



INFORMATION BULLETIN: DECEMBER 2010

www.buildingcommunitysociety.org

Maggie Geiser, Administrator: mgeiser@telus.net or 604 619 5050

DTES Community Planning Data Base

The DTES lacks a coordinated, objective and always up-to-date information resource about the many significant characteristics of the area. Discussions are to be undertaken with involved stakeholders working with researchers to design such a system.

The goal is to create a credible information base and make it available to everyone through electronic means and through a street-front location in the DTES. Such a process would be undertaken through discussion with involved stakeholders. The organizing principle is that everyone can contribute to the information base from the community, from government and from business. The operational principle is that the data base will facilitate understanding and discussion that can lead to collaborative, informed decision-making regarding issues and opportunities before the DTES. The status of housing in all its forms, including types, location, availability, costs and targets, with regular updates will be one of the first elements to be programmed.

Project lead: Ray Spaxman

Putting It All Together: Plans, Policies, Programs, Projects, and Proposals

In July, 2010 BCS issued this report. Its purpose is to present a synopsis and comparison of the various City and community initiatives that have been prepared in the past decade regarding the Downtown Eastside. The hope is that the Report will serve as a useful framework for informed discussion between the various parties, aid problem solving and lead to the development of shared goals for the benefit of all concerned. <http://buildingcommunitysociety.org/bcs-works-in-progress/>

Now a follow up document is in preparation: **DTES Reports at-a-Glance**. It will have a simpler, more graphic format. Readers can quickly compare the various plans and policies for points of agreement and disagreement and where there may be opportunities for finding shared solutions. Available in early 2011.

Project Lead: Ian Chang

Model Demonstration Projects

These projects are designed to model integrated health, social, economic, cultural and environmental approaches to community well-being – with priority attention to people who experience marginalization and poverty.

Aboriginal Mother Centre

This spring 16 units of transition housing for mothers and children will open as part of an expanded AMC facility at Dundas and Wall Streets. The amenities include:

- Daycare for 15 children 1-6
- Intergenerational drop-in with programs in health, life skills, parenting
- Commercial grade kitchen for healthy meals
- Job training in placements in the Centre
- Social Entrepreneurship: Mama's Wall Street Knitting Studio – in partnership with Nisga'a Knit & Apparel and Kootenay Knit and Apparel

Planning is underway for stage two of the project – 40 units of permanent non-market housing for Aboriginal mothers and children.

This project is led, developed, and maintained by Aboriginal organizations – the Aboriginal Mother Centre and L'uma Native Housing Society – in partnership with Builders Without Borders and the Building Community Society. Funding is coming from 10 public and philanthropic organizations.

BCS lead: Gerry Zipursky.

First United Church (Hastings and Gore)

Program space requirements and the architectural design work have been completed for a new First United Church facility to be built on the site of the present property. When it opens there will be three floors of community and church space: sanctuaries, dining area, family activities spaces, advocacy and counselling and education rooms – and retail outlets on the ground floor that can accommodate social enterprises. There will be a refuge for 150 people, a shelter for 50 (awaiting permanent housing), 32 units of supportive housing and 55 units of affordable housing. There will be safe storage for personal effects and carts for people in temporary refuge/shelter accommodation).

Planning for fund-raising is underway. The goal is to open in 2012/13.

BCS has provided pro-bono legal, project management and communications services.

BCS lead: Michael Clague (under contract to First United).

Pantages Project (100 Block East Hastings)

Originally the Pantages Theatre Arts Society was working to save the historic Pantages Theatre and then to manage a restored theatre on a development that included non-market housing on 6 properties in this block. Unfortunately this plan did not succeed and the theatre is past the point of saving. The owner of the properties has them for sale.

BCS has led two unsuccessful efforts to have the City purchase the properties. By getting them off the market and in City ownership it was intended that essential time would be created for community consultations, for identifying potential development partners and for good planning. This would ensure that this strategic site would successfully address local housing needs, host a major cultural amenity in the entertainment tradition of Hastings Street, provide a direct connection to Chinatown through the creation of a mews between Hastings and Pender Streets and through good design contribute to the renewal of the block as a whole.

BCS continues to explore financing, development and management options for securing and building on the site. To be successful the project will need to be led by one or more partners with particular experience and credibility in housing for people with low incomes, by the involvement of cultural partners and with the skills to meaningfully involve the local community.

BCS leads: Joe Wai and Gerry Zipursky

About the Building Community Society

The Building Community Society has been formed by a group of volunteers who share a personal desire to contribute positively to the future of the Downtown Eastside. BCS focuses on supporting the communities that make up the DTES in their efforts to build on their many strengths and to address the issues they face. BCS believes that effective solutions will only occur when those most affected are fully involved in developing those solutions. Therefore we will always seek community partnerships and listen carefully to the advice we received.

The Building Community Society is affiliated with **Sustainable Cities International**. SCI is a small catalytic organization that tackles the daunting challenges of urban sustainability. It is headquartered in Vancouver, Canada, with an active network of over 40 cities in 14 countries. <http://sustainablecities.net/>

Building Community Society – Demonstration Projects

Aboriginal Mother Centre: Under One Roof Stage One opening Spring 2011



First United Church: Opening 2012/2013

