



Backgrounder

Economic revitalization projects support new and existing businesses, improve streetscapes in Downtown Eastside

Vancouver Agreement partners and community organizations are collaborating on a series of initiatives to enhance the business environment and build the economic capacity of the Downtown Eastside. These initiatives will complement and support business and community development projects already in place or under consideration.

Business Enhancement Initiatives

- Development of Chinatown marketing plans to identify priority areas for action, set work plans and bring together community and business organizations to promote and revitalize Chinatown. This initiative will be complemented by a comprehensive multi-lingual communications strategy.
- Design bilingual menus and signs for businesses in Chinatown to help overcome language barriers, create a more friendly shopping environment and promote understanding of products and services.
- Installation of a memorial place-marker to commemorate Chinese-Canadian World War II veterans and pioneers who worked on construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.
- Constructing an information kiosk to make the area more welcoming for tourists.
- Creation of an information database to enhance business development to provide an on-line exchange and listing of enterprises, purchase requests, procurement Requests for Proposals and other business opportunities.
- Creation of a real estate database and assessment of market housing opportunities – the project will work with local business groups, property owners and real estate agents to create a database describing the condition of existing buildings in strategic parts of the DTES
- System development and marketing plan to enhance catering business – Potluck Café is a successful community enterprise in the Downtown Eastside committed to training and hiring local residents. Professional restaurant systems will make the business more self-sufficient and sustainable.

Funding: Western Economic Diversification, business and community organizations
\$540,000

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Community Enterprise Hub

- Community economic development organizations will work together to share information to help create and sustain new businesses and secure employment opportunities and affordable commercial services for area residents. A mechanism for referral to government social services may also be included in a community enterprise hub. Further information about this project will be available in coming months.
- Establishment of a Community Enterprise Centre and Business Incubator in the Downtown Eastside (DTES)
Eastside Movement for Business and Economic Renewal Society (EMBERS) will set up a business incubator to facilitate, assist and support the creation and operation of new local businesses in the DTES. It will provide resources, technical assistance and ongoing support by providing direct counsel, mentoring, educational programs, referral services and operational incubation (actual and virtual) for people doing market research, business plan development and the initial launch of their businesses. The business incubator will also provide office space and shared equipment for up to 15 businesses and offer bookkeeping and ongoing management support through experts who will train and develop the capacity of new entrepreneurs to manage their businesses successfully.
- Recovery Works Incubation Centre
The Recovery Works Incubation Centre will address economic opportunity within the DTES for people with mental health disabilities by building up the economic capacity of the community through business development and incubation. It will use methods and tools of incubation to community enterprises developed by and for people with mental health disabilities. The Centre will provide a comprehensive range of business development services and support to consumer-run and social-purpose enterprise by taking an idea from the conceptual stage to business launch and the establishment of market sustainability.

Funding: Western Economic Diversification Canada, provincial government, City of Vancouver, and community organizations \$481,500

Streetscapes and building improvements

Streetscape and building improvements enhance the environment in which businesses operate and residents live, making the area more attractive and promoting positive uses for area parks.

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- Victory Square Park – the first phase of the park upgrade involved improving lighting in the park. The second phase upgrading will retain and enhance the heritage character with improved seating and decorative railings. The upgrading will help to encourage more legitimate businesses to invest in the area and support existing businesses.
- Carrall Street and CPR Greenways concept plan and construction. The project will develop a concept design for an urban greenway on Carrall Street linking the heart of Gastown at Maple Tree Square to the cultural heart of Chinatown at the Chinese Cultural Centre and Dr. Sun Yat Sen Garden. It will also develop a portion of the CPR right-of-way park and complete the construction of the community-based Interurban Gallery at Carrall and Hastings.
- Improve façade of heritage buildings in Gastown and Chinatown to make the area more attractive to shoppers and visitors.
- Installation of furniture in Sun Yat Sen Courtyard for seniors and visitors.

Funding: Western Economic Diversification, City of Vancouver
and community contributions \$480,000

Street programming and community economic development activities

Public realm and special events help to re-invigorate local environments. The following programs are intended to attract visitors and improve the feeling of safety and security in the Downtown Eastside.

- Victory Square Park and Chinatown lighting installation and street festivals – BC Hydro donated 800 strings of lights to facilitate outdoor activities in the evening; Chinatown BIA has committed funds to host festivals and activities to bring people to the streets; Friends of Victory Square will hang angels in the park and install an angel sculpture; Victory Square businesses and residents will join in celebrating the Lunar New Year in February with a lantern procession and banners.

Funding: Western Economic Diversification, Chinatown and Victory Square
Businesses \$208,000

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