

## **REGULAR MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON CULTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Notice is hereby given of the following Regular Meeting of  
the Task Force on Culture and Economic Development

October 25, 2021 at 9:30AM

Meeting Held Electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192/2020

### **AGENDA**

**Call to order.**

#### **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA - Urgent/time sensitive matters only**

1. *MOTION to Add or Delete Items from the Agenda.*

#### **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

2. *MOTION to adopt the minutes of the August 23, 2021 meeting.*

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

3. **Downtown Livability Plan Discussion** (Blair Fryer, Manager, Communications & Economic Development)

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Task Force on Culture and Economic Development will occur on:

Date:	November 29, 2021
Time:	9:30 AM
Location:	Conference call

#### **ADJOURNMENT**



## **REGULAR MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON CULTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

August 23, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Held Electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192/2020

### **MINUTES**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Chinu Das  
Councillor Jaimie McEvoy

**STAFF:**

Emilie Adin – Director, Development Services  
Harji Varn – CFO/Director, Finance  
Gordon Duggan – Director + Curator, New Media Gallery  
Sarah Joyce – Director + Curator, New Media Gallery  
Todd Ayotte – Manager, Community Arts & Theatre  
Robert McCullough – Manager, Museums and Heritage Services  
Christy Mereigh – Manager, Building Inspections, Development Services  
Jen Arbo – Economic Development Coordinator  
Carolyn Armanini – Planner, Economic Development

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

#### **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**1. MOVED and SECONDED**

**MOTION:**

*THAT pursuant to Section 90 of the Community Charter, members of the public be excluded from the Closed Meeting of the Task Force immediately following the Regular Meeting of the Task Force on the basis that the subject matter of all agenda items to be considered relate to matters listed under Sections 90(1)[a] and of the Community Charter:*

(a) *personal information about an identifiable individual who holds or is being considered for a position as an officer, employee or agent of the municipality or another position appointed by the municipality;*

**CARRIED.**

All members of the Task Force present voted in favour of the motion.

## ADJOURNMENT

**2. MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the Task Force on Culture and Economic Development in Open Session be adjourned and proceed to Closed Session at 9:31.*

**CARRIED.**

All members of the Task Force present voted in favour of the motion.

## RECONVENE TO REGULAR MEETING

**3. MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the Regular Mayor's Task Force on Culture and Economic Development be reconvened.*

**CARRIED.**

All members of the Task Force present voted in favour of the motion.

## ADOPTION OF MINUTES

**4. MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the minutes of the Regular meeting of the Task Force on Culture and Economic Development of June 28, 2021 be adopted.*

**CARRIED**

All members of the Task Force present voted in favour of the motion.

## NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Task Force on Culture and Economic Development will occur on:

Date:	October 25, 2021	
Time:	9:30 a.m.	
Location:	Via video conference	

## ADJOURNMENT

**ON MOTION**, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 AM.

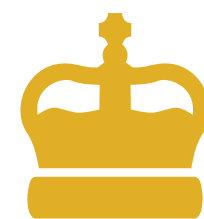
<b>Mary Trentadue CHAIR</b>	<b>Carolyn Armanini Planner, Economic Development</b>



# Downtown Livability Roadmap

Culture and Economic Development Task Force

October 25, 2021



NEW WESTMINSTER

# Background

At the September 13, 2021 meeting of Council, a motion was passed to address challenges in the livability of the downtown neighbourhood, called the **Downtown Recovery Strategy**.

## **Recommendation:**

Whereas Downtown is the densest and most rapidly-growing residential neighbourhood of New Westminster, representing a commitment to regional Transit-Oriented Mixed-Use development goals concentrated in identified Regional City Centres; and

Whereas the initial revitalization since the 2010 Downtown Community Plan was developed has suffered a series of more recent setbacks, including the loss of several historic buildings to fires and the loss of a major anchor retailer, while a recent loss of park space and ongoing construction serve to challenge livability goals for the downtown community; and

Whereas despite robust growth, several properties in the key blocks of Columbia Street have been derelict or vacant for many years, impairing neighborhood revitalization efforts and challenging the impression of Columbia Street as a vibrant commercial district for both residents and existing businesses;

## ***Therefore be it resolved:***

That staff review strategies and regulatory tools available to Council to support the rapid revitalization of underperforming, derelict, and vacant properties on Columbia Street in the historic Downtown, including but not limited to powers under the New Westminster Redevelopment Act (1989), and

That Staff provide recommendations for rapid and medium-term actions to support the vibrancy of business, the activation of the streets, and improving the amenity value of the historic Downtown for all residents of New Westminster.

# Immediate Needs

Staff quickly started working interdepartmentally to address immediate needs and to consider medium-term and long-term strategies to address the motion. On October 18, 2021, staff presented a report to Council outlining key areas identified as requiring immediate or short term actions, and outlined a plan for those actions.

## Issues Identified:

1. Need to improve general cleanliness and the provision for 24 hour, public toilets in the Downtown
2. Homeless outreach and added emergency shelter capacity
3. Opioid epidemic and illicit drug response
4. Business support and engagement
5. Need to work with Fraser Health in addressing mental health issues which are contributing to increasing homelessness and illicit drug use

# Issue 1:

Need to improve general cleanliness and the provision for 24 hour, public toilets in the Downtown

## IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

1. The Engineering Department has added larger garbage receptacles throughout the Downtown and increased collection frequency.
2. Expression of Interest has been developed for specialized waste management in the Downtown.
3. The City is adding one portable toilet in Hyack Square.

## SHORT TERM ACTIONS:

1. Investigate resource requirements to support late night garbage collection (refer to 2022 Budget process).
2. Continue workplan to provide 24/7 washrooms in City facilities, and report back to Council.
3. Investigate with Translink the provision Of public washrooms at Skytrain stations.
4. Investigate additional fee for service with faith-based or non-profit service providers as washroom attendants/outreach service providers.
5. Prepare to purchase and install a prefabricated stand-alone public toilet in the Downtown and report back to Council (already identified in the 2022 Budget).



# Issue 2:

Homeless outreach and added emergency shelter capacity.

## **IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:**

1. Police, Bylaws, Engineering and Fire Departments are creating a coordinated multi-departmental Team.
2. The multi-departmental Team is working on a protocol to check the well-being of homeless individuals and attend to any safety or environmental hazards on a daily basis.

## **SHORT TERM ACTIONS:**

1. Developing a work plan and resource requirements to implement seven day and evening bylaw coverage (refer to 2022 Budget process).
2. Working collaboratively with service providers and BC Housing for up to 50 emergency shelter beds in the Downtown
3. Interdepartmental Inspection staff will prioritize the emergency shelter application.

# Issue 3:

Opioid epidemic and illicit drug response.

## **IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:**

1. The Fire Department is evaluating an interdepartmental and inter-agency medical approach. Learning from successes in Vancouver – Vancouver Fire and Vancouver Coastal and Surrey Fire and Fraser Health.
2. Outreach and training between Fire and Police first responders, Bylaw staff and Social Planners.

## **SHORT TERM ACTIONS:**

1. Create a work plan and resource requirements to develop: a customized screening process to identify suitable candidates to connect with existing social, mental and medical services designed to address the issues and facilitate access and introduction to these services.
2. Work with Fraser Health to expand hours of the Health Contact Centre, including during the morning and early afternoon, and to increase needles sweeps and outreach.

# Issue 5:

Need to work with Fraser Health in addressing mental health issues which are contributing to increasing homelessness and illicit drug use.

## **IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:**

1. City staff will work closely with Fraser Health's new Integrated Response Team which will support sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons with mental health issues. The team will include a mix of nursing, allied health professionals, and clinical and peer support workers; operate 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily, including weekends; and serve New Westminster and the Tri-Cities.
2. City staff will clarify the role of the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team, which includes the City's Mental Health Police Liaison Officer, and serves adults living with serious mental illness.

## **SHORT TERM ACTIONS:**

1. The City to provide mental health education, information and training to staff on the front lines, including in Engineering Operations, Integrated Services, and Parks and Recreation.

# Issue 4:

Business support and engagement.

## IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

1. Create a dashboard for Economic Development to understand the current situation from other divisions when businesses reach out with who to contact for further information.
2. Formalized plan and materials for business outreach that cohesively relays information coming from City Departments.
3. Targeted overdose awareness and education for trades, temporary labour, and construction companies by refocusing existing work with the BIA, WorkSafe and Purpose Society.

## SHORT TERM ACTIONS:

1. Developing a work plan and resource requirements between Building, Licensing and Economic Development to reduce timelines for building permit applications and business license applications requiring building permits (refer to 2022 Budget process).

# Immediate & Short Term Actions

## Communication Dashboard

- Interdepartmental communication and communication sharing
- Issue tracking
- **Next Step:** CAO to meet with IT to commence planning

## Reduction of Permitting Times

- Develop a work plan to reduce timelines for building permit applications and business licence applications requiring building permits.
- **Next Steps:**
  - Building to take the lead to develop the plan with input from Licensing and Economic Development.

## Business Outreach Plan & Assets

- Work inter-departmentally to streamline information flow to business
- **Next Steps:**
  - Ec Dev to work with communications to review and indexing of existing resources
  - Identification of additional information required
  - Develop template materials so that items can be created quickly

## Overdose Awareness Education

- Targeted overdose awareness and education for trades, temporary labour, and construction companies by refocusing existing work with the BIA, WorkSafe and Purpose Society.
- **Next Steps:** develop plan for educational opportunity and implement.

# Longer Term Issues For Discussion

## Vibrancy

- Sidewalk Café Bylaw (1997) revisions based on learning from Temporary Patio program
- Specialized grant for public space activation
- Streetscape improvements (e.g.: public art, bike and pedestrian amenities, etc)

## Reduction of Permitting Times

- Increased staff resources
- Prioritization of small business tenant improvements over residential
- Consideration of a pre-approval process for business licensing for low-risk businesses

## Derelict or At-Risk Properties

- Requirement for increased fire prevention strategies with the cost covered by property owners (e.g. security, monitoring)
- *New Westminster Redevelopment Act, 1989*
  - Acquisition of property
  - Special development permits

## Vacant or Unleased Properties

- Exploration of tax or other financial penalties for vacant properties
- Consideration for conditional approvals / operating permits that allow a business to operate while minor tenant improvements occur for a limited time

## Nuisance Activity & Crime Reduction

- Public Washroom Plan
- Consideration of restriction of certain business licence types (e.g. cheque cashing, pawn shops, and other “high risk” businesses)