



Heritage Vancouver

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February 24, 2020

Mayor Stewart and Vancouver City Council
Vancouver City Hall
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver BC V5V 1V4

Re: Motion B.5 Declaring Support for an Eastside Arts District

Dear Mayor and Council,

We are writing in support of the Motion: Declaring Support for an Eastside Arts District.

The East Side of Vancouver is effectively already a Cultural and Arts District which supports an intricate ecology of those working in arts and culture. However, because of the heavy competition between places for arts and cultural uses and more financially profitable commercial and residential uses, the existence of those involved in local arts and culture (often on an individual scale) face an extremely precarious existence. This threatens the cultural, social and economic diversity of the city.

We have had interactions with a number of artists, particularly in East Vancouver and have learned a great deal about the intricate cultural ecology of the arts and culture community that is an integral part of life in the city. Arts and culture provide direct benefits to local community life, the local economy, and invites thinking and debate of societal issues expressed through a variety of mediums. Additionally, older industrial and commercial spaces have been more easily repurposed for arts and cultural uses requiring relatively few adjustments. This repurposing of older buildings contributes to sense of place both through historical reference and through current uses as arts and cultural spaces.

The proposed examination by city staff of securing a healthy and sustainable cultural and arts district is extremely timely and important. In particular, land use policy and long-term funding alternatives require in-depth examination so that the current area concentrated by arts and cultural assets is not just a transitory area for arts and culture soon to be replaced. A healthy long-term arts and culture district will require much more stability and management of change at a pace that does not undermine the diversity and conditions that allowed for the place to become the valued cultural district it is in the first place.

Finally, we would like to add that examination of stable arts and cultural spaces across the city, whether they fall into the geographic area suggested in the motion is

necessary. Places that fall out of the boundaries that come out of the proposed work face similar vulnerabilities that threaten their contribution to our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Yuen', with a stylized, cursive script.

Bill Yuen
Executive Director, Heritage Vancouver Society