

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media release

Wednesday, December 13, 2006

Vancouver BIAs support Project Civil City

Vancouver, BC – Vancouver area Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) are applauding Project Civil City, Mayor Sam Sullivan's broad new initiative to address public disorder in the City of Vancouver scheduled to go before City Council on Thursday, December 14.

The eighteen BIAs, which represent business and property owners across the city, agree that all levels of government, associations and social agencies need to work together to find long-term, sustainable solutions to public disorder and the contributing factors of drug addiction, mental illness and homelessness. In fact, the BIAs endorse increasing the recommended 50% targets for reducing homelessness, aggressive panhandling and the open drug market.

The BIAs welcome the prospect of being consulted by the Project Civil City Implementation Team as it develops an action plan in the coming 90 days.

As the Mayor has indicated, "the time for talk is over." BIAs agree. For years they have been concentrating their resources to the collective tune of more than \$2,400,000 spent every year on security, litter and graffiti removal.

These include:

\$430,000 on sanitation, litter collection and graffiti removal

\$1,900,000 on security

"We are on the front lines in keeping our City livable and safe", says Sharon Townsend, executive director in South Granville BIA. "Our security teams help to reduce crime everyday, and our anti-litter programs keep our neighbourhoods clean everyday".

In 2006, the Vancouver BIA's collectively spent over \$5,000,000 on safety and security, street enhancement and business and tourism development, for their areas.

Vancouver area BIA's are committed to long term solutions by hiring social agencies such as The Coast Foundation, United We Can and Street Youth Job Action to create jobs and clean up the neighbourhoods. "This City is only as strong as its most vulnerable citizens. And we are investing heavily in the social agencies that help strengthen those in need", adds Annette O'Shea executive director of Yaletown BIA. "Hiring *"Clean Teams"* of at-risk youth are just one example of how local merchant groups create opportunities for personal success for these young people. The City is kept clean, the youth get job experience, and the social agency gets needed funding. It's a win, win win".

BIA contacts:

Yaletown (Annette O'Shea, Executive Director) 604-683-7473

Downtown Vancouver (Charles Gauthier, Executive Director) 604-685-7811

Gastown (Leanne Sali, Manager) 604-683-5650

Collingwood (Diana Cousins,) 604-639-4403

Strathcona (John Van Luven, Executive Director) 604-258-2727
Kitsilano 4th Ave. (Cheryl Easton, Manager) 604-263-6443
Pt. Grey Village, (Cheryl Easton, Manager) 604-263-6443
Marpole (Claudia Laroye, Executive Director) 604-418-8232
Davie Village (Lyn Hellyar, Executive Director) 604-696-0144
Commercial Drive (Marijoel Cramer, Coordinator) 604-251-2884
Mount Pleasant (Lynn Warwick, Executive Director) 604-874-9816
Victoria Drive (Rania Hatz, Coordinator) 604-710-2954
Kerrisdale (Terri Clark, Coordinator) 604-257-8438
Robson Street (Tomarra Walker, Manager) 604-669-8132
Hastings North (Patricia Barnes, Executive Director) 604-215-2401
South Granville (Sharon Townsend, Executive Director) 604-734-3195
Chinatown (Diamond Lui, Executive Manager) 604-632-3808
Cambie Village (Rania Hatz, Coordinator) 604-710-2954