



A Vacant Lot will Soon be the Next Hands-on Classroom for Students and Residents

Date: Tuesday, March 22, 2016

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — A vacant lot on Yates Street will soon come to life as a community garden with the help of downtown residents and University of Victoria students, through the newly established CityStudio Victoria.

Building on new City policies designed to grow more food in the city, the currently unused property presents a rare opportunity for City staff, university students and community members to co-create, design and launch a new community project from the ground up. The University of Victoria will offer its second CityStudio Victoria course, a public policy course, called Growing Community "From the Ground up". It is an intensive three-week course, starting May 9, 2016, with third year students, and staff working in partnership with the Downtown Residents' Association and Greater Victoria Placemaking Network.

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY:

Where: On site at 1012/1014 Yates Street
When: Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 1:15 p.m.
Who: Mayor Lisa Helps
Sarah Wiebe, University of Victoria, Department of Political Science
Nicholas Harrington and Janet Strauss, Downtown Residents' Association
Kevin McGeough and Emmy Marshall-Hill, Greater Victoria Placemaking Network

Building on the success of CityStudio Vancouver, the central mission of CityStudio Victoria is to innovate and experiment with the ways cities are co-created, while teaching students the skills needed to collaborate on real projects. An empty storefront at 742 Johnson recently became the new home of CityStudio Victoria. Earlier this year, Biketoria, a University of Victoria urban geography course focused primarily on planning and designing a new cycling network in the Capital City was offered in this new downtown classroom shared by Camosun, Royal Roads and the University of Victoria.

"CityStudio Victoria is learning in action. Students get credit for courses by working on real-world opportunities, together with their classmates, community members and City staff," said Mayor Helps. "We're thrilled to learn from CityStudio Vancouver and to be their first CityStudio partner in Canada."

1012/14 Yates Street has sat vacant for several years after the City purchased it through a tax sale when the property owner did not redeem it. The former site of a dry-cleaning business, the property was subject to a provincial remediation order and was recently contained and filled to be considered for future use. Environmental monitoring of the site will continue, and City Council has approved the 7200 square foot property for a future community garden for three years while longer term uses continue to be explored.

Attachment: Current photo of Yates Street property

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For more information:

Katie Hamilton
Director of Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning
Office: 250.361.0210
Mobile: 250.217.8343