Group Work Agreement: Downtown Eastside Group

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The agreement below articulates our:
1. Goals for the project
2. Delineation of roles and responsibilities
3. Expectations
4. Agreed working practices
5. Operating procedures

We expand on each of these five points in the document below. In the preparation of our group work agreement, we owe a great deal to the page on Agreements for Productive Group Working, available from the Omnibus website, at http://tonydorcey.ca/Omnibus/08GroupWorkAgOmni.html.

We wrote this agreement in a group working session on Thursday, October 7th, 2010. We developed each point of the agreement through a process of consensus.

1. Goals for the project

There are huge advantages to ensuring that everyone involved in the project is on the same page with regard to key factors such as: the objectives (or goals, we use both interchangeably) of the project, the deliverables, and the timeline for deliverables.

Goals/objectives for the project
We use the terms goals and objectives interchangeably to describe most broadly the tasks that must be accomplished in order for the project to be a success.
- Complete a report and a presentation based on the case study of sustainability in the planning process of the Downtown Eastside (DTES)
- Practice group leadership and facilitation skills

Deliverables
We define deliverables as products to be handed in or presented for the project's grade.
- Group work agreement
- Outline and partial draft of report
- Draft report and agenda for presentation
- Presentation/discussion session

- Final report outlining : Governance Context, Planning Models Employed, Sustainability Planning Tools Used, Sustainability Planning Approaches Incorporated

Timeline for deliverables
- Completed Group Work Agreement: October 13th
- Initial Draft of Selected Components: October 22nd
- Draft Presentation: November 19th or 26th
- Presentation/Discussion: November 22 or 29th
- Final: December 6th

Timeline for mid-process increments (i.e. internal timeline)
Internal time lines already established:
- Group meetings every Thursday morning, 9:30 - 11.00 am
- Facilitator of the week sends out meeting agenda for review/preparation on the Tuesday before the meeting

As group work progresses internal time lines will be established as an ongoing process through weekly goal setting. By using a [group calendar](#) that will be shared using Google Docs, each member of the group will have the ability to access the timeline. Once roles and responsibilities have been established a more detailed timeline for reviewing, revising, and collaborating on final products will be finalized. The Note Taker will be responsible for keeping the calendar officially updated.

2. Delineation of roles and responsibilities

With the exception of the Facilitator/Time Keeper (which will rotate), each member of the group will take on one responsibility, and two members of the team will take on one role in addition to their responsibilities.

We will decide who will be responsible for each of the roles and responsibilities at our next meeting at 9.30 AM on Thursday, October 14th.

Roles
We define roles as activities that each of us will perform during our weekly meetings.

- Facilitator / Time Keeper
    - The Facilitator / Time Keeper will be responsible for preparing and circulating the agenda on the Tuesday before each meeting.
    - The Facilitator / Time Keeper will be responsible for making sure that meetings run smoothly, creating the space for everyone to have the chance to speak, helping the group reach consensus, and leading the group to resolve any disputes that arise. The Facilitator / Time Keeper will also be responsible for making sure that the meeting progresses in a timely fashion and finishes by 11 am.

- ○ This role will rotate amongst each of the members of the group. Please see the [group calendar](#) for the schedule.
  - ○ We have decided to combine the roles of Facilitator and Time Keeper because we feel that this will give us valuable practice in learning how to pace sessions that we facilitate.

- ● Note Taker
  - ○ The Note Taker will take notes at each meeting and email them around to the members of the group within 24 hours of the end of each meeting.
  - ○ If it is the Note Taker's turn to facilitate, another member of the group will volunteer to take notes.
  - ○ The Note Taker is responsible for updating internal deadlines on group calendar.
  - ○ The Note Taker will also have the responsibility of Liaison.

- ● Visualizer:
  - ○ The Visualizer will capture the running memory of the meeting and display it in writing to the other members of the group.
  - ○ The Visualizer will use a laptop and Google Docs to complete this task.
  - ○ If it is the Visualizer's turn to facilitate, another member of the group will volunteer to visualize.
  - ○ The Visualizer will also have the responsibility of Content Checker.

Responsibilities
- ● Liaison
  - ○ The Liaison will be responsible for communicating with Tony Dorcey and any other groups, as needed.
  - ○ The Liaison will manage internal group communications.
  - ○ The Liaison will 'project manage' to make sure that the group sticks to the Timeline.

- ● Content Checker
  - ○ The Content Checker will be responsible for carefully reviewing all deliverables, and assuring that the group has correctly and fully complied with the requirements of the assignment, and also has incorporated the readings from the class as fully as possible.
  - ○ If the Content Checker identifies an area that requires improvement, the member of the group responsible for that area must review any readings suggested by the Content Checker and make any needed changes by his- or herself.
  - ○ The Content Checker will be the first of the four final reviewers of the deliverables.

- ● Editor
  - ○ The Editor will be responsible for checking the content of the deliverables that relates specifically to the subject of the Downtown Eastside.

- ○ The editor will be responsible for avoiding unwanted content duplication/repetition and pointing out differences in the overall writing style.
  - ○ The Editor will be the second of the four final reviewers of the deliverables.

- ● Proofreader
  - ○ The Proofreader will be responsible for checking the words, grammar and language of the deliverables.
  - ○ The Proofreader will be the third of the four final reviewers of the deliverables.

- ● Formatter
  - ○ The Formatter will be responsible for collecting the written material and consolidating drafts for the group to review
  - ○ The Formatter will be responsible for collecting the written material for the report and making sure that it is optimally displayed (including the creation, collection, and use of figures, pictures, and diagrams).
  - ○ The Formatter will be the fourth of four final reviewers of the report.
  - ○ The Formatter will be responsible for confirming consensus and handing in deliverables in accordance with the timeline

- ● Presentation Coordinator
  - ○ The Presentation Coordinator will be responsible for leading the group on writing and preparing the presentation.
  - ○ The Presentation Coordinator will format the powerpoint for the presentation.
  - ○ The Presentation Coordinator will be the fourth of four final reviewers of the powerpoint for the presentation.

Report Responsibilities

The report will include the following structural features:
1. Introduction
2. Analytical framework
3. Methods
4. Analysis
5. Conclusions
6. Recommendations
7. References

We will use Ref Works to generate the list of references. Each member of the group will be a lead writer for one of the other structural features. We will chose who will be the lead writer on each of the structural features at our next meeting at 9.30 AM on Thursday, 14th October.

3. Expectations

We expect that we will each adhere to the following in our group working:

- Bring laptops to all meetings
- Use Google Docs for all group contents
- Be punctual for meetings
- Be prepared for meetings
- Meet all internal deadlines
- We will respond to communications within 2 days, unless otherwise noted by the sender. We will respond to any urgent communications as soon as we can.
- We will commit to performing each of our roles and responsibilities with utmost diligence and helping our fellow group members if they are struggling to do this.

Consequences are as follows:
- If the group reaches a consensus that a member has failed to meet any of the above expectations, that group member will be required to buy a round for the rest of the group.
- If the group reaches a consensus that we have done an excellent job in meeting all of the above expectations, we will do something fun together.

4. Agreed working practices

Approaches to be taken in our work
These are the broad approaches that we will use in our work to achieve the
goals/objectives of the project.
- Participatory
- Collaborative
- Consensus-based
- Shared responsibility and facilitation

Resources and information available to use in our work
These are the sources we will utilize to complete the project:
- Websites
- Class materials
- Contact people who work for the city
- NGOs
- Community groups (note: there is no ethics approval for this, so we can only address people regarding information that is already public)
- Nathan Edelson
- Normajean McLaren
- Tony Dorcey

Ethics and confidentiality

The group will maintain the academic responsibility and integrity of the University of British Columbia, including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, dishonesty, fabrication of

information, submitting previously completed work and misusing or destroying school property (UBC, Academic Integrity Resource Centre site).

Group members will also maintain a courteous, respectful professional and ethical manner at all times while working together. Duties will be performed diligently and on time, with the cooperation of other group members, the faculty and external parties when necessary.

5. Operating procedures

Communications
- The communication process includes two aspects: Internal (among our group) and External (with Tony Dorcey, expert consultants and other class groups)
- For internal communication purposes we will use primarily email, and the Google Doc available online. To ensure participation, collaboration and consensus based working practices, this document will always be open for reviewing and commenting. Each member of the team has an assigned colour for commenting. These are: Adam, Debra, Lindsay, Maysa, Sandra, Thomas
- For external communication purposes, contacts will be personal or through email. The Liaison will be the designated person to approach Tony Dorcey, but any other member of the team can be chosen to consult Nathan Edelson, Normajean McLaren or other experts in the matter.

Scheduling meeting times and places
- The team will meet weekly on Thursdays from 9.30 to 11 AM in the SCARP kitchen.

Agenda setting
- Each week the Facilitator will set the agenda for the meeting they will be facilitating.
- The Facilitator is responsible for circulating the agenda by email to members of the team on the Tuesday before each meeting to allow them to suggest any last-minute items they wish to see discussed.

Agenda format
We will use a simplified format for the agenda, as is appropriate for our regular meetings.

1. Approval of the agenda and setting out any other business
2. Progress reports from group members
3. Any other business
4. Reminders for next meeting

Note taking
- The Note Taker will take notes and circulate them by email to the Group within 24 hours of the end of the meeting.

Facilitation

- Facilitation will be carried out on a rotating basis, as laid out in the [group calendar](#).

Decision making process
- We will use consensus for decision-making. No unanimous agreement will be necessary, but each team member should agree that they can live with the package.
- To achieve consensus we are in agreement that active listening, research and meeting preparedness will be expected.
- Consensus will be the means by which we'll be making our important decisions. Consensus will be polled in the moment through non-verbal cues to facilitate the process. Non-verbal cues are thumbs up for agreement, horizontal thumbs for neutral or mixed feelings, open palms for further discussion or clarification, and thumbs down for significant disagreement which will require further discussion. The process is to be repeated until we reach a point where there are no thumbs down.
- If consensus cannot be reached within a reasonable time during our weekly meeting, the item is to be set for next weeks' agenda, and additional research is to be performed and reported back to the group prior to the said meeting. If consensus cannot be attained at this meeting, our group will seek third party mediation.

Process for resolving disagreement
- In the same spirit of consensus, open and respectful dialogue will be expected from fellow group members.
- Will will use our principal means of decision making to resolve disagreement if appropriate, but if an issue evolves to an unmanageable state, we will seek mediation.