

City of Victoria

**Draft Strategic Plan  
2015 – 2018**



# Our Goal:

“Victoria is a leading edge capital city that embraces the future and builds on the past, where human needs and the environment are priorities, where the community feels valued, heard and understood and where City Hall is trusted. Victoria is a city that is livable, affordable, prosperous and vibrant, where we all work in partnership to support opportunities and get things done.”

## Council’s Principles for Strategic Planning

### In the planning process we are committed to:

- Starting with an open heart and an open mind
- Being honest, frank and respectful in our discussions
- Participating with active listening and respectful challenging
- Keeping a sense of humour
- Believing in the process and the outcome
- Allowing for differences
- Strong facilitation
- Learning from the past
- Making the process visible
- Making sure that we’re starting with a blank slate but also with transparency around priorities
- Engaging the public

### In the plan we are committed to:

- Creating a clear plan with agreed on purpose
- Making sure our stated values are clear
- Identifying specific proposals that the public can react to – make defining statements
- Including timelines, measurable, and budgets for all items
- Making the plan accessible

### In implementation we are committed to:

- Doing what we say
- Scheduling check in updates on strategic plan execution with Council
- Creating mechanisms for emerging issues
- Aligning our governance structure with our priorities

# Objective 1: Innovate and Lead

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## 2015–2018 OUTCOMES:

- Council's governance structure reflects its strategic objectives.
- Staff is organized into cross-departmental project teams with strong project management capacity.

## 2015 ACTIONS:

- Be bold.
- To enable bold, innovative leadership, invest in City Hall's capacity by creating an interdisciplinary project team to support collaborative, holistic planning and public engagement. This approach introduces new expertise, project management support and capacity for meeting strategic objectives and delivering within Financial Plan.
- Introduce focused advisory committees and task forces to build capacity and include public input within projects. Conclude previous broad topical advisory committees.

## Considerations:

- Deliver on what we have committed to, within timelines committed to.
- Demonstrate leadership.
- Introduce pilot projects and innovative methods.

## Estimated Resources:

- Interdisciplinary three-staff person project team will be created at a cost of up to \$300,000/year, to be evaluated annually.

## Objective 2: Engage and Empower the Community

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### 2015 OUTCOME:

- Improved relationship with nearby First Nations. (Ongoing)

### 2016 OUTCOMES:

- Build capacity of neighbourhood/community associations. (Ongoing)
- Empowered neighbourhood residents, place makers and others to lead and implement projects.

### 2017 OUTCOME:

- More youth are engaged in City programs, civic issues, and the broader community. (Ongoing)

### 2018 OUTCOMES:

- Transparent government.
- Rebuilt trust with the public in terms of meaningful public engagement.
- Regional leader in Open Government.

### 2015 ACTIONS:

- Create Councillor Liaison position/role to reach out and work with Esquimalt and Songhees Nations on an ongoing basis.
- Identify dedicated staff to work with community/neighbourhood associations to inform, collaborate, and educate community association/neighbourhood boards and staff on City processes, expectations and opportunities.
- Make open government actions routine – require automatic posting of reports, etc. (Create and implement a plan and timeline for open government enhancements.)
- Create “great neighbourhoods initiative” based on Edmonton’s model; amend to fit our local circumstances.
- Utilize online tools, established youth networks and learn from other cities to improve the City’s youth engagement.
- Work with community to design participatory budgeting opportunities. Be engaged in a meaningful two-way conversation with the public.

### Considerations:

- First Nations culture requires high direct involvement of Mayor to Chief.
- Neighbourhoods unit to be created in spring 2015. Neighbourhood engagement to be initiated soon after.
- Explore open data portal options.
- Identify new datasets and real-time updating.
- Align Youth Council with Citizen Engagement Department and develop Youth Engagement strategy together.
- Establish engagement metrics to measure increased engagement.
- Design of participatory budgeting will begin in 2015, with implementation in 2016.

### Estimated Resources:

- Can be done within existing resources.

## Objective 3: Strive for Excellence in Planning and Land Use

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### 2016 OUTCOMES:

- Reduced processing time for all types of applications from building permit to rezoning.
  - South Block is through Phase 1.
  - Streamlined land use policies.
  - Local Area Planning focused on urban villages and transportation corridors.
- Create a Development Permit/Heritage Conservation Area on Dallas Road between Cook Street and Clover Point.

### 2018 OUTCOMES:

- Housing, employment and economic boom in Douglas/Blanshard Corridor through implementation of Master Plan, with substantial new low-cost units, mixed use, and quality-of-life infrastructure.
- Enlivened public space. Victoria is a people-centered place.

### 2015 ACTIONS:

- Hire the best City planner in Canada to lead our Planning Department.
- Identify as staff priority in Planning Department: Local Area Planning focused on urban villages and transportation corridors.
- Identify as a staff priority: Work through planning process to deliver acceptable form and density for proponent and community.
- Establish predictable flat fee per square metre fee for bonus density.
- Make a decision with regard to whether we are going to delegate more decision-making authority to staff.
- Empower the City Manager to make/lead the changes required to streamline our processes at City Hall.
- Increase emphasis on placemaking in our planning. Include active transportation impacts and opportunities listed in all planning and land use reports.

### 2016 ACTIONS:

- Work through planning process to deliver acceptable form and density for South Block proponent and community.
- Complete the Douglas/Blanshard Corridor Master Plan and allocate funds in Financial Plan for quality-of-life infrastructure.
- Commence three new urban village centre plans upon completion of Burnside-Gorge/Douglas Street Corridor Plan.

### Considerations:

- Recruitment for Director of Sustainable Planning and Community Development underway. Interviews in March.
- Placemaking training to be introduced for all areas to instill into project planning and design.
- 2018 is a realistic timeline for City to see tangible outcomes in Douglas/Blanshard Corridor after development of new plan.

### Estimated Resources:

- Upon completion of the Burnside Gorge Local Area Plan, three additional urban villages and associated transportation corridors can be completed by the end of 2018, within existing resources.
- Additional resources may be required to undertake a city-wide village planning process with associated transportation corridors.
- Capital dollars for implementation of Douglas/Blanshard Corridor to be identified, informed by consultation process.

## Objective 4: Build the Financial Capacity of the Organization

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### 2015 OUTCOMES:

- A business case for a property acquisitions/real estate management office.
- More revenue and strategic influence for City with implementation of Municipal Property Acquisition and Management Strategy.

### 2018 OUTCOMES:

- Maximized and where possible (e.g. School Districts and City lands) consolidated City-owned assets, put to best and highest use including market rate commercial leases.
- Full catalogue and list of long-term investment costs/profits for infrastructure and facilities. Increased revenue from property.

### 2015 ACTIONS:

- Create an integrated facilities and real estate arm at City Hall or in Economic Development Office staffed by people who understand business and the market.
- Complete and implement Municipal Property Acquisition and Management Strategy.
- Complete a full long-term infrastructure and facilities assessment.

### Considerations:

- Not applicable.

### Estimated Resources:

- A business case and financial resources are needed to support property acquisitions/real estate management office.

# Objective 5: Create Prosperity Through Economic Development

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## 2015 OUTCOME:

- Economic Development Office is set up.

## 2016 OUTCOMES:

- Downtown is the hub of both large and small business.
- Reduced retail and commercial vacancies downtown.
- Improved health, consumer purchasing power, and social solidarity with implementation of Municipal Incomes Strategy.
- Victoria's two largest private sector industries – tech and tourism – have grown.

## 2017 OUTCOMES:

- Downtown is vibrant and is a draw for residents and visitors alike.
- Victoria has hosted delegations from each of our Twin City partners.

## 2018 OUTCOMES:

- Victoria is the heart of commerce and business in the Region and Vancouver Island.
- Taxpayers and businesses perceive tax levels fair and reasonable.
- Increase household median income from \$45,827 to something more livable.

## 2015 ACTION:

- Create an Economic Development Task Force led by the Mayor, of up to 15 diverse individuals, to advise on the set up of an Economic Development Office in the City of Victoria that supports economic development in the City and by so doing, contributes to the economic viability of the Region.

## 2016 ACTIONS:

- Create and implement a plan to revitalize and brand Douglas Street as our “Main Street”.
- Develop a Municipal Incomes Strategy.
- Invite Twin City delegations for 2017 “Canada 150” events.

## Considerations:

- Discussions about branding of Douglas Street as “Main Street” can be initiated within Wayfinding program, for further advancement in 2016.
- Municipal Incomes Strategy to be informed by economic development function, proposed for 2016.
- Household median income is \$45,827, not \$28,000 as previously noted. Updated.

## Estimated Resources:

- The draft financial plan includes ongoing funding of \$250,000 per year for economic development function.

## Objective 6: Make Victoria More Affordable

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### 2016 OUTCOMES:

- Substantial increase in construction of new low-cost housing units with implementation of income-mixed zoning.
- Complete Municipal Housing Strategy; include income mixed zoning.

### 2017/2018 OUTCOME:

- Increased the range of affordable housing not only for those in need of supports but also for working people.

### 2018 OUTCOMES:

- There are more affordable and supportive rental units available.
- New garden suites are in process. (Target TBD)

### 2015 ACTIONS:

- Increase City contribution to Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Lobby other cities to do the same.
- Initiate Municipal Housing Strategy; include income mixed zoning.
- Form an Affordable Housing Task Force to research, analyze and implement innovative housing policy solutions. Look at zoning, bylaws and specifically at inclusionary zoning.
- Work with developers, BC Housing, and private sector landlords. Think and act outside the box. Be willing to pilot new ideas, e.g. inclusive zoning, tax exemption.
- Limit annual property tax increases to maximum of rate of inflation plus 1%.
- Drive more garden suites and secondary suites through an incentive program.
- Consider re-instituting incentives for suites.

### 2016 ACTIONS:

- Continue to push for a National Housing Strategy.
- Consider a CRD Housing Levy.

### Considerations:

- Propose Council workshop on affordable housing, including Municipal Housing Strategy.
- Staff to explore City's authority to create income mixed zoning.
- 250 new garden suites may be ambitious. New target to be established, informed by Council workshop. The Zoning Bylaw Review can be a mechanism for considering this.
- Incentive program for suites can be looked at in 2015, 2016.

### Estimated Resources:

- Housing Trust Fund can be increased within annual operating budget. The 2015 Financial Plan includes a \$250,000 contribution.
- Additional expertise may be required to support Municipal Housing Strategy, dependent on Council's desired deliverables.



## Objective 7: Facilitate Social Inclusion and Community Wellness

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### 2017 OUTCOMES:

- Crystal Pool issues are resolved by replacing or renovating the facility. Victoria has a modern, inclusive public pool and fitness facility in a central location, with increased revenue.
- Created accessible health services for Victoria's most marginalized people.
- Enhanced quality of life.
- Victoria is closer to ending chronic homelessness.
- Opportunities for accessible sports and fitness by children and adults.

### 2018 OUTCOMES:

- Public recreation and cultural facilities are first rate.
- Coalition to End Homelessness completes its mandate to end homelessness.
- City's seniors' facilities have grown their memberships by 50%.

### 2015 ACTIONS:

- The City facilitates a collaboration among Island Health, VicPD, YES2SCS, and City of Victoria to create supervised consumption services embedded in a continuum of health care services, including harm reduction.
- Develop plan for public engagement on Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre, to be implemented in late 2015 or early 2016.
- Initiate discussions with YMCA to explore possibility of a common downtown pool and recreation facility delivering many programs.
- Increase number of subsidized housing units. Deepen partnerships. Lobby upper levels of government and increase investment in the housing trust fund.
- Continue to keep subsidized housing units a focus and work with partners to create/identify opportunities.

### 2016 ACTIONS:

- Establish a Councillor-facilitated process with regard to supervised consumption services, with occasional staff contributions as required, for specific issue-based advice; e.g. land use, zoning, maintenance, etc.
- Work through Facilities Assessment and community engagement plan, and seek out possible funding partners.
- Tender-required upgrades and invest in public pool and fitness facility.
- Continue collaborating with Vic High on new/upgraded school and community sports facility at Vic High. Expect \$ expenditure in 2016.
- Seniors centres have increased programming options that are not pirated and competitive.

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## Objective 7: Facilitate Social Inclusion and Community Wellness

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### Considerations:

- Collaboration on supervised consumption services is facilitated by Council with social planning support.
- Planning for Crystal Pool public engagement to be completed in 2015, and to be informed by facilities assessment, for implementation in 2016.
- Time discussions on potential partners for new Crystal Pool facility with public engagement. This was proposed for 2017/2018 but should occur earlier in planning process.
- Public input to inform future planning; initiate procurement process for upgrades to Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre in 2016.

### Estimated Resources:

- Staff resourcing for supervised consumption services to be determined based on outcome of 2015 collaboration of noted participants.
- Capital funding required in future years for improvements to Crystal Pool.
- Grant funding may be required for Vic High project in 2017.
- Increased funding for Housing Trust Fund may be required for increasing supportive housing units.

## Objective 8: Enhance and Steward Public Spaces, Green Spaces and Food Systems

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### 2016 OUTCOME:

- Complete three high profile projects, identified through consultation in Parks Master Plan and food security discussions.

### 2017 OUTCOMES:

- Boulevard gardens exist in all neighbourhoods.
- Increased waterfront park space at Ship Point resulting in community wellness and economic vitality.
- David Foster Harbour Pathway is celebrated for its wayfinding that links all harbourfront developments.

### 2018 OUTCOME:

- Greenspace, parks and food systems that are enhanced, well-maintained and fully utilized.

### 2015 ACTIONS:

- Initiate Parks Master Planning process, including:
  - City greenspace and opportunities for “have not” park neighbourhoods
  - Commitment to a high-quality park and festival site at Ship Point
  - Include public dialogue on waterfront park at Ship Point
  - Discuss dogs in parks, with eye to identify locations, best practices, and plan for fenced dog area in 2016
  - Identify three high profile projects to advance in 2016
- Develop design and make investment to improve Begbie Green.
- Create a micro-grant for volunteer coordination of commons and community gardens.
- Develop long-term policies for food security and boulevard gardening including an inventory of City-owned land for food production.
- Learn from Vancouver’s success in creating garden on Davie Street and replicate model in Victoria.

### 2016 ACTIONS:

- Introduce new partnerships with citizens and groups to increase food cultivation on public and private land.
- Monitor efforts in neighbouring municipalities regarding urban deer.
- Build upon input from Parks Master Plan process and hold a placemaking activity at Ship Point to advance a site plan in the Harbour Principles. Consult public on specific design, and allocate money in 2018 capital budget to complete.

### 2017 ACTION:

- Complete two of the “special sites” at Heron Cove and Ship Point, along the David Foster Harbour Pathway corridor.

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## Objective 8: Enhance and Steward Public Spaces, Green Spaces and Food Systems

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### Considerations:

- Based on ownership, and synergy with other related projects, the two special places with highest likelihood for advancement are: Heron Cove and Ship Point.

### Estimated Resources:

- Advancing the Parks Master Plan requires additional design consulting, and capital costs in future years. Estimated design costs for Parks Master Plan \$250,000. (Design of two special places, off leash area, Victoria West Park)
- Estimated capital cost for fenced dog park in 2016: \$35,000. Could be introduced within Victoria West improvements. Victoria West has high concentration of dogs. Could also be considered in another area. Estimate based on an approximate area of Dog Park that can be constructed and fenced, with dog park obstacles/amenities. Approximately 0.7 acres, in a flat area.
- Estimated capital cost for Begbie Green improvements: \$100–150k, depending on scope.
- Harbour Pathway special places may be candidates for Gas Tax funding.

# Objective 9: Complete a Multi-Modal and Active Transportation Network

## 2016 OUTCOMES:

- Improved quality of life, public safety, air quality, placemaking, and pedestrian and cycling trips through implementation of neighbourhood-led transportation planning and “complete streets” lens for all transportation projects.
- Public transit is accessible to all and rivals private automobile trip duration.
- Substantial increase in the number of trips by bicycles, with the completion of a skeletal cycling network.

## 2017 OUTCOMES:

- Extend Government Street Mall.
- David Foster Harbour Pathway almost completed.
- Johnson Street Bridge is complete.

## 2018 OUTCOMES:

- Victoria is a national leader for cycling infrastructure and complete streets planning, having completed six cycling improvement projects at the following locations:
  - Pandora Avenue between Store and Cook Streets
  - Johnson Street between Store and Cook Streets
  - Vancouver Street route (from Vancouver Street/ Park Boulevard, to Fifth Street/Tolmie Avenue, via Graham and Fifth Streets)
  - Off-Bay Street route (Haultain Street/Kings Road between Richmond Road and Douglas Street)
  - Off-Shelbourne Street route (Doncaster Drive/ North Dairy Road to Gonzales Beach)
  - Wharf/Belleville Streets route between Pandora Avenue and Oswego Street
- Completed Phase 2 of the Belleville Terminal Project. Phase 2 = David Foster Harbour Pathway improvements to Belleville Street public realm.
- Walking is safe, comfortable and enjoyable.

## 2015 ACTIONS:

- Mandate and create a collaborative neighbourhood process and “complete streets” lens for all projects.
- Designate location for E&N station as close as possible to the new bridge.
- Collaborative design and completion of network of 4–8 high quality cycling corridors by 2016.
- Build protected cycling facilities, more bike parking, and start an Active Transportation Advisory Committee. Begin to see all planning and engineering through multi-modal lens.
- Designate money in 2015, 2016, 2017 and just build it (cycling network).
- Sign pedestrian-only lanes just as prominently as streets. Distinguish between “No Exit” and “No Exit for Motor Vehicles”.
- Review policy for desired right of way widths for road dedications and statutory right of ways.

## LATE 2015 ACTION:

- Develop task force including Government Street property owners to consider a Local Area Improvement Project.

## 2016 ACTIONS:

- Move to full-time bus lanes on Douglas and fewer stops (in accordance with Rapid Bus plans).
- Work in partnership with First Nations, Province, ferry operators and others to identify financial opportunities for the Belleville Terminal. Allocate money in 2017 Capital Budget for Belleville Street.

## 2017 ACTIONS:

- Prioritize “special places” along the David Foster Harbour Pathway and identify funding opportunities.
- Keep the Johnson Street Bridge process moving forward and support staff.

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## Objective 9: Complete a Multi-Modal and Active Transportation Network

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### Considerations:

- Staff do not believe a bylaw is required for collaborative process and complete streets lens, but more expertise and a coordinated effort are.
- Staff feel a complete streets and active transportation perspective should appear in all operational departmental reports, where applicable, not just transportation. (Parks, Sustainable Planning and Community Development etc.)
- Belleville timelines hinge on Province and are likely ambitious.
- Pedestrian-only lanes can be signed in 2015, earlier than 2016.
- Rights of way widths can also be considered in 2015 with recommended changes in new bylaw.

### Estimated Resources:

- To expedite the design of projects outlined in the cycling network in 2015, civil design consulting services of \$500,000 are needed. (Estimate is based on 10% of capital costs of \$5 million in approved cycling network.)
- Cycling projects are candidates for gas tax funding (design and construction).

# Objective 10: Nurture Our Arts, Culture and Learning Capital

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## 2015 OUTCOME:

- Increased number of funding partners for the McPherson Theatre.

## 2017 OUTCOMES:

- Victoria has an Arts and Culture Master Plan.
- A new Arts Centre serves as a cultural hub.

## 2018 OUTCOMES:

- Support for arts and culture is increased, inclusive and strategic.
- Successful Western Canada Music Awards/BreakOut West event with Rifflandia sees Region being asked to bid for the JUNOS.
- A new Central Library serves the community.

## 2015 ACTIONS:

- Support the 2015 event Western Canada Music Awards/BreakOut West with Rifflandia.
- Work with the CRD to increase number of funding partners for McPherson Theatre.
- Identify resources required to develop Arts and Culture Plan.
- Provide background on arts and cultural mapping to the public.

## 2016 ACTIONS:

- Develop Arts and Culture Master Plan.
- Fund an Economic Impact Study linked to a Cultural Master Plan.
- Identify scope and develop budget strategy for a new Central Library.

## Considerations:

- Arts and Culture Master Plan proposed to be initiated in 2016 after Parks Master Planning process. Minimizes community consultation fatigue and maximizes staff resources.
- McPherson funding strategy to be Councillor-led.
- Scoping for new library can begin in 2016 with additional information from Greater Victoria Public Library, Facilities assessment and property acquisition strategy, as well as economic development function.
- Due to several considerations and information forthcoming from economic development, property acquisition strategy and Greater Victoria Public Library, “New Central Library” is moved to 2018. Greater Victoria Public Library is presenting to GPC on February 26 regarding a James Bay Library.
- An economic impact study to be an inherent component of a Cultural Master Plan.

## Estimated Resources:

- Arts and Culture Master Plan requires consulting funds. TBD for 2016 Financial Plan.
- Central Library requires capital funding. Currently not contemplated in Financial Plan.

## Objective 11: Steward Water Systems and Waste Streams Responsibly

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### 2018 OUTCOMES:

- A sewage treatment plan is underway.
- The City handles waste in a more responsible way.

### 2015 ACTIONS:

- Continue discussion on sewage treatment options.
- Begin the discussion of sewage treatment sites for different treatment options.
- Communicate to CRD desire to see single stream collection of recyclables in closed wheeled totes. Make garbage disposal less convenient than recycling.

### Considerations:

- Changes to recycling streams to be realized, timed with CRD contract changes.
- Current CRD contract ends May 30, 2019.

### Estimated Resources:

- Costs for planning for sewage treatment are currently funded from Sanitary Sewer Utility planning budget.



## Objective 12: Plan for Emergencies Including Climate Change Short and Long-Term

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### 2016 OUTCOME:

- City has increased the capacity of VEMA.

### 2018 OUTCOMES:

- City heritage buildings can survive a major earthquake. (Ongoing)
- Fire Station issues are resolved.

### 2075 OUTCOME:

- Low-lying areas are protected from flooding.

### 2015 ACTIONS:

- Complete seismic analysis of privately-owned properties and infrastructure.
- Explore potential for City to require upgrades to heritage buildings for seismic protection even where use is not changed, combined with subsidy program.
- Align VEMA's budget through Victoria Fire Department and work with Planning.
- Initiate public dialogue and market sounding on fire station options.

### 2016 ACTION:

- Move forward with plans for a new fire station.

### 2017 ACTION:

- Review drainage systems in low-lying areas of City in light of ocean rise. Adjust base building elevations as needed.

### Considerations:

- Unclear if City has authority to require upgrades heritage buildings. 2015 Action is reworded to "Explore".
- Work is currently underway to review VEMA and alignment with Fire Department and other departments.
- 10-week market sounding for Fire Station No. 1 was initiated in February 2015.

### Estimated Resources:

- Seismic analysis is included in proposed 2015 Financial Plan.
- Capital funding for fire station to be identified for 2016, informed by facilities assessment.

## Objective 13: Demonstrate Regional Leadership

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### 2018 OUTCOME:

- Put a recommendation in front of the public in the 2018 Election.

### 2015 – 2018 ACTION:

- Support and work with the Provincial government in the study of the potential for amalgamation in the Region.

### Considerations:

- Council-led actions with staff analysis as needed.

### Estimated Resources:

- Not applicable.



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