

## Chinatown Phase 2 Scope of Work - Final

### Cultural Plan for Chinatown

#### **Background:**

In 2016, extensive engagement was carried out and many discussions were had about the future of Calgary's Chinatown. Concerns about the erosion of the unique cultural identity and viability of Chinatown, including but not limited to the built environment, have been identified by the community. A common vision for cultural preservation and development is needed to provide some certainty and specific actions that the community and other stakeholders can undertake together to strengthen Chinatown's unique cultural identity into the future.

While The City will project manage the development of the Cultural Plan, it will be a community-owned plan calling for participation and implementation by a range of stakeholders.

The Cultural Plan for Chinatown will identify implications for the built environment and the potential of integrating these elements into the Chinatown Local Area Plan. Tourism, as a contributor to both cultural and economic viability, is also an important focus.

#### **Typical cultural plan components\*:**

1. Policy and plan review/synthesis  
Analyze and synthesize key research, studies and initiatives (e.g. Chinatown Historical Context Paper, Guiding Principles, public art inventory, Canada 150 storytelling project, Exploring Communities-Chinatown paper, demographic studies, tourism and economic development plans, Green Line engagement input). Summarize what they tell us about the current and future state regarding Chinatown's cultural identity and its built environment.
2. Cultural resource mapping and information gathering  
Based on Statistics Canada's cultural resources framework and considering Chinese culture, build on mapping work undertaken by The City of Calgary, Chinatown Community Stakeholders' Committee, Calgary Arts Development, Urban Alliance projects, and other sources to map, describe and analyze key tangible and intangible cultural resources.
3. Stakeholder consultation  
Identify opportunities, challenges and priorities for cultural future. By working with The City's Engage Business Unit, develop and implement an engagement plan which may include leader interviews, community facilitation and alternate listening and gathering strategies. Stakeholders include those both directly and indirectly connected to Chinatown's cultural life. Translation, inclusion of youth voices, seniors and cultural workers important.
4. Cultural Plan for Chinatown  
Based on the above activities, develop a draft Cultural Plan which includes vision statement(s); cultural development goals and objectives; implications for the built environment and tourism. The Plan will include an implementation plan with actions, roles and responsibilities; timelines, governance and resource requirements.
5. Built environment and cultural integration  
Provide recommendations for integration of relevant components from the Cultural Plan for Chinatown into the Local Area Plan within the constraints of a Local Area Plan.
6. Plan final circulation and adoption  
Circulate the Plan for final feedback; refine and improve the plan; discuss the implications of the plan for and with the community. Finalize and adopt.
7. Plan launch  
Conduct a launch in the community which includes action plans.

\* Components may change based on consultant expertise and other project inputs.

## **Culturally-based Local Area Plan**

### **Problem statement:**

Ensure that development proposals for Calgary's Chinatown are evaluated against updated policy that adequately addresses Chinatown's unique history and cultural character. Much of the existing 1986 Chinatown ARP is outdated and no longer fulfills the purpose of providing meaningful development direction. The following will serve as critical components of the new Local Area Plan:

#### 1. Community Character and Vision

**What this is:** This section will identify defining features of the look and feel of the community as a whole in terms of what makes it unique. This work will strive to capture the essence of the existing built-form along with what areas of the community are open to transition. Key findings from the Chinatown Cultural Plan will help finalize the community character and vision section.

**What this will do:** This section will serve as an important link between the Cultural Plan and the Local Area Plan, and will provide the Local Area Plan with a clear description about the community's character based on its unique and distinct qualities. It is expected that this work will help identify neighbourhood nodes and corridors along with activity hubs tied to cultural activities. This work will outline a common vision for community character, cultural preservation and evolution with the aim of providing a level of certainty around the future of Chinatown by distinguishing preservation areas from growth areas. Policy formulation will happen as part of the Local Area Plan process, and implementation will take place through the review of planning applications.

**Who conducts this work:** Input on the community character statement will be derived from the Chinatown Historical Context Paper, which was recently completed by local historians and heritage researchers working with a number of community members and supervised/vetted by the Calgary Heritage Authority and The City's Heritage team. The project team will use findings from other bodies of work undertaken for the Cultural Plan, including research findings from the Urban Alliance partnership in the delivery of the Community Character Statement.

**Why do this work:** Chinatowns across North America are facing a number of pressures that threaten their continued existence. Calgary's Chinatown is in a stronger position than many others, but a new vision is needed to strengthen community identity in the face of inevitable change, such as demographic shifts and imminent developments.

**Engagement:** All stakeholders will be actively engaged on this work due to the critical link it will establish between the Cultural Plan and the culturally-based Local Area Plan. Given the regional role that Chinatown plays, city-wide consultation will need to play a significant role.

#### 2. Add the Eight Guiding Principles to the Local Area Plan

Given Chinatown's function as a social and cultural hub for the Chinese community, the expected changes as a result of the future development and LRT project, and its overall importance to Calgary, it is appropriate to define a vision that builds on the 2016 engagement work and supports the Guiding Principles developed in collaboration with the community.

**What are these:** The Guiding Principles are eight statements that reflect what Chinatown perceives itself to be. The principles are aspirational statements that were unanimously accepted by Council in 2016 December to be used as an interim guide in reviewing planning applications.

What this will do: The Guiding Principles are forward-looking statements intended to provide direction for new development within Chinatown. Although they were approved by Council in 2016 December, adding them to the Local Area Plan will add an additional layer of assurance, and ensures that they are visible and carry the weight of a policy. Additional work on clarity and “visualizing” the principles is required as part of integrating them into the Local Area Plan.

Engagement: The Guiding Principles were derived from community feedback and public consultation. They were accepted unanimously by Council. Specific engagement may still be required on validating the principles to gain clarity, refinement and interpretation on the principles in terms how they appear in the plan.

### 3. A new Land Use Concept Plan

What is this: A statutory map that organizes the Plan Area by providing direction on active corridors (i.e. Centre Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue), community interface and transitions, open/green spaces (Sien Lok Park), and residential/commercial areas.

What this will do: Sets a new formal land use framework for the community with direction on development expectations. This exercise will specifically remove the land use table and replace the associated map in the ARP with a new map. While a 2016 City analysis concluded that only a limited number of changes are needed to the existing heights and density, a more effective Land Use framework will ensure that revitalization and public realm enhancement efforts are funded and supported through an updated heritage and density bonusing system for: 1) community improvements 2) open/green space and 3) affordable housing. This work may adjust density and allowed heights through form-based transition area policies and shadow impact analysis. The need to amend the existing sunlight protection policies to safeguard sunlight access to both public and private realm will also be explored.

Engagement: All stakeholders will have an opportunity to comment. Any updates that result in wholesale changes will require more engagement and commensurate resources.

Note: This work is identified as a critical component in allowing for a Transit Oriented Development land use framework in anticipation of Green Line and may require policies that limit auto-oriented uses.

### 4. Green Line Integration

What this is: The Green Line will become a key connection for Chinatown in relation to The City’s overall light rail network. A station will offer an opportunity to bring more visitors into the community. Green Line City Shaping has the following goal: “People living in communities along the Green Line have access to cultural destinations, local spaces and a connection to Calgary’s heritage”. Area developers are aware that the Green Line is the most significant capital project facing Chinatown. Updated Local Area Plan policies need to address the capital project and community integration that includes connectivity and pedestrian linkages.

What this will do:

- The current ARP does not contemplate the Green Line or the station to be located at 2 Street and 2 Avenue SW. Green Line will affect nearby development sites and increase community accessibility;
- A local area plan process is an opportunity for station area placemaking and to explore land uses that promote vibrancy and activity around the station and identify connections throughout the community;
- The station is expected to have 8,200 riders, increasing to over 10,000 by 2043;
- Green Line may also prompt some landowners towards development.

5. Design Guidelines and Signage Plan

What this is: Establishing new design guidelines will encourage visually-distinctive architectural and built-form design features that celebrate traditional and contemporary characteristics of Chinatown. A defining characteristic of North American Chinatowns historically has included distinct design motifs, community entrance and gateway features and signage. To celebrate and commemorate Chinatown, more elaborate guidelines are needed that fully articulate design intent. Strict application of signage regulations has also resulted in signage that is flush with building frontages, in accordance with current land use regulations. New policies can differentiate character areas and precincts within the community and allow for new policies that allow the Approving Authority additional latitude in making decisions on projecting signs mounted on buildings. Projecting signs are known to be an effective way of enhancing the public realm.

What this will do: This plan will explore ways that Chinatown can incorporate architectural elements (Chinese and Asian motifs) and non-standard signage types. This work will lead to design guidelines and allowances for bylaw variance. It is envisioned that by encouraging both traditional and contemporary characteristics, the evolution of Chinatown will offer variety and an eclectic mix in the built-form. Further, a special scheme for signage in Chinatown will allow the community to add to its distinctive character.

Who conducts this work: Administration in partnership with Urban Alliance.

Engagement: Residents of Chinatown will be interested in this initiative and will require engagement along with building / business owners, potentially via the Chinatown District Business Improvement Area.

6. Evaluate transportation network and market conditions

What this is: A comprehensive interdisciplinary study that will inform land use and transportation policies. The focus of the study will be on the transportation (pedestrian and vehicular) network and parking analysis, and how these two factors affect the residential travel patterns, business activity and market conditions in Chinatown. For example, does the price of parking in Chinatown affect consumer behaviour and travel patterns in and outside of Chinatown (when comparing it to Centre Street North where a number of Asian businesses have established)? Is there a strong correlation between the supply of parking and market rents, availability of leasable space and foot-traffic in the community? Are provisions for surface parking important for a community located within the core of the city and so close to the CBD (central business district with access to the +15 network)? This study will inform future policies on mobility and infrastructure requirement that will have the most impact on commercial and residential users. Opportunities to capitalize on the integration of a future Green Line station within the community will also be a key focus of the study.

What this will do: A market analysis that includes an assessment of who lives in, who shops in, and who visits Chinatown, and how, and for what reasons can assist in telling what transitions have taken place over the years. The analysis can help predict the forces at-play that will determine the future of Chinatown. Future developments in Chinatown must take into consideration the opening of a LRT station as part of the new Green Line. Local Area Plan policies that emphasize investment on public infrastructure investments and placemaking will help the transition of Chinatown over the coming 20-30 years.

Who conducts this work: Researchers as part of the Urban Alliance partnership.

Engagement: To undertake this work, Chinatown residents, business owners and operators along with developers and landowners will need to be active participants.

**Anticipated timelines and milestones\***

Project Milestones	2019		2020				2021	
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
RFP release for Cultural Plan consultant	X							
Urban Alliance partnerships finalized		X						
Project engagement			X	X	X	X	X	
Cultural Resource Map				X				
Update to Priorities and Finance Committee					X			
Draft Cultural Plan						X		
Land Use Concept Plan						X		
Draft Local Area Plan							X	
Approval of Plans								X

\*Timelines are subject to change