

**Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown  
2016 December 5**

1. All new developments reinforce the distinct cultural and historical character of Chinatown.
2. Chinatown is a residential, mixed-use community.
3. All developments enhance the pedestrian experience.
4. Chinatown is a community for all, and provides housing for residents of all ages and incomes.
5. There are a variety of options for getting to Chinatown.
6. Chinatown has a variety of public and private gathering spaces.
7. Chinatown is safe, clean and vibrant, day or night.
8. Commercial activity in Chinatown supports the residential and cultural community.

**Effective until such time as a new Area Redevelopment Plan to replace the 1986 ARP is approved by Council.**

# **Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown**

## **2016 December 5**

### **Background on Guiding Principles**

#### ***Introduction***

The eight guiding principles were developed based on comments received throughout Phase 1 of the engagement. The principles were then refined from their initial form in Phase 1, based on feedback heard in Phase 2. A general revision was made to make the wording of the principles more direct, based on feedback to provide more clarity in the intent of the principles.

The themes are broad and there is a degree of overlap between them. The overall vision from the engagement is that Chinatown is predominantly a residential community, with retail, restaurants, services, and limited office. The biggest fear is that over time Chinatown will lose its distinct cultural identity and become part of the downtown.

This document provides additional background regarding the guiding principles, and is provided for information only. Each principle is given further explanation, and is discussed in terms of engagement feedback. A number of possible best practices are provided for each, but these are not exhaustive. Each of the guiding principles has been cross-referenced against the Centre City Plan, the Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan, and the Chinatown Improvement Handbook.

#### **1. All new developments reinforce the distinct cultural and historical character of Chinatown.**

All new developments reinforce the distinct cultural and historical character of Chinatown. Chinatown is a distinct cultural and historical community. Chinatown is Calgary's only remaining cultural neighbourhood and has strong ties to the past. It is separate and distinct from the Downtown, Eau Claire and the East Village. This principle is the most critical, in that cultural and heritage elements underpin the rest of the principles.

Engagement feedback: Chinatown is special to people because of the prominent Chinese culture, restaurants, history, and personal ties people have in the community.

Best Practices: Provide a variety of choices of shops, restaurants and services; use of Asian inspired public realm and architecture; distinct architecture and landmarks and streetscapes; preservation of historic buildings and spaces; provide variety of opportunities for arts and cultural displays and events; and storytelling through public art.

Relevant existing policies

Centre City Plan Policies: 4.2.3.1, 4.2.3.2, 4.2.3.3

Chinatown ARP: Objective IV B2(a)iii

Chinatown Public Improvement Handbook: Not Applicable

## **Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown**

### **2016 December 5**

#### **2. Chinatown is a residential, mixed-use community.**

Chinatown is a residential mixed-use community with a human scaled environment, with a fine-grained retail environment at grade, with great public spaces and public art.

Engagement feedback: Chinatown has always been a residential community with supporting commercial activities and community services; however more of a residential focus is supported in Chinatown to help maintain activity and vibrancy in the community.

Best Practices: High quality public realm at grade, small retail units at grade, business frontages along sidewalks, sensitive height transitions, wide sidewalks. Office is limited, with a preference for residential development to support local businesses.

Relevant existing policies

Centre City Plan Policy: 4.2.3.10

Chinatown ARP: Development Guidelines

Chinatown Public Improvement handbook: Objectives III A1, III A2, III B1, III B2, III B3, III B4, III B5

#### **3. All developments enhance the pedestrian experience.**

All developments enhance the pedestrian experience. Chinatown is one of Calgary's most walkable communities.

Engagement feedback: There are concerns that tall buildings do not fit with the unique character of Chinatown. There is a strong consensus that Chinatown is an excellent walking community. Creating a human-scaled environment, with a culturally appropriate ground level environment is essential to help prevent a loss of Chinese culture.

Best Practices: Encourage uses that activate the street during evenings and weekends; high quality public realm; connecting destinations and public spaces; provide great connections for all modes.

Relevant existing policies

Centre City Plan Policies: 4.2.3.5, 4.2.3.6, 4.2.3.7, 4.2.3.8

Chinatown ARP: Objectives III A1, III A2

Chinatown Public Improvement handbook: Objectives III A1, III A2, III B1, III B2, III B3, III B4, III B5

#### **4. Chinatown is a community for all, and provides housing for residents of all ages and incomes.**

Chinatown is a community full of energy and life, where housing accommodate a range of ages, lifestyles, and budgets. Affordable housing is important to maintaining the energy and life of the community. Also important is addressing

## **Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown**

### **2016 December 5**

the lack of evening and weekend activity available in Chinatown needed to make Chinatown a live/work/play community.

Engagement feedback: A number of issues relating to age-friendly communities arose during engagement. Safety and accessibility are one side of becoming more age friendly, while having activities and opportunities for young people are also important for Chinatown to be age-friendly, and maintain its vitality into the future.

Best practices: Residential units at a variety of price points; encourage services and uses that support all ages and stages of life; encourage the development of affordable housing units.

Relevant existing policies

Chinatown ARP: Objectives III A1

Chinatown Public Improvement handbook: Not applicable.

#### **5. There are a variety of options for getting to Chinatown**

Chinatown is one of Calgary's most walkable communities, and will continue to be a destination for all with great access by all transportation modes. There will be a continued need to accommodate all modes of transportation into the future.

Engagement feedback: The primary issue identified during engagement was parking cost and availability. There is a high volume of transit available to Chinatown, which will improve with the future Green Line LRT.

Best Practices: Ensure all modes of transportation are accommodated; encourage and strengthen connections to the river and Downtown, and east to west; safe roadway crossings; explore options for parking strategies, and provide great connections for all modes.

Relevant existing policies

Centre City Plan Policies: 4.2.3.5, 4.2.3.6, 4.2.3.7, 4.2.3.8

Chinatown ARP: Objectives III A1, III A2

Chinatown Public Improvement handbook: Objectives III A1, III A2, III B1, III B2, III B3, III B4, III B5

#### **6. Chinatown has a variety of public and private gathering spaces**

Chinatown is a community that enables family and friends to gather and celebrate at festivals and events.

Engagement feedback: There is a strong vision of an active and vibrant community in the future. This could be achieved through redevelopment, or by facilitating street closures for events such as a night market.

Best Practices: Encourage connections between community gathering places; encourage formal and informal gathering places, both inside and out outside; explore opportunities for street closures for night markets and weekend markets,

## **Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown**

### **2016 December 5**

publicly accessible spaces; new development should encourage publicly accessible private spaces, pop-up patios, sParks (pop-up parks).

Relevant existing policies

Centre City Plan Policies: 4.2.3.2, 4.2.3.11

Chinatown ARP: Objective IV B3

Chinatown Public Improvement handbook: Objectives III C1, III C2, III C3, III C4, III C5

#### **7. Chinatown is safe, clean and vibrant, day or night**

Chinatown is a safe and clean environment whether shopping, dining out, visiting family and friends, and crossing the street.

Engagement feedback: Chinatown has active streets and restaurants, which creates a level of vibrancy. Conversely, a common concern is that there is a perception that Chinatown is unsafe and dirty. The future vision is that Chinatown is well maintained, safe, clean, and inviting to all.

Best Practices: Encourage uses that activate the streets in the evenings and weekends; ensure streets are well-lit at night; support strategies to clean the public realm and storefronts; encourage regular meetings between Community Association, Business Improvement Area, and Calgary Police to share information about potential safety issues and solutions.

Relevant existing policies

Centre City Plan Policies: None

Chinatown ARP: Objective IV B2

Chinatown Public Improvement handbook: Objective III B

Relevant existing policies

Centre City Plan Policies: 4.2.3.1, 4.2.3.2, 4.2.3.6, 4.2.3.8

Chinatown ARP: Objective III A1

Chinatown Public Improvement handbook: Objective III D

#### **8. *Commercial activity in Chinatown supports the residential and cultural community.***

Chinatown is an attractive place to start and grow business, has a healthy local economy.

Engagement feedback: Local shops and businesses were identified as important to the overall character and feel of Chinatown. There is a strong desire to see more opportunities for small business. A strong economic foundation requires people to frequently visit, or live in the community and use the shops and services. Many small family-owned businesses in Chinatown are a defining feature of the community, and there is a fear of losing those to big box stores. There is also a fear that some commercial uses would not be appropriate for a residential community and should be avoided in order to maintain the residential foundation of Chinatown.

## **Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown**

### **2016 December 5**

Best Practices: Support awareness and action on the Chinatown Retail Vitality Study; increase local residential population to support existing and new businesses Business Improvement Area branding and promotion of Chinatown events, businesses, and services.

Important to the overall discussion is the need for an environment that encourages redevelopment. All communities need growth and new development to remain healthy and relevant. If new development is not economically feasible, development will go elsewhere and the community will not grow.

Relevant existing policies

Centre City Plan Policies: 4.2.3.1

Chinatown ARP: Objective III A1, III B2

Chinatown Public Improvement handbook: Not applicable