

Tomorrow's Chinatown – Program and Funding Update

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Executive Committee recommends that:

1. Council receive this report as information for the corporate record, fulfilling the reporting requirements for the Council Innovation Fund.
2. Council approve a one-time budget increase of \$250,000 in 2022 to the City Planning and Policy Service budget to be funded from the Fiscal Stability Reserve and Budget Savings Account Merged Reserve to accomplish project deliverables of the Tomorrow's Chinatown program; and
3. Administration report back through the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure & Planning on the three projects of Tomorrow's Chinatown program, being: 1. Chinatown Cultural Plan 2: Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan, and 3. Renaming of the James Short Park and Parkade, by no later than Q4, 2022.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Tomorrow's Chinatown program is a comprehensive, culturally-sensitive approach to planning in Calgary. It integrates *people* and *place* to introduce innovative and inclusive practices that will benefit future planning initiatives. In working with stakeholders and listening to feedback, Council and Administration expanded the scope of the project to include additional projects that impacted the Chinatown neighbourhood. As budget did not increase with the expanded scope and timelines, this report is requesting additional funding to complete the expanded scope. If additional funding is not made available, the project cannot be delivered as scoped, planned and communicated.
- Council's decision to fund Tomorrow's Chinatown was partially supported by the Council Innovation Fund (CIF) in the amount of \$250,000. The terms of reference for the CIF require Administration to report back with an update once the project is completed, or once the funds have been applied. This report back fulfills this requirement.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? Chinatown is one of Calgary's most distinctive neighbourhoods with a history that is vital to the fabric of Calgary. Its character is important to residents, citizens, and visitors, and the neighbourhood is strategically located within the Greater Downtown.
- Why does it matter? Without further funding, additional communication, engagement and promotion of the program cannot be completed, and only partial engagement of the ARP can be undertaken.
- Since project kick-off, the scope of Tomorrow's Chinatown has been increased by Council direction to include the Centre Street South concept plan and the James Short park and parkade renaming, refer to Attachment 1. In addition, Administration recognized a need to do further work on enhancing the vibrancy of 3 Avenue SE. All three projects were added to the Tomorrow's Chinatown program to ensure coordinated public communication and engagement to mitigate community confusion, which had been identified as a critical risk.
- Tomorrow's Chinatown as a program will deliver two plans. The Chinatown Cultural Plan outlines strategic guidance for advancing and investing in Chinatown's cultural future including cultural experiences, programs, spaces, facilities, and amenities. The Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) is a statutory plan that sets out the future vision, development policies, and objectives for supporting the revitalization of the neighbourhood.
- The new funding requested in this report will allow the full integrated scope to be completed.

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- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods.

DISCUSSION

Original Scope

Tomorrow's Chinatown is a Council-directed multi-year program that began in October 2019 with two key deliverables: Chinatown Cultural Plan and the culturally informed ARP for Chinatown. The approved funding was \$500,000, including \$250,000 from the Council Innovation Fund.

Expanded scope

In the summer of 2020, the scope of Tomorrow's Chinatown was increased to add three separate projects with no new resourcing or funding identified. Council and Administration expanded the scope of the program to include additional initiatives that holistically impacted the Chinatown neighbourhood. The expanded scope included:

- Centre Street South streetscape concept plan – Council's Motion Arising – June 2020
- Renaming of the James Short Park and Parkade – Council Notice of Motion – July 2020
- 3rd Avenue Vibrancy in association with 3rd Avenue Walking & Wheeling – August 2020

The Tomorrow's Chinatown program has "front-ended" costs and resources towards the expanded scope. The risk of expanded scope without budget was identified for Committee in September 2020, see [PFC2020-0922](#). However, at that time the true extent of the expanded scope was not well understood. While inter-departmental transfers have been received, the funding gap is too large to be addressed. Administration has used nearly all approved budget to complete the expanded scope of work.

Extended timelines

The approved budget in 2019 had anticipated two years of work under normal circumstances. Due to COVID-19, project activities and deliverables needed to be adjusted and creatively approached. This required additional planning, technology, and time, which have all expanded the project costs. As of November 2021, the project has entered its third year.

In addition, Administration developed a more expansive engagement plan to respond to the added scope. Project completion is now anticipated to be no later than Q4 2022; refer to Attachment 2 for the program timelines for completion.

Work Completed to-date

Based on the project work completed to-date, the approved budget for the project with the expanded scope has been nearly exhausted. The table below highlights the funds used to-date, and the need for additional funding is outlined in Attachment 3.

	Original Estimate of Funding Needed (2018)	Approved Funding (2019)	Actual Spent (Feb 28, 2022)	Additional Budget Requested
Total	\$1 million	\$500,000	\$510,000	\$250,000

Three project phases, being "Discover, Create, and Realize" are being used to deliver the project. By end of Q2 2022 all three deliverables will be in the "Realize" phase. The [draft Chinatown Cultural Plan](#) was released for public comments in December 2021. An interactive [Chinatown Cultural Resource Map](#) has been developed in collaboration with community partners. Three [academic research projects](#) through the Urban Alliance partnership have been

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commissioned and completed to inform the ARP. The [Centre Street South public realm improvement plan](#) has been finalized. Draft Chinatown ARP has been circulated to the Chinatown Advisory Group and Calgary Planning Commission on March 24 for comment.

Areas of Innovation:

Innovation has been a specific area of focus for this project. Areas of innovation include:

- Procurement process improvements allowing community participation in consultant selection.
- Support to the Chinatown Artist-In-Residency program.
- New on-boarding process for community members on the Advisory Group.
- Consultation with language-specific workshops, lunch and learn series, smaller round table conversations, and over 125 individual interviews.
- Academic research and project support from three Urban Alliance partnerships.
- Implementation of new technology to undertake consultation during COVID-19.
- Undertaking “lessons learned and reflection” workshop as the project work is completed.

Moreover, working with the community to listen and understand experiences of racism, discrimination and exclusion has similarly required a different approach. The program team has collaborated with the anti-racism team to create spaces for these conversations and align with The City's anti-racism mandate. The addition of James Short Park renaming project has significantly increased the program's complexity and the resources required. Engagement on park names has ushered broader conversations about historic and systemic racism, and how The City can rebuild its relationship with the community.

Finally, the Tomorrow's Chinatown program has established a cross-functional project team and cross-corporate governance model. This embodies One City, One Voice and can be built on for future projects.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

This report did not require public engagement as the funds requested will be directed to ongoing project deliverables previously-approved by Council (no new initiatives will be introduced through the funding received). The program does rely on a community-based advisory group to support and guide project deliverables. This group has been informed of the report.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

This program provides an opportunity to advance the goals and priorities captured in The City's 2016 Cultural Plan. This project responds to a more deliberate and formalized approach to include cultural planning and cultural elements in planning policy. Moreover, the project is developing and piloting new processes, and lessons learned that will influence The City's approach to ethno-cultural engagement. The completion of this project and the effective

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communication and promotion through additional funding will develop and implement The City's cultural competency, which will benefit Chinatown and other Calgary neighbourhoods.

Environmental

Tomorrow's Chinatown will deliver a new culturally based ARP for Chinatown that will apply smart growth principles as they relate to sustainable, walkable, and complete communities. The new ARP will establish a land use framework that responds to the Green Line alignment and capitalize on the opportunity of intensification around new transit infrastructure.

Economic

The economic strategy for Calgary identifies "Place" as one of the four interconnected focus areas to an enduring and prosperous economy. Cultural activities play an important role in resilient cities that attract talent and businesses because of the quality of place. Moreover, an updated policy framework provides certainty for growth and economic investment. Tomorrow's Chinatown is aligned to Calgary's Destination Strategy, the Greater Downtown Plan, and the Resilient Calgary Strategy

Service and Financial Implications

The additional funding will draw against the Fiscal Stability Reserve and Budget Savings Account Merged Reserve fund in the amount of \$250,000.

New operating funding request

\$250,000

Tomorrow's Chinatown is included in the Council-approved 2022 workplan for the City Planning and Policy Service Line. The budget request, if approved, will be funded from the Fiscal Stability Reserve and Budget Savings Account Merged Reserve and used for completion of the program deliverables.

RISK

Failure to secure additional budget for Tomorrow's Chinatown will result in work being halted and program incompleteness. Tomorrow's Chinatown has been a City priority for several years and is well-established. Stoppage of the work would negatively affect project momentum and undermine trust built with the community.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Previous Council Direction, Background
2. Tomorrow's Chinatown - Anticipated project timelines
3. Tomorrow's Chinatown Program - Budget and actuals spent update

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Stuart Dalgleish	Planning & Development Services	Approve
Katie Black	Community Services	Approve
Doug Morgan	Transportation	Consult
Carla Male	Chief Financial Officer	Inform