

Tomorrow's Chinatown

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council:

1. Approve the Chinatown Cultural Plan (Attachment 2);
2. Give First Reading to proposed bylaw, Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan (Attachment 3);
3. Withhold Second and Third Readings of the proposed bylaw until the Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan has been approved by the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board;
4. Following Third reading of the proposed Bylaw
 - a. RESCIND, by resolution, the Chinatown Handbook of Public Improvements; and
 - b. REPEAL, by bylaw, Bylaw 3P86 the Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan;

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tomorrow's Chinatown is a collaborative program that facilitated a culturally-respectful approach to engagement and neighbourhood planning in Calgary. The innovative program led through an inclusive engagement approach will benefit future city initiatives. While working with the community to understand cultural practices and resources, Administration completed three projects: the *Chinatown Cultural Plan*, the culturally-informed *Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan*, and a new name for the former James Short Park and Parkade – now known as 和園 Harmony Park. This report seeks approval of the Chinatown Cultural Plan and the Area Redevelopment Plan.
- *What does this mean to Calgarians?* Chinatown is one of Calgary's most distinctive neighbourhoods and an important part of our downtown. Our downtown recovery relies on our downtown neighbourhoods, including Chinatown, being places where people want to live, visit, work and enjoy. Re-imagining Chinatown is a step towards maintaining the vibrancy of one of Calgary's oldest and most recognized cultural communities.
- *Why does it matter?* Longevity and prolonged vibrancy in Chinatown requires a new approach to planning that integrates local culture to enhance sense of place, supporting businesses and attracting talent. Tomorrow's Chinatown program employs a cultural approach to engagement and planning that is a first-of-its-kind program for The City of Calgary. The program allowed The City to be progressive while the plans provide direction for the community, developers and decision-makers to act with a common vision. The program also offers valuable learnings and a model that can be replicated for future work.
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

[Tomorrow's Chinatown](#) is a Council-directed multi-year program comprised of three project deliverables: the *Chinatown Cultural Plan*, a culturally-informed *Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan* (ARP) and the renaming of the former James Short Park and Parkade. As a first-of-its-kind program for The City, Tomorrow's Chinatown employed a "planning culturally" approach as identified in the *Cultural Plan for Calgary*. Planning culturally requires inclusive community consultation and decision making to identify cultural attributes, character and resources that can help a community achieve its civic goals. In taking this approach, it was the aim of the program to support Chinatown's future as a vibrant, culturally-rich place to live, visit, work and do business.

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The *Chinatown Cultural Plan*, see Attachment 2, provides strategic direction for advancing and investing in Chinatown's cultural future, including: cultural experiences and programs; spaces, facilities, and amenities; and legacy businesses and tourism. It provides guidance for setting priorities, forming partnerships, assigning roles, and securing resources.

The *Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan* (refer to Attachment 3) is a statutory document that sets out a comprehensive planning vision with policies to guide future redevelopment and investment in the plan area. It seeks to ensure new developments integrate cultural considerations that reinforce Chinatown's unique identity.

Process

Tomorrow's Chinatown began in 2019 and unfolded through three program phases. Throughout all three phases Administration relied on a citizen-led advisory group of community members with expertise and lived experience to guide the program.

Tomorrow's Chinatown piloted several innovative practices throughout its duration, including: three academic research projects through the [Urban Alliance](#) partnership, the implementation of new culturally-informed engagement tactics, a partnership with The City's Anti-racism team, and a new cross-corporate governance model. The program has captured its learnings throughout the process and developed recommendations for future cultural planning projects.

Deliverables

a. *Chinatown Cultural Plan*

The *Chinatown Cultural Plan* is a roadmap for identifying and leveraging the community's cultural resources to strengthen and inspire community vibrancy. It outlines five key themes and corresponding strategies to support the community in achieving this goal. The five key themes include:

- people, voices and experiences
- culture, creative and learning
- food, merchants, and tourism
- housing, health and social purpose; and
- places, spaces and natural environment

b. *Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP)*

The Chinatown ARP is a long-range, statutory plan that sets out the future vision for redevelopment in Chinatown. The proposed ARP is framed around five core ideas that envision Chinatown as:

- an affordable and attractive residential neighbourhood
- a setting with unique character that continues to be expressed within the built environment
- a place of historic significance where important assets are preserved
- a neighbourhood of vibrant streets and eclectic commercial offerings that support a thriving local economy; and
- supporting the community, family and individual health and harmony

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Learnings

Tomorrow's Chinatown serves as a template for future cultural planning projects. Its innovative approach demonstrates the opportunity to incorporate and enhance community cultural resources through planning and development projects. It also reaffirms the interconnectedness of people, place, and culture, which cannot be understood in isolation. In working cross-corporately and leveraging Urban Alliance's academic research, the program began with a broader and deeper understanding of the community, which was distilled further through program engagement. "Lessons learned" in undertaking the program are captured within Attachment 4.

Next Steps

Tomorrow's Chinatown program was delivered through extensive cross-corporate collaboration. This approach will be continued through the implementation phase to ensure that the work programs, resources, and budgets are aligned to deliver on priority actions.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Interested Parties were informed
- Interested Parties dialogue/relations were undertaken

Engagement was undertaken on both plans in addition to extensive community dialogue throughout the program. Refer to Attachment 5 for the engagement outline.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Tomorrow's Chinatown provides an opportunity to advance the goals and priorities captured in The City's 2016 Cultural Plan. This program responds to a more deliberate and formalized approach to include cultural planning and cultural elements in planning policy. Moreover, the program has piloted new processes, and the lessons learned will influence The City's approach to future ethno-cultural engagement. The completion of this program will strengthen The City's cultural competency, which will benefit Chinatown and other Calgary neighbourhoods.

Environmental

The ARP supports a more compact, complete and climate resilient neighbourhood. Removing barriers and encouraging redevelopment in one of Calgary's oldest neighbourhoods makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and brings people closer to services and amenities, resulting in reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The ARP supports the integration of climate change mitigation and risk-reduction strategies into decision-making within Chinatown.

Economic

Calgary's future success relies on our downtown neighbourhoods, including Chinatown, being places where people want to live, visit and set up businesses. The economic strategy for Calgary identifies "Place" as one of the four interconnected focus areas to an enduring and

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prosperous economy. Cultural activities play an important role in resilient cities that attract talent and businesses because of the quality of place. Tomorrow's Chinatown is aligned to Calgary's Destination Strategy, Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan, and the Resilient Calgary Strategy.

Service and Financial Implications

Existing operating funding - one-time

\$250,000

As part of a [program and funding update](#) shared in Spring 2022, a one-time budget of \$250,000 was funded from the Fiscal Stability Reserve and Budget Savings Account Merged Reserve to support the ongoing work of the program. Upcoming work will include a community launch of the Chinatown Cultural Plan, establishing the terms of reference for the Chinatown Community Investment Fund, and a transition towards the implementation and sustainment of the plans. The funding was formally approved by Council at their meeting of 2022 May 10.

RISK

Tomorrow's Chinatown has been a significant investment from The City and the Chinatown community for several years. If the proposed plans are not approved, community trust, support and involvement may dampen. Council's approval of the plans is a necessary requirement to ensure implementation and action planning can commence in partnership with community-led initiatives.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Previous Council Direction, Background
2. Chinatown Cultural Plan
3. Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan
4. Tomorrow's Chinatown program – Summary of Lessons Learned
5. Tomorrow's Chinatown program and engagement summary
6. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Stuart Dalglish	Planning & Development Services	Approve
Katie Black	Community Services	Approve
Doug Morgan	Operational Services	Approve
Michael Thompson	Infrastructure Services	Consult