

**Planning & Development Report to  
SPC on Planning and Urban Development  
2018 June 14**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
PUD2018-0514  
Page 1 of 13**

**Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

---

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Chinatown is one of Calgary's most distinctive cultural neighbourhoods. In 2016 an extensive community engagement process about Chinatown's future was conducted in response to a land use application. The engagement revealed concerns about "loss of culture", stagnation and community decline. Council subsequently directed Administration to proceed with Phase 1 of an Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) / Cultural Plan comprising background research and further project scoping and to report back with an update.

Key pieces of work undertaken in Phase 1 included: exploring the connection between land use planning and cultural planning; examining development potential; and determining budget and funding sources. Based on the findings of work, and in consideration of budget, Administration developed three options for the next phase of work to support Chinatown's cultural and planning aspects, for Council's consideration.

Given Chinatown's overall importance to Calgary, its function as a social and cultural hub for the Chinese community, and changes as a result of the future Green Line, it is appropriate to define a vision that supports the Guiding Principles developed by the community in 2016. As such, Administration recommends proceeding with a Cultural Plan / Culturally-based Local Area Plan (Option 3), consistent with Council's general direction in 2016. Additional budget is required to undertake this work.

**ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**

That the SPC on Planning and Urban Development

1. Recommends that Council direct Administration to:

- a) proceed with Option 3 Chinatown Cultural Plan / Culturally-based Local Area Plan, as presented;
- b) include the costs associated with Option 3, as identified in this report, in The City Planning & Policy 2019-2022 service plan and budget, for Council's review and approval in 2018 November;
- c) report back to Council, through the Standing Policy Committee on Planning & Urban Development, with a detailed scope of work for Option 3 by no later than 2019 July, if budget for Option 3 is approved in the 2019-2022 service plan and budget.

**RECOMMENDATION OF SPC ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DATED  
2018 JUNE 14:**

That the Administration Recommendations contained in Report PUD2018-0514 be approved.

Opposition(s) to Recommendations:

Against: Councillor Demong

## **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

Excerpt of the minutes of the SPC on Planning and Urban Development, held 2018 June 14:

**““And further, that the distributions and documents received for the Corporate Record be attached to this Report prior to being forwarded to Council.”**

### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY**

On 2016 December 05, Council approved the recommendations of C2016-0864, as follows:

1. Reconsider the reporting requirement arising from Council's direction regarding 2016 January 11 Notice of Motion NM2016-01 for Administration to report back to Standing Policy Committee on Planning & Urban Development by 2016 December on the broader scope of the work conducted with stakeholders, and direct Administration to report to the 2016 December 05 meeting of Council.
2. Approve the Guiding Principles as outlined in Attachment 1 to be used as an interim guide to reviewing planning applications, in conjunction with the Chinatown ARP, Centre City Plan and other City policies, until a new ARP is approved by Council.
3. Direct Administration to conduct Phase 1 of work as outlined in the Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan and Cultural Plan Scope of Work (Attachment 2) and report back to Council, through the Standing Policy Committee on Planning & Urban Development, with a progress report by no later than 2018 Q2.

### **Land Use Application**

On 2016 December 05, Council adopted the recommendations of report C2016-0907 as follows:

1. Give 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading to 38P2015;
2. Give 1<sup>st</sup> reading to Bylaw 179D2015;
3. Consider the amendments to Bylaw 179D2015 as set out in the Revised Attachment 2 with clerical corrections.
4. Give 2<sup>nd</sup> reading to Bylaw 179D2015, as amended.
5. Withhold 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of Bylaws 179D2015 as amended, pending the conditional approval of a Development Permit by Calgary Planning Commission
6. Withhold 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of Bylaw 38P2015 pending the conditional approval of a Development Permit by Calgary Planning Commission or the passage of a new ARP for Chinatown.

On 2016 April 11, at Confirmation of the Agenda, Council referred Report CPC2015-183 and Bylaws 38P2015 and 179D2015 and the submissions received after the tabling motion was adopted by Council, to the Administration to “undertake a Scoping Report, for a new Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan, to incorporate the following, to return with a Scoping Report to the 2016 December 05 Combined Meeting of Council:

- i) Develop a community-wide City-led Engagement process that identifies key work to be addressed in a new Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan, and identifies preliminary topics, issues, and aspirations conveyed by a range of stakeholders;

Approval(s): Stuart Dalglish concurs with this report. Author: Allison Chan  
City Clerk's: Julien Lord Charest

## **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

- ii) Based on the results of the Engagement process in i) above, provide a supplementary planning report to Council on the subject application CPC2015-183, with recommendations for amendments, as appropriate; and
- iii) Coordinate with the on-going current Engagement projects in Chinatown including the Chinatown Retail Strategy, Green Line Project, and Centre City Guidebook.”

### **Notice of Motion**

On 2016 January 11, Council adopted Councillor Farrell’s NM2016-01 directing Administration, through a future Work Program and following the completion of the Green Line and Main Streets planning projects, to consider the preparation of a new Area Redevelopment Plan for Chinatown and to prepare a progress report on the scoping of the ARP project and to report back to City Council no later than Q4 2016 through the Planning and Urban Development Committee.

### **BACKGROUND**

Chinatown is one of Calgary’s most distinctive cultural neighbourhoods. Although it spans about nine blocks, only four to five blocks are readily identifiable as Chinatown. In 2017, Chinatown had 2124 residents and 1436 units; however countless more consider Chinatown a cultural home and visit regularly. A 2016 retail vitality study indicated a healthy 7% retail vacancy rate.

In 2016, extensive public engagement was conducted as a result of land use amendment application LOC2012-0101. The engagement highlighted concern for Chinatown’s future generally, and in relation to the proposed land use, as well as culture, character, and aesthetics. “Loss of culture” was a key theme. The Guiding Principles (Attachment 1) were developed based on community feedback, and approved by Council to be used to review planning applications in absence of an updated ARP.

The engagement highlighted the link between culture and built form. Guiding Principle #1 “all new development reinforce the distinct cultural and historical character of Chinatown” speaks directly to this notion. As a result, it was recommended that further work in Chinatown include both an updated ARP to address built form, and a cultural plan to address vibrancy.

Subsequently, Council directed Administration to conduct Phase 1 of an ARP and Cultural Plan, consisting of background research, further project scoping, and an examination of costs and budget. This work has been completed (Attachment 2). At that time, Council had only recently adopted a Cultural Plan for The City. One of the key pieces of Phase 1 was to understand the connection between land use planning and cultural planning and how both could be used in Chinatown.

Cultural planning is a process to identify and leverage a community’s cultural resources, strengthen the management of those resources, and integrate a cultural lens across all facets of local government planning and decision-making. Culture is anything that defines the unique identity of a community or social group, including such characteristics as social customs, seasonal traditions, geography, cuisine, oral traditions, fashion, literature, music and religious expression. Culture also includes heritage (both built and natural), community initiatives and the

## **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

creative economy (film, design, arts, etc.). Given Chinatown's unique nature, there is a need to ensure that cultural aspects inform any future land use planning.

### Update on Land Use Application 2012-0101 (El Condor)

LOC2012-0101 (C2016-0907) has received 2<sup>nd</sup> reading on its land use from Council, with 3<sup>rd</sup> reading pending an approved development permit. Due to the two year limitation on the public hearing as per the Municipal Government Act, the applicant has until 2018 December 05 to get both an approved development permit and 3<sup>rd</sup> reading on land use.

A pre-application enquiry on a development permit was submitted to The City on 2018 May 08. Given that the applicant must still submit a full development permit application; have it reviewed by Administration and Urban Design Review Panel; undertake public engagement; resolve all technical issues; and proceed to Calgary Planning Commission for approval, it is unlikely that 3<sup>rd</sup> reading on the land use can be achieved on or before the land use amendment expiry date of 2018 December 05. As such, any future development interest will require a new land use application and a new public hearing.

### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

There are eight vacant parcels in Chinatown (Attachment 3). Of these, six are long term surface parking lots. Administration undertook a detailed analysis to further understand:

- the factors influencing Chinatown's overall development potential, particularly in the short to mid-term, and
- the need for additional supportive policy work.

The results are presented in Attachment 4. Key findings:

1. Current social and cultural aspects appear strong and the community continues to grow, but a population transition is either underway or imminent.
2. A financial feasibility study indicated that the surface parking lots are financially viable for development at the existing allowable land uses, heights and densities.
3. The three largest sites will likely develop in their own time due to their unique circumstances. Four of the five smaller sites are constrained and may only result in limited scale redevelopment. Whether land use amendments are required for any of the sites will depend on how the landowner's plans fit into site-specific conditions and current land use district.
4. Current forecast models indicate that even a moderate development scenario could more than double the population. There is no need to add more units and population than the current land uses allow.
5. Other Centre City communities and nearby established communities generally have more development capacity, suggesting that development is likely to go there first.

### **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

6. Green Line is the most significant capital project facing Chinatown, with a station to be located at 2 Avenue / 2 Street SW.
7. A number of large and small City initiatives have been completed in the last decade, for example streetscape improvements and a Master Plan for Sien Lok Park.
8. New planning policy tools and processes since the El Condor application may reduce the difficulties encountered during the review of that application in future applications. Tools include the Guiding Principles, Urban Design Review Framework and the forthcoming Historical Context Paper.

The analysis indicates a variety of factors affecting Chinatown as a community, and in terms of development timing. Typically, local area plans are used to increase capacity when development pressures exceed existing capacity. Chinatown does not need additional capacity. Further, additional heights, densities and land uses are not needed to make development financially viable, although there may be strategic reasons to consider adding density. This suggests that a typical local area plan is not the right tool by itself to increase vibrancy, and that there is benefit in a broader policy approach.

Finally, Administration explored costs and budget. The 2016 December report (C2016-0864) scoped work for an ARP and indicated the need for a consultant to undertake this work. Currently, Administration does not have adequate budget to retain a consultant for a full-scale policy process (see Financial Capacity section below).

#### Options for Future Work

As a result of better understanding of Chinatown's short to mid-term development potential; a range of new policy tools available; and budget considerations, additional options to the ARP / Cultural Plan work indicated in the 2016 report were explored, for Council's consideration.

In Chinatown, built form and culture are inextricably linked. A conversation about culture is needed to better understand and support Guiding Principle #1 and inform how cultural aspects could enhance outcomes relating to Guiding Principles #2-8. Thus, options without a strong culturally-centred approach, such as a standalone ARP, were dismissed. Three options are summarized below, and are described in detail in Attachment 5:

#### *Option 1: Evaluate applications using existing and new tools / policies / processes*

In this option, there is no further policy development. Administration would respond to any planning applications that are submitted using existing policies, such as the current ARP, as well as a number of new policy tools and processes that have been developed since 2016 (Attachment 4, #7), for example, the Urban Design Review Framework and the Guiding Principles. These recent changes may allow for a more comprehensive review of planning applications than previously.

#### *Option 2: Minor policy amendments to define character and historical context*

### **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

The current ARP lacks policy about heritage, culture and character. This option would improve understanding of these aspects through the following actions:

- Amendment to add the Guiding Principles and Historical Context Paper (under development; this study will document major events, people, landscapes and structures that contribute to Chinatown's identity) into existing policy, such as the current ARP, for easy reference
- Evaluate four to five buildings for potential inclusion in The City's Heritage Inventory and continue to support the community-led history project, "Buildings Could Talk".
- Develop a signage plan to encourage Asian style signage

#### *Option 3: Cultural Plan / Culturally-based Local Area Plan – Recommended Option*

Through a community engagement process, a cultural plan would establish a community cultural vision and priorities and develop a roadmap for future cultural development. This option would build on the foundation of planning work and research completed to date. The cultural plan would inform The City's interaction with Chinatown in relation to the built environment, programming and other areas. External organizations, the community, and businesses could also use it to undertake their own initiatives.

Following the cultural conversation, Administration would undertake a local area plan process to develop planning policies that address the community's planning and development vision through a culturally specific lens.

#### Conclusion

The table below presents estimated budget requirements for each option:

	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3 Recommended</b>
Consulting Estimate	-	\$50,000 - \$100,000	\$500,000
Engagement Hard Costs Estimate (ads, venues, etc.)	-	\$10,000	\$100,000
<b>Total Estimated Cost (Consulting + Hard Costs)</b>	-	<b>\$60,000 - \$110,000</b>	<b>\$600,000</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not include staff overtime for engagement events</li> </ul>
Can this be accommodated within current budget?	n/a Fees are collected for applications	<b>Yes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No additional budget is required</li> </ul>	<b>No</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional budget of up to \$1 million is required; see Financial Capacity section for details</li> <li>• See Recommendation 2b</li> </ul>

Option 3: Cultural Plan / Culturally-based Local Area Plan is recommended. This option is consistent with Council's general direction in 2016 and provides a strong cultural foundation to

## **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

support to all eight Guiding Principles. The Community Association and the Business Improvement Area both strongly support this option (Attachments 6 and 7).

A number of factors were considered in this decision: the typical capacity issues and development pressures that tend to spur a local area plan process are not seen here; adding additional units and population beyond the current land uses are not required; and, there are other risks to undertaking this work (see Risk section). As a result, the investment required for this policy process may not be proportionate to the amount of development expected. On the balance, however, it is necessary to think beyond the usual planning issues and pursue cultural and local area planning for broader purposes:

### 1) The need for updated planning and cultural policy direction

- Chinatown is one of Calgary's most distinctive cultural neighbourhoods. Chinatowns across North America are struggling and providing timely support to Calgary's Chinatown may help avoid this situation;
- the community is highly unique in its character and composition; demographics indicate a transition is imminent or underway;
- Chinatown is a cultural home for Calgary's Chinese community. It provides culturally supportive living, social and cultural activities, services, support and acts as a gathering place for family and friends;
- it is a distinct gateway into the Centre City, and provides a link between the transitioning communities of Eau Claire and the East Village;
- the current ARP is over 30 years old. It is outdated and is not well aligned with the Municipal Development Plan and other significant City policies, nor does it have detailed policy to assist Administration in making contextually sensitive planning recommendations;
- it provides an opportunity to connect the processes of development planning and planning culturally.

### 2) Green Line Readiness

- 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;
- Construction is anticipated to start in 2020. On opening day in 2026, the station is expected to have 8200 riders, increasing to over 10,000 in by 2043;

## **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

- Green Line may also prompt some landowners towards development.

### **3) Leveraging Current Work and Community Momentum**

- Significant work was conducted in 2016 and the community is eager to continue working with The City on a long term vision for Chinatown. Recent work by the community to document its history fits well with the cultural planning process;
- The City is moving towards a more deliberate and formalized approach to including cultural planning and cultural elements in planning policy. Chinatown provides an opportunity to pilot a new process;
- A number of projects in and around Chinatown are ongoing or pending, including Green Line, flood mitigation, and new development in neighboring Eau Claire and East Village.

Given Chinatown's overall importance to Calgary and the building momentum within and around the community, is appropriate and timely to define a vision for Chinatown's future through both a cultural plan and a local area plan.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

In 2016, 4700 people participated in an extensive two-phased, tri-lingual public engagement process that highlighted a high level of community pride, and concern over Chinatown's future. The current Phase 1 background work was intentionally designed to be completed without additional community engagement.

Going forward, Option 3 requires extensive, detailed community engagement. Due to the complexity of the engagement and communications an external consultant should be retained to develop an engagement plan that accounts for cultural nuances and language / translation issues. At this time, The City does not have any dedicated expertise in these areas.

The Community Association and the Business Improvement Area both strongly support Option 3 and not Options 1 and 2 (Attachments 6 and 7). They see Chinatown as a unique cultural community and believe in its potential as a strong draw for the Chinese community, Calgarians and tourists.

Option 3 applies lessons from Vancouver's Chinatown. After pursuing a development-forward approach, The City of Vancouver has reconsidered its height and width policies in favour of an approach that recognizes that "Chinatown's intangible heritage (people, businesses and culture) should be the cornerstone of Chinatown's revitalization and future." A recent planning decision on a key site underscored the importance of development that fits Chinatown's historic and cultural context. Going forward, The City of Vancouver has committed to "a more culturally-centred approach to community building in Chinatown, recognizing the unique character and needs of the neighbourhood." (Attachment 8)



## **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

---

### **Strategic Alignment**

This report aligns with the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, specifically:

- 5.1.3 Increase the proportion of new development that takes place within already developed or disturbed lands either through infill, redevelopment and/or shared use, relative to new development that takes place on previously undeveloped lands.
- 5.1.4. Plan, design and locate new development in a manner that best utilizes existing infrastructure

A cultural plan / local area plan would support many Municipal Development Plan goals and objectives, including:

- 2.2.3 Create a livable, vibrant and diverse centre city
- 2.2.4 Foster distinctive complete communities with a strong sense of place
- 2.3 Creating great communities

The Centre City Plan describes Chinatown as “clearly distinct”, with a “defined identity due to cultural and physical aspects”.

Cultural Plan – On 2018 May 28 CPS2018-0253 provided Council with an update on The City’s Cultural Plan, noting the use of cultural lens to help shape the future of Chinatown. Administration was directed “to ensure that planning culturally is reflected in the development of future plans, policies and processes, including One Calgary” and to undertake an exploratory discussion of formally including a cultural component in the Developed Area Guidebook and ARPs and ASPs at the NextCity Advisory Committee.

Green Line – The Green Line will become a key connection for Chinatown. A station will be located on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SW near Daqing Square. The station will offer an opportunity to bring more visitors into the community. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2020 on Stage 1 of the Green Line with a tentative opening day of 2026. 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”.

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

#### **Social**

Cultural life, in all its forms, strengthens the city’s social fabric. The Guiding Principles were the outcome of a broad and inclusive engagement process, and reflect community values about Chinatown’s future. A local area plan could articulate the Guiding Principles into policy form, as informed by a cultural vision. Due to its unique demographic, future policy work in Chinatown should help guide community initiatives, activities, and development in a way that respects seniors and immigrants.

#### **Environmental**

The Guiding Principles emphasize the pedestrian realm in Chinatown. Cultural planning encourages the preservation and re-use of heritage buildings.

#### **Economic (External)**

A lively and dynamic Chinatown is important to all of Calgary. Planning policy based on cultural values would play a vital role in maintaining Chinatown’s vibrancy and authenticity. Chinatown

## **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

presents an opportunity for cultural tourism through its festivals and events, heritage, and culinary opportunities. Recent studies indicate that vibrant communities are of the highest rated elements of appeal to new residents and businesses.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### ***Current and Future Operating Budget:***

The 2016 December report (C2016-0864) indicated the need for outside consulting expertise, given the specialized nature of this work; complex community dynamics; broad public interest; cultural nuances and language issues; and high public engagement expectations. At that time, Council indicated general support for this work in their discussions.

Estimated resource requirements for each option outlined above and in Attachment 5 are based on a variety of sources:

- consulting costs are based on a broadly scoped Expression of Interest for an ARP and Cultural Plan, conducted in 2017. Estimates ranged from \$300,000 to \$2,100,000
- Staff requirements for an ARP, by department, as outlined in the 2016 December report
- Costs associated with the 2016 engagement process

Options 1 and 2 can be funded from existing budget. Option 3 would require significant resources, potentially for an extended time, and cannot be supported through the business units' consulting budgets. It is estimated that this work will cost approximately \$600,000 for consultant and engagement hard costs, but this could be higher due to the community's diversity and competing interests of various groups. This cost does not include staff overtime for engagement events.

Accurate consulting costs, including a breakdown of cost by year, will only be known once a Request for Proposals process is undertaken. As such, Administration recommends having budget available for up to \$1 million, to accommodate any variances once the Request for Proposals process is complete and should any unforeseen circumstances with the community arise. Work on Option 3 cannot commence until funding is secured for the duration of the project.

The project will be managed by Community Planning and Calgary Recreation. The budget split between these two business units has yet to be determined. As such, Administration will likely recommend that entire budget to be placed in Community Planning, program #612, with Recreation to recover their costs from Community Planning by means of a Letter of Agreement. Details to be finalized in the 2019-2022 service plan and budget submission for presentation to Council in 2018 November.

#### ***Current and Future Capital Budget:***

None

### **Risk Assessment**

#### ***1. Risks of Proceeding with Option 3***

## **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

Community History / Government Relations: Owing to a long and often difficult historical relationship between the Chinese community and levels of Canadian governments, including The City, there are deep-seated trust issues among some segments of the community. Throughout its history, The City and Chinatown have had numerous conflicts, and although many of these happened long ago, the impact lingers.

Policy processes cannot be expected to overcome the past, although they may be an opportunity to foster a new relationship between the community and The City. Part of the recommended body of work includes elements that acknowledge the community's history and celebrate its survival and success through difficult circumstances.

Community Complexity: There are diverse opinions on Chinatown's future and who speaks for it, owing to different languages, countries of origin, politics and other factors. This may be difficult to overcome. This risk could be reduced, but likely not eliminated, through a well-developed engagement plan that considers community dynamics, cultural aspects, and by including community stakeholders in developing a process to complete this work. Further, new organizations such as the Community Association and the Business Improvement Area can help to channel information between The City and the community.

Cultural Planning: Chinatown is the heart of Calgary's Chinese community. Proceeding with planning policy but without a strong understanding of cultural aspects could erode Chinatown's unique attributes, resulting in a loss of cultural identity, historical context, and community.

The 2016 El Condor application, and recent planning activity in Vancouver's Chinatown highlight that development, regardless of built form, must respect culture and context. In Vancouver, a rapid increase in new residents who did not connect with the existing culture has been detrimental to the community; there is no guarantee that new residents will connect with cultural aspects or support existing cultural businesses. Moving forward in Calgary, this risk could be mitigated through a cultural plan that identifies actions to keep the community fabric strong.

Cultural planning is a relatively new practice in North America. Cultural plans are generally undertaken at a broader municipal level; it has not been tried at the neighborhood level in Calgary and there is no set process or format. As with any new process, there is some uncertainty as to how cultural planning work will unfold, however, given the unique nature of Chinatown, this risk should be considered an opportunity to innovate. Chinatown will be the first attempt at planning culturally, with Administration exploring how to incorporate cultural components into future local area planning policies and processes.

Expanding Scope: Limitations on time, resources, and budget mean that a policy process plan cannot address every aspect of the community. Expanding scope is a particular concern when implementing a new or undefined process (such as Option 3) within a community as complex as Chinatown, with many competing interests. This risk can be mitigated through a well scoped body of work prior to proceeding with the Request for Proposals process, followed by Council oversight once a consultant is hired and additional project details, such as timelines, are discussed with the community. Care must also be taken to choose a consultant with the appropriate project management skills and expertise to undertake a project of this magnitude.

## **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

Timing: Local area plans that are not well-timed with development activity may result in the need to amend the plan when an application is received, as market forces and building trends change over time. New planning policy does not guarantee that a planning application will not require a policy amendment, nor that development will happen. Conversely, the start of Green Line construction in 2020 makes planning policy development timely.

Cost and Timelines: The 1986 Chinatown ARP process took several years and the El Condor application required eight months of dedicated engagement and issues resolution; any new process is also likely to be lengthy. Some risk may be mitigated through use of a consultant working with the community to create a process, including timelines, to move forward.

Consulting: Option 3 would be the first time in recent years that a consultant was retained to conduct a full local area plan process. Although there are numerous planning consultants, and to a lesser extent cultural consultants, there are few with specific expertise in Chinatowns or similar urban ethnic enclaves. The 2017 Expression of Interest process yielded interest and expertise, however, there is a risk that a future Request for Proposals process may not attract these respondents, or other similarly qualified consultants.

Resourcing and impact on other work: Option 3 requires significant staff resources regardless of consultants. In some cases, these resources may not currently be available, and if this option is chosen, other policy work may need to be re-prioritized or delayed.

Communication: Administration currently does not have dedicated internal resources to read and write Traditional Chinese. This was a significant issue in the 2016 engagement, even with the use of external translators / interpreters. Without this expertise, Administration will be vulnerable in terms of accuracy of written content. It is critical that any consultancy hired for this process have appropriate Chinese language skills available as a core part of its team.

### *2. Risks of not proceeding with Option 3*

Policy: Without updated policy, planning applications are more unpredictable. This puts the community, customer, Council and Administration in positions of uncertainty. If significant community concern arises over a planning application (such as in 2016), it may result in additional engagement. This can require considerable time and resources from community, the customer and The City, and delay the customer's approval until a resolution is reached.

This could be mitigated by clarifying with the community how applications will be reviewed (Option 1) or introducing new policy (Option 3). However, new policy may not lessen conflict and uncertainty over planning applications. At any time, a landowner may submit a planning application that does not align with policy, and Administration must review it.

Missed Opportunity: Chinatowns across North America are facing a number of pressures that threaten their continued existence. Calgary's Chinatown is in stronger position than many others, but a new vision is needed to strengthen community identity in the face of inevitable change, such demographic shifts, and from the imminent development of Green Line. There is momentum building in the community since 2016. Not addressing Chinatown's needs in the near future risks losing a window of opportunity to avoid possible decline.

Planning & Development Report to  
SPC on Planning and Urban Development  
2018 June 14

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
PUD2018-0514  
Page 13 of 13

### **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Phase 1 Update**

---

#### **REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Chinatown's importance is not just as a small inner city community – it is a unique community with strong cultural, social and heritage aspects, and a citywide draw. In Chinatown, built form and culture are inextricably linked. Option 3, Cultural Plan/Culturally-based Local Area Plan, presents a unique opportunity to define a detailed vision for Chinatown's future that will support all eight Guiding Principles comprehensively. Undertaking this work now takes advantage of community momentum that has been growing since 2016, and aligns with upcoming Green Line construction. Additional budget is required to pursue this option.

#### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown
2. Phase 1 Work Completed
3. Map of Redevelopment Sites
4. Chinatown Analysis Summary
5. Options for Phase 2 Work in Chinatown
6. Letter from Calgary Chinatown Community Association
7. Letter from Chinatown District Business Improvement Area
8. City of Vancouver Chinatown Development Policy Changes
9. **Distributions received at the 2018 June 14 SPC on Planning and Urban Development**