

**POLICY REPORT
URBAN STRUCTURE**

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Council: July 23, 2002

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Community Project Manager of Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program,
General Manager of Community Services and Director of Current Planning
SUBJECT: Chinatown Revitalization Program: Chinatown Vision

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT Council approve in principle the Chinatown Vision Directions, attached as Appendix A.*
- B. THAT the Chinatown Vision Directions be used to help guide City policy decisions, priorities, budgets and capital plans in the Chinatown community.*
- C. THAT the Community Project Manager of the Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program, in consultation with relevant City departments, business organizations, the Vancouver Economic Development Commission and Vancouver Agreement partners, report back on a work program to implement the Chinatown Vision.*
- D. THAT the Director of Current Planning meet with the Chinatown community to further discuss the issues of investment and land use, especially residential intensification in Chinatown, and develop strategies to occupy vacant spaces.*
- E. THAT the Director of Current Planning report back on developing effective heritage conservation strategies and implementation tools to conserve Chinatown's built environment.*
- F. THAT the Director of Current Planning report back on ways to encourage neon lighting in Chinatown.*

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of A to F.

COUNCIL POLICY

On July 28, 1998, Council confirmed principles to provide general guidance for actions and planning in the Downtown Eastside, Chinatown, Gastown and Strathcona which include encouraging legitimate commercial activity, improving conditions at street level, improving existing SROs, reducing crime, and helping community people to find allies and seek a common future.

On September 21, 1999, Council approved a funding allocation of \$2.5 million toward initiatives to revitalize the Downtown Eastside in the 2000-2002 Capital Plan.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

This report presents the Chinatown Vision for Council endorsement and provides an overview of the Chinatown Revitalization Program and the progress of the community development work that has been undertaken.

Working closely with the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee (VCRC), staff have studied land use changes in Chinatown from the 1970s to 2000, conducted a telephone survey to better understand the Chinese-Canadian market for Chinatown, and researched the revitalization experiences of other North American Chinatowns. All research confirmed that Chinatown's major strengths are its retail and cultural activities, and that a successful revitalization strategy should involve attracting more residents, young people and visitors to the area.

A comprehensive public process took place from August 2001 to April 2002, reaching out to more than 600 people, including the Chinatown community, residents in the nearby neighbourhoods, Chinese youth groups, the arts and cultural community, and the general public. This process revealed a common vision that Chinatown should be a place that tells the area's history with its physical environment, serves the needs of residents, youth and visitors, and acts as a hub of commercial, social and cultural activities.

In summary, the many valued qualities of Chinatown that community members want to protect and enhance include its history, architecture, retail and cultural activities and strong sense of community. Changes desired by the community mainly involve the beautification of the physical environment, connection to nearby neighbourhoods, diversification of services, increased sense of public safety and improvements to the investment climate.

The VCRC and many other community organizations have endorsed the proposed Chinatown Vision and are already working on its implementation. The recommendations in this report instruct staff to report back on an overall work program so that the City can continue to be a partner in implementing the Vision. They also include taking specific actions with the community, developing strategies to occupy vacant spaces, to intensify the residential base, to conserve Chinatown's built environment, and to encourage neon lighting in Chinatown.

BACKGROUND

The Chinatown Revitalization Program began in 1999 as part of the Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program. It is supported by funds from the National Crime Prevention Centre to implement a community development and mobilization process, bringing together community stakeholders to address the issues of community safety and economic revitalization. The three levels of government through the Vancouver Agreement have already supported and funded a number of initiatives and capital projects recommended by the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee. The VCRC was officially formed in January 2001 to bring together more than twenty of the area's social, cultural, resident and business groups to work with the City to develop short-term revitalization plans, and a long-term vision for Chinatown, along with strategies to implement that vision.

Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee

Vancouver's Chinatown has always been an active community with many organizations providing programs and services to enhance its role as the heart of the Chinese-Canadian community and a significant historic area with a unique cultural and heritage legacy. The key partners in the VCRC include organizations such as Chinese Benevolent Association, Chinese Cultural Centre, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association, Chinatown BIA, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden, Chinese Community Policing Centre and many of the family clan associations. (Appendix B: VCRC Membership List.) The VCRC has evolved as a key component of a community development process that encourages the entire community to work together and build partnerships with governments and private funders.

Currently the VCRC has seven subcommittees, working on areas identified by the community as priorities:

- Chinatown Vision
- Marketing and Promotion
- Arts and Culture
- Sports Organization
- Parking
- Housing
- Youth Network.

Through the VCRC, the Chinatown community also identified and supported the following capital projects. These projects have been approved by Council with additional funding support by senior governments through the Vancouver Agreement:

- Chinatown Millennium Gate
- Shanghai Alley and the Han Dynasty Bell
- Silk Road
- Chinatown Memorial Square Place Marker
- Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Courtyard Improvements
- Chinatown Pedestrian Lighting Improvement Project.

DISCUSSION

City staff have worked closely with the Chinatown Vision Subcommittee on the development of a Vision to guide the development of a vibrant Chinatown. The following three research projects were undertaken to foster a better understanding of both Chinatown's strengths and the challenges it faces in the new millennium.

1. Land Use Survey and Analysis: 1970 - 2000

Businesses focussed on basic goods and services have historically formed the majority of ground floor land uses and provided a key indicator of the economic health of Chinatown. These include food, herbal and clothing shops, banks, law offices, beauty salons, and other services used by residents from Strathcona and Chinese residents, particularly seniors, from throughout Vancouver who retain strong linkages to Chinatown. This land use has increased from 336,370 sf. in 1990 to 370,870 sf. in 2000, and is concentrated in the area east of Main Street. (Appendix C: Chinatown Ground-Floor Land Uses.)

Specialty retail and cultural uses, such as bookstores, music stores and the Chinese Cultural Center and Museum, have also increased by about 20,000 square feet between 1990 and 2000. This is an indication of the growing importance of the tourist trade and cultural functions in Chinatown. Eighty-eight percent of the specialty retail and cultural uses are now in the area west of Main Street (calculated by the floor area). However, in the early 1990's vacancy patterns started to emerge and suggest some decline in the economic viability of Chinatown. While many of the lots that were vacant in the 1970s have been developed with buildings, much of the new commercial space has been empty since the mid 1990s.

A fragmented and decentralized property ownership pattern in Chinatown poses another challenge for Chinatown revitalization efforts. In 2000, out of 165 property parcels in Chinatown, 121 properties (almost 75%) were owned by individual owners and only two property owners in Chinatown own more than three properties. This makes property acquisition and redevelopment more difficult and costly. Furthermore, most of the property owners in the 1970s lived in Vancouver, many inside Chinatown. Today, owners of Chinatown properties live all over the Greater Vancouver region and overseas.

2. Telephone Survey: the Chinese-Canadian Market for Chinatown

In February of 2001, CGT Research International Inc. was commissioned by the City to survey 386 Chinese-Canadians in Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond about their attitude toward Chinatown and their shopping and entertainment patterns. Interviews were conducted in Cantonese, Mandarin and English. (Appendix D: Executive Summary of the Telephone Survey.)

The survey reveals that most visits are for shopping and cultural activities, confirming these as Chinatown's basic strengths. Some 90% of the respondents said they came to Chinatown for basic goods and services, 55% for the night market, 39% for cultural and educational events, and 36% for special events. However, 58% of those who had visited Chinatown less than once a week said location and distance are the main reasons they do not visit Chinatown more often. As Chinese market and commercial developments have followed the changing settlement pattern of people of Chinese ancestry in the Greater Vancouver region, people now have access to these goods and services closer to their homes and do not need to travel to Chinatown. The area around Victoria Drive and 41st Avenue, as well as development of the Asian-style malls in municipalities such as Richmond and Coquitlam have emerged as direct commercial competitors to Chinatown. Other reasons for not visiting Chinatown more include concerns about inconvenient or inadequate parking (39%) and perceptions of public safety (22%).

3. Research on North American Chinatowns

With the help of a graduate student, Andrew Yan, from Vancouver who is completing his thesis at UCLA Planning School on "Rethinking Vancouver's Chinatown: Planning in a Global Neighbourhood," City staff and the VCRC Vision Subcommittee had the opportunity to learn and review the experiences

of Chinatowns across North America, many of which are facing similar challenges. This research indicates that successful Chinatowns have strategies that focus not only on tourism, but also on forming strong linkages to surrounding communities, encouraging nearby residential developments and attracting younger generations of those of Asian ancestry. They also build on their strengths by enhancing significant cultural facilities with an emphasis on the need to establish connections with people from all backgrounds in addition to Asian residents in the region. (Appendix E: Revitalization Challenges for Vancouver's Chinatown)

While Vancouver's Chinatown shares a similar history, experiences and challenges with other North American Chinatowns, the ethnic characteristics of Greater Vancouver area make our Chinatown unique. Greater Vancouver now has the highest concentration of people of Chinese ancestry of any metropolitan area outside of Asia. The 1996 Census total of 288,780 Chinese Canadians amounted to 16% of the region's population. In the City of Vancouver, Chinese Canadians constituted 28% of the total population. In a city with such an ethnic makeup, Chinatown has the potential to play a more active role as a social and cultural hub not only for the Chinese-Canadian community, but also for Vancouverites who want to learn and experience Chinese-Canadian culture.

Public Outreach

Based on the above research, staff and the VCRC Vision subcommittee designed an extensive public outreach process, recognizing that Chinatown is a community not only for people who live and work there, but also for all Vancouverites who care about this historic area. Twenty-five focus group discussions and one public opinion survey took place between August of 2001 and February of 2002, reaching out to more than 600 people.

Focus group discussions were held with people who live and work in Chinatown, residents in the surrounding area, including Strathcona, Downtown Eastside, City Gate, and International Village, Chinese youth groups, arts and cultural organizations as well as the general public. Discussions were conducted in three languages - English, Cantonese and Mandarin. The outreach process generated wide interest among the public in the Chinatown revitalization process. Many participants have maintained their involvement in the process. (Appendix F: Executive Summary of the Findings from the Focus Group Discussions 2002.)

The VCRC and interested focus group participants reviewed the land use inventory, public opinion surveys and the findings from the focus group discussions in two major workshops on February 23 and April 27, 2002. The results of this process are the following Vision Directions, which were the subject of a public open house on May 30, 2002 and endorsed by 38 Chinatown organizations and 7 other resident groups in the nearby neighbourhoods. (Appendix G: List of Organizations Endorsing the Chinatown Vision Directions)

A Vision for Chinatown

Chinatown has many valued qualities that community members want to protect and enhance, including its history, architecture, retail and cultural activities and strong sense of community. Changes desired by the community mainly involved the beautification of the physical environment, connection to the nearby neighbourhoods, diversification of services and land uses and improvement to the investment environment. There is also a strong recognition that the impact of the illegal drug trade must be addressed in cooperation with the three levels of government and surrounding neighbourhoods.

In summary, the future Chinatown should be ***a place that tells the area's history with its physical environment, serves the needs of residents, youth and visitors and acts as a hub of commercial, social and cultural activities.*** Currently there are many projects and initiatives underway to help realize the Vision. The following section describes the eleven Vision Directions. They are proposed for Council endorsement in principle in recommendations A and B. A brief discussion of each direction is followed by some of the specific strategies proposed to move toward its realization.

1. Heritage Building Preservation

Chinatown's heritage buildings are a priceless asset to the community. They serve as a reminder of the community's history and are the most visible and obvious source of the neighbourhood's uniqueness. Chinatown was designated provincially as a historic district in 1971 and rezoned in 1994 to allow two separate zoning schedules: HA-1 and HA-1A.

HA-1 corresponds to the provincially designated site boundary, and the HA-1A Schedule includes the remainder of Chinatown. Thirty-two buildings in Chinatown are listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register.

There was wide consensus throughout the Vision process about the importance of conserving the heritage buildings. However, many people were concerned that there is a need for more incentives to encourage heritage building conservation.

In May 2000, the City and the Province of B.C. commissioned a study to develop a Heritage Management Plan for Gastown with the goal to develop effective heritage conservation strategies and implementation tools to conserve Gastown's built environment. Staff recommendation will be submitted to Council for consideration shortly. Since Gastown and Chinatown are the only two provincially designated historic districts in Vancouver, staff will be seeking Council approval to review incentives identified in the Gastown Heritage Management Plan for their applicability to Chinatown.

Another issue that affects heritage building preservation in Chinatown is property ownership. Many properties in Chinatown are owned by family clan associations. These associations started out as social service providers for their family members regarding the arrangement of their work, housing and social activities during the period of the discriminatory Immigration Act. Today, many associations still attach great sentimental value to their properties in Chinatown. For any heritage preservation incentives to work fully, a strategy to engage those associations is needed.

Currently there are many initiatives underway, such as the Chinatown and Strathcona walking tours, that help increase awareness of the area's heritage buildings. A pilot project to restore the Chinese Benevolent Association building (108 East Pender) to its original colour scheme is another attempt to help reinforce pedestrian interest in the area. Recommendation E calls for staff to work with the community to develop effective heritage conservation strategies and implementation tools to conserve Chinatown's built environment.

2. Commemoration of Chinese-Canadian and Chinatown History

Chinatown's role as the seed-bed of Chinese-Canadian culture in Vancouver as well as the presence within its boundaries of many arts and cultural facilities makes it the place to focus commemoration of Chinese-Canadian history. The projects undertaken to achieve this goal also offer both educational and cultural tourist opportunities. To commemorate Chinatown's birthplace, a reproduction of a 2,200 year-old bell was placed in Shanghai Alley in 2001. In addition, the Millennium Gate on Pender Street will be completed in August, while public artwork detailing Chinese-Canadians' contributions to Canada in both war and peace will be installed in the plaza at Keefer and Columbia later this year.

The community also identified the need to form partnerships with educational institutions to foster the understanding of Chinese-Canadian and Chinatown history. Discussions with both University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University are underway.

3. Public Realm Improvement

Efforts to improve the public realm are strengthening Chinatown's appeal to residents, visitors and tourists alike. Such improvements also help in meeting other goals, such as safety and security and the commemoration of Chinatown's history.

While more work needs to be done to improve the appearance of Chinatown, many public realm improvement projects have been completed. The Chinatown Pedestrian Lighting Improvement Project has recently installed 90 new, heritage-style lampposts throughout Chinatown. This project was identified as a priority by the VCRC and funded under the Vancouver Agreement through Western Economic Diversification and the City. The City Engineering Department has also been the key partner in working with the Chinatown BIA to clean up the lanes in Chinatown. Graffiti removal and an awning improvement project initiated by the Chinese Community Policing Centre is a good starting point to beautify the building facades.

Restoration of neon signs has been raised as an important issue by many focus groups. Colourful neon signs with Chinese characteristics were identified as one way to help revitalize the area. Until the 1960s, Chinatown was known for its vibrant and colourful neon signs. With the decline of Chinatown and the introduction of more restrictive sign regulations, some expressive signs have been lost and some signs permitted in the past are no longer permitted.

Chinatown is not alone on the issue of neon sign restoration. At a July 1998 public hearing, Council approved amendments to the Sign By-law, which provide more opportunities for larger signs for the International Village marketplace. Similarly, Council also approved an amendment to the Sign By-law to allow larger signs and encourage the use of neon illumination on Granville Street to compliment a number of initiatives to revitalize Granville Street. Recommendation F calls for the Director of the Current Planning to report back to Council on ways to encourage more neon lighting on signs in Chinatown.

4. Convenient Transportation and Pedestrian Comfort

People visit Chinatown by different transportation modes - walking, cycling, public transit and driving. Parking and convenience were among the main reasons why respondents to the survey do not visit Chinatown as often as they otherwise might. Improvements to these factors will assist in the revitalization of Chinatown by encouraging people to return.

There are three parkades in Chinatown, providing more than one thousand parking spaces in addition to on-street parking. However, Chinatown needs better promotional and directional signage indicating where available parking spaces can be found. Parking, creating efficient transit, directional signage to Chinatown at the nearby skytrain stations, safe cycling connections and more pedestrian comforts, such as benches, should also be part of a comprehensive transportation strategy to make Chinatown a more convenient and comfortable neighbourhood in which to work, visit, shop and live. Recommendation C calls for staff to report back on a work program that will include reference to these items.

5. A Sense of Security

Over the last few years the media has paid considerable attention to illegal drug activities in the Downtown Eastside area. This has contributed to the perception that Chinatown is not a safe place to visit despite the fact that police statistics indicate crime is decreasing. Increased pedestrian activities, engagement of community groups, and collaboration with other neighbourhoods to jointly sponsor special events will create more positive street activities, combat the negative perception and bring people back into Chinatown.

"Neighbours First" is an initiative that aims to cultivate and promote relationships among the different communities in Chinatown, Gastown and the Downtown Eastside to build public confidence that the neighbourhoods are both safe and attractive to visit. The project increases graffiti removal and litter clean up throughout the area. It also expands volunteer street patrols to offer assistance to residents and visitors, as well as providing extra "eyes on the street." Neighbours First is funded by Western Economic Diversification through the Vancouver Agreement and is a partnership initiative involving United We Can, Gastown Business Improvement Association, Chinatown Business Improvement Association and the Chinese Community Policing Centre.

6. Linkage to the Nearby Neighbourhoods and Downtown

Chinatown is physically very close to many other large neighbourhoods, such as Strathcona, Gastown, Yaletown, International Village and City Gate. Reinforcing and reemphasizing that proximity will encourage more visitors while diversifying the retail will make the community more attractive to a larger number of people.

The Silk Road project was approved by Council in November of 1999. Its goal is to create a safe and clearly marked connection between Library Square and Chinatown. Phase one of the project identifies the route through distinctive signs and banners. Stage two is now underway and will include the installation of panels describing local history at key points on the route. Carrall Street and Columbia Street can also provide links between Chinatown and Gastown. In addition, a Greenway is being developed along the former CPR Right-of-way. One site at 10 West Hastings has been cleared and landscaped and negotiations are underway with other property owners along the Right-of-way.

7. Youth Connection and Community Development

There is a sense that Chinatown is not for the young and that it does not cater to or care for their needs. Drawing youth back to the community will help develop the next generation of Chinatown's leaders. The VCRC has established a Youth Network to actively engage youth in the Chinatown Revitalization process.

Many Chinatown organizations such as S.U.C.C.E.S.S., the Chinese Cultural Centre and the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden Society have youth programs focussing on leadership training and voluntarism. The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. youth group has been actively participating in the Chinatown revitalization process and is currently working with Chinatown merchants to explore the possibility of creating a "discount card" for Chinatown. In addition, special events are being targeted at young people throughout the region. A recent example was the wrap-up party for the Asian Heritage Month that was held in Chinatown on May 31. The party was called "C-town Dance Revolution," and was a hip-hop dance competition which attracted many hundreds of youth into the area.

8. Attraction for Vancouverites and Tourists

Chinatown's cultural and historic treasures provide a unique opportunity for both the people of Chinatown and those who visit it. Strengthening the community's base for tourism and cultural activities will assist in the area's economic revitalization and enhance a major cultural asset for the entire region.

Tourism Vancouver is another partner in the revitalization process. It has advised the community to create a holistic "Chinatown experience" with a focus on educational and cultural tourism. Since then, the VCRC Marketing and Promotion Committee has designed a logo and an event calendar to better promote Chinatown as a whole, and developed a work plan to attract more visitors to the area. This includes a facilitated discussion led by Tourism Vancouver with both tour bus and the tourist hotel industries to prepare for the upcoming tourist season.

In addition, the proposed West Coast Historical Experiences Ltd. (WHEX) initiative in Gastown also creates an opportunity to draw visitors to the area. If developed in close collaboration with the community, it can also foster better understanding of the City's history, including that of Chinatown.

9. A Community with a Residential and Commercial Mixture

Chinatown has always been a community that is more than a commercial district. Many people lived in the area because they enjoyed its amenity while others had limited choice due to low income or discrimination. As these barriers were removed, a large number of people chose to relocate to other parts of the City and region. By 1996, only 785 residents remained in the historic Chinatown.

Research of Chinatowns across North America and the focus group discussions point to the need to enhance Chinatown as a living neighbourhood with a mix of residential and commercial developments. Several initiatives are already underway to bring more residents back to live and work in this neighbourhood.

Currently, there are 261 units of non-market housing within the Chinatown boundaries, including Dart Coon Club, CBA Manor, Solheim Place and the recently opened Lore Krill Co-op East. In addition, there are 520 units of Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) housing in the area, based on the 2001 Survey of Low-Income Housing in the Downtown Core. There are also more than 100 moderate rental market units and a number of housing units that are run by the Chinatown family clan associations. The 1998 draft Housing Plan suggested that market units be increased to 300 - 400 over a ten-year period.

The following strategies have been identified by the Chinatown Vision to help bring more residents back into the area:

- Encourage market housing
- Improve living conditions in the existing hotels
- Encourage affordable rental housing
- Explore possibilities of housing in the upper floors of buildings with commercial storefronts.

The VCRC has recently formed a Housing Subcommittee to facilitate more discussion on the strategies stated in the Vision Directions. This subcommittee could be a good venue for staff to participate and develop strategies to make Chinatown a neighbourhood with residential and commercial mixture.

Recommendation D calls for the Director of Current Planning, in consultation with staff from the Housing Centre and Real Estate Services to further discuss land use issues, especially on residential intensification, with the VCRC and other Chinatown community members, and report back to Council later this year.

10. Diversified Retail for Goods and Services

Chinatown's current land uses are predominantly commercial premises selling basic goods and services or arts and cultural-oriented products. In addition, there are a significant number of cultural facilities and family clan associations serving the general public. Diversifying this base will help attract more residents and visitors. To serve the needs of residents, youth and visitors, Chinatown merchants need to diversify their services and better market their products, especially to nearby neighbourhoods such as City Gate, Strathcona and International Village.

The Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association and Chinatown BIA are the key partners in moving this Vision Direction forward. Both organizations have started discussions on training programs needed for the merchants, and a comprehensive marketing strategy to reach out to a more diversified client base.

Staff from the three levels of government under the Vancouver Agreement are working with local business and community representatives to develop an economic revitalization strategy for the Downtown Eastside, including Chinatown. Phase II of the Economic Capacity Study clearly identified opportunities for increased investment in the retail, tourism, education, apparel, film, arts and cultural sectors. This is consistent with the directions of the Chinatown Vision. Recommendation C calls for staff to report back on a work program that will include a business development strategy for Chinatown.

11. A Hub of Social and Cultural Activities

Chinatown has many vibrant social, arts and cultural organizations and facilities. Building on this strength will enable Chinatown to become a focus for these activities not just for Chinese-Canadians, but for the general population.

The first phase of the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Courtyard improvement was completed in June. Many community events and festivals are planned for this courtyard. They will help strengthen the Chinese Cultural Centre and reinforce the part of Chinatown west of Main Street as a cultural focal point. Events planned include the Chinatown Arts and Cultural Festival, the Canada Day Celebration and the Chinatown Festival.

In addition to building on the success of various festivals, Chinatown also needs to integrate existing programs and facilities to create a better sense of community. Facilities such as the Chinese Cultural Centre and Museum, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden, and Andy Livingstone Park are valuable assets for Chinatown that can enhance its role as one of the key social and cultural hubs in Greater Vancouver.

CONCLUSION

The Chinatown Vision planning process has been a successful tool in bringing together people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives to work on revitalizing Chinatown and address its long-term sustainable development. The Vision has been created and owned by the Chinatown community while City staff has taken an active role in facilitating this process and in providing technical and professional support.

When adopted, the Vision Directions will help provide guidance for both City and community action for the next 5 to 10 years. VCRC and its initiatives are part of the five-year Downtown Eastside Community Development Project, with the goal to build a safe and healthy community through a community capacity building approach. The interim evaluation report 1999-2001 for this project has been sent to Council. Another interim evaluation will be available in 2003 and the final evaluation will be completed in early 2004.

Subject to Council's approval of the Chinatown Vision Directions, staff will report back on the staff resources and work plan required to address each of the Vision Directions, recognizing that the implementation of the Vision will be led by the community. Additional staff work, and in some cases, resources may be required to assist the Chinatown community in launching these initiatives.

APPENDICES:

A. Chinatown Vision Directions

B. Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee Membership List

C. Chinatown Ground-Floor Land Uses: Map and Analysis (2000)

D. Executive Summary of the Telephone Survey: Visiting Pattern to Chinatown by Chinese Canadians in Vancouver, Burnaby, and Richmond (2001)

- E. Revitalization Challenges for Vancouver's Chinatown: Demographic and Economic Regional Trends in the Chinese Canadian Community (2001)
- F. Executive Summary of the Findings from the Focus Group Discussions (2002)
- G. List of Organizations Endorsing the Chinatown Vision Directions

Appendix A

CHINATOWN VISION DIRECTIONS - July 9, 2002

A Place that Tells the History with its Physical Environment ...

1. Heritage Building Preservation
 - 1.1. Create incentives to preserve heritage buildings
 - 1.2. Strengthen architectural, historic and cultural tours
 - 1.3. Enhance awareness of heritage buildings
2. Commemoration of Chinese-Canadian and Chinatown History
 - 2.1. Foster the understanding of Chinese-Canadian and Chinatown History
 - 2.2. Develop monuments and destinations to commemorate Chinese-Canadian history
 - 2.3. Form partnerships with educational institutions
3. Public Realm Improvements
 - 3.1. Improve pedestrian lighting
 - 3.2. Encourage restoration of neon signs
 - 3.3. Keep the lanes and sidewalks clean
 - 3.4. Beautify public spaces
 - 3.5. Strengthen graffiti removal initiatives
 - 3.6. Improve and beautify building façades
4. Convenient Transportation and Pedestrian Comfort
 - 4.1. Develop a parking strategy, which includes communication, education and signage initiatives
 - 4.2. Provide more pedestrian comforts, such as benches, plantings and public washrooms
 - 4.3. Create efficient transit and safe cycling connections
 - 4.4. Develop linkages to nearby neighbourhoods through transportation measures
5. A Sense of Security
 - 5.1. Partner with other neighbourhoods to work on the social issues faced by the community
 - 5.2. Enhance public education on social issues
 - 5.3. Reduce the impact of the illegal drug trade
 - 5.4. Increase the sense of public safety and security
 - 5.5. Encourage more positive street activities
 - 5.6. Develop a strategy for safe parking

A Place that Serves the Needs of Residents, Youth and Visitors ...

6. Linkage to the Nearby Neighbourhoods and Downtown
 - 6.1. Enhance walking corridors between Chinatown and downtown
 - 6.2. Develop walking corridors between Chinatown and surrounding neighbourhoods - Gastown, City Gate, North False Creek, Science World
 - 6.3. Provide services and products that draw in people from neighbouring communities
7. Youth Connection and Community Development
 - 7.1. Improve co-ordination of youth initiatives in Chinatown
 - 7.2. Encourage youth to establish recreational / educational programs and services to attract young people, especially those of Chinese and Asian descent
 - 7.3. Encourage community involvement and leadership development of youth
 - 7.4. Establish formal relationships with educational institutions
 - 7.5. Develop succession plans for Chinatown organizations
 - 7.6. Encourage youth-oriented retail services
8. Attractions for Vancouverites and Tourists
 - 8.1. Create a holistic Chinatown experience with a focus on educational and cultural tourism
 - 8.2. Develop Chinatown promotional and educational campaigns
 - 8.3. Install directional signs
 - 8.4. Create an Information Centre
9. A Community with a Residential and Commercial Mixture
 - 9.1. Encourage market housing
 - 9.2. Improve living conditions in the existing hotels
 - 9.3. Encourage affordable rental housing
 - 9.4. Explore possibilities of housing in the upper floors of buildings with commercial storefronts

A Hub of Commercial, Social and Cultural Activities ...

10. Diversified Retail Goods and Services

- 10.1. Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy, targeting local residents, youth and visitors
- 10.2. Develop customer service training programs for Chinatown merchants and their employees
- 10.3. Encourage on-street commercial activities
- 10.4. Encourage more businesses to open at night
- 10.5. Improve customer services, including bi-lingual signs and services
- 10.6. Encourage more diversified services in Chinatown, especially quality restaurants
- 10.7. Build on the success of the night market and arts fair
- 10.8. Provide financial incentives for new businesses
- 10.9. Create a better environment for investment

11. A Hub of Social and Cultural Activities

- 11.1. Develop a diverse educational program, targeting not only Chinese but anyone who is interested
 - 11.2. Enhance the arts, cultural and recreational facilities in and around Chinatown
- 11.3. Build on the success of the Chinese Film Festival and explore opportunities for Chinese film theatres
- 11.4. Build on the success of various festivals in Chinatown
- 11.5. Encourage media groups, especially those with Asian market, to move into Chinatown
- 11.6. Integrate existing programs and facilities to create a better sense of community

Appendix B

Members of the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee June 2002

NAME ORGANIZATION

1. Fred Mah Chinese Benevolent Association
2. Ginny Chin Chinese Benevolent Association
3. Monty Jang Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver
4. Kenneth Li S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
5. Ped Win Wong Vancouver's Chinatown Merchants Association
6. Daniel Wei Vancouver's Chinatown Merchants Association
7. Syrus Lee Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Society
8. Agnes Wong Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Society
9. Michael Ng Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Classical Garden
10. Adrian Wong Wong's Benevolent Association of Canada
11. George Lee Lee's Benevolent Association of Canada
12. George Chow Yue Shan Society
13. Rick Lam Shon Yee Benevolent Association
14. Alan Louie Chinese Freemasons
15. Connie Yuen Chau Luen Association
16. Richard Lee Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee
17. Ken Low Chinese Community Policing Centre
18. Jack Chow (Chinatown property owner)
19. William Chu (Chinatown property owner)
20. Glen J. Wong (local professional)
21. Sam Kam (local business)
22. Sam Lam (local business)
23. Edna May Ng (local business)

Appendix C-1

Comparison by Total Ground Floor Area between East and West of Main Street in Vancouver's Chinatown

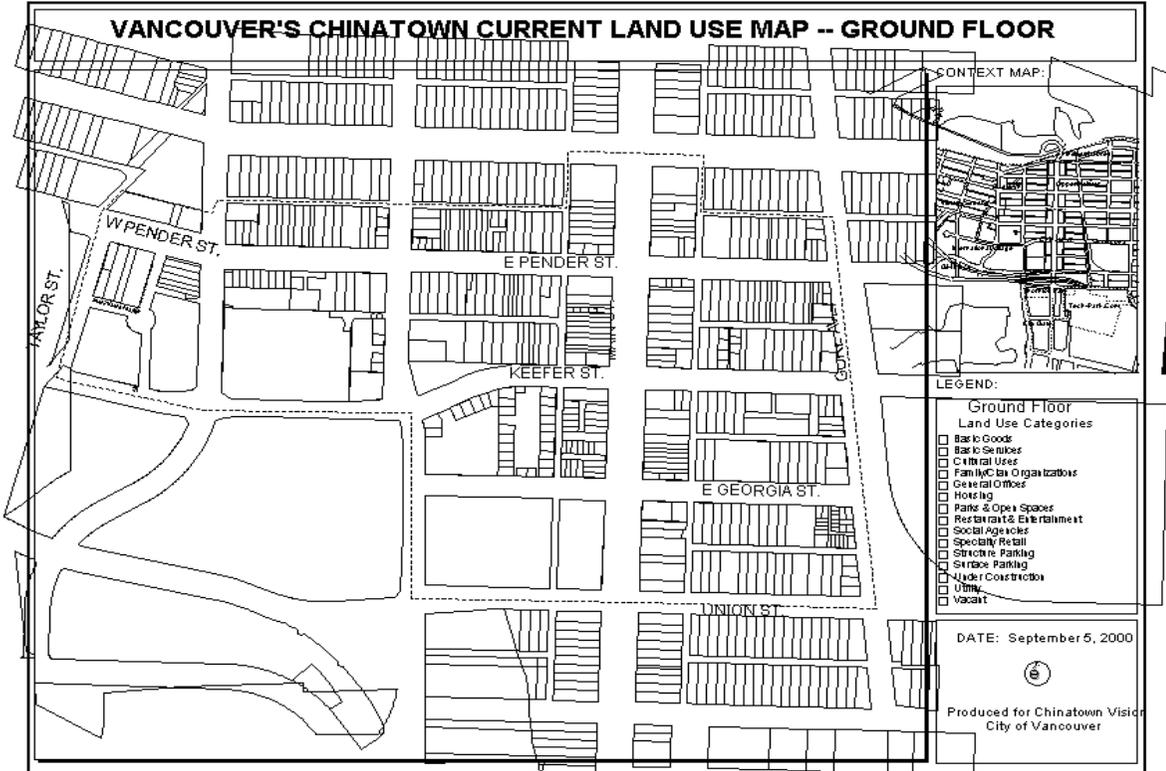
Date: September 13, 2000

Approximate total floor area in sq. ft. 780,000 Count: 386

Note: Not included in floor area calculation are parks and open spaces, surface parking, structure parking, under construction, utility, and vacant lot

Land Use Category	Count	EAST of MAIN ST.		Count	WEST of MAIN ST.	
		Floor Area (sq. ft.)	% of Total Area		Floor Area (sq. ft.)	% of Total Area
Basic Goods	93	220,000	28%	31	50,000	6%
Basic Services	21	60,000	8%	43	80,000	10%
Cultural Uses	2	3,000	0%	17	50,000	6%
Family/Clan Organizations	2	6,000	1%	0	-	0%
General Offices	1	6,000	1%	2	3,000	0%
Housing	2	6,000	1%	0	-	0%

Restaurant & Entertainment	14	50,000	6%	18	40,000	5%
Social Agencies	0	-	0%	3	20,000	3%
Specialty Retail	6	10,000	1%	30	50,000	6%
Vacant	37	40,000	5%	44	80,000	10%
Total	178	401,000	51%	188	373,000	48%



Appendix C-2

Appendix D

CHINATOWN TELEPHONE SURVEY
executive Summary

In February, 2001, the Chinatown Revitalization Committee, sponsored by the City of Vancouver, commissioned CGT Research International to conduct a telephone survey of Chinese Canadians in Vancouver-Richmond-Burnaby to study their shopping, entertainment and cultural patterns.

A sample of 386 Chinese Canadians, living in Vancouver north of 16th Avenue, Vancouver south of 16th Avenue, Burnaby and Richmond, were interviewed. The interviews were conducted in Cantonese, Mandarin and English.

Only five percent of the sample never visits Chinatown, while 28 percent visit once a week or more. Residents of Vancouver visit most frequently, and residents of Richmond visit least often.

Fifty-eight percent of those who visit Chinatown less than once a week say that location and distance are the main reasons they do not visit Chinatown more often. This is followed by inadequate parking (39%), crime and a sense of personal endangerment (22%) and the presence of drugs and drug addicts, homeless people and the dirtiness of the streets and buildings (14%).

Chinatown is a destination that is visited by family groups more than in any other way. Virtually no trips at all are made for business purposes. Most visit occur during the day (89%). Those who live closer to Chinatown tend to visit during the week and those who live further away tend to visit on the weekend.

Four main reasons for visiting Chinatown were probed. Ninety percent of the respondents said they come to Chinatown for basic goods and services, 55 percent come for the night market, 39 percent come for cultural and educational events and 36 percent come for special events.

The main reasons respondents come to Chinatown for basic goods and services are as follows:

- Best selection 44%
- Best prices 34%
- Best quality 25%
- Can't get what I want anywhere else 17%

The main reasons respondents come to Chinatown for cultural and educational activities are as follows:

- Go with friends or relatives 18%
- Can't get what I want anywhere else 14%
- I take my children 14%
- I want to support the businesses there 13%

The main reasons respondents come to Chinatown for special events are as follows:

- It is a family/social event 47%
- I want to support these activities 23%
- They don't exist anywhere else 17%
- I like the atmosphere 13%
- To support Chinese culture 12%

The main reasons respondents come to Chinatown for the night market are as follows:

- It is fun 71%
- It is a family/social event 30%
- I want to support this activity 10%

From a marketing perspective, the lists shown above give guidance as to how an appeal might be made to the Chinese Canadian community to visit Chinatown more often.

For example, basic goods and services can be promoted based on their superiority on price, selection and quality, as reported by actual purchasers.

In like manner, cultural events can be promoted as unique family activities. Special events are also unique family activities, with the added element of preserving Chinese culture. Finally, the night market can be promoted as fun entertainment, a place to take the family and to meet and greet others.

To make Chinatown more attractive, a number of actions can be taken. The most important of these actions are:

- Reduce the amount of crime in the neighbourhood;
- Get rid of drugs in the DTES;
- Keep the streets cleaner.

A second set of actions includes:

- Make parking easier;
- Clean up and renovate the buildings;
- Make parking cheaper.

Appendix E

Revitalization Challenges for Vancouver's Chinatown: Demographic and Economic Regional Trends in the Chinese Canadian Community

A Summary of a Presentation for the Chinatown Business Improvement Association, Chinatown Revitalization Committee, Vancouver Chinatown Merchants' Association, and the City of Vancouver

By Andrew Yan (ayan@ucla.edu)

Department of Urban Planning, University of California - Los Angeles

August 2001

Introduction

As Vancouver's Chinatown begins to engage its revitalization challenges, it needs to recognize one of the central sources of its problems -- the profound changes that have occurred within Vancouver's Chinese Canadian community over the last 30 years. Coupled with the continuing physical, economic, and social deterioration of the Eastside (DTES), these changes have catalyzed the decline of the City's Chinatown. This paper will outline some of the key demographic and economic trends in Vancouver's Chinese community on a regional and spatial scale and their consequences for Chinatown. From these trends, the role of Chinatown for Vancouver's Chinese community has transformed from being the only central Chinese Canadian residential and commercial center in the Greater Vancouver region to a center for the region's robust Chinese community.

Chinese immigration characteristics to Vancouver in the 1980s and 1990s

The influence of successive generations of immigrants from Hong Kong and China to the Greater Vancouver area and its Chinatown cannot be underestimated. In the span of 10 years, the Chinese Canadian population in the City of Vancouver has nearly doubled from 70,455 in 1986 to 143,115 by 1996.¹ Much of this growth can be directly attributed to immigration from Hong Kong and, to lesser degree, from Mainland China as well as ethnic Chinese from Vietnam. While Chinese immigration has always played a role in shaping Vancouver, the 1980s and 1990s have seen significant changes in the socioeconomic nature of Chinese immigrants.

Beyond the numbers of Chinese immigrants to Vancouver, changes in Canadian immigration policy have reshaped what kinds of Chinese immigrant settle in Vancouver. Federal immigration policy such as the Business Immigrant Program have produced an immigrant that can be described as frequently affluent or at least 'comfortable', skilled, and educated. For example, in 1991, 28 percent of all adult immigrants from Hong Kong held a university degree, compared with the 14 percent of all immigrants and 11 percent of the Canadian born adult population.² In addition to being better educated, the socioeconomic status of Hong Kong immigrants are much higher than previous periods of Chinese immigration as 23 percent of all Hong Kong immigrants between 1988 and 1997 come as business class immigrants which require minimum capital holdings of, at least, \$250,000. From these demographic and class characteristics of Chinese immigrants, the results have been significant changes in the residential and commercial patterns of Vancouver's Chinese community.

Changing Chinese Residential and Settlement Patterns in Greater Vancouver Region

For the latter quarter of the 19th and most of the 20th century, Vancouver's Chinatown has been the central commercial district for the Chinese in Vancouver. With the inclusion of Strathcona, the area has encapsulated the presence of the Chinese in Vancouver. However, as overtly discriminatory social and legal practices diminished and Chinese Canadians attained social mobility through increased education opportunities and acculturation at the end of the Second World War, the Chinese community has slowly suburbanized directly east and south of Chinatown. Indeed, by 1970s, the suburbanization of Chinese was well underway before the large-scale Hong Kong immigration in the late 1980s. However, until the early 1990s, Chinatown and Strathcona still formed the economic and residential core of the Chinese community in Vancouver.

Between 1991 and 1996, the residential patterns of the Chinese Canadian community shifts from a single population centered on Chinatown to a polycentric population focused around a number of urban and suburban clusters throughout the Greater Vancouver region. In 1991, the Chinese Canadian community is still centred around Chinatown as the residential census tract (933057.00) directly east of Chinatown contained the largest number (5,110) of Chinese Canadians in Vancouver region. By 1996, after an influx of wealthier, skilled Chinese immigrants to the region, the residential geography of the

Chinese in Vancouver has dramatically changed. The rise of inner suburban and suburban Chinese populations outside of Chinatown is exemplified by the Chinese population primacy of the Chinatown tract (5,020 Chinese individuals in 1996) being surpassed by Census Tract 933147.03 (5,880 in 1996). This census tract is located in Richmond, far away from the traditional Chinese neighbourhoods of Chinatown and of the City of Vancouver, and marks the beginning of a large Chinese community in the suburbs.

While there has been significant Chinese residential change in Vancouver, it cannot be equated Chinese Canadian suburban flight and, in this way, Vancouver breaks away from its American counterparts. Inasmuch as the Chinese population of the suburbs rise, the Chinese population in the City of Vancouver remains largely stable and, in most cases, increase. While the population within the strict City definition of Chinatown has decreased, the Chinese population in Chinatown Census Tract has only slightly decreased by two percent (90 persons) from 5,110 in 1991 to 5,020 in 1996. In all statistical probability, the Chinese population around Chinatown has remained stable throughout the 1990s.

Far from being a wholesale abandonment of Chinatown and decentralization of the Chinese population in Vancouver, the residential patterns of Chinese Canadians in Vancouver, through new immigration, sees the development of multiple centers across the region. However, Chinese population growth in other parts of Vancouver outstrips the growth in Chinatown. Within this particular pattern, Chinatown no longer becomes the neighbourhood of first settlement nor first investment for Chinese immigrants to Vancouver - a major break from its historic role.

Shifting Chinese Commercial Patterns

While most of this analysis has so far focused on Chinese residential settlement, Chinese commercial developments have followed similar distribution patterns as stores and services that once congregated in Chinatown have followed their clientele into the suburbs. The areas of East 41st Avenue and Victoria Drive and Richmond as well as other parts of the City have emerged as direct competition to the businesses in Chinatown. Indeed, these inner suburban and suburban commercial developments have greatly diminished the economic viability and vitality of Vancouver's Chinatown. Two retail developments reflect the diffusion of Chinese commercial activities from Chinatown to the inner and outer suburbs and mark the changing structures of Chinese owned businesses in Vancouver: the T&T Supermarket chain and the suburban Asian theme malls.

The T&T supermarket chain was the first full service Asian supermarket to open in the Vancouver area and, at eight stores in Vancouver and one in Calgary, Alberta, it is also the largest Asian themed supermarket chain in Western Canada. Within each store, they have an average size of about 40,000 square feet and a product line of 10,000 Asian and non-Asian goods.³ To place this in perspective, the average basic goods firm in Vancouver's Chinatown only averages 2,500 square feet. Ironically, with each T&T store, they feature the same goods and services as Chinatown does in an entire district. The presence and growth of the chain is relatively recent with the first T&T opening in 1993. With this first store, T&T begins to separate itself from the traditional Chinese patterns of first opening in Chinatown and then migrating out to the suburbs as this first store was located in Metrotown, a mall in the Vancouver suburb of Burnaby. From this first store, the chain has spread throughout the Greater Vancouver region. Interestingly, T&T's Chinatown store, which only opened in 1998, was one of the last stores to open in the chain.

For the retail environment in Chinatown, the implications of the development of T&T occur with the store's location choices and how it facilitated the leakage of customers from Chinatown. Each T&T is located near almost every major Chinese residential area in the Greater Vancouver region.⁴ Coupled with the smaller Chinese retail developments in the same areas, they have greatly reduced the distances that Chinese Canadians need to travel to purchase Chinese goods and services and, in turn, trips to Chinatown.

Another retail development to demonstrate the growth of Chinese business activity outside Chinatown is the advent of Asian-themed malls in the Vancouver suburb of Richmond. In the late 1980s, a number of developers from Hong Kong created a series of malls along Number 3 Road. Collectively known as Asia West, these malls were facilitated by the investment requirements of the Canadian immigration system and out of consumer and entrepreneurial dissatisfaction with the services and goods of Chinatown by new immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan. However, they also come out of the very pragmatic role of serving the growing Chinese population in Richmond which grew from 20,660 in 1991 to 50,075 in 1996. While these malls offer roughly the same types of products as Chinatown, they also provide what is perceived to be a safer and cleaner shopping experience in addition to having much easier access to parking of which have only powered their popularity.

Within a distance of two kilometres along Number 3 Road, there are six of these malls (Aberdeen Centre, Empire Centre, Fairchild Square, Parker Place, President Plaza, Yaohan Plaza, and Parker Place) of which feature several hundred shops that offer goods and services designed for a Chinese clientele. Like T&T, the internal organization of these malls breaks away from certain Chinatown business characteristics. Each store is held by strata title (owned by the tenants) in these malls of which differs from Chinatown where most businesses rent their stores. While T&T is several times larger than the average Chinatown retail outlet, stores in these malls are, at most, half the size of the Chinatown average. Stores range from the smallest being approximately 42 square feet, a medium sized store being 100 square feet, and to the largest store in the mall being 300 square feet (Fairchild Developments, 1996, p.2). A recent development within these malls has been the attempt on the part of mall management to establish themselves as centre of the Chinese community in Richmond through Chinese New Year festivals, talent contests, and beauty pageants.⁵ From these events, the emerging role of these malls in moving beyond just a commercial function and into larger socio-cultural institution can be seen -- a role that was once the sole domain for Chinatown.

The Land-Use Changes in Vancouver's Chinatown

While this paper has so far focused upon the Chinese Canadian community in the Greater Vancouver region, they are the forces that have driven neighbourhood change in Vancouver's Chinatown. In observing the land use patterns of Chinatown, it is clear that the effects of isolation, leakage, and drought have taken its toll on the neighbourhood. Chinatown itself has changed with the loss of its markets and community functions that it once dominated.

Although land uses in Vancouver's Chinatown have remained diverse throughout the 1970s to 2000s, there have been numerous trends within these land uses.⁶ Businesses focused on basic goods and services have historically formed the plural majority of ground floor land uses and provide a key indicator towards the economic health of Chinatown.⁷ For basic goods and services, this land use has consistently increased through the 30 year timeline. Another land use that has increased has been specialty retail uses which have increased from 14 parcels in 1972 to 30 in 2000 and marks the growing importance of the tourist trade in Chinatown. While certain land uses have grown over the last 30 years, others that have either decreased or virtually disappeared in Chinatown. The most noteworthy land use decline is a decrease in restaurants and entertainment uses which has declined from a high of 35 parcels in 1980 to 28 parcels in 2000. This is an important pattern as, in addition to basic goods and services, restaurants form a key component of the Chinatown economy.

The land use statistic that embodies the decline of Chinatown occurs with vacancies. The patterns of vacancies have followed a parabolic pattern through time where their highest number of vacancies and undeveloped land occurs in the 1970s and the 2000s. In 1972, there were 77 vacant parcels. By the 1980s and the 1990s, many of these vacancies were filled and empty lots developed as vacancies only consisted of 26 and 27 parcels, respectively. However, by 2000, vacancies are again on the rise at 43 parcels. The sudden increase in vacancies from 1990 and 2000 is particularly important in gauging the economic health of Chinatown. The 1980s saw a considerable amount of development in neighbourhood ranging from the construction of the Chinese Cultural Centre to the Sun Wah Shopping Centre. The differences in the nature of vacancies in Chinatown in 1972 is important to note as it largely consisted of empty plots that did not have structures on the parcel. By 2000, the nature of vacancies have changed where these underdeveloped parcels in the 1970s have been filled by buildings of whose rentable spaces now lie empty.

Just as its land use composition has changed through time, Chinatown has also faced a significant amount of spatial restructuring. This movement is best exhibited by the shift of basic good and services land uses. With these land uses, they have essentially disappeared on Pender Street, west of Main Street and, coincidentally, this area is also the oldest part of Chinatown.⁸ In their place, specialty retail stores focused on tourist and cultural goods such as silks, art prints, and jewelry have replaced basic goods and services uses. While retail basic goods and service outlets are disappearing

west of Main, the areas east of Main have seen a stable, if not proliferating, pattern of basic goods and services stores. Within these new basic goods and services stores, particularly on West Georgia Street, these tenants are predominantly ethnic Chinese from Vietnam. This particular pattern empathizes the growth influence and importance of Vietnamese Chinese business and customers in Chinatown of which breaks away from the traditional customer core of Cantonese Chinese. However, it also reflects the importance of non-automobile based customers as Strathcona provides an important walk-in customer base for Chinatown and Main Street serves as a major transit conduit for Chinatown customers. Beyond the visibility of land-uses, the invisible patterns of property ownership also reflect how Chinatown and the Chinese Canadian community has changed in recent years. However, an important aspect of Chinatown ownership patterns has not changed is a significant fragmentation of property ownership. Out of the 165 property parcels in Vancouver's Chinatown, approximately 75 percent (121 properties) were owned by one property owner and only 2 property owners in Chinatown own more than three properties. This remarkable decentralization of ownership reflects one of the key challenges towards revitalization within Chinatown where property patterns that were developed in the early 1900s meet the realities of redevelopment in the 2000s.

Rethinking Chinatown's Problems: Isolation, Leakage, and Drought

This paper cannot provide an adequate forum towards listing the myriad of issues faced by Chinatown residents and merchants that these changing demographic and socioeconomic trends within the Chinese Canadian community have facilitated in the neighbourhood. Instead, as means of developing solutions to Chinatown, this paper suggests that the long-term revitalization problems of Chinatown can be conceptualized into three challenges: *isolation, leakage, and drought*. Together, these three challenges form the core problems for Chinatown's long-term viability, but, in recognizing these challenges, it can provide the basis of creating effective solutions.

Isolation

Isolation can be defined as a separation between a neighbourhood from larger vibrant economy and networks of the City. In certain cases, it may entail a physical disjuncture of a neighbourhood from the city via the loss of a transportation route or the construction of physical barrier. Chinatowns in North America face a unique form of isolation where, in many cases, there is a separation of the neighbourhood from the comparatively prosperous and vibrant regional Chinese economy.

Leakage

Leakage occurs with the loss of tenants, businesses, and customers of a neighbourhood to other parts of the City. Pull factors of other neighbourhoods such as cheaper rents, safer spaces, and modern facilities coupled with the push factors of a decaying local infrastructure, changing consumer patterns, and increasing rents can trigger an exodus of neighbourhood professionals, services, and businesses. For an ethnic enclave like Chinatown, a critical aspect of leakage that is often overlooked and underestimated is the devastating loss of neighbourhood youth and young clientele to other parts of the City. This particular feature of leakage can undermine any long term revitalization initiative as it extinguishes what is arguably the greatest asset of any community.

Drought

Drought is the most complex of the three revitalization challenges. While it can be conceptualized as the lack of investment and human capital for a neighbourhood, this shortage is often a complex mix of larger urban economic trends with the activities of external neighbourhood actors such as financial institutions and investors. The typical result of this combination is a vacuum of financial resources and human skills to facilitate any form of economic development in a neighbourhood.

Irregardless of location in Canada or the United States, isolation, leakage, and drought are the three major economic development and revitalization challenges that any governmental or organization faces working in any community.

Isolation, leakage, and drought are not exclusive categories as one often leads to another. They differ with changing local economic and social situations from city to city and from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the terminal end of their combination is the creation of an economically depressed and blighted neighbourhood.

In the case of Vancouver's Chinatown, the neighbourhood clearly suffers from all three elements of urban decay. A walk through the neighbourhood exposes the cumulative effects of decades of isolation, leakage, and drought. However, in examining the causes of decay in Chinatown, the regional economic and social restructuring of the Chinese community in the Lower Mainland emerge as a key factor behind Chinatown's decline.

Conclusion

The solutions to the revitalization problems in Vancouver's Chinatown will not be simple because the causes of these problems are not simple. Over the last decade, the Chinese Canadian community in the Greater Vancouver region has seen spectacular changes to its socioeconomic composition and spatial distribution. This is a testament towards the new globalism embracing the City of Vancouver and the success of Chinese Canadians in obtaining social mobility in the larger economy. At the same time, the neighbourhood that has symbolized and represented the success and struggles of Chinese Canadians in Vancouver is clearly in trouble. The economic and social foundations and assumptions of Chinatown are shifting and the neighbourhood has had great difficulty in adjusting to this change. This fact undermines the efficacy of many traditional strategies towards Chinatown revitalization and stresses the need for new strategies to stem the tide of decay in Vancouver's Chinatown.

Further Reading

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An Executive Summary

Of A Report of the Findings of the Focus
Addressing the Revitalization of Vancouver's Chinatown

A place for shopping...

Focus group participants generally associate Chinatown with shopping - shopping for food, for herbal medicine, at the night market. They refer to Chinatown being a one-stop-shopping area, as well as "a walking community." The historical aspects of Chinatown, especially the heritage architecture, as well as the many festivities associated with the Chinese communities, were also frequently mentioned by both English- and Chinese-speakers. Of course, there were also less than positive references, many having to do with crime and traffic. Many from especially the younger generation associate Chinatown with the older generation. Many business and property owners indicated that high rent and stringent zoning laws limit further development of Chinatown, especially when it came to the heritage buildings.

Belonging versus exclusion...

Some of the Chinese-speaking participants brought up the idea that Chinatown gives them a sense of home, of being an important focal point for all Chinese-Canadians. On the other hand, many of the non-Chinese speaking participants, as well as Chinese-Canadian youths, commented upon feeling excluded when they are in Chinatown. English-speaking participants all referred to the lack of information and signage in English. Others referred to the low quality of customer service as well as the rudeness of shopkeepers and store-clerks.

For young and old...

Most participants' vision of Chinatown's future is one of being a "real" community, and not something that is created solely for the benefit of tourists and visitors. Participants from especially the English-speaking groups further stressed the importance of maintaining Chinatown's historical associations. There was frequent mention of the importance of the inclusiveness of Chinatown - for Chinese of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds as well as non-Chinese speakers, for young and old. The importance of commerce to Chinatown was also brought up. Some of the residents from areas surrounding Chinatown felt that the borders of Chinatown should be extended to include these neighbouring communities.

A place for culture...

Some of the ideas for attracting more visitors to Chinatown include having street signs and information not just in Chinese and English, but other Asian languages as well. In general, participants stressed the importance of promoting a greater sense of welcoming for non-English speakers. Some participants mentioned the need of associating Chinatown with cultural events and artistic festivals, to bring a sense of "fun," a sense of festivity back to Chinatown, and to make it a "cool" place to visit, especially for the youths. This of course necessitates having the appropriate venues for different events.

Concerted efforts...

Participants mentioned the importance of improving the Chinatown's cleanliness, and of addressing problems associated with traffic, with crime, of addressing the drug issues. Everyone agreed that these problems needed to the participation of not just one party but everyone involved, as well as for Chinatown business owners to listen and be more receptive to different perspectives, new ideas, and constructive criticisms. Others indicated that a revitalization of Chinatown requires a concurrent revitalization of surrounding communities, as well as a greater link between Chinatown and its neighbouring communities.

Food services and historical and cultural sites remain the top of participants list of businesses and services important to Chinatown. As a tourist attraction, there was mention of the need to have a concerted effort to promote and market Chinatown.

Continued growth...

Almost all participants felt that Chinatown has a continuing relevance in today's Vancouver, but added that it must responded to the needs of the changing communities and be relevant to all.

Even with all the divergent views and opinions collected in the more than two dozen focus groups, we feel that all participant express a care and concern for the future of Vancouver's Chinatown. We feel that everyone involved must work together constructively in order to put forth a shared vision for Chinatown, one that ensures not merely its survival, but a continued growth and relevancy for future generations.

Patrick May
OPUS Communications Inc.
2002

A Breakdown of the Affiliation and Language of Focus Groups Participants

Date Focus Group Language

August 15, 2001 SUCCESS Youths English
June 5, 2001 VCRC English
June 23/24, 2001 Dragon Boat Festival Survey* Written survey
July 12, 2001 VCRC English
September 25, 2001 Tourism Vancouver / Chinatown* English
October 10, 2001 UBC/SFU Youths English
October 19, 2001 Strathcona Youth Council English
November 7, 2001 Maclean Park Residents Cantonese
November 10, 2001 Cantonese speakers Cantonese
November 17, 2001 CRC Marketing and Promotion* English
November 17, 2001 English speakers English
November 21, 2001 Arts and Culture English
November 22, 2001 Chinese media English/Cantonese/Mandarin

November 23, 2001 Seniors' drop-in Chinese
 November 24, 2001 Family Associations English/Cantonese/Mandarin
 November 27, 2001 Chinatown merchants Cantonese
 December 2, 2001 Mandarin speakers Mandarin
 December 3, 2001 Europa residents English
 December 7, 2001 C.C.C. Board of Directors English
 December 19, 2001 CAPC Chinese-speaking parents Cantonese
 December 19, 2001 Lions Manor Cantonese
 January 9, 2002 City Gate English
 January 10, 2002 City Gate Cantonese
 January 12, 2002 Community Directions English
 February 2, 2002 Asian Professionals English
 February 10, 2002 C.B.A. Cantonese

**not actual focus groups, but discussions did pertain to the visioning of Chinatown's future.*

Appendix G

ORGANIZATIONS ENDORSING THE CHINATOWN VISION DIRECTIONS July 9, 2002

The following organizations have submitted their formal letters of endorsement.

Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee Member Organizations

1. Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA)
2. Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver (CCC)
3. S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
4. Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association (VCMA)
5. Vancouver Chinatown BIA
6. Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Classical Garden
7. Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee (CHAPC)
8. Chinese Community Policing Centre (CCPC)
9. Chinese Freemasons
10. Yue Shan Society
11. Shon Yee Benevolent Association
12. Chau Luen Society of Vancouver
13. Lee's Benevolent Association of Canada
14. Wong's Benevolent Association

Chinatown Organizations and other Chinese Organizations

1. Chinese Benevolent Association of Canada
2. Association of Chinese Canadian Professional
3. National Congress of Chinese Canadians
4. Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society
5. Yin-Ping Benevolent Society
6. Toi-Shan Benevolent Association
7. Tung Koon Benevolent Canadian Association
8. Chinatown Plaza Tenant Association
9. VanCity Credit Union Chinatown Branch
10. Hoy Ping Benevolent Association of Vancouver
11. The Chinese Canadian Military Museum
12. Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans - Pacific Unit 280
13. Mah Society of Canada
14. Western Canada Chinese Martial Art Association
15. Kwanghai Society of Vancouver
16. Teo-Chew Society
17. Ing Suey Sun Tong Association
18. Hoo Tow Society
19. Tse Clansman Association
20. Beijing Friendship Association of Canada
21. Ngai Lum Musical Society
22. Canada United Hakka Association
23. Tsung Tsin (Hakka) Association
24. Hoy Sun High School Alumni Association of Canada

Resident Organizations in the Nearby Neighbourhoods

1. MacLean Park Residents Association
2. Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA)
3. City Gate (LMS 1108) Strata Council
4. City Gate (Station Place) Strata Council
5. City Gate (LMS 195) Strata Council
6. City Gate (LMS 1088) Strata Council
7. International Village (Europa) Strata Council

* * * * *

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(c) 1998 City of Vancouver

1 All statistical data is from the 1986, 1991, and 1996 Canadian censuses.

2 from BC Stats, *British Columbia Immigration Highlights*, July, 1998 by Planning and Statistics Division, Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations, Province of British Columbia

3 from Ford, A. (1988, April 28). Li Ka-shing in. Vancouver Sun, p.A1.

4 Interestingly, the mall space taken up by T&T was formerly occupied by the now-bankrupt Woodward's, a one hundred year-old department chain based in Vancouver.

5 From <http://www.parkerplace.com/events/index.html>

6 For a full definitions of these land uses, please see Appendix One

7 Based upon the City of Vancouver's definitions, basic goods can be defined as businesses that sell foodstuffs, herbs, or clothing while, for basic services, they can be defined as firms that provide financial, legal, medical, or beautician services.

8 Pender Street serves as the main spine to Vancouver's Chinatown.