

Draft: August 8, 2013

# VCRC Handbook

***Introduction to the  
Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee Handbook (2013)***

*This is the 2013 updating of the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee Handbook. Like its 2005 predecessor, it provides an overview of the mandate, structure and activities of the VCRC. This edition of the handbook reflects the proceedings of the VCRC Visioning exercise of March 9, 2013 at which 26 participants refreshed the vision and goals of the organization under the facilitation of Doug Soo (see Appendix 2). The 2013 visioning exercise led to a decision to maintain the informal – that is unincorporated – status of the VCRC. This handbook serves the purposes of the bylaws of an incorporated society.*

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## **1. Introduction to the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee**

### **1.1 History**

The seed of the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee (VCRC) was planted in September 1999 when 20 Chinatown community leaders and representatives of the three levels of government met to address the many issues threatening the continued success of Chinatown. An interim Chinatown Revitalization Steering Committee was formed in 2000. In February 2001, the City of Vancouver formalized the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee with 22 regular members including individual community leaders and representatives of business and community organizations (see Appendix 1). The new committee was funded as part of the Vancouver Agreement (see Appendix 3), a joint effort of all three levels of government and the local community to revitalize the Downtown Eastside. It was staffed by the City and mandated to develop a revitalization vision and strategy over a period of five years.

The VCRC went right to work in 2001 to produce the Chinatown Vision (see Appendix 3) which was adopted by Council in July 2002. The report outlined a three year action plan as the second phase of the Chinatown Revitalization Program. The three-year action plan focused on an expansion of residential development, including non-market housing, ongoing community development, revitalization of retail and business district, youth and senior involvement, and enhancement of Chinatown's role as a regional and social cultural hub. These subjects formed the basis of the VCRC's on-going subcommittees and accomplishments.

The VCRC was effective and Council renewed its funding, but eventually, with the original mandate of the committee realized and Vancouver Agreement funding coming to an end, the committee concluded its phase as a committee of the City. The VCRC members, however, had come to realize the positive impact they could have and continued to meet without City financial and staff support. In the following years, the committee continued to play a continuing significant role in community development and community review of City initiatives, such as the Historic Area Height Review (see Appendix 3). It continued to work closely with City council and staff to implement the Chinatown policy decisions that it had helped to bring about. In 2012, the VCRC played a significant role in the Vancouver Chinatown Economic Revitalization Action Plan study and Council's adoption of the Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan.

### **1.2 The VCRC Today**

The VCRC is not incorporated under the Society Act. It has evolved into an informal organization involving members of many Chinatown organizations but binding none of its member organizations to its representations. In its current form, it has been successful in

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organizing consensus and action within the broad community when contentious issues, such as the Historic Area Height Review – have arisen.

With the Chinatown Plan (see Appendix 3) and the Chinatown Economic Revitalization Action Plan in place, the VCRC has mostly fulfilled its original mandate. Other Chinatown organizations will be taking the lead on the implementation of the Economic Revitalization Plan (CERAP) and championing the principles laid out in the Chinatown Character paper originally prepared by the VCRC.

The March 9<sup>th</sup> VCRC visioning session determined that the VCRC continues to have a great strength in its informal and non-partisan nature. Its life-long ability to bring Chinatown together has gained the respect of City council and staff. Chinatown's many organizations bring many valuable things to the community; what VCRC brings is the broad view and the ability to bring together a united voice when issues important to the revitalization of Chinatown arise, drawing from a diverse talent base in the community.

### **1.3 Purpose**

The purpose of the VCRC is to provide a forum for information-sharing, identifying issues, open discussions, problem-solving, and developing work items that will help revitalize Chinatown in accordance with the Chinatown Vision.

VCRC brings together community organizations, merchants, property owners, residents, experts and concerned individuals to develop short-term plans and a long-term vision as well as to develop a strategy to implement that vision for a common goal, to build a vibrant Chinatown.

### **1.4 Vision**

The vision of the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee is to be “a collaborative voice for Chinatown Revitalization.” It pursues its vision by:

- Providing a highly respected conduit of information between Chinatown and the City of Vancouver
- Continuing to promote and assist in the implementation of the Chinatown Vision
- Building a community coalition to identify issues, carry open discussions and develop work items to implement the Chinatown Vision
- Providing a coordination role among community groups and individuals
- Supporting existing community organizations to further their work
- Influencing the nature of new development projects to further their contribution to Chinatown revitalization
- Advocating for change to regulatory obstacles to Chinatown revitalization

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## 2. Structure and Procedures of the VCRC

### 2.1 General Procedural Rules

- General Membership Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm, with exceptions as required.
- Subcommittee chairs report to the VCRC chair prior to each monthly meeting.
- The General Membership Meeting Agenda is set in advance by Chair with inputs from members.
- General Membership Meetings are chaired with the objective of free and balanced participation by all members and mutual respect for diverse opinions.
- Decisions at General Membership meetings are made through consensus wherever possible but when consensus fails the will of the majority is respected.
- Differences of opinion are resolved by problem-solving methods.

### 2.2 Membership and the Role of Members

The VCRC maintains its relevancy and mandate through its solid rooting in Chinatown's community organizations, augmented with the direct membership of individual merchants and business people, individuals with a professional or other informed-knowledge of Chinatowns, and the community's youth.

Each of the VCRC's founding member organizations is invited to appoint a member to the VCRC for a one-year term commencing January 1 each year with the intention of that person attending VCRC meetings on a regular basis. The organizations are:

- Chinese Benevolent Association of Vancouver
- Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver
- Chinese Community Policing Centre
- Chinese Freemasons
- Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee
- Chinatown Property Owner Association
- Chau Luen Benevolent Association
- Chiu Chow Benevolent Association of BC
- Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Classical Garden
- Lee's Benevolent Association of Canada
- Shon Yee Benevolent Association
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- Vancouver's Chinatown Merchants Association

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- Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Area Society
  - Yue Shan Benevolent Society
  - Wong's Benevolent Association of Canada

and

- Other Chinatown Associations interested in participating in the VCRC's work
  - Business owners
  - Youth
  - Representatives at large
- Individuals and appointees from Chinatown Associations – other than appointees of the founding organizations – are invited to join the VCRC upon the advice of the Nominations and Membership Committee with the approval of two-thirds of the general members attending a regular meeting
  - A revised membership list will be prepared for distribution at the first meeting of each calendar year

### **2.3 Volunteers**

VCRC welcomes volunteers to get involved in its various projects and to participate in the proceedings of its subcommittees.

### **2.4 Executive Roles**

VCRC is an unfunded organization that is totally reliant on the volunteer efforts of its members. In addition to their normal executive responsibilities, all executive committee members are expected to be working participants, carrying a share of the duties that staff would execute in a funded organization.

### **2.5 Executive Committee**

- The VCRC Executive Committee consists of the following:
  - Chair
  - Vice-Chair
  - Secretary
  - Nominations and Membership Committee Chair (Immediate Past Chairman)
  - All subcommittee chairs for the duration of their subcommittees
- The Chair, Vice-chair and Secretary shall serve no more than three consecutive years in any one office.
- The Immediate Past Chairman will serve as the Chair of the Nominations and Membership Committee.

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## 2.6 Role of the Chair

The Chair is to:

- Set the agenda for all regular meetings of the VCRC
- Invite and confirm all guests to VCRC meetings
- Prepare a Chair's report for regular meetings
- Chair meetings
- Be the public face of VCRC
- Liaise with City staff and represent the VCRC before Council
- Write letters as directed by the VCRC
- Keep track of the Motions and Action items of the VCRC and report back when they are completed or to be openly abandoned as not achievable.

## 2.7 Role of the Vice Chair

The Vice-chair is to:

- Assume the functions of the Chair when the Chair is not available
- Assist the Chair as he/she requests
- Provide oversight and reporting structure to all subcommittees, making sure they complete assigned Action Items in a timely way.

## 2.8 Role of the Secretary

The Secretary is to:

- Maintain minutes of regular meetings
- Maintain the record of Motions and Action Items
- Maintain the Membership List
- Distribute notifications and other communications at the direction of the Chair

## 2.9 Role of the Nominations and Membership Committee

The Nominations and Membership Chair is to:

- Provide a list of nominees for the executive positions at the regular VCRC meeting of each November. Upon two-thirds approval by the members in attendance the officers will assume office on January 1 of the following year
- Maintain liaison with Chinatown organizations so as to maximize representation at the Annual General Membership meetings
- Consult with the leadership of Chinatown organizations on specific matters likely to impact significantly on Chinatown

## **2.10 Role of Subcommittees and their Chairs**

Subcommittees will be created on an *ad hoc* basis by the VCRC to address needs as they arise. All committees and subcommittee chair appointments will expire\* on the day prior to the first meeting of each new calendar year, unless they will expire at an earlier date upon the completion of their work. VCRC Chair and Vice-chair are *ex-officio* members of all subcommittees.

At the first meeting of each year, the VCRC will evaluate each Sub-Committee's incomplete business and decide whether to continue the Sub-Committee in order to fulfill objectives.

## Appendix 1: Community organizations originally participating in VCRC

The following organizations comprised the original membership of the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee (Volume 1 Issue 1 VCRC Newsletter, October 2001):

- Chinese Benevolent Association of Vancouver
- Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver
- Chinese Community Policing Centre
- Chinese Freemasons
- Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee
- Chinatown Property Owner Association
- Chau Luen Benevolent Association
- Chiu Chow Benevolent Association of BC
- Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Classical Garden
- Lee's Benevolent Association of Canada
- Shon Yee Benevolent Association
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- Vancouver's Chinatown Merchants Association
- Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Area Society
- Yue Shan Benevolent Society
- Wong's Benevolent Association of Canada

## Appendix 2: Participation in the March 9, 2013 VCRC Visioning Exercise

The March 9 Visioning Exercise facilitated by Doug Soo was essential to updating the vision of the VCRC and to the development of the purpose and the structure outlined in this handbook. Participants in the exercise were:

Henry Tom	Mike Leung
Jaiie Yee	Carol Lee
Andrew Wong	Henry Fung
Doug Soo	Joe Wai
Edmund Ma	Laurence Ling
Kelly Ip	Esther Yue
Wesley Louie	Glen Wong
Ross Lam	Bob Sung
Judy Lam Maxwell	Vanessa Yu
Doug Halverson	Jordan Eng
Fred Mah	Shirley Chan
George Chow	Inge Roecker
Henry Yu	Gil Tan

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### Appendix 3: Further reading

- Vancouver Agreement  
<http://www.vancouveragreement.ca/city-of-vancouver-links/>
- Chinatown Vision  
<http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk//020723/rr2.htm>
- Three Year Action Plan  
<http://vancouver.ca/docs/planning/chinatown-2005-council-report.pdf>
- Historic Area Height Review  
<http://vancouver.ca/docs/planning/historic-area-height-review-policy-implementation-of-chinatown-related-items.pdf>
- Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan  
[http://lanewaysofvancouver.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/chinatownneighbourhoodplan\\_economicrevitalizationstrategy.pdf](http://lanewaysofvancouver.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/chinatownneighbourhoodplan_economicrevitalizationstrategy.pdf)
- Chinatown Economic Revitalization Action Plan  
<http://vancouver.ca/docs/planning/chinatown-economic-revitalization-action-plan.pdf>
- Chinatown Rezoning Policy for Chinatown South (HA-1A) – Outcome of HAHR for Chinatown  
<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/G017.pdf>
- Chinatown Vision Directions  
<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/C019A.pdf>
- Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan & Economic Revitalization Strategy – Staff Report  
<http://internal.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20120725/documents/ptec3-ChinatownNeighbourhoodPlanandEconomicRevitalizationStrategy.pdf>
- Chinatown Character (Contact VCRC for a copy)
- Chinatown Retail Character (Contact VCRC for a copy)

### Appendix 4: VCRC's Achievements

- Developed and presented the Chinatown Vision to City Council (adopted in 2002)
- Partnership with the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Agreement to secure funding for various revitalization initiatives
- Directional signage to direct people from the Stadium Skytrain station to Chinatown and the renaming to the Stadium/Chinatown Station.
- Chinatown Youth Idol Contest during the Chinatown Festival in the summer
- Table Tennis tournament in the summer
- Chinatown Arts & Cultural Festivals (lasted over several weekends in the summer)
- Dr. Sun Yet-Sen Garden courtyard mosaic unveiled on Jul 5/03
- Chinese New Year Celebration – worked with Friends of Victory Square and Carnegie Centre for the parade from Victory Square to Chinatown

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- Family Sports Day in February 2003 to support the Olympic Bid – Tai Chi, Kung Fu, dancing (demonstration & lesson)
  - Worked with SUCCESS on the Drug Prevention Forum
  - Produced several Chinatown Newsletters
  - Worked with Chinatown organizations -- such as the Chinatown Merchants Association and the Chinatown Business Improvement Association -- for various festival events
  - Fundraising dinner with the Carnegie Centre on May 16, 2003 to raise funds for the Community Arts Trust – handed over \$18,000
  - Bilingual Promotional Campaign
  - Marketing Plan
  - Environmentally-friendly shopping bags introduced to Chinatown community
  - Promotional CD (2<sup>nd</sup> edition being finalized)
  - Youth Group – Bike Event on Jun 26/04
  - Lecture series – SFU Campus Downtown and Green College
  - Chinatown Memorial Square place marker
  - Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Courtyard improvement
  - Chinatown pedestrian lighting improvement project
  - Chinatown Market Housing Study
  - Organized broad community support for a Community Amenity Contribution strategy for Chinatown
  - Community presentation on Dunsmuir and Georgia Viaducts
  - Successfully organized “Chinatown United” to support HADR rezoning policy
  - Successfully urged council to adopt the Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan
  - Chinatown Character document
  - Chinatown Retail Character document
  - Organized and presented Chinatown mayoral town hall meetings in 2009 and 2012 civic elections

### **Contributing Partners**

- Silk Road
- Carrall Street
- Millennium Gate
- Street Furniture
- Chinatown Parkade Plaza neon sign
- Chinatown Economic Revitalization Action Plan Study
- Downtown Eastside Local Area Planning Process participant