

VANCOUVER CHINATOWN REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE



February 28, 2011

CITY OF VANCOUVER
453 West 12 Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Y 1V4

Attn.: His Worship, Mayor Gregor Robertson and Vancouver City Councilors

Dear Sirs or Madams:

Re: Historic Area Height Review: Policy Implementation

On behalf of the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee and the Chinese community at large, we present our submission in support of the Historic Area Height Review: Policy Implementation.

The Historic Area Height Review rezoning policy for Chinatown is the culmination of a planning and visioning process that has taken 10 years. We believe that the immediate implementation of the rezoning policy and the accompanying guidelines is critical to calming speculation and providing more stable expectations for rents and property value.

The certainty will encourage private sector, public sector and non-government organizations investment in Chinatown to build a more sustainable and balanced residential population and fill vacant storefronts. We also believe that HAHR Rezoning Policy and Design Guidelines reinforce the long standing priorities for the preservation of Chinatown's unique architectural and cultural heritage.

Your truly,

Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee

Henry Tom
Chair

Key elements for Chinatown's support of the Historic Area Height Review: Policy Implementation



1. Chinatown is an historic neighbourhood defined by unique architectural, cultural, residential and commercial components requiring unique zoning and development consideration.
2. Chinatown serves the whole Greater Vancouver region as the living icon of Canada's multicultural heritage, and a diverse socio-economic population is needed to maintain the inclusive vibrancy and relevance of Chinatown's assets.
3. Support for the HAHR: Policy Implementation is widely based in Chinatown's deep rooted organizations.
4. Chinatown has completed a decade of planning and needs to move to implementation.
5. Chinatown believes the proposed Chinatown height amendments strike a good compromise between the much-needed physical renewal of the neighbourhood and the preservation and the conservation of those heritage characteristics that make it Chinatown.
6. Chinatown needs a diverse socio-economic population to safeguard its cultural and commercial vibrancy, which includes low-income residents.
7. Chinatown needs to maintain and enhance the commercial life that makes it an exciting place to work, shop and live.
8. Chinatown believes that uncertainty about future development potential leads to land speculation, poor building maintenance, vacant commercial space and empty lots.

Chinatown is a historic neighbourhood defined by unique architectural, cultural, residential and commercial components requiring unique zoning and development consideration.



Chinatown has been a distinct historic neighbourhood within the City, not only as one of the original neighbourhoods of an emerging City 125 years ago, but also in its current context because of its cultural heritage.

Chinatown has undergone an intensive planning process with the City of Vancouver during the past decade separate from the neighbouring Downtown Eastside communities in creating its vision for revitalization.

Chinatown supports Strathcona's Community Vision as an equally distinct neighbourhood with a solid sense of community.

The buildings in Chinatown form a large part of the heritage and cultural legacy of Chinatown. For the broader community these buildings, and the unique streetscape they form, have come to define the image and character of Chinatown. The Chinese community and the City have worked closely together to preserve these buildings, many which are owned by society and association organizations.

Preservation of heritage buildings in Chinatown is largely supported within the community. The heritage preservation initiatives by the City include the following:

- Heritage Registry
- Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program, 2003
- Heritage Incentive Program, 2003
- Historic Study of Society Buildings in Chinatown, July 2005
- Chinatown Society Buildings Planning Grant Program, 2009

The Chinatown Society Heritage Buildings Association was formed in 2009 to support the preservation of Society owned historic building stock. It is also working with the City to secure National Heritage Site and UNESCO World Heritage designation for Chinatown's historic district.

Chinatown has completed a decade of planning and needs to move to implementation.



The Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee (VCRC) was an initiative that began in 2000 as part of the Vancouver Agreement, a joint effort between all three levels of government and the local community to revitalize the Downtown Eastside. It was felt that steps had to be taken not only to preserve Chinatown for its historical and cultural significance, but also to invigorate and promote it as a vibrant community where people live, work and visit.

The Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee (VCRC) was officially formed in 2001 to encourage collaboration between the community and the City in developing short-term revitalization initiatives and a long-term vision for Chinatown.

The Chinatown Vision 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.

The key initiatives included:

- Heritage building preservation
- Chinatown history
- Public realm improvements
- Transportation access and pedestrian connections
- Neighbourhood linkages
- Safety and security
- Youth connections
- Tourism & local visitors
- Retail, goods and services
- Social and cultural development
- A complete community with a mix of uses.

In March 2004, Vancouver City Council requested City staff to report on the steps necessary to develop a Chinatown Community Plan. Based largely on the Chinatown Vision, the plan is targeted at encouraging private sector investment in Chinatown and improving conditions for those who live, work and visit the area.



In February 2005, Council approved a three-year action plan and work program to develop and implement a Chinatown Community Plan as the second phase of the Chinatown Revitalization Program. The comprehensive program summarizes ten years of cumulative work in the following areas:

- Cultural Development
- Economic Revitalization
- Residential Intensification
- Public Realm & Urban Design
- Community Development

Residential densification is the final key component in the Chinatown Community Plan and an important step in the revitalization of Chinatown by focusing on development of a consumer based community within Chinatown.

Housing studies in the neighbourhood have included:

- Chinatown Market Housing Study, 2004
- Society Buildings “Urban Acupuncture” Study, 2006
- Chinatown Market Development Economic Analysis, July 2008 prepared by G.P. Rollo & Associates Ltd., Land Economist
- Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside adopted by Council 2005

The Historic Area Height Review which is the result of this 10 year planning process was approved by City Council in January 2010 and was forwarded to City staff to proceed with the implementation process.

Support for the HAHR: Policy Implementation is widely based in Chinatown's deep rooted organizations.



The family/clan societies and benevolent associations in Chinatown have traditionally served a key role in the social life of Chinese-Canadians, providing mutual help, access to housing and the general welfare of their members. Their activities have evolved over the course of history, but their presence continues to help define and enhance Chinatown's unique cultural identity.

The original members of the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee included the following organization:

1. Chinese Benevolent Association
2. Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver
3. Chinese Community Policing Centre
4. Chinese Freemason
5. Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee
6. Chinatown Property Owner Association
7. Chau Luen Benevolent Association
8. Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Classical Garden
9. Lee's Benevolent Association of Canada
10. Mah's Association
11. Shon Yee Benevolent Association
12. S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
13. Vancouver's Chinatown Merchants Association
14. Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Society
15. Yue Shan Benevolent Society
16. Wong's Benevolent Association of Canada

The existing social and non-market housing stock in Chinatown is already protected by City policy and long-time community practice.



A key component of the revitalization process was the protection of the existing housing stock in Chinatown and preventing the displacement of existing residents.

Chinatown's existing housing is primarily in Single Room Accommodation (SRA) and government owned non-market housing.

SRA Stock in Chinatown

Name	Address	Units	Ownership
West Hotel	488 Carrall Street	98	Private
London Hotel	700 Main Street	70	BCBC
	221 East Georgia	14	P
Arno Rooms	291 East Georgia	34	P
Keefer Rooms	222 Keefer	45	P
Lung Jen Ben	240 Keefer	4	Society
Pacific Rooms	507 Main	30	P
New Sun Ah	100 East Pender	42	P
Chinese Freemason	110 East Pender	3	P
Asia Hotel	139 East Pender	35	S
Pender Place	228 East Pender	23	P
May Wah Hotel	258 East Pender	<u>120</u>	S
	Totals	518	
	Private	289 (56%)	
	Society	159 (31%)	
	Gov't	70 (14%)	

Source: *2009 Survey of Low-Income Housing in the Downtown Core-Housing Policy Community Services Group, April 2010*

The Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside adopted by Council in 2005 recognizes that the DTE will remain a primary low-income community in the City. A key housing plan policy includes “replacing SRA with low-income social housing on a 1 for 1 basis, and increase the quality of these units over time.”



Protection of SRA Housing is entrenched in City policy and protected by various initiatives by all three levels of government:

- Single Room Accommodation (SRA) By-Law, October 2003
- Amendment to SRA By-Law, December 2009
- Street to Home-\$5,000,000 grant approved by the City of Vancouver to BC Housing for the acquisition and upgrade of SRA properties and \$500,000 matching funds to the Streettohome Foundation
- The federal government Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provides \$16,000 grant per SRO unit for upgrades.
- Provincial Homelessness Initiative launched as a result of the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions in December 2004 - Province acquired 23 SRA hotels with 1,350 units in Vancouver through this initiative, primarily in the Downtown Eastside, to stabilize and upgrade units. In addition, the City purchased 2 SRA hotels.



The Chinese community has always support non-market and affordable housing within its community.

Social Housing Stock in Chinatown

Name	Units	Clientele	Household Type
Solheim Place	60 – 1 bed	Families	26
251 Union St	<u>26</u> – 2 bed+	Seniors	52
	86	Others	8
Lori Krill Co-op	3 - studio		
239 East Georgia St	52 – 1 bed	Families	42
	<u>42</u> – 2 bed	Seniors	0
	97	Others	55
Dart Coon Club	34	Seniors	
490 Columbia St	—		
Total	217		

Non-Market Housing in Chinatown and Surrounding Area

Name	Address	Units	Clientele	Household Type
C.B.A. Manor	32 W Pender	44	Families	17
			Seniors	27
Chau Luen Tower	325 Keefer St	82	Seniors	
China Villa	300 E Pender	50	Seniors	
Chinese Freemason's Manor	768 Prior	81	Seniors	
Chinese United Church Lodge	430 Dunlevy	29	Seniors	
Chinatown Lions Manor I	830 Campbell	68	Seniors	
Chinatown Lions Manor II	830 Campbell	18	Seniors	
Chinatown Lions Manor III	102 Main St	54	Seniors	
Mau Dan Gardens	350 E Pender	52	Families	27
			Others	25
Mau Dan Gardens	400 E Pender	34	Families	
Mau Dan Gardens	401 Keefer St	38	Families	
MacLean Park-Phase I	705 Jackson	159	Families	38
			Seniors	121
MacLean Park-Phase II	350 Keefer	300	Families	139
			Seniors	161
Shon Yee Place	628 E Hastings	72	Seniors	
S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Care Home	32 W Pender	<u>23</u>	Seniors	
	Total	1,104		

CONCLUSION-COMING TOGETHER

Economic Revitalization and Residential Densification



City Council's approval of the Historic Area Height Review: Policy Implementation on March 17th 2011 is vital to the health and survival of Vancouver's historic Chinatown. The approval of the recommendations provide clear guidelines for future development in the community.

The Historic Area Height Review is the result of a 10 year planning process and extensive community involvement and synthesizes the key components of economic revitalization with residential densification.

The HAHR: Policy Implementation is based on Council's policy direction of January 26, 2010.

The recommendations in the report endorses moderate height increases to support economic revitalization. Increased residential density will support local businesses that contribute to a vibrant healthy neighbourhood.

The Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee initiated extensive public consultation regarding the allocation of Community Amenity Contributions and recommended to Council that such benefits resulting from rezoning remain in the community to support innovative heritage, cultural and affordable housing projects and for the specific purpose of economic revitalization.

The Historic Area Height Review is sensitive to preserving the unique cultural and heritage aspects of the neighbourhood and the report provides revised design guidelines to reinforce the prevailing heritage context.

The current City housing policy protects the existing housing stock in the Chinatown and future development serves only to introduce an inclusive diversity of housing mix.

We therefore urge Council's support of the Historic Area Height Review: Policy Implementation without further delay.

Appendix

Additional studies completed by the City of Vancouver on Vancouver Chinatown



Chinatown Historic Site Nomination Package (2009)

http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/chinatown/pdfs/ChinatownNHS_Nomination.pdf

Chinatown New Residential Building Prototype Study (2008)

<http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/hahr/pdf/jan08chinatownstudy.pdf>

Chinatown Vision and Chinatown Community Plan

- Historic Area Height Review: Conclusions and Recommendations (January 19, 2009, RTS 8079)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20100119/documents/rr2a.pdf (PDF)
vancouver.ca/hahr (website)
- Chinatown Community Plan: Progress Report (December 12, 2006, RTS 6113)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20061212/documents/a3.pdf (PDF)
- Chinatown Community Plan (February 15, 2005, CC File No.8102)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20050215/p3-full.pdf (PDF)
- Chinatown Vision (July 23, 2002, RTS 2783)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/020723/rr2.htm

Heritage Incentive Programs

- Transfer of Density (ToD) Program and Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program (HBRP) Review (July 28, 2009, RTS 7281)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20090728/documents/csbu1.pdf (PDF)
- Status Report on the Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program for Gastown, Chinatown and Hastings Corridor (November 1, 2005, RTS 4565)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20051101/documents/a1.pdf (PDF)
- Heritage Incentives Implementation for Gastown and Chinatown (July 10, 2003, RTS 3222) vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20030710/pe3.htm
- Property Tax Incentives for Heritage Properties in Chinatown (October 30, 2002, RTS 3060) vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/021105/P2.htm

Chinatown Society Buildings Rehabilitation Strategy

- Chinatown Society Buildings Rehabilitation Strategy Update and Extension of the Society Buildings Planning Grant Program (Phase II) (May 21, 2009, RTS 8097)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20090521/documents/csb3.pdf (PDF)
- Chinatown Society Buildings Rehabilitation Strategy (February 14, 2008, RTS 6114)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20080214/documents/pe1.pdf (PDF)

Appendix

Additional studies completed by the City of Vancouver on Vancouver Chinatown



Public Realm Projects

- Market Alley Commemoration Project (December 17, 2009, RTS 8400)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20091217/documents/penv1.pdf (PDF)
- Chinatown Yue Shan Society Courtyard Improvement Project (July 21, 2009, RTS 8226)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20090721/documents/a11.pdf (PDF)
- Chinatown Plaza Parkade Neon Lighting Project (July 22, 2008, RTS 7510)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20080722/documents/a27.pdf (PDF)
- Carrall Street Greenway Detailed Design and Implementation (July 13, 2006, RTS 5800)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20060713/documents/pe3.pdf (PDF)
- Carrall Street Greenway Concept Design (April 28, 2005, RTS 4246)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20050428/pe8.pdf (PDF)
- Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden Society Education and Presentation Centre (December 2, 2003, RTS 3717) vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20031202/a11.htm
- Chinatown Millennium Gate (September 20, 2001, RTS 2260)
vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/010920/pe4.htm
- Chinatown Memorial Square Place Marker, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Park and Courtyard Improvements (July 26, 2001, RTS 2217) vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/010726/peA1.htm