



# BACKGROUND



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## Chinatown Community Plan

The Chinatown Vision adopted by Council in 2002 outlines 11 directions to guide future development in Chinatown. It aims to:

- further develop Chinatown as a complete mixed-use community that incorporates people of diverse social-economic and cultural backgrounds
- position Chinatown as a cultural district for Vancouver and its region, where locals and visitors can experience Chinese-Canadian heritage and culture, including its architecture, urban history, arts and commercial activities
- reflect Chinatown's historic role as a regional centre with institutions and services for the Chinese-Canadian community and other cultural groups
- reinforce the role of Chinatown as a regional cultural tourist destination.

The City of Vancouver has been working with the Chinatown community over the past nine years on a range of initiatives to revitalize Chinatown. The approach focuses on attracting new investments while respecting the area's culture and heritage. Key revitalization strategies include cultural and economic development, public space improvements, intensification of land use, and inter-generational programming.

Actions that have been completed or are ongoing include: a rehabilitation strategy for heritage buildings owned by Chinatown family associations and benevolent societies; the Carrall Street Greenway, which improves connections between Chinatown, Gastown, Hastings Street and downtown; addressing vacant storefronts on Pender Street; and monitoring development trends, including increasing development interest in Chinatown.

The Chinatown Community Plan is currently being developed based on the Council-approved Vision to guide Chinatown's long-term growth. The Plan will include policies for land use, built form, parking, public spaces and cultural and economic development.

### Historic Area Height Review

City Council has directed staff to undertake the Historic Area Height Review to look at opportunities for additional height and density in the Historic Area, which includes Chinatown, Gastown, Victory Square and Hastings & Main Street, while maintaining its unique character and scale. The Height Review is also considering how additional development might generate public benefits, such as affordable housing, heritage conservation, and social and cultural facilities.

Technical work was completed in 2008. An extensive public consultation process is underway. Public meetings, workshops and open houses took place in April and May 2009 to gather feedback from the public.

The public was asked to consider:

- maintaining current maximums (no change from current zoning regulations);
- moderate height increases (through rezoning); and,
- special sites (adding taller buildings, above 150 feet, at special sites).

Maintain Current Maximums: Most of the heritage buildings in the area are about 3 - 7 storeys. The current zoning bylaw allows for building heights of 50 - 100 feet, or about 5 to 10 storeys.

Moderate Height Increases: Low to mid-rise developments between 70 - 120 feet, or about 7 to 12 storeys, would be allowed through rezoning only. This is about 20 feet, or 2 storeys, higher than current zoning allows.

Special sites: Taller buildings at special sites in the Historic Area are also being discussed. The public was asked to consider three roles for taller buildings:

- markers (sites that mark features like boundaries or gateways or areas of high activity)
- Main Street Corridor
- transitions (transition from the Historic Area to adjacent areas of taller buildings, such as the Central Business District).

The height range being discussed for special sites is between 150 to 300 feet (about 15 to 30 storeys). The development of a taller building on any site will require additional technical analysis and public consultation, and would be through rezoning.

### Next Steps

The public consultation process for the Height Review has been extended to the end of July. Interested organizations can also contact staff to arrange for additional meetings and presentations. Staff aim to report to Council in the fall on what was heard throughout the process.

The results from the Historic Area Height Review will be incorporated in the Chinatown Community Plan which will also include land use, built form, public spaces, and parking issues. Any policy changes to the zoning bylaw and design guidelines will be discussed as part of the Plan. Public consultation will be held on these issues once a draft Plan is prepared. The public can also comment on the plan when it goes to Council for approval.