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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 1/16/2023 6:20:51 PM
Subject: Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan - additional questions

Good evening Mayor and Council,

I am writing in response to questions we have received from Council regarding the above-referenced report. The specific questions and responses from our staff team are as follows.

As general context, the initial responses within the Action Plan are focused on immediately actionable initiatives, for example increasing service levels for street cleaning. Through the outreach with the Chinatown BIA and other community groups that will take place in the next couple months, staff will determine if there are other improvements or initiatives that require further consideration from Council.

1. Other than parking, there's no mention of improved transportation services within Chinatown. Are there other efforts in the works? What about providing more bus shelters? Or improved bike parking? Or sidewalk upgrades?

Work is nearing completion this month in Chinatown to remove and replace the old parking meters with new pay stations and add new bike racks throughout the neighbourhood. A total of 234 new bike racks have been installed, either repurposing the old meter posts or new racks when that was not feasible. In the next couple years, there is also sidewalk rehabilitation work planned on Hastings St, between Gore and Dunlevy, as well as regular maintenance and repair work at various locations as required. If other amenities or repairs are identified through engagement with community groups, such as the need for additional transit shelters, staff will consider whether this can be accomplished through existing programs, and then work with community groups to prioritize and bring additional asks to Council as needed.

We also know that the community has ongoing concerns about transportation access to the neighbourhood, and as the work progresses related to North East False Creek implementation we will work with them to ensure access to Chinatown is improved.

2. Are there other efforts in the works to create safe spaces to gather outside, or other ways to improve the public realm?

There are existing programs that can support community groups to access, programme, improve streets and public spaces. For example, in the last few years, our teams have worked closely with community groups in Chinatown to programme Memorial Sq, supported the Hogan's Alley Society with community programming and are currently working with a few urban indigenous organizations in the area to create and programme gathering spaces. Existing programs generally cover partner-led activations or programming, as well as smaller scale infrastructure improvements. Further engagement with community groups will help staff assess if desired amenities and initiatives can be accomplished through existing programs or will require additional resources.

In addition to the initiatives that will be scoped in coming months in partnership with community groups, work continues to progress on the re-design of Memorial Sq. Community groups and the public will have opportunities to participate in the design process.

Staff are in the process of releasing a design RFP for the redesign of Chinatown Memorial Square. This project will renew this important public space in Chinatown that supports community-led programming and events, and helps conserve, commemorate, and enhance Chinatown's living heritage and cultural assets. A community working group was formed in 2022 and continues to support this work. When the design is completed early in 2024, staff will focus on implementation. The project is anticipated to be completed in 2025.

The work on North East False Creek implementation will also consider the public realm opportunities in Andy Livingston park and its relationship with Memorial Sq and the Chinatown neighbourhood.

3. How will Indigenous groups and Hogan's Alley Society be engaged?

Over the past month, staff have had to accelerate their planning efforts and deliberations, leading to the high-level recommendations in this report. Should Council approve the recommendations, staff will commence a more specific, detailed process to identify appropriate stakeholders, and determine the required level and mode of any initial or further engagement, as needed. This includes considerations related to Indigenous partners, Hogan's Alley Society, and any other relevant community groups.

Best,
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Snw̓x̓w̓ú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.