

**From:** "Mochrie, Paul" <[Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)>  
**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"  
**Date:** 7/24/2023 6:04:09 PM  
**Subject:** Memo - Chinese Society Legacy Program Update  
**Attachments:** Memo to Mayor and Council - Chinese Society Legacy Program Update.pdf

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Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Theresa O'Donnell, regarding the Chinese Society Legacy Program Update:

- The Program is inviting applications for small scale rehabilitation projects from the 12 Chinese Society buildings in Chinatown. Staff will initiate an application call-out to eligible Societies and seek Council's approval of the grants in Q3 2023. Building upgrades will take place after Council's approval.
- Part of the Program's funding will be used for a consultant study to support Societies to manage their revenue generating commercial units.

Should you have any questions, please contact Theresa O'Donnell ([Theresa.O'Donnell@vancouver.ca](mailto:Theresa.O'Donnell@vancouver.ca)).

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
City Manager  
City of Vancouver  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

## MEMORANDUM

July 20, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC  
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk  
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office  
Trevor Ford, Interim Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Sandra Singh, General Manager, ACCS

FROM: Theresa O'Donnell  
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Chinese Society Legacy Program updated: 2023

RTS #: N/A

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The purpose of this memo is to update Mayor and Council on the implementation of the Chinese Society Legacy Program ("the Program").

### **Background**

Council approved the Chinese Society Legacy Program in December 2015.<sup>i</sup> The initial intent of the Program was to provide seed funding to catalyse the full-scale rehabilitation of 12 Society-owned heritage buildings in Chinatown, as part of protecting Chinatown's cultural heritage assets.<sup>ii</sup> Since 2015, grants were disbursed to eligible Societies for the development of detailed business plans and a fundraising strategy.

Although the business plans and fundraising strategies were completed successfully, Societies were not able to proceed to full-scale rehabilitation. This is due to Societies lacking the technical and financial means to undertake these complex projects. In the meanwhile, Society buildings continue to deteriorate at all scales with many critical capital upgrades not completed.

## **New Implementation Strategy**

To respond to these challenges, staff adjusted the Program's implementation strategy to make the Program more accessible and deploy funding towards critical needs. Firstly, staff adjusted the maximum City funding contribution from 15% to 50% of the total project cost, with a maximum amount for each grant. Secondly, the Program will now focus on smaller scale rehabilitation projects rather than full building rehabilitation. Thirdly, part of the Program's funding will be used for a consultant study to support Societies in better managing their revenue generating commercial retail units.

This new implementation strategy is modeled after the Downtown Eastside (DTES) Grant Program, as Societies are already familiar with the program's application requirements and process.<sup>iii</sup> These changes have been approved by the staff Capital Planning and Delivery Oversight Committee (CPDOC).

Since the Program is now focused on immediate, urgent capital upgrades, the full rehabilitation of Society buildings will not be addressed. The cost of full rehabilitation will still need to be addressed in future Capital Plans and/or from funding provided from senior governments. Since 2016, the City has submitted funding requests for the Program to other levels of governments, including to the Province of British Columbia as part of the City-Province memorandum of understanding (MOU) towards a United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designation for Chinatown. To date, these funding requests have not materialized, and future funding asks by the City and fundraising efforts by the community are still needed.

## **Next Steps**

Staff will initiate an application call-out to eligible Societies and seek Council's approval of the grants in Q3 2023. Building upgrades will take place after Council's approval.

## **Conclusion**

The new implementation strategy for the Program contributes to the retention and maintenance of key cultural assets in Chinatown. These buildings enable non-profit organizations to continue providing affordable housing for Chinese seniors, strengthening intangible and living heritage, building a sense of community, and commemorating Chinese Canadian history. The outcomes align with Council's adoption of the Cultural Heritage Assets Management Plan (CHAMP) and Uplifting Chinatown motion.<sup>iv</sup>



Theresa O'Donnell  
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

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<sup>i</sup> <https://council.vancouver.ca/20160615/documents/cfsc2.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.chinatownsocieties.org/societies/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/special-enterprise-program.aspx>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/chinatown-cultural-heritage-assets-management-plan.pdf>