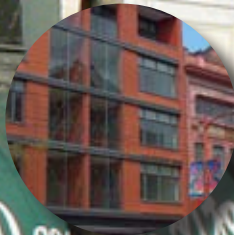




Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan & Economic Revitalization Strategy



June 2012

Chinatown

Neighbourhood Plan & Economic Revitalization Strategy

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About the Neighbourhood Plan

Since 2000 the Chinatown planning and revitalization process has worked to address complex community issues through immediate, community-based, action-oriented efforts. This plan reflects over a decade of community and City efforts to identify issues, develop revitalization policy and plans, and implement projects on the ground. As such, the Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan is more than a report card of actions taken, it provides a coherent and comprehensive approach to revitalizing the Chinatown neighbourhood that will guide community planning efforts in the years to come. Vancouver's Chinatown is one of the largest in North America and regeneration of this neighbourhood is of great significance to neighbourhood residents, the regional population, as well as national and international stakeholders.

About the Economic Revitalization Strategy

In 2010 Council approved the Historic Area Height Review (HAHR) recommendations enabling new residential development in Chinatown. A key objective of this new development was to create a local customer base to support Chinatown's struggling businesses and draw new investment into the area. Recognizing that "body heat" alone will not solve the issues of vacant storefronts, failing businesses and a negative public image, Council directed staff to work with the local business community to identify short-term and medium-term actions to support business retention, expansion and attraction. The Economic Revitalization Strategy, described in this document, builds on all that has been learned over the last decade of work in Chinatown and identifies the key short-term and medium term actions the community and City should take to ensure that a new, vibrant Chinatown will emerge in years ahead.

Chinatown is for Everyone

Vancouver's Chinatown is one of the largest in North America. Situated in a region with a high percentage of Chinese-speaking population, Chinatown's significance in Vancouver reaches far beyond the ten blocks of its physical boundaries.

Vancouver's Chinatown has always been a place of commerce, community organizing and advocacy. It has also been a place many people called home, metaphorically and physically. The neighbourhood has bore witness to the history, challenges and growth of the Chinese-Canadian community over the past century: the early pioneers' struggle to establish a home in Canada; the battle for citizenship and voting rights in the 1920s; and the fight against urban renewal and the freeway in the 1960s and 70s. Throughout history, Chinatown continues to adapt, grow and evolve.

The challenges and opportunities that face Vancouver's Chinatown in the 21st century are different. The historic and cultural significance of Chinatown has since been recognized by Vancouverites of all backgrounds and the Chinese-Canadian communities continue to thrive in all parts of the region. At the same time, Vancouver and the surrounding region are becoming increasingly multi-cultural.

For Chinatown to continue to remain relevant in a more multi-cultural Vancouver, it must strive to connect to younger generations and to reach out to people of all backgrounds. To remain economically competitive, it must do so without losing its culture and heritage - assets that define its identity and set it apart from other neighbourhoods.



East Pender Street Looking West from Columbia Street c. 1966. (Vancouver Archives CVA 780-456)

The Chinatown Vision Statement

The Chinatown Vision is the product of an extensive grass-roots community process supported by action-oriented planning and a close partnership between the City and the community. The 11 Vision Directions developed by the community described Chinatown as:

**"a place that tells the history with its physical environment,
a place that serves the needs of residents, youth and visitors,
and a hub of commercial, social and cultural activities."**

Chinatown Vision Directions

1. Heritage Building Preservation
2. Commemoration of Chinese-Canadian and Chinatown History
3. Public Realm Improvements
4. Convenient Transportation and Pedestrian Comfort
5. A Sense of Security
6. Linkage to the Nearby Neighbourhoods and Downtown
7. Youth Connection and Community Development
8. Attractions for Vancouverites and Tourists
9. A Community with a Residential and Commercial Mixture
10. Diversified Retail Goods and Services
11. A Hub of Social and Cultural Activities

Introduction

I. Historical Overview

Established in the 1880s, Chinatown is one of the two formative communities of Vancouver. This community stands as the vibrant centre of an evolving and enduring culture. The formation of cultural identity through community organizations, the expression of social and cultural history through a distinctive urban and cultural landscape, and the genesis of vernacular architecture are some of the defining characteristics of this lively neighbourhood.

Chinatown speaks to important historical themes in Canada relating to urban immigration and settlement patterns. As one of the original ethno-cultural communities in Vancouver, Chinatown epitomizes the core value of contemporary Canadian society – cultural diversity. It continues to provide numerous social and cultural functions while adapting to change and preserving its historic sense of place. Below are some of the significant moments in Chinatown's history and development.



Undated postcard showing Carrall Street looking south from Pender Street c.1906

1880s - 1900: Establishing a Community

In the late 1880s at the conclusion of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), sojourners attracted by the opportunities in the newly established city, arrived in what was to become Vancouver. Many of Chinatown's earliest residents were railway workers, whose efforts in building the trans-continental railway were recognized as a National Historic Event (1977); 1885, a federal head tax of 50 dollars was instituted; 1887, the presence of a "China Town" at the south end of Carrall Street was noted in local papers; 1889, the construction of the first brick building in Chinatown; 1890s, the construction of the

theatre and opera house and the establishment of the Vancouver branch of the Chinese Benevolent Association. An emerging merchant class was established. In 1887 the Chinese population was estimated at 90 but by 1901 the population had risen to almost 2900.

1900 - 1911: Growth and Importance

With the growing importance of Vancouver, Victoria-based Society headquarters moved to Vancouver; 1903, the Empire Reform Association was formed; 1903, head tax was raised to 500 dollars; 1907, a mob charges through Chinatown and Japantown after a meeting of the Asiatic Exclusion League; subsequent reports led to immigration quotas for the Japanese and ultimately to the Chinese Exclusion Act; 1909, the Chinese Benevolent Association building was opened; 1911, Vancouver's Chinese population of approximately 3500 had surpassed Victoria's. In this period, Chinatown expanded eastward to Gore and the overall identity of the district was established with the construction of the first of a number of Society buildings, starting with the Chinese Empire Reform Association on Carrall Street. The establishment of the Reform Association and the visits of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen attested to the connection Vancouver's Chinatown retained with China and the interest and participation in her affairs.



Pender and Carrall Streets in 1912. (Vancouver Public Library photo A49544)

1923 - 1947: Exclusion Act to Enfranchisement

1923 saw immigration to Canada closed for the vast majority of Chinese with the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act on July 1st. Chinatown struggled with families unable to reunite, and an aging bachelor population; 1935, the first of three major music societies was established; 1936, Chinatown celebrated Vancouver's Jubilee by erecting a Chinese Village on the site of today's cultural centre, a turning point in attitudes to the district; 1947, through the efforts of Wong Foon Sien (declared a National Historic Person in 2008) on behalf of Chinese war veterans, the 1923 Act was repealed and Canadian citizenship was granted to Chinese Canadians. The BC legislature returns the right to vote to the Chinese that same year.



Restaurants and their exuberant neon signs were part of the city's night-time scene in the 1960s and 70s.

1947 - 1966: New Opportunities



Pender Street in 1978. (Vancouver Archives CVA780-461)

With immigration restrictions removed, Chinatown flourished. New and popular restaurants and businesses, attracted citizens from across the city; popular nightclubs such as Forbidden City became part of the city's social scene; 1957, Chinatown was noted in the City's 25 year plan for downtown as an economic bright spot. In the same year, Canada's first Chinese-Canadian MP

Douglas Jung, was elected in the riding of Vancouver Centre which includes Chinatown. In the 1950s, freeway plans were floated which threaten parts of the district.

1966 - 2012: Freeway Debate to a Chinatown Plan

Rallies and marches drew attention to Chinatown and the threat posed by freeway construction and urban renewal projects. Throughout the 1960s and 70s Chinese organizations fought the redevelopment and freeway proposals; 1971, Chinatown was protected as a historic district along with Gastown under provincial legislation; 1980s, beautification projects were underway; 1981, Chinese



Renovated historic courtyard in the Yue Shan building.

Cultural Centre construction began; 1986, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Classical Garden opened; 2000, the Downtown Eastside Community Development Project starts through the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC); 2001, the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee is formed; 2002, City Council approves the Chinatown Vision as a blueprint of Chinatown's future and to direct capital investments and projects; 2005 to 2008 the three year action plan for revitalization; 2009 to 2012, completion of the Historic Area Height Review, Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan and development of a 3-Year Economic Revitalization Strategy.

(Source: Chinatown National Historic District Nomination Package, February 2009)



The Chinese community celebrating the end of World War II in Chinatown at Pender and Columbia Streets. (Vancouver Public Library photo A45087)

II. Profile of the Neighbourhood



Chinatown and downtown.

Vancouver and the surrounding region have rapidly grown in the past twenty years. The city has been well-recognized for its achievements in building vibrant mixed-use neighbourhoods that offer quality, high-density living. Vancouver is also recognized by the values shared passionately by its residents, and one of the most important ones is the continued preservation, retention and integration of the city's historic roots while the city grows.

Within this context, Chinatown and the surrounding areas are a community in transition. Today, Chinatown is situated in a region with a large percentage of Chinese-Canadian population. The significance of this historic neighbourhood's future reaches far beyond its physical boundaries. While Vancouver values strongly heritage conservation, the preservation of this young city has never been about freezing a place in time. This is particularly true for Vancouver's Chinatown, whose success

throughout history was dependent on its ability to adapt and reinvent itself while maintaining its culture and identity.

Chinatown, like many historic neighbourhoods in other North American cities, have experienced decline due to similar social and economic issues. At the heart of the continued discussion of Chinatown's future is the delicate balancing of growth, economic opportunities, affordability, heritage conservation and community participation. Other issues also include housing, scale of development, goods and services for the growing population, and Chinatown's culture and identity in the midst of changes. As one of the largest, most intact Chinatowns in North America, Vancouver's Chinatown has unique opportunities and challenges in its regeneration. The following section provides some key statistics from Census 2006 of this neighbourhood regarding its built environment and its population.

Chinatown Plan Area

The Chinatown Plan Area covers approximately 10 blocks, totalling 45 acres of land area within the City of Vancouver. The City of Vancouver has a population of 578,000, and is situated within the Metro Vancouver region, the third largest metropolitan area in Canada with a population of 2.1 million¹. Notably, 25.3% of the City's population, and 15.3% of the region's population identified Chinese as their mother tongue².

Chinatown is a centrally located neighbourhood: located east of the downtown peninsula and adjacent to a number of residential neighbourhoods, including historic Strathcona, the newer high-density developments at City Gate, International Village, and the upcoming Northeast False Creek development. Chinatown's southern boundary is defined by the large structure of the Georgia Street viaduct, remnants of a freeway project that Chinatown helped stall in the 1960s and 70s. It is connected to other neighbourhoods by two main corridors, Main Street and Hastings Street, and is well-served by transit.

Chinatown and the surrounding areas are often described as the historic roots of Vancouver, reflecting its rich physical and cultural heritage. Chinatown is one of the neighbourhoods within the diverse and vibrant Downtown Eastside community, which includes Gastown, Victory Square, Strathcona, Oppenheimer, and adjacent Industrial Areas.



Chinatown and Downtown Eastside.

The Chinatown Plan Area is comprised of two Zoning Districts: Pender Street (Historic Area-1 or HA-1) and Chinatown South (Historic Area-1A or HA-1A). Pender Street (HA-1), the historic core of Chinatown, is a municipally protected historic area (see map on page 14).

Many of its buildings, mostly two to four storeys tall built on narrow lots, were constructed in early 1900s. A number of them are now protected heritage properties and are concentrated along Pender Street (HA-1). HA-1's Zoning and Development Bylaw generally allows a lower building scale that is compatible with heritage buildings. The HA-1A Zoning District was established in 1994, to encourage more development of low to mid-rise scale in Chinatown South, where fewer heritage buildings are located.

Population, Age, Language

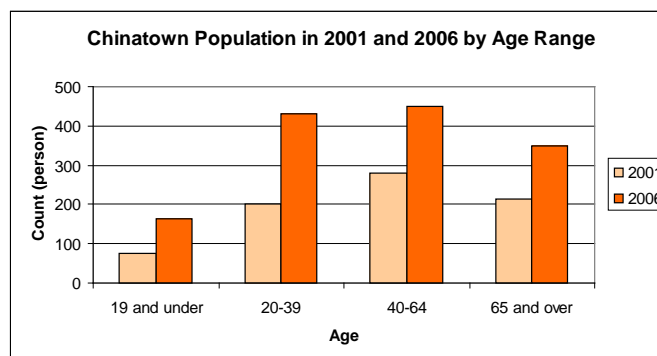
The neighbourhood has always been mixed use with a strong residential base both within Chinatown and the adjacent Strathcona neighbourhood. Up until the 1990s, the residential population in Chinatown declined, leaving many buildings vacant and contributing to the economic challenges of the area.

However, the 2006 Canada Census recorded a significant population growth from 2001. The number of people living in Chinatown nearly doubled from 775 people to 1,420 in this five-year period. This growth can be mainly attributed to a number of larger residential developments at the southern edge of Chinatown. These new residents were also younger in age. In 2006, the age group between 20 to 39 years (31%) is almost as large as the age group between 40 to 64 years (32%).

Many Chinatown residents (41%) continue to be of Chinese ethnicity (i.e. identifying their ethnic origin as Chinese according to 2006 census data).

Population		
	Chinatown	City of Vancouver
Census Population	1,420	578,041
Population 5 yrs prior	775	545,671
Population change in 5 yrs	81.80%	5.90%
Immigrant population	49.08%	45.62%
Aboriginal population	9.89%	2.59%

Age Groups		
	Chinatown	City of Vancouver
19 and under	11.80%	17.90%
20-39	30.80%	34.50%
40-64	32.30%	34.50%
65 and over	25.10%	13.10%



Household Structure and Income

Many residents in Chinatown live in one-person households. The average size of a household in Chinatown is 1.8 persons, compared to 2.2 persons city-wide. The median household income in Chinatown is approximately \$17,000, significantly less than that of the whole city. A large portion of the households are considered low income. It should be noted that the large percentage of one-person households affects the median household income figure.

Households		
	Chinatown	City of Vancouver
Number of private households	580	253,210
One-person households	50.90%	38.60%
Average size of household	1.8	2.2
Median household income	\$17,658	\$47,299
Population in low income households	67.00%	26.60%
Families		
Number of families	195	145,605
Single parent families	15.40%	16.20%

Housing

Dwellings		
	Chinatown	CofV
Rented dwellings	80.20%	51.90%
Average gross rent **	\$625	\$898
Type of dwelling		
Single-detached house	0.00%	19.10%
Semi-detached house	0.00%	1.50%
Detached duplex	0.00%	16.90%
Row house	3.50%	3.30%
Apartment (< 5 storeys)	13.00%	34.80%
Apartment (> 5 storeys)	83.50%	24.20%
Age of dwelling		
built before 1946	14.50%	18.10%
built 1946-1960	0.00%	13.60%
built 1961-1970	0.00%	13.10%
built 1971-1980	0.00%	13.80%
built 1981-1990	3.40%	14.20%
built 1991-2000	26.50%	18.30%
built 2001-2006	55.60%	8.90%

Chinatown has traditionally been an affordable neighbourhood with a mix of rental, Single Room Occupancy Hotels (SROs), non-market housing and owner-occupied market housing. Over half of the housing units were recently constructed between 2001 and 2006. Another 25.6% of the units were built between 1991 and 2000. There was very little housing built in the half century period between 1946 and 1990. A number of the units (14.5%) constructed before 1946 are still remaining today.

The 2006 census showed that a high percentage (80%) of dwellings in the neighbourhood have remained rented dwellings (i.e. not owner-occupied, which could include dwelling units in SRO, non-market housing and market housing buildings). These units are typically in multi-level apartment buildings, and they offer relatively affordable rents compared to the city average.

In recent years, new market housing units have been developed in Chinatown and have brought more residents to the neighbourhood. In 2012, there are several significant development and rezoning applications in process under the new zoning and development guidelines that resulted from the Historic Area Height Review (2010). If these projects are successful it could result in 500-700 new residents in the next few years; a significant increase in the resident population.

Employment & Incomes

The 2006 unemployment rate in Chinatown was 13.3%, more than twice the figure for the whole city. The average household income in Chinatown was \$29,986, compared to City average of \$68,271. The neighbourhood has been and continues to be a pre-dominantly low-income community.

Labour force		
	Chinatown	CofV
Employed labour force	495	310,640
Working at home	8.10%	8.60%
Working in the City, outside the home	17.20%	52.60%
Unemployment rate	13.30%	6.00%
Mode of travel to work		
Car, truck, van as driver	23.40%	51.50%
Car, truck, van as passenger	3.20%	6.10%
Public transit	31.90%	25.10%
Walked to work	30.90%	12.20%
Bicycle	2.10%	3.70%
Other method	8.50%	1.30%

Mode of Travel to Work

Reflecting its central location and accessibility to public transit, a large percentage (64%) of Chinatown's residents take public transit, walk or bike to work. In contrast, 42.3% of Vancouver residents take public transit, walk or bike to work.

Chinatown Tomorrow

All of this data indicates that Chinatown is a neighbourhood in transition. Central to the search for Chinatown's future are questions such as: Who is Chinatown for today? Who will be living, shopping and working here in the future? How will the existing low-income community and the new residents define a new vision for the neighbourhood that celebrates and strengthens the cultural and historic fabric while embracing new opportunities?

(Census 2006, Statistics Canada)

III. Planning & Policy

Prior to 2000, a number of policies provided a regulatory framework for development in Chinatown, including policies in the Central Area Plan (1990), and the Chinatown District Schedule and Design Guidelines (1994). Since then, Chinatown has received more intensive planning efforts, which led to a community vision and the comprehensive Chinatown Community Plan.

Chinatown Vision (2002)

In 2000, the Downtown Eastside Community Development Project began with funding support from the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC). The aim of this project was to mobilize the community and bring together community stakeholders to address issues of community safety and economic revitalization.

The Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee (VCRC) was officially formed in 2001, bringing together more than twenty of the area's social, cultural, residential, and business groups to work with the City on immediate projects and to develop a long-term vision for Chinatown. In 2002, the Vision was brought to City Council for adoption. The Vision served to guide City policy decisions, priorities, budgets and capital plans in the Chinatown community. Implementation of the Vision began immediately with a number of initiatives such as public realm enhancements, business improvement strategies, and the extension of heritage incentives for Chinatown.

Three-year Action Plan (2005-2008)

At the close of NCPC funding in 2004, Council directed staff to develop a comprehensive planning program, with actions over three years to continue implementation of the Chinatown Vision. A full-time Social Planner dedicated to community development in Chinatown was approved, as part of the work program. The Action Plan included the following key work areas: community and social development, residential intensification, public realm, transportation, cultural development, and economic development.

HAHR & Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan

Since 2009, staff have been working, at Council's direction, to develop and complete the Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan. One of the most significant pieces of policy work completed during this time was the Historic Area Height Review (HAHR). The objectives of the HAHR were to provide direction for growth and development in the Historic Area; maintain its character and general building scale; and ensure that future new development potential generates public benefits and amenities for the area. Council approved the HAHR Conclusions and Recommendations report in January 2010, and implementing policy and by-law amendments in January 2011. This Plan document provides a summary of the comprehensive array of Council approved policies and directions and relevant community-led projects since 2000. The policies and directions described in this plan are in different stages of implementation and there will be on-going implementation and monitoring.

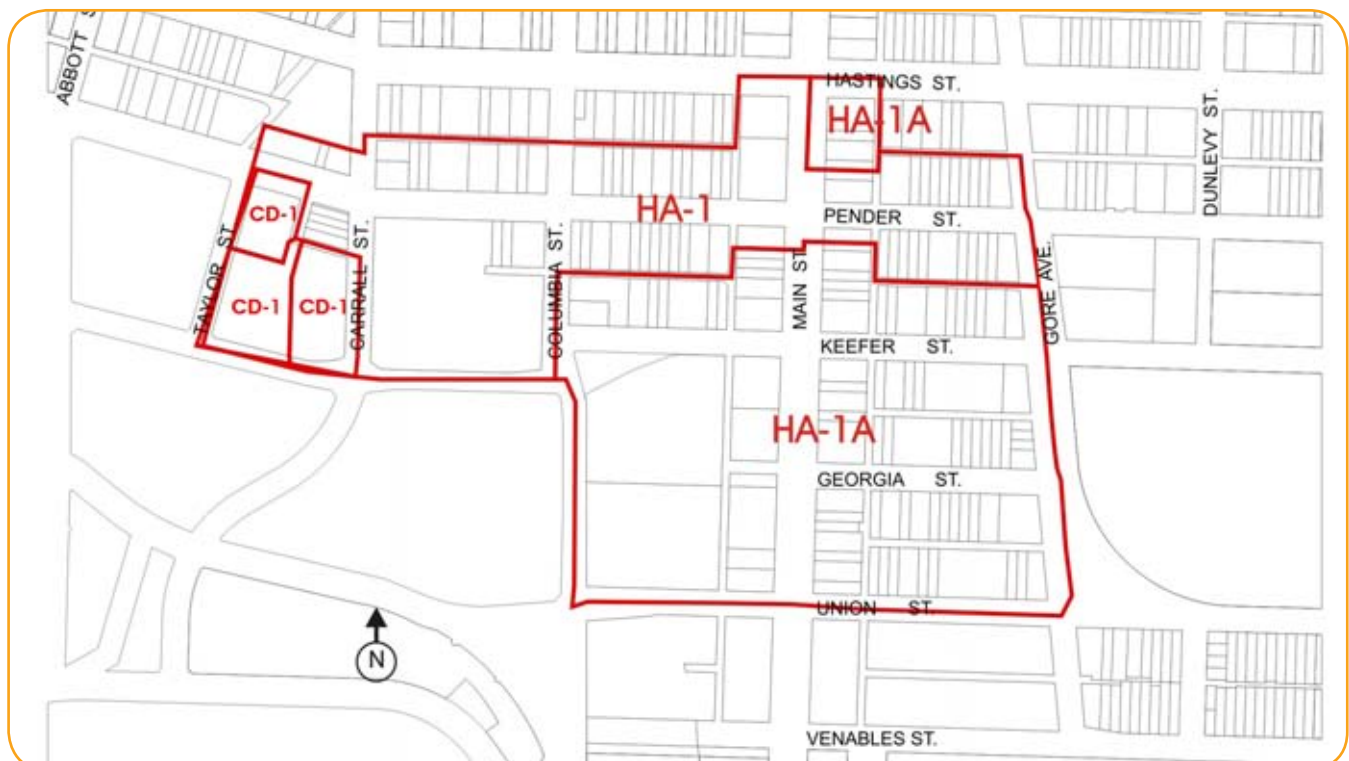


IV. Plan Structure

This Plan is organized into five chapters:

1. *Heritage and Culture*
2. *Built Form and Urban Structure*
3. *Land Use*
4. *Public Places and Streets*
5. *Community and Economic Development*

Each chapter includes an introduction, a description of community resources and underlying issues and opportunities, key strategies as approved by Council in the Chinatown Vision and Three-Year Action Plan, and a summary of approved Council policies and directions. Policies that have been implemented include an update. This Plan is a summary document and does not intend to replace original policies as adopted by Council. For details, please refer to the original policy documents. A complete list of them can be found in the References section at the end of the Plan.



Chinatown Plan Area Including the Zoning Districts of HA-1 and HA-1A.



Heritage and Culture

Protecting and Growing Assets



Vancouver's Chinatown is a valued cultural and heritage resource. The neighbourhood has an opportunity to become a regional - even global - destination where people can experience Chinatown's culture and heritage through its architecture, urban life, and festival events. To achieve this, Chinatown needs to respect and protect its cultural assets, and at the same time reach out to the world to make Chinatown relevant not only for Chinese-Canadians, but for everyone.

(Vancouver Archives Bu N158.1)

Community and Neighbourhood Resources

Chinatown as a Historic Area

Chinatown is one of the city's founding neighbourhoods. The community began to establish in the area in the 1880s as workers moved into the city after the completion of the railway. Many of the heritage buildings that stand today were built at the turn of the 20th century. Chinatown was recognized as a Provincially-designated Historic Area in 1971. In the 1990s, responsibility for Provincial designation was transferred to the City and Chinatown is now a municipally-designated historic area.

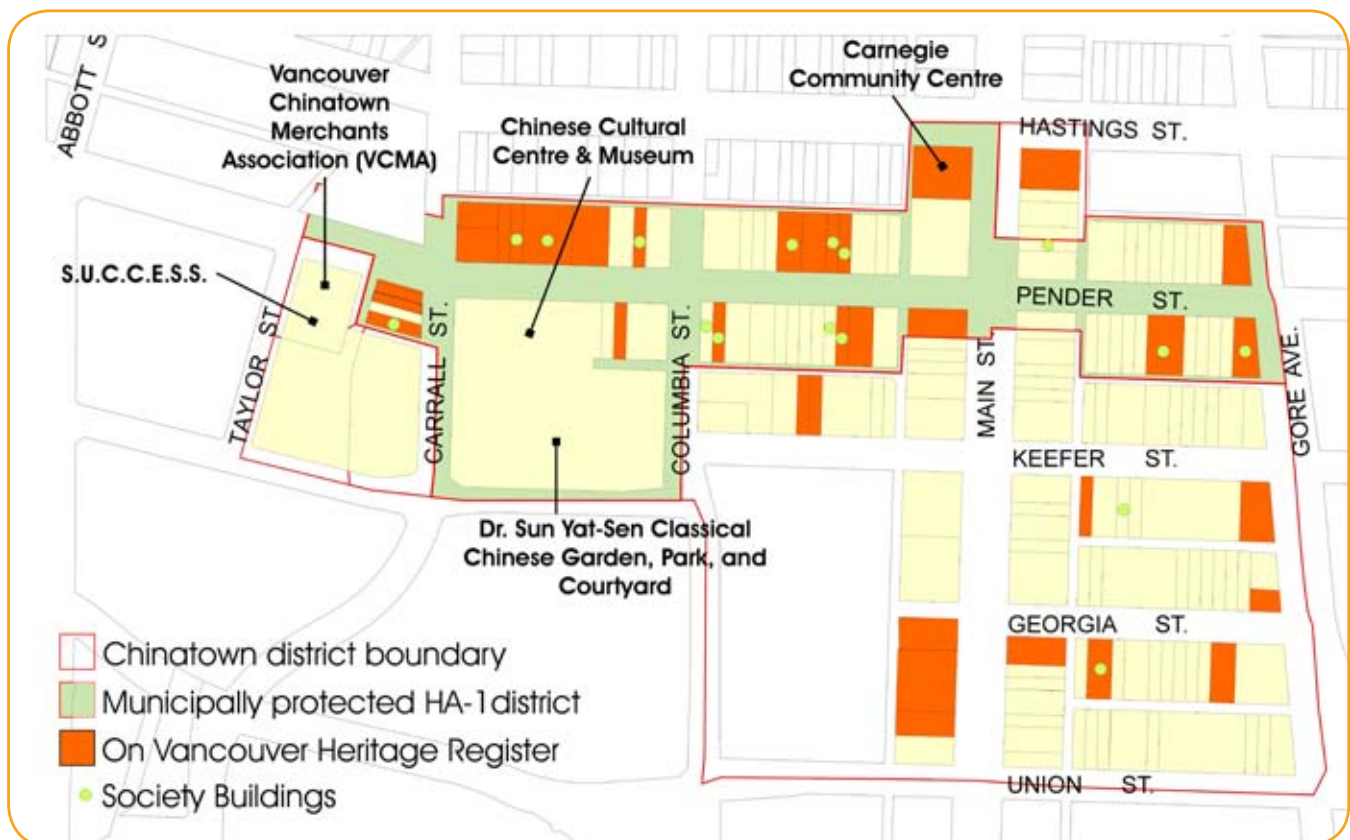
In the 1980s, prompted by the City's Centennial Celebration, Vancouver developed a Heritage Program to promote conservation and understanding of the City's valuable heritage resources. This included the first Transfer of Density Policy in 1984 to assist with heritage retention and the adoption of the Vancouver Heritage Register in 1986.

Rich Cultural Assets

Chinatown is known for its rich cultural assets. These include 33 protected heritage buildings, key cultural facilities, and the Chinese Family Associations and Benevolent Society buildings. Many of these assets are concentrated along the Pender Street (HA-1) historic core which is also the area for the National Historic Site nomination. In addition to these physical assets, Chinatown has an active community which organizes many cultural events throughout the year.

Society Heritage Buildings

Chinatown Family Associations and Benevolent Societies ("Society") represent extensive community networks that have been central to Chinatown's early establishment. These Societies continue to serve the area's commercial, cultural and social functions. Twelve of the 33 heritage buildings in Chinatown are owned by Societies.



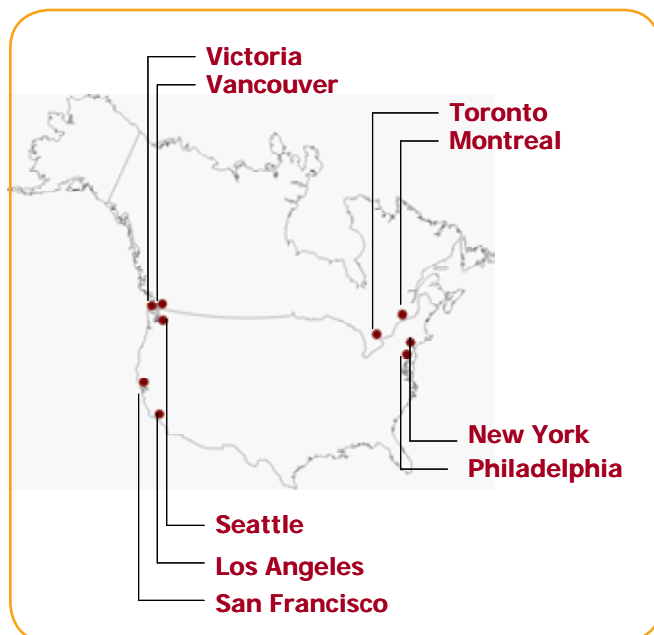
Cultural Assets in Chinatown.

Most of these buildings have not seen major renovation since they were built nearly 100 years ago. Both the architectural character of these buildings and its mix of uses contribute to the character of Chinatown. The building typology typically includes small retail at grade, a mix of community-based uses or housing on the upper floors, and a full floor (typically the top) reserved as the Society meeting hall.

Many buildings also contained courtyards and breezeways which connected the streets and the alleys. These semi-private spaces provided ventilation, light and much needed open space for residents in a dense urban environment. They also contributed to Chinatown's urban development pattern through intra-block connections to the streets and alleys.



Mixed use typology of the Chinatown Society Buildings.



Global Networks

Vancouver is often described as one of the gateways to the Asia-Pacific region and Vancouver's Chinatown is part of a larger network of Chinatowns. As such, many Societies have chapters in cities around the world, and host regular international conferences with hundreds of participants.

Vancouver is a sister city with Guangzhou, Yokohama and a number of other cities. Many of Chinatown's organizations have economic and social connections to Asia. There is great potential for Vancouver's Chinatown to benefit and be one of the centres for coordinating the movement of ideas, people and economic opportunities, including tourism.

Council Policies and Directions

Key Strategies

- *Preservation of Heritage Buildings*
- *Enhance Cultural Facilities*
- *Encourage Community Programming and Events*
- *Partner with Academic Institutions*

Council Policies and Directions

- 1.1 *Heritage Buildings*
- 1.2 *Transfer of Density Policy*
- 1.3 *Society Buildings Strategy*
- 1.4 *Chinese Cultural Centre and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden*
- 1.5 *National Historic Site*

1.1 Heritage Buildings

The Vancouver Heritage Register was adopted in 1986 by City Council to inventory properties and sites with architectural and historical significance. The accompanying City-wide Heritage Policies and Guidelines were developed to protect heritage resources and to regulate their alterations and redevelopment. Chinatown has 33 buildings listed on the Heritage Register, 12 of which are owned by Chinese Family Associations and Benevolent Societies.



East Pender Street in 1970s.

Chinatown's zoning was revised in 1994 to provide opportunities for growth while protecting the historic core. The neighbourhood was split into two zoning districts: HA-1 for the Pender Street historic core and HA-1A for the remainder of Chinatown (see map on page 8). In addition, responding to the community's desire to stimulate more development in Chinatown, a number of buildings of lesser heritage significance were removed from the Vancouver Heritage Register.

In 2002, to participate in the federal government's Historic Places Initiative, the City retained consultants to develop Statements of Significance for Chinatown as a whole as well as for individual buildings in the area.

The Chinatown Statement of Significance is an important tool to enrich public understanding and guide conservation planning of heritage buildings, in addition to the City's Heritage Register and its associated policies and guidelines. The Statement of Significance describes heritage value in a broader sense, including historic, aesthetic, scientific, educational, cultural, social, and spiritual significance. This tool is particularly applicable to Chinatown, a neighbourhood whose heritage value lies not only in its physical environment, but also in its cultural activities and social networks.



Lion Dancing in Society Hall.

1.2 Transfer of Density Policy

In 2002, to facilitate heritage building rehabilitations and to kick-start economic revitalization in the Historic Area, special incentives were developed. The Council-approved Heritage Incentive Programs was initiated in 2003 for a five-year period (2003-2008) for Chinatown, Gastown, Hastings Corridor and Victory Square. These Programs included new provisions for density transfer in addition to the 1984 Transfer of Density Policy. Property Tax Relief and Heritage Façade Improvement Grants were also available as additional incentives.

The Programs were adjusted after the five-year pilot period as increasing numbers of projects seeking density transfer and incentives have contributed to density bank challenges. In 2009, Council approved a series of actions to rebalance the density bank. Council also approved the continuation of the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program for three more years (2009-2011).

In 2010, Council approved options to the Transfer of Density Policy and Procedure to allow density to be transferred into or within Chinatown South (HA-1A). This policy allows larger development projects to have the option to assist heritage building rehabilitation projects in Chinatown. The heritage incentives were successful in facilitating rehabilitation and active reuse of heritage properties, especially for privately-owned buildings. In Chinatown, two buildings were fully rehabilitated and two buildings had renovated façades.



Chinese Freemasons Building
5 West Pender
Project Status: Complete

This previously vacant heritage building was rehabilitated to include 11 residential units with common dining facilities, a hobby room, and outdoor gardens.



Wing Sang Building
51 East Pender
Project Status: Complete

This is the oldest heritage site in Chinatown. There are two vacant buildings on site which were rehabilitated as offices and an art gallery.

1.3 Society Buildings Strategy

Family Associations and Benevolent Societies in Chinatown are typically member-based, non-profit organizations. Many of them have limited financial resources and little development experience. As such, they have not been able to take full advantage of the City's incentives for heritage buildings rehabilitation. Rehabilitating these buildings is a challenge for both the Societies and the broader community.

To support the community's effort, in 2008, Council approved the Chinatown Society Buildings Rehabilitation Strategy to support Societies in their heritage conservation planning, implementation and organizational capacity building.

Central to the Strategy was the Society Buildings Planning Grant Program. This Program provided grants for Societies to work with professional consultants to develop rehabilitation



Stained Glass Window in Society Building.

plans specific to their long-term visions, heritage building conditions, programming, and operational needs.

Five Societies have completed their Rehabilitation Plans. A number of Societies are actively pursuing building rehabilitation. Staff will continue to assist the Societies in seeking funding partners, including government and private investors, to realize these projects. Go to Chapter 6 : Economic Revitalization Strategy for more information on the recommended next steps to assist Society Buildings.

Community Development: Chinatown Society Heritage Buildings Association (CSHBA)

The CSHBA is a non-profit organization established by the Chinatown Societies to support the rehabilitation of Society heritage buildings through information sharing, fundraising and public education. The City supported the establishment of the Association, and continues to liaise with it to implement the Society Buildings Strategy.

The Association serves as a tremendous resource in engaging and building awareness amongst the Societies and the community in general. As a result of the outreach, the Kung Chow Society recently moved their head-quarters back into Chinatown. Other examples of projects City staff and the CSHBA have worked on include: National Historic Site of Canada nomination, a Chinatown Cultural Development Study and the Yue Shan Courtyard renovation project to enhance cultural programming space.



1.4 Chinese Cultural Centre and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden

The Chinese Cultural Centre and the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden are two major cultural facilities in Chinatown. They have a strong physical presence and are central to Chinatown's identity as a cultural attraction for residents and visitors. Aside from providing educational courses, tours, cultural events and programming, the Chinese Cultural Centre is also a testimony of the community's activism and dedication to promoting Chinese-Canadian culture. These values are respected and shared by many community members.



Chinese Class at the Chinese Cultural Centre.

The Chinese Cultural Centre of Vancouver was founded in 1972 and is currently supported by over 50 community organizations and three levels of government³. The Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden Society was established in 1985. The City dedicated a full block of City-owned land in the heart of Chinatown (through a nominal lease) for these facilities. In 2002, the City and Western Economic Diversification of Canada (a federal agency) provided additional capital funding for the expansion of the Garden.

Over the years, the City also invested in a number of major public realm improvements to reinforce this cultural heart of Chinatown, including the Sun Yat-Sen Courtyard upgrade, the Millennium Gate and the Chinatown Memorial Square (see Chapter 5 for more details).



Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden.

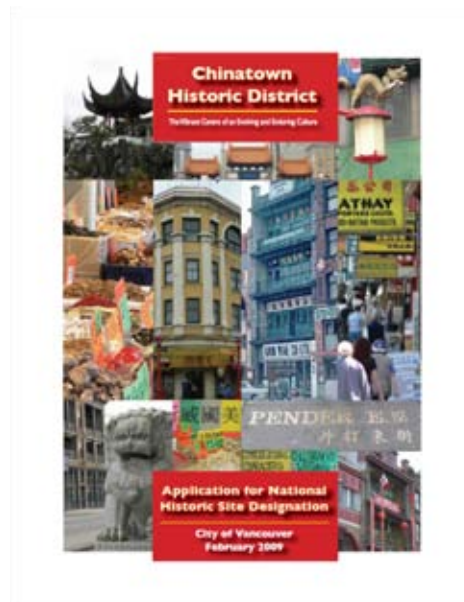
1.5 National Historic Site

Chinatown is a vibrant centre of an evolving and enduring culture. The formation of its cultural identity through community organizations, expression of social and cultural history, and distinctive architecture are some of defining characteristics of this lively neighbourhood⁴.

Chinatown also speaks to important historical themes in Canada relating to urban immigration and settlement patterns. As one of the original ethno-cultural communities in Vancouver, Chinatown epitomizes the core value of contemporary Canadian society: cultural diversity⁵.

In February 2009, Council passed a motion to support the community in its effort to secure United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Heritage Site listing for Vancouver's Chinatown. As a first step, Chinatown must be recognized as a National Historic Site. Securing both National Historic Site and UNESCO listing would be a great honour to the community's rich heritage and boost tourism. Moreover, it will help raise public awareness about the national and international significance of Vancouver's Chinatown, as a bridge between the east and the west across the Pacific Ocean. The nomination package for the consideration of Vancouver's Chinatown as a National Historic Site of Canada was submitted to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in March 2009.

In the fall of 2011 the Minister of Environment announced the awarding of National Historic Site Designation to Chinatown. Becoming a designated site is a major milestone in raising awareness of the significance of Vancouver's Chinatown and its heritage assets. Go to Chapter 6 : Economic Revitalization Strategy 2 for more information on the next steps to optimize the site designation.



The National Historic Site nomination was jointly submitted by the City of Vancouver and the community-based proponent group.

Community Development: Partnership with Academic Institutions

Vancouver's Chinatown is demonstrating leadership in multi-cultural planning for a diverse community. While its planning process has been positive, drawing attention from Chinatowns in other North American cities, Vancouver has also benefited from studying the best practices on neighbourhood revitalization around the world. Partnerships with academic institutions help build these international connections and bring fresh ideas forward from recognized academics, practitioners and students.



Between 2005 and 2008, working with the University of Washington and the community, City planning staff organized community exchanges with Seattle's Chinatown International-District for planners and community members to learn from each other's experiences. Locally, staff and community members have also worked with universities to host a number of conferences and lecture series, including the international conference "Chinatown and Beyond" organized by Simon Fraser University in April 2009.



The School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (SALA) at the University of British Columbia has also been actively involved since 2003. Through the Chinatown Community Studio, university students have the opportunity to work closely with the community on projects such as the building of a three-dimensional Chinatown model to inform public discussions on development and housing.

Built Form and Urban Structure

Building with a Sense of Place

2



Vancouver is a rare North American city where its Chinatown remains in its original site. Much of Chinatown's urban fabric remains intact: a valuable resource that significantly contributes to the neighbourhood's unique character.

Chinatown has always been a place where new ideas mix with old, and innovations emerge. The existing urban fabric can be enhanced to foster a stronger sense of place while creating opportunities for growth. Specifically, Chinatown can become a place for innovative redevelopment, including heritage rehabilitation, infill and various forms of new construction.

Community and Neighbourhood Resources

Fine-grain Character

Many of the physical elements that make up Chinatown's fine-grain fabric are still intact today. Less visible but equally important, the narrow lot pattern and fragmented property ownership continue to influence redevelopment of Chinatown.

The urban fabric in Chinatown consists of narrow lots, human-scale buildings, ornate façades, and shop fronts on the ground floor that animate the sidewalk. Historically, many buildings also had internal courtyards and breezeways, forming an intricate intra-block system that connected streets and alleys. Although many of them were filled overtime, they can be reinterpreted to inform new developments that reflect the historic pattern.



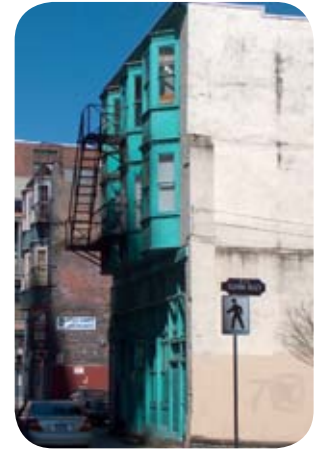
Chinatown is a compact, urban neighbourhood.

The buildings and their relationship with the streets and alleys not only have heritage value, but also reflect the historical, social, and economic functions of Chinatown and the way it has evolved over time. These features

express a Chinatown identity and a sense of place that makes Chinatown unique from other neighbourhoods. This distinctive character is part of Chinatown's economic advantage, which can attract businesses, investors, residents and visitors.

Height and Scale

Similar to elsewhere in the historic core of Vancouver, Chinatown is a dense neighbourhood. The buildings are generally rectilinear in shape with no setback from the streets. In addition to heritage buildings, the overall coherent scale of the neighbourhood also contributes to Chinatown's character. Along historic Pender Street (HA-1), 33% of the buildings are on the Vancouver Heritage Register. This compares to 70% in Gastown, and close to 50% in Victory Square. Since a large proportion of buildings in Chinatown are not protected heritage sites, maintaining the scale of development is important in retaining Chinatown's character.



Façade of heritage building on Shanghai Alley.

The streetwall along Pender Street (HA-1) is defined by a variation of lower heritage buildings (two to five storeys) built on narrow lots that create a "sawtooth" pattern. A number of taller buildings (up to nine storeys) on aggregated lots are located in Chinatown South (HA-1A). There is capacity

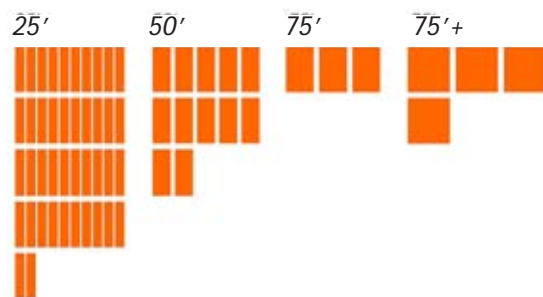
for growth within the Zoning. In general, more redevelopment opportunities can be found in Chinatown South, where a number of larger, aggregated lots are located.



100 Block East Pender Street (north side).

Existing Lot and Development Patterns

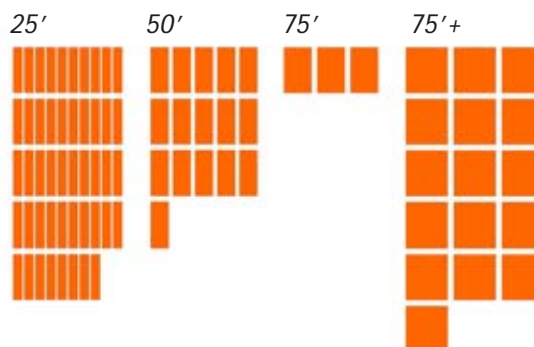
Pender Street (HA-1)



Number of Lots in Each Frontage Category*

Heritage Buildings (%)	Avg. Building Height (Storey)	Density (Floor Space Ratio)
33%	2 to 3	2.5 FSR

Chinatown South (HA-1A)



Number of Lots in Each Frontage Category*

Heritage Buildings (%)	Avg. Building Height (Storey)	Density (Floor Space Ratio)
12%	2 to 3	2.1 FSR

(Data Source: Development Database, City of Vancouver, 2009)

*Odd shaped lots are excluded

Development in Chinatown

The 1980s saw a number of significant new developments in the neighbourhood including the establishment of the Chinese Cultural Centre and a number of commercial shopping centres, filling many previously vacant land.

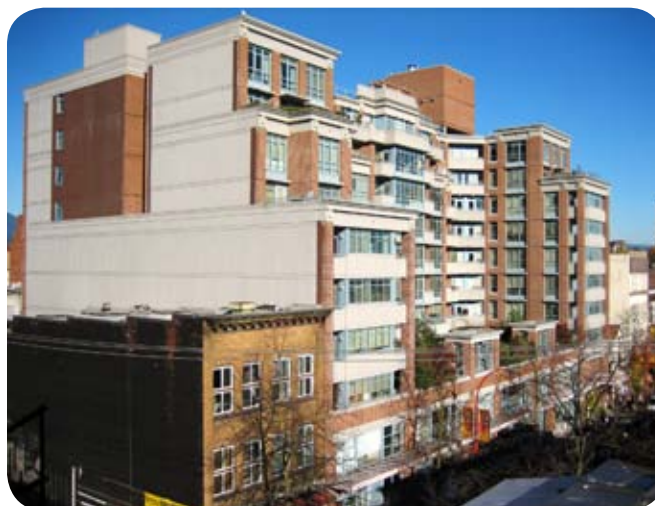
In the 1990s, a number of large community and publicly funded projects were added to the area, including seniors and family housing projects, the Chinatown Plaza and Parkade, and some smaller commercial developments.



Chinatown Plaza and Parkade.

Since 2005, the area has seen increased interest in building rehabilitation and new development. There has been a wide range of project types in response to unique development opportunities in Chinatown. Some examples include commercial buildings, non-market housing, new market housing on small and larger lots, and heritage rehabilitation through adaptive reuse.

As the economic conditions of Chinatown and the surrounding area start to improve, and developers utilize the new options under the HAHR, ensuring these policies result in projects that support the heritage, economic and social fabric of the neighbourhood will be important to Chinatown's future.



Lore Krill Housing Co-op.

Council Policies and Directions

Key Strategies

- *Preserve Chinatown's character and fine grain development pattern, including public places*
- *Support small lot and mid-rise development*
- *Develop a residential intensification strategy*

Council Policies and Directions

- 2.1 *Chinatown Design Guidelines*
- 2.2 *Form of Development*
- 2.3 *Height and Density*
- 2.4 *Public Realm Linkages*

2.1 Chinatown Design Guidelines

The Zoning District Schedule revision and accompanying Design Guidelines developed in 1994 attempted to introduce new development into the historic area at a compatible scale. Chinatown's Design Guidelines were developed as a tool for a more design-based, contextual approach to neighbourhood regeneration and improved livability. They reflected an increased understanding of the intricacies of neighbourhood fabric, informed by growing public awareness of building with a sense of place.

The design philosophy behind the Guidelines was to not emulate heritage building styles. Instead, the Guidelines encourage respect of the overall massing and scale, while allowing flexibility for contemporary materials and expressions.



Active ground floor storefronts are an essential part of Chinatown's character and pedestrian-friendly feel.

The Guidelines also set out expectations for larger lot development to respect Chinatown's smaller frontage expression, by requiring the division of the ground floor into narrower shopfronts. Several new buildings have been built under the 1994 Guidelines. While some developments were generally compatible with the area, other developments have given expression to larger aggregations that are not in character with the area's fine-grained historic fabric.

Both staff and community recognized a need to gain a more in-depth understanding of Chinatown's fine-grain character

to facilitate redevelopment on narrow lots and encourage contextual mixing of new and old developments.

In 2011 as part of the Historic Area Height Review, staff were directed to amend the HA-1 and HA-1A design guidelines to reflect the Council approved increased heights, while reinforcing the importance of Chinatown's sense of place, character, and scale by encouraging heritage rehabilitation, re-use of existing buildings, and high-quality new development. The key revisions included: a new section on design philosophy and principles, changes to the criteria for height, courtyards and rear-yard setbacks to support the increased heights, illustrations and photos to better convey a contemporary architectural response in historic Chinatown.

2.2 Form of Development

To support Chinatown's growth, the area's zoning encourages diverse forms of development, including new construction, heritage, and infill that complement and contribute to a coherent fabric. Low- to mid-rise construction has been the main form of development in the historic area. This form of development is flexible, and can accommodate a variety of building types, lot sizes, and land uses. It can also address adjacency issues with heritage buildings. Low- to mid-rise development enhances and strengthens Chinatown's urban pattern while accommodating significant growth within the historic area, side by side with heritage and other existing buildings.

As redevelopment on smaller frontage lots is often more challenging due to site constraints, in 2005 Council directed staff to develop a strategy to enable these developments, including removal of barriers in the current Zoning, Design Guidelines, Parking Bylaw, and Building Code Bylaw applicable to Chinatown. Finding a way to unlock the redevelopment potential is critical and practical for the

area's future growth since many sites are on smaller frontage lots.



A recent development on Pender Street.

In 2010, Council approved mid-rise development remain the primary form for development in the Historic Area, including Chinatown. This form of development complements heritage building rehabilitation, especially considering the area's existing buildings scale, public realm, smaller lot pattern and the fragmented property ownership pattern.

2.3 Height and Density

In order to support Chinatown's growth at an appropriate scale, a review of its height and density was undertaken as part of the Historic Area Height Review. The Height Review was directed by Council under the EcoDensity initiative in 2008 and was completed in 2010/11. In January 2010, after detailed technical analysis of urban design, height, density and forms of development in the Historic Area, as well as extensive public consultation, Council approved changes to zoning and development policies to guide growth in the

Historic Area, including Chinatown (see map and chart on page 28 for details). Council approved moderate height increases in Chinatown as part of a residential intensification strategy.

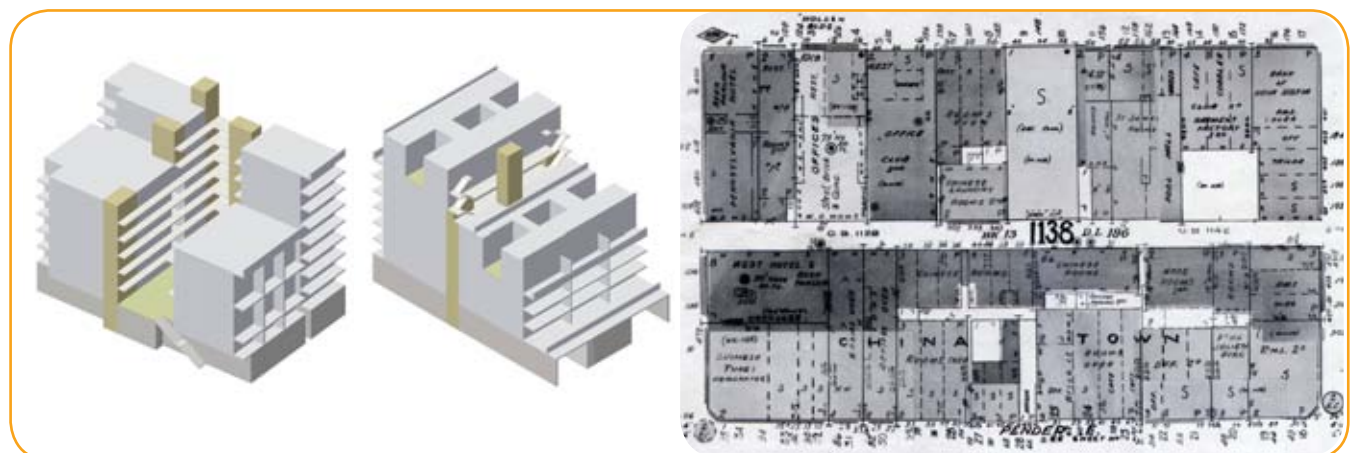


There are a number of under-utilized sites in Chinatown such as this surface parking lot in HA-1A that could be redeveloped into more active uses.

This strategy focuses on:

- Better utilization of current building stock, including heritage buildings;
- Encouragement of developments that respond to existing urban development pattern of smaller frontage lots and low to mid-rise scale;
- Ensuring larger projects on consolidated lots integrate well with the prevailing scale and fabric of the neighbourhood; and,
- Allowing density transfers within Chinatown so larger development projects can have the option to assist heritage building rehabilitation projects in Chinatown (see 1.2 on page 19).

Pender Street (HA-1): The maximum discretionary height for Pender Street (HA-1) was increased from 65'



Prototypes of development schemes that respond to Chinatown's historic fine-grain pattern.

(Source: Chinatown Prototype Study, 2008. Fire Insurance Map, 1920s.)

to 75'. Discretionary height requires the approval by the Development Permit Board or the Director of Planning if the project meets a number of conditions, mostly design based. There is no maximum density (Floor Space Ratio) limits on Pender Street (HA-1).

Chinatown South (HA-1A): the maximum height was increased from 70' to 90'. Similar to Pender Street (HA-1), there is no maximum density (Floor Space Ratio) limits in Chinatown South (HA-1A).

Heigher Heights: A rezoning policy for Chinatown South was also introduced as part of Council's approval. This policy provides Council the opportunity to consider rezonings up to 120' throughout HA-1A and up to 150' within a sub-area of Main Street. The higher buidlings in Chinatown were for the specific purpose of economic revitalization while also considering heritage values. These sites are also expected to provide public benefits, and the rezoning policy specifies

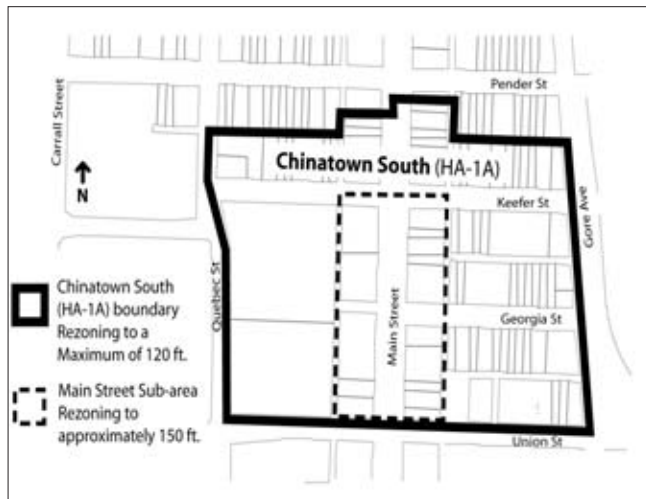
these benefits should meet the community's objective of innovative heritage restoration, cultural and affordable housing projects. For every supported higher building, a significantly higher standard of architectural and urban design excellence will be required.

2.4 Public Realm Linkages

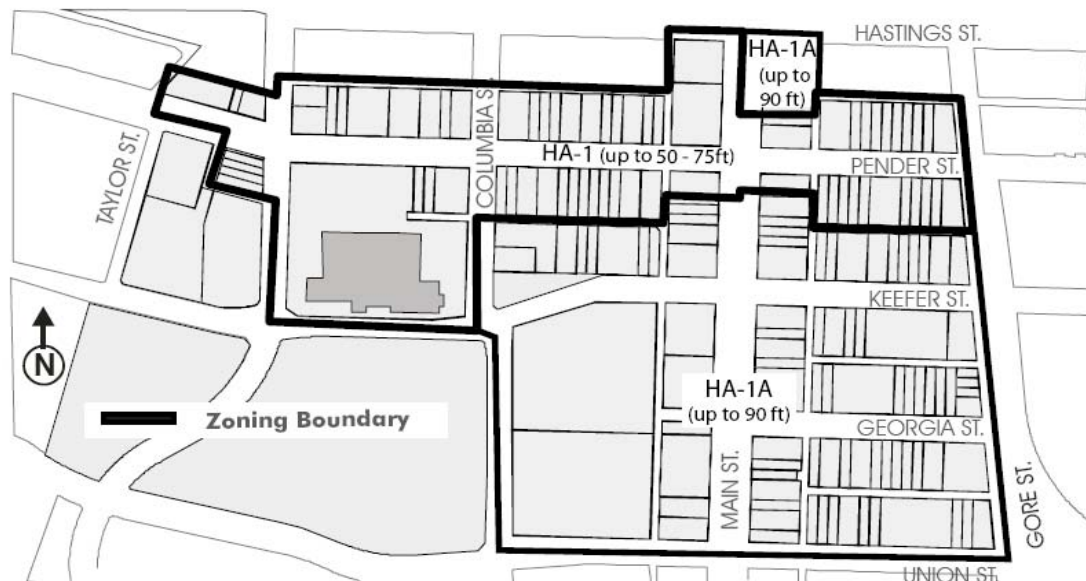
The public realm, including parks, plazas, streets and alleys is also part of Chinatown's fine-grain pattern and provides linkages to neighbourhoods adjacent to Chinatown. The City has invested in a number of capital improvement projects to enhance Chinatown's public realm, particularly its pedestrian-friendly character. Capital improvement projects such as the historic Shanghai Alley, Suzhou Alley and Canton Alley turned previously neglected spaces into functional places for walking and passive enjoyment.

To further restore the historic intra-block system of courtyards, breezeways and alleyways, the last remaining original courtyard in Chinatown in the Yue Shan Society building was rennovated. The courtyard and the breezeways improve visual connections between Pender Street and Market Alley, and set the tone for the future revival of Market Alley. (See Chapter 5 for more details.)

A number of major transportation projects have also been completed to enhance linkages between Chinatown, Downtown and the surrounding neighbourhoods. The Carrall Street Greenway connects Chinatown, Hastings Street and Gastown to the waterfront recreation loop. The Silk Road was developed as a historic walking corridor between Chinatown and Library Square. (See Chapter 5 for more details.)



Map: Chinatown South Rezoning Policy



Map: Building Heights for HA-1 and HA-1A



Land Use

A living and working community

Historically, Chinatown had many small buildings on narrow lots that were between two to five storeys tall, with commercial and retail on the ground floor, often with housing or offices on the upper floors. The compactness and smaller scale of these buildings reflected the area's economy, which mainly consisted of locally-owned small enterprises.

Protecting this established mix of uses will help maintain Chinatown's unique character. The neighbourhood also has an opportunity to help meet the city's housing needs while retaining its own function as a vibrant hub of social, cultural, and commercial activities.

Community and Neighbourhood Resources

Land Use Changes

Chinatown has always been a mixed-use neighbourhood providing basic goods and services, professional services, restaurants on Pender Street, housing, warehousing and manufacturing in the southern blocks. Essentially, everything one would need in their daily life could be found in this compact and complete neighbourhood. It was a vibrant neighbourhood with activity day and night.

Land uses have remained diverse in Chinatown, and the neighbourhood still retains its role as an important node for commercial and cultural activities. The top land use categories in Chinatown include basic goods and services, cultural and community uses (including offices and meeting halls for family/clan organizations and community groups), restaurants and specialty retail.



Specialty retail on Pender Street.



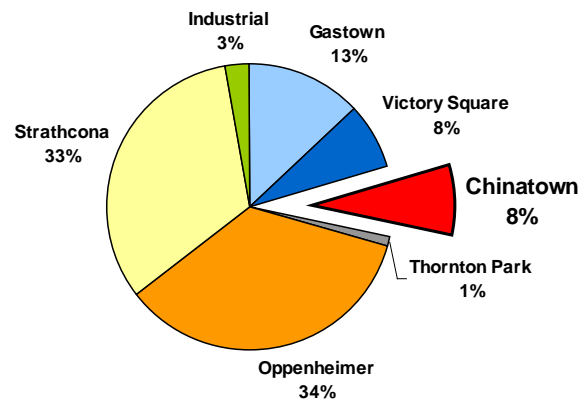
Restaurant such as the Foo's Ho Ho are an important part of Chinatown's land use, bringing people and activities into the area.

A land use survey showed that between 1970 and 2000, while uses such as basic goods and services remained stable, other uses have changed. Most notable was that restaurants and hospitality uses declined from 35 lots in 1980 to 28 lots in 2000. At the same time, specialty retail increased from 14 lots in 1972 to 30 lots in 2000⁶. These land use fluctuations reflected competition from other commercial nodes in the region and the changing functions of Chinatown.

Population and Housing

Chinatown, like Gastown and Victory Square, is a mixed-use area with both commercial and residential uses. Historically, there was a larger population base in Chinatown and in the adjacent neighbourhood of Strathcona which supported Chinatown's economy. Up to the 1990s, the residential population within the Chinatown Plan Area declined and the upper floors of many buildings were left vacant as residents moved out. However, adjacent Strathcona continues to be a residential neighbourhood with many families, Chinese seniors and young couples. The population in areas within walking distance of Chinatown, including International Village and City Gate, has increased significantly with the development of a number of new residential towers.

Population in 2006 by Subarea in Downtown Eastside



(Census 2006, Statistics Canada)

In the 1990s, a number of non-market housing projects were built in Chinatown. Block 17 at the southwestern corner of Chinatown (bounded by Keefer Street, Pender Street, Taylor Street and Carrall Street) was redeveloped. As a result, the population in the Chinatown Plan Area nearly doubled (from 770 to 1395 people) between 2001 and 2006. Specifically, the portion of the population between 20 and 39 years in age saw the biggest increase.

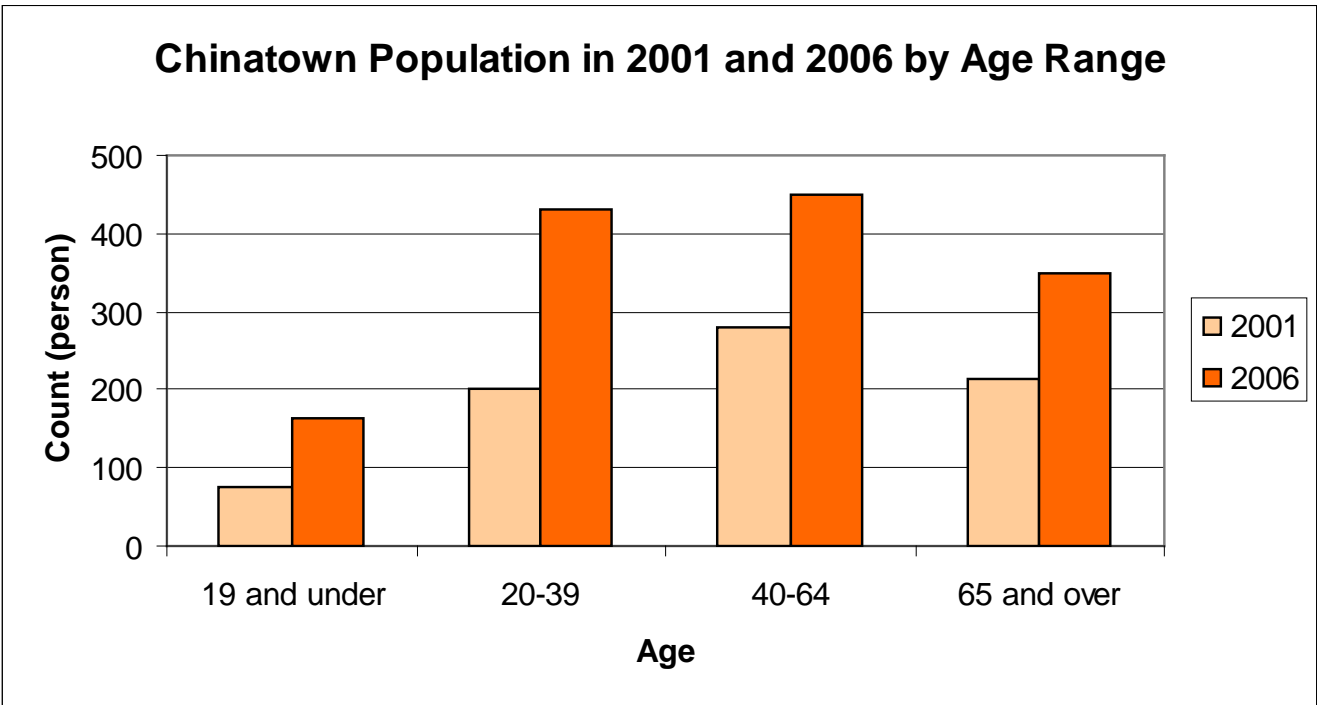
Jobs and Economy

The Downtown Eastside historic area, including Chinatown, contains a significant amount of commercial space, primarily consisting of retail, restaurants and character offices. According to the Metro Core Jobs and Economic Land Use Plan (2007), the area provided a total of 10,480 jobs. While the growing number of residents in the historic area supports local businesses, particularly in the evening and weekends, maintaining jobs in the area is also important as office workers not only work, but often shop in the area. Protecting jobs in the area has the dual benefits of creating a stronger customer base and supporting the neighbourhood's economy.

In Chinatown, a significant amount of commercial spaces particularly on the upper floors, are currently vacant. In addition to residential intensification, commercial uses can also be increased to take advantage of available spaces. Chinatown has relatively low lease rates compared to other parts of the downtown, which could make it more attractive for smaller, start-up companies.



Recent residential tower developments at International Village.



(Census 2006, Statistics Canada)

Council Policies and Directions

Key Strategies

- *Maintain Chinatown as a vibrant hub with commercial, retail, cultural uses both day and night*
- *Intensify all uses to better utilize existing building stock*
- *Replace existing Single Room Occupancy hotels (SROs) with better quality housing targeted to low-income and aging residents.*
- *Encourage market housing with a focus on affordable market rental and ownership housing.*

Council Policies and Directions

- 3.1 *A Mixed Use Neighbourhood*
- 3.2 *Diverse Housing Mix*
- 3.3 *Broad Range of Allowable Uses*

3.1 A Mixed Use Neighbourhood

The Chinatown Vision described Chinatown as a mixed-use neighbourhood with a range of commercial, retail, and cultural uses to serve both residents and visitors. To support its role as a commercial centre, a number of revitalization initiatives have been completed. These initiatives strengthen the diversity of the area's retail goods and services and attract new customers through improved marketing and promotions. The Active Storefront Program approved by Council, and other community-led projects are examples of economic initiatives (See pages 30 and 34 for more details).

As a social and cultural hub, Chinatown features many cultural assets. The Society Buildings Strategy and enhancements of key cultural facilities discussed in Chapter 1 aim to strengthen these resources (See pages 15 and 16 for more details). Staff also worked with the community to attract media groups, including Channel M, to locate in Chinatown, and build partnerships with academic institutions as identified in the Vision.

As a complete, mixed-use neighbourhood, Chinatown is also a place for residents. Increasing the residential population in Chinatown helps fill under-utilized buildings and support businesses. Policies for a sensitive residential intensification strategy are discussed in 3.2 Diverse Housing Mix.



An Italian foods wholesaler on Main street.



A new business on Union Street.

3.2 Diverse Housing Mix

As land for development in the City's downtown core becomes less available, Chinatown is well-positioned to receive new residents, especially those who enjoy the convenience of a compact, central neighbourhood that is well served by transit. A residential intensification strategy is included in the Historic Area Height Review recommendations as discussed in Chapter 2.

Chinatown has traditionally been an affordable neighbourhood, with a mix of rental, SROs, non-market housing and limited owner-occupied market housing. To protect the existing low-income housing stock and to encourage new housing types in Chinatown, the Downtown Eastside Housing Plan and Chinatown Vision outlined the following two directions: replace existing SROs with better quality housing targeted to low-income and aging residents and encourage market housing with a focus on affordable market rental and ownership housing.

Since Chinatown is an established neighbourhood, it is anticipated that new housing will continue to be realized in multiple ways: infill, active reuse of heritage buildings, and redevelopment on consolidated sites.



The Single Room Accommodation (SRA) Bylaw was enacted in 2003 to regulate the rate of change in the supply of low income housing in the downtown core (including Chinatown). Chinatown's Zoning District Schedule was revised in 2003 to allow seniors' supportive housing.

SRO room in Chinatown. In the past ten years, there has also been an increased diversity in housing types in Chinatown. A number of housing projects were completed. These include three social housing and one seniors' supportive housing project. In recent years, under favourable economic conditions for the development of market residential, there have been a number of new market housing projects underway, ranging from small projects with three to four units to larger projects with over 70 units.

Between 1998 and 2009, the total number of residential units has increased from 764 units to 1379 units. The related increase in population was reflected in the 2006 Census (See page 27). The number of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units has remained stable. However, with respect to proportions of housing types, while SROs comprised of over half of Chinatown's housing in 1998, they now represent 37% of the area's housing, as other types of housing were added to the area. In 2012, Staff are working to implement the Downtown Eastside Housing Plan via the DTES Local Area Planning Process currently underway.

3.3 Broad Range of Allowable Uses

Chinatown's mixed-use nature is reflected in the area's zoning. As described in Chinatown's HA-1 and HA-1A Zoning District Schedule, the area is unique in the ways it accommodates a wide variety of uses in a very compact area with a degree of tolerance and flexibility not found in all parts of the city.

Recognizing the area's character, the Central Area Plan (1991) confirmed Chinatown as a "choice of use" area where a wide mix of land uses would continue to be permitted. Specifically, the intention was to allow flexibility in permitting land uses that could be easily accommodated in existing buildings, or new buildings of a compatible scale, to help preserve the heritage character and encourage active reuse

and rehabilitation of heritage buildings.

Addressing Vacant Storefronts Issues

Attracting stable and viable businesses into Chinatown is a significant issue, since the area has a number of vacant storefronts. A 2009 field survey in the historic core of Chinatown indicated ten vacant storefronts in the 100 and 200 blocks of East Pender Street (between Columbia Street and Gore Avenue). Compounding the issue is that business tenants often cycle through different storefronts in search of lower rents. This creates unhealthy internal competition, decreases the quality of goods and services offered in Chinatown, and creates a sense of instability in the business environment.

In 2009, Council approved the Chinatown Active



A vacant storefront on Pender Street.

Storefront Program to activate six vacant storefronts. The Program focuses on recruitment of new businesses, especially businesses that are more dependent on the unique character and identity of the area. As a result of this Program, a new restaurant featuring a special type of Chinese cuisine targeted to a wider audience has

opened in Chinatown. In addition to this Program, staff have been working closely with local business organizations and individual merchants on a number of economic revitalization initiatives (see Chapter 4 & 6 for more details).



This new restaurant at 163 Keefer Street is one of the projects completed as part of the Active Storefront Program. (Illustration courtesy of Bao Bei Chinese Brasserie.)

4

Public Places and Streets *A vibrant public realm*



The Chinese New Year Parade is one of the best known public events in Chinatown. Every year, thousands of Vancouverites and visitors fill the streets, balconies and rooftops of buildings in Chinatown to take part in the parade. Special events and daily activities in public places are an essential part of urban life and contribute towards the community's identity and sense of pride.

Public places are used for both day and night-time events. Chinatown, like Granville Street, was once known for its vibrant night life and associated colourful neon signs. There are many opportunities to enhance Chinatown's character and re-define its night-time image through ambient and neon lighting.

Community and Neighbourhood Resources

Public Realm in Chinatown

The quality of a neighbourhood's public realm - the shared spaces that people use to get around, to meet, to shop and celebrate - plays a key role in a neighbourhood's identity and livability. The public realm, including streets, alleys, plazas and squares, ties a community together, both physically and metaphorically. Public spaces also provide relief from Chinatown's urban environment and are affordable venues for non-profit and cultural organizations to host events and performances. In addition, public spaces are some of the most visible elements of the neighbourhood. Improving them through physical upgrades and enhanced programming can have a positive impact on the community and strengthen its appeal to residents, visitors, and tourists.



Pender Street Today.

Since 2000, many public places have been upgraded within Chinatown. These projects not only commemorate the history of Chinatown but also strengthen its cultural identity and create opportunities for many community organizations to work together.

Downtown Transportation Plan

Chinatown is part of the city's core and its transportation needs are looked at as part of downtown. The Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP) is a comprehensive plan for ensuring that Vancouver's city centre remains a thriving commercial centre and one of the easiest and most pleasant downtowns to get to and around in, whether by walking, biking, transit, or driving. In conjunction with land use planning, the goal of the DTP is to accommodate more people travelling to the downtown without having to increase road capacity.



Pedestrian Routes and Greenways in Downtown (City of Vancouver, Downtown Transportation Plan, 2005)

The objectives of the DTP are in harmony with the Chinatown Vision, and include increasing transportation choices and encouraging walking and cycling. Transportation infrastructure is already in place to support future growth. For example, Chinatown is well-served by transit and its street networks promote walking and cycling. Enhancing inter-neighbourhood linkages can help reduce congestion while maintaining the movement of people and vehicles that many businesses depend on. A number of key initiatives have been implemented to improve these aspects (See 5.2 below for more details).



The Chinese community celebrating the end of World War II in Chinatown at Pender and Columbia Streets. (Vancouver Public Library photo A45087)

Major Streets

The street network in Chinatown reflects its historic roots as one of the original neighbourhoods in Vancouver. The streets are organized in an orthogonal grid typical of most historic neighbourhoods built around the late 19th century. Blocks were bisected by 20' (6 m) wide laneways, which not only supported servicing and delivery, but were historically lined with commercial shopfronts and access to apartments blocks. The street right-of-way (measured from property line to property line) is typically 66' (20 m) in width, including a wide sidewalk that can accommodate pedestrian activities. The scale of the streets, the buildings, and the pedestrian interface at ground floor, all contribute to Chinatown's unique sense of place and its pedestrian-friendly nature.

Pender Street is the high street of the neighbourhood with specialty retail and restaurants. It is part of the Downtown Historic Trail - Silk Road. Other east-west streets, including Keefer, Georgia and Union Streets also support Chinatown's commercial function, lined with shops and sidewalk merchandise displays. North-south routes including Carrall Street, Main Street and Columbia Street are important transportation routes for Chinatown. Streets are also the stages for community activities unfold, such as special events, ceremonies, processions and demonstrations. Examples include the Chinatown Night Market and the Chinese New Year Parade.

Courtyards and Squares



Children gathering at the Sun Yat-Sen Courtyard.

In addition to the streets, courtyards and squares in Chinatown provide venues for gathering and entertainment. The Sun Yat-Sen Courtyard in the Chinese Cultural Centre complex has an intimate atmosphere and is suitable for smaller scale programming. In contrast, the Chinatown Memorial Square at Keefer Street and Columbia Street is a

larger civic plaza suitable for regional events, such as the summer Chinatown Festival and the Night Market.

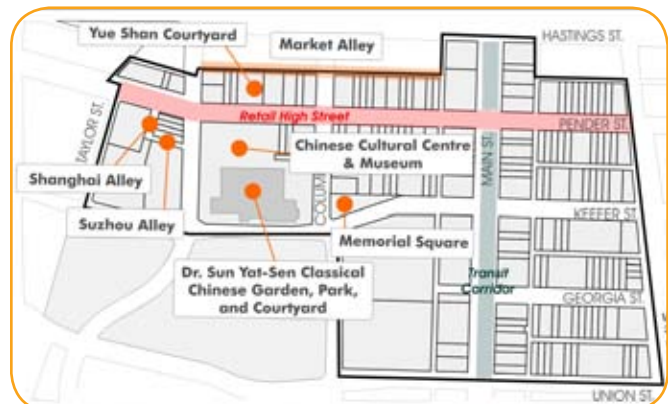
Historically, many buildings in Chinatown had internal courtyards and breezeways providing additional connections between buildings and much needed open space, light, and air into buildings constructed on narrow lots. Overtime, many of these semi-private open spaces were filled in, and the last remaining original courtyard in Chinatown today is in the Yue Shan Society building.

Alleyways

In the historic area, alleyways were not only for practical functions such as garbage and recycling pick-ups, loading, and access to parking. Alleyways were also bustling places, with customers visiting laundry services, shoemaker shops, and restaurants. Residents also accessed their apartments from the alley. Shanghai Alley and Canton Alley had special significance as the "birth place" of Chinatown. Market Alley was intimately linked with the City's early history: it was named after the city market that operated in the old City Hall building, also known as "Market Hall" on Main Street near Hastings Street. The lane that runs two blocks east-west between Pender Street and Hastings Street from Main Street to Carrall street was known as Market Alley from the early 1880s and was a busy place for shopping.



Entrance to the Yue Shan Courtyard.



Public Realm in Chinatown.

Council Policies and Directions

Key Strategies

- Provide capital improvement to enhance key public places and streets
- Build linkages to surrounding neighbourhood
- Assist local community and cultural organizations in event and festival programming in public spaces

Council Policies and Directions

- 4.1 Cultural Markers
- 4.2 Linkages to Adjacent Neighbourhoods
- 4.3 Courtyards and Alleyways
- 4.4 Convenient Transportation and Pedestrian Comfort
- 4.5 Ambient and Neon Lighting

4.1 Cultural Markers

Public places and streets present opportunities for heritage and cultural commemoration. For example, cultural landmarks can serve as reference points in one's mental map of a neighbourhood and can become a source of community pride. Many of these projects were made possible with extensive fundraising by the community and funding from three levels of governments through the Vancouver Agreement.



Millennium Gate.

Millennium Gate

The Millennium Gate marks an important entry into Chinatown on East Pender Street at Taylor Street. The Gate was undertaken by the Vancouver Chinatown Millennium Society with funding from three levels of governments to commemorate of Chinatown's past and celebrate of its entrance to the new millennium. The design was inspired by classical Chinese gates and expresses authentic character through its carefully determined proportions, colour and design motif.

Chinatown Memorial Square

The Chinatown Memorial Square, formerly known as Keefer Triangle, was created in 1995 in conjunction with the construction of the Chinatown Plaza and Parkade and the diversion of Keefer Street to its current alignment. The site was designed to provide an attractive pedestrian-friendly public space with a hard-surfaced, flexible public open space with trees. A sculpture was installed in 2001 to commemorate the historic contributions made by Chinese veterans and rail workers. The Square has since been used for many civic celebrations, including Canada Day and Remembrance Day services for Chinese veterans.



Chinatown Memorial Square.



Heritage Bell in Shanghai Alley.

Shanghai Alley Bell and History Panels

To commemorate the "birthplace of Chinatown", a replica of a Han Dynasty bell was brought to Shanghai Alley. The Alley was repaved and nine history panels were installed.

4.2 Linkages to Adjacent Neighbourhoods

As part of the implementation of the Downtown Transportation Plan, a number of projects that enhance transportation access to Chinatown have been implemented, including the Carrall Street Greenway, Silk Road and the Main Street Transit Showcase Project. The Council approved street-car route connects downtown, Chinatown, the Southeast False Creek Olympic Village and Granville Island. The station in Chinatown is planned at Keefer Street and Columbia Street, adjacent to the Chinatown Memorial Square.



Council-approved street-car route. (City of Vancouver, Downtown Transportation Plan, 2005)

Carrall Street Greenway



Carrall Street Greenway looking South.

The Greenway also offers comfortable public spaces, encourages events programming and supports economic development of the community.

In July 2006, Council approved the detailed design and budget for the construction and maintenance of the Carrall Street Greenway. Construction of the Chinatown blocks has been completed. This major public realm project enhances connections between the Downtown, Chinatown, Gastown and the Downtown Eastside. The Greenway also offers comfortable public

Main Street Transit Showcase Project

The implementation of this project has been completed in Chinatown. The work included upgrading existing infrastructure (including the repair of sidewalks and reconstruction of ramps) and installing new benches and pedestrian bulges at the corners of Keefer and Main Streets, and Pender and Main Streets. These upgrades improve pedestrian comfort and enhance Main Street's role as a transportation corridor in Chinatown and in Vancouver.

Silk Road

Silk Road is part of the Downtown Historic Trail, linking Chinatown's historic core along Pender Street and Keefer Street through the Keefer Steps to the Vancouver Public Library. This project is important in building pedestrian linkages and facilitating movements of people between Chinatown and Downtown.



Colourful banners marking the Silk Road route.

4.3 Courtyards and Alleyways

The preservation of Chinatown's heritage environment also requires the protection of the neighbourhood's public realm, including its courtyards and alleyways.

Suzhou Alley

Suzhou Alley was built as part of the redevelopment of Block 17 (the current location of the Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association, the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Senior Care Home and the market residential development at 550 Taylor Street). Suzhou Alley is a greened pedestrian walkway that links Shanghai Alley through a mid-block crossing across the Carrall Street Greenway to the Chinese Cultural Centre.



Suzhou Alley.

Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Courtyard

This Courtyard is located at the centre of the Chinese Cultural Centre and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden. It links these key cultural facilities and is a place for many cultural and recreational community events. In 2001, staff from the City and the Board of Parks and Recreation worked with the community to upgrade the courtyard to encourage more programming. The courtyard was transformed from an under-used grassy area to a paved courtyard that is more in line with traditional Chinese landscape architecture. Phase 2 of the upgrade was completed in 2008, including additional lighting, a sound system and a movable performance stage. These improvements allowed more active use of this space, including outdoor fundraising galas, movie nights, hip-hop dance competitions and the annual Chinatown Arts and Cultural Festival.



Chinatown Arts and Cultural Festival.

Yue Shan Courtyard and Market Alley



Tile work marking a Market Alley address.

Many Vancouver residents retain vivid memories of the vibrant commercial activities in Market Alley, such as the Green Door restaurant. There is strong community interest in re-activating this historic alley through public realm improvements and more active uses.

To support the community's interests, Council recently approved the Yue Shan Courtyard upgrade and the Market Alley Commemoration projects.

These projects will improve the

visual and physical connections between Pender Street and Market Alley and will make the upgraded courtyard available for community programming. The courtyard upgrade is already underway and the first community event will take place in February 2010. This project increases the recognition of and improves the appearance of Market Alley in the short term, while setting the tone for commercial revitalization in the future.



Yue Shan Courtyard Opening Event. (Photo Courtesy of ASIR Studio.)

Projects such as this help improve the visual and physical connections between Pender Street and Market Alley. The Yue Shan Courtyard upgrade was completed in early 2010. The first community event drew many visitors, and demonstrated how these formerly neglected spaces could be turned into active gathering places for community enjoyment. The upgrade not only increases the recognition of this unique historic place, it also sets the tone for commercial revitalization of Market Alley in the future.

4.4 Convenient Transportation and Pedestrian Comfort



A "bike box" on Union Street.

It is important to have appropriate infrastructure to support all modes of transportation including walking, cycling, public transit and driving. Chinatown has an adequate supply of on-street and off-street parking to support daily business functions and special events. Specifically, the City of



Character street light and bilingual street sign.

Vancouver purchased the Chinatown Plaza and Parkade in 2006, a commercial building with approximately 1000 parking stalls, to secure public parking for shoppers and visitors. As part of the Implementation of the Downtown Transportation Plan, Union Street at Main Street was re-stripped to make biking more attractive, safe and comfortable for riders.

Providing clear wayfinding and better pedestrian amenities are also part of the comprehensive transportation strategy to make Chinatown more convenient and accessible.

Working with the community, the City has installed character street lights specially designed to reflect Chinatown's character. New bus shelters, benches, and garbage bins were also installed. Street signs in Chinatown are bilingual, and new directional signage were added to bring more people into Chinatown.

Chinatown Plaza, a city-owned commercial building, and improves lighting in the surrounding blocks. Strategically located near key attractions, including the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Garden and the Chinatown Memorial Square, this sign contributes to making Chinatown an exciting place at night.

The bilingual sign incorporates traditional and contemporary design elements and ideas from the community. The installation of the sign has already generated interest from individual merchants to re-introduce neon signs to their business storefronts (See page 30 for more details).



Chinatown Plaza neon sign at night.

4.5 Ambient and Neon Lighting

Exuberant, colourful neon lighting and associated night-time businesses on Pender Street in the 1950s and 1960s became one of the defining images of the community in its prime: a lively 24/7 hub.

Various factors, including economic decline, changes in choice of advertising methods from neon signs to awnings and Sign Bylaw changes, led to the decline of neon signs in Chinatown. However, there has been steady interest from the community to find ways to bring colour and lighting back to help create a lively evening atmosphere.

Chinatown Plaza Neon Sign

In 2009, Council approved the installation of a prominent five-storey neon sign at the intersection of Keefer Street and Quebec Street. This new neon sign marks Chi-



"African Arts Day" at the Chinatown Arts and Cultural Festival.

Multicultural Programming

The planning of physical improvements and cultural events have also built working relationships amongst Chinatown and other Downtown Eastside groups. For example, the annual Chinatown Arts and Cultural Festival and Chinese New Year Parade, are multi-cultural events that strive to involve the participation of different cultural groups. The Chinese New Year Parade grows every year as more groups of diverse cultural backgrounds join, including Aboriginal groups.

Inter-generational Programming

The Chinatown Vision identified the importance of engaging younger generations to ensure Chinatown will continue to be vibrant in the future. The community has taken leadership on inter-generational programming. ChinatownNext, a youth group formed under the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee, has been working since 2004 years with existing Chinatown organizations to integrate youth-oriented programming and encourage youth volunteerism at events.

Community and business organizations have also demonstrated leadership in incorporating inter-generational programming, such as the Youth Talent Showdown during the annual summer Chinatown Festival. Recent Chinatown Festivals programs had strong youth participation: the 2009 Festival had over 200 youth volunteers and youth programming expanded into the later evening-hours for the first time.

Other events organized by the community that catered to a younger audience include dodge ball tournaments, Youth Zone at the annual Chinatown Night Market, and an outdoor movie night called "C-Town Summer Cinema". The City has been supporting the community's effort in youth engagement through staff involvement and grants.



"B-Boy and B-Girl Battle" at the Chinatown Festival.

Community and Economic Development

A Thriving Local Economy

5



Small enterprises and community and cultural activities form the core of Chinatown's economy, drawing residents, visitors and tourists to the area. Further, community and cultural organizations bring their constituents into the neighbourhood regularly and during special events, supplying a client base for local businesses.

Chinatown's active community is one of its biggest assets. On-going collaboration between community and government to enhance and diversify the neighbourhood's economic base, is key to Chinatown's future. Improving the local economy is a critical issue at this time.

Community and Neighbourhood Resources

Changing Client Base for Chinatown

Since Chinatown's establishment in the 1880s, the residential pattern of the Chinese Canadian community shifted from one solely concentrated in Chinatown and Strathcona to one being dispersed to other urban and suburban neighbourhoods throughout the Lower Mainland. Changes in commercial activities soon followed and Chinatown lost its position as the only centre for Chinese-Canadian goods and services.



Chinatown has changed from one to one of many regional centres for Chinese-Canadian goods and services.

While these trends presented some challenges, Chinatown has many unique features that can help re-brand the neighbourhood. Some of these include its heritage environment and many long-time businesses that have become icons of the neighbourhood and inspirations for new businesses. The new businesses that opened in the recent years in Chinatown are often new interpretations of traditional services offered by Chinatown, including hair salons, clothing stores and restaurants.

New businesses not only di-



Long-time retailers and the heritage buildings they occupy are part of Chinatown's character.

versify Chinatown's economy, but at the same time enhance its character. They also highlight Chinatown's potential to reposition itself as a local and regional commercial node.

Markets, Shops, and Restaurants

The commercial activities in Chinatown are very diverse and clustered in different parts of the neighbourhood. East of Main Street has a variety of businesses that attract clients to dine and shop on a regular basis, including produce and seafood markets, barbecue and fresh meat shops, and bakeries. The colourful merchandise display that often spills out onto the street, and the sounds and the street-side activities they generate are all important parts of Chinatown's character. There are a number of accountants and insurance offices, dental and medical clinics, Chinese herbal shops, hair salons, and financial institutions, providing professional and health services by Chinese speaking staff catering to their clientele.



Produce shopping in Chinatown.



A new hair salon in Shanghai Alley.

The heritage buildings and the character retail spaces in Chinatown are particularly attractive to new entrepreneurs who are seeking to enhance their character and uniqueness. Restaurants, clothing stores featuring local designers, specialty furniture stores, and shops selling cultural products have begun to locate along Pender Street west of Main Street, reinforcing the emerging role of Pender Street as the cultural heart of Chinatown.

Festivals, Events, and Tourism

As recognized in the Chinatown Vision, tourism has been identified as part of the neighbourhood's new economy, centered on Chinatown's culture and heritage. To build on the success of existing attractions, such as the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, the City invested in building cultural markers in the public realm including the Millennium Gate, Memorial Square, and Heritage Bell in Shanghai Alley with story panels to commemorate history and support educational and cultural tourism.



The Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden is a major tourist draw in Chinatown. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden.)

Chinatown hosts many festivals that attract not only local residents, but regional and international visitors. The Chinese New Year parade is one of the biggest events in Vancouver, bringing thousands of spectators each year. Events such as the Arts and Culture Festival strive to include multi-cultural programming to complement traditional Chinese arts. The Chinatown Festival and the summer Night Market along Keefer Street have also grown in popularity and continue to attract clients into Chinatown.



Rows of barbecued ducks on display at a meat shop.

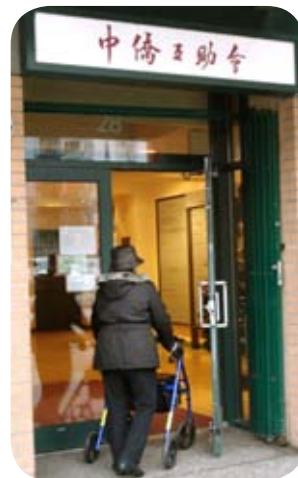
Community Organizations



A specialty furniture store on Pender Street.

The many cultural activities in Chinatown are organized by community groups, reflecting the diversity and leadership in Chinatown's revitalization. A number of prominent community and cultural groups are located on historic Pender Street, including Chinatown Societies, the Chinese Cultural Centre, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and the Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association. There are also many agencies providing health, education and welfare support services to Chinatown and Downtown Eastside residents.

The Chinatown community, through the planning process, identified a perception that the area is not for the young. Drawing youth back to the community will help revitalize the community and develop the next generation of leaders. Community organizations including the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee (VCRC), S.U.C.C.E.S.S., the Chinese Cultural Centre and the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden Society have taken the lead to develop youth programs focussing on leadership training and volunteerism. The business community in Chinatown has also devoted significant effort to include youth oriented programming into special events such as the Youth Talent Showdown during the annual Chinatown Festival.



Community organizations provide much needed services and bring their constituencies into the neighbourhood on a regular basis.

Council Policies and Directions

Key Strategies

- A community development approach to economic and cultural revitalization
- Develop an economic strategy to build a holistic Chinatown experience, including:
 - Marketing and promotion
 - Business improvement
 - Public realm enhancement
 - Residential intensification

Council Policies and Directions

- 5.1 Business Improvement Area Program
- 5.2 Community Development
- 5.3 Vancouver Agreement

5.1 Business Improvement Area (BIA) Program

The City of Vancouver's Business Improvement Areas Program was established to assist communities in local economic development. BIAs are non-profit associations of property owners and merchants. At the request of area property owners and merchants, City Council enacts a by-law to establish the BIA, its boundaries, and collects a special property tax on behalf of the BIA. The entire amount of the tax collected is remitted to the BIA's governing board as part of their annual budget to carry out projects. The City also assists by providing staff liaison who provide contacts between the BIA and City departments, facilitate the funding and renewal process and monitor BIA budgets.

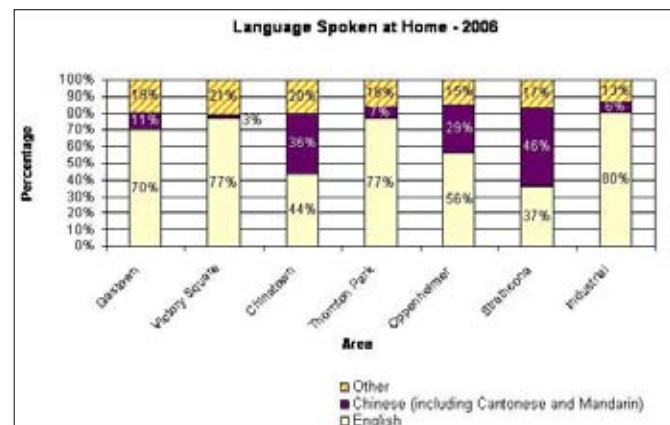


Chinatown Logo.

As part of the community development work in Chinatown, staff worked with local merchants and property owners to establish the Chinatown Business Improvement Area Society in 2000, which was approved by Council for an initial five year term. In 2004, with assistance from the Vancouver Agreement, the Chinatown Business Improvement Area Society reached out to their membership to prepare for renewal of the BIA. The Chinatown BIA Society was renewed in 2009. Over the years, the City had partnered with the Chinatown BIA and other business organizations on a number of projects, including the development of a Chinatown logo, staff training, "We Speak English" campaign, special events and the development of a Chinatown Marketing Plan.

While Chinatown will continue to have a role in providing Asian goods and services for the Chinese-Canadian population, the neighbourhood also has an opportunity to diversify its economy. For example, the population within Chinatown has doubled since 2001, and a number of residential projects were also added to the periphery of Chinatown. Census data from 2006 showed that more than half of Chinatown's population does not speak Chinese at home⁷.

Specifically, the Chinatown Marketing Plan (2003) identified the importance of attracting four emerging client groups: local residents and workers; local visitors; tourists; and, youth and seniors. The community also identified the need to retain existing businesses and recruit viable new businesses, particularly those that can benefit from and enhance Chinatown's character. A number of new businesses with non-Asian-specific goods have recently opened in Chinatown to capture these emerging economic opportunities. However, vacant storefronts and lack of new investment continues to be a significant challenge for Chinatown.



(Census 2006, Statistics Canada)

5.2 Community Development

As part of the Downtown Eastside Community Development Project, in 2001, Council directed staff to assist the community in building partnerships and working together. The Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee (VCRC) was established to coordinate revitalization projects (see below). The City assigned a Chinatown Planning Team, including a full-time social planner, to liaise with VCRC and other organizations. This community development approach was important in building working relationships and generating changes with visible results in the short-term.

Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee

The Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee (VCRC) was officially formed in January 2001 to bring together more than twenty of the area's social, cultural, resident and business groups to work with the City to develop short-term revitalization plans, a long-term vision for Chinatown, and strategies to implement the vision. The VCRC was instrumental in the development of the Chinatown Vision, which was approved by Council in 2002 as the blueprint for Chinatown's regeneration.

The VCRC has been key to encouraging diverse groups to work together and build partnerships with governments and private funders. The VCRC was also critical in establishing a youth committee, ChinatownNext, to work on inter-generational programming and youth engagement. The Committee has worked on many revitalization initiatives, and continues to monitor the implementation of the Chinatown Vision.

The VCRC includes representatives from:

- Chinatown community organizations
- Chinese Benevolent Association and other Chinatown Societies
- Chinese Community Policing Centre
- Chinese Cultural Centre
- Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden
- Chinese Military Museums
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association



5.3 Vancouver Agreement



The Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association.

The Vancouver Agreement is an urban development initiative involving three levels of government: Canada, the Province of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver. The Agreement began in March 2000 for an initial five-year term and was renewed until March 31, 2010. It commits government partners to work together with communities and businesses in Vancouver on a coordinated strategy to promote and

support sustainable economic development with targeted investments.

The Downtown Eastside Economic Revitalization Plan (2005) developed under the Vancouver Agreement, outlined a strategy to increase demand for Chinatown's goods and services (e.g. marketing campaign and residential intensification), strengthen the capabilities of businesses (e.g. customer service training and business improvement), and improve the area's physical appearance (e.g. public realm projects).

These directions, and with the support from the Vancouver Agreement, the City worked closely



with the Chinatown community to implement a number of public realm and business improvement initiatives, as identified in the Chinatown Marketing Plan. The targeted investments through the Vancouver Agreement served as catalysts to improve the area and attract new investments (see project examples on page 36).



Projects such as the Chinatown Wall Mural is an example of partnership between government and community that brings visible changes to the street.

Chinatown Economic Development Projects

A number of projects have been implemented through the City in partnership with a wide range of community organizations. These projects were often made possible with the support from the Vancouver Agreement. Projects were developed in different areas to build a holistic Chinatown experience, from increasing promotion, better business services and provision of goods, a more attractive public realm, and promotion of culture and heritage. Examples of these projects are highlighted below.

Marketing, Promotion, and Tourism

- Chinatown Marketing Plan
- Chinatown Communications Strategy
- Chinatown Logo
- Chinatown familiarization tour for tourism industry and tour operators
- “Shopping in Chinatown” pamphlets and newspaper inserts
- Promotion of Chinatown Night Market and Chinatown Festival

Business Improvement and Diversification

- Bilingual Campaign and “We Speak English Campaign”
- Customer service training initiatives
- Window Display competition project
- “Dragon Rickshaw Adventures” Pedicab
- Awning Replacement Program
- Chinatown Active Storefront Program



Bilingual and “We Speak English Campaign” Signage and Buttons.



“Dragon Rickshaw Adventures” Pedicab. (Photo courtesy of Chinatown BIA Society.)

Public Realm Improvements

- Street lights, street furniture, way-finding signs, improvements to key public places for events and programming (See Chapter 5)
- Chinatown Murals
- Enhanced transportation including Main Street Showcase, Carrall Street Greenway, renaming of Stadium-Chinatown Skytrain Station, Silk Road, and the future street car line
- Establishment of new cultural markers, including Millennium Gate, Shanghai Heritage Alley, and Memorial Square.
- Chinatown Plaza Neon lighting project

Heritage and Cultural Promotion

- Incentive Programs for heritage buildings renovation
- Chinatown Heritage Map Guides
- Arts and Cultural Festival
- Youth-oriented programming



Art students working on the Window Display Project. (Photo courtesy of Chinatown BIA Society.)