

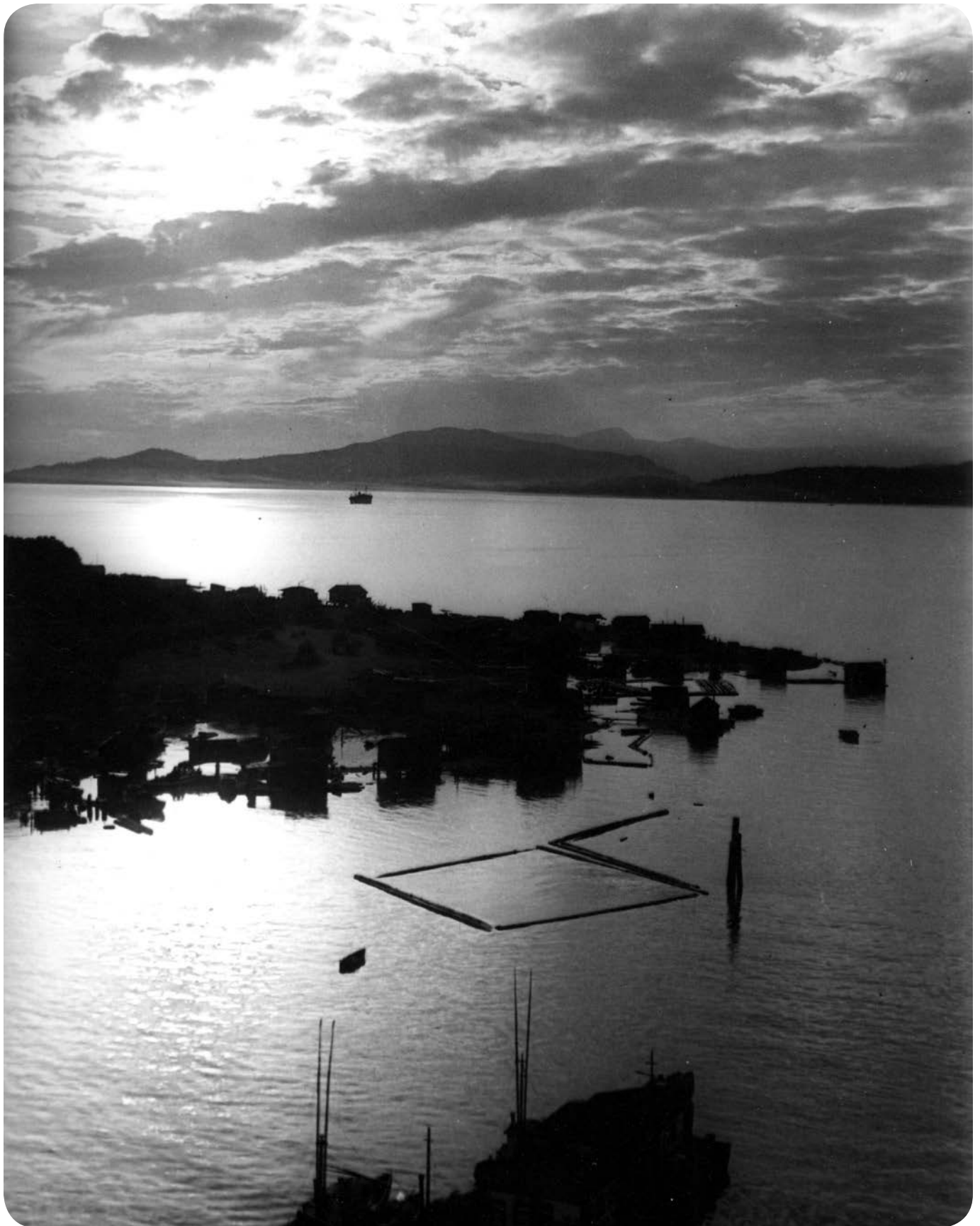


**APRIL
2019**

LIFE IN CHINATOWN LANES

Exploring Hidden Opportunities for Activation

唐人街(華埠)的公眾空間:探究巷道活躍化的潛在機會



Kitsilano Reserve, English Bay, 1936. Photo: Karl Haspel; City of Vancouver Archives

THE LAND ON WHICH WE STAND

We would like to acknowledge that this report and the research behind it have been produced on the traditional, ancestral, unceded and occupied territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations. The land where Chinatown and Vancouver are situated was never surrendered by these First Nations to the Government of Canada or to British Columbia. Any conversation on public space and community belonging must critically engage with the colonial history of ongoing displacement and inequity in the city. As settlers on this land, we are grateful to be given the opportunity to learn and share with others. We hope that this report can encourage people to reflect and think more deeply about the complexity and importance of decolonizing urban public space.



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Chinatown Millennium Gate, Vancouver. Photo: Stella L. Zhou

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chinatown is a vital part of the City of Vancouver's heritage, with a strong sense of community and cultural identity going back over 100 years. Historically, Chinatown's lanes were more vibrant than today, filled with social and commercial activity.

The City of Vancouver is exploring the feasibility of applying for UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for Chinatown. Our group, the Chinatown Laneway Team (CLT), has completed a project that explores how Chinatown's underused historic lanes can showcase Chinatown's cultural assets. In this report, we identify opportunities for local stakeholders, with City support, to activate lanes that were once cultural assets to Chinatown.

As a group within the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) Studio at the University of British Columbia, we have conducted this work on behalf of the City of Vancouver's Chinatown Transformation Team.

In addition to this report, we have produced an accompanying toolkit as a knowledge resource to support community groups interested in activating lanes in Chinatown.

An activation is any activity or infrastructure that enriches a space, making it more alive and people-friendly. Activations can be physical, such as art installations or community amenities. Alternatively, they can be event-based, including street theatre, music, food, athletic or health events.

Our project is informed by case studies from other lane activation projects in Vancouver, Toronto and Fuzhou, China. We also consider public space activations in the Chinatowns of San Francisco, New York, Seattle, Singapore and Victoria, B.C.

We have conducted a site analysis to study the potential of different lanes as venues for activation.

We have consulted many local community groups and knowledge holders connected with Vancouver's Chinatown. Participants expressed what they valued in Chinatown, their concerns about the issues affecting the neighbourhood, and what they would like to see celebrated in public space.

Possible lane activations include markets, lane walking tours, public art and murals, seniors' events focused on physical activity and health, book fairs, commercial events driving entrepreneurship, and year-round events.

From this research, we present our key findings and recommendations for lane activations:

- Wide support among Chinatown community groups for lane activation
- Processes for lane activation must be inclusive and community-led
- Four distinct lane areas proposed as promising venues for activation
- Strategies for preventing or mitigating displacement of vulnerable people
- Shortage of capacity to lead or fund activations, despite interest from groups in participating
- Complex government permit processes are barriers to small-scale events
- Lack of storage for staging events in Chinatown
- Opportunities for partnerships to boost capacity
- Possibilities for scaling up activations from individual lanes to larger lane networks

In this project, we borrow a conceptual framework from ecology, developing the idea that each lane has a complementary function serving the laneway ecosystem of Chinatown as a whole. Rather than treating lanes as isolated pieces of infrastructure, we present each one as having unique assets and values of its own, offering distinct potential as a venue for specific activations.

I.0 INTRODUCTION

I.1 Purpose of the project

Chinatown is one of the City of Vancouver's oldest neighbourhoods. A vital part of the city's heritage, it has maintained a strong sense of community and cultural identity for over a century. This project is aimed at reclaiming underused public space and promoting Chinatown's cultural assets. The Chinatown Laneway Team (CLT), our group at the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) Studio at the University of British Columbia, has focused on activating lanes to showcase Chinatown as a heritage asset. We have conducted this work on behalf of the City of Vancouver's Chinatown Transformation Team.

Our project is the first phase of what could potentially develop into a multi-year partnership between the Chinatown Transformation Team and the SCARP Studio. Our phase of this work, focusing on research, has set the stage for activations that we hope will eventually result. The role of our team has been to identify opportunities and strategies that will empower local stakeholders to produce and steward this initiative with City support.

In addition to this report, we have produced an accompanying toolkit designed as a knowledge resource for supporting lane activation in Chinatown. The intended audience for the toolkit could include community members from Chinatown or anyone with meaningful connections to the neighbourhood. Although created to help untangle the complicated civic processes of activating public lanes, the toolkit is not a step-by-step how-to guide. Instead, it should assist readers in taking mindful, sensitive steps toward making Chinatown's lanes more vibrant, inclusive and engaging for local residents and neighbouring communities.

I.2 UNESCO World Heritage Site

Currently, the City of Vancouver is exploring the feasibility of applying for UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for Chinatown. Our project supports the City's conservation and revitalization efforts, including the UNESCO application.



Chin Wing Chun Society building, Vancouver. Photo: Stella L. Zhou



Traditional Chinese barbecue. Photo: Stella L. Zhou

1.3 Tangible and intangible heritage

Activating Chinatown's lanes has the potential to highlight the heritage that makes this neighbourhood unique and significant to the City of Vancouver. The "historic district is an evolving, accretive continuum" that requires contemporary advocacy through design to help give its hidden layers a voice.¹ Throughout this report, we embrace two distinct yet complementary conceptions of heritage: **tangible** and **intangible**.

Tangible heritage refers to built form, including architecture, urban design and streets. Being a National Historic Site of Canada,² Vancouver's Chinatown has some of the city's best-preserved and oldest heritage buildings, dating back to the early 1900s. The recessed balconies, glazed roof tiles and mezzanines are all distinct characteristics of Vancouver's Chinatown. The internal courtyards of some buildings were also connected to streets and back lanes through narrow passages, which aided in the ventilation of the courtyards. This distinctive urban fabric symbolizes the effort and struggle of early Chinese-Canadians in making a home away from home at the edge of a growing city.

Intangible heritage includes significant traditions, practices, sights and sounds that are difficult to define in physical features alone. It is often intangible heritage that gives a place its meaning. Chinatown's intangible heritage carries important cultural and historical values. Farmers selling fresh choi on the streets; people playing mahjong while chit-chatting; restaurant takeout windows with long lines; elders sipping tea on their balconies; kids running around with egg tarts in their hands; the lion dancing, calligraphy writing, lantern riddles and informal food stalls during festivals: these are all examples of intangible heritage passed on through collective memories, storytelling and lived experience.

If tangible heritage is the shell and bones of Chinatown, then intangible heritage is its heart and soul. These two forms of heritage need to come hand in hand and to be passed onto future generations.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Placemaking in the public realm

Public space is a critical part of any livable city. The public realm abounds with streets, lanes and parks that anyone may legally access. As the unpredictable future of our cities threatens our social values on a variety of dimensions, interventions that engage in societal and urban issues are gaining momentum.

Our project is grounded in the concept of placemaking, which is a way of describing actions that strengthen connections among people and the places they share. Placemaking is collaborative, inspiring people collectively to shape the public realm to maximize shared values. It “facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.”³

Whether through events, group activities or public art installations, placemaking embraces actions that improve social conditions, preparing ground for further investments. Placemaking is informed by and about the people who inhabit and use a space. Success is measured in the ways people engage with formal and informal spaces to create interventions contributing to community outcomes.

2.2 What is ‘activation’?

Activating a space is about making it inclusive, memorable, unified, innovative and entrepreneurial. Community-based participation leads the process of drawing on local assets, inspiration and potential for creating public spaces that contribute to health, happiness and well-being. An activation directly engages with and affects local residents and passers-by in a public place. It can have either short-term or long-term impact, while engaging locals in the ongoing process of building relationships and reducing fear.

Urban interventions create performative situations for urban acting and for developing visions based on shared values of living together. In this way, stakeholders become coauthors of the spaces they inhabit. As Boje and Rosile have written, “Storytelling and narrative representation are powerful ways to trace the forces that push and pull people, organizations and communities.”⁴

Our project has focused mainly on activations as temporary events. That said, our research suggests a number of longer-term legacies that such activations could catalyze. We include these in our **Conclusions and recommendations** (p. 81).

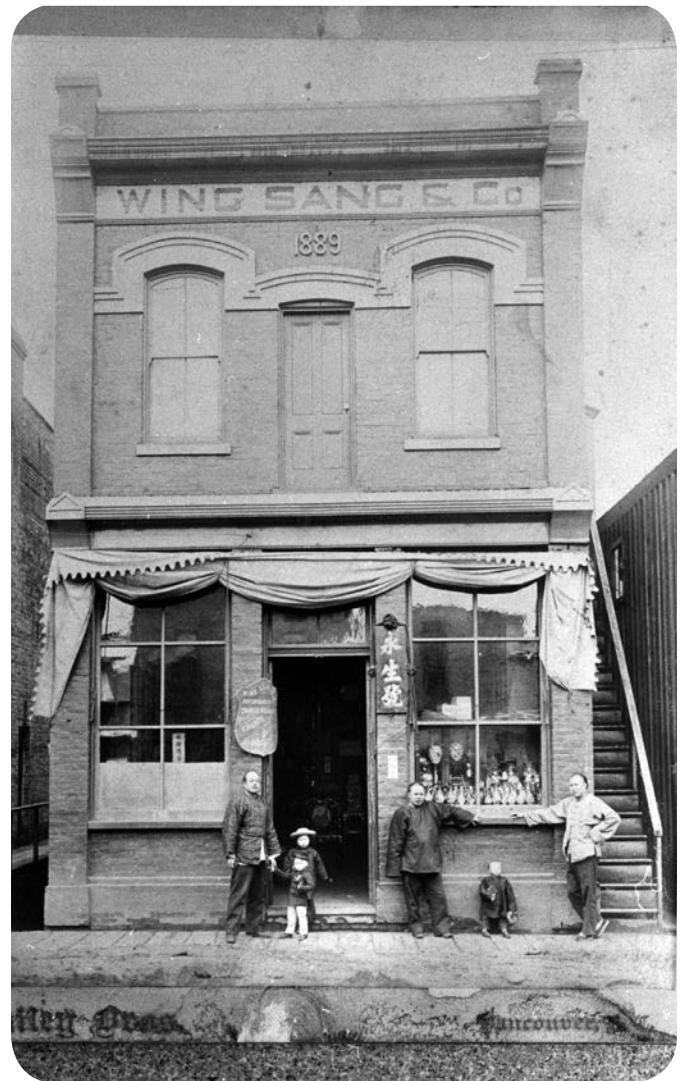
An activation is any activity or infrastructure that enriches a space, making it more alive and people-friendly. Most activations are either physical (e.g., art installations, community amenities) or event-based (e.g., street theatre, music, food, athletic or health events).

2.3 Chinatown from past to present

The establishment of Chinatown was rooted in racial discrimination and physical segregation.⁵ Only in recent years has Chinatown been recognized as an important part of the city's urban fabric and history. Many Chinese labourers came to B.C. during the Gold Rush, and most stayed to help build the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) across B.C. in the 1880s. Chinese workers were a crucial part of building the railway because they were often tasked with its most challenging and dangerous sections. However, when CPR completed the work in 1886 and sited its terminal in Vancouver, Chinese workers were abandoned. A heavy discriminatory Chinese head tax was immediately put in place for all new Chinese immigrants. With little money to return to their families and nowhere else to go, some started building homes at the edge of the newborn city.

Despite the head tax and the 1907 Anti-Asian Riot, Chinese immigrants continued to come to Vancouver, and Chinatown kept growing over the next few decades. Where the Millennium Gate stands now was drawn the physical segregation line between the Chinese neighbourhood and the rest of the city. Chinese-Canadians back then were not allowed to own property or operate businesses beyond Taylor Street. Chinatown was situated on swamp land, it was crowded, and many social issues arose; however, it was also vibrant, and people created lives for themselves in a constrained space. Even amid discrimination, they and their descendants built a Chinatown that was both resilient and thriving.

That was the birth of Vancouver's Chinatown, a history that is often untold. In April 2018, the City of Vancouver officially apologized for the historical discrimination against people of Chinese descent. History should not be forgotten, but this significant milestone is a new start for Vancouver's Chinatown.



Yip Sang with children and family in front of Wing Sang & Co., 51 East Pender; around 1900. Photo: City of Vancouver Archives



(Left) 33-39 East Pender,
 1985. Photo: Vancouver (B.C.)
 Planning Department;
 © City of Vancouver; City of
 Vancouver Archives

(Below) Same location, 2019.
 Photo: Stella L. Zhou



2.4 Surrounding and overlapping communities

The **Downtown Eastside (DTES)** was Vancouver's first settlement on the unceded territories of the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. It comprised the Strathcona, Chinatown, Gastown, Victory Square and Oppenheimer/Japantown neighbourhoods. Today the DTES is generally referred to as the 10 blocks from East Hastings onward.

The DTES encompassed two distinct areas within its boundaries: the original civic centre and the original industrial area along the new city's port, including the Hastings Mill.⁶ The area was once vibrant, with civic head offices to arts and culture establishments. The DTES has always been an area with low to moderate-income housing, which increased in the 1990s because the "gradual loss of low-income housing in other parts of the city and the deinstitutionalization of thousands of psychiatric patients drove more people to the DTES for affordable housing."⁷

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, **Hogan's Alley** was home to black families, black-owned businesses and Vancouver's only African Methodist Episcopal church as the heart of the community. Hogan's Alley ran through the southwestern corner of Strathcona, between Union and Prior Street from Main Street to Jackson Avenue.⁸ Its residents were pressured to leave the neighbourhood by slum clearance policies established by the City of Vancouver for urban renewal and the construction of the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts.⁹ The Hogan's Alley Society was formed to reclaim the area from this displacement and revitalize Strathcona's black community.

Japantown was established along Powell Street and the 300 to 700 blocks of East Cordova. Powell was the business centre of the Japanese community, with "578 ethnic Japanese stores and organizations".¹⁰ Japantown was a middle-class and working-class residential district close to the Hastings Mill. Japanese immigrants moved to the area from the "1890s to 1942, when the Government of Canada ordered them to move at least 100 miles inland."¹¹



Hogan's Alley, 1958. Photo: A.L. Yates; © City of Vancouver; City of Vancouver Archives

2.5 Importance of lanes

Lanes are an essential part of Vancouver's public space network. Although often seen as an underused resource, they contribute to our city's progress, with the potential to stimulate growth and create lively communities. Historically, Chinatown's lanes were more vibrant than today, filled with commercial activity. As K. McKinnon et al. have written, lanes in the early twentieth century "were the heart of Chinatown, packed with restaurants, stores, opera and several tenements. Occasional narrow passages between buildings connected internal courtyards to street and alley. Similar to internal breezeways, they also aided in the ventilation of courtyards".¹²

Revitalization of Chinatown's lanes could provide strategies for cultural and economic activity. Lanes could provide places for collective memories while celebrating and protecting Chinatown's heritage. Through these hidden lanes, the cultural essence and historical importance of Chinatown could be preserved, retold and experienced.

Lane activation could contribute to a larger Chinatown plan by drawing inspiration from the real case history for how the area could be converted and reused. This could provide an accessible model based on both the historical functions of Chinese-Canadian economic activities and the idea of preservation inherent to protecting the district's layers.

Preservation of an urban fabric represents protection of collective memory. As McKinnon et al. have explained, "Historic revitalization should include contemporary overlays that widen the historic context and add to a sense of continuity and connection to the past" without compromising the integrity of the historic layers.¹³



Carrall Street looking north. Photo: Philip T. Timms; City of Vancouver Archives



Market Alley around 1933. Photo: James Crookall; City of Vancouver Archives

3.0 SENSITIVITIES AND RISKS

Like any project, a lane activation presents a variety of sensitivities and risks. A number of the following are particular to Chinatown, while others would apply anywhere in Vancouver as a whole. It is important to be mindful of the sensitivities and risks that come with using Chinatown's lanes for placemaking activities.

Stakeholders

Consultation on any activation needs to show sensitivity to the possibility that stakeholder groups may express multiple, possibly conflicting interests. Moreover, over the course of a project, the pool of stakeholders may shift. Some groups identified as stakeholders may oppose or decline to participate in the project, while others may reduce their involvement after showing initial interest. Still others may step forward and self-identify who do not feel included in the planning but wish to be. Groups considering staging activations in a sensitive neighbourhood need to be flexible and responsive as stakeholders present themselves or withdraw.

Keeping it local

In choosing vendors, employees, contractors and volunteers, groups considering activation should take care to work with local people, products and services whenever possible. This will help celebrate and showcase the longstanding legacy businesses of Chinatown, a vital source of intangible and cultural heritage. It will also help ensure authenticity and will support labour in a vulnerable area of the city. For further information, please see the **Mitigating gentrification and displacement** section of this report (p. 74).

Avoiding displacement

Transforming underused public space runs the risk of displacing and excluding individuals. It can also have the unintended effect of contributing to gentrification by helping to drive up real-estate values. Chinatown has already experienced some of the ramifications of gentrification. Groups proposing activations should seek feedback from

local stakeholders on how to avoid supporting this trend. For further information, please see the **Mitigating gentrification and displacement** section of this report (p. 74).

Cultural appropriation

Chinatown has always been a place where different cultures come together in harmony. Groups considering activations should keep in mind the difference between celebrating and appropriating culture. Generalizing Chinatown's culture as 'pan-Asian' or 'Oriental' is disrespectful because diverse cultures exist within the larger umbrellas of Asian and Chinese culture. It is also exclusionary, as it obscures the past and present existence of many other cultures in neighbourhoods nearby such as Hogan's Alley and Strathcona that influenced Chinatown's development. In addition, elements that may seem culturally Chinese may not necessarily be authentic to Vancouver's Chinatown. When in doubt, groups considering activations should discuss proposed themes and designs with the local Chinatown communities with which they're working.

Language barriers

Many Chinese seniors, clan society members, legacy store owners and local Chinatown residents may not speak or understand English comfortably. Lack of language skills in Mandarin, Cantonese or Toi Shan dialect may make it difficult to communicate with them. Groups considering activation should make sure they can communicate with community members in the language with which they're most comfortable, hiring translators when needed. It is also important to have multilingual volunteers on site during activations.

Substance use

Vancouver has a long history of substance use and addiction. Chinatown and the broader Downtown Eastside (DTES) has been hit particularly hard as many of its residents live with substance use. Poverty and lack of quality housing have pushed many vulnerable populations into the streets. People often go to secluded areas like lanes while using drugs. Groups choosing lanes for activation will need to be sensitive to activities currently going on in lanes, seek opportunities that appear to pose lower risks of displacement and speak with stakeholders to understand the area's sensitivities in order to minimize challenges.

Condition of lanes

Lane condition can constrain event design. Uneven asphalt, potholes, puddles and garbage can affect ambience. Groups choosing lanes to activate will need to evaluate surface condition.

Shortage of capacity and funding

Our research has indicated that local businesses and nonprofit groups often like the idea of public realm activations in principle but lack the capacity to fund and execute projects falling outside their core mandates. For example, a nonprofit may be able to contribute elements to an activation or may be able to pitch in with volunteer help but may not be in the position to direct and fund the event as a whole. Our research has suggested a shortage of leadership with the time, financial resources and mandate to head up activations. For a sampling of funding options, please see **Appendix A** (p. 90).

Lunar New Year festivities

Getting the community on board for a project may be challenging during the months of January and early February, while Lunar New Year events are going on. As an alternative, events can be staged during times of year when there are fewer simultaneous activations happening in Chinatown. The December holiday season or spring, summer or early fall are all possibilities.

Planning for all weather

Visitors generally resist attending outdoor events in inclement weather. Given Vancouver's highly variable climate, groups looking to activate lanes may wish to consider "weather-resistant" solutions such as tenting, combined indoor–outdoor events or amenities such as warm tea or other hot drinks to draw people in during rain. Alternatively, activations could occur during sunnier seasons: late spring, summer or early fall.

Bureaucratic barriers

Complex impediments at the municipal level, particularly permitting processes, have the potential to discourage small or mid-scale events. Our research has indicated that permitting processes tend to be geared around large-scale events. This creates barriers for the stewardship of public space, especially for community groups that lack the resources, expertise or time to navigate complex bureaucratic systems.

4.0 CASE STUDIES

Our project is informed by case studies from other public space projects in Vancouver, Toronto and Fuzhou, China. We also consider public space activations in the Chinatowns of San Francisco, New York, Seattle, Singapore and Victoria, B.C. The following is what we've learned from these places.

Part A: Public space uses in Vancouver

4.1 Alley Oop

Key features

- First of three lane redesigns conserved permanently in the city through VIVA Vancouver
- Lane entrance on Granville Street, one of the city's busiest commercial areas.

Goals

- Reimagining underused lanes as engaging, accessible public spaces that contribute to city's livelihood

Indicators of success

- Recipient of International Downtown Association's Downtown Achievement Award 2017
- One of the most 'Instafamous' places in Vancouver

Examples of events

- Public discos
- BBQs
- Basketball
- Street festivals
- Music video: 'Likey' by Twice
- Public art installations

Lessons learned

- Ongoing funding and resources needed for programming, activation and long-term maintenance
- Deliveries, waste collection and loading zones need to continue to function in an activated lane
- Community engagement recommended throughout process to keep stakeholders informed with each project phase
- Partial funding for Alley Oop came from surrounding property owners and businesses

Who's involved

- Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA)
- City of Vancouver
- HCMA Architecture + Design
- VIVA Vancouver
- More Awesome Now

Selecting a lane with potential partners in close proximity can assist with stewardship of the space.



Alley Oop, downtown Vancouver. Photo: Kim Bellavance

4.2 Market Alley

Key features

- Named after a market on the ground floor of City Hall established in the 1890s
- Used to be a lively arts and culture lane with an active open market
- Was a site of counter-culture that attracted economic development through traffic flow brought in by the alley entrances of businesses
- Incorporated recent mural and streetscaping initiative led by the Overdose Prevention Society

Goals

- Streetscaping occurred in phases, according to community engagement conversations
 - Phase 1: Reclamation of counter-culture through murals
 - Phase 2: Repairing pavement, adding lighting for safety
- Both phases safeguarded safety without leading to displacement of Chinatown and broader DTES communities

Challenges

- Limited garbage pick-up
- Graffiti over permanent murals
- High concentration of substance use within lane

Indicators of success

- Community-led
- Creating a sense of pride for community
- Cultural space
- Activating local organizations

Examples of events

- In summer 2019, the Vancouver Mural Festival will help stakeholders revitalize Market Alley for the community

Lessons learned

- Market Alley historically supported laneway food culture through access to late-night restaurants
- Market Alley functioned historically as a desired pedestrian route for tourism and the local communities

Who's involved

- Overdose Prevention Society
- Vancouver Chinatown BIA (VCBIA)
- Vancouver Mural Festival (VMF)
- City of Vancouver
- Downtown Eastside Plan Project Team
- Local DTES graffiti artists

The City of Vancouver supports the reclamation of the DTES by community-led artists telling their stories through murals.



Columbia Street at Market Alley, 1977. Photo: Paul Yee; City of Vancouver Archives

4.3 Choi on the Go (COTG)

Key features

- Spearheaded by two Simon Fraser University students as a design proposal to tackle food waste and support community groups
- Temporary mobile produce service providing easy access to culturally relevant, recycled vegetables at affordable prices sourced from local farmers
- Operated mainly on streets or in public spaces around Chinatown and Downtown Eastside (DTES)

Goals

- Reconnecting low-income Asian seniors in Chinatown and DTES to their cultural foods
- Supporting low-income seniors through fundraising and donating to Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice

Examples of events

- Sold culturally relevant, fresh reclaimed organic produce on the streets and in public spaces in Chinatown and DTES
- Participated in 2018 Chinatown Summer Events, selling choi in courtyard adjacent to Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden
- Shared knowledge on food sustainability and locally sourced organic food with seniors

Lessons learned

- Student initiatives have the potential to engage local communities and benefit those in need
- Thoughtful consultation with low-income seniors from Chinatown and DTES prior to proposal garnered positive feedback and support
- Operation focuses on ‘place-keeping’ that uplifts local communities through existing social fabric, rather than transforming physical space through ‘placemaking’
- COTG made sure that products were directly sourced from local farmers and easily accessible by vulnerable community members

Who’s involved

- Annette Cheung and Marielle Wall, two students from SFU
- Low-income seniors living in Chinatown and DTES
- Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice
- Carnegie Community Centre

COTG started as a one-time student-initiated pop-up event on the streets of DTES. It received a positive reaction from the local community and occurred a few more times later in Chinatown.



Choi on the Go operating on the streets and engaging with Chinese seniors. Photo: Laura Wisler Møller

Part B: Chinatown and public space projects around the world

4.4 Toronto Laneway Project

Key features

- The Laneway Project¹⁴ in Toronto has put together a Toronto Laneway Manual as a resource for anyone requiring information on variables governing use and improvement of Toronto's numerous lane spaces, such as:
 - Neighbourhood characteristics
 - Ownership structures
 - Access requirements
 - Microclimates
 - Edge conditions
- Easily accessible website allows public to research how to activate other public spaces

Who's involved

- The Laneway Project
- City of Toronto

Highlighted in Toronto Laneway Manual

- Hard variables: Lane ownership, zone categories, allowable adjacent building heights, right-of-way width, access and permit requirements
- Soft variables: Adjacent open spaces, pedestrian/bike routes and desire lines, upcoming neighbourhood developments, active local organizations, microclimates, state of repair and edge conditions
- Requirements by Toronto City Division for solid waste collection, fire and infrastructure services
- Zoning with reference to each chapter where the permit is located
- Explanations of different lane activation considerations
- Maintenance: Waste, traffic, mode-share planning and traffic safety measures, attractive and well-maintained paving, pedestrian-friendly lighting
- Beautification: Creative expression, greening and infill development

A simple online manual that is easy to read will increase the willingness of communities to activate lanes.



Honest Ed Alley, Toronto, 2016. Photo: Katrina Afonso/The Laneway Project

4.5 San Francisco Chinatown

Key features

- One of the oldest and most established Chinatowns in the United States
- Has lanes that are incorporated into San Francisco's Living Alleys, a city-wide initiative of community-led lane activations

Goals

- Promote lanes as public spaces
- Create green, shared, vibrant lanes
- Ensure cleanliness and safety
- Build strong partnerships
- Activation needs to be supported and led by local grassroots community

Indicators of success

- Chinatown revitalized by a local Chinese businessman¹⁵
- Seven-step plan made tourism a positive and valuable asset to Chinatown¹⁶
- Arts and culture in the district led by local community¹⁷
- Most lanes were used in Chinatown's revitalization and are still living alleys today

Examples of events

- Chinatown Food Fest 2018
- Multi-week festival put on by Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco, 2018
 - Chinatown exhibits in Ross Alley

Lessons learned

- Hanging lights provide a 'ceiling' for lanes and define space, creating human-scaled experience
- Converting garages in lanes to commercial uses is a strategy for economic development through creating active frontages
- Public art lowers crime and forges community partnerships

Who's involved

- Community-supported, neighbourhood-led projects in close collaboration with City of San Francisco
- Funding through sponsorships, in-kind services, fundraising, and partnering with private development and community benefit district
- Chinatown Community Development Center introduces place-based activities to activate formal and informal art spaces
- 41 Ross activates Ross Alley with cultural programming

A living alley combines several streetscaping elements into one re-development. It is called a living alley because it communicates to nearby vehicles and pedestrians.¹⁸



Traditional red Chinese Lanterns, San Francisco Chinatown. Photo: Tiffany Creyke

4.6 New York (Manhattan) Chinatown

Key features

- One of the densest neighbourhoods in North America's densest city: Chinatown's density is 4,713.5/sq mi
- One of the world's oldest Chinatowns
- Manhattan not built with rear or side lanes; activity occurs on streets, in parks and inside
- Very little public open space in Chinatown¹⁹; overuse of existing space by competing interests²⁰

Goals

- Continues to be a magnet area for immigration (Asian, Latinx) for affordable housing
- Desire to preserve affordability from gentrification
- Threat to historic conservation of tangible and intangible heritage by development and lack of zoning protection²¹
- Desire for better use and programming of public spaces including parks, libraries and schools²²

Examples of events

- W.O.W Project: Community-based initiative that preserves Chinatown through arts, culture and activism, located inside Wing On Wo & Co., oldest continually run family business in Manhattan Chinatown. Hosts panel discussions, artist-in-residency program, film screenings²³
- Social gatherings in "barber shops, senior citizens' centers, coffee shops and restaurants, community and civic organizations, schools, churches, street corners, plazas and public parks"²⁴

Lessons learned

- W.O.W. Project's indoor cultural event series could be emulated within lanes of other cities
- Shortage of public space can mean competition for outdoor space use and lively use of available indoor space

Who's involved

- W.O.W. Project, Wing On Wo & Co.
- Chinatown Working Group
- Pratt Center for Community Development
- Collective for Community, Culture and the Environment
- Neighbourhood associations traditional to Chinatown

Manhattan isn't built with lanes. In North America's densest city, activity occurs on streets and in parks.



Street life in Manhattan's Chinatown. Photo: chensiyuan (CC BY-SA 4.0)

4.7 Seattle Chinatown

Key features

- Community-led development groups with capacity to lead laneway revitalization
- Exploring potential for lanes as places for living, working and visiting²⁵
- Leveraging of public and private funds²⁶
- Cleaning up waste

Goals²⁷

- Improving aesthetic appeal of lanes
- Highlighting historical/cultural lane significance
- Enhancing lanes to strengthen community and support local business
- Improving neighbourhood safety
- Positive activations in underused public spaces
- Intergenerational focus: Public space for seniors and younger generations
- Balancing development and preservation

Indicators of success

- Lane revitalizations: Nord, Canton, Nihonmachi and Maynard Alleys
- Chinatown Historic Alley Partnership (CHAP) founded in response to Canton Alley activation²⁸
- Neighbourhood-organized clean parties motivated by Clear Alleys Program, 2009 (cleaning program)

Examples of events

- Arts and culture: Visual art displays, folk music, participatory dancing (hula)
- Refurbishment of a store to look as it did at turn of last century
- Food event: Marshmallow roasting

Lessons learned

- Revitalization led by community groups dedicated to advocating for lanes and public space rather than directed top-down by city
- Historic preservation balanced with development

Who's involved

- Chinatown Historic Alley Partnership (CHAP)
- Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (SCIDpda), community development organization founded 1975
- IDEA Space, a program of SCIDpda
- Related programs
- King Street Visioning Project, 2009
- Clear Alleys Program

Building community groups strengthens local capacity to lead lane activation ground-up.



Canton Alley. Photo: Nakano Associates

4.8 Singapore Chinatown

Key features

- Preservation of architectural fabric of Chinatown's streetscape, especially its traditional shophouses
- Street furniture, lighting and signboards reflect area's historic charm
- Food street with open-air cooking and dining
- Market square with fresh produce
- Served by Singapore's Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system

Goals

Conservation master plan executed in 1986 to preserve Chinatown as well as other cultural districts as part of national tourism exercise

Indicators of success

Chinatown has numbered in top three free tourist destinations in Singapore²⁹

Examples of events

- Theatre for wayang (traditional Chinese street theatre and opera)
- Street performances, including puppet-making demonstrations, calligraphy competitions, lion and dragon dances, and martial arts shows
- Trishaw rides

Lessons learned

- Commercial activity left to free competition. Many small, traditional businesses have been forced out with rental increases. Many residents believe this has led to over-commercialization of Chinatown³⁰
- Local residents feel that conservation efforts should go beyond preserving buildings and architectural façades and should sustain existing trades and local culture³¹

Who's involved

- Singapore Tourism Board
- Singapore's Urban Redevelopment Authority
- Singapore Heritage Society

Top-down planning strategies that focus on preserving traditional architecture can hinder conservation of intangible heritage.



Chinatown, Singapore. Photo:
[Marco Verch](#) (CC BY-SA 2.0)



Outdoor street dining at
 restaurants in the heart of
 Chinatown, Singapore. Photo:
[Khalzuri Yazid](#) (CC BY-SA 2.0)

4.9 Victoria Chinatown

Key features

- Victoria's Chinatown is the first and oldest Chinatown in Canada
- Small but incorporated into downtown core as major tourist and heritage attraction
- Narrow lanes connected with larger downtown public realm network

Goals

- Promoting and enhancing Chinatown as significant part of downtown public life for both residents and visitors
- Creating more attractive and vibrant lanes and activating them with arts and activities

Indicators of success

- Declined sharply to only 2 city blocks and 150 residents by 1970, then protected and revived through city's Chinatown Rehabilitation Project (1979–1986)
- Designated as National Historical Site in 1995 as Canada's oldest intact and continuously active Chinatown³²
- Emphasized and included in city's Downtown Core Area Plan (2011) and Downtown Public Realm Plan & Streetscape Standards (2017)³³

Examples of events

- Chinatown Heavenly Lights Project³⁴ launched in 2010 to light up Chinatown year-round
- Installation of lanterns, festival lights and colourful overhead lighted decorations shaped as dragons
- Other public-space enhancements: historical murals, decorative bike racks and refurbishment of old phone booths

Lessons learned

- Significance and use of lanes as integral part of downtown public realm network emphasized across multiple city plans
- Designated and ongoing public realm project launched and maintained in collaboration with Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) and Chinatown communities
- Fan Tan Alley is a narrow lane filled with small shops, attractive storefronts and pedestrian activities, though can be seen as sign of gentrification as many stores in lane are not traditionally Chinese

Who's involved

- City of Victoria
- Downtown BIA
- Chinatown communities

In the 1970s, Victoria's Chinatown was on the verge of disappearing. However, it is now revived and valued for its economic potential and heritage significance.



(Left and below) Fan Tan Alley,
 Victoria. Photos: Katrina Afonso/
 The Laneway Project



4.10 Fuzhou (China), Sanfang Qixiang (Three Lanes & Seven Alleys)

Key features

- Sanfang Qixiang (Three Lanes & Seven Alleys) is a network of well-preserved lanes and alleys in old-town Fuzhou with over 1,000 years of history
- Included in tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 2013 and won Honourable Mention in 2015 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation³⁵
- Lane network restored in late 2000s as part of China's largest intact old-town district, with over 200 buildings from Ming and Qing dynasties

Goals

- Like Vancouver's Chinatown, Sanfang Qixiang aims to become UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Becoming a 'must-see' destination in Fuzhou for local, regional and international visitors
- Preserving historic integrity of tangible heritage within Three Lanes & Seven Alleys network
- Promoting public education on site history, including famous scholars, politicians, military strategists, philosophers and artists who have lived in these houses
- Protecting endangered handicrafts, arts and culture, traditional practices and other intangible heritage in Fuzhou

Examples of events

- Originally built in Qing Dynasty, the Shui Sie Xi Tai (Water Pavilion Theatre) continues to provide shows and entertainment for visitors year-round
- Countless street food vendors, traditional arts and crafts stores and other commercial activities populate main street
- Many old houses in lanes where historically famous people once lived are now open to public as living community museums

Lessons learned

- Commercial activities on the connected main street have brought lots of foot traffic to the lane and alley network
- Whole network of lanes and their main connecting street within old-town district are closed off from vehicle traffic
- Keeping traditional legacy stores running while making sure that newer stores blend in with site aesthetically
- Process was fairly top-down, with many residents relocated by local government to restore and preserve fragile historical buildings
- Successfully preserved tangible heritage but lost some important intangible heritage as intense touristification has displaced many local residents

Who's involved

- Fuzhou City Government
- National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO

In Chinese culture, lanes (fang) and alleys (xiang) are slightly different built forms. Lanes are usually longer and wider than alleys.



*Main commercial street at
 Sanfang Qixiang.
 Photo: Stella L. Zhou*



*Tower Alley (Ta Xiang)
 at Sanfang Qixiang
 Photo: Stella L. Zhou*

5.0 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

5.1 What Chinatown communities have said

Prior to this studio project, Chinatown communities already went through extensive consultations on various major City initiatives. These projects have included the City's new Chinatown development policy, North East False Creek and more. Through these engagements, the people and organizations of Chinatown have brought forth their values, their concerns and what they'd like to see celebrated. We highlight here what they have said. (For consultation reports and documents, see p. 39.)

Cultural values

- History and culture of Chinese-Canadians as fundamental to Chinatown
- Recognition that Chinatown was built by the Chinese community through a history of discrimination
- Importance of seniors
- Strengthening intergenerational connections and youth involvement
- Desire to bring young Chinese-Canadians back to Chinatown
- Appreciation of tangible and intangible heritage
- Local, traditional food and enterprises
- Preservation of distinct Chinatown spirit
- Need for social revitalization

Preservation and development

- Development should support Chinatown's character
- Stronger heritage protection for older buildings, preserving Chinatown's fine grain
- Concern over displacement of seniors, low-income people and other vulnerable residents of Chinatown and Downtown Eastside
- Balance between providing affordable housing and preserving historic character
- Incremental development preferred over fast development
- Desire to improve neighbourhood appearance

Public space

- Lack of public and social space in Chinatown
- Need for playful, safe, inclusive space
- Need for flexible, welcoming community facilities, cultural programming, business improvement programs, schools, outdoor space and spaces for seniors and families
- Activation of lanes with innovative waste disposal to get dumpsters out of lanes
- Celebration of Shanghai Alley and other historic lanes in Chinatown
- Interest in seeing public art (murals), events and economically sustainable programming in lanes
- Activation of Memorial Plaza
- Activities brought to streets
- Desire for permeability and connection to other communities, inviting visitors into Chinatown
- Proximity of Chinatown to waterfront and parks
- Wayfinding signage for culturally significant landmarks to preserve community memory
- Crime reduction

Economic development

- Desire for economic development
- Desire to attract both local visitors and tourists to Chinatown
- Traditional, culturally appropriate, affordable, independent shops preferred over large chains

Consultation reports and documents

- Heritage BC. (2015, September). Vancouver Chinatown Intangible Heritage Values Report.
- Lao, A., Chia, E., But, I., and Fung, S. (2016, September 14). “A Grandma’s Eye View of Chinatown”: Workshop Final Report.
- Lee, C. (2018). Vancouver Chinatown Social Cohesion Report. Hua Foundation.
- Vancouver, City of. (2017, April 8). Chinatown Workshop: Northeast False Creek.
- Vancouver, City of. (2018, April). Public Consultation Summary: Proposed Changes to Chinatown Development Policy.
- Youth Collaborative for Chinatown. (2017). Experiences of Chinatown.
- Youth Collaborative for Chinatown. (2018, October). Experiences of a Courtyard.



Dragon dancing at Lunar New Year parade, led by Chinatown community members. Photo: Stella L. Zhou



People gathering at the Special Council Meeting on the Formal Apology to Chinese Communities, April 22, 2018. Photo: Stella L. Zhou

5.2 What we've heard from stakeholders and knowledge holders



Over the course of this project, we have consulted many local stakeholders and knowledge holders connected with Chinatown or experienced in activating public space. We reached out to a wide range of organizations and individuals; of these, the following spoke with us:

Community stakeholders

- Chinatown House
- Chinatown Today
- Chinese Community Policing Centre
- Choi on the Go project (COTG)
- Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden
- Hastings Crossing Business Improvement Association (HXBIA)
- Hua Foundation
- Rhinofish Noodle Bar
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Foundation
- Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Association (VCBIA)
- Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice
- Youth Collaborative for Chinatown (YCC)

Knowledge holders

- Chinese Canadian Historical Society of BC
- City of Vancouver, Downtown Eastside Project Plan Team
- City of Vancouver, Engineering Services
- City of Vancouver, Film and Special Events
- City of Vancouver, VIVA Vancouver program
- Initiative for Student Teaching and Research in Chinese Canadian Studies (INSTRCC), UBC
- Vancouver Public Space Network (VPSN)

With the majority of groups that responded to our outreach, we conducted a one-on-one interview of approximately an hour with an organization member. Our questions focused on Chinatown heritage, values or economic and social development or on the possibility of lane activations. We also asked if the organizations would be interested in being involved with lane activations in the future and what kind of support they might need to enable that interest.

In the following section, we summarize the feedback we have received. On the basis of this feedback, we went on to conduct a preliminary assessment of community capacity, which forms the foundation of our **Conclusions and recommendations** (p. 79). Given the amount of qualitative information gathered, we have grouped the consultation results into categories, themes and subthemes (Figure 1).

Category	Theme	Subtheme
General reflections	Demographic changes	
	Changes in commercial retail	
	Intergroup politics	
	Need for shared vision and government support	
Values and assets of Chinatown and its communities	Tangible and intangible heritage of Chinatown	
	Equity and engagement	
	Drawing people to Chinatown	
	Intergenerational connections	
	Economic development	Balancing development with people's needs
	Stewardship	Incentives to help get organizations involved
	Community celebrations	
	Chinatown's unique food culture	
Concerns around lane activation	Conditions for activation	Health and safety
		Waste and litter
		Noise
		Vehicular traffic
		Weather
	Community capacity	Funding
		Storage
		Limits on resources
		Volunteer sustainability
	Social impacts	Chinese-Canadians and Indigenous people
		Cultural appropriation
		Displacement
		Overdevelopment
	Permitting processes	Challenges
		Solutions
Ideas for lane activation	Specific ideas for events	Markets
		Commercial events driving entrepreneurship
		Seniors' events: Physical activity and health
		Lane walking tour
		Public art and murals
		Year-round events
	Conditions for events	Promotion
		Using space creatively
		Incentives to get organizations involved

Figure 1: Categories, themes and subthemes from consultation feedback

5.3 Main takeaways from our community consultations



This section highlights the main learnings that we gleaned from our engagement with Chinatown stakeholders, advocates and community partners. We have synthesized the feedback into four main categories, each with additional themes and subthemes. We also include direct quotations and notes taken during our consultation to showcase the diversity of community feedback. (For greater detail, see pp. 44–51).

General reflections

This category includes general comments from stakeholders interviewed, expressing thoughts on Chinatown. Some of these are reflections that concern Chinatown and its infrastructure as a whole. Others relate to lanes specifically.

- **Demographic changes:** Shifts in age and ethnic composition of people moving in
- **Changes in commercial retail:** Loss of traditional legacy businesses such as Chinese groceries
- **Intergroup politics:** Diverging interests, pathways and goals for Chinatown's future
- **Need for shared vision and government support** on addressing challenges to Chinatown's infrastructure and social development

Values and assets of Chinatown and its communities

Throughout our engagement, we heard about what people valued most in Chinatown and how that could be reflected in activations. Here are some of the values that people expressed:

- **Tangible and intangible heritage** of Chinatown showcased in lane activations
- **Equity and engagement:** Activations should be inclusive of the diversity of communities within Chinatown and the broader neighbourhoods
- **Need for balance** between development and people's needs
- **Drawing Chinese youth and other visitors** to Chinatown
- **Intergenerational connections** between seniors and youth
- **Economic development** consistent with Chinatown's legacies
- **Stewardship:** Activations led from the ground up for authenticity and local hiring
- **Community celebrations** increased throughout the year
- **Chinatown's unique food culture** highlighted in lanes

Concerns around lane activation

Many stakeholders expressed that they liked the idea of lane activation; however, they all had concerns about potential challenges and impact. We have grouped this feedback into four high-level categories of concern that summarize their complexity broadly.

- **Conditions on the lane** such as safety, noise, waste and traffic can all impact the viability of an activation
- **Lack of community capacity** such as funding options, storage space, limited labour power and other resources
- **Unintended social impacts** including risk of displacement, cultural appropriation, overdevelopment and more
- **Onerous permitting processes**, especially for small-scale and grassroots initiatives

Ideas for lane activation

A number of community stakeholders were excited about the project and provided specific ideas for lane activations and their delivery.

- **Ideas for events**
 - Markets
 - Commercial events driving entrepreneurship
 - Year-round events
 - Seniors' events, e.g., health and physical activity
 - Book fairs
 - Lane tours
 - Public art, murals and additional heritage markers
 - Events celebrating Chinatown's food culture
- **Event delivery**
 - More event promotion needed
 - Creative use of space
 - Incentives to get organizations involved



5.4 General reflections

5.4.1 Demographic changes

- Cultural demographics in Chinatown are broadening; seniors needing health and other services are no longer only serving Chinese-Canadian communities
- New residents and communities are moving into Chinatown. “This organization is shifting too. ... No organization is just there. We keep changing too, based on the needs of the clients”
- New construction brings new residents, who bring new culture to the neighbourhood
- Chinatown used to be very tight-knit and people came together to help in difficult times; this is changing as other Vancouverites move in
- Seniors use lanes but feel unsafe there because of crime (getting robbed)
- Loss of affordable food sources, grocery stores and affordable housing

5.4.2 Changes in commercial retail

- Traditional retail becoming limited; most stores that sell Chinese food items such as seafood and herbs are gone
- Seniors and Chinatown staff can no longer shop at one store after another
- Stores have become more youth-oriented: “skateboards, marijuana...very Western-type of restaurants”
- “There are still some shops, but I don’t know how they are surviving right now, because it is affecting the type of clientele that is coming. ... Tourism might not be just enough. Because they lost all the local people that were really supporting Chinatown before”
- Even with heritage-protected buildings, “the types of commercial products have changed a lot. If we really want to bring people to the neighbourhood, then we need to do more”
- “You have a lot of farmers’ market-style vendors and such, but do you want another farmers’ market in Vancouver, especially in Chinatown?”

- “People used to come here to shop, to eat and all that, but that might not be the case now. They might just end up going to Richmond, because it’s more concentrated of all those commercial restaurants and shopping areas and all of that.”

5.4.3 Intergroup politics

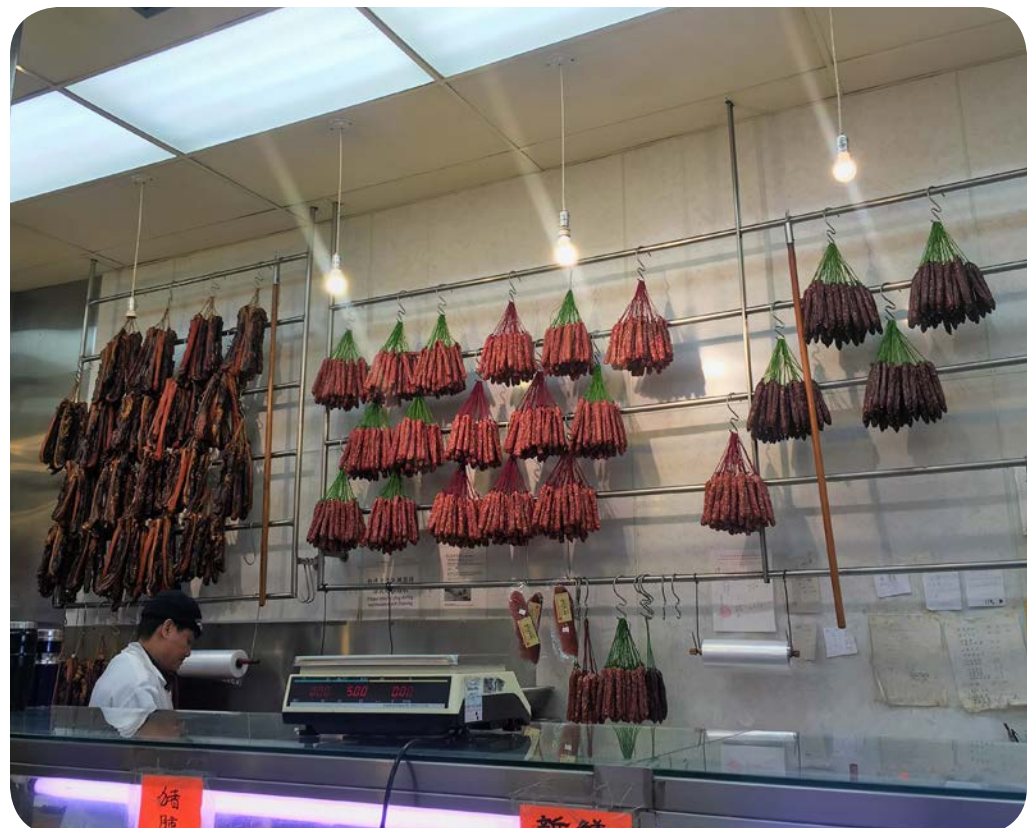
- “Being in the Chinese media has been really impactful in terms of seniors recognizing us and young people being in Chinatown”
- “We have worked in collaboration with other young groups, and this has helped us achieve historic milestones, like 105 Keefer. This showcased that young people are engaged with the neighbourhood”
- Everyone in Chinatown wants the community to thrive, but in different ways; therefore political conflicts, personal conflicts and conflicts of interest arise
- Generational conflict occurs between older, traditional community organizations and youth-based nonprofits
- “I say ‘communities’ because it’s important to get as much buy-in as possible. How do you engage communities properly? How do you steward?”

5.4.4 Need for shared vision

- “If the core value of [a lane activation] builds around heritage, whether it’s tangible or intangible ... then we can easily see that there are certain businesses that would be more optimal to help ... A lot of people talk about food as an example. It’s definitely one of those examples that ... [fit] in well [with] intangible cultural heritage, but at the same time it has so much potential as a commercial business to be creative. And it fits really well into a larger framework of marketing Chinatown as a product for tourism”



*Selling Chinese Lunar
 New Year decorations.
 Photo: Stella L. Zhou*



*Traditional legacy stores
 are declining in Chinatown.
 Photo: Stella L. Zhou*

5.5 Values and assets of Chinatown and its communities

5.5.1 Tangible and intangible heritage of Chinatown

- Everyday practices
- Restaurant industry
- Clan societies, food, events, language schools and art centres
- “The truths of the Chinese-Canadian and immigrant experience”
- A “mixture of class and culture”
- The people who work in Chinatown – the artists, the makers, etc.
- Need for balance between new development and retention of buildings and services that encourage Chinatown’s vibrancy
- Lane activation enabling cultural heritage to communicate different ways of seeing Chinatown’s development, fitting different elements together
- “We have to look at cultural heritage management in a balanced way that remains accountable to sustainable cultural and environmental conservation and the different social elements”
- Chinatown has always been working-class, affordable and supportive
- “Sometimes the quickest way to get from A to B is through the lane. Laneways do not need to be separate”

5.4.2 Equity and engagement

- Neighbourhood needs to take mobility, power and privilege into account. Whatever is built should be accessible, not just physically but also economically
- “Can we use this as a vehicle to uplift people’s economic mobility? How do we make sure that they can participate?”
- “So how do you onboard the outside communities that are coming in? How do you create these pathways for them to engage and support the existing neighbourhoods and communities?”

5.5.3 Drawing people to Chinatown

- Hong Kong is a good example of placemaking in informal spaces that attract large crowds of tourists and locals
- Creating an informal lane route that drives people from other neighbourhoods to Chinatown through a walking tour of Chinatown would bring the vision of laneway activation to life

5.5.4 Intergenerational connections

- Need for regular contact and connection between elders and youth
- Importance of bringing younger generations back into Chinatown
- Over 2,000 low-income seniors live in Downtown Eastside and Chinatown, but only 150–200 of them are actively engaged with community events and initiatives
- “We love to bring in kids from kindergarten and elementary school to intergenerational activity together with the seniors because it’s just so lively. Seniors suddenly think, ‘Oh, we are home again.’”

5.5.5 Economic development

- “I would like to see more businesses and restaurants in Chinatown, so we can make this the area to eat and to drink”
- “We need to look at how to ensure activities are sustainable, or at least sustainably managed. How can we implement activities that not only require investment but also can produce values or even in some cases produce resources?”
- “If the starting point for the [lane] activity does not have enough of a commercial drive to it, then it might not drive further investment as an incentive for other activities”
- “There is a lot of consumption going on ... cultural consumption, consumption through economics, but we rarely talk about production of Chinatown culture.”

Balancing development with people's needs

- Respectful development and investment in community show caution in changing a neighborhood
- Need for better spreading of incentives and resources to support existing community
- “Preliminary findings show” that building a block of condos packaged with all amenities diverts people from shopping elsewhere in neighbourhood

5.5.6 Local stewardship

- For Vancouver's diverse public spaces, need to work with the voices of the community to steer away from whitewashing Vancouver and determine who gets a say in what it looks like
- Need for a mixture of voices, including young people, and for separate City-led committees for lane activation involving the community
- Different organizations have different capacities, and Chinatown has many groups. Stewardship should involve multiple groups who all bring their strengths to Chinatown's activation

Incentives to help get organizations involved

- More service industry staff
- More funding
- More accessible permitting processes
- Dedicated community lead(s) needed to spearhead an activation

5.5.7 Community celebrations

- More celebrations needed where community comes together, for example on Family Day
- More activation suggested along arteries through celebratory installations such as lighting
- More events needed during inactive times in Chinatown (e.g., around Christmas, spring, summer and early fall)

5.5.8 Chinatown's food culture

- “The buy-in from legacy businesses could anchor laneway activation, since the food is right there”
- Food fits the need for increasing commercial business in marketing Chinatown for tourism within a heritage framework
- “If we look at Chinatown as a product that can cater to a very specific, unique subset of tourism, then it will help to inform a lot of possible areas of business to focus on first”
- “A lot of people talk about food as an example. It's definitely one of those examples that ... fit the criteria partly because it really fits in well [with] intangible cultural heritage, but at the same time it has so much potential as a commercial business to be creative.”



Traditional dried foods. Photo: Stella L. Zhou

5.6 Concerns around lane activation

5.6.1 Conditions for activation

Smoothness of pavement

- “You can see that the road is not very flat in the back alleys”

Health and safety

- Safety concerns are increasing
- Garbage, needles, human waste and homelessness might make lanes dangerous for some people to walk in
- Activation makes public space safer because there are more eyes on the street, yet lanes only occupy one space and you cannot control the path to get there and back
- Seniors have been feeling unsafe in laneways, but they do use them

Waste and litter

- Lanes are multipurpose yet are used primarily for dumpsters. Work with adjacent businesses; e.g., “Hello, Restaurant X, your dumpster might be moved a block over for the day”
- Lanes are hard to maintain for events because it costs organizers money to clean them regularly

Noise

- “Depending on the event, adjacent residents might not like the noise”
- “How can we manage noise expectations for neighbouring residents?”

Vehicular traffic

- Desire to see lanes become more active and pedestrian-friendly, with fewer cars
- “It’s important to understand motor vehicle circulation. Things like parking, loading and deliveries need to be thought about”

Weather

- “A lot of spaces are exposed. There is no place to escape the heat (in the summer) or rain (during the winter). This does not make public spaces very user-friendly”
- “If there can be more activities during the summertime, I think we can utilize these streets and laneways more”

5.6.2 Community capacity

Limited resources for public space activation

- Increasing numbers of youth want to implement activities in public space, but main challenge to community involvement is lack of resources
- “Lack of culturally appropriate and culturally specific labour and talent”
- Long-term events are harder to sustain
- More capacity needed to lead or initiate lane activation through labour support or financial assistance
- For activities and business purposes, need to look into having more resources from organizations and/or municipal and provincial governments

Funding

- There is a lack of community and government funding opportunities that enable stewards to take on laneway events.

Storage

- YCC has accessed storage for events from EasyPark near Memorial Square (Lot 7, 180 Keefer Street)
- Chinese Cultural Centre has agreed to store equipment overnight in the past; however, there are access issues since only CCC staff have keys
- Chinatown needs more entities to own and manage event supplies
- “The DVBI has a program where they bring in furniture in and out in different areas during the summer and it’s amazing but limited. ... The Thingery might also be a good partner. What if you co-located a public space activation where they are parking a Thingery?”

Volunteer sustainability

- “There’s volunteer fatigue in Chinatown, but there’s a lot of energy as well”
- Volunteering is not sustainable over the long run because many people volunteer to get a job
- Volunteers need proximity to Chinatown. With displacement from affordable housing, older low-income volunteers may become unable to come

5.6.3 Social impact

- Physical infrastructure and larger systemic social issues are some of the biggest challenges for Chinatown's development: "I think a lot of people have good ideas but have stopped ... coming up with new ideas because of that issue"

Chinese-Canadians and Indigenous people

- "There's an interesting relationship between Indigenous groups and Chinatown's seniors. If an event could be more inclusive and foster connection between these groups, that would be great"

Cultural appropriation

- Promotions must be culturally appropriate
- "There's a fine balance between attracting too much outsider influence versus becoming a place that is only for Chinese descendants"
- "Outside organizations tend to have other agendas"
- "There is the interest, but again who is it for? Is it to borrow from the Chinatown identity and claim that as exotic, but not do much for the existing community? Or is it to bring people back into the neighbourhood so they'll be more familiar with it?"

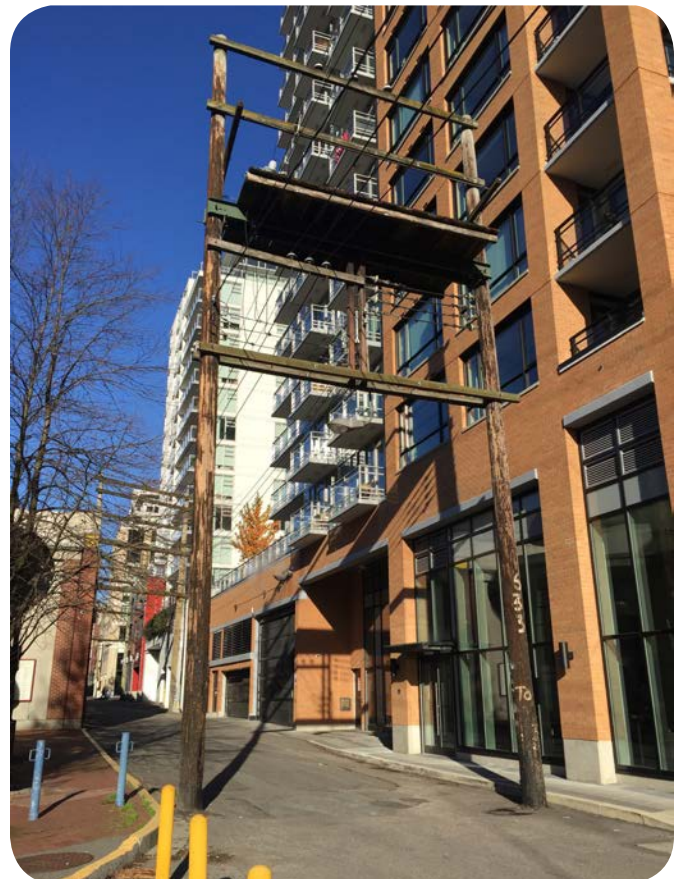
Displacement

- "Ownership over a space can impact the dynamics of how a space is used; it should not be exclusively for one group"
- "How do you have inclusive events where you are not pushing people out? How do you make a place nice without displacing people?"
- "People living in the street might feel like we are invading their space"
- "So here we are thinking about a new build ... and on the other hand there's people fighting for their survival. How do you justify your wants versus their needs?"

- "If you go after people's ability to have a place to just hide for a little bit or take a nap, that's where you will get the pushback"
- "It should be place-keeping versus placemaking. It's already there; we just need to find ways to build relationships with the community so that we can grow together. Placemaking is with the assumption that there's nothing there, but there is always something there. It might not be a value to you, but it's a value for what's already there"

Overdevelopment

- "I wish people [didn't] just tear down every building and start building apartments"
- "So how do you on-board the outside communities that are coming in? How do you create these pathways for them to engage and support the existing neighbourhoods and communities? This is why it is important to get as much buy-in from the community as possible"



*New condos along Main Street, contrasting with vintage hydro poles.
Photo: Stella L. Zhou*

5.6.4 Permitting processes

Concerns

- “A lot of the parallel business challenges are structural issues such as permitting, cost and infrastructure”
- “If the City is going to be supporting grassroots, there needs to be a difference in how they are supporting it and treat public space as public”
- Confusing and difficult permitting processes
- Some local vendors do not realize that they need a temporary business permit and a permit to sell food in public
- “The bureaucracy is geared around large-scale events. If you want to serve food, you need to have waste stations [and] be wary of noise levels, and you need a site plan to indicate where everything is going to be stationed”

Solutions

- “The [Chinatown Transformation Team] helped make the permit processing smoother by becoming an entry point and ... liaison”
- Renting space from Park Board includes cleanup before and after, but user must request it after application/permit is approved

5.7 Ideas for lane activation

5.7.1 Specific ideas for activations

Markets

- More Chinese cultural and colourful visually designed night markets
- Culturally themed book fairs
- Food markets from local vendors

Commercial events driving entrepreneurship

- “Implementing activities requires investment but should also produce values and resources in a sustainable way ... The key ... is how to redesign or design the space to make it attractive to entrepreneurs so that the activity itself can be self-sustainable and drive itself in the longer term”

Seniors’ events: Physical activity and health

- Outdoor exercise stations (e.g., tai chi)
- Health presenters, services and education, e.g., volunteer blood-pressure monitoring in booths
- Affordable access to produce, free healthcare support and culturally creative seniors’ activities

Lane walking tour

- Creating informal lane route to attract people from other neighbourhoods into a walking tour of Chinatown



People hanging around the courtyard outside Sun Yat-Sen Park on a sunny weekend. Photo: Stella L. Zhou

Public art and murals

- “Murals speak to the sociocultural statistics of a neighbourhood. Highlighting an artist who is also a community leader from the neighbourhood ... deflects from gentrification concerns by eliminating the authenticity questions that tend to arise. Public art through murals helps increase the protection of heritage status”
- Working with multiple communities is the best way to generate culturally relevant and moving imagery. Working directly with business owners to reflect their values and hiring a diverse range of artists creates success in generating culturally important imagery on streets

Year-round events

- Need for more summer activities in Chinatown as they are scarce
- Businesses should install more lights and decoration to attract people year-round
- More events throughout the year would bring more people to Chinatown
- “Events during the day are less intrusive than nighttime events and could feel safer”



5.7.2 Conditions for events

Promotion

- More promotion needed for public events in Chinatown
- “I think they need to do more promotion and all that, if they need higher attendance ... I do get newsletters once in a while from other programs too, but not regularly. I know there are a lot of meetings that are happening here, which sometimes we tend to miss. So if they can do more broadcastings ... that would be nice.”

Using space creatively

- “A physical space such as an alleyway is a tangible and creative way to drive a lot of support from different people in the community who want to be involved but cannot find a starting point”
- “How do we use a space creatively and cost-effectively? Spatial constraints birth innovative ideas and solutions for creative use of space”

Incentives to get organizations involved

- “I think this vision will help drive a lot of support from different people in the community who want to be involved but cannot find a starting point. A physical space especially alleyways like this is really good tangible way of getting different people involved in coming up with creative ideas. So I think this is fantastic.”

*Mosaic of Year of the Dog sign from Chinese zodiac on ground of courtyard outside Sun Yat-Sen Park.
Photo: Stella L. Zhou*

6.0 FINDINGS FROM SITE ANALYSIS



6.1 Candidate lanes

In fall 2018, we conducted our initial site analysis to gather baseline measurements of the physical conditions of 8 lanes in Chinatown. Figure 2 (p. 53) details a map of the lanes that we examined. The 8 lanes chosen for site analysis were as follows:

1. Shanghai Alley – Between W Pender & Taylor St.
2. Market Alley – Between Carrall & Columbia St.
3. East of Columbia between E Pender & Keefer St.
4. West of Main between E Pender & Keefer St.
5. East of Main between E Pender & Keefer St.
6. East of Main between Keefer & E Georgia St.
7. East of Main between E Georgia & Union St.
8. East of Quebec between Keefer & Union St.

From our original identification of these lanes, we decided to omit Lane 2 (Market Alley) from site analysis for reasons of feasibility. Lane 2 appeared to have a high concentration of substance use. Poverty and lack of quality housing in the Downtown Eastside have pushed many vulnerable populations into public spaces. Public spaces where vulnerable groups feel comfortable are also rapidly decreasing with gentrification of the wider neighbourhood. We felt that it would be inappropriate and intrusive to observe and report on this particular lane given the sensitivities of the area.

6.2 Methods

Our methodology consisted of standing in each lane for 30–45 minutes to document its dimensions and physical characteristics. In addition we counted pedestrians and cyclists and observed traffic patterns. We recorded our findings using a site analysis checklist for public space observations (**Appendix B**, p. 93). We also hand-marked aerial maps of each lane that we later transformed into our hand-drawn site plans for each recommended lane. As we observed the lanes on a day with clear weather, our findings should not be considered exhaustive. We acknowledge that our measurements could vary greatly with weather, time of day and day of the week.

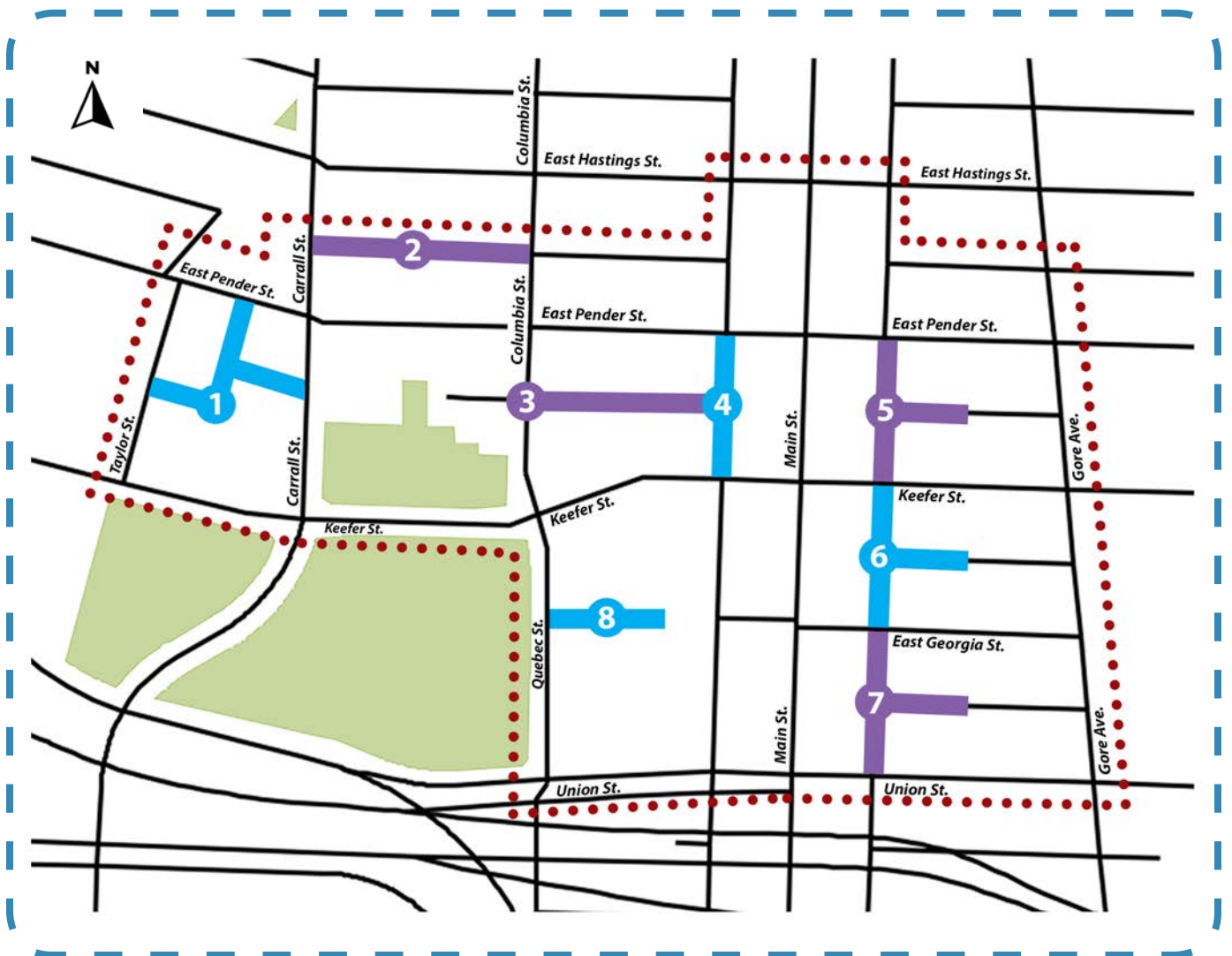
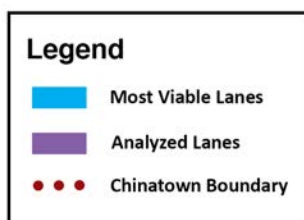


Figure 2: Map of 8 candidate lanes for site analysis in Chinatown. Map design: Jacqueline Hunter





6.3 Matrix of lane characteristics

To assess the tradeoffs presented by the 7 lanes, we have created a matrix (see Figure 3, p. 55) to display feasibility based primarily on physical characteristics. The full matrix is included in (**Appendix C**, p. 99).

We have rated each lane on every physical characteristic using a colour-coded scale from 1 (lower viability) to 3 (higher viability) on the basis of the contribution of that characteristic toward the lane's viability as a potential site for activation. From there, we have selected the 4 lanes with the highest scores as possible sites for activation.

It is important to note that this matrix reflects our team's assessment of the lanes from our understanding of the conditions that make an activated lane *physically* viable. That said, neither the 4 alternatives chosen nor the ratings should be viewed as all-inclusive of the many nuanced issues that characterize lane and public realm projects. It is not our intention to imply an ordered hierarchy among these lanes. Rather, each lane has unique values of its own, contributing complementary assets and functions to the lane network and the overall social ecosystem of Chinatown and the surrounding urban environment. Every location possesses intangible characteristics including heritage value, role in the social fabric of the various communities and proximity to retail, nonprofit and other organizations.

Because these more complex social and intangible characteristics do not lend themselves to quantitative ranking but are nevertheless vital to acknowledge, we indicate below which ones we took into consideration. In the community engagement that followed our site analysis, we went on to gather feedback on the social and intangible values of the lanes from community members with real, lived experience in Chinatown and surrounding areas. For this feedback, please see **Main takeaways from our community consultations** (pp. 42–43), as well as the reporting on individual lanes under **Lane recommendations** (pp. 56–73).



Stewardship
availability



Sense of
safety



Community
values



Intangible
heritage



Tangible
heritage

Social characteristics that are considered for recommended lanes but are not measurable

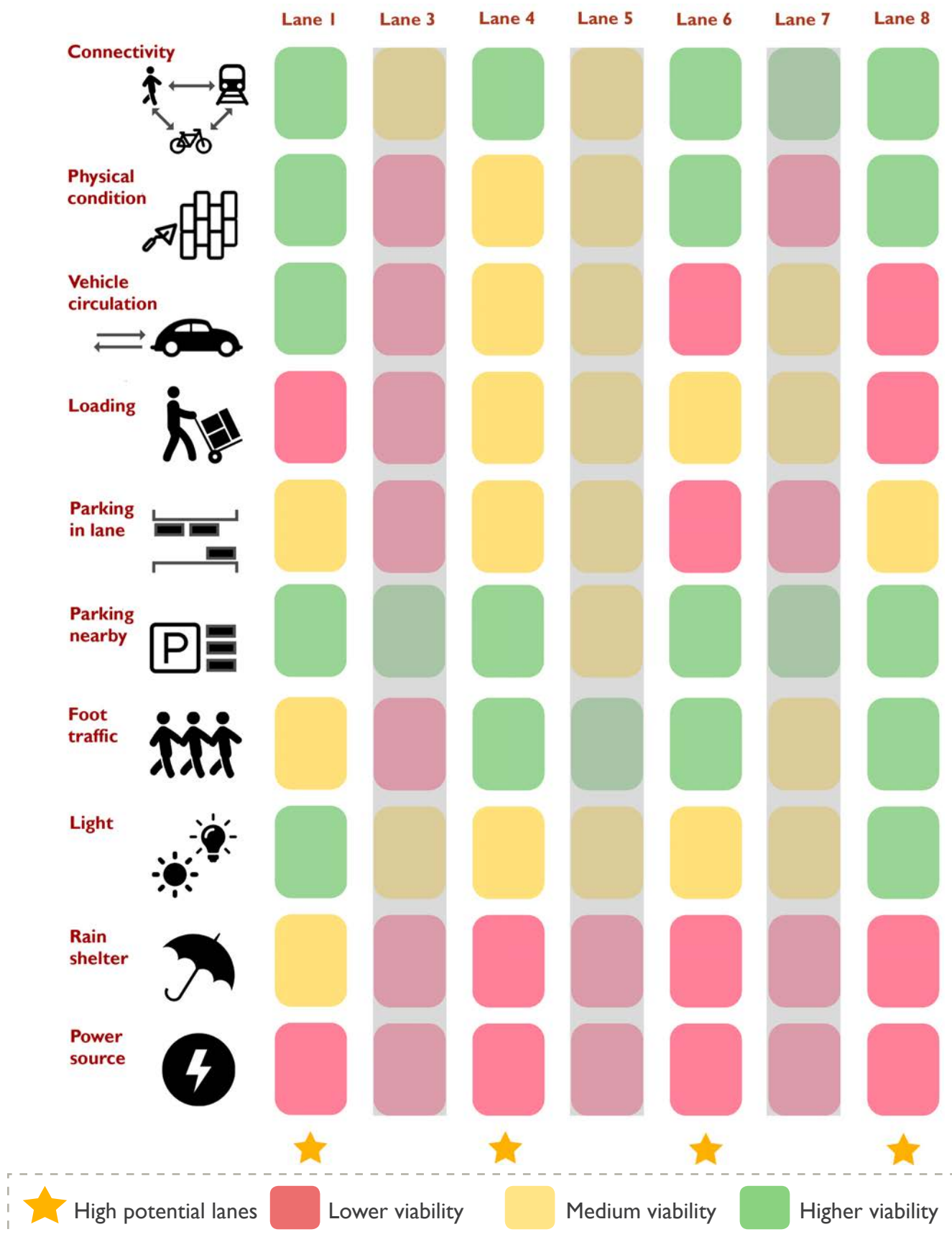


Figure 3. Matrix of lane characteristics from site analysis. Design: Stella L. Zhou. Icons: Freepik from www.flaticon.com

7.0 LANE RECOMMENDATIONS

Going through the interconnected process of community consultation and site analysis led us to borrow the concept of **complementarity** from the field of ecology. Considering our site analysis together with our community consultation, we suggest that each lane serves a particular function within the laneway ecosystem of Chinatown as a

whole. Rather than treating lanes as isolated pieces of infrastructure, we present each one as having unique assets and values, offering its own distinct potential as a venue for specific types of events. In the section that follows, we apply this idea to the four lane areas we have identified as having particular promise for activation.

West of Main between Pender and Keefer

- High connectivity
- Proximity to Chinatown community groups
- Proximity to legacy businesses
- Easy access to Chinatown foods



Shanghai Alley and surrounding network



- High connectivity
- Minimal obstructions
- Existing cultural placemaking
- Lighting
- Smooth pavement
- Connection to Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden



East of Main between Keefer and Georgia

- High connectivity
- Artist-run studios and galleries
- Garage doors: multiuse
- Decent pavement
- Proximity to legacy businesses



South of Keefer between Quebec and Main



- High connectivity
- Spillover spaces
- Natural light
- Smooth pavement
- Minimal obstructions
- Proximity to other public spaces

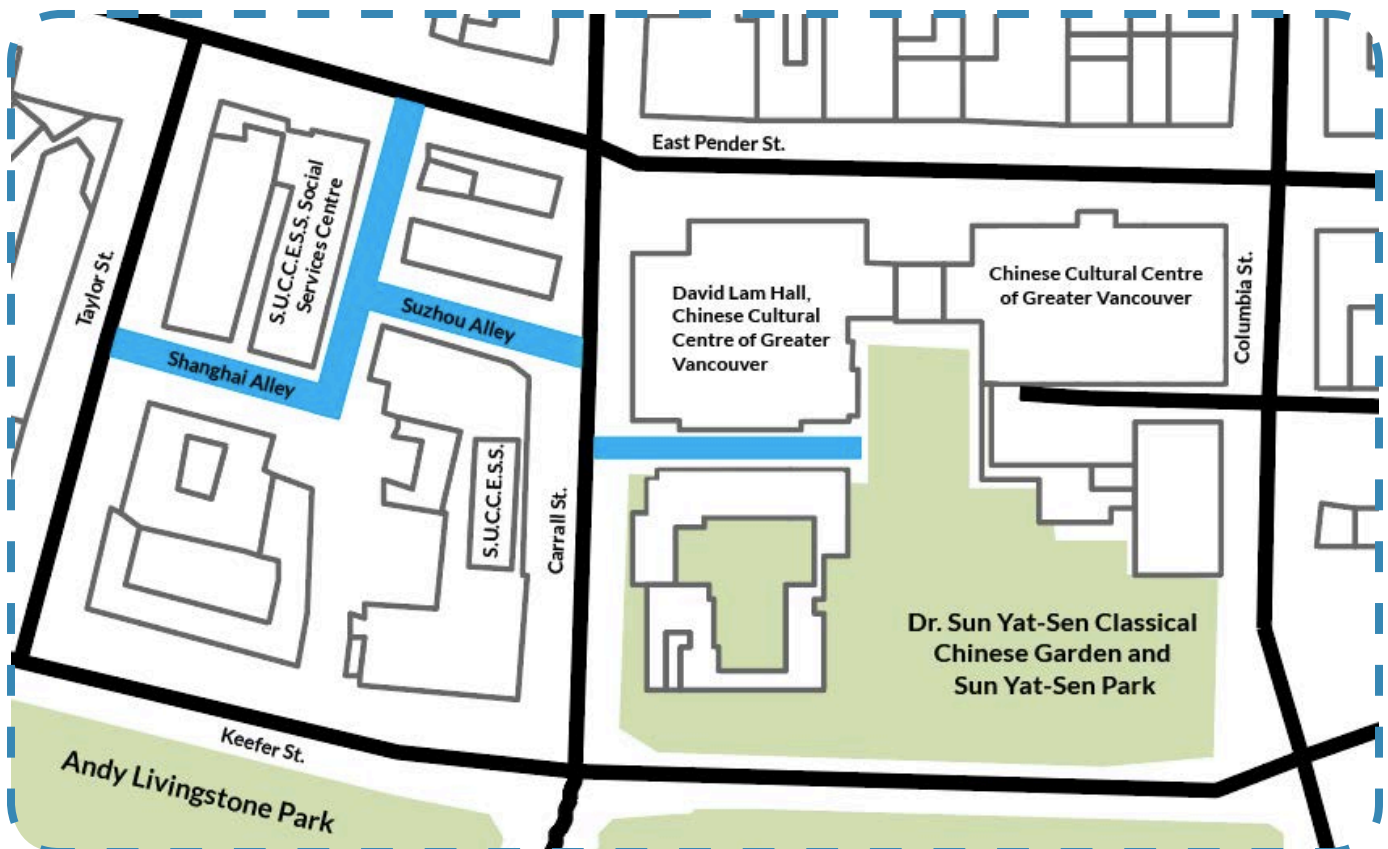
7.1 Shanghai Alley and surrounding network

The first of the lane sites identified for activation is Lane 1 on our matrix. Shanghai Alley, otherwise known as Chinatown Heritage Alley, occurs within an underused but highly promising network of interconnected lanes that present exciting potential for activation.

A narrow pedestrian-only wayfinding path called Suzhou Alley runs perpendicular to Shanghai Alley, connecting to Carrall Street and pointing toward the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden and the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver.

Across Carrall from Suzhou Alley, another lane (unnamed) runs perpendicular to Carrall between the garden and the Chinese Cultural Centre. This unnamed lane could also be used in activation. This unnamed lane is under the jurisdiction of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. It leads to an open courtyard that is under Park Board jurisdiction as well.

“People do spend the night there, especially in the summer. But it’s better than Chinatown’s other lanes. It would also be easier to block off traffic in this lane.”



Site map for Shanghai Alley network. Map design: Jacqueline Hunter

Advantages

High connectivity and transit access

The network of lanes including Shanghai Alley is located between the highly pedestrianized West Pender Street and Taylor Street, with proximity to major transit routes, bike routes, the Vancouver Chinatown Millennium Gate landmark, the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, the International Village Mall, Andy Livingstone Park and the Stadium–Chinatown SkyTrain station. Numerous parking spaces surround Shanghai Alley, which could help draw in visitors.

Minimal obstructions

There are no waste or recycling bins on Shanghai Alley that would need relocation during an activation. Emergency access could likely be accommodated and diverted to either Taylor or Pender Street. Vehicles could also be easily diverted from this lane.

Cleanliness

Shanghai Alley is clean, with minimal to non-existent garbage and graffiti. Storm drains line the lane.

Lighting

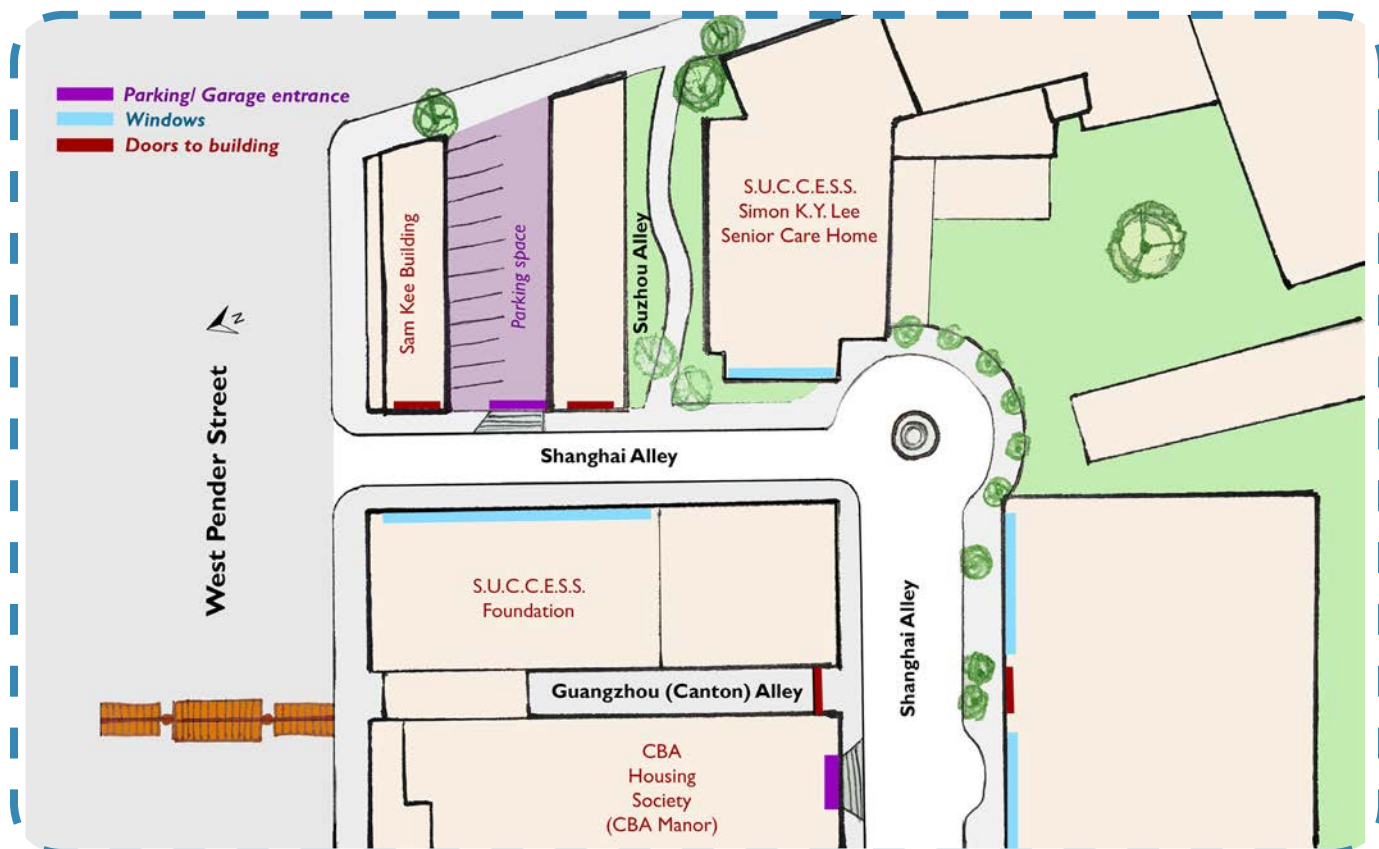
Shanghai Alley has both street lamps and ample sunlight. The neighbouring S.U.C.C.E.S.S. building provides wall space and an overhead that could potentially act as temporary shelter from rain or sun.

Existing cultural placemaking

Signage boards around Shanghai Alley explain Chinatown's cultural history. In the middle of the Allan Yap Circle roundabout stands the Han Dynasty Bell, given as a gift to Vancouver from its sister city of Guangzhou, China.

Smooth pavement

Mixed concrete and brick pavement makes Shanghai Alley promising to activate. Both Suzhou Alley and the unnamed lane alongside the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden are also smooth.



Site plan view for Shanghai Alley network. Plan design: Stella L. Zhou

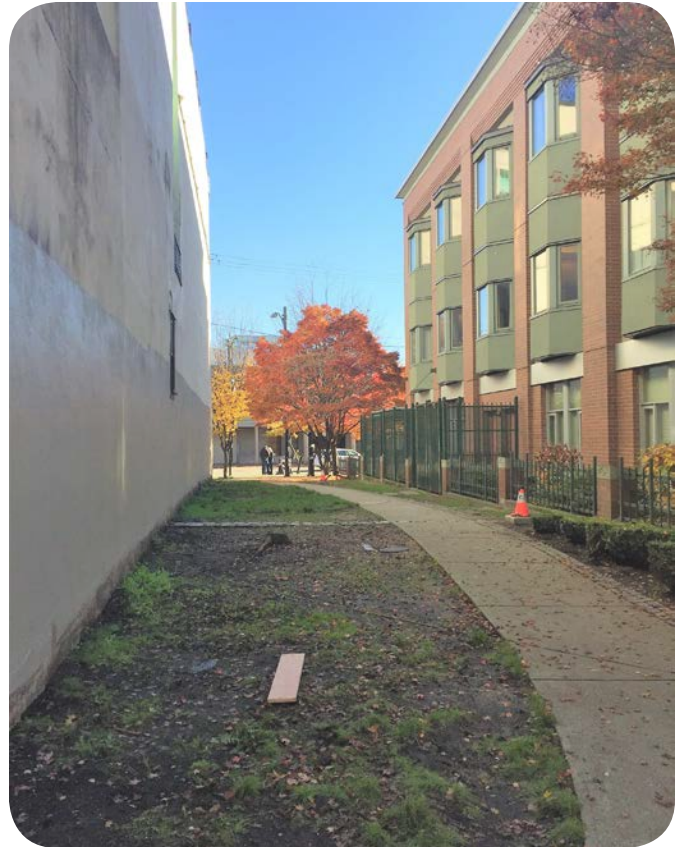
Considerations

Electrical power

The absence of visible power sources within Shanghai Alley could mean that a group activating the lane would need to bring in sources, increasing the budget. That said, across Carrall Street, inside the courtyard next to the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, there are electric outlets managed by the garden and the Chinese Community Centre. (For information on activating those spaces and accessing power, see **Connections to Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden**, p. 60.)

Residential access

Groups wishing to activate the Shanghai Alley area will need to engage with the surrounding residential and commercial property owners. Neighbouring residential tenants should be notified of any noise or activity that would arise. The parking and loading needs of residential tenants surrounding the lane should be considered as well.



Looking east into Suzhou Alley from Shanghai Alley. Photo: Stella L. Zhou



Looking south into Shanghai Alley from East Pender. Sketch: Jacqueline Hunter



Space would be great for

Chinatown's seniors

Shanghai Alley and Suzhou Alley are located directly next to the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Foundation, whose managed assisted living centre primarily serves local seniors. These lanes would be great for events accessible, inclusive and culturally appropriate for Chinatown's seniors.

Mid-scale and small-scale events

Shanghai Alley would accommodate mid-scale events. Suzhou Alley is very narrow and pedestrian-only. It could accommodate activations on an intimate scale, such as health-related booths, small book sales or tai chi classes.

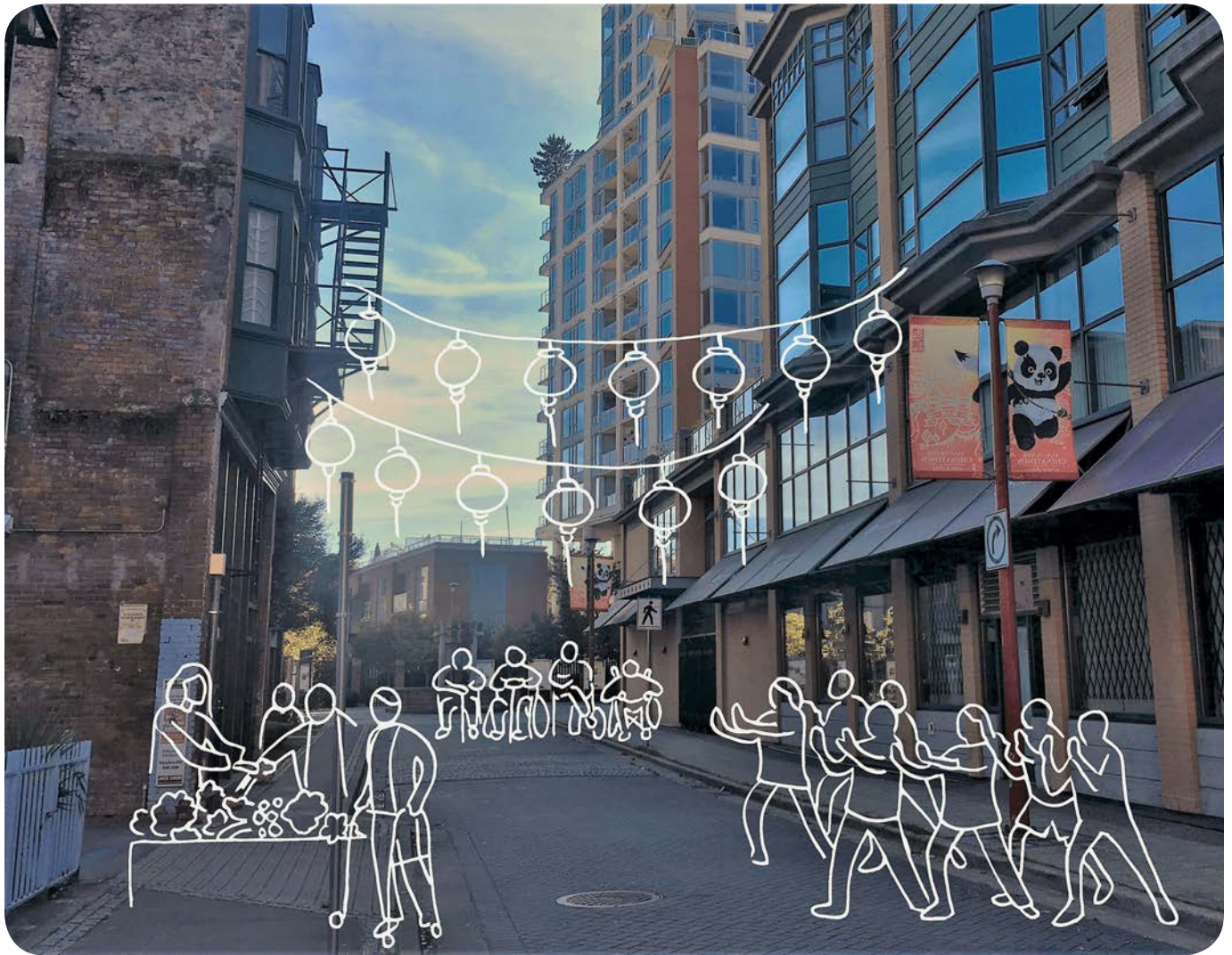
Permanent art and installations

The pedestrian-only Suzhou Alley would be a great place to install public art, create historical markers or paint a mural to continue the heritage themes already present in Shanghai Alley. Such visible markers would also help invite visitors from Shanghai Alley to continue on to the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden across Carrall Street.

Connections to Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden

Activating Shanghai Alley and its network could facilitate connections to other valued historical and cultural landmarks in Chinatown. As mentioned above, Suzhou Alley connects Shanghai Alley to Carrall Street, creating a direct link to the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden. Suzhou Alley also provides connectivity to the unnamed lane intersecting Carrall that runs between the garden and the Chinese Community Centre into an open courtyard. Both this unnamed lane and the courtyard are managed by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. As described above, inside the courtyard, there are electric outlets managed by the garden and the Chinese Community Centre. As of this writing, the garden has indicated that community groups wishing to activate this area are welcome to reach out to the garden for gaining power support through outlets inside and outside the garden. This will help groups determine whether they need additional generators. Groups will also need to consult the Park Board on use of the courtyard and this unnamed lane next to the garden.

*Unnamed lane beside Dr. Sun Yat-Sen
Classical Chinese Garden, connecting to
Suzhou and Shanghai Alley.
Photo: Stella L. Zhou*



Possible lane activations in Shanghai Alley: choi market, tai chi, knitting and seniors-focused events. Sketch: Jacqueline Hunter

7.2 Lane 4 – West of Main Street between Pender and Keefer

The second lane identified for activation is Lane 4 on our matrix. This lane is located west of Main Street between Pender and Keefer, close to several community organizations and groups in Chinatown. The lane sits directly adjacent to Chinatown House, a co-working space accommodating multiple organizations experienced with public placemaking and community organizing in Chinatown. These organizations could serve as potential partners in a laneway activation.

Advantages

Chinatown community groups and organizations

This lane is close to many nonprofits, entrepreneurs, advocates and community groups familiar with Chinatown's public space, arts and culture. This could increase the capacity for activation happening in this space.

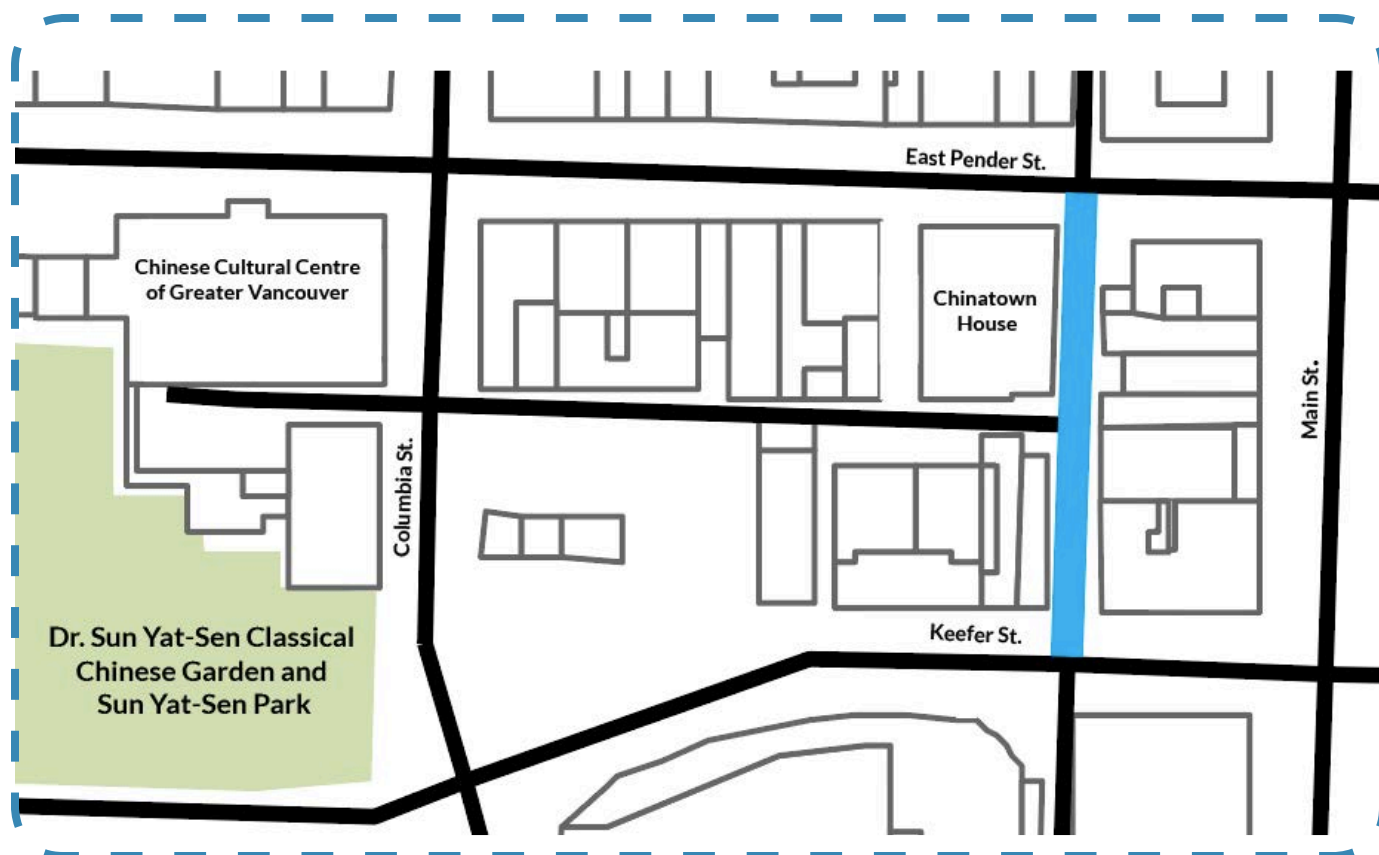
Legacy businesses and restaurants

This lane is close to several legacy businesses and traditional restaurants on Keefer Street that are vital parts of Chinatown's intangible heritage.

Considerations

High volume of loading and parking

Traffic is likely to need diversion during lane activation. Four highly trafficked parking spots serve clients of the Main and Pender CIBC branch. There's also a lot of loading activity within the lane. It's possible that only a portion of the lane could be activated given the vehicle traffic. Weekend activations would be preferable in this lane, avoiding conflicts with weekday loading and deliveries.



Site map for Lane 4. Map design: Jacqueline Hunter

“Bao Bei and Fortune get a lot of late-night traffic. It would be cool if an alley could somehow accommodate that.”

Waste and recycling bins

There are 5 waste and recycling bins in this lane that would possibly need temporary removal. The City of Vancouver’s Sanitation and Engineering departments would need consultation, along with the adjacent property owners and tenants.

Lack of power sources

The absence of visible power sources within the lane could mean that community groups would need to bring in sources, increasing the budget.

Garbage

A lot of garbage was observed in this lane that would need cleaning up.

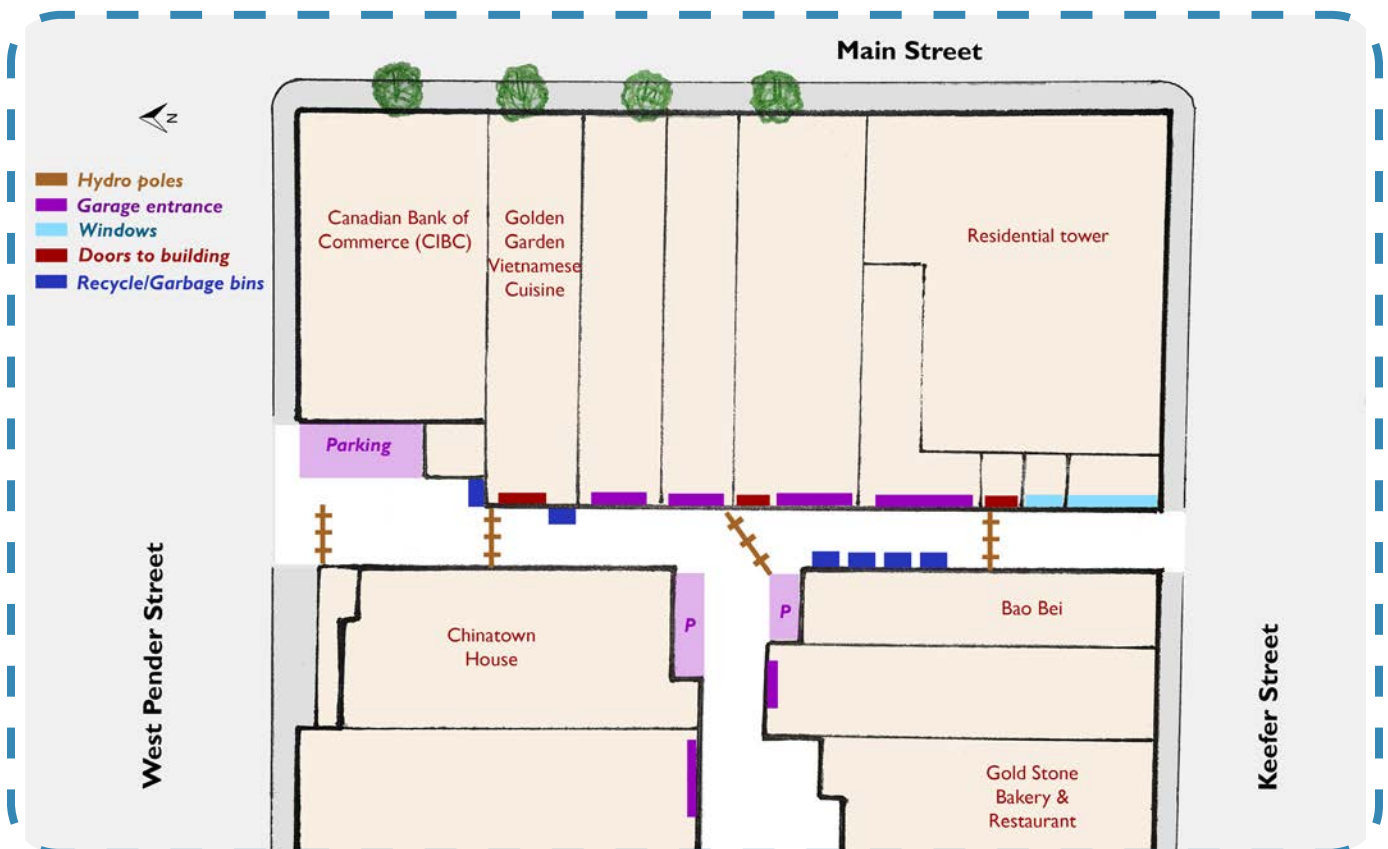
This space would be great for

Showcasing Chinatown’s traditional food

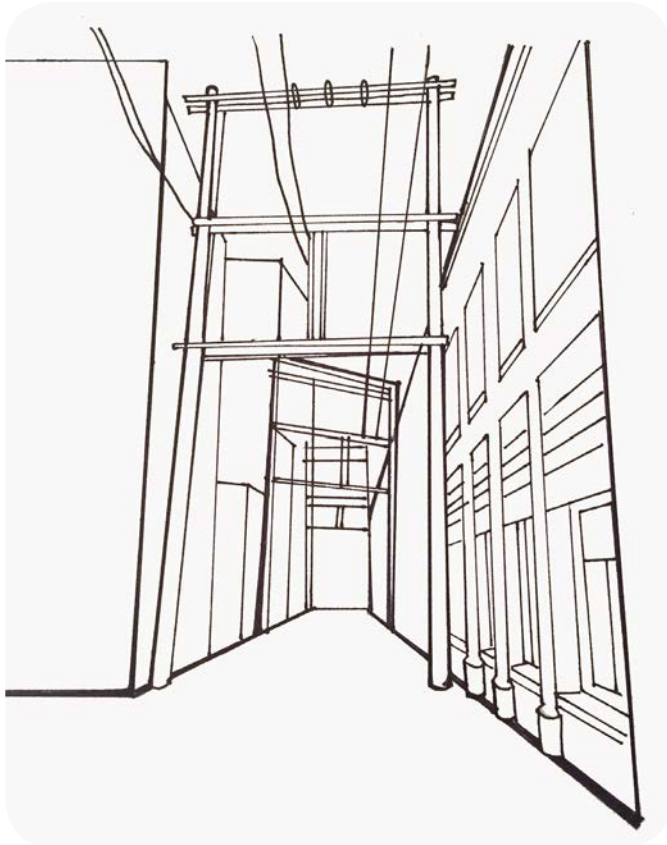
This lane is close to many well-established legacy and traditional restaurants that could perhaps serve as vendors in a lane activation. Food is a core value of Chinatown, and this lane offers an opportunity to celebrate it. Many traditional Chinatown restaurants on Pender Street back onto an adjoining lane that intersects with this lane. This could help facilitate their participation in a lane activation.

Late-night activation

A number of Chinatown’s nightlife establishments such as the Fortune Sound Club are close to this lane, making it ideal for late-night activation.



Site plan view for Lane 4. Plan design: Stella L. Zhou



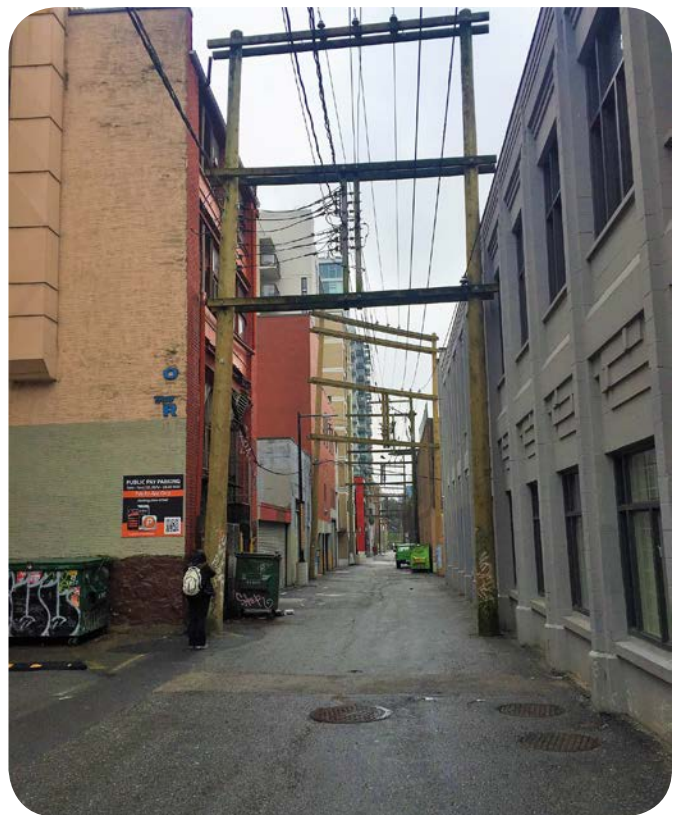
Looking south into Lane 4 from East Pender. Sketch: Jacqueline Hunter



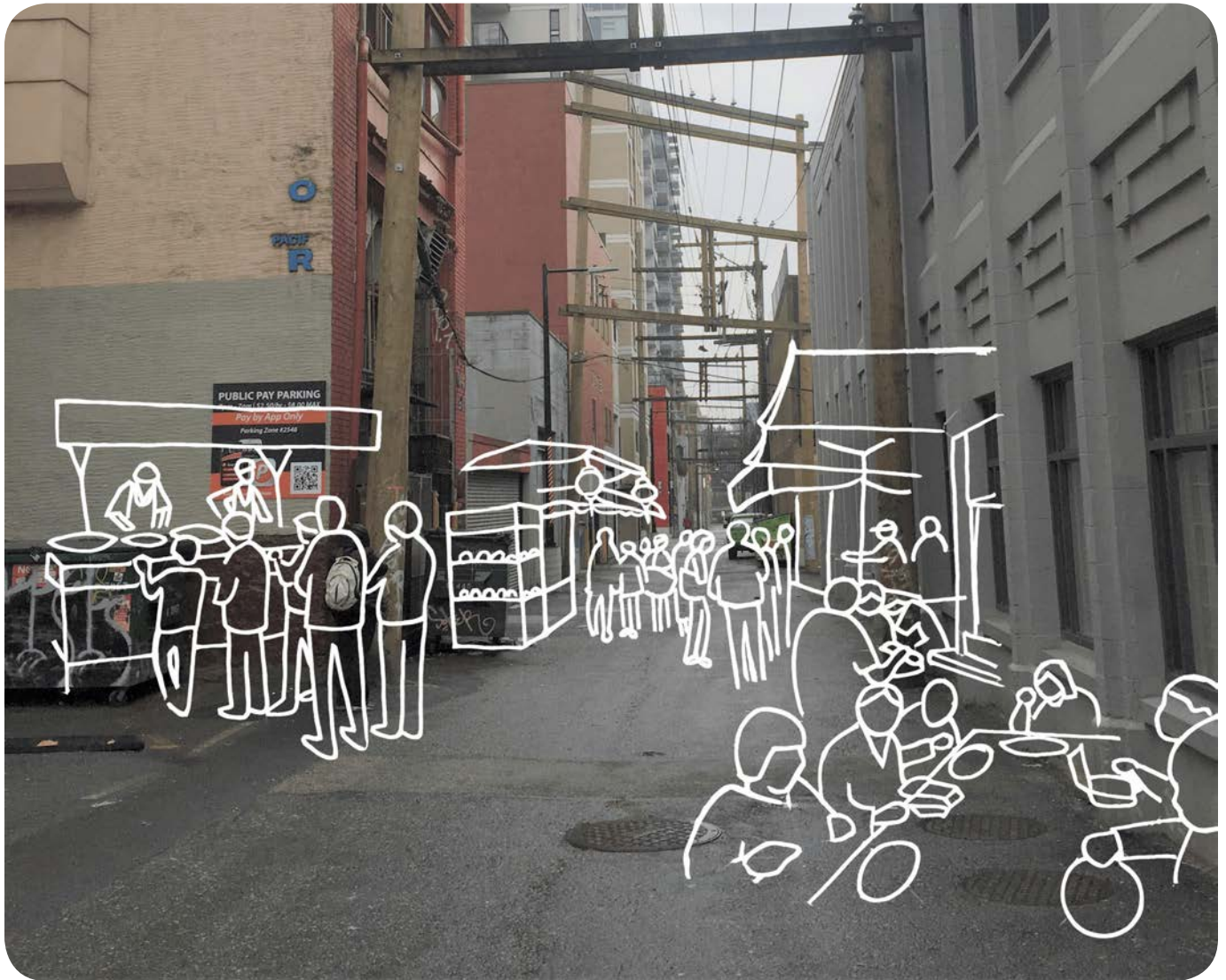
Parking space allowing for event spillover. Photo: Jacqueline Hunter



Vehicle traffic, uneven pavement and litter. Photo: Jacqueline Hunter



Many hydro poles allowing for overhangs. Photo: Jacqueline Hunter



Possible lane activations in Lane 4: food vendors and social gatherings. Sketch: Jacqueline Hunter

7.3 Lane 6 – East of Main Street between Keefer and Georgia

The third lane site identified for activation is Lane 6 on our matrix. The lane is located east of Main Street between Keefer and E Georgia. This lane is close to many legacy and traditional businesses on Keefer. This lane is highly trafficked by pedestrians and shoppers who use it as a detour between Chinatown's busy streets. Many artist-run entrepreneur spaces and galleries surround this lane, adding to the area's cultural vitality.

Advantages

Legacy businesses

This lane sits adjacent to several legacy and traditional businesses on Keefer, which are a vital part of Chinatown's intangible heritage. These businesses attract a lot of foot traffic, making the lane feel safe and active.

Artist-run studios and galleries

Many artist-run social enterprises, studios and galleries are nearby, including the Sun Wah Centre on Keefer.

High connectivity

Bike routes, high pedestrianization and ample parking surround this lane. Main Street also provides easy transit access.

Garage doors

Several garage doors opening onto this lane lead to additional spaces that could be used for activation.

Decent pavement

The lane has pavement in decent condition as well as drainage.



Site map for Lane 6. Map design: Jacqueline Hunter

Considerations

High volume of loading and parking

Traffic would likely need diversion during a lane activation. It's possible that only a portion of the lane could be activated given the high amount of vehicle traffic. Weekend activations are preferable in this lane, as they'd avoid conflicts with weekday loading and deliveries.

Waste and recycling bins

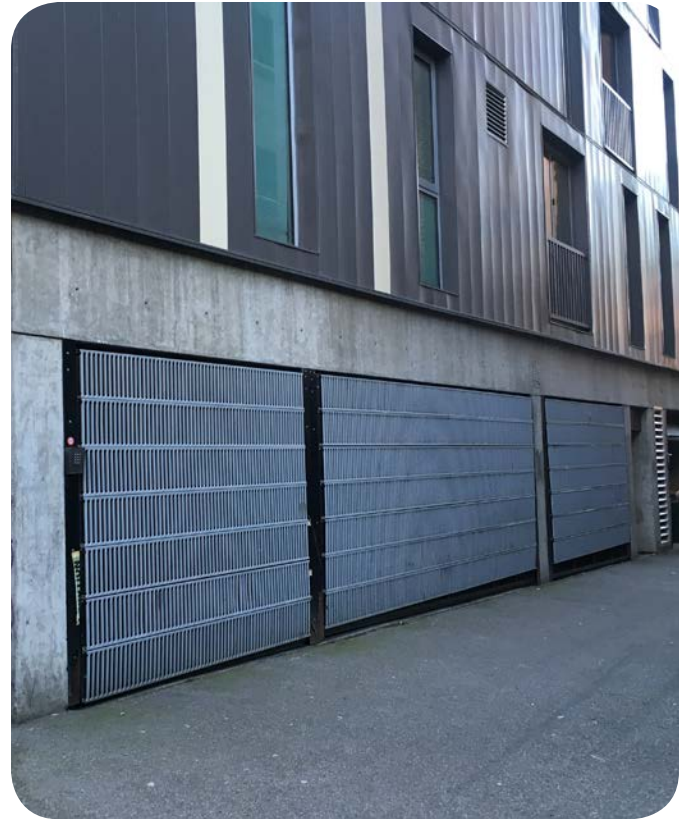
There are 3 waste and recycling bins in this lane that might need temporary removal. The City of Vancouver's Sanitation and Engineering departments would need consultation, along with adjacent property owners and tenants.

Lack of lighting

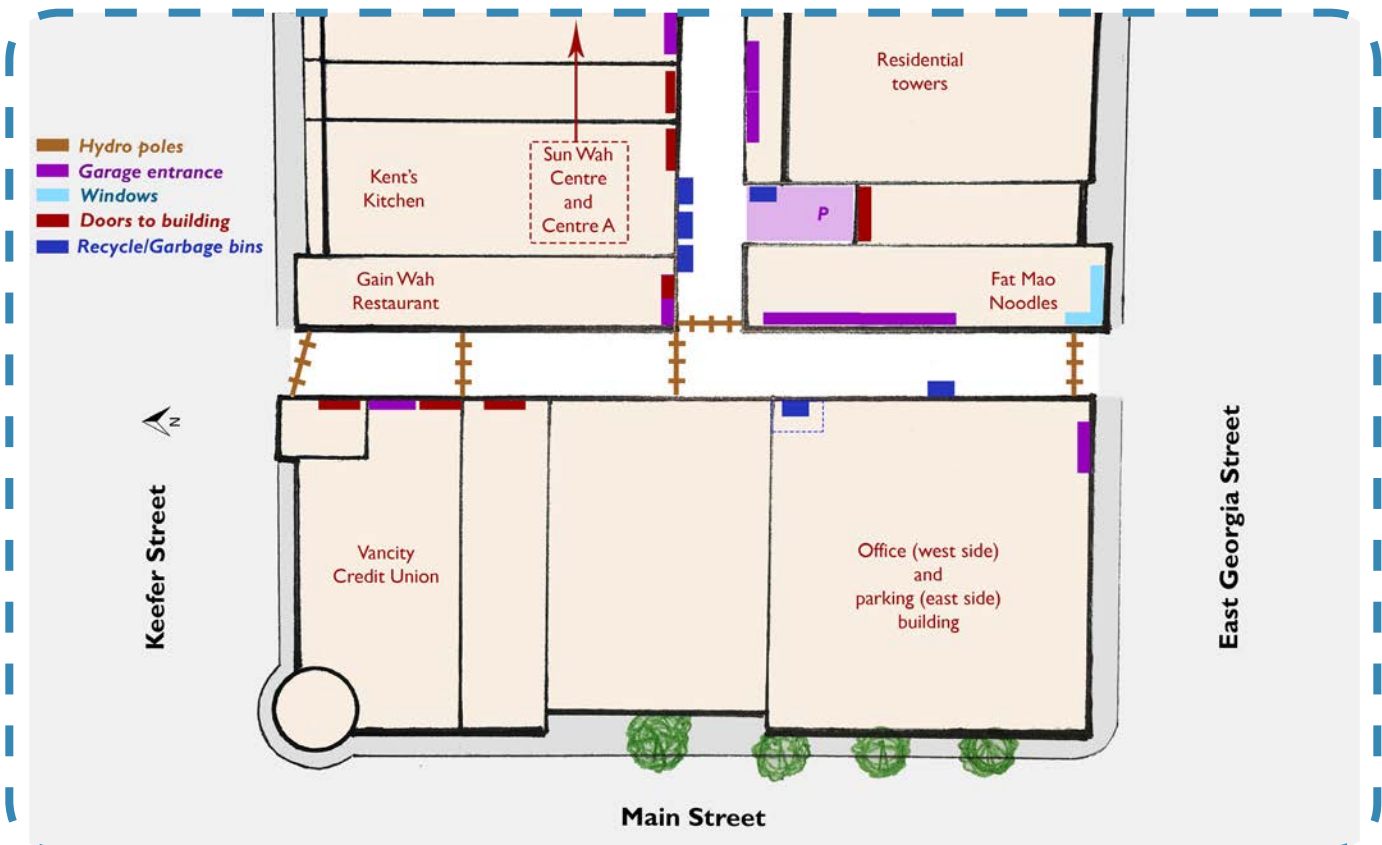
There is no lighting within this lane, except for some natural light.

Lack of power sources

The absence of visible power sources within the lane could mean that community groups would need to bring in sources, increasing the activation budget.



Garage doors open up potential multiuse space. Photo: Stella L. Zhou



Site plan view for Lane 6. Plan design: Stella L. Zhou

This space would be great for

Celebrating Chinatown's legacy businesses

This lane is located next to several traditional grocers, restaurants, bakeries and herbal shops on Keefer. Despite the difficulties faced by Chinese-Canadians, many have established family-run businesses that have been passed down through the generations. This lane could serve as a backdrop to celebrate how the Chinese-Canadian immigrant experience has shaped the economy of Vancouver's Chinatown and how it continues to evolve today.

“The buy-in from legacy businesses could make this initiative last longer. It could anchor your event.”



Restaurant beside the entrance to Lane 6. Photo: Stella L. Zhou



Looking into the 'T-bone' lane from Lane 6. Sketch: Jacqueline Hunter



Looking north into Lane 6 from East Georgia. Photo: Stella L. Zhou



Possible lane activations in Lane 6: food vendors and social gatherings. Sketch: Jacqueline Hunter

7.4 Lane 8 – South of Keefer Street between Quebec and Main

The fourth lane site identified for activation is Lane 8 on our matrix. The lane is located south of Keefer Street between Quebec and Main. This lane is located between the BC Hydro Series Capacitor Station and Chinatown Plaza. Wide, bright and open, it offers multiple adjacent spaces that could encompass activations.

Advantages

Spillover spaces

Several spillover spaces widen the available ground, increasing opportunities to include events such as performances. These spillover spaces include an adjacent lane between Keefer and E Georgia, a parking lot and a raised platform that presently houses a Mobi bike station.

High connectivity

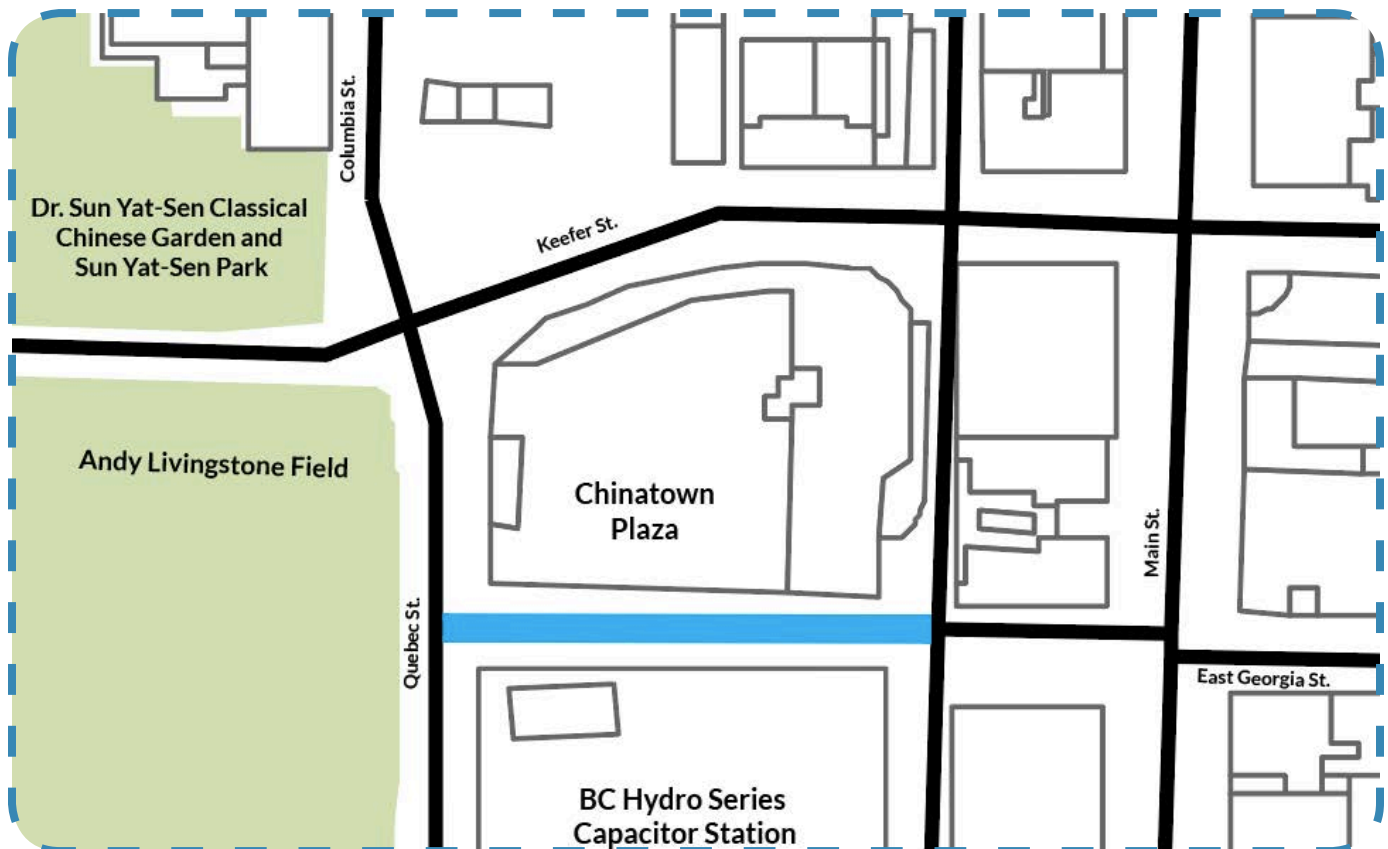
This lane is in a highly connected and accessible area, close to Andy Livingstone Park, China Creek skateboard park, an elementary school, transit routes, bike routes and parking facilities.

Natural light

A high amount of natural light enters this space. There is street lighting, as well as light from the surrounding multi-storey parkade and residential buildings.

Chinatown Plaza

The lane is next to Chinatown Plaza, a large retail building that houses a number of shops and offices. This attracts a lot of foot traffic, adding to the sense of safety and security within the lane. It has been reported that Chinatown Plaza also has 24-hour security service.



Site map for Lane 8. Map design: Jacqueline Hunter

“That space is incredibly underused, and the space itself physically is screaming to be activated as a foot alleyway. ... And it also can help to inform how to relook at the power station to be designed differently or to be used differently from how it is designed or used right now.”

Considerations

BC Hydro jurisdiction

Located beside a BC Hydro Series Capacitor Station, the lane falls under BC Hydro’s jurisdiction. To activate this lane, community groups would need permission from BC Hydro.

Parkade access and loading zones

A large, multi-storey parkade and loading zones stand directly next to this lane. Access would need redirection during an activation.

Lack of power sources

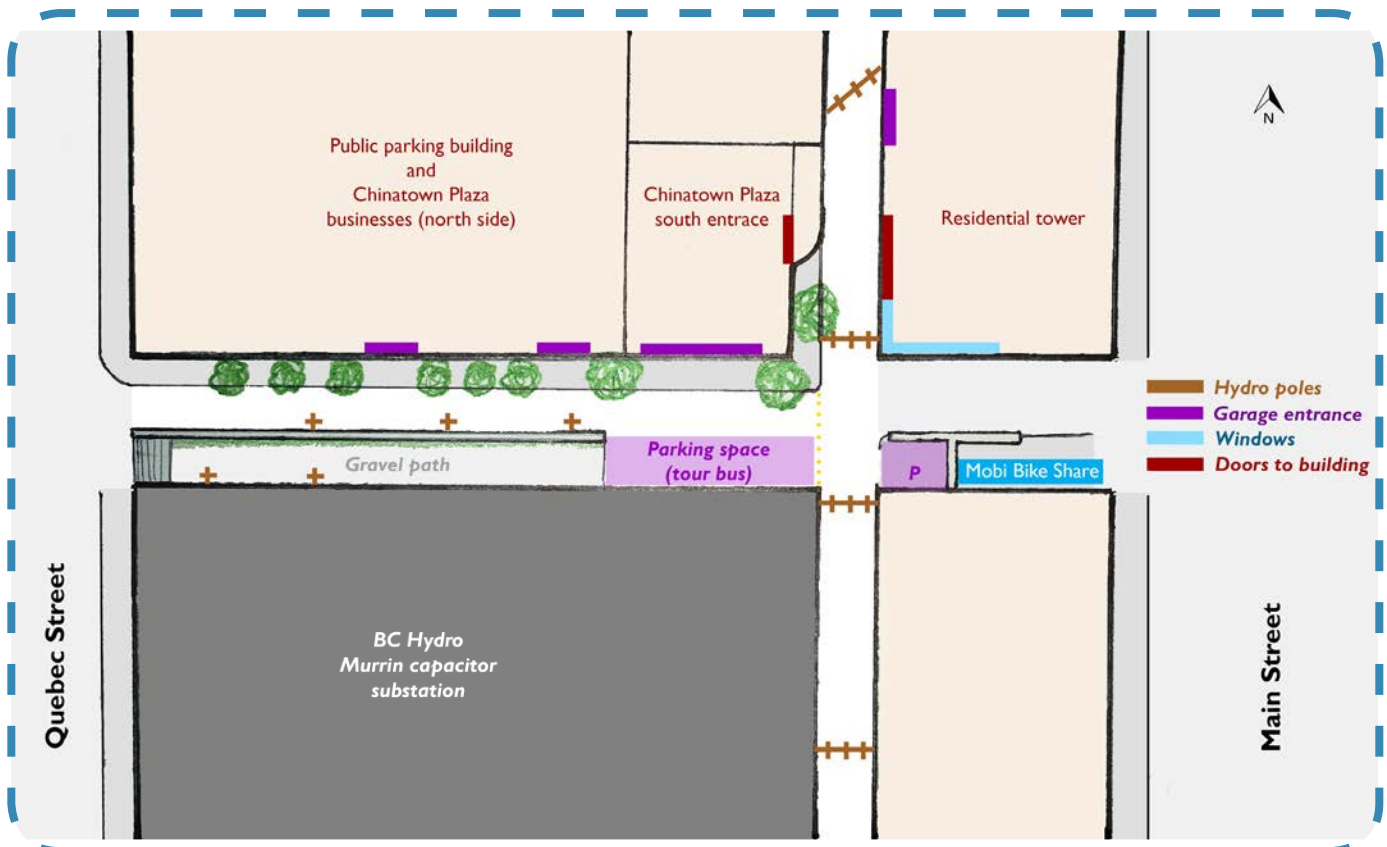
The absence of visible power sources within the lane could mean that community groups would need to bring in sources, increasing the activation budget.

Smooth pavement

The pavement is new from recent road improvements. Upgraded bike lanes surround the lane.

Minimal obstructions

There are 3 waste and recycling bins in this lane tucked away in the neighbouring Chinatown Plaza’s loading zone. However, these bins would probably not need relocation during an activation as they’re not directly on the lane.



Site plan view for Lane 8. Plan design: Stella L. Zhou

This space would be great for

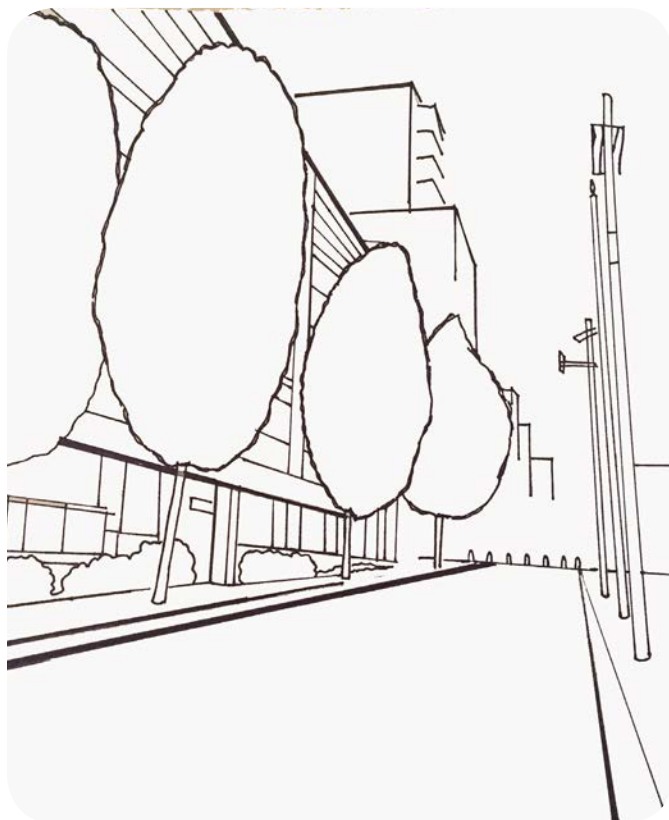
Events and performances

This very bright, spacious and open lane would be ideal for cultural events and performances. These might include dragon dances or demonstrations from local athletic clubs. As mentioned above, multiple spillover spaces surround the lane. One of these spaces includes a raised platform on the lane's east end, closest to Main Street. While this space currently houses a Mobi bike station, it could potentially serve as a stage, with seating set up in the area below.

“[Lane 8] is a very central space, and I think it is highly feasible to start something immediately.”



BC Hydro station, south side of Lane 8. Photo: Naomi W. Reichstein



Lane 8 is the only lane studied that is lined with greenery.
Sketch: Jacqueline Hunter



Spillover space available at Lane 8. Photo: Stella L. Zhou



Possible lane activations in Lane 6: athletic activities and large events. Sketch: Jacqueline Hunter

8.0 MITIGATING GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT

As described earlier, transforming underused public spaces runs the risk of displacing and excluding people. It can also have the unintended consequence of helping to drive up real-estate values, reducing an area's affordability. Moreover, Chinatown borders the Downtown Eastside (DTES), a neighbourhood that has been hit particularly hard by the opiate crisis; many DTES residents live with substance use.

Groups choosing lanes for activation will need to be sensitive to activities currently going on in lanes, seek opportunities that appear to pose lower potential for conflict in the use of space and speak with stakeholders to understand the area's sensitivities in order to minimize challenges and explore appropriate mitigations.

8.1 How we engaged

In our community consultation, we cast a wide net in seeking input from groups involved with poverty, homelessness and substance use in both Chinatown and the DTES. We sought to understand how to reduce the potential that activations could trigger hardship for the most vulnerable residents. Of the groups we approached, not all were able or prepared to engage with us on this topic.

On issues relating to gentrification and displacement, we received feedback from two key stakeholders as well as through conversations with a variety of others:

- Downtown Eastside Plan Project Team, City of Vancouver
- Chinese Community Policing Centre

An important aspect of mitigation is to discover ways of generating opportunities from events and installations. For example, hiring local homeless people as well as others suffering from poverty can help include them in the benefits of executing an activation.

The Downtown Eastside Plan Project Team introduced us to an idea called **neighbourhood fit**, developed first for the DTES. We have adapted this idea into a version for Chinatown (see p. 75).

“We’ve been working on this for years, and it’s hard to sit with because I do want people to participate in the neighbourhood, but when problems are literally around survival, how do you justify their needs? How do you justify your wants versus their needs?”

8.2 Neighbourhood fit

Groups activating lanes in Chinatown will need to ask themselves how and to what extent their ideas will fit the neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood fit is both an idea and a tool created by the City of Vancouver for the DTES. The intent is to help new development fit community context and serve local needs. Though a different neighbourhood, Chinatown is also a sensitive one; therefore we have adapted this tool to suit Chinatown (see p. 76).

The intended audience for this neighbourhood fit tool is a community group seeking to launch an activation in Chinatown. By using this tool, a community group can work to ensure that an activation serves the local population, respects heritage and improves the quality of the public realm without excluding or having negative effects on vulnerable people.



Traditional Chinese architecture at the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, with new condos as a backdrop. Photo: Stella L. Zhou

‘Neighbourhood fit’ questions and steps³⁶

Ask yourself:

1. Is the site suitable for our proposed project or use?

- ☐ Strongly unsuitable
- ☐ Unsuitable
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Suitable
- ☐ Strongly suitable

2. Does our proposed project or use address a need in the community?

- ☐ Definitely does not address a need
- ☐ Does not address a need
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat addresses a need
- ☐ Definitely addresses a need

3. Will our proposal benefit or negatively affect local communities, including vulnerable ones?

- ☐ Strongly negatively impact
- ☐ Negatively impact
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Benefit
- ☐ Strongly benefit

4. Should our project proceed as is? Should it be changed, and if so, why?

- ☐ Should not proceed
- ☐ Changes need to be made
- ☐ Should proceed as is

Rate your project

Think about your project. For each goal below, rate your project on a scale of 0–4.

You may find that most projects will tend to fall in the 1–3 range on many goals.

- 0 – Does not contribute to goals at all
- 1 – Makes small contribution to goals
- 2 – Makes some contribution to goals
- 3 – Makes significant contribution to goals
- 4 – Exceptional: goes clearly ‘above and beyond’ in contributing to goals

- Hires local people, including people with barriers
- Purchases and/or resells local goods and services
- Provides needed, low-cost goods and/or services for residents
- Includes low-income and/or other vulnerable communities
- Fits neighbourhood (heritage, scale, urban pattern, social and community context)
- Improves quality, accessibility and inclusiveness of public spaces
- Retains, preserves or celebrates arts and culture of Chinatown
- Supports health, social services and/or affordable housing in community
- Provides community amenities and/or gathering spaces

8.3 Case study – Greenpoint, Brooklyn

Given the sensitivities of Chinatown and the broader Downtown Eastside, we decided to research cases where activation did not lead to gentrification or displacement. We discovered Greenpoint, a neighbourhood of Brooklyn, New York that undertook environmental placemaking in a way that was holistic and respectful of existing residents.

Greenpoint, Brooklyn, is a working-class neighbourhood with an industrial history. It is home to Newtown Creek, the site of a massive and decades-long oil spill that sparked a \$25-million settlement from Exxon Mobil in 2006. Greenpoint has maintained its working-class identity by insisting on environmental projects that cater to the local population. A Community Advisory Panel, made up of low-income communities, long-time residents and newcomers, was created to determine neighbourhood needs and decide how the settlement money would be spent. Settlement funds went towards toxic creek cleanup and the development of a Newtown Creek Nature Walk, a waterfront pathway comprising small-scale community gardens and green spaces. The waterfront path lets residents monitor the Creek's environmental cleanup.

Greenpoint's industrial heritage has been preserved through the establishment of Industrial Business Zones. While it has not halted gentrification entirely, this approach safeguards the existing manufacturing districts, fosters industrial growth and protects against speculative development.

This case study suggests that placemaking initiatives that fit the existing character of a neighbourhood when combined with retention of employment lands that support an industrial base are less likely to trigger gentrification. Moreover, including vulnerable communities in decision-making increases bottom-up control of spending and encourages policies that reduce the risk of displacement.

Some key takeaways for lane activation initiatives in Vancouver's Chinatown:

- Involve vulnerable communities in the decision-making process
- Acknowledge the history and character of Chinatown and the surrounding communities



Newtown Creek Nature Walk. Photo: Peter Greenberg, CC BY-SA 3.0



Signposts for historic lanes. Photo: Stella L. Zhou

9.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From our site analyses, community consultation and case studies, we have generated a number of takeaways that can help the City of Vancouver and the Chinatown Transformation Team support community groups in activating Chinatown's lanes and the public realm generally.

9.1 Organizations interested in participating

The following Chinatown community groups have expressed various degrees of interest in supporting, participating in or contributing to Chinatown lane activations, depending on the nature of the event:

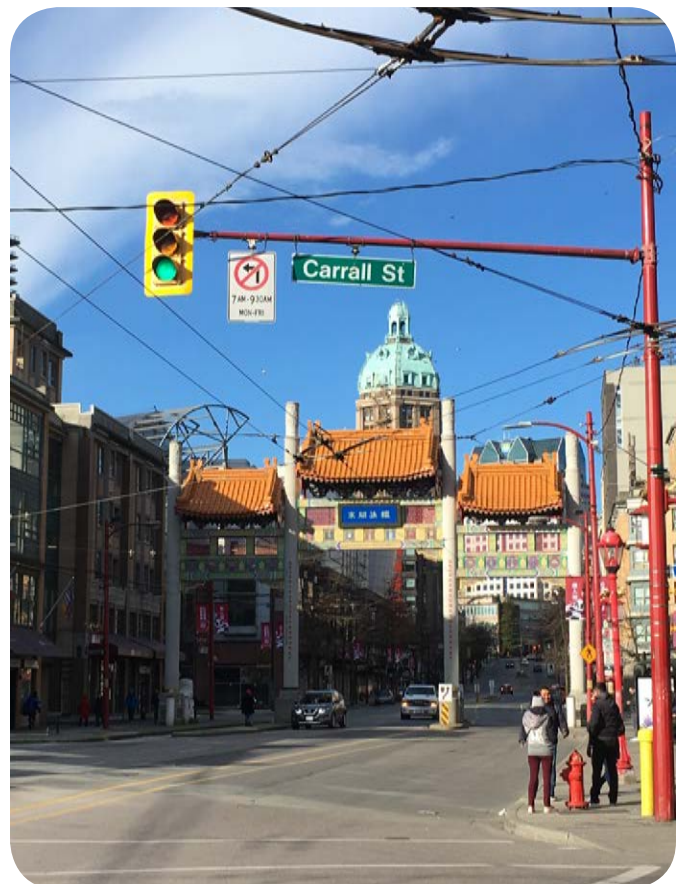
- Chinatown House
- Chinatown Today
- Chinese Community Policing Centre
- Choi on the Go (COTG)
- Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden
- Hua Foundation
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Foundation
- Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Association (VCBIA)
- Youth Collaborative for Chinatown (YCC)

This list of interested organizations is current as of the time of this writing. Over time, organizational interest can change, and other potential participants may present themselves. Below is a list of ways that organizations said they might want to be involved:

- Initiating and organizing a lane activation
- Supporting the planning of a lane activation
- Being consulted and providing feedback on design ideas
- Promoting the activation by getting word out within their communities
- Participating or supporting on the day of activation
- Providing volunteer help

Some groups like the overall idea of lane activation but lack the capacity or intention to be involved. Some have hesitations about being involved.

Other groups did not express support for lane activation. From a minority of the groups we approached, we either heard concerns that activations could help trigger gentrification or we simply did not receive responses to our outreach.



Looking west on Pender. Photo: Stella L. Zhou

9.2 Building capacity

An important finding from this research has been the realization that although many community groups would welcome lane activations in principle, the majority of groups are not necessarily able to lead such events on their own. Most groups are not set up to act as event promoters. Financial limitations are a barrier for nonprofits that are obligated to allocate their funding within the scope of their formal mandates. Thus some groups are willing to loan volunteer help but are unable to provide funding. Other businesses or nonprofits lack staff, volunteers or time to share. Moreover, a group may be willing to contribute to one aspect of an event but may be unable to assume directorship of the event as a whole. Given these gaps in capacity, we recommend that the City consider appointing a staff office to act as an incubator for public realm events, providing not only funding but leadership and event staffing as needed.

Permitting

From multiple community organizations and constituencies, we have heard that permitting is a real barrier. The City of Vancouver's Film and Special Events unit has a complex set of requirements for hosting events in public space. Moreover, providing food in public space, which one would be likely to expect in a Chinatown activation, requires applicants to navigate an additional set of permits with Vancouver Coastal Health. Given these circumstances, we have heard that only applicants with the capacity, funding and expertise to navigate complex bureaucratic systems are able to host legal events in public space. We suggest efforts to streamline the various permitting processes. In cases where bureaucratic impediments cannot be eliminated altogether, we recommend appointing City staff to assist with navigation to help build the capacity of community groups.

Small-scale events

We have heard that the City's event permitting and other bureaucratic processes are designed for large-scale events. The permitting processes, for instance, require applicants to provide traffic flow maps, waste management plans, liability insurance and so forth. We suggest that the City remove barriers and waive certain requirements for small-scale activations to support more grassroots initiatives. We also suggest providing easier-to-navigate event permitting for small-scale events.

Storage

We have learned that storage is a challenge for many community groups in Chinatown. There is a lack of accessible storage space for event supplies in Chinatown, and many community groups scramble or have to rent expensive supplies to execute events. The ability to share and store inventories of supplies easily would decrease costs for groups and build community infrastructure. We suggest that the City invest in basic event supplies for loan or low-cost rental. We also recommend the provision of accessible storage facilities to help community organizations increase their capacity. Such measures could benefit organizations not only in Chinatown but across Vancouver.

"I think there are a lot of people that are interested in doing [public space activation]; I think the main challenge potentially is the lack of resources."

9.3 From short-term interventions to long-term visions

While focused on temporary activations, our project points to the possibility of catalyzing long-term benefits. Such benefits could come in the form of tangible legacies such as murals and other art installations, historical markers, or amenities useful to the community such as benches, bike racks or small play areas for children designed to reflect community culture and values. Moreover, activations that generate revenue, if successful, could stimulate further events of a similar nature, offering potential for long-term economic sustainability.

We began our project with the vision of activating individual lanes, but our research suggests ways of scaling these interventions up as capacity develops.



Signage showing two main streets in Chinatown. Photo: Stella L. Zhou

9.4 Scaling up from lanes to network to ecosystem

Micro-networks

Certain lanes are situated within very small, tight networks that could be activated in tandem. As we have described, Shanghai Alley, Suzhou Alley and the courtyard and unnamed lane next to the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden form a promising micro-network that could be activated in this way.

Larger lane networks

With greater resources and stakeholder involvement, lanes could be activated simultaneously across Chinatown as part of a unified project such as a market, food event or walking tour. Lanes included in such a network may or may not be contiguous with one another. For example, the lanes profiled in this report – 1 (Shanghai Alley), 4, 6 and 8 – could be activated in tandem. Scaling up to simultaneous activation of multiple lanes spread across Chinatown could attract a higher level of media and visitor attention than focusing on individual lanes in isolation. A larger-scale simultaneous activation could catalyze recurring events with the potential to become economically self-sustaining. It would also offer the benefits of representing different locations and constituencies within the community. Some of the larger systemic issues such as displacement and gentrification may need mitigation before such a larger lane network vision can be achieved.

Chinatown's lane ecosystem

A major conceptual finding from this project is the idea of complementarity, adapted from ecology. This framework allows us to see that each lane has a particular function serving the laneway ecosystem of Chinatown as a whole. Rather than being isolated pieces of infrastructure, each lane has unique assets and values of its own, offering distinct potential as a venue for specific activations.

9.5 For further exploration

As this was a 8-month studio project conducted by four graduate students, the constraints of time, capacity and lack of budget limited the scope of work. In addition, the contingencies and sensitivities around Chinatown and its surrounding neighbourhoods meant that the project hinged on much larger systemic issues beyond the ability of planning students to resolve.

Actions that we were unable to achieve ourselves but that could be considered in future phases of this project include:

- Bringing different Chinatown stakeholders together to work toward establishing common goals despite diverging interests and perspectives
- Going beyond community stakeholders to conduct a more thorough engagement with the general public visiting and living in Chinatown
- Consulting and engaging stakeholders outside of Chinatown who could be affected by this project (e.g., the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations and residents of the Downtown Eastside, Hogan's Alley, Japantown and Strathcona)
- Identifying community groups with the capacity and willingness to lead lane activations and creating collaborative plans to guide such leadership
- Initiating and building partnerships among local community organizations with a common interest in lane activation
- Holding community workshops and brainstorming potential design or event ideas for lane activations in Chinatown

“How do you reconcile equity for some but not others? It’s not on one individual to solve; it’s on the entire system.”



Sunset in Chinatown. Photo: Naomi. W. Reichstein



Chinatown Millennium Gate, Vancouver. Photo: Stella L. Zhou

CHINATOWN LANEWAY TEAM MEMBERS



Tiffany Creyke has a background in sustainable community development through social enterprises, reconciliation, conflict and development. She is the Indigenous design lead for Aboriginal Health with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and is a design recipient of the 2018 Park People's Public Space Incubator competition. For more information and a conceptual rendering of RED EMBERS see <https://parkpeople.ca/publicspaceinc/>. She was the Program Coordinator for the Indigenous Place Making Council and intermittently a Planner for Brook McIlroy, an architecture, urban design, landscape architecture and planning firm with offices in Toronto, Thunder Bay and Winnipeg. She is Co-Creator of the ReMatriate Collective and is the Artistic Associate for Indigenous Fashion Week in Vancouver and Toronto.

Tiffany Creyke (易媿斐) 善于通過社區企業、原住民和解行動、以及衝突調解來達各社區的可持續性發展目標。她目前是與溫哥華沿海衛生局合作的原住民設計領導者，且榮獲過2018年的 Park People's Public Space Incubator 競賽。她的參賽作品可通過[此網站](https://parkpeople.ca/publicspaceinc/)觀賞。她曾是原住民公共環境設計政務會的項目協調員，並且在擁有多倫多、溫尼伯、珊德灣等分公司的跨城市建築設計與城市規劃企業 Brook McIlroy 擔任過規劃師。她同時也是 ReMatriate Collective 的聯合創作人以及溫哥華和多倫多原住民時尚週藝術組織的成員。



Naomi W. Reichstein has a professional background in media. Interested in open space, affordable housing and heritage, she is editor of the Goodman Report rental sector newsletter and former editor-in-chief of Business in Vancouver (BIV) Magazines. As a Greenest City Scholar, she has designed and executed a [study at the Vancouver Park Board](#) about how teachers use city parks in outdoor environmental learning. She is the Arbutus Greenway Project Lead at the Vancouver Public Space Network and blogs about heritage, public space and the urban scene at [Sidewalk Babble: Meandering through the Urban Maze](#). Earlier, she was the nonfiction editor of Raincoast Books, Harry Potter's Canadian publisher.

Naomi W. Reichstein (石寧梅) 擁有媒體與書本出版發行的專業工作背景。她的規劃興趣在於公共環境設計、經濟適用房規劃以及城市遺產規劃。她同時還是 Goodman Report 的租房新聞編輯以及 Business in Vancouver (BIV) 的前任總編輯。這個夏天她作為溫哥華市的綠色城市研究學者參與了溫哥華公園局關於“[如何讓教師利用城市公園進行戶外教學](#)”的研究項目。她還是溫哥華公共環境聯網的阿標特斯綠色通道項目領導，並且在自己的博客 [Sidewalk Babble: Meandering through the Urban Maze](#) 裡發表了許多關於城市遺產、公共環境以及城市環境的文章。

SCARP PLANNING STUDIO 2018-2019

Jacqueline Hunter has a background in community engagement and nonprofit administration. Prior to starting graduate school, she worked as a Community Engagement Coordinator for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada and managed the Living Streets program for Better Environmentally Sound Transportation. She worked as a Greenest City Scholar this past summer, which allowed her to complete a [study on workplace childcare](#) for the City of Vancouver's Social Policy and Projects department. While her interests are ever-evolving, right now she is interested in social and community planning, heritage and housing. She enjoys travelling and learning new languages in her spare time.

Jacqueline Hunter (賀佳玲) 擁有社區參與規劃以及非盈利組織行政管理的背景與經驗。在她攻讀研究生之前她曾在加拿大多發性硬化症協會擔任社區參與規劃協調員，並且參與管理了Better Environmentally Sound Transportation的街道活躍化項目。這個夏天她作為溫哥華市社會政策和項目部的綠色城市研究學者發表了一篇關於[工作環境與育兒政策](#)的報告。雖然她的興趣愛好在不斷的進步與變化，她目前對社會社區規劃、城市遺產規劃以及住房規劃最感興趣。在她休閒的時候她十分喜愛外去 旅遊以及學習新的語言。



Stella L. Zhou has a background in urban geography and environmental sustainability. She is a project assistant for a Arbutus Greenway [health impact study](#) at the Cities, Health and Active Transportation Research (CHATR) Lab. She is interested in social equity, healthy communities and the built environment. She is most passionate about planning healthy and inclusive cities with multicultural communities. As a young Chinese-Canadian, Stella thrives through understanding the deep connections between her cultural roots and her self-identity. She is a map enthusiast and enjoys telling urban histories and community stories through [interactive maps](#). She also loves cooking and sharing food with others because she believes that nothing can be accomplished on an empty stomach.

Stella L. Zhou (周詩喆) 擁有人文地理學位且熱衷于城市環境的可持續發展。她目前在城市健康動態交通科研實驗室 (CHATR) 的[阿標特斯綠色通道項目](#)小組裡擔任協調員助理。她的規劃興趣在於探究社區的健康平等與城市環境建設。她希望能與不同的社區一起規劃建出更加健康、開放、接納的多元文化城市。作為一個位加拿大青年華裔，她始終追尋著自己的文化根源並以此激勵自己去了解多元文化。製作[各種地圖](#)來敘述城市歷史與故事是她熱衷的興趣與愛好。她同時喜愛做飯以及嘗試各類料理，所以她樂意與大家一起製作和分享美食。俗話說“民以食為天”所以她相信食物是快樂的源泉。



NOTES

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APPENDICES

Appendix A — Funding options for lane activation

City of Vancouver grants and awards

Every year, the City of Vancouver awards funding to artists and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. Here are some of the City's [grants and awards](#) that could apply to Chinatown lane events:

Community Arts Grant Program

Community-based art projects or events are eligible for funding to assist with planning, execution or promotion.

Creative City Strategic Grant Program

Supports new and existing projects that advance principles of reconciliation, equity and access, investment and visibility, capacity or collaboration.

Cultural Grants Program

An arts or cultural nonprofit that produces ongoing arts and cultural activities, projects or events may be eligible for funding through project grants, annual assistance grants and operating grants.

Cultural Infrastructure Grant Program

Funding is available to help a nonprofit buy, build, renovate or expand a cultural space.

Grants to offset City services costs

The City of Vancouver's Film and Special Events Office may offer financial relief of up to \$2,000 to eligible nonprofits to offset certain eligible City service costs incurred during special events.

Green Grants

The Greenest City Fund supports projects that help achieve Vancouver's goal of becoming the greenest city in the world.

Neighbourhood Matching Fund

Fund supports neighbourhood-based groups that want to make creative improvements to local public lands.

Public Art Community Grants

The City provides grants to support small-scale public art projects produced by Vancouver-based organizations working with practicing artists and communities.

Provincial grants

BC Arts Council Enhanced Capacity Assistance

Helps arts and cultural entities increase organizational sustainability and capacity.

Community Resilience through Arts and Culture Program

Supports arts and cultural initiatives by and for local communities. Focuses on communities experiencing hardship, historic oppression or other challenges.

Heritage Legacy Fund

Offers support for community initiatives that conserve and increase understanding and appreciation of heritage resources.

Federal grants

Canada Cultural Spaces Fund

Supports improvement of physical conditions for artistic creativity and innovation.

Canada Heritage Grant for Building Communities through Arts and Heritage

Supports community celebrations, such as festivals, events and projects.

Canada Heritage Grants for Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives Program

Supports initiatives that build on Canada's strength as a diverse, inclusive society. Has three funding components: events, projects and community capacity-building. [Events](#) component provides funding to community-based events that promote intercultural understanding, civic memory and celebration of a community's history and culture.

Canada History Fund

Encourages Canadians to improve their knowledge about Canada's history. Supports production of learning materials and creation or maintenance of networks.

Canada Summer Jobs

Provides wage subsidies to employers from nonprofit organizations, the public sector and small private sector organizations to create summer work experiences for people aged 15–30.

Commemorate Canada

Funds initiatives that commemorate and celebrate historical figures, places, events and accomplishments of national significance.

Banks, nonprofits, credit unions and businesses

Central City Foundation

Grants support programs that enhance inner-city communities that provide economic opportunity.

Neighbourhood Small Grants

Vancouver Foundation gives grants from \$50 to \$500 to support projects that bring people together, share skills and knowledge, build a sense of belonging and responsibility, and respect and celebrate diversity.

Real Estate Foundation

Funds initiatives that transform real-estate and land-use practices throughout B.C. General and special grant programs are available to eligible nonprofits, municipalities, regional districts, First Nations, senior government departments, professional associations and other entities.

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

Supports a wide range of environmental initiatives, with focus on environmental education, urban greening, biodiversity enhancement and energy conservation.

Vancity Community Grants

Foundation focuses on nonprofit social enterprises, community-owned real estate (including housing) and collaborative approaches to change. Funding criteria and application processes vary across foundation's granting programs.

Other types of funding options to explore

- Nonprofit fiscal sponsors that can funnel grants and charitable donations
- Public-private partnerships that can help realize community-led initiatives on the ground
- Funding or in-kind contributions from surrounding businesses, organizations, property owners or tenants willing to provide sponsorship or services in exchange for the publicity of being connected to a project
- Crowdsourcing campaigns

Appendix B — Site analysis checklist

Site Analysis Checklist Page 01

Observation Time: 10-15 minutes

Date of Observation: November 17, 2018 at 11:00 am

Lane: _____

Time and Date of Observation: _____

Dimensions

- Width of the lane: _____
- Height (from ground level):
 - Of the adjacent buildings: _____
 - Of first overhead obstacle (i.e electricity wires, etc.): _____
- Length of the lane: _____
- Shade: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Time of Day: _____
- Allowing overhang: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Rain coverage: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Location

- Intersection(s): _____
- Street(s): _____
- Nearby shop(s) (note them down): _____

- Bike racks: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Parking:
 - Is there parking at all? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - Restricted parking: ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - Meter parking: ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - Additional notes (i.e. how busy the parking seemed): _____

Site Analysis Checklist Page 02

Physical Features

- Drains: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Potholes: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Lighting: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- What is the paving like?
 - ☐ Smooth
 - ☐ Gravelly
 - ☐ Patchy

Other: _____

- Bins: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Power sources: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- What is the architectural style of the surrounding buildings? _____

Traffic

- Vehicle Counts (within the lane):

Site Analysis Checklist Page 03

Pedestrian and Cycling Counts:

Entrance 1

*Use different symbols for pedestrians (i.e. **X**) and cyclists (i.e. **O**)

	Males		Females		Unidentified	
	Within the lane	Adjacent to the lane	Within the lane	Adjacent to the lane	Within the lane	Adjacent to the lane
Child (0-12)						
Youth (13-18)						
Young Adult (18-30)						
Adult (30-65)						
Seniors (65+)						

Site Analysis Checklist Page 04

Pedestrian and Cycling Counts:

Entrance 2

*Use different symbols for pedestrians (i.e. **X**) and cyclists (i.e. **O**)

	Males		Females		Unidentified	
	Within the lane	Adjacent to the lane	Within the lane	Adjacent to the lane	Within the lane	Adjacent to the lane
Child (0-12)						
Youth (13-18)						
Young Adult (18-30)						
Adult (30-65)						
Seniors (65+)						

Site Analysis Checklist Page 05

Activity Observed

- Commercial activity:
 - ☐ Multi-use
 - ☐ Loading
 - ☐ Other: _____
- Homelessness counts: _____
- Substance use counts: _____
- Other types of activity: _____

Other Uses of the Lane

- Emergency routes: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Additional Notes: _____
- Garbage pick-up routes: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Additional Notes: _____
- Recycling pick-up: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Additional Notes: _____
- Compost pick-up: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Additional Notes: _____

Appendix C — Detailed matrix for lane physical characteristics analysis

Physical Characteristics	Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Lane 4	Lane 5	Lane 6	Lane 7	Lane 8
Connectivity	H		M	H	M	H	H	H
-- Walkability	H		H	H	H	H	H	H
-- Transit	H		M	H	H	H	H	H
-- Bike	H		M	H	L	H	H	H
Physical condition	H		L	M	M	H	L	H
-- Physical obstacles (e.g., bins, construction, blockade)	H		L	M	L	H	M	H
-- Cleanliness	H		M	L	H	H	L	H
-- Condition of pavement	H		M	M	M	H	M	H
Vehicle circulation	H		L	M	M	L	M	L
Loading in lane	L		L	M	M	M	M	L
Parking on lane	M		L	M	M	L	L	L
Parking nearby	H		H	H	M	H	H	H
Foot traffic	H		L	H	H	L	H	H
Light	H		M	M	M	M	M	H
-- Artificial light (e.g., streetlamps)	H		L	L	L	L	L	M
-- Sunlight	H		H	H	M	M	H	H
Rain shelter	L		L	L	L	L	L	L
Power source	L		L	L	L	H	L	L
	H: 14		H: 3	H: 7	H: 4	H: 10	H: 7	H: 12
	M: 1		M: 6	M: 7	M: 9	M: 3	M: 5	M: 1
	L: 3		L: 9	L: 4	L: 5	L: 5	L: 6	L: 5
	Total: 18		Total: 18	Total: 18	Total: 18	Total: 18	Total: 18	Total: 18
H scored at 3	42		9	21	12	30	21	36
M scored at 2	2		12	14	18	6	10	2
L scored at 1	3		9	4	5	5	6	5
Total for lane	47		30	39	35	41	37	43

Legend	Symbol	Viability level	Score
	H	Higher viability	3
	M	Medium viability	2
	L	Lower viability	1



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