

MEMORIAL SQUARE REDESIGN

唐人街紀念廣場 重新設計

Public Engagement Summary
Phase 1



BACKGROUND

Chinatown Memorial Square hosts important community events such as the Remembrance Day ceremony, and draws many visitors to the neighbourhood where they can learn about the contributions of Chinese people in Canada. It also provides a social space for community members to honour their culture and traditions.

This project is an important part of the Chinatown Transformation work that came from the recommendations in the Historical Discrimination Against Chinese People in Vancouver approved by Council in 2017. Since then, the Chinatown Transformation Team has been working with the Legacy Stewardship Group and the community to support and grow Chinatown's cultural heritage assets, with the long-term goal of having Chinatown designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Improving assets such as Chinatown Memorial Square to support Chinatown's living cultural heritage is a key component of this work.



OVERVIEW

We had the first phase of public engagement in the spring of 2021. This process involved setting up a Community Advisory Group and reaching out to the community to develop a vision, principles, and goals for the redesign of Memorial Square.

This document provides a summary of the public's input regarding likes, dislikes, principles, and the community's vision for the future of Chinatown Memorial Square



Phase 1 Public Engagement by Numbers

The first phase of public engagement included Shape Your City (SYC) websites and surveys; as well as bilingual semi-structured phone interviews with Chinese seniors. All engagement materials were bilingual, in English and Traditional Chinese; while the interviews were conducted in Cantonese and Mandarin.

385

responses to our
online survey

6

phone interviews
with Chinese
seniors

2,203

engagements
through social
media

733

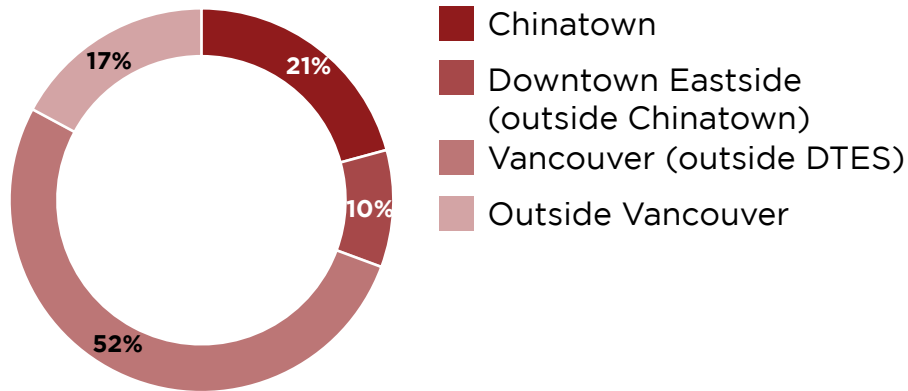
people are aware
of the project
through our SYC
website

11

organizations
represented on
the Community
Advisory Group
and 3 individual
members

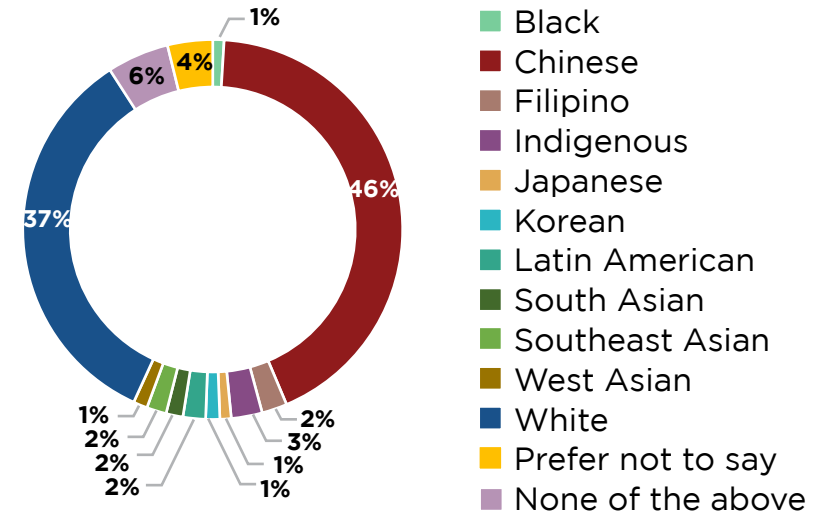
WHAT WE HEARD

Q. Where do you live?



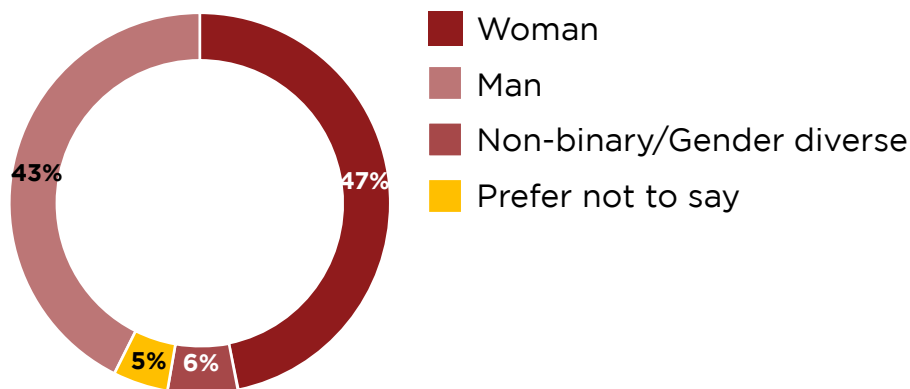
Q. How would you describe your ethnocultural/racial identity?

(Check all that apply)

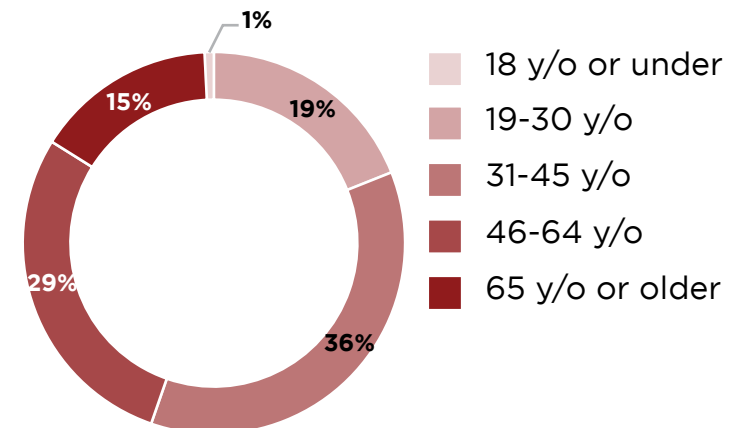


Q. How would you describe your gender identity?

(Check all that apply)



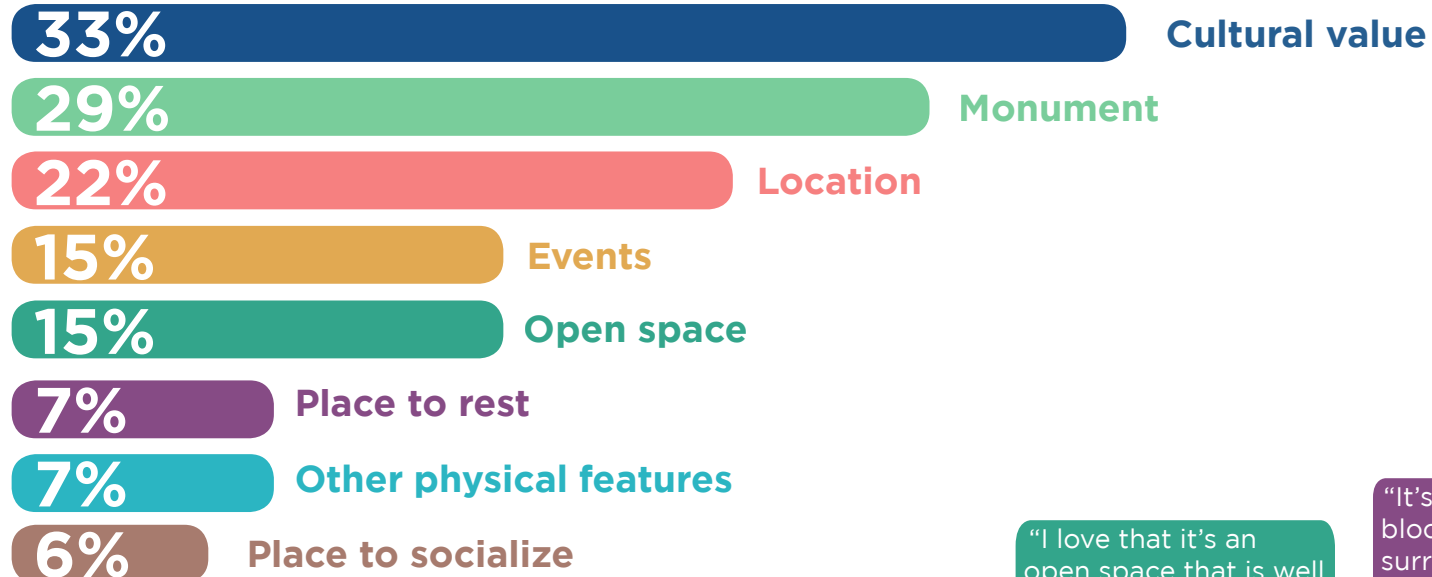
Q. What age group do you belong to?



WHAT WE HEARD

Q. What do you like the most about Memorial Square?

Key Themes



"I love that it's an open space that is well used by community groups for culturally relevant activities."

"It's a quieter block than the surrounding ones and it's great to sit and watch the neighbourhood."

"Meaningful gathering space for the community, to share culture with the rest of the region."

"It is a symbol of respect and the commemoration of the contributions Chinese Canadians have made to our country."

"The special Events set up by the Chinatown advocacy groups to create vibrancy."

"The open space and the honoring of Chinese veterans."

"Its prominence. It is bold, public, visible, accessible, and unmistakable."

"It's a great place to walk past and discuss the history of the neighbourhood with my students."

"How it reflects Chinese heritage and culture and is a central location for the community."

"It is the heart of historic Chinatown."

"Public space for programming and gathering e.g mahjong socials by YCC, night market in the past."

"It is a gathering place for Chinatown seniors."

WHAT WE HEARD

Q. What do you dislike the most about Memorial Square?

Key Themes



Not enough shelter and public infrastructure: especially seating and sun/rain shelter.

Needs more infrastructure for gathering - variety of seating, power, water, performance space, rain/sun/tree cover (especially given seniors in the neighbourhood) etc.

It's ugly and somewhat nondescript.

It lacks a sense of place, something to give it presence. It also needs seating and a reason for people to linger.

Too tight, could be larger to fit more people during the ceremonies.

It needs more space for people to gather.

Garbage, lack of seating options and it is adjacent to the empty lot. It also feels too small to be a real square.

Trash/litter left around the square.

The influx of aggressive addicts. Criminals selling drugs and products along Columbia.

The empty parking lot beside it, it's an eyesore.

Traffic all around compromises safety.

It's desolate, lonely, and lacks life and animation.

Note: several comments that were considered out-of-scope regarding purchasing neighbouring lots or changing the square's location were also received

WHAT WE HEARD

Q. How do you want to use Memorial Square in the future?



WHAT WE HEARD

Q. 7. Please rank the statements below in order of support (1 being your top choice and 6 your bottom choice)

The redesign of Memorial Square should:

average
top
choice

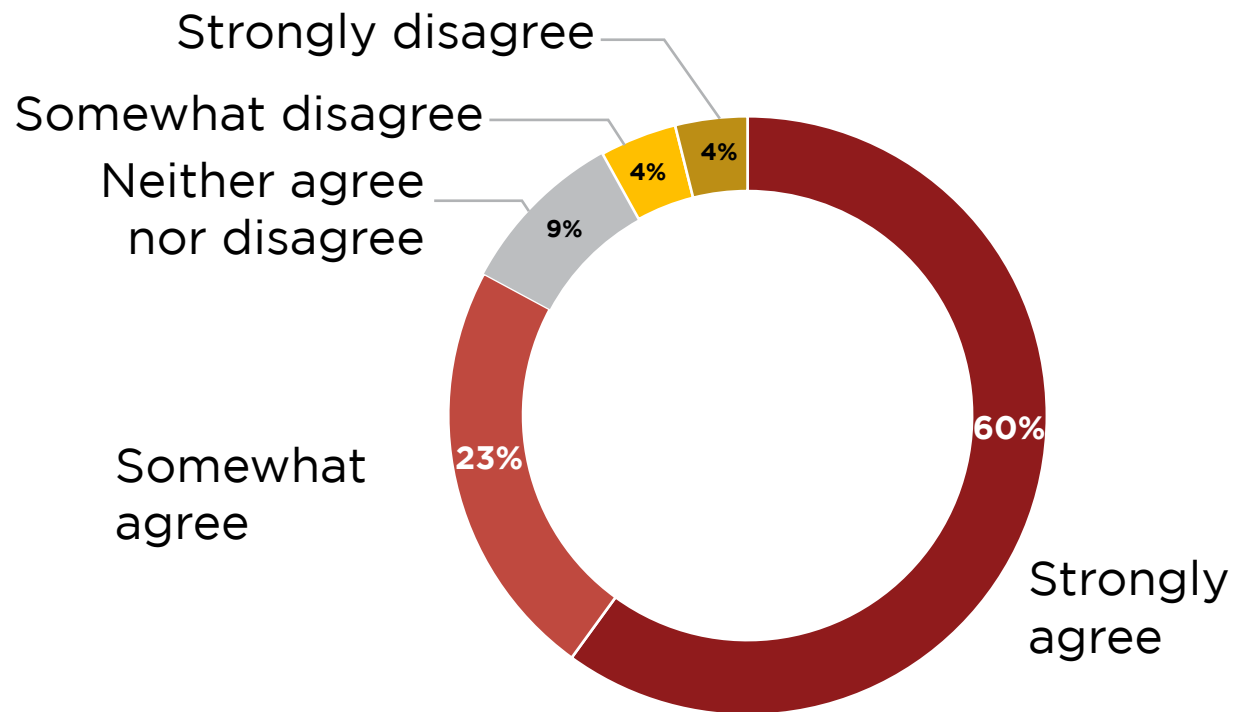


average
bottom
choice

- Make it a **culturally appropriate space for Chinese seniors**, and inclusive and accessible for people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Enhance it as a **place for special events, festivals and traditions** (e.g. meeting place for Lunar New Year parade, Remembrance Day service for veterans and railway workers, Ching Ming ceremony)
- **Improve safety and level of comfort** (e.g. lighting, shade, benches, etc.)
- **Support daily cultural activities** (e.g. exercise, socializing with friends, tai chi)
- **Connect better to nearby destinations** such as Andy Livingstone Park, Chinatown Plaza, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, Chinese Canadian Military Museum
- **Make it more visible and draw more visitors to Chinatown**, including from the waterfront and outside of the neighbourhood

WHAT WE HEARD

Q. There is an opportunity to use some of the road allowance adjacent to the Square to increase the size of the space and improve pedestrian crossings on Keefer Street and Columbia Street, while also maintaining access into Chinatown for motor vehicles.



WHAT WE HEARD

We conducted semi-structured phone interviews with Chinese seniors through a partnership with Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice. The interviews supplemented the results with additional qualitative information and gave more insight into their wants and needs for the square.

More events would help them go there more often

- The Night Market was cited as an example a few times

Some cannot come due to **poor health and poor transit** accessibility

Some mentioned the square as a place to **teach and learn about Chinese Canadian history**

It's a place to **meet friends**

Mah-jong, dancing, singing, exercise, and tai chi are some of the current activities mentioned

One said it's a place where they **don't fear discrimination**