



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 24, 2008
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RTS No.: 07498
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: July 10, 2008

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

FROM: Director of Planning

SUBJECT: Chinatown Society Buildings Planning Grant Program: Phase 1 Grants Approval

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve five Planning Grants of up to \$100,000 each, to the five Chinatown Societies identified in this report and subject to the conditions outlined in Appendix A, for a total grant allocation of up to \$500,000. The source of funds is the previously approved Chinatown Society Buildings Planning Capital Budget. Eight affirmative votes are required for the approval of Grants.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

On February 14, 2008, City Council approved the Society Buildings Rehabilitation Strategy, which included the Chinatown Society Planning Grant Program: Phase 1.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for grants under the Chinatown Society Buildings Planning Grant Program: Phase 1 to five Chinatown Societies which have completed the application process and met the eligibility requirements.

BACKGROUND

The Chinatown Vision approved by Council in 2002 identified protecting the area's heritage and culture while bringing in new energy and investment as an important direction. In 2003, the Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program (HBRP) was made available to Chinatown to help protect the area's heritage assets and spark economic revitalization. Although there are 32 heritage buildings in Chinatown, with 12 being owned by Societies, there have only been two buildings that have pursued a full building upgrade through HBRP to date, with neither being a Society-owned building.

Staff have been working closely with Chinatown family associations and benevolent societies ("Societies") on a rehabilitation strategy for Society owned heritage buildings as part of Chinatown revitalization.

On February 14 2008 (RTS #06114), City Council approved the Chinatown Society Buildings Rehabilitation Strategy, which included the Chinatown Society Buildings Planning Grant Program: Phase 1 ("the Program"). The report and the Program's policies and procedures are available on the City's website at vancouver.ca/chinatown. The Program is to provide grants to Societies for the preparation of Rehabilitation Plans for their heritage buildings. These Plans will be prepared with the assistance of consultants and will include examination of the buildings' existing condition, exploration of heritage rehabilitation options, and a costing analysis.

Five grants of \$100,000 each are available for 2008. The source of funds as approved February 14, 2008 is \$400,000 from the 2006 Capital Budget (Downtown Eastside) and \$100,000 from the 2008 Capital Budget (Downtown Eastside). Additional grants may be available in future years depending on funding availability.

DISCUSSION

The Program Policies and Procedures approved by Council in February 2008 outlined a two-stage application process. The first stage requires Societies to submit an Expression of Interest letter while the second stage requires the preparation of a Full Proposal. The first five Societies to provide a complete Expression of Interest package would be invited to the second application stage. All Societies that own heritage buildings in Chinatown were notified in writing of the Grant Program, with Policies & Procedures and application forms provided in both English and Chinese.

To be eligible for the Planning Grant, Societies must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Member-based organization (Family Association or Benevolent Society)
- Registered non-profit society status

- Ownership of a building, located in Chinatown (HA-1 and HA-1A), that is listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register (VHR)
- Interest in undertaking a full building rehabilitation (major upgrade) of the heritage building
- Contribution of \$20,000 towards the Rehabilitation Plan project (resulting in a total budget of up to \$120,000).

Staff began accepting applications on March 25, 2008, and five Expression of Interest letters were received that day, with no others received to date. These five Societies have now completed the two-stage application process, meet the eligibility requirements, and have agreed to the Payment of Grant Process and Conditions outlined in Appendix A.

Summarized below is an overview of each Society, their heritage building, and the heritage rehabilitation ideas they and their consultants will explore using the grant funding. A map showing where each of the five Society buildings is located in Chinatown is provided in Appendix B.

1. Lim Sai Hor Kow Mock Benevolent Association (531 Carrall Street)

The Lim Association was incorporated in 1929, and is a family/clan association with its membership base being people who share the same last name. The Lim Association building is at 531 Carrall Street and is a Class "C" heritage building. The structure was originally built in 1903, and was acquired and renovated by the Association in 1945. The site is a three storey building with four residential suites on the first two levels and the top floor reserved for Society meeting and activities.

The Association has on-going seniors and women's programs. The Association is a founding member of the Chinatown Society Heritage Building Association and their President has been involved in Chinatown revitalization work, including as a member of the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee.

The Association wants to explore renovating the building with a mix of commercial and residential uses, to showcase the oldest Society building in Chinatown which is located prominently on the recently constructed Carrall Street Greenway.

2. Mah Society of Canada ("Asia Hotel" at 137-139 East Pender Street)

The Society was formed in 1919 and incorporated as a mutual help organization providing support and services to the Mah family members as well as new immigrants. The building at 137-139 E Pender Street serves as the national headquarters for branches in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg and Toronto. This building is a Class "C" heritage building constructed in 1913 and purchased by the Society in 1920. The top floor was added in 1922 to serve as the Society's "clubhouse". This 5 storey building has a restaurant on the ground floor, 35 SRO units on the second to fourth floors, and the clubhouse on the fifth floor.

In addition to providing non-market housing, the Society contributes to the revitalization of Chinatown through various programs and active participation in community events such as the annual Chinese New Year Parade. The Society has also been very active in the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee and is one of

the founding members in organizing the Chinatown Society Heritage Buildings Association.

The Society would like to explore retaining the clubhouse and renovating the SROs into seniors housing, with priority given to existing residents. The Society also proposes to explore sustainable building principles, such as maximizing natural lighting, separating black and grey water and introducing a green roof. In addition, the Society has many ideas to actively involve youth as part of their succession planning strategy.

3. Shon Yee Benevolent Association of Canada ("May Wah Hotel" at 254 East Pender Street)

Shon Yee Association members come from the Zhongshan County in southern China. It was formed in 1914 for the purpose of providing social services and welfare for their members and has branches in Calgary and Victoria. Their building at 254 East Pender Street is a Class "B" heritage building. It is known as the May Wah Hotel and was one of the largest rooming hotels in Chinatown when it was built in 1913. This four-storey brick building occupies three 25 foot lots. It has retail space in the basement and ground floor, with the upper 3 floors being residential use (130 SRO rooms).

Shon Yee is also involved in a joint venture with the provincial government (Shon Yee Housing Society on 628 E Hastings) to provide non-market housing for seniors in the community. Shon Yee also has an active athletic division to help engage the younger generations.

The Shon Yee Association proposes to renovate their building at 254 East Pender Street and upgrade the SROs into self-contained units. The retail spaces will be retrofitted to provide better storefront access.

4. Yee Fung Toy Society of Canada (226 East Georgia Street)

The Yee Fung Toy Society of Canada is the national organization for six chapters in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Toronto and Montreal. Their three storey Class "C" heritage building at 222-226 E Georgia Street was originally constructed circa 1910. Half of the ground floor is currently used for the Society with the other half serving as retail space. The second and third floors have been subdivided into twelve rental residential units.

Ongoing programs held by the Society include regular events for seniors, women and youth. The Society also plans to revive their martial arts and Chinese language classes for youth.

The Yee Fung Toy Society would like to explore rehabilitating the primary façade, renovating the main building, and replacing the rear addition with new market residential units.

5. Chinese Nationalist League of Canada (525 Gore Avenue)

The Chinese Nationalist League of Canada (CNLC) was found in Victoria in 1816 as a non-profit organization with the objective of providing benevolent services to assist Chinese new immigrants to Canada. The Society moved to Vancouver in 1918 and built its headquarters at 529 Gore Avenue with donations from members all over Canada. Currently there are 12 branches across the country. This four storey Class "A" heritage building is used entirely for Society activities, including meeting rooms/hall, a library and archival exhibition.

Currently, the CNLC Society serves the Chinese community in Chinatown through various programs, such as English classes for seniors, Chinese arts and painting exhibitions, and martial arts classes for youths.

The CNLC Society would like to explore a full rehabilitation of the building with possible new uses being a museum on Chinese immigration or commercial space.

Based on the proposals received, the expected time required to complete the Rehabilitation Plans will range from 6 to 8 months. The Societies will be required to meet with staff by the end of 2008 to review progress of the work and address any issues.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff recommend approval of five Planning Grants of up to \$100,000 each, to the five Chinatown Societies identified in this report, for a total grant allocation of up to \$500,000, the total amount approved for Phase 1 of the Program. Source of funds as approved February 14, 2008 (RTS #06114) is \$400,000 from the 2006 Capital Budget (Downtown Eastside) and \$100,000 from the 2008 Capital Budget (Downtown Eastside).

CONCLUSION

Staff recommend approval of five grants, totalling \$500,000 under the approved Chinatown Society Buildings Planning Grant Program: Phase 1, which aims to assist the Societies in exploring options to rehabilitate their heritage buildings. This grant program builds upon the Chinatown Vision, which describes Chinatown as a complete neighbourhood with a strong cultural identity.

Five Societies have completed the two-stage application process and are eligible for a grant. These grants will enable the Societies to prepare Rehabilitation Plans that will assist them in understanding their heritage building and planning for a major rehabilitation project.

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APPENDIX A

Payment of Grant Process and Conditions

The grant will be released in two stages as outlined below, with cheques made payable to the Society:

Stage 1 - After approval of the grant by Council, the Society must provide the City with documentation showing establishment of a trust account opened by the Society for the Rehabilitation Plan project and a deposit by the Society into this account for \$20,000. Once this has been confirmed, the City will provide the Society with 50% (maximum of \$50,000) of the total grant amount.

Stage 2 - After the final Rehabilitation Plan report and deliverables have been submitted, and the lead consultant and Society have presented to City staff, the Society must provide the City with the final project budget and actual costs incurred (invoices). Once the project costs have been confirmed, the final grant payment will be made. The size of the final payment will be based on actual costs incurred, less the Society's contribution of \$20,000 and the Stage 1 payment, to a maximum total grant value of \$100,000.

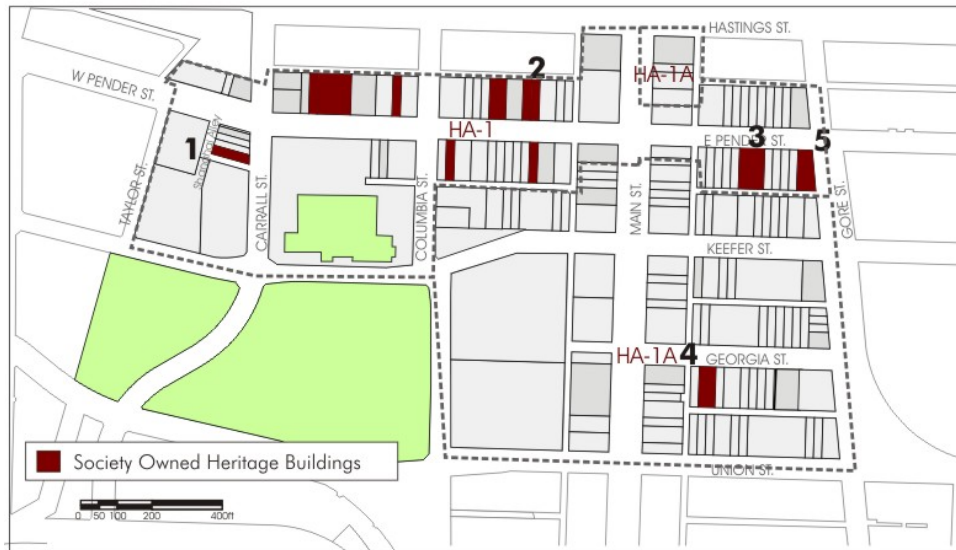
Prior to receiving any funds, the Society must complete, sign, and submit to the City the Society Buildings Planning Grant Program application form, which outlines the conditions of the grant as follows:

Conditions

- a. That in the event that the funds are not used for preparation of the Rehabilitation Plan, or if there are misrepresentations in the Full Proposal, the full amount of grant funds released to the Society will be payable forthwith to the City.
- b. That if there are any changes in the funding of the project as presented in the Full Proposal, the City's Planning Department will be notified of such changes. That if the project proposed in the Full Proposal is not commenced or is not completed and City funds remain on hand, or if the project is completed without requiring the full use of the City funds, such City funds will be returned to the City through the Planning Department.
- c. That the project not be represented as a City project, and that the Society not represent itself as agency of the City in any way, the only relationship being that the City has approved and granted financial assistance to the Society.
- d. That grant recipients be required to report back to the City by December 1, 2008 on any outstanding work including a timeline for completion; and
- e. In situations where grants have been approved, but where conditions have not been met and, therefore, City funds not advanced within three years from the original application deadline, the allocated amount be returned to the Downtown Eastside Capital Budget unallocated account.

APPENDIX B

Location of Five Societies in Chinatown (Planning Grants Applicants)



1 525-531 Carrall
Lim Sai Hor (Kow Mock)
Benevolent Association
Year Built: 1903
Heritage Category: C



2 137-139 E Pender
Mah Society of Canada
(Asia Hotel)
Year Built: 1915
Heritage Category: C



3 254-262 E Pender
Shon Yee Benevolent Association
(May Wah Hotel)
Year Built: 1914
Heritage Category: B



4 222-226 E Georgia
Yee Fung Tong Society
Year Built: 1929
Heritage Category: C



5 525 Gore
Chinese Nationalist League of Canada
(Kuomintang Building)
Year Built: 1920
Heritage Category: A