



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: March 28, 2024
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: April 9, 2024
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
SUBJECT: Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan – Grants

Recommendations

- A. THAT Council approve four Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan grants totaling \$387,000 from the City's 2024 Operating Budget to the organizations named in Appendix A for the amounts listed in the "Amounts" column to continue the implementation of the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan.
- B. THAT pursuant to Section 206(1)(j) of the *Vancouver Charter*, Council deems any organization listed in Appendix A that is not otherwise a registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency to be contributing to the culture, beautification, health, or welfare of the city.
- C. THAT Council delegate its authority to execute grants agreements that disburse the grants described in this report to the City's Director of Legal Services.
- D. THAT no legal rights or obligations will arise or be created by Council's adoption of Recommendations A through C unless and until all legal documentation has been executed and delivered by the respective parties.

Recommendation A requires two-thirds affirmative votes of all Council members under section 206(1) of the *Vancouver Charter*.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report seeks Council approval for a total of four Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan strategic priority grants totaling \$387,000 to support the Year 2 implementation of the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan which was approved by Council on January 17, 2023.

If approved, the grants would be funded by the City's Operating Budget. These amounts are included in the current 2024 Operating budget:

- Chinatown BIA (\$150,000) – Ongoing implementation of the Graffiti Removal and Abatement Enhancement on Private Property Pilot Project;
- Chinatown BIA (\$50,000) – Ongoing implementation and improvement of the Chinatown Safewalk pilot program;
- Chinese Community Policing Centre (\$10,000) – Ongoing implementation of the Expanded Volunteer Graffiti Removal Program Pilot Project;
- EMBERS Eastside Works (\$177,000) – Ongoing implementation of the Chinatown Community Stewards Program as a pilot action.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

1. Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan ([January 17, 2023](#)): Council approved the draft Action Plan in principle, with the Action Plan budget approved as part of the 2023 Operating Budget.
2. Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan – Strategic Priority Grants ([May 9, 2023](#)): Council approved four (4) Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan strategic priority grants totaling \$387,000 to three organizations.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

On January 17, 2023, Council approved in principle the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan, which consists of a series of actions and pilot projects related to cleaning and sanitation, graffiti abatement strategies and placemaking, and community supports in Chinatown.

On December 12, 2023, Mayor and Council approved the 2024 Operating Budget, which includes funding to continue initiatives from the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan for Year 2 implementation.

Discussion

The grants recommended in this report support the ongoing implementation of the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan, as they fund organizations working in partnership with the City to continue projects related to graffiti abatement/removal and provision of community supports.

The recommended grants are in addition to the Graffiti Abatement Grants program. Staff will bring a report to Council on May 8, 2024 recommending graffiti abatement grant allocations for 2024 to all 22 BIAs.

Allocation of Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan Strategic Priority Grants

If approved by Council, Uplifting Chinatown grants totaling \$387,000 will be distributed to the following organizations:

1. *Chinatown BIA – Pilot Project: Graffiti Removal and Abatement Enhancement on Private Property (\$150,000)*

The Chinatown BIA, similar to other BIAs across the city, has an established graffiti prevention and abatement program which supplements the City's public property graffiti removal by addressing graffiti on commercial private property within their boundaries.

In 2023, the Chinatown BIA was provided additional funding through the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan for a graffiti removal and abatement pilot project focused on: expediting response times; addressing street-front and eye-level facades; alleys; highly visible and repeatedly targeted locations; anti-graffiti coatings; removal of large-scale graffiti; and addressing challenges such as buildings with graffiti on upper facades and laneways. Over a six-month period (July 2023 to December 2023), the grant supported the removal of 1,790 graffiti incidents. In 2024, this grant will support the continuation of the graffiti removal and abatement pilot project, while also increasing collaboration with partners and investigating preventative measures.

The pilot project will continue to track metrics including but not limited to: response times; types and size of graffiti removed; locations of graffiti, including repeat incidences; number of hours of service. These metrics will inform future graffiti abatement and removal strategies and resources required to address graffiti in Chinatown and potentially elsewhere in the city.

2. *Chinatown BIA – Ongoing Implementation and Improvement of the Safewalk Pilot Program (\$50,000)*

The Safewalk program aims to support individuals who may require or request accompaniment to their desired location. In 2023, the emphasis was on supporting Chinese-speaking seniors living in the area, many of whom are low-income and face systemic and language barriers. In 2024, the grant will support the Chinatown BIA in extending the reach of the Safewalk pilot program and increasing community awareness, while identifying strategic opportunities to maximize effectiveness, uptake, and sustainability of the program.

The pilot program will continue to track metrics including but not limited to: number of requests; type of request (e.g., seniors, residents, visitors, students); and areas and/or locations served to better understand residents' and business needs in the area and continue to inform potential development of an ongoing Safewalk program.

3. *Chinese Community Policing Centre (CCPC) – Ongoing Implementation of the Expanded Volunteer Graffiti Removal Program Pilot Project (\$10,000)*

The Chinese Community Policing Centre (CCPC) is located at 44 E. Pender and operates a number of community outreach and safety-oriented programs. In 2023, the grant supported the expansion of the existing volunteer graffiti removal program to support proactive graffiti removal and expediting response times, including funding for supplies needed for ongoing graffiti removal. In 2024, the grant will support the continuation and improvement of this program by focusing on graffiti prevention education and initiatives.

The pilot program will continue to track metrics including but not limited to: number of participants/volunteers; total hours volunteered; number of cleanup events; number of graffiti incidences removed, to better inform graffiti abatement and removal needs for the area overall.

4. *EMBERS Eastside Works – Ongoing Chinatown Community Stewards Program (\$177,000)*

Chinatown Stewards operate seven days per week to patrol the neighbourhood to support businesses and residents, de-escalate situations, provide directions to visitors, provide information on resources and outreach for those experiencing homelessness, and identify locations for rapid response (e.g. feces, garbage and graffiti).

In 2023, the Chinatown Community Stewards Program was integrated into the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan. Over the past year, Stewards have reported:

- More than 300 interactions with merchants to support businesses directly and keep doorways ready for operations, with an average response time of 10 minutes;
- More than 3,700 interactions with community members, including assisting seniors, de-escalation, and referral to health clinics and other supports;
- Performing wellness checks, calling for paramedics and other emergency services when medical assistance was needed, and responding to over 30 overdose situations with naloxone; and
- Provided additional support to overall cleanliness of streets and sidewalks while on daily patrol in the neighbourhood.

In December 2023, staff surveyed 53 Chinatown businesses, who provided positive feedback on quick response times by Stewards and their proactive approach to addressing issues, resulting in a cleaner and safer Chinatown. The businesses commended the work of the program in providing a resource to directly support their operations and appreciated developing a relationship with Stewards. Businesses expressed a desire for broadened service hours to address incidents during evening and early morning hours.

In 2024, the Stewards program and City staff will continue to engage with businesses to ensure that the program continues to support them effectively, and with stakeholders around a broader community safety role for Stewards to address incidents that occur in the public realm. The program currently provides monthly reporting on neighbourhood trends and metrics. The program will continue to track metrics including but not limited to: number of requests, number of incidences addressed, number of calls to other agencies, number of storefront interactions, number of issues identified for rapid response.

As the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan is a pilot program, the Chinatown Community Stewards Program remains a pilot initiative in Year 2.

The Working Group continues to evaluate and refine the overall Action Plan’s scope and needs, including understanding potential challenges and opportunities to strategically optimize integration with other initiatives in the Action Plan. Should there be a Council decision to continue an ongoing Stewards program in Chinatown beyond this grant, staff would undergo a procurement process to award a contract to a service provider.

Financial Implications

Staff are seeking Council approval of four strategic priority grants totaling \$387,000 in support of continuing pilot projects and initiatives identified in the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan. Funding sources and organizations receiving strategic priority grants are included in Appendix A.

Funding for all four programs was allocated in the Council-approved 2024 Operating Budget.

As the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan is being run as a pilot project, staff will return to Council prior to the end of 2024 with an update report on progress, outcomes, achievements, and next steps. This will include information on associated costs needed to continue the program, should that be a recommended next step for Council decision.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

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APPENDIX A
UPLIFTING CHINATOWN ACTION PLAN – ALLOCATION OF STRATEGIC PRIORITY GRANTS

	ORGANIZATION	PROJECT	AMOUNT	FUNDING SOURCE
1	Chinatown BIA <i>(Vancouver Chinatown BIA Society)</i>	<p>Ongoing pilot project to further enhance graffiti removal and abatement on private property, with a focus on: expediting response times; addressing street-front and upper facades; alleys; highly visible and repeatedly targeted locations; anti-graffiti coatings; and removal of large-scale graffiti.</p> <p>The pilot project will track metrics including but not limited to: response times; types and size of graffiti removed; locations of graffiti, including repeat graffiti; number of hours of service. These metrics will inform future graffiti abatement and removal strategies and resources required to address graffiti in Chinatown and potentially elsewhere in the City</p>	\$150,000	2024 Operating Budget
2	Chinatown BIA <i>(Vancouver Chinatown BIA Society)</i>	<p>Ongoing implementation and improvement of the Safewalk pilot program.</p> <p>The pilot program will track metrics including but not limited to: number of requests; type of request (e.g. seniors, residents, visitors), and areas and/or locations served, to better understanding of residents' and business needs in the area and inform potential development of an ongoing Safewalk program.</p>	\$50,000	2024 Operating Budget
3	Chinese Community Policing Centre	<p>Ongoing pilot program to support expansion of volunteer graffiti removal program to further supplemental graffiti abatement and removal efforts.</p> <p>The pilot program will track metrics including but not limited to: number of participants/volunteers; total hours volunteered; number of cleanup events; number of graffiti incidences removed, to better inform graffiti abatement and removal needs for the area overall.</p>	\$10,000	2024 Operating Budget

4	<p>Eastside Movement for Business and Economic Renewal Society (EMBERS) Eastside Works</p>	<p>Continuation of the Chinatown Community Stewards Program as a pilot action alongside other Action Plan initiatives.</p> <p>Steward duties include acting as liaisons to support businesses and residents, de-escalation, providing directions to visitors, and providing information on resources and outreach for those experiencing homelessness. The stewards also help identify locations for rapid response (e.g. feces, garbage and graffiti).</p> <p>The program will continue to track metrics including but not limited to: number of requests, number of incidences addressed, number of calls to other agencies, number of storefront interactions, number of issues identified for rapid response. These metrics will inform ongoing needs in the area and inform consideration of the potential continuation of a stewards program beyond December 2024.</p>	\$177,000	2024 Operating Budget
	TOTAL		\$387,000	