



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: January 6, 2023
Contact: Ben Pollard
Contact No.: 604.673.8222
RTS No.: 15432
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: January 17, 2023
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: City Manager
SUBJECT: Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan

Recommendations

- A. THAT Council approve in principle the Draft Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan, contained in Appendix A of this report.
- B. THAT Council direct the GM, Finance, Risk and Supply Chain Management to include in the draft 2023 operating budget for Council's consideration funding for the initiatives that comprise the Draft Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan, as summarised in Table 1 in Appendix A of this report.
- C. THAT if funding is allocated, in whole or in part, to the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan initiatives through the 2023 budget process, Council direct staff to proceed with implementation of initiate detailed design and implementation planning for the Action Plan initiatives that are approved in the 2023 operating budget, targeting implementation in Q2-2023, and to report back to Council in Q4-2023 on progress, outcomes, achievements and next steps associated with the Action Plan.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report responds to a recent Council resolution (contained in Appendix B of this report) concerning urgent measures to uplift Chinatown, including:

- 1) **A draft Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan:** An action plan comprised of immediate actions related to cleaning and sanitation, graffiti abatement strategies and placemaking, and community supports (contained in Appendix A of this report). The Action Plan will be coordinated and monitored by the City Manager's Office, taking a 'whole City' approach to address Chinatown's most urgent needs.
- 2) **Potential by-law changes:** A response to the Council request that staff examine potential by-law changes to the Graffiti, Solid Waste and Ticket Offences By-laws to

remove or waive fines to property owners and businesses. At this time, staff do not recommend any by-law changes, as by-laws apply city-wide, and there may be unintended consequences for other areas of the city. Staff instead have proposed other options in this report (e.g., non-enforcement and support for graffiti removal) for Council's consideration.

- 3) **Update on neighbourhood parking policies and practices:** Summary of work related to on- and off-street parking, pay stations, and loading zones. This update also responds to a previous Council resolution from April 2022 (RTS 15155).
- 4) **Information on potential Satellite City office in Chinatown.**

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

- Vancouver Chinatown Cultural Heritage Assets Management Plan – Strategic Framework (2021)
- Northeast False Creek Plan (2018)
- Historical Discrimination Against Chinese People in Vancouver and Formal Apology (2017 & 2018)
- Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan (2014)
- Healthy City Strategy (2014)

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

Vancouver Chinatown is a cultural gem, and is often regarded as a symbol of the resilience and strength of Chinese Canadians in the face of systemic racism and exclusion throughout Canadian history. In April 2018, Vancouver City Council delivered a formal apology for historical discrimination against people of Chinese descent, and established the Chinatown Transformation Team (CTT) to undertake actions related to conserving, commemorating, and enhancing the living heritage and cultural assets of the community.

In recent years, Vancouver Chinatown has experienced significant challenges including but not limited to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of anti-Asian racism, and increasing incidences of graffiti and vandalism. Chinatown continues to experience ongoing safety concerns that impact small businesses, residents, and cultural organizations.

Currently, there are numerous initiatives and regular operations at the City across multiple departments that attempt to respond to Chinatown's needs for street/alley/sidewalk cleaning, graffiti abatement, placemaking, and community outreach. This has been augmented by community-led initiatives in Chinatown that rely on external agencies and volunteers. To date, there has been limited coordination between the City's service delivery and community-led initiatives to ensure maximum impact in the neighbourhood, and there is the opportunity to enhance this coordination.

In November 2022, Council provided direction to staff through a resolution (Appendix B) to address some of these issues. This report responds to this resolution.

Discussion

This section discusses the following aspects of the resolution:

1. Draft Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan;
2. Potential changes to Graffiti, Solid Waste and Ticket Offences by-laws;
3. Update on Neighbourhood Parking Policies and Practices;
4. Information on potential Satellite City Office in Chinatown.

1. Draft Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan

The November 2022 Council resolution directed staff to develop a draft action plan including recommendations for enhanced support related to street, alley, and sidewalk cleaning, litter and needle pick-up, new graffiti removal strategies, placemaking, and outreach opportunities. This resolution also directed staff to identify resources to be considered in the draft 2023 Operating Budget.

In response to the Council resolution, staff have developed a draft Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan, which is included in Appendix A. To inform the Action Plan, staff have applied observations and lessons from the Vancouver Police Department's August 2022 San Francisco Chinatown visit, and have also conducted initial engagement with some Chinatown stakeholders.

The Draft Action Plan is proposed as a set of pilot projects, to be funded and executed over 2023, and outcomes evaluated and reported to Council in Q4-2023. It focuses on delivering a clean, well-maintained, and safe and supportive Chinatown for residents, businesses, and community organizations. The Action Plan has three work streams with expanded or new measures:

- A. Cleaning and sanitation,
- B. Graffiti abatement strategies and placemaking, and
- C. Community supports in Chinatown.

The short-term actions identified in the Action Plan are an initial set of immediately implementable actions responding most directly to the November 2022 Council direction. There are further options that are being explored to support the economic and community vitality of Chinatown (e.g., Park Board activation and operations initiatives, strategies for public space activation and beautification, sanitation needs, further social supports, etc.). Staff will report back on options in Q4 2023

The execution of the Action Plan will be overseen by the City Manager's Office, and will support collaborative efforts among City departments, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), the Chinatown Business Improvement Association (BIA), the Chinese Community Policing Centre, and other agencies and community organizations in Chinatown.

Staff are recommending that Council approve in principle the overall approach identified in the Action Plan, which includes both initiatives that are primarily for Chinatown, and also initiatives that apply and provide benefits to Chinatown as well as other Vancouver neighbourhoods facing some of the same challenges as Chinatown. Staff are recommending that Council consider the associated funding requests as part of the draft 2023 operating budget for Council deliberation and direction. These costs are identified in Table 1 in Appendix A. Implementing initiatives

identified in the Action Plan that require incremental funding implications would be subject to budgetary approval.

Staff are further recommending that Council direct staff to initiate detailed design and implementation planning for the Action Plan initiatives once the 2023 operating budget for the proposed initiatives is approved, targeting implementation in Q2-2023, and to report back to Council in Q4-2023 on progress, outcomes, achievements and next steps associated with the Action Plan.

Key Considerations Regarding the Action Plan:

a. Urgent Actions Alongside a Longer-Term Strategic Approach

The Draft Action Plan proposes immediate actions to address specific urgent needs within Chinatown. These actions are proposed alongside a broader strategic approach that looks towards strategic collaborations with senior levels of government and community organizations to address longer-term needs in Chinatown. This includes cultural heritage, economic development, addressing retail health/vacancies, laneway activation, area planning, single-resident occupancy (SRO) revitalization, and enabling cultural activities.

b. Timelines for Implementation

Implementation of the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan initiatives is contingent on the approval of funding via the 2023 budget. If the Action Plan funding request is approved as part of the overall City budget, implementation will begin in Q2-2023.

c. Pilot and Monitoring Approach

Staff are proposing an intensive, coordinated approach to designing and implementing the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan initiatives. As such, staff are proposing that plan implementation be treated as a series of pilot projects, with monitoring to inform mid-pilot shifts if necessary, and longer-term learnings that could inform an ongoing approach in Chinatown and/or other neighbourhoods. Staff will report back to Council in Q4-2023 on progress, outcomes, achievements and next steps associated with the Action Plan.

d. Precedence and Other Affected Neighbourhoods

Concentrated financial supports for services, initiatives, and community organizations in Chinatown may set expectations among other neighbourhoods, and raise concerns from other neighbourhoods affected by challenges with cleanliness/sanitation and graffiti.

In 2021 and 2022, the City provided one-time funding for cleaning, sanitation and graffiti removal in several neighbourhoods, including:

- Supporting enhanced cleaning and sanitation in downtown, DTES, Gastown, and Strathcona, as well as Chinatown.
- Supporting graffiti removal initiatives across all 22 BIAs in the city.

While the Action Plan focuses on Chinatown, staff feel that it would be important to continue funding these enhanced supports, and these be included in the proposed

budget. The monitoring of these supports and the learnings from the proposed approach in Chinatown will help to inform a future Council decision on this topic.

e. Human Resources

Implementation of the Uplifting Chinatown Plan will require staff time and resources for coordination and expanded or new services and initiatives across City departments and Park Board, and additions to work programs. Where possible, these costs have been included in the draft work plan, and synergies identified to reduce costs; however, once implementation begins, there will be a clearer picture of additional staff requirements. Staff will include this consideration in the report back to Council in Q4-2023 on progress, outcomes, achievements and next steps associated with the Action Plan.

2. Potential By-law Changes

Council directed staff to explore potential by-law changes to remove or waive fines to property owners and businesses who are repeat victims of graffiti.

Background

At the City, the GM, Development, Buildings & Licensing (DBL) is responsible for the regulation of private property, and the GM, Engineering Services is responsible for the regulation of public property.

Graffiti Regulation, Current Practice: The placing of and failure to remove graffiti are violations under the City's Graffiti By-law. These violations are not ticket offences under the Ticket Offences By-law, and therefore DBL's Property-Use Inspectors (PUI) do not issue tickets these violations. The fine and penalty referenced in sections 10 and 11 of the By-law are for the purposes of prosecution, should the City opt to pursue that approach for a court-ordered fine.

Historically, the preferred enforcement approach for graffiti has been to first contact the property owner and ask that they remove it voluntarily. Should this fail, PUIs may serve an Order requiring them to remove graffiti within 10 days of being served this document. If after 10 days voluntary compliance is not successful and the graffiti remains, it may be removed by a contractor hired by the City with the cost of removal charged back to the property owner.

Chargebacks to Businesses for Graffiti Removal: Chargebacks, where the City will charge the property owner for the cost of graffiti removal, are included as a compliance tool under the City's Graffiti By-law. Chargebacks for the removal of graffiti may occur when a property owner fails to remove the graffiti following expiry of the 10-day Order requiring them to do so.

If a property owner defaults in paying the cost of the chargeback, the City may recover the cost as a debt due, or direct that the amount of the cost be added to the real-property tax roll. These chargebacks may be perceived as fines or penalties by business owners. Since 2019, there have only been two instances of the City requiring a chargeback for graffiti in Chinatown.

Under the Solid Waste By-law, Engineering Services requires that hauler and user information be displayed on commercial waste containers which are stored in laneways. This identification is necessary so that Street Use Inspectors (SUI) can ensure that the container is legitimately licensed to be on public property, and to facilitate contact with the responsible parties in case of any container issues (e.g. overflowing waste, unlocked container, etc.).

If the labelling has been obscured by graffiti, Engineering SUIs may issue a container notice, and if the issue is not addressed, an Order to rectify the deficiency. When a Notice or Order is issued, haulers have historically switched the container for a new one or painted over the graffiti. Some waste haulers will charge the business a fee for this service, dependent upon their contract with the business.

While there is no actual fee or fine being issued by the City in this case, it is possible that the hauler chargeback could be interpreted as the City indirectly fining them for graffiti. While SUIs do have the ability to issue a ticket for failing to display hauler or user information, the City's solid waste enforcement approach first seeks compliance through outreach and education. There have been five cases noting obscured hauler/user information on commercial containers in Chinatown since 2019, and all were resolved through education.

Proposed Approach

Staff do not recommend by-law changes to the Graffiti, Solid Waste and Ticket Offences by-laws to remove or waive fines to property owners and businesses, as by-laws apply citywide, and there may be unintended consequences for other areas of the city. The City has discretion on the enforcement approach for its by-laws. Since the onset of pandemic in 2020, DBL has acknowledged the burden that graffiti removal places on property owners in Downtown and Chinatown, as such, graffiti enforcement actions have only been taken for the removal of obscene and offensive content.

Rather than proposing any by-law amendments at this time, staff is instead recommending implementing a set of graffiti removal strategies and initiatives that have been included in the Action Plan, while continuing for the time being with discretionary non-enforcement of existing by-laws Downtown and in Chinatown.

As Chinatown has been subject to repeated incidents of hateful and racist graffiti, staff recommend strengthening support for graffiti abatement and removal on private property. Staff will monitor the outcomes of this approach and include these findings in the Q4-2023 report back to Council on Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan progress.

3. Update on Neighbourhood Parking Policies and Practices

Over the past two years, staff have undertaken various initiatives in Chinatown regarding pick-up, deliveries and parking, in response to Council resolutions. These are summarized below:

- **Pay Stations:** In early 2022, aging parking meters in Chinatown were replaced with pay stations to provide improved reliability for customers as well as to enable payment by credit card. A unique feature of these pay stations is that they offer service in both English and Traditional Chinese, to help improve accessibility for the community.
- **On-Street Meter Parking Rates:** Initial consultation was conducted in Summer 2022 with the Chinatown BIA to consider changes to parking meter rates during non-peak hours. Further engagement is needed to confirm final recommendations, which will be included in the report back to Council from the GM, Engineering Services, planned for the end of Q1-2023.
- **Chinatown Plaza Parkade:** To support the economic recovery of Chinatown during the pandemic, EasyPark adjusted parking rates in Spring 2021 to include free parking for the third hour in the Chinatown Plaza Parkade. Feedback from the Chinatown BIA suggested that the rate structure was complicated, so staff will be conducting further

engagement with the community and EasyPark to simplify parking rates and encourage customers to make use of the parkade.

- **Loading Zones:** Loading zones allow both private and commercial vehicles to stop for up to 30 minutes to load and unload passengers and materials. To help build awareness on how these zones can be used, staff have created Room To Load signage with Chinese translation that will be installed at all existing loading zones in Chinatown. Additional zones can be installed upon request.

Staff will be conducting further engagement to confirm recommendations for on- and off-street parking rates. These recommendations will be provided to Council by end of Q1-2023.

4. A Satellite City Office in Chinatown

Staff are in the midst of securing a space for a satellite City office in Chinatown, and have identified three potential locations within the City-owned Chinatown Plaza at 180 Keefer Street to establish a satellite City office in Chinatown:

- Two 2nd floor office units – ranging from approximately 1,200 to 1,600 sq.ft.;
- 112 Keefer Street – street fronting retail space (approximately 1,200 sq.ft.).

Some tenant upgrades may be required, subject to a site visit and final decision by Mayor and Council in early 2023. Costs related to tenant upgrades or foregone revenue for the space are not included in the draft Action Plan,

There will be costs associated with staffing the satellite office; the Action Plan identifies staffing resources that could support the activation of the space, while also providing coordination and engagement opportunities in support of the Action Plan. These costs are included in the Action Plan funding under the Project Structure section.

Financial Implications

Staff are recommending that the \$2,160,000 of incremental operating costs associated with the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan contained in Appendix A of this report be included for Council's consideration in the 2023 budget. None of these costs have been included in the draft 2023 operating budget that was presented to Council in Q4-2022. If approved, the costs presented in this report would be funded from property tax, either through reallocation of funding within the budget or increases to property tax.

The property tax increase identified in the Draft Current State Budget presented to Council in December 2022 was 5%. If the initiatives identified in this report are approved, the property tax impact would be an additional 0.2% and/or funding would need to be reallocated from other property tax funded budget areas.

The financial implications of the proposed satellite City office in Chinatown outlined in the draft Action Plan are as follows: the sites under consideration are owned by the Property Endowment Fund, and foregone revenue estimated to be approximately \$50,000 annually would be factored in to the annual PEF dividend to the operating fund. Tenant improvement costs would be determined after a site is selected. A decision on tenant improvement funding would come separately through the capital budget adjustment process and would require a funding tradeoff against other renewal capital projects within the Capital Plan.

Detailed information on estimated 2023 costs associated with current service levels, proposed expanded, and/or new services and programs is included in Appendix A.

As the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan is proposed to run as a pilot project, staff will also return to Council prior to the end of 2023 with an update report on progress, outcomes, achievements and next steps.

Legal Implications

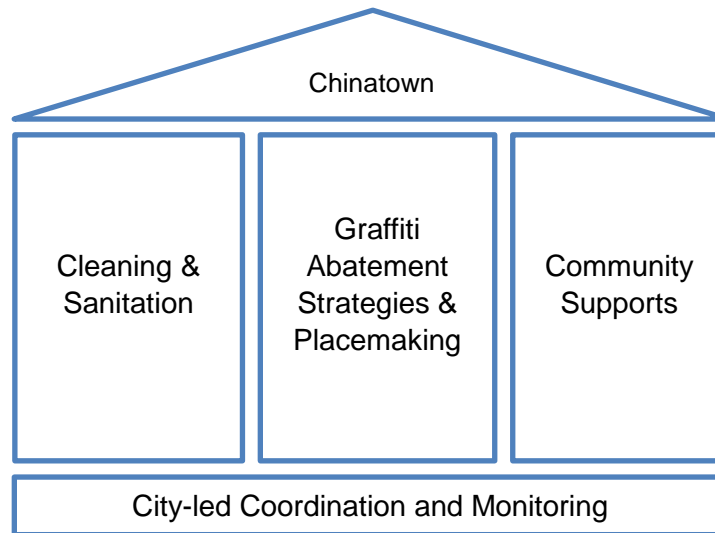
The City is not obligated to enforce all by-law violations in all circumstances, The proposed plan is lawful and is based, in part, on discretionary enforcement.

* * * * *

APPENDIX A DRAFT UPLIFTING CHINATOWN ACTION PLAN

Purpose

The Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan focuses on delivering a clean, well-maintained, and safe and supportive Chinatown for residents, businesses, and community organizations. The Action Plan is built on City-led coordination and monitoring of three work streams: cleaning and sanitation, graffiti removal and placemaking, and community supports in Chinatown.



The City Manager's Office will lead and coordinate implementation of the Action Plan in partnership with City departments, Vancouver Police Department (VPD), the Chinatown Business Improvement Association (BIA), the Chinese Community Policing Centre, and other agencies and community organizations in Chinatown. Key goals and outcomes of the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan include:

1. Establishing a cohesive and coordinated approach to better address urgent on-the-ground needs, linked to longer-term supports for Chinatown;
2. Improve the public realm environment in Chinatown;
3. Establishing measures of success, data collection, and metrics to understand the impacts of City-led and community-led actions and initiatives in the draft plan; and
4. Monitoring and providing support to community organizations working in partnership with the City, to ensure that initiatives are able to provide maximum on-the-ground impact.

The Action Plan for Year 1 proposes immediate actions. Staff will return to Council in Q4 2023 with an update report on progress, outcomes, and next steps, including other potential actions informed by the learnings of the early implementation and further engagement with the community.

These short-term actions support longer-term needs in Chinatown, including cultural heritage economic development, addressing retail health and vacancies, laneway activation, area planning, SRO revitalization, and enabling cultural activities. The City will continue to engage with Chinatown and other partners on addressing these longer-term needs.

Action Plan Overview

Table 1 summarizes proposed Action Plan initiatives and associated incremental City of Vancouver 2023 costs that have not been included in the current Draft 2023 Operating Budget, with details in the following pages. The costs include both Chinatown specific initiatives and initiatives that benefit both Chinatown and other affected neighbourhoods.

		Chinatown-Specific Initiatives	Broader DTES/City and Chinatown	Total
Project Support and Coordination				
1	Chinatown Satellite City office (staffing resources for 6 months) Additional costs associated with the Chinatown Satellite City office are noted in the financial impacts section.	\$110,000		
Total, Project Support		\$110,000		\$110,000
A. Pillar 1 – Cleaning and Sanitation				
A1	Expand Feces Collection Pilot Program to provide additional proactive servicing	\$80,000		
A2	Increase Micro-Cleaning Program from 9 to 13 times per week in Chinatown.	\$120,000		
A3	Additional Litter Cans (15)	\$65,000		
A4	Neighbourhood Clean-Up Program	\$125,000		
A5	Enhanced Day-Time Cleaning and Feces Collection		\$670,000	
A6	Increased Access to Public Washrooms		\$280,000	
Total, Pillar 1 – Cleaning and Sanitation		\$390,000	\$950,000	\$1,340,000
B. Pillar 2 – Graffiti Abatement Strategies and Placemaking				
B1	Graffiti Removal on Public Property and Free Paint Program (for Private Property Owners)	\$0	\$0	
B2	Graffiti removal and abatement enhancement for private property	\$150,000		
B3	Volunteer graffiti removal program via Chinese Community Policing Centre	\$10,000		
B4	Funding to maintain current mural program.	\$0	\$0	
B5	Permitting tools to support public realm use	\$0	\$0	
B6	Graffiti prevention and abatement grants to all 22 BIAs, including \$50,000 for Chinatown BIA		\$500,000	
Total, Pillar 2 – Graffiti Abatement Strategies and Placemaking		\$160,000	\$500,000	\$660,000
C. Pillar 3 – Community Supports				
C1	Social Policy and Renters Services grants	\$0		
C2	Safewalk program development and implementation with Chinatown BIA	\$50,000		
C3	Chinatown Community Stewards Program Continuation	\$0		
Total, Pillar 3 – Community Supports		\$50,000		\$50,000
Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan, Total 2023		\$710,000	\$1,450,000	\$2,160,000

The Foundation: A City-led Coordinated and Responsive Approach with Local Engagement

A key issue that has been raised by stakeholders is the need for a coordinated, responsive, and collaborative approach to address the challenges in Chinatown. Taking a “whole-city” approach, the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan will be coordinated by the City Manager’s Office in collaboration with staff from across City and Park Board departments and with community partners.

The Plan will also include staff support at the satellite City office in Chinatown in order to enhance local coordination, responsiveness, and support a community-engaged approach, as well as staff the office. These roles will work in collaboration with staff in City departments to provide on-the-ground knowledge to support coordination, advance and shape short-term actions identified in the action plan, and ensure that community feedback is incorporated into the City’s coordination as the work evolves. The project will work closely with 3-1-1 to ensure that frontline service and initiatives in the Action Plan are responsive to requests submitted to 3-1-1 or through the Van 311 app.

The table below provides the incremental costs which are not included in the current Draft 2023 City Budget.

Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan – Project Structure	Proposed Incremental 2023 Costs	Notes
City Manager’s Office: overall coordination.	\$0	Uses existing staffing
Local coordination, including community engagement and dedicated staffing at the Satellite City office in Chinatown (2 FTE). These staff will also support the activation of the Satellite City office.	\$110,000	Given timelines for office space and hiring, assuming only 6 months in 2023 budget. The annualised cost associated with this would be \$220,000.

The desired outcome for this work is enhanced coordination and engagement in Chinatown.

The primary measure of this will be:

1. Process Measure: Effectiveness of coordination process (partner feedback).

The Three Pillars

The Draft Action Plan proposes continued delivery of existing work, and identifies expanded or new initiatives across City-delivered services and community-led initiatives. Actions are grouped into three work streams:

- A. Cleaning and sanitation;
- B. Graffiti abatement strategies and placemaking; and
- C. Community supports.

A coordinated approach to these issues will address Chinatown’s most urgent needs. This model will not only provide Chinatown residents, businesses, cultural and non-profit organizations with immediate support, but also provide the City with an on-the-ground understanding of impacts and community interests to better support long-term actions and visions for Chinatown. This section will outline the current, expanded and new initiatives proposed for each of the pillars.

A. Cleaning and Sanitation

Chinatown's streets, alleys, sidewalks, and parks experience a high volume of litter and garbage that negatively affects businesses, residents, and cultural organizations.

Current City and Park Board Services and Initiatives

The City's sanitation services operate 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Regular sanitation servicing includes nightly street sweeping, lane cleaning and flushing, abandoned garbage removal, emptying waste receptacles, and general litter collection. Daily micro-cleaning services (using brooms, shovels, wheeled garbage buckets) for collection of litter and needles, supplements work done by City crews. Up until the end of November 2022, over 5,100 bags of litter and over 24,000 needles were collected through this year's micro-cleaning program in Chinatown.

In each of 2021 and 2022, Council approved \$670,000 one-time funding for enhanced daytime City sanitation servicing in the DTES area, including Chinatown. This also includes a Feces Collection Pilot Program, where a team from Mission Possible responds to incidences of feces on City property in Chinatown, as well as a portion of the downtown, DTES, Gastown, and Strathcona.

Engineering Services also operate a volunteer litter collection program called Neighbourhood Cleanup Parties. The City provides volunteers with necessary materials (garbage bags, gloves other cleanup tools) and coordinates pick-up of litter following the cleanup. In 2022, the City has partnered with individuals, local businesses and organizations to support 10 Neighbourhood Cleanup Party events in Chinatown with over 500 participants.

Park Board is focused on providing safe and clean park spaces. Operations workers provide litter and needle pickup at public parks within and near Chinatown, including the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, the adjacent public courtyard, Andy Livingstone Park, and Pioneer Place (Pigeon Park) nearby.

Outcomes and Metrics

The primary desired outcome of this work stream is a significant improvement in the cleanliness of the street environment in Chinatown. The metrics that will be used to monitor this pillar include:

1. Activity Measures: Service levels, including community-led initiatives; response times;
2. Output Measures: Measures of collected items (bags of litter, needles, feces); and
3. Outcome Measures: Perception of cleanliness by key stakeholders, residents, businesses, and community organizations in Chinatown.

Proposed Action Plan Approach

The Action Plan's approach to cleaning and sanitation in Chinatown is a combination of City-delivered services, services supported through contractors, Street Cleaning grants to non-profit organizations, and collaborations with the community.

Maintaining the current enhanced City-delivered cleaning services in Chinatown and the DTES area more broadly provides a critical base for the work in Chinatown, while also supporting surrounding neighbourhoods facing similar challenges.

In addition, several expanded and new initiatives will be implemented during the first year of the Plan, to improve the level of cleanliness and to test complementary approaches that will inform longer-term programming in Chinatown, and potentially other affected areas.

The tables below outlines the activities identified by staff, and in consultation with the Chinatown BIA and other Chinatown stakeholders, as priority approaches that can be quickly implemented, and identify incremental costs not included in the current Draft 2023 Operating Budget.

Chinatown-Specific Initiatives

	ACTION	Proposed Incremental 2023 Costs	Notes
A1	Expand the Feces Collection Pilot Program to provide 5 day/week proactive servicing in Chinatown. Current Feces Collection Pilot provides one day/week proactive servicing, and four days/week responsive servicing.	\$80,000	Builds off enhanced cleaning services for DTES as identified in table below.
A2	Increase micro-cleaning from 9 to 13 times per week in Chinatown	\$120,000	Builds off enhanced cleaning services for DTES as identified in table below.
A3	Add an additional 15 larger capacity, more secure litter cans in Chinatown, including costs for servicing.	\$65,000	Staff will consult with stakeholders on locations alongside other site considerations.
A4	Continue supporting Neighbourhood Cleanup Parties Program in Chinatown and expand to monthly events, where community organizations lead litter cleanup events.	\$125,000	
	Continuation of the Chinatown Community Stewards Program, where Stewards act as liaisons for businesses and residents, and duties include needle/litter pickup.	<i>Included elsewhere in Action Plan</i>	.
	TOTAL	\$390,000	

Initiatives with Benefits for Chinatown and other Neighbourhoods

Maintaining the current enhanced City-delivered cleaning services in Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside (DTES) area more broadly provides a critical base for the work in Chinatown, while also supporting surrounding neighbourhoods facing similar challenges. The table below identifies incremental costs for these initiatives which are not included in the current Draft 2023 City Budget.

	ACTION	Proposed Incremental 2023 Costs	Notes
A5	Continuation of funding to maintain enhanced City-delivered daytime service levels plus existing feces collection pilot program (includes DTES and surrounding BIAs: Chinatown, Gastown, Yaletown, Hastings Crossing, Strathcona, and Downtown Vancouver).	\$670,000	Same level as 2022 one-time funding; Enhanced cleaning funded through this is a required foundation for

			the additional cleaning in Chinatown.
A6	Increase access to public washrooms in the DTES area, through 24/7 access to the comfort station at Main and Hastings. Currently there are no 24/7 public washrooms available in the neighbourhood. This will help with the issues of feces in Chinatown while also providing benefits to the DTES.	\$280,000	Base funding (\$465,000) included in the 2023 Draft Budget. Brings total to \$745,000.
	TOTAL	\$950,000	

B. Graffiti Abatement Strategies and Placemaking

Chinatown has been heavily impacted by graffiti, damaged murals, defaced statues, and offensive and racist graffiti. Graffiti generates community concern because of its impact on businesses, residents, and community organizations.

Current City and Park Board Services and Initiatives

Approaches to graffiti removal and abatement are dependent on whether graffiti is identified on public or private property.

Public Property: The City has a multi-year contract with Goodbye Graffiti for the abatement and removal of graffiti on City buildings, property and infrastructure city-wide. The process for addressing graffiti on public property includes:

- Graffiti reported via 3-1-1 is prioritized and addressed in 3-5 business days;
- The whole city is patrolled on a route schedule with most graffiti addressed in 7-10 business days;
- Prioritizes racist and hate graffiti on both private and public property within 24 hours – often on site within 4 hours. Racist and hate graffiti needs to be first reported to VPD and then removal is prioritized once the incident has been investigated and evidence collected.
- Staff are currently working with BC Hydro to establish a pilot to address graffiti on Hydro assets in Chinatown.

The City currently has an Integrated Graffiti Management Program (IGMP) that provides strategic direction and programs to manage graffiti on public property. IGMP includes a mural and art wrap programs, which support artists, property owners, and community groups to create murals on private and public property. The most recent mural call for Chinatown was in 2019, and a number of murals are slated to be installed in Chinatown in Summer 2023. Staff are currently working with stakeholders to develop a graffiti wall pilot, which explores a sanctioned graffiti zone that encourages graffiti in an alley off Pender Street, to provide a site for graffiti and reduce impact on other locations in Chinatown.

Private Property: In general, the City utilizes its Graffiti By-law and partnerships to address graffiti on private property. These partnerships include the free paint program, which provides property occupants with up to two gallons of paint in a calendar year to assist with graffiti removal. The Graffiti By-law enables enforcement actions to reduce graffiti and ranges from voluntary compliance and public education to the enlisting of a contractor to remove graffiti at the property owner's expense. By-law enforcement for graffiti on private property is complaint-based. Since the onset of pandemic in 2020, the City has acknowledged the burden that graffiti removal places on property owners in Chinatown, as such, graffiti enforcement actions have only been taken for the removal of obscene and offensive content.

The City provides grants dispersed directly to BIAs to provide additional financial assistance to help reduce graffiti. The Chinatown BIA received \$50,000 in 2021 and \$50,000 in 2022. In 2020-2021, the Chinatown Transformation Team provided approximately \$63,000 in additional top-up funding to support the Chinatown BIA with pandemic-related increases in graffiti. In total, the

Chinatown BIA has received \$163,000 from the City to support graffiti abatement on private property from 2020 to 2022.

Park Board: Park Board operations staff also remove graffiti, and the Park Board Activation Team creates and maintains safe urban park spaces for use and placemaking through recreation, art, culture and social activities at public parks.

Outcomes and Metrics

The primary desired outcomes of this work stream are significant improvements in the level of graffiti in Chinatown, as well as enhanced beautification of the public realm. The initiatives in this area are broadly grouped into two areas, with related desired metrics:

Metrics that will be used to monitor the **graffiti removal approach** are:

1. Process Measures: Effectiveness of coordination process (partner feedback);
2. Activity Measures: Service levels and response times for removal;
3. Output Measures: Number of graffiti incidents addressed; and
4. Outcome Measure: Level of graffiti in Chinatown; perception of graffiti by key stakeholders in Chinatown

Metrics that will be used to monitor the **placemaking approaches** are:

1. Process Measures: Number of partnerships created; stakeholder and broader community engagement levels;
2. Output Measures: Number of placemaking activities funded and implemented and their deliverables; and
3. Outcome Measures: Perception of impact of placemaking initiatives.

Proposed Action Plan Approach

In order to provide a comprehensive and effective response, addressing graffiti in Chinatown requires strong collaboration and coordination between the City and community organizations, as different organizations have different funding for different locations (e.g. City for public property and City-owned assets, BIA for private property). The City will play a strong role in coordinating this work.

Placemaking initiatives such as laneway activation, public space programming, and beautification are community-led, and require community relationships, collaboration models, and resources so that community organizations and businesses can lead, design, and implement placemaking activities and activate public space.

The Action Plan envisions partnership models where City-delivered services address graffiti in the public realm and provide a foundation to support community-led graffiti removal, abatement, and beautification. One key area of the focus will be coordinating work processes to support prompt and continuous graffiti removal and increased public awareness of resources and initiatives in the Plan to support capacity-building.

Given the significant number of anti-Asian racism incidences that have impacted Chinatown's sense of well-being, residents, community members, and business owners will be encouraged

to report hateful and racist graffiti to the VPD. These incidents will be investigated and evidence captured by an investigator before they are removed.

Maintaining current City programs and services for graffiti abatement and removal are necessary to ensure continued expected service delivery in Chinatown, as well as a base level of support for other BIAs across the city who received supplemental funding in 2022. In addition, several expanded and new initiatives will be implemented to support community organizations in leading placemaking and public space initiatives.

The tables below outlines actions identified by staff, in consultation with key community stakeholders, as priority actions to rapidly address graffiti, and identifies incremental costs for these initiatives which are not included in the current Draft 2023 City Budget.

Chinatown-specific Initiatives

	ACTION	Proposed Incremental 2023 Costs	Notes
Rapid Graffiti Removal Response			
B1	Maintaining existing City-delivered services, including: the removal of graffiti on public property and the free paint program to support private property owners to remove graffiti; and graffiti by-law compliance.	\$0	Funding already included in 2023 Draft City Budget.
B2	Strengthen support for graffiti abatement and removal in Chinatown, including on private property. This may include: exploring successful models such as the Downtown BIA's Clean Team, increasing funds for free paint and graffiti removal (including on upper facades), costs associated with graffiti removal on heritage buildings.	\$150,000	An additional \$50,000 would be available for Chinatown from the general BIA graffiti funding identified below, for a total of \$200,000
B3	Support to the Chinese Community Policing Centre to continue and expand volunteer graffiti removal program.	\$10,000	Matches a grant from the Vancouver Police Foundation.
	City-led coordination of Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan, including staff resources for local coordination and engagement.	<i>Included elsewhere in Action Plan.</i>	Dedicated staffing resource located at satellite City office.
Placemaking			
B4	Funding to maintain current mural program.	\$0	Included in 2023 Draft City of Vancouver operating budget.
B5	Other permitting tools to support businesses and residents to use the public realm (e.g. patios, special events, community programming, merchandise displays, etc.)	\$0	Included in 2023 Draft City of Vancouver operating budget.
	TOTAL	\$160,000	

Initiatives with Benefits for Chinatown and other Neighbourhoods

The Action Plan also includes funding requests that would have benefits to Chinatown as well as other neighbourhoods. As discussed above, the City has provided supplemental funding of \$500,000 to all 22 BIAs to address graffiti issues in 2021 and 2022, including \$50,000 to the

Chinatown BIA in each year. Given the ongoing challenges across the City related to graffiti, staff are recommending continuation of this funding which would have benefits across the City, while providing additional funding to Chinatown. The table below identifies incremental costs for this initiative which are not included in the current Draft 2023 City Budget.

	ACTION	Proposed Incremental 2023 Costs	Notes
B6	Continuation of graffiti prevention and abatement grants to all 22 BIAs to cover graffiti removal costs on public and private property.	\$500,000	Continuation of 2022 funding; Chinatown would receive \$50k from this funding.

C. Community Supports

In recent years, Chinatown has experienced significant challenges including but not limited to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of anti-Asian racism, and incidences of violence. Chinatown continues to experience ongoing safety concerns that impact small businesses, residents, and cultural organizations. At this time, there are no Safewalk programs offered by community organizations in Chinatown that provide support to individuals who may require or request accompaniment to their desired location.

Current City and Park Board Initiatives and Services

The City provides programs that support direct community outreach in Chinatown and the broader DTES area.

Operated by Arts, Culture, and Community Services (ACCS), the Carnegie Community Centre provides social, educational, cultural, and recreational activities on-site. The Centre, often referred to as the living room of the Downtown Eastside, operates programs that serve low-income people in the neighbourhood, including Chinese-speaking seniors.

The Chinatown Community Stewards Program is an employment program operated by EMBERS Eastside Works that hires DTES community members to act as stewards for Chinatown. Stewards duties include acting as liaisons to support businesses, needle/litter pickup, de-escalation, and providing information on resources for those experiencing homelessness.

The City also provides grants to support non-profit organizations who provide services in Chinatown and the DTES. Many Chinese-speaking seniors living in Chinatown, Strathcona, and the DTES are low-income, face systemic and language barriers to accessing services, and many live in unsecured and inadequate housing. In 2022, Social Policy and Renters Services provided \$216,000 in grants for seniors programs in Chinatown and the DTES:

- **DTES Neighbourhood House (\$10,000):** Supports development of a network of non-profit organizations that provide services directly to Chinese-speaking seniors. Network members include: DTES Neighbourhood House, Carnegie Centre, Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice, Vancouver Second Mile Society, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, the DTES SRO Collaborative, and MOSAIC.
- **Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice (\$45,000):** Supports low-income immigrant seniors in Chinatown and the DTES by providing direct multilingual supports to seniors through service provision (e.g. vaccination clinics, translation support), grocery delivery program, medical accompaniment, casework support, and operating a Chinese seniors hub. Grant supports organization operations.
- **Vancouver Second Mile Society (\$34,000):** Supports Chinese-speaking seniors residing in Chinatown, DTES, and Strathcona through programs such as door-to-door visit, educational workshops, social and recreational activities, and language support and referrals. VSMS receives one grant, of which a portion is allocated towards the Chinese Seniors Outreach Program.
- **DTES SRO Collaboration (\$75,000):** Supports Chinese-speaking seniors living in SROs in Chinatown and the DTES, with the goal of improving habitability, safety and housing security in privately-owned SROs.

- **Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre (\$52,000):** Grant directly supports the Chinese Seniors Outreach Program, which offers community building, isolation supports, translations, institution and document navigation, transportation to appointments, Community Kitchen Program, and advocacy. This is one of the few DEWC programs funded through grants.

The Park Board also facilitates safe parks and supports placemaking through Park Rangers, who support events and activities in public parks, including providing information, working with other agencies including VPD and Fire and Rescue, connecting individuals with support services, and responding to park concerns.

Outcomes and Metrics

The primary desired outcome of this work stream is a significant improvement in the perception of safety in the neighbourhood, and the coordination of services to support seniors in Chinatown. The type of metrics that will be used to monitor this pillar:

1. Activity/Output Measures: Service level/usage of Safewalk program; Community Stewards service levels and activities;
2. Outcome Measures: Effectiveness of each initiative with specific metrics; perception of safety and levels of support services by key stakeholders, businesses, and residents (in particular, seniors).

Approach

The proposed approach for community supports in Chinatown emphasize continuation of existing programs that provide supports to people in Chinatown, while introducing a new Safewalk program to provide support to individuals who may require or request accompaniment to their desired location.

Maintaining the current level of grants support for non-profit organizations and services is critical to ensure that existing levels of supports and services continue to be accessible in the area. Community outreach and supports for seniors in Chinatown rely heavily on non-profit organizations that provide direct services and outreach programs. The table below identifies the proposed approach, and costs for the safewalk program which is not included in the current Draft 2023 City Budget.

	ACTION	Proposed Incremental 2023 Costs	Notes
C1	Maintaining existing level of Social Policy & Renters Services grants to continue current supports for services in Chinatown, including seniors programs.	\$0	Included in the City's 2023 Draft Operating Budget
C2	Support the Chinatown BIA to develop and implement a safewalk program.	\$50,000	
C3	Continuation of the Chinatown Community Stewards Program, where Stewards act as liaisons for businesses and residents, and duties include de-escalation and providing resources to those experiencing homelessness.	\$0	Funded through other sources
	TOTAL	\$50,000	

Looking Forward

The actions identified in the Uplifting Chinatown Action Plan are implementable in the short-term, and will begin to address some of the challenges facing Chinatown while also providing supports to the broader community.

If approved through the budget process, staff will monitor the implementation and continue to engage with the community to identify if there are modifications to existing approaches or new approaches that could be taken to address these challenges. Staff will report back to Council in Q4-2023 on progress, outcomes, achievements and next steps associated with the Action Plan.

The actions identified in the Uplifting Chinatown Plan will support Chinatown priorities in other plans adopted by City Council, where work is already underway. These plans focus on supporting Chinatown's long-term cultural heritage economic development, intangible heritage, arts and culture, social and cultural infrastructure, as well as area planning in Chinatown, Strathcona, and the DTES. These plans include:

- [Vancouver Chinatown Cultural Heritage Assets Management Plan Strategic Framework](#);
- [Northeast False Creek Plan](#);
- [Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan](#);
- [Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture](#) and related [Making Space for Arts and Culture](#) and [Vancouver Music Strategy](#);
- [Spaces to Thrive: Vancouver's Social Infrastructure Strategy](#);
- [Healthy City Strategy](#).
- SRO Revitalization Strategy (in development)

Staff will continue to engage with Chinatown on these strategies in order to support the long-term success and vitality of Chinatown.

APPENDIX B
URGENT MEASURES TO UPLIFT VANCOUVER'S CHINATOWN (MEMBER'S MOTION B.3)

FINAL RESOLUTION AS APPROVED

10. Urgent Measures to Uplift Vancouver's Chinatown (Member's Motion B.3)

WHEREAS

1. Vancouver's Chinatown is a cultural gem and holds an irreplaceable place in the fabric of our city and in the hearts and minds of Vancouver residents;
2. Historically, Vancouver's Chinatown community was established before the city was even incorporated and is considered to be the largest Chinatown in Canada. It has been a designated National Historic Site since June 2010;
3. Symbolic of the resilience and strength of Chinatown and Chinese Canadians in the face of adversity, are the 20th century's two world wars where Chinese Canadians fought for a country where they could not vote, where they had been the target of race riots spurred by anti-Asian sentiment, and been subjected to discriminatory policies from all three levels of government including: the Chinese head tax, a freeway plan that would have paved over Chinatown, and even a federal order to ban the sale of delectable Chinese barbecued meats;
4. In April 2018, Vancouver City Council officially apologized to the Chinese Canadian community, recognizing the historical discrimination against Chinese People in Vancouver, and committed to conserving, commemorating, and enhancing the living heritage and cultural assets of the community;
5. In recent years, Vancouver's Chinatown has been hit by – and struggled with – challenges ranging from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to ongoing anti-Asian hate in the city. Anti-Asian hate crime incidents saw a 400 percent increase from 2018 to 2022 YTD, with violent assaults and random attacks on local seniors, ongoing safety concerns, and increasing graffiti and vandalism impacting small businesses, cultural organizations, and institutions;
6. According to a preliminary report to Council by City staff, vacancy rates have increased in Chinatown by 23.7 percent compared to pre-pandemic levels, hitting 17 percent relative to the Vancouver citywide average of 10 percent. Broken windows are common, and nuisance and damaging graffiti are now a constant that shopkeepers and building owners cannot keep up with (yet many were further challenged by punitive City by-laws that levy fines if graffiti is not removed quickly enough);
7. The economic survival and vibrancy of the Chinatown community is being hindered by these issues that are not being suitably addressed, and the impacts are being felt by area residents, small businesses, cultural organizations, locals, and visitors alike;
8. Without immediate action, more than 700 small businesses and arts and culture organizations that operate in Chinatown are very much at risk. Many are culturally relevant or legacy businesses, such as the community hub Goldstone Bakery and Restaurant which recently closed after 30+ years of operation. The character and the customs of these businesses that could soon be lost forever are what make Chinatown

what it is. Collectively they comprise the unique, intangible qualities and living cultural heritage upon which the contemplated UNESCO World Heritage Site designation hinges;

9. Recently, the Vancouver Police Foundation supported a visit of representatives and community leaders to San Francisco's Chinatown in order to learn firsthand how this historic neighbourhood had overcome similar challenges to those faced by Vancouver's Chinatown. City of Vancouver staff were invited to be part of that initiative. The findings the delegation identified highlighted the fact that the success in addressing the problems of San Francisco's Chinatown was built on strong partnerships between local community groups, the San Francisco police department, and the City of San Francisco Public Works department, as well as through the establishment of clearly defined programs, communications protocols, and resource allocation;
10. Specifically, San Francisco set about tackling issues in their Chinatown through a multi-pronged approach including:
 - Alley beautification
 - Graffiti response & mural programs
 - Clean-up efforts
 - Volunteerism and community initiatives
11. Success in San Francisco was achieved by explicitly directing that City sanitation and cleaning resources be stepped up and dedicated to the initiative, including activities such as weekly power washing of sidewalks and alleys, enhanced cleaning and needle pick-up, placemaking through beautification of alleys and art projects with local artists, removal of punitive by-laws that fine businesses for not removing nuisance graffiti quickly enough, shifting to a help-centered approach with a dedicated number to call the City's Public Works for assistance, and volunteer groups that would do patrols and also help with cleanup and other efforts;
12. Vancouver's Chinatown is a cultural gem under siege. Rectifying the situation requires immediate leadership from Vancouver City Hall in partnership with the local community to invest in and support uplifting Chinatown to help return vibrancy to this important neighbourhood.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to report back by the first regular Council meeting in January 2023 with a draft action plan to support urgent measures to uplift Chinatown, including engaging with the VPD and community leaders regarding the San Francisco experience to inform the action plan;

FURTHER THAT the plan to uplift Chinatown shall include, but not be limited to, recommendations for enhanced support from Streets & Engineering including robust street, alley, and sidewalk cleaning, litter and needle pick-up, new graffiti removal strategies, place-making, new murals or local artwork, as well as outreach opportunities that include local community groups in graffiti clean-ups, safe walks, and seniors support.

- B. THAT the above direction to staff in “A” identify the required resources from the 2023 Operating Budget, and that consideration be given to extending the impact of these resources through use of the Community Stewards Program and engagement with the Chinese Policing Centre.
- C. THAT staff report back as soon as possible on potential by-law changes to remove or waive fines to property owners and businesses that are repeat victims of nuisance and damaging graffiti.
- D. THAT Council direct staff to establish a satellite City office in Chinatown, such as within the City-owned Chinatown Plaza, or within another City-owned property or reasonable alternative, to provide Mayor and Council with the ability to work from the space and meet with community members as desired.
- E. THAT staff report back on possible changes to neighbourhood transportation policies and practices in terms of people and goods movement with specific reference to pickup, delivery, and parking that is supportive of neighbourhood retail activities.