



MOTION ON NOTICE

Creating a Public Square Legacy in Chinatown

MOVER: Commissioner Kirby-Yung

WHEREAS:

1. The courtyard between Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden and Pender Streets is accessible from both Pender Streets and Carrall Streets as well as through the adjacent public garden;
2. This courtyard which is also home to the Chinese Cultural Centre, including the Chinese Canadian Military Museum, has the potential to be a gem that is an anchor for the rich history of this neighbourhood. It serves as the main entrance and access points to both institutions;
3. Unfortunately, the courtyard is plagued with challenges stemming from serious social issues including ongoing sustained vandalism resulting in boarding up the Chinese Cultural Centre entrance, under usage by the public, and fire risks from unauthorized fires and related activity;
4. In an area with such a rich heritage and architecture, the risk of fire cannot be ignored;
5. Various individual solutions have been proposed over time ranging from consideration of the installation of gates to provide security benefits to lighting. For example, a lighting study was completed for Cultural Services at the City of Vancouver by historian John Atkin. However, despite some funding allocation to the Chinese Cultural Centre, this did not result in a successful implementation of lighting. Similarly, installation of gates was proposed in the past by the local Vancouver Police Community Policing Centre and has recently been under consideration by Vancouver Park Board staff. These might present some security benefits but they could also result in the creation of additional security hazards to the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden as well as other related issues;
6. Vancouver-based renowned architect James K.M. Cheng was commissioned for the Chinese Cultural Centre in 1978. The original exterior design in today's environment poses challenges as, in conjunction with the courtyard design, it creates dead zones and impedes visual sightlines;
7. The City of Vancouver has been placing priority on revitalization of public squares, such as the recent renovation of the Vancouver Art Gallery main plaza recognizing the role they can play in providing community hubs and serving as activity and gathering spaces;
8. In addition to broad design strategies and security considerations, animation of this space as a true public square would provide a meaningful legacy for the community;
9. There are a number of existing community organizations that Park Board and the City could partner with to activate the space ranging from and not limited to the



Chinatown Night Market to the Hua Foundation and Vancouver Farmers Markets (to address food rising food security issues in the neighbourhood) and create a social hub;

10. At the November 1, 2017 Standing Committee of Council on Policy and Strategic Priorities, City Council unanimously approved the Report titled: "Historical Discrimination Against Chinese People in Vancouver" including the following key actions:
 - i. Initiating a process towards a UNESCO designation of World Heritage Site for Chinatown Adoption of the "Preliminary Research on Historical Discrimination Against Chinese People in Vancouver" report that provides context and background for the initiative;
 - ii. Creating a Chinatown Living Heritage & Cultural Assets Management Plan to support the UNESCO process; and
11. A Conservation & Upgrade Assessment for the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden report is being led by Real Estate & Facilities Management for the long-term needs of the Garden with completion expected in Summer 2018.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation ask the City of Vancouver to explore the opportunity to work on a redesign of the courtyard between Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden and Pender Streets with the goal of creating a true Public Square in this historically rich and priceless neighbourhood and support the UNESCO work with the engagement of key stakeholders;
- B. THAT such a project be broad-based including exterior architecture review, potential for light and/or art installations and other design strategies that would open the plaza more fully to the public and encourage broader usage;
- C. THAT consideration be given to involvement of the original Chinese Cultural Centre architect and opportunities for his support of such a project;
- D. THAT the Vancouver Park Board recommend an initial step of a high-level feasibility review with a report back to the City and Park Board on early findings; and
- E. THAT the Vancouver Park Board explore opportunities in partnership with the City of Vancouver, Sun Yat-Sen Garden, Chinese Cultural Centre, and local community organizations and stakeholders to identify programming opportunities that would create vitality and animate this important location in this historic neighbourhood.