

## PROGRESS UPDATE

### Capital Investments in Chinatown (A. Sohi)

#### RECOMMENDATION

That the June 15, 2022, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS01152, be received for information.

#### Report Purpose

##### Information only.

To inform Executive Committee on progress in implementing the Chinatown Strategy's recommended capital investments.

#### Previous Council/Committee Action

At the March 9, 2022, Executive Committee meeting, Mayor A. Sohi made the following inquiry:

Can Administration provide an update on progress in implementing the Chinatown Strategy's recommended capital investments including status of the relocation of the Harbin Gate, progress on streetscaping and park improvements, as well as projects that remain to be funded?

#### Executive Summary

- Although the Chinatown Strategy presented to Council in 2018 has not been fully funded to deliver all recommended elements, a number of key projects and opportunities are underway or planned.
- Key projects and opportunities that have been leveraged include the following:
  - Streetscape improvements of residential roads identified in the Chinatown Strategy are being coordinated with the Boyle Street and McCauley Neighbourhood Renewal projects for construction in 2023-2025. These include 98 Street, 99 Street, 100 Street and parts of 105 Avenue.
  - Mary Burlie Park improvement designs are being coordinated with the Boyle Street/McCauley Neighbourhood Renewal project with some elements being included for construction in 2023-2025.
  - The 97 Street Bridge is not owned by the City but is identified in the Chinatown Strategy as an asset that needs to be addressed, with ideas ranging from removal to retention. The

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- approach will be confirmed by the developer of the Station Lands development as it is a privately owned amenity space that will be included in a future phase of development.
- The New Harbin Gate installation will be brought forward in the 2023-2026 budget cycle for consideration of design and delivery with an expected funding source from the Downtown Community Revitalization Levy (CRL).

### **REPORT**

The Chinatown Strategy Implementation and Budget Adjustments Council Report (CR\_4983) was presented to Executive Committee on April 30, 2018, outlining the Chinatown Unfunded Programs and Projects.

As committed in CR\_4983, a separate package for implementation of the Chinatown Strategy was included for consideration in the 2019-2022 budget deliberations. Funding for planning and design of Mary Burlie Park (east of 97 street near 105 Avenue) and delivery of future phases of 105 Avenue was not approved in the 2019-2022 budget cycle. Although dedicated funding was not approved, Administration leveraged opportunities to move forward with projects recommended in the Strategy through approved renewal projects, where feasible. Updates on the four priority capital projects identified in report CR\_4983 are outlined below.

#### **Chinatown Streetscape Improvements**

The Chinatown Strategy identified the focus area between 97 and 101 Streets and 105 and 107 Avenues for streetscape improvements. Major streetscape improvements are generally coordinated with road renewal projects as the most cost-effective way for implementation. The Boyle Street and McCauley Neighbourhood Renewal projects are scheduled for construction from 2023-2025, and include 98 Street, 99 Street, 100 Street, and parts of 105 Avenue.

While most of the roads identified in the Chinatown Strategy are being reconstructed with the Boyle Street and McCauley Neighbourhood Renewal projects, other main arterial roads such as 97 Street and 107 Avenue have different reconstruction schedules. At this time, these roads are not proposed for reconstruction, however, 97 Street is being considered for asphalt resurfacing in the 2023-2026 Capital Budget. Opportunities to help support the implementation of the Chinatown Strategy in the interim have occurred through coordination with stakeholders including:

- New street lighting was installed on 97 Street from the 97 Street Bridge to 107A Avenue in 2020.
- New banners and lanterns were then installed on these poles, during Lunar New Year and Mid Autumn Festivals in 2021 and 2022.

#### **Mary Burlie Park Improvements**

Improvements to Mary Burlie Park are also being coordinated with the Boyle Street and McCauley Neighbourhood Renewal projects for construction in 2023-2025. The project currently includes a new north-south shared pathway to improve connectivity in the area, additional green space and new trees to expand the usable park area, and some tree and shrub removal to improve sight lines. These elements will improve the functionality of the park and address safety concerns. Additional

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placemaking opportunities are able to be accommodated if dedicated capital funding is approved in the future.

### **Harbin Gate**

The original Harbin Gate (102 Avenue) was removed as part of the Valley Line Southeast LRT project and has been stored. The community and Harbin agreed that the new desired location was 97 Street, south of Jasper Avenue, but as the old gate could not span across the road, a new gate was agreed upon. In order to proceed with manufacturing and installation of the new Harbin Gate, Administration is preparing a capital profile for Council's consideration as part of the 2023-2026 Capital Budget, with the recommended funding source from the Downtown Community Revitalization Levy (CRL). The foundations and bases for the new gate were recently constructed as part of the Jasper Avenue New Vision and 97 Street project.

### **97 Street Bridge**

The bridge over 97 Street (located north of 103A Avenue and south of 105 Avenue) is identified in the Chinatown Strategy as an infrastructure asset that needs to be addressed, with ideas ranging from removal to retention. The approach will be confirmed by the developer of the Station Lands development as it is a part of the privately owned amenity space that will be included in a future phase of development.

### **Budget/Financial Implications**

Implementation of the priority capital projects identified in the Chinatown Strategy will require additional investment in future capital budgets. Capital projects costs are being identified and developed for consideration for the 2023-2026 Capital Budget.

## **COMMUNITY INSIGHT**

As the four priority capital projects are in different stages, insight from the community has also varied.

### **Chinatown Streetscape & Mary Burlie Park Improvements**

Community outreach for the Boyle Street and McCauley Neighbourhood Renewal Project was guided by the Building Great Neighbourhoods Public Engagement Charter. This Charter was developed to align with the City's Public Engagement Policy and provides a consistent approach to public engagement for neighbourhood renewal projects. The Charter outlines the impact residents and stakeholders can have on the decisions made for the design.

The community outreach included businesses, service provider organizations and their clientele, adjacent property owners, residents, both community leagues, the Chinatown Transformation Corporation and the Chinatown BIA to share project information and gather input to help shape the neighbourhoods' design. The engagement activities included virtual community conversations and stakeholder meetings, online engagement tools, paper newsletters and feedback surveys sent out via Canada Post to all postal codes in both neighbourhoods, email and phone call interactions. This approach has been applied consistently throughout each engagement phase of

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the project.

In addition to the community outreach, a committee was formed with interested residents and stakeholders to ensure transparency of messaging and reporting back of public input as well as diversity in engagement activities. This committee met quarterly to provide feedback on approaches and materials used for promotion, specifically with a lens to encourage participation from a broad range of community members.

### **Harbin Gate**

Previous mayoral and other diplomatic visits to the City of Harbin reaffirmed the importance of the twinned status and the City of Harbin confirmed support to assist in any rebuilding of the Chinatown Harbin Gate by offering design services. A delegation of Harbin Government officials, urban planners and gate designers visited Edmonton in September 2018 to consider options. The delegation confirmed their support to assist with building the new Harbin Gate based on the original design. They also agreed the new location on 97 Street would give the gate greater prominence and honour the original intentions.

Administration continues to provide updates on the new Harbin Gate project status with the City of Harbin, and they remain committed to help further the design as needed.

### **GBA+**

Two of the priority capital projects are currently under development and have conducted a full GBA+. Once approved, the Harbin Gate Relocation and any capital projects associated with the 97 Street Bridge will include GBA+ considerations.

### **Chinatown Streetscape & Mary Burlie Park Improvements**

GBA+ considerations have informed the designs for both the Boyle Street and McCauley Neighbourhood Renewal projects to ensure that people of diverse backgrounds, ages, and abilities are able to enjoy and access the area and its amenities. Throughout the neighbourhoods, accessibility will be increased with curb ramps, wider sidewalks (where possible) and the inclusion of tactile walking surface indicators along primary walking routes. Pedestrian crossings were evaluated and improvements will be made, including pavement markings and signals in some locations.

Community members shared concerns about low levels of lighting and a low sense of safety in Mary Burlie Park due to a lack of clear sight lines and current usage of park space. The draft design includes improvements to sight lines and the promotion of movement through the park to improve natural surveillance.

Overall, the draft designs for Boyle Street and McCauley Neighbourhood Renewal, including Mary Burlie Park, are in alignment with the City Plan, the City's Winter Design Guidelines, Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards, and Access Design Guidelines.