

Chinatown Economic Development Plan Workshop 1– Feedback Summary

Edmonton

AECOM

January 4, 2016

Workshop Overview

As part of community engagement exercise and project planning effort, the City of Edmonton hosted a workshop on December 9, 2015 to engage community members in conversation regarding Edmonton's Chinatown Economic Development Plan. AECOM lead the workshop, and Urbanics was there to assist. The purpose of the workshop was to look at the strengths, challenges and opportunities in Edmonton Chinatown from the perspective of the community.

Representatives from community members attended include, but not limited to:

- Cultural Community
- Business Community
- Development Community
- Orders of Government
- Interest Groups

A number of questions were posed to community to answer collectively in small groups. This report provides a summary of their feedback.

Small Group Discussions

Workshop participants were asked to answer four major questions:

1. What are the strengths and opportunities in Edmonton Chinatown?
2. What are the biggest challenges / weaknesses facing Edmonton Chinatown?
3. What does a successful future Edmonton Chinatown look like? What would you like to see in Edmonton Chinatown?
4. What other ideas do you have? What other issues are important? What do we need to know?

Question 1: Response Themes

What are the strengths and opportunities of Edmonton Chinatown?

- Chinatown has a rich and historical significance in Edmonton, including unique cultural attributes as well as historic buildings.
- Chinatown is very well-located. Its proximity to downtown and large redevelopment projects such as the Royal Alberta Museum, Ice District and Galleria projects are an advantage for Chinatown.
- Chinatown provides an authentic and unique shopping and dining experience in Edmonton. It offers a range of unique restaurants and supermarkets.
- The Chinatown community has many different organizations who are actively involved with numerous community leaders.
- Chinatown still supports new international immigrants moving to Edmonton.
- There is opportunity for redevelopment and plenty of land available for new projects.

Question 2: Response Themes

What are the biggest challenges/weakness facing Edmonton Chinatown?

- The concentration of social agencies serving the homeless creates numerous challenges for Chinatown, including:
 - A perception that Chinatown is not safe, leading to limited visitation and pedestrian activity in the evenings. This negatively impacts business revenue potential.
 - Significant cleanliness and maintenance issues, often directly affecting individual businesses. Business costs are higher as a result of the increased need for cleaning and maintenance due to the transient population.
 - There have been challenges in communicating with senior leadership at social service agencies to address problems in a proactive manner.
- Limited residential population
- Lack of visibility & wayfinding from downtown
- Absence of a major cultural / heritage attraction and/or high quality central community plaza or indoor gathering space for major cultural events and programming
- Limited activities for younger generation
- Physical fragmentation
- Parking availability
- Limited redevelopment activity and turnover of properties; abundance of vacant lots; land speculation

Question 3 & 4: Response Themes

What does a successful Chinatown look like? What would you like to see in Chinatown? Additional Ideas and Issues?

- Chinatown is a destination for both residents and tourists
- Welcoming and safe environment
- Preservation of culture and history remain central focus of district
- Urban design that celebrates the culture
- Cultural attraction such as a museum and facility for gatherings and programming
- Increased cultural programming and events on a regular basis
- Increased residential population
- Attractive to youth / young professional population through either increased nightlife, art, or retail
- Additional tourism and promotion, including a well-developed map for tourists, additional tourism products and experiences, better marketing of existing experiences
- Consider a development corporation or land bank for redevelopment
- Consider integration of the cultural and business groups

Thank You

To learn more about the City of Edmonton Chinatown Project,
please visit

www.edmonton.ca/chinatown



December 09, 2015

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