

**The Chinatown Working Group  
Preliminary Action Plans  
Presented by the CWG: CAPZ Working Teams  
Updated February 6, 2012**

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**CAPZ: Affordability**

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Agencies</u>
<p><b>Define a local Area Median Income figure that reflects the demographic of Chinatown and utilize this figure to define affordable housing.</b></p>	<p>Ensure that this figure is used for any city development effort in Chinatown and the greater Chinatown region.</p>	
<p><b>Preserve the existing rent regulated stock in Chinatown by:</b></p>	<p>Prohibiting the practice of predatory tactics that evict tenants from their rent regulated units.  Prohibiting the intentional demolitions used by landlords to destroy the rent regulated units.</p>	
<p><b>Provide opportunities for affordable home ownership options:</b></p>	<p>Create and expand programs that effectively create opportunities for affordable Homeownership.  Ensure that these programs restrict immediate resale and recapture property value increases.</p>	<p align="right">NYC Comptroller, HPD</p>
<p><b>Create more affordable housing rental units by utilizing existing subsidy programs:</b></p>	<p>Encourage 421-A incentive program to build affordable housing, but tailor it to meet our community needs to build mixed use affordable housing that targets several different income levels.  Encourage Low Income Housing Tax Credits incentive program to build affordable housing, but tailor it to meet our community needs to build mixed use affordable housing that targets several different income levels.  Define an Inclusionary Zoning program that incentivizes the creation of affordable housing units. Mandate affordable housing when buildings are built to maximum height.  Call for the development of 100% truly affordable housing at local AMI on New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) property, and for ULURP review of any redevelopment of NYCHA property.</p>	<p align="right">HPD</p>

Determine if other expired housing programs may be revived to serve Chinatown (ie. Mitchell-Lama, Homesteading).

## CAPZ: Cultural and Historic Preservation

### The Eight Principles

This action plan aims to implement eight principles designed to preserve Chinatown's vital culture:

1. Preserve and enhance the cultural character of Chinatown that makes it a unique and diverse community. Recognize that the foundations of traditions from the past and the innovations of the present compose the dynamic and complex character of this community.
2. Support cultural activities and preservation efforts that will attract and retain Chinatown residents, businesses, and visitors, while also addressing the quality and importance of family life.
3. Create a dedicated community arts center and other appropriate spaces for cultural use that are affordable to area artists, organizations and residents. Cultivate a hospitable and affordable environment in Chinatown for traditional and contemporary artists, artisans, cultural entities, culturally-based businesses, and cultural activities from inside and outside the community. Chinatown's interplay with its neighboring communities and the City infrastructure itself can be significantly enhanced.
4. Recognize, protect and preserve Chinatown's historical buildings/structures and districts of architectural and/or cultural significance, its distinctive streetscapes and other characteristic elements of the community.
5. Encourage imaginative new architecture and environmental design reflective of contemporary life and aesthetics, but also respects and acts in harmony with older architectural styles in the neighborhood.
6. Ensure that the efforts of other CWG working teams are consonant with the community's historic/cultural preservation, growth, and development goals.
7. Work with and support local cultural organizations that gather, safeguard and disseminate the shared histories and stories that collectively form the basic foundations of this neighborhood and are vitally relevant to its future, successive generations and the general American population.
8. Recognize that decorative elements like Chinese-style facades or ceremonial arches, while worthwhile, are just symbolic measures. Active policies, legislation and efforts are needed to achieve true long term revitalization that avoids the danger and short-sightedness of a "Disneyland Chinatown".

**CAPZ: Cultural and Historic Preservation (continued)**

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Agencies</u>
<p><b>Chinatown is in danger of losing its distinctive culture and streetscape</b></p>	<p>Create a Special Chinatown Cultural and Historic Preservation Sub-district to protect historic structures and the low scale nature of the Chinatown core, and promote Chinatown culture and arts (examples: Fourth Street Arts block, SoHo artist certification, 42nd Street Theater Sub-district, Special Little Italy District). The special districting would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Impose height restrictions to prevent the erosion of the skyline and street character.</li> <li>ii. Allow owners of historic buildings to sell and transfer air rights to developers citywide, designating a percentage of the sales for additional financing of the new Sub-district Fund referenced in Action Plan item A above</li> <li>iii. Include provision for a ‘percent for art’ requiring developers to set aside 1% of construction in the Subdistrict to public art projects</li> <li>iv. Legalize the signage, street set-ups, and storefront display practices (e.g. hanging ducks in windows) that are noted characteristics of Chinatown</li> <li>v. Provide protection for buildings of special interest or significance.</li> <li>vi. Establish a Chinatown visual and performing arts center plus other adequate affordable spaces for culturally specific performances, artwork, and activities through tax incentives, culture zones legislation, rent regulations protecting space for non-profit use, restrictive covenants, limited equity space arrangements, etc</li> <li>vii. Allow and encourage culturally distinct activities and businesses like open air markets wherever possible including in newly created spaces.</li> </ul>	<p>Community boards, New York State Council on the Arts, State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Register for Historic Places, LPC, City Council, State Legislature, Congress</p> <p><u>EDUCATE</u> local landlords on the benefits of landmarking and National Register listing, including tax credits for preservation and rehabilitation work</p>

**CAPZ: Cultural and Historic Preservation (continued)**

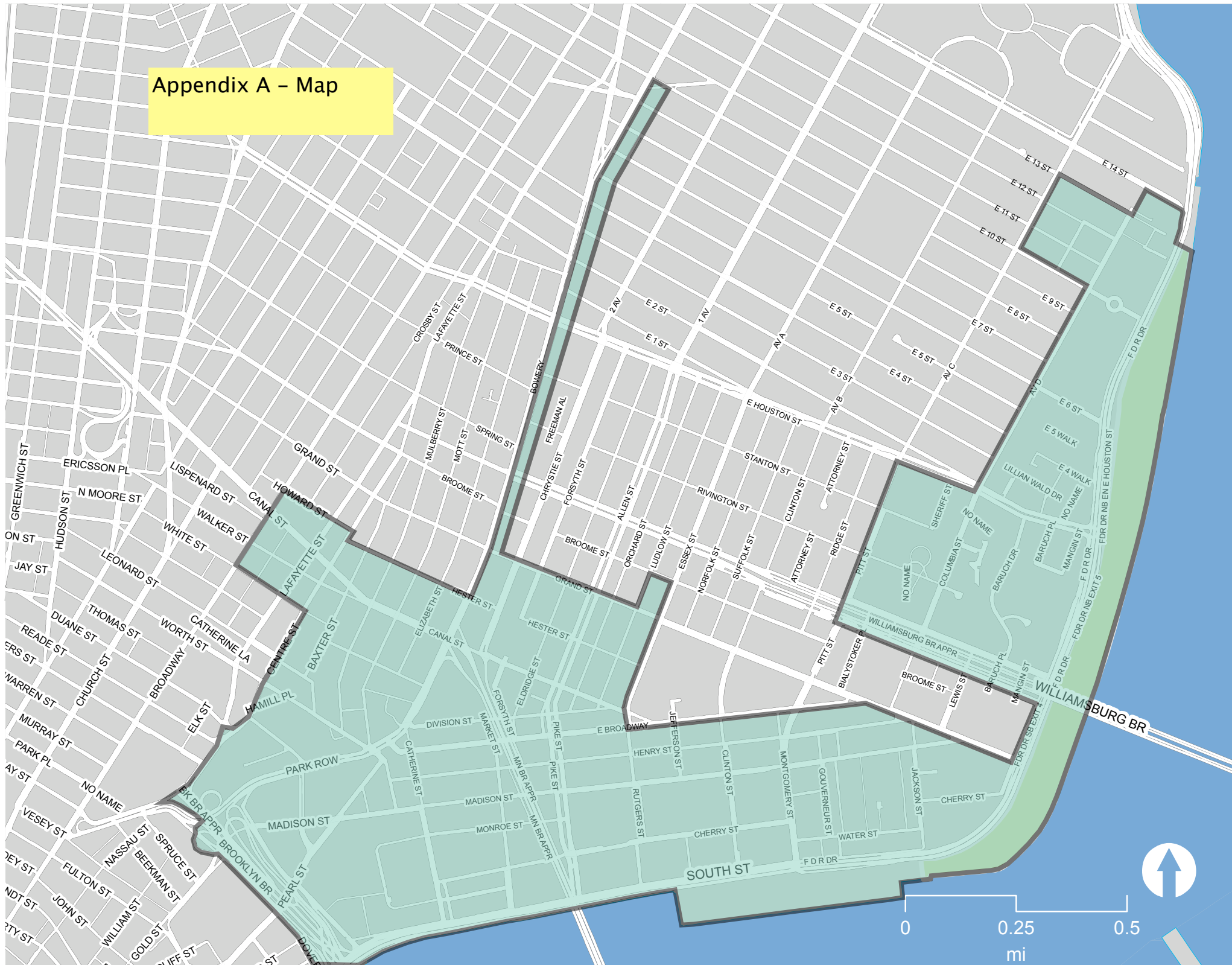
<b><u>Problem</u></b>	<b><u>Proposal</u></b>	<b><u>Agencies</u></b>
<b>Chinatown is in danger of losing its distinctive culture and streetscape</b>  (continued)	Establish a Chinatown Culture and Historic Preservation Subdistrict Fund similar to the 42nd Street Theater Subdistrict Fund to provide grants for restoration projects and cultural programs in Chinatown. The fund would be financed by assessments on new real estate developments in the Chinatown district.	Community boards, DCP, LPC, DCA, City Council, State Legislature, Congress ALSO architectural historians, Preservation League of New York State, the Two Bridges Neighborhood Council, City Lore, HDC, MoCA, NY Landmarks Conservancy, Municipal Arts Society, Society for the Architecture of the City, local non profits
	Identify specific and appropriate non profits to manage the Fund. Identify an organization interested in sponsoring a survey of greater Chinatown for architectural, historical and/or cultural resources (buildings and districts of significance). Explore a Chinatown Historic District or Districts. Explore individual landmarks and a comprehensive list of buildings of special interest or significance in greater Chinatown for protection.	Community boards, New York State Council on the Arts, State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Register for Historic Places, LPC, City Council  EDUCATE local landlords on the benefits of landmarking and National Register listing, including tax credits for preservation and rehabilitation work
	Support and promote the Two Bridges Chinatown/Little Italy National Register district and the Bowery National Register district.	
<b>Rising real estate values threaten to displace Chinatown's culturally distinctive community</b>	Explore alternative methods beyond rent regulation/stabilization for retaining current residents and attracting new immigrants (e.g., limited equity housing, housing restoration programs, inclusionary zoning for owner-occupied units, SROs, communal and temporary housing for recent immigrants).	Community boards, HPD, DHCR, State Legislature, Governor, mutual housing developers (AAFE, LESPMH) , urban development funders (e.g., Urban Investment Group)
	Explore city support for local small businesses	NYC Small Business Services
<b>Coordination, support and consensus</b>	Form working relationships with local organizations	Architectural historians, urban planning programs, MOCA, the Tenement Museum, the Eldridge St. Synagogue, the Educational Alliance, University Settlement, Henry Street Settlement, the Cultural Equity Group, the NYU Asian/Pacific American Studies program, the Cantonese Opera (Louisa Leo), the Julie Tay/Mencius Society, the Two Bridges Neighborhood Council, the Photography Group (Joe Wong), the Lower East Side History Project, the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors, City Lore, HDC inter alia
<b>Information gathering</b>	Use existing studies	Bowery Alliance study, CREATE Feasibility Study, MoCA Feasibility, Light Rail Impact study of LES Historic structures, Two Bridges Study for Historic Districting, Landmarks Preservation Commission / LES Tenement Museum survey/report filed with National Trust for Historic Preservation, Columbia University Bowery Study, Eldridge St Synagogue Historic Survey, CAAAV Study, AALDEF Study

## CAPZ: Zoning

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Agencies</u>
<p><b>New York City's Chinatown is the only major North American Chinatown without special zoning protection. San Francisco, Boston, Vancouver, Honolulu, and Toronto all have special zoning and development provisions, as does London.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Fundamentals of a Chinatown Special District:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable Housing (cf. Clinton Preservation District)</li> <li>• Cultural Use Bonus and Air Rights Transfer (cf. Theatre Subdistrict of Midtown Special District)</li> <li>• Aesthetic controls in special preservation subdistrict               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ streetscape</li> <li>○ building form</li> <li>○ transparency</li> <li>○ signage to emphasize cultural and language diversity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Open Space requirements</li> <li>• Explore development opportunities in undeveloped areas</li> <li>• Develop strong anti-harassment and anti-demolition provisions.</li> <li>• Require certain chain stores/chain hotels to obtain a special permit which would require community review to operate in the community</li> <li>• District-wide Transfer of Development Rights to Preserve Character of Preservation Core</li> <li>• Construction and Building Maintenance Fund</li> </ul>	<p>New York City Department of City Planning</p>
	<p><b><u>Mechanics of the District: Zoning Goals and Strategies</u></b></p> <p><b>Preservation Core Sub-district</b> (Medium-density residential and mixed-use zoning)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to protect the low-rise character of Chinatown</li> <li>-to reinforce the vibrant and colorful streetscape</li> <li>-to permit appropriately scaled mixed-use development</li> <li>-to allow transfer of development rights (TDR) to allow property owners to make use of the zoning potential of their sites, but move development to a more appropriate area</li> <li>-to improve and upgrade existing housing stock</li> </ul> <p><b>Undeveloped Areas (eg. Parking Lots)</b> (Higher density mixed-use manufacturing zoning that encourages affordable housing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to enhance the long-term commercial viability of Chinatown and create new jobs</li> </ul>	

- to protect existing manufacturing and Class B & C office space
- to encourage new affordable housing
- to encourage mixed-use development which has historically been so prevalent in Chinatown-to allow an outlet for TDR to protect development of the Preservation Core
- to encourage the development of a Chinatown Cultural Arts Center through a Cultural Bonus mechanism

Appendix A - Map



## Appendix 2

January 12, 2012

Mr. David McWater, Chair  
*Land Use, Zoning, Public & Private Housing Committee*  
Community Board #3  
59 East 4th Street  
New York, NY 10003

Dear David:

The CAPZ Working Team of the Chinatown Working Group met on January 5, 2011 and revised the 10-point agreement which had been a subject of discussion at the Land Use committee meeting on December 13, 2011.

In response to your request attached is a map showing the boundaries of the study area as was requested. We are also attaching the revised agreement, now reduced to 8 points. We look forward to making a full presentation of this revised document to the Land Use Committee on February 2, 2012.

In light of the revised agreement, we would request that the Community Board address the secondary displacement issues now arising within the rezoned areas, a task we should like to participate in with the Community Board. We hope the Land Use committee welcomes this initiative.

Sincerely,

The CAPZ Working Team

Copy: D. Pisciotto  
Gigi Li  
Linda Jones  
Susan Stetzer

### Appendix 3

January 10, 2012

Mr. David McWater, Chair  
*Land Use, Zoning, Public & Private Housing Committee*  
Community Board #3  
59 East 4th Street  
New York, NY 10003

Dear David:

The Cultural, Affordability, Preservation and Zoning Working Team of the Chinatown Working Group met on January 5, 2011 and revised the 10-point agreement which had been a subject of discussion at the Land Use committee meeting on December 13, 2011.

With your feedback we have revised our agreements to 8 points, removing the area between Houston and Delancey Streets and the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area. We also attached a map showing the boundaries of the study area as was requested. We look forward to making a full presentation of this revised document to the Land Use Committee on February 2, 2012.

We remain concerned about potential secondary displacement and the loss of affordable housing in the removed areas. We hope that going forward we can work together with the guidance of the Land Use Committee to address these concerns.

On behalf of the Chinatown Working Group,

Sincerely,

Victor J. Papa  
Co-Chair  
CWG: CAPZ Working Team

Michael Levine  
Co-Chair  
CWG: CAPZ Working Team

Copy: Dominic Pisciotta  
Gigi Li  
Linda Jones  
Susan Stetzer