

Chinatown Working Group

唐人街工作小组

Economics and Transportation Working Team

Nov. 6, 2009

Conference Call for Revisions on October Minutes

Attending

Wellington Chen – Chair Combined Econ & Transp Team

Danny Chen – Acting Chair Combined Econ & Transp Team, Chatham Green

Zella Jones – Vice Chair, Econ Dev Team, CB2

AGENDA: Refine Conditions and Goals of Preliminary Action Plan

Guiding Principles

ECONOMICS AND TRANSPORTATION

Economic Development & Revitalization

1. Promote economic development strategies in Chinatown that will broaden the base of businesses and classifications; increase opportunity for local employment; expand job skills; and, overall, expand Chinatown's customer/patron profile as a distinct and contributing New York City entity.
2. Create and integrate education and training opportunities to improve business practices and labor conditions and employee skills to build a stronger base of Chinatown resources.
3. Provide targeted business assistance to help and support business expansion. Such assistance would include, but may not be limited to: Worker education programs; ESL programs; customer retention programs; new business incubators; new business investment programs/funds.
4. Coordinate and promote long-term environmental and business improvement efforts for the purpose of raising the community's image and stimulating business growth.
5. Pursue transformational development projects that can strengthen Chinatown's inherent cultural, social and economic assets. E.G. Multi-purpose buildings with compatible/contributing use groups.

Parking, Transportation, Circulation, and Safety

1. Strive for a balance in transportation, parking, and security.
2. Foster community input and involvement in vehicular and pedestrian traffic planning and monitoring in an ongoing transparent process.
3. Advocate for "natural" [holistic] designs and flows (a "go with the flow" approach to designs); develop improvements to physical layout by taking small steps towards an end goal that measures the effectiveness/success/failure at each step and reassessing the path accordingly.
4. Resolving parking and transportation issues: Re-establish lost parking, promote public transportation while easing bus congestion and improving pedestrian and cyclist safety, plan for private transportation (buses, shuttles, etc) to make it easier for customers to patronize Chinatown businesses, for residents to travel within their community and for people who have family and other ties to Chinatown throughout the New York Metropolitan Area to congregate and pursue Chinatown traditions and activities related, but not limited, to Chinese-American culture.

Updated Preliminary Action Plan

Pedestrian and Vehicular Traffic & Transportation

Current Condition

Goal

Agency Coordination and Research

I. **Pedestrian Traffic**...very crowded pedestrian right-away (in vehicular/sidewalk areas, sanitary conditions deleterious in some areas

Inefficient use of space (crowded sidewalks)

Create Better Pedestrian Spaces

Enforce 0 Tolerance for less than 8' pedestrian right-of-way. Enforce Dept of Health Standards for food vending.

Investigate Pedestrian Malls & Street Closures on some streets (Pell? Doyers?) - Investigate pedestrian **ONLY** sidewalk and street

DOT, DCA, DOS, DOH, Parks, LPC, CPC

Research: Pedestrian Counts Chatham Square and Park Row. Check available DOT and CATS surveys; Model an updated survey

spaces with small retail, business etc. (perhaps for defined hours of the day to accommodate store deliveries)

11/6/09 Note;
Look at
Post Office on Doyers – Preserve, if so there has to be some traffic for deliveries allowed.
Pell and Doyers have long Chinese History, hallowed ground. Explore Historic Designation. Dr. Sun Yat-sen

Create Sidewalk Vending Regs just for Chinatown to better present/organize open market flavor but improve massing to accommodate pedestrian flow– redefine allowed areas, consider no-vending areas; define amt of space allowed by vendors in Chinatown Special District(s).

Incorporate wider sidewalk standards in zoning code and in new-build areas, where vending might be allowed.

2. **Transportation: lack of ready-access** (bad access) – Chinatown has a large

Plan for a Central transportation portal for Chinatown – create-A “hub” like the Fulton

Research: Check with Arthur Huh at the Dept of City Planning; review vending from stores statutes as a means of improving enforcement or improving legislation.

Review CATTS Study regarding wider sidewalk recommendations

DOT, MTA, State and Federal Agencies

population, and is an established tourist cache. It should have an adequate, large, mass-transportation “hub” which will make access and intra-Chinatown movement more efficient. This would help to recoup commerce lost since 9/11 and attract people to the area

3. **Re-establish access to Chinatown** lost in the planning and development of government buildings which blocked off parks, closed streets and radically changed traffic patterns. Additionally the imposition of adhoc security measures by NYPD headquarters and facilities has failed to accommodate Chinatown.

Street Transit Hub...

Shuttle Buses – Public transit: shuttle system (i.e. Downtown Alliance shuttle)

Reduce car speed on Canal St.

Crosstown Buses –East and West traveling between Grand St. at the north and Worth or Frankfort at the south. Canal St also.

Improve pedestrian linkage between Chinatown and Municipal Buildings.

Columbus Park of 19 years ago vs wall of govt eminent domain buildings. Right arm of Chinatown has been cut off. Needs a gateway passage thru to Columbus Park and historical connection to Chinatown central.

Improve pedestrian linkage with Municipal Area Public Transit centers to L.I., NJ, etc.

Bicycle lanes and other improvements to

Research:

Costs, structures and public/private arrangements for shuttles in other areas and cities

CPC, DOT, NYPD, City Council, State and Federal Transportation Agencies

Research:

Survey large, small, long time and new businesses near Chatham Square and areas surrounding and on both sides of Police Headquarters and Park Row for customer access impacts.

the streets that encourage bicycle riding in the neighborhood

4. Chatham Square/Park Row – The impact of Park Row closure on vehicular and pedestrian access between Government Center and Chinatown is profound. It cuts off a natural flow of commuters in and out of Chinatown to major public transit hubs; inhibits retail traffic from one of the largest centers of employee commerce in the City.

Re-Open Park Row

NYPD, CPC

Relocate Police Headquarters

Research

Study relocating Police Headquarters to a safer location

Environmental Impact Study and Recommendations from I Police Plaza case. (Chatham Green & Chatham Towers)

5. Lack of coordination and planning for incoming and outgoing bridge and tunnel traffic.

Create a flexible traffic routing system (including reduced tolls to encourage re-routing for peak or off-hour traffic)

Office of Emergency Management, DOT, Bridge and Tunnel Authority, Federal and State Depts of Transp.

Research:

Quantify benefits of Brooklyn Bridge/Park Row entry to Chinatown reopened to traffic.

6. Loss of parking affects businesses (*weekends)...(Police Plaza, Pearl St., Leonard St.). As the vehicular entry point

Re-establish municipal parking. Provide above or below ground parking with better intra Chinatown and Govt Center local transit

CPC, DOT

Research: Review

for the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges as well as the Holland Tunnel with additional Govt Agency parking needs, the area provides no opportunity for parking vehicles and reducing vehicular traffic.

opportunities.

Stricter limits and better enforcement of placard parking.

Consider shared fleet system for government agencies/employees

Study lost parking revenues from the Municipal Garage closure.

What are the potential benefits to the entire Civic Center of having a 1000 car garage (this includes approximately 400 public spaces and 600 NYPD spaces at the Municipal Garage)?

7. Taxis avoid Chinatown (Chatham Square)

Provide mandated Taxi-Stand areas.

Possible coordination with pedestrian mall or seating areas and with municipal parking locations

Taxi & Limousine Commission, DOT

8. Too much Commercial Traffic - truck traffic on Canal St. (health problems, safety issues). This has unfairly burdened Chinatown.

Change toll structure on Verrazano Bridge

Dis-incentivize access by large trucks (Higher tolls for larger vehicles, defined local delivery hours ?)

Federal Dept of Transportation, State Dept of Transp., Bridge and Tunnel Auth.

9. Need better coordination between local residents and businesses for ongoing City improvements and larger City/Government built environment plans.

Foster community input and involvement in vehicular and pedestrian traffic planning and monitoring in an ongoing transparent process.

DOT, CAU, CPC

Economic Development

Current Condition

1. **Too many of the same kinds of retail businesses.** Built environment needs re-invention to integrate groundfloor retail with more vital above ground businesses.
2. Lost jobs (out of 21,000...16,000 gone)...garment industry (staggering loss of jobs)
3. **Above street level space underutilized.**

Goal

- Develop economic development zones (Empire Zone) and programs.**
- Create business incubators:** Clothing and Home Furnishings Design; Culinary Products.
- Develop Training Centers:** Adopt “English Language Learners (ELL) programs among employers for immigrants...job training, skill building all ages/skills. Proximity to Govt entities providing programs and funds for such programs is a plus and could make an excellent case for Chinatown as a NYC Center for job training, retrain and job readiness programs.
- Include Worker Training Programs in **Community Benefit Agreements**
- Alter or retro-fit built environment so that**

Agency Coordination and Research

State Dept of Commerce, EDC, CPC, Dept of Education

Research:

State Statutes on Empire Zone regulations - Karen He, Speaker Silver’s Office

Develop a Community Benefit Agreement Template. Study Examples – Furmin School, Brooklyn Atlantic Yards, Red Hook

Agencies: CPC (special zoning

While much of Chinatown is already zoned for FAR 6 it is not attracting use of this resource.

it can house service businesses: medical, high-tech, educational, design studios. Investigate tax credits for development of new/green business opportunities.

Attract college/university, hospital partners, public or private clinics

Re-Invent Light Mfg – Garment/furniture design, electronic assembly/packaging and product testing facilities, art or craft creation. Amend Land-Use definitions if necessary

Investigate Manufacturing Cooperatives with resident training programs and classroom spaces

4. **Empty office space** (plethora)...in non-residential buildings. The exit of garment manufacture has left many Manufacturing buildings vacant and their infrastructure and configuration uncompetitive with alternative and more modern MI-5 uses

Provide for development of green businesses, increasing high-tech infrastructure build-outs, incentives for renovation, addition of floors and/or restoration (where buildings have a historical context) in Zoning modifications."

Incentivize educational, cultural, financial institution and community facilities investment in Chinatown facilities.

districts), EDC, NYU, CUNY, Federal Agency incentives.

Research: Seth Borstein, Asst. Dean, LaGuardia Community College (CUNY)

NYC & Co., EDC, CPC (special zoning for light industrial uses within mixed use environment)

5. **Signage (Way-finding)** – Chinatown lacks a coordinated municipal signage system.

Add signage directing traffic from Brooklyn, Manhattan & Williamsburg Bridges.

DOT

Add Direction/Exit signs on FDR, West Side Highway, from Brooklyn/Battery Tunnel

6. **Sidewalk Commerce** – a traditional and cultural identity for Chinatown, it is currently lacking a logic and variety and organization to enhance its use.

More defined street commerce and street life strategy

DOT, DCA, LPC Parks, Dept of Cultural Affairs

Test marketplace with greater variety of street vending choices

See also Transportation, Item 1 – Sidewalk Vending

Sidewalk cafes/entertainment presence – to extend street life and commerce into night time – in compatible and defined areas.

Cultural Hub around MOCA – Industrial conversions to Artist Work Spaces

ADDENDA: References – Working List

ⁱ **Sun Yat-sen** (pinyin Sūn Yìxī) (12 November 1866 – 12 March 1925) was a [Chinese revolutionary](#) and [political](#) leader. As the foremost pioneer of [Republican](#) China, Sun is frequently referred to as the [Father of the Nation](#). Sun played an instrumental role in overthrowing the [Qing Dynasty](#) in October 1911, the last imperial dynasty of China. He was the first provisional [president](#) when the [Republic of China](#) (ROC) was founded in 1912 and later co-founded the [Kuomintang](#) (KMT) where he served as its first leader.

His American experience was to be of lasting influence. Sun attached particular importance to the ideas of [Alexander Hamilton](#) and [Abraham Lincoln](#). Sun often said that the formulation of Lincoln's [Gettysburg Address](#), "government of the people, by the people, for the people", had been the inspiration for the *Three Principles of the People*. He incorporated these ideas, later in life, in two highly influential books. One, *The Vital Problem of China* (1917), analyzed some of the problems of [colonialism](#): Sun warned that "the [British](#) treat nations as the [silkworm](#) farmer treats his worms; as long as they produce [silk](#), he cares for them well; when they stop, he feeds them to the fish." The second book, *International Development of China* (1921), presented detailed proposals for the development of [infrastructure](#) in China, and attacked the ideology of [laissez-faire](#), as well as that of [Marxism](#) adhering more to the ideas of [Henry George](#)'s, particularly [land value taxation](#).
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_Yat-sen

ⁱⁱ **Historic Locations** – <http://www.explorechinatown.com/PDF/ChinatownLandmarks.pdf>

Chatham Square (cross streets), also known as Kim Lau Square, is the site of the Kim Lau Memorial Arch. Located in the middle of the square, it was erected in 1962 in memory of the Chinese Americans who died in World War II. The square is named after the Earl of Chatham, William Pitt, who supported the American opposition to the Stamp Act, a tax on printed papers imposed on all American colonists by the British in 1765. The arch is named for Lt. Benjamin Kim Lau, an aircraft commander in the Second World War. Just east of the square, on Division Street, lies Confucius Plaza, where a statue of the famous philosopher stands.

Just south of Chatham Square along St. James Place is the **First Shearith Israel Cemetery**. The cemetery dates back to 1683, making it not only the oldest Jewish cemetery in New York City but the oldest standing *artifact* in New York City. Buried here are 18 Jewish Revolutionary-War era soldiers and patriots, as well as the first American-born rabbi. The original 23 settlers, who had already been expelled from Spain and Brazil, were descendents of survivors of the Spanish Inquisition.

East Broadway is the heart of the new Fujianese community. Slightly northeast of the traditional borders of Chinatown, this three-block area near Manhattan Bridge is lined with authentic Fujianese rice-noodle shops, herbal medicine shops, and fresh markets.

Mott Street is the oldest Chinese-inhabited street in New York, and today remains one of Chinatown's most vibrant thoroughfares. Its fine restaurants, interesting markets and unique shopping opportunities have made Mott Street Chinatown's unofficial main draw, drawing tens of thousands of non-residents on any given weekend.

At **41 Mott Street** is a large white building topped with the only remaining wooden pagoda roof in Chinatown. Such roofing was outlawed in the early 1900s because they were perceived to be fire hazards. The site of the oldest Chinese store in New York, established in 1891, is **32 Mott Street**. **The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA)** building is also located on Mott Street at number 62.

It is also the home of the **New York Chinese School**, founded in 1909 at 64 Mott St. During the Ching Dynasty in the year 1909, certain organization in the New York Community Center, along with other interested individuals suggested establishing an overseas Chinese School in New York. In the beginning, there were about twenty students. The number of students grew rapidly with the support of the New York Overseas Community Center. The growth of the school can be compared to as a little flower bud, blossoming from 1909 into a flower which has never fade since. Today New York Chinese School (NYCS) is the largest Chinese School in North America. The New York Chinese School is a non-profit 501(C) (3) school, staffed by dedicated teachers. Currently the school has a faculty of 50 people.

Collect Pond is an area that was once the site of Manhattan's largest body of water in the 1700s. Once teeming with freshwater fish, the pond covered the area between present-day Franklin and Worth Streets from Lafayette to Baxter Streets. By the turn of the Nineteenth Century, the pond had become almost entirely depleted and was turned into a waste site, earning the nickname of "Collect Pond" because that's exactly what the garbage did: collect. By 1808, it was decided that the Pond simply had to be drained and, as a result, a canal was built to drain the filthy water into the sea. This canal was later paved over to create modern-day Canal Street. Though advised against it, developers started building on the newly drained land without waiting for it to settle. The new homes were no sooner completed than they began to crack and lean. No residents of even modest means would move in and, as a result, the area soon became the infamous Five Points.

Five Points was established when developers began to build poorly constructed housing on the former Collect Pond site. Located on a corner of present-day Columbus Park, the site marked the intersection of five streets whose neighborhood became Manhattan's first true slum. Over 40,000 residents – almost all of them living in poverty – dwelled in less than half a square mile. These desperate living conditions gave rise to dangerous gangs including the Plug Uglies and the Dead Rabbits, both of whom were immortalized in Martin Scorsese's 2002 film *Gangs of New York*.

The **Museum of Chinese in the Americas** allows visitors to learn about the Chinese community and view exhibits featuring personal stories, photographs, mementos, and poetry. Displays showcasing Chinese customs and religions are also available to the public. The museum is located at 70 Mulberry Street on the 2nd Floor. For visitors' information, call 212-619-4785.

Standing at 18 Bowery on the corner of Pell Street, the **Edward Mooney House** is the oldest dwelling in New York City. Erected in 1785 by Edward Mooney and used as a residence until the 1820s, the building has been home to a variety of businesses since, including a hotel, tavern, pool hall, restaurant and bank. Today, the house is a recognized Historic Landmark and open to the public.

The **Church of the Transfiguration** was built in 1801 by the English Lutheran Church and sold to the Roman Catholic Church of the Transfiguration half a century later. Since its inception, the church has served as a place for immigrants to become adjusted to their new lives in America, and today offers services in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English.

Historical Photography: <http://www.nychinatown.org/history/early1900s.html>

Interactive Map: <http://www.nychinatown.org/maps/index.html>