

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>Chinatown is in danger of losing its distinctive culture and streetscape</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"> i. Impose height restrictions to prevent the erosion of the skyline and street character. 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 iii. Include provision for a ‘percent for art’ requiring developers to set aside 1% of construction in the Subdistrict to public art projects iv. Legalize the signage, street set-ups, and storefront display practices (e.g. hanging ducks in windows) that are noted characteristics of Chinatown v. Provide protection for buildings of special interest or significance. 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 vii. Allow and encourage culturally distinct activities and businesses like open air markets wherever possible including in newly created spaces. 	<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)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Agencies</u>
Chinatown is in danger of losing its distinctive culture and streetscape (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). Propose a Chinatown Historic District or Districts. Propose 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.	
Rising real estate values threaten to displace Chinatown's culturally distinctive community	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
Coordination, support and consensus	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
Information gathering	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

