

PLANNING PRINCIPLES FOR ZONING

CHINATOWN WORKING GROUP

CULTURAL, AFFORDABILITY, PRESERVATION & ZONING (CAPZ) WORKING TEAM

▪ Affordable Housing

- Mandate inclusionary zoning in specific areas within the 197-a area
- Maintain permanent affordability of inclusionary units
- Require on-site provision of inclusionary units to encourage mixed-income community development in Chinatown
- Mandate anti-harassment regulations for new developments
- Set income levels for affordable housing eligibility locally to reflect community housing needs
- Allow development bonus to create maximum new affordable housing¹

▪ Cultural use bonus and air rights transfer for Cultural Arts Facility

- Permit a floor area bonus for the provision of a large-scale community facility cultural use venue within the 197-a area boundaries to encourage preservation and revitalization of the arts within Chinatown (but only for a qualifying cultural use facility, not community facilities generally)²
- Allow transfer of air rights (“TDR”) from site of cultural use facility to a designated development area within the 197-a area to preserve the scale of the venue, and enhance the viability of the selected site for development by allowing full use of development rights
- Enhance arts in the district through Percent for Art requirement for public projects, other major developments

▪ Urban Design

- Preserve the special character of building form and streetscape by regulating special urban design features, including:
 - streetscape
 - building form
 - transparency
 - wayfinding and signage to emphasize cultural and language diversity
 - open space and pedestrian circulation space requirements

¹ cf. Special Clinton District regulations for the Preservation Area, New York City *Zoning Resolution* §96-10, *et seq.*, and the approved CB9 197-a plan (2007)

² cf. Theater Sub-District regulations of the Special Midtown District, ZR §81-70 *et seq.*

- Preserve the scale and character of the area
 - within designated areas, limit height of new development to preserve the low-rise nature of existing development

☐ Balancing Preservation and Development

- permit district-wide Transfer of Development Rights to preserve character of preservation core
- create construction and building maintenance fund to upgrade existing built fabric and residential stock (contributions could be mandatory upon development [impact fee-based] or as part of a bonus mechanism)
- designate “preservation zones” that protect housing and existing low-scale development

• Creation of a Special Zoning District

- create a special Chinatown zoning district. Special Districts are created to preserve, protect, and enhance the special character of a particular neighborhood. There is a special zoning district adjacent to Chinatown—Little Italy—which enjoys zoning protections for preservation and guides development; the Lower East Side rezoning did not use a special district mechanism and was thus restricted to a broader-brush approach to development using more generic zoning. Among the special features that could be built into special district zoning for Chinatown, there are many that would not be available with basic zoning designations
- rationalize the chaotic zoning pattern in Chinatown by mapping fewer base districts, reducing the number from the sixteen existing currently to four or five zones that encourage mixed-use and contain fewer restrictive vestigial manufacturing zones
- design a district that contains distinct sub-districts within which the zoning goals and strategies complement one another, but which could independently be more finely tuned. For example:

Preservation Core Sub-district (Low/Medium-density residential and mixed-use zoning)

- to protect the low-rise character of the Chinatown core
- to reinforce the vibrant and colorful streetscape
- to permit appropriately scaled mixed-use development
- to permit transfer of development rights (TDR) to allow property owners to make use of the zoning potential of their sites, but move development to more appropriate areas (e.g., prohibit excess development in the Preservation Core, but allow air rights float to a Canal Street Development Corridor)
- to improve and upgrade existing housing stock

Canal Street Development Corridor (Higher density mixed-use manufacturing, residential, and commercial zoning)

- to enhance the long-term commercial viability of Chinatown and create new jobs
- to protect existing manufacturing and preserve Class B & C office space

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- to encourage the creation of 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 within the Preservation Core
- to encourage the development of a Chinatown Cultural Arts Center through a Cultural bonus mechanism