

## **Chinatown Working Group Economics and Transportation Working Team**

October 8, 2009, 6-8:30 pm at the Chinatown Partnership

### **Attending**

Wellington Chen – Chair Combined Econ & Transp Team  
Danny Chen – Acting Chair Combined Econ & Transp Team, Chatham Green  
Jeanie Chin – Chatham Towers  
Jan Lee - CCRC  
Zella Jones – Vice Chair, Econ Dev Team, CB2  
Elisa Espiritu – CB1 Intern  
Matt Viggiano - Guest

### **AGENDA: Refine Conditions and Goals Plan**

## **Pedestrian and Vehicular Traffic & Transportation**

### **Current Condition**

- I. **Pedestrian Traffic**...very crowded pedestrian right-away (in vehicular/sidewalk areas, sanitary conditions deleterious in some areas  
  
Inefficient use of space (crowded sidewalks)

### **Goal**

- 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?) -

### **Agency Coordination and Research**

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

Investigate pedestrian ONLY sidewalk and street spaces with small retail, business etc. (perhaps for defined hours of the day to accommodate store deliveries)

**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.

**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).

Review CATTs Study regarding wider sidewalk recommendations

**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 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

**Plan for a Central transportation portal for Chinatown** – create-A “hub” like the Fulton Street Transit Hub...

DOT, MTA, State and Federal Agencies

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

**Research:**

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

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.

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;

**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.

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

**Bicycle lanes and other improvements** to the streets that encourage bicycle riding in the neighborhood

**Re-Open Park Row**

**Relocate Police Headquarters**

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.

NYPD, CPC

**Research**

Study relocating Police Headquarters to a safer location

inhibits retail traffic from one of the largest centers of employee commerce in the City.

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

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

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

**Include Chinatown access as part of an integrated and coordinated lower Manhattan traffic management strategy.**

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

**Stricter limits and better enforcement of placard parking.**

**Consider shared fleet system for government agencies/employees**

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

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.

CPC, DOT

**Research:** Review

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

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|   |  | Municipal Garage)?   |
| 7. <b>Taxis avoid Chinatown</b> (Chatham Square)  | <b>Provide mandated Taxi-Stand areas.</b><br>Possible coordination with pedestrian mall or seating areas and with municipal parking locations                            | Taxi & Limousine Commission, DOT   |
| 8. <b>Too much Commercial Traffic</b> - truck traffic on Canal St. (health problems, safety issues). This has unfairly burdened Chinatown.                  | <b>Change toll structure on Verrazano Bridge</b><br><br><b>Dis-incentivize access by large trucks</b> (Higher tolls for larger vehicles, defined local delivery hours ?) | Federal Dept of Transportation, State Dept of Transp., Bridge and Tunnel Auth. |
| 9. <b>Need better coordination between local residents and businesses for ongoing City improvements and larger City/Government built environment plans.</b> | 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.** While much of Chinatown is already zoned

## 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 it can house service businesses: medical, high-

## 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 districts), EDC, NYU, CUNY,

for FAR 6 it is not attracting use of this resource.

tech, educational, design studios. Investigate tax credits for development of new/green business opportunities.

Federal Agency incentives.

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

**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.

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

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

5. **Signage (Way-finding)** – Chinatown lacks

**Add signage directing traffic from**

DOT

a coordinated municipal signage system.

**Brooklyn, Manhattan & Williamsburg  
Bridges.**

**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

*See also Transportation, Item 1 – Sidewalk  
Vending*

**Test marketplace with greater variety of  
street vending choices**

**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: 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.