

**Economics and Transportation Working Team
Chinatown Working Group
Monday July 27, 2009**

Meeting Minutes

Location: 49 Chambers Street, Room 709

Time: 6:00pm to 8:00pm

In Attendance: CB 1 (Michael Levine), CB 2 (Zella Jones), CB 3 (Jan Lee), Chatham Green (Danny Chen), Chatham Towers (Jeanie Chin), Chinatown Partnership (Wellington Chen by phone), CWG (Julian Fu, Alanna Martinez), LESRRD (Rob Hollander)

Media:

1. Review of Milestones

Michael presented Milestones again. Working Teams are currently in Stage Two, which emphasizes research by Working Teams.

2. Finalization of Working Team Guiding Principles for August 10th CWG meeting

Guiding Principles for Economics and Transportation were presented and were finalized after discussion. The end product will be presented for review before the full CWG at the August 10th meeting. The guiding principles are as follows:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REVITALIZATION

1. Develop business strategies in Chinatown to broaden the business base, variety of local employment, and customer base.
2. Develop education to improve business practices and labor conditions and skills to improve Chinatown's inherent resources.
3. Provide targeted business assistance to help businesses enhance their strategies and practices. (worker education, English, store layout, etc.)
4. Sustain environmental and business improvement efforts to raise the community's image and stimulate business growth.
5. Pursue transformational development projects that could strengthen Chinatown's cultural and economic assets, spur an economic resurgence, and receive broad community support.

PARKING, TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION AND SAFETY

1. To strive for a balance in transportation, parking, and security.
2. To foster community input and involvement in a transparent process.
3. To advocate for "natural" 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. Re-establish lost parking, promote public transportation, and resolve parking and transportation issues to make it easier for customers to patronize Chinatown businesses.

5. To promote public transportation and plan for private transportation (buses, shuttles, etc).

3. Brainstorming: “Planning for Chinatown”

Discussed: 1) What are the current economic and transportation conditions, 2) What economic and transportation conditions are desired, and 3) what entities are responsible for implementing policies to achieve desired economic and desired conditions.

Discussion notes recorded by Alanna on easel pad. Please see below for brainstorm session notes.

4. Next meeting

The next meeting will be Tuesday, August 18th, 6pm at the Chinatown Partnership. Michael will be away.

Notes from Economics and Transportation Brainstorming Session

1. What do we have now?

PARKING

- Pedestrian traffic...very crowded pedestrian right-away (in vehicular/sidewalk areas)
- Inefficient use of space (crowded sidewalks)
- Transportation: lack of ready-access (bad access)
 - To mass-transit, as well as access to Chinatown area via major streets by vehicular traffic
- Street closures/change of traffic patterns
 - Chatham Square/Park Row
- Loss of parking affects businesses (*weekends)...(Police Plaza, Pearl St., Leonard St.)
- Taxis avoid Chinatown (Chatham Square)
 - It is hard to find taxis in major intersections and larger streets in Chinatown, i.e. Chatham Square and Canal Street

- Limited public access to public transportation
- Proximity to Civic Center has contributed to loss of parking (adversely impacting business)...government workers/NYPD using that parking space
- Police headquarters practicing imposing security presence
 - Police Headquarters and surrounding Civic Center have placed bollards and other security measures around the perimeter of Chinatown
- Brooklyn Bridge construction (restricting access to Chinatown)
- Abundance of commercial truck traffic on Canal St. (health problems, safety issues)

ECONOMICS

- Many of the same kinds of businesses & built environment too similar...driven by built environment largely ground floor retail
- Lost jobs (out of 21,000...16,000 gone)...garment industry (staggering loss of jobs)
- Empty office space (plethora)...in non-residential buildings
- Loss of business to locations outside Manhattan's Chinatown (& immigration)...satellite communities
 - Garment Industry has moved to sections of Brooklyn/Queens

CULTURAL CHARACTER

- Density of living environment
 - Crowded living spaces as well as public spaces
- Historic environment: buildings (physical setting)...(to be preserved)
- Unbuilt parks (public space)
 - There could be more park space/open public space in Chinatown
- Over crowdedness, unsanitary

2. *What do we want in the future?*

PARKING

- "Central transportation portal for Chinatown"

-A “hub” like the Fulton Street Transit Hub...Chinatown has a large population, it should have an adequate, large, mass-transportation “hub” which will make transit more efficient and attract people to the area

- Free-flowing sidewalk space
- Pedestrian mall spaces
 - Pedestrian ONLY sidewalk and street space with retail, business etc.
- Less trucks...more bicycles to reduce congestion (to allow better movement through congested environment)
 - Bicycle lanes and other improvements to the streets that encourage bicycle riding in the neighborhood
- Transportation: establish (re-establish) municipal parking
- Elimination of placards—replace system with fast-fleet technology
 - A system used in other cities that cuts down on the number of city-used vehicles by having shared vehicles
- Disincentive Canal St. as an alternative route to Verrazano Bridge
 - Make adjustments to the street that shift the traffic flow to a one-way possibly
- Reduce car speed on Canal St. Public transit: shuttle system (i.e. Downtown Alliance shuttle)

ECONOMICS

- Defined space for sidewalk vending
- Sidewalk cafes/entertainment presence
- Improvements to built environment along Canal St.; attract educational, cultural, financial institutions...community facilities
- Remove the illegal commercial element of Canal St. (organized crime)
 - “Knock-off industry”
- Training centers (immigrants)...job training all ages/skills
- Expand economic development programs
- Light manufacturing (*bring back...a building etc.)
- Creation of jobs...job incentive programs
- CUNY campus

-Possibly where the current Police Headquarters is...move Police Headquarters

- Incubator buildings...for businesses and jobs
- Self-contained garment center (1 floor for designers, fabric, patterns, etc.)...Incubator firms

CULTURAL CHARACTER

- An educational process for tourists/consumers
- “Solutions that provide rather than deny”
- Group/hostel housing options (transitional housing)
- New Postal facility

-Chinatown is losing a current post office

-Despite loss of Doyers St. post office Chinatown HAS needed another post office for a while

- “Harmonious environment” ...”welcoming environment”
- “Cultural gateway”
- “Quality of the place-making”
- Enforcement of codes: building, commercial, sanitary...dialogue with city to enforce established codes (continue prior enforcement by city)
- There are existing city codes that have not been enforced in Chinatown that could improve sanitation and public space
- Move/relocate police headquarters; use existing space for a school/hospital etc.

3. *Who is going to make it happen?*

PARKING

- Transportation: city...DOT for parking issues (municipal)
- Canal St. traffic...federal...speaker assembly
- Sidewalks...DOT, NYPD, DCA, DOS, (co enforcement & DEP, LPC)
- Public advocate
- MTA for public transit

ECONOMICS

- EDC (city), senator, LMDC, empire state development corporation

- Schumer, Nadler, Unions (garment) (homecare industry issues)
- CUNY (major educational institutions)...for bringing institutional, health, cross-cultural presence
- Local banks

CULTURAL CHARACTER

- Chinatown Associations
- DCP
- Post offices...brand new