

Notes from Brainstorming Session

1. *What do we have now?*

IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS

- Language...linguistic isolation
 - Dialects create divisions
- Understanding the environment...how to start everyday life
- Lack of knowledge of available resources
 - Already existing immigrant resources
- Employment, jobs...inability to find jobs (lacking basic working skills, have skills...college grads...lack language skills
- “Cultural holding back” ...asking for help
- Agencies that serve specific segments of the population (dialects, cultural differences)
 - Settlement houses: English classes, youth programming, daycare, senior programming, transitional process for children (Hamilton, Madison, University)
 - CPC: afterschool programming, healthcare referrals, Charles B. Wang (Canal st.) Health care services
- Small amount of flexible funding sources for immigrant needs...skilled sources combine multiple funding sources) *government funding sources specifically
 - NY Asian Women’s Center: domestic violence, shelter, counseling, food stamps
 - Sanctuary for families: counseling for domestic violence, clinical, legal shelter, human trafficking help (marginalized communities, Chinese immigrant communities

- Chinatown YMCA (273 Bowery, 100 Hester, I.S.131) New Americans Program: ESL classes (3 levels) computer literacy, civics class, workshops for issues related to immigrant families, indirect referral services (citizenship, housing, ESL, counseling)
- Insufficient media coverage of immigrant services
- Chinese progressive association (In-Kind services)
- Asian Health and Social Service Council: Umbrella organization
- Wider array of services for seniors
- Community clearinghouse for available services
- Multi-generational programming
- Links to organizations outside of Chinatown
- Change attitude to government, communication; overcome distrust

PARKS

- As a place to meet people, beneficial for family life, immigrants
- A place for youth activities, fairs
- Lack of open space (serve as living room for residents because of housing density)
 - Lowest percent of open space per resident (less in Chinatown than city-wide)
- Safety concerns: not-maintained, unsafe, parks vehicles in parks
 - Existing park security is adequate, equipment not maintained
- Provides space for public participation

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

IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS

- Better social service providers networking
- Access to services through schools... access through kids
 - PTA, school events, teachers, parent relationships with children
- Better communication, resources, resource sharing

- Methods of catching new immigrant population that can't read (radio, TV channel to reach different dialects, local news NY oriented)
 - Varying media provides more widespread coverage
- Affordable, decent community space for programming
- Bring immigrants to parks outside communities
- Principle #1: Employment and Worker's Rights
 - More bilingual outreach such as workshops, conferences, and literature
 - Public education campaign
 - Higher levels of accountability from: local elected officials, NYS Dept. of Labor, State and Federal HRC, local CBOs, labor unions, non profit law firms, pro-bono firms/lawyers, employer education from SBS
- Principle #2: Businesses to hire locally
 - Development of local employment center utilizing public/private partnership model
 - Negotiate that a certain % of local workers must be hired in new development contracts, such as Chatham Square re-zoning
 - Job readiness training for identified expanding industries in Chinatown
 - Parties that can affect change: Economic development committee of CB 1,2, and 3, BIDs, local elected officials, employers, SBS, Mayor's office
- Principle #4: Affordable Housing
 - SPURA needs to utilize locally defined mean income, SPURA should set aside affordable housing
 - Brochure explaining all "types" of housing, guide to housing for new immigrants
 - Require new developments to "replace" same # of affordable housing units destroyed
 - Tenants rights education campaign

- Parties that can affect change: HPD, DHCR

PARKS

- Parks as resources for parents, children, schools relationships
- Community bulletin boards in parks: announce available services
- Programming in Chatham square and other public parks
- Community involvement in design and programming of parks
- Better quality and more maintenance of open spaces (ongoing)
 - Improved security so park can be used longer
- More activities in parks and open spaces
 - Facilities for socializing
 - Already existent spaces could be better utilized (buildings for community centers)
- Events that center around Asian holidays (fairs, festivals, activities)
- Parks as a means of creating “community identity” for Chinatown
- Rooftop community gardens
- Columbus Park: replacing astro-turf
 - Flexible programming spaces in park renovations
 - Chinese checker boards (space for specific game activities)
- More donated corporate space for public space
- Empty lots/streets into green space
 - Encourage increase in pedestrian/green space
- Playground design: creative play spaces
 - Better jungle gym equipment, fountains, sandboxes, etc.
- Converted underutilized public buildings into public space (waterfront area)

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

IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS

- Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs: [Implement Order 120 to translate all government paper work \(language access\)](#).
 - [Higher quality interpreters \(enforce this\)](#)

- NY Immigrant Coalition (state wide)
- Local elected officials
- Heads of Family Associations, Benevolent, Business organization to meet (Chinese New Year)
-Spark discussion and solutions through community group dialogue
- Government partnership: Financial incentive
- CPLDC Chinatown Partnership
- Dept for the Aging: wider array of services for seniors (funding, support)
- Independent Press Assoc (Local + ethnic presses): ensure better coverage for Chinatown
- Public Advocate + local elected officials: partner together to hold people accountable, commission studies, use press crew
- Community organizations, public schools, health clinics + medical facilities: more/better programming space. Need better ways for programs/institutions to share space (funding, communication, ie: long-term partnership with settlement house)
- Dept of Education, elected officials: more funding for Beacon programs.

PARKS

- Parks and recreation, DOT, EDC
- Community gardens: Green Thumb, New York Restoration Project
- Parks dept, community organizations, schools, senior centers: More opportunities for community stewardship of local parks. ex: gardening programs.
- Parks Dept, community organizations, schools: prioritize community uses of local parks
- Local organizations (CPLDC), DPR, Dept of Sanitation: Improve park cleanliness
- Dept of Parks, Elected Officials: Preserve and increase multi-use space (funding) indoors and outdoors

- Parks dept, recreational organizations: More equitable use of ball parks (Columbus Park), more monitoring of programs, sharing, etc.
- Dept of Parks: Better continuous maintenance of Parks. ie: Columbus Park drainage.
- Dept of Parks, elected officials, community board: increased inter-agency coordination & transparency, turn malls into good public space at Eldridge St.
- Elected officials: removal of vehicles from parks
- Dept of Transportation: survey area to figure out which empty lots are viable park locations. ie: Division & Orchard, James Madison.