

# **Little Saigon, Japantown, Chinatown – International District Vision 2030**

## **A Community Response to the Preliminary Recommendations of the “South Downtown Livable Communities Study”**

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# Little Saigon, Japantown, and Chinatown/International District Vision 2030

## Executive Summary

The City of Seattle initiated the *Livable South Downtown* study in 2005 as an extension of the *Center City Initiative*, a plan to increase housing capacity and economic activity in the downtown core. After several meetings with twenty-five South Downtown community stakeholders, the City released a draft report in January 2006, outlining land use and rezoning recommendations. An alliance of Little Saigon, Japantown, and Chinatown-International District stakeholders met to discuss the report and agreed that the City needed to broaden its scope of work, as well as its vision for the neighborhood. The community went through a visioning process and produced a narrative document called *Vision 2030* (in reference to the year 2030). This vision builds on the recommendations and values of the 1998 Chinatown-International District Neighborhood Plan.

This vision document describes the Little Saigon, Japantown, Chinatown-International District in the year 2030 as a healthy, vital, and vibrant community supported by safe, pedestrian-friendly streets, new and improved open spaces, and a diverse array of retail stores that support the variety of people who live in the area. Vision 2030 also advocates for a balanced mix of neighborhood housing options, ranging from condos for empty nesters to affordable family housing units. The vision additionally advocates for the continuation of the International District as the regional center of Asian American commerce, culture, and recreational activities. In sum, we want to see enhanced beautiful parks and green streets, the elimination of crime, and the development of new cultural, educational, and recreational facilities built in the area.

To achieve this vision, however, we feel that the City needs to understand the social, economic, and cultural dynamics of this community. While examining zoning changes in the neighborhood, some basic questions need to be addressed to help us achieve our community goals. We would, consequently, like the following questions to be addressed as part of the EIS analysis: How will increased density impact small and independent businesses? Will existing low-income residents be displaced? How are we going to achieve our goal of balanced development? How will we improve our neighborhood streets and parks? How do we make this neighborhood safer? How will the physical environment be affected? Does the neighborhood's infrastructure have the capacity to handle the impending new development?

These values are similar to those expressed by other communities around the city; however, due to the historical and cultural dynamics of this community and the relatively high poverty rates that exist within the International District, specific government tools need to be revisited or developed to support livability and economic growth within this neighborhood. Many tools - such as incentive programs for restoration of vacant buildings - need the support of creative, strong leaders from the City who are willing to make this neighborhood vision a reality.

The following report contains three sections: 1) the *Vision 2030* narrative, 2) a report outlining neighborhood priorities, goals, and the tools that need to be implemented for Vision 2030 to become a reality, and 3) an outline of analysis needed in order to fully understand the implications of the City's recommended land use and zoning changes.

## Seattle's Little Saigon, Japantown and Chinatown - International District, Vision 2030

In the year 2030, the Seattle Little Saigon, Japantown, Chinatown-International District is one of the city's most desirable places to live, work, and play. As the culture and activity hub for the region's Asian community, the neighborhood is beloved city-wide for its urban liveliness, rich heritage and architecture, and multi-ethnic and generational atmosphere. The community-supported movement to revitalize the health and vitality of the neighborhood while restoring its historical character has made it a nationally recognized model of successful neighborhood rejuvenation.

The neighborhood's most endearing quality is its lively, multi-cultural, community spirit. Stand on any street corner and you're likely to hear at least five different languages within minutes. To the right, a group of laughing elder Chinese women walk arm-in-arm to pick up ingredients for their Lunar New Year celebration. Across the street, a teenager carries tools for his grandfather who recently arrived from the Philippines, as they make their way to the community garden. If you're not careful, you may get knocked over by the group of children running to Hing Hay Park, trailed by their cluster of colorful kites. Even newcomers immediately feel like a longtime member of the community as they stroll down the neighborhood's lively, pedestrian-friendly streets to its many shops, grocery stores, restaurants, and community facilities.

Conveniently near downtown and a major transportation hub, the Little Saigon, Japantown, Chinatown-International District is home to 6,000 residents, over a 100 percent increase since the 90s. The Little Saigon, Japantown, Chinatown-International District is the only centrally-located neighborhood featuring a healthy diversity of housing ranging from attractive subsidized apartments to high-end condominiums. The neighborhood's balanced residential mix includes new immigrants, families, young professionals, couples, and seniors representing a wide range of ethnicities and incomes.

Many of the neighborhood's residents make up the 6,000 people that work in the Little Saigon, Japantown, and Chinatown-International District each day. The neighborhood's broad range of professional offices, restaurants, shops, services, and non-profits provide a wealth of job opportunities. With access to affordable housing and service providers in the neighborhood, many Chinatown International District workers can afford to live close to their jobs. Workers living outside the neighborhood use nearby transit connections such as Union Station to quickly get to and from home. Professional offices and work places are interspersed with housing throughout the neighborhood.

The neighborhood's newer developments have been carefully integrated into its existing fabric. There is a gradual transition between its historic buildings and the residential high-rises that have replaced previously vacant lots along the neighborhood's borders. The refurbished historic buildings remain a source of pride for the community and provide a unique glimpse into the history of one of Seattle's oldest neighborhoods. The sidewalks and open spaces, featuring a wealth of Asian-style public art and landmarks, are bathed in natural light during the day and well-lit and safe at night. Asian-themed way-finding signs lead the path to neighborhood green spaces where residents and workers go to retreat from the city's hustle and bustle. Families from across the region visit the neighborhood parks for year-round festivals and cultural celebrations and cheering can often be heard from neighborhood sports fields.

### **Historic Core – Jackson St. to Weller St**

The Chinatown International District's historic core has survived decades of neglect and is now home to a thriving and diverse mix of housing, small businesses, professional offices, community services,

and cultural amenities. The neighborhood's historic buildings, considered by many to be the soul of the Chinatown International District, have been renovated and their Asian characteristic restored. The old brick buildings are part of a popular walking tour that also spotlights public art located throughout the neighborhood. In fact, a once-abandoned building is now one of the city's most popular 4-star hotels, internationally celebrated for its historic details.

The historic core is the neighborhood's cultural center and the destination for hundreds of visitors each year. Visitors ride the streetcar from the Seattle waterfront to Jackson St., a pedestrian-friendly boulevard lined with dozens of Asian-inspired shops and restaurants that connects the neighborhood with Pioneer Square and Little Saigon. Located within a few blocks of the historic core are dozens of museums, performance spaces, art galleries, theatres, independent bookstores, and parks. Visitors can learn about the neighborhood's rich heritage and spirit of community activism from sidewalk sculptures and art pieces sponsored by the Wing Luke Asian Museum. Alleyways featuring the neighborhood's signature murals that depict the community's human rights struggles are well-lit 24 hours a day. Many of the neighborhood's cultural attractions are open in the evening, contributing to its vibrant nightlife.

However, the historic core is not just a place for visitors. Housing within the historic core includes market-rate apartments, owner-occupied condominiums, and attractive low and mid-income, family-size units. The neighborhood continues to offer small, affordable commercial and retail spaces, welcoming new immigrants to start their own businesses and make a fresh beginning. A new park masks a parking structure that supports the businesses within the historic core.

From the early morning hours and into the evening, the historic core buzzes with the activity of residents, workers, and visitors. Days start with corner Asian grocery store owners helping customers pick out the sweetest fruits and freshest fish. Many shop owners have been operating from the same open-air markets for decades. Workers on their way to the office stop for coffee at neighborhood cafes. Later in the day, the same regulars will be back for mid-day bubble teas between running errands. Come nightfall, the neighborhood restaurants will beckon diners with the fragrant smells of pho, Chinese crab, and freshly shaved noodles. Those with enough stamina might then make their way to an art opening for Seattle's most famous Vietnamese artist or the launch of a new line of soy-based clothing hosted in the Northwest Asian American Theatre.

### **Japantown**

A linear park and plaza stretches along both sides of Washington St. from Pioneer Square to Kobe Terrace Park at 6<sup>th</sup> Ave S., linking Seattle's two popular historic districts. Hundreds of residents, workers, and visitors use the safe and beautifully landscaped pedestrian corridor each day, stopping to purchase small gifts at retail kiosks or buy lunch from food vendors. The park is considered a mini-art walk that includes the Foster White Gallery, the Tashiro Kaplan building, and the Greg Kucera Gallery.

Many new market-rate apartments and condominiums are located off the park, in the high density area north of Jackson St, between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. Residents have stunning views of the waterfront and the seasonal festivals hosted in the park. The park also provides easy access to the popular restaurants on Main St, widely known as the place to go for traditional Japanese cuisine. Panama Tea House remains a neighborhood landmark and popular gathering place for students and residents.

Another linear park runs on the eastside of Maynard Ave. from Danny Woo Garden to Jackson St, providing a sunlit connection between the north-end of the neighborhood and its historic core. The park reflects an Asian theme and features the work of local artists.

### **King Street Station Area**

The major transportation hub to the west of the Chinatown International District is used by thousands of office workers, residents, sports fans, exhibition guests, and tourists each day. The hub includes the renovated historic King Street Station where people access local buses, the streetcar, Sounder and Amtrak trains, and taxis. South of the station at Royal Brougham, Sound Transit's light rail station is humming with the activity of daily commuters. Between the two stations is an expansive esplanade over the railroad tracks, bridging the gap that once existed between the Chinatown International District, Pioneer Square, and the sports stadiums. The well-lit esplanade is lined with restaurants and retail shops that are open in the evening, contributing to the neighborhood's lively night life. Above the esplanade are high rise towers that include offices, condominiums, retail, and services.

### **Dearborn St.**

Anchored by the International District Village Square (IDVS), the southeast corner of the neighborhood is a vibrant hub of activity. To the south of IDVS, a Sound Transit light rail station at 8<sup>th</sup> Ave S has replaced the City's former Charles Street maintenance complex, connecting Seattle to the eastside via I-90. Although Dearborn St. remains a critical corridor for freight mobility and commuters, appropriate street signals and a marked pedestrian crossing allow seniors, families, and children to get safely from the station to IDVS. Hugging the station to the south and southeast is a community garage serving the station and the wider neighborhood.

Throughout the day, the sound of children's singing, laughing, and playing can be heard from this corner of the neighborhood. At IDVS, younger children learn their ABC's at the Denise Louie Education Center while teens play basketball at the community center gym. To the southwest, students are getting out of class from the new elementary school and making their way to the neighboring multi-purpose sports field. A paved trail connects the sports field to Jose Rizal Park in Beacon Hill and is used by walkers, runners, and bicyclists year-round.

A popular, pedestrian-friendly promenade runs along the south side of Dearborn St. Small shops offer products, services, and food, seven days a week and into the evenings. Many neighborhood residents who work in Chinatown International District use the promenade to walk safely to and from work during the day and evening. The appropriate width of the promenade ensures pedestrians remain at a safe distance from passing freight.

### **Southwest Chinatown International District**

New senior housing towers have replaced vacant lots along Dearborn St. The senior assisted-living facilities, just west of the IDVS Annex, provide elders with easy access to neighborhood health services and amenities. Seniors walk safely along the Dearborn St. promenade to the light rail station to visit with families living on the eastside.

The former INS building has been redeveloped into clean and affordable workforce housing and classrooms for Seattle Central Community College. The housing provides a vital community resource for those working in nearby food processing plants located in the light industrial area between Royal Brougham Way and Charles St. The nearby International Family Center also provides neighborhood workers as well as families, seniors, and students with a wide array of services and resources ranging from technology training to language, music, and art classes.

Below the senior housing towers, the streets buzz with activity from restaurants and shops that open onto wide sidewalks lined with trees and benches that catch the summer sun. The shops continue to the former Uwajimaya Village parking lot that is now a new hotel topped by condominiums. The hugely popular Fujimatsu retail complex north of Uwajimaya Village has helped to re-energize the

King Street core and is a popular shopping destination for hotel guests. Down the street, the historic Chinatown International District gates at 6<sup>th</sup> Ave and King St. is the most popular place in the neighborhood to take pictures.

### **Little Saigon**

Torn apart in the early 1960s by the construction of I-5, Little Saigon has experienced an amazing rebirth. Now a thriving, multi-cultural neighborhood, Little Saigon is home to dozens of small businesses and hundreds of residents. The neighborhood's largest land owner is a co-op made up of Little Saigon business owners who started out renting their retail spaces. As the activity hub for the region's Vietnamese-American community, neighborhood pioneers are often found sipping coffee at sidewalk cafes, chatting with recently arrived immigrants.

Little Saigon includes a diverse mix of affordable housing, apartments, and high-end condominiums and is home to renters, home-owners, singles, couples, and families. Excellent Metro bus and street car service makes the neighborhood a great place to live for downtown and hospital workers. The neighborhood park provides families with a safe green space for kids to run and play. The park hosts cultural events and celebrations throughout the year and its signature water sculpture is a popular meeting place for community gatherings. Community members have easy access to ESL and job preparedness classes hosted at the Vietnamese-American Cultural Center which also serves as a venue for performances and visual art exhibitions. Neighbors from the recently re-developed Yesler Terrace also use the many amenities Little Saigon has to offer.

### **Conclusion**

The Little Saigon, Japantown, Chinatown-International District is truly a unique example of thriving urban life. What some once doubted as an implausible vision to revitalize a struggling neighborhood has become reality. The successful revitalization of the Little Saigon, Japantown, Chinatown-International District is proof that economic diversity and vitality can be created through a balance of housing and businesses while protecting the community's existing culture.

## Neighborhood Priorities, Goals and Tools

The following outline of priorities, goals and implementation tools for the Little Saigon, Japantown, Chinatown-International District neighborhood was developed by a coalition of community stakeholders following the release of the preliminary draft report of the Livable South Downtown land use plan. Community stakeholders met regularly in January and February 2006 to discuss the draft report. We concluded that the report was limited in its scope and needed to address specific community issues in greater detail. The community developed a vision statement that described the future of the neighborhood and provided a description of the various amenities and structures, the types of people and businesses, and the general atmosphere we wanted to see in our neighborhood. We also identified the tools needed to accomplish the goals and targets in our vision statement, they are included at the end of this document.

As a result of our visioning process, we identified nine areas that should be addressed in the South Downtown Livable Communities study:

### The top five priority items:

- Vacant Buildings
- Balanced Development, especially for Housing
- Small Business Support
- Land Use
- Public Spaces and Healthy Environments

### Additional important items:

- Parking
- Transportation
- International Special Review District Board
- City Services - Public Safety and Public Schools

The following section provides an outline of the **Issues** that should be included in the Livable South Downtown study, the **Objectives** of what we are trying to accomplish, the **City Departments** we feel need to be involved in the discussion to help resolve our identified problem, and the **Tools** we feel need to be examined and implemented to effectively address the identified problem.

We expect that these issues will be addressed and incorporated into any final City recommendations and are reflected in the proposals put forward for future EIS evaluations. We also expect that the principles that we are advocating – balanced development, small business support, enhancing our public spaces - will be applied throughout the community, including large future developments such as the INS building, the Goodwill redevelopment, and the Charles Street Station.

We believe the redevelopment of South Downtown should require a comprehensive City approach. Consequently, zoning changes should not be developed in isolation from other City strategies, tools, resources, and/or programs necessary to achieve the (2030) vision that represents all our neighborhood interests.

## Priority Items for the Chinatown, Japantown, Little Saigon – International District

**Issue #1: *Rehabilitating Vacant Buildings*** – Vacant buildings are a blight to our neighborhood, a marketing problem, a public safety issue, and an eye-sore.

**Objective:** Renovate vacant buildings and restore historical physical characteristics of buildings

**City Departments:** Office of Housing, Department of Neighborhoods, Office of Economic Development, Department of Planning and Development (DPD)

**Tools:** To activate these buildings, we feel that additional incentive programs need to be created to help induce property owners to rehabilitate their property. All property owners should be informed of the various programs available to them in the language they are the most comfortable speaking in. However, if incentive programs have not encouraged these owners to act, the community will face the perpetual perception that we are unsafe, as well as a blighted community. Consequently, disincentive programs must also be utilized to put pressure on these owners to act.

### **Incentive Programs:**

1. *Historic Transfer of Development Rights* - route proceeds generated from new or (re)developments back into historic buildings allow additional zoning height for historical buildings for TDR sale only in the event that TDR proceeds are used to renovate the building;
  - Grant contingent height upon approval of bldg permit (only for TDR height)
2. Easier access to appropriate capital (lines of credit, bridge loans, commercial tenant, etc.)

### **Disincentive Programs:**

1. Enhanced code enforcement for life, safety, and health. Also, allow for the International Special Review District (ISR) to cite violations.
2. Eminent domain as the very last resort [provide proper info about eminent domain, there could be tax benefits for owner].

**Issue #2: *Balanced Development, especially for Housing*** – New development will put pressure on the land values in our neighborhood. Without proper programs in place, we will not have the financing to develop the balance of various income and housing types in our neighborhood.

**Objective:** Increase our housing capacity by as much as 10,000 units and 25,000 people. We want a diversity of housing choices, where a 1/3 of the units are low and moderate income, a 1/3 are workforce, and 1/3 are market-rate. Also, we want to increase the number of home-owners and families living in our neighborhood. In addition, we do not want to see any displacement of existing residents, and in the event of displacement there needs to be assistance to help these residents find affordable replacement units somewhere in the city.

**City Departments:** Office of Housing, DPD, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)

**Tools:** We are advocating for tools that would utilize a mixture of developer incentives and government financing and legislative policies to accomplish our balanced development objectives.

### **Developer incentives**

- Incentive zoning that would establish a percentage of units for affordable housing
  - Developers pay into a fund or contribute “in lieu of” benefits
- TDRs applied to affordable housing

- Including vacant lots

### **Government funds and legislative tools to be established**

- Increased loans or grants for affordable housing
- Growth-related Fund targeted for affordable housing
- Community Development Financing
- Land Banking
- Waiver of permit fees and other development costs for affordable housing projects
- Differential utility rates with lower rates to promote affordability and help offset costs for public benefit developments

***Issue #3: Small Business Support:*** The character of our neighborhood must be preserved by maintaining the number of small businesses in our community as much as possible, especially as land values increase through the rezoning process. In addition, where opportunities arise, small businesses opportunities should be enhanced.

**Objective:** Maintaining a presence of a variety of small businesses that are locally and independently-owned, and primarily Asian; A culture and atmosphere that is inviting to new businesses; 50% of businesses have been here since 2005 and 50% more business owners

**City Departments:** Office of Economic Development and DPD

**Tools:** We wish to utilize tools that can compensate displaced businesses and provide funding for businesses to enable them to adjust to a changing market; enhance the current BIA; and provide additional powers and/or financing to the community to help preserve the small businesses in the neighborhood.

### **Displacement mitigation**

- Displaced businesses receive fair and reasonable relocation assistance

### **Enhancing opportunities for businesses**

- Pool together lenders to develop fund for existing businesses to get loans or grants to upgrade and remain in neighborhood
- Support creation of a Business Assistance Center or technical assistance center
- Community Capital Development (working with VAEDA & CISC) or low interest loan program
- Support community-based projects, such as a night market, that will enhance small business startups

### **BIA**

- Extend Business Improvement Area (BIA) south of Dearborn to capture revenue and enhance funding.
- Establish a separate BIA in Little Saigon, but share costs of cleaning and public safety with CIDBIA.

### **Special community designation to help preserve small businesses**

- Waive B&O or reduced sales tax zones within a City-designated boundary
- Community Renewal Area
- Establish New Market Tax Credits
- Designated areas for small street frontages

**Issue #4: Land Use** – Although we are trying to increase our housing capacity, increasing heights must accompany appropriate public benefit tools to develop a livable South Downtown. A base should be established, and thereafter, a correlating public benefit program for developments that go above that base needs to be created.

**Objectives:** Develop housing in all parts of the neighborhood; preserve small businesses throughout the neighborhood; maintain parking capacity in the community

**City Department:** DPD

**Tools:** The following are legislative tools that addresses a multitude of community issues.

- Develop additional public benefit and design requirements if a building exceeds 75' feet in the historical core – if the zoning does go above 65'
- Street level housing in designated areas.
- Shared use agreements with private parking lots to allow for flexible use of these spaces
- Designate nodes w/in community reserved specifically for small businesses
- Development bonus that includes culture or education uses in development
- Allow for flexibility of uses in certain parts of the neighborhood that supports a diversity of employment opportunities

**Issue #5: Public Spaces** – To create a livable neighborhood in a dense, urban community, it is essential to enhance that neighborhood's public spaces.

**Objective:** Pedestrian-friendly, well-lit, and safe streets; Clean, safe alleyways that are active and usable; Healthy environments that address air pollution, litter, and pest control. Acquire and develop additional open space, especially in Little Saigon; Parks are safe, comfortable, and offer flexibility for performances, sports, markets, etc.; Green streets with plantings that reflect the multi-Asian community and culture, art work, and street furniture

**City Departments:** Parks and Recreation, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), DPD, Fleets and Facilities

**Tools:** Public spaces need funding from various sources, either through development fees or government funding programs.

#### **Open Spaces**

- Renew Parks Levy
- Green Space – both active and passive green space is needed in the neighborhood
- Eminent domain to acquire property for open space
- City allows Charles Street complex to be developed, including additional open space for the neighborhood.
- New development fees for open space and streetscape improvement (street furniture, lighting and other features) and/or open space acquisition
  - Developer works directly with community to develop open space in lieu of impact fees

#### **Environmental Health**

- Address community exposure to environmental pollutants and toxins
- Address disparate community environmental health indicators

### **Streetscape improvements for public safety**

- Brighter illumination in parks, streets, alleyways
- Crosswalks with blinking lights and/or other surface treatment installed in key locations
- Stop lights located at strategic locations
- Angled parking to help slow down traffic

### **Streetscape improvements**

- Increase number of awnings (for cover); encourage awnings for new construction
- Funding for Green Streets needs to be located
- Growth related fund or community development financing to finance public space enhancement.
- Relax SDOT regulations on alley uses

## **Additional Important Items**

***Issue #6: Special Review Board*** – the International Special Review District is an important regulatory body that enables the neighborhood to maintain its unique characteristics. However, we should review certain Review Board processes, as well as its guidelines to help the Review Board improve. Although, many feel this is an important issue, we do not feel that it is as urgent as the top five priority items.

**Objectives:** Maintain Asian Character in our buildings; maintain street-level retail consisting of independent locally-owned businesses; enhance the neighborhood through signage and public art, new construction should be designed and use materials that compliment the existing urban fabric of the neighborhood; support historical uses

**City Departments:** Department of Neighborhoods, DPD

**Tools:** These tools speak to the process, jurisdiction, and content of the review board

#### **Content**

- Maintain Historical code as overarching guideline for neighborhood; Design is compatible with Asian character in historic district
- New construction guidelines
- Review certain current design guidelines
  - Review guidelines to identify incongruities
- Include environmental design as part of review board purview (in context of crime prevention)

#### **Jurisdiction**

- Extend Review District overlay beyond core - Rainier to east and south of Dearborn

#### **Process**

- Streamline or simplify process to make it more user-friendly – look at administrative review for certain projects
- Revisit Review Board election and board selection process

**Issue #7: City Services** – increased city service will create a safer, livable community. Public Safety is a primary concern in this community.

**Objective:** Increase public safety by eliminating illegal activity in public spaces; public places are well-lit; environment is clean in regards to street trash, air pollution, and pests; open a Neighborhood Service Center that provides direct City services to the community; increase neighborhood infrastructure to match growth – power grid, sewage, water main, DSL access, storm water drainage, streets and sidewalks; finally supporting a public school in our community.

**City Departments:** Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle Police Department, Mayor's Office

**Tools:** Public Safety is a primary concern in this community.

#### **Police**

- Include Little Saigon in the same police precinct as Chinatown.
- Community policing with emphasis on Community Police Team (CPT)
- Neighborhood Police Station; Mobile Units
- Offer training programs to support multi lingual police officers (offer training)

#### **Neighborhood Service Centers** (*formerly called "little City Halls"*)

- Dedicate additional resources to get City staff to be based in the neighborhood

#### **Community Based Public Safety Programs**

Improve public safety communication within community (more resources to CAP and IDEC) GF

**Issue #8: Transportation** – Considering the number of individuals that will live, work and play in this neighborhood, enhancing transportation alternatives must be considered.

**Objective:** Easy access to a seamless multi-modal transportation system; Light-rail connection to the Eastside based in the ID, possibly at Charles St. Station; Streetcar runs up Jackson St., turns on 12<sup>th</sup> Ave and/or continues to 23<sup>rd</sup>; 80% of neighborhood workers walk or take public transit; Safe, comfortable, weather-protected transit stops

**Government Entity:** Sound Transit and King County Metro

**Tools:** Although the two government agencies involved in this issue are not associated with the City, the City needs to work with our community in helping us develop these public transit alternatives.

#### **Sound Transit**

- If next Sound Transit bond levy includes East-West connection - a station at 8<sup>th</sup> & Dearborn should be considered (currently part of Charles St. complex)
- Implement Sound Transit free ride zone for Light Rail & trolley
- Include streetcar in levy
- Extend streetcar up Jacksn and down 12<sup>th</sup>, as well as to 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave

#### **Metro**

- Extend free ride zone to 12<sup>th</sup> & Jackson
- Extend Street car up Jackson and down 12<sup>th</sup>, as well as to 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave

**Issue #9: Parking** – Parking is an ongoing problem in our neighborhood, which will intensify as new developments replace current surface parking lots. The increase in the residential population, employees, and desired designation points will additionally put a strain on our parking problem.

**Objective:** Reduce stadium parking in the neighborhood; Maintain short-term parking especially for small businesses; Develop New parking garage that blends within the neighborhood and/or is hidden underground

**City Departments:** SDOT, Fleet and Facilities

**Tools:**

- Keeping parking meter revenue within neighborhood
  - Money collected from public parking should be directed to Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and funds toward new community parking structure
- Authorize BIA or other community based agency to be parking developer and/or operator of a new parking structure (could we redevelop part of Charles Street for this purpose?)

# Analysis

Community stakeholders are concerned that zoning changes developed without thorough analysis of the goals and issues identified by our community may lead to unintended consequences. Consequently, we feel that an analysis of the following issues (Balanced Housing Development, Small Business Retention, Land Use, Infrastructure, and Urban Design) will help us ultimately identify the proper tools needed to achieve the neighborhood's desired goals.

In order for our community to better understand the City's recommendations and the potential impacts these recommendations may create in the study area, the neighborhood has identified six categories that need to be analyzed on a deeper level. Analysis should concentrate on the Chinatown-International District Neighborhood Planning boundaries and the area south of Charles Street and west of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## **1. Balanced Housing Development**

Achieving balanced housing development of various income levels and housing types is a goal of our neighborhood. City departments, like DPD and Office of Housing (OH), should include the following in its analysis:

### ***Current units of housing***

How many units of housing currently exist in this neighborhood?

- What is the income breakdown per housing unit?
- Identify "at risk" affordable housing units (units that do not have a long-term covenant)

### ***Capacity of housing***

- What is the projected number of units that will be produced under the current zoning?
  - How does that compare to the 10,000 units recommended by the 2030 vision?
- What is the projected number of units that will be produced under the proposed changes?
  - How does that compare to the 10,000 units recommended by the 2030 vision?

### ***Anticipated housing production by type: size, income, ownership structure versus rental***

How many subsidized and market rate units will need to be produced:

- To achieve our community goal of 1/3 affordable low/moderate income, 1/3 workforce, 1/3 market rate?
- At the comprehensive plan's goal of 20% of new units up to 50% of median income and 17% of new units at 51% to 80% median income?
- Determine the number of condos and rentals that will be produced?

### ***Mechanism to achieve needed subsidy for low-income and workforce housing***

In order to reach the comprehensive plan and our community's subsidized housing goals of 1/3 low-income and 1/3 workforce housing, what funds need to be produced by public and private sources?

- How many units of low-income and how many units of affordable workforce housing can be produced under an incentive height-zoning program (which is one possible program)?
- What is the base?
- What is the incentive height?

## **2. Small Business Retention**

Many small businesses are in danger of being displaced, consequently an analysis of the sustainability of small, minority and emerging businesses in substandard or underdeveloped buildings with proposed changing land uses should be conducted.

### ***Current Conditions***

- What are the current rent levels for existing ID businesses?
- What are the current capital needs?
  - Do they need financing to enhance their business and where?
- What markets do they serve?
- Have they sought financing?
  - Have they secured that financing?
  - If not, why?
- Would their landlord assist in helping to improve their space?
- Which businesses are housed in “under-built” structures in the community?

### ***Anticipated impacts on land values due to land use changes***

What are the anticipated increases in rent levels 5 years from now? 10 years from now?

## **3. Land Use**

We would like to better understand the value that is being created for current property owners after various areas in this neighborhood are upzoned. We can then evaluate the type of public benefit programs that can be created through the assistance of private and public sources.

### ***Land Values***

- What is the current fair market value of land throughout the neighborhood?
- What will the anticipated fair market value of land be in various zones after a specific area in the community is rezoned? In 5 years? In 10 years?

### ***Land Use***

- What are the anticipated residential types and sizes under the proposed zoning?
- What are the likely uses under the proposed zoning?
  - What will the cost be for such development?
- What existing uses are likely to be changed by anticipated development patterns?

### ***Historical Preservation***

What would the implications be if the heights were uniformly increased to 120' throughout the Chinatown core, including the historical designated district.

### ***Public Benefits***

Evaluate how public amenities will be achieved with the proposed zoning, such as:

- Publicly owned open spaces
- Streetscape improvements adjacent to the development

- Streetscape improvements for “specially” designated streets for our neighborhood
- Public art

#### **4. Infrastructure**

The Chinatown, Japantown, Little Saigon - International District is located in a community with aging infrastructure; consequently new developments must be aware of any additional costs that they might have to encumber as they start construction.

- Are there any unknown City infrastructure development costs related to increased density?
- Identify the infrastructure needs and costs to sustain the proposed level of development, such as:
  - Electrical/power capacity
  - Water/sewer/storm system capacity
  - Gas and other utility capacity
- What is the reasonable City versus neighborhood contribution for these infrastructural needs?
- Would there be additional costs to existing users if infrastructure improvements were incurred above normal costs?
- Pedestrian safety – is there a need to identify trouble spots in the neighborhood with greater traffic circulation within the neighborhood?

#### **5. Urban Design**

- An urban design study should examine the height impacts on the surrounding environment and see if these taller buildings fit into the context of this historical community.
- What are the view, wind, and solar impacts on the pedestrian environment with the full build out at the proposed zoning changes?
- What public view corridors need to be protected and from where?
  - Are there any additional views that should be protected that do not currently exist?
- Does the scale of these new buildings at the proposed new heights fit within the context of their surrounding environment?

#### **6. Parking**

Identify the parking needs to sustain the existing residential and commercial base, and the projected parking needs with the projected build out.