



May 7, 2014

Scott Andrews, Commission Chair
John Mohlis, Commission Secretary
Commissioner Charles Wilhoite
Commissioner Aneshka Dickson
Commissioner Tom Kelly
Patrick Quinton, Executive Director
Portland Development Commission
222 NW Fifth Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97209-3859

Mayor Charlie Hales
Commissioner Nick Fish
Commissioner Dan Saltzman
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Commissioner Steve Novick
1221 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204

RE: Old Town Chinatown Community Association's Response to
PDC's 5-Year Action Plan for Old Town Chinatown

Old Town Chinatown is a neighborhood on the brink of great progress. While there have been incredible successes in several parts of the district over the past decade, we have not been able to sustain the economic momentum and positive revitalization for the entire district. The successful implementation of the 5-Year Action Plan for Old Town Chinatown will bring critical resources and actions to the district that will have an immediate impact and help our community achieve the goals of an economically healthy, safer, revitalized, balanced and prosperous neighborhood.

The Old Town Chinatown Community Association Board appreciates the enormous collaborative efforts between the Portland Development Commission and the City of Portland. This Action Plan is very much a Community Development Plan based on an holistic neighborhood view rather than a plan based on single, targeted catalytic developments and brings collaborative efforts from over 12 City of Portland Bureaus to find tools and resources to help with the preservation, development and revitalization for the district.

We enthusiastically support the implementation of PDC's 5-Year Action Plan for Old Town Chinatown and offer additional recommendations in key areas of the strategies that include safety and livability, neighborhood investment, transportation, business vitality and district management:

Public Safety and Livability

We have heard from all sectors of our community that this is a top priority - this was reaffirmed at the Community Forum held on April 9th where Public Safety and Cleanliness received more than twice as many votes as any other single issue for our community. We make the following endorsements and recommendations to the PDC 5-Year Plan:

- We support the request for \$500,000 per year for FY 14-15 for increased police resources and walking beats.
- We request increased funding for the Mobile Crisis Unit and the Police Behavioral Unit.
- We request that PDC and the City coordinate with Multnomah County to increase funds for drug and alcohol rehabilitation services (including recovery beds) and mental health services for individuals residing in Old Town Chinatown.
- We request that the City restore funding for a Multnomah County District Attorney dedicated to enforce the Old Town Chinatown Drug Impact Area.
- We request that the City enforce agreements that address the concentration of social services and queuing in Old Town Chinatown.
- We request funding for public restrooms in Old Town Chinatown, ie: the Portland Loo
- We request that the City and PDC implement and/or support measures to improve cleanliness in Old Town Chinatown - this may include working with the Community Association and Clean and Safe to enhance services provided by the BID.
- We strongly support the inclusion of Community Livability Grants in the Plan.
- We request that the City adequately fund the enforcement of existing noise ordinances.

Built Environment

The Community Association has long prioritized the addition of market rate housing in the neighborhood to create a more balanced residential mix. As home to two nationally registered historic districts, the New Chinatown/Japantown National Historic District and the Skidmore Old Town Historic Landmark District, we also value our rich multi-ethnic history and prioritize preservation of our unique physical assets. We make the following endorsements and recommendations to the PDC 5-Year Plan:

- We support efforts to encourage the development of market rate and student housing, including implementation of SDC exemptions and MULTE tax abatement for housing up to 100% MFI.
- We believe the TIF resources of our district should not be restricted to the redevelopment of commercial property and that PDC funds should be used to develop and preserve mixed use and residential projects.
- We request that PDC implement a grant or forgivable loan program to cover the cost of seismic upgrades for historic buildings, including mixed-use properties, which make up the majority of contributing structures in the New Chinatown/Japantown National Historic District. Code-required seismic upgrades are currently economically

infeasible and deter owners from investing in/rehabilitating valuable historic assets of the community.

- We explicitly support use of PDC/TIF funds for redevelopment of historic properties that will house historic, museum, and multi-cultural uses.
- We reinforce our commitment to existing affordable housing in Old Town Chinatown and the City's no-net loss policy and support the preservation/rehabilitation of existing affordable units with PHB set aside funds.
- We support and encourage the disposition and redevelopment of PDC-owned properties in the district.

Transportation and Connectivity

Our community suffers from various physical barriers that negatively affect safety and economic development. We make the following endorsements and recommendations to the PDC 5-Year Plan:

- We request that PBOT conduct a traffic study and work with the Community Association to craft a plan that addresses access and circulation. This study should look at best practices in other cities for both day and night uses. We need traffic management and amenities to increase access and circulation during the day and night, including interconnectivity between both sides of Burnside.
- We recommend that the current Street Closure ordinance be allowed to sunset.
- We need a parking strategy for the district based on a comprehensive study of existing resources and current and future needs.
- We request that PDC funds be used to pay for structured parking on sites that will facilitate development of surface parking lots.
- We request that PDC funds be used to develop a central parking structure that can be used to assemble a reserve of preservation parking stalls that can be used to entitle parking spaces for existing commercial or residential buildings with inadequate or no parking and to support new development in the district.

Marketing, District Management, Retail Strategy

We make the following endorsements and recommendations to the PDC 5-Year Plan:

- We support matching funds for District Management as long as the District Management Plan and District Manager job description are crafted by and controlled by the Community Association. The District Manager should work for and report to the Community Association.
- We support matching funds for Marketing as long as the marketing plan is controlled by the Community Association.
- The Old Town Chinatown Community Association must develop a business and marketing plan that demonstrates financial sustainability.
- We support a retail strategy for Old Town Chinatown that is based on the results of a marketing study and input from the Community Association about the types of retail targeted for recruitment and retention. We would like the PBA to work closely with the Community Association to develop the retail strategy for our neighborhood.
- We believe the retail strategy should include support for existing neighborhood businesses.

This 5-Year Action Plan is the community plan and roadmap to a more prosperous Old Town Chinatown. It is an action plan, and investment plan and it is important that we don't miss this opportunity for the neighborhood. Thank you for your partnership as we work together to revitalize one of Portland's oldest, most unique, and most exciting neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Howard Weiner, Chair

Helen Ying, Vice Chair

David Hoof, Treasurer

Jacqueline Peterson-Loomis, Secretary

Patrick Gortmaker, Board Member

Jane Demarco, Board Member

Paul Verhoeven, Board Member

Zach Fruchtengarten, Board Member

Jesse Burke, Board Member

Gloria Lee, Board Member

Dan Lenzen, Board Member

Sarah Stevenson, Board Member