

Chinatown International District (CID) Framework and Implementation Plan ISRD Guideline & Design Workgroup Meeting

February 15, 2018

2:00 – 3:30 PM

Bush Hotel, 409 Maynard Ave. S., CMP Hall

Participants:

City staff -- DON Historic Preservation Program – *Rebecca Frestedt, ISRD Coordinator & Sarah Sodt, Seattle Historic Preservation Officer* and Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)– *Vinita Goyal, Gary Johnson and Janet Shull*

Facilitator: *Angela Powell (Imago)*

Consultant Team: *Grace Kim and Margaret Knight (Schemata), Susan Boyle (BOLA)*

Work Group (WG) members and community stakeholders – Quynh Pham, Jessa Timmer, Valerie Neng, Rie Shinanti, Andrew Tran, Betty Lau, David Della, Tomio Moriguchi, Tiernan Martin (ISRD Board, WG co-lead), MaryKate Ryan, Sergio Legon-Talamoni (ISRD Board), Miye Moriguchi (WG co-lead), Shanti Breznau (WG co-lead), Joshua Brevoort, Michael Jurich, Erica Chung, Tanya Woo, Stephanie Hsie (ISRD Board), Mike Omura, Russ Williams (ISRD Board)

Agenda

1. Welcome by Angela Powell and the Work Group Co-leads

2. Introduction and Process overview

Schemata Workshop and BOLA

The design consultants from Schemata Workshop and BOLA provided background on their firms and past relevant work, including working the development of design guidelines for the Central District. There was a presentation of a map recognizing geographic sub-areas within the District, summarizing previous documents that they reviewed and a discussion of overarching common themes from their review of documents (such as: promoting Asian character and culturally responsive design, preservation, CPTED principles and how new construction fits in.

3. Overview of background data and What to expect looking forward

Schemata Workshop

Guidelines from other west coast cities are of consultant's review:

Portland, OR (New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District)

Vancouver, BC (Chinatown)

Los Angeles, CA (Little Tokyo)

Examination of Chinatown International District -- Architecture and infrastructure dating back to early 1900s. Urban conditions influence why and how buildings are laid out the way they are. Recognition of differences between areas east and west of I-5. Little Saigon developed with post-war auto orientation, for instance. While conditions between examples differ, analysis is similar.

Guidelines can promote welcoming places through building orientation, streetscape design, each example is specific to its context. Historical and cultural preservation extends beyond “adding flavor” to building design.

Common themes from consultants’ review (from slides).

- Promoting Asian character design (through signage and other elements)
- Ensuring public spaces are designed with a welcoming and pedestrian-friendly focus
- Contextually appropriate alterations to historic buildings through adherence to the Secretary of Interiors Standards
- Feeling safe in the streets –accessibility/CPTED

Questions arising from review (from slides):

- What does Asian character design mean?
- How does new development address and incorporate Asian character?
- What is culturally responsive design? And when does it become cultural appropriation or ornamentation without meaning?
- What public spaces do the community find welcoming?
- What do new buildings in a historic/cultural neighborhood look/feel like?

How do desires of community and physical expression translate into building form?

4. Open discussion, facilitated by Angela Powell

Overview of guidelines and ground rules, consistent with those used in the full Advisory Committee. All agreed to adhere to them.

See photos of flip charts from breakouts.

Participants’ report back – The following is a summary of questions and themes raised during the report back session. Recognition that some of these are “launch pad” topics, not directly related to the design guidelines, for future discussion and deeper exploration.

- Community concern about affordable housing and retail spaces. More concern about preserving culture through diversity of housing/spaces than design.
- Consider creating an Ethnic Building District, how can urban design support and perpetuate businesses?
- How to grow local businesses when District expands?
- How to build guidelines around multiple Asian groups? What type of structure/building is functional to meet the needs of current community members in the neighborhood? How do you make them more functional?
- Function originally dictated design

- 1970s and non-contributing buildings (like banks) that have Asian character that we should look at
- For buildings that bridge old and new, are there examples we can point to?
- Design is not enough, it's also use. What have historic uses been?
- Guidelines (GL) that reflect distinct cultural characteristics for neighborhood, desire for more specific GL. Current GL too broad.
- GL need to be more thoughtful about how materials are used in new construction.
- For a lot of projects that the board sees are really small, but gems...Proposal for developing a condensed list of GL to address smaller projects.
- What does a welcoming streetscape look like? Activities for elders.
- Parking and parking access – frustration with interdepartmental decision-making process
- What does it look like to be culturally appropriate or responsive to different cultures?
- Informal activities in storefront entries, encouraging informal uses
- How to use existing space that isn't efficiently constructed?
- Supporting integration/permeability of businesses and social space
- GL should be more user-friendly and acknowledge different users
- Process integration, limit the quantity of meetings. How can priority review apply to commercially affordable space?

5. Next Steps and Closure

Angela Powell

March 1st, walking tour of area west of I-5.

Tentative discussion about future tours, including Little Saigon.