

Chinatown-International District

Neighborhood Strategic Plan 2022-2032

10-Year Vision ❀❀❀❀❀❀❀❀

Seattle's Chinatown-International District is a distinct, culturally-rich community in Seattle where those who have long faced a history of injustice find safety and belonging, residents of all ages and backgrounds thrive, locally-owned businesses prosper, and residents and visitors activate public spaces.

The community, located on the ancestral land of the Duwamish people, continually honors its history as a home for generations of Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants and refugees, while also offering an affordable, healthy foundation for success and prosperity for all who call it home.

About the Project

The Chinatown-International District (CID) is a historically significant and culturally rich community in Seattle's south downtown that has seen decades of insufficient investment, harmful public policies, and institutional racism. In recent years, the community has faced new public and private development pressures, the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and a rise in anti-Asian hate crimes and violence. In 2019, several CID organizations came together as the CID Visioning Advisory Group to identify how the community can have a stronger voice and influence in the face of these multiple pressures. With funding from the City of Seattle, the group has sponsored a community process to:

- Build a structure for inclusive community engagement and decision making,
- Ensure community self-determination in projects that impact the CID, and
- Create a long-term community vision and plan.

The result is the Chinatown-International District Neighborhood Strategic Plan 2022-2032, based on input from hundreds of CID community members over the past two years. It shares community concerns and strengths and outlines a 10-year vision, goals and strategies for the CID, summarized here.



CID Visioning Advisory Group Members

- API Coalition Advocating Together for Health (APICAT)
- Chong Wa Benevolent Association
- Chinatown International District Business Improvement Area (CIDBIA)
- Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC)
- Denise Louie Education Center
- Friends of Chinatown-Seattle
- Friends of Japantown
- Friends of Little Sài Gòn
- Hop Sing Tong
- International Community Health Services (ICHS)
- InterIm Community Development Association (ICDA)
- Lee Family Association
- Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (SCIDPDA)
- Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience
- Yee Fung Toy Family Association

Project Support

- Funder:**
City of Seattle
- Lead Project Consultants:**
Trang Tu, Tu Consulting and Mary Murray, MEMconsultants
- Community Survey Lead:**
MEMconsultants

Goals and Strategies

Goals and strategies are grouped into six topics that reflect the top concerns among CID community members:

Community Safety & Health

Goal 1: Individual and community safety, health and wellness.

Strategies

- 1-A.** Address community public safety issues, including desired roles and levels of community and/or City policing.
- 1-B.** Ensure availability of community-based health care and social supports, with a priority on residents.

Business & Economic Strength

Goal 2: Thriving neighborhood businesses, including preservation of longstanding/legacy businesses who wish to stay in the CID.

Strategies

- 2-A.** Stabilize, support, strengthen and prevent displacement of CID businesses including investment in and technical assistance for neighborhood legacy businesses.
- 2-B.** Encourage and promote customer activity in the neighborhood through increased social, community and business activities during the day as well as evenings.
- 2-C.** Attract and promote additional and ethnically diverse businesses in the neighborhood that contribute to its distinct, culturally rich character.

Neighborhood Character, Culture & History

Goal 3: The Asian culture and history central to the CID's identity is preserved and honored, and other communities that are part of the neighborhood's diverse history and identity are also recognized and celebrated.

Strategies

- 3-A.** Improve and activate public spaces so they are welcoming and safe, honor CID history and culture, foster health and wellness, allow for community connection and attract customers.
- 3-B.** Encourage an intentional mix of land uses (residential, commercial, public spaces) that harnesses desired development while avoiding displacement of existing residents and businesses.
- 3-C.** Encourage continued rehabilitation of historic buildings including looking at new strategies to provide financial support, incentives, and technical assistance to building owners, and considering emergency planning.
- 3-D.** Adopt and implement revised guidelines for the International Special Review District (ISRD) that support community values.

Housing

Goal 4: Housing available for both longtime/existing residents, particularly elders and families, and for residents who can strengthen customer base to support neighborhood businesses.

Strategies

- 4-A.** Prevent displacement of residents, especially longtime and vulnerable elders; and provide opportunities to repair/undo displacement that has already happened.
- 4-B.** Reduce risk of and address homelessness and evictions.
- 4-C.** Work toward a mix of housing balanced in affordability (low-income, middle-income, workforce, and market rate housing) and type of housing (family housing, elder housing).
- 4-D.** Address concerns of rental tenants about building maintenance and security, and renter rights and empowerment; and at the same time support and address needs of building owners in their relationships with tenants.

Transportation & Mobility

Goal 5: Ease of getting around within and to and from the neighborhood, with a priority on residents, particularly elders.

Strategies

- 5-A.** Balance neighborhood needs for diverse transportation capacity including: parking needs of different types of users; pedestrian safety; and public transportation.
- 5-B.** Address traffic and congestion that negatively impacts the CID.
- 5-C.** Advocate for inclusive access across all transportation modes and infrastructure.

Community Strength & Self-Determination

Goal 6: A CID inclusive of diverse groups and across generations, who use collective voice and power for community self-determination the CID's growth and development.

Strategies

- 6-A.** Address divides among communities and across generations, foster healing and trust.
- 6-B.** Support community leadership, social connections, civic engagement and knowledge building.
- 6-C.** Bring strong community voice and advocacy on external projects and policies so that public and private entities: center community priorities and goals; provide mitigation and public benefits; maintain public infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, parks and public spaces); and invest in CID businesses, properties and communitywide efforts.
- 6-D.** Explore community ownership of commercial and residential property as a possible vehicle for greater community control and self-determination.

Chinatown-International District 10-Year Vision

Seattle's Chinatown-International District is a distinct, culturally-rich community in Seattle where those who have long faced a history of injustice find safety and belonging, residents of all ages and backgrounds thrive, locally-owned businesses prosper, and residents and visitors activate public spaces.

The community, located on the ancestral land of the Duwamish people, continually honors its history as a home for generations of Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants and refugees, while also offering an affordable, healthy foundation for success and prosperity for all who call it home.



Community Strengths

Community Strengths. Despite the broad range of needs and concerns in the CID, community members also spoke to many strengths in the community. These include:

- **A history of successful community activism** that continues across generations.
- Community advocacy that has achieved **significant improvements and investments** in the CID including more affordable housing, a library, community center, parks development, health clinic, childcare, and senior programs.
- Improvements that have attracted **new businesses including younger business owners, and new and younger families** to live in the neighborhood.
- **Mutual support during the COVID pandemic**, including support for local businesses, murals and neighborhood beautification, and COVID testing and health volunteers.
- **Mutual respect and hope across older and younger generations**, even as there may be tension or conflict.
- **Community organizations** that often collaborate even though they may sometimes compete.
- **Community leadership** that has evolved and now may be different from the past, in not relying on only a few well-known leaders but being held more and shared by many leaders.
- **Breadth and diversity of groups and people who care** about the CID and want to support the neighborhood, despite disagreements and tensions.

Core Values for CID Community Process

Transparency and Trust

- Be clear and open about the process and decision-making.
- Report back how input and feedback was used or informed the work.

Collaboration and Shared Purpose

- Reach back to reach forward, embracing history between neighborhoods to move forward.
- Focus on working together for the common good.
- Work through differences of opinion respectfully and constructively.
- Be open to mistakes, learning, and improving over time.

Civility

- Create spaces where people are comfortable sharing opinions.
- Listen and understand others' ideas and perspectives.

Inclusion and Equity

- **Recognize and work to mitigate the impact of historic inequities**
 - Build shared understanding of the roots of inequities and systems of power.
 - Create opportunities for community healing.
- **Infuse equity into every aspect of the work**
 - Include diverse people, voices, ideas and information and recognize different communities equally.
 - Prioritize underrepresented people and communities, and those most impacted.
 - Offer multiple and varied opportunities for participation, including responding to the needs of specific groups and/or cultures.
 - Avoid overtapping "the usual suspects."
 - Do not tokenize or co-opt people.
- **Level the playing field. Ensure people can participate meaningfully:**
 - Address barriers to participation such as language, knowledge gaps, logistics and transportation, and family support.
 - Invest in building community knowledge and capacity to engage meaningfully.
 - Ensure high-quality language support.
 - Value community members' time by offering compensation for participation.

Issue Areas, Goals and Strategies

Issue Area 1. Community Safety & Health (CSH)



Goal 1: Individual and community safety, health and wellness.

Strategies

- 1-A.** Address community public safety issues, including desired roles and levels of community and/or City policing.
- 1-B.** Ensure availability of community-based health care and social supports, with a priority on residents.

Issue Area 2. Business & Economic Strength (BES)



Goal 2: Thriving neighborhood businesses, including preservation of longstanding/legacy businesses¹ who wish to stay in the CID.

Strategies

- 2-A.** Stabilize, support, strengthen and prevent displacement of CID businesses including investment in and technical assistance for neighborhood legacy businesses.
- 2-B.** Encourage and promote customer activity in the neighborhood through increased social, community and business activities during the day as well as evenings.
- 2-C.** Attract and promote additional and ethnically diverse businesses in the neighborhood that contribute to its distinct, culturally rich character.

Issue Area 3. Neighborhood Character, Culture & History (NCCH)



Goal 3: The Asian culture and history central to the CID's identity is preserved and honored, and other communities that are part of the neighborhood's diverse history and identity are also recognized and celebrated.

Strategies

- 3-A.** Improve and activate public spaces so they are welcoming and safe, honor CID history and culture, foster health and wellness, allow for community connection and attract customers.
- 3-B.** Encourage an intentional mix of land uses (residential, commercial, public spaces) that harnesses desired development while avoiding displacement of existing residents and businesses.
- 3-C.** Encourage continued rehabilitation of historic buildings including looking at new strategies to provide financial support, incentives, and technical assistance to building owners, and considering emergency planning.
- 3-D.** Adopt and implement revised guidelines for the International Special Review District (ISRD) that support community values.

¹City of Seattle defines a legacy business as a "small business that supports community identity and stability through its long tenure."

Issue Area 4. Housing (H)



Goal 4: Housing available for both longtime/existing residents, particularly elders and families, and for residents who can strengthen customer base to support neighborhood businesses.

Strategies

- 4-A.** Prevent displacement of residents, especially longtime and vulnerable elders; and provide opportunities to repair/undo displacement that has already happened.
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- 4-C.** Work toward a mix of housing balanced in affordability (low-income, middle-income, workforce , and market rate housing) and type of housing (family housing, elder housing).
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Issue Area 5. Transportation & Mobility (TM)



Goal 5: Ease of getting around within and to and from the neighborhood, with a priority on residents, particularly elders.

Strategies

- 5-A.** Balance neighborhood needs for diverse transportation capacity including: parking needs of different types of users; pedestrian safety; and public transportation.
- 5-B.** Address traffic and congestion that negatively impacts the CID.
- 5-C.** Advocate for inclusive access across all transportation modes and infrastructure.

Issue Area 6. Community Strength & Self-Determination (CSS)



Goal 6: A CID inclusive of diverse groups and across generations, who use collective voice and power for community self-determination the CID's growth and development.

Strategies

- 6-A.** Address divides among communities and across generations, foster healing and trust.
- 6-B.** Support community leadership, social connections, civic engagement and knowledge building.
- 6-C.** Bring strong community voice and advocacy on external projects and policies so that public and private entities: center community priorities and goals; provide mitigation and public benefits; maintain public infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, parks and public spaces); and invest in CID businesses, properties and communitywide efforts.
- 6-D.** Explore community ownership of commercial and residential property as a possible vehicle for greater community control and self-determination.

Community Strengths

- **A history of successful community activism** that continues across generations and that has led to significant improvements and investments in the CID.
- Improvements that have attracted **new businesses including younger business owners**, and **new and younger families** to live in the neighborhood.
- **Mutual support during the COVID pandemic**, including support for local businesses, murals and neighborhood beautification, and COVID testing and health volunteers.
- **Mutual respect and hope across older and younger generations.**
- **Collaboration among community organizations.**
- **Community leadership** that has evolved and is held among a diverse range of leaders.
- **Breadth and diversity of groups and people who care** about the CID and want to support the neighborhood.

