

## Community Discussion, Vision and Goals

---

The Boston Chinatown Community, lead by Chinatown Master Plan 2010, a collaboration of community members, community-based organizations, and local businesses has undertaken a community planning process to update its 2000 Master Plan. A core component of that process is bringing the community together to create a unified vision for the future of Chinatown. A neighborhood visioning was held at the Metropolitan during the evening of Wednesday, July 22nd, 2009. Approximately one hundred Chinatown residents, students, and business owners participated.

### Underlying Theme

A significant **underlying theme** that emerged out of the discussion is the **sustainability of the neighborhood over time**.

In general participants expressed an awareness of Chinatown's changing role and seemed to feel a sense of urgency to address these changes. The discussion seemed to conclude that as the number of Asian Americans continue to increase at a dramatic rate and land uses and population changes occur in adjacent areas, there is a need to make a conscious effort to define and actively protect the role of Chinatown as a regional hub of an ever-expanding network of satellite communities. An additional theme was the weakening sense of community and cultural identity related to the aforementioned changes.

### Guiding Principles

Four **guiding principles** emerged from the theme of neighborhood sustainability.

- Define and reinforce Chinatown's regional role as hub of Asian American cultural life.
- Protect and strengthen Chinatown's sense of community and its identity as a unique and important ethnic neighborhood.
- Increase interaction and integration with greater Boston area while still retaining identity.
- Improve community organization and increase political involvement in order to achieve community goals.



## Elements of Vision

**Core elements** of the community's vision for Chinatown represent ideas around which relative consensus was noted or which seemed consistent with other thoughts as suggested by the workshop participants.

- Chinatown will be a vibrant hub at the center of a network of suburban satellite communities. It will serve as a regional base for Asian American culture and provide services to the Asian American community.
- Chinatown will continue to be a gateway for new immigrants, providing well-organized and accessible services and affordable housing opportunities.
- Chinatown will be a more sustainable community supporting a variety of residents of all ages and ethnicities.
- Chinatown will provide a variety of housing types for a range of lifestyles, and income groups.
- Chinatown will attract new and diversified economic development and will support and train its resident workforce.
- Chinatown will have good air quality, less noise, and a clean and healthy environment.
- Chinatown will improve public safety including reducing crime and increasing safe crossings for pedestrians.
- Chinatown will provide vibrant civic spaces including a library and parks and playgrounds with gathering spaces for all ages.
- Chinatown will encourage civic participation and political representation to enable its residents and business owners to be heard.

## Preliminary Supporting Goals

These goals relate directly to the elements of the vision, begin with broad and general statements and will be molded into clear strong declarations of intent.

- Define the neighborhood's edges and ensure that they develop in ways that are compatible with Chinatown's land uses.
- Expand the number and range of housing options in order to serve and sustain a strong and balanced residential community.
- Create a balanced economy that provides goods and services for local residents as well as the regional Asian American community, is an integral component of Boston's cultural economy, provides both beginning and advanced employment opportunities for local residents, and is compatible with the needs of the residential community.
- Build and maintain a clean and healthy environment, free from litter, unreasonable noise and pollution.
- Increase the level of public safety to ensure that residents and visitors to Chinatown are comfortable and safe in all areas at all hours.
- Develop and support a more expansive network of public facilities, streetscapes, parks and community spaces that help build the social capital of Chinatown by providing accessible, clean, safe and inspiring places where all members of the community can come together.



## Discussion Highlights

### ***Sustainability of the neighborhood***

how the neighborhood can accommodate change and transform itself into a sustainable community

### ***Affordable housing***

majority noted as important community need

lack of consensus about the type and amount of affordable housing

### ***Economic development***

critical for sustainability

suggested strategies included façade and streetscape improvements, increasing job training, supporting small businesses, and encouraging diversification

### ***Parking***

lack of parking and expense of using existing spaces may result in lost business

### ***Library***

most frequently mentioned service needed

### ***Civic participation***

key to future

includes communication, organization, and negotiation with developers and adjacent institutions

### ***Cleanliness***

overwhelmingly noted as most needed improvement to make the environment healthy and attractive

### ***Culture and sense of community***

some perceive weakening of community spirit and changes to the culture

reinforce role as hub with cultural center and events

### ***Additional Priority Concerns***

- Bilingual communication
- Education, including ESL
- Traffic issues, including road repair and pedestrian safety
- Benefits for elderly, including more housing
- Public safety, including more police presence

