

Appendix

Summary of Small Group Discussions

Question 1

“As we are working to update the 2000 master plan, please think back over the last decade and consider what has changed. What has gotten better in Chinatown over the last 10 years? What has gotten worse?”

Better	Comments	# of groups ¹
Public Safety	Less drunks, prostitution, crime watch, almost eradication of combat zone, increased police presence, open space at Rose Kennedy Greenway has improved safety in that area	6
Cleanliness	Gateway park with flowers, green space, beautification, more sanitary	4
More housing	Increase in the # of residential units	3
Supermarkets	Variety of price points, stable prices More convenient	3
Restaurants	Number and variety (incl. bbq), more dim sum	3
Diversity	High rises Race and class businesses	3
Transportation	Convenient Roads improved	2
Removal of Central Artery ramps		1
More parks	Chinatown Park, more green areas	2
Big projects completed		1
Elderly benefits	Better	1
Environment & living conditions improved		2
More day care & schools		1
Improved health care service	Due to bilingual staffing	1
Community Benefits	e.g. Lincoln development and Chinatown Trust Fund where monies have been given back to community	1
Community organization	Community is more organized, e.g. community was organized to meet with BRA Promise Keeper & there are more organization More political activity/recognition, voter registration, elected officials	2
Prosperity		1
New immigrants		1
Affordable housing		1
Attracts tourists		1

¹ Of a total of six (6) groups



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Worse	Comments	# of groups
Gentrification	Displacement of low income housing	
Lack of affordable housing		
Parcels taken by outside entities are pushing out people who originally live in Chinatown		
Increase in “ultra-luxury” housing potentially displacing residents	5	
Public Safety	Robberies, drug dealing, vandalism	
Police have decreased		
Some sense that drug-related crimes (& people carrying weapons) have increased	4	
High/rising rents		2
Job market	More unemployment	
Employment diversity is narrowing	3	
Store/business closings	Increase in empty storefronts & “dead zones”, e.g. Washington & Kneeland	2
More homeless	From outside the community	2
Street crossings	More dangerous due to increased traffic	2
Lack of parking	For visitors (all parking permits only) + paid parking is expensive	
Could be why Malden/Quincy populations are increasing	2	
Fluctuations in food prices	Inflation of grocery prices	2
Public health	Air quality	
Increase in rate of asthma in children due to more car traffic	2	
Elderly housing & services	Less elderly housing, not enough elderly services, elderly benefits being cut	2
Sense of community	Lack of community spirit	1
High rise buildings		1
Lack of public restrooms		1
Environment is bad	Very dirty, less green, more trash, noisy at South Cove East (building)	1
Affordable housing	Cost of developing (materials, land) increased	1
Lack of zoning enforcement		1
Traffic		1
Lack of Chinese entertainment		1

The next three questions focused on stimulating discussion around the three key trends. Participants were asked to identify positive and negative implications of each trend and then to think about how to address these in order to begin to develop goals to strive towards for the future.



Question 2

The Asian American population is rapidly increasing in the region².

a) *“What effects – positive or negative – do you see this trend having on Chinatown?”*

Positive Effects	Comments	# of groups ³
Enhances Chinatown economy	Businesses & services Community is busy People from suburbs support economy, increase demand for services- regional	5
New suburbs mean more integration	With greater Boston area, more influence	2
Wealthier community	More prosperous businesses	2
More academic opportunities for kids		1
More restaurants		1
Communication with Asians is increased		1
2 nd generation Chinese give back by supporting organizations	May no longer live in Chinatown but e.g. sit on board of organization	1

Negative Effects	Comments	# of groups ⁴
New suburbs mean more competition	For jobs, for business Satellite communities are taking away business from Chinatown	4
Increase demand for parking & increase traffic	Suburbanites add to this	2
High rents	Chinese need to move to suburbs due to high rents More people – higher rents	3
Loosening of community spirit		1
Not enough housing & jobs		1
Long waits for medical/dental appointments	Up to a year	1
Lack of middle class	Polarized either high or low	1
Racial discrimination		1

Additional Comments:

- Type of immigration is more Mandarin as of late – do they have a voice? This different mix should be taken into account.
- Development of suburbs is a result of the lack of land In Chinatown
- Who owns the parking lots and does this money support Chinese businesses?
- Is gentrification good or bad? Image of Chinatown now is seen as “downtown”
- Questioned future of Chinatown as a hub (in relation to satellite communities)

b): *“How could Chinatown respond to these issues? What should our goals be for the future?”⁵*

² See Appendix for a copy of the summary sheet given to participants for this discussion

³ A total of five groups contributed responses

⁴ A total of six groups (all) contributed responses



- Library (Chinese language) to bring people back
- Increase middle class housing stock
- Chinatown obtain control of open parcels
- Encourage Chinatown businesses to diversity and improve facades. Look at North End as an example.
- Be vigilant about affordable housing
- Invest in businesses via Main Street program
- Chinatown needs to own change and not just react
- Develop senior affordable housing at Trigen

Question 3

Development pressure is increasing and land uses are changing adjacent to and within Chinatown.⁶

a) *“What effects – positive or negative – do you see this trend having on Chinatown?”*

Positive Effects	Comments	# of groups ⁷
More commercial development		1
More economic opportunities		1
Luxury housing		1

Negative Effects	Comments	# of groups ⁸
Cost and availability of affordable housing	Surrounding by districts that drive up prices Displacement of poor, low-income	4
Encroachment	Lost control of parcels	3
Increased luxury developments		1
Institutional expansion	Possible relationship to drug use (student dorms)	1
Community members may not understand changes	Especially if they cannot follow English	1
Commercial/retail turnover		1
Attract more diverse people		1

b) *“How could Chinatown respond to these issues? What should our goals be for the future?”*⁹:

- Develop Affordable housing (3)
- Expand land area of Chinatown
- Commercial developments

⁵ Based on input from four (4) groups that contributed responses

⁶ See Appendix for a copy of the summary sheet given to participants for this discussion

⁷ A total of two (2) groups contributed responses

⁸ A total of four (4) groups contributed responses

⁹ Based on input from the four (4) groups that contributed responses



- Need community control
 - organize the community & ensure benefits accrue from development;
 - affect the direction of development and be at the table
- Provide incentives to big businesses
- Make big institutions provide something to Chinatown; hold them accountable
- More communication with community
- Develop elderly service center
- Chinatown library (2)
- Develop less high rise buildings

Question 4

The Chinatown economy is changing.¹⁰

a) *What effects – positive or negative – do you see this trend having on Chinatown?*

Positive Effects	Comments	# of groups ¹¹
Improved shopping	Variety of shops	2
More jobs		1

Negative Effects	Comments	# of groups ¹²
New affluent people do not frequently participate in Chinatown economy		1
Lack of parking		1
Language barrier		1

Additional Comments

- Chinatown is heavily elderly – try to diversity the population

b) *How could Chinatown respond to these issues? What should our goals be for the future?*¹³

- For Chinatown to survive, need to cater to different population to some level (i.e. Whole Foods or make the local markets appealing)
- Businesses organize & collaborate to solve issues like crime, parking, trash
- Find a way to convince people to stay
- Create middle income housing options
- Increase job opportunities
- Solve parking problem
- Increase entertainment options
- Support small businesses through government grants
- More shops
- Library

¹⁰ See Appendix for a copy of the summary sheet given to participants for this discussion

¹¹ Only two (2) of the six (6) groups responded

¹² Only one (1) of the six (6) groups responded

¹³ Based on input from the three (3) groups that contributed responses



Question 5

a) “Are there any important trends you see missing from this discussion? Any additional goals you would like to add?”

- Number of low income increased but middle income population has not increased so will cause instability
- Decrease in Chinatown culture
- Need for civic space
- Traffic, lots of pollution
- Smoking , health risks
- Conversation & priority on youth programs & services
- Conversation about the role of “spiritual dimensions” & awareness & future of Chinatown

b) “Think of all that has been said in our discussion here tonight. Thinking about ways we can work to preserve and improve Chinatown, what would you say is one of the most important things you would like to emphasize?”

Issue	Comments	# of Votes¹⁴	# of Groups¹⁵
Affordable housing	Increase For very low income	26	5
Library	Lack of	22	5
Increase economic development	With support from government, specific policies, decrease crime Job training & job opportunities Protect small businesses	22	3
Parking	Lack of	14	2
Civic participation	City to hear Chinatown’s needs More representation, voting	11	2
Cleanliness	Good environment	8	2
Decrease housing rents	In Chinatown	7	1
Bilingual ballot	100% transliteration of candidate names	6	1
Education	Increase # of schools, different kinds of curriculum, decrease tuition for ESL classes	6	1
Traffic issues	Repair roads, improve pedestrian safety at crossings	6	2
Cultural center		5	2
Benefits for elderly	Including more housing	5	2
Public safety	More police presence	4	1
Provide for all stages in life	Sustain population	3	1

¹⁴ All participants were asked to respond to this question. Once all group members had contributed their ideas, each participant was given five dots and asked to get up from their seats and “vote” on which they felt was most important by placing the dots next to the words on the large pads. Each participant was instructed to use all five of their dots but not to place any more than 3 dots on any one issue.

¹⁵ Only one of the six groups did not have enough time to respond to this question, therefore responses are compiled based on the responses of five (5) groups.



Issue	Comments	# of Votes¹⁴	# of Groups¹⁵
Community Center	For elderly	3	1
Take open space parcels	For community benefit	3	1
Nursing home expansion		1	1
More taller housing buildings		1	1
Performance stage	In the park	-	1
Prevent gentrification		-	1
Preserve Gateway		-	1

Additional Comments

- Need a Chinatown Library
- Need more green space
- Zoning codes have been broken many times
- Are elderly being serviced?
- What cannot be changed about Chinatown?
- While Chinatown is good at servicing its community, not good at relating/connecting to the “outside philanthropic community”

Written Responses

1) *What are your favorite things about Chinatown (that you want to be sure stay the same)?*

- Close, collegial relationships & cooperative spirit among leadership & staff at so many community agencies
- The fact it is a gateway city for immigrants and maintains an ethnic enclave but links out to the greater community
- Open space, parks, greenway

2) *What are your least favorite things about Chinatown (that you would like to change)?*

- Dirty sidewalks and the seeming lack of respect for common areas (sidewalk, streets)
- More parking spaces
- Not enough educational opportunities for people who need them, especially at higher levels of English classes
- Safety & public health hazards
- Trash, barrels, spitting on the streets

3) *If you could do one thing to improve Chinatown, what would it be?*

- Have community leadership make a strong collective statement that adult basic education/ESOL is a key, necessary component of community life (as a way to increase individual prosperity and strengthen the community as a whole)
- Increase the standard of living without displacing everyone and creating an economically prosperous shell of a community, but that’s really ideal
- Community bulletin board
- Art work/displays
- Bringing suburban Chinese back to Chinatown community
- Cultural events



Additional Comments:

- Please keep all community stakeholders updated on the information that you gather
- Greenway – more user friendly – shaded areas, benches, tables
- Make Chinatown more attractive – plants, flowers, sidewalk café, artwork

Children's Vision

Childcare was provided for those participants who brought their children along. The children were led by teen volunteers in a visioning exercise of their own which they presented to the adults at the community meeting. Among the issues of importance to the children were:

- Good restaurants
- Cleanliness
- Parks and playgrounds
- Library

