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# OLD TOWN / CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

(PART 1 OF 3)



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ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL DECEMBER 1999

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# OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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Kalberer Company  
*Chair, Vision Committee*

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Everett Station Lofts  
*Historic Old Town Association*

**Bruce Allen**  
**Margaret Bax**  
*Portland Development Commission*

**John Beardsley**  
*Old Town/Chinatown Property Owner*

**Doreen Binder**  
*Transition Projects, Inc.*

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*Regional Arts & Cultural Council*

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*N.W. Natural*

**Mona Knapp**  
*Bridgeview Community*

**Denis Lachman**  
*Bureau of Planning*

**Louis K.C. Lee**  
Old Town/Chinatown Property Owner  
*Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood Association*

**Dan Lenzen**  
Concept Entertainment Corp.  
*Old Town Arts & Entertainment Committee*

**Karen Moore**  
SERA Architects  
*Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood Association*

**Genny Nelson**  
Sisters of the Road Cafe  
*Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood Association*

**Nancy Sanders**  
Resident  
*Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood Association*

**John Tess**  
Heritage Investment Corp.  
*Historic Old Town Business Association*

## PROJECT COMMITTEE

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*Shiels Oblatz Johnsen*

**Thomas Hacker**  
**Will Dann**  
**Brandon Sanchez**  
*Thomas Hacker & Associates*

**Carla White**  
**John Southgate**  
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**Sarah Heinicke**  
*Portland Development Commission*

**Eric Hovee**  
*ED Hovee & Company*

**J. Hahn Lee**  
*J. Hahn Lee & Associates*

**Suenn Ho**  
*Suenn Ho Design*

**Paul Morris**  
**Kia Buford**  
*McKeever/Morris*

# OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
Project Goals .....	2
New Developments .....	3
Development Opportunities/Challenges .....	3
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	5
Immediate Actions .....	5
Short-Term Actions .....	6
Long-Term Actions .....	7
Conclusions .....	11
<b>INVESTMENT STRATEGY</b> .....	12
<b>DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	15
Development Potential .....	15
Housing Inventory .....	15
<b><u>APPENDIX A</u></b>	
<b>ISSUES</b> .....	A-1
<b><u>APPENDIX B</u></b>	
<b>PHYSICAL PLANNING</b> .....	B-1
Identification of Opportunity Sites .....	B-1
Detailed Urban Design Study Areas .....	B-1
Third and Fourth Avenues .....	B-3
Open Space .....	B-5
Cultural Identity and Urban Form in Chinatowns .....	B-8
Trailways Block .....	B-12
Edges to the District .....	B-14

## INTRODUCTION

Old Town/Chinatown is Portland's oldest neighborhood, and one of its most diverse. This is a community that is rich in resources – its people, its buildings, its important location in the heart of the Central City. It is a community with its share of challenges, but it is also a community undergoing dramatic change, with promising new public and private investments. The Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan seeks to build on these special resources, characteristics and challenges.

This neighborhood has witnessed a history of community revitalization efforts, each of which has achieved important results. These include the creation of the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District in 1975, coupled with the subsequent adoption of a development plan for the historic district in 1976. A Chinatown Development Plan was adopted in 1984, and Chinatown was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988. These planning efforts were tied to major public/community investments, such as:

- *Rehabilitation of the North Waterfront Park and the Japanese Memorial Garden.*
- *Extension of the Transit Mall north of Burnside.*
- *Acquisition and rehabilitation of Union Station.*
- *Saturday Market.*
- *Restoration of numerous historic structures.*
- *Construction of the Chinatown Gate.*

In December 1997, City Council adopted a Vision Plan for Old Town/Chinatown. This Vision Plan represented a major step forward for the neighborhood. It brought together representatives from the diverse elements of Old Town/Chinatown – the business community, the Chinese businesses, residents, the social services and the Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood Association. The Vision Plan is a collaborative document which sets forth a series of agreements about how the neighborhood could move forward. The Vision Plan places major emphasis on the need for strong communication among the diverse members of the community, for balance, and for a commitment to the principles of the Good Neighbor Agreement.

Historic Old Town/Chinatown's Development Plan is designed to complement the spirit and implement the economic development objectives of the Vision Plan. This unique public and private partnership is built on a firm commitment to honor and preserve the historic and cultural character of the neighborhood. The foundation of the revitalization process is a progressive partnership to ensure the community maintains a social and economic balance, providing mixed income housing as well as a healthy climate for the business community.

Old Town possesses a unique multi-cultural identity, including a rich heritage of Chinese, Japanese and Greek communities. Portland's Saturday Market, a vibrant arts community and the Nightlife District combine to make it a dynamic hub of creative activity. These diverse aspects of Old Town/Chinatown will serve as a magnet for cultural tourism. Throughout the revitalization process, those who live and work in this historic area will join with the City to ensure protection of the historic and cultural assets that make up the identity of the neighborhood.

The Vision Plan has already resulted in significant and positive change. More than 200 new housing units have been constructed, serving a broad mix of incomes. The new Port of Portland headquarters has been completed, and the Classical Chinese Garden is underway. These projects represent a greater financial investment in Old Town/Chinatown than the prior 50 years combined.

The Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan, identified as an immediate need in the Vision Plan, utilizes the goals and components of the Vision Plan to prepare a strategy for immediate, short-term and long-term public and private investments. The underlying premise for the strategy is to use public investment to foster private investment in Old Town/Chinatown, while maintaining the unique character of the neighborhood.

The Development Plan is intended to serve as a broad blueprint, and not as a block-by-block prescription. The Plan is intended to evolve when new opportunities arise. It is important that the Old Town/Chinatown Vision Committee process continue through

the implementation of the Plan, to respond to new opportunities and to assure that the community's fundamental vision is sustained.

The Development Plan has been conducted in three phases. Phase 1 included background and analysis with data collected on the district and identification of a complete set of issues. Appendix A sets forth the comprehensive set of issues assembled during Phase 1. Phase 2 involved preparation of detailed physical planning analysis for three specific areas in the district. The three areas were the Third/Fourth Avenue Corridor from Burnside to Hoyt; the Trailways Blocks; and Burnside Street. Public workshops were conducted during each of the first two phases. The Phase 2 conclusions are included in this report as Appendix B. Phase 3 contains the development recommendations for implementation.

The Old Town/Chinatown district is a complex and diverse community with small parcels, underutilized buildings and many long time owners who do not have interest in current new investments. The Vision Plan has created an atmosphere of support and cooperation within and among the community business interests, social services, the Chinese community, and residents. The Plan is intended to respect the importance of all members of the district while striving to renovate and upgrade the use of property.

## ■ PROJECT GOALS

The first step in the development plan effort was to articulate a positive vision for the district. The goal of the Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan is:

***To develop Old Town/Chinatown into a vibrant, 24 hour, mixed-use, urban neighborhood, rooted in a rich historical past.***

Vibrant means that an active and safe street life should be established and economic and cultural diversity should be encouraged. An active street life may be accomplished with a diversity of shops and other businesses related directly to the street. Street and sidewalk treatments should reinforce the historic, arts and

cultural character of the neighborhood. And, street modifications should be made to enhance the pedestrian experience and slow traffic to reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflict.



*3rd Avenue at Burnside Street*

Economic diversity is encouraged by preserving the existing lower-income housing and social services providers and adding new housing of all income levels. Cultural diversity is encouraged by preserving the existing ethnic diversity and targeting new housing and businesses to re-establish a significant Asian presence in Chinatown. Street safety is emphasized by increasing the vested residential population in the neighborhood, through increased home ownership, and by community policing.

The 24-hour, mixed-use character of the district can be encouraged with ground floor retail businesses, housing, and nightlife related businesses in combination with upper story offices and other commercial space. Regional attractions, (such as the Chinese Classical Garden and Saturday Market) and hotels should bring in people from outside the district and increase the vitality during the evenings and weekends.

The historic character of the neighborhood will be maintained through retaining and rehabilitating existing historic structures, insuring that new development is compatible with those historic structures, and reinforcing the identity of Old Town/Chinatown with improvements which relate to the cultural history.



*Fifth Avenue Court Apartments under construction*

**PORT OF PORTLAND OFFICES:** The Port of Portland recently completed a 100,000 square foot headquarters office building at NW Second and Everett. An estimated 300 employees occupy the building.



*Port of Portland Offices in the background*

**FIFTH AVENUE PLACE APARTMENTS:** Seventy new affordable rental units and first floor retail were completed and opened in February 1999. The project is located at NW Fifth and Everett.

**MACDONALD CENTER:** A 54-unit, low-income senior assisted living center at NW Sixth and Couch, was completed in September 1999.

## ■ NEW DEVELOPMENTS

As noted, the Old Town/Chinatown Vision Plan has been very successful. The Plan called for 50-100 units of housing, preparation of a Development Plan, solicitation of commercial office development at the Trailways Blocks and development of the Classical Chinese Garden. All objectives have been met except the Trailways Blocks (and the Port of Portland office essentially achieves this objective). The following projects have been completed or started since the Vision Plan was adopted:

**CLASSICAL CHINESE GARDEN:** Groundbreaking was conducted in June 1999 with a projected opening date of spring 2000. Substantial funds have been secured to assure the development of the Garden.

**FIFTH AVENUE COURT APARTMENTS:** Ninety-six units of housing, 170 parking spaces, and first floor retail were completed in July 1999. Forty-eight units of housing are affordable (60% of median income) and 48 units are market rate. The project is located at NW Fifth and Davis.

## ■ DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGES

A complete list of issues and challenges for the district was developed in Phase 1 of the Development Plan. These issues were used to guide the recommended actions. The complete list of issues is presented in Appendix A of this report. The core opportunities and challenges, described below, are critical to the generation of the proposed actions and investment strategy contained in this report.

1. **Diversity:** The diversity of the district is regarded as an opportunity for a rich urban life-style. Old Town/Chinatown is diverse in terms of its ethnicity, its socioeconomic mix, and in terms of its variety of uses - business, social service, residential, etc. There is a strong desire to preserve this diversity. The diversity also presents a challenge in the number of different organizations (with varying boundaries) that exist in the district.

2. **Property Ownership:** Old Town/ Chinatown has numerous parcels and few full block single owners. The smaller parcels make property acquisition and redevelopment more difficult and more costly. There are numerous historic structures that are valuable components of the urban fabric that are important to preserve.
3. **Development Potential:** A majority of the blocks in Old Town/Chinatown currently have improvements that are less than the value of the land that they occupy. The assessment of the development potential for the study area is that 1,000 new housing units could be developed along with 500,000 square feet of office, streetfront retail, parking and open space while preserving all of the existing services and historic buildings of merit in the district. In short, there is considerable redevelopment potential.
4. **Edges:** The district faces a specific challenge in that access to the district is adversely affected by its edges and boundaries. Burnside Street represents a major deterrent for the downtown connection. Naito Parkway makes access to Waterfront Park more difficult. The Steel Bridge and railroad tracks at Union Station divide 1,100 existing/planned housing units along the waterfront from the district. Union Station and the Post Office constrain access to the River District and a proposed grocery store at NW 9<sup>th</sup> and Lovejoy.
5. **Classical Chinese Garden:** The development of the Garden represents an important attraction for the district. The number of visitors to the district will increase, providing greater familiarity with the area and new traffic patterns. It is important for the success of the Garden and the district to support new developments adjacent to the Garden so that the visitor experience will be enhanced. It is also important to insure light, air and visual connections to the Garden. This may be accomplished through zoning performance standards and/or through design of adjacent buildings.
6. **Access Choices:** Old Town/Chinatown has excellent transit access and service

with light rail and the Transit Mall. The auto access is reasonable with the Steel, Broadway and Burnside Bridges. Commuters, visitors and residents all have choices with regard to mode and opportunities for access in the district, especially if the aforementioned edge/barrier conditions can be ameliorated.



*Burnside St. short term improvements*

7. **Streets for People:** Many of the streets in the districts (both arterials and local) feature widths, traffic speeds, and design which maximize vehicular traffic functions at the cost of pedestrian ease/mobility. Consideration of pedestrian needs must be integrated into traffic operations/functions.
8. **Design Quality:** It is important that new development be of high quality design and materials. New development should also utilize sustainable construction and design practices.

## ■ RECOMMENDATIONS

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A high priority should be placed on specific actions that would continue the positive development momentum in the district. The priorities are based upon the following objectives:

- *Reduce barriers to Old Town/Chinatown.*
- *Preserve and enhance the historic and cultural character of the area.*
- *Support the development of retail and arts and entertainment businesses in the district.*
- *Enhance the area around the Classical Chinese Garden.*
- *Support preservation and development of a mix of housing for different incomes.*
- *Proceed with development of the Trailways Blocks.*

## ■ IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

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The following immediate actions are recommended as the highest priority for the Plan to be implemented in the first year, with the goal of prioritizing funds and providing an early visible commitment to redevelopment of the district. The following immediate actions are recommended:

### ① Street Revisions.

- 1.1 Burnside:** Reduce West Burnside Street from three lanes to two lanes in the westbound direction from 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue by installing parking meters by the end of 1999. Monitor the safety and effectiveness of the changes in determining the long-term viability of this redevelopment strategy.

Undertake a study to determine the feasibility of reducing West Burnside Street from three lanes to two lanes in the eastbound direction from S.W. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and returning parking to this area during some or all hours of the day.

Evaluate and implement options for reducing travel speeds in the corridor through changes in signal timing or other methods. The potential effects on air quality, traffic congestion and pedestrian safety should be considered in the evaluation.

Expedite the Burnside study for future reconstruction of the street incorporating the recommended revisions of the Visions Committee (see Long-Term Action Item 7.2).

- 1.2 Port of Portland:** Obtain commitment from the Port of Portland to operate its surface parking lot on weekends to support visitors to the district, particularly the Classical Chinese Garden.
- 1.3 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> and Flanders:** Rededicate and improve NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue right-of-way between Everett and Glisan Streets, and NW Flanders Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues, as part of the Classical Chinese Garden and Port of Portland developments. Prepare a traffic circulation plan for the area based upon the new street openings.

### ② Property Development.

- 2.1 Block 25 Development:** Acquire most of the block bounded by Glisan, Flanders, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, undertake pre-development work and prepare a development offering for the block that would include parking, housing, first floor retail and accommodation of the Blanchet House functions.
- 2.2 Trailways Blocks:** Prepare a development offering for a mixed-use project on the two blocks. This development may occur in phases.

### ③ Property Redevelopment.

- 3.1 Third Avenue/Everett to Burnside:** Renovate the blocks across from the Classical Chinese Garden II. The blocks on the west side have vacant or underutilized buildings. Property owners should be encouraged to invest in redevelopment or to make the property available for redevelopment. Investigate other immediate term renovation or redevelopment opportunities.
- 3.2 Burnside/Third to Fourth Avenues:** Initiate efforts to redevelop the property on the north side of Burnside between Third and Fourth Avenues either through public acquisition and/or private redevelopment.



4 Housing.

- 4.1 **Housing for Mixed Income Levels:** Support development of additional housing for a variety of income levels.
- 4.2 **Asian Senior Housing:** Support creation of a senior housing development in Chinatown, targeted to the Asian community similar to projects that exist in Seattle and San Francisco.

5 Encourage New Development:

Support continued efforts to redevelop Old Town/Chinatown through assistance to property owners, improved information about the district, and implementation of the recommendations contained in the Development Plan.

## ■ SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

The short-term actions include those items recommended to receive priority consideration for implementation within one-three years.

- 1 Reduce barriers to Old Town/Chinatown.
  - 1.1 **Naito Parkway Crossing:** Evaluate the option to provide traffic signal at Naito Parkway and Couch to improve pedestrian access to Waterfront Park. The pedestrian activated signal currently at Couch does not seem to be effective. Also synchronize this signal with other signals.
- 2 Enhance the property surrounding the Classical Chinese Garden.
  - 2.1 **Third Avenue/Glisan St. Lane Reduction:** Reduce Third Avenue from three to two lanes of auto traffic from Glisan to Davis with possible extension to Couch, and widen sidewalks along existing street contour. Eliminate the eastbound lane on Glisan from Fourth to Third and improve pedestrian crossing.
- 3 Support investments for Old Town/Chinatown developments.



3rd Ave. and Glisan St. short term improvements

- 4 Enhance the arts, cultural and historic character of the district.
  - 4.1 **Property Acquisition and Renovation:** Support public investments in properties either by acquisition or grants to owners to renovate, provide seismic upgrades, or redevelop.
  - 4.2 **Streetscape Improvements:** Provide grants and assistance for banners, streetlights, trees, public art, interpretive projects and other improvements which enhance Old Town/Chinatown.
  - 4.3 **Building Preservation:** Support financing to existing building owners for required seismic upgrades. Increase financial support for building facade improvements and storefront restoration and rehabilitation.
  - 4.4 **Information:** Develop promotional materials such as brochures on the historic and cultural components of the district.
  - 4.5 **Aural History:** Support the formation of a committee to investigate the feasibility of developing aural history installations in the district.
  - 4.6 **Fountains:** Create fountain walk on Ankeny from Fifth to Fourth, Third and Second Avenues connecting to Skidmore Fountain.



*Cultural Events in Chinatown*

- 4.7 **Asian Businesses:** Provide assistance to new and existing Asian business enterprises.
- 4.8 **Open Space Study:** Prepare an open space study of the district which addresses the full range of existing and potential open spaces in and near the district. These would include Tom McCall Waterfront Park, the North Park Blocks, the Fountain Walk identified above, the future Forecourt in front of Union Station and the Classical Chinese Garden.
- 5 **Housing:** Support development of additional units of mixed-income housing in the immediate and short terms.
- 6 **Crime and Safety.**
  - 6.1 **On-going Public Safety:** The Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood and its public safety partners (Portland Police Bureau, Tri-Met, Association for Portland Progress, Portland Development Commission, Mayor's Office, Portland Parks & Recreation, etc.) will continue to use the Old Town/Chinatown Vision Committee as a vehicle to help solve crime and public safety issues.
  - 6.2 **Physical Improvements:** Recognize the crime and public safety issues that will need to be addressed utilizing manpower resources as well as financial support.
  - 6.3 **Lighting:** Continue improvement of building and street lighting in the district.

## ■ LONG-TERM ACTIONS

The Visions Plan set the stage for the Development Plan by setting forth the components to be included in the Planning/Implementation/Development Strategy. *The City Council-adopted Vision Committee components are written in italics with minor revisions reflecting current thinking on these components.* The Vision Plan components are followed by a set of actions recommended to accomplish each of the components. Note that some of the Immediate and Short-Term Actions respond to these components as well.

Four new components have been added to the Strategy:

- *Reduction of the barriers and edges to the district.*
  - *Preservation of the cultural and historic character of the district.*
  - *Enhancement of the properties surrounding the Classical Chinese Garden.*
  - *Open Space opportunities and connections.*
- 1 **Parking.** *(Including new off-street parking facilities for shoppers and for older buildings which currently lack parking; this could potentially free up the numerous surface parking lots which represent an enormous potential for future private development parcels).*
    - 1.1 **Revise City Parking Code:** To stimulate redevelopment of surface parking lots, revise parking code to allow surface parking lot owners to transfer parking to new structures.
    - 1.2 **New Parking Facilities:** Develop new parking facilities to support underparked buildings and visitor use in the district.
  - 2 **Redevelopment Opportunities.** *(including currently under-utilized parcels which lend themselves to new housing, commercial, and other appropriate development).*
    - 2.1 **Streetfront Improvements:** Continue to provide matching grants for storefront improvements (on-going).
    - 2.2 **Development Opportunity Fund:** Consider using the Fund to support seismic upgrades, offsets for System Development Charges (SDC's), and

other costs which inhibit redevelopment.

**2.3 Transit Supportive Development:**

Consider strategies that encourage high-density development along the North Transit Mall, to support public investment in transit.

**2.4 Nightlife Strategy:** Prepare a retail and nightlife development strategy to encourage 24-hour mixed-use activity.

**3 Public Market.** *(Preserve and enhance the public market in the New Market/Skidmore Fountain/ Saturday Market area, integrating with the adjacent Waterfront Park).*

**3.1 Ankeny:** Expand sidewalks and pedestrian space as part of street improvements along Ankeny/ Third/Fourth.

**3.2 New Market Plaza:** Pursue replacement parking for the New Market Theater surface parking to enable public plaza/market use.

**3.3 Fire Station Redevelopment:** Pursue redevelopment of the fire station block.

**4 Chinatown.** *(Special strategy for Chinatown, which is one of the core components of the broader neighborhood. Such a strategy should capitalize on the potential benefits of expanded trade and tourism with Asian/ Pacific Rim countries).*

**4.1 Property Owner Group:** Institute special program to contact Asian property owners to encourage development, redevelopment and investment in property that supports Chinatown.

**4.2 Asian Market:** Promote creation of specialty markets and events.

**4.3 District Entrances:** Consider construction of a new gate or similar feature at the north end of Chinatown.

**4.4 Public Events:** Encourage use of street and sidewalks for public events which enhance Chinatown life and culture.

**5 Housing.** *(Including mixed-income and affordable housing, is a subject of considerable interest).*

**5.1 Housing Diversity:** Encourage preservation and new development of hous-

ing which serves a diverse range of incomes in a range of housing types (rental, for-sale) and which also serves specialized needs (artists, etc.).

**5.2 Residential Development:** The long-term potential redevelopment in Old Town/Chinatown could include more than 500 units of new housing in addition to units created in the short-term and immediate term.

**6 Marketing Strategy.** *(Focusing on the Arts and Entertainment and retail aspects of the neighborhood).*

**6.1 Arts and Entertainment:** Support the arts and entertainment venues (new and existing), including mixed income live/work housing for artists. Encourage everyone in the neighborhood to utilize the Visions Committee to mitigate livability issues.

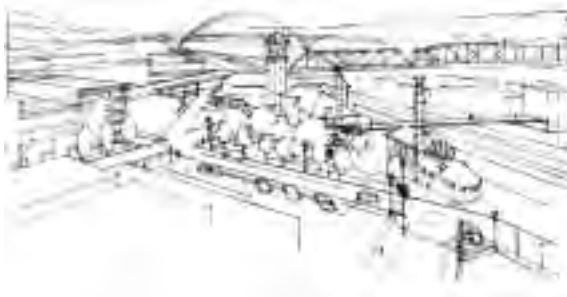
**7 Street/public improvements.** *(Including streetlights and other furniture, public art, opportunities for special paving, street trees, etc.).*

**7.1 Priority Streets:** Support the immediate/short-term improvements recommended for Burnside, Third Avenue and Naito Parkway crossing.

**7.2 Burnside:** As part of the major reconstruction plan for Burnside, support effort to reduce Burnside to two lanes, eliminate the median, restore parking, expand sidewalks, extend sidewalk corners, reduce vehicle speeds, provide left turn for eastbound autos on Fourth, provide special paving for crosswalks, and improve street frontage.

**7.3 Union Station:** Redevelop parking and entry to create angle road under the Broadway Bridge connecting to 9<sup>th</sup> and Northrup. Modify the parking area in front of the station, placing parking underground and open space above. Coordinate development of underground parking with the proposed development on the adjacent block.

**7.4 Pedestrian Crossing:** Investigate the desirability of providing a pedestrian crossing to Waterfront Park at Glisan.

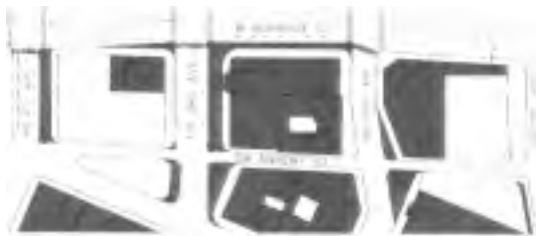


*Old Town / Chinatown connection to River District*

**7.5 Intermodal Facility:** Consider creation of an intermodal transfer point at Union Station, with connections to light rail, the airport and inter-city transit modes. This facility might include a baggage check-in facility for transit patrons bound for the airport.

**8 Public Right-of-Way.** (*Special public right-of-way projects possibly to include Ankeny Street, the Third and Burnside intersection, a new “torii gate”, a Greek gate, etc.*).

**8.1 Burnside/Ankeny:** Reduce street widths on Third and Fourth by widening sidewalks and enhancing open space, consider plaza improvements at Ankeny and Third and Second Avenues.



*Burnside / Ankeny Revisions*

**9 Public safety.** (*related projects including public restrooms*).

**9.1 Public Restrooms:** Provide safe, clean and convenient public restrooms. This would entail development of new facilities as well as reestablishing existing facilities (e.g. Front and Davis parking garage).

**9.2 On-Going Public Safety:** The Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood and its public safety partners (Portland

Police Bureau, Association for Portland Progress, Tri-Met, Portland Development Commission, Mayor’s Office, Portland Parks & Recreation, etc.) will continue to use the Old Town/Chinatown Visions Committee as a vehicle to help solve crime and public safety issues.

**9.3 Physical Space:** Take initiative to identify public safety challenges, research and make recommendations to the appropriate entity.

**10 Coordination.** (*With planned projects including the River District, South-North light rail project, etc.*).

**10.1 Visions Committee:** Continue to support the Visions Committee in its oversight of implementation of the Development Plan, and to continue in its role as a forum for resolution of community issues and challenges.

**11 Barriers and Edges.** (*Address barriers and edges to the district that limit access*).

**11.1 Burnside:** Reconstruct Burnside with priority given to pedestrian crossings and improvement of the street environment for streetfront businesses (see item 7.2).

**11.2 Pedestrian Crossing at Third Avenue:** Continue to advocate for an at-grade pedestrian crossing at Third Avenue and Hoyt across the railroad tracks to encourage pedestrian connections to Old Town/Chinatown from the new housing developments along Naito Parkway. This may be extremely difficult to achieve, based on earlier ODOT action on this issue. If these efforts for an at-grade crossing fail, consider other means of enhancing pedestrian access in this vicinity.

**11.3 Union Station:** Create connection through Union Station to 9<sup>th</sup> and Northrup under the Broadway Bridge.

**11.4 Glisan Connection:** Consider connecting NW Glisan Street to NW Naito Parkway.

- 12 Historical, Arts and Cultural Character. (*Promote the historical, arts and cultural character of the district.*)



*Burnside Street Reconstruction*

- 12.1 **Design Guidelines:** Update design guidelines to reflect current expectations for redevelopment, historic preservation and the unique characteristics of Skidmore/Old Town, Chinatown and other areas of special character. Use these guidelines to assure high quality design of new development, especially for public-sponsored projects.
- 12.2 **Community Center:** Support efforts to establish a community center to provide uses such as meeting space, recreation, reading room, historic displays and other functions of benefit to the neighborhood.
- 12.3 **Public Art:** Many publicly funded projects will include public art. Encourage developers to incorporate public art, historical or other cultural aspects in their projects.

- 13 Open Space Opportunities and Connections. (Creation of open space in the district is needed, including access to existing and identification of new spaces. See Also Short-Term Action 4.8)

- 13.1 **New Open Space:** Consider creation of open space as part of redevelopment of the neighborhood.

- 13.2 **Access to Open Space:** Improve access to existing open space in the area including Tom McCall Waterfront Park and the North Park Blocks and future park spaces in the River District.

- 13.3 **Pedestrian Plaza:** Develop pedestrian plaza at Third/Ankeny and at New Market Theater as part of the enhanced Ankeny connection from the Transit Mall to Waterfront Park. Consider development of a fountain in the Third Avenue vicinity as part of an Ankeny “fountain” walk.

- 13.4 **Recreation Pockets:** Encourage developers of new residential projects to include space for recreation pockets.

- 14 Classical Chinese Garden. Enhance Classical Chinese Garden surrounding properties.

- 14.1 **Hotel:** Market opportunity for hotel in the vicinity of the Garden.

- 14.2 **Asian Cultural Center:** Support efforts to establish an Asian cultural center to build on the success of the Classical Chinese Garden.

## *Conclusions*

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The Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood is at a critical point in its long and rich history. A strong and diverse community has come together in the last few years – perhaps in a way like no other time in its history. Major new redevelopment is occurring, with more new projects already on the drawing boards. The area is witnessing significant new public and private investment.

This Development Plan reflects the hard work of many people in the neighborhood. It reflects a serious commitment to a consensus-driven approach. The Plan, and the future vitality of Old Town/Chinatown, will not succeed unless all of the community continues to work together to achieve a good vision in a way that benefits all.

Economic opportunities lie before Old Town/Chinatown and our challenge will be to harness them so that Old Town/Chinatown is a better, stronger community for all who live, work and visit the neighborhood. The Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan Steering Committee is committed to fulfilling this vision.

## INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The recommended Investment Strategy of the Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan is on page 13. The table addresses recommendations for some of the Immediate Actions, Short-Term Actions and Long-Term Actions. A total public investment of \$69,140,000 is called for resulting in an estimated \$503,600,000 in private investment. The final budget for these actions, and for other actions identified in the Plan but not presented in the table will be determined through the City's/PDC's budget planning process in consultation with the Old Town/Chinatown community.

The public investment is divided into Immediate (1 year), Short-Term (1-3 years) and Long-Term investment classifications consistent with the Recommendations. Public funds are predominantly tax increment funds but other sources are included, such as City of Portland Capital Improvements Plan, regional transportation funds, System Development Charge funds, and Portland Parks and Recreation funds. The private investment is estimated for only those investments that would be directly required with or generated by the public investment. For example, the housing loans from PDC would only be provided with the private commitment for construction of housing. The secondary private development benefits from improvements to the district are not included in the estimate.



*Fifth Avenue Place Apartments*

Public financing is critical to the redevelopment of Old Town/Chinatown. A partnership of public and private investment is needed to

upgrade the current built environment. The following are specific recommendations for the investment strategy:

1. **Extend Tax Increment:** Old Town/Chinatown is currently in the Downtown Urban Renewal District which expires in 6 years leaving the district without a source of tax increment urban renewal funds. Consideration should be given to including Old Town/Chinatown in the newly formed River District Urban Renewal or some other means of assuring a long-term funding source for implementation of the development plan.
2. **Prioritize Private Investment Leverage:** It is recommended that a priority be given to projects that involve private investment in the district. The diverse property ownership and perceptions of the area have discouraged private investment in the past. A concerted program to assure property availability and incentives for mixed use development are needed to enable successful private investment.
3. **Special Incentives for Economic Uses:** It is recommended that consideration be given to targeted incentives for redevelopment in the district. Office and streetfront commercial do not have a strong market for development at this time. There are several properties that are vacant which should be developed as retail or office. Targeted assistance for these uses would be valuable.
4. **Promote Incentives for Historic Use:** Promote incentives for historic redevelopment and seismic upgrades, including state tax incentives.

## OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Immediate Actions (first year)	Public Investment			Private Investment	Comments
	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term		
1.1 Burnside	\$50,000			\$500,000	
2.1 Glisan/Flanders	\$20,000		\$2,500,000	\$15,000,000	100 units of housing
2.2 Trailways Blocks	\$20,000		\$1,800,000	\$23,000,000	100 units of housing
3.1 3rd Avenue	\$100,000		\$500,000	\$5,000,000	Housing, retail, office
3.2 Burnside/3rd/4th	\$500,000		\$1,500,000	\$9,000,000	Housing, retail, office
4.1 Housing			\$2,500,000	\$22,000,000	100 units of housing
4.2 Asian Senior Housing			\$1,750,000	\$14,000,000	70 units of housing
<b>Total Immediate Actions</b>	<b>\$690,000</b>		<b>\$10,550,000</b>	<b>\$88,500,000</b>	
Short-Term Actions (one to three years)	Public Investment			Private Investment	Comments
	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term		
1.1 Naito Crossing		\$150,000			
2.1 3rd Ave Lane Reduction		\$1,000,000		\$5,000,000	Retail upgrades
4.1 Property Renovation		\$1,000,000		\$8,000,000	Housing, retail, office
4.2 Streetscape Imp.		\$2,000,000		\$8,000,000	Retail upgrades
4.3 Building Preservation		\$1,000,000		\$12,000,000	Housing, retail, office
4.4 Information		\$25,000			
4.5 Aural History		\$25,000			
6. Crime and Safety		\$150,000		\$1,000,000	
<b>Total Short-Term Actions</b>		<b>\$5,350,000</b>		<b>\$34,000,000</b>	
Long-Term Actions (three years or more)	Public Investment			Private Investment	Comments
	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term		
1.1 Revise Parking Reg			\$50,000		
1.2 New Parking Facilities			\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	300 new parking spaces
2.1 Storefront Improvements			\$150,000	\$1,500,000	
2.2 Dev Opportunity Fund			\$4,000,000	\$40,000,000	Housing, retail, office
3.1 Ankeny Improvements			\$1,000,000	\$8,000,000	Retail, new development
3.3 Fire Station Dev			\$3,000,000	\$30,000,000	150 housing units
4.2 Asian Market			\$150,000	\$1,500,000	
4.3 New Entrances			\$500,000	\$4,000,000	Public/private partnership
5. Housing			\$12,500,000	\$120,000,000	500 add'l units of housing
7.2 Burnside Reconstruction			\$10,000,000	\$100,000,000	Reinvestment in street
7.3 Union Station Access			\$5,000,000	\$40,000,000	Retail, new development
8.1 Burnside/Ankeny			\$1,500,000	\$12,000,000	Retail, new development
9.1 Public Restrooms			\$200,000		
11.2 Ped Crossing at 3rd			\$100,000	\$1,000,000	Retail, new development
12.1 Design Guidelines			\$50,000		
12.2 Community Center			\$250,000	\$1,500,000	Public/Private investment
13.1 Park at Couch/4th			\$9,000,000	\$2,000,000	Retail, new development
13.4 Steel Bridge Open Space			\$100,000	\$100,000	
14.1 Hotel				\$10,000,000	
14.2 Asian Cultural Center			\$500,000	\$5,000,000	Public/private partnership
<b>Total Long-Term Actions</b>			<b>\$52,550,000</b>	<b>\$381,100,000</b>	
<b>Total Investment Potential</b>	<b>\$690,000</b>	<b>\$5,350,000</b>	<b>\$63,100,000</b>	<b>\$503,600,000</b>	





## DEVELOPMENT

### DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

A block-by-block analysis of Old Town/Chinatown was conducted for development and redevelopment potential. Those blocks that contained improvement values less than the land values based upon the Multnomah County assessed valuations were analyzed with regard to redevelopment potential. Lots where historic buildings or existing services were operating were evaluated for additional development but not considered for new development. A considerable portion of Old Town/Chinatown has potential for redevelopment.

Sites were then considered for housing, commercial, office, parking and open space. It was assumed that housing would be in structures of six stories or less and that parking would be provided in structures to support each of the assumed developments. Based upon this sketch analysis, a total potential of 1,532 housing units, 138,000 s.f. of new retail, 670,600 s.f. of office and a 200 room hotel could be developed requiring 1,663 parking spaces. There is considerable redevelopment potential in the district.

### HOUSING INVENTORY

A survey of housing type and affordability for the River District (of which Old Town/Chinatown is a part) indicates that Old Town/Chinatown contains a large supply of low-income housing. The current housing inventory in the Old Town/Chinatown District exceeds the River District targets for below 80% of Median Family Income (MFI), but is well below the targets for 81-120% of MFI.

To achieve the vision of housing diversity in the Old Town/Chinatown District, new housing units above eighty percent of MFI need to be developed. To meet the income/housing markets as guided by the River District Plan, over seven hundred additional Low Income Units (below 50% MFI) will need to be developed in portions of the River District Planning Area other than Old Town/Chinatown.

The large number of low-income units historically present in the Old Town/Chinatown District is what enables the River District planning area to match the income patterns of the City at this time. It is therefore an important priority to preserve the low-income housing stock in Old Town/Chinatown.

## OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN HOUSING INVENTORY

### Total Surveyed Units

HOUSING TYPE	MFI 0-30%	MFI 31-50%	MFI 51-80%	MFI 81-120%	MFI over 120%	MFI TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
SRO	549	318	107	0	0	974	71.78%
Studio	75	77	71	0	0	223	16.43%
1 Bedroom	0	31	91	19	1	142	10.46%
2 Bedroom	0	0	18	0	0	18	1.33%
3 Bedroom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
4 Bedroom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,357</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>45.98%</b>	<b>31.39%</b>	<b>21.15%</b>	<b>1.40%</b>	<b>0.07%</b>		

**OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

BLOCK	ADDRESS	HOUSING	RETAIL	OFFICE	OTHER	PARKING	PUBLIC
3rd/4th							
P	4th/Glisan	105	7,000			38	
O	3rd/Glisan	24	8,000				
24	2nd/Flanders		9,000		200 Hotel	380	
25	3rd/Flanders	148	14,000				
26	3rd/Everett	155	18,000				
27	3rd/Davis	50	6,000				
28	3rd/Couch	40	6,000				
29	3rd/Burnside			32,000			
29	3rd/Burnside			53,600			
32	4th/Burnside						
33	4th/Couch					100	Park
34	4th/Davis	50	6,000				
35	4th/Everett	50	6,000				
36	4th/Flanders	55	6,000			20	
		<b>677</b>	<b>86,000</b>	<b>85,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>538</b>	
<b>Trailways</b>							
Y	6th/Irving					80	Plaza
U	6th/Hoyt	195	8,000			100	
R	6th/Glisan		16,000	285,000		420	
		<b>195</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>285,000</b>		<b>600</b>	
<b>Other</b>							
37	5th/Flanders	100					
8	1st/Davis		10,000	100,000		150	
13	2nd/Davis		10,000	100,000		150	
N	3rd/Glisan					75	
40	5th/Couch			50,000		75	
48	6th/Flanders			50,000		75	
SW 34	Fire Station	150	8,000				
SW 31	2nd/Ankeny						
SW 23	3rd/Pine	70					
SW 28	1st/Pine	70					
SW 29	2nd/Oak	70					
SW 26	Naito/Oak	50					
SW 40	Naito/Stark	150					
		<b>660</b>	<b>28,000</b>	<b>300,000</b>		<b>525</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,532</b>	<b>138,000</b>	<b>670,600</b>		<b>1,663</b>	

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OLD TOWN / CHINATOWN  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
(PART 2 OF 3 - APPENDIX A)



## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A

### ISSUES

Phase 1 of the Development Plan involved the preparation of data for analysis of Old Town/Chinatown along with the development of agreement on the issues facing the district. The Old Town/Chinatown Steering Committee prepared the following list of issues confronting the district which were used in the preparation of the Development Plan.

#### ■ COMMUNICATIONS/ CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Perceptions: There seems to be a perception about the district that there is higher crime and unsafe streets in the area. While there are areas of specific problems, the overall safety of the area is similar to the entire downtown.
2. Social Service Siting: The District is an impacted area and has a Shelter Reconfiguration Plan which calls for a balance of social service activity.
3. Balance: There is commitment within the district to maintain a "balance" of social services, housing and commercial development. The term "balance" has varied meanings and needs more information regarding use in discussing new facility siting.
4. Boundaries: The various districts have numerous organizations and defined areas, making a clear definition of relationships and authority difficult.
5. Diversity: The diversity in the district is regarded as positive for the community with historic buildings, Chinatown, artistic community, and commercial activity. This rich diversity in the District is to be promoted. More communications and interaction are needed to establish understanding and agreement.
6. Social Services Organizations: The social service agencies in the area have different organizational structures and goals. Understanding the differences will improve the communications.

#### ■ HOUSING

1. Housing Diversity: There is strong support for the development of additional housing that includes all income levels from 30% median income, to 50-60% median income to market rate housing.
2. Current Developments: The addition of 166 units of housing (118 at 60% median and 48 at market rate) in the district should be reinforced with support for additional housing in the district. The adjacent 600+ units at Union Station represent a strong population shift.
3. Housing Opportunities: Numerous properties have the potential to residential conversion including surface parking lots, buildings requiring seismic upgrade, and the fire station property.
4. Targeted Housing Markets: The diversity of the district provides strong support for targeted housing developments for artists, ethnic, elderly housing.

#### ■ CRIME/SAFETY

1. Drug Activity: Drug activity is significant in the areas where nighttime activity is low. Recent increases have occurred on Fifth and Sixth Avenues.
2. Current Police and Clean and Safe Activities: The number of personnel assigned to Central Precinct have been lower in recent years due to unfilled positions and assignments to violent crime located elsewhere.

#### ■ STREET ENVIRONMENT

1. Vision Plan: Calls for public restrooms, street lighting, and community center as part of the improvement of the street environment.
2. Public Art: Identify ways in which public art can be incorporated as new development occurs in the area.

3. Historic Community: The historic districts and historic buildings in the area provide a unique ambience to the area that should be encouraged.
4. Burnside: Burnside serves as a significant barrier to downtown and is not supportive of active business on the street.
5. District Edges: The district has considerable physical barriers impeding connections to other areas including Naito Parkway, Steel Bridge ramps, railroad tracks and the Post Office.
6. One-Way Grid: The one-way north/south grid along with Everett/Glisan restricts access within the district.
7. Lines of People: People waiting in line on the sidewalks for specific social services create a discomfort for other users of the public right-of-way.
8. Awnings, Street Protection, Furniture: There is a need for relaxing the City's expectation for awnings *in the short-term only*, so that loitering and sleeping behavior can be better managed.
9. Fourth Avenue: There is potential for strengthening the connection between the Chinatown Gate and the Chinese Garden by improving Fourth Avenue.
10. Social Service Locations: Some services provide meals, resulting in service users waiting in line along the sidewalk. This can create conflicts for other pedestrians.

#### ■ CIRCULATION

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1. South/North Light Rail: Fifth and Sixth Avenue circulation will be revised due to rail.
2. Naito Parkway: Reconstruction planned.
3. Pedestrian Access: Pedestrian access is impacted primarily by the hard edges to the District including Burnside, Naito Parkway, and the railroad tracks. Steel Bridge ramps and Glisan represent difficult areas in the district.

4. Burnside: A difficult area to cross. Reconstruction of Burnside related to light rail crossing may present opportunity to improve pedestrian amenities at Fifth and Sixth Avenues.
5. Bikeways: Additions of bikeway access in the district are anticipated.

#### ■ NIGHT LIFE/ MARKETING/PROMOTION

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1. Promotion: Continuation of promotion and marketing recommended.
2. Conflicts: Some conflicts have arisen between housing and evening entertainment activity.

#### ■ PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

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1. CIP: City capital improvements include \$480,000 for District pending results of Development Plan.
2. South/North Light Rail: Proposed to be constructed within seven years. Construction will revise circulation and operation of the Transit Mall.
3. Chinese Garden: Proposed to be open in 2001.
4. Urban Renewal District: The current district has six more years before it loses tax increment funds. TIF has been a significant component in supporting redevelopment.
5. Lighting Program: The City of Portland lighting program is available to support targeted efforts for revitalization.
6. Facade Program: The City of Portland has a facade improvement program that includes loans and potentially grants for targeted areas. The Fourth Avenue and Burnside areas could be targeted for this program.

## ■ OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

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1. Waterfront Park: There is a need for a better connection to Waterfront Park.
2. Union Station: There is an open space opportunity in the forecourt of Union Station.

## ■ PHYSICAL

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1. Historic Buildings: There are many historic buildings in the district which have unique requirements for redevelopment and use.
2. Seismic: Seismic standards have increased the cost of renovation and reuse of buildings.
3. Property Ownership: The property available for development has a wide diversity of ownership, development interest, and commitment.

## ■ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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1. New Development: Several new developments including 156 housing units, GSL Union Station development, Chinese Garden and Port Building are likely to create positive momentum for additional development.
2. Trailways Blocks: The Vision Plan included these blocks for office development which have not occurred.
3. Permanent Market: Vision Plan calls for a seven day market for Saturday Market. Several investments in the area have tried to support that activity with limited success.
4. Asian Senior Housing: A proposal for Asian senior housing has merit for increasing activity, preserving diversity, and maintaining economic development momentum.

5. Hotel: The recent additions of Port offices and lack of alternatives would appear to provide a positive environment for a hotel. Night life and entertainment districts would be supported.
6. Parking: Addition of the Port and Chinese Garden should strengthen the need for additional parking facilities. This effort could be combined with acquisition of surface parking areas.
7. Union Station: With new light rail, GSL housing and the agricultural center, the Union Station may become more of an opportunity.
8. Community Center: Local groups are working on the potential for a community center that houses family association offices, community services, multi-functional space for banquet, classes and special events.
9. Trade/Cultural Center: Provides conference/exhibition facility, performance/small theater/cinemas.
10. Housing: Housing development for all income levels will support the goals for nightlife, street activity and diversity of development.

## ■ ASIAN BUSINESSES

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1. Asian Business: Foster Asian related business activity and investment in Chinatown.



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OLD TOWN / CHINATOWN  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
(PART 3 OF 3 - APPENDIX B)



## APPENDIX B



DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

- (A) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (B) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (C) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (D) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (E) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (F) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (G) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (H) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (I) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (J) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (K) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (L) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (M) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (N) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (O) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (P) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (Q) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (R) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (S) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (T) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (U) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (V) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (W) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (X) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (Y) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL
- (Z) RETAIL/PROFESSIONAL

5/19/2012

# OLD TOWN / CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

THOMAS HACKER  
AND ASSOCIATES  
ARCHITECTS P.C.



## Appendix B

### PHYSICAL PLANNING

Following the identification of issues during Phase I, the second phase of the Development Plan effort focused on physical planning. This phase was primarily an urban design exercise, identifying opportunity sites, and addressing public investments intended to spur redevelopment. Note that some of the recommendations and design concepts from Phase II were modified during the subsequent phases of the Development Plan, so that the recommended action plan does not always correspond directly to the Phase II findings.

#### ■ IDENTIFICATION OF OPPORTUNITY SITES

As a first step in understanding the development potential of Old Town/Chinatown, the Design Team sought to identify potential sites for new development or renovation (see Development Potential Plan, at left). The new development sites were identified using the following criteria:

- *Historic structures should remain.*
- *Buildings which contain compatible existing businesses should remain.*
- *Existing historic buildings which are under-utilized should be adaptively reused.*
- *Existing buildings which are not historic, or are occupied by incompatible uses or are unoccupied, should be replaced with new structures.*
- *Open parking lots should be redeveloped.*

#### ■ DETAILED URBAN DESIGN STUDY AREAS

Recognizing the size of the Old Town/Chinatown Study Area and the complexity of issues, the Steering Committee selected specific areas for detailed study. These areas were chosen not only for their specific issues and conditions, but also because they were representative of the major issues and conditions of the entire district.

As a result of the Phase 1 Issues & Data Collection Report (see Appendix A) the

Steering Committee designated the following areas for detailed Urban Design:

**The Third and Fourth Corridor.** This area was chosen because it is the heart of the district. Third Avenue is where Old Town and Chinatown meet, and it engages the proposed Chinese Classical Garden.

**The Trailways Blocks.** Development of the three blocks east of the bus terminal and south of Union Station was the one major goal identified in the Central City 2000 vision process which has not been accomplished. The open lots represent a major opportunity to bring new energy to the streets of the district.

**Burnside and related barriers and edges of the district.** Burnside acts as a major divider between the Old Town/Chinatown district and Downtown. Slowing traffic and improving the pedestrian crossings would enhance the quality of the sidewalk experience and help integrate Old Town/Chinatown with Downtown and provide a more welcoming entrance.



*Old Town / Chinatown aerial*



-  NEW BUILDING
-  RENOVATED BUILDING
-  NEW BUILDING OUTSIDE STUDY AREA
-  EXISTING BUILDING
-  GREEN SPACE
-  HARDSCAPE COURTYARD/PLAZA
-  NOTES

**3RD AND 4TH AVENUE**



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**OLD TOWN / CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

THOMAS HACKER AND ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS P.C. 

## 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Plan Key

### Possible Developments

- Block P** Development Assumptions  
6:1 F.A.R., 360 FT Height Maximum
- Block O** Development Assumptions;  
Plus Renovated Warehouse  
6:1 F.A.R., 350 FT Height Maximum
- Block 24** Development Assumptions  
Office Building  
12:1 F.A.R., 360 FT Height Maximum
- Block 25** Development Assumptions  
9:1 F.A.R., 360 FT Height Maximum
- Block 26** Development Assumptions  
9:1 F.A.R., 360 FT Height Maximum
- Block 27** Development Assumptions  
6:1 F.A.R., 100 FT Height Maximum
- Block 28** Development Assumptions  
4:1 F.A.R., 75 FT Height Maximum
- Block 29** Development Assumptions  
Burnside Street  
4:1 F.A.R., 75 FT Height Maximum  
6:1 F.A.R., 100 FT Height Maximum
- Block 33** Potential Mixed-Use Development  
with Open Space
- Block 34** Development Assumptions  
6:1 F.A.R., 100 FT Height Maximum
- Block 35** Development Assumptions  
9:1 F.A.R., 360 FT Height Maximum
- Hotel** Alternate-No Specific Site  
12:1 F.A.R., 360 FT Height Maximum

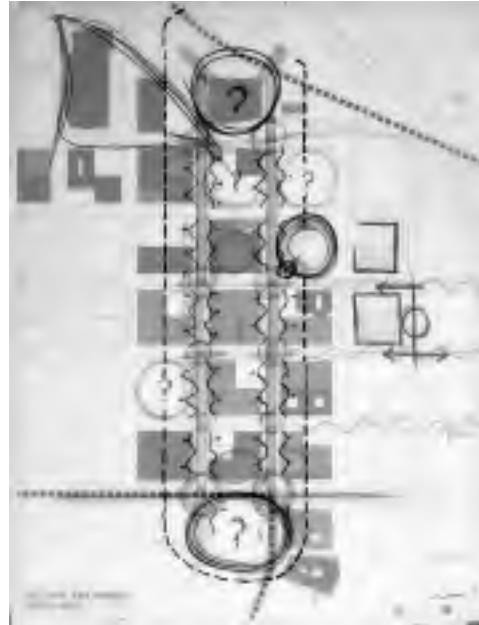
**Note:** residential development is eligible for an additional 3:1 FAR bonus. Other FAR bonuses may apply to non-residential development as well.

### Street Improvements

- 1) Add pedestrian crossing at Third Avenue to Naito Parkway.
- 2) Reduce width of Glisan Street to two lanes plus parallel parking; add curb extensions to improve pedestrian crossing.
- 3) Eliminate eastbound traffic on Glisan.
- 4) Modify for pedestrian crossing at Glisan Street to Waterfront Park.
- 5) Reduce Third Avenue to two lanes plus parallel parking; add curb extension to encourage pedestrian crossing; extend sidewalks.
- 6) Develop curb extensions to encourage pedestrian crossing.
- 7) Reduce Burnside to two lanes each way plus parallel parking.
- 8) Reduce width of Second Avenue at Ankeny Street.
- 9) Develop Ankeny Street as pedestrian connector.

## ■ THIRD AND FOURTH AVENUES

Third and Fourth Avenues are the heart of the district. Fourth Avenue is the historic center of the Asian Community. Third Avenue is where Old Town and Chinatown come together, with the boundaries of their historic districts overlapping.



*3rd and 4th Avenue Concept Diagram*

## Street Character

The quality of the pedestrian experience is impacted by the scale and dimension of the streets, and the activity on the adjacent properties.

Fourth Avenue generally has a comfortable pedestrian scale. With additional infill development of vacant sites with ground floor retail space, it has the potential of becoming an active urban environment. Curb returns to decrease the width of the pedestrian crossings and reduced traffic speeds will improve the streetscape, but are not essential. The plan suggests a simple version of a Chinese gate or some other gateway feature at Fourth and Glisan to provide closure to the street, and balance the Chinese Gate at Burnside at the south end.

Third Avenue is less commodious than Fourth Avenue because it has three traffic lanes rather than two and because of the excessive traffic speeds, which are related to the ramp

access from the Steel Bridge. The right-of-way is actually 70 feet as opposed to 60 feet on Fourth Avenue. Discussions with the Office of Transportation revealed that the third lane between Glisan and Couch is not required to handle the projected traffic volumes. The design proposal is to eliminate one lane, reconfiguring the street to have two traffic lanes and two parallel parking lanes. The sidewalk should be widened on the west side of the street, and graded to slope back to a continuous trench drain at the existing curb line. This sidewalk widening should occur on the west side because it can be accommodated incrementally with potential development of blocks 25 and 26, and with the potential renovation of buildings on block 27.



*Glisan Street at 3rd*

Glisan Street/Third Avenue is excessively wide and the traffic speeds are far too fast to be a safe, comfortable place for pedestrians. The design proposes several changes to address these problems. The eastbound traffic lane connecting Fourth to Third Avenue should be eliminated. This traffic should be rerouted to Hoyt Street. Glisan should be reduced in width to two lanes of traffic plus parallel parking. An additional right-turn lane from the bridge to Third Avenue should be maintained. The street width should be narrowed creating a large triangular plaza on the south side of Glisan Street between Fourth and Third Avenues.



*Reconstruction at Glisan St. and 3rd*

## ***Development***

The Third and Fourth Avenue corridor includes several parcels available for new development, existing buildings appropriate for rehabilitation and a few buildings which we recommend be replaced with new buildings. The intent of the plan is not to be prescriptive about the uses, so that the developers and property owners will be encouraged to respond to the market demands. However, the plan has made some assumptions about uses in order to represent a balance of uses in the neighborhood and because particular sites are more appropriate for particular uses.

**Housing.** The priority for new development in the neighborhood is for housing above ground floor retail. Fortunately, housing is also the most likely form of new development because it is a public funding priority. There is particular interest in the development of some specialized housing, particular Asian Senior housing. There are several alternative sites for this housing and the specific site will be determined by market conditions. Similarly a proposal for an Asian Community Center could be accommodated in several locations and would be most compatible as a part of a housing development (perhaps occupying the ground floor retail space).

For the purpose of assessing capacity (see matrix), the analysis assumes that most of the available parcels north of Couch Street on either side of Fourth and on the west side of Third Avenue be developed as housing with ground floor retail.

**Retail.** Ground floor retail or office space should be encouraged in the Third and Fourth Avenue fronts of all new buildings. Counting only the potential new buildings, and allowing for apartment lobbies and parking entrances, properties along Third and Fourth Avenue have the potential of adding over 80,000 square feet of new commercial space. Community amenities such as the proposed Asian Community Center would be counted in this number.

**Parking.** Old Town/Chinatown has suffered the loss of over 200 parking spaces in the development of the north transit mall. This loss is exacerbated by the fact that many

patrons of commercial parking lots in Old Town/Chinatown actually work south of Burnside, i.e., out of the district. The plan recognizes that new development in the district plus the attraction of the Chinese Classical Garden, with the corresponding decrease in surface parking lots will worsen the parking problem and require the construction of new parking facilities. Current zoning restrictions which do not allow for the replacement of surface parking spaces in new developments are a serious impediment to new development.

The plan suggests construction of four levels of parking on Block 24, as indicated above. Large, mostly full block developments such as those on blocks 25 and 26, could accommodate ground level parking behind the retail and one level of parking above grade. The half block developments on Blocks O and P could accommodate ground level parking behind retail. A potential park on block 33 (see below) could accommodate one level of below grade parking. The total amount of parking could be approximately 870 off-street parking spaces along Third and Fourth Avenues, compared with the approximately 450 existing spaces (not including those on Block 16, the site of the Chinese Classical Garden).

**Hotel.** A hotel in the district would add vitality in the evenings and weekends, bring visitors to the neighborhood, serve the Classical Chinese Garden and the adjacent businesses and the convention center which is just across the Steel Bridge. As with the housing, several parcels could accommodate a hotel of up to 200-rooms, with ground level retail space and the hotel lobby. The area around the Chinese Garden is a promising vicinity for such a hotel.

An alternative idea would be to rehabilitate several historic structures as smaller hotels and bed and breakfasts. This approach could take advantage of a market for this type of lodging, i.e., visitors drawn to the historic character of the area.

**Offices.** The plan recognizes that Old Town/Chinatown has traditionally had an employment base of its own and continued development of office space is essential for the creation of a vibrant life of the district during the weekdays. The proposal suggests new Class A

office space as an alternate to the hotel on Block 24. This site could accommodate a twelve-story building with 160,000 square foot of office space above four stories of parking. The plan also suggests additional Class A office space on the Trailways Blocks (see below). The neighborhood also has the need for Class B and C office space. This space is attractive to small professional service providers, such as designers and engineers, and has typically been accommodated in renovated buildings. This space is also particularly compatible with arts and entertainment activities.

The plan suggests new Class C Office space on Block 29, on Burnside and Couch between Third and Fourth Avenues. These sites are currently occupied by non-historic buildings which are either not occupied, or occupied by non-compatible uses. The condition and use of these buildings, at the entrance to the district from Burnside, make redevelopment of these parcels critical to the redevelopment of the entire district. In addition, existing multi-story historic structures could be developed for office space. A strategy of public investment to facilitate these projects is a priority of the development plan.



*Potential Development along 4th Ave. at Burnside St*

## ■ OPEN SPACE

The River District Recreation & Open Space Needs Assessment, prepared by Portland Parks & Recreation in March of 1997, identified the need for open space within the neighborhood.

**Open Space Study.** It is recommended that an open space study be conducted as part of the short-term actions for the Development Plan. The following considerations should be incorporated as part of this open space study.





OPEN SPACE PLAN



Increased connection to existing Community Recreation Spaces. The plan proposes to enhance the connections to the North Park Blocks and Waterfront Park. Specifically, a pedestrian crossing should be created at Glisan and Naito Parkway, and the pedestrian light at Couch Street should be upgraded to be a fully signalized crosswalk. To emphasize these new connections a tree planting program should be undertaken on Glisan Street, Everett Street and on Couch Street, i.e. the streets with signalized pedestrian connections to these open spaces.

Neighborhood Recreation Space. The plan suggests that a neighborhood park should be developed in the neighborhood. Block 33, between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, Couch and Davis is designated as a potential mixed use site to possibly include retail and housing along with a community center/cultural space. Ideally this project would have an open space component, i.e. an urban park, with below grade parking. The design should be compatible with the neighborhood context, i.e. Chinatown, especially on the Fourth Avenue side.

There is significant concern in the neighborhood about the safety of open space. It is essential that the park be created only after the residential population of the district is greatly increased and in conjunction with the redevelopment of the properties immediately adjacent to the proposed park. The park must be designed to engage the street and avoid spaces which may be conducive to unsavory activity.

The plan also anticipates a plaza space in front of Union Station, although such a space may be limited to a relatively decorative character and function.

Recreational Pockets. New quarter block developments may have landscaped courtyards with controlled access from the street if these blocks are not developed with ground

floor parking. These would be primarily for the use of residents, however could be open to the public at some times of the day. A neighborhood precedent for this is the courtyard in the Merchant Hotel on Davis, between Second and Third Avenues.

With the creation of a neighborhood parking plan, and in conjunction with the renovation of the upper floors of the Couch Street Fishhouse, there is the possibility that the parking lot behind the facade of the Simon Building (Block 28) could be developed as a pocket park. A park in this location would get good light from the east and west, and could be secured with gates in the evening. This proposal would preserve the facade as a public amenity and provide needed open space.



*Merchant Hotel Courtyard*

Weekend Market. The plan suggests that the Chamber of Commerce Parking lot, across from the entrance to the Classical Chinese Garden, be made available for market stalls on the weekend.

Classical Chinese Garden. While the Classical Chinese Garden is not a public park, it has significant open space benefits. With its one-story wall and over-arching foliage, it offers visual relief in the district.

OPEN SPACE PLAN KEY	
<b>Notes</b>	
A.	Courtyard at grade in new housing development with controlled access from street.
B.	Courtyard above parking for use of housing resident.
1)	Parking lot proposed for weekend market.
2)	Proposed community garden accessible from Flanders Street.
3)	Modify for pedestrian crossing at Glisan to Waterfront Park.
4)	Add signalizations for pedestrian crossing at Couch Street.
5)	New neighborhood park as part of mixed use development.
6)	Street tree program for streets connecting to North Park Blocks and Waterfront Park.



*Future Development of Chinese Classical Garden*

Ankeny Street Pedestrian Way. The plan suggests that an enhanced pedestrian way of linked plazas with fountains be developed along Ankeny Street from Third Avenue to the Waterfront Park. Third Avenue should be reduced to two traffic lanes, creating a widened sidewalk on the east side between Burnside and Ash Streets. Ankeny Street, between Third and Second Avenues should be restricted to pedestrians. Second Avenue should be reduced in width to three lanes between Ash and Burnside, creating widened sidewalks. The parking could be removed from the free-standing facade adjacent to the New Market (and a new building developed on the north side of Ankeny). These spaces should have the same pavement, and share other design features. Together these spaces will serve as an entrance into Old Town and encourage the expansion of Saturday Market to the west.

## ■ CULTURAL IDENTITY AND URBAN FORM CHINATOWNS

In order to set a clear course to revitalize Portland's Chinatown, it is necessary to respect its history, the uniqueness of its community, and its cultural characteristics. The cultural identity of a successful contemporary Chinatown relies on the vibrancy of a work/live community. During the physical planning effort, the following goals were established for Chinatown:

- *To encourage development that fosters Chinatown's cultural identity as well as its history.*
- *To promote a vibrant work/live environment in Chinatown.*
- *To recognize and respect the growth of a contemporary Chinatown.*



*Chinatown Gate at 4th Avenue*

## ***Historical Background***

1851. The original location of Portland's Chinatown was along SW Second Avenue roughly between Yamhill and Stark. The first Chinese-owned business was opened.

1873. The most devastating fire in Portland's history began in a Chinese laundry in the "old" Chinatown. Twenty City blocks burned prompting the gradual relocation of many businesses to the "new" Chinatown, which was previously Japantown.

1880-1910. Portland's Chinese population was the second largest in the United States, trailing only San Francisco. Most Chinese came from southern China to mine, farm, build railroads and roads, or work in the fish canning industry.

1880's. West Coast's economic depression aroused an anti-Chinese sentiment. The Oregon Constitution forbade any Chinese to own or buy any property.

1886. The Chinese were to be forced out of Portland on March 24 by anti-Chinese mobs. But the expulsion did not occur because Mayor John Gates intervened.

1882-1943. US Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act prohibiting all Chinese immigration or citizenship.

1894. The physical damage caused by the flooding of the Willamette River as well as the social and geographical restructuring of the Chinese community caused remaining Chinatown activities to move to the current location on NW Fourth Avenue (New Chinatown).

1942. President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which forced the evacuation of persons with Japanese ancestry from the West Coast.

1986. Erection of the 38 foot tall Chinese gate at NW Fourth Avenue and Burnside.

1989. The new Chinatown was named a National Historic District.

1999. Completion of Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan funded by the City of Portland.

2000. A Suzhou-style classical Chinese garden is scheduled to be opened to the public (sited at NW Third Avenue and Everett Street). This garden will be the largest urban Chinese garden outside of China.

### ***Traditional Chinatowns (Urban)***

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**Location:** Traditional Chinatowns in the United States mostly date back to the 1850's. They were usually sited in less desirable/less-valued land allocated by local governments.

**Social Structure:** Most Chinatowns at one time or another were the only areas where the Chinese were allowed to stay. Their population consisted mostly of male laborers. Tongs [meeting halls] and Associations (distinguished by their Chinese village origins, surnames, dialects, trades, etc.) in different Chinatowns were established to serve as social & cultural safe havens. Many of them are linked to a national headquarters in San Francisco. These organizations maintain strict social traditions, engendering absolute loyalty as well as strong seniority-based ruling hierarchies. This organizational structure has made it difficult for many Tongs and Associations to obtain consensus on the development directions for their holdings. In addition, due to the history of racial discrimination, apprehension still exists among some old-timers. Today, the old-style Associations and Tongs need to expand their roles as community-involved, family-oriented organizations in order to attract new members.

The solidarity of Tong and Association members at times cause conflicts between organizations. In most major cities, CCBA, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolence Association (a national entity) serves as the umbrella organization.

**Physical Presence:** Of the buildings built in the 19th and 20th centuries in Chinatowns, many have extensive use of Chinese mythical motifs intended to reinforce the cultural identity as well as attract business from the non-Asian community. Auspicious elements are integrated into the built form. Many Tongs' and Associations' buildings have very specific hierarchies of uses on each floor. This practice very much reflects a vertically-oriented traditional Chinese courtyard house

**Note:** The social structure and the physical presence of traditional urban Chinatowns have created a "style" that uniquely represents the culture of the Overseas' Chinese. The authenticity of Chinatown is based on the functional content; scenographic physical images would not be enough. It is important to understand that each Chinatown uniquely expresses its interrelationship with the host city. Therefore, no one Chinatown can serve as a model/prototype for any other.

### ***Contemporary Chinatowns (Urban)***

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The traditional urban Chinatowns of the United States, are generally losing their luster due to aging of the older immigrants, the decreased availability of affordable housing and business opportunities, limited availability of larger land parcels for development and the unwillingness on the part of Chinese property owners to reinvest. The sustainability of the traditional Chinatown also suffers tremendously due to the rise of upscale suburban Chinatowns. Today's urban Chinatowns tend to be places that attract supporters who yearn to preserve the romantic identity of the ethnic Chinese enclave and for a "captive" community. Many existing housing and business establishments enjoy unrealistically below-market-rate rents. These residents and business are therefore unwilling to leave or simply cannot afford anything outside of Chinatown. New development usually features market rate rents which the locals cannot afford. Many cities have integrated Chinatown into their larger city planning studies. Often collaborative efforts develop between the Chinatown communities and their respective cities in an attempt to provide investment-friendly Chinatowns. Many Chinatowns have also been attracting a diverse Asian population such as Vietnamese businesses.

*NOTE:* It is a challenge to attract Chinese to reside in existing urban Chinatowns due to their awareness of race and history. Chinatowns are very commonly perceived by more affluent Chinese as urban enclaves where the less fortunate Chinese reside and this causes potential investors to be less motivated, perhaps even skeptical.



*Chinatown storefront*

### ***Contemporary Chinatowns (Suburban)***

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As the affluent Chinese population increases, a new market for suburban living has developed. Since traditional urban Chinatowns provide only limited options in terms of lifestyle, amenities, and social structure, Chinese immigrants (from mainland China as well as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia) have begun to establish Chinese residential and commercial hubs outside of the urban environment.

**Social Structure:** There are a variety of available organizations in which Chinese can participate beyond traditional ethnic boundaries.

**Physical Presence:** Due to a more globally-aware mainstream population, Chinese busi-

nesses are less dependent on mere exotic visual attractions. In increasingly competitive markets, Chinese businesses are now very conscious of delivering quality goods and services at affordable prices. Contemporary suburban Chinatowns exhibit many of the characteristics of the American shopping mall.

### ***Portland Chinatown***

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**Challenges:** The traditions within the Tong and Associations make it extremely challenging to foster a proactive development process within the Chinese community. The Chinese community is generally skeptical about the success of any investment in Chinatown. Many properties have multiple ownership or belong to absentee owners making it difficult to initiate any development process. Too often, one encounters a “wait and see” attitude as a means by which to avoid taking the “risky” initiative. It is vitally important to seek out willing Chinese owners who are willing to take action in investing in/developing their properties. Their leadership is crucial in motivating the rest of the Chinese owners to seek development options. The current push to establish an Asian senior housing and cultural center will be an extremely important confidence boost within the Chinese community.

Constant communication between the city and the Chinese community (within and beyond Chinatown) must be in force in order to stimulate development interest and, more importantly, to establish the community’s trust in accepting development aid and guidance. Publications must be made available in both English and Chinese and take full advantage of the local Chinese organizations, the Chinese Weekly Times, as well as the Oregonian. Portland’s Chinatown also needs to expand its attraction to the diverse Asian population in the city at large. The Seattle International District can serve as a successful reference.

### ***Common Design Features that Can Enhance Chinatown’s Character***

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- *Deep awnings fixed/retractable.*
- *Street vending.*
- *Display of merchandise on the exterior of the storefront.*

- *Retractable storefront for displaying merchandise.*
- *Chinese signage protruding beyond building faces.*
- *Bilingual signage on storefront surfaces.*
- *Signage highlighted with neon lights.*
- *Ethnic murals.*
- *Chinese motifs accenting the architecture.*
- *Curbside loading/unloading.*

**Note:** Refer to River District Design Guidelines 1998 amended version A5-1-6 REINFORCES THE IDENTITY OF CHINATOWN for specifics on signage.



*Chinatown street life*

### ***Feng Shui Applications***

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Feng Shui is a traditional art of geomancy practiced by many Asians to different extents. This art form originated from Taoist beliefs specifically for siting auspicious burial grounds in ancient China. There are a multitude of Feng Shui practices ranging from the placement of a tree at one's home to the orientation of built form at an urban scale. Authentic Feng Shui applications are very site specific and can involve extremely complex calculations and considerations. Feng Shui is gaining substantial interest in the United States. There are many commercial publications and Fang Shui "Masters" readily available in the market. Unfortunately, there is no one credible source that provides an authentic approach holistically. The general principles are very much integrated into one's daily life in Asia as "common knowledge".

When developing Portland's Chinatown, it is helpful to be aware of some common Feng Shui planning principles and to try to empha-

size overall balance as a means of achieving harmony. To take any Feng Shui consideration out of context might not be practical or appropriate. The following lists some Feng Shui issues worth considering:

- *Orientation / proximity / views: Southern and Eastern exposures are considered preferable as entrances.*
- *Encourage the use of auspicious colors & numbers: Avoid large surfaces of black or white and the number 4; they are usually associated with death or mourning. (Exception: exterior walls of Portland's Classical Chinese Garden.)*
- *Location of trees / lamp-posts: Avoid placing a tree or a lamp-post directly in front of any entrance.*
- *Subtle integration of Chinese paving patterns and/or graphic motifs.*
- *Mirrors: Avoid using large surfaces of reflective or mirror glass for exterior glazing, it is considered very offensive to the opposite neighbor(s).*

### ***Possible Additional Programs that Need Public Support***

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- *Affordable housing*
- *Senior center*
- *Community service center*
- *Community recreational facility*
- *Cultural center*
- *Parking*
- *Asian business recruitment*

### ***Issues for Residential Development***

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Portland's Chinatown will be a strong work/live environment where Chinese and non-Chinese work and live together. It is prudent to sensitively address any development to the particulars of Chinese culture.

- *Sound transmission factor: The construction of interior divisions between units and floors should take in the consideration of extra reduction of sound transmission.*
- *Kitchen: it is preferred to have gas stoves for Chinese cooking and to separate kitchen space from the rest of the residential unit (this can be compensated by providing duct venting, NOT filter vents).*
- *Laundry set-up in individual units preferred.*

- *Balconies*
- *Landscaping of Asian plants for street-scape as well as in courtyard (with seating): Bamboo, ginkgo nut tree, wintersweet tree, peonies, etc.*
- *Maximize indoor presence of daylight*

## **Closing Note**

Although Portland's Chinatown played an important role in the early history of Chinese immigration to the United States, the current Chinatown lacks a critical mass to support a more vibrant atmosphere. With the increase of activities and population around Chinatown due to the development of the Pearl District and the River District, the projected increase in pedestrian and automobile traffic will certainly benefit Chinatown commercially. As well, it is inevitable that Portland's Chinatown, with its physical location, will attract a diverse population of residents. Although it is unrealistic to romantically impose an image of a traditional Chinatown in Portland, it is critical for us to recognize and thus strengthen Chinatown's historical value and the Chinese community's cultural identity.

The lack of rich historical structure in Portland's Chinatown should not diminish the level of success in revitalizing this Chinatown. Success will depend on how vibrant the work/live environment can become.

## ■ TRAILWAYS BLOCKS

Development of the three blocks opposite the Trailways Bus Station and south of Union Station was the only development objective of the Old Town/Chinatown Vision Plan which has not been achieved. The blocks are in public ownership and represent a major opportunity for the neighborhood. Their location has great visibility and development would be a positive signal of the vibrancy of the district.

The plan looked at several options for development. A priority in the review of options was for a phased development which could be initiated to complete a short-term objective. Previous ideas about the development potential of the site as a high-density office space were considered to not be achievable in the time frame.

The proposed option calls for the development of a plaza, with parking below on the northern block, opposite Union Station. This parking (approximately 80 spaces) would serve the station needs and the Plaza would form a forecourt for the station and a setting for public events. The plan calls for the middle block (Block U) to be developed as a six-story residential building with ground floor retail on Sixth Avenue, parking behind and one-story below grade. This scheme could have 195 dwelling units, 145 parking spaces and 8,000 square feet of retail space. For the southern block (Block R), there are two options, dependent on market conditions. One option is housing similar to Block U. This would yield 202 dwelling units, 16,000 square feet of retail and 100 parking spaces. The second alternative would be an eight-story building with 285,000 square feet of office space, 16,000 square feet of retail space and 100 parking spaces.

The three blocks could be a phased development, with the below grade parking continuous under all three blocks and the intervening streets. Phase 1 could be the center block and Phase 2 could be the southern block. The park could be done with the extension of Sixth Avenue (see below).

### Trailways Block Plan Key

#### **Possible Developments**

Block Y Development Assumptions  
Union Station Forecourt  
Below Grade Parking  
6:1 F.A.R., 75 FT Height Maximum

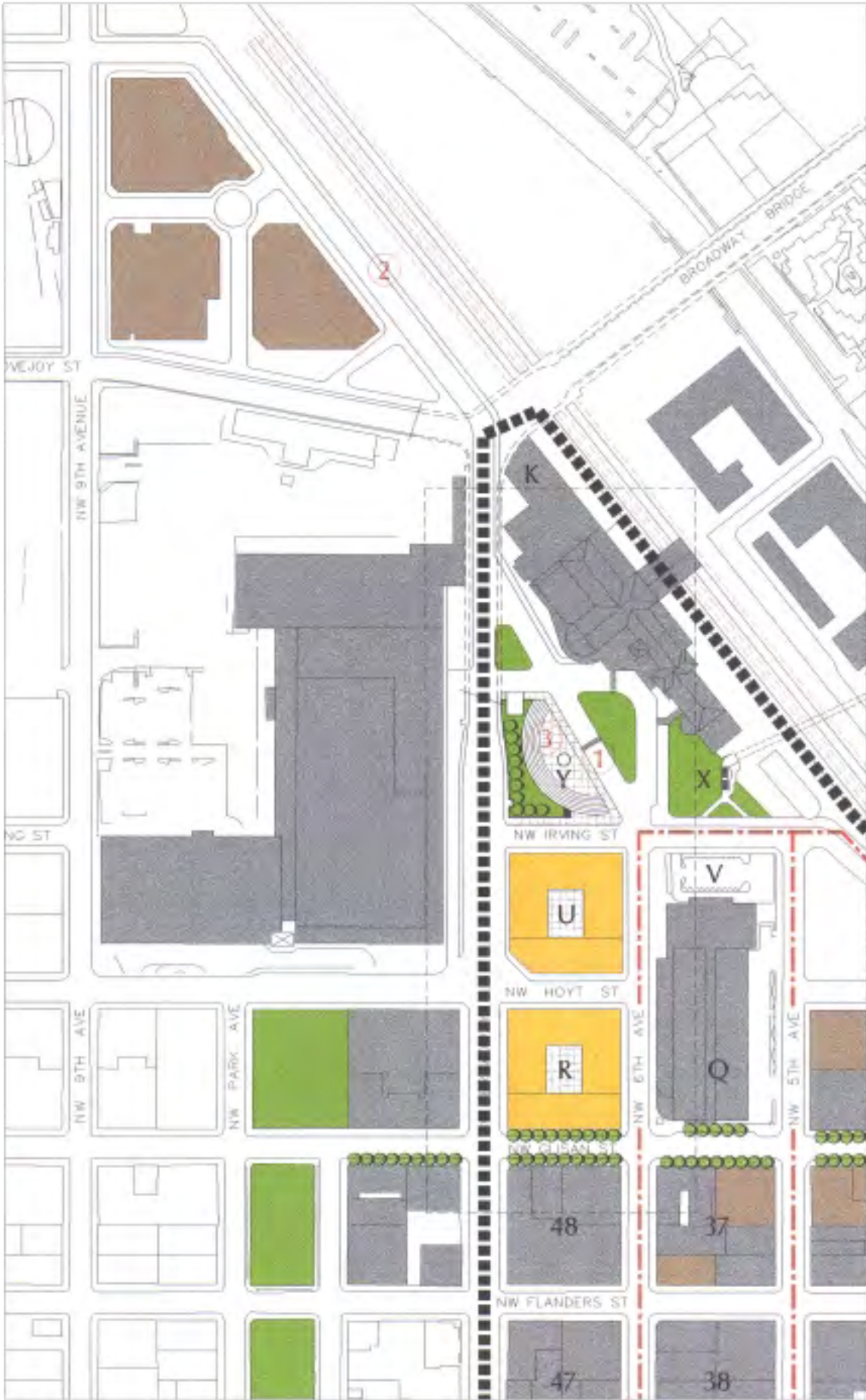
Block U Development Assumptions  
High Density Housing  
6:1 F.A.R., 75 FT Height Maximum

Block R Development Assumptions  
High Density Housing  
6:1 F.A.R., 350 FT Height Maximum

Office (Alternate)  
6:1 F.A.R., 350 FT Height Maximum

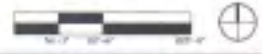
#### **Street Improvements**

- 1) Extend Sixth Avenue under Broadway Street to North River District.
- 2) Develop enhanced pedestrian walkway from North River District to Third Avenue crossing of tracks to Naito Parkway.
- 3) Develop parking below public plaza/park.



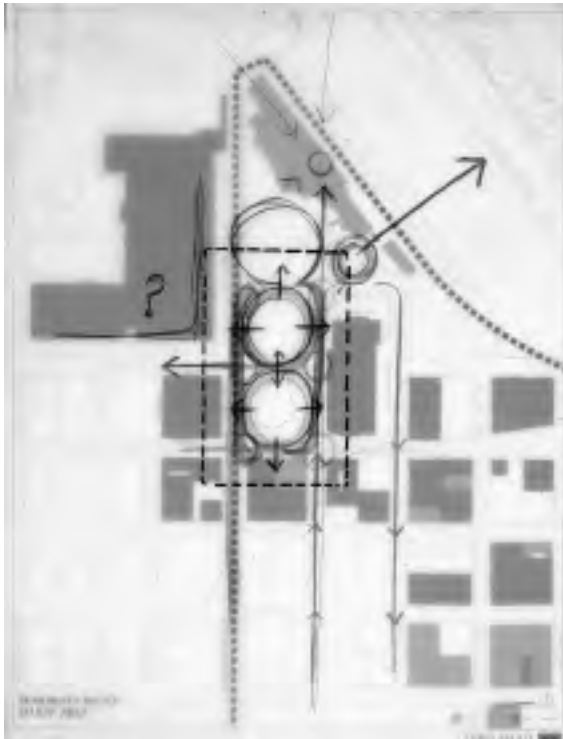
-  NEW BUILDING
-  RENOVATED BUILDING
-  NEW BUILDING OUTSIDE STUDY AREA
-  EXISTING BUILDING
-  GREEN SPACE
-  HARDSCAPE COURTYARD/PLAZA
-  NOTES

**TRAILWAYS  
BLOCKS**



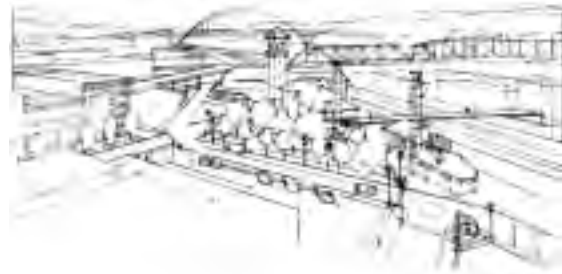
**OLD TOWN / CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN**





*Trailways Block concept diagram*

River District Connection. A major focus of the Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan is breaking down the borders which isolate the neighborhood from adjacent neighborhoods. The development of the Trailways Blocks and the removal of the Lovejoy Ramp, as a part of the River District Plan presents a major opportunity to create a direct connection between Old Town/Chinatown and the River District. The plan proposes that Sixth Avenue be extended diagonally in front of Union Station, under Broadway and connect to Northrup Street in the River District. Current plans for the River District anticipate the construction of a supermarket (with housing above) at 9th and Lovejoy, which could serve the Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood. Bus service could be extended from the Bus Mall to serve the River District. An enhanced pedestrian walkway from the River District can be developed along this extension and continue in front of Union Station, parallel to the train tracks to a pedestrian crossing to Naito Parkway at Third Avenue, or south on Third Avenue to the Classical Chinese Garden. A separate study is underway to consider the potential of extending the Central City Streetcar along a similar route.



*Old Town/Chinatown connection to River District*

## ■ EDGES TO THE DISTRICT

The Old Town/Chinatown district is surrounded by edges that represent major barriers to access and commerce. Considerable effort will need to be made to reduce and mitigate the impact of these edges in order to assure the successful redevelopment of Old Town/Chinatown. The following issues were identified during Phase 2:

1. Burnside: The width, high traffic speeds and difficult pedestrian crossings on Burnside Street create a huge barrier to the connection to downtown.
2. Naito Parkway: Waterfront Park is a well-developed open space with limited accessibility for Old Town/Chinatown due to the difficulty in pedestrian crossing.
3. Railroad: The Union Station tracks cannot be crossed by pedestrians other than by the new pedestrian bridge under construction at Union Station. The McCormick Pier Apartments and Union Station housing have difficult pedestrian access to the district.
4. Glisan/Hoyt: The ramps from the Steel Bridge create a significant barrier to areas north of Glisan.
5. Union Station/Post Office: The new developments north of Lovejoy are not accessible to the district.
6. Ankeny: The avenues (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, etc.) crossing Ankeny are wide. There is potential for pedestrian improvements.

## ***Burnside Street***

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Burnside Street is a major issue and constraint for the Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan. The current design and operation of the street poses a significant problem for the area due to the poor pedestrian safety for crossings, major degradation of economic activity on the street, and high automobile speeds contributing to safety and environmental problems.

### ROLE OF BURNSIDE

Burnside Street is a major arterial street located in the heart of downtown. The street serves several roles:

1. **Major Arterial:** Burnside Street connects Northwest Portland with the Burnside Bridge, providing a substantial regional connection for auto traffic.
2. **Urban Boulevard:** Burnside Street qualifies as a Metro-designated urban boulevard. This designation suggests that the area along Burnside should be recognized as a regional center where higher densities and mixed uses need to be supported. Traffic impacts need to be mitigated to enable the mixed-use activity in the vicinity of the street.
3. **Active Use Area:** The Central City Plan designates Burnside Street as an “active use” area which requires storefront retail and pedestrian priorities for the street.
4. **Transit Access:** Buses use the street to provide service to the eastside and require access through left turn at Fifth Avenue and the Transit Mall.

### Problems with Burnside for Old Town/Chinatown

The multiple functions of the street are necessitated by the location and historical use of the street. The current operation and use of the street creates significant problems for Old Town/Chinatown:

1. **Burnside Creates A Major Barrier to Downtown:** The current street operation substantially discourages people from

crossing Burnside from downtown. This substantial barrier is regarded as the major deterrent to redevelopment of Old Town/Chinatown.

2. **Street Too Wide:** The width of the street is wider than any other in downtown making pedestrians reluctant to cross the street.
3. **Crossings Unsafe:** The pedestrian crossings are substantially limited on the street and are documented as unsafe based upon the record of incidents.
4. **High Traffic Speeds:** The operation of the street currently encourages high speeds due to the nature of the signals and the width of the street. The speeds and noise contribute to the barrier-like qualities.
5. **Poor Street Front Activity:** Burnside Street does not provide a comfortable environment for pedestrians, resulting in unsuccessful street-front activity in the buildings.
6. **Limited On-Street Parking:** The current operation limits parking during the day allowing three lanes of traffic in each direction. The traffic adjacent to the sidewalk further deteriorates the environment on the street.



### Short-Term Recommended Actions

It is recommended that consideration be given to some immediate actions that would begin to improve the environment on the street:

1. **Revise Signal System: Modify signal system to discourage the current high-speed operation on the street.**
2. **Reduce Burnside to Two Lanes/Add Parking: Add parking meters on the street providing for parking all day. Also consider narrowing the lanes of traffic in accordance with urban boulevard standards. Parking from Fourth eastward should not be installed.**
3. **Reduce Excess Roadway Space: Evaluate the operation of the street and reclaim for sidewalks and public space areas that are not needed for auto use. Included for consideration are reduction of Third and Fourth Avenues south of Burnside that have excess capacity dedicated to autos.**
4. **Increase Number of Pedestrian Crossings: Consider addition of crossings that are currently prohibited to improve accessibility for pedestrians.**
5. **Provide Grants for Street Front Improvements: Consider program to support upgrade of street fronts.**
6. **Acquisition: Include properties in PDC acquisition program that could be converted to support street front activity.**

## Long-Term Recommended Actions

1. Advocate Commencement of the Burnside Street Study: It is recommended that the City of Portland commence the study of the reconstruction of Burnside as soon as possible. It is recommended that direct participation of representatives from Old Town/Chinatown be assured in the development of the Burnside Street plan.
2. Revise Sidewalk Environment: Change Burnside Street to increase pedestrian amenities including sidewalk extensions at crossings, increased crossings, elimination of the median, and extended sidewalks where possible.
3. Street Improvement Program: Implement a long-term street improvement program that supports redevelopment of buildings along Burnside.
4. Provide Parking: Establish parking along Burnside.
5. Slow Traffic Speeds: Develop operational plan that reduces travel speeds in the area through signal management.
6. Revise Median Design: Consider removal of median in Burnside in all areas except between Fifth and Fourth Avenues to accommodate bus left turn to the Transit Mall and auto left turn at Fourth to provide access into Old Town/Chinatown.
7. Provide Auto Access into Old Town/Chinatown: Consider inclusion of an east-bound left turn lane at Fourth Avenue that would enable access from Burnside into Old Town/Chinatown.



## Priority Objectives

The following priority objectives are recommended for consideration by the Steering Committee:

1. **Pedestrian Crossings:** It is recommended that the highest priority be given to improving the pedestrian crossings at Burnside. This can be accomplished through a number of techniques including reduction in the number of lanes to two in each direction all day and extending sidewalks at corners. The median currently in Burnside could be removed in all areas except Fifth Avenue (bus use only) to shorten pedestrian walk distances.

**Discussion:** *The pedestrian crossing is recommended as the highest priority for two reasons: safety for pedestrians and improving the connection to downtown. Burnside Street has one of the highest occurrences of pedestrian accidents in the City. Old Town/Chinatown commerce and first floor retail activity would be enhanced by the willingness of the neighboring populations in downtown to cross Burnside. This should be encouraged and could well be the most important factor in supporting first floor retail activity.*

2. **Improve Streetfront Environment on Burnside:** It is recommended that the second priority be given to physical changes on Burnside Street that support an active street environment. This can be accomplished by widening the sidewalks, improved lighting, and/or providing on-street parking along both sides of the street. The on-street parking will provide access for potential customers and serve as a buffer for pedestrians to Burnside traffic. Storefront improvement grants can only be successful if the environment on the street is improved.

**Discussion:** *Burnside Street suffers from a perception of unsavory activity that discourages people from walking to or along the street. The storefronts are unable to improve their operations due to the lack of people willing to be on the street. A physical investment in improved sidewalk environment combined with pedestrian crossings and façade improvement grants could be successful. The combination of high*

*vehicle speeds, noise and the lack of a buffer to the traffic is a major deterrent to promoting an active pedestrian environment.*

3. **Reduce Burnside Traffic Speed:** It is recommended that the third priority be reducing the speed of traffic on Burnside. This can be accomplished by a combination of narrowing lanes, physical improvements such as landscaping and modification of the signal cycle.

**Discussion:** *Travel speeds create significant safety hazards to pedestrians contemplating use of the Burnside crossings. Metro has developed urban boulevard design standards that could be incorporated in the Burnside design. Narrower lanes, landscaping and other devices are recommended. The current signal cycling system (simultaneous) encourages drivers to speed so that more signals can be cleared. This cycle system works most effectively for two way traffic. The one-way grid in downtown is set on a progressive system that results in traffic speeds of 15 miles per hour. The progressive system does not work on a two way street. Alternative cycles should be investigated that would not promote high speeds as the current system does.*

4. **Reduce Excess Auto Space:** The fourth priority is to evaluate the true need for auto lanes and space adjacent to Burnside. These areas could be converted to public spaces extending sidewalks for storefronts and providing open space which is greatly needed in Old Town/Chinatown. Most notable are the areas south of Burnside at Third and Fourth Avenues where sidewalk extensions could be effective.

It is recognized that Burnside Street must continue to serve as a major arterial. To that end, certain traffic objectives are recommended to be accommodated by the Burnside Street operation:

1. **Traffic Volumes:** Continue to assure that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the traffic volumes projected. This is recommended to be accommodated in light of the limitations at the Burnside Bridge and 10th Avenue which currently are recognized as bottlenecks.

2. Auto Accessibility: Continue to limit the left turns from Burnside other than Fourth Avenue in order to accommodate traffic flow. This limits access to Old Town/Chinatown but is necessary to assure flow and limited width of the street.
3. Bus Accessibility: Continue to provide access for transit at Fifth Avenue.

### ***Naito Parkway***

Naito Parkway has considerable traffic volumes and speed. The Tom McCall Waterfront Park is well developed in the area. The pedestrian access is more limited due to the traffic volumes. There is a pedestrian activated signal at Ankeny which enables a strong connection. North of Burnside, there is a pedestrian warning signal at Couch.

It is recommended that the pedestrian activated warning at Couch be changed to a full signal so that the pedestrian is given full priority for crossing. This signal should be accompanied with signage in the district directing pedestrians to this crossing.

### ***Railroad***

The railroad tracks divide the new Yards at Union Station housing development from the district. A pedestrian crossing is being built connecting from the Yards to Union Station at Fifth Avenue. Pedestrians are able to cross the tracks at Naito Parkway under the Steel Bridge. Pedestrians are also able to cross through the Greenway Trail in Waterfront Park. Unfortunately, the crossing at Waterfront Park does not provide for pedestrian access to Old Town/Chinatown until Couch Street which is a poorly understood crossing. The crossing under the Steel Bridge is confusing and difficult, discouraging use.

It is recommended that a pedestrian crossing be provided at Third Avenue where the railroad track narrows to two tracks. This more direct access would enable pedestrians to easily access the Classical Chinese Garden and the district.

### ***Glisan/Hoyt***

The ramps from the Steel Bridge at Third Avenue create a poor pedestrian area for the district. The area north of Glisan has redevelopment potential along with the opportunity for connecting the new residential developments in Union Station.

It is recommended that the Glisan Street ramps be reduced to two lanes by extending the curbs on both sides of the street. The east-bound connection on Glisan should be eliminated by providing access for vehicles on Hoyt. The service road along Glisan from the under the Steel Bridge should be closed off at Third Avenue enabling a single lane for turning from the Steel Bridge.

### ***Union Station/Post Office***

The Union Station/Post Office area separates Old Town/Chinatown from the Pearl District and Hoyt Street Yards where new development is occurring. PDC has planned a major development in the Union Station property which would include a grocery store.

It is recommended that an attractive access be built through Union Station under the Broadway Bridge that would enable vehicle and pedestrian access to 10th and Northrup. Tri-Met should be encouraged to extend bus routes on the Mall to connect to the Central City Streetcar. This added pedestrian access will strengthen the Union Station area and connections to the adjacent developments.

### ***Ankeny***

Ankeny Street provides an important connection from the U.S. Bank Plaza to Waterfront Park. The street includes fountains at Fifth and First Avenues, Third and Fourth Avenues are significant barriers to use of Ankeny by pedestrians due to the street width and traffic speeds.

It is recommended that Third and Fourth Avenues be narrowed with curb extensions and widened sidewalks, and that fountains be placed in Ankeny at Second, Third and Fourth Avenues.