Reimagining Chinatown

重繪：曼哈頓華埠

May 3, 2017

Instructors: Ethel Sheffer & Douglas Woodward
Teaching Assistant: Dorothy MacAusland
Angel Lopez Zamora | Emily Fesette | Eri Furusawa | Jiaohong Du | Joan Zhang | Madeline Berry | Shaochun Zhou | Xin Guo | Yi Jiang
Overview

I. Introduction
II. Research
III. Initiatives
IV. Closing
Our Clients

Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

Margaret Chin
City Council Member, District 1
Vision Statement

Promote, preserve, and protect the historic singularity and cultural uniqueness of Manhattan Chinatown by

- preventing displacement
- supporting the area’s economic vitality
- safeguarding neighborhood character
Research 調査研究
Previous Studies & Their Limitations

1976

2002

2008

2013

2014

2016
Boundary Disputes

Asian American Federation Study Area 2008
Department of City Planning Neighborhood Tabulation Area 2010
Chinatown and Little Italy Historic District 2010
Chinatown Working Group CAPZ Linguistic Landscape 2011
Chinatown BID Boundary 2011
Chinatown Working Group Rezoning Plan 2013
Google Maps 2017

Top 10 Cities with the Highest Percentage of Populations of Chinese Americans

1. New York City: 549,181
2. San Francisco: 214,211
3. Irvine: 31,728
4. Oakland: 39,420
5. San Jose: 72,141
6. Seattle: 30,835
7. Sacramento: 21,045
8. Honolulu: 53,119
9. Plano: 15,105
10. Boston: 29,472

Source: 2011-2015 ACS
Chinese Americans in Major New York City Chinatowns

- **Flushing**: 36,053
- **Manhattan Chinatown**: 24,812
- **Sunset Park**: 34,010

Source: 2011-2015 ACS
Identity & Urban Design

German Band, Lower East Side, 1876

Little Italy, Mulberry Street, c. 1900
Identity & Urban Design

Chinatown Historic Core, c. 1900

Chinese 49ers During the California Gold Rush

Source: Then & Now: Chinatowns of New York City, Wendy Wan-Yin Tan
Identity & Urban Design

Canal and Baxter Streets, 1910

Pell and Mott Streets, 1930s

Source: Then & Now: Chinatowns of New York City, Wendy Wan-Yin Tan
Identity & Urban Design

Park Row, 2015

EIS Study Area, 2007

Identity & Urban Design

Identity & Urban Design
Affordability & Housing

- Affordable housing units are not truly affordable
  - Local AMI ($37,362) less than Citywide AMI ($85,900 ) published by HUD (2013)
  - Limited supply for low-income and extremely low-income groups
- Financial stress
  - Rental price increased more rapidly than household income
- Rent burden
- Overcrowding is common


Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2010; ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2015
Economic Development

- **Local Economic Conditions**
  - Dominated by small businesses
  - Strong service sector
  - Retail trade has greatly declined, health care has greatly increased
  - Average unemployment rate is greater in Chinatown than Manhattan’s overall by 2.4%, median annual income is lower than Manhattan’s average by $20,000

- **Economic Challenges**
  - **Business Owners**
    - Customer loss
    - Increased commercial rents
  - **Local Workers & Residents**
    - Limited English proficiency
    - High unemployment

Source: ACS 2011-2015 SF1
Street Vending

Map of Street Vending Conditions on Canal Street (from Broadway to Bowery)

Source: DOT
Sanitation

- Existing Sanitary Conditions
  - Commercial Trash Piles
  - Scattered Debris
  - Stagnant Water
  - Rat Infestation
Rat Infestation

Source: DOHMH, DCP
Vision Statement

Promote, preserve, and protect the historic singularity and cultural uniqueness of Manhattan Chinatown by

- preventing displacement
- supporting the area’s economic vitality
- safeguarding neighborhood character
Initiatives

改进建議
- Identity & Urban Design
- Affordability & Housing
- Sanitation
- Economic Development
Initiatives

Enhancing Wayfinding
Preserving Community Identity
Promoting Efficient Circulation
Improving Living & Street Conditions
Securing Housing Tenure
Empowering the Local Economy
Public Space Utilization
Tour Brochure & Kiosk Map
Walking App Prototype
Local Business Stabilization
Street Vending Expansion
Sanitation Improvement
Sidewalk Redesign
Walking App Prototype
Public Space Utilization
Allen Street
Canal Street
E Broadway
Bowery
Tour Brochure & Kiosk Map

**Why**
- Foster pride
- Educate residents and visitors
- Enhance visitor experience
- Increase visibility of Chinatown’s unique assets

**How**
- Large scale map printed on blank side of the kiosk at Canal & Baxter Streets
- Printed copies available at kiosk
- Online version available for download
BEFORE
Lower Manhattan was dominated by a lake called Collect Pond (also known as Fresh Water Pond).
The lake was filled in.

This area on top of this became Five Points, the notorious slum and famous subject of both Charles Dickens and Mark Twain.

"nothing everywhere of date and light." — Charles Dickens

In the early to mid 19th century, the area was home to populations of Irish, German, Jewish, Italian, and Puerto Rican.

Manhattan Chinatown’s story begins at the dawn of the 19th century when the first merchants began to arrive from China.

HISTORY OF CHINATOWN
1847
A Chinese merchant—and 35 crew members set off towards New York to look for business opportunities. They arrived along Mill, Pell, and Doyers Street—now known as the Chinatown Core.

1855
Chinese immigration begins to increase, many settle in the area to take advantage of the businesses already established and to join family associations for protection and community.

1882
The Chinese population continued to increase.

1891
Church of the Transfiguration was designated an LPC landmark in 1964, this 19th-century church is one of the few remaining Gothic churches in New York.

1904
This area was filled in by 1813. By 1825, what had been the pond became an infamous slum, Five Points.

1965
Legislation attempts to stem Chinese immigration with the Chinese Exclusion Act.

1982
The annual immigration quotas were revoked, the Chinese population continued to increase.

1995
Bowery Savings Bank
Designed by Stanford White in the Roman Revival style, this early savings bank is an LPC landmark.

1997
Mahayana Temple
Located on Canal Street, this is the largest Buddhist temple in New York City. It also houses the tallest Buddha statue on the east coast.

2004
Five Points & Canal Street
This area was filled in by 1813. By 1825, what had been the pond became an infamous slum, Five Points.

2005
Loew’s Canal Street Theatre
Built during the Golden Age of Cinema by renowned theater architect Thomas Lurton. Loew’s seat 2,500 and was designated an LPC landmark in 2010.

2006
Doyers Street
Now home to the Kirsan Kirsanov Arch and statue of Lisa Ze-Noa, this area is the former location of the connection point between the elevated Third and Second Avenue railroad lines from 1878-1937.

2013
Looking Ahead
Years after the first Chinese immigrants began to settle in Lower Manhattan, Chinatown is still thriving and growing continually.

Sponsored by
Manhattan Borough President’s Office
Councilmember Margaret Chin, District 1

GSAPP
Public Space Utilization

Why

- Create a communal space for vendors and merchants
- Identify locations for cultural activities
- Attract young visitorship

How

- Night Market
- AAFE, CCBA, or CREATE in Chinatown to encourage and organize cultural activities and events
Public Space Utilization

Pop Up Art
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permit demand is greater than supply</td>
<td>Issue more permits every year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizable feature of the Chinatown streetscape</td>
<td>Use the business models of Hester Street Fair, Taipei’s night market, and Union Square market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vital part of the local economy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sanitation Improvement

**Why**
- Illegal trash dumping is pervasive
- Trash piles and trash overflow mar the streetscape
- Organic waste provides food source for vermin

**How**
- Increase government enforcement
- Use rat-proof trash bins
- Synchronize commercial dumping and pick-up schedule with apps or text alerts
Trash Pickup

Recyclable
Mixed - Paper
Non - Recyclable

Category
Location
Existing Time
Collector
Destination

Sidewalk Trash
Residential Trash
Commerical Trash

Litter Basket
Curbside

Max. 2-Day
Max. 1-Night
Max. 1-Night

DSNY+B.I.D
DSNY
Private Company

Landfill
Incineration
Recyclers
Walking Tour App Prototype

Why

- Encourage both older and younger generations to explore their neighborhood
- Enhance visitor experience
- Help keep Chinatown relevant to an increasingly tech-focused society

How

- Prototype designed by studio
- Sponsorship by a local organization
Manhattan Chinatown

Chinatown is the oldest continuous ethnic enclave in North America. Over the past several centuries, it has been home to several ethnic groups including Jewish, German, Irish, Italian, Puerto Rican, and obviously Chinese. Today the neighborhood is distinguished by its distinctive signage. Remnants of past enclaves still exist if you know where to look.

START TOUR

Take a walk with us and experience Chinatown’s unique cultural and historic heritage.
## Sidewalk Redesign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Obstructed pedestrian paths</td>
<td>● Delineated sidewalk zones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Crosswalks are too long</td>
<td>○ Retail/ vending/ pedestrian uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Pedestrian injuries and fatalities</td>
<td>● Modify signal timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Vehicles speeding</td>
<td>● Sidewalk bulb-outs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Vehicles do not yield to pedestrians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sidewalk Redesign
Local Business Stabilization

**Why**

- Challenges for small business owners
  - Increased commercial rents
  - Outdated retailers and restaurants
- Loss of customers
  - Growth of other Chinatowns
  - Increased non-Chinese population
  - Displaced local residents
  - Closing of Park Row
  - No parking for tour buses

**How**

- To attract customers
  - Preserve historic architecture
  - Preserve unique ethnic businesses
  - Modernize and broaden product offerings
- To retain local residents
  - Explore sector-based workforce programs
- To retain business
  - Vending on Canal Street
  - Redevelop second floor spaces
Chinatown Special Purpose District

**Why**

- To preserve and support Chinatown’s uniqueness:
  - Historical significance
  - Cultural importance
  - Resources for residents & visitors

**How**

- Define boundary by the existing linguistic landscape and demographics.
- Rezoning to:
  - Provide affordable housing for current residents
  - Support local economy by limiting big-box commercial tenants
  - Legalize existing signage
Specific Objectives

- Affordable Housing
  - Apply Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, using a newly created local AMI
  - Restrictions applicable to development:
    - Limit development within the Historic Core subdistrict
    - For each new development outside of the Historic Core subdistrict:
      - Create a mechanism to fund the preservation of affordable housing within the historic core
      - Require a non-eviction certificate
      - Allow senior NYCHA residents priority move-in
      - Incentivize seniors to move into new units by working with local organizations to provide niche services
  - Allow the transfer of development rights within the Historic Core subdistrict to identified receiving sites
    - Use the transfer fee to improve open spaces, tenant protections, education, and legal counseling
Specific Objectives

- **Support Local Businesses**
  - Require a special permit for hotel use within the whole district
  - Limit big box or chain stores to 10,000 square feet
  - Set aside a percentage of commercial floor area in new development for unique local businesses

- **Legalize the signage to modify size, illumination, and quantity restrictions**
Acknowledgements 感謝

Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President

Margaret Chin, Council Member for District 1

Roxanne Earley, Director of Land Use and Planning, District 1, Councilmember Chin’s Staff

Basha Gerhards, Deputy Director of Land Use, Planning, and Development, Office of MBP

Erica Baptiste, Urban Planner for Community Boards 2, 3, and 8, Office of MBP

Wellington Chen, Chinatown Partnership & Chinatown BID

Gigi Li, Former Chair of Community Board 3 and CWG

Joel Kolkmann, Team Leader & Senior Planner for NYC DCP

Thomas Yu, Strategic Development Officer at AAFE, former chair of CWG

Jerry Shiao, President of CCBA

Ethel Sheffer, Studio Instructor

Douglas Woodward, Studio Instructor

Dorothy MacAusland, Teaching Assistant

GSAPP Faculty
Thank You
謝謝
Public Space Utilization
Tour Brochure & Kiosk Map
Walking App Prototype
Sanitation Improvement
Local Business Stabilization
Chinatown Special District
Street Vending Expansion
Sidewalk Redesign
E Broadway
Allen Street
Canal Street
Bowery
Data Sources


References

- New York City Department of City Planning, “CHINATOWN Street Revitalization”, 2014.
- Google Maps