

## **Vision 2030 (10.23.07)**

Last year, a number of community stakeholders came together to develop a vision, describing how they would like to see the Little Saigon, Japantown, Chinatown-International District develop by the year 2030. In sum, the 2030 vision group wants to see pedestrian-friendly streets safe from illegal activities, more people living in the neighborhood, new and improved open spaces, a diverse array of retail stores, the restoration of derelict buildings, and a balanced mix of neighborhood housing options, ranging from condos for empty nesters to affordable family housing units. The ultimate goal is to improve the current conditions of the community.

We concluded that zoning changes alone could not comprehensively address the many challenges that the neighborhood faces. We believe that the city needs to employ other strategies that would leverage the resources and/or implement the programs needed for our neighborhood to successfully develop as we envision in our 2030 document.

In summary, neighborhood goals stated in Vision 2030 are the following:

1. Healthy Balanced Equitable Development, Increased Density, and Diversity of Housing Choices
  - a. Develop financial tools that will encourage a diversity of income levels. By 2030, 1/3 of the housing stock should be targeted for 50% or below median income, 1/3 for 50%-100% median income, and 1/3 for 100% and above.
    - i. In the area east of the freeway (Little Saigon) and south of Dearborn street, 20% of the housing stock should be targeted for 50% or below median income, 17% for 50-80% median income, 13% for 80-100% median income, and 50% for 100% median income and above.
  - b. Encourage family housing
    - i. By 2030, family housing should account for 20% of the neighborhood's housing stock.
  - c. Maintain community stability through limiting residential displacement.
    - i. By 2030, the number of housing units at 50% or below median income should not fall below the number of low-income units we currently have in the neighborhood.
2. Rehabilitate Substandard Housing and Vacant Buildings
  - a. Develop financial tools and legislative programs to encourage the rehabilitation of substandard and vacant buildings.
3. Safe and Dynamic Neighborhood Public Spaces
  - a. Improve streetscape through integrating public art, pedestrian amenities, and green elements.
  - b. Improve and maintain existing public park space. Acquire new open space for community.
    - i. Prioritize acquisition in areas that lack open space, such as the Little Saigon community, as long as the location is determined to be an appropriate site by the neighborhood.
4. Strong, Vibrant Small Business Community and Maintain Cultural Character
  - a. The neighborhood is the vital, dynamic economic and cultural center of the Asian-American community. Maintaining and enhancing small business and other cultural elements of the neighborhood (museum, the arts, family associations) are vital in sustaining the integrity of the cultural character of the community.
    - i. Increase retail and office space for small and locally-owned businesses in Little Saigon to a total of 400,000 sq ft
  - b. Develop financial and legislative tools to support the small business environment.

## **Resources**

Many goals were identified by our community stakeholder group. The goals of creating balanced development, rehabilitating derelict buildings, improving our public spaces, and supporting our small business will all need financial support.

In our 2030 document, our neighborhood wishes to achieve a 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 split between low-income housing, moderate income housing and market rate units. To achieve this goal, we believe that current financial resources will not be sufficient in building the amount of low-income and moderate units stated in our goals. We conclude

that the increase in land values due to development pressures will make it more difficult to acquire properties for affordable housing purposes. In addition, we fear that existing affordable housing funds will remain competitive and relatively static, making it more imperative to develop additional financial tools to help build affordable housing in this progressively expensive and competitive market.

Of the four goals aforementioned, two of the goals – creating balanced development and rehabilitating derelict buildings – will require vast amounts of financial subsidy or greater participation by the private market. In addition, improving our streetscapes and open spaces, as well as supporting our small business environment will also need financial support. We believe that the City should establish the following financial tools that will help leverage the resources needed to support our various goals. Consequently, zoning changes should not be implemented until the following financial programs are enacted.

- Reestablishing a **growth related fund** can produce significant financial resources on an ongoing basis to help the neighborhood achieve its housing goals, especially considering the growth that is expected in this distressed community. As we understand, the City can currently establish a growth related fund, funded from the General Fund, which will enable a specifically designated area to access a percentage of the increment of increased property taxes in a given area from a current tax, and to utilize these funds for a designated purpose. We recommend:
  - The South Downtown Livable Community study area should be designated by the City for its own targeted growth related fund.
  - 70% derived from this program be designated for affordable housing purposes.
  - 30% percentage of funds should be designated for acquiring and/or improving public open space, enhancing streetscapes, a technical or financial assistance fund for small businesses, and cultural and community facilities.
  - We request the City commence doing an existing tax base and revenue analysis of the Livable South Downtown planning area.
- Utilize **incentive zoning** to leverage resources from development projects throughout the South Downtown planning area to produce affordable housing within the South Downtown community. Residential and mixed-use developments may build these units on-site, or off-site by the payment in lieu of funds. We recommend that these affordable housing units remain permanently affordable.
  - Affordable housing requirement through incentive zoning or upzoning should contribute to addressing the housing production goals advocated in this 2030 plan.
  - Developments may pay into an affordable housing fund in lieu of building the units on-site, however these units must be built with the South Downtown Livable Community planning area.
  - 15% of funds should be designated for acquiring and/or improving public open space, enhancing streetscapes, a technical assistance fund for small businesses, cultural and community facilities. 85% should be designated to affordable housing purposes.
- Utilize existing **Transfer of Development Right program** to support affordable housing goals.
  - We are recommending that TDR's can include vacant properties, as well as Historical buildings.
  - Increase heights in the Chinatown-International District historical core, enabling property owners to capture additional resources to rehabilitate historical buildings. However, this proposal will need to be vetted through legal channels to determine if it is legal to increase heights in an historical area with buildings that cannot be demolished due to its historical significance. In addition, it must be determined if our designation as a historical district is in any way threatened with the change of zoning that would allow an increase in heights.

### Legislative tools

In addition to leveraging financial resources to support our goals, we are seeking certain legislative tools to help facilitate the rehabilitation of derelict buildings and help preserve the small business environment our community has fostered over the last century. The City should investigate the following legislative tools that can help support the four aforementioned goals.

- Besides creating incentive programs, the City should examine more effective code **enforcement of** current building codes, specifically health and safety codes. This strategy will help encourage current

owners of derelict buildings to redevelop their buildings, or to provide disincentives for continued inaction. The City is currently looking at a city-wide program that would increase fines for such buildings.

- In supporting the character of our small business community, we would like to examine the zoning code changes which can provide **limitations on the size of retail businesses** that could enter our community, which would help encourage small family operated businesses typical of the community to be built and maintained in the neighborhood.
- We can develop an additional process beyond the Review Board for **formula businesses** that wish to locate in this neighborhood to examine if that business is congruent to the character of this neighborhood.
- The city needs to initiate a dialogue with Little Saigon's business and property owners on possibly developing a different **design review process**, which is currently, in part, housed in the Southeast Design Review Board. In addition, the current IDSRD review guidelines and process should be reviewed, which may include expanding into areas South of Dearborn Street and east of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Allow flexibility of parking uses (shared uses) at all off-street parking lots.
  - Ensure there is sufficient parking necessary for the continued residential and commercial vitality of the District, given the anticipated loss of surface parking lots due to development.
  - Also, look into supporting efforts of developing a community parking structure.
- Expand the Free Ride Zone to Rainier Avenue.
- Expand the neighborhood's green streets to include Washington Street from Kobe Terrace to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, King Street from 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Rainier, Weller Street from 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to I-5.

### **Additional City Assistance**

In addition to the Legislative and Financial Tools aforementioned, the City can dedicate a full time staff person for the neighborhood to look at existing and new programs that can help the community attain its stated 2030 Vision Group goals. The staff person can work on helping to rehabilitate substandard housing in the neighborhood, through providing current property owners with needed technical assistance. In addition, the City staff person can work on issues such as the new Community Preservation District created by the state and other new programs that we are recommending the City incorporate into their South Downtown Livable Community study.

## **Proposal of the 2030 Vision Group**

### **Goals:**

1. Healthy Balanced Equitable Development and Increased Density
2. Rehabilitate Substandard Housing and Vacant Buildings
3. Safe and Dynamic Neighborhood Public Spaces
4. Strong, Vibrant Small Business Community and Maintain Cultural Character

### **Financial tools to support our goals:**

1. Growth Related Fund
2. Incentive Zoning
3. Transfer of Development Rights

### **Legislative tools to support our goals**

1. Formula Business Ordinance
2. Retail Size Cap
3. Code Violation enforcement
4. Liberal Parking Rules
5. Zoning Designations that Support Community Goals

### **ID's current zoning:**

#### **WEST OF THE FREEWAY**

IDM 100-120 – between 4-5<sup>th</sup> Avenues and Yesler and Jackson Street  
Top Height Proposed: 240'

IDR 150 – between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Freeway and Yesler and mid-block Jackson/South Main St.  
Top Height Proposed: 240' between 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Yesler-Jackson St, except property on Eastern half of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue between S. Washington-Jackson St.  
Other properties do not change.

IDM 75-85 – between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Freeway and S. Jackson- Dearborn St.  
Top Height Proposed: Up to 125' between S. Weller- S. Dearborn St except New Central Building. Other properties do not change.

C2-85 – between Dearborn-Charles Street and 4<sup>th</sup> – Freeway  
Top Height Proposed: 125'; also may change land use designation

#### **EAST OF THE FREEWAY**

NC3-65, C1-65, IC-65 – between King-Dearborn and Freeway and Rainier.

Top Height Proposed: 125' (between S. King and S.Weller with the exception of Seattle Indian Center site and the block that contains the Seattle Indian Health Board) and 85' which includes the Goodwill site, Marpac, and the Koh property.

One alternative is to change the IC zone to NC or DMC



**VISION 2030  
COALITION**

*One unified vision from within*



## ONE DAY, EVERYONE WILL KNOW THESE STREETS...

In the year 2030, **Chinatown-International District, Japantown, Seattle's Little Saigon**, will be one of the city's most desirable places to live, work, shop and play.

**Vision 2030 coalition** *is about building that place where we...*

- Work and play together
- Taste centuries of culinary art
- Explore the possibilities
- Meet your future neighbor
- Learn our histories
- Breathe the excitement
- Be at home

## LIVE THE VISION







In 2006, the **Vision 2030 Coalition** first came together in response to the City of Seattle's Livable South Downtown Planning Study, a draft of land use changes to increase housing capacity and economic activity in the South Downtown core. Recognizing that the study's proposals would affect this community for decades to come, Vision 2030 Coalition members took collective action to compose a narrative document called Vision 2030 in response to the City's draft.

## KEY VISION 2030 COALITION GOALS ARE:

- **Balanced Housing Development** – Stabilize our low-income residents. Build more diverse housing types including family, workforce, low-income and market rate housing.
- **Safe and Dynamic Public Spaces** – Improve streetscapes through integrating public art, pedestrian amenities and green elements. Acquire more public park space. Maintain and improve our existing ones.
- **Strong Small Business Environment** – Develop an environment that promotes small business growth.
- **Renovate Older Buildings** – Create financial tools to encourage the redevelopment of older buildings.

## HOW DO WE GET THERE?

- **Incentive Zoning** – Allow development to build at a taller height, but in return, the developer must provide financial resources for the neighborhood.
- **Transfer of Development Rights** – In exchange of forgoing future commercial development rights, an owner can receive resources to redevelop.
- **Growth Related Fund** – Take an increment of each years increase in property taxes and dedicate it to improving the neighborhood.
- **Formula Business Ordinance** – Retail chains would have to go through a community vetted process in order to establish their businesses in the neighborhood.
- **Sidewalk Vending** – Allow sidewalk vending.
- **Retail Size Cap** – Prohibit large retail business.

We are committed to accomplishing our goals with the help of private and public partners. We believe by broadening our partnerships we will achieve new levels of innovation and participation thus improve the quality of life for everyone. Join us in this opportunity to take the future into our own hands.



## THE VISION 2030 COALITION IS REPRESENTED BY THE FOLLOWING GROUPS

Chinatown-International District Business Improvement Area  
Chong Wa Benevolent Association  
Inter\*Im Community Development Association  
International District Housing Alliance  
Marpac Construction LLC  
PCG  
RealSolutions Capital LLC  
Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation  
and Development Authority  
Seattle Chinese/Chinatown Chamber of Commerce  
Uwajimaya  
Wing Luke Asian Museum

To learn more about how you can become involved with the  
Vision 2030 Coalition, contact

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### MISSION STATEMENT

*The Vision 2030 Coalition is dedicated to improve the livability of the Chinatown-International District through its advocacy work in reshaping the City's Livable South Downtown Plan. We believe financial and legislative tools can improve the physical, cultural, and economic landscape of the community. At the same time we challenge the City to be more creative in their planning.*