



Legislation Text

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CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION relating to the Chinatown/International District; identifying actions of the City and its partners that hold promise to enhance cultural identity and economic vitality, recognize history, and promote equitable development.

WHEREAS, the area known as Chinatown/International District (C/ID) includes the neighborhoods of Chinatown, Japantown, and Little Saigon; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 102455, passed by the City Council (“Council”) on August 13, 1973, established the International Special Review District in the C/ID to preserve the District’s unique Asian-American character and to encourage rehabilitation of areas for housing and pedestrian-oriented businesses; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Chinatown National Register Historic District, established in 1986, is located within the International Special Review District; and

WHEREAS, the City established the current boundaries of the C/ID in 1998 by Ordinance 119297, resulting from the collaboration by the people of the three distinct neighborhoods on the Chinatown/International District Strategic Plan submitted to the Council in December 1998; and

WHEREAS, the City has long benefited from the unique and significant contributions of the people, organizations, and businesses of the C/ID to our shared economic vitality and civic life; and

WHEREAS, the C/ID community has persevered despite the effects of racist and inequitable national and local laws and unfair housing practices since the early days of the City; and

WHEREAS, several major public projects have significantly impacted the physical development of the C/ID, including the construction of Interstate 5 through the C/ID, the construction and demolition of the Kingdome, and the construction of two new stadia; and

WHEREAS, the City and the community began the planning effort known as Livable South Downtown in 2003, leading to recommendations in 2009 for changes to zoning in South Downtown neighborhoods, including in the C/ID; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, consistent with the recommendations, the City changed the Land Use Code to increase development capacity in the South Downtown neighborhoods, and provided for historic preservation, creation of open space, better building and street design, and support for small businesses via Ordinance 123589; and

WHEREAS, in November 2015 the Council passed Ordinance 124895, which created Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 23.58B and established the framework for the commercial component of mandatory housing affordability (MHA); the Council updated this chapter in December 2016 with Ordinance 125233; and

WHEREAS, in August 2016 the Council passed Ordinance 125108, which created SMC Chapter 23.58C and established the framework for the residential component of MHA; and

WHEREAS, concurrently with this resolution, the City is considering legislation for additional development capacity in the C/ID, excluding the Seattle Chinatown National Register Historic District, as well as implementation of MHA requirements; and

WHEREAS, the potential implementation of MHA requirements and additional development capacity in the C/ID are changes to land use regulations that are intended to promote the development of more affordable housing as well as encouraging growth in the Downtown Urban Center; and

WHEREAS, the overarching goals of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan (Seattle 2035) for the C/ID are: thriving businesses, organizations, and cultural institutions; diverse and affordable housing; safe and dynamic public spaces; and an accessible neighborhood for all transportation modes; and

WHEREAS, the goal of Seattle 2035 for the commercial core of the C/ID is maintaining the commercial core as a major employment center, tourist and convention attraction, shopping magnet, residential

neighborhood, and regional hub of cultural and entertainment activities, while promoting a unique neighborhood identity for the commercial core; and

WHEREAS, the City conducted the 2016 Growth and Equity Analysis in conjunction with the update to Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, finding in part that both the risk of displacement and access to opportunity are high in the C/ID; and

WHEREAS, in response to the 2016 Growth and Equity Analysis, the City created the Equitable Development Initiative, a collection of strategies aimed at advancing economic mobility and opportunity, preventing displacement, building local cultural assets, promoting transportation mobility and connectivity, and developing healthy and safe neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, in September 2016, InterIm Community Development Association, Swedish, Public Health - Seattle and King County, and community-based organizations released the 2020 Healthy Community Action Plan, which defines the complex health and social issues, resulting from years of historic disinvestment and institutional racism, the C/ID faces and strategies to address those issues; and

WHEREAS, in December 2015, the Mayor convened the Chinatown/International District Public Safety Task Force ("Task Force") to address public safety and livability in the C/ID neighborhood, and in 2016 the Council passed Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) 80-1-A-4 requesting a report from the Task Force on public safety recommendations; and

WHEREAS, in June 2016, the Task Force delivered many recommendations under three main categories: 1) improve communication and coordination between the C/ID and the City; 2) target criminal activities and related environmental factors; and 3) foster public safety through a vibrant and healthy neighborhood;

WHEREAS, the Mayor presented the Public Safety Action Plan for the C/ID in response to the Task Force's recommendations to the Council; and

WHEREAS, in May 2017, the Mayor and Council adopted the 2017 City of Seattle and Seattle Housing

Authority Joint Assessment of Fair Housing by Ordinance 118961. The findings of the Assessment respond to the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assess compliance with the Federal Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule and identified four racially/ethnically concentrated areas of poverty (R/ECAPS) in Seattle: High Point, Rainier Beach, New Holly, and, overlapping with the C/ID, First Hill/Yesler Terrace; NOW, THEREFORE,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR
CONCURRING, THAT:**

Section 1. The City recognizes the significance of land use regulation that implements mandatory housing affordability (MHA) to the production of new affordable housing, as well as more housing overall, while acknowledging that land use regulation alone is not sufficient to achieve the articulated goals of the Chinatown/International District (C/ID).

Section 2. The City commits to considering the contributions of all stakeholders in the C/ID during the pending revision of use and development rules and guidelines of the International Special Review District (ISRD) and the design review program, to better serve the C/ID. The Council requests that the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) and the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) work with the C/ID community, stakeholders, and the ISRD Board to consider the following types of changes:

- Reducing the maximum permitted size of retail uses;
- Specifying important characteristics of storefront entrances and their spacing;
- Amending the list of conditional uses;
- Applying limits to formula retail uses;
- Allowing administrative review for minor changes to buildings, rather than ISRD board review;
- Providing authority to the ISRD board to grant departures from Land Use Code requirements; and
- Changing the structure of the ISRD board.

Section 3. The Council supports the efforts of a C/ID Advisory Committee, with City departments, to

develop a framework and implementation plan for the C/ID, addressing topics such as: updates to the ISRD guidelines, community development and stabilization, strategic investment of City funds, public realm improvements, and an update to the Charles Street Campus Master Plan. The Council expects the updated planning for the City's Charles Street property to consider streetscape improvements along S Dearborn Street, partial redevelopment, and a strategy for relocation of City facilities leading to community ownership of property along S Dearborn Street, particularly north of Charles Street, and additional adjacent portions of the site, if recommended by the C/ID Advisory Committee.

Section 4. The City will act in a timely manner to partner with local businesses, property owners, community organizations, and customers to promote entrepreneurship, economic development and commercial stability as evidenced by business retention, expansion, and the ability to relocate within the neighborhood for culturally-relevant commerce in the C/ID as guided by the recommendations of the Commercial Affordability Advisory Committee and continuing dialogue with the C/ID's business community stakeholders. The Council requests that C/ID Advisory Committee further these recommendations by exploring additional tools and strategies to increase economic viability and address cultural displacement including adjustments to operating fees for small businesses, commercial land trusts, and incentives that would result in discounted commercial rents for community-identified, commercial uses such as food storage and warehousing to support local restaurants; community-rooted, legacy businesses; and innovative spaces to support new businesses. Consistent with this approach, the Council requests that the Office of Economic Development report to Council by September 2017 on the status and expected completion date for the King Street Activation project.

Section 5. The City recognizes the critical contribution of the Chinatown/International District Public Safety Task Force and is dedicated to maintaining improvements made based on the recommendations of the Task Force, while acknowledging the significant work yet to be completed. The Council requests that the Mayor and City departments maintain the momentum of early 2017 in the effort to improve public safety in the C/ID and earnestly pursue the completion of the unaccomplished goals of the Public Safety Action Plan for the

C/ID.

Section 6. The Council requests a report from the Mayor by September 2017 on the timing and sequence of the completion of City-supported projects to enhance parks and public spaces, including improvements such as green streets, mid-block crossings, and pocket parks. Furthermore, the Council intends to ensure ongoing support for the operation and maintenance of public spaces in the C/ID, including the programming of positive activities, as well as throughout Seattle.

Section 7. The Council requests a report from the Mayor on the timing and sequence of transportation investments and improvements in the C/ID to access and mobility via all modes, including but not limited to better street design plans to guide private development, improvements to crosswalks, protected bike lanes, a neighborhood greenway, and the Center City Connector streetcar project.

Section 8. Consistent with Seattle's designation as an Age-Friendly City, the City recognizes the need for multicultural and multilingual services and businesses for long-term residents who wish to live in the C/ID as they age. The Council requests that City departments coordinate thoughtfully to amplify the City's efforts in making the C/ID convenient to seniors.

Section 9. The City celebrates the strong cultural organizations, religious institutions, and community-based organizations that the people of the C/ID have built over time. The City recognizes with gratitude the partnerships with these institutions and organizations. The City will emphasize the ongoing, reciprocal commitment with these organizations and institutions in prioritizing the shared goals of the City and these partners for the near future and over the long term. The City recognizes the diversity of perspectives within the C/ID and remains committed to inclusive and equitable community involvement by continually seeking to connect with a broad range of community members as well as to uplift new voices, institutions, and organizations of the C/ID and to encourage them to engage with the people of their neighborhood and to partake in the decisions that impact them.

Section 10. The Council requests that the Mayor direct the City's departments to coordinate efforts

among themselves and with local organizations to enhance the C/ID, in a manner exemplary of the City's approach to maintaining and improving the quality of life throughout Seattle.

Section 11. The Council recognizes the strong desire of diverse stakeholders and Asian-Pacific Islander (API) communities to retain a "cultural home" in the C/ID; and that the future of the C/ID as a safe, vibrant neighborhood with a unique identity depends on placemaking, economic development, and community building by its residents and stakeholders. The City commits to exploring culturally- and linguistically-responsive strategies and resources that can help C/ID residents and stakeholders to best preserve and grow cultural, community, and business institutions as a diverse, unique neighborhood.

Section 12. The City is committed to continued investment in the Equitable Development Initiative, which builds creative anti-displacement, community-driven solutions, and mitigates historic disinvestment. Furthermore, the Council will work with the Executive to provide options for establishing an ongoing funding source for investments through the Equitable Development Initiative in advance of the 2018 budget process.

Section 13. The City recognizes the potential for displacement as property in the C/ID undergoes public and private development, and is committed to informing City decisions regarding investments by careful consideration of racial and social justice impacts, including:

- a. Support under the Equitable Development Initiative;
- b. Exploration of strategies to encourage community control of land, public financing for land acquisition, re-use of City-owned property and/or City partnership and support for re-use of property owned by other public entities to minimize the burdens of site control, including cleanup of polluted lands, and to increase the availability of land for the development of new affordable housing, affordable commercial/retail and non-profit community uses in the neighborhood; -
- c. Exploration of an Unreinforced Masonry Preservation pilot to increase the supply of affordable housing on currently-vacant upper floors, and to sustain affordable commercial spaces on the ground floors funded as allowed by the restrictions of various sources such as the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA)

program, proceeds from the \$29 million housing bond, and/or a targeted growth fund with revenues from an increment of increased property tax revenue from future growth, as appropriate; and

d. Support for displaced renters or those at risk of displacement, beyond the provisions of the Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance, such as financial assistance and case management supports to help people stay in their current homes or to secure housing in the C/ID upon eviction.

Section 14. The Council requests that the Office of Housing, in collaboration with community partners and other City departments, prepare and submit recommendations to Council by March 31, 2018 for best practices, financial tools, as well as potential changes to the Seattle Housing Levy Administrative and Financial Plan and subsections 23.58B.040.B and 23.58C.040.B of the Land Use Code. Council seeks recommendations that would provide neighborhood stability, as evidenced by people returning or being able to stay in the neighborhood, such as options for giving preference to qualified applicants for OH-supported housing who have been long-time residents of the neighborhood in which the housing is located, informed by a review of preference programs implemented in comparable settings, such as San Francisco, California, and Portland, Oregon. Also, during July 2018 Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) Framework review, Council will consider ways to prioritize the City’s spending of cash contributions made through the payment option of the Mandatory Housing Affordability program to support affordable housing in neighborhoods that the City has identified as having a high-risk of displacement in addition to delivering new affordable housing units throughout the city, including high-opportunity areas. Council intends that local non-profit, low-income housing organizations that are culturally-relevant and historically rooted in the C/ID, or other neighborhoods determined to be at high risk for displacement, remain competitive in their application for available funding, and have fair access to these funds through identification and elimination of institutional and structural barriers to foster development that prevents displacement and advances other community development goals.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2017, and signed by

me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2017.

President _____ of the City Council

The Mayor concurred the _____ day of _____, 2017.

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2017.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)