

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

..title

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.

..body

WHEREAS, the area known as Chinatown/International District (C/ID) includes the

neighborhoods of Chinatown, Japantown, ~~historic Manilatown~~, 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

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

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

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

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

15 WHEREAS, in August 2016 the Council passed Ordinance 125108, which created SMC Chapter
16 23.58C and established the framework for the residential component of MHA; and

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

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

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

5 WHEREAS, the goal of Seattle 2035 for the commercial core of the C/ID is maintaining the
6 commercial core as a major employment center, tourist and convention attraction,
7 shopping magnet, residential neighborhood, and regional hub of cultural and
8 entertainment activities, while promoting a unique neighborhood identity for the
9 commercial core; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

11 WHEREAS, in May 2017, the Mayor and Council adopted the 2017 City of Seattle and Seattle
12 Housing Authority Joint Assessment of Fair Housing by Ordinance 118961. The findings
13 of the Assessment respond to the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and
14 Urban Development to assess compliance with the Federal Affirmatively Furthering Fair
15 Housing rule and identified four racially/ethnically concentrated areas of poverty
16 (R/ECAPS) in Seattle: High Point, Rainier Beach, New Holly, and, overlapping with the
17 C/ID, First Hill/Yesler Terrace; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

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

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

16 Section 3. The Council supports the efforts of a C/ID Advisory Committee, with City
17 departments, to develop a framework and implementation plan for the C/ID, addressing topics
18 such as: updates to the ISRD guidelines, community development and stabilization, strategic
19 investment of City funds, public realm improvements, and an update to the Charles Street
20 Campus Master Plan. The Council expects the updated planning for the City's Charles Street
21 property to consider ~~a range of alternatives including~~ streetscape improvements along S
22 Dearborn Street, partial redevelopment, and a ~~long term~~ strategy for relocation of City facilities
23 [leading to community ownership of property along S Dearborn Street, particularly north of](#)

1 [Charles Street, and additional adjacent portions of the site, if recommended by the C/ID](#)
2 [Advisory Committee.](#)

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

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

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

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

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

16 Section 9. The City celebrates the strong cultural organizations, religious institutions, and
17 community-based organizations that the people of the C/ID have built over time. The City
18 recognizes with gratitude the partnerships with these institutions and organizations. The City will
19 emphasize the ongoing, reciprocal commitment with these organizations and institutions in
20 prioritizing the shared goals of the City and these partners for the near future and over the long
21 term. [The City recognizes the diversity of perspectives within the C/ID and remains committed](#)
22 [to inclusive and equitable community involvement by continually seeking to connect with a](#)
23 [broad range of community members as well as to uplift new voices, institutions, and](#)

1 [organizations of the C/ID and to encourage them to engage with the people of their](#)
2 [neighborhood and to partake in the decisions that impact them.](#)

3 Section 10. The Council requests that the Mayor direct the City’s departments to
4 coordinate efforts among themselves and with local organizations to enhance the C/ID, in a
5 manner exemplary of the City’s approach to maintaining and improving the quality of life
6 throughout Seattle.

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

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

19 ~~Section 12~~[Section 13](#). The City recognizes the potential for displacement as property in
20 the C/ID undergoes public and private development, and is committed to informing City
21 decisions regarding investments by careful consideration of racial and social justice impacts,
22 including:

- 23 a. Support under the Equitable Development Initiative;

1 b. Exploration of [strategies to encourage community control of land, public financing for](#)
2 [land acquisition](#), re-use of City-owned property and/or City partnership and support for re-use of
3 property owned by other public entities [to minimize the burdens of site control, including](#)
4 [cleanup of polluted lands, and to increase the availability of land for the development of for new](#)
5 affordable housing, affordable commercial/retail and non-profit community uses in the
6 neighborhood; ~~and~~

7 c. Exploration of an Unreinforced Masonry Preservation pilot to increase the supply of
8 affordable housing on currently-vacant upper floors, and to sustain affordable commercial spaces
9 on the ground floors ~~by using funds from~~ [funded as allowed by the restrictions of various](#) sources
10 such as the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) program, proceeds from the \$29 million
11 housing bond, and/or a targeted growth fund with revenues from an increment of increased
12 property tax revenue from future growth, as appropriate; ~~and~~

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

17 [Section 14. The Council requests that the Office of Housing, in collaboration with](#)
18 [community partners and other City departments, prepare and submit recommendations to](#)
19 [Council by March 31, 2018 for best practices, financial tools, as well as potential changes to the](#)
20 [Seattle Housing Levy Administrative and Financial Plan and subsections 23.58B.040.B and](#)
21 [23.58C.040.B of the Land Use Code. Council seeks recommendations that would provide](#)
22 [neighborhood stability, as evidenced by people returning or being able to stay in the](#)
23 [neighborhood, such as options for giving preference to qualified applicants for OH-supported](#)

1 housing who have been long-time residents of the neighborhood in which the housing is located,
2 informed by a review of preference programs implemented in comparable settings, such as San
3 Francisco, California, and Portland, Oregon. Also, during July 2018 Mandatory Housing
4 Affordability (MHA) Framework review, Council will consider ways to prioritize the City's
5 spending of cash contributions made through the payment option of the Mandatory Housing
6 Affordability program to support affordable housing in neighborhoods that the City has
7 identified as having a high-risk of displacement in addition to delivering new affordable housing
8 units throughout the city, including high-opportunity areas. Council intends that local non-profit,
9 low-income housing organizations that are culturally-relevant and historically rooted in the C/ID,
10 or other neighborhoods determined to be at high risk for displacement, remain competitive in
11 their application for available funding, and have fair access to these funds through identification
12 and elimination of institutional and structural barriers to foster development that prevents
13 displacement and advances other community development goals.

1 Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2017,

2 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of

3 _____, 2017.

4 _____

5 President _____ of the City Council

6 The Mayor concurred the _____ day of _____, 2017.

7 _____

8 Edward B. Murray, Mayor

9 Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2017.

10 _____

11 Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

12 (Seal)