



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31754, **Version:** 2

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, 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

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; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor presented the Public Safety Action Plan for the C/ID in response to the Task Force's recommendations to the Council; 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 a range of alternatives including streetscape improvements along S Dearborn Street, partial redevelopment, and a long-term strategy for relocation of City facilities.

Section 4. The City will act in a timely manner to partner with local businesses, community organizations, and customers to promote economic development and commercial stability 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.

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.

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 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 re-use of City-owned property and/or City partnership and support for re-use of property owned by other public entities for new affordable housing, affordable commercial/retail and non-profit community uses in the neighborhood; and
- 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 by using funds from 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.

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)