Housing Preservation and Development Assessment

Seattle Chinatown International District

Executive Summary [TM, CB]

Introduction [CB]

As with many neighborhoods in Seattle, the Chinatown International District (CID) is feeling the strain of the City’s rapid growth. In May 2015, the City of Seattle DPD published a Growth and Equity Report that identified the CID as a highly desirable neighborhood for development that will likely cause displacement of marginalized populations. As community based organizations, InterIm Community Development Association (ICDA) and the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (SCIDPDA), see and experience the displacement happening already. The CID community needs to come together to act swiftly and strategically to ensure that culturally appropriate affordable housing options remain available to the people that make our neighborhood so vibrant.

MORE ON NH GENERALLY—include Growth & Equity report #s/graphs

ICDA and SCIDPDA collaborated on a Housing Preservation and Development Assessment of the Seattle CID to gain a more detailed understanding of where the loss of affordable housing is most likely and where opportunities exist to preserve existing or develop new affordable housing. Through the lens of established community housing goals, this study will inform strategic future investments in affordable housing by project partners and be used to advocate for resources on the neighborhood’s behalf.

# Framework

This assessment focuses on the buildings and parcels within the CID, with an emphasis on housing stock. The limited scope does not address important social nor cultural factors that impact housing stability of the residents of the neighborhood.

# Community Outreach

Conversation framed by neighborhood housing and development goals. The CID is a highly studied community with many external groups expecting residents and community stakeholders to attend their meetings to give feedback. Therefore the community outreach approach taken for this assessment was attendance and brief presentations at existing community meetings with an emphasis on existing neighborhood housing goals. Since ICDA and SCIDPD staff were guests at these meetings, rather than hosts, participants were forthcoming about their thoughts on the two organizations and housing in the neighborhood. Meeting participants received a two-page handout about the purpose and framework of the assessment (appendix XX) and were encouraged to take an online survey in Chinese or English (appendix XX), or sign up for a focus group. While there was no interest in focus group participation and minimal completion of the online survey, these meetings offered an opportunity for ICDA and SCIPDA staff to strengthen relationships with community stakeholders and their organizations.

* Chong Wa Benevolent Association – April 16, 2015
* CID Public Safety Meeting – April 21, 2015
* Little Saigon Public Safety Meeting – April 28, 2015
* Historic South Downtown Meeting – April 28, 2015
* Chinese Chamber of Commerce Meeting – May 18, 2016

# Working Group

A working group of affordable housing funders, policy makers and advocates was formed to guide strategic direction of the assessment. (Appendix XX)

# Key Terms

Area Median Income

Displacement

Formal Affordable Housing

Informal Affordable Housing

Homeowner Housing

Marginalized Populations

Market Rate Housing

Chapter 2: Planning Context

# Neighborhood Housing Goals [CB]

During the last decade, ICDA and SCIDPDA led and participated in several neighborhood planning exercises that resulted in a roadmap for the growth of the community. The following goals are related to housing and livability and are pulled from four different planning documents.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Vision 2030** | Renovate vacant buildings and restore historical physical characteristics of buildings |
| Increase housing capacity by as much as 10,000 units and 25,000 people. Increase diversity of housing choices, with 1/3 of units low- and moderate income, 1/3 workforce, and 1/3 market-rate. Increase the number of homeowners living in the neighborhood. Avoid displacement of existing residents. In the event of displacement, provide assistance to help those residents find affordable replacement units in the city |
| Develop housing in all parts of the neighborhood; preserve small businesses throughout the neighborhood; maintain parking capacity in the community |
| Use the ISRD Board to maintain Asian Character in our buildings; maintain street-level retain consisting of independent locally-owned businesses; enhance the neighborhood through signage and public art, new construction should be design and use materials that complement the existing urban fabric of the neighborhood; support historical uses |
| **Livable South Downtown** | Preserve historic and cultural resources and encourage revitalization of historic buildings |
| Protect existing affordable housing and plan for future affordable units |
| Provide opportunities for the development of dense residential mixed-use community south of the neighborhood core, and provide a transition from the core of the Chinatown ID to non-residential employment uses located South of South Dearborn Street |
| **Chinatown/International District Strategic Plan** | Diverse and affordable housing - encourage creation of more family housing as well as moderate income units; preserve existing low-income units; support upgrading of existing vacant and sub-standard housing |
| **King Street Task Force** | Preserve and develop properties that increase resident base, livability and support economic viability of local businesses |

# City Planning Context [TM]

# Seattle 2035 Growth and Equity Report

The Seattle 2035 Growth and Equity Report (May 2015) identified the Chinatown International District as a High Opportunity and Access and High Displacement Risk Neighborhood. The CID is highly desirable because of community amenities such as the library and community center, proximity to downtown jobs and major transit hubs, plus relatively lower housing costs. The desirability is attracting new development that will likely cause displacement of marginalized populations. An equitable development strategy is to stabilize existing marginalized populations while also providing opportunities for economic mobility. This approach would lead with public and non-profit investment in affordable housing and stabilization of small businesses and cultural organizations to allow market-rate development to occur with minimal displacement. (DPD, 2015)

# Seattle HALA Recommendations

More resources for affordable housing - R.1

More housing - MF.1, MF.5

More supports for communities - P.1, P.2, P.3, T.1

More Innovation - L.1

# Housing Seattle: A Roadmap to an Affordable and Livable City

In the wake of the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda advisory committee’s 65 recommendations, Mayor Edward Murray published an action plan to serve as a roadmap to a more affordable and equitable city. Mayor Murray stated a goal of 50,000 new units of housing built or preserved over the next 10 years, with 20,000 of those units designated affordable.

Chapter 4: Housing in the CID Today [CB]

Increase housing capacity by as much as 10,000 units and 25,000 people. Increase diversity of housing choices, with 1/3 of units low- and moderate income, 1/3 workforce, and 1/3 market-rate. Increase the number of homeowners living in the neighborhood.

Protect existing affordable housing and plan for future affordable units

Diverse and affordable housing - encourage creation of more family housing as well as moderate income units; preserve existing low-income units; support upgrading of existing vacant and sub-standard housing

The tables on the following pages give a snapshot of the housing stock and affordability within the neighborhood in 2015.

## Formal Affordable Housing

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Project** | **Address** | **0-30%** | **31-50%** | **51-65%** | **66-80%** | **>80%** | **Total** | **Reg Yr** |
| **Longer Term** | Bush Hotel | 621 S Jackson ST | 0 | 95 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 96 | 2037 |
| Eastern Hotel | 506 Maynard AV S | 0 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 47 | 2046 |
| ID Village Square I - Legacy House | 800 S. Dearborn ST | 60 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 75 | 2036 |
| ID Village Square II | 725 8TH AV S | 31 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 57 | 2052 |
| International House | 607 Maynard AV S | 0 | 30 | 68 | 0 | 0 | 98 | 2048 |
| International Terrace | 202 6TH AV S | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | SHA |
| Leschi House | 1011 S Weller ST | 8 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 0 | 34 | SHA |
| New Central Hotel | 657 S Weller ST | 0 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 2028 |
| Nihonmachi Terrace | 651 S Main ST | 25 | 13 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 50 | 2054 |
| NP Hotel | 306 6TH AV S | 0 | 62 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 63 | 2034 |
| Victorian Row Apartments | 1234 S King ST | 0 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 13 | 2031 |
| Washington Terrace | 609 Yesler Way | 0 | 0 | 136 | 0 | 0 | 136 | 2046 |
| William Booth Center | 811 Maynard AV S | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 48 | 2031 |
| **Longer Term Subtotal** | | | **272** | **319** | **223** | **26** | **5** | **845** |  |
| **Shorter Term** | Addison | 308 4TH AV S | 0 | 0 | 250 | 0 | 2 | 252 | 2010 |
| Atlas Hotel | 420 Maynard AV S | 0 | 0 | 0 | 46 | 0 | 46 | - |
| Imperial House | 514 S Main ST | 96 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 96 | 2014 |
| Jackson Apartments | 664 S Jackson ST | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | - |
| Nikkei Manor | 700 6TH AV S | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 40 | 50 | 2016 |
| Oak Tin Apartments | 519 7TH AV S | 15 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 2009 |
| Rex Hotel | 657 S King ST | 6 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 2019 |
| **Shorter Term Subtotal** | | | **134** | **35** | **250** | **51** | **42** | **512** |  |
| **Formal Affordable Housing Total** | | | **406** | **354** | **473** | **77** | **47** | **1357** |  |

## Market Rate Housing

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project** | **Address** | **0-30%** | **31-50%** | **51-65%** | **66-80%** | **>80%** | **Total** |
| 500 12th Ave. S | 500 12th Ave. S | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 612 7th Ave. S | 612 7th Ave. S | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 705 Lofts | 705 S Weller St | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 28 | 40 |
| 711 S. Weller St | 711 S. Weller St | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 19 |
| Adams Freedman Building | 513 Maynard AV S | 0 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 |
| Alps | 621 S King | 117 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 117 |
| Ascona Apartments | 200 5TH AV S | 0 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 53 |
| Bing Kung | 706 S King | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Chinese Post | 410 Maynard AV S | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Don Hee Apartments | 412 8th AV S | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| Evergreen Apartments | 400 Maynard AV S | 0 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| Far East Apartments | 618 S Jackson St | 0 | 5 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Governor Apartments | 514 S Jackson St | 0 | 19 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Hip Sing | 418 8th AV S | 0 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Hong Kong Building | 507 Maynard Ave S | 0 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| International Apartments | 315 Maynard S | 20 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 53 |
| Metropolitan Park | 601 S Washington St | 0 | 0 | 0 | 62 | 20 | 82 |
| Milwaukee Hotel | 664 S King ST | 0 | 0 | 117 | 0 | 0 | 117 |
| New American Hotel | 420 7th Ave S | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40 |
| Ohio Hotel | 618 S Weller ST | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Republic | 416 7th Ave S | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60 |
| Ticino Project, The | 100 6TH AV S | 0 | 0 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| Uwajimaya Village Apartments | 521 S Weller ST | 0 | 0 | 0 | 46 | 130 | 176 |
| West Kong Yick | 508 1/2 7th AV S | 0 | 70 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 70 |
| **Market Rate Housing Unit Total** | | **237** | **268** | **192** | **120** | **212** | **959** |

## Homeowner Housing

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project** | **Address** | **Units** |
| 1215 S Main St | 1215 S Main St | 1 |
| 1247 S King St | 1247 S King St | 1 |
| 1251 S King St | 1251 S King St | 1 |
| 1261 S King St | 1261 S King St | 1 |
| 610 7th Ave S | 610 7th Ave S | 1 |
| Asia Condominium | 668 S Lane ST | 75 |
| Fujisada Condominium | 510 6th AV S | 25 |
| Pacific Condominium | 900 S Jackson St | 50 |
| Tobira Condos | 108 5TH AV S | 88 |
| **Homeowner Housing Unit Total** | | **243** |

## Summary of Units

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Units** | **0-30%** | **31-50%** | **51-65%** | **66-80%** | **>80%** | **Own** | **Total** |
| Long Term Formal Affordable Housing | 272 | 319 | 223 | 26 | 5 | 0 | 845 |
| Short Term Formal Affordable Housing | 134 | 35 | 250 | 51 | 42 | 0 | 512 |
| Market Rate Housing | 237 | 268 | 192 | 120 | 212 | 0 | 959 |
| Homeowner Housing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 243 | 243 |
| **Unit Total** | **643** | **622** | **665** | **197** | **259** | **243** | **2629** |

## Anticipated Housing Developments

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project** | **Address** | **0-30%** | **31-50%** | **51-65%** | **66-80%** | **>80%** | **Own** | **Total** |
| Hirabayashi Place | 442 S Main St | 0 | 72 | 23 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 96 |
| Icon Apartments | 400 S Jackson St | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 120 | 0 | 120 |
| Inland Project | 913 S Jackson St | 0 | 0 | 247 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 247 |
| LIHI Project | 1253 S Jackson St | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| Louisa | 665 S King St | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 90 | 0 | 90 |
| Publix Hotel | 504 5th Ave S | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 100 | 0 | 125 |
| Stream Real Estate Project | 525-537 Yesler Way | 0 | 0 | 0 | 150 | 0 | 0 | 150 |
| Studio 19 Hotel/Condos | 616 8th Ave S | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| **Anticipated Unit Total** | | **50** | **72** | **270** | **175** | **311** | **8** | **886** |

Chapter 5: Data for Indexes 🡪 appendix

# Data Collection

Data was collected from a variety of sources. While the majority of these sources are civic institutions (e.g., the King County Assessor, the City of Seattle’s open data portal, US Census Data, etc.), some of the data is based on staff surveys that are more informal in nature. The most common file format of the original data sources is comma-separated tabular documents. This format is a standard one for data science work and is accessible with a wide variety of software including Microsoft excel, ESRI ArcGIS, and QGIS. Tabular data in the form of Microsoft Excel files was also used in this project. This format is also quite versatile, although the high accessibility of spreadsheet software often results in files that require significant reformatting and cleaning in order to be incorporated into an analysis. Geospatial data was collected in ESRI Shapefile format exclusively.

# Indicator Selection

Effort was taken to incorporate as many indicators relevant to this study’s topic as possible. Generally, the “fuzzier” the central concept of a model (i.e., the harder the concept is to pin down with a definition) the more important it is to incorporate many different indicators in the analysis. The indicators were collected based on literature review and consultation with professionals working in relevant fields. A major challenge was finding relevant indicators with data at the correct scale. For instance, demographic data like household income would be very interesting to include in an analysis like this, but unfortunately it is not available at the scale of individual buildings or parcels. Because of the scale of this study it was important to obtain data that was high complete and accurate. Effort was made to obtain the most recent data available and to identify and correct inaccuracies or omissions where they occurred. Although it’s likely that some erroneous data was missed during the cleaning process, the small spatial scale and high level of familiarity of staff with the neighborhood helped to reduce these errors substantially.

# Index Creation

The project was originally conceived as an asset map showing the neighborhood’s housing qualities and characteristics. We decided to shift to a spatial composite index because it allowed for more clear analysis of the aggregate conditions of housing and development. The Development and Preservation Opportunity composite indices share some indicators but also have their own unique indicators. The Housing Change Potential composite index incorporates the other two indices in one of its indicators (the high development/preservation opportunity neighbor’s indicator) and also has its own set of unique indicators.

# Data Cleaning

Several different data sources were used in this project, and the amount of effort required to clean and prepare the data varied depending on the source. Data from the Seattle DPD’s Development Capacity analysis was already cleaned by previous analysts and included complete coverage of our project’s study area. On the other end of the spectrum, some development opportunity surveys made by SCIDpda staff required substantial manual entry and geocoding work prior to being included in the composite indices. Geocoding is the process of inferring geospatial location from descriptive text (e.g. a street address or business name). Much of the data needed to be geocoded in order to associate it with the correct building or parcel. There are many geocoding tools available, but this project relied on a software package called “geocodeHERE”, which provides a simple interface that is accessed using the R programming language. The advantage of this particular geocoding tool is that it provided the ability to geocode large numbers of addresses at a time. Unfortunately, sometime in July 2015 the package stopped working and has not been fixed. While all of the geocoding work necessary for this project had already been completed by that time, if any updates to the model required geocoding then a new tool would be necessary and new R code would need to be written. This sort of scenario is one of the risks of using open source software.

# Normalization

To facilitate the combination of indicator scores into a composite index, the individual indicator values were normalized into a 0 to 1 scale based on the perceived contribution to their respective composite index. This allowed for simple summing of scores into a final composite index score for each of the three study focuses: development opportunity, preservation opportunity, and housing change potential.

# Filtering

Each composite index scores all parcels/buildings for which scoring data is available. Once the scoring is complete, filters are applied to “zero-out” the scores of parcels/buildings that are not within the focus of each index (e.g., the Housing Change Potential index does not focus on non-residential buildings, so the scores for those buildings are filtered out).

# Weighting

The relative influence of each indicator on the composite index score can be adjusted through weighting schemes. Initially, all variables were weighted equally for each composite index. Alternative weighting schemes were created based on discussions with professionals working in the real estate development and affordable housing industry. An online tool was created to facilitate flexible adjustment of the variable weighting. This tool enables the project staff to adjust the influence of indicators for each of the indices in two ways: changing the influence group of an indicator (e.g. ‘high’, ‘mid’, or ‘low’ influence), and changing the relative weight of each of these groups.

# Gaps

* Inability of this model to account for consolidation potential when calculating Development Opportunity (the model assigns scores parcel-by-parcel, so expanding beyond that scale causes results in over-counting)
* Informed but statistically arbitrary nature of the assignment of indicators to influence groups
* Arbitrariness of the distinction between ‘low’ and ‘moderately’ priced naturally-occurring affordable housing (the cutoff for ‘low’ was $600/month for a studio apartment)

Chapter 6: Composite Indices [TM]

--Why indices? (again, reference intro)

--Why these three?

--Varying weights assigned to each metric

## Housing Change Potential Index

The Housing Change Potential Index identifies informal affordable housing buildings where change is more likely to occur.

--More on what we were trying to achieve

Comparison of 18 informal affordable housing (studio <$1000/month, not regulated affordable housing) buildings in the neighborhood to determine likelihood for change. We have unit counts for 7 of these buildings, which totals 468 units, and are working on getting unit counts for the other buildings. There are currently 20 formal affordable housing buildings in the neighborhood with a total of 1018 units (missing unit counts for 4 buildings and all units within a building may not be affordable)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Description | Weighting |
| RRIO | If building is not rental registration and inspection ordinance compliant | 2 |
| URM | If building has unreinforced masonry | 2 |
| Will Sell | Owner Willing to Sell | 2 |
| Turnover | Number of recent sales | 2 |
| Neighbors | High development/preservation opportunity neighbor parcels | 2 |
| Permit Value | Combined value of recent building permits | 1.5 |
| Occupancy Rate | Residential occupancy rate | 1.5 |
| Condition | Building condition | 1 |
| Violation Count | Number of recent building code violations | 1 |

--Histogram w/ % of buildings in each category

--Other summary material, conclusions

## Housing Preservation Opportunity Index

Renovate vacant buildings and restore historical physical characteristics of buildings

Avoid displacement of existing residents.

Preserve historic and cultural resources and encourage revitalization of historic buildings

Preserve and develop properties that increase resident base, livability and support economic viability of local businesses

The Preservation Opportunity Index identifies existing buildings with a housing component that can be maintained or converted to affordable housing units.

Comparison of 41 existing buildings with a housing component to determine potential preservation projects to maintain or convert to affordable housing units in the neighborhood. (approximately 1825 units, missing unit counts for 11 buildings) 13 of the HCP Index identified buildings are also in this index.

Table X - Preservation Opportunities Index Indicators

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Description | Weighting |
| Will Sell | Owner Willing to Sell | 2 |
| Historic Building |  | 2 |
| REC | Recognized Environmental Condition | 1.5 |
| Relationship | With SCIDPDA or InterIm CDA | 1.5 |
| Parcel Cost/Unit | Estimated parcel cost per residential unit | 1.5 |
| Condition | Building condition | 1.5 |
| Vacancy | Vacant or partially vacant building | 1 |

## Housing Development Opportunity Index

Increase housing capacity by as much as 10,000 units and 25,000 people. Increase diversity of housing choices, with 1/3 of units low- and moderate income, 1/3 workforce, and 1/3 market-rate. Increase the number of homeowners living in the neighborhood.

Provide opportunities for the development of dense residential mixed-use community south of the neighborhood core, and provide a transition from the core of the Chinatown ID to non-residential employment uses located South of South Dearborn Street

Preserve and develop properties that increase resident base, livability and support economic viability of local businesses

Comparison of 201 parcels to determine opportunities for the development of multifamily affordable housing. If every parcel is built out with a 5/2 that could add approximately 11,300 units to the neighborhood.

Number of highly ranked parcels with development planned during the assessment period.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Description | Weighting |
| Will Sell | Owner Willing to Sell | 2 |
| No Building on the Parcel | Parcel vacant or used for surface parking | 2 |
| REC | Recognized Environmental Condition | 1.5 |
| Relationship | With SCIDPDA or InterIm CDA | 1.5 |
| Parcel Cost/Unit | Estimated parcel cost per residential unit | 1.5 |
| Potential Units | Building condition | 1 |

Chapter 9: How Growth Unfolds [CB, TM, MWC, ??]

--Summarize findings

--Overall vision (recap NH plan + Growth/Equity Analysis + HALA)

--Targeted policy/funding recommendations—w/ responsibilities?