

Old Town/Chinatown Vision-Development Plan Update

January 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Re-Visions Committee was established in early 2002 to update the Old Town/Chinatown Vision Plan and the Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan, and to evaluate the role and mission of the Vision Committee. This is the first major re-look at what and how we are doing. Below is the report.

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The committee makeup consists of five Neighborhood Association members, including two past chairs and current chair of the Neighborhood Association, and the present and past chair of the Vision Committee. All seven members are active at Vision meetings.

A. Charge of the Committee:

1. To evaluate the Vision and Development plans to determine what has been accomplished, what needs to be worked on, changed or added. (pg 5)
2. To define the on-going purpose and goals of the Vision Committee, and its relationship to the Neighborhood Association. (pg 11)
3. To propose the makeup and role of the Joint Land Use Committee (pg 12)
4. To ensure that the Vision Committee represents all facets of the community, and proactively reaches out to the community. (pg 12)
5. To address the issues that tend to divide the community: the diverse points of view in the neighborhood regarding gentrification, balance, and development versus historic preservation. (pg 13)

B. **Primary Recommendations:** The following are the recommendations of the committee, many of which require action plans to be accomplished. They are divided into five topic areas addressed by both plans.

1. **Neighborhood Process** (Neighborhood Association/Visions, Communication, Land Use Planning)
 - a. The Vision Committee reaffirms the goals of the Vision Plan and the Development Plan and recognizes its clear mission in attaining those goals.

- b. Land Use Committee must represent all parts of the community. (A proposal for its make-up and authority is enclosed.) The Vision Committee has a strong interest in land use, since the Vision Committee goal is to ensure our vision and development goals are being met.
- c. Consensus on how we approach gentrification and balance in the community is critical. The Vision Committee, in partnership with the Neighborhood Association, should tackle these issues. They should not be left to the Land Use Committee. A discussion of this issue is in Section 5.
- d. The Vision Committee needs to better evaluate our goals with the funding priorities of the PDC and other public entities, to ensure limited resources are funding our priorities.
- e. The Vision Committee must be vigilant to ensure all facets of the community are represented. This means proactive community work to ensure community involvement. A good example is the involvement the 3rd and 4th Committee has generated from the community. This means a clear communication network needs to be set up, as called for by the Vision Plan. The Neighborhood Association is currently working on such a plan, and Vision should aid in this process.
- f. The Vision Committee should promote the rebirth of a business association as a byproduct of the 3rd and 4th Avenue marketing strategy.

2. Housing, Development, Circulation / Barriers:

- a. Reaffirm our support of the Burnside planning effort, the NW Broadway study, The Waterfront plan, and the 3rd and 4th Street approved investment strategy, to enable desirable development.
- b. We must be vigilant in pursuing the breakdown of our access barriers—to the waterfront, across Burnside, and to the Pearl District. All the plans being developed include this goal, but to date we have not achieved the breakdown of any barriers.
- c. Recognize the historic wealth of the district and devise strategies to protect and enhance these assets through seismic and other incentives that lead owners to restore and renovate rather than replace. The strategy needs to be balanced, so that protection and incentive is given to preserving our assets, but the area does not remain stagnant with many boarded up buildings. Emphasis should be on preserving landmark buildings. Additionally, contributing buildings may be an asset. A process needs to be identified for agreement on restoration or replacement of those buildings.
- d. Old Town/Chinatown is a neighborhood whose housing in the 0 – 60 MFI range is protected by two City ordinances: the Housing Preservation Act and the No Net Loss Housing Policy. Our housing goal is to increase the number of housing units, attract more housing in the 60-120 MFI range, and promote home ownership, including the use of strategies such as the Share Appreciation Mortgages utilized in the Old Town Lofts. Included in Appendix A is the 1999 mix and number and the 2002 number. We have

increased housing over 50%, and shifted upwards in housing income. We need to promote and continue this trend by promoting all housing especially those serving the downtown workforce. A process needs to be in place that brings our neighborhood to consensus on what balance means regarding income diversity, unit size, and production goals.

- e. Determine an adequate mix of transportation options--transit, auto and bike access, parking, and circulation that best enhances the community. The Broadway, Burnside and 3rd& 4th plans attempt to do this, but Vision Committee must ensure this priority.
- f. Parking should be included in all new mixed-use developments.

3. Open Spaces, Community Center, Culture, History.

- a. The character and culture of our neighborhood is its history, its arts, and its entertainment. Each is significant in its own rights, has its individual attributes and should not be lumped together as we develop strategies to promote all three.
- b. History plays a distinctive role in our buildings, our people, and our activities. We must promote our history as a living aspect of our neighborhood. This is now being done through various venues.
- c. We should recognize our importance as a community containing two National Historic Districts – Skidmore and New Japantown Chinatown Historic District.
- d. We do not have consensus on open spaces, their need and location. Do we have the critical mass of residents to both warrant more open space and ensure its safety? Have we maximized the access to open spaces in and around our community? An ongoing Open Space Committee has been meeting, but without clear direction from the Vision Committee, or Neighborhood Association, no meaningful work can be expected. The Neighborhood Association and Vision Committee should formulate clear open space priorities. Primary focus of an open space plan would be North Waterfront Park, North Park Blocks, Steel Bridge space, and other opportunities as they should arise.
- e. A Community Center is a priority. There is consensus that a community center is needed. However, there is not yet a consensus about all the elements of a community center. A process is underway to identify a more specific community center model. Both the Vision Committee and the Neighborhood Association should insure it is completed, as it impacts various plans being developed, such as the Northwest Broadway study.

4. Nightlife / Marketing / Promotion / Job Creation

- a. Develop marketing plan in conjunction with the various groups in the community, including PDC and PBA (Portland Business Alliance), to insure

proper image is portrayed to overcome perceptions about the vitality of the area. This is a necessity for 3rd and 4th funding, but is also necessary to meet our other goals. The marketing strategy needs to include a retail strategy that might include ways of attracting small storefront businesses that cater our ethnic diversity, provide services to the people who live and work in the area, and attract visitors to our community.

- b. The Development plan is strangely silent on a job creation strategy, and very weak on a marketing strategy. The Vision Committee should take these challenges on, with help from the PDC and the Portland Business Alliance.
- c. At present, active nightlife and dense housing are primary characteristics of Old Town/Chinatown. We need to continue to address the challenges of the interaction between nightlife and housing, particularly the issues of public safety, noise, and nighttime parking.

5. Crime / Public Safety

- a. Crime and Safety issues are key to the success of the area. We must insure that land use and development enhance rather than hinder are fight to have a secure environment.
- b. Our priority should be to combat negative perception of the neighborhood, and work diligently with the Police and city to free our streets of gang activities and drug dealings and address infrastructure issues such as blank walls, lighting, and other negative detractions. We offer our longstanding goal of establishing and maintaining safe restroom facilities.
- c. The Neighborhood Association is taking the lead role in addressing these issues.

OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN REVISION REPORT:

A. History of Vision Committee:

People concerned about the viability of the neighborhood formed the Vision Committee in 1995. Conflict and mistrust among the various groups – social services, property owners, Chinese community, and the retail and nightlife businesses – stopped our neighborhood from addressing the problems facing us. We were divided, the neighborhood was crime ridden, development was at a standstill, and we had no effective voice with the city.

The Vision Committee tried to seek out all the stakeholders of the community, and put together a “vision” of what we wanted our neighborhood to be. The result is the Old Town/Chinatown Vision Plan was adopted by City Council in 1997. The Plan set forth ways of resolving conflict, the need to cohesively fight crime, and the nucleus of the development plan.

The Vision Committee then began work on the Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan, which was adopted by City Council in December 1999. This is the blueprint for the development of the neighborhood. It becomes the backdrop of describing what we want in terms of economic development. The Vision Committee has stayed in existence since 1999 to help implement the adopted plan, and encourage both private and public investment in the area.

The Vision Committee has no legal authority, such as the Neighborhood Association. Its influence is in its ability to represent all the stakeholders of the community and to proactively promote and update the adopted Vision and Development Plans. Both the public and private sector have looked to the Vision Committee for its leadership in these areas.

B. Discussion of the 5 charges of the Revision Committee:

1. Evaluation of Vision Plan and Development Plan

Overview:

The Vision Plan was developed in 1995-1997, and adopted by City Council in September, 1997. The Development Plan was developed in 1998-1999, and adopted by City Council in December, 1999. These two form our collective vision of Old Town/Chinatown, the basis of cooperation in our neighborhood, and a blueprint for development. The following is a review of those two documents,

and study of the substantive issues that face our neighborhood, and a set of recommendations for our future.

Old Town/Chinatown Vision Plan (1997):

- 1) We have come a long way towards meeting many of the challenges we faced 5-7 years ago. A sincere effort to work together is evident. Tensions are not as high between the various elements of the community. Most have accepted our first principle that all have a right to be in and grow in Old Town/Chinatown. The negative impacts of poor retail/business climate, limited mixed income housing, and the Regions highest concentration of social service providers does not ring as true now as it did 5 years ago. But crime, especially high drug trade, seems to ebb and flow, and negatively impact all elements of the community. Bullet point six should be changed to be more inclusive: “the various elements of the community (such as neighborhood...) The need to be more inclusive and to seek out all elements of the community into the shaping of the community is a challenge we must address. We should be about relationship-building in our community. The basis of this is trust among each other. This should be addressed at both the Vision Committee and the Neighborhood Association. The plan also calls for an annual review, which we have not done. This is the first concerted effort to review the Vision Plan.
- 2) Good Neighbor Agreement. The good neighbor agreement can be an effective tool to ensure positive coexistence among various parties. The Neighborhood Association has the mandate to develop and enforce the agreements. In the late nineties, we were very insistent that they be negotiated, as tensions were quite high. In the past few years, the Neighborhood Association has taken on the task, as new tensions, especially between nightclubs and other neighbors, have emerged. The ideal is all parties would be aware of and abide by neighborhood agreements, not just social services and nightclubs. Perhaps this can best be done by better communication to new members of the community what our vision is and what are expectations are. The Good Neighbor Agreements were to be monitored by an Advisory Board. This board was never really established by Vision, and the work has been done by the Neighborhood Association. The Vision Plan should be changed to reflect this reality. Communications is a difficult area to maintain. The Vision Plan calls for an established link with interested parties. The Neighborhood Association is doing some communication, and the Vision Committee limited communication. Our recommendation is that the two organizations work together to develop an effective plan of communication. This entails not only news dissemination, but also relationship building. It involves trust, and trying to overcome the lack of interest most parties have when things go along smoothly.

- 3) Housing, Shelter, and Social Services: This sets the tone of balance and cooperation in the neighborhood. We never really established what balance is, but reaffirm each entities right to be and grow in the neighborhood. The Shelter Reconfiguration Plan is complete. The Assessment Center was never agreed upon as being a viable idea. The Location Policy is very strong in that it requires a Good Neighbor Agreement be in place for a social service before the final site is approved by the governmental entity in charge.
- 4) Communication: This is one area that we have failed to formalize in a way that ensures communication is really happening. Recommendation is that Vision and Neighborhood Association jointly put together a viable plan.
- 5) Crime and Public Safety: The Neighborhood Association will take the lead role in ensuring a good action plan in dealing with crime and public safety. The community- policing model continually needs to be re-energized. Crime and lack of safety is the one element that negatively impacts all aspects of life in our area. With a lack of police and enforcement presence on the streets, the call for partnerships within our community to deal with crime and public safety issues is critical at present. There has been much progress in terms of investment in housing, retail, and office; and we cannot afford to negate those investments and discourage future progress.
- 6) Street Environment and Public Improvements: These areas are more vividly defined in the Development Plan, and will be addressed there. The one issue that has not been addressed is the need for public restroom, and should be revisited as we go to the next level of development.
- 7) Nightlife/Marketing/Promotion: While nightlife is definitely a vibrant characteristic of the area, we need to make sure other aspects of the community are acknowledged. This was first done shortly after the Vision Plan, when the area became known as the Arts and Entertainment District. The area is also an historic and cultural district. But what it really is about is creating tourism, that is, making all the wonderful aspects of the area accessible to both our residents and those around us. The Vision Committee should revisit this issue, to ensure we are fully marketing all aspects of our district.
- 8) Development, Parking & Circulation: The four components of the Central City 2000 plan have essentially been achieved: We have surpassed the housing goals, we have finished the development plan, we are in the process of finishing the NW Broadway plan, though funding for the project is far from assured, and the Classical Chinese Garden is a reality.

Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan (1999):

Overview:

Our Development Plan goal is to develop Old Town/Chinatown into a vibrant, 24 hour, mixed use, urban neighborhood, rooted in a rich historical past. Our challenges remain the same: diversity, which makes us what we are, but adds to development challenges; small parcels under many ownerships; historic buildings, which are the heartbeat of the community, but create seismic and economic challenges; and the edges of our community—Broadway to the west, Burnside to the South, and Naito Parkway to the east, which create physical as well as psychological barriers. Many of the plan's recommendations have either been accomplished, or are being worked on. But development also has created other issues, which need to be addressed

The Plan:

- 1) Our recommendations as outlined on pg 5 of the plan set the framework for the development that has taken place. These include reducing the barriers to OT/CT, preserve and enhance the historic and cultural character of the area, support the development of retail and arts and entertainment businesses, enhance the area around the Classical Chinese Garden, support preservation and development of a mix of housing, and proceed with development of the Trailways Blocks. We then designed immediate, short term, and long-term actions to achieve the plan.
- 2) Immediate Actions:
 - a) Street Revisions: We achieved some parking on Burnside and the retiming of lights to make it easier to cross. This was done through much effort. We have obtained a commitment from the Port of Portland surface parking on weekends, but the parking problem envisioned was not materialized. NW 2nd and Flanders has been improved.
 - b) Property Development: Block 25 development is still being worked on by the PDC, and hopefully will come to fruition, with the moving and rebuilding of the Blanchet House. The Trailways Blocks are now being aggressively planned as part of the NW Broadway Master Plan. This plan should be ready for city action by late fall. The funding of the plan, however, is still not assured.
 - c) Property Redevelopment: Redevelopment in the 3rd avenue and on Burnside as not progressed to this point. The challenge is creating the incentives so that private owners invest to redevelop. The finalizing of the 3rd and 4th Plans, and the Burnside Plan will greatly help. An essential piece of this plan will be the formation of a group of local merchants and property owners to champion this project. Vision and the Neighborhood Association both need to ensure this is done.

Organizational help from the Portland Business Alliance and the Chinese community should be obtained.

- d) Housing: Included in Appendix B is our present housing mix. We have increased overall housing by 50% since 1999, preserved our SRO housing, and increased affordable housing, especially in the 50 to 120 MFI range, but true market rate still is a challenge. Our first experiment with condominiums, Old Town Lofts, has been moderately successful. The Pacific House is presently being constructed to create housing attractive to the senior community. We are moving towards a more balanced housing market. The lower end is being more professionally managed as more units move under the auspices of entities such as CCC and Transitional Projects. This increase in housing helps make the neighborhood more livable and entices more retail activity and job development.
- e) Encourage New Development: We do not have in place a coordinated marketing program for the area.

3) Short Term Actions:

- a) Reduce Barriers: We have had limited success in reducing the barriers. Naito Crossing is being addressed by the waterfront plan, Burnside by its plan, and Broadway by the NW Broadway plan. But we are still only in the planning stages. These barriers are also psychological as well as physical, and that first aspect must also be addressed.
- b) Enhance property surrounding Classical Garden: Not much investment to date, but 3rd/4th Plan should help. Plan needs to ensure private participation.
- c) Support investments for Old/Town Chinatown: Have done so in Creative Service Center, and enticing a bank into area. Must give support to business we attract.
- d) Enhance Arts, Culture, and Historic Character: We have achieved some streetscape improvements such as banners and Chinese Street lights. Storefront facade program has been helpful. Only one loan for seismic upgrade has been used. PDC made a sizable public investment in the Creative Service Center. Marketing information has not been coordinated. No plans yet for fountains on Ankeny. Assistance to new and existing Asian businesses has not happened. Open space studies are taking place in the Waterfront Plan and the NW Broadway plan. We need to come to agreement as a community of the open space question. No progress has been made on an Aural History.
- e) Housing: Housing has been a great boon to the area, but we need to reevaluate the mix.
- f) Crime and Safety: Neighborhood Association has taken on task of ensuring safe neighborhood. We still fall victim to the perception, and in a cyclical nature, the real increase in street crime, especially drug

dealing. Visions needs support physical improvements and lighting that help in this area.

4) Long-Term Actions:

- a) Parking: Parking, the amount and type, needs to be addressed in conjunction with an overview of access and transportation issues. Our goal is a balance of parking, housing, retail, and job growth. New parking facilities will be needed, especially as we increase jogs in the area.
- b) Redevelopment Opportunities: PDC has continued the storefront improvement grant. We need to better advertise this program. Costs of redevelopment far exceed the benefits in the present economic environment, so growth the past year has been slow. The growth area has been nightclubs and retail along 5th and 6th. The term Nightlife Strategy should be changed to a marketing strategy which will include nightlife, but also the arts, retail, and the historical nature of the area.
- c) Public Market: No progress to date. Public Market advocates are looking seriously at the 511 building for the market. This would greatly enhance our connection to the Pearl District and the feasibility of developing the Trailways blocks, one of our major goals. But the costs could be extremely high, and this must be weighed against other priorities for public funding.
- d) Chinatown: The 3rd and 4th Street Plan to be adopted Fall, 2002, will set the framework to accomplish a key piece of our plan—to revitalize and expand the Chinatown component of our neighborhood. The driving force is street improvements, but we need to insure private investment follows.
- e) Housing: Diversity is again a goal. Old Town Lofts is our first experiment in for-sale housing. This type of project should be supported. We call for 500 units of new housing. We have achieved part of this goal.
- f) Marketing Strategy: Need to better market our area.
- g) Street/Public Improvements: We have had success in priority street improvements, but the real success is when Burnside has been reconstructed, and 3rd & 4th plan is accomplished, and we have solid links to the Waterfront. Burnside plan is ongoing. Extension of 6th Avenue past Union Station is passed and will be constructed in late 2002. This will be a vital link to the Pearl District. Pedestrian Crossing is been incorporated in Waterfront Plans. We need to press this issue, as that is long-range plan, and our needs are more immediate. Light Rail was derailed, but is now being reevaluated. Our preferred Irving Diagonal Alignment might conflict with the plans to relocate the Blanchet House.
- h) Public Right of Way: This is being addressed in the Burnside Plan.
- i) Public Safety: Public Restrooms have not been secured. This is a major priority we must revisit. The issues of safety, maintenance, and

funding must be addressed. Public Safety is an ongoing issue that the Neighborhood Association is taking the lead.

- j) Coordination: There has been quite a lot of coordination among the various plans being developed (Burnside Plan, 3rd & 4th, Waterfront, NW Broadway), but we must insure this coordination. The Visions Committee is charged with oversight of implementation of the Development Plan. Since the Vision Committee is outside the normal neighborhood formats, this tends to create more meetings and some confusion as to the roles of Vision vis-à-vis the Neighborhood Association and other groups. This issue is addressed in the beginning of this report.
 - k) Barriers and Edges: Barriers and Edges are being addressed in the various plans. The bridge at The Yards at Union Station has helped access over the train tracks.
 - l) Historical Arts and Cultural Character: Design Guidelines insuring historic preservation is a goal. Economics must play a factor. Vision Committee needs to be part of the solution in finding incentives for property owners to redevelop their holdings that preserve the unique characteristics of the area. The Community Center is an important goal, but we have no consensus as to what it means. We need a broader discussion concerning public art in the community.
 - m) Open Space Opportunities: Access to existing open spaces, i.e. Waterfront Park and the Park Blocks, is perhaps more important than creating new open spaces. Work on an open space plan should be a priority of both the Vision Committee and the Neighborhood Association, and is presently being addressed by a subcommittee. We have not moved on a pedestrian plaza at Third & Ankeny.
 - n) Classical Chinese Garden: Limited upgrading of surrounding properties as taken place. No hotel is being contemplated. The Asian Cultural Center is being accomplished. 3rd & 4th Plan will speed the development of properties.
- 5) Investment Strategies: Included is an update of the chart on page 13 that shows both our goal of investment and actual investment. Significant public and private dollars have been invested in the area. Public funding in the future has challenges, as the recent court challenge to TIF dollars has decreased some funding. The expiration of our Urban Renewal District is in three years. We must be proactive in advocating for public funding for our projects, and compare our goals to the funding priorities of public agencies. From 1999 through 2003, the PDC will have invested \$42,000,000 in our area (see Addendum B). Much of this was in form of low interest loans. But it has been a significant amount, and most has gone to further our goals. Private investment is harder to track. The major projects which included some or all private funding are: McDonald Residence, 5th Avenue Place, 5th Avenue Court Apartments, Union Station Housing, Chinese Classical Garden, Old Town Lofts, Creative

Service Center, the Lush Building, and Pacific House. Many other buildings were improved substantially, including many along the transit mall. All new projects required some type of public funding—still a necessity as building costs and seismic upgrades are more than our market will economically bear. The estimate of private funding for the above and other projects is estimated to be \$75,000,000.

2. Goals of the Vision Committee, and its relationship to the Neighborhood Association:

- a) The committee believes that the Vision Committee has a clear mission in assuring that the goals of the Economic Development plan the Vision Plan are accomplished, that the plans be updated as necessary, and that the Vision Committee can best insure all facets of the community are at the table.
- b) Having both a Vision Committee and a Neighborhood Association is sometimes confusing, especially to our public partners. Yet the rationale of having both groups comes out of our collective histories and a realization of the abilities and perspectives of each group.
- c) Both the Vision Committee and the Neighborhood Association need to coordinate their activities so that we are not being wasteful in our resources. This could mean common meetings on issues, rather than multiple meetings, and an exchange of ideas and responsibilities. This most directly is played out at the Land Use Committee.
- d) The litmus test is that the Vision Committee be made up of many Neighborhood Association members as well as other facets of the community. At present, a large part of Vision is made up of Neighborhood Association members. Our need is to be sure other members of the community feel free to come to the table.

3. Makeup and role of the Joint Land Use Committee:

Land Use decisions of the neighborhood have tended to be a lightning rod or disagreement as to our goals and priorities. Both the Vision Committee and the Neighborhood Association have a vested interest in making sure this body functions well. We have a unique situation in that we have both bodies who need to trust each other and work with each other to further our common goals.

The makeup and charge of various coalitions (Nwana, NECON, SNI) and neighborhood associations (Hollywood, Lloyd District, Goose Hollow, Pearl) were looked at as we prepared our recommendations. We propose the following:

- a) The Land Use Committee be made up of six members, three from the Neighborhood Association, and three from the Vision Committee.
- b) The participants be selected based on their knowledge of land use, and their dedication to the neighborhood.
- c) This committee selects their own chair.

- d) In the event there is not sufficient time for broader neighborhood input, the Committee has executive authority to represent both the Neighborhood Association and the Vision Committee.
- e) The Land Use Committee is to concern itself with land use issues, and not broader gentrification and balance issues, which must be addressed by the Neighborhood Association and the Vision Committee at large.
- f) The Land Use Committee shall meet once a month as needed.
- g) Committee meetings are open to all, but only those appointed members will vote on issues.
- h) This policy will be evaluated after a one year period by the Neighborhood Association and the Vision Committee.

4. Ensure that the Vision Committee represents all facets of the Community:

At present, the makeup of those that participate (all meetings are open and the only elected person is the chair) includes most of the facets of the community: Asian, social service, developers, property owners, Neighborhood Association members, and other non-profits. Often we do not have as strong a voice from the Asian community and the night-life venue as we should. We recommend that we do the following:

- a) Identify and recruit members from the community that are not at the table. This should be a joint Vision/Neighborhood Association project.
- b) Communication of what the committee is doing needs to be improved. In the Vision Plan review we say this as a major weakness. A communication committee should be set up to coordinate this effort. The Neighborhood Association is already working on a better communication link to the community.
- c) The Vision Plan and Development plan should be reviewed with the community every other year, to insure we have consensus on what we are doing.

5. Gentrification, Balance, and Development verses Historic Preservation:

During the development of the vision Plan and the Development Plan, we paid homage to the works gentrification—something we did not want—and balance—something we wanted—without really defining what they were or how w would achieve them. We are a neighborhood of diversity. We all agreed we wanted to keep and encourage that diversity. But with diversity comes the potential for conflict of one use over another. Examples would be a vibrant nightlife vs. housing; or property development vs. the ability for non-profits to be able to afford to exist and expand. This potential tension or conflict is not easily dispelled. So how do we address it? The committee recommends that we look at these issues from a holistic approach. What is the outcome that we desire, and how do we get there. Our stated goad is to be “a vibrant, 24 hour mixed use, urban neighborhood, rooted in a rich historical past.” (pg. 2, Development Plan) We should describe the outcome we want: a mixture of daytime, night, and weekend activities which ply upon our strengths—

Saturday Market, Chinese Garden, historic buildings, Chinatown, restaurants, clubs, a mix of housing, and well managed social service providers.

Therefore, our balance is not prescriptive in keeping activities out. Rather, it is prescriptive in demanding that our development plan provide the opportunity for those activities to flourish. It is about what incentives we can provide to be more inclusive. Our activities should be aimed in fulfilling our vision, and encouraging all parts of our community to share in our common goal through development of their own goals.

The economic reality is that wholesale gentrification has not taken place in Old Town/Chinatown. But we must be specific in defining what we want our neighborhood to look like. We must put in place a process that encourages the development we desire. The role of Vision is to decide how best use our limited resources. A primary role is in the determination of the use of public (mainly PDC) funding, and how that funding can entice private investment. We must ensure that all facets of the community participate in the allocation of these limited resources.

We are a very rich neighborhood in history and historic buildings. We must strive to save and enrich these building. We must do this in a proactive way—incentives to restore and reinvigorate the many buildings that are either vacant or underutilized. We need to work with the city, property owners, and with historic preservationists to make sure our treasures do not simple deteriorate because they are not economically viable. Difficult choices need to be made, for in some cases properties are already beyond being economically viable. We need to get our community together to determine how we address such issues. Preservation versus economic growth is another “balance” issue that we must address by agreeing upon what we want, and then deciding how we get there.