

# Downtown Oakland Specific Plan Draft Zoning Amendments

## Chinatown Meeting: October 27, 2022

### Summary

#### Attendees

##### Staff

- Ed Manasse, Planning & Building
- Interpreter, City of Oakland
- Joanna Winter, Planning
- Khalilha Haynes, Planning
- Laura Kaminski, Planning
- Neil Gray, Planning
- Stephanie Skelton, Planning

##### Registrants/Attendees

- Alyce Barner
- Anderson Gin
- Angel Tsay
- Angelins Cheng
- Carl Chan, Chinatown Chamber of Commerce
- Carol Liao
- Chris Bailey
- Claudia Skelton

- Daniel Tischler
- Elain Peng
- Feelmore Joiner
- Gabriella Folino
- Garrick Huey
- Gilbert Gong
- Gravity Meiers
- James Cai
- Janie Chen
- Jessica Chen, Chinatown Chamber of Commerce
- Joe Ma
- Josephine Hul
- Joshua Simon
- Kimberly Gasaway
- Kirby Ung
- Michael Chang
- Mike Lok
- Tony Trinh, Oakland Chinatown Improvement Council

#### Presentation

This was a hybrid meeting coordinated with the Oakland Chinatown Improvement Council and Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, held at Oakland Asian Cultural Center. Staff and some attendees attended in person (wearing masks to comply with covid precautions), and other attendees were broadcast on a screen via Zoom. The presentation and some discussion was interpreted in Cantonese.

Staff presented an overview of the Draft Zoning Amendments and then focused on how the Zoning Amendments relate to Chinatown. These amendments apply to the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan (DOSP) area, which does not include Chinatown because Chinatown developed its own plan immediately prior, the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan. However, they will impact Chinatown due to their proximity,

and can also be considered a pilot that could be applied to Chinatown in the next few years through the General Plan Update process that will update the Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE) and corresponding zoning.

Amendments include changes to allowed land use activities, design regulations, and several special districts. The special districts include a Lake Merritt Channel combining zone to allow development along the channel while protecting its natural resources. They also include a Interstate Freeway combining zone to improve pedestrian under-crossings, including between Chinatown and the Jack London District. The amendments also include a Zoning Incentive Program that allows developers additional height, residential density and commercial floor area in return for community benefits. The community benefit options include affordable housing, below market-rate commercial space, culturally-relevant streetscape improvements and public restrooms. A program such as this was originally raised as a suggestion during the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan process and could be applied to Chinatown as well (potentially with other benefits) through the General Plan Update process.

## Discussion

### Community Engagement

- 3:00 would be a better time for an in-person meeting; since the pandemic people don't like to be out in Chinatown after dark; snacks will also be helpful
- Staff can work with the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce to reach additional community members; this may relate to the General Plan Update, which is citywide, including Chinatown, and has done some outreach in Chinatown already
- Need more opportunities to listen to the residents in Chinatown, would like to have more planning meetings; please bring planning staff back to discuss the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan, including what has worked, and what needs improvement/changes (Deputy Director of Planning Ed Manasse was involved in that process)
- Plan with Chinatown not for Chinatown.
- Interpretation is critical: work with interpreters who have local knowledge of Chinatown (including its specific areas and organizations) as well as relevant planning terminology

### Draft Zoning Amendments

- Is there opportunity to refine the ZIP? Do the benefits reflect the everything that the community would like to achieve?
  - *Yes, there is opportunity to refine the ZIP. However, the benefits included in the draft program were those that consistently rose to the top. As we are discussing expansion as part of the General Plan/LUTE zoning update, we could discuss whether there are different benefits that would best apply to Chinatown.*
- Need to promote family-sized (more bedrooms) units with developers to keep more families in Downtown/Chinatown. Consider adding this as a benefit to the ZIP.
- Concerns about building heights

- Concerns about developing entertainment next to senior housing in Chinatown; disruptive to residents

#### Other Issues to Address

- Need to address mental health and homelessness underneath the freeways
- Chinatown has done a lot of traffic studies. They started the first scramble system in Oakland Chinatown on 8<sup>th</sup> and Webster. As a result, recommended 3 additional scramble systems: 9<sup>th</sup> and Webster, 8<sup>th</sup> and Franklin, 9<sup>th</sup> and Franklin. Currently conducting traffic studies.
- The business environment is changing within Chinatown. Businesses are closing sooner.
- Make sure this plan will solve issues and problems, not create more problems. With long term planning processes, we must address residents' concerns, we should set aside discussion to see how we can carry issues forward to work with other planning.
  - *The DOSP is proposing an ongoing implementation committee with community members involved, possibly for the General Plan as well.*
- Carl would like to bring Ed back, would like the community to bring people we know to the next meeting. Would like the city to work with us, and bring snacks and have an earlier meeting, would be a better turn out. Plan together.

#### Chat

00:24:03 Khalilha Haynes: Got it, thank you

00:57:08 Khalilha Haynes: Here is the website with link to survey:

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/downtown-oakland-specific-plan-zoning-amendments-downtown-plan>

01:00:14 Elaine Peng: Chinese [https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/TC\\_2022-04-28-Zoning-Outreach-Summary-Memo-fmt.pdf](https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/TC_2022-04-28-Zoning-Outreach-Summary-Memo-fmt.pdf)

01:13:01 Khalilha Haynes: Sorry, sent to wrong participant!

01:13:20 Khalilha Haynes: Mike, your comment had cut out a bit

01:13:29 Anderson Gin: I can't hear their comments

01:13:36 Mike Lok (he/him): Joe Ma is muted

01:13:57 Khalilha Haynes: Do you hear Tony speaking Anderson?

01:14:18 Anderson Gin: yes, it's ok now

01:18:06 Khalilha Haynes: Both of them? Or just the translator?

01:18:52 Khalilha Haynes: Can everyone here the host and translator?

01:18:58 Joshua Simon: This is Josh Simon - I can not hear either.

01:19:20 Elaine Peng: Now OK

01:19:54 Elaine Peng: Thank you.

01:23:02 Khalilha Haynes: Thank you all for bearing with us

01:24:23 Elaine Peng: Thank you so much Khaliha!

01:25:02 Kirby Ung: 🙌 all part of the process in these times

01:37:04 Khalilha Haynes: Thanks everyone good night