


Five Goals of Chinatown



**1 Developing Chinatown
as a Cultural Destination**
將中國城發展成為一個文化中心



**2 Creating a Physical
Chinatown Experience**
創造一個物質與感官上的中國城



3 Promoting Chinatown Businesses
促進中國城的商業發展



4 Living in Chinatown
生活在中國城



5 Working Together
團結協作

Summary Of Goals And Actions

Developing Chinatown as a Cultural Destination	Creating a Physical Chinatown Experience
Culture is the Key to Strengthening Chinatown	Enhancing the Way Chinatown Looks and Feels
<p>Key Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Develop an Asian street market festival 1.2 Work with Cultural Tourism DC to develop a year-long calendar of programmed Asian-themed events 1.3 Begin development of an Asia Center <p>Additional Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4 Develop a marketing effort for Chinatown that promotes it as a cultural place for everybody 1.5 Increase Chinatown's online presence by creating a website or other social networking accounts to help reach out to a wider audience 1.6 Develop a rotating storefront space (and other temporary event space) for Asian embassies to showcase cultural events and programming in Chinatown 1.7 Establish a Chinatown Artist in Residency Program 1.8 Program year- around events for Chinatown Park 1.9 Work with neighboring institutions such as the Goethe Institute and the American Museum of Art to host Asian events and programs 1.10 Establish an Asian culinary school 	<p>Key Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Promote creative signage and storefront design 2.2 Create a public realm master plan for Chinatown <p>Additional Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3 Create a framework for business and way-finding signs in Chinatown that further activate the streetscape 2.4 Utilize vacant storefronts and empty lots for art displays or other temporary exhibits 2.5 Consolidate service vehicle access and trash storage/ removal so that sidewalks are available for pedestrian use, and screen trash and loading areas from public view 2.6 Work with property owners and the Downtown BID coordinate efforts to ensure proper street & alley maintenance & cleaning 2.7 Update the Chinatown design guidelines and strengthen the Chinatown design review process 2.8 Install additional Chinese themed streetscape elements and other decorative amenities. 2.9 Revise historic designation to reflect the historic significance of the Chinese American settlement in the 1930s to present

Promoting Chinatown Businesses	Living In Chinatown	Working Together
Creating A Diverse and Successful Asian Business District	Supporting Chinatown's Residents	Cultivating Strong, Unifying Leaders and Organizations for Chinatown Residents and Businesses
<p>Key Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vending Development Zone 2. Designate Chinatown as a Special Cultural District <p>Additional Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3 Attract signature Asian themed eating establishments to Chinatown 3.4 Develop a space or storefront that can house many small shops or "micro retail space" for small Asian businesses to allow them develop and grow 3.5 Strategically redevelop and package second floor spaces of Chinatown buildings to lease to Asian cultural professionals, practitioners and specialty goods and service providers 3.6 Develop a small retail space to act as an incubator or showcase for unique international Asian goods and retailers 3.7 Organize a "moving feast" event to promote Asian American cuisine and Chinatown restaurants 3.8 Develop collective and coordinated marketing support for small Chinatown merchants 3.9 Organize a task force that will be in charge of bringing in Asian investments and retailers 3.10 Partner with Washington DC Economic Partnership to add a neighborhood profile for Chinatown which can be used for marketing to attract new Asian businesses 	<p>Key Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Transform Chinatown Park into a great neighborhood park 4.2 Locate a space for a Chinese charter school or satellite campus in Chinatown <p>Additional Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.3 Work with the city and property owners to install lighting on buildings and in alleyways 4.4 Create safer bus loading areas in Chinatown 4.5 Work with retail/pharmacy chains (e.g., CVS) about having Chinese bilingual staff or doctors during regular business hours 4.6 Work with DC government agencies to provide more interpretation services for critical services 4.7 Work with intercity Chinatown bus companies to provide regular free transportation to suburban Asian grocery stores for the seniors 4.8 Seek investors with national and international resources to create cultural specific retirement care facility 4.9 Explore affordability incentives for families to live in Chinatown 4.10 Work with the Downtown BID and the Downtown Neighborhood Association to beautify the streets through planted tree/flower boxes, lamp posts, and swept streets 	<p>Key Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Establish a quarterly Chinatown Community Forum to track the progress of the CCDS 5.2 Developing a Chinatown business council or Chinatown merchant's association <p>Additional Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.3 Locate and develop a more visible community activity space 5.4 Work together to reach out to local and national affordable housing advocacy groups and build coalition to support downtown affordable family housing opportunities 5.5 Work with regional and suburban Asian associations to make DC Chinatown a regional destination and channel more cultural performances and events to Downtown DC 5.6 Create a reciprocal/mutual volunteer program between local schools (inc. public, charter, private, universities, and colleges) and the Chinatown community 5.7 Attend national conferences to build relationships with national community organizations and share resources

1

將中國城發展成為一個文化中心

DEVELOP CHINATOWN AS A CULTURAL DESTINATION

Promote Chinatown DC as THE Place to Experience Chinese American and Asian Culture in the Washington Region

Establishing DC's Chinatown as the principal destination in the metropolitan area for experiencing Chinese American and contemporary Asian culture is the goal shared by all those involved. Early each winter Chinatown transforms into a pedestrian-only place of culture and celebration as visitors flood the streets to watch the Chinese New Year's Parade unfold in Chinatown, marking the most important day of the year and drawing visitors from the entire region. The Chinese New Year celebration illustrates the potential for the success of additional events throughout the year, perhaps according to a carefully programmed calendar of recurring annual events. As the region's only outdoor public space for holding events and festivals in an Asian ethnic neighborhood, Chinatown DC has the potential to capture this energy and excitement with additional celebrations,

events, and programs, under and around the dramatic Friendship Archway.

Street markets, public performances, educational demonstrations, films, and festivals offer visitors and residents a perennial opportunity to become engaged in Chinatown's offerings and explore the deeper meaning and spirit of the Asian culture. Expanding Collaborations with organizations such as the Downtown Events Corporation, the Penn Quarter Neighborhood Association, DC Cultural Tourism and the Goethe Institute could add a Chinese cultural dimension to Arts on Foot, Cherry Blossom Festival, Taste of DC, and DC Film Fest as a starting point for adding Asian cultural events to the annual calendar of Center City activities.

Authentic Asian businesses also contribute to Chinatown's cultural identity. Traditional Chinese healing arts, therapies, and medicinal practices, specialty Asian foods, contemporary products from the world's Asian cultures,



Chinese New Year Parade, DC Chinatown, 1997



Dana Tai Soon Burgess & Co., Washington DC

Chinese art galleries, and traditional stores and restaurants can combine to create an economic cluster that comprises cultural identity and provides an enriched array of services and attractions to the residents of downtown and the District and their visitors. This type of cluster offers an experience and wealth of products that currently cannot be found anywhere in the city and has the most potential at this location.

Opportunities exist for Asian embassies and organizations with an existing presence in DC to enlarge the window into the exciting world of Asian energy and spirit, culture and experience with temporary exhibitions, contemporary product displays, and cultural events in Chinatown. These embassies and missions of the Asian countries and other international partners are interested in Chinatown DC's potential as a bridge to and a locus for contemporary Asian culture, design expression, and experience.

While the actual streets of Chinatown provide a setting for cultural events, so do the neighboring cultural institutions. Situated adjacent to the Verizon Center; the Harmon Center for the Arts and Shakespeare Theatre Company; the National Portrait Gallery; the Smithsonian American Museum of Art and spectacular Kogod Courtyard; the Historical Society of Washington DC; and Pepco's Edison Place Gallery; provide venues and partnership opportunities in programming cultural events, exhibits, and performances. Chinatown currently lacks an auditorium space, making these partnerships necessary in order to hold Asian cultural events to achieve the dynamic, current, relevant, as well as traditional Chinatown envisioned in this strategy.



Asia Fiesta, Washington DC. Photo Credit: Asia Heritage

Key Actions

- 1.1 Develop an Asian street market festival
- 1.2 Work with Cultural Tourism DC to develop a year-long calendar of programmed Asian-themed events
- 1.3 Begin development of an Asia Center

Additional Actions

- 1.4 Develop a marketing effort for Chinatown that promotes it as a cultural place for everybody
- 1.5 Increase Chinatown's online presence by creating a website or other social networking accounts to help reach out to a wider audience
- 1.6 Develop a rotating storefront space (and other temporary event space) for Asian embassies to showcase cultural events and programming in Chinatown
- 1.7 Establish a Chinatown Artist in Residency Program
- 1.8 Program year-around events for Chinatown Park
- 1.9 Work with neighboring institutions such as the Goethe Institute and the American Museum of Art to host Asian events and programs
- 1.10 Establish an Asian culinary school



Photo credit: Asian Seniors Center

KEY ACTION #1: Develop an Asian street market

What is it?

An Asian Street Market would be a regular weekly or monthly event in Chinatown that comprised a collection craft or food vendors displaying Asian goods and produce in temporary stalls. Ideally, a widened sidewalk or a temporarily closed highly visible street such as I or H Street would host the street market. The street market would require only a small amount of infrastructure or capital to start, and vendor fees, sponsorships, and grants would be fund ongoing costs

Having a regular Asian street market in Chinatown would act as a major building block for solving two major needs in Chinatown: resident's need for affordable Asian produce and goods, and a need for more events and festivals that attract new visitors. Chinatown area residents currently lack access to an Asian grocer and many travel to the suburbs to shop for basic goods and services, this has the effect of reducing their spending in the Chinatown area to around 20% of their total spending on basic shopper's goods. While a street market selling Asian produce would not replicate a grocery store, it would begin to provide local access to these goods, and show market demand for them to potential retailers.

A street market would also be a draw for visitors and spectators who come to look at the array of exotic produce and shop for crafts and specialty items. A Chinatown Asian Street Market would be a unique draw for local DC residents, regional residents, and Asian Americans. Currently festivals in Chinatown often feature vending booths of Asian crafts, but there is no regular Asian street market in DC Chinatown or in the region as a whole.

A successful market will increase the public perception of activity in Chinatown and can serve as a catalyst for many future activities. By increasing the exposure of Chinatown, a street market will create new demand for Asian businesses and services. Businesses that are part of the street market can also grow and potentially move into more permanent storefront space. Developing, operating, and promoting the street market will build the organization capacity and strength to carry out larger events and festivals such as a night market or a lantern festival.

Why It's Important

- Creates a unique event which could draw regional residents to shop and dine in DC Chinatown
- Provides opportunities for new Asian small businesses to grow and develop innovative product lines
- Provides an option for fresh Asian groceries for residents of Chinatown, downtown workers and residents, and the entire District

How to make it happen

Form of an exploratory committee of Chinatown stakeholders to investigate and develop a business plan for the street market. This committee would be responsible for carrying out the following items:

- Form partnerships with groups like the Penn Quarter Neighborhood Association which have expertise in organizing and managing street markets
- Designating individuals to manage event logistics, vendor contracting, government permits, and other key items
- Securing “seed” funding from local businesses, organizations, and sponsorships



Farmer's Market, Boston MA

SUNDAY APRIL 12TH

Racquetball Tournament
12 noon - 3:00PM, Field House
Sponsored by Pakistan Student Association (PSA)

TUESDAY APRIL 14TH

Film - Gate of Heavenly Peace
7:00PM, Johnson Center - Cinema
Award winning and critically acclaimed documentary on the 1989 Tiananmen protests in China
Directed by Carmi Minton, GMU Robinson Professor

THURSDAY APRIL 16TH

APA Student Game Room Social
6:00PM - 9:00PM, SUB 1 Game Room
It's Game Room Night! Take time out from your studies and educational APA Heritage Month events to relax, meet new people, and have fun.
Sponsored by the Asian Pacific American Coalition (APAC)

Japanese Play - "The Magic Fan (Mahou No Ogi)"
6:30PM, Johnson Center - Dewberry Hall
Sponsored by Dr. Sufumi So, Department of Modern and Classical Languages

FRIDAY APRIL 17TH

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Lunch
11:00AM - 2:30PM, Southside Dining Hall
(Mason Money or Meal Plan)
Sponsored by Mason Dining Services

National Acrobats of China
8:00PM, Concert Hall
Executing daring feats with tables, chairs, flags, and plates, the performers of the National Acrobats of China demonstrate their amazing flexibility, agility, and extensive training, as audiences gasp, laugh, and often hold their breath. Considered one of the most influential acrobatic troupes in the world, it distinguishes itself with extensive touring and achievements in international competitions. This is a wonderful event for the entire family.

SATURDAY APRIL 18TH

National Acrobats of China
2:00PM & 8:00PM, Concert Hall
Executing daring feats with tables, chairs, flags, and plates, the performers of the National Acrobats of China demonstrate their amazing flexibility, agility, and extensive training, as audiences gasp, laugh, and often hold their breath. Considered one of the most influential acrobatic troupes in the world, it distinguishes itself with extensive touring and achievements in international competitions. This is a wonderful event for the entire family.



Photo credit: George Mason University

KEY ACTION #2: Work with Cultural Tourism DC to develop a year-long Calendar of programmed Asian-themed events

What is it?

Cultural Tourism DC anticipates working with community leaders, District government agencies, and other partners to develop an ambitious year-long program of events that portray Asian culture and promote it to the larger community. Events could occur in Chinatown as well as other locations throughout the District. This will most likely need to be a 3-year approach with largely public funding the first year and decreasing public support the following two years. This program could be clustered under the concept of "Experience Chinatown/Museum LIVE" or some other evocative label that "opens the doors" to Asian culture and the Chinese American experience. There is the potential to engage the missions and embassies though generally they do not have large budgets or large staffs.

Why It's Important

- Anchors the identity of Chinatown DC as the place for Asian culture and business
- Adds an array of exciting events to the Chinatown experience with the potential to increasingly draw local, regional, national and international tourists

- Exploits the synergy between cultural development, economic development, and tourism
- Builds the capacity of the key stakeholders committed to advancing Chinatown DC as a thriving destination district
- Further establishes Chinatown “clearing house” for information on Asian culture and events throughout the District and the region

How to make it happen

1. Cultural Tourism DC will work with the key stakeholders, the Office of Planning and Mayor’s Office on Asian and Pacific Islanders Affairs to prepare a proposal
2. The Mayor’s Office on Asian and Pacific Islanders Affairs and the Office of Planning will organize initial meetings, ensuring that the right partners are at the table
3. The Office of Planning takes the lead in identifying a funding source for the initial year of the program
4. Chinatown stakeholders and community organizations working with Cultural Tourism DC will identify additional funding sources and do fundraising and apply for grants

Timeframe:

Can start Immediately. Kick-off meeting tentatively scheduled for July 9, 2009 but contingent on availability of funding. The unveiling of the calendar and the launch of initial events are planned for mid- late 2010.



Several major cultural institutions with theater, exhibit, performance, and rehearsal space are adjacent to or within a short distance of Chinatown. They offer prime opportunities to collaborate on programming concepts and to share facilities, equipment, marketing and promotion.





House of Sweden, Washington DC



Kogod Courtyard, Smithsonian Institution National Portrait Gallery Museum

KEY ACTION #3: **Begin development of an Asia center**

What is it?

An Asia Center would be an international commercial emporium and cultural institution that provided an exciting place to experience products and culture of contemporary Asia, as well as experience the history of the Chinese American experience. The place could take various forms from a cultural institution in Chinatown to an embassy/foreign delegation partnership located near the National Mall. The center could also be developed in parts and grow into a full institution. The Asia center would be comprised of many elements including the following:

- Community facilities for Chinatown neighborhood gatherings, and activities
- Exhibition and performance space to display Chinese American and Asian arts, history, and culture
- An information center to help orient visitors and tourists
- Retail incubator space to showcase contemporary Asian merchants, products, and services

Why It's Important

- Provides dedicated space for cultural activities and enhance Chinatown's ability to attract and serve both tourists and local residents alike
- Provides a physical historical record of Chinatown and the Chinese American Experience for international, national, and regional visitors
- Provides a novel way to display and sell unique Asian goods with low overhead costs for merchants.

- Creates a destination attraction in Chinatown for visitors and tourists, which could have tremendous spin-off effect

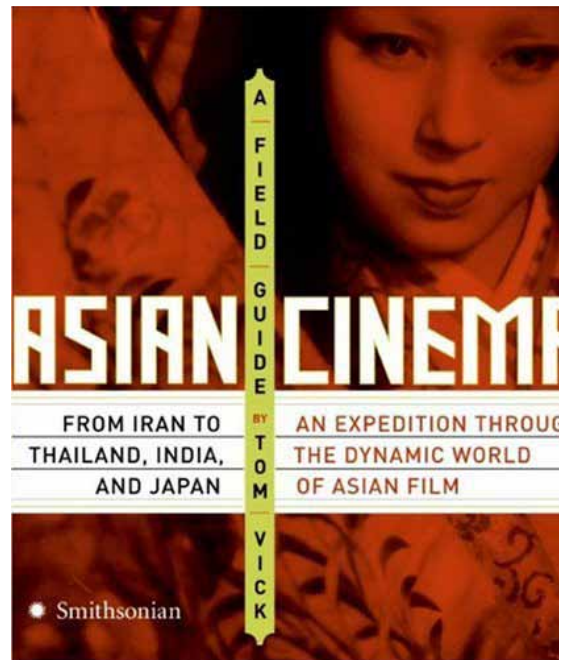
How to make it happen

1. Work with the various embassies and other foreign organizations to create an Asian cultural space in Chinatown
2. Work with developers and property owners to identify potential sites
3. Explore the creation of interior block project on H street by combining the alleys and real lots of properties
4. Develop the capacity of the Community Activity Center into an organization with professional staff to develop the mission, goals, and fundraising efforts
5. Reach out to national Asian groups to raise funds for planning, design, and construction of the building or space
6. Develop relationships with established museums and institutions like the Smithsonian to help with programming and exhibits
7. Work with embassies and other international partners to develop Chinatown's role as a bridge to modern Asian culture and design

Timeframe:

The development of the Asia Center is a long-term project that will happen in a series of steps. Immediately, Chinatown task force members can begin locating space for the Community Activity Center that would act as a stepping-stone to achieving the larger Asia Center. This could happen in the next 2 - 3 years depending on when available space can be found and money fundraised.

Many of the pieces of the Asia Center can also develop separately in smaller storefront spaces before joining in the larger institution. Specifically the “incubox” concept, in the Promoting Business in Chinatown section, can develop into the retail showcase for contemporary Asian goods.



Promote and Publicize Chinatown's Role as the Center of the Asian Cultural Experience in the Washington Region

1.4 - Develop a marketing effort for Chinatown that promotes it as a cultural place for everybody

What is it?

Chinatown has a wealth of cultural activities, programs, and events that can be promoted and celebrated. In addition, it can assume the role of a communication "clearing house" for all Asian Cultural activities in Washington DC and the region. Many of these events have strong followings, while others are less so. One key to building these events and increasing attendance is wider more coordinated promotion and marketing. With concerted strong marketing initiatives Chinatown can tap into the 1.4 million regional residents who live just in and around the District. Chinatown has already begun this effort by creating a map of Chinatown and having a well organized events website. A marketing or promotions campaign expands this effort in a coordinated way by branding the effort, advertising in select media outlets, using large public events to promote Chinatown culture, and using other direct and online marketing techniques. A public relations firm would typically be hired or volunteer its time to manage and design a marketing campaign.

Why it's important

- Promotion, marketing and ongoing communication increases attendance and participation in Chinatown cultural events.
- Increased attendance and visitors establishes Chinatown as a regional anchor for cultural programming and experiences.

How to make it happen

1. Seek advice from other local groups such as Penn Quarter Neighborhood Association, Cultural Tourism DC, and Destination DC on how to develop and coordinate an ongoing communications and marketing program.
2. Hire a public relations firm to design a marketing plan or seek out donation of services from individuals with public relations experience.
3. Implement marketing plan through purchasing ads in key media sources, online marketing, and other activities.
4. More fully utilize the video monitors at Gallery Place to communicate events and activities in Chinatown.

1.5 - Increase Chinatown's online presence by creating a website or other social networking accounts to help reach out to a wider audience

What is it?

Currently many Chinatown groups have websites, but there is no website for Chinatown itself. A DC Chinatown website with downloadable or interactive maps and brochures, links to Chinatown organizations, and a constantly-maintained cultural events calendar will provide an efficient, up to date and inexpensive way to communicate Chinatown's offerings to a wide audience. It also allows tourists and visitors to explore Chinatown and plan a visit before arriving in Washington. Establishing a virtual presence on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace will allow younger generations to show their support for Chinatown and its organizations. Chinatown Cultural Community Center's website and neighborhood map serve as an excellent first step towards realizing this action.

Why it's important

- A Chinatown web site will expand interest and knowledge of Chinatown by increasing awareness of its cultural offerings.
- Its an efficient way to communicate what's going on in Chinatown to a wide and diverse audience

How to make it happen

1. Recruit a group of volunteers to establish the Chinatown website, and monitor a DC Chinatown presence on Facebook, Twitter, etc.
2. Raise funds for hardware and web-hosting costs
3. Launch a DC Chinatown website and teach community leaders how to maintain it
4. Develop maps and brochures featuring cultural attractions and events in Chinatown that can be accessed from the website

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

Enhance Chinatown as a Destination for International Cultural Offerings and Programs

1.6 - Develop a rotating storefront space (and other temporary event space) for Asian embassies to showcase cultural events and programming in Chinatown

What is it?

Most Asian embassies have developed programming to support cultural exchange and awareness of their countries. But most of them currently provide little programming outside their embassies for cost and logistic reasons. A few countries have begun to expand this programming into larger facilities that have museum quality experiences, specialized shopping venues, along with unique cafes and restaurants. As a first step to promoting the development of facilities like these in Chinatown, Chinatown groups could work to provide space in Chinatown to display or host programming provided by Asian embassies. This could be organized in a single storefront which would rotate its contents on a periodic basis. A first step before providing a storefront space could be creating temporary exhibit space at events and festivals for embassies to program.

Why it's important

- This action is the first step to developing a permanent cultural facility like the Asia Center (Key Action 1.3) which would create a significant cultural and tourist attraction for Chinatown
- Provides Chinatown with unique international experiences and events which draw in new visitors such as international tourists

How to make it happen

1. Begin by providing free space at Chinatown events for Asian embassies to display programming. Work with Cultural Tourism DC to reach out to embassies and plan events
2. Work with local property owners to locate a storefront space and begin fundraising or grant writing
3. Work with Cultural Tourism DC to program storefront space with Asian embassies events and exhibits

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

Commemorate the Asian American Experience through Programming and the Creative Arts

1.7 - Establish a Chinatown artist in residency program

What is it?

An artist in residency program sponsors an artist to live in a community for 1 or 2 years and produce artwork. They are usually provided housing and a yearly stipend to support themselves. Often the artist sells their artwork in local galleries, and is required to donate a number of pieces to the community to help develop a museum facility. Artist in Residency programs have been very successful in a number communities at creating spinoff economic development and nurturing successful artistic scenes complete with galleries and museums. For example, DC government's Poet in Residence, Dolores Kendrick worked with Washington Metropolitan Area Authority to place student poetry on public buses. A Chinatown Artist Residency Program would support an Asian or Chinese American artist who would produce artwork reflecting on Chinatown and the Chinese American experience or contemporary Asian culture.

Why it's important

- Commemorate the Chinese American experience
- An artist in residency program is an inexpensive way to develop unique cultural production in Chinatown
- Helps create a "buzz" which could support other types of cultural economic development
- It is a good incubator for developing galleries and museums with the right supporting actions

How to make it happen

1. Begin by researching other artist in residency programs to see what works and what doesn't
2. Locate space and secure funding through grants or donations
3. Market and promote program to Master of Fine Arts Programs

1.8 - Program year- around events for Chinatown Park

What is it?

Outdoor events and activities are inexpensive ways to bring people to Chinatown and provide innovative cultural offerings. Such events can include craft markets, outdoor film series, musical performances, and exercise groups. These events can both help support Chinatown businesses by bringing more patrons that are interested in Asian food, products, and services, but also help build larger cultural programming in Chinatown like museums and galleries. Closing streets in Chinatown is not practical for frequent activities, but Chinatown Park can be utilized almost immediately with the proper permits. Additionally, the Park is close to being funded for improvements which will make it even more attractive for more gatherings and events.

Why it's important

- An inexpensive and effective means a creating events which draw people to Chinatown and help Chinatown businesses
- Will increase the safety of Chinatown by brining active uses to a currently under used space
- Programming and bringing users to the park will also help in the effort to develop a more Chinese themed design for the Park

How to make it happen

1. Begin holding regular outdoor Tai Chi exercise sessions in the Park weekly in addition to the ones held thrice a week at the Chinatown Cultural Community Center
2. Develop an initial event such as a film series or craft market
3. Work with the National Park Service to obtain permits for culture events and activities

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

Develop Temporary and Permanent Facilities to Host Performances, Museums, Art & Other Cultural Offerings

1.9 - Work with neighboring institutions such as the Goethe Institute and the American Museum of Art to host Asian events and programs

What is it?

Washington DC is well known for its access to prominent museums and rich cultural offerings which draw over 15 million domestic and 1.2 million international tourists throughout the year. DC Chinatown would greatly benefit from these resources especially with its location (i.e., walking distance to the National Portrait Gallery and the Goethe Institute). Forming partnerships with these institutions allows community groups to organize at a larger scale and reach a broader audience, promoting Chinatown and Asian programs like Asian film festivals; lunar New Year celebrations and others Asian American focused events.

Why it's important

- Forming stronger partnerships with other institutions creates additional resources (volunteers, funding and etc)
- Organizations can host/organize large scale event with increased space from institution thus reaching a broader audience.
- Large scale events increase the visibility of Chinatown.

How to make it happen

1. Initiate contacts with neighboring institutions and find out how Chinatown can partner on some of their existing programs and brainstorm with them for new program ideas.
2. Establish an annual joint program (e.g., APA Film Festival or Lunar New Year Celebration)

1.10 - Establish an Asian culinary school

What is it?

An Asian culinary school in Chinatown will encourage a culture of innovative Asian cuisine in Chinatown. It will establish Chinatown as the regional authority on Asian gastronomy. Culinary programming has the potential to support and engage Chinatown restaurants, and it will provide a regional (and perhaps national) draw to DC Chinatown for both serious culinary students and those wishing to pursue recreational culinary instruction. Programming can begin in the short term by partnering with existing culinary schools like Zola.

Why it's important

- Gives Chinatown unique regional offering by drawing variety of talented culinary students and enthusiasts
- Supports the establishment higher quality restaurants and retail in Chinatown by creating competition for more innovation

How to make it happen

1. Create a consortium of Chinatown restaurants and establish a cooking class series held in their kitchens to establish culinary instruction in Chinatown Create a coalition of Chinatown restaurants to organize, plan and fundraise
2. Conduct a study to determine programming needs, space requirements and cost for a culinary institute in Chinatown
3. Solicit the assistance of celebrity chefs, such as Martin Yan of San Francisco, Ming Tsai of Boston, and visiting chefs of Asian embassies, to support, sponsor, and or provide demonstration events that will draw attention to, and investment towards, a culinary school and Chinatown.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

2

CREATING A PHYSICAL CHINATOWN EXPERIENCE

創造一個中國城物質與感官上

Develop the Buildings and Public Spaces of Chinatown as the LIVE Stage of Chinese American Culture

Throughout this planning effort, participants expressed the desire that DC Chinatown look and feel more like a Chinatown, with bustling streets filled with residents, visitors, shoppers and vendors. Interesting experiences unfolding on Chinatown's streets, warm cooking smells, the sounds of life, colorful signage, inviting storefronts, unique buildings and varied textures – all these reflect traditional and contemporary Chinese American culture and contribute to the Chinatown street experience, forming the heart of Chinese and Asian culture in Washington.

Currently, Chinatown's public spaces—its streets, sidewalks and open spaces—do not fully support the cultural identity, desired activity and commercial exchange of the envisioned Chinatown DC. Few places exist for street entertainment, vending carts, cafes, and in some places, there is not even comfortable sidewalk space

for couples walking. Developing an inviting streetscape includes addressing lighting, paving material and pattern, street furniture, and even widening sidewalks in some areas of Chinatown in order to accommodate a variety of activities -- walking, sitting, outdoor dining, sidewalk selling, and street performance. Thoughtful designs for Chinatown's lighting, sidewalk furniture, paving materials and signage, and a corresponding investment in the construction and ongoing maintenance requires coordination between property owners, business owners, the Downtown BID, and various District government agencies.

Chinatown's architecture, storefronts, window displays, signs, façade lighting, and other design elements play an important role in creating the Chinatown street experience, yet we miss this opportunity for creativity. Chinatown DC gains much of its Chinese character through its signage --- a vibrant backdrop of layer upon layer of active and colorful, vertically oriented signage, traditionally associated with Chinese



commercial areas in the United States and throughout the world. Here too opportunities exist for a richer and more varied visual experience.

Chinatown Design Review, mandated through District Government Regulations, currently promotes and encourages Chinese character in building design and signage, based on the Chinatown Design Guidelines. This process, sometimes misunderstood and ignored by property and business owners, requires adequate enforcement mechanisms and permitting processes within District government agencies to advance the visual qualities of Chinatown that we see today and to encourage greater creativity and variety. Revised guidelines would encourage fresh, contemporary Chinese design as well as traditional design. Despite some successes, improving the visual and physical experience gets very complicated when it means meeting the design requirements of three different processes: Chinatown Regulations, the Downtown Historic District, and Gallery Place Signage. Streamlining and coordination, increased communication with property and business owners, and the development of procedures for enforcement, have the potential to produce more creative and inviting architecture, design, signage and displays.

Chinatown can become a place of even greater excitement and curiosity, as well as a forum for the exchange of cultural knowledge and experience. Though some sensations are intangible, we can reinforce them by working to improve the physical aspects of the Chinatown. Chinatown business owners expressing themselves freely and authentically in Chinese calligraphy and expanding their operations with sidewalk vending or seating, dynamic storefronts, and commercial displays that employ color and a variety of Chinese inspired designs, are all key to strengthening the Chinatown street experience.



Key Actions

- 2.1 Promote creative signage and storefront design
- 2.2 Create a public realm master plan for Chinatown

Additional Actions

- 2.3 Create a framework for business and way-finding signs in Chinatown that further activate the streetscape
- 2.4 Utilize vacant storefronts and empty lots for art displays or other temporary exhibits
- 2.5 Consolidate service vehicle access and trash storage/removal so that sidewalks are available for pedestrian use, and screen trash and loading areas from public view
- 2.6 Work with property owners and the Downtown BID coordinate efforts to ensure proper street & alley maintenance & cleaning
- 2.7 Update the Chinatown design guidelines and strengthen the Chinatown design review process
- 2.8 Install additional Chinese themed streetscape elements and other decorative amenities.
- 2.9 Revise historic designation to reflect the historic significance of the Chinese American settlement in the 1930s to present



KEY ACTION #1: Promote creative signage and storefront design

What is it?

Business signage and the design of storefronts is a major physical element that helps convey to visitors and potential customers the feeling of an authentic Chinatown. Several historic storefronts and signs in Chinatown convey a sense of cultural tradition and identity; however, many buildings have nondescript storefronts and small signage that do not convey the identity of a thriving exciting Chinatown. There are two principle barriers to more businesses having larger more animated Chinese inspired signage; the first is many Chinese merchants have had trouble getting permits for new Chinese signs; the second cause is the large creative signage, which often associated with Chinatowns, is currently not allowed in Chinatown based on the District's signage regulations.

The problem of denied permits stems from three main sources; signage vendors and business owners often do not know about signage requirements in Chinatown and frequently obtain signs without permits, there is a lack of coordination and conflicting goals between DC government agencies, and the design review process is often lengthy and costly for business owners. These problems can be easily addressed by working with all the stakeholders involved in Chinatown Design Review process to develop strengthened guidelines and promote them to the end users. Strengthened guidelines would include inspirational examples of innovative and creative signage and storefront designs, as well as practical advice on placement and design of signs, window displays and storefronts.

A longer effort would be to revise the signage regulation for Chinatown to allow larger more animated signage to complement the signage on at Gallery Place. This would require working with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) and passage of legislation by DC City Council. It would also require close consultation with area residents and business to ensure new signage did not detract from the neighborhood and residential areas of Chinatown.

Why It's Important

- Helps in promoting Chinatown businesses with bright creative Asian signage
- Makes Chinatown streets look more vibrant and active
- Identifies Chinatown district clearly to visitors

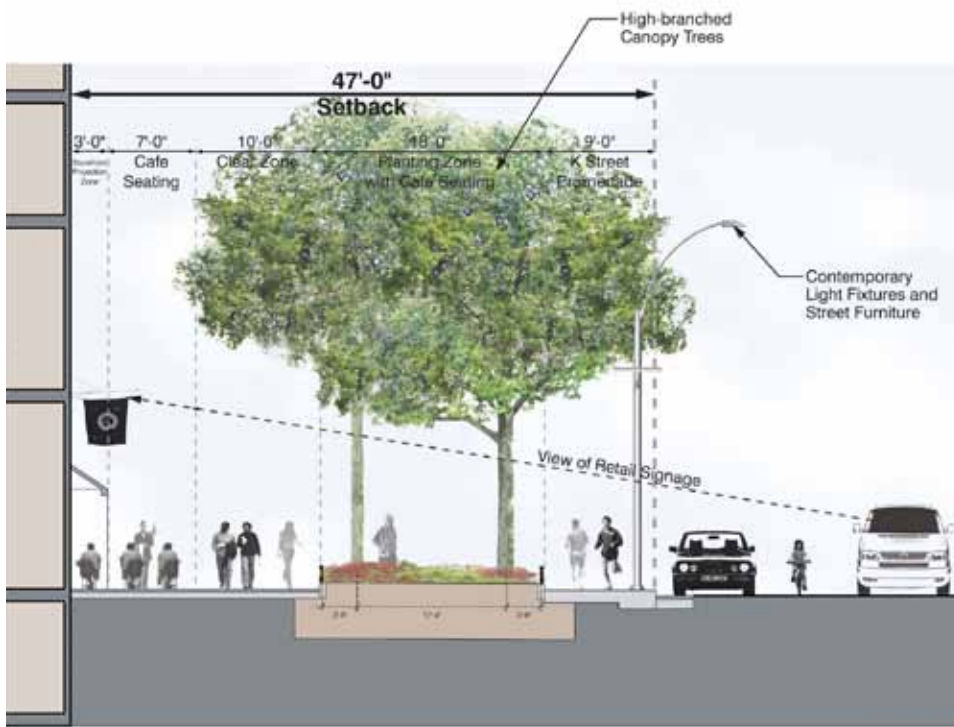
How to make it happen

1. Form a Chinatown Signage Task force made up of the following members: Chinatown Design Sub-Committee members, Historic Preservation Staff, Chinatown business owners, DCRA, and Office of Planning to clarify issues of conflict and work out potential solutions.
2. Office of Planning and Historic Preservation Office will develop and publish new user friendly guidelines.
3. The Chinatown Steering Committee will publicize and distribute new guidelines to Chinatown businesses, property owners, and signage vendors.
4. Signage Task force will work with the DCRA, and consult residents, to develop new signage regulations for the Chinatown District to allow larger signage more animated signage.

Timeframe:

- Identifying a task force to work with city government on signage regulation issues can happen immediately. We will likely see results on improved signage review and guidelines by the end of 2009.
- Revising signage regulation with DCRA will be a longer effort, probably 1 to 2 years in length.





KEY ACTION #2: Create a public realm master plan for Chinatown

What is it?

A Public Realm Master Plan is a document that guides government agencies and property owners on what kinds of improvements should be made to the streetscape and public spaces of Chinatown. The document would build on the basic streetscape elements for Chinatown defined in the Downtown Streetscape Regulations. The Chinatown Public Realm Master Plan would provide direction on a broad set of issues including:

- Identifying locations for public art, or commemorative elements;
- Designating loading and building access locations;
- Specifying light fixtures, street furniture (such as benches), and paving;
- Identifying where we can widen sidewalks to provide more space for pedestrians and outdoor display of store merchandise;
- Designating where new trees, plantings, street signage, and street lightings should go;
- Specifying what parking and curbside restrictions should be in place.

The Public Realm Master Plan creation process is participatory, and would allow the Chinatown community to be engaged in shaping Chinatown's physical appearance

Why It's Important

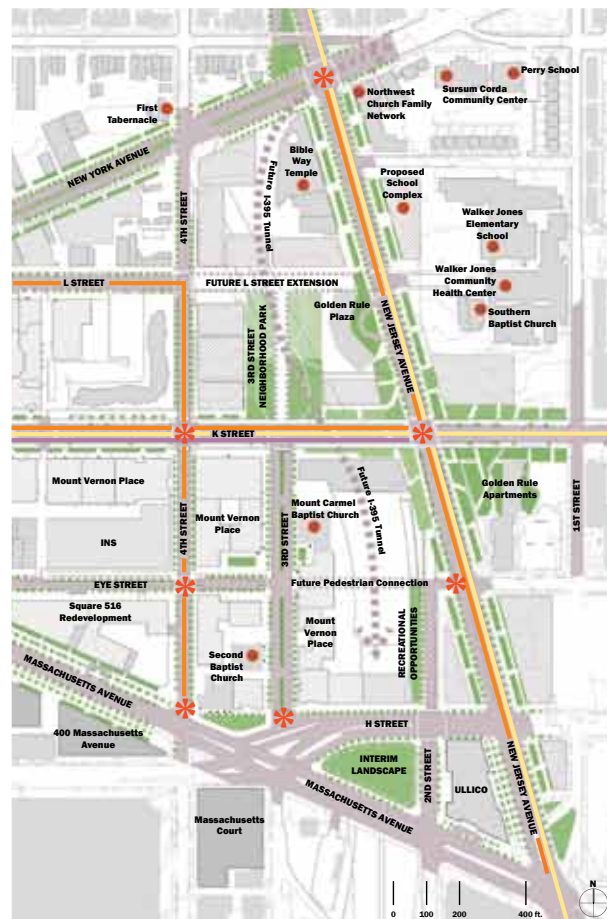
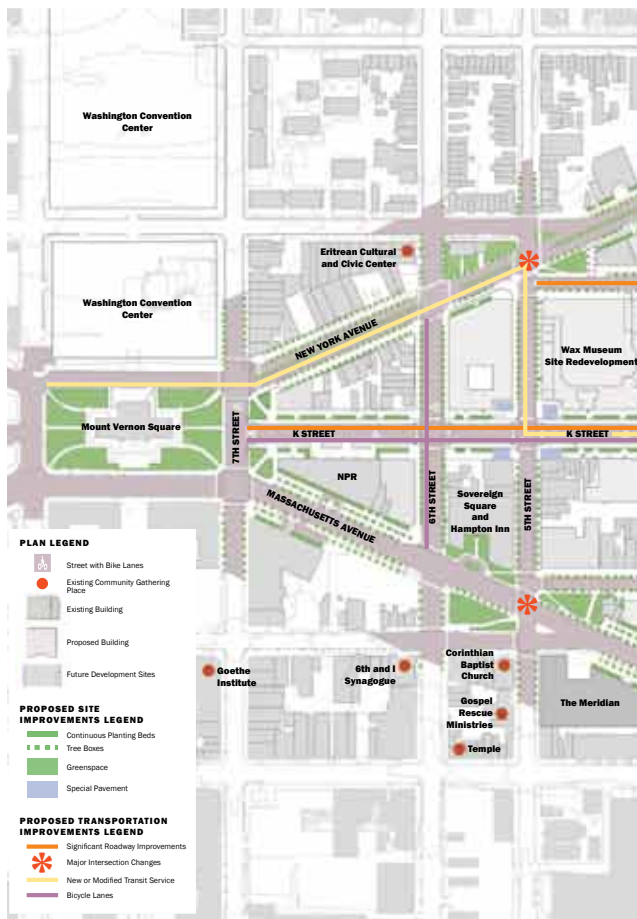
- Creates an official roadmap for designing and strengthening the “Chinatown Street Experience”
- The Master Plan helps coordinate government agencies, private partners like developers, or the Downtown BID on their streetscape and maintenance projects
- Helps prioritize government and private sector funding for Chinatown streetscape projects
- Provides a framework for seeking additional funding from District, federal or private programs and grants

How to make it happen

Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Office of Planning (OP) will work on a Chinatown Public Realm Master Plan with Chinatown Stakeholders and the Downtown BID.

Timeframe:

We can begin the process of creating a Public Realm Master Plan for Chinatown immediately. Implementing the revised recommendations could begin as early as the next year and likely take 2 to 3 years to complete.



Mount Vernon Triangle public realm master plan

Develop Chinatown as a Place for Pedestrians with Busy Storefronts, Wide Active Sidewalks, and Inviting Parks and Open Spaces

2.3 - Create way-finding signs in Chinatown that further activate the streetscape

What is it?

Graphic display is an important part of the Chinatown Street Experience. Creative and vibrant signage, kiosks, place markers and maps contribute to the identity and sense of place of Chinatown. These elements afford visitors a sense of comfort and familiarity with an unknown area if they are well-designed and appropriately placed.

Why it's important

A comprehensive strategy for signage and way finding will provide a visual guide to visitors and tourists to help them understand Chinatown and its offerings. It will also help to create a Chinatown "brand" that is easily identified with the area and could be used to help market local businesses.

How to make it happen

1. Work with the Downtown BID to develop a new graphic identity for Chinatown and a set of guidelines for reinforcing this identity through various types of signage including; light pole banners, kiosks, and way finding signage.
2. Coordinate graphics guidelines with signage regulations established by city government
3. Work with the Department of Transportation (DDOT) and its public space committee to develop a signage plan for Chinatown

2.4 - Utilize vacant storefronts and empty lots for art displays or other temporary exhibits

What is it?

There are currently almost a dozen vacant ground level storefronts and lots in Chinatown today. While they await future businesses to fill them, these vacant spaces can easily be turned into temporary cultural exhibits and displays that showcase and sell Asian arts. With such a space to display their art, local artists can help Chinatown grow and expand its share of the \$352 million domestic tourist market. The resulting impromptu exhibit space requires no new development and provides both an inexpensive way for Chinatown artists to attain greater exposure and affords the public an easy way to engage with the Arts in Chinatown. The end result will expand Chinatown's cultural capacity, add new attractions to the area, and enliven the streetscape.

Why it's important

- Vacant storefronts and lots tend to make Chinatown look dull and lifeless
- Art displays will provide a unique chance to sponsor cultural expression of modern Chinese American artists
- Increased art display and sales would provide additional attractions for one of Chinatown's major market segments: domestic and international tourists. These markets comprise over 20% of Chinatowns sales, but Chinatown currently captures less than 3% of this \$352 million market.

How to make it happen

1. Work with property owners to identify vacant spaces and connect them with artists or cultural institutions
2. Establish a committee to oversee storefront programming and fundraising to support exhibitors
3. Apply for artistic grants to fund artist stipends and commissions

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

Work Together to Ensure the Buildings, Streets, and Alleyways in Chinatown are Clean, Well Maintained, and Safe

2.5 - Consolidate service vehicle access and trash storage/removal so that sidewalks are available for pedestrian use, and screen trash and loading areas from public view

What is it?

Loading access and garbage storage take up a disproportionate amount of sidewalk space in Chinatown and gives the perception that Chinatown is dirty and un-cared for. Reconfiguring and consolidating loading zones and trash storage so they are removed from or take up less sidewalk space will help alleviate this. Loading and trash zones can also be screened with decorative elements to promote a well-maintained and inviting environment.

Why it's important

- Helps to make Chinatown look cleaner and safer which will attract more business
- Garbage storage on the sidewalk is unsightly, noxious, and attracts pests that deter pedestrian activity.
- Loading access takes up valuable sidewalk space that could otherwise be used for seating, outdoor dining, vending, ground floor retail, and plantings
- Unattractive streets deter downtown employees (who are Chinatown's biggest market representing 34% of all sales) from shopping in the Chinatown area. Currently Chinatown only captures a little less than 13% of this growing \$581 million market.

How to make it happen

1. Perform a study as part of the public realm master plan to quantify demands for loading access and garbage service in Chinatown.
2. Work with the Department of Transportation and private trash haulers to identify better locations and schedules for service vehicles and garbage collection.
3. Incorporate well-designed garbage and loading access into a comprehensive plan for streetscape improvements in Chinatown.

2.6 - Work with property owners and the Downtown BID coordinate efforts to ensure proper street & alley maintenance & cleaning

What is it?

Chinatown streets are some of the busiest streets in the city. Due to the significant amount of foot traffic, they have also become some of the dirtiest and need additional maintenance. While this problem is not caused by businesses, it is the responsibility of business owners and the Downtown BID to care for Chinatown Streets and make sure they promote a healthy business environment. It is the responsibility of the City to fix streets when things break or wear out. Currently many shop owners do sweep and care for their sidewalks, but many do not. The Downtown BID also sweeps and clean streets in Chinatown, but has a large area to care for, of which Chinatown is a small part. The Chinatown Business Council can take the first step to cleaner streets by getting all the parties together to discuss and formulate a plan for how to improve the maintenance of Chinatown streets.

Why it's important

- Clean streets and alleys give the perception that Chinatown is a vibrant and attractive place to visit, and will attract additional patrons to restaurants and businesses, and will make Chinatown feel safe and inviting.
- Clean streets will provide an environment attractive to new types of Asia investment like a signature Asian restaurant or Asian American Museum.

How to make it happen

1. Organize a meeting of business owners (either through a merchants association or just a group) and the Downtown BID to discuss the issue, potential solutions, and recurring problems.
2. Create an action plan of maintenance and cleaning responsibilities for all party's involved

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

Establish Chinatown as a Place of High Quality and Distinctive Architecture and Design

2.7 - Update the Chinatown design guidelines and strengthen the Chinatown design review process

What is it?

Chinatown design review procedures support the authentic expression of Chinese culture in new and rehabilitated development. The 2006 Comprehensive Plan provides direction to the Office of Planning to periodically review the procedures and update them as necessary. The Chinatown design guidelines were written in 1988 and have become out of date and need revisions. Updated design guidelines will give clarity and direction to both applicants and reviewers to ensure that new design enhance the identity of Chinatown. In combination with the cultural district designation, updated design guidelines will establish a vision for Chinatown's physical environment.

Strengthening the Chinatown Design Review process not only entails working with DCRA to provide a better enforcement mechanism but revising the review process itself to make it more streamlined and easier for applicants to comply with.

Why it's important

- New guidelines will provide better direction to developers and property owners when they are building in Chinatown and ensure that Chinatown's identity is maintained and promoted by new development in the area.
- Stronger enforcement will ensure new developments comply with the design guidelines
- A streamlined review process will make it easier for applicants to comply, as well as making the time to complete the process shorter.

How to make it happen

1. The 2006 Comprehensive Plan directs OP to work with the Chinatown stakeholders to revise and update the Chinatown design guidelines
2. Office of Planning, working with the Chinatown Design Review subcommittee will investigate potential improvements to streamline the review process

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

Ensure that Chinatown's Buildings, Streets, Open Spaces, and Signage Reflect Chinese and Asian Character

2.8 - Install additional Chinese themed streetscape elements and other decorative amenities.

What is it?

Streetscape elements create the environment that lends Chinatown excitement and allure. They provide the setting for vibrant pedestrian life and encourage people to linger, explore, and connect with others in Chinatown. Banners announce cultural events and neighborhood celebrations, paving materials and patterns encourage passersby to linger and explore, trees and plantings provide shade and texture, and street lighting casts a warm and inviting glow on the sidewalks at night. These help ensure that Chinatown's buildings, streetscapes, open spaces, and signage reflect Chinese character.

Why it's important

It will help provide H Street with the bright colorful atmosphere of a Chinatown

How to make it happen

1. Enlist professional designers to help the community define the 'Chinese Character' of Chinatown
2. Work with DDOT to install light fixtures and permanent Asian Streetscape elements

2.9 - Revise historic designation to reflect the historic significance of the Chinese American settlement in the 1930s to present

What is it?

Currently over 50 years old, many parts of Chinatown are part of the Downtown Historic District. This district covers an area much larger than Chinatown, and doesn't reference the historic significance of Chinatown in DC. Revising the designation to reflect Chinatown's unique cultural heritage would allow and mandate that developers and property owners preserve Chinese architectural elements, and build new buildings which are complimentary with this heritage.

Why it's important

- Would encourage preservation of Chinese architecture and history in Chinatown
- Mandates new construction which would be sensitive to Chinese American history and architectural heritage

How to make it happen

1. Work with Historical Preservation (HP) staff to research potential for adding Chinatown history to the Downtown Historic District registration
2. Lobby Chinatown property owners and businesses for their support recognize Chinese American settlement and culture in the designation for the Downtown Historic District
3. Contract with HP or a paid consultant to prepare a designation application

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS