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New Chinatown/Japantown Design Guidelines Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #2

Tuesday, March 29, 2016
Portland Development Commission
Commission Room: 1st Floor
1:00 – 2:30 PM

Meeting Summary

Members in attendance: Hillary Adam, Joren Bass, Herman Colas, Brian Kimura, Neil Lee, Peggy Moretti, Will Naito, Jackie Peterson Loomis, Matthew Roman, Kat Schultz

Consultant team in attendance: Adrienne DeDona (JLA), Karen Lange (Waterleaf), Kristen Minor (PMA), Brandon Grilc (PMA)

City Staff in attendance: Lisa Abuaf (PDC), Anne Crispino-Taylor (PDC), Sarah Harpole (PDC), Mark Raggett (BPS), Brandon Spencer-Hartle (BPS), Nicholas Starin (BPS)

Handouts:

- Meeting Agenda
- Draft Guiding Principles

1. Welcome

Adrienne DeDona

Adrienne asked the group's preference for sharing information between meetings. The group agreed that to better facilitate collaboration, information could be shared via e-mail between meetings. Adrienne reminded the members to cc: staff on all e-mail correspondence and to be sure to provide a preferred e-mail address. Adrienne also reminded members to turn in their Conflict of Interest forms if they had not already done so.

2. Project & District Overview

Sarah Harpole / Nicholas Starin / Brandon Spencer-Hartle / Kristen Minor

Sarah summarized the historic district location, project process, timeline, partners and public outreach components. The goal is to present a Proposed Draft Report to the Historic Landmarks Commission in September and a Recommended Draft Report to City Council this winter.

Nicholas explained the recommendations from the Central City 2035 Plan that serve as the foundation for the project. Creation of the guidelines was recommended to protect significant resources within the district. Also, once design guidelines are adopted there could be potential to allow for increased height on Block 33 (bound by NW Davis, NW Couch, NW 4th, NW 5th). Brandon added that depending on the location (i.e. the overlap with the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District), more than one set of guidelines may need to be met. However, once the

This summary is PDC staff's interpretation of the main points of discussion, including statements attributed directly to committee members, staff and the public, and is not intended to be a word-for-work transcription of the meeting.

New Chinatown Japantown Historic District Design Guidelines are adopted, the district will no longer be required to follow the River District Design Guidelines. He also explained the guidelines will not address uses or interior design, but will consider the ground level experience and activation. The guidelines should also provide clear language that is easy to interpret – these are not intended to be *design standards* but rather are discretionary approval criteria for new development and alterations to existing buildings.

The District was recognized on the National Register in 1989. Kristen explained the significance of the district is due to its affiliation with Asian heritage, industry, and commerce as well as the architecture of the primary and secondary development from 1880 through 1943. Kristen reviewed the history of Chinese and Japanese within the district, and discussed alterations and new development that has occurred over time within the district.

3. Case Studies of Other Peer Districts

Brandon Grilc

Brandon presented images and a high-level summary of design guidelines from the Chinatown Historic District of Honolulu, the Chinatown-International District of Seattle and the Little Tokyo Historic District of Los Angeles. SAC members requested additional information regarding the existing heights within these districts and how the design guidelines address height compatibility. Staff indicated this additional information would be provided, however there is also a need to be cognizant of how other cities address the hierarchy of city code and zoning regulations for a true apples-to-apples comparison.

4. Guiding Principles

Adreinne DeDona

SAC members were asked to review a list of draft guiding principles for the project. Adrienne asked the group to brainstorm values they would like to see embraced in the guiding principles and forthcoming design guidelines, and anything they saw missing from the guiding principles.

The list of “Values” included:

- no kitsch
- vibrant community
- cultural
- retain sense of place / historic “memory”
- tell the story of the district
- honest cultural interpretation
- respect architectural DNA of the district (essence)
- continuity along street scape
- enhance quality of district with new construction
- build connectivity
- honest; apply authentic details
- historic character
- maintain integrity
- vibrant; active streetscape
- authentic
- unique (to sense of place)
- public art
- authenticity

The list of “What else?” included:

- Non-standard improvements in the ROW
- Icons and artwork
- Documentation of the archeology in vacant lots
- Asian signage on buildings
- Parking (not enough)
- Prioritize compatibility
- Not overly restrictive
- Rebuild “neighborhood” by providing housing
- Clean – too many bars and issues related to alcohol use in the district

Members discussed how to balance the past with the present in an authentic manner and retain something unique to the City. There was recognition of the need to revitalize the area to support businesses and draw tourism. The need to engage the Chinese and Japanese community to better gather information regarding the cultural aspect of the guidelines was also raised. Lastly, it was also acknowledged that some of the items listed above are outside the scope and influence of the design guidelines project.

5. Public Comment

Public comment was provided by Hardy Li, Terry Chung, and Hongcheng Zhao. Comments focused on the importance of community in creating an authentic sense of place. Building design needs to be sensitive to the ethnic communities and adding faux embellishments as an afterthought does not preserve Chinatown. The Chinese community needs to engage in the district and certain undesirable uses need to be discouraged.

6. Next Steps / Closing Comments

Sarah Harpole / Brandon Spencer-Hartle

SAC members were asked to review and provide any further feedback on the draft guiding principles by April 12. Comments can be provided to Adrienne, Sarah and/or Brandon.

Brandon indicated that the project website would go live soon, and all meeting dates and materials would be made available, in addition to key background materials.

April 6, 2016 Postscript: Website now available at <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/70480>

Next meeting: April 26, 2016 – 3:00-5:00 on the 6th floor

Meeting notes prepared by Anne Crispino-Taylor, PDC Senior Administrative Coordinator, Central City