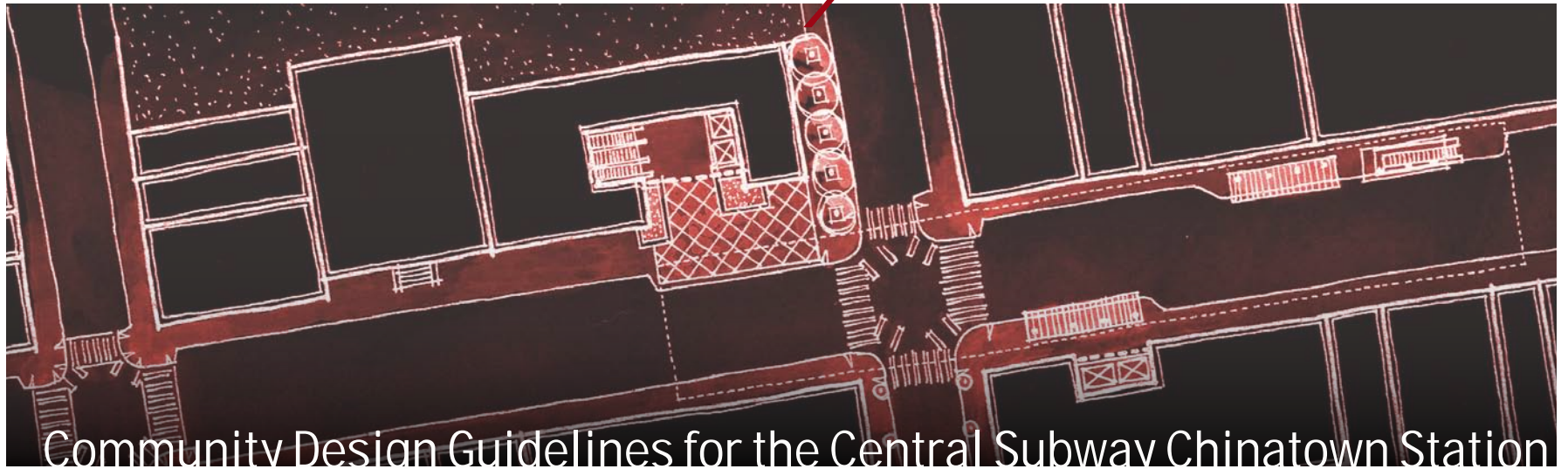


A Station for Chinatown



Community Design Guidelines for the Central Subway Chinatown Station

Asian**Neighborhood**Design

prepared for **Chinatown Community Development Center**

draft: December 2008

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Credits & Acknowledgements

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Acknowledgements

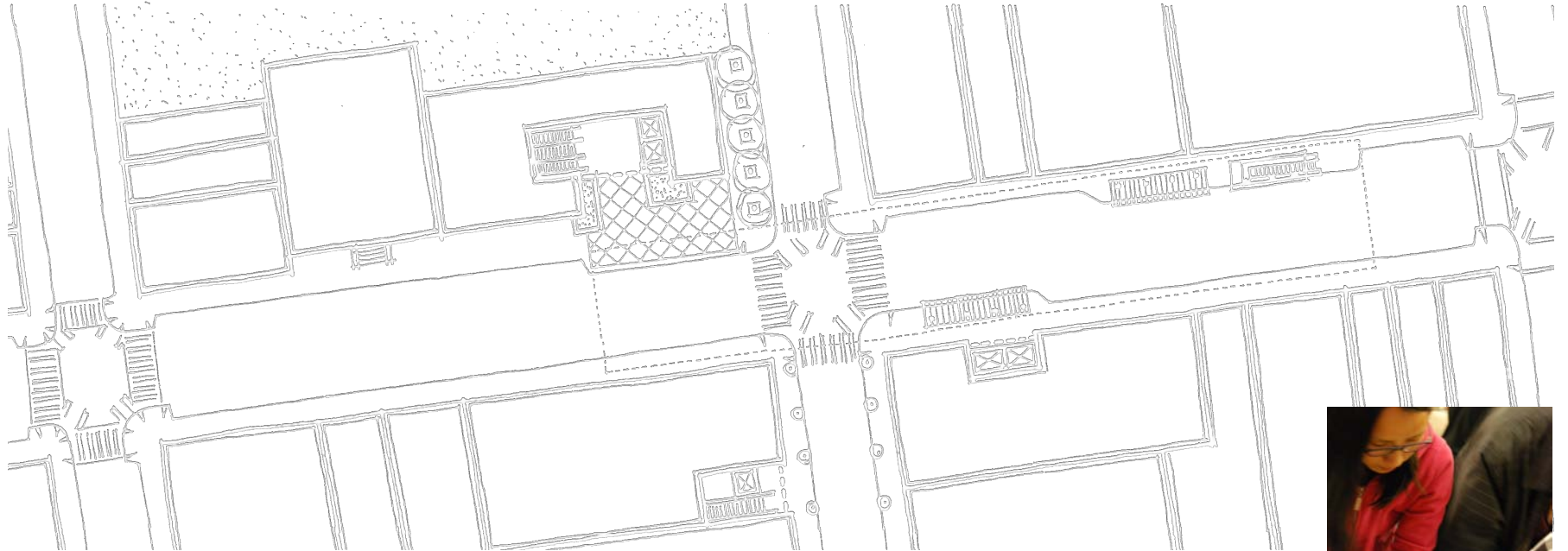
Thanks to Mona Tamari from Kwan Henmi Architects.

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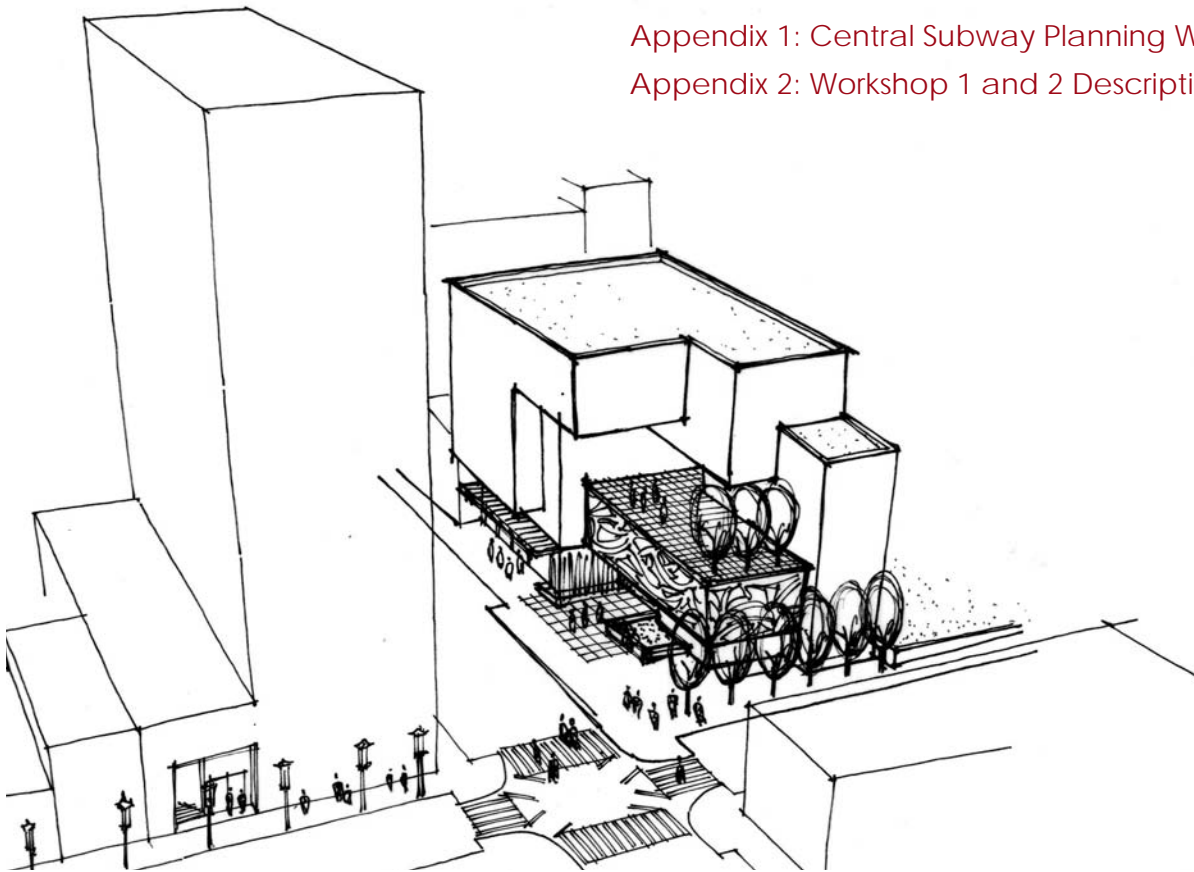


AsianNeighborhoodDesign
prepared for Chinatown Community Development Center

December 2008

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One: Introduction

A vision for Chinatown's new transit gateway

During the Fall of 2008, Asian Neighborhood Design (AND) joined the Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC) and other Chinatown organizations to think about the plans for the new Chinatown Central Subway station. San Francisco's Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is planning a new subway line which will link the Third Street light rail with Chinatown, to be completed in 2016. AND and CCDC developed, through a series of community workshops involving Chinatown residents, youth and seniors, a set of design guidelines to address community concerns about the station design. The workshops addressed station access, the pedestrian experience to and from the station, and development impacts in the area surrounding the station. The community workshops were held entirely in Cantonese, with translation into English for non-Cantonese speakers. The conceptual designs created by community members were developed into a set of guidelines that are the main part of this document, and are intended to be used by the community to advocate for their vision within the MTA's ongoing planning for the Central Subway.

The goals for the community-led participatory design process, developed by AND and CCDC, were to:

- Build a grassroots community vision around the proposed Chinatown Central Subway.
- Produce visuals and guidelines that could be used for communications with city agencies and with the wider Chinatown community.
- Build community capacity and leadership in talking about technical aspects of design and development in Chinatown.

At the first community workshop held on October 20, 2008, thirty-eight community members discussed their concerns surrounding the proposed station, and developed a series of community goals which included safety, access, cultural identity and community amenities. At a second community workshop on November 18, 2008, forty-eight community members delved into the design of the area around the station, paying particular attention to the need for several station entries, as well as street and sidewalk improvements to upgrade the quality of the streets for pedestrians. Members also presented ideas about how the new building above the station could be configured to create dynamic public spaces.

Based on Chinatown residents' own ideas, AND synthesized the community-driven concepts into a series of design guidelines. Chapter Five describes these guidelines in the form of a "Pattern Language:" each guideline is given a short descriptive name, followed by a problem statement outlining Chinatown residents' concerns, a solution statement, and a sketch or photograph. Chapter Six illustrates the use of these patterns as an integrated design concept for a new Chinatown transit gateway.



Two: Development and Transit in Chinatown

San Francisco Chinatown context



Development in Chinatown

Chinatown occupies a unique space in San Francisco. It is one of the most densely populated areas in the US, second only to Manhattan. Chinatown is the oldest Chinese-American community in the United States. It was a first place of arrival for many immigrants, mostly young men from the Canton region, coming to work in the mining and railroad-building industries in California. Later arrivals stayed and worked in local industries including shoe, cigar, and garment factories. Today, over 20,000 people live within Chinatown's 35 square blocks, many residing in its 115 single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels.

Chinatown shares many physical characteristics with other Chinatowns in the Americas: relatively low but very dense buildings, and narrow streets and alleys. Due to the lack of open spaces, most public life occurs in busy commercial streets where shop merchandise spills out onto crowded sidewalks. After the original Chinatown was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake, residents fought off displacement to the south edge of the city. Merchants consciously rebuilt Chinatown with specific design and architectural elements, including using Chinese roof details, pagoda-style towers, and lively red, green and yellow colors. These colors are often associated with directions in Feng Shui design and bringing good fortune to a building's occupants.

Chinatown has always been an economic center: locally, for Chinatown residents; regionally, as a center of economic and cultural activity for extended Bay Area Chinese and Asian-descent communities; and internationally, as a tourist destination. Chinatown's organizations and residents have fought unwaveringly to maintain the right for the largely immigrant, low-income residents and businesses to stay: fending off onslaughts from the mob violence in the 1880s, relocation after the 1906 earthquake, and downtown commercial and development interests in the 1970s and 80s.

The northward expansion of downtown, with projects like the Transamerica Pyramid and the Bank of America Headquarters, destroyed over 4,000 low-income housing units. The struggle to save the International Hotel, with 196 mostly elderly Filipino and Chinese tenants, was a major turning point for organizing in Chinatown. San Francisco continued to see aggressive development in the early to mid 1980s. As a response various Chinatown community groups and stakeholders responded by drafting two comprehensive community plans that addressed rezoning, land use and housing issues. CCDC, in collaboration with AND and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, produced the "Chinatown Community Plan," while the Chinese Six Companies, through the help of a professional planning firm, drafted "A Plan for Chinatown."



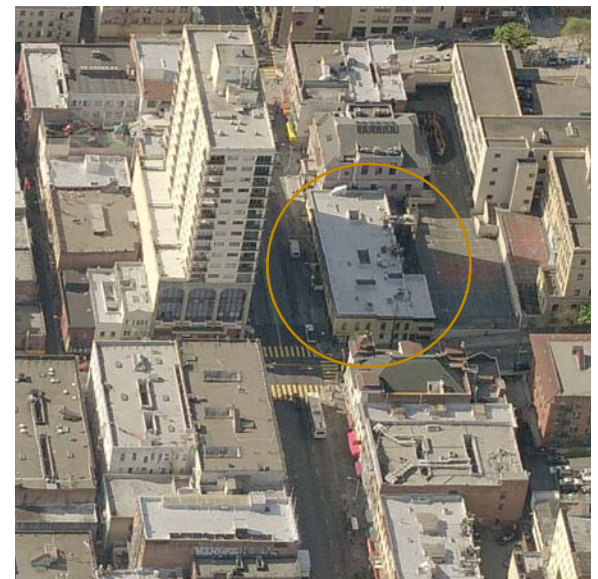
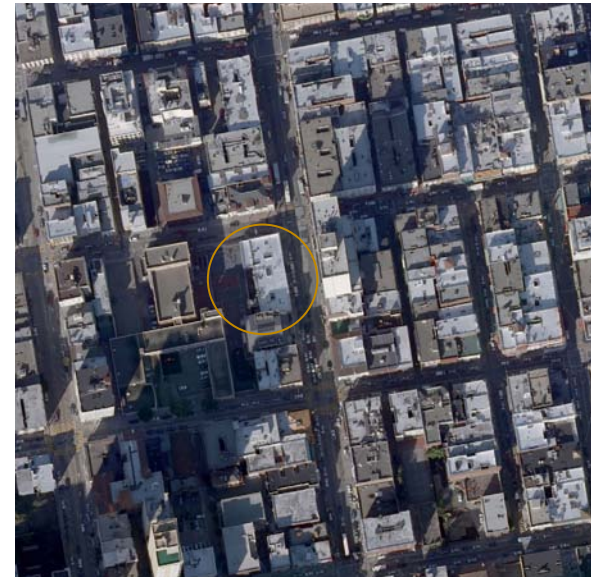
Chinatown map inlaid in an alleyway pavement, above, and map of the proposed Central Subway line, below.

Some aspects of these community plans were incorporated into the City Planning Department's official Chinatown Rezoning Plan which was unanimously adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1986. Through active community participation, these groups helped preserve the character and culture of Chinatown. In particular, the plan identified two important Chinatown streets, Grant Avenue as a locus for tourist-oriented businesses, and Stockton Street as a primarily local-serving neighborhood commercial corridor. The plan also downzoned large portions of Chinatown in order to protect the critical SRO housing stock from speculation and conversion to tourist hotels, and created incentive zoning with height bonuses for affordable housing.

CCDC has been centrally involved in a number of local transportation and streetscape projects. During the early 1990s, Chinatown groups were involved in the controversy surrounding whether to retrofit the Embarcadero Freeway after the Loma Prieta Earthquake of 1989. Though there was opposition to its demolition, the freeway was eventually taken down when studies proved a retrofit would not suffice to ensure safety. In response to the demolition of the Embarcadero Freeway, Chinatown CDC spearheaded a community planning process to plan for the future of the Broadway Corridor, an important artery linking the Chinatown and North Beach neighborhoods to the Embarcadero Waterfront. In 1996, Chinatown CDC spearheaded a two-year comprehensive planning process to develop the Chinatown Alleyway Master Plan, conducting numerous community meetings and extensive surveys to solicit community feedback for alleyway improvements under the Plan. Chinatown CDC sees the Central Subway station as a key piece in this process of incremental improvements to community infrastructure.

The Chinatown Subway Station

At the turn of the 20th century, San Francisco had a robust mass transit system. The Key System consisted of an intricate network of light-rail streetcars, trains and ferries that served Bay Area commuters from 1903 to 1960. The area served by the Key System is now served by BART, Muni and AC Transit. After World War II, the popularity of the automobile and the appearance of suburban development together contributed to the demise of the Key System and other light-rail systems across the US. With the introduction of the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act, the Federal Aid Highway Act, and the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, development in the US centered on the automobile. Between 1936 and 1950, National City Bus Lines purchased over 100 light-rail systems nationwide, and replaced streetcar lines with General Motors diesel-engine buses. The impact of this event, dubbed the Great American Streetcar Scan-





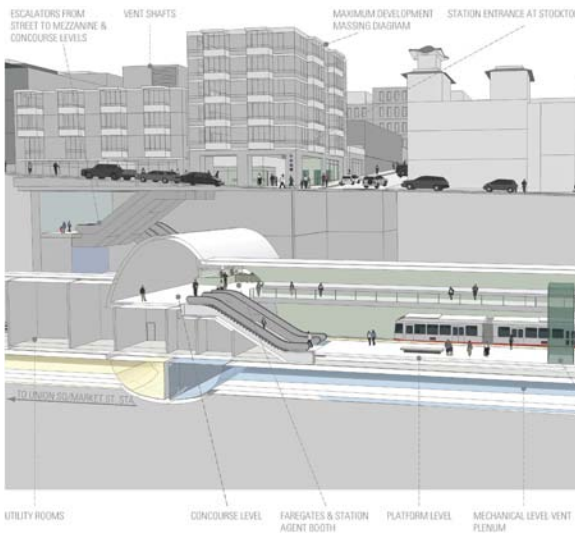
dal, transformed San Francisco and other cities. One impact of this new emphasis on cars can be seen in Stockton Street sidewalks in Chinatown: in 1960 the sidewalks were narrowed to nine feet to allow more rooms for cars and Muni buses, adding to the pedestrian congestion on this busy street.

Today local governments are working with public and private developers to curb sprawl by turning their attention back to urban mass transit. This new wave of “Transit-Oriented Development” (TOD), attempts to integrate high density development around transit stations. However, low-income communities have legitimate concerns around transit-oriented development, including increased rents, displacement, and gentrification pressures, while welcoming new investment and improvements.

MTA is planning to expand the Third Street Light-Rail through a new Central Subway line into Chinatown. According to the plan, it intends to improve connectivity between southeastern neighborhoods of the City to Downtown and Chinatown. The project is currently moving forward with its final EIR certification.

The site that has been chosen for the new station is the southwest corner of Stockton and Washington streets. This new development dovetails well with the Stockton Street Enhancement Project, a study developed by CHS Consulting Group for the SF Department of Parking and Traffic and for CCDC in 2003. The project creates opportunities to implement several of the report’s recommendations for physical street improvements, including corner sidewalk widenings, bilingual signage, and larger more-open bus shelters.

Preliminary concept drawings by MTA’s architects indicate one station entry only, located in an indoor lobby within a new building, built to the existing zoning for market-rate developments, 65’. MTA is working with CCDC to expand their community outreach and deepen their understanding of community needs and concerns. The concepts presented in this document do not contradict MTA’s initial design, but add to it, by emphasizing the crucial need for additional subway exits and elevators, integrated sidewalk and street improvements, and the need to think deeply about the potential impacts of this major development by protecting and enhancing Chinatown’s small businesses, open space, and affordable housing.



Existing conditions at Stockton & Washington, above. Design concept for Chinatown Station, by Kwan Henmi architects, below.

Three: Community Design Process

The Chinatown community speaks its vision

The purpose of the community workshops was to engage participants in deciding community goals for the station as well as developing a shared vision for the station design. Community participation played an important and key role throughout the workshops. The entire workshop series was conducted in Cantonese, with some minor exceptions of English with consecutive translation into Cantonese.

The workshops were facilitated under the partnership of the Chinatown Community Development Center, and Asian Neighborhood Design, a non-profit community design center with a long history of working with the Chinatown community. CCDC organized the outreach, publicity and logistics for the events. Participant groups included Chinese for Affirmative Action, Chinese Progressive Association, Chinatown Coalition for Better Housing, SRO Families Collaborative, Ping Yuen Resident Improvement Association, and Community Tenants Association. All workshops were held at the new I-Hotel building, just a few blocks from the proposed site for the station.

Workshop 1 – Developing a shared vision

The first community workshop was held on October 20, 2008. Thirty-eight community members attended this workshop, including a diverse group of youth, seniors, parents, SRO tenants, other Chinatown residents and members of different Chinatown community-based organizations.

At this workshop, community members had a chance to discuss shared concerns surrounding the proposed station, and developed a set of community goals. The workshop started with a short slide presentation by AND, to give context about the site and neighborhood. The slides included examples of subway stations in San Francisco and around the world in addition to examples of public art and business activities at subway stations.

The presentation was followed by small group breakout sessions where participants engaged in a discussion guided with questions around the visioning and design for the station. Some of the questions dealt with the station and street design, as well as adjacent uses. Each group was given a set of maps to contextualize the discussions. The maps included the station site, community buildings, sidewalk, bus routes & bus stops.

Workshop facilitators identified the priorities that the community wants to see included for the new station. These goals were summarized into the eight community goals outlined in Chapter Four, including addition-





al entrances into the station; a safe gathering space at the main station entry; easy access to buses; improvements to the street and sidewalks around the station; locally-owned stores that are open late and a night market; and a station that will be a symbol for Chinatown, designed according to Feng Shui principles.

Workshop 2 – Design concepts and guidelines

The second community workshop was held on November 18, 2008. Forty-eight community members attended this workshop. Half of these participants had attended the first workshop and the new attendees were also Chinatown stakeholders.

At this workshop, community members had a “hands-on” chance to address the design of the public areas of the station. Concerns included access into and out of the station, as well as street and sidewalk improvements. There was also an opportunity to look at the building massing in relation to public open spaces at the site.

Based on the eight goals identified at the first workshop, participants were given an opportunity to make informed decisions for the design of the station and surroundings through a series of design games. AND constructed a series of design games using a scale model of the site and large maps. These design games allowed workshop participants to design their own station, streetscapes improvements, and massing for a building above the station.

Based on these two workshops, AND synthesized the community-created concepts into a series of design guidelines, described in Chapter Five, and a design concept illustrated in Chapter Six.



Four: Community Vision and Goals

Eight Goals for the Central Subway Chinatown Station and the streets around it

These community goals were developed by workshop participants in the first community workshop, held on October 20, 2008.

1. There will be more than one safe entrance into the station, appropriate for people of different ages and with special needs.
2. There will be safe gathering spaces around the station with greenery.
3. It will be easy to get to and from the station by bus.
4. The station improvements will extend to the street and sidewalk.
5. The station area will be safe, clean and well-lit, with stores that are open late.
6. The station will support Chinatown small businesses, vendors, night markets, and community activities.
7. The station will be a symbol for Chinatown: its design, landscaping and art will reflect Chinatown's community and history.
8. The new building above the station will fit into the neighborhood and will support community uses such as public space, community centers, and affordable housing.

CHINATOWN STATION VISION



The station should serve the needs and desires of the people of Chinatown, reinforce the identity and character of the neighborhood, while reflecting Chinatown as a contemporary place, and integrate the feeling, fact and function of Chinatown as a city-wide and regional market.

Five: Design Guidelines

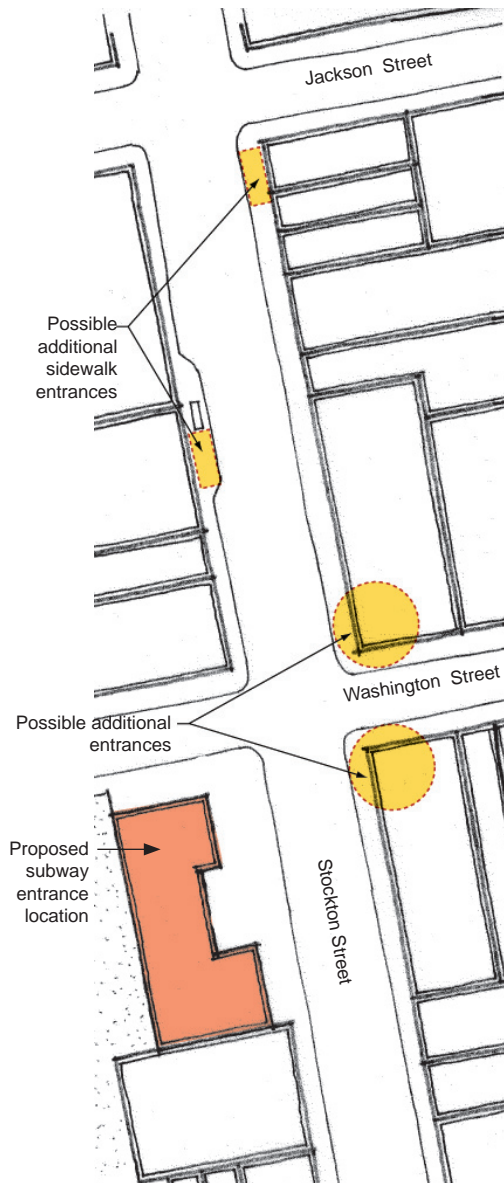
Design guidelines to shape the development of the station and the surrounding area

These design guidelines were based on the community's vision and goals shaped over the course of the two workshops. Most of the guidelines add to, rather than contradict, the preliminary designs that MTA has been preparing. However, one important addition is that the community feels very strongly about the need for additional station entrances, particularly on the east side of Stockton Street. A number of the guidelines extend the station area improvements to the adjacent streets and sidewalks, particularly to create a safe pedestrian environment for station users and to add greenery and open space in the dense Chinatown area. Of particular concern of the community was that the design of the station, streets, and building should reflect the community of Chinatown in terms of local arts and Feng Shui design. Finally, a number of the guidelines are not about design per se, but relate to uses and programming of the building and open space. These guidelines are written in a "Pattern Language" style: each guideline has been given a short descriptive name, followed by a problem statement outlining Chinatown resident's concerns, a solution statement and an illustration or sketch.

GOAL 1: The Chinatown station will be served by more than one safe entrance, appropriate for people of different ages, languages, and those with special needs.

1. MANY ENTRANCES

A primary concern of all workshop participants was the number of station entries to be provided. As the most densely populated area of the city, the Chinatown subway station is expected to be heavily used, accessed from Chinatown streets already congested by pedestrians. Therefore, provide more entries in addition to the single entry already planned for the southwest corner of Stockton and Washington. Priority should be given to one additional entry at the northeast corner of Washington and Stockton, so that residents and visitors traveling to and from Grant Avenue and Portsmouth Square are not forced to cross Stockton Street. Workshop participants also suggested additional entries at the Mandarin Tower building at the southeast corner. The Mandarin Tower already has a relatively high ground floor appropriate for a station entry, and along the downslope Washington Street side, an entrance leading to a basement level. Finally, one group suggested several entries north along Stockton Street, closer to Jackson, where a second "emergency-only" exit has already been contemplated. The additional entries should also have elevator access (see "Many Elevators" guideline, below).

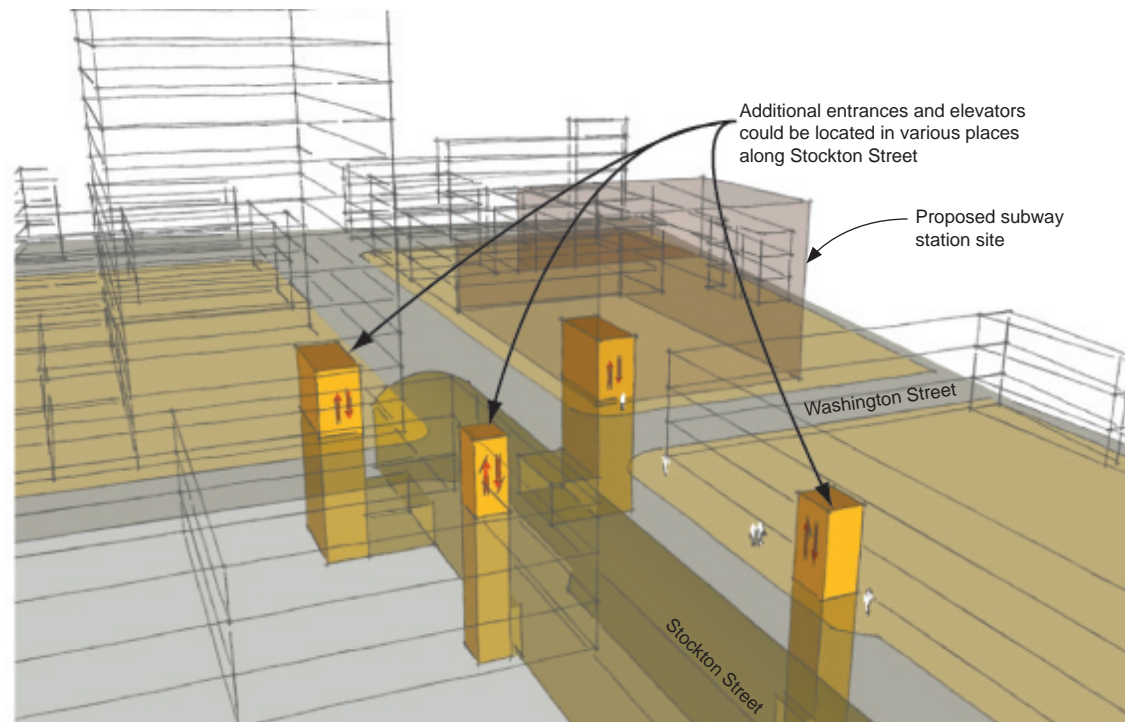


2. MANY ELEVATORS

While subway stations in the United States tend to emphasize stairs and escalators rather than elevators, Chinese users are familiar with and comfortable with elevators. Given that many of the station's users will be seniors and families with young children and shopping bags, workshop participants emphasized having elevators that are plentiful and frequent, large enough to accommodate the large numbers of people expected to use the station and who are less comfortable with escalators. People also commented on the need for visually open elevators with glass walls, for security. Therefore, provide several elevator banks, and provide elevators that are large.

3. BILINGUAL SIGNAGE AND REAL-TIME INFORMATION

Participants wanted good signage, maps, and information kiosks, differentiated to direct tourists to the Chinatown tourist areas (Grant Street, Portsmouth Square, Chinatown Alley tours), as well as to support local residents and workers. The Chinatown plan (initially developed by AND and CCDC, and incorporated into the City's General Plan in the 1980s) specifically directs tourism-related uses to the Grant Street area, preserving the character and stores of Stockton Street for local residents. The new Chinatown station poses the possibility of impacting Stockton Street's local-serving role by bringing in new tourists, so special care must be given, through exiting and signage, to direct visitors to the tourist areas. Participants were also very excited about the possibility of providing real-time information at street level, alerting users of bus schedules as well as the arrival/departure times for the subways at the station below. However, most transit system signs, web sites, and other information are only in English, posing a problem for the monolingual Chinese speakers of Chinatown. Therefore, ensure that all signage is bilingual, including area maps at station entry, tourist information, directional signage, information kiosks, and real-time train and bus information.



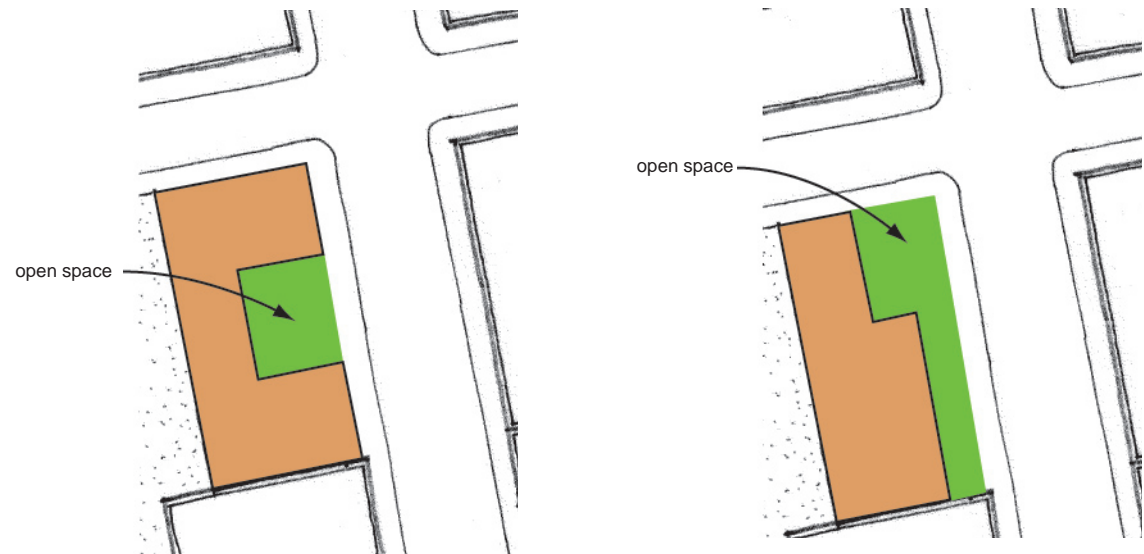
GOAL 2: There will be a safe gathering space at the Chinatown station.

4. STREET-LEVEL OPEN SPACE

Chinatown's streets and sidewalks are typically narrow and crowded, and the density of the buildings allows little opportunity for light, air, and open space. The new station is going to be an important new gathering node for Chinatown, and will exacerbate the congestion of Chinatown's streets. Therefore, provide a well-lit street-level open space at the station entry by setting back the ground floor to widen the pedestrian area. The new station building should embrace this open space, following "Feng Shui Principles," below.



The Portland Classical Chinese Garden, above, illustrates Chinese landscape principles. The new Chinatown Park in Boston, below, uses traditional Feng Shui principles, but reinterprets the "Pai Fang" district gate in a contemporary language.



5. PARK SEATING

A large percentage of Chinatown's population is seniors, and many of the station's users will be seniors. Therefore, provide flexible seating areas at the station entry, where elders can rest and wait.

6. URBAN GREENERY

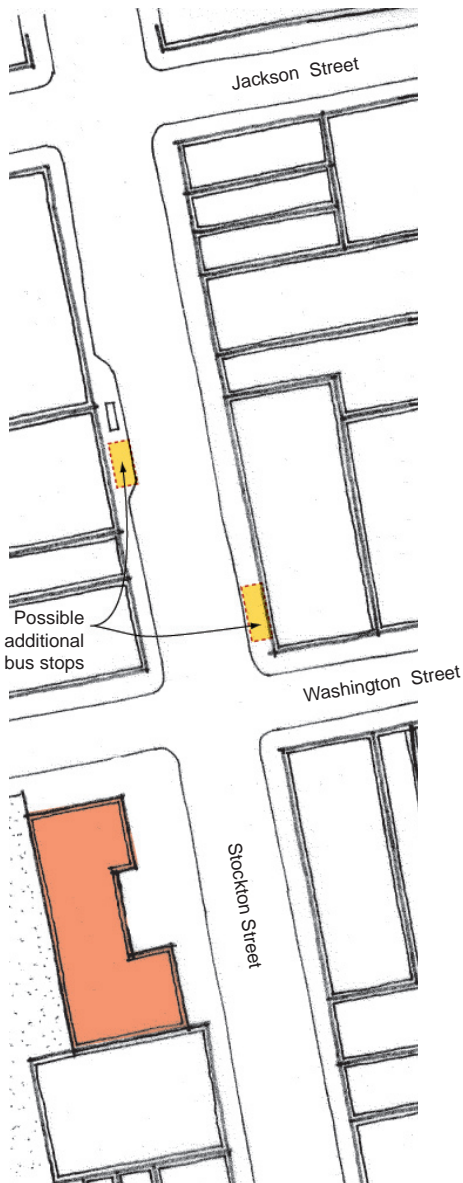
Chinatown historically suffers from a lack of greenery and trees. Small spaces in Chinatown offer the opportunity to become oases of greenery, much like traditional courtyards. Therefore, provide areas for greenery and trees on many levels of the new building, from the street-level open space, to the building walls, upper floor courtyards, and roof gardens.

7. CHINESE LANDSCAPE

The Chinatown residents in our workshops were very concerned that the station might become a generic or nondescript place, that could be located anywhere in the city. While participants hinted that they did not necessarily want a design that could be interpreted as "traditional," they did want a design that followed traditional Chinese principles of design. The station should provide an open space that reflects Chinese courtyards, which are often a series of outdoor "rooms" connected by gates and paths, or Chinese-influenced landscaping, which contrasts with the axial design of buildings by emphasizing less formal and more meandering designs, with water and nature elements. See design guideline 26 "Feng Shui Principles," later in this chapter.



Chinatown's plazas are critical bits of greenery and open space, above. The benches in LA's Chinatown, below, were built by local architecture students.



GOAL 3: It will be easy to get to and from the Chinatown station by bus.

8. BUS STOP ADJACENCY

Workshop participants were adamant about not losing any additional bus lines (particularly recalling how the No. 15 line was discontinued after the Third Street light rail was completed). They were also concerned about how closely the new station would connect with existing bus lines. While it did not seem necessary that the Stockton bus stops needed to be immediately adjacent to the station entry, creating additional pedestrian crossings on busy Stockton Street brought up safety concerns. As it currently stands, connecting southbound riders would have to walk one block, crossing either Washington or Clay Street, and connecting northbound riders would have to walk two blocks crossing Stockton, Washington and Jackson. Therefore, locate bus stops on the same block and side of the street as the subway station entries, so connecting pedestrians don't have to cross the street to enter the subway. This may be done by either moving the bus stops, or locating new subway entries on the same block as the bus stop. The concept design illustrates one possible solution, with a new northbound stop at the northeast corner of Stockton and Washington.

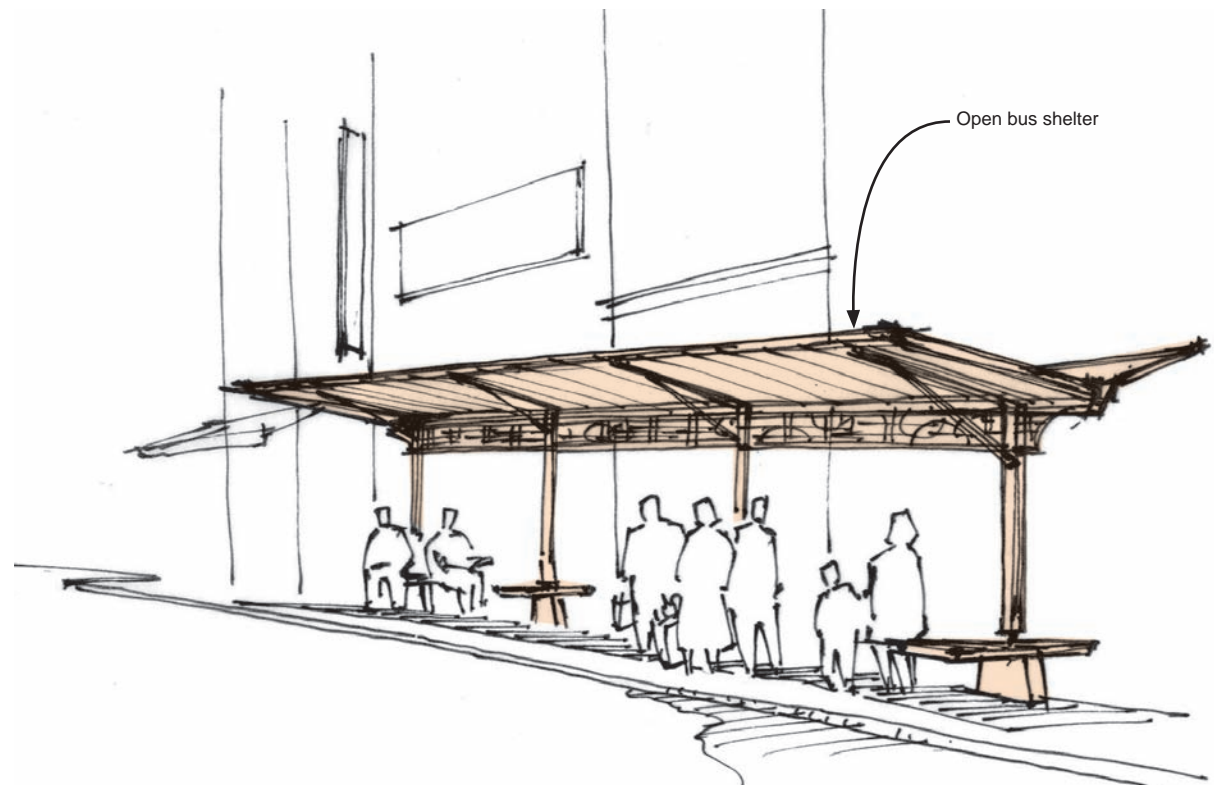
Connectivity to the many bus lines that get Chinatown residents and workers across town is critical. The Muni map at right shows bus lines through Chinatown, including the No. 15 which was eliminated by the Third Street Light Rail.



9. BUS BULBS & OPEN SHELTERS

As has been stated before, Chinatown streets are narrow and heavily used. Bus stops are particularly congested areas. Bus bulbs (sidewalk widenings at the bus stops) currently exist midblock in both directions on Stockton between Clay and Sacramento, and midblock southbound between Washington and Jackson, but they are often crowded to capacity, especially at midday, and the bus shelters and benches are inadequate to the amount of people waiting. There are no bus bulbs on the proposed block of the station, between Clay and Washington. A 2003 study prepared for San Francisco DPT proposed larger modified bus shelters with no side or back walls, to facilitate the mobility of pedestrians waiting to board buses. Therefore, at all bus stops between Clay and Pacific, widen the sidewalks where needed, and provide wider bus shelters, benches, trash bins, lighting, and bilingual real-time signage.

Bus shelters can add to the congestion on a busy sidewalk, but if designed properly, they facilitate the pedestrian experience.





Bulbouts in Chinatown expand the pedestrian realm.



Chinatown lanterns highlight the tourist areas.

GOAL 4: The station improvements will extend to the street and sidewalk.

10. CORNER BULBS

The wider north-south streets (Stockton Street and Kearny Street) tend to be well-trafficked by cars, buses and delivery trucks, posing potential hazards for pedestrians crossing the streets. Moreover, users of the Chinatown station are likely to either walk directly to their home or workplace, or catch a connecting bus a few blocks away. The major cross-town bus lines that are walking distance from the Chinatown station are the No. 1 at Clay/Sacramento, and the No. 12 at Pacific/Broadway, as well as the No 9X along Stockton. Streets should be improved to make these connections as safe as possible for the transit users, especially the elderly. Therefore, provide corner sidewalk widenings at the intersections along Stockton from Clay to Broadway, especially for crosswalks across Stockton.

11. WELL-LIT STREETS

Participants expressed concern about night-time safety at the station, particularly for pedestrians walking to and from the station. While Stockton Street has high roadway lighting standards, there are no pedestrian level lights. In contrast, Grant Street is well served by pedestrian lighting. The station improvements could provide new pedestrian-level street lights along Stockton and Washington Streets from Clay to Broadway. The station could also be linked to the tourist and shopping area on Grant by extending the “traditional” Grant Avenue light standards along Washington. Particular attention should be paid to intersections and bus stop areas. An even more critical aspect for night-time safety, however, are the hours of businesses, that provide light and eyes into the evening (see “Late Night Stores, below). A stark contrast occurs to the east of Stockton, where stores stay open late at night, compared with the areas west of Stockton, that feel empty as soon as night falls.

GOAL 5: The station area will be safe, clean, well-lit, with stores that are open late.

12. STORES ON THE STREET

Participants pointed out that stores in interior mall areas of Chinatown are often not as well-used or frequented as stores fronting streets. Participants pointed out how the many stores along Chinatown's streets contribute to the feeling of safety by providing "eyes on the street." Therefore, activate the sidewalk and street-level open space area by providing multiple retail uses opening directly on to it.

13. LATE-NIGHT STORES

A major understanding of Chinatown residents is that those areas that have stores that stay open late at night are also those areas that feel safest and most comfortable. Therefore, stores in the new building should be only those businesses that stay open late.

14. HEALTHY STORES

Workshop participants, particularly the youth, were especially sensitive to not adding negative uses to the district, especially stores that sell unhealthy items. Therefore, stores in the new building should not be allowed to sell cigarettes or liquor, and non-smoking signs should be provided throughout.

15. CLEAN SIDEWALKS AND OPEN SPACE

Participants asked whether the station management would be maintaining the streets and sidewalks that serve the station. Participants suggested a partnership with local community organizations to provide a sidewalk cleaning program for the area around the station, and that plenty of trash cans and recycling bins be provided at the station and open space.

16. RESTROOMS IN THE STATION

Participants raised concerns about the need for public restrooms, particularly since the station would be serving many families with children and elders. Therefore, provide public restrooms in the paid station area, and provide staffing to keep it clean and well-maintained.





The existing building holds two beauty salons, a dim sum restaurant and noodle shop, a food distributor, and a real estate agent, among other uses, as well as over a dozen housing units upstairs.



The new station should support local vendors, like this flower stand at the Glen Park BART station.

GOAL 6: The station will support Chinatown small businesses, vendors, night markets, and community activities.

17. PRESERVE EXISTING BUSINESSES

Participants were very worried about what would happen to the existing businesses on the site of the new station. While we discussed that a relocation program would be implemented to help these businesses, participants worried that there might not be enough vacant spaces to support the businesses, and that the new station would contribute to rising commercial rents. Therefore, existing businesses should be given a first right to rent the retail spaces in the new building at comparable rents.

18. LOCAL BUSINESSES

Participants were very concerned about the wider impacts of the new station, particularly the possibility that the new station would encourage displacement of local businesses, not only at the project site itself, but also on the surrounding streets. Stores in the new building should be for a range of business, small restaurants, galleries, and entertainment; and should be targeted to local vendors and small businesses. Participants were very excited about the possibility of a “tea break” shop at the station that would serve local residents and workers. Moreover, there was a concern about keeping the type of small-scale businesses that thrive in Chinatown’s small retail spaces, rather than the larger chain-store type spaces. They specifically wanted to not permit chain stores or supermarkets. Therefore, the transit agency should support a community program in partnership with local organizations to recruit local commercial and community uses for the building, and run a night market/vendor program.

19. NIGHT MARKET AND VENDORS

One of the highlights of Chinatown for many participants is the recent night market that has been set up in Portsmouth Square, triggering memories of traditional night markets in China. Participants wanted to add to the activities and eyes that bring a sense of safety to the station, by providing space in the new open space and station entry for vendor stands – including permanent newspaper kiosks and non-permanent structures. Utility hookups could be provided to facilitate the vendor businesses. Therefore, the transit agency will facilitate a program for local vendors and night markets, including the possibility of programming a Night Market on the new public space or through temporary street closures on Washington Street.



20. VENDORS INSIDE THE STATION

While participants emphasized the commercial uses on the street, they also wanted to replicate the activity and liveliness that they associate with urban Chinese train stations. Therefore, the underground station platform should also include space for small vendors, such as newspaper vendors or tea vendors. The transit agency should work with local organizations that promote local micro-enterprises to recruit vendors, and should craft regulations as necessary to facilitate bringing local vendors to the station.



21. COMMUNITY USES AT UPPER COURTYARDS

Participants also saw a new building in Chinatown as providing opportunities for much-needed community uses. However, while they emphasized primarily retail uses on the ground floor, they saw that community uses, such as a Community Center or Youth Center, could occur on different floors. Moreover, by having these spaces look out directly over the station open space, they could help support the safety of the space by providing additional activity and eyes. This idea fits in well with Chinatown's traditional pattern of recessed balconies at upper floors, where households often grow plants, dry clothes, and place altars for the Chinese New Year. Therefore, provide space for a community use at the 2nd floor of the building, opening onto an upper courtyard looking over the new street level open space.



Night markets bring people out on warm evenings, and create a sense of safety at night.



GOAL 7: The station will be a symbol for Chinatown, and its design, landscaping and art will reflect Chinatown's community and history.

22. SYMBOLIC GATEWAY

Participants were excited about the role the new station would play as a new node for Chinatown. They saw the potential of the new station and building to become a symbol for Chinatown. Like the freestanding gateways (Pai Fang) used to identify districts within Chinese cities and Chinatowns across North America, the subway station will be an identifying marker for Chinatown. Therefore, the design should be a symbolic (not literal) structure or gateway for the neighborhood.



23. CULTURAL AND HISTORIC REFERENCES

The station could easily become a nondescript design, which could be placed anywhere in the city. The building and station design could contain cultural references like the Great Wall, the Beijing Bird's Nest stadium, the Forbidden City, or China's subway system. Public art should be located at the exterior of the station and in the open space (not just inside the station as currently contemplated), including banners, artistic paving, community art exhibits, murals, art pavement, or sculptures. Artwork should reflect the community, culture and history of Chinatown and Chinese immigration in San Francisco, including iconic characters, calligraphy, and Chinese paper cutting art.

24. FAÇADE ELEMENTS

Chinatowns are characterized by the density of signs and symbols attached to the walls of their buildings – they are rarely composed of clean or austere facades. Chinatown streetscapes are often filled with projecting signage, banners, balconies, as well as Chinese characters denoting concepts of good luck, blessings, and longevity. Workshop participants talked of integrating art into the façade of the new building, with things such as banners or cutout metal panels with contemporary interpretations of Chinese paper cut art, carvings, and calligraphy. Different faces of the new building could reflect different aspects of the community – for example, one face relating to the history of Chinatown, and the other one for contemporary artistic expressions. Advertisements, if any are allowed, should be kept inside the paid platform area, while more public spaces should be reserved for community art.



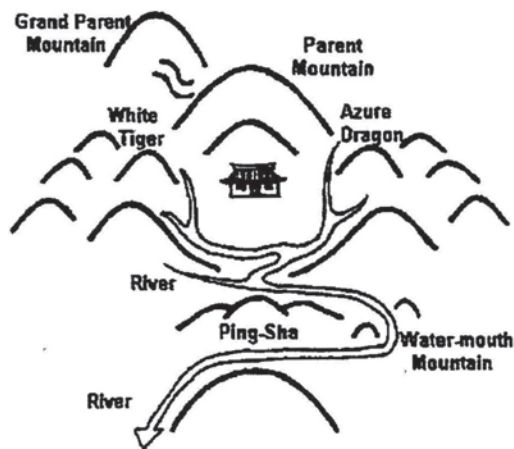
Examples of architectural "paper-cut" facades: Shenzhen Museum, HSBC Bank London, and proposal for Polish pavilion in Singapore.

25. COMMUNITY ART AND PROGRAMS

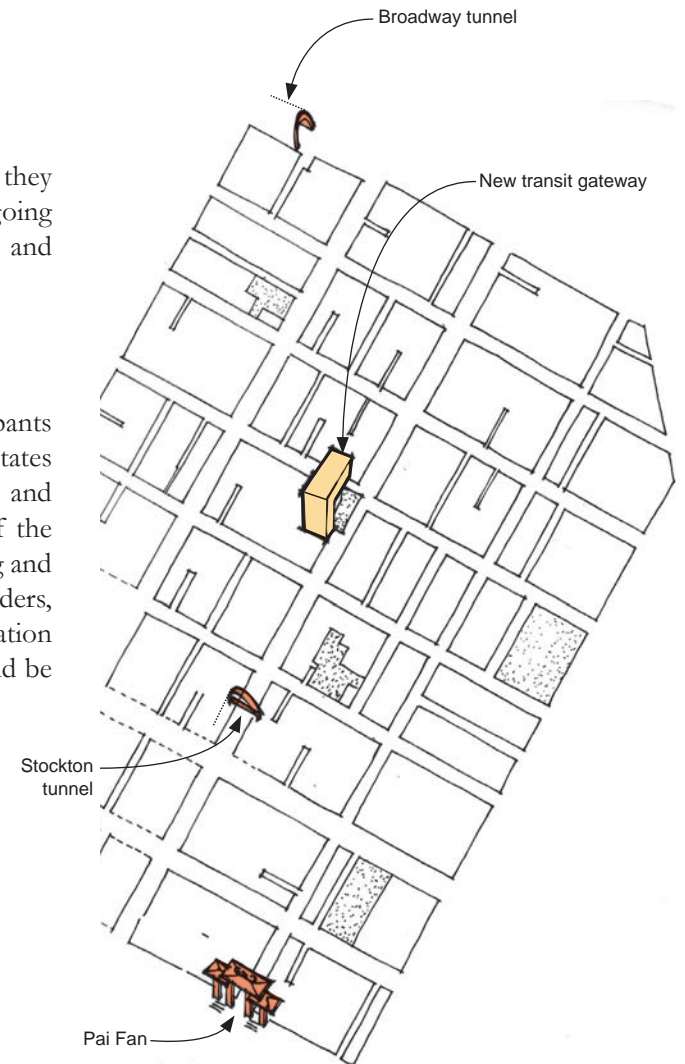
While participants want to see a big investment in art and design that reflects the neighborhood, they also want to make sure this new space provides opportunities to display the neighborhood's ongoing artistic creation. Therefore, provide space for rotating exhibits, including art & craft exhibits, and children's art.

26. FENG SHUI PRINCIPLES

Chinese culture has a deep design tradition embodied in the principles of Feng Shui, that participants insisted should be applied to the design of the station, building and open space. Feng Shui facilitates the smooth flow of energy in a space, creating "breathing space" and inviting healthy energy and proper circulation. The five directions are a key concept in Feng Shui, including the direction of the earth or center, represented by the color yellow, symbolizing dignity. The boundaries surrounding and embracing the spaces are especially important, as are natural elements such as flowing water, boulders, and plantings. These concepts would seem to work well with the idea of a new Chinatown station with a street level open space at its entry. Therefore, the station, building, and open space should be designed according to Feng Shui principles, with the help of a professional consultant.



Feng Shui diagram from "Feng Shui and Architecture," 1991.



The gates of Chinatown: the traditional Pai Fan to the south at Grant and Bush, the Stockton and Broadway Tunnels to the south and west, and a new gateway at Stockton and Washington, connecting Chinatown to the rest of the city.



GOAL 8: The new building above the station will fit into the neighborhood and will support community uses such as public space, community centers, and affordable housing.

27. EIGHT STORY HEIGHT

The ideal building height was the only area where there was significant disagreement among participants, some calling for a building no taller than the adjacent three-story church, others calling for a building as high as the adjacent Mandarin Tower. A primary concern seemed to be the shading impacts that the building might create on surrounding streets and the school (see “Sunlight Access” below). However, when given a chance to model the potential new building, participants created massing models that were generally in the range of the existing zoning – 80’ (or eight stories) for affordable housing developments. In addition, the participants mentioned that eight would be a good number of stories because it was a lucky number. Therefore, the new building should be not more than eight stories.

28. SETBACKS FOR SUNLIGHT ACCESS

A particular concern was how the building would impact the area around the station, especially the school playground to the west. Any new design should undergo shadow studies to determine a configuration that has a minimal impact on these spaces. Therefore, shape the new building to provide adequate sunlight access to adjacent open space.



29. UPPER STORY COURTYARDS AND ROOF GARDENS

Open space is a critical resource in Chinatown, as many workshop participants expressed. The new building provides opportunities for adding new open space, even small courtyards, not only at street level, but also at upper levels. These spaces, however, can also be visually linked to provide additional eyes on the street. Participants were also very excited about providing public access to the roof, including an accessible roof garden, similar to I-Hotel, or a revolving rooftop restaurant, that would provide views of Chinatown, and information about the station and building systems such as solar energy production. Therefore, the new building should provide public space in upper floor courtyards and gardens, overlooking the street and station entry.

Chinatown buildings have very active upper levels, with restaurants, community services, and all-important greenery.

30. WRAPPING AROUND COURTYARDS

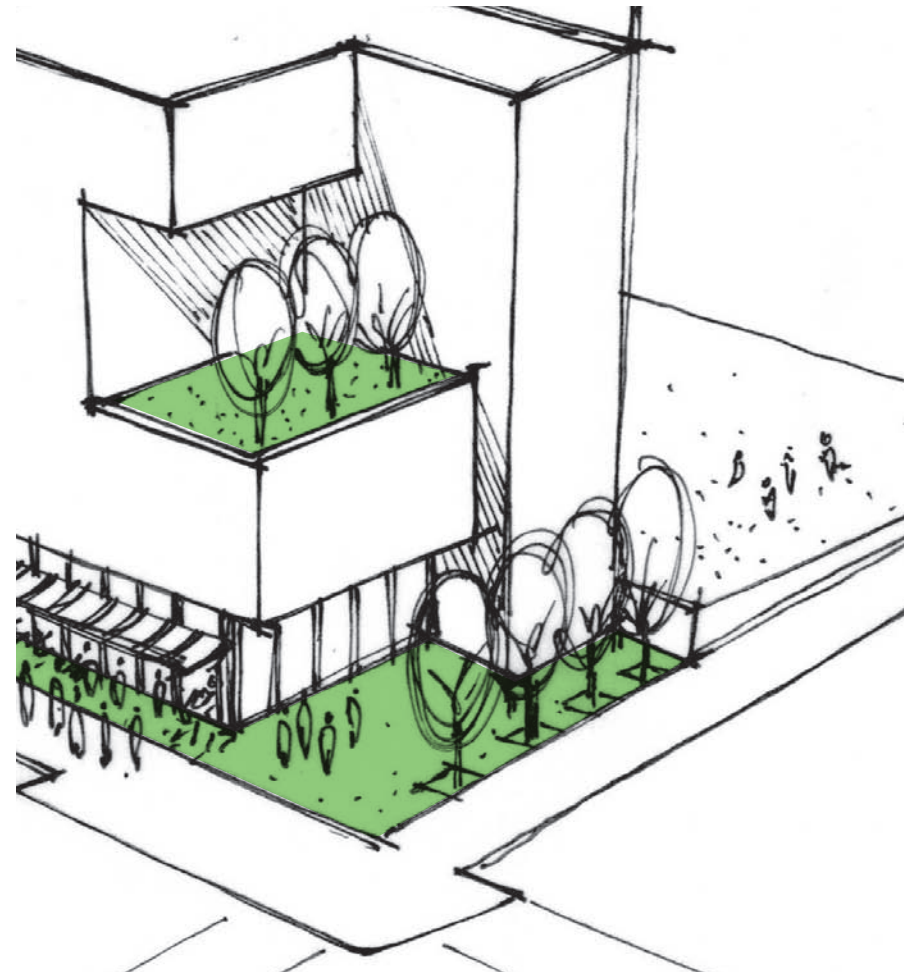
Workshop participants were very open to the idea of a building that was not a simple block, but which wrapped around a series of courtyards at different levels (see Appendix for photos and diagrams of the workshop models). However, they also reiterated that the scale and articulation at the ground floor should relate to the older Chinatown buildings in the vicinity. A Feng Shui principle seeks to embrace spaces, creating a sense of enclosure and security. Therefore, the building should wrap around courtyards at different levels.

31. HOUSING FOR CHINATOWN RESIDENTS

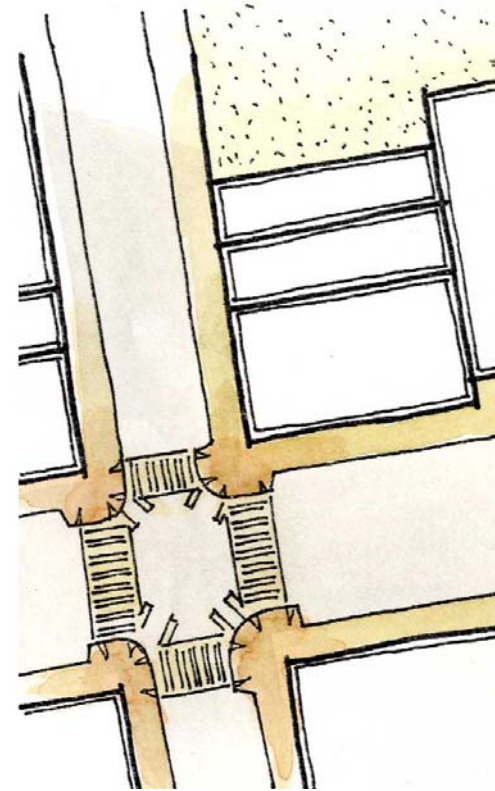
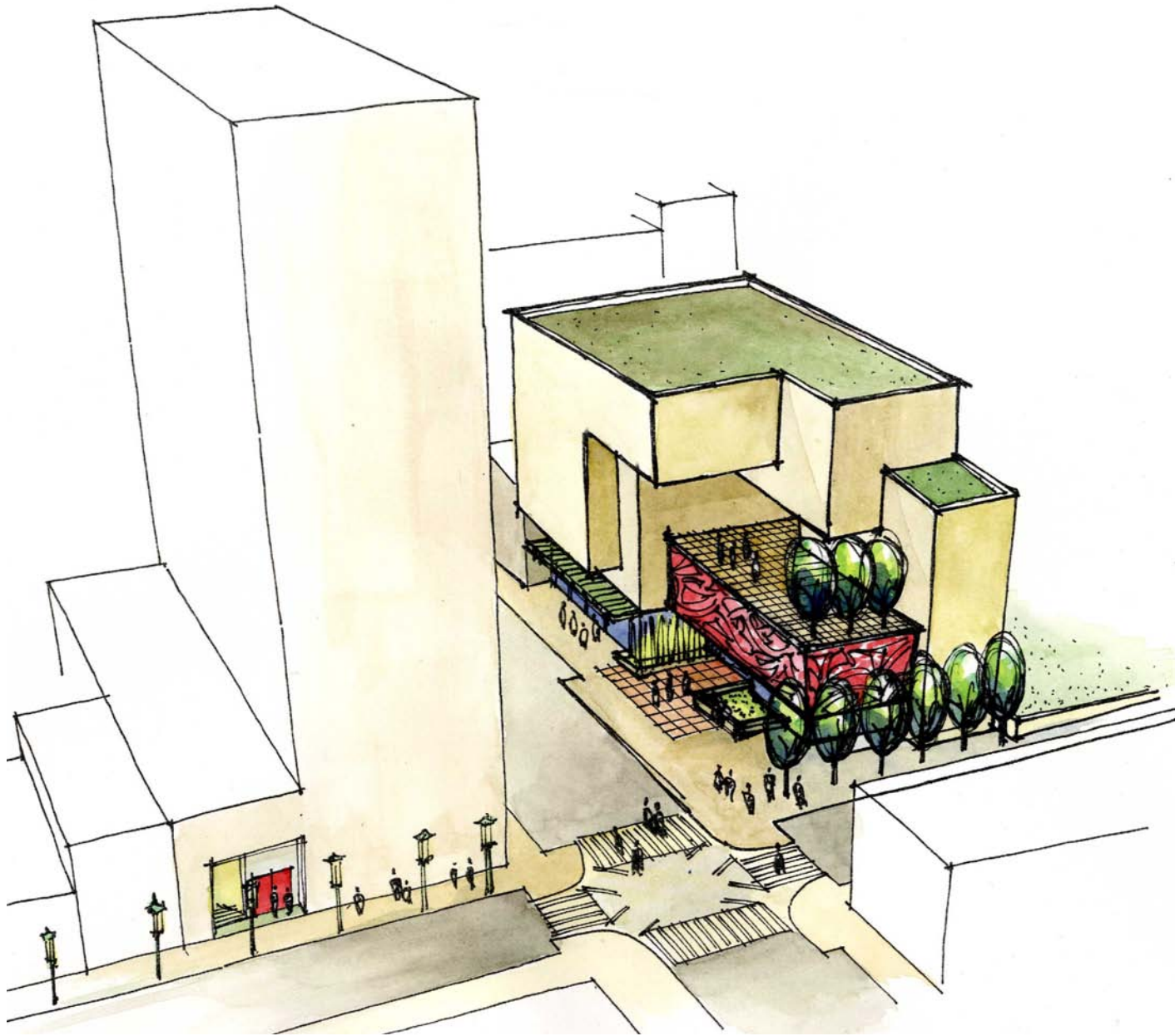
In addition to the concern about displacement of businesses at the building site, there was also a concern about the residents that would be displaced by the new station and building (there are approximately 14 residential units in the existing building). Moreover, concern was raised that a significant public investment like the subway construction is likely to impact rents in the vicinity, making the area even more unaffordable. The Chinatown Area Plan and zoning specifically designates this area as a place for incentivizing affordable housing, by providing a variable height limit that allows up to 80' heights for affordable housing only. Therefore, the residential floors of the new building should be reserved for affordable housing affordable to Chinatown residents.

32. GREEN BUILDING

Participants also saw the new building as an opportunity for bringing green technologies into Chinatown, looking towards the future at the same time that the building would respect Chinatown's history and scale. Therefore, the new building should be a green building, with solar panels, wind turbines, a green roof, and the use of sustainable materials.



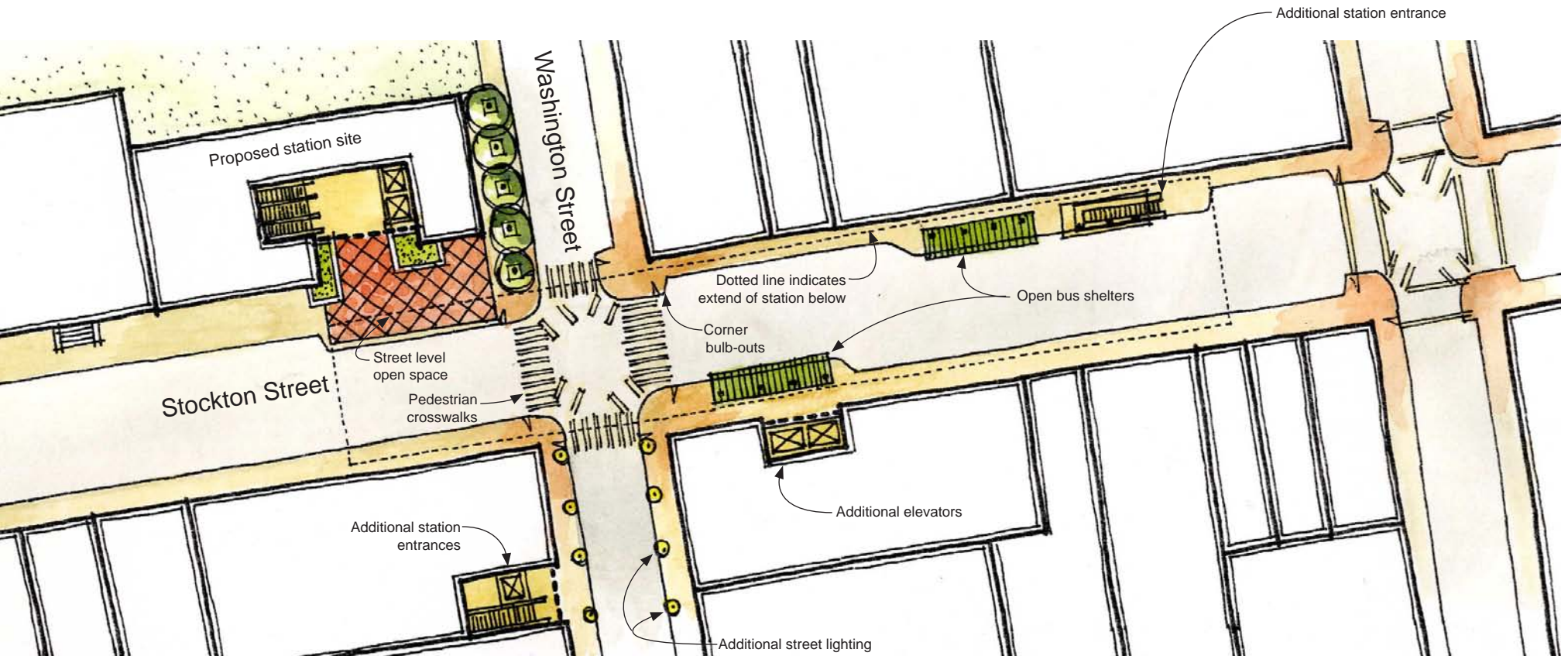
This sketch illustrates how the new building could wrap around the new street-level open space, create upper level courtyards, bring greenery to the street, and step back to allow sunlight access.



Six: Conclusions

Transforming the community's vision into reality

The design shown here illustrates several of the most important concerns highlighted by the Chinatown community at our workshops. Using the MTA concept design as its starting point, residents imagined the station as a new gateway into Chinatown, an equivalent to the Pai Fang gate at the southern end of Grant Avenue, integrating the district people live, work and play into the geography of San Francisco's light-rail system. Chinatown residents recognize the character of Chinatown as a distinct space from downtown's version of "modernity." The new station creates opportunity for innovation with respect to design that incorporates the multiple identities and imagination of Chinatown's contemporary residents. The design incorporates large-scale public art into the façade, and respects Feng Shui design principles, wrapping around the new courtyards and stepping back to allow sunlight into the adjacent streets.



The design shows several additional entrances, many with elevators that are critical for the Chinatown population. At a minimum, a second entrance should be provided – for safety, for flow of people, practicality, etc. The design also recognizes the critical need for public space in Chinatown, and the function of small oases and upper level courtyards to provide green open space within the density of the district. Moreover, with the new pedestrian and bus transfer traffic that the station will bring to Stockton and Washington, it sees this as an opportunity to implement much needed street and sidewalk improvements in the immediate area of the station.

The new construction does not happen in a physical space devoid of habitation – it has a responsibility to preserve and expand existing social and economic relationships, meaning businesses, markets, community activities, and housing for Chinatown’s residents. It should reinforce and support the function of Chinatown as a regional and local marketplace, making local vendors, storefronts that open onto the street, and signs that direct tourists to Grant Avenue, an integral component of the design. Recognizing the potential gentrification impacts of this new development on its surrounding low-income community, the building itself would provide space local businesses and vendors at the ground floor, space for community activities at upper level courtyards, and critical affordable housing units up to an eight story height.

We hope the guidelines and the conceptual design presented here will spark a much-needed dialogue between the Chinatown community and city agencies about how to shape investments that truly serve the community and the city.

Appendix 1

Central Subway Planning Workshop Participants

Workshop 1: October 22, 2008

37 Participants

Andrew Chen, SRO Youth
Ann Panopio, Asian Neighborhood Design (AND)
Bai Hui Huang, Visitacion Valley Parents Association (VVPA)
Ben Nong Li, Community Tenants Association (CTA)
Cecilia Wong, Interpreter
Cindy Wu, Chinatown Community Dev't Center (CCDC)
Clarrissa Cabansagan, AND
Cathie Lam, CCDC
Tan Chow, CCDC
Diana Pei Wu, AND
Enoch Fung, CCDC
Feng Zhang Huang, Chinatown Resident
Fernando Marti, AND
Guang Wu Chen, Ping Yuen Resident (PYRIA)
Guihua Zeng, Chinatown Resident
Hoi Chung Wong, CTA
Jade Wu, SRO Families Collaborative
Jenny Deng, Chinese Progressive Association (CPA)
Juan Calaf, AND
Judy Kuang, CCDC
Kam Yee Kwok, CTA
Kwong Heung, CPA
Li He Wu, CPA
Mandy Yu, CPA
Max Kwok, AND
Ng Yim Kee, PYRIA
Qing Zhi Deng, CTA
Ronghai Lao, International Hotel Senior Housing Inc. (ISHI)
Scott Mo, SRO Youth
Siu Ying Tsang, PYRIA
Suki Wen, CPA
Tammy Hung, CCDC
Un Un Chu, VVPA
Yi Peng Yu, SRO Youth
Yue Hua Yu, SRO Families Collaborative
Yue Xian Mo, Chinatown Resident
Zhen Zi Hao, SRO Youth

Workshop 2: November 17, 2008

47 Participants

Aisem Huan, Chinatown Resident
Amy Yuen, VVPA
Andrew Chen, SRO Youth
Ann Panopio, AND
Bai Hui Huang, VVPA
Ben Nong Li, CTA
C.K. Ng, Chinatown Resident
Cecilia Wong, Interpreter
Cindy Choy, VVPA
Cindy Wu, CCDC
Cathie Lam, CCDC
Tan Chow, CCDC
Clarrissa Cabansagan, AND
Demian Minjarez, AND
Enoch Fung, CCDC
Feng Zhang Hum, Chinatown Resident
Fernando Marti, AND
Guang Wu Chen, PYRIA
Hoi Chung Wong, CTA
Jade Wu, SRO Families Collaborative
Jeremy Till, CCDC
Juan Calaf, AND
Judy Kuang, CCDC
Julia Metz, AND
Kam Yee Kwok, CTA
Kelly Huang, VVPA
Lan Ying Wong, CTA
Lehmann Sio, CCDC
Max Kwok, AND
Mona Tamari, Kuon Hemni Architects
Pui Ling Che, VVPA
Qing Zhi Deng, CTA
Scott Mo, SRO Youth
Su Yun Zhen, VVPA
Sui Ying Tsang, PYRIA
Tammy Chan, CCDC
Thi Mai Nguyen, CTA, Chinatown Resident
Tse Shek Yuen, VVPA

Tuan Situ, VVPA
Un Un Chu, VVPA
Vivian Chang, CCDC
Wei Fung Yan, ISHI
Wendy Lan, Chinatown Resident
Ye Zhen Li, Chinatown Resident
Yi Peng Yu, SRO Youth
Yue Xian Mo, Chinatown Resident
Zhen Zi Hao, SRO Youth

Appendix 2

Workshop 1 and 2 Descriptions



Workshop 1 – Developing a shared vision

The first community workshop was held on October 20, 2008. The intent of Workshop 1 was to develop a shared vision with Chinatown community members and to determine the goals around the design for the subway station planned for the intersection of Stockton and Washington streets. At this workshop, community members had a chance to discuss shared concerns surrounding the proposed station, and developed a set of community goals.

Thirty-eight community members attended this workshop, including a diverse group of youth, seniors, parents, SRO tenants, other Chinatown residents and members of different Chinatown community-based organizations. These included members of AND, CCDC, CPA, CTA, ISHI, PYRIA, SPA, SRO Families Collaborative and VVPA. The outreach was conducted by CCDC.

Participants were paired to have an opportunity to introduce each other by asking the other person, “How did you get here today?” Afterwards people shared what they had learned about their partner to initiate a dialogue about Chinatown. Following this small ice breaker, CCDC staff welcomed everyone to the workshop series and explained the goals of the workshop: where MTA is in planning a Central Subway station for Chinatown; that CCDC was hired by MTA to conduct this community process; and that this workshop would be part of two workshops that would build from each other. CCDC explained that by the end of the workshops the following decisions would be made: Location for entrances, conceptual design of entrances, design of public spaces/open space/lobby, design of adjacent streets, and guidelines for a new building (stores, housing, massing, etc.); create conceptual designs/guidelines for the station, streets, and building.



The workshop started with a short slide presentation by AND, to give context about the site and neighborhood. The slides included examples of subway stations in San Francisco and around the world in addition to examples of public art and business activities at subway stations. Slides included photographs of the chosen site for the Central Subway Station and its surroundings; examples of subway stations in San Francisco; examples of subway stations around the world; examples of public art works in and around subway stations; and examples of vendors and/or business activities in or around subway stations.

The presentation was followed by small group breakout sessions where participants engaged in a discussion guided with questions around the visioning and design for the station. Some of the questions dealt with

the station and street design, as well as adjacent uses. Each group was given a set of maps to contextualize the discussions. The maps included the station site, community buildings, sidewalk, bus routes & bus stops. One map showed the entire area of Chinatown including the proposed station. The second map showed the proposed station site and one block radius area surrounding the site. Both maps showed an overlay of the transit routes and major destinations (Chinese hospital, schools, etc.). Facilitators were given the following guiding points to address to their groups: locate where you live or work on the map; how do you get around Chinatown?; where do you take the bus?; and how do you get to and from Chinatown?

Visioning. These questions were answered by all groups while a note-taker noted comments on easel pads.

1. What would you like to see for the new station and the surrounding block?
2. What do you want it to feel like – for example, like a downtown subway station? the area around the Grant Street gate? another neighborhood or country? Prompt for facilitator: refer back to the slides.
3. How should we design the station so that it serves as a symbol for Chinatown?
4. What would you want to change or NOT SEE in the area around the stations?

Station Design Issues. Each group was assigned to a set of design questions. There were the three sets of questions. A note-taker recorded comments on easel pads.

1. The station will likely be located at the intersection of Stockton and Washington streets. What corners should the subway exits be located?
2. What are your concerns about the entrances/exits for different users? Prompt: do you think there are different concerns for workers, youth, seniors, parents with small children, disabled people, and tourists?
3. Do you prefer an entrance inside a building? on the sidewalk? or on a plaza?
4. Which way do you prefer for getting up and down to the underground station (stairs, escalators, elevators)? Prompt: do you have specific concerns about the escalators or elevators?
5. How do you think that the station could include local artists and art?

Street Design

1. How do you want to change the streets around the new station? Prompt: is it too crowded, too dark at night, etc.?
2. Are there bus routes and stops that should be moved to connect with the subway?



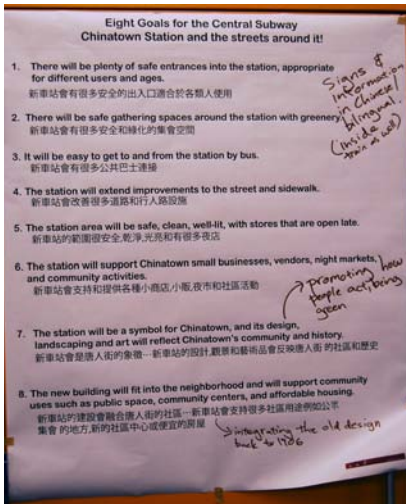


3. How do you think that the street improvements could include local artists?

Adjacent Uses

1. What uses do you want to see in this building? Prompt: at the street level? on the upper floors? inside the underground station level?
2. What do you want the station and building to feel like? Prompt: Like downtown, like Grant Street, like a park, etc.?
3. Given that this project has an enormous budget and huge impacts, what benefits would you like the project to provide to the community?
4. How do you think that the new building could include local artists?

Large Group Discussion. Small group facilitators were asked to identify the priority items and report back to the large group. Participants were asked to identify any other issues that small groups had not identified. A note-taker wrote these down on large butcher paper. The workshop ended with an evaluation. Participants were asked the following: what did you like about the workshop?, and what was missing from the workshop? Workshop facilitators identified the priorities that the community wants to see included for the new station. These goals were summarized into eight community goals, including additional entrances into the station; a safe gathering space at the main station entry; easy access to buses; improvements to the street and sidewalks around the station; locally-owned stores that are open late and a night market; and a station that will be a symbol for Chinatown, designed according to Feng Shui principles.



Workshop 2 – Developing design concepts and guidelines

The second community workshop was held on November 18, 2008. Based on the eight goals identified in Workshop 1, the participants were given an opportunity to make informed decisions for the building design and streetscapes with a series of design games. At this workshop, community members had a “hands-on” chance to address the design of the public areas of the station. Concerns included access into and out of the station, as well as street and sidewalk improvements. There was also an opportunity to look at the building massing in relation to public open spaces at the site. Based on the eight goals identified at the first workshop, participants were given an opportunity to make informed decisions for the design of the station and surroundings through a series of design games. AND constructed a series of design games using a

scale model of the site and large maps. These design games allowed workshop participants design to their own station, streetscapes improvements, and massing for a building above the station.

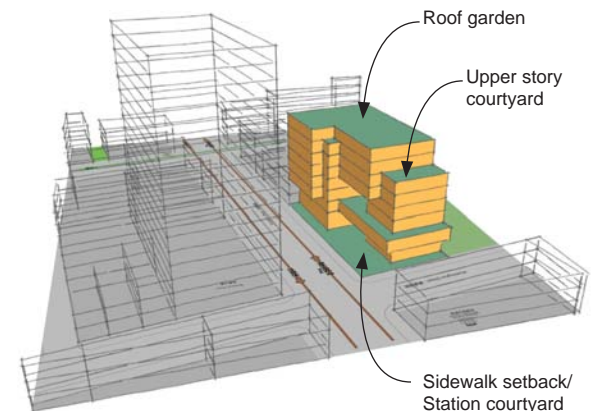
Forty-eight community members attended this workshop. Participants from Workshop 1 were asked to come back for Workshop 2. More than half of the participants had attended Workshop 1. As with the first workshop they were comprised of a diverse group of Chinatown residents and community members: SRO tenants, youth and seniors; and members of AND, CCDC, CPA, CTA, ISHI, PYRIA, SPA, SRO Families Collaborative and VVPA. Outreach was conducted by CCDC organizers working alongside CPA and CAA organizers. The entire workshop was conducted in Cantonese with exception to some consecutive English to Cantonese translation.

As a quick ice-breaker, attendees who had participated in Workshop 1 were asked to reflect on what they had learned and share it with the rest of the group. Following this there was a brief synopsis of Workshop 1 as well as an outline of the goals for Workshop 2. Participants were introduced to the following: Workshop 1 was about clarifying people's concerns and developing a shared vision to get a consensus on the goals. The goal of Workshop 2 is to create conceptual designs & design guidelines for the station, the streets, and building above. The workshop is part of a community-driven process and necessary to get community input since it was missing from MTA's original outreach. By the end of Workshop 2 decisions would be made for:

- a. Locations for the entrances
- b. Conceptual design of entrances
- c. Public spaces/Open spaces/Lobby
- d. Streetscape design
- e. General guidelines for a new building (stores, housing, massing, etc.) at the station

Slide Presentation & Discussion. AND staff presented slides that included a brief overview of MTA's Central Subway station plan, and a summary of the eight Goals from Workshop 1. Participants were given a chance to add anything they felt was missing from the goals provided. The slideshow included photographic examples and sketches of pieces used in the design games.

- a. Access to the Station – stairs, escalators and elevators.
- b. Public Space – plazas and sidewalk spaces.
- c. Street Furniture – bus stops, bus shelters, street lights, trash can, public restrooms, benches and sitting steps.





- d. Information Elements – kiosks, information signs and directional signs.
- e. Greenery – trees and planters.
- f. Public Art Elements – sculptures, paper cut art, art murals, art paving, art banners and mosaic benches.
- g. Activities and Building Uses – newsstands, vendor stalls, night market, small businesses, youth center and community center.



Building design exercise. Participants were divided into four groups. CCDC staff introduced the design game activities. Facilitator oriented participants to the 3-D model & the large map. Participants used the 3-D model provided to look at building design issues such as setbacks, building height, and open space/public space & sunlight access. Participants had to assemble a building model “insert” to fit into the context and explain how it met the goals established in Workshop 1. Participants were given the opportunity to make decisions for the future building at the site. They were asked to consider the Pro/Cons of their decisions. This was an opportunity to explore some alternatives to open space within the building and the exterior to the building. It was also an opportunity to think about the potential housing opportunities, building massing and height. At this scale participants were able to get a grasp of where extra entrances to the station could be, and think of where social activities (night markets, vendors, etc.) could take place. Each group was given a set of foam core pieces (each layer of foam core was one floor level) that represented the following uses: Building mass/Height (Orange), Open Space (Green), and Entry/Exit (Yellow). By the end of the exercise each group came up with one design for the building. A 3-d model “insert” was put together by the group and explained by a chosen group member. These questions were to be answered by all groups. Note-takers recorded comments on easel pads.

1. Should the building include a setback for Public Space? If so, how much?
2. Should there be a public space somewhere within the building: at the ground level, at an upper floor or a community space (enclosed public gathering space)?
3. How tall should the building be? Think of the impact of the shadows to the surrounding spaces. Think of housing opportunities within the building.

Streetscape improvements. Each group was given a large map, showing a one block radius surrounding the station, and a set of design pieces to place on the map to express the design improvement on the street level. The purpose of this activity was to look at the streetscapes design issues: transit improvements, street furnishings, greenery, public art, etc. For this exercise the participants had a set of game

pieces. Together, they made decisions about what street improvements they wanted to see around the station. The pieces were labeled in 5 different categories:

1. Transit, Bus Stop, Bus Shelter, Corner Bulb out, Sidewalk widening, Escalator, Elevator, Information Kiosk, Public Restrooms, Street Lights, Open/covered Stairs
2. Landscaping, Planters, Benches, Grass/Greenery, Trees, Plaza - Enclosed/outdoor
3. Businesses: Night market, Vendor Stall, Small Business
4. Art: Art paving, Art banners, Mural, Sculpture
5. Community: Youth Center, Community Center

Participants were provided with extra colored paper and scissors to create their own design pieces as they saw fit. Participants were encouraged to draw with the provided color markers on the map. These questions were answered by all groups. Note-taker noted comments on easel pads.

1. Where are opportunities for art within streetscape or building design? Walls? Sidewalk/pavement, etc.?
2. One stair or escalator area vs. more (If more then where?)
3. One elevator area or more?
4. Exits location: exits to street?; exits to public space (courtyard, plaza)?; exits to into lobby?

Participants were asked to identify the priority items on butcher paper (or put stars next to important design elements) for each game. A representative of each group reported back to the large group. Each group had a chance to make a small presentation of the outcome of the design games. Following small group presentations, a facilitator from AND summarized the key points that came out of the workshop for everyone.

Based on these workshops, AND synthesized the community-created concepts into a series of design guidelines, described in Chapter Five, and a design concept illustrated in Chapter Six.



