



Building an Equitable Economy

Old Town Chinatown Redevelopments: Block 25 and 4th/Burnside:

Focus Group Meeting Summary

Prepared for:

Prosper Portland

Prepared by:

JLA Public Involvement

December 2018

Overview

Based on feedback from stakeholder interviews in September and October 2018, Prosper Portland conducted five focus group meetings with the Chinese community, Japanese community, the general public and Old Town Chinatown (OTCT) residents, and the Old Town Community Association from November to December 2018. Two meetings were held with the Chinese community to capture feedback from community members living in outer East Portland who have either lived or owned a business in OTCT or have a general interest in the redevelopment opportunities in OTCT.

- **Chinese Community (East side)** - November 19, 5:30-8 pm at Asian Health and Service Center
- **Chinese Community (West side)** - November 20, 5:30-8 pm at Prosper Portland
- **Residents & General Public** - November 26, 5:30-8 pm at Prosper Portland
- **Japanese Community** - November 29, 5:30-8 pm at Prosper Portland
- **Old Town Community Association** - December 5, 5:30-8 pm at Prosper Portland

The purpose of each meeting was to:

- Share information and answer questions about Old Town Chinatown, its history, the purpose and goals of the Action Plan and the current redevelopment efforts underway for Block 25, 4th & Burnside and the Broadway Corridor.
- Understand community needs and benefits, and possible issues to mitigate or avoid as a result of redevelopment of Block 25 and 4th & Burnside, and identify interested parties to participate in the Stakeholder Advisory Group.
- Review next steps and the decision-making process.

Focus Group Meeting	Number of Attendees
Chinese Community (East side)	56
Chinese Community (West side)	57
Residents & General Public	10
Japanese Community	17
Old Town Community Association	24

All the focus groups combined drew 164 participants.

Engagement Format

At each meeting, participants had time to mingle with community members, enjoy food and refreshments, view display presentations regarding each site including Broadway Corridor, and talk with the Prosper Portland staff. Local vendors from the Jade District and Old Town Chinatown catered the food. Translation of materials and interpreters were provided at the two Chinese community meetings.

After welcoming participants and introducing the Prosper Portland project team and public involvement consultants, staff provided a brief overview of each site and details about the existing opportunities and constraints. Participants then broke into smaller groups of 2-3, depending on the number of people present, to discuss the following questions about Block 25 and 4th & Burnside:

- **Opportunities:**
 - What needs and gaps currently exist in the neighborhood that need to be filled to foster a vibrant, livable community?

- What use or uses of each of the sites specifically (4th & Burnside and Block 25) would help to honor and preserve the area's culture and history?
- **Barriers:**
 - What should be avoided or mitigated with any future use of this site?
- **Partnerships:**
 - What opportunities for partnerships exist between community and developers as the development moves forward?

Each group reported out on the outcomes of their discussion and answered any additional questions from participants. A project team member reviewed next steps in the project timeline and the decision-making process, and asked participants to complete a comment form to provide additional feedback and indicate whether they would be interested in joining the Stakeholder Advisory Group. To conclude the meeting, participants had the opportunity to win a raffle prize which included a combination of gift certificates and admissions tickets to cultural history museums, events, destinations, stores, and restaurants in Old Town Chinatown.

Outreach and Notification

Stakeholder groups included neighborhood associations, various Chinese and Japanese community organizations and nonprofits in Portland and the region, Chinese Tongs, business associations, the Oregon Nikkei Endowment, the Portland Chinatown History Museum, local businesses, and residents. Organizations, stakeholders, and community members were notified of the focus groups through the following methods:

- **Email invitations and phone calls to stakeholder list:** The project team requested stakeholders to spread the word about meeting dates with their community and networks.
- **Project website:** Prosper Portland developed a dedicated webpage for the project on their main website. The page included reminders about focus group dates and event details, and other relevant project materials.
- **Door-to-door canvassing:** The project team canvassed businesses and residents in Old Town Chinatown and the Jade District to distribute postcards and translated fact sheets. Postcards included all meeting dates. Flyers promoted the general public focus group and were posted around Old Town Chinatown and the Jade District.
- **Newspaper ads:** Prosper Portland placed ads in the Asian Reporter, the Portland Chinese Times, and Portland Chinese Media promoting the Chinese community focus groups and generating awareness of the project.
- **Community Engagement Liaisons:** The City of Portland Community Engagement Liaisons program recruited members of the Chinese community to participate in the session held on November 19 in the Jade District.

Key Themes

The following are overall key themes from all the focus groups:

- **Honoring history and culture:** Participants shared widespread agreement that any future development, through both its use and design, should honor and respect the multicultural history of OTCT. They had deep concern that the historical significance of the area will be forgotten by future generations.

- **Culture and/or community space:** Many community members expressed a desire for a museum or cultural center for all ethnicities that were a part of OTCT's history including Japanese, Chinese, African American, and Indigenous communities. Uses could include space for cultural activities and performances, festivals, and galleries.
- **Housing:** There is a strong desire for market-rate housing. Some community members acknowledged the need for and are open to affordable housing or mixed-income housing, while others expressed opposition to developing affordable housing on these sites.
- **Property and Business Ownership:** Participants noted that while Portland has undergone a development and prosperity boom over the past decade, property and business ownership by people of color in OTCT has notably declined. This is an indicator that wealth creation opportunities have not been available to people of color in a neighborhood that at one time had a significant concentration of properties and businesses owned by people of color.
- **Social Services:** Many community members feel that the concentration of social services in OTCT has contributed to the area's blight and disenfranchisement. Although community members acknowledge the need and importance of such social services, participants expressed a desire for such services to be more spread out to the rest of downtown and/or the city.
- **Retail:** Many participants shared ideas for potential retail uses such as ethnic cuisines and restaurants, minority-owned business, retail that reflects different cultures, ethnicities, and/or geared toward youth, or an Asian-themed food hall similar to Pine Street Market. There was a strong desire for an affordable grocery store or a large Asian grocery store that can have a regional draw.
- **Safety:** Safety and crime were consistently major topics of concern for participants. Participants felt active retail space will create more eyes on the street and increase the perception of safety in the area.
- **Welcoming Environment:** Community members expressed that the neighborhood does not feel warm, welcoming, and inviting to multicultural groups who historically lived or worked here, especially to those of Chinese and Japanese descent.
- **Revitalization vs. investment:** Many community members agreed that incomes don't currently exist in the neighborhood to support revitalization, but without revitalization, it's difficult to incentivize investment. It's a chicken and egg scenario. Community members expressed that these two developments should be seen as a catalyst for future investment.
- **Building community trust:** Community members expressed a need to rebuild trust between Prosper Portland and the community. Community members perceive a lack of follow-through and transparency in past projects where the community has provided input. Community members expressed that it is important for developers and Prosper Portland to listen to the goals and desires of community and follow through on them. Most participants appreciated the opportunities to provide feedback thus far, and felt it was a good start in building trust.
- **Partnerships:** Community members expressed that developers and Prosper Portland should partner and collaborate with existing local institutions in the area, but also consider foreign investments to catalyze investment. Community members also expressed the importance of involving and informing the community throughout the development process to ensure transparency and accountability.
- **Block 25:** Many participants saw Block 25 as an opportunity to draw visitors in from Broadway Corridor, Union Station and across the bridge. Since it's a larger site than 4th & Burnside, community members see an opportunity for multiple uses such as retail, housing, and cultural and community uses.

- **4th & Burnside:** Many participants envisioned a mix of retail and a multicultural center since this site is located adjacent to the Chinatown Gate. Community members agreed that the use should draw people into OTCT. Many also agreed that the vision for the site should be in collaboration with existing uses to the north (Bing Kong Tong and Gee How Oak Tin).

Detailed Responses to Discussion Questions

What needs and gaps currently exist in the neighborhood that need to be filled to foster a vibrant, livable community?

- Vibrant and active streets.
- Safety at all hours of the day.
- Housing:
 - Strong desire for market-rate housing.
 - Some interest in affordable or mixed-income housing.
- Parking:
 - Additional parking is needed.
 - Need for free or discounted parking. Expensive parking is a barrier for the Chinese community living on the east side of Portland or Beaverton.
- Retail:
 - Retail activity, restaurants, and shops.
 - Uses that balance out the “entertainment” uses that currently exist.
 - No more night clubs, bars, and strip clubs.
- Business and Property Ownership
 - Opportunities for people of color with historic and cultural connections to the neighborhood to own property and operate businesses, especially those that cater to multicultural customers and visitors to the neighborhood seeking an authentic multicultural experience.
- Amenities:
 - Amenities for those that live and work in the neighborhood, such as affordable groceries, pharmacy, restaurants, public restrooms, better lighting, gym.
- Development that reflects and honors the culture and history of OTCT:
 - Japanese, Chinese, African American, Indigenous, etc.
 - Sense of community and diversity.
 - Chinese community expressed that OTCT is no longer prosperous for Chinese business owners.

What use or uses of each of the sites specifically would help to honor and preserve the area’s culture and history?

General Uses

- Retail:
 - Incentivize the developer to include a destination Chinese and Japanese restaurant on the ground floor at both sites.
 - Grocery store such as Kai market, Ranch 99, Uwajimaya, or Miniso which are affordable, multi-ethnic grocery stores.
 - Retail that reflects different cultures and ethnicities such as Daiso or an anchor store similar to Muji to draw people in regionally.
- Resource center that helps immigrants new to Portland navigate the city, particularly Chinese people who are drawn to the OTCT gate on 4th & Burnside
- Amenities:
 - Green space.
 - Public art.

- Good lighting for safety at all times.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience between Union Station, Block 25, and Lan Su Chinese Garden.
- Design:
 - The design should emphasize the culture. If an international design firm is designing Block 24, then why not Block 25? The design doesn't have to be a historic design but could be modern interpretation.
 - Use green infrastructure.
- Honoring History and Culture:
 - Multi-ethnic museum campus – creates a destination in OTCT for visitors and to support businesses.
 - Cultural center for indigenous people and African American communities (Oregon's Black Pioneers) – important to honor the indigenous community that came through the area.
 - A use that celebrates the multicultural history of the area is a priority (Japanese, Chinese, Native Americans, Greeks, Roma, Italians, etc.)
 - A family-friendly place for cultural performances, recreation, activities, and festivals.
 - Factor in preserving cultural significance of the area and economic development.
 - Create job opportunities for people in the area.
 - Mixed use – multicultural food center and staple food that are affordable.
- Housing:
 - Strong desire for market-rate housing.
 - Graduate student housing for University of Oregon students – it can be flexible housing such as housing for undergrads in the summer.
- Take advantage of the transit hub adjacent to the two sites.
- Parking should be provided.

Block 25

- Pine Street-style food market oriented around Asian cuisine, but that also provides an affordable grocery with staple Asian produce and foods.
- Block 25 is an opportunity to draw people through the neighborhood from Broadway Corridor and Union Station.
- Block 25 could have a programmed event space for cultural activities and festivals.
- Include a Japanese Tori gate at Block 25 to symbolize a north side gateway into OTCT.

4th and Burnside

- Utilize the Chinese gate as a landmark that complements the use of the site on 4th and Burnside.
- 4th & Burnside is too small a site to do something significant – capitalize on the opportunity to partner with adjacent properties (Bing Kong and corner lot) to develop a more cohesive vision along the entire block.
- Rotating cultural gallery to honor the history and culture of the neighborhood.

What should be avoided or mitigated with any future use of this site?

- Many agreed that additional social services are not needed in the area. There's a desire to integrate social services throughout the rest of Downtown Portland rather than concentrate within OTCT. The concentration of social services in OTCT is seen as a major impediment to investment and development of the area.

- Community members agreed that additional supportive housing and social services are not needed in the area; however, the community acknowledges that homelessness, crime, and drug use are serious issues in the area that need to be addressed.
- No need for additional office space.
- Avoid negative impacts such as occurred with development of the Festival Blocks. Prosper Portland and other City bureaus need to listen to and address the needs of businesses and residents.
- In the same way that the adjacent Pearl District has rapidly developed over the past decade while OTCT has been overlooked, care should be taken to ensure the adjacent Broadway Corridor does not attract development and investment to the detriment of OTCT.

What opportunities for partnership exist between the community and developers as the development moves forward?

- Consolidated support from existing community organizations.
- Create more social enterprises, entrepreneurs, and worker-owner business opportunities.
- Continue involvement with the community, especially younger generations who will continue to invest in the area.
- 4th & Burnside: Partner with adjacent property owners on the west side of the block to develop a cohesive vision for the block, not just the 4th & Burnside site.
- Look into potential foreign investments from Asia.
- Seek out partnerships with developers, property owners, and business owners with historic and cultural ties to the community.
- Partner and collaborate with existing local institutions, such as the Lan Su Chinese Garden, Portland Chinatown History Museum, Oregon Nikkei Endowment, the Chinese Tongs, PNCA, Central City Concern, Innovative Housing, University of Oregon, Portland Business Alliance, Portland Saturday Market, etc.
- Developers should meet with the community frequently to create shared sense of ownership and accountability.



Building an Equitable Economy

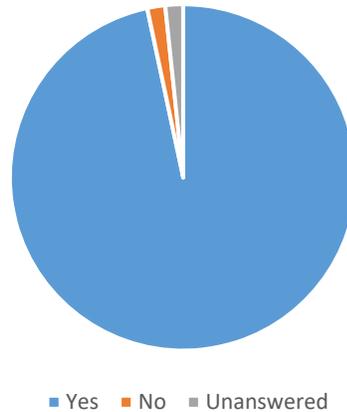
Old Town Chinatown Redevelopments: Block 25 and 4th/Burnside

Appendix A: Comment Card Results

Comment Card Results

Participants were provided comment cards at each focus group meeting to submit additional feedback. A total of 60 comment cards were submitted. Below are all responses to the comment card.

1. *Did this meeting provide you with adequate opportunity to share your perspective and ideas?*



2. *How would you describe a good relationship between Prosper Portland and you and your community?*

- Collaboration
- Quite good- frequent meetings w/ Old Town Community Association
- One where Prosper educates the community about how it works, and is transparent in its decision-making
- To continue to be genuinely enjoyed
- More involvement w/ African American residents & indigenous people with ties to this area
- I would describe the relationship as tenuous given they asked for the removal of Right 2 Dream 2. A community I was a part of.
- I am happy that Prosper Portland held such meeting to collect info from the public in order to build something that people want.
- So far so good. I believed the good relationship will be getting better/excellent!
- Prosper Portland is reaching out to the Chinese community a good start.
- Transparency on how decisions are made- how options are scored and ranked by weight of importance.
- Prosper is trying hard. Not much worthwhile.
- We want to have a Chinese culture brand similar to Chinatown.
- Good.
- Good closer connection
- Suggestions: 1) change the atmosphere in Chinatown (clean the streets, change the look) 2) Establish various community center for people to frequent, 3) Increase parking spaces of public transit to increase foot traffic in the area.
- We hope to have a new Chinese cultural community center in Chinatown and increase business opportunities.

- Because entrance arch that lead into Chinatown is a busy street, we hope that placing the building next to the arch will attract more a lot of these people to see the new attractions we want to include in it, such as: museums, restaurants, entertainment facilities, shopping centers and bars.
- Suggestions to building: 1) food court, 2) tourist attraction so people can remember it and increase chances of returning
- Be more transparent on developments. Post on website or discussion group.
- Regarding the Chinatown entrance building plan, the building should be built in a style that represents Chinese culture, similar to Lan Su Chinese garden to match Chinatown.
- Trusting relationship
- Have fun!
- Friend who organize block party!
- Chinese communities should be involved and participate in the development stage; more Chinese advisory members
- Any outcome that results in a vibrant Chinatown that is neither corporately boring nor tech bro playground
- Scale 1-10 = highest. For CACA Portland = 8. For tongs & fam assoc = 2 (trust lacking). For Lan Su = 9.
- Be a partner working together to make the area thriving
- Good relationship. Looking forward to excellent relationship.
- First time to hear it
- Prosper Portland did really good that to hold such meeting to respect our communities thoughts and comments/input
- More meetings will help build up better relationship
- A good relationship has been established. Me and my community with Prosper Portland
- Very well communicated and sharing good opinions
- Collaborative, but the community needs to realize that the decision belongs to Prosper Portland
- I am unsure what the relationship is
- Keep doing what you're doing
- Informative
- Good relationship
- Periodic meetings- Ask JA for history and cultural info
- Good relationship. I've sat on Old Town Historic District guidelines. Recipient of PIP grants for other projects.
- Continuing communication. Posting info on your website?
- Weighing heavily on the developers making sure they heard the community voice and respect the history here.
- Listen to each other and follow through. Say and do what they say they will.
- Open, clear communication. Transparency, respectful of voices and opinions. Inclusive
- One with open, frequent communication, and real follow-through when reacting to citizen concerns. They should be prioritizing mending the broken communities they caused by the city's choices in the past.
- Good