

UNDER THE AUTUMN MOON
中秋月下

NORTH OLD TOWN / CHINATOWN REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Prepared for the Portland Development Commission, Portland, Oregon
September 2008

Table of Contents

I	Executive Summary	1	VIII	Economic Overview	
				Development Economics and Market Analysis	63
II	Background and Context		IX	Implementation Recommendations	
	Past Studies	5		Currently Proceeding Measures	67
	Urban Planning Framework	8		Implementation Action Items Matrix	68
	Community Context	10			
III	Strategy Objectives			Appendix	
	Social Services Siting	11		I - Case Studies	
	Determining Community Development Objectives	13		Housing	A -1
	Charrette Process and Concepts	15		Cultural Centers	A -8
IV	Concept Scenarios for Blocks 24, 25, 26			Community Centers	A -9
	Urban Design Principles	21		Hotels	A-10
	Development Scenarios	24		Groceries	A-12
V	Glisan Plaza Scenarios			Parking	A-14
	Glisan Street Right-of-Way and			II - Detailed Market Analysis	A-17
	Gateway Enhancements	38		III - Scenario Economic Analysis	A-26
	Plaza Scenarios	40		IV - Social Services Site Discussion Overview	A-33
VI	Block A&N Scenarios				
	Block A&N	49			
	Development Scenarios	50			
VII	Historical Considerations				
	Types of Designations, Review, and Options	59			
	Site Specific Implementation Considerations	62			



Acknowledgements

This Project was sponsored by the Portland Development Commission. The study was conducted under the guidance of a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC).

Portland Delevopment Commission:

Bruce Warner
Lewis Bowers
Sarah Harpole
Peter Englander
Ross Plambeck
Leah Greenwood
Karen Perl Fox
Barbara Shaw
Art Hendricks
Pasqual Contreras

Portland Bureau of Planning:

Karl Lisle

Consultant Team:

DAO Architecture, LLC
David Horsley
Joann Le
Jeremiah Long

E.D. Hovee & Company, LLC

Eric Hovee
Tess Jordan

Barney & Worth, Inc.

Clark Worth
Kathy Fong Stephens

Stakeholder Advisory Committee:

Doreen Binder, *Transition Projects Inc.*
John Case, *Property Owner Representative (Joe Van Haverbeke)*
Brian Ferschweiler, *Blanchet House*
Greg Goodman, *Property Owner Represenative (Uptown Developers)*
Patrick Gortmaker, *Old Town/Chinatown Land Use Committee*
Richard Harris, *Central City Concern*
Blaine Hoggard, *Property Owner Represenative (JBH Properties)*
Betty Jean Lee, *Chinese American Citizens Alliance*
Gloria Lee, *Classical Chinese Garden*
Louis Lee, *Property Owner Represenative*
Richard Louie, *Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association*
Alexander Mace, *Resident (Old Town Lofts)*
Brian McCarl, *Property Owner Represenative (Fish Block Associates)*
Tim McCarron, *Property Owner Represenative (Green Gables)*
Carol McCreary, *Resident (Old Town Lofts)*
Michael Menashe, *Property Owner*
June Schumann, *Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center*
Carly Ritter, *Portland Business Alliance*
Steve Walti, *Property Owner Representative (Northwest Natural)*

Charrette Participants:

Doreen Binder-TPI	Bill Hart-Carleton Hart Architecture
John Case-Classic Chauffer	Bill Hoffman-PDOT
Tom Corrollo	David Hoof
Pete Eggspuehler-BEAM Development	David Horsley-DAO Architecture
Fern Elledge-TPI	Steve Iwata-PDOT
Tom Ellicott-Beardsley	Arun Jain-Portland Planning
Peter Englander-P.D.C.	Wade Lange-Ashforth Pacific
Brian Ferschweiler-Blanchet House	Joann Le-Dao Architecture
Karen Perl Fox-P.D.C.	Betty Jean Lee-CACA
Micheal Gaeta-OCOM	Louis Lee-Property Owner
Patrick Gortmaker	Gloria Lee-Classical Chinese Garden
Chris Hagerman	Rebecca Liu
Lisa Hamel-World Market	Karl Lisle-Portland Planning
Sarah Harpole-P.D.C.	Richard Louie-CCBA
Richard Harris-C.C.C.	Brad Malsin-BEAM Development

Special Thanks to these Additional Project Resources

John Carroll, Carroll Development
David Gold, Goldsmith Blocks
Skip Grodahl, GSL Properties
Craig Holmes, Artist
Suenn Ho, Mulvanny G2 Architecture Corp.
Gloria Jung, Oriented.com
Ed McNamara, Turtle Island Development LLC
D. Carter MacNichol, Shiels Oblatz Johnson
Anne Naito-Campbell, Bill Naito Company
Michael O'Connell, BPM Development
Jack Onder, ODEVCO Development
Laurence Qamar, Architect & Town Planner
Vernon Rifer, Real Estate Development Inc.
Jill Sherman, Gerding Edlen Development
Homer Williams, Williams & Dame Development
Rick Williams, Rick Williams Consulting

also: The Oregon Historical Society (for reproductions of Historical Chinatown photographs herein)

Brian McCarl - Fish Block
Rudy Munzel - Blanchet House
Larry Norton-District Resident
Ron Paul-Public Market
Dan Petrusich - Blanchet House
Doug Pugh - Ashforth Pacific
Laurence Qamar-Architect
Mark Raggett - Portland Planning
Carly Riter - PBA
June Schumann-Nikkei Legacy Center
Steve Walti-NW Natural
Dorian Yee-Bank of the West
Stephen Ying-CCBA

I Executive Summary

The North Old Town / Chinatown Redevelopment Strategy

District Overview

The historic Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood has served a vital role throughout this past century in the downtown waterfront district as well as Portland at large. It is a culturally pluralistic neighborhood with a uniquely diverse environment that historically has attracted newcomers, immigrants and other workforce populations with limited resources, including African Americans, Gypsies, Greeks, Japanese, and Chinese residents. Social service agencies such as Central City Concern, Union Gospel Mission, and Blanchet House also located in the area to provide support, food, and shelter and help to create a place where new immigrants and the working population found hospitality and understanding.

This area today maintains the diverse community aspect that includes social services, Asian and other businesses as well as a youthful demographic, attracted to the nightlife bars, arts, and music scene. This is a unique part of Portland, and its proximity to amenities such as the Classical Chinese Garden, Old Town Lofts, Pacific Tower, the new festival streets, light rail, and emerging Waterfront improvements offers strong links for this neighborhood which has the potential to develop into a unique welcoming gateway to the central city. Ironically, other factors have been at work in recent years to cloud the optimism for the area's potential to be a thriving neighborhood and desirable destination. Specific examples include the recent loss of several prominent asian restaurants and other businesses to SE 82nd Avenue, the lack of a grocery store (particularly one suited to the culture of the area) and other seemingly basic ingredients for viable neighborhoods. Community stakeholders also cite concerns about parking, impacts from gentrification, safety, and a lack of housing that balances low-income and supported workforce housing options. When viewed in a certain perspective, however, many of these physical and developmental challenges can also present opportunities.

Strategy Objectives

In late 2006, the North Old Town/Chinatown (NOTCT) Redevelopment Strategy was initiated by the Portland Development Commission (PDC), with the participation of a Stakeholder Advisory Committee consisting of area business owners, property owners, residents, social service providers, and members of the Asian community. The Strategy is a market analysis and urban design and planning effort to prepare a framework for future redevelopment in the North Old Town/Chinatown area, located in the Downtown Waterfront Urban Renewal Area.

The NOTCT Strategy builds upon the foundation of the community work that has been accomplished over the past several years in this area and neighboring districts, previous studies, reports, and plans: starting back with the 1988 *Central City Plan*, focusing more on the district with 1997's *Old Town/Chinatown Vision Plan*, the subsequent *Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan* two years later, the *OTCT 3rd & 4th Avenue Streetscape Plan* in 2002, as well as the *Update to the Vision and Development Plans* in 2003.



Aerial view of the study area from the southeast

NORTH OLD TOWN / CHINATOWN REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The primary focus of the strategy report is the area comprised of the 3 blocks directly north and northwest of the Classical Chinese Garden:

- **Block 25** (the '*Blanchet House/Dirty Duck Block*', bounded by NW Glisan, NW Flanders, NW 3rd and NW 4th) which is owned in part by PDC and the City of Portland and 1/16th of the block by Blanchet House,
- **Block 24** (the '*NW Natural Block*'), owned by the gas company ratepayers of Northwest Natural,
- **Block 26** (the '*Fish Block*' from its earlier history as a fish storage warehouse), privately owned, as well as
- Potential opportunity sites surrounding these blocks also considered in discussions and scenario development, such as **Block A&N** where the historic Fire House is located and which is owned by PDC and partially dedicated to Tri-Met.

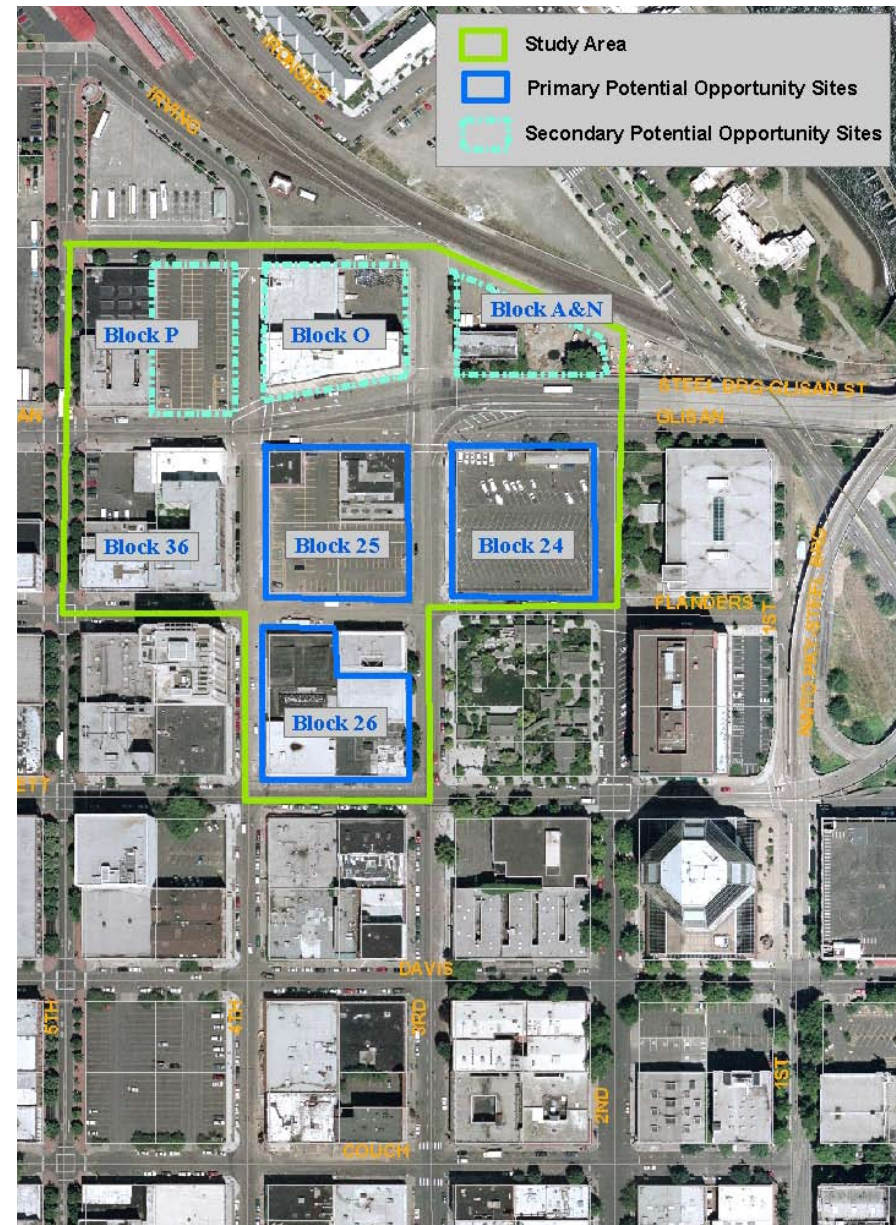
The NOTCT Redevelopment Strategy has two primary goals: 1) Provide direction on the short-term strategy for Block 25, focusing on the proposed Blanchet House expansion and its impact on the feasibility for redevelopment of the block, and 2) Report on the potential for revitalization on the blocks adjacent to Block 25 and develop potential redevelopment scenarios for the overall Study Area that reflect community values and priorities.

Strategy Process

Major components of the Strategy were:

- Community outreach to engage a wide range of people and develop partnerships and relationships to carry through identified priority actions,
- A stakeholder design charrette where participants envisioned and generated redevelopment scenarios,
- A financial market analysis of existing economic conditions and a conceptual financial analysis of the generated redevelopment scenarios,
- Refinement of the redevelopment scenarios showing a spectrum of options for uses, densities, open space opportunities, and ground floor urban design principles and strategies for the primary opportunity sites of Blocks 24, 25, and 26, and
- An implementation strategy outlining specific actions to guide public and private investment and lead to revitalization of key parcels and improved amenities in the area.

The work on the Redevelopment Strategy occurred in two main phases. The community outreach, charrette worksessions, redevelopment scenarios, and market and financial analysis, were completed in late 2006 and early 2007. In mid-2007, the Strategy process paused while discussions were held regarding the siting of an expanded and enhanced social service Resource Access Center operated by TPI on Block 25. At the completion of an exhaustive site search, this Center was located instead three blocks to the west (at Block U). A location for Blanchet House was finalized on Block 25 at the same time in early 2008. Finalization of the NOTCT Redevelopment Strategy then proceeded to the second phase.

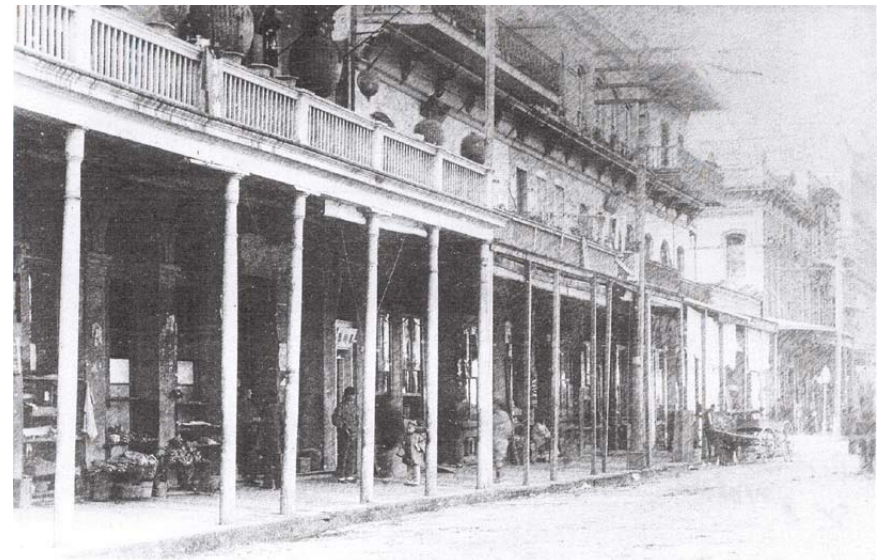


The North Old Town / Chinatown Study Area

This second phase included refinements to the conceptual phasing and configurations for Block 25, as well as open space concept scenarios for a Glisan plaza area directly north of Block 25, and redevelopment concepts for Block A&N, responding to the updated site influences during the pause in the Strategy work.

The community outreach, development scenarios, and market research all take a number of other factors and site-specific influences under consideration, including:

- A desire for compatible uses surrounding the Classical Chinese Garden, to enhance the overall visitor experience of this important resource within the district,
- Blanchet House's history in their present location and their proposed expansion,
- The NW Natural parking entitlement - 130 parking spaces are assigned to remain on Block 25, in exchange for NW Natural's donation of land for the Classical Chinese Garden,
- The need for an active and safe pedestrian street environment, which is currently lacking due to the abundance of surface parking lots and inactive storefronts,
- The potential of the study area blocks for synergy with the *3rd & 4th Avenue Streetscape Improvements* project, including the festival Streets on NW Flanders and NW Davis, and following through on a Glisan plaza that would close down the eastbound lane,
- A desire for cohesiveness and compatibility of uses and buildings, especially at the ground floor as the district evolves,
- Enhancing the connections and view corridors to the river and waterfront,
- Making connections with the addition of light rail on the 5th and 6th Avenue transit mall,
- Remaining cognizant of the boundaries of the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District and historic properties within the area,
- Taking advantage of the historical, and arts and cultural character already existing within the district and its surroundings, and
- The desire to strengthen the identity of the district with some form of northern gateway to Old Town/Chinatown, as well as emphasizing this location as a gateway to downtown from the Steel Bridge.



Old Town historical photograph, courtesy Oregon Historical Society



Panorama looking east, south, and west, with Block 25 at center

Findings and Implementation

Overall, the Strategy is intended to stimulate and guide revitalization in the area by providing an analysis of current conditions and emerging development opportunities (residential, commercial, and other), identifying community values and priorities, and reporting on needed public amenity improvements. Maintaining the diversity of the district (including affordable housing facilities and social service programs) is both important and assumed, as well as recognizing that a balanced neighborhood needs to continue to address both the perceived and real issues of this district character. The community at large, and the key district leaders specifically, have a real desire for discernable progress in this area.

The Strategy's scenarios provide a spectrum of alternative directions for Blocks 24, 25, 26, and A&N, depending on whether the market is ready to maximize the development potential on these specific parcels. A range of densities and phasing is illustrated and variants are included to inform the timing and nature of PDC investment in continued revitalization of the area, including future solicitation for redevelopment proposals from interested developer teams.

Blanchet House is poised to proceed, and out of this study's implementation strategy comes definitive action items and implementable milestones on those affected parcels, as well as other district property acquisition possibilities. The implementation strategy notes the significant policy and bricks-and-mortar progress that has been within the district during the course of the study, as well as lists a myriad of additional action items in the following areas:

- Community Involvement and Partnership Building,
- Arts, Culture, History, and District Identity Measures,
- Housing Stimulus Measures,
- Commercial and Retail Oriented Measures,
- District Parking and Access Measures,
- and Block Specific Recommendations for development on Blocks 24, 25, 26, and A&N.

To further aid implementation of the Strategy, an appendix is included which documents:

- More in-depth case study information on relevant example facilities for housing, cultural and community centers, hotels, groceries, and parking uses.
- Detailed market analysis and economic proforma information on selected development scenarios (generated in 2007, as the market was beginning its current correction), and
- A brief overview of the stakeholder site discussions regarding Blanchet House and the TPI/Resource Access Center.

Future of the District

The successful Autumn Moon Festivals have shown that thousands of participants are interested in coming to this area for authentic cultural experiences and that people are drawn to the Chinese Garden and the traditions and history of Old Town/Chinatown. New and potential initiatives in the surrounding area (e.g. the University of Oregon program at NW 1st and Couch, the renovated DeSoto Arts Building at NW Broadway and Davis, the Mercy Corps headquarters near Skidmore Fountain, small creative work spaces, light rail system improvements, as well as the Davis and Flanders Festival Streets and the East of Pearl Building are bringing benefits, vitality, and activity to the redeveloping northern area of Old Town/Chinatown. We are optimistic that the North Old Town/Chinatown Redevelopment Strategy will contribute to the positive evolution of this diverse, historically rich neighborhood - balancing important social, economic, and cultural elements for the people who live, work, and play there.



Autumn Moon Festival activities

II Background and Context

Brief Synopsis of Previous Reports

This Redevelopment Strategy must be reviewed within the context of a long history of comprehensive planning and urban design studies, starting back with the *Central City Plan* of 1988, evolving into 1997's *Old Town / Chinatown Vision Plan*, the subsequent *Old Town / Chinatown Development Plan* two years later, the *Update to the Vision and Development Plans* in 2003, and sandwiched in-between, (in 2002) the *Old Town / Chinatown 3rd and 4th Avenue Streetscape Plan*. A brief overview of these pertinent past reports is listed below.

This planning and urban design legacy forms the context for the broader district. The purpose of this document is to build upon the context of these documents with a more specific redevelopment strategy for the study area in question.

Central City Plan, 1988

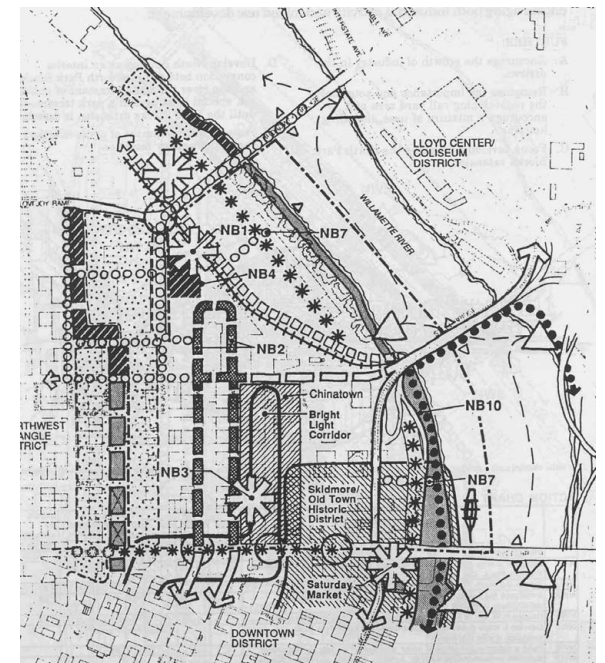
While far reaching in scope and covering the whole of the central city, the North of Burnside Urban Design Plan references several specific goals and actions pertaining to the area surrounding the current study blocks. They include:

- Preserving and enhancing the district's architectural character and international character,
- Focus development along the extended transit mall
- Maintain those social services in the area while supporting business activities and development opportunities,
- Pursue implementation of the Chinatown Development Plan,
- Preserve and maintain up to a maximum of 1282 SRO housing units and shelter beds.
- Limit the maximum number of permanent shelter beds to 252 and allow the replacement of all district shelter beds with SRO housing units.

In addition, several specific North of Burnside action items affecting the current study area were noted:

- Establish an Asian Market with a rooftop public plaza or Chinese Garden on the block bounded by 4th, 5th, Couch, and Davis Streets.
- Provide 'Portland Ornamental' cast iron lighting standards throughout the district.
- Maintain a community center for area residents with clean-up facilities, medical support, and a job bank.
- Build North of Burnside District gateways in locations shown on map, including additional cultural gateways on the north side of Burnside
- Increase the supply of housing for no and low-income individuals.
- Develop a strategy to reinforce the international character of this area.

The Human Services Sector was addressed with several recommendations, and three main items of note: establish a centralized human services info center; establish a youth center offering recreational programs, health care, counseling, and job placement; and conduct an additional study developing a city-wide plan to guide the siting and expansion of social services facilities.



Downtown Waterfront excerpt from the Central City Plan



Excerpt from the Old Town / Chinatown Development Plan,
by Thomas Hacker and Associates, Architects, P.C.

Old Town / Chinatown Vision Plan, 1997

This collaborative document brought together representatives of the neighborhood's diverse stakeholders and set forth a series of agreements, addressing five main areas. Periodic updating of the vision was recommended to create a living document. The five main areas were:

- Communication/Conflict Resolution reinforced the neighborhood's commitment to increased communication, namely through good neighbor agreements, while diversifying the housing, shelter, and social services.
- Crime/Safety made mention of addressing not only the reality but the perception of safety in the district.
- Street Environment and Public Improvements made broad recommendations regarding the physical appearance of the neighborhood.
- Night Life/Marketing/Promotion encouraged businesses creating active, off-hour activities and streetlife inviting to visitors.
- Development, Parking, and Circulation, listing the goals of the planning and implementation strategy. One item of note in the social service section opposed the notion of a single, centrally located assessment center, differing from the 1988 Central City Plan. Finally, the last chapter identified four specific action items: one or more housing developments in Chinatown, preparation of an Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan, soliciting a commercial development for the 'Trailways' Blocks U and R, and the construction of the Classical Chinese Garden.

Old Town / Chinatown Development Plan, 1999

This report was designed to complement the spirit and implement the economic development objectives of the Vision Plan, and to serve as a broad blueprint for public and private investment. The plan addressed a large area, spanning from Union Station in the north to SW Stark street in the south, and from the Willamette River in the east, to 7th Avenue in the west, so holds a large range of recommendations spanning from and integrating the planned Public Market and Fire Station redevelopments, to the Burnside street improvements, to the Arts and Cultural Marketing Strategy. Specific recommendations for the current Study Area included:

- Reduce the barriers to the OT/CT district at the edges and access points, consider construction of a new gate or similar feature.
- Support new developments adjacent to the Classical Chinese Garden to enhance the visitor experience. Possibilities might include a hotel or Asian cultural center.
- Acquire most of Block 25, undertake predevelopment work, and prepare a development offering that would include parking, housing, retail, and accommodation of the Blanchet House functions.
- Address the district's parking needs with four levels of parking on Block 24, additional parking beneath and within large developments on Blocks 25 and 26, as well as Blocks O and P.
- Proceed to develop the 3rd and 4th Avenue concept diagram,
- Reconstruct the intersection at Glisan Street and 3rd Avenue and proceed with a tree planting program on Glisan.

Old Town / Chinatown 3rd & 4th Avenue Streetscape Plan, 2002

The improvements outlined in this document were intended to strengthen the identity of the historic district, fostering cultural and economic diversity, and promote a vibrant pedestrian streetscape. Three schemes were explored:

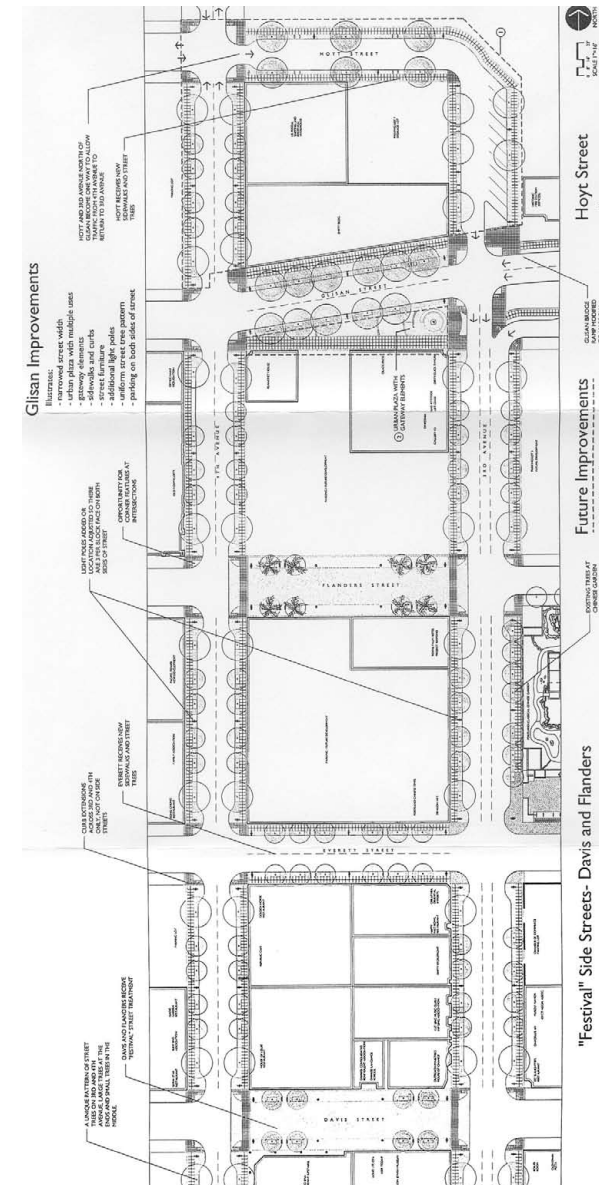
- 'The Ribbons', addressed the tree size and frequency, graphic signage, street furniture and lighting, and restriping along one, or both, of 3rd and 4th Avenues;
- 'The Ring' emphasized creating a district center by temporarily blocking off Davis and Flanders for public events, and improving Glisan, to better link 3rd and 4th Avenues, and,
- 'The Jewel Box' which defined additional sidewalk improvements on Couch, Everett, and Hoyt, as well as introduced the Festival Street concept for Davis and Flanders Streets. Ultimately, the Jewel Box approach was selected, and after some value engineering revisions, the design and engineering progressed and construction is now substantially completed. Additionally, a Glisan plaza was envisioned as a future consideration, north of Block 25, as a gathering area and potential gateway location.

Old Town / Chinatown Vision / Development Plan Update, 2003

The Re-Visions Committee, incorporating several members of the original 1997 and 1999 documents, was established to update and evaluate the progress of the earlier recommendations. In general, the 2003 report reaffirmed the goals and mission of the earlier efforts, while in some areas listed specific updates and recommendations. Pertinent items addressing the current Study Area centered on five topic areas:

- *Neighborhood Process* – The committee reiterated the priority of working with the Neighborhood Association to reach consensus on how to approach gentrification and balance in the area, ensure representation for all facets of the community in vision and land use work, and set up a clear communications network to promote relationship building and good neighbor agreements. The rebirth of a business association was emphasized.
- *Housing, Development, Circulation / Barriers* noted a lack of success in breaking down the barriers to the waterfront, across Burnside, and to the Pearl District. Transit options were supported, as were the preservation of landmark and contributing buildings. The committee reiterated their goal of increasing the number of for sale housing units, particularly in the 60-120% MFI range, with parking included for all new mixed-use developments.
- *Open Spaces, Community Center, Culture, History* emphasized the district's history, arts and entertainment, with particular note of the New Japantown Chinatown Historic District. It also included a clear priority for a Community Center and the desire to develop an appropriate model. A lack of consensus on the need for, or location of, potential open space in the district was also mentioned.
- *Nightlife / Marketing / Promotion / Job Creation* noted that the challenge remained regarding the interaction of active nightlife and housing and parking, and mentioned the lack of a clear job creation strategy.
- *Crime / Public Safety* stated a priority for future development to enhance the security of the neighborhood, as was the desire to address blank building walls, enhance lighting, and provide safe public restrooms.

Additional studies and reports recently completed primarily addressing housing needs and retail uses in downtown Portland include the **Workforce Housing Report Central City Portland, Oregon, 2003; Central City Housing Inventory, 2005; Downtown Retail Strategy, 2002; The 10-year Plan to End Homelessness in Portland and Multnomah County, 2002;** and the **No Net Loss/Preservation Policy**, which all serve to inform this strategy's jurisdictional context.



Excerpt from the 3rd & 4th Avenue Streetscape, by SRG Partnership PC, Nevue Ngan Associates, Suenn Ho Design

Urban Planning Framework

The study's primary opportunity sites of Block 24, 25, and 26 are on the eastern flank of Portland's River District, within the Central City Plan District. This area was envisioned by the city with the potential for larger-scaled structures, to take advantage of the location's views to the Willamette River in the east and north, and to downtown in the south, and the housing towers in the west. These parcels, along with the 1/4-block, 14-story Pacific Tower directly adjacent to Block 26, will help to transition from the low- and mid-rise environment at the center of Old Town and in the Skidmore / Old Town historic district to the taller structures to the west, in the Pearl.

In anticipating this vision, the zoning classifications for the study area's blocks is **CXd** (Central Commercial with a design overlay). Blocks 25 and 26 each have an allowable Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR is essentially a measure of a building's bulk - 1:1 corresponds to the site area, 1-story deep) of **9:1**, bonusable to **12:1** (if certain amenity bonuses are proposed within the development, such as residential use, sustainability features, etc.) These two blocks also have an existing height limit of **350'**, bonusable to **425'**. These entitlements are quite generous within the city of Portland, able to accommodate large structures, or if the floorplates do not fill the parcel, more slender, higher towers.

Block 24 has a similar height limit to these blocks, with an allowable FAR of 6:1, bonusable to 9:1, as does the developable parcels on Blocks P and O. Block A&N, closer to the river, has an FAR of 4:1, bonusable to 7:1, with a similar height limit to the other blocks in the study area, as shown on the map to the right.



Zoning Code Allowable Development Limits and Transportation Map, showing FAR (Floor-Area-Ratio), Height Limits, and Traffic Directions



An aerial view of the North Old Town / Chinatown Redevelopment Strategy study area and surroundings is shown at left, with present ownership, public amenities, and other district landmarks indicated. This aerial photo documents conditions at this study's outset, in early 2007. Not shown are the Tri-Met light rail tracks now completed on the 5th and 6th Avenue transit mall, or currently under construction on the Steel Bridge approach ramp, and nearly surrounding Block A&N. This alignment is shown on the engineering overlay, above, and shows the revised Tri-Met light rail locations, essentially passing to the south and west of Block A&N, rather than bridging overhead along the northern portion of the block, as earlier designed. A small spur line for train staging is now being constructed along the north of this block, which has ramifications for potential development of this block. This area is seen in greater detail in the Block A&N Scenarios chapter, later in this report.



Looking north on 4th Avenue, with Block 26 on the right, Blanchet House and Block 25 beyond

Community Context

The North Old Town/Chinatown Study Area demographics reinforce both the district's opportunities and challenges. The diverse population is a rich mix of new and old, traditional and alternative, living in close proximity. The district is an historically rich and culturally-diverse neighborhood that is poised for revitalization but struggles with the need for economic vitality while honoring a historic past and looking toward the future. The gentrification of a neighborhood, especially an historic and pluralistic neighborhood such as North Old Town/Chinatown, can carry negative connotations when it implies a displacement of the older, the poorer, and the diversity by the younger, the affluent, and homogeneity. However, gentrification can lead to positive changes when it achieves a balance between capturing the essence of the old neighborhood, without hollow reconstruction of the past, while integrating the benefits of the new - creating an even stronger 'evolved' neighborhood versus a wholesale gentrified district. This paradox exists in many facets of the North Old Town/Chinatown Study Area and a primary goal is to find a balance between these facets, reinforced with broad community support.

The following outlines these primary challenges and opportunities, which may be balanced through continued stakeholder involvement and creative thinking about the development options for the study area:

- Multi-culturally diverse districts bring diverse agendas - How to reach consensus and build a truly pluralistic neighborhood;
- The tradition and presence of social services providers carries a perception of stigma and blight - How to continue the essential need of SRO's, and provider kitchens, as part of downtown's diverse housing stock;
- The location of the study area is on the periphery of the Old Town/Chinatown district - How to capitalize on the location as a 'gateway' versus the 'end' of the district and make residents feel at home within;
- The proximity of the study area to the Pearl District and the fear of gentrification that will erase the history and character of the neighborhood - How to use the synergy of the Pearl to help bring residents to North Old Town/Chinatown to activate the street level;
- The departure of Asian family businesses to SE 82nd Avenue and NE Sandy Boulevard - How to capitalize on recent public works improvement projects within Old Town/Chinatown to attract different types of grocery stores, new restaurants, and other small and medium-sized businesses.
- The lack of a hotel in the immediate area, forcing those in town for family association gatherings to stay in the downtown core or Rose Quarter – How to increase accommodations and parking, or improve these linkages;
- The fading of an OldTown/Chinatown flavor through new developments - How to create a new type of neighborhood that retains the historic flavor by renovation and reinvigoration of existing structures;
- The lack of workforce housing due to low economic feasibility - How to provide flexibility of typologies for a range of potential occupants to maintain a healthy and diverse urban working population.

The myriad of constituencies and the complexity of the study area warranted a collaborative effort with committed stakeholders. The community outreach and charrette worksessions outlined in the next chapter were structured to expand the existing energy and goodwill of this group, including those who have historically participated and those who have not but have vested interest in this neighborhood.

III Strategy Objectives

Social Services Siting Objectives

A large number of social service agencies are located throughout Old Town/Chinatown, with several prominent facilities in the northern portion of the neighborhood. One priority for the NOTCT Redevelopment Strategy was to look specifically at one of those facilities, the Blanchet House of Hospitality, and report on how this facility's proposed expansion plans will impact the feasibility of future redevelopment of Block 25. Through community outreach and visioning, discussions continued to illustrate the community leaders' support for an appropriate balance of varied housing types and social service facilities. Extensive interviews and worksessions were held and documented regarding three prominent services existing or considered in NOTCT: Blanchet House of Hospitality, Transition Projects Inc., and a future planned facility, the Resource Access Center.

Blanchet House, currently occupies a structure that they own on the northwest 1/16 of Block 25. This organization has been serving meals and providing temporary lodging to Portland's homeless community since 1952. The facility houses approximately 30 men who are directly involved in the meal service program, and serves three meals a day, totaling between 600 – 800 meals every day, in a clean and sober environment. That they accomplish this mission in their current facility is quite remarkable, given the very compact 50'x 50' ground floor footprint. The limited enclosed space of the building itself results in extensive queuing outside on Glisan Street and 4th Avenue.

Blanchet House has been planning an expanded facility, approximately 1/4 block of ground floor area, to adequately serve the population in need. The numbers that their operation will serve is not estimated to increase, but in order to internalize the queuing of their patrons, and update their kitchen and dining facility, a new building is necessary, which the community stakeholders support. One clear possibility was for Blanchet to expand their facility where their present one now sits – on Block 25, or another possibility was for Blanchet to relocate to a nearby block.



Blanchet House's dining room and kitchen, between shifts. Over 600 meals a day are served from this small room, in many seatings, resulting in long queues on the outside of the building.



Aerial photo of the parcels northwest of the NOTCT Study Area, with Block U at the corner of NW Hoyt and Broadway

Transition Projects Inc. (TPI), has been located in OTCT since 1969 and currently leases space from Central City Concern at 475 NW Glisan, on the southwest corner of Block P. TPI is a vital access point for support services and living assistance, as well as housing a 90-bed men's transitional shelter. Their facility has been upgraded over the years, but is no longer providing the space it needs for proper operations. As their lobby and service center are now substantially undersized, queueing often occurs throughout the day along the building's exterior. If TPI is relocated, Central City Concern has expressed an intent to renovate the structure, bringing additional retail frontage and activity to the 5th Avenue transit mall at its intersection with Glisan Avenue.

Over the past several years, the City and a large multi-organizational group participated in a series of planning meetings to identify key service needs and model options for an expanded **Resource Access Center**, offering enhanced support services and housing to the homeless. During the course of the NOTCT Redevelopment Strategy, TPI and the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) reached an agreement to collaborate on this facility, which is intended to streamline access to homeless assistance, provide a location for engagement, and direct patrons to programs that will move them into permanent housing alternatives. Coupled with this facility will be additional permanent supportive housing in a multi-story structure above the RAC. The facility is planned to be relatively unique, providing men's and women's transitional housing, showers, telephone, messaging, and mail services, restrooms, case management, rent assistance, and more in-depth client outreach with meeting rooms for extended staff.

Blanchet House and RAC Siting

The NOTCT Redevelopment Strategy stakeholder interviews, discussions, and charrette workshops concentrated primarily on Blanchet's facility plans, alternative sites, and their likely impacts on Block 25 and the surrounding neighborhood parcels. A focus on, and timeline for, identifying a location within the NOTCT Study Area for an expanded TPI/Resource Access Center accelerated soon after the redevelopment scenarios were generated, as HAP's and TPI's owner/developer and tenant/lead operator agreement formalized and a site search took on additional priority. Subsequently the NOTCT Strategy paused during this interim.

During a subsequent public process separate from this Strategy, an extensive exploration for potential parcels ensued in the fall of 2007, looking at full- and partial-block locations in a broad area of OTCT, the West End, and the River District for a TPI/RAC facility. As an additional possibility, a co-located TPI/RAC-Blanchet House facility was explored, to determine if site efficiencies could be gained. Two sites emerged as leading candidates for the facility, Block 25 within the Study Area, and Block U, several blocks to the west. After broad input from community stakeholders at the Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood Association, Visions Committee, and City Council sessions, the TPI/Resource Access Center was located at Block U. Also as a result of this process, Blanchet House was assigned the NE corner of Block 25 and the NOTCT Redevelopment Strategy resumed.

Additional detailed information regarding these social services siting objectives and process is included in the Appendix of this report, following.

Determining Community Development Objectives

Community Outreach Process and Comments

In addition to collaborating on this project with the Stakeholders Advisory Committee, the consultant team interviewed dozens of other community members. This group included those active in a variety of community initiatives (many with decades of involvement), area business and property owners, and representatives from social service agencies and cultural organizations. In addition to individual interviews, our team sought information from a number of organizations on specific aspects of the study.

The main points offered by the community outreach stakeholder interviews are summarized below. The information presented particularly concentrates on comments and information helpful to urban design and redevelopment that informed the community charrette sessions. This report is not intended to provide a scientifically valid or all-encompassing profile of community opinion.

Summary of Findings

1) *Key elements of a redevelopment strategy in the NOTCT focus area to help create a “vibrant, mixed-use, 24 hr/day urban neighborhood, rooted in a rich historical past”:*

- Create a northern gateway into the area that augments the Chinatown identity and supports the artistic, cultural, historical, and educational assets of OTCT as a whole;
- Enliven the street level with ground floor retail and good access to buildings; develop pedestrian friendly routes between important blocks and destinations, including into downtown Portland;
- Develop workforce housing (most common definition is between 80-120% of median family income/mfi) to have a critical mass of people who invest in OTCT by living there, and who will support local businesses.

2) *This is a forgotten area (a doughnut hole), and comprises an opportunity ripe for redevelopment with the possibility for people to have a real impact on positively defining the area. It's been overlooked; it's time to fill in the hole.*

- The Autumn Moon Festival (strongly attended by tens of thousands) showed that people are willing to come to this area for authentic cultural experiences. People are attracted to the Classical Chinese Garden and the culture/history of OTCT. More businesses that support the mission of the Classical Chinese Garden would enhance the experience;
- New and potential initiatives in the surrounding area (e.g. University of Oregon, DeSoto Arts Bldg., Mercy Corps, small creative work spaces, Pacific NW College of Art, Light Rail, bus/train station developments, festival streets) can bring benefits, vitality, and activity to a redeveloped northern area of OTCT;
- We can do more to encourage and recruit for private investments (local, foreign, etc.)
- Transit options, the U of O, and proximity to downtown core, eastside, and riverfront make the area desirable for workforce housing.



Entrance of Portland's Classical Chinese Garden at 3rd Avenue and Everett Street



Activities of the Autumn Moon Festival, looking east on the Flanders Festival Street



Looking east down Flanders Street toward Block 25 with the Old Town Lofts beyond

3) The primary specific challenges for the Old Town/Chinatown District remain:

- A perceived lack of parking;
- The perception of danger and drugs;
- Cleanliness issues, loitering, queuing detracts from the visitor experience and lessens the desirability for those considering living here or having a business here;
- Besides a visit to the Classical Chinese Garden and eating lunch at a few neighborhood restaurants, there's little of Chinatown left and not much along those lines to do;
- Lack of area residents with disposable income;
- Businesses will look for already-developed spaces and stable areas to locate; OTCT streets have been under construction for years and will continue to be due to future construction.
- Some type of gentrification will happen if the area develops. How do we develop in a vibrant fashion, but not lose the character of the area?

4) What's missing from today's business mix to meet customer needs? What are the top priorities for new ventures?

- High end, well-run Asian restaurant with private banquet room space;
- Boutique-type hotel with meeting spaces;
- Small local business spaces;
- Coffee shops and professional personal services;
- A grocery store or market, particularly one that was Asian-oriented or even a destination-type;

5) With limited future public funding available to assist developments, what types of projects should receive priority?

- Parking – subsidize development; do a cost/benefit analysis of parking;
- Development of small business spaces; development of buildings that have small business-owned spaces; enhancements for current businesses;
- Seismic upgrades to conserve historic buildings;
- Community center and/or cultural center space (varying opinions as to what this means, how the space would be managed and how operating costs would be paid);
- Destination open spaces and/or natural spaces.

6) Current District residents' and business owners' perception of Blanchet House:

There was overall support for Blanchet House to stay in the area and provide their service in a facility that is appropriate and designed to accommodate their work and be a good neighbor. Many felt that if Blanchet House stayed in its current site it would be detrimental for the revitalization of the north focus area because that would remove an opportunity for one of the few full-block developments in OTCT. Generally, interviewees supported the current social services in the area but voiced concern about and potential opposition to substantial expansions and additional facilities.

Community Charrette Process

The term charrette was originally used in design schools to describe the intense, deadline-driven, problem-solving process of refining one's design, prior to completing a course of study. The urban design profession has incorporated this type of exercise in order to better engage the stakeholder community in intense, collaborative, hands-on worksessions, typically held within a limited time period. These community charrettes have often led to a more integrated understanding of the various stakeholders' viewpoints by the constituents themselves, as well as urban design plans incorporating input from a broader spectrum of users than otherwise available. The ideas generated within the worksessions are integrated into the ongoing redevelopment strategy effort, as well as leading to a more comprehensive understanding of ideas amongst all participants. The following pages illustrate this discussion, feedback, and resulting urban design concepts and influences.

Goals of the Charrette

The North Old Town/Chinatown Redevelopment Strategy charrette process was customized around the needs of this particular Study Area. The design and evaluation efforts were centered on the blocks in question, incorporating the program uses recommended by the community outreach, previous visioning, and city planning goals. The charrette entailed three 3-hour sessions, sequenced over three consecutive days in early December 2006, attended by approximately 40 stakeholders and other individuals. Days 1 and 2 were organized as short large-group presentations, followed by much more extensive smaller-group worksessions. Day 3's open house presented the work of all sessions for the public at large.

The purpose of the charrette was for each team to create potential development scenarios for the seven Study Area blocks at three levels of detail or emphasis:

- A) **Urban Design Concept Plan** – The first day's small group sessions looked at how the overall Study Area's potential ground floor uses might be configured to reinforce certain aspects of the District's character. Given the potential of various Blanchet House locations, different concepts were created, based on the possible locations. Overall building massing was also considered, given the large building volumes currently allowed, but the ground floor uses were focused upon, as these uses and adjacencies will greatly influence the district's streetscape activity.
- B) **Conceptual Economics Exercise** – The second day's small group sessions reviewed how a conceptual-level economic point system for potential public and private investment might help identify stakeholder priorities for the district. Given the entitlements for NW Natural parking on Block 25, and stakeholder expectations for public amenities, this exercise was created to illustrate the balancing of public investment necessary by PDC and other entities.
- C) **District Center Streetscape Environment Studies** – As a wrap-up of the second day's sessions, the groups explored how the groups' preferred Urban Design Plans can be strengthened by identifying particular street or streetcorner locations as potential centers for the district and focusing uses and/or investment there.

Charrette Urban Design Concept Plan Development

Each team (small table discussion) developed several urban design concept plans, modeling potential ground floor uses with the various Blanchet House locations. At the end of each exercise, photographs were taken of the concept models, and drawings were created to document additional specifics discussed.



Table 2 charrette worksession



Community Charrette Open House

NORTH OLD TOWN / CHINATOWN REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Based on the earlier stakeholder meetings, where six potential locations for a new Blanchet House facility were discussed, three emerged as having more potential than the others – Blocks P, 25, and A&N. The charrette worksessions looked at the opportunities possible with each of these alternatives, and how the district's future uses may be configured to take advantage of the adjacencies of each of these locations.

Regarding additional uses modeled, the earlier vision plans and updated community outreach consistently showed an interest in bringing the following uses to the district:










- More housing, with a mix of affordable, workforce, and market-rate, with an emphasis on workforce;
- An asian cultural center, for residents and tourists alike;
- A community center, for the district residents;
- A hotel (or B&B), to take advantage of the Classical Chinese Garden, in particular to house visitors to the district;
- A destination-type asian grocery store, to serve as a catalyst in retaining both the asian community and other district residents to shop within Old Town/Chinatown;
- Ground floor retail uses, to raise the level of activity on the streets, and help raise security in the area;
- Additional parking, preferably below-ground, to make the area more attractive to visitors and retail patrons;
- Potentially new office uses, as some prior studies and community members mentioned may be viable.

The small groups envisioned development scenarios including whichever of these ground floor uses they deemed most visionary, and/or realistic for future development. These scenarios also considered the following questions:

- Given the significant recent investment in the public infrastructure of the district, how best can private development in the study area blocks take advantage and reinforce the Classical Chinese Garden, Festival Streets on Davis and Flanders, and the recently completed 3rd and 4th Avenue improvements?
- Is retail being locating where it will flourish and help draw people and business to this northern part of the district? As these blocks develop, which one- or two-block segment should be the district center, or is one street being activated at the expense of another?
- What is the best way to create a northern gateway to the district – create the gateway with the buildings and uses, on openspace plaza, or an actual symbolic gateway feature?
- Who will be the primary market for these new businesses and housing and are their needs being met?
- Are we being visionary, thinking about what the district could be 5, 10, 20 years into the future, and yet maintaining the diverse and unique nature of the district?
- Are we being realistic, thinking about what it will take to entice this type of development into the district?

A variety of appropriately-sized and color-coded wood pieces and an enlarged site plan of the Study Area were provided as a baseline for the group urban design exercises. The illustrations and photographs on the following pages correspond to the color coding shown below.

Potential Ground Floor Uses and Sizes for the Study Area

• Blanchet House -	10,000 to 16,000sf	(Blue)	
• Asian Cultural Center -	5000sf to 40,000sf	(Bright Yellow)	
• Community Center -	10,000sf to 40,000sf	(Red)	
• Hotel -	10,000sf to 40,000sf	(Dark Red)	
• Grocery Store -	20,000sf to 40,000sf	(Pink)	
• Retail -	40,000sf to 100,000sf	(Orange)	
• Parking -	600 to 1000 spaces (typically 300 sf/space)	(Gray)	
• Housing -	800 to 1600 units (unit sizes could range from 500 to 1500sf)	(Light yellow)	
• Office -	40,000sf to 100,000sf	(Purple)	

For comparison, one Portland city block is approximately 40,000 square feet (sf), Pacific Tower sits on a one-quarter block site (10,000sf), and The Royal Palm or the Green Gables Building sites are 1/8 block (5,000sf.)

On Day 2, participants reconvened as a large group to discuss the previous day's concepts and discuss potential commonalities and insights. After developing their preferred Urban Design Concept, each team was then give the task to evaluate these recommendations through the lens of potential investors or public agencies, with a focus on conceptual economic feasibility. The exercise was designed for comparative and illustrative purposes only, to give the community members a general idea of the policy trade-offs associated with certain program components and uses.

For most of the desired types of uses, there will be a need for some form of public subsidy: a) in order to make housing more affordable to a particular income range; b) in order to entice a private entity to develop in the district (grocery store or hotel) or, c) to provide a portion of construction or operating funding (for a community-based use such as an asian cultural center, or community center). This exercise, while conceptual in nature, was primarily intended to inform the stakeholders of the economic realities regarding public investment and priorities of the redevelopment strategy.

Finally, the small group discussions centered on identifying specific one- or two-block long street segments and/or intersections and focused the discussion on the size (or grain) of development, entrances, setbacks, building volumes, signage, and identity in these locations. The goal of this exercise was to involve the participants in a closer level look at what makes living streets, and how these principles become part of the NOTCT Redevelopment Strategy, as is further illustrated in the following chapter.

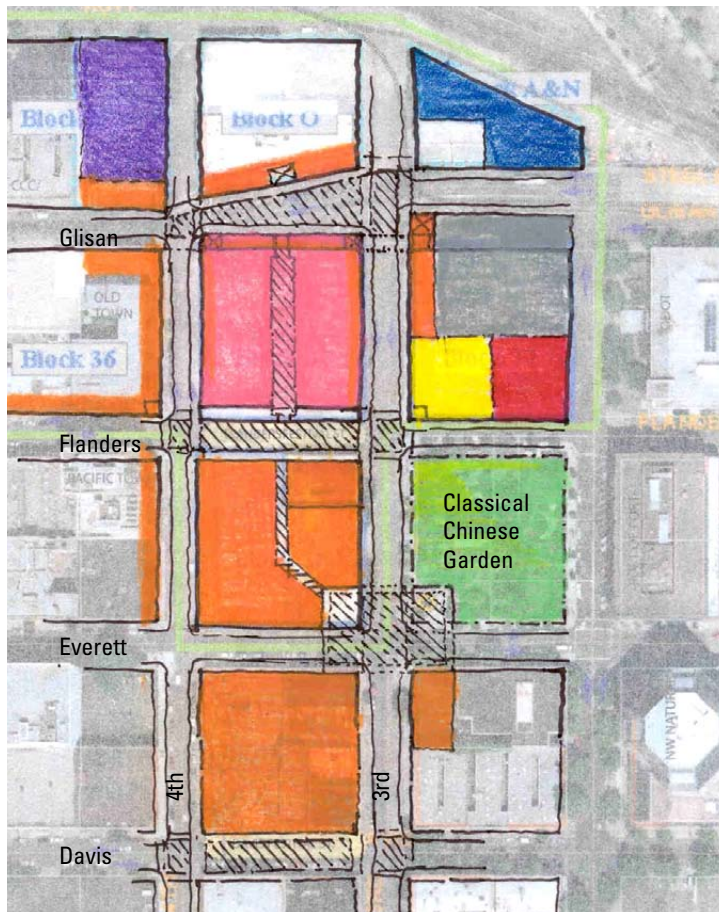


Table 1 Urban Design Concept (locating Blanchet House on Block A&N)



Table 1 ground and above-ground floor use models

Table 1 (First Option) Urban Design Concept and Influences:

Table 1 documented two options, this first showing their preference for Blanchet House to be located on Block A&N. This location leaves the opportunity open for Block 25 to be a contiguous, single-use development with a square footage available for a grocery. With an additional emphasis on the festival streets, potential plaza on Glisan between 3rd and 4th, and the potential for a small corner square opposite the entrance to the Classical Chinese Garden, this concept focused on linkages between these public spaces. Inter-block passages were discussed, as well as continuing pedestrian movement all the way north to Glisan Street and even the retail on the north side of that street.

Other specifics are noted below:

- The ground floor uses on Block 25 are shown shifted to the north to enlarge the potential uses lining the Flanders Festival Street, as well as place a building volume within the Glisan Street right-of-way.
- Block 24 is shown expanding even further northward into the Glisan Street right-of-way with a distinct architectural corner overlooking a new northern gateway plaza.
- Block 25 programmed as an asian grocery would be desired as a northern gateway use for the district.
- Glisan Street between 3rd and 4th is highlighted as a new gateway plaza, with building walls enclosing this space as an outdoor room. The northern portions of the building volumes on Blocks 24 and 25 might create dramatic viewpoints, but could terminate street vistas.
- A parking structure above and below ground in the northeast corner of Block 24 with office tower or residential above to capture river views.
- Block 25 asian market is shown with a central arcade cutting north/south through the block and aligning with the facade on the front of Block O.
- A small plaza in the southeast corner of Block 26 is shown to mirror the Classical Chinese Garden entry plaza. This intersection should serve as an active retail hub that captures visitors entering and leaving the garden.
- Either an office or residential use tower on Block P may have river views.
- The south edge of Block 24 is shown as 1/4 block cultural center, and 1/4 block community center, oriented south, towards views of the Classical Chinese Garden.
- Blocks 24, 25, 26 show residential podiums with taller slender towers in the core of the blocks, taking advantage of the view to Classical Chinese Garden. A hotel use in the upper stories of any of these towers might also be appropriate.
- The group indicated at least 1 story of parking below ground for Blocks 24, 25, 26 would most likely be necessary to accommodate the new uses on these blocks.

Table 1 (Second Option) Urban Design Concept and Influences:

Even though the table's preference was to locate Blanchet House on A&N, they developed an alternative concept with Blanchet House remaining in their present location on Block 25, with an enlarged footprint. Here the group emphasized uses along the Flanders festival street by pulling the building face north, expanding the public space even more. An emphasis on a northern gateway element at 3rd and Glisan was formed with the building's themselves, creating a large arching element, and a double-sided retail street at this portion along 3rd Avenue.

- In this concept, Block 25 is shown as a parallelogram volume with its north facade skewed into the Glisan right-of-way and south facade angled and set back to enlarge the Flanders Festival Street.
- A cultural center is shown in the existing building at corner of 4th Avenue and Davis Street (outside the Study Area, though).
- A literal gateway formed by building volumes is shown arched across 3rd Avenue as a large-scale northern gate into the district.
- Retail is shown concentrated in all blocks between 3rd and 4th, with the exception of the Blanchet House volume shown on the northwest quadrant of Block 25.
- Residential is shown extending to the ground floor on the south face of Block 24 to face the Classical Chinese Garden.



Table 1 charrette session

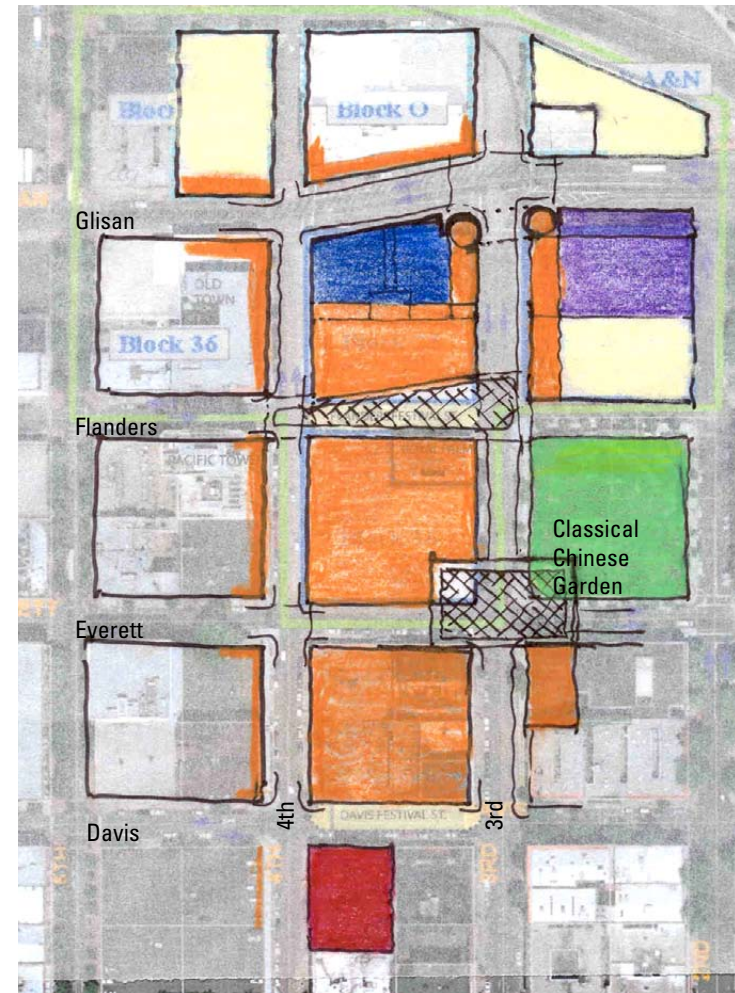


Table 1's (second option) Urban Design Concept (locating Blanchet House on Block 25)



Table 2 Urban Design Concept (locating Blanchet House on Block A&N)

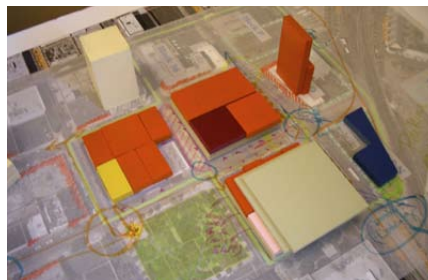


Table 2 ground and second floor use models

Table 2 Urban Design Concept and Influences:

This table preferred Block A&N for Blanchet House, with the possibility for a community garden for the patrons. A grocery was located on Block 24, which might best accommodate the loading of goods with minimal disruption to the small-scale retail spaces shown lining the streetscapes. Block 26 is shown with many smaller retail spaces (similar to the very successful models common on SE 82nd Street, in this case with an internal passage linking the Flanders Festival Street to a corner community use opposite the Classical Chinese Garden entrance).

- There was a definite consensus for Blanchet on Block A&N, as the configuration of the block made it difficult for other uses, and particularly for vehicle traffic or parking.
- The group put the main (early development) emphasis and focus on Block 26, as it is closer to the existing activity to the south and east (Classical Chinese Garden).
- One preferred strategy was to build flexible space, allowing a myriad of uses, a cultural center, retail space, and allowing expansion of whatever uses settled there. Flexible, but not generic -- ie, use the architecture as a cultural reference, in a substantial, not Disneyfied way.
- There was extensive discussion on the specifics of an asian cultural center, and that to broaden the appeal and potential users, this center could tap into the larger multi-cultural characteristic of the district.
- There was a concern that a ground floor cultural center would use up valuable real estate for more active retail use, so some portions of the facility could be located above the ground floor.
- On Block 26, the flexible retail floorplate shows many small spaces (ala the Global Bazaar during the inaugural Autumn Moon Festival) which might favor a wide range of multi-cultural tenants. Locating the cultural center on the corner, obviously a high impact location, which could change, if retail proved more viable. Also showing even a small amount of retail within the Royal Palm Building, as currently that is a missed opportunity to place more active storefront uses on the Flanders Festival Street.
- On Block 24, north of the Classical Chinese Garden, a grocery store is a potential use, possibly built into the right-of-way, in the area just south of the Steel Bridge, which could accommodate the loading dock in this location. On the 3rd Avenue side, smaller retail stores could line the street face, which would have a much higher entrance frequency than a single grocery entrance, because 3rd Avenue between Flanders and Glisan is one of the few street-facing locations to have double-sided, active retail.
- Regarding the form of the housing - it might be possible to build out over the right-of-way to the north on Blocks 25 and 24, taking advantage of some view corridors to the west, as well as broad views to the river. The group favored smaller floorplate towers, - one developer considered a potential way to make these units unique and economical would be quite small units, perhaps 300 – 400 sf/unit, making every inch count. The square foot costs would be higher, but overall living unit costs could be lower.

