Executive Summary

City of Portland
Portland Development Commission

City of Portland Office of Transportation

3rd & 4th Avenue Streetscape Plan Steering Committee

Prepared by
SRG PARTNERSHIP PC
NEVUE NGAN ASSOCIATES
SUENN HO DESIGN

SEPTEMBER 2002
INTRODUCTION

In December of 1999, the Portland City Council adopted the Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan. The Plan, which capped years of effort by a coalition of local business leaders and social service agencies, made the improvements of Third and Fourth Avenues between W Burnside Street and NW Hoyt Street an immediate and top priority for retaining and attracting business, jobs and housing in the heart of Old Town/Chinatown Historic District. It is a key priority of the Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan adopted by Portland City Council in December 1999.

Old Town/Chinatown Third and Fourth Avenue Streetscape Plan continues the collaborative effort of the Old Town/Chinatown Visions Committee, neighborhood groups and business leaders to bring new vitality to Portland’s oldest and most diverse neighborhood. As recommended by the Third and Fourth Avenue Streetscape Plan Steering Committee and Old Town/ Chinatown Visions Committee, the Third and Fourth Avenue Streetscape Plan supports the spirit of a revitalized, mixed-use environment that enhances cultural values, protects affordable housing and services, and welcomes investments in the community.
Third and Fourth Avenue Streetscape Plan envisions a vibrant, active streetscape through the heart of Portland’s Old Town/Chinatown, a neighborhood that can once again attract residents and visitors throughout the year. By reinforcing public and private investments in the Portland Classical Chinese Garden, the Port of Portland building and major businesses like Northwest Natural, a revitalized Chinatown has the potential to compete for new business, trade and jobs from within the region and Pacific Rim economy. The Portland Development Commission is currently developing a program to generate private investment from businesses and property owners to further the goal to revitalize this district.

The project area, 6 blocks long and 2 blocks wide, contains a diverse mix of historic and cultural resources. The current Chinatown, dating from the 1890’s, gained status as a National Register Historic Resource District in 1989. Although home to some of the oldest Chinese associations, Fourth Avenue’s ambiance pales in comparison to other major urban Chinatown’s bustling main streets and the time when Portland had the second largest Chinatown in the country. Along Third Avenue is a significant representation of Portland’s cast iron architecture and some of the oldest stories of Portland’s past are layered here.

The improvement of the heart of Old Town/Chinatown will help preserve, maintain and enhance part of our diverse, ethnic heritage and build an important bridge between growth in the Pearl and River Districts, the downtown core and West End. Portland is the only major port city in the western United States without a vital Asian ethnic neighborhood and yet, with community dedication, Third and Fourth Avenues have the potential to live up to the community’s dream.
PROJECT PROCESS

From the start of the Third and Fourth Avenue Streetscape Plan, the Steering Committee and Design Team determined that success would depend on clearly reflecting the vision established in the adopted, Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan and the involvement of all parts of the community in the planning process.

Beginning in October of 2001, a bilingual outreach effort has been interwoven throughout all stages of the planning/design process. Communication was established with the community through numerous public workshops and interviews with community members at a six-week, on-site Community Involvement Station equipped with bilingual interpretation. All concept planning documents were presented in both Chinese and English; a bilingual project web page and voice mail message box were established.

As evidenced by the significant number of Asian participants attracted to the planning and design process, the Steering and Visions Committees believe that the outreach process has been successful. It has helped to establish goodwill and trust with the public and has created a significant foundation for support for future decision making within the historic district. While substantial work remains to be completed on the details of the preferred plan and final budget, the community response has been overwhelmingly supportive of the Streetscape Plan Project and the streetscape design reflects the community’s vision.
PROJECT VISION STATEMENT
(generated by the community)

The vision of the Old Town/Chinatown Streetscape is to create an urban environment that strengthens the identity of this historic district, fosters cultural and economic diversity and promotes a vibrant pedestrian environment for commercial, retail and residential uses.

DESIGN APPROACHES

Based on the community input, the design team created three design approaches for the streetscape improvements to the neighborhood. Each approach was presented to the public during a public workshop, subsequent meetings and through public outreach initiatives. The approaches, titled The Ribbons, The Ring, and The Jewel Box, varied in the extent of improvement and cost of implementation.
Approach #1 - “The Ribbons”
This concept focused on the north/south connections through Old Town/Chinatown and developed unique identities for Third and Fourth Avenues only.

Main Design Features:

• Provide different sidewalk paving and street tree patterns on Third and Fourth Avenue
• Fewer and smaller feature trees on Fourth Avenue allows for visibility of existing and new graphic business signage
• New street furniture and street lights
• Third Avenue restriped with two travel lanes and one bicycle lane

Approach #2 - “The Ring”
This concept emphasized creating a distinct center to Old Town/Chinatown.

Main Design Features:

• Special streetscape treatment highlighting district center (Davis and Flanders Streets, and Third and Fourth Avenues between Davis and Flanders Streets)
• Ability to temporarily block off Davis or Flanders Streets for public events
• Curb extensions on Third and Fourth Avenues to improve safety at crosswalks
• Third Avenue restriped with two travel lanes and one bicycle lane
• Reconfiguration of Glisan Street and Third Avenue intersection to create urban plaza and northern gateways.
Approach #3 - “The Jewel Box”
This concept focused on creating special “festival” areas within Old Town/Chinatown while also providing continuous elements that unify the entire neighborhood.

The “festival” street concept responded to a need evidenced in other Asian, urban neighborhoods for flexible, public space to serve pedestrians, street festivals, shopping fairs and special events, while accommodating the need for traffic movement.

Main Design Features:
• “Festival” street idea provides shared pedestrian and auto environment for Davis and Flanders Streets
• Curb extensions on all corners to improve safety at crosswalks
• Intersections highlighted with larger feature trees
• Different sidewalk paving and street tree patterns on Third and Fourth Avenues
• Third Avenue redesigned with widened sidewalks, two travel lanes, and one bicycle lane
• Glisan Street and Third Avenue intersection reconfigured to create an urban plaza and northern gateways
• Sidewalk improvements to Couch, Everett and Hoyt Streets
• Hoyt Street paved in cobbles to create a northern terminus

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FOR A REFINED STREETSCAPE PLAN

The Visions Committee, Steering Committee and the community strongly favored the Jewel Box approach. Further discussions with city staff and the Steering Committee led to a recommendation for revisions to the Jewel Box approach to meet a 5 million dollar budget. The Refined Streetscape Plan achieves this target by proposing a project with costs totaling approximately 4.5 million dollars.

The approach was also evaluated by city bureaus, utility agencies and other regulatory organizations having jurisdiction to ascertain associated issues, conflicts and cost impacts. The approach was further refined to respond to these comments.
PROPOSED PLAN

REFINED STREETSCAPE PLAN

The key design elements of the refined Jewel Box concept are:

- New concrete sidewalks with cobblestone/paver accents and curbs throughout the project area
- "Festival" street treatment (shared pedestrian and auto use) on Davis Street and Flanders Street
- Consistent street light pattern throughout project area
- Curb extensions on Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue
- Improvements to Third Avenue/Glisan Street intersection
- One new traffic signal at Third Avenue and Glisan Street
- Street furnishings added throughout project area
- Various Asian species of street trees planted throughout project area
- Cultural/historical/art streetscape amenities

Approximate Construction Cost: $4.5 million

DEFERRED OR DELETED DESIGN ELEMENTS

Due to budgetary constraints, the following plan elements would be deferred or deleted:

1. Defer construction of two of the proposed traffic signals at Fourth Avenue and Davis Street and Fourth Avenue and Flanders Street. The Refined Streetscape Plan includes one traffic signal at Third Avenue and Glisan Street (as noted above).

2. Defer improvements north of Glisan Street and on Hoyt Street until redevelopment occurs.

3. Defer development of Glisan Street and Third Avenue intersection until redevelopment occurs. Street realignment, curbs, and sidewalks are provided in the Refined Streetscape Plan (as noted above).

4. Delete or defer Third Avenue redesign with widened sidewalks. Sidewalk improvements with street trees, lights, paving and curb extensions are provided in the Refined Streetscape Plan (as noted above).
FINAL STEPS  
After incorporating additional comments received during Public Open House #3, the final plan will be presented to the Portland Development Commission and City Council for approval. If the Plan is approved, design and engineering will continue through Summer 2003 with construction beginning in Fall 2003. The Construction will last approximately 9 months. Specific details of the design that will reinforce the historical and cultural identity of the neighborhood, such as historic markers, art work, or cultural paving motifs, will be determined during the next phase of design.

SUMMARY  
The Third and Fourth Avenue Streetscape Plan continues the momentum in the Old Town/Chinatown’s Vision and Development Plans. The improvements of Third and Fourth Avenues will provide Old Town/Chinatown with a pedestrian-friendly environment. This streetscape plan can help preserve, maintain and enhance this ethnically diverse neighborhood while providing a stage for attracting new business, jobs and housing growth within Portland’s historic downtown core.
Old Town/Chinatown 3rd & 4th Avenue Streetscape Plan
The Refined Jewel Box Approach
Festival Street on Davis Detail Plan

NW Glisan Street Detail Plan

Glisan Plaza amenities deferred until development occurs.
STEERING COMMITTEE

Louis K. C. Lee, Co-Chair
Old Town/Chinatown Property Business Owner

Brian McCarl, Co-Chair
Brian McCarl Co.

Rosario Aglialoro
Northwest China Counsel

Bill Bach
Port of Portland

Doreen Binder
Transition Project Inc.

Jim Boehlke
Northwest Natural

Gene Chin
Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association

Marah B. Danielson
Oregon Department of Transportation

Richard Harris
Central City Concern

Betty Jean Lee
Northgate Group, LLC

Gloria Lee
Portland Classical Chinese Garden

Mike D. McMullin
Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood Association

Jackie Peterson
Old Town History Project

Doug Schmitt
Royal Family Ginseng

John Tess
Heritage Consulting

Scott Watson
H.Naito Property

PROJECT TEAM

Bruce Allen
Sarah Heinicke
Kathryn Krygier
Portland Development Commission

Bill Hoffman
City of Portland Office of Transportation

Skip Stanaway
Jeff Smith
Jaci Amend
Deidre Noll
Shellee Harkins
SRG Partnership, PC

Suenn Ho
Suenn Ho Design

Ben Ngan
Andrea Carlassare
Kayo Tokuda
Ross Swanson
Nevue Ngan Associates

Gordon Chin
Wai Ching Kwan
Helen Kwan
Chinatown Community Development Center (S.F.)

Eugene Moy
Development Advisor (L.A.)

Paul Morris
Kia Selly
Patrick Sweeney
Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.

Erric Jones
Chase, Jones & Associates

Rosaline Hui
Portland Chinese Times