



## Meeting Summary

Client: **NYCDOT**  
Project Name: **ESA-Transportation Planning**  
Location: **Chinatown, NY**  
Project Number: **10312404**  
Issue Date: **April 2, 2012**

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TO: **Nathan Gray, NYCDOT**

FROM: **Patrick Jordan, Zetlin**

RE: **Public Workshop #2 Overall Summary**

Project **Chinatown Curbside Management Study**

NYCDOT – ESA: Transportation Planning, Transportation Engineering, Urban Design and Related Services, Citywide. PIN: 84107MBTR187

For the second Chinatown Curbside Management Study public workshop, the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) held various sessions with local groups in the Chinatown community in order to encourage a broad base of community input. A total of 119 people participated over the course of six workshop sessions. These six workshops were held with the following groups:

- Little Italy Merchants Association/Two Bridges Neighborhood Council
- Indochina Sino-American Community Center
- Hamilton-Madison Houses Senior Center
- BRC Senior Center
- United Fukienese Association
- Chinatown Partnership LDC

The purpose of these workshops was to introduce the pilot blockfaces and the proposed toolbox of solutions. Each workshop was offered in the language spoken by the groups being visited. Workshops were conducted in Cantonese, Mandarin, English and Fukienese.

The facilitators presented an overview of the project and a summary of the information collected to date through technical review and public involvement. The presentation offered examples of potential solutions. After the presentation, participants played a board game activity that focused on using the proposed toolbox of solutions to address the four real world issues identified through the previous public involvement activities. The goal of the board game activity was to work as a team to develop consensus on proposed solutions for each issue.

The following sections summarize the information gathered during board game activity at the six workshops:

### **Block 1: Double Parking – Cars & Trucks**

To address the issue of double parking, one solution was mentioned at almost every table: *Parking Regulation Changes*. Many participants thought this solution would reduce double parking by increasing parking turnover. Additionally, many community members felt that parking regulations do not match neighborhood's current land uses. Updating and clarifying the regulations was a theme that ran through all six workshops. Participants also felt that regulations were unclear, since the parking times change from block to block throughout the neighborhood.

*Commercial Delivery Windows* and *Paid Commercial Parking* were also a popular solution. Workshop participants identified the issues caused by deliveries in Chinatown and saw these two improvements, either separate or combined, as a way to reduce double parking. In particular, community members felt that *Commercial Delivery Windows* and *Paid Commercial Parking* would discourage trucks from parking in one spot for the entire day.

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## **Block 2: Sidewalk Obstructions and Pedestrian Congestion**

*Sidewalk Garbage Control* was mentioned the most as a solution to sidewalk obstructions and pedestrian congestion. Many participants thought that eliminating the garbage that builds up on Chinatown's sidewalks would reduce sidewalk obstructions, freeing up more space for pedestrian movement. Some participants said this was part of a bigger issue regarding health and hygiene. They were concerned that the run-off from fish mongers and vegetable stands flows across the sidewalk and into the street, making the sidewalks unsightly and affecting health conditions.

*Sidewalk Garbage Control* was often paired with *Modification to Pedestrian Space*. Some participants spoke of how sidewalk extensions have helped this issue in other areas of the city, such as in Queens. Many participants felt that since there are so many pedestrians clogging Chinatown's streets, more space should be allocated to pedestrians.

The lack of enforcement of current vendor regulations was consistently raised by community members. Participants felt that by not enforcing the existing rules, vendors and businesses use the entire sidewalk as an extension of their carts or stores.

## **Block 3: Intercity Buses and Commuter Van Issues**

This was a hot-button issue for many at the workshops. Community members felt that the city should create a new bus depot in Chinatown, but, unfortunately, this solution is outside of NYCDOT's jurisdiction. Workshop participants stated that the buses will not go away and will just keep moving from block to block as NYCDOT changes regulations. They saw an off-street bus depot as the only viable solution to the problem.

From NYCDOT's toolbox of solutions, the participants favored *Metered Bus Parking*. They thought that buses should have to pay for the curbside space that they use. Participants felt that making buses pay would reduce the amount of time that they sit along the curbside.

Other proposed solutions to this issue included considering buses as commercial vehicles and restricting them to areas with paid commercial parking. Also some felt that by clarifying the language used on parking signs, bus drivers would have a better idea of where they can legally park.

## **Block 4: Vendors**

The issue of vendors also brought forth another community-proposed solution: a centralized vendor space. The participants thought that by creating a space that was dedicated to vendors, people would know where to find them and the obstructions on the already crowded Chinatown Streets would be reduced. Some suggested using underutilized bike lanes as a place to put vendors. Several participants referred to other world cities where there are vendor markets. These cities with vendor markets do not have the issue of vendors taking up space on sidewalks.

Some participants felt that using NYCDOT's tool of *Modification to Pedestrian Space* could help with the vendor problem. They said sidewalks could be extended and the vendors could be placed in the extension reducing the number of sidewalk obstructions and improving pedestrian circulation. More enforcement was mentioned as another solution. Many felt that either vendors were unlicensed or abusing their licenses and there should be increased enforcement by the appropriate agency.

Participants disagreed about the importance of vendors to the community. Some felt that vendors play a vital role in the Chinatown economy and are seen as necessary to the local populations. Others, especially senior citizens, felt that vendors were a nuisance to the community and should be eliminated or restricted to certain locations.

A participant noted that a distinction should be made between working artists selling their folk art on the street and other vendors.

### **Additional Issues**

Many participants mentioned issues that were either not previously identified, outside the scope of this project, or outside the purview of NYCDOT. These issues included:

- Mulberry Street has to be resurfaced. It is in terrible condition.
- Sewers have never been repaired in this neighborhood.
- Need to have hydrants replaced and fire department alarms repaired.
- Rodents are a terrible problem and nothing is being done about it.