

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)

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CHINATOWN

THEN AND NOW

GENTRIFICATION IN BOSTON, NEW YORK, AND PHILADELPHIA



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The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

Founded in 1974, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) is a national organization that protects and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans. By combining litigation, advocacy, education, and organizing, AALDEF works with Asian American communities across the country to secure human rights for all.

Executive Summary

For many Asian Americans, Chinatown is an essential part of our heritage and history. But Chinatowns on the East Coast are on the verge of disappearing.

The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) embarked on a three-city land-use study of Chinatowns in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia to identify the people, buildings, and institutions that currently compose these neighborhoods to help each community better plan for sustainability in the coming years. Our new findings, based on a year of gathering land-use data, block by block and lot by lot, shows the interplay of residential, commercial, and industrial uses in Chinatowns and pinpoints where high-end, luxury development areas are concentrated and emerging. Our findings also incorporate three decades of Census data to reveal the staggering changes in all three communities.

In each city, local governments drove areas of accelerated gentrification and have encouraged and assisted the gutting of Chinatowns. Government policies have changed these traditionally working class, Asian, family household neighborhoods into communities that are now composed of more affluent, White, and non-family households. From the expansion of institutions like universities and medical centers in Boston, to Mayor Michael Bloomberg's massive rezonings promoting development in New York, and the government's encouragement of luxury condominiums and casinos in Philadelphia, local governments have dramatically transformed what these immigrant neighborhoods look like.

The Report's Census Findings Show Significant Gentrification Through a Variety of Indicators

- In 1990, Asians made up more than half of the population in all three Chinatowns. By 2010, Asians were still the majority group, but they made up less than half of all residents. White populations are now growing faster in Chinatowns than they are overall in each of the three cities in which they are located. In fact, the White population in Boston and Philadelphia's Chinatown doubled between 2000 and 2010 while the White populations decreased in those cities overall. Furthermore, of all racial groups, only the White population in New York's Chinatown has grown in the last decade.
- From 2000 to 2010, the share of the Asian population in all three Chinatowns decreased. The absolute number of Asians in New York's Chinatown also decreased during this period.
- Chinatowns have traditionally consisted of multi-generational immigrant family households, but the share of family households in all three Chinatowns has drastically decreased from 1990 to 2010. At this point, only New York's Chinatown retains a slight majority of family households. Reinforcing the decline in family households in all three Chinatowns, the share of residents under 17 years old also dropped. New York is the only Chinatown that experienced a slight increase in the elderly population, likely due to the prevalence of rent regulation laws in the city that have allowed older immigrants to stay in housing units with lower rents.
- Boston's Chinatown has experienced a sharp increase in the share of non-family households living in group share quarters, with a 450 percent increase between 1990 and 2000 and another 46 percent increase from 2000 to 2010, suggesting an influx of college and post graduate students as the result of increased university presence in the neighborhood. They now represent almost a quarter of Chinatown residents (compared to 5 percent in 1990).

- The median housing value and rent values in all three Chinatowns show the rising value of land in these neighborhoods. By 2010, Philadelphia’s Chinatown became more expensive for both owners and renters as the median housing values and rents exceeded the city’s overall. New York’s and Boston’s Chinatowns still had lower rents but housing values by 2010 for New York and 2000 for Boston were much higher than the city overall. Although the home ownership rate in all three Chinatowns was still relatively low, Philadelphia’s Chinatown had the highest rate and rose by 10 percent from 2000 to 2010.
- Between 1990 and 2010, the share of foreign born residents in Boston’s and New York’s Chinatowns decreased and they now represent less than half of the residents in all three Chinatowns.

Despite this drastic change in demographics, the land use survey reveals that each Chinatown still reflects the heavily residential nature and mixed commercial character that these immigrant neighborhoods have long boasted. However, luxury condominiums, high-end businesses, hotels, and other upscale services are now situated in certain areas that used to have businesses and housing primarily serving low-income immigrants:

Chinatowns Contain Mainly Small Businesses with Restaurants and Food-Related Businesses Predominating

- All three Chinatowns were predominantly served by small businesses. National chains in New York and Philadelphia made up a small share of the neighborhood.
- Restaurants, bakeries, and bars were the most predominant commercial use in all three Chinatowns. All three Chinatowns reflected a great variety of businesses.
- Small businesses in New York’s Chinatown—including restaurants, supermarkets, and convenience and variety stores—overwhelmingly offered every day goods and services for residents and workers. Businesses geared toward tourists or non-residents, including gift shops and jewelry stores, were present but not prevalent. With this focus on residents’ every day business, the concentration of more than 20 hotels recorded in New York’s Chinatown therefore seems inconsistent.
- Boston’s Chinatown has the smallest portion of small businesses and largest share of national chains.
- The vast majority of restaurants in Philadelphia’s Chinatown served Asian cuisine and Chinese cuisine exclusively, indicating Chinatown’s strength in continuing to serve local and regional Asian immigrants. Boston’s Chinatown restaurants also served majority Asian cuisine with a little less than half serving exclusively Chinese cuisine. Slightly less than half of New York’s Chinatown restaurants served Asian cuisine.

High-End Businesses Were Concentrated on Certain Streets Within and on the Edges of Chinatown

- In New York’s Chinatown, the highest portion of high-end stores—mainly clothing and shoe stores and some restaurants—clustered between Houston and Delancey Streets, an area that recently underwent a significant upzoning, which allowed for higher density buildings. High-end stores also dotted Allen and Orchard Streets heading towards the historic core of Chinatown.
- High-end businesses in Boston’s Chinatown concentrated more on the edges of the neighborhood, though a few were clustered along Shawmut Avenue.

Luxury Condominiums Have Already Changed the Skyline of All Three Chinatowns, Yet More Luxury Developments Are Planned for the Coming Years

- In Philadelphia’s Chinatown, developers have converted the area north of Vine Street, which was previously heavily industrial, into lofts and luxury condominiums. Nearly all of the residential development has been for the “creative class,” including art galleries, architects and designers, and other consulting firms. The population moving into this area is typically not Asian. But luxury condominiums south of Vine Street have also attracted more affluent Asians.
- Boston’s Chinatown has experienced an influx in massive luxury condominiums in the past couple decades, ignoring a 1990 “Community Master Plan” that limited the height of buildings.
- In New York’s Chinatown, luxury condominiums primarily fall in the area between Houston and Delancey Streets and on streets closer to Soho, but the physical aspects of gentrification are not as obvious as in Boston and Philadelphia as much of the housing stock consists of tenement buildings. The shifting demographics, however, suggest that non-family households, which include students, young professionals, artists, and designers who often make neighborhoods “hip,” are displacing working-class immigrants who have relied on these affordable units for centuries.
- The housing stock in these neighborhoods will continue to change if the development of public lands in Boston and New York’s Chinatown in the coming years calls for significant luxury development with little or no low-income housing to be built.

Industrial Spaces Were Scarce and Mainly Concentrated in the Food Industry as Developers Have Transformed Former Factories and Warehouse Spaces into Luxury Condominiums

- All three Chinatowns had few industrial spaces, but those that existed were mainly related to the food industry – equipment, food products, and printing. Boston’s Chinatown had the fewest number of industrial spaces. New York’s industrial spaces were not concentrated in a particular area, but rather spread throughout Chinatown. Philadelphia’s industrial spaces were concentrated north of Vine Street.
- Although garment factories once dominated these neighborhoods, apparel use is not prevalent.
- The decline of manufacturing has contributed to gentrification as many former industrial spaces have become high-end condos. For example, a former garment factory on Hester Street in New York is now selling condos for millions of dollars. The industrial area north of Vine in Philadelphia is now considered by some to be the “loft” area. Even more recently, developers razed a long-standing bean sprout company, one of the few industrial spaces left, for luxury condos on Harrison Avenue in Boston.

Green Space in All Three Chinatowns Is Insufficient

- Despite many elderly Asian immigrants who use green space for exercise and as extended living rooms due to cramped living quarters, the amount of green space in each Chinatown is negligible.
- Philadelphia’s Chinatown has the least amount of open/green space of all three Chinatowns.

Based on the Census and land use data, this report contends that the history of environmental racism experienced by all three neighborhoods combined with government decisions allowing for gentrified Chinatowns is destroying these immigrant communities. Government incentives and policies have accelerated

gentrification by enabling the conversion of industrial use to luxury condominiums; the proliferation of high-end businesses on certain streets; and the increase in luxury condominiums and hotels in Chinatowns. Government resources must be placed into maintaining these communities for low-income immigrants rather than continuing to subsidize luxury development. The development of housing and neighborhoods should focus on people rather than profit.

To ensure that Chinatowns remain vibrant residential and mixed-use commercial neighborhoods, this report recommends:

- Assessing the health and status of low-income and publicly-subsidized housing in Chinatowns.
- Allocating public land and funds for low-income housing development and retention.
- Avoiding inclusionary zoning policies that create more luxury than low-income housing.
- Subsidizing small and local businesses to offset increasing commercial rents, given the symbiotic relationship of residents and businesses in Chinatowns.
- Prioritizing green and open spaces and engaging community organizations and residents in defining the character and uses of the new spaces.
- Using creative methods to link new satellite ethnic enclaves to center city Chinatowns.
- Engaging family associations and land owners to maintain Chinatowns.

Despite government policies accelerating gentrification, Chinatowns have persisted as havens for low-income immigrants and workers not only because of the continued need for affordable and culturally appropriate services and goods, but also because of the many people fighting to maintain their existence. This report seeks to encourage the work of grassroots organizations, residents, workers, small business owners, and property owners to ensure that the Chinatowns of the future reflect our shared Asian American history and remain home to working-class immigrant families.

Chinatown: Then & Now

Gentrification and Displacement on the East Coast

Introduction

For more than a century, Chinatowns have been home to immigrant families. Residents rely on networks of friends and relatives and on affordable housing, food, and goods in the neighborhood. Workers depend on jobs they find in Chinatown and from employment agencies centered in these communities. Yet as land use struggles change downtowns across the United States, Chinatowns' futures as immigrant communities are threatened. Chinatowns in some cities, including Washington, D.C., are effectively no longer residential communities for new or old immigrants while other Chinatowns, like in St. Louis, have long ago been destroyed for things like sports stadiums.

The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) embarked on a three-city study of Chinatowns in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia to determine the current state of the three largest Chinatowns on the East Coast. Whereas Chinatowns historically arose from abandoned areas deemed undesirable by city elites, urban renewal began targeting these neighborhoods from the 1940s through the 1960s. Large institutions and luxury housing developers also focused these previously neglected areas in the 1980s and 1990s for new uses including high-end condominiums, convention centers, and stadiums. For decades, Chinatown residents, workers, small business owners, and community organizations have fought for their own place and voice against such development, instead seeking alternative visions of community development that strengthen rather than threaten immigrant networks and resources in these neighborhoods. In collaboration with these community partners, academic institutions, and hundreds of volunteers, AALDEF spent a year recording block by block and lot by lot the existing land uses in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia's Chinatowns and surrounding immigrant areas. Researchers in the University of Pennsylvania's City Planning and Urban Studies Departments analyzed and mapped the data.

This report describes the startling transformation of these three Chinatowns in the past three decades. The report incorporates land use data from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia's Chinatowns, collected mainly in 2011, and Census data for each city since 1990 to better understand the effects of development and neighborhood change on these immigrant communities. It also reviews public and private plans and projects in the neighborhoods, as public policy decisions by local governments have resulted in the removal and displacement of working-class immigrant residential and commercial land uses from each of these Chinatowns in recent decades as well as in earlier eras.

Without the fights against unfettered development led by groups like the Chinese Progressive Association in Boston, Chinese Staff & Workers' Association in New York, and Asian Americans United in Philadelphia, these Chinatowns would likely be diminished, overtaken by even more luxury hotels and residences and institutional expansion. This study documents current land uses in each of these neighborhoods to support ongoing community organizing and planning efforts to retain the resources and networks that currently support immigrants both in the neighborhood and regionally.

Background

Since their formation, Chinatowns have served as the gateway for thousands of immigrants from Asia—despite city government interventions of the last half-century. Although this report is focused on recent trends, any history of how Chinatowns originally came together as communities in the late 1800s must touch on the effects of discrimination, as city and state governments sought to segregate Asian settlement in these

neighborhoods. Because these neighborhoods were comprised mainly of low-income immigrants, city governments often paid little attention to their needs. Therefore, with so many Chinese immigrants living so closely together, these communities became self-sustaining out of necessity. Personal services like doctors and accountants, social services agencies, stores selling day-to-day items, and social networks like family associations all formed in Chinatowns. This structure has supported generations of new and old immigrant families.

But Chinatowns' locations in city centers have made them the target of multiple generations of central city redevelopment that has destroyed affordable housing, commercial, and institutional spaces where Asian immigrants have traditionally lived and worked. These neighborhoods have disproportionately borne the burden of land use and zoning decisions that have torn apart the community and dumped undesirable projects like highways and convention centers next to people's homes. More recently, as cities' land values have risen, the neighborhoods' historical and cultural significance has been disregarded in favor of luxury buildings and upscale businesses that alter Chinatowns' essential role as a home and center of community life for new immigrants. Chinatowns' history as an immigrant, working class neighborhood has ironically been exploited to attract not only tourists to the neighborhoods' "exotic" products and experiences, but also more affluent residents to conquer a hip and unexplored "frontier" in city living. High-priced real estate transactions, institutional expansion, and commercial development have predominated in recent years, leading to increasing gentrification. Low-income residents and small businesses therefore face more direct displacement as developers tear down older or vacant properties to build hotels and luxury residences. New immigrants and small business entrepreneurs are also facing increasing rents that diminish the supply of affordable housing and commercial space.

The history of neighborhood intrusion and destruction has been similar in all three Chinatowns. Since the mid-twentieth century, the government has targeted these neighborhoods for large-scale urban renewal projects and undesirable land uses. In New York, a large piece of public land on the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area, where the government demolished affordable tenement housing, has remained empty for more than four decades. Urban renewal czar Robert Moses' 1941 plan to turn Canal Street, which runs through the heart of New York's Chinatown, into a 10-lane Lower Manhattan Expressway was not realized, yet Canal Street has become a de facto interstate highway between New York and New Jersey due to diverted traffic from the Verrazano Bridge between Staten Island and New Jersey. In Boston, urban renewal demolished an estimated 1,200 units of housing when two major highways, I-93 and Massachusetts Turnpike, tore through Chinatown. Institutional expansion also allowed Tufts University and New England Medical Center to take over one-third of the land area in Chinatown. Then, in 1974, the city decided to concentrate and formally establish the "adult entertainment district" on lower Washington Street, thereby moving all adult entertainment that had previously existed elsewhere in the city to the border of Chinatown, threatening the neighborhood daily with prostitution, drugs, and other associated petty crime. Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, the Independence Mall Urban Renewal Project and the Commuter Rail Tunnel destroyed a quarter of Chinatown's housing stock. The development of a large center city shopping mall with its attendant parking ramps hemmed in the southern edge of Chinatown. By 1975, a city planning report noted that 52 percent of the land in Chinatown was used for the movement and storage of motor vehicles, as demolition left large surface parking lots. The massive Vine Street Expressway cut through the neighborhood and would have resulted in the utter devastation of Chinatown had it not been for the Save Chinatown movement that reduced its scale and won concessions for the construction of new affordable housing in Chinatown. Redevelopment in all three Chinatowns destroyed large portions of the housing stock that enabled single, working-class immigrants to live in typically small apartments and single-room occupancy buildings that cities labeled "skid row." This destruction not only impacted men of the "Bachelor Society" who settled in the United States when various Asian Exclusion Acts forbade immigration of women, but also limited Chinatowns' ability to house later immigrants.

In recent decades, large public, private, and institutional development projects continue to target Chinatown. While residents have successfully opposed some plans, gentrification and urban development projects threaten the neighborhood's role as a destination for new immigrants. Thousands in New York's Chinatown protested the eventual 1983 expansion of "the Tombs," a detention complex, while community organizations successfully rallied against Off Track Betting in the 1990s. More recently, New York University's expansion plans calls for Chinatown's Canal Street to act as a southern boundary for its urban "campus." In the 1980s, the Pennsylvania Convention Center took away 200 homes in Philadelphia's Chinatown. Residents successfully stopped the siting of a baseball stadium in 2000 and a casino nine years later, though they remain vigilant of the predatory casino industry's targeting of Asian communities. Boston's Chinatown has historically faced and fought against increasing institutional expansion from Tufts University and New England Medical Center where these non-profit institutions, with the blessing of the city and the state, have taken land in Chinatown either for their own building use or for future empire building by land banking vacant lots. The threat of future development looms even larger as a vacant 20-acre parcel of land opened up with the completion of the Central Artery Tunnel Project. Areas bordering all three Chinatowns, including the Bowery in New York, have transformed with expensive boutiques, galleries, and hotels; old factories in the heart of Chinatown have been developed into luxury residential, office, and institutional space. While Chinatowns have experienced some success in stopping recent unwanted public projects, the expansion of high-priced condos is making the neighborhoods ever more inaccessible to the low-income new immigrants who most need their services, job networks, and proximity to other Chinese speakers.

Even as Chinatowns have gentrified, public authorities continue their old pattern of neglect. Just in this past decade, New York's Chinatown had to fight for compensation for environmental hazards impacting residents in neighborhoods surrounding the World Trade Center after the 9/11 attacks, while more affluent communities like Tribeca were automatically included. Similarly, Boston's Chinatown learned from a survey that municipal trash pickup occurred three times more frequently in the nearby affluent neighborhood of Beacon Hill than in Chinatown. Further, Philadelphia's Chinatown continues to demand basic services like decent lighting and trash pick-up of construction and household waste that amasses on street corners.

Just as the history of neglect, demolition, and redevelopment in all three Chinatowns has overlapped, their more recent struggles with gentrification and displacement also echo each other. For example, in 2011, Philadelphia's Chinatown forced down a Neighborhood Improvement District, which would assess additional taxes on property owners and is a proven mechanism to accelerate gentrification. Around the same time, the New York City Council approved a similar entity called the Business Improvement District for New York's Chinatown after years of sustained opposition by residents and small business and property owners. Luxury condominiums have become a familiar feature in all three Chinatowns. New York's Chinatown has become saturated with hotels. Recent luxury and high-end developments in each city's Chinatown have directly and indirectly threatened both current residents' and future immigrants' ability to live, work, shop, and participate in the community and cultural life of these historic neighborhoods.

Boston

By the 1990s Chinatown began to experience significant gentrification. Governmental needs to replenish the municipal tax base, along with the ever-present siren of job creation, consistently trumped the formal community planning process in the late 1980s that created the Chinatown Master Plan of 1990, which imposed height limits on buildings. Throughout the 1980s, Chinatown fought against institutional expansion from Tufts University and New England Medical Center, and then against high-rise luxury development proposals in the 1990s. From the struggle for a small plot of land called Parcel C to be returned to Chinatown, to fighting and mitigating luxury developments such as the Ritz-Carlton's Millennium Place, Liberty Place (now Archstone),

and Kensington Place, these efforts served simply as precursors to the onslaught of hotels and luxury developments that engulf Chinatown today.

Attempts to update the Chinatown Master Plan of 1990 in 2000 and 2010 have amounted to documents with admirable goals but little enforcement power. As Chinatown has experienced, private interest comes first and community interest a distant second. For instance, although existing zoning regulations prohibited the height and mass of various development projects, zoning exemptions from the city became the rule instead of exception. Therefore, any zoning regulation or master planning process became practically meaningless. Zoning exemptions allowed for one after another luxury development in Chinatown.

Additionally, as the Central Artery Tunnel Project placed the I-93 North/South expressway underground this past decade, developers eyed the prospect of a giant 20-acre piece of open land that could and will be carved up and filled with more luxury high rise condos. Although one local community development corporation is slated to build some affordable housing on state-owned property called "One Greenway" on a sliver of this open land, this small promise of affordability permits the city to accelerate private development to generate miniscule benefits that trickle back to the community. The real question to ask after "One Greenway" is whether the state and the city will allow more community housing and development that will actually strengthen the low and middle-income working class historic character of Boston Chinatown. Where this huge parcel of land could serve as reparations for the years of demolition and environmental injustice forced upon this community, the likelihood is that Chinatown will continue to fight for its very existence with the state and city looking at the potential to generate public funds through sale of the land, tax revenue, and job creation again. Initial actions by the government forecast such negative prospects. For instance, whereas this community has dealt with such environmental degradation for years in this area where two highways met known as "Chinatown," the moment this open parcel of land became valuable, real estate interests and the City renamed it "South Bay." Plans now call for the "South Bay Tower" to occupy 10 acres of this open land at 800 feet and surpasses the tallest skyscraper to date in Boston.

New York

Residents and workers in New York's Chinatown have fought against luxury development since the 1980s. In 1986, the Chinese Staff and Workers' Association, represented by AALDEF, won a precedent-setting case that required the City to assess the impact of development on the displacement of people and businesses. This case ultimately stopped a developer from building luxury residences on a vacant lot and sparked discussion about changing the City's environmental review process. Yet, while New York's Chinatown expanded in those years, the decline of the neighborhood's garment industry in the 1990s, increasing real estate speculation, and relaxed rent regulations laws have made the neighborhood much less affordable for new immigrants.

In the past decade, after 9/11, zoning and commercial development have emerged as the dominant struggles in New York's Chinatown between residents, workers, and small business owners—who want to maintain Chinatown's varied network for low-income immigrants—and city agencies and big developers—which covet the neighborhood's rising property values for higher-income households. Although residential gentrification is not as visible as in Boston and Philadelphia's Chinatowns, New York is also experiencing an influx of luxury condominiums. As the garment industry has shrunk post 9/11, developers have converted many former factories into loft units that now sell for millions of dollars in the heart of the neighborhood. Furthermore, tenement buildings have similar exteriors as decades ago, but landlords flouting rent regulation laws are increasingly illegally evicting low-income tenants in favor of residents who can afford rents closer to \$2,000 and \$3,000 per month.

The local government has accelerated this gentrification. In November 2008, the New York City Council unanimously approved the East Village-Lower East Side rezoning, New York's third largest rezoning plan since it changed the zoning code in 1961 despite vigorous protest by Chinatown and Lower East Side residents and workers and a petition opposing it with more than 10,000 signatures. Although the City predictably determined that the rezoning would not significantly harm the community, independent analysis by urban planners concluded that the rezoning would push luxury development into Chinatown and the Lower East Side and disproportionately impact these low-income and immigrant communities. In particular, opponents feared the resulting increase in density by more than 100 percent on Houston and Delancey Streets; Avenue D, where public housing is located; and Chrystie Street, which runs into Chinatown, would accelerate luxury development.

In September 2011, the City Council also unanimously approved a Business Improvement District (BID), a public-private entity with the power to tax property owners covering a significant portion of Chinatown, with the asserted goal of cleaning its streets and making other neighborhood "improvements." The City approved the BID even though small business and property owners filed unprecedented numbers of objections. BID opponents feared that the BID fees assessed on each property would raise commercial rents and increase displacement and vacancies of commercial properties. BID opponents also feared that the BID would facilitate zoning the already-congested Canal Street for even bigger luxury buildings.

Most recently, the threat to public land has become even more evident. Local community boards and officials have agreed to build 50 percent luxury housing and 50 percent "affordable" housing on the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area, the largest remaining piece of city-owned property in the Chinatown and Lower East Side area where low-income housing was demolished more than four decades ago. Yet, even the "affordable" housing called for on this site largely falls out of reach for many Chinatown and the Lower East Side families with low median incomes. Additionally, the New York City Public Housing Authority has proposed luxury development for the parks and parking lots of five public properties in the neighborhood. This year, "Requests for Proposals" will have been sent out for development projects on all of this public land in Chinatown and the Lower East Side. Going forward, city government is clearly embracing luxury development in both private and public spheres.

Philadelphia

Gentrification took off in Philadelphia's Chinatown in the 1990s. Luxury condominium and apartment development began in the neighborhood's commercial core, with the conversion of old factories, office buildings once associated with the garment industry, hotels that were overbuilt in anticipation of the 2000 Republican National Convention, and the former Metropolitan Hospital. Some upscale restaurants and nightclubs opened in the neighborhood at the same time.

As immigration to Philadelphia increased in the 1990s, Chinatown residents began wondering where newcomers could find affordable housing in and around the neighborhood. By the early 1990s, Chinatown was surrounded on all sides by large publicly funded projects – the Independence Mall Urban Renewal Area to the east, Vine Street Expressway to the north, Gallery Mall to the south, and Pennsylvania Convention Center to the west. The only viable prospect for Chinatown to grow was to the north, across the expressway, in an area of old garment factories that virtually all closed by the end of the decade. For decades, this area has been a mix of light industry and warehouse businesses (tofu makers, noodle factories, food distributors, sign companies, kitchen suppliers) largely serving Chinatown businesses and included low-income Chinatown housing, abandoned buildings and vacant lots, and a growing concentration of artists and artisans seeking cheap live/work space. The Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC), which built affordable

housing in the 1980s and 1990s—but struggled to do so after property values rose in the 1990s—worked with the City Planning Commission to rezone this area for residential conversion.

Residents began calling it “Chinatown North,” and they protected the area’s ability to accommodate new housing by defeating city government proposals for a new prison, baseball stadium, and expansion of a methadone clinic and halfway houses in and near the area. In the two decades since, Chinatown has successfully expanded its borders north of the Vine Street Expressway. PCDC has developed mixed income housing projects in the area of Ninth and Vine Streets. Other Asian civic organizations also expanded in Chinatown North, which is now home to the annex for an expanding church, a public charter school founded by Asian Americans United (AAU) serving many immigrant families, the headquarters of a Fujianese Association, one of the fastest growing Chinese ethnicities on the East Coast, local art organizations and galleries including the Asian Arts Initiative, as well as small businesses.

But instead of more affordable housing development, Chinatown North became the site of luxury development and speculation in old factories and lots. Realtors soon dubbed it the “Loft District.” In addition to condominiums, it has become a center of galleries and offices for high-end design and consulting firms. In recent years, the area’s diverse mix of high- and low-income residents, homeless services and hip new bars, and its continued problems of abandoned property and dumping, have inspired diverse visions for the area’s future.

Plans for Chinatown North have continued the debate over gentrification. Area residents have pushed to convert the old Reading Railroad viaduct to an elevated park and for a Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) that would tax residents to fund investment in neighborhood maintenance and improvements. Supporters from city hall, foundations, and the powerful downtown business improvement district view the area—which they call Callowhill, not Chinatown North—as an important frontier for expanding upscale residential, commercial, and office development as the downtown grows. Chinatown residents and community organizations have taken different stances on the viaduct plans and the NID. PCDC has opposed both, advocating the demolition of the viaduct partly to make way for affordable housing construction. AAU has supported the park for its promise to expand Chinatown’s scarce public green space and improve the area’s livability, while arguing that the lighting, street cleaning and maintenance promised by the NID are taken for granted as basic municipal services in other neighborhoods—and should be in Chinatown, too. As Philadelphia undergoes its first citywide rezoning and comprehensive planning since the 1960s, the decisions made about land use in Chinatown North will effectively determine the area’s ability to remain a gateway and home for new immigrants.

Meanwhile, new development proposals continue to threaten Chinatown’s immigrant community. In 2009 residents defeated a proposal to build a 24-hour gambling casino less than two blocks from the first homes in Chinatown. Residents, businesses, and community organizations and a 40-member multiracial, civic, faith and community based coalition initiated by AAU organized a successful opposition. Nonetheless, the concern about predatory gambling practices of casinos targeting Asian communities in particular remains a very real threat for Philadelphia Chinatown today.

What Currently Exists in Our Chinatowns?

As in the past when city governments ignored Chinatowns, residents, workers, and small business and property owners are continuing to fight to retain the fabric of these communities in this new era of government-backed luxury real estate growth. The support networks and structure for jobs and everyday goods developed over the years in these Chinatowns have allowed immigrants to thrive. They realize much of what still exists is critical to the survival of these immigrant communities. This land use survey documents what

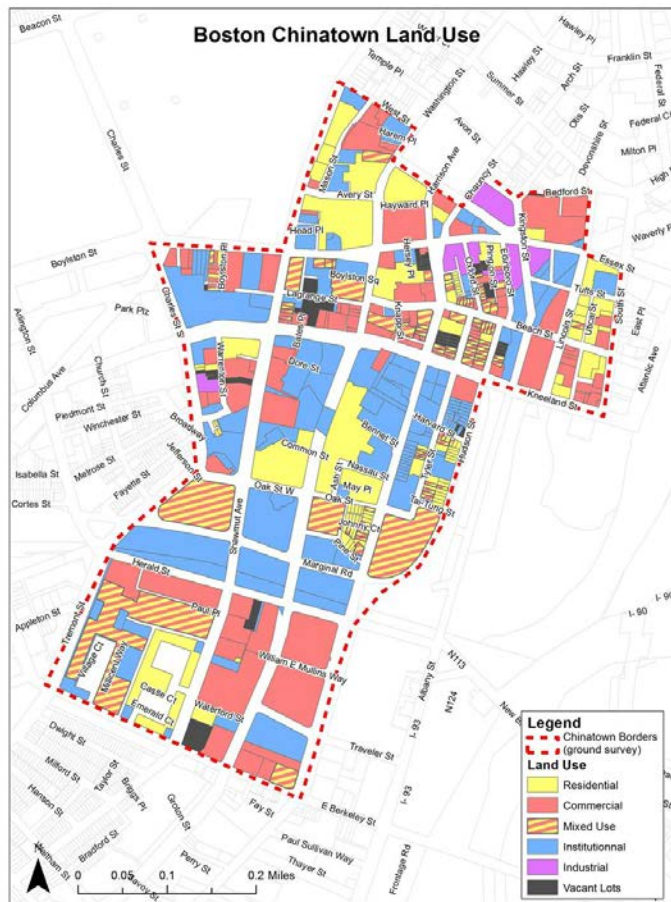
currently exists in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia’s Chinatowns to support each community’s demands for more affordable housing and commercial spaces, sustained services, and publicly accessible community space.

Boston’s Chinatown

The boundaries of Boston’s Chinatown, based on the 2010 Chinatown Master Plan boundaries established by community groups and neighborhood stakeholders, are West and Bedford Streets at the northern end, East Berkeley on the south, Charles and Tremont Streets on the most western end, and South and Hudson Streets on the east.

In total, 734 parcels were surveyed in Boston’s Chinatown, comparable to the nearly 800 parcels surveyed in Philadelphia. Of this total, only 19 percent were residential while 53 percent were commercial. Approximately 18 percent were mixed use. Institutions comprised 11 percent of the area, the most of all three Chinatowns. This higher percentage of institutions in Boston is indicative not just of the typical family associations and schools found in all of these Chinatowns, but also of the significant area that university and hospital campuses have taken in the neighborhood. Notably, however, among “missing” institutions that often comprise a neighborhood, Chinatown has not had a public library since its demolition in 1956 made way for the state highway. Industrial uses and open space/recreation constituted only about 1 percent each. Finally, vacant lots comprised 3 percent of the area. The median height of the buildings was 5 stories. The land use data percentages collected for this survey may differ from certain categories of the land use data collected by city planning commissions likely due to the more detailed categories covered by this survey.

Boston Chinatown: Land Use Map (Boston Property Parcel Data Fiscal Year 2013)

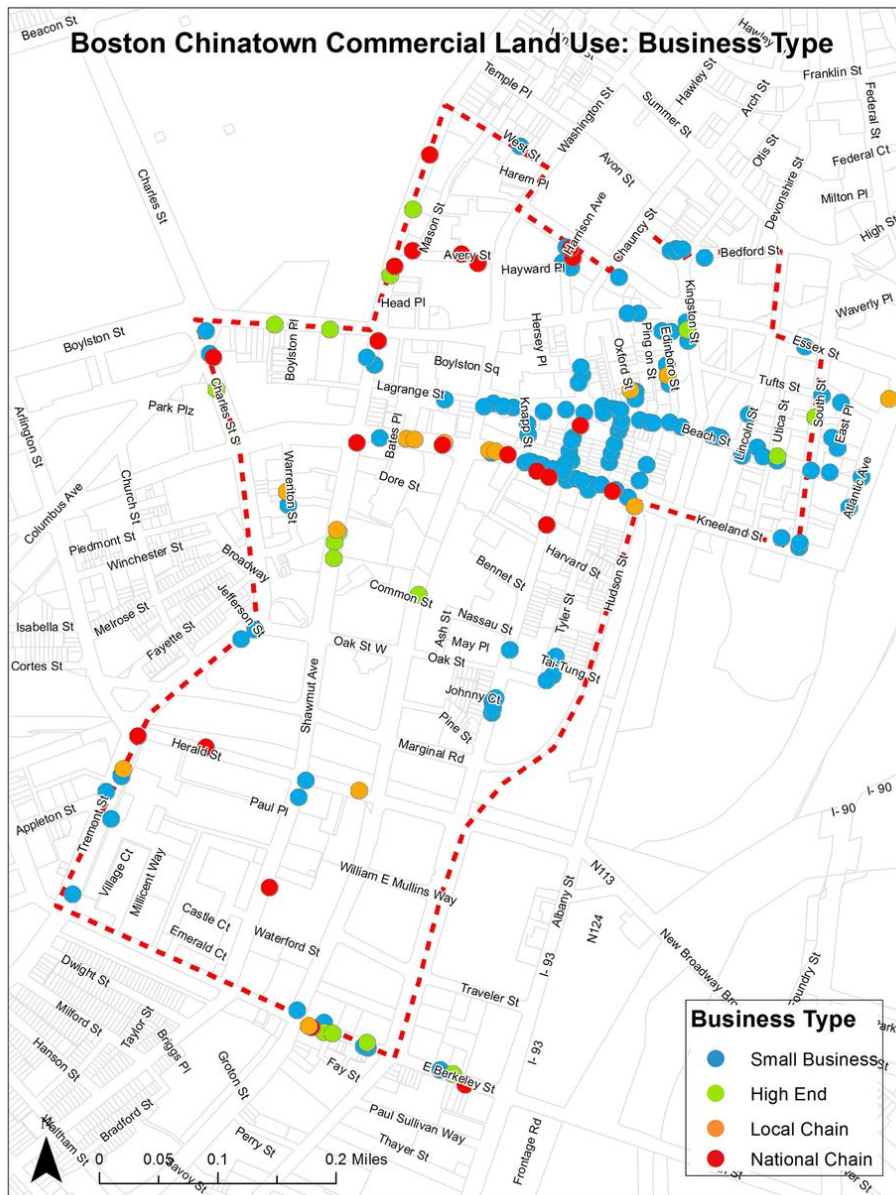


Commercial & Institutional Uses

Chinatown has 391 commercial businesses and 84 institutions.

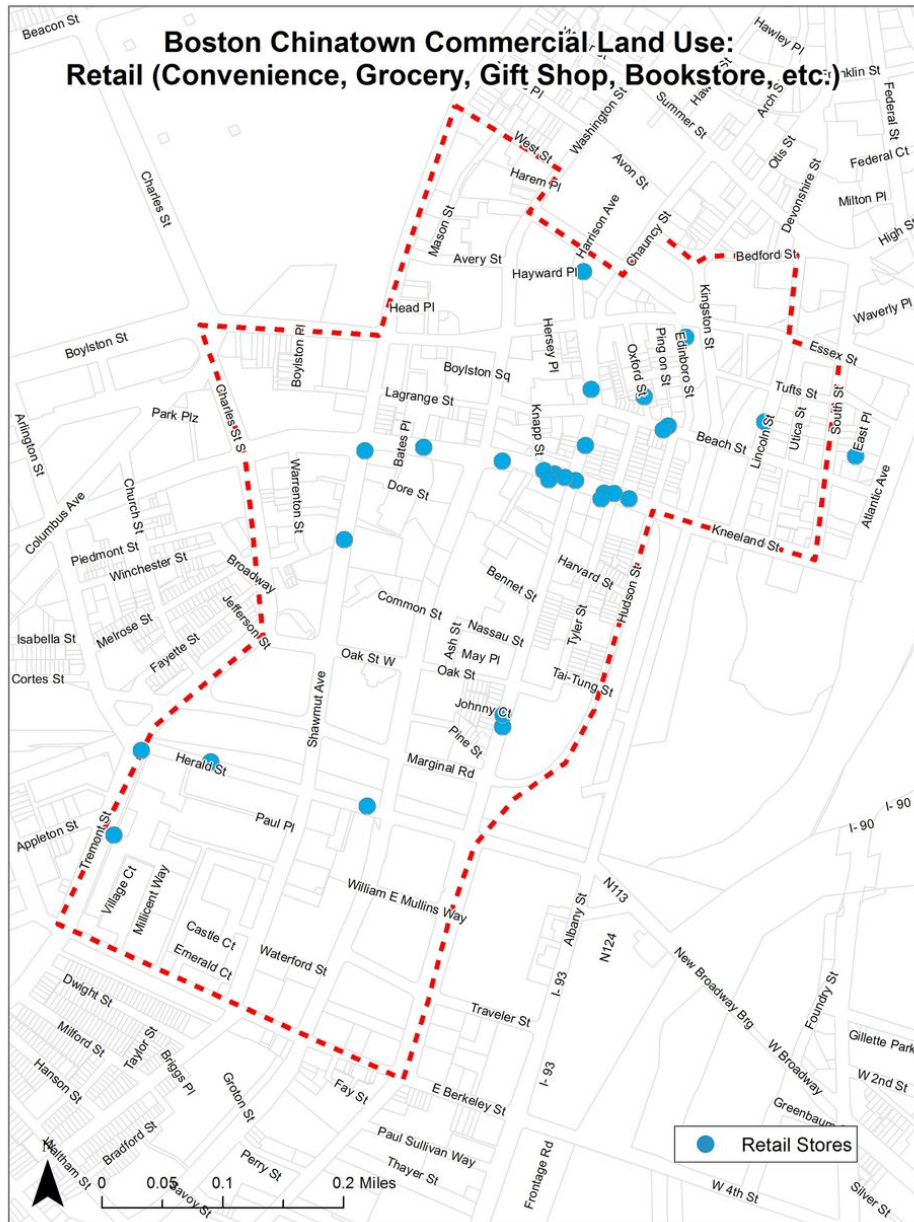
Of all three Chinatowns, Boston has the smallest portion of small businesses at 58 percent and the largest share of national chains at 12 percent. Many of the national chains were located along Kneeland Street, a larger thoroughfare in the neighborhood, and in areas outside what might be considered the commercial core of Chinatown. Approximately 6 percent of all businesses were considered local chains. And 10 percent of all businesses were classified as “high end,” including 8 hotels, 14 restaurants, 4 bars, 2 beauty/hair salons and 2 clothing/shoes stores. The high end businesses were located more on the edges of Chinatown, though a few were clustered along Shawmut Avenue.

Boston Chinatown: Commercial Uses



As with New York and Philadelphia, the most significant commercial use was restaurants, bakeries, and bars at 33 percent. Next were retail businesses at 14 percent, many of which fell within Chinatown's core and along Kneeland Street.

Boston Chinatown: Retail Stores



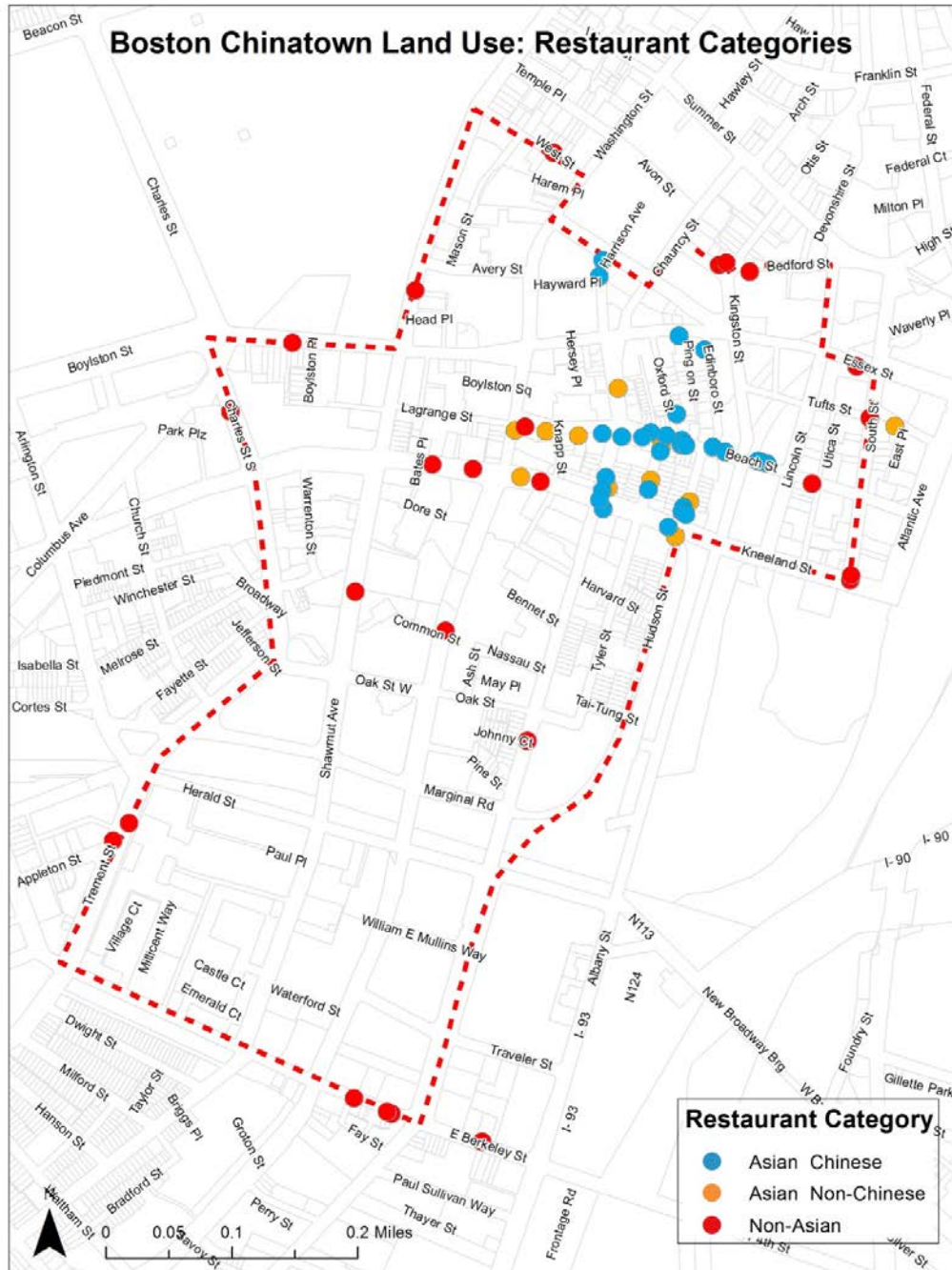
Nearly 4 percent were professional services, including lawyers and doctors. Approximately 4 percent were banks and 2 percent were hotels. Many of the beauty/hair salons at 6 percent fell within the commercial core whereas the 1 percent of clothing/shoes stores were located more towards the edges of Chinatown. Chinatown also had at least 19 community centers, including many operated by family associations for its members.

Among the 157 buildings with commerce on upper floors, nearly half housed offices; approximately 8 percent included spaces for classes like art, martial arts, and yoga; and 3 had grocery stores.

Restaurants

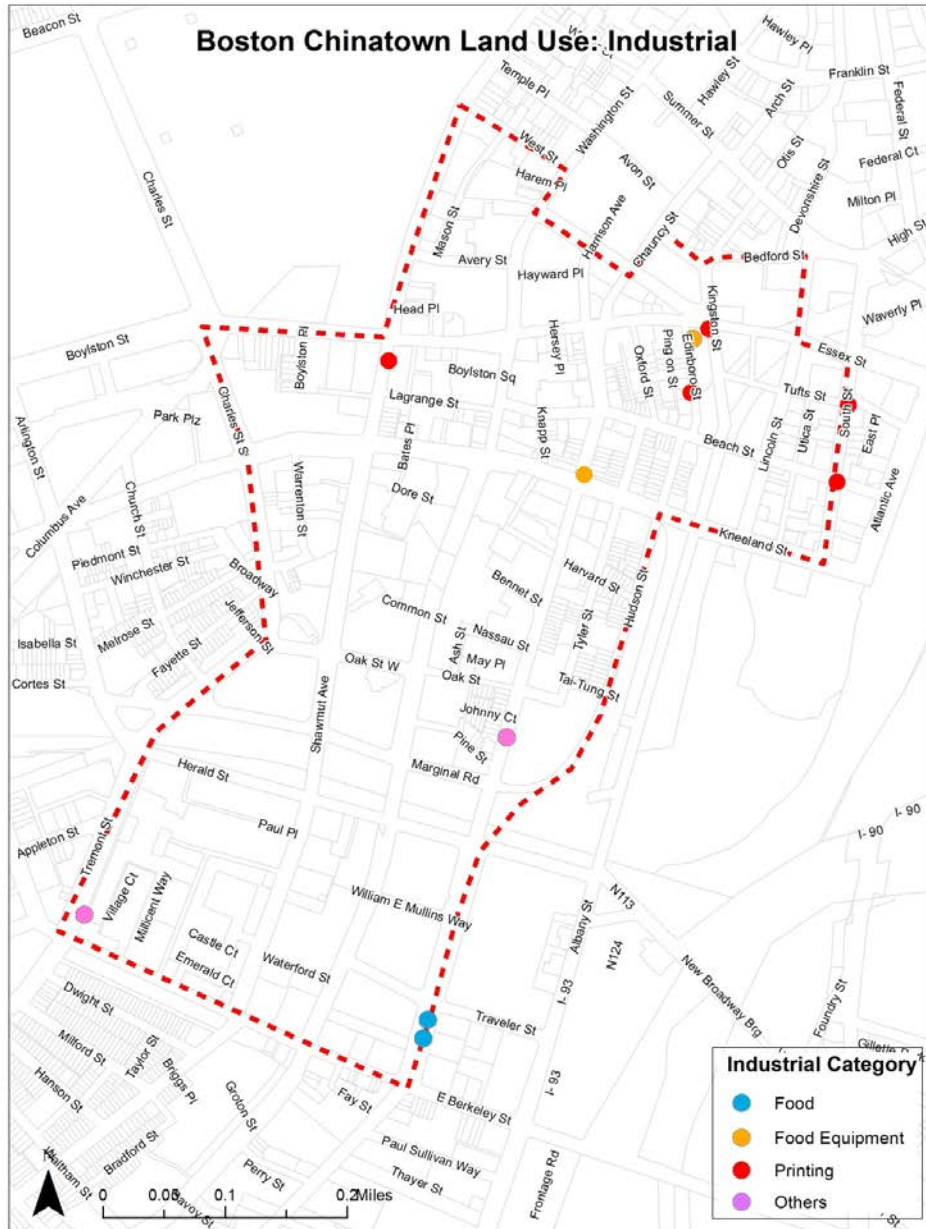
The share of Asian versus non-Asian cuisines in Chinatown is a good indicator of gentrification in the neighborhood. The share of Asian cuisine still predominated in Chinatown at 61 percent. Among 113 ground-floor restaurants in Boston, 48 (42%) served Chinese cuisine, 44 (39%) served non-Asian cuisine (from Starbucks to McDonald's to Mexican), and 21 (19%) Asian non-Chinese restaurants, including 9 Japanese and 5 Vietnamese. Many of the Chinese and other Asian restaurants are also concentrated in the commercial core along Beach Street whereas the non-Asian restaurants fell on Kneeland Street or on the borders of Chinatown.

Boston Chinatown: Restaurants



Industrial Uses

The industrial uses in Chinatown were nearly nonexistent and the least of all three Chinatowns, with a total of just 13 recorded. These uses were located outside of Chinatown’s commercial core. Despite the scarcity of industry in Chinatown, food service equipment/wholesale and food were the most prominent at three each and five printing establishments. These industrial uses are similarly reflected in both New York and Philadelphia. Food wholesalers sold such products as bread and tofu for restaurants. Only one remaining apparel use was recorded.

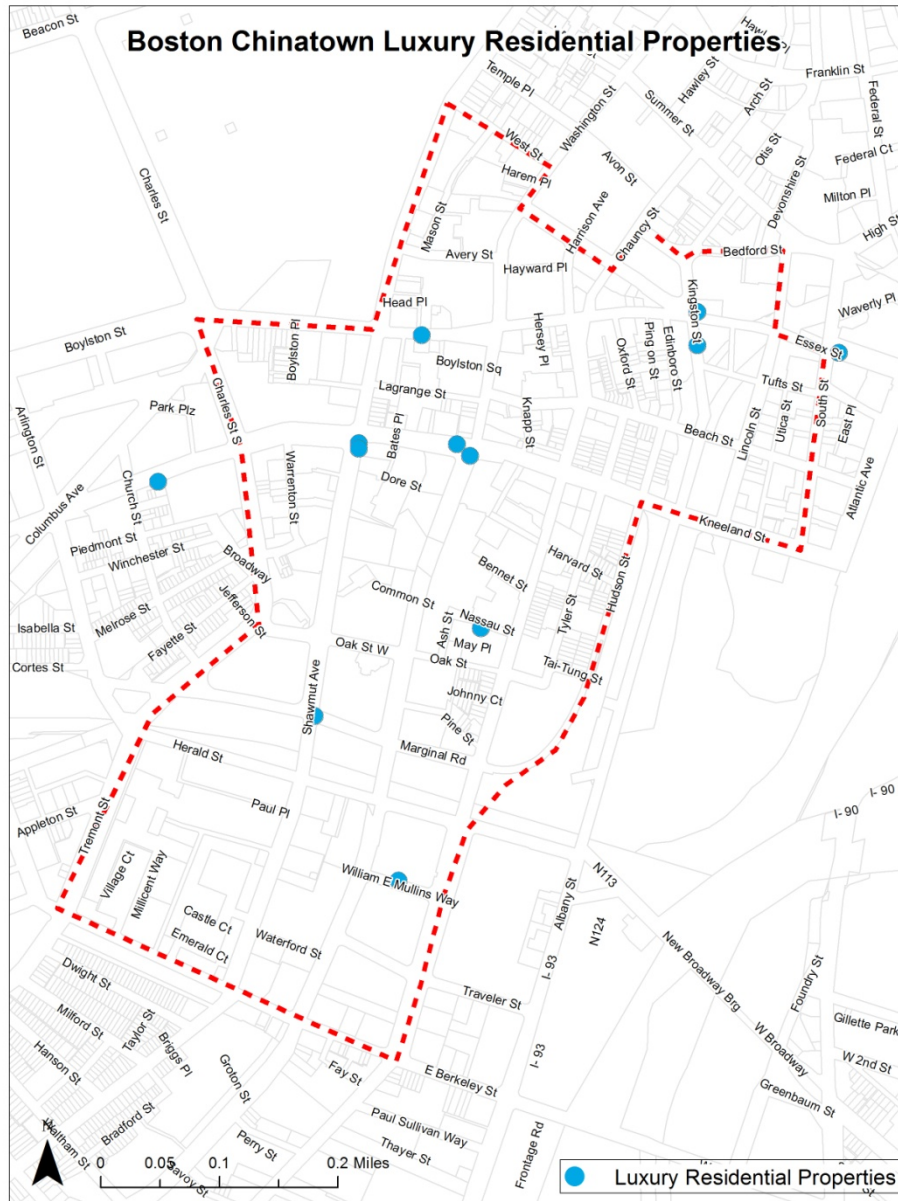


Even within the last two years, this short list of Industrial/Manufacturing uses has already changed due to gentrification. Since the data collection in 2011, both Ho Kong Bean Sprout Co. and Quinzani’s Bakery on Harrison Avenue have been demolished—along with the Boston Herald building—to make way for yet another luxury rental and mall development called “The Ink Block Development.”

Residential Uses & Household Make-Up

Chinatown’s skyline has changed in the past two decades. Despite Chinatown’s Community Master Plan limiting the height of development, multiple luxury condominiums now dot the neighborhood and dwarf the previously shorter buildings in the neighborhood.

Boston Chinatown: Luxury Residences and Condos



The changing residential stock has clearly affected Chinatown’s demographics. The most prevalent sign of gentrification is the decrease in the share of Chinatown’s Asian population. Representing 70 percent of Chinatown’s population in 1990, the share of Asians dropped precipitously to 46 percent by 2010. Because luxury and unaffordable skyscrapers tend to add more affluent White dwellers to the neighborhood, the share of White residents also dramatically increased from 19 percent in 1990 to 41 percent in 2010. Just from 2000 to 2010, the white population in Chinatown doubled.

Boston Chinatown- Racial Composition and Change								
	1990		2000		2010		1990- 2000	2000- 2010
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Change	Change
Total Population	6,887	100%	9,196	100%	12,843	100%	34%	40%
Non Hispanic White	1,313	19%	2,703	29%	5,383	41%	106%	99%
Non Hispanic Black	460	7%	596	7%	677	5%	30%	14%
Hispanic or Latino	220	3%	482	5%	678	5%	119%	41%
Asian or Pacific Islander	4,881	70%	5,242	57%	5,848	46%	7%	12%
Other race [^]	13	0%	173	2%	257	2%	1231%	49%

[^]The definition of "Other race" changed between the 1990 and 2000 census with the introduction of a "Two or more race category." Therefore, this category cannot be compared across decades. Given the small share of this category, it has a limited impact on the levels of the other groups.

Another clear sign of gentrification is median household income, where non-Hispanic Whites in Chinatown went from \$40,554 in 2000 to \$84,255 between 2005 and 2009. Meanwhile, for Asians, the median household income actually dropped deeper into poverty levels from \$16,820 in 2000 to \$13,057 between 2005 and 2009. The actual poverty rate for Asians thus increased from 39 percent in 2000 to 44 percent between 2005 and 2009, the highest poverty rate for any racial group in Boston. This juxtaposition in the increase of median household income for Whites and a decrease for Asians is a classic indicator that working class Asian immigrants are and will be priced out of Chinatown.

It is important to note that data on income, poverty, and other figures in this report drawn from the 2005-2009 or 2006-2011 five-year series of the American Community Survey (ACS) are not as accurate as results from the decennial census or from our land use surveys. The ACS is a yearly survey of one percent of the United States population, and therefore does not capture patterns at the level of neighborhoods or census tracts with a high degree of statistical reliability. ACS figures are included in this report since (1) the decennial census no longer reports on income, poverty, foreign-born status, or housing values and rents, and (2) the ACS figures do reflect general trends in the neighborhoods, even if the specific figures from the ACS may not be precise. ACS data is denoted with an asterisk (*) where it is included in tables in this report.

The seismic change in demographics is a direct effect of the many new and massive luxury developments, made possible with local governmental assistance for developers. As more luxury high rises are planned in the coming years, the near equilibrium of 5,383 Whites and 5,848 Asians living in Chinatown in 2010 will almost definitely shift within a few years such that the percentage and actual number of white residents would have surpassed that of the Asian population in Chinatown.

The value of land in Chinatown is consistent with the more affluent demographic. In 1990, the housing values in Chinatown were approximately the same as in Boston overall. However by both 2000 and 2010, the housing value in Chinatown had nearly doubled that of Boston's overall.

	Boston Chinatown - House Value and Rent					
	1990		2000		2006-2010*	
	Chinatown	Boston	Chinatown	Boston	Chinatown	Boston
Median Value	\$162,500°	\$161,400	\$390,000°	\$190,600	\$583,850°	\$369,600
Median Contract Rent	\$428	\$546	\$422	\$722	\$859	\$1,117

° Value Missing for some of the Census Tracts

* These figures are from the American Community Survey.

Source: US Census Bureau

This continued change is supported by an examination of the housing tenure data for Chinatown, where the trend indicates an increase in home ownership from owner occupied units of 279 in 1990 to 420 in 2000 to 1,074 in 2010, accounting for a 156 percent increase alone from 2000 to 2010. The data for median contract rent also indicates an upward shift in Chinatown, where figures went from \$428 (1990) to \$422 (2000) and increased to \$859 (2010).

In addition to the decline in overall Asian population, the household structure and age composition of the community showed that between 1990 and 2010, the share of non-family households increased from 21 to 29 percent. Meanwhile, the share of family households has decreased dramatically from 73 to 47 percent.

	Boston Chinatown - Population in Households by Household types							
	1990		2000		2010		1990-2000	2000-2010
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Change	Change
Total Population	6,807	100.0%	9,191	100.0%	12,843	100.0%	35.0%	39.7%
In Family Households	5,002	73.5%	5,079	55.3%	6,086	47.4%	1.5%	19.8%
In Nonfamily Households	1,448	21.3%	2,150	23.4%	3,697	28.8%	48.5%	72.0%
In Group Quarters	357	5.2%	1,962	21.4%	3,060	23.8%	449.6%	56.0%

Most meaningful for understanding the decline of families in what has been a traditionally multi-generational immigrant family neighborhood is the rise of people living in group quarters contrasted with the age of current Chinatown residents. The share of people living in the non-family category of group quarters rose from 5.2 percent in 1990 to 21.4 percent in 2000, accounting for a 450 percent increase. From 2000 to 2010, this category experienced an additional 56 percent increase. While Chinatown always had single room occupancy units, or "SROs," thus accounting for the numbers of group quarters in the past, that number was never that abundant. Therefore, this dramatic change can be explained when coupled and analyzed with the age of residents below:

	Boston Chinatown - Age Group Composition and Change								
	1990		2000		2010		1990-2000	2000-2010	
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Change	Change	
Total Population	6,887	100%	9,196	100%	12,843	100%	34%	40%	
Up to 17 years	1277	18.6%	1210	13.2%	1,210	9.4%	-5%	0%	
18-24 years	741	10.8%	2081	22.6%	3859	30.0%	181%	85%	
25-64 years	3521	51.2%	4015	43.7%	5897	46.0%	14%	47%	
65 and over	1,348	19.6%	1,890	20.6%	1,877	14.6%	40%	-1%	

The crucial category is share of 18 to 24 year olds, which experienced a 181 percent increase from 1990 to 2000, and then an additional 85 percent increase from 2000 to 2010. Meanwhile the percentage of people 65 years old and over generally decreased from 1990 to 2010. With data on age change as context, the increase in the share of group quarters is likely due to the rise in 18 to 24 year old college and post-graduate students. With the multiple colleges and universities in Boston, and the additional dormitories from nearby Suffolk, Emerson, and Tufts downtown campuses, the spillover of people who are already familiar with these areas into private rentals was inevitable. This trend of younger college age students further pushes family households out of Chinatown.

Family households have been an identifying marker of Chinatown since the mid-20th century. Starting from the 1990s, as a strategy to diversify housing in Chinatown, community development corporations (“CDCs”) supported building family units within new developments, yet that strategy often came at the expense of developing individual low-income units. Many residents argued for building, supporting, and stabilizing housing for low-income renters, but the CDC's plan prevailed. Therefore many more high-priced market rate units were introduced into the neighborhood in order to subsidize the development of family units within these same developments. Despite this push for family units, the dramatic decrease in family households in the past three decades suggests that, unless housing strategies are changed in the future, Chinatown will continue to experience even greater declines in families.

	Foreign Born Population					
	1990		2000		2007-2011*	
	Chinatown	City	Chinatown	City	Chinatown	City
Boston	62%	20%	51%	26%	46%	27%

* These figures are from the American Community Survey.

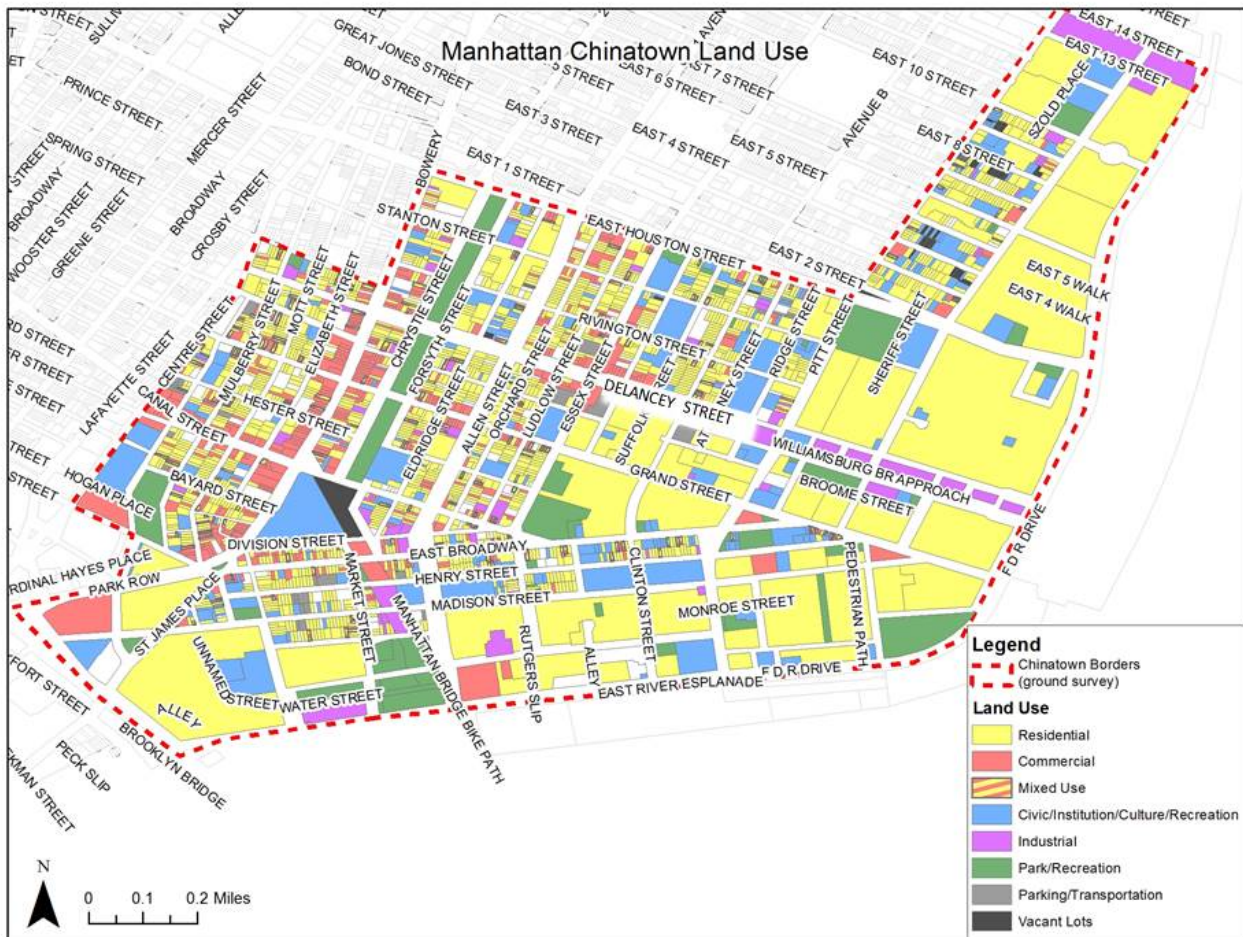
The share of the foreign born population has also decreased over time in Boston, suggesting that fewer new immigrants are able to live in Boston Chinatown likely due to its lack of affordability. Some newer Asian immigrants who are moving into Chinatown now include those who have more expendable incomes. For example, Asians from overseas account for nearly one-third of the units bought in the yet-to-be-finished luxury condo, Hayward Place, on Washington Street. In the future, Chinatown may no longer be able to fully serve its historical role of acculturating new generations of low-income immigrants.

New York's Chinatown & Lower East Side

The boundaries of New York's Chinatown and its surrounding immigrant areas, in particular the Lower East Side, have been defined by residents and workers to include areas historically considered Chinatown, but also areas where immigrants of similar socioeconomic status live and work. The area stretches from the East River on the south, goes up along the eastern border of Manhattan to portions of 14th Street, where public housing is sited, and goes back down to Houston Street on the north and Bowery and Centre Street on the west.

The area contained 3,652 surveyed parcels: 43 percent had commercial use on the bottom floor with residential use on the upper floors, 62 percent had commercial uses, 15 percent were purely residential, 7 percent were public institutions, 2 percent were park/recreation space (though the percentage of the area allocated to parks is 8.5 percent), 2 percent contained industrial uses, and 6 percent were vacant. The average height of the buildings is 5.25 stories.

Chinatown & Lower East Side Study Area Land Use Map (City Planning Commission 2010)

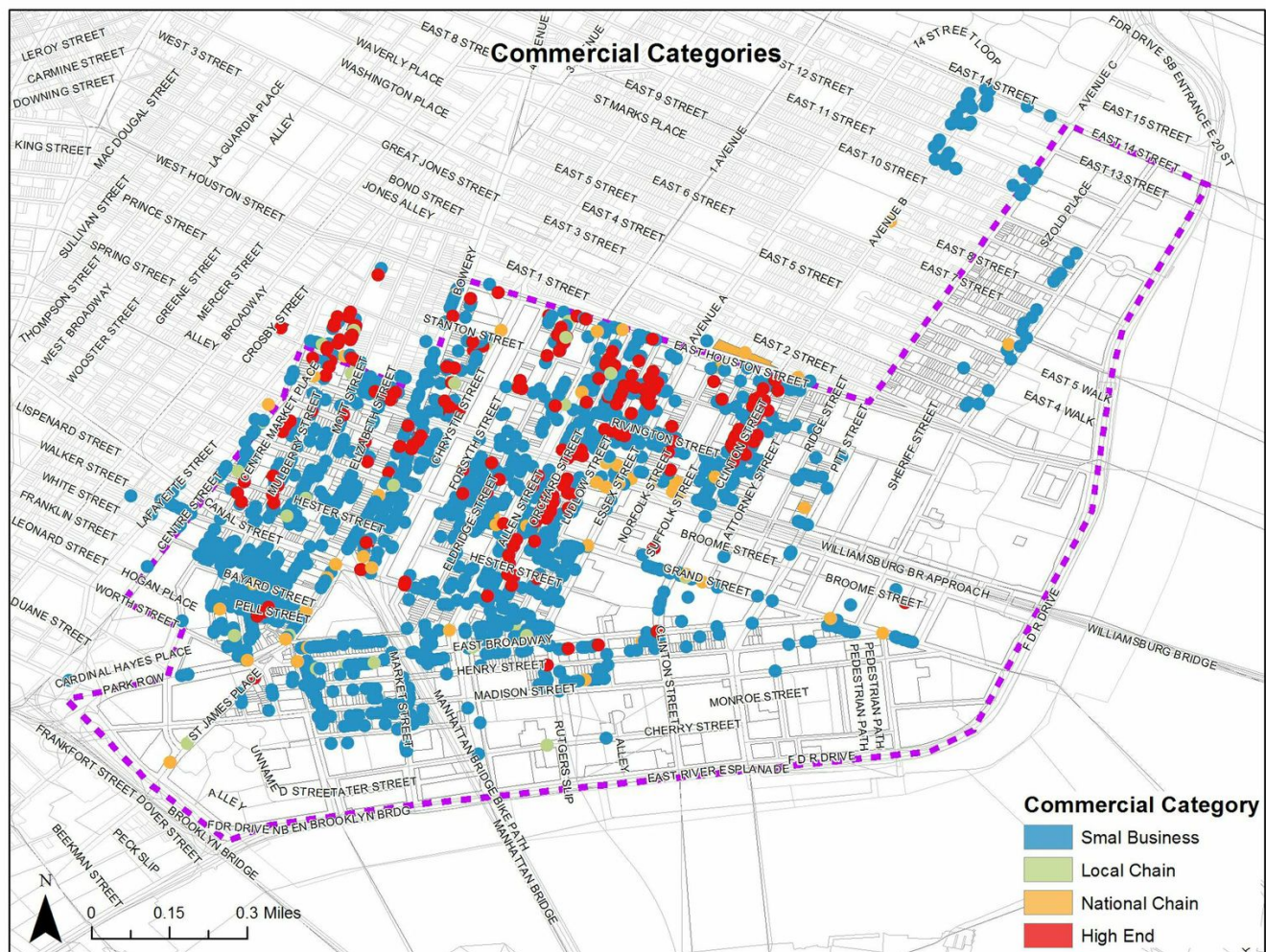


Commercial Uses & Small Businesses

Claiming a much broader area than Boston or Philadelphia, New York’s Chinatown had 2,274 ground floor businesses or institutions. At 94 percent, the overwhelming majority of commercial use in New York’s Chinatown was small businesses. The majority of these businesses was geared towards residents’ everyday use and purchase of affordable goods and services. Businesses geared toward tourists were minimal. Only 4 percent were national chains and 1 percent were local chains.

Approximately 12 percent of all businesses were classified as “high-end,” including 79 clothing/shoes stores and 62 restaurants. The most significant portion of these high-end stores were clustered between Houston and Delancey Street, where certain streets were upzoned in 2008 by over 100 percent and where students and young professionals have displaced immigrants in the past decade. High-end stores also dotted the landscape along Allen and Orchard Streets heading towards the historic core of Chinatown.

New York Chinatown & Lower East Side: Commercial Uses

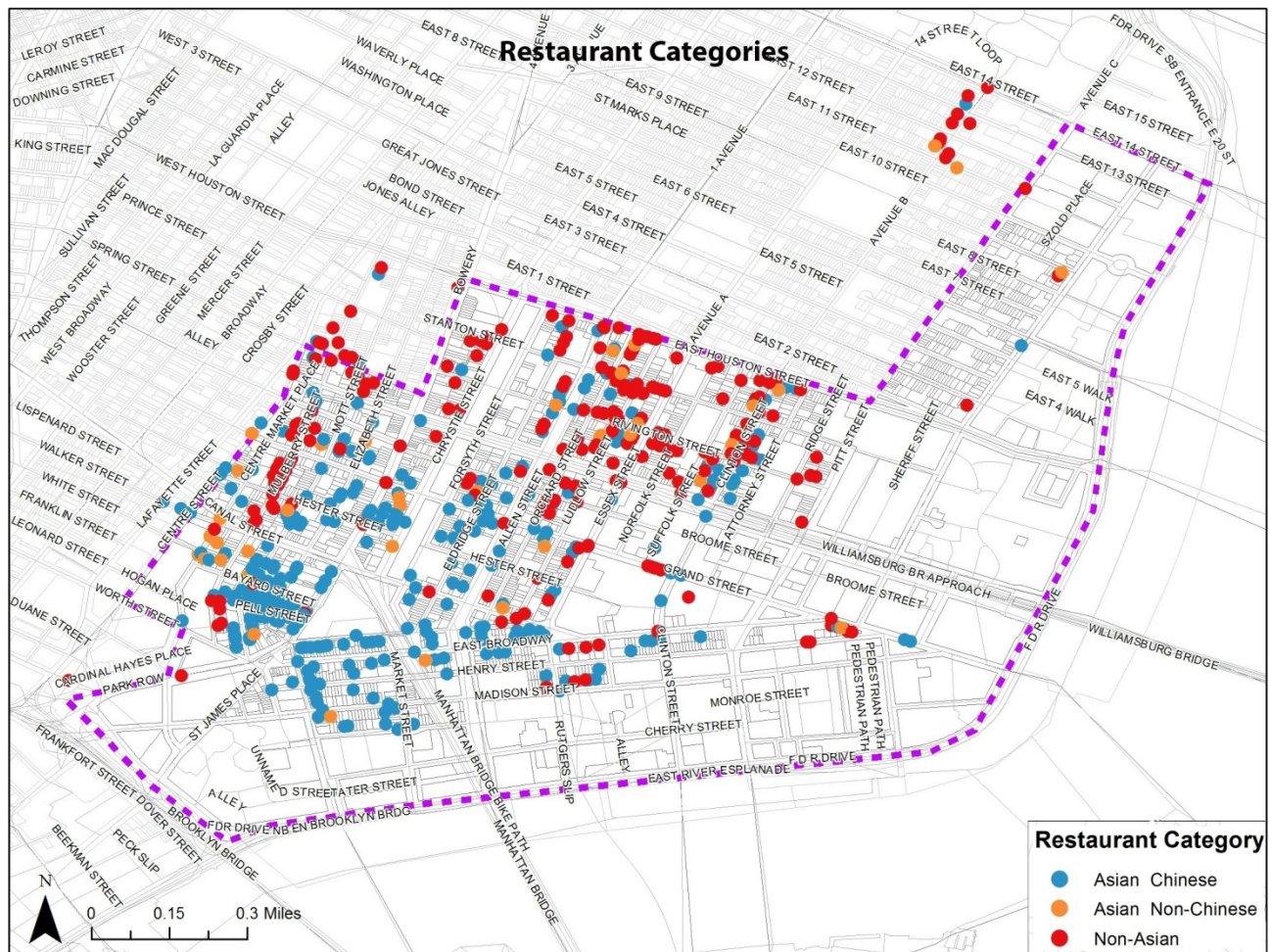


Restaurants

The predominant commercial use in the neighborhood is restaurant/food at 26 percent. Chinese restaurants were mainly in Chinatown’s historic core. Non-Asian restaurants were mainly between the Houston and Delancey Street area and Little Italy, but also have popped up along some edges of historic Chinatown where many Chinese residents live and work, including on East Broadway, Essex Street, and the Bowery. Throughout Chinatown and the Lower East Side, 43 percent of all restaurants served Asian cuisine and 57 served non-Asian cuisine. Approximately 36 percent of all restaurants served Chinese cuisine specifically.

In addition, in the past few years, non-Asian restaurants such as a French bistro opened on streets like Baxter in the heart of Chinatown. Starbucks opened on Canal Street in the 2000s. A building along Canal Street, where stalls of counterfeit goods were located just across the street from a tourism booth for Chinatown, recently debuted a large coffee shop. Before the recent opening, the building’s ground floor storefront was covered with wooden boards, on which a local resident had scrawled the Chinese word for “gentrification.”

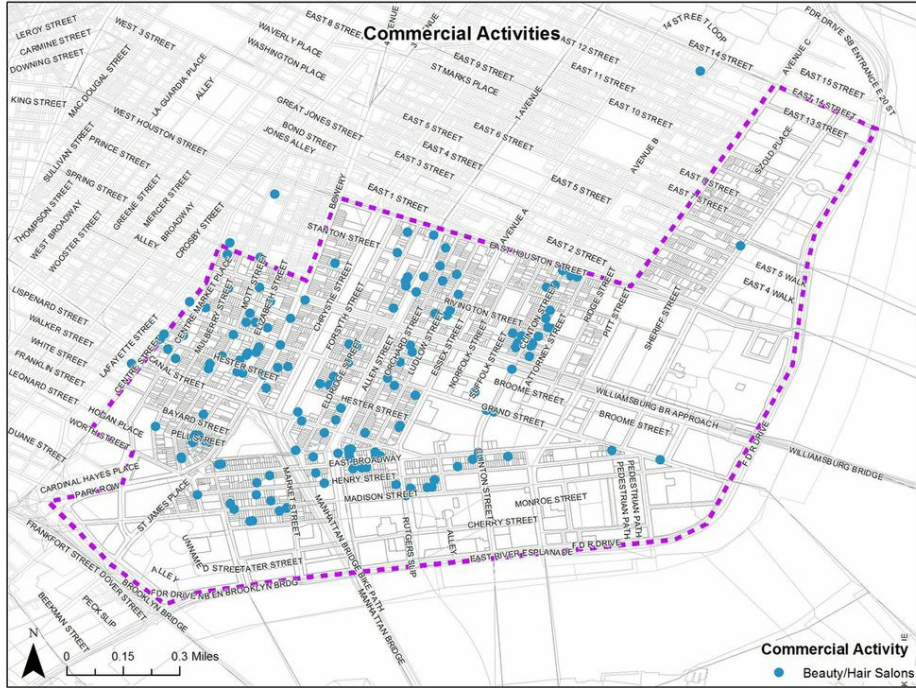
New York Chinatown & Lower East Side: Restaurants



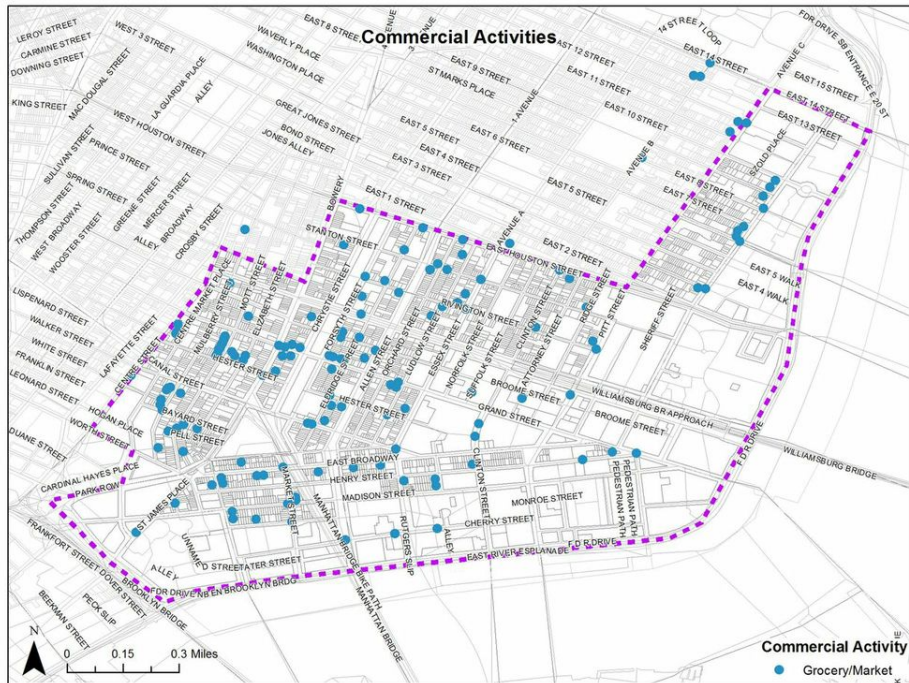
Beauty & Hair, Groceries, Clothing & Shoes, and Other Small Businesses

Beauty/hair salons and grocery stores/markets—both of which comprise 9 percent each of all businesses—were the next most predominant uses and spread throughout Chinatown, providing residents, workers, and immigrants who live within the New York and New Jersey region with goods and services at inexpensive prices.

New York Chinatown & Lower East Side: Beauty & Hair Salons

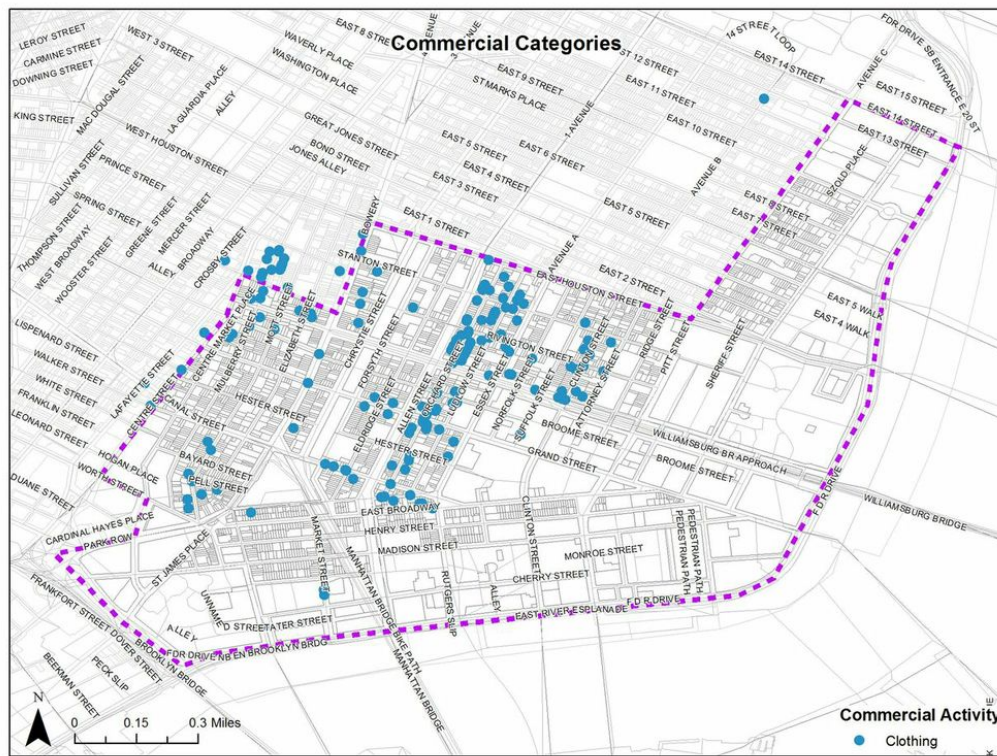


New York Chinatown & Lower East Side: Grocery Stores & Markets



Clothing and shoe stores also comprised 9 percent of the stores in the study area, but were clustered mainly on the same streets where high-end stores have been identified, suggesting that low-income immigrants in Chinatown may not frequent this type of store.

New York Chinatown & Lower East Side: Clothing & Shoes



Businesses in Chinatown were incredibly diversified, demonstrating the neighborhood’s strong residential nature as locals rely on Chinatown for their day-to-day needs. The predominant businesses that provide affordable goods and services were dotted throughout the neighborhood. For example, appliance and electronics stores (5 percent) and convenience and variety stores (4 percent) are the next most predominant commercial uses in Chinatown while offices of dentists, doctors, herbal pharmacists, lawyers, and accountants (3 percent) are scattered throughout the neighborhood. These types of small businesses are supported largely by residents, but also attract Chinese and Asian immigrants who live outside of the neighborhood and rely on linguistically and culturally accessible services.

Other types of small businesses like jewelry stores and gift shops—which comprised about 3 percent each of all businesses in Chinatown—were geared more towards tourists. The clusters of these types of stores versus the scattered nature of businesses geared towards residents, such as grocery stores, make them more of a destination stop rather than representative of businesses selling everyday goods. For example, gift shops are clustered just a couple blocks north and south of Canal Street along streets like Baxter, Mulberry, and Mott while jewelry stores are located mainly along Canal, Elizabeth, and the Bowery. Although present in the neighborhood, businesses geared towards tourists were not as prevalent as businesses selling day-to-day goods to residents and workers.

Therefore, the concentration of hotels in Chinatown seems misplaced. The survey recorded nearly 20 hotels in the neighborhood. Since the survey was completed, developers have built more hotels, including the Wyndham Garden on the Bowery. Multiple community groups have called for a moratorium on hotel construction in the neighborhood because hotels have not focused on the needs of local residents and workers.

Industrial Uses

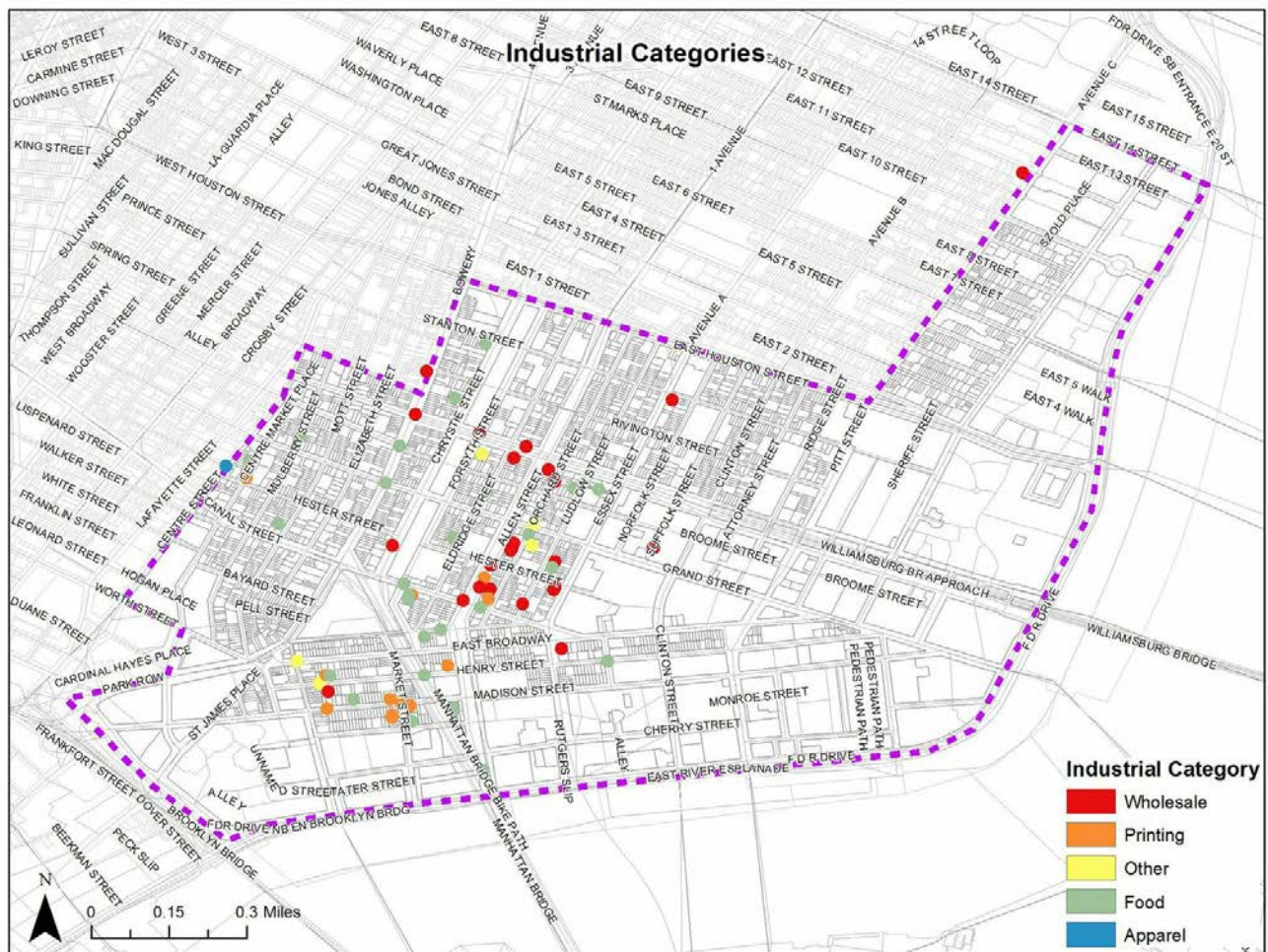
Like the commercial uses in the neighborhood, a closer look at the industrial uses reflected the predominance of the food industry in Chinatown. The majority of industrial uses were connected to food and restaurants. Approximately 33 percent were wholesalers, including for restaurant supplies and food, while another 33 percent made or distributed food, including beer, dumplings, ravioli, wonton skins, and sushi supplies. The smaller spaces that produce food were particularly geared towards stocking local restaurants with perishable food supplies. Wholesalers stocked restaurants in the local vicinity, but also attracted restaurant owners from all over the country who need supplies.

Even the printing industry, which comprises 15 percent of industrial uses, was focused on the food industry and prints such things as restaurant menus and materials for wedding banquets used in local restaurants or outside of New York.

The decline of the garment industry was obvious as only 2 percent of all industrial uses are apparel.

As noted in the map below, the industrial uses are scattered throughout Chinatown, rather than being concentrated in a particular spot for industrial/manufacturing uses as in Philadelphia's Chinatown.

New York Chinatown & Lower East Side: Industrial Uses

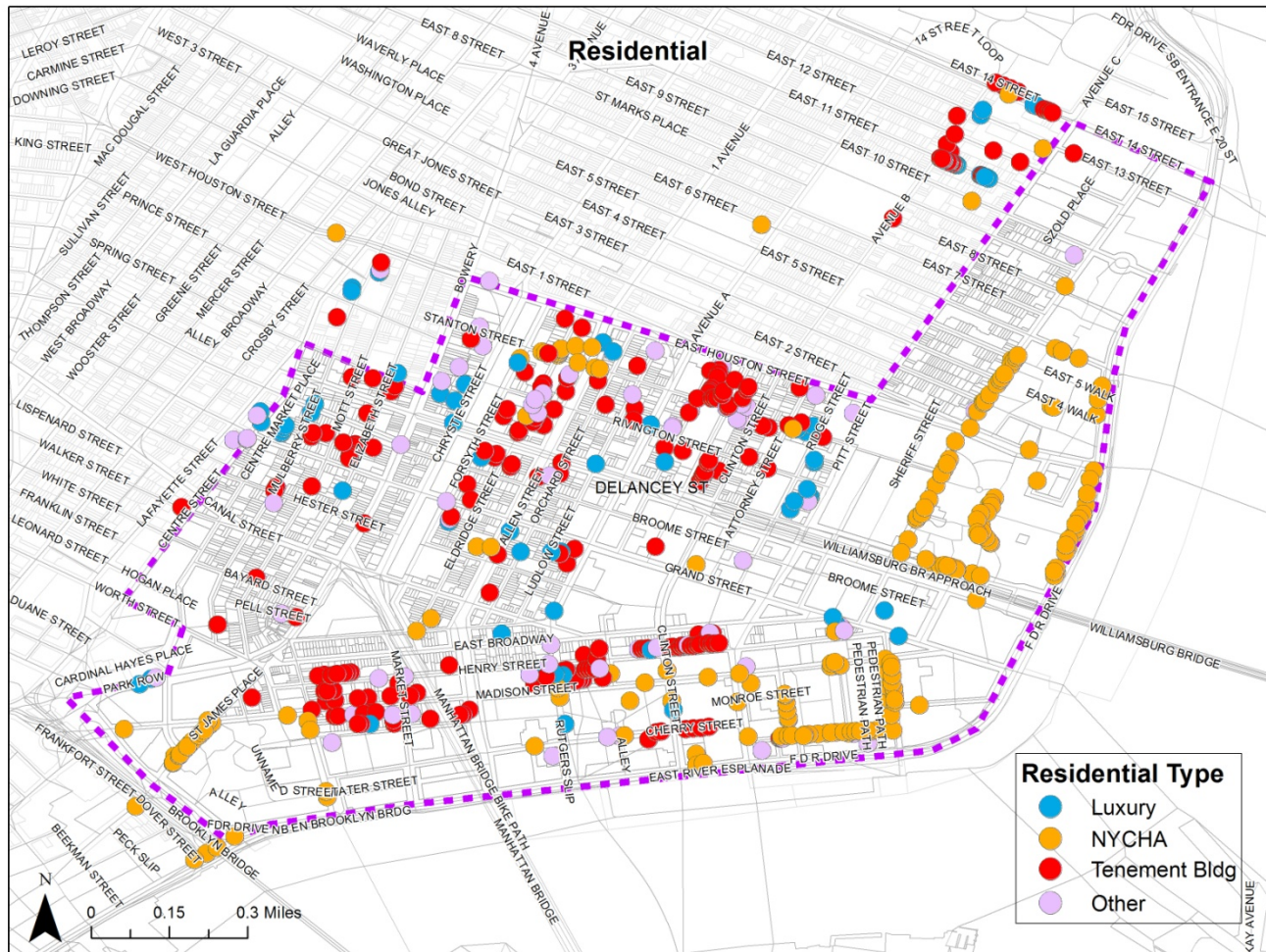


Residential & Household Make-Up

As seen in the below map, luxury condominiums were concentrated in certain areas in Chinatown. But because many residential buildings were tenement buildings and Chinatown in New York is larger than in Boston or Philadelphia, the physical aspects of residential gentrification were not as obvious. Changes in the neighborhood, however, were still occurring. Tenants have experienced more harassment by landlords in the past decade. The occupants of rent regulated units have shifted from immigrant family households to a younger demographic, including young professionals and students. Further, the decline of the garment industry has transformed former factories into million dollar loft apartments on streets like Hester Street in the core of Chinatown.

As seen in the map, tenement buildings, traditionally a source of affordable housing for immigrants in Chinatown and the Lower East Side still proliferate, but the demographics of their occupants have changed in the past three decades. With public housing's plans to add luxury housing to its open space and if the maximum zoning capacity of the East Village rezoning plan is realized as the economy improves, the area's population could see even more change in the next ten years.

New York Chinatown & Lower East Side: Residential Uses



US Census data shows that between 1990 and 2010, the population of New York’s Chinatown decreased by 7 percent whereas Manhattan’s population grew by 6.6 percent. The change in New York’s racial demographics was not as drastic as in Boston or Philadelphia as the Asian population in Chinatown, currently at 45 percent, has been relatively stable since 1990. However, in the last decade only the White population in Chinatown increased, more than doubling the growth rate of the White population in Manhattan overall.

	Manhattan Chinatown - Racial Composition and Change							
	1990		2000		2010		1990-2000	2000-2010
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Change	Change
Total Population	125,574	100%	124,165	100%	116,722	100%	-1%	-6%
Non Hispanic White	22,229	18%	19,529	16%	23,314	20%	-12%	19%
Non Hispanic Black	9,867	8%	8,588	7%	8,457	7%	-13%	-2%
Hispanic or Latino	41,609	33%	34,050	27%	30,227	26%	-18%	-11%
Asian or Pacific Islander	51,439	41%	59,320	48%	52,613	45%	15%	-11%
Other race	430	0 %	2,678	2%	2,111	2%	523%	-21%

White households in Chinatown were also generally more affluent than other racial groups.

	Manhattan - Median Household Income			
	2000		2006-2010*	
	Chinatown ^o	New York	Chinatown ^o	New York
Non Hispanic White	\$35,904	\$46,534	\$58,265	\$62,517
Non Hispanic Black	\$26,653	\$31,058	\$44,410	\$39,927
Latino	\$29,627	\$27,757	\$31,814	\$34,467
Asian Pacific Islander	\$31,368	\$41,119	\$29,524	\$53,173

^o Value Missing for some of the Census Tracts

* These figures are from the American Community Survey.

Source: US Census Bureau

However, the most meaningful explanation for New York Chinatown’s shrinking population is the decline of family households; a revealing gentrification indicator in Chinatowns is the shift from multi-generational immigrant families to households comprised of young professionals.

As the below chart shows, between 1990 and 2010, the share of non-family households steadily increased whereas the share of family households steadily decreased. Even more telling in the decade between 2000 and 2010 is that the portion of non-family households in New York City overall remained exactly the same at 37 percent, but increased in Chinatown.

Manhattan Chinatown - Population in Households by Household types								
	1990		2000		2010		1990-2000	2000-2010
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Change	Change
Total Population	125,257	100.0%	124,074	100.0%	116,722	100.0%	-0.9%	-5.9%
In Family Households	102,666	82.0%	97,337	78.5%	85,102	72.9%	-5.2%	-12.6%
In Nonfamily Households	17,410	13.9%	22,996	18.5%	27,915	23.9%	32.1%	21.4%
In Group Quarters	5,181	4.1%	3,741	3.0%	3,705	3.2%	-27.8%	-1.0%

This change from family to non-family households is also reflected in some of the changes in Chinatown residents' age composition. Along with the decline in family households, the share of residents under 17 years old also declined from between 1990 and 2010.

Manhattan Chinatown - Age Group Composition and Change								
	1990		2000		2010		1990-2000	2000-2010
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Change	Change
Total Population	114,088	100%	115,637	100%	108,921	100%	1%	-6%
Up to 17 years	24,338	21%	21,365	18%	16,440	15%	-12%	-23%
18-24 years	11,648	10%	12,864	11%	11,932	11%	10%	-7%
25-64 years	60,442	53%	62,995	54%	62,141	57%	4%	-1%
65 and over	17,660	15%	18,413	16%	18,408	17%	4%	0%

The main difference in age demographics between New York and the other two Chinatowns is the share of the elderly population in New York increased slightly in the past thirty years. The elderly population's steadiness in New York's Chinatown reflects the rent regulation system's critical role in maintaining immigrant neighborhoods, since many residents who are 65 years old or older have lived in Chinatown's rent regulated housing for decades despite overall higher rents in the neighborhood. Although it has been weakened by a heavy pro-landlord lobby, rent regulation makes demolition of buildings and evictions more difficult than in places like Boston and Philadelphia without this system in place.

However, newer immigrants do not have the same access to rent regulated units as decades ago. The foreign born population in New York's Chinatown decreased from 50 to 44 percent between 2000 and 2007 to 2011, suggesting that fewer new immigrants can afford Manhattan's market rental prices. Fewer rent regulated units are now available because as land values and rents become more lucrative, increasingly more landlords harass tenants to leave and illegally try to take these units out of the rent regulation system. The value of property in Chinatown is apparent as by 2006-2010 the median house value was significantly higher in Chinatown at \$684,388 as opposed to \$504,500 in New York City overall.¹ Combined with increasing median rents and the significant jump in median housing value, Chinatown will not be able to serve as a gateway for new immigrants in the coming decades as it has in the past.

¹ Note that the value was missing for some of the Census tracts.

	Manhattan Chinatown - House Value and Rent					
	1990		2000		2006-2010*	
	Chinatown	New York	Chinatown	New York	Chinatown	New York
Median Value	\$145,000°	\$189,600	\$167,917°	\$211,900	\$684,388°	\$504,500
Median Contract Rent	\$351	\$448	\$534	\$646	\$851	\$1,022

° Value Missing for some of the Census Tracts

* These figures are from the American Community Survey.

Source: US Census Bureau

As in Boston and Philadelphia, luxury development occurring in and around New York's Chinatown is contributing to that increase and the rise in home ownership opportunities in the neighborhood has not benefited the immigrant Asian population in Chinatown. The map of surveyed residential buildings indicates that a large amount of luxury buildings are located in the area between Houston and Delancey Streets in addition to portions that creep into Soho near Broome and Ludlow Streets. This pattern coincides with the higher concentration of high end clothing and shoe stores on these streets.

Although the share of renters in Chinatown still predominates, the number of new housing units clearly skews in favor of owner-occupied units, indicating that the additional housing units in the past few decades has been largely condominiums for more affluent populations.

	Manhattan Chinatown - Housing Tenure							
	1990		2000		2010		1990-2000	2000-2010
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Change	Change
Occupied Housing Units	43,704	100.0%	46,146	100%	47,543	100%	5.6%	3.0%
Owner Occupied	3,145	7.2%	5,519	12.0%	6,558	13.8%	75.5%	18.8%
Renter Occupied	40,559	92.8%	40,627	88.0%	40,985	86.2%	0.2%	0.9%

However, whereas homeownership nearly doubled between 1990 and 2010, the poverty rate among Asians in Chinatown has remained relatively consistent. Further, the poverty rate of Asian residents in 2010 in Chinatown remains much higher as compared to the city overall.

	Manhattan - Poverty Rate			
	2000		2006-2010*	
	Chinatown°	New York	Chinatown°	New York
Non Hispanic White	15%	12%	16%	13%
Non Hispanic Black	39%	26%	32%	21%
Latino	35%	31%	32%	27%
Asian Pacific Islander	32%	20%	33%	18%

° Value Missing for some of the Census Tracts

* These figures are from the American Community Survey.

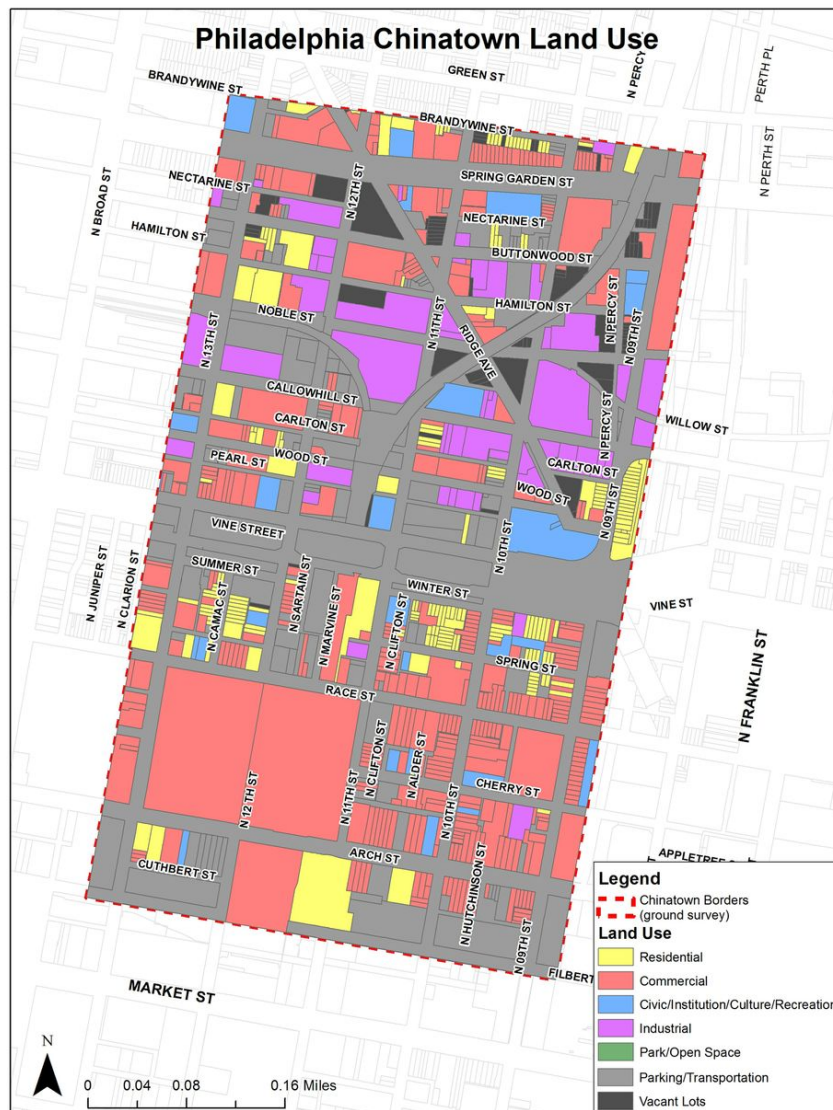
The owner-occupied housing in Chinatown is clearly geared toward higher-income households, whereas rental units have remained somewhat more affordable. As Asian immigrants do not seem to have benefited from the increase in ownership opportunities in recent decades, the focus of some CDCs in pushing for more ownership opportunities seems out of place. The lowest-income populations that rely on Chinatown as a sustainable network require strategies with more emphasis on low rents. Keeping rents affordable in Chinatown will largely determine whether the immigrant population will shift dramatically in the next ten years.

Philadelphia's Chinatown

The boundaries identified as Philadelphia's Chinatown were Spring Garden Street to the north, Filbert Street to the south, North 9th Street to the East, and North 13th Street to the West. These boundaries included the historic commercial core of Chinatown below Vine Street as well as Chinatown North across the expressway. Below Vine Street is a dense mix of mostly small commercial, residential, and institutional land uses. Above Vine is an even more varied mix of residential, manufacturing, warehousing, commercial, institutional, and vacant properties.

Throughout Chinatown, 799 total buildings and lots were surveyed, a number that is comparable to Boston. Of this total, 28 percent were residential while 49 percent were commercial. Additionally, 26 percent were mixed use commercial and residential. Institutions, including churches, schools, and community organizations, comprised 5 percent. Parking comprised 7 percent while vacant lots comprised 4 percent. Industrial use was less than 0.5 percent. Open space/recreation was less than 0.1 percent, the least of all three Chinatowns. The median height of the buildings was 3 stories, with some taller buildings, including former factories, interspersed throughout the neighborhood, and others clustered especially north of Vine Street.

Philadelphia Chinatown Land Use Map (City Planning Commission 2013)



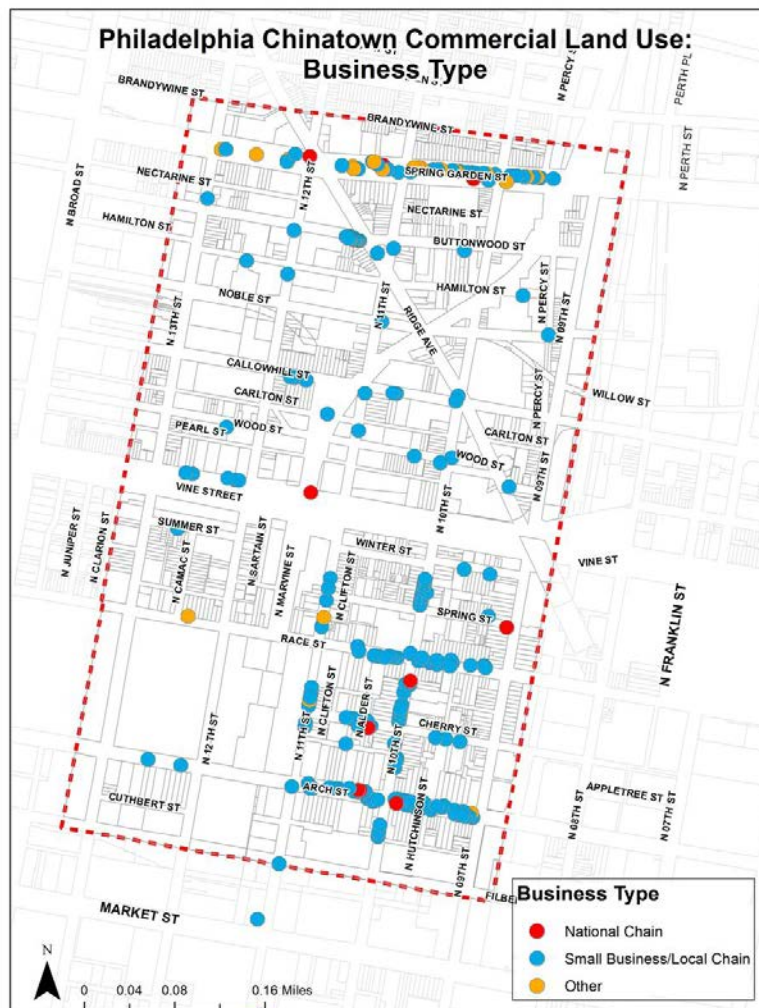
Commercial Uses

Chinatown had 427 commercial businesses or institutions. Approximately 74 percent of these businesses were small or local businesses. Similar to New York, only 4 percent of all businesses were national chains.

Commercial uses generally clustered below Vine Street or closer to Spring Garden. The 387 ground floor businesses included restaurants, grocery stores, various other retail stores, and beauty/hair salons, especially on the main streets of the commercial core below Vine on 9th, 10th, 11th, and Race, Arch, and Cherry Streets, which are densely packed with small businesses. Restaurants, cafes, and bakeries constituted the most common commercial use at 21 percent while retail stores (11 percent), hair and other beauty services and supply stores (8 percent), and grocery stores (7 percent) were also prevalent. Chinatown's largest grocery store is located with a restaurant one floor down from the street at 11th and Race.

Chinatown had 85 buildings with upper floor commercial spaces. Professional services, including doctors, lawyers, accountants, and real estate agents, were located in 13 percent of commercial buildings, which often had more than one office. Small offices concentrated especially on Arch, typically on the second or third floor, where community associations also often locate. Institutions in Philadelphia's Chinatown included branches of many of the same family, regional, and business associations found in Boston and New York. The neighborhood also contained 4 banks in ground floor commercial spaces and 2 more on upper floors.

Philadelphia Chinatown: Commercial Uses



Restaurants

Restaurants, cafes, and bakeries were the most predominant commercial use at 21 percent with a total of 80 in Chinatown, almost all located below Vine Street. Of the restaurants, 85 percent served Asian cuisine. The majority served Chinese cuisine at 62 percent. Meanwhile, 11 percent served Vietnamese cuisine, 5 percent served Malaysian cuisine, and the remaining Asian cuisine restaurants served Japanese, Thai, Burmese, and other Asian food. Many of the non-Asian restaurants, at just about 15 percent of the total, were located on the edges of the neighborhood.

The significant number of Asian restaurants indicates Chinatown's strength in continuing to serve a local and regional Asian immigrant population. Although tourists frequent restaurants, both local and regional immigrants from New Jersey and Pennsylvania also use Chinatown as a base for family gatherings, banquets, and shopping. The increasing diversification of Asian restaurants in recent years demonstrates the broader immigrant populations, beyond just Chinese immigrants, that rely on Chinatown's resources.

Of the 47 restaurants with sales prices listed for the building since the 1980s, with most sales beginning in the 1990s, 34 percent sold for a nominal fee of \$20 or less, suggesting the building's transfer between family members. A core group of Chinatown restaurants have clearly remained family-owned businesses. Of 43 restaurant buildings with an owner's address listed, almost half were owned by residents of Chinatown and three-quarters were owned by residents of Philadelphia. However, half of the 18 restaurant buildings that sold for over \$250,000 were purchased by people or corporations based outside of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia Chinatown: Restaurants



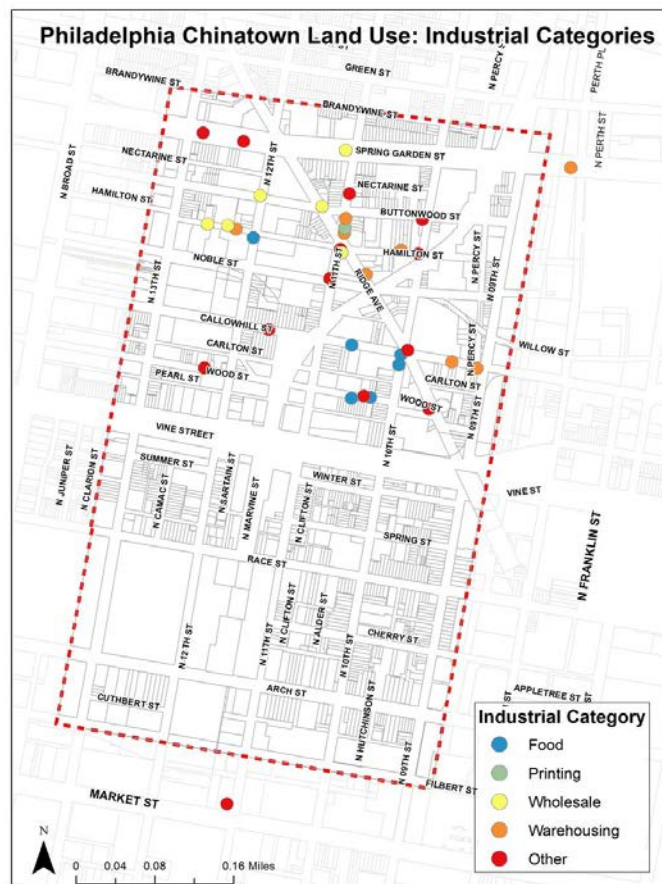
Industrial Uses

Industrial and manufacturing uses are concentrated in Chinatown North. Similar to New York's Chinatown, the food and printing industries are the most significant industrial and manufacturing uses. Of the 78 ground floor industrial land uses, 18 percent made or distributed food; 15 percent were wholesalers, including of food products; and 24 percent were printers. The apparel industry comprised 9 percent of all industrial uses.

Most of the industries in the area were closely connected to the neighborhood's food industry. They included food brokers that sell wholesale metal containers and restaurant supplies, manufacturers of plastic food containers, wholesale distributors of Chinese noodles and tofu, and even factories that sell fortune and traditional Chinese cookies to restaurants, stores, and individuals. Some other industries did not serve Chinatown specifically, including construction materials and vacuum cleaner products suppliers and an art storage and installation company.

The prevalence of the food and printing industry is similar to the existing industrial uses in New York Chinatown and to some extent Boston in smaller numbers. Especially with the decline of garment manufacturing in all three Chinatowns, food and restaurant supply have become virtually the lone industrial or manufacturing enterprises employing immigrants and serving other local businesses. Retaining these land uses in these neighborhoods is vital to the restaurant and grocery sectors, and thus to the larger Chinatown economy and labor market, even as warehousing and manufacturing are often targets of increased nuisance complaints in gentrifying areas.

Philadelphia Chinatown: Industrial Uses



Residential Uses & Household Make Up

The southern half of Chinatown remains largely a dense, small-scale commercial and residential district. However, some of the largest buildings have recently been converted into luxury condos, sometimes marketed towards more affluent Asians as reflected in the lack of a fourth floor listing in some buildings, due to Asians' negative connotations with the number four.

The northern half of Chinatown, or Chinatown North, consists of former industrial buildings with a mix of row houses and small commercial buildings. As the last area around downtown Philadelphia with old factories and warehouses, Chinatown North was poised—and planned—for residential and small business growth. But nearly all of that residential development thus far consists of luxury condos and new businesses associated with the “creative class,” including art galleries, architects and designers, and other consulting firms. The population moving into Chinatown North's lofts and luxury condos typically is not Asian.

Philadelphia Chinatown: Luxury Residences & Condos



The proliferation of luxury condos and loft spaces is reflected in Chinatown’s dramatic population change in the last three decades. From 1990 to 2010, Chinatown grew by 143 percent. In contrast, the city of Philadelphia’s population decreased by 4 percent during that same period.

	Philadelphia Chinatown- Racial Composition and Change							
	1990		2000		2010		1990-2000	2000-2010
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Change	Change
Total Population	2,437	100%	2,924	100%	5,923	100%	20%	103%
Non Hispanic White	596	24%	509	17%	1,697	29%	-15%	233%
Non Hispanic Black	578	24%	785	27%	1,287	22%	36%	64%
Hispanic or Latino	156	6%	145	5%	336	6%	-7%	132%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1,096	45%	1,421	49%	2,464	42%	30%	73%
Other race	11	0.5%	60	2%	139	2%	445%	132%

The most significant marker of gentrification in Chinatown’s huge population growth is the dramatic increase in the neighborhood’s White population. As with Boston’s Chinatown, the White population in Philadelphia’s Chinatown more than doubled between 2000 and 2010. The gradual addition of more lofts and luxury condos has clearly changed Chinatown’s residential makeup.

It is important to bear in mind that the Census boundaries of Chinatown census tracts expanded significantly between 2000 and 2010, especially in Chinatown North. However, this area’s conversion from mainly industrial to largely residential during this decade, along with the opening of several large condos south of Vine Street, accounts for much of the residential growth overall (i.e., only some of the increases in population are due to the boundary change itself).

This change helps explain why, despite the similarity to Boston’s spike in White residents, Philadelphia’s Chinatown did not experience a sharp decrease in Asian residents. The share of Asian residents has dipped by only 3 percent since 1990. While this steadiness could partially be attributed to the affordable housing stock that exists in Chinatown, another reason is that in the past three decades many Asians with higher-incomes have also bought units in the newer luxury condos.

A closer look at the increase in Asians’ median income within Chinatown reveals a much higher increase than the city as a whole. From 2000 to 2010 in just one decade, the median income of Asians in Chinatown increased by 306 percent versus 127 percent in Philadelphia. During the same period, the share of Asians living in poverty dropped from 44 to 9 percent in Chinatown. While new condo residents account for some of this decline, Chinatown residents and community organization leaders also point out that the Census fails to count many of the neighborhood’s poorer residents, including people who speak little or no English, suggesting that the poverty rate among Asian residents is almost surely much greater.

Indeed, Chinatown remains a neighborhood where low-income immigrants reside. As with Boston and New York, the actual median household income of Asians in Chinatown remained much lower compared to Asians in Philadelphia overall. And the percentage of foreign born residents in Chinatown increased in Philadelphia to 42 percent between 2007 and 2011 from 33 percent in 1990. Yet, Chinatown’s low-income family immigrant population will have difficulty expanding if the stock of affordable housing does not grow substantially, and some of its existing affordable housing may be converted from subsidized status to market-rate or “upgraded.”

	Philadelphia - Median Household Income			
	2000		2006-2010*	
	Chinatown	Philadelphia	Chinatown	Philadelphia
Non Hispanic White	\$27,317	\$37,073	\$71,064	\$48,413
Non Hispanic Black	\$8,358	\$26,217	\$16,978	\$29,295
Latino	\$9,861	\$20,762	\$16,875	\$24,971
Asian Pacific Islander	\$10,587	\$47,294	\$32,411	\$59,969

* These figures are from the American Community Survey.

The luxury condos in Chinatown have also forced an increase in the share of non-family households from 25 to 33 percent and decrease in the share of family households from 61 to 46 percent between 1990 and 2010. Of all three Chinatowns at this point, only New York retains a majority of family households. If more loft and luxury buildings in and around Chinatown continue to attract non-family and white households, Philadelphia Chinatown's demographic will continue this shift in the coming decade. Just as in Boston and New York, this decrease in family households significantly changes the historical role Chinatown has played.

	Philadelphia Chinatown - Population in Households by Household types							
	1990		2000		2010		1990-2000	2000-2010
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Change	Change
Total Population	2,437	100.0%	2,845	100.0%	5,923	100.0%	16.7%	108.2%
In Family Households	1,513	61.2%	1,633	57.4%	2,769	48.6%	7.9%	69.6%
In Nonfamily Households	618	25.4%	679	23.9%	1,943	32.8%	9.9%	186.2%
In Group Quarters	306	12.6%	533	18.7%	1211	20.5%	74.2%	127.2%

Further emphasizing the decrease in family households, the share of residents under 17 years old in Chinatown has also dropped from 17 to 10 percent between 1990 and 2010. In those same years, the share of residents over 65 years old declined as well from 14 to 8 percent. As more luxury condos are built, fewer elderly immigrants can afford to live Chinatown. As opposed to Boston's Chinatown, however, college-age students do not seem to be targeting Philadelphia's Chinatown to rent as the increase in the share of 18 to 24 year olds has remained relatively steady since 1990.

The age demographic for luxury condos and lofts likely goes beyond the college and post college age range. By 2010, Philadelphia had the highest percentage of 25 to 64 year olds of all three Chinatowns along with the most sizeable increase of 133 percent in this age group between 2000 and 2010. The residents of new condominiums below Vine Street and of lofts to the north contributed significantly to this increase.

Philadelphia Chinatown - Age Group Composition and Change								
	1990		2000		2010		1990-2000	2000-2010
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Change	Change
Total Population	2,437	100%	2,924	100%	5,923	100%	20%	103%
Up to 17 years	418	17%	456	16%	613	10%	9%	34%
18-24 years	348	14%	380	13%	895	15%	9%	136%
25-64 years	1334	55%	1706	58%	3969	67%	28%	133%
65 and over	337	14%	382	13%	446	8%	13%	17%

Although the rate of home ownership in all three Chinatowns was still relatively low, Philadelphia's Chinatown had the highest rate of home ownership among all three at 30 percent, rising by 10 percent from 2000 to 2010. Of all three Chinatowns in the past few decades, median house value and rents in Philadelphia's Chinatown best illustrates the increased value of land downtown—and the neighborhood's gentrification.

Yet Philadelphia's Chinatown became more expensive for both owners and renters. By 2010, whereas New York's Chinatown still had lower values and rents than the city overall and Boston's Chinatown was similar to the city overall, by contrast Philadelphia's Chinatown had higher values than the city overall in both categories. Even in 1990, Chinatown's median house value was \$69,800 versus \$49,400 in Philadelphia as a whole. By 2006 to 2010, those values increased to \$262,700 in Chinatown and \$142,800 in the city overall. Of the listed sale prices in Philadelphia's property database, nearly one-third of the buildings in Chinatown sold for more than \$250,000; 34 properties sold for more than \$1 million.

Although median rents were comparable in the 1990s (\$368 per month in Chinatown versus \$358 per month in Philadelphia overall), by 2006 to 2010, the difference between Chinatown at \$931 per month and the city overall at \$683 per month was significant. The number of renter occupied units also steadily grew, but the share of those units decreased as owner-occupied units have become more prevalent. The median contract rent has also nearly doubled in Chinatown between 2000 and 2006 to 2010.

Philadelphia Chinatown - House Value and Rent						
	1990		2000		2006-2010*	
	Chinatown	Philadelphia	Chinatown	Philadelphia	Chinatown	Philadelphia
Median Value	\$69,800	\$49,400	\$73,200	\$59,700	\$262,700	\$142,800
Median Contract Rent	\$368	\$358	\$493	\$474	\$931	\$683

* These figures are from the American Community Survey.

Still, a significant portion of Chinatown's property owners do live or run businesses based in Chinatown, including 70 percent of residential properties and 50 percent of commercial and industrial properties. Many buildings are also clearly passed from one generation to the next as these properties are sold for the nominal fee of typically \$1 between family members. Even owners who live or are based off-site are located mainly in other parts of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania suburbs north of the city, or in nearby suburbs around Cherry Hill, New Jersey, which is often labeled a "satellite" Chinatown. Other owners' addresses are in northern New Jersey and New York and a few in Texas and California.

Preservation and development of affordable housing by Chinatown community organizations has its roots in the fight against the highway, but in the 1990s it changed in important ways. Federal funds for family housing built by CDCs shifted from housing for very poor people to "moderate income" households, which enabled the Philadelphia Community Development Corporation (PCDC) to build mixed-income housing but diminished the overall support for new low-income housing. In the 2000s, however, development pressures priced out PCDC and other affordable housing developers from the Chinatown land market virtually altogether. Moreover, some of the subsidized housing built in the 1980s transitioned to market-rate as its tax credits expired after 15 years, despite some struggle and efforts to preserve its affordable status. However, since at least the 1990s, some leaders of community associations have purchased a modest number of multi-unit buildings in Chinatown as a way to preserve affordable housing, often for new immigrants from their same region.

Affordable housing in Chinatown today is largely single-family row houses, approximately 60 of which have retail on the ground floor and residences in the upper floors. Only one of the affordable housing properties is a large, multi-story building, called the On Lok House and designated for seniors. Much of the housing identified as "affordable" in the land use survey included buildings formally developed and designated as affordable housing, but it also includes residential units that had not been visibly upgraded on the exterior, which is a rough measure but aims to capture both publicly subsidized and unsubsidized (or de facto) affordable housing. Although surveyors did not record rents for these units, substantial supporting evidence and interviews confirmed that these areas and apartments were considered affordable.

Compared to past decades, and to New York's Chinatown, Philadelphia's Chinatown has a very limited supply of affordable housing.

Conclusion & Recommendations

One of the most fundamental contradictions in the current development of housing and neighborhoods is the focus on profit instead of the people who live and work there. For internationally accepted principles like a right to housing or a right to the city to flourish, the ideas driving community development must be based in organizing and the community's needs. Only then will communities be developed for people and not for profit.

If demographics continue to change in ways that Census and land use data have revealed in this report, the question must be asked: at what point does Chinatown cease to be Chinatown?

This question is relevant in many urban neighborhoods with similarly rich cultures and histories of discrimination and self-reliance. For example, for the first time in decades, Harlem no longer has a majority Black population. Will the history of this neighborhood as a thriving Black community carry its culture into a new generation? Or will places like Harlem and Chinatown become "ethnic Disney Lands," little more than a caricature of their cultural heritage?

Urban planners and preservationists often tout the need for neighborhoods with distinctive cultures. Yet while public and private interests outwardly celebrate neighborhoods like Chinatown, the residents who create that culture are often forgotten. An historical plaque in Chinatown is no substitute for a real life working community full of residents and vitality that such immigrants produce. For this reason Chinatown must be preserved for future generations.

As detailed in this report's history of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia's Chinatowns, municipal government has played a direct role in destabilizing and diminishing these neighborhoods as residential and cultural centers. Though limited in some instances, public land is available in all of these Chinatowns, and government authorities have important choices to make regarding the future of this land. Public lands and funds should be prioritized for the following purposes because they act as transformative spaces.

Recommendation 1: Census of Chinatown Housing

This study did not have the resources to conduct a full scale census of publicly subsidized and low-income housing, but each Chinatown should assess the health and status of housing in each city. For instance, how many subsidized units are due to have their affordability requirements expire? How much of each city's public and affordable housing can be preserved for the long term? A survey of the status quo of publicly subsidized low-income housing would allow an accurate accounting for preservation purposes.

Recommendation 2: Reinforce Existing Low-Income Housing

- (A) Make inclusionary zoning policies work for Chinatowns, and avoid inclusionary zoning policies when the ultimate outcome is more luxury developments and reduced affordability overall.

Strategies pursued by local governments and CDCs in recent years that depend on amassing properties or working within the profit-maximizing system of inclusionary zoning simply are not enough. To reverse the trend identified in this report of Chinatowns becoming more invisible, government policies cannot offer lip service to building "affordable housing" by pursuing luxury developments that include a negligible amount of low-income housing – often built in other neighborhoods – because these large complexes ultimately lead to gentrification and more displacement of existing low-income spaces. The way that governments have used policies like inclusionary zoning has often weakened existing housing and networks rather than strengthening current resources and infrastructure.

Not only is the way in which local governments have promoted inclusionary zoning a hollow promise, but in and of itself it is insufficient to achieve preservation or creation of affordable housing. Boston is a primary example where despite one of the stronger state-level inclusionary housing laws in the United States, it has still been incapable of addressing the huge demographic shift pricing out the very class of people that had sustained this livable space for so long. In Philadelphia, a local inclusionary zoning law is on the books but has never been put into practice. New York provides a good example of voluntary inclusionary zoning failing to produce many affordable units.

(B) Build more low-income, senior, and SRO housing.

To counter the market rate luxury housing added each year to Chinatowns, the strategy for sustaining the neighborhood should focus on strengthening and stabilizing existing low income and public housing—not venturing into particular housing stock that is newer or smaller in number. For instance, in the 1990s many CDCs, following the lead of federal government incentives and programs, advocated for the creation of family units using public sector housing funds in Chinatowns. The idea was to diversify affordable housing and bring families back to the neighborhood. The problem is that such funds are limited so if family units are built, other low-income units are not. In lieu of diffusing public housing funds, existing low-income housing stock should be repaired and supported to ensure that those units and residents continue to thrive in these Chinatowns.

Advocacy and funding should be targeted towards building more low-income units, senior housing units, and SRO (single room occupancy) units. Currently, public funds for housing are limited and often used to subsidize developers of new luxury developments rather than build low-income housing often tied into new luxury developments. The census of publicly subsidized and low-income housing could help to determine where the focus should be, depending on the affordable housing stock and the needs of local populations in each city. As highlighted in all three Chinatowns, the government owns that could be used for low-income housing and accompanying space for small businesses. It has the space. But the government is actively choosing to use that space for other priorities to satisfy the demands of developers.

The main way in which the year-by-year disappearance of these neighborhoods can be reversed is by building housing for low-income residents and immigrants, which these neighborhoods have supported for generations before high-end developers arrived to reap the benefits of the many improvements and cultural vitality produced by these immigrant communities. The present rate of growth of luxury units will certainly overtake and gentrify these neighborhoods. Without a serious focus on building and maintaining low-income housing as the central goal, existing public and low-income housing stock will not survive to serve the needs of current and future working class immigrant tenants.

Recommendation 3: Subsidize Local Small Businesses

The vitality of Chinatowns is strongly tied to their symbiotic composition as mixed-use communities where stores rely on the patronage of immigrant and working class residents and these residents rely on businesses' affordable goods. Given the strong ties between small businesses and Asian residents, more non-national chain, locally owned small businesses should be housed in new developments. The government should meaningfully include workers and small business owners in the process of determining the best strategies to retain and create businesses that support local residents and provide jobs to workers in the community.

Presently developers are required in some locales to support public housing by paying into a fund or setting aside a number of units as affordable housing, yet formal subsidies to small locally owned businesses are not

recognized. These new developments could offset the gentrification of both residential and commercial entities by subsidizing commercial rent to small community-owned business ventures.

Recommendation 4: Prioritize and Support Green/Open Spaces

This study confirmed what Chinatown residents have known for too long: Chinatowns contain inadequate open space. The government should actively engage community-based organizations and residents to determine the need for green and open space, as these areas in Chinatown often serve as outdoor living rooms for people in crowded buildings. Working class residents of Chinatown should have a meaningful, even primary, role in defining the particular character and uses of new green and open spaces, to ensure that these spaces serve their interests and needs and not just those of affluent interests that often drive the development of urban parks and open spaces.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen Linkages of Satellite Asian Enclaves to Central City Chinatowns

Because Chinatowns have become so unaffordable for new and older immigrants, so-called “new Chinatowns” have grown in areas like Malden and Quincy in Massachusetts, Sunset Park and Flushing in New York, and communities in Northeast and South Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania and New Jersey suburbs. These communities share some characteristics with central city Chinatowns and help to provide access to affordable stores and services. Yet in terms of political representation, historical significance, and geographic location, these new Chinatowns are no replacement for the old Chinatowns.

Central city Chinatowns can remain relevant even while newer enclaves expand. One problem for these newer enclaves is the tendency for stores and neighborhoods to be dispersed in suburbia. One way to keep older Chinatowns relevant is to sustain them as “one-stop” destinations for grocery shopping, medical and social services, and gathering places for friends, family, and community associations. Chinatown already serves this function, but is there a way to make the experience better? For instance, can community based organizations open up their spaces even more to these suburban community members? Can they establish places to store purchased goods on a temporary basis? Is temporary child care a possibility while parents are shopping? Should there be more spaces for teens and elders? These and other ideas are necessary to preserve and nurture Chinatown as a central location with a past and a future.

Recommendation 6: Engage in an Exploratory Dialogue with Traditional Community Land Owners

Many family associations and traditional community groups such as On Leong or the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association own a significant amount of land and buildings in Chinatown. Could these associations be actively brought into the discussion about making Chinatown sustainable? Many of these private non-profit groups rent to commercial establishments on the ground floors and to residential tenants on the upper floors. Some of the residents may be family association members. Could these and other land owners encourage their respective Chinatowns to remain a vital and vibrant residential base?

Founded in 1974, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) is a national organization that protects and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans. By combining litigation, advocacy, education, and organizing, AALDEF works with Asian American communities across the country to secure human rights for all.

AALDEF focuses on critical issues affecting Asian Americans, including immigrant rights, post-9/11 civil liberties, voting rights, economic justice for workers, language access to services, educational equity and youth rights, housing and environmental justice, and the elimination of hate violence, police misconduct, and human trafficking.