Look Forward and Preserve the Past

The Launching of the Neighborhood Plan in Chinatown Philadelphia

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Field Placement: Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC)
Field Supervisor: Site - Sarah Yeung / Faculty Advisor – Gary McDonogh
Description of Placement: PCDC is a grassroots, non-profit, community-based organization. PCDC’s mission is to preserve, protect, and promote Chinatown as a viable ethnic, residential, and business community. As a planning intern, I played an active role in a community visioning process which will drive the next 10 years of planning and development of Philadelphia Chinatown.

Planning and Zoning

Research
- Affordable housing and health
- Previous planning effort
- Other Chinatown Neighborhood Plans
- Vision Zero (City of Philadelphia)

Zoning
- Coordinate monthly zoning cases in Chinatown area
- Arrange and summarize meeting minutes and materials from monthly planning committee meetings
- Check City of Philadelphia’s zoning documents and link with Chinatown cases

Affordable Housing
- Prepare publicized materials for housing projects in Chinatown

Engagement with Residents and Business

Surveying Process
- Conduct street survey
- Attend public forum
- Trestle Inn – Neighborhood Plan Happy Hour
- On Lok House – Map Exercise

Materials Preparation
- Visual materials: posters, flyers, trifold brochures
- Meeting materials: invitation letters, contact list

Working in a Bilingual Environment
Translation became a big component of my PRAXIS experience. Working with a local community with a large immigrant population, clear and accurate translation became an important skill in the process of reaching out to local residents, communicate planning ideas and concepts, as well as reflecting residents’ and local business owners’ needs and wishes back to PCDC and other related organizations.

Where I used my Chinese-English bilingual skills: prepare neighborhood outreach materials, conduct surveys on streets and in local schools & residential units, prepare public forum materials, reflect neighbors’ opinions and concerns back to PCDC planning director/design firm/City of Philadelphia, and much more...