



# The Chinatown Coalition 華埠社區聯盟

Mail to: c/o Boston Chinese Evangelical Church  
249 Harrison Ave., Boston MA 02111

Phone: 617.635.5129 x 1099  
www.tccboston.org

March 7, 2014

Dear Mayor Walsh:

We are writing as members of The Chinatown Coalition (TCC) and want to introduce ourselves and acquaint you with some issues the Chinatown community would like you to be aware of as you begin your term as Mayor of Boston.

TCC is a forum of non-profit organizations that comes together monthly to share information and learn about opportunities and concerns that impact the Chinatown community. TCC is one of the original, and still operating, Healthy Boston Coalitions, founded in 1992, whose mission remains focused on all aspects of the health and well-being of the community. As some Chinatowns across the country have disappeared, a major focus for TCC has been the survival and strengthening of Chinatown as a unique community.

In recent meetings, we have encouraged conversation around messages our members would like to convey to you. From these conversations, the following ideas and challenges have arisen.

## Affordable housing

Much discussion revolves around making sure that Chinatown continues to exist as a home for Chinese immigrants and as an economic and cultural center for the larger Chinese community. As luxury development booms in and around Chinatown, the neighborhood is becoming increasingly unaffordable to working class residents. With that in mind, affordable housing continues to be a major objective for Chinatown and a number of TCC member organizations work to develop and preserve housing opportunities for low and moderate -income Chinese, and to make sure the community provides a welcoming home for newly arrived immigrants.

As new residential towers rise up on the edges of Chinatown, it is important that affordable housing opportunities keep pace with market rate housing.

## Economic Opportunity in Chinatown

There is a great need for jobs for residents of Chinatown and **we urge you to issue an RFP for the Jobs Trust to create new opportunities for people of color across the city.** We need to prioritize living wage jobs and many people in this community would benefit from job training, opportunities with unions and with the city's many large employers.

We hope you will encourage employers to offer flexible time for low wage workers so they may take advantage of the community's ESOL and job training programs. The need for English language skills seems to expand every day to more and more job opportunities. We need to align the jobs being created by the development boom with training opportunities for residents. Chinatown residents, who work to support their families, should also have the chance to advance.



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The Chinatown business community is comprised of small shops and restaurants. We urge the city to provide technical assistance that will help existing businesses weather difficult economic times and become stronger. Additionally, we would like to see the city offer entrepreneurship training in Chinatown to encourage and support residents who have ideas for new businesses.

### Public Safety

Public safety issues continue to be of concern. With great cooperation from the Boston Police Department and the initiative of local residents and businesses, with leadership from the Chinatown Safety Committee, Chinatown has seen improvements in public safety. The Combat Zone has been diminished. The homeless numbers, however, continue to increase. The proximity of shelters and the presence of a number of night clubs contribute to continued concern about crime that sometimes sees the communities' vulnerable elders as victims. Chinatown has its own safety patrol, which has been a significant help to the police and the community. But we need continued vigilance, adequate resources and creative approaches.

### Josiah Quincy Schools

Chinatown is inextricably linked to the Josiah Quincy Elementary and Upper Schools. Residents whose children attend these schools—of which Chinatown is proud—want to be sure that new assignment processes will not hinder their children from continuing to attend them.

### Relationships of Institutions to Community

Because the quality of physical infrastructure, accessibility, and community impacts of institutions located in Chinatown are so important and far-reaching, the relationships of institutions to each other and the community are very important to the best interests of the Chinatown community. The current Josiah Quincy Upper School (JQUS) spreads across several buildings in deteriorating spaces. TCC is excited for the potential of bringing a new school building to the community to enhance this situation.

We appreciate that in your campaign you highlighted institutional relationships as a key to healthy communities. We in the Chinatown community did not find out about the project currently proposed as combining 2 schools-- the Boston Arts Academy (BAA) and JQUS-- until it was announced in newspapers. This is unfortunate. We hope going forward that there will be an open and transparent process that takes into serious consideration the input and best interests of the community. **We would like to discuss the JQUS/BAA school with you within the first 180 days of your administration as the building is now in design and waiting may cost us opportunities and create avoidable tensions.**

### Chinatown Library

The community has worked diligently to replace a branch library in Chinatown for many years. This branch closed in 1956 due to urban renewal. The Chinatown Lantern Committee has been



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leading this effort. While creative temporary solutions have been developed, none has been sustainable. Chinatown needs the city to support the effort to replace the branch library. Since you have signed the commitment to fund a full-time librarian and “long-term library services for the Chinatown people” at your candidate forum in Chinatown in summer 2013, **we want to work with you on the following:**

- 1) We request that you delegate a contact person in your administration who can monitor and report on the progress for this community need and commitment.
- 2) We invite you to attend a tour of Chinatown that focuses on the potential sites for the permanent library.
- 3) We request that you host a public meeting for the Chinatown community in which residents can share their ideas and suggestions for the Chinatown library.
- 4) The Josiah Quincy Upper School and Boston Arts Academy administrators have met with us and said they are willing to consider incorporating a new public library into their building, separate from the school library that is already being planned. We want to leverage the new proposed building’s library infrastructure for community access/usage. We recommend a Chinatown Library be incorporated into the design process approved by the City Council last year for the Parcel 25 site, or other viable alternatives put forth.

We would like to invite you to visit Chinatown and we would be pleased to arrange a tour. We know you will have a very full schedule, but would welcome you or someone from your staff to attend our TCC meetings, which are always the second Thursday of the month from 9:30AM-11:00AM. Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center is kind enough to provide space for these meetings as well as acting as TCC’s fiscal agent. Please contact Co-Chairs Sherry Dong and Enoch Liao at email or phone to set up this tour and community visit.

We wish you the best as you take on the leadership of this city and look forward to seeing you in Chinatown and being your partners in progress.

Sincerely,

*Sherry Dong*  
Co-Chair

*Rev. Enoch Liao*  
Co-Chair

cc: Daniel Koh, Chief of Staff, Mayor’s Office

cc: Denny Ching, Neighborhood Coordinator, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services