

Old Town/China Town Neighborhood

A Neighborhood Renaissance in the Making

By Karen Moore
President of Old Town/Chinatown
Neighborhood Association

Old Town/Chinatown is a community with character, heart and a unique urban flavor. The neighborhood hosts a large percentage of Portland's intact historic buildings and is claimed as a starting place by many of the city's ethnic communities including Chinese, Japanese and Greek. By day, the community is an active business and retail area. For decades, it has been a place for Portland night life and its popularity in this regard continues to grow. The area is bounded by the Broadway Bridge to the north, Burnside on the south, NW Broadway on the west and the Willamette River to the east. Notable landmarks such as Union Station's Clock Tower and the historic Made in Oregon sign (formerly White Stag) flank its edges, and, without a doubt, the Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood is one of the oldest and most diverse neighborhoods in the city of Portland.

At the moment, the Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood is experiencing a renaissance. Six development projects are currently underway in the area including four housing projects, a major tourist attraction and a headquarters' office building. The Union Station Housing Project located between NW Naito Parkway and Union Station is in its second phase of development and will ultimately include nearly 700 housing units for mixed income levels and will offer both rental and condominium units. The three other housing projects are situated closer to the heart of the neighborhood

along the 5th and 6th Avenue bus mall. The Fifth Avenue Place Apartments located at the corner of NW 5th and Everett were completed earlier this year and added 70 units of affordable housing to the neighborhood. This month the Fifth Avenue Court Apartments will open at the corner of NW 5th and Davis. These apartments will offer 96 units of

mixed-income housing. In August, the Macdonald Center Assisted Living Facility will open its doors at the corner of NW Sixth and Couch Street. Included in this facility will be 54 units of low-income assisted living units as well as the offices for the Macdonald Center - a community outreach program associated with the Downtown Chapel as well as the Assisted Living Administration offices. The assisted living units will be open to all applicants, but are targeted towards the neighborhood's low-income population to allow these individuals to age in place - within the neighborhood they call home.

The Chinese Classical Garden is scheduled to open in the Fall of

2000 between NW Second and Third Avenue and Everett and Flanders Streets. This building is located on NW Second between

vibrant 24-hour, mixed-use, urban neighborhood, rooted in a rich historical past." Although there is plenty of "new" influx in "Old" Town/Chinatown, the neighborhood is committed to retaining its historic flavor and unique character. A primary goal of



The Classical Chinese Garden will be the largest authentic Suzhou-style classical Chinese Garden in the United States. Completion of this \$5 million project will be in the summer of 2000. There are plans for a hotel to be built nearby the site.

outside of China and become a major tourist attraction for the city of Portland. The garden will instill fresh vitality into Chinatown's cultural district.

Finally, the Port of Portland will open its new headquarters' facility in August bringing 300 additional employees to the Old Town/

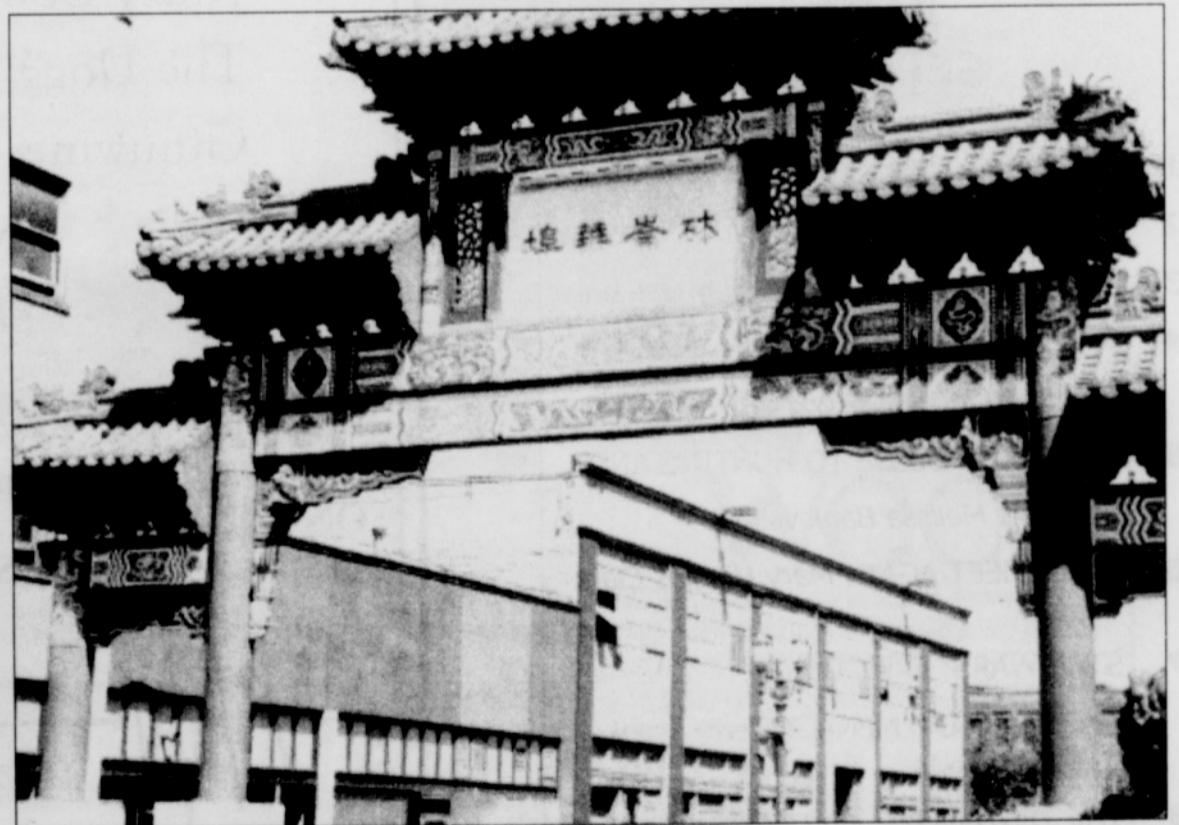
NW Everett and Flanders.

The future vision for the neighborhood is best summed up by the Neighborhood Plan's project goal "To develop Old Town/Chinatown into a

the neighborhood's Development Plan - scheduled to go before Council in the Fall - is to preserve the existing mix of uses within the area as well as the historic and cultural con-



The Union Station Housing is part of a mixed-income, 700 unit dwelling project coordinated by the Portland Development Commission. A pedestrian walkway will be built over the south side of the Union Station tracks for the apartment residents so that they can easily get to bus malls and connect with the rest of the neighborhood.



The Chinese Gate (located on 4th & Burnside) is the frontpiece for Chinatown. There are plans to have a monument anchored on the other side of 4th Street to create a real feeling of entry and exit. Old Town/Chinatown is changing for the better by maintaining its rich cultural diversity, preserving its historic character, keeping the existing social services and encouraging new businesses to the area.