



IMAGINE ASIATOWN
VISIONING REPORT

WE'RE GROWING HOME

PRODUCED FOR MIDTOWN
CLEVELAND, INC.

NOVEMBER 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCTION | 3
- 2. SUMMARY IN BRIEF | 4
- 3. RECOMMENDATIONS | 8
 - a. Vision-in-Action Compass
 - b. Continued Community Engagement
- 4. VISIONING PROCESS | 13
- 5. SHARED VISION | 15
 - a. *We're Growing Home*
 - b. Core Values
 - c. Stories About the Future
- 6. CONCLUSION | 30
- 7. APPENDIX | 31
 - a. Data Collection Tools
 - b. Hundred-Year Visions for AsiaTown
 - c. What We Might Find in Our Vision of AsiaTown

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the **Imagine AsiaTown** visioning process was to identify a collective vision for the future of the AsiaTown neighborhood in a way that engages residents and community members, while amplifying the community's power to shape the future of the neighborhood. This report summarizes the process and the Shared Vision, captured under the banner, **"We're Growing Home."** The Shared Vision was created through a series of public visioning events between August and October 2020. More than 100 community members of diverse ages and races participated through one or more modes of engagement. They included at least 38 AsiaTown residents, 10 business owners, and 20 workers, as well as neighborhood advocates, visitors, and individuals with personal or familial roots in the neighborhood.

Like countless other communities, this year the AsiaTown Cleveland community has faced tremendous risk and uncertainty from the global COVID-19 pandemic. Fears about our health have been accompanied by a national economic crisis, isolation imposed by physical distancing, and the psychological, social, and financial impacts of a widespread resurgence in violence and stigma impacting Chinese and Asian American communities. In 2020, we've also witnessed the largest mass protests in U.S. history against police brutality and systemic racism.

Residents and businesses have navigated these difficult dynamics by showing love and care for each other through growing support networks and neighborhood initiatives like AsiaTown Sweetheart, Feed AsiaTown, and Square Dancing. This time of tremendous change and uncertainty has offered an opportunity to hear what our neighbors, families, friends think about the future of our neighborhood and **discuss the things that matter most to us.**

It is intended that the MidTown Cleveland, Inc. team will use the concepts in this report to incrementally design, select, and implement initiatives in the neighborhood in a way that coheres with the AsiaTown Shared Vision. Moreover, this report outlines next steps to sustain **ownership, commitment, and chosen accountability** of community members to the Shared Vision and projects. Finally, this report aims to demonstrate an approach to community engagement which begins and ends within AsiaTown as a Home to many past, present, and future.

This report was created by WOC Group LLC and space-between.us in collaboration with the AsiaTown staff at MidTown Cleveland, Inc.

For more information, contact:

- Tessa Xuan at tessa.xuan@gmail.com
- Lisa Hong at space.between.team@gmail.com
- Argerie Vasilakes at axv124@gmail.com

SUMMARY IN BRIEF



HOME

*The source of vivid memories for a place we've never been
the yearning for return to a place we've yet to find
the sense of true belonging
when we know that we've been found
the confidence to journey through this life.*

— Margaret J. Wheatley

We're Growing Home

GO HOME!

GO BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM!

Asians and other groups in the United States are all too familiar with being on the receiving end of this painful racist taunt. Its chilling effect has served to reinforce xenophobia, the stereotype of people of Asian descent as perpetual foreigners, not “real” Americans, of not mattering and not belonging. In uncovering the hopes, dreams, values, and future vision of community members through this Imagine AsiaTown project, the collective vision statement “**We’re Growing Home**” emerged. The statement embodies an intention of dismantling stereotypes and reclaiming the community’s pride, experience, and intention of making AsiaTown a thriving home for all.

Imagine AsiaTown was conceived to shape a collective strategic vision for the AsiaTown Cleveland neighborhood’s future. We invited people who live, work, shop, and spend time in AsiaTown to imagine and contribute to this future, and to engage as a community. The results were heart-warming: they described the undeniable essence of AsiaTown Cleveland. In these results lay the shared values and clear-eyed stories of the future. In naming them, the values and stories showed themselves as already alive in the neighborhood, longing to be amplified. They offer place-based wisdom and a lens through which to see potential community initiatives as strengths, continued flourishing, and antidotes to the current specters of the COVID-19 pandemic, fears of gentrification, systemic racism, a diluted Asian culture, and a preference of profits over people and place. To hear the voices of AsiaTown is to be welcomed home.

In a process of emergent learning, we came to understand the core values and stories as an abiding expression of home, despite challenges related to economic pressures, safety, and regret about the people and businesses that had left AsiaTown. For example, in one activity, community members shared how they would complete the sentence: “**AsiaTown is a place that...**”

Some of their aspirational answers included:

...fosters pride for Asian Americans and helps show who Asians are way beyond stereotypes!
...is welcoming and radically connected, a place for Asian people to feel safe and to belong
...lets Asian people feel accepted and understood in a country and city where we often aren’t
...is bustling and full of energy ...is valuable and fundamental to Cleveland
...makes me proud ...blooms with beautiful flowers ...we can ALL call HOME

Community members imagined and shared their stories of the future for AsiaTown. Each story was an expression of one or more of the values they shared as a community. The future stories described the specific look of a future AsiaTown in standard contexts of main street buildings, streetscapes and pedestrian experiences, residential areas, public art & festivals, businesses, local resources, green space, performing arts, community programs, community services, education, and growth plans. But the uniqueness of the place came forth in the nuance of these contexts that lifted up Asian heritage: more businesses that are Asian-owned, visible signs of Asian culture, festivals and events specifically celebrating Asian culture, and the availability of food from all Asian traditions. Arising throughout the stories was the desire for safety, welcome, prosperity, beauty, solidarity, and health.

Place-Based Process

Often, vision & values processes result in a poster on a wall, inspiring words on a website, and organizational advertising and public relations — but fall short on action. How can a community bring the values to life through tangible actions and engagement that grows community member participation and capacity to actively create their own collective future? “Often planning processes claim to involve citizens and potential occupants,” writes Peter Block, a thought-leader and host to thriving communities. “In most cases it is lip service, holding to the belief that experts, usually from out of town, hold the real key to great design.”

The idea of Home speaks to a desire to care for everyone’s needs, to have courage to go beyond either/or thinking towards harmony and integration of seemingly opposing ideas, beyond compromise and towards collaborative creativity. A largely untapped resource lies in engaging people’s willingness to understand and look out for each others’ needs, not just one’s own. Participants of Imagine AsiaTown clearly expressed “caring for one another” and “people helping people” as core values. Their contributions rejected the mainstream idea that they are merely “consumers who react and respond to the decisions of community leadership groups and planning experts,” as Block writes in *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Rather, they have already begun in the process of designing their own community motivated by their own collective needs and desires.

This community-oriented sentiment echoes the Faces of the Town 2020 Annual Report video, in which one MidTown community innovator posed a question that speaks to the heart of MidTown’s work: “Who are we as individuals, what are our strengths, and how can we support one another?”

The Imagine AsiaTown visioning process returned six highly interdependent themes that combine under the overall Shared Vision: “We’re Growing Home.”

The interlacing nature of the themes illustrates the richness of AsiaTown as a home to myriad realities. For example, the theme **AsiaTown is a beautiful neighborhood that reflects authentic Asian cultures** (theme #1), is described by such attributes as: “AsiaTown is growing and thriving. Families and residents walk around the neighborhood and think ‘where I live is beautiful!’” and “AsiaTown is a model of an equitable Asian immigrant neighborhood in the US.”

But these quotes also describe another theme: **AsiaTown is walkable and safe for people of all races** (theme #2). Without doubt, a home that is *beautiful* and where its residents feel like they *belong* is also a *safe* place. Similarly, the theme **In our diverse neighborhood, an ethic of care strengthens bonds** (theme #5) imagines a future AsiaTown where basic needs are met and *neighbors help neighbors*, reducing root causes of housing insecurity and crime.

The previous theme also might share many characteristics with **Our businesses lead to prosperity for all** (theme #4): “A supermarket has brought the foot traffic back. There’s more shopping: grocery stores with low prices that carry everything, serving neighborhood needs.”

The remaining themes are **AsiaTown attracts and keeps residents of all different races** (theme #3) and **Everyone throughout the city and beyond knows AsiaTown as a welcoming place** (theme #6) where characteristics of a thriving and caring community may be a significant attraction for young families and immigrants, while preserving our existing culture and uplifting long-time residents and businesses.

Taken together, the six themes offer a way to express the spirit of AsiaTown. Progress toward each theme mutually reinforces progress toward the other themes and the overall Shared Vision. A tool, the Vision-in-Action Compass offers an approach to community initiatives that ensures they are holistically and consistently informed by that spirit. In addition, the Compass provides a framework for community members to work out differences in perspective about the design or impact of proposed initiatives, especially when they may appear to be contradictory.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations align with the voices in the 2020 MidTown annual meeting, which highlighted that circumstances this year are calling for us to “be more innovative than ever” and put into practice “true collaboration for catalytic change.”

Innovation and catalytic change are embodied not just in the physical environment we seek to transform, but the very processes we use to make our decisions. We propose an approach that transforms either/or thinking into collaborative solutions; that seeks to engage with, rather than to avoid power differences; and that invites dissent, rather than presses for agreement. All of these can, perhaps counterintuitively, make collaboration more efficient by unblocking the flow of a community’s creativity and collective wisdom.

The main focus of our recommendations aims to harness the themes of the AsiaTown Shared Vision*. The aims of our entire recommendation are threefold:

- 1. To provide a means by which to design and respond to potential initiatives,**
- 2. To support and sustain ownership, commitment and accountability that community members (including MidTown Cleveland, Inc.) choose to declare to each other, and**
- 3. To invite and develop neighborhood leadership capacity from the inside out.**

We propose a practical process that unleashes the power of community members’ gifts and willingness to work together in order to bring their Shared Vision to life in a multitude of tangible actions — both those of which MidTown Cleveland, Inc. is currently aware and those yet to be discovered. At the same time, this practical process aims to bring about resolution with tangible outcomes.

* Section 5 on **Page 15** of this report offers detail on the AsiaTown Shared Vision and themes.

VISION-IN-ACTION COMPASS

We have designed the [Vision-in-Action Compass](#), a flexible strategy and assessment tool customized to the AsiaTown Shared Vision. It offers a practical way to consistently orient AsiaTown community development decisions to the Shared Vision and can provide a method for mutual accountability and transparency, as well as an avenue for productive feedback. The Compass itself is intended to evolve as the community applies the tool and learns through its own feedback how to improve the tool to better meet emerging needs.

The Compass emerged directly from the Imagine AsiaTown visioning process during which community members described values and imagined future stories of AsiaTown as a place community members want to Grow Home. The Compass features community members' statements of vision as the foundational rationale for all AsiaTown projects going forward. The Compass translates the AsiaTown Shared Vision into design criteria that can help the MidTown team and community members alike assess, prioritize, and shape projects moving forward.

Future iterations of the Compass could include additional values/criteria that MidTown Cleveland, Inc., as a key member in the AsiaTown ecosystem, brings to designing, assessing, and prioritizing project ideas. These could include elements such as environmental sustainability, current funding strategies, political support, etc.

The Compass can be applied in several ways:

1. Preliminary Assessment by MidTown Team

- **Individual project ideas** — The Compass can be used to rate individual projects relative to each of the six AsiaTown Vision themes. The tool includes both a numeric rating and space to enter summary statements that specify possible actions. Users rate each action according to the extent to which the action is likely to fulfill, not fulfill or detracts from each theme and associated design criteria.
- **Project portfolio** — Individual projects can be ranked relative to each other. Users can manage the portfolio as a system by determining the extent to which they meet the criteria as a whole, despite whether or not each project meets all the criteria.

2. Facilitated Community Conversations

- **Collaborative design brainstorming** — The Compass can help the community members discuss projects and their match with the design criteria. Together they identify whether a project is likely to be coherent with the AsiaTown Vision. Where they encounter gaps against the design criteria or differences of opinion, they have opportunities to brainstorm ideas for enabling the project to realize the missing theme or design criterion.
- **Collaborative idea prioritization** — Rather than members increasing their attachment to and defense of their own idea, the Compass helps shift the focus to shared values and can encourage a more openness to flexibility in how those values can be fulfilled.
- **Building capacity** — Coaching or workshop sessions can support the AsiaTown team to both apply the tool and facilitate difficult conversations that seek common ground in the AsiaTown Vision. The approach combines use of the Vision-in-Action with Convergent Facilitation.

Continued Relationship & Community Building

Keep the spirit of Imagine AsiaTown alive! Visibility and recognition for community members' contributions along with creating opportunities for meaningful, vision-inspired connection can continue increasing the neighborhood's "relational capacity". This helps create a foundation of trust and belonging needed for more harmonious and committed collaboration.

1. Increase visibility and recognition of community members' stories, contributions and commitment.

Seeing that one's contribution matters and that others are involved fosters excitement for the vision, a sense of belonging and energy for participation. A key and relatively simple, yet overlooked strategy for supporting ongoing and increased community member participation is to visibly recognize contributions of all members, not just those who hold positions of formal political or institutional leadership. This aims to support community members in claiming their agency and power to take action in shaping their own future.

- **Personal Endorsements of the AsiaTown Shared Vision** — Include a component of the Imagine AsiaTown public community report-out that includes collecting and preserving community members' signatures and sentiments. This would 1) memorialize the specific people who represent and care for the AsiaTown community during this momentous year, and 2) symbolize their endorsement of, resonance with, and/or commitment to the Shared Vision. (For some gifts and offerings already shared by participants, see the Appendix for responses to the question "What is an action you can take or gift you can share to step toward this future?")

- **Media Strategy** — Imagine AsiaTown website, social media, video channels, newsletters, etc.

Create dynamic strategy that highlights and continually updates:

- Individual storytelling based on “What’s My Story?” interview questions
- #ImagineAsiaTown arts contributions
- Project idea board, organized by themes. (These might grow into themes for future Community Conversations, with the intention of inviting neighbors to join together to lead efforts and take action.)
- Neighbor-led projects — highlight project champions and contributions of others
- Community contributions to MidTown-led AsiaTown Initiatives

2. **Build & strengthen relationships: What’s Your Story?** Continue inviting community members to connect with family, friends, and neighbors by using the “What’s Your Story?” Interview Guide and online and socially-distanced strategies until regular in-person gatherings are safe!

- **New Quarterly Themes and Questions** to pique and maintain interest
- **Quarterly Imagine AsiaTown Conversations** to enable members to meet new neighbors and interview each other in partner breakout sessions and whole-group sharing
- **Storytelling “Cafe” Events** create both visibility and pride for individual stories, and stir empathic connection for others and self through resonance with underlying universal experiences

3. **Support collaborative, vision-inspired action.** Utilize the *Vision-in-Action Compass* to co-design and co-prioritize projects and activities to help the neighborhood Grow Home in the six ways identified in the AsiaTown Shared Vision.

- **Build MidTown Team’s Skill with the Compass Tool**

- *Compass Level 1: Assessment of AsiaTown Project Ideas.* Convene MidTown team (and potentially Steering/Advisory Committee) to learn about and practice Compass Level 1 Application to MidTown’s AsiaTown ideas. This can provide a general picture of how each project idea lives into the Shared Vision and preliminary identification of ways a project fulfills, does not fulfill, or detracts from each vision theme.
- *Compass Level 2: Supporting a Vision-Inspired Project Design & Portfolio Prioritization.*
 - Facilitated conversation process to experience (practice, learn skills) applying the Compass to one actual AsiaTown project idea.
 - Additional training for MidTown staff in a deeper dive into values-led collaborative design and project portfolio decision-making for a Community Conversation.

- **Project Updates to the Community** — The AsiaTown team can demonstrate transparency and accountability to the Shared Vision by showing how they are assessing and prioritizing projects using the Compass and emphasizing how the community-created vision specifically informs MidTown’s decisions. The Compass can also create a more specific framework for gathering feedback and ideas from community members relative to specific projects.
- **Convene Community Conversations** — No doubt, different members of the community have expressed desired futures which may seem contradictory. The opportunity is to see these differences as key data that can create a more robust project portfolio that integrates these differences. MidTown’s role as facilitator and “neutral broker” can help the community find shared understanding and then to agree to solutions based on that understanding. This convergent process generally looks like this: First the community group that comes together in conversation translates their differing views into deeper principles that they all agree on. Then those principles harmonize existing proposals or inspire new proposals. Finally, they use their newfound mutual understanding to craft a collaborative solution.

Developing relational capacity and neighborhood leadership in stages can deepen a spirit of goodwill toward each other and grow the community’s ability to navigate differences.

- **Gifts of the Head, Heart, Hand & Teaching.** Host gatherings where community members can declare to each other and the community the gifts they bring and ways they want to contribute to the efforts in general or a specific initiative
- **Neighbor-Led Action Project ideas.** Build community members’ skill with Compass Level 1 Assessment, applying the Compass in conversations focused on specific actions members want to initiate and create together. Invite creativity utilizing the Compass to shape projects that bring the 6 Vision Elements to life. Define roles, resource requirements, and sources of mutual support.
- **MidTown-Led Initiatives: co-design & prioritize community development options.** Facilitate process that invites community members to actively contribute to the design, assessment and prioritization of projects (community-building and physical improvements) in the MidTown portfolio using the Vision-in-Action Compass. This extends beyond the usual “public meeting” to gather feedback and input. This process moves towards supporting community members to be genuine design and implementation partners, based on the gifts they currently bring and those they want to develop.
- **Support Home-Grown Leadership** — Help community members identify and define roles needed to implement projects and invite them to self-organize, take responsibility, and choose accountability for serving in those roles. Support a process for a neighborhood network to provide mutual support and learning where capacity is under-developed. Start modestly, supporting skill-building with Neighbor-Led Action Projects. Gauge readiness and interest in taking on roles defined for AsiaTown Projects.

IMAGINE ASIATOWN VISIONING PROCESS

This section outlines the methods of the Imagine AsiaTown visioning process that led to the recommendations in the previous section.

DISCOVERY

The objective of the discovery phase was to equip us with relevant context for designing and facilitating interactive visioning sessions, as well as other modes of engagement and data collection. We recognized previous work and considered ideas to design our approach to hear from community members, with the intent to avoid redundancy and build upon past efforts.

We reviewed documents on previous neighborhood planning efforts dating back to 2010 (AsiaTown Master Plan, Transportation/Streetscape Plan, Community/Cultural Center Plan, Midway Cycle Track Plan, MidTown Strategic Plan summary, St. Clair Superior 2012 AsiaTown Survey); read books, articles, and websites (AsiaTown history & current, Trends in other AsiaTowns, Community engagement of immigrants, numerous AsiaTown project presentations/notes/meetings); reviewed extensive notes from prior interviews with residents and stakeholders; and held conversations with the AsiaTown staff team at MidTown Cleveland, Inc. as well as the Imagine AsiaTown Steering Committee.

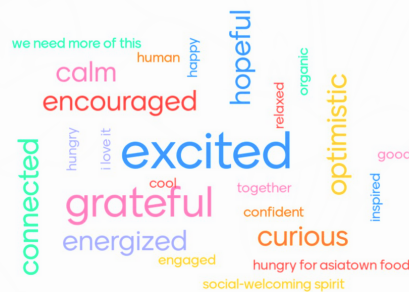
We came to understand that many past efforts had resulted in many project ideas but no cohesive vision, and little-to-no action. We wondered, “How to develop no or low-cost 'social capital' before high-cost projects?” And “What are the community’s common purpose, values, and vision?” We mined previous ideas to uncover the common WHY’s through countless conversations with the MidTown team and agreed that a focus on WHY would help them facilitate collaborative decision-making on future efforts for a flourishing AsiaTown.

DESIGN

The Imagine AsiaTown visioning process involved a holistic design consisting of multiple modes of data collection and community engagement, culminating in two Online Community Conversations. We were limited to delivering via an online collaboration platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted in-person meetings. We designed the two sessions with a “leading with values” approach. In addition to hearing and gathering information about values and vision that were most important to participants, the design simultaneously intended to strengthen relational skills and practices of community-building through both 1-on-1 and large group conversations that matter.

Other equally important modes of data collection facilitated by AsiaTown staff team at MidTown Cleveland, Inc. took place primarily in the month leading up to the Community Conversations. They included Art Inspiration Kits; #ImagineAsiaTown social media images and physical Love Letters to AsiaTown; and 1-on-1 interviews between family and friends using a What's Your Story? Interview Guide (paper and online form), which we used again later during the Community Conversations. Participants were reached via WeChat, social media, phone calls, and email in both English and Chinese. (The data collection tools can be found in the appendix.)

The two Online Community Conversations engaged over 40 individuals overall, and each was delivered in English with consecutive interpretation provided in Mandarin. The image below shows some the feelings participants expressed in real-time as they connected with one another:



MEANING-MAKING

We pored over all collected data to discern shared values and repeated stories of the future based on responses to the following questions:

1. Tell me about a memory about AsiaTown that makes you feel most proud, alive or connected. Why is it important?
2. Who is someone who has influenced you in a positive and meaningful way (such as a family member, teacher, friend)? Tell a story about a time they demonstrated a value or lesson that is important to you.
3. Imagine you had a magic wand and could have three wishes granted for AsiaTown. What would they be? How might these wishes heighten the health and vitality of AsiaTown?
4. How do you want AsiaTown to **look** and **feel** in 100 years, for example, for your great-grandchildren? 100 years from now, what has been preserved? What's different?

As we opened ourselves to the spirit of AsiaTown as Home, we recognized a way that the Shared Vision might enable anyone contributing to designing, selecting, and prioritizing community initiatives to do so from a place-based perspective. This insight led us to develop the Vision-in-Action Compass which places users inside the Shared Vision to answer questions about projects. (See more in Section 3.)

SHARING FINDINGS

The preliminary results were shared with the AsiaTown staff team at MidTown Cleveland, Inc., the Imagine AsiaTown Steering Committee, and the AsiaTown Advisory Committee before being shared with the broader public in a community report-out in mid-November 2020.

The background of the entire page is a light gray floral pattern. It features stylized, line-art style flowers and leaves, possibly resembling orchids or similar delicate plants, scattered across the surface. The pattern is subtle and serves as a decorative backdrop for the text.

SHARED VISION

In this section, we provide detail behind AsiaTown's Shared Vision and its themes/elements, the shared core values, and the Stories of the Future, from which the six vision elements were derived.

WE'RE GROWING HOME

We propose the overarching vision statement: **“We’re Growing Home.”** The phrase subverts and transforms the racist insults “Go home” and “Go back to your country” so familiar to Asian and Asian American people in the United States. It represents taking a stand, reclaiming our belonging to this place, and a collective commitment to making it better. In general, “home” can mean many things to many people — it celebrates the myriad ways people create a place that they can call home. It is a place of care and hospitality, where everyone is welcome and supported. It is a place where everyone can thrive, and where prosperity and meaningful livelihood may flourish. It is a place of safety, belonging, and acceptance. And it invites a longing and the capacity to include all.

The AsiaTown Shared Vision expresses “home” in its unique and interconnected way. It is organized in six themes or elements. Although each element overlaps and is mutually dependent on each of the others, we organize them here separately for clarity:

1. AsiaTown is a **beautiful neighborhood that reflects authentic Asian cultures** — not just about food or stereotypes. This is our home: where we belong and are seen and heard by all in the community, around Cleveland, and around the country.
2. AsiaTown is **walkable and safe** for people of all races.
3. AsiaTown **attracts and keeps residents** of all different races, families who stay here to raise their kids, and young professionals who come here to live and play.
4. Our businesses thrive, leading to **prosperity for everyone**. Small businesses, many of which are Asian-owned, all contribute to a cherished sense of community.
5. In our diverse neighborhood, an **ethic of care strengthens bonds**. People help people. Families help families, neighbors help neighbors, and all needs are met.
6. Everyone throughout the city and beyond knows AsiaTown as a **welcoming place**: a destination for visitors and a place where immigrants can be at home.

The rest of this document details the values and meanings behind these Vision Elements in the voices of community members. If comments were shared or captured in Chinese, we retain the language and add a translation.

CORE VALUES

The AsiaTown Shared Vision implies a set of shared values, which we articulate below. In the following pages, we match value statements with comments made by community members. We've included extensive, verbatim quotes rather than distilling them, in order to celebrate, recognize, and honor the time, energy, vulnerability, and worth of community members' contributions to each other and to the Imagine AsiaTown visioning process. The following eight core value statements all generated high levels of resonance from community members. The values are deeply interconnected; when all eight are actualized, they serve to reinforce one another:

- Taking care of family, neighbors & community 关心家庭、邻居和社区
- Connection with our heritage & history 有属于我的文化历史
- Belonging 有归属感
- Prosperity 繁荣
- Feeling seen & valued 得到重视
- Health 健康
- Respect toward elders & leaders 尊敬长辈
- Safety 安全

Taking Care of Family, Neighbors & Community
关心家庭、邻居和社区

SUPPORTING FRIENDS & FAMILY

- She spoke admiringly of her younger sister who graduated with her masters, a chemist; supported her parents, herself, nieces, and her own family.
- My dad always preached "family first!", which I disliked as a teenager, but many decades later I realize that family is what's most essential to me.
- The way he spoke about and admired his dad resonated with me! Lots of family history and memories about his commitment to family and the community.
- Friends help each other to get through this difficult time and help to create community culture.
- When I came here, I faced a lot of challenges. Luckily I met people from the same hometown and they gave lots of helpful hands. I really appreciate them. In the future, I want to give the heart forward to my community.

- My mother is so influential to me. I admire her strength, creativity, and work ethic. She puts others first before herself. Immigrants & women need more support, from family and community.
- I think AsiaTown is a big family. What we should be proud of is that we have a courageous, caring and loving parent and good leadership. There are many young and energetic outstanding social workers such as Xiao Cui (Xinyuan) and Xiao Tan for the people of AsiaTown.
- Western ideals are different from how our parents were raised. Being close to family, taking care of people is heavily emphasized.

HELPING OTHERS & BUILDING COMMUNITY

- I appreciate those who take care of the community.
- My mother, an Asian immigrant, has a huge influence on me. She instilled in me the importance of caring for others, looking out for our communities and helping when others are in need.
- My mom always puts other people before herself, no matter the situation. She has dedicated so much to volunteering for others that are less fortunate, and her efforts have been inspiring.
- Gratitude is implicit in Asian culture. Thankful for the staff and volunteers of various community programs that assist the building. Thankful that the AsiaTown neighborhood exists as it provides convenient vendors and services to residents, and it's walkable. Thankful for donations made by vendors to residents, such as Good Harvest.
- When COVID-19 hit Cleveland, we were asked to "stay at home." I'm depressed and disappointed because I work in the restaurant service industry. Fortunately, we have an AsiaTown team and ASIA, Inc. They helped me which made me feel hopeful and have energy to combat COVID-19.
- Cleveland Chinese Senior Association provides a senior nutrition lunch program and hosts many outdoor events like cruising and zoo day. Thankful to have many kind and generous people in our community donate turkey, mooncake and holiday gifts annually, just to name a few: Ming Ho, Jason Lin, Cha Chan, Tom Kuang.
- During the pandemic, Summer helped me with paying utilities and registering things online. Xinyuan's team organizes lots of info and shares it with us. Feed AsiaTown warms my heart.
- 亚洲城团队的工作，让我们很感动。社区对居民的关心 (We are very touched by the work of the AsiaTown team. The community cares for residents.)
- 亚洲节。亚洲城团队的工作。爱心餐。慰问品。社区关爱。中秋节爱心。社区的商家。亚洲民众协会 / 微信账号。和朋友讨论社区发展，希望它繁荣 安全。广场舞 (Asian Festival. The work of the AsiaTown team. Loving meals. Condolences. Community care. Mid-Autumn Festival love. Community business. Asian People's Association / WeChat account. Discuss community development with friends, hope it will be prosperous and safe. Square Dance.)
- Care about community, about AsiaTown, about the people. That community care is important.

TEACHING & MENTORING

- I didn't have mentors really growing up. In my 20's, I met someone who took me under their wing and led me to mission oriented activities which I love, and a colleague that mentors me at work.

- I didn't know how to bake before and had nothing to do. But friends in the neighborhood shared their baking goods and experiences with me.

ACTIVISM

- My mother's resilience as a professional and a woman, taught me to fight for equality.
- His Mom was an activist and a huge voice for the Vietnamese community. She got him involved with ASIA at 17 with Lisa Zhao (who moved to Chicago). He lobbied for anti-tobacco legislation and passed out info packets about no smoking indoors.
- As a gay person, he had no job protection or healthcare protections. He pushed his company to include domestic partnership benefits. That experience spurred a desire to give back [and address] inequalities. What he can do to help the Asian community be more outspoken?

Connection with Our Heritage & History
有属于我的文化历史

PRIDE IN ASIAN CULTURE & IDENTITY INSTILLED BY ELDERS

- May Chen was not American-born, she came when she was very little but she keeps Asian culture and understands both Asian and American culture. May was my first boss and her parents are also from Hong Kong. The way she looked at the community was different — she saw the long term impact for the community, what they wanted and needed. I learned so much.
- Elder relatives that did things in the community and how proud they were of the Asian culture and proud to pass down values.
- His Dad was his connection to the community. His father challenged him to scratch beneath the surface to understand a community or place in Cleveland. Also that the way it seems now can change and grow and develop.
- I remember dim sum at Bo Loong with my parents, brother and grandfather almost every Sunday. I loved going to the different grocery stores and seeing the fish tanks. It was important for me to learn about my Chinese heritage and culture. Only when I visited AsiaTown did I see people who looked like me and shared culture. I also learned more about other Asian countries.
- Cleveland AsiaTown (although small) is known throughout other Asian communities and in China.
- Being involved with the AsiaTown team, such as the Mooncake pop-up festival last year! It generates excitement and allows me to feel involved and connected. More "Asian proud" feeling, communicating to friends an opportunity to come in and explore. I hope my generation's kids would have the influence of their heritage.

BEYOND STEREOTYPES

- I was moved by hearing their desire to understand the people and place of AsiaTown in a deeper way beyond just the food or outward appearance.

- Getting food at Bo Loong, observing Chinese wedding at Bo Loong and realizing that there's a lot more to the community and people than just the food.
- My Dad studied & competed in martial arts in-depth. He influenced my foundation of knowledge of Asian culture beyond entertainment value to really seeing another culture.

Belonging

有归属感

FEELING AT HOME

- When Asia Plaza opened, it was the first time I saw AAPI representation. While there were other Chinese restaurants in the suburbs, this was the first time I saw mostly Asian patrons — I felt welcomed, heard other people speaking other languages like Mandarin. I had seen this in cities like Chicago, and NY, where my family would stock up on various foods, but this was the first time in Cleveland that I saw so many people who looked like me. I was excited — it was loud, with carts filled with familiar foods. I loved that it was a regular weekend destination, it felt easy and like I belonged.
- I think it was when I first immigrated from the Philippines to Cleveland in 2006 and my mom brought me to Li Wah and that plaza for the first time. I remember feeling like I could really let my shoulders down and enjoy my surroundings. Eating dim sum and seeing fellow Filipinos enjoying it alongside my Mom and I. For the first time, my 14 year old self felt seen.
- My first experience in AsiaTown was old Chinatown on Rockwell Ave in 1973 when I was 18. Finding out that I was part Chinese, I wanted to explore all that I could about my cultural heritage and background. All of the sights, sounds, smells, and being able to speak Cantonese with someone 'other' than family members! It gave me more self-worth and a certain 'belonging'.
- As a kid growing up, every year for Chinese New Year, On Leong would always sponsor something for the holiday. Fireworks, pastries. As kids, we always looked forward to doing it with our families. Chinese people had an opportunity to see family and friends all at once. It was an opportunity to connect and for us all to come together. Now I understand the purpose of Chinatowns, allowing folks to have a sense of belonging.
- I hope this is a place where we feel [belonging] and our AsiaTown has a unique characteristic.

Prosperity

繁荣

PROSPERITY FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- Continued success for all the businesses in AsiaTown. More restaurants and businesses opening.
- I wish prosperity for everyone in AsiaTown.

- Donna Hom is known as an influencer, she works hard and developed the restaurant into the successful business that it is. She has really benefited the neighborhood.
- We also see a lot of homeless around the area begging, making people scared. I'm not sure how those governments/departments work, but I know that some churches serve the homeless and let them eat and shower there. I think they can have jobs in certain places to have free food and a place to sleep, take a shower. Let them work.
- I hope for 100 straight years there is continued growth in AsiaTown. I want the AsiaTown neighborhood to look vibrant and successful.
- I came here in middle school and I didn't get the opportunity to study. So I can't work in a place where they require a degree. I lost my restaurant job due to COVID-19.

BUSINESS AS COMMUNITY CONNECTION

- I remember AsiaTown from the 1970s when it was one grocery store owned by John Louie. The smell of the dried food section is still an edible memory along with John handing to me a square box with a tiny straw filled with sweet soy milk. It was a tiny store compared to the stores we have today. In 1986, I worked for John Louie as a delivery person and in the warehouse for his grocery store Hall One which is today Asia Plaza. For a teenager, it was easy to get lost in this enormous warehouse filled with Asian groceries and freezers the size of 40 foot containers.
- Mom started a jewelry store in AsiaTown at Asia Plaza in the early 90s. I was friends with Danny Zhang whose family owned the store just two doors down. We grew up together since we were 6 or 7. I grew up in Asia Plaza — so many memories. I really feel connected, feel my family is an integral part of AsiaTown.
- Grocery stores in AsiaTown provided us a lot of convenience which is important to us.
- My dad was so helpful, caring, and a community leader. He ran a gift shop in Asia Plaza. Helped on the committee developing Chinatown. My grandmother was so strong and resilient!
- We are all connected to our places; that connection is very personal. When we treat each place with importance, we are extending that importance to every person connected to that place.

Feeling Seen & Valued
得到重视

HONORING HISTORY

- When I was growing up, Chinatown seemed more alive, more of a community. Everyone knew each other, talked to each other. At the Edgewater gatherings, people got together, like a family reunion. There were activities and raffles donated by grocery stores, that's when I felt most connected. I looked forward to it every year. It used to be a time when we would see a bunch of Chinese people being happy together. That should be the way it is, not a nostalgic memory.

- My store was located in historical Chinatown but a lot of people don't know about this. Now people try to move Chinatown to 30th. I hope people still acknowledge and respect [our history]!

DESIRE FOR ACCEPTANCE

- Valuing a community also means valuing the people.
- AsiaTown reminds me of Asian shopping at H-Mart with her kids in Long Island, finding unique ingredients to cook things like homemade ramen! Excited about the wide selection, but feeling a little sad, wishing for more openness and acceptance for me as a non-Asian person.
- Feeling sadness that even among minorities, we can feel "not included" by minority groups in which we're not a member.
- I'm Chinese so I'm proud of my identity, but I don't feel valued here. I don't feel respected; I feel oppressed!!! So seeing my own people makes me feel secure. I try to be optimistic about my community.
- Most of my childhood was spent in AsiaTown. I talked to everyone — all different languages. (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Laotian, Thai, etc.)
- I wish for a global community where all ethnic neighbors are appreciated and valued; to learn from each other and break down fears and barriers.

Health 健康

- I wish for support for improving health, expanding for providers and availability; prevention and education for diabetes and other chronic diseases.
- Even if it means making yourself vulnerable or without gaining anything, it is of utmost importance to ensure others are healthy, happy and taken care of.
- Michael Byun never preached, just lived it. He taught me to think bigger, network and advocate, and he thought about many things that other people weren't talking about, especially about healthcare in the Asian community (sex, pregnancy, sexual education, diseases that impact AAPIs like diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease) I didn't feel that very many other people were doing this, and he did so much.
- Especially appreciate the efforts made to inform, provide assistance, and safety measures during COVID-19.

Respect Toward Elders & Leaders 尊敬长辈

- I am very happy to live in AsiaTown. The service here is good. Many people help to translate the materials since elders like me don't understand English.

- Asian Evergreen apartments were funded by private donations and government grants to build a home that many Asian seniors enjoy living in now.
- Need to take care of our elders — protect their dignity and independence.
- My mom cared for all of the grandmas and grandpas in the Asian Evergreen building. We take care of each other, especially the most vulnerable, even if we have no relation to them. We take care of our own. I know Americanized kids who would never visit their family elders. My grandma lived there until age 92 or 93; she would make breakfast for her best friend downstairs everyday.
- May Chen...kept the [Asian] values but mixed with American, such as respecting seniors. She always remembers to what is important to the seniors. She used to send mooncakes from NYC to share with the seniors at Asian evergreen. She would give out red pockets with just \$1 (not about the money, but so meaningful to share the culture). I don't see this in American culture. People might acknowledge elders once in a while, but May Chen always thinks of them. Always fights for seniors and thinking of them. Also her thoughtfulness and attention to detail.

Safety 安全

- My mom is my [backbone]. She used to drop me off and pick me up from school for my safety.
- A lot of people think this area is not safe. If you go shopping or meet a friend and it doesn't make you [feel] safe when you go there, that's a problem. Normally we close early because no one wants to go outside when it's dark. At 8pm if it's dark, I'd like to park outside and feel secure that no one would hurt my car. I had a former employee that got robbed when they were going to go home. A few years ago, a customer went to dine in, and when she left, her car windows were broken. We helped her call 911, and guess what? Her daughter came earlier than the cops did. So what do you think?
- Last night, a few homeless guys walked in without a mask, sat down and asked for money. They don't leave until we give them what they want. I call 911 but no one answers. A customer helped us get them out. The most important thing to us is safety. It happens every day — people will stop shopping in AsiaTown if it doesn't feel safe.
- I care about being able to walk safely. I'm scared of being robbed. My kids are still small.
- I wish for a kid-friendly community for them to play outside.

STORIES ABOUT THE FUTURE

Over 100 AsiaTown community members — business owners, workers, residents, visitors, and advocates — provided input on the values and vision for AsiaTown. Following are the stories of the future which inspired the AsiaTown Shared Vision and its six interconnected themes, which all garnered high levels of resonance from Imagine AsiaTown participants. Although these stories overlap and mutually reinforce one another, we organize them separately in the following pages for clarity:

1. AsiaTown is a beautiful neighborhood that reflects authentic Asian cultures — not just about food or stereotypes. This is our home: where we belong and are seen and heard by all in the community, around Cleveland, and around the country.

Culture and history reflected with authenticity and care

- The history of AsiaTown is told by the folks that live/work/grew up there.
- The rich ethnic heritage of AsiaTown is preserved, maintained and grown.
- Visitors experience and enjoy the rich cultures and incredible cuisines. More people (other races) know us through our culture, art, food, and beautiful neighborhood.

Beautiful decorations representing a diversity of Asian cultures

- AsiaTown is growing and thriving. Families and residents walk around the neighborhood and think "where I live is beautiful!"
- More central planning has created a unified style. It is complementary but also full of cultural characteristics - a beautification of old Chinatown. AsiaTown's range was expanded to include more residents and promote our culture and features. AsiaTown is very inclusive and adaptive.
- There's a lot more to the community and people than just the food. There are lots of diverse kinds of people throughout this neighborhood.
- AsiaTown represents Asia as a whole (understanding the tricky history between the countries.)
- A true AsiaTown is built up, showing different cultures and nationalities.

Uplifts voices and affirms humanity of residents and people of Asian descent

- AsiaTown is a friendly place, because of having so many Asian people there.
- People feel pride in Asian identity and heritage with a long-time sense of belonging.

- Elevating the *stories and the history* of the area and its people.
- Asian Americans are *seen, heard, welcomed, supported and included* in Cleveland.

Visibility and impact is felt beyond the AsiaTown neighborhood

- AsiaTown has become very respected across the city. It's a real community, not just a tourist attraction.
- We are part of a global community where all ethnic neighbors are appreciated and valued — learning from each other and breaking down fears and barriers.
- Feeling pride when sharing Asian heritage and inviting friends to come in and explore AsiaTown. The Night Market still allows people to "rediscover."
- Cleveland AsiaTown (although small) is known throughout other Asian communities and in China.

2. AsiaTown is walkable and safe for people of all races.

Reduced violence or hate based on race, gender, and class

- This is a safer neighborhood with less crime.
- People feel safe shopping or meeting a friend in AsiaTown, even at night.
- Police-community relations are better than ever. We have safety and security. We have continually worked as a community to overcome *language barriers and racism*.
- Our community has worked to *eliminate racism* locally and globally.
- People see us as part of America. We are no longer foreigners. There will be *no discrimination* toward us. All races are families.

Trust & reconciliation among people in different groups

- Different people learn about culture beyond pop culture to *break down barriers* between races (for example, between Black and Asian people).
- Opportunities for people from different races/ethnicities to *mingle and learn* from each other.
- I want to learn Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish (or have a device that automatically translates). I know all my neighbors but wish there was a way to *communicate* with them better.

Walkable neighborhood

- The route between Asian Evergreen and downtown is cleaned up, safer. Asian Evergreen residents easily walk there or take accessible public transportation.
- The road is level, the community is beautiful, and the street is well lit. This is a safe community. It's a place where the elderly can rest and relax.
- I feel comfortable and safe and free to walk on the street.
- For people from Asian Evergreen who travel to and from downtown, they have a safe, air-conditioned, magic tunnel — more than a bus.
- There are safe, multimodal street networks.

- More cameras in the community have improved community safety and security.
- There are more street lights.

Vibrant, colorful, and clean

- AsiaTown is flourishing by addressing safety, health, education for kids, poverty, business growth, and beautification.
- This is an environment that's clean, and visually appealing.
- Our streets are safe. More people feel safe, and more people have been moving in.

3. AsiaTown attracts and keeps residents of all different races, families who stay here to raise their kids, and young professionals who come here to live and play.

High quality of life for current & long-time residents

- Green spaces have replaced concrete jungles. People love *coming out of their houses*.
- Many opportunities and places to *meet with friends*. Events make people feel connected to AsiaTown and feel *harmony* between neighbors.
- This is a *vibrant neighborhood* with successful businesses, monthly gallery hops, people enjoying summer, green spaces, people doing tai chi, and regular festivals and activities.
- Residents have no worries of being displaced due to gentrification.

Attracts residents of different races and socioeconomic status

- New residents add vibrancy to AsiaTown while maintaining our *existing culture and heritage*.
- A more robust housing market—with *easier entry points* for those looking to purchase housing.
- Attract more people through economic development and prosperity, good schools, an Asian activity center, and a nursing home for Asians.
- There is a *critical mass of Asian people* in all of Cleveland and not just in AsiaTown. We have attracted more people to *come back* and live in AsiaTown from various parts of the region.
- *Bigger population* that can support successful businesses.

Residents are engaged in decisions impacting them & become leaders

- Continue to engage the people *within and outside* AsiaTown.
- Want to see *residents engaged* in the plan for and future of AsiaTown.
- Residents are *engaged, express what they want*, and are *represented* in community discussions.
- *Full participation* from different ages, socioeconomic statuses, abilities, etc.

Families raising happy, healthy children

- Kids feel *free and safe* to play outside.
- The neighborhood itself helps my kids to know, be part of, and be *proud of their culture*. They see Chinese characters around the neighborhood.

- There are plenty of community activities for kids and families. There are *places for kids to play*.
- We have *excellent schools* - people move from the suburbs so their kids can come to our schools.
- AsiaTown is a model of *multi-generational living*.

Young people contribute and plant roots

- People who come to live here *stay*.
- Places to *hang out*, such as a sports bar, or lounge area. A place for community gatherings that is open late with dessert and drinks, ice cream, shaved ice, or tea.

Seniors are respected, considered, and cared for

- Assisted living and/or a long-term care facility staffed by Asians or people who can speak Asian languages and are familiar with our culture.

4. Our businesses lead to prosperity for everyone in the community. Small businesses, many of which are Asian-owned, all contribute to a cherished sense of community.

Flourishing small businesses

- All the *small and family businesses* are successful and supported.
- We have unlimited \$\$\$ to *promote what is here already*.
- My store will still be there in the future. I hope people can taste real Sichuan food as a way to *promote our beautiful culture*.

New businesses, especially Asian-owned

- More restaurants and businesses have opened, bringing *economic development*.
- Commercial vacancies are filled and have put a priority on *local, Asian-run* businesses.
- The businesses are a true melting-pot of *all Asian cultures*!
- A small business incubator supporting small footprint restaurateurs featuring seasonal businesses, like shaved ice (Snow Bros!), Filipino food, hawker style street food.
- New types of businesses have moved in. An Asian comic book store and a stationary store.
- There are more pork bun manufacturers. A pork bun street vendor on every block!
- The area between Rockwell Ave and other commercial centers in AsiaTown is filled up with vibrant pumping businesses!

High quality of life for workers

- In AsiaTown we enjoy *prosperity for everyone*. That is driven in large part by the continued success for all the businesses here.

Education and employment opportunities

- The neighborhood has flourished through economic development and support for small businesses, enticing young professionals, students, families, and immigrants to come here and make a life.

- Economic vitality has created good job opportunities, even for those without degrees.

A collective sense of thriving community

- Residents enjoy shopping at full store fronts of robust businesses.
- A supermarket has brought the foot traffic back. There's more shopping: grocery stores with low prices that carry everything, serving neighborhood needs.
- There's a place to sit with to-go drinks when meeting up with friends - something that has been missing for a while.

5. In our diverse neighborhood, an ethic of care strengthens bonds. People help people. Families help families, neighbors help neighbors, and all needs are met.

Strong bonds among neighbors & community members

- We know our front and back neighbors.
- Neighbors helping neighbors!
- Get the community together and out of their house, people mingling.
- Bonds between neighbors.
- Everyone feels supported (financially, emotionally) and has a sense of belonging.

A collective culture of solidarity

- We are *people helping people*. People are not cold to others.
- The Cleveland Chinese Benevolent Association has long been helping to *shape our community*.
- We can call on people to do things *for the community*, even those things that are not directly related to them.

Basic needs are met

- People don't have to cook but still have hot food to eat. When people get sick or old, they have company. Everyone can have health care. People don't have buy or drive cars. Transportation service is one call away.
- *Nobody* is homeless.
- Care for the holistic needs of people - more expansive healthcare resources, parks and recreation space, arts and vibrant uses.

Caring for people and place

- Our neighborhood is accessible and age-friendly. Community task forces work together to find creative solutions to poverty and other socioeconomic disadvantages. Everywhere you look you see marks of AsiaTown's *sustainability and eco-friendliness* from community gardens and greenhouses to food pantries, a recycling center, etc.

- Getting rid of cars! Electric vehicles to transport.

6. Everyone throughout the city and beyond knows AsiaTown as a welcoming place: a destination for visitors and a place where immigrants can be at home.

Immigrants feel sense of home & belonging

- Asian immigrants are the lifeblood of AsiaTown.
- Continuing *influx of new immigrants* — so that it's populated by Asian Americans and new arrivals to the area. Welcoming to all.

Recognized as welcoming, inclusive, and accessible

- AsiaTown is known as the *most welcoming community* in the world to immigrants.
- Even people from the Asian communities of Cincinnati and Pittsburgh know the Chinese grocery stores in AsiaTown Cleveland and *travel* to shop and spend time here.
- AsiaTown is a model of an equitable Asian immigrant neighborhood in the U.S.

Attracts visitors of all races and socioeconomic status

- People of all demographics from all parts of Cleveland spend a lot of time here and enjoy the neighborhood's vibrant assets.
- The markets are visible and *accessible to all Clevelanders*.
- Visitors experience and enjoy the rich cultures, incredible cuisines, and community spirit. AsiaTown is filled with more festivals, color, vibrancy, delicious smells, and possibilities.
- More people (other races) know us through *our culture, art, food*.
- Black people appreciate what's in AsiaTown and feel comfortable knowing there are other Black people shopping there.
- AsiaTown competes with Tremont for its nightlife — we are a *destination spot* to come and enjoy with friends and family.

CONCLUSION

This year of 2020 perhaps represents a metaphor of Clear Vision. For AsiaTown, particular dynamics of the pandemic highlight, through the challenges it poses, the essence of what's important to community members. In addition to basic and immediately pressing survival issues of food, shelter and employment, the community is experiencing and voicing the capacities for mutual care, resilience, ingenuity, perseverance, and connection that weaves a strong — sometimes invisible — web of support. This kind of support not only equips the community to weather current challenges; **it provides the common ground to envision the tapestry they will weave together for the future.**

We are struck by the amount of care shown by community members for the neighborhood and for each other throughout the visioning process. We anticipate that the experience of listening to and being heard by each other will encourage many community members — whether they be business owners, workers, residents, or visitors — to accept future invitations to participate and contribute to initiatives in the neighborhood.

We hope that the steps described in this report will help MidTown Cleveland, Inc. assess AsiaTown's priorities and begin to implement our recommendations. Their implementation will increase the likelihood that decisions taken will fulfill the community-created Shared Vision. Moreover, we believe they will help to support and sustain **ownership, commitment, and accountability among community members and organizations**, ultimately aiding in the ongoing efforts to build and strengthen leadership capacity in the AsiaTown community.

Now that each of us feels our own even deeper attachment to AsiaTown, we ardently wish for this inside-out approach to help AsiaTown Cleveland to continue its path toward a vibrant, safe, welcoming, prosperous, and community-oriented place that Grows Home!

APPENDIX

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

- [Imagine AsiaTown Interview Guide: What's Your Story?](#)
- [Imagine AsiaTown Art Inspiration Kit](#)
- [Love Letters to AsiaTown \(Instructions\)](#)

Hundred-Year Visions for AsiaTown

Community members offered the following responses to the prompts: "How do you want the AsiaTown neighborhood to look and feel in 100 years, for example, for your great-grandchildren? 100 years from now, what has been preserved? What's different?" These have been edited for clarity only and are presented to show the richness of these images. Despite their diversity, they stay true — as a whole — to the community's core values and Shared Vision.

- Built-up and strong community, like in Austin's Koreatown. Festive and new, clean, moving towards the future, demonstrated with futuristic architecture.
- Asian cultures living and growing together, educating others of our heritage..and supporting the bright 'New' ideas of tomorrow's youth!!
- A thriving, bustling, pedestrian, and cyclist (and scooterist) oriented neighborhood with quality affordable housing options, beautiful architecture, art and streetscape elements that reinforce the Asian heritage and culture of the area, and an active arts and cultural scene.
- Vibrant, safe, and accessible to all cultures
- More Asian immigrants - lifeblood of AsiaTown. More Asian-based businesses and families who want to be there. Want to see us as young Asian professionals incentivized to bring parents back - ability to age in place in a comfortable community, where they can speak their own languages. Raise a family, surrounded by Asian peers, be more comfortable.
- We need a safe space to feel at home and feel like we belong. Slow growth toward an LA-type of diversity where no ethnic group is a minority. Third or 4th generation Asian Americans cooking and serving products that they learned in their own grandma's kitchens. I DON'T want to see gentrification (loss of control) and cultural appropriation. Houses are so run-down and old, I want to see Yu Popo live in a house that has working plumbing and we don't have to worry that there's lead in the wall. Houses that look like the houses I lived in Westlake or the townhouses I live in now. Nice grocery stores. Afraid to imagine something like this because I'm afraid it will never happen.

- I hope that AsiaTown continues to represent the people and even continue to elevate the importance of the community. More delicious food, markets, and to continue to engage the people within and outside AsiaTown.
- Connected, respected, verdant, and vibrant
- I want to see that AsiaTown draws Asian people back to AsiaTown to keep traditional Asian culture. This should remain the same. Don't want to see it like DC Chinatown - which kept the culture but white-washed (Not real culture because no Chinese people live there) We must change that and make sure that doesn't happen. Wish we could be like Toronto. But where are the people to make this happen? I want to see a school in AsiaTown that is bilingual - maybe this can grow slowly. See Holy Redeemer in Philly's Chinatown as an example. People love that school and will come for that. I want it to be safe. Need to build relationships with residents and police. I want to see people engaging - not many people are left living in Chinatown. Some longtime residents but turnover often. We need more people to stay, not moving in and out.
- Daughter said that she feels more comfortable in Toronto. Would love to see how Cleveland can give this same feeling. But how can you keep the culture without enough population?
- Would like to see more opportunity for people from different races and ethnicities to mingle and learn from each other. Hope for more opportunities of different cultures to mingle, get to know one another and their practices. So more people would grow vegetables, clean up their places, take their garbage cans back to the back of the house.
- I'd like to see a true AsiaTown built up, showing different cultures and nationalities. Booming, successful businesses (same as what we hope Cleveland could be). Robust economy, continually built up community. Would like to see a community mixture, beautiful buildings, unique architecture, representing different cultures. Bigger population that can support successful businesses.
- Getting rid of cars! Electric vehicles to transport. Get people to talk and communicate, TV/internet sucks people into the screen and has isolated our community, people don't leave houses. I would like to see a way to get the community together and out of their house, people mingling. Want to learn Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish - or have a device that automatically translates. I know all my neighbors but often can't say more than hello - wish there was a way to communicate better. Focus on gathering and communication amongst groups.
- Neighborhood is bustling, with successful businesses that are owned by Asians. More businesses, more attractive. Businesses are clean. Asians are supporting Asians. (Currently opposite of that - businesses are dirty, Asians don't support each other, and don't feel safe). Safety is key.
- Our people and spirit.
- Our AsiaTown story.
- I have a small garden. I hope it stays because it represents my seeds.
- A pretty and clean environment for residents.
- A more formalized AsiaTown is still here, authenticity is still here. Traditional feel, authenticity - don't lose the culture we already have. Will our next generation carry on family businesses, etc? When they see all the things we've put in place.

- Hope people still emigrate to AsiaTown and don't go elsewhere.
- Bigger AsiaTown, newer buildings, right now it's too old.
- More educational facilities.
- There is too much apathy in the community now. After a time, AsiaTown could be more prosperous.
- Adequate food, clothing, housing and transportation. I hope these supermarkets can be preserved.
- We can call on people to do things for the community, even those things that are not directly related to them.
- Our people and Chinese benevolent association.
- A thriving community is good for everyone. I open my restaurant just to survive. Maybe in the future my store will still be there. I don't like American Chinese Sichuan food. I hope people can taste real Sichuan food as a way to promote our beautiful culture.
- Our culture.
- After 100 years it should feel like the same as ChinaTown in New York. Old buildings should be kept because they can tell a story.
- In 100 years, AsiaTown will be like heaven. People don't have to cook but still have hot food to eat. When people get sick or old, they have company. Everyone can have health care. People don't have buy or drive cars. Transportation service is one call away.
- AsiaTown Sweetheart needs to stay!
- Cultural food that represents our identity.
- Prosperity, diversity of Asians.
- Today our kids don't appreciate the history and culture. They are being more American. I hope our community can host more traditional festival celebration and help us to educate young people on our culture.
- In 100 years, I hope people see us as part of America. We are no longer foreigners. There will be no discrimination toward us. All races are families.
- Our culture. People are not cold to others.
- Our culture is still here. AsiaTown will thrive and more just.
- AsiaTown homes have more value. I hope there will be restoration and better security/ safety.
- Our delicious food. Bonds between neighbors. Our culture characteristic, decoration and language.
- In 100 years I want AsiaTown to still be here.
- I want AsiaTown to still be here and be better than ever.
- I want a more clean and beautiful neighborhood with our cultural identity intact.
- Medical facility, bank(s), library, parks, performance venues.
- Respect for family lineage in the neighborhood, and desire for it to be a 24-hour neighborhood - not just a place to visit and shop or eat weekend dim sum. Stay longer and have an opportunity to seize the day!

- 活動中心，綜合大超市，我們的文化和語言，街道上的設施，有更多我們的人。圖書館（有中國人的書），郵局，有更多說我語言的人服務社區）。有一個屬於亞洲人的書店。孩子的課後活動場地 (Activity center, general supermarket, our culture and language, facilities on the street, there are more of us. Library (with Chinese books), post office, more people who speak my language serve the community. A bookstore belonging to Asians. Children's after-school activity venue.)
- Care for the holistic needs of people - more expansive healthcare resources, parks and recreation space, arts and vibrant uses.
- 20年，这个城市没有什么活力，适合老人，但是年轻人为什么都离开克利夫兰了，就像我的外孙，一个去了纽约/洛杉矶。不愿回来。就像rockefeller，但是也去大城市发展了。但是亚洲城团队来了。有年轻人来。让我觉得这个城市又充满了活力，疫情下的dedicated。让我很hopeful. (For 20 years, this city has no vitality and is suitable for the elderly, but why have the young people left Cleveland? Just like my grandson, one went to New York/Los Angeles. Do not want to come back. Just like Rockefeller, but also went to the big cities to develop. But the AsiaTown team is here. There are young people coming. It makes me feel that this city is full of vitality again and is dedicated under the epidemic. Makes me very hopeful.)
- Connections, community, basic needs met, activities, spaces activated, accessible, age friendly, something for everyone to take part in; ways for people to engage.
- Majority Asian-ownership.
- Caring about Asian business ownership.
- Vibrant and green and welcoming to all.
- Continuing influx of new immigrants—so that it's populated by Asian Americans and new arrivals to the area. Welcoming to all. More density, busy, walkable. Businesses of all kinds that meet the needs of tourists and non-tourists. Having an international school.
- Passion for green space in AsiaTown. A neighborhood that is inviting to Asian Americans and new immigrants for years to come. Businesses that meet the needs of visitors and those living there. Elevated stories of those living in AsiaTown and elevating its history.
- It should feel like everyone can take part in the community and feel connected. Basic needs should be met, and then have activities and programs to enrich people's lives and allow for interactions. I'd like for it to be accessible & age-friendly. Reduced poverty and other socioeconomic disadvantages. Sustainable and eco-friendly, maybe with community gardens and greenhouses, food pantries, recycling center, etc. People helping each other out, with a mutual aid system in place.
- It's important that the community allows for full participation from different ages, socioeconomic statuses, abilities, etc. Everyone should feel supported (financially, emotionally) and have a sense of belonging.
- I hope for 100 straight years there is continued commercial and residential growth in AsiaTown. I want the AsiaTown neighborhood to look vibrant and successful.

- We need to preserve the authenticity of the community because it's a real neighborhood. Keep what we have but promote it to help support the small businesses.
- More residents and visitors walking on busy sidewalks; chatting in parks, resident-owned shops offering locally-grown and prepared food & other products.
- Known as a technology-savvy place where new ideas are born, supported and grown.
- AsiaTown should look vibrant and colorful!
- Community center for AsiaTown!
- Uniquely Asian; not bombarded with franchises - a safe place that is familiar, more Asian American business owners, more vitality.
- I want AsiaTown to stay uniquely-Asian, but I do want growth. I want it to be more attractive to residents — especially Asian-American residents. I want more businesses, but in addition to the already existing businesses.
- A public green space is a great idea for AsiaTown. Similar to Public Square downtown or Lincoln Park in Tremont — a central meeting place would provide energy to the neighborhood.
- Being known as a place to be 24/7 and feel safe and have access for personal growth. Envision a large corporation that will establish their HQ in AsiaTown for Live, Work, Play.
- People want to stay in AsiaTown rather than moving away.
- Nerdy Black people who appreciate Asian culture. More clothing stores / custom dresses, etc. want to see retail full. I still want it to be largely Asian + preserved. Vibrant and kicking. Holiday mochi special holiday tradition. I am not Asian, but I want to be more connected with Asian culture beyond pop culture! Intercultural connections between Asian and Black Culture.
- Have a cultural center and have more schools such as teaching Chinese language. Also have street signs in Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean in addition to English. Make the streets be more notable and distinguished.
- Preserved: local Asian-owned places. People still grow bittermelon vines. Different: place where all Asian Americans can feel included. Planting more trees and plants. A bittermelon festival! The function and deeper meaning of residents able to grow bittermelon around their homes.
- Zoning of AsiaTown makes sense, to see resources available to the community (for youth, health and wellness, safe place to thrive and grow) and for Clevelanders to know AsiaTown and be more aware of its history and community.
- 100 years from now, I want AsiaTown to be safe, see more green / community space for elderly and young to all enjoy. These things will help the community to grow and flourish. In 100 years, global issues of racism and health/pandemic will no longer be an issue. The collective works of our communities will help AsiaTown flourish, be safe, healthy, and suitable for raising kids, and for elderly to enjoy their golden years!
- More cultural elements that go beyond food and restaurants. More awareness about AsiaTown.
- Walkable, lots of trees, outdoor tai chi, activities, performances (not in parking lots).
- Asian Americans are seen, heard, welcomed, supported and included in Cleveland.
- More colorful place, hanging lights. More colorful buildings, More color artwork. Colorful AsiaTown. More public murals, and art work.

WHAT IS AN ACTION YOU CAN TAKE OR GIFT YOU CAN SHARE TO STEP TOWARD THIS FUTURE?

The following lists an abundance of offerings from community members responding to the above question from the What's Your Story? Interview Guide. Several participants also said they would be willing to get involved and support the MidTown team's work if personally asked!

FINANCIAL

- I would contribute financially to something specific because the community still serves my family, we still have friends and family in that area.
- Reinvest capital
- Security and investment
- More help on financial needs like insurance / investment
- Business expertise and ability to bridge immigrant-owned businesses with resources

MENTORSHIP

- Become a "surrogate family" to help welcome and give support to Asian international students
- Help international students find their way around and get acclimated
- I can offer mentorship to young AAPIs
- Help young people be proud of their roots and culture. *Why should they care about AsiaTown?*

CARING COMMUNITY CULTURE

- Passion about my neighborhood, it's my people
- Desire to give back
- Support, promote, and encourage people to visit
- Getting more people engaged
- Try to get other people more involved with the community
- Develop more of a volunteering/fundraising culture in the Asian community
- Host events that attract young people of different races
- Volunteer
- Volunteer for ASIA, Inc.
- Community clean-up
- I would love to get involved in any way that I can

ADVOCACY & ACTIVISM

- Help the community be more outspoken about inequalities
- Willing to be a strong voice and fighter to advocate for [my vision of AsiaTown].

- Personal experience with activism
- Be an advocate for the neighborhood
- Garner support for the neighborhood

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

- Share talents and wisdom. Share all of my experiences.
- Teach yoga
- Counsel people experiencing trauma or addiction as a social worker
- Teach about beekeeping
- Excellence for curating and high standards (well traveled)
- Knowledge about quality sourcing
- Legal services
- Share art resources
- Promote my Chinese heritage to educate the public (Tai-chi, performances)
- Pho!

IDEAS & PARTICIPATION

- Contribute my voice
- Join in community meetings and activities
- Participate in fun activities
- Participate in community activities/services
- Attend community meeting
- Participate in community clean-up, attend meetings and volunteer
- Attend community meeting, share my gifts
- Participate in community meeting and community events
- Attend more community events and share my ideas.
- Continue following the progress/process of AsiaTown and continue providing this input and feedback
- Willing to share honest feedback

WHAT WE MIGHT FIND IN OUR VISION OF ASIATOWN

The following list documents words and phrases that community members used to describe elements of their imagined stories of the future. They are not meant to be a wish list for projects, let alone a prioritization. Rather, they were shared by community members to illustrate their wishes, hopes, future images, and yearnings. We record them here as a source for testing design criteria that might be used in the Vision-in-Action Compass.

MAIN STREETS

- Newer buildings
- Old buildings that are kept because they can tell a story
- Beautiful architecture, modern architecture
- Bigger AsiaTown
- Colorful AsiaTown: more colorful buildings, art work, more public murals, more electric boxes with decoration and art
- Art and streetscape elements that reinforce the Asian heritage and culture
- Our culture characteristics, decoration and language
- Vibrant and colorful, more colorful place
- Street signs in Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean in addition to English
- Chinese characters
- Streets that are more notable and distinguished
- Hanging lights
- Pedestrian and cyclist and scooterist, walkable, walking on busy sidewalks
- People don't have to buy or drive cars... transportation service is one call away

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

- Affordable housing options
- More housing options (mid range)
- Houses that are kept up and restored
- Lead-free houses with working plumbing
- Places to grow vegetables
- Small gardens
- Houses that people clean up and take their garbage cans to the back
- Homes that have more value; townhouses or homes that look like houses in Westlake
- Clean and beautiful neighborhood with our cultural identity intact
- Incentives to bring people back to AsiaTown

FOOD

- Cultural food that represents our identity
- Delicious food
- Real Sichuan food that promotes our beautiful culture
- AsiaTown Sweetheart

PUBLIC ART & FESTIVALS

- An active arts and cultural scene
- More traditional festival celebrations
- A bittermelon festival! The deeper function and symbolic meaning of bittermelon
- Performances (not in parking lots)

BUSINESSES

- More businesses, but in addition to the already existing businesses
- Asian-owned businesses, more Asian-based businesses
- Resident-owned shops offering locally grown and prepared food and other products
- Successful businesses that are owned by Asians
- Uniquely Asian businesses, not bombarded with franchises
- Businesses that are vibrant and kicking
- Nice grocery stores, general supermarket, markets, preserved supermarkets
- Clothing stores, custom dresses, etc.
- More nightlife
- Small businesses
- A place to develop technology know-how
- A large corporation to establish their headquarters in AsiaTown
- A technology-savvy place where new ideas are born, supported and grown

GREEN SPACE

- Parks, parks and recreation space, chatting in parks
- Green space, public green space similar to Public Square downtown or Lincoln Park in Tremont - a central meeting place that would provide energy to the neighborhood
- Green and community space for elderly and young to all enjoy
- Lots of trees, planting more trees and plants
- Park with community gardens, exercise and playground equipment, performance venue

PROGRAMS & EDUCATION

- Activities and programs to enrich people's lives and allow for interactions
- Outdoor tai chi
- Children's after-school activity venue
- Educational facilities
- Bilingual school
- International school
- Schools that teach the Chinese language
- Ways to learn Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish
- Workshop about financial management and health care
- Kids book club
- English class for people who don't have a school to go to

COMMUNITY RESOURCES & SERVICES

- Community Center, Activity Center
- Cultural center, Museum for culture and history
- Center for nonprofits to have an office and/or mailing address
- More community services like health care and affordable housing
- Medical facility
- Banks
- Library (with Chinese books)
- Bookstore belonging to Asians
- Relationships built with residents and police
- Services to help the sick or old
- Healthcare, more expansive healthcare resources, focus on prevention and education
- A mutual aid system where people can help each other out
- Adequate food, clothing, housing, transportation