A Glimpse into the International District

**BACKGROUND**

Although the Chinatown International District has been disrupted several times by the suppression of the Asian American community, it has persisted as an important neighborhood for new immigrants and their American-born descendants. It is located southeast of Pioneer Square and south of the central business district. Its character derives from entrepreneurs of various Asian backgrounds and the community's strong family ties. Its diverse ethnic restaurants and shops attract tourists as well as locals.

The initial Chinese settlers were evicted from Seattle in 1886, but by 1889 the Chinese population had rebounded to about 150. In 1903, the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition celebrated the growing importance of Asian trade to Seattle. Still, this did not assuage the racist violence of the 1880s would not be repeated against the Chinese and the growing number of Japanese and Filipino immigrants.

**OUR OBSERVATIONS**

As a group we observed that the International District is made up of mostly local, family owned businesses that have been passed down for multiple generations.

From the grocery stores to the billboards, this district incorporates a vast amount of cultural elements and languages. The people walking the street are diverse, representing different wealth classes, races, and education levels.

The district is tourist heavy because of the diversity of the area and the breathtaking, representative street art and building architecture, as well as its fun, bustling energy that engulfs everyone the second they step off the light rail.

**DEVELOPMENT**

By the late 1920s, when construction of the 2nd Avenue Extension just east of Pioneer Square uprooted much of the original Chinatown, a thriving neighborhood of Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino families and their American-born descendants was already blooming in the modern-day International District. Japanese Americans constituted Seattle's largest ethnic minority and the second largest such community on the West Coast. Considering the development of Chinatown as a whole, it is a barrier. Compared to region around Chinatown, International District still remains the economy in 2000. The infrastructures are not as good as other region in Seattle. The primary structure of business is family business which is already eliminated by modern business structure.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The International District does not have suburban nor "cookie-cutter" housing, which contributes to the unique character the town has to offer. However, housing is limited, quite expensive for the quality, and there are plenty of people without shelter. This is a blight. Housing looks to have a "build upwards" mentality, rather than out. This means clustered, cramped, apartment style living. There are very limited spaces to live. It’s to the point where the city turns older, run-down hotels into apartments, seeing leases going for around $1500 a month.

**RACE, ETHNICITY, & CULTURE**

Chinese individuals settled into International District in the 1850s. Initial Chinese settlers were evicted from International District in 1886 but by the 1880s the population had increased. Today the population in International District is around 62,222. Within the population, 41.5% are Asian, while 32.1% are White. 15.9% of the population are either Black or African American. There is affordable housing for families who are in need. Healthcare buildings are nearby if people need in drugstore products. The streets of International District have multiple Asian restaurants where people can enjoy a delicious meal. There are multiple festivals one can enjoy such as Lunar Year DragonFest, JamFest, and Autumn Moon Festival and Night Market.

**ARTS**

Seattle’s International District is filled with public art. From murals and sculptures to stylized architecture, the public art of the International District is representative of the people and cultures who make their home here. Public art acts as an asset to the population health of the community. It is culturally expressive. It adds beauty to the district, and it helps international people from Asian cultures to feel more at home. The International District is primarily composed of three Asian cultures: Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese. The public act found in the International District is expressive of these cultures, and can be seen in our photos as well as when we visited the district.

**A CULTURAL HUB OF THE ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY**

"International District's character is derived from entrepreneurs of various Asian backgrounds and the community's strong family ties" - Walt Crowley
URBAN PLANNING

The urban plan used by the city of Seattle for this neighborhood was the 2018 Chinatown-International District Framework and Implementation Plan, taking into account stake holders and previously placed city amenities in the area. The two focused objectives were to create a plan that guides public investment and to design culturally relevant and responsive involvement processes. Right now, the Mayor’s budget includes $200,000 to support further culturally relevant outreach, in language engagement. Urban planning is an up-and-coming asset to the International District community as improvements being made are to make the space more culturally accessible.

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY

Off the working civilians (age 16 or older)
- 23.9% in hospitality
- 10.3% in professional, scientific, & technical services
- 11.5% in health care & social assistance
- 10.9% in retail

Sex Ratio
- Wholesales: 2.19x more male than female
- Retail: 1.81x more male than female
- Hospitality: 1.58x more male than female
- Healthcare: 2.03x more female than male
- Education: 1.7x more female than male

Median of annual income by industry (of working population)
- Real Estate ($225.9k) - 7.31%
- Professional ($80.6k) - 12.1%
- Hospitality ($19.5k) - 23.9%
- Retail ($23.5k) - 10.9%

WORKS CITED


