

Gatekeepers Chinatown

*A Program for Making Us Safer
in the New Chinatown Japantown Historic District*



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Introduction

This proposed program, although sparked by the proposal of another 200 bed low barrier one across from the North Gate of the Historic district, is relevant even without adding another shelter.

It is based on living in this neighborhood since September, 2012 in affordable housing and applying skills and expertise in creative problem solving earned by working for and with many of the most innovative leaders in the world in both high tech business and the social sector at state and national levels.

Residents cannot rely on our police bureau to rebound anytime soon from its under-staffing, nor has Clean and Safe and the high concentration of Central City Concern properties and other social agencies able to distribute its clients and services elsewhere, nor is it likely the Old Town Chinatown Community Association will change its focus of attracting tourists - a focus shared by Prosper Portland and the Portland Business Alliance.

Our People

Gatekeepers Chinatown addresses the over arching problem of crime and how unsafe our doorways have become for those who live here in the New Chinatown Japantown Historic district of Old Town, Portland. Our personal safety is severely challenged by violent crime, the primary reason to contest the placing of 200 even more vulnerable folks here, but not the only reason. Please refer to the accompanying *Point of View* document.

The very idea should have been challenged early on for personal safety reasons and for pitting the poor against the poorest, not to mention ignoring published promises and City plans.

The Gatekeepers program is scalable and applicable for other high crime areas to include other sections of Old Town and Downtown.

The Environment

There is relatively easy access to buildings that contributes to property-related crimes to include burglaries and trespassing as well as the quality of life or livability on our surrounding streets and sidewalks- the scene of disorderly conduct, drug law violations and other liquor and drug fueled behaviors 24/7.

The plethora of surface parking lots, vacant properties, neglected buildings, and a low tree canopy on this heat island contributes to the overall external view, cited in the press, as a squalid and blighted neighborhood. And it is.

Our Economy

In terms of economics, the level of criminality - the highest in the City - was acknowledged in 2014 Five Year Action Plan by the Portland Development Commission (PDC) now Prosper Portland as having “an impact on the market’s perception on the neighborhood and *deters business growth*, neighborhood investment, and *tourist activity*.”

There has been some growth despite the situation, the Chinatown Gate restoration, development of a hotel, and the successful move of Right 2 Dream Too residents to another temporary location is creating a gateway to the historic district that will be thrown out of balance (no street connectivity) to the North and much of what still remains in between.



GATEKEEPERS CHINATOWN

Entrance-
South



SEPTEMBER, 2017

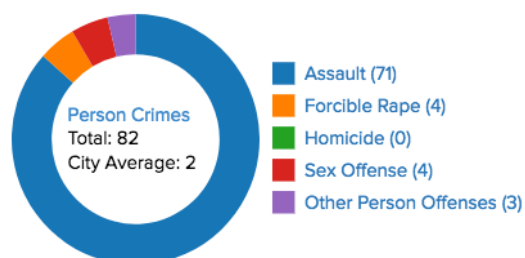
Gatekeepers Chinatown

Job Creation, Training, and Placement

No One is Safe

The Old Town Chinatown district of Portland, Oregon includes the historic district of New Chinatown Japantown in which I and hundreds of others live, mostly, but not exclusively in affordable, low income housing.

As residents we have been required to adjust to a 22% crime rate for narcotic and drug offenses and 6% for assaults. The Police Bureau is operating under a greatly reduced workforce; the district remains a focal point for the homeless to find shelter and health services; and residents are absent from decision making on the allocation of resources and plans for our neighborhood.



Making Us Safer

Gatekeepers Chinatown has three measurable objectives: (1) to create a job category called gatekeepers similar, but not the same as doormen or security guards; (2) to train 10 to 20 gatekeepers living in our homeless shelters; and (3) to fund their employment for a full year with landlords

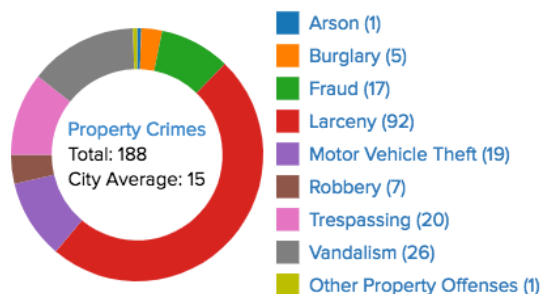
providing a reasonable percentage of the funding for their residential properties that are provided gatekeepers during the day and/or night, more if they are testing the idea for business tenants. Extension of the program will be based on a significant reduction in crime, a community wide feeling of safety and positive reports by the press.

While some businesses have staffed up with private security, most of the doorways to residential and non-retail businesses remain relatively easy to crash and gain

entry. There is an idea that residents and employees are responsible - even have a duty - to challenge and use aggressive tactics if necessary to keep people out.

Many of us are physically and mentally unable to carry out this so-called duty. Intimidation, assaults, robberies and other personal and society crimes are rife and

it is not unusual to hear that it is our responsibility to keep our apartment buildings safe.



The murder in May of our neighbor, Jacob, may have been avoided had we a gatekeeper.

Theft and trespassing are not uncommon.

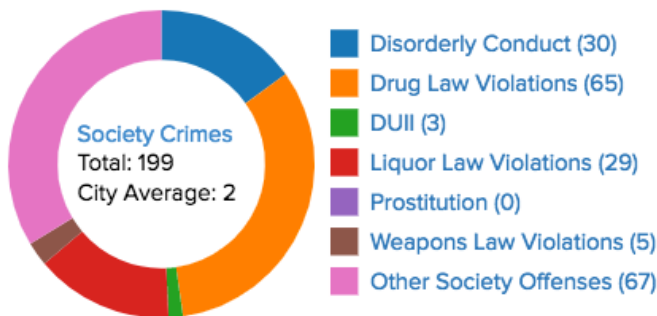
Indeed the cost of lost lives and property are high and are part of an ROI that is rarely calculated when it comes to social and environmental challenges. One measurement of success is a 15% drop in the number of murders, assaults and burglaries another is the amount of money paid out by the County in their Victim Assistance Program, and yet another is the amount of money paid out by insurance companies to cover stolen property along with higher insurance rates paid by businesses, renters, and property owners. It all adds up, but the costs are never added up. They are distributed across thousands of people, multiple governmental agencies, businesses, and dozens of insurance companies.



“GateKeepers offer friendly faces to visitors and tourist.”

Free of Fear - Role of Gatekeepers

Gatekeepers are trained to be the building's eyes, ears and feet for not only the lobby area, but the street around the property and its residents.



Gatekeepers quickly become familiar with street and sidewalk traffic - the regulars walking to/from work.

They screen visitors to insure they are known to the resident or employer, they accept packages from the ever growing delivery services (there are no neighborhood serving businesses) so they are not stolen

from the lobby area where they are

often dumped. They help with the referral of homeless people to shelters and/or programs. They coordinate with Clean and Safe personnel as well as police officers to identify crime patterns, troubled areas, livability issues affecting some of the more egregious "society" and property crimes.

As this is an entertainment district, it's a 24/7 neighborhood with customers and employees returning home early in the morning hours.

Person Crimes - 17% of 335 incidents

Details					
Person Crimes	Before 7PM	After 7PM	Total		
Simple Assault	15	13	28	49%	
Intimidation	11	5	16	28%	
Aggravated Assault	6	3	9	16%	93%

Gatekeepers meet and work as both individuals and as a group to build community and to ensure our community is “free of fear.”

The CCC Model

And, Gatekeepers Chinatown can leverage the experience of Central City Concern’s (CCC) **On-call Staffing**: “A training program that provides 24/7 front desk coverage to 14 **Central City Concern Housing buildings** throughout the Portland metro area. Each trainee performs front desk operations, emergency procedures, routine building cleaning, and maintain the cohesion and livability of the community. More than 50 formerly homeless clients are expected to complete the training program annually.”

JOB CREATION

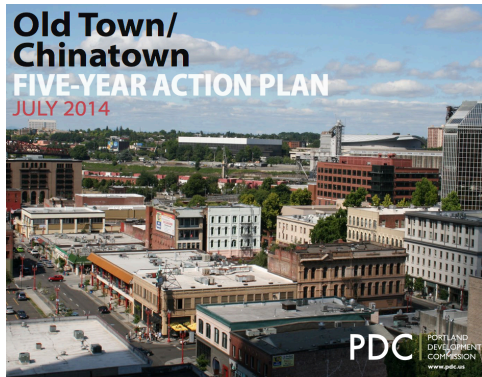
Gatekeepers is less about staffing a desk and cleaning and more about community building, coordination, and watchfulness. It’s not only about training and placement for homeless folks in our neighborhood, but jobs.

AFFORDABILITY

If Central City Concern, a non-profit, can afford 24/7 coverage to 14 buildings, why can’t the City with landlords/employers modify and then extend the CCC concept to protect their property, tenants and employees as well as visitors and tourists*?

SOCIAL INNOVATION

If necessary, there are grants from organization such as the Corporation for National & Community Service’s Social Innovation Fund or other champions of healthy connected neighborhoods and the City and landlords can leverage the training and job placement resources of Central City Concern.



The PDC's Five Year Action Plan (2014) included an allocation of \$58M by the City Council to re-develop the built environment while acknowledging "the level of criminal activity has had an impact on the market's perception of the neighborhood and deters business growth, neighborhood investment, and tourist activity." One of the objectives was for a "clean and safe environment for residents and visitors." Certainly cleaning up the blight and reducing the number of vacant doorways helps but it has been pretty much left up to the residents and employees to fend for themselves while the neglect and crime go unabated.

NEXT STEPS

Project Sponsor(s)
 Agency Sponsor
 (if not City program)
 Timeline
 Proposed Properties
 Budget
 Funding sources
 Job Description



Is safety at our front doors and walkways only for the wealthy?

Prepared by Ruth Ann Barrett, Sustainability Advocate, Publisher and Producer
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