



## **Pilot Project Profile: Chinatown Boston, Massachusetts**

### ***History***

Boston's 170 year-old Chinatown has long been an economic, social and cultural hub of New England's Chinese community, a portal for new immigrants and also a concentration of families living in poverty. Chinatown's residents are primarily first generation immigrants who live in the most densely populated neighborhood in Boston. Notably, Chinatown is not defined as a separate neighborhood by the Boston Redevelopment Authority or the Boston Public Health Commission.

### ***Catalytic Project/Shifting Sands Dynamic***

Over 30 % of Chinatown residents live below the federal poverty line (compared to 19.5% for the general population) and Asian Bostonians are the most likely racial group to have trouble affording health care. In recent years, Chinatown's land has become prime real estate due to its proximity to Boston's downtown and theater district revitalization. The Big Dig produced approximately 20 acres of land (both *terra firma*) and air rights over highway ramps, which become available for development on Chinatown's eastern border. In particular, one of those developments, Parcel 24, offers potential for direct benefit links to the community. Luxury developments to the east and west threaten to escalate the market, forcing rents higher and far outpacing the income growth and financial capacity of low and moderate income and elderly Chinatown residents, as well as adding pressure to the commercial real estate market where 75% of Chinatown businesses have less than ten employees.

Chinatown's population includes many newcomers who are preoccupied with fulfilling their basic needs, and do not speak English well enough to successfully grapple with the implications of urban planning and understand development concepts and terminology. The Chinatown Master Plan 2010 was created with the goal of influencing rapid development events and, through the process to unite the community. HD-OD can enhance this process and add value to it by tracking individual's progress as well as community progress over time.