

C U L T U R A L E X C H A N G E

A NEW CENTER FOR SEATTLE'S ASIAN IMMIGRANTS

Veronica Nell Macalinao

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Committee Members
Ann Marie Borys - Gundula Proksch - Rick Mohler

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ABSTRACT

The city of Seattle is experiencing a rapid growth in its immigrant population, having increased 40 percent between 1990 and 2000. Today, immigrants make up 17.3 percent of the total population in comparison to the national average of 12.9. Despite this dramatic influx, Asians have consistently stood as the dominant ethnic group, making up 39.8% of the current immigrant population. With that, the gentrification of the urban core has increased the trend of Asian immigrants migrating southwards to the outskirts of the city. This economic pressure has resulted in an Asian population that is disconnected and dispersed. Not only are they removed from the established Asian support system that exists in Seattle's International District, but they also lack the density needed to create a visible presence and place identity within their present communities. This further debilitates them during an already challenging transition and ultimately diminishes the available opportunities they have for civic engagement within the greater community.

In an effort to address this problem, this thesis proposes the design of a cultural center that cultivates the growth of south Seattle's existing Asian presence and helps to generate a distinct sense of place for the increasing Asian immigrant population. Located at the heart of Seattle's Rainier Valley along the Central Link Light Rail line, this cultural center not only serves the Holly Park and Brighton neighborhoods where the reported Asian

population is highest, but is also accessible to the greater Seattle area. Architecturally, this cultural center works to unite the Asian community by providing opportunities for cultural exchange through the expression of food, language, and art. Acting as a beacon for Asian cultures, the facility roots itself in the existing Asian presence, supporting its continued growth while also amplifying its visibility within the city.

C O N T E N T S

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION.....	05
The Dislocation of Seattle’s Growing Immigrant Population	
Seattle Asian Immigrants and a Call to Action	
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
The History of the International District	
The International District and Civic Engagement	
The (In)Visibility of Asian Immigrants in Seattle	
Improving Asian Immigrant Imagability	
A Cultural Hub for Seattle’s Asian Immigrant Population	
Generating a Center for Cultural Exchange	
Precedents for Community Engagement and Cultural Exchange	
CHAPTER 3 - METHODS.....	25
Site Selection	
Seattle Public Transit	
South Seattle’s Asian Population	
Asian Presence	
Site Analysis	
Program of Spaces	
Delimits and Limits	
CHAPTER 4 - DESIGN.....	37
The Site	
The Building	
Materiality, Structure, and Space	
CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSION.....	54
END NOTES.....	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	57
FIGURES.....	60

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with two related spatial problems that affect Seattle's growing immigrant population: their dislocation from the central core of the city and their need to access services and develop a sense of place within the expansive geography that they now occupy. Looking first at the dislocation of Seattle's growing immigrant population, especially Asians, and then at their specific needs, this first chapter of the thesis begins by investigating the immigrant experience, their place in the city, and the accessibility of resources and services.

THE DISLOCATION OF SEATTLE'S GROWING IMMIGRANT POPULATION

Immigration is presently taking place at an unprecedented rate in the United States. Since the establishment of the Immigration Act of 1965, the flow of immigrants has been on a steady incline. While few immigrants came during the Depression in the 1930s, after World War II immigration levels increased with about 250,000 to 300,000 documented immigrants arriving annually.¹ These increased immigration levels continued into the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. With the constant growth of the overall population, the flow of immigrants coming into the United States during the 20th century have come to average around 500,000 arrivals each year. Today, the United States' foreign-born population makes up 40.8 million people, which accounts for approximately 13 percent of the total U.S. population.²

Of the states with the largest numerical increases and immigrant population over the last decade, Washington stands as one of the top 10 states with the highest immigrant population, having grown from 322,144 in 1990 to 916,399 in 2012, increasing by almost 300 percent. In fact, due to its rapid growth in immigrant and refugee populations, Washington has been termed a "new growth" state. In the span of 2000-2012 alone, the documented foreign-born population experienced an increase of 49.1 percent; over 1.5 times the national statistic of 31.2 percent. Moreover,

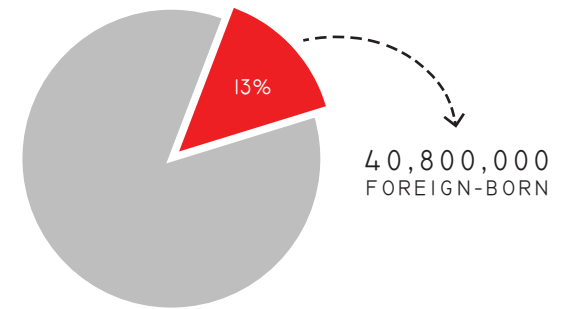


FIGURE 1: UNITED STATES POPULATION

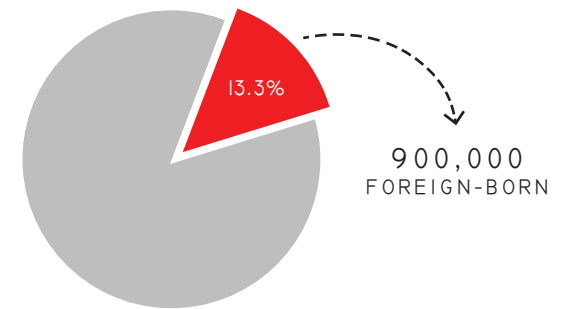


FIGURE 2: WASHINGTON STATE POPULATION

immigrants are making up more and more of Washington's total population, increasing from 6.6 percent in 1990 to 13.3 percent in 2012. Of this immigrant population, the top reported regions of origin were Latin America (South America, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean) and Asia.³

Washington has been a major destination for immigrants since the city of Seattle was founded in 1851. With the establishment of the lumber and coal industries and the development of the fishing, wholesale trade, shipbuilding, and shipping, Seattle became a magnet for immigrant laborers, which as a result led to a major increase in the Seattle foreign born population as a whole. By the 1900s, the demographic of immigrants expanded to include Scandinavians, African Americans, Japanese, Chinese, Jews, and Filipinos.⁴

Due to the fact that this population served as a major part of the workforce in Seattle, this immigrant population was able to establish a sense of community and place within the city despite their unfamiliarity with the local culture, customs, and surroundings. Sharing the same experiences both as newcomers and working side by side as laborers, the immigrant community settled themselves around the core of city, making their homes and their cultural centers in what is now known as Seattle's International District. Over time, this area became a main cultural hub for immigrants, serving as a place of refuge and community within a foreign city.

During the twenty-first century, many Washington immigrants continued to live in their historically established location in the city with the exception of those who moved to eastern and central Washington for agricultural work.

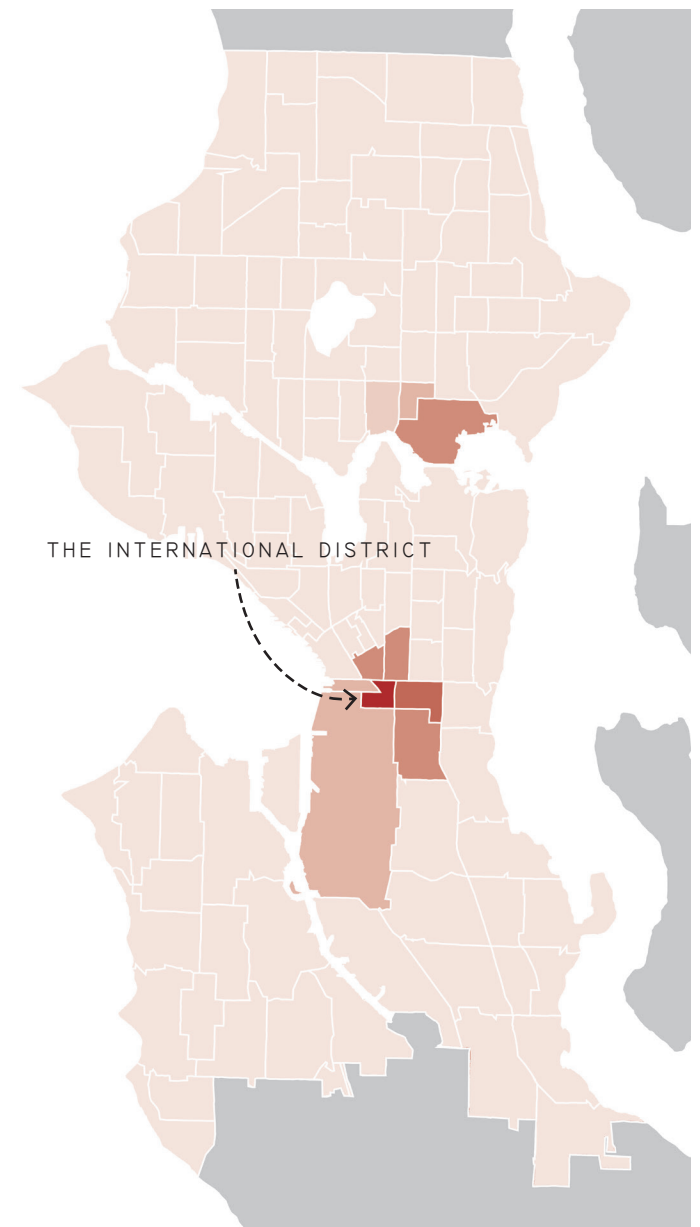


FIGURE 3: PAST ASIAN POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

However, the ever-increasing foreign-born population and the continued gentrification of the city of Seattle has resulted in a shift and expansion of the geographic location of immigrants to the edges of the city core and beyond: the Latino population to the southern end of King County and Pierce County, more specifically south Seattle and Renton, and the Asian population to the eastside, including Bellevue, Redmond, and Sammamish, as well as in south King County and south Everett.⁵ Ultimately, this resulted in not only a decentralization of the immigrant population but also loss in the visible presence in the city and a breakdown of generations upon generations of accumulated feelings of community and sense of belonging.

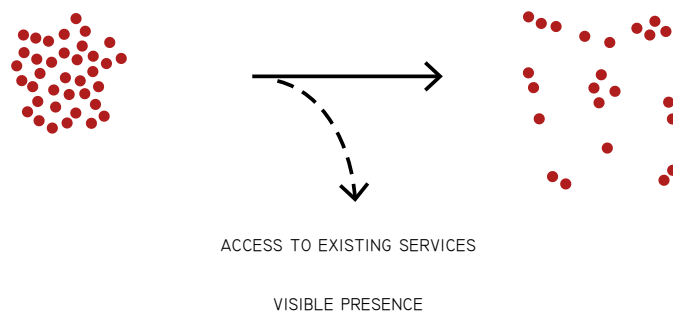


FIGURE 4: PROBLEM - DISLOCATION OF ASIANS

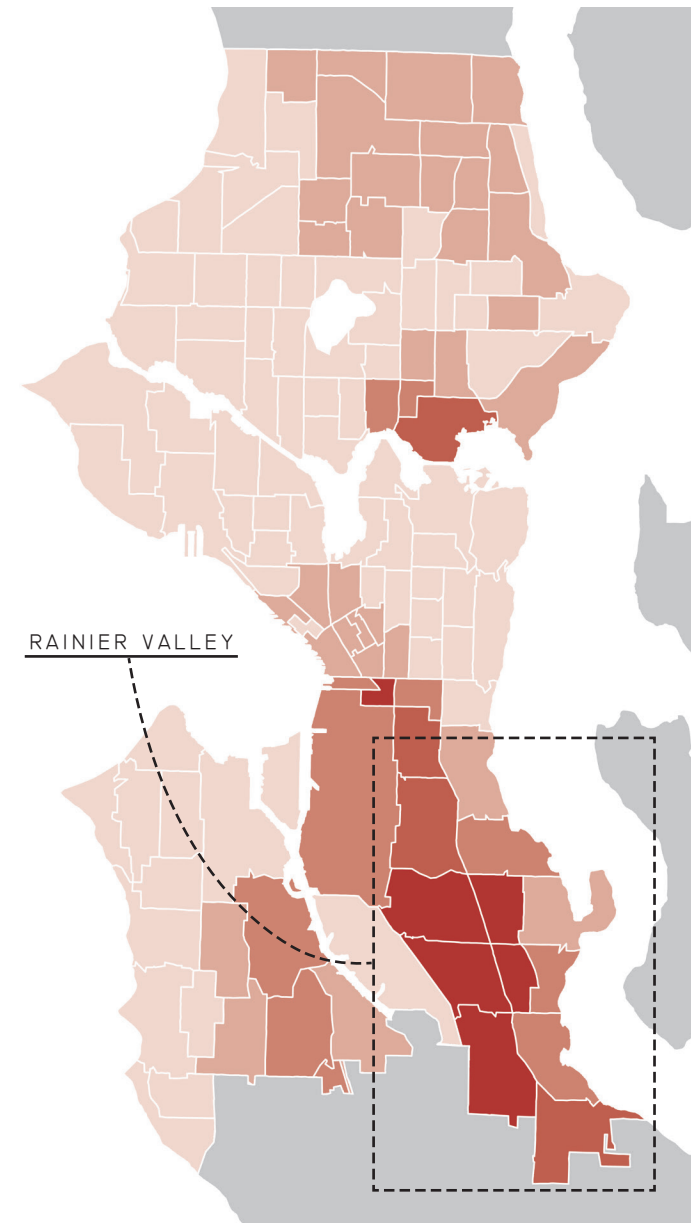


FIGURE 5: PRESENT ASIAN POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

SEATTLE ASIAN IMMIGRANTS AND A CALL TO ACTION

Of Seattle's foreign-born population, the most frequently reported place of origin has consistently been Asia, ranging from 40.3 percent in 1990 to 39 percent in 2000. Today, Asians make up 41 percent, with the most reported ethnicities being Filipino at 7.4 percent, Chinese at 6 percent, and Vietnamese at 6 percent.⁶ Because of the fairly regular presence of Asian immigrants, a number of local non-profit and government organizations have developed over time to provide human services that cater specifically to the Asian foreign-born population of the greater Seattle area. These services come in the form of family centers, school readiness and preschool centers, child care facilities, community health centers, senior centers, food banks, and non-English language information centers. Each facility provides an array of services, including culturally relevant support for school-age children, domestic and sexual violence services and prevention, citizenship assistance, and meals for seniors.⁷

Yet, despite these efforts, the growing size of the Asian immigrant population and their increasingly dispersed establishment southward have resulted in not only a more diffused community that have limited access to the existing support

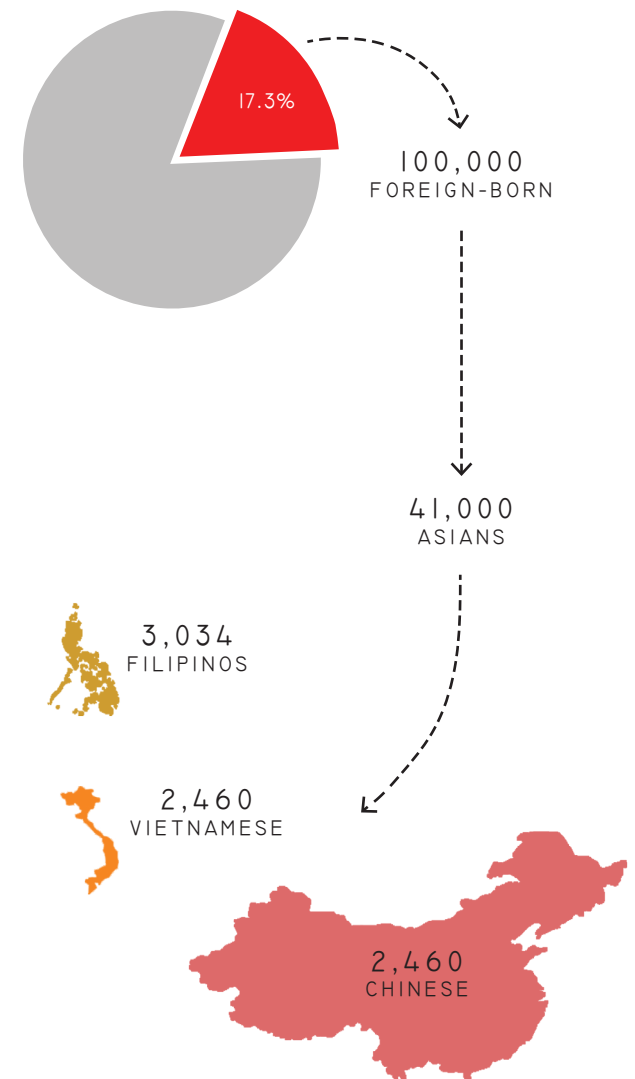


FIGURE 6: SEATTLE POPULATION BREAKDOWN

infrastructure but also a severing of their once thriving social and cultural network. That said, not only is there a need for more accessible resources, but also a number of outlets in which the local Asian immigrant population can gather and recreate the community and support system that is needed to truly create a sense of belonging and place. With many of the incoming Asian immigrant populations settling outside of the core of the downtown Seattle area, it is crucial that all Asian immigrants, regardless of their geographical location, have both access to the services they need as well as a place that they can gather and call their own.

With so much change happening in their lives, and with the existing support systems' inability to match the growing need, it is crucial that additional support be put in place to assist newly immigrated Asian peoples in adjusting to their new culture and neighborhood. Focused on the growing Asian immigrant demographic, this new resource not only needs to be more accessible, but it also needs to centralize the existing dispersed Asian population in such a way that amplifies their visual presence within their existing community. Moreover, as a place of social gathering and community building, it benefits the Asian population as well as the local population as a whole, providing opportunities for people of the neighborhood to interact with each other, encouraging an overall heightened level of community and support.

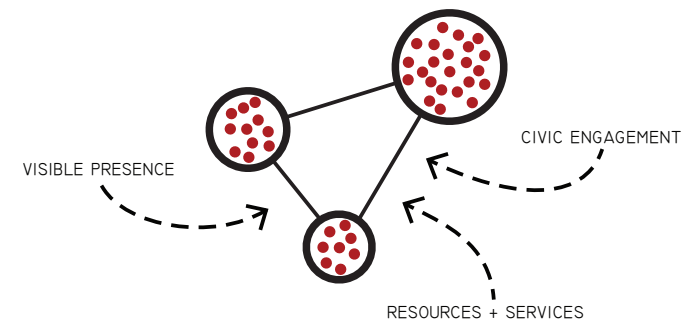


FIGURE 7: PROPOSAL - ASIAN CULTURAL CENTER

Given Seattle's increasing number of Asian immigrants, their increasing dislocation from the core of the city, and the multitude of unique challenges which they face, this thesis will propose the design of an Asian cultural center aimed at assisting Asian immigrants in their transition into their new surroundings and the American culture. The center will provide the given Asian population with the help that they need in overcoming many of the hardships that accompany a move to a new country. This includes offering variety of social services and opportunities for community engagement. Utilizing a strategy of cultural exchange, this center will, at its core, serve as a platform for cultural expression and celebration. Moreover, as the conduit through which this population can give back to the community, the central focus will be on serving the Asian community by acting as a beacon for Asian culture for both Asians and non-Asians alike.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will discuss the place of Asian immigrants in Seattle, both past and present. Beginning with the historical context of the International District, this examination focuses on its evolution as a cultural hub for Asians and its development of place and belonging for its users. It then continues by discussing the dislocation of Asians, foreign-born and naturalized citizens alike, and the impact it has had on their visibility as a population. In order to combat this negative trend, this section goes on to investigate how it is that people interact with their environment and uses that to inform the design of a community space that unites the Asian population as a whole, enhances their visibility within the community, and helps generate a sense of place and belonging for its users.

THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT

Of Seattle's population, the most represented demographic aside from caucasian is Asian, with 14 percent having reported Asia as their place of ethnic origin in 2012.⁸ Despite the fact that much of this population has been forced to move toward the southern fringes of the city, the International District is still home to a significant number of Asians, making up over 34 percent of the total population in 2000 to 63 percent of the total population in 2010.⁹

The International District itself was established in the 1880s by predominantly Chinese immigrants who were recruited as laborers early in Seattle's industrial development, helping to lay the area's first railroads, dig its coal mines, and work its salmon canneries. Then, it was known as Seattle's Chinatown District. Comprised of small clusters of worker residences that ran along the swampy coastline, much of the original Chinatown neighborhood was lost to the Great Seattle Fire of 1889 or demolished during the 2nd Avenue Extension. Despite anti-Chinese sentiments that emerged during the economic recession of the mid-1880s and the loss of the original Chinatown, the Chinese community gradually rebounded as they migrated east towards the area now known as the International District. Thanks to the development of the

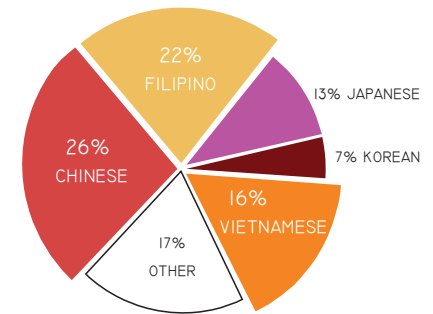


FIGURE 8: SEATTLE ASIAN POPULATION

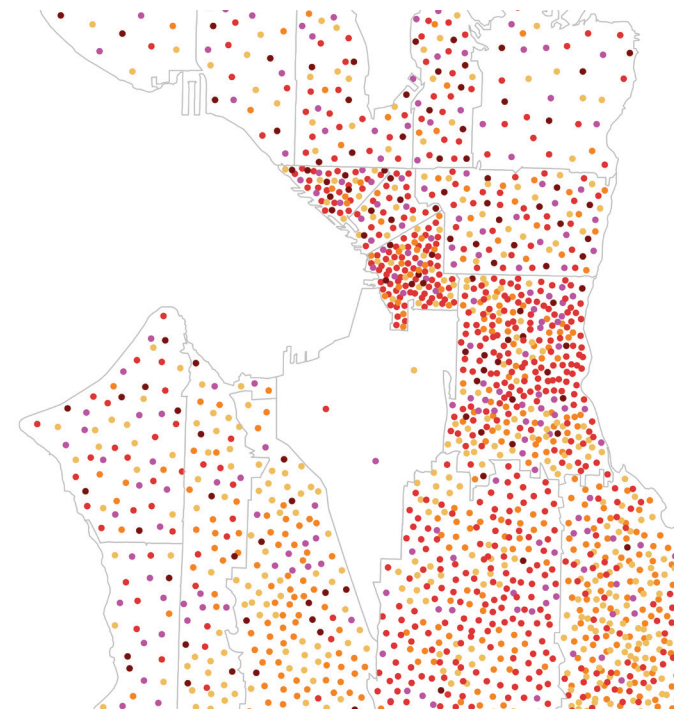


FIGURE 9: SEATTLE ASIAN DENSITIES

Kong Yick Investment Company, lead by Goon Dip, a prominent businessman in Seattle's Chinese American community, the area was established as the "new" Chinatown, with the East Kong Yick Building and the West Kong Yick building serving as the anchor for the greater Chinese American community.

By the 1900s, work began to fill the vast tide flats that extended south of Pioneer Square along the western slope of Beacon Hill to the mouth of the Duwamish River. This development opened up more opportunities for work, leading to a major increase in Seattle's Asian immigrant population. It also led to the formation of Japantown and Little Saigon. While Japantown struggled to regain its former stature after World War II and the attack on Pearl Harbor, the area's population further diversified as growing numbers of Filipinos migrated over to work in Alaska's thriving salmon canneries. This growing diversity led to the renaming of the district from "Chinatown" to the "International District" in 1951.¹⁰ Today, the neighborhoods that make up the International District stand as more than just a place to call home for its residents, it is a place of rich history and culture.

With each neighborhood within the International District reflecting a blend of the traditions of distinct ethnic homelands, the International District as it stands today is a center for Seattle's Asian American community. In the blocks just south of Jackson Street is Seattle's Chinatown neighborhood. As one of Seattle's



FIGURE 10: WORKER RESIDENCES, PRE-CHINATOWN



FIGURE 11: CHINATOWN PRIOR TO JACKSON REGRADE



FIGURE 12: CHINATOWN, AFTER JACKSON REGRADE

oldest neighborhoods, Chinatown is home to a number of historic buildings, including the Goon Dip Building, the Freeman Hotel, the Eastern Hotel, the Chinese Baptist Church, and a number of other architecturally significant commercial buildings.¹¹ The streets are filled with many ornately decorated balconies that resemble those of southern China, small family-run restaurants that serve traditional Chinese food, and small specialty stores that sell everything from tropical fish to medicinal herbs. At its northern edge is Hing Hay Park where many local elders practice Tai Chi in its main brick square. Close by is the International Children's Park, where kids from all around the neighborhood can be seen clambering over the bronze dragon sculpture and chasing each other across the grass and sand that form a yin-yang symbol on the ground of the park. Also in the vicinity is the International District/Chinatown Community Center, which offers a wide array of recreational programs and holds many special events open to the surrounding community.

In the blocks north of Chinatown is Japantown, where the Japanese influence can be seen dating back to the 1800s when Dearborn Street was named Mikado Street and Japanese bathhouses, dry goods stores, tailors, barbershops, and restaurants made up the streetscape.¹² In addition, there are a number of historic buildings that still stand today, dating back to the early 1900s. These include the Astor Hotel, the New Richmond Hotel,



FIGURE 13: GOON DIP BUILDING (MILWAULKEE HOTEL)



FIGURE 14: FREEMAN HOTEL (EAST KONG YICK BLD.)



FIGURE 15: HING HAY PARK

and the Old Main Street School Annex.¹³ While this neighborhood experienced a major decline after WWII and the attack on Pearl Harbor, today it is being revitalized back to its once distinct cultural essence with a shop and gallery called Kobo moving into the former Higo Variety Store and retaining the spirit of Nihonmachi, a term used in Asia to refer to historical Japanese communities. The Panama Hotel is being restored, and the new Nihonmachi Terrace is being built to house families and elders. Today, restaurants dot the area, featuring tatami rooms and sushi bars to enjoy traditional and contemporary Japanese cuisine. Along the northeast edge of this neighborhood sits the Danny Woo Community Garden where community members can be seen tending their plots or just meandering along the winding pathways and taking in the views of downtown to the west and the distant Mount Rainier to the south. In the same area lies the Kobe Park, which features a Yuki Midoro, also called a snow viewing lantern, which was gifted to the area by the citizens of Kobe, Japan, and is yet another urban artifact which reminds citizens of their ties to their homeland.

Then, across Interstate 5 is Little Saigon. Since its establishment as a historic economic and social center dating back to the early 1980s, this neighborhood was originally built up by many of the Vietnamese refugees that fled their homeland and started new lives in the United States after the fall of Saigon in 1975.¹⁴ While they first established themselves in Chinatown, their



FIGURE 16: PANAMA HOTEL



FIGURE 17: NICHIREN BUDDHIST CHURCH

population grew to such high levels that they eventually migrated up the hill to 12th Avenue South and South Jackson Street where Little Saigon exists today. Currently this neighborhood is home to the historic and culturally significant Nichiren Buddhist Church that

dates back to the 1920s. With the long, steep, stairway that forms its entrance, it follows the traditional configuration of Buddhist temples that can be found throughout Japan. In addition, the streets of this neighborhood are characterized by restaurants that serve authentic Southeast Asian foods, salons, small storefronts that sell Asian-inspired arts and crafts, and markets that spill out onto the sidewalks with overflowing crates of fresh fruits, vegetables, and seafood. Marking many of these shops and restaurants are traditional calligraphic signs on bright painted panels, which reflect an important visual and architectural tradition from the home countries of many of the district's residents.

Each of these distinct communities and smaller neighborhoods within the International District reflect the community's unique ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The buildings provide spatial continuity to the streetscape that in turn is overlaid with calligraphic signs, facade decorations, balconies, outdoor market stalls, and other embellishments and additions that have been incorporated over the years by local residents and shopkeepers. The built environment not only exhibits the community's ethnic traditions through the manner in which the buildings are ornamented, but also in the manner in which buildings and outside spaces are used and adapted. The district as a whole holds a special place for all those who make up Seattle's Asian foreign-born and naturalized population, reflecting their cultural heritage both aesthetically and spatially. For them, these neighborhoods stand as their own personal mark on the city, a place where they can experience the visual presence of their native peoples. By instilling in its residents, business owners, workers, and visitors this sense of belonging in the city, the district provides its occupants with a feeling of community in which they can not only be comfortable and at home but also feel a level of security and safety in that they are heard and represented.



FIGURE 18: NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE INTL. DISTRICT

THE INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

As a whole, the International District stands as the heart of Seattle's Asian community. With the historic social and political impacts that have shaped this part of the city, the International District has become a cultural hub and a center for civic engagement. That said, the neighborhood offers a variety of activities for the local community as well as the greater Seattle area to come and experience the distinct culture that this neighborhood has to offer. In addition to providing a multitude of specialty grocery stores, ethnic specific social services, Asian art galleries and restaurants, it is home to a number of cultural clubs and community organizations that promote cultural expression and social justice and equity toward a better quality of life for Asians. Some of these organizations include the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation & Development Authority, the Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Foundation, the Japanese American Citizens League, and the Organization of Chinese Americans.¹⁵ In addition to providing a multitude of services to help improve not only the general experience within the neighborhood, as a resident, business owner, or employee, these organizations provide opportunities for civic engagement and serve as a voice for Seattle's Asian community.



FIGURE 19: POSTERS OF ASIAN FESTIVALS IN THE INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT

The International District also celebrates its diverse cultures with a number of publicly advertised events and exhibitions where Asians and non-Asians come from all around the Seattle area and beyond to witness and take part. Some of these ethnic festivities and celebrations include the Lunar New Year Celebration, Dragon Fest and the Summer Festival, the Night Market and the Autumn Moon Festival, and a variety of special exhibits at the Wing Luke Museum

and the Bryan Ohno Gallery. Through these outlets, the Asian and non-Asian populations together are able to share in this cultural diversity and make for a more prominent Asian presence both at a city level and a state level.

THE (IN)VISIBILITY OF ASIAN IMMIGRANTS IN SEATTLE

While the International District continues to stand as a major source of support and community for the Seattle Asian population, access to its resources are limited. That in combination with the increasing property values in and around the downtown Seattle area and progressive gentrification of the International District as a whole have caused many of the existing residents to move out and toward the southern edges of the city proper, leaving the familiarity of their established community behind. In addition, more and more incoming Asian immigrants miss the International District experience entirely, building their lives in south Seattle where the cost of living is more feasible as a newcomer to the Seattle area. That said, although those living outside of the city center have the opportunity to venture to the International District and utilize the services and community spaces there, because it is not as easily accessible or integral to their daily lives, it is unlikely that it will have such a great impact on Asian immigrant community as it had in the past.

Thus, despite the strong presence of an Asian community in the International District, an increasing number of the Asian foreign-born population do not experience its benefits as a hub for Asian culture. Moreover, despite their volume as a growing population, their dispersed living conditions have resulted in an Asian population that lacks the visibility and the presence that cultivate the development of a strong cultural community and with that, opportunities for cultural expression and civic engagement. That said, there is a definite need for a more accessible outlet that not only provides community services and support, but also serves as a platform for cultural expression and exchange in a way that will make for a heightened awareness of this population as a whole.

IMPROVING ASIAN IMMIGRANT IMAGABILITY

In an effort to not only increase the visibility of the Asian population to the rest of the city, but also increase the comfort and available cultural outlets of the Asian immigrant population, this facility acts as a highly visible centralized location for Asian cultural exchange. Drawing from American urban planner Kevin Lynch's Image of the City, where he investigates how people perceive their environments through the creation of mental maps, it is important that the Asian population develop a sense of legibility of their environment, essentially strengthening their image of

the city and how it fits together as a part of their surroundings. Moreover it is also important that the greater community recognize this new proposed facility as a part of their existing image of their environment, establishing it as a place of Asian culture.¹⁶

In the terms set out by Lynch's research, the image of a city is comprised of an overlap of many different individual images, which include paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks, and it is these components that contribute to a city's legibility as a cityscape. While the apparent clarity of a cityscape is by no means the only important property when considering an urban environment, a "vivid and integrated physical setting" has the ability to give its possessor "an important sense of emotional security" by simply reversing "the fear that comes with disorientation."¹⁷ In addition, Lynch asserts that every environmental image has three key components; identity and the recognition of urban elements, structure and the relation of urban elements to other objects in the environment, and meaning and its practical and emotional value

to the observer. It is these components that ultimately contribute to one's ability to map, learn, and shape, meaning that inhabitants of a city must first be able to acquire a clear mental map of their urban environment, learn how to navigate this environment by training, and then operate and act upon their environment.¹⁸ While these ideas are meant to serve as guidelines for designing a city, as a work, it speaks to how people perceive, inhabit, and move around within a city and reveals the true complexities of the urban landscape.

That said, as newcomers, incoming Asian immigrants are unfamiliar with their new environment, socially, culturally, and geographically resulting in feelings of insecurity, alienation, and stress.¹⁹ Therefore, this proposed center helps to alleviate those pressures by serving as a node for Asian culture, informing their cognitive map and acting as a visual and mental marker within the city. Not only is this pivotal in empowering Asian immigrants within their new urban environments, enabling them to better understand

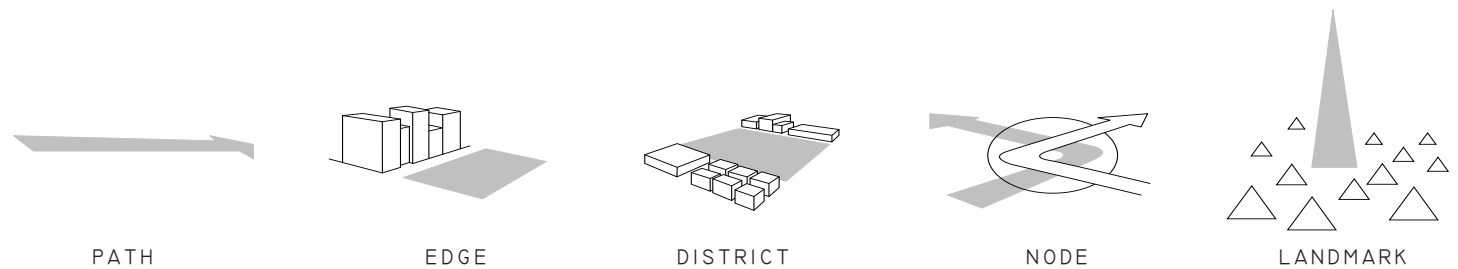


FIGURE 20: LYNCH'S FIVE COMPONENTS OF A LEGIBLE CITYSCAPE

their environment and navigate the city at large, but it is also essential to increasing Asian visibility and awareness amongst the greater community with the center itself serving as an cultural hub.

A CULTURAL HUB FOR SEATTLE'S ASIAN IMMIGRANT POPULATION

In an effort to design a center that functions as an Asian cultural hub, it is important to understand its role as a node within the greater urban context. Referring back to Kevin Lynch's description of "the image of the city", a node is one of the five elements that contribute to the many individual snapshots that in turn come together to create the overall public image.²⁰ They often manifest themselves in the form of junctions, concentrations, or both simultaneously. Junctions are places where a break in transportation or a convergence of paths in which a notable shift occurs.²¹ Because decisions must be made at junctions, people heighten their attention at such places and thus perceive nearby elements with more than normal clarity. This results in the "special prominence" of that particular location or area.²² Concentrations, on the other hand, are a "condensation of some use or physical character".²³ They are recognized as cores, foci, or symbols of a specific area or region.²⁴ While their forms can vary, nodes are in general intensive polarizing centers that are found in almost every image. Not only do they evoke a sense of arrival to the observer,

being recognized as somewhere different from its surrounding area, but they also act as the dominant feature within the overall image of the city.

In considering the siting of the proposed Asian cultural center, a node would serve as the ideal location in terms of supporting the existing Asian population both in their understanding of their environments and in enhancing their visible presence within the greater Seattle area. As an integral part of one's mental map of the city, this center would not only make a mark in the minds of both Asians and non-Asians, but it would serve as an anchoring point within the city as a place for Asian culture and pave the way for the continued centralization of Asians and the expression of Asian culture.

GENERATING A CENTER FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Although the International District's reach falls short of the Asian population outside of the city core, it still stands as a major cultural hub, instilling its users with an Asian cultural experience. While its development is deeply rooted both socially and politically, as a built environment, it possesses three main traits that contribute to its meaning as a place for cultural expression: a variety of social settings, an ability to adapt and customize to its users, and a history rooted from within the community.

By providing a variety of social settings that bring people together and encourage varying levels of social interaction, the International District not only provides ample opportunities for both residents and visitors to intermingle and develop relationships and mutual feelings of cultural community and support. This can be seen in the International District's many community parks where residents of the area are able to interact with one another in a public, social setting building a greater sense of community as a whole. These parks can also serve as platform for cultural celebrations, being a venue for public performances or meeting places for community organizations and clubs.

Another factor that contributes to the International District's identity as a place for cultural expression is its ability to be modified physically as a space. This manifests itself architecturally in the form of the Danny Woo Garden in which people of the community can appropriate a parcel of land for growing fruits and vegetables. While the garden remains a part of a greater outdoor space, by permitting its users to make it their own, it also instills a higher sense of responsibility to the institution as a whole. Another way the International District offers opportunities for customization is by simply allowing its users to personalize a given space to accommodate a specific need or reflect a certain cultural aesthetic, similar to how many of the generic brick buildings in the International District were altered and ornamented to reflect



FIGURE 21: DANNY WOO GARDEN COMMUNITY PLOTS AND HARVEST EVENTS



FIGURE 22: CHINA GATE RESTAURANT

their own traditions and ethnic origins. By incorporating this added level of meaning, users begin to develop feelings of ownership and responsibility to maintain it as a cherished space. This not only encourages a sense of familiarity for incoming Asian immigrants by reminding them of the homes that they had left behind, but it also stands as a physical manifestation of the Asian presence within the neighborhood.

Furthermore, having developed from the Asian immigrant workers early on in Seattle's industrial development, the International District was a direct result of its users, requiring community involvement throughout its entire development. This is reinforced by Christopher Alexander et al. who, in their book *A Pattern Language*, investigated the commonalities in architecture, urban design and community livability. They address the concept of successful community spaces and the importance of its development as a grassroots movement. Moreover, they stress the need for an availability of minimal space for low costs, highly visibility among its users and passersby, and allowance for natural contact with the rest of the community.²⁵ The authors explain that unless a place is "surrounded by all kinds of small community activities and projects, generated by the people for themselves," it will never be "an honest part of the community."²⁶ This is also evident in that many of the historic buildings and spaces that still stand today originated from within the community. They have been able to withstand years of

redevelopment because their significance both historically and culturally.

In all, the International District as a whole exemplifies the successful creation of a social setting that aids in alleviating if not eliminating many of the stresses that come with immigration to a new and unfamiliar setting as well as allowing an outlet for community engagement and cultural exchange. Moreover, it sets a precedent for how to approach the design of a public community building oriented towards that same purpose, by providing a set of criteria to which the facility should strive in maintaining a space in which the community feels at ease sharing their culture, not only to increase the Asian immigrants comfort and ties to the community, but also to increase their visibility throughout the city as a whole.

PRECEDENTS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

In order to understand better the complexities of how the built environment can create spaces that foster all of the facets of culture and its expression and exchange, it is important to consider built projects that have already been successful in creating such places. These precedents in turn can inform the design of the proposed cultural center as a place for Asians and non-Asians alike.

One such example is the historic Chinatown Gate that marks the formal entrance of Chinatown on South King Street and

Fifth Avenue South. It stands as a 45-foot-tall Paifang, a traditional Chinese gate that symbolizes strength, good luck, and safety. While the archway itself has only been in the International District since 2008, it was the result of a long effort that came to fruition from within the community with local funding and support.²⁷ Since its erection, the gate has become an icon for the International District, attracting tourists from all around the Seattle area and beyond. This gate not only commemorates the Asian presence of the Chinese community within the International District, but it also stands as a physical representation of traditional Chinese art and form, exposing observers to Chinese culture in a very prominent and celebratory way.

Another local precedent for cultural community development and exchange are the numerous restaurants and fresh produce markets which dot the neighborhood. Though traditional foods and goods from these markets are not easily procured in other parts of the city, these restaurants and shops are a very accessible way for all members of greater community to engage and share in the rich culinary experience that make up Asian culture. They serve as an outlet for Asian entrepreneurs to provide the neighborhood with dishes from their native homelands and an opportunity for customers to either get a taste of traditional home-cooking or experience the exotic flavors of another culture.



FIGURE 23: CHINATOWNS PAIFANG GATE



FIGURE 24: UWAJIMAYA ASIAN MARKET



FIGURE 25: STREET SIGNS IN THE INTL. DISTRICT

Many of these restaurants also have prominent signage which is primarily in the native language of the restaurants owners, be it Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, or any of the other ethnicity represented in the area. With that, much of the street signage throughout the neighborhood are in both English and Chinese, with both represented equally in size and prominence. While it is passively exposing observers with the ethnic language of the neighborhood, it adds to the overall atmosphere of Asian culture that is experienced throughout the entire district, inviting those who speak the language to indulge in their native tongue or expressing the significance of this district as a place that exudes a particular culture.

Each of these precedents exhibit how culture can be expressed and shared, whether it be through interacting with others or with the built environment. While they each serve as an outlet for the Asian population to exhibit their heritage, they highlight three key ways in which people experience culture: art, food, and language. It is through these facets that people, both Asian and non-Asian are able to participate in a cultural exchange that not only allows for cultural exchange but also amplifies the visible presence of Asians within the larger community.

While the presence of Asian immigrants can still be seen in today's International District, the efficacy of the developed sense of community engagement and cultural exchange that was

generated by that area has dramatically decreased with their continuing dispersal out of the city. Because of this, their once distinct community has scattered and with their now diluted concentrations, this demographic not only has limited access to the existing resources and social services, but it has also lost its visible presence in the city and its connection with the long built sense of community, support, and belonging. That said, in order to address this need spatially and design a facility that provides resources to this particular population in its now more dissipated state, this thesis proposes to install a public facility that reflects current population densities. By centralizing existing resources for immigrants, and rooting the growing Asian presence in south Seattle, this thesis will not only answer the need for access to community services, but will also do so in such a way that encourages community engagement and cultural exchange amongst its users.

METHODS

With a central focus on the needs of existing Asian immigrants in the Seattle area, this thesis strives to provide more centralized social resources, creating opportunities for civic engagement, and helping to cultivate a more prominent Asian community within their current dispersed location, outside of the city core and southward. This was accomplished by providing programmatic spaces that foster the expression and exchange of the aforementioned readily apparent forms of culture: art, food and language. With the addition of community amenities and services, the overarching goal of this thesis was to empower Asian immigrants by increasing the visible presence of the existing Asian population and assisting in the establishment of a cultural community that is recognized by both the Asians and non-Asians of the Seattle area. Looking first at the essential criteria for the ideal location of this cultural center and then at the proposed location, this chapter investigates the present and the future constraints and opportunities of the site and the surrounding context. Then, it delves deeper into the functions of both the site and the building, with each addressing the immediate and long-term needs of the Asian population and the greater community.

SITE SELECTION

In an effort to service the ever increasing Asian immigrant population, the success of the proposed cultural center is dependent on a site that allows it to not only meet the needs of the given population but also thrive as the only major Asian cultural hub outside the International District. That said, the center needs to be accessible to the most potential users as well as be rooted within the existing Asian presence so that it can build upon it as a place for Asian culture. Therefore, the criteria by which the site location was selected were: 1) the ease of access to major modes of transit, 2) the density of the Asian population in the immediate surrounding area, and 3) the presence of an established Asian influence within the neighborhood.

When considering the various layers of public transit available in south Seattle, the mode of transportation that is the most far reaching and accessible is the Central Link light rail. Traveling between Westlake Station in downtown Seattle and SeaTac Airport with plans of expanding north as far as Lynnwood, east as far as Redmond, and south as far as Kent, the Link provides for a wide range of people with a vast range of service.²⁸ Moreover, with a currently estimated 26,600 average daily trips and a predicted growth to 280,000 daily trips in 2030,²⁹ the Link stands as an increasingly important public transportation infrastructure for the future development of the city of Seattle as a whole. In

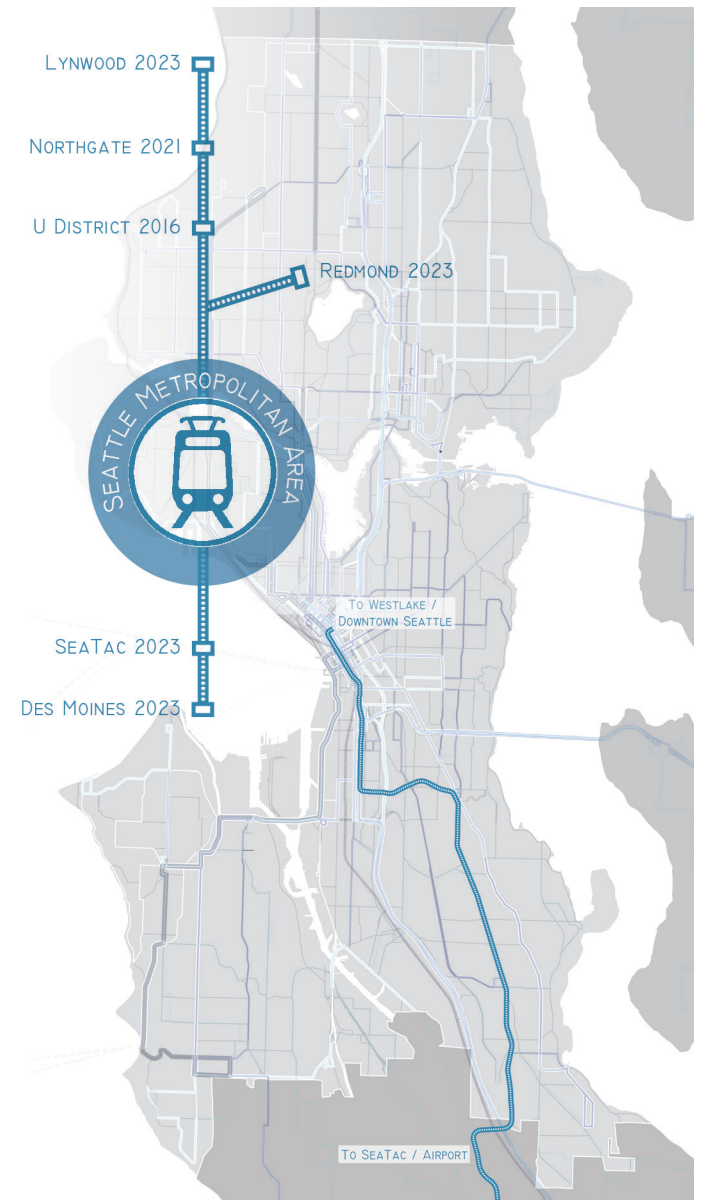


FIGURE 26: SEATTLE PUBLIC TRANSIT AND CENTRAL LINK LIGHT RAIL FUTURE EXPANSION PLAN

considering the access of the Asian population throughout the southern neighborhoods in Seattle, the Link stops in North Beacon Hill, Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello, and Rainier Beach, all of which are home to an increasing number of Asian residents. In addition as a public mode of transportation, the Link serves as an already well used transportation network that is fast, affordable, and user friendly. That said, the Central Link light rail proves to be not only an advantageous resource for those living in and around the Seattle area as a means of travel but also a way to better orient and familiarize themselves with the city as a whole.

Looking closer at the neighborhoods that constitute the 5 southern Seattle Central Link light rail stops, it is evident that each are home to a large number of the Asian residents. Though the highest reported population of Seattle's Asians still reside in the International District with 1,580 residents which consist of over 60 percent of the population,³⁰ the number of Asians living throughout the southern neighborhoods of Seattle not only surpass that, but in some cases double the reported Asian population in the International District. According to the 2010 Decennial Census, the southern Seattle neighborhood with the highest Asian population is Othello with 2915 residents making for 41 percent of the total population.³¹ Moreover, the general trend indicates that these numbers will likely increase over time, having increased from 1% to 41% from the year 2000 to 2010.³² This, in combination with

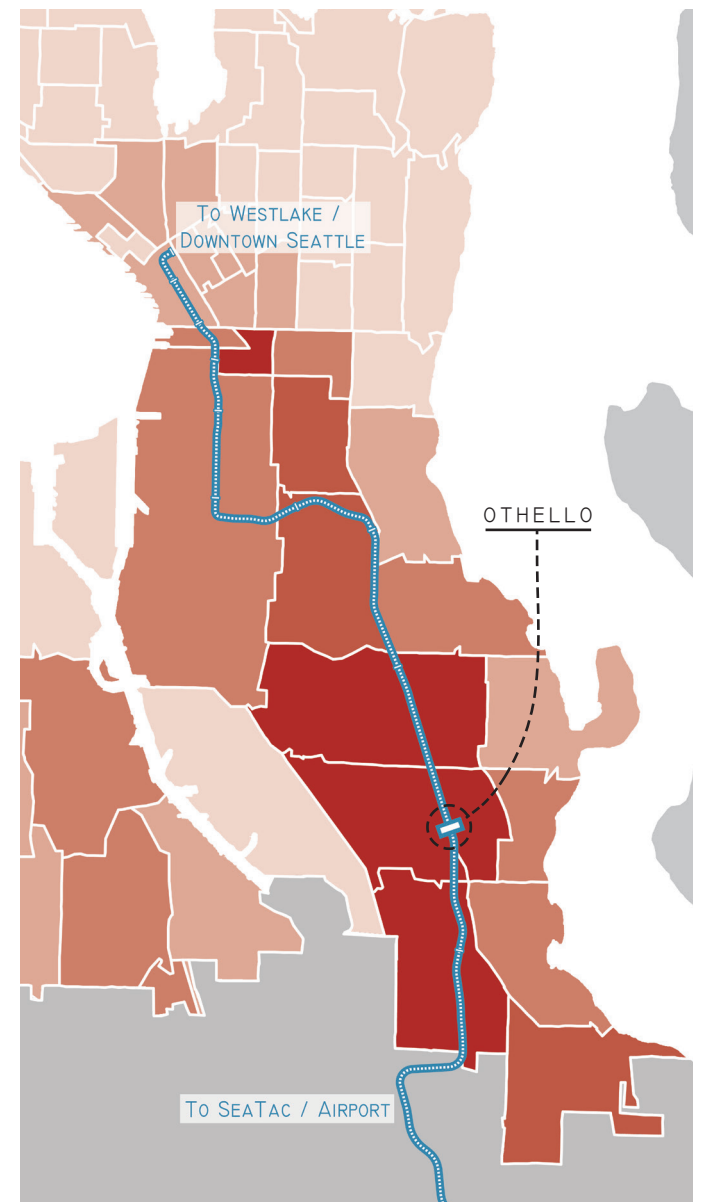


FIGURE 27: CENTRAL LINK LIGHT RAIL LINE AND ASIAN POPULATION DENSITIES

the Central Link light rail services highlights the potential for the Othello neighborhood to make for an exceptionally accessible and visible location for a new Asian cultural center.

The buildings located on either side of the Othello Central Link Light Rail Station not only compose the commercial core, but also the sole visible Asian presence in the neighborhood, manifesting itself in the form of single-story and double-story retail and commercial storefronts. While the influential impact of the Asian population appeared to be minimal in comparison to their density, these small businesses not only dominate the commercial core, but they also are constantly bustling with life.

Taking each of these criteria for site selection into consideration, the ideal site for the proposed Asian cultural center revealed itself at 7119-7135 Martin Luther King Jr Way, fronting the Othello Central Link Light Rail Station and centrally located in the heart of the neighborhood's commercial core and existing Asian presence. Due to its proximity to the Link Light Rail Line and Othello Station, the site is not only exceedingly accessible via public transit, but it is also highly visible by passersby and local residents alike. Moreover, as a part of this commercial core, the site holds the potential for the proposed facility to add to this vibrant activity and to help define the identity of this area as a distinct neighborhood. However, in order to design a public facility that is able to best fulfill its design goals and objectives as an Asian cultural center, it is

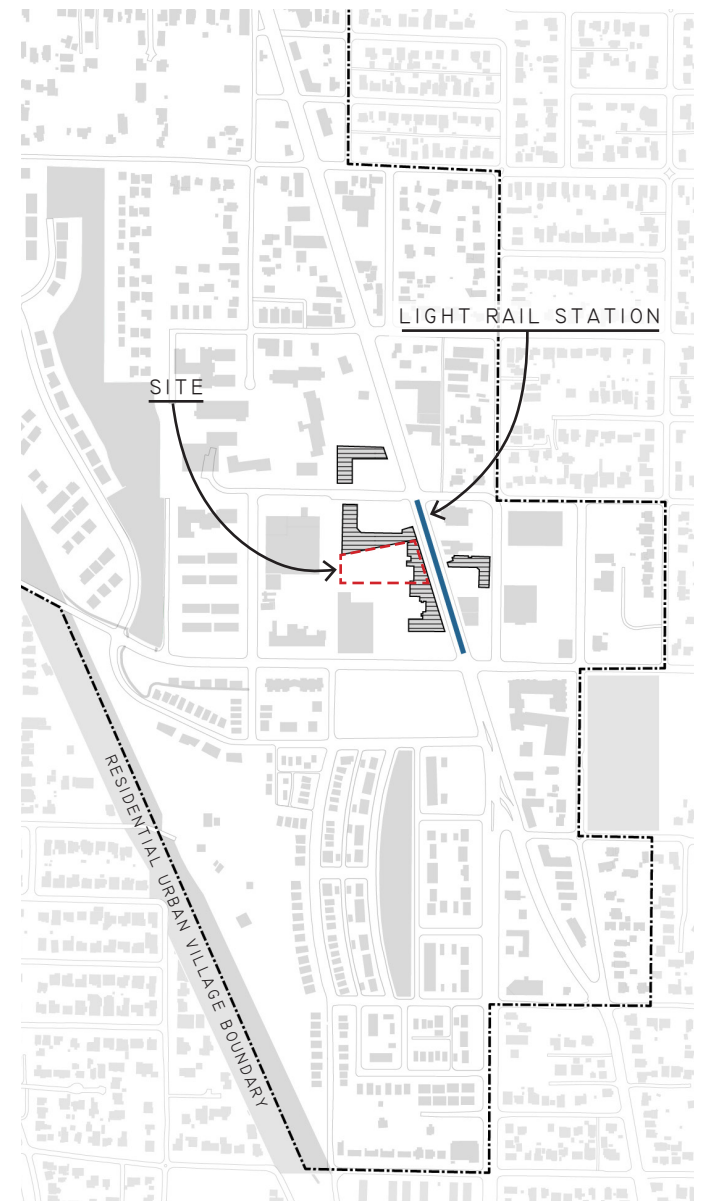


FIGURE 28: OTHELLO RESIDENTIAL URBAN VILLAGE AND THE EXISTING ASIAN PRESENCE

important to both understand the existing and future opportunities and constraints of the site and its surrounding context.

SITE ANALYSIS

The Othello neighborhood has been deemed a Residential Urban Village by the Seattle Planning Department. With a primary focus on supplying housing and supporting local residents with goods and services, the neighborhood as a whole has received significant public investment through the development of a Link Light Rail Station. As a transit community, providing viable mobility options for its residents and employees, this area is intended to see growth and development, and over time, accommodate for a major portion of the city's growth.³³

As far as the population, the neighborhood stands at a total population of 7,267 people over an area of 375 acres, averaging about 20 people per acre in density. The majority of residents are young families, with a median age of 31.8 and an average household size of 3.5 people.³⁴ However, as the population continues to increase and the neighborhood transforms, there may be a shift toward younger, non-family households in the future.

Spatially, the neighborhood is segmented north-south by the main thoroughfare, Martin Luther King Jr Way. With the Central Link Light Rail line running at grade alongside four lanes of traffic, this road is a significant generator of activity and with that, the main

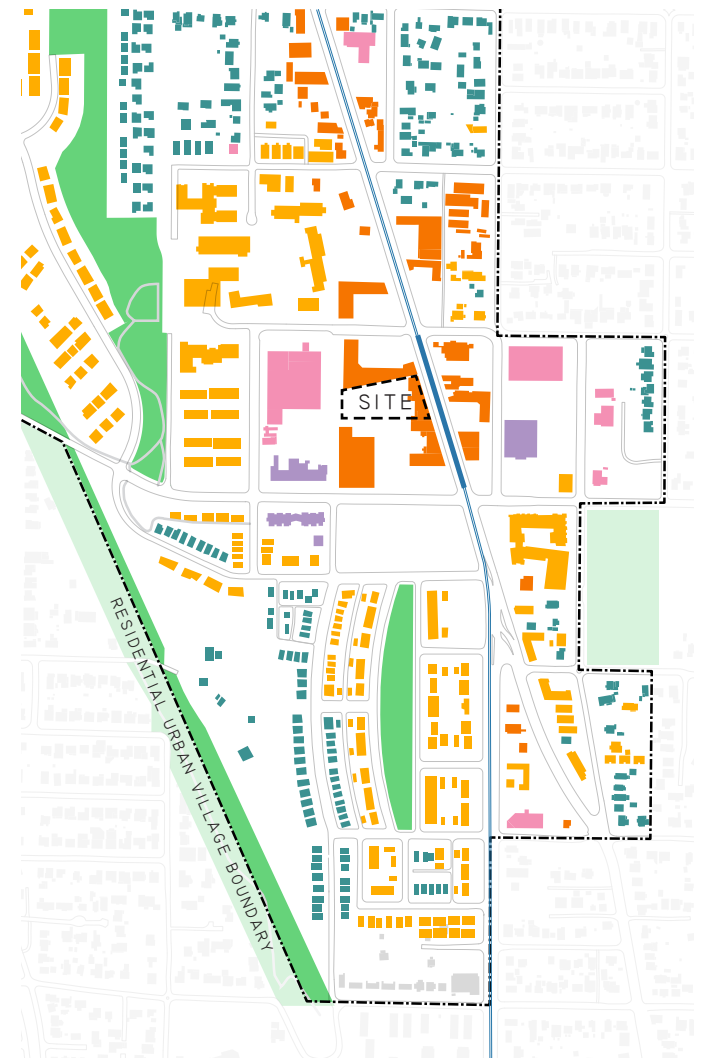


FIGURE 29: OTHELLO NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING USES



point of entry to and exit from the neighborhood. Because of this, the central commercial core is located along the Othello Central Link Light Rail Station, stretching from South Myrtle Street to South Othello Street and before petering out into the predominantly multifamily/mixed use and single family residential homes that dominate the rest of the neighborhood.

Located within the heart of this commercial core, the proposed site not only fronts the Central Link Light Rail stop, but it also embeds itself within the only existing Asian presence within the community. That said, just north of the site is a two-story commercial shopping center that consisting of small Asian retail storefronts, restaurants and fresh produce and seafood markets. Then immediately south of and within the proposed site are single story retail spaces, a small bank on the corner and a large big-box grocery store to the south west. Contained within some of these commercial and mixed use buildings are a few existing neighborhood amenities which provide a variety of services to the community as a whole. These include the Refugee Federation Service Center, the Young Women’s Christian Association, the Mars Hill Youth Reach Out Center and Food Bank, Hope Place, and the International Community Health Services Holly Park Medical and Dental Clinic. In addition to the very prevalent link light rail stop in the very center of the established commercial core along Martin Luther King Jr Way, the site is serviced by three additional bus lines

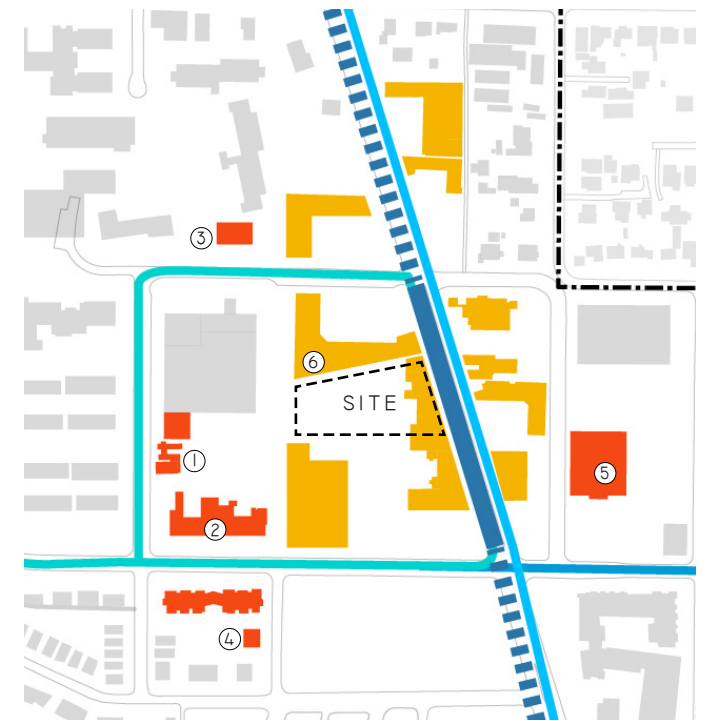


FIGURE 30: EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| ① YOUTH REACH OUT CENTER | ■ COMMUNITY SERVICES |
| ② HOPE PLACE | ■ RETAIL/GROCERY STORE |
| ③ YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION | ■ CENTRAL LINK LIGHT RAIL |
| ④ ICHS HOLLY PARK MEDICAL & DENTAL CLINIC | ■ BUS LINE 36 |
| ⑤ PUBLIC MARKET | ■ BUS LINE 8 |
| ⑥ REFUGEE FEDERATION SERVICE CENTER | ■ BUS LINE 50 |

within minutes walk to the north, south, and east.

While examining these existing conditions in relation to the proposed site, it was also important to take into consideration



FIGURE 31: OTHELLO NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING USES



the continued development of the area, drawing insight from the 2010 Othello Neighborhood Plan which was developed in coordination with the Seattle Planning Department and local community leaders. In addition to the increased zoning height of much of the central commercial core of the neighborhood, this plan outlines needs of the residents as well as their hopes for its future. As a neighborhood known for its ethnic diversity, they stressed the desire to be recognized as a “destination for international goods and services,” providing opportunities for local “community engagement” and support through the creation of “shared gathering spaces appropriate for the wide range of cultures living in the neighborhood”.³⁵ In addition, they also present a number of potential opportunities for future development. These include the addition of a mixed-use gateway to the north, a supermarket development to the south west, replacing the current big-box store, and a public plaza to the south east, removing some of the single story retail and the bank on the corner of MLK and Othello streets. Moreover, it proposes a network of new pedestrian and vehicular connections in addition to an increase in urban density along South Othello Street and Martin Luther King Jr Way. In an effort to fulfill the desired urban development of the community, the proposed site sits in the very center of the three proposed development opportunities and leverages upon the future pedestrian network

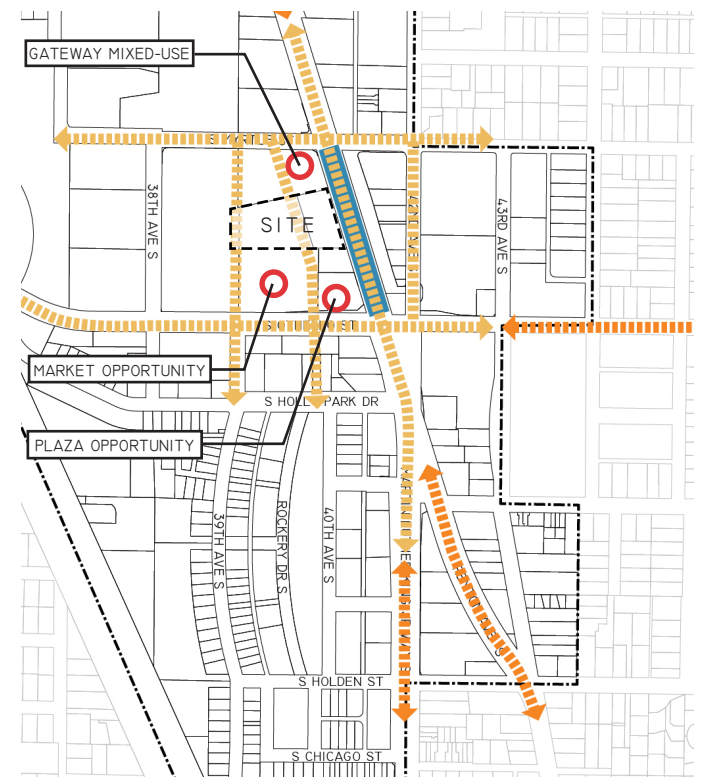


FIGURE 32: 2010 OTHELLO NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

- POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES
- ▬▬▬ CONNECTING STREET
- ▬▬▬ PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
- ▬ CENTRAL LINK LIGHT RAIL STATION

in order to create a centralized location to better root the current Asian presence and act as a flagship building for the future development.



FIGURE 33: EXISTING URBAN DEVELOPMENT



FIGURE 34: PROJECTED FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM OF SPACES

As an Asian cultural center, this proposed facility works to provide the given Asian population with a variety of social resources and services, as well as opportunities for community engagement. In order to achieve this, it is important that the programmatic spaces of the center reflect these goals and actively work to create a series of spaces which foster Asian cultural expression and exchange both within the Asian community and the greater Seattle area. With that, the services offered at this facility are aimed at increasing the visibility of this Asian presence to the broader community and heightening the level of responsibility felt among the Asian immigrant population towards their new environment, thereby instilling in them a feeling of security and stability.

Thanks to the site selection criteria used to select the most ideal location for this proposed center, the site itself greatly

contributes to the success of this facility as a center for community engagement and cultural exchange. By siting the building directly in the middle of the existing Asian presence in the neighborhood, it anchors the existing Asian presence and provides the residents with a place to practice, experience, and learn about Asian culture. Moreover, the central location of the site and its position in proposed future development of the neighborhood provides a number of opportunities to set a precedent for the future development and growth within the area.

Building upon that, the building itself is programmed to create an environment of cultural celebration, serving as an outlet for both the expression and exchange of traditions for the growing Asian population. Included in this building are spaces of various scales which will help to express Asian culture through food, art, and language as well as provide services to the greater community.



FOOD



ART



LANGUAGE



SERVICE

FIGURE 35: PROGRAM OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE

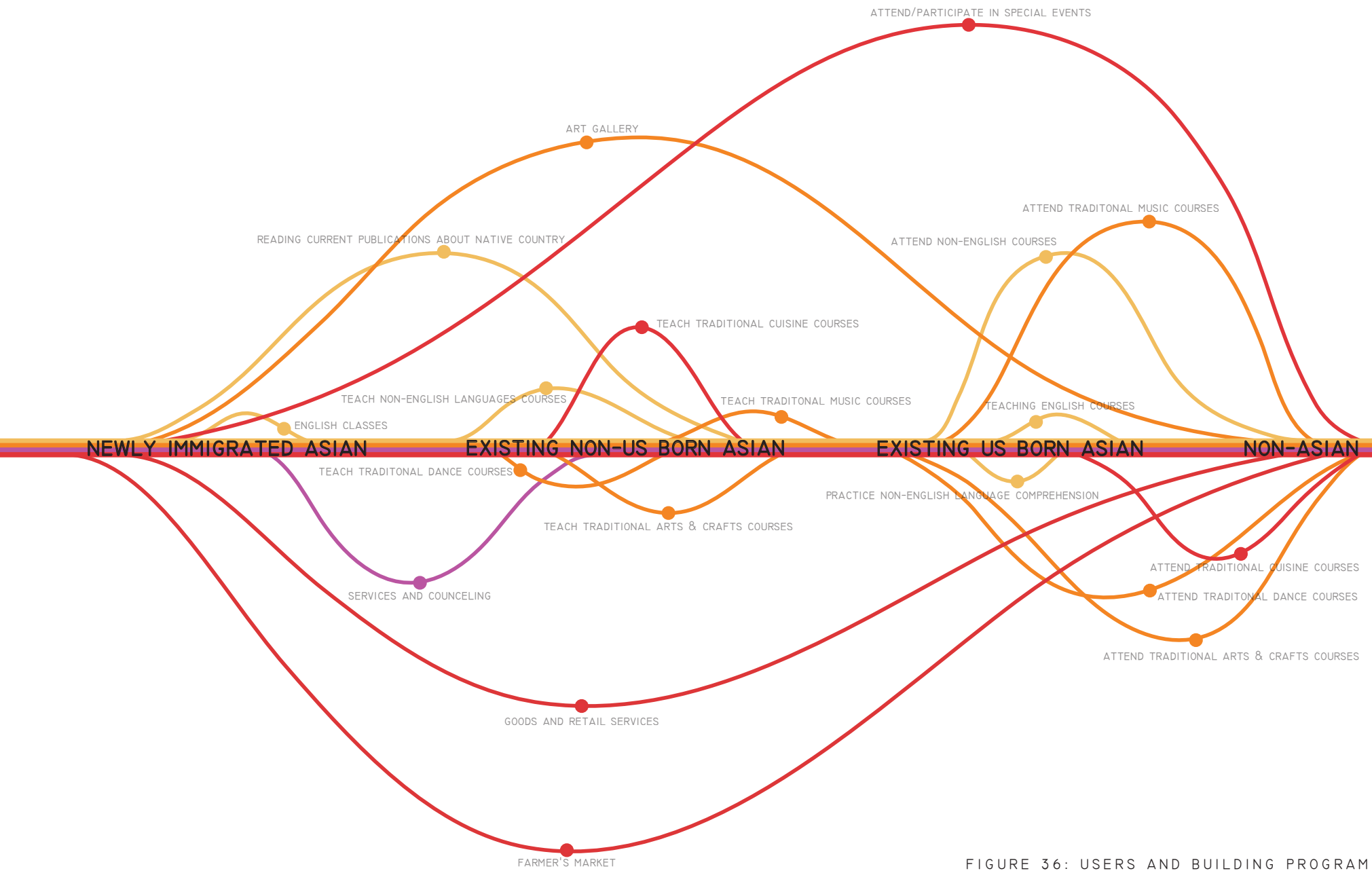


FIGURE 36: USERS AND BUILDING PROGRAM

DELIMITS AND LIMITS

While the issues associated with immigration have deep political and social roots, this network of community spaces is focused on addressing the lack of resources and diminishing visibility for Seattle's existing Asian immigrant population through architecture. This proposal simplifies the interdisciplinary nature of a project of this scale and does not address any of the other aspects of tackling a project of this scope. Instead it focuses solely on the architectural design of a community space focused on cultural exchange by providing the spatial resources needed to rebuild the visible presence of this population. In all, this facility will not solve the major issues surrounding immigration, but will work to better the lives of those going through this difficult transition.

In addition, this thesis assumes the continued growth of the Othello neighborhood and the execution of the proposed future development plan. Additionally, because the proposed building necessitates various changes be made to the proposal as it currently exists, it must be assumed that the residents and community leaders as well as the Seattle Planning Department would be amenable to the alterations to the neighborhood development plan.

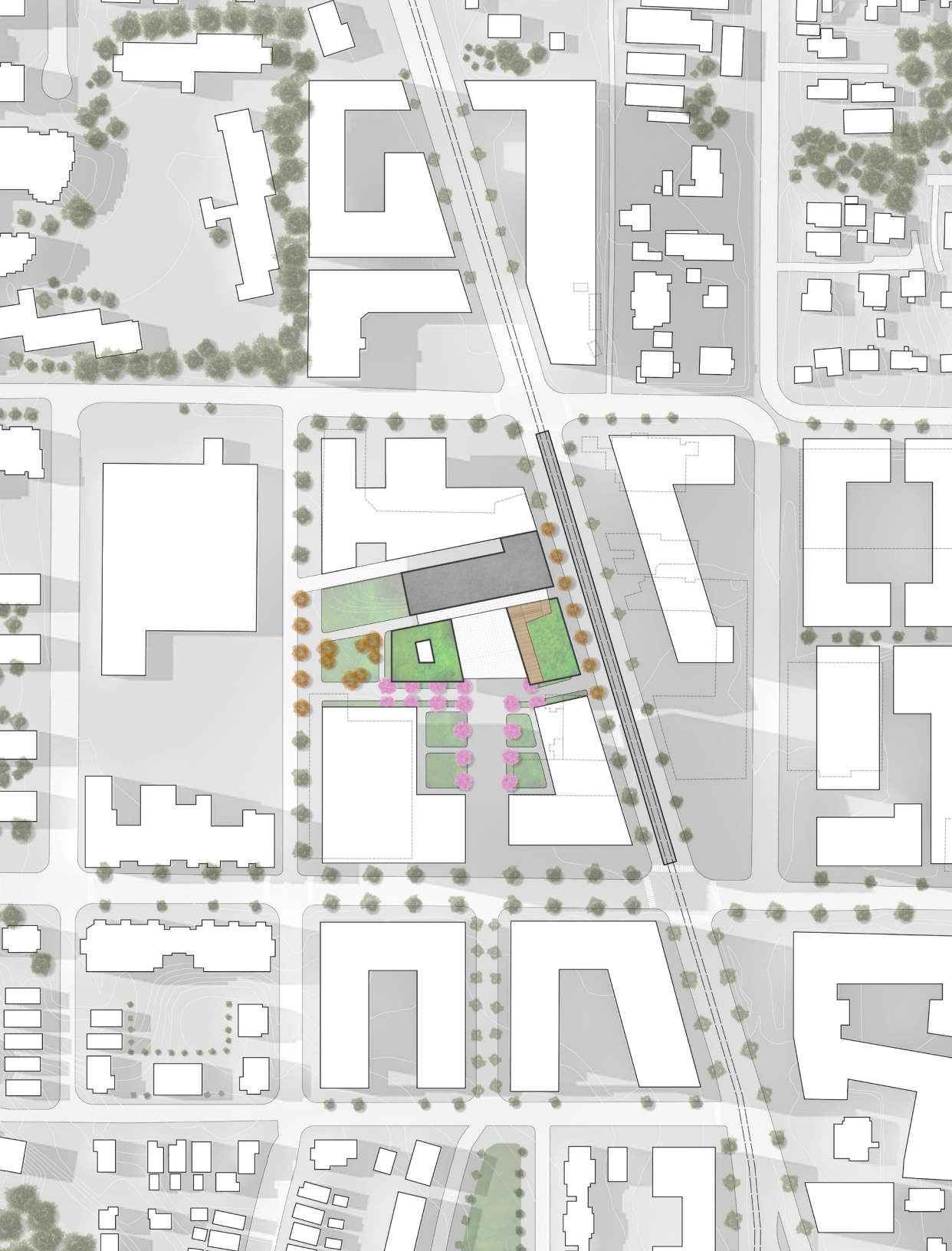
Moreover, because the flow of immigration is constantly fluctuating with the global shifts in economy and politics, it is difficult to project immigration rates let alone those of a particular

ethnic group. Therefore, this thesis does not take into consideration the unknown future potential of the spaces, such as a dramatic shift in immigrant population numbers or demographics. The spaces are not designed to respond to such a shift, and instead focus on the current situation in south Seattle.

CHAPTER 4

DESIGN

As a cultural hub, this Asian center addresses the problems associated with the dispersion of the existing Seattle Asian population by increasing the visible presence of this demographic within the larger context of south Seattle, centralizing the needed resources and fostering community engagement through the most basic expression of culture: food, language, and art.



THE SITE

In an effort to address both the existing and future site constraints and opportunities, this thesis not only proposes the design of an Asian cultural center, but it also proposes the reconfiguration of the future development as it was suggested in the Othello Neighborhood Plan. Due to the existing conditions of the site with back-of-house service for the building to the north, the main commercial strip fronting Martin Luther King Jr Way to the east, open parking to the south, and the smaller arterial of 39th Avenue to the west, the building is sited to reflect the existing spatial qualities of the context.

The back-of-house access for the building mirrors the adjacent building to the north with the building offset from the property line to make for a shared service alley. Then along the east, the building works to continue the existing prominent commercial streetwall, breaking only at the main building entrance and the pedestrian connection that runs on the south side of the site. Adapting the Othello Neighborhood Plan, this site design relocates the future through-block pedestrian connection from the north edge of the property to the south edge, presenting an opportunity for a pedestrian oriented entry and an interface with the future developments to the south. This pedestrian connection then opens up to the east, with the building setback from 39th Avenue.

THE BUILDING

Taking into consideration all of the site conditions, both existing and proposed, the building itself is organized programmatically and formally around a central enclosed courtyard space. As the heart of the building, the courtyard serves a variety of functions. It is not only an extension of proposed pedestrian corridor and public plaza formed by the future developments to the south, but it also acts as a venue for the local farmer's market, a stage for informal performances by community organizations and clubs, a gathering place for large neighborhood events and celebrations, and a means for orienting oneself throughout the multiple levels of the building. As a large flexible space, the courtyard is the main draw for activity and life, holding the most potential as a platform for the Asian community to express and celebrate their culture in all of its many facets.

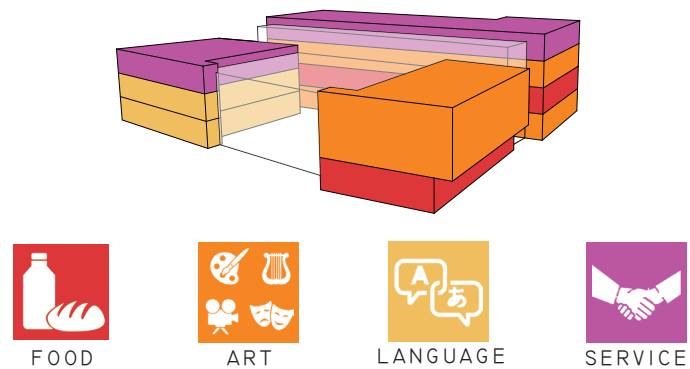


FIGURE 38: BUILDING PROGRAM MASSING

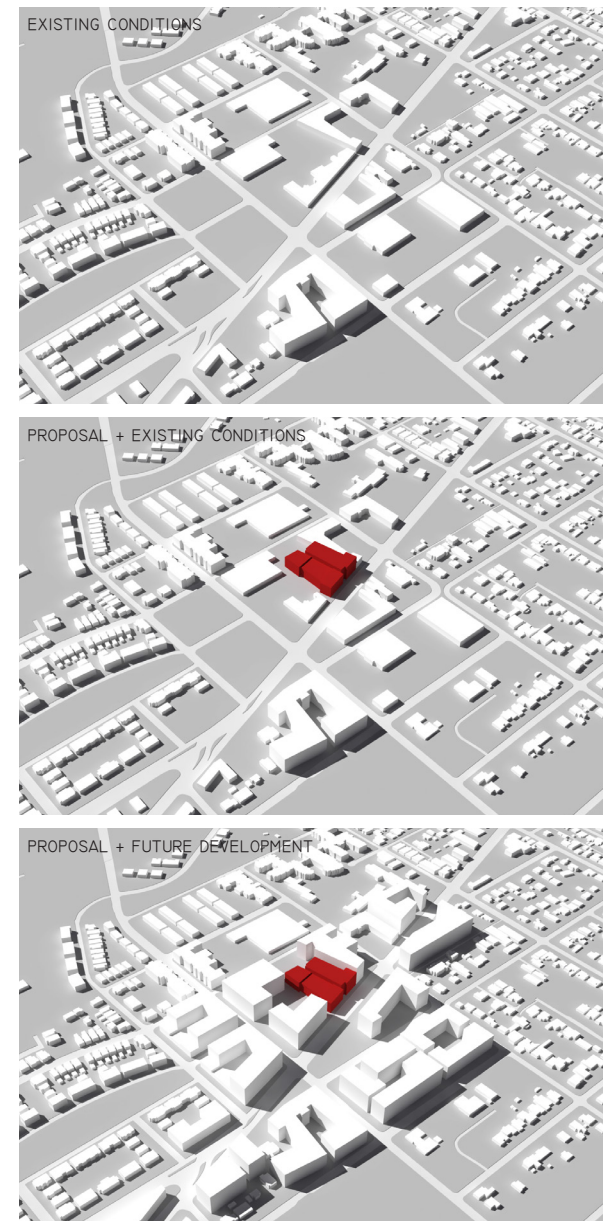


FIGURE 39: NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

FIGURE 40: ASIAN EVENT CALENDAR

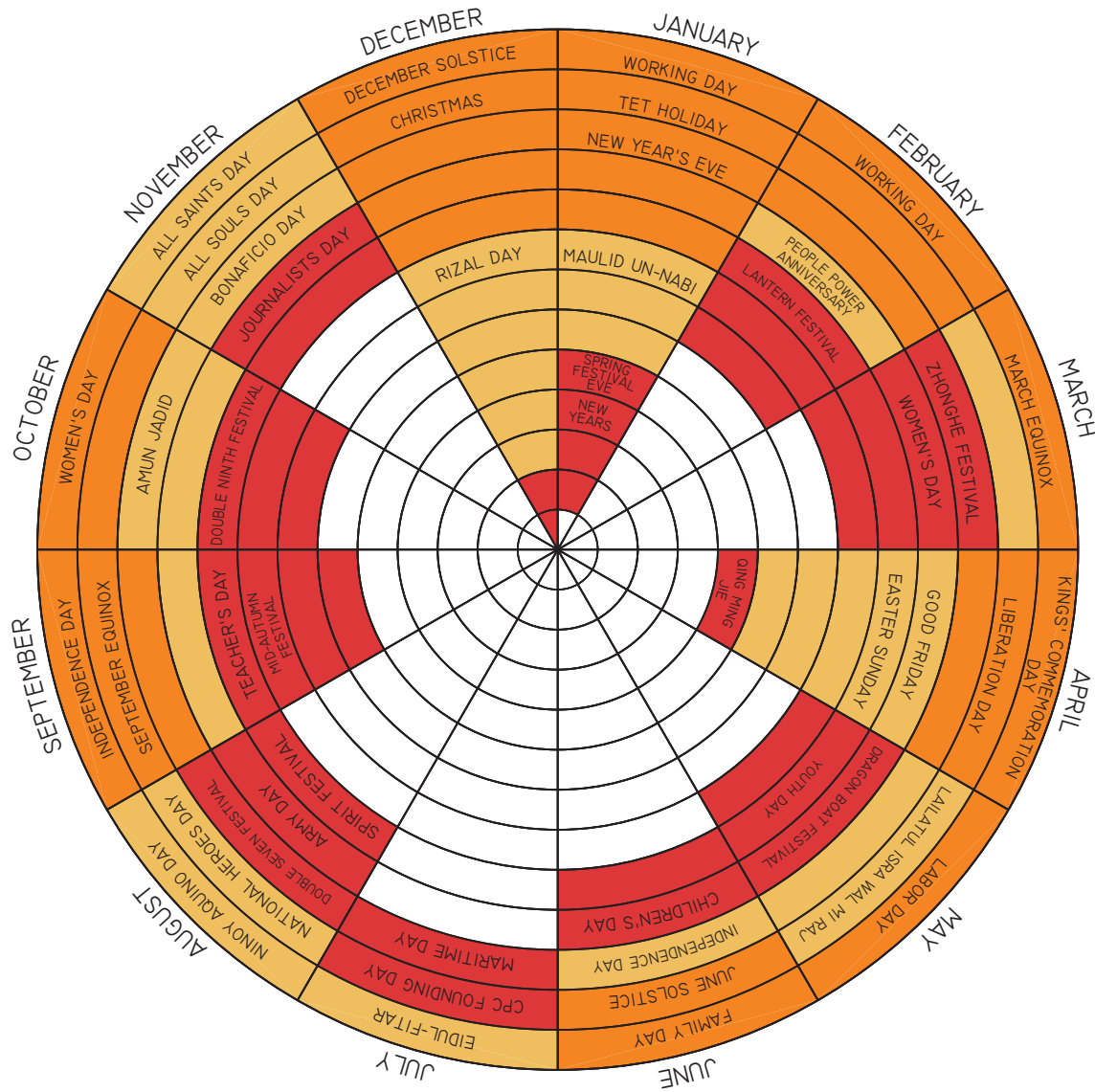
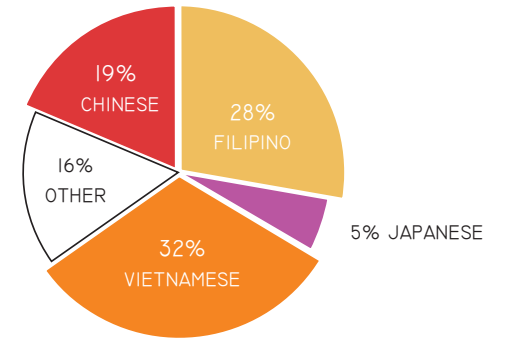


FIGURE 41: OTHELLO ASIAN POPULATION



Further activating the ground level is the art gallery and small retail storefronts that line Martin Luther King Jr Way, maintaining the commercial and retail uses that already exist along that street and exhibiting the Asian culture contained within the building to passersby. At the opposite end of the building is the first of the two levels of library. As a community amenity, the library is placed at the 39th Avenue entry, fronting the residential neighborhood that make up the rest of the larger Othello urban fabric.

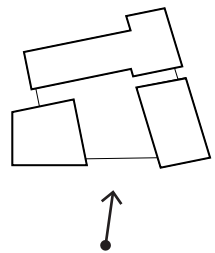


FIGURE 42: SOUTH ELEVATION 41



39TH AVENUE

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR WAY

FIGURE 43: LEVEL 1 PLAN 42

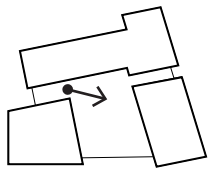
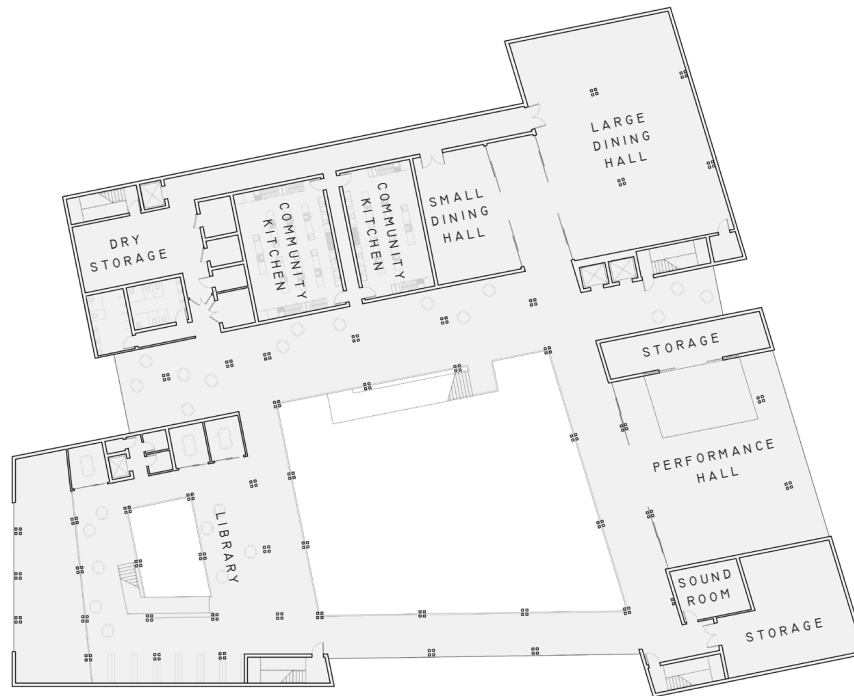


FIGURE 44: INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE OF COURTYARD 43



Then at the second level, there are two rentable community teaching kitchens, with each kitchen being able to service either the small dining hall, the large dining hall, or the combined dining hall areas for even larger events. In an effort to provide the community with the opportunity to express their culture

through their traditional cuisine, the commercial-sized kitchens and dining halls allow for visitors to take part in the communal cooking and serving of traditional Asian food. In addition, the second floor also holds the second level of the library as well as the formal performance hall.

FIGURE 45: LEVEL 2 FLOOR PLAN 44

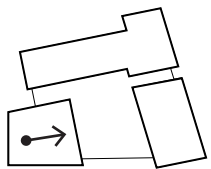
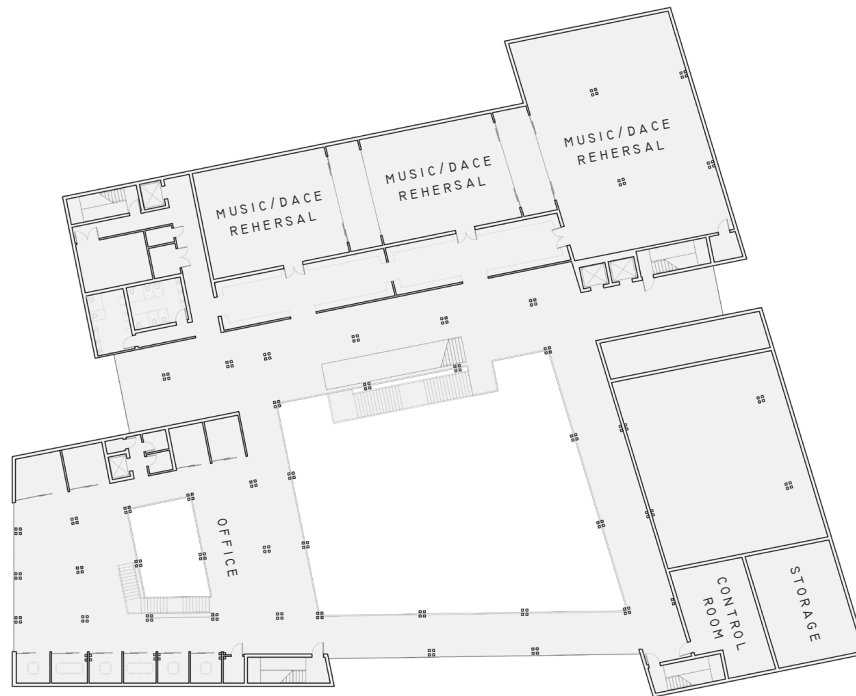


FIGURE 46: INTERIOR LIBRARY PERSPECTIVE 45



Continuing up the building, the third level contains larger classrooms for dance and music rehearsal. Offering classes in traditional Asian dance, musical instruments, and song, these spaces house local Asian dance troupes, musical ensembles, and other Asian performance groups and organizations. In addition, stacked on top of the library are the offices for the community

support and counseling service providers. As a needed resource for the Asian immigrant community, this aspect of the building is not only a major destination for newly immigrated Asians but also other members of the community in need of guidance and additional social services, whether it be citizenship applications or simply familiarizing oneself with the neighborhood amenities.

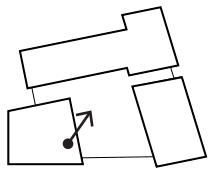
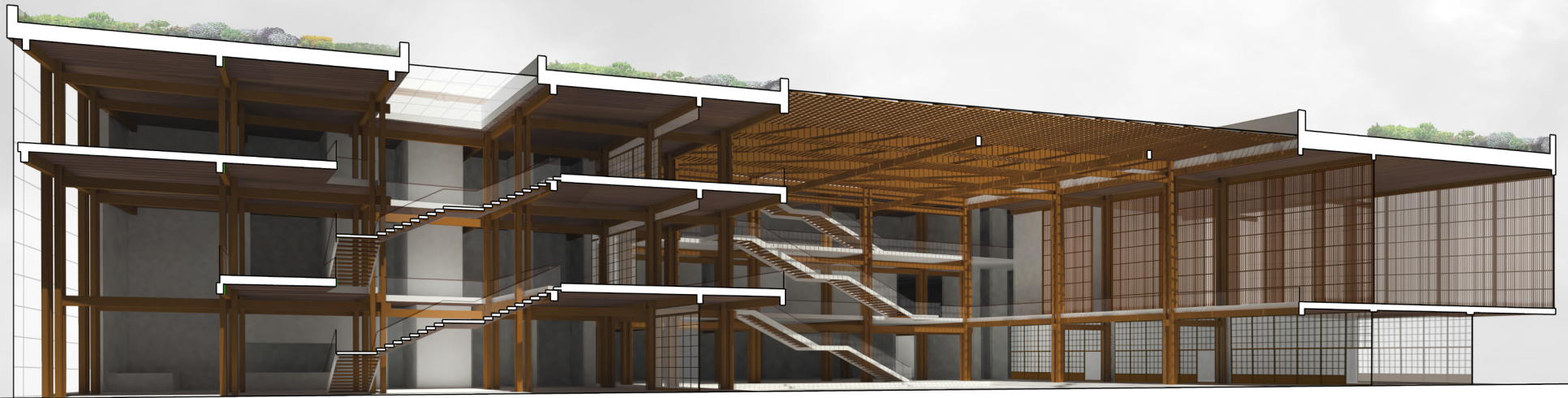


FIGURE 48: INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE VIEW ACROSS THE COURTYARD 47



Then at the top level of the building are smaller classrooms, a large lecture hall, and an outdoor learning area. Providing a variety of Asian and English language classes as well as Asian art classes, the center offers basic computer classes and one-on-one tutoring sessions, all of which are held in these spaces. This level not only addresses the expression of culture through language by allowing people of the Asian community to learn the English

language or teach their native tongue, but it also addresses the greater community, providing the opportunity to learn and share in a new linguistic experience. This can also be said for much of the program throughout the building in that it encourages all people to participate in this expression and exchange of culture through food, language, and art.



MATERIALITY, STRUCTURE, AND SPACE

The building strives to not only act as a container for cultural expression programmatically, spatially, and architecturally, but also to be an expression of Asian culture itself through materiality and structure. In order to develop an architectural character reminiscent of what many of the new immigrants are used to from their home country, this building draws on a readily accessible architectural style, the vernacular architecture of the three most prominent Asian ethnicities in the surrounding area; Vietnamese, Chinese and Filipino. The proposed building alludes to traditional and vernacular architecture due to the fact that it is not only the earliest

exposure culture through architecture, but it is also the most basic interaction that a community has with its surroundings through the built environment. It is these factors that make vernacular and traditional architecture so deeply rooted in the psyche of a culture and its people. That said, through a connection to this architectural style, this building imparts a sense of comfort to its Asian immigrant users, evoking feelings of belonging and nostalgia which in turn allows them to utilize it more freely and openly for cultural exchange and community engagement.

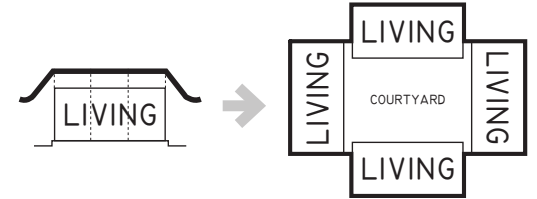
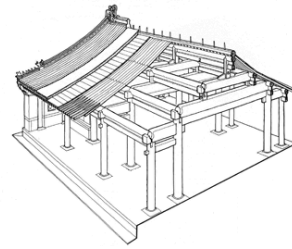
TRADITIONAL VERNACULAR

MATERIALITY - LOCAL MATERIAL

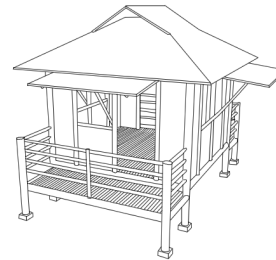
STRUCTURE - WOODFRAME

SPATIAL QUALITY + ORGANIZATION

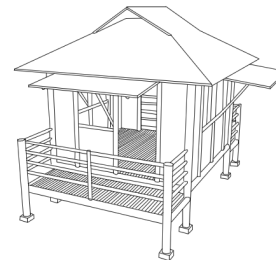
CHINA



PHILIPPINES



VIETNAM



Through an investigation of the vernacular architecture of Vietnam, China and the Philippines, it becomes apparent that there are many similarities between the cultural architecture. In each of the expressions, a focus on the utilization of local building materials is strongly stressed. Additionally, each culture relies on very prominent and heavy timber construction as the main structural elements. Drawing from these ideas, the proposed building uses cedar - a locally available wood - to create a very visible grid of structural beams and columns. Though each of the cultures has very similar takes on the sourcing and use of materials, there are two distinct styles of organization. The Chinese vernacular architecture focuses on courtyard house design, with much of the community space in the house encompassed by a central courtyard that is completely enclosed by the building structure. Vietnamese and Filipino vernacular housing on the other hand is more focused on vertical segregation with the base raised off the ground to provide for storage as well as allow for the buildings to survive flooding which is common in many of the coastal regions. The unifying factor between each of these approaches is the focus of the activity and spaces facing inwards towards the core of the building. The proposed building utilizes this idea in the organization of its space, with the program and elements inward facing and focused on the central semi-open courtyard.

Another element that is apparent in these three cultures which relates to the space and architectural character is the duality between highly active and heavily stimulating spaces and more contemplative and tranquil spaces. This is most apparent in the juxtaposition of the incredibly busy, bustling street markets and downtown spaces of China, Vietnam and the Philippines, with the many meditation gardens and quiet, contemplative temples and gardens which dot these countries.



FIGURE 52: JUXTAPOSITION OF ACTIVITIES

In an effort to combine both of these major spatial elements, the proposed building is centrally focused, with all of the spaces oriented toward the courtyard. Moreover, in convergence with provide a variety of spaces for cultural exchange, the building is also programmatically organized vertically by activity. The vitality of the street is mimicked in the market, bustling crowds, and festival celebrations that occur within the courtyard, and as one moves higher in the building, activities progressively are calmer and more introverted, first to kitchen and dining spaces, then to performance art learning spaces, before finally settling on more quiet study of the classrooms and a rooftop garden on the fourth floor. In all, the building works to incorporate many of the ideas within traditional vernacular architecture, using it as an inspiration for materiality, structure, and spatial planning.

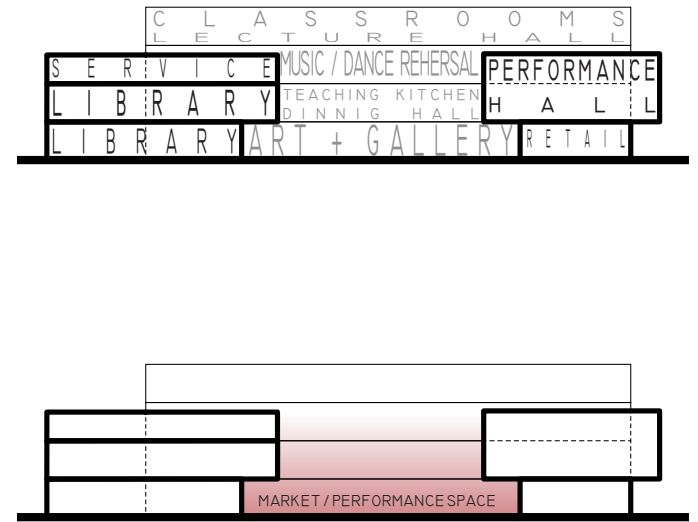


FIGURE 53: VERTICAL BUILDING ORGANIZATION



FIGURE 54: PERSPECTIVE OF COURTYARD

CONCLUSION

Through the investigation of the past and present status of the Asian immigrant population in the Seattle area and their recent dispersion away from the existing Asian cultural hub, an opportunity for development presents itself. This thesis focuses on design of an Asian cultural center that is accessible to the dislocated Asian population and highly visible to the greater community. That said, the building sets the stage for further development of the neighborhood, establishing the character of the neighborhood as it continues to grow.

In all, by creating a facility focused on the displaced Asian population, the proposed center provides them with the opportunity for cultural exchange, community engagement, and the cultivation of a strong sense of community. By creating a central hub rooted in an established Asian presence, this center broadcasts the presence of this particular demographic to the greater community, serving as a beacon of Asian culture for residents throughout Seattle. Looking to the future, it is apparent that the already prevalent Asian population of south Seattle will continue to increase. It is therefore critical to have a centralized location through which all Asians can connect with and proudly express their culture.

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FIGURES

Figure 1: United States Population

Figure 2: Washington State Population

Figure 3: Past Asian Population Distribution

Figure 4: Problem - Dislocation of Asians

Figure 5: Present Asian Population Distribution

Figure 6: Seattle Population Breakdown

Figure 7: Proposal - Asian Cultural Center

Figure 8: Seattle Asian Population

Figure 9: Seattle Asian Densities

Figure 10: Worker Residences, Pre-Chinatown, Hooverville in Interbay Neighborhood, Seattle, 1938. Digital image. Museum of History and Industry, n.d. Web. <<http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/ref/collection/imlsmohai/id/4133>>.

Figure 11: Chinatown Prior to Jackson Regrade, Pre-Regrade Jackson Street. Digital image. Museum of History and Industry, n.d. Web. <<http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/ref/collection/imlsmohai>>.

Figure 12: Chinatown, After Jackson Regrade. Post-Regrade Jackson Street. Digital image. Museum of History and Industry, n.d. Web. <<http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/ref/collection/imlsmohai/id/4133>>.

Figure 13: Goon Dip Building (milwaukee hotel), Milwaukee Hotel. Digital image. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://s.inimg.com/photo/poster_768/3d29015a9acd49fba3d3d899f8ed8881.jpg>.

Figure 14: Freeman Hotel (east kong yick bld.), Freeman Hotel. Digital image. Olson Kundig Architects. Olson Kundig Architects, n.d. Web. <<http://www.olsonkundigarchitects.com/Projects/171/Wing-Luke-Museum-of-the-Asian-Pacific-American-Experience>>.

Figure 15: Hing Hay Park, Hing Hay Park. Digital image. Seattle Parks. Seattle.gov, n.d. Web. <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=358>.

Figure 16: Panama Hotel, Panama Hotel. Digital image. Wikimedia.org. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5a/Seattle_-_Panama_and_NP_Hotels_01.jpg>.

Figure 17: Nichiren Buddhist Church, Nichiren Buddhist Church. Digital image. Nichiren-shu, n.d. Web. <<http://www.nichiren-shu.org/Seattle/>>.

Figure 18: Neighborhoods of the Intl. District, Neighborhood Map. Digital image. Seattle Chinatown ID. N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://www.seattlechinatownid.com/neighborhood/neighborhood-map>>.

Figure 19: Posters of Asian Festivals in the International District, Event Posters. Digital image. Chinatown International District, n.d. Web. <<http://www.cidbia.org/events>>.

Figure 20: Lynch's Five Components of a Legible Cityscape, Kevin Lynch, p.47

Figure 21: Danny Woo Garden Community Plots and Harvest Events, Danny Woo Garden Uses. Digital image. N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://interimicda.org/whatwedo/sustainable-communities/danny-woo-community-garden/in>>.

Figure 22: China Gate Restaurant, China Gate Restaurant. Digital image. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://acaciafarm.smugmug.com/photos/259577053_2qUtr-XL.jpg>.

Figure 23: Chinatowns Paifang Gate, Chinatown Gate. Digital image. Chinatown International District, n.d. Web. <<http://www.cidbia.org/folder.2008-10-02.5424088258>>.

Figure 24: Uwajimaya Asian Market, Uwajimaya Market Interior. Digital image. Peasonmoss.com. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://www.peasonmoss.com/2010_07_01_archive.html>.

Figure 25: Street Signs in the Intl. District, Bilingual Street signs. Digital image. Komo News. N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://www.komonews.com/news/local/First-bilingual-street-name-sign-unveiled-in-International-District-215388061.html>>.

Figure 26: Seattle Public Transit and Central Link Light Rail Future Expansion Plan

Figure 27: Central Link Light Rail Line and Asian Population Densities

Figure 28: Othello Residential Urban Village and the Existing Asian Presence

Figure 29: Othello Neighborhood Building Uses

Figure 30: Existing Neighborhood Amenities

Figure 31: Othello Neighborhood Building Uses

Figure 32: 2010 Othello Neighborhood Plan

Figure 33: Existing Urban Development

Figure 34: Projected Future Development

Figure 35: Program of Cultural Exchange

Figure 36: Users and Building Program

Figure 37: Site Plan

Figure 38: Building Program Massing

Figure 39: Neighborhood Development

Figure 40: Asian Event Calendar

Figure 41: Othello Asian Population

Figure 42: South Elevation

Figure 43: Level 1 Plan

Figure 44: Interior Perspective of Courtyard

Figure 45: Level 2 Floor Plan

Figure 46: Interior Library Perspective

Figure 47: Level 3 Floor Plan

Figure 48: Interior Perspective View Across the Courtyard

Figure 49: Level 4 Floor Plan

Figure 50: Building Section Perspective

Figure 51: Traditional Vernacular Analysis

Figure 52: Juxtaposition of Activities

Figure 53: Vertical Building Organization

Figure 54: Perspective of Courtyard