

Revive Chinatown Community Transportation Plan and Pedestrian-Oriented Improvements Project

Oakland, CA



Chinatown's pedestrian flows had been long in conflict with heavy Webster Street (SR-260) traffic to the Posey Tube and Alameda. Developed through a community workshop process, the Revive Chinatown Plan created a blueprint for better and safer vehicular and pedestrian circulation as well as streetscape over multiple city blocks. Design features were specifically developed to also reinforce Chinatown's district identity and enhance its visitor appeal.

BEFORE

- Chinatown sidewalks were heavily used, crowded, and poorly lit at night.
- In 2002, Chinatown intersections had the highest rate of pedestrian-auto accidents in Oakland.
- 2 quickly-implemented "scramble" intersections had long crossing distances and were poorly marked.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Enhance pedestrian safety and comfort at intersection crossings.
- Increase sidewalk space at corners to enable more pedestrians to wait comfortably for the walk signal.
- Select cost-effective means of adding streetscape amenity and neighborhood identity with pedestrian safety improvements.

OUTCOMES

Construction completed July 2008.

- 4 major intersections at Webster, Franklin, 8th, and 9th Street were reconfigured in a "scramble" format with additional diagonal crosswalks, retimed signals, pedestrian countdown timers and bilingual signs.
- "Scramble" intersections created a cycle where all traffic stops and all pedestrians may cross (including diagonally).
- Corner "bubs" with decorative red paving increased sidewalk waiting room and shortened crossing distances.
- Crosswalks were designed by FTS with decorative red and yellow Chinese patterns using cost-effective "Streetprint" material.
- Supplementary pedestrian-height streetlight poles brightened the sidewalks at night.

CLIENT: City of Oakland

IN COLLABORATION WITH: CHS Consulting, T.Y. Lin International, SFE Landscape Architects

FTB: When this project was completed the firm name was Freedman Tung & Bottomley (FTB).



The completed improvements increased waiting room and shortened crossing distances with sidewalk bulb-outs; provided countdown crossing timers and retimed traffic signals; added highly visible and decorative Chinese motifs in the crosswalks; and provided supplementary pedestrian-height streetlights.



Close-up view of imprinted decorative crosswalk markings, adapted from a Qing Dynasty manual of Imperial Court architectural design and decoration.



Before: Two experimental "scramble" intersections had long crossings and hard-to-see markings.



Before: Pedestrians confronted fast one-way state highway traffic at many Chinatown intersections.