

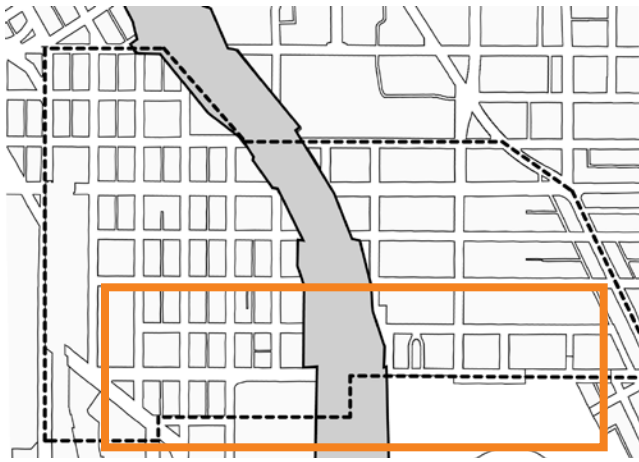
# South Dearborn I

## Community Open Space Initiatives

Community Design Studio Report 2005

Department of Landscape Architecture / University of Washington





## Executive Summary

The Dearborn Avenue corridor, which comprises the southern boundary of Seattle’s Chinatown/International District, affords several opportunities to protect, enhance and create open space. In conjunction with community participants, team members identified both traditional and non-traditional locations for open space improvements to activate, reconnect and green sites in this neighborhood, including freeway underpasses, alleys, remnant spaces, green roofs and walls, bridges and intersections.

Design explorations serve as an extension of our conversations with residents, employees, business owners and visitors of the neighborhood and as such, seek to enhance public amenities, to improve resident safety and pedestrian and bicycle circulation, to define and celebrate neighborhood identity and to provide linkages to both the neighborhood and the larger city fabric. We attempt to provide suggestions for interventions, rather than prescribing solutions. Each of us focused on a specific site which in turn provided a palette of interventions for the entire corridor.

Through interviews, meetings and workshops, we gleaned insights into the needs of community members. Participants in the process identified housing, crime, traffic, lack of neighborhood identity, and a dearth of green, recreational or meditative spaces, as major challenges for this particular portion of a diverse neighborhood.

We examined mechanisms to slow traffic, to improve bicycle circulation, to create linkages to the neighborhood and the surround city and region, to offer entertainment and recreation, and to improve overall safety through the clarification of spaces, be it through re-establishing the street grid, to lighting, to (re)defining street edges, and finally, sought more broadly to improve the overall health and safety of the neighborhood through the exploration of mechanisms to ad-

dress air pollution and traffic noise. We established a list of formal design guidelines and sought a series of precedents, which provide a foundation for subsequent design developments.

**Attention/Intrigue** activates the freeway underpass through short film installations and dappled lighting that references the adjacent greenbelt on Beacon Hill. Niche spaces in proposed new development pulls pedestrians towards the core of Chinatown and provides pockets of green along the street. Pedestrians are buffered by traffic by the addition of parking on Dearborn.

**creating links/activating corridors** evaluates the potential to link new developments along the Dearborn corridor via regional trails and neighborhood connections. These linkages would strengthen the connection each built project has to each other, to the neighborhood retail core, and to the region via a bridge to the I-90 Trail.

**breath(e)** explores opportunities to address health and safety along the Dearborn corridor on the southern boundary of Chinatown/International District, through several proposed design interventions, or filters, that address circulation (both literal and metaphorical) of buildings, particulates and people. Filters ameliorate negative impacts on the city—pollution, high-speed traffic—by slowing, capturing, and cleansing, and ultimately releasing back into the environment.

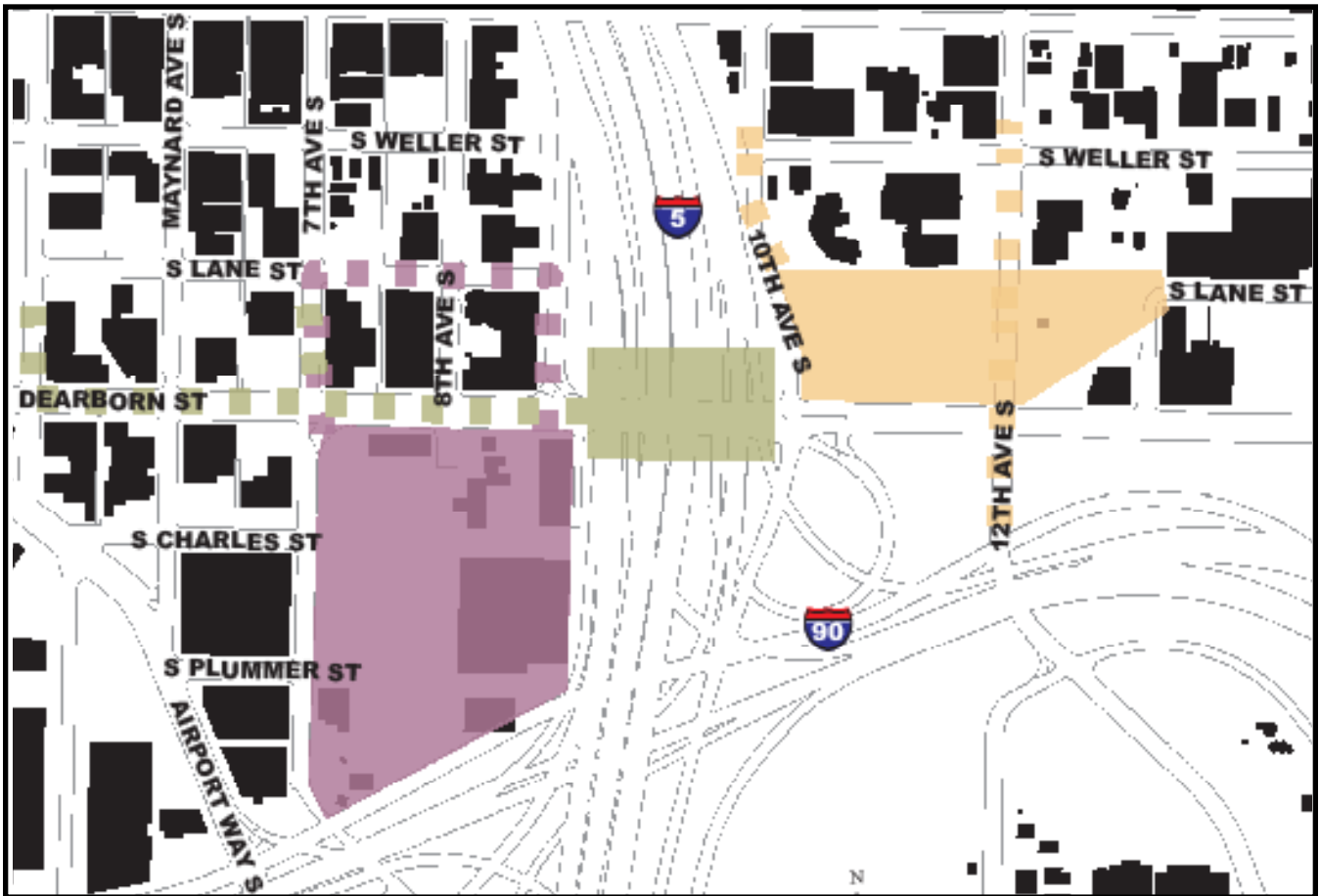
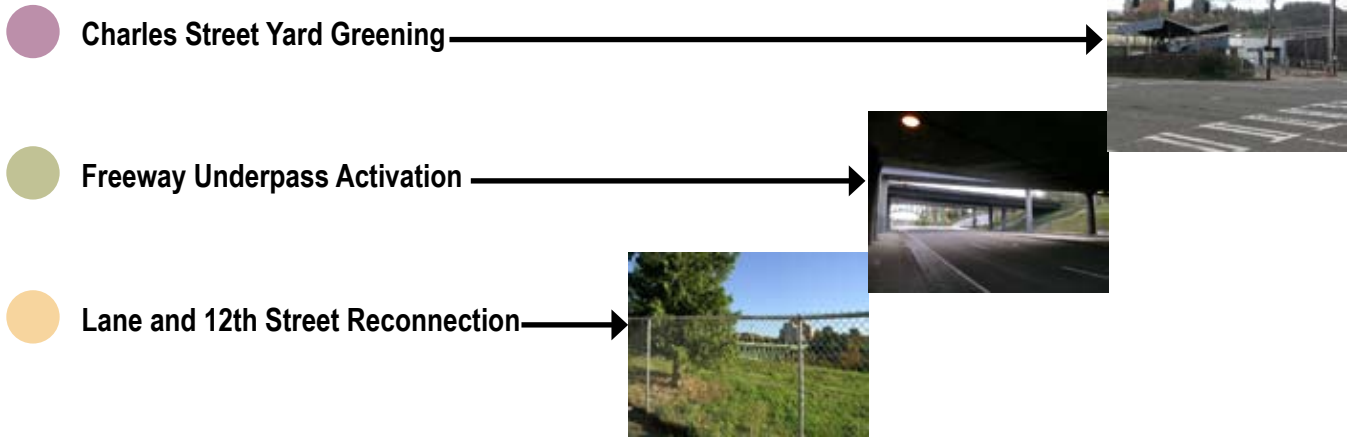
## Site Overview

### Dearborn Corridor and Adjacent Sites

Interventions were proposed for three sites within the Dearborn Corridor and surrounding properties from Rainier Avenue west to 6th Avenue. Sites were found on the existing Charles Street Yard, under the Interstate-5 underpass and near the future Goodwill development on Lane Street. Strategies for all of the sites included streetscape interventions on Dearborn and linkages to the Chinatown/Little Saigon cores.

## Planning & Design Issues

Traffic Congestion esp. near Goodwill Site Development and from 12th and Weller  
 Appropriateness of big box retail - in question  
 Potential residential Uses  
 Goodwill Site a gateway to downtown and Little Saigon and should be emphasized  
 Long blocks  
 Development potential of property bordered by 10th & 12th Ave, between Dearborn and S. Lane Street  
 Possible commercial and multifamily development in that area



Consider the appropriateness of altering height restric  
 Economics of more durable building types – concrete  
 v. wood frame  
 Potential business competition with core of the district;  
 development should support and enliven core  
 Difficult for owners to change land use and bring to  
 code  
 Incentives not sufficient to stimulate development  
 Bicycle Safety sharing the road  
 Pedestrian experience  
 Need more police on foot/bike in neighborhood edge  
 Homelessness/ general perceptions of safety

Walkability of S. Side of Dearborn  
 Bicycle lane improvement, especially around freeway  
 ramps  
 Residential ground floor w/ stoops  
 Neighborhood parking strategy  
 Streetscape improvements – noise, places to sit, char-  
 acter, pedestrian experience, physical continuity w/  
 core  
 Re-connect S. Lane Street E. of 12th Ave. as a pedes-  
 trian route  
 Link open spaces to residential areas

## Design Strategies for Dearborn: Reconnecting the Grid

### Strategies:

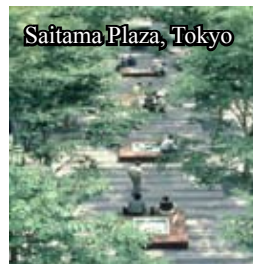
- Define southern edge of Chinatown/International District through (a) conscious thresholds (b) defined cues for movement through neighborhood and (c) distinctive stopping points
- Create and enhance linkages to Chinatown and Little Saigon
- Reopen the street grids at Lane and Charles Street
- Address safety and comfort issues through
  - (a) improving pedestrian and bicycle access, mobility and protection (b) slowing vehicle traffic through distinct views and flow interventions (c) discouraging illicit activity and (d) remediating noise and air pollution
- Encourage creation of public and private green open space through gardens, green roofs, parks and play areas

### Group Precedents

#### Street Calming



#### Public Spaces/Private Development



#### Pollution Mitigation

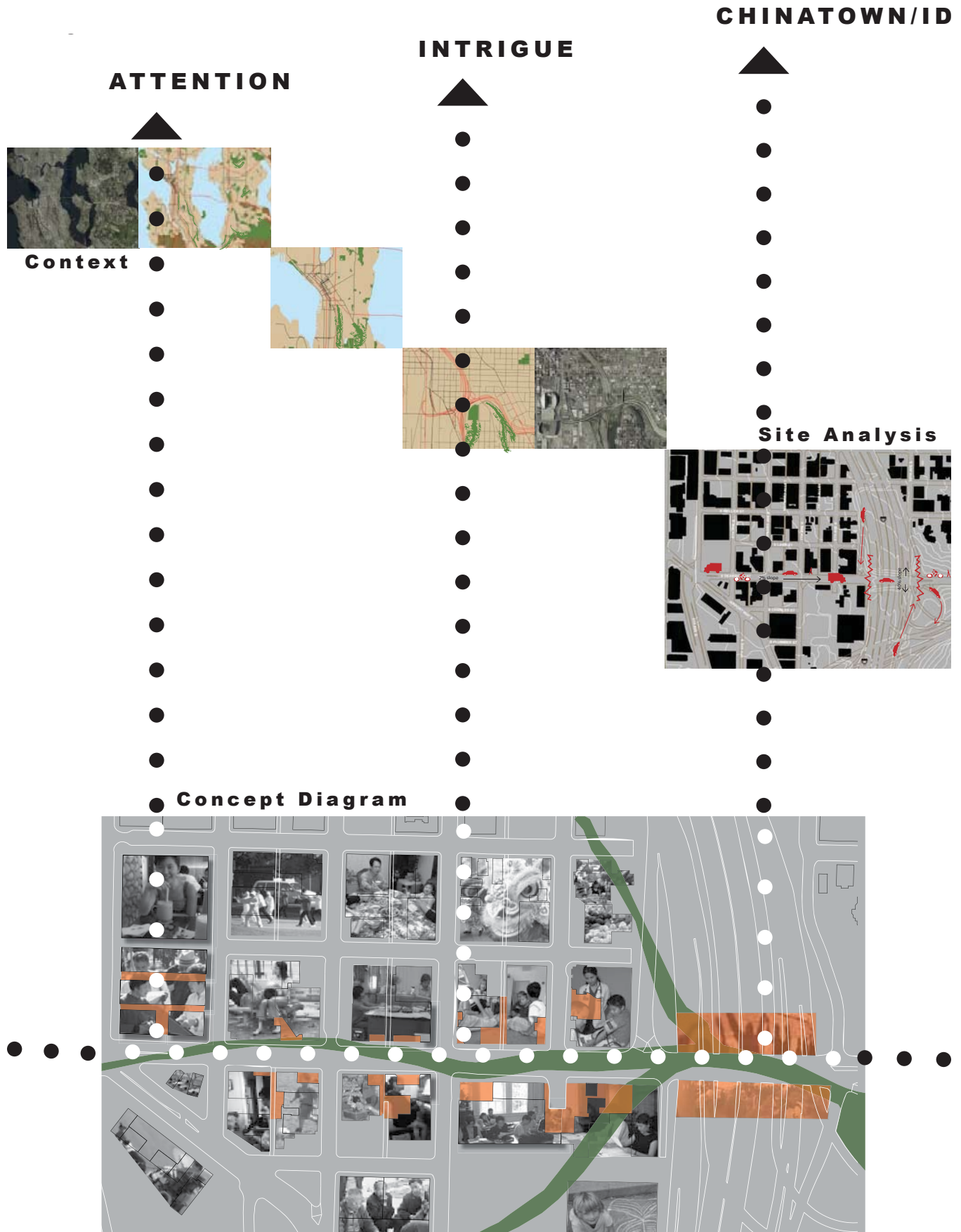


#### Urban Trails/Walkable Cities



# Project 1: Attention/Intrigue

Betsy Severtsen



Community Open Space Initiatives: S. Dearborn

Plan



Precedents



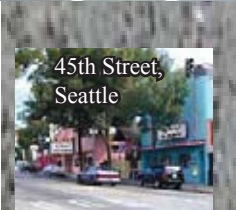
Paley Park, NYC



Herald Square, NYC



Pearl District, Portland



45th Street, Seattle



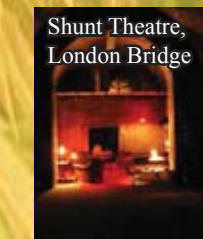
Tijuana Projection, Krzysztof Wodiczko



Railspur Alley, Granville, BC



Median, Zurich



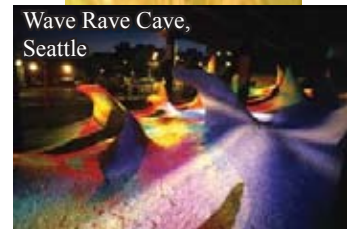
Shunt Theatre, London Bridge



Roof Garden, Reading, UK



Median, San Diego



Wave Rave Cave, Seattle



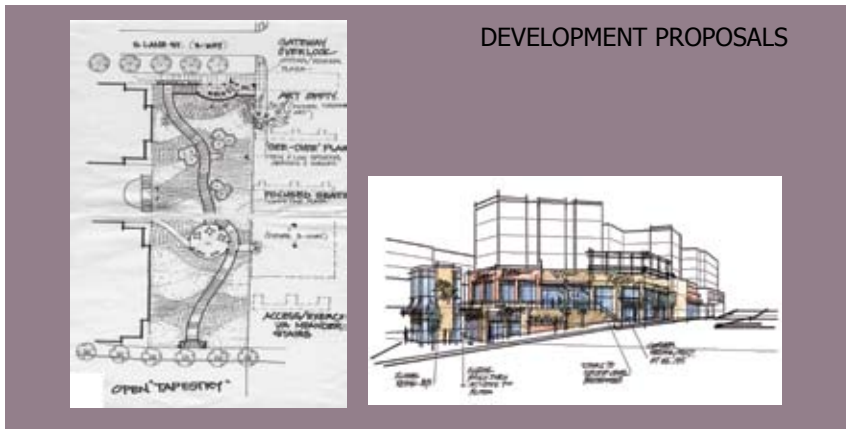
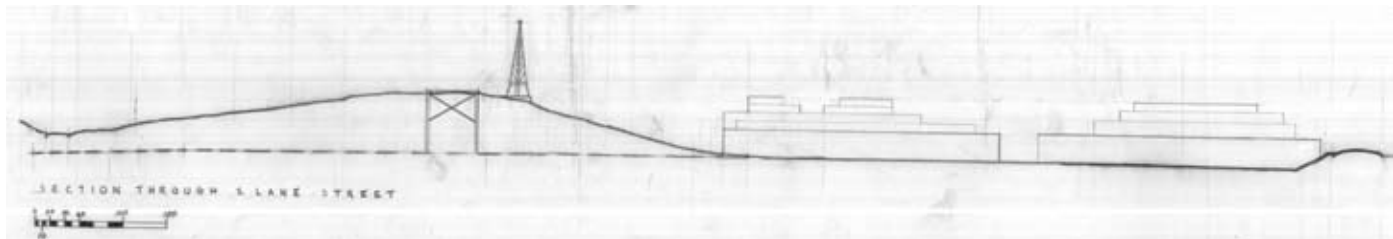
Fremont Troll, Seattle

Before/After



Project 2:

# south dearborn street • creating links





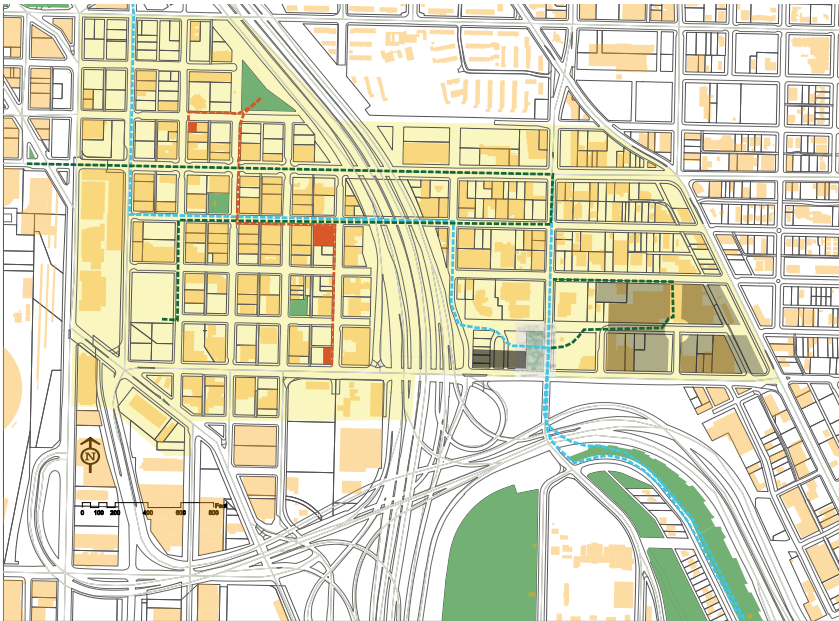
# activating corridors

Jocelyn Freilinger

[community open space initiatives 2005]



## ACTIVATING URBAN WALKWAYS



## CULTURAL POINTS OF INTEREST



## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ROUTES



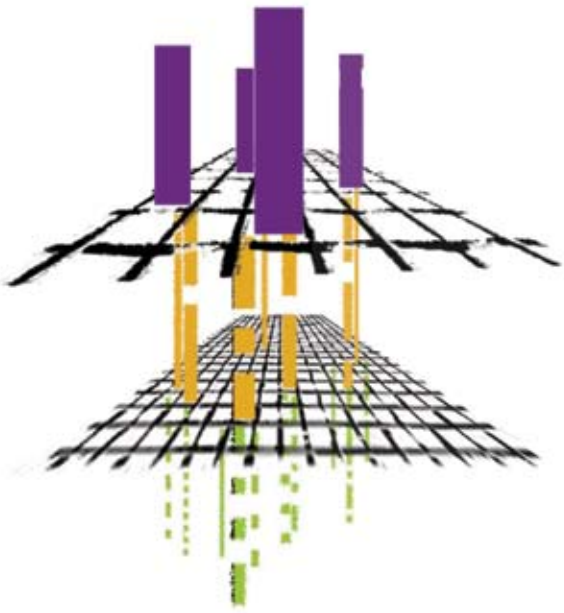
## SHOPPING DESTINATIONS



Project 3:

# breath(e)

Elizabeth Umbanhowar



metaphorical and real filters

*breath(e)* explores opportunities to address health and safety along the Dearborn corridor on the southern boundary of Chinatown/International District, through several proposed design interventions, or filters, that address circulation (both literal and metaphorical) of buildings, particulates and people. Filters ameliorate negative impacts on the city—pollution, high-speed traffic—by slowing, sorting, and cleansing, and ultimately releasing back into the environment.



slowing



sorting



(re)circulation

until they fall  
apart



and begin to  
breathe again



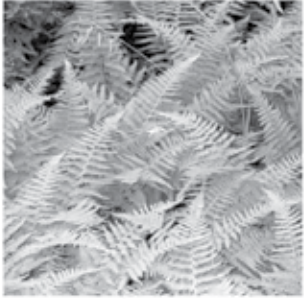
extraction and  
diversion



lead from the  
tracks



new life



gives way to



water wears



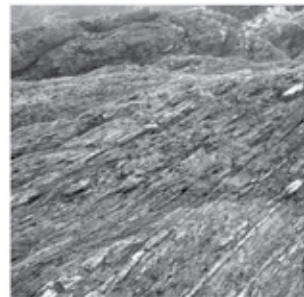
awash with



stone



is the foundation





biofilter module for remnant spaces



open space as green





(re)cycling buildings for "interior" open space



# lungs of the city

## *charles street yard as open space*



panoramic elevation of charles street yard at dearborn and ninth

elisabeth umbanhowar  
ISKI/community design  
december 2005

## Major Recommendations

- Use art installation that employs light to activate underpass.
- Provide niche spaces facing Dearborn that pull people into Chinatown core.
- Use parking and bicycle lanes as a buffer between vehicle traffic and pedestrians on Dearborn.
- Coordinate city agencies, developers, and stakeholders to develop neighborhood and regional connections for non-motorized trails.
- Convert Charles Street yard facility to major recreational and ecological hub, to enhance both the health of local residents and regional health and safety.
- Re-cycle buildings on Charles Street yard to create densely planted (trees capture tons of carbon dioxide and other particulates each day) bio-filter modules to remove hazardous air pollutants resulting from highway traffic. These modules can be duplicated elsewhere in the City and can be made more or less accessible to the public, to engage, educate and filtrate in conjunction with modules elsewhere in the City.
- Work in partnership with City of Seattle Parks and Recreation, Mountains to Sound Greenways, Mountaineers, Pomegranate Center, TREK and other urban environmental education organizations to create a major recreational hub for cyclists and pedestrians who utilize Mountains to Sound Greenway, Dearborn corridor and other urban trails for commuting and exercise. In addition develop new indoor playing fields for local residents, particularly those living in and around Dearborn, as well as municipal and regional sports leagues.
- Engage public artists to create light sculptures to activate and enhance safety of new open spaces created from remnant buildings at Charles Street Yard site.



---

**Community Open Space Initiative:**  
Chinatown, Japantown, Little Saigon—  
International District, Seattle

2005 Community Design Studio Report

**Part 5. South Dearborn -- Jocelyn Freilinger, Betsy Severtsen, Elizabeth Umbanhowar**

© 2006 Jeff Hou, Lauren Kimiko Acheson, Alison Blake, Nathan Brightbill, Paul Chasan, Arielle Farina Clark, Garrett Devier, Jocelyn Freilinger, Noelle Higgins, Vanessa Lee, Sarah Preisler, Chiaki Nakajima, Elizabeth Powers, Betsy Severtsen, Kari Stiles, Irene Tang, Elizabeth Umbanhowar,

Department of Landscape Architecture,  
University of Washington  
Box 355734, Seattle, WA 98195-5734, USA

For more information, visit <http://courses.washington.edu/cosi>, or contact Jeff Hou at [jhou@u.washington.edu](mailto:jhou@u.washington.edu) and 206-543-7225.