



Update on City-Funded Security Guards

Funds for the Chinatown security guards have been in the City FY20 budget since July 1. Four months later, City Managing Director Roy Amemiya has not released the funds.

We have been frustrated by the City’s apparent unwillingness to get this program started. However, there’s been progress in the past 10 days. Members of Chinatown Watch and Chinatown Improvement District met on Oct 29 with Sandy Pfund, Director of the Department of Land Management. She will administer the guard program once MD Amemiya releases the funds. (We reported earlier that funds had already been released to Director Pfund, but in fact they have not.)

Based on our discussions with Director Pfund, we proposed a schedule and locations for the 1st phase of guard service. We’ve planned the schedule to coordinate with CID’s security patrol for private (non-City) properties. Shortly we will be meeting with HPD’s District 1 command to get their input, which we will share with Director Pfund. She said she expects to present our proposal to MD Amemiya during the week of Nov. 18. We hope to have more progress to report at the Dec 5 Neighborhood Board meeting.

Our goal remains to protect the public by having guards patrol **in the public spaces AROUND City-owned buildings**, which are among the most derelict in Chinatown



Above: City properties on No. Pauahi, So. Pauahi & No. Hotel

CBCA & City Council Honor Chinatown Watch at “Heroes” Banquet

We sincerely thank the Chinatown Business & Community Association and the Honolulu City Council for acknowledging our group’s hard work. The City Council commended Chinatown Watch.com in particular for being “a welcome tool used by area legislators, HPD and community stakeholders to rescue Chinatown from drugs, crime and other illegal behavior.” We’re proud to work alongside so many dedicated people who see Chinatown’s potential and are moving toward that brighter future!

Do the Yellow Trash Bags Work?

It depends on which trash problem they were supposed to solve.

PROBLEM #1: Illegal Dumping by Merchants and Others.

- Some Chinatown businesses have an account with the City for trash pick up. They pay a monthly fee for curbside collection 6 days/week.
- Other businesses pay private companies for use of a dumpster and collection on a set schedule. These are typically newer businesses, as the City stopped accepting new accounts years ago.
- Still other merchants choose NOT to pay for trash collection. Instead, they dump their rubbish illegally in front of other businesses that DO pay for curbside collection. The legal businesses then get charged extra for the illegal dumpers' trash because the cost is based on volume.
- Further, renovations and move-outs often result in refrigerators, ovens, mattresses and other bulky items being dumped on sidewalks because the owner and/or contractor did not want to pay dump fees. Both forms of illegal dumping are long-standing problems in Chinatown.

PROBLEM #2: Trash Dumped by Homeless People and Others.

- Most businesses put their trash out for pick up in the evening. City crews pick up the trash at 4am. Therefore bags of trash sit out all night at curbside awaiting pick up.
- These unattended bags of trash are fair game for homeless people and others to open and dump out looking for food, etc. The dumped-out rubbish gets scattered around the area, no longer in a form that City crews can collect on their 4am run.
- Current sit/lie laws allow homeless people to camp on public sidewalks from 11 pm to 5am. The trash they leave behind often includes urine-soaked cardboard, food, cartons, bottles & cans, clothes, bedding, used toilet paper, etc.
- Because homeless campers disband AFTER the day's trash pick up, the trash they leave behind stays on the sidewalks. Many shopkeepers are forced to clean up the homeless people's trash every morning, including human waste.

THE YELLOW BAGS PARTLY ADDRESS - BUT DO NOT SOLVE - PROBLEM #1.

By issuing official yellow bags to legal account holders, the City identifies who pays for City pick up and who does not. **City crews now pick up the yellow bags only. They leave all other trash lying uncollected at the curb.** Uncollected trash attracts more trash, rats, flies, etc, quickly becoming a nightmare for the legal account holder in front of whose door the illegal trash is accumulating. Does the City do the logical next step - send inspectors to find & cite the illegal dumpers? We see no evidence of that. What we do see is trash piling up.

THE YELLOW BAGS DO NOTHING TO SOLVE PROBLEM #2.

The 4 ml bag is both hard to close and easy to open. There is nothing about it that discourages people from opening and digging through and dumping out the bags. ANY bag left on the street overnight can be torn up. Nor do yellow bags stop homeless campers from leaving trash where they slept. In this regard the yellow bags are useless.

Yellow Bags Don't Solve the Problems. What Can the City Do Now?

Meet with community members to gather ideas for concrete solutions. Chinatown citizens study this problem every day. We can help guide the City toward solid solutions that will work here if City officials will listen and work with us, instead of dropping a silly non-solution in our laps.

Trash Problem #1: Illegal Dumping by Merchants & Others



Legal yellow bag torn open, trash spilled. Left on sidewalk for several days. Joined by illegally dumped trash in regular bags.



Illegally dumped appliances attracted bagged trash & a mattress, and remained on sidewalk for 10 days.



Restaurant worker leaves old freezer next to other restaurant.



Restaurant workers dump trash in front of lei stand.



Trash pile on Maunakea grew for 8 days. Did City inspectors investigate?



Commercial trash piling up at Kekaulike & Hotel. Legal yellow bags + other trash in bags & boxes.

Trash Problem #2: Trash Dumped by Homeless People & Others



Man eating out of yellow trash bag



HPD officer tells homeless male to clean up trash he had dumped out of yellow trash bag



Trash left by homeless camper(s) on Maunakea



Camper & trash in front of Pauhi Senior Rec Center



Commercial trash pile upended on Smith St.



Shopping cart dumped out by disturbed man on Pauhi St.



Homeless male digging through trash on No. Hotel

Ongoing Issues with Blight & Crime

Go to ChinatownWatch.com to view & post incidents.

Actions that City Administrators Can Take Now:

- 1) **Release the funds for private security guards at and around City-owned properties,** as provided in the current City budget.
- 2) **Commit to being an active, present landlord at your Chinatown properties.**
 - Find and vet responsible tenants for your vacant spaces. Lease to tenants who support a healthy neighborhood, not diminish it.
 - Actively manage the properties. Be on site at least weekly. Fix the broken things. Keep it clean. Make it safe. Listen to tenants and community concerns and act on them.
- 3) **Work WITH the Chinatown community** to truly understand and collaboratively solve our district's problems.

...and...

- Provide all additional funding needed to support HPD in protecting Chinatown's citizens.
- Fast-track your negotiations with River of Life Mission so they may move their feeding operation to Iwilei this year.
- Close the Pauahi Street hygiene center and relocate Safe Haven out of Chinatown.
- Close the liquor stores that sell alcohol and drugs to homeless & mentally ill substance abusers.

Actions that Concerned Citizens Can Take Now:

- 1) **Call 911 to report violations.**
- 2) **Talk to your neighbors about the problems.** Encourage them to call 911, too.
- 3) **Post incidents anonymously to ChinatownWatch.com.** Please note that posting to ChinatownWatch.com is NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR CALLING 911.
- 4) **Urge the City Council and Mayor Caldwell to fund private security patrols for ALL of Downtown-Chinatown's public spaces.** Contact Councilmember Fukunaga's office to report incidents in your area. Email cafukunaga@honolulu.gov or call 768-5006
- 5) **Support HPD deploying police foot & bike patrols 24/7 throughout Downtown-Chinatown**
- 6) **Get some neighbors together to meet with the HPD's Community Policing team.** Call the CPT office at 732-3927. A strong community partnership with HPD is good for everyone.
- 7) **Merchants & property owners, please join the Chinatown Improvement District's neighborhood security patrol.** Call Lee Stack at 589-9927 or email chinatownimprovementdistrict@gmail.com, or via the website: cidchinatownhawaii.org.
- 8) **To order Chinatown Watch window signs for your business, email ChinatownWatch@gmail.com**