



Chinatown Connections

NYC / EDC



Welcome Gateway Subgroup Meeting 2 – 05/23/2024

Welcome!

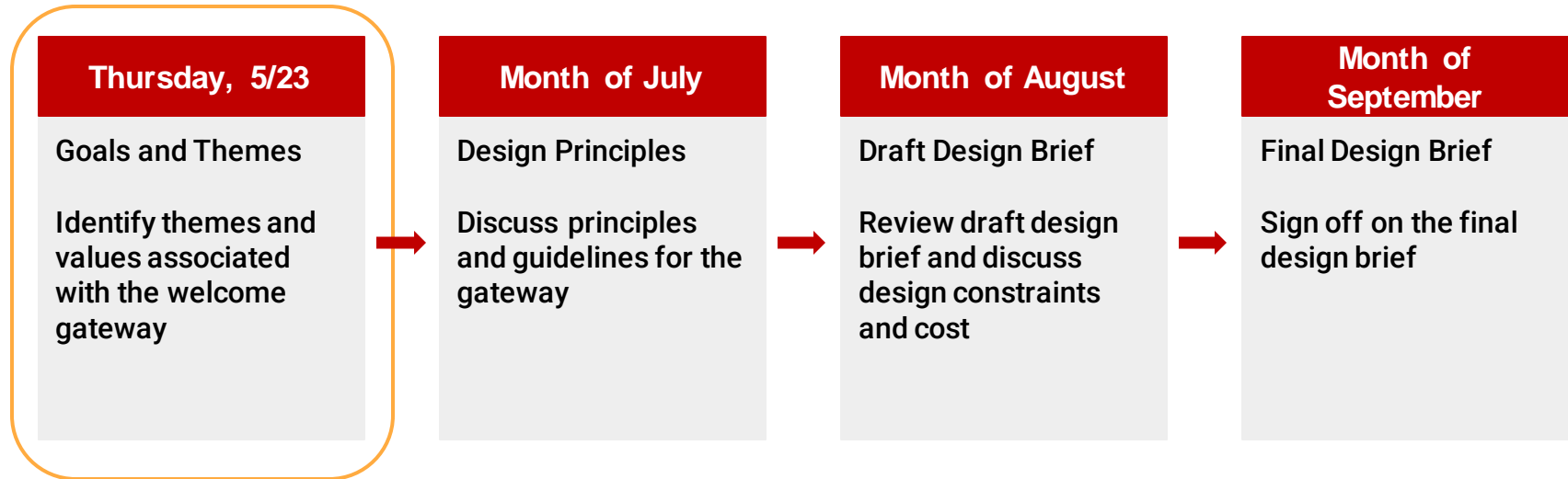
Take a minute to introduce yourself.

- Name
- Affiliation
- Favorite place in Chinatown



Process Overview

Subgroup engagement and next steps



We are here!

Community Reaction: 2019 Gateway Design

- Bad feng shui
- Lack of an undefined “authentic” representation
- Desire for more traditional iconography
- Desire for something entirely non-traditional
- Lack of purpose or relevance for Chinatown residents
- Missed opportunity to integrate a landscape approach to mitigate the legitimate pedestrian and vehicular traffic problems at this location.
- Selection of a Chinese Australian artist, rather than Chinese American, to reflect the Chinese American experience was considered disrespectful, as was the public presentation of the design ... professionals with no connection to Chinatown
- "... the design doesn't mean anything to Chinatown."

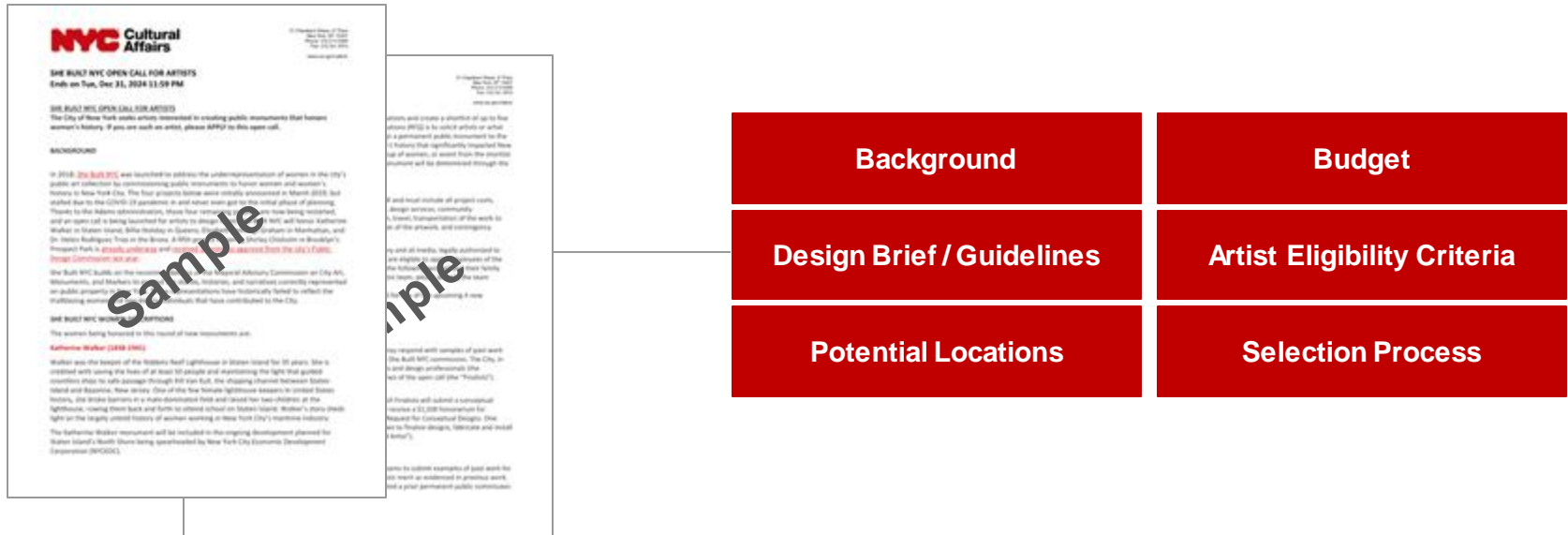


Adapted from Kerri Culhane “Paifang Problematic” and FWD research



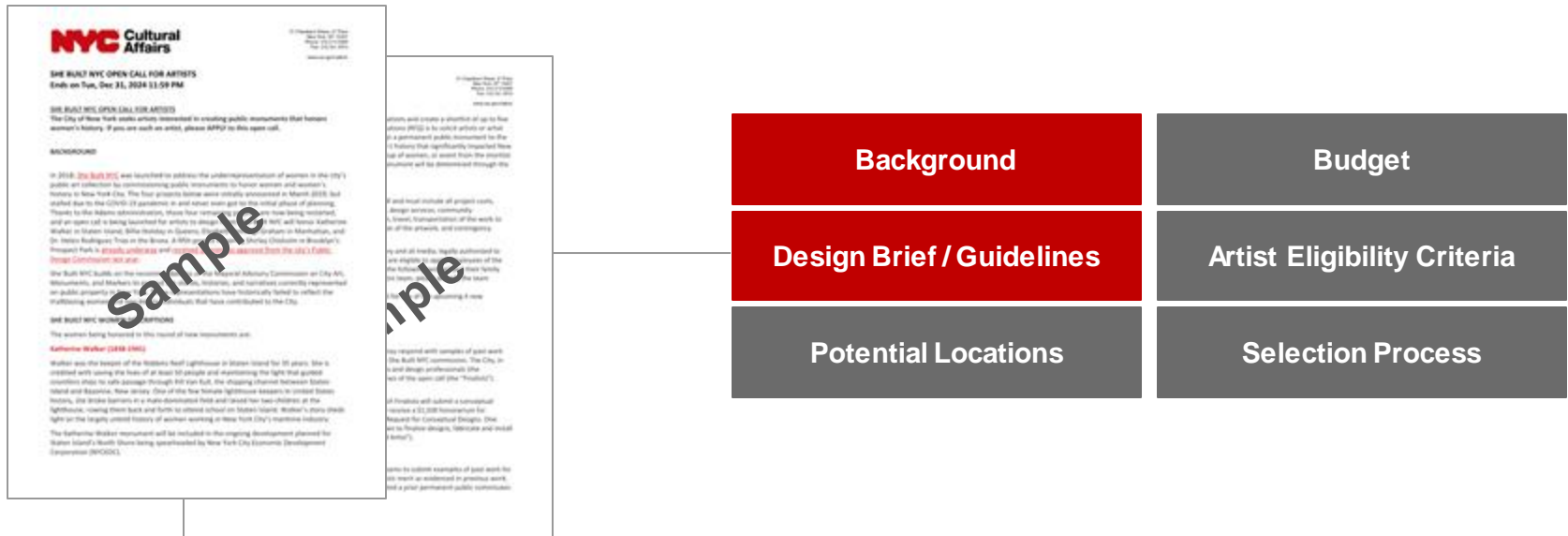
Design Brief Structure

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) Process



Design Brief Structure

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) Process



Agenda

Chinatown Welcome Gateway Subgroup Meeting # 2

- Introductions and Process Overview, Acknowledgements
- Activity 1: Unpacking Gateway
- Precedent Research and Timeline Presentation
- Activity 2: Reviewing values
- Close-Out

Ground Rules

Today, we aim to identify themes and values associated with the Welcome Gateway. Which means we will brainstorm more than make decisions. Here are some ground rules to set us up for success:

- **Communicate openly**; share the air-time and make room for everyone to participate
- **Respect diverse viewpoints and experiences in the group**; together, we know a lot; alone, we don't know it all
- **Be present** as much as possible
- **Build each other up**; create a culture of encouragement so folks are confident to express themselves
- **Avoid the use of acronyms** as much as possible

Let's get started



Precedent Research Framework

Step-by-step process to organize research and subgroup meetings

- **1. Define Themes:** Select specific aspects of the gateway to focus on, such as entryways, heritage, social connectedness, community impact, or authenticity.
- **2. Identify and Analyze Examples:** Look at existing research and gather and analyze examples to understand: (1) values they represent; (2) their goals; (3), community and historical contexts; (4) and their style.
- **3. Create a Grid:** Organize the findings into a grid to identify patterns, constraints, and guidelines for the gateway based on precedents and subgroup discussions.
- **4. Develop Brief:** Use the insights gained to create creating a design brief.




What does a gateway mean to you?



A gateway may prepare you for what lies ahead, helping you move you from point A to B

Williamsburg Bridge Entrance
Manhattan, New York





A gateway may be a transitional space, facilitating the change of states and controlling flow of people

LaGuardia Airport Terminal
Queens, New York

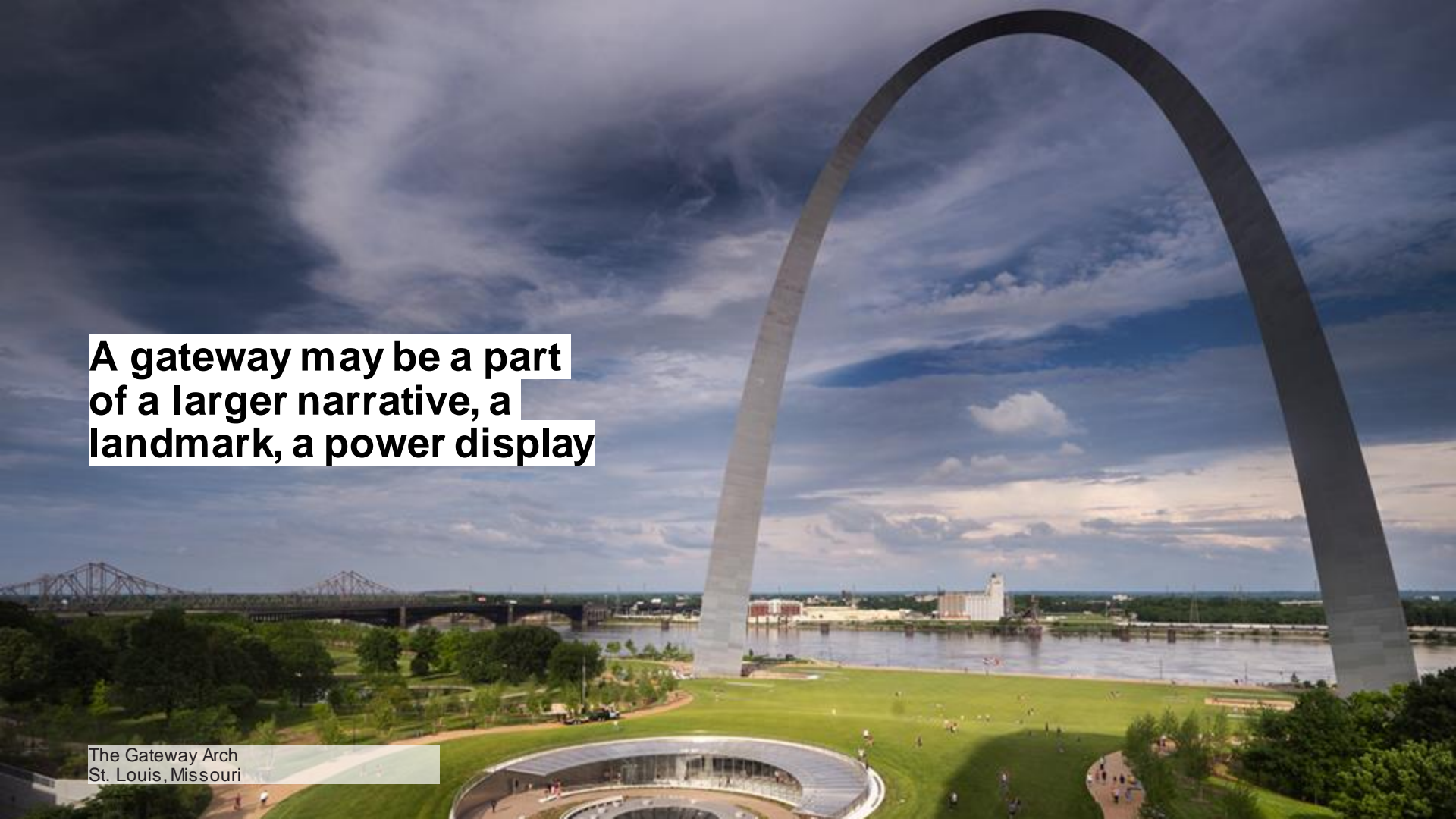



**A gateway may be an
experience, a rite of passage,
a moment to notice**

The Gates, Christo and Jeanne-Claude
Central Park, New York

**A gateway may be a part
of a larger narrative, a
landmark, a power display**

The Gateway Arch
St. Louis, Missouri





**A gateway may be a
opening to a public
space...**

Museu de Arte de São Paulo
São Paulo, Brazil

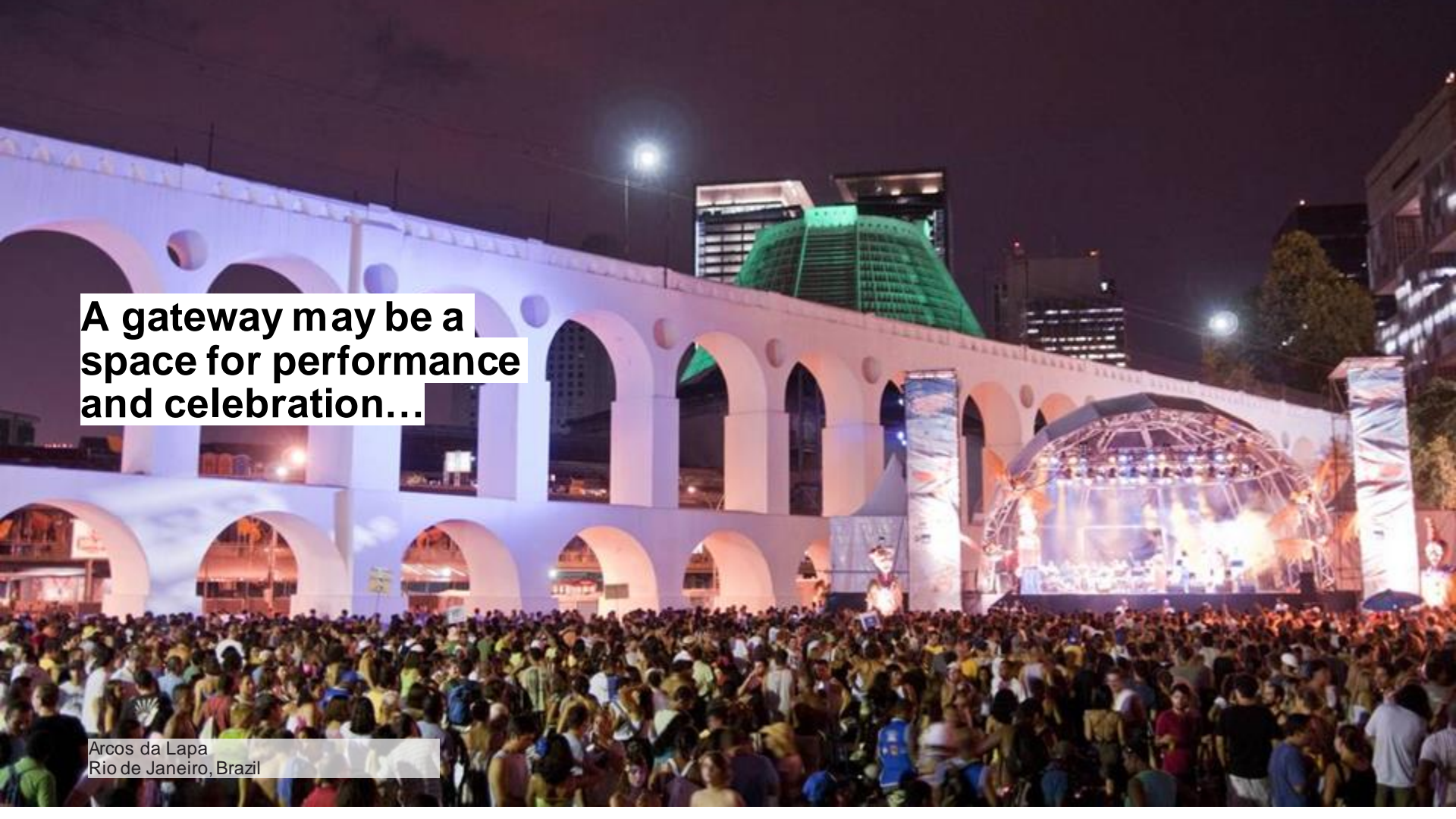
STRAT



A gateway may be a way to welcome people somewhere...




Las Vegas Boulevard Gateway
Las Vegas, Nevada

A large crowd of people is gathered at night in front of the Arcos da Lapa in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The structure is illuminated with purple and white lights. A stage with a large, illuminated archway is visible on the right side of the image. The crowd is dense and diverse, with many people wearing yellow and blue clothing. In the background, a green, dome-shaped building is visible, along with other city buildings and streetlights.


**A gateway may be a
space for performance
and celebration...**

Arcos da Lapa
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

A modern architectural structure at Gateway Discovery Park in Portland, Oregon. The structure features a large, illuminated, angular canopy with a grid-like pattern of recessed lighting. A prominent, tall, green-tinted pillar supports the canopy. The building is constructed with light-colored stone or concrete blocks. In the foreground, there are several tables and chairs, suggesting an outdoor seating area. The scene is set at dusk or dawn, with a clear blue sky and several streetlights illuminating the area.

**A gateway may be
an invitation to
explore and play...**

Gateway Discovery Park
Portland, Oregon



A gateway may be the physical manifestation of heritage and cultural tradition...

Fushimi Inari Shrine
Kyoto, Japan



**What does "gateway" mean
for the communities you
belong to?**



Activity 1: Unpacking Gateway

When you think of a gateway, what comes to mind?

- Use the activity sheets provided to organize your thoughts.
- Please take 3 minutes to reflect on the prompt.
- We will engage in a quick shareback afterwards

Activity 1: Unpacking Gateway

What does a gateway invite someone to do in your community?

- Use the activity sheets provided to organize your thoughts.
- Please take 3 minutes to reflect on the prompt.
- We will engage in a quick shareback afterwards

Precedent Research



Paifang 牌坊



Han Dynasty

Wooden Gateways to demarcate boundaries or mark significant locations

Song Dynasty

Elaborate and decorative structures with intricate carvings, inscriptions, and colorful ornamentations to commemorate important events or signify entrances to prosperous commercial districts.

Regional Variations

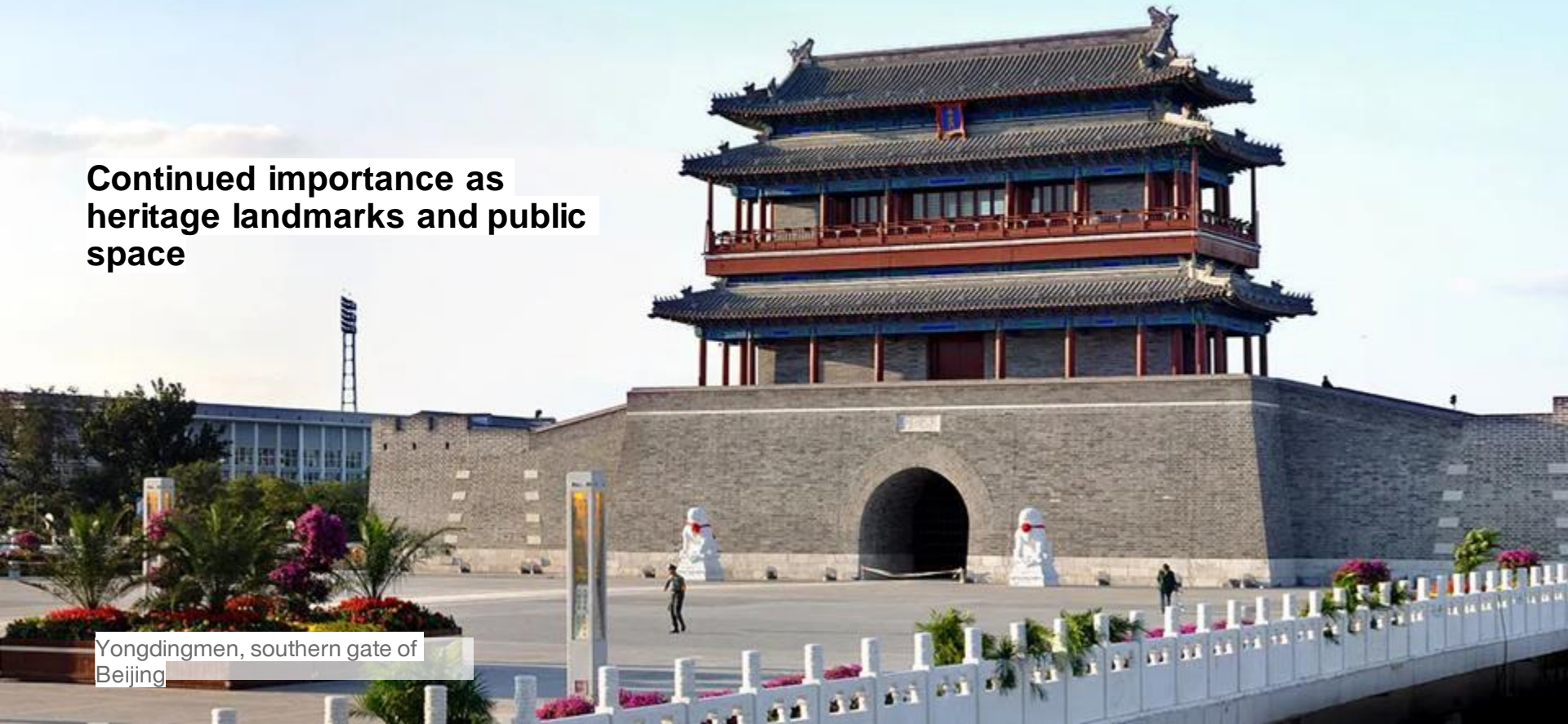
The paifangs in southern China often feature curved roofs with upturned eaves, while those in northern China may have more squared-off designs.

Imperial and Religious

Paifangs, symbolizing the authority or as common features of temple complexes, where they served as thresholds between the secular world and the sacred realm.

**Continued importance as
heritage landmarks and public
space**

Yongdingmen, southern gate of
Beijing



Chinatown Gateways



Late 1800s

Commodification and distortion of Chinese culture

Chinatowns framed as tourist destinations

Early 1900s

Stereotypical “Oriental” Aesthetic

Catering to Western notions of Chinese culture

1970-80s

Geopolitical struggle between the Republic of China and People’s Republic of China becomes visible in the United States

Resurgence of Chinatowns as tourist destinations

Integral part of urban cultural landscape

Early 2000s

Post 9/11 Manhattan Chinatown Decline

2017-19

Gateways to Chinatown competition



Adapted from Kerri Culhane “Paifang Problematic” and FWD research

Brief Timeline

Late 1800s

Chinatowns framed as tourist destinations through commodification and distortion

- 1876: Centennial in Philadelphia
- 1893: Chicago World Fair
- Chinese community protested against call for “Go Slumming” inviting fair-goers to descend to chinatown by night to find exoticised images of the Chinese other

Early 1900s

White architects creating a stereotypical form for Chinatowns

- Limited and outdated understanding of Chinese culture
- Framed by a white gaze and interest in the spectacle of Chinatown
- Enhanced economic viability of Chinatowns
- Cooperative efforts as well as PRC support

Political dispute between ROC and PRC to show influence in the States

- Beijing cleared its pailou to embrace a soviet style of urban planning
- SF Paifang as a mid-block gateway to social housing sponsored by Taiwan
- Ornaments unrelated to the experiences and lives of Chinese Americans

Brief Timeline

1970-80s

Chinatowns boosted as tourist destinations

- 1976: DCP plans the Canal Street Triangle Open air market - not built
- 1979: Tourism revenue in NYC reaches 2bi, 70% of tourists visited Chinatown
- 1982: NYC Chinatown Gate is rejected

Early 2000s

Post 9/11 Chinatown Decline

- 2004: Info Kiosk functions beyond information booth: photo-op signifier of Chinatown entrance
- 2005: Funds are allocated for gateway at Canal St. but not approved by DOT to span a st.

Current

Gateways to Chinatown Competition

- Aimed at creating a new landmark in NYC Chinatown
- “Foster cultural and social identity” -> Reinforcing cultural and social identity
- Controversy about who it is for and the creation of a “theme park”
- Winning proposal is not built

Paifang

- Wooden pillars on stone bases, bound with beams, beautifully adorned with red-painted pillars, intricate designs on beams, Chinese calligraphy, and colorful tile roofs resembling a Chinese palace.
- **Friendship Archway:** The colorful, US\$1 million work of public art includes seven roofs covered in 7000 tiles and 284 dragons (272 painted and 12 carved) in the style of the Ming and Qing dynasties.
- **Chinatown Arch:** Costing £700,000 and Europe's tallest Chinatown arch and the second tallest outside mainland China, it is adorned with 200 hand-carved dragons, symbolizing good fortune. In 2010, a £25,000 lighting scheme added multicolored, low-energy lights to highlight the structure.



Friendship Archway
Chinatown, Washington D.C.



Chinatown Gate
Liverpool, England

Paifang

- The form of true archways made of stone or bricks; the walls may be painted, or decorated with coloured tiles; the top of the archways is decorated like their wooden counterparts
- **Chinatown, Boston:** The traditional Chinatown Gate (paifang) with a foo lion on each side is located at the intersection of Beach Street and Surface Road.
- **Millennium Gate, Vancouver:** Built in 2002, the design was inspired by the Inner City Gates of 19th-century and 20th century Beijing. It combines Eastern and Western designs to represent the past and future of the community.



Paifang
Chinatown, Boston



Millennium Gate
Vancouver, Canada

Moon Gate

- The moon gate is a common element used in Southern Chinese Garden design.
- The gate is often used to **connect two adjacent spaces**; it functions as a frame, to mediate and guide one's attention toward a particular view, such as a focal point in the garden.
- The circular moon can be sometimes substituted by a similar shape, such as an octagon
- **Barrio Chino** features three gates – entryway, exit, and square – from 1999, 2008, and 2018



What underlies the design of the Gateway to Chinatown?

We have identified some themes; we would like to verify these and identify additional themes through a set of activities.



Activity 2: Identifying themes

Based on the examples and your experience, we will reflect on functions, values, and meanings of a Chinatown gateway

- We will do this by engaging in a mad-lib activity
- We will go through 5 themes: Values, Impact, Location, Scale, and Designer
- For each theme, please fill in the blanks with the response you find most appropriate
- We will engage in a quick shareback afterwards and take notes

Theme 1: Values

- A Chinatown Gateway should make the community feel _____
- A gateway in Chinatown should convey _____
- A gateway in Chinatown will be authentic to the community if it _____

Theme 2: Impact

- A Chinatown gateway should generate _____ in the community
- A Chinatown gateway should invite the community to _____
- A gateway in Chinatown should not _____

Theme 3: Location

- A Gateway in Chinatown will create space for _____
- The location of a Chinatown Gateway should consider _____

Theme 4: Scale

- A Chinatown gateway reaches which audience _____
- The size of a Chinatown gateway should be _____

Theme 5: Designer

- The Gateway Designer/Artist should _____

Next Steps



Thank you!

Appendix

Chinatown Park

Boston, MA

- Part of Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway redesign process
- Goal was to balance memory and prophecy and converse with the more traditional gate in Beach Street
- Wants to offer an open plaza for festivals, celebrations, and daily activities
- Point of departure for the design was the Chinese village festival space.



Moon Gate

Mexico City, Mexico

- Barrio Chino features three gates – entryway, exit, and square – from 1999, 2008, and 2018
- Result of various revitalization process, the latest in 2017 with the inclusion of a Moon Gate
- Main Goals: make the area more pleasant for pedestrians, increase the number of visitors, improve the perception of safety and generate a homogenized identity
- "Essentially we want to create a landmark and a selfie point to show the world there is a Chinatown in Mexico"



Liberdade Ave.

São Paulo, Brazil

- Home of the largest Japanese community outside of Japan that established in Brazil in 1900s
- In 1974 neighborhood was redesigned with the American Chinatowns as inspo to celebrate Japanese heritage and enhance trade in the region – traditional lamps, gardens, Torii gate, and mitsudomoe drawings
- Today, tensions between drivers, pedestrians and cyclists as City Hall struggles to close the ave to traffic.
- Black-Brazilians try to reclaim the memory of the neighborhood



Friendship Gate

La Habana, Cuba

- Formed at the heyday of Chinese presence in Cuba (a community of 25 thousand people in 1940)
- Gate was built in 1999 as a gift from China to during one attempt to revitalize the neighborhood
- Today a reliac of years past and a community that is no longer there.
- Neighborhood is in a state of disrepair, crumbled buildings, and decay – a zone of warehouses, some restaurants, housing, parking, and offices.



Millennium Gate

Vancouver, Canada

- Built in 2002 to celebrate the new millennium and honours the role of Chinese settlers in the city
- Goal was to commentate a journey in time as well as to represent both the past and the future
- Plaques and dedications to those involved in the project on the bottom
- Neighborhood is considered to be a living symbol of multiculturalism, it was also site for racist attacks in the midst of Covid-19 Pandemic

