

# Chicago's Chinatown is an American Success Story

*The Windy City's Chinese neighborhood is booming despite low gentrification*

BY **JAY KOZIARZ** · FEB 25, 2016, 10:41A



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A recent and troubling trend has seen traditional urban Chinatowns dwindle and disappear in cities across the United States. As the Great Recession coincided with China's meteoric rise on the world's economic stage, many potential immigrants no longer viewed these American neighborhoods as the ideal land of opportunity. With the exclusionary segregation practices

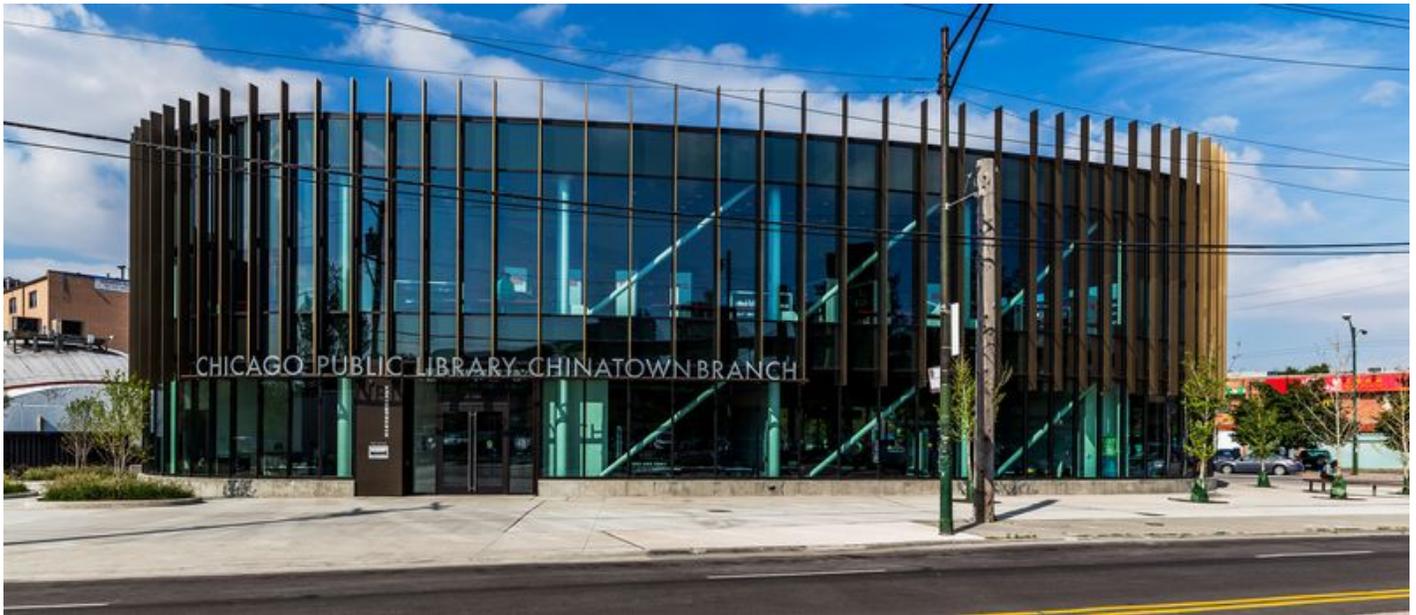
of the early 20th century replaced by generally more integrated open-mindedness, the new immigrants that did arrive in US found they had a choice regarding where to live and many were no longer picking the traditional urban enclaves. Chicago's Chinatown, however, has seen the opposite occur. With population growing at an astonishing 26% between 2000 and 2010, the South Side neighborhood is thriving and looks to continue its success in the future, according to an article published by [Next City](#).



Chinatown Square retail shopping center opened in 1993

[Curbed Chicago Flickr Pool/Irina Hynes](#)

Winner of the 2013 Curbed Chicago [Neighborhood Cup](#), Chinatown has enjoyed the recent renovation of Ping Tom Memorial Park, the expansion of Chicago Water Taxi service to the neighborhood, and the construction of the [must-see](#) SOM-designed Chicago Public Library Chinatown Branch as a new cultural hub for the area. Despite these improvements, Chinatown's boom has surprisingly not come at the expense of increased gentrification, displacement of population, or loss of identity. While other cities have seen their Chinatowns priced out of existence or residents flee to the suburbs, Chicago proudly bucks the trend.



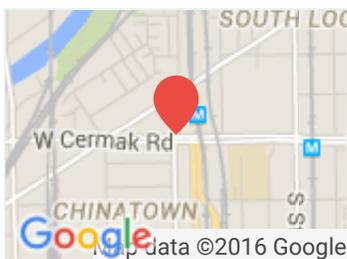
Chicago Public Library Chinatown Branch  
[Curbed Chicago Flickr Pool/erocketship7](#)

Much of Chinatown's prosperity can be attributed to organic growth, but some macro-level urban engineering is also at play. Last year the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) implemented its [Chinatown Community Vision Plan](#) to foster continued growth across all income levels, ensure the vitality of local small businesses, and preserve of the area's cultural heritage. The plan also aims to activate new areas of Chinatown with increased foot traffic and street beautification to spur economic development and improve public safety. CMAP and local leaders are optimistic that continued growth and place-making initiatives will pay dividends to Chinatown's residents and visitors alike.

·[The Unlikely Boom of Chicago's Chinatown](#) [Next City]

·[The End of Chinatown](#) [The Atlantic]

·[Chinatown archives](#) [Curbed Chicago]



## Chinatown

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