

《数十年来旧金山中国城首次扩建》

It's perhaps the liveliest Chinatown in America, literally filled from end to end with residents and tourists. But as people celebrate the Chinese New Year, many are hoping that the Year of the Monkey will bring about some needed elbow room.

It's the oldest Chinatown in North America and one of the densest. San Francisco's Chinatown borders the pricey financial district, which means there's no room to expand.

Downtown San Francisco property prices are some of the highest in the country. As demonstrated by that 25-story office project, there's nowhere to go but up. That means the financial district literally has the potential to cast a shadow over Chinatown.

This is the result of 20 years in the works. Because that office building will block sunshine in Chinatown, Recreation and Parks Commissioner Allan Low shows us a work in progress that is meant to soak up more sun.

The St. Mary's Park extension is being transformed into more than six-thousand square feet of space for gatherings, exercise and relaxation.

"This extension will be the first open space created in Chinatown in 30 years, 40 years,"

"Open space is very scarce in Chinatown, the community residents really live in crowded conditions. What we take for granted, living rooms, dining rooms, just doesn't exist for the residents of Chinatown," said Allan Low, Commissioner of

San Francisco Recreation & Park Commission.

The extension is one of five open space projects happening in Chinatown right now. That includes a new subway station and plaza, and an open area in front of Chinese Hospital -- the place where icon Bruce Lee was born.

Major plans are also in the works for Portsmouth Square - Chinatown's and San Francisco's most utilized area. Deputy Director of the Chinatown Community Development Center, Cindy Wu, says the "open space boom" is a direct result of hard work from the community.

"I think we are in the Golden era of open space in Chinatown. It's really because a number of things came together right now and so advocacy over 20 or 30 years,"

"Planning processes that have taken 10 years. Things are in construction, in the ground, and they are gonna be realized in the next 3-5 years," said Cindy Wu, Dep. Dir. of Chinatown Community Dev't Center.

Makeovers for famous alleyways, like this one, are also happening this year. The year of the Monkey will be a hectic one, but also one that brings about a treasure for future generations - breathing room.

