**San Francisco Preps for Chinese New Year (Fully masked and vaccinated) -**

**Despite the lurking presence of Corona Delta and Omicron**

Chinatown cautiously plans to scale down the Street Fair and Chinese New Year parade to salvage the livelihoods of small businesses. The Pandemic has severely damaged small businesses everywhere, including in San Francisco’s Chinatown. In 2021 Chinese New Year’s activities were cancelled, disappointing San Franciscans and tourists. For the small businesses that depended on income from it was devastating.

This year, if you haven’t heard, San Francisco Chinese Chamber of Commerce is prepared to sponsor New Year’s activities throughout January and February, including the Community Street Fair, Flower Market Fair, and historic parade. By the time this CD is published it will be February, and the January Flower Market Fair will have passed, but if you haven’t heard, we are having the Street Fair on the 19th and 20th. The big Parade will happen on the 19th as well. For everyone’s safety, face masks (do you have your N-95 mask) are required and proof of vaccination is also required.

Have a great time and stay safe!!

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**SOURCE:**

**San Francisco Lunar New Year celebrations spark anxiety**

Posted By Julia Tong***, AsAmNews***, January 17, 2022

As the Lunar New Year approaches on February 1st amidst a spike in Omicron cases, planned celebrations have become a source of excitement and anxiety for the San Francisco Chinatown community.

The spike in Omicron cases in the city, which resulted in a 20% drop in foot traffic downtown per ABC7, has now also taken a toll on some Lunar New Year celebrations.

KPIX 5 reported that the Chinatown Neighborhood Association **cancelled a Lunar New Year street fair on Stockton street due to COVID safety concerns**. **The cancellation has significant ramifications for Chinatown businesses.** Locals such as Linda Liu, who works in Chinatown, noted that the area was already suffering from a drop in foot traffic after the Omicron surge.

“It’s really slow and it doesn’t have that much tourists coming,” Liu told KPIX. “**It kind of hurts businesses, especially the small businesses.”**

For small business owners such as Bao Huin, the owner of Tian Long Appliance Corp, the street fair was an important source of revenue ahead of the New Year.

“Before the pandemic, a lot of people attended the street fair.  And that helped our business,” Huin told KPIX 5 in Cantonese. Regardless, she recognizes both the importance of health measures, as well as the lack of attendance due to Omicron.

“It’s good to cancel.  No one is going to come out even if they have the street fair,” she said. “A lot of people are scared to walk on crowded sidewalks.”

**Despite Omicron threats, however, New Year celebrations sponsored by the San Francisco Chinese Chamber of Commerce are set to continue throughout January and February, including the Community Street Fair, Flower Market Fair, and historic parade**. For the Chamber of Commerce and residents alike, the celebration to welcome the Year of the Tiger has gained extra importance as they **recover from the economic downturn and anti-Asian racism the community has faced since the COVID pandemic began**.

According to the Chamber of Commerce’s website, **the Flower Market Fair will be held on January 29th-30th, with numerous vendors selling fresh fruit, flowers** , and produce with symbolic meaning for the New Year. **The Community Street Fair will run on February 19th-20th, and contain over 120 booths and concession stands from local vendors**. Both events will feature cultural performances such as folk dance, Chinese opera, drumming, lion dance, and others.

According to the Chamber of Commerce’s announcement, these fairs will be particularly important in helping to “revitalize the economy of San Francisco Chinatown.” They will provide revenue and customers to small businesses who had once again faced financial difficulties, uncertainties, and even closure amidst the Omicron surge.

**The most culturally significant event that will return in 2022, however, is the renowned Chinatown parade, which is the biggest parade celebrating the Lunar New Year outside of Asia**. According to the Chamber of Commerce, the parade has deep historic roots in San Francisco area, **originating with Chinese migrant workers in the 1860s, and has grown in size and magnitude in the 160 years since then**.

Today, **the parade attracts over three million spectators and television viewers per year**. As participant and community member Margot Seeto writes in The Bold Italic, the parade runs around two hours long and features live firecrackers, lion dancers and dance troupes, marching bands, and an almost 300 foot long golden dragon that is carried by 100 performers. Pictures of the 2020 parade from Hoodline show performers dressed in traditional garb, riding elaborate floats, and dressed in mouse ears to welcome the Year of the Rat.

Per Seeto, **the parade is critical in bringing the local community together during a vital Asian holiday.**

“The SF Chinese New Year Parade is one of those precious city pride moments where the community comes together to celebrate something special, and everyone seems happy to simply be there,” Seeto writes. “It also symbolizes Chinatown’s community strength and its continuing fight for survival.”

According to NBC Bay Area, the pandemic forced the parade to be cancelled and replaced with a virtual celebration in 2021. **After a difficult year, the Chamber of Commerce announced that the parade will make its “roaring return” on February 19th, 2022, with a vaccination and mask requirement for COVID-19 safety.** For community members who had weathered the pandemic and its challenges, being able to safely celebrate an important holiday, even amidst Omicron closures, is an important and exciting step forward.

“It’s great,” Chinatown business owner Anita Chan told KCBS Radio. “It’s good for the local businesses, and also it’s for the culture. People know about the Chinese culture. That will be great.”