

From: Chinatown BID Steering Committee

Rubenstein Associates, Inc.

Public Relations

Contact: Pat Smith (212) 843-8026

Sarah McDonnell (212) 843-9372

www.chinatownbidnow.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CHINATOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT SUPPORTERS
PRESENT PROPOSAL TO CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

NEW YORK, January 26 - Led by New York City Councilmember Margaret Chin, dozens of supporters of the Chinatown Business Improvement District (BID) presented their case to the City Planning Commission today. The Planning Commission is expected to vote on the proposal in February.

If the Planning Commission approves the BID proposal, the City Council will consider legislation in March and April.

Councilmember Chin opened the presentation with an impassioned speech highlighting the neighborhood's longstanding need for a BID: "This proposal is a loud and clear message that Chinatown is ready to determine its own future. The Chinatown community will now have an organization that can advocate for its multifaceted interests, not only bread and butter issues such as graffiti removal and sanitation, but job creation and tourist attractions as well. A Business Improvement District will allow Chinatown to reaffirm its place in the fabric of diverse neighborhoods that make up Lower Manhattan. A BID will not only improve the lives of residents and local businesses in Chinatown but will benefit surrounding communities as well, and ensure that the wider community prospers together."

"We are very encouraged by the response we received from the City Planning Commission today," said Patrick Yau, a member of the BID Steering Committee who also acted as its spokesman in front of the Commission. "We are confident in the quality of our presentation and hopeful that the Commission feels the same way."

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Members of the BID Steering Committee and the Chinatown community also testified before the Planning Commission. Additional supporters, who could not fit in the hearing room due to space limitations, filled the hallways and sidewalks with large signs clearly expressing their enthusiasm for the BID.

“We were pleased to have so many community members take the time to join us today and show their support for the BID,” said David Louie, co-chair of the BID Steering Committee. “Their overwhelming support means so much to us.”

The proposed Chinatown BID service area includes sections of Community Boards 1, 2 and 3, which required BID supporters to present their proposal at seven Community Board meetings over two months. The BID won unanimous support from all three Boards before meeting with the Planning Commission.

“We know the process is not over yet, but we are glad to have taken another step towards securing a BID,” added BID Steering Committee co-chair Michael Salzhauer.

The proposed BID would have a \$1.3 million budget for the first year, with 78 percent of the budget committed to sidewalk cleaning and trash removal. The balance would be used for holiday lighting and to advocate for a fair share of government services. More than \$1.9 million from other government sources is available once a BID is formed.

The BID would provide 30 entry level cleaning jobs for people from the community, with an efficiency of services individual property owners cannot achieve.

The proposed BID would have some of the lowest – perhaps the lowest – assessments of any of New York City’s 64 bids:

- 35 percent of owners would pay the minimum \$200 assessment – the cost of two Department of Sanitation summons;
- 74 percent would pay under \$1,000;
- A handful of properties would pay \$2,000 to \$5,000;
- \$1 per year for solely residential properties, including condos.

Since 1976, 64 communities have formed BIDs in New York City, many after contentious disputes by those who were afraid of change or who had a vested interest in preserving the status quo.