



Yin Kong
25 Henry St Apt #14
NYC, NY 10002

May 10, 2019

To Community Board 1:

I am a resident of Chinatown against the proposed new jail at 124-125 White Street.

I have many serious concerns over the economic and social impact on this vulnerable small business ecology and immigrant community. A ten-year plan of constant demolition and construction will have tremendous negative impact on connectivity, circulation, and quality of life for all Chinatown resident. Because of the site's proximity to the well-used Columbus Park and it's position between most of Chinatown and the N,Q subway stop entrance, this site will affect Chinatown resident's daily lives. I have not seen a plan put forth by the City to propose any mitigations for impacts to connectivity during this ten-year period. An entire decade of demolition and construction is an unforgivable burden for the City to put on our community which has already endured hardships from racial exclusionary practices to 9/11 fallout.

As someone with 2 degrees in Urban Studies/Design, I take issue with how this project has been represented by the city. This block-wide building going up 450 feet has not been rendered from the Bayard Street side of the neighborhood. From our side of the neighborhood, a rendering or diagram would show how this mammoth building would dwarf our historic neighborhood and change it's character significantly. A simple east-west section drawing would quickly reveal the disproportional scale of the proposed building. Instead, the drawings released by the City do not convey the full scale of the project and it's impact to the neighborhood. In my opinion, this is an intentional strategy and it is deceptive to the community.

The plan to de-map White St is alarming, especially when the White Street plaza was intended to be a community give back when the City built the existing jails in the 1980's. Correctional Officers have since taken over the public space once promised to the community to become their own parking lot. Building over this plaza is another example of the City's disregard to our community. Impact on pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and the plans for this building "cut through" needs to be investigated and communicated.

As a director of a non-profit based in Manhattan's Chinatown, I must also take issue with how poorly the city has taken on their duty of community engagement. Outreach in Chinese is the responsibility of the City if they are to build a project in our neighborhood. Hiring a translator to show up at a hearing is only the smallest possible piece of an impactful engagement strategy. Relying on the selected NAC community members to represent and communicate the ideas to the rest of the community is

unacceptable. As someone who sat in on those meetings, I have to raise concerns over the efficacy of how the City used the time of the NAC and how they have not fully conveyed our concerns. This negligence in community outreach and engagement signifies either incompetence or malintent.

Justice reform is very much needed, but the burden of the law maker's guilt cannot be unfairly placed on our immigrant community. A decade of large-scale demolition and construction will do irrevocable damage to our amazing neighborhood. Chinatown makes New York the unique city that it is, vote to protect us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yin Kong', written in a cursive style.

Yin Kong

Resident of Chinatown

Director of Think!Chinatown

B.A. Urban Studies, Columbia University

M. Arch Urban Design, Bartlett School of Architecture