

CHINATOWN
DOESN'T NEED



the
BUSINESS
IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT
(BID)



THE BID IS NOT HERE FOR US

The BID is not elected by the community: it does not represent us, and is not accountable to us.

A **Business Improvement District** (BID) is an organization that specific geographic areas can pay for services not offered by the city through **assessments (taxes)** charged to all members of the district, like sidewalk cleaning, marketing, and private security patrols.

Sounds great right?

BUT the Chinatown BID, originally formed in 2000, exists as a **property-based** business association.



華埠商業發展區
C H I N A T O W N
B U S I N E S S I M P R O V E M E N T D I S T R I C T

BID serves **property owners**, NOT the mom & pop business owners, not the local community made up of elders, families, renters, and unsheltered folks: In these pages, you'll find how

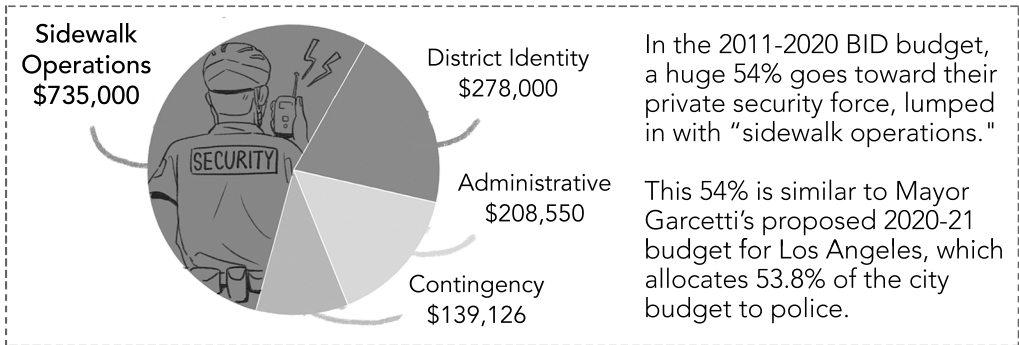
- 1) BID harasses the local community
- 2) the BID is ineffective and corrupt
- 3) BID contributes to the gentrification or displacement of the local community
- 4) the BID has failed small businesses during COVID



THE BID, ABUSE, & POLICING

BID is meant to improve the neighborhood, often claiming that they provide "security" and "safety."

BID hires private security agents to patrol Chinatown, known as the "Red Shirts." Equipped with **tasers, batons, handcuffs, and bikes**, these "Red Shirts" **do not keep the peace but assault the community**. They have been documented bullying elders, intimidating the unhoused, and harassing anyone who does not fit the profile of a middle-class professional.



Local Street Vendors

BID regularly patrols and surveils street vendors, making it harder for elders to simply exist on the sidewalk with their produce. BID will also threaten these elders with tickets, often intimidating them into leaving.

Local Musicians

Local musician Mr. Song would play his music at his usual spot by Wonder Bakery. Then during BID's musical event Chinatown Summer Nights, BID security members descended upon him demanding that he could only play with a permit. This consistent harassment forced Mr. Song to be displaced to 3rd Street Santa Monica.

Unhoused Members

BID regularly harasses unhoused community members, none more prominent than Theo, a local community activist who speaks out on houselessness. BID surveils and stalks Theo simply because he is a black unhoused person who finds shelter at Alpine Park. After defending himself and his right to exist in public space free of surveillance and harassment, Theo has faced even more harassment.

GEORGE YU BRINGS DISHONOR TO US ALL

Who is in charge of the BID and these Red Shirts? **George Yu.** He is the vice president of Macco Investments, which owns Far East Plaza in Chinatown. To put it simply, **George Yu is a power-hungry crook constructing BID into a racist, corrupt institution.**

BID President George Yu advocates for the death of houseless people.

George Yu asked a police officer to NOT fix dangerously altered streetlight wiring because he hoped that unhoused people would be electrocuted. **He purposefully leaves streetlights unfixed to kill unhoused people.**



BID is racist and classist.

In their marketing, BID **excludes the majority of local, immigrant-owned and immigrant-serving businesses** in favor of trendy eateries that serve the white and wealthy. They focus exclusively on expensive places like **Howlin' Ray's, Scoops,** and **Endorffine**— that cater to whiter and wealthier, non-local clientele. **Why?** To make Chinatown more attractive for the **rich, white professionals** who will “play” in our neighborhood, live in the luxury condos, and dine in the trendy restaurants.

In a particularly egregious example, BID President George Yu has told Kim Chuy, long-standing restaurant in Far East Plaza, that it is their “dirty customers” that make the bathrooms in Far East Plaza unkempt. Let's be clear that George Yu harasses businesses like Kim Chuy because he wants to drive away the immigrant-owned, immigrant-serving businesses that he feels “don't belong.”

BID and its President George Yu refuse accountability.

Although BID is supposedly a public institution, board meetings are kept **secret and inaccessible** to the wider public. Not only this, when local residents attended a meeting to demand George Yu stop harassing unhoused community members, he immediately shut the meeting down.

GEORGE YU IS A CROOK

LA County Superior Court issued a warrant for his arrest because he failed to show up in court twice after refusing to release public records about BID. (LA Curbed, 2020)



Warrant issued for head of Chinatown business improvement district

The courts have ordered him to turn over records sought by city watchdogs

By Jenna Chandler on February 5, 2020 5:08 pm



Far East Plaza in Chinatown. | Kwasi Boyd-Bouldin

A bench warrant was issued this morning in Los Angeles County Superior Court for George Yu—a real estate manager credited with the “revitalization” of Chinatown—for failing to produce documents two city watchdogs claim could prove he and other business owners were trying to stop the formation of a neighborhood council in Skid Row.

The BID does not even do its job.

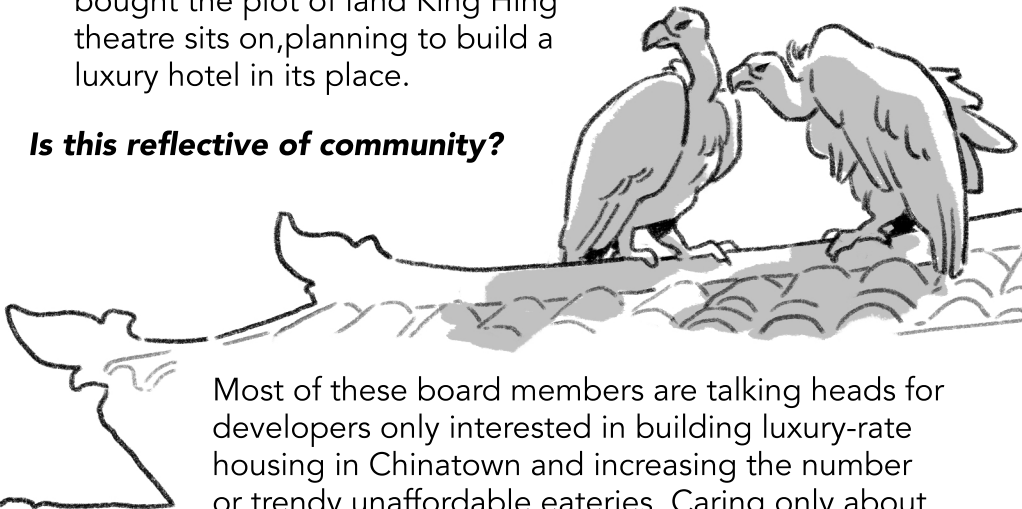
- They consistently **delay sending out Board of Directors nomination** forms to multiple benevolent associations and other organizations who oppose them, or have convenient excuses for not being able to accept their forms.
- They were unable **to get the required amount of property owner petitions by the 2020 deadline** to continue the BID for the next 5 years (they had to enlist politician support)
- Hosted Chinatown Summer Nights which **does NOT support existing, longstanding businesses within the neighborhood**; they choose to bring in restaurants outside of Chinatown instead.

THE BID'S PROPERTY "IMPROVEMENT"

However, it's not just George Yu, it's the entire system. These are some of the people that he brought in with him to be on the Board.

- **Jennifer Kim** a representative from Forrest City, the developer that built Blossom Plaza, the massive 237 unit luxury apartment complex in Chinatown
- **Jenni Harris** a representative from Atlas Capital Group, who's planning to build the Chinatown Station (formerly College Station) project, a 700-unit luxury building with no affordable housing. **CCED is currently suing Atlas Capital for their evasion of accountability in their approval process for the College Station Project**
- **Thomas Majich** a representative from Red Car, who has bought and flipped multiple plots of land in Chinatown, generating millions in profits. Most notably, they bought the plot of land King Hing theatre sits on, planning to build a luxury hotel in its place.

Is this reflective of community?



Most of these board members are talking heads for developers only interested in building luxury-rate housing in Chinatown and increasing the number or trendy unaffordable eateries. Caring only about money, they benefit from replacing the working-class community with white professionals. They profit off our displacement. Along with George Yu, they are the leaders driving gentrification in Chinatown.

But wait, what is gentrification?

BID IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF GENTRIFICATION OF CHINATOWN

Gentrification is the process of:

high rents



increased



policing

&



displacement

driving out the Chinatown residents who form our community — Chinatown seniors, immigrants, working class people and families, people of color.

The upscale businesses, hipster art galleries, and luxury condos moving into Chinatown have caused rents to skyrocket: **they destroy affordable housing and displace low-income people.** When their low-income clientele leaves, traditional Chinatown small businesses and mom and pop stores serving the low-income community suffer too. They face rising rents and are targeted for elimination by “hip” competitors: they are pushed out and forced to close. This is how in 2019, Chinatown lost **three full-service grocery stores**, decreasing foot traffic to surrounding restaurants and stores that made them lose business.

BID has seen more **LOSS** of mom and pop local businesses than increase in businesses because they are actively gentrifying the neighborhood.



Earlier in 2020, Redcar Properties evicted over 10 longstanding family/immigrant-owned businesses at The Shop shopping center. Business owners were forced to relocate to other parts of Chinatown and San Gabriel Valley, or retire entirely.

WHAT ARE NEXT STEPS?

Based off all of this, we know that BID is a major cause of gentrification in Chinatown. We know that BID President George Yu doesn't care about you. He steps on working-class immigrant families. **BID is making Chinatown worse.**

We want to ABOLISH BID.

They haven't even helped at all during COVID-19. COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted Chinatowns across North America due to sinophobia. Instead of looking for ways to support Chinatown's businesses, the BID has barely done anything to support small businesses, further demonstrating its lack of accountability and general ineptitude.

We want to ABOLISH BID.

The BID, rather than choosing to support the businesses suffering from the impacts of COVID-19 and gentrification, instead harassed and called the City of Los Angeles to ticket Yue Wa Market, one of the few remaining small produce stores in Chinatown, for putting stands onto the sidewalk. Yue Wa Market has remained open since COVID-19's early days to serve the community.

We want to ABOLISH BID.

Give Your Comment Against BID During the Renewal Meeting on September 29, 2020:

A Public Meeting on **September 29, 2020 at 10am** will be taking place to count the ballots from property owners voting YES or NO on renewing the BID. **Tell your Council Members that you do not want the BID in our community!**

If you see the Red Shirts harassing members of the community, record them!

ABOLISH BID!

Join the fight with Chinatown Community for Equitable Development (CCED)!

