

# Coalition to Protect Chinatown/LES

Chinese Staff and Workers Association • National Mobilization Against Sweatshops • Action by Lower East Side •  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund • Hunter College Department of Community Planning & Development ♦  
Chinese Restaurant Alliance, Inc. ♦ American Chinese Voters Alliance, Corp.

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## Principles for an Alternative Community-Based Rezoning Plan

The Coalition to Protect Chinatown and Lower East Side represents the residents, workers, and small businesses who make up the majority of the Chinatown and the Lower East Side community. We call for community planning that is accountable to the people who live and work here- the low-income working families and the small businesses of Chinatown and the Lower East Side. The Lower East Side, historically an immigrant community is now composed of: 44 percent Asian, 28 percent Latino, and 7 percent African-American. The median household income of residents in this area is \$24,000 while 33 percent are below poverty level.

In the face of this economic crisis, despite the critical need to protect vulnerable low-income communities of color the City has not only failed to meet these needs but has accelerated the destruction and displacement of this community. Since the East Village/Lower East Side rezoning plan has passed, permits for luxury condominiums and hotels in the Chinatown and the Lower East Side community have multiplied. Rents have skyrocketed for residents and small businesses. Dozens of buildings of long-time residents have been evicted by city agencies. Rent-stabilized apartments, Mitchell-Lama, and Section 8 are under threat, while local politicians promote the idea that vacant NYCHA land in the LES will be sold to private developers.

The Chinatown and Lower East Side community needs a plan that will serve and be accountable to the needs of this predominantly low-income community of color, not a plan that will further divide and displace its members. This planning initiative will include the area south of Houston from the East River to Bowery; east of Avenue D from Houston to 14<sup>th</sup> Street; and east from Centre Street from Spring to Park Row. This community plan is based on the following principles:

- 1) Protect the homes, workplaces, and businesses of the people who currently reside and work here; and not a plan driven by tourism and for the benefit of developers.
- 2) Includes and gives equal protections to the members of the Chinatown and Lower East Side community as one with common interests; not divisive, exclusionary, nor discriminatory.
- 3) Provides for the building of low-income housing and preserves the stock of rent-stabilized, Mitchell Lama, Section 8, and NYCHA housing in which the majority of current residents reside, particularly prohibiting the privatization and sale of NYCHA housing.
- 4) Preserves and protects the ethnic small businesses that serve our community, by prohibiting key money practices, providing for rent regulations for small businesses.
- 5) Provides for mandatory, on-site low-income housing for every new residential construction.
- 6) Defines affordable housing according to what is affordable to the low-income working families that live and work in the community.
- 7) Limits luxury high-rise development.

We invite everyone in the community who share our common interests in putting the needs of people first to join us in developing plans for the future of our community.