

# **Friends of Educational Opportunities in Chinatown** **華埠教育機會之友**

For Immediate Release

September 19, 2007

Contact: Susan Hsieh, (415) 274-6760 x303, [shsieh@caasf.org](mailto:shsieh@caasf.org)

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **OFFICIALS AND COMMUNITY PREPARE FOR CITY COLLEGE BOARD VOTE ON CHINATOWN CAMPUS**

**San Francisco, CA** – Friends of Educational Opportunities in Chinatown (FEOC) held a press conference yesterday morning to discuss the recent developments of the City College Chinatown project, among them a mass postcard and newspaper ad campaign, date change for the EIR certification and exemption vote hearing, and support from Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin on the exemption vote.

The EIR certification and exemption vote originally scheduled for September 27 has been moved to October, with the final date to be announced by City College at a later time; and the final project design approval originally scheduled for October 25 has also been moved to later next month. All three votes are now scheduled for one day in October.

On this day, the City College Board of Trustees will make a critical decision about the proposed Chinatown campus on Kearny and Washington Streets. At least five trustees, out of seven, must vote “yes” to exempt the Chinatown project from city planning height limits.

If the trustees do not approve an exemption, the Chinatown project goes to the city planning commission, where it will essentially be killed. The planning commission does not have the authority to approve a building that is taller than 65 ft. in the area of the proposed campus, and all of the current design options listed by City College as workable options exceed 65 ft. A “no” vote from the trustees against an exemption is a vote to kill the project.

City College, as a state body, has the authority to exempt any of its projects from local planning requirements. Historically, the City College Board of Trustees have always voted for exemption, including on the recently opened Mission Campus.

FEOC launched a postcard and newspaper ad campaign last week to urge the trustees to vote for exemption. FEOC is asking all San Franciscans to fill out the bilingual English-Chinese postcards, which read, “[Dear Trustees,] As a San Franciscan who believes in educational opportunities, I urge you to support the construction of a City College campus in Chinatown now. Your vote is needed to exempt the project from city planning restrictions. Without your exemption vote, there will be no campus. That is unacceptable to me.”

Newspaper ads which carried a similar message were published on Sunday in five major Chinese language papers. At today’s press conference, speakers urged businesses and homes citywide to sign postcards and hang the ads in their windows to remind college trustees that a positive exemption vote is critical to the Chinatown project. Speakers included Vincent Pan, executive director of Chinese for

Affirmative Action; Phil Ting, City Assessor-Recorder, Eric Mar and Norman Yee, SF School Board Members; David Chiu, San Francisco Small Business Commissioner, who also spoke on behalf of Supervisor Peskin; Reverend Calvin Wong of the Chinese Christian Union; and Siu Yuen Chung, president of Chinese American Association for Commerce.

Members of FEOC met with Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin, City College officials, the director of the SF Planning Department, and other community leaders on September 16 to hear the latest development on possible Chinatown project design alternatives, including a new two-site 13 story and 5 story option. At this meeting, Peskin expressed his support for FEOC's "Guiding Principles" (copy attached), which includes the need for an exemption vote of the Chinatown project. Peskin joins Public Defender Jeff Adachi, Ting, Mar, and Yee as city officials who are urging the trustees to vote for exemption.

No state legislator who represents the Chinatown neighborhood has yet come out to support the struggle against the owners of Hilton Hotel or to help secure exemption of the Chinatown project from city planning height limits.

Since last spring, tens of thousands of Chinese community members have taken time to learn about the educational benefits of the Chinatown project. Community members have witnessed how the owners of the Hilton Hotel and their paid lobbyists have shamelessly used deceptive tactics to split the Chinese community over this project. Hilton's campaign of deception has failed, though, to break the unity within the Chinese community and its support for the Chinatown project.

With constant coverage of the Chinatown project by the Chinese-language press, television and radio, over 23,000 community members have expressed their determined support for the project through petitions, letter writing and participation in public hearings and meetings. Additionally they have urged the college trustees to consider the addition of an auditorium for educational and community use.

Between now and the October board meeting, the owners of Hilton Hotel will pour more money into its campaign of deception to raise more objections about the project and persuade college trustees to vote against exemption. The Chinese community can expect the owners of Hilton Hotel and hostile, non-Chinatown neighborhood groups to make false accusations about the environmental impacts of the Chinatown project. These opponents want the Chinatown project to go to the City Planning Commission so that the project can be killed.

## **Friends of Educational Opportunities in Chinatown**

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A NEW CITY COLLEGE CHINATOWN/NORTH BEACH CAMPUS**

#### **1. A 1<sup>st</sup> Class Educational and Community Facility**

Build a 1st class educational environment for students and faculty, with quality classrooms, laboratories, student and administrative support services in one consolidated building located at the corner of Kearny and Washington Street. Feature amenities that can be shared with the community, e.g. library, café, book store, auditorium.

#### **2. Public Transit and Pedestrian Safety First**

In accordance with City policies and priorities, public transit and pedestrian safety FIRST. No on-site parking is necessary.

### **3. A “Green and Sustainable” Building**

Design a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) “Silver” standard facility. One that: maximizes day lighting benefits with appropriate window wall/floor depths, alternate exterior materials and features for different building orientations; promotes heat retention in the winter, while reducing heat gain in the summer and the “island effect” of reflective wall and roof materials.

### **4. Maintain Tower Set-Backs along Kearny & Washington**

Maintain building “tower” setbacks along Kearny and Washington Streets to: narrow the profile and reduce the skyline impact of the project; maintain a sense of relief for pedestrians; provide a landscaped terrace at the podium level to relate to Portsmouth Square.

### **5. Severely Limit Shadows & Negative Wind Impacts**

NO increased shadow or wind impacts other than those already defined for the SFCCD Project described in the Draft EIR (SCH No. 98031039).

### **6. No Delays in Project Review, Approval or Construction**

Chinatown has waited almost 30 years for a permanent Community College facility. Further delays create increased project costs and constitute an ongoing injustice to the educational aspirations and needs of Chinatown-North Beach area students.

### **7. Approve Exemption from Local Planning Requirements**

The City College Board of Trustees must vote for exemption of this project from local City Planning Requirements. Continuing adult learning opportunities, career enhancement, certification programs, citizenship preparation and English as a Second Language courses assure maximum public benefit to the community and the City-at-large that far outweigh and mitigate any potential impacts of this educational facility. City Planning Requirements will not allow City College to build a facility that meets the educational needs of the community.

# # #

*Friends of Educational Opportunities in Chinatown was formed in March 2007 to support the need for expanded adult education opportunities in Chinatown and a permanent City College campus to meet this need. [www.supportchinatowncampus.org](http://www.supportchinatowncampus.org)*