

Chinese-American Committee Member of Community Board 1, Eric Yu, Launches Campaign for City Council with Over 100 Supporters at Southbridge Towers

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Eric Yu, a Chinese-American member of Manhattan Community Board 1, officially launched his campaign for City Council in District 1 on January 12 at his residence in Southbridge Towers, supported by over 100 attendees from diverse backgrounds.

Yu is the third Democratic challenger to current City Council Member Chris Marte, joining Jewish-American attorney Elizabeth Lewinsohn and attorney Jess Coleman. A fourth candidate, Chinese-American pastor Helen Qiu, is running as a Republican, making this a highly contested race.

Eric Yu's Background

Introducing himself, Yu shared that he was born in Chinatown and later moved with his family to a top-performing school district in Queens, where his mother emphasized education. He earned a degree in economics from SUNY Stony Brook and a master's in urban affairs from Queens College. After graduating, Yu lived in Brooklyn until 2018, when he and his wife Nancy relocated to Southbridge Towers in Lower Manhattan.

Yu has spent over 20 years working in Lower Manhattan, holding roles at the NYC Department of Transportation and the Department of Design and Construction, focusing on rail access and subway service disruptions. Currently, he works in budgeting and analysis for subway service delivery. Yu also has experience driving buses, assisting individuals with developmental disabilities, serving on MTA's hazardous materials response team, and volunteering as an EMT.

From 1995 to 1996, Yu served in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves as a ground radio repair specialist, earning an honorable discharge. He credits his military experience for instilling discipline and resilience.

Commitment to Community

Soon after moving to Southbridge Towers, the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Yu joined the Southbridge Towers Residents Committee, where he served as treasurer and later vice-chair. In 2021, he became a member of Community Board 1, participating in committees on transportation, waterfronts, parks, and culture. Witnessing the declining quality of life in his community post-pandemic, Yu decided to run for City Council to effect change.

Campaign Platform

Yu's campaign centers on public safety, economic vitality, and restoring essential city services:

Public Safety:

Yu criticized the lack of attention to rising crime rates over the past four years, pointing to inadequate law enforcement and dangerous conditions in streets, subways, and parks. He advocates:

- Enforcing quality-of-life laws.
- Supporting law enforcement.

- Enhancing mental health outreach services with trained social workers collaborating with law enforcement.
- Opposing homeless shelters near schools, citing a shelter near P.S. 320 on Pearl Street as unacceptable.

City Services:

Yu emphasized the need for stronger city services, including increased park patrols, quality public schools, and effective enforcement of city regulations.

Economic Vitality:

Yu noted the economic challenges of vacant storefronts and buildings in Lower Manhattan, which contribute to higher crime rates. He proposed:

- Developing a resilient economy to reduce reliance on regressive taxes and fees that disproportionately affect low- and middle-income residents.
- Opposing congestion pricing, which he calls a “mobility tax” that hinders economic growth.
- Reopening Park Row to private vehicles, bike lanes, and pedestrians, and reducing traffic on Pearl Street and St. James Place to provide direct north-south routes for emergency vehicles.

Yu drew on his family history, recalling how his grandfather owned two traditional Chinese restaurants on Mott Street. Their early-morning operations now contrast with the 9 PM closures typical today, reflecting Chinatown’s economic decline.

“I will work to make Lower Manhattan safer, more prosperous, and provide the city services we deserve,” Yu declared, pledging to represent the community effectively as its next City Council Member.