



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

## Forwarding: Mayor de Blasio Announces Plan for Restoration of Historic Chinatown Building

BRIAN KAVANAGH October 5, 2021

| ISSUE: 70 MULBERRY STREET, CHINATOWN, LOWER MANHATTAN, HISTORIC PRESERVATION



**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced a \$170 million plan to reconstruct 70 Mulberry Street, a historic, City-owned building in the heart of Chinatown. The building, which was severely damaged by a fire in January 2020, is a cultural and community hub for Chinatown. The plan announced today will preserve and restore portions of the building's historic façade, add two additional floors, and result in over 68,000 square feet (sf) of space. The building was previously home to five community and cultural organizations, all of

which will be welcomed back as tenants.

“70 Mulberry Street has been a beloved gathering place for the Chinatown community for generations,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “After the devastating fire in January 2020 destroyed much of the building, we promised to rebuild. This historic \$170 million commitment will preserve the historic façade and add two floors of additional space, ensuring the community and nonprofit tenants have an incredible building to return to. These investments will ensure 70 Mulberry can continue to be a critical community space for generations to come.”

The plan announced today is the product of an over one-year community visioning process that featured a community survey and a series of public forums and events. The visioning process was guided by the 70 Mulberry Advisory Committee, consisting of building tenants, local elected officials, and representatives from Manhattan Community Board 3. As part of its work, the advisory committee also commissioned a preservation assessment to assess the condition of the building’s façade and gather repair recommendations.

The restoration of 70 Mulberry Street will include:

- Over 50,000 square feet of space to return tenants
- A new multi-purpose room new that could serve as an auditorium and gym to provide recreation space to the community
- Over 6,500 square feet of additional office and community spaces
- Building enhancements to ensure greater accessibility, including an elevator

Substantial completion is anticipated in 2027. More information on the reconstruction of 70 Mulberry Street is available at [nyc.gov/70mulberry](https://nyc.gov/70mulberry).

"A \$170 million commitment from the Mayor to rebuild 70 Mulberry represents a bright future for Chinatown's residents. For the first time, Chinatown will have a fully accessible auditorium/gymnasium and a community space for artists, and the 5 non-profits who were forced to relocate after the fire will finally be able to return. By preserving the building's facade and constructing a state-of-the-art facility, the city is making a historic investment in a community that has uniquely suffered over the last few years. I am grateful to the Mayor for the significant increase in funding, and I thank DCAS for their commitment to the community engagement process. I look forward to seeing my former elementary school become a vibrant community center for generations to come," said **Council Member Margaret Chin**.

"70 Mulberry Street is an integral part of Chinatown's history and served vital social functions," said **Representative Nydia M. Velazquez**. "It is crucial that all community stakeholders have their voices heard and are fully engaged to ensure a timely restoration that preserves the building's heritage while embracing the future. I call on all stakeholders to participate in the survey and townhall to help envision the future of this local gem."

"I commend Mayor de Blasio and his administration for committing an additional \$90 million in funding for 70 Mulberry Street, a place that is a cornerstone of the Chinatown community," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "I look forward to hearing about the proposed designs to restore and keep parts of this historic building intact, and a continuation of the efforts to engage with the community and local stakeholders."

"It's great news for the Chinatown community and for so many people who know and love 70 Mulberry Street that the Mayor has followed through with his promise to provide the capital funding necessary to bring this community treasure back to life," said **State Senator Brian Kavanagh**. "Today's commitment of \$170 million to rebuild the building and restore its historic facade will enable the project to move forward in a manner consistent with the

inclusive visioning process that our community leaders, the displaced tenant organizations, and my fellow elected officials and I called for in the days immediately following the catastrophic fire—and which the City has welcomed. While some of the details still need to be worked out, I am heartened that the community and cultural organizations that were displaced by the fire will be welcomed back and will be able to serve our community for many years to come.”

"It's been over a year since a fire burned down 70 Mulberry in the heart of our community," said **Assembly Member Yuh-Line Niou**. "The Mayor made a commitment to make our community whole again after the devastating fire and to keep this space as community space. We are thankful for the much needed funding that the City has stepped up to commit to this project. It will bring more accessibility and opportunities for services to the future space. Going forward, we must ensure that we continue engaging our community to discuss how best to approach design and future use for this critical project. Thank you to all of our elected partners, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders for their tireless work."

“The Chinese-American Planning Council thanks Mayor de Blasio for the increased investment to rebuild 70 Mulberry Street. We are delighted to know that there is a commitment to restore the building, move back in the five nonprofit tenants, and add a couple floors to meet growing community needs,” said **Wayne Ho, President and CEO of the Chinese-American Planning Council**. “We would like to thank the Mayor’s Office, DCAS, DFTA, and elected officials – Congresswoman Velazquez, Senator Kavanagh, Assembly Member Niou, Manhattan Borough President Brewer, and Council Member Chin – for their support since the fire. We are excited that CPC’s Chinatown Senior Center will be part of this modernized, ADA accessible community center, providing more than 300 seniors per day with a hot meal, social interaction, cultural programs, English classes, public benefits

enrollment, and more.”

"The Museum of Chinese in America alongside its neighbors are grateful to the Mayor's leadership, NYC DCAS, and Councilmember Chin for their advocacy to create a true community center in the heart of Chinatown. MOCA looks forward to documenting its creation as a major milestone in Chinatown's preservation," said **Nancy Yao Maasbach, President, Museum of Chinese in America.**

“Chen Dance Center thanks Mayor de Blasio and Councilwoman Margaret Chin for their heroic support for the restoration and rebuilding of the iconic 70 Mulberry Street; home to 5 leading non-profit organizations of Chinatown. The restored site will be a cultural and educational hub for the community, and a compelling destination for all New Yorkers,” said **H.T. Chen, Artistic Director of Chen Dance Center.**

“The City’s continuing commitment to re-build 70 Mulberry Street, amid recovering from the challenges of a global pandemic, is to be commended. We thank Councilwoman Margaret Chin and her staff’s untiring effort to include this re-building commitment in the City’s capital plan, Mayor Bill de Blasio and all involved City agencies’ dedication, and all our local elected representatives’ caring, support, and exercise of their leadership to bring this first ADA compliant community center in Chinatown another step closer to reality.” Lee further urged the City “to engage local vendors, contractors, and workforce in the planning, design, supply, and build out process of the building, so that this community center is truly built by the community,” said **Hong Shing Lee, Executive Director of Chinatown Manpower Project (CMP).**

“There is still a long road ahead of us, but the outlook has just been made much promising as the City has taken a substantial step toward re-building 70 Mulberry Street”, said **Echo Wong, Board of Director of the United East Athletic Association (UEAA).** “We look forward to the additional space for the community that the new funding commitment has made possible,

and the added programming potential it creates. We can hardly wait for these social service, health and wellness, history and art, and leadership development programs to benefit the multi-generational users of this facility.” Wong continues “UEAA wishes to thank Mayor de Blasio and Councilmember Chin for staying committed to their pre-COVID promise. Today’s announcement gave us a much needed new hope after a long year and a half of uncertainty and despair.”

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