

Communication from Public

Name: Zen Sekizawa

Date Submitted: 06/16/2025 07:11 PM

Council File No: 25-0408

Comments for Public Posting: Agenda item #6. Dear Councilmember and Staff of CD14, I urge you to vote no on the property based BID conversion. My name is Zen Sekizawa, and I am a long-time community member of Little Tokyo. My family has been rooted in this neighborhood for over 80 years—my grandparents opened the Atomic Café, a historic cultural landmark. I am writing to express my deep concern and outrage over the continued employment of Michael James, a Safety Ambassador with the Little Tokyo Business Improvement District (BID). I have personally witnessed Mr. James use excessive force against some of the most vulnerable members of our community. His behavior is violent, erratic, and entirely devoid of accountability. I have been harassed, followed, and physically assaulted by both Michael James and Jessica Delgadillo (no longer employed). This assault occurred on December 15, 2022, at Toriumi Plaza—an area where the BID was not even authorized to operate. I was punched in the face by Delgadillo and pepper-sprayed by James. Several others were pepper sprayed, including an unhoused woman who lived on that street. Ellen Endo, Brian Kito, and the Little Tokyo Business Association (LTBA) were immediately informed of this incident via email. There was no response. Instead, Ellen Endo abused her power at The Rafu Shimpo by publishing a fluff piece about Delgadillo adopting a puppy, further ignoring and erasing the harm done. This silence reflects a systemic failure of responsibility and care. Even more troubling, the LTBA awarded Michael James a “Hero Award” in March 2025. This is not only outrageous—it is a clear endorsement of violence by those tasked with managing public safety in our neighborhood. This is not an isolated issue. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) across the country have been at the forefront of the criminalization of homelessness and are often tools of gentrification and the displacement of poor and working-class people. Little Tokyo is no exception. The BID’s operations and enforcement tactics directly threaten the safety and dignity of the very people who have called this neighborhood home for generations. Videos documenting items below were sent to CD14: -Michael James violently attacking a fleeing person -An unhinged interaction involving Michael James, with Kristin Fukushima (LTCC) and Joy Yamaguchi (JANM) present -Michael James making

inappropriate comments to a minor -Michael James stalking me as I walked from the market These are just a few examples of a long-standing pattern of misconduct, and of a complete lack of de-escalation training, professionalism, or care by LTBA. I am demanding the following: -A NO vote on any property-based BID conversion until independent oversight, transparency, and true community accountability are established. -The immediate termination of Michael James and his permanent removal from any position in Little Tokyo. -An independent investigation into the current operations of the Little Tokyo BID, including their use of public space, personnel conduct, and decision-making processes. Little Tokyo deserves community-led safety rooted in care—not coercion, surveillance, or intimidation. We deserve transparency, not silence; protection, not policing. Thank you, Zen

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/16/2025 07:33 PM

Council File No: 25-0408

Comments for Public Posting: Little Tokyo is a treasure. The lack of input from and consultation with residents and homeowners on the proposed Property-Based Little Tokyo Business Improvement District guarantees that this is not in their best interests.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/16/2025 12:17 PM

Council File No: 25-0408

Comments for Public Posting: I am a resident in Little Tokyo, writing to call for a delay on this Tuesday's vote on the transition of the Little Tokyo Business Improvement District (BID) from merchant-based to property-based. Numerous concerns about not only the proposal but also the process taken to approve this petition have motivated me to send this email. These include: 1) A lack of answers by the current BID board who are championing this transition on a number of items including: How the board will be structured; How board members will be selected; How property owners paying the proposed BID assessment would interact with the board about future assessment fees and BID operations; How fee-paying property owners will review or provide feedback on the BID's Budget 2) In a survey organized by a coalition of Little Tokyo Community Members, 75% of responding property owners have not received their ballots to vote on the transition. This does not demonstrate a democratic process. Property owners should have been mailed a ballot automatically, but those who didn't receive one and have submitted a request for a ballot still have not received them in time for Tuesday's deadline 3) Public meetings have not been publicized and have been held with little accessibility. The in-person meeting scheduled for Monday June 16th at 9 AM was announced only 3 days in advance, and is inaccessible for many working members of the community. 4) Residential parcels do not receive the same level of special benefits as the commercial parcels, but are expected to pay for marketing and activation costs, which solely benefit commercial parcels. These rates are not responsive to payers' needs, and can be increased up to 10% every year without public approval. Given the unprecedented circumstances facing Little Tokyo in the last week, the community has been unable to meet to discuss these concerns with the Little Tokyo Business Improvement District Advisory Board and its members. I am asking that instead of moving forward with business as usual, the Councilmember acknowledge the above concerns and the community's urgent need to address them before this vote moves forward. I am calling on the Council Office to delay the vote, and give our community a chance to inform and discuss this significant change to our neighborhood.