

May 12, 2020

Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors,

As former Fellows of the Chinatown Urban Institute, we strongly support Deland Chan's nomination to the Planning Commission.

Deland co-founded Chinatown Urban Institute when she was working at Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC), and we graduated from the program during one of the years when Deland taught the program between the years of 2010 and 2019. Even though Deland no longer works at the CCDC, she has continued to come back as a volunteer to mentor young people through the Chinatown Urban Institute, which speaks volumes about her commitment to participatory planning.

The Chinatown Urban Institute is a youth empowerment and professional development program offered by the Chinatown Community Development Center. Its mission is to educate and empower young leaders ages 18-24 to understand and take action on urban planning issues, using the City as a living and breathing laboratory for knowledge. Through an inquiry-based approach, Urban Fellows aim to learn the history, technical skills, and practical applications of the planning profession as a tool for social justice and advocacy.

We fondly remember our biweekly sessions, with Deland leading lectures or facilitating interactive seminars with community leaders. We spent many afternoons learning about Chinatown and other San Francisco neighborhoods through walking tours, bike tours, and fieldwork. For many of us, this was our first exposure to urban planning and enabled us to see a pathway for us to be involved in doing this work. Deland's work aimed to make planning tangible and accessible, rather than something that consisted of theoretical academic jargon.

Over 120+ graduates of the program have gone on to pursue careers in city government, the non-profit and private sectors, and academia. The Chinatown Urban Institute has provided hands-on experience in grassroots community planning and allowed us to see the possibilities for long-term professional and personal pathways to improving our communities.

We strongly urge you to support Deland's nomination to the Planning Commission. She has worked for more than a decade as an educator committed to building the pipeline of future planners, and her experience as an educator, planner, and researcher will add a multidimensional perspective that will be inspiring and needed on the Planning Commission.

Sincerely,

*Organizations are for identification purposes only.*

- Preston Lam, Founder, Densify Lab
- Linda Ly, Planner, Alameda County

- Diana Pang, Community Building Supervisor, Chinatown CDC
- Joyce Slen, Project Manager, Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development
- Tracy Zhu, Board Member, Chinese for Affirmative Action
- Maggie Dong, District 3 Youth Commissioner, San Francisco Youth Commission
- Sarah Gowing, San Francisco State University graduate student
- Erin Dong, SFUSD Academic Counselor
- Harriet Hu, Medical Device Engineer
- Adrienne Tran, Product Manager at Tesla
- Allen Lu, Administrator at Bosch Baha'i Center of Learning
- Jessica Kyo, Recruiter, Amazon Web Services
- Tianlan Shen, San Francisco State University student