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## Woodside leaders, pols propose cheaper BID option for small businesses

Critics say the plan will drag merchants into unneeded expenses

BY [JOSEPH STEPANSKY](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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Woodside leaders want to give business owners a taste of BID-lite.

The community board and pols in Woodside recently proposed a cheaper model for a business improvement district that they hope will speed the BID's instatement. However, detractors said the plan will drag businesses into unneeded expenses.

The new model, which was announced by Small Business Services in June and has yet to debut in the

city, will decrease annual costs that create "barriers" in BID formation, said Joseph Conley, chairman of Community Board 2.

"I think it's one of those entrance steps you take before you take the big leap," he said.

A business improvement district "express" would focus specifically on sanitation and maintenance services and scale back on public safety, marketing and the appointment of a paid executive director included in full-fledged districts, according to Small Business Services, lowering the required annual fee for shop owners.

Chairman of the Woodside Neighborhood Association David Rosasco called the stripped-down plan "more-palatable," after arguing a full-fledged BID would hasten gentrification and strain merchants in the neighborhood.

"This is a working-class community," said Rosasco. "If they're going to try to transform Woodside, they're going to face opposition."

The district would likely stretch from 57th to 63rd Sts. on Roosevelt Ave. and extend from 39th Ave. to 69th St. on Woodside Ave., Conley said. Over half of the business owners in the proposed area would have to approve the plan, which would then go before the City Council and mayor.

Frank Ottomanelli, 46, whose family opened their namesake butcher shop on Woodside Ave. in 1960, saw potential in the plan.

"A community is like a machine, you have to maintain it," said Ottomanelli. "But no one's looking to spend unnecessarily."

Gosha Gruszecka, 45, who opened Bursztynek Deli on Woodside Ave. in April, said the services were too redundant for local penny-pinchers.

“Everyone cleans in front of their shops already,” said Gruszecka. “Right now each penny counts.”

Other shop owners noted that Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer — who supports the BID along with a swath of local pols — already allocated \$31,000 in city funds to bring DOE-funded street cleaners to Woodside. He promised to continue to allocate funds if the BID did not pass, his spokesman said.

With more outreach, Conley said he was confident a district could be approved in less than six months.

“It’s an attractive option,” he said.