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City Limits WEEKLY

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BETTING ON A FULTON BID

Business owners and neighbors in downtown Brooklyn are pushing for a Business Improvement District. > *T. Adams*

Chilly passers-by were greeted by the roars of the Brooklyn "Steppers" Marching Band as they blew and beat out a rendition of Madonna's "Borderline" on the sidewalk in front of the Fort Green Sports Club. The club played host to last Thursday's fundraiser, sponsored by Pratt Area Community Council (PACC), for a Business Improvement District (BID) on Fulton Street between Flatbush and Classon Avenues. "A BID will bring capitol dollars—for new street lights, to fix sidewalks and for street cleaning," says Deborah Howard, executive director of PACC, a community development group serving Clinton Hill, Fort Green and Bedford-Stuyvesant. The 51 BIDs in New York City operate by collecting annual dues from property owners, who then decide how the money is spent. The BIDs in Times Square and Union Square have helped boost business, reduce crime, improve trash removal and coordinate holiday events. "Every neighborhood that has a BID gets a real incentive to do business better, be safer, and get greater attention from government," said Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, one of roughly 200 attendees. But despite having gained the support of local business owners and artists, who agreed to donate goods and services to the evening's silent auction, advocates of the BID still need to convince a majority of the strip's 200+ merchants to participate before bringing the proposition before the City Council in 2006. Melissa Lee, PACC's director of economic development is hopeful. "They will be leveraging their funds to see a tangible impact," she said. "They will be reinvesting in their community." (T. Adams) [12/12/05]