



June 24, 2025

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City Hall
New York, NY, 10007

Chair Dan Garodnick
New York City Department of City Planning
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, NY, 10271

Commissioner Ahmed Tigani
New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

Commissioner James Oddo
New York City Department of Buildings
280 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Re: 43 Bleecker Street and 142 Greene Street, and other failures of the SoHo/NoHo/Chinatown Rezoning:

Dear Mayor Adams, Chair Garodnick, Commissioner Tigani, and Commissioner Oddo;

The SoHo/NoHo/Chinatown upzoning is the latest chapter in the City's futile and counterproductive insistence of using land-use deregulation as an affordable housing policy tool. Our recent report on the upzoning's impact on the local housing market demonstrates the failure of this intervention in the more than three years since its approval

(<https://media.villagepreservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/09094519/Report-The-SoHo-NoHo-Chinatown-Rezoning-Taking-Stock-FINAL.pdf>).

Not a single unit of housing, affordable or otherwise, has been built to date within the rezoning district. By contrast, the neighborhood has seen a reduction in its affordable rent regulated housing stock, in many cases seemingly directly as a result of the rezoning. On top of that, several of the

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few contemplated residential projects under way have consisted of as-of-right luxury development with no affordable housing set aside—an outcome that we anticipated and warned about, but that the City dismissed as impossible. In at least one of those projects (43 Bleecker Street), the City itself has been complicit in allowing the developer to avoid the on-site affordable housing requirement.

There are proposed plans to convert the loft structure at 43 Bleecker Street into a 100% market-rate, multi-unit residential development, with no affordable housing. The developer intends to utilize the option allowed by the rezoning whenever a development project contains less than 25,000 square feet of new residential space. Under this provision, the developer can make a contribution to a City-managed “Affordable Housing Fund” instead of actually including any affordable housing within the development — a fund that currently has \$0 in it, has never produced a single unit of affordable housing, and lacks a clear mechanism for doing so.

Three rent regulated Interim Multiple Dwelling (IMD) units were eliminated at 43 Bleecker Street in anticipation of this project. Although applications to legalize these units as residential (ie. use group 17D) were filed, they were subsequently withdrawn, and the process never concluded, leaving them classified as commercial. Nonetheless, the City is allowing the developer to treat the square footage of these units as residential for purposes of calculating the project’s added residential square footage. The ensuing reduction in the total additional residential square footage contemplated for this project allows the developer to do a 100% luxury housing conversion with no affordable units. We strongly urge you to reverse this decision and not treat these units as existing residential uses for the purposes of calculating the new residential square footage of the development, so as to prevent the developer from avoiding on-site affordable housing requirements.

The proposed residential conversion under way at 142 Greene Street is following a similar path. Like 43 Bleecker Street, it could not have happened as-of-right without the rezoning; and also like 43 Bleecker Street, it will, as a result of the rezoning, consist of 100% luxury housing with no affordable units. This building once contained multiple Joint Live-Work Quarters for Artists. But these had been vacated by the time this five-story, 24,200 square foot building was purchased by the current developer in February, 2022, after the rezoning passed. The proposal contemplates the construction of additional levels at the top of the building, and of a sub-cellar, and the development of the entire seven-story building as an ultra-luxury single-family residence. The development plans made public do not offer a detailed square footage breakdown that might show whether the conversion would add 25,000 square feet of new residential square footage. But they also indicate no intention to include any additional units, least of all affordable ones, within the single-family mansion.

While the entire project would clearly exceed 25,000 square feet, it is not clear how much, if any, of that square footage is being assigned to non-zoning mechanical space and non-residential uses. We strongly urge city agencies to carefully scrutinize this application to ensure that, if it does exceed 25,000 square feet of residential space, the on-site affordable

housing requirements are triggered and enforced. If it does not, it's worth noting how easily and successfully developers have done exactly what we warned about: utilizing its many loopholes to avoid the affordable housing requirements that were the ostensible purpose of the rezoning, profit handsomely from its benefits, and destroy existing affordable housing in the process.

The City promoted the SoHo/NoHo/Chinatown rezoning as a way of making these neighborhoods more affordable and inclusive. And yet, the rezoning it pushed through seems almost designed to encourage as-of-right luxury residential and commercial development that can easily evade the window dressing that was the proposal's "affordable" housing requirement. The results thus far have been precisely as expected. The upzoning is poised to make these neighborhoods more exclusive and expensive, while slowly squeezing out the legacy pockets of affordability that remained when the City put the area in its crosshairs.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc:

Councilmember Carlina Rivera
Councilmember Christopher Marte
Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
State Senator Brian Kavanagh
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