

**Bowery Alliance of Neighbors - Broadway Residents Coalition - Chinatown Working Group
City Club of New York - CNU NYC (Congress for a New Urbanism New York City Chapter)
Cooper Square Committee - East Village Community Coalition
Kathryn Freed, Former City Councilmember - FRIENDS of Upper East Side Historic Districts
Greenwich Village Community Task Force - Humanscale NYC and Tribeca Trust
Landmark West! - Lower East Side Preservation Initiative - Met Council on Housing
National Mobilization Against Sweatshops - New York City Loft Tenants
NoHo Neighborhood Association - SoHo Alliance - South Village Neighbors
Tenants PAC - Victorian Society New York - Village Preservation**

Councilmember Keith Powers
250 Broadway, Suite 1815
New York, NY 10007

November 3, 2021

Dear Councilmember Powers,

We are organizations from across the neighborhoods directly affected by this proposed rezoning, as well as from across New York City and State, and beyond. We represent thousands of individuals and a broad range of interests and concerns. But we share a common message as it relates to the SoHo/NoHo/Chinatown Rezoning proposal before the City Council:
we strongly urge you to reject this plan.

Our reasons for opposition vary among groups, but they include:

- The plan is unlikely to result in the creation of any significant amount of affordable housing due to multiple loopholes and exemptions in the plan. Even with affordable housing included, the developments the plan will create will actually make these neighborhoods wealthier and less diverse, and their housing more expensive.
- The plan puts a target on existing rent regulated affordable housing in the neighborhood, providing a strong economic incentive for its demolition and the displacement of its residents — predominantly low-to-moderate income, and disproportionately seniors, artists, and Asian Americans.
- The plan disproportionately impacts Chinatown and its predominantly Asian American residents, targeting that area and its residents for the largest upzoning, and creating the largest incentive for displacement.
- The plan will force out independent and arts-related businesses, making it difficult for anything other than big box destination chain retail and mega-

bars and restaurants to survive in these neighborhoods, with its allowance for retail and eating and drinking establishments of unlimited size.

- The plan will encourage and allow oversized development in the area — up to 12 FAR, the greatest legally allowable density in New York State for residential use, which is two and a half times the size current rules for this area allow, and two and a half times the size of average building size in the neighborhood currently.
- The plan will encourage the demolition of historic buildings recognized at the city, state, and federal level.
- The plan will impose a punitive and excessively high tax on artists who wish to sell their homes.
- The plan will not protect the artists who have long been a foundation of these neighborhoods, but make their continued presence in the neighborhood more tenuous and difficult.
- The plan will have a negative impact upon the environment, by encouraging vastly increased density of development in an area with existing intractable pollution hot spots, and by encouraging demolition rather than adaptive reuse.
- The plan will allow the expansion of New York University and other private universities in the area (which is currently prohibited), breaking prior promises made to these communities, and allowing such developments to be built free of affordable housing requirements.
- The plan allows a broad range of very lucrative uses at high densities, including offices, hotels, retail, community facilities including private universities, and even luxury condos and rentals of 25,000 sq. ft. or less, with no requirement for inclusion of affordable housing, making the creation of affordable housing here highly unlikely, and contradicting one of the main rationales for the plan.
- The plan greatly increases incentives for, and the likelihood of, harassment of tenants.
- Various community stakeholders have offered alternative approaches and plans to address legitimate issues regarding outdated zoning, restrictions on reasonably-sized retail, legalization of non-artist residents, and creating new affordable housing. But these have been ignored by the City and are not reflected in this plan; in fact, this plan as structured will likely do more harm than good in these regards.

Approving this sweeping proposal, especially in the final days of the administration of Mayor de Blasio, who cannot be held responsible for its efficacy, would be a terrible mistake. We strongly urge you to vote no.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman, Executive Director
Village Preservation



George Calderaro
Victorian Society New York



Lynn Ellsworth, Chair
Humanscale NYC and Tribeca Trust



Kathryn Freed, Former City Councilmember
1st District (SoHo, NoHo) 1992-2000



Steve Herrick, Executive Director
Cooper Square Committee



Sean Khorsandi, Executive Director
Landmark West!



Stephanie Kranes
National Mobilization Against Sweatshops



Jeffrey Kroessler, President
City Club of New York



Rachel Levy, Executive Director
FRIENDS of Upper East Side Historic Districts



John Massengale, AIA CNU, Chair
CNU NYC (Congress for a New Urbanism New York City Chapter)



Micki McGhee, Founding Member
South Village Neighbors



Michael McKee, Treasurer
Tenants PAC



Renee Monroe
Broadway Residents Coalition



McDavid Moore
New York City Loft Tenants



Richard D. Moses, President
Lower East Side Preservation Initiative



David Mulkins, President
Bowery Alliance of Neighbors



Zishun Ning
Co-chair, Chinatown Working Group



Laura Sewell, Executive Director
East Village Community Coalition

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean Sweeney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "S" at the beginning.

Sean Sweeney, Director
SoHo Alliance

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Wakeham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "K" at the beginning.

Kathleen Wakeham
Met Council on Housing

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanne Wilcke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "J" at the beginning.

Jeanne Wilcke, Co-Chair
NoHo Neighborhood Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zack Winestine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "Z" at the beginning.

Zack Winestine, Co-Chair
Greenwich Village Community Task Force