



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF NEW YORK

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DEPUTY MAYOR FOR HOUSING AND
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December 9, 2021

Speaker Corey Johnson
Council Member Margaret Chin
Council Member Carlina Rivera

New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Johnson, Council Member Chin, and Council Member Rivera,

For years, we have worked with you to plan for the future of the SoHo and NoHo neighborhoods. We are proud that the resulting SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan and associated initiatives and investments build on the rich history, artistic legacy, and tremendous opportunities the neighborhood offers to both its residents and New York overall.

Today we are effectuating land use and zoning changes that will allow for the legalization of existing housing and construction of new housing in one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods, including nearly a thousand permanently affordable homes, while respecting the existing historic character. It includes tools to support retail and related uses, updating antiquated zoning rules from fifty years ago. It establishes an innovative Arts Fund tool to ensure a future stream of investments into the area's artistic vibrancy.

In parallel with these land use and zoning reforms, the City is committing strategic investments for improvements to nearby parks and open spaces, activation of vacant storefronts, tenant support services, and initiatives focused on comprehensive improvements to transportation, public realm, and sanitation throughout the area. The City is also advancing efforts to develop new affordable housing on publicly-controlled sites in neighborhoods surrounding SoHo and NoHo.

Pursuant to Local Law 175 of 2016, every City-initiated neighborhood rezoning is subject to a public commitment tracker. My office will work closely with the Mayor's Office of Operations to record all commitments made in an online public tracker within 30 days after passage, including timeline and funding, and will produce annual progress reports to let community members and other stakeholders know how we are making progress.

Creating more housing opportunities in well-resourced, centrally located neighborhoods is a moral, economic, and environmental imperative. We commend the extraordinary efforts that have made this plan a reality together.

Sincerely,

Vicki Been
Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development

Introduction

The City will advance the following neighborhood investments and initiatives focused on affordable housing, parks and open space, investment in the arts, activation of vacant storefronts, and efforts to comprehensively plan for transportation, sanitation, and the public realm needs. The strategies below will support both current and future residents as part of the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan.

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HOUSING

1. Prioritize the development of City-owned land at 388 Hudson Street with affordable housing

- 388 Hudson Street is a City-owned site under DEP jurisdiction in nearby Hudson Square. The site is currently vacant with critical DEP infrastructure on the southern half of the lot. The northern half of the lot has 12,500 sq ft of developable land that the City will prioritize for the development of affordable housing. This half of the site can accommodate around 100 affordable homes. HPD will commence community engagement in Fall 2022 to inform development of the site and issue an RFP for a 100% affordable housing project in 2023.
- **Timeline:** Commence community engagement in Fall 2022 and issue RFP in 2023.

2. Prioritize the development of City-owned land at 324 East 5th Street for affordable housing

- The City will issue an RFP to redevelop an NYPD parking lot at 324 East 5th for affordable housing. The site is City-owned under DOE jurisdiction and currently being used as a parking lot (with approximately 50 spaces) by the NYPD 9th Precinct, located directly across the street from the site. Development will be subsequent to the relocation of the NYPD parking spaces to a site with reasonable proximity to the 9th precinct. DCAS will work with HPD and partner agencies to evaluate potential relocation and incorporation into new affordable housing developed on-site. Any future RFP will be subsequent to an executable relocation or incorporation plan for the minimal municipal parking need. HPD will engage with local stakeholders in advance of issuing an RFP.
- **Timeline:** Relocation will be assessed in 2022. RFP for this site will be released following confirmation of relocation.

3. Coordinate with partners in the Federal government to explore the feasibility of developing affordable housing on Federally-owned land

- The SoHo and NoHo neighborhoods do not have developable City-owned land that can be leveraged for a 100% affordable housing project. Public sites owned by the federal government exist in the neighborhood that can accommodate hundreds of affordable homes under MIH and public financing. HPD and other city agencies will coordinate with the City's Federal Affairs Office to liaise with Congressional representatives and advance affordable housing on federally controlled land. These sites could include the parking lot on 2 Howard Street, the 350 Canal Street Post Office, and the 93 Park Avenue South Post Office.

4. Prioritize the use of the Affordable Housing Fund for projects as close to the rezoning area as possible and maximize the creation and preservation of affordable homes

- To-date, HPD has not had in-lieu contributions to the Affordable Housing Fund through MIH. If funds are available to use in the SoHo/NoHo area, HPD will prioritize identifying projects within the SoHo/NoHo rezoning or as close to it as possible. HPD would use the following guiding principles in finding and evaluating projects for use of the fund:
 - The Affordable Housing Fund should be used to create new opportunities for affordable housing that wouldn't exist absent the fund.
 - The Affordable Housing Fund should prioritize projects that serve those who would benefit significantly from the amenities and opportunities of Lower Manhattan.
 - The Affordable Housing Fund should be used as close to sites that generate the funds as possible.
- If funds are available, HPD will pursue these principles through the following priorities:
 - Buying down affordability of new construction projects and residential conversions – for market-rate new construction projects and residential conversions or additions, the Fund can be used to subsidize a portion of the units to make that project more affordable. This could mean adding more affordable units to an MIH project in SoHo/NoHo than required 25% or 30% (Option 1 or 2). This could also include adding units to VIH projects elsewhere in CB2 or other creative uses like funding affordable basement conversions, additions or expansions to existing affordable projects, etc.
 - Supporting acquisitions of projects for preservation – the Fund can be used to acquire buildings in distress and establish long-term regulatory agreements to protect existing affordable units. Since acquisition costs might be higher in this neighborhood, the Fund can be crucial to make up the difference.
 - Deeper affordability on public sites – For future public site developments in Community District 2, the Fund can be used to provide more units with deeper affordability by supplementing the allowed subsidy on HPD term sheets.

5. Enhance resources for the Loft Board in order to better support residents of Interim Multiple Dwelling (IMD) units who wish to obtain a residential Certificate of Occupancy

- The Loft Board tracks the progress of conversions from IMD units to residential and mediates between tenants and landlords over renovation plans to ensure that residential units from the conversion process are safe and legal.
- The Loft Board has confirmed the completion of legalization of 177 IMD units in the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan area to date; 64 IMDs are still currently in that process.
- The City will increase staffing capacity at the Loft Board to support more expeditious completion of those conversions still in process.
- **Timeline:** Hiring to begin in 2022
- **Funding:** Three attorneys at competitive salary ranges for five years; to be reevaluated after five years

6. Fund dedicated tenant support services targeted for SoHo/NoHo and surrounding neighborhoods

- The City will fund one or more local community organizations to conduct proactive outreach to tenants in the rezoning area. Outreach will inform tenants of their rights, identify any housing-related issues and connect them with a range of resources, such as emergency repairs and HRA's free legal assistance. HPD will identify one or more partner organization(s) through a competitive process in early 2022, and will work with the selected organization to develop a scope of work that meets local needs.
- **Timeline:** Identify community organization(s) in 2022 and begin implementation in 2022/2023
- **Funding:** \$200,000 for up to three years

7. Continue proactive tenant outreach targeted for SoHo/NoHo and surrounding neighborhoods

- Since October 2021, Tenant Support Unit (TSU) Specialists have conducted outreach to 13 buildings in the rezoning area, reaching over 180 households. TSU, part of the Mayor's Public Engagement Unit (PEU), uses a data-driven approach to engage tenants and provide assistance to those who may be at risk of displacement or experiencing harassment. Specialists conduct outreach through phone, text and door-to-door canvassing, to proactively inform tenants of their rights, identify any housing-related issues and connect them with a range of resources, such as emergency repairs and HRA's free legal assistance. TSU will continue outreach efforts in the rezoning area this week, with a focus on providing additional language access resources.

ARTS, CULTURE, AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

8. Establish the framework for the Downtown SoHo/NoHo Arts Fund

- In order to preserve and strengthen the cultural life of Soho and Noho as well as the surrounding communities, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) will designate and

enter into a legal agreement with a nonprofit fund administrator to create and manage the SoHo/NoHo Arts Fund. DCLA will establish program guidelines and oversight measures, similar to its application-based regrating process with the borough arts councils, to ensure that the funding is distributed in a competent and equitable manner, while recognizing the needs of artists and cultural workers in underserved areas throughout lower Manhattan.

- The fund will distribute grants to artists and nonprofit organizations to support cultural events and programming, preserving and building on these communities' rich artistic legacy. The Fund can also potentially support small scale capital projects at cultural organizations, as long as they align with the goals of the Fund to support and preserve existing cultural assets in the neighborhoods. Funding priorities will be determined by the non-profit fund administrator in consultation with DCLA on a yearly basis. For each cycle of Arts Fund grants, an open and competitive application process will be used to solicit funding proposals from eligible individuals and organizations in the designated area (defined as based in, or providing services within Manhattan Community Districts 1, 2, and 3); these applications will be reviewed by peer review panels convened by the non-profit administrator. DCLA will post information on its website documenting the amount of funds distributed and recipients of the funds over time.
- The SoHo/NoHo Arts Fund will be supported via contributions from future conversions of JLWQA to residential units, should an existing JLWQA owner elect to convert and/or sell to the general public rather than a certified artist. This contribution process will be managed within the City via an interagency process involving DCLA, DCP, DOF, and DOB. The process will include:
 - A requirement via local law that going forward, new property owners of JLWQAs record with the city register a statement that the property is a JLWQA and therefore subject to the JLWQA rules and regulations
 - A database at DOB that centralizes information on transactions occurring on JLWQA units, applications for residential Certificates of Occupancy, artist certifications via DCLA, and completed payments of the Arts Fund contribution in coordination with DCP, in order to effectively track the requirement
 - Enforcement steps as necessary by DOB, including complaint-driven enforcement and potential audit actions
- DOB will issue a formal Buildings Bulletin clarifying the process for future applicants and enforcement provisions.
- Rules and requirements regarding DCLA Artist Certifications remain unchanged when the Arts Fund is established. DCLA Artist Certifications do not expire, and occupancy is subject to succession rights for family. DCLA will ensure its informational web materials on the Artist Certification are updated to continue to clarify any questions about the process.

9. Expand the Storefront Startup program to activate vacant storefronts in the SoHo/NoHo area in the near term

- In early 2021, SBS launched Storefront Startup, a program which pairs small businesses without a physical location to vacant storefronts at no cost to the business owner. The program connects artists and entrepreneurs, especially those from low to moderate-income neighborhoods, women, or entrepreneurs of color, temporary rent-free storefronts to help them launch and grow. An expansion of the program will open up the vibrant artistic legacy and resources of SoHo and NoHo to diverse artists and entrepreneurs citywide, while activating and enlivening storefronts and streetscapes in the SoHo and NoHo areas.
- **Timeline:** Beginning 2022
- **Funding:** \$200,000 in expense

10. Ensure future applicants requiring the approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) have access to LPC staff and informational resources

- More than 80 percent of the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan area is within New York City-designated historic districts. As the City agency responsible for protecting New York City's architecturally, historically, and culturally significant buildings and sites, the LPC will have to review and approve any change to buildings within these areas, including alteration, reconstruction, demolition, or new construction, pursuant to the requirements of the City's Landmarks Law.
- While the zoning will be updated, LPC's jurisdiction remains unchanged, and any development and enlargement will continue to be subject to future review and approval by the LPC in accordance with the New York City Landmarks Law.
- To ensure that future applicants have access to LPC staff and informational resources to consider potential work in the rezoning area and understand LPC processes and requirements, LPC will establish a monthly "open office hours" for business and property owners in the rezoning area.
- **Timeline:** For one year after adoption of the zoning changes, to be reevaluated as needed

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

11. Create New Open Space at DEP Shaft Sites

- New open spaces, especially in Manhattan, are extremely rare to come by. Parks, in close coordination with DEP, created designs based on community input for two water tunnel shaft sites at Grand/Lafayette Street and Bowery/East 4th Streets. These sites will provide the community with a vital half an acre of new publicly accessible open space. Construction is underway at both sites.
- DEP infrastructure below the open space may limit the ability to install some types of temporary artwork, but Parks and DEP will explore opportunities for further activating the Grand/Lafayette Street site with public art.
- **Timeline:** Construction completion for both sites is anticipated by the end of 2022.

12. Reconstruct and expand the Pike/Allen Street Malls

- Stretching 14 blocks from East Houston Street to the FDR Drive, Pike and Allen Street Malls are an important neighborhood amenity. Parks and DOT worked to reconstruct the Pike and Allen Street malls from Delancey to Hester Street and Madison Street to the FDR Drive, expanding open space and greatly improving amenities offered and usability of those spaces. Reconstructing the remaining malls along Pike and Allen Streets between Hester and Madison Streets is a longstanding community request. Parks, coordinating closely with DOT, will redesign and reconstruct the mall from Hester Street to Canal Street and East Broadway to Madison Street, expanding open space for local residents.
- Parks and DOT are also finalizing an agreement with a private party to fund the redesign and reconstruction of the malls from Canal Street to East Broadway.
- The expanded malls would be designed with community input and could include amenities such as expanded landscaping, game tables, seating areas, lighting, protected greenways, and other amenities. Holistically reconstructing and expanding these malls will provide additional quality open space in a neighborhood with an open space deficiency.
- Building upon improvements to the malls to the south, Parks and CDOT will work to activate the mall between Delancey and Rivington Streets. Parks will issue a RFP for the closed building and rest of the mall prioritizing uses like concessions, recreational and cultural programming and other Parks appropriate uses to activate the space.
- **Timeline:** Design start in 2022
- **Funding:** \$8.8M in capital, \$100K in expense

13. Make improvements and expand programming opportunities at Sara D Roosevelt Park

- Sara D Roosevelt Park is a heavily used and much-loved neighborhood park. The Administration is committed to working with Parks, DCAS and other city agencies to search for a new site to accommodate the operational and maintenance needs currently served by the Stanton Street building in order to open the Stanton Street building for community park uses. Parks will also make capital improvements within the Park.
- **Timeline:** Design start in 2022
- **Funding:** \$10M in capital towards relocation for the Parks operational and maintenance needs; \$15M in capital for park improvements

STREETS AND PUBLIC REALM

14. Reimagine Petrosino Square

- DOT, in consultation with Parks, commits to studying the potential redesign and expansion of Petrosino Square to expand the public space and create new opportunities for public art programming. The study will evaluate potential geometric changes to Lafayette, Cleveland, and Kenmare Streets; effects on safety and flow for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles; emergency vehicle access; impacts on access to adjacent

residential and commercial properties; and the potential modification or relocation existing furniture within the Square, including existing fencing, benches, and the bike share station; and other relevant considerations. As we await the findings and recommendations of that study, Parks commits to advancing opportunities for activating the space at Petrosino Square by promoting the site through Parks' rotating public art installation program. Upon completion of the study, DOT and Parks will share its findings and recommendations with the Manhattan Borough President, local Council Member, and Community Board.

- **Funding:** \$500,000 in expense
- **Timeline:** Study to begin in Q3 2022

15. Explore Cooper Triangle planning and pedestrian-friendly improvements

- Building upon the City's extensive investment in the Cooper Triangle area, DOT will evaluate and implement appropriate pedestrian improvements on Cooper Square and the adjacent Cooper Square Plaza, including programming, plantings, or other community supported improvements.
- **Timeline:** Beginning in summer 2022
- **Funding:** \$100,000 expense

16. Study the Broadway corridor for comprehensive transportation and public realm improvements

- DOT commits to undertake a study or studies of potential pedestrian safety enhancements, public space upgrades, and freight delivery strategies, including ways to encourage the Commercial Cargo Bike Program and Neighborhood Loading Zones, parking regulations, within the SoHo/NoHo area, focusing on Broadway between Houston and Canal Streets and impacted side streets.
- DOT will present any findings and recommendations to Community Board 2, the local Council Member's Office, the Manhattan Borough President's Office, and other local stakeholders before finalizing a plan to implement improvements that may include new signage, markings, signal timing changes, flexible delineators, shared / open streets, changes in parking regulations, or other necessary treatments.
- **Timeline:** Begin community engagement in 2022; timeline may be adjusted based on congestion pricing implementation
- **Funding:** \$500,000 in expense, covering both Broadway corridor and Canal St studies

17. Study the Canal Street corridor for comprehensive transportation and public realm improvements

- DOT commits to undertake a study or studies of potential pedestrian safety enhancements, public space upgrades, and freight delivery strategies, including parking regulations, within the NoHo/SoHo district, focusing on Canal Street between Bowery and West Street.
- DOT will present any findings and recommendations to Community Boards 1, 2, and 3, the local Council Member's Office, the Manhattan Borough President's Office, and other local stakeholders before finalizing a plan to implement improvements that may include

new signage, markings, signal timing changes, flexible delineators, or other necessary treatments.

- **Timeline:** Begin community engagement in 2022; timeline may be adjusted based on congestion pricing implementation
- **Funding:** \$500,000 in expense, covering both Broadway corridor and Canal St studies

18. Enhance nearby Open Streets

- Explore opportunities to enhance open streets on Avenue B, St. Marks Place, and East 7th Street in coordination with local partners: Loisaida Open Streets Community Coalition, Village Alliance, St. Marks Business Coalition, Overthrow Hospitality, and other potential partners. Improvements would be tailored to the particular street and community, and could include elements like traffic diverters, shared streets, plaza blocks, bike corrals, gateway treatments, and other treatments.
- **Funding:** \$150,000 to cover the cost of identified treatments

19. Explore locations for new tree plantings in the SoHo-NoHo area

- Parks is dedicated to growing our urban forest wherever possible. Planting opportunities within SoHo NoHo are constrained due to presence of subsurface utilities, building basements that extend below sidewalks and sidewalk vaults. Parks will examine the 10012, 10013, and 10003 zip codes and will employ best efforts to explore the potential for street trees and other plantings within the SoHo-NoHo neighborhood, noting any locations requested by City Council and local stakeholders. While this area is known to be particularly challenging for plantings in light of dense infrastructure, such as subway tunnels and basement vaults, Parks will explore potential options and share the findings of potential planting locations with City Council and other stakeholders as requested.
- **Timeline:** 2022

SANITATION

20. Implement Commercial Waste Zones in Community District 2 as expeditiously as possible.

- The New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) is currently working to implement Local Law 199 of 2019, which creates Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) for the collection of waste from businesses and other commercial establishments.
- The SoHo/NoHo district is a mixed-use area that will benefit greatly from the implementation of this program, which will provide high-quality, low-cost waste collection services for businesses while protecting public safety, improving quality of life and advancing the City's zero waste goals. The CWZ program will divide the city into 20 zones, each served by up to three carters selected through a competitive process. Five citywide contracts will also be awarded for the collection of containerized waste and compactors. This approach will reduce truck traffic associated with commercial waste

collection by 50 percent, eliminating millions of heavy-duty truck miles from NYC streets every year, while strengthening service standards and allowing for customer choice.

- Under rules published in 2020, DSNY designated the entirety of Manhattan Community Board 2 as one of 20 zones under this program. DSNY will work with local businesses, residents and elected officials to implement this program expeditiously in this zone (the “Manhattan Southwest” zone) and to maximize the overall benefits of this program with regard to public safety and quality of life for area residents.
- **Timeline:** DSNY anticipates the customer transitions under the CWZ program will begin as early as the last quarter of 2022.

21. Conduct targeted enforcement before implementation of Commercial Waste Zones

- In advance of the implementation of the Commercial Waste Zones program in Community Board 2 (the “Manhattan Southwest” zone), DSNY and its partner agencies will conduct targeted enforcement of existing laws and regulations concerning commercial waste operations, including regarding waste storage, setout and collection requirements as well as street and sidewalk cleaning regulations.
- Timeline: 2022

22. Advance Clean Curbs pilot with local partners

- In 2020, DSNY created the Clean Curbs program for the collection of commercial waste from containers in the roadway or at the curbside, eliminating the storage, setout and collection of commercial waste in bags on the sidewalk.
- DSNY will work with the SoHo Broadway Initiative, local businesses, residents and other stakeholders to advance a pilot of this approach in the SoHo/NoHo area. DSNY will explore the feasibility of providing funding or other support for pilots of this initiative in FY2022 or future fiscal years. DSNY will also work with these stakeholders to explore similar approaches for residential waste storage, setout and collection.