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**MAYOR DE BLASIO CELEBRATES HISTORIC PASSAGE OF SOHO/NOHO REZONING**

*SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan will bring 900 affordable homes and economic opportunity to iconic, centrally located neighborhoods*

**NEW YORK** – Mayor Bill de Blasio today celebrated the City Council’s approval of the [SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan](#), the first overhaul of this area’s local zoning regulations in half a century. The plan will bring approximately 900 permanently affordable homes, support existing historic districts, invest in arts and culture through an innovative arts fund model, and introduce flexible zoning for ground floor and other uses.

“Today, New York City has taken a generational step toward building a recovery for all of us,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “This rezoning victory sends a powerful message that every community can and should join the fight to help solve our affordable housing crisis and make this city accessible for working families. SoHo and NoHo are two of the most iconic neighborhoods in the country for a reason – and now, we are one step closer to them finally reflecting all the diversity that makes our city great.”

“The approval of the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan is a critical, precedent-setting milestone towards a fairer New York City,” said **Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been**. “Creating more housing opportunities in well-resourced, centrally located neighborhoods is a moral, economic, and environmental imperative. Thank you to Council Member Chin, Council Member Rivera, and the stakeholders and advocates engaged in the process for the extraordinary efforts that have helped make this a reality.”

“As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, equity must be at the forefront of our work to increase affordable housing and economic opportunities. Today’s approval of the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan stands for the idea that all neighborhoods can and should play a part in solving the planning challenges we, as New Yorkers, share. Through permanently affordable housing requirements, support for the arts, and a balance between historic preservation and continued growth, this initiative is a much-needed step towards a fairer, more livable city. Thanks to Council Members Chin and Rivera for their leadership and collaboration on this vital plan,” said **Department of City Planning Director Anita Laremont**.

“The rezoning of SoHo and NoHo represents a significant milestone that realizes our commitment in Where We Live NYC to make sure that all our neighborhoods contribute to building a more equitable and affordable city,” said **Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Louise Carroll**. “For the first time affordable housing will be a permanent feature of the neighborhoods’ growth while ensuring that the community’s architectural, historical and cultural essence will continue to flourish. We commend the residents, local officials and various stakeholders for their critical partnership on this long awaited achievement.”

“Soho’s artistic legacy is part of our collective cultural heritage as New Yorkers,” said **NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Gonzalo Casals**. “We applaud this historic rezoning effort, and the investments it signals in preserving and strengthening the creative landscape of Soho/NoHo and across all of Lower Manhattan.”

“Open space and affordable housing are key to a livable city, and the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan will create rare

opportunities for new and improved parkland in this area,” said NYC Parks Commissioner Gabrielle Fialkoff. “As part of this plan, we are proud to make improvements at Sara D. Roosevelt Park, work with DEP to transform two sites into new public spaces for the community, and partner with DOT to reconstruct and expand the Pike and Allen Street Malls and explore the renovation of Petrosino Square and other neighborhood locations.”

The SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan will, for the first time, permit housing and require affordable housing in all new developments, allowing as many as 3,500 new homes to be created, approximately 900 of which would be permanently affordable via the City’s Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) program. In addition to new homes created on vacant and underutilized land, conversion of existing non-residential space to residential with a MIH requirement will create a more diverse, mixed-income neighborhood. Existing rent-regulated homes, many covered by the Loft Law, will remain protected under State tenant protections and supported by a wide range of City resources.

This initiative furthers the priorities developed in [Where We Live NYC](#), the City’s fair housing plan that calls for changes to ensure every neighborhood contributes to the City’s affordable housing development goals. By allowing affordable housing development in SoHo and NoHo, the plan will offer opportunities for lower-income New Yorkers to live in these amenity-rich, high-income, disproportionately white communities – while also lowering housing pressures on surrounding neighborhoods.

Covering an area generally bounded by Canal Street to the south, Houston Street and Astor Place to the north, Lafayette Street and the Bowery to the east, and Sixth Avenue and West Broadway to the west, the plan updates antiquated zoning rules that were tailored for a 1970s SoHo/NoHo that has greatly changed in the last 50 years.

The Plan includes land use changes alongside a range of initiatives and investments, including:

- **Sensible retail regulations:** Rather than a patchwork of variances and zoning rules for a manufacturing landscape that no longer exists in SoHo/NoHo, the plan removes obsolete regulations that hurt small businesses and introduces sensible use rules that recognize its status as a major economic engine and retail destination. The Plan also includes investments to bring Small Business Service’s Storefront Startup to SoHo/NoHo to address storefront vacancies. This program pairs small businesses, including artists and creative entrepreneurs, without a physical location to vacant storefronts to help them launch and grow.
- **SoHo/NoHo Arts Fund:** The Plan supports the legacy of arts and culture in and around SoHo and NoHo over the long term with a new arts fund model to ensure a future stream of investments into the area’s artistic vibrancy. The SoHo/NoHo Arts Fund creates a voluntary mechanism for those living in Joint Living Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQA) who wish to convert to a legal residential use through a contribution to a neighborhood arts fund. The JLWQA program will also remain an option for certified artists in perpetuity.
- **Tools to protect and enhance the historic context:** New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission’s review and certification of appropriateness remains unchanged throughout the historic districts, which is about 85% of total rezoning area. The Plan will add height limits to the area for the first time, which will further encourage beloved loft-like structures. To enhance and protect the neighborhoods’ historic character and building forms, no towers will be allowed. The new height limits include:
  - Outside of the historic districts and along Canal Street and the Bowery, “Opportunity Areas” allow increased density and a maximum height of 275 feet, in line with the existing context. In comparison, the tallest existing building in the “SoHo West” Opportunity Zone is the approximately 400-foot Telephone Building.
  - Along historic district commercial corridors, including Broadway, the maximum height is 205 feet.
  - In the historic cores of the project areas, maximum height is 145 feet.
- **New affordable housing on nearby city-owned sites:** The City will prioritize the development of affordable housing at 388 Hudson Street and 324 East 5th Street, two City-owned sites in the surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Resources to support existing residents:** To support existing tenants, the City will fund one or more local community organizations to conduct proactive outreach to tenants in the rezoning area and continue proactive tenant outreach via the Mayor’s Public Engagement Unit’s Tenant Support Unit. The City will also fund additional staff resources within the Loft Board to support a faster process for residents who wish to converting from Interim Multiple Dwelling (IMD) to legal residential use.
- **Investments in neighborhood amenities and infrastructure:** The Plan includes initiatives focused on compre-

hensive improvements to transportation, public realm, and sanitation throughout the area, such as:

- Reconstruction and expansion of the Pike and Allen Street Malls, with potential enhancements including expanded landscaping, seating areas, lighting, protected greenways, and more.
- Improvements to Sara D. Roosevelt Park, including reopening the Stanton Street building for community use.
- Exploring the redesign of Petrosino Square and Cooper Triangle, well-used public spaces by the SoHo/NoHo communities.
- Comprehensive studies of the Broadway and Canal Street corridors for transportation and public realm improvements.
- Advancing the Commercial Waste Zone and Clean Curbs programs to address sanitation and quality of life concerns in the area.

The SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan grew out of a two-year public engagement process that included over 40 meetings and the [Envision SoHo/NoHo](#) report, which was co-sponsored by the Department of City Planning, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and City Council Member Margaret Chin.

“The final zoning map and text are a product of countless hours of negotiation with the Administration and in-depth discussion with community stakeholders,” said **Council Member Margaret Chin**. “As a City Council Member I believe it is my responsibility to create housing opportunities in high-opportunity neighborhoods for low-income New Yorkers, and I am confident that this rezoning accomplishes that goal. This historic rezoning will create thousands of new homes and it is my hope that the City’s fair housing plan is implemented in a similar fashion across the entire city to ease New York City’s housing crisis. I am so grateful for the partnership of my colleague and friend Council Member Carlina Rivera, as well as the Land Use Division and the Department of City Planning.”

“Throughout this process, we centered one goal as our North Star: to incentivize the creation of affordable housing at income levels where it is desperately needed. This historic rezoning marks a critical change to New York City’s long-held practice of focusing neighborhood rezonings in communities of color, typically comprised of an overwhelming majority of lower-income families, thus bringing us into a more equitable future, where all neighborhoods contribute their fair share in our ongoing fight against the housing crisis,” said **Council Member Carlina Rivera**. “This project will yield incredible things for New York City, and for New Yorkers. For that, I am grateful to my colleague and friend Council Member Margaret Chin, the City Council Land Use division, and the administration for their hard work and partnership.”

“The SoHo plan is an important victory for housing equity in the largest city in America,” said **Aaron Carr, Founder and Executive Director of Housing Rights Initiative**. “The creation of hundreds of units of affordable housing in one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in New York City will result in the expansion of economic opportunity, social mobility, and affordability for low income and working class New Yorkers. We want to thank our City government, Council Member Carlina Rivera, Council Member Margaret Chin, and the housing advocates for making this historic day happen.”

“New affordable housing, especially near jobs and transit, is a critical need for all our neighborhoods,” said **Moses Gates, Vice President for Neighborhood Planning at Regional Plan Association**. “The SoHo/NoHo plan brings exactly that, as well as addressing open space, neighborhood retail, and support for existing tenants and artists. This rezoning shows that with good planning Historic Districts can easily embrace new residents and development, building better places for more people, and that all communities in the region can - and should - look to do the same.”

“Introducing Mandatory Inclusionary Housing into SoHo and NoHo with contextual bulk regulations will finally bring a meaningful amount of low income housing to these affluent, amenity rich, historic mixed-use communities by giving zoning preferences to housing over commercial development,” said **Steve Herrick, Executive Director of Cooper Square Committee**. “We’re pleased that Councilmembers Chin and Rivera negotiated many improvements over the original plan, providing more protections and resources for rent regulated tenants in the upzoned areas as well as streetscape, transportation, and sanitation improvements.”

“Decades ago, SoHo was a haven for low-income residents who formed a thriving creative community among its spacious lofts, which has sadly evolved into one of the most expensive districts in the nation through exclusionary zoning that protects wealthy, white New Yorkers. But with today’s approval of the rezoning plan, we are taking a critical step towards

more equitable development for New York City,” says **Jessica Katz, Executive Director of CHPC**. “This is an important moment in legalizing the housing and retail that SoHo is known for, while continuing to protect the beautiful buildings in its historic core and creating desperately needed affordable housing options in one of the City’s most resource-rich neighborhoods. We hope SoHo/NoHo residents will welcome their new neighbors with open arms, who want to share in all the benefits this fantastic neighborhood has to offer.”

“Retail flexibility is key as the neighborhood and City continue to evolve post-COVID, and the NoHo BID is thrilled to see the antiquated ground-floor zoning, which arbitrarily restricted retail use, lifted in favor of rules that reflect the on-the-ground reality of the NoHo,” said **Cordelia Persen, Executive Director of the NoHo Business Improvement District**.

“The SoHo/NoHo rezoning is a long overdue and important step in removing archaic restrictions on this iconic shopping district. It has been a fashion and design leader for the world, and a source of jobs and vitality for New York. Today’s vote is coming at a crucial moment as it will allow SoHo/NoHo to grow in a more intentional and cohesive way as we are all trying to recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic. It is important that we push New York City towards a more equitable landscape for everyone. Finally making retail as of right allows smaller retailers certainty, and more access without the barriers of paying for an expensive special permit,” said **Michael Salzhauer, Principal at Benjamin Partners, a family owned business that has been in operation in SoHo for over 100 years**.

“Housing is too important to be a political football—we need to make sure that more New Yorkers are in homes they can afford this time next year,” said **Will Thomas, Executive Director of Open New York**. “This rezoning is a critical step towards making that happen, planning thousands of desperately needed homes. Deputy Mayor Vicki Been, along with Councilmembers Chin and Rivera, have been critical in shepherding this historic rezoning over the finish line and have given voice to the majority of New Yorkers who want to see a more affordable, more open New York, where everyone who wants to live in the City—including those who already live here—can afford to do so.”

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