



DISTRICT 2 NEWS

COUNCILWOMAN CARLINA RIVERA

Dear Neighbor,

Yesterday, the New York City Council passed the SoHo/NoHo Rezoning with a vote of 43-5, marking a critical change to our City's historic practice of focusing neighborhood rezonings in communities of color with an overwhelming majority of low-income families.

This plan moves New York City towards a more equitable future, where all neighborhoods contribute their fair share in our ongoing fight against the housing crisis.

With this rezoning, we had the opportunity to update archaic zoning codes in neighborhoods that have changed dramatically since the current SoHo zoning laws were enacted in 1971. As you know, the SoHo/NoHo area contains some of the City's highest concentrations of transportation, storefronts, and office space, and a key goal in this rezoning was to create affordable housing opportunities in these neighborhoods where very few affordable units currently exist. I think the folks at [Curbed](#) said it best: as a result of this rezoning, a family of three making \$42K will be able to live in SoHo, and benefit from a resource-rich neighborhood.

Before this certified, we made our priorities clear to the administration - priorities that we believed would help make this project a long-term success. After receiving a scope of work that fell short of what we and the community wanted, we began a rigorous series of tough negotiations and internal reviews so that we could do our best by the neighborhood.

We worked very hard to maximize housing opportunities in this rezoning, while remaining sensitive to the contextual and physical integrity of historic buildings in Districts 1 and 2. We responded to community concerns by creating a new special permit process for large-scale retail that focuses on quality of life issues, as well as for eating and drinking establishments, among other key wins.

One thing that is abundantly clear is that before certification, the comment period must be collaborative rather than performative, and the Department of City Planning needs to seriously take into consideration the comments and suggestions from elected officials and local stakeholders – it is the

only way to create a process that is genuinely collaborative and protected from cynicism.

This final rezoning agreement was not reached without countless hours of discussion with housing advocates, community stakeholders, and residents. This rings true in the zoning map and points of agreement, which both respond to community concerns in a thoughtful and constructive way. See below for more details on the final plan, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office by calling (212) 677-1077 or emailing district2@council.nyc.gov.

Council Member Chin and I thank our community partners for their hard work in creating such a successful plan.

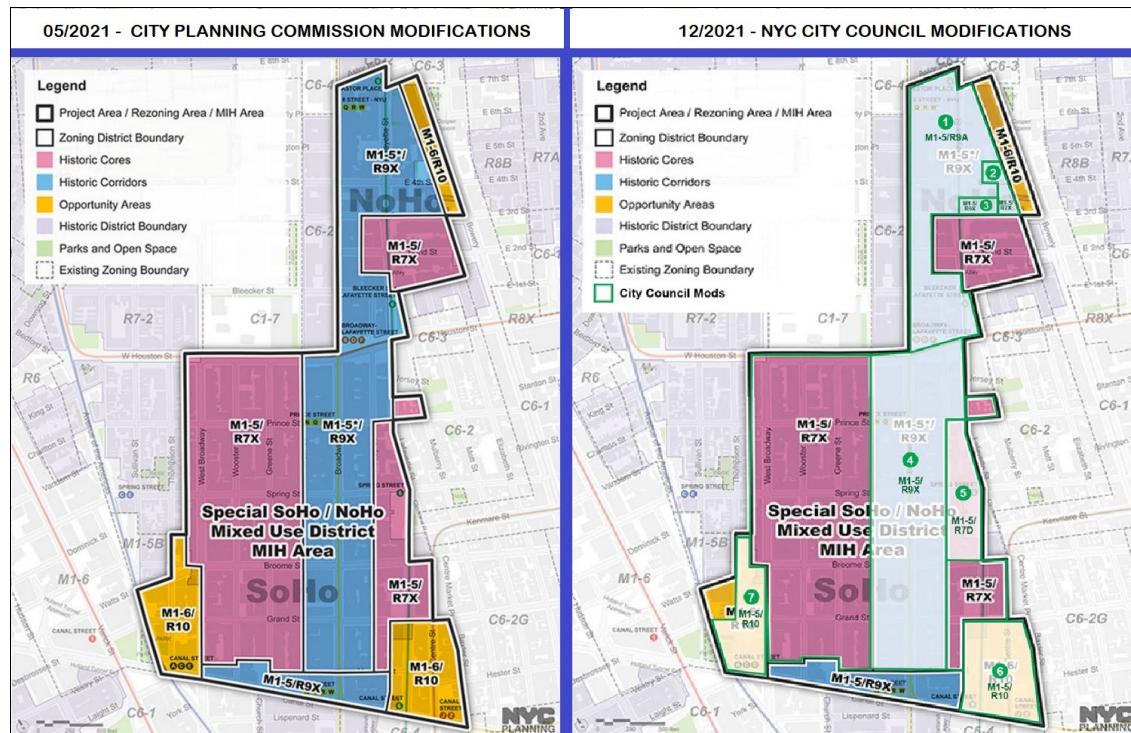
Sincerely,



Carlina Rivera

Final SoHo/NoHo Rezoning Map

The below maps present the initial proposal presented by the City Planning Commission in May of this year, and the final modified map we fought for through months of negotiations and reviews, addressing the concerns of community stakeholders, advocates, and residents.



Incentivizing Housing Creation

With this project, one clear goal was held above all others: to incentivize the creation of affordable housing at income levels where it is desperately needed. As a result, the final plan passed yesterday creates a rational framework for housing generation and retail operation in a high-value, transit-rich neighborhood.

SoHo and NoHo are amazing communities that are treasured for more than just their architecture. These neighborhoods are held in high esteem because of how residents at the time transformed them into a place that would welcome lower-cost homes for a blooming creative community. That is the legacy this plan seeks to honor by incentivizing the creation of affordable housing above all else, while still balancing the needs of residents.

The finalized agreement includes a reduction of commercial FAR throughout the whole zoning map, the elimination of dorm, college, and university use, and the requirement of a special permit for eating and drinking establishments larger than 8,500 square feet and large-scale retail larger than 10,000 square feet in narrow streets and 25,000 square feet in wide streets.

Most importantly, this rezoning will create approximately 3,000 new homes, an estimated 900 of which will be affordable at an average of 60% AMI, with 10% of total homes at or below 40% AMI.

Additional Wins for the Community

Despite facing several roadblocks – from private interests, political pressure, an accelerated timeline, and misguided projections – the final plan and points of agreement include many big wins that will benefit both the neighborhood and surrounding areas for generations to come.

- Constructing 100% affordable housing on two city-owned sites; 100 units at [388 Hudson Street](#) and 75 senior housing units at [324 East 5th Street](#).
- Coordinating with partners in the Federal government to explore the feasibility of developing affordable housing on Federally-owned land.
- Prioritizing the use of the Affordable Housing Fund for projects as close to the rezoning area as possible and maximizing the creation and preservation of affordable homes as described in the POA.
- Hiring three additional attorneys who will serve as an exclusive resource for loft tenants and Interim Multiple Dwelling (IMD) residents who wish to obtain a residential Certificate of Occupancy.
- Committing \$200,000 for a fund dedicated to tenant support services in and around SoHo/NoHo.
- Establishing the framework for the Downtown SoHo/NoHo Arts Fund, which distributes grants to artists and nonprofit organizations in support of cultural events, programming and potentially small scale capital projects which will be public in DCLA's website.

- Expanding the Storefront Startup program by \$200,000 to activate vacant storefronts in the SoHo/NoHo area in the near term.
- Funding \$500,000 to study the Broadway and Canal Street corridor for comprehensive transportation and public realm improvements.
- Ensuring future applicants who require the approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) have access to LPC staff and informational resources.
- Expeditiously completing new open space at DEP shaft sites currently under construction located at Grand/Lafayette Street and Bowery/East 4th Streets.
- Committing \$8.8M in capital and \$100K in expense funding to reconstruct and expand the Pike/Allen Street Malls.
- Exploring locations for new tree plantings in the SoHo/NoHo area.
- Funding \$10M in capital money towards relocation for the Parks operational and maintenance needs and \$15M in capital for park improvements and expanding programming opportunities at Sara D. Roosevelt Park.
- Allocating \$500,000 in expense funding for the study and reimagination of Petrosino Square.
- Implementing Commercial Waste Zones in Community District 2 as expeditiously as possible.
- Conducting targeted enforcement before implementation of Commercial Waste Zones.
- Committing \$100,000 for the planning and pedestrian-friendly improvements in Cooper Triangle planning.
- Pledging \$150,000 to cover the cost of identified treatments to enhance nearby Open Streets on Avenue B, St. Marks Place, and East 7th Street in coordination with local partners.
- Advancing Clean Curbs pilot with local partners 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.

What Neighborhood Stakeholders and Housing Advocates Are Saying

“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 equal 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.”

"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, Cooper Square Committee**. "We're pleased that Council Members Chin and Rivera negotiated many improvements over the de Blasio Administration's original plan, providing more protections and resources for rent regulated tenants in the upzoned areas as well as streetscape, transportation and sanitation improvements."

"We are grateful for the extraordinary time and attention we were given to make our case for modifications to the SoHo/NoHo rezoning. NoHo is proud to contribute and welcome affordability and we appreciate that affordable credits we may not be able to realize in our antique buildings will help fund units in lots close to our resource rich neighborhood. And, we appreciate the most recent modifications to Int. 2443-A, regarding fine imposition for illegal JLWQA units." said **Zella Jones, President, NoHo-Bowery Stakeholders, Inc.**

"This historic rezoning process has revealed that there is a broad coalition of New Yorkers who share a commitment to abundant, affordable, and equitable housing — and we're proud to have leaders like Council Members Chin and Rivera fighting with us," said **Will Thomas, Executive Director, Open New York**. "Given their history of bold leadership on housing, it should be no surprise Council Members Chin and Rivera delivered in Soho and NoHo. Thanks to them, thousands of New Yorkers will soon be able to call SoHo and NoHo home."

"The SoHo plan is as substantive as it is symbolic, because it sends a powerful message that wealthy communities are no longer off-limits when it comes to affordable housing creation," said **Aaron Carr, Founder and Executive Director, Housing Rights Initiative**. "This plan chooses integration over segregation, equality over inequality, inclusivity over exclusivity. While no rezoning is perfect, affordable housing in SoHo is better than no affordable housing in SoHo. We commend Council Member Carlina Rivera, Council Member Margaret Chin, and the housing advocates who made this happen."