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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES START OF PUBLIC PROCESS FOR SOHO-
NOHO NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

Proposed zoning initiative would update 50-year-old codes to promote housing equity and support business, arts, and culture

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the [SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan](#) will advance into the City’s public land use review process, a major milestone toward realizing a shared vision for an inclusive and vibrant SoHo and NoHo. The proposal would replace outdated, 50-year old zoning to offer greater flexibility for ground floor use by businesses and arts and cultural organizations, while incentivizing the creation of new permanently affordable homes. This proposal will open two neighborhoods with exceptional access to transit, schools, jobs, and other amenities to many more New Yorkers and advance the City’s goals of fair housing and equitable growth.

“New York City has changed a lot in the last fifty years, and SoHo and NoHo have changed with it. Thoughtful, progressive zoning changes will pave the way for the next fifty years of growth – while making two iconic neighborhoods more accessible than ever, and helping us rebuild a fairer and better city,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“The SoHo/NoHo rezoning is a critical step to promote fair housing and ensure that these two neighborhoods and New York City as a whole recover fairly and robustly,” said **Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been**. “The pandemic and the movement for racial justice make clear that all neighborhoods must pull their weight to provide safe, affordable housing options. Updating the zoning in one of the city’s most iconic retail districts also will give arts and cultural organizations, retail, and other businesses more flexible options to recover, adapt, and succeed. I look forward to working through the land use process with Council Member Chin and all of our partners from these neighborhoods and throughout the city.”

“Today’s proposal to create a more inclusive and resilient SoHo and NoHo rests on the rigorous community engagement work that artists and residents, businesses, preservation groups and property owners participated in last year. That work is even more essential now as we seek to ensure that these iconic neighborhoods, and New York City as a whole, fully and fairly recover from the economic challenges wrought by COVID-19,” said **Anita Laremont, Executive Director of the Department of City Planning**.

The changes would cover 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 area is currently mapped with zoning districts found only in the

SoHo and NoHo neighborhoods and which date to the early 1970s, when vacant manufacturing buildings were being repurposed by artists and others drawn to the neighborhoods' versatile and affordable lofts.

The proposal would allow new homes to be created and require affordable housing in all new developments, allowing as many as 3,200 new homes to be created, with approximately 800 permanently affordable homes via Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH). Existing rent-regulated homes, many covered by the Loft Law, will remain protected. Rules designed in the 1970's to recognize artist live-work space would be reimagined to reflect modern live-work modes.

This initiative also furthers the priorities developed in [Where We Live NYC](#), the City's ongoing fair housing planning process. Where We Live NYC calls for changes to ensure every neighborhood can contribute to the City's affordable housing development goals – especially amenity-rich, high-income, disproportionately white areas like SoHo and NoHo.

Building on a foundational public engagement process that spanned six months and included over 40 meetings last year, the plan seeks to establish a new zoning district to address the community's housing needs and economic challenges. The public engagement process was co-sponsored by the Department of City Planning, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and City Council Member Margaret Chin. It resulted in the [Envision SoHo/NoHo](#) report.

The plan would also remove overly complex and obsolete regulations that burden local business owners and artisans. The area's existing zoning prioritizes traditional manufacturing, which departed the neighborhoods long ago, and subjects active storefronts to lengthy and costly approval processes. These outdated and rigid regulations pose significant barriers to businesses and the contribute to high retail vacancies. The plan will provide the necessary zoning flexibility for economic recovery and adaptation for businesses, artists, and cultural organizations.

Inside the historic districts, contextual zoning will guide building form and scale in keeping with historic context. Outside of the historic districts, an appropriate building envelope will be established to maximize potential for housing and affordability while aligning with the area's loft building form.

The notice of the scoping hearing, the first step to prepare for the public review process, will be released this Friday and the remote public scoping meeting will be held Nov 10. The formal certification into the public review process is anticipated in 2021. To stay up to date about further details about the proposal and next steps in the process, click [here](#).

“As our city continues its path to rebuild and recover, the movement to secure housing justice and build inclusive neighborhoods has never been more urgent. Our collective recovery as a city will be determined by how our communities rise up to confront that challenge,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. “For years, I have maintained that the fight to create more deeply affordable housing and expand housing stability is a shared responsibility, and I look forward to working with residents, stakeholders, and the Administration to taking our community dialogue to shape the future of SoHo and NoHo to the next level and chart a path forward that brings more

opportunities for desperately-needed affordable housing while preserving and enhancing the artistic, cultural, and historical components that make these neighborhoods so special.”

“The SoHo-NoHo Neighborhood Plan demonstrates the City’s commitment to fostering a more equitable and integrated city. In keeping with our Where We Live NYC fair housing blueprint, it will spur the creation of new, permanently affordable homes in a transit-rich, high-opportunity neighborhood that has historically lacked affordable housing,” **said HPD Commissioner Louise Carroll**. “I want to thank the Mayor, our colleagues across City government, and especially Council Member Chin for supporting this plan to grow the vibrant SoHo/NoHo community in such an inclusive way.”

“Investments that support our small businesses and make our city more equitable are key to a robust economic recovery that builds a stronger future for New York City,” said **James Patchett, president and CEO of New York City Economic Development Corporation**. “This proposed zoning initiative creates more affordable homes for New Yorkers, removes barriers to local businesses, and builds a more inclusive city. It is the vision we need to prioritize as the City looks towards the future and the recovery that lies ahead.”

“Providing equitable access to resources has been the highest priority for this administration and this rezoning showcases the continued commitment to this mission,” said **Jonnel Doris, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services**. “This is a huge win for the City – we are doubling down our efforts to invest in neighborhoods, advocating on behalf of those who need us most, and creating a fairer City for all.”

"By transforming industrial buildings into live/work space and advocating to preserve the area in the 1970s, Soho's storied artist community helped put New York on the map as a global arts capital," said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Gonzalo Casals**. "We look forward to working with local leaders, residents, and other stakeholders to re-imagine how this iconic neighborhood can nurture a vibrant cultural community as it continues to evolve."

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