

**FOR THE RECORD**

**CK Technology Group, LLC and Wanderport Networks, Inc.**

**330 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor**

**New York, NY 10018**

**Members of the City Council,**

I want to express my strong support for the Midtown South Mixed-Use (MSMX) Rezoning proposal. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reposition a centrally located, transit-rich part of our city for the future by enabling urgently needed housing, supporting economic recovery, and enhancing the public realm.

I am Chris Kossifos, owner of CK Technology Group and Wanderport Networks—two long-standing business tenants on 38th Street in the district. Over the years, I have witnessed a significant decline in the quality of life in this area. We face increasing crime, widespread neglect of the neighborhood, indiscriminate littering, and an overall sense of disorder on our streets. This environment discourages business tenants and visitors alike. Worse, during weekends and after business hours, the absence of a residential community emboldens criminal activity, leaving the district vulnerable.

Allowing residential development through the Mixed-Use rezoning would not only strengthen the local business climate but uplift the entire district. A vibrant residential presence will create a safer, more stable, and more prosperous community. On behalf of my companies, staff and colleagues in the district, I strongly urge you to approve the Midtown South Mixed-Use rezoning. To deny this change would be a disservice to those—business and property owners alike—who contribute most to the vitality and future of this district.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical initiative.

**The MSMX plan is essential.** MSMX would allow residential development in Midtown South, including the Garment District, where outdated manufacturing and commercial zoning has prevented housing for decades.

**The plan will enable Office-to-Residential Conversions** to deliver housing, including affordable units through the use of 467m, and **revitalize a struggling neighborhood** with the reduction of obsolete office stock that is driving down the retail experience in the district due to the lack of foot traffic.

The Garment District currently has one of the lowest residential populations in the city. A new residential population will bring stability, activate the streetscape, support local businesses, and improve public safety.

Vacancy rates in many buildings hover between 25% and 40%, and the neighborhood has struggled to recover post-pandemic. A neighborhood rezoning brings more than zoning changes – it guarantees additional capital and investment by a variety of city agencies to address quality of life concerns and ensure a safe and habitable mixed-use community that is supported by the appropriate city infrastructure.

Thank you for your leadership on this vital initiative. MSMX is a smart, timely, and necessary step to ensure the future of Midtown South.

Sincerely,

Chris Kossifos

Owner/Principal of CK Technology Group, LLC and Wanderport Networks, Inc.  
330 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10018

July 1, 2025

**FOR THE RECORD**

**EJMB Realty Co Inc.  
330 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street, suite 305  
New York, NY 10018**

**Members of the City Council,**

I want to express my **strong unwavering support** for the Midtown South Mixed-Use (MSMX) Rezoning proposal. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reposition a centrally located, transit-rich part of our city for the future by enabling urgently needed housing, supporting economic recovery, and enhancing the public realm.

As owner and manager of a building in the Garment District for over 20 years, we have been working hard to rent our property. It is not easy to convince a prospective tenant to come to this amazing district because all they hear is how the area is plagued with crime. How many times have we lost tenants who told us that they came at night to see the neighborhood and were concerned with the less than desirable roaming the streets tanking the possibility of renting a space. Most office buildings in the district have high vacancies which keeps the area from growing and flourishing, and reduces the income spent in the neighborhood. **A 24-hour neighborhood promotes businesses to invest in the Garment District creating a place where families would want to live and create a sense of community.**

The quality-of-life issues are a concern for all tenants: homeless people sleeping on the streets, drug vendors, needle users, beggars, drug pushers, drugged out people bothering and frightening tenants from coming to the office. **Now is the time to act. The time is ripe to create a thriving 24/7 neighborhood which will coincide with the recent commencement of the renovation of the Port Authority.** This pocket of Midtown South has been long neglected and now with more people going west to Hudson Yards, one can see the stark difference of what is new and vibrant to what has been held back by zoning overlays and lack of forward vision. **This will change. An increase in residential housing will transform the neighborhood, giving life to desolate streets. The possibility of an increase in housing will in turn create jobs and opportunities for restaurants, retailers and stores to come to our community and enhance the area.** In speaking with our tenants and based on our experience, we can see only positive in the Midtown South Mixed Use Rezoning proposal. **It is a must for this community that nothing less would leave this community out of the growth and progress that we call NYC.**

**The MSMX plan is essential.** MSMX would allow residential development in Midtown South, including the Garment District, where outdated manufacturing and commercial zoning has depressed the area and prevented housing for decades.

**The plan will enable Office-to-Residential Conversions** to deliver housing, including affordable units through the use of 467m, **and revitalize a struggling neighborhood** with the reduction of obsolete office stock that is driving down the retail experience in the district due to the lack of foot traffic.

The Garment District currently has one of the lowest residential populations in the city. A new residential population will bring stability, activate the streetscape, support local businesses, and improve public safety.

Vacancy rates in many buildings hover between 25% and 40%, and the neighborhood has struggled to recover post-pandemic. A neighborhood rezoning brings more than zoning changes – it guarantees additional capital and investment by a variety of city agencies to address quality of life concerns and ensure a safe and habitable mixed-use community that is supported by the appropriate city infrastructure.

Thank you for your leadership on this vital initiative. MSMX is a smart, timely, and necessary step to ensure the future of Midtown South.

Sincerely,

*Marc Bengualid*

President

**FOR THE RECORD**

Dear Council Members:

I have been managing commercial buildings in the Garment District for many years. Since the pandemic, my retail tenants have been struggling due to the eroding customer base and have never fully recovered. Residents are critical to the survival of ground floor businesses, but the Garment District has fewer residents than any other district in the five boroughs. Passing the MSMX proposal is critical to revitalizing the neighborhood, while also helping to solve the city-wide housing crisis. The neighborhood needs a robust residential population and a 24/7 mixed-use community to generate increased pedestrian activity, enhance the vibrancy of our public realm, animate street life, and improve safety. I have only received positive feedback from my tenants about the idea of rezoning the Garment District to create a mixed-use neighborhood, and I strongly urge the passing of the MSMX proposal.

Thank you.

  
David Zaga

**New York City Council  
Sub-committee on Zoning and Franchises  
Tuesday, July 1, 2025  
11:00 a.m.  
Council Chambers  
Barbara A. Blair**

**Good afternoon. I am Barbara Blair, president of the Garment District Alliance, a business improvement district which is in the NW quadrant of the MSMX proposal area.**

**The Alliance strongly supports MSMX. The city needs housing and the Garment District's future depends on it.**

**For many decades, the Garment District has been a sacrifice zone. Lack of investment, outdated zoning regulations, and an over saturation of social service entities due to a neglect of the city's Fair Share principles have suppressed economic development and impacted quality of life. Today, despite its central location as the gateway to New York City for millions of tourists and commuters, the Garment District falls well behind the rest of midtown by every measure.**

**Without residents, the Garment District is wholly reliant on our commercial tenant sector – a vulnerability that proved untenable during the pandemic. Without a stable residential population, the district collapsed. Retailers had no customer base, office buildings emptied, and our streets exploded with crime and antisocial activity.**

**We are now faced with higher vacancies than ever with some buildings being between 25% - 40% vacant. Tenants are leaving for better neighborhoods because of the deplorable social conditions on our streets. The future is grim unless the district is allowed to develop into a robust, mixed-use community.**

**MSMX presents an ideal opportunity for the city to create much needed housing and improve the quality of life and pedestrian experience in the Garment District. The Garment District is the most transit-rich district in NYC and is in proximity to midtown culture and attractions including theater, museums, Lincoln Center, Madison Square Garden as well as walking distance to Flatiron, Bryant Park , Hudson Yards, 14<sup>th</sup> Street, and Meatpacking. Leaving these assets on the table makes a mockery of sound planning.**

**The Alliance respectfully urges the Council to save the Garment District by supporting MSMX as presented and allowing the neighborhood to evolve and thrive as 24-hour, mixed-use community.**



FOR THE RECORD

GFP Real Estate  
515 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Jeffrey Gural  
Chairman  
(212) 372-2400  
[jgural@gfpa.com](mailto:jgural@gfpa.com)

**New York City Council  
Sub-committee on Zoning and Franchises  
Tuesday, July 1, 2025  
11:00 a.m.  
Council Chambers**

Good morning chair Riley and members of the committee. I am Jeffrey Gural, Chairman of GFP Real Estate. We own six buildings in the Garment District, and we are strongly in support of this proposal to save our neighborhood.

My family has a long history in New York City and especially in this district and we have worked with many businesses in the garment industry. At one time, the district was bustling with fashion uses as the sector comprised nearly 100% of the district and 100% of my tenancy. We were happy to work with them, but in the 1970s things began to change. Fashion companies in all sectors began leaving due to changes in industry and the global market, forces far larger than zoning or lower rents can solve.

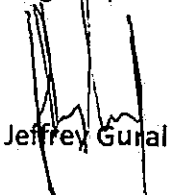
We've seen a steady and unrelenting decrease in fashion tenants looking for space in the district. Since COVID there are none. Our buildings throughout the city all took a hit, but all are rebounding except the ones in the garment district. Our buildings are 35% empty and finding any tenants is challenging because of the security and social disorder in the neighborhood. For our part, we've had to hire guards and off-duty police to appease the tenants we still have.

With some of the highest vacancy rates in the city and the lowest rents in Manhattan, we must look to new stakeholders that can revive the district. For our neighborhood to become sustainable, we need to create a 24/7 mixed use environment like every other district in the city.

The city needs high density housing, and the Garment District needs a lifeline. The MSMX rezoning is the perfect solution to both problems.

I urge you to pass this lifeline for the Garment District.

Regards,



Jeffrey Gural





HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

July 1, 2025

Dear Councilmembers,

I am Frampton Tolbert, Executive Director of the Historic Districts Council, the citywide advocate for New York's historic neighborhoods and representing more than 500 Community Partner organizations.

HDC strongly supports new housing in Midtown South. But the current proposed rezoning does not create a vibrant, mixed use neighborhood. Instead it incentivizes demolition of existing buildings and loss of hundreds of specialty businesses. We implore the Council to make the following improvements so that the rezoning creates housing quickly and sustainably while safeguarding Midtown South's historic fabric and supporting manufacturing jobs.

We urge you to:

1. **Lower the Plan's proposed residential FAR.** We oppose creating residential FAR higher than commercial FAR, because it incentivizes demolition over adaptive reuse. Proposed residential FARs of 18 and 15, coupled with zoning lot mergers, and available bonuses, will encourage developers to see every existing building as underbuilt and expendable. Ideally commercial and residential FARs should be the same so that owners can decide what makes the most sense for their property. Additionally, lowering the plan's FAR also supports the use of landmark TDRs, which were recently expanded under City of Yes.
2. **Incentivize adaptive reuse.** There are hundreds of historic commercial buildings in the rezoning area—create more incentives for the conversion of these buildings, which will help the city achieve its housing goals more sustainably, celebrate the iconic architecture that the area is known for, and create a shorter timeline for housing to come online.
3. **Support the Garment industry and small businesses.** The Plan currently offers no incentives for retention of manufacturing jobs. We need new strategies and funding to keep the existing businesses in the MSMX area, especially in the iconic Garment District. Many of these businesses need to be in this location and have nowhere else to go. If we lose these jobs, NYC's economy will suffer.

We can have both housing and jobs. Help create a plan that works for everyone. Thank you.

Testimony of the New York Housing Conference

New York City Council  
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises

July 1, 2025

Good afternoon. My name is Brendan Cheney, I'm the director of Policy and Operations at the New York Housing Conference. We are a nonprofit affordable housing advocacy organization. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Midtown South Mixed-Use Plan.

As you know, New York City is facing a severe housing crisis. The city's vacancy rate is just 1.41% citywide, the lowest rate in 50 years. Over 850,000 households are rent burdened, 500,000 of them are severely rent burdened, and there are over 120,000 people staying in city shelters.

To address the crisis, the city needs to add more housing supply, especially more subsidized affordable housing. And we need to do it everywhere in the City.

Our NYC Housing Tracker shows affordable housing production across the city, and the data shows we are not building housing equitably across the city. Our 2025 report shows this same trend as our previous three reports. We're building in neighborhoods that have a higher share of Black and Latino residents and neighborhoods with lower incomes while neighborhoods with higher incomes and higher shares of White residents are adding less new housing.

Rezoning like the one in MSMX, will add more housing, including more affordable housing in a neighborhood that has very high costs and has seen little new affordable housing. The neighborhood of the rezoning has seen only 300 new affordable units over the past 11 years – less than 30 new affordable units per year.

To compare, other high-density neighborhoods produced 4,000 or more affordable units over that time. Several neighborhoods saw over 1,000 new affordable units just last year.

Rezoning like MSMX are desperately needed. It will add affordable housing, particularly in a high-cost majority white neighborhood with little new affordable housing recently added. It adds density, which will allow for an increase in housing supply in a neighborhood rich with transit and jobs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions.



## **Testimony in support of the Midtown South Mixed-Use Plan**

City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises – July 1, 2025

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Thank you Chair Riley, Council Members Bottcher and Powers, and members of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises for the opportunity to testify in favor of the Midtown South Mixed-Use proposal. My name is Logan Phares, and I am the Political Director at Open New York. Open New York is an independent, grassroots, pro-housing nonprofit. We have 12 chapters across the state and nearly 800 active, volunteer members.

New York faces a severe housing shortage. In February 2024, the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey revealed that the rental vacancy rate had fallen to 1.4%, the lowest point since 1968. New Yorkers know the pressures of the housing crisis all too well. Displacement, exclusion, tenant harassment, and homelessness are all exacerbated by our dire housing shortage. Following last week's primary election, it's more clear than ever that New Yorkers' top priority is affordability, and that they want their elected officials to be laser focused on finding solutions to rising housing costs. As a city, we must take an all-of-the-above approach to solving the crisis by protecting tenants and creating the housing we need.

For far too long, the most well-resourced parts of the city have been exempt from creating new homes, driving up rents and reinforcing long-standing patterns of segregation. We've seen wealthy New Yorkers use their influence and connections to keep affordable housing from being built, most recently exemplified by First Deputy Mayor Randy Mastro killing the Haven Green project at the request of nearby millionaire homeowners. If Mastro hadn't intervened, this project would have created 123 deeply affordable homes for low income seniors, including many formerly homeless seniors.

Midtown South is another example of a neighborhood centrally located to transit and jobs, which has been off-limits to new housing opportunities for decades due to outdated zoning laws. It's impossible to uphold fair housing principles without every neighborhood being part of the solution. Luckily our leaders in the Council are stepping up to the plate. In 2023, Speaker Adams championed the Fair Housing Framework, and at the end of last year, she led the Council in passing City of Yes and City for All, which will create more than 80,000 new homes across the city.

MSMX not only gives us the chance to create a more vibrant future for Midtown South, but it furthers the Council's fair housing goals, and will create an affordable housing requirement for the neighborhood that doesn't currently exist. We are excited to see that the proposal would allow for nearly 9,700 homes, including up to 2,900 much needed income-restricted homes. It is



critical that the plan keeps the highest residential density possible – ideally 18 FAR across the project area.

By creating the housing we need, we can follow in the footsteps of cities such as Minneapolis and Austin to stabilize and ultimately lower rents, making New York City more accessible and affordable for current and future residents. We encourage the City Council to pass the Midtown South Mixed-Use Plan without any changes to ensure that we bring as many new homes as we can to this incredibly well-resourced neighborhood. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

**PACHYDERM  
CONSULTING**

66 West 38th Street, Suite 11K // New York, NY 10018  
212 629 7600 // [www.pachyderm.net](http://www.pachyderm.net)

July 1, 2025

I own Pachyderm Consulting, a boutique IT firm, and I strongly support MSMX.

My business was located in the Garment District for 15 years because the neighborhood's unparalleled transit access made it easy for me to attract employees and reach client sites. However, the Garment District today is struggling from the long-lasting impacts of the pandemic. Commercial vacancies, failing retail, and increased crime have diminished the quality of life in the neighborhood, making it difficult to find and retain quality employees.

In 2022, I moved my company out of the area to a safer, more active neighborhood. However, I still commute through the Garment District and find myself feeling vulnerable when I need to work during evenings and weekends, because the neighborhood feels particularly dangerous during those times.

I support the MSMX plan because it is abundantly clear that the Garment District's reliance on commercial tenants is untenable. I would love to move back into the area, and my employees would love to live in midtown, but the city must encourage the Garment District's development into a self-sustaining, 24/7 community with mixed uses that can support each other and bring life to the streets. This can only be accomplished by encouraging more residential conversions and development to take place.

At a time when the city is experiencing a housing crisis that further threatens the workforce, MSMX presents an opportunity to revitalize the Garment District in the heart of midtown, while also addressing this critical, city-wide need.

I urge the passing of the MSMX proposal. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Boxer  
President



WE TAME TECHNOLOGY

# SAVITT PARTNERS

New York City Council  
Sub-committee on Zoning and Franchises  
Tuesday, July 1, 2025  
11:00 a.m.  
Via Zoom

FOR THE RECORD

Good afternoon,

I am Robert Savitt, president of Savitt Partners, with multiple buildings in the Garment District.

Savitt Partners strongly supports the MSMX proposal. The city needs housing and the Garment District has ample, vacant space available for conversions. The MSMX proposed zoning is the perfect solution to both these problems.

Without residents, the Garment District is wholly reliant on our commercial tenant sector – a vulnerability that proved untenable during the pandemic and the lingering effects of which we are still experiencing.

Residents are critical to the survival of ground floor businesses. The Garment District has fewer residents than any other district in the five boroughs. Passing the MSMX proposal is critical to revitalizing the neighborhood, while also helping to solve the city-wide housing crisis. The neighborhood needs a robust residential population and a 24/7 mixed-use community to generate increased pedestrian activity, enhance the vibrancy of our public realm, animate street life, and improve safety. I have only received positive feedback from my commercial tenants about the idea of rezoning the Garment District to create a mixed-use neighborhood. I strongly urge the passing of the MSMX proposal.

Our business tenants are leaving the Garment District to find “better” neighborhoods in Manhattan. Some Garment District buildings are now faced with higher vacancies than ever with some buildings being between 25% - 35%.

MSMX presents an ideal opportunity for the city to create much needed housing and improve the quality of life and pedestrian experience in a critically important area. The Garment District is the most transit-rich district in NY and is in proximity to midtown cultural attractions including museums, Broadway theaters, Lincoln Center, Madison Square Garden as well as walking distance to Flatiron, Bryant Park, Hudson Yards, 14<sup>th</sup> Street, and Meatpacking.

Savitt Partners respectfully urges the Council to save the Garment District by supporting the MSMX as presented and allowing the neighborhood to evolve and thrive as 24-hour, mixed-use community.

Best,



Robert Savitt



July 1, 2025

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES REGARDING THE MIDTOWN SOUTH MIXED-USE PLAN

Good day, Chair Riley and Council members. I'm Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is a 52-year-old organization dedicated to preserving, revitalizing, and reusing New York's historic buildings and neighborhoods. We support affordable housing. We want to ensure that New York's rich diversity of architecture continues to enhance the City: creating jobs, housing New Yorkers, encouraging sustainability, and welcoming visitors from around the world.

The Midtown South Mixed-Use Plan would dramatically upzone four sections of this part of the City to encourage commercial to residential conversions and new residential development. Conversion of underused buildings is at the heart of preservation, and we support this concept for Midtown South. But in practice, we fear that the blanket upzoning will encourage massive new construction and the demolition of the historic buildings that contribute so much to this community.

The Madison Square North and Ladies Mile Historic Districts overlap with the southeast quadrant. These historic districts have been remarkably successful. They have created housing and fostered commercial and retail uses. They have become destinations for New Yorkers and visitors. The upzoning will put development pressure on sites within the historic districts, and pressure the LPC to approve out-of-scale new buildings.

The northwest section includes the Garment Center Historic District. These buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They still contain hundreds of Garment Center businesses and thousands of jobs, which form a unique ecosystem of design and production. The rezoning will fast-forward the buildings' demolition and hasten the demise of the Garment Center.

This rezoning is also at odds with recently passed City and State laws. City of Yes expanded the ability for individual landmarks to sell their unused development rights, but this upzoning would extinguish those opportunities since development rights for all sites in the area would increase. State changes to the Multiple Dwelling Law that ended the 12 FAR limit on residential development exempted historic districts. There's no reason why the City should now increase the FAR above 12 in the historic districts.

We urge the Council to make changes that tailor the plan for each section of Midtown South. Reducing the FAR in some sections to an R10 equivalent or a 12 FAR, or excluding historic districts would prioritize reuse of existing, historic buildings, encourage sustainable development, and still support the City's goals of increasing housing. Thank you for the opportunity to express the Conservancy's views.

**FOR THE RECORD**

**Members of the City Council,**

I want to express my strong support for the Midtown South Mixed-Use (MSMX) Rezoning proposal. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reposition a centrally located, transit-rich part of our city for the future by enabling urgently needed housing, supporting economic recovery, and enhancing the public realm.

**I am Catherine O'Toole, I have been in the Garment Center for over 26 years. I am a portfolio manager for a commercial real estate firm called Lee & Associates. I have leased over 3 million sq feet to Retail and Office tenants in the District. I have experienced vacancy in the properties due to challenges with the homeless, drugs and crime in the area.**

**The MSMX plan is essential.** MSMX would allow residential development in Midtown South, including the Garment District, where outdated manufacturing and commercial zoning has prevented housing for decades.

**The plan will enable Office-to-Residential Conversions** to deliver housing, including affordable units through the use of 467m, **and revitalize a struggling neighborhood** with the reduction of obsolete office stock that is driving down the retail experience in the district due to the lack of foot traffic.

The Garment District currently has one of the lowest residential populations in the city. A new residential population will bring stability, activate the streetscape, support local businesses, and improve public safety.

Vacancy rates in many buildings hover between 25% and 40%, and the neighborhood has struggled to recover post-pandemic. A neighborhood rezoning brings more than zoning changes – it guarantees additional capital and investment by a variety of city agencies to address quality of life concerns and ensure a safe and habitable mixed-use community that is supported by the appropriate city infrastructure.

Thank you for your leadership on this vital initiative. MSMX is a smart, timely, and necessary step to ensure the future of Midtown South.

Sincerely,

Catherine O'Toole

Executive Managing Director & Principal  
1211 Avenue of the Americas, 29<sup>th</sup> Floor



New York, NY 10036

[REDACTED]

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[leeassociatesnyc.com](http://leeassociatesnyc.com)

**New York City Council**  
**Sub-committee on Zoning and Franchises**  
**Tuesday, July 1, 2025**  
**11:00 a.m.**  
**Council Chambers**  
**Ira Z. Fishman**

**FOR THE RECORD**

Good morning Chair Riley and members of the committee. I am Ira Z. Fishman. I have worked in the Garment District for 53 years in real estate. I have witnessed firsthand the evolution of the district and the relentless decline of the fashion sector in its buildings.

The garment district has historically had the lowest rental rates in Manhattan, and it still does. When I started in 1972 the streets were clogged with trucks, racks and goods from the factories, cutting rooms and warehouses. At night the district was dark and empty.

In the early years you could not rent in these buildings unless you were in fashion. In those days buildings were identified by sector, childrenswear, bridal, outerwear, couture etc.. Buildings would not take you if you were not in the sector by which they identified.

In the mid-80s when rents got high on the east side and space tightened - non-fashion businesses started looking at the garment district. My first non-fashion lease was in 1986. The market was starting to change but then in 1990 the non-fashion tenants went right back to the east side when rents over there dropped again.

The 1987 zoning overlay basically had no impact and manufacturing businesses continued to leave. Cutting rooms and manufacturers moved to NJ and Brooklyn and showrooms began their exodus to cool areas in the city like the Meatpacking District and Soho.

Things were looking up in recent years with non-fashion tenants taking advantage of cheap rent and then COVID hit. During COVID rents crashed all over the city including office districts. Businesses located here took the opportunity to move to better neighborhoods. And our rents dropped from \$52 a square foot to \$32. Marking and grading that used to be done by hand in large spaces on huge tables was now being done on the computer in 20% of the space.

Zoning as a retention tool for jobs and businesses in the fashion sector failed. The 1950s model of clustering sectors is obsolete, and it has been tremendously detrimental to the garment district. Residential is a lifeline for this neighborhood allowing our spaces to be occupied by uses with a vested interest in the area, are a 24/7 presence and animate our streets. It matches a tremendous need for housing with existing space to create it. I urge you to pass MSMX to save this important neighborhood, the garment district.

**FOR THE RECORD**

**Philippe Ifrah**  
**336 West 37th Street**  
**New York, NY 10018**  
**(914)409-7318**  
**phifrah@gmail.com**

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Midtown South Mixed-Use (MSMX) Rezoning proposal. This is a crucial opportunity to transform a centrally located, transit-rich area of our city for the future by enabling much-needed housing, supporting economic recovery, and enhancing the public realm.

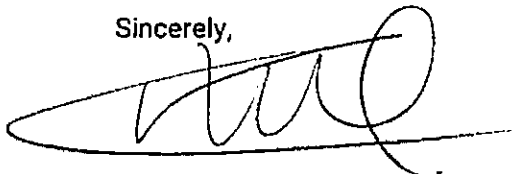
I am Philippe Ifrah, a property owner in the Garment District. I have seen firsthand how the current outdated manufacturing and commercial zoning has hindered the growth of this area for decades, leading to high vacancy rates and a decline in foot traffic for local businesses.

The MSMX plan is essential because it will allow residential development in Midtown South, including the Garment District. This will enable office-to-residential conversions, delivering housing (including affordable units through the use of 467m), and revitalizing our struggling neighborhood. The reduction of obsolete office stock will also improve the retail experience in the district.

The Garment District currently has one of the lowest residential populations in the city. A new residential population will bring stability, activate the streetscape, support local businesses, and significantly improve public safety. With vacancy rates in many buildings hovering between 25% and 40%, and the neighborhood struggling to recover post-pandemic, this rezoning is vital. It will not only bring zoning changes but also guarantee additional capital and investment from various city agencies to address quality of life concerns and ensure a safe and habitable mixed-use community supported by appropriate city infrastructure.

Thank you for your leadership on this vital initiative. MSMX is a smart, timely, and necessary step to ensure the future of Midtown South.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philippe Ifrah', written over a horizontal line.

Philippe Ifrah

Dear Members of the City Council,

I want to express my strong support for the Midtown South Mixed-Use (MSMX) Rezoning proposal. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reposition a centrally located, transit-rich part of our city for the future by enabling urgently needed housing, supporting economic recovery, and enhancing the public realm.

My name is Varun Sanyal and I am the Vice President of Government Relations and Policy at Gotham Organization. We are a 5<sup>th</sup> generation firm with over 100 years of experience and investment in New York City. We own several residential assets in the area and see firsthand how this proactive proposal can positively inject economic stability into the area.

The MSMX plan is essential. MSMX would allow residential development in Midtown South, including the Garment District, where outdated manufacturing and commercial zoning has prevented housing for decades.

A neighborhood rezoning brings more than zoning changes – it guarantees additional capital and investment by a variety of city agencies to address quality of life concerns and ensure a safe and habitable mixed-use community that is supported by the appropriate city infrastructure.

A new residential population will bring stability, activate the streetscape, support local businesses, and improve public safety.

Thank you for your leadership on this vital initiative. MSMX is a smart, timely, and necessary step to ensure the future of Midtown South.

Varun Sanyal  
Vice President, Government Relations & Policy  
Gotham Organization

FOR THE RECORD

My name is Wendi Rose and I have lived on West 26th st for 30 years. I have raised my children in the neighborhood and we welcome new families and affordable housing. My neighbors and I have appeared and testified at every opportunity in the public review process to offer constructive suggestions about how this plan should be revised to protect the qualities that make the area so appealing: protecting the future of our landmarks, leaving room for the diversity of uses that make us a true 24/7 mixed use neighborhood, and making sure existing and future residents have adequate light and air. We are heartbroken that instead of listening and trying to improve the plan, City Planning has ignored our comments. We are here today to ask our elected representatives to hear us and show that you take your oversight role seriously and step up to fix this plan. Thank you.