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SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING
AND FRANCHISES

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November 9, 2021
Start: 10:19 a.m.
Recess: 6:41 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING - VIRTUAL ROOM 2

B E F O R E: Francisco P. Moya,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Diana Ayala
- Joseph C. Borelli
- Margaret S. Chin
- Barry S. Grodenchik
- Stephen T. Levin
- Keith Powers
- Antonio Reynoso
- Carlina Rivera

A P P E A R A N C E S

Eric Palatnik
Zoning and Land Use Attorney

Paul Basile
Brooklyn Dream Makers Studios

Elise Wagner
Partner at Kramer Levin, Counsel to Terminal
Owner LP, the owners of the Terminal Warehouse

Carrie Harris
Goldman Harris

David Horwitz
L&L Holding Company

Jeff Nelson
RXR Realty

Eric Schlameuss
RXR Realty

Alex Moscovitz
Environmental Planner VHB

Paul Devlin
Co-Chair of the Chelsea Land Use Committee of
Community Board Four

Betty Mackintosh
Co-Chair of the Chelsea Land Use Committee of
Community Board Four

Rami Abou-Khalil
Architect and Middle East Enthusiast

David Karnovsky
Fried Frank

Penny King
Fried Frank

Jon McMillan
Real Estate Board of New York

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Amir Stein
TF Cornerstone

David Velez
Senior Corporate Accountant at FirstService
Residential New York

Darnell Harper
New York City Resident and a Member of Local 79

Gilfredo Valentin
Speaking on Behalf of Pathway to Apprenticeship
and Laborers Local 79

Renzo Ramirez
Member of 32BJ SCIU

Jessica Walker
President and CEO of the Manhattan Chamber of
Commerce

Rob Byrnes
President of the East Midtown Partnership

Ryan Pukos
Speaking on behalf of the Grand Central
Partnership

Anne Trenkle
Helmets to Hardhats

Santos Rodriguez
On behalf of Gary LaBarbera, President of the
Building and Construction Trades Council of
Greater New York

Jay Badame
Chairman of the Regional Alliance for Small
Contractors

Munsun Park
Senior Real Estate Manager in the Transit
Oriented Development Group at the MTA

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Nicole Bertran
Executive Vice President of the Edward J. Malloy
Initiative for Construction Skills

Felicia Park-Rogers
Director of Regional Infrastructure Projects for
Tristate Transportation Campaign

Helene Cinque
MTA TOD Group

Anita Lavemont
New York City Department of City Planning

Sylvia Li
New York City Department of City Planning

Ahmed Tigani
New York City Department of Housing and
Preservation and Development

Edith Hsu-Chen
Lead the Office responsible for planning, zoning,
urban design, public space and land use,
Department of City Planning

Michael Sandler New York City Department of
Housing Preservation and Development

Erik Botsford
Deputy Director of the Manhattan Division at the
New York City Department of City Planning

Gonzalo Casals
Commissioner of Department of Cultural Affairs,
DCLA

Christopher Marte
Council Member Elect for District One

Deborah Glick
New York State Assembly

Brad Hoylman
New York State Senator

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Benjamin Wessler
Democratic District Leader for the 76th Assembly
District in Manhattan

Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

Anthony Wong
Member of Community Board Two and Board Treasurer

Carter Booth
Immediate Past Chair of CB2 and Member of the
Envision SoHo/NoHo Advisory Group

Jeanine Kiely
Chair of Manhattan Community Board Two

Anita Brandt
Lifetime Resident and Business Owner in NoHo and
Chair of the Community Board's SoHo/NoHo Working
Group

Benjamin Prosky
Executive Director of the American Institute of
Architects New York, also known as AI in New York

Brendan Cheney
Director of Policy and Communications at the New
York Housing Conference

Moses Gates
Vice President of Housing and Neighborhood
Planning at Regional Plan Association

Cordelia Persen
Executive Director of the NoHo Bid

Andre Berman
Representing Village Preservation

Kate McClintock
Speaking on behalf of Village Preservation

Sam Moskowitz
Speaking on Behalf of Village Preservation

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1
2
3 Andrea Goldwyn
Speaking for the New York Landmarks Conservancy

4
5 William Thomas
Executive Director of Open New York

6
7 Ankur Dalal
Testifying in Favor of the Proposed Rezoning

8
9 Douglas Hanau
Longtime New Yorker

10
11 Edward Siegel
Urging all to vote in Support of Projects

12
13 Zella Jones
NoHo Bowery Stakeholders

14
15 Mark Dicus
Executive Director of the SoHo Broadway
Initiative

16
17 Sean Sweeney
Director of the SoHo Alliance

18
19 Pete Davies
41 Year Resident of SoHo

20
21 Anthony Borelli
Senior Vice President for Edison Properties

22
23 Dan Miller
Resident of Brooklyn, Speaking in favor of the
Rezoning

24
25 John Sanchez
Serve as a District Manager in Bronx Community
Board Six

Sheena Kang
Senior Policy Analyst at Citizens Housing and
Planning Council, CHPC

Valerie De La Rosa
Mexican American Millennial Renter in Community
District Two

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1 David Herman
2 Village Preservation

3 Donna Raftery
4 Member of Community Board Two

5 Steve Herrick
6 Cooper Square Committee

7 Austin Celestin
8 Urban Design Student at NYU

9 David Gordon
10 23-year-old Resident of Lower Manhattan

11 Denny Salas
12 Resident and testifying in support of the
13 rezoning for NoHo and SoHo

14 Sunny Ng
15 Resides in Brooklyn and in support the SoHo/NoHo
16 Rezoning Plan

17 Juan Rivero
18 Village Preservation

19 Lannyl Stephens
20 Village Preservation

21 Mary Ann Arisman
22 Village Preservation

23 Jenavieve Hinton
24 Village Preservation

25 Christopher Goode
Volunteer with Visiting Neighbors

Andy Zhang
In support of the Proposed SoHo/NoHo Rezoning

Casey Berkovitz
In support of the Proposed SoHo/NoHo Rezoning

Michelle Koppersmith
District One Resident

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Jeanne Wilcke
Co-Chair of the NoHo Neighborhood Association

Ingrid Weigand
Lived and worked in SoHo for decades as a Young
Artist and a Member of the Original SoHo Artist
Association

Maria Feliciano
Residential Owner and Board Member at 543
Broadway 114 Mercer Street
Chuck Delaney

Kathleen Wakeham
Met Council on Housing

Ryder Kessler
Member of Community Board Two

Mikey Lampel
Member of Open New York

Ken Ayub
In support of the Proposed SoHo/NoHo Rezoning

Sarah Eccles
Village Preservation

Hew Evans
Village Preservation

Trevor Stewart
Village Preservation

Frederica Sigel
Speaking on individual capacity

Eric Goshow
Fellow of the American Institute of Architects

Harrison Grinnan
Working for a large company in Midtown with many
co-workers who are immigrants

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Meghan Heintz

Katherine Schoonover
Village Preservation

Alida Camp
In Opposition of Proposed SoHo/NoHo Plan

Victoria Fariello
District Leader in lower Manhattan in opposition

David Mulkins
President of the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors

Enzo Repetto
Current NYU Student in Support of Proposed
SoHo/NoHo Plan

Campbell Munn
Junior studying architecture and urban planning
at NYU Gallatin

Max Livingston
In support of Proposed SoHo/NoHo Plan

Nicholas Oo
In support of Proposed SoHo/NoHo Plan

Alexandr Neratoff
Architect and Member of Infusion Advisory Group

Emily Hellstrom
Theater Artist in SoHo

Allie Ryan
Council District Two Resident and a Documentary
Film Producer

Lora Tenenbaum
Speaking on behalf of Self and Artists JLWQA Co-
op

Margo Margolis
Certified Artist

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1
2
3 Michele Varian
25-Year Residential Tenant and Small Business
4 Owner in SoHo

5 Leigh Behnke
Artist and I've lived on Broadway Since 1984
6 Before Retail

7 Samir Lavingia
In Support of Proposed SoHo/NoHo Plan

8 Aron Chilewich
9 Resident of Tribeca, in Support of Proposed
SoHo/NoHo Plan

10 Flavin Judd
11 In opposition of Proposed SoHo/NoHo Plan

12 Jane Fisher
Resident of SoHo for just under 40 years with
13 husband being a Certified Artist

14 Zeke Luger
Open New York

15 Justine Leguizamo
16 Village Preservation

17 Amanda Yaggy
In opposition to the SoHo/NoHo Chinatown Plan

18 David Lawrence
19 Photographer

20 Richard Moses
President of the Lower East Side Preservation
21 Initiative

22 Ronnie Wolf
42-year Resident of SoHo and Certified Glass
23 Artist

24 Jean Standish
Vice President of Bowery Alliance of Neighbors
25

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Anita Jorgensen
Lighting Designer

Leslie Clark
Resident of Greenwich Village

Lucy Koteen
In opposition of SoHo/NoHo Plan

Anita Isola
Village Preservation

Lorna Nowve
Interim Executive Director of the Historic
Districts Council

Jordy Mark
Resident and Renter for over 40 years in a
building across from a Proposed N15-R10 Rezoning

Peter Von Mayrhauser
Longtime Resident of SoHo

Connie Murray
Former Resident of SoHo, Native New Yorker in
opposition of rezoning

Anna Marcum
Village Preservation

Pauline Augustine
In opposition of SoHo/NoHo Chinatown Up-Zoning
Plan

Michele W.
Moved to SoHo in 1976

Darlene Lutz
40 Year Resident of SoHo in the Southwest
Quadrant

Micki McGee
Resident of the South Village

Joel Lobenthal
In Opposition of SoHo/NoHo Plan

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1
2
3 Julie Finch
4 In Opposition of SoHo/NoHo Plan

5 Susan Wittenberg
6 Longtime SoHo resident and a Certified Artist, in
7 Opposition of SoHo/NoHo Plan

8 Kathleen Row
9 Graphic Designer

10 Peter Feld
11 East Village Renter

12 Nina Roberts
13 Lived in the neighborhood just east of SoHo since
14 about 1991, in opposition of SoHo/NoHo rezoning

15 Zack Winestine
16 Co-Chair of the Greenwich Village Community
17 Taskforce

18 Adam Brodheim
19 Historic Preservationist

20 Daniel Cohen
21 Great Uncle Arthur Cohen invested in Manhattan
22 real estate

23 Sam Zimmerman
24 Resident of CD1 and In Support of SoHo rezoning

25 Kyle Dontoh
In favor of SoHo/NoHo rezoning

Rahner Judd
President of Judd Foundation

Judith Stonehill
Village Preservation

Raymond Cline
President of the Village Reform Democratic Club

Jeffrey Kroessler
President of the City Club of New York

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1 Jason Zakai
2 Attorney from the Law Firm Hiller

3 Michael McKee
4 In opposition of SoHo/NoHo rezoning

5 Bo Riccobono
6 In opposition of SoHo/NoHo rezoning

7 Catherine Paplin
8 Registered Architect and Co-Chair of the Historic
9 Buildings Committee and the American Institute of
Architects New York

10 Fred Doner
11 Longtime Resident of SoHo

12 Yukie Ohta
13 Lifelong Resident of SoHo and Founder of SoHo
Memory Project

14 Stephen Wanta
15 40 Year Resident at SoHo and a Practicing
Architect

16 Rob Houtenbos

17 Christabel Gough
18 Society for the Architecture of the City

19 Sherida Paulsen
20 Design Professional

21 Michael Henry Adams

22 Margaret Baisley
23 In Support of the SoHo/NoHo Rezoning

24 Susan Stoltz
25 Loft Tenant

Todd Fine
26 President of the Washington Street Advocacy Group

Vincent Cao
27 Represent 8385 and the Local Residents

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Liequang Wen
Interpreter for Vincent Cao

Michele Campo
Vice President of Bowery Alliance of Neighbors

Zishun Ning
Chinese Staff Workers Association

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1 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Recording to the Cloud all
2 set.
3

4 SERGEANT BRADLEY: Sergeant Kotowski, you may
5 begin the opening.

6 SERGEANT KOTOWSKI: Good morning and welcome to
7 today's Remote New York City Council Hearing at the
8 Committee on Zoning and Franchises. At this time,
9 would Council Staff please turn on their video.
10 Please place electronic devices on vibrate or silent.
11 If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so at
12 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. That is
13 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you. Chair,
14 we are ready to begin.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Good morning, I'm
16 Council Member Francisco Moya, Chair of the
17 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. I am joined
18 remotely today by Council Members Grodenchik,
19 Borelli, Rivera and Ayala.

20 Today, we will hold public hearings on the
21 redevelopment proposal for the 175 Park Avenue
22 rezoning for the Starrett-Lehigh and Terminal
23 Warehouse buildings and the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood
24 Plan, all in Manhattan. As well as the rezoning
25 proposal for 506 3rd Avenue in Brooklyn. In

1
2 conjunction with the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan, we
3 will also hold a hearing on Proposed Local Law in
4 relation to an increase in penalties relating to the
5 occupancy of joint living work quarters for artists
6 contrary to zoning.

7 But first, we will vote on a number of items
8 heard by the Subcommittee at our October 12th, 20th
9 and 25th meetings. I'll note now that the Gowanus
10 Neighborhood Plan and its related CSO facility
11 actions along with the New York Blood Center and the
12 343 Madison Avenue Proposals shown on today's agenda
13 are being laid over.

14 We will vote to approve the modifications of
15 Preconsidered LU's items for the 1045 Atlantic Avenue
16 Rezoning Proposal under ULURP's Number C 210276 ZMK
17 and N 210277 ZRK relating to property in Council
18 Member Cornegy's district in Brooklyn. The Proposal
19 seeks a Zoning Map Amendment to change an M1-1
20 District to a C6-3A District and a related Zoning
21 Text Amendment to establish an MIH program area
22 utilizing MIH Option 2 and the workforce option and
23 to establish special street wall regulations for
24 sites in C6-3A Districts in Brooklyn Community
25

1
2 District Three. With the frontage on Atlantic
3 Avenue.

4 Together these actions would facilitate the
5 development of a new 17 story mixed use building with
6 ground floor retail and office use on the second
7 floor and approximately 426 dwelling units. Our
8 modifications will be to strike the MIH Workforce
9 Option. Council Member Cornegy is in support of the
10 Proposal as modified.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'm sorry Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yup.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Excuse me, I'm just going to
14 ask you to just pause there for a moment while we
15 just confirm a technical issue. Sorry, please stand
16 by.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yup.

18 [STANDBY 00:02:58-00:06:02]

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Okay, I see the livestream.

20 [00:06:04-00:06:44] Okay, livestream is up. Will
21 Sergeant Kotowski begin with the opening.

22 SERGEANT KOTOWSKI: Good morning and welcome to
23 today's Remote New York City Council Hearing at the
24 Committee on Zoning and Franchises. At this time,
25 would Council Staff please turn on their video.

1 Please place electronic devices on vibrate or silent.
2
3 If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so at
4 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. That is
5 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you. Chair,
6 we are ready to begin.

7 [00:07:21-00:08:10]

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, uh, let's start again
9 and here we go. Good morning, I am Council Member
10 Francisco Moya, I am the Chair of the Subcommittee on
11 Zoning and Franchises. I am joined remotely today by
12 Council Members Ayala, Rivera, Borelli.

13 Today, we will also hold public hearings on the
14 Redevelopment Proposal for the 175 Park Avenue. A
15 rezoning for the Starrett-Lehigh and Terminal
16 Warehouse buildings and the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood
17 Plan, all in Manhattan. As well as the rezoning
18 proposal for 506 3rd Avenue in Brooklyn.

19 In conjunction with the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood
20 Plan, we will also uh hold a hearing on Proposed
21 Local Law in relation to the increase in penalties
22 relating to occupancy of the joint living quarters,
23 the joint living work quarters for artists contrary
24 to zoning.
25

1
2 But first, we will vote on a number of items
3 heard by the Subcommittee at our October 12th, 20th
4 and 25th meetings. I'll note now that the Gowanus
5 Neighborhood Plan and its related CSO facility
6 actions, sorry, faculty actions along with the New
7 York Blood Center and the 343 Madison Avenue
8 Proposals shown on today's agenda are being laid
9 over.

10 We will vote to approve the modifications of
11 Preconsidered LU's items for the 1045 Atlantic Avenue
12 Rezoning Proposal under ULURP's Number C 210276 ZMK
13 and N 210277 ZRK relating to property in Council
14 Member Cornegy's district in Brooklyn. The Proposal
15 seeks a Zoning Map Amendment to change an M1-1
16 District to a C6-3A District and a related Zoning
17 Text Amendment to establish an MIH program area
18 utilizing MIH Option Two and the workforce option and
19 to establish special street wall regulations for
20 sites in C6-3A Districts in Brooklyn Community
21 District Three. With the frontage on Atlantic
22 Avenue.

23 Together these actions would facilitate the
24 development of a new 17-story mixed-use building with
25 ground floor retail and office use on the second

1 floor and approximately 426 dwelling units. Our
2 modifications will be to strike the MIH Program, uh,
3 the MIH Workforce Option. Council Member Cornegy is
4 in support of the Proposal as modified.
5

6 We will also vote to approve with modification
7 uh, LU's Number 882 and 883 for the 185-17 Hillside
8 Avenue Rezoning related to property in Council Member
9 Gennaro's District in Queens. The Proposal seeks a
10 Zoning Map Amendment to rezone portions of existing
11 R3X and R6A Districts to an R7A District and to
12 extend an existing C24 commercial overlay and the
13 Special Downtown Jamaica District over the rezoning
14 area along Hillside Avenue. And a related Zoning
15 Text Amendment establishing an MIH program area
16 utilizing Options One and Two. As well as a special
17 bulk and parking regulations for R7A Districts within
18 an MIH area within the special downtown Jamaica
19 District. The modification will be to strike MIH
20 Option Two. Council Member Gennaro's in support of
21 the Proposal as modified.

22 We will also vote to approve with modification,
23 Modifications LU's 894 and 895 for the 824
24 Metropolitan Avenue Rezoning relating to property in
25 Council Member Reynoso's District in Brooklyn. The

1
2 Proposal seeks a Zoning Map Amendment to rezone
3 portions of the existing R6B and C8-2 District to an
4 R7A District and to extend an existing C2-4
5 Commercial overlay over the rezoning area along
6 Metropolitan and Bushwick Avenues. And a related
7 zoning text amendment establishing an MIH area
8 utilizing Options One and Two. The modification will
9 be to strike MIH Option Two and to add the deep
10 affordability option. Council Member Reynoso is in
11 support of the Proposal as modified.

12 We will also vote to approve LU 896 for the 624
13 Morris Avenue Rezoning, relating to property in Chair
14 Salamanca's District in the Bronx. The Proposal
15 seeks a Zoning Map Amendment to establish a C1-4
16 Commercial Overlay District within an existing R7-1
17 District to legalize and permit the modest expansion
18 of existing commercial uses on Morris Avenue between
19 East 153rd and East 151st Street. Chair Salamanca is
20 in support of the Proposal. And I want to also
21 recognize that we have Council Members Reynoso and
22 Council Member Barry G. that has joined us today.

23 And now, I would like to call for a vote to
24 approve LU 896 and to approve with modifications that
25 I have described LU's 882, 883, 894, 895 on the

1
2 Preconsidered LU's relating to 1045 Atlantic Avenue
3 under ULURP's Number C 210276 ZMK and N 210277 ZRK.
4 Counsel, if you can, please call the roll.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya?

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I vote aye on all.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Reynoso?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Permission to explain my
9 vote?

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Permission granted.

11 COUNCIL MEMEBR REYNOSO: Thank you Chair. I just
12 wanted to thank Chair Riley as well for the work that
13 he did on his Committee to get us to this point.
14 Very happy for this rezoning in the District that's
15 going to bring 700 of units, of which 200 would be
16 for homeless and about 200 that would be for formerly
17 homeless. So, I'm really excited for this project.
18 I want to thank everyone for voting aye. I want to
19 encourage everyone to vote aye and thank you Chair.
20 I appreciate it.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Council Member.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Grodenchik?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Ayala?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I vote aye.

1

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Rivera?

2

3

COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye.

4

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Borelli?

5

Council Member Borelli? Chair, the vote will remain

6

open for Council Member Borelli and Council Member

7

Levin. It is currently at five in the affirmative

8

and zero in the negative with no abstentions.

9

COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: I'm here. Can you not

10

hear me?

11

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, Council Member Borelli

12

continuing vote on land use items.

13

COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: I vote aye please, I'm

14

sorry.

15

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'm sorry, sorry I didn't

16

hear you. Chair, the vote will still remain open for

17

Council Member Levin and currently stands at six in

18

the affirmative, zero in the negative and no

19

abstentions.

20

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Uh, so before we turn

21

to our hearing, I will first recognize the

22

Subcommittee Counsel to review the Remote Meeting

23

procedures.

24

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Moya. I am

25

Arthur Huh, Counsel to this Subcommittee. Members of

1
2 the public wishing to testify were asked to register
3 for today's hearings. As part of the registration
4 process for today's hearing, Counsel Staff have made
5 efforts to facilitate language translation services
6 for those who request such services. We ask that all
7 speakers bear with us today as we work to ensure that
8 everyone has their opportunity to testify.

9 If you wish to testify and have not already
10 registered, we ask that you please do so now by
11 visiting the New York City Council website at
12 www.council.nyc.gov to sign up. Members of the
13 public may also view a livestream broadcast of this
14 meeting at the Council's website.

15 For those members of the public viewing this
16 meeting specifically for the SoHo Neighborhood Plan,
17 the Council is providing multilingual livestream
18 viewing options available through the Council's
19 website at council.nyc.gov with audio translation in
20 Cantonese and Mandarin.

21 Once again, these options can be found at the
22 Council's main website at www.council.nyc.gov. As a
23 technical note, for anyone requesting an accessible
24 version of any of the presentations shown today,
25

1
2 please send an email request to
3 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

4 When called to testify, individuals appearing
5 before the Subcommittee will remain muted until
6 recognized by the Chair to speak. Applicant teams
7 will be recognized as a group and called first,
8 followed by members of the public. When the Chair
9 recognizes you, your microphone will be unmuted.

10 Please take a moment to check your device and confirm
11 that the microphone is on before you begin speaking.

12 Public testimony will be limited to two minutes per
13 witness. If you have additional testimony you would

14 like the Subcommittee to consider or if you have
15 written testimony you wish to submit instead of

16 appearing before the Subcommittee, you may email it

17 to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Please indicate
18 the LU Number and/or project name in the subject line
19 of your email.

20 During the hearing, Council Members with
21 questions should use the Zoom raise hand function.

22 The raise hand button should appear at the bottom of

23 your primary viewing window. Council Members with

24 questions will be announced in order if they raise

25 their hands and Chair Moya will recognize members to

1
2 speak. Witnesses are requested to remain in the
3 meeting until excused by the Chair, as Council
4 Members may have questions.

5 Finally, there will be paused over the course of
6 this meeting for various technical reasons and we ask
7 that you please be patient as we work through any
8 issues. Chair Moya will now continue with today's
9 agenda items.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Arthur. Uhm, I now
11 open the public hearing on the Preconsidered LU items
12 for the 506 3rd Avenue Rezoning Proposal under ULURP
13 Number C 210119 ZMK and N 210120 ZRK requesting a
14 Zoning Map and Zoning Amendment relating to property
15 in Council Member Lander's District in Brooklyn.
16 Anyone wishing to testify on this item, if you have
17 not already done so, you must register online and you
18 may do that now by visiting the Council's website
19 once again at council.nyc.gov/landuse. And Counsel,
20 please call the first panel for this item will
21 include Eric Palatnik and Paul Basile.

22 ERIC PALATNIK: Hello, can you hear me now?

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.
25

1
2 ERIC PALATNIK: That's great. Good morning
3 everybody my name is Eric Palatnik. Thank you for
4 having us. May I proceed Chair Moya?

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You may.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Palatnik, we need to
7 swear you and Mr. Basile in. Please raise your right
8 hand and state your name for the record.

9 ERIC PALATNIK: Eric Palatnik.

10 PAUL BASILE: Paul Basile.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell - do
12 you both affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth
13 and nothing but the truth in your testimony before
14 this Subcommittee and in answer to all Council Member
15 questions?

16 ERIC PALATNIK: I do.

17 PAUL BASILE: I do.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

19 ERIC PALATNIK: Thank you Arthur and thank you
20 everybody for making time on a beautiful day and a
21 beautiful time in New York City and congratulations
22 to everybody. I hope your candidates won last week.

23 I wanted to introduce a great development for
24 you. I know you have a busy day, so I will speak
25 with a little bit of New York speed and go through

1
2 it. It's a Rezoning Proposal I'm bringing to you
3 today that is well supported. Its been supported by
4 Community Board Six in Brooklyn, in the Gowanus area
5 of Brooklyn of course, where Community Board Six is
6 located. You just acted on the Gowanus Rezoning
7 there and it is also I believe and I'll let him speak
8 for himself, uh, supported by the Councilman Brad
9 Lander. Who we met with numerous times but as time
10 goes on, I'll let him speak for himself.

11 The application is on behalf of Brooklyn Dream
12 Makers Studios, Mr. Paul Basile and if I may ask your
13 team to pull up the screen of the presentation, we
14 can show you what it's all about. Next slide please.

15 Well, he had some problems earlier and I have a
16 feeling he's having the same exact problem now, that
17 he's not able to move the screen. Oh, there he goes,
18 good. Good, this was the technical problem that was
19 going on earlier.

20 So, there are two sites proposed in this
21 rezoning. We're asking your permission to rezone the
22 sites you see as Site One and Site Two, which is
23 located at 506 and 530 3rd Avenue, which is between
24 11th and 13th Streets in the Gowanus section of
25 Brooklyn. You can see it situated there right

1
2 between the trains and you can see the expressway
3 heading into the Brooklyn-Battery where Hugh Carey
4 tunnel as they call it now days.

5 The two buildings or the two sites are located,
6 are located at currently an M2-1 Zoning District. If
7 the action we're asking for is approved, we would be
8 allowed to have a C4-4A Zoning District, which is an
9 R7A equivalent. Next slide please.

10 This is a view of the existing sites. DOC site
11 One here is Scarlino Brothers Fuel Oil Company.
12 That's what it used to be. Right now it's got a
13 makers space in it, which is Cups to Crop, which is a
14 coffee bean use. Paul Basile, who's on the call
15 right now in the building we are proposing are all
16 proposed to be used by maker spaces, which are end
17 makers of manufacturing and light industrial uses
18 that we use locally. There are things that are made
19 and then shipped off in the use of UPS and Federal
20 Express. And they are located behind the rolldown
21 doors there is a coffee roaster. They would be
22 located within the new building. Next slide please.

23 This is what the new building at 506 3rd Avenue
24 that I'm talking about that you just saw would look
25 like if it was approved and it would include the

1
2 maker spaces. It would be five stories and
3 approximately 70 feet tall. Next slide please.

4 This is the other site. This is 506 or 533rd
5 Avenue which is an existing building you are seeing
6 now labeled as Site Two. That's in the middle and
7 it's flanked in the rear by two other smaller lots,
8 which were also included in the rezoning. Also
9 including by Paul Basile right up top there. The
10 building you're seeing that's built right now has
11 been built utilizing air rights and development
12 rights in the area and it has all maker spaces within
13 it. Some of which we are proposing here. I'll go
14 through in a second all three of these buildings when
15 constructed would be connected through an interior
16 court yard that would create almost an incubator kind
17 of echo system for all of the maker spaces to share
18 and utilize an outdoor area and common areas. And
19 I'll show you that as I go through the plans.

20 Also, I'd like to just simply call out for you is
21 the very lack of manufacturing in the surrounding
22 community. As you can see here, the images, you'd
23 never know you were in M12 Zoning District but rather
24 you see a lot of residential. And this proposal
25

1 includes no displacement to residential whatsoever.

2 Next slide please.

3 This shows you what the second site would look
4 like in the lower right hand corner. You can see
5 what I was describing before how those buildings
6 would be connected. Really a great thing for New
7 York and a great thing for Brooklyn. It's the advent
8 of a new economy we're all seeing which is that
9 people are creating products in Brooklyn. They don't
10 need gigantic warehouses to do so. They could do so
11 in a small space and not only that, they could
12 coproduce with other people and share knowledge and
13 resources and that's what this is. You can see the
14 three development; all the buildings would be
15 connected to this common space. Next slide please.

16 This shows you the nuts and bolts of the zoning
17 district. What we're asking for is shown on the
18 right hand side of the screen and what is existing is
19 shown on the left hand side. The left hand side
20 shows you site one and two that I just explained and
21 the right hand side shows you the proposal. And the
22 proposal is as much as a moment ago for C4-4A Zoning
23 District. Which I should add, is consistent with
24 what the Gowanus neighborhood plan did in the recent
25

1
2 action on the Gowanus neighborhood rezoning. It
3 created this middle ground for manufacturing uses.

4 It's not available here in this area because that
5 was special to Gowanus but what we're proposing here
6 at the C4-4A allows for the four FAR. Which is of
7 course a lower FAR than a five, which doesn't exit
8 for light manufacturing uses. By proposing it here,
9 we're leaving the door open for some residential and
10 legalizing all the residents on the block, as well as
11 opening up the door for these maker spaces. There is
12 really a great combination, I think. Next slide
13 please.

14 And I'll cruise through the rest of the slides
15 because I think I gave the nuts and bolts of
16 everything. If you could just keep clicking through
17 the plans and I'll show everybody the suggestion of
18 the plans and then I'll go back with any questions
19 that any of you may have. Next slide please.

20 If we just stop right here, perfect. This gives
21 you a good idea for the five story building and uh,
22 this is the building that's located at 506 3rd Avenue
23 and next slide please. One more slide please, just
24 give you an idea for the floor plan. Next slide.
25

1 This gives you an idea for the floor plans. As
2 you can see, I've been talking about maker spaces.
3 They divide it up just like you would imagine.
4 That's 700 square feet, 715, some are a little
5 smaller but pretty much square areas for people to do
6 some work, make coffee, make lunch for themselves and
7 get stuff done.
8

9 I won't bore you with the rest of the plans
10 because it's all pretty much the same kind of stuff.
11 We would be happy to answer any questions anybody may
12 have and I thank you very much for your time. I know
13 you have a busy agenda.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Eric. Thank you for
15 your presentations. Uh, no questions here from me.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'm not seeing any members
17 with questions at this time either.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, uhm, thank you. There
19 being no further questions, the applicant panel is
20 excused. Are there any member of the public who wish
21 to testify on the 506 3rd Avenue Rezoning
22 Application?

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please stand by Chair. I'll
24 just confirm. Okay, if there are any members of the
25 public who wish to testify on the 506 3rd Avenue

1
2 Rezoning Proposal, please press the raise hand button
3 now.

4 Chair, we will just very briefly stand ease while
5 we check to see if there any newly registered
6 members. Uh, Chair Moya, I see no other – no members
7 of the public who wish to testify on this item.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, there being no members
9 of the public who wish to testify on the
10 Preconsidered LU items for the 506 3rd Avenue
11 Rezoning Proposal on the ULURP Number C 210119 ZMK
12 and N 210120 ZRK, the public hearing is now closed
13 and the items are laid over.

14 I now open the public hearing on the
15 Preconsidered LU's for the Starrett-Lehigh and
16 Terminal Warehouse Rezoning Proposal seeking a Zoning
17 Map Amendment and Zoning Text Amendment on the ULURP
18 Numbers C 210408 ZMM and N 210409 ZRM relating to
19 property in Speaker Johnson's District in Manhattan.

20 Once again, if you wish to testify on this item,
21 please visit the Council's website to register. That
22 link is at www.council.nyc.gov/landuse. You may also
23 submit written testimony by emailing it to
24 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

1 Counsel, can you please call the first panel for
2 this item?
3

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The applicant panel for this
5 item will include Elise Wagner and Carrie Harris as
6 Land Use Council for the applicant and also available
7 for question and answer will be Jeff Nelson, Eric
8 Schlimis. Melena Panoly and Alex Moscofitz. Again,
9 all available for question and answer.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, Counsel, can you please
11 uh, administer the affirmation?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, please raise your
13 right hands and state your name for the record.

14 ELISE WAGER: Elise Wagner.

15 CAROLINE HARRIS: Caroline Harris.

16 ERIC SCHLAMEUSS: Eric Schlameuss.

17 JEFFREY NELSON: Jeffrey Nelson.

18 ALEX MOSCOVITZ: Alex Moskcovitz.

19 MELINA PANOLI: Melina Panoli.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the
21 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in
22 your testimony before this Subcommittee and in answer
23 to all questions?

24 PANEL: I do. Yes.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. You may begin.

3 ELISE WAGNER: Good morning Chair Moya, Council
4 Members, can we put up our presentation please? I'll
5 get started to save some time while the presentation
6 is going up. My name is Elise Wagner, I am a partner
7 at Kramer Levin. I am Counsel to Terminal Owner LP,
8 the owners of the Terminal Warehouse. I am joined by
9 Caroline Harris of Goldman Harris. She is counsel to
10 RXRSL owner LLLC, the owner of the Starrett-Lehigh
11 building. Next slide and next slide.

12 I'm going to give a brief introduction, then
13 Carrie will summarize the rezoning and will describe
14 the ways in which it will enhance the neighborhood.
15 Next slide. The rezoning covers buildings which each
16 occupy a full block. On the left, you see the
17 Starrett-Lehigh building and on the right, you see
18 the Terminal Warehouse. Both buildings are
19 undergoing as of right renovations that have been
20 approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.
21 Next slide, next slide.

22 The rezoning effects the two blocks between 11th
23 and 12th Avenues and West 26th and 28th Street and it's
24 the area that's just right in the middle of the
25 circle that you see on the map. The current zoning

1
2 is M23. These two blocks are not currently within
3 the special West Chelsea District which is the grey
4 area directly east of those blocks. Next slide.

5 This slide shows the existing uses in the area.
6 The red is commercial and office buildings, the
7 yellow is residential. The orange is mixed
8 residential and commercial and the purple is
9 industrial and transportation. As you can see, the
10 area is primarily commercial with a substantial
11 amount of residential use. Next slide.

12 The two buildings shown in purple and turquoise
13 on this slide are strategically located between West
14 Chelsea to the east, Hudson Yards to the north, the
15 highline to the north and east and Hudson River Park
16 to the west. Next slide. Both buildings are located
17 within the West Chelsea historic district, which is
18 outlined in brown. The Starrett-Lehigh building is
19 also an individual landmark. And now, I'm going to
20 turn it over to Carrie.

21 CARRIE HARRIS: Thank you Elise. Next slide
22 please. I'm Caroline Harris as Elise mentioned,
23 people call me Carrie. I'm with Goldman Harris, we
24 represent RXR in this proposal. This slide explains
25 the objective of our rezoning and text amendment

1
2 proposal. The objective is to rezone the area, these
3 two blocks to facilitate a broader range of uses in
4 the buildings and prepare them for the next
5 generation of New York City's economy. Enabling
6 flexibility to support the future of manufacturing
7 and retailing and the changing office workplace.

8 If you could move to the next slide. The
9 applicants are proposing to amend the Zoning Map.
10 You can see on the left outlined in red is the area
11 proposed for the rezoning, which currently is the M23
12 and we're proposing to rezone it to M24. And on the
13 right, you'll see the extension of the Special West
14 Chelsea District to include these two blocks and
15 we're calling it subarea K. Next slide please.

16 The Proposed Zoning Text Amendments will expand
17 the uses that are permitted in the buildings without
18 eliminating the uses allowed in the M2 District.
19 We're going to allow the conversion of only 25
20 percent of the building to these special expanded
21 uses and limit the use group 10A uses to 15 percent
22 of each buildings zoning floor area.

23 We're proposing that sidewalk café's be allowed
24 on West 27th Street and they will be subject to
25 whatever rules and regulations are adopted by DOT in

1
2 connection with City Planning's recent proposed
3 change to allow sidewalk café's more universally in
4 New York, assuming that that amendment passes.

5 The corner signage regulations are being proposed
6 to change slightly to accommodate the Chamfered
7 corner on the Starrett-Lehigh building, although
8 these changes would apply also to the Terminal
9 Warehouse building. And they will allow indirectly
10 illuminated signs up to 75 feet without a restriction
11 on the angle of the sign. And we're proposing very
12 significantly that there be no required loading in
13 the connection with the change of use. Next slide
14 please.

15 This group of Zoning Text Amendments and map
16 changes intended to enhance West Chelsea. Next
17 slide. Uhm, what we're proposing to do is make
18 improvements in the loading. This is not strictly a
19 zoning change. This is work that each applicant has
20 been doing for several years now in contemplation of
21 the repositioning of the terminal warehouse. They've
22 removed all exterior loading and are consolidating a
23 loading berth in a single location inside the
24 building, removing all of the loading from the
25 exterior of the building. In the case of Starrett-

1
2 Lehigh, we are reducing the number of active loading
3 berths on West 26th Street from 14 to 10 and we'll
4 designate those spaces as appropriate for smaller
5 while directing large trucks to the three new loading
6 berths on 12th Avenue and that will enter into the
7 building and not be straddling the sidewalk. And
8 another loading berth inside the building on West
9 27th Street. These four loading berths will be
10 utilized by larger trucks.

11 Starrett-Lehigh building is also creating a
12 comprehensive freight and logistics management plan
13 with DOT and they are discussing a midblock crossing
14 on West 26th Street with DOT. Turn the slide please.

15 This is a 3D image showing the
16 compartmentalization of the terminal warehouse space
17 on the first floor, originally designed to 28
18 separate storage spaces. The brick loading
19 partitions in the Terminal Warehouse Building will be
20 retained. These images show a diagram and photos of
21 the new positioning of the ground floor of the
22 Terminal Warehouse Building called the Tunnel. There
23 is a tunnel in fact that extends from 11th Avenue
24 through to 12th Avenue and it's flanked on either
25 side by areas that are proposed to be used for retail

1
2 with innovative studios and product showcase retail
3 opportunities, a marketplace and an assembly area
4 with an auditorium and flexible convening spaces.

5 Those images on the bottom show the proposed uses
6 and there is uniquely, if you can turn the - uhm,
7 there is a unique bike concierges area that you'll
8 see in another slide. Could you move forward please?

9 Uhm, West 27th Street will be improved by eliminating
10 the loading areas on West 27th Street from the
11 Terminal Warehouse Building. It will make this
12 street much more appropriate for pedestrians and for
13 bicycling and will be the connecting street between
14 Terminal Warehouse and the Starrett-Lehigh building.

15 As you see, there are windows that will encourage
16 engagement between the street and the building and
17 doors and lobby entrance will be inviting. Next
18 slide please. This slide shows a unique feature of
19 the Terminal Warehouse, a bicycle concierge.

20 Terminal Warehouse will have 500 spaces for bicycles
21 and turning now to Starrett-Lehigh, it will have
22 spaces for over 300 bikes. Showing both applicants
23 commitment to alternative transportation. You can
24 turn the slide please.

1
2 This is an image of the ground floor plan for the
3 Starrett-Lehigh building, which will enable flexible
4 and customizable space. The ground floor will be
5 wholly dedicated to an entirely new retail enterprise
6 with an incredible range of artisanal dining,
7 shopping, art and entertainment offerings. A large
8 portion of the ground floor is used under a long-term
9 lease by Verizon and so, it's not part of the
10 repositioning of this building.

11 The images on the bottom of the slide illustrate
12 the type of uses that are being proposed for the
13 building as well as for the ground floor. Next slide
14 please. And this is an image of the 11th Avenue
15 façade of the Starrett-Lehigh building. And again,
16 with transparency to engage people on the sidewalk
17 and driving by with what's going on inside of the
18 building. In encouraging the activity in the
19 transformation of these two landmark buildings. Next
20 slide please.

21 This is an image of an event space that would be
22 in the Starrett-Lehigh building. Both applicants are
23 committed to reaching out to local business,
24 incorporating the arts in their programming and to
25 create a real unique and exciting small area on the

1
2 west side that will connect the northeast, west and
3 south of Manhattan together, knitting them together
4 both for planning purposes and for economic
5 development. Next slide please.

6 So, we look forward to having a discussion with
7 you and on the next slide please. Thank you for the
8 opportunity to share this very exciting proposal with
9 you that will enable this location to serve as a
10 connector from planning perspective with all of the
11 neighborhoods around and inside the buildings to be
12 responsive to the changing economy in the 21st
13 Century. Thank you very much and if we can answer
14 any questions, we'd be happy to do so.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. But before we go
16 into questions, I just want to acknowledge that we've
17 been joined by Council Member Powers and Levin and
18 I'm just going to go back to our Counsel to reopen
19 the vote.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Moya. On a
21 continuing vote of the Land Use items Council Member
22 Levin? Council Member Levin, can you hear me? We
23 seem to have temporarily lost Council Member Levin,
24 sorry. We can come back.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Sorry, I'm sorry, I'm
3 back. Can you repeat?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, yes, continuing vote of
5 the Land Use items on the agenda today, Council
6 Member Levin?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye on all. Thank
8 you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Chair, the vote
10 is late and now it stands at seven in the
11 affirmative, zero in the negative with no
12 abstentions. All items are adopted and referred to
13 the full Land Use Committee.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great, thank you very much.
15 Uhm, so I want to go back in the beginning, you were
16 talking about the 15 percent of the total floor area.
17 You proposed capping large scale retail on this site
18 at 15 percent.

19 CARRIE HARRIS: Correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: The Community Board, they
21 advocated for a reduction that the cap be at 10
22 percent to limit the neighborhood impact of large
23 scale retail. Can you explain the rationale for the
24 15 percent threshold and why can't we lower it to ten
25 percent?

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JEFF NELSON: Chair Moya, I can take that question. I think really part of the impetus of the rezoning was to allow flexibility for changes over time. You know, as the neighborhood is evolving, as these buildings evolve. Obviously, we've seen a lot of changes over the last number of years. And with respect to retail in particular, you know no one really knows what retail will look like next year, five years from now, ten years from now. So, we think that flexibility is important.

I mean, with that said, you know as you noted, this is a concern that was raised by the Community Board. It's something we've discussed with Council Member Johnson's team. We're looking at ways to respond and do believe that we can reach a satisfactory outcome with respect to that threshold, that you know all parties will find satisfactory.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, like, let's go to that because as you talk about the uncertain future of the retail market, isn't that the exact scenario that the Community Board was wary of? And with the large scale retail in the future, somehow be less impactful than today?

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 46
2 JEFF NELSON: Sorry, can you clarify the last
3 part of the question in terms of the -

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Can the large scale retail in
5 the future, somehow be less impactful than it is
6 today?

7 JEFF NELSON: Well, I think it's important to
8 know you know again, this is about flexibility and if
9 you look at the plans for our building and for
10 terminal, which we've already started to implement.
11 Remember this is an existing building today. We're
12 looking at small retailer. We're looking at
13 different food uses. We think that's what's
14 important to activate the building today. That
15 flexibility long-term is also important and I think
16 having some degree of those uses between that 10-15
17 percent range is important for us and important for
18 the building in the neighborhood.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, so your argument that
20 the sites natural constraints will limit the
21 likelihood of large scale retail tenants wanting to
22 lease the space here?

23 JEFF NELSON: I think there's a degree of that
24 and I could ask Eric Schlameuss who's on our team if
25 he is available to talk a little bit about the layout

1
2 of the floors and stuff. You know as we said, in
3 particular, there's a long-term lease with Verizon
4 who are already programming different components of
5 the building with smaller retail and food functions.
6 So, maybe Eric can opine a little bit on the other
7 constraints.

8 ERIC SCHLAMEUSS: Yeah, I think and you know
9 David from L&L can jump in you know as soon as I kind
10 of talk a bit about Starrett.

11 Starrett-Lehigh is you know constrained you know
12 as Carrie mentioned and Jeff now mentioned. The
13 ground floor, the eastern portion of the building has
14 already been programmed with kind of breakdown of
15 uses there that's kind of articulated an ecosystem of
16 restaurants, food, a food hall and event space. Our
17 building lobby is in the middle of the block there
18 and then the Verizon space is locked up for you know
19 another ten years or so.

20 Uhm, so, you know based on those kind of physical
21 constraints and some of the other articulations that
22 we've already put into place. Uhm, it seems unlikely
23 that there would be a super large block of space
24 available that would be you know kind of uhm, key for
25 one of the uses that the Community Board has you know

1
2 expressed concerns about. Uhm, so you know, those
3 kinds of things lead us towards the feeling that you
4 know while you know as Jeff mentioned, you know our
5 desires for flexibility, there will be some natural
6 criteria that will start to break down those blocks
7 of spaces into smaller chunks that will you know
8 cater to a different type of user.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, uhm, and what is the
10 most recent dialogue with the Community Board on this
11 issue?

12 JEFF NELSON: So, we received recommendations
13 from the Community Board you know as part of their
14 positive recommendation on the project. They guided
15 us as you noted to that 10-15 and not one option or
16 path to ten percent, overall 10A use. So that's what
17 we've been considering and also been talking to the
18 Council Members about.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great, okay, thank you that's
20 it for me. Do we have any Council Members that have
21 any questions?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No Chair, I see no members
23 with questions for the panel.

24

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, uhm there being uh no
3 questions for this panel from my colleagues, this
4 panel is now excused.

5 ELISE WAGNER: Thank you very much.

6 CARRIE HARRIS: Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Counsel, do we
8 have any member of the public who wish to testify on
9 this item?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, I believe we have two
11 public witnesses here to testify. We will now hear
12 from the first panel, which will include Paul Devlin
13 and Betty Mackintosh. Paul Devlin first followed by
14 Betty Mackintosh.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 PAUL DEVLIN: Hello, my name is Paul Devlin, I
17 think Chair Moya just stole some of my thunder. I'm
18 Co-Chair of the Chelsea Land Use Committee of
19 Community Board Four and I'm here to speak in favor
20 of this rezoning but with conditions.

21 We've enjoyed working with the development team
22 over the years and appreciate their consideration of
23 our many issues and look forward to the repurposing
24 of these buildings. The goals of the West Chelsea
25 District are to facilitate an appropriate integration

1
2 of uses in the area surrounding the reuse of the
3 highline. And these two blocks between the highline
4 and the Hudson River do play an integral role in
5 linking these uses in our community.

6 However, on the Use Group 10A issue, we think 50
7 percent is too high. Given that with the total
8 square footage of these buildings, this would result
9 in over 440,000 square feet of destination retail.

10 This proposed rezoning would allow approximately five
11 large destination retailers on two blocks. As noted
12 by Chair Moya, we are requesting a ten percent cap.

13 We've had many conversations with the applicants
14 requesting they offer solutions to address our
15 concerns. We have discussed ideas such as

16 restricting individual square footage per retailer or
17 restricting retail only to manufacturers within the
18 building. They have yet to offer up a specific
19 alternative be included in this amendment. Ten

20 percent would still allow over 300,000 square feet of
21 destination retail, providing the developer with
22 adequate flexibility. Large destination retail uses

23 will alter the unique character of the West Chelsea
24 District and is not consistent with the goals of the
25 special district.

1
2 The developer has stated it's not their intent to
3 market these buildings as destination retail centers
4 and the current configuration wouldn't allow for any
5 of these large retailers. This argument might be
6 true today but we're concerned about the future
7 owners of these buildings, not honoring the current
8 owners commitments. And without the restrictions put
9 into place today in the zoning, which will extend
10 beyond the Verizon lease, we have no future
11 protections.

12 In conclusion, we are requesting that the
13 rezoning for the Use Group 10A ten percent, to reduce
14 the negative impact on the historic fabric of this
15 site -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 PAUL DEVLIN: As well as eliminating any
18 establishment that proceeds precedents to a large
19 scale retailers within the space. I'm happy to
20 answer any questions and thank you all for your time.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be Betty
23 Mackintosh.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Betty Mackintosh?

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BETTY MACKINTOSH: Hi.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Hi Betty.

BETTY MACKINTOSH: Good morning. Uhm, I am Co-Chair of the Chelsea Land Use Committee of Community Board Four and the Board has recommended approval with conditions of the proposed rezoning. The proposed inclusion of these two sites in the West Chelsea District is a much welcomed, long awaited measure that Community Board Four enthusiastically supports.

We have major concerns. We ask that the applicant implement a solution to the dangerous pedestrian conditions on West 26th Street. Park trucks extend into West 26th Street blocking the sidewalk. Pedestrians are forced to cross the street midblock without seeing the oncoming traffic.

A midblock pedestrian crossing could provide a safe path for pedestrians. Manhattan and Borough President Gale Brewer agrees with us. We are pleased that the City Council staff has been discussing a solution with the applicant and with DOT and it made it to a slide today by the applicants show.

We are hopeful that this pedestrian safety measure will be implemented. Community Board Four

1
2 looks forward to joining with Hudson River Park
3 friends and the applicant to add the streetscape
4 improvements that would connect Hudson River Park,
5 the applicant sites and the highline. LPC has
6 discovered street trees on the sidewalks adjacent to
7 Starrett-Lehigh building. We urge the applicant to
8 revisit this issue with LPC.

9 Uhm, we look forward to the opportunity to
10 facilitate the transformation of these two sites and
11 to address several local needs. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
13 testimony today.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, Chair, that was the last
15 speaker on this panel and I see no members with
16 questions for this panel.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, seeing no members of the
18 public who wish to testify on this item, uh -

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We are - Chair, sorry. We
20 are going to just after you dismiss this panel, we'll
21 check to make sure and the move on.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. This panel is now
23 excused. Thank you for your testimony today.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If there are any other
25 members of the public who wish to testify on the

1
2 Starrett-Lehigh Terminal Warehouse Proposal, please
3 press the raise hand button now. Chair, the meeting
4 will briefly stand at ease just to confirm.

5 Chair Moya, I see no other members of the public
6 who wish to testify on these items.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, there being no members o
8 the public who wish to testify on the Preconsidered
9 Lu items for the Starrett-Lehigh and Terminal
10 Warehouse Rezoning Proposal under ULURP's Number C
11 210408 ZMM and N 210409 ZRM, the public hearing is
12 now closed and the items are laid over.

13 Uh, I now open the public hearing on LU's Number
14 899 through 904 for the 175 Park Avenue Redevelopment
15 Proposal, which seeks approval of four separate
16 Zoning Special Permits, a Zoning Text Amendment, and
17 the disposition of the city owned property all
18 related in property in Council Member Powers's
19 District in Manhattan.

20 I will remind the viewing public for anyone
21 wishing to testify on this item, if you have not
22 already done so, you must register online and you may
23 do that now by visiting the Council's website at
24 council.nyc.gov/landuse. Counsel, if you can, please
25 call the first panel for this item.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The applicant panel for this
3 item will include Jeff Nelson and Rami Abou-Khalil.
4 Also available for question and answer will be David
5 Karnovsky, Penny King, Jon McMillan, Amir Stein and
6 Adam Green. Panelists, please raise your right hands
7 and state your name for the record.

8 JEFFREY NELSON: Jeffrey Nelson.

9 RAMI ABOU-KHALIL: Rami Abou-Khalil.

10 JON MCMILLAN: Jon McMillan.

11 DAVID KARNOVSKY: David Karnovsky.

12 PENNY KING: Penny King.

13 AMIR STEIN: Amir Stein.

14 DAVID VELEZ: David Velez.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you swear or affirm to
16 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
17 truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee and
18 in answer to all Council Member questions?

19 PANEL: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. You may begin.

21 JEFF NELSON: Chair Moya, thank you, it's good to
22 see you again. Will you put up the presentation
23 please.

24 I'll kick it off as that's coming up. So, I'm
25 Jeff Nelson with RXR Reality. Next slide please.

1
2 We're partnered with TF Cornerstone on the
3 development of 175 Park, which is the site of the
4 Grand Hyatt Hotel and very happy to be at this point
5 in our ULURP process having received positive
6 recommendations at the Community Board from the
7 Borough President and obviously at CPC as well. Next
8 slide please. One more, thank you.

9 So, 170 Park is ideally situated directly
10 adjacent to Grand Central Terminal at the center of
11 really an unparalleled transit network. You have
12 metro North, the Lexington Avenue and Flushing subway
13 lines, the shuttle and east side access which will
14 come in shortly to serve the east side as well. I
15 want to highlight in particular on the right side of
16 this slide, the Lexington Avenue line and the Metro
17 North Loop Track that bisect our site. Those are
18 infrastructure challenges that present both
19 challenges and opportunities for the design team and
20 really in form the building will show you. Next
21 slide.

22 So, the current building, which you probably all
23 know is uhm, has a façade that's very dark and
24 imposing and it's generally uninviting, particularly
25 at the street level. It's built to the lot line and

1
2 in a lot of ways actually goes beyond that on 42nd
3 Street, there's actually a cantilever that serves to
4 block additional light and air for the general public
5 and commuters coming out of the terminal. Next
6 slide.

7 The sidewalks as you can see here are narrow and
8 congested and above grade, the Park Avenue Viaduct is
9 an exclusively car zone we zone. Next slide. That's
10 a relationship that really extends the interior as
11 well. The building poses severe challenges for the
12 commuting public. What you see on this slide is that
13 very congested entrance down into the 42nd Street
14 passage and into the subway system. That's actually
15 an entrance that sits on the Grand Hyatt property and
16 a number of our transit improvements will help that
17 condition we think immensely. Next slide.

18 So, the proposed project is the demolition of the
19 existing hotel which is functionally obsolete. And
20 then the construction of a new mixed-use office
21 building and hotel. The overall program is 2.2
22 million zoning square feet and that's comprised of
23 just under two million square feet of office space
24 and then a 500 key hotel at the top of the building.
25 There's a small amount of retail that's controlled by

1
2 the MTA and then, there are extensive public realm
3 and transit improvements that leverage the greater
4 east midtown zoning framework. Next slide.

5 Those improvements are really the foundation of
6 our project uhm and as Rami will go through, that's
7 really both the literal and figurative expression.
8 You can see on the left side, the current condition
9 and how integrally linked and connected we are to
10 Grand Central Terminal. And what we've proposed,
11 which you can see on the right side are a series of
12 public improvements and plan that Rami will go
13 through. The highlight at grade is a new transit
14 hall will be constructing and then below grade, new
15 mezzanine access and a connection into east side
16 access.

17 Above the street level, the building will be
18 surrounded by three really world class public
19 terraces. And with respect to those terraces, we
20 want to thank two people in particular, Borough
21 President Gale Brewer for providing the suggestion
22 and inspiration for elevating those terraces. And
23 then we'd also like to thank Council Member Powers
24 for identifying the need for cultural programming and
25 tasking us with thinking creatively about how

1
2 cultural and art programming could further enliven
3 the project.

4 I'll turn it over to Rami and he can go through
5 the building in greater detail.

6 RAMI ABOU-KHALIL: Thank you Jeff. Next please.

7 So, I'm going to walk you through the transit and
8 open space improvements and they really unfold on
9 three different levels, starting here with below
10 grade. One of the major improvements will effect how
11 passengers connect between the train tracks and
12 subway currently. As you can see in this image,
13 passenger have to from the Long Island Railroad or
14 the Metro North tracks up into the main terminal just
15 to descend back onto the subway mezzanine. Next.

16 And by reusing a doormat train tunnel, we can
17 create a pedestrian shortcut that will decongest the
18 terminal above and allow passengers to go directly
19 from LIRR and Metro North tracks into the subway
20 mezzanine. Next. Now, that subway mezzanine, most
21 New Yorkers are familiar with how confusing of an
22 experience it is currently. This diagram shows that
23 it's congested mainly by the turn cycle configuration
24 that you see here on the lower left hand side of the
25 page. And by the presence of these very deep gutters

1
2 that you see here in green. These visually break up
3 the space but also prevent efficient distribution of
4 passengers across the platforms. Next.

5 Because we're taking down the Grand Hyatt Hotel,
6 we can remove these gutters in order to visually open
7 up the mezzanine from one side to the other, making
8 it safer and more efficient and the turn styles will
9 be moved up to grade in order to further open up the
10 mezzanine. We're also adding a new diagonal stair
11 that you see here that will serve to distribute
12 passengers in a much more even way to avoid crowding
13 at the extremities of these platforms. Next.

14 And now let's go up to grade and you'll see that
15 the diagonal stair that I just showed you as well as
16 those turn styles that we just relocated, are now
17 arriving and expanded and use subway entrance. The
18 new subway entrance will have direct access, directly
19 from the street, so you no longer have to go into the
20 terminal on the 42nd Street passage just to enter the
21 subway. We're also going to be relocating an
22 existing ADA elevator out of the historic vestibule
23 in the 42nd Street Passage and into this new transit
24 hall, so that will allow us to restore the vestibule
25 to its original condition. Next.

1
2 And the transit hall that you see here, this
3 image will be connected to the 42nd Street Passage
4 that you see beyond. It will feature skylights that
5 will bring natural light into the terminal. Next.
6 Uh, and this is the view of that same transit hall
7 but looking south to West 42nd Street. I want to
8 point out those turn styles that you see again raised
9 to the ground floor level, as well as direct views
10 out to 42nd Street. Next.

11 The Lexington Passage will be rebuilt more or
12 less in its current condition but with taller ceiling
13 heights and better finishes. Next. And you can see
14 this image how it will have a large window out onto
15 Lexington Avenue for better orientation and
16 wayfinding. It's going to continue to be lined with
17 retail as it currently is. Next.

18 And this view shows what it will look like on
19 Lexington Avenue. So, you can see on the right the
20 entrance into the Lexington Passage with this tall
21 glass wall compared to the current bay small opening.
22 Just to its left, you see the newly relocated subway
23 entrance that currently sits very close as a
24 congested corner for moving it further north and
25

1
2 creating a covered area that will allow pedestrians
3 to orient themselves as they exit the subway. Next.

4 In order to provide relief for pedestrians on
5 what is one of the busiest intersections of the city,
6 the project expands sidewalks by approximately 4,000
7 square feet, especially at the entrances of those
8 subways. Next.

9 And we're surrounding the tower with a necklace
10 of three elevated plazas, each named after an
11 adjacent landmark. That's going to be a total of
12 approximately 24,000 square feet of publicly
13 accessible open space and as Jeff noted, we are
14 working very hard to make sure that they are
15 programmed, animated, publicly accessible. Next.

16 These can be reached via three grand staircases
17 as well as AD elevators that bring the public up to
18 the level of the Park Avenue viaduct. Like many
19 buildings on Park Avenue, our lobby is elevated at
20 the level of that viaduct. Uh, next. And so this
21 will create new public spaces for which we can
22 finally appreciate the surrounding contacts away from
23 the extremely busy sidewalks below. This view is
24 looking east towards Lexington Avenue. You can see
25 the Chrysler building on the left. Next.

1
2 This view is on the Great Bar Terrace, so on the
3 north side of our site looking west towards the
4 terminal and you can see these new views of the
5 terminal that are going to be revealed. Next.

6 And on the west side, finally a new public space
7 will for the first time allow the public to really
8 appreciate the eastern façade of the terminal in a
9 way that has been essentially inaccessible since the
10 terminal was built. Next, next slide.

11 As you can imagine building a – uh, so this is a
12 – in summary, you know the project really dedicates
13 large areas to public improvements. Both below grade
14 with the creation of the short loop. The
15 improvements to the transit mezzanine at grade with
16 this large new transit hall, new subway entrances and
17 improvements to the Lexington Avenue Passage and the
18 Lexington Avenue Subway entrance.

19 And finally, above grade, this necklace of
20 elevated public spaces that will really create a new
21 destination for midtown. Next. As you can imagine,
22 designing a building above such an infrastructurally
23 dense site is a unique challenge. This diagram shows
24 how there are only two points along 42nd Street that
25 allow the building to meet [INAUDIBLE 1:05:58]. I'm

1
2 going to show you how that has impacted the design of
3 the tower. Next.

4 The tower itself has a balanced symmetrical
5 massing that we think is very, very New York. It
6 doesn't titter over the neighboring landmark and it
7 sets back at critical data to reduce its bulk as it
8 rises. This helps us create access to outdoor space
9 and we know how important that is for tenants in the
10 current context. The tower is in clad and expressed
11 structural lattice, so it has some texture and
12 materiality. It's not just a glass box and of course
13 then, that structure if woven, sculpted and rounded
14 at the top in order to address the city with a crown.

15 And at the base, as you can see in this diagram,
16 it kind of bundles in order to hit 42nd Street on
17 these points that we identified earlier. Next slide.
18 So, we've really taken this uh, uh, extremely
19 difficult structural constraint and turned it into
20 the main design features that allows us to
21 dramatically improve the streetscape for pedestrians
22 and that creates a new visibility for the terminal
23 itself and the public spaces that now are created
24 along 42nd Street. Next.

1
2 In the skyline, the tower will address the city
3 in the round and create a new gateway format down
4 east. Next.

5 JEFF NELSON: Thanks Rami. So, just to conclude,
6 obviously a project of this magnitude will generate
7 thousands of jobs and billions of economic impact, as
8 we note on the slide. I think even more importantly
9 and where we wanted to conclude was that we're
10 committed to working with all the workforce
11 development partners including Helmets to Hard Hats,
12 Nontraditional Employment for Women and others, that
13 work closely with the construction trades in
14 providing job opportunities and then also working
15 with the city through their Hire NYC program on
16 overall hiring at the building.

17 Obviously, RXRNTF are big believers in New York
18 and the recovery coming out the pandemic and we think
19 this project is really a key initiative and
20 undertaking to demonstrate that forward progress.
21 Thank you for your time and happy to take any
22 questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thanks, I got two quick
24 questions. Are there and if you said this during the
25 presentation, I'm sorry I'm not sure I got it but are

1
2 there any other development sites that could
3 theoretically take advantage of the Amended Special
4 Permit Text?

5 JEFF NELSON: I'm going ask David Karnovsky, our
6 counsel to answer that one Chair. If David's
7 available.

8 DAVID KARNOVSKY: I'm sorry, I was muted. Uh,
9 Chair Moya, the Text was designed to facilitate the
10 treatment of the development site and the Grand
11 Central lot as a single qualifying site for purposes
12 of the East Midtown regulations and it applies only
13 to that. And we wouldn't anticipate that this would
14 be replicated elsewhere.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, as part of the overall
16 project, the Borough Board must separately approve of
17 the Amendment of the ground lease on the site.
18 Between the City of New York as landlord and the LDC
19 affiliated with the applicant, can you give us the
20 status report on what that process and your expected
21 timing on this?

22 JEFF NELSON: Sure, so uhm, you're right, the
23 site is currently owned by the State of New York.
24 It's leased to Hyatt. The ownership will be
25 transferred to the city. The lease will be extended

1 following the Borough Board approval and we expect to
2 be at the Borough Board in December.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, uhm, that's all the
5 questions I have. Counsel, do we have any Council -
6 there we go. Yup, I'm going turn it over to Council
7 Member Powers. I just want to remind my colleagues
8 that we have a five minute time limit that we set up
9 for questions. So, if you can set that up. There we
10 go. Council Member Powers.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Thank you
13 Chair Moya and I'll try to do even less than five. I
14 know you guys got a long day here. Uhm, can we just
15 discuss just the Transit Hall for a very quick second
16 and can you tell us just about the retail that's on
17 the border of it and whether you guys are going to be
18 retaining the retail spaces in the middle of the
19 Transit Hall? Are those going to be removed?

20 JEFF NELSON: So, the answer is uhm, a portion of
21 the retail will be removed. There is a little bit of
22 the retail that will remain. The passageway is
23 something that we've worked both with the MTA and
24 with our architects Spire, Blender Bell. You know,
25 as you know we retained, they did the original Grand

1
2 Central renovation a couple decades ago. We think
3 that passageway you know historically it's been
4 important to maintain a degree of retail there and
5 I'm working with MTA and BBB ensuring that there is
6 circulation that meets the needs of commuters is key.
7 And then also maintaining that sort of character.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, and just on transit
9 still, can you tell us how much and public realm, can
10 you tell us how much money has been contributed to
11 the Public Realm Improvement Fund for public realm
12 improvements in midtown? How much additional FAR is
13 being granted based on the transit improvements and
14 then any ADA accessible improvements that are being
15 made as part of the project?

16 JEFF NELSON: Let's take those, maybe we can do
17 ADA first Rami, if you want to just talk about the
18 ADA improvements.

19 RAMI ABOU-KHALIL: That's right. So, all the
20 subway entrances off of the Lexington and 42nd Street
21 will come with their own dedicated ADL elevators.
22 ADL - another set of ADL elevators will also be
23 serving all of the terraces. So, all the terraces
24 will be accessible with dedicated ADL elevators,
25 exclusively for the public realm.

1
2 JEFF NELSON: Then with respect to the FAR that's
3 being generated by the improvements, it's
4 approximately 850,000 square feet I believe between
5 the public terraces, as well as the transit bonuses
6 that will be provided. With respect to the creek, it
7 depends on the amount of air rights that are
8 ultimately transferred. But I believe the number is
9 approximately \$30 million will be the anticipated
10 payment.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, and uh, did we talk
12 about how much FAR is being granted for the transit
13 improvements. I think that was my first question.

14 JEFF NELSON: Uh, I gave you the aggregate
15 number.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Oh, okay.

17 JEFF NELSON: So, it's about 800 — David can give
18 the exact number.

19 DAVID KARNOVSKY: It's about 870 actually.

20 JEFF NELSON: 870,000. Thanks.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, just on the hotel
22 standpoint. I'm just going to try to hit a couple of
23 questions just so we have these clear answers. How
24 many hotel rooms are planned to be in the building?

25 JEFF NELSON: 500.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: 500, is there going to be
3 any events based, conference rooms or ball rooms, any
4 restaurants or amenities?

5 JEFF NELSON: Yeah, there's a component of events
6 base as well as a restaurant. And this is all you
7 know per severance agreement that's been executed
8 with the Hotel Trades Council.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: And is that - where is
10 the location of the restaurant and events base?

11 JEFF NELSON: It's all expected to be at the top
12 of the building with the hotel.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER POWER: Okay, on the cultural and
14 arts, which is something we have talked a lot about,
15 ways to kind of revitalize Midtown, bring life to it
16 in the afterhours, give something new to the folks
17 that work and live around there. Can you just give
18 us a little more understanding of the sort of
19 governing structure or how the you know whether there
20 will be community input on those events? How you'll
21 make decisions on which private or public entities
22 might be able to be programmed there and anything
23 else we might expect in terms of how things will be
24 planned there?

1
2 JEFF NELSON: Sure, so you know as Rami walked
3 through, we have three we think distinct terraces in
4 terms of their character and obviously location at
5 the building. And each one lends itself to different
6 types of programming. In particular the Graybar
7 Terrace on the north side, we think presents a real
8 opportunity to events and programming given its
9 location at the building.

10 And what we is we engaged lower cultural
11 resources which is a Renown, an organization that
12 works with nonprofits and cultural organizations, as
13 well as the Public Art Fund to think through the
14 various forms of programming at the terraces and how
15 we can activate it.

16 So, what we've uhm, contemplated are both events
17 that within the guidelines promulgated by city
18 planning, involve full closure of terraces at times
19 and others that are what we call pop up or events
20 that would allow access from the public throughout.
21 Now, in forming all of this, the buildings not going
22 to be open you know until about 2030 based on our
23 timeline. What we expect to put in place is an
24 advisory board. Obviously with your input -
25

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired as well as the
3 Community Board and Borough President.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, I'm going just heed
5 my questions. We have a lot to talk about -

6 JEFF NELSON: Apologies for the long answer.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: No worries. I know that
8 Chair Moya and others have a long day, so I want to
9 keep it at that and uh, we'll keep talking. So,
10 thanks for the presentation.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you Council
12 Member Powers. Council, do we have any other Council
13 Members with questions for this panel?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No Chair, I see no other
15 members with questions for this panel.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, seeing no further
17 questions, the applicant panel is excused. Counsel,
18 are there any members of the public who wish to
19 testify on the 175 Park Avenue Proposal?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. The first panel will
21 include Darnell Harper, Gilfredo Valentin, Jessica
22 Walker and Renzo Ramirez. The first speaker on this
23 first panel will be Darnell Harper followed by
24 Gilfredo Valentin.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 73
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Perhaps we'll take Gilfredo
3 Valentin first and then Renzo Ramirez. Gilfredo
4 Valentin first.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'm sorry, okay.

7 DARNELL HARPER: Hello, can you hear me?

8 GILFREDO VALENTIN: Yes, I can.

9 DARNELL HARPER: Okay, this is Darnell Harper.
10 Sorry for the delay.

11 GILFREDO VALENTIN: Who's going first?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: My apologies Mr. Valentin.
13 Darnell Harper will be the first speaker.

14 DARNELL HARPER: Sorry about that. Yeah, uhm,
15 thank you for the opportunity of voicing my support
16 for this project. My name is Darnell Harper, I'm a
17 New York City resident and a member of Local 79 with
18 almost 10,000 members and you know, we're the largest
19 laborers in North America. And I just want to
20 express you know, how I came from nonunion and coming
21 in the union working for TF Cornerstone right now.
22 Them giving me an opportunity work for them and you
23 know, make a better living for myself.

24 And our industry provides an opportunity to
25 uplift those that have been the most impacted by the

1
2 pandemic, including low income New Yorkers, people of
3 color and out of borough residents. Also, LXR and TF
4 Cornerstone projects will create thousands of good
5 construction jobs that provide benefits that families
6 need to sustain wages. I got an opportunity for the
7 union career through pathways to apprenticeship and
8 then Local 79 is an apprenticeship program.

9 I want other people from my community to have the
10 same opportunity to change their lives and this
11 project can provide those pathways. 175 Park Ave
12 will also bring thousands of permanent jobs once
13 completed. New open space and a flux of economic
14 activity. Thank you again for the opportunity to
15 hear our support to this important project.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Darnell. Thank you
17 for your testimony today. Next speaker.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Gilfredo Valentin will be the
19 next speaker followed by Renzo Ramirez.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 GILFREDO VALENTIN: Good morning members of the
22 Board. I am speaking on behalf of Pathway to
23 Apprenticeship and Laborers Local 79. My name is
24 Gilfredo Valentin Jr. and I am a resident of New York
25 City and a Member of the Laborers Local 79 with

1
2 almost 10,000 skilled and experienced members, we are
3 the largest Laborers Local in North America.

4 I would like to share a story of how I got into
5 the Pathway to Apprenticeship. I was walking into my
6 mom's lobby and I seen an add on a wall advertising
7 for this program. And it was something that I needed
8 in my life at that particular moment. I was working
9 nonunion. I felt very unsafe and it wasn't enough to
10 take care of my family. There was no health
11 benefits, nothing like that and when I got into this
12 program, I was shown a different side of the
13 construction business. I saw where the members or
14 the workers are put first. Their safety are put
15 first. The public safety are put first and that was
16 very important to me. And once I graduated that
17 program, I got accepted into the Laborers Local 79
18 apprenticeship and again, it was nothing but safe
19 talk. We are trained well.

20 Uhm, I'm a little nervous but I just wanted you
21 know to support this project because it's going to
22 uplift our communities. It's going to help people if
23 you know low-income New Yorkers, people of colors,
24 the outer boroughs residents. People who needs the
25

1
2 opportunity to make it ahead in life. People that
3 come from poor judgements and bad neighborhood.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 GILFREDO VALENTIN: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Gilfredo. You did
7 great. We appreciate your testimony today. Call up
8 the next speaker.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Renzo Ramirez will be the
10 next speaker followed by Jessica Walker.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 RENZO RAMIREZ: Hello, can you guys hear me?

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you Renzo.

14 RENZO RAMIREZ: Alright, great. Uhm, good
15 morning Chair Moya and members of the Subcommittee.
16 My name is Renzo Ramirez and I am a member of 32BJ
17 SCIU. As you know, 32BJ is the largest property
18 service union representing 85,000 property service
19 workers across the city. We represent workers who
20 maintain, clean and provide security services in
21 buildings like the one being discussed at 175 Park
22 Ave.

23 32BJ supports responsible developers who invest
24 in the communities where they build. I am happy to
25 report that the developers affiliated with this

1
2 project RXR have a track record as responsible
3 employers. 32BJ has experience working with these
4 developers and know them to be good partners. We
5 estimate that this rezoning, which will allow the
6 construction of over two million square feet of
7 commercial office space will lead to the creation of
8 66 cleaning jobs.

9 These jobs are typically filled by local members
10 of the community and because of this commitment, will
11 pay family sustaining wages. Which help bring
12 working families into the middle class. This
13 commitment to good prevailing wage jobs will give
14 opportunity for upward mobility, security, and
15 dignity to working class families. 32BJ supports
16 responsible developers who invest in the communities
17 where they build. We know that this development will
18 continue to uphold the industry standard and provide
19 opportunities for working families that thrive.
20 Thank you so much for your time.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony
22 Renzo. Do we have any other questions.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No questions at this time but
24 Jessica Walker will be the next and last speaker on
25 this panel. Jessica Walker.

1

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: My apologies.

2

3

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

4

5

JESSICA WALKER: Good morning. I'm sorry, I'm having some technical difficulties this morning. I'm

6

Jessica Walker, the President and CEO of the

7

Manhattan Chamber of Commerce. And of course we

8

represent and support the business community across

9

the Borough of Manhattan.

10

So, even though the city is rebounding in the

11

wake of the COVID crisis, we are seeing that foot

12

traffic is still extremely depressed in the city's

13

central business district. It's about half of what

14

it was before the pandemic. And that's why we see

15

the redevelopment of 175 Park Avenue is so critical.

16

It's a real vote of confidence in Midtown's continued

17

viability as a bus lane center of innovation transit

18

and economic growth. We think that the you know the

19

state of the art office tower is really going to

20

continue the legacy of leading global companies and

21

talented workforces to continue to call this

22

neighborhood home.

23

And of course, we do think it would be very

24

helpful to increasing foot traffic in the long run

25

and really rebuilding that community to support the

1
2 small businesses and startups and the midmarket firms
3 in the area.

4 And finally, we are extremely excited about the
5 future transit improvements to the Grand Central
6 Terminal and the surrounding area that are proposed
7 as part of this redevelopment. Certainly, it's going
8 to create new entry and exit points that's really
9 going to increase the pedestrian flow and
10 accessibility for workers and commuters.

11 So, we wholeheartedly support this project and we
12 strongly support its passage. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
14 testimony. Do we have any other speakers?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last speaker on
16 this panel Chair and I see no members with questions
17 for this panel.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, this panel is now
19 excused and you can up the next panel.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will include
21 Rob Byrnes, Ryan Pukos, Adam Hartke, and Anne
22 Trenkle. The first speaker will be Rob Byrnes
23 followed by Ryan Pukos.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
25

2 ROB BYRNES: I seem to have problems with my
3 video. Oh, no, it's going okay. Hi, good morning,
4 my name is Rob Byrnes and I am President of the East
5 Midtown Partnership, which is the business
6 improvement district encompassing an area a few
7 blocks of north of 175 Park.

8 The plans for 175 Park deliver on the promise on
9 east Midtown rezoning, by bringing an attractive and
10 modern Class A building to the area and improving the
11 public realm by adding roughly 25,000 square feet of
12 publicly accessible and ADA compliant open space to a
13 community sorely lacking in that amenity.

14 Transit improvements to Grand Central Terminal
15 and the subway station running beneath will also
16 benefit the area. Including new subway and terminal
17 entrances, expanded circulation, ADA accessibility
18 and other improvements at one of the busiest stations
19 in the one of the busiest mass transit systems in the
20 world.

21 At a time when the MTA is under severe financial
22 strain, these improvements at no cost to the public
23 are especially welcome. Finally, the redevelopment
24 of 175 Park will add more than 24,000 well paying
25 construction jobs with an estimated \$1.8 billion in

1 earnings. It's also projected to add approximately
2 \$3.8 billion annually to the city's economy. And at
3 a time when the city's commercial core is yet to
4 recover from the pandemic, this is especially
5 significant.

6
7 For these reasons, I urge the support of the 175
8 Park Proposal. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ryan Pukos will be the next
11 speaker followed by Adam Hartke.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 RYAN PUKOS: Good morning, my name is Ryan Pukos
14 speaking on behalf of the Grand Central Partnership.
15 The Grand Central Partnership is a business
16 improvement district serving an approximately 70
17 square block area in midtown east surrounding Grand
18 Central Terminal. The half of our district
19 management association and its board of directors, we
20 welcome the opportunity to voice our support for 175
21 Park Avenue. As one of the worlds largest bids
22 serving a district with 73 million square feet of
23 commercial, residential and retail building space,
24 our goal is to keep our midtown east neighborhood
25 clean, safe and thriving.

1
2 We believe that the redevelopment of 175 Park
3 Avenue supports this goal in several important ways.
4 First, 175 Park Avenue will deliver valuable public
5 realm transit improvements to midtown east. For
6 example, the project as critically needed open space
7 in the form of a 25,000 square foot elevated public
8 terrace that provides new vantage points to some of
9 our neighborhoods most iconic landmarks. In addition
10 TF Cornerstone and RXR Realty have partnered with the
11 Public Art Fund and cultural resources to develop a
12 cultural program to bring public art installations
13 and programming to the terrace.

14 The project also delivers accessibility and
15 circulation of events so the MTA infrastructure
16 including new and optimized subway and terminal
17 entrances. And a new transit hall would retail
18 another amenities.

19 Second, 175 Park Avenue address a long term
20 challenge for our district by increasing the
21 neighborhood supply of modern efficient and
22 sustainable class A office space. A key goal of the
23 2017 greater east midtown rezoning. Finally, 175
24 Park Avenue represents a crucial investment in the
25 economic health of midtown east and the city at

1
2 large. In the short term, this investment will
3 support the city's economic recovery by creating more
4 than 24,000 construction jobs and bringing more
5 workers to our district to support our restaurants,
6 retailers and other businesses.

7 In the long term, it will lose tax revenue and
8 help ensure that midtown east remains a -

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 RYAN PUKOS: A premier central business district
11 and vibrant destination for New Yorkers and
12 [INAUDIBLE 1:29:13] alike. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
14 Next speaker please.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Adam Hartke will be the next
16 speaker followed by Anne Trenkle.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 ADAM HARTKE: Hi, good afternoon everyone.
19 Apologies for the baby in the background if you can
20 hear it. My name is Adam Hartke and I am testifying
21 as a Resident Murray Hill and as a member of
22 Community Board Six, which is adjacent to the
23 proposed development. This project is both the
24 highest and best use for this area due to its
25

1
2 proximity to one of the busiest transportation hubs
3 in the hemisphere.

4 As Midtown continues to recover from the ravages
5 of COVID, this project represents the broader
6 commitment to business within our open corp. which
7 will bring much needed upgrades to transit and open
8 space in the surrounding area. With the passage of
9 this project, I urge the various government parties
10 and private actors to continue the reimagination of
11 the area around Grand Central Terminal. Such as
12 expanding open space to the Grand Central viaduct and
13 other open space improvements, similar to the new
14 plazas on Vanderbilt Avenue.

15 Coupled with street level improvements, including
16 but not limited to expanding the sidewalks, improved
17 bus lane, secure bike parking, etc. If people from
18 all stripes return to Midtown for business, living or
19 pleasure, we cannot return to the subpar pre-COVID
20 conditions. Today you can already see the popularity
21 of Vanderbilt Avenue Pershing Square and this demand
22 for open space will only increase. I laud the
23 improvements in this project but much more should be
24 implemented in the coming years. Doing so makes both
25

1
2 business and civic sense. Thank you very much for
3 your time.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
5 Next speaker please.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Anne Trenkle.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 ANNE TRENKLE: Hi good morning. Uhm, we've heard
9 a lot of testimony about the post construction
10 positives of this project. We also heard from some
11 of our brothers in Local 79 and also 32BJ SCIU.

12 What these construction jobs mean to different
13 individuals in the city. Helmets to Hardhats
14 represents our returning military personnel and also
15 we're active reserves and our guards men and women.
16 We're looking to get into a career and not just a job
17 but a career that will offer them a future.
18 Training, safety, pension, benefits, the full
19 whatever we could expect to offer to our returning
20 military folks.

21 This being Veterans Day coming around the corner,
22 it's very near and dear to our hearts on how many
23 veterans that we have placed into the construction
24 trades. In New York State, we have about
25 approximately 838,000 veterans. Approximately 25

1
2 percent of those military veterans live here in the
3 five boroughs. At any given time, New York Helmets
4 to Hardhats has 20,000 plus military veterans that
5 are looking to get into a construction union.

6 We have placed from the duration of the program,
7 approximately 3,000 vets into the different trades in
8 New York. From 2013 forward when we formed New York
9 City Helmets to Hardhats, we have approximately 900,
10 925 vets that have started careers. They have
11 families, they can buy homes. They can have a life
12 and it's really the future is much brighter when they
13 have something to look forward to and they know they
14 can come to work in the morning and they're going to
15 make it home safely to their family at the end of the
16 day. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the - sorry,
18 that was the last speaker on this panel and I see no
19 members with questions for this panel.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Seeing no
21 questions for this panel, this panel now is excused.
22 If you can please call up the next panel.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next panel will include
24 Santos Rodriguez, Jay Badame, Munsun Park, and Nicole
25

1
2 Bertran. First speaker will be Santos Rodriguez
3 followed by Jay Badame.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 SANTOS RODRIGUEZ: I was just trying to unmute
6 myself. Good morning everyone. Thank you for the
7 opportunity. I am Santos Rodriguez; I am here to
8 testify on behalf of Gary LaBarbera President of the
9 Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater
10 New York and vicinity. We testified in support of
11 this project, the Grand Hyatt Project at 175 Park in
12 June 2021, in September of 2021 and we are here to
13 testify in support of this project today. The
14 Building and Construction Trades Council is an
15 organization of local building and construction
16 trades that are affiliated with 15 international
17 units and a north American building trade.

18 Our local union affiliates represent
19 approximately 100,000 union construction workers.
20 The Building and Trades mission is to rise the
21 standards of living for all workers to advocate for
22 safe work conditions and collectively advance working
23 conditions for all our affiliates members, as well a
24 all workers in New York City.

1
2 Time and again it is demonstrated that
3 construction work is the catalyst for the city's
4 economic recovery and I believe that this situation
5 we face today is no different. New Yorkers need jobs
6 to make ends meet. The city needs investment to
7 drive recovery and there are few better ways to
8 catalyze both by building. Construction is a crucial
9 source of good paying stable jobs. 175 Park Avenue
10 will create the new open space in Midtown and improve
11 the transportation infrastructure around Grand
12 Central Station. RXR and TF Cornerstone propose
13 redevelopment will create the thousands of
14 construction jobs that provide benefits and steady
15 paychecks. The project will create opportunities for
16 New Yorkers of all walks of all lives through our
17 apprenticeship readiness collectively. The program
18 within provides entry level work and the industry
19 training and preparation for careers and future work
20 in construction.

21 For individuals to participate in these programs

22 —

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 SANTOS RODRIGUEZ: There needs to be construction
25 work to perform the development of the Grand Hyatt

1
2 will provide opportunities as such and we at the
3 Building Trades Support this project. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jay Badame will be the next
5 speaker followed by Munsun Park.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 JAY BADAME: Thank you Chair Moya for the
8 opportunity to comment on this project. I am the
9 Chairman of the Regional Alliance for Small
10 Contractors as well as sitting on the Board of NEW,
11 the Nontraditional Employment for Women. And we also
12 support the Helmets to Hardhats Initiative.

13 As such, my constituents care deeply about what
14 happens at 175 Park. This development holds the
15 potential to help New York City begin its long
16 recovery following the COVID-19 crisis. In terms of
17 good paying jobs, open space and transit improvements
18 the city needs.

19 175 Park Avenue will be a new mixed use tower
20 that will feature approximately 2.1 million square
21 feet of new Class A commercial office space. A
22 453,000 square foot high operated hotel with up to
23 500 rooms and 10,000 square feet of retail and the
24 seller and ground floors including MTA Controlled
25 Retail locations.

1
2 As such, the project will deliver a significant
3 number of construction related benefits including
4 indirect and induced benefits. The project will
5 generate an estimated thousands of construction jobs.
6 \$1.8 billion in wages and fringe benefits and an
7 annual output of \$3.8 billion in New York City's
8 economy. What's more, the team will be pursuing an
9 aggressive MWBE Campaign by working with a host of
10 local organizations to establish partnerships that
11 ensure New Yorkers of all backgrounds that they can
12 access good paying construction jobs.

13 The Landmarks Committee, Community Board Five,
14 Borough President Gale Brewer, City Planning
15 Commissioner have voted in support of this proposal.
16 I welcome and look forward to your comments and
17 takeaway. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Munsun Park will be the next
19 speaker followed by Nicole Bertran.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 MUNSUN PARK: Good morning Council Members. Can
22 you hear me?

23 Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this
24 project. My name is Munsun Park and I am a Senior
25 Real Estate Manager in the Transit Oriented

1
2 Development Group at the MTA. As such, we care
3 deeply about what happens at 175 Park. Notably as it
4 relates to the host of public transit improvements
5 this development offers.

6 We strongly endorse the 175 Park package of
7 transit improvements that will be delivered, which
8 will undeniably improve the terminal and support the
9 city's long term mobility goals to significant
10 investments in our mass transit infrastructure.

11 Grand Central Terminal is the second busiest hub
12 in New York City. In fact, the terminal and subway
13 stations see over 750,000 visitors per day. 175 Park
14 development is offering improvements that will
15 enhance the commuter experience for every transit
16 user around Grand Central Terminal and the Grand
17 Central 42nd Street Subway Station.

18 Specifically, the developments public transit
19 improvements include providing New York City transit,
20 Metro North and Long Island Railroad customers would
21 direct an efficient intermodal connections to fast
22 track their daily commutes. A brand new transit
23 hall, a new dedicated subway entrance, and a new
24 thorough controlled area relocated at street level
25 that will increase capacity and alleviate density.

1
2 Intuitive wayfinding at the subway mezzanine
3 level with increases in walkable area and the
4 introduction of daylight. New ad optimized subway
5 and terminal entrances, expanded circulation and ADA
6 accessibility along with enhanced amenities.

7 And lastly, an improved subway entrance on
8 Lexington Avenue –

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 MUNSUN PARK: That along with the flow of traffic
11 within the subway mezzanine level. This robust set
12 of improvements is necessary to provide New Yorkers
13 with a world class transit system and we recommend
14 that the City Council approve the proposed
15 improvements. Thank you for your time.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Nicole Bertran will be the
18 next and last speaker on this panel.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 NICOLE BERTRAN: Good afternoon Chair Moya and
21 esteemed members of the Committee. My name Nicole
22 Bertran, I serve as the Executive Vice President of
23 the Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction
24 Skills. Construction Skills is a nonprofit
25 apprenticeship readiness organization that serves New

1
2 York City public high school students and adult
3 residents from throughout the five boroughs. And I'm
4 pleased to offer testimony this afternoon.

5 For 20 years, since 2001, Construction Skills has
6 contributed to the development of a skilled and
7 trained workforce by recruiting training and placing
8 residents of New York City into apprenticeship
9 programs jointly sponsored by union affiliates of the
10 Building and Construction Trades Council. Our
11 participants live in all five boroughs. 89 percent
12 are minority and to date, we've placed more than
13 2,300 graduates into union apprenticeship careers.
14 80 percent of these graduates remain active in the
15 industry today including 1,000 journey persons.

16 In March 2020, and there has been mention of this
17 today, four apprenticeship readiness programs in New
18 York City formed a first of its kind collective
19 called the Apprenticeship Readiness Collective. And
20 ARC affiliates include Construction Skills, Helmets
21 to Hardhats, Nontraditional Employment for Women and
22 Pathway to Apprenticeship.

23 From 911 to Hurricane Sandy and now the COVID-19
24 pandemic ARC programs have always been part of the
25 city's recovery efforts. Workforce development

1
2 stakeholders have noted the disproportionate impact
3 of COVID-19 during this pandemic, which has had on –
4 sorry. The disproportionate impact the COVID-19
5 pandemic has had on minority communities. Each ARC
6 affiliate stands ready with the skills and expertise
7 to provide direct entry access to family sustaining
8 careers in the unionized construction industry –

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 NICOLE BERTRAN: Benefits and retirement
11 security. We support the 175 project and hope that
12 goes through. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
15 speaker on this panel. I see no members with
16 questions for the panel.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, there being no questions
18 for this panel, the panel is now excused. Can you
19 call up the next panel please.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will include
21 Felicia Park-Rogers, Helene Cinque and Tapadar
22 Sural(SP?). First speaker will be Felicia Park-
23 Rogers followed by Helene Cinque.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
25

1
2 FELICIA PARK-ROGERS: Good morning, my name is
3 Felicia Park-Rogers and I am the Director of Regional
4 Infrastructure Projects for Tristate Transportation
5 Campaign. A regional transportation advocacy and
6 policy organization working to reduce congestion,
7 pollution and to improve commutes. Thank you for the
8 opportunity to speak on behalf and in support of 175
9 Park Avenue. I'd like to focus my comments on the
10 transit improvements included in the project scope
11 and have submitted testimony with more detail to your
12 email.

13 As you know, complicated transit connections
14 within the Grand Central complex along with serious
15 congestion at the 42nd Street Subway entrance have
16 been persistent issues at this important transit hub.
17 Tristate appreciates the thoughtful approach that RXR
18 and TF Cornerstone have developed in partnership with
19 the MTA to maximize the opportunities that this
20 project provides for addressing structural issues
21 which have previously prevented major upgrades at
22 Grand Central.

23 In the coming years as ridership returns and
24 eventually exceeds pre-COVID levels, and as east side
25 access brings Long Island Railroad Service to Grand

1
2 Central, it will be critical that we ensure our
3 transit infrastructure is prepared to handle higher
4 passenger volumes while promoting the health, safety
5 and ease of travel for riders. This project includes
6 a number of investments which will greatly improve
7 riders and pedestrians experience moving through the
8 area. Improving riders experience with transit helps
9 reduce car use to the City Center, which is vital for
10 combating climate change and bringing economic
11 opportunities back to this critical business and
12 tourist district.

13 The plans public improvements go far beyond
14 cosmetic upgrades and create a sizable upgrade to the
15 city's and regions public transit infrastructure.
16 The transit improvements that this project will
17 deliver will come at no cost to the MTA, as the
18 improvements will be privately funded by the
19 developers. This is important for our city's
20 underfunded transit system, even more so during the
21 COVID budget crisis, which as severely impacted the
22 MTA budget including its ability -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 FELICIA PARK-ROGERS: Including its ability to -
25 I just have two more sentences if you don't mind.

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CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Wrap it up.

FELICIA PARK-ROGERS: Which has severely impacted the MTA budget, including its ability to fully fund better ADA accessibility across the system. The ADA and accessibility improvements in this project are especially critical and include two new elevators. One which is covered, so that people can wait and stay dry in the rain.

So, in closing, I recommend this proposal and I thank you for your time and attention.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. Next speaker.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Helene Cinque will be the next speaker followed by Tapadar Sural.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

HELENE CINQUE: Hi, I'm Helene Cinque from the MTA TOD Group. I actually wasn't sure I was going to make it to this meeting, so Munsun Park actually read our remarks that represented our feelings but I just want to reiterate that the transit improvements proposed by 175 Park are major, major improvement to Grand Central and we support the project. We support the transit improvements and uhm, we're thrilled to be part of it. Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, thank you for your
2 testimony today.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was actually the
4 last speaker on this panel that we have available and
5 I see no members with questions.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, uhm, there being no
7 members of the public who wish to testify on the LU
8 Number 899 through 904 for the 175 Park Avenue
9 Proposal, the public hearing is now closed and the
10 items are laid over.

11 I now open the public hearing on Preconsidered LU
12 items for the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan, which
13 seeks a Zoning Map and Zoning Text Amendment under
14 ULURP's Number C 210422 ZMM and N 210423 ZRM and
15 relating to property in Council Member Chin's and
16 Council Member Rivera's District in Manhattan, in
17 conjunction with these Preconsidered LU's items, we
18 will jointly hold a hearing on Proposed Local
19 Legislation relating to increasing penalties relating
20 to occupancy of the joint living work quarters for
21 artists contrary to zoning.

22 We have a lot of speakers signed up for this
23 hearing, so I would ask that you all be patient and
24 that the Counsel Staff is working hard to make sure
25

1
2 that you all have a chance to speak. If you would
3 prefer to submit written testimony, you can always do
4 so by emailing it to
5 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. And I will remind
6 the viewing public, for anyone wishing to testify on
7 this item, if you have not already done so, you must
8 register online and you may do that now by visiting
9 the Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse.
10 Counsel, please call up the first panel.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes Chair, just before I do
12 that, I'm going to make a quick announcement. Again
13 regarding registrations for everyone who has signed
14 up in advance and successfully logged into this
15 webinar, you are in the right place. We will make
16 sure to get to everyone's testimony. There is no
17 reason for anyone to be using the raise hand
18 function. If you are here, please be patient and we
19 will get to you.

20 And with that, the applicant panel for this item
21 will include Anita Laremont and Sylvia Li of the
22 Department of City Planning. Also available for
23 question and answer will be Edith Hsu-Chen and Erik
24 Botsford. Also, of the Department of City Planning
25

1
2 Ahmed Tigani of HPD, Michael Sandler of HPD and
3 Gonzalo Casals ECLA Commissioner.

4 Panelists, please state your name for the record
5 and raise your right hand.

6 ANITA LAREMONT: Anita Laremont.

7 AHMED TIGANI: Ahmed Tigani.

8 MICHAEL SANDLER: Michael Sandler.

9 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Edith Hsu-Chen.

10 GONZALO CASALS: Gonzalo Casals.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you all swear or affirm to
12 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
13 truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee and
14 in answer to all Council Member questions?

15 PANEL: Yes, I do.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, you may begin your
17 presentation.

18 ANITA LAREMONT: Thank you. Good afternoon,
19 could you please bring up the slides? Thank you.
20 Good afternoon Chairs Moya and Salamanca, Council
21 Members Chin and Rivera and members of the
22 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. Next slide
23 please. Next slide.

24 Okay, thank you. Thank you for the opportunity
25 to testify today on the Department of City Planning's

1
2 Proposal for a comprehensive rezoning of the SoHo and
3 NoHo Neighborhoods in Manhattan Community District
4 Two. Two highly desirable neighborhoods with
5 excellent transit connectivity, iconic architecture
6 and a rich cultural history situated between two of
7 the countries largest business districts and adjacent
8 to communities that are dynamic in their own right.

9 SoHo and NoHo are also among the city's strongest
10 retail corridors and are home to tens of thousands of
11 jobs and businesses. Next slide please. The
12 SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan is centered around
13 promoting housing affordability and equity.
14 Improving access to economic opportunity, furthering
15 the wellbeing of our cultural community, and
16 promoting good urban design and an improved public
17 realm.

18 At a high level, the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan
19 exemplifies the idea that with sensitive and focused
20 planning and robust public dialogue, all
21 neighborhoods across the city can play a part in
22 solving the myriad challenges that we as New Yorkers
23 share. Critically, this initiative affirms that
24 historic preservation and continued growth can be
25 mutually beneficial, especially with sensible urban

1
2 design controls and continued LPC oversight. With
3 strong tenant protection laws and programs, building
4 housing in SoHo and NoHo will relieve market pressure
5 on rents in these two communities and in surrounding
6 communities including Chinatown. The plan offers
7 meaningful support for the arts in a publicly
8 oriented way, recognizing the continued contribution
9 of long time artists and our cultural sector to the
10 vitality of SoHo and NoHo. Next slide please.

11 This plan is a culmination of years of extensive
12 local and citywide stakeholder engagement, which
13 traces its start to a 2015 joint letter from Borough
14 President Gale Brewer and Council Member Margaret
15 Chin calling on the Department to fix the existing
16 unfair and broken zoning. Initial research by our
17 three offices, led to the 2019 envision SoHo/NoHo
18 community engagement effort which was jointly
19 sponsored by the Borough President, the Council
20 Member and DCP. And the final report with
21 recommendations that laid out the important
22 foundation of our proposal. Next slide please.

23 As many noted during our numerous in person and
24 virtual engagement event, SoHo and NoHo are
25 significantly constrained and hampered by the

1
2 outdated 50 year old zoning created in 1971 for a
3 very different SoHo/NoHo in New York City. Current
4 zoning does not allow new housing without special
5 permission. It has no affordability requirements for
6 residential development and severely restricts the
7 use of ground floors to industrial uses.

8 As such, this restrictive regime has resulted in
9 extremely limited housing options that exclude
10 moderate and low income New Yorkers, increases
11 pressure on surrounding neighborhoods in less
12 protected areas. Contributes to storefront
13 vacancies, and disproportionately burns smaller
14 business owners. Who often lack the resources and
15 capacity to navigate land use and environmental
16 review processes, leaving them therefore at a
17 disadvantage.

18 While current zoning recognizes artists, live
19 work as a legal use. No one as joint living work
20 quarters for artists or [INAUDIBLE 1:54:19]. It is
21 really important to remember that these homes are not
22 income restricted. And also that no provisions exist
23 to ensure the long term vitality of the cultural
24 community. Moreover, while this artist only
25 restriction runs contrary to our fair housing

1
2 principle as outlined in where we live. It also
3 creates real challenges as there are limited legal
4 options to rent or sell units. Additionally, in an
5 area defined by its iconic cast iron walls, the
6 existing zoning does not have controls on building
7 form and heights that reflect this important
8 architectural context.

9 The photos on the screen offer several examples
10 of out of character building that were developed
11 pursuant to the existing M1-5A and M1-5B zoning
12 regulation. Our proposal will change that. Next
13 slide.

14 I want to highlight that under the existing
15 zoning, SoHo and NoHo have lagged most communities in
16 the city in providing housing for New Yorkers, as
17 this map illustrates. In fact, SoHo/NoHo have become
18 among the wealthiest and the least diverse
19 neighborhoods in the city. 40 percent of SoHo and
20 NoHo households earn \$200,000 or more a year,
21 compared to the city's annual median income of
22 \$64,000 annually for a household. While 73 percent
23 of people living in SoHo and NoHo identify as why
24 just 33 percent of New York City residents so
25 identify.

1
2 At this moment in history, as we seek to fully
3 recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and as we work to
4 build a fairer and more inclusive New York City,
5 allowing land use rules that serve as barriers to a
6 diverse equitable and an economically healthy So/Ho
7 and NoHo is to put it bluntly just unacceptable. We
8 believe it is time to establish a new plan for an
9 evolved local economy that is no longer industrial
10 but rather defined by office, retail and creative
11 sectors in a city that is home to 8.8 million people.
12 One million more than we had in 1970.

13 The proposal will bring an estimated 3,500 homes
14 to SoHo and NoHo. A quarter of the new housing or
15 about 900 units will be permanently affordable.
16 Enough for some 1,800 New Yorkers of low and moderate
17 income. This is especially meaningful because there
18 is no income restricted affordable housing in SoHo
19 and NoHo today.

20 Now, I'm going to hand it over to my colleague
21 Sylvia Li who has expertly managed this essential
22 proposal and who is going to walk you through the
23 important equity focused details. Thank you.

24 SYLVIA LI: Thank you so much Anita. Uhm, good
25 afternoon Chairs Moya and Salamanca, Council Members

1
2 Chin and Rivera and members of the Subcommittee on
3 Zoning and Franchises. Thank you for your time
4 today. Next slide please.

5 So, to achieve this vision of diverse and
6 resilient SoHo and NoHo that Anita laid out, we are
7 proposing a Zoning Map Amendment and a Zoning Text
8 Amendment. As I will spell out in greater detail in
9 the following slides to two actions work together to
10 allow housing, mandate affordability, provide direct
11 support for the arts, remove barriers for business,
12 while addressing quality of life and establish urban
13 design controls, so that growth can be both equitable
14 and contextual. Next slide.

15 First on uses, so overall, the proposed paired
16 manufacturing and residential districts means that
17 the zoning will finally reflect the fact that
18 SoHo/NoHo are a dynamic mixed use neighborhoods.
19 Light manufacturing use will continue to be permitted
20 as they are today, including no changes to provisions
21 related to existing Joint Living Work Quarters
22 Artists, JLWQA. If you are a certified artist
23 residing in JLWQA today, you can continue to live and
24 work as you always have.

1
2 In addition to JLWQA, as Anita pointed out,
3 importantly the proposal will allow housing for
4 everyone for the first time in SoHo and NoHo. And
5 affordable housing would be mandated. I'll spend a
6 little more time on these two components JLWQA and
7 MIH after this slide.

8 The full suite of community facility and culture
9 uses would also be permitted as of right.
10 Additionally, a wider range of job generating uses,
11 such as office and retail would be permitted in a
12 manner that is consistent with many mixed use
13 communities in our city. This is also a long overdue
14 recognition of SoHo/NoHo's economic contribution as a
15 major retail district and hub for congress for the
16 city and the region. Here I'll highlight that in its
17 approval, the City Planning Commission added scrutiny
18 for larger stores over 25,000 square feet in response
19 to concerns raised by local communities around retail
20 loading activities conflicting with residents and
21 other users of our streets and sidewalks.

22 We think that this added Chairperson
23 certification review process with coordinated DOT and
24 City Planning Review will help balance the quality of
25

1
2 life considerations and a need for greater zoning
3 flexibility that supports a dynamic local economy.

4 Beyond zoning, I'll just note that the we're
5 continuing discussions with other city agencies and
6 local stakeholders about additional long term
7 strategies. That includes how the Departments of
8 Sanitation and Transportation can leverage broader
9 initiatives to address local concerns. Happy to talk
10 more about that during the Q&A, thanks. Next slide.

11 A bit more detail on MIH. As Anita alluded,
12 paired with allowing housing for the first time, the
13 plan also ushers in one of the city's largest
14 mandatory inclusionary housing area and in the heart
15 of lower Manhattan. We're taking this opportunity to
16 apply the most progressive program of its kind in the
17 nation and leverage the strong market to deliver
18 permanently affordable housing on private sites
19 without the need for public subsidy.

20 MIH Options One and Two are proposed, requiring
21 25 to 30 percent of new housing to be set aside for
22 income restricted permanently affordable homes in new
23 developments, conversions as well as enlargements.
24 As the Council is familiar, 60 and 80 percent AMI's
25 are just the average. Both options of the MIH are

1
2 designed to serve a range of low and moderate income
3 levels. As low as 40 percent AMI's in Option One for
4 example, which means that a qualifying family of
5 three would earn less than \$43,000 a year, about a
6 third of the median household income in SoHo and NoHo
7 today.

8 I'll note that proposal also enclosed two
9 targeted adjustments to the standard MIH provisions,
10 so that the program further ensures that we fully
11 capitalize on the affordable housing potential here.
12 Next slide.

13 For those who currently live in rent regulated
14 housing in SoHo and NoHo as Anita said, strong and
15 existing tenant protection laws and programs will
16 continue to govern. As summarized on this slide, the
17 2019 reforms to relevant laws significantly
18 strengthen tenant protections and restricted the
19 ability of landlords to raise rents on stabilized
20 units or remove them from rent stabilization program.

21 Here as just a side note, I'll also mention that
22 the vast majority closed on 90 percent of the
23 buildings with rent regulated units in SoHo and
24 NoHo. Based on HPD's research, sits within historic
25 districts and since any changes to these buildings

1
2 will also continue to require LPC approval and
3 oversight, tenants in these buildings also enjoy an
4 additional layer of protection.

5 On top of all that, my colleagues at HPD on the
6 panel can speak more at the Q&A about their ongoing
7 efforts on tenant outreach, education and legal
8 services the city provides as part of the
9 neighborhood planning process later. Next slide.

10 So, moving on to the JLWQA and the Arts Fund. Uhm,
11 as mentioned earlier, the plan retains allowance for
12 existing joint living work quarters for artists while
13 introducing a new mechanism to directly support the
14 arts in SoHo/NoHo and surrounding neighborhoods. We
15 understand that this is an issue that is important
16 and personal to a lot of people currently living in
17 the neighborhoods today, including the artists who
18 help transform the neighborhoods decades ago.

19 Drawing from recommendations from the envision
20 SoHo engagement effort, uhm, which are twofold. Uhm,
21 one, the new zoning should reinforce the arts legacy
22 in SoHo/NoHo. And two, it also needs to allow
23 occupancies beyond certified artists. So, we come up
24 with a proposal that addresses both of these facets
25 by providing much needed optionality along with a

1
2 SoHo/NoHo arts fund. As laid out on this slide,
3 existing JLWQA's can remain as they are. This means
4 artists residing in JLWQA's today can continue to do
5 so and the space can be sold or rented later to
6 certified artists as well. That doesn't change.

7 Alternatively, on a voluntary basis, these spaces
8 can also be converted from JLWQA to residential use
9 with a contribution touring arts fund. This
10 essentially means that in exchange for lifting the
11 artist only restriction currently present on a JLWQA,
12 the Arts Fund would be available for publicly
13 oriented arts and cultural programming and spaces.

14 Here, I'll want to emphasize that our proposal
15 does not take away the ability again for current
16 residents to continue living in SoHo/NoHo. It simply
17 expands the range of legal options available to them
18 when they make their plans for the future. Next
19 slide.

20 So, what can the Arts Fund accomplish? It will
21 support and strengthen public presence of the arts in
22 SoHo/NoHo and around and provide opportunities to
23 invest in historically disadvantaged communities near
24 the SoHo/NoHo neighborhood as well. The fund could
25 also provide financial support for artists, arts

1
2 collectives, cultural nonprofits, to pursue projects
3 and partake in preserving, upgrading, expanding and
4 acquiring cultural spaces including studio and
5 exhibition spaces for local artists.

6 Again, we are very excited that the rezoning
7 provides an opportunity to build upon what we have in
8 SoHo/NoHo and do more for the arts. In terms of
9 funding allocation and what can be used specifically,
10 I'll note that most of the funds details exist
11 outside of zoning and we're looking forward to
12 flushing them out with the City Council. DCLA
13 Commissioner Gonzalo Casals is here to answer
14 questions about opportunities and potential at
15 administration – uh administrative structure of the
16 arts fund. Next slide. Last but not least on
17 density and urban design. Importantly as Anita
18 alluded to, unlike the existing zoning, which does
19 not have height limits, the proposed zoning imposes
20 height limits and contextual building envelopes to
21 SoHo/NoHo limiting the size of new developments and
22 requiring that they reflect the loft-like historic
23 character.

24 The proposal also recognizes the fact that
25 SoHo/NoHo are not uniform in terms of their built

1
2 character allowing different building heights and
3 sizes in different parts of SoHo/NoHo. As the map
4 shows, allowable density in historic cores and
5 corridors shown in pink and blue here are lower.
6 Consistent with many of the historic buildings found
7 in these areas. Densities in the opportunity areas
8 shown in yellow, which are largely outside of
9 historic districts and framed by major corridors,
10 such as Canal Street 6th Avenue and Bowery would be
11 increased in a manner that it responds to at
12 surrounding context and is commensurate with the
13 areas potential.

14 As you can see on the chart, the density levels
15 are calibrated to provide robust allowance to support
16 a dynamic mix of uses while also putting our thumb on
17 the scale for housing. I'll highlight that the
18 residential allowance in the plan has always been
19 higher than it is for a commercial development. Even
20 so, during ULURP, we heard loud and clear that there
21 is a strong desire to favor even more residential and
22 as a result, the CPC further lowered the permissible
23 commercial density along Bowery and Canal Street in
24 the South Eastern study area.

1
2 Lastly, I want to reiterate that the majority,
3 over 80 percent of the rezoning area is within and
4 protected by six city historic districts. The city's
5 LPC's oversight within historic district will not
6 change. Next slide.

7 We believe that the sensible contextual zoning
8 along with LPC review, strong tenant laws and
9 protection programs will work in unison to ensure
10 that these two historic neighborhoods accommodate
11 growth in a manner that is equitable and responsive
12 to neighborhood character. This is a sketch that
13 shows the pedestrian view of one of the opportunity
14 areas, showing exciting and new buildings coexist in
15 a way that compliment the historic context of the
16 neighborhood. Next slide.

17 So, before I wrap up, I'll note that this
18 neighborhood plan is a coordinated interagency effort
19 involving many agencies. And some of them are
20 present on the panel today. Thank you again for your
21 consideration and the time for letting us walking you
22 through at a high level our proposal. We're looking
23 forward to hear from you and your questions,
24 priorities and concerns throughout the City Council
25 review. Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. A couple of
3 questions just before I turn it over to my colleagues
4 here. Specifically with the retail, the proposal
5 allows unlimited retail as of right. Why does the
6 DCP believe that the very large format retail is a
7 good economic strategy for SoHo? It should only be
8 focusing in uh, more on the higher wage economic
9 development strategies.

10 SYLVIA LI: Uhm, thank you very much for your
11 question. Uhm, so I guess I didn't address the
12 question in two - from two parts. Uhm, one is, you
13 know we see SoHo/NoHo from an economic development
14 perspective as really critical retail center effect
15 global destination that you know contributes to our
16 city's economy significantly.

17 That involves job opportunities as well as you
18 know taxes for the city to provide services. Uhm,
19 you know I'll not that anecdotally we've heard that
20 the retail sector uhm, especially the larger retail
21 stores, provides opportunities for upward mobility in
22 terms of jobs. And those are important economic
23 opportunities that we strengthen and reinforce in
24 SoHo/NoHo. They're present today, I think our goal
25 is to make sure that retail sector continues to be a

1
2 major provider of jobs in SoHo/NoHo in the future and
3 for our city.

4 Uhm, you know we certainly understand that uhm,
5 there have been a lot of concerns related to larger
6 retail stores, you know loading, unloading activities
7 being you know a source of disruption for residents,
8 especially during night time. It also is maybe you
9 know conflicting with pedestrian flows or other users
10 of our streets and sidewalks. With that in mind,
11 uhm, you know as I mentioned in the presentation,
12 we've introduced additional level of review, and
13 together with DOT to make sure that uhm you know, new
14 larger retail establishments incorporate appropriate
15 loading plan and strategies to mitigate some of those
16 uhm, negative impact that they have on the
17 neighborhood.

18 Uhm, I'll note that you know one other source of
19 disruption, not you know limited to larger retail
20 stores but also retail and office uses in general is
21 you know kind of the issue related to truck traffic
22 you know that come with garbage pickup. Uh, we
23 understand that you know as part of the rollout for
24 the commercial waste zone, that Sanitation is
25 implementing and looking to implement. You know, it

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2 will bring down the cardan companies going through
3 the neighborhood from some 49 to three, really go a
4 long way to reduce impact of commercial activities to
5 residents.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, uhm, commercial versus
7 residential. How many of the housing groups have
8 criticized the proposal because your only increasing
9 the residential FAR? You are also proposing to
10 increase the commercial FAR. Because this proposal
11 has been largely framed around fair housing, why
12 should we increase the commercial FAR at all? And
13 shouldn't we stay focused on the affordable housing
14 goal?

15 ANITA LAREMONT: I'll take that Chair Moya. You
16 know that the City Planning Commission did approve
17 with modification what we think is a nuanced approach
18 to commercial density. And we think we struck an
19 appropriate balance between expanding housing
20 opportunities, which you are correct, was really a
21 primary motivator here. But also, reenforcing the
22 healthy bounce mix of uses in this dynamic local
23 economy.

24 You know, the residential densities here have
25 always been higher than the commercial, so we believe

1
2 that we really are favoring housing. And we did make
3 an adjustment though based on calls that ask us to go
4 further to really ensure that the housing goals were
5 achieved. So, we did that. But that said, I really
6 do have to note, that we as planners have to consider
7 the regional context for our planning work and in
8 that regard, we feel like we have to reenforce the
9 strength of diversity of office space that we have in
10 New York City for a wider range of jobs. And there
11 are a number of jobs in this area of the city and we
12 believe it's very important to the city's continued
13 vitality.

14 So, we did not want to overlook it. Uh, we think
15 this is really important as we recover and for the
16 long term. But that was the balance that we were
17 trying to strike.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I understand that, just given
19 the fact that we are in the middle of a housing
20 crisis and there is an opportunity for us to expand
21 the housing stock here, why wouldn't we want to focus
22 more on the housing issue? I know what you said, I
23 just think that this is an opportunity that may get
24 missed here. And sticking with housing, this is the
25 only rezoning that we have looked at that doesn't

1
2 have a significant affordable housing component
3 beyond the MIH. Why have you not been able to
4 advance a 100 percent affordable project in this
5 neighborhood?

6 ANITA LAREMONT: I'll look to HPD to provide that
7 answer.

8 AHMED TIGANI: I can take that question. Uh,
9 thank you for the question Chair Moya. You know as
10 we try to look forward at every rezoning, we are
11 always dependent on a mix of things, both our private
12 partners and added sites to be able to generate
13 housing, which is why bringing MIH to this
14 neighborhood is so critical to creating more
15 diversity and equity in SoHo/NoHo.

16 But in places where we can potentially activate
17 public sites to create affordable housing, that's
18 something that we also prioritize as well. And
19 unfortunately, we have not been able to secure or
20 find public sites in this neighborhood that we can
21 leverage for affordable housing. We are doing what
22 we can certainly to talk to the owners of buildings
23 in the neighborhood making sure that they are aware
24 of our term sheets that we are here to talk to them
25

1
2 about what projects can look like to better them and
3 the community.

4 But there just simply isn't a wealth of -

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Ahmed, always good to see you
6 my friend but let me just say something here. Like,
7 describe them to me because you just mentioned
8 conversations with the property owners.

9 AHMED TIGANI: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, describe with me the
11 conversations that you've had specifically with the
12 property owners in the area to date uh, that go
13 deeper and that will help us understand where we can
14 expect affordable housing that is beyond MIH. Are
15 you saying that there's been conversations and
16 there's no ability to go beyond what they're saying
17 they can do with MIH?

18 AHMED TIGANI: No, I'm not saying that sir. So,
19 we've - at the beginning of this rezoning and
20 throughout, there have been multiple round tables and
21 individual conversations with property owners. Most
22 recently we did another round reaching out to
23 projected - the owners of projected sites. And we
24 also have taken recommendations or any possible lead.
25 So, we've sat down with owners. We've laid out in

1
2 detail what our ability is to work with them to
3 develop affordable housing and I think that honestly
4 and fairly, they are looking to know where the
5 rezoning will ultimately go before making for them,
6 critical business decisions.

7 Most of the people in the development world
8 understand that we go out of our way to make sure
9 that when we're building 100 percent affordable term
10 sheets - are build for the site.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I didn't mean to interrupt.
12 So, basically you're saying no? That the
13 conversations you've had with all of the property
14 owners, no one has said that they are willing to go
15 beyond MIH, correct?

16 AHMED TIGANI: I think that there is interest but
17 at this point, they're still waiting for more
18 information.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, so, no right? I just
20 want to get clear that all the conversations have
21 been - is nothing beyond MIH, correct?

22 AHMED TIGANI: Currently, we don't have a
23 community project.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, great. Thank you for
25 that. Uhm, can you explain what the planning

1
2 rationale is for the rezoning on the north side of
3 Canal Street but not on the south side of Canal
4 Street. I know you touched upon it a little bit in
5 your presentation but can you just uh talk a little
6 bit about that please?

7 SYLVIA LI: Uhm, thanks for the question. If I
8 understand correctly it's about the sort of the
9 boundary to focus on north Canal Street.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah, yup.

11 SYLVIA LI: So, the you know as mentioned in
12 presentation, I think the way we've looked at the
13 area is you know, the primary goal is to update the
14 significantly outdated manufacturing zoning that is
15 unique to the SoHo/NoHo neighborhoods at the M1-5A
16 and M1-5B Districts. And north of Canal Street is
17 sort of where the boundary ends on the southern end
18 of the existing zoning district we want to update.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, uh, what investments is
20 the administration proposing to make to ensure that
21 this is a neighborhood plan and not just a rezoning?

22 ANITA LAREMONT: This is - I will point out that
23 this is a unique among our neighborhood planned
24 rezoning in that, it is a very uh, well-serviced and
25 regarded community. It has significant access to

1
2 transit and services and it has very robust property
3 values. It has not as a neighborhood or
4 neighborhoods, experienced the sort of disinvestment
5 or hardship that many of the communities in upper
6 Manhattan and in our outer boroughs have experienced
7 over the decades. And as a consequence, we really
8 did not approach this in the same way that we did our
9 other neighborhood plans.

10 Equity here really means expanding housing access
11 and choice, eliminating the owners regulations that
12 we have here and making targeted improvements to
13 these two neighborhoods to make them more livable and
14 to serve more New Yorkers. But we did not view this
15 neighborhood as one that required the significant
16 kinds of infrastructure investments that the others
17 for the reasons that I just stated.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Ah, thank you. I just got a
19 couple more questions. Just two more questions and
20 them I'm going to turn it over to my colleagues. Uh,
21 there's been a lot of questions about uh, how the
22 open restaurants will work in neighborhoods in
23 Manhattan, especially SoHo pre-pandemic has some of
24 the highest pedestrian counts anywhere in New York
25 City. Can you help us understand which streets the

1
2 administration believes are suitable for open
3 restaurants in SoHo?

4 SYLVIA LI: Uhm, that's a great question and I
5 you know I think that uhm, you know consistent with
6 sort of the overall framework proposed under you know
7 the Open Restaurant Proposal. I think we'll believe
8 that you know many are streets. As long as they meet
9 you know the necessary sort of relation path and
10 clear path requirements, we think they, you know
11 SoHo/NoHo are so dynamic as a commercial area. On
12 the lower levels of buildings at least and many of
13 the streets. We think that as long as the
14 circulation requirements are met, you know a lot of
15 them can be you know suitable locations for
16 restaurants. As far as restaurants are viable
17 businesses in SoHo/NoHo and I think you know kind of
18 eliminating zoning barriers for that is you know what
19 we're doing here.

20 But in terms of you know specifically what
21 corridors are you know where we see it more of a
22 concentration today, I you know west Broadway is an
23 example where you have you know wider sidewalks where
24 there are you know more opportunities. That people
25 are already taking advantage today.

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2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, thank you and this is my
3 last question here. This rezoning will preserve the
4 JLVQA's that have been allowed in the SoHo/NoHo
5 neighborhood to help artists live in their work space
6 in manufacturing buildings. However, we have often
7 seen that these units are more often than not luxury
8 penthouses that are owned by the Uber wealthy. A few
9 years ago, Jon Bon Jovi sold his SoHo penthouse for
10 almost \$40 million. Clearly this is not a live work
11 space. What is being put in place to make sure that
12 we are not simply granting the Uber wealthy an
13 exemption and that we are actually helping working
14 artists utilize the work spaces?

15 SYLVIA LI: Thank you Chair Moya for that
16 question. So, this is you know obviously a complex
17 issue. What I will note is that I think the
18 occupancies over the years you know since
19 establishment of JLVQA as a legal use has you know
20 really evolved to include a variety of you know types
21 of residents. There are still you know long term
22 artists that are aging in place and using their homes
23 as live, work space right. And then there are
24 examples you were mentioning that are sort of you
25 know operating in the sort of a grey area. And what

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2 we are proposing is you know kind of addressing those
3 variety in SoHo/NoHo today. You know by one, you
4 know, continuing to allow existing artists to
5 continue to occupy their live work space and utilize
6 that.

7 Uhm, and then at the same time, you know creating
8 this arts fund mechanism so that folks that are
9 actually are not artists or intend to sell to folks
10 that are not artists, can you know contribute back by
11 paying into the Arts Fund and kind of link that with
12 uhm, ongoing support for the cultural community in
13 SoHo/NoHo. That is important.

14 Uhm, I didn't know that I'm aware of the
15 legislation that was introduced, that was recently
16 introduced by the Council Member and we, for greater
17 enforcement around existing JLVQA's rules. It's
18 fairly recent. It's premature for me to speak to the
19 legislation directly and specifically but certainly
20 we understand where the Council Member is coming from
21 and are actively reviewing.

22 So, what I can say at this moment is that the
23 issue of enforcement you know really highlights the
24 problem that I mentioned that we're trying to solve
25 here in the proposal.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, so just really quick,
3 uh, so uh, who is responsible for regulating that and
4 what are the penalties for those that are exploiting
5 the loopholes?

6 SYLVIA LI: Uhm, in the — you know as with any
7 sort of uhm, zoning regulations, uhm, Department of
8 Buildings is sort of the enforcer of zoning
9 regulations right? And so, I don't want to misspeak
10 but I think my understanding is that uhm, if the
11 zoning proposal is approved and adopted, there will
12 be a coordinated interagency effort you know
13 facilitated by a Chairperson Certification if you
14 were asking about the Arts Fund conversion mechanism.

15 It will be a Chairperson Certification,
16 facilitated by the Department of City Planning
17 coordinating with DCLA to make sure that you know how
18 much Arts Fund is required and then certifying with
19 the Buildings Department to kind of effectuate the
20 conversion.

21 Uhm, understand that you know obviously
22 enforcement and the administrative process, a lot of
23 them exist beyond zoning and we're you know here to
24 continuing working.

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2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, we don't have anyone from
3 the Department of Buildings on this?

4 SYLVIA LI: We don't have them on the panel today
5 but we've had extensive conversations with the
6 Buildings Department throughout the proposal
7 development and we're happy to follow up with any
8 specifics.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: That would be - that would be
10 great. Uh, okay, thank you very much. That's it for
11 me. I now want to turn it over to my colleagues and
12 I would like to turn it over to Council Member Chin
13 for questions.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair Moya.
15 Thank you to the Committee Members.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I'm sorry Council Member, yup.
17 They just set the clock, so you can start right now.
18 It's fine.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Oh, okay. Yeah, I just
20 wanted to uhm, follow up on your question because I
21 did introduce legislation about increasing the fine.
22 Right now the fine is only \$1,250. And that's why we
23 have all these illegal sales going on for
24 multimillion dollars and they are not contributing
25

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2 anything back to the community. And then that's why
3 we have this Art Fund.

4 I mean we're open you know to hearing from the
5 community. You know some of them think the Art Fund
6 requirement is too high. I mean it's negotiable but
7 right now, the way it is, the fine is too little.
8 There is not enough enforcement and my legislation
9 will increase that fine to start with at least
10 \$15,000 and up. And hopefully that will deter some
11 of the sales. Because the sales are going on for
12 more than \$2,000 a square foot according to the
13 market.

14 And we do want to preserve these JLVQA for
15 artists and that's really important. Uhm, my
16 question is that I, I wanted to uh, ask you know DCP
17 right because you're talking about the conversion.
18 Why aren't you thinking about expanding the
19 definition of artists? Because right now the
20 definition is very limited. So, was there any
21 thought about you increasing and broaden the
22 definition rather than just allowing conversion to
23 Use Group Two for residential?

24 SYLVIA LI: Uhm, thank you Council Member for
25 your question. Uhm, so I think for on the kind of

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2 the regulation uhm and administration sort of note, a
3 change of definition of sort of certified artist
4 would require changes to the multiple dwelling law,
5 which is the state legislation. So, if this is not
6 something that is you know can be done through
7 zoning. So, that's just kind of uh, uhm, regulatory
8 background.

9 But in kind of zooming back a little bit to take
10 a step back to look at you know where the concerns
11 are and where they are coming from and why there is
12 this call for a broadening you know kind of artist
13 certification and definition of that. You know, we -
14 if it's about you know making sure that the new
15 zoning doesn't harm existing artists. Uhm and
16 continues to accommodate live, work, I think that
17 the proposal that we put in front of you already does
18 that.

19 Uhm, you know as you know existing artists,
20 JLDQA's may remain. And I think there is the
21 definition of certified artists in existing JLDQA
22 programs that will continue to facilitate that into
23 the future. And other units including those in new
24 buildings and also converted from JLDQA to
25 residential units, those have expanded home

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2 occupation provisions that will continue to
3 accommodate live, work. Which we know that you know
4 goes beyond just artists as narrowly defined, right?
5 It is something that people in the neighborhood want
6 and I think that's what the new zoning also
7 accommodate. Not only in the form of JLVQA but also
8 in new residential units, even though they are called
9 residential use. But we introduced you know
10 regulations to accommodate you know a wider range of
11 a live, work arrangements. Make them more accessible
12 too.

13 And I think another you know side - consideration
14 that we've uhm, you know kind of taken into account
15 is you know our goals for SoHo/NoHo are centered
16 around kind of increasing access to a broad range of
17 people right? I think further limiting a certain
18 type of space to only artists. However that's just
19 defined, sort of runs contrary to that overall goal.
20 And I think our - we want to focus on more publicly
21 oriented arts and culture programming, which is what
22 Arts Fund would do.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. Uhm, a question for
24 HPD. Can you elaborate more on the outreach that HPD
25 is doing in terms of you know around the rezoning to

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2 let tenant know and landlord know what's coming up,
3 what programs are in place to protect tenants. What
4 programs are available to landlords. Can you
5 elaborate more on the outreach that HPD has been
6 doing?

7 AHMED TIGANI: Yes, absolutely. So, I'll start
8 off with the owner and outreach just to piggyback on
9 earlier comments. So, prior to you know in the
10 earlier conversations there were roundtables with
11 both residents and owners about what the rezoning
12 would look like and what HPD would have as far as
13 tools to be able to develop affordable housing and
14 since then, either owners have reached out to us or
15 we initiated proactive outreach to owners.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 AHMED TIGANI: Sit down with them and talk about
18 our various programs. Most recently, we did another
19 full round throughout the projected development
20 sites. Met with owners and their respective real
21 estate teams to lay out what our programs are. How
22 would it be useful for a proposed development based
23 on what the projected zoning could look like and then
24 start to discuss what the next steps, as you can
25 imagine that you know development projects take years

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2 and some of them are still in the early stages of
3 figuring out whether or not this is appropriate for
4 their site. So, we have made it our job to check in
5 with them and continue to engage to get them to a
6 place where they would want to work with us to do
7 more than MIH.

8 On the tenant side, you know the city has a
9 robust outreach and support program around protecting
10 tenants, letting them know their rights. Most
11 recently in this neighborhood, HPD partnered with the
12 city's tenant support unit to perform door knocking
13 at buildings with the highest concentration of rent
14 stabilized units and units with low-income seniors.

15 So, you know, in the first round, uh, well,
16 actually we did two rounds of knocking across 13
17 buildings in late October and we were able to
18 successfully contact some of the tenants. Some of
19 which took advantage of free legal services that the
20 city provides.

21 For those that we could not reach, we left flyers
22 and leave behinds that explained how they can gain
23 contact with us. And then you know, taking a step
24 back, the city has consistent advertising and
25 publication of both the tenant helpdesk, a helpline

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2 that's being run by the Mayor's Office to Protect
3 Tenants. Plus our right to counsel advertising that
4 we do almost in every neighborhood. This way, people
5 know that we're here to help them.

6 We would absolutely be open to talking about
7 doing more outreach. We'd have to bring in our other
8 partners to the table but we do think that this is a
9 critical part of how we help protect it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: What about the small
11 landlord? The tenement building landlords or a
12 landlord who owns loft units. Are there you know
13 discussion with HPD in terms of what program
14 resources available to them, to help them preserve
15 them preserve their buildings?

16 AHMED TIGANI: We definitely have had
17 conversations in this area. We, both from either you
18 know, from new development or preservation, we have
19 had some conversations but we could probably do more
20 I'm sure. I can't think of a specific example yet,
21 so let me come back to you. But it's something we
22 can certainly do. We can look at as a next step of
23 the Phase Two of outreach on the ownership side.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Hmm, thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Council Member Chin.

We will now turn it over to Council Member Rivera.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Hi, good morning

everyone. I know there are a lot of people hoping to speak today, so I will be as concise as possible with my questions. Thank you Mr. Chair for asking important questions around commercial FAR, affordable housing, property owner outreach and even outdoor dining and of course, Council Member Chin.

So, I guess I'll start with uh, we want this project to create affordable housing, so we all know lowering FAR's was essential but we also want to limit dorm uses and allow for any commercial building to go through adaptive reuse to residential regardless of size. How can we eliminate adaptive reuse thresholds in this plan?

SYLVIA LI: Thank you Council Member Rivera. I will try to address that. Uhm, so, and I think those are important issues that you raised, including you know kind of issues around dorm and a commercial FAR and you know, I think they really get at the core issue of what is the balance you know between the

1
2 variety of planning goals and our housing goal here,
3 right?

4 So, I think we are here in front of you and we
5 look forward to continue working with you on
6 addressing some of your concerns and I believe that
7 there are you know, there is leeway for Council to
8 make certain adjustments and we're here to work with
9 you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Okay, we'll certainly
11 follow up on that. What is the current cost to a
12 developer to pay into the affordable housing fund?
13 In a place like SoHo/NoHo, shouldn't the cost be
14 higher than in other rezoning areas because of higher
15 market prices?

16 SYLVIA LI: Uhm -

17 AHMED TIGANI: I can -

18 ANITA LAREMONT: I will -

19 AHMED TIGANI: Sorry, I can take that.

20 ANITA LAREMONT: Okay, good.

21 AHMED TIGANI: Sorry, I can take that question.
22 So, the - currently what we predict the affordable -
23 so the affordable housing fund is a number that is
24 created as a means to ensure that whatever is being
25 paid for would equate to creating affordable housing

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2 for that neighborhood. So, we think based on the
3 current fee structure, which is adjusted annually.
4 So, it's a \$1,070 per square foot until June 30,
5 2022.

6 The developer would need to pay about four to
7 eight million dollars in fees. Uhm, that money would
8 go along way toward HPD creating a 100 percent
9 affordable housing but you know due to that cost we
10 find that more often than not, actually 100 percent
11 of the MIH buildings have not used a fee and built
12 housing onsite.

13 But to your question specifically, we think a
14 developer would need to pay around \$4 million to \$8
15 million in fees.

16 ANITA LAREMONT: And Council Member, I would just
17 add that we, for legal reasons, don't have the
18 ability to target the amount that is required based
19 on the neighborhood in which the development would be
20 occurring. So, this is the citywide number It's a
21 very significant number though.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Understood. Uhm, well,
23 there are concerns that have been brought up
24 regarding tenant protections currently living in
25 affordable units in the proposed area. I know my

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2 colleagues have brought this up. So, what is the
3 city proposing to do actually to increase these
4 protections in addition to the current city and state
5 protection laws in order to avoid displacement?

6 AHMED TIGANI: And I can take that question. So,
7 I think what we've been certainly doing more of is
8 trying to flex on leverage and tenant support units.
9 We're trying to as the expansion of right to counsel
10 and other resources, including with the creation, the
11 Mayor's office to Protect Tenants new partnerships
12 and cross agency taskforces. And try to target those
13 neighborhoods that need greater protections

14 We've talked to the Mayor's Office to Protect
15 Tenants about things that we can do in SoHo/NoHo and
16 initiatives. We'd love to talk to you more about
17 that for sure. But we are definitely in a new place
18 with a centralized Mayor's Office to help us where we
19 are bringing DOB. We are working with our state
20 partners to do more. This latest round of outreach
21 to rent stabilized buildings I think is an example of
22 something that has been successful and we can
23 certainly talk about doing more. Especially with
24 regards to ensuring that we have the right language
25 access with us when we go out and knock on doors.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Of course, it's very
3 disappointing to not have anyone from LPC at this
4 hearing. Uhm, what is LPC's position on this or when
5 can we expect their input? I know I'm looking
6 forward to meeting with them.

7 ANITA LAREMONT: Thank you for that question
8 Council Member. You know LPC has been involved with

9 -

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 ANITA LAREMONT: Rezoning since its very start.
12 Uh, they were aware of and participated in planning
13 conversations ever since we were working on Envision
14 SoHo/NoHo. They reviewed and had input in the
15 historic resources chapter of the EIS that we did for
16 this rezoning and it's really important to note that
17 over 85 percent of the study area here is in landmark
18 districts and will remain within these districts,
19 meaning that all development, enlargement and
20 demolition will be subject to LPC review.

21 Uhm, you know many projects in this area have
22 come to the City Planning Commission and the City
23 Council for height and setback waivers because the
24 existing bulk regulations here don't allow the base
25 height and building form that LPC would approve for

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2 modifications to those buildings and the proposal
3 that we have in front of us, considers how LPC review
4 interacts with zoning and includes provisions to
5 facilitate the alignment that they think is important
6 to address this exact issue.

7 Historic preservation and equitable growth are
8 not mutually exclusive at all. As a city, we must
9 stand by the idea that the city will change and that
10 change can coexist with historic architecture like
11 many cities around the world and we will continue to
12 work with LPC throughout this process.

13 AHMED TIGANI: I'm sorry to interrupt. There's
14 one thing that I failed to mention when I spoke about
15 the tenant protections. You know, and it gives me an
16 opportunity to acknowledge the work with the Council
17 too. So, Certificate No Harassment had recently
18 passed to Council. The pilot has been extended and I
19 just want to be very clear that that pilot extends to
20 SoHo/NoHo. So, that is a huge way for us to have the
21 tool at fighting harassment in place where
22 developments proposed.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Well, thank you and I
24 just ask you all to be little like public about,
25 appropriately public about the campaign, so people

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2 know the work that you're doing. And Mr. Chair, if I
3 could just add that we have an opportunity to improve
4 the proposal and I urge the administration to
5 continue having the hard conversations with good
6 faith community representatives like the NoHo Bowery
7 Stakeholders, like Cooper Square Committee. They're
8 organizations that have come to the table with
9 constructive forward focused feedback that's going to
10 allow us to ensure this rezoning does what it's
11 intended to do.

12 And further, I've asked the administration to
13 proactively reach out to potential partners in the
14 creation of affordable housing and I know you
15 mentioned language access, but also make sure that
16 there is a cultural humility in their current and
17 ongoing tenant outreach and communication.

18 So, thank you for being here, for your testimony,
19 for answering my questions and I know we have a few
20 to follow up with. And thank you Mr. Chair for the
21 time.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Council Member
23 Rivera. Counsel, do we have any other Council
24 Members that have any questions for this panel?
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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, no, Mr. Chair, I see no
3 members with questions for the panel.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, seeing that there are no
5 further questions, this panel is now excused. Thank
6 you so much for your testimony today. Uhm, Counsel,
7 if you can, please call up the next panel.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, Chair the first panel
9 will include Christopher Marte, Deborah Glick,
10 Benjamin Wessler, and Manhattan Borough President
11 Gale Brewer.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, we're going to start
13 with Assembly Member Glick, the Borough President and
14 then with Mr. Marte.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Assemblywoman Glick?

17 DEBORAH GLICK: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Good to see you.

19 DEBORAH GLICK: It's lovely to see you.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I'm just going to make you
21 stop for a second if we can get the Sergeant at Arms
22 to reset the clock please.

23 DEBORAH GLICK: How much time don't I have?

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You have two minutes but we
25 can give you some time. Don't worry about it.

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2 DEBORAH GLICK: Alright, uhm, thanks very much
3 for giving me the opportunity to speak before you and
4 these communities SoHo/NoHo are communities I have
5 represented for 30 years. I have extended a – I have
6 an extensive written testimony but let me try to
7 summarize. This proposal is a knife at the heart of
8 these communities, so it's very hard to get
9 everything in in two minutes.

10 And the ostensible reasons for the dramatic
11 zoning change is to add more affordable housing, even
12 though the incentives for larger commercial
13 development are a key part of the rezoning. We've
14 heard how they are actually doubling. Right now,
15 it's limited to 10,000 square feet for retail. They
16 are more than doubling it. This is an invitation for
17 big box retail.

18 The MIH – I didn't say it but Samuel Stein wrote
19 in the Journal of Urban Affairs, that zoning changes
20 with MIH and ZQA have only further exacerbated
21 affordable housing issues by causing real estate
22 speculation in anticipation of the zoning change and
23 as you know, speculation has significant displacement
24 in much of the city.

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2 I am concerned that the repeated and completely
3 erroneous notion that these neighborhoods are filled
4 with only rich people belies the reality of the
5 working and middle class residents who have long
6 called these neighborhoods home. Yeah, there are
7 wealthy property owners but the majority of people
8 who actually live in the community are average New
9 Yorkers. As far as the Departments protestation that
10 rent regulations can protect artists, the big
11 loophole is the right for buildings to be demolished.
12 Even if they are rent regulated people living there.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Don't worry about it Assembly
15 Member.

16 DEBORAH GLICK: This proposal actually puts at
17 risk rent regulated tenants and the issue for artists
18 is that they cannot live in residential zones because
19 of the processes and materials that they use to
20 create their art is antithetical to the housing code
21 that exists for residential areas. They say they
22 haven't dropped the JLWQA but there was a little bit
23 of a hint in there that said Certified Artists. The
24 city has long ignored and rarely certifies artists.
25 This goes back to Ed Koch, so they stopped protecting

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2 the area for artists. They stopped certifying
3 artists to a large extent and the rules are clearly
4 to limit who can actually be certified.

5 So, with all due respect to Council Member Chin,
6 it's not clear who gets fined. Is it the landlord or
7 is it a tenant who doesn't have the actual
8 documentation that's undefined in her legislation.
9 So, it could put people actually at risk for
10 eviction.

11 Uhm, let me just jump quickly to the plan that
12 they have said for affordable housing. This plan
13 that they have said for affordable housing. This
14 plan is thousands, thousands of luxury apartments.
15 And they've said they've had conversations and
16 nobody's really interested and there's nothing in the
17 area that's city owned. But Two Howard Street is a
18 federally controlled parking lot and the city has
19 done nothing to further the conversations with the
20 feds where we could get 100 percent affordable
21 housing at that location. It is Community Board Two
22 that has entered into those discussion and tried to
23 push it forward and I appreciate Council Member
24 Rivera bringing up dormitories. There is no bar to
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2 dormitories in this and NYU has always looked to
3 expand.

4 So, let me just conclude by saying that the
5 height that would be allowed are far in excess and
6 LPC can do nothing about heights. The opportunity
7 programs zones on the corners of these areas border
8 areas that are already under real estate stress.
9 Chinatown, East Village, and this will only
10 exacerbate the pressure on those communities for
11 displacement. Now, if I thought that this would get
12 more diversity and more affordable housing, I could
13 be supportive if I was sure that JMWQA, and rent
14 regulated folks were protected but this is a plan for
15 thousands of luxury units, an audacious giveaway to
16 luxury development guaranteeing a less diverse and
17 more wealthy enclave while undermining an important
18 and existing arts community.

19 And it's completely contrary to their rhetoric.
20 The Arts Fund, they can't even tell you who would be
21 eligible for it. It's about getting rid of artists
22 but having some sort of dollar for arts programs that
23 nobody can in fact discuss with you. So, I urge you
24 a no vote on the plan as it's current constructed,
25 particularly in waning days of the most unpopular

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2 mayoralty that exists in my memory. So, uhm, I
3 appreciate the extra time. As I said, there's a very
4 extensive written document and I urge you or your
5 staff to take a look at it and I thank you for your
6 courtesy.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Always good to see
8 you Assembly Glick. Hope all is well. Thank you for
9 your testimony. I am now going to move to Senator
10 Hoylman.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 BRAD HOYLMAN: Thank you Mr. Chair. It's good to
13 see you and your colleagues and my colleagues here at
14 this important hearing. I'll be brief. I'm going to
15 submit testimony but I wanted to let you know Mr.
16 Chair that back in September, uh, I signed on to
17 testimony from Congressman Nadler where we stated
18 that we're hopeful that the Commission would go back
19 to complete the work of crafting a proposal that
20 could generate broad agreement.

21 Unfortunately, that just has not happened and the
22 concerns that I had back in September sadly remain
23 today. I'll just summarize them. Uhm, as we've
24 heard, uh from Assembly Member Glick, the plan has
25 almost no guarantee of affordable housing. Uhm, it

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2 allows for construction of mixed-use buildings that
3 would occupy the entire allowable FAR and so as long
4 as the residential portion occupies less than 25,000
5 square feet, it wouldn't require any affordable
6 housing. This loophole threatens to undermine much
7 of the proposals promised. And it's main central
8 selling point to the community, which is surely not a
9 guarantee of the construction of additional
10 affordable housing and instead, allows again as my
11 colleague have expressed, fully market rate buildings
12 if they had mixed uses.

13 Secondly, despite the use of MIH, the plan relies
14 heavily on the demolition and replacement of
15 buildings that currently house rent regulated
16 residents to generate additional housing. This puts
17 families dependent on the protections of joint led
18 work quarters for artists or loft law units at risk
19 of being evicted from buildings that are prime sites
20 for demolition and reconstruction. We have to think
21 of the folks who live there now. I'm concerned that
22 some of the current residents of JMWQA units may also
23 face harassment under this proposed plan.

24 There are some —

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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2 BRAD HOYLMAN: That may use loud or hazardous
3 materials that's going to subject them to harassment
4 from their homes as well as units around them.

5 Third, the broad up zoning of an established and
6 well-functioning historic district may be without
7 precedent in the city. The administration is
8 shifting responsibility for housing preservation to
9 historic preservation while actively encouraging
10 developers to harass and evict rent regulated
11 tenants. It appears the outgoing administration is
12 trying to box the LPC into a policy making role by
13 forcing the Commission to weigh in on issues such as
14 housing priorities. This is deeply concerning and
15 takes the LPC outside of its purview. The LPC has
16 continuously allowed the façade of a building to be
17 preserved while the entire structure behind it is
18 removed. If the LPC continues to allow this type of
19 facadism, this is all but certain to result in
20 evictions of long time residents in this area.

21 And fourth finally, I continue to be opposed to
22 the plans invitation to bring big box superstores to
23 SoHo and NoHo, by allowing large scale retail. Above
24 10,000 square feet, the city would be subjecting
25 neighbors to quality of life issues that are

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2 generated by such uses and that's ironic when we're
3 all trying to save small businesses at the same time.

4 A blanket rezoning of this kind isn't going to
5 work in these neighborhoods. I'd urge the city to
6 maintain the special permitting process for large
7 scale retailers until a new mechanism can be
8 identified.

9 In conclusion, the Department of City Planning
10 hasn't identified effective solutions to modifying
11 the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan. I'd encourage your
12 Subcommittee and colleagues in the Council to reject
13 the plan as it's currently proposed and attempt a
14 fresh start in the next city administration. Thank
15 you so much for your consideration of my colleagues.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Senator. Thank you
17 for your testimony. I'm now going to turn it over to
18 Christopher Marte.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 CHRISTOPHER MARTE: Thank you Chairman Moya for
21 the opportunity to testify. My name is Christopher
22 Marte and I am the Council Member elect for District
23 One. The SoHo/NoHo Chinatown up zoning is a flawed
24 rezoning application and members of this Committee
25 should vote no.

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2 We have to remember why SoHo/NoHo and Chinatown
3 were targeted for this rezoning in the first place.
4 Manufacturing no longer dictates the use of this area
5 and commercial and residential uses have been allowed
6 through arduous permits and special provisions to be
7 used. Today, SoHo and NoHo are fully mixed use and
8 deserve truly affordable housing but not at the
9 expense of overdevelopment and displacement. The
10 planning process for this rezoning started so then we
11 could make sure that this rezoning area reflected the
12 current use and local needs. Facilitating legal
13 residency, supporting small business, preserving the
14 historic districts and introducing contextual
15 affordability.

16 The plan before the Council today achieves none
17 of these goals. The Art Fund property owner fees
18 will dissolute residents from converting their JLQWA
19 apartments to Use Group Two. Out of context
20 commercial FAR and expanded retail floor will only
21 push out small businesses in favor of super big box
22 stores. Added density in the special district will
23 incentivize a wave of changes to the areas historic
24 architecture and the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing
25 with new loopholes, unique only to this rezoning will

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2 bring more luxury development for the possibility of
3 a fraction of affordable units.

4 Hence why housing groups and tenant groups like
5 Ten and Pack, MET Council and Housing, Cooper Square
6 Committee, the Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the
7 lower east side are strongly against this plan. As
8 the future Council Member of this district, I know
9 the zoning of SoHo and NoHo is out of date. The
10 residents and small business owners of SoHo and NoHo
11 know this too.

12 But this rezoning is not the answer. I urge
13 Council to say no and to give the communities of
14 SoHo/NoHo and Chinatown an opportunity to actually –

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 CHRISTOPHER MARTE: Address the zoning concerns
17 of this area. Say no to this giveaway to developers
18 and say no to this rezoning. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Chris for your
20 testimony today. Our next speaker.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, the next speaker will
22 be Benjamin Wessler.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 BENJAMIN WESSLER: Hello, good afternoon. My
25 name is Ben Wessler, I'm a Democratic District Leader

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2 for the 76th Assembly District in Manhattan and I'm
3 here to speak in support of the application.

4 In 2015, the Obama Administration released an
5 affordable housing toolkit which outlined policies
6 that local governments could adopt in order to reduce
7 rents and increase the production of new affordable
8 housing. The very top of that list of their
9 recommendations was reducing barriers to new
10 construction imposed by outdated and overly
11 prescriptive landuse regulation and it's specifically
12 cited allowing greater multi-family residential there
13 density as of right and imposing inclusionary
14 affordable housing requirements. These are precisely
15 the types of changes envisioned in the SoHo/NoHo
16 Neighborhood Plan.

17 Four years later, in the closing days of the 2020
18 presidential election, former president Donald Trump
19 ended his campaign by unilaterally eliminating the
20 affirmatively further and fair housing regulations
21 imposed by his predecessor and posted that residents
22 of the wealthiest communities in the country would
23 now vote for him, since he had "ended the long
24 running programming where low income housing would
25 invade their neighborhood. Naturally, it was a high

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2 priority for the incoming Biden Administration to
3 reverse this decision and to build back better acting
4 negotiated with Congress right now includes billions
5 of dollars for local governments to make these types
6 of zoning reforms in the their wealthiest and most
7 exclusive neighborhoods.

8 This is a local application but I'm talking about
9 national affairs, precisely to remind the Members of
10 the Committee how important it is to consider these
11 decisions in context. It is too easy to say that New
12 York is the heart of the National Progressive
13 Movement and then make up excuses why the very
14 policies that our representatives are advocating for
15 in Washington should not be imposed in our own
16 backyards.

17 Affordable housing cannot exist only in theory.
18 It needs to actually get build and in order for that
19 to happen, it needs to be viable. It needs to be
20 constructed at the scale and density needed to meet
21 the city's needs and it needs to have as few
22 unnecessary hurtles as possible.

23 I urge you to approve the application and thank
24 you for your time and consideration.

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2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
3 testimony today. Do you have any other speakers?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No Chair, that was the last
5 speaker on the panel and I see no members with
6 questions for the panel.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, uhm, there being no
8 questions for this panel, the panel is now excused.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will include
10 Anthony Wong, Carter Booth, Jeanine Kiely, and Anita
11 Brandt. First speaker on the panel will be Anthony
12 Wong followed by Carter Booth.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 ANTHONY WONG: Hello, greetings, afternoon
15 Committee Members. Anthony Wong, Member of Community
16 Board Two and Board Treasurer as well.

17 Uh, for the past 36 years, since the age of five,
18 I've lived on Summer Street, which is part of the
19 rezoning plan in Chinatown. However, if this plan
20 comes to pass in January, I'm going to have to tell
21 friends I live in SoHo East, as that's what the City
22 Planning has labeled the area in terms of their
23 zoning plan.

24 In terms of the envisioning process during that
25 time, uh, did make it known to the organizers that

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2 the group didn't reach out to the Chinatown
3 community. They did hold one workshop which was held
4 and the only person who attended was my mom. Only
5 because I encouraged her to go because I was out of
6 town and City Planning didn't hold another one.

7 So, outreach was terrible in terms of what the
8 HPD individual said in terms of outreach. They did
9 go to different buildings including my apartment back
10 in October. They were passing out information in
11 regards to tenant harassment and rights etc., but the
12 material was only available in English. And the
13 person who came was a White person who only spoke
14 English. And in my particular building there were
15 several individuals who live here or Chinese and
16 don't speak English, so that needs to be remedied.

17 In terms of the rezoning area, FAR is still too
18 high for commercial. That's been mentioned. If any
19 residential housing doesn't come to pass, the
20 beneficiaries of the increased FAR are going to be
21 two major property owners, Edison Properties and also
22 another individual who owns several buildings on
23 Canal Street as well as Center Street that are
24 contiguous with each other.

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2 So, if no housing comes about, they'll be the
3 beneficiaries, commercial luxury etc. Affordable
4 housing needs to be mandatory for sure and more
5 outreach needs to be done.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
8 testimony today. Next speaker.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Carter Booth to be followed
10 by Jeanine Kiely.

11 CARTER BOOTH: Good afternoon. Carter Booth, I'm
12 the Immediate Past Chair of CB2 and Member of the
13 Envision SoHo/NoHo Advisory Group. LPC and DOB have
14 not spoken at public meetings to address the issues
15 repeatedly raised today.

16 I want to address problem in four intertwined
17 areas. First, everyone promised a clear pathway to
18 legalization for residents who don't have a certified
19 artist in their household in JLWQA units. It was
20 promised during envision process, during the planned
21 developed process and during the ULURP process. PCP
22 delivered this plan to you without delivering a clear
23 path.

24 We are hearing today for the first time publicly
25 that there's new legislation before you to penalize

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2 those nonconforming residents. Yet there is no clear
3 complete pathway and mechanism for them to comply.

4 Second, is the conversion of JLWQA manufacturing
5 units to residential units, which is also important
6 for those who want to pass on their apartments to
7 family, who are not certified or want to sell their
8 units to a broader market of allowable occupants.

9 No one including DCP or DOB has created any basic
10 case studies of representative building to review the
11 feasibility of the conversion from manufacturing
12 JLWQA to residential. It has become clear that the
13 conversion is not reasonably practical in many
14 buildings and is simply not possible in other because
15 the differences in code requirements for residential
16 buildings. Also, this conversion is not a voluntary
17 process as presented. Most of the unit are in Co-ops
18 and as you all know; shareholders cannot
19 independently make decisions regarding converting
20 individual units and boards or landlords could also
21 force units to convert involuntarily.

22 Third, is that if there are limited to no
23 conversion from JLWQA to residential, there is no
24 funding for the Arts Fund. The projected conversions
25 from DCP are not be believed.

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2 Finally, without the Arts Fund, little in this
3 rezoning celebrates, sustains or expands the artistic
4 nature of these world renowned arts neighborhood at a
5 commiserate level. Arts and culture are a critical
6 pillar to this plan and a critical element for our
7 city -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 CARTER BOOTH: Without solution to these
10 intertwined problems and others highlighted today,
11 this deserves reconsideration of the implementation
12 of this entire plan. It is fundamentally flawed.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
15 testimony today. Next speaker please.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jeanine Kiely to be followed
17 by Anita Brandt.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 JEANINE KIELY: Good afternoon, I'm Jeanine
20 Kiely, the Chair of Manhattan Community Board Two.
21 Our Board voted 36 to One to reject the Mayor's plan
22 to rezone SoHo/NoHo in Chinatown and we cited six
23 major flaws. Four of which City Planning
24 Commissioner Ann Levin highlighted as her major
25 concerns.

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2 One, the plan fails to achieve affordable housing
3 objectives. As Levin said, there's too much up
4 zoning in opportunity areas with too little
5 affordable housing that may encourage commercial
6 development. It promotes demolition that will drive
7 displacement and ignores 100 percent affordable
8 housing you heard of at Two Howard.

9 Two, it fails to maintain mixed use neighborhoods
10 that are nearly half residential. We want to keep
11 the special permit for retail for 10,000 square foot
12 and above and eating and drinking establishment above
13 5,000 square feet. This exists in nearby Tribeca and
14 Hudson Square. This is a zoning led bailout for over
15 leveraged retail and it hurts smaller businesses.

16 Three, it fails to amend the JLVQA zoning.
17 Commissioner Levin stated that the conversion key is
18 too high and the Arts Fund mechanism needs serious
19 work. We also agree with Commissioner Levin that the
20 rezoning undermines the integrity of historic
21 districts. Two other areas it fails to mitigate any
22 of the adverse impacts identified in the EIS and it
23 pushes a deceiving, an intentionally deceptive
24 narrative. The city projects in ten years, 26 sites
25 will produce 20 at 25 percent, 465 affordable units,

1 zero guarantee. Any other number you hear is
2 misleading. Please don't be deceived.
3

4 And finally as my colleague pointed out, the city
5 failed to reach out to Chinatown where 43 percent of
6 the projected housing would be built. Please vote no
7 because you would not let this happen in your
8 district. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
10 testimony. Next speaker.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Anita Brandt.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You're muted.

14 ANITA BRANDT: Can you hear me?

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you now.

16 ANITA BRANDT: Am I on? Alright, thank you
17 everybody. Good afternoon, my name is Anita Brandt,
18 lifetime resident and business owner in NoHo. I'm
19 also Chair of the Community Board's SoHo/NoHo Working
20 Group.

21 Why is it that we voted no on the Mayor's plan?
22 This plan is based on incorrect assumptions and data
23 and therefore it's not fixable. It incorporates
24 massive FAR increases and requires the adoption of
25 incompatible residential rules and regulations that

1
2 will directly result in destruction, demolition and
3 displacement.

4 And while the plan does not guarantee any
5 affordable housing or adequately address other stated
6 goals, it does guarantee huge financial gains to a
7 few well positioned property owners. The plan will
8 shatter the defining historic and cultural cores of
9 our unique NoHo/SoHo District and will never be
10 replaced. It will weaken landmark laws and new
11 construction will dominate with big bland familiar
12 corporate towers.

13 The promise of affordable housing attempts to
14 disguise that this rezoning will in reality reduce
15 the available affordable units. In fact, the plan
16 renamed parts of Chinatown East SoHo. Officially
17 identified as an opportunity area and targeted for
18 building demolition. That's the one tried and true
19 action that allows the removal of long-term
20 subsidized tenants.

21 As for new housing, what the plan promises in
22 public is taken back in loopholes buried in the small
23 print. Please join us CB2 in rejecting this
24 rezoning. We should start fresh, armed with the high
25 quality data and information -

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

ANITA BRANDT: We have gathered and we can do better. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. Next speaker.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last speaker on the panel and I see no members with questions for this panel.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, thank you. Seeing that there's no questions for this panel, the panel is now excused. If you can please call up the next panel.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next panel will include Ben Prosky, Moses Gates, Brendan Cheney, and Cordelia Persen. The first speaker will be Ben Prosky to be followed by Moses Gates.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

BEN PROSKY: Thank you. Uhm and thank you to the City Council for holding this important hearing today. I'm Benjamin Prosky, Executive Director of the American Institute of Architects New York, also known as AI in New York.

We represent New York City's public and private sector architects who are passionate about designing a more equitable city. We are testifying in support

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2 of the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood plan. The proposed
3 rezoning of these neighborhoods represents a major
4 step towards making our city's housing policies more
5 equitable. While there has been a significant amount
6 of new residential construction in the city over the
7 last few years, these projects have primarily been
8 built in marginalized communities in the outer
9 boroughs.

10 We must find ways to increase affordable housing
11 in more centrally located and wealthier historic
12 neighborhoods. Without new housing, rents and home
13 prices will continue to rise, making the city
14 unaffordable for most New Yorkers. Adding thousands
15 of units of housing including a significant amount of
16 affordable housing, would make one of our city's most
17 expensive areas more affordable.

18 As such, we strongly encourage the city to add
19 even more housing, particularly affordable housing to
20 this proposal. The best way to do this is to lower
21 the commercial floor area ratio. Thereby
22 incentivizing that housing is prioritized over
23 offices. While we strongly believed in mixed use
24 neighborhoods, with both housing and offices SoHo and
25 NoHo are already good examples of mixed use

1
2 neighborhoods. What they need now is more affordable
3 housing.

4 We are also confident that the areas
5 architectural landmarks will be protected by the
6 Landmarks Preservation Commission and other agencies.
7 If anything, by allowing more New Yorkers to live in
8 these architecturally rich neighborhoods, the
9 rezoning should make SoHo and NoHo more
10 architecturally accessible.

11 It is an architects duty to ensure that
12 neighborhoods are open and accessible to all.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 BEN PROSKY: Not only for those with means. I
15 strongly encourage the Council to vote yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
17 testimony. Next speaker please.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll hear from Brendan
19 Cheney next and then Cordelia Persen.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 BRENDAN CHENEY: Good afternoon, my name is
22 Brendan Cheney, I'm the Director of Policy and
23 Communications at the New York Housing Conference.
24 We strongly support the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan,
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2 which among other things would bring desperately
3 needed affordable housing to the neighborhood.

4 The city is facing an affordable housing
5 homelessness crisis. In New York City, more than
6 77,900 people experienced homelessness on one night
7 last year. Nearly one million households are rent
8 burdened and by one measure, New York is the fourth
9 most segregated city in the country. This is an
10 unsustainable situation and every neighborhood must
11 participate in the solution.

12 Asking every neighborhood to be a partner in
13 creating affordable housing and up zoning in high
14 income neighbors is wide appeal. Both were
15 recommendations of the United for Housing Coalition,
16 a coalition led by the New York housing conference
17 and joined by 90 partner organization in New York
18 City.

19 The SoHo/NoHo neighborhood currently does not
20 have any income restricted affordable housing and the
21 rezoning would bring a projected 3,200 units of new
22 desperately needed affordable housing to the
23 neighborhood through the Mandatory Inclusionary
24 Housing program.

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2 Bringing affordable housing to SoHo/NoHo would
3 also bring diversity to a neighborhood that is
4 predominantly White and wealthy. Working to reverse
5 and repair our history of racial discrimination.

6 SoHo/NoHo has a median income of \$144,000 and 77
7 percent of residents are White and only two percent
8 are Black and six percent are Hispanic Latinx.

9 While the affordable housing will provide
10 tangible benefit for the people that get the housing,
11 it will also create economic benefits to the
12 community. Research has found that 100 units of
13 affordable housing construction creates 230 jobs and
14 \$46 million in economic activity. And the city,
15 state and national economy need additional stimulus
16 to recover from the recession.

17 There is one change we'd like to see in the
18 rezoning. We recommend lower the proposed allowed
19 commercial FAR to 2.0. We believe that the current
20 high allowable commercial FAR's will result in office
21 buildings instead of mixed income residential.
22 Changing this will still allow ground floor retail,
23 second floor office space and mixed use buildings.

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2 As the city's economy struggles to recover, we
3 fight our housing and homelessness crisis.

4 Opportunities like SoHo/NoHo can create -

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 BRENDAN CHENEY: Affordable housing, increase
7 neighborhood diversity, unlock new tax revenue,
8 refill a construction pipeline and help local
9 businesses. New York Housing Conference supports
10 this rezoning.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you Brendan.
12 Thank you for your testimony today. Next speaker
13 please.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be Moses
15 Gates to be followed by Cordelia Persen. Moses Gates
16 first, then Cordelia Persen.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 MOSES GATES: Hi, thanks so much for allowing me
19 to testify. My name is Moses Gates, Vice President
20 of Housing and Neighborhood Planning at Regional Plan
21 Association. We wholeheartedly support this rezoning
22 as a much needed addition to affordable housing in
23 the neighborhood with wonderful transit, excellent
24 access to jobs, and not enough income diversity and
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2 not enough diversity overall, which this plan will
3 help accomplish and move forward with.

4 Like many other folks supporting this plan, we
5 would like to see it a little bit more intentionally
6 focused on promoting mixed income housing through
7 MIH. Specifically, by lowering the commercial FAR's
8 to the lowest possible permitted, while still being
9 in scope and able to pass this Council. I would like
10 to make just kind of one point, which is that if this
11 rezoning is rejected, the neighborhood will still
12 change. And our choice here today is, what direction
13 will the neighborhood change in? And since 1971,
14 there has not been another rezoning and the
15 development that most encompasses this static
16 paradigm is just outside the rezoning area, and I'll
17 note that Regional Plan Association testified it
18 should be within the scope. But it's on Sullivan
19 Street, between Sullivan Street and south of Spring
20 Street with the back burning 6th Avenue where four
21 4,600 square foot single family homes were developed
22 only a few short years ago. Currently valued at \$12
23 million each in a neighborhood where the walk score
24 is 99 out of 100 and the transit score is 100 out of
25 100.

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2 And that is really the choice that's facing us
3 today. Will we move forward with SoHo as a more and
4 more exclusive area [LOST AUDIO 3:17:02]. Thank you
5 so much.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. We lost you at the last
7 minute but thank you Moses for your testimony. Next
8 speaker please.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next and last speaker on this
10 panel will be Cordelia Persen.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 CORDELIA PERSEN: Hello, I am Cordelia Persen,
13 the Executive Director of the NoHo Bid. As a member
14 of the Envision SoHo/NoHo Advisory Group, I have been
15 deeply engaged in this process from the beginning.
16 Everyone knows there are some real problems with the
17 current zoning that need to be addressed. The
18 current mishmash of zoning rules that have been
19 patched together since our last rezoning continue to
20 lead to the kind of problems the opposition to this
21 plan have been complaining about.

22 What the area needs is a coherent plan to follow
23 to go forward. We need zoning that actually matches
24 the current usage versus continuing with a long
25

1
2 cumbersome expensive variance process that only works
3 for certain well financed tenants and developers.

4 From the beginning the NoHo Business Improvement
5 District's goals for the rezoning center around
6 retail use in our buildings. We are happy to see
7 that the plan makes retail as of right and ends the
8 arbitrary 10,000 square foot limit to the size of
9 retail that makes no sense due to the size of our
10 building floorplates.

11 We have said since the beginning that retail is
12 in a major flux and the property owners and retail
13 uses need the flexibility to use their spaces as the
14 time and trends lead them. And COVID has only made
15 this more true.

16 The NoHo Bid feels very strongly that we want to
17 preserve the historic character of the district
18 though and we are concerned about the level of up
19 zoning currently proposed. Others have come up with
20 alternative scenarios that we believe will allow more
21 growth, encourage more housing, but that will also
22 set height limits that will not be detrimental to the
23 character of the district. We hope the Department of
24 City Planning will look closely at these plans and
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2 alter their current proposal and we can get this done
3 and move the district into the future. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
5 testimony. Next speaker.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, I believe that was the
7 last speaker on this panel. I'm Angelina Martinez-
8 Rubio taking over as Subcommittee Counsel. So, I
9 don't see any Council Members with questions, so
10 we'll call on the next panel. And that will be
11 Andrew Berman, Kate McClintock, Sam Moskowitz, Andrea
12 Goldwyn. And so, the first speaker is Andrew Berman
13 followed Kate McClintock.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time start now.

15 ANDREW BERMAN: I'm Andre Berman representing
16 Village Preservation and we've submitted written
17 testimony. But I'm here today to strongly urge you
18 to reject the Mayor's SoHo/NoHo Chinatown rezoning
19 plan. It's full of lies, distortions and boldface
20 giveaways to the Mayor's developer donor friends
21 who've lobbied for it. Masquerading as a social
22 justice and affordable housing plan.

23 That's why housing intended groups like the MET
24 Council and Housing and Tenants Packs strongly oppose
25 it. It's why thousands of New Yorkers through our

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2 website alone have written City Council Members
3 urging them to reject it. How exactly can one
4 justify supporting a plan that would allow
5 construction of over ten million square feet of space
6 in this small area but only accounts for about one-
7 third of it being built? How can you justify a plan
8 which allows giant big box chain stores of unlimited
9 size, NYU dorms, huge office towers and hotels, and
10 even 100 percent luxury condos and rentals with no
11 affordable housing, as long as they don't exceed
12 25,000 square feet per zoning lot? How can you
13 justify a plan which would likely create little or no
14 affordable housing due to multiple loopholes but
15 would potentially displace hundreds of lower income
16 tenants disproportionately seniors, artists and Asian
17 Americans and permanently destroy their rent
18 regulated housing?

19 A plan that would allow development up to two and
20 a half times the size currently allowed here and the
21 maximum legally allowable size of New York State for
22 residential development. For the sake of these
23 neighborhoods and all of New York City, please reject
24 this plan. And I want to also quickly say, the HPD
25 representative mentioned how there's a \$1,000 per

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2 square foot cost if you don't include affordable
3 housing, as was also mentioned by another speaker.
4 New market rate housing in this neighborhood commands
5 well over 2,000 square feet. So, it's very clear
6 that developers are going to choose the fund option.

7 And I also just want to mention that the
8 development that Moses Gates referred to on Sullivan
9 Street, that's actually not allowed by the existing
10 zoning. That was approved by a zoning variance that
11 the city approved. And it really speaks to -

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.,

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you so much
14 for your testimony today. Thank you.

15 ANDREW BERMAN: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Next speaker.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker is Kate
18 McClintock to be followed by Sam Moskowitz.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 KATE MCCLINTOCK: Can you hear me?

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you Kate.
22 Whenever you're ready.

23 KATE MCCLINTOCK: Okay, thank you. I am Kate
24 McClintock speaking on behalf of Village
25 Preservation.

1
2 One of the many lies upon which this rezoning
3 proposal is based, is that it's either this plan or
4 maintain the status quo. And opponents are unwilling
5 to consider any changes to the current zoning
6 whatsoever. This rezoning plan with its incentives
7 for demolishing rent regulated housing, adding huge,
8 big box chain stores, and oversized developments with
9 no affordable housing is actually worse than the
10 status quo.

11 But there's a community alternative plan endorsed
12 by more than a dozen local groups that calls for real
13 change, including deeper and more broadly affordable
14 housing, residential development with real affordable
15 housing requirements, without the massive loopholes,
16 allowing for a wider range of retail uses without the
17 giant, big box chain stores and eating and drinking
18 establishments. A path to legalization for non-
19 artist residents without ending during the status and
20 protections for artist residents. More compatible as
21 of right uses like museums and nonprofit social
22 services, without allowances for NYU and private
23 university expansion.

24 But we all oppose the destructive unnecessary
25 massive up-zoning the city wants, which is just a

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2 giveaway to the Mayor's developer and donor friends
3 and the oversize chained stores and NYU expansion the
4 city's plan entails.

5 Please join this community in implementing a real
6 rezoning plan based on equity, fairness, and
7 preserving the best of what we have and building upon
8 that, rather than destroying it and reject this plan.
9 Thank you so much.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
11 Next speaker.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker is Sam Moskowitz
13 to be followed by Andrea Goldwyn.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 SAM MOSKOWITZ: Thank you. My name is Sam
16 Moskowitz and I'm speaking on behalf of Village
17 Preservation. One of the many lies of this plan is
18 that it will make these neighborhoods more diverse
19 and affordable. It will actually make them wealthier
20 and more expensive and we have submitted solid
21 documentation proving this.

22 Even if one ignores that the plan will result in
23 the destruction of a considerable amount of
24 affordable housing with lower income residents, and
25 that it will actually create little of the promised

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2 affordable housing. New developments under the plan
3 which are 70 to 75 percent luxury and 25 to 30
4 percent affordable will still be populated by
5 wealthier people than the current neighborhood and
6 cost more to live in.

7 As per documentation we've provided, new market
8 rate construction in this neighborhood commands
9 significantly higher prices than neighborhood housing
10 overall. The 70 to 75 percent of residents in market
11 rate units in new developments can be expected to pay
12 at least an average of \$17,000 a month rent or \$6.35
13 million per unit.

14 This would make them considerably richer than the
15 top 70 to 75 percent of income earners currently in
16 the neighborhood and paying higher housing costs.
17 But even the 25 to 30 percent in this so-called
18 affordable units will be wealthier and paying higher
19 rents than the last wealthy 25 to 30 percent of
20 current residents. The incomes required for those
21 units are considerably higher than the average income
22 of the 25 to 30 percent leased well off current
23 residents of the rezoning area. A vote for this plan
24 is a vote for a richer and more expensive
25 neighborhood. We urge you to vote no. Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker and the last one
3 on this panel is Andrea Goldwyn.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 ANDREA GOLDWYN: Good day Chair Moya and Council
6 Members. I am Andrea Goldwyn speaking for the New
7 York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy was a
8 member of the SoHo/NoHo Advisory Group. We agreed
9 with the goal the conveners presented nearly three
10 years and so many meetings ago. Updating antiquated
11 zoning to reflect current residential and commercial
12 uses.
13

14 We also support the goal of affordable housing.
15 But like many members of the Advisory Group, we
16 cannot support this proposal. A core principal for
17 the group was that SoHo and NoHo's historic character
18 is integral and should be protected. The proposal
19 allowed nearly doubling the size of buildings in the
20 historic district. It's an invitation for out of
21 scale commercial development unlikely to create
22 affordable housing within the historic district
23 boundaries. The proposal ignores the unique asset of
24 the historic district. This neighborhood doesn't
25 have parks, open space, or reasonably priced grocery

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2 stores. It does have historic building, which form
3 streetscapes that attract residents, workers,
4 artists, tourists, and economic development. The
5 rezoning threatens those streetscapes and the areas
6 economic viability. It labels rare buildings dating
7 back to the 1820's as prime development sites.

8 No one is against more housing but there needs to
9 be a balance that also protects these resources. DCP
10 says that LPC review will be the safeguard but when
11 DCP brought in city agencies to discuss their role in
12 the rezoning, LPC was nowhere to be found. There are
13 still significant questions about how much affordable
14 housing will be created, affordability levels and
15 whether loopholes will allow offsite units or none at
16 all. The proposal doesn't address quality of life
17 concerns the public and advisory group brought up
18 over and over again.

19 Council Members, this is your chance to improve
20 the plan. Steve Herrick and Zella Jones, members of
21 the Advisory group have submitted thoughtful and
22 detailed alternative proposals that allow respectful
23 development while protecting historic character.
24 Please listen to the Advisory Group and consider the
25 alternatives. Working together, we can find a better

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2 plan that protects SoHo and NoHo and lets them
3 thrive. Thank you for the opportunity to present the
4 conservancies views.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
6 testimony today.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, I see no Council
8 Members with questions, so, I'm going to call on the
9 next panel which will be William Thomas, Ankur Dalal,
10 Doug Hanau, and Edward Siegal. And so the first
11 speaker is William Thomas to be followed by Ankur
12 Dalal.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 WILLIAM THOMAS: Hello everyone, my name is Will
15 Thomas, I'm here to support the rezoning as the
16 Executive Director of Open New York. An independent
17 grassroots pro-housing organization that aims to
18 create a New York where everyone who wants to live
19 here can afford to do so.

20 I'd like to center my testimony on a few facts.
21 Right now, New Yorkers are facing rent increase of up
22 to 50, 60, 70 percent. As rent discounts offered
23 during the pandemic expire. Homelessness is at the
24 highest rate since the great depression. There are
25 over 14,000 children who sleep in city shelters each

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2 and every night. The hundreds of affordable homes
3 this rezoning would provide are desperately needed.

4 In addition, residential construction in SoHo and
5 NoHo, has been legal as of right since the 1960's.
6 Which in turn has shunted demand for housing into
7 surrounding neighborhoods, raising rents and causing
8 displacement. More market rate housing in SoHo and
9 NoHo to the wealthiest neighborhoods in the country
10 would help put this process into reverse.

11 This rezoning is a critical step for achieving a
12 fairer, more just, more affordable city that works
13 for all New Yorkers. This rezoning will help to
14 alleviate New York's dire housing shortage. It will
15 create the conditions necessary to lower rents. To
16 reduce pressure on gentrifying neighborhoods. To
17 create more vibrant walkable neighborhoods and allow
18 the city to focus our housing budget and subsidies on
19 areas most needed investment.

20 The plan is not perfect. We believe that the
21 office densities are far too high. There is a high
22 risk that commercial development will crowd out
23 residential as it wouldn't need to provide any
24 community benefits. Office density should be kept at
25 five FAR. In addition, the city should mandate the

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2 deepest affordability option of MIH and expand its
3 community preference policy beyond Community Board
4 Two to ensure the rezoning is a force for
5 integration.

6 At Open New York, we've advocated for pro-housing
7 rezoning here for almost two years and while some may
8 disagree is undeniable that SoHo is a fantastically
9 wealthy neighborhood. The many such neighborhoods
10 have not built enough housing and also, that more
11 mixed income housing would hardly be the end of the
12 world.

13 I hope the Council can see the clear benefits of
14 this plan for the neighborhood and for all New
15 Yorkers see past the ample misinformation around it
16 and improve it with needed amendments. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
18 testimony today. Next speaker.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker on this
20 panel is Ankur Dalal to be followed by Douglas Hanau.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 ANKUR DALAL: Hello, my name is Ankur Dalal and
23 I'm here to testify in favor of the proposed
24 rezoning. I support the rezoning because it has the
25 potential to create thousands of new homes, including

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2 hundreds of permanently affordable homes in wealthy
3 high opportunity neighborhoods. We are now at the
4 end of a process that began over four years ago.
5 While this started as an effort to end special
6 permitting requirements for retail spaces over the
7 years, a broad coalition of New Yorkers dedicated to
8 promoting greater equity in our city have transformed
9 the rezoning proposal into one that would provide
10 desperately needed housing for thousands of families.

11 This is not without controversy. Many long time
12 incumbents are bitterly opposed to any change to
13 these neighborhoods. But you are the City Council
14 and your role is to address the needs of all New
15 Yorkers over the privileges of the very few.

16 Allowing the rezoning would be consistent with the
17 history of this city. Over 100 years ago, New
18 Yorkers wealthiest families, the Vanderbilt's and
19 Astor's attempted to use their money and their
20 influence to prevent apartment buildings and offices
21 from encroaching on what they considered their
22 stretch of 5th Avenue.

23 But back then, we knew this wasn't a city that
24 could be owned by a few and we didn't their mansions
25 or their millions block change. Today, those parts

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2 of the city are home to tens of thousands in jobs and
3 100 more homes than previously existed. As our city
4 did then, I urge you today to not allow a wealthy few
5 to block needed change.

6 Allowing the rezoning would also be consistent
7 with the values of this city. New York is and has
8 always been a city of immigrants. My family is an
9 immigrant family and we started our lives in America
10 in New York City. When they first moved here, we had
11 enough housing that even nearly penniless immigrants
12 could find homes here.

13 When I testified to Manhattan CB2 in support of
14 this rezoning, I told my families story and I said
15 that we are a city with a statue in its harbor that
16 tells the world that everyone is welcome to live
17 here. And for that, for mentioning the Statue of
18 Liberty, I was booed, heckled and screamed at by the
19 local audience. As the City Council, I urge you to
20 think about which side of this debate is on the side
21 of our city's values, traditions and history and to
22 vote with them. Please support this rezoning and
23 communicate to the world that New York is open to
24 everyone.

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2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
3 testimony. Next speaker.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be Douglas
5 Hanau to be followed by Edward Siegel.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 DOUGLAS HANAU: Hello, my name Douglas Hanau, I'm
8 a longtime New Yorker. I've lived here my whole
9 life. Raising two teenage daughters. This rezoning
10 is about the future of New York not the past.

11 Without rezoning like SoHo/NoHo and other rezoning's,
12 the future will mean young people like my children,
13 my teenagers, college age daughters will have no
14 place to live in New York City.

15 The people who own expensive homes like I do,
16 will continue to see those houses uhm, get wealthier
17 and wealthier and worth more while the young people,
18 like my kids, will have no place to go. We have to
19 pass this rezoning and all kinds of rezoning's. The
20 city is stagnant right now. We're not building
21 enough housing. We're not building enough affordable
22 housing and to oppose this means you're voting for
23 New York to remain in amber. We won't be able to
24 address climate change. We won't be able to address
25 inequality. We won't be able to address any of those

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2 progressive issues that young people who are not
3 represented at this meeting, fight for every day.
4 They march in Washington. So, this is a fight that
5 is pitting young people against old people but the
6 young people don't have a voice.

7 So, please, support this, allow New York to be a
8 vibrant place, dynamic place, where young people can
9 live together with older people. Where wealthy
10 people can live with people who are starting out
11 there lives and trying to get better and trying to
12 make it. So, please, I implore you to support this
13 rezoning. Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
15 Next speaker.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on this
17 panel is Edward Siegel.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Do we have -

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do we have Ed Siegel?

21 EDWARD SIEGEL: Hi, yes, I'm sorry. I'm here.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay Ed.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Go ahead.

24 EDWARD SIEGEL: Uhm, so my name is Eddie, I live
25 about two blocks away from the rezoning boundary and

1
2 I urge you all to vote in strong support for this
3 projects. We are in the middle of a housing crisis,
4 I think a lot of the speakers already have discussed
5 a lot of the same points that I you know, this is
6 going to be a long meeting. I don't need to remind
7 you too deeply of but this will create hundreds of
8 units of affordable housing. We need more market
9 rate housing and dense urban cities with lots of
10 people are [INAUDIBLE 3:36:06] for the environment.

11 I would love to welcome all these new neighbors
12 into my neighborhood and I think this project is one
13 step of many that our city's going to need to do to
14 make sure that we reduce as many rent burdened
15 households as possible in our city.

16 Thank you all for your time and I hope you
17 support this rezoning. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Next speaker.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, I don't see any
20 Council Members with questions, so I am going to call
21 on the next panel. And the next panel will be Zella
22 Jones, Mark Dicus, Sean Sweeney, and Pete Davies.
23 So, the first speaker on this panel will be Zella
24 Jones to be followed by Mark Dicus.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

1
2 ZELLA JONES: Thank you Chair Moya and members of
3 the Subcommittee and Margaret Chin and Carolina
4 Rivera. This has been a most helpful session. NoHo
5 Bowery Stakeholders is a ten year old nonprofit
6 community benefit organization. We appreciate
7 Council Member Rivera's confidence in our
8 contributions to this process. Our members are
9 residents, businesses, nonprofit institutions, owners
10 and lessors and represent over one million square
11 feet of NoHo's built environment. We believe there
12 needs to be new zoning and that new zoning should
13 create opportunities for affordable residency. There
14 are however several modifications that must be
15 included.

16 The zoning envelopes do need to be reduced on
17 specifically in the historic districts. Other
18 colleagues have brought this up. We need better
19 protections for historic buildings. We're advocating
20 for addition restrictions on additions to buildings
21 in the historic district. We are interested in
22 increasing the contribution of new development to art
23 based initiatives. We're advocating that any new
24 development be included in an affordable calculation
25 and funds be distributed to art supporting endeavors.

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2 Transition of non-artists of JLWQA units, the
3 provision of this proposed rezoning need much more
4 thorough consideration. They are not clear; in some
5 cases they are contradictory and they are not
6 mandator. Further the cost of transitioning between
7 the Art Fund and the intendency of all improvements
8 will make it - will be a major deterrent in achieving
9 its intent overall.

10 We are advocating for performance standards on
11 Use Group 10. We feel that mixed use districts - in
12 mixed use districts ramification of commercial size
13 are acute. Either by comminutor review of retail
14 size over 25,000 square feet or by defining
15 acceptable performance standards -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 ZELLA JONES: Which have met with not -

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Well, you can wrap it up.
19 I'll give you a couple of seconds.

20 ZELLA JONES: Okay. Some combination of the two.
21 And finally, we are advocating for tenant
22 protections. We thoroughly endorse the tenant
23 protections recommended by the Cooper Square
24 Committee. Thank you so much for your time.
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
3 testimony today. Next speaker.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uhm, the next speaker after
5 Zella is going to be Mark Dicus to be followed by
6 Sean Sweeney.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 MARK DICUS: Hi, good afternoon Chairperson Moya
9 and members of the Committee. My name is Mark Dicus
10 and I'm the Executive Director of the SoHo Broadway
11 Initiative. The non-for-profit that manages the
12 neighborhood focus business improvement district on
13 Broadway from Allison to Canal.

14 The initiative is advocated for long standing,
15 long needed zoning changes to facilitate the long
16 term health and success of our community. Indeed our
17 board has adopted a set of planning goals that has
18 guided all over advocacy in this regard. However, as
19 we near the conclusion of this ULURP process, our
20 board is divided on this zoning proposal before you
21 today. The vast majority of our residential board
22 members opposed the proposal while our commercial
23 members generally support it. Despite these
24 divergent positions, there is general agreement on
25 the following recommendations.

1
2 First, the initiative strongly supports allowing
3 the conversion of JLVQA units to residential, without
4 requiring a certified artist to occupy the unit. We
5 firmly believe the conversion process should be
6 efficient and inexpensive with flexibility around co-
7 compliance.

8 Next, the initiative believes that the proposed
9 Arts Fund is an insufficient and unsustainable
10 approach for celebrating SoHo's remarkable legacy of
11 arts and culture. The provisions for creating an
12 Arts Fund should be removed from the proposal with a
13 separate process for arts and culture planning
14 undertaken when there is community and political
15 support for doing so.

16 Third, the initiatives committed to working with
17 the city to address quality of life issues and our
18 unique mixed use district. We call on the city to
19 make enforceable commitments to address garbage,
20 retail, lighting and signage, sidewalk and vehicular
21 congestion, commercial deliveries and public space.
22 We have more details which we'll share in our written
23 testimony.

24 Finally, the initiative strongly believes that
25 protecting existing residents, especially those who

1
2 live in affordable and rent regulated housing must be
3 a priority. We are the city to provide adequate
4 resources to protect displacement of these residents.
5 Thank you for your time and we look forward to
6 continuing to advocate to create a better SoHo
7 Broadway for all residents, businesses and visitors.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
9 Next speaker.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker Sean Sweeney to
11 be followed by Pete Davies.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 SEAN SWEENEY: Hi, my name is Sean Sweeney, I'm
14 the Director of the SoHo Alliance. A community group
15 funded in 1981 interested in landmarking and zoning
16 and we were the successors to the SoHo Artists
17 Association, which initially got this successful
18 zoning that we now have in place.

19 But I want to tell you about myself. I moved to
20 SoHo in '77 from Brooklyn. I was an immigrant with
21 my parents who were Supers in the building in
22 Brooklyn. I moved to 99 Prince Street in SoHo where
23 I lived and worked and Chairman Moya, you might - I
24 notice that sign behind you House of Music. I worked
25 at 99 Prince Street, the groundswell of House Music.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You can take your time now.
3 I'm going to give you more time to speak just for
4 that.

5 SEAN SWEENEY: I new you'd like that sir. I like
6 your turntable.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Vinal Mania(SP?)
8 that was my place.

9 SEAN SWEENEY: Oh, I know that guy, okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: But go ahead, sorry, sorry.

11 SEAN SWEENEY: Uhm, so I moved to - I'm also the
12 Vice President of the Downtown Independent Democrats
13 which I'm not speaking for but they also have come
14 out against this. And why I have 23 percent of the
15 city's voters only voted last week because there's a
16 distrust of government.

17 I was on that panel that Envision SoHo/NoHo panel
18 and the main goal was to allow greater residential
19 uses and to permit retail. Not big box stores. We
20 had dozens and dozens of meetings and what happened?
21 We were ignored. The only people who wanted an
22 increase in the square footage of retail was the
23 Radney(SP?) person.

24 NYU, when asked said, we don't want to come into
25 SoHo. Even the Broadway property owners did not want

1
2 an increase in FAR. Then when COVID came, this
3 process died. It went away for nine months and then
4 got resurrected in the waning months of the worst
5 Mayor since Jimmy Walker. So, who is supporting
6 this? This is not a neighborhood plan. All our
7 wasted hours with Gale Brewer and Margaret Chin, what
8 was it for. For de Blasio to push this down our
9 throat. There's not going to be any affordable
10 housing. We know that. There were so many
11 loopholes, you could drive a Mac truck through it.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 SEAN SWEENEY: That's it, thank you sir.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay Sean. Thank you so much
15 for your testimony. Next speaker please.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on this
17 panel is Pete Davies.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 PETE DAVIES: Okay, hi, I am Pete Davies, 41 year
20 resident of SoHo, rent stabilized certified loft
21 tenant, senior citizen aging in place. The Mayor's
22 proposal for the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan does not
23 work. I urge you to reject the city's rushed and
24 reckless plan to up zone these neighborhoods. We can
25 do so much better.

1
2 Before continuing Mr. Chair, I need to point out
3 the public cannot see any of the Committee Members.
4 Now, back to my testimony. In 2019, I served on the
5 SoHo Advisory Group, representing the Broadway
6 Residents Coalition. The key goals then legalized
7 nonconforming loft residents, bringing to line
8 various nonconforming retail.

9 But the city's plan cobbled together during the
10 chaos and the confusion of the COVID-19 pandemic
11 fails to provide for residents, leaving many at risk.
12 And it inadequately addresses retail conditions.
13 Instead, the Council is presented with a blunt,
14 unimaginative and careless plan, filled with false
15 promises for an uncertainty and lacking equity with
16 no guarantee of affordable housing. The plan hides
17 its true purpose. The economic rescue of the
18 overleveraged real estate speculators done by the
19 city's magical grant of new FAR. Equal to over nine
20 million square feet, more than three Empire State
21 buildings.

22 All of that incentivizes harassment of existing
23 residents. HPD has done no outreach to our rent
24 stabilized building where the new owner has failed to
25 register the building and failed to provide us with

1
2 our new lease extensions. The rezoning speculation
3 hijinks have begun.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 PETE DAVIES: Vote no on this unworthy proposal
6 and for a better opportunity. We can do so much
7 better. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony
9 today.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, there are no Council
11 Members with questions for this panel. So, I'll call
12 on the next panel, which will be Anthony Borelli, Dan
13 Miller, John Sanchez and Sheena Kang. So, the first
14 speaker will be Anthony Borelli to be followed by Dan
15 Miller.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time started.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Before we get started, I just
18 want to make a quick note. I am going to have
19 Council Member Levin take over for a brief moment.
20 Thank you so much.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 ANTHONY BORELLI: Hi, my name is Anthony Borelli,
23 I am Senior Vice President for Edison Properties.
24 Thank you Council Members for the opportunity to
25 represent Edison in this hearing. Edison Properties

1
2 is a family owned real estate company. Edison
3 affiliates owned and operate businesses on the
4 properties the family owns.

5 Since the early '70's Edison has owned and
6 operated two public parking lots in the proposed
7 rezoning area. One at 375 Lafayette at the corner of
8 Great Jones and another at 174 Senator Street at the
9 corner of Hester. Edison Properties developed, owns
10 and manages the 243 unit rental apartment building at
11 the corner of Hudson, Houston and Levlo(SP?). This
12 is a 7525 building developed on a former parking lot.
13 Two other residential rental projects were build on
14 Edison Parking lots. These lots were ground leased
15 to developers. One is at 88 Lenard, 352 units in an
16 apartment building in Tribeca. The other is at 241
17 West 28th Street, 480 units developed under the
18 Voluntary Inclusionary Program and Affordable New
19 York Programs. It has 30 percent of affordable
20 units.

21 We work with architects to understand and to
22 study conceptual residential developments on Edison's
23 sites within the proposed rezoning area. Under the
24 proposed zoning framework, including quality housing
25 and MIH. On the Sun Street Lot, we modeled a rental

1
2 apartment building with ground floor retail. We were
3 able to achieve a total of 210 units and uhm, which
4 would yield somewhere around 40 to 65 below market
5 units, depending on which MIH unit option is used.

6 We also modeled uh, a rental residential
7 development with ground floor retail on Lafayette
8 Street Parking Lot.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 ANTHONY BORELLI: Using a similar approach, we
11 were able to achieve 238 units. I'll just quickly
12 cut to the chase. The originally proposed FAR's
13 favored residential uses. That's now even more the
14 case given City Planning's amendments. MIH will
15 ensure that affordable housing is part of any
16 project, any residential project on Edison sites.
17 And uhm, the density proposed would provide for the
18 most housing in new buildings designed to fit within
19 tailored contextual envelopes. Thanks again for the
20 opportunity to participate in this hearing.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next speaker
22 will be Dan Miller to be followed by John Sanchez.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 DAN MILLER: Hi, my name is Dan Miller and I'd
25 like speak in favor of the rezoning, in my capacity

1
2 as a resident of Brooklyn. There's been a lot of
3 talk about SoHo as a neighborhood I this rezoning
4 process and that's appropriate but it's also
5 appropriate that we take into account the rest of the
6 city because housing is a citywide issue. The entire
7 city faces a massive shortage of new housing, both
8 affordable and market rate.

9 When people move from neighborhood to
10 neighborhood, they don't always stay in the same
11 neighborhood. They don't always want to stay in the
12 same neighborhood. I'm considering moving myself at
13 the end of my lease and I am going to be looking at
14 apartments in Brooklyn but I'm also going to be
15 looking in Queens at the end and even in Manhattan,
16 even in SoHo if I could afford it.

17 Because people aren't stuck in place, housing is
18 a citywide issue and the fact is that we are not
19 producing nearly enough of new housing to serve the
20 city's needs. Let alone those people who would
21 actually want to move here. So, we need to ask -
22 we're not building enough housing right now. We know
23 this because rents are high.

24 If we're going to build new housing, where should
25 we build it? And the obvious answer is wealthy,

1
2 well-connected neighborhoods like SoHo and NoHo.
3 These are the kind of places that we need to be
4 building as much housing as possible. If we can't
5 build here, where can we? Do we – should we simply
6 shunt all residential development to the outer
7 boroughs, to poorer neighborhoods? Should we make
8 these – should we just freeze all new construction
9 and make it impossible to live here for the middle
10 class? Or should we build more housing in the places
11 that it's best suited? I say yes. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next speaker
13 will be John Sanchez followed by Sheena Kang.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 JOHN SANCHEZ: Good afternoon, my name is John
16 Sanchez and I serve as a District Manager in Bronx
17 Community Board Six. Can you hear me?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can hear you Mr. Sanchez.

19 JOHN SANCHEZ: Alright, good afternoon my name is
20 John Sanchez and I serve as a District Manager of
21 Bronx Community Board Six. I fully support and urge
22 the Committee to support the NoHo/SoHo plan with
23 higher residential density and lowering the
24 commercial density.

25

1
2 It's not customary to comment on another
3 neighborhood, but that is exactly the problem. Our
4 housing crisis is a citywide problem but what happens
5 in one neighborhood, impacts another. Thousands of
6 our fellow New Yorkers live in shelters and nearly
7 4,000 children sleep in cars, parks or abandoned
8 buildings. This isn't due to any moral failings,
9 it's probably due to the fact that our city limits
10 who and how many people can live in neighborhoods.
11 Through a tool called zoning, which says we won't
12 allow new housing to be built because of rules we
13 designed in 1961. New York City should not be a city
14 where the cost of residency in SoHo and neighborhoods
15 like it, is a six figure salary. Or parents with a
16 six figure salary or being lucky enough to have moved
17 there 40 years ago.

18 No neighborhood in New York City including SoHo
19 should be one where a majority of New Yorkers are
20 unable to afford to live in. We need to open the
21 closed neighborhood doors of SoHo and open it to
22 people to fall incomes and races when looking for a
23 stable home.

24 New York's historic character comes from the idea
25 that people from around the world and across the

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country journey to come here in search of better opportunities, to open businesses and to raise their families. New York's greatness doesn't come from architectural details and it certainly doesn't come from defacto segregation. The SoHo/NoHo plan is a great first step to show that we can bring affordable housing to all neighborhoods. Not just neighborhoods like Bronx Community Board Six. Please support this plan. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The last speaker on this panel is Sheena Kang.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Times starts now.

SHEENA KANG: Hi, thanks for the opportunity to testify. My name is Sheena Kang and I am a Senior Policy Analyst at Citizens Housing and Planning Council or CHPC. We are a nonprofit thinktank focused on improving the housing policy and planning in New York City.

So, thanks to everyone who has put their hard work and effort into this process. I know that many people here today are not entirely satisfied with diversion of the plan that we have before us but I also believe that no version of this plan will

1
2 satisfy everyone and so, voting yes on this one is
3 ultimately the right thing to do.

4 This is an opportunity for the city to do
5 something about segregation and racial injustice
6 instead of just continuing to talk about it.
7 Communities rarely meet new development with smiles
8 and applause and processes like these are never easy.
9 But we as a city have an obligation to do them. We
10 must build enough housing so that every New Yorker
11 has a place to live. We must end the legacy of
12 racial segregation and exclusion of low income people
13 and communities of color. The city and its elected
14 leaders have an obligation to do these things even if
15 some of it's more affluent and more powerful,
16 residents don't like it.

17 A lot of the opposition to this plan has ranged
18 somewhere between mildly misinformed to downright
19 exclusionary. I have heard opponents say that low
20 income residents would bring the neighborhood down,
21 that people of color would not feel comfortable
22 living among such luxury and that some in NoHo are
23 already diverse because Jay Z and John Legend once
24 owed property there.

1
2 I have watched opponents try to define SoHo as a
3 low income community of color by manipulating data
4 and appropriating the demographics at immigrant
5 communities living nearby. This last ploy is not
6 only deeply offensive but it also undermines the very
7 real concerns of communities that have dealt with the
8 impacts of disinvestment and structural racism for
9 decades.

10 Letting this opportunity pass up by will be a
11 huge mistake. We urge the Council to consider the
12 suggestions that groups who have put time and energy

13 -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 SHEENA KANG: Into making recommendations for how
16 the rezoning could be improved and created but we
17 also urge you to recognize much of the opposition to
18 this plan for what it is and not to lose sight of the
19 vision of a more equitable city that New Yorkers both
20 need and deserve. Thanks very much.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. That was the last
22 speaker on this panel and Council Member Chin has a
23 question. Go ahead Council Member.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes, thank you. Yeah,
3 thank you to this panel. Uhm, I have a question for
4 Mr. Borelli representing Edison Property. Hi
5 Anthony, thank you for testifying. I wanted to see
6 if you have met with HPD to see if there's any
7 possibility of creating more affordable units and
8 also lowering the AMI? Are there any HPD programs
9 that you might be able to utilize to do that?

10 ANTHONY BORELLI: Yeah, well, I should say that
11 you know Edison doesn't have any immediate
12 development plans for either of our sites. But we
13 did talk to HPD and they made us familiar with their
14 programs and their term sheets. Uhm, and we had a
15 conversation. We shared information about our sites
16 and as I said, they shared information about what
17 types of programs would be available to us should we
18 pursue a residential project in the future.

19 Uhm, you know, it's what's - you know at this
20 time, we're unable to say you know which programs we
21 would tap or how we would you know finance a project
22 but HPD was very helpful in opening the door and
23 making us familiar with what was available to
24 developers and us at the time that that would be
25 appropriate to use.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, thank you. Well,
3 thank you for testifying.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uhm, I'll call on the next
5 panel, which will be David Herman, Valerie De La
6 Rosa, Donna Raftery and Steve Herrick. So, the first
7 speaker is David Herman to be followed by Valerie De
8 La Rosa.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do we have David Herman?
11 Uhm, I'll skip David and we'll go back to him and
12 we'll continue on with Valerie De La Rosa.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 VALERIE DE LA ROSA: Thank you. Sorry, I
15 couldn't unmute. Good afternoon Chair Moya and
16 Subcommittee members. My name is Valerie De La Rosa.
17 Today, I am speaking to you as a Mexican American
18 Millennial Renter in Community District Two. I've
19 lived in the district for six years and as a graduate
20 student of economics at CUNY's John Jay College.

21 The Proposed SoHo/NoHo Chinatown rezoning will
22 fail to maintain a mixed use neighborhood. In your
23 deliberation, please take into consideration the
24 following data points from the second quarter of
25 2021. SoHo recorded the highest retail leasing

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2 velocity in the second quarter of 2021. The largest
3 transactions were all brand spaced abroad including
4 the UK, which was Vashi, uhm, on Green Street as well
5 as a French apparel company, AMI Paris and a Canadian
6 co-company Kanuck.

7 All three global brands are opening up their
8 first Manhattan locations. SoHo is one of the only
9 corridors in Manhattan to report an increase in
10 average asking rents rising 13.3 percent quarter over
11 quarter and 7.4 percent year over year to \$469 per
12 square foot. The uptick was mainly caused by the
13 addition of above average price space which was
14 formerly occupied by Unode50 at 123 Prince Street,
15 while the inventory remained mostly unchanged.
16 Eliminating the 10,000 square foot cap on retail
17 incentivizes more large retail development and does
18 not support small businesses, nor does it ensure a
19 healthy vitality tenant mix that supports a
20 residential neighborhood.

21 More importantly, the cap ensures the community
22 has input on potential quality of life issues and
23 support small businesses. I'll leave you with three
24 guiding principles from envision SoHo/NoHo that said
25 that a plan should promote economic vitality. And

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2 economic vitality should encourage a vibrant and
3 diverse ground floor landscape that enhances the
4 quality of life for residents.

5 And two, specifically –

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 VALERIE DE LA ROSA: Specifically allow and
8 incentivize scarce neighborhood resources that aim to
9 protect and serve the community. And three, provide
10 predictable zoning rules that support small
11 businesses. I strongly urge you Chair Moya to reject
12 the Mayor's plan. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Valerie. So, we're
14 going to go back to David Herman, which apology, it
15 looks like you are not unmuted. Go ahead.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 DAVID HERMAN: Uhm, there we go sorry. Can you
18 hear me?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yeah, we can hear you.

20 DAVID HERMAN: Okay, sorry about that. Uhm, hi,
21 my name is David Herman and I'm speaking on behalf of
22 Village Preservation. The city's argument for this
23 plan is based on three claims. First, that the plan
24 will create 3,500 units of housing, 900 of them
25 affordable. Second, that developers will choose

1
2 residential developments over commercial ones and not
3 utilize the main loopholes in this plan to not
4 include affordable housing. And third, that even
5 though the plan allows over ten million square feet
6 of new construction in this tiny area, only one-third
7 of it will actually be built.

8 Our analysis of the rezoning submitted to the
9 Council shows a very different outcome is much more
10 likely. But don't just trust us, look at the city's
11 miserable track record for accurately predicting
12 outcomes from the other rezoning plans. As per data
13 we've submitted, a coin flip would be a more accurate
14 predictor of what will actually happen in rezoning
15 than the city's analysis. For the first three
16 developments under the East Midtown rezoning, the
17 city had a zero percent, zero percent accuracy rate
18 in Hudson Square which is right next door to SoHo.
19 They grossly misjudged how much commercial
20 development would take place versus residential.

21 In East Harlem, East New York, Jerome Avenue,
22 Long Island City, Downtown Brooklyn and the East
23 Village, they've been less accurate in their
24 predictions than a storefront fortune teller.
25 Grossly misestimating the amount, type and location

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2 of new development and the creation of promised
3 public amenities. Don't ignore the data when so much
4 is at stake and so many can be harmed. Please vote
5 no on this plan. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you David. We're going
7 to now call on Donna Raftery to be followed by Steve
8 Herrick.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 DONNA RAFTERY: Hello, thank you for the
11 opportunity to speak on this application. My name is
12 Donna Raftery, I'm a member of Community Board Two
13 and wholeheartedly support the Resolution in
14 opposition to this plan which I encourage you all to
15 read.

16 I am attending today to speak as a long-term
17 nearby resident. SoHo has been a part of my backyard
18 since the late '70's and '80's when I lived in
19 Tribeca and spent most weekends in SoHo enjoying the
20 many galleries and unique small retailers. Living in
21 what is now called the Meat Packing District since
22 the mid-80's, I have continued to visit SoHo often.
23 I worked nights on Spring and Crosby in the 90's and
24 watched Baltazar opened its doors in '97 transforming
25

1
2 that block. The neighborhood has changed a lot over
3 the years.

4 The beauty of the city is the uniqueness of its
5 neighborhoods. The plan with its up-zoning and large
6 retail will turn SoHo/NoHo and Chinatown into
7 something more akin to a mini-midtown destroying the
8 very character and unique shops that have made the
9 area so desirable. We need to look at what came out
10 of the envision SoHo/NoHo report and go back to the
11 drawing board to create a plan that honors the nature
12 of this historic district, truly adds affordable
13 housing and protects the artists that are here. And
14 expands retail use on the ground floor for unique
15 small scale retailers, keeping the special permit for
16 retail over 10,000 square feet. Please reject this
17 plan and encourage City Planning to work with the
18 community to develop a truly creative plan that
19 considers everyone's needs and enriches the
20 neighborhood. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks Donna, the next
22 speaker and the last one on this panel is Steve
23 Herrick.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Steve, we can't hear you.

1 STEVE HERRICK: Okay, sorry about that, I thought
2 I was unmuted, okay.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we reset the clock? We
4 can hear you now. Thank you.

5 STEVE HERRICK: Okay. Hi, I'm Steve Herrick,
6 Executive Director of Cooper Square Committee and
7 I've submitted written testimony. The rezoning plan
8 does not reflect the recommendations of the Advisory
9 Group. And City Planning has ignored calls for
10 changes to the plan. The City Council has a chance
11 to make those changes. I asked the City Council to
12 vote no on the ULURP application unless the following
13 change were made.
14

15 First, reduce the proposed residential FAR. The
16 proposed increase in floor area ration from 5.0 to as
17 much as 9.7 and 12.0 throughout much of SoHo and NoHo
18 is wildly out of scale with the built environment.
19 In the housing opportunity zones, the City Council
20 should change the R10 zoning to R9A which is 8.5
21 residential FAR with MIH. Height limits should not
22 exceed 175 feet, since there are very few buildings
23 taller than that in these areas.

24 Along Broadway, Lafayette Canal Street changed
25 the R9X zoning, which is 9.7 down to R8A, which is

1
2 7.2 and impose 125 foot height limit. There are
3 virtually no buildings taller than 12 stories along
4 Broadway and Lafayette Street. And really nothing
5 taller than six stories on canal street, other than
6 the area between West Broadway and 6th Avenue.

7 A second change we urge, is the City Council to
8 reduce the proposed commercial FAR. The FAR was
9 reduced slightly by the City Planning Commission in
10 some parts SoHo and NoHo but it's still too high. It
11 should be kept at 5.0. There needs to a significant
12 differential between the residential and commercial
13 FAR or else developers will choose to build offices
14 and hotels instead of mixed income buildings.

15 We urge you to look at Cooper Square Committee's
16 alternative proposal, which uses more appropriate MIH
17 densities to create about 600 low-income units. And
18 we think it will create more low-income housing than
19 the current proposal which will end up incentivizing
20 office and hotel development.

21 The city can still achieve 800 to 900 low income
22 units if affordable housing funds are used to acquire
23 addition sites to build 100 percent low income
24 housing on it.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 STEVE HERRICK: Okay, I have other comments,
3 which I will submit in writing but I would ask that
4 you please revisit the plan or else reject it. Thank
5 you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Chair Levin, I
7 don't see any Council Members with questions. I can
8 call on the next panel, if you're okay. Uh, I see
9 you nodding so, I'll call the next panel.

10 Uhm, the next panel will be Austin Celestin,
11 David Gordon, Denny Salas, and Sunny Ng. And so, the
12 first panelist Austin Celestin to be followed by
13 David Gordon.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 AUSTIN CELESTIN: Uh, can you hear me?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can hear you.

17 AUSTIN CELESTIN: Okay. Uhm, hello, my name is
18 Austin Celestin and I am an Urban Design Student at
19 NYU. This plan isn't perfect. Similar rezoning's
20 have higher affordable housing proportions. The
21 commercial allowance is too high and there are
22 several other missed opportunities. But this plan is
23 infinitely better than the status quo and needs to be
24 passed.

1
2 SoHo is disproportionately White and wealthy and
3 the neighborhood hasn't just had a problem building
4 affordable housing, it has had a problem building
5 housing period. This is a supply crisis. This
6 neighborhood's ridiculous rent demonstrates this
7 perfectly. The 900 affordable units are long overdue
8 for this high opportunity area and the 2,700 market
9 rate units will help stymie gentrification in working
10 class neighborhoods across the city and take pressure
11 off of outer borough neighborhoods.

12 I find it interesting that people regularly point
13 out that MIH has failed but failed to mention why and
14 how to fix it. When a Manhattan Institute study from
15 last year asserted that to fix MIH, it should be
16 applied to high opportunity neighborhoods explicitly
17 invoking SoHo/NoHo. On top of that, 85 percent of
18 the rezoned area is in a historic district. The
19 people implicating Chinatown's proximity to the
20 opportunity zone failed to mention that it's one of
21 only three areas that aren't landmarked. Perhaps the
22 city would have made an opportunity corridor along
23 Broadway but historic districts weren't touched. And
24 said districts weakens the output of this rezoning.

1
2 We should revisit this district, reduce its size
3 and designate individual buildings, protect those
4 historic buildings while maximizing the housing
5 output and the rezoning. Again, this is a supply
6 crisis and we need to get as much housing as possible
7 to help the entire city.

8 Lastly, I would like to mention the false
9 dichotomy between housing production and tenant
10 protection that has been created. We can and should
11 do both. Up-zone the neighborhood to allow as much
12 housing as possible and for working class new comers
13 to enjoy what everyone in this neighborhood
14 celebrates and give the tenants the resources and
15 protections to stay in the neighborhood and allow
16 them to age in place.

17 It is very urgent that the City Council passes
18 this plan. The ramifications of rejecting this plan
19 are disastrous. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
21 David Gordon to be followed by Denny Salas.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 DAVID GORDON: Hello, thank you for having me
24 members of the Council and members of this Committee.
25 My name is David Gordan, I'm a 23-year-old resident

1
2 of lower Manhattan and I live just a few blocks from
3 the proposed rezoning. I recently finished my times
4 at NYU over the summer and I strongly support this
5 rezoning. This neighborhood is one of the wealthiest
6 and most transit oriented in the city and it will
7 allow young people, many of them from NYU like myself
8 to stay in the city and build a life for themselves.
9 For working class residents of New York, the income
10 restricted units will give them a foothold in the
11 area, meanwhile the market rate residential will
12 allow young people with a more established and maybe
13 older than myself, to move into this area allowing
14 young people like myself and my friends to move into
15 the units that those future residents will then
16 vacate.

17 This filtering process is how NYC can become more
18 inclusive. I have been able to stay in NYC with my
19 friends and colleagues thanks to a few lucky breaks
20 and an incredibly supportive family but most people
21 will not have those breaks and even mine will run out
22 eventually.

23 The rezoning will open doors for more young
24 people, people like myself. Lastly, I want to
25 mention that I'm gay. Very proudly and thankfully,

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2 my family is incredibly supportive of me because of
3 this but I often think about the gay and queer people
4 who don't have the same support. Or even if they do,
5 they live in a place that isn't as tolerant as lower
6 Manhattan. These folks would love to move to NYC,
7 whether in the lower Manhattan or a filtered place in
8 another borough. To move to a city like New York
9 where they can feel safe and embrace or at least
10 avoid hostile stares would be everything for them.

11 Without the opportunity for future residents, we
12 are not a fully accepting city and I urge you to
13 support the rezoning.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you David. The next
15 speaker is Denny Salas to be followed by Sunny Ng.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 DENNY SALAS: Good afternoon Council Members. As
18 a resident of this area, I'm testifying in support of
19 the rezoning for NoHo and SoHo. What matters most in
20 our city's progress? We have espoused idealistic
21 goals that have called for equity, fairness, and
22 opportunity for too long where we have fallen
23 woefully short.

24 New York City remains one of the most segregated
25 city's in America. A city ruled by democrats that

1
2 has relegated success and the fulfillment of the
3 American dream to its wealthy enclaves. Providing
4 housing opportunities to immigrants and working class
5 families and families in higher income neighborhoods
6 will help destroy the obstacles that have held them
7 back. Rezoning NoHo and SoHo is not panacea into our
8 problems but supporting this project, the Gowanus
9 rezoning and for that matter, the blood center will
10 place us on the right path and show the rest of the
11 city that we're still capable of doing the right
12 thing. Even in the face of considerable resistance.
13 This plan is imperfect and the commercial density
14 allowance must be lower to spur more housing. So,
15 please make those corrections. Thank you for your
16 time and I hope you have a wonderful day.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next and last
18 speaker for this panel is Sunny Ng.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 SUNNY NG: Good afternoon Council Members. My
21 name is Sunny, I live in Brooklyn and I've been
22 working SoHo for the last five years. I support the
23 SoHo/NoHo rezoning plan. The city has a housing
24 crisis and if you rent, you would know that. It's
25 expensive and difficult to find a place to move. And

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2 if you're someone who rents in the city, this cycle
3 has happened to you every couple of years. The
4 SoHo/NoHo up-zoning provides an opportunity to create
5 more housing stock in a White affluent neighborhood
6 that has excellent transit connections for once.
7 This will relieve pressure for gentrifying other
8 neighborhoods like Harlem, Bed Stuey, Crown Heights,
9 Sunset Park and Chinatown.

10 On the subject of Chinatown, I just want to
11 mention how opponents of this plan, including
12 preservation groups and Community Board Two with
13 their completely disingenuous resolution, have
14 constantly been using Asian Americans as pawns and
15 continues to mislead the community by
16 mischaracterizing the rezoning boundaries and its
17 effects. As well as attempting to attach Chinatown
18 to the name of the rezoning.

19 If you want to fight the SoHo/NoHo up-zoning,
20 then fight it for the real reasons you're opposing
21 and not try to drag the Asian American community into
22 this. You don't really care about whether or not
23 there was sufficient consultations with the Chinese
24 community. If you did, you would have represented
25

1
2 your constituents better instead of using them as
3 cover.

4 Don't pretend you care about diversity when you
5 artificially inflate numbers to prevent a plan that
6 would allow more people of color to move in. Don't
7 act like you've ever crossed Broadway or shopped at
8 any of the businesses that were impacted by COVID or
9 anti-Asian hate because if you did, you would know
10 there are affordable grocery stores there. You're no
11 better than White conservatives that have used Asian
12 Americans to fight against affirmative action in
13 court.

14 If you really care about displacement and
15 gentrification of Chinatown, then you should put more
16 housing in SoHo and NoHo instead. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Sunny. That was
18 the last speaker on this panel Chair Levin, so I can
19 call on the next panel, which will be Juan Rivero,
20 Lannyl Stephens, Mary Ann Arisman and Jenavieve
21 Hinton. First speaker is Juan Rivero.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 JUAN RIVERO: Hi, my name is Juan Rivero and I am
24 speaking on behalf of Village Preservation. One of
25 the many falsehoods at the heart of this plan is that

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2 25 to 30 percent of space in all new development will
3 consist of affordable housing. This is an utter lie.
4 The plan doesn't require or guarantee a single unit
5 of affordable housing being built and will likely
6 result in little if any of it.

7 At 358 Howard, where the city projects that
8 affordable housing will be built, a commercial tower
9 is already set to go up with no affordable housing
10 and that's because the plan exempts from its
11 affordable housing requirement of retail space,
12 offices, hotels, and community facilities including
13 NYU dorms other private university uses, as well as
14 luxury condos and rentals of up to 25,000 square feet
15 per zoning lot.

16 As per detailed - for detailed and analysis that
17 we have submitted, on every single site in the
18 rezoning area where the city predicts affordable
19 housing will be built, the rezoning actually provides
20 a strong incentive not to build it by allowing
21 developers more market rate space if they exclude
22 affordable housing than if they include it. It is
23 magical thinking or simply a lie to say that profit
24 driven real estate developers will forego these
25 financial incentives and include affordable housing

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2 when the plan allows them such lucrative ways not to
3 do so.

4 This rezoning is not designed to produce
5 affordable housing. It merely uses that false
6 promise as a thig leaf for this obscene giveaway to
7 developers. We urge the City Council not to be an
8 accomplice to this willful deception and to reject
9 this plan. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next speaker
11 will be Lannyl Stephens to be followed by Mary Ann
12 Arisman.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 LANNYL STEPHENS: Good afternoon. I'm Lannyl
15 Stephens and I'm speaking on behalf of Village
16 Preservation.

17 The city has consistently lied about the danger
18 this plan poses to affordable housing in the rezoning
19 area. In spite of their claims that the 2019 rent
20 laws prevent this, earlier this year the New York
21 Apartment Law Insider published an article entitled,
22 demolition. One of the last ways to deregulate an
23 apartment which said, with the June 2019 passage
24 regulation reforms, owners are desperately seeking
25 ways out of rent regulation and highlighted,

1
2 demolition generally available to rent stabilized
3 buildings regardless of their condition as one of the
4 few remaining ways to achieve this.

5 DCP's lies don't end here. They claim few
6 buildings with rent regulated units will be
7 underbuilt under this proposed rezoning. In fact,
8 per data, we submitted to the Council, 90 percent of
9 buildings with such units would be and nearly half of
10 those would be more than 50 percent underbuilt.

11 Which is DCP's own very high criteria for defining
12 when a building is likely to succumb to development.

13 100 percent of rent regulated units in the
14 Chinatown section of the rezoning would be
15 underbuilt. As would all those outside of historic
16 districts or in noncontributing buildings within
17 historic districts, which are automatically eligible
18 for demolition. 30 percent of rent regulated units
19 in the rezoning area fall under this category but as
20 per documentation we've submitted, the LPC's regular
21 allowance of that demolition of all but the facades
22 of buildings means no landmarked units are safe.

23 Don't buy the city's lies. Vote no. Thank you.

24

25

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next speaker
3 is Mary Ann Arisman to be followed by Jenavieve
4 Hinton.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 MARY ANN ARISMAN: My name is Mary Ann Arisman
7 and I'm speaking on behalf of Village Preservation.
8 From the beginning, we were told that this process
9 would look to ways to preserve and reenforce the
10 artistic character of SoHo and NoHo. In fact, this
11 plan seems to be designed to do everything possible
12 to destroy that character. The allowance for big box
13 chain stores and eating and drinking establishments
14 of unlimited size will make it incredibly difficult
15 for any art gallery or arts or design related
16 business to continue in any ground floor space. The
17 up-zoning will create huge incentives for landlords
18 to push out remaining artists living in rent
19 regulated and loft log units to gut or demolish their
20 buildings, which is why groups like Lower Manhattan
21 Loft Tenants and New York City Loft Tenants are
22 opposing it.

23 Allowing vastly larger office buildings and
24 hotels will further dilute and diminish the artistic
25 character of these neighborhoods. The new allowance

1
2 for as of right luxury condos and rentals along with
3 NYU dorms and other private university facilities
4 will further supplant and dislodge any arts related
5 uses in the neighborhood. And the new rules, more or
6 less amount to a phasing out of the artists and
7 residents regulations, which helped make these
8 neighborhoods such vital centers of artistic
9 activity. The plan allows for no new artists,
10 resident's and includes no provision for new artist
11 housing among the affordable housing and no space for
12 arts groups.

13 This rezoning doesn't respect the artistic
14 character of the east neighborhoods and I urge you
15 strongly to reject it because it destroys the
16 artistic character. Thank you very much.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mary Ann. The last
18 speaker on this panel is Jenavieve Hinton.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 JENAVIEVE HINTON: Hi, my name is Jenavieve
21 Hinton and I am speaking on behalf of Village
22 Preservation. It is undeniable that the proposed
23 rezoning will have a disproportionately negative
24 impact upon Chinatown and Asian Americans. And
25 that's no surprise given that the process by which

1
2 this rezoning was created completely failed to reach
3 out to you and include the Chinatown community, or
4 even acknowledge its impacts upon them.

5 Calling this SoHo/NoHo rezoning when several
6 blocks of Chinatown are also included is emblematic
7 of this failure. The Chinatown section of the
8 rezoning is in fact targeted for the largest up-
9 zoning but the largest incentive for demolition and
10 displacement, oversized development and new wealthier
11 residents.

12 This area of Chinatown has a disproportionately
13 high concentration of lower income residents and rent
14 regulated housing. And as per documentation we've
15 submitted, blocks with higher concentrations of Asian
16 Americans throughout the rezoning area track
17 consistently with where the city has targeted the
18 highest up-zonings, which creates the greatest
19 pressure for displacement, oversize development and
20 new wealthier residents.

21 The city still refuses to acknowledge that
22 Chinatown is even in the rezoning, although elsewhere
23 the city's own website calls this area Chinatown its
24 In the Chinatown Bid and the majority of its
25 residents are Chinese American and the Museum of

1
2 Chinese in America, the China Buddhist Association
3 and the iconic Pagoda Building at 183 Center Street
4 are all located here. So, don't buy the city's
5 offensive whitewashing and reject this plan.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Jenavieve. That
7 was the last speaker on this panel Chair Levin and I
8 don't see any uhm Council Members with questions at
9 this time. So, I'm going to call on the next panel.
10 The next panel will be Christopher Goode, Andy Zhang,
11 Casey Berkovitz and Michelle Koppersmith. The first
12 speaker will be Christopher Goode followed by Andy
13 Zhang.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 CHRISTOPHER GOODE: Hi, sorry about that, it
16 wasn't allowing me to unmute myself. Uhm, hi, I
17 first moved to SoHo in 1978 and for the past 20
18 years, I've owned my home on the east edge of the
19 rezoning area. My daughter attended PS 130 on Baxter
20 Street. I'm a long time volunteer with Visiting
21 Neighbors, an organization which helps local seniors
22 age in place.

23 Once again, I'm before you today as an advocate
24 for all housing and I support this rezoning because I
25 think a diverse and equitable neighborhood is more

1
2 important than ever increasing loft values. I would
3 like to rebut some of the claims regarding my
4 immediate neighborhood, the Chinatown part of
5 rezoning. First the area between Baxter and Lafayette
6 Street, south of Grand Street is already gentrified.
7 There are 60 multimillion dollar condos on these few
8 blocks alone. Four hotels have been built and more
9 recently, the remaining large manufacturing buildings
10 have been converted to expensive office space.

11 Second, this area's 13 rent regulated buildings
12 are not at risk of demolition or resident
13 displacement. Not only were tenant protections
14 strengthened in 2019 but because of the small
15 footprints of these buildings, new development on
16 these sites has never made economic sense. Despite
17 the past 20 years of intense gentrification, not a
18 single rent regulated building has been demolished
19 for new development here. The zoning will not change
20 this but simply allow for the residential development
21 of this areas few vacant lots in underutilized
22 commercial buildings.

23 Most of these sites are too small for office
24 development, so they will not be available sites for
25 housing. Who will get market rate housing which

1
2 helps to reduce the gentrification pressures of less
3 wealthy neighborhoods including Chinatown.

4 Additionally, we'll all benefit from new affordable
5 apartments being added to SoHo.

6 Please do not buy into the displacement and
7 gentrification smoke screens being put forth by the
8 same individuals and groups who have been fighting
9 100 percent affordable housing, like they are
10 fighting Haven Green just a few blocks away.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 CHRISTOPHER GOODE: Please say yes to this new
13 zoning. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Uhm, the next
15 speaker will be Andy Zhang to be followed by Casey
16 Berkovitz.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 ANDY ZHANG: Hello, my name is Andy and I am here
19 to support the Proposed SoHo/NoHo rezoning. I
20 support this rezoning because we as a city
21 desperately need more housing to address the overly
22 expensive housing costs and overcrowded living
23 conditions faced by New York City residents. We've
24 had skyrocketing housing costs due to historically
25 low vacancy rates and we have over 300,000 people

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2 living in overcrowded conditions due to lack of
3 available units.

4 The only way to ameliorate both these pressing
5 issues is to build up the amount of floor space per
6 residents. This is something that can be gleamed
7 from data and evidence collected, not just in this
8 one neighborhood but also, the entire city and
9 metropolitan area of New York City, the State of New
10 York, the whole country and all over the world. The
11 answer is clear. Build more housing.

12 I do not see the re-zoning proposal as perfect
13 and I do wish to see it improved. I believe that
14 even more housing needs to be included than what is
15 currently proposed. I say we lower the office and
16 commercial densities in order to add additional
17 housing units instead.

18 While commercial space is undoubtedly valuable,
19 the primary issue facing New York City today is a
20 housing shortage and not a commercial one.
21 Commercial spaces are currently still at historically
22 high vacancy rates compared to our historically low
23 housing vacancy rates. The answer is clear. Build
24 more housing.

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I want to use the opportunity to rejecting attempts to use the Chinese and Asian American and other immigrant communities as tools to oppose this plan. The vast majority of this rezoning plan features the wealthier and Whiter parts of SoHo/NoHo and is not Chinatown. The spillover housing demand from people desiring to live in these neighborhoods has had gentrifying effects on the lower income residents of Chinatown and Two Bridges. This should not have to happen.

In the same way that we ask the rich to pay their fair share in taxes, I ask the wealthy and White property owners and esthetic snobs dominating these anti-housing groups to end the economic lies they are spouting and build your fair share in housing. To them and to the city, either build where housing or get out of the way. Stop using us as bargaining chips and build your fair share.

The best and only way to stop displacing is to have enough housing for everyone to move into and live in. When there's a housing crisis, the city needs to stop coming back to us repeatedly to have us do their homework. Cease with the theatrics -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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2 ANDY ZHANG: Ignore the incumbent interest and
3 rezone and build more housing. The answer is clear,
4 build more housing. Thank you for your time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Andy. The next
6 speaker is Casey Berkovitz to be followed by Michelle
7 Koppersmith.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 CASEY BERKOVITZ: Hi there. Thank you for the
10 opportunity to testify. I appreciate in particular
11 that this hearing is remote. I urge the Council to
12 continue this, even in perpetuity and into the
13 future. I know I and the hundreds of other people on
14 this call probably would not have been able to join
15 were it in-person in the Council Chambers.

16 I also want to point out on that note, that even
17 though this hearing is available via Zoom, it is
18 still unrepresentative of New York City's population.
19 Only so many people can take time out of their day to
20 testify at a hearing like this and I hope that in
21 this decision and in your other decisions moving
22 forward, you will take the opportunity to take the
23 broad, more representative scope of what New Yorkers
24 truly want and need into consideration as you make
25 your decisions.

1
2 It won't shock you to hear that I am in favor of
3 this rezoning. In particular, I want to emphasize
4 that the area in Community District Two and the
5 rezoning area in particular, is significantly whiter
6 and wealthier than New York City as a whole. In
7 addition, it has vastly underproduced its
8 proportionate share of housing. I could argue in
9 fact that it should be producing more housing and
10 more affordable housing than the rest of the city.
11 Because of its access to jobs and transit and good
12 schools.

13 However, some parts of this Community District
14 have actually lost housing units over the last
15 decade. Frankly, that's unacceptable. This rezoning
16 is an opportunity to begin to remedy that. Although
17 in my view it doesn't go far enough. And in order to
18 do that, we need to fix the commercial and the
19 residential FAR imbalance. I urge the Council and
20 the Mayor's Office to reduce the commercial FAR's and
21 increase the residential FAR's where appropriate and
22 within the state capacity limits.

23 There is plenty more to be said. I am sure that
24 you will hear it later this afternoon. Thank you for
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2 taking the time to listen to us all and make this
3 available. Thank you very much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next speaker
5 and last one on this panel is Michelle Koppersmith.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 MICHELLE KUPPERSMITH: Thanks. Hi, my name's
8 Michelle Koppersmith, I'm a District One resident and
9 I support re-zoning SoHo and NoHo. I was the first
10 generation of my family since the 1890's to not grow
11 up in New York. Not because my parents didn't want
12 to live here but because they couldn't afford to with
13 a family.

14 My father grew up in a one bedroom apartment with
15 his mother and grandparents in Regal Park and my
16 shared a bedroom with her brother in East Flatbush.
17 They saw the suburbs as somewhere they could live the
18 American dream which was only plausible in a place
19 with abundant housing. Of course, I made it my
20 mission to move back as soon as possible and I now
21 live two blocks from my grandmothers home on the
22 lower east side, where she used to sleep on the fire
23 escape to find space in a tenement apartment that
24 housed her parents and six siblings.

1
2 My family's history of crowded housing is a story
3 of many New Yorkers but it doesn't have to be. New
4 York does not build enough housing for many reasons
5 but one of them is that so much of the city is
6 hindered by restrictive zoning. Right now, it is
7 literally illegal to build housing in SoHo. A lucky
8 few are able to get certified as artists decades ago
9 and have now called SoHo home for years. That
10 doesn't mean they should be the only people that gets
11 to live in SoHo for perpetuity. We need a SoHo/NoHo
12 rezoning to update the restrictive zoning that hasn't
13 been touched in 50 years. When the neighborhood was
14 zoned as a manufacturing district.

15 New York needs more housing period and this will
16 be the first time the Administration has actually
17 tried to rezone a neighborhood where mandatory
18 inclusionary housing will work. So, let's make the
19 AMI's for any MIH housing built through this rezoning
20 are as low as possible. Please also do whatever you
21 can to prioritize a residential building over
22 commercial building.

23 Just yesterday, Advocates for Children released a
24 report that 100,000 NYC school kids were without
25 stable homes during the last school year. Let's do

1
2 the right thing and allow more homes to be built so
3 we can start chipping away at that number. Also, I'd
4 like to apologize to anyone who heard my name called
5 multiple times during the SoHo/NoHo DCP hearing.
6 Where I unfortunately was unable to testify in the
7 end. My job does not always allow me to block off an
8 indefinite number of hours during a work day to sit
9 in a hearing, like I'm sure many other New Yorkers.

10 I hope Council Members consider any written
11 testimony as carefully as live testimony. Just
12 because you aren't privileged enough to sit in a
13 public hearing for hours doesn't mean you don't care
14 about your community. Thank you all for your time.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Michelle.

16 Apologies, my camera was off. Uhm, Chair Levin,
17 there's no Council Members with questions at this
18 time, so I'll call on the next panel, which will be
19 Jeanne Wilcke, Ingrid Wiegand, Maria Feliciano, and
20 Chuck Delaney. For the first speaker is Jeanne
21 Wilcke to be followed by Ingrid Wiegand.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 JEANNE WILCKE: Hi, I'm Jeanne Wilcke, I'm Co-
24 Chair of the NoHo Neighborhood Association and I was
25 on the City's SoHo/NoHo Advisory Committee. What

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2 originally started out as a plan to legalize ground
3 floor use, retail use and find a path to legalize
4 non-artists living in uh, non-certified artists
5 living in artist housing, it's now morphed into a
6 monster. Right now, this plan has insurmountable
7 flaws. The city's plan creates a mess of future
8 problems and legal actions. We need a better plan
9 for affordable housing especially.

10 The 747 airplane hangar wide of loopholes will
11 not add affordable units but it will add a lot of \$25
12 million penthouses. Manufacturing loft buildings
13 most cannot comply with residential building codes
14 thus, no affordable housing added. This is also the
15 first ever massive up-zoning of a New York City world
16 known historic district. This will be the City
17 Council's legacy. Bullseye is on the back of tenants
18 no matter what the city says.

19 Over 50 percent of renters supposedly pay \$2,000
20 a month and below. This area is also a red zone for
21 air quality by the city's own data. Within and
22 surrounding the area, the main thoroughfares between
23 three bridges in the Holland Tunnel, yet this area
24 has one of the lowest per person green spaces and
25

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2 open space by the city's own data. Which will
3 decrease further with this up-zoning.

4 The city kept talking there are few artists left
5 but hundreds showed up again and again.

6 Significantly, most of these were seniors. The so-
7 called arts fund and new penalties is unfair and
8 unequal taxation to the non-rich and long-term
9 existing residents and a conundrum for co-ops. While
10 commercial buildings get a free ride for extra FAR.
11 Southeast Asia is Chinatown. City's PR Campaign
12 should not deny this. Diversity is most important
13 but the current plan creates even less diversity by
14 having no guaranteed housing built in and even if it
15 was built in, a high AMI threshold.

16 We want real affordable housing and diversity in
17 our community. Help us achieve this. We need a
18 better plan.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 JEANNE WILCKE: Do not let the ghost of Robert
21 Moses reappear to shame us all. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next speaker
23 will be Ingrid Wiegand to be followed by Maria
24 Feliciano.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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INGRID WIEGAND: Hello, can you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can hear you, go ahead.

INGRID WIEGAND: Yes, I am Ingrid Weigand. I've lived and worked in SoHo for decades. I was a young artist and a member of the original SoHo Artist Association that negotiated the founding of SoHo with the City Planning Commission back in 1969.

I support changes that allow a more diverse range of people to live in SoHo but I oppose the way the rezoning gives the real estate industry a [INAUDIBLE 4:36:58] that has nothing to do with affordable housing. This plan talks of building contextually but takes the tallest building in the area and makes that the context for building as many as 40 taller buildings in our low rise neighborhood. Please limit the height of new buildings to heights that are really contextual.

I'm also for changing the zoning of the area from M15A to more appropriate zoning that better reflects the mixed use area that SoHo and NoHo have always been. I'm also for all ground floors to permit retail as of right. But that's no reason to not allow the expansion of retail stores beyond the current 10,000 square feet, inviting Walmart and

1
2 other big box stores to gut our historic buildings
3 and explode the population of shoppers that crowd our
4 already crowded sidewalks. We really need affordable
5 housing. Not only in SoHo and NoHo but other areas
6 of the city. But we need this City Council to do
7 that without giving the real estate industry ways to
8 crowd our neighborhoods with new glitzy places to
9 rent and sell to their money buyers.

10 We're counting on you to do both. Build new
11 housing but save SoHo and NoHo from this deeply
12 flawed plan. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next speaker
14 is Maria Feliciano to be followed by Chuck Delaney.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 MARIA FELICIANO: Hello, my name is Maria
17 Feliciano and I am a Residential Owner and Board
18 Member at 543 Broadway 114 Mercer Street. I
19 represent 18 families in this building. We oppose
20 the DCP's rezoning plan while supporting diversity
21 and housing fairness inner midst. Because our
22 community representatives focus and priorities
23 commercial and real estate interests, the only
24 winners in this proposal. Residential voices had
25 been abandoned and left to advocate for ourselves.

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2 Unlike real estate property owners, who have no
3 interest in affordable housing, residents are not
4 represented by our elected officials. DCP and our
5 local representatives have a vision for the future of
6 SoHo and NoHo that does not include residents,
7 present, future, or affordable. The point here is to
8 commercialize 100 percent this district.

9 When our building is rendered uninhabitable due
10 to the callously conceived JLWQA conversion to UG2
11 General residential zoning, what then? Will the 18
12 families that live here be expected to exit our homes
13 and mass and for cheap. Sell our properties to real
14 estate speculators? For what? Hair salons, gyms?
15 Contrary and respectfully to any misleading
16 Introduction to this meeting, we are not adjacent to
17 vibrant communities. We are a vibrant community. We
18 are not a commercial district. We are a mixed use
19 district of residential and commercial voices. More
20 than 8,000 people reside here and I urge you to
21 consider that. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Maria. The next
23 speaker and the last one on this panel is Chuck
24 Delaney.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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2 CHUCK DELANEY: Council Member Chin, Committee
3 Members, Committee Staff, the City Planning
4 Commission's proposed SoHo/NoHo rezoning is a
5 terrible idea. Overwhelmingly rejected by Manhattan
6 Community Board Two, criticized by Borough President
7 Brewer. I know others will testify to many reasons
8 that the Council should reject this proposal.

9 Hells hundred acres of SoHo was once known was
10 pioneered for residential use by artists and fellow
11 travelers from the 1960's and '70's. The best option
12 is to reject this proposal and start anew. The
13 damaging aspect of this proposal I want to highlight
14 is the danger to loft tenants and other low and
15 moderate income tenants in SoHo/NoHo and the joining
16 neighborhoods particularly in Chinatown.

17 As one of the four founders of lower Manhattan
18 loft tenants in the 1970's and as the Tenant
19 Representative on the Loft Board, I have been in many
20 loft units in SoHo and NoHo over the years. If
21 adopted, this proposal would put many residential
22 buildings at risk of demolition.

23 For the record, I must note that I'm not
24 providing this testimony on behalf of the Loft Board.
25 Rather as a long time tenant organizer, I speak on

1
2 behalf of loft tenants who are being put at risk by
3 this proposal. Particularly because CPC staff that
4 drafted it, whoever comprehended the laws and
5 provisions that protect this community and that
6 allowed it to flourish. And indeed, it does
7 flourish. There are no artists left in SoHo than
8 Koch Administration Deputy Mayor Robert Esnard told a
9 group of loft tenants way back in the mid 1980's.
10 That wasn't true then and it's not true today.

11 However, amid the tourists and shoppers that the
12 artists presence help attract to the neighborhood, we
13 have to look for them. But they're there on Green
14 Street, Crosby, Broadway, Mercer Street, and all
15 through this unique zone. Sadly, City Planning staff
16 made little effort to count them or calculate the
17 threat their proposal creates for these pioneers. I
18 will submit detailed written testimony.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 CHUCK DELANEY: Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chuck. That was
22 the last speaker on the panel Chair Levin and I don't
23 see any Council Members with questions, so I'm going
24 to call on the next panel. Which will be Kathleen
25 Wakeham, Ryder Kessler, Mikey Lampel and Ken Ayub.

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2 For the first speaker is Kathleen Wakeham followed by
3 Ryder Kessler.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 KATHLEEN WAKEHAM: Good day. My name is Kathleen
6 Wakeham, of the Met Council on Housing. For 50 years
7 I have lived in the community as a rent stabilized
8 tenant and I'm very familiar with the needs of our
9 community. Please vote no for the proposed up-zoning
10 of SoHo/NoHo Chinatown. This up-zoning is another
11 giant giveaway to developers during de Blasio's lame
12 duck year in office.

13 Many are de Blasio donors who lobbied
14 relentlessly for this giveaway. Such development
15 would cost the demolition of more than 600 units of
16 rent regulated housing. These units are the homes of
17 lower income and Asian American residents. Also,
18 this rezoning will identify a secondary displacement
19 of thousands more tenants in the surrounding area,
20 more Asian American and lower income residents. This
21 plan includes office, hotel and other commercial
22 space as well as luxury condo space and facility
23 space for institutions like NYU which are all exempt
24 from affordable housing requirements.

1
2 The pandemic has had a devastating impact on New
3 Yorkers. Over a million New Yorkers have lost jobs
4 and are facing eviction because they cannot pay the
5 rent. Over 70,000 New Yorkers are without stable
6 homes. Our community does not need another up-zoning
7 for super luxury housing and commercial corridors.
8 This proposed plan will not provide a vital need to
9 affordable housing, rather it will only increase the
10 housing crisis of New York.

11 The corporate chains in the commercial corridor
12 will be the death of small businesses. During the
13 pandemic, 50 percent of small businesses have closed.
14 New Yorkers need commercial rent control to save and
15 revive small businesses not another giveaway to
16 corporate chains. Please vote no to this rezoning
17 plan and please consider the plans proposed by
18 Village Preservation.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 KATHLEEN WAKEHAM: Working Group. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Kathleen. The next
22 speaker on this panel is Ryder Kessler to be followed
23 by Mikey Lampel.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
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1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 247
2 RYDER KESSLER: Hi there, my name's Ryder
3 Kessler. I am a member of Community Board Two.
4 Unlike many of my board colleagues, I am here to urge
5 you to approve rezoning of SoHo/NoHo. I want to
6 focus in our progressive values.

7 First, as progressives, we say we're committed to
8 following the facts and the facts here are clear. We
9 have a housing supply crisis. The lack of housing
10 stock in New York is the primary driver of high costs
11 that make New York the most expensive rental market
12 in the nation. Social science research demonstrates
13 unequivocally that building more housing including
14 market rate housing lowers prizes for everyone and
15 reduces displacement.

16 Second, we say we're committed to racial equity.
17 When we do build housing here in New York, it's
18 disproportionately in poor, Black and Brown
19 neighborhoods. Meanwhile largely White and wealthy
20 neighborhoods like SoHo and NoHo do not contribute to
21 new housing stock and that has to change.

22 Third, I want to highlight the question of
23 sustainability. It's another self-described
24 progressive value. We are in the midst of a climate
25 crisis. New York experienced record rainfall twice

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 248
2 within just weeks this year. The single most
3 important step we can take to ameliorate climate
4 change is to generate housing density in transit rich
5 areas like SoHo and NoHo.

6 So, overall legalizing housing production in SoHo
7 and NoHo is a critical step to making New York more
8 affordable, less segregated and more sustainable. I
9 urge the Council to approve this rezoning with the
10 recommended modifications to reduce commercial
11 density so that vital housing production is not
12 crowded out. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ryder. The next
14 speaker is Mikey Lampel to be followed by Ken Ayub.

15 MIKEY LAMPEL: Thank you for having me today. My
16 name is Mikey Lampel. I'm a member of Open New York,
17 a lifelong Manhattan resident, and a student at NYU's
18 Wagner School of Public Service at the PUK building
19 in SoHo.

20 I strongly support the Proposed rezoning to
21 create thousands of desperately needed units of mixed
22 income housing. Going to school in SoHo and NoHo is
23 a privilege because the neighborhood's showcase some
24 of the greatest aspects —

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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MIKEY LAMPEL: Wait -

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yeah, I think we need to reset that clock. That was I think left over from Ryder's clock.

MIKEY LAMPEL: I can continue.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, go ahead.

MIKEY LAMPEL: Uhm, going to school in SoHo/NoHo is a privilege because the neighborhood showcase some of the greatest aspects of New York City. A vibrant art scene, historic architecture and incomparable transit access. However, SoHo and NoHo also represent many of the city's fixable inequities. The neighborhoods could contain almost zero units of deeply affordable housing. Market rate apartments are far out of reach for the middle class and they are two of the least diverse neighborhoods in the whole city. This rezoning plan will preserve and build upon what makes SoHo and NoHo such vibrant neighborhoods but it will help eliminate the structural inequities that make them so inaccessible.

The creation of an estimated 900 units of deeply affordable housing will be a life changing development for the families that can move in and finally escape the horrors of housing insecurity.

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2 There are hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers in
3 need of affordable housing that the city does not
4 have. So, it is a moral imperative to build
5 affordable units in every neighborhood of the city,
6 especially ones like SoHo that currently don't have
7 any.

8 Building new housing in SoHo and NoHo would take
9 rent pressures off of surrounding neighborhoods and
10 it would lower the city's unacceptable levels of
11 residential segregation by allowing a diverse group
12 of people to move into a wealthy and predominantly
13 White neighborhood. I also believe the rezoning can
14 be improved by reducing commercial densities to
15 incentivize more housing as opposed to office space.

16 Lastly, the community preference policy should be
17 altered to include residents outside of CB2, so that
18 low income workers from adjacent neighborhoods are
19 eligible for more affordable units. In the 50 years
20 since SoHo and NoHo zoning laws came into effect, the
21 neighborhoods and the city as a whole have changed
22 considerably. It's time the zoning changed too.

23 Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mikey. The last
25 speaker on this panel is Ken Ayub.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

KEN AYUB: Hello, can you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can hear you, go ahead.

KEN AYUB: Okay, great got you. Thank you. So, I just want to express my support for the rezoning. Uhm, I think adding home for 3,000 mixed income housing uhm, and also 900 homes for – sorry, for 900 families who are in desperate need of affordable housing is a great idea. Uhm, I would like us to encourage the uh, maximizing the incentives for residential instead of office space. So, I would like to see the City Council to reduce the commercial densities and maximize the residential densities.

I also would like to see a city belong in the community preference as a means for integration. As a former historic district resident I often find myself the only Hispanic in my district. So, increasing and broadening the community preference to those who work in the rezoning area live in other neighborhoods that – uh, besides the SoHo/NoHo I think would be a huge gain to integration in the city. A central city with the second most segregation in the country.

1
2 And then lastly for — I'd like to echo my
3 previous colleague who mentioned our progressive
4 values, right? So, we often as progressives like to
5 say that we are pro-immigration and what have you but
6 then you know, it's one thing to be pro-immigration
7 but if you don't provide them a home, hey, that's not
8 pro-immigration. And so, creating affordable housing
9 is a key step in that process of immigration.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 KEN AYUB: Yeah and if I'm running low on time,
12 I'll seed the rest of my time but uh please vote yes
13 for the rezoning and reduce the office MC and the
14 community preference.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ken. Can you state
16 your name for the record?

17 KEN AYUB: Oh, my name is Ken.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, thank you. Chair
19 Levin, I don't see any Council Members with
20 questions, so I'm going to call on the next panel,
21 which is going to be Hew Evans, Sarah Eccles, Trevor
22 Stewart, and Frederica Sigel. So, the first speaker
23 is Hew Evans followed by Sarah Eccles.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I don't see Hew. Can we then
3 call on Sarah Eccles?

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 SARAH ECCLES: Okay, I got it. Hello, my name is
6 Sarah Eccles and I am speaking on behalf of Village
7 Preservation. In response to the wide spread
8 criticism, said their plan will likely result in
9 little or no new affordable housing and oversized big
10 box chain stores, the city made some changes to their
11 proposal.

12 To call them window dressing would be an insult
13 to window dressing. Analysis we performed and
14 submitted to the Council shows small changes to the
15 allowable commercial FAR will have no effect on the
16 likely production of affordable housing. First of
17 all, 88 percent of the sites where the city predicts
18 affordable housing will be built were outside of the
19 area covered by the changes and therefore unaffected.
20 But even with the changes, we found that the rezoning
21 still allows developers to build the maximum
22 allowable amount of FAR without including any
23 affordable housing on 92 percent of the sites where
24 the city predicts affordable housing will be built.

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2 On the other eight percent of sites, even with
3 the changes, under the rezoning developers can still
4 build more market rate space when they don't include
5 affordable housing than when they do. With such
6 incentives, why would any developer choose to include
7 affordable housing? And the requirement for special
8 permits for loading docks for stores over 10,000
9 square feet is a hollow, meaningless gesture
10 addressing none of the harms the rezoning will do to
11 a small business. The plan remains a shame and a
12 developer giveaway, even with the changes. We urge
13 you to vote no.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Sarah. The next
15 speaker that we skipped; I see him in the Zoom now is
16 Hew Evans.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 HEW EVANS: Hello, my name is Hew Evans.
19 Pronouns are they, them and I am speaking on behalf
20 of Village Preservation.

21 Projections about the affordable housing this
22 plan will produce is based on the city's claim that
23 no developer will choose to just pay into a fund
24 rather than include affordable housing. Is there
25 allowed two developments with 25,000 square feet of

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2 residential space or less. The city's main argument
3 is that no developer has chosen to do this so far but
4 as per documentation we've submitted, that's an
5 outlandish basis for arguing that it won't happen
6 here.

7 By far the majority of those other developments
8 the city has cited, they had additional public
9 funding, making them 100 percent affordable. So
10 paying into a fund to avoid including affordable
11 housing wasn't an option. And all those other
12 developments were located in much weaker housing
13 markets. Where market rate units come in fairly
14 similar or even slightly lower rents and be
15 "affordable" units. Providing little incentive to
16 pay into a fund to avoid providing affordable units.

17 But in SoHo and NoHo, market rate units bring an
18 astronomically higher rents or sales prices than
19 affordable rents, giving developers a huge financial
20 incentive to limit their residential spaces 25,000
21 square feet, pay into the fund and avoid providing
22 any affordable housing at all. If they have unused
23 floor area, they'll just build the rest of the
24 building with lucrative retail, office, hotel or
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2 community facility space. Which has no affordable
3 housing requirement.

4 This is just one more reason why we strongly urge
5 you to vote no on this plan. Thank you for your
6 time.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Hew. Chair Moya's
8 back, so Chair Moya the next speaker is Trevor
9 Stewart.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you to
11 Council Member Levin for stepping in during this
12 time. Trevor, whenever you're ready.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Trevor, you got to unmute
15 yourself.

16 TREVOR STEWART: My name is Trevor -

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Oh, hold on. Trevor, hold on
18 one second. You got to unmute yourself one more
19 time.

20 TREVOR STEWART: [INAUDIBLE 4:57:12].

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: There you go. Now we can hear
22 you.

23 TREVOR STEWART: My name is Trevor Stewart and
24 I'm speaking on behalf of Village Preservation. One
25 of the many reasons to oppose this deeply troubling

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2 plan is the enormous scale of development it allows.
3 For all practical purposes, the current maximum
4 allowable FAR here is five. Since a high FAR is only
5 allowed for a very narrow band of community
6 facilities. But under the rezoning, the allowable
7 FAR increases at least 30 percent to 6.5 but also 94
8 percent to 9.7 FAR in some areas and a mind boggling
9 140 percent to 12 FAR in other areas.

10 This is enormous. Not only compared to the very
11 generous size of new development currently allowed,
12 but to existing buildings in the rezoning area, which
13 average around 4.8 FAR. The maximum allowable FAR of
14 12 is two and a half times that size. That's 20
15 percent larger than allowed for residential
16 developments on Billionaires Row in Midtown. In
17 fact, it's the highest residential density legally
18 allowed in New York State.

19 This means grossly out of scale construction but
20 huge financial incentives for demolishing existing
21 buildings smaller than what the new zoning allows.
22 Including buildings of historic significance, both
23 landmarked and those listed on the national register
24 but not landmarked. As well as buildings with
25 affordable rent regulated units.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 258
2 The dramatic unprecedented proposed up-zoning is
3 not only wrong, it's unnecessary to achieve the plans
4 goals. Mandatory Inclusionary Housing requirements
5 could be applied to new developments at the maximum
6 allowable FAR of five. For these and many other
7 reasons, we urge you to vote no. Thank you very
8 much.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
10 testimony. Next speaker.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker is Frederica
12 Sigel.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 FREDERICA SIGEL: My name is Frederica Sigel.
15 Although I am Chair of CB2's Land Use and Housing
16 Committee, today I'm speaking as an individual.

17 This plan is an unacceptable substitute for
18 direct city investment in affordable housing. We
19 need to revise Mandatory Inclusionary Housing with
20 text that mandates higher percentages of permanently
21 affordable housing and lower median incomes.

22 Eliminate any funds, offsite housing options and
23 payments in lieu that would create affordable housing
24 outside CB2. Expand the preference area to include
25 Chinatown. Please eliminate the potential for any

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2 combination of bonus packages that would result in
3 buildings as much as 40 percent greater than FAR
4 would permit.

5 The plan must better address demolition
6 displacement in other forms of involuntary housing
7 loss. It fails to take sufficient steps to protect
8 residents during conversions from joint live work to
9 youth group two. Apply the toughest protections
10 available. Require unequivocal proof that each
11 conversion is voluntary. Please eliminate the arts
12 fund. But if you don't, restrict the funds that
13 generates to the rezoned area and reduce the tax to a
14 maximum of \$5 per square foot, just like in Hudson
15 Square. Apply it to every type of request for a use
16 conversion.

17 I reiterate the communities long standing
18 opposition to lifting the current caps on eating and
19 drinking and oversized retail. Why not institute a
20 special permit when restaurants exceed 200 total
21 seats as in Hudson Square? Develop tough quality of
22 life performance standards to govern retail
23 deliveries, hours of operation, lighting, refuse and
24 inventory storage.

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2 Lastly, please prohibit dormitories and close any
3 loophole that would let NYU expand further into SoHo
4 and NoHo. Which they did pledge to do, to not do in
5 2012. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
7 Next speaker please.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh Chair that was the last
9 speaker on this panel and I don't see Council Members
10 with questions, so I'm going to call the next panel
11 which is going to be Eric Goshow, Harrison Grinnan,
12 Margaret Basely and Meghan Heintz. Eric Goshow
13 followed by Harrison Grinnan, the next panel.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Eric, we can't hear you.

16 ERIC GOSHOW: I don't know what happened here but
17 anyway, can you hear me?

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

19 ERIC GOSHOW: Chair Moya, uhm, -

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Hold on, let's reset the clock
21 Eric. Hold on one second okay.

22 ERIC GOSHOW: Sorry, it won't take long.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: No worries.

24 ERIC GOSHOW: Yeah, where's my camera?

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

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2 ERIC GOSHOW: Alright, well, Chair Moya, my name
3 is Eric Goshow. I'm a Fellow of the American
4 Institute of Architects. My firm Goshow Architects
5 is very much involved in housing in New York City,
6 including affordable and supportive housing.

7 But I'm not writing about - from that point of
8 view, I'm writing as a reading and writing and
9 talking as a citizen of the greatest of American
10 cities. One with flaws and opportunities. Two of
11 which I'd like to mention here. The first is the
12 obvious and desperate need for housing in New York
13 City. Housing of all types for all people in all
14 boroughs, in all areas of our city. Our zoning laws
15 intended to create wellbeing and safety for all, no
16 longer serve that purpose. By limiting residential
17 density, our zoning resolution simply restricts the
18 ability of many to live here by implicitly
19 encouraging rising housing costs. This has to
20 change.

21 Secondly, is the segregated nature of our
22 neighborhoods. Perhaps unintentionally supported by
23 the market place and its interpretation of zoning
24 laws. The rich and mostly White here, the poor and
25 mostly color there. In this great city that I love,

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2 one of the great pleasures is the knowledge that here
3 we can all exist together, work together, eat food
4 from all over the globe together, worship as we see
5 fit together. We're a melting pot comedy and
6 civility. These two flaws suggest opportunities to
7 make our city more open, more inclusive, more civil.
8 The NoHo/SoHo rezoning accomplishes both goals.
9 Goals of more housing and housing more integrated and
10 more representative of our city's diversity.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 ERIC GOSHOW: This rezoning will act as a model
13 for others. Thank you very much. Sorry for the
14 delays.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: No worries. Thank you. Thank
16 you for your testimony. Have a good day Eric. Next
17 speaker please.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker is Harrison
19 Grinnan.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 HARRISON GRINNAN: Hello, my name is Harrison
22 Grinnan. I work for a large company in Midtown with
23 many co-workers who are immigrants. Of my co-
24 workers, not a single one with children is able to
25 afford to live inside the boundaries of New York City

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2 despite white collar pay. When I brought that up at
3 the first community board meeting I've ever attended,
4 a meeting in Community Board Two in Manhattan, I was
5 shouted over. Hearing White homeowners yell, "who
6 cares and oh, boo hoo." A member of the Community
7 Board said that SoHo should not have to bear the
8 burden of providing affordable housing because of its
9 contributions to culture and its cobblestone streets
10 and that Jay Z owning property there showed that it
11 was a diverse place.

12 At a second meeting, a representative at
13 Municipal Arts Society, said that an alternative plan
14 was better. And then under questioning from Gale
15 Brewer about what would be better, said that actually
16 the area was simply too expensive and thus not a good
17 location for affordable housing. I believe that
18 contrary to those voices, SoHo does have a duty to
19 the rest of the city to do its fair share to help
20 with the housing crisis.

21 By contrast to the previous rezoning's and
22 especially the previous administrations down zoning's
23 in specifically rich, White neighborhoods, this
24 rezoning gives us the opportunity to turn the page on
25 the failed policies that passed. The area is

1
2 extraordinarily wealthy and exclusive with sky high
3 market rate rents to prove it. Rents have rebounded
4 from their pandemic lows and the average asking rent
5 and street ease in the area is currently \$5,800 per
6 month. These sky high market rates are great for
7 Mandatory Inclusionary Housing. What it means is
8 that with zero subsidy from the state, these high
9 rents will support affordable housing for people who
10 can't afford the market rents.

11 When Mandatory Inclusionary Housing is used in
12 poor neighborhoods, it struggles but in a
13 neighborhood like this, it will succeed. With this
14 rezoning, not only will wealthy people be able to
15 move in new housing instead of creating a chain of
16 displacement as they out bid existing tenants who are
17 not lucky enough to have rent control. Those same
18 rich people will end up subsidizing will hopefully
19 total about 1,000 households living at fixed rents in
20 an area with extraordinary access to jobs, transit
21 and schools. This rezoning won't be easy as I
22 learned watched community members shout abuse at
23 anyone speaking in favor of it, including the
24 Department of City Planning staff. The opponents of
25 it know what they stand to lose, a one way ration of

1
2 property values and rents. Achieving housing justice
3 is a cause worthy of standing up to these bullies,
4 their lawsuits, and the publicity their money buys.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 HARRISON GRINNAN: This is the kind of action
7 upon which legacies are made. Thank you very much
8 for your time.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
10 testimony. Next speaker.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker and I'm not
12 sure we have her but Margaret Basely. So, if you are
13 there, please unmute yourself.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Margaret, if you can hear us,
16 all you have to do is unmute yourself.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can come back to her
18 because I see our next speaker ready. So, Meghan
19 Heintz.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 MEGHAN HEINTZ: Hi. I'm going to be quick uhm,
22 because I have my two month old baby on my lap right
23 now but I'm here to speak in favor of the rezoning.
24 We have a housing crisis, climate crisis and social
25 justice crisis and this is one of the few actions we

1
2 can take that chips away at all three of them. We
3 need to pay down our housing shortage. That housing
4 needs to be in transit rich and walkable
5 neighborhoods to reduce reliance on cars and White
6 wealthy neighborhoods need to step up and start doing
7 their fair share in terms of housing production.

8 I would also say that this is a process that is
9 very undemocratic and not very well sampled at
10 gathering opinions on the topic. I can say as like a
11 working person and now as a young mom, it's very,
12 very difficult to come to these meetings and sit for
13 hours waiting for people to speak.

14 So, just, you know keep that in mind as you
15 listen to peoples testimonies today because it's not
16 a particularly representative sample. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: People can always their
18 testimony Meghan if they can't you know, a lot of -
19 this is our forum that we have here and we try to
20 keep it as open as possible. That's why we do these
21 hearings that go on for several hours. Uhm, and so,
22 we thank you for your patience and we appreciate your
23 testimony today and we want to make sure that
24 everyone has the ability to speak and if not, we can
25 always remind folks where they can send their

1
2 testimony to the City Council so that they are able
3 to submit that and their voices will be heard.

4 And with that, let us move on to the next
5 speaker. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, it looks like we
7 couldn't get Margaret Basely, so and I don't see any
8 Council Member questions. So, we can move on to the
9 next panel which will be Katherine Schoonover, David
10 Mulkins, Alida Camp, and Victoria Fariello.
11 Katherine Schoonover first please.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 KATHERINE SCHOONOVER: Good afternoon. My name
14 is Katherine Schoonover and I am speaking on behalf
15 of Village Preservation. As has been noted by
16 several other speakers, among the many unconscionable
17 elements of the rezoning plan is the allowance for
18 big box chain retail and eating and drinking
19 establishments of unlimited size throughout the
20 rezoning area including on narrow side streets which
21 form the majority of the rezoning area. Do
22 SoHo/NoHo, Chinatown or New York City for that
23 matter, really need more of these? This will only
24 make it impossible for anything but huge chain stores
25

1
2 or giant restaurants or bars to survive there and
3 will harm smaller, local, independent businesses.

4 This helps no one but the big developers and big
5 landlords who have been lobbying in favor of this
6 plan. Large chains take revenue out of our city and
7 turn our neighborhoods into giant outdoor malls
8 indistinguishable from anywhere else. Oversized
9 chain stores, bars and restaurants don't tend to
10 support healthy, successful, retail environments. As
11 we see higher retail vacancies in areas with large
12 numbers of chains than in those with independent
13 businesses. They will also generate huge amounts of
14 vehicular traffic in what is already one of the most
15 traffic clogged areas of New York City.

16 One of many reasons groups like the Sierra Club
17 New York City oppose this plan on environmental
18 grounds. Residents support reasonable size limits on
19 retail such as 5,000 square feet for eating and
20 drinking establishments and 10,000 square feet for
21 general retail. This proposal is nothing more than
22 an unmitigated giveaway to powerful corporate
23 interests and we strongly urge you to reject it.

24 Thank you.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 269
2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony
3 today. Next speaker.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
5 Alida Camp.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

7 ALIDA CAMP: Sorry about the unmuting. Thank
8 you. Thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is
9 Alida Camp. I love to explore New York's various
10 neighborhoods. The Proposed SoHo/NoHo plan should be
11 a NoNo plan.

12 No, because the numbers are wrong. While
13 affordable housing is essential to the survival and
14 vitality of New York, 25 to 30 percent affordable
15 means 70 to 75 percent market rate decreasing
16 diversity while increasing financial incentives for
17 property owners. No, because this plan will destroy
18 one of New York's treasures. New York is a gorgeous
19 mosaic as former Mayor David Dinkins defined diverse
20 New Yorkers. However, neighborhoods provide the
21 community essential to the city's vitality.

22 Neighborhoods thrive through protections afforded
23 by zoning and historic and special districts.
24 Distinct neighborhoods are why people want to move
25 here, live here, stay here, visit here and spend

1
2 money here. This plan will irremediably damage the
3 special character of SoHo/NoHo and parts of
4 Chinatown.

5 No, because ironically low income and senior
6 residents will lose their housing in the effected
7 parts of Chinatown. No, because small businesses in
8 Chinatown will be lost. No, because artists will
9 lose their homes. The Times real estate section this
10 weekend pointed out the rare event of live, work,
11 artist spaces. Is this something to be thrown away?

12 No, because the special character of SoHo as an
13 artis enclave will be lost to encroaching residential
14 towers and big box stores of suburban size as of
15 right.

16 Communities and neighborhoods deserve protection
17 to preserve livability for residents, allow small
18 business to flourish and maintain character and a tie
19 to New York's layers of history. SoHo/NoHo are an
20 important part of New York's history with a unique
21 character as first a manufacturing area leading to
22 the vernacular architecture. And then as an artist
23 community building upon New York's reputation as a
24 magnetic artist environment.

1 Don't allow a plan to damage their character.
2
3 The very thing that drives New Yorkers and visitors
4 alike to the SoHo/NoHo communities. The proposed
5 plan is not worthy of New York and one of its iconic
6 neighborhoods. There are better alternatives. Make
7 this the NoNo plan. Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
9 Next speaker please.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker is Victoria
11 Fariello.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

13 VICTORIA FARIELLO: Hi, thank you for having me.
14 My name is Victoria Fariello, I'm a District Leader
15 in lower Manhattan. I am here to ask that the City
16 Council vote no on this zoning proposal.

17 The proposed zoning plan does not guarantee
18 affordable housing. We've heard that from many, many
19 people. There are infinite loopholes in MIH that can
20 be used to scur any affordable housing requirement.
21 For example, they can build dormitories or you could
22 choose to build offices. Other mean to just avoid
23 building affordable housing. So, we need to be clear
24 that this is not about affordable housing.

1
2 There is much greater likelihood that this will
3 generate displacement rather than create affordable
4 housing. Instead, we should be focusing our efforts
5 on sites such as by more trade centers, where we can
6 have up to 1,300 affordable units in a truly resource
7 rich neighborhood that would not displace a single
8 person. Or to Howard Street and SoHo that could
9 provide 300 units of affordable housing.

10 The proposed plan is an incredible disrespect to
11 the community leaders and members who have been
12 working with elected officials to provide meaningful
13 feedback. But the plan remains virtually unchanged
14 after 14 months. They put hours of work with the
15 belief that their input mattered. Instead they've
16 been completely disregarded. For these reasons among
17 others, I strongly urge our Council Members to vote
18 no on proposed zoning rezoning plan. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
20 Next speaker please.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on this
22 panel is David Mulkins.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

24 DAVID MULKINS: Hi, I'm the President of the
25 Bowery Alliance of Neighbors and a 25 year public

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2 high school history teacher. This up-zoning plan
3 contains no guarantee that any affordable housing
4 would be built and is wildly perceived as a giveaway
5 to big real estate.

6 After long months of workshops and meetings at
7 which the city assured the community that its voices
8 would be heard, the plan produced by City Planning
9 ignores our voices and obviously was preconceived a
10 long time before. This process was a shame and the
11 end result is a mess. The areas incoming City
12 Council Member Chris Marte strongly opposes it and
13 Community Board Two voted by a staggering 36 to one
14 to reject the plan. SoHo and NoHo are iconic
15 economically thriving historic districts famous for
16 cast iron architecture and as incubators for modern
17 art. By adding height and bulk, big box superstores,
18 luxury housing and NYU dorms, this up-zoning plan
19 would destroy the areas unique creative character and
20 displace long time residents and businesses,
21 especially in Chinatown.

22 Lastly, this bold plan shows contempt for the
23 city's half century old landmarks law. If passed, it
24 would set a terrible precedent for the destruction of
25 historic districts in every borough in the city. As

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2 such, you cannot vote on this as merely a lower
3 Manhattan issue. For the good of the entire city,
4 please vote to reject the SoHo/NoHo rezoning plan.
5 Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
7 speaker on this panel and I don't see any Council
8 Members with questions.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Seeing no further
10 questions, can we call the next panel please?

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Arthur, do you want to call
12 the next panel?

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will include
14 Enzo Repetto, Campbell Munn, Nicholas Oo, and Max
15 Livingston. The first speaker on the panel will be
16 Enzo Repetto followed by Campbell Munn.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

18 ENZO REPETTO: Hello? Hello?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hello.

20 ENZO REPETTO: Hello there. My name is Enzo
21 Repetto, I am a current NYU student who is attending
22 and I wanted to voice my support in favor of the
23 SoHo/NoHo Rezoning Act. And my — the reason I
24 support this plan basically is, I've seen many
25 students and many of my friends planning to live in

1
2 the city in the future but at the current rate that
3 we're seeing housing right now, it seems more and
4 more unlikely due to rising costs. The only way that
5 we're going to be able to address this is that we
6 need to be able to up public transportation and build
7 in areas where public transportation already exists.

8 The best way to do this is that we need to start
9 up-zoning place such as SoHo in order to be able to
10 build up and create these opportunities for people to
11 live in in the future. It would be more affordable
12 housing and also prevent gentrification by building
13 in places that have been decreasing housing over
14 time. Over this time, we have seen more housing in
15 other areas and overall, that's my take on it. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
18 Next speaker.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Campbell Munn who will be
20 followed by Max Livingston.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Campbell, you're on.

23 CAMPBELL MUNN: Hello, good afternoon. My name
24 is Campbell - can I - oh, thank you so much. My name
25 is Campbell Munn, I'm 20-years-old and I'm a junior

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2 studying architecture and urban planning at NYU
3 Gallatin. I live on 103 2nd Avenue on the border of
4 the East Village and NoHo. Just one block from the
5 rezoning's effected area. I spend much of my free
6 time and classroom time in the neighborhood, often
7 even in the buildings potentially affected by the
8 rezoning.

9 In short, I am testifying in strong support of
10 the proposed rezoning with one caveat. The rezoning
11 should not proceed with the commercial FAR increases
12 as proposed. We continue to have a housing crisis
13 not a shopping or an office crisis. With that said,
14 I'll spend the rest of my time speaking to the three
15 reasons I support the rezoning.

16 SoHo/NoHo is one of the few neighborhoods of NYC
17 to have lost housing in the last decade. But the
18 neighborhood is seeing demic apartment [LOST AUDIO
19 5:21:01] create urban palaces out of the neighbors'
20 homes is abhorrent. It is no secret that the city is
21 experiencing acute and not soon to end housing
22 crisis. The rezoning would finally end the year on
23 year increase in the neighborhoods housing stock.

24 Two, the affordable housing in the rezoning is
25 set to provide a crucial step to desegregating New

1
2 York City. We are familiar with the rezoning –
3 excuse me, with the history of redlining and the
4 racist federal housing policies enacted in the
5 1930's. However, this legacy is not behind us and is
6 incumbent upon this generation to do all it can to
7 bring about a more just and integrated New York City.
8 100 affordable homes would bring racial and economic
9 integration to a neighborhood known as a rich mans
10 playground. This is a truly exceptional opportunity
11 to take a bold step to a more equitable New York.

12 Three, finally I want to address the historic
13 nature of the district. Specifically, I want to talk
14 about an example on the lower, on the west side of
15 Lafayette Street between Fourth Street and Astor
16 Place. This is the former site of a full stack of
17 colonnade houses built by John Jacob Astor in the
18 1830's. As this wealthy neighborhood turned in to
19 the warehouse district in the 1850's, a number of the
20 colonnade houses were replaced by storing loft built
21 links and later full lofts.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

23 CAMPBELL MUNN: A number of those buildings have
24 since been landmarked or mentioned in the 1999 LPC
25 NoHo Designation Report.

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CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

CAMPBELL MUNN: This is to say the new construction can exist with all the construction -

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.

CAMPBELL MUNN: And office and one landmarked building can replace by another.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you so much. Thank you for your testimony today. Next speaker please.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Max Livingston who will be followed by Nicholas Oo.

MAX LIVINGSTON: Hi, uh, can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

MAX LIVINGSTON: Good. My name is Max Livingston, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'd like to start off by voicing my strong agreement with the need to up-zone SoHo and NoHo. My primary concern echoing what many others have said with the current rezoning plan is that office densities are too generous, which can result in developers opting to build new offices rather than new residences.

Uhm, up-zoning wealthy areas in New York is a crucial and necessary policy tool to counter the climate crisis, the housing affordability crisis and

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2 to combat the legacy of segregation redlining and
3 racial injustice in housing.

4 Uhm, as someone who is from New York originally
5 from the upper west side, when I moved out of my
6 parents apartment after college, I would have loved
7 to live in lower Manhattan. There's a lot of great
8 stuff there. It's beautiful. It's close to my job.
9 Unfortunately the city's housing construction peaked
10 in the '60's, so while there are plenty of apartments
11 available for my parents' generation, and I would
12 note the generation of a lot of the SoHo residents
13 who I see testifying in opposition today, there were
14 way fewer apartments to go around for the city's
15 growing population when their children, my
16 generation, tried to move into our own apartments.

17 So, I moved to Crown Heights in Brooklyn and I
18 love Crown Heights, it's a great neighborhood as
19 well. It's much farther from work and I'm sure you
20 know walking around that I look the part of a
21 gentrifier. But I just want to say that the actual
22 gentrifiers are the ones in meetings like these,
23 opposing with a passion that I didn't realize people
24 could have about zoning. Any reasonable change to
25 the ancient zoning code, opposing any new housing

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2 being built near them, fighting so, so hard for the
3 status quo really just, the true definition of small
4 C conservatives in what is one of the most liberal
5 cities in the country.

6 If the city had taken a such a slow approach to
7 building the housing stock that it already had, uhm,
8 most of Brooklyn would still be Dutch farmland. We
9 need more housing now. That's the only way to solve
10 the affordability crisis. I would also like to say
11 that trying to govern a city of eight million people
12 through public comment and direct democracy is kind
13 of ridiculous. I have the ability, in fact I
14 recently did elect and/or vote against a Mayor,
15 Borough President, City Council Member, State
16 Assembly person, State Senator, Governor and among
17 others. I vote for them because I trust them to
18 govern. I trust them to -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

20 MAX LIVINGSTON: Check the facts, an event like
21 this is guaranteed to attract people invested opposed
22 interest. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
24 testimony today. Next speaker.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next and last speaker will be
3 Nicholas Oo.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

5 NICHOLAS OO: Hi. I support this rezoning. Uhm,
6 I uh you know, New York City is the greatest city in
7 the world because of growth and because of change.
8 New people, immigrants move here. I, myself, I'm an
9 immigrant. Uhm, you know, uh, I'm very lucky to be
10 here but you know many of my family members who were
11 immigrants and came you know at the same time as I
12 did uhm, have to leave New York City because uhm, you
13 know the rent is simply too high. Because we have
14 this devastating housing shortage and ultimately the
15 solution is to build more housing.

16 You know currently, we renters, we compete for
17 limited housing. Whereas by building more, landlords
18 will have to compete for us renters and the way
19 they'll do it is by lowering rents or increasing
20 quality. To a great extent, I feel like a lot of the
21 opponents of the rezoning are homeowners who uhm, you
22 know when the rents go up, they don't feel it. They
23 just see - they might see the property values go up
24 and they don't see it. But when the rents go up for
25

1
2 us renters, we just see ourselves you know, one step
3 closer to having to move again.

4 You know, imagine - I don't know when was the
5 last time a lot of these opponents even looked for a
6 rental apartment for themselves to live in. Uhm, so,
7 I asked the City Council to think about the 900
8 families who could move into the affordable housing
9 through this rezoning. And there's also 2,000
10 families who could move into the market rate housing,
11 which in turn will free up 2,000 extra units outside
12 of SoHo/NoHo, helping another 2,000 families. That's
13 just, that's 5,000 families who can benefit from
14 this.

15 Uhm, and all the people and all the renters who
16 couldn't be here at this hearing to speak up for
17 themselves, uhm, finally, as a member of the Chinese
18 American - Chinese community in the city, I think
19 it's not really appropriate for other people, rich
20 White people to use us as pawns. Uhm, you know,
21 despite being next door, Chinatown was excluded from
22 School District Two because SoHo parents don't want
23 their kids to go to school with Chinatown kids. So,
24 I think that you know what we should do is approve
25 the rezoning and expand the community preference to

1
2 Chinatown folks, so they can get priority to the SoHo
3 units.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

5 NICHOLAS OO: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Nicholas. Next
7 speaker please.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
9 speaker on this panel and I see no members with
10 questions for this panel. So, with your permission
11 we can call the next panel, which will include
12 Alexandr Neratoff, Renea Monroe, Allie Ryan and
13 Emily Hellstrom. First speaker will be Alexandr
14 Neratoff to be followed by Renea Monroe.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

16 ALEXANDR NERATOFF: Alexandr Neratoff, Architect,
17 member of Infusion Advisory Group, living and working
18 in SoHo for more than 40 years, representing New York
19 loft tenants as well private clients.

20 Portions of this massive rezoning are not well
21 worked out. It took 50 years to get there. The
22 remaining six weeks seem too short to rethink and
23 rewrite this text. The City Council should consider
24 these points and others I'll present in written
25 testimony.

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2 One, substantial demolition that followed
3 increases in FAR covering non-fireproof buildings
4 exceeding their construction class height limits.
5 Demolition will lead to evictions. Strong new
6 protections for rent regulated housing must be
7 included.

8 Two, the under building disincentive, page 57 and
9 58 should clearly include commercial only
10 construction above the first floor to tie MIH equally
11 to commercial as well as residential construction
12 triggers.

13 Three, most problematic is the fate of joint
14 living work quarters for artists. This use is
15 preserved but no new conversions to or new JLVQA
16 floor area is allowed. It's just a position of these
17 uses in new partial conversions and inevitable
18 enlargements exposing MDL and building code
19 incompatibilities. Depth of lighting and
20 ventilation, studio use restrictions, egress yards
21 and courts. Requiring expensive CFO changes to
22 implement. What really does not work is a proposal
23 to impose an enormous tax on the very artists and
24 homesteaders who created the neighborhood in order
25 for them to sell their spaces.

1
2 There is a simple way to eliminate this painful
3 solution. Eliminate the problem. New artist
4 certification was already deleted by the proposal.
5 That leaves no reason to maintain artists passivity
6 in joint living work quarters for artists. Declare
7 them to be joint living work quarters for anyone and
8 preserve the one valuable characteristic of mixed use
9 space. No limits to the percentage of the space used
10 to live or to work. While solving the compatibility
11 problems outlined above by simple text changes
12 coordinated with the New York State Legislature.
13 Thank you for your attention.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
15 Next speaker.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
17 Emily Hellstrom to be followed by Renea Monroe.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

19 EMILY HELLSTROM: Hi, my name is Emily Hellstrom
20 and I have lived in SoHo since 1996 and spent over
21 half my life here. I have been a theater artist
22 here. I am choosing to raise my family here. I have
23 made community here.

24 I am the President of my co-op board, the largest
25 residential building on Broadway, the Vice President

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2 of the SoHo Broadway Bid, and I am an active
3 participant in the civic life of this neighborhood
4 and this city. But my voice does not count. People
5 from SoHo/NoHo, Chinatown and all over downtown
6 Manhattan who are equally woven into the fabric of
7 this vibrant, vibrating place are all fiercely
8 pleading with you to stop this bad plan.

9 A plan that doesn't accomplish what it's set out
10 to and will have unintended consequences that will
11 ripple throughout this city and radically and
12 permanently alter this world famous place. But it is
13 clear, those neighborhood voices do not count. Our
14 community and many organizations I sit on have come
15 to the table with real compromises, yet almost no
16 changes to this plan have been made throughout this
17 entire process.

18 Know the only voice that matters here today is
19 money. At the root of this rotten rezoning is money.
20 A commercial real estate bailout cloaked in virtual
21 signaling. Trickle down housing does not work where
22 market forces do not follow the normal paths and huge
23 real estate interests have millions of dollars to
24 spend exploiting loopholes.

1
2 During an envision SoHo/NoHo, I sat next to
3 someone high up in Vornado Realty Trust who openly
4 advocated for allowances for rooftop penthouses. One
5 of those loopholes, rooftop penthouses. What are we
6 doing here? A blunt instrument like off the shelf
7 zoning will open up a cascade of unintended
8 consequences. But if money counts, then I will be
9 plain. This plan will fundamentally reshape a
10 neighborhood that currently draws millions of
11 visitors per year from which the city reaps enormous
12 amounts of money. Using a plan that will put
13 unprecedented power over the direction of the
14 neighborhood into the hands of large real estate
15 holders.

16 I hope your voice will count. Please vote no and
17 let's get started on a real conversation to tackle
18 the problems we all know exist and we all want to
19 work on. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Uh, next speaker
21 please.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Allie Ryan will be the next
23 speaker.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.
25

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2 ALLIE RYAN: Hello, my name is Allie Ryan and I'm
3 a Council District Two resident and a Documentary
4 Film Producer with a small production company. I
5 request all City Council members to vote no on the
6 proposed SoHo neighborhood plan. A yes vote, even
7 with negotiations will create a visual legacy of
8 significantly enabling the demolition of an
9 internationally recognizable neighborhoods for their
10 signature architecture.

11 In signaling the death for small businesses in an
12 area that is specifically known and celebrated for
13 small businesses. And finally, displacing elderly
14 and artists who created these neighborhoods, now
15 wanting to age in place.

16 Today, I want to bring a face to the potential
17 large retail, over 25,000 square feet. Encouraging
18 large retail over 25,000 square feet, discourage the
19 small business owners. Commercial truck traffic is
20 not just sanitation trucks but tractor trailers
21 bringing in goods for these larger stores.

22 I see this as a result of two targets that have
23 moved into the lower east side. Just drive into the
24 suburbs and you will see the sprawl of 25,000 square
25 feet large retail, such as Walmart, Lowes, Home

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2 Depot, Kohls among other chains. History has shown
3 that these large box stores have swallowed small
4 storefronts, and in recent years, even before COVID
5 lockdown. The growth of online shopping has caused
6 retail stores to abandon their physical spaces as
7 seen right now, if you walk down Broadway.

8 In closing, I want to say City Council Members,
9 please vote no on this plan and send DCP back to the
10 drawing board under the next Mayor's Administration
11 with a mandate to work with the envision report
12 recommendations, keeping in mind that consumer habits
13 have changed as well as live, work habits. Thank
14 you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
16 speaker on this panel. I see no members with
17 questions for the panel. So, with your permission we
18 can call up the next panel. That will include Lora
19 Tenenbaum, Margo Margolis, Michele Varian, and Leigh
20 Behnke. The first speaker will be Lora Tenenbaum
21 followed by Margo Margolis.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

23 LORA TENENBAUM: My name is Lora Tenenbaum, I
24 speak on behalf of myself and our artists JLWQA Co-
25 op, which has a 50-year commitment in the SoHo

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2 community. We urge you to reject the proposed
3 rezoning in its entirety because of its fundamental
4 and unfixable flaws.

5 City Planning was asked by our Council Member and
6 Borough President to tweak things to make our
7 community work, not bulldoze it and hand it over to
8 overextended big real estate. This plan for
9 dystopian future was an ugly surprise for us. A slap
10 in the face after months of community participation.

11 Even worse is the message about democratic
12 process and data gathering when it is being rammed
13 through during and pandemic. Any rezoning's goal
14 must include retaining SoHo's vibrant popular active
15 inhabited arts community, not turning SoHo into a
16 cookie cutter commercial center with big box stores,
17 clubs and interactive retail entertainment venues as
18 City Planning gleefully anticipates.

19 We urge that the needs of our Asian American
20 neighbors, both residents and small businesses such
21 as those who predominate our block, be placed above
22 those of the developers. And that a realistic path
23 for legalization without a punitive arts fund be
24 found for unconfirming residents. It was painful for
25 us older residents to be labeled relics by DCP and

1
2 none of us or our businesses important enough for DCP
3 to quantify in its study of our community.

4 To have them label part of Chinatown SoHo east.
5 The picture DCP paints for you is not the truth of
6 our communities. I understand that the rush to get
7 this done before the Mayor's term ends makes it
8 difficult to do this right. But you should be
9 presented with the state of the art plan for the
10 future and this plan is anything but. Unlike SoHo,
11 the plan needs a complete do over. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for
13 your testimony. Next speaker please.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Margo Margolis who will be
15 followed by Michele Varian.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

17 MARGO MARGOLIS: Yes, hello, can you hear me?

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

19 MARGO MARGOLIS: Okay, thank you. Uhm, I'm Margo
20 Margolis and I'm a Certified Artist. I'm speaking
21 today to oppose this plan. I think it's an
22 unworkable and disastrous plan.

23 I moved to SoHo in 1972. At that time, New York
24 was in recession and people were fleeing the city.
25 It was the artist that created grassroots community

1
2 here and it was SoHo that firmly established New York
3 as the preeminent cultural capital of the world. You
4 recognize the successes of the area that followed and
5 the factors that have made SoHo a global destination
6 and a huge economic engine for the city.

7 This could all be destroyed by the city's plan.
8 So, here is some of the problems. The city claims
9 that this will create affordable housing, yet there's
10 no guarantee of one unit of affordable housing that
11 will be built. There are so many loopholes that will
12 prevent this and favor instead the construction of
13 commercial space, offices, dorms and large, big box
14 stores, all oversized construction.

15 The proposed increase in the size of the
16 buildings will incentivize developers to demolish
17 buildings and displace small businesses, artists, low
18 income tenants and Asian Americans. There are 635
19 units of rent regulated housing that could be lost.
20 I'm afraid that I and other seniors who are aging in
21 place will be forced to leave. And I wonder if the
22 Department of Aging has been consulted in this plan.

23 Furthermore, the city has not addressed the
24 mechanism for conversion. It's near impossible to
25 convert J1WQA to residential, as the building codes

1
2 are different and incompatible. Even where possible,
3 conversions would take an exorbitant outlay of money
4 per unit plus a total evacuation of the building.

5 The city lists as potential sites for development
6 29 landmarked buildings in the SoHo National Historic
7 District to be demolished. It's heartbreaking. This
8 plan is for erasing history, culture, and displacing
9 them with a big, oversized mall and luxury housing.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

11 MARGO MARGOLIS: I'm for affordable housing but
12 not this way. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
14 testimony. Next speaker.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Michele Varian who will be
16 followed by Leigh Behnke.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Arthur, who do we have up
19 next?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Michele Varian. Michele, you
21 are on mute.

22 MICHELE VARIAN: There you go. My name is
23 Michele Varian and I am a 25 year residential tenant
24 and small business owner here in SoHo. I share a
25 rent stabilized JLWQA loft with my artist certified

1
2 husband, where we both live and work. We have heard
3 nothing from HPD who were incapable of helping us
4 when we were horribly harassed by the most recent
5 owners of our building.

6 Our affordable loft created the opportunity for
7 me to start my designing manufacturing businesses and
8 eventually opened a retail store in SoHo. My store
9 grew to showcase, not only my own but that of over
10 100 other mostly local and locally manufacture design
11 brands. The contributing economic driver of many
12 other small businesses. It became an international
13 destination, visited annually by business delegations
14 from around the world, Germany, Brazil, Japan, even
15 Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce came to visit me.
16 Businesses like mine were what they wanted to emulate
17 in their own city's.

18 Unfortunately, I was forced to move my shop and
19 manufacturing out of SoHo due to the increasingly
20 burdensome high rent. I moved my shop to an area in
21 Brooklyn with lower rent and now my store business
22 and the block I moved to are flourishing, as the new,
23 it place to visit for cool retail.

24 Because I now have profits to reinvest in my
25 employees and business versus owing every last cent

1
2 of potential profit to my landlord, I can now
3 consider scaling my business to additional locations.
4 As a small business rep at the dozens of SoHo/NoHo
5 advisory group meetings, I was "in the room" where
6 many, many great ideas were put forth regarding the
7 future of SoHo by residents and small business
8 owners. While commercial real estate reps
9 contributed few new ideas or suggestions. What I am
10 now aware of is that I was in the wrong room.
11 Commercial and real estate power brokers were busy
12 making lucrative backroom deals that did not reflect
13 any of the hours and hours and hours of community
14 input that the ULURP process requires.

15 Unlike big real estate, we do not have the ears
16 of elected officials. DCP has made clear their
17 vision for the future of SoHo. It does not include
18 residents, affordable or otherwise. Many of you
19 officials know this proposal will not create
20 affordable housing. But a carefully crafted PR -

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Michele.

22 MICHELE VARIAN: By real estate lobbyists and
23 gaslighting by DCP -

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

25 MICHELE VARIAN: Opposition.

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CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Next speaker please.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Leigh Behnke will be the next
and last speaker on this panel.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

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LEIGH BEHNKE: Yes, can you hear me?

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CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

8

LEIGH BEHNKE: Can you hear me? Okay. I'm an
artist and I've lived on Broadway since 1984 before
there was retail. I'm not rich and I welcome the
city's goal of affordable housing. Unfortunately,
this is not the plan that will accomplish this. This
proposal is a set up for failure for both residential
and retail spaces. Due to the incompatibility, these
historical structures to comply with the proposed
requirements. These incompatibilities are not being
discussed or considered as this process is rushed
through.

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Residential conversion from joint work to UJ2 for
many of the buildings in the district will be
impossible due to the structural issues that cannot
be altered. This will leave many joint work units in
limbo for years. Alexandr Neratoff has provided
testimony for this, which has been independently
confirmed. My building is one of them. City

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2 Planning has punted on this issue, an act of
3 irresponsibility I find incomprehensible.

4 The possibility exists that several hundred
5 remaining families will be put into a state of
6 housing uncertainty to allow a smaller, fictional
7 number of families to receive affordable housing that
8 may never be built. This is the city's version of
9 robbing Peter to pay Paul.

10 Disenfranchising one group to give illusionary
11 help to another group. It smacks the political
12 opportunism and is not worthy of a favorable consent
13 from this Council. The same issue exists for up-zone
14 to retail. It will overwhelm the status of mixed
15 usage and is physically impossible to achieve under
16 the required landmark status of the buildings in our
17 historic neighborhood. You are destroying a
18 community with a yes for this plan. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony
20 today. Next speaker please.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last speaker on
22 this panel and seeing no members with questions for
23 the panel, Chair with permission I'll go to the next
24 panel, which will include Samir Lavingia and Aron
25 Chilewich. Samir Lavingia.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

SAMIR LAVINGIA: Perfect, hi, my name is Samir Lavingia, I live a few blocks from the rezoning area. Previously, I've lived in the Community Board that represents SoHo but I moved in March 2020. I just want to tell a brief story about how well, my journey moving to New York and into my new residence. I want to highlight that people who are new to the city are just moving to the neighborhoods they can afford. When I moved to New York, I looked where my work was and I wanted to live nearby. My work was in Chelsea, so I looked at Chelsea, West Village, SoHo, and a few other neighborhoods.

I did extensive research and looked at many, many units before I found something that would work for me. Fortunately, I was with my girlfriend and we both had relatively high paying jobs, so I was able to find a place in the West Village. But what if I wasn't? What if I worked in Chelsea but I wasn't paid highly enough to live nearby? I would have looked at all those neighborhoods and realized I couldn't afford it. I would have then looked in areas in Williamsburg, Bushwick, etc., places could be near the subway, until I found something that I

1
2 could afford. And simply put, that's how
3 gentrification happens. New people will move into
4 the city and we should welcome them with open arms
5 because everyone has their own reasons to move. Be it
6 LGBTQIA plus persecution in other states, wanting to
7 live in a walkable city where they don't have to own
8 a car or literally anything else.

9 And they will want to live in the neighborhoods,
10 in the most desirable neighborhoods that they can
11 afford to live in and they are going to filter down
12 until they can find something they can actually
13 afford. It's not their fault. We blame
14 gentrification on individuals but it is not an
15 individual choice. It is the city's fault for not
16 producing enough housing in these highly desirable
17 neighborhoods. This rezoning is an opportunity to
18 alleviate this issue.

19 And that brings us to my move in March. My
20 girlfriend and I split up and I could no longer
21 afford to live in the West Village, so I was on the
22 hunt again for something I could afford. We don't
23 have a variety of housing at different income levels,
24 so whenever a unit, like family unit size changes
25 like adding a kid or anything else, people are forced

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2 to move. That form of displacement is not talked
3 about but it is real.

4 If we had more affordable income restricted and
5 market pressure based housing, then people would be
6 able to stay in neighborhoods when they have to move.
7 Thank you for listening to my perspective.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Aron Chilewich. Aron
9 Chilewich will be the next speaker.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

11 ARON CHILEWICH: Hello, my name is Aron
12 Chilewich, I am a resident of Tribeca. I live just
13 outside of the area that is under consideration today
14 for rezoning.

15 I have lived throughout Brooklyn - I've lived in
16 Brooklyn for most of my time as a New York City
17 resident and only recently did I move to Tribeca
18 where I am currently living in an apartment purchased
19 by my partners family in the 1980's. My partner's
20 family purchased his apartment for about \$125,000 or
21 in 2021 terms, about \$340,000. There is no where in
22 New York City where you can purchase a home for this
23 amount today.

24 This is not because the city is not subsidized
25 enough, but they are not subsidizing enough. This is

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2 - or the federal government is not subsidizing
3 enough. This is because we are not building enough
4 housing anywhere in New York City. And particularly
5 not in areas such as SoHo/NoHo that are wealthy and
6 White and are beyond gentrified.

7 People have said repeatedly throughout this
8 hearing that none of this affordable housing in this
9 plan is guaranteed. With the exception of a tiny
10 portion of developments that are provided direct
11 capital subsidies, no affordable housing is
12 guaranteed. Someone has to choose to build it and I
13 know this because I work in affordable housing. I
14 hope you will give builders a chance to build in
15 SoHo/NoHo and I hope you would use this as an
16 opportunity to look beyond SoHo/NoHo and consider
17 additional rezoning's in other wealthy areas in lower
18 Manhattan. Thank you very much.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last speaker on
20 this panel Mr. Chair and seeing no members with
21 questions, with your permission, we will move onto
22 the next panel, which will include Flavin Judd, Jane
23 Fisher, Zeke Luger, and Justine Leguizamo. Flavin
24 Judd will speak first followed by Jane Fisher.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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2 FLAVIN JUDD: Hi, my name is Flavin Judd and I
3 grew up in SoHo. Uhm, although I can't afford to
4 live there and haven't been for a very long time.
5 Uhm, I would love to have more families and diversity
6 in the neighborhood because that's the SoHo I grew up
7 in. It was an incredible, vibrant place.

8 Unfortunately, due to luxury apartments and
9 shops, a lot of people had to move. A lot of small
10 shops had to move and it's become basically a
11 shopping mall. And unfortunately, uhm, this plan
12 will increase that, that trend. Uhm, it's completely
13 naive to think that any low income housing will come
14 out of this plan. The supporters of the plan say it
15 will become a model and they are right. It will
16 become a model in its clear goal and that is avoiding
17 the building of low income housing.

18 The many loopholes and mechanisms it proposes
19 will mean low income housing will be almost
20 impossible to build citywide in the future. They
21 will have the model how to avoid that.

22 Uhm, luxury apartments and retail are the goal of
23 this entire plan. Hudson Yards stole \$1.2 billion in
24 low income housing investment funds to build luxury
25 apartments. That is uh, the model for the future as

1
2 far as uhm, developers go and that's what they want
3 to do for the rest of the city. So, I would hope
4 that everybody votes no on this. Thank you very
5 much.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jane Fisher who will be
7 followed by Zeke Luger.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

9 JANE FISHER: Hello, I have been a resident of
10 SoHo for just under 40 years. My husband, excuse me,
11 start the video. I tried to do that.

12 To begin. I have been a resident of SoHo for
13 just under 40 years. My husband is a Certified
14 Artist and resident in our small co-op. A building
15 that was raw and rodent infested in 1979 and which he
16 and others made habitable.

17 We have lived there ever since. Raising a
18 family, contributing to our community, and
19 increasingly paying sky high real estate taxes. I am
20 appalled by what the debt ridden Mayor is trying to
21 pull off as he heads out the door buying a run for
22 Governor. This so called plan is a parting gift to
23 his developer funders.

24 Number one, this deeply flawed plan does not
25 guarantee affordable housing, its purported purpose.

1
2 Do you hear that? It does not guarantee a single
3 affordable unit.

4 Number two, it will without doubt encourage
5 demolition of historic buildings. Right now, 29
6 buildings within the world recognized SoHo cast iron
7 historic district are targeted. And this
8 irreversible destruction will come for what purpose?
9 Not for affordable housing but for extreme
10 development, big box chain retail and the
11 encroachment of NYU.

12 Number three, there has been zero resolution of
13 the incompatibility of the JLVQA and residential
14 building codes. Meaning this plan will throw
15 thousands of loft dwellers into a twilight zone of
16 punitive taxes based on requirements that cannot be
17 put into effect. Stop and figure this out.

18 Number four, the city aims to hit early SoHo
19 settlers who built this neighborhood with a penalty
20 tax on the fruits of their labor. Bleeding the
21 elderly artists to subsidize an undefined arts fund.
22 How could anyone see this as fair or even legal? Do
23 you plan this new sales tax throughout the city and
24 New York State?

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

1
2 JANE FISHER: Hudson Valley, Long Island? Will
3 commercial interest pay? I ask you to kill this
4 proposal and go back to the table.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you so much for your
6 testimony today. Next speaker please.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be Zeke
8 Luger followed by Justine Leguizamo.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

10 ZEKE LUGER: Hi, thank you for letting me speak.
11 So, DCPS had one main community partner for this
12 rezoning, Open New York. Almost all of the pro-
13 zoning testimonies today came from members of Open
14 New York. So, who are they?

15 I first met Open New York last December. I was
16 asked to help fight a rezoning in Flushing, a lively
17 unique neighborhood near my school Prince College.
18 Like many New York neighborhoods, much of Flushing is
19 now demolished after rezoning is allowed enormous new
20 glass condo and hotel towers. Displacing thousands
21 of long time residents living in rent stabilized
22 housing. Published in Opinion piece criticizing the
23 Flushing developers. Just hours later, I was
24 disturbed to find I had more than 60 comments calling
25

1
2 me stupid, a liar, pro-homelessness, a climate denier
3 and a nimby.

4 SoHo activists I've talked to say they've been
5 similarly bullied and gas lite. Open New York is a
6 pro developer, pro displacement, outright Astroturf
7 organization created to cyberbully tenant advocates
8 into silence across all neighborhoods of New York.
9 Leaders recruit young people on [INAUDIBLE 5:54:45]
10 climate change and bombard them with hyperaggressive
11 messaging, demonizing anyone who stands up to
12 developer agenda until they imitate this bullying.

13 They self-describe this grassroots but Open New
14 York does not do street outreach in their targeted
15 neighborhoods. However, they do have a project
16 submission form on their home page intended for
17 submissions both from the general public as well as
18 developers. "If you would like Open New York to
19 consider advocating for a project you're involved
20 with."

21 Open New York is founded by a quantitative real
22 estate investor and makes money betting on these
23 rezoning's he's influencing and still directs their
24 every move. In August, he Tweeted, "had drinks in
25 NoHo tonight and walking back downtown through SoHo

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2 and fantasizing about all this going to look like
3 post war Dresden come January.”

4 What's scary is that he's right. After all the
5 demolitions up-zone neighborhoods by Flushing and
6 downtown Brooklyn look like they've been bombed.
7 Flushing streets are filled with people living there
8 after their affordable homes were destroyed. What is
9 DCP doing with these people? Is this what our city
10 government has been doing actively destroying
11 people's homes for two decades now? Open New York is
12 a highly inappropriate community partner and an
13 example of how DCP has been widely irresponsible
14 throughout this entire process. This plan will not
15 create affordable housing. It does nothing to bring
16 justice to the unique New York neighborhoods.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you so much for your
18 testimony today.

19 ZEKE LUGER: DCP has displaced and destroyed.
20 Please vote no on this.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Justine Leguizamo will be
24 the next and last speaker on this panel.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

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2 JUSTINE LEGUIZAMO: Hi, uh, this is Justine
3 Leguizamo. Okay, uhm, my name is Justine Leguizamo
4 and I'm speaking on behalf of Village Preservation.
5 The city insists that developers will choose to build
6 residential buildings with affordable units in the
7 rezoning area, rather than commercial ones without
8 any. Claiming that the residential market is so much
9 stronger than the office market in this area. But
10 right next door to the rezoning area, Google just
11 signed its deal on the largest office building
12 purchase in the country. Not only showing that the
13 office market in this area is quite strong but likely
14 providing a catalyst for further office development
15 in the area.

16 And Google is not an outlier. As we've shown in
17 documents submitted to the Council in next door
18 Hudson Square, the city grossly underestimated how
19 much office development would take place there when
20 they rezoned the area in 2013 and overestimated how
21 much residential development would take place and
22 ironically, the city has included in this proposed
23 rezoning a provision that would prevent existing
24 commercial buildings from being converted to
25 residential use and including affordable housing.

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2 All this illustrates that at best, the city is
3 incompetent in their planning but more likely is not
4 operating in good faith in this process and has no
5 true interest in affordable housing. Their interest
6 is payback to developer friends and supporting the
7 real estate industry, which has supported the Mayor.
8 Don't be complicit in this corrupt charade. Vote no
9 on this shame plan. Thanks.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony
11 today. Next speaker.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
13 speaker on this panel. I see no members with
14 questions for this panel, so we'll call the next
15 panel and that will include Amanda Yaggy, David
16 Lawrence, Richard Moses, Ronnie Wolf, and Jean
17 Standish. The first speaker will be Amanda Yaggy who
18 will be followed by David Lawrence.

19 I just want to make a very quick announcement
20 before that. Once again, we appreciate everyone's
21 patience today. We will get to everyone's testimony.
22 If you are logged into this webinar, we simply ask
23 for your patience. Please stand as your name is
24 called. There is no reason for anyone to be using
25

1
2 the raise hand button. And with that, Amanda Yaggy
3 to be followed by David Lawrence.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 AMANDA YAGGY: My name is Amanda Yaggy, I live in
6 Harlem and I'm here to speak against the SoHo/NoHo
7 Chinatown Plan.

8 No affordable housing in SoHo is guaranteed in
9 this plan. The Mandatory Inclusionary Housing could
10 be built as far as half a mile from the zone's
11 limits. What this plan does guarantee is massive
12 developer profits notably for landlord Jonathan Shew
13 and his family.

14 This is a familiar scheme to New Yorkers. One
15 that allowed the last president to become a self-
16 proclaimed billionaire, while the city's giveaways to
17 locals Steve Shwartzman and Steven Roth, ensured he
18 had the funds to run it with. Filtering is also
19 familiar from the '80's, then called trickle down
20 economics. It works as well for housing as it did
21 for the economy. A meaningful way to address the
22 housing crisis would be to enact vacancy controls as
23 well as rent control.

24 Proponents of this plan for Open New York,
25 including one who spoke today have plagued that New

1
2 York City suffers from segregation and that
3 incentivizing White to move to Black and Brown
4 neighborhoods. As an east New York and east Harlem
5 rezoning's is beneficial for long time residents.

6 The author of their Bible color of law expressed
7 enthusiasm when told Black residents leaving by the
8 thousands. Saying it was too bad that they were now
9 concentrating [INAUDIBLE 6:00:01]. Protections of
10 course are available to those who can go to housing
11 court, as evidence by the struggles of tenants at 83
12 to 85 Bowery.

13 Open New York members have alleged that historic
14 districts are themselves, tools of White supremacy.
15 Something the advocates from Mount Morris and Harlem
16 and Stuyvesant Heights in Brooklyn, among many others
17 would be surprised to learn. The residents of rent
18 stabilized and low rise buildings would be the first
19 affected by the precedent by this plan. Unless you
20 believe the development in New York is ridden by
21 something other than profit margins. It is breath
22 taking and cynical to appropriate social just
23 language to incentivize investment property
24 construction.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 312
2 But after the city cut funding for every
3 department but the police -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 AMANDA YAGGY: It's unsurprising.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
7 testimony. Next speaker please.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: David Lawrence will be the
9 next speaker.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 DAVID LAWRENCE: Hello, can you hear me?

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah, we hear you.

13 DAVID LAWRENCE: Yes, hi, I'm David Lawrence, I'm
14 a Photographer. Uhm, I am here today because I've
15 spoken up over and over again along with thousands of
16 others who've all tried to be good citizens with good
17 intentions contributing to this process. And feel
18 that it's only a dog and only show, so that our mayor
19 can repay his developer friends who bankrolled his
20 campaigns. The pretend that it's all about
21 affordable housing but it's really all about forcing
22 the artists out of SoHo, so the developers can turn
23 it into a clone of Midtown and a [INAUDIBLE 6:01:40].

24 Personally, I'm a legal Certified Artist. I've
25 been in my loft for 26 years. I've lived in SoHo

1
2 since 1982 and I'm now being asked to pay a tax of
3 over \$300,000 if I decide to sell my loft to my
4 daughter. Meanwhile, illegal retail owners face zero
5 tax, a conversion or any kind of conversion or
6 legalization penalty and in fact, they're told that
7 the sky is the limit with this zoning to do whatever
8 they want to do. How is that fair?

9 City Planning seems to think that all of the
10 live, work spaces will magically become residential
11 but many of those spaces will not meet the
12 residential building codes because they are created
13 out of industrial spaces. The goal is to leave
14 artists with no options in limbo, so we move out and
15 those spaces can be torn down or converted back to
16 commercial use.

17 Under this plan, in 20 years, there will little
18 or no affordable housing as others have stated. Our
19 neighborhood will be richer, whiter and denser.
20 Where is the new infrastructure to support all of
21 these new people? DCP would like to double the
22 population of SoHo and this plan. The so called Arts
23 Fund is a slush fund, to buy off the arts
24 organizations so they will not flee or neighborhood
25 after Walmart moves in next door to them.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 314
2 If this plan moves forward -

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

4 DAVID LAWRENCE: You'll be killing the goose that
5 laid the golden egg. Bye, bye an artist eventually
6 means bye, bye tourist dollars. Please reject this
7 plan. Thank you for your time today.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
9 Richard Moses to be followed by Ronnie Wolf.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 RICHARD MOSES: Good afternoon Council Members,
12 I'm Richard Moses President of the Lower East Side
13 Preservation Initiative, also known as LESPI. I'm
14 here today to express LESPI's strong opposition to
15 the Mayor's Proposed SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan to
16 up-zone SoHo and NoHo, which also includes portions
17 of the East Village and Chinatown.

18 If approved, this plan would allow buildings to
19 be built up to two and a half times larger than what
20 is currently permitted. It would promote out of
21 scale luxury condominiums, destroy the character of
22 these neighborhoods and set a dangerous precedent,
23 threatening neighborhoods throughout the city.
24 Including the SoHo/NoHo plan area are some of the
25 city's most popular historic districts.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 315
2 The plan, as it now exists, would dramatically
3 alter the scale within those districts. It would
4 also allow for the proliferation of large chain big
5 box stores making it more difficult for small
6 independent and family owned businesses to survive.

7 While this up-zoning plan is presentative of
8 means to promote affordable housing, the specifics of
9 the plan belay this claim. There are no provisions
10 that guarantee inclusion for explicitly middle and
11 low-income residents. Actually, the plan threatens
12 the areas existing lower income residents and
13 promises to make the neighborhood less affordable,
14 neighborly and hospitable than they are now.

15 The charm and livability of New York City lay in
16 its neighborhoods and their distinctive qualities.
17 Those distinct charms would draw perspective
18 residents to live in New York and tourists to visit.
19 Our historic districts and neighborhoods are not only
20 characterized by beautiful, irreplaceable
21 architecture, but typically with a low scale that
22 allows for light and air, particularly important in
23 these times of pandemic.

24 We need a plan that would help create more
25 affordable housing for the area while maintaining the

1
2 neighborhood character that so many residents,
3 businesses and visitors cherish.

4 I respectfully urge you to vote -

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 RICHARD MOSES: To defending your neighborhood
7 and reject SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan up zoning.
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
10 testimony. Next speaker please.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
12 Ronnie Wolf followed by Jean Standish.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ronnie Wolf, you need to
15 accept the unmute request in order to begin your
16 testimony.

17 RONNIE WOLF: Hello. I'm a 42-year resident of
18 SoHo, a Certified Glass Artist, a residential
19 representative on the SoHo Broadway Initiative and a
20 small Broadway commercial owner. I speak on behalf
21 of those I represent. We oppose the DCP plan and
22 Councilwoman Chin's Bill. We oppose the plan as
23 their doesn't exist a code that will enable co-ops to
24 transition from manufacturing to residential
25 seamlessly without raising taxes.

1
2 DCP and DOB haven't resolved the how to convert
3 JLVQA to Use Group Two residential. Thus, any
4 mechanism short of being seamless and cost free and
5 pose unintended burdens on the residential community.
6 The envisioned SoHo/NoHo plan sought to make
7 nonconforming residents legal and to create a pathway
8 to legalizing buildings stuck in limbo. DCP's plan
9 does not have a clear path on how that can be done
10 and has the potential to destroy more rent regulated
11 homes than build affordable ones. The arts fund is
12 insulting and despite DCP's claims, residents gain
13 nothing from it. The bills misguided intention is 40
14 years too late. But if the zoning had been enforced,
15 the city would have lost out on collecting hundreds
16 of millions of dollars in property taxes.

17 Hmm, tourists, retailers, shoppers, and media
18 companies are drawn to SoHo because its residents
19 preserve the historic facades of their buildings and
20 because only in SoHo can you experience such storied
21 architecture with low FAR. This diverse culturally
22 rich neighborhood developed organically while DCP's
23 plan is solely a financially driven developers dream.

24 Voting for as of right oversized retail is a vote
25 against small businesses, the quality of life of its

1
2 residents, and against what makes SoHo the go to
3 destination celebrated around the world. These are
4 rational reasons why we oppose the plan. Please vote
5 no. Thank you.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
8 Next speaker please.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be Jean
10 Standish.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 JEAN STANDISH: Hi, my name is Jean Standish and
13 I'm Vice President of Bowery Alliance of Neighbors.
14 If the SoHo/NoHo up-zoning is implemented, it would
15 actually make these neighborhoods richer, less
16 diverse and more expensive and likely destroy much of
17 the affordable housing and push out long time tenants
18 and businesses.

19 All the while, allowing grossly out of scale new
20 construction and big box chain stores. It provides
21 multiple incentives and loopholes for developers to
22 avoid building any affordable housing at all. But
23 would enable and encourage huge commercial
24 structures, luxury condo construction and hotels.
25 Included in SoHo and NoHo are some of the city's most

1
2 popular historic districts. Consequently, the
3 SoHo/NoHo up-zoning would set a dangerous precedent
4 for the destruction of historic districts all over
5 this city.

6 This plan calls for the first up-zoning of an
7 historic district in the 66 years of Landmarks
8 Preservation Commissions existence. Even if new
9 developments are built as the city predicts with 75
10 percent luxury condos and 25 to 30 percent affordable
11 housing, these developments will overall actually be
12 more expensive and house wealthier, less diverse
13 residents than the current neighborhood overall.
14 Making for a less equitable, less affordable
15 neighborhood. I urge you to oppose the SoHo/NoHo up-
16 zoning. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
18 testimony today. Next speaker please.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last speaker on
20 this panel. I see no members with questions for the
21 panel, so we can call up the next panel. The next
22 panel will include Anita Isola, Leslie Clark, Lucy
23 Koteen and Anita Jorgensen. The first speaker will
24 be Anita Isola followed by Leslie Clark.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Who do we have up?

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We're waiting for Anita Isola to be the first speaker on this panel.

4

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CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Anita, if you can hear us -

6

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Anita, if you can hear us, you need to accept the unmute request. Okay, we'll come back to Anita. I see her in the list and go to Leslie Clark.

9

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ANITA JORGENSEN: I'm unmuted.

11

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh.

12

13

ANITA JORGENSEN: I'm sorry. It wasn't allowing me to unmute. Uhm, my name is Anita Jorgensen. Uhm, I live and work in the neighborhood. I'm a Lighting Designer and I am 100 percent for affordable housing. I'm 100 percent for diversity, ethnic as well as economic diversity. However, this plan gives no guarantees of affordable housing, as many people have stated. Uhm, it is a plain and simple giveaway by Mayor de Blasio to his donors.

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The plan in fact does not require any housing at all, let alone affordable. The community is starved for parks. Nowhere in the plan are parks mentioned. The neighborhood is starved for schools. Nowhere in the plan is that mentioned.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 321
2 This is a neighborhood with families. We need
3 those amenities. Well, it's not really amenity, it's
4 a requirement. Uhm, oversized zoning will grossly uh
5 affect the character of the neighborhood. It will
6 push out small businesses. An example, would be
7 McNally Jackson, who is continually struggling with
8 her rent. One of the most uhm, admired book sellers
9 in the city. This up-zoning will force all of the
10 commercial retail rents to go way up, which will then
11 spill over into the adjoining neighborhoods.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

13 ANITA JORGENSEN: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you Anita.
15 Thank you for your testimony. Next speaker please.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
17 Leslie Clark to be followed by Lucy Koteen.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

19 LESLIE CLARK: Good afternoon. My name is Leslie
20 Clark, I am a resident of Greenwich Village and I am
21 here to testify this afternoon for my neighbors to
22 the south and east because I fear that just as the
23 destruction of NoHo/SoHo Chinatown is designed to
24 serve big real estate interest, the same will
25 inevitably happen to those of us in the historic

1
2 district of Greenwich Village. The SoHo/NoHo
3 Chinatown up-zoning does not guarantee any additional
4 affordable housing as it is now proposed. Not one
5 single unit. It would however inevitably result in
6 the destruction of a historic district and the
7 destruction of existing affordable housing by the one
8 means that this does not protect against, which is
9 demolition of buildings that contain rent stabilized
10 housing.

11 In fact, I fear that this plan is part of a
12 larger real estate industry agenda to replace rent
13 stabilized housing, which is in desperately short
14 supply with luxury housing of which we have plenty
15 throughout New York City. There is a pervasive
16 understanding, misunderstanding of NoHo/SoHo as
17 luxury districts. This is simply not true. There
18 are rich people everywhere in New York City but this
19 area and even my area still contain many thousands of
20 units of truly affordable rent stabilized apartments.
21 This proposal does nothing to prevent the destruction
22 of small buildings that contain rent stabilized units
23 throughout this area and would therefore, in the end,
24 result in a decrease in affordable housing. I urge
25 you to reject this plan. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Leslie. Thank you
3 for your testimony today. Next speaker please.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lucy Koteen to be followed by
5 Anita Isola.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

7 LUCY KOTEEN: Hello, hi, good afternoon almost
8 good evening. My name is Lucy Koteen. Could we stop
9 the pretense that the rezoning has anything to do
10 with equity? Every MIH is fired rezoning has been a
11 catalyst for displacement and gentrification. As
12 soon as the developers get a whiff of a rezoning,
13 they swoop in and start buying up everything they
14 can. Landlords with low-income tenants such as the
15 artists and the rent controlled tenants harassing the
16 tenants as soon as the rezoning proposal is made
17 public.

18 They want to join the bandwagon of greed and
19 destruction. There are many accounts of the
20 harassment of low rent tenants. Stop talking about
21 the 20 to 30 percent affordable units with incomes as
22 high as \$130,000. Higher than many of the residents
23 living in the area and talk about the 70 to 80
24 percent market luxury housing that changed the
25 demographics of the area.

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2 Talk about the big box stores that replace the
3 local store and take the profits out of the city to
4 deliver them to their shareholders. If the city
5 wants to build low income housing, they would find a
6 way that does not give our tax base to big developers
7 looking to make the next billion dollars on the back
8 of those who pay all the taxes that make the city
9 function.

10 To consider the destruction of this amazing,
11 landmarked area is shameful. Do you think that
12 tourists come to see another 50 blocks of soulless
13 glass steel and cement high rises? These beautiful
14 buildings are the soul of the city that must be
15 preserved. What are the real goals in this rezoning?
16 One, dismantling landmarks. Two, opening up all of
17 Chinatown to be gobbled up by the developers. They
18 are the next area to be up-zoned. There is so much
19 detailed information that Village Preservation along
20 with others have put together. They should be giving
21 the presentations. This is one of the -

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

23 LUCY KOTEEN: And then charged with multiple
24 ethics of violation. Let's not forget the rezoning -

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 325
2 give back to those many – for those many donations.

3 If you care about the city –

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

5 LUCY KOTEEN: Agree with the Community Board.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you so much for your
7 testimony today. We appreciate it very much. Thank
8 you so much for your testimony. Next speaker please.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next and last speaker on this
10 panel will be Anita Isola.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

12 ANITA ISOLA: Yes, can you hear me?

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

14 ANITA ISOLA: Okay, hi. Uh, my name's Anita
15 Isola and I'm speaking on behalf of Village
16 Preservation. In spite of the efforts by the Mayor
17 and other proponents of this up-zoning plan to
18 portray it as motivated by social justice and equity,
19 fair housing.

20 Let's be 100 percent clear about who the main
21 beneficiaries would be. It's big real estate
22 developers and big private institutions like NYU.
23 Imagine you bought or owned a piece of property in
24 the rezoning area and suddenly you are able to build
25 two and a half times as large as the rules had

1
2 allowed you previously. And that you can suddenly
3 include highly profitable uses that were prohibited
4 previously like luxury condos, big box chain stores,
5 NYU dorms or classrooms. Well, if you're Edison
6 Properties who owns the two largest development sites
7 in SoHo and NoHo and you've made multiple large
8 donations to the Mayor and his disgraced campaign for
9 One New York, your dream is about to come true. And
10 a multimillion dollar windfall is coming your way, if
11 the plan is approved.

12 Same if you're the union busting Chew family
13 which own some of the other largest development sites
14 in this area. And which has made campaign
15 contributions to key decision makers in this process.
16 This proposal isn't about benefiting New Yorkers or
17 those in need, it's clearly about benefiting the
18 wealthy and the well connected developers. Who have
19 lobbied, donated, bought and paid for it. Please say
20 no to this plan. We can do better. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Anita, thank you for your
22 testimony. Next speaker please.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
24 speaker on this panel and I see no members with
25 questions for the panel, so we'll call up the next

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2 panel. And that will include Lorna Nowve, Jordy
3 Mark, Peter Von Mayrhauser, and Connie Murray. The
4 first speaker to be Lorna Nowve followed by Jordy
5 Mark.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

7 LORNA NOWVE: Hello, can you hear me?

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

9 LORNA NOWVE: Great, hi, I'm Lorna Nowve, the
10 Interim Executive Director of the Historic Districts
11 Council, which is the citywide advocate for New York
12 City's neighborhoods. The proposed SoHo/NoHo
13 rezoning proposal has the potential to be profoundly
14 damaging to the designated landmark properties of the
15 historic districts that it encompasses and to the
16 practice of historic preservation throughout New York
17 City.

18 Landmark designation does not concern itself with
19 use. Landmarking does not stop the development of
20 housing nor does it mandate the price of what that
21 housing might cost. Some of the most densely
22 populated areas of the city are landmark districts
23 and have been for decades. To imply that landmarking
24 prevents a development of new housing and development
25 is simply not correct. Look at Dumbo, Gansevoort,

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2 Tribeca, even SoHo and NoHo. The population in these
3 formerly commercial districts has increased after
4 they were landmarked. Protecting historic district
5 does rely upon having the underlining zoning match up
6 with the existing buildings. If the city increases
7 the underling zonings of these buildings, i.e.
8 encouraging much more bulk than they currently have,
9 it puts an enormous strain on a landmarks commission
10 to keep the landmark building intact.

11 If City Planning says a 15-story building can be
12 built where a seven story building currently stands,
13 how can Landmarks Commission say no. This backed in
14 conflict strains the system and is unfair to both
15 property owners and the agencies. This is not an
16 unknown fact or a new situation.

17 Over the past 55 years, many historic districts
18 have been rezoned after landmarking in order to bring
19 the underlining zoning into better compliance with
20 the LPC's regulatory standards. It is sound urban
21 planning to do so. If adopted, the SoHo/NoHo
22 rezoning plan will be the first time the HDC is aware
23 of where underlining zoning of a historic district is
24 deliberately adjusted to be less aligned with the
25 existing built environment. This junction preplans a

1
2 conflict between city regulations and undermines the
3 preservation process explicitly put forward by
4 landmark designation. It sets a terrible and
5 damaging precedent. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
7 Next speaker please.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jordy Mark to be followed by
9 Peter Von Mayrhauser.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

11 JORDY MARK: Hello, I am a resident and a renter
12 for over 40 years in a building across from a
13 proposed N15-R10 rezoning. I've watched the
14 neighboring streets change from an area of empty
15 lofts revitalized by artists and galleries to a
16 crowded tourist destination called SoHo. I've
17 watched neighborhood stores on my street serving my
18 community replaced with trendy, expensive, specialty
19 shops serving tourists.

20 I've experienced the increased traffic, noise and
21 crowds that came with the zoning changes allowed
22 hotels. Neighborhoods have value for different
23 reasons. For me, the main value was for the
24 neighbors, as the name itself suggests. With
25 tourists crowding our sidewalks that have been

1
2 narrowed by restaurant expansions. With narrow
3 streets further stressed by bike lanes, rental bike
4 parking, street closures in an inadequately
5 controlled tunnel traffic. With more and more public
6 space being taken over by private businesses at least
7 we still have light and sky. We are a low rise
8 neighborhood. We are historically low rise with
9 small retail businesses. The proposed zoning change
10 will stress our community not serve it. The zoning
11 change for SoHo/NoHo only brings large retail, more
12 people, more deliveries, more taxi's, garbage and
13 noise and the zoning change means less sky, less
14 light, less unique neighborhood profile.

15 Additionally, the lie of affordable housing is
16 also a ploy to make overbuilding and neighborhood
17 destruction acceptable. The truth is, that with the
18 proposed income parameters, many of us in my building
19 would be considered too poor to qualify for so called
20 affordable housing. And dangling it before us in
21 this plan is not any way toward the truth. This is
22 not an affordable housing plan. Please stop
23 overbuilding, stop the destruction of the unique and
24 historic neighborhood. Respect and preserve the
25

1 nature and character of these low rise neighborhoods.

2 Say no, no to SoHo/NoHo rezoning changes.

3 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

5 JORDY MARK: No to SoHo/NoHo developer, it's a
6 developers plan. It is not a plan -

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Next speaker
8 please.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Peter Von Mayrhauser who will
10 be followed by Connie Murray.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Peter Von Mayrhauser, if you
13 can hear me, you need to accept the unmute request.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Peter, if you can hear us -

15 PETER VON MAYRHAUSER: I can hear you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay great, we can hear you
17 now.

18 PETER VON MAYRHAUSER: Okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Whenever you are ready.

20 PETER VON MAYHAUSER: Okay, I am ready.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: There you go.

22 PETER VON MAYHAUSER: Hi, uhm, my name is Peter
23 Von Mayrhauser. I am a long time oh, yes, sorry.

24 I'm a long time resident of SoHo and I've been
25

1
2 listening to this Zoom since 10:30 this morning and
3 one thing I have noticed is that all of the
4 participants both pro and con for this measure have
5 expressed the desire for more affordable housing. I
6 don't think that's the issue here. Everybody wants
7 more affordable housing. The problem comes with the
8 fact that - wow, there we are.

9 Uhm, how do we get there and nearly every single
10 one of the proponents of this measure has said that
11 the commercial - I forget how it's worded. The
12 density, the commercial density allowed by this plan
13 in its current form is too high. But not one of them
14 has said that they will push to get that reduced.
15 They only talk about you know passing this plan
16 because it will provide affordable housing.
17 Everybody wants affordable housing. This is not the
18 way to do it. What is the rush here? Why can't they
19 go back to the table? Why can't the Council go back
20 to the table and come up with a plan that suits both
21 of these factions here?

22 Uhm, I say to those students at NYU who you know
23 earlier on were you know complaining about the fact
24 that they couldn't live in this area. You are going
25

1
2 to be sorely disappointed when this bill passes
3 because you will not find the rents affordable.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Peter. Thank you
6 for your testimony today.

7 PETER VON MAYRHAUSER: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Next speaker please.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next and last speaker on this
10 panel will be Connie Murray. Connie Murray will be
11 the next and last speaker.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Connie?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Connie, if you can hear us,
15 we need you to accept the unmute request in order to
16 speak.

17 CONNIE MURRAY: Hi, sorry about that.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: It's okay. Whenever you're
19 ready Connie.

20 CONNIE MURRAY: My name is Connie Murray as a
21 former resident of SoHo and a Native New Yorker, I
22 oppose the city's proposed rezoning for SoHo/NoHo.
23 Because while the Department of City Planning cannot
24 guarantee that even one unit of affordable housing
25 will be created, it can guarantee that almost 200

1
2 historic buildings will be on the chopping block.
3 Displacing over 1,000 low-income residents and
4 eliminating their already existing deeply affordable
5 homes. I ask you as our elected city officials to
6 find any logic in killing truly affordable housing
7 only to replace it with scammy MIH unaffordable
8 homes.

9 As well, there is nothing green or sustainable
10 about demolishing hundreds of buildings and turning
11 SoHo into a massive construction site. The only
12 proponents of this proposal as demonstrated once
13 again today on this call are the [INAUDIBLE 15:42]
14 from real estate development lobbying group Open New
15 York.

16 The same group who have notoriously and
17 deliberately slandered elderly area residents as
18 being members of the Ku Klux Klan for having simply
19 shown up to try and fight to be able to stay in their
20 homes. Like the Department of City Planning, Open
21 New York knows all too well that no affordable
22 housing will be created by this rezoning. Only deep
23 tax abatements for the greedy real estate developers
24 for whom they work.
25

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 335
2 Say no to this gratuitous developer giveaway.
3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
5 Next speaker.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
7 speaker on this panel. I see no members with
8 questions for this panel, so with your permission, we
9 can go to the next panel. That will include Anna
10 Marcum, Pauline Augustine, Michele W., and Darlene
11 Lutz. First speaker will be Anna Marcum to be
12 followed by Pauline Augustine.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

14 ANNA MARCUM: I'm waiting for the timer to start.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You can start.

16 ANNA MARCUM: Okay, hello, my name is Anna Marcum
17 and I am speaking on behalf of Village Preservation.
18 One of many pernicious elements of this plan is that
19 strongly incentivizes demolition of rent regulated
20 affordable housing. Permanently losing this precious
21 resource in displacing residents who are
22 overwhelmingly lower income and disproportionately
23 artists, seniors and Asian American's.

24 We've identified 650 units of housing and 108
25 buildings in the rezoning area. The city says there

1
2 are 185 such buildings. Meaning the number of units
3 is probably near 1,000 or more. With a little over
4 4,000 housing units in the rezoning area, that's one
5 in four units in residents with a target on their
6 back as a result of the rezoning.

7 With the proposed increased of allowable density
8 of 30 to 140 percent, virtually every rent regulated
9 building will be underbuilt under the new zoning.

10 Creating strong incentives for landlords to do
11 whatever they can to get tenants out and demolish
12 their buildings to build substantially larger. Uhm,
13 landmarking won't prevent that. Since the LPC
14 routinely allows demolition of buildings behind their
15 facades, which is all that's needed to permanently
16 eliminate rent regulated units.

17 Anti-harassment regulations won't prevent it
18 either, as has been proven time and time again. And
19 the strengthened rent laws of 2019 won't prevent it
20 as they left the demolition allowance entirely
21 intact. Though those changes virtually guarantee
22 these units would remain affordable unless they are
23 demolished.

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2 A vote for this plan is a vote for destroying
3 affordable housing and displacing tenants. We urge
4 you to vote no. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
6 testimony today. Next speaker please.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Pauline Augustine to be
8 followed by Michele W.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Pauline, we need you to
11 except the unmute request in order to begin your
12 testimony.

13 PAULINE AUGUSTINE: Can you hear me now.
14 Alright, there we go. Hi, uhm, my name is Pauline
15 Augustine and I live - I strongly urge the Council to
16 vote no on the disastrous SoHo/NoHo Chinatown up-
17 zoning plan first of all.

18 I live in one of the tenant buildings in this
19 historic district on Sullivan Street. I personally
20 have a huge stake in this not going forward. I'm a
21 low income 80-year-old senior living in regulated
22 housing. Owners of affordable housing in my
23 neighborhood have been aggressively harassing and
24 evicting those of us who are not artists and live in
25 regulated housing for many, many years. And who have

1
2 developed and created this area. I have friends who
3 have been displaced just recently and the building is
4 up for demolition. The whole building is affordable
5 housing.

6 Aging in place, not here. If they and if you
7 vote yes, I will say, I have questions. Why should I
8 have to leave my home of many years for new
9 development? What about aging in place for persons
10 and all the people who live here and there are many
11 of us? Why do you think this whole place is filled
12 with only rich people?

13 I'm upset hearing testimony from people who are
14 not really aware who lives here. I'm not in an
15 approval plan that will not guarantee I can stay in
16 my home. And where do you suggest I find a
17 "affordable" studio apartment anywhere in New York
18 City today? It won't be in this neighborhood
19 according to this SoHo/NoHo plan. Maybe the people
20 in the form are not aware that there are over 20,000
21 applicants per unit. When truly affordable units are
22 built in as someone mentioned outlying areas of
23 former devastation with little public transportation.

24 Not only can we age in place, not by aging in
25 place of our choices, you're placing us in former

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2 brown fields and in industrial areas. But the
3 scarcity of truly affordable housing will not be in
4 the least change by what is being proposed in this
5 plan. The use of verbiage regarding affordable
6 housing as the end game of this plan is ingenuous to
7 be kind with my words.

8 I won't live long enough to get a chance to even
9 apply for a unit anywhere much less be awarded one.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

11 PAULINE AUGUSTINE: I also have to - affordable
12 to whom and not for me. So, I would like you to
13 really, really vote no and think seriously about the
14 humans who are in this area and who will be effected.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you so much for your
16 testimony.

17 PAULINE AUGUSTINE: Thank you for letting me
18 testify.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Next speaker
20 please.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be Michele
22 W. who will be followed by Darlene Lutz.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Michele, you need to unmute
25 yourself.

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MICHELE W.: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: There you go.

MICHELE W.: I moved to SoHo in 1976 into a crumpling apartment that I somewhat restored with my own hands. It still needs work but I love it. Profit focused development plans like this one have been implemented over the detailed objections of local resident and neighborhood after neighborhood in our city. Not long ago, after three public hearings like this one, not a single detail of the original plan was altered in response to public concerns. I urge the City Council to seriously consider the harm to SoHo/NoHo and Chinatown this plan will cause.

We need to take an extraordinary step of actually weighing the interest of the people effected against increasing the wealth of real estate speculators, no matter how generous they may have been. This plans PR uses the housing shortage issue to distract but its sinical vagueness and integrated loopholes in fact do not guarantee any affordable housing. It's a ruse to further enrich the developers and their crony's through the construction of still more luxury housing and oversized office towers. Further burdening our aging infrastructures and disregarding

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2 the changes of the workspace habits that the pandemic
3 has created.

4 People of lesser means will be displaced. Rent
5 stabilized housing will be lost, as will
6 architectural treasures that give this area its
7 unique and appealing character. To be sure we do
8 need to create affordable housing but this is not the
9 plan to do so. This plan also extracts profit for
10 the realtors and the vaguely allocated so called Arts
11 Fund from the sweat equity of long time SoHo artists
12 who made the neighborhood an international
13 attraction. While freely allowing commercial
14 interest to transform our unique neighborhoods
15 manufacturing spaces into yet more anywhere USA
16 retail mall. And not the public space, this sounds
17 nice if you're aware of the - if you aren't aware of
18 the impossible volumes of traffic that will be
19 redirected to an already choked Broom Street.

20 And why you agreed never to expand them to SoHo,
21 but all it had to do was wait for the right scheme to
22 break the promise and for that -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

24 MICHELE W.: For the right politician - this
25 expansion. Don't do it.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Michele. Thank you
3 for your testimony today. Thank you so much. Next
4 speaker please.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next and last speaker on
6 this panel will be Darlene Lutz.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

8 DARLENE LUTZ: Thank you. My name is Darlene
9 Lutz. I am a 40 year resident of SoHo in the
10 southwest quadrant. Uhm, I have attended all of
11 these meetings over the last couple of years. It's
12 been very stressful for the residents here to feel
13 that we have not been heard and we haven't. I think
14 the Community Board Two Resolution directly points to
15 all of the reasons why this plan should be voted
16 down, sent back to the drawing board and see if we
17 can come up with that works for all.

18 I happen to live across the street from a large
19 lot that has been vacant for the last 15, 16 years.
20 It is owned by Trinity Church Wallstreet, a
21 development was scheduled to happen there for the
22 last ten years for an 800 unit residential building
23 with a pre-K through fifth grade school at the base.
24 This was a result of a deal that the community came
25 up with in the Hudson Square rezoning. It remains to

1
2 be a vacant lot except for the party bar that's been
3 operating there for the last four years and I would
4 suggest that perhaps the community council would
5 start paying attention to some of the properties such
6 as this that could be utilized and developed right
7 here and right now. Thank you for your time. I
8 appreciate it. Please vote no, thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
10 testimony. Next speaker please.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last speaker on
12 this panel Chair and I see no members with questions,
13 so I will announce the next panel. That will include
14 Micki McGee, Santee Scardillo, Joel Lobenthal, Julie
15 Finch, and Susan Wittenberg. Santa Scardillo, I
16 would ask you to accept the promotion request, so
17 that you can testify. First, we will hear from Micki
18 McGee and then Santee Scardillo.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 MICKI MCGEE: Thank you so much. I hope you can
21 hear me and thank you Chair Moya and members of the
22 City Council. It's a long day.

23 My name is Micki McGee and I live in the South
24 Village. It's the pocket neighborhood wedged between
25 the SoHo Cast Iron District and Hudson Squares

1
2 massive tuck and entertainment industry development
3 projects.

4 The SoHo/NoHo rezoning targets the southern part
5 of our neighborhood from massive up-zoning with
6 increases of FAR of up to 12 with no guarantees.
7 None, as you have heard from so many people
8 testifying. No guarantees of affordable housing.

9 A large part of the housing in the South Village
10 continues to be 19 Century tenement buildings with
11 conventional affordable housing. That is to say rent
12 stabilized housing that has no requirement for a low
13 end on income. In other words, it is genuinely
14 affordable. You do not need to make \$64,000 a year
15 to live in a rent stabilized unit. You can live in a
16 rent stabilized unit with much lower income and many
17 people do.

18 Our affordable housing is significantly
19 threatened by this rezoning. We already have small
20 buildings in our neighborhood being snapped up by
21 international entrepreneurs and emptied of their rent
22 regulated tenants. Please feel free to contact me to
23 learn more about this. I'm not going to go into it
24 in detail in a public hearing.

1
2 People who know this area, know that the
3 neighborhood group, South Village Neighbors of which
4 I am a founding member has been here on the ground
5 since 2013 supporting affordable housing efforts. We
6 were here opposing the Sullivan Street development
7 that Moses Gates mentioned earlier at a site that
8 produced a 16 story luxury tower and four multi-
9 million dollar brownstones with no affordable
10 housing. We have been fighting for affordable
11 housing.

12 Earlier today, we heard the Department of City
13 Planning staff members say that SoHo/NoHo Chinatown
14 rezoning is putting the thumb on the scale for
15 housing.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 MICKI MCGEE: If that were the case -

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Wrap it up.

19 MICKI MCGEE: Yeah, if that were the case, I
20 would be speaking in favor of this plan but far from
21 tipping the scale for affordable housing, this will
22 be devastating for the affordable housing that we
23 already have.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

25

1
2 MICKI MCGEE: Please vote no and thank you for
3 your time.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Next speaker.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be Santee
6 Scardillo followed by Joel Lobenthal.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Santee Scardillo, if you can
9 hear us, we need you to accept the unmute request.
10 You can do it on a phone by pressing star six.

11 Okay, we'll come back to Santee Scardillo and
12 take Joel Lobenthal. Joel Lobenthal.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 JOEL LOBENTHAL: Am I unmuted? Okay, and could
15 you start me now please. I just got unmuted.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah, we can hear you.

17 JOEL LOBENTHAL: Okay, I have been disheartened
18 and disgusted to see one neighborhood after another
19 in this city targeted by up-zoning resulting in
20 overbuilt financially inaccessible communities robbed
21 of their unique character. I have watched the
22 SoHo/NoHo Chinatown up-zoning gambit ploy for the
23 last two years. Watched as residents were lied to.
24 Watched as the city attempted to impose a top down
25 agenda that primarily benefits new city developers

1
2 and the international investment community. It is
3 clear that what this latest up-zoning means for
4 SoHo/NoHo and Chinatown is an end game. It will
5 disincentivize affordable housing through exemptions
6 and loopholes. It will radically advance the Mayor's
7 longstanding attempt to curtail landmark
8 preservation. This is an inflection point to New
9 York City. If approved, the Mayor's plan will be
10 used to template for more and more district up-
11 zoning.

12 I have lived in the West Village almost my entire
13 adult life. I am horrified as a prospect of the West
14 Village becoming the next victim of up-zoning. I
15 urge the Council to reject this up-zoning proposal.
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Next speaker
18 please.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Julie Finch.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 JULIE FINCH: Hello, can you hear me?

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

23 JULIE FINCH: Hi, start my video okay. Uhm, so I
24 was married to Donald Judd and we lived at the corner
25 of Spring and Mercer Street from '69 until '76 when I

1
2 left to get divorced. I brought up my two kids there
3 and I was Chair of Artists Against the Broom Street
4 Expressway. I support Village Preservations
5 alternative plan as well as Cooper Squares and other
6 peoples.

7 My children, my son, Flavin Judd has already
8 spoken and my daughter Rahner Judd will also be
9 speaking today. Why change a district distinct
10 neighborhood? I agree with almost all of the
11 previous speakers who asked you to vote no. I was
12 also a member of Community Board Two and I am like
13 totally stunned that they voted 36 to one. It's a
14 phenomenal vote and I am urging all of my Council
15 Members, especially Corey Johnson to vote no. This
16 is a shame and the lie that they have used affordable
17 housing and asking us to be in favor of diversity is
18 very dirty politics. Thank you so much. Have a good
19 day.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
21 Next speaker please.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Susan Wittenberg who will be
23 followed by Santee Scardillo. Susan Wittenberg.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Susan?

1

SUSAN WITTENBERG: Can you hear me?

2

3

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

4

5

SUSAN WITTENBERG: Oh wonderful. Okay, sorry, I was having a problem. Let me just get this here. I

6

had a very difficult time signing into today. So,

7

thank you for letting me speak, even though it's so

8

late in the day.

9

As a long time SoHo resident and a Certified

10

Artist, I'm against this plan because it eats away at

11

the heart of the area and gives little in return to

12

any group other than commercial property owners and

13

developers. For them, it's an unexpected bonanza.

14

Small residential buildings, home to rent regulated

15

tenants will be torn down, replacing these lower

16

income people with luxury towers and some Mandatory

17

Inclusionary Housing units at higher income bands.

18

Big box stores and chain restaurants will

19

proliferate, squeezing out local oriented shops and

20

restaurants, the few we have remaining. Even

21

tourists may become less interested in coming here as

22

it feels more generic.

23

The plan is poorly thought out. Filled with

24

inaccurate and dated conceptions and goes against

25

everything groups local and citywide have suggested.

1
2 This area has been pressing for more affordable
3 housing but lost every battle to the developers.
4 Find a way to meet the needs. Retain scale and the
5 unique character of this area. This plan personifies
6 greed. Don't add it to the list of other failed
7 rezoning's. Take more time, don't be afraid to go
8 back to the drawing board.

9 As an Artist, I know this is often how the best
10 ideas happen. Make this a truly visionary plan and
11 you will have the full support of the community.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Next speaker
14 please.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Santee Scardillo.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Santee Scardillo, if you can
17 hear us, we need you to accept the unmute request in
18 order to begin your testimony. Which you can do on a
19 telephone by pressing star six.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Santee, can you hear us? Why
21 don't we come back to him.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last of this
23 panel to be called. We can try to come back to
24 Santee Scardillo in a future panel but for now, we'll
25 call the next panel with seeing no members with

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 351
2 questions. Which will include Madeline Gingold,
3 David Row, Peter Feld, and Nina Roberts. The first
4 speaker will be Madeline Gingold followed by David
5 Row/

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Madeline Gingold, if you can
8 hear me, we need you to accept the unmute request in
9 order to begin your testimony. Which you can do on a
10 phone by pressing star six.

11 We will come back to Madeline Gingold on this
12 panel. Madeline Gingold, I saw that you had just
13 unmuted, I'm sorry, go ahead.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Madeline? There you go.
15 Madeline, can you hear us? Madeline? Okay.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, we'll come back to
17 Madeline Gingold. David Row we will hear from next
18 to be followed by Peter Feld.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 KATHLEEN ROW: Hi, I'm Kathleen Row, I'm David
21 Row's wife. My husband David Row is an Artist, I'm a
22 Graphic Designer. We've lived in the SoHo since
23 1970. We've built out three lofts, the first two in
24 rental buildings. The second one was a Helmsley
25 Spears Building and we were evicted because he had

1
2 managed to sell out one of the units and we no longer
3 fit under the loft law.

4 So, consequently, at that point, which was 25
5 years ago, I said, I'm not being evicted again. And
6 we looked for a building we could buy into. Now, I'm
7 listening to this and I have to say, so many people
8 have been so eloquent. Richard Moses, Micki McGee
9 have spoken so well about the true issues that this
10 proposal is not about affordable housing. It's not
11 going to gain affordable housing but it is going to
12 put pressure on the large number of existing
13 affordable housing in the neighborhood. It's really
14 a question of far, way over built in this proposal
15 and it's about letting big real estate have their
16 way.

17 And I'm really a bit shocked by the Council
18 Members and your position that if you can't see this,
19 if you don't understand it. If you go along with
20 this because it really, I have to say, is a big
21 problem. For the people who founded this
22 neighborhood, we're people who came here straight out
23 of college. We believed in the civil rights, we
24 believed in equal opportunity. To pose this as
25 something about affordable housing and this is an

1
2 elite neighborhood, all you're asking is to allow big
3 real estate to add elite housing above our heads.
4 And I really encourage you to listen your conscience
5 and your heart and vote against this.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 KATHLEEN ROW: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Next speaker
9 please.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Peter Feld who will be
11 followed by Nina Roberts.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 PETER FELD: My name is Peter Feld, an East
14 Village Renter. Thank you Chair Moya and all for
15 listening all day and I want to appreciate my own
16 Council Member Carlina Rivera. I urge you to reject
17 the outgoing Mayor's pro developer plan as now
18 drafted. Chris Marte was elected in opposition to
19 this plan and though it will be weeks before he's in
20 office, I would ask for consideration of the
21 principle of representation.

22 We need more truly affordable housing but luxury
23 developers and honestly free market capitalism have
24 nothing useful to offer our housing crisis. Half
25 empty glass towers for a quote, "new investor asset

1
2 class," that's been called "vertical safe deposit
3 boxes," will make things much worse. I support
4 desegregating rich neighborhoods, as well the
5 environmental rationale for density but we need to
6 rethink density since things are never going back to
7 how they were before COVID.

8 The shift to remote work will steeply reduce to
9 New York's commercial real estate, much of which
10 should be repurposed for deeply affordable housing
11 and if many folks are not going to be commuting to
12 jobs anymore, it's less essential that we all live on
13 top of each other. And before building, we must
14 consider that within decades, all lower Manhattan
15 will have to undergo managed retreat due to climate
16 change.

17 Just imagine the 1818 building at 143 Spring.
18 The oldest in SoHo that's on the Planning Commissions
19 opportunity site hit list and which they obviously
20 don't anticipate LPC will protect. Demolished and
21 replaced by a dark monstrous glass tower, adding no
22 benefit for any but the super richest New Yorkers to
23 afford. We do not need to darken our skies and trash
24 our civic architectural and cultural heritage for
25 private gain by creating thousands of deeply

1
2 unaffordable units. It will not desegregate
3 SoHo/NoHo or house the unhoused. It will only enrich
4 undeserving developers and investors and will create
5 significant gentrification and pressure displacing
6 tenants in adjacent working neighborhoods, Chinatown,
7 Lower East Side and East Village as adding luxury
8 housing and luxury retail always does.

9 Affording housing is essential -

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 PETER FELD: But please vote no and start over.

12 Thank you kindly.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.

14 Next speaker.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Nina Roberts who will be
16 followed by Madeline Gingold. Nina Roberts.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 NINA ROBERTS: Okay, hi, I'm Nina Roberts.

19 Thanks everyone for staying and listening. Uhm, I'm
20 just going to try and swish everything into two
21 minutes.

22 I've lived in the neighborhood just east of SoHo
23 since about 1991. I lived on the edge of the
24 rezoning area in a rent stabilized apartment, which I
25 am truly grateful for. I am against the rezoning and

1
2 I urge you to vote no. Over the 30 years I've lived
3 in this neighborhood, I've watched it change
4 radically. It's gone from a livable, affordable,
5 diverse neighborhood with many independently owned
6 shops, restaurants, cafés, diners and galleries, to a
7 neighborhood that is only geared for the wealthy.

8 I am not against development but this scale, this
9 like square footage is so vast and it encompasses
10 many different neighborhood with different issues. I
11 think rezoning should be done at a much smaller
12 scale. This massive scale is completely reckless,
13 irresponsible and benefits wealthy developers and
14 those who can invest in high-end real estate.

15 This has been a very stressful year because of
16 the pandemic. Most residents have been focusing on
17 just how to deal with living, not about the rezoning.
18 Uhm, I'm just going to skip over some parts because I
19 want to get to the important bits.

20 To use the argument that the rezoning will
21 produce affordable housing is simply not true. There
22 are no guarantees it will produce one unit of
23 affordable housing. The rezoning is cart launched
24 for developers to build towers, willy-nilly in this
25

1
2 massive zone and sell luxury real estate to the
3 wealthy.

4 The one neighborhood that would be hit the
5 hardest by development is the corner of Chinatown and
6 the corner of the redevelopment zone. I've done some
7 research, it's really unbelievable what's happening
8 in that little area of canal in Center Street.

9 I'm all in favor of affordable housing but 100
10 percent affordable housing under the current zoning
11 laws that we have now and at the scale we have now.
12 I am not in favor of a vague promise of perhaps
13 affordable housing.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 NINA ROBERTS: Uhm, as a percentage of a luxury
16 tower.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Next speaker
18 please.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Zack Winestine who will be
20 followed by Madeline Gingold.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 ZACK WINESTINE: Hello, is my microphone working?

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: It's working.

24 ZACK WINESTINE: Great, thank you. Chair Moya
25 and other Council Members, thank you for your

1
2 patience and sitting through and listening through
3 this marathon hearing.

4 My name is Zack Winestine, I'm Co-Chair of the
5 Greenwich Village Community Taskforce. There was a
6 lot of talk earlier in this hearing about the need
7 for a more just and more equitable city. God knows
8 that's something that we need and if this plan would
9 do anything to contribute towards moving towards that
10 goal, I would be jumping up and down in support of
11 it. But let's get real.

12 This is a plan that was spearheaded by that
13 famously militant social justice organization, the
14 Real Estate Board of New York. Uhm, this is a real
15 estate - this plan is a real estate developers wet
16 dream. Far from creating more affordable housing,
17 this plan would enrich developers at the expense of
18 residence and small businesses. This plan would
19 reduce neighborhood diversity while encouraging the
20 construction of giant commercial buildings, hotels,
21 and luxury condos.

22 I urge you to vote no on this developer driven
23 monstrosity. Thank you very much for your time.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
25 Next speaker please.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
3 Madeline Gingold. Madeline Gingold, if you can -
4 thank you.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Madeline Gingold, I can see
7 that you are unmuted. You are clear to begin your
8 testimony.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, why don't we move to
10 another speaker and then come back to her.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll try again Santee
12 Scardillo, Santee Scardillo, if you can hear me, we
13 need you to accept the unmute request in order to
14 begin your testimony. Which you can do by phone by
15 pressing star six.

16 Okay, we can come back to both Gingold and
17 Scardillo. We have completed this panel Chair. I
18 see no members with questions for this panel, so if
19 it's okay with you, we will bring up the next panel.
20 That will include Adam Brodheim, Daniel Cohen, Sam
21 Zimmerman and Kyle Dontoh. We'll begin with Adam
22 Brodheim to be followed by Daniel Cohen.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Adam Brodheim, we just -
25

1
2 ADAM BRODHEIM: Thank you City Council Members and
3 Staff for hearing from the community today. My name
4 is Adam and I'm a Historic Preservationist studying
5 at Columbia University.

6 SoHo is one of the most special and unique places
7 in New York City. It has the best collection of cast
8 iron buildings in the world. It is a tourist
9 attraction that see's millions of visitors every
10 year. It is also an unbelievably, expensive
11 neighborhood that has zoning completely incompatible
12 with its current uses. It is a regulatory nightmare
13 to do business in. The area is significantly Whiter
14 and wealthier than the rest of the city.

15 I love SoHo dearly. I mean where else in the
16 world can you find cast iron buildings made to look
17 like stone? Buildings that are so well disguised, it
18 can take a magnet to tell what they truly are. But
19 unlike some of the commenters today, I do not think
20 this zoning is a threat to SoHo. The vast majority
21 of the rezoning area is covered by the LPC, who will
22 take the same critical eye they always do to make
23 sure that this new development is fitting with the
24 neighborhood.

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2 The only threat to SoHo is to think that 200
3 years of development was somehow the perfect amount.
4 That somehow we have found the precise and perfect
5 moment to stop the clock and keep SoHo preserved in
6 amber forever. That in the midst of an historic
7 housing crisis, this neighborhood filled
8 statistically with whiter and wealthier residents
9 should stagnate and not do its part to help. I am a
10 preservationist who believes that in New York,
11 preservation and development work best together. I
12 look forward to seeing a SoHo with affordable housing
13 and the diversity of residents that come with that.

14 I know that this rezoning plan will make SoHo a
15 better reflection of the equitable world that we all
16 seek to live in. I can't wait to walk through a SoHo
17 with new buildings that pay homage to the past, while
18 looking boldly into a more egalitarian future. To
19 make sure that happens, I have two comments. We
20 should lower the commercial densities to encourage
21 residential development and we should expand
22 community preference beyond CB2 to target a more
23 diverse set of New Yorkers.

24 No part of New York City is ever finished. We
25 are always on a path of creative destruction. It is

1
2 what has made New York great and what will continue
3 to drive our progress going forward. Thank you for
4 your time and I urge you to approve this rezoning.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
6 Next speaker please.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Daniel Cohen to be followed
8 by Sam Zimmerman.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 DANIEL COHEN: Hi, can you hear me?

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

12 DANIEL COHEN: Hi, my name is Daniel Cohen. In
13 the 1950's, my great uncle Arthur Cohen invested in
14 Manhattan real estate. Particularly relevant to the
15 SoHo rezoning are buildings he invested in at 256
16 East 10th Street and 256 West 22nd Street, both of
17 which are within walking distance of SoHo.

18 My family receives rent money from these
19 investments and up until now, the zoning code has
20 protected speculators like ourselves from
21 competition. Thus, allowing us to charge extremely
22 high rents to hardworking New Yorkers.

23 Unlike most New Yorkers, we haven't had to
24 contribute anything of value in order to profit off
25 of this city and we like it that way. In fact, most

1
2 of my family doesn't even live in New York anymore.
3 All thanks to New York City's wonderful zoning code.
4 Which has blocked new buildings from competing with
5 us. However, if you were to legalize more housing in
6 SoHo, then in order to compete with the newer,
7 fancier buildings that would go up, we might have to
8 lower our rents slightly. Wouldn't that be terrible?

9 I'm grateful that in the past, the city has sided
10 with speculators like my great uncle Arthur by
11 perpetuating bands on new housing. Please don't stop
12 now. Please don't rezone SoHo. Let us speculators
13 make more money off of tenants by protecting us from
14 competition. We want to continue charging as high
15 rents as possible to hardworking New Yorkers and
16 allowing more competition would go against that.
17 Please vote no on the rezoning, so that nearby older
18 buildings like the one my family profits from at 256
19 East 10th Street will continue to demand high rents.
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
22 Next speaker please.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sam Zimmerman to be followed
24 by Kyle Dontoh.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

1
2 SAM ZIMMERMAN: Hi, this is Sam Zimmerman, can
3 you hear me?

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

5 SAM ZIMMERMAN: Thank you. Thank you for the
6 opportunity to testify today. I live on East
7 Broadway and I'm a resident of CD1 and I'm here to
8 give my support to the SoHo rezoning.

9 First, I just want to briefly comment on the
10 format here, I know that this meeting started at 10
11 a.m. this morning and was scheduled to go to 7 p.m.
12 tonight. The participants were not given numbers or
13 any other indication of when they would be able to
14 testify. I, myself, was only able to testify because
15 a friend has been watching the whole day and texting
16 me when I was up. But even then, I'm only able to
17 testify because I work a white collar professional
18 services job in front of a computer and am able to
19 take a few minutes to log onto Zoom and talk to you.

20 This process excludes a huge percentage of city
21 residents participating and discourages many more who
22 can testify but aren't willing to go through the
23 hassle of this process. And it's important for
24 issues like this rezoning because it means that you
25 end up receiving a biased view presented by people

1
2 with the time and motivation to stick it out. And
3 overwhelmingly, those people are going to be opposed
4 and it isn't true just for this proposal. It will be
5 the same for any agenda item that you
6 disproportionately get testimony from people who are
7 opposed and supporters will be underrepresented.

8 But on the merit to the rezoning, this is a good
9 and necessary step for the city. The city
10 desperately needs new housing. For decades, the city
11 has built less housing than was needed to accommodate
12 the new people who have moved here and as a result,
13 it's gotten more expensive.

14 For a long time, we have pushed the burden of
15 development out into neighborhoods like East New
16 York, Williamsburg, Greenpoint, Long Island City and
17 the lack of new housing for new residents in central
18 desirable neighborhoods like SoHo has led people to
19 settle in other neighborhoods like Crown Heights or
20 Bed Stuey where longtime residents are being
21 displaced and forcing those neighborhoods to bear the
22 brunt of gentrification.

23 It's long since time that wealthy, transit rich
24 neighborhoods with good jobs like SoHo created their
25 share of new housing. So, this is why I support the

1
2 SoHo rezoning and implore you to approve it. Thank
3 you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
5 testimony. Next speaker please.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kyle Donto.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 KYLE DONTOH: Good afternoon everyone and thank
9 you for the opportunity to speak. I don't have much
10 to add that I think hasn't been said by anyone else
11 but I would just like to reiterate that the present
12 state of affairs in SoHo and NoHo and New York City
13 at large is inequitable, unaffordable and
14 unsustainable. We need new affordable housing and
15 market rate housing in wealthy, high opportunity
16 neighborhoods like SoHo and NoHo. What I would note
17 as I said before in previous meetings, is 77 percent
18 White compared to 32 percent [INAUDIBLE 55:15] for
19 the city at large.

20 Median household income in this neighborhood is
21 \$140,000 which is more than twice of the median of
22 the citywide median. The rezoning, meanwhile, will
23 provide up to 900 new affordable units in this area
24 and this is a really critical measure we need to do
25

1
2 and need to implement in order to stem segregation in
3 the city which has reached crisis levels.

4 I would note that there are those who are saying
5 things and we could reject calls to say for
6 affordability or unfunded mandates as a hollow
7 diversionary tactic that everyone here tonight knows
8 is financially impossible. I would, however,
9 strongly encourage the city to incentivize more
10 affordable housing in this plan by lowering
11 commercial densities and providing a community access
12 affordability.

13 There are some people here who are in the facts,
14 opposing the Manhattanization of Manhattan. But I
15 would encourage our Council Members and everyone here
16 tonight to understand and to grasp the depth of our
17 housing crisis in New York and I encourage people
18 very strongly to vote yes on this important proposal.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
21 Next speaker please.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
23 speaker on this panel and I see no members with
24 questions for this panel, so I will announce the next
25 panel.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 368
2 That will include Rahner Judd, Judd excuse me,
3 Judith Stonehill, Raymond Cline, Jeffrey Kroessler,
4 and Michael McKee. We will begin with Rahner Judd to
5 be followed by Judith Stonehill.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 RAHNER JUDD: Hi, thank you Chairman Moya and
8 members of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises.
9 I am Rahner Judd and I appreciate you taking the time
10 to hear from residents and stakeholders from the
11 community.

12 I was born on the corner of Spring and Mercer and
13 I really love the buildings of SoHo and I know there
14 are a lot of different issues at play but uhm, having
15 grown up there, I want to speak out about the
16 neighborhood that I grew up in and love.

17 My playgroup was on Prince and Rooster. I played
18 in both the Housing Street Playground and Thompson
19 Street Vesuvio Playground. I clubbed at Danceteria
20 where the music theme in this conversation and uhm,
21 we bought bread from the community leader Tony
22 Dapolito. My parents, along with the immigrant
23 families and grades like Jane Jacobs fought the lower
24 Manhattan Broom Street Expressway. It is thanks to
25 their hard work and foresight as well as elected

1 officials of that time that the neighborhood did not
2 get raised. I hope it doesn't get raised and
3 demolished soon.
4

5 Today, I am President of Judd Foundation and we
6 are the Artist Foundation of the Artist Donald Judd.
7 We own a five story cast iron building that was
8 bought in 1968 and restored in 2010. We recast more
9 than 1,000 pieces of cast iron in the process.

10 Uhm, I'm not going to go through all my comments
11 but I want to recommend one of my favorite letters
12 that I've read on this topic. The National Trust for
13 Historic Preservation last March wrote a very
14 eloquent letter opposing this plan, and as members
15 who need to think long and hard about this vote
16 you're going to take, I would recommend the reading
17 of that. And I would also consider very seriously
18 what it means when the National Trust for Historic
19 Preservation opposes a zoning plan.

20 Uh, affordable housing in the neighborhood is
21 possible without the requirement of new construction
22 and new construction means destruction of the
23 historic district and I'll wrap it up there and uhm,
24 say thank you again for a long day and thinking hard
25 and reading more before you vote. Thank you so much.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Rayner, thank you for bringing
3 me back to the days of Danceteria.

4 RAYNER JUDD: Yeah, limelight area tunnel.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You got it. Thanks so much
6 for your testimony today. Next speaker please.

7 RAYNER JUDD: Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Judith Stonehill who will be
9 followed by Raymond Cline.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 JUDITH STONEHILL: Okay, hello, I'm Judith
12 Stonehill, a resident of SoHo and I'm speaking on
13 behalf of Village Preservation.

14 I strongly urge the City Council to vote no on
15 the disastrous SoHo/NoHo Chinatown up-zoning plan.
16 It would fulfill none of the affordable housing
17 promises, as it would actually make it more
18 profitable to build without affordable housing than
19 with. It will create huge incentives for destroying
20 the hundreds of existing units of rent regulated and
21 loft law affordable housing in the neighborhood
22 currently occupied by lower income residents and
23 seniors and artists and Asian Americans.

24 It will push out many small businesses with its
25 allowance for big box retail of unlimited size. It

1
2 will encourage grossly oversized development, up to
3 two and a half times the size allowed by current
4 rules. It will encourage the destruction of historic
5 buildings and allow developers to add luxury – build
6 luxury apartments with no affordable housing by
7 limiting the size to 25,000 square feet for a zoning
8 lot.

9 This proposal would make the neighborhood less
10 diverse and more wealthy and even more expensive.
11 The city has consistently not told the truth about
12 the impact that rezoning would have and who would be
13 hurt by it. It's the lower income tenant renters,
14 the Artists, the seniors, and the Chinatown residents
15 who will be the most hurt. My neighbors and I
16 support an alternative plan for real affordable
17 housing. Without displacement or oversized
18 development or big box chain stores. We need real
19 affordable housing. I urge you to vote no on this
20 plan.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 JUDITH STONEHILL: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
24 testimony.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Raymond Cline will be the
3 next speaker followed by Jeff Kroessler followed by
4 Michael McKee.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 RAYMOND CLINE: Good afternoon Council Members.
7 I am Raymond Cline, I'm the President of the Village
8 Reform Democratic Club. [LOST AUDIO 1:02:11] the
9 SoHo/NoHo plan.

10 The Proposed plan provides for many incentives
11 for offices, retail community facilities, and luxury
12 housing. What it does not provide is any guarantee
13 for a true affordable housing. The RDCA [LOST AUDIO
14 1:02:28] since it first came out. And we have done a
15 lot of work with communities. People who have
16 limited affordability. These are tenants who are
17 loft tenants, Mitchell Lama tenants, and [LOST AUDIO
18 1:02:49].

19 Planning or destroying the quality of life for
20 existing income challenged residents and seniors.
21 [LOST AUDIO 1:02:59-1:03:04], not represent uh, the
22 facts as they truly are. The SoHo/NoHo plan must be
23 replaced with a new plan that creates truly
24 affordable housing. The new plan [LOST AUDIO
25 1:03:19} to all the effected, including those

1
2 adjacent to this SoHo area and NoHo area. And they
3 must have enough time to be able to read this and not
4 be rushed into making a decision like many people the
5 entire plan has been rushed through. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Raymond. You were
7 breaking up a little bit but hopefully you submitted
8 your testimony, so that we can have a copy of that as
9 well. Next speaker please.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jeffrey Kroessler who will be
11 followed by Michael McKee.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 JEFFREY KROESSLER: Good evening. My name is
14 Jeffrey Kroessler, I am the President of the City
15 Club of New York. The City Club of New York is very
16 opposed to the rezoning proposed. The plan up-zones
17 part of the area to the maximum allowable under New
18 York State Law. And the result will make
19 billionaires row seem modest.

20 Robert Moses famously remarked, when you're on
21 the side of parks, you're on the side of the angels.
22 In this scandalous moment, we must update this to
23 when you're on the side of affordable housing, you're
24 on the side of the angels. Except this plan does not
25 lead us to paradise but to Haiti's. In reality, not

1
2 one unit of affordable housing would have to be built
3 under this plan. It is the work of devils, not
4 angels. We must ask, if we are not actually building
5 any housing that the man on the street would
6 recognize as affordable, what actually is the purpose
7 of this proposed rezoning? If the residents of this
8 part of the city do not support the plan that we must
9 ask for whose benefit is it being pushed forward.
10 New Yorkers like the fine grained character of these
11 blocks. They do not want super tall with multi-
12 million dollar units for offshore capital. They do
13 not want big box retail to replace long established
14 businesses owned by and employing New Yorkers. Who
15 does want that?

16 The most insidious part of this plan is that it
17 will be the first up-zoning of a historic district.
18 Now those blocks are built close to the zoning
19 envelope. Under this plan, the sanctity of the
20 historic district would be shattered. Again, who
21 benefits from the erasure of protections for our
22 historic districts?

23 In sum, this plan is a lie and a fraud. The City
24 Club of New York urges you to vote this ugly thing
25 down. Thank you.

1

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Michael McKee will be the next and last speaker on this panel.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Michael McKee, we need you to

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MICHAEL MCKEE: Thank you. Good evening Chairman Moya and thank you for sticking this out and I want to also compliment Council Members Chin and Rivera for sticking it out for this very important issue. I know it's been a very long day.

10

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13

I've submitted a written statement which is much longer than what I'm going to be able to say in two minutes but the think I want to concentrate on is the threat to the existing rental housing. The rent controlled, rent stabilized loft units in the district, which we think are at least 1,000. Uhm, we believe that this plan would open the flood gates to displacement through demolition.

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Now, demolition is something I know a lot about.

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I've been doing this work for 51 years. I have worked with to my memory more than a half dozen groups of tenants facing demolition who were rent controlled and/or rent stabilized and I have to tell

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2 you that in every single one of those cases, the
3 demolition actually was achieved and the tenants were
4 evicted. The increase in FAR contained to this plan
5 will be an irresistible temptation to predatory
6 speculators and I encourage you to vote no. The city
7 has poo-pooed this entire issue. I'm telling you
8 from my own experience, the 2019 rent reforms will
9 not protect people from eviction. The Landlords
10 Preservation Commissioner will not and while it would
11 be good to have the certificate of no harassment
12 extended to SoHo and NoHo, it's not going to be
13 enough. This neighborhood needs updated rezoning.
14 The current zoning is obviously obsolete and it needs
15 affordable housing but this plan is not the right
16 plan.

17 So, I'm urging you to vote no. I don't see how
18 you're going to be able to fix this between now and
19 the end of the year when some of you are going to be
20 gone and there's going to be a brand new Council.
21 So, I'm urging you to lay this over and deal with
22 this next year.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Michael. Thank you
25 for your testimony today. I just want to make a

1 quick announcement. If anyone would like to submit
2 their testimony, you can do so by emailing us at
3 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. That's
4 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.
5

6 And with that, uhm, Counsel, do we have any other
7 speakers for this panel?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
9 speaker of this panel. I see no members with
10 questions for this panel, so I will announce the next
11 panel which will include Eddy Panta(SP?), Fred Doner,
12 Yukie Ohta, Stephen Wanta.

13 The first speaker will be Eddie Panta followed by
14 Fred Donor.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Who do we have Arthur?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'm sorry Chair. Uhm, I
18 think the next panel will include Chris
19 Valagoff(SP?), Bo Riccobono, Catherine Paplin, and
20 Jason Zakai. First speaker will be Chris Valagoff to
21 be followed by Bo Riccobono.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, Bo Riccobono.

24 BO RICCOBONO: Yes, hello, am I sufficiently -
25 I'm seeing I'm unmuted. Thanks a lot for allowing me

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to testify. You know I just wasn't able to watch most of the hearing, so I'm not sure if this point was raised but recently, just a couple of days ago, Cranes New York had a very interesting article against the Proposed Rezoning of SoHo. And to me, you know, it's just a no brainer. You know one of the jewels of New York City is SoHo. One of the reasons so many tourists come to New York City is to go to SoHo.

As you all know the uh, tourists from Europe have recently just two days ago, been allowed to return and they're coming back and believe me, they are heading to SoHo. They would not head to the reimagined SoHo that for some reason members of the City Council and the City Planning think is necessary. SoHo is an iconic neighborhood. It is unique. It is seen in movies and pictures all over the world.

I understand the need to have affordable housing. I don't think this plan does address that issue. I think there are areas of the city in the financial district in Midtown that could easily be converted to much more residential and would be very helpful for many reasons to have that kind of economic

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2 development there. SoHo works the way it does and
3 the way it is currently configured and zoned and to
4 destroy that would be foolish and it's to quote the
5 articles - the article in Crane's you know, the city
6 would be cutting off its nose despite its face. It
7 makes absolutely no sense to go forward with this
8 plan and I do think efforts should be made to
9 increase affordable housing in other areas of
10 Manhattan even adjacent areas of Manhattan but not
11 SoHo because you really - it just makes no sense and
12 I urge the Commissioners to actually think about this
13 and -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

15 BO RICCOBONO: Vote the plan down. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony
17 Bo. Next speaker.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be
19 Catherine Paplin to be followed by Eddie Hanta.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

21 CATHERINE PAPLIN: Hello, uh, thanks to the City
22 Council for allowing me to give testimony on the
23 rezoning plan. My name is Catherine Paplin and I am
24 testifying as a New York City Native and resident as
25 a Registered Architect and as Co-Chair of the

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2 Historic Buildings Committee and the American
3 Institute of Architects New York. I urge rejection
4 of the plan in its current form. Promoting
5 affordable residents is a public good that ought to
6 be supported everywhere in the city. Encouraging
7 high rise construction in and around historic
8 districts however will destroy already existing
9 affordable housing for the remaining low and moderate
10 income residents in Chinatown and SoHo/NoHo with no
11 guarantee of providing more for the many in need.

12 A diverse economy and people can't be injected
13 into an area like gasoline and a car engine. Any
14 serious intent to support a diverse and equitable
15 neighborhood requires a holistic approach where many
16 layers of infrastructure and services are woven into
17 the fabric of the city and community. This plan will
18 set a long precedent for future rezoning efforts in
19 the city's historic centers. Historic districts are
20 steeply undervalued by both city government and the
21 real estate industry. Not only is the foundation of
22 New York City's individual character and sense of
23 place but also, as an overwhelming generator of
24 tourists and commercial revenue.

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2 Further, we now see that our existing buildings
3 have an enormous, embodied carbon value. Saving and
4 reusing buildings maybe our greatest immediate tool
5 for slowing and reversing climate change. City
6 Planning should partner with the local community and
7 Landmarks Commission to evaluate the impact of
8 rezoning on all landmarked historic districts
9 throughout the city. The zoning block method that
10 has been used for decades is a blunt instrument whose
11 main intent is to maximize short-term profit and
12 whose essential method is divisive, segregating the
13 city in two zones.

14 We should do the opposite and create an integrity
15 nuance and fine grained approach to city planning.
16 One will text these districts full value and
17 potential into account as well as the human value
18 inside them. Thank you very much.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
21 Next speaker please.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we'll hear from Jason
23 Zakai to be followed by Chris Valagoff. Jason Zakai.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.
25

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jason Zakai, we need you to
3 accept the unmute request.

4 JASON ZAKAI: Good afternoon. My name is Jason
5 Zakai, I am an Attorney from the Law Firm Hiller, PC,
6 which specializes in land use preservation and zoning
7 law in New York.

8 We represent individual residents of SoHo and
9 NoHo and our Residents Coalition. I am speaking
10 today to voice our strong opposition to the misguided
11 SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Up-zoning Plan. As an initial
12 matter, the plan should be rejected on procedural
13 grounds because it did not comply with the ULURP
14 process under the City Charter. Specifically, the
15 Department of City Planning failed to provide both
16 Community Board Two and the general public with the
17 requisite precertification notice as required by the
18 recently adopted City Charter amendments. As a
19 result, the entire ULURP process has been tainted
20 with illegality from the start. And we brought a
21 lawsuit to address this problem and we still have a
22 motion on this issue that is pending in court.

23 The up-zoning plan should also be rejected on its
24 merits because it is simply a bad proposal for
25 multiple reasons. For example, the plan will not

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2 bring affordable housing to the area despite being
3 marketed to the contrary. Do not be fooled by the
4 false promises. On most of the development sites,
5 the plan does not require affordable housing but
6 instead, allows for luxury condos, our office, hotel
7 and commercial retail space. The plan is also filled
8 with loopholes which can be easily used to avoid
9 building any affordable housing in the area.

10 Although several community groups have put forth
11 an alternative proposal, which would allow for
12 affordable housing, it has been ignored and is now
13 part of the up-zoning plan before you today. On top
14 of this, the plan would hurt small business in the
15 area. It would legalize destination big box retail
16 stores and displace the small, independent, creative,
17 businesses and local shops. The plan would also
18 displace different groups of people living in these
19 neighborhoods such as artists who have been living
20 and working there for decades, imposing the punitive
21 flip tax upon them, which will push them out of the
22 area.

23 The plan also fails to protect the many
24 designated landmarks in the area and would encourage
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2 the demolition of many historic buildings. It is
3 telling that the -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

5 JASON ZAKAI: Finishing up. The LPC has not been
6 present on any of the public hearings. For these
7 reasons and many others discussed today, we urge the
8 Council to vote no on the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood
9 Plan. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
11 Thank you. Next speaker please.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Christabel Gough.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Christabel Gough, if you can
15 hear me, we need you to accept the unmute request in
16 order to begin your testimony. Okay, we seem to not
17 be getting through to Ms. Gough. That concludes this
18 panel Mr. Chair, so I don't see any members with
19 questions. With your permission, I'll announce the
20 next panel, which will include Fred Doner, Yukie
21 Ohta, Stephen Wanta, and Rob Houtenbos. Fred Doner
22 first to be followed by Yukie Ohta.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

24 FRED DONER: Hello, this is Fred Doner. I am a
25 long time resident of SoHo and a Board Member of our

1
2 five building co-op which maintains an excellent
3 balance between and respect for our residential and
4 commercial co-op owners.

5 In the late '50's, early '60's, a New York
6 Developer promised Mayor Wagner that he could prove
7 Greenwich Village was a slump, in order to qualify
8 for 80 percent federal funding grant for "urban
9 renewal." He would have knocked down most of the
10 historic residents and stores. We now know it has
11 been restored today. The visionary Jane Jacob sent a
12 photographer to the City Hall. He took a picture of
13 the letter from the developer to the Mayor making his
14 promise. Jane then released the letter to the press
15 and the plan died. There would be no Greenwich
16 Village as we know it today if it weren't for Jane
17 exposing this lie.

18 I tell you this story because the current
19 rezoning at SoHo and NoHo in Chinatown is also based
20 on a huge lie. That lie has been well defined on
21 many articulate speakers today. I'm not going to
22 review the obvious problems. It is a land grabbed by
23 the development community and is supported by
24 organizations and individuals that are backed by a
25 large development money who have recruited many of

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2 the people who have joined us today. I'm sure that
3 they are well meaning but you can notice the scripts
4 they are giving or that they write are very similar.
5 I know because one of my close relatives received a
6 call from a PR firm asking for this kind of support
7 for developers in SoHo.

8 If you want Council Members to confirm this line,
9 go for it. On the other hand, there's good news if
10 you don't want to. This year, the Pritzker Prize in
11 Architecture was given to a firm that excels in
12 creating affordable housing out of existing office
13 industrial and retail buildings. Send this plan back
14 today and invite many architects who specialize in
15 this practice to compete for this prize.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

17 FRED DONER: Please vote no and send this plan
18 back for one based on truth. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony
20 today. Next speaker please.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
22 Yukie Ohta who will be followed by Stephen Wanta.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

24 YUKIE OHTA: Good evening. Can you hear me?

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

1
2 YUKIE OHTA: Thank you. As a lifelong resident
3 of SoHo and founder of SoHo Memory Project, a
4 nonprofit organization that celebrates and preserves
5 the history of SoHo, I urge you to reject the
6 SoHo/NoHo Rezoning Plan.

7 Contrary to what developers and commercial
8 property owners assert, SoHo is still a neighborhood
9 populated by working artists who contribute greatly
10 to our city's cultural life. Tourists and businesses
11 alike are drawn to SoHo by its reputation as a
12 creative hub and by its historic cast iron
13 architecture.

14 This plan will help push out long time artist
15 residents of SoHo and NoHo as well as arts groups and
16 businesses and it will encourage the demolition of
17 historic buildings recognized a city, state and
18 national landmarks. Furthermore, this plan does not
19 guarantee any affordable housing. The plan is
20 opposed by leading citywide housing and tenant groups
21 and city, state and national preservation
22 organizations.

23 Over a dozen community and tenant groups have
24 offered a community alternative rezoning plan, which
25 would allow construction of true affordable housing

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2 without tenant displacement, out of scale development
3 and without big box chain stores forcing out local
4 businesses. Approving the sweeping proposal would
5 not only greatly impair our communities quality of
6 life while providing no community benefits. It would
7 provide little if any affordable housing and it would
8 also destroy the qualities that draw people to SoHo,
9 to the detriment of all stakeholders. I urge you to
10 say yes to our communities by voting no on the
11 SoHo/NoHo Rezoning Plan. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your
13 testimony. Next speaker please.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Stephen Wanta, who will be
15 followed by Rob Houtenbos.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

17 STEPHEN WANTA: Good morning, good afternoon and
18 now good evening to Chairperson Moya and the rest of
19 this Subcommittee and the many people who have stuck
20 with the hearing.

21 I'm a SoHo resident at 66 Crosby Street for
22 almost 40 years. A board member of my 36 unit co-op
23 and a practicing architect. I was married in this
24 loft as a young man and has raised my family. My
25 older daughter went to elementary school at PS124

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2 Young Wing School and both daughters continued
3 through the New York City public school system. I've
4 been able to stay on this Zoom meeting because I and
5 my staff work from my SoHo loft.

6 If there is a desire to build affordable housing,
7 then the city needs to actually determine how to
8 promote and build affordable housing instead of a
9 plan riddled with loopholes that may result in none.
10 The plan as it stands will result in luxury units
11 where non primary residents who have other homes part
12 capital. Or result in bulky office buildings or
13 result in more unrestricted NYU dorm construction.
14 Or result in more hotels.

15 This is what your yes vote will support, not
16 affordable housing. That this plan has been proposed
17 after effectively abandoning what had been indeed a
18 robust stakeholder engagement is insulting to the
19 many residents who here participated in the many
20 envisioned meetings. Based on the proposed rezoning,
21 the supporting stakeholders referred to by City
22 Planning appear to be overleveraged developers and
23 commercial landlords that do not live in this
24 neighborhood. Add to that, an up-zoning in a
25 historic district is in itself a terrible precedent

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2 that should be the result of a – not be the result of
3 a plan railroaded through this process.

4 Equally, if there is a desire to resolve the
5 JLWQA issue, then spend the time with real
6 stakeholders to create a plan that fully addresses
7 this quite difficult issue. If you are indeed
8 letting the community speak, we just had in the form
9 of the new officials we have elected, in particular
10 Chris Marte. Please vote no on this proposal and
11 work on this in the next term in a more considered
12 way instead of ruining this iconic neighborhood just
13 so the mayor has a nice parting gift to real estate
14 interests.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thanks for your testimony
16 today.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be Rob
19 Houtenbos who will be followed by Christabel Gough.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

21 ROB HOUTENBOS: My wife will take over here.

22 MRS. HOUTENBOS: Hi everyone. Thanks for staying
23 on so long. I want to thank our elected officials in
24 particular for a lot of their wonderful testimony.
25 Debra Glick, Brad Hoylman, Carolina Rivera and also,

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2 I'm sorry, Christopher Marte. Pretty excited to have
3 you with us. I also want to thank a lot of the
4 peoples testimony. I'm really proud to be part of
5 this whole group. Also advocating to vote no. I've
6 spend at least 30 hours on all the envision meetings
7 up until this point. I think this meeting is the
8 best meeting yet. I think it's been run excellent.

9 Really, its just been an amazing meeting. I
10 think its been worth listening. It's not because I
11 have no time, it's because I care and just my
12 personal situation, I care about the whole
13 neighborhood. I am someone who puts my best foot
14 forward in life and politically for diversity, for
15 equal rights, for underprivileged. I think something
16 we're talking about which is affordable housing, I
17 don't think anyone has really spelled out on this
18 meeting, what "affordable housing is." I think it
19 has a very different meaning in this day and age and
20 I also think that we should have really planned, if
21 we're so concerned about artists and the texture of
22 this neighborhood. I've personally lived here 44
23 years, started on Crosby Street in 1977, have never
24 left the neighborhood. Had an office, have raised a
25 family, have been in a rent controlled artist loft of

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2 my ex-husband and live in a purchased condominium
3 with no CFO because we have no AIR status.

4 And I think one complaint is that in this whole
5 process, I think that the caveat of we who live in
6 these AIR buildings yet are not artists, are not
7 addressed in these meetings. Thank you.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
10 Next speaker please.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will try again to
12 hear from Christabel Gough. Christabel Gough will be
13 the next speaker.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If you can hear us, we need
16 you to accept the unmute request in order to begin
17 your testimony.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can see you, you just got
19 to unmute. There you go.

20 CHRISTABEL GOUGH: Oh, good. Something was
21 wrong, I'm sorry.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: That's okay, we gotcha now.

23 CHRISTABEL GOUGH: It's Christabel Gough, I am
24 speaking for the Society for the Architecture of the
25 City.

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2 Some New Yorkers have a visceral dislike of
3 history and the past and they will unite behind an
4 up-zoning that creates financial incentives for
5 destruction of old landmarked architecture. And
6 calls for transformation of places that remind us of
7 our history.

8 Optimists imagine that the SoHo/NoHo Rezoning,
9 which targets the staggering number of local, state
10 and federal historic districts and individual
11 landmarks will not be a problem because the landmarks
12 are fully protected. But this is not true.

13 State and federal designations are honorific.
14 They provide tax benefits. They do not prevent
15 demolition or alteration. Our local NYC landmarks
16 law worked quite well for 50 years when government
17 leaders still saw value in the checks and balance
18 provided by the agencies regulatory policies. But
19 our local landmarks law was born of compromise. It
20 does not necessarily prevent the landmarks chair, a
21 political appointee from steering the commission to
22 discretionary decisions that are in fact destructive
23 of the landmarks laws original objectives.

24 As a long time monitor of that commission, it is
25 my observation that the agency is slipping away from

1
2 its original mission. Instead, it is leaning toward
3 facilitating real estate development without adequate
4 consideration and the words of law. Of the
5 irreplaceable loss to the people of the city, of the
6 esthetic cultural and historic values represented by
7 landmarks.

8 Now, with this rezoning, landmarks and historic
9 districts that people believed would be protected
10 treasures of the city forever are in danger.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.
13 Next speaker please.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
15 speaker on this panel. I see no members with
16 questions for this panel, so we'll announce the next
17 panel.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Before you announce the next
19 panel, I just want to turn it over to Council Member
20 Chin to take over for the remaining part of the
21 hearing. Thank you Council Member Rivera and thank
22 you Council Member Chin for stepping in here. I have
23 to step away for the moment and we will continue on
24 with the hearing. Thank you so much.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will include
3 Robert Piatkowski, Billie Cohen, Sherida Paulsen, and
4 Michael Henry Adams. Robert Piatkowski will speak
5 first followed by Billie Cohen.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 ROBERT PIATKOWSKI: Hi, my name is Rob
8 Piatkowski, I'm an Urban Planner and Designer, a
9 lover of New York City who happens to not be able to
10 afford to live in Manhattan.

11 The city's historic districts including SoHo/NoHo
12 are some of the most beautiful and desirable places
13 to live in New York City and also, some of the most
14 expensive. As someone who has devoted himself to
15 study of cities, I work with dozens and dozens of
16 communities across the country, I believe New York
17 City to be one of the best cities in the world. I
18 encourage you to vote against this rezoning unless
19 the historic protections are enhanced and the
20 provision of affordable housing strengthened.

21 The zoning is spearheaded by the administration
22 and pro-development groups that advocate that
23 neighborhoods and communities should not have a say
24 in their own evolution and it presents a false
25 economy between demolition and redevelopment of

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2 historic neighborhoods versus providing affordable
3 housing. But there's a huge middle ground to work
4 with. Austria is an example of an inclusive city and
5 consistently ranked as one of the most livable city's
6 on earth. You do not find them demolishing their
7 historic buildings, the City Center. They recognize
8 the importance of these places with the cultural,
9 physical and economic wellbeing of the city. And
10 instead, they invest in housing in these areas
11 purchasing historic buildings for public housing that
12 is truly affordable and deeply affordable.

13 They also create new neighborhoods of choice, not
14 desirable, new desirable places to live. Not just
15 [INAUDIBLE 1:34:04] and location.

16 In SoHo neighborhood, the population density is
17 really quite high, almost the same as Paris and
18 almost double that of New York City's overall
19 density. So, to say that it doesn't provide housing
20 is disingenuous. It still needs to provide
21 additional housing, especially affordable housing but
22 this plan takes a blunt tool approach to something
23 that should be more nuanced.

24 And there's a lot of middle ground here and [LOST
25 AUDIO 1:34:27-1:34:37].

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Piatkowski, you have been
3 muted. Robert Piatkowski, we missed the last few
4 seconds of your testimony. You seem to have
5 inadvertently muted.

6 ROBERT PIATKOWSKI: I would like the City Council
7 and Planning to take the time to re-envision and
8 relook at this plan and come up with a better balance
9 as truly affordable and deeply affordable housing
10 well maintains and protects historic attributes of
11 this space that's a well renowned district. Thank
12 you for your time this evening.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, thank you for your
14 testimony. Next speaker please.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
16 Billie Cohen to be followed by Sherida Paulsen.

17 BILLIE COHEN: Hi, can you hear me? Can you hear
18 me?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes.

20 BILLIE COHEN: Okay, this is obviously another
21 giveaway to the developers and a continuing agenda of
22 displacement by the city under the guides of the
23 affordable housing washing language that the
24 developers are using and there's been so much
25 testimony over the whole de Blasio administration.

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2 The City Council is usually deaf to the community
3 voices, I'm glad you're still here listening to us.
4 But we've been through a lot in the last years and it
5 just seems like the community voices, the community
6 boards have really had their power uhm, diminished
7 greatly. And this plan will definitely destroy the
8 culture, the character, the creativity, and devastate
9 the community and the small businesses.

10 The affordable housing has to come out of the
11 hands of the developer. Right now their control of
12 what they are calling affordable housing. If the
13 city was serious about taking care of this problem
14 and the homelessness, there would be comprehensive
15 planning done with real city planners, not under the
16 pocket of developers. And for example, Hudson Yards
17 became a giant perfect example. Here was a huge open
18 space that could have been the most beautiful mixed
19 community shopping, small businesses.

20 Instead, it's homogenized the rest of the city,
21 like just you know, shopping malls. Like a
22 homogenized shopping mall for the wealthy. Where's
23 the affordable housing, the beautiful open spaces of
24 Hudson Yards? It's over and over and over throughout
25 the city that you're just taking away the heart and

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2 soul and the character that makes New York what it is
3 over and over and over. The developers have got to
4 stop being in control of what happens in the city.

5 And shame on the city for not helping the small
6 businesses that are the heart and the backbone of New
7 York City and one of the biggest employers. Nobody
8 helped them after they got the riots came through in
9 the summer and they were all boarded up and they got
10 robbed. There was no help for them. There was no
11 help for them during COVID. Just like the cab
12 drivers, the heart and soul and the workers of New
13 York are not being supported by the city and it's
14 just making life unbearable for everybody.

15 And also, to start -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 BILLIE COHEN: Oh, but green spaces are supposed
18 to be in a community air spaces. You can't put tall
19 buildings - the infrastructure can't take it. Where
20 are these flushing - the sewer systems can't take all
21 these toilets either. You're just covering everybody
22 in poop. I'm sorry, please City Council, please
23 listen to us.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you for your
25 testimony. Next speaker please.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be Sherida
3 Paulsen who will be followed by Michael Henry Adams.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 SHERIDA PAULSEN: Hello, my name is Sherida
6 Paulsen, I'm an Architect, Past President of the AIA
7 New York Chapter and Former Chair of the Landmarks
8 Preservation Commission.

9 I testify today however, as a Design Professional
10 working on individual landmarks and within historic
11 districts with decades of experience dealing with the
12 cumbersome approvals required in SoHo and NoHo to
13 allow for retail and residential uses.

14 With that said, I am here today to speak in
15 opposition to this Proposed Zoning Text. The current
16 zoning adopted many years ago has many, many flaws.
17 But it achieved its goal of preserving these special
18 buildings and allowing for adaptive reuse for
19 residential and retail when the applicant did repair
20 and restoration work.

21 The community, the Council Members and many
22 elected officials spent much time and effort to reach
23 common goals to allow for retail, commercial and
24 residential uses to coexist in a balanced manner,
25 retain the special character of the historic

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2 districts and provide reasonable flexibility for
3 future adaptive reuse without requiring multiple
4 lengthy reviews.

5 This zoning proposal does not address these
6 goals. It penalizes the residents and building
7 owners who invested in this area by adding a flip
8 tax, creates confusion regarding allowable
9 development but provides no regulatory relief or
10 requirements that can [LOST AUDIO 1:39:45] and
11 additions to historic buildings, especially for
12 residential use.

13 I urge the Council to reject the proposal as
14 presented or address the multiple critical comments
15 from elected appointed officials and members of the
16 public by reducing the FAR allowable, eliminating the
17 [INAUDIBLE 1:40:05-1:40:09] above the second floor
18 and apartment buildings, analyze the current codes
19 for possible conflicts and develop clear
20 modifications that can address adaptive reuse in
21 these neighborhoods.

22 Again, I urge you to -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Expired.

24 SHERIDA PAULSEN: Thank you.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you for your
3 testimony. Next speaker.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be Michael
5 Henry Adams.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Michael Henry Adams, we need
8 you to accept the unmute request in order to begin
9 your testimony. Michael Henry Adams?

10 MICHAEL HENRY ADAMS: Yes, hello.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

12 MICHAEL HENRY ADAMS: Great. I'm so sorry. Our
13 beauty or heritage and history on the purview of
14 people who are rich or White. Does no one else have
15 the right to live in a city as beautiful or historic
16 or meaningful and livable as our forbearers?

17 Landmarking is demonized by some as lead us and
18 in terms of current implementation, it is. Now it
19 disproportionately protects rich, White neighborhoods
20 as opposed to communities of color. Yet, where
21 landmarking exists in marginalized neighborhoods, it
22 has been utilized as a tool both to preserve rent
23 regulated housing and also to increase such housing,
24 through application of the National Historic
25 Preservation Investment Tax Credit.

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2 As to sustainability, how densely built a city as
3 sustainable. Are we not more sensible to create
4 housing units in the least dense areas of our city,
5 instead of those which are the most dense? In a
6 nation where most of us are segregated by social
7 class, a rezoning of this type, incentivizing
8 destruction of historic and rent regulated housing is
9 not solution for inequality. Rent control is and
10 rent control is the only answer and no one has
11 mentioned that during all of the testimony.

12 Franklin Roosevelt identified this in 1936 during
13 the new deal as the answer to the problems which
14 people talk about of overcrowding and of a shortage
15 of housing. That exists now worse than before
16 everyone says and yet no one is going to the real
17 answer, rent control. Thank you very much.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you for your
19 testimony. Next speaker.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Madam Chair, that was the
21 last speaker for this panel, so if it's okay with
22 you, seeing no members with questions, I'll announce
23 the next panel.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes, please.
25

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 404
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will include
3 Margaret Baisley. Margaret Baisley.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Margaret Baisley, if you can
6 hear me?

7 MARGARET BAISLEY: Yes, hi.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay.

9 MARGARET BAISLEY: My name is Margaret Baisley.
10 I've advocated rezoning for over 20 years here and
11 I'm here to support the plan to rezone this historic
12 district, to make downstairs residential – upstairs
13 residential occupancy legal and downstairs retail
14 legal occupancy legal as well.

15 What I don't support with the respect to this
16 program and this proposal, is to charge residents a
17 penalty of up to \$100 a square foot to legalize their
18 lofts. We are mindful of artists in our area who
19 need our support. We're happy to provide it but this
20 tax is onerous, it's punitive, it doesn't serve the
21 purpose for which it was intended and it really
22 should be removed.

23 Funding the arts is important. So is the
24 preservation of our historic cast iron buildings.

25 And the people of SoHo and NoHo are the ones who have

1
2 done so. For the past 40 years, we're the ones who
3 paid outrageous tax assessments here. We're the ones
4 who pay the millions of dollars that it costs to fix
5 these roofs, to preserve these façades, to redo the
6 sidewalks, to keep these buildings beautiful so that
7 New York City can keep collecting all the tax
8 revenues it collects from retail, from tourists, from
9 residents that SoHo and NoHo generate.

10 We have already paid \$100 a square foot and we
11 have already paid these taxes and these amounts and
12 it is uncalled for to make us pay it again. We think
13 that the proposed legislation, that was proposed by
14 Margaret Chin, the penalties of \$15,000 for a first
15 offense for occupying a loft without jointly work
16 order certification and \$25,000 for a second offense
17 is even more goaling. You know that 99 percent of
18 people who live here could never be certified as
19 certified artists and 99 percent of certified artists
20 can never afford to keep these buildings maintained
21 the way that we do.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 MARGARET BAISLEY: In light of this, we think
24 that we should have a compromise. We are willing to
25 trade an up-zoning for increased construction for new

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2 housing, for inclusionary housing to support artists
3 but paying for the right to live here, when people
4 have already lived here and already paid dearly to do
5 so is just simply unacceptable.

6 I came here in 1977. Many people who bought
7 lofts here are older. Their lofts are really their
8 nest eggs. They're retirement investments. Don't
9 make seniors pay \$250,000 for the privilege of living
10 in their lofts that they've owned for 30 years or for
11 the privilege of selling their lofts in retirement.

12 Compromise on the up-zoning. We're willing to
13 see up-zoning in return for benefits for all
14 community members. Residents here don't want see 225
15 foot high new buildings on Broadway, so agree on new
16 height restrictions that are a bit lower. Agree on
17 bulk density requirements that are a little bit
18 lessened. Compromise on these issues. Provide
19 protections for tenants but get rid of this \$100 a
20 square foot penalty tax. Give us a rezoning plan
21 that makes sense and that meets the needs of all
22 stakeholders here. Thank you very much.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you for your
24 testimony and I hope that you will submit your
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2 recommendation and we'll definitely you know take a
3 look and work on it. Thank you. Next speaker.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the last
5 speaker on this panel. And with your permission,
6 then I will announce the next panel. That will
7 include Susan Stoltz, Michele Camo, Vincent Cao, and
8 Todd Fine. The first speaker will be Susan Stoltz to
9 be followed by Michel Campo.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 SUSAN STOLTZ: Okay, can you hear me? Okay, I'm
12 uhm- today I just listened to the plan and I've gone
13 to almost all of the public meetings and all I
14 thought in my head was chaos. Because I'm a loft
15 tenant. I moved here in 1949, an artist loft tenant
16 and a senior and one of the things that came up at
17 one of the meetings - I run an alert across the whole
18 five boroughs about being a senior citizen and trying
19 to fit under these laws, which are completely open
20 ended and they're not defined.

21 That's one thing you cannot have like this uh,
22 the law for paying this tax fee and I don't know
23 whether loft tenants, we already have been working on
24 that for years. But at the same time, it's so
25 chaotic. There's no definitions and one of the

1
2 things I don't want to do that I did for years, was
3 have to go fight this over and over. Because right
4 now, my concentration and for many seniors and I know
5 those that are artists, all I have an estate of my
6 spouses work. I have all my work. I have two
7 organizations; I work in all the boroughs with
8 children and young people in films. I have all this
9 work that has to be disbursed and I cannot have my
10 mind go focusing and everything have to do with legal
11 issues. Because this is what's going to - the
12 Mayor's plan right now is so open ended. It just
13 allows for all kinds of problems and harassment and
14 things like that. I've been through this before, I
15 had someone kick the door in on my and that was
16 younger.

17 And at this point, I need my focus on really
18 getting the work out and getting this done while I
19 have -

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 SUSAN STOLTZ: But I want you think about and
22 reject it as is. It just doesn't work. It just
23 causes chaos for seniors, which also, in one - I just
24 want to say one thing about that. They were told
25 even if someone, a family wanted to put uh, one of

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2 ours needed to go to a residence in a senior
3 residence, they'd still have, the family would have
4 to pay the fee. Whatever the hell it is. So, this
5 is important across the city. Something that can be
6 used. It's not great for senior citizens and for
7 artists. Thank you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you for your
9 testimony. Next speaker please.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
11 Vincent Cao to be followed by Todd Fine.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 TODD FINE: Hello? It's Todd or Vincent?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Todd Fine.

15 TODD FINE: Oh okay. Yes, my name is Todd Fine,
16 I'm the President of the Washington Street Advocacy
17 Group, which supports affordable housing and also
18 preservation in the little neighborhood near
19 Manhattan. And a lot of people say that people in
20 Lower Manhattan don't support affordable housing are
21 being selfish but people in Lower Manhattan have been
22 fighting desperately for the last year to maximize
23 affordable housing at the Five World Trade Center
24 site, which was a Cuomo Initiative that gave Larry
25

1
2 Silverstein the ability to build a luxury tower on
3 government land at the World Trade Center.

4 The city, the Mayor's office has half the seats
5 on the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation Board.
6 It can work to maximize affordable housing. It can
7 work with the City Council. It can work with the
8 federal government. It can work with all the state
9 and local legislatures who want this to happen but
10 it's not doing it and it shows that the Mayor's
11 office, in one move could get more affordable housing
12 than this entire rezoning and we need the City
13 Council to embrace this, along with Two Howard
14 Street.

15 Additionally, Council Member Moya made an
16 extraordinary remark about how and Carlina Rivera,
17 where is the Landmarks Preservation Commission? I've
18 gone to every meetings this entire year. We've never
19 seen Landmarks deal with an initiative, talk about an
20 initiative that effects six historic districts. That
21 the environmental impact statement says we'll have
22 adverse impacts on dozens of national registered
23 monuments. It will build luxury penthouses. Not
24 just on the projected development sites but on dozens
25 and dozens, hundreds of historic buildings will be

1
2 filled with luxury penthouses. It will be a
3 nightmare for one of jewels of the world and
4 Landmarks has done nothing and it cannot be assumed
5 to protect this historic district under the political
6 controls and the weakening in the corporate capture
7 of landmarks.

8 We need a strong LPC and we need their
9 involvement to deal with this otherwise this plan
10 will destroy world heritage and be a nightmare for
11 the world essentially.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Next speaker please. Thank
13 you for your testimony Todd.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker will be
15 Vincent Cao to be followed by Michele Campo. Vincent
16 Cao.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 VINCENT CAO: [SPEAKING IN MANDARIN 1:53:23-
19 1:55:12].

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah [SPEAKING IN MANDARIN
21 1:55:16]. I think we have a translator?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, now Chair, do we have an
23 interpreter available to assist this witness?

24

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: He just gave his testimony
3 in Mandarin, so if the translator could just
4 translate what he said on the record.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do we have Liequang Wen? Are
6 you available to provide a translation?

7 LIEQUANG WEN: Yes. Can you hear me now?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. Yes.

9 LIEQUANG WEN: Okay, I represent 8385 and the
10 local residents. Uhm, we consider that the SoHo/NoHo
11 plan has actually helped the uhm, realty developer to
12 earn money and it's a nightmare for the local
13 residents, particularly for the low rent tenants. If
14 this plan is carried on than a lot of local tenants
15 have to move out and the developer will bring them
16 into a court issue.

17 They are all low income tenants. How can they
18 afford to fill this issue. So, we urge Council to
19 stop this SoHo/NoHo Plan.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. Next speaker
21 please.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Madame Chair, I believe that
23 was the last - oh sorry, Michele Campo. Do we have
24 Michele Campo?

25 MICHELE CAMPO: Thank you. Can you hear me?

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

MICHELE CAMPO: You can hear me, oh wonderful.
Good evening. I am Michele – what? Hello? Okay,
I'm just forging ahead here.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, go ahead. Go ahead.

MICHELE CAMPO: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: We hear you Michele.

MICHELE CAMPO: Okay, thanks Margaret. Vice
President of Bowery Alliance of Neighbors. I
attended all the envisioned SoHo/NoHo sessions
beginning with what I call the chaos in the
cafeteria.

I have seen many changes as a Native New Yorker
who has lived in my loft since 1971. But I must say
that the current face paced rush to rezone by a Mayor
about to leave office, does not pass the smell test.
Some decades ago there was an attempt by a since
discredited public official, Robert Moses, who
destroyed Lower Manhattan in Washington Square Park,
for the misguided purpose of easing vehicular traffic
flow.

This ill-conceived attempt was supported by a
coalition of community activists, including Jane

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2 Jacobs and a dear friend of many exulted recently
3 departed Doris Dither(SP?). The result of this
4 community activism has been beneficial to many,
5 including those who would have been similarly
6 displaced.

7 These plans have been historically conducted to -
8 the current plans have been historically conducted to
9 disrupt and tear apart lower income areas. Sorry,
10 the first one is better. These plans have been
11 historically conducted to disrupt and tear apart
12 lower income areas. This practice unfortunately
13 continues across the country to this day. These
14 current plans apparently now include destruction of
15 cultural and architectural historic districts. I am
16 100 percent in favor of affordable housing. This
17 plan does not provide any. This plan, which will
18 lead to the ultimate destruction of SoHo/NoHo
19 Chinatown is another such ill conceived plan. This
20 is a false narrative pushed by developers for their
21 own interests.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 MICHELE CAMPO: It will not include affordable
24 housing. I missed a couple minutes in the beginning,
25 can I continue? It will lead to displacement of many

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2 affordable housing units. This unfortunate plan is
3 worthy of Robert Moses. That discredited public
4 official years past. The current New York Mayor will
5 join the list of those discredited individuals.

6 I ask the Council Members to please reject this
7 ultimately non affordable housing plan. Thank you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you for your
9 testimony. Next speaker please.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Madam Chair, that was the
11 last speaker on this panel. Uh, we will - unless we
12 have other question, I see no members with questions,
13 so we can announce the next panel. That will include
14 Zishun Ning and Cynthia Chapin. Zishun Ning.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 ZISHUN NING: Yes, hi everyone. This is Zishun
17 speaking from Chinese Staff Workers Association,
18 which is a member of Chinatown Working Group. And
19 I'm here speaking in opposition to the SoHo/NoHo
20 rezoning. The Department of City Planning brush off
21 the criticism on the rezoning's impact on Chinatown.
22 Thinking the Chinese are so cheap that a vague
23 promise of affordable housing can shut them up. This
24 is an insult to the community fighting for years for
25 the Chinatown Working Group Rezoning Plan, which will

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2 limit real estate speculation and create more truly
3 affordable housing. And which was rejected by the
4 same agency and the Mayor. It is safe to say
5 Chinatown won't be displaced but at least we could
6 give so called affordable housing to a few lucky
7 ones. In an area we don't even think of as part of
8 Chinatown.

9 So, what it is if not intentional divide and
10 destruction of Chinatown?: Chinatown in the lower
11 east side have fought against racism. Not for equal
12 suffering that why people should be displaced, like
13 people of color but for equal protection, like with
14 the East Village had in 2008. So that everyone,
15 Chinese, Black, White and Latino can live, work and
16 thrive in our communities.

17 Mayor de Blasio wants to see us divided. He
18 promotes racism in the name of racial equality. He
19 promotes displacement in the name of creating so
20 called affordable housing. Our current Council
21 Member of District One has been too happy to follow
22 his lead. He has left a legacy of racism and
23 displacement. We urge the City Council to stop being
24 a pawn for his shameful act. Vote no on the
25 SoHo/NoHo Rezoning and pass community plans like the

1
2 Chinatown Working Group Plan and the SoHo/NoHo
3 Neighborhood Plan. Thank you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you for your
5 testimony. Next speaker please.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next speaker will be Cynthia
7 Chapin. Cynthia Chapin.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Cynthia Chapin, we need you
10 to accept the unmute request in order to begin your
11 testimony which you should be able to do on a phone
12 by pressing star six.

13 CYNTHIA CHAPIN: Okay, can you hear me?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

15 CYNTHIA CHAPIN: I wasn't planning on speaking
16 and I think everybody has already - I'm against the
17 zoning plan and everyone else has you know stated the
18 reasons many times over you know that I would give.
19 But one thing that I think hasn't been pointed out is
20 that I haven't heard anyone point out is that our
21 streets are too narrow. Our sidewalks are too
22 narrow. There's no room for the amount of people
23 that this plan could potentially bring. And I remind
24 you of when we had to shut down fashion night because
25 of crowds and because people couldn't even drive in

1
2 the streets and I just can't see how you can have
3 nightclubs and big theatrical venues and hotels and
4 office buildings and more people on the subways. I
5 just don't think that there's room for this.

6 So, that's all I wanted to say. Thank you and
7 I'm sorry that I didn't prepare anything to say.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: No, thank you Cynthia for
9 your testimony. Next speaker please.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair that was the last
11 speaker on this panel and I am now on the very bottom
12 of page 34 and we will see if there is any last
13 coming witnesses. If there are any members of the
14 public who wish to testify on the SoHo/NoHo
15 Neighborhood Plan and legislation, please press the
16 raise hand button now.

17 We will have the meeting briefly stand at ease
18 while we check for any additional members of the
19 public who wish to testify.

20 Chair Chin, I see no other members of the public
21 who wish to testify on this item. None who have not
22 already testified.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, thank you. There
24 being no members of the public who wish to testify on
25 the Preconsidered LU item for the SoHo/NoHo

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2 Neighborhood Plan under ULURP Number C 210422 ZMM and
3 N 210423 CRM and related Proposed legislation, the
4 public hearing is now closed and the items are laid
5 over.

6 I just wanted to thank everyone who came to
7 testify today and we really appreciate all the
8 comments and recommendations. Is there someone else
9 that hasn't been called?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No one who has not already
11 testified Madam Chair.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Oh okay. Council Member
13 Rivera, do you want to say something before I close
14 the Chair remarks? No, okay.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Well, I just want to
16 thank everyone at the Council and everyone who
17 participated for making this happen. And of course
18 to the Committee Counsel, Arthur especially, you've
19 been amazing and thank you Council Member Chin for
20 being someone great to work with and for being here
21 the whole time. Good night everyone.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. Yes, thank you
23 again to everyone who stayed for this long hearing.
24 That concludes today's business. I will remind the
25 viewing public that for anyone wishing to submit

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2 testimony for items that were heard today, please
3 send it by email to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

4 And I once again thank the members of the public.

5 Thanks to my colleague on the Subcommittee and also
6 the Subcommittee Council, Land Use and other Council
7 Staff and the Sergeants at Arms for participating in
8 today's meeting.

9 So, this meeting is hereby adjourned. Thank you
10 and good night. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date December 13, 2021