

Post-event Follow-up Notes

This document contains the **full list of verbatim questions submitted via the Zoom Q&A feature** during the SoHo/NoHo Arts & Culture Information Session held on March 30, 2021.

Please note that the questions were directly exported from the Zoom platform and have not been altered in any way except for the removal of individuals' identifying information, obscene, racist, sexist or otherwise derogatory and discriminatory language.

For questions that were answered during the event, you can watch the event's recording. Answers to commonly asked questions regarding the planning process and the neighborhood plan will continue to be updated as part of our SoHo/NoHo FAQ as we move forward.

The event's recording and FAQ can be found on our website at www.nyc.gov/sohonohoplan.

Number	Question	Asker Name
1	Can we please see the attendance numbers?	Anonymous Attendee
2	As an artist, I'm interesting in hearing how DCP will protect every JLWQA units forever, in these neighborhoods once the area is transitioned to making it legal for anyone to live in these live/work units? And what language will DCP use in its Plan to prevent landlords and Boards from denying or exclude future artists that seek housing here?	ronnie w
3	how many people are signed in today?	Anonymous Attendee
4	How many participants do we have on the zoom tonight?	Pete D
5	why have you disabled the attendee chat?	Anonymous Attendee
6	The chat is disabled	Anonymous Attendee
7	Could you just put the counter up? Thank you	Anonymous Attendee
8	when will chat be enabled	Anonymous Attendee
9	After countless hours of meetings over more than a year, what are the chances that DCP will improve on the off-the shelf MIH program to better reflect the concerns of the community and the uniqueness (in the real sense of the word) of the SoHo/NoHo neighborhood? Please explain DCP's current approach to MIH.	Frederica S
10	Great!	Randy A
11	How do you think culture and art progressed throughout the years	Issac S
12	who is that	devin
13	Why not let chat happen during the presentation? This is making the meeting even less open than before.	Anonymous Attendee
14	Will FUTURE SoHo/NoHo residents in the artistic and creative fields be able to work in their respective fields in their work/live residences? What protections will there be under the proposed zoning to allow them to work in place? - Considering possible conflicts with strict residential-type zoning. The Draft Scope of Work does not address this.	Jeanne W
15	Hello, I think I'm positive to covid what to do?	Jack H

16	Under the new zoning proposal, will Use Group 9 artist studios be permitted to convert to residential? Will this be as of right or by special permit with a C of O change?	Margaret B
17	What 1983 Occupancy Survey?	Lora T
18	<p>Sylvia, This is not true. It effects Rent Stabilized, Loft Law , A.I. R. and Joint Living Quarters.MANY people will lose their homes. You are altering the laws that govern our homes. More than half of Tribeca lost their homes over rezoning. How can you say this?</p> <p>You don't understand what you are suggesting. It is illegal. You are ignoring the Loft Laws and the Landmark Laws in Soho and Noho. Just like Willets Point. You are violating many people's rights for their homes. This is all a lie!</p>	Victoria H
19	Does DCP understand that by early '80s it became clear that artists no longer needed to apply for artist certification to find homes here without facing issues nor paying the fees and go through the portfolio process? DCP..you can't count how many artists are here by counting past and current certified artists.	Anonymous Attendee
20	Stores are creative businesses. Listen to yourself.	M F
21	How will a Use Group 3 museum be able to compete with a Use Group 10 Walmart for space?	Anonymous Attendee
22	She means only for the buildings that were legalized and put into Rent Stabilization by the Loft Board. We will lose over 1,000 units minimum. She is lying. Any lawyer will tell you Sylvia is lying, and has no idea what she is talking about.	Victoria H
23	How dare you? Contribute?	Victoria H
24	Why is there no park and no park planned, and why is there no palyground and no playground planned. Most artist who are living in the districts have ben certified and so why do you keep making an issue of certification. I was on the original NYC certifcation committee. The Loft Law is and one does not have to say thus—it is the law,	Elliott B
25	Sylvia has presented the rezoning based on one lie after the other.	Victoria H

26	Questions for Sylvia Li:	Zella J
27	Will the “arts fund” be dedicated to SoHo and NoHo or citywide? Will “conversion” be required upon sale to a non-artist and is it by unit or by building? And what is the range and formula for the expected contribution?	Anonymous Attendee
28	Are you including incentives for the creation of new art-related uses. What would make these more or even equally attractive as general retail?	Zella J
29	Do you envision the JLWQA pass-through to be a one time or permanent surcharge?	Zella J
30	Why has the City not collected or made known data on the existing number of Certified Artists and also have not made efforts to gather data on those who may not be certified, but identify themselves as in the art fields or creative-maker fields? It is important for specific, local data to be collected. Many in the arts & creative fields may file Federal Tax returns that do not identify them as artists, but instead file tax returns which indicate income from the jobs that support their main art & creative endeavors (such as work in restaurants or office temp work).	Jeanne W
31	Will folks be able to submit questions for a period of time after tonight’s presentation? There is a lot of information to absorb, and additional time would be useful.	Pete D
32	DCP please consider that the “arts fund” is available to maintain the vaulted sidewalks of these neighborhoods which are public spaces and yet are shouldered by artists living in these majestic lofts..which also require extensive facade work! We need funds for the upkeep of the neighborhoods...	ronnie w

33	<p>He is lying. You don't want to know how many people applied for Loft coverage and protected occupancy status on June 15th alone over Senator Hoylman's Loft Bill to extend filing deadlines. 1,000 buildings in North Brooklyn are now eligible for Loft Law coverage and protected occupancy status for Julia Salazar's Loft Bill.</p> <p>He is neglecting to state Mayor Bloomberg somehow altered the laws for Loft tenant to legalize their lofts. How much grant money is irrelevant. There is no decline.</p>	Victoria H
34	I had to join late, will the recording be sent after? I really want to see DCLA's info about artist spaces in SoHo. I have an artisanal business and want to remain in SoHo or TriBeCa.	Patrick H
35	How will the contribution to the arts be determined? Will it be payable at the time of conversion or upon a sale of the loft? Will non-artist Joint Live/Work be permitted while an application to convert from JLWQA is pending or will you commence enforcement proceedings to determine who is living legally?	Margaret B
36	<p>What is the city proposing in order to protect current JLWQA rent stabilized tenants from landlord harrassment as increased potential property values will likely encourage landlords to pressure rent stabilized JLWQA tenants to leave, like we experienced in my building during the ramp up to the height of SoHo property values in 2014?</p> <p>We were not protected by the city when our landlord gut renovated around us, did unprotected asbestos abatement, sent a man through our floor with a sledge hammer and opened the roof of our building for months with no protection in order to make us leave. We persevered and are still here. Yes, we are certified artists.</p> <p>Landlord harrassment of rent stabilized tenants by construction harrassment is VERY REAL.</p>	Michele V

37	How will DCLA prevent the overwhelming financial/real estate pressure that will be put on arts organizations in the rezoning's surrounding areas (Little Italy, Chinatown, etc.), or is it ok for these small arts org's to be force out by this plan?	R. L
38	I expect all the above comments / questions would have been in chat if you had it and not been in the Q&A section. I have a Q&A question I would like to pose...though I am interested in your 1983 study, I hope you don't use that as my Q&A!	Lora T
39	Very few artists now apply for certification. Are you looking at those artists that received certification 40/30/20 years ago and are still here in SoHo/NoHo? Have you done a careful accounting of the number if artists currently in this area?	margo m
40	<p>The last slide during the DCP part of the presentation titled, SoHo / NoHo Neighborhood Plan - Strategies for Arts/Culture, included the following language: Provide an option to convert JLWQU to residential use, paired with benefits to arts/culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing JLWQY "may" remain as-is - Existing JLWQA "may" be converted to residential use through a contribution into a SoHo / NoHo arts fund - Provide additional support for arts and cultural organizations within and around SoHo/NoHo. <p>Can you please clarify what you mean by the word "may"?</p> <p>And can you expound on the specific ways in which the DCP will ensure that it supports the arts and cultural: i.e., it seems too general.</p>	Marna L
41	DCP: why would you suggest that applications for AIR certification are in any way indicative of number of artists residing in SoHo? Everyone knows that this certification is not monitored and no one any longer applies. But those who applied over the years are here!	Jane F

42	<p>The city is refusing certification and certificates of occupancy. The loft board is even changing the “rules” to apply. Of course, the city would see a decline. They created the decline.</p> <p>Once it is rezoned. The units the Loft Laws created will lose their homes over rezoning. The city is refusing to uphold the laws that govern lofts.</p> <p>1,000 buildings were eligible to be put into Rent Stabilization in North Brooklyn alone. These are lofts people have lived in for years.</p>	Victoria H
43	Are there any plans to create affordable artists housing, similar to Westbeth Artists Housing in the West Village, as part of the SoHo/NoHo rezoning?	Olivia M
44	Per the Draft Scope of Work, the City says it is “difficult to estimate” the number of Certified Artists in the study area. Since the City certifies artists, can you explain why this data is “difficult to estimate” & not available or there have not been efforts to gather the most recent data for this rezoning purpose? There were hundreds of people who raised their hands when at the City’s public meetings in 2019 it was asked who was a Certified Artist. And much more with those who identified as in the arts of creative-maker fields, but not certified, were added in.	Jeanne W
45	What is the formula and the financial specifics for payments into the Arts Fund, and what specifically triggers those payments?	Pete D
46	But we are talking about arts and culture, NOT commerce, right?	M F
47	How can we obtain a detailed breakdown of the funds paid out to local arts groups in SoHo & NoHo?	Pete D
48	Another form of landlord harrassment that has been used to get existing rent stabilized JLWQA tenants to leave has been owners leasing empty spaces in the building for Air BNB all night raves that have succeeded in driving out the conforming tenants.	Michele V

49	Are developers going to provide space for artists to work in studios? What incentives would they get to do this?	Bonnie L
50	Will the City continue the Artist Certification process in SoHo and NoHo if the rezoning takes place? Will the City update and expand the Artist Certification designation? Will the City add other categories, such as “creative makers”?	Jeanne W
51	I photograph over 300 murals on plywood during Black Lives Matter protest. Who at Art & Culture I should contact about this photo collection. I might add many of the murals are not in the artists possessions and virtually all of them have been taken down by building owners or retailers as stores open back up. It's important art event that took place in Soho/NoHo that should be preserved by way of photographs of the art. Kurt Boone: bmc20205@aol.com	Kurt B
52	Please explain in detail how this Arts Funds will work. Who will decide how much that will cost a buyer? Or will it be the seller? Or a landlord? What is the mechanism for this?	Renee M
53	Follow up: artist activities are considered a manufacturing use (17D) so will that be changed?	Lora T
54	Silvia Li: So many of these questions were raised during the lengthy “envision process.” Why are there still no answers—punting to ‘must talk to legal’? This all must be resolved for review before proceeding.	Jane F
55	How will the Fund work? Will 100% of the monies remain in CB2? How transparent will the process be? What's the plan?	Frederica S
56	Is anything in the planning considering the need for an arts-rich media outlet? SOho could not have been Soho without the Village Voice, SOhho Weekly News and The Villager.	Jonathan S
57	the graph pointing to certified artists by year implies that since 1987 the certification has fallen dramatically. this is a false narrative. more to reality is that artists living here have continued to occupy their homes.	michele c

58	<p>I am so distressed by this RE grab and NYC gloss over of the issues confronting SoHo/NoHo at this terrible time. All the pictures you've been showing seem to reflect clean and peaceful streets. Nothing could be farther from current reality. We are plagued with commercial vacancies, frequent robberies both residential and commercial, traffic jams and loud souped up cars/cycles, predatory bicyclists who "own" the sidewalks, mountains of uncollected garbage, clogged sidewalk drains, yada, yada...This is no longer the upscale privileged neighborhood that the city and REBNY are proposing to change for the better. The city has allowed RE interests to ruin what was once an interesting and vibrant neighborhood and now wants to give free rein to those same interests to destroy what few positive threads remain here to feather their coffers. This, along with lack of enforcement of sanitation, transportation, other QOL regulations, illustrates why NYC is failing.</p>	Dianne M
59	<p>Will there be a separate session on historic preservation?</p>	Todd F
60	<p>DCP: Please tell ONY interrupters to stay on topic: Arts & Culture.</p>	Jane F
61	<p>A city and its political leaders owned by special interests - RE foremost and Finance thereafter - will never achieve the objective of making a liveable and affordable city.</p>	Dianne M
62	<p>Can it be explained further from what I may understand, or don't understand, as it was very vague: To convert to residential housing a thought is to pay into an arts fund? How does that help artists? How does that help retain the arts & creative-maker culture in SoHo & NoHo? Where do those funds go? To a non-profit or into the City's general fund? This appears to decrease the arts component in SoHo and NoHo.</p>	Jeanne W

63	Sylvia mentioned that conversion of Artist Studio UG 9 to standard residential would trigger MIH if the building is of a certain size; that indicates that a payment into the Affordable Housing Fund would be required if there is no space in the existing building for any AH units. Please address that situation, and what is the current amount by \$/SF that conversions would have to pay into the AH Fund?	Pete D
64	If there is an artist who works in wood, and oils, and thus has noise and noxious fumes, and a stockbroker moves in downstairs, what protections does the artist have from being sued because of noise and smells? This is a zoning issue, because zoning is different in M districts in how it treats noise and fumes.	Lora T
65	the chat feature is not working. It is blank for most participants	M F
66	ALERT: Many of us cannot see chat at all. Can you adjust or advise the audience?	Jane F
67	The courts have found this Zoom process illegal in other communities due to the limitations and lack of full representation by some community members. How do you justify this process that appears to disenfranchise a portion of our community	Leigh B
68	I will ask again: Please advise how to access chat if it is indeed enabled—many, many of us cannot use it; it's not activated.	Jane F
69	I apologize, but the City is not giving clear answers to the questions. The answers appear evasive and double-talk.	Jeanne W
70	The city has allowed the conversion of formerly affordable live/work, rent controlled/regulated spaces to office and quasi-hotel spaces such as AirBnB, WeWork, etc. The people displaced by this, mostly artists or low-income elderly- do not benefit from this unfortunate transition. If the city is really looking to create a more "affordable" neighborhood, why are officials pushing a plan that benefits only RE interests and threatens to oust people/families who have lived here for decades, if not generations.?	Dianne M

71	payment into Affordable housing if there is no space??? How is the space issue addressed? If its a small building will it be punished for being small?	PIER LUIGI C
72	DCP: Since these details have not yet been worked out, how can you expect SoHo residents to interact in an informed way with you tonight?	Jane F
73	Can you name another fund that has been a success?	Frederica S
74	Why are you having this meeting when DCP is clearly not prepared to answer the really imporant questions that the community has?	Renee M
75	I am trying very hard to listen to this presentation and not feel as though you are radically transforming our neighborhood for the worse. This plan feels light on details and not what our community has been asking asking for. I guess my question is what was the full year of "envision SoHo/NoHo" for? It does not seem as though this was what I was hearing at the many tables that I sat out throughout the process. I am so sad.	Emily H
76	Why was an arts fund never consdired before? Why now? The institutions are here, the artists are here...	M F
77	Can you advise how many employees Dept of Cultural Affairs has and what budget?	Jeanne W
78	Why is DCP giving preference to speakers who want to talk off topic about housing when this meeting is about Arts and Culture?	Renee M
79	Hi there! Someone who has logged in to tonight's meeting as "Amelia Joseph's on" is impersonating me in the chat. Would it be possible to kick that person out of the Zoom? Thank you!	Amelia J
80	MIH is affordable housing. Artists needs affordable housing. After countless hours of meetings over more than a year, what are the chances that DCP will improve on the off-the shelf MIH program to better reflect the concerns of the community and the uniqueness (in the real sense of the word) of the SoHo/NoHo neighborhood? Please explain DCP's current approach to MIH.	Frederica S

81	Is there any fear that skyscrapers will harm SoHo's image related to arts and culture that is connected to its architecture?	Todd F
82	DCP: Please tell residents of SoHo why it is necessary to radically increase FAR, turning SoHo into midtown, eliminating air and light AND inviting big box retail, in order to increase residential units, including affordable units.	Jane F
83	Asking Derek Weng DCLA to clarify regarding the CreateNYC Cultural Plan, which he said they "heard from people like you." When did those involved in that study & plan engage with folks in SoHo & NoHo. However looking at the 2017 Create NYC Cultural Plan there is NO mention of SoHo, and I have not heard of anyone in the neighborhoods who was consulted for or took part in that two-year study. For the 2019 CreateNYC Action Plan: SoHo is mentioned only ONE time; that is found in a footnote in regard to proposed zoning changes in the neighborhood and elsewhere. Can Mr. Weng please explain how his statements line up with what is reported in the CreateNYC documents?	Pete D
84	Regarding JLWQA conversions to residential, would the contribution towards this arts fund act as a type of tax on the sale of existing JLWQA housing stock? How would this not have the effect of depressing the value of future sales under this yet-to-be-defined program? What is the timeline for presenting some concrete details? Particular considering that this is session 3 out of 3.	Eugene Y
85	Much appreciated!	Amelia J
86	I agree. How can we open up more live work spaces for creative types and affordable housing for creatives specifically?	Patrick H
87	When will you explain "the mechanism?" I thought that was what this presentation was to be. So far, we have heard no new details.	Michele V

88	It's very upsetting that this is happening and it's being put into the public record, so thank you for taking this seriously. I would be more than happy to send a screenshot of my photo ID if that would help resolve the identity question and empower your team to either change this Zoom user's name or ask them to leave the meeting.	Amelia J
89	If an individual wishes to do live/work in their space in a new building, how do they go about it? What if their landlord, or co-op board wishes to keep it as residential. What rights will the individual have to pursue their work?	David L
90	This New Arts fund should include supporting those senior artists who are required to maintain the sidewalks..if we contribute to the fund when we convert. Not just organizations!! Who is going to help us afford to live here?	ronnie w
91	Are you aware that a resident of SoHo is being impersonated by an ONY member? Do we need more evidence to support the fact that this medium is PROBLEMATIC in the extreme?	M F
92	I am confused: why is the chat session restricted to the attendees? Do those running the meeting from the DCP and the DCLA have access to the chat? Why have you made a point — for the first time — of making a point that the Chat is limited to the attendees? Are you afraid to see what the public has to say? It may be that this meeting does not satisfy the legal requirements for the Open Meetings Law. Are you aware that the public is frustrated that we — the public — cannot see those those attending the meeting. I mean, really! — if we can open restaurants for indoor dining, the DCP can find a way to ensure that an Open Public Meeting is just what it is suppose to be: Open!	Marna L
93	DCP: When will you supply all the specifics just referenced by Pete Davies? And will you stop the clock until you've got the answers ready to be shared?	Jane F

94	<p>How would new construction be incentivized so that developers would build units that artists would want to live in? Just as one example, many of the existing artists here need space and/or light to create their art.</p>	Eugene Y
95	<p>The amount of the “contribution” for converting from JLWQA units to residential is absolutely crucial for ALL resident owners to know now and an important piece of this entire plan.</p> <p>If it is significant, many owners and especially longtime artist owners (many of whom are seniors) may be forced to sell if they cannot afford the fee. Artists who don’t need to make this conversation to continue to stay, may need to convert when they sell, since few artists can afford to buy lofts now. This expense will impact negatively on the profit they realize from their sales and compromise severely their future options for living/working opportunities elsewhere.</p> <p>When can you give us a specific answer?</p> <p>Ann Levy</p>	Ann L
96	<p>Has DCP or DCLA spoken with our NYS Legislators in regard to how your ideas for changes line up with NYS LAW, the loft law in particular?</p>	Pete D
97	<p>Sylvia, Please ask to look at the mail I sent to Lizett Chaparro. The specifics asked for are spelled out in it. I too have found you consistently vague.</p>	Phyllis R
98	<p>I have attended ALL the meetings that DCP has organized on Zoom. When all is said and done, this is a sham. This particular session seems to have been cobbled together 10 minutes before presentation. You are on record agreeing to the fact that this neighborhood is neither dead nor dying, culturally or otherwise.</p>	M F

99	DCP: Will you address SoHo residents' anger over the bait and switch that has taken place between the envision meetings and this top-down plan that is being shoved down our throats? All those nights of brainstorming—what a rook. And will you address the fact that many, many aspects of this plan have not been resolved and thus are not ready to be shared—making it impossible for us to react to reality?	Jane F
100	When an owner decides to knock down their building/s which has affordable..rent stabilized units.. he won't have to add back those units . Where will those individuals go?	ronnie w
101	I want to register an objection to the the ONY person who is impersonating a resident of the neighborhood.	Renee M
102	Has DCP considered the vulnerabilities that will be put upon current rent stabilized loft tenants who are protected from owner taking of units due to provisions of the artist certification requirements? That is a bar that owners have not been able to cross, even when they have tried to claim the unit under RS allowance. The change would kick open that door and put existing RS tenants at risk of removal. How will DCP make certain those protections remain in place?	Pete D
103	I want to register a formal complaint against the Department of City Planning for failing present any of the promised substantive information regarding JLWQA and the mechanism for conversion at this "community" meeting. This has been a sham.	Renee M
104	I am working with a city council District 2 candidate, ALLIE RYAN - who holds a degree in fine arts - I would like to ask anyone interested working with me to improve the SOHO / NOHO PLAN to help ARTISTS and PEOPLE IN NEED -NOT DEVELOPERS— contact our campaign at allieryan2021@gmail.com or https://linktr.ee/allieryan2021	Allie R
105	DCP had sign-in sheets at EVERY public meeting - with email addresses. Hundreds of people showed up! Why weren't these attendees and residents contacted, whether to invite to future City sponsored meetings or to gather data?	Renee M

106	Will there be amnesty similar to what occurred in 1987?	Eugene Y
107	DCP: your LACK OF EMPATHY, lack of seriousness, and lack of preparation shocks me. It should not. Your usual ONLY loudspeakers are not here in the usual numbers (they really are not interested in arts and culture, are they?) so you cannot hide behind the choir...SHAME ON YOU.	M F
108	Will details be revealed before or after certification??!!	Frederica S
109	Given that details are not available and there is no indication about when they will be, when do you anticipate this plan to be entering ULURP phase.	Zella J
110	EXACTLY WHAT barriers are there for arts uses???	M F
111	Would Ms Li define "rich amenities".	Darlene L
112	Are there currently barriers for art uses? I thought they were as of right?	Michele V
113	Again, the blank statements meant to push forward a "done deal, dead neighborhood" narrative is SHOCKING.	M F
114	When you say level the playing field and mention galleries and museums, that sounds good, but does retail fall under the same those barriers? we don't want removed as they protect the quality of life of those of us who live here.	ronnie w
115	Is my question visible?	David L

116	<p>And: Has DCP considered the additional vulnerabilities that will be inflicted upon RS tenants - who have NO say in what goes on in the buildings where we live - by the granting of additional FAR which will allow as-of-right enlargement of loft buildings. The construction that DCP allows by the new FAR will only be able to take place atop the existing buildings, above the loft units where RS tenants live. To think that property owners will not take advantage of the new value being given to them ignores the reality that RS loft tenants know all too well. So: What protections - beyond the less than helpful comments about elusive legal options that have been mentioned - will DCP commit to so that RS tenants, many aging in place, are not subjected to hugely impactful construction in and around our homes?</p>	Pete D
117	<p>What about the potential shelter for 200 homeless men that the DHS and the Mayor's office is trying to push through on Wooster Street in the large and dimly lit garage with few windows? How will that effect the artis institutions in the neighborhood? Can you please address this?</p>	Alexander A
118	<p>Please respond.</p>	David L
119	<p>Can you give us facts on the conversion from Art to residential? Many if us as "senior artists" stand to lose our lifetime savings if this is not done thoughtfully</p>	Leigh B
120	<p>Silvia: Could you please tell us why DCP can't encourage small business owners—to scale—along with affordable housing, for example as outlined in the alternate community plan, rather than big box retail?</p>	Jane F
121	<p>Will removing barriers for museums and galleries also remove barriers of retail and restaurants?</p>	ronnie w
122	<p>Sylvia Li stopped trying to hide her disdain for the community.</p>	M F
123	<p>DCP stopped trying to hide her disdain for the community</p>	M F
124	<p>Disdain does not hide incoptence. Nor does it drown out the wrongfulness of your plan.</p>	M F

125	What art institutes are you referring to can't rent here and want this zoning change? I think you are making broad statements which can't be backed up.	ronnie w
126	HEAR OUT SUSAN STOLTZ and take her seriously.	M F
127	Can an HPD unit be dedicated deivision to helping to protect tenants harrassed and threatened with displacement by development and UPZONING?	Michele V
128	But WHY would DCP set up a new situation here which will cause long time residents the need for lawyers to fight for enforcement of our rights?	Pete D
129	When are the next meetings occuring where you said more details will be shared? How do you expect to get feedback to refine any future proposal?	Carter B
130	SHAME ON YOU, DCP	M F