



## An Iconic Neighborhood in Transition: SoHo's Past, Present, and Future

Angie Co, Syracuse University

# Study Area

## SoHo/NoHo, Manhattan CD 2

**Centrally located**

**Exceptional transit access**

(10 stations on N/Q/R/W, B/D/F/M, A/C/E, J/Z, 1, 6 subway lines)

**Dynamic mixed-use neighborhoods with live-work traditions**

**Five-decade old manufacturing zoning** (M1-5A/M1-5B established in 1971)

**Iconic cast-iron architecture protected by six historic districts**

**Unique history and cultural identity**



# Unique History & Cultural Identity



**Residential**

**Commerce, Entertainment, & Industry**

**Artist live-work**

**Loft-living**

**Mixed-use neighborhoods**

**Post-Civil War - mid-20th c.**  
Apparel/textile manufacturing, warehousing & wholesale center

**Mid-20th Century**  
Shrinking industrial sectors & burgeoning artist live-work community

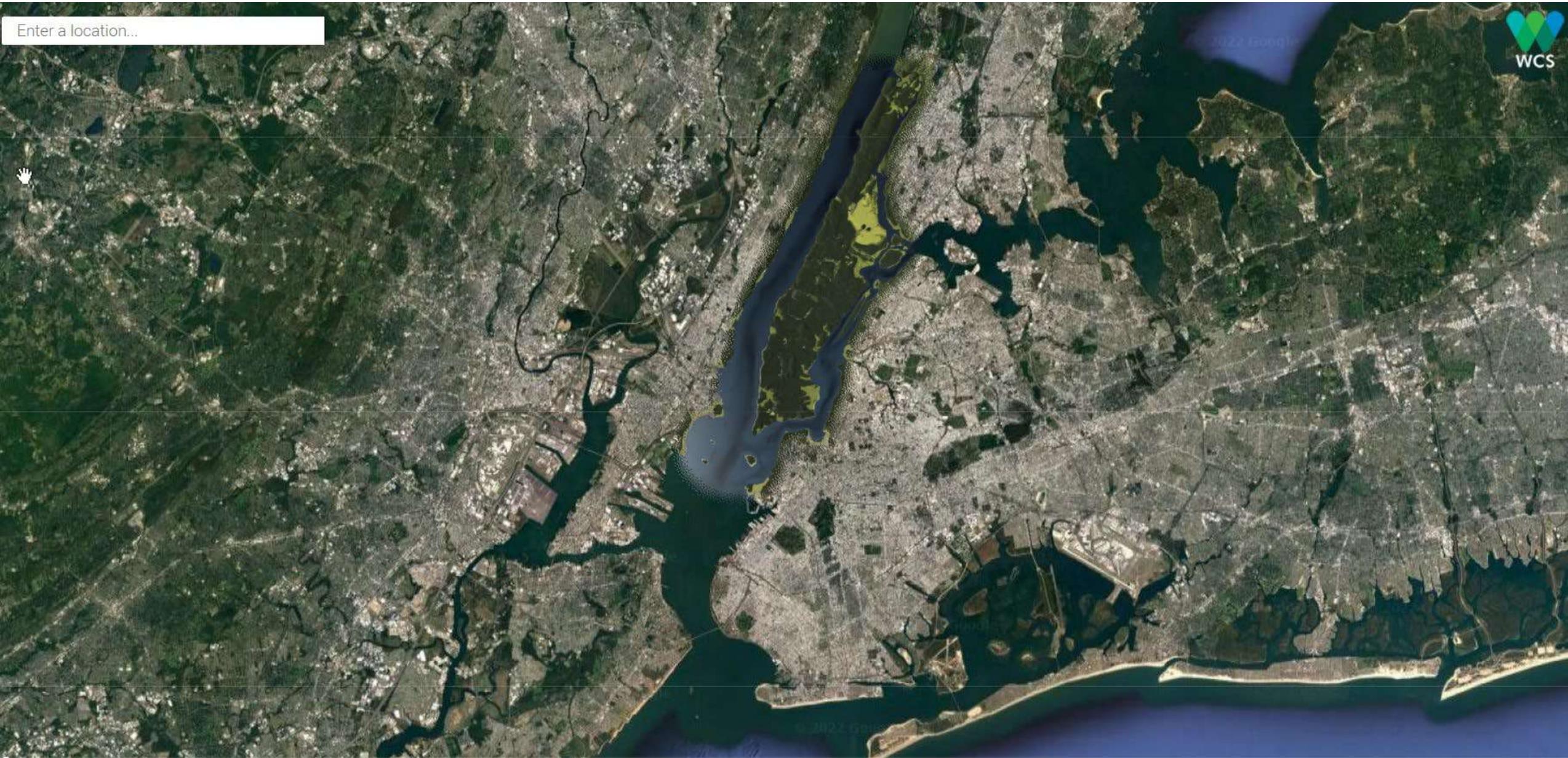
**1960's - 1970's**  
Artist live-work gaining legal status  
*Artist in Residence (A.I.R.) for fire & safety*  
*M1-5A & M1-5B districts established Joint Living-Work Quarters for Artist (JLWQA) as a manufacturing use in Use Group 17D*

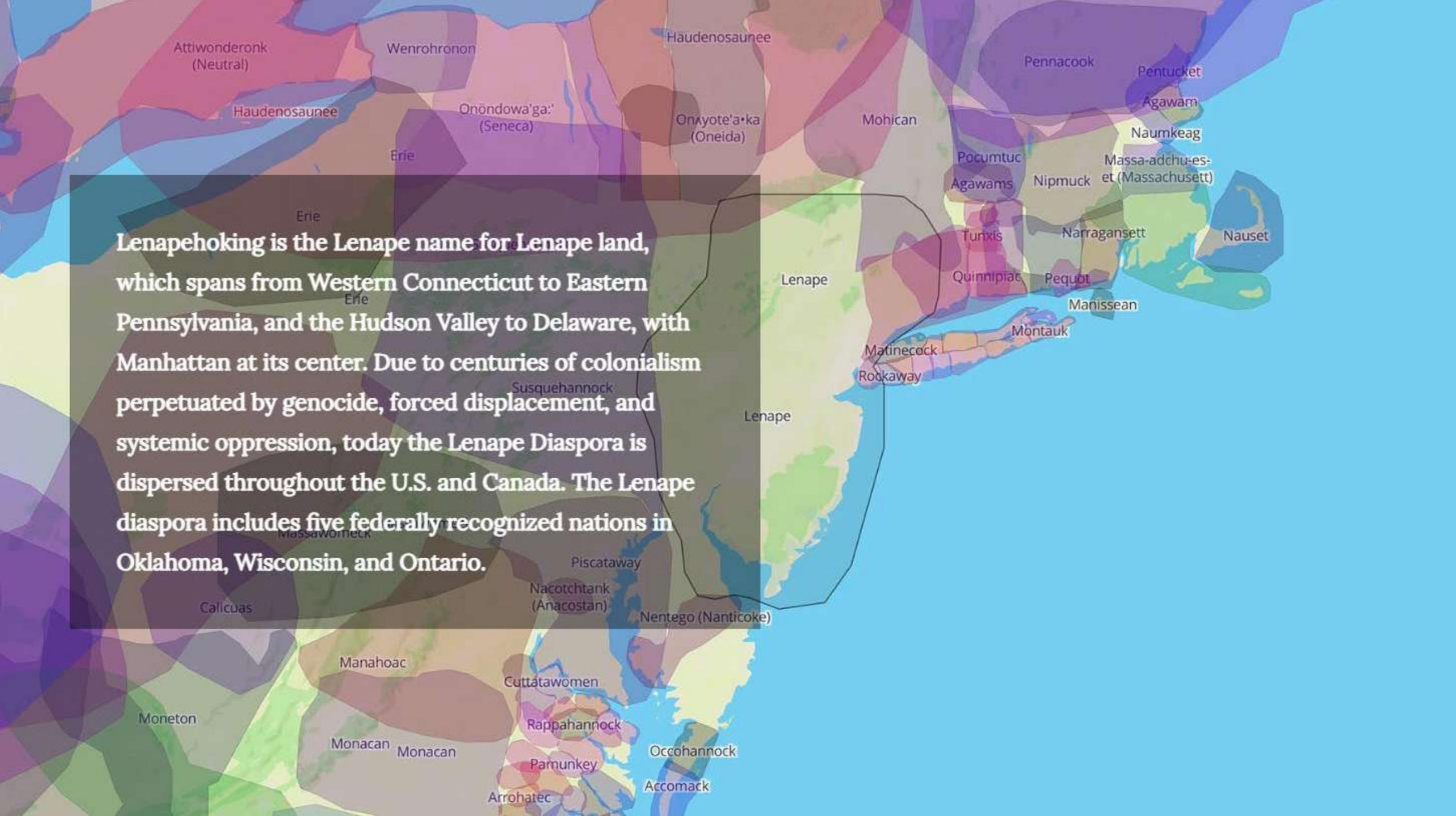
**1980's**  
Increasingly popular loft-living  
*Manhattan: Loft Law provided path to legalize residential use*  
*SoHo/NoHo: Occupancy Survey (1983) found 1/3 households had certified artists*

**1990's - present**  
Dynamic mixed-use district  
*~8,000 residents including certified artists and those that are not*  
*Dynamic local economy and cultural sector*  
*Over 53,000 private sector jobs*  
*Internationally renowned shopping district*  
*Tourist destination with iconic architecture*



Enter a location...



A map of Eastern North America showing various Native American tribes and their territories. The map is color-coded by tribe, with labels for many of them. A large, semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the map, containing text about the Lenape people. The text describes the Lenape name for their land, its geographical extent from Western Connecticut to Eastern Pennsylvania and the Hudson Valley to Delaware, and the impact of colonialism on the Lenape diaspora. It also mentions that the diaspora includes five federally recognized nations in Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and Ontario. The map shows tribes such as the Attiwonderonk (Neutral), Wenrohronon, Haudenosaunee, Onöndowa'ga' (Seneca), Oniyote'a•ka (Oneida), Mohican, Pennacook, Pentucket, Agawam, Naumkeag, Pocumtuc, Agawams, Nipmuck, Massa-adchuset (Massachusetts), Narragansett, Nauset, Turixis, Quinnipiac, Pequot, Manissean, Montauk, Matinecock, Rockaway, Lenape, Susquehannock, Piscataway, Nantego (Nanticoke), Nacotchtank (Anacostan), Calicuas, Manahoac, Moneton, Monacan, Rappahannock, Pamunkey, Arrohatoc, and Occohannock. The Lenape territory is highlighted in a light green color and outlined with a black border.

**Lenapehoking is the Lenape name for Lenape land, which spans from Western Connecticut to Eastern Pennsylvania, and the Hudson Valley to Delaware, with Manhattan at its center. Due to centuries of colonialism perpetuated by genocide, forced displacement, and systemic oppression, today the Lenape Diaspora is dispersed throughout the U.S. and Canada. The Lenape diaspora includes five federally recognized nations in Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and Ontario.**





Mannahatta – “The Place Wood Is Gathered To Make Bows”  
in Lenape Munsee dialect



1609 - Henry Hudson, an English sea captain working for Dutch merchants, was trying to find a north-west passage to Asia. He came to the island of Manahatta.  
Mannahatta: A Neutral History of Manhattan, Eric Sanderson

Enter a location...



Keyboard shortcuts | Imagery ©2022 | Terms of Use | Report a map error

<https://welikia.org/explore/mannahatta-map/>

What was it like in 1609?

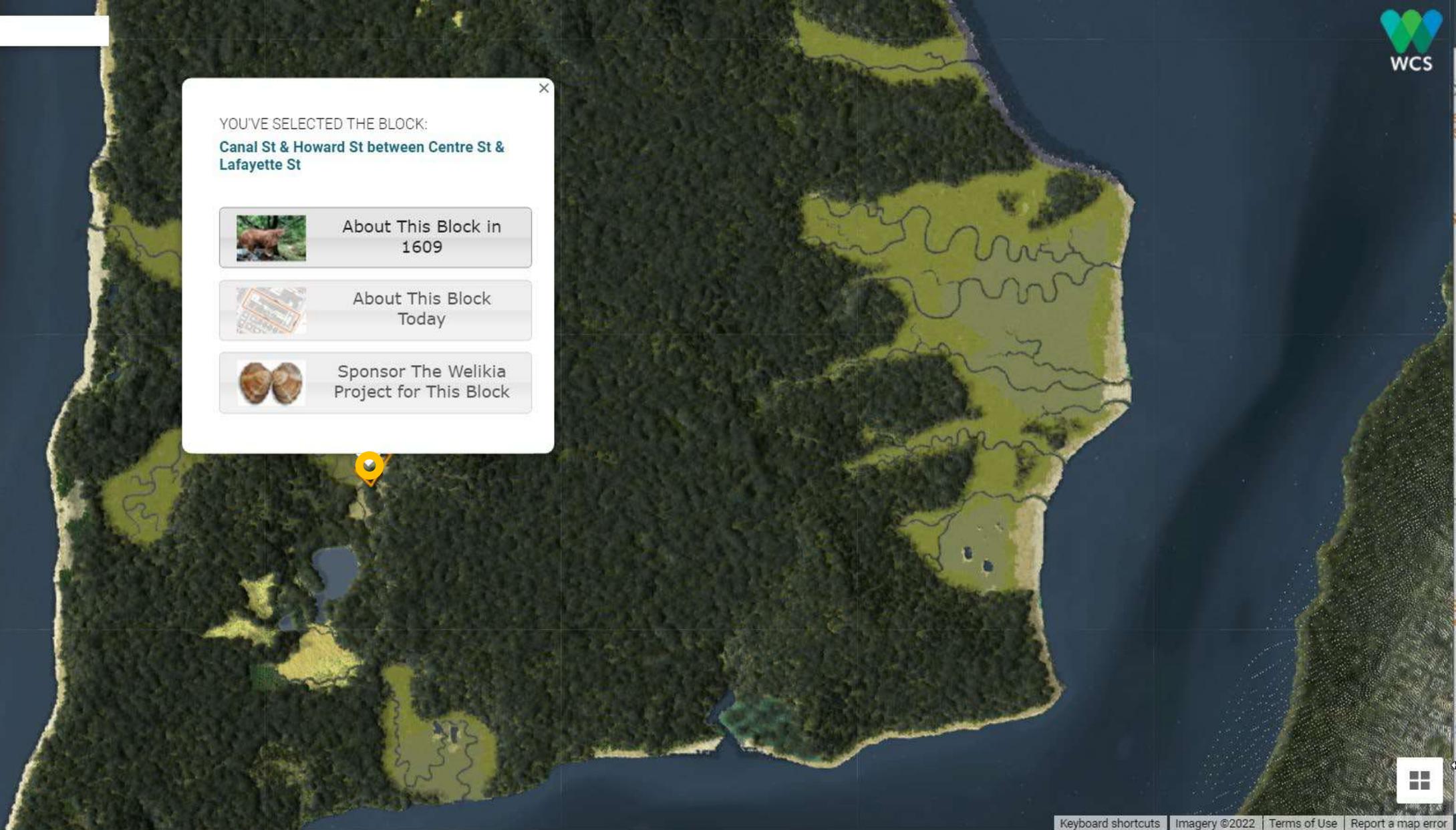
Enter a location...

YOU'VE SELECTED THE BLOCK:  
**Canal St & Howard St between Centre St & Lafayette St**

 About This Block in 1609

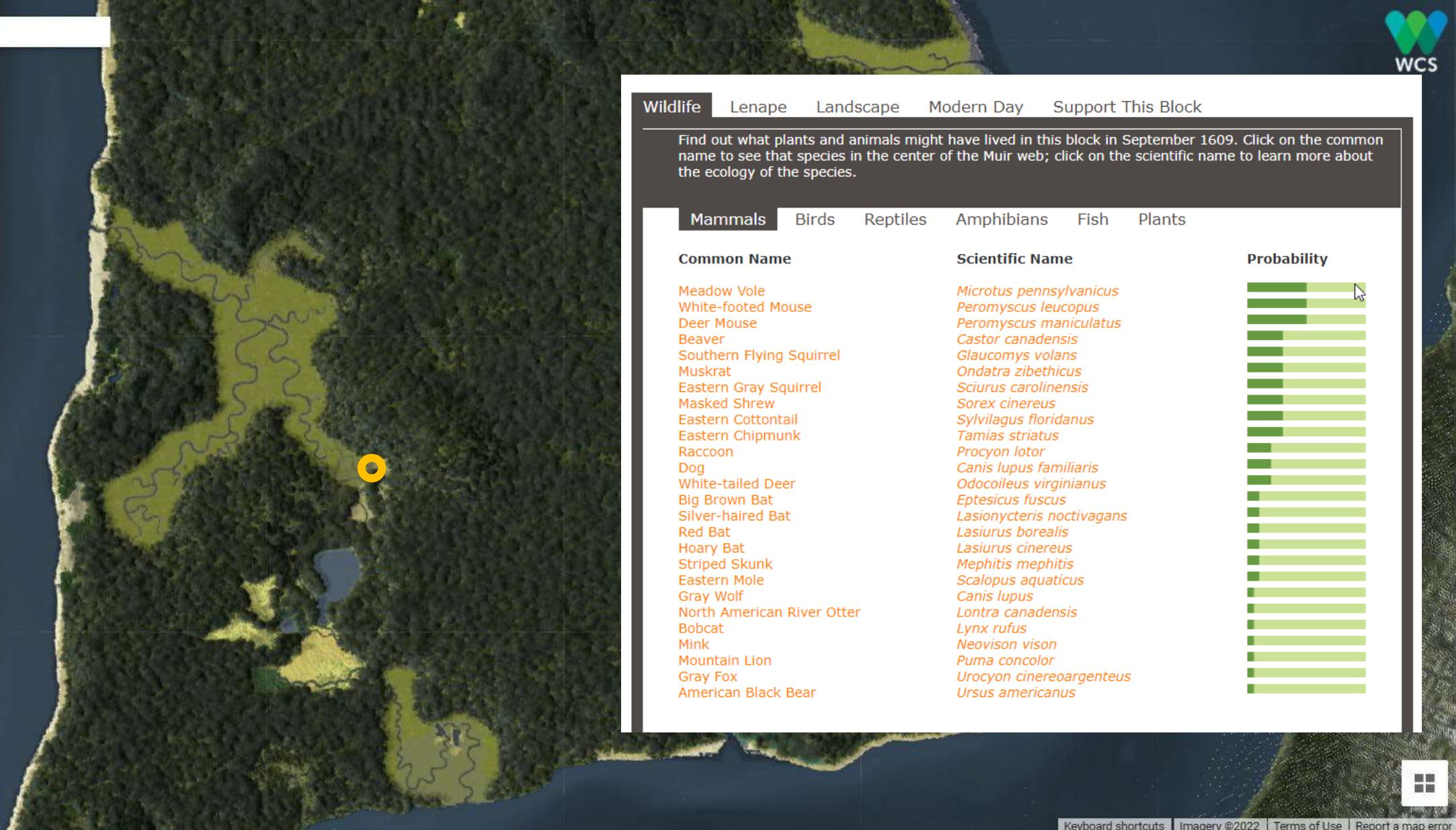
 About This Block Today

 Sponsor The Welikia Project for This Block



<https://welikia.org/explore/mannahatta-map/>

What was it like in 1609?



Wildlife | **Lenape** | Landscape | Modern Day | Support This Block

Find out what plants and animals might have lived in this block in September 1609. Click on the common name to see that species in the center of the Muir web; click on the scientific name to learn more about the ecology of the species.

**Mammals** | Birds | Reptiles | Amphibians | Fish | Plants

Common Name	Scientific Name	Probability
Meadow Vole	<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i>	██████████
White-footed Mouse	<i>Peromyscus leucopus</i>	██████████
Deer Mouse	<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>	██████████
Beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>	██████████
Southern Flying Squirrel	<i>Glaucomys volans</i>	██████████
Muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	██████████
Eastern Gray Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	██████████
Masked Shrew	<i>Sorex cinereus</i>	██████████
Eastern Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus floridanus</i>	██████████
Eastern Chipmunk	<i>Tamias striatus</i>	██████████
Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>	██████████
Dog	<i>Canis lupus familiaris</i>	██████████
White-tailed Deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	██████████
Big Brown Bat	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	██████████
Silver-haired Bat	<i>Lasiurus noctivagus</i>	██████████
Red Bat	<i>Lasiurus borealis</i>	██████████
Hoary Bat	<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>	██████████
Striped Skunk	<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	██████████
Eastern Mole	<i>Scalopus aquaticus</i>	██████████
Gray Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	██████████
North American River Otter	<i>Lontra canadensis</i>	██████████
Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>	██████████
Mink	<i>Neovison vison</i>	██████████
Mountain Lion	<i>Puma concolor</i>	██████████
Gray Fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>	██████████
American Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>	██████████

<https://welikia.org/explore/mannahatta-map/>

What was it like in 1609?

Enter a location...



Wildlife | Lenape | Landscape | Modern Day | Support This Block

Find out what plants and animals might have lived in this block in September 1609. Click on the common name to see that species in the center of the Muir web; click on the scientific name to learn more about the ecology of the species.

Mammals | Birds | Reptiles | Amphibians | Fish | **Plants**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Probability
red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i> L.	██████████
American hornbeam	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i> Walt.	██████████
coastal sweetpepperbush	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i> L.	██████████
starved panicgrass	<i>Dichanthelium depauperatum</i> (Muhl.)Gould	██████████
intermediate woodfern	<i>Dryopteris intermedia</i> (Muhl.exWilld.)Gray	██████████
prairie fleabane	<i>Erigeron strigosus</i> Muhl.exWilld.	██████████
Virginia creeper	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> (L.)Planch.	██████████
red chokeberry	<i>Photinia pyrifolia</i> (Lam.)Robertson&Phipps	██████████
black cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i> Ehrh.	██████████
Allegheny blackberry	<i>Rubus allegheniensis</i> Porter	██████████
roundleaf greenbrier	<i>Smilax rotundifolia</i> L.	██████████
blackhaw	<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i> L.	██████████
marsh blue violet	<i>Viola cucullata</i> Ait.	██████████
sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> L.	██████████
western brackenfern	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> (L.)Kuhn	██████████
Virginia threeseed mercury	<i>Acalypha virginica</i> L.	██████████
American chestnut	<i>Castanea dentata</i> (Marsh.)Borkh.	██████████
white wood aster	<i>Eurybia divaricata</i> (L.)Nesom	██████████
cinnamon fern	<i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i> L.	██████████
northern red oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i> L.	██████████
flameleaf sumac	<i>Rhus copallinum</i> L.	██████████
mapleleaf viburnum	<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i> L.	██████████
nimblewill	<i>Muhlenbergia schreberi</i> J.F.Gmel.	██████████
sweetflag	<i>Acorus americanus</i> (Raf.)Raf.	██████████
northern water plantain	<i>Alisma triviale</i> Pursh	██████████
hazel alder	<i>Alnus serrulata</i> (Ait.)Willd.	██████████
Canadian serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i> (L.)Medik.	██████████
Canadian anemone	<i>Anemone canadensis</i> L.	██████████
smooth rockcress	<i>Arabis laevigata</i> (Muhl.exWilld.)Poir.	██████████

<https://welikia.org/explore/mannahatta-map/>

What was it like in 1609?

Enter a location...

People lived on Mannahatta long before Europeans arrived. Here learn about possible Lenape use of this block four hundred years ago and some of the species they may have hunted, fished and gathered.

Probability bars indicate relative suitability/probability of use; estimates are based on analysis of archaeological information and landscape models for Mannahatta. For more information, read *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City* (2009).

**Lenape Habitat**

Human habitat suitability  
Distance to nearest Lenape encampment (meters): 411  
Distance to nearest Lenape trail (meters): 336



**Hunting**

Selected species

Common Name	Scientific Name
Wild Turkey	
Blue-winged Teal	
Wood Duck	
American Black Bear	
Northern Bobwhite	



**Fishing**

Selected species

Common Name	Scientific Name
White perch	
Red-breast sunfish	
Chain pickerel	
American eel	
Alewife	



**Gathering**

Selected species

Common Name	Scientific Name
common serviceberry	
Canadian serviceberry	
Pennsylvania blackberry	
blackgum	
mapleleaf goosefoot	



<https://welikia.org/explore/mannahatta-map/>

What was it like in 1609?

Enter a location...



Wildlife Lenape Landscape Modern Day Support This Block

The natural environment of Mannahatta was so rich and abundant because of the underlying diversity of the landscape. Here learn about the landscape features and original ecological communities of this block in 1609.

Geological layers are based on a modified version of U.S. Geological Atlas of the United States; soil types are based on descriptions from the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service. Ecological communities follow descriptions from the New York State Natural Heritage Program. For more information, read Eric W. Sanderson's *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City* (2009).

Landscape Feature	Quantity/ Percent Coverage
<b>Topography</b>	
Minimum elevation (feet)	6
Average elevation (feet)	14
Maximum elevation (feet)	41
Hillsides	
Valleys	
<b>Hydrology</b>	
Marshy headwater stream (length in meters)	33
Tidal creek (length in meters)	52
<b>Shore</b>	
Minimum distance to shore (meters)	908
<b>Soils</b>	
Wareham	
Windsor	
Deerfield	
<b>Bedrock Geology</b>	
Manhattan schist	
<b>Surface Geology</b>	
Stratified drift	
<b>Ecological Communities</b>	
Modern Block Area (square meters)	6,886

<https://welikia.org/explore/mannahatta-map/>

What was it like in 1609?

Enter a location...



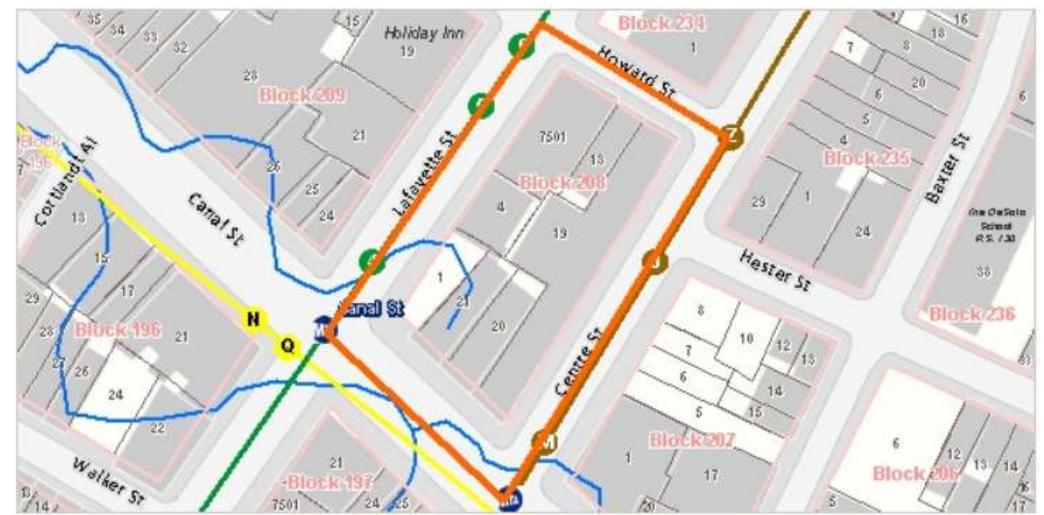
### CANAL ST & HOWARD ST BETWEEN CENTRE ST & LAFAYETTE ST

Welcome to a wild place: this block in 1609! Through the tabs below, discover the wildlife, Native American use, and landscape factors of this block's original ecology, as reconstructed by the Mannahatta Project. You can also explore the block today and sponsor the Mannahatta Project into the future.

- Wildlife
- Lenape
- Landscape
- Modern Day**
- Support This Block

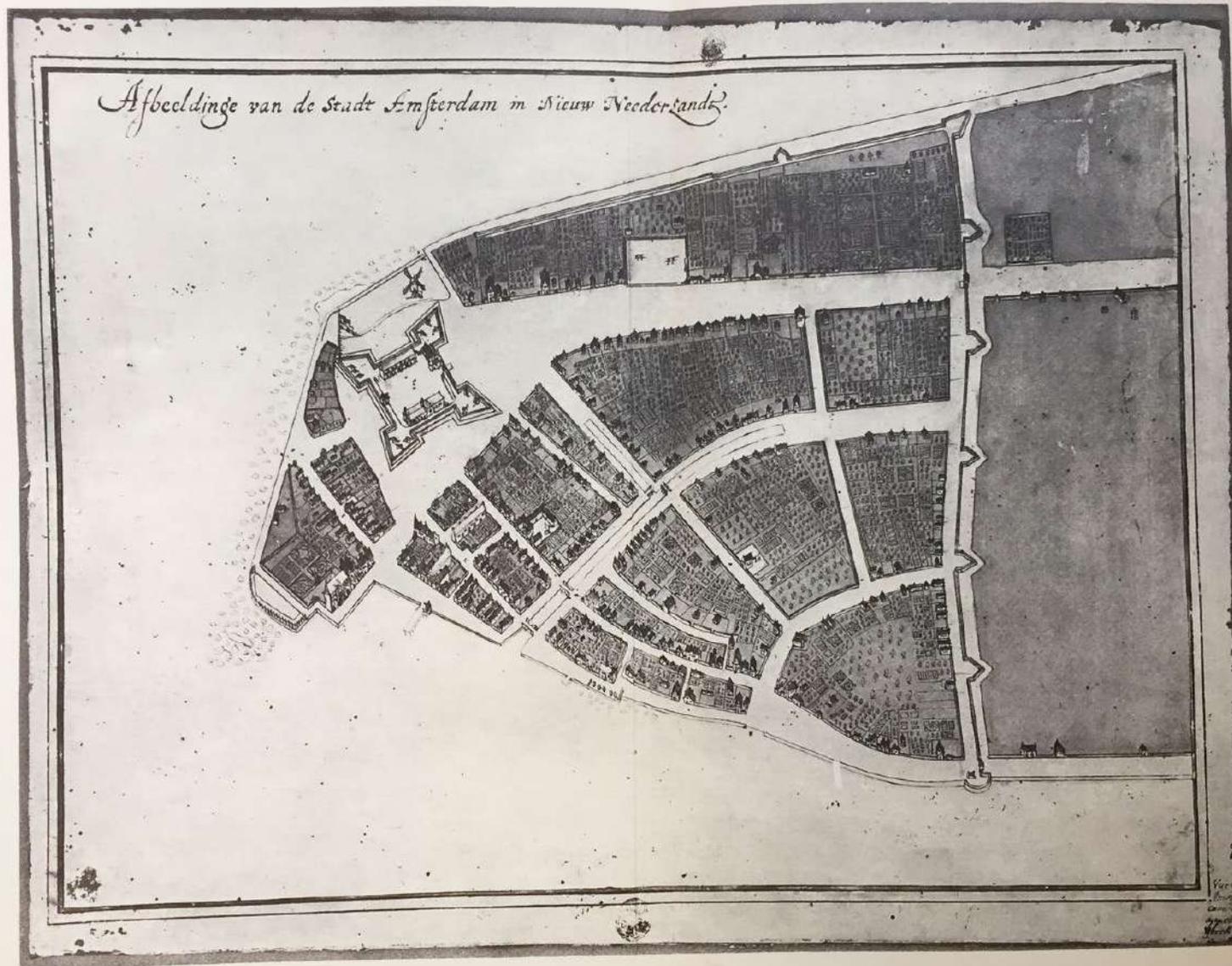
Landscapes never disappear, they just change. Click on the image below to see this block today through the New York City Open Accessible Space Information System (OASIS) and learn about open space and other contemporary environmental resources.

This block of Manhattan today on OASIS (click to visit OASIS):



<https://welikia.org/explore/mannahatta-map/>

What was it like in 1609?



Hadrien Coumans, Co-director of the Lenape Center:

“New York City has a huge problem, in that the Lenape People, the indigenous people, are not here, they’re in Oklahoma, previously known as Indian territory. The history of genocide, the history of forced removal, the history that began with colonization in 1609. And with this capitalist, market-driven mindset, early on, the city began to be shaped by an idea of commerce—not ideas that were inherently part of the very fabric of Manhattan; of *Mannahatta* in Lenape, “the place where wood is gathered to make bows”.

That severing to original place was really first scarred through the creation of what would become...Wall Street: a wall built in lower Manhattan by the Dutch West India Company to keep the Lenape out. Built by slave labor...The Dutch West India Company had at its foundation a mission of profit at any cost. It was a 2nd generation company from the Dutch East India Company, that had colonized other parts of the world, including South Africa, India, Southeast Asia. And so it had in its own sense perfected methods of colonization, including clearcutting, including extracting of “resources” to send back to Europe to put on the market. Timbers, furs, people. The Lenape people were enslaved and sent to other forts of the Dutch West India and Dutch East India company as well. So right at the beginning of colonization, it’s a really disconnected—intentionally, by design, disconnected—approach to understanding place.”

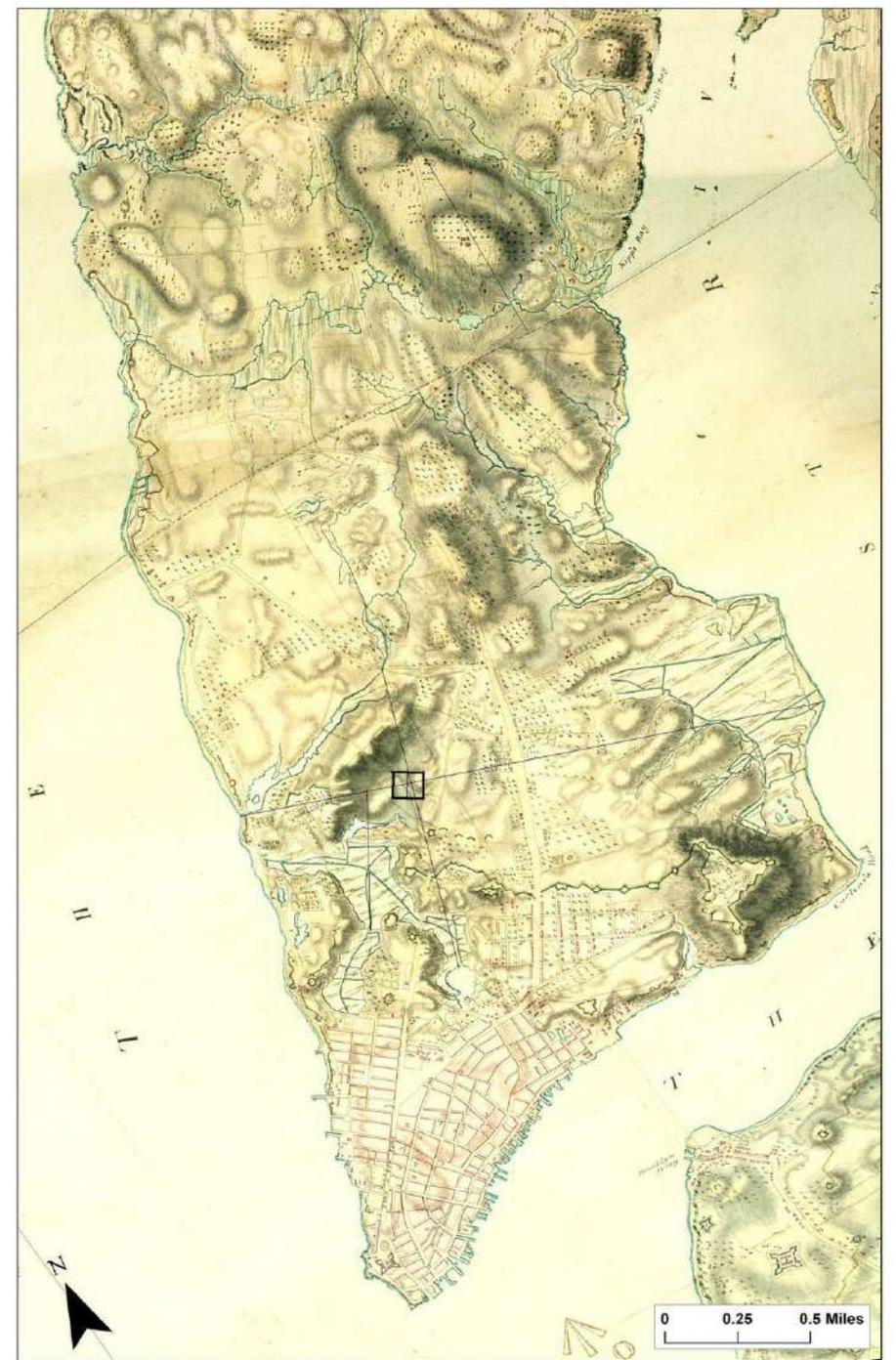
The Dutch West India Company built a wall along the north side of the settlement in 1653  
“The Castello Plan” of New Amsterdam shows the wall as it was circa 1660



*Gezicht op Nieuw Amsterdam* by Johannes Vingboons, 1664  
1664 – The British forcibly take New Amsterdam and rename it New York City.

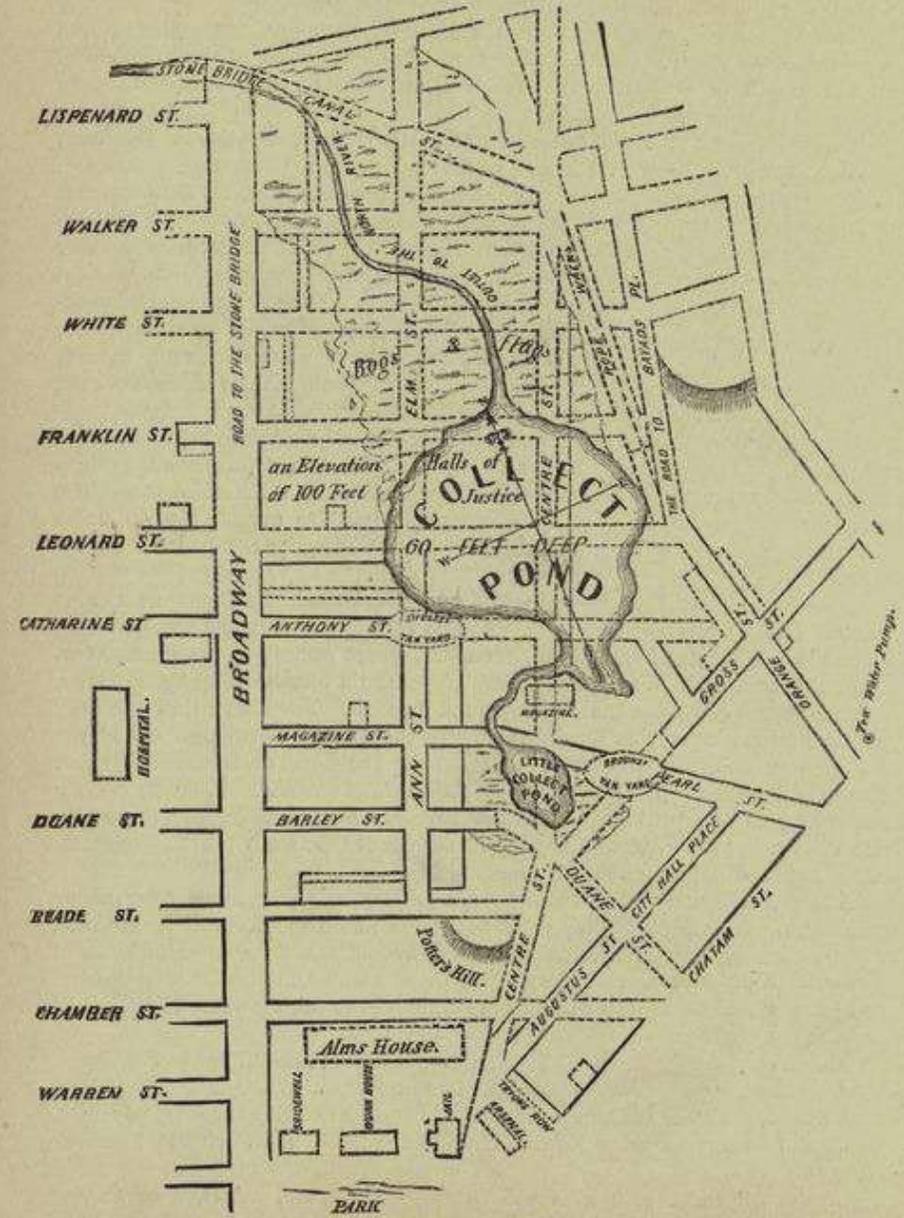


1782 British Headquarters Topography Map,





View of Collect Pond



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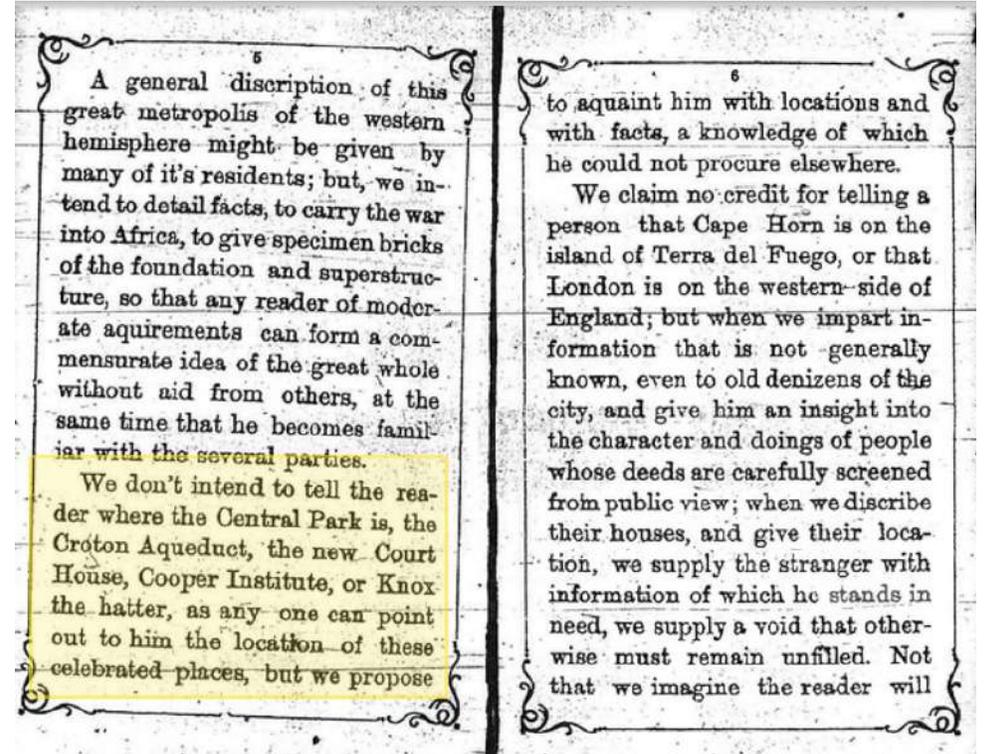
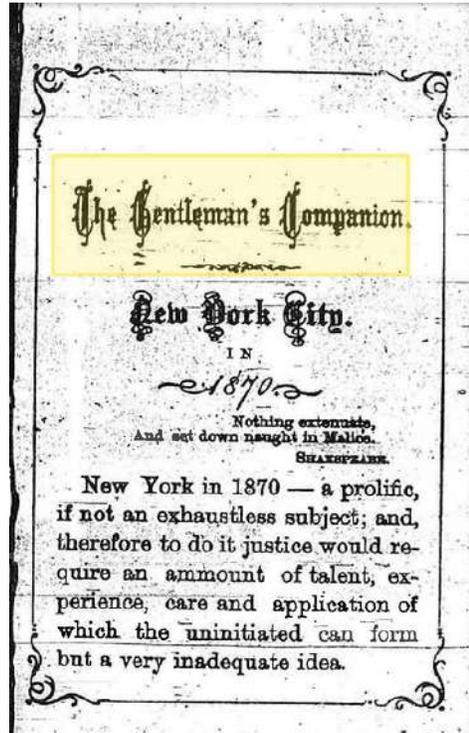
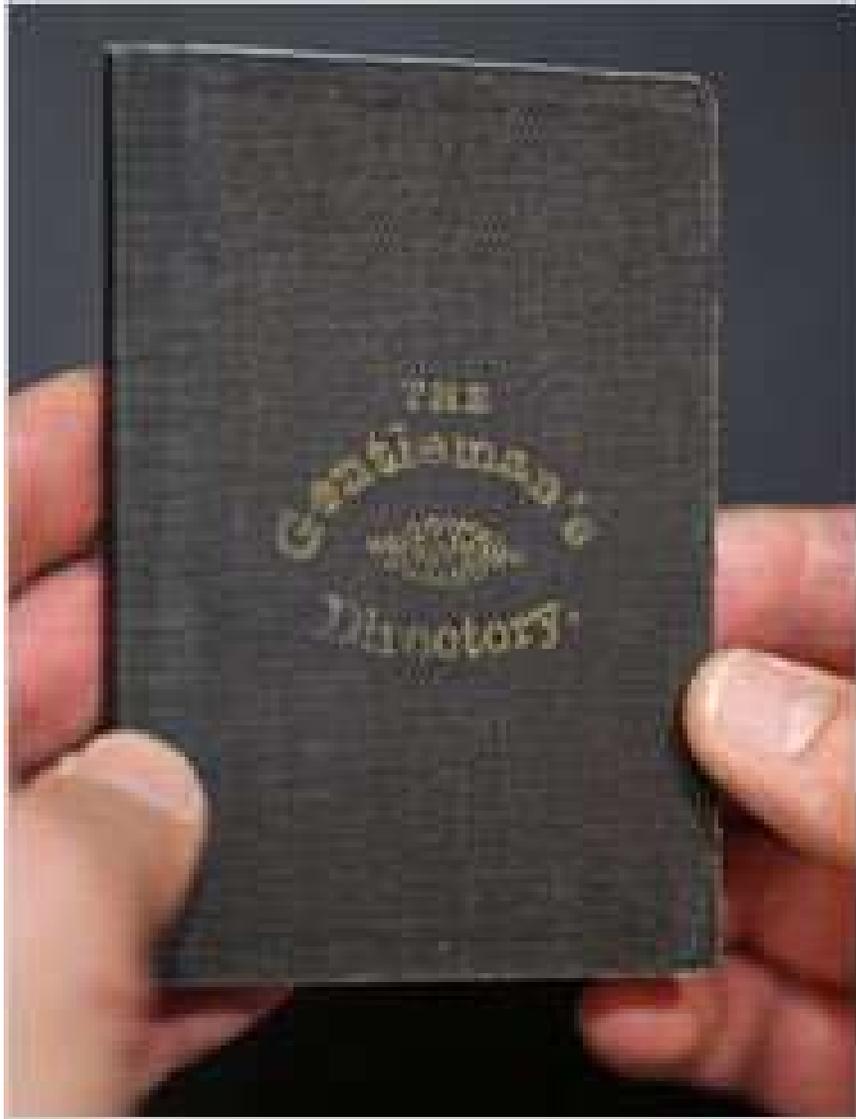
G NEW YORK CITY - 18005

703.1187

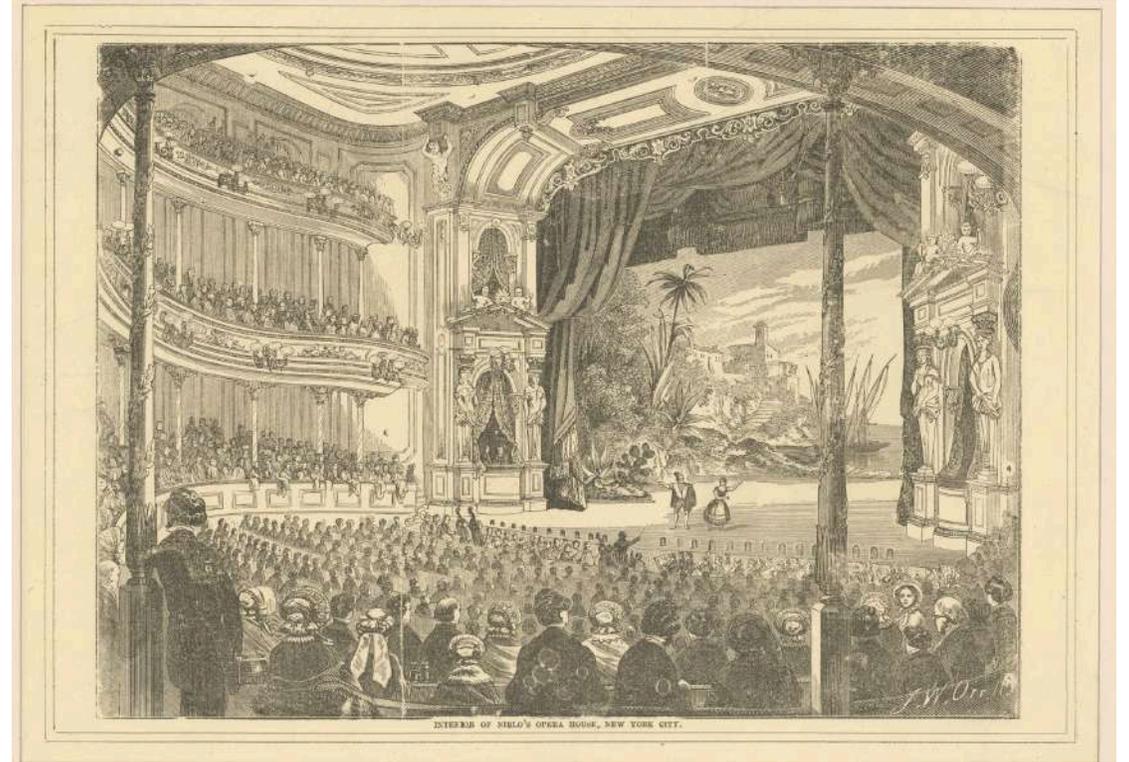
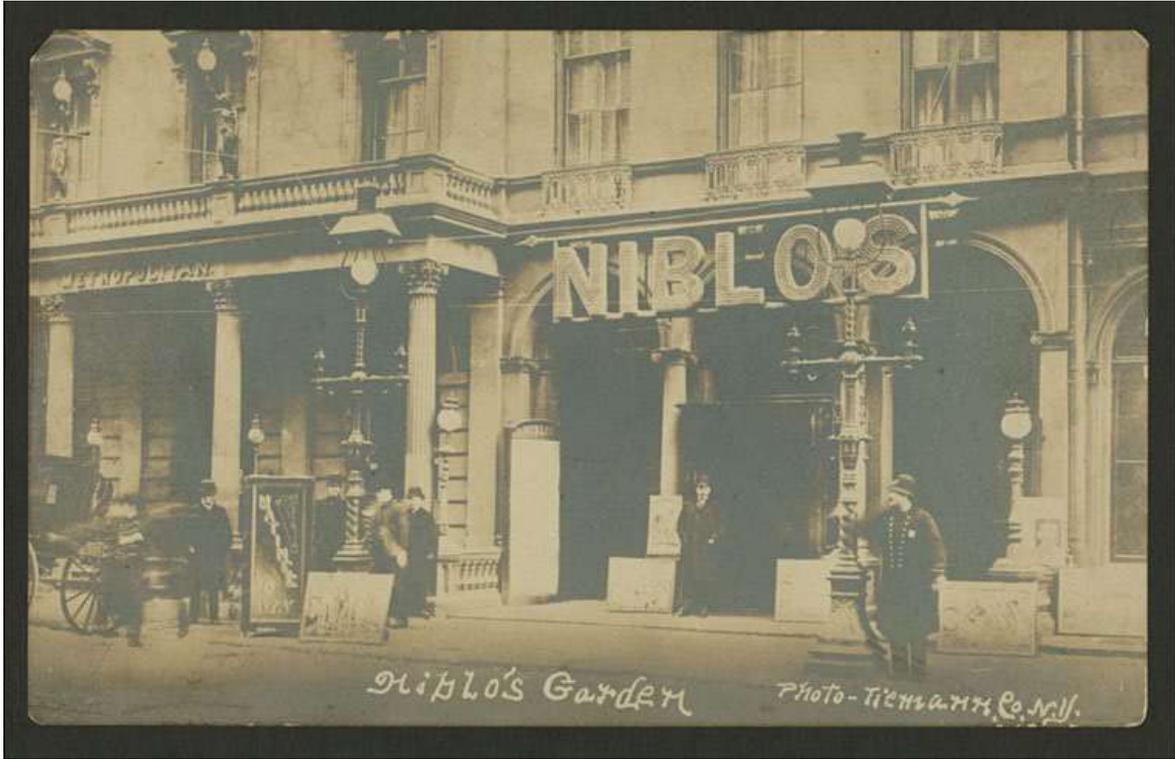
NEW YORK CITY LIBRARY  
PICTURE COLLECTION



An early photograph of the neighborhood known as Five Points taken in 1875.  
Image courtesy of the NYPL



A Gentlemen's Directory  
1870



Niblo's Garden, or Niblo's Theater, ran from 1834 - 1895.



FURNITURE WAREHOUSE

BRANCH of the BRITISH COLLEGE of HEALTH  
GENERAL DEPOT FOR THE SALE of MORISON'S HYGIENIC MEDICINES

IMPORTERS of BOOKS, TRINETS & STATIONERY

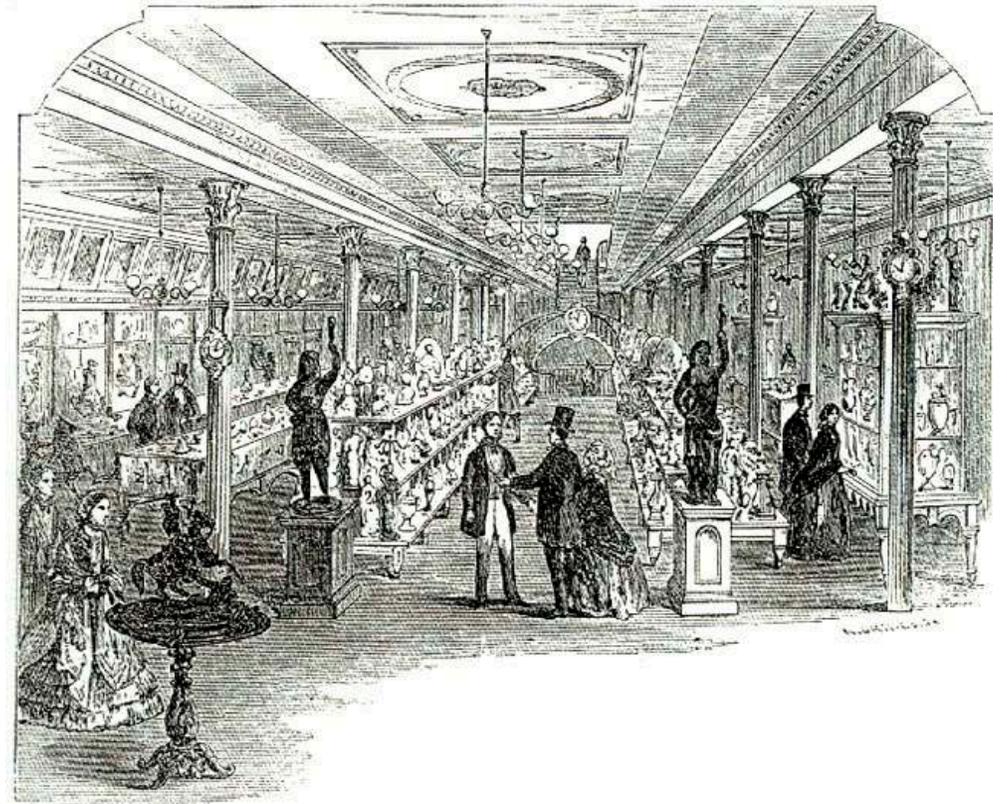
WRIGHT

TO STORE

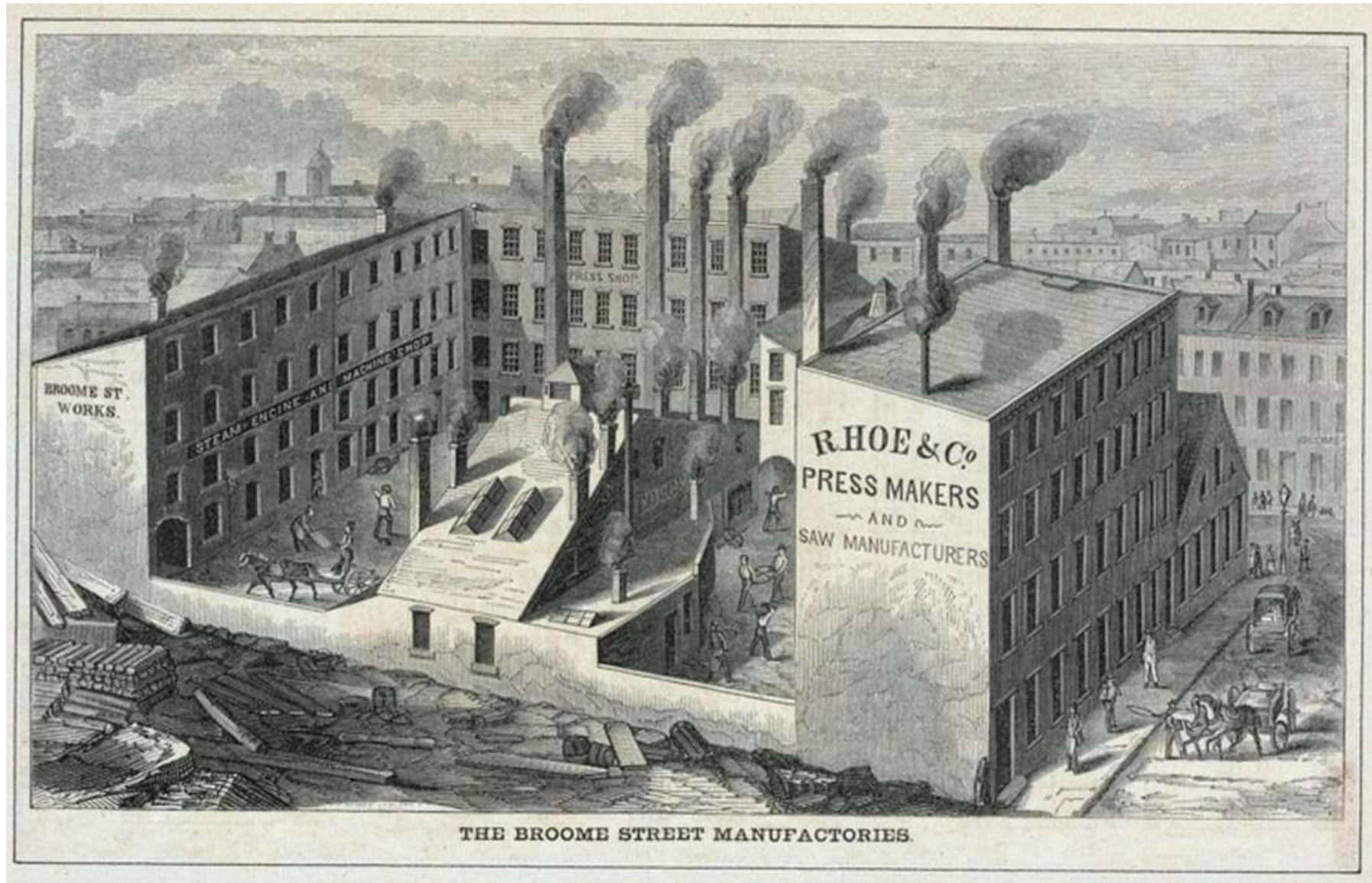
N. MARSHALL



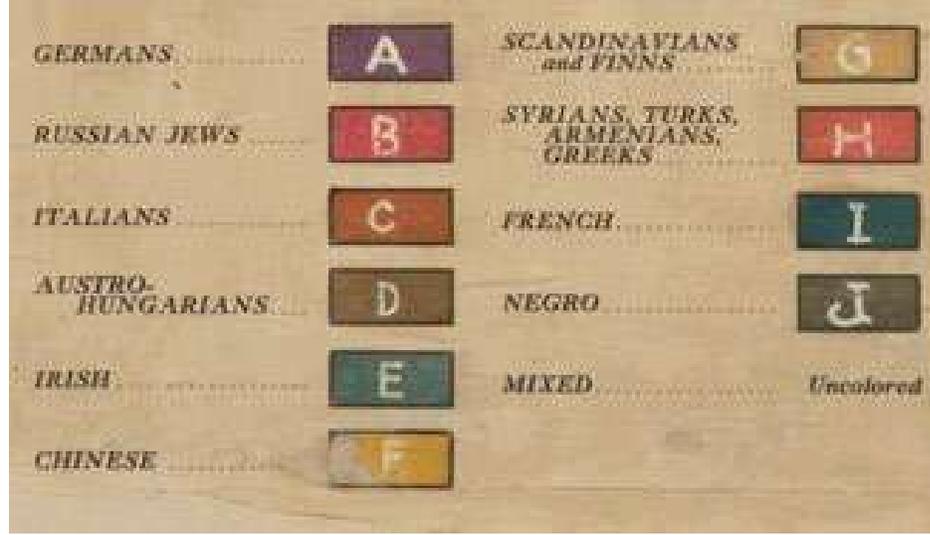
BROADWAY: THE STORE OF MESSRS. E. V. HAUGHWOUT AND CO.



Houghwout Building – constructed 1859



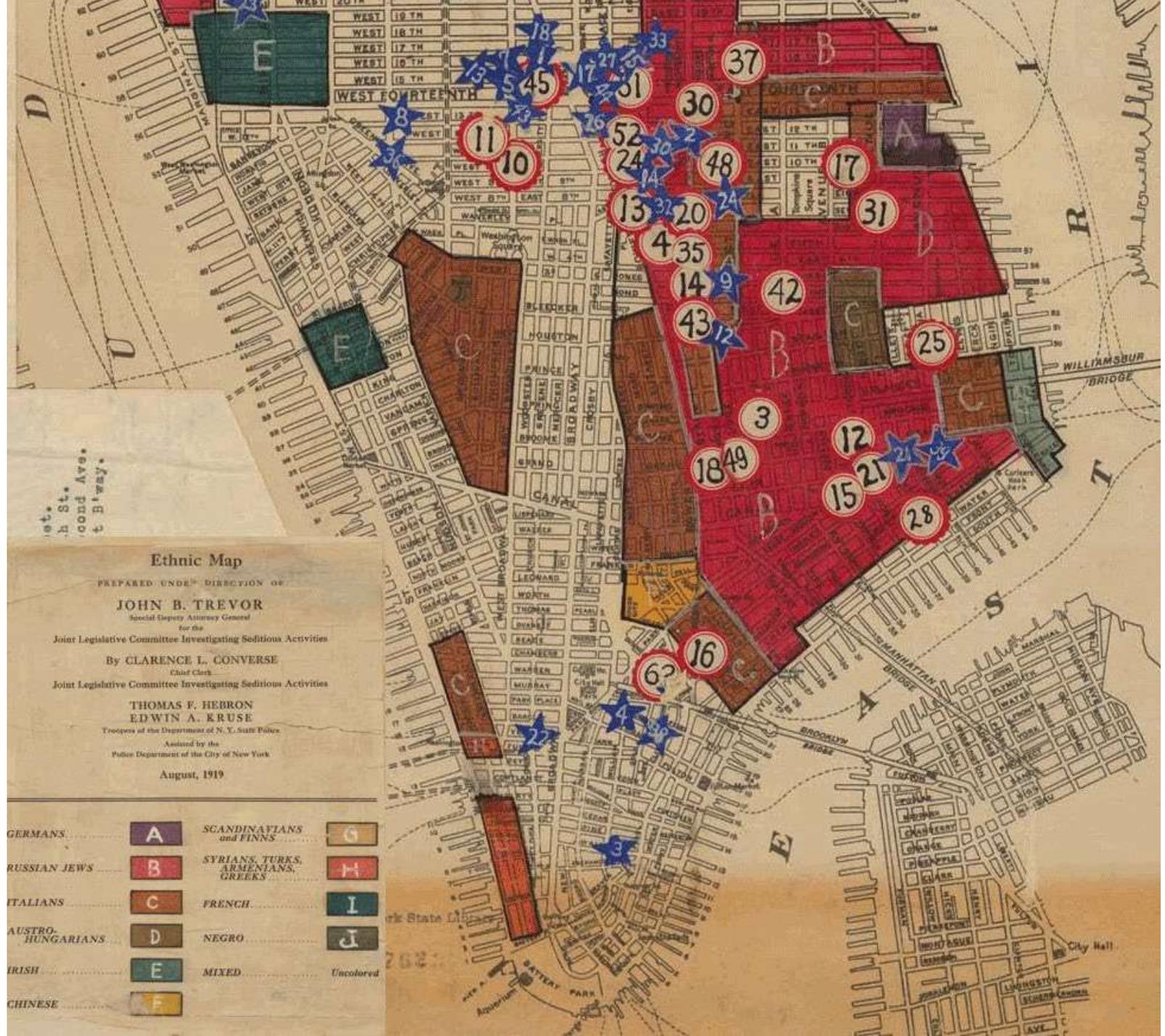
Broom Street Manufactories – Woodcut by Thomas Addis Emmet, 1880.



The factories are connected to Little Italy and the Lower East Side by new streetcar lines, allowing Italian and Russian Jewish laborers to flock to work on Greene Street. Italian women bring with them a tradition of sewing and embroidery, and many Russian immigrants are also tailors or milliners.

This "Ethnic Map" was commissioned by the Joint Legislative Committee Investigating Seditious Activities, and later used by State Senator Clayton Lusk to track suspected radicals. Ethnic Map, 1919. New York State Archives. Found at New York Times.

<https://www.greenestreet.nyc/6-labor>





1908 – Women workers striking for shorter working hours, better pay, an end to child labor, and the right to vote.

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory – photo of interior, c. 1910

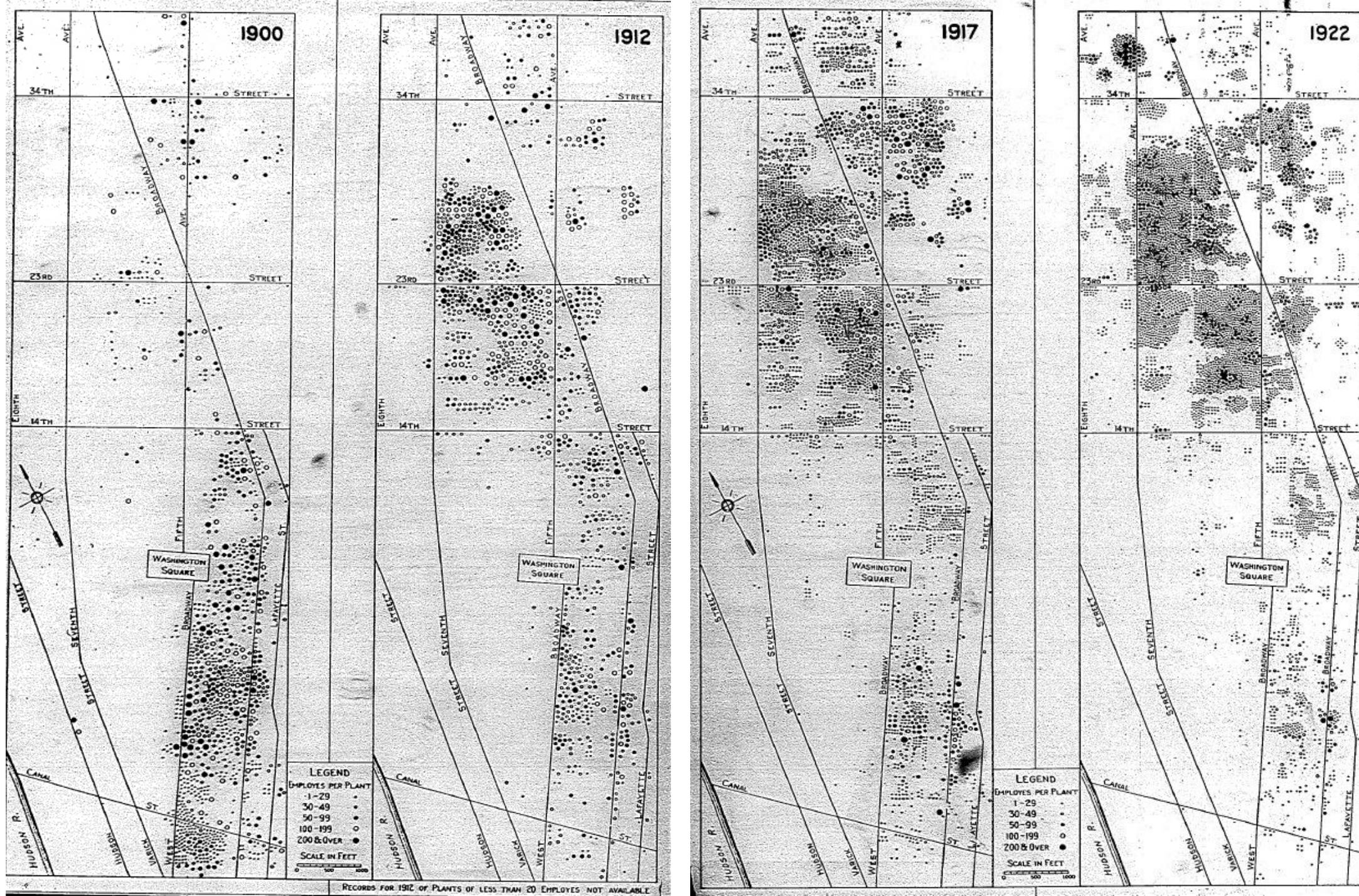
The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911 killed 146 people. The average age of victims was 21, most were Jewish or Italian immigrants.

[.https://www.greenestreet.nyc/6-labor](https://www.greenestreet.nyc/6-labor)

This map shows the clusters of factories and commercial spaces of the garment industry, which are dense in SoHo in 1900 — but by 1922 the business is pushed almost entirely uptown.

From B.M. Selekman, Henriette R Walter, W.J. Couper. "The Clothing and Textile Industries." *In Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs*, 1928.

<https://www.greenestreet.nyc/6-labor>

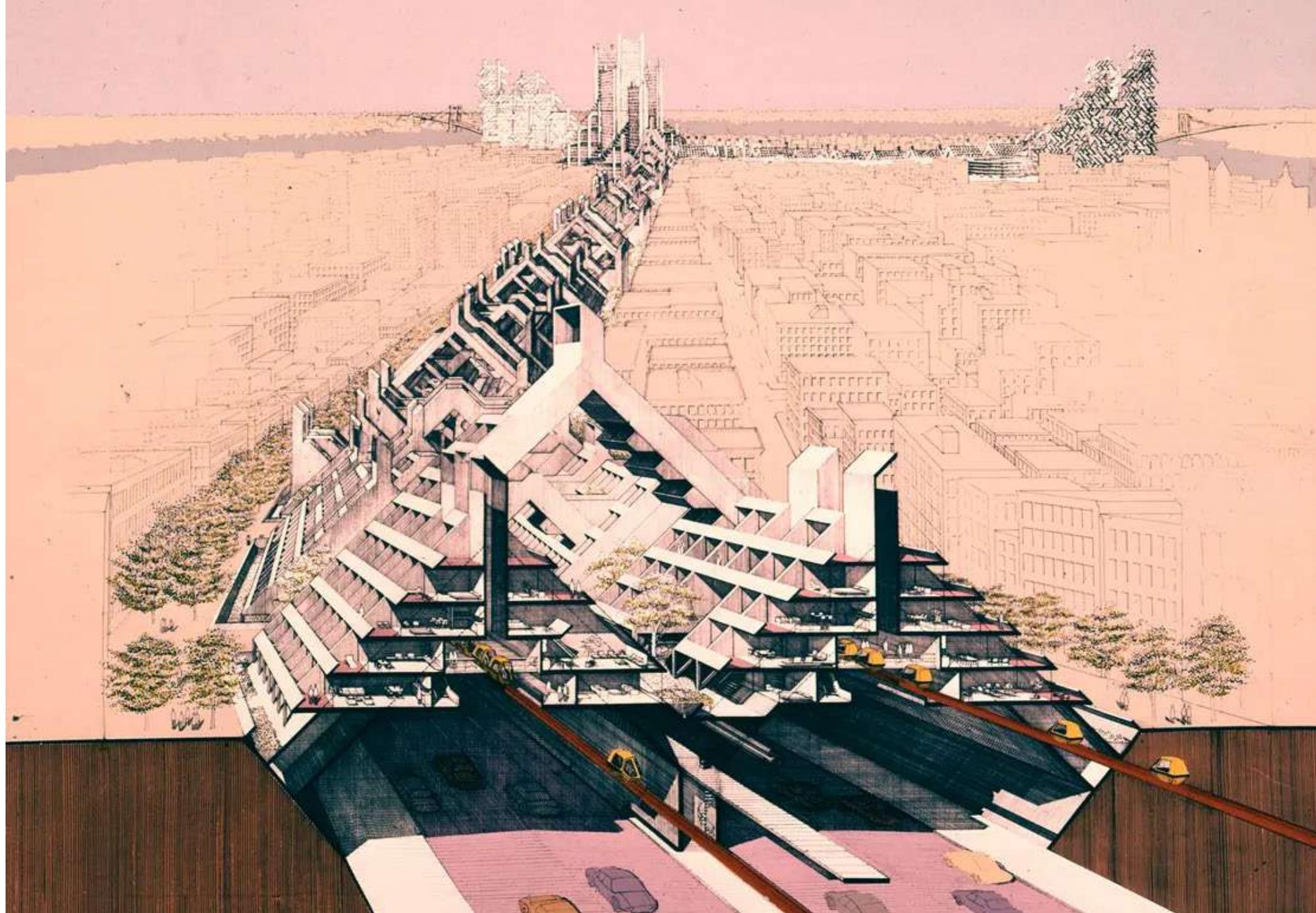


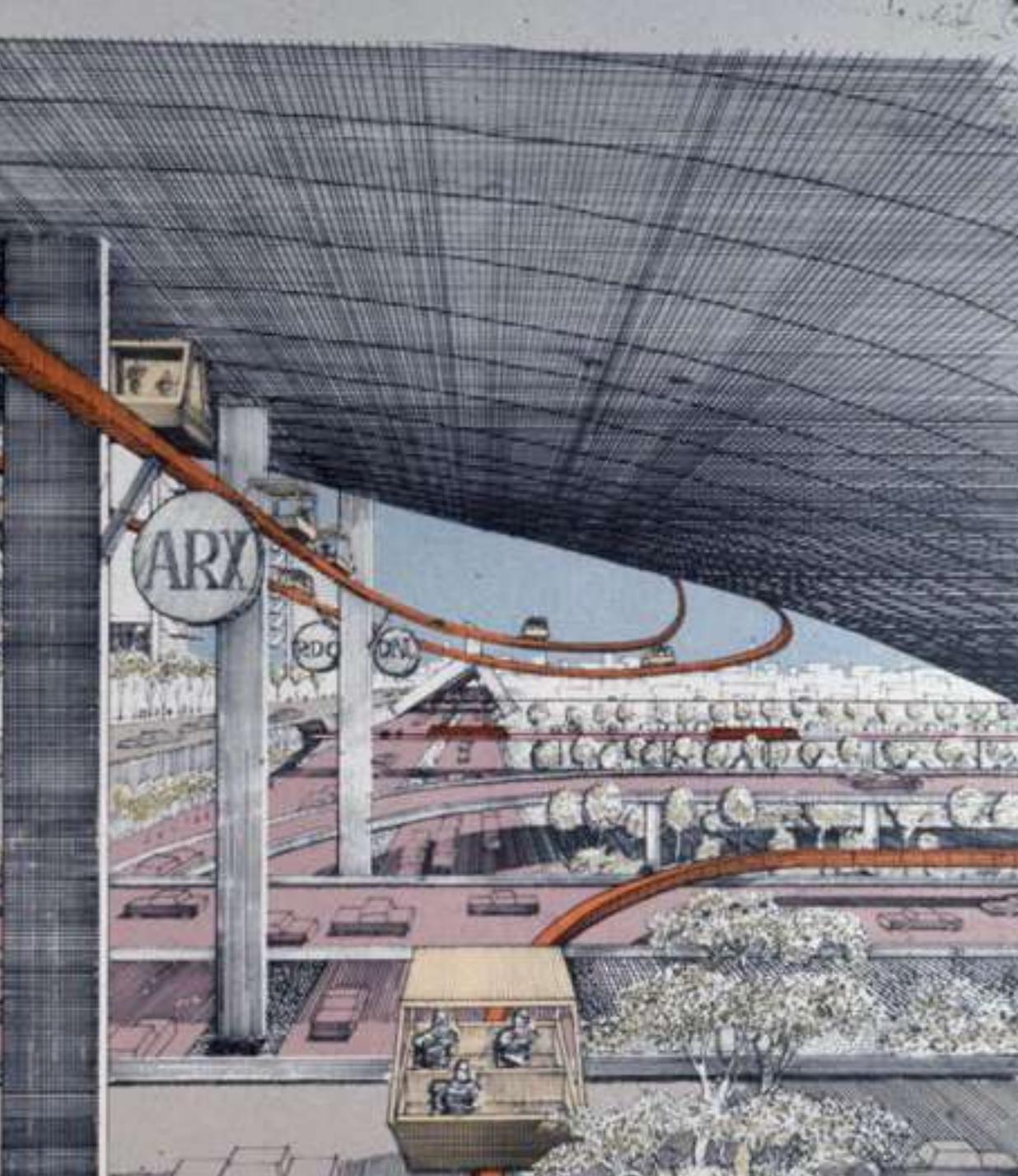
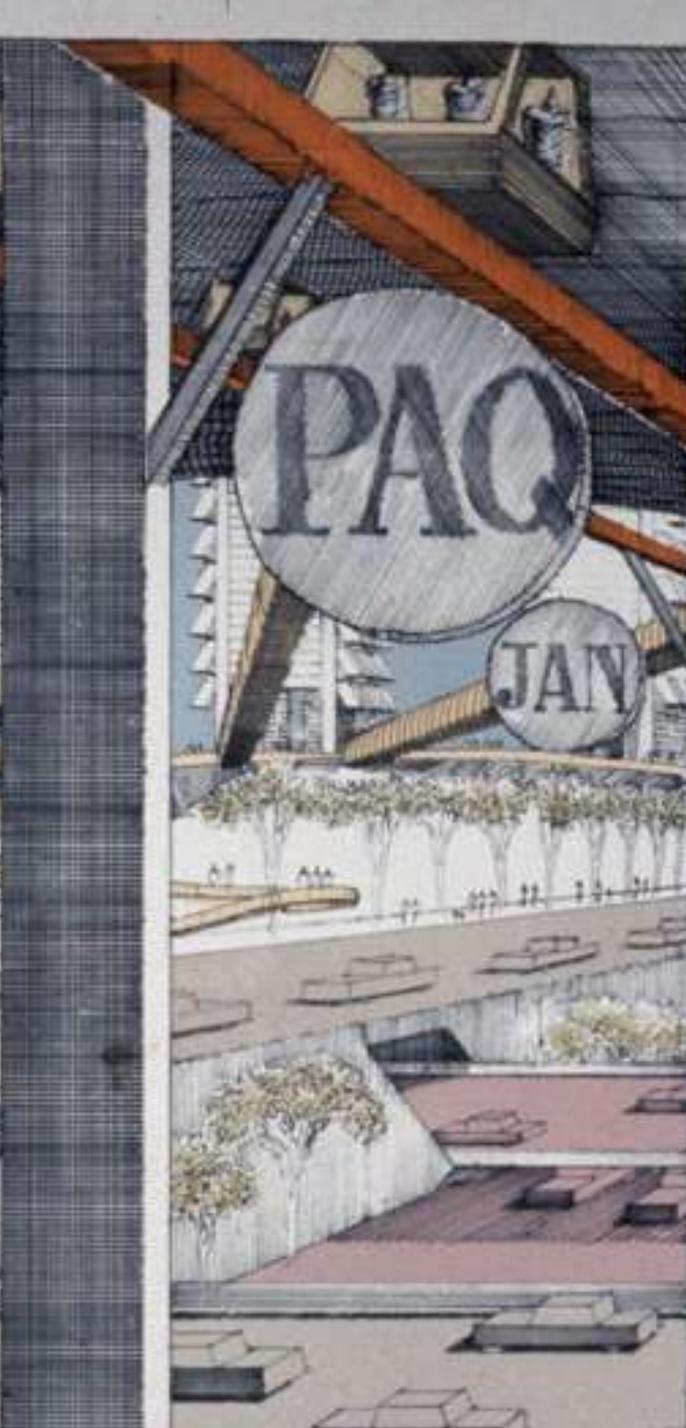
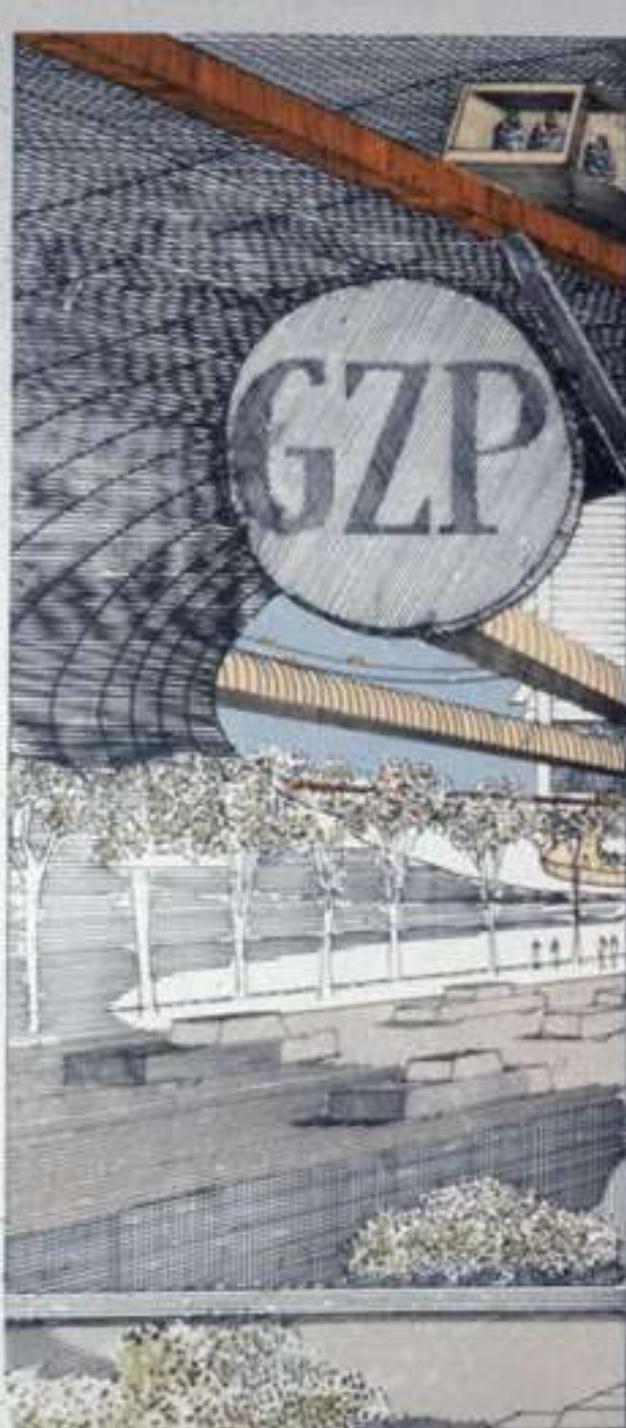


1958 - Photograph of a fire in a Wooster Street factory that killed six firefighters. The fire commissioner dubbed the neighborhood "Hell's Hundred Acres."



Lower Manhattan Expressway reintroduced in 1959







<https://sohomemory.org/george-maciunas-the-father-of-soho>

# FLUXHOUSE

PLAN FOR AN ARTIST  
CONDOMINIUM IN NEW YORK CITY

## THE ARTIST'S PROBLEM

While it has been recognized for some time that New York City is one of the leading art centers of the world, with probably the largest artist population, it is considerably less well known that the city suffers from a severe shortage of economical working space for artists. In part this shortage is due to the moderate means of the average professional artist and the artist's special space requirements. Normally the artist requires large unbroken spaces with high ceilings and adequate illumination, and these needs can only be met by commercial lofts. At the same time these lofts, which are relatively expensive, are rarely zoned for living or require considerable alteration to make them suitable for dwelling, so that the artist is often forced to pay a double rent -- one for living and one for working -- which he can ill afford. Moreover the fluidity of the artist's working regime, demanding periods of concentrated activity, make the separation of living and working spaces very undesirable. Both the city and the state at the urging of the Artists Tenants Association and various other sympathetic groups have attempted to alleviate the problem by making certain concessions in zoning requirements. These attempts, though well motivated, have been insufficient. The artist is put to considerable expense in improving the property, even to comply with relaxed zoning requirements. What is more, his investment is unprotected, since there is nothing to prevent his landlord from even doubling the rent on the now more valuable property once the artist's lease has expired. The result is that the improved loft is removed from the class of economical working spaces.

## THE ARTIST'S PROBLEM IS PART OF A LARGER GENERAL PROBLEM

But the scarcity of economical working space for artists is part of the general problem arising from urban obsolescence and decay. Large areas of the central city, zoned for commercial and light manufacturing use were constructed some time ago. The narrow streets and old buildings are usually not suited to the demands of modern commercial usage. Because of this and the fashion that dictates the location of the more flourishing businesses, the more profitable enterprises tend to compete for space in a few favored areas. The older sections are left to house the more marginal businesses; the buildings are rarely in more than partial use, and are hardly profitable to their owners. In many cases they have been allowed to fall into disrepair. These areas,

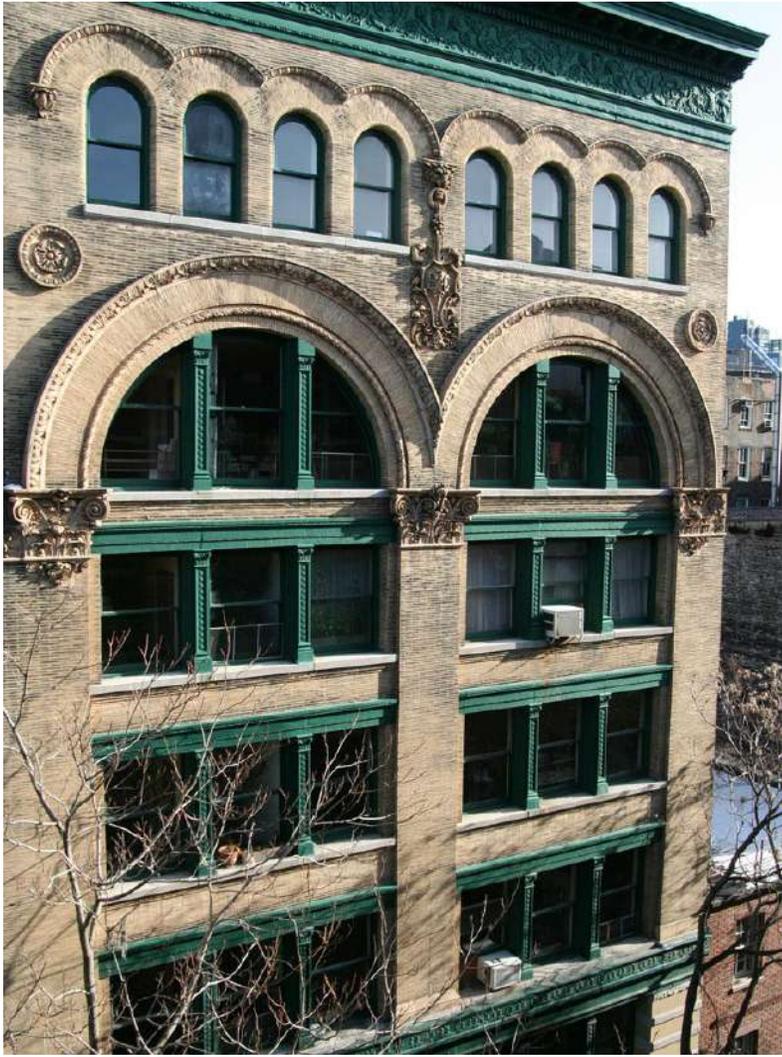
"1963, Maciunas published a one page manifesto titled "FLUXHOUSE, PLAN FOR AN ARTIST CONDOMINIUM IN NEW YORK CITY." In it he set forth the economic problems facing artists and proposed a solution. He envisioned purchasing underutilized loft buildings by a not-for-profit corporation and renovating them to provide living-work spaces for artists. He saw communal resources for the artists and expected that in return the artists would provide services to the greater community. It took another four years before he started to implement his plan."

-- Roslyn Bernstein is a professor of Journalism at Baruch College

frequently abutting on low income or slum residential areas, become foci of urban blight. Up to now significant attempts at urban renewal of these areas involving costly clearing of the areas and new construction, have not been made. And the process of obsolescence and decay here continue without obstruction. Nevertheless there are many buildings in such areas that are architecturally sound and potentially valuable if considered from the point of view of radically altered use.

#### A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF A SOLUTION

With the artist's problem in mind FLUXHOUSE was formed as a non-profit cooperative corporation consisting solely of professional artists seeking adequate combined work and living space. Its aim is to purchase, renovate and maintain suitable buildings for artist occupancy. A comprehensive survey led FLUXHOUSE to select the area of Manhattan between Houston and Canal Streets, known as "Hell's Hundred Acres", as the most suitable because of economy and location, and because it contained a number of very sound, though underused, buildings. This area is the site of precisely the type of obsolescence described. Moreover, it abuts on lower income residential areas immediately to the East and West. FLUXHOUSE's immediate plan is to purchase three buildings, already selected, within this area as the site of an artistic community. These buildings are to be renovated as work-residences which will not only comply with zoning requirements but also conform to the specific living and working requirements of the individual artists. Renovation, which has already been thoroughly planned will, include in each building a self-service elevator, a central air heating and cooling system, new flooring, kitchens, bathrooms, plumbing, lighting fixtures, walls, partitions, doors, closets etc. Moreover two of the buildings will house theaters for the performing arts, which will be used for film exhibitions, dance recitals, concerts etc. They will also house wood and metal working shops, photo darkrooms, a film processing and editing laboratory, a sound studio and offset printing press. All of these facilities will be available to all of the artist members of the cooperative. But FLUXHOUSE intends to go beyond this and become an integral part of the adjoining community by making available to the children of the area workshops in the various arts under the supervision of the artist members of FLUXHOUSE. In view of the wide range of special competences of the artist residents of FLUXHOUSE, these local workshops can include, depending upon the needs and desires of the neighborhood, work in painting, sculpting, film making, dance, printing etc. It is our belief that the introduction of an artistic nucleus as FLUXHOUSE into such an area can pave the way for other similar projects and perhaps initiate the conversion of a marginal and deteriorating commercial district into a cultural center with value extending far beyond the immediate bounds of the community.



80 Wooster Street – FLUXHOUSE 2



<https://sohomemory.org/listening-to-soho-a-day-of-recording-with-storycorps>

[Shael Shapiro](#), architect and co-author with his wife, [Roslyn Bernstein](#), of [Illegal Living](#), explains how loft living first came about in SoHo:





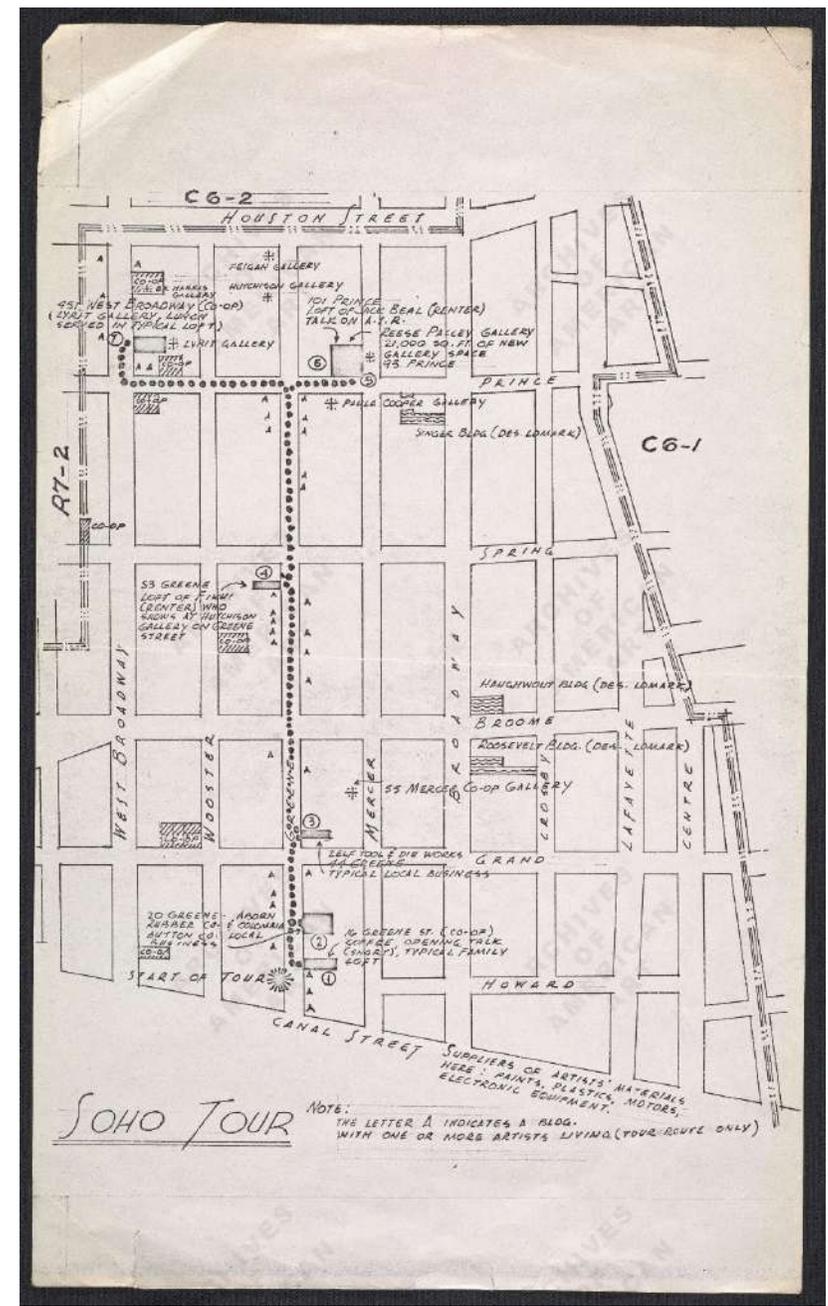
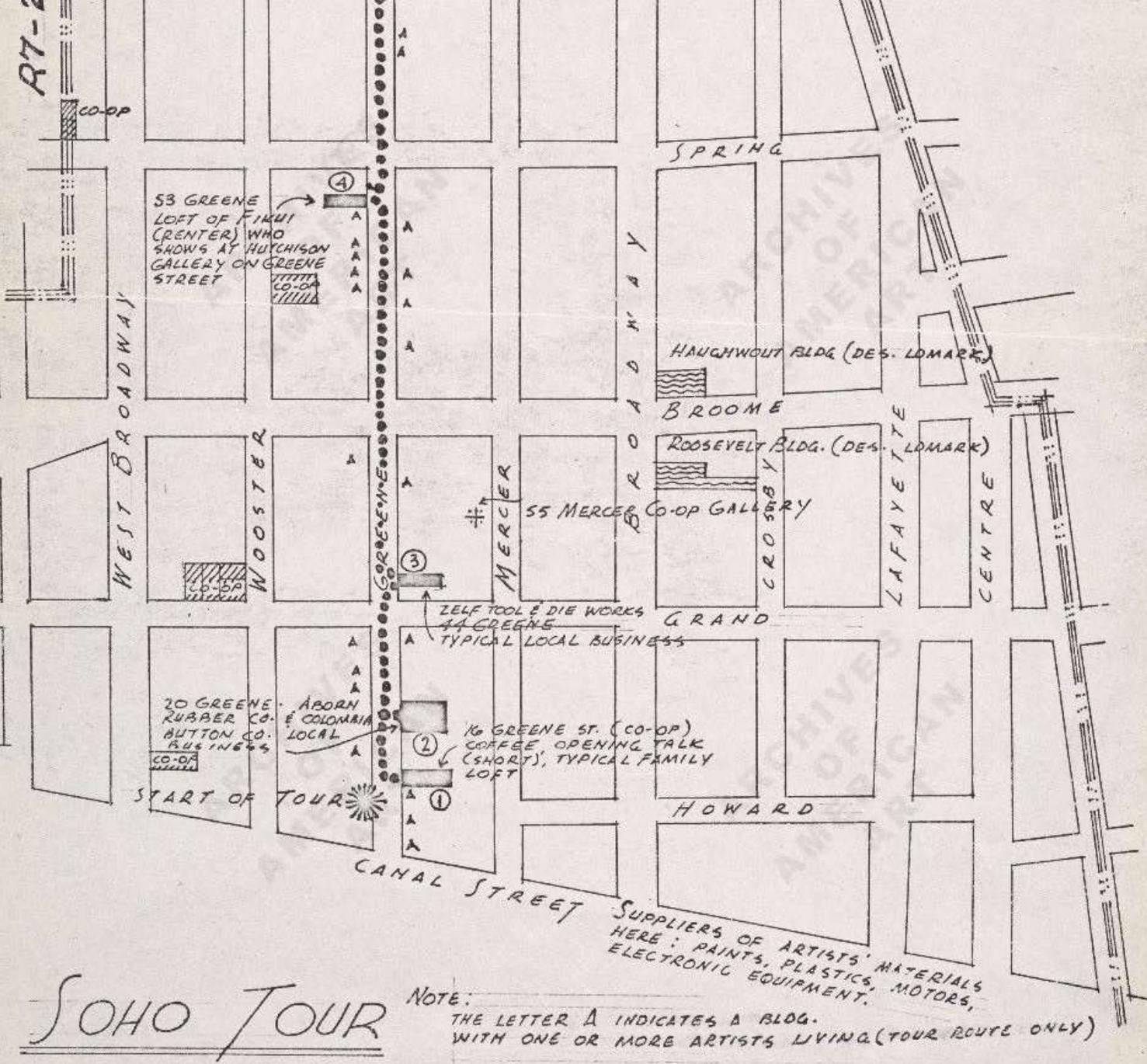




1969, creation of the SoHo Artists Association, predecessor of the SoHo Alliance

Their goal was to improve living conditions, legalize loft dwellings, and fight to keep SoHo an affordable place for artists to work.

Meeting of SoHo Artists Association Planning Committee, discussing survey maps prior to the legalizations of loft living. SoHo Artists Association Records, 1968-1978. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution



The *SoHo Newsletter* in 1971 called the restrictions and requirements for artists residency "a four-alarm drag." The spirit of the community who built out their own lofts by hand was one of rebellion rather than compliance. The city did not enforce the restrictions, so the artists won in the end – in spite of rather than because of the city program.

*SoHo Newsletter*, 1971. SoHo Artists Association Records, Archives of American Art.

### A.I.R.

City authorities ultimately created a program that legalized lofts in specific blocks of SoHo for artist use. The Artist in Residence (A.I.R.) program had size restrictions, however, and it also required tenants to officially register as "artists." Many refused, asking: who is the city to define the artist?

Artist Certification, 1970-1971.  
SoHo Artists Association Records,  
Archives of American Art.

February 10, 1971

# SOHO NEWSLETTER

Published by SOHO Artists Association  
to promote the interests of artists in the area south of Houston St  
451 West Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012 533-8040

## SOHO ARTISTS LEGALIZED

### What Happened?

On January 20, 1971, the City Planning Commission voted 4 to 0 to recommend to the Board of Estimate that artists be permitted to reside in the manufacturing buildings of the 43-Block area of SoHo. On January 28, the Board of Estimate made that recommendation a City Law.

The City Planning Commissioners who voted for us included Don Elliot, who had been a prime mover in getting the legislation formulated; Chester Rapkin, who did the first modern study of SoHo back in 1962; and Martin Gallent and Ivan Michaels, both of whom have been supportive of our legalization for quite some time. Throughout the hearing on January 6, the Commissioners looked as pleased as Punch with themselves (and us) as different people spoke. We felt it was in the bag, but didn't stop holding our breath until we got the word. When we did, we learned definitely that Canal Street was in despite the active interest of developers for those blocks, making it a major victory for a NYC community over the bad guys.

The Board of estimate, which could have been formidable (what is the artist's housing problem compared with those of the West Side squatter's or the hotel welfare mother's?) was a big brass band, as the judges (the Bd of E) proceeded to give speeches on behalf of the defendant (us). SoHo also got a bonus: Percy Sutton promised to use the powers of his office to ensure that all the artists occupying oversize lofts as of last September 15 would be able to live out their tenancies – however long those might be.

### Whodunnit?

All this came about because – first, of course – of all those people who worked their asses off for the last two years, starting from scratch – the yours truly SoHo Artists Association people. But it would have been a rebellion instead of a revolution (the former being a latter that didn't come off) if it hadn't been for the artillery in the form of establishment clout that was primarily brought in by Doris Freedman. Mrs. Freedman not only drummed up support for us from her former position as Director of the NYC Office of Cultural

SOHO: THE ARTISTS' LEGAL TURF – the area of the solid blocks and frontages.

Affairs, but also set up the artists' certification committee (see page 3) without which SoHo couldn't have liberated the corner bar. Since then, she's set up the potent Citizens for Artists' Housing (with Klaus Kertess) and its Lawyers and Architects Committees, who will see SoHo through its future battles with the really big and usually bad bureaucracy (see page 2). If SoHo had a mother.....

Another "mother" for SoHo was Mike Levine, a member of the CPC's staff who

**soho party** page 2

**GENERAL MEETING** page 4

132-10

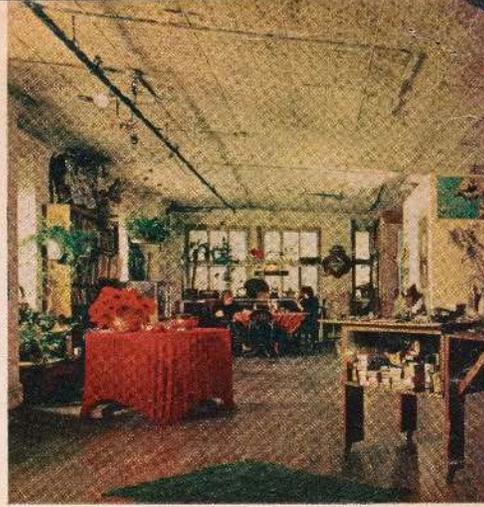
CERTIFICATION OF ARTISTS APPLYING FOR OCCUPANCY IN THE  
M1-5 ZONED SOHO

1. Definitions
  - a. Artist: (As used in the amended Multiple Dwelling Law of 1968) The word artist means a person regularly engaged in the visual fine arts, such as painting and sculpture or in the performing or creative arts, including choreography and filmmaking, or in the composition of music on a professional basis.
  - b. Certification: Today the state of art expression is too fluid to permit exact cataloguing. If an applicant can satisfy the Certification Committee that his is a true art form and that his art form demands a large working space for its expression or creation, then the Committee should advise the Department of Cultural Affairs that this applicant should be certified.
  - c. SOHO : 40-block M1-5 area bounded by Houston and Canal Streets on the north and south, and Lafayette and West Broadway on the east and west.
  - d. M1-5 Zone: "Light Manufacturing Districts". Residence is permitted for artists, certified by the Department of Cultural Affairs, in lofts where the owner has applied to, and received from, the City Planning Commission a <sup>Special Permit</sup> usage waiver.
2. Criteria for Certification
  - a. the need for special space (app. 2500 Square feet) for the expression or creation of an art form.
  - b. degree of commitment

If you don't have lots of room,  
'your ideas get very small'



**M**ultimedia Artist Bob Wiegand swings from a trapeze he installed in his 2,500-square-foot loft, on the fifth floor of a cooperatively owned building. He enjoys performing acrobatic stunts in his studio, although he admits that climbing the 144 stairs from the street is probably all the exercise anyone needs. Wiegand is one of the original organizers of the "SoHo Artists Association," a group working to change the laws that prohibit living in lofts. SoHo is short for "south of Houston Street," the area where most of the disputed loft-residences are located.



From *Life* magazine, SoHo Artist Association Records, Clippings 1970-1978. Archives of American Art.



<https://sohomemory.org/soho-friends-joyce-and-elizabeth-in-their-own-words>

SoHo friends: [artist Joyce Kozloff](#) and [Elizabeth Weatherford](#)



Dynamic Mixed-use

**SOHO REZONING:  
HOW DOES A NEIGHBORHOOD EVOLVE?**

# Study Area

## SoHo/NoHo, Manhattan CD 2

**Centrally located**

**Exceptional transit access**

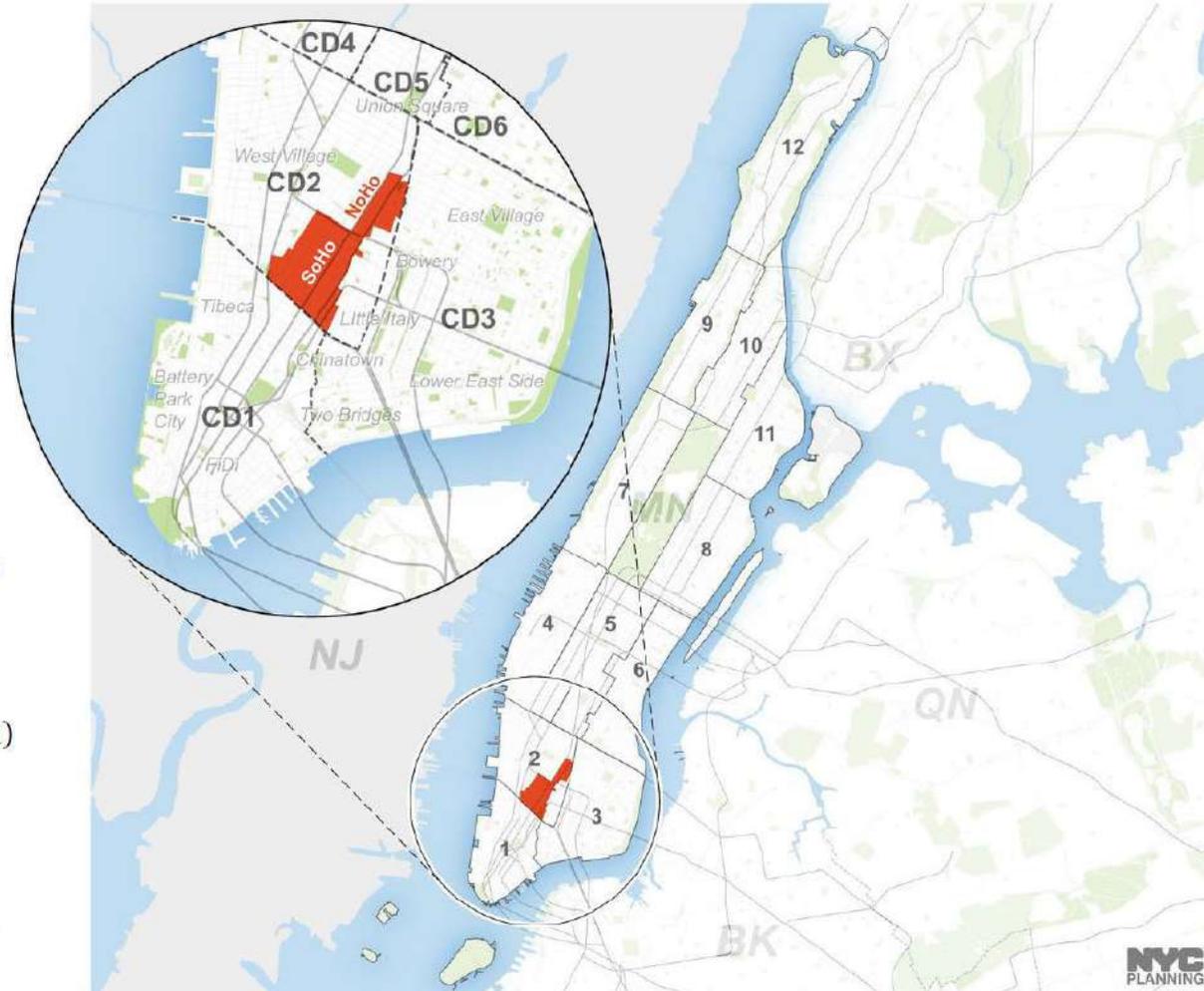
(10 stations on N/Q/R/W, B/D/F/M, A/C/E, J/Z, 1, 6 subway lines)

**Dynamic mixed-use neighborhoods with live-work traditions**

**Five-decade old manufacturing zoning** (M1-5A/M1-5B established in 1971)

**Iconic cast-iron architecture protected by six historic districts**

**Unique history and cultural identity**

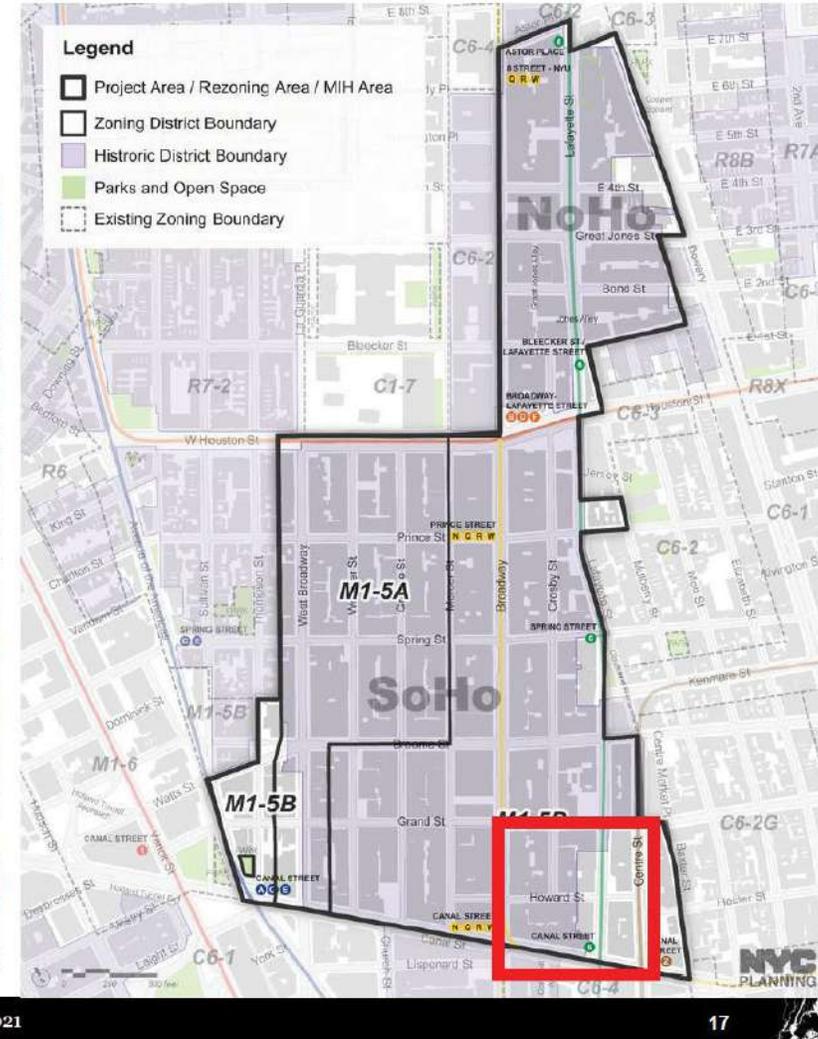


# Exceptional Transit



# Outdated M1-5A/M1-5B Zoning

- **Residential: Not permitted**
  - No affordable housing requirement
- **Manufacturing / Commercial: 5 FAR**
  - Ground floors largely restricted to industrial and related uses
  - Joint Living Work Quarters for Artist (Use Group 17D JLWQA)
- **Community facility: 6.5 FAR**
  - Limited range
- **Standard M1-5 envelope**
  - Non-contextual
  - No height limits
  - Street wall height: 85' or 6 stories
  - Sky Exposure Plane (SEP)
  - Allows sheer-rising towers setback from the street

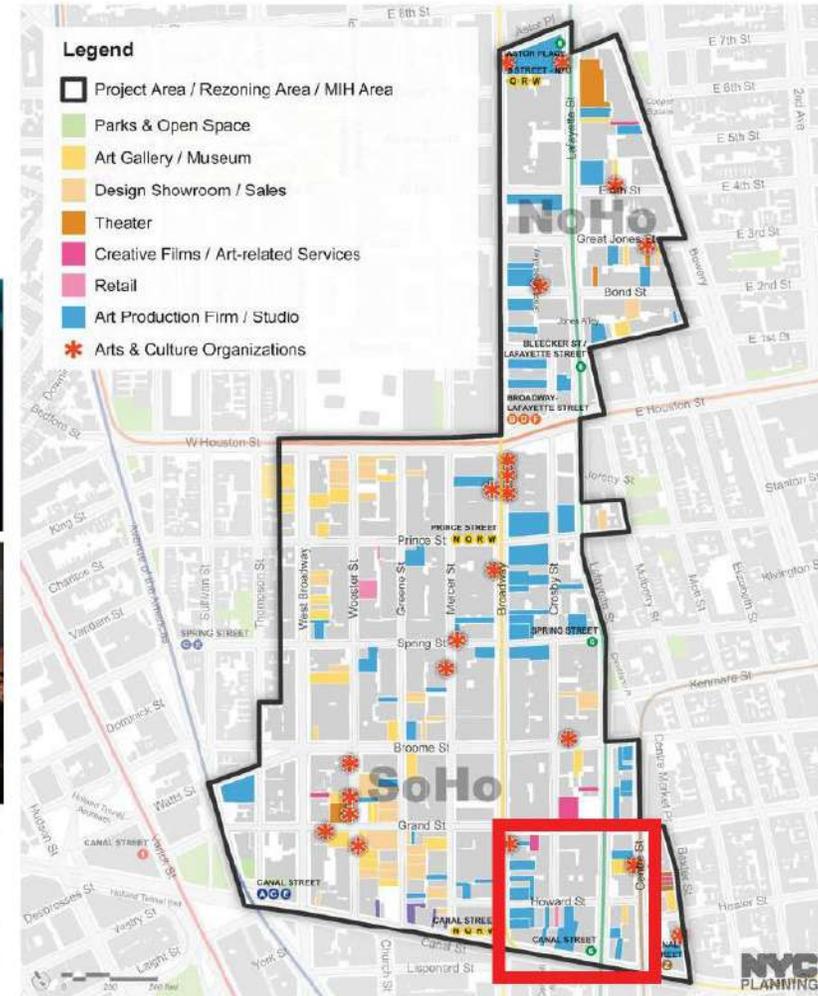
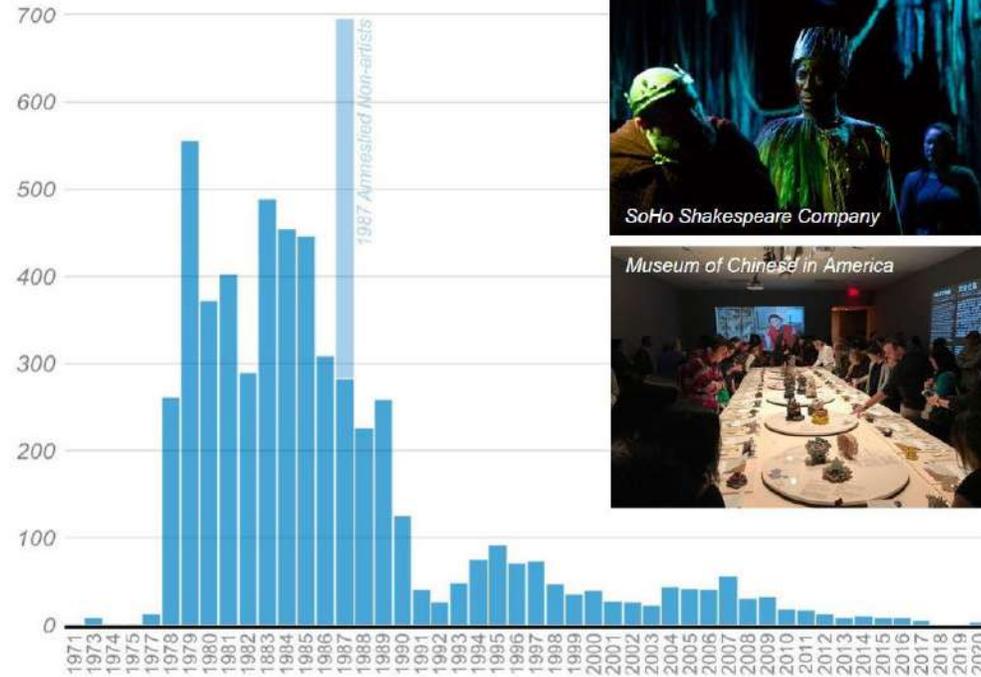


 **SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**

# Evolved Creative Landscape

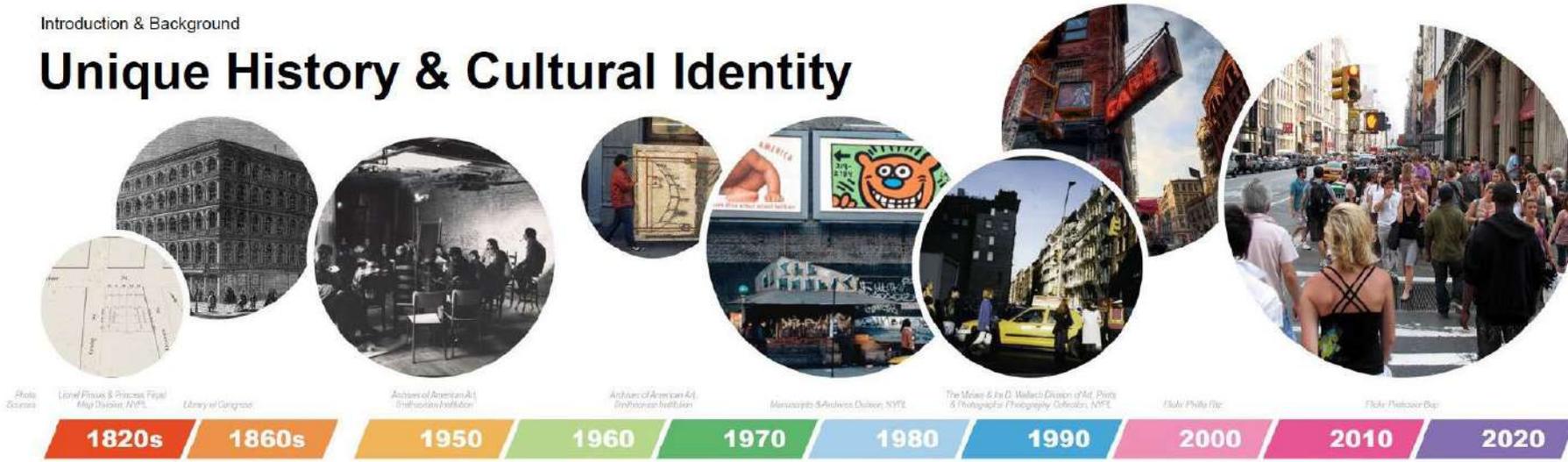
## Number of Artists Certified for JLWQA

Source: Department of Cultural Affairs



**SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**

# Unique History & Cultural Identity



**Residential**

**Commerce, Entertainment, & Industry**

**Artist live-work**

**Loft-living**

**Mixed-use neighborhoods**

**Post-Civil War - mid-20th c.**  
Apparel/textile manufacturing, warehousing & wholesale center

**Mid-20th Century**  
Shrinking industrial sectors & burgeoning artist live-work community

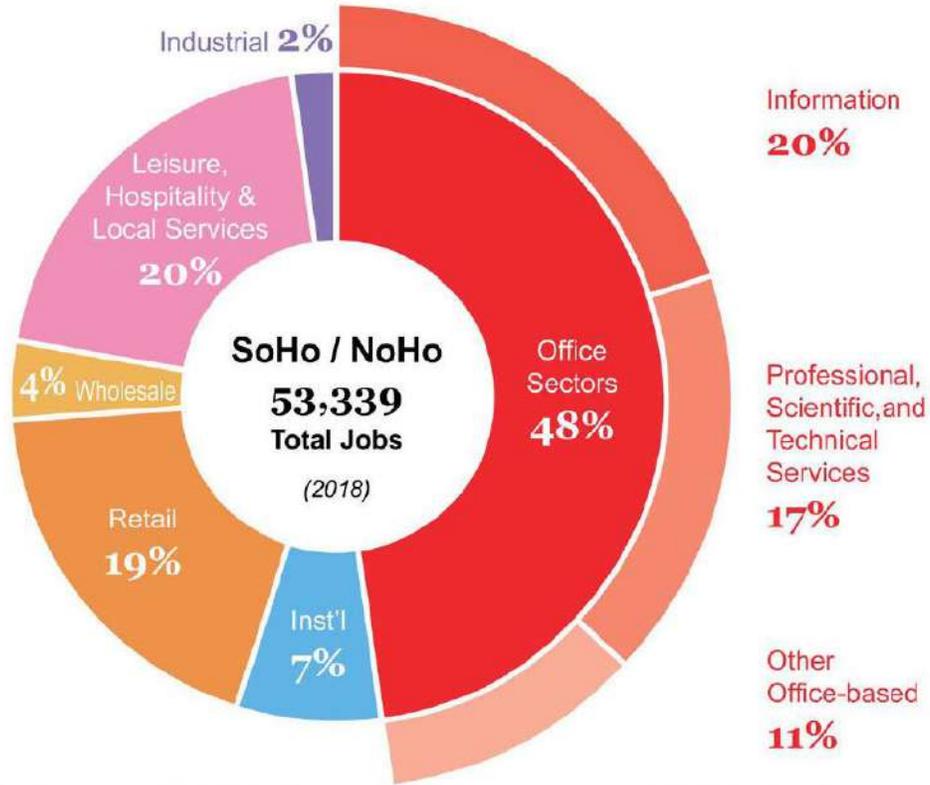
**1960's - 1970's**  
Artist live-work gaining legal status  
*Artist in Residence (A.I.R.) for fire & safety*  
*M1-5A & M1-5B districts established Joint Living-Work Quarters for Artist (JLWQA) as a manufacturing use in Use Group 17D*

**1980's**  
Increasingly popular loft-living  
*Manhattan: Loft Law provided path to legalize residential use*  
*SoHo/NoHo: Occupancy Survey (1983) found 1/3 households had certified artists*

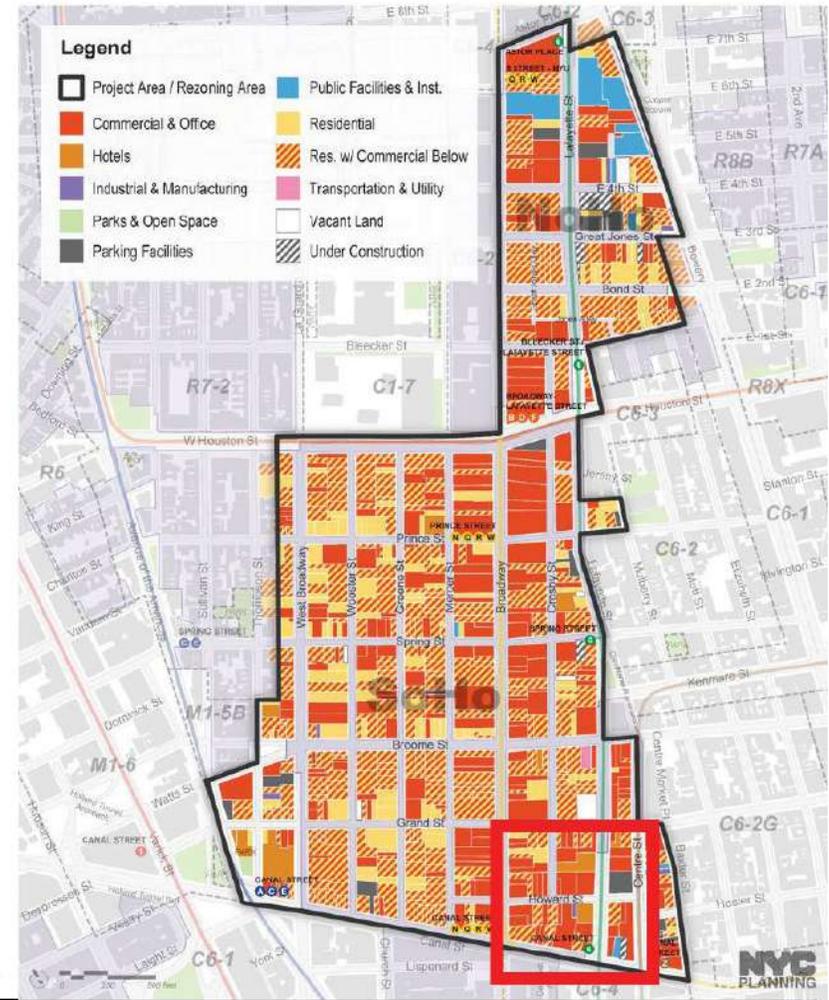
**1990's - present**  
Dynamic mixed-use district  
*~8,000 residents including certified artists and those that are not*  
*Dynamic local economy and cultural sector*  
*Over 53,000 private sector jobs*  
*Internationally renowned shopping district*  
*Tourist destination with iconic architecture*



# Dynamic Mixed-Use District



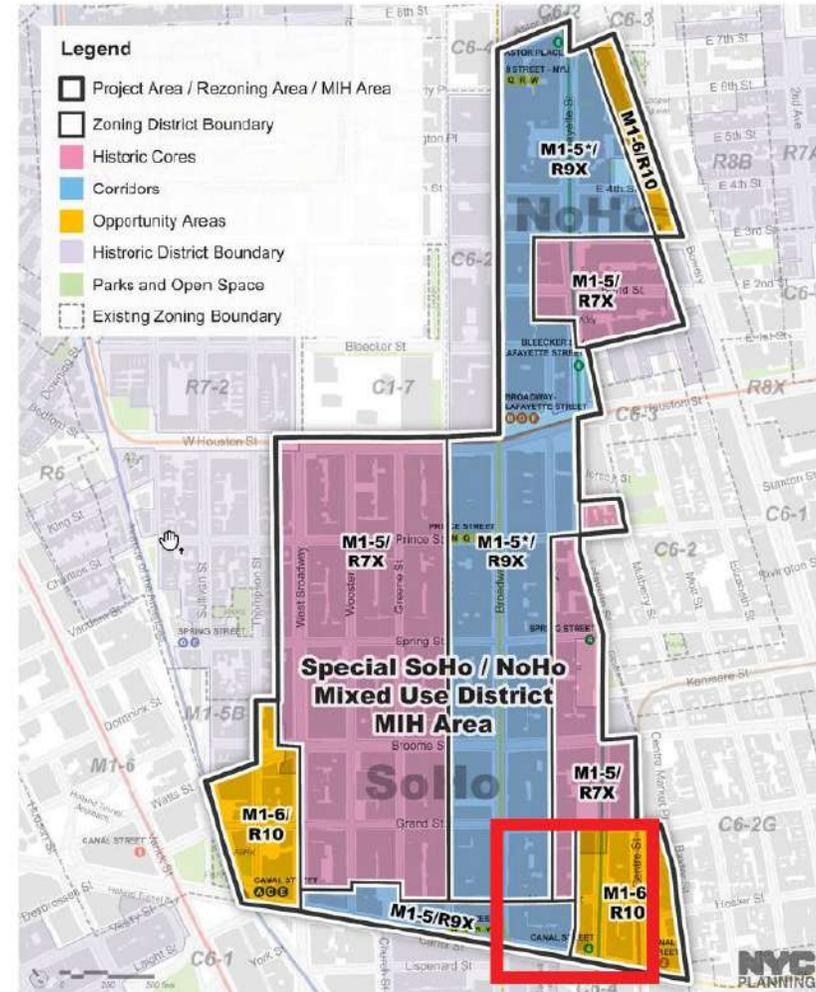
Employment data: 2018 LEHD (US Census Bureau). Land use map: Map PLUTO 20v4 and AKRF study area survey



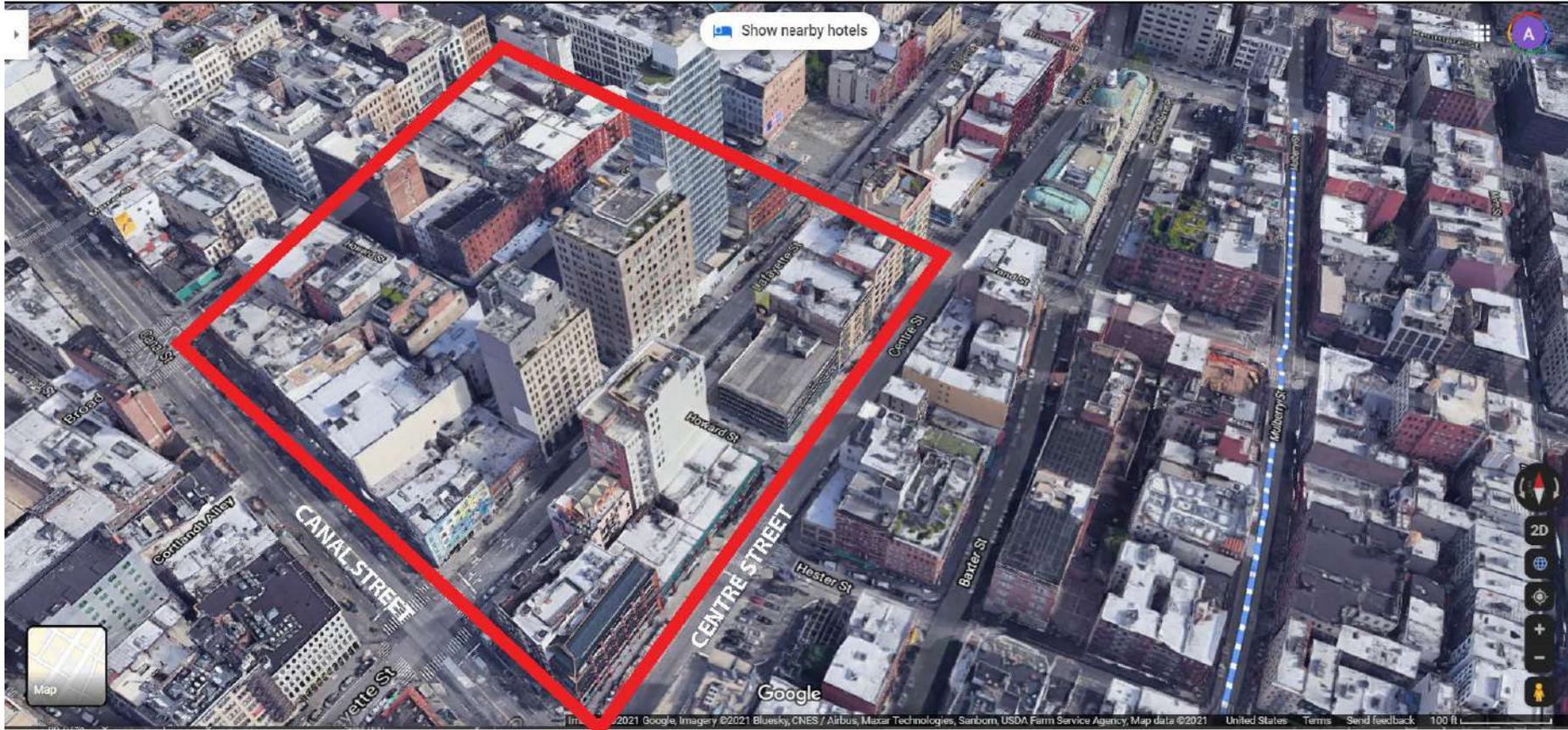
**SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**

# Proposed Zoning Overview

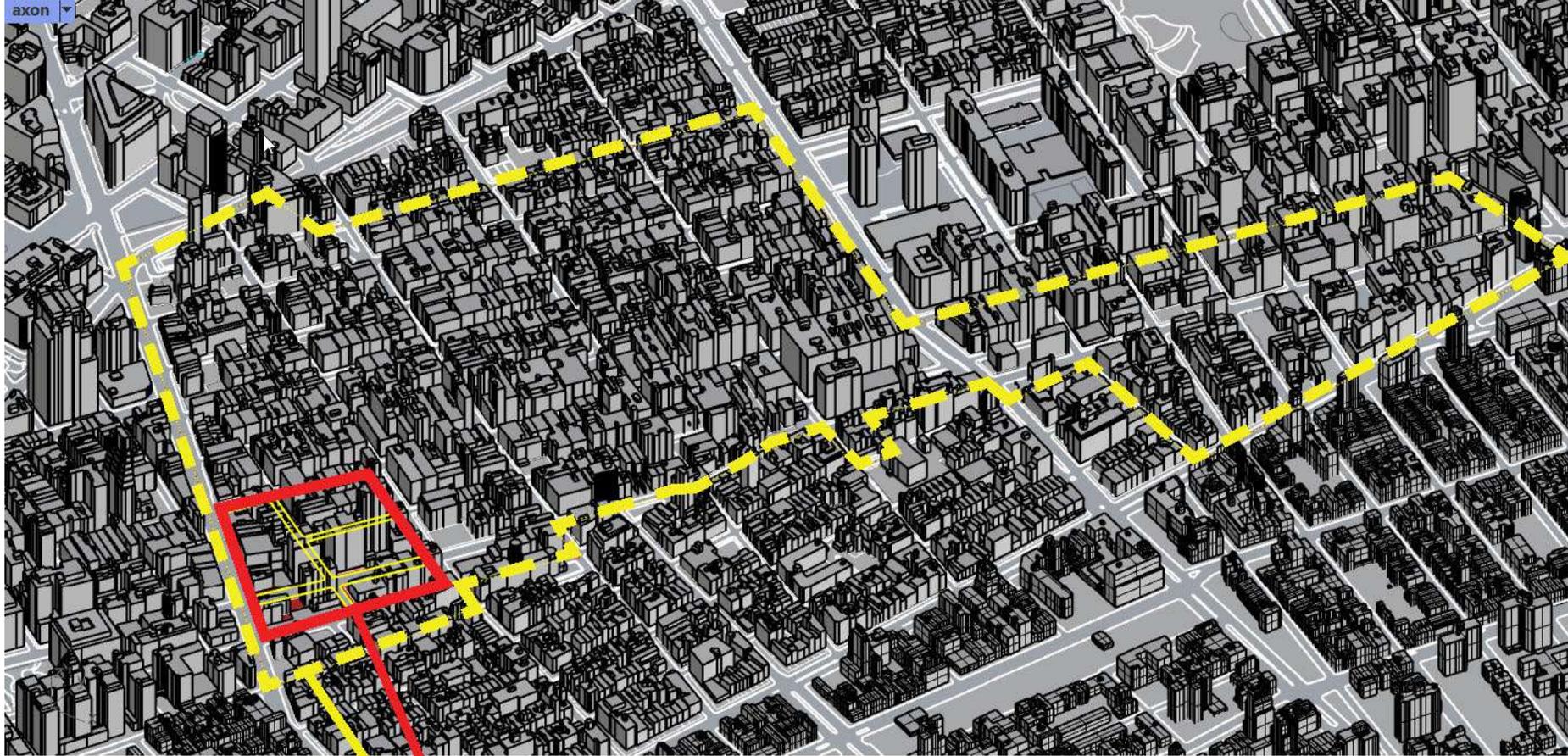
- **Map paired manufacturing / residential districts** to support dynamic mix of residential, commercial, manufacturing, and community facility uses
- Establish a new special district – **Special SoHo/NoHo Mixed-use District & three density tiers**
  - *Historic cores*
  - *Corridors*
  - *Opportunity areas*
- **Contextual building envelopes** to shape appropriate built forms
- **Designate Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Area** to require permanently affordable housing in SoHo/NoHo for the first time
- **Sustain SoHo/NoHo’s cultural legacy** by promoting public presence of the arts



**SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**  
Includes Opportunity Zone + Historic Core + Historic Corridor



 **SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**  
Includes Opportunity Zone + Historic Core + Historic Corridor



FILE: Site Context.3dm

**SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**

**Re-zoning extents**

**SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**

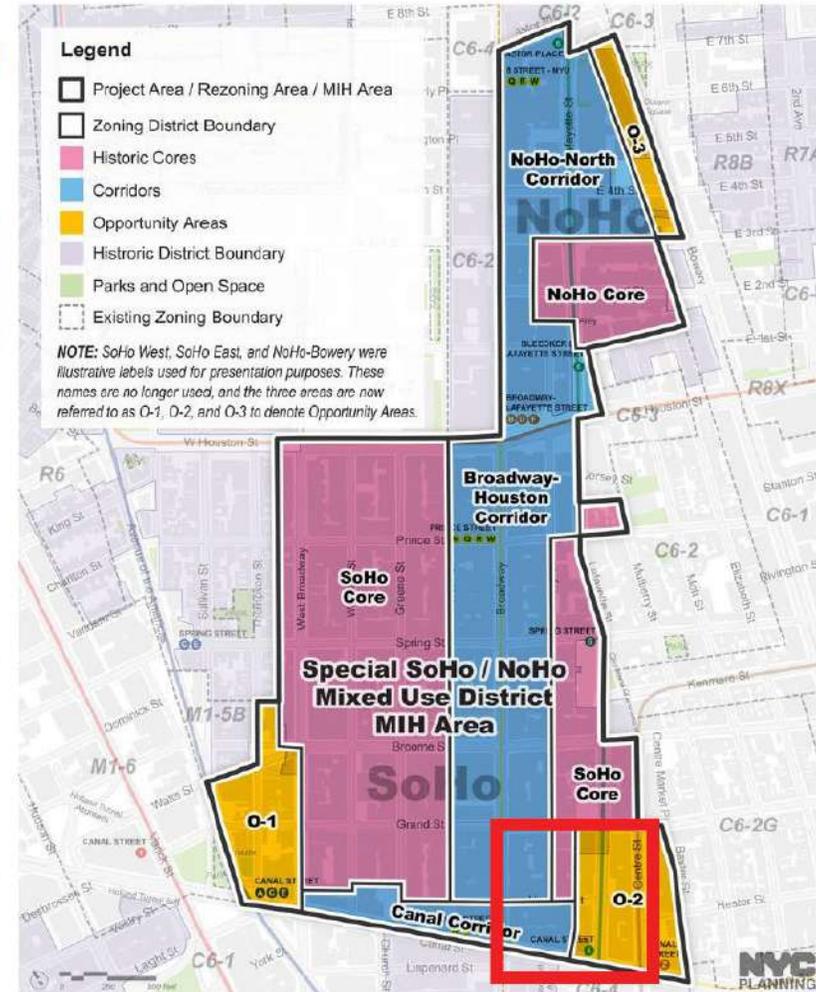
Includes Opportunity Zone + Historic Core + Historic Corridor



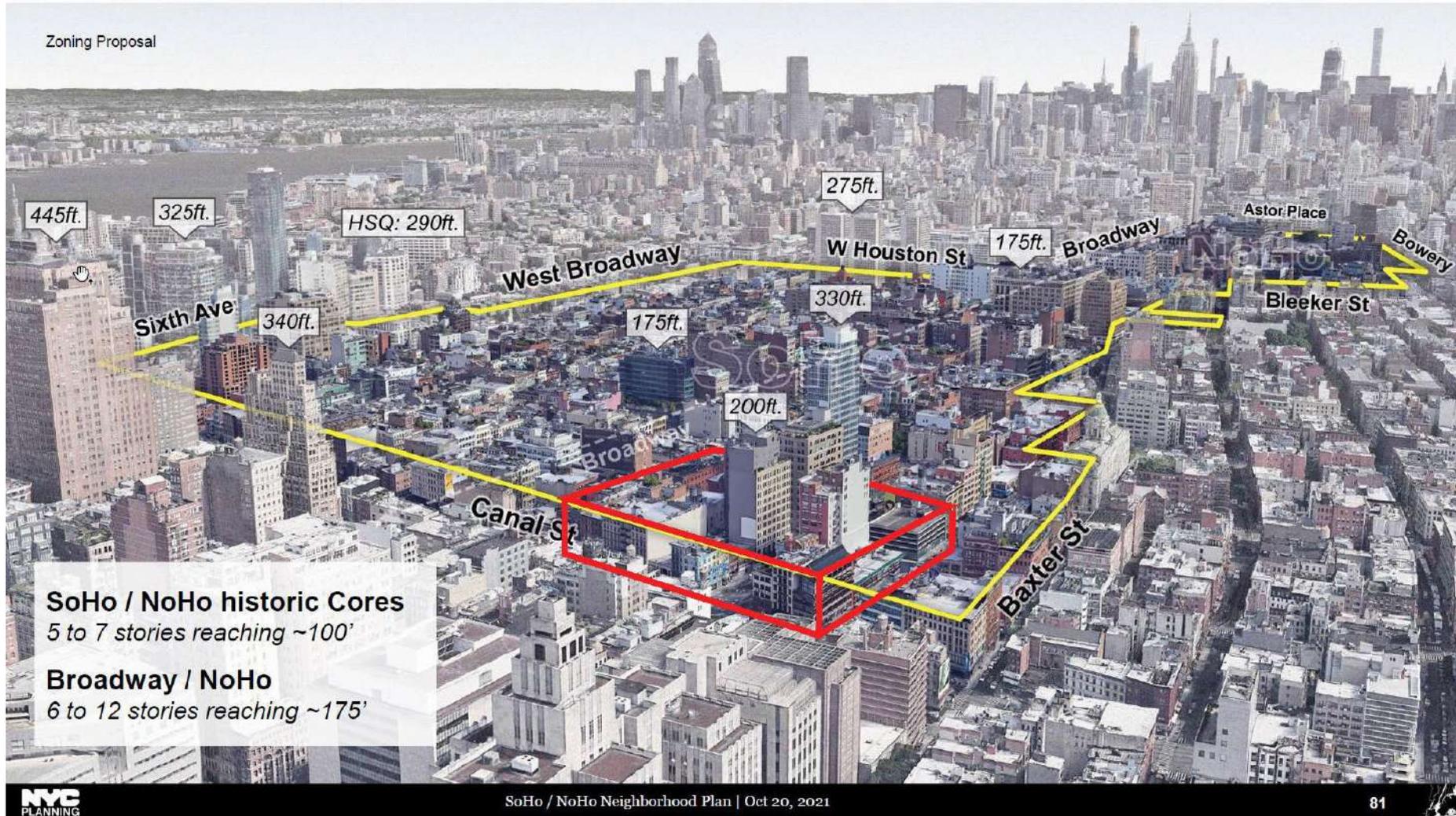
# Bulk | Density & Envelope Overview

	M1-6 / R10 Opportunity Areas	M1-5 / R9X Historic Corridors	M1-5 / R7X Historic Cores
<b>Residential FAR</b>	12.0	9.7	6.0
<b>Commercial / Mfg. FAR</b>	7.0, <b>8.0</b> , 10.0 <i>(CPC mod)</i>	5.0 / 6.0	5.0
<b>Community Facility FAR</b>	6.5		
<b>Base Height (ft)*</b>	125 - 155	85 - 145	60 - 105
<b>Max Height (ft)</b>	275	205	145

\* Additional base height flexibility within historic districts to facilitate better cornice alignment



**SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**  
Includes Opportunity Zone + Historic Core + Historic Corridor



**SoHo / NoHo historic Cores**  
5 to 7 stories reaching ~100'

**Broadway / NoHo**  
6 to 12 stories reaching ~175'



 **SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**

Includes Opportunity Zone + Historic Core + Historic Corridor



**Opportunity Area / M1-6/R10**  
*Centre Street & Hester Street looking north*

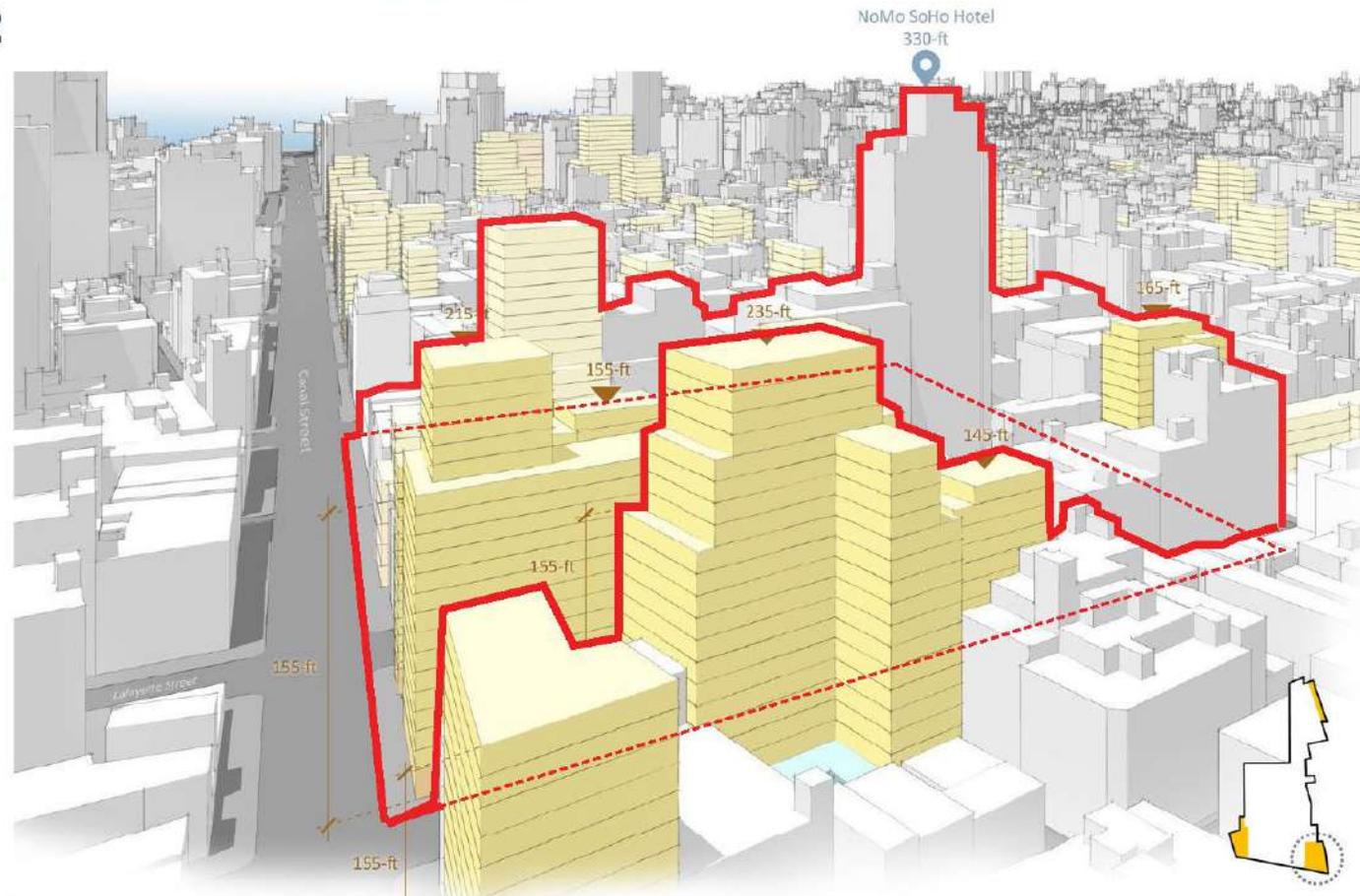




# Opportunity Area 2 (O-2)

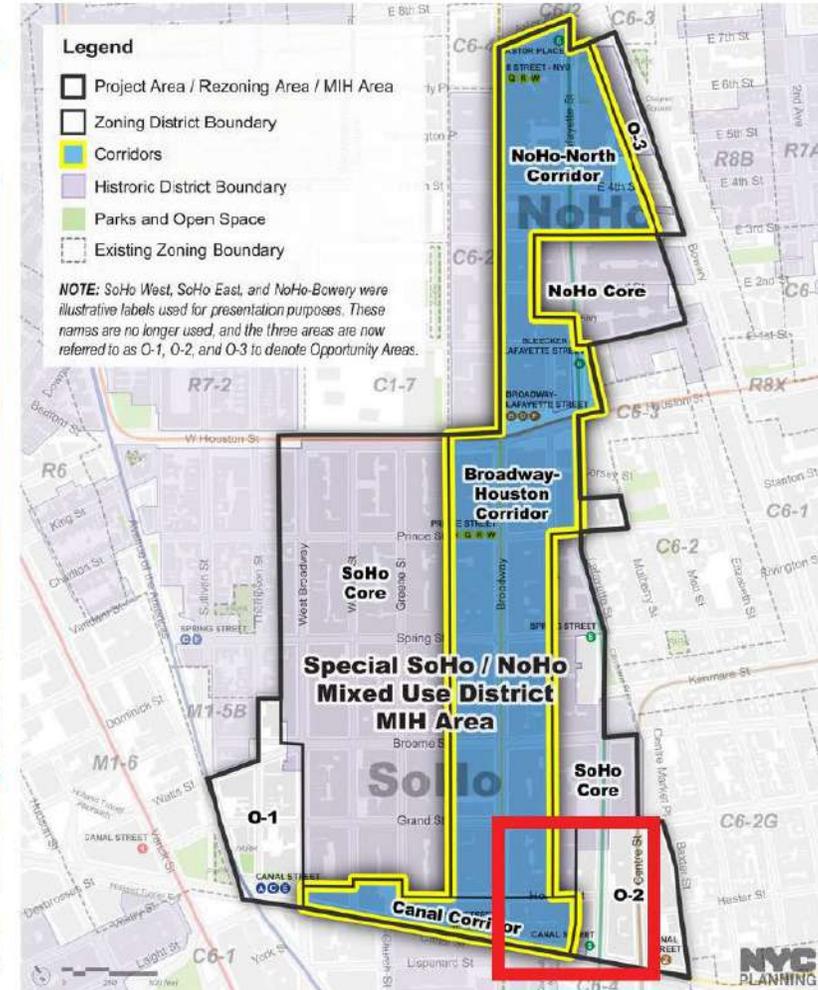
M1-6 / R10	
Max. Residential FAR (w/ MIH)	12.0
Max. Commercial / Manufacturing FAR	8.0
Max. Community Facility FAR	6.5
Min. Base Height	125 ft
Max. Base Height	155 ft
Max. Building Height	275 ft

NOTE: SoHo West, SoHo East, and NoHo-Bowery were illustrative labels used for presentation purposes. These names are no longer used, and the three areas are now referred to as O-1, O-2, and O-3 to denote Opportunity Areas.



**SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**  
Includes Opportunity Zone + Historic Core + Historic Corridor

# Historic Corridors



**SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**  
 Includes Opportunity Zone + Historic Core + Historic Corridor

A car driving on a city street

Description automatically generated

r / M1-5/R9X

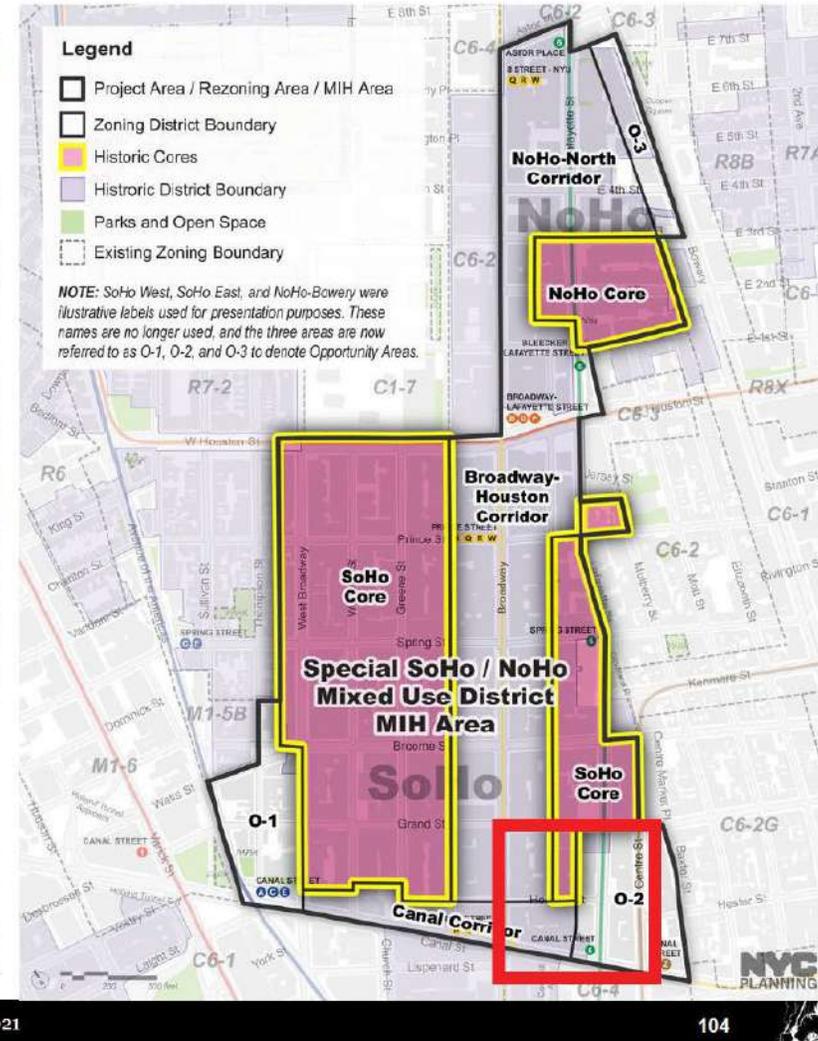
Canal Street & Lafayette Street looking north



99



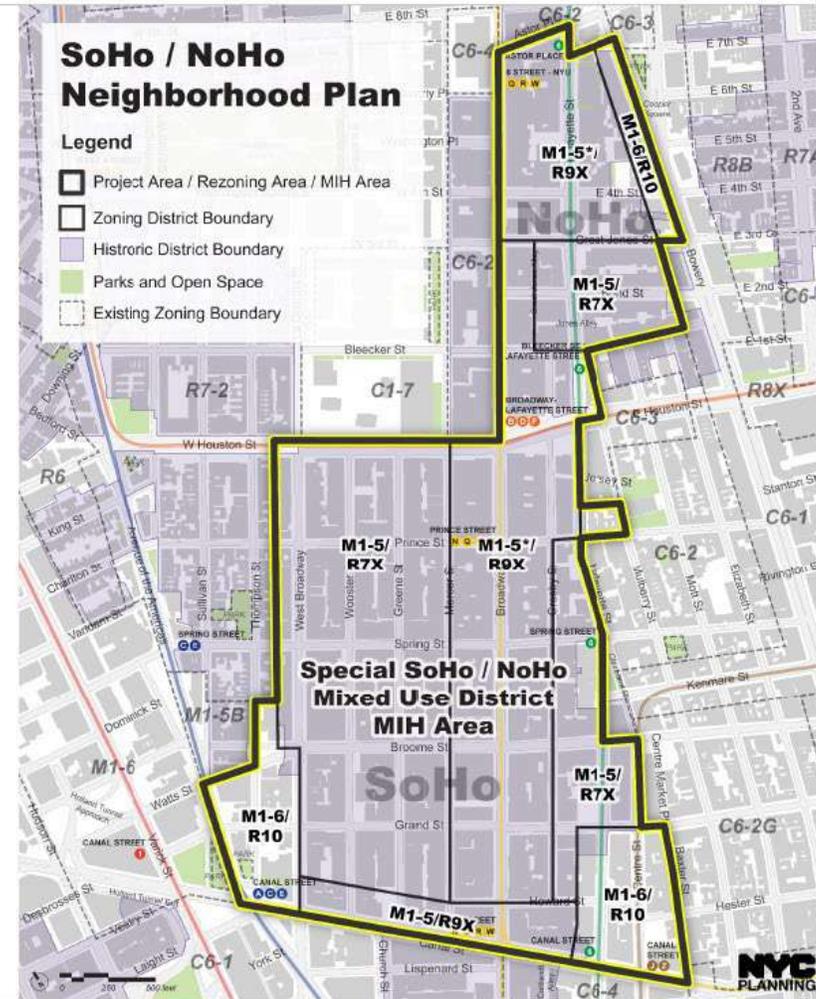
# Historic Cores

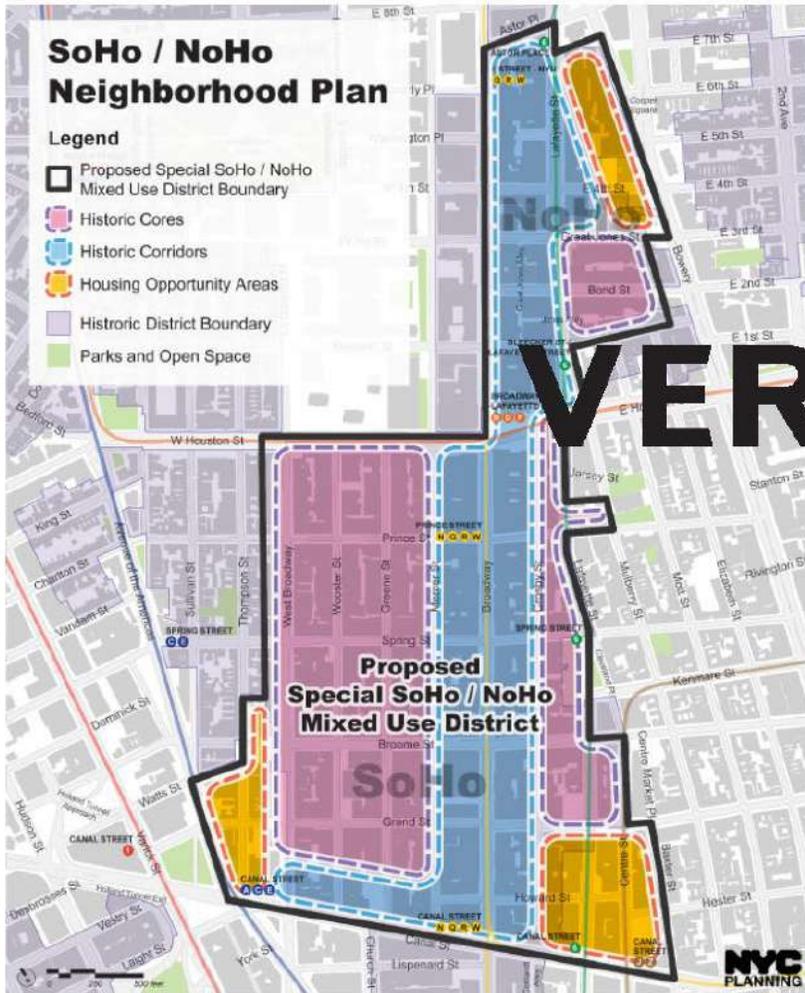


**SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**  
Includes Opportunity Zone + Historic Core + Historic Corridor

# Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH)

- Between **20% and 30%** of new residential floor area would be required to be **permanently affordable** and available to residents at a **range of income levels**. MIH options that could be applied in SoHo and NoHo include:
- Option 1: 25% of residential floor area** must be for affordable housing units for residents with incomes averaging 60% AMI (\$61,440 per year for a family of three)
- Option 2: 30% of residential floor area** must be for affordable housing units for residents with incomes averaging 80% AMI (\$81,920 per year for a family of three)
- Deep affordability option: 20% of residential floor area** must be for housing units for residents with incomes averaging 40% AMI (\$40,960 per year for a family of three).





**Community Alternative Zoning Plan for SoHo/NoHo**

December 2020

**VERSUS**

# IN SUPPORT OF NYCDCP PROPOSED ZONING



Open New York is an all-volunteer group advocating for abundant homes and lower rent. We believe in housing for all and housing of all types. That means we support more social housing, government subsidized housing, and market rate housing.

## An Open Letter on the SoHo & NoHo Rezoning

 Open New York Oct 7, 2020 · 5 min read



To Mayor Bill de Blasio and Deputy Mayor Vicki Been:

CC: Council Member Margaret Chin, Council Member Carlina Rivera, and Borough President Gale Brewer

We are organizations fighting for housing justice in New York City, writing to urge you to build on the work begun by the Envision SoHo/NoHo program and commence an equitable, housing-focused rezoning of these neighborhoods that could be completed by the end of your term. Our city, which is by one measure the second-most segregated in the country, has long been a tale of two cities: Black and brown New Yorkers face higher rent burdens, longer commutes, more severe overcrowding, and were at higher risk of eviction and displacement than their white counterparts even before the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic, with its disproportionate impact on New Yorkers of color, has only exacerbated the inequality of our segregated city.

Signed,  
Ascendant Neighborhood Development  
Churches United for Fair Housing  
Citizens Housing and Planning Council  
Community Service Society of New York  
Cooper Square Committee  
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation  
Fifth Avenue Committee  
Habitat for Humanity NYC  
Hester Street  
Hope Community, Inc.  
Housing Rights Initiative  
New York Appleseed  
New York Housing Conference  
Open New York  
Regional Plan Association  
Riseboro Community Partnership  
Settlement Housing Fund  
St. Nick's Alliance  
Supportive Housing Network of New York  
Teens Take Charge  
This Land is Ours Community Land Trust  
University Settlement

# COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVE ZONING

*Summary: Community Alternative Rezoning Plan*

1. Allow for As-of-Right Residential Development With Affordability Mandates, But With No Upzoning
2. Expand Inclusion & Diversity through Deeper and Broader Affordability Requirements Than Currently Proposed By City
3. Legalize and Protect Current Residential Occupancies, and Lower Conversion Restrictions to Allow for New Residential Opportunities, Including Affordable Housing, through Adaptive Re-Use
4. Retain, Reinforce, and Perpetuate the Creative and Arts Character of SoHo and NoHo in New Developments, Conversions, and Street Level Spaces
5. Permit Appropriately Scaled As-of-Right Retail Without Opening the Floodgates to Giant Big Box Chain Stores or Oversized Eating & Drinking Establishments



*Celebrants gather for unveiling of plaque marking the former home and studio of Jean-Michel Basquiat on Great Jones Street*



This plan represents and is supported by:

[\*Bowery Alliance of Neighbors\*](#)

*Bowery Block Association*

*Broadway Residents Coalition*

[\*East Village Community Coalition \(EVCC\)\*](#)

[\*Lower East Side Preservation Initiative \(LESPI\)\*](#)

*Lower Manhattan Loft Tenants*

[\*New York City Loft Tenants\*](#)

[\*NoHo Neighborhood Association\*](#)

[\*SoHo Alliance\*](#)

[\*SoHo Design District\*](#)

[\*South Village Neighbors\*](#)

[\*Tribeca Trust\*](#)

[\*Village Preservation\*](#)

# AGAINST NYCD CP PROPOSED ZONING

## EXAMPLES OF BUILDINGS WITH RENT REGULATED UNITS IN PROPOSED REZONING AREA

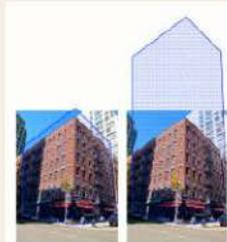
☐ -- Allowable size of new development under existing zoning (l) / proposed zoning under city plan (r)



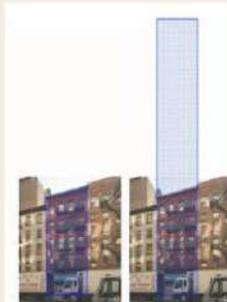
**202 Hester Street Built FAR: 4.5**  
 (l) Currently Allowable FAR: 5 – little incentive to demolish  
 (r) Allowable FAR under City Upzoning plan: 12 – strong incentive to demolish



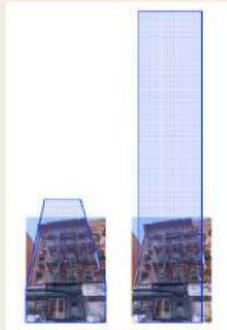
**508 Broome Street Built FAR: 7.5**  
 (l) Currently Allowable FAR: 5 – strong disincentive to demolish (overbuilt compared to allowable FAR)  
 (r) Allowable FAR under City Upzoning plan: 9.7 – strong incentive to demolish



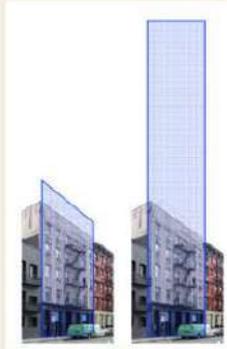
**30 Grand Street Built FAR: 4.96**  
 (l) Currently Allowable FAR: 5 – little incentive to demolish  
 (r) Allowable FAR under City Upzoning plan: 12 – strong incentive to demolish



**216 Centre Street Built FAR: 5**  
 (l) Currently Allowable FAR: 5 – little/no incentive to demolish (built as large as zoning allows)  
 (r) Allowable FAR under City Upzoning plan: 12 – strong incentive to demolish



**128 Baxter Street Built FAR: 3.93**  
 (l) Currently Allowable FAR: 5 – little incentive to demolish  
 (r) Allowable FAR under City Upzoning plan: 12 – strong incentive to demolish



**38 Grand Street Built FAR: 4.25**  
 (l) Currently Allowable FAR: 5 – very little incentive to demolish  
 (r) Allowable FAR under City Upzoning plan: 12 – strong incentive to demolish

Under the proposed upzoning, buildings with rent regulated units are placed in great danger of being demolished.

Such demolition will take place not just for new high-rise residential developments, where approx. 75% of units will sell for an average of at least \$6.437 mil.<sup>2</sup> to households with average annual incomes over \$1 mil., and a mere 25% will be affordable to households significantly wealthier than the least wealthy 25% of current area residents.

They are also in danger of being demolished for new commercial developments which would contain no affordable housing whatsoever.



Likely scenario under the proposed upzoning: 4-6 story walk up residential buildings with rent regulated units are demolished to make way for new residential high-rises with mostly super-luxury apartments, or for commercial developments with no housing, affordable or otherwise.

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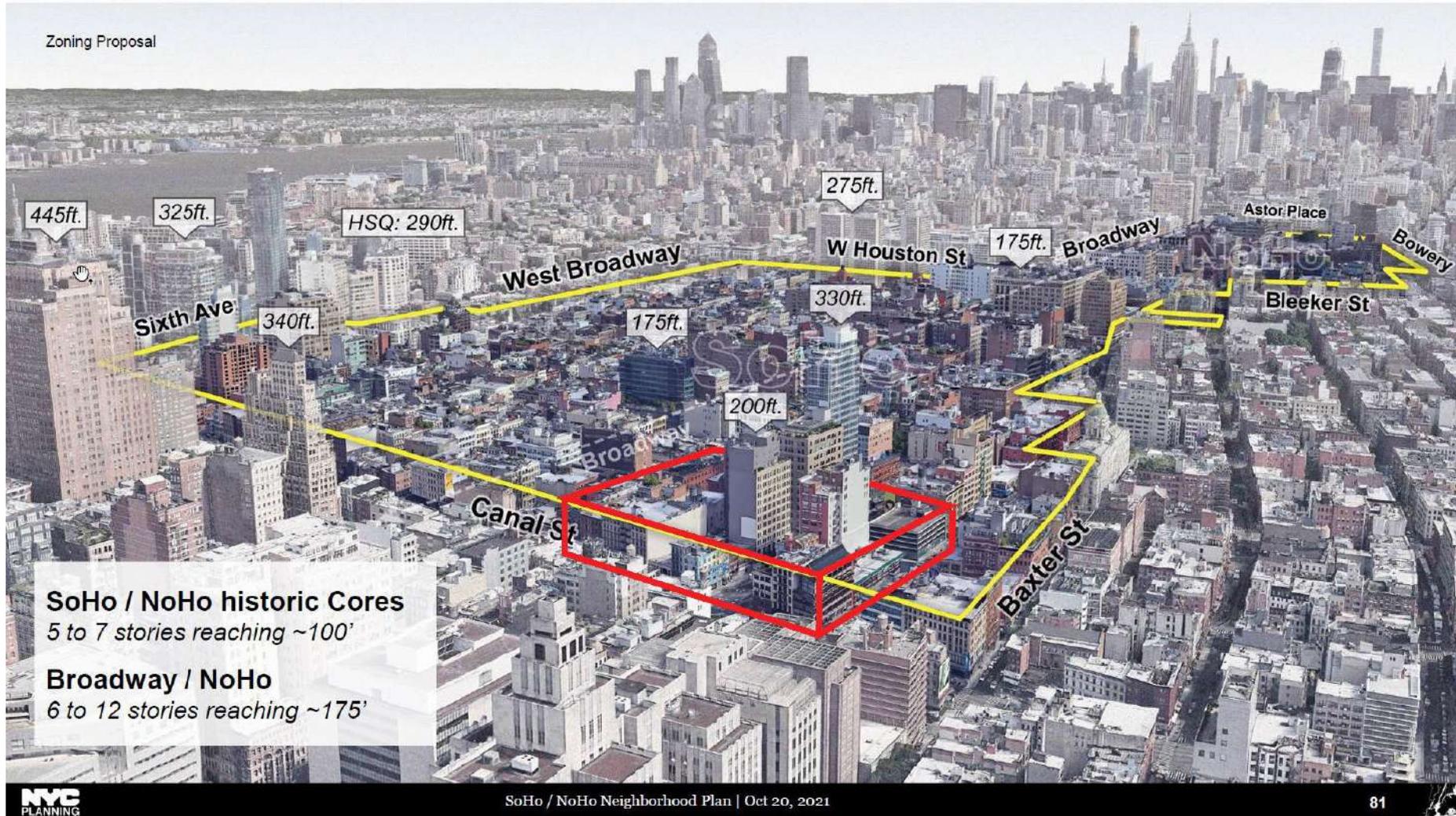
## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **There are three major flaws to the city's plan, which could be corrected:**

- It relies on an upzoning, which by its very nature incentivizes the destruction of existing buildings, in this case including 4-6 story residential buildings that in many cases include affordable rent-regulated housing
- It is entirely market-driven, and is dependent upon the whims of developers and their for-profit construction to subsidize affordable housing development
- It makes the price for every unit of moderately affordable housing three units of super-luxury housing, which will have ripple effects of pushing out existing lower income tenants and incentivizing the destruction of more affordable housing

### **The [Community Alternative Plan](#) addresses all three of these issues. That plan:**

- while attaching a mandate for inclusion of affordable housing in new residential developments, does not employ an upzoning, and would only allow development at the same current maximum allowable density for new development (5 FAR). Thus it would not increase pressure for demolition of existing buildings beyond pressure that already exists (and would largely only incentivize the development of sites that currently have parking lots or 1-3 story buildings on them, which are almost never residential)
- calls for deeper and broader levels of affordability than the city's plan, so there would be both a higher percentage of affordable housing in new developments and housing which is affordable and accessible to people of greater need than currently proposed
- calls for direct subsidies to create new affordable housing, as a market-driven approach will never meaningfully address these issues



**SoHo / NoHo historic Cores**  
5 to 7 stories reaching ~100'

**Broadway / NoHo**  
6 to 12 stories reaching ~175'

**SITE: SoHo East - 5 blocks**  
Includes Opportunity Zone + Historic Core + Historic Corridor