



October 27, 2023

Chair Dan Garodnick
City Planning Commission
120 Broadway, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10271

RE: Support for City of Yes for Economic Opportunity

Dear Chair Garodnick,

The NYC Office of Nightlife at the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment is a was established in 2018 to support our nighttime economy and serve as a central point of contact for stakeholders across our city's \$35 billion nightlife industry.

We are writing to express our strong support for Mayor Adams' *City of Yes for Economic Opportunity* as a common-sense citywide initiative to support new and growing small businesses and address zoning barriers that are preventing industry growth.

In 2021, ONL produced a [report](#) that includes legislative, regulatory, policy, and programmatic recommendations to improve long-standing challenges facing NYC's nightlife community. One of those recommendations highlighted the "unfinished business" of the broad, grassroots community efforts to successfully repeal the antiquated Cabaret Law:

4.4 Explore changes to zoning language to support and expand live music and social dancing uses

In 1926, Prohibition-era New York City introduced its Cabaret Law that banned nightlife establishments from hosting "musical entertainment, singing, dancing, and other forms of amusement," without a formal license. The law was widely perceived as having a disproportionate effect on marginalized groups, who were liable to be targeted for enforcement. In 2017, the City Council repealed the provisions of the law that required venues to obtain a Cabaret License.

However, changes to the Cabaret Law did not loosen all restrictions on live music or social dancing. Social dancing is permitted in select zoning districts only... ONL recommends working with city agencies and the City Council to explore changes to language that regulates live music venues and nightclubs, including exploring allowances for "music events" and "patron dancing," among other potential changes... Such reforms would help improve consistency for business operators in permitting, licensing, and inspections, and clarify what types of uses and activities are allowable in nightlife spaces.

The draft text of *City of Yes for Economic Opportunity* removes the outdated restrictions on social dancing currently in place in many commercial districts, and establishes a new category for eating and drinking establishments with scheduled entertainment, regulating them according to size rather than specifying which kinds of entertainment can take place. This common-sense approach can ensure that the potential impacts of these forms of scheduled entertainment are minimized in size in local commercial districts.

ONL is proud to partner with the Department of City Planning (DCP) to advance this effort, and look forward to continue working with all our City agency partners on the successful implementation of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jose Soegaard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and a stylized "S".

Jose Soegaard
Deputy Director
NYC Office of Nightlife