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September 21, 2023

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

Dear Chair Garodnick,

The Garment District Alliance strongly supports the City of Yes for Economic Opportunity proposal, a long overdue initiative to reshape the landscape for small businesses and commercial corridors in New York City.

The proposed changes will modernize New York City's zoning regulations to support small businesses and our commercial corridors so that they are aligned with how our neighborhoods are now, but also open up opportunities for them to thrive. We increasingly realize that mix-use neighborhoods permit more adaptive reuse and permits a commercial environment that is more pedestrian friendly and acknowledges our current living patterns. Embracing this evolution and putting a plan into place that will allow for neighborhoods to be more dynamic is to be applauded.

City of Yes for Economic Opportunity would enable the city to unlock potential in both historically economically significant neighborhoods and historically economically depressed neighborhoods.

The pandemic challenged the resilience of our small businesses and tested the strength of our economic foundation. Having more flexibility in zoning for local businesses to best use their existing space is precisely the rational response our city needs allow.

We support eliminating antiquated rules that dictate how a business' own space can be used, where certain businesses can be located, and simplifying regulations that contribute to storefront vacancies. This initiative fosters a more adaptive and dynamic environment for our local entrepreneurs, simplifies and streamlines zoning regulations, and makes it easier for businesses to find and utilize space to flourish, contributing to a more dynamic and inviting environment for all New Yorkers. These changes also pave the way for companies to grow responsibly and encourages vibrant commercial streets by establishing consistent streetscape rules that contribute to lively, active commercial areas.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Blair
President