

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021





# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To invoke a now-clichéd phrase once again, the fiscal year that began in July 2020 was unprecedented.

June 2020 saw SoHo emerge from several nights of civil unrest and property damage, followed by an organic explosion of art created on boarded-up storefronts lining otherwise nearly empty sidewalks and streets.

Since July 2020, SoHo and New York City have steadily re-opened, taking slow steps forward out of the pandemic over the past year. The summer and fall of 2020 saw local visitors return to SoHo to stroll the sidewalks, admire the street art, and slowly acclimate to shopping indoors again. As the painted plywood boards came down, we helped some of these artworks find their way to museums, onto streetlight banners, and into other exhibitions.

During the 2020 holiday shopping season, SoHo saw another burst of activity with locals finding SoHo to be a popular place

to be able to walk and dine outdoors while shopping. As the Covid vaccination effort sprung into high gear in early 2021, the spring and summer seasons saw regional visitors increasingly join NYC locals coming to SoHo.

Over the summer of 2020 we started to see a return of pre-pandemic issues such as overcrowded sidewalks and traffic congestion, a pattern that repeated itself again during the spring and summer of 2021. The pandemic forced the City to rethink how streets and sidewalks provide open space for people, introducing programs such as Open Streets and outdoor dining via Open Restaurants.

The return of chronic congestion issues coupled with a world actively redefining the public right-of-way led the Initiative to embark on an ambitious effort to re-imagine SoHo Broadway's streets and sidewalks to address many long-standing quality-of-life issues. During this fiscal year, SoHo Broadway staff, alongside Board and community members, worked closely with Street Plans and Karp Strategies to develop a SoHo Broadway Public Realm Framework and Vision Plan to illustrate a potential future for the district that prioritizes people over vehicles and creates more space for pedestrians, public art, greening, and seating. The Plan, released in October 2021 in concert with "Little Prince Plaza" (an Open Street demonstration project), will continue to be advanced and explored in upcoming fiscal year.

In May 2021, the City released its proposal to rezone SoHo. We've followed the review process closely, provided testimony along the way, and commissioned a massing study of potential development sites in our district to assess the impact potential development might have on the historic look and feel of the district. While members of the SoHo

Broadway community have had divergent opinions about the proposal, we worked diligently to suggest improvements to the City and our elected officials on behalf of the residential and commercial communities represented by the Initiative.

While we still worked at home some of the time last year, in December 2020 we moved into beautiful new offices on 11th floor of 594 Broadway. Throughout the pandemic, our office remained open thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of our staff (Frank, Brandon, Matthew and Arvind) and members of our Clean Team (Bobby, Cheikh, Henry, Melvin, David, Donald, Wayne, and Lance) who never stopped working during this challenging time. Thank you to our staff and Clean Team for your unwavering effort on behalf of the SoHo Broadway community during the year.

The district has experienced vast changes over the past year, and I'm thrilled to see SoHo full of visitors and residents while awaiting more offices to re-open as the pandemic hopefully wanes. We still have a long way to go, but if we continue to work together, SoHo Broadway will recover in the near term and thrive over the long term for all who live in, work in, or visit the neighborhood.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Dicus".

Mark Dicus

*Executive Director*

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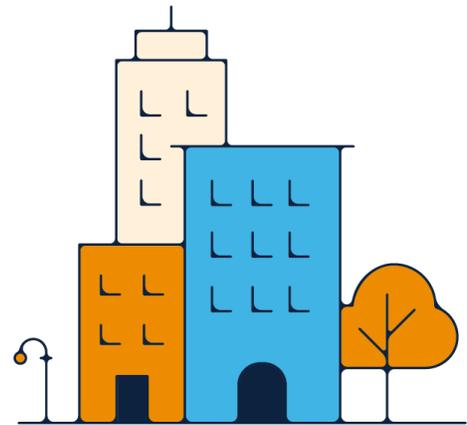
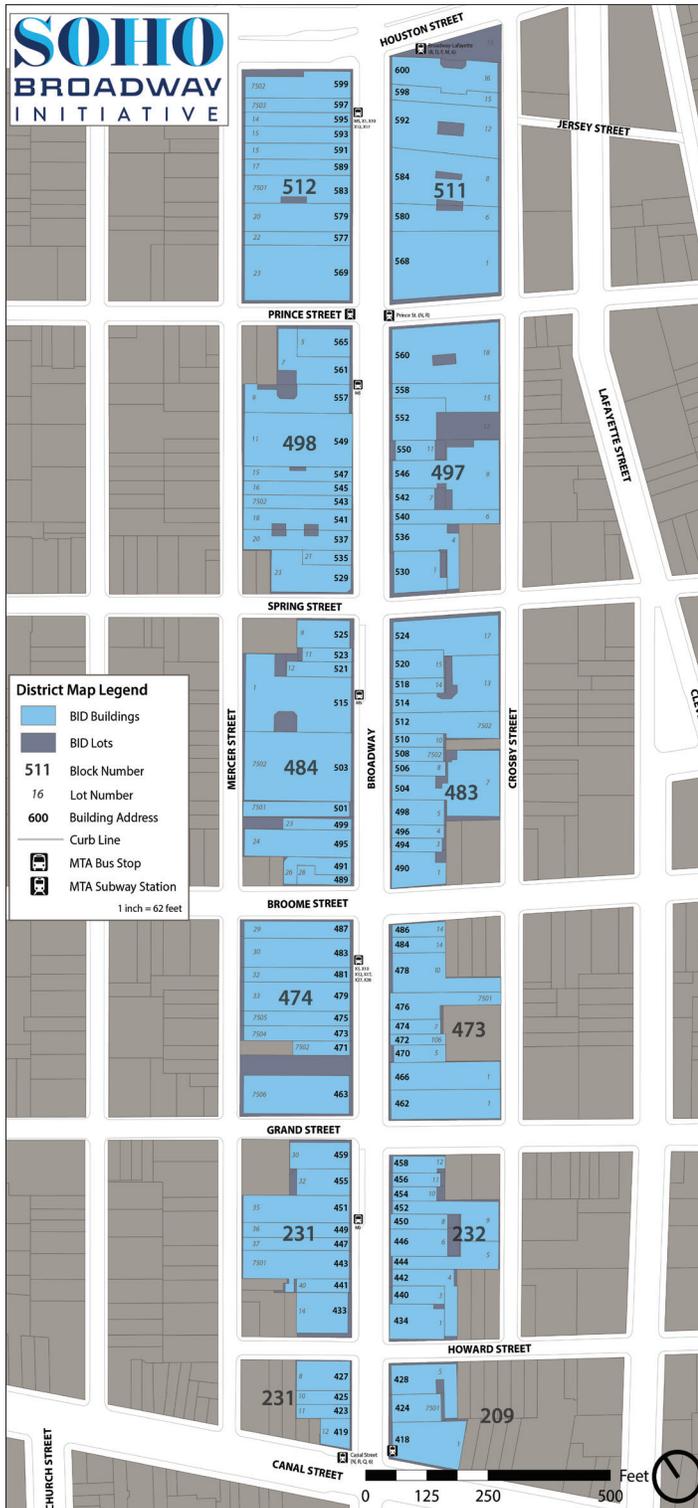
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# WE ARE SOHO BROADWAY



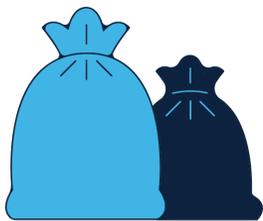
The SoHo Broadway Initiative is a neighborhood-focused business improvement district that serves those that live and do business in the SoHo Broadway corridor between Houston Street and Canal Street.

The Initiative seeks to foster a unique, vibrant, mixed-use district with enhanced maintenance and public safety, effective advocacy and administration, technical and professional services for its members, and strategic capital improvements. The Initiative achieves this mission through our four major services areas: sanitation & beautification; public safety & quality of life; community development & public art; and planning & advocacy. The Initiative's activities and achievements during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, in each of these areas are summarized in this Report.



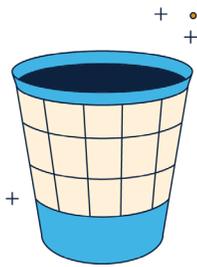
The SoHo Broadway business improvement district is a vibrant mixed-use community where a vast array of national and international retailers and a growing tech, media and entertainment industry thrive alongside a culturally rich and sophisticated residential community.

# SANITATION



**34,101**

bags of garbage removed



**31**

trash receptacles serviced



**8,539**

incidents of graffiti removed



**4**

Clean Team members

Our sidewalk cleaning and maintenance program focuses on keeping the district clean and attractive. The essential workers of the SoHo Broadway Clean Team work 363 days per year sweeping the sidewalks, emptying trash receptacles, removing graffiti, removing snow and ice from crosswalks and sidewalk extensions, and generally making Broadway

look its best. The Clean Team is provided through a maintenance contract between the Initiative and ACE Programs for the Homeless. In Fiscal Year 2021, the Initiative was able to temporarily expand sidewalk cleaning services on Crosby Street and Mercer Street with the generous support of Council Member Margaret Chin.

# BEAUTIFICATION



In partnership with the New York City Department of Transportation and the Horticultural Society of New York, the Initiative installed fifteen planters along Broadway in November of 2021. Refreshed with new plantings seasonally, they add color and greenery in addition to enhancing the safety of the corridor's recently installed curb extensions.

The Initiative continued its banner program, featuring two different campaigns during Fiscal Year 2021. Banners installed in January 2021 featured “We’re All In On SoHo” messaging, in coordination with the citywide All In NYC campaign to support the economic recovery of the district. We would like to thank our generous sponsors for making this year’s banner program a reality: GFP Real Estate, Loci Architecture, Meringoff Properties, NoMo SoHo Hotel, PacSun, T.J. Maxx, Vornado, and Zara. Additionally, we would like to thank our partners Five Boro Flag, Banner & Sign, NYC & Company, and the New York City Department of Transportation who made these banners possible.



**26**  
banners in  
district



**15**  
planters along  
Broadway

# PUBLIC SAFETY & QUALITY OF LIFE



**213**

community complaints



**119**

notifications to city agencies



**45**

contacts with vendors operating illegally

Our public safety program focuses on maintaining good pedestrian flow, ensuring pedestrian safety, minimizing sidewalk congestion, and working to address common quality-of-life issues within the SoHo Broadway improvement district. Our efforts focus on sidewalk activity such as vending, retail activity and events, and construction in the public realm, working in partnership with the NYPD's 1st and 5th Precincts and other City agencies.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Our community development program seeks to create opportunities for members of the SoHo Broadway community to connect, support each other and provide opportunities and resources to succeed while being a good neighbor. Through our website, e-newsletter and social media presence, the Initiative seeks to create awareness of who is here and what is going on in and around SoHo Broadway.

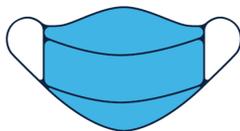


During Fiscal Year 2021, the Initiative faced the unique challenges of being a resource to the district as it began the long economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic as well as damage to buildings and businesses in the district following civil unrest in June of 2020. The Initiative shared information and resources from government agencies via its communication channels as well as distributed PPE, signage, and best practices information to businesses and property owners in the district. In addition, a series of remote community roundtables were held to share information, answer questions, and allow stakeholders in the district to connect with one another during this unprecedented time.



1,000

bottles of hand sanitizer distributed



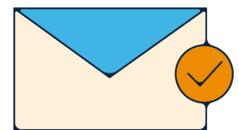
23,200

masks distributed in partnership with the Department of Small Business Services



17

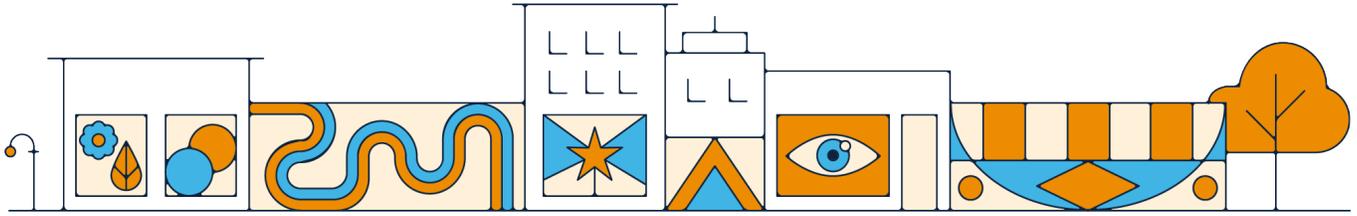
virtual community roundtable meetings held



2,850

email list subscribers

# PUBLIC ART



The Initiative continually seeks opportunities to celebrate SoHo's renowned legacy and continuing status as a center of arts and culture by supporting public art efforts in the district.

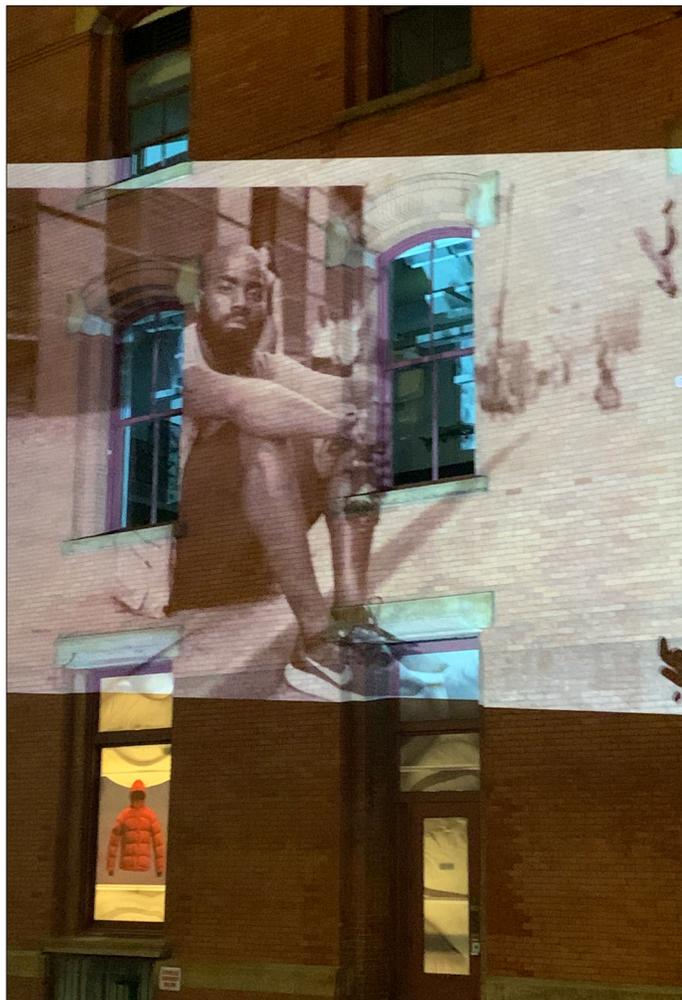


After dozens of artists gathered to apply temporary murals and other works to boarded-up storefronts in SoHo following days of civil unrest in June 2020, including along Broadway, the Initiative worked with property owners and retailers to recover as many of these plywood boards as possible and offer them to artists who had painted them.

A special thanks to Aurora Capital Associates, JVP/Margalit Startup City, and Cubico for their generous assistance with interim storage of these boards, as well as Westwood Gallery for advising the Initiative during the process. In the past year, the Initiative successfully returned over two dozen artworks to artists or their representatives.

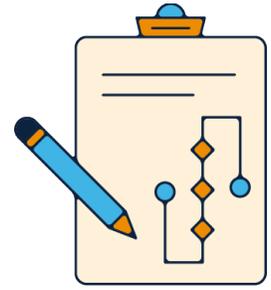
Three of the plywood artworks (by Tyler Ives, Rochelle White, and Fabio Esteban) recovered in the district were featured in an exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York. *New York Responds: The First Six Months*, which ran December 2020-May 2021, included artwork that documented “the Covid pandemic, the racial justice uprisings, and the responses of New Yorkers as they fought to cope, survive, and forge a better future.”

Our winter-spring 2021 banner campaign incorporated five artworks from the SoHo Renaissance Factory, a collective of young artists Amir Diop, Light Noise, Brendan T. McNally, Konstance Patton, and Sulé, who were among the dozens who painted on boarded storefronts in SoHo since June 2020.



In October 2020, the Initiative helped bring Digital Art Month to SoHo Broadway. Three district businesses, Galeria Melissa, Dop Dop Salon, and JVP/Margalit Startup City New York hosted augmented reality and digital video artwork during the month. The decidedly analog portrait photography of Jean Andre Antoine, depicting images of New Yorkers, was projected on Prince Street between Broadway and Crosby Street on October 15 during a magical three-hour period. The Initiative thanks property owners Aurora Capital Associates and GFP Real Estate for their partnership in making this exhibition possible!

# PLANNING & ADVOCACY



In addition to being a service organization, the Initiative also advocates on behalf of the SoHo Broadway improvement district and its constituents.

In July 2020, the Initiative convened a Public Realm Task Force comprised of local business and residential stakeholders and elected and government officials to initiate the creation of a vision for the corridor's streets and sidewalks. The goal of this plan and its implementation was to address near/medium-term challenges raised by the Covid-19 pandemic while also addressing some known long-term challenges to the public realm, with the outcome of maintaining public confidence in SoHo Broadway as an outstanding area to live in, work in, and visit. A consultant team led by Street Plans with Karp Strategies was selected to develop a public realm vision plan for the SoHo Broadway district in collaboration with the Task Force, Initiative staff, and Board members.

Work commenced in December 2020 with data collection and existing conditions analysis as well as community engagement via street-side intercept surveys, focus groups with residential and commercial stakeholders, and a digital survey. The top findings across all engagements were demands to expand sidewalk space and reduce vehicular congestion.

In October 2020, the Mayor announced that the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan would advance to the City's public land use review process. After a series of informational public meetings, the proposal entered the City's formal Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) in May 2021. Having participated in the 2019 Envision SoHo-NoHo Advisory Group, the Initiative closely followed this process and worked to make recommendations to improve the City's proposal in line with the Board's planning goals adopted in 2019.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Brandon Zwagerman, Director of Planning & Community Engagement

Matthew Morowitz & Arvind Sindhvani, Interns

# CLEAN TEAM MEMBERS

Lance Marsh, Assistant Crew Supervisor/District Supervisor

Donald Brown, Clean Team Member

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Henry Jones, Clean Team Member

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# SOHO

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