

Testimony on 11/20/24 CECM-SAPO Rules Hearing

Open Plans writes today in regard to new proposed rules on the extension of the moratorium on street fairs. We strongly oppose the extension of the street fair moratorium, and believe the justification of avoiding police overtime is illogical and neglects the importance of public space management. Further comments on these points are below:

- **End the street fair moratorium.** We are vehemently opposed to the extension of the street fair moratorium and continuation of the status quo. The New York City Comptroller's Office [found](#) that an average of just \$29.5 million was spent on the festival/fair/parade category of uniformed police overtime yearly (which includes some of the largest events in the city like the St. Patrick's Day Parade — though most street fairs are smaller in size). This is a drop in the bucket of the *hundreds of thousands* of total spent uniformed overtime each year. The rationale for the continuance of this moratorium being to reduce police overtime does not reflect the current reality of policing in our city, devalues the safety and necessity of safe and joyful public spaces, and disregards the benefits of such events. And while some areas of the city may see more street fairs than others if such a moratorium were to be lifted, this can be dealt with on a case-by-case basis without a blanket moratorium.
- **Recognize the economic and social benefits of street fairs.** Street fairs make our neighborhoods vibrant. Managing our public space in a cohesive way — including by lifting this blanket moratorium of street fairs — provides economic and social benefits to our communities. Street fairs give small businesses and food entrepreneurs a way to grow their businesses, provide a draw to tourists to spend locally, and bring neighbors together. We must shift the paradigm on public space management by creating streets that are truly people-centered.

Respectfully,
Open Plans

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