



# CENTERING THE COMMUNITY IN

*city of yes:*

## **Affordable Housing Opportunities in Manhattan Community Board 3**

Juliana Phaomei

Community Planning Fellow, FCNY 2025-26

# WHAT DOES *city of yes* CHANGE ABOUT ZONING?

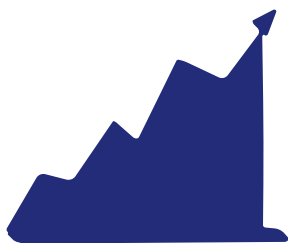


**Reduces ULURP, creates Universal Affordability Preference (UAP):** Allows developers to build higher than otherwise allowed by zoning in exchange for some permanently affordable units for households earning 60% AMI



**Allows more housing to be built as-of-right by changing zoning rules citywide**

- Low density: Accessory Dwelling Units
- Medium density: Town center zoning, Transit Oriented Development
- High density: Universal Affordability Preference (UAP)
- Citywide: Removing parking requirements



**In CB3 where density is medium and high:** 20% more floor area ratio (FAR) allowed



# RESIDENTS CURRENTLY FACING

## RISING UNAFFORDABILITY



- **Low incomes + small households:**

- Median HH income \$58,717
- 48.6% live alone
- Mostly earning below \$20,000

- **Seniors most vulnerable:**

- 58% earn under \$29k
- 41% of rent-burdened households

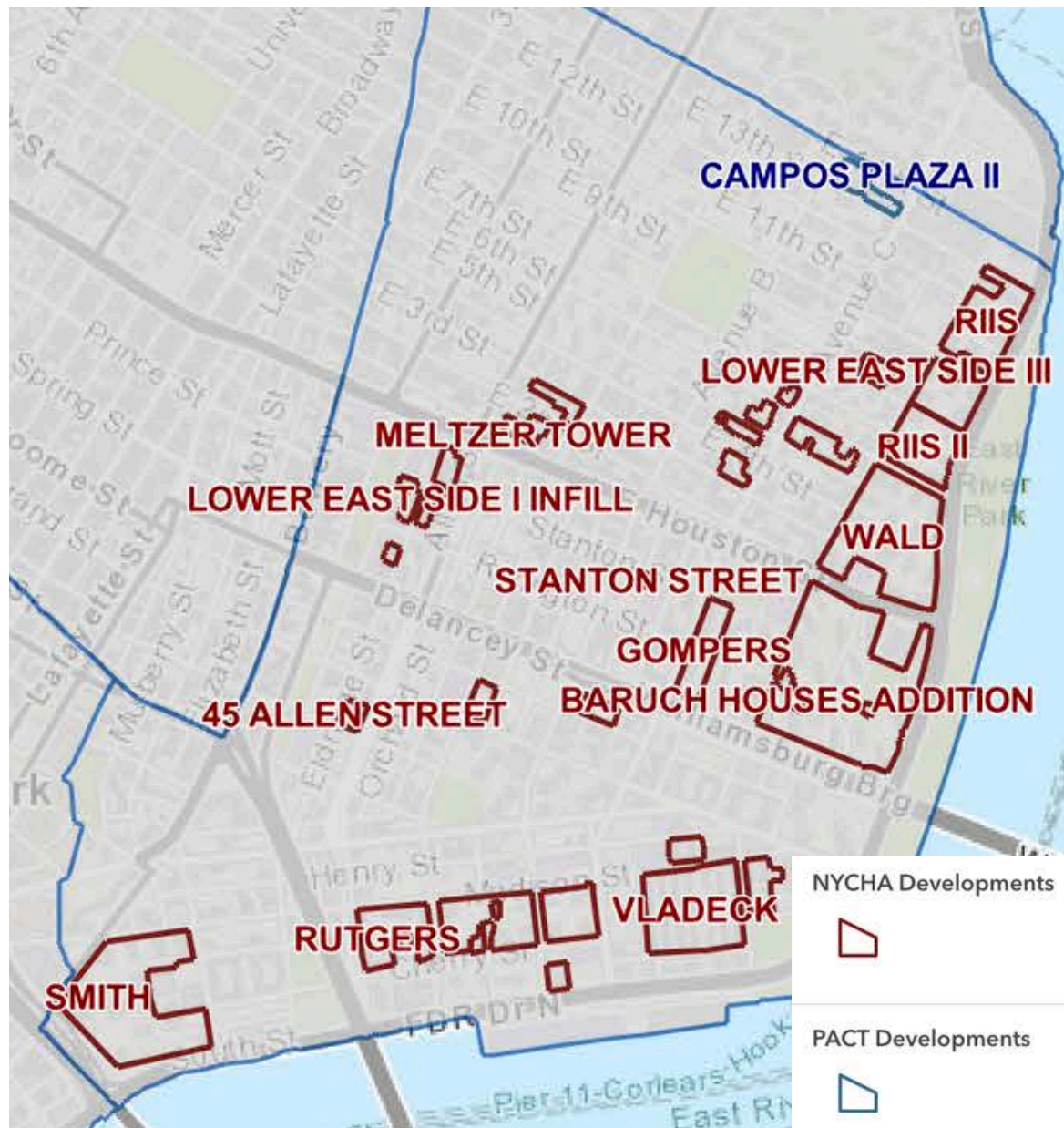
- **Severe rent burden:**

- Median gross rent is \$1180
- Yet 24% of renters pay 50%+ of income toward rent
- 29% food insecure

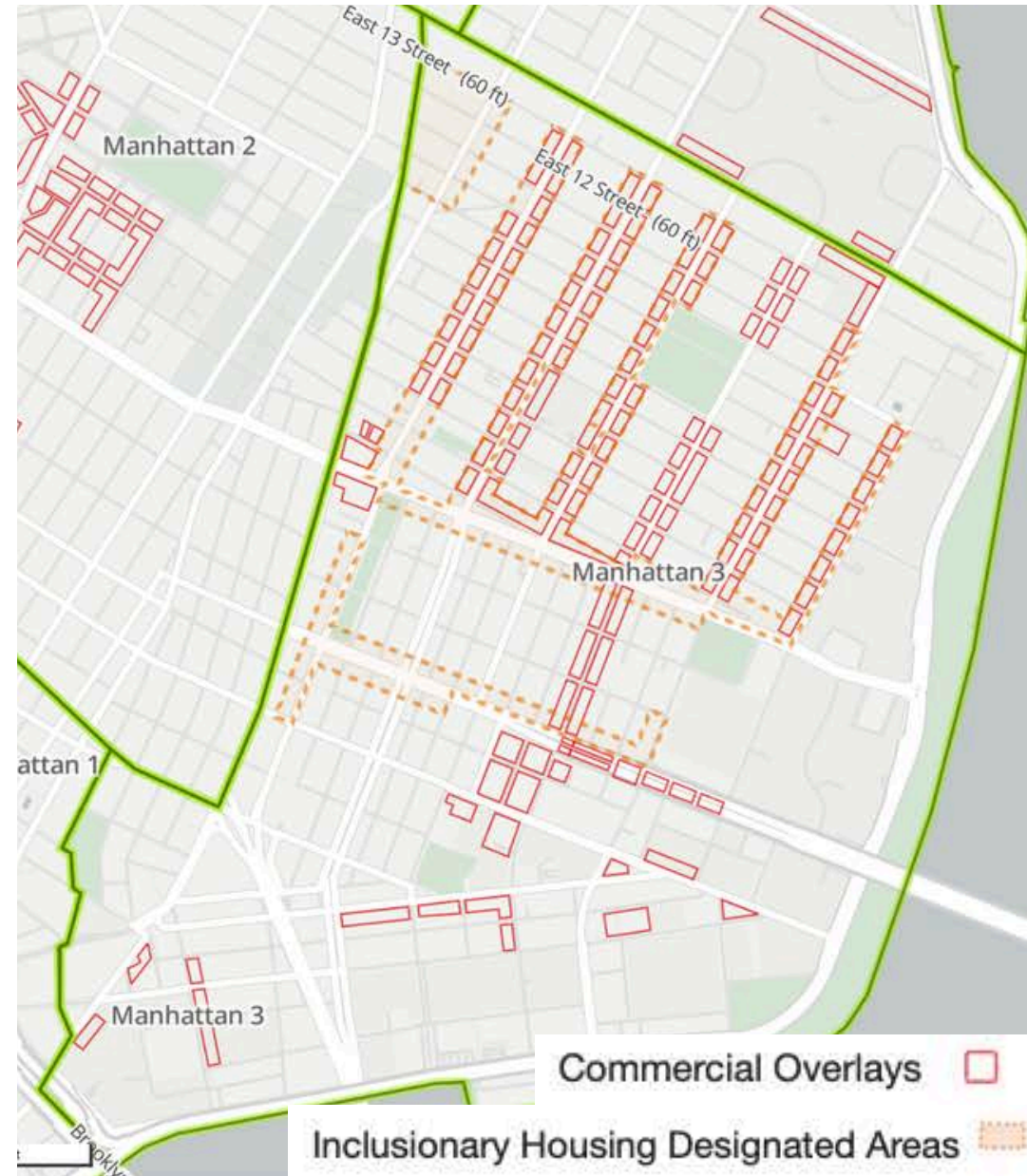


# CURRENT LANDSCAPE

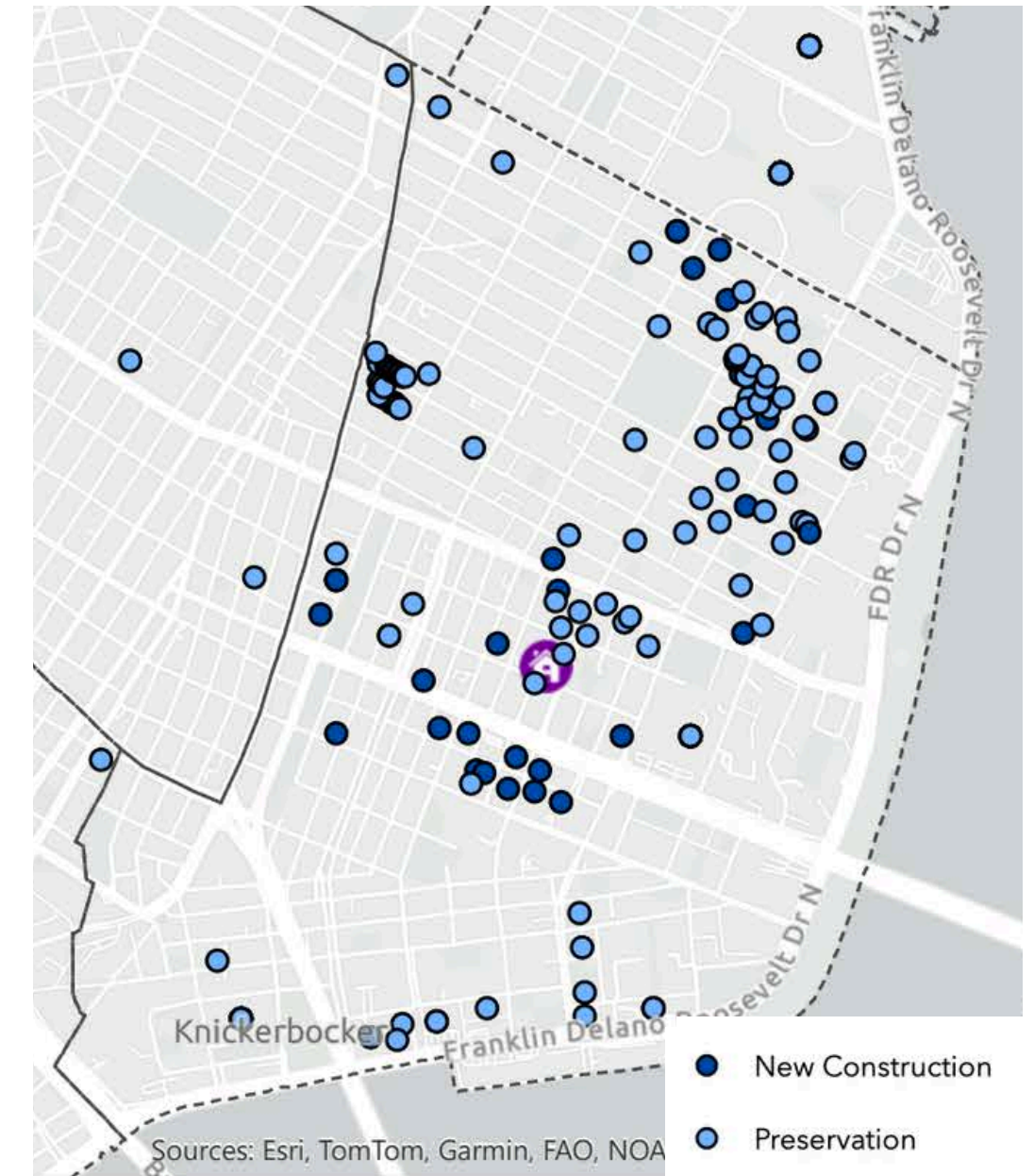
## OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN CB3



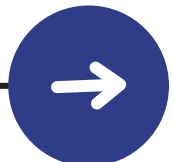
**Large NYCHA campuses occupy significant land area; not typical redevelopment sites**



**Zoning incentives primarily along major commercial corridors, limiting new development**

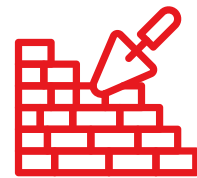


**Limited affordable housing production in CB3 (map shows Jan 2014 to Jun 2025)**



EXISTING ISSUES + *city of yes*

= **RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES**



**Only supply-oriented**



**AMI-based, does not ensure deep affordability**



**Fund allocation unclear**



**Could exacerbate displacement**



**Trusted nonprofit developers in the district**



**Conversion, unused FARs & parking reform allows for new buildings or units**

**WHAT MORE AND HOW?**



RESEARCH DESIGN:

# A **COMMUNITY-CENTERED** APPROACH



**How can Manhattan Community Board 3 engage with *city of yes* to support affordable housing pathways in the district?**

- Specific sites or development scenarios
- Pathways for non-profit developers
- Recommendations for CB3

- **Policy Analysis Report**
- **Public-facing summary report/pamphlet**



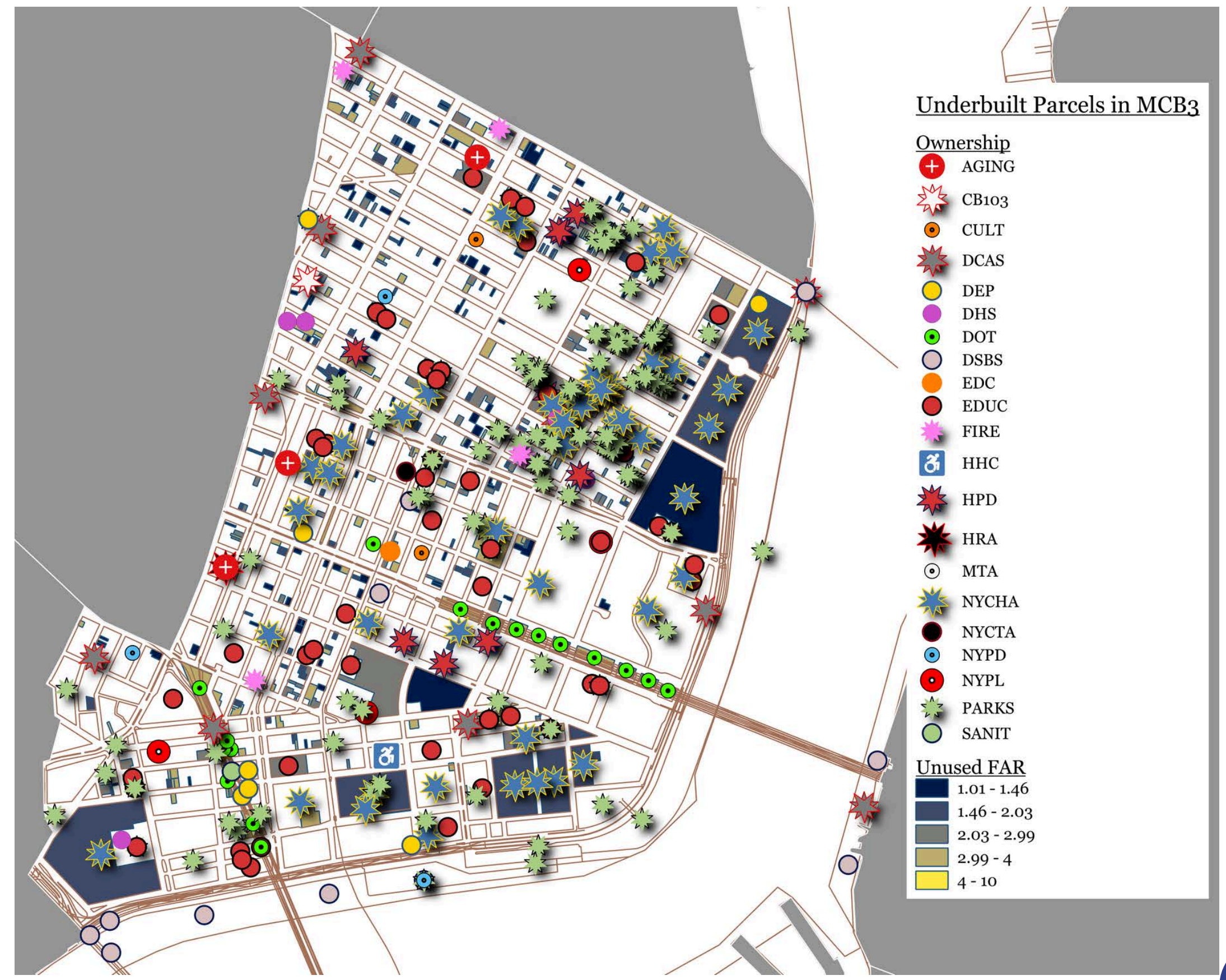
# UNDERBUILT PARCELS

**59% of tax lots are built below their maximum permitted residential FAR.**

But many of these parcels here are constrained by:

- landmark status
- NYCHA
- parks
- schools

Parcels with high unused FAR are mostly not owned by the city.



# FINDINGS



## FROM THE COMMUNITY

**Non-profit developers struggle with maintenance & operating costs**

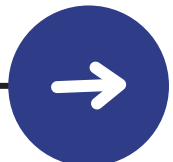
**Preservation buyers may help maintain current affordable stock**

**Need for better funding & subsidies for new developments, to layer with City of Yes**

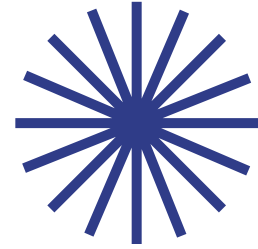
**Preservation is the more cost-effective route for the district**

**Churches, parking lots and Chinatown manufacturing district are prospective sites for new development: some nonprofit developers already working on it**

**Conversion from commercial to residential is not as easy: costly for non-profit developers; more likely to exacerbate gentrification**



# FINDINGS



# FROM THE COMMUNITY

## **Non-profit developers struggle with maintenance & operating costs**

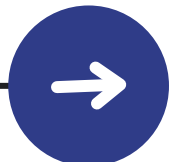
- Inflation and high costs mismatch with low revenue from affordable rent income
- Old building stock makes conversion difficult
- Need strong funding for maintenance in addition to construction

## **Conversion from commercial to residential is not as easy: costly for non-profit developers; more likely to exacerbate gentrification**

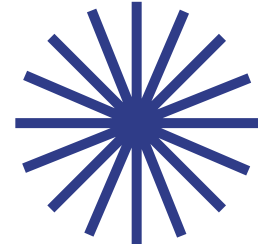


# OLD BUILDINGS & VACANT STOREFRONTS FACE

# CONVERSION COMPLEXITIES



# FINDINGS



## FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Most projects using the new 485-x will likely skew toward 60–80% AMI due to density allowing mostly small/moderate rental projects

**Need for better funding & subsidies for new developments, to layer with City of Yes**

- Layering/Stacking financing options is a complex process: different requirements of income, affordable units, timeline
- Zoning and tax breaks need to be aligned with strong subsidies to ensure affordability

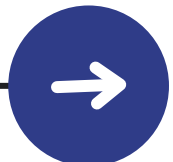


# ADMINISTRATIVE **LAYERS & HURDLES**

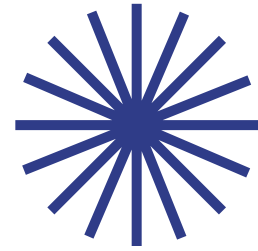
## TO BUILD NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Homes and  
Community Renewal



# FINDINGS



## FROM THE COMMUNITY

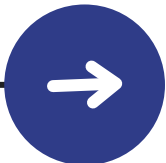


### Neighborhood Pillars

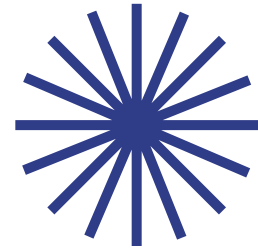
*(prominent community organizations in CB3 are qualified)*

**Preservation buyers may help maintain current affordable stock**

- Nonprofit or mission-driven buyers have and can continue to acquire rent-stabilized buildings before speculative investors
- Crucial because many landlords were reconfiguring/“frankensteining” units and/or coming up with different eviction tactics



# FINDINGS



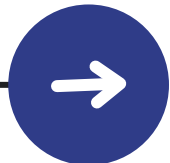
## FROM THE COMMUNITY



- Helps keep local businesses alive
- Preserves the aesthetic essence

**Preservation is the more cost-effective route for the district**

- About 1/2 or 2/3 the cost of new construction
- Still requires more ways than just one competitive program



# FINDINGS

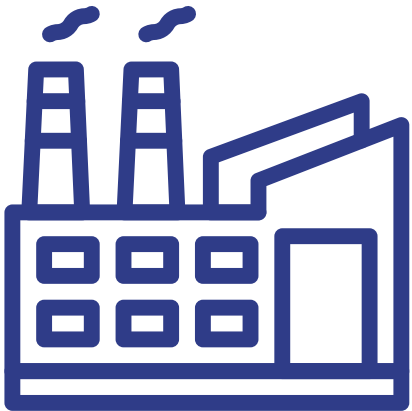


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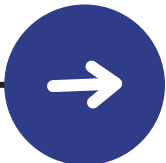


- Air rights of churches available mostly in East Village, Lower East Side
- Removal of parking restrictions also allows for easier conversions

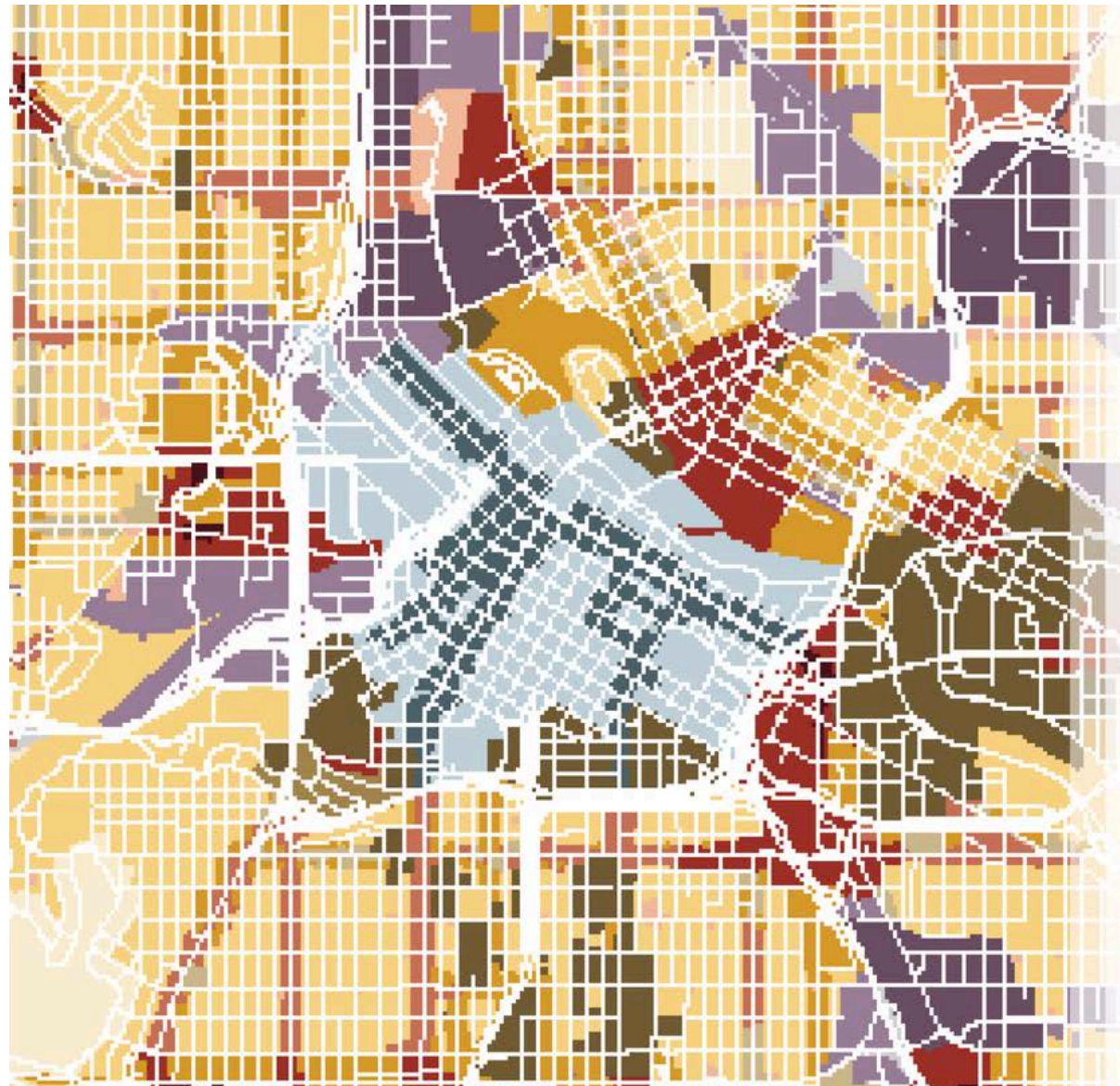
**Churches, parking lots and Chinatown manufacturing district are prospective sites for new development: some nonprofit developers already working on it**



- Areas in Chinatown & Two Bridges previously restricted for light manufacturing have many older loft buildings suitable for conversion.



# FINDINGS FROM CASE STUDIES



## Minneapolis 2040:

- increased housing construction
- slowed rent growth by 17-34%

City of Minneapolis  
**LAND USE HANDBOOK**  
July 2023

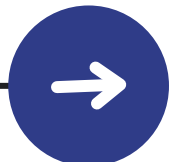


## Massachusetts and Connecticut ADU legalization:

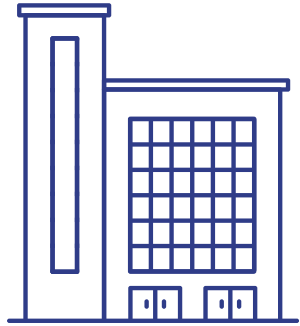
- increase in applications show a gradual increase in housing
- helped maintain affordable stock



***Overall positive outcomes from citywide rezoning, but housing production is slow due to development costs, financing constraints, and market conditions***



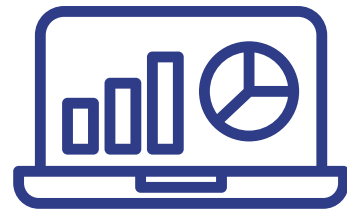
# RECOMMENDATIONS



**Negotiate a budget increase in the Neighborhood Pillars program to encourage and enhance preservation buying**



**Advocate for the allocation of City of Yes funds for non-profit developers with a focus on conversion funds**

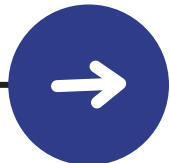


**Develop a publicly available dashboard that tracks building permits, property sales and development applications that uses City of Yes**

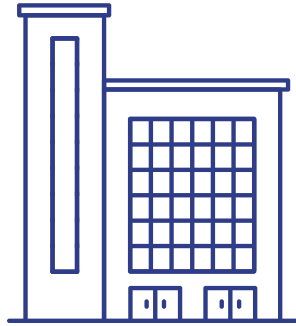


**Initiate a policy project to advocate for:**

- **standardized affordability tiers across financing programs**
- **streamlined approval processes across agencies**



# RECOMMENDATIONS

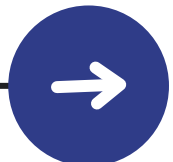


Negotiate a budget increase in the Neighborhood Pillars program to encourage and enhance preservation buying

## Why?

- **preservation the more feasible and affordable route for CB3**
- **already strong history and presence of tenant organizing**
- **HPD relaunched program in 2025 and qualifies M/WBEs**

- program combines HPD financing with private funding to preserve affordable housing
- program budget in 2024 was \$15 million
- maximum subsidy is \$380K per dwelling unit
- borrowers must commit to permanent affordability for no less than 30% of the units
- all projects must set aside at least 20% of units for homeless households and individuals.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

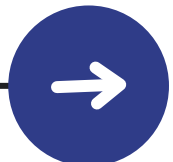


Advocate for the allocation of City of Yes funds for non-profit developers with a focus on conversion funds

## Why?

- conversion process is expensive and labor intensive
- expensive building materials / mismatch of plumbing or wiring / lack of technical expertise
- additional support would be very significant

- \$5 billion total for the program
- capital funding distribution not clear
- mostly focused on new construction
- no realistic funding for conversions



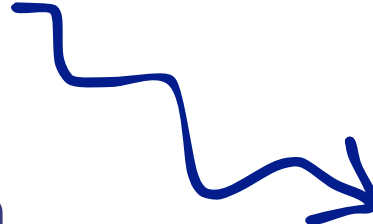
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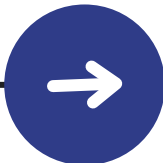
### Why?

- easily accessible real-time information
- data would be collected for further action and recommendation
- Many projects use city subsidies + density bonuses
- Only one financing option has not been enough, yet application process is complex



**Initiate a policy project to advocate for:**

- **standardized affordability tiers across financing programs**
- **streamlined approval processes across agencies**



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**Thank You**

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