



Community Board No. 2

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Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

February 27, 2025

Mr. James S. Oddo
Commissioner
NYC Department of Buildings
280 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

Mr. Adolfo Carrion, Jr.
Commissioner
Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

RE: **Basement Apartments**

Dear Commissioner Oddo and Commissioner Carrion, Jr.:

The members of the Land Use and Housing Committee of Queens Community Board 2, are writing to express our concerns and recommendations regarding the implementation of the basement apartment legalization pilot program in our district.

As the only Queens district included in this pilot, we recognize both the opportunity and responsibility this inclusion presents. After careful consideration of a presentation by Matthew Sooknanan from the Chhaya Community Development Corporation, we would like to highlight the following points:

- 1. Community Engagement:** Community Board 2 strongly recommends the creation of a community working group to increase local involvement in the implementation process. This group should include homeowners, tenants, specialists, and other stakeholders directly impacted by the housing crisis.
- 2. Accessibility:** Community Board 2 is concerned about the accessibility of the current process for low-income homeowners and tenants, particularly those who may not speak English as their first language. We urge you to develop multilingual resources and outreach programs.

"Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth"

3. Tenant Protections: Community Board 2 is requesting clear guidelines on protections for existing tenants, including resources for those who may be displaced during the conversion process.

4. Safety Concerns: Given our district's history with flooding, we ask for stringent safety measures, particularly for units in flood-prone areas that may not be officially designated as flood zones.

5. Infrastructure Impact: Community Board 2 is seeking assurances that the legalization of these units will be accompanied by necessary infrastructure upgrades, particularly to our sewer and drainage systems.

6. Transparency: Community Board 2 is requesting regular updates on the program's progress, including data on applications, approvals, and any challenges encountered.

7. Financial Assistance: Community Board 2 is recommending exploring financial assistance programs for homeowners to help cover the costs of necessary renovations and upgrades to meet legal requirements.

8. Enforcement: Community Board 2 seeks clarification on how the city plans to enforce these new regulations and prevent the creation or perpetuation of unsafe living conditions.

Community Board 2 appreciates the potential benefits this program could bring to our community, including increased housing options that are both safe and affordable. However, we believe these concerns must be addressed to ensure the program's success and the safety and well-being of our residents.

Community Board 2 looks forward to your response and to working closely with you as this program moves forward.

Sincerely,



Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager,
Queens Community Board 2



Christine Hunter
Chair, Land and Housing Committee
Queens Community Board 2



Prameet Kumar
Vice Chair, Land Use and Housing Committee
Queens Community Board 2

Cc: Honorable Grace Meng, US Congress
Honorable Nydia M. Velazquez, US Congress
Honorable Michael Gianaris, NY State Senate
Honorable Kristen Gonzalez, NY State Senate
Honorable Jessica Ramos, NY State Senate
Honorable Claire Valdez, NYS Assembly
Honorable Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, NYS Assembly
Honorable Zohran Mamdani, NYS Assembly
Honorable Steven Raga, NYS Assembly
Honorable Robert Holden, NYC Council Member
Honorable Shekar Krishnan, NYC Council Member
Honorable Julie Won, NYC Council Member
Honorable Donovan Richards, Queens Borough President
Chhaya Community Development Corporation
Anatole Ashraf, Chairperson, Community Board 2
Christine Hunter, Chair, Land Use & Housing Committee