

city of yes for **Housing Opportunity**

An illustrated guide



April 2024

Image Credit: Alfred Twu

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City of Yes for Housing Opportunity

Dear Neighbor,

New York City is facing a severe housing shortage that makes homes scarce and expensive.

Outdated, restrictive, and complicated zoning laws limit opportunities to build new homes and make those that do get built more expensive. The rental vacancy rate is 1.41% – the lowest since 1968 – and more than half of renters spend over a third of their income on rent.

In recent decades, New York City has produced far less housing than it used to, and housing production has not kept pace with job growth. What housing is created has been mostly limited to only a few neighborhoods, while other areas build virtually no new housing.

When tenants have few options, landlords gain leverage. This imbalance of power has direct human consequences, including high rents, gentrification and displacement pressure, segregation, homelessness, and poor housing quality.

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, a zoning reform proposal, would address the housing shortage by making it possible to build a little more housing in every neighborhood. Zoning, which regulates how much and what can be built, is a tool that New York City can use to address its housing crisis. Updating our zoning rules to create a little more housing and more types of housing in every neighborhood can result in a lot of housing overall without dramatic changes or overtaxed infrastructure.

Each aspect of the proposal—from helping offices convert to housing, to giving homeowners the option to add a small second unit, to adding more affordable housing in high-demand neighborhoods—is a proven strategy to help lower housing costs and help neighborhoods thrive. **It is time to undo the barriers holding back housing opportunity and give New Yorkers more housing choices!**

Sincerely,



Daniel R. Garodnick,

Chair of the New York City Planning Commission

Director of the New York City Department of City Planning

Key Goals

- 1 Provide New Yorkers with more housing options and more housing types
- 2 Reduce pressure on gentrifying areas
- 3 Build more housing and affordable housing in high-demand areas
- 4 Provide flexibility for single- and two-family homeowners
- 5 Boost New York City's economy by creating new jobs and easing housing costs
- 6 Create more climate-friendly, transit-adjacent housing

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity: Key Proposals

Keep reading to learn about the key components of *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*. They are grouped here into low-density proposals (applicable to R1-R5 zoning districts), medium- and high-density proposals (applicable to R6-R10 zoning districts), and citywide proposals.

Find your neighborhood's zoning district at zola.planning.nyc.gov.

Low-Density



Town Center Zoning

Re-introduce buildings with ground-floor commercial and two to four stories of housing above, in areas where this classic building form is banned under today's restrictive zoning.



Transit-Oriented Development

Allow modest, three-to-five story apartment buildings where they fit best: large lots within half a mile of subway or rail stations that are on wide streets or corners.



Accessory Dwelling Units

Permit accessory dwelling units such as backyard cottages, garage conversions, and basement apartments, allowing homeowners to earn rental income and providing more space for multi-generational families.



District Fixes

Give homeowners additional flexibility to adapt their homes to meet their families' needs.

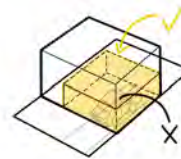
Medium- and High-Density



Universal Affordability Preference

Allow buildings to add at least 20% more housing if the additional homes are permanently affordable. This proposal extends an existing rule for affordable senior housing to all forms of affordable and supportive housing.

Citywide



Lift Costly Parking Mandates

Remove costly parking mandates for new buildings. Parking mandates make housing more expensive and drive up rents. Parking would still be allowed, and projects can add what is appropriate at their location.



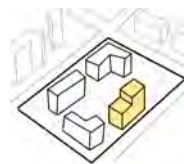
Convert Non-Residential Buildings to Housing

Make it easier for underused, non-residential buildings, such as offices, to be converted into housing. Allow conversions for buildings constructed before 1991 and expand eligibility to anywhere housing is allowed.



Small and Shared Housing

Re-introduce housing with shared kitchens or other common facilities. Allow buildings with more studios and one-bedroom apartments for New Yorkers who want to live alone but don't have that option today.



Campus Infill

Make it easier to add new housing on large sites that have existing buildings on them and ample space to add more, (e.g., a church with an oversized parking lot).

Key Terms

Key terms that appear throughout the *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* proposal:

Affordable

As a rule of thumb, a home is considered affordable if it costs less than 30% of a household's income. Naturally affordable housing meets this measure when it's available on the open market. Income-restricted affordable housing – which is created through tax incentives or public subsidies – requires households to meet a legally-defined income to qualify for the housing.

Area Median Income (AMI)

A measure of affordability determined yearly by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. AMI determines the eligible income levels for affordable housing. In New York City, this measure is based on local market rents.

As-of-right Development

Development that follows zoning regulations (as opposed to development that would require zoning changes to be built). As-of-right development involves limited City approvals and does not need to go through a public review process.

Base Height

The height of a building before any required setback (see Key Term “setback”).

Building Envelope

A three-dimensional space that determines the maximum volume within which a structure can be built on a zoning lot. It is shaped by rules for height, setback, lot coverage, and yard size.

Commercial Overlay

A commercial zoning designation within a residence zoning district to accommodate local retail and services (such as grocery stores, dry cleaners, or restaurants).

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

A measurement used to regulate how much floor space can be built on a lot. FAR is the ratio of a building's floor area to the size of the lot it sits on. Each zoning district specifies a maximum FAR for various building types. (See *Figure 1*.)

High-density

Describes a zoning district that allows for larger residential apartment buildings. Zoning districts R6-R10, generally found in more central locations with good access to transit, are high-density.

Low-density

Describes a zoning district that is characterized by single-family and two-family homes as well as low-rise apartment buildings. Zoning districts R1-R5, found in areas of Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island, are low-density districts.

Mixed-Use Building

A building that includes multiple uses, such as residential and commercial space.

Setback

The distance between the building façade and the property line. Setback rules determine the separation between a building and the street or an adjoining lot.

Zoning

Laws that regulate, among other things, the types of uses (for example, residential or commercial) that can be located on a given piece of land, as well as the overall shape and size of buildings.

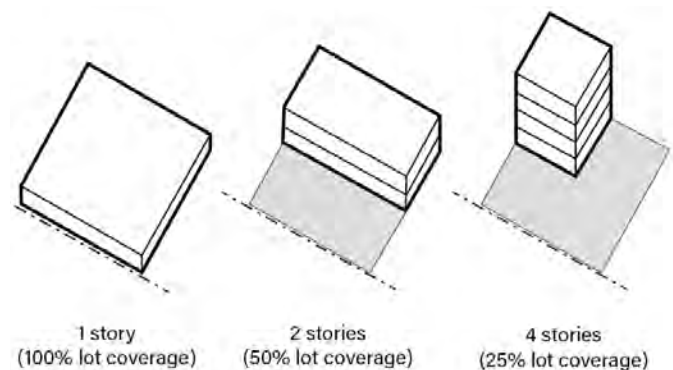


Figure 1. Floor Area Ratio

This diagram shows three examples of the same Floor Area Ratio on a particular site.

city of **yes**

for **Housing Opportunity**

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity would make it possible to build a little more housing in every neighborhood, through a range of proposals, some of which are specifically designed for low-density areas:



Proposals for Low-Density Districts

Missing middle housing

Modest apartment buildings are called “missing middle” because of their physical size and because they tend to serve middle-income residents. “Missing middle” buildings are affordable to build and therefore more affordable for tenants or homeowners.

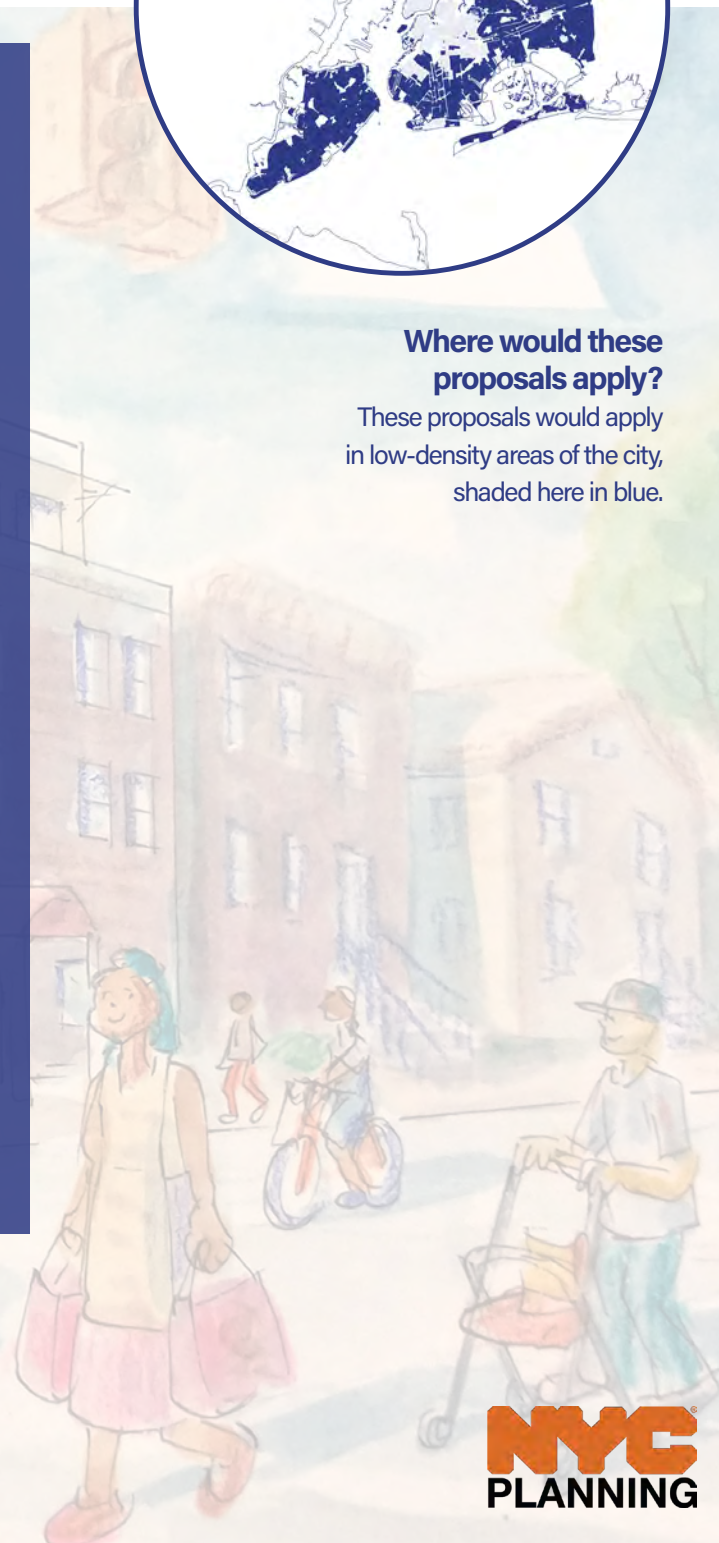
These kinds of smaller apartment buildings already exist in lower-density areas across the boroughs, but current zoning largely bans new ones from being created. **Town Center Zoning** and **Transit-Oriented Development** are two proposals to enable more “missing middle housing” along commercial corridors and near subway and train stations in lower-density areas.

Helping homeowners

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity would support homeowners by allowing them to create small **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)** that can provide much-needed rental income, or more space for multi-generational families. A variety of **District Fixes** would also allow homeowners to make simple alterations to their single-family and two-family buildings and ensure that low-density zoning rules work as intended.

Where would these proposals apply?

These proposals would apply in low-density areas of the city, shaded here in blue.



Town Center Zoning

Modest, mixed-use buildings with stores on the street and apartments above exist in low-density areas across the five boroughs – most of them from the 1920s to 1950s. Today, zoning prohibits that classic building form even in areas where it is very common. **By re-introducing new housing above businesses on commercial streets in low-density areas**, *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* would create new housing, allow customers to reach small businesses, and help sustain vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods.



Overview

Town Center Zoning would enable modest, mixed-use apartment buildings in low-density commercial corridors. Many existing commercial corridors are meant to be zoned to allow low-density mixed-use buildings, but today's restrictive zoning makes it virtually impossible to build new ones that match their counterparts from before our current zoning. Height and floor area limits are lower than what is realistically necessary for mixed-use construction, and parking requirements are extremely high. As a result, many commercial corridors are left with underutilized single-story buildings.

Re-introducing modest, mixed-use apartment buildings would allow for the return of a classic New York City building form, helping to ensure that new buildings match those constructed before our current restrictive zoning code was enacted. There are many underutilized commercial sites across the city, so this proposal has the potential to add a significant amount of housing, while also supporting local business districts.

Existing



Under current regulations, this building could not be built today!



© New York City Economic Development Corporation, 2023.

Town Center Zoning would enable two to three residential stories above commercial uses at the ground floor.

More Information

This proposal would make low-density mixed-use buildings more feasible by providing sites with additional FAR and height. Residential FARs would be between 1.0 and 2.0 FAR, with an additional 0.5 FAR for commercial uses to encourage mixed-use buildings. The adjusted height limits would allow for two to four floors of housing above a commercial ground floor. The *City of Yes* proposal to remove off-street parking mandates for new housing (see page 31) would make these Town Center Zoning changes feasible. Commercial parking requirements would also be reduced depending on how close a site is to public transit.

Low-Density Commercial Overlays

This proposal applies in areas in R1-R5 districts with commercial overlays, as well as C4-1 districts (districts that allow commercial shopping centers or low-density multi-family buildings). **The proposal does not change any of the uses allowed on a particular site**, because low-density districts with commercial overlays already allow mixed apartment buildings. The proposal simply changes the bulk rules - which concern the size and placement of a building on a lot - to make low-density mixed-use buildings more feasible.

Greater Transit Zone

Within the Greater Transit Zone, all low-density districts with commercial overlays would have access to the R5 Town Center regulations. This means, for example, that an R3X district with a commercial overlay located in the Greater Transit Zone would receive 2.0 residential FAR and 2.5 total FAR along with a maximum height of 55 feet. These allowances would accommodate denser mixed-use development in areas with good transit access.

Map: Existing Low-Density Commercial Districts

On low-density, mixed-use sites, outside of the Greater Transit Zone, a commercial ground floor with two to four stories of housing above would be allowed. Within the Greater Transit Zone, a commercial ground floor with four stories of housing above would be allowed.

- Low-Density Commercial Overlays
- Greater Transit Zone



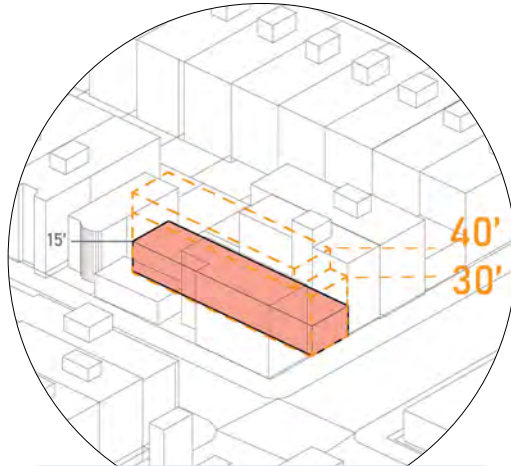
How Town Center Zoning Works

[More Information](#)

The example on the left shows an underused commercial strip in an R5 residential district that cannot add housing on top because of restrictive zoning. The example on the right shows the same site under Town Center Zoning, which allows residential stories to be built above a commercial ground floor. Reference the Zoning Table on the next page to find out more about a specific zoning district's buildable area.

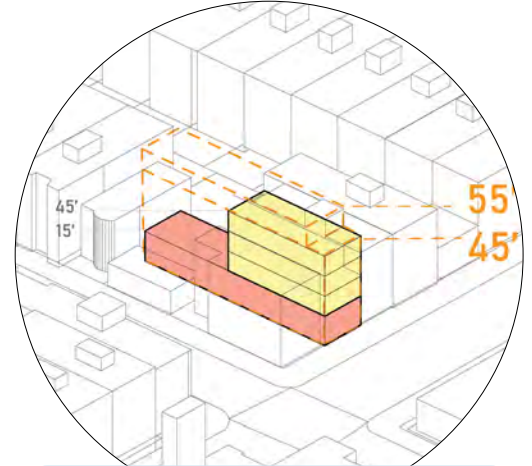
R5 Example

- Commercial
- Housing
- - - Building Envelope



Existing

Current regulations only allow a single floor of commercial to be built.



Proposed

Additional residential floor area enables a few more housing units.

Town Center Zoning Examples

3828 Dyre Avenue, Bronx



This 1920 building has a local grocery store with 2 stories of housing on top, a style of development that brings New Yorkers housing and neighborhood amenities. Low floor area and height limits, as well as high parking requirements, make it impossible for other sites on the street to add this kind of building.

71-58 Austin Street, Queens



This is a four-story mixed-use building (built 1937), with 23 walk-up apartments and a commercial ground floor, located along a vibrant commercial corridor in Forest Hills. Due to current restrictive zoning rules, this building could not be constructed today.

Town Center Zoning Table

The table below shows Floor Area Ratios (FARs) that would be allowed through Town Center Zoning, for each applicable zoning district when mapped with a commercial overlay. It also includes base building heights and maximum building heights for each applicable zoning district. In gray are the proposed zoning changes.

		Residential FAR		Commercial FAR	Total FAR		Base Height		Max Height	
		Current	Proposed	Current	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Single-Family Districts	R1-1	0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	21	35	35	35
	R1-2	0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	21	35	35	35
	R1-2A	0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	21	35	35	35
	R2X	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	21	35	35	35
	R2	0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	21	35	35	35
	R2A	0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	21	35	35	35
Two-Family Districts	R3-1	0.60	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	25	35	35	35
	R3A	0.60	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	25	35	35	35
	R3X	0.60	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	25	35	35	35
	R4-1	0.90	1.50	1.00	1.00	2.00	30	35	33	45
	R4A	0.90	1.50	1.00	1.00	2.00	25	35	35	45
	R4B	0.90	1.50	1.00	1.00	2.00	30	35	33	45
	R5A	1.10	2.00	1.00	1.10	2.50	25	45	35	55
Multi-Family Districts	R3-2	0.60	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	25	35	35	35
	R4	0.90	1.50	1.00	1.00	2.00	30	35	33	45
	R5	1.25	2.00	1.00	1.25	2.50	30	45	40	55
	R5B	1.35	2.00	1.00	1.35	2.50	30	45	33	55
	R5D	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.50	---	45	40	55

R5 Example
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Note: Within the Greater Transit Zone, all districts are subject to the rules for R5 districts.

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Learn More!

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Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Many modest apartment buildings already exist in lower-density areas of New York City, most of them built between the 1920s and 1950s. However, current zoning bans this sustainable model of development despite the housing shortage and climate change. *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* would **allow modest, three- to five-story apartment buildings where they fit best**: large lots, within half a mile of subway or rail stations, that are located on wide streets or on the short end of the block. Adding buildings like these would help address our housing shortage without disrupting neighborhood character. It would also provide people with easier access to public transportation.

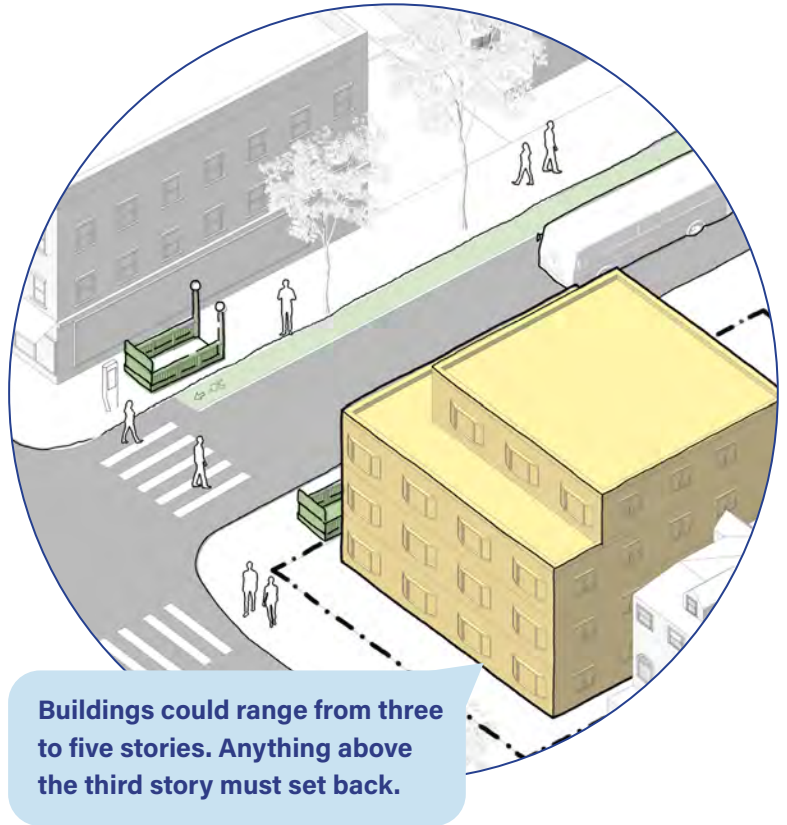


Overview

The Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) proposal would enable modest apartment buildings in areas with good access to transit. TOD would be allowed in low-density (R1-R5) residential districts:

- Within half a mile of subway or rail stations (Greater Transit Zone)
- On sites that are over 5,000 square feet and located on the short end of a block or are facing a wide street (i.e., one that is over 75 feet wide)

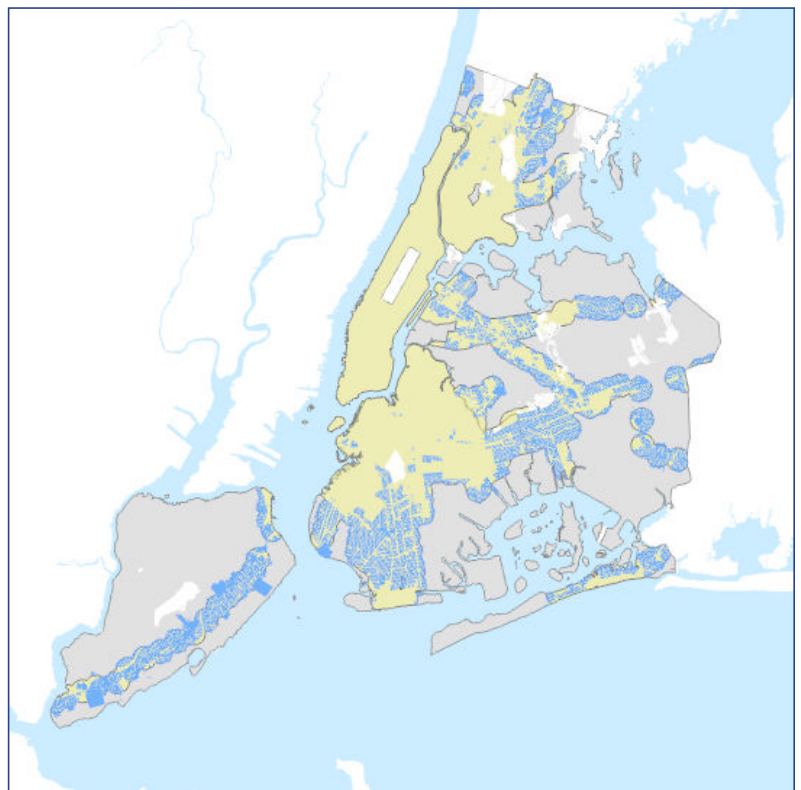
Sites that meet these criteria would have as-of-right access to TOD regulations, including additional FAR and height.



Map: Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-Oriented Development would be allowed in low-density districts within the Greater Transit Zone, indicated here in blue. Qualifying sites must meet the square footage and street requirements described above.

- Low-Density Districts
- Greater Transit Zone



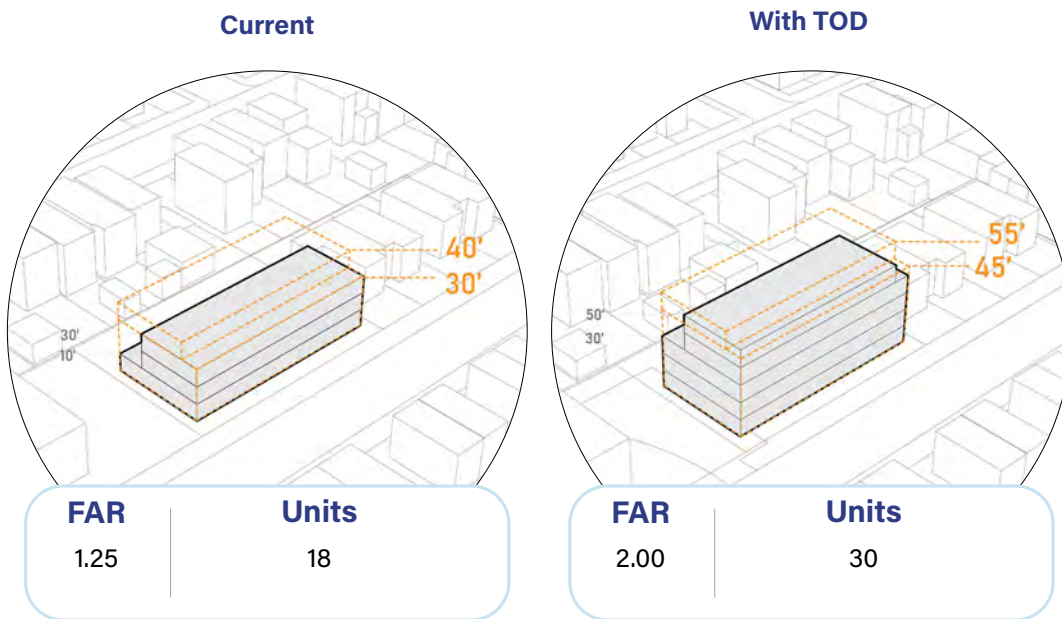
More Information

Transit-Oriented Development aims to mirror historic development patterns in low-density areas while providing a little more housing to help address New York City's housing shortage. The below examples demonstrate how these rules work with different low-density zoning districts.

How Zoning for Transit-Oriented Development Works:

Example 1 - low-density multi-family district on a wide street.

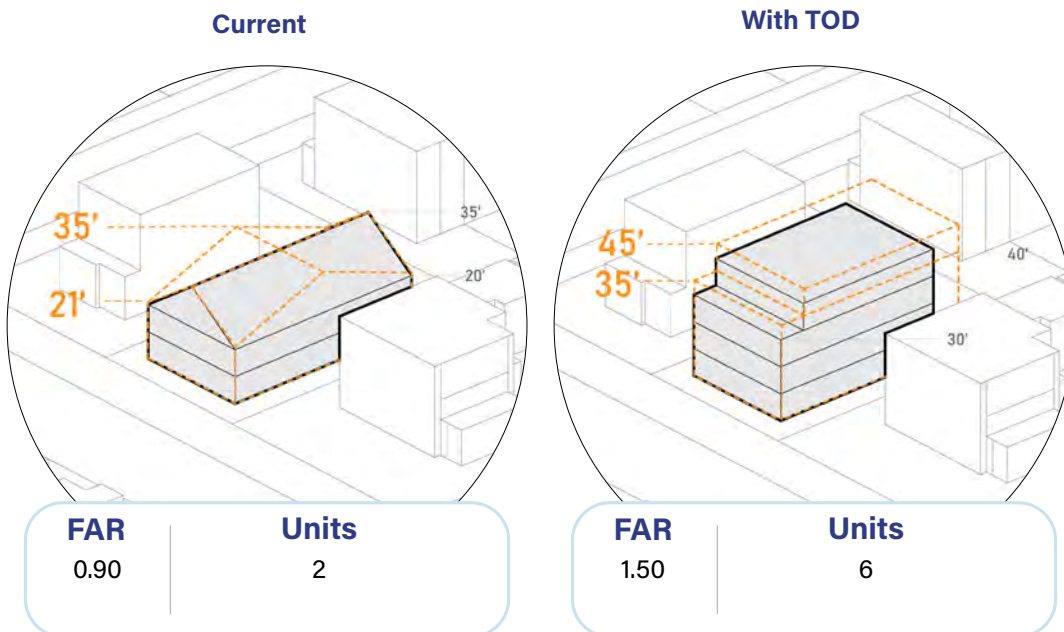
A building site in an R5 district. Because this site is in the Greater Transit Zone, on a wide street, and over 5,000 square feet, a slightly larger apartment building could be built here.



Building
 Building Envelope

Example 2 - two-family district located on the corner adjacent to subway entrance.

This site is zoned R4A, meaning current zoning would only allow detached single-family and two-family homes. Because this site is in the Greater Transit Zone, on a wide street, and is over 5,000 square feet in area, Transit-Oriented Development would allow for a small apartment building to be built there.



Building
 Building Envelope



TOD Zoning Table: Existing and Proposed FAR and Building Envelopes

With Transit-Oriented Development, a building would be allowed to be between 1.0 and 2.0 FAR and between three and five stories tall, depending on the regulations of the underlying zoning district. Anything beyond the third story would be required to be set back. Yard requirements would also be reduced.

		FAR		Max Base Height		Max Height	
		Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Single-Family Districts	R1-1	0.50	1.00	---	35	---	35
	R1-2	0.50	1.00	---	35	---	35
	R1-2A	0.50	1.00	25	35	35	35
	R2X	1.00	1.00	21	35	35	35
	R2	0.50	1.00	---	35	---	35
	R2A	0.50	1.00	21	35	35	35
Two-Family Districts	R3-1	0.60	1.00	21	35	35	35
	R3A	0.60	1.00	21	35	35	35
	R3X	0.60	1.00	21	35	35	35
	R4-1	0.90	1.50	25	35	35	45
	R4A	0.90	1.50	21	35	35	45
	R4B	0.90	1.50	---	35	24	45
Multi-Family Districts	R5A	1.10	2.00	25	45	35	55
	R3-2	0.60	1.00	21	25	35	35
	R4	0.90	1.50	25	35	35	45
	R5	1.25	2.00	30	45	40	55
	R5B	1.35	2.00	30	45	33	55
	R5D	2.00	2.00	---	45	40	55

R4A Example
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R5 Example
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Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

For seniors struggling to stay in the neighborhood on a fixed income, or young people stretching to afford a first home, adding a small home on their property can be life-changing. But under current rules, New York City homeowners cannot choose to use their properties in this way. **City of Yes for Housing Opportunity would allow single- or two-family residences to add an “accessory dwelling unit,” or ADU** — which can include a backyard cottage, garage conversion, or basement apartment.

Many other places across the country have legalized accessory dwelling units because they support homeowners and provide more space for multigenerational families without significantly changing the look and feel of a neighborhood.

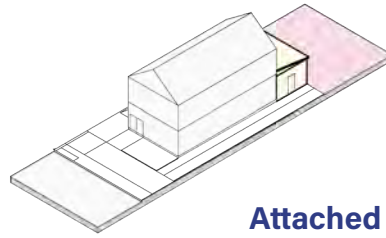
These small units also provide important housing options for small households, like a young person moving into their own place for the first time or an elderly resident who wants to age in place. Because of their small size, these units also serve a wider range of income levels than a large single-family home does.



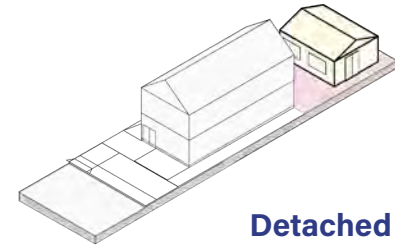
Overview

Types of ADUs

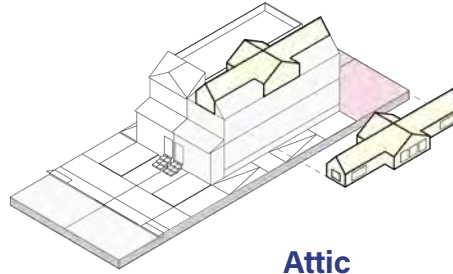
One accessory dwelling unit would be allowed per single-family or two-family building. These ADUs would be allowed in detached, attached, basement, and attic typologies with a maximum size of 800 square feet.



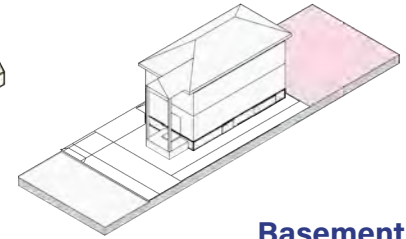
Attached



Detached



Attic



Basement

Existing



Legalization of Existing Units

Zoning changes made through *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* would allow for small secondary homes to be added, but some existing homes, such as basement apartments, would require other changes to State law to be fully legalized.

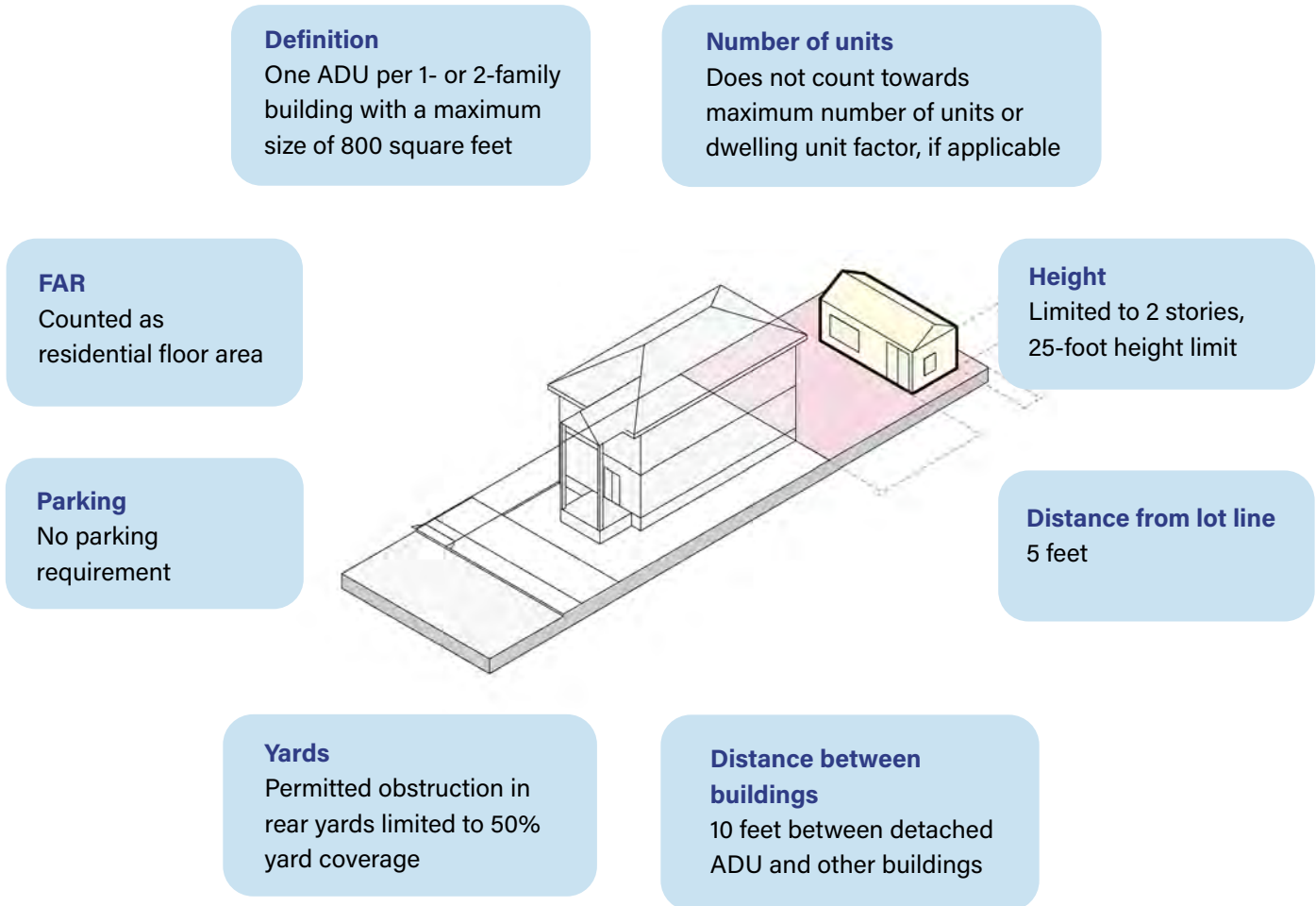
Resiliency

ADUs would not be allowed in Special Coastal Risk Districts, and basement ADUs would not be allowed in coastal flood areas. The Department of City Planning and the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice have convened an interagency working group to develop the ADU proposal, including specific regulations related to stormwater flooding and basement ADUs.

How ADUs Work

More Information

Accessory Dwelling Units would not count towards the maximum number of units or the “dwelling unit factor,” which is the minimum average unit size (learn more on page 40). This means that single-family homes in single-family districts would be able to add an ADU.



Allow Conversions of Existing Structures

This proposal also extends flexibility to convert existing structures into ADUs under a noncompliance provision. Existing structures, such as detached garages, would be allowed to convert into ADUs even if that introduces a new noncompliance – for example, exceeding FAR limits. However, a wholly new space could not be added. This noncompliance provision may support the legalization of some existing informal units.

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Learn More!

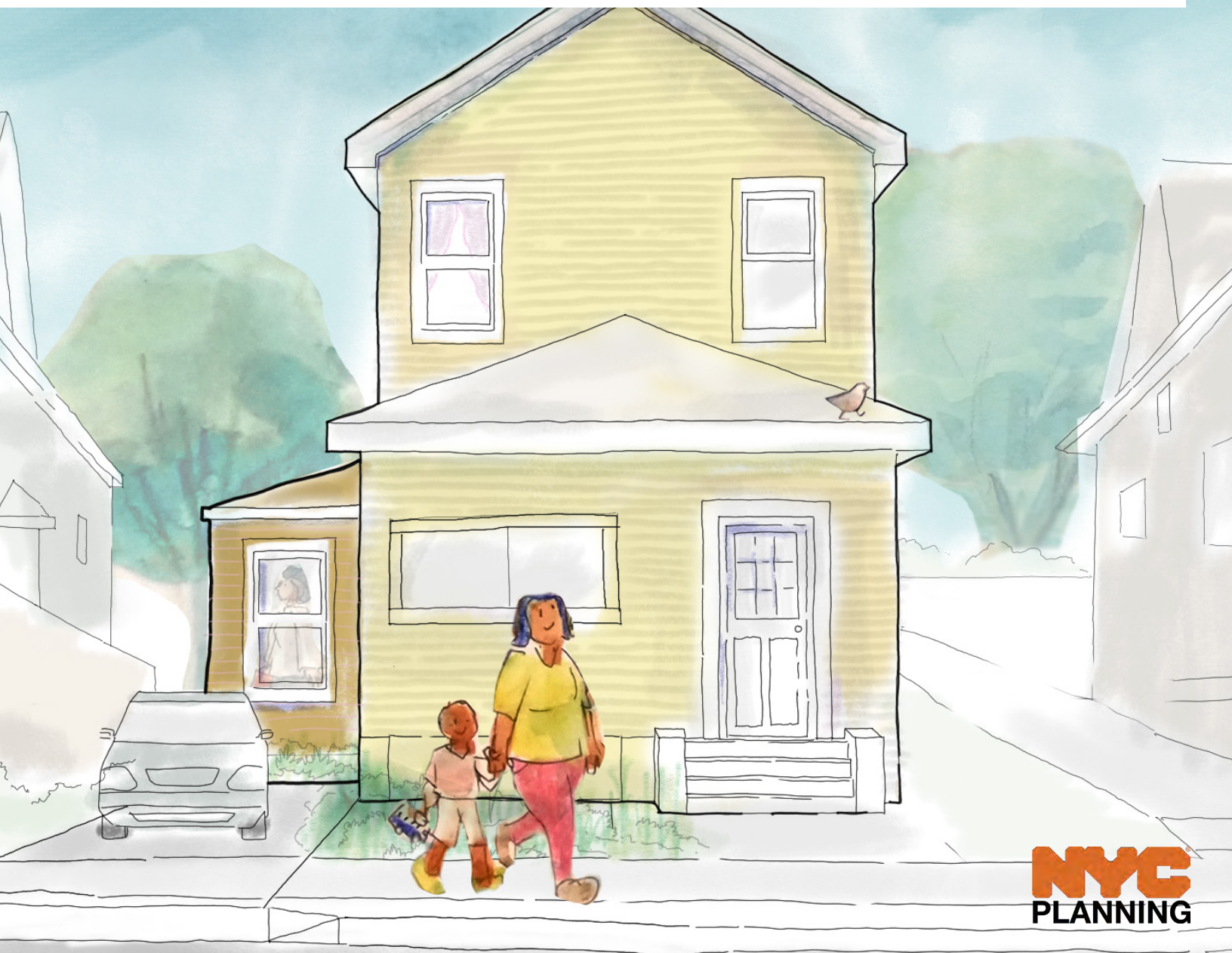
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District Fixes

Currently, many existing one- and two-family homes are out of compliance with zoning, making it almost impossible for homeowners to make minor alterations or enlargements. Similarly, many low-density areas are supposed to allow for two-family homes or small multi-family buildings, but overly-complex rules make it virtually impossible to build anything other than single-family homes, contributing to our housing crisis.

By updating and streamlining these rules, *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* would **give homeowners additional flexibility to adapt their homes to meet their family's needs, and make it easier to build two-family homes and small-scale apartment buildings where they are technically already allowed.**



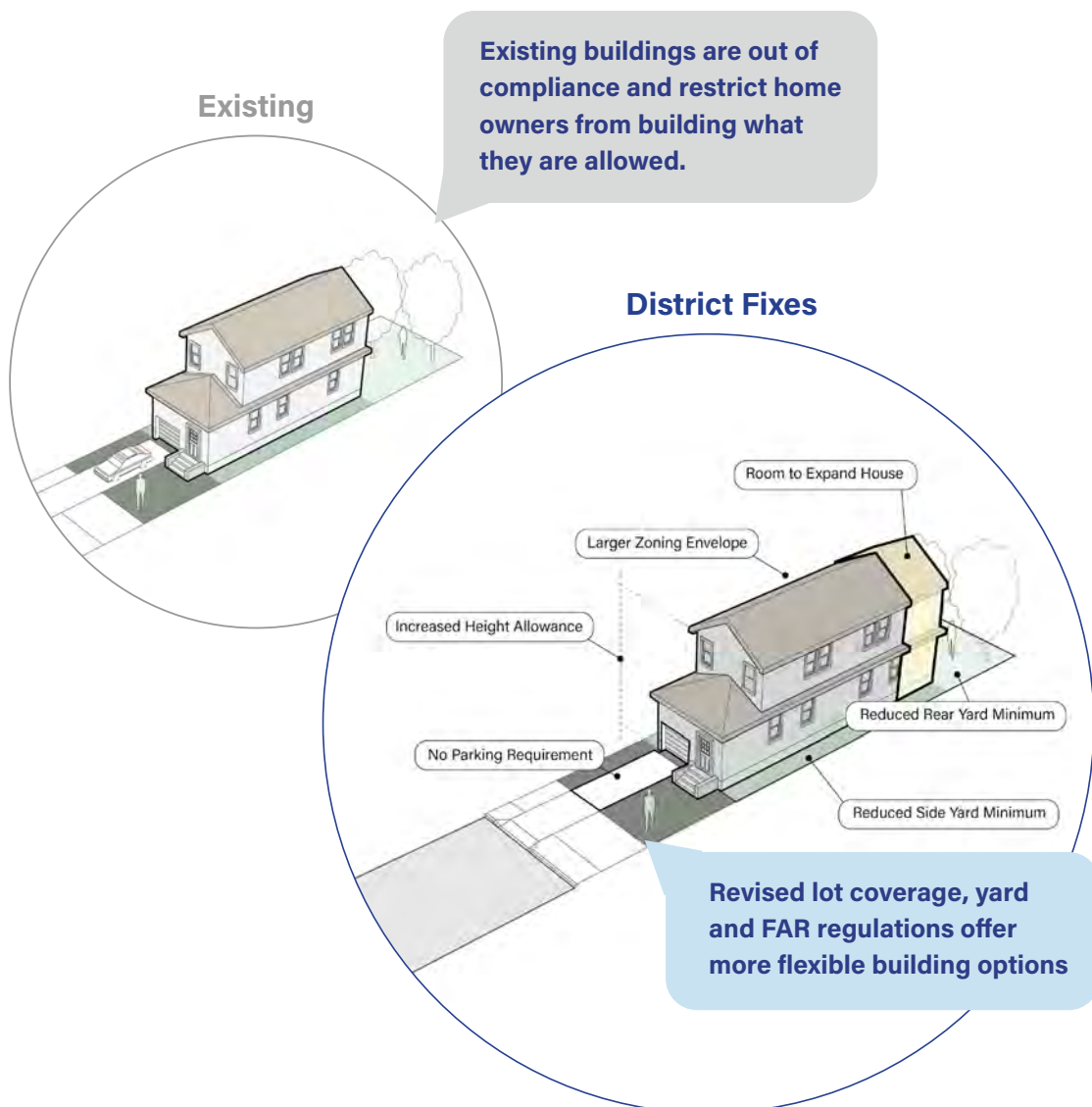
Overview

Many existing one- and two-family homes and small apartment buildings are out of compliance with current zoning rules. Non-compliances can cause big headaches for homeowners if they need to borrow money from the bank or if they want to make simple changes to their home, such as renovating an outdated kitchen.

Additionally, most of New York City's low-density zoning districts ostensibly allow people to build two-family homes or small, multi-family buildings, but in practice, it is not feasible to build them in most of these areas. For example, parking requirements are often so high that it would be physically impossible to fit both a building and parking, or yard requirements are so extensive that the building's footprint couldn't accommodate more than one home.

Fixing these rules would have dual benefits:

- First, homeowners won't encounter unnecessary roadblocks when attempting to make simple alterations, because the zoning would match what's actually on the ground.
- Second, low-density zoning would actually work as intended: it would be possible to build a two-family home in a two-family district or a small, multi-family home in a multi-family district.



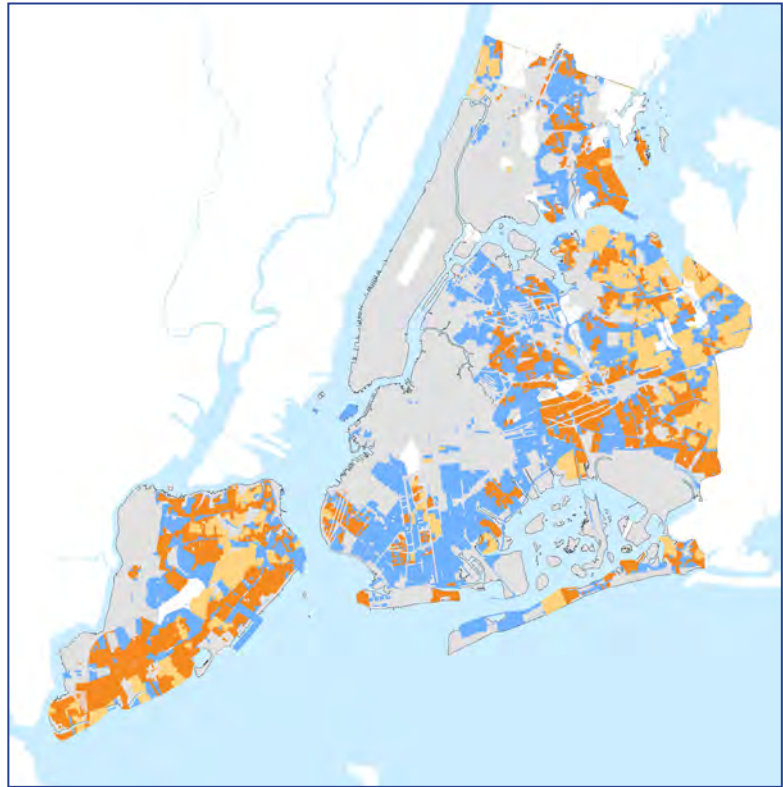
More Information

Zoning regulations for low-density districts will be updated and streamlined to ensure that they match what is already on the ground.

Map: Where District Fixes Would be Made

This map shows low-density areas of the city where these district fixes would apply.

- Districts that allow only single-family homes
- Districts that allow only single- and two-family homes
- Low-density multi-family districts



District Fixes Examples

62nd Street, Brooklyn



This 1940 two-family corner lot home in an R4-1 district would be virtually impossible to build today due to current zoning rules.

66th Street, Queens



This 1935 two-family, Tudor-style home in an R4-1 district could not be constructed today due to driveway and garage space mandates.

How District Fixes Work

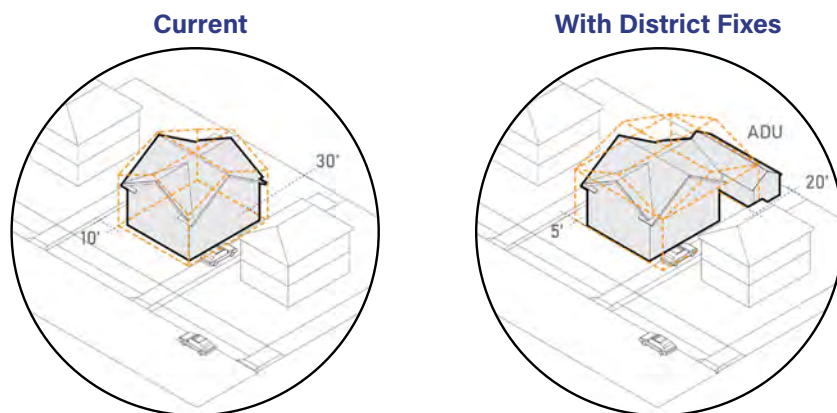
City of Yes for Housing Opportunity would adjust FAR allowances, yard sizes, and other regulations so that low-density zoning rules actually work as intended and better reflect what is on the ground:

- **FAR** - Every low-density zoning district except R5D would receive a small amount of additional FAR, generally 0.1 to 0.25.
- **Yards** - Rear yard requirements would be reduced from 30- to 20- feet. Where side yards are required, they would be reduced to five feet.
- **Height limits** - Districts with 21-foot perimeter heights would be increased to a 25-foot perimeter height with a maximum height of 35-feet.
- **Minimum lot sizes** - Minimum lot sizes would be reduced to better reflect the smaller lot sizes commonly found in low-density districts.

Example 1 - R1-2A home adding an ADU.

Relaxed yard regulations and proposed ADU provisions enable additional housing. An ADU is a permitted obstruction up to 50% of the rear yard.

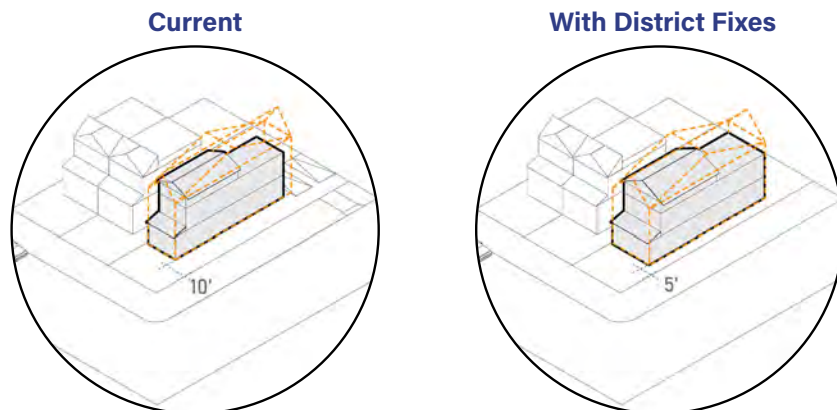
- Building
- Building Envelope



Example 2 - R4-1 corner lot gaining an extra unit.

District fixes will once again allow a two-family home to be built on this corner lot in a two-story district – as the zoning originally intended.

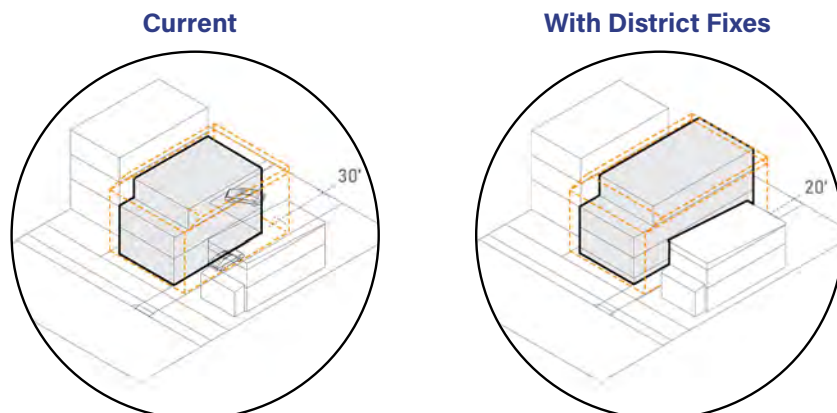
- Building
- Building Envelope



Example 3 - R5B building expanding due to smaller rear yard minimum.

This building gains a couple of extra units from relaxed rear yard minimum and slight FAR increase.

- Building
- Building Envelope



District Fixes Table

The table below shows the maximum FAR, as well as the base building heights and maximum building heights for each zoning district. In gray are the proposed zoning changes that would expand flexibility to build more housing in these districts. Highlighted columns represent examples show on Page 22.

		Min. Lot Size		Min. Lot Width		FAR		Max Base Height		Max Height	
		Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Single-Family Districts	R1-1	9,500	4,750	100	50	0.50	0.75	25	25	25	35
	R1-2	5,700	4,750	60	50	0.50	0.75	25	25	25	35
	R1-2A	5,700	4,750	60	50	0.50	0.75	25	25	35	35
	R2X	2,850	2,850	30	30	1.00	1.00	21	25	35	35
	R2	3,800	2,850	40	30	0.50	0.75	25	25	25	35
	R2A	3,800	2,850	40	30	0.50	0.75	21	25	35	35
Two-Family Districts	R3-1*	3,800	2,375	40	25	0.60	0.75	21	25	35	35
	R3A	2,375	2,375	25	25	0.60	0.75	21	25	35	35
	R3X	3,325	2,850	35	30	0.60	0.75	21	25	35	35
	R4-1*	2,375	2,375	25	25	0.90	1.00	25	25	35	35
	R4A	2,850	2,375	30	25	0.90	1.00	21	25	35	35
	R4B*	2,375	2,375	25	25	0.90	1.00	--	--	24	25
R5A	2,850	2,375	30	25	1.10	1.50	25	25	35	35	
Multi-Family Districts	R3-2*	3,800	2,375	40	25	0.60	0.75	21	25	35	35
	R4*	3,800	2,375	40	25	0.90	1.00	25	25	35	35
	R5*	3,800	2,375	40	25	1.25	1.50	30	35	40	45
	R5B*	2,375	2,375	25	25	1.35	1.50	30	30	33	35
	R5D*	2,375	2,375	25	25	2.00	2.00	--	--	40	45

*If other permitted housing type not listed in table no change to minimum lot size at 1,700 square feet and no change to minimum lot width at 18 feet.

R1-2A, R4-1, and R5B examples on page 22

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Learn More!

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City of Yes for Housing Opportunity would make it possible to build a little more housing in every neighborhood, through a range of proposals, some of which are specifically designed for medium- and high- density areas:

Proposal for Medium- and High-Density Districts

Universal Affordability Preference

The **Universal Affordability Preference** would allow buildings to be at least 20% bigger if the additional space is occupied by permanently affordable housing.



Where would this proposal apply?

The Universal Affordability Preference would apply in medium- and high-density areas of the city, shaded here in blue.



Universal Affordability Preference (UAP)

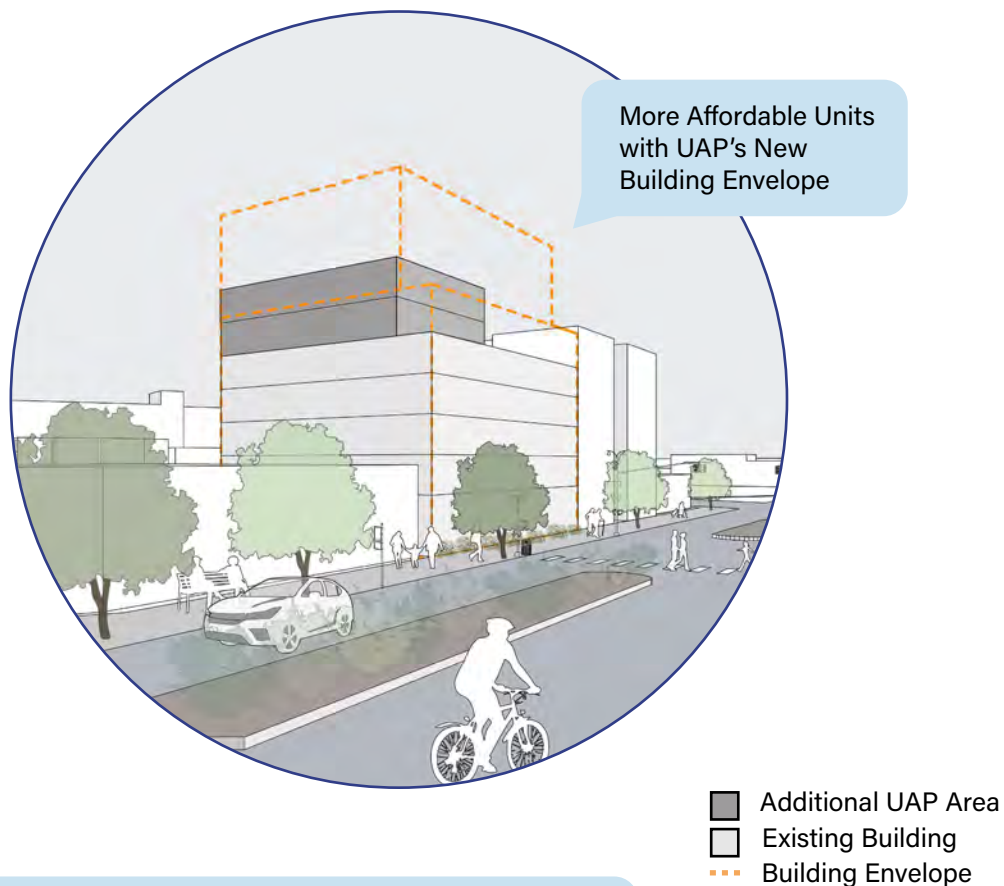
The Universal Affordability Preference (UAP) would allow buildings to include at least **20 % more housing** if the **additional homes are permanently affordable**. UAP would enable **incremental affordable housing growth** throughout medium- and high-density districts. This proposal would **encourage affordable housing throughout NYC**, rather than concentrating it in a few neighborhoods.



Overview

Today, most zoning districts allow affordable senior housing to be about 20% bigger than other buildings through a program called Affordable Independent Residences for Seniors (AIRS). The Universal Affordability Preference would expand this framework to all forms of affordable and supportive housing, making it easier to build affordable housing in every medium- and high-density district.

This proposal would also create a 20% increase for affordable and supportive housing in districts that do not have a senior housing preference today. Some districts would also receive height increases, so that it's feasible for UAP buildings to fit their allowed square footage.



What does affordability mean here?

- UAP would have an affordability level of **60% of the Area Median Income (AMI)**. AMI is an affordability measure set by the federal government based on local rents.
- This means that UAP would serve **lower-income New Yorkers** than NYC's existing Voluntary Inclusionary Housing program, which UAP would replace.
- UAP would also allow for **income averaging**, meaning homes at a variety of income levels can be included in a single project. Income-averaging would enable the creation of more homes for extremely low-income New Yorkers.

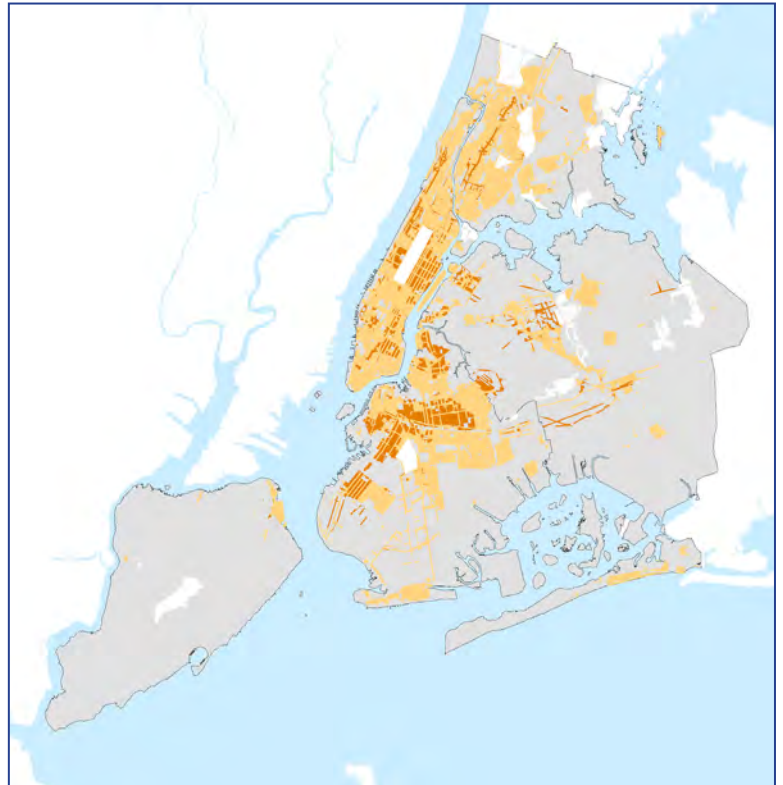
More Information

The Universal Affordability Preference would enable **incremental affordable housing growth** throughout the medium- and high-density parts of the city.

Map: Where UAP Would Apply

This map shows where UAP would apply: all medium and high-density residence districts.

- Districts receiving a 20% FAR bump
- Districts with an existing senior housing preference
- Low-density districts



Understanding the Universal Affordability Preference through AIRS

Essex Crossing Site 6, Manhattan



Image Credit: L+M Development Partners

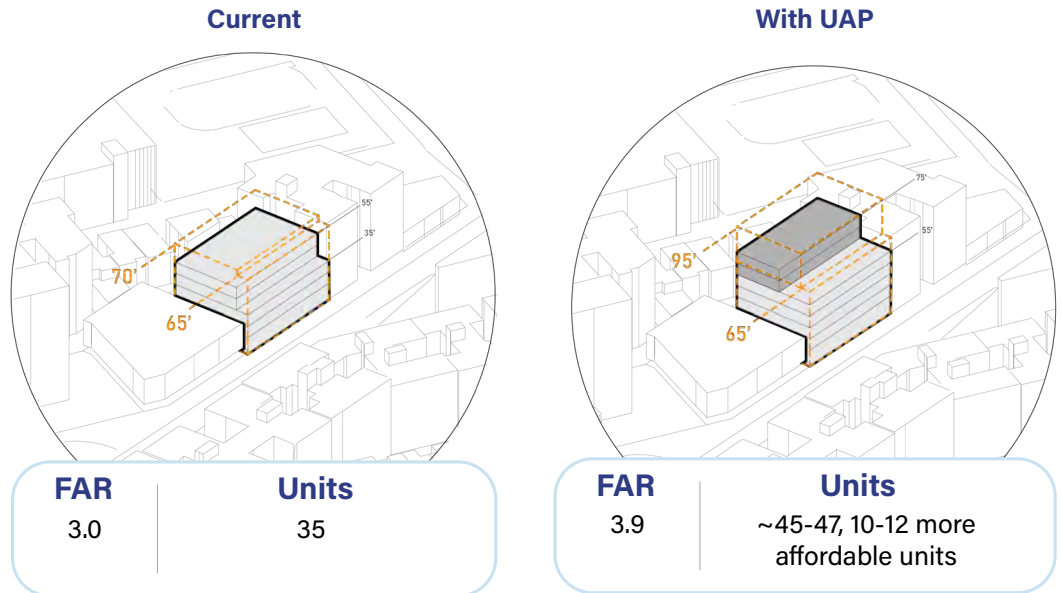
This apartment building was constructed in 2016 along Delancey Street in Manhattan, through the AIRs program. As such, 99 of the 100 affordable units are reserved for seniors and supportive apartments.

How UAP Works

[More Information](#)

Example 1 - UAP in a mixed income building in an R6 district.

A developer wants to build a new building in an R6 district. Today, the site is limited to 3.0 FAR. Under UAP, the site will receive 3.9 FAR, but anything above 3.0 FAR must be permanently affordable. This allows for 10-12 more affordable homes.

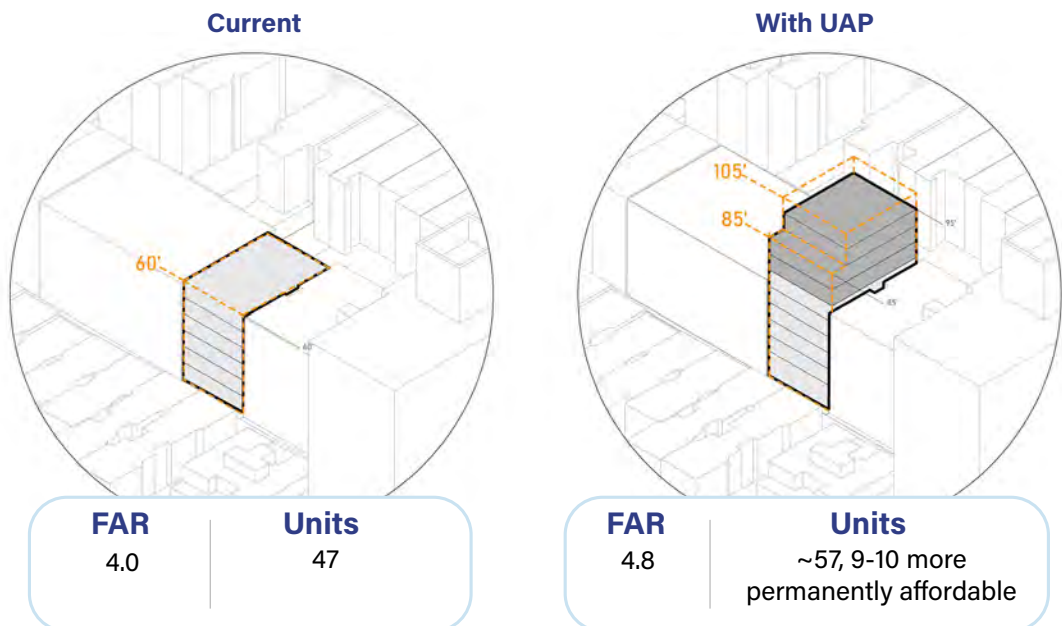


- Existing Building
- Additional UAP Area
- Building Envelope

Example 2 - UAP in a new, 100 % affordable housing building.

A city-owned site in an R8B district is going to be used for affordable housing.

Today, R8B districts do not have an AIRS preference. Districts without AIRS FARs would be given a 20 percent increase for affordable and supportive housing as well as taller height limits that allow for the additional affordable housing.



- Existing Building
- Additional UAP Area
- Building Envelope

UAP Zoning Table

The table below represents Floor Area Ratio (FAR) able to be built as well as base building heights and max building heights for each applicable zoning district. In gray are the proposed zoning changes that would enable more affordable housing to be built.

	FAR		Base Height		Max Height	
	Basic*	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
R6B	2.00	2.40	40	45	50	65
R6 Narrow	2.20	3.90	45	65	55	95
R6 Wide Outside MN Core	3.00	3.90	65	65	70	95
R6A	3.00	3.90	60	65	70	95
R6D	**n/a	3.00	**n/a	55	**n/a	75
R7 Narrow or in MN Core	3.44	5.00	65	85	75	115
R7 Wide Outside MN Core	4.00	5.00	75	85	80	115
R7-3	5.00	6.00	**n/a	105	**n/a	145
R7A	4.00	5.00	65	85	80	115
R7B	3.00	3.90	65	65	75	95
R7D	4.66	5.60	85	95	100	125
R7X	5.00	6.00	85	105	120	145
R8B	4.00	4.80	65	85	75	105
R8 Wide Outside MN Core	7.20	8.64	95	125	130	175
R8 Narrow or in MN Core	6.00	7.20	85	105	115	145
R8A	6.00	7.20	85	105	120	145
R8X	6.00	7.20	85	105	150	175
R9 Narrow	7.50	9.00	95	135	135	185
R9 Wide	7.50	9.00	105	135	145	185
R9A Narrow	7.50	9.00	95	135	135	185
R9A Wide	7.50	9.00	105	135	145	185
R9X Narrow	9.00	10.80	120	155	160	215
R9X Wide	9.00	10.80	120	155	170	215
R9D	9.00	10.80	85	155	--	215
R10 Narrow	10.00	12.00	125	155	185	235
R10 Wide	10.00	12.00	155	155	210	235
R10A Narrow	10.00	12.00	125	155	185	235
R10A Wide	10.00	12.00	150	155	210	235
R10X	10.00	12.00	85	155	--	235
R11A, R11	**n/a	12.50	**n/a	155	**n/a	325
R12	**n/a	15.00	**n/a	155	**n/a	395

R6 Example
Page 28

R8B Example
Page 28

*Basic FAR and heights represent existing Quality Housing building envelopes.

** District does not have current FAR base or maximum building height due to it being a newly added district.

city of **yes**

for **Housing Opportunity**

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity would make it possible to build a little more housing in every neighborhood, through a range of proposals, some of which are applicable city-wide:



Citywide Proposals

Lift Costly Parking Mandates

Prioritize housing over parking and reduce the cost of housing construction by making off-street parking optional in new buildings.

Convert Non-Residential Buildings to Housing

Make it easier for underused, non-residential buildings like offices to be converted into housing. Allow conversions for buildings constructed before 1991 and expand eligibility to anywhere housing is allowed.

Small and Shared Housing

Re-introduce housing with shared kitchens or other common facilities. Allow buildings with more studios and one-bedrooms for New Yorkers who want to live alone but do not have that option today.

Campus Infill

Make it easier to add new housing on large sites that have existing buildings on them, but which have ample space to add more, such as a church with an oversized parking lot.

Where would these proposals apply?

These citywide proposals would apply in the blue-shaded areas of the map.

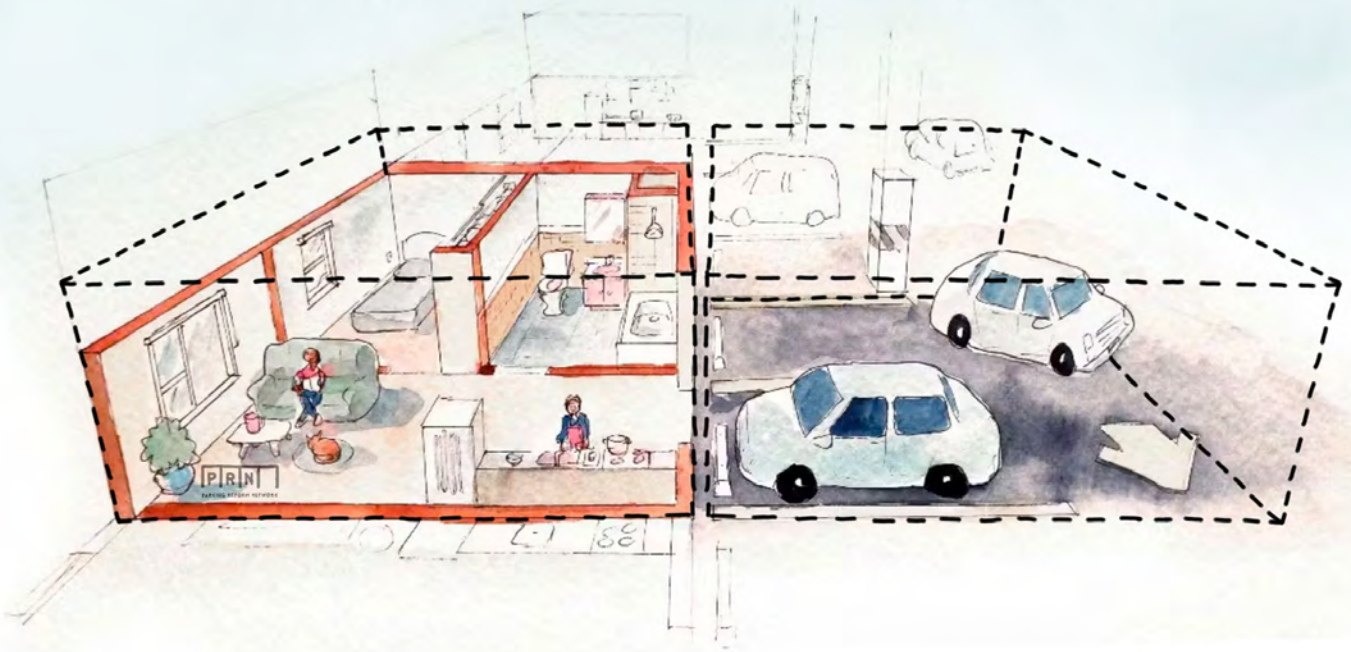
Lift Costly Parking Mandates

Today, New York City requires new housing to include off-street parking even where it's not needed. These mandates mean less space for housing, and increased construction costs, which results in less housing being built.

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity would **lift parking mandates for new housing, as many cities across the country have successfully done.** Lifting off-street parking mandates would **reduce housing costs and increase housing production, while still allowing for parking where needed.**

This proposal would preserve the option to add parking in new buildings. Today, some new buildings already include even more parking than required, and it would continue to be possible to provide parking into the future.

Living Space vs. Parking Space

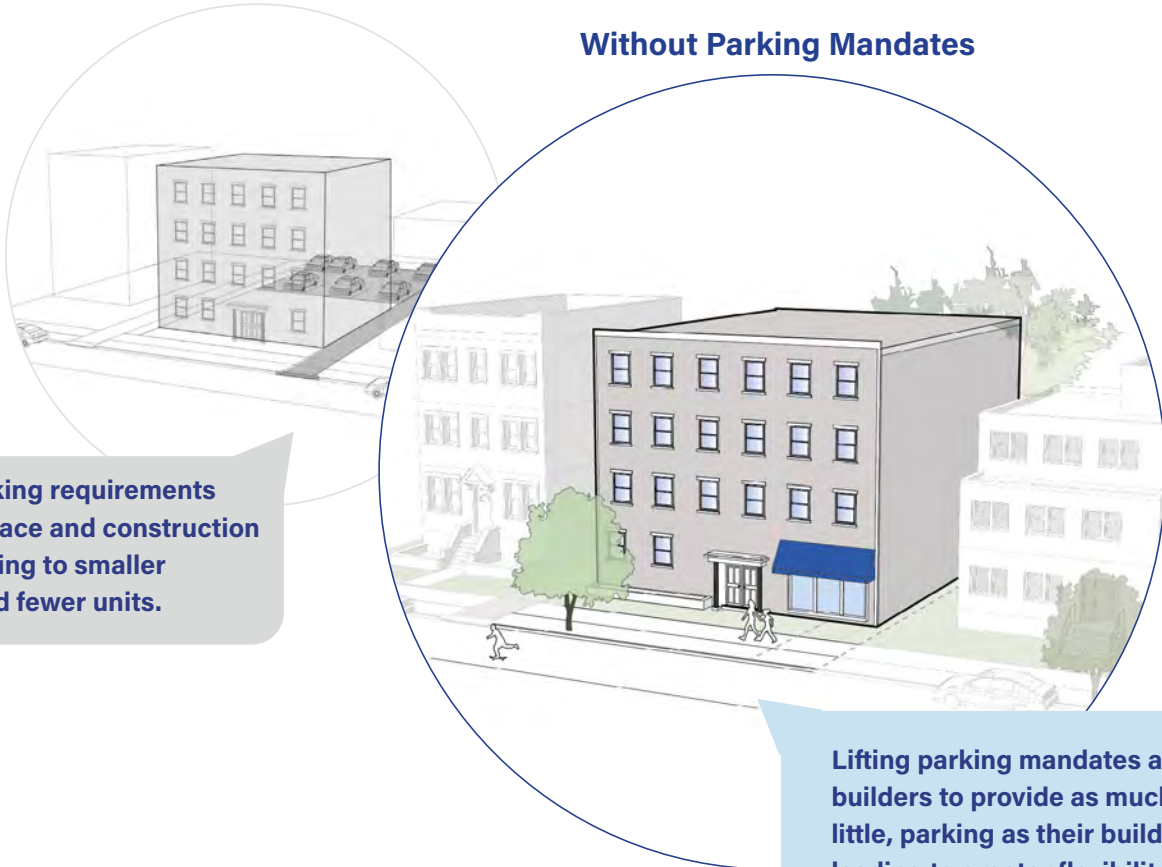


Overview

Lifting parking mandates would make it easier to build housing, by lowering construction costs and freeing up more room for homes. This change is also critical to the other proposals in *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*, such as Town Center Zoning and Transit-Oriented Development, by facilitating increased density and walkability and devoting less land to parking lots, driveways, and curb cuts.

Existing

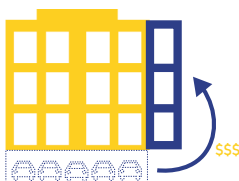
Without Parking Mandates



Existing parking requirements use up lot space and construction budget, leading to smaller buildings and fewer units.

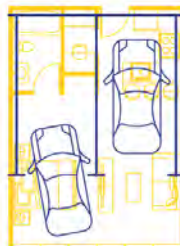
Lifting parking mandates allows builders to provide as much, or as little, parking as their building needs, leading to greater flexibility in housing production.

Why are we making parking optional?



Cost

The cost of building four off-street parking spots is roughly equal to the cost of building one new home.



Space for Parking or Housing

Two parking spaces take up nearly the same space as a studio apartment.



Public Realm

Improved open space, better streetscape, and community facilities can be provided.

More Information

New York City contains a wide range of residential buildings, some with off-street parking and some without. By eliminating this mandate, *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* would maintain this legacy of housing variety and choice:

Historic Buildings Without Parking

55 Monroe Avenue, Staten Island



Built in early 1900s without parking mandates

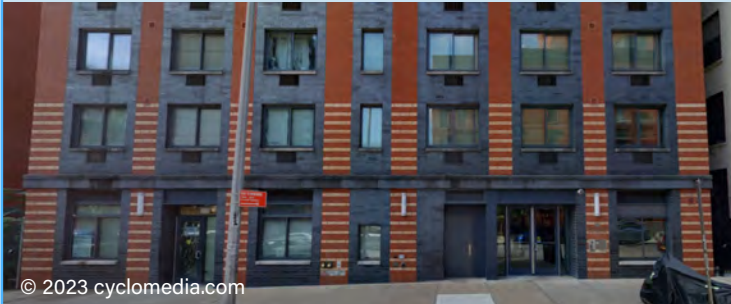
139-44 87th Avenue, Queens



Built in early 1900s without parking mandates

New Buildings Without Parking

306 West 128 Street, Manhattan



This West Harlem building was constructed in 2010 and includes 30 apartments and 0 parking spaces. The developer requested to waive parking in favor of including more homes and spaces for bicycles.

New Buildings that Provide Parking

125 Parkside Avenue, Brooklyn



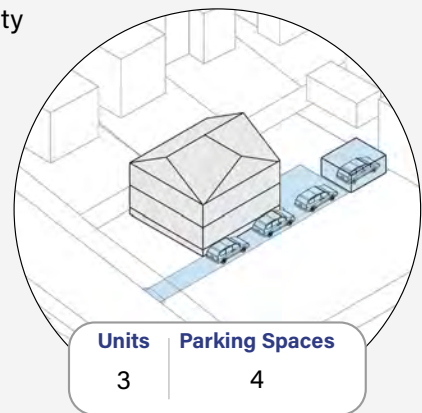
This Prospect-Lefferts Gardens building was constructed in 2017 and includes 131 apartments and 128 parking spots, only 66 of which were required per current parking mandates. This would still be allowed under *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*.

Lifting parking mandates would increase housing production by lowering construction costs and providing more space for homes. Learn more about how this proposal would work:

Existing: Parking mandated

- New housing outside the Manhattan Core and Long Island City Area requires accessory off-street parking.
- High-cost parking requirements stifle new housing production by taking up space and money that could otherwise be used to build homes.

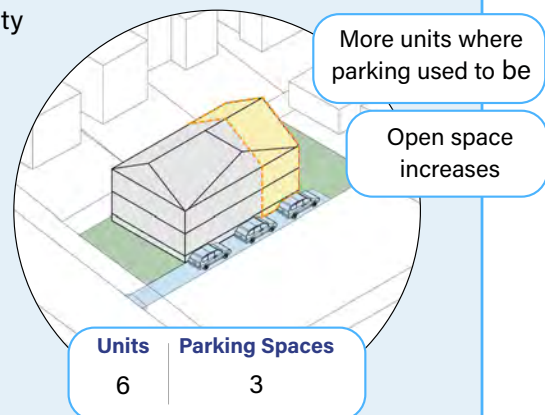
Low Density
FAR: 0.6



Proposed: Parking optional

- Existing parking stays the same.
- New developments have the option to include parking where it's needed.
- Buildings can include more housing and lower-cost units.
- Space for cars can be used for people – in the form of housing, green space or other amenities.

Low Density
FAR: 1.0



This example shows a new building in a low-density district after parking mandates are lifted. There is more room for housing and open space, and parking is still provided.

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Learn More!

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Convert Non-Residential Buildings to Housing

Today, outdated rules prevent underused, non-residential buildings like offices from converting to housing. For example, many buildings that were constructed after 1961, or are located outside the city's largest office centers, cannot be converted to housing.

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity would allow conversions for buildings constructed before 1991 and expand eligibility to anywhere residential uses are allowed. It would also allow non-residential buildings to **convert to more housing types, like supportive housing, dorms, or shared housing** with common amenities.

This change would **breathe new life into our office districts** and help address our housing shortage.



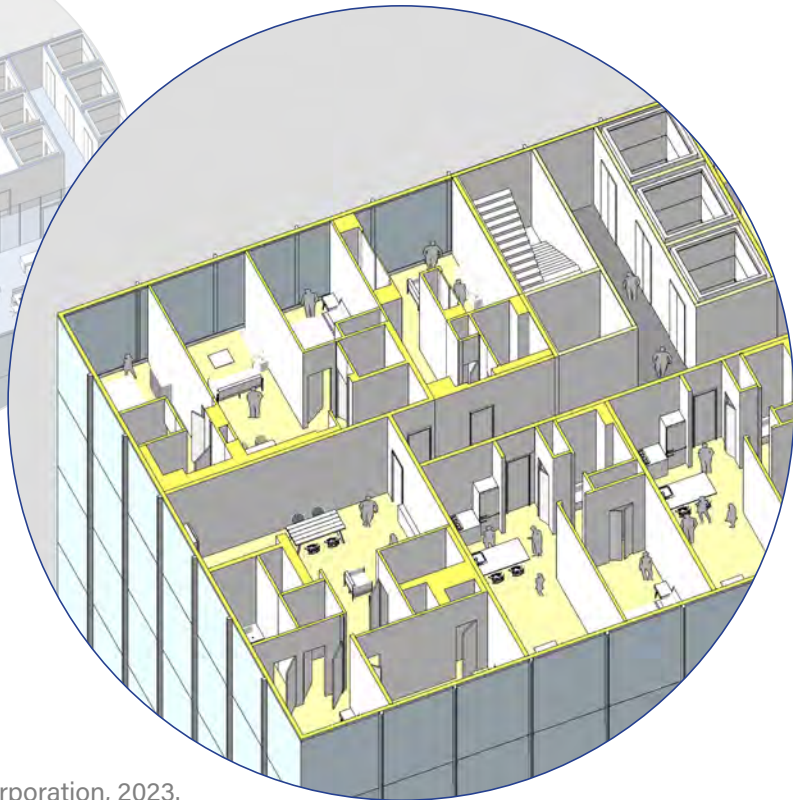
Overview

The conversion proposals seek to extend and improve the existing adaptive reuse regulations so that more underused, non-residential buildings can become housing.

Existing Office



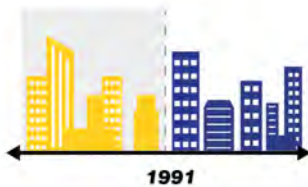
Residential Conversions



When converting office space, the floorplate often must be rearranged to allow for the variety of units types.

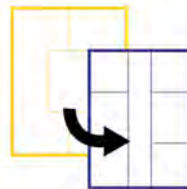
© New York City Economic Development Corporation, 2023.

How are we converting more than just office buildings to residential?



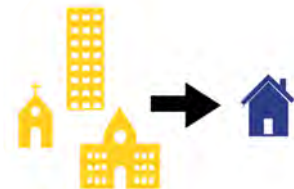
Shift Conversion Date

The cut-off date of eligibility will be moved to 1991 from 1961 or 1977, allowing more buildings to convert into housing.



Allow More Home Types

Allow buildings to convert to home types like shared housing or dorms.



Wider Geography

Wherever residential use is allowed, buildings can convert to housing, instead of just those within current eligible geography districts.

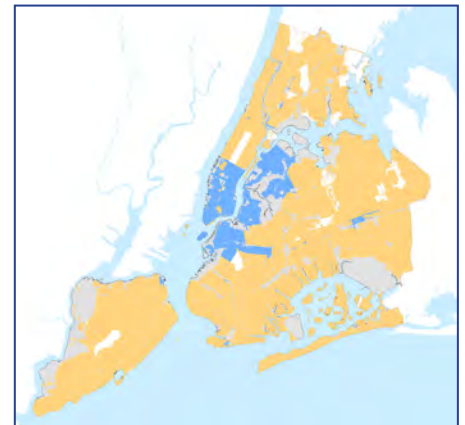
More Information

Enabling the conversion of non-residential buildings involves a few key changes to adaptive reuse regulations:

- **Expand the eligible geography from primarily central office districts to the entire city.** Right now, only buildings located in Manhattan office centers and select other locations can be converted into housing. *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* would extend flexible conversion regulations citywide.
- **Move the eligibility date up to 1991, allowing for more recent buildings to convert.** Today, a building must have been built prior to 1961 or 1977 – depending on where in the city it is located – to access the most flexible conversion regulations. Under *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*, this cut-off date would be 1991, allowing underused buildings from the 1970s and 1980s to more easily convert to housing.
- **Allow the conversion to different types of housing, including supportive housing, shared housing, and dorms.** Currently, non-residential buildings can only convert to traditional apartments. *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* would change our adaptive reuse regulations to allow non-residential buildings to convert to a wider variety of housing types, including supportive housing, shared housing, or dorms.

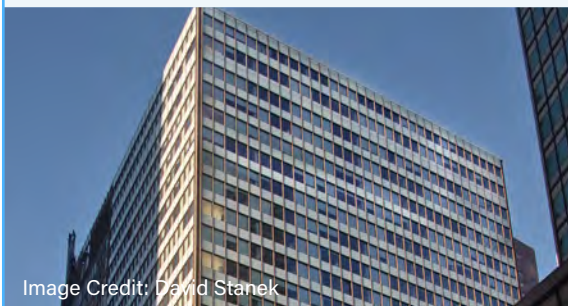
Map: Where Conversions to Housing Would Be Allowed

- Current eligible geography
- Proposed eligible geography



Example of Office-to-Residential Conversions:

180 Water Street, Manhattan



180 Water Street is a 1971 office building that was converted in a 580 unit apartment building in 2017. It was able to be converted because the Financial District has particularly flexible adaptive reuse regulations. If this building had been located anywhere else in the city, or if it had been built just a few years later, it would not have been able to convert.

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Small and Shared Housing

In the 1950s and 60s, New York City prohibited the creation of new shared housing and apartment buildings full of studio apartments. This has contributed to the homelessness crisis in the decades that followed and forced people who would prefer to live alone into living with roommates.

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity would **re-introduce housing with shared kitchens or other common facilities**. It would also **allow buildings with more studios and one-bedrooms** for the many New Yorkers who want to live alone but do not have that option today.

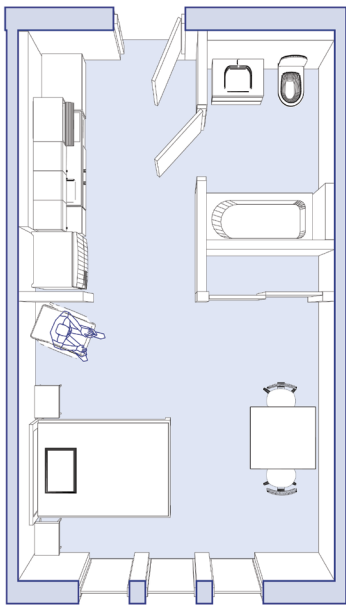
These apartments are important for so many people – recent college graduates, older households that are downsizing, and everyone who lives with roommates but would prefer to live alone. Allowing more small and shared apartments would also open up larger, family-sized apartments that might otherwise be occupied by roommates.



Overview

This proposal would enable buildings with only studios, as well as homes with private bedrooms and shared kitchens or other common facilities. These building types have historically played an important role in New York’s housing landscape, especially for young, working New Yorkers who need a place to stay while they find their feet. A lack of housing options is also what forces young professionals, seniors, and recent arrivals to team up with roommates and occupy family-sized units. Allowing more small and shared apartments can ease the pressure on these larger units.

Small Housing



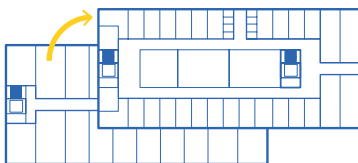
This proposal does not change minimum health and safety standards for a home but instead would allow more of these unit types to be built.

Shared Housing



- Shared Spaces within Units
- Shared Communal Spaces across Floor
- Private Rooms

Why are we enabling small and shared housing?



Shared housing has historically served an important purpose in New York City but today there is no clear path to create it.

Allowing more small and shared apartments could ease the pressure on large family units.

Removing the dwelling unit factor in the Greater Transit Zone can create more housing in areas that have greater access to mass transit.

More Information

Today, a zoning rule known as dwelling unit factor prevents buildings from including small units. Dwelling unit factor, a minimum average unit size, requires buildings to include a mix of small and large units in order to maximize the buildable area. It does not set a minimum size for any one unit. This proposal would remove the dwelling unit factor in central locations and reduce it elsewhere, allowing for buildings with more studio and one-bedroom apartments. This would re-introduce a building type that already exists and provides as an important entry point for many to the New York City housing market.

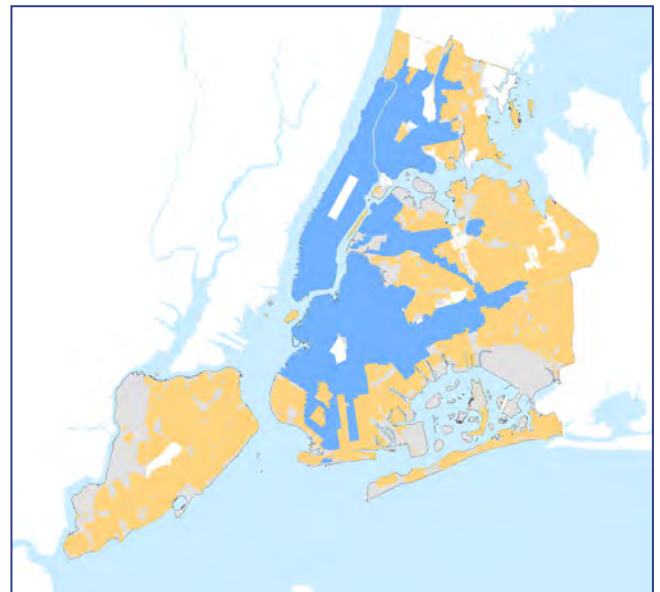
This proposal would also develop clear rules for building shared housing, or homes with private bedrooms and shared kitchens or other common facilities. Our current zoning does not provide a clear path for building shared housing or for constructing homes with private bedrooms but with shared kitchens and other common facilities. Creating clear definitions and rules would:

- Make it possible to build shared housing in any multi-family zoning district.
- Enable a range of new shared housing projects, including affordable shared housing.

Map: Where Small Apartments Would Be Allowed

City of Yes would allow for more small apartments in multi-family districts by removing the dwelling unit factor in central parts of the city and reducing it elsewhere.

- Eliminate dwelling unit factor
- Reduce and simplify dwelling unit factor



Dwelling Unit Factor

	Current	Proposed	Change
R1, R2, R3-1, R3A, R4-1, R4B,	--	500	--
R3-2, R4	870	500	-370
R4 ¹ , R5 ¹ , R5	900	500	-400
R5, R5D	760	500	-260
R5B ²	1,350	500	-850
R6, R7, R8, R9, R10	680	500	-180

¹ For residences in a predominantly built-up area.

² For zoning lots with less than 40 feet of street frontage and existing on the effective date of establishing such districts on the zoning maps.

Note: The table above represents the Dwelling Unit Factor (DUF) changes for applicable multi-family districts in the map's orange region.

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Campus Infill

Across the city, many residential campuses, or large lots with multiple buildings on them, have underused space that they could turn into housing. Funds generated from that new construction could pay to fix existing buildings, breathe new life into community institutions, and help address our housing crisis.

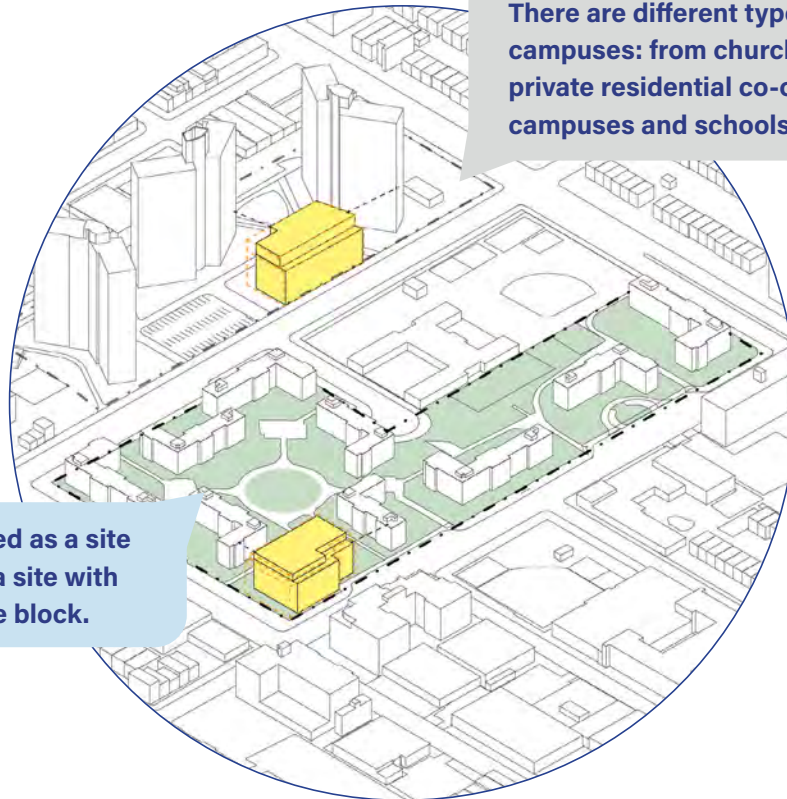
Today, arbitrary rules get in the way of campuses using development rights that they already have. If existing buildings are too tall or too far back from the street, for instance, zoning prohibits new developments on the property – even if they would comply with current height limits and other regulations.

By removing obstacles and streamlining outdated rules, *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* would make it easier to add new buildings to campuses.



Overview

Across New York City, residential campuses that were built under an old set of “height factor” zoning regulations cannot add new housing, even if they have the available development rights. *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* would remove this needless regulatory barrier by providing a new set of more sensible zoning regulations.



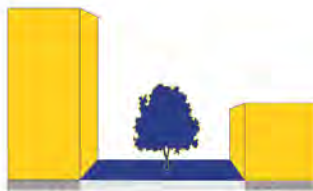
There are different types of campuses: from churches to private residential co-ops, NYCHA campuses and schools.

A campus is defined as a site over 1.5 acres OR a site with control of an entire block.

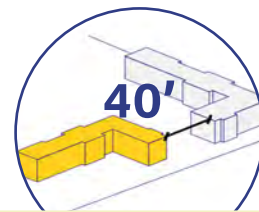
How are we simplifying campus infill rules?



Allow Height-limited Infill
Campuses would be allowed to add buildings under the existing height limits.



Lot Coverage
Housing would be allowed on 50% of campus lot area, allowing a balance of open space and new homes.



Distance Between Buildings
Required distance between buildings would be reduced, offering new opportunities for housing.

More Information

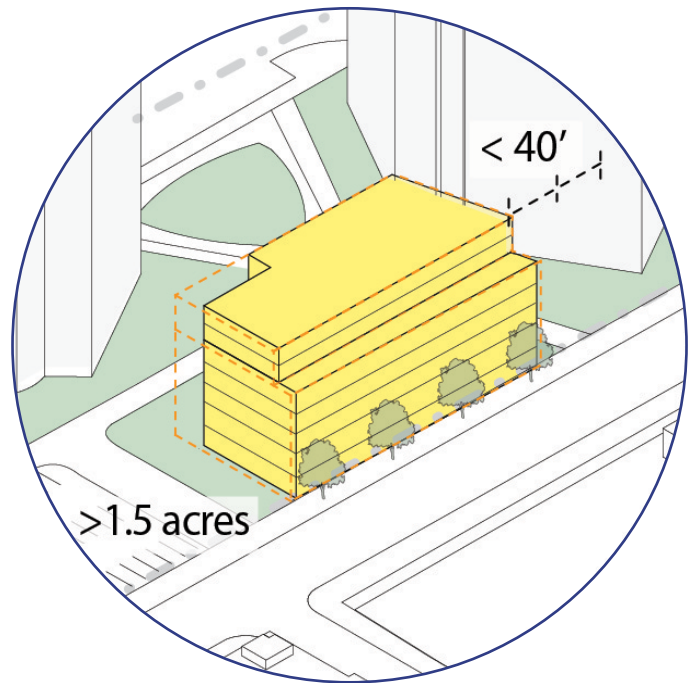
Campuses face slightly different zoning obstacles to using their existing development rights, depending on whether they are located in high- or low-density parts of the city. *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* would address these obstacles in different ways:

High-Density Campuses (R6-R10)

This proposal would replace infill “mixing” rules that prevent Height Factor and Quality Housing buildings from being on the same lot with a simpler set of rules based on FAR, height limits, and lot coverage maximums.

Campuses would need to comply with the Quality Housing FAR for their zoning district, and new buildings would need to comply with the Quality Housing height limit. The complicated open space ratio would also be replaced with a new overall 50% lot coverage maximum.

Required distances between buildings would be reduced to match the Multiple Dwelling Law: 40-foot distance between buildings, or 80-foot distance if buildings are over 125 feet tall.

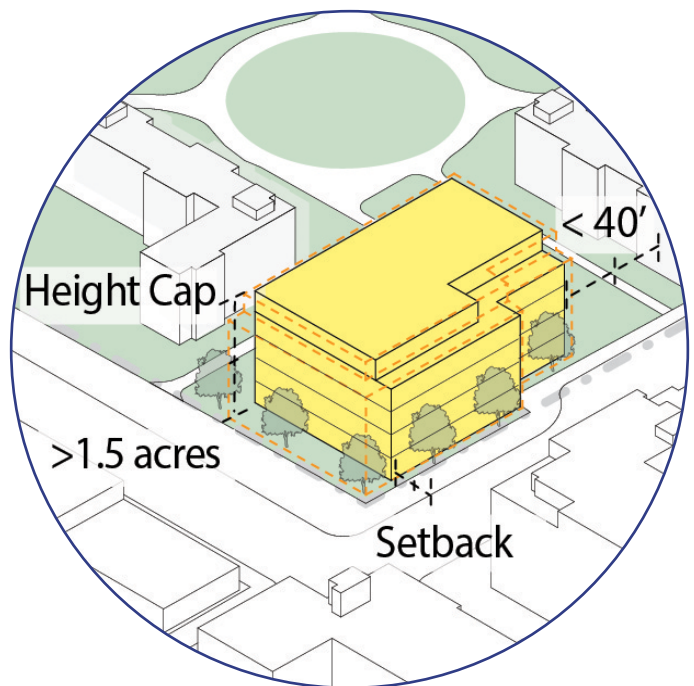


Low-Density Campuses (R1-R5)

This proposal would enable infill on low-density sites as long as the zoning lot complies with:

- The FAR limit for the zoning district.
- New overall 50-percent lot coverage maximum.
- New campus height limits of 45 feet in R3-2 districts, 55 feet in R4 districts, and 65 feet in R5 districts.

These rules would enable additional campus infill opportunities in context with the built environment in low-density areas while preserving significant amounts of open space for residents.



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Learn More!

[NYC.gov/YesHousingOpportunity](https://nyc.gov/YesHousingOpportunity)



Resources

To find out more background information about *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*, please visit the following selected references:

New York City Housing References

[Equitable Development Data Explorer](#). (2022). New York, NY: NYC Department of City Planning; NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development. (equitableexplorer.planning.nyc.gov)

Hess, D. B., & Rehler, J. (2021). [Minus Minimums: Development Response to the Removal of Minimum Parking Requirements in Buffalo \(NY\)](#). *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 87(3), 396–408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2020.1864225>

[Home Truths: A Survey of Unmet Housing Need in Lower-Density Districts](#). (2023). New York, NY: Citizens Housing and Planning Council.

[HPD Design Guidelines for New Construction](#), v 2.0. (2023). New York, NY: NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development.

[New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Selected Initial Findings](#). (2023). New York, NY: Census Bureau; The City of New York.

[NYC Population Factfinder](#). (2018). New York, NY: NYC Department of City Planning. (popfactfinder.planning.nyc.gov)

[Office Adaptive Reuse Study](#). (2023). New York, NY: NYC Department of City Planning.

[Principles of Good Urban Design](#). (2024). New York, NY: NYC Department of City Planning. (nyc.gov/udprinciples)

[Twilight Zoning](#). (2024). New York, NY: Citizens Housing and Planning Council.

[Where We Live NYC Plan](#). (2020). New York, NY: The City of New York.

Additional References

Been, V., Ellen, I. G., & O'Regan, K. (2019). [Supply Skepticism: Housing Supply and Affordability](#). *Housing Policy Debate*, 29(1), 25–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2018.1476899>

Marantz, Nicholas J., Elmendorf, Christopher S., and Kim, Youjin B. (2021). [Evaluating California's Accessory Dwelling Unit Reforms](#). New York, NY: NYU Furman Center.

Phillips, S., Manville, M., & Lens, M. (2021). [Research Roundup: The Effect of Market-Rate Development on Neighborhood Rents](#). UCLA: The Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5d00z61m>

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