

Frequently Asked Questions

Does ZQA increase permitted square footage of buildings?

Except for a modest increase for affordable senior housing, ZQA does not increase the allowed square footage of buildings. It only removes impediments to building the full allowable square footage, while enabling better designed buildings that fit neighborhood character.

Does ZQA affect landmarked buildings or landmarked districts?

No. ZQA does not authorize changes to landmarked buildings or landmarked districts. Any requests to change those buildings remain under the jurisdiction of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

How will height changes under ZQA impact neighboring communities?

The height increases under ZQA are very modest. The new rules also impose limits on the number of floors and will continue to require that new buildings fit with neighborhood character. ZQA will result in better ground floor shops and services, creating a better experience for pedestrians and buildings that will contribute more to the needs of the neighborhood.

Will eliminating parking for affordable housing increase demand for street parking?

ZQA only eliminates parking for very specific developments — affordable and senior housing buildings in designated areas that are served well by public transit. These types of developments generally have very low rates of car ownership and parking is consistently underutilized. ZQA does not reduce parking requirements for market rate housing.

Why is zoning inhibiting affordable housing development?

The zoning rules that set out the permitted shape of buildings have not kept pace with building requirements, modern construction practices or the priority to build affordable housing using programs such as inclusionary housing. As a result, square footage that would be affordable housing cannot be used, resulting in a loss of affordable units.

“ZQA fixes zoning issues that we have struggled with over the years when designing affordable housing projects. These changes will mean more affordable housing, as well as better designed buildings and higher quality units and retail spaces. It will be a huge win for New York City’s neighborhoods.”

— Mark Ginsberg, Principal, Curtis+Ginsberg Architects LLP

Zoning for Quality and Affordability

A Path Forward on Affordable Housing

- Remove outdated barriers that get in the way of urgently needed affordable housing
- Encourage better design of buildings and apartments
- Incentivize urgently needed senior housing

New York City is facing a housing crisis:

- 1 in 3 renters paying more than 50% of income on rent
- Nearly 60,000 homeless people, including over 23,000 children
- Housing vacancy rate at emergency level
- Projected 40% increase in senior households by 2040



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NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

LiveOn NY

NEW YORK 
HOUSING CONFERENCE

A Path Forward on Affordable Housing:

Zoning for Quality and Affordability

Maximizing the Production of Affordable Housing

The Problems

- Outdated zoning that inhibits affordable housing development
- Difficult to build affordable housing on irregularly shaped and sloped sites

The ZQA Solution

- Remove impediments to using the total permitted square footage for affordable housing
- Provide zoning options for affordable housing that work on irregularly shaped and sloped sites

Serving Our Growing Senior Population

The Problems

- A senior housing crisis created by fixed incomes, rising rents, and declining federal funding
- Outdated senior housing regulations that slow the creation of affordable housing for seniors
- Tens of thousands of New York City seniors face waits of up to a decade to access affordable senior housing

The ZQA Solution

- Provide modest additional building height and square footage to generate more units in affordable senior housing developments
- Streamline the production of independent affordable senior housing
- Transform underutilized parking lots in senior developments into affordable housing for New York City's seniors

House New York City's seniors with ZQA: LiveOn NY, an advocacy organization for older adults, found 39 underutilized parking lots at existing senior developments across the city that could be used to build 2,000 affordable senior units.

"There are tens of thousands of senior citizens facing 7-10 year waiting lists for affordable housing. Without ZQA, low income seniors across the city will continue to languish on ever growing waiting lists." — Bobbie Sackman, Director of Public Policy, LiveOn NY

Ending Parking Requirements that Prevent Affordable Housing Construction

The Problems

- Parking requirements – costing upwards of \$50,000 per space – reduce the number of affordable units and make units less affordable
- High cost of parking requirements on some sites can stop affordable housing from being built altogether
- Parking requirements preclude amenities that serve residents and the community

The ZQA Solution

- Redirect housing funds to building affordable housing and providing deeper affordability
- Unlock the potential for affordable housing on sites where parking currently makes affordable development infeasible
- Create more space for ground floor shops, community and senior centers, children's play areas, and resident gardens

Designing Better Buildings for All Communities

The Problems

- Outdated zoning that results in flat, dull apartment buildings
- Outdated zoning that has not kept pace with fire and building requirements or modern construction practices

The ZQA Solution

- Support building design that better fits neighborhood character
- Enable better designed apartments with higher ceilings and improved neighborhood shops on the ground floor