

January 30, 2024

Speaker Adrienne Adams
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Adams and Members of the City Council,

We are reaching out to express support for the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity zoning text amendment. The proposals in City of Yes will generate more affordable housing and also make it easier to add housing in every neighborhood across the city, even in neighborhoods that have seen little new housing added in recent decades.

This is a critical moment – New York City is experiencing a severe and growing housing and affordability crisis. Nearly 600,000 households are severely burdened in the city, paying more than 50% of their income on rent, while more than 88,000 people experienced homelessness on a single night in 2023. The solution to the crisis is more housing and more affordable housing.

In addition, housing production, especially affordable housing production, is not shared equitably across the city. Some neighborhoods are doing more to improve their neighborhoods and address the crisis than others. Data from our [NYC Housing Tracker](#) shows that 16 City Council districts produced more than 2,000 units of new affordable housing from 2016 – 2022, mostly in neighborhoods in the South Bronx, Central Brooklyn, East River waterfront in Brooklyn and Queens, and Southeast Queens. Meanwhile, 17 districts produced fewer than 400 units over that time, with nine districts producing less than 200 units over the nine years. The disparity in neighborhood affordable housing production is particularly stark when analyzed by race and ethnicity: in the top third of districts in terms of affordable housing production, on average 72 percent of residents are Black or Latinx, while in the bottom third of districts by housing production just 35 percent of residents are Black or Latinx.

Our zoning resolution is severely outdated and riddled with decades of zoning barriers to building affordable housing. Zoning is a powerful tool that can ease barriers to housing production and ensure that every neighborhood does its part to add to our affordable housing supply.

As affordable housing advocates and providers, we enthusiastically support the provisions in the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, which will allow for housing growth across the city and encourage all neighborhoods to add housing. We support giving a density bonus for affordable housing, removing barriers to moderate density in more neighborhoods including around transit and on campuses, allowing for more conversions to residential housing, and removing parking mandates. We expect more details and look forward to discussing potential modifications but these proposals cannot be weakened.

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity will modify outdated zoning rules to allow NYC to combat its housing shortage. We need forward-thinking, citywide solutions like this to ensure that we are adding critically needed

housing in each neighborhood. We look forward to working with you and the rest of the City Council further to shape a more equitable and affordable city for all.

Sincerely,

New York Housing Conference