

Testimony of the New York Housing Conference

**New York City Council Committee on Land Use
Testimony**

March 23, 2026

Good afternoon. My name is Brendan Cheney. I am Director of Policy and Operations at the New York Housing Conference (NYHC). I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify about the FY 2027 preliminary budget.

NYHC is a nonprofit affordable housing policy and advocacy organization. As a broad-based coalition, our mission is to advance City, State and Federal policies and funding to support the development and preservation of decent and affordable housing for all New Yorkers.

NYHC was a strong supporter of the City of Yes and housing-related Charter ballot changes and we are excited about the ways these changes will support housing development going forward. We greatly appreciate the work of the DCP staff around the City of Yes and staff of the Charter Revision Commission around these changes.

Moving forward, the City will need to work hard to process plans to take advantage of both City of Yes and the Charter changes and will need to continue neighborhood rezonings to add new housing citywide. New opportunities such as Sunnyside Yards, a large scale housing and infrastructure project, or the Interborough Express, a rapid transit line that would connect up to 17 subway lines between Brooklyn and Queens all require the thoughtful planning of DCP staff to study, evaluate, engage and propose zoning and land use changes to plan for NYC's growth, equitable development and changing neighborhood needs.

However, we are concerned about DCP's budget and staffing levels required to process projects in a timely manner and to develop and finalize neighborhood rezonings. The agency currently has significant vacancies, with an actual headcount of 309 compared to a budgeted headcount of 370. In addition, the agency's budget is cut from \$58.2 million to \$51.4 million.

With current staffing, we expect the agency will be limited in its capacity to meet the needs to review and evaluate land use matters necessary to address NYC's supply shortage. Increasing the DCP budget is a wise investment. A relatively small change in staffing will have exponential long-term benefits. One rezoning for example can add thousands of new units of housing. It is a small investment with a huge payoff in terms of creating housing, jobs and local economic stimulus, while planning for NYC's future.

We urge robust funding in the annual budget with adequate budgeted headcount to ensure DCP can complete rezonings and process applications to fully take advantage of the City of Yes, neighborhood rezonings and future planning needs.