

Universal Affordability Preference (UAP)

In recent decades, high-demand neighborhoods have lost affordable housing and become increasingly out of reach to working families.

The Universal Affordability Preference is a new tool that would allow buildings to add 20% more housing, but only if the additional units are affordable. As a result, it will deliver new affordable housing in high-cost neighborhoods across New York City to working families.

Office to Residential Conversions

Today, outdated rules prevent underused commercial space from converting to housing. For example, many buildings constructed after 1961, or outside the city's largest office centers, cannot be converted to housing.

City of Yes will make it easier for vacant offices and other commercial buildings to become homes, a win-win policy to create housing, boost property values, and create more active, vibrant neighborhoods in areas that have been hard-hit by the effects of the pandemic.

Town Center Zoning

New York is a city of neighborhoods, and each neighborhood is anchored by commercial corridors with shops and vibrant street life – a little town center for every community.

Modest apartment buildings with stores on the street level and apartments above them exist across the five boroughs. However, in many places, regulations preclude the creation of new mixed-use corridors.

By legalizing new housing above businesses on commercial streets, City of Yes will create affordable housing, help neighbors reach small businesses, and build vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods.

Removing Parking Mandates

New York City currently mandates off-street parking along with new housing even where it's not needed, driving down housing production and driving up rents.

City of Yes would end parking mandates for new housing, as many cities across the country have successfully done. The proposal will preserve the option to add parking, but no one will be forced to build unnecessary parking.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Across the city, small homeowners face challenges with rising costs and aging in place. Regulations limit what New Yorkers can do with their own property, which means families have to move farther away from their grandparents or grandchildren, or are forced into uncomfortably cramped houses.

Meanwhile, spaces like garages can go unused when small improvements could make them comfortable homes.

Accessory dwelling units (backyard cottages, garage conversions) can add new homes and support homeowners without significantly changing the look and feel of a neighborhood.

Transit Oriented Development

Adding housing near public transit is a commonsense approach to allow convenient lifestyles, limit the need for car ownership, lower congestion, reduce carbon emissions, and support the MTA. Many modest apartment buildings already exist in the outer boroughs – but more of these buildings could not be built today.

The regulations that ban 3-5 story apartment buildings force New Yorkers into long commutes, worsening traffic congestion and climate change. City of Yes would legalize modest apartment buildings where they fit best: on large lots near public transit, on wide streets or corner lots.

Campuses

Across the city, many campuses have underused space that they could turn into housing. That new construction can pay to fix up existing buildings, breathe new life into community institutions, and help address our housing crisis.

However, arbitrary rules mean that many campuses can not add new buildings. For example, a campus cannot add new height-limited buildings if existing buildings exceed that height limit.

By streamlining outdated rules, City of Yes would make it easier for campuses to add new buildings if they wish to. The new buildings could bring money for repairs, new facilities, and housing.