

Resilient Acquisitions Framework

New York City's Voluntary
Acquisition Program for
High-Flood-Risk Homes



Mayor's Office of Climate &
Environmental Justice

Introduction

Climate change is bringing more frequent and severe flooding to New York City, putting residents' lives at risk and causing financial strain. New Yorkers have experienced Hurricanes Sandy, Henri, and Ida, as well as several extreme rainfall events recently.

Recent flood events show the need to support residents interested in moving out of homes that are vulnerable to severe flooding, where other options to reduce flood risk are limited.

Given the interest expressed by members of the public in pursuing acquisition of their homes in the most at-risk areas of the city, New York City committed in **"PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done,"** the City's long-term climate plan, to launch a voluntary land acquisition program to address this need. The Resilient Acquisition Framework lays out the City's strategy for acquiring high-flood-risk homes and supporting homeowners and their tenants who want to move out of areas vulnerable to severe flooding with limited alternative options for flood resilience.

Adapting to Flood Risk

New York City has more than 94,000 housing units in one- to four-unit residential buildings across the five boroughs at risk of severe damage and loss of life during flood events. To protect these units and vulnerable neighborhoods, New York City is pursuing a wide range of flood resilience strategies, from [large-scale coastal protection projects](#) to targeted infrastructure interventions and building retrofits. In cases where other risk-reduction methods are limited, a voluntary land acquisition program can enable the City to engage with interested residents and acquire flood-vulnerable properties that are difficult to protect through other resilience measures.

Through the [Rainproof NYC](#) initiative, the City along with Rebuild by Design and One Architecture & Urbanism convened residents, nonprofits, government agencies, community organizations, and private sector partners to develop guiding principles and [recommendations](#) for the design of an equitable buyout program for New York City. The City built upon these principles and lessons learned from similar past programs to develop the Resilient Acquisitions Framework.

Rainproof Working Group Principles

1. Voluntary and well-informed
2. Community-based and neighborhood-specific
3. Housing-centered and housing-focused
4. Equitable and renter-inclusive
5. Environmentally restorative and integrated
6. Permanent and adaptable

Resilient Acquisitions Overview

The City has developed the Resilient Acquisitions Framework to provide New York City residents with the opportunity to move out of high-flood-risk homes. The Resilient Acquisitions Framework will enable the City to purchase high-flood-risk homes when there is (1) interest from homeowners in selling their home and moving, (2) funding available for acquisitions, and (3) a long-term use for the land to protect residents and increase resilience across New York City.

The Resilient Acquisitions Framework is designed to address a range of flood risks, including coastal, tidal, riverine, and stormwater flooding. Acquisitions will focus on properties that are difficult to protect through other resiliency measures.

Based on homeowner interest, acquisition feasibility, and funding availability, the City will advance acquisition projects in specific high-flood-risk neighborhoods, where other flood resilience options are limited.

Supporting Households with Severe Flood Risk

Resilient Acquisitions is designed to purchase one- to four-unit residential buildings that have flooded or face severe flood risk. The program is voluntary and will provide the opportunity for homeowners to sell their property and relocate. Tenants living in homes whose owners choose to participate in the program will also receive support services.

Owners of other property types, such as vacant lots, may be included where it furthers the goals of the acquisition project and as funding permits.

Steps for an Acquisition Project



Homeowners express interest.



City announces an acquisition project in a specific neighborhood.*



City engages with the community about the project and options for resilient uses for the land.



Homeowners can apply to sell their property.



Applicants are selected. Homeowners and tenants in selected homes are paired with a case manager and receive relocation support.



Participating homeowners sell their properties to the City.



Residents move.



Homes are demolished and acquired land is transitioned to a resilient end use.

*where feasible and funded

Advancing Resilient Acquisition Projects

Resilient Acquisitions is designed to operate on an ongoing basis. It will operate in “blue skies,” acquiring homes with high flood risk before a major flood event, as well as in “grey skies,” scaling up after a disaster to assist communities recovering from significant flooding.

Resilient Acquisitions is a voluntary program and will be guided by homeowner interest. Through the Expression of Interest form, homeowners will note their interest in selling their high-flood-risk home to the City.

An acquisition project can advance in a specific area when:

- there is interest from homeowners of high-flood-risk homes;
- funding is available for acquisitions; and
- there is a resilient, long-term use for the potential sites to be acquired and a long-term landowner for the acquired properties.

Once a specific project area meets these criteria and an acquisition project is announced, the City will reach out to engage homeowners in that area and invite them to formally apply to participate.

Participating homeowners and tenants in homes being acquired will be assigned case managers to support them throughout the acquisition process. Homeowners and tenants will be connected with relocation support services to help them successfully relocate.

Engaging the Community

Homeowner interest will guide the advancement of acquisition projects. In areas where homeowners are interested in selling their properties, the City will engage with the local community to keep them informed of plans and incorporate their input into the project. Acquisition projects can also be advanced as part of broader neighborhood planning in collaboration with local community members, community organizations, and City agencies.

Resilient Uses for Acquired Land

The City will work with each participating community to identify long-term uses for acquired land that build flood resilience for the neighborhood and New York City, and are aligned with community needs. The long-term use for the land, or “end-use” options, may vary by funding source and associated restrictions, but are broadly categorized as resilient infrastructure, open space, or, in limited cases, may include new resilient housing opportunities.

Community input, flood resilience needs, and the long-term stewards of the land will determine end uses. All end-use options will offer increased flood resilience over prior residential uses. Some end uses, like a pump station or other stormwater infrastructure, have direct stormwater and water system tie-ins, while others, like parks or community gardens, create benefits for natural habitat and increased stormwater absorption alongside community use.



Clockwise from top left:

Floodgate: designed to block floodwater and mitigate damage at Asser Levy. Image source: NYC DDC.

Cloudburst Basketball Court at NYCHA's South Jamaica Houses: designed to temporarily hold stormwater and relieve pressure on the sewer system. Image source: NYC DEP.

Staten Island Bluebelt: designed to convey, store, and filter precipitation or stormwater and provide open space to communities. Image source: NYC DEP.

Acquisition Timeline & Funding

Using this framework, the City will collect interest from homeowners on an ongoing basis and coordinate potential acquisitions with various funding sources as they become available. Each funding source will have different requirements that will impact who can participate, the documentation required, and the timeline for an acquisition. A timeline may be faster or slower depending on the funding or other factors.

The City will work with homeowners and tenants in participating homes on a timeline for relocation and will continue to keep them informed. Acquisitions are a long-term process, and it may take several years for funding to be secured and projects to begin.

Please note that this document reflects the City's framework at its time of issuance. The City may update and amend this guide to reflect changes in policy, rules, and regulations as needed.

Resilient Acquisitions is an initiative of New York City, and all communications will come from authorized representatives of the City. Please note you will not be asked to provide financial information or personally identifying information (e.g. Social Security Numbers, bank details) to express interest in the initiative. If you are contacted about Resilient Acquisitions and are unsure whether it's an official city communication, we urge you to verify it directly by contacting us at info-ra@recovery.nyc.gov or 844-208-3181. The City is not responsible for any loss of funds, personal information or property due to interactions with unofficial or fraudulent actors.