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**NEW YORK CITY RELEASES FINAL “WHERE WE LIVE NYC” PLAN, A
BLUEPRINT TO ADVANCE FAIR HOUSING IN THE RECOVERY FROM COVID-19**

NEW YORK, NY—Today, Mayor de Blasio and Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been released the final [Where We Live NYC Plan](#), the City’s blueprint for fair housing in the five boroughs. The plan is a culmination of a two-year planning process led by the Deputy Mayor’s office, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), and involved more than 30 City agencies. Where We Live NYC is the City’s five-year plan to break down barriers to opportunity and build more integrated, equitable neighborhoods. Updated to reflect the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on low-income communities of color, the plan includes enhanced metrics, strategies, policy proposals, and new priorities to address a legacy of housing segregation and build a more inclusive city.

“Rebuilding a fairer, better city starts with listening to New Yorkers. I’m grateful for feedback from residents, advocates, and New Yorkers across the five boroughs as we find more ways to make our city more affordable and inclusive than ever,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“Because of our incredible diversity, the role we play in welcoming and providing opportunity for so many people from around the country and the world, and our commitment to make NYC the fairest big city in the nation, we New Yorkers have a moral obligation to lead the nation in addressing structural racism and housing discrimination. The pandemic and the movement for racial justice have made that obligation more urgent and important than ever,” said **Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been**. “The Where We Live NYC Plan lays out specifics about how we will double down on our work to make New York City fairer and more just. I am grateful to everyone who participated in the multi-year effort to make this plan an ambitious but concrete and achievable agenda, and I look forward in advancing the plan together.”

“To rise above our nation’s long legacy of racial injustice, and the ensuing deep-rooted inequities, the City needs a shared vision. Where We Live NYC is a balanced blueprint for addressing generations of housing disparities and fostering the neighborhood conditions that lead to better jobs and educational opportunities for all New Yorkers. With the coronavirus taking a greater toll on the city’s communities of color, it is clearer than ever that we cannot take our foot off the gas when it comes to building a fairer city,” said **HPD Commissioner Louise Carroll**. “I want to thank the amazing teams at HPD, our fellow City agencies, our many community partners and every New Yorker who shared their experiences and helped to shape this plan for a more integrated, equitable, and inclusive city.”

“NYCHA is a vital resource for low-income New Yorkers – many of whom are people of color – and we are working tirelessly to drastically improve the living conditions for residents who have been disproportionately impacted by decades of disinvestment in public housing,” said **NYCHA Chair & CEO Greg Russ**. “The comprehensive renovations and operational improvements the Authority is spearheading are central to the goal of creating a more equitable city – an effort that will be more crucial than ever as New York City continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“New York City’s greatest strength is our diversity. It’s imperative that we tackle a legacy of discrimination and inequality, so as to build a city that works for everyone. Where We Live NYC gets us one step closer to creating affordability across all our neighborhoods. With this plan, we’re setting the city on a path to a brighter future,” said **DCP Director Marisa Lago**.

“We need to work across government and use all the policy tools in our toolbox to achieve the equity and affordability in our housing policy New Yorkers deserve,” said **Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.** “That’s why I welcome the insights this ‘Where We Live NYC’ report offers. By bringing together City agencies and stakeholders, we can chart a course towards a housing policy that combats past and present injustice, accommodates the needs of New York’s diverse communities, and mobilizes resources commensurate with the challenges we face. Thanks to all the leaders, staff, agencies, and advocates who contributed in crafting this plan, and who will continue to guide us towards achieving these important equity, inclusion, and affordability goals.”

“For decades we’ve seen how housing has had a direct impact on separating New Yorkers by race,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “There’s always been a need to address historic patterns of racial segregation and the systemic factors that continue to lead to a lack of resources in our housing developments, schools, jobs and public amenities in communities of color across the City. This plan is one step toward breaking down racial barriers so all families can experience equitable and sustainable living in our City.”

“The COVID pandemic has laid bare long-standing racial and ethnic disparities that this plan would help address, and AARP New York has been pleased to work with NYC Housing Preservation & Development on this effort,” said **AARP New York State President Leo Asen**. “The City’s affordable housing and Right to Counsel initiatives and last year’s landmark reforms to the state’s rent laws are all moves in the right direction. More needs to be done, and Where We Live NYC provides a roadmap. If anything, the economic fallout from the pandemic has added to the strain of housing costs that have long been a major concern. That’s particularly true for older City residents of color, who AARP New York’s Disrupting Racial & Ethnic Disparities research shows have less access to safe, affordable housing - which makes their communities particularly vulnerable to gentrification and displacement - inferior access to subways and stations with elevators, and less safe street crossings.”

“The final Where We Live NYC Plan is honest, ambitious, and results-oriented. A huge step forward in moving NYC housing policy beyond counting units and towards leading with our shared values,” said **Jessica Katz, Executive Director, Citizens Housing & Planning Council**.

“Equitable community investment and fair housing must be an integral part of New York City’s economic policy as we work to recover from the impacts of the pandemic,” said **Judi Kende, vice president and New York market leader for Enterprise Community Partners**. “We are pleased to have contributed recommendations to inform the Where We Live NYC report and are glad that the City included government agencies, community-based organizations, and residents when gathering input to form strategies to help ensure that all New Yorkers can access stable, affordable housing and other valuable resources moving forward.”

"Now, in this moment of national reckoning, we must radically re-imagine the kind of city we want and need to live in. That re-think starts in our neighborhoods - where systems meet people and shape experience on the ground. We must confront segregation head-on in order to address the persistent, pernicious impacts of systemic racism and to foster the kind of environment where we all thrive. Where We Live NYC represents an important step down that road, centered on the experiences and voices of those most impacted by segregation and discrimination, and gives us hope that another world might just be possible,” said **Betsy MacLean, Co-Executive Director, Hester Street**.

“New York City is rising to the occasion to better understand the historic barriers and exclusionary zoning practices that have long stood in the way of developing diverse and inclusive neighborhoods,” said **Jolie Milstein, president and CEO of the New York State Association for Affordable Housing**. “The devastating impacts of the pandemic, which were exacerbated by housing segregation, underscore the importance of the ‘Where We Live NYC’ initiative. We look forward to collaboratively creating meaningful solutions to help the city recover and become fairer and more equitable for everyone.”

“The updates to the ‘Where We Live NYC’ plan represent a real, positive, and commendable shift in direction for New York City’s approach to fair housing,” said **Tom Wright, Regional Plan Association President and CEO**. “By prioritizing strategies to add affordable housing in affluent neighborhoods which lack it, especially in low-density areas, the plan has the potential to break down some of the longstanding structural barriers to equity in New York City. The metrics of success and measurable steps to progress will help ensure accountability and transparency. RPA called for similar actions in our Fourth Regional Plan, and we offer our help to the Department of Housing Preservation and Development as it begins to implement these initiatives, which we hope will be a meaningful step toward racial equity and reversing our legacy of housing discrimination.”

“Despite our storied diversity, New York continues to be among the most segregated cities in the country. This segregation is no accident, but rather has been enforced and encoded by over a century of intentional land use and development decisions,” said **Open New York Board Member Casey Berkovitz**. “The Where We Live NYC plan, itself a needed response to the Fair Housing Act, is an important acknowledgement of the steps that our leaders must take in order to create an integrated city where all New Yorkers can thrive. We look forward to working with the administration to accomplish the goals laid out in this report.”

“The foundation of any community development ecosystem is equal, accessible, and affordable housing for all New Yorkers” said **Valerie White, Executive Director of LISC NYC**. “We

support the fair housing platform outlined in this report and stand in partnership with city leaders working to grow New York City’s affordable housing portfolio.”

Where We Live NYC is the City’s response to the 2015 rule issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under President Obama to guide cities and counties in interpreting what it means to “affirmatively further” the goals of the federal Fair Housing Act. While recent regulatory changes at HUD have all but erased these requirements, the City of New York moved forward with the Where We Live NYC process, drawing upon the 2015 rule as a guiding framework.

Through Where We Live NYC, the City has worked collaboratively with residents and community leaders to better understand their housing challenges and identify goals, strategies, and actions to advance fair housing. In developing the plan, the City engaged hundreds of residents, over 150 community-based and advocacy organizations, and the full range of governmental agencies whose work affects housing and neighborhood quality. Since releasing a draft of the plan in January, the city has collected public comments via a city-wide listening tour and incorporated feedback into the final version.

The city has also faced an unprecedented health and economic crisis that has heightened deeply embedded disparities. COVID-19 has laid bare the continued significance of neighborhood-based inequities and racial inequality. The final plan will advance fair housing in the recovery from COVID-19.

The plan lays out the City’s commitments over the next five years. Key goals of the plan include:

- Fight housing discrimination by pursuing increased resources and protections.
- Promote development that opens up more communities to low-income families.
- Preserve low-cost housing and prevent displacement of long-standing residents through stronger tenant protections and new affordable housing investments.
- Empower families receiving rental assistance and expand use of these benefits in amenity-rich neighborhoods.
- Create better and more integrated living options for people with disabilities.
- Align investments to address segregation, discrimination, and concentrated poverty.

New Actions in Where We Live NYC Plan

- **Incentivize more affordable housing and increase neighborhood diversity in amenity-rich neighborhoods like Gowanus and SoHo/NoHo that have exceptional access to transit, schools, and job centers.** The final plan follows the City’s recent announcements that the Gowanus Neighborhood Plan and SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan will both advance into the City’s public land use review process.
- **Expand housing options in low density zoning districts to encourage the development of low-cost housing options in neighborhoods across the City.** This could open up a wider variety of neighborhoods to more New Yorkers and give small homeowners more flexibility to

create extra space and income. Analysis of data and regulations will identify specific provisions that can achieve this.

- **Propose changes to the Zoning Resolution to allow for an increase in density for affordable housing across the city.** Preferential floor-area-ratio (FAR) for affordable housing would apply to income-restricted housing for all populations, including housing for seniors and special needs populations.
- **Create a citywide housing growth framework that takes into account an equity-centered and race-forward approach to planning.** The City will analyze housing trends and demographic changes to pursue growth, affordability and equity.
- **Incorporate lessons from Where We Live NYC into decisions about affordable housing financing.** Data and metrics collected through the fair housing initiative will help inform HPD's allocation of annual capital funding and Section 8 resources to ensure that affordable housing projects serve a greater diversity of neighborhoods.

The de Blasio Administration has worked to ensure that the city's growth and prosperity includes all neighborhoods and made substantial investments toward creating a fairer city. The City has worked to advance fair housing by preserving and creating affordable housing, preventing displacement, investing in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods, and fostering opportunities for households of all races, ethnicities, national origins, religions, genders, family status, and abilities. This progress includes:

- **Financed unprecedented numbers of affordable homes for the lowest income and most vulnerable New Yorkers.** Almost 13,000 homes reserved for formerly homeless households, more than 9,000 reserved for seniors, and more than 72,000 targeted to households with extremely low or very low-incomes, less than \$30,720 or \$51,200 for a family of three, respectively.
- **Moved more than 100,000 households** from the City's homeless shelters into permanent housing and **provided 260,000 individuals** emergency rental arrears assistance grants.
- **Helped more than 72,000 seniors and renters with disabilities afford rent** in 2019 by freezing their rent payments and paying the difference to their landlords.
- **Enacted the nation's first universal access to counsel legislation, and provided free legal assistance to more than 100,00 households.** Eviction filings and completed evictions have fallen by over 40% percent since legal assistance was expanded in 2014.
- **In rezoned neighborhoods, ensured housing builders dedicate 20% to 30% of units to affordable housing.** New York City's aggressive Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) program has produced over 2,700 new permanently affordable homes in 18 Community Districts.
- **Created affordable space for commercial and industrial businesses,** particularly in high poverty communities and communities of color including the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, Downtown Far Rockaway, and the East New York Industrial Business Zone.
- **Financed more than 165,000 affordable units – enough to house about 350,000 New Yorkers** through the Mayor's ambitious affordable housing plan, with tens of thousands of more units on the way.

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