



# WHO GETS IT DONE & HOW

A People's Guide to Development in New York City

The Municipal Art Society of New York  
**MASNYC**

Generously supported by:



## **ABOUT MAS**

Founded in 1893, the Municipal Art Society (MAS) has helped create a more livable city by advocating for the quality of the built environment through excellence in urban planning, design, preservation, and placemaking. From saving Grand Central Terminal and the lights of Times Square to establishing groundbreaking land-use and preservation laws that have become national models, MAS is at the forefront of New York's most important campaigns to promote our city's economic vitality, cultural vibrancy, environmental sustainability, and social diversity.

MAS has played a critical role in the creation of the New York City Planning Commission, Design Commission, and Landmarks Preservation Commission, and has served as an incubator for such civic organizations as the Public Art Fund, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Historic Districts Council, the Park Avenue Armory, and the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance.

## **MAS A PEOPLE'S GUIDE TEAM**

Alison Brown, Joanna Crispe, Mike Ernst, Aileen Gorsuch, Sami Naim, Kate Slevin, Casey Uy, Karyn Williams

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Chair: Frederick Iseman	Sophia Koven
President: Vin Cipolla	David W. Levinson
Treasurer: James M. Clark, Jr.	Christy MacLear
Secretary: Frances Resheske	Chris McCartin
General Counsel: Earl Weiner, Esq.	Joseph A. McMillan, Jr.
Enid L. Beal	Gregory Morey
Elizabeth Belfer	Richard Olcott
Eugenie L. Birch	Barbara Koz Paley
Serena Boardman	Julio Peterson
Gabriel Calatrava	Carlos Pujol
Lisa Smith Cashin	David F. Solomon
Vishaan Chakrabarti	Kent M. Swig
Kathryn C. Chenault, Esq.	Yeohlee Teng
Carol Coletta	Thomas Vecchione
Michael P. Donovan	Thomas L. Woltz
Mark Fisch	William H. Wright II
Susan K. Freedman	Gary J. Zarr
Kitty Hawks	
Manuela V. Hoelterhoff	

## **DIRECTORS EMERITI**

Kent Barwick	Charles A. Platt
David M. Childs	Janet C. Ross
Joan K. Davidson	Whitney North Seymour, Jr., Esq.
Hugh Hardy	Jerry I. Speyer
Philip K. Howard	Stephen C. Swid
John E. Merow, Esq.	Helen S. Tucker
Frederic S. Papert	

## **EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT**

Mary Rowe

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

Pure and Applied

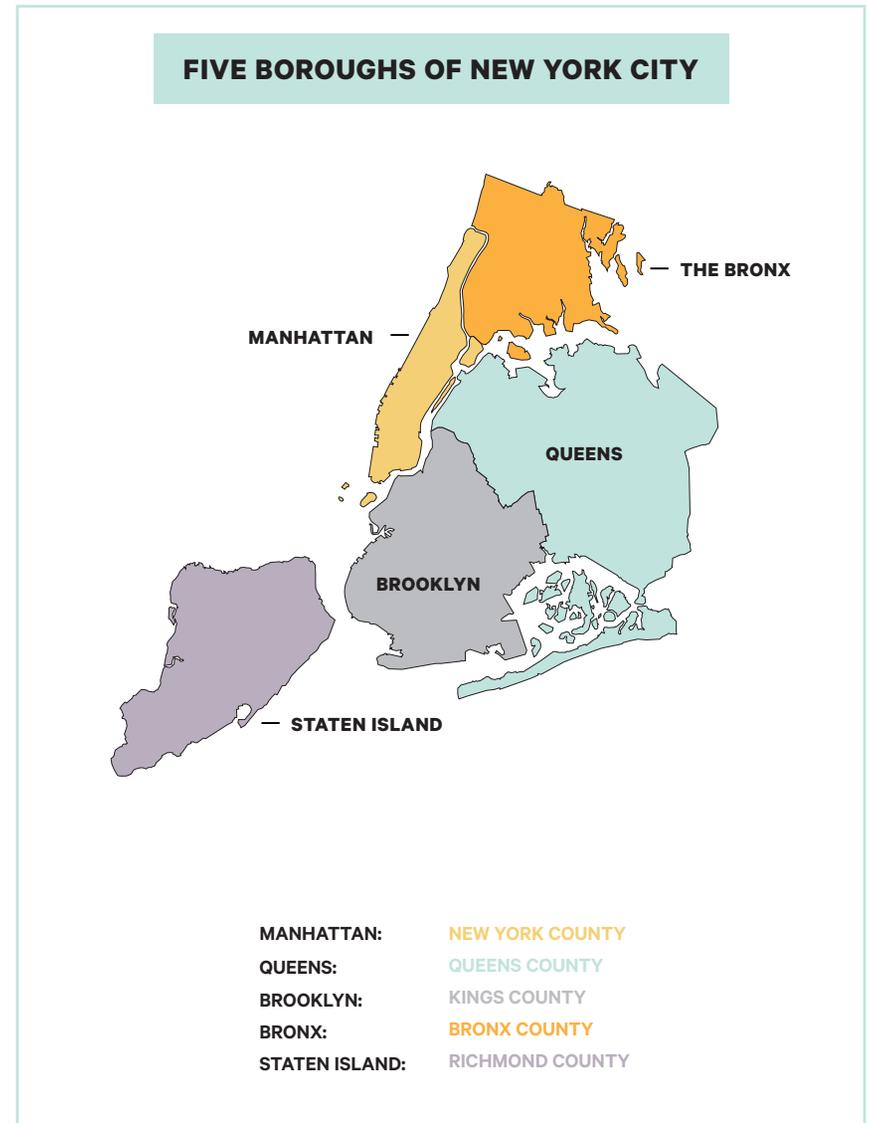
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>02</b>	<b>[ 1 ]</b>	Introduction
<b>04</b>	<b>[ 2 ]</b>	New York City Government
<b>20</b>	<b>[ 3 ]</b>	Understanding the Development Process
<b>36</b>	<b>[ 4 ]</b>	Affordable Housing
<b>44</b>	<b>[ 5 ]</b>	Parks
<b>48</b>	<b>[ 6 ]</b>	Streets
<b>54</b>	<b>[ 7 ]</b>	Neighborhood Economic Development
<b>58</b>	<b>[ 8 ]</b>	Community-Based Resilience
<b>62</b>	<b>[ 9 ]</b>	Budgets
<b>70</b>	<b>[10]</b>	Public Hearings
<b>72</b>	<b>[11]</b>	Who Represents You?
<b>77</b>	<b>[12]</b>	Glossary

## [ 1 ] INTRODUCTION

Many New York City communities seek a larger role in shaping their built environment and in planning for their future. Public involvement is critical to achieving a more just and equitable city and is a fundamental component of successful planning. But effective community participation requires basic knowledge of existing structures and processes by which plans, policies, and day-to-day decisions are made.

This document intends to explain the planning and development processes in New York City and give communities basic information about who controls what, why they make decisions, and how to influence those decisions. With these tools, citizens can become more effective advocates for their communities.



New York City's political geography is unique. The City is made up of five boroughs. The boroughs belong to their own county.

## [ 2 ] NEW YORK CITY GOVERNMENT

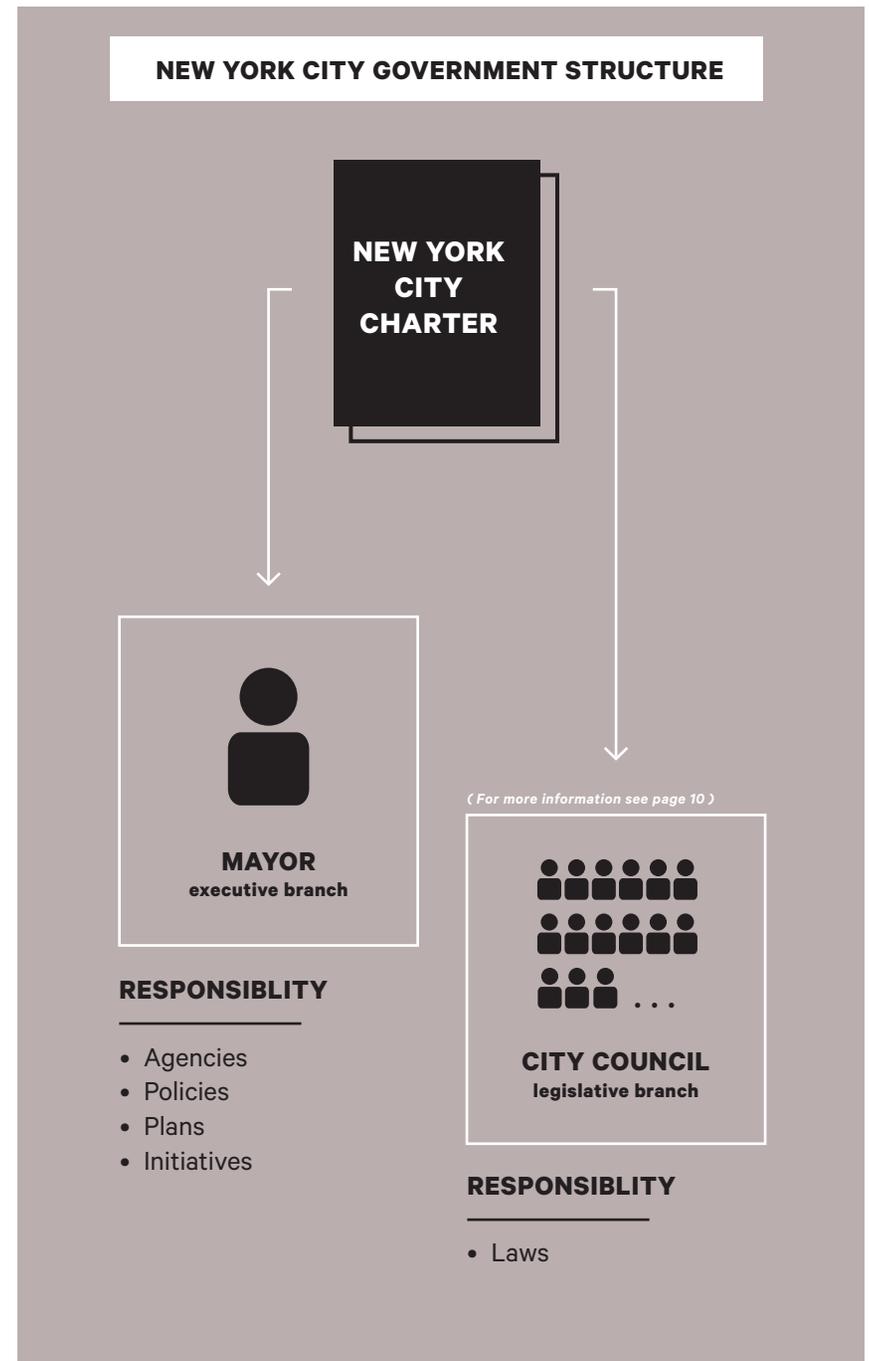
The built environment in New York City is controlled or regulated by some level of government. For example, buildings are regulated by the City's Department of Buildings and streets by the Department of Transportation. Understanding who controls what and how decisions are made helps residents navigate the planning process and be effective voices for their communities.

The New York City Charter lays out how local government will function. New York has a mayor-council system whereby the Mayor and City Council are elected for a term of four years. Under the Charter, the Mayor is in charge of the City's executive branch and the City Council the legislative branch.

---

**City Government has a number of tools to change the form, function, design, and feel of communities.**

---



**THE PLAYERS**



**THE MAYOR**

---

**BILL DE BLASIO**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

---

- Runs City services
- Manages public safety & enforcement
- Administers public property
- Manages public agencies
- Issues strategic policy every four years

**POWER**

---

- Appoints heads of 50 agencies
- Appoints deputy Mayors
- Vetoes City Council legislative bills



**PUBLIC ADVOCATE**

---

**LETITIA JAMES**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

---

- Facilitates public relations with government agencies
- Investigates complaints regarding City agencies
- Mediates disputes

**POWER**

---

- Introduces legislation
- Replaces Mayor if Mayor is unable to serve



**COMPTROLLER**

---

**SCOTT M. STRINGER**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

---

- Manages the City's budget
- Advises Mayor & City Council on all financial matters
- Audits finances of City agencies
- Issues & markets City bonds

**POWER**

---

- Investigates City expenses & finances
- Replaces Mayor if Public Advocate is unable to serve as Mayor

**BOROUGH PRESIDENTS**



**QUEENS**

---

**MELINDA KATZ**



**BROOKLYN**

---

**ERIC ADAMS**



**STATEN ISLAND**

---

**JAMES ODDO**



**MANHATTAN**

---

**GALE BREWER**



**THE BRONX**

---

**RUBEN DIAZ JR.**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

---

- Advocates for their respective borough
- Works with residents, community organizations, schools, and other individuals

**POWER**

---

- Advises Mayor on issues relating to boroughs
- Comments on land-use issues
- Appoints members to community boards and City Planning Commission

**OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS**



**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

**MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO**

*( Elected by fellow council members )*

**RESPONSIBILITY**

- Leads City Council
- Represents respective district

**POWER**

- Decides which legislative bills will be voted on
- Appoints chairs of various Council committees
- Distributes discretionary funds to Council committees



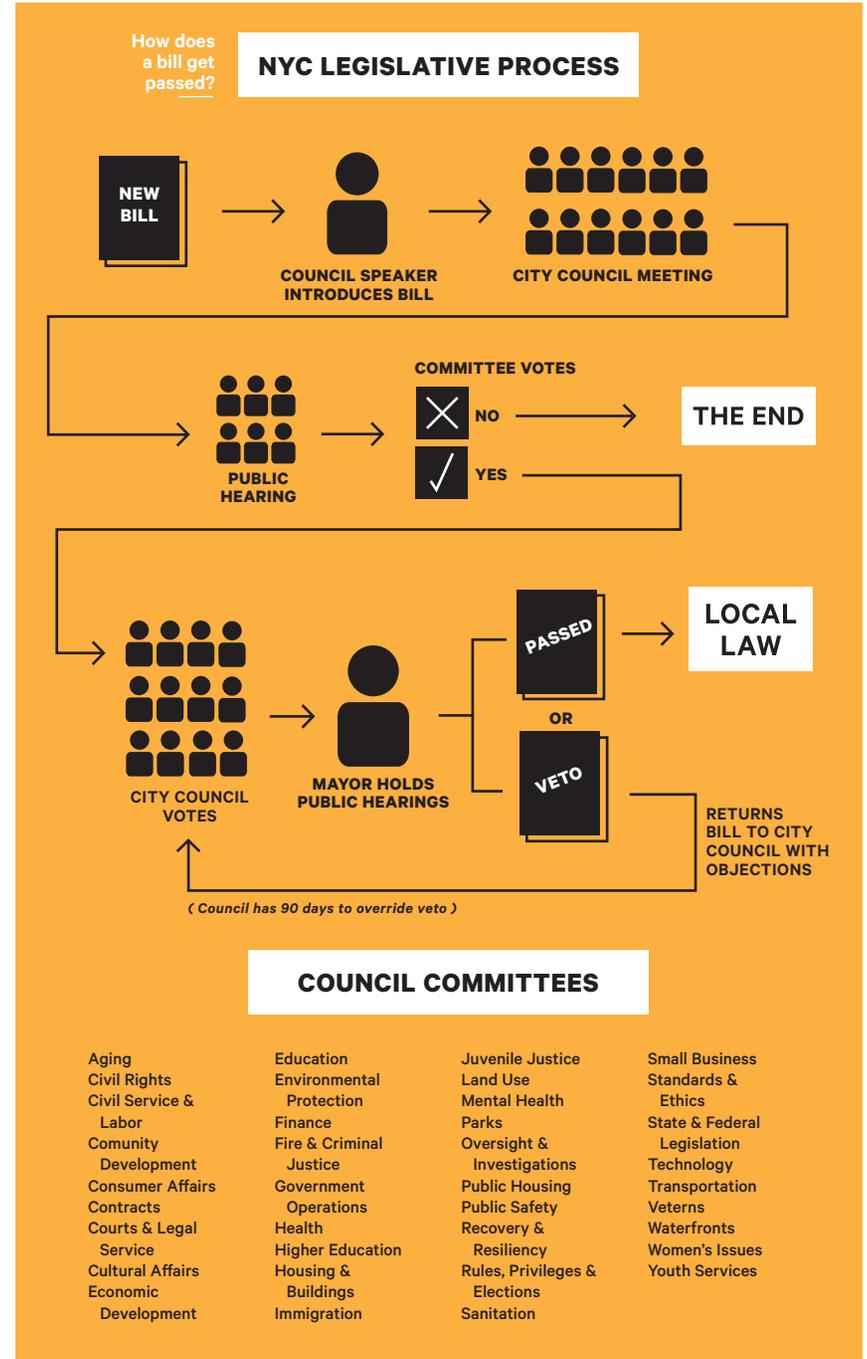
**CITY COUNCIL**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

- Represents council district
- Maintains office in district
- Performs constituent services
- Serves on various committees for oversight and legislative hearings

**POWER**

- Introduces City legislation
- Votes on proposed legislation and City budget
- Votes to overturn a Mayoral veto
- Passes City budget
- Supports or opposes development in their district



## CITY COUNCIL BY BOROUGH

### STATEN ISLAND



3 City Council Members

### BRONX



8 City Council Members

### MANHATTAN



10 City Council Members

### QUEENS



14 City Council Members

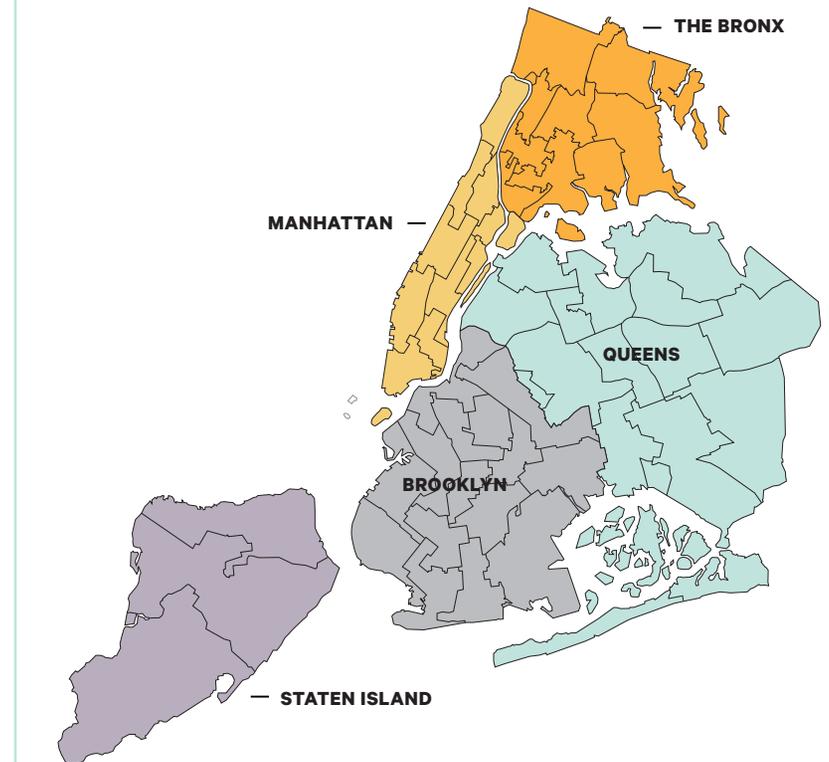
### BROOKLYN



16 City Council Members

# 51 COUNCIL MEMBERS

## CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT MAP



For information about City Council Districts go to: [www.council.nyc.gov](http://www.council.nyc.gov)

## COMMUNITY BOARDS

Community Boards are local representative bodies that meet monthly to address local concerns. Board meetings are open to the public and can be a great way to learn about proposed development, public safety, and municipal services in your neighborhood. Community Boards also hold public hearings on the City’s budget or land-use matters to give community members the opportunity to express their opinions and concerns.

### RESPONSIBILITY

- Advises on land-use and zoning issues
- Prepares local statement of needs for City budget
- Addresses community concerns
- Advocates for better government services
- Renames streets

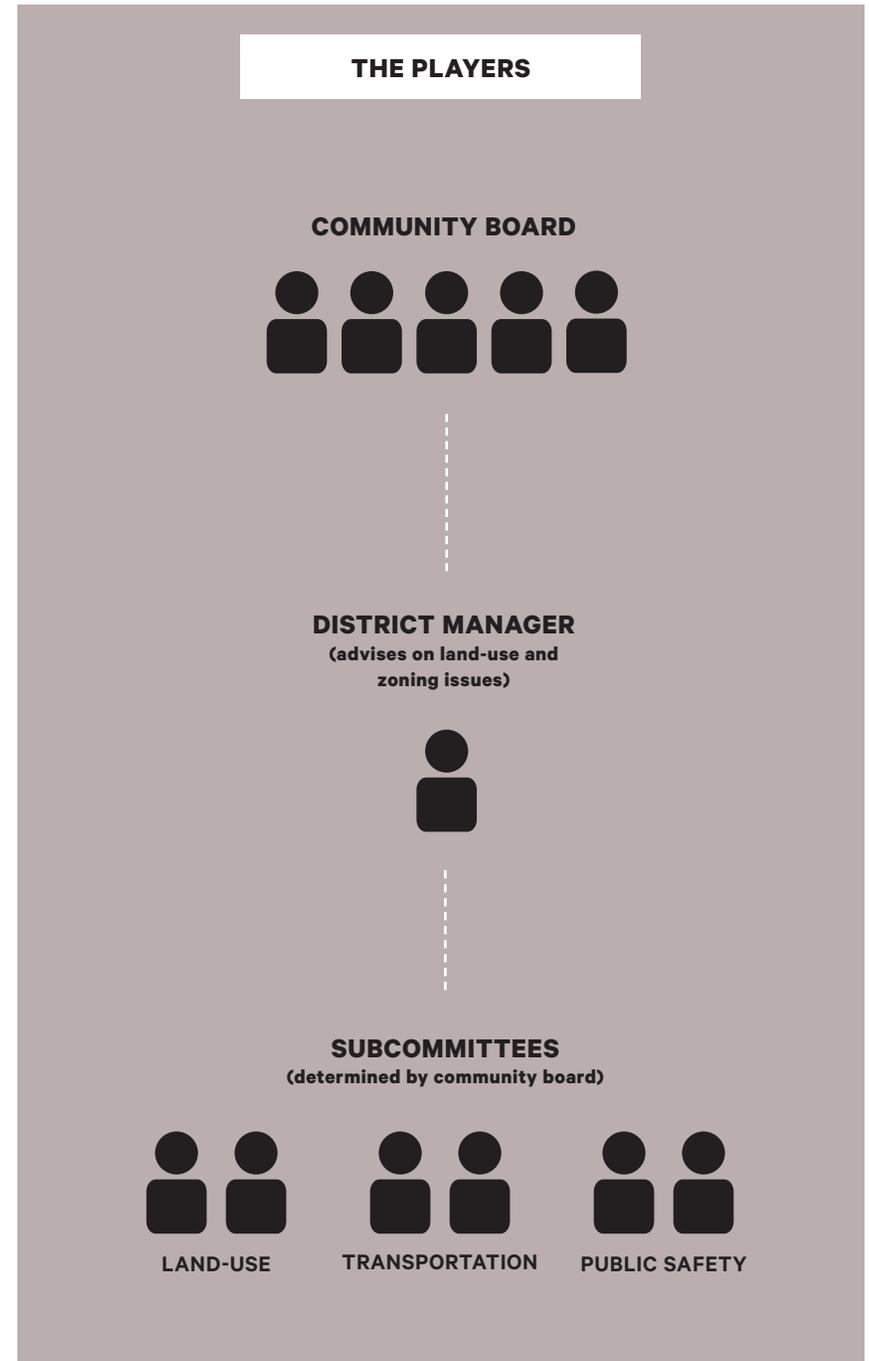
### POWER

- No authority to make or enforce laws but are often effective in advocating for improvements in city services

### COMMUNITY BOARDS BY BOROUGH

**59**  
IN ALL OF NYC

- 12 MANHATTAN
- 12 THE BRONX
- 14 QUEENS
- 18 BROOKLYN
- 3 STATEN ISLAND



## **FEATURED PLAYERS**

Below are government agencies that are mentioned in this guidebook and involved in land-use and development in New York City.

To learn more, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/greenbook>

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Economic Development Corporation (EDC)**

EDC is a nonprofit organization that operates under contract with the City of New York. The organization's mission is to promote economic development throughout New York City.

## **FINANCE**

### **Department of Small Business Services (SBS)**

SBS helps businesses start, operate, and grow by providing direct assistance to owners. The department also links employers to a qualified workforce and fosters neighborhood development.

### **New York City Office of Management and Budget (OMB)**

OMB is responsible for preparing the Mayor's budgets and advising the Mayor on issues affecting the City's financial health and efficiency of City services and programs.

### **Department of Finance (DOF)**

DOF collects revenue, values property, records property documents, administers tax benefits, adjudicates parking tickets, and advises the Mayor on pension issues.

## **HOUSING**

### **Department of Homeless Services (DHS)**

DHS aims to prevent homelessness and provide short-term emergency shelter for individuals and families who have no other housing options available.

### **New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)**

NYCHA provides affordable housing to nearly 420,000 low and moderate income residents in 345 housing developments and 180,000 apartments in the five boroughs. Through federal rent subsidies (Section 8 Lease Housing Program), the Authority assists over 87,500 families in locating and renting housing in privately-owned buildings. In addition, the Authority provides social services for its residents through 112 community centers, 42 senior centers, and a variety of programs.

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)**

HPD supports the availability, affordability, and quality of housing in New York City using a variety of preservation, development, and enforcement strategies. The department works with private, public, and community partners to enable more New Yorkers to become homeowners or to rent well-maintained, affordable housing.

**New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC)**

HDC supplements and provides alternative ways of supplying financing for affordable housing. HDC is responsible for issuing bonds and for providing subsidies and low-cost loans to develop and preserve a variety of housing.

**Rent Guidelines Board (RGB)**

RGB provides information on renewal lease guidelines for rent-stabilized apartments in New York City.

**Department of Buildings (DOB)**

DOB enforces the Building Code, Zoning Resolution, and other applicable laws.

**LAND-USE & DESIGN**

**City Planning Commission (CPC)**

CPC makes land-use decisions that relate to housing, zoning, or urban renewal plans or projects that must be reviewed by the City Council. The Chair of CPC is also the head of the Department of City Planning. These two entities make up the City's professional planners and set the guidelines for growth and development.

**Department of City Planning (DCP)**

DCP oversees land-use planning for New York City by utilizing regulations to promote strategic growth and sustainable communities throughout the five boroughs. DCP works with the CPC.

**Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA)**

BSA hears requests from property owners relating to construction, building alterations, and zoning. The Board has the power to interpret the meaning of provisions of the Building Code, Fire Code, Multiple Dwelling Law, Labor Law, and Zoning Resolution. They also have the capacity to grant variances and some special permits under the Zoning Resolution.

**Public Design Commission (PDC)**

PDC reviews permanent works of art, architecture, and landscape architecture proposed on or over City-owned property. The commission also acts as caretaker and curator of the City's public art collection and maintains an extensive archive documenting the history of New York City.

**The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)**

LPC protects and preserves the culturally, historically and architecturally significant neighborhoods, buildings, and sites that tell the collective story of New York City.

## **PARKS**

### **Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)**

DPR oversees parks, athletic fields, playgrounds, public pools, golf courses, and beaches. The department also looks after 650,000 street trees and is a provider of recreational programs and athletic facilities.

## **RESILIENCE**

### **The Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU)**

CAU is a unit that was established to deepen partnerships with communities to engage and mobilize New Yorkers in local government.

### **The Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resilience (ORR)**

ORR was established by Mayor Bill de Blasio to plan for future risks of climate change and rebuild the communities that were affected by Hurricane Sandy in the fall of 2012. It is also in charge of implementing a long-term, comprehensive action plan to strengthen coastal defenses, upgrade buildings, protect infrastructure, and make vulnerable neighborhoods safer.

### **New York City's Office of Emergency Management (OEM)**

OEM was established in 1996 and is in charge of planning and preparing for emergencies, coordinating emergency responses and disseminating emergency information, and educating the public about preparedness.

### **New York City's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS)**

OLTPS is a part of the New York City Mayor's Office, OLTPS works with agencies, advocates, partners, and industry to advance long-term plans for sustainable growth. They are also in charge of developing and overseeing implementation of OneNYC (formerly PlaNYC), the City's sustainability plan for growth, sustainability, resiliency, and equity.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Department of Transportation (DOT)**

DOT provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in New York City. The agency maintains bridges, tunnels, streets, sidewalks, and bike lanes. They also operate the Staten Island ferry.

### **Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)**

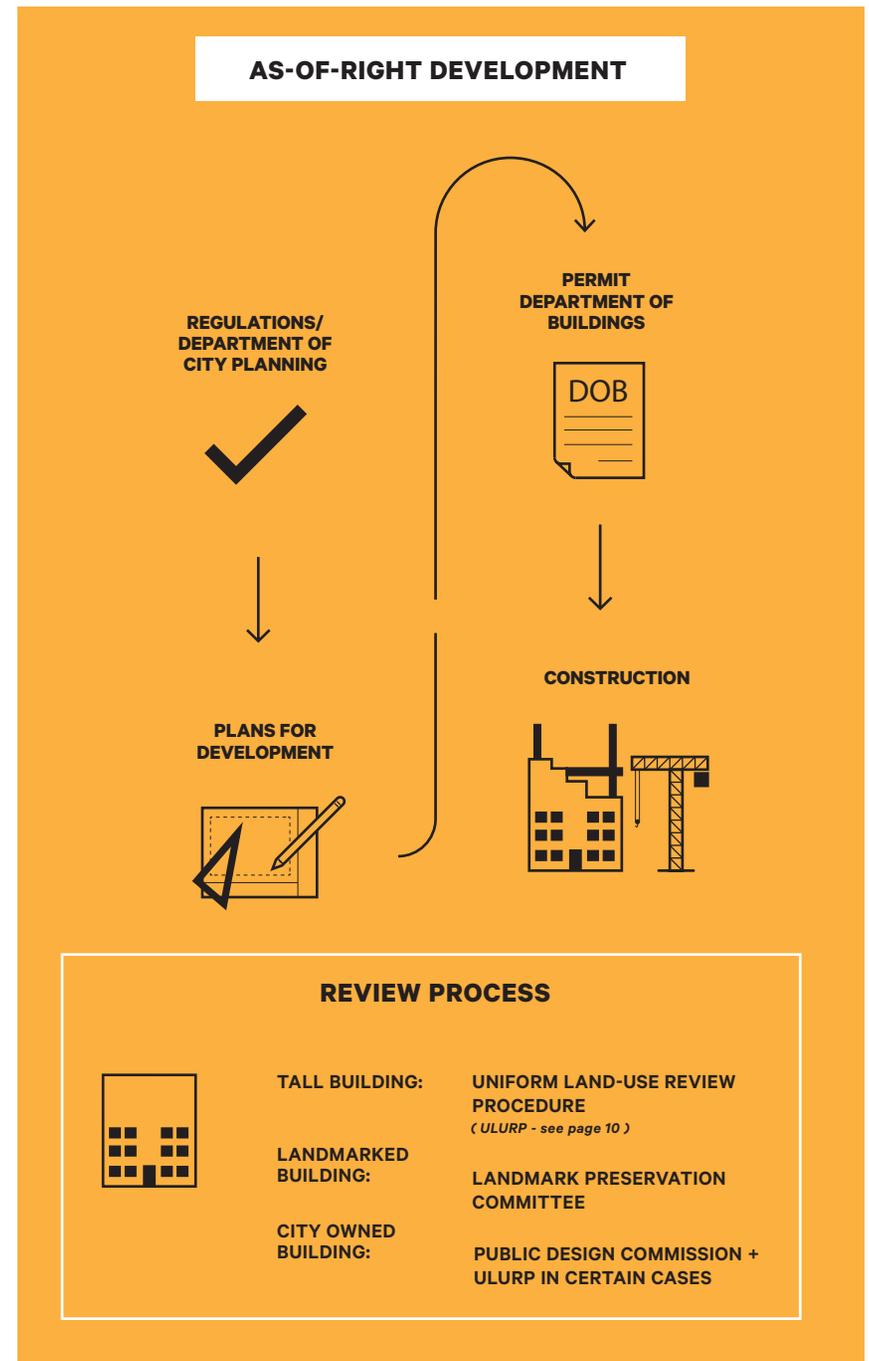
MTA is a state authority controlled by the Governor that provides local and express bus, subway, and regional rail service in greater New York. It also operates multiple toll bridges and tunnels in New York City.

### [ 3 ] UNDERSTANDING THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Many New York City communities seek a larger role in shaping their built environment and in planning for their future. To participate effectively, New Yorkers need to know all the means they have to weigh in on important land-use decisions. There are many opportunities for the public to influence outcomes, even if final decision-making power rests with agencies and elected officials.

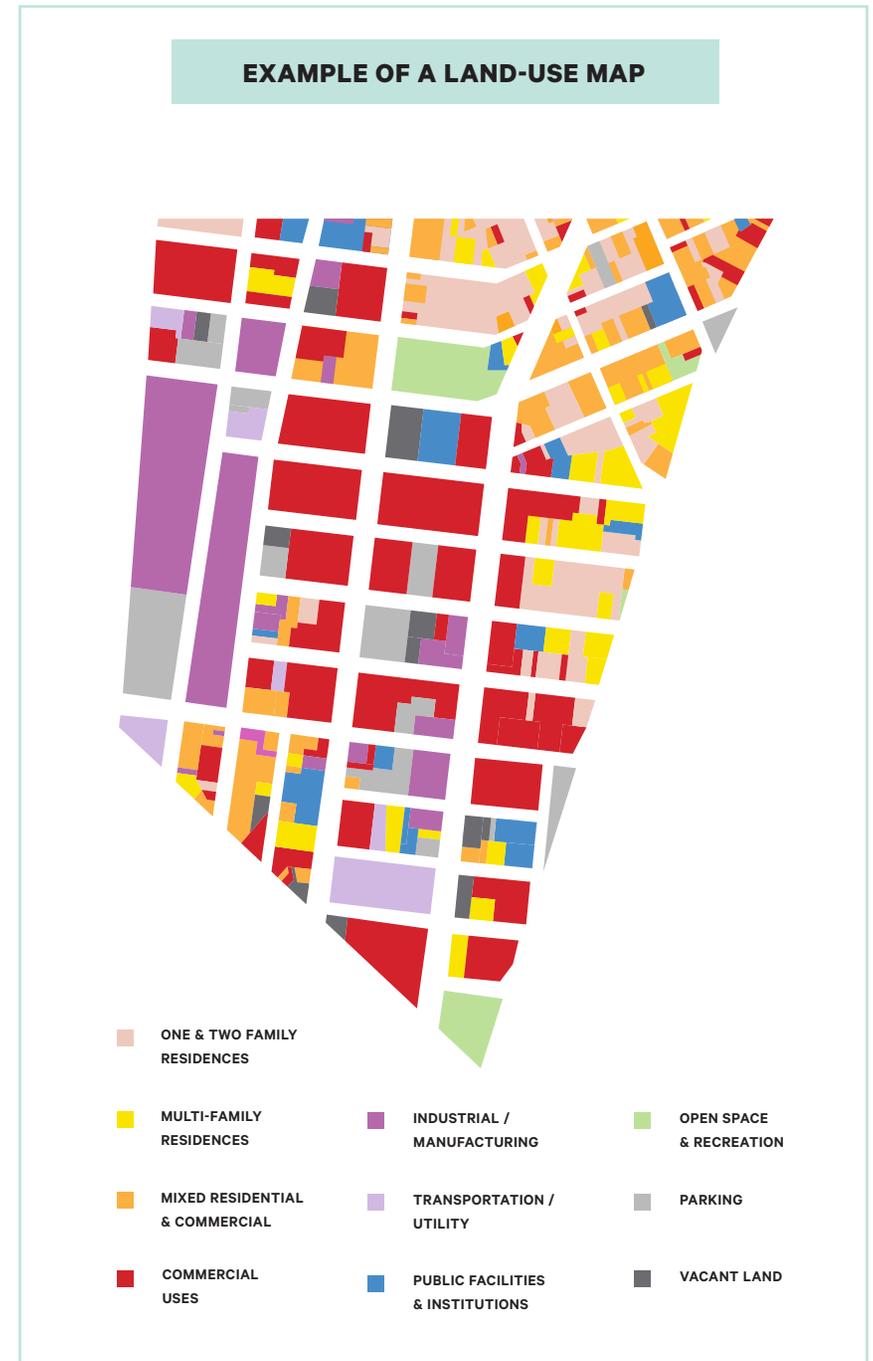
Generally, new construction cannot begin in New York City without a permit from the Department of Buildings. The Department of Buildings reviews permit applications for compliance with the Building Code, the Zoning Resolution, and, in the case of residential buildings, the State Multiple Dwelling Law as well.

If the project complies with the applicable rules, then it is “as-of-right.” The Department of Buildings may issue the permits without public review, and construction can begin. Most projects in the City meet all codes and regulations and are approved as-of-right.



## LAND-USE

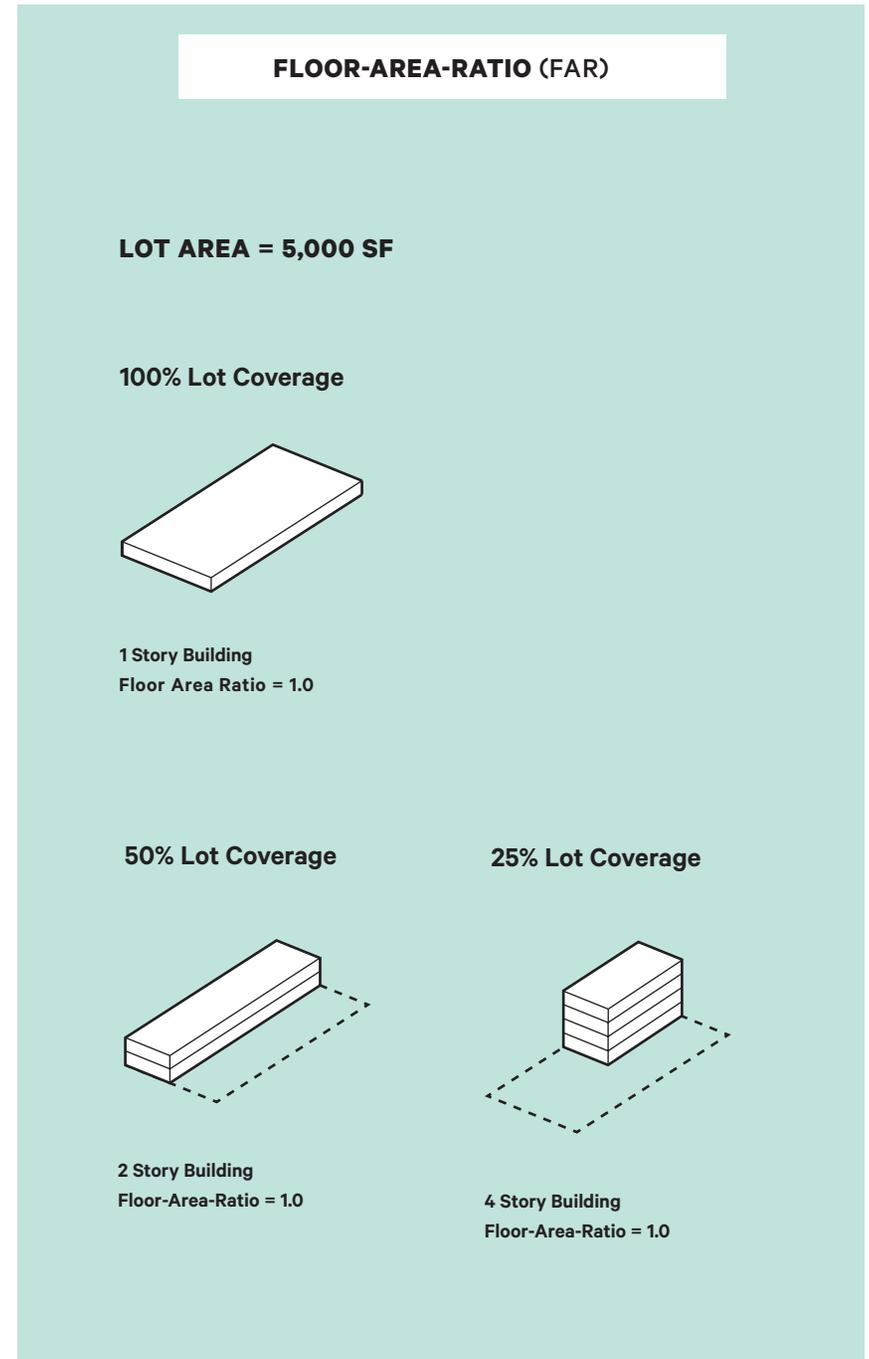
The term land use refers to the way that public and private property is used. For example, properties can be used for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, or manufacturing uses. In New York City, the City's Zoning Resolution classifies land usage and regulates buildings' height, size, relationship to the street, and what happens in the building. Zoning shapes the City's built form. Local governments create districts to regulate what types of uses and structure can legally be built within a district. These regulations are known as zoning.



## ZONING

In 1916, New York became the first city in the world to implement citywide zoning regulations as a response to an abundance of skyscrapers being built near Wall Street with virtually no regulation. The buildings shut out daylight due to their unprecedented size. By limiting massing above certain heights, the 1916 code resulted in the proliferation of skyscrapers with setbacks such as the Empire State and Chrysler Buildings which still help define the Manhattan skyline.

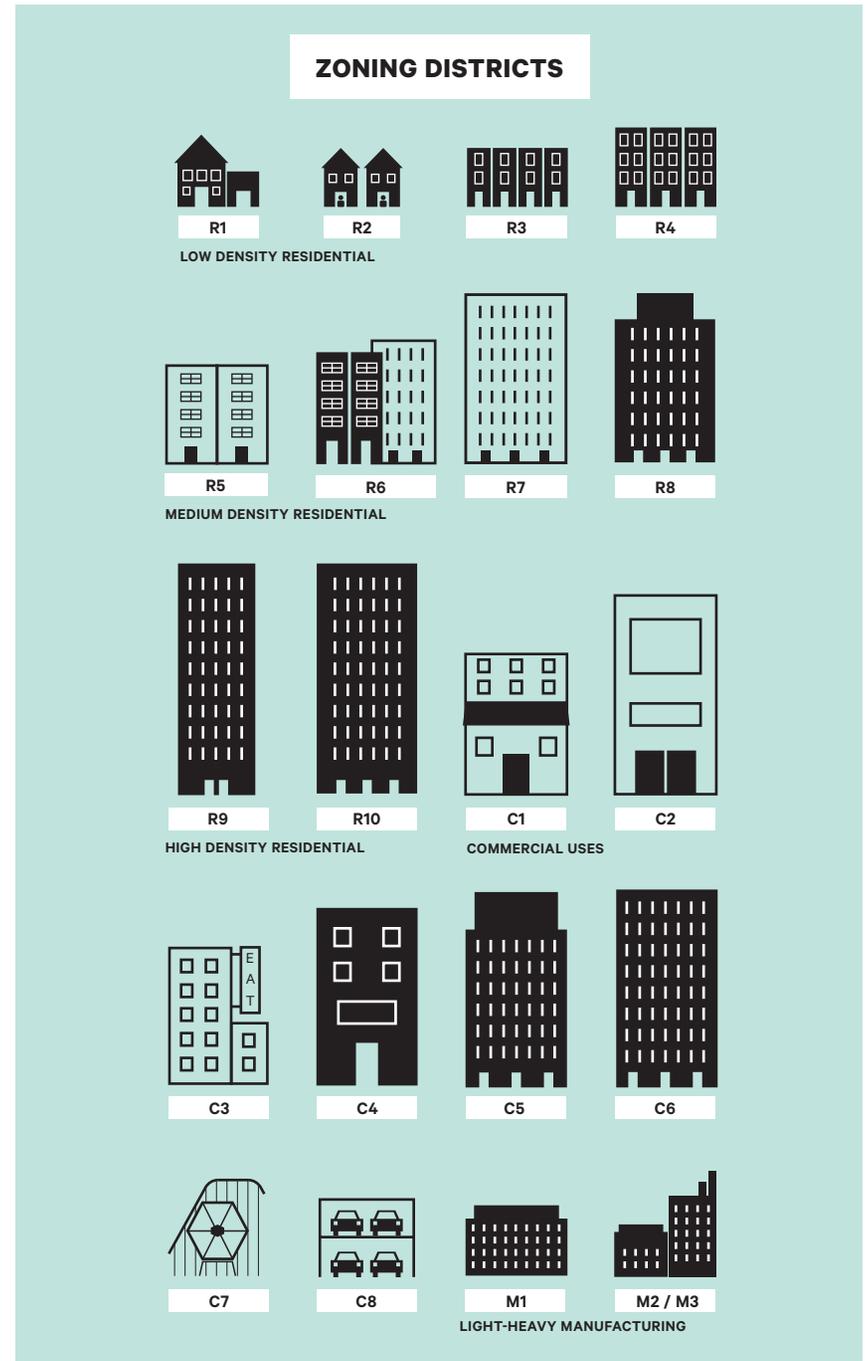
The city replaced this massing-based code with a new Zoning Resolution based on Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR) in 1961. This principle, still in effect, regulates the size of a building based on the size of the building lot.



**ZONING** cont.

Currently, the city is divided into three types of zoning districts: residential (R), commercial (C) and manufacturing (M). Each of these district types regulates:

- The distance between the building and the front, side and rear lot lines;
  - The amount of required or permitted parking; and
  - Other features applicable to specific residential, commercial or manufacturing districts.
- For residential uses, the number of dwelling units permitted, the amount of open space and planting required on the zoning lot and the maximum amount of the lot that can be covered by a building

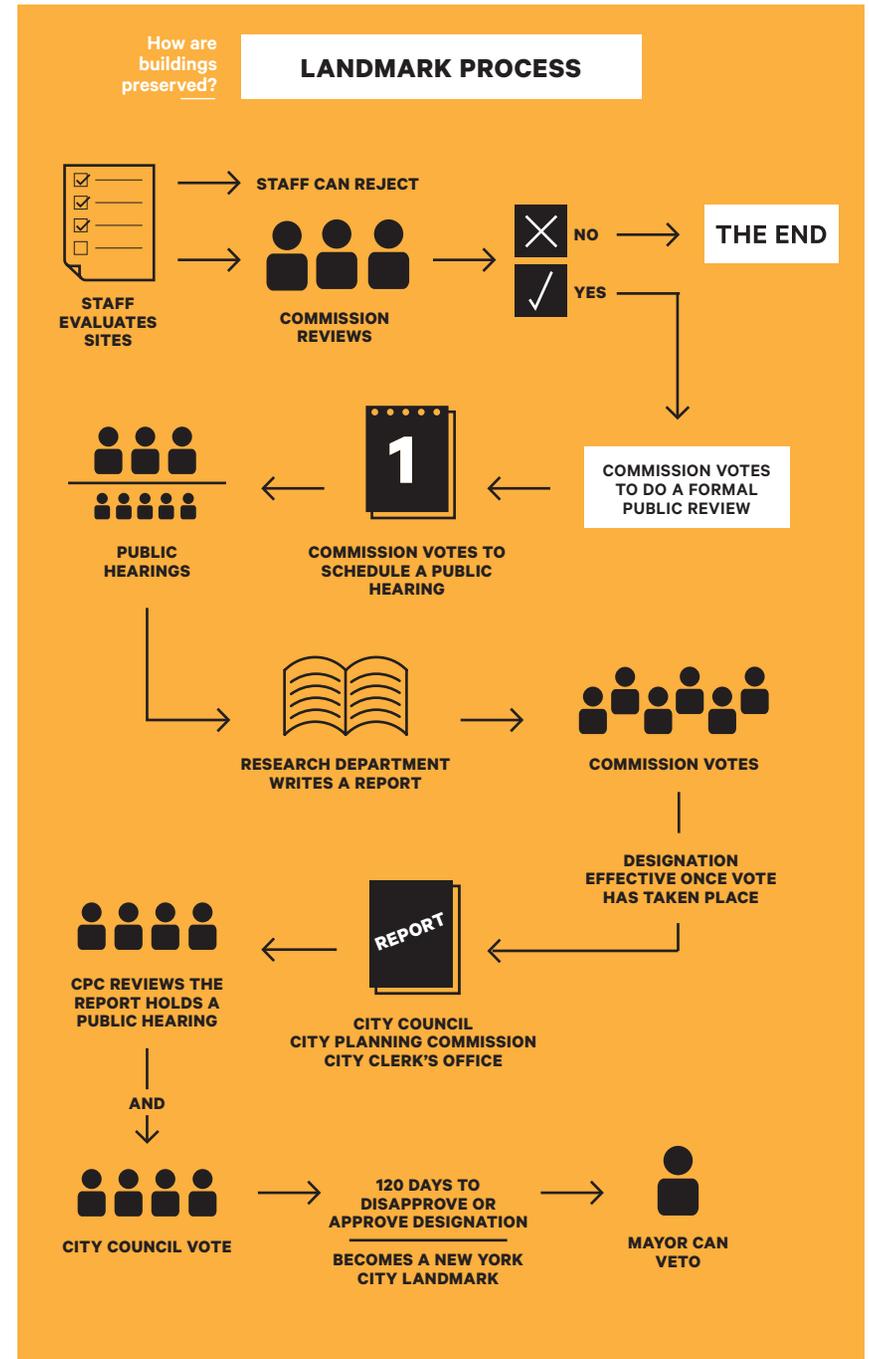


## NYC LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Certain properties have regulations that prohibit as-of-right construction. For instance, historically significant properties that are designated as a New York City landmark or located within a designated historic district are under the jurisdiction of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Before the Department of Buildings will allocate a new building permit, projects must first receive permission from the Landmarks Preservation Commission. In addition to overseeing existing landmarks, the Landmarks Preservation Commission also designates new landmarks.

There are four types of City landmarks, including individual, interior, scenic, and historic districts. Anyone can propose a site for landmark consideration, however there is specific criteria that must be met before consideration.



**DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS**

There are times when development does not fit within the existing laws. In these cases, special permission or review must be given. The development review process in New York City is called Uniform Land-Use Review Procedure (called “U-LURP”).

**Only 10% of construction projects in New York City trigger ULURP**

When a proposed development does not comply with one or more zoning requirements, the requirements may be waived or modified through a special permit, a variance, or a zoning amendment. These waivers require discretionary approvals and trigger public review processes.

Special permits may be requested in order to change the limitations in the size of a building or to permit uses that are generally compatible with the surrounding area but that are not permitted “as of right” Special permits are granted for facilities like:

- 1**



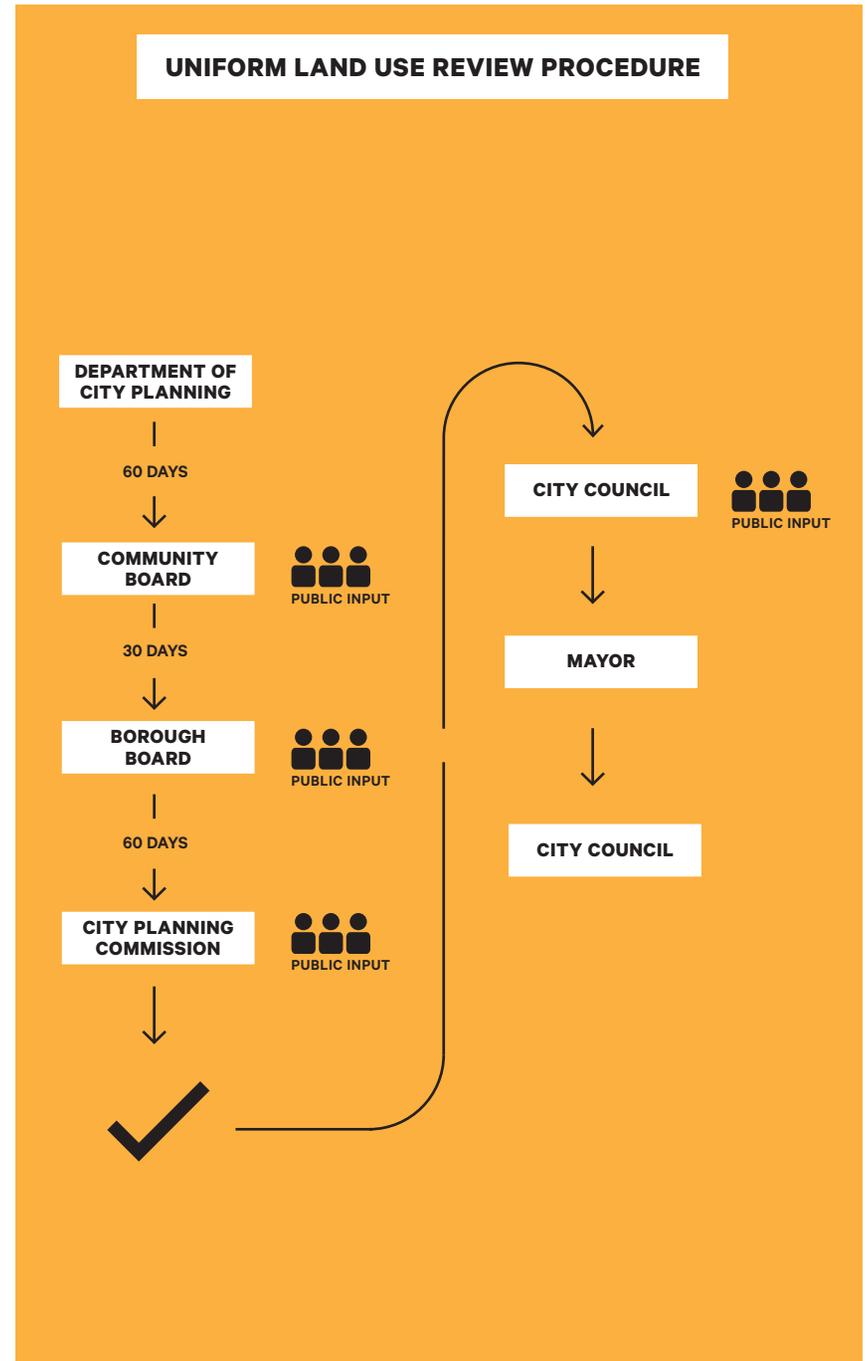
Parking Garages
- 2**



Large Shopping Centers
- 3**



Amusement Parks



## **UNIFORM LAND-USE REVIEW PROCEDURE**

The Uniform Land-Use Review Procedure (ULURP), is a lengthy review process, including public hearings and several levels of government approval. It is one of the few means of direct participation in planning and development decisions.

Before ULURP begins the Department of City Planning (DCP) must review and approve all applications. The application also undergoes environmental review to determine whether the project may have significant environmental effects. If it is determined that there will be an environmental impact, a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) must be prepared (usually by the applicant) and accepted by the City before the ULURP application is certified and the review process can begin. The ULURP process and the environmental review process happen at the same time.

---

**There are opportunities for public input in the City’s development review processes.**

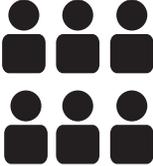
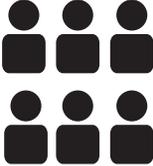
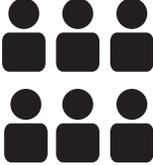
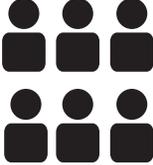
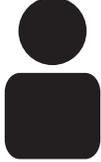
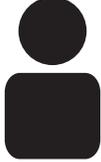
---

If an EIS must be prepared, DCP releases a DEIS and holds a public “scoping hearing”. Comments from the public are accepted at the time of the hearing and for ten days following. The period from initial application to approval (“certification”) has no absolute time limits.

**ACTIONS THAT REQUIRE ULURP**

<p><b>1</b> Changes to the City map</p>	<p><b>6</b> Permission for a private entity to operate a business on public land, such as concession stands in parks</p>
<p><b>2</b> Mapping of subdivisions or plotting of land into streets, avenues or public places</p>	<p><b>7</b> Improvements in City property that the City is not responsible for paying</p>
<p><b>3</b> Designation or change of zoning district</p>	<p><b>8</b> Housing and urban renewal plans and projects</p>
<p><b>4</b> Special permits that require approval of the City Planning Commission (CPC)</p>	<p><b>9</b> Sanitary or waterfront landfills</p>
<p><b>5</b> Site selection for capital projects like the construction of libraries, fire houses and sanitation garages</p>	<p><b>10</b> Disposition and acquisition of City owned property. This includes sale, lease, or exchange of property</p>

## THE PLAYERS

 <p><b>BOARD OF STANDARD APPEALS (BSA)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSIBILITY</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hears advisory recommendations from community board</li> <li>Sets date for environmental review public hearing</li> </ul>	<p><b>POWER</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants variances</li> <li>Requires developers to notify City Planning Commission, local Borough President, Community Board, local City Council</li> </ul>	 <p><b>CITY PLANNING COMMISSION</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSIBILITY</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviews project</li> <li>Holds a public hearing within 60 days</li> </ul>	<p><b>POWER</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approves, modifies, or disapproves</li> <li>Disapprovals are final but Mayor can bring the case to City Council</li> </ul>
 <p><b>COMMUNITY BOARD</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSIBILITY</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducts public hearing within 60 day review period</li> </ul>	<p><b>POWER</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes advisory recommendations to City Planning Commission, Borough President</li> </ul>	 <p><b>CITY COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSIBILITY</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviews final approvals from City Planning Commission</li> <li>Holds a public hearing within 50 day period</li> </ul>	<p><b>POWER</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approves, modifies, or disapproves City Planning Commission decision</li> <li>Overrides a veto by Mayor</li> </ul>
 <p><b>BOROUGH PRESIDENT</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSIBILITY</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviews project and community board recommendations within 30 day period</li> <li>Elects to hold a public hearing during this period</li> </ul>	<p><b>POWER</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes advisory recommendations to City Planning Commission</li> </ul>	 <p><b>MAYOR</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSIBILITY</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets priorities for development</li> <li>Monitors the process</li> </ul>	<p><b>POWER</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vetoes City Council decisions within 5 days</li> </ul>

## [ 4 ] AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The shortage of affordable housing is the one issue all New York City communities can identify with. The City has experienced an increase in population and a building boom in the luxury apartment market. A “crisis of affordability” has hit New York City’s housing market with rents rising 40% over the past 20 years.

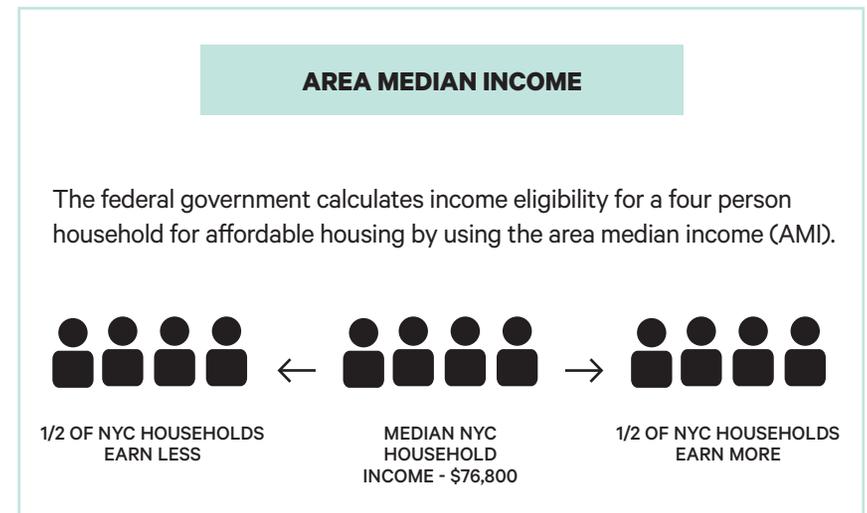
Although development and investment can be a positive force for neighborhood change, many communities are finding themselves struggling to balance new community development with the financial limitations of existing neighborhood residents and the desire to preserve neighborhood character and identity. Throughout the city, low to moderate income residents are being priced out of neighborhoods they have called home for generations. New York City’s affordable housing crisis is not only about helping people find an affordable place to live, but creating a stabilizing force in communities that helps protect existing residents while accommodating new residents who need affordable housing.

Affordability is a relative term: there are a number of different sets of data that are important to use when addressing housing affordability in order to create a more complete picture of your neighborhood’s resources and needs.

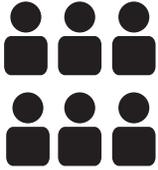
---

**42% of renters in New York rely on some form of rental subsidy.**

---



**THE PLAYERS**



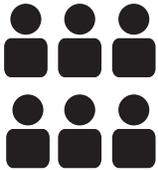
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (HPD)**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

- Helps developers preserve and create affordable housing

**POWER**

- Provides developers financial assistance with buying land, predevelopment and development costs



**NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY (NYCHA)**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

- Manages and provide affordable housing for low-income residents

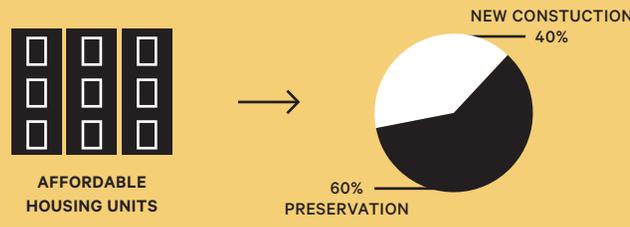
**POWER**

- Disperses section 8 vouchers
- Raises funds from private donors

**FIVE BOROUGHS / TEN YEAR HOUSING PLAN**

**200,000 UNITS / 10 YEAR PLAN**

BILL DE BLASIO'S PLAN TO ADDRESS AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS



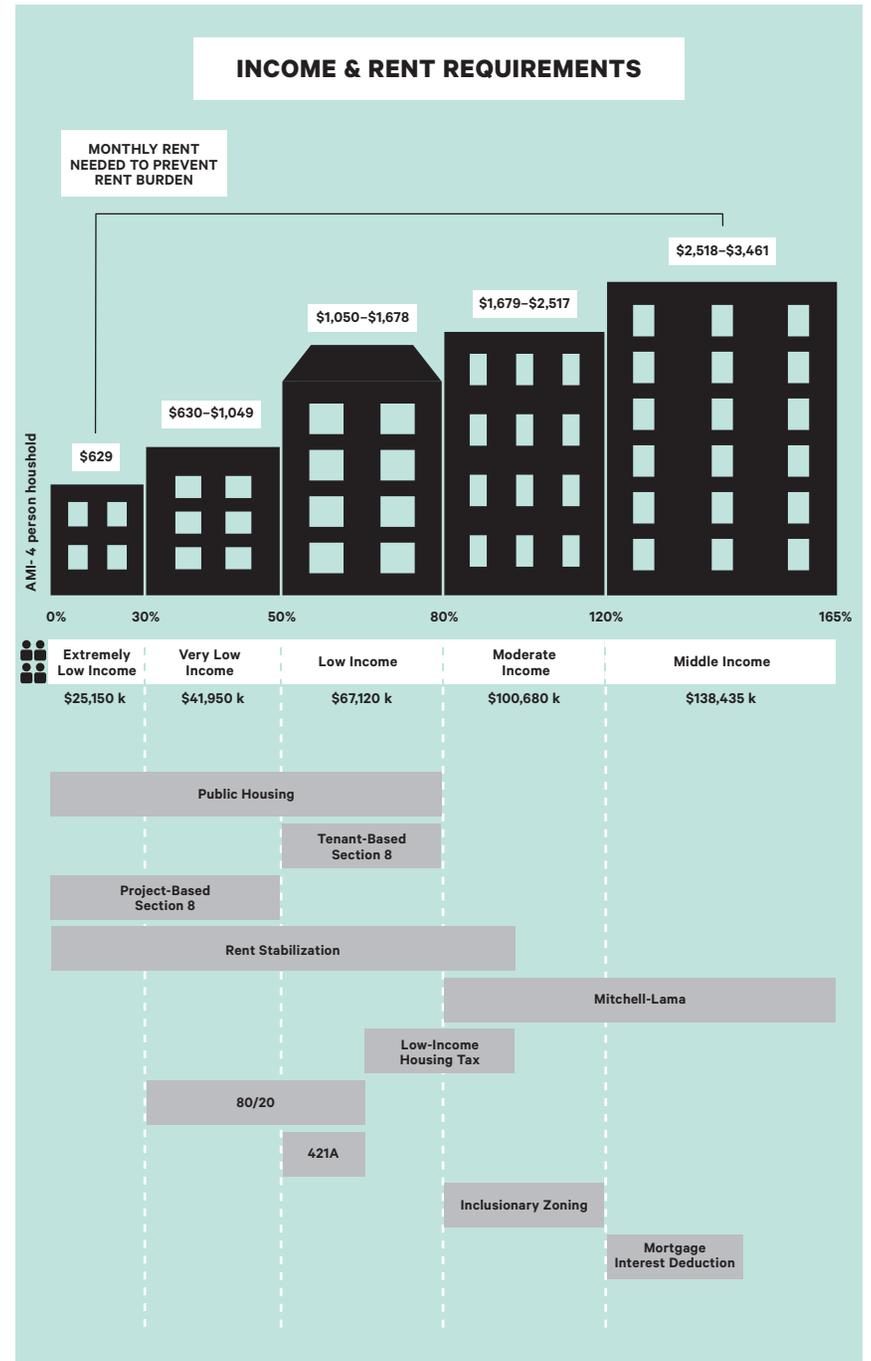
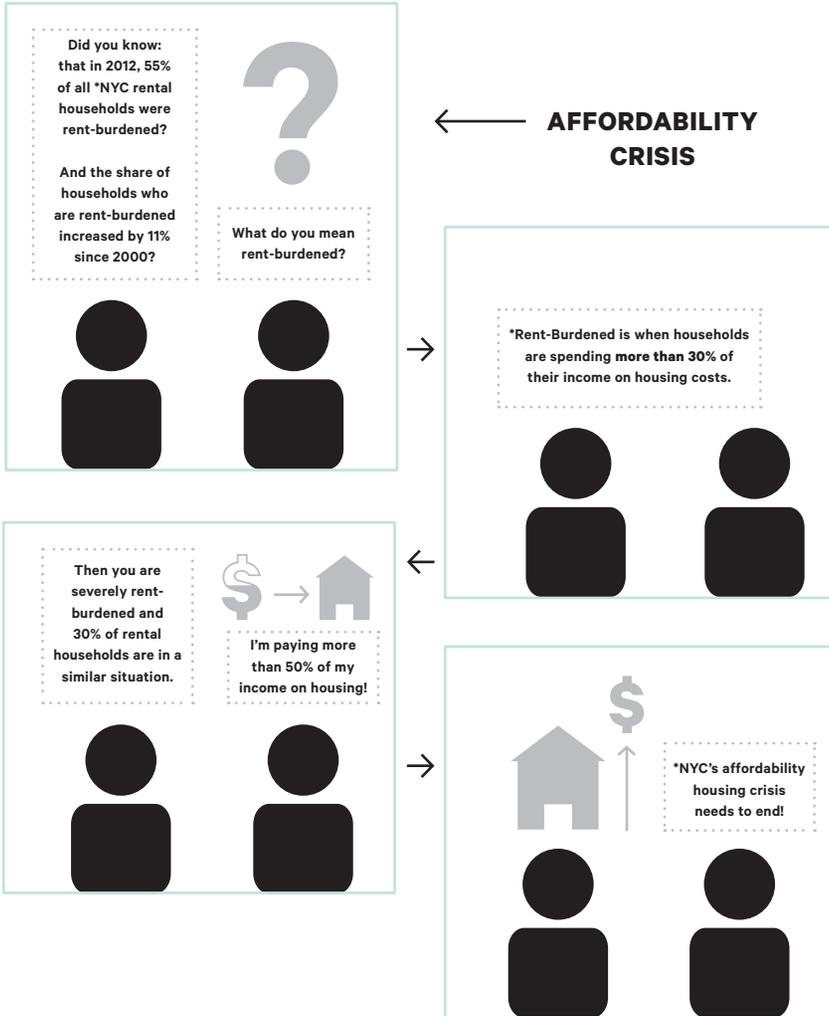
**AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS** → **NEW CONSTRUCTION 40%**  
**60% PRESERVATION**

**HOW WILL THIS BE DONE?**

-  Find opportunities for affordable housing in all boroughs.
-  Mandatory inclusionary zoning
- Require a portion of new housing to be permanently affordable.
-  Change financing tools.
- More funding services.

MIDDLE INCOME	11%
MODERATE INCOME	11%
LOW INCOME	58%
VERY LOW INCOME	12%
EXTREMELY LOW INCOME	8%

**A “crisis of affordability” has hit New York City’s housing market with rents rising 40% over the past 20 years.**





**INCENTIVES GIVEN TO DEVELOPERS TO BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT (LIHTC)**

A federal housing program that gives tax breaks to developers who agree to set aside parts of their development for lower-income families. Families earning 40–60 % or less of AMI are qualified. The targeted income categories vary by developer.

**80/20**

A state and City affordable housing program that gives low-cost financing and property tax breaks to developers who set aside at least 20 percent of the units in their buildings for lower income families. Eligibility for this program is similar to the LIHTC program.

**INCLUSIONARY ZONING**

A city program that allows developer to build larger buildings and gives tax breaks if they reserve units for affordable housing. Historically this program has been used in high density areas where developers are allowed to build a roughly 33% bigger building if they reserve 20% of their units for families at 80% of AMI, or 10% size bonus for families at 80% of AMI and 15% for families at 125% of AMI.



**INCENTIVES GIVEN TO LANDLORDS**

**MITCHELL-LAMA**

This program provides affordable rental and cooperative housing to moderate- and middle-income families. There are 132 City-sponsored, moderate- and middle-income rental and limited-equity cooperative developments in New York City, which contain approximately 54,000 units.

**SECTION 8**

A federally funded affordable housing program that works with private landlords who agree to set aside some of their units solely for the program. In New York City, families who earn 50% or less of AMI are qualified.



**SUBSIDIES GIVEN DIRECTLY TO HOUSEHOLDS**

**PUBLIC HOUSING**

A federally funded affordable housing program that is managed by the local housing authority (NYCHA). Families who earn 80% or less of area median income (AMI) are qualified.

**TENANT-BASED SECTION 8**

A federally funded affordable housing program that gives low-income families vouchers to help pay their rent on the private market. Families have to find landlords who are willing to take the vouchers and apartments that rent for the right amount. Families who earn 50–80% of AMI are qualified.

**MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTION**

A program under the federal tax code that allows homeowners to deduct the amount they spend on mortgage interest from their taxable income. Families that own their home and pay mortgage interest are qualified for this deduction.



**LAWS THAT SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**421A STATE-LAW**

City-run program that gives tax breaks to developers of residential buildings. The City does not increase the taxes on the property once the building is built, which is a significant cost savings to the developer. In certain neighborhoods in exchange for a tax break for 10-25 years, developers must set aside 20% of their units for low income families.

**RENT STABILIZATION**

A state law that puts a limit on how much landlords can increase yearly rents. This program mainly applies to buildings built before 1974. Post-1974 buildings that received tax breaks under other housing programs are also applicable. In order to qualify, families have to earn less than \$175,000 and the rent for their qualifying apartment must rent for less than \$2,000 per month.

## [ 5 ] PARKS

Everyone deserves equal access to public space. The City’s sustainability plan, OneNYC, recognizes this and sets goals to make it possible for all New Yorkers to live within a ten-minute walk of a park, public open space, or recreational facility. This effort is important because parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities are critical to people’s quality of life.

Some parks benefit from private support and have more resources than others for maintenance, construction of new buildings, and parks programming. Other communities have to advocate for better-maintained public space, beaches, and playgrounds. NYC Parks, a department in local government that is responsible for maintaining New York City’s parks, has committed to creating public spaces for all New Yorkers through their Framework for an Equitable Future.

### FRAMEWORK FOR AN EQUITABLE FUTURE

This framework would make all park systems in New York City more accessible, efficient, and improve maintenance. Under the framework is the Community Parks Initiative (CPI), the agency’s first major equity initiative to invest \$130 million in public parks in communities with the greatest need for open space improvement. This initiative will bring in educational workshops, maintenance, and community partnerships, as well as engage New Yorkers in helping to rebuild local parks.



**PARKS CONT.**

The Parks Department (DPR) is a large City agency with various divisions that handle different aspects of their work.

**MILLION TREES**

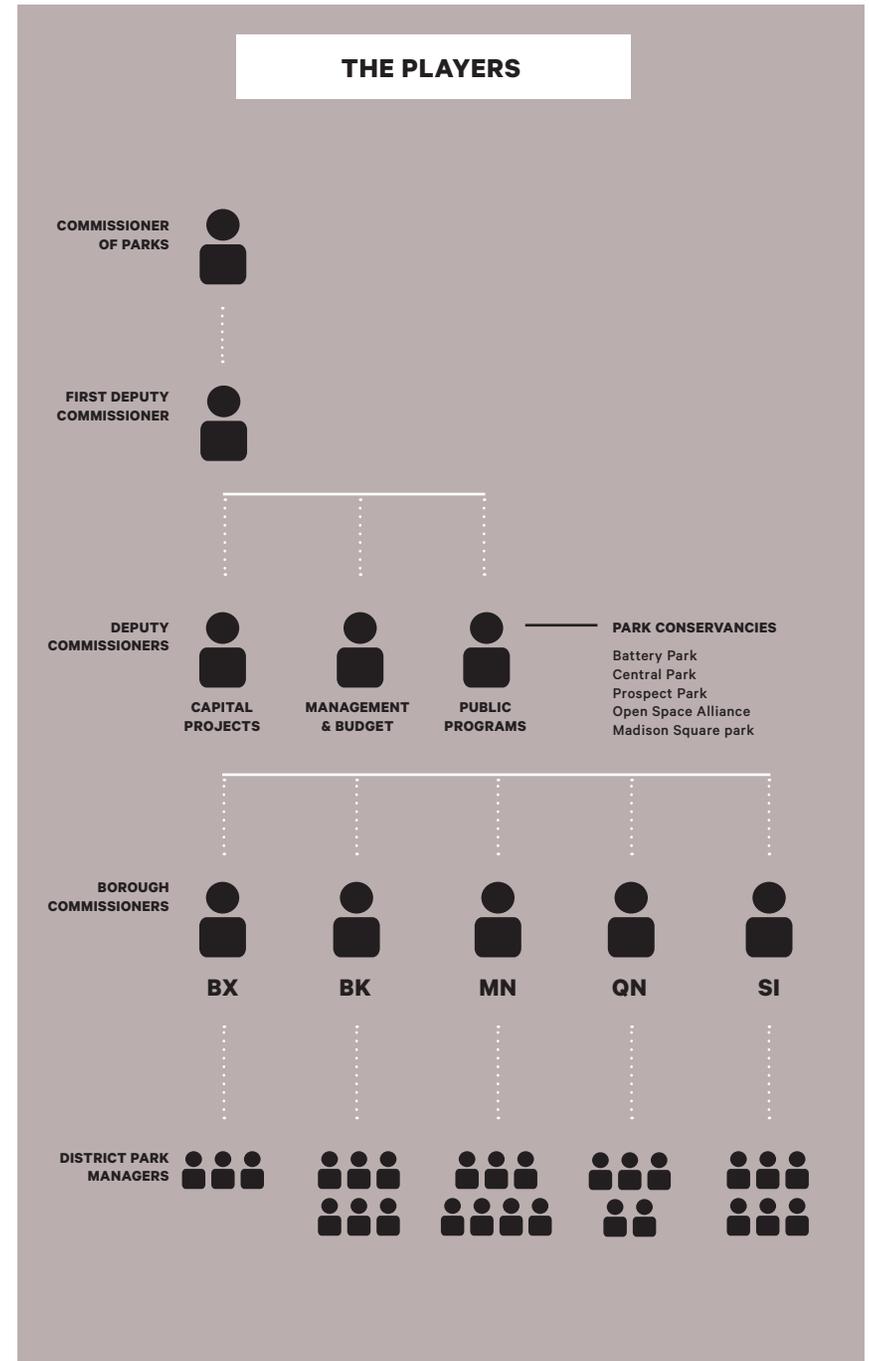
A public-private initiative that is committed to planting and caring for one million trees throughout the City. This initiative is currently led by the New York Restoration Project (NYRP) and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR).

\*\* To learn more about the initiative or to get involved, check out NYRP's website: [www.nyrp.org](http://www.nyrp.org).

**GREEN THUMB**

A program under the DPR that supplies materials and provides workshops to more than 600 community gardens in the City. The workshops are held every month of the year to educate residents on a wide variety of topics, including gardening basics and community organizing.

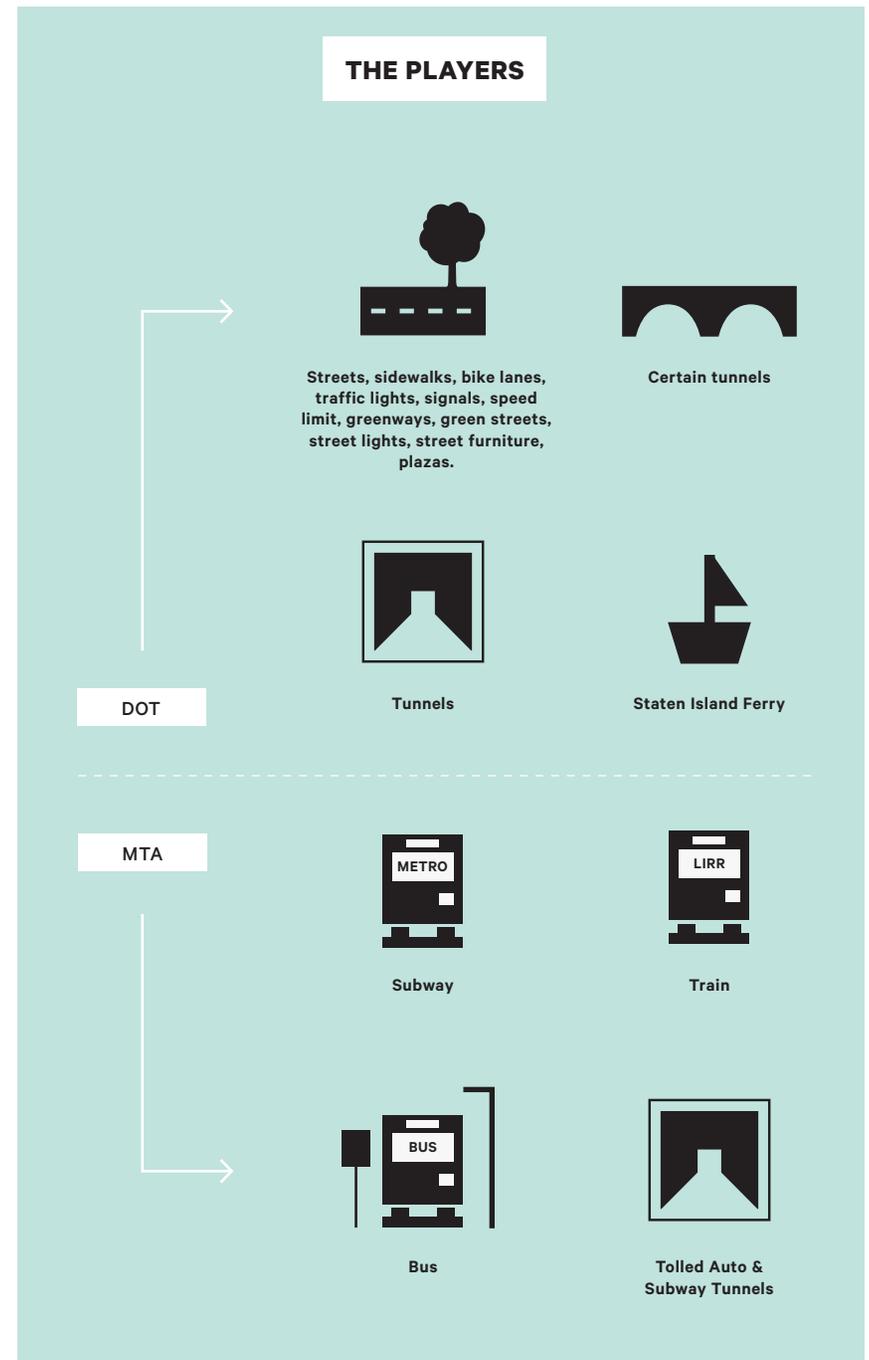
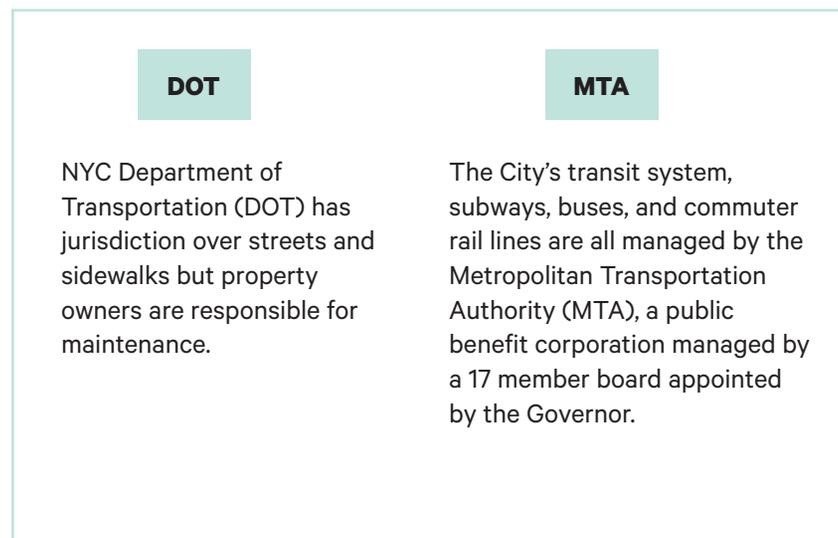
\*\* To learn more about this program or to get involved, check out Green Thumb's website: [www.greenthumbnyc.org](http://www.greenthumbnyc.org).



## [ 6 ] STREETS

Streets and sidewalks make up 80% of public space in New York City. Not only do our streets facilitate movement and transport people and goods from place to place, they also serve as gathering places and sites for commerce, eating, and artistic expression.

Small changes to City streets can greatly improve pedestrian safety, slow cars down, and create more attractive neighborhoods. New public plazas can also create gathering places for community events.



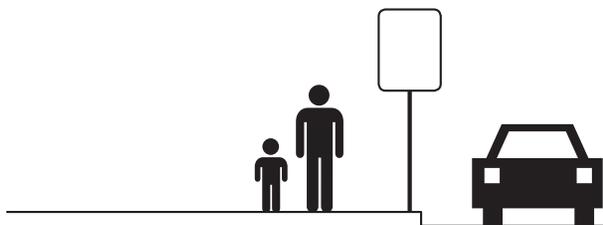
## **NEIGHBORHOODS SLOW ZONES**

Neighborhood Slow Zones are a community-based programs that reduces the speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph and adds safety measures within a select area in order to change driver behavior. It uses street features and signage to reduce vehicle speeds.

### **How Does It Work?**

The program is application based. Applications may be submitted by local community boards, civic associations, business improvement districts (BIDs), elected officials, or other community institutions such as schools or churches.

To learn more, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/motorist/slowzones.shtml>



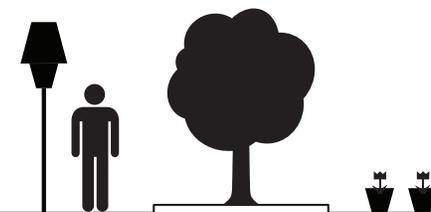
## **PUBLIC PLAZAS**

The public plaza program is a program administered by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and is intended to create a plaza within a 10 minute walk for every New Yorker by 2030.

### **How Does It Work?**

A partner organization, usually a local business improvement district (BID) or a community development organization (CDC) will apply for a plaza at a particular location that is at least 2,000 square feet. If the project is approved, DOT covers the costs of designing and constructing the plaza. The plaza's maintenance is the responsibility of the partner organization.

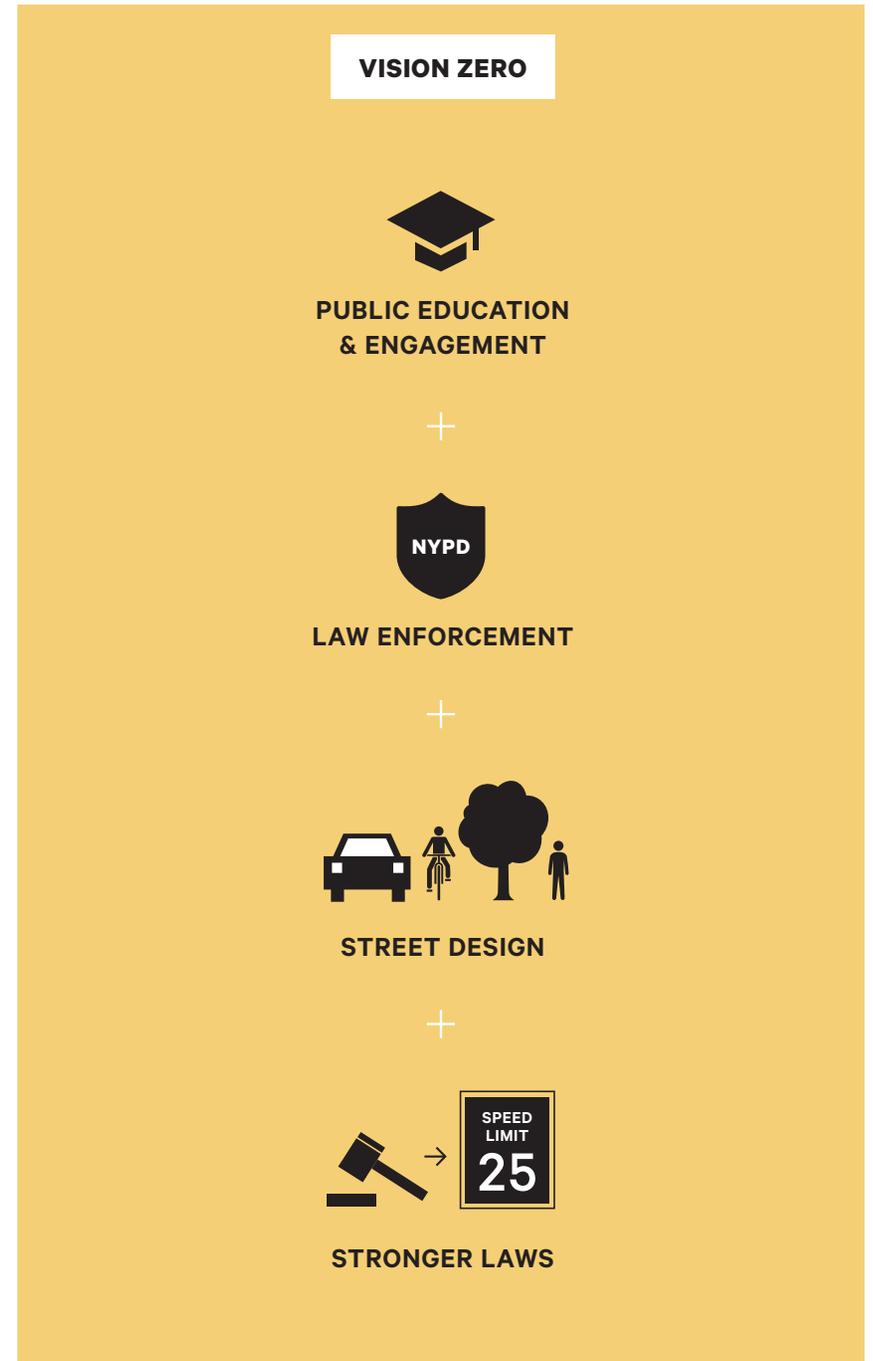
To learn more about how to apply, see <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/nyc-plaza-program.shtml>



## **VISION ZERO ACTION PLAN**

Vision Zero is an initiative of Mayor Bill De Blasio that seeks to eliminate traffic fatalities on New York City streets. The city has an ambitious campaign to implement Vision Zero by eliminating death and injury on city streets, preventing traffic deaths and injuries, and changing the culture of how the public behaves on our public streets.

The goals of the plan will be achieved by: public dialogue and education, law enforcement, street design and stronger laws. As a part of the action plan the city-wide speed limit in New York City was reduced to 25 miles per hour.



**VISION ZERO**



**PUBLIC EDUCATION  
& ENGAGEMENT**



**LAW ENFORCEMENT**



**STREET DESIGN**



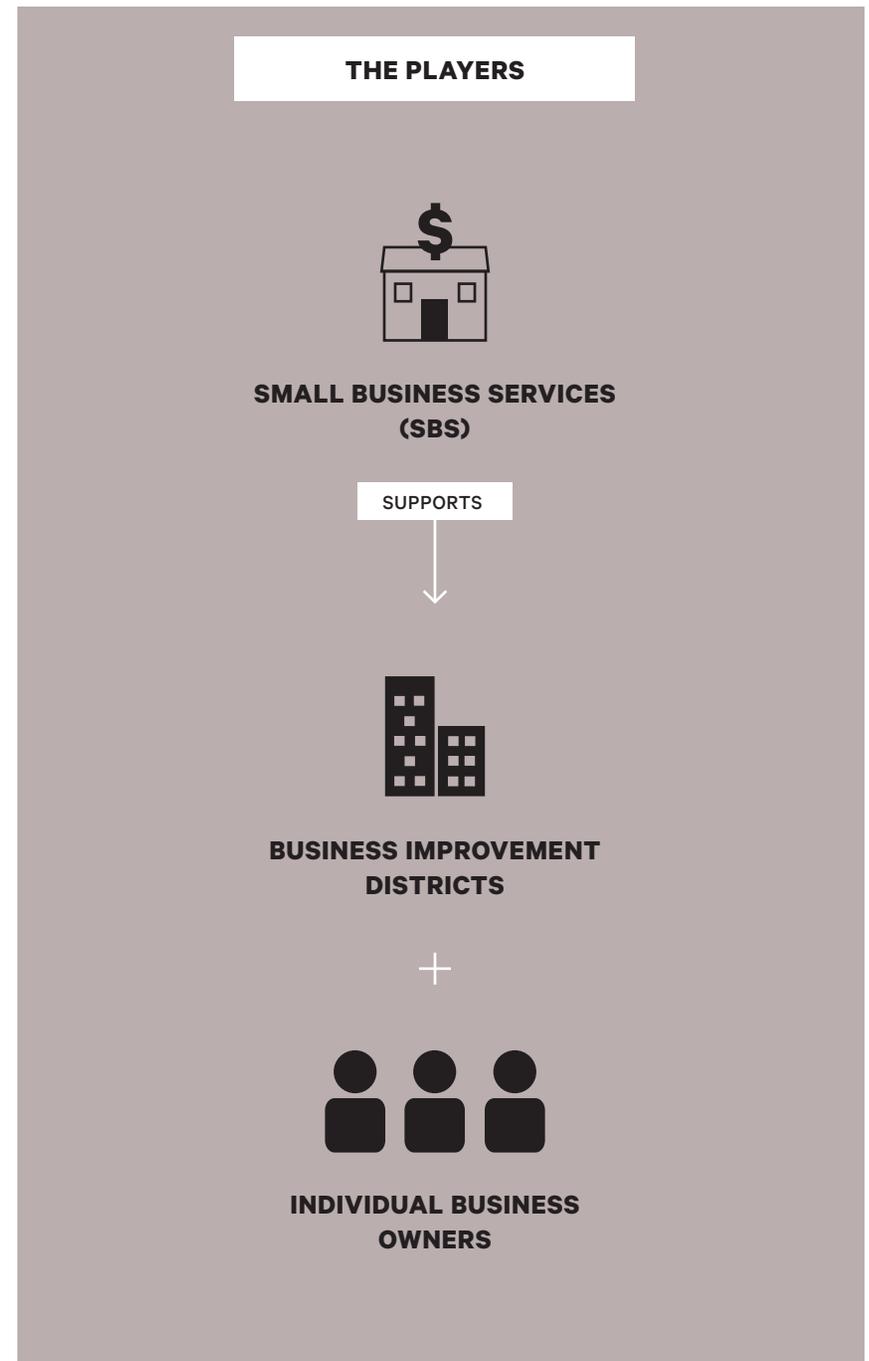
**STRONGER LAWS**

## [ 7 ] NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Every community struggles with the question: “what kind of place do we want to become?” Retail, jobs, and industry are all a part of what makes a community a certain “type” of place. Retaining and attracting jobs and business is often referred to as neighborhood economic development.

Economic development is a broad term that can be used to define activities ranging from the recruitment of a large multinational retailer to the designation of a special-purpose district. However, at its core, economic development is a term that defines process as opposed to outcome, as outcome varies depending on your goal. City, state, national and even international economic development policies and initiatives have an effect on neighborhood economics. Community groups can, to a lesser extent, have influence over the economic climate of their community.

This section will focus on local resources, policies and initiatives that support neighborhood based economic development.



**BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS**

In the early 1980’s, New York City passed legislation allowing for the creation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

BIDs are public/private partnerships where property and business owners work collectively to improve their commercial district. In their most basic form, BIDs provide supplemental services that typically focus on the physical appearance of the district, i.e., street cleaning. However, many BIDs go beyond just the physical appearance of their district and address issues that range from public safety to vacancy reduction.

**HOW ARE BIDS CREATED?**

<b>PLANNING</b>	<b>OUTREACH</b>	<b>LAW</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">1</span> Contact SBS</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">2</span> Determine whether to form a bid</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">3</span> Form a steering committee</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">4</span> Hold initial steering committee meeting</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">5</span> Develop a database of property owners and commercial tenants</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">6</span> Send out first informational mailing</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">7</span> Hold first public meeting</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">8</span> Hold second public meeting</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">9</span> Document results of support gathering</li> </ol>	<p>Legislature authorization process</p>

**45 BIDS IN 5 BOROUGHES**

<p><b>Marketing</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertising</li> <li>Public events</li> <li>Public relations</li> <li>Promoter signs</li> </ul> </div>	<p><b>Physical Improvements</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tree planting</li> <li>Street cleaning</li> <li>Street furniture</li> <li>Landscaping</li> </ul> </div>
<p><b>Community Service</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>Community service</li> <li>Workforce development</li> </ul> </div>	<p><b>Economic</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small business aid</li> <li>Retail attraction</li> <li>Market studies</li> </ul> </div>

**FUNDING**

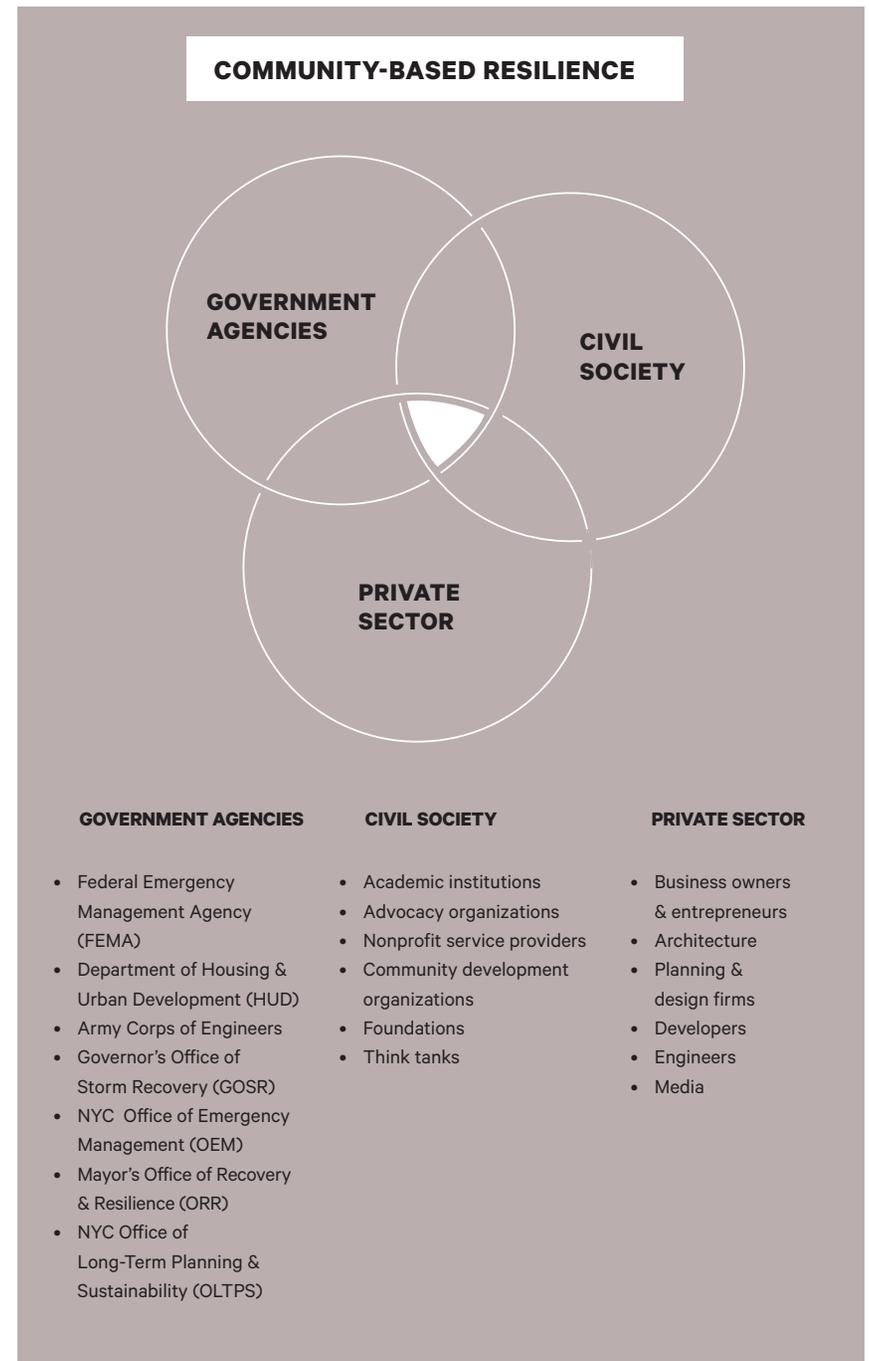
BIDs are financially supported with an assessment paid by property owners. This assessment can be passed on directly to tenants depending on their lease agreements. BID assessments are collected by the Department of Finance on behalf of the BID. Although BID assessments can cover a large portion, if not all, of a BID’s expenses, many BIDs fundraise like a typical nonprofit would to expand and improve their services.

## [ 8 ] COMMUNITY-BASED RESILIENCE

Community-based resilience is the ability of people, the places where they live, and our infrastructure systems—such as transportation and energy—to withstand continued stress or a devastating event, to recover, and emerge even stronger.

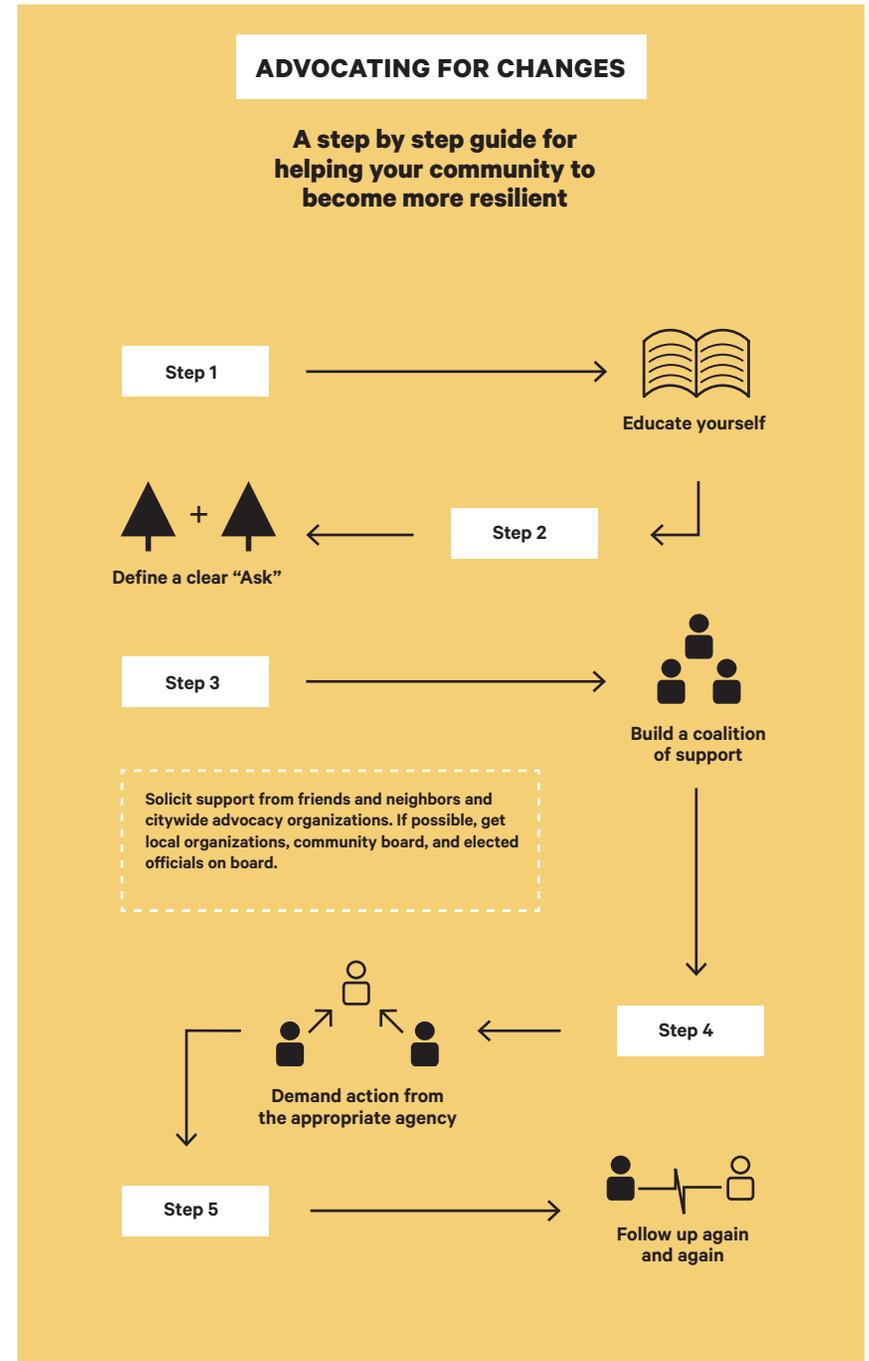
### It is not just about flood walls and emergency preparedness but also about:

- Holding off economic recessions
- Grappling with income inequality
- Confronting civic unrest
- Prevailing against power interruptions
- Fighting for affordable housing and public services
- Standing up to support small business owners and operators



## COMMUNITY-BASED RESILIENCE

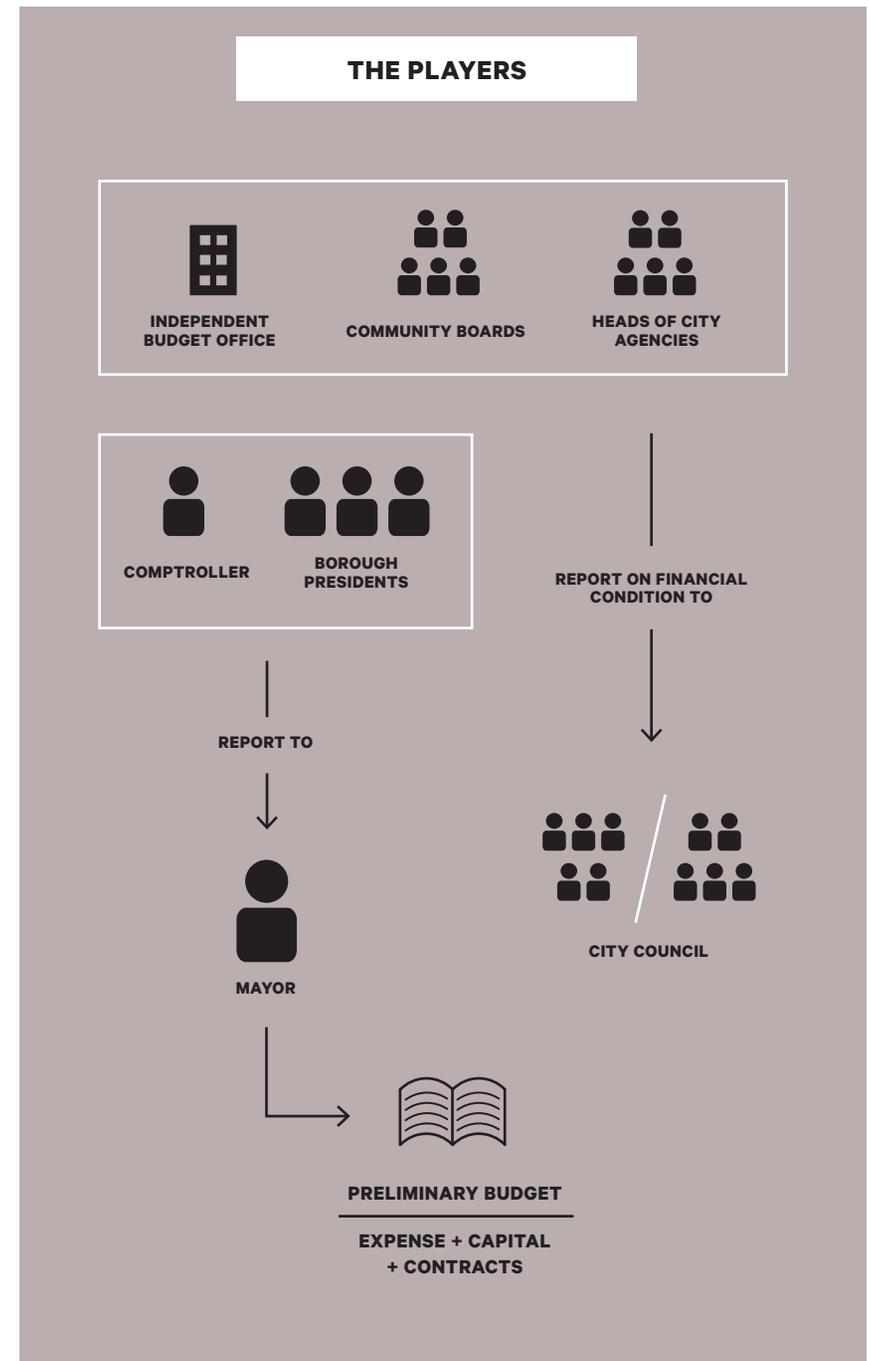
Government agencies and institutions play a critical role in developing and implementing solutions. An effective community-based resilience strategy requires mobilization of social, cultural and intellectual capital of residents living in vulnerable communities.



## [ 9 ] BUDGETS

Government budgets reflect policies and priorities and explain where we choose to spend City taxpayer money, and at what level. The New York City budget is broken up into two parts: the **expense**, or **operating** budget pays for day-to-day municipal functions that benefit the public, like payroll of City sanitation workers or rent for government offices. The capital budget pays for improvements to physical infrastructure, such as a new bridge or reconstruction of a school.

One way to advocate for the implementation of a community plan or physical improvements is to work with elected officials and your local community board to connect your community needs to the New York City budget. If you have a solid foundation of community consensus around the items that require funding from the City—conversion of a vacant lot into a pocket park, or construction of a new day care facility to accommodate the growing number of young children in your neighborhood—you are well equipped to begin lobbying for your recommendations to be included in the City’s budget.



**OPERATING BUDGET**

**\$40.6 Billion**

Operating Budget

The operating budget funds current City government services, including the salaries of government employees, pensions, debt service, and routine operating expenses such as paper and pencils, rent, utilities, and contracts.

+

**\$34.4 Billion**

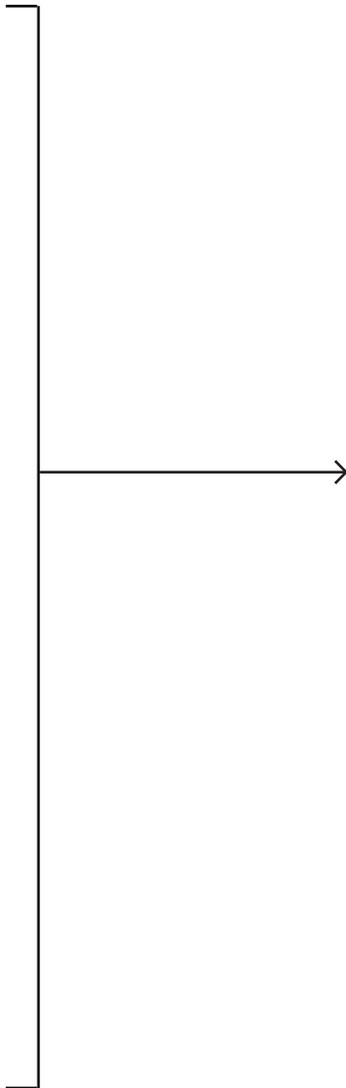
Capital Budget

A capital budget is budget intended for capital projects involving construction, reconstruction, acquisition, or installation of physical improvements. A capital project has to be valued at more than \$35,000 or more AND be usable for the purpose for which it was acquired for at least five years. Examples of capital projects are the purchase of garbage trucks and reconstruction of bridges.

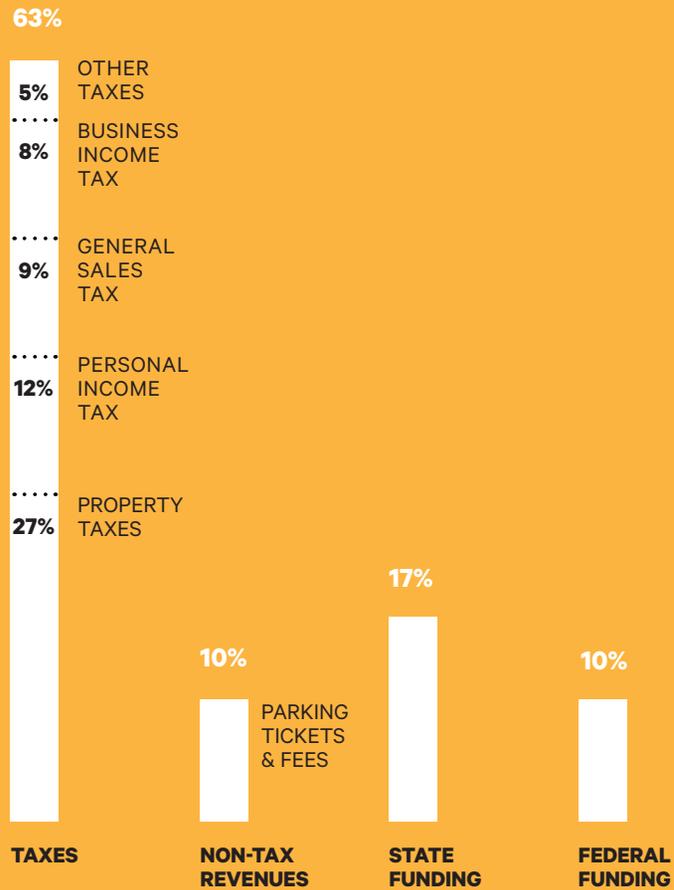
**\$75  
BILLION**

FY 2013-2016

The Revenue Budget is an estimate of how much money the City government will take in during the fiscal year. This includes collections of taxes such as the general property tax, personal income tax, and sales tax; revenues from government agencies for services like licenses, permits, and rental income; and money received from the state and federal governments. The Department of Finance collects revenue for the City of New York.



## THE REVENUE BUDGET



## CAPITAL BUDGET



## BUDGET PROCESS

The Mayor initially determines the amount necessary to meet the city’s capital and operating needs. He empowers the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to develop a budget for the fiscal year, which it does while working with other agencies. The Mayor usually releases his proposed budget in January, and over many months the Mayor and his agencies negotiate with the City Council to develop a final budget. The final budget is the result of an intense negotiation between the City Council and Mayor, and influenced by Community Boards and Borough Presidents.

The process for adopting the expense and capital budget is spread out in a nine-month period, starting in October and concluding in June.<sup>1</sup>

### BUDGET CALENDAR



#### OCTOBER

The Mayor submits the amount of money needed to meet City’s capital needs.



#### NOVEMBER

Each community board submits their own capital budget priorities to the Mayor and respective Borough President.

MAX BUDGET



#### JANUARY

The Mayor sets the maximum amount of capital debt, appropriations, and expenditures and issues the Preliminary Budget for the upcoming fiscal year.



#### FEBRUARY

Each Community Board responds to Mayor’s Preliminary Budget.



Each Borough President submits their borough’s budget priorities



#### MARCH

Each Borough President submits proposed changes to the Preliminary Budget to Mayor and City Council.



#### APRIL

The Mayor submits proposed Executive Capital Budget to the City Council.



#### MAY

Each Borough President submits response to Executive Capital Budget to Mayor and City Council.



#### JUNE

Adoption of budget by the City Council.

Mayor can veto City Council’s decision within 5 days after adoption.

The City Council holds public hearing on budget as presented by Mayor.

City Council can override Mayor’s veto within 10 days of Mayor’s veto



#### JULY

Start of the fiscal year

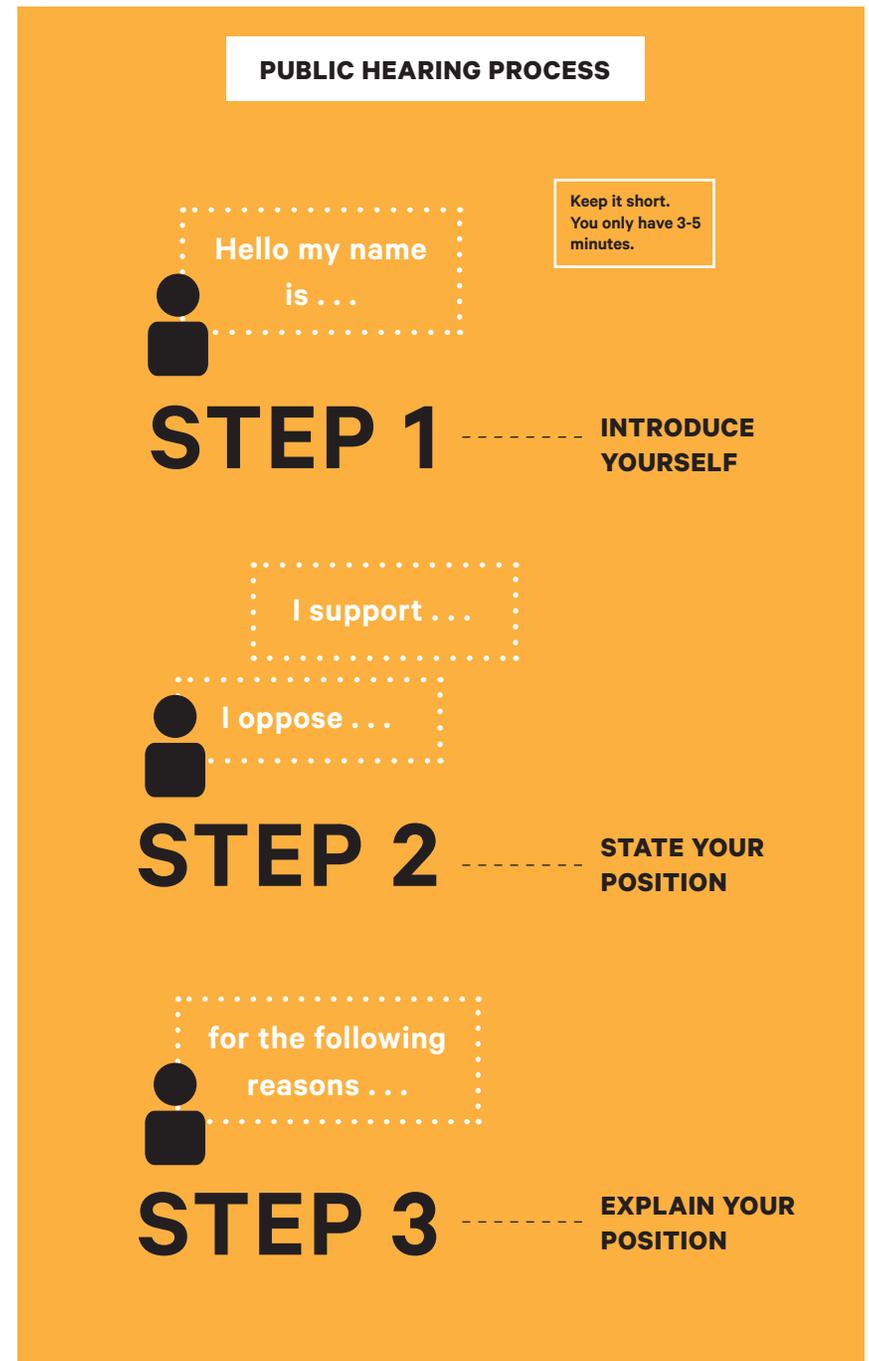
1. Although dates may change by annual legislation.

## [ 10 ] PUBLIC HEARINGS

Citizens can have a significant effect on influencing decisions. Public hearings by City, State and Federal agencies provide an opportunity for citizens to voice their opinions. Decisions have been reversed or modified based on public input.

### HOW TO TESTIFY?

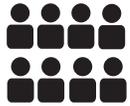
- Find out from the government agency holding the hearing what the ground rules are. How much time will you be given to speak? Can you email your testimony?
- Get ready to stay late, hearings often run behind schedule.
- Prepare a written testimony and make copies to share with the hearing panel, news media, and other attendees.
- Start with your most important point in case you run out of time.
- Be ready to answer questions from the panel.



# [ 11 ] WHO REPRESENTS YOU?

## How do you find your elected officers?

**CITY COUNCIL MEMBER**



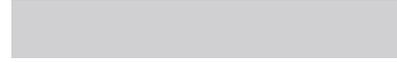
[www.council.nyc.gov](http://www.council.nyc.gov)

**MAYOR**



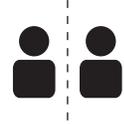
[www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov)

**NYC COMPTROLLER**



[www.comptroller.nyc.gov](http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov)

**PUBLIC ADVOCATE**



[www.pubadvocate.nyc.gov](http://www.pubadvocate.nyc.gov)

**BOROUGH PRESIDENTS**



[www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov)

**[ 11 ]** WHO REPRESENTS YOU?

**Worksheets**

**Mayor**

**Public Advocate**

**City Council Member**

**Comptroller**

**Borough President**

**I am in**

**( Borough )**

[www.nycgo.com/neighborhoods](http://www.nycgo.com/neighborhoods)

**Community District #**

[www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov)

**City Council District #**

[www.nycgo.com/neighborhoods](http://www.nycgo.com/neighborhoods)

**What Community Board, City Council & Civic Group District Do You Live In?**



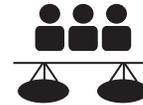
**COMMUNITY BOARD**

**BOROUGH, NUMBER**  
[www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov)



**CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT**

**BOROUGH, NUMBER**  
[www.council.nyc.gov](http://www.council.nyc.gov)



**CIVIC GROUPS**

**COMMUNITY AFFAIRS UNIT**  
[www.nyc.gov/cau](http://www.nyc.gov/cau)

## **[ 12 ]**

### **GLOSSARY**

#### **AS-OF-RIGHT**

A development that does not need to be reviewed or approved by the City government as long as it follows the City's existing zoning law.

#### **ARCHITECTURE**

The art or practice of designing and constructing buildings with special consideration given to esthetic effects.

#### **BUILDING CODE**

A set of rules that explain the minimum standards for buildings and non-building structures. The main purpose of building codes are to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the people.

#### **BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Refers to the man made environment as opposed to the natural environment. Parks, buildings, and streets, are all a part of the built environment.

#### **BULK REGULATIONS**

These regulations determine the maximum size and placement of a building on a lot based on lot size, floor-area-ratio, lot coverage, open space, height and setback.

#### **COMMERCIAL DISTRICT**

A zoning district that allows for commercial and residential uses.

#### **DENSITY**

The number of people or residents within a given space.

**DEVELOPER**

A person who develops a property in an area.

**DISCRETIONARY ACTION**

An action that requires the review and approval of the City Planning Commission or the Board of Standards and Appeals. An example of a discretionary action is when a developer tries to get approval on a zoning amendment or variance.

**FISCAL YEAR**

An accounting period of 12 months, which begins July 1 and ends the following June 30 in New York City. Each fiscal year is named for the calendar year in which it ends. For example: July 2015- June 2016 is Fiscal Year 2016.

**FLOOR-AREA-RATIO**

Controls the size of a building based on the ratio of total building floor area to the area of its zoning lot.

**GREEN STREETS**

Integrate stormwater treatment techniques in urban transportation right-of-ways, improve water quality and create more livable communities.

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

The art and practice of designing the outdoor environment, like designing parks or gardens together with buildings and roads.

**LAND DEVELOPMENT**

A term that refers to the business of constructing buildings or changing land for new uses.

**LAND-USE**

Refers to the way that all property whether public and private is used for residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, recreational or other uses.

**LOT COVERAGE**

The portion of a zoning lot that is covered by a building.

**OPEN SPACE**

Any open piece of land that is undeveloped (has no buildings or other built structures) and is accessible to the public. Open space can include: green space, schoolyards, playgrounds, public plazas, vacant lots.

**MANUFACTURING DISTRICT**

The production of merchandise for use or sale is permitted in this zoning district. Residential land-uses are not permitted as-of-right.

**MIXED USE DISTRICT**

This is a special zoning district where residential and non-residential land-uses are allowed as-of-right.

**PLAZA**

An open space designed for public use and defined by surrounding buildings and/or streets. Its primary functions are to encourage a diversity of opportunities for social interaction and activities, to provide relief and relaxation in the city.

**RE-ZONING**

When you make changes to existing zoning regulations.

## **[ 12 ]** GLOSSARY

### **SCALE**

Represents the size reduction in a plan drawing or model.

### **SPECIAL PERMIT**

An action by the City Planning Commission or Board of Standards and Appeals that will allow developers to change the use or bulk of their development if they meet certain conditions in the existing zoning. An example of a development that would require a special permit is a bar that is proposed to be located in a commercial or manufacturing district.

### **URBAN DESIGN**

The process of shaping the physical setting for life in cities. Involves the design of groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes.

### **URBAN RENEWAL**

A term that refers to the process of improving and rehabilitating a neighborhood or area that is aging and/or decaying through the power of eminent domain.

### **URBAN PLANNING**

Integrates land-use planning and transportation planning to improve the built, economic and social environments of communities.

### **VARIANCE**

An exception granted to a developer from the bulk regulations that are laid out in the Zoning Resolution.

### **ZONING**

The regulation that govern land-use. These regulations were first created to separate land-uses that were thought to be incompatible.

For more information visit: [www.mas.org](http://www.mas.org)  
or call 212 935-3960

The Municipal Art Society of New York  
**MASNYC**