

Location Focus: Park Slope (Brooklyn Community District 39)



NYC Civics 101

Please complete this survey before
the presentation if you haven't
already!



NYC Civics 101 Program

01

LOCAL GOV 101

Understand local government positions and how to influence decisions made by local government.

02

HOUSING

Understand why housing costs are rising and how residents can shape housing policy and advocate for their interests.

03

MEDIA LITERACY

Learn how to navigate local news in the age of AI and social media, identify credible information, and avoid misinformation.

04

CAMPAIGNS & ADVOCACY

Learn how issue campaigns, primaries, and elections work and how to effectively mobilize voters and participate in campaigns.

05

POLICING

What authority does NYC have over policing and when do they change their approach?

06

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Learn how services – from libraries and sanitation to parks – are funded and how residents can advocate for improvements.

Goals of the Pilot Program

1. Show that local government affects our lives in many ways that make it relevant in a context of national focus.
2. Provide a tour of local government and how you can engage in acts of civic engagement to solve problems, advocate for your interests, protect your rights, and increase your level of civic action.
3. Provide new skills in navigating a complex information environment and using your voice in ways that can have a real impact.
4. Build community and develop a civic-education model that can be used in other neighborhoods.

Location Focus: Park Slope, Brooklyn

Local Civics: Housing

*How does local government shape housing?
What can I do to address my concerns?*

Why Does the Local Government Matter?

- NYC controls zoning and land-use decisions that shape where housing can be built.
- NYC funds affordable housing and manages public housing and housing vouchers.
- City and state government create rent, eviction, and tenant protections.
- City agencies enforce housing standards and respond to unsafe conditions.

Special Guests



[Alec Schierenbeck](#),
General Counsel,
Department of City
Planning



[Rebecca Kobert](#), Senior
Fair Housing Planner,
HPD Equitable
Neighborhood Initiatives



[Mimi Rosenberg](#), Senior Staff
Attorney, Legal Aid Society.



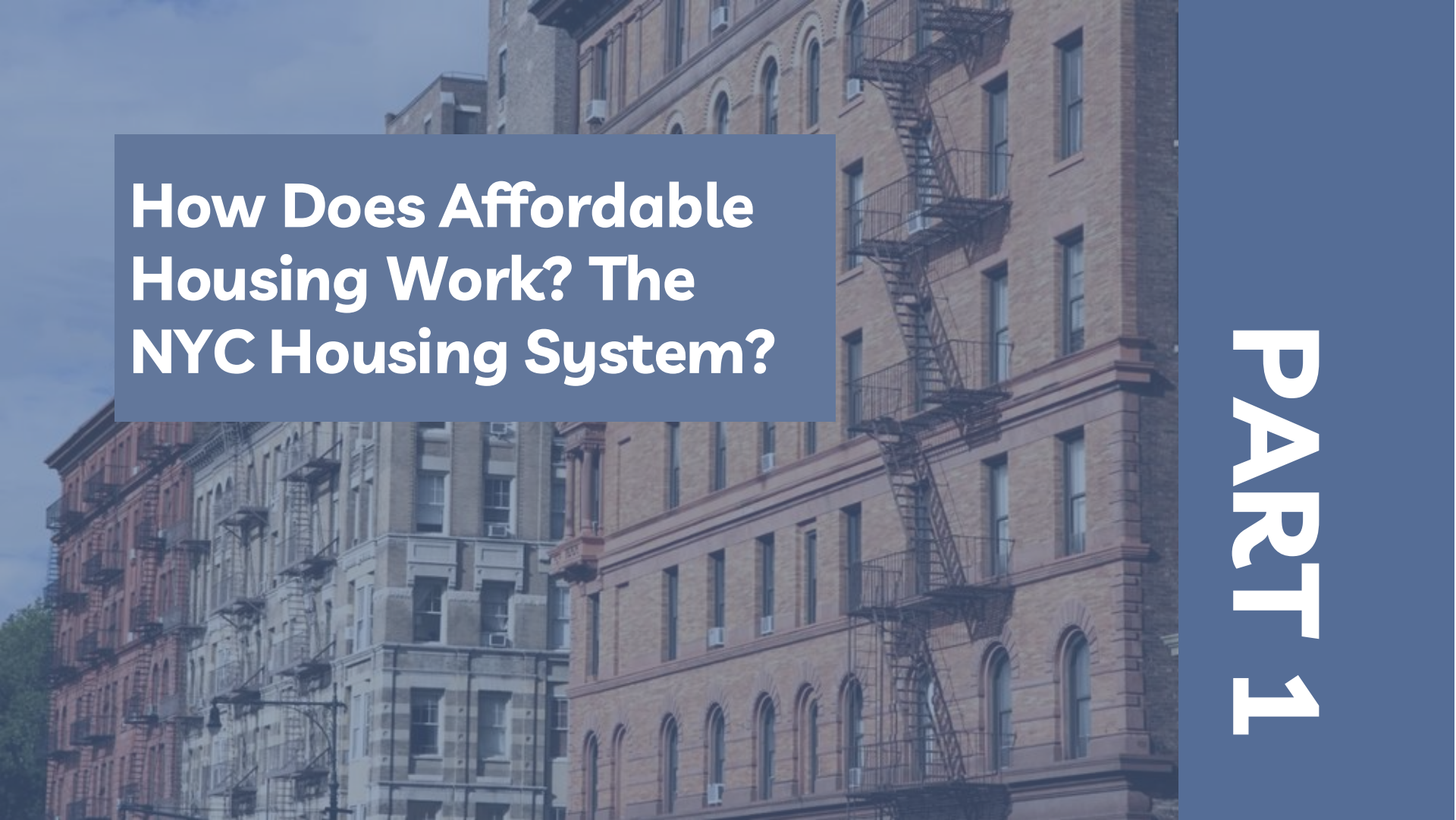
[Mike Racioppo](#), District
Manager, Brooklyn
Community Board 6.

NYC Housing Mythbusters

Thumbs up = True 

Thumbs down = False 

1. Tenant protections apply to all NYC residents, regardless of immigration status.
2. If your apartment has no heat in winter, your only option is to buy more blankets.
3. The Mayor can freeze rents for all apartments in NYC.
4. New York City decides who gets rent stabilization based on income.
5. Neighborhood residents can stop any new housing development they don't like.
6. Calling 311 can help trigger an inspection if your landlord ignores serious housing problems.
7. A landlord can legally evict you with a letter or phone call, as long as you have 30 days to move out.



How Does Affordable Housing Work? The NYC Housing System?

PART 1

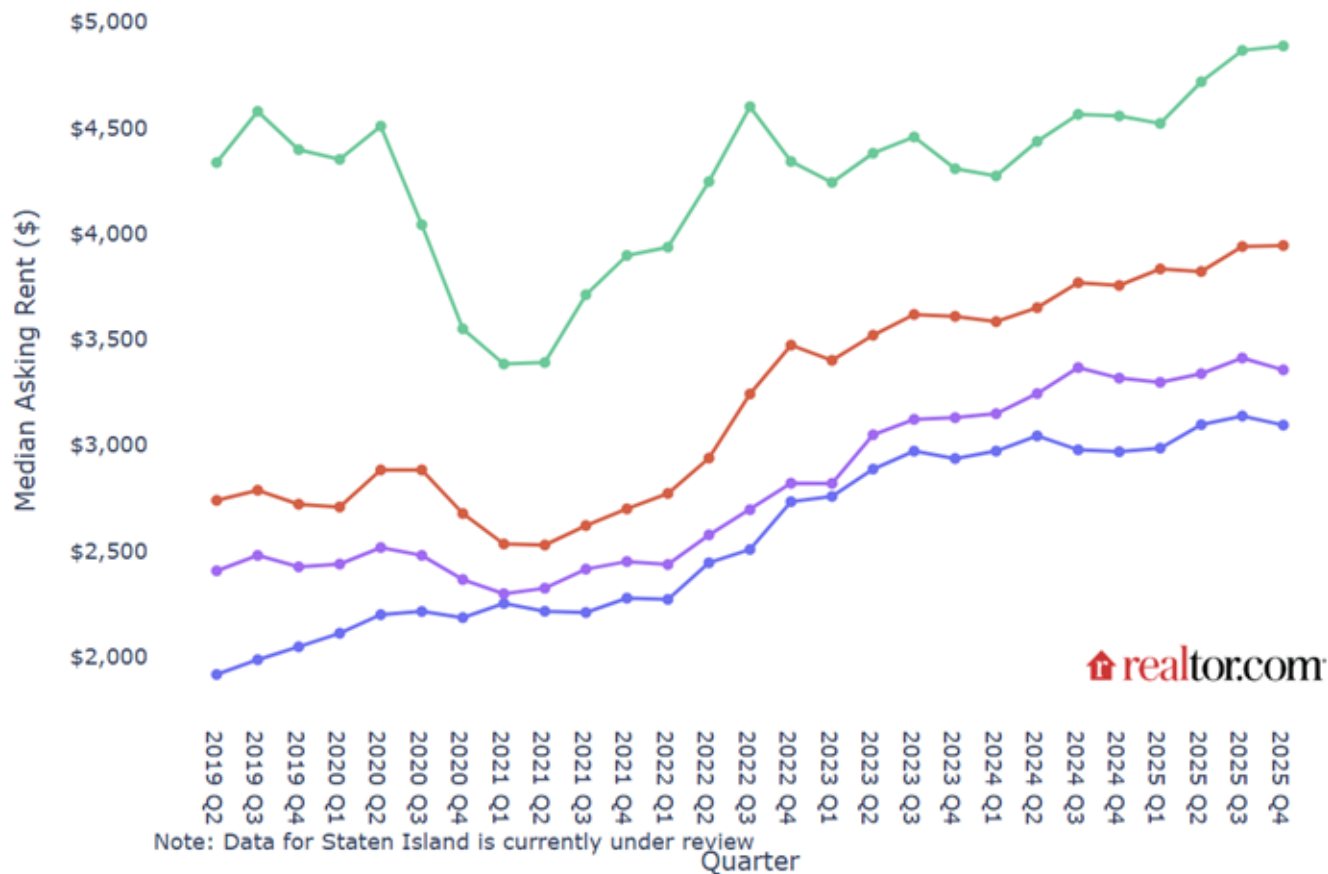
Average Rent Prices in Brooklyn

1 BEDROOM



Rents by Borough in New York City—2025Q4

Green = Manhattan
Red = Brooklyn
Purple = Queens
Blue = The Bronx



Rent is Going Up

Why is Housing in NYC So Expensive? Cost, Supply, Demand

High Market Demand

- NYC's strong job market, amenities, and global appeal generate sustained demand for a limited number of homes Brooklyn's latest official rental vacancy rate was just 1.27% in 2023.
- High home prices and mortgage rates keep many higher-income households in the rental market.

Low Supply: Obstacles from Local Zoning Laws

Zoning laws (where can you build) and Participation among higher income homeowners and renters limit new construction (who participates to block new housing).

Low Supply: High Costs for New Construction Limit Construction of Affordable Housing

High construction and maintenance costs: Labor, materials, financing, affordable housing requirements, and regulations make new construction and preservation of housing prohibitively expensive.

How is Affordable Housing Defined in New Construction?

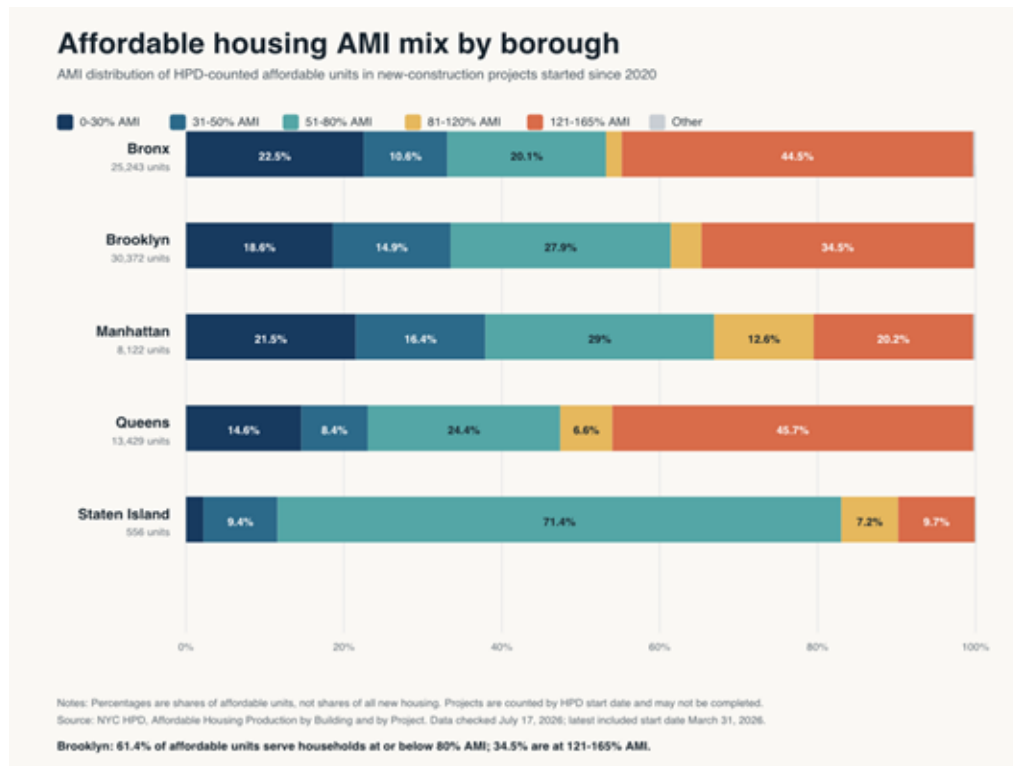
- Affordable housing is defined relative to Area Median Income (AMI) for the NYC metro region, which includes NYC plus nearby counties.
- The city sets rents/eligibility as a percentage of [AMI](#):

Because AMI is calculated across a wider, wealthier region (including suburbs), the income cut-offs can be higher than what many NYC residents actually earn.

- Available units are assigned through the city's housing lottery (via NYC Housing Connect).
- Applicants list household size and income; each unit has an income band it's reserved for.
- Priority is sometimes given to people already living in the community district where the building is located.

How Affordable is Affordable Housing?

- Most “affordable” units in these projects—61%—are reserved for households at or below 80% AMI.
 - But “affordable” covers a wide range: 35% are targeted to households at 121–165% AMI.
- Affordable housing is rarely targeting households with less than 100k incomes.

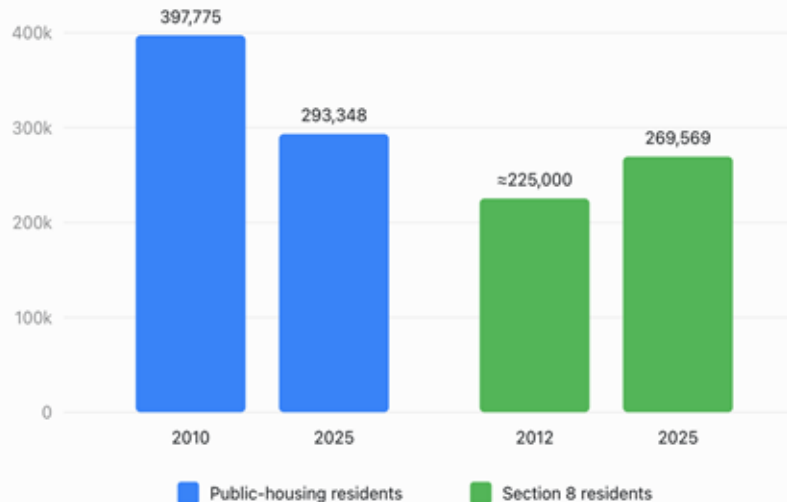


Housing Vouchers (Subsidies) and the Decline of Public Housing

- There has generally been a pivot away from public housing to section 8 housing.
 - In Brooklyn, the number of people in Public Housing dropped from approximately 131,000 in 2010 to approximately 93,000 in 2025.
- NYC has several voucher programs where the city directly pays a share of rent to landlords (inc. Sec 8)
- Section 8 housing expanded – moving some people out of traditional public housing – but it has not fully offset the decline.

**The ability of low-income New Yorkers to stay in NY through affordable, subsidized, or public housing is facing crisis level stress.*

NYCHA Residents Public Housing Section 8



Note: The 2025 Section 8 total combines 223,114 traditional Section 8 residents with 46,455 PACT/RAD residents. The closest verified historical Section 8 figure is approximately 225,000 in 2012. Source: NYCHA.



Building New Housing – How to Push for More & Obstacles in the Way

PART 2

Which Parts of City Government Shape New Housing Developments?



Mayor

Develops enforcement priorities and housing programs

City Council

Approves rezoning policies; Passes legislation on affordable housing

HPD

Regulates and enforces housing quality standards

Community Boards

Holds public hearings, gathers input from the community, advisory role

Planning Commission

Works with developers to modify & approve proposals

**Zoning laws and local residents often
block new housing.**

Why isn't more housing built? The Battle Over Zoning

- Zoning is the set of rules that city officials create to determine what can be built where. Zoning laws permit the type of building, dimensions of the building, and can require affordable housing units in residential buildings.
- 10% of residential land in NYC allows for high or moderate density buildings, making it difficult to build bigger apartment buildings.
- This bureaucratic process can take years. This process is estimated to increase the cost of a housing project by 11-16%.

The Rezoning Process: Overview

- 1) Team of architects, attorneys, and environmental consultants develop a **rezoning proposal**.
- 2) The rezoning application is submitted to the **Department of City Planning** (DCP) to be certified.
- 3) **The Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)** begins - application goes to the **Community Board**
- 4) **The City Planning Commission** approves the rezoning (simple majority)
- 5) **City Council** approves the application (simple majority) - “member deference”
- 6) If denied, you can go to the new Affordable Housing Appeals Board (**Mayor, Speaker of City Council, Borough President**) - two of the three must agree to reverse the decision

#2



Department of City Planning

What is the Department of City Planning?

Department that plans NYC by shaping land use, environmental policy, and infrastructure

- Provides information to the Mayor, City Council, Borough Presidents, and other local government officials about NYC development
- Goals include sustainable development, housing opportunities, economic growth, and collecting data to inform policy making

DCP Certification

The DCP must **certify** a rezoning application as complete before ULURP begins



The DCP may provide feedback on rezoning proposals before it goes for official approval

#3

The Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)

After certification by the DCP, the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) begins.

Advisory Review phase (60 days): The local Community Board holds **public hearings** where residents can testify

You can speak in favor or disapproval of new development projects at your Community Board hearings.

After, the Board submits a written recommendation. *Their vote is advisory (holds no legal power)*



What Do Community Boards Do to Shape New Affordable Housing (or Its Absence)

Community Boards don't have binding power, but they are the first official record of local sentiment.

They have strong influence over which housing projects are accepted or rejected.

Example: In 2016, Brooklyn Community Board 9 voted against a housing project due to its lack of sufficient affordable housing. Local council member Cumbo and Borough President Adams disapproved of the plan. This pressured the developers to modify the plan, and the final project had a greater number affordable housing units



#3

The Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)

The Borough President then has 30 days to review the proposal and give a written recommendation to the City Planning Commission.



This recommendation is advisory and non-binding.

#4

City Planning Commission (CPC)

The City Planning Commission (CPC) listens to presentations from the DCP and testimonies in **public hearings**.

The CPC has 60 days to vote and approve, modify, or disapprove the rezoning. They need 7 out of 13 people to approve.



#4

City Planning Commission (CPC)

Example of Citizen Action:

Members of Open New York (nonprofit addressing NYC housing shortage, part of Yes In My Back Yard YIMBY movement) testified at the City Planning Commission to support the “City of Yes” housing plan to fight the housing crisis.

Testimonies lasted a **record-breaking 15 hours** at the City Planning Commission hearing.

The plan successfully passed, creating 80,000 new homes.



#5

City Council

The NY City Council has 50 days to review the proposal and hold public hearings in committees.

They vote for approval, disapproval, or send back to the CPC for modification



Member deference - the council member who represents the district of the rezoning proposal has the greatest influence - the council usually defers to their position

#6

Affordable Housing Appeals Board

Created in 2025, the Affordable Housing Appeals Board can reverse the City Council's vote.

Rejected rezoning proposals can request this board to review their application.

The Board includes the Mayor, Speaker of the City Council, and Borough President. Two of the three must agree to reverse the decision.



Power Dynamics in Zoning Decisions

Yes In My Backyard (YIMBY)

Development supporters include:

- Real estate developers
- Building trades unions
- City planners - address affordability by increasing housing supply
- Advocacy groups (like Open NY)
- Climate advocates - more density = better public transportation

Not In My Backyard (NIMBY)

Development opponents include:

- Homeowners in low-density areas - limit traffic/overcrowding & maintain neighborhood character
- Anti-displacement advocates - rezoning could lead to gentrification
- Historic preservation
- Local civic groups

While the mayor can set YIMBY priorities (like the City of Yes), local communities (NIMBY) have a large influence. Residents can organize and voice their opposition, influencing their council member to oppose rezoning (who determines city council approval via member deference)

Example of Citizen Action to Block New Development

In 2020, a redevelopment proposal in Sunset Park, Brooklyn planned to rezone Industry City (shipping, manufacturing, and warehouse complex) to allow developers to build office, retail, and mixed-use commercial space.

Community members opposed this, claiming that it would displace residents, increase rents, and turn the neighborhood from a manufacturing hub for immigrants and blue-collar workers into a tourist site.

Citizens protested and pressured City Council Speaker Corey Johnson to stop the proposal.

Impact: the owner withdrew the rezoning proposal.



The Role of Residents, Representatives, and Developers in Finding Compromise in the Gowanus Development

- NYC proposed rezoning Gowanus to make way for thousands of new housing units
- Residents supported more housing -> also worried about flooding, displacement, affordability, environmental contamination
 - Residents attended public meetings + submitted testimonies through the ULURP process
 - Organized through neighborhood and advocacy groups
- Council member Brad Lander and other officials negotiated with residents, developers, and NYC
- Developers agreed to include more investments in sewage and stormwater infrastructure, more permanently affordable housing, new parks and community facilities

Another Obstacle: Historic Districts

The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) can block new housing on landmarked sites, or within historic districts - even if the zoning allows for more density.

In Park Slope: Thousands of buildings (brownstones) are protected by the original historic district and its extensions.



Where Can Residents Go to Advocate for More Affordable Housing?

- **Community Board Land-Use Committee Meetings and Public hearings :**
 - Attend, Community Board Meetings and Committee Meetings on land use, and publicly support projects and zoning changes that create more housing.
- **ULURP City Council land-use hearings:**
 - Testify at ULURP Meetings to shape the recommendations of the Borough President.
- **City Planning Commission public hearings**
 - File testimony at these hearings, which becomes part of the official land-use record.
- **City Council land-use hearings**
 - Attend and speak at these influential meetings on new developments.
- **Meet local officials (city council member, State Assemblymember, State Senator)**
 - These officials – especially city council – are key because the Council traditionally defers to the member representing a project's district.

Engage with Organizations

Join a pro-housing organization

- E.g., [Open New York](#) organizes residents to support rezonings and housing projects, testify at hearings, and contact elected officials.

Work with affordable-housing advocates

- [New York Housing Conference](#) advocates for the public funding and policies needed to finance new affordable housing.
- [ANHD](#) supports community-based organizations that advocate for and develop affordable housing.

Support nonprofit housing developers

- Nonprofit developers acquire sites, assemble public financing, seek land-use approvals, and build affordable or supportive housing.

Join or create a community land trust

- [New Economy Project](#) supports community land trusts that acquire land and develop permanently affordable, community-controlled housing.

Mobilize neighborhood institutions

- Nonprofits, faith organizations, and civic associations can endorse proposed housing projects and organize petitions, testimony, rallies, and lobbying.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a multi-story brick building, likely in New York City, featuring several external fire escapes. The building is made of reddish-brown brick and has many windows. A semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the main title text.

How are Tenants Protected in NYC?

PART 3

How Does Rent Stabilization Work?

What is the difference between rent stabilized and rent controlled ?

- **Rent stabilized:** The landlord can only raise rent by the amount approved each year by the NYC Rent Guidelines Board. (1 million units approximately available).
- **Rent controlled:** A much older system that mostly applies to people (or qualifying family members) who have lived in the same apartment since before 1971 (22,000 units available).

Which apartments are usually rent stabilized?

- Older apartment buildings with multiple units
- Some newer buildings that received tax incentives in exchange for offering stabilized apartments.
- Eligibility is determined by New York State law.

Since 2019 (HSTPA law):

- High-rent deregulation was eliminated (removing a unit from stabilization due to cost)
- Preferential rents generally stay with the tenant for as long as they remain in the apartment.

What Protections Do Tenants Have from Rent Increases in the Private Market (i.e., not stabilized)?

- Advance notice of rent increases of 30 to 90 days, depending how long you lived there.
- Many tenants in non-rent-stabilized apartments can challenge an eviction, lease non-renewal, or an “unreasonable” rent increase—generally one exceeding inflation plus 5%, capped at 10%
 - Many exemptions apply.



Where Do You Go When Your Rights as a Tenant Have Been Violated?

- **Your district's Assemblymember Office or City Council Office**
 - Can help you understand your rights, assist with next steps and contact certain agencies on your behalf
 - Connect you with free legal services
 - May directly reach out to your landlord for inquiry
- **Tenant Advocacy Organizations:**
 - The Legal Aid Society -> Free representation for eligible tenants
 - NYC Public Advocate's Office -> Maintains the Worst Landlords watchlist, helps address housing issues
 - Right to Counsel NYC Association -> Tenant-Led organization that guarantees low-income tenants facing eviction the right to a free attorney
- **311 and HPD:**
 - Report violations and unsafe conditions
 - May inspect property and issue violations -> quicker repairs and fines
- **Housing Court:**
 - File a HP Proceeding to ask judge to order repairs
 - Eligible tenants receive a free attorney

What Protections do Tenants Have: Eviction

- Good Cause Eviction Law: Landlords of homes (only homes covered by the new Good Cause Eviction requirements) **cannot end a tenancy** without a “good cause” reason
 - E.g., Failure to pay rent, violating lease terms, using the apartment for illegal purposes, severely damaging property.
- Tenants cannot be evicted without going through Housing Court.
 - The landlord must file a court case and notify the tenant.
 - Tenants have a right to challenge this eviction, and if eligible, receive free legal assistance
 - Tenants cannot be forced out without a court order
 - Only a city marshal can carry out an eviction.
 - Landlords cannot harass a tenant to get them to vacate.
 - People who have lived in a home for 30 or more consecutive days generally cannot be removed without a Housing Court eviction, even if they do not have a written lease.



What is Housing Court?

The Housing Court hears and decides disputes between residential landlords and tenants. There are six case types:

Landlords may file cases for:

- Unpaid rent
- Eviction or lease violations

Tenants may file cases for:

- Repairs and unsafe conditions
- Harassment
- Illegal lockouts

Do Tenants Have a Reasonable Chance in Housing Court?

Challenges for tenants

- Landlords often have high-price lawyers (especially large landlords)
- Cases can take months
- Tenants many not know their rights

But....tenants have

- The right to counsel for many low-income tenants
- Access to legal aid organizations
- The possibility to request HPD inspections
- The right to join tenant organizations

Organizations are There to Support Tenants

For Residential Tenants

[The Legal Aid Society](#)

Provides free legal representation involving eviction, harassment, unsafe conditions, rent regulation, and other housing problems.

[Communities Resist](#)

Combines legal representation with tenant organizing, particularly for low-income tenants facing harassment, displacement, or neglected conditions in Brooklyn and Queens.

[Housing Court Answers](#)

Explains Housing Court procedures and helps tenants find legal representation. Particularly useful for starting an HP case to force repairs. Hotline: **212-962-4795**.

[Met Council on Housing](#)

Provides tenant-rights counseling and helps residents understand repairs, rent regulation, leases, harassment, and organizing. Hotline: **212-979-0611**.

For Small Business Tenants

[NYC Commercial Lease Assistance Program](#)

Connects eligible small businesses to free attorneys for lease negotiations, renewals, landlord disputes, and commercial harassment.

[Build Up Justice](#)

Helps small businesses negotiate leases, enforce lease provisions, respond to landlord harassment, and address other commercial legal problems.

Success Stories: Residents Taking Action to Protect Against Eviction (In Progress)

964 Park Place

- Family was locked out of their property in what supporters argued was an illegal, deed-fraud-related eviction

Community Action:

- Crown Heights Tenant Union (CHTU) + Brooklyn Eviction Defense (BED) broke the family back into their place, and organized a 24-hour eviction watch for 18 days. Those stoop watchers protected the family from landlord harassment.
- Activists physically blocked the landlord's agents from re-entering the property
- When a conflict broke out with a group sent by the landlord, the district's Councilmember Chi Ossé reached out to AG Letitia James, who showed up at the property to help settle the conflict.
- Court order (Feb 28, 2022) restored the family's ownership



Tenant Protections: Repairs and Housing Conditions

- **Warranty of Habitability:**
 - Requires landlords to keep apartments safe, habitable, and in good repair.
 - Must provide heat (Oct. 1–May 31), hot water, electricity, plumbing, and address serious hazards.
- **311 and HPD Complaints**
 - NYC residents can call 311 to make a complaint about Housing Violations.
 - HPD (Housing Preservation and Development) may inspect the property and issue a housing violation.
 - Landlords must correct violations within legal deadlines:
 - 24 hours for immediately hazardous violations, 30 days for hazardous violations, and 90 days for non-hazardous violations.
- **Tenants may withhold rent if repairs are not made**
 - Must clearly document the issue and be prepared to justify it in Housing Court.
 - Tenants can also file an **HP proceeding (HP Action)** in Housing Court to ask a judge to order the landlord to make repairs



Success Story: Crown Heights Tenants Organize Against Neglect and Displacement

After years of sewage leaks, pest infestations, and other unsafe conditions, a fire destroyed two apartments and left residents—including seniors—without working gas.

Tenant action

- Tenants organized with the Brooklyn Eviction Defense tenant union.
- They documented conditions, held public rallies, and collectively withheld rent.
- The campaign pressured the landlord to address conditions and negotiate with residents.

The result

- More than **\$250,000 in rent debt was forgiven.**
- Tenants gained greater leverage to demand repairs and remain in their homes.



Which Parts of City Government are Relevant to Protecting Tenants (Renters and Small Business that Rent)?



Mayor

Establishes enforcement priorities, controls policy on rent increases for rent stabilized.

City Council

Passes tenant protection laws.
Members advocate for constituents.

HPD

Conducts investigations of landlord abuse, enforces tenant protections.

City Advocate

Audits housing programs, tracks spending, highlights negligent landlords

Housing Court

Courts for tenants and landlords to bring cases related to tenant issues.

Mayoral Priorities and Enforcement of Housing Laws

The Mayor can make landlord accountability a priority of his mandate

- He can direct HPD to focus enforcement on the worst landlord and most dangerous buildings
- The Mayor also controls agencies that can make housing services easier or harder to access: he can expand HPD inspection teams, improve 311 complaints response time, create programs that target building with repeated violations, make tenant resources easier to access etc...
- Such measures in turn can have impact such that there are more inspections and more pressure on landlords to fix unsafe living conditions.

Example: Mayor Mamdani has made landlord accountability a visible priority by using city enforcement powers more aggressively; in the Bronx apartment case, HPD pursued owners with thousands of violations, resulting in a record \$31 million penalty and funds set aside for repairs.

City Council Protecting Tenants: Rental Rip-off Hearings

These hearings investigate how landlords, brokers, and housing practices can make renting unfair or unaffordable for NYC tenants

→ Officials, landlords and tenants testify about problems such as unsafe housing conditions, illegal rent increases, tenant harassment, poor building maintenance...

→ **Rental Rip-Off Hearings make individual tenant complaints become citywide policy debates.**

After hearings, City Council can propose new tenant protection laws, pressure city agencies like HPD to improve enforcement, create rules to make the rental process more transparent.

Some proposals aim to change how tenants apply for apartments e.g. by limiting application fees

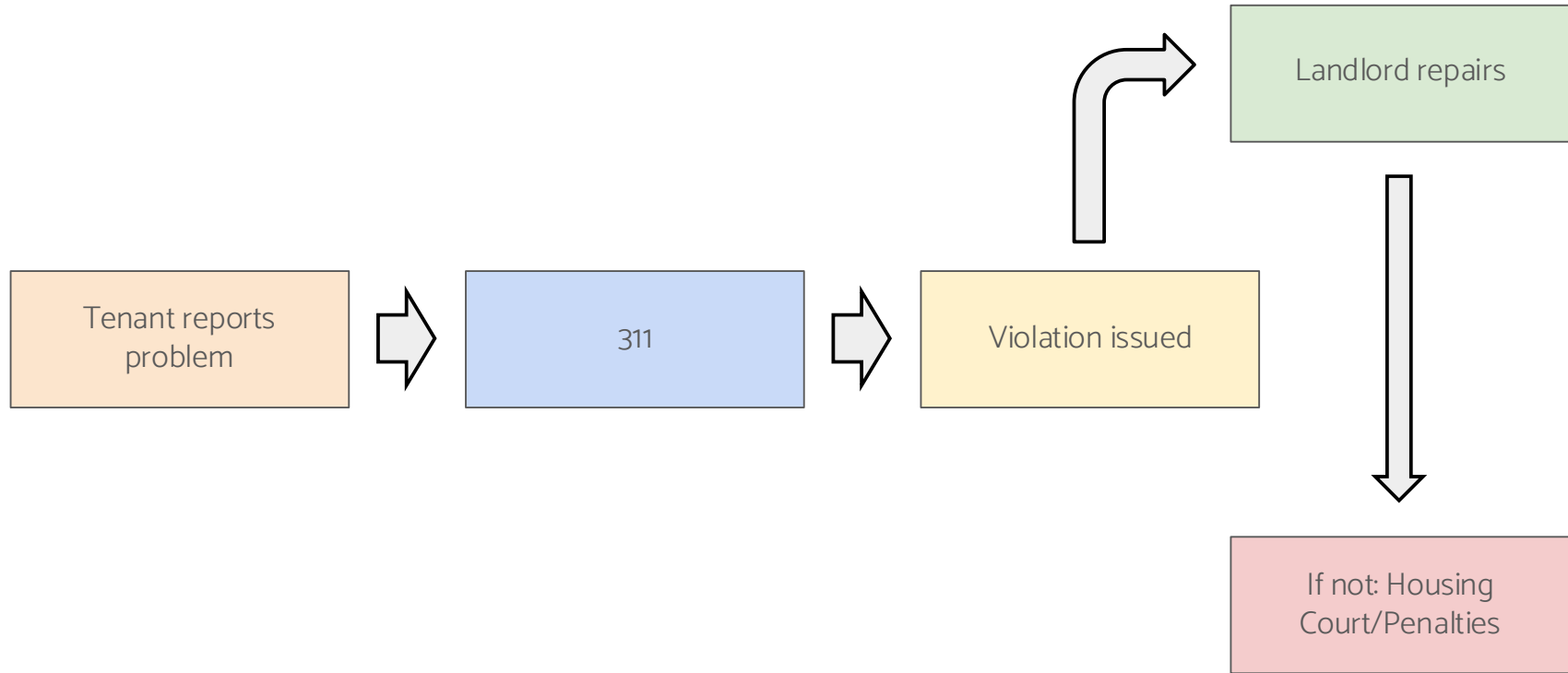
How Does HPD Protect Tenants ?

- HPD is the agency responsible for enforcing housing rules but its effectiveness depends on political priorities and resources

HPD can:

- inspect building in response to tenant complaints
- issue violations when landlords fail to maintain safe conditions
- take landlords to court for serious violations
- provide emergency repairs when owners refuse to act
- manage affordable housing programs

How Can NYC Residents Engage HPD?



How Can NYC Residents Engage HPD ? Other methods

1. Organising with neighbours (file complaints together to receive more attention)
2. Documenting unsafe conditions: take photos, keep records and communications with your landlord to support an HPD investigation or court case
3. Working with tenant advocacy organisations that can help residents navigate HPD and organize collectively
4. Requesting an HPD inspection and filing an HP Action in Housing Court if the landlord does not make repairs(311- see next slide)

Example: Fining Landlords for Negligence

Case study: Bronx Apartment Building (May 2026)

- Tenants in nearly 500 apartments reported unsafe conditions and building code violations = the buildings accumulated thousands of housing violations.
- HPD took the owners to court.
- The court imposed \$31 million in penalties = the largest penalty ever obtained by HPD.
- More than \$900,000 was frozen from the owners' accounts to pay for emergency repairs.

Q&A



NYC Civics @ Old Stone House, 7PM

**July
28**

MEDIA LITERACY

Learn how to navigate local news in the age of AI and social media, identify credible information, and avoid misinformation.

**Sept
23**

CAMPAIGNS AND ADVOCACY

Learn how issue campaigns, primaries, and elections work and how to effectively mobilize voters and participate in campaigns.

**Oct
14**

POLICING & PUBLIC SAFETY

Learn what authority NYC has over policing and how residents can advocate for greater police presence or stronger accountability.

**Oct
21**

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Learn how services – from libraries and sanitation to parks – are funded and how residents can advocate for improvements.

Appendix

Other Affordable Housing Programs

Income/lottery-based:

- For 18+ seeking affordable rentals or homeownership via lottery, any income tier within a listing's AMI band, any immigration status:
 - [NYC Housing Connect](#) is NYC's online portal for finding and applying for affordable rental and homeownership opportunities, units are awarded via random lottery.
- For moderate/middle-income households seeking long-term affordable rentals or co-ops, accepted applicants are taken off a waitlist rather than a one-time lottery:
 - [Mitchell-Lama](#) includes rentals and limited-equity co-ops (allowing residents to buy shares below market rate), supervised by NYS HCR or NYS HPD.

Crisis/subsidy-based:

- For NYC residents facing eviction/homelessness seeking a rental voucher, up to 5 years:
 - [CityFHEPS](#) is a NYC rental subsidy that pays part of a tenant's rent anywhere in New York State.
- For families with children on Cash Assistance facing eviction/DV/health-safety loss, seeking a state rent supplement:
 - [FHEPS](#) is a state-funded rent supplement for families with children.
- For those 18+ with serious mental illness/substance use disorder, often homeless, seeking housing + support:
 - [Supportive Housing](#) combines affordable housing with case management and clinical services.
- For seniors 62+ or people with disabilities (income under ~\$50K) in rent-regulated units, seeking a rent freeze:
 - [SCRIE/DRIE](#) (the NYC Rent Freeze Program) locks rent at its current level, with the city reimbursing the landlord for future increases via a property tax credit.

Tenants vs. Landlords Protections

TENANT PROTECTIONS	LANDLORD PROTECTIONS
• Right to safe and non-hazardous housing (i.e., free from conditions that are dangerous or detrimental to life, health, or safety). • Includes safe building structure, no mold or pest infestations, safe electrical wiring, etc • Units must have working locks, smoke & carbon monoxide detectors, adequate lighting, and required windows. • Illegal housing discrimination based on protected characteristics is prohibited. • Landlords cannot harass tenants, shut off utilities, or illegally lock tenants out. • Right to organize a Tenant Association in their building • A security deposit must not exceed one month's rent. • Landlords cannot change the locks without providing a key.	• Right to collect rent on time, but provide a five-day grace period before charging late fees. • May terminate a lease or seek eviction after repeated lease violations, following legal procedures. • Right to retain part/all of a security deposit for unpaid rent or damage beyond normal wear and tear. • May enter an apartment in emergencies or with advance notice for repairs and inspections. • Landlords can legally evict a tenant if they receive a court order signed by a judge.

Housing Court: How to Sue (For Tenants)

1. You must make a good faith effort to tell your landlord about repairs before suing (via 311, writing a demand letter, etc)
2. Collect information (exact contact info, detailed list of repairs, evidence of damage)
3. Go to your borough courthouse's Housing Court clerk's office. Tell the clerk you want to start an HP action for repairs and fill out the forms.
 - a. Filing fee = \$45, but you can request a fee waiver
4. You will be assigned a HPD inspection date (inspectors examines your housing conditions and makes a report) and a court date
5. Go to court - bring evidence of damage and the judge may order the landlord to make repairs by a certain deadline

Types of Tenant Cases in Housing Court?

The Housing Court hears and decides disputes between residential landlords and tenants. There are six case types:

- Housing Part (HP) - cases brought by tenants or by New York City to enforce laws requiring repairs in residential buildings
- Harassment - brought by tenants against landlords who are harassing them (threats, turning off heat/water after you file a complaint, changing locks, etc)
- Article 7A Proceedings - If you are having landlord problems related to a lack of heat, water, electricity, or other dangerous conditions, you can ask the court to appoint an administrator to run the building instead. This would require the support of at least one-third of the tenants in the building.
- Illegal Lock-Outs - If you've been living in an apartment for at least 30 days (with or without a lease), you cannot be evicted unless the landlord has a court order. It is illegal to force a tenant out of the apartment without a court order.

When Development Happens: Gowanus Development

8,500

New apartments
planned citywide

3,000

Reserved as
affordable units

\$200M

Pledged for NYCHA
repairs nearby

- 82 city blocks along the Gowanus Canal were rezoned for mixed-use and high-density housing.
- This area is also on a federal Superfund canal, tying every project to an ongoing pollution cleanup.

Within Gowanus, developers can build more densely and at greater heights.

In exchange, projects must set 25-30% of units as affordable (Mandatory Inclusionary Housing). The city also must fund public housing repairs in the area and sewer upgrades near the canal.

Supporters

A good opportunity to address a shortage of housing, while also creating density with affordability set aside.

Critics

Much of the new development would be built on contaminated land, and could change the nature of the local industry.