

"Enough is Enough: Why New Yorkers Must Say No to the 'City of Yes'"

Mayor Adams' *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* is a complete betrayal of New Yorkers. It is pitched as an affordable housing and community revitalization plan but is actually designed to serve the wealthy elite. This plan would rob our communities of what little control they have, destroy historic neighborhoods, pave over precious green space that will increase flooding and escalate the affordability crisis with phony affordable units and wide-spread gentrification. The Met Council, The Black Institute, Save 1-Family New York, S.T.O.P. City of Yes and a massive and diverse coalition of community and civic organizations representing tenants, homeowners and neighborhoods across New York City are united in demanding that the City Council vote NO on this catastrophe we're calling the "City of Mess", "City of Stress" and "City of B.S.!"

Let's not be fooled by this proposal's glossy promises and propaganda. The *City of Yes* isn't about helping New Yorkers: it's simply about making more profits for developers – while ignoring the realities of our affordability crisis. Here's a small sample as to why this proposal is a fast track to disaster.

1. Stripping Away Community Power

Mayor Adams' *City of Yes* brazenly strips away the power of community boards, residents and their elected officials – the City Council itself – by bypassing the public review process (ULURP). Outside of Manhattan, Community Boards across the city overwhelmingly voted NO to the *City of Yes*. Yet City Hall is willing to push through these radical changes to our neighborhoods without any real public input, signaling that New Yorkers' voices don't matter. This disregard for our communities and the people who live in them is not just offensive, it's an insult that will tear apart civil society and the democratic process.

2. Destruction of Neighborhoods and Historic Sites

The *City of Yes*, written by developers for developers, is a blueprint for demolishing New York's unique neighborhoods and cultural landmarks to make way for yet more luxury development. In addition, the *City of Yes* encourages paving over private property by taking away required yards and special districts. Community spaces, historic sites, and even religious buildings could be razed solely for the sake of profit, erasing generations of history and community identity. New York City isn't just a playground for developers and the ultra-rich; it's our home, and our neighborhoods deserve protection.

3. Unaffordable Housing Disguised as "Affordable"

The *City of Yes*'s promise of "affordable" housing is a bad joke, pledging to construct 58,000 – 109,000 homes within the next 15 years. To break that down into simpler terms, that roughly translates anywhere from 3,900 to 7,300 homes – about 780 – 1,460 units per borough per year, or 65-125 units per Community Board per year, a number that makes no sense for something being promoted as a game-changer (see #6 below). Of that miniscule quantity, only 20% of new units are described as affordable, and that's for households earning at least \$77,000 (and often much more) far beyond reach for most New Yorkers, especially essential workers. This plan leaves behind the city's low-income residents, catering only to those who

already have enough. It's housing for the privileged few, not for the millions of New Yorkers who are struggling under record-high rent burdens.

4. Tenant Harassment and Forced Displacement

City of Yes is a green light for landlords to harass tenants by forcing new construction on top of occupied buildings or forcing total displacement for new market-rate / luxury buildings. We know this tactic well — create noise, push tenants out of their homes, and jack up rents. It's exploitation of vulnerable New Yorkers at its worst, and the *City of Yes* actively enables it by providing landlords with even more tools to abuse tenants without any real protections in place.

5. Replacement of Homeowning Communities with Market-Rate and Luxury Rental Units

At 31.2%, New York City has less than half the homeownership rate of the United States (65.7%) and considerably less than New York State (53.6%). While homeownership rates vary widely across the city, Staten Island (69.8%) and Queens (45.6%) have the highest proportion of owner-occupied one and two-family homes, coops and condos, followed by Brooklyn (30.3%), Manhattan (25.0%) and the Bronx (19.6%). The *City of Yes* real estate scheme is heavily focused on destroying lower density neighborhoods – which have the highest percentages of homeownership in the city – and replacing them with higher density market rate and luxury rental units. These communities have little infrastructure / are transit deserts. *City of Yes* will cannibalize neighborhoods and destroy generational wealth in what's left of our working and middle-class homeowning communities.

6. Ignoring Environmental and Health Impacts

The *City of Yes* is environmentally reckless, with no credible protections for communities of color that face environmental hazards every day. The Department of City Planning's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a document with dubious claims to justify their development scheme, stating that the *City of Yes* will have no effect on communities around the city. There is absolutely no question that there will be an exponential increase in flooding, pollution, congestion and poor air quality, further damaging public health and safety in neighborhoods already overburdened by environmental racism. Green space, trees and permeable ground will be threatened in a city already facing critical challenges due to climate change. This disregard for community health, safety and environmental justice is unacceptable.

New Yorkers don't need flashy false promises that line developers' pockets. We need genuine, people-first policies that protect our communities. Here are some important examples:

Community Land Act: This is a bold step toward tenant power, giving renters the first right to buy their buildings and keep them within the community, not sold off to the highest bidder.

Social Housing: Rather than luxury developments, we need community-controlled housing that remains affordable. Social housing works because it prioritizes people over profits, creating stable, affordable housing that remains accessible to future generations (Ex: Mitchell-Lama).

Universal Rent Control: Rent stability must apply citywide, protecting all renters from predatory increases and creating lasting housing security for all New Yorkers.

Real Mandatory Affordable Housing: All R6 and above districts must mandate a percentage of truly affordable units in all as-of-right new development.

Infrastructure First: We are decades behind in our current infrastructure with our current population in a time of climate change and rising sea levels. No new upzonings should be approved without Community-approved and funded infrastructure expansion.

Community Boards across New York have already spoken and voted NO on the *City of Yes*. It's time for the City Council to listen to the people they serve and reject this corporate giveaway masquerading as a solution.

History Repeats Itself and We're Not Falling for It

This isn't the first time we've heard big promises, only to end up with more displacement, higher rents, and gutted communities. We've been down this road before, and we know what comes next. Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is the definition of insanity. New Yorkers aren't crazy! We're informed, we're vigilant, and we know better. Our communities see through this plan, and we 100% reject it.

Fact: New York City's current zoning, if it is never changed again, can accommodate another 8 to 12 million more people right now. The issue is not housing capacity – it is affordability! The *City of Yes* is nothing more than a brazen land grab gift-wrapped for developers by Mayor Adams, trampling over the voices of New Yorkers who are fighting to keep their neighborhoods, their homes, and their futures intact. We are calling on every City Council member to take a stand — reject this apocalyptic package of proposals in full and show the people of New York that their voices matter more than lining the pockets of donors and lobbyists. This is our city, our home, and our fight. Instead of playing the Mayor's game on his purposefully expedited and undemocratic timeline, the City Council can shut this madness down with a simple NO vote and, together, we can demand real, people-first solutions that protect our communities, honor our history, and ensure housing for everyone, not just for a wealthy few.

New Yorkers deserve a city and government that stands by its people. Join us in this fight, and let's build the city that WE want, not what Mayor Adams and his real estate industry friends are trying to dictate to us. Say NO to the *City of Yes*!

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