



MITCHELL-LAMA RESIDENTS COALITION

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WEBSITE: www.mitchell-lama.org

Two Mitchell-Lama developments agree to long-term affordability plans

New affordability deals for residents of Waterside Plaza and Westview, two Mitchell-Lama complexes near the East River, were announced in August by the owners and both the City and the State. Waterside Plaza residents will see rent increases limited for seventy-five years; Westview residents will have a thirty-year reprieve.

Waterside Plaza

Under an agreement reached between the city and real estate developer Richard Ravitch, the owner would keep 325 apartments--all that remain under rent regulations of the original 1470 units--permanently affordable for seventy-five years.

In exchange for restrictions on rent increases in a rapidly gentrifying area, the owner will be guaranteed a ground lease for ninety-nine years. (That part of the deal, however, is still subject to the city's uniform land use review procedure, and must secure approval by the City Council. The process generally takes around six to eight months.) Ravitch has been attempting to extend the ground lease in order to refinance the mortgage. Under the new deal, the owner's payments to the city will be reduced.

The complex include four towers, twenty townhouses, and a large plaza,

plus stores and the British International School of New York. Waterside residents, most of whom are elderly, voted 199 to 0 in support of the deal.

Rent increases would vary with the finances of the tenants. Those whose income is below 165 percent of the area's median income (\$83,000 for a family of two) would get a rent freeze. Residents who earn above that amount might see increase of either 2.25 percent a year, or the official Rent Stabilization rates, whichever is higher. Very poor tenants might have their rents reduced to thirty percent of their income.

Westview

Westview, consisting of two 19-story buildings with 361 apartments, will leave the Mitchell-Lama program, but tenants will be offered an opportunity to purchase their units at low prices (roughly 30 percent of market value). Tenants who choose not to buy will still be allowed to remain in their apartments at Rent Stabil-

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Masaryk, Lakeview affordability

Late breaking news: Masaryk Towers and Lakeview Apartments, both related to the Mitchell Lama program, to accept affordability offer for decades. Pages 2 and 6.

Get out the vote! key lesson of the primaries

The central lesson of the recent Democratic primaries in both the city and the state: voting counts, today perhaps more than ever. "Get out the vote" may well be the new rallying cry for those seeking housing justice.

The victories in the Democratic primaries in September came as little surprise, as establishment or "centrist" figures beat their more progressive opponents in the three top races: Governor, in which Andrew Cuomo garnered around two-thirds of the vote over newcomer Cynthia Nixon's one-third; Lt. Governor, where Kathy Hochul, the office's acting official, beat Jumaane Williams by a small margin of six points (53 percent to 47 percent); and Attorney General, in which Letitia James, the City's public advocate, won over Zephyr Teachout and two others with 41 percent of the vote.

Pretty much as widely predicted.

But there was one striking development in this primary: the number of Democratic voters who went to the polling booths *more than doubled* that in 2014.

In a tabulation by the upstate newspaper Democrat & Chronicle, around 1.5 million registered Democrats, or more than 24 percent of all those reg-

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**Strengthen MLRC
Join today (use form on page 2)**

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Saturday, October 27, 2018 10:00 a.m - noon

NOTE: If weather is inclement, prospective attendees should call the MLRC hotline at 212-465-2619 after 6 a.m., to learn if the meeting's been canceled due to the weather.

CONTACT: Information@mitchell-lama.org
PLACE: Musicians Union, Local 802, 322 W. 48th St., near 8th Ave. in the ground floor "Club Room." Subway trains: No. 1 to 50th St. & 7th Ave.; Q,W to 49th St. & Broadway; E to 50th St. & 8th Ave.

Mitchell-Lama Residents Coalition
PO Box 20414
Park West Station
New York, NY 10025

Masaryk Towers will receive city financing to retain affordability

Masaryk Towers, a 1960s Mitchell-Lama cooperative on the Lower East Side, will receive city financing to provide low-interest mortgage loans to shareholders, in return for caps on sellers' profits and limits on buyers' income.

Financing for the 1,000-unit cooperative, in the amount of \$45 million, will be made available by the Housing Development Corporation. HDC signed off on the financing in late September.

The project is an example of the de Blasio administration's efforts to stem the loss of Mitchell-Lama developments and other affordable housing programs to luxury accommodations. An estimated 20,000 M-L units, both rentals and cooperatives, have been lost since 1989.

The Masaryk Towers project follows HDC's offer of \$320 million for new affordable housing construction and preservation of some five thousand units in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens.

A year ago, Masaryk Towers found itself embroiled in a public controversy when it constructed locked gates that cut off a popular shortcut used for years by residents of nearby NYCHA projects. The shortcut had enabled the housing authority residents, many of whom are elderly, to walk about five minutes to the Grand Street Settlement, a century-old institution offering social services. The trip will now average around thirty minutes. Supporters of the gates had long complained of vandalism on the walkway.

Bob Wilson, Knickerbocker Village tenant leader, dies in apparent suicide

Bob Wilson, a long time tenant leader at Knickerbocker Village, the housing development where he grew up, committed suicide in July. He was 78 years old.

No suicide note was available, but press reports indicate that the former president of the development's tenants association had been treated for post traumatic stress and major depressive disorder." He had been a marine in the Vietnam war.

Press reports indicate that Wilson fell from the balcony of his Monroe St. penthouse apartment on July 2. The City's chief medical examiner confirmed that Wilson's death was a suicide, caused by "multiple blunt-impact injuries."

Well-known in the lower east side

community where he had lived most of his life, Wilson was praised by various community leaders. Susan Stetzer, the district manager of Community Board 3, called him "wonderful," specifically mentioning his efforts during Hurricane Sandy, when he led tours of elected officials to acquaint them with the problems tenants faced.

An online remembrance of Wilson quoted by a local newspaper noted that he had been born in Washington, DC, and moved to New York as a child with his mother.

He attended Brooklyn College and worked for the City's Bureau of Investments for several years.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**MLRC
General Membership
Meeting**
Saturday, October 27, 2018
10:00 a.m. - noon

Members are urged to voice concerns regarding their developments, especially long- and short-term standing issues

**Musicians Union, Local 802,
322 W. 48th St., near 8th Ave.
in the ground floor "Club Room"**

NOTE: If weather is inclement, prospective attendees should call the MLRC hotline at **212-465-2619** after 6 a.m., to learn if the meeting's been canceled due to the weather.

For more information, e-mail: info@mitchell-lama.org

Mitchell-Lama Residents Coalition, Inc.

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JOIN THE MITCHELL-LAMA RESIDENTS COALITION 2018

INDIVIDUAL: \$15 per year; DEVELOPMENT: 25 cents per apt
(\$30 Minimum; \$125 Maximum)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Evening phone _____ Day phone _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____

Current ML: Co-op _____ Rental _____

Former ML: Co-op _____ Rental _____

Development _____

President's name _____

Donations in addition to dues are welcome.

Inwood rezoning passes Council following months of controversy

After months of vociferous opposition by various community residents, and numerous changes to the original plan, the City Council voted almost unanimously in August to approve an upzoning of Inwood, perhaps the last remaining moderate/middle income neighborhood in the city where most of the buildings are rent regulated.

A central goal of the plan is to increase the availability of affordable apartments, by requiring developers seeking to avail themselves of the plan's benefits to include a percentage of such units in any construction undertaking. On its [website](#), the City Council noted that the goal of the upzoning is to "promote the development of thousands of affordable apartments," and generate other economic improvements.

Among the Councilmembers supporting the plan was Ydanis Rodriguez, who represents the district in which the upzoning will occur. The only "no" vote was cast by Brooklyn Councilmember Inez Barron. Councilmember Jumaane Williams abstained.

After the vote, Councilman Francisco Moya of Queens announced that he was halting further land-use negotiations with the city in rezoned areas. Moya, who chairs the Council's Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, had insisted that construction workers on affordable housing projects be paid prevailing wages, and that the city should increase its anti-harassment efforts against landlords. City officials dismissed his threat.

The issue of upzoning has long been contentious in the city. Supporters cite a standard "supply and demand" argument: that the increased allowable height will enable developers to construct many more apartments, and this additional supply will serve ultimately to force down rents. Opponents argue that years of constructing new apartments in the city have not only not lowered rents, but have increased them to stratospheric heights. They also fear that upzoning is but a first step to opening the gates to luxury developments, which ultimately--in spite of laws and regulations to the contrary--will result in forcing out moderate and middle income residents. They cite neighborhood after neighborhood--from Chelsea in Manhattan to Bedford Stuyvesant in Brooklyn--as typical.

A significant modification of the original plan was to remove any upzoning in the so-called Commercial U district, a

move intended to meet the concerns of small businesses and residents about displacement.

The number of newly created apartments to be rented at affordable prices will vary from 20 to 25 percent.

A report on the plan published in City Limits notes that "developers will choose between devoting 25 percent of units to rents affordable to households making 60 percent of the area median income (which is an estimated \$56,340 for a household of three persons) or setting aside 20 percent of units to be affordable to those making 40 percent of the area median income, which is \$37,560 for a household of three persons."

Key housing elements of the plan, according to the City Council, include the following:

- The City will build 925 new affordable apartments on public land (Inwood Library, 4095 Ninth Ave, and Dyckman Houses).
- The City will work to finance 1000 new affordable apartments on private land.
- An estimated 675 additional affordable units will be created via Mandatory Inclusionary Housing.
- The City will work to preserve or

protect at least 2,500 homes.

Key transportation elements entail improving priority intersections along 10th Avenue, focusing on providing better pedestrian crossings, simplifying complex intersections, and calming traffic. Intersections will include 10th Avenue at West 205th Street, West 207th Street, West 218th Street, as well as Dyckman Street and Nagle Avenue. Improvements could include reduced pedestrian crossing distances, and new crosswalks, sidewalks and traffic signals.

Key parks and open space elements include:

- Construction of new two-acre waterfront City park on the former Academy Street east of 10th Avenue across the street from NYCHA's Dyckman Houses.
- Restoration of the North Cove as an ecological resource, and changing the area currently used for parking to become part of a new North Cove park.
- Renovation of Monsignor Kett Playground including an intergenerational fitness area and new comfort station.
- Repairing waterfront infrastructure along the Harlem River to address structural integrity of waterfront edge structures.

Former Yonkers M-L development razed for new affordable apartments

A town house in Yonkers that was once the site of a Mitchell Lama housing development has been razed for a new form of affordable housing.

The former townhouse, at 209 Warburton Avenue, was demolished at the end of August in preparation for "townhouse-style" affordable units.

The demolition and subsequent reconstruction are the third part of a larger project known as the Cottage Place Gardens revitalization. Project Three will include 70 units of townhouse-style affordable housing.

An additional 56 units to be replaced in the \$41.9 billion project are known as the Villas at the Ridgeway.

The new structures will comprise four-story rowhouse-style walk-up apartment buildings containing 70 units of mixed-income housing for families earning

less than 30 percent of the Area Median Income, as well as for those earning less than 50 percent, 60 percent, and for those with no income restrictions.

Yonkers' municipal housing authority and Community Builders are partners in the project. According to the project's website, the buildings "will have green/high performance features in compliance with NYSERDA Multifamily program and LEED for Homes and will serve to re-invigorate pedestrian activity along Warburton Avenue and Willow Place by providing new sidewalks, street trees, and site lighting."

Additional work will be done on the New Little Branches day care center, to include "structural repairs, roof replacement, upgrades, new finishes, and new mechanical and electrical equipment to supplant the outmoded systems in place today."

State comptroller critiques HPD and Linden Plaza on expenditures

The owner of Linden Plaza, a Brooklyn Mitchell-Lama development comprising 1,525 apartments, is seeking rent hikes to cover \$10.7 million in purchases between January 2016 and August 2017 that were never reviewed by the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development to check for competitive bidding.

According to a report issued by Thomas DiNapoli, the state's comptroller, the reason for the lack of review was that the money was spent either without a contract, or on various contracts which were under \$100,000 each. City rules do not require competitive bidding for contracts that are less than that amount, or for purchases made without a contract, regardless of dollar amount.

Of the \$10.7 million, \$6.1 million was paid to eleven vendors with contracts for services not covered by the rules. The remaining funds were paid to vendors that did not have contracts with Linden Plaza.

The rules, according to DiNapoli, "do not specify when a contract is

required . . . With limited exception, there was no documentation indicating that Linden Plaza had conducted price analyses or taken any other steps to determine the reasonableness of prices."

The report also criticized Linden Plaza for insufficient documentation of at least one vendor. Further, "We sampled 50 invoices totaling \$87,914 (out of 204 invoices totaling \$577,822) for plumbing work. We found 20 invoices totaling \$45,710 that did not match purchase/work orders and/or lacked evidence that the work was completed." The owner of the development was also criticized for lacking an adequate inventory system.

DiNapoli recommended an expansion of "requirements for bidding and/or HPD approval and ensure that the Rules are enforced;" and a requirement that "invoices only be paid when supported by adequate documentation." It also suggested that Linden Plaza "establish and maintain an inventory control system to properly account for assets.

New York Times advocates pro-tenant rent reforms

The New York Times on September 10th recommended a series of rent reforms in Albany that many tenant groups have long advocated.

Acknowledging that the state's lawmakers--recipients of tens of millions of dollars from real estate interests--"have been gutting New York City's rent regulations for decades, putting hundreds of thousands of rent-stabilized apartments on the open market, driving up housing costs and forcing poor and middle-class New Yorkers out of their homes," the editorial presented a series of reforms sought for decades by pro-tenant associations, including the Mitchell-Lama Residents Association.

The reforms advocated included:

¶ Overturning the Urstadt law, which prevents the City from enacting rent regulations without the approval of the state legislature, which is dominated by real estate supporters.

¶ Ending vacancy decontrol

for apartments where the rent has reached \$2,733.45. That amount, not long ago considered high-end, is now considered "affordable" for many city apartments. The Times recommends keeping all stabilized apartments in the program, with gradual rent increments to reflect owners costs and rates set by the Rent Guidelines Board.

¶ Ending vacancy bonuses, which allows owners to raise rent by twenty percent whenever an apartment is vacated. The law provides an "incentive for continually displacing tenants, a pervasive form of harassment.

¶ Ending the preferential rent bonus, which allows owners to raise the rent to reach a theoretical "legal rent" at lease renewal time, instead of when the tenant vacates the apartment.

¶ Strengthening the state's Homes and Community Renewal division, to enforce greater landlord accountability.

City to launch \$1.5 million anti-displacement program

New York City will launch a \$1.5 million anti-displacement pilot program, to begin in recently rezoned areas of East Harlem, Jerome Avenue in the Bronx, and the Inwood and Washington Heights sections of upper Manhattan.

Funding will come from the city's department of Housing Preservation and the Development and the Housing Development Corporation, along with Enterprise Community Partners, a nonprofit affordable housing financing and management group.

A statement from HPD noted that the program, to be called Partners in Preservation, "will serve as a hub for local anti-displacement initiatives" in the areas, where "high rates of speculative investment and rising rents have made residents particularly vulnerable to tenant harassment and displacement."

Funds will be distributed to community-based organizations "to jointly coordinate anti-displacement initiatives – such as code enforcement, tenant organizing and education, legal representation, affirmative litigation, and other strategies."

MLRC Developments

These developments are members of the Mitchell-Lama Residents Coalition

**Individual Membership: \$15 per year
Development Membership: 25 cents per apt
(\$30 minimum; \$125 maximum)**

Donations above membership dues are welcome

Adee Towers	Assn
Amalgamated Warbasse	Meadow Manor
Arverne Apartments	Michelangelo Apartments
Bethune Towers	109th St. Senior Citizens Plaza
Castleton Park	158th St & Riverside Dr. Housing
Central Park Gardens	Parkside Development
Clayton Apartments	Pratt Towers
Coalition to save Affordable Housing of Co-op City	Promenade Apartments
Concerned Tenants of Sea Park East, Inc.	RNA House
Concourse Village	Riverbend Housing
Dennis Lane Apartments	River Terrace
1199 Housing	River View Towers
Esplanade Gardens	Rosedale Gardens Co-op
Franklin Plaza	Ryerson Towers
Independence House	Starrett City Tenants Assn
Tenants Assn	St. James Towers
Independence Plaza North	Strykers Bay Co-op
Inwood Towers	Tivoli Towers
Jefferson Towers	Tower West
Knickerbocker Plaza	Village East Towers
Linden Plaza	Washington Park SE Apts
Lindsay Park	Washington Square SE Apts
Lindville Housing	Westgate Tenants Assn
Lincoln Amsterdam House	Westgate
Manhattan Plaza	Westview Apartments
Marcus Garvey Village	West View Neighbors Assn
Masaryk Towers Tenants	West Village Houses

Affordable housing news from around the nation

Nationwide: rents are easing, but only for the rich

Rent levels in expensive cities across the nation are finally declining--for the wealthy. For low- and moderate-income tenants, they are continuing to rise. According to the [Washington Post](#), which analyzed data from Zillow, a real estate monitoring firm, "Nationally, the pace of rent increases is beginning to slow down, with the average rent in at least six cities falling since last summer. . . . But the decline is being driven primarily by decreasing prices for high-end rentals. People in low-end housing, the apartments and other units that house working-class residents, are still paying more than ever."

Montana: county moves to help former inmates secure rentals

Missoula County is entering into a pilot program to help about 75 formerly incarcerated people secure affordable rental housing. With the second-highest homeless population and the second-highest number of people in corrections supervision in the state, the county is working with a local human resource council to find rental housing for about 75 people who are returning from incarceration. All will be supervised by the Montana Department of Corrections. A similar program in Pennsylvania's Union County resulted in a 22 percent drop in the recidivism rate.

LA: Mobile homes growing resource for low-cost dwellings

Mobile home parks are emerging as a growing resource for the increasing number of people who cannot afford traditional apartments or houses. A report in *How Housing Matters* notes that "more than six percent of Americans live in mobile homes, and more than a million Californians live in mobile home parks." Problems include:

¶ Mobile home parks tend to be in low-density neighborhoods at the urban fringe and tend to have inadequate access to public services.

¶ People living in mobile home parks have poor access to transit, which limits access to jobs.

¶ Mobile home parks in LA experience worse drinking water service, reliability, quality, and affordability.

¶ Almost a third of mobile home parks in LA are in areas zoned for commercial or industrial purposes, not residential uses; as such, they are exposed to more environmental hazards.

Seattle: Council repeals 'head tax' for affordable housing

One month after unanimously passing a "head tax" on very large corporations to fund affordable housing, the city council repealed it, giving in to opponents, primarily giant companies like Amazon and Starbucks who characterized the program as a "tax on jobs." In fact, the tax would not have been levied on either employees or jobs, but on the giant corporations, who would have been charged \$275 per employee per year. It would have affected only three percent of the city's firms (around 500) whose gross revenue exceeded more than \$20 million annually. It had been expected to raise \$47 million per year.

Baltimore: City to allocate \$20m yearly to housing trust fund

Mayor Catherine Pugh's office and members of city council, bowing to pressure from community activists, agreed to allocate \$20 million a year to the city's affordable housing trust fund. Created in 2016, the fund has remained empty, impelling activists to lobby residents for a ballot question that would require the city to set aside 0.05 percent of its total property assessment for affordable housing. Under the agreement reached in August, the activists will not push for the ballot in November.

Cincinnati: Judge effectively criminalizes being homeless

Robert Ruehlman, a Cincinnati judge, banned homeless camps in Hamilton County, Ohio, and ordered police to arrest anyone who defied the order. His order "effectively made being homeless in most of Cincinnati illegal," according to US district judge Timothy Black. Ruehlman justified his ruling on the grounds that sufficient shelters are available for homeless people who now live on the streets. Police moved quickly to calm fears of mass arrests. They say that they will continue to direct the homeless to shelters and social service agencies rather than arrest them.

Local Housing Briefs

NYC to consolidate voucher programs

In an effort to eliminate confusion stemming from numerous rent-subsidy programs, the city will consolidate all voucher types under a single program in the fall. As explained by Steven Banks, the commissioner of social services, "Rather than seven programs with unique criteria, we will now have one unified program with consolidated criteria." Complaints about the current system have been expressed by both tenants and landlords. The new system, City Fighting Homelessness & Eviction Prevention Supplement, will no longer require vouchers to expire after five years.

11 percent of HUD and M-L subsidy programs may expire by 2023

Of the 2,663 properties in the city with HUD and Mitchell-Lama subsidies in 2017, eleven percent are eligible to expire out of affordability restrictions by 2023. A new [report](#) from NYU's Furman Center found that almost three quarters of developments eligible to expire by 2023 are in Brooklyn and Manhattan. In the next fifteen years, Manhattan will have 454 properties with expiring subsidies; Brooklyn will have 433.

Former Jehovah's Witness building to house affordable apartments

The Brooklyn building that formerly served as headquarters for the Jehovah's Witness religion, and also as a hotel that never opened, will be transformed into an affordable housing development by early 2020. Breaking Ground, a nonprofit housing provider, plans to start renovations next year. The group said that 127 units will be single-bedrooms, which "will be geared toward low-income, working families." The remainder, to include studios and other units, will be rented to formerly homeless low-income individuals.

Affordable units slated for old Greenpoint Hospital

The former Greenpoint Hospital, a century-old building in Brooklyn that served as a medical center for seventy years and later as a homeless shelter, will be renovated as affordable housing, largely for the very low income, and for seniors. One of two buildings on the site will be refurbished as a new center for the homeless. Hudson Companies, a private real estate developer, will work with St. Nick's Alliance and Project Renewal, two community groups, to create 512 units of affordable housing. The renovation will include two new buildings as well as conversion of existing structures.

Forty-year reprieve for Lakview tenants

Lakeview Apartments, a 446-unit Mitchell Lama development in East Harlem, will remain affordable to tenants for around forty years, and will include long term protections for income-eligible tenants, as a result of an agreement by the state's Homes and Community Renewal. Announced at the end of September, the agreement will also allow the owner of the complex to make structural improvements, including repairs and an updated security system.

As with so many other Mitchell Lama developments, Lakeview was eligible to exit the ML program and charge market rate rents, which most if not all current tenants (as well as residents in other ML buildings) could not afford.

A statement released by Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office noted that the agreement included the following stipulations:

Restricting apartments to new tenants who earn no more than 110 per-

cent of the area median income;

Requiring capital improvements and repairs including new roofs, new kitchens, an upgraded bathrooms for all apartments;

An upgraded security system, upgraded laundry rooms, renovated lobbies, energy improvements, and new elevators;

"Preserving long-term affordability under Rental Assistance Demonstration, a program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that is enabling nearly all Lakeview tenants to spend no more than 30 percent of their income on rent. With RAD, apartments are kept affordable through a long-term contract that provides Section 8 funding to designated apartments."

This higher level of Section 8 funding was secured by Senator Charles Schumer and Representative Adriano Espaillat, according to a statement by the governor's office.

New state law requires M-L and other co-ops to include more contract information in annual reports

Condominium and cooperative housing corporations, including those in the Mitchell Lama program, will now have to submit an annual report to the members of the governing board regarding information about contracts entered into that were subject to certain transactions.

The requirement became law after the appropriate bills passed both the Assembly and Senate.

Specifically, the annual report must include a list of all contracts voted on by the board of directors,

including information on the contract recipient, amount, and the purpose of entering into the contract.

In addition, the report must contain the record of each meeting including director attendance, voting records for contracts, and how each director voted on such contracts; and the date of each vote on each contract, as well as the contract date.

The bill had been introduced in the Senate by Republican Martin J. Golden of Brooklyn, who had formerly served on the New York City Council.

Delsenia Glover named new executive director of Tenants & Neighbors

Delsenia Glover, a staff member since 2013 of Tenants & Neighbors, a key tenants rights group in New York State, has been named Executive Director. She succeeds Katie Goldstein.

Among her previous positions, Delsenia was the founder and leader of a Central Harlem-based organization of

rent-stabilized tenant association presidents. She has worked professionally in public relations with several NYC firms before starting her own consultancy. Delsenia is also a founder of the Bronx Career & College Preparatory High School in the Bronx.

Q and A on Mitchell-Lama

Q: My mother lives in Mitchell-Lama housing, and I want to take over her lease. What are the rules for succession?

A: Above all, providing proof that you're related to the current tenant and have lived in the apartment with them.

Succeeding a current tenant or co-op shareholder requires fulfilling several qualifications. First, the resident must have permanently vacated the apartment. This can occur if he or she dies, moves elsewhere, or is in a nursing home with no likelihood of being able to move back into the unit.

You must also be a member of the resident's family. Family members are as defined by statute. They can be related in a traditional or non-traditional sense. They can be related by blood or marriage (e.g. spouses, children, parents, siblings, grandchildren or grandparents). You can prove a familial connection through documentation like a birth or marriage certificate. If you are a non-traditional family member you must prove that you had an emotionally and financially interdependent relationship with the former tenant.

In addition, you must have co-occupied the apartment with the person you're succeeding for two years (if you are under 62 years old and don't have a disability) or one year (if you're over 62 or have a disability.)

Although you no longer have to be listed on your predecessor's annual income affidavit, it's still a good idea to make sure your predecessor is listing you on theirs, as it will help your application for succession move along more smoothly.

You can also prove your tenancy in the apartment by filing state income taxes from that address—if you haven't filed then, it can be fatal to your succession.

Registering to vote, as well as having a driver's license, credit cards, bank statements, gym memberships, or medical and employment records at that address, are also strong forms of proof that you've resided in the apartment for the required one or two years. The more paper that connects you to the apartment the better. Witnesses can also testify that you occupied the apartment with the departing tenant.

To apply for succession, you must file an application with the housing company that manages your Mitchell-Lama building.

*This article is a slightly edited version of a [column](#) by **Sam Himmelstein**, an attorney for residential and commercial tenants, that appeared in *Brick Underground*.*

Comptroller: City has lost more than 425,400 affordable apartments since 2005

More than 425,000 affordable apartments, renting for \$900 or less, have been lost in New York City since 2005, according to a new report by City Controller Scott M. Stringer.

At the same time, the report notes, high rent units have soared. Specifically, the number of apartments renting for \$2,700 or more jumped by 110,000, replacing many lost low-rent units.

These figures are corrected for an error in the original report, when it was initially issued. The original claim was that over a million affordable units had been lost, and that the increase in expensive apartments had increased four-fold, rather than two-fold.

According to the real estate publication *The Real Deal*, the "mistake occurred when a staffer working on the report multiplied a number in a formula rather than dividing it..."

In a statement to the *Wall Street Journal*, which broke the story on the erroneous data, Stringer's spokeswoman Ilana Maier said that, "While it remains true that affordable housing is declining at an unsettling rate and the gap is still growing, we overstated the pace."

Notwithstanding the mathemati-

cal error, the basic analysis in the report remains the same. Namely, that the key factor in the loss of so many affordable units and the increase in barely affordable apartments is the erosion of rent-stabilized units, which lose their regulated status as soon as a tenant vacates--either voluntarily or because of being harassed out. During the past thirteen years, more than 88 thousand such units were so affected, a number that is more than the entire addition of new rental housing.

"Behind these [425,000-revised] lost units," Stringer said, "are countless New Yorkers – families, seniors, students and immigrants – who are working harder than ever to put a roof over their heads." He added that more than half of low-income tenants in the city pay more than fifty percent of their income on rent.

All financial data are in inflation-adjusted figures.

The largest contributor to the loss of affordable housing was "high-rent vacancy deregulation – which occurs when a vacant rent-stabilized apartment legally surpasses the threshold amount of regulated rent." The loss has been slowed, however, by higher thresholds for vacancy decontrol.

Council considers law to stop false renovation permits

The City Council is now considering enactment of a law deterring real estate owners from falsifying applications for renovations of buildings with rent-regulated tenants. False applications are often filed in an effort to drive out those tenants, enabling the owners to charge much higher market rents.

The effort by the Council came in response to reports that the Kushner Cos, a business owned by the family of Jared Kushner, a son-in-law and advisor to President Donald Trump, had falsified such applications.

A statement released by Aaron Carr, the executive director of the Housing Rights Initiative said that "The Department of Buildings has said they would hold landlords accountable for falsifying their applications and now we are going to hold the department accountable for enforcing the law and honoring its promise." The HRI in a report initially exposed the landlords' practice.

A report in the publication *Finance and Commerce* noted that "The city council's legislation would require the buildings and finance departments to coordinate their information to identify false applicants, who would then be subject to an audit of their entire property portfolio to determine whether any false statements were made elsewhere. The buildings department would also audit 25 percent of a compliance watchlist. False applicants would be referred to law enforcement authorities."

Breast cancer and housing: segregation doubles chance of dying for Afro-American women

New York City will undertake a three-year, \$12.8 million program to reduce breast cancer deaths and various pregnancy-related problems among women of color.

Announced in July, the program coincides with a new study by the University of Illinois that found that breast cancer incidence and survival rates, especially among African American women, correlate with various socio-economic characteristics of the urban neighborhoods in which the women live.

The study found that racial segregation and low-income status in numerous urban areas notably increased "African American women's rate of late-stage diagnosis and doubled their chances of dying from breast cancer," according to an analysis of the findings.

The study was based on a sample of more than 93,600 women in large urban areas throughout the United States. Study participants, who were followed for eight years, ranged in age from 19 to 91

White women living in largely black low-income areas had comparable mortality rates to those of African Americans, which suggests that the low-income status of the neighborhoods--with considerably less access to mammograms and medical follow-up care--were the key factors in survival, as opposed to color or ethnicity.

"We are losing far too many mothers – especially women of color – to pregnancy-related complications," said Mayor Bill de Blasio in a release. "That is unacceptable. This new plan will put our hospitals and healthcare system on track to save the lives of mothers and make healthier

the futures of their children."

The pilot program will focus on four areas:

1) Helping health care providers to adopt implicit bias training – the unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that can affect behaviors, decisions and actions in their treatment of women of color who are pregnant;

2) Supporting private and public hospitals to enhance data tracking and analysis of severe maternal mortality and maternal morbidity;

3) Enhancing maternal care at NYC Health + Hospitals' facilities;

4) Expanding public education in partnership with community-based organizations and residents.

Sen. Warren sponsors \$500 billion bill to vastly expand housing availability

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D, Mass.), who recently announced her consideration of a run for the presidency after the mid-term elections, has introduced a broad national housing bill that "aims to build or rehabilitate more than 3 million new affordable homes over a period of ten years at a cost of nearly a \$500 billion dollars," according to a summary by the New York Housing Conference.

In a statement announcing the bill, Sen. Warren said that according to "an independent analysis of the legislation from Mark Zandi, Chief Economist of non-partisan Moody's Analytics, the bill [the American Housing and Economic Mobility Act of 2018] would build or rehabilitate more than 3 million units over the next decade and fully close the current gap between housing demand and supply, create 1.5 million new jobs at its peak impact, bring down rents for lower-income and middle class families by 10% - saving families an average of \$100 per month - and produce no long-term deficit impact."

Highlights of her bill, as presented by the NYHC, follow:

¶ \$445 billion would be invested in the national Housing Trust Fund.

¶ \$25 billion in the Capital Magnet Fund.

¶ \$10 billion in grants for infrastructure development to local governments that amend their land use rules to allow for the development of more affordable housing.

¶ \$2 billion in the Indian Housing Block Grant.

¶ \$4 billion in a new "Middle-Class Housing Emergency Fund," to support the construction of homes in areas where supply is limited, and housing prices have increased faster than incomes.

¶ \$2 billion to support borrowers whose wealth was destroyed in the 2008 financial crisis and who still have negative equity on their mortgages.

¶ \$523 million in rural housing programs.

¶ Down payment grants to first-time low-to-moderate income homebuyers in formerly red-lined or officially segregated areas.

In addition, the bill would amend other key housing laws. It would expand the Fair Housing Act to prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, and source of income.

It would also expand the scope of financial institutions covered under the Community Reinvestment Act

[which penalizes banks for "redlining," that is, denying mortgage and small business loans to areas based on their racial or ethnic composition] and strengthen its sanctions.

Finally, it would modify the guidelines for the Housing Choice Voucher program to make it easier for recipients to use their vouchers to secure housing in neighborhoods with good schools.

Get out the vote! key lesson of the primaries

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istered, voted in the recent elections.

If this surge in Democratic turnout continues into the general elections in November, Democrats may finally have a chance at controlling the state Senate.

For tenants, cooperators, and affordable housing advocates in general, such a development would be substantial. Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to heed such popular demands as overturning the Urstadt law, which prevents the City from enacting rent regulations without the approval of the state legislature, which is dominated by real estate supporters; and ending vacancy decontrol and vacancy bonuses, which cause rents to soar and serve as incentives for owners to harass tenants to vacate.

The key, of course, is for residents to vote. Voter apathy was never a good idea; for the forthcoming November general elections, it is downright dangerous.

HUD rents would soar for most under Carson's legislative proposal

A legislative proposal by Ben Carson, the secretary of the federal Housing and Urban Development department to impose higher rents on over four million HUD-assisted tenants would raise most of their rents by up to 33 percent, depending on the tenant's circumstances (household composition, medical situation, income, etc.).

An [analysis](#) by the Center on Policy and Budget priorities found that the proposal, which still needs Congressional approval, would "eliminate deductions that lower rents for households with high expenses, such as for medical costs or child care." At the same time, however, the plan would also benefit

extremely poor tenants by raising "minimum housing payments for households with little or no income."

Carson's justification for imposing higher rents--that cutting subsidies will likely encourage tenants to start working and thus be able to secure better housing (although most of them already work, often more than one job at a time)--was explained in a HUD [document](#) stating that the goal is to promote "economic opportunity for HUD-assisted residents by encouraging self-sufficiency and financial stability, as measured by increasing the proportion of households who *exit* HUD-assisted housing for positive reasons [emphasis added]."

Two M-L developments agree to long term affordability plans

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ization rates for the next thirty years.

As part of the deal, the owners will contribute six million dollars to the building's capital reserve fund. They will also deposit an additional \$3.6 million in a fund to be used by the tenants association for their own expenses, and for building-related expenses.