



## MITCHELL-LAMA RESIDENTS COALITION

Vol.30  
Winter 2025-26

WEBSITE: [www.mitchell-lama.org](http://www.mitchell-lama.org)

### *City Council introduces collection of 'affordability' housing bills as year ends*

**A**s the year drew to a close, the New York City Council passed a number of "housing affordability" bills.

In a [statement](#), the Council said that the bills are designed "to advance greater affordability in city-subsidized housing development, ensure it meets the needs of families, and includes opportunities for homeownership, while preserving existing affordable homes."

Following is a summary of some of the key bills,.

**Intro 958-A** would approximately double the production of affordable homeownership opportunities financed by the City by requiring that at least 4 percent of all newly constructed affordable units be for homeownership.

**Intro 1433-A** would require that, starting July 1, 2027, at least 25% of rental affordable units financed by the City be two-bedroom units and 15% be three-bedroom units.

**Intro 1443-A** would require that, starting July 1, 2027, 50% of newly constructed rental units financed by the City be affordable for very low-income households, and at least 30% for extremely low-income households.

**Intro 902-B**, also known as the Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA), would give qualified nonprofits, or joint ventures between qualified nonprofits and other entities, a first opportunity to submit an offer and purchase certain residential properties when an owner plans to sell the property before it is placed on the open market.

**Intro 1120-B** would set timelines for decisions regarding the sale of co-op apartments, requiring the co-op to acknowledge receipt of application materials within 15 days and provide notice of whether it has consented to the sale within 45 days after the application is complete.

**Intro 994-A** would require that, by June 1, 2030, owners of tenant-occupied buildings provide cooling systems capable of maintaining 78 degrees Fahrenheit in rooms in which tenants sleep, upon the request of the tenant. . . from June 15 through September 15.

**Intro 570-B** would create a New York City land bank, pending state approval, to acquire and manage vacant, abandoned, tax-delinquent, and foreclosed properties.

### **Mamdani's pledge of zero rent hike now in jeopardy as Adams packs RGB**

**I**n a clear rebuke to Mayor-elect **Zohran Mamdani's** vow to prevent a rent hike for Rent Stabilized apartment buildings during his forthcoming administration, outgoing Mayor **Eric Adams**—who had defined himself as "I am real estate" during his 2021 Mayoral campaign—appointed his own four members to the City's Rent Guidelines Board, which is likely to guarantee rent increases for the coming years.

Adams had only two weeks left before his term of office ended. He was only entitled to appoint members to positions that by law were up for renewal.

The RGB's nine members include two tenant advocates, two representatives of real estate, and five members who are selected to represent the public. Some serve two years, others three years.

Early in Adams' term, the RGB voted increases of 3% and 4.5%, depending on whether tenants chose to renew a one-year or two-year lease. That compares with a zero increase set during the administration of Mayor **Bill de Blasio**.

As noted by [6sqft](#), a real estate reporting service, "Adams' allies now hold a majority on the nine-member board, which sets rent increases for the city's one million rent-stabilized apartments."

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

## MLRC

### General Membership Meeting

***\*Elections to the Executive Board\*  
will be held at this meeting***

**January 24, 2026  
@ 10 a.m.**

**The meeting will be held via Zoom. Members  
will be informed by regular mail and by email.  
Contact: [Info@mitchell-lama.org](mailto:Info@mitchell-lama.org)**

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

## Republicans remove affordable housing provisions from national defense spending act

The affordable housing provision originally included in a massive military defense spending bill (\$924.7 billion), which unanimously passed the Republican-dominated Senate in October, has been removed completely from the defense allocations.

The Road to Housing Act, which had support from Democrats in the Senate as well as Republicans, is no more.

Instead, Republicans in the House are saying they prefer to explore a stand-alone housing bill "that reflects the lower chambers' preferences," according to a report in [Realtor.com](#).

The original bill contained the following key provisions, as noted on the [National Mortgage Professional](#) website:

- Raised the cap on banks' public-welfare investments (enabling greater investment in affordable housing);
- Streamlined zoning and regulatory barriers;
- Boosted the production of multi-family and rental housing;
- Expanded access to homeowner-ship;
- Preserved and expanded rental assistance programs (like making the Rental Assistance Demonstration — RAD— permanent and eliminating its cap);
- Improved disaster recovery tools and funding."

An angry Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) responded to the cut by saying that if "House Republicans continue to block legislation to cut housing costs in 2026, then Democrats will pass it ourselves when we take back Congress."

## Gap between income and house prices makes new homeownership a fading reality

The so-called "American dream" of owning one's own home is rapidly fading for younger Americans, as the divergence between housing prices and earned income widens.

This is the conclusion of a new study by [Bankrate](#), a financial reporting service, which found in a new study "that anyone earning the median U.S. income will find themselves priced out of three out of every four U.S. homes on the market."

Part of the reason is that buyers who took advantage of low mortgage rates available during the pandemic are holding on to their homes or demanding very high prices to sell, which lowers the available supply, while typical wages and salaries have not kept pace with the soaring housing prices.

In the USA today, the median house price is \$435,000, while the median household income is less than \$80,000.

As a result, "A prospective home-buyer's income would need to top \$200,000 to afford the median-priced home in Seattle, San Francisco and New York," according to Bankrate's analysis.

JOIN THE MITCHELL-LAMA RESIDENTS COALITION

2026

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.

NOTE: Checks are deposited once a month.

Mail to: MLRC, PO Box 20414, Park West Finance Station, New York, NY 10025

UPCOMING EVENTS

MLRC

General Membership Meeting

Elections to MLRC Board

Note:  
the next meeting will be held  
Januart 24, 2026  
at 10 a.m., via Zoom.

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Members will be informed  
by regular mail and by email.  
Contact: Info@mitchell-lama.org

Mitchell-Lama Residents Coalition, Inc.

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## Leading tenant activist Michael McKee dies

Michael McKee, perhaps the best known pro-tenant champion in New York City and New York State for well over half a century, died from brain cancer on October 1st at the age of 85. He is survived by his husband Eric Stenshoel, two brothers, and numerous nephews, nieces and their children and grandchildren.

A founder of [Tenants and Neighbors](#) (formerly the NYS Tenants and

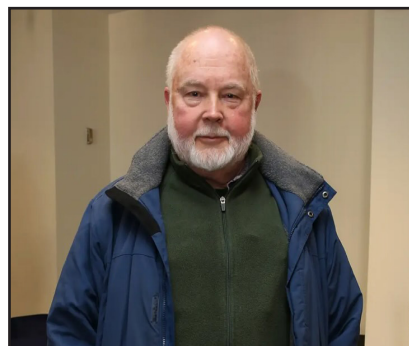


Photo by Tenants and Neighbors

Neighbors Coalition), he went on to found the Peoples Housing Network, School for organizer and Brook-

lyn Tenants Union.

He also founded and served as treasurer of the Tenants Political Action Committee.

Joining the Metropolitan Council on Housing—one of the oldest pro-tenant groups in the city, and through which he organized a successful rent strike—in the early 1970s, he eventually led a walkout of members who chafed under that group's reputed authoritarian leadership. Years later, however, under a new generation of leaders, he rejoined the group's governing board.

### Start of an unplanned career

At one time a dancer and opera singer, he had launched his new and unplanned career following that most common experience of the city's tenants: an unresponsive landlord who had neglected such items as a broken window, lack of heat due to a busted boiler, and other key

services.

Although the rent strike he helped organize ultimately resulted in repairs, McKee and his fellow tenants decided that they would be better off with transforming the building on West 17th Street in Manhattan, which they then managed, into a cooperative.

His service for the City's various tenant organizations has been largely responsible for a series of major victories.

A statement by Met Council noted that "He fought for rent stabilization and SCRIE [Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exemption] in the 70s, lead-free apartments for children, DRIE [Disability Rent Increase Exemption], citywide rent freezes, 2019's tenant protection laws, eviction bans during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many more victories."

As reported in the [New York Times](#), "Mr. McKee succeeded in extending rent regulation to other parts of the state; protecting seniors and the disabled from onerous rent hikes; limiting landlords from charging market-rate rents when apartments become vacant; requiring property owners to maintain their buildings in a habitable condition; minimizing grounds for eviction; banning brokers from charging prospective tenants fees; and curbing the conversion of individual apartments to short-term hotel suites."

Another summary of McKee's accomplishments has been prepared by [St. Peter's Church](#). And a further insight into his personal life was provided by McKee himself, in a recounting of his time with his longtime former lover [Louis Fulgoni](#).

A memorial celebration of McKee's life was held at Saint Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY on Wednesday, December 3rd.

## New state law slashes real estate taxes for some M-L co-op developments

A real estate tax break for certain Mitchell Lama cooperatives in New York City was signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul in October.

It will lower the tax the co-ops pay to the City from ten percent to five percent, which amounts to a huge savings for the cooperators--no less than fifty percent.

The new benefit will apply to M-L cooperators in Article 5 developments. It will also apply to Penn South, a cooperative that was originally built under a separate program, but is now considered within the M-L universe.

The new law is expected to enable the developments to use the savings for long-neglected repairs and renovations.

## Owners to ICE: You may urge tenants to report immigrant neighbors

What do you do when an agency of the federal government urges you to "report" any of your neighbors you might suspect of being an immigrant?

Some tenants in Queens were faced with that question eight years ago, during the first Trump Administration, when they read a "tip sign" from the Department of Homeland Security posted in their lobby.

The sign, allowed by the building's owners, urged them to report any tenant who might be guilty of such crimes as narcotics dealing, human trafficking, and . . . *immigration?*

That's what the sign, at 88-06 Parsons Blvd. in Jamaica, said. It was posted by Homeland Security's ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] unit.

### NY State sued, alleging discrimination

By allowing it on their property, the state's Human Rights Commission argued, the owners were guilty of violating the state law barring discrimination on the basis of national origin.

The state sued. Eight years later, in October of 2025, the parties reached an agreement requiring the landlords to pay \$55,000 and guarantee they will no longer violate the state's anti-discrimination laws.

As reported by the [New York Times](#), the defendants "included Parsons 88 Realty, the owner of the building; Zara Realty, the management company associated with the building and dozens of others in Queens and Long Island; and several individuals associated with the companies."

Many of the tenants in the building were, in fact, immigrants, so the sign was an early indication of the drive by the first Trump presidency to crack down on immigration itself, not least by implying it was an inherently criminal act.

The State's complaint included the charge that the landlords "exploited the rising xenophobic political tide to intimidate tenants not originally from the United States."

### Revised sign now bars discrimination

A new sign in the lobby now reads in part that "Zara Realty and its affiliates strictly prohibits discrimination in the selection of residents or participation in any programs, services, or activities implemented by or on behalf of Zara."

## MLRC urges full Council to support changes in programs aiding seniors and disabled

A Resolution to support bills that would ease rents paid by seniors and disabled tenants was supported by the MLRC in October, as Katy Bordonaro, the group's Secretary, called on the full City Council to endorse it.

Introduced by the Council's committees on Veterans and Aging, the resolution [0985] calls on the full Council to support two bills in the state legislature.

### Retroactive rent freeze

Those bills would retroactively freeze rent at which a SCRIE [Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exemption] or DRIE [Disabled Rent Increase Exemption] enrollee pays at the level it was when the tenants first became eligible, or at the level it was two years before the enrollees entered the program. The reason for the bill is that the tenants' entrance occurred more than two years after they first became eligible.

Others who spoke in favor included Ellen Davidson, an attorney for the Legal Aid Society, and Genesis Aquino, Executive Director of NYS

Tenants and Neighbors.

"MLRC has long advocated for changes in the SCRIE/DRIE program to allow it to keep up with inflation and expand the number of beneficiaries," Bordonaro said in her testimony. "Such modifications will keep not only more Mitchell-Lama residents, but in New Yorkers in general, in their homes for a longer period of time."

She then thanked the Council for its message to the State Senate in support of "an automatic, annual increase in the income cap for eligibility. This increase would equal any increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI)."

That legislation passed the Senate last year; MLRC is urging both houses to support it this year in the next session.

As of November 1, ten City Council members were sponsors of the Reso 0985. They are Adrienne E. Adams, Crystal Hudson, Gale A. Brewer, Amanda Farías, Lincoln Restler, Chris Banks, Justin L. Brannan, Carmen N. De La Rosa, Lynn C. Schulman, and Shaun Abreu.

## Voucher holders' rent stays at 30% as Council overrides Adam's veto

The City Council in December overrode Mayor Adam's veto of a bill that to prevent the City from requiring certain voucher holders to pay more in rent than 30 percent of their income, which has always been the norm.

In the previous month, the Council passed a bill preventing the Mayor from increasing the rent paid by participants in the City PHEPS [Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement] program after six years.

The new rent would have risen to 40 percent of income among most PHEPS voucher holders, excluding recipients of Supplemental Security Income and those older than age 60.

Among most economists, as well as the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, people paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent are considered cost burdened.

Adams justified his veto by arguing that the program last year spent \$4.5 billion, an amount that would increase to the point where the program could become unsustainable.

Supporters of the veto, such as the Citizens Budget Commission, argue that the current rent limit is unsupportable in the long run.

Opponents, as reported by [The City](#), include the Community Service Society, the Legal Aid Society, and Win, a large provider of shelter and supportive housing for families currently homeless.

In an earlier [statement](#), the City Council condemned the veto, arguing that "At a time when New Yorkers are clearly calling on our leaders to tackle affordability, income inequality, and deliver basic services they rely on, it is embarrassing that Mayor Adams would use his final days in office to stand in the way of what the city needs."

## 70 NYCHA employees convicted of bribery amounting to \$2.1m

After a two-year investigation by federal and city agencies of alleged bribes and extortion amounting to \$2.1 million in exchange for awarding contracts, seventy NYCHA employees—mostly managers—have been found or pleaded guilty of the schemes.

Sentences imposed to date consist of up to 48 months in prison, according to a [statement](#) from the US Attorneys Office of the Southern District of New York.

"As a result of the convictions, the defendants will collectively pay over \$2.1 million in restitution to NYCHA and will forfeit over \$2 million in criminal proceeds," the statement noted.



### MLRC Developments

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



## Coalitions of state attorneys and nonprofits win temporary halt in HUD funding cuts for homeless

An effort to slash funds from a federal housing program designed to help local governments and nonprofits fight homelessness was put on temporary hold in December.

The decision by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to stop the cuts came about after **federal judge Mary S. McElroy** issued a preliminary injunction in the face of a lawsuit lodged by two coalitions: one comprising eleven nonprofits and local governments, the other comprising twelve Attorneys General and governors. The latter group was led by New York Attorney General **Letitia James**.

As reported by [Politico](#), HUD officials decided to "Assess the issues" that plaintiffs raised, and to develop a new notice that funds were available.

The hold, however, is temporary. If it is lifted, by 2026, tens of thousands of Americans who have found refuge in the federal **Continuum of Care** program, which provides permanent assisted housing for homeless people and others in precarious situations (domestic abuse, sexual assault and the like).

They may find themselves back on the streets or in their former abusive situations, if the Trump Administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development overcomes the lawsuit.

### Aiding homeless with permanent supportive housing

Created 38 years ago, the program partners with local nonprofits and agencies to "keep tens of thousands of people from sleeping on the streets every night," James said in a [press release](#). "I will not allow this administration to cut off these funds and put vital housing and support services at risk."

As [Politico](#) noted, under HUD's plan, more than half of the 2026 funding would "be cut for permanent housing assistance and moved to transitional housing assistance with some work or service requirements."

The new HUD policy is part of the Administration's plan of "Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets," [Politico](#) said.

The policy also bars from the program organizations that acknowledge the presence of transgender or nonbinary individuals.

In New York City, the cuts would jeopardize housing for nearly 45,000,

"Because many CoC program participants are tenants with leases, this loss of funding would eliminate rental assistance for thousands of vulnerable tenants, including many with mental health challenges," she said. "As a result, communities across the state could see thousands of evictions that would threaten to overwhelm shelters right as temperatures drop to dangerous levels."

### 'Unlawful and unconstitutional'

The lawsuit contends that the new HUD policy is both unlawful and unconstitutional, because it is imposing its own conditions "on funds that Congress mandated should be distributed based solely on need. As a result, these new conditions violate the Administrative Procedure Act and Congress' constitutional power to control spending."

### Lawsuit participants

Participants in the lawsuit include the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia, and the governors of Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

[Politico](#) noted that HUD Secretary Scott Turner responded by saying that the existing program has generated a "homeless industrial complex," and ignores the real causes of homelessness.

### Mayoral pro-tenant unit to be reset by Mamdani

Mayor elect Zohran Mamdani will bring back the Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants, which will have the authority to "identify negligent owners and distressed buildings, negotiate with owners to acquire the properties if they fail to improve conditions or pay fines, and, at least in some cases, keep them under municipal control," as reported in [Gothamist](#).

Since gutted by Mayor Adams, the office was created in 2019 by Mayor Bill de Blasio. Its aim was to coordinate the City's various tenant protection procedures in a single unit.

While details of the resurrected office are not yet available, it would likely work closely with organized tenant groups to manage, even seize, buildings which owners refuse to maintain.

## Mamdani vows to end sweep of homeless sidewalk encampments

Homeless people who have found that even their minimum shelter in sidewalk encampments are no longer available to them under Mayor Adams' tenure may not have to fear "eviction" when Zohran Mamdani takes office.

That is because the Mayor-Elect has vowed to end Adams' sweep and destruction of such encampments. In their place, he has promised to gear his administration to a lot more affordable housing.

Under Mamdani's plan, trained social workers in a new Dept. of Community Safety, rather than police, would be assigned to helping homeless in public spaces connect to a variety of services such as new supportive or assisted housing.

"If you are not connecting homeless New Yorkers to the housing that they so desperately need, then you cannot deem anything you're doing to be a success," Mamdani was reported as saying by several news sources.

Referring to Adams' policy, Mamdani said "They are simply pushing New Yorkers who are living in the cold to another place where they will live in the cold."

### Pinnacle tenants seek to halt auction of bankrupt firm's buildings

Tenants in New York City buildings managed by Pinnacle Group, which boasts a portfolio of more than 800 multifamily buildings nationwide, are hoping to put a stop to an auction of 82 of the firm's properties, which are now under a Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Fearful that any new manager would continue to allow the rent-stabilized buildings to deteriorate, they are hoping that a federal court judge will delay any auction so as to give the tenants "a chance to work with the city and make sure that a responsible owner—or tenants themselves—can take over," as reported in [City Limits](#).

The residential properties have been in disrepair for years. As one Brooklyn tenant involved in the effort to halt or slow down the auction said, "We are here because of gross neglect, harassment, and abuse of tenants. We don't know what's gonna happen to our buildings. We don't know if they're gonna be bought by another slumlord. We don't know if we're gonna have electricity in our common areas tomorrow."

## New state bill would increase penalties on owners who harass tenants to leave

State legislation to increase penalties on landlords found guilty of systematic harassment of rent-regulated tenants was introduced in October by Manhattan District Attorney **Alvin L. Bragg Jr.**, New York State Senator **Brian Kavanagh** and New York State Assemblymember **Micah Lasher**.

### New Class D felony

If passed, the law would create a new class D felony, Aggravated Harassment of a Rent-Regulated Tenant, that would apply to owners engaged in "systemic harassment across multiple buildings." It would also increase penalties on those owners who had previously been convicted of harassment, according to a [release](#) issued by the DA's office.

"This new proposed legislation will create additional measures of accountability for those who systemically harass rent regulated tenants," Bragg said, adding that it would also "create a deterrent to engage in this type of conduct."

At present, owners can be charged with harassment if they pressure—harass—two or more tenants to in a single building to leave. But if they harass tenants in two or more buildings, the penalty is not increased. The proposed legislation would revise that situation through the new class D felony.

### Two Powerful NYC real estate scions could face harsher terms

Two of the city's most prominent real estate company owners, **Joseph and Meyer Chetrit**, could be among the first people to be charged under the proposed law.

Both have been indicted by Bragg on charges of harassing rent-regulated tenants. At present, if found guilty, they could face a maximum of four years in prison. But under the proposed legislation, their imprisonment could rise to seven years.

The indictment alleges that the brothers "engaged in a sustained pattern of harassment of two rent-regulated tenants living in a Manhattan property they own located at 117-119 West 26th Street in Chelsea," as reported by [Bisnow](#), a real estate reporting service.

The founder of the Chetrit Group,

Joseph Chetrit, had been an importer and exporter of textiles, "but he ran afoul of customs law and received three years probation in the 1990s," according to the [Commercial Observer](#). He had also been "accused of laundering money from the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan into two condo projects, a claim that Chetrit settled in 2015."

### Vast Chetrit holdings

The real estate holdings of the Chetrit Group are extensive. As the Commercial Observer noted, "the firm has been 'buying and selling properties such as Willis Tower in Chicago, the Standard Oil Building at 26 Broadway, the International Toy Center, the Chelsea Hotel, 1107 Broadway and many others. The company ended up making some \$2 billion worth of trades in the first decade of the new millennium.'"

The group also owns several thousand residential properties across several states, including New York.

Brian Kavanagh (D), who chairs the Senate Committee on Housing, Construction and Community Development, sponsors the Senate version (S8559). Liz Kreuger (D) is the Senate co-sponsor.

Micah C. Lasher (D), a member of the Children and Families Committee Home, sponsors the Assembly version (A9220). Linda Rosenthal (D) is the Assembly co-sponsor.

## M-Ls & other rent-regulated buildings not subject to new containerization rules

Mitchell-Lama buildings will not be subject to the new city potential residential waste system, by which buildings of at least ten units must have containers on the sidewalks for garbage composting and recycling.

Such buildings will be fined \$50 per container. The Council passed the bill, Intro 1123-B, in early November.

As reported by the [NY League of Conservation Voters](#), a statewide environmental group, "the fee is waived for Mitchell-Lama buildings, HDFCs, 100% affordable-housing buildings, and buildings where at least half of units are rent regulated."

## Progressives outside NYC donated \$1.7 million to Mamdani's super pac

While real estate firms in New York City raised funds to defeat Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani, progressives elsewhere sent in considerable donations to aid his campaign.

A report in the [New York Post](#) noted that residents in other states—some as far away as California—provided donations amounting to more than \$1.7 million to the democratic socialist's campaign.

In California alone, twenty-six donors sent in \$762,631, most of it coming from two sources.

### Affordability key issue

It is reasonable to assume that many such donors were hoping that a Mamdani victory would help to spur similar victories in their own locales.

Indeed, throughout the recent spate of Democratic victories in local city and state elections, a key factor was the same that helped propel Mamdani to victory: affordability, especially concerning housing.

As noted by the [Commercial Real Estate Development Association](#), "The dominant buzzword of these elections was 'affordability.' As voters consistently indicate that the high cost of living is one of their biggest concerns, campaigns that promised to lower costs were ascendant."

## Council kills bill requiring co-op boards to explain reasons for rejections

A bill to require co-op boards to inform prospective buyers, in writing, why they were rejected was killed by the City Council in December. This leaves applicants in the dark as to why they could not buy in.

As reported in [The Gothamist](#), boards in buildings with more than ten units would have had to provide rejectees with written statements explaining in detail the boards' reasons. Refusing to do so would have resulted in fines of up to \$25,000. Supporters said the bill would have helped to stop racial or other frivolous reasons for rejections.

But many boards argued that the bill would add undue administrative burdens, would "restrict board members' discretion," and would increase liability for their members. They also said that there cannot be a "one-size-fits-all framework" for all 450 NYC co-op boards.



## Affordable Housing News from Around the Nation

### National: HUD dismisses all building inspectors

The entire staff of HUD building inspectors, responsible for safety check-ups of all traditional public housing, as well as of new and existing buildings that are either subsidized, or whose tenants receive vouchers, was dismissed in October. The inspectors are—or were—responsible for checking smoke alarms, electrical outlets, lead paint, poor construction and a host of other areas.

According to [Bloomberg News](#), two weeks after a gas explosion in a Bronx public housing building sheared off part of the structure, the "federal government shut down, sending federal housing inspectors and their data on furlough."

### Denver: Plan for hotels to house homeless in flux

Three hotels in the Colorado capitol that were repurposed into homeless shelters are transitioning to new management, a sign that they may be in financial trouble, and a fourth is closing, indications that the city's plan to end sleeping on the streets may be on shaky grounds. Nevertheless, the program remains operative. As reported by the [Colorado Sun](#), "As the city decreases its use of hotel shelters, more emphasis is going toward drug treatment and permanent housing, officials said."

### Knoxville, Tenn: Voters reject sales tax hike for affordability

Voters rejected a half-percent sales tax increase, the proceeds of which had been slated in part for affordable housing. The increase would have cost families seven dollars a month on average, according to [Next City](#). The original plan had specified that all the proceeds—around \$47 million—would be used for the housing, but a resolution supported by the city council called for only \$10 million to be so allocated.

### New Mexico: Rehab program for tenants grows statewide

A once tiny program to encourage owners to rehab dilapidated buildings for low-income tenants has grown statewide from its origins in Roswell. As reported in [Shelterforce](#), the program began after activists approached a small nonprofit to offer funds to owners who agree to rehab their dilapidated buildings to low-income residents. As the program began to succeed, larger funders took notice, and have since provided several hundred thousand dollars for owners throughout the state.

### Oakland, Cal: Plan to get tougher on homeless camps halted

A proposed effort to further crack down on the city's homeless camps was put on hold in December, after the state informed the City Council that it opposed the effort. Had the bill passed, City officials would have been allowed to "tow vehicles people are living in, and to clear more camps even when there's no other shelter available," as reported in [The Oaklandside](#).

Council President Kevin Jenkins explained that "the state was concerned that the policy bans homeless people from living in too many parts of the city."

The crackdowns had begun in 2023, following a US Supreme Court ruling that "cities could cite or arrest people for sleeping outside even if there is no available shelter," according to [Shelterforce](#).

### Steamboat Springs, Colo. Billionaire buys complex and offers only affordable units

A project with a long history of promises and failures has recently been purchased by billionaire Mark Stevens, who is offering all units on the 562-acre area only to people who work in the area for at least 30 hours a week.

There are no income requirements. According to the [Colorado Sun](#), which noted that "Stevens is an early investor in tech companies like Nvidia and a minority owner of the Golden State Warriors NBA team."

## Local Housing Briefs

### New owner group to fight Mamdani

A new landlord group, Gotham Housing Alliance, with around 400 members, has formed to counter Mayor Zohran Mamdani's affordable housing agenda, according to the [New York Times](#).

### Homeless public school students reach new high

More than 150,000 public school students in New York City were homeless at least part of the 2024-2025 school year, a new high but in keeping with a ten-year history in which more than 100,000 kids were without a home during part of each year. [Advocates for Children](#), which released the data in October, noted that "If these students comprised their own school district, it would be one of the 20 largest districts in the country."

The consequences of being homeless as a student are severe: "One in eight students in shelter dropped out of high school—more than three times the dropout rate of their permanently housed peers—and only 62% graduated in four years."

### Failed luxury building in Brooklyn to be used for voucher tenants

Some families living in shelters may soon get to reside in a building originally planned for luxury rentals. As a result of an agreement between the City and a nonprofit group, New Yorkers who hold PHEPS [Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement] voucher holders may become tenants in the Atlantic, on Brooklyn's Atlantic Avenue. One delighted tenant has already moved in, according to [City Limits](#). The owners of the building decided to sell it to the nonprofit after they found insufficient demand for the free-market units.

### Zoning proposals for Queens stirs strong local opposition

Two zoning proposals for neighborhoods in Queens are generating strong pushbacks by residents fearing displacement and "character" change.

In Elmhurst, the City is proposing to rezone a large area that currently hosts houses and small business that are almost always no more than two stories high. The plan would allow a developer to build a 13-story tower, which would include 79 affordable apartments. And in Jamaica, the city council is considering a "sweeping, 230-block rezoning that would create 12,000 new homes, including 4,000 affordable units," as reported by [The Gothamist](#).

**The Mitchell-Lama Residents Coalition  
wishes all members, readers and supporters  
A Very Happy and Affordable New Year!**

## 100 Gold Street, home of HPD, slated for a development with 900 affordable units

The white Manhattan building known as 100 Gold Street, long the home of the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development, will be demolished for a major housing complex containing around 3,700 mixed-income apartments.

Around a quarter of the units will be designated as "affordable."

The developer, a major funder of Mayor Eric Adams' failed bid for re-election, is GFP Real Estate, owned by Jeffrey Gural and his family.

According to [The City](#), the Mayor's political action committee received \$45,000 from the firm during the campaign. But a spokesperson for the city denied that the contributions had anything to do with winning the redevelopment contract.

"As with all competitive bidding processes," the spokesperson, Daniel Marans, said, "the city selected GFP Real Estate to develop the 100 Gold St.

property based on the firm's experience and commitment to building affordable



100 Gold Street

housing, creating jobs, and investing in the community. Any suggestion to the contrary is ridiculous."

When completed, the new development is slated to include both a fitness and a senior citizens center, as well as open space and perhaps retail storefronts.

The proposed new housing, *The City* said, was part of the deal made with supporters of keeping the Elizabeth Street Garden an open green space, rather than a site for affordable senior housing.

But opponents of that deal argue that units at the 100 Gold Street site, plus two other sites, would not be as affordable as those planned for the Garden.

## HUD attacks Boston's fair housing outreach as discrimination against white people

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development is accusing Boston of housing discrimination—against white people.

In a December 11th letter to Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, Craig W. Trainor, HUD's Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity,



condemned the city for furthering "its racist theory of housing justice" by promising to "target homebuyer outreach" at "Black and Latinx families" and pressure "banks and mortgage lenders to increase their lending in communities of color" and "with collecting racial and ethnic data 'to evaluate their work through a racial equity/social justice lens.'"

Trainer said Boston's policy violated the federal Fair Housing Act, which bars discrimination against people of any color, Include whites.

But many localities have long since acknowledged that special housing and mortgage outreach programs to minority populations are needed to counter the ingrained

effects of generations of racial discrimination primarily against Black and Latinx communities.

Such efforts are often referred to as proactive, rather than reactive, anti-discrimination policies.

New York City has such a provision. In 2023, it passed a Fair Housing Framework known as LOCAL LAW 167.

The law "created a new local mandate for our five-year fair housing plan," in the words of a the City's [Where We Live 2025](#) website. Among other things, the plan includes "Investing equitably in neighborhoods to ensure that all communities have the resources they need to thrive."

### Boston's response: "Unhinged"

In response to the HUD letter, Mayor Wu's office called the investigation an example of "unhinged attacks from Washington" and said "Boston will never abandon our commitment to fair and affordable housing."

Reporting on HUD's condemnation, the [New York Times](#) uncovered "efforts by the Trump administration to limit enforcement of the Fair Housing Act, the landmark civil rights law that has prohibited discrimination in housing for nearly six decades."

## Atlantic Yards project may be revitalized after 22 years

A two-decade year old plan to develop thousands of apartments over the sprawling 22-acre Atlantic Yards, only partially realized, may be reactivated by a new construction coalition.

As reported in [The City](#), a joint venture known as the Brooklyn Ascending Land Company is proposing to construct nine thousand apartments in buildings that have less living space per unit than earlier planned, to allow for more public space. Other buildings would be taller than originally planned.

Referred to as Pacific Park, the "new development team will pay \$12 million to an affordable housing fund to support new apartments in nearby neighborhoods. The developers have already paid \$4.5 million into the fund. . . ."

The new proposal is being overseen by the Empire State Development agency, which will hold public hearings on such issues as whether the new construction should be rentals or co-ops, how many bedrooms the new apartments should have, and how much income should applicants earn to apply for the affordable units.

## East Harlem tenants win \$\$ landfall after 16-mo. strike

Do rent strikes work?

Ask the tenants at five buildings in East Harlem, who withheld their rent for sixteen months in an effort to force their landlord, Emerald Equities, to make long-neglected repairs.

As a result of a sixteen-month strike, aided by Legal Services and the Legal Aid Society, the tenants "won half a million dollars in back rent and repairs," [City Limits](#) wrote.

The victory came about when the mortgage lender foreclosed; the buildings were won half a million dollars in back rent and repairs, then brought under a receiver who is mandated to oversee repairs.

As reported in *City Limits*, "residents will receive six months rent credit, and pay back the rest they withheld on strike. The receiver is legally obligated to use the remaining settlement money and future rent proceeds to fund repairs."

The tenants had been living for years with such hazards as black mold, lack of heat and hot water, roach infestations and electricity blackouts, not to mention "stolen security deposits."

The building's owner is Isaac Kassirer of Emerald Equities.