

TOWARD A 21ST CENTURY CITY FOR ALL



PROGRESSIVE POLICIES FOR
NEW YORK CITY IN 2013
AND BEYOND

Rediscovering City Planning and Community Development, Together

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Across the years and from every part of the political spectrum, candidates for mayor of New York City bill themselves as the “candidate of neighborhoods.” They shop at small businesses and walk neighborhood commercial strips. They stand with neighborhood groups and give awards for civic leadership. They cite statistics on the value of immigrant entrepreneurs. They roll up their sleeves for cleanups at neighborhood parks and read stories to kids at branch libraries. And they eat a lot of ethnic food.

But while they may genuinely value the city’s neighborhoods, they generally don’t place neighborhoods at the center of their overall efforts to plan, invest police, govern, or provide services. And there are some good reasons that we don’t really expect them to.

New Yorkers are deeply ambivalent about growth. We want the economy to add jobs and income. We celebrate the city’s vibrant energy, its 24-hour culture, and its restaurants. We talk about real estate like it is an entertainment industry. But when it comes to our own neighborhoods, we often fight development tooth and nail, out of concern that it will undermine our quality of life and erode what makes our neighborhoods special. Most New Yorkers (at least the vocal ones) don’t seem to want buildings that are taller than those already there, whether we are in East Midtown or East Bushwick or Eastern Queens.

New York City government is organized in large agencies that are challenging to manage well. In general, we want to be sure that the garbage gets picked up more than we want to schedule which days of the week that happens for our block, make sure neighborhood residents are driving the Sanitation trucks, or have a say in how we reduce our neighborhood’s waste.

We are in denial about segregation. While immigration and ethnic succession have taken the sharpest edges off racial segregation in recent years, New York City remains one of the most racially and economically segregated cities in the United States. Brooklyn and Queens are the two most segregated counties in the nation. Our public schools are as segregated as ever. An honest conversation about New York City’s neighborhoods would have to look seriously at segregation. Yet we rarely confront it as a serious public policy problem.

Despite these understandable reasons to pay little more than lip service to neighborhoods, there are also many good reasons – and good opportunities – to govern as though neighborhoods really matter.

Neighborhoods are portals – or barriers – to social and economic opportunity. The places where we live profoundly affect our life-chances – through education, housing, transportation, job networks, and health. Life in neighborhoods often becomes self-reinforcing – whether in cycles of virtue or vice. Public policy can and should centrally focus on adjusting how they do this. Fundamentally, if we genuinely care about offering more equal opportunity, we must do this by paying more equitable attention to the city's neighborhoods.

Smarter growth and more livable communities offer us the best future. Over the past few decades – especially over the past few years – New Yorkers have seen the transformative possibilities of more livable communities, with more walkable streets, better parks and open spaces, and new forms of public transportation. These aren't luxury goods. They can save lives (in a city where traffic and pedestrian deaths are comparable to gun deaths) and improve health outcomes. Cities around the world have shown that it is possible to integrate comprehensive smart-growth planning with attention to making all communities more livable.

Place-oriented coordination is possible and delivers better outcomes. As Andrew White argues persuasively in this volume, coordination among agencies to attend to neighborhood needs can improve outcomes. Public safety improves and spending on criminal justice declines when young people have constructive things to do after school. Affordable housing requires fewer subsidies when retail stores succeed on the ground floor. Neighborhoods are healthier when they feature grocery stores offering affordable, nutritious food, and are safe and attractive places to walk.

Unlocking community capacity makes for better government and a better city. In the weeks after Hurricane Sandy, New Yorkers pitched in to help in remarkable ways. The outpouring of volunteer and civic energy saved lives, was worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and offered what one displaced senior called “courtesy, gentleness, and goodness beyond description” (Eisenstein-Drachler 2012). While natural disasters often evoke extraordinary community responses, we can harness a similar “organized compassion” to improve public services and quality-of-life in a time of fiscal challenges. While all politicians praise such activity, governing attention can go much further to make it real and effective.

Several chapters in this volume argue for putting neighborhoods closer to the center of how New York City governs itself and provides services. Andrew White argues for pilot social service programs that implement coordinated plans to combat poverty and increase collective efficacy. Michael Freedman-Schnapp shows that community-level resiliency is essential in an era of climate change. Aaron Pallas highlights the “community schools” approach that turns school buildings into community education centers. Benjamin Dulchin and his colleagues emphasize the importance of attending to communities’ specific needs as we work to provide affordable housing. In each case, organizing government services to strengthen and act through communities can yield better outcomes and bolster our local democracy.

This chapter focuses on more strongly centering New York City’s land use planning and community development framework around its neighborhoods. New York City was a pioneer in creating community development, when Senator Robert Kennedy walked through central Brooklyn and helped launch the nation’s first community development corporation (CDC), the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration

Corporation. At its birth, community development sought to cover a wide range of issues in a low-income neighborhood, with a focus on jobs. Over time, because of the city's abandonment crisis (and declining federal resources), many CDCs narrowed their focus to affordable housing – and often lost their connections to broader issues of city planning, local economic development, neighborhood infrastructure, culture, and streetscape.

At this moment of transition, a new opportunity exists to reconnect comprehensive city planning and community development. Paradoxically, perhaps, the best opportunity to center neighborhoods is by focusing more comprehensively and strategically on shaping and sharing growth.

1. Growth: Friend or Foe?

While not all neighborhood, preservation, or environmental advocates will agree, the next mayor of New York City should continue to plan for the city's population growth. This is just facing reality: despite a lower-than-anticipated 2010 Census count, demographers estimate that the city's population will add as many as 300,000 people per decade (Salvo 2012). "New York City will achieve 9 million people," New York City's demographic guru, Joe Salvo said recently. "The question is when" (Rubenstein 2013). Indeed, the most recent Census figures show a return to population growth. If we fail to plan for it, we will wind up with ever higher housing prices, more crowded subways, streets, and apartments, and a more degraded infrastructure.

With good planning, the city's future growth can be a virtue for those who care about sustainability, economic vitality, community quality-of-life, and equity. Given the challenges of climate change, we should ask hard questions about how we can limit growth at a global scale. But the public transportation, high-density housing, and walkable mixed-use neighborhoods in cities like New York make them places where we should concentrate population growth if we care about sustainability (compared to car-dependent, single-family suburbs).

In addition, population growth – driven both by immigrants and young professionals – can continue invigorate the city's economy. Immigrants, "cultural creatives," STEM researchers, engineers, students, corporate CEOs, and hereditary princes all add economic value to New York. At best, we can share that value to create a wide array of opportunities for New Yorkers across lines of race, class, and neighborhood.

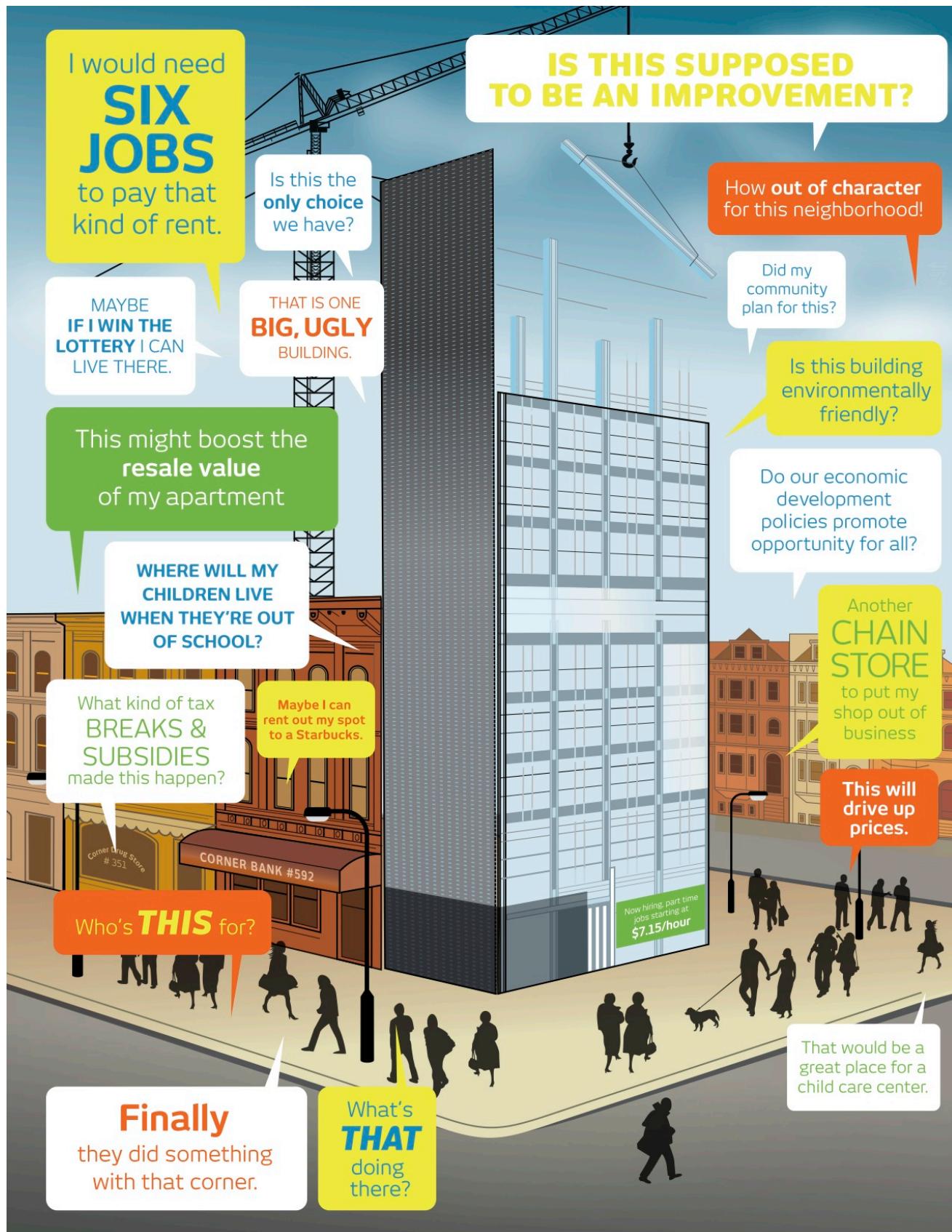
Unfortunately, the current process of planning and development in New York City – and the polarized debates around it – frequently undermines the possibilities of sustainable growth and a true sharing of the benefits of development to strengthen all communities.

In the absence of comprehensive planning, we are not connecting new development sufficiently with the infrastructure needed to sustain it. We cannot evaluate whether we are shaping growth in the most sensible ways. We cannot be confident we are making fair decisions about where to site facilities (and the environmental justice movement has shown us that often they are not).

Under the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the Department of City Planning has been reduced to the "Department of Zoning and Urban Design." The rezonings it has adopted have largely been developer-driven and the negotiations between developers, the Department of City Planning,

elected officials, and community stakeholders has often felt more like Kabuki theater than democratic planning.

Figure 1: Illustration from One City, One Future Blueprint, 2009



Developers and administration officials generally believe neighborhoods will oppose development, so they gird for battle. Rather than creating space for dialogue about shaping growth or the infrastructure necessary to support it early in the process, they grit their teeth, fight through opposition, and negotiate concessions at the last minute.

With good reason, communities believe that the City will ultimately approve plans with little attention to their core concerns about neighborhood preservation, quality of life, amenities, or infrastructure – so they oppose proposals with a fatalist fervor. Some push for the infrastructure that would be needed to sustain growth, or for more affordable housing, good jobs, or targeted hiring. More often, neighborhood opposition focuses on height and scale. The local community board votes to “disapprove with conditions,” signaling that it knows the project will be approved despite their opposition, hoping that the City will adopt a few of their recommendations.

Elected officials stand with community residents, articulating their near-opposition, and then try to identify a few key things they can deliver in negotiations as the project travels through the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). This reduces building heights somewhat, modestly increases the affordable housing percentage, and may lead to a last minute Memorandum of Agreement (though with good reason to doubt its commitments), and the New York City Planning Commission and City Council then vote to approve the plan.

The current debate around East Midtown offers an instructive recent example. Mayor Bloomberg proposed a dramatic density increase around Grand Central Station, indeed a logical area for growth, but with few plans to increase transit capacity, strengthen the public realm, or invest in new infrastructure. Essentially, the plan would put 21st century density on 19th century infrastructure. The mayor has deemed opponents of the plan – including all the area community boards – a “special interest.” The conversation thus far has focused mostly on preservation, landmarking, height, and design. Meanwhile it gives too little attention to long-needed infrastructure improvements and amenities. If we don’t see the large-scale rezoning of Midtown (with enormous financial benefits for real estate owners) as the opportunity to achieve real public transportation from Grand Central to LaGuardia, are we really serious about creating a 21st century city?

Some of this is inevitable; but we can make significant improvements. Our choice is not really “pro-growth” versus “anti-growth,” or even top-down versus bottom-up planning. It is about whether we will continue these battles in a way that yields growth without planning – or move instead to thoughtful, strategic, and inclusive processes to shape and share growth. With the city continuing to grow, amidst the broader challenge of climate change, attention is rightly being paid to infrastructure and sustainability. If the next mayoral administration rediscovers comprehensive planning and community development and how to put them together, it can better address equity and fairness issues as well as sustainability, livability, and economic vitality.

This chapter offers a road map to the next mayoral administration for planning growth with attention to sustainability, community development, and shared prosperity. The route includes:

1. Planning comprehensively and with communities.
2. Coordinating infrastructure investments.
3. Seeking a better balance of development goals.

4. Fixing the “fair share” process for siting municipal facilities.
5. Modifying environmental review to focus on mitigation.
6. Preserving proactively.
7. Providing a better framework for community negotiations.
8. Combating segregation.
9. Investing in deeper models of civic engagement and community development.

Before fleshing out these recommendations, let us consider recent trends in New York City neighborhoods and the land use policies of the Bloomberg administration.

2. Recent Trends in Our Neighborhoods

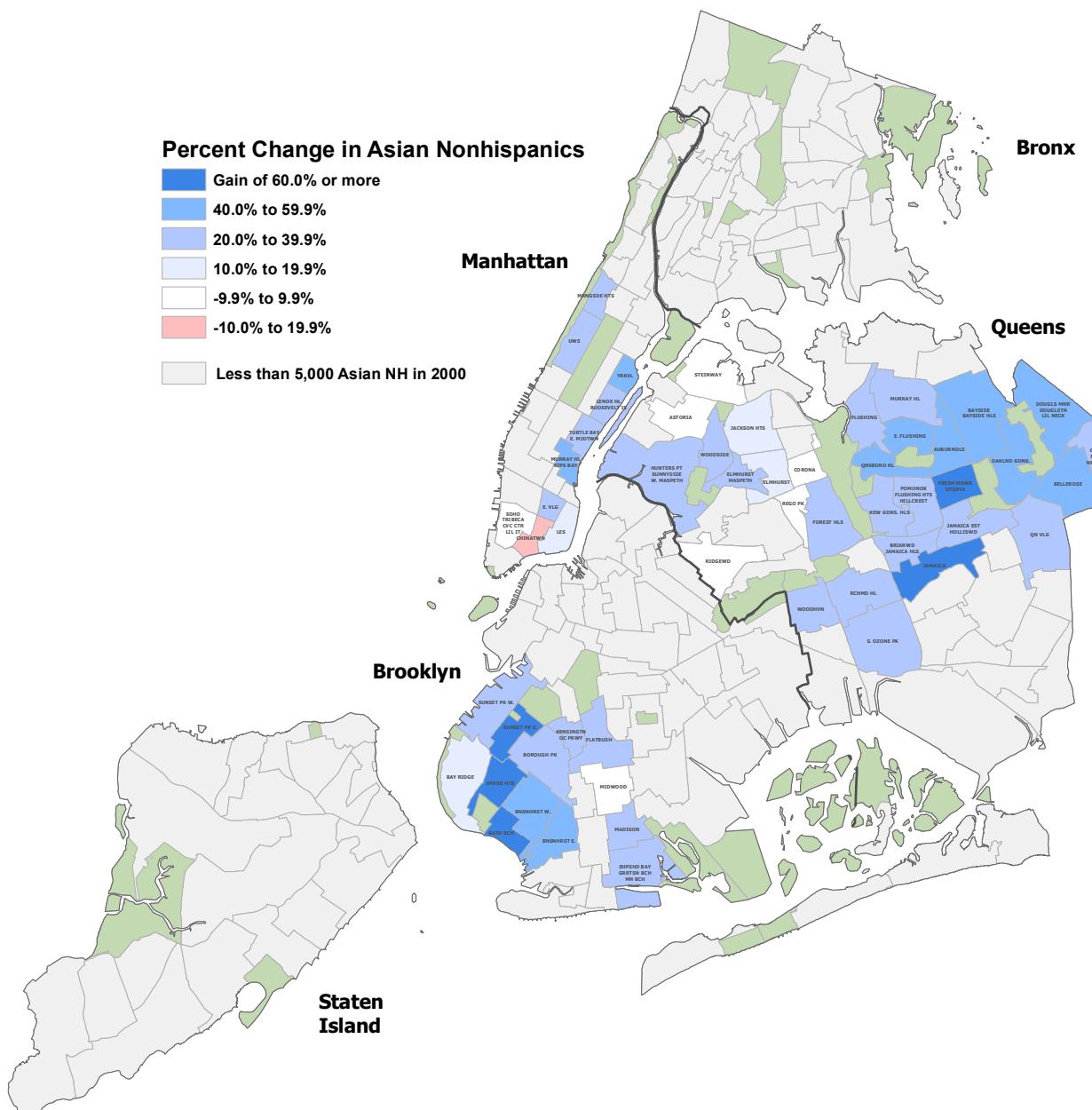
New York City’s neighborhoods have undergone significant transformations over the past decade. Immigration, outmigration, and gentrification have reshaped their landscapes; yet our neighborhoods remain stubbornly segregated.

New York is an immigrant city, just as it was a century ago. As of the 2010 Census, 37 percent of New Yorkers were foreign born, the highest percentage in a century and immigrants and their children comprise over 60 percent of the city’s population. New York City’s population also continues to churn. Modest overall growth from 2000 – 2010 reflected international immigration and natural increases in immigrant communities, especially Asian and Hispanic households, offset by significant net decline of white, African-American, and Puerto Rican households (Salvo 2012). The dramatic growth in the Asian population has transformed eastern Queens and southwest Brooklyn (see

figure 2), which saw Asian population increases of over 40 percent. Now, as a century ago, immigration has brought tremendous cultural, culinary, religious, economic, entrepreneurial, and civic vitality.

Figure 2: Asian population growth by neighborhood, 2000 – 2010

**PL-P12A NTA: Percent Change in the Asian Nonhispanic Population
by Neighborhood Tabulation Area*
New York City, 2000 to 2010**



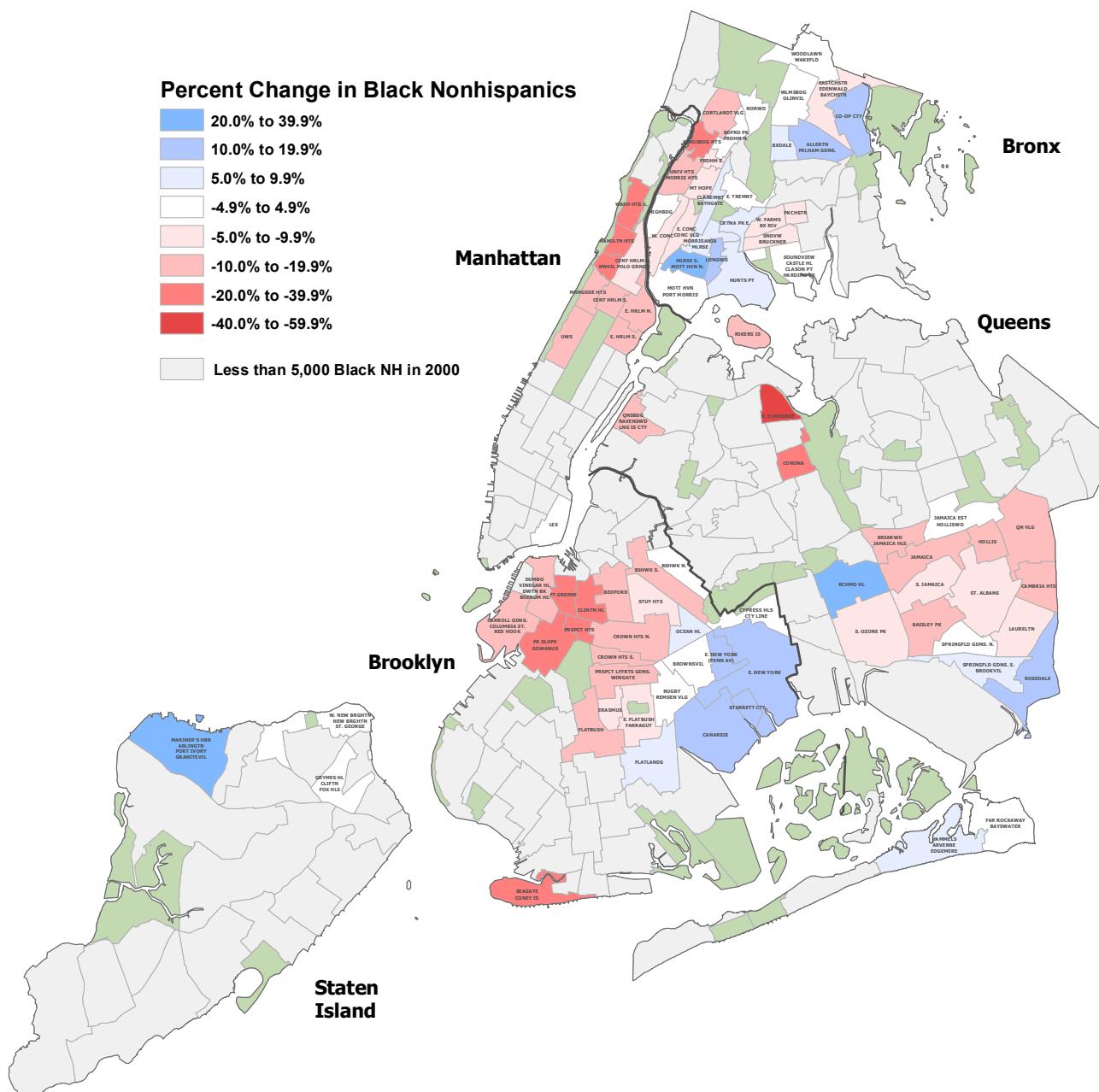
*Asians of a single race.

Asian or of a single race. Neighborhood Tabulation Areas or NTAs, are aggregations of census tracts that are subsets of New York City's 55 Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). Primarily due to these constraints, NTA boundaries and their associated names may not definitively represent neighborhoods.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census PL 94-171 Files
Population Division - New York City Department of City Planning

Figure 3: Black population change by neighborhood, 2000 – 2010

**PL-P8A NTA: Percent Change in the Black Nonhispanic Population
by Neighborhood Tabulation Area*
New York City, 2000 to 2010**



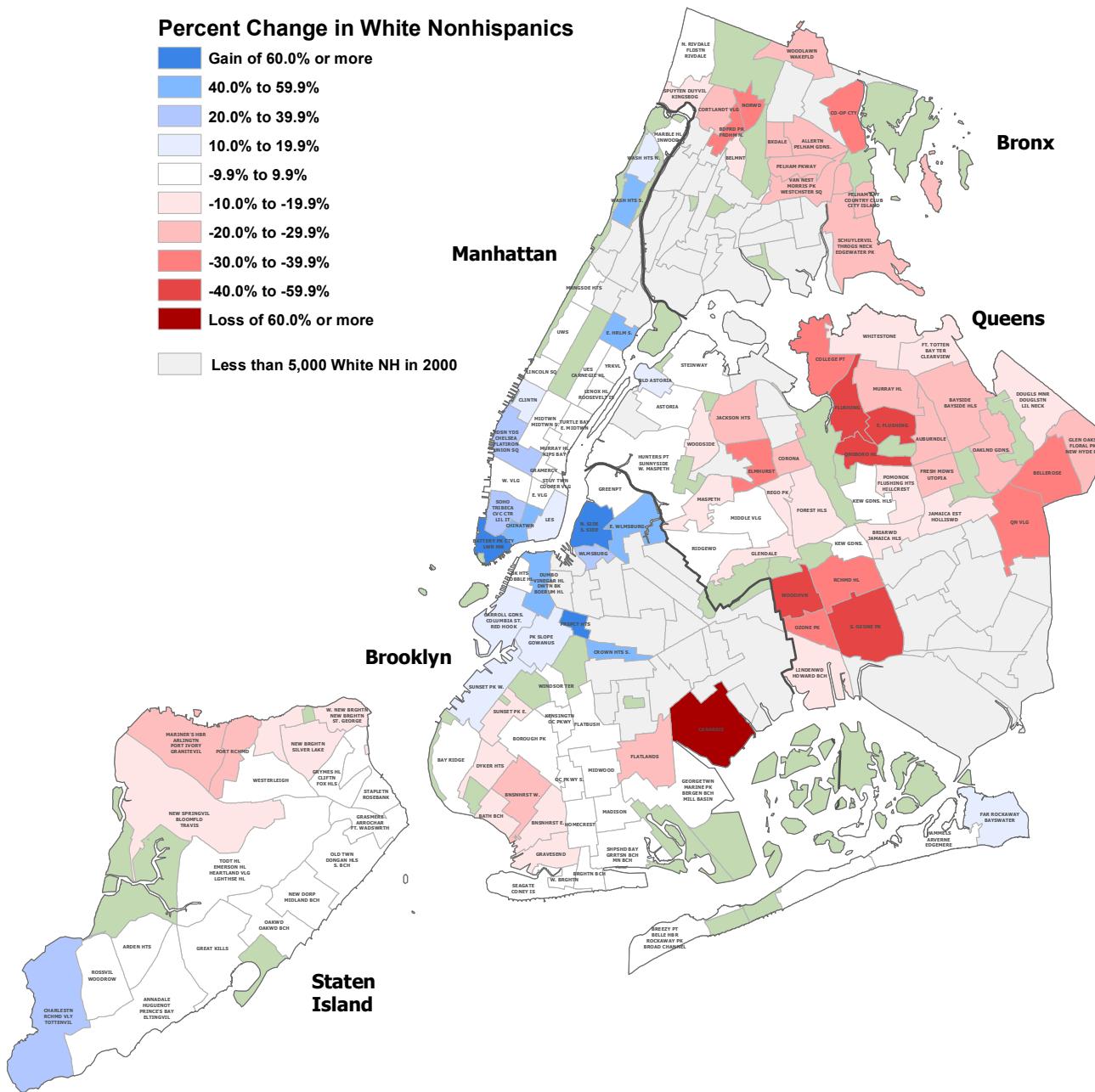
*Blacks of a single race.

Neighborhood Tabulation Areas or NTAs, are aggregations of census tracts that are subsets of New York City's 55 Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). Primarily due to these constraints, NTA boundaries and their associated names may not definitively represent neighborhoods.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census PL 94-171 Files
Population Division - New York City Department of City Planning

Figure 4: White population change by neighborhood, 2000 – 2010

**PL-P6A NTA: Percent Change in the White Nonhispanic Population
by Neighborhood Tabulation Area***
New York City, 2000 to 2010



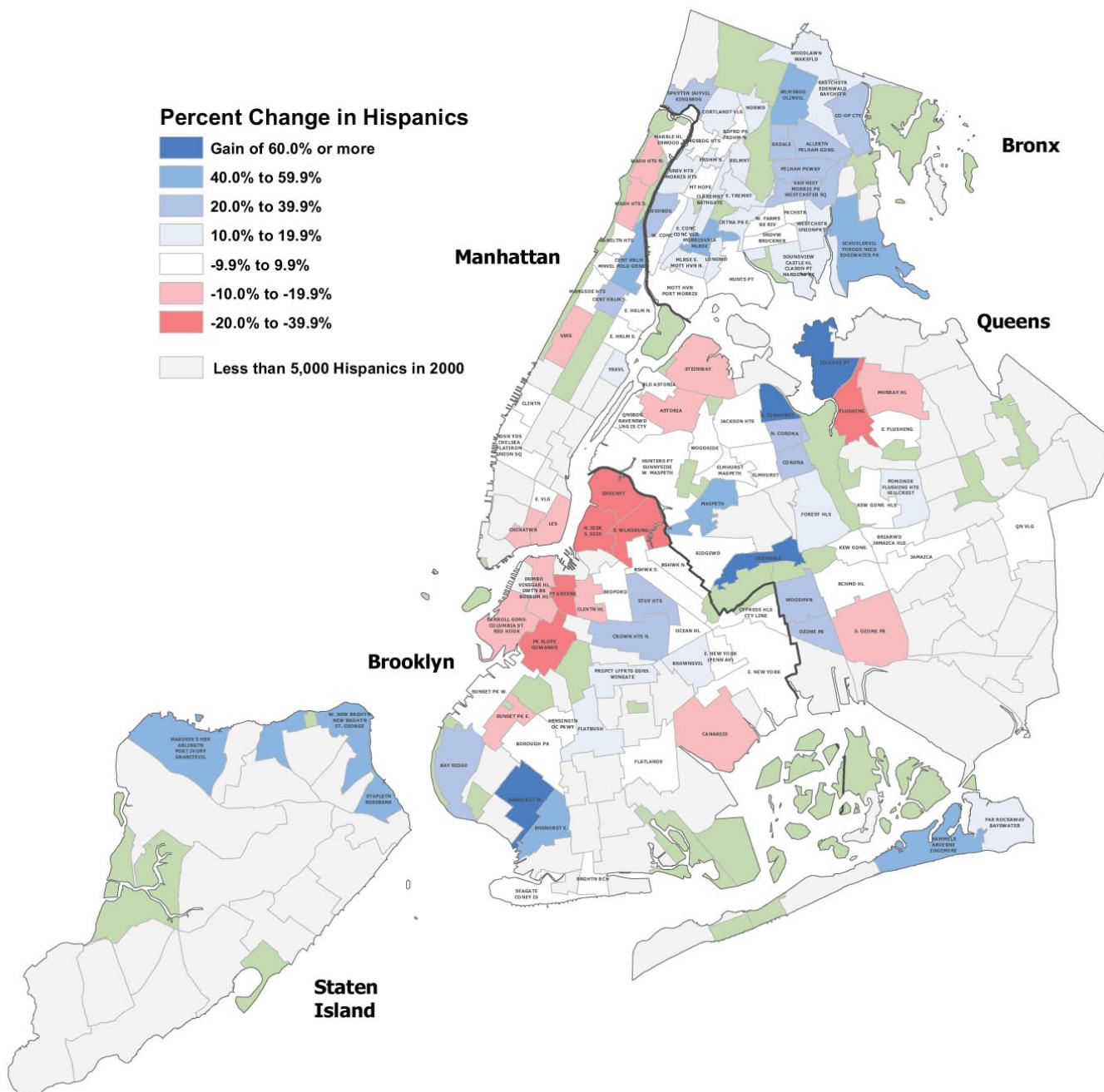
*Whites of a single race.

"whites or a single race." Neighborhood Tabulation Areas or NTAs, are aggregations of census tracts that are subsets of New York City's 55 Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). Primarily due to these constraints, NTA boundaries and their associated names may not definitively represent neighborhoods.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census PL 94-171 Files
Population Division - New York City Department of City Planning

Figure 5: Latino population change by neighborhood, 2000 – 2010

Percent Change in the Hispanic Population by Neighborhood Tabulation Area* New York City, 2000 to 2010

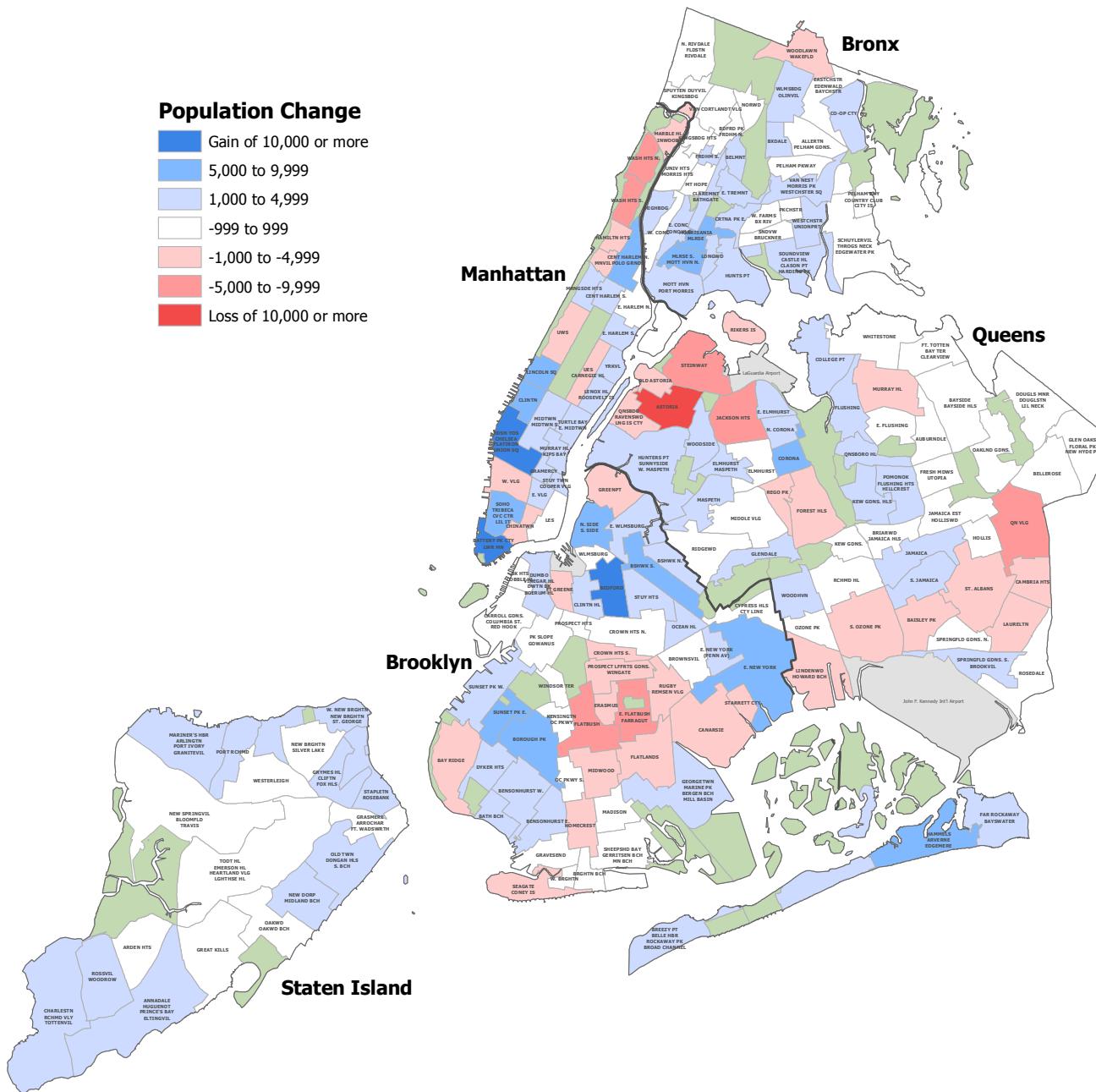


*Neighborhood Tabulation Areas or NTAs, are aggregations of census tracts that are subsets of New York City's 55 Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). Primarily due to these constraints, NTA boundaries and their associated names may not definitively represent neighborhoods.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census PL 94-171 Files
Population Division - New York City Department of City Planning

Figure 6: 2000 – 2010 population growth by neighborhood

PL-P3 NTA: Population Change by Neighborhood Tabulation Area* New York City, 2000 to 2010



*Neighborhood Tabulation Areas or NTAs, are aggregations of census tracts that are subsets of New York City's 55 Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). Primarily due to these constraints, NTA boundaries and their associated names may not definitively represent neighborhoods.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census Public Law 94-171 Files
Population Division - New York City Department of City Planning

Scholars actively debate just how much gentrification causes displacement – but there is no doubt that it is transforming many neighborhoods. Historically black communities in Upper Manhattan and Central Brooklyn have seen tremendous change. The white population of Bedford-Stuyvesant increased 633 percent (almost 16,000 people), raising its share from 4 percent in 2000 to 25.5 percent in 2010 (CUNY Center for Urban Research 2011).¹ Meanwhile, the black population increased in eastern Brooklyn, the south and east Bronx, and the north shore of Staten Island (see figures 3 and 4).

To be sure, gentrification creates neighborhood energies that contribute to the city's economy and culture along the lines outlined by Richard Florida. While we may mock artisanal cheese stores, microbreweries, or subcultures of Pulitzer and Booker Prize winners, the vitality of Brownstone Brooklyn's neighborhoods contributes to the city's economic success and draws succeeding waves of new residents (and, at least for some, creates an extraordinary place to live). At the same time, residents of African-American and Puerto Rican communities worry that the neighborhood improvement dynamic is largely synonymous with the displacement of long-time residents of color.

These demographic patterns have generated an unexpected amalgam of neighborhoods with high population growth:

- ↳ wealthy, high-density areas (e.g. Lower Manhattan, Downtown Brooklyn);
- ↳ immigrant neighborhoods (e.g. Corona, Elmhurst, Bensonhurst); and
- ↳ mixed neighborhoods receiving international immigration and black, West Indian, and Puerto Rican internal migration due to gentrification (e.g. East New York, Morrisania, and the North Shore of Staten Island).

While the Bloomberg administration's city planning efforts have focused largely on the first category, they have done little to address growth in the latter two.

Despite the churn of immigration and gentrification, New York City remains deeply segregated, for all its diversity. “Single-group predominance” remains the dominant residential pattern. Of the 2,500 populated Census tracts in the city, 85 percent had the same plurality group in 2010 as in 2000 (Alba and Romalewski 2013). While many US cities have seen some declines in segregation, New York saw the smallest of the 10 largest metropolitan areas (Glaeser and Vigdor 2012). We remain the second-most segregated of the top 10 cities, whether looking at black/white segregation (after Chicago), or Hispanic/white segregation (after Los Angeles).

Meanwhile, economic segregation is on the rise. The city has fewer mixed-income neighborhoods – with more wealthy neighborhoods and poor ones taking their place. New York City tops the list of big cities in the percentage of low-income residents who live in especially poor neighborhoods (Fry and Taylor 2012). The corollary of changing but diverse neighborhoods like Prospect Heights or Jackson Heights (which can feel like ideal, diverse, and inclusive places) is the Bronx or eastern Brooklyn, which are still overwhelmingly Latino, African-American, and poor.

¹ Though this represents typical black to white gentrification, it includes an increase in the Hasidic population in northwestern Bed-Stuy.

3. The Bloomberg Administration's Land Use Policy

Under the leadership of Amanda Burden, the City Planning Commission has had a dramatic impact on the city's land use framework over the past eleven years, rezoning over 20 percent of the city's blocks in over 120 neighborhood rezoning actions, by far the largest reshaping of the city's zoning since the 1961 Zoning Map (which reflected a postwar New York City with 1 million manufacturing jobs, and a modernist, "towers-on-the-park" urban design sensibility).

The high-profile rezonings (e.g., Hudson Yards, Greenpoint-Williamsburg, West Chelsea, Long Island City, and Willets Point) converted manufacturing areas, and upzoned existing residential and commercial areas, to allow for additional development. By land area, though, the vast majority of Bloomberg administration rezoning actions have either applied "contextual" zoning or downzoned blocks to limit development (e.g., Staten Island, Eastern Queens, Northeast Bronx, and Southern Brooklyn).

Impact on residential development capacity

The Furman Center for Real Estate and Public Policy analyzed the net impact of the 76 rezonings between 2003 and 2007 (the time period that included most of the major upzonings) on the city's residential development capacity (Armstrong et al. 2010). They found that the residential capacity of the upzoned lots only slightly outweighed the capacity lost from downzoning (or contextual) rezoning. Overall, the rezonings increased residential development capacity on paper by about 1.7 percent, adding almost 100 million additional square feet of residential development capacity, enough for about 80,000 new units, or 200,000 new residents (far short of the 1 million projected for 2030, but still significant).

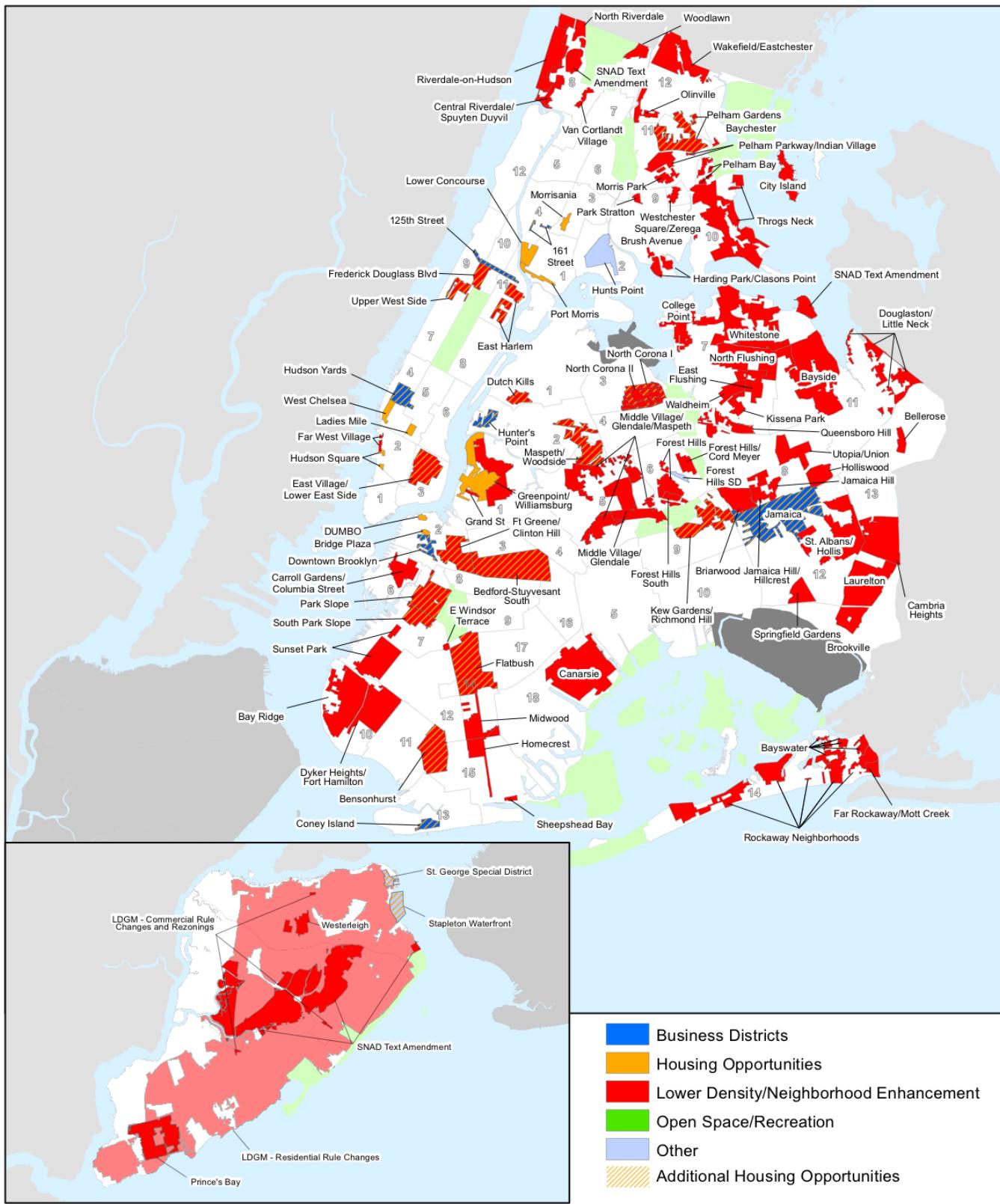
The Furman Center report found one striking socio-economic pattern: upzoned lots tended to be in Census tracts with a higher proportion of black, Hispanic, lower-income residents, and renters than the median tract of the city. Downzoned and contextually-rezoned lots tended to be located in tracts with a higher share of white residents. Contextually-rezoned lots were located in areas with median incomes significantly higher than the city average (\$65,489 versus \$53,724), and a much higher proportion of homeowners. The alignment between the gentrification patterns noted above and the rezoning patters identified in the Furman Center report is troubling. As the Furman Center report concludes:

"the variation in the pattern of rezonings among communities with different socio-economic characteristics calls for a larger conversation about how the benefits and burdens of development should be shared across the City." (Ibid)

The City's rezonings were broadly – but not perfectly – consistent with the smart-growth principle of transit-oriented development. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of upzoned lots are within a half-mile walk from a subway station, adding 181 million square feet of near-transit development. However, 59 percent of the downzoned lots were also within a half-mile walk from rail transit, removing 89 million square feet of near-transit development rights.

Figure 7: Map of Bloomberg Administration Rezonings, 2003 – 2009

Adopted DCP Initiatives by Type 2002-2009



Infrastructure

The Bloomberg administration's approach to infrastructure investment has been decidedly mixed. They made substantial investments, including the #7 subway extension, scores of new schools, grand new parks (Governor's Island, Brooklyn Bridge Park, McCarren Pool, and High Bridge), and in the city's water infrastructure (e.g., the Third Water Tunnel and plans for citywide green infrastructure). However, while a small number of neighborhood rezonings have included infrastructure – especially those where it was perceived as necessary to drive market-led growth, such as the #7 subway extension and the High Line, most have not.² Even in areas where the need for infrastructure investments was identified in the EIS (e.g., Coney Island, Greenpoint-Williamsburg, and Willets Point), they were not included in the area plans.

Impact on manufacturing-zoned land

The Bloomberg administration rezonings significantly shrank the land zoned for manufacturing – by 20 percent through the rezonings from 2003 through 2009 (Pratt Center for Community Development 2009). While manufacturing jobs have been on the decline, there is a recent resurgence of interest in high value-added manufacturing in the United States.³ But with little vacant space in city-owned manufacturing parks (Brooklyn Navy Yard and Bush Terminal), these rezonings have caused significant real estate pressures on manufacturing firms.

Inclusionary zoning and affordable housing

Following significant community organizing, the Bloomberg administration adopted a new “inclusionary zoning” (IZ) program in 2005 and modified the 421-a tax incentive program to require affordable units in many more neighborhoods. Under the voluntary IZ program, developers can choose to include 20 percent affordable units in exchange for a 33 percent density increase (as well as a 20- to 25-year tax exemption).⁴ In the two large-scale rezonings in which the program was launched, Hudson Yards and Greenpoint-Williamsburg, IZ has generated over 2,000 units of permanently affordable housing – (albeit with significant subsidy). However, outside of those two areas, almost no housing developers have opted to take advantage of the inclusionary program. Of the 50 market-rate developments that have taken place in the other IZ areas since inclusionary zoning was mapped, only two projects applied to use the inclusionary zoning program, generating fewer than 8 percent of the total units.

Memoranda of Agreement

In a dozen of the larger rezonings, negotiations between the Bloomberg administration, communities, and elected officials resulted in a “Memorandum of Agreement” spelling out agreements for local hiring, affordable housing, infrastructure, and amenities (e.g., Hudson Yards, Greenpoint-Williamsburg, Flushing

² This might be more understandable if rising real estate taxes were structured to pay for the infrastructure investments through tax increment financing (TIF); however, as James Parrott has showed, financing for the #7 subway was financed in an extremely expensive way for the city.

³ See, for example, *Making in America*, Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization, 7:3, MIT Press, February 2013; Martin Neil Baily and James M. Manyika, “Is Manufacturing ‘Cool’ Again?” Brookings Institution, January 21, 2013.

⁴ Inclusionary zoning programs can be voluntary (developers can choose to include affordable housing in exchange for a density bonus) or mandatory (all development over a certain number of units must include affordable housing, usually with some density bonus or other public benefit).

Commons, Willets Point, and Coney Island, etc.). While these MOAs addressed critical neighborhood issues, they were essentially side deals, not covered by the city's land use process, negotiated outside of public review and delivered within the last few days before the City Council's vote on the rezoning. They were not recorded or made public.⁵ In many (if not most) cases, the promises have not been kept, or even monitored.⁶

4. Going Forward

The next mayor faces a moment of opportunity. The current chair of the City Planning Commission has been in office for 12 years and much of the senior leadership has been at the agency for far longer. The simpler path will be to continue the current course, with perhaps a few warmer words for community efforts, but generally with developer-driven rezonings for high-end residential and commercial development.

The harder path will require a leap of imagination in the possibilities of comprehensive planning and community development, real attention to neighborhoods, a stronger insistence on equality, and efforts to unleash civic energy for a more dynamic and better-stewarded public realm. This path is more challenging, but offers the rewards of a more sustainable, inclusive, vibrant, and livable city.

Plan comprehensively, and with communities

The New York City Planning Commission should return to its mission of developing a comprehensive plan for the city so as to establish a forward-looking framework for sustainable growth – where growth should occur, what infrastructure is needed to support it, and how the benefits should be shared. In prior generations, the New York City planners put forth citywide development plans that framed individual zoning actions. The Department of City Planning should once again plan strategically for the entire city, rather than serve as an enabler of developer-driven projects. Many cities around the world (e.g., London) and in the United States (e.g., Portland) now utilize comprehensive planning to foster successful, sustainable, and shared growth. There are also several relevant processes closer to home, including the New York City School Construction Authority,⁷ the Vision 2020/Comprehensive Waterfront Plan,⁸ and the Bloomberg administration's aborted "Visions for New York City: Housing and the Public Realm."⁹

⁵ Local Law 40 of 2011 provided that future Memoranda of Agreement must at least be made public on the city's website; however, the agreements reached on the major Bloomberg administration rezonings remain unavailable to the public.

⁶ At a City Council hearing on the 2005 Greenpoint-Williamsburg MOA, it was clear that the majority of points in the MOA have not been achieved, and that little follow-up is taking place.

⁷ By State law, the New York City School Construction Authority undertakes a five-year capital plan (with annual updates). It begins with demographic projections, enrollment capacity and utilization reports, and a ten-year housing starts projection. Through the plan, the SCA identifies school seat need, allocates capital, has opportunities for community feedback, and directs the work of the SCA in siting schools in a manner that generally reflects need.

⁸ In 2008, the City Council passed Local Law 49, which required the City Planning Commission to produce a comprehensive waterfront plan with updates every ten years. The City Planning Commission undertook an extensive and inclusive planning process, which it finalized and published in 2011. The planning process also informed the update of the Waterfront Revitalization Plan, which governs all discretionary city actions on waterfront land and in the harbor.

⁹ In 2006, at the start of the PlanNYC 2030 effort, the Bloomberg administration commissioned Alex Garvin & Associates in 2006 to develop "Visions for New York City: Housing and the Public Realm," a citywide plan which identifies locations for 325,000 additional housing units (to accommodate the 1 million people projected), along with public realm investments to "enable the city to grow in a way that improves, rather than degrades, its quality of life." While the plan was never made public, it provides a glimpse of how New York City might begin to think about – and debate – planning for growth. It envisioned

A successful comprehensive planning process in NYC would:

- ↳ **Make extensive and transparent use of relevant data:** on demographics, likely growth scenarios, infrastructure use and need, neighborhoods patterns and strains. The Bloomberg administration is a pioneer in the innovative use of data to identify problems and construct solutions, through its Office of Policy and Strategic Planning (aka “the mayor’s geek squad”) (Feuer 2013). But that data has rarely been used as part of inclusive planning.
- ↳ **Engage communities through a process that offers them the opportunity to shape the plan:** input (though not a veto) on broader growth shares, meaningful opportunities to influence the siting of infrastructure and amenities, and a real say in local area planning if they work as part of the fair-share framework and in alignment with the citywide plan.
- ↳ **Plan transparently for the large-scale infrastructure investments needed to sustain growth,** including transportation, energy, water and sewers, waste, schools, and environmental resiliency, etc. (see recommendation 2).
- ↳ **Incorporate “fair share” principles,** in order to locate City facilities, growth shares, and amenities fairly (see recommendation 3).
- ↳ **Present the comprehensive plan to the City Council for approval.**
- ↳ **Make subsequent planning actions** – both developer-driven projects and neighborhood rezonings – easier to implement if they conform to the comprehensive plan.¹⁰

Coordinate public investments in infrastructure and leverage them for good jobs, sustainability, and community development

Several other chapters in this volume speak to the need to invest in public infrastructure. The importance of urban infrastructure is increasingly recognized across the political spectrum – not just mayors and governors and think tanks, but corporations like IBM and KPMG. As Michael Freedman-Schnapp argues in a companion chapter, economic growth and environmental sustainability demand smart investments in 21st century transit, clean energy, smart grids, and in modernizing outdated infrastructure (bridges, water-mains, and above-ground power lines). With interest rates remaining near historic lows, this is a good time to invest in New York City’s future.

The Bloomberg administration has made significant, indeed visionary infrastructure investments – the Number 7 subway extension, the High Line, green infrastructure, new school construction, and several new regional parks. But it has rarely prioritized these investments strategically, with attention to what

significant new growth on platforms over Sunnyside Rail Yards in Queens, and many highways along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront (served by new light-rail) and around The Hub in the Bronx (with new infrastructure and public realm investments). The Garvin Plan was not comprehensive (it covers only housing and some public improvements, not broader infrastructure or other land uses), was not integrated with demographic projections, and never entered public or community discussion (reportedly because substantial new development in these areas was not seen as politically advisable). PlaNYC proceeded as an environmental initiative, rather than a planning one.

¹⁰ One option would be to undertake a Citywide Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the comprehensive plan, which could cover rezoning actions that conform to the plan, thus reducing the time it would take a project to go through ULURP. This process could be conducted as a Citywide Section 197-a plan, prepared by the Department of City Planning, and integrated with the City’s Ten Year Capital Strategy as required in Charter Section 215. The administration currently has the legal authority to do so, or it could be specifically authorized by a Local Law, like the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan. A longer-term possibility would be to modify the City Charter to streamline subsequent development by shortening the ULURP process for development that conforms to the adopted comprehensive plan.

most commands public resources given competing priorities. One simple way to look at this is through New York City's "Citywide Statement of Needs," the City Charter-mandated document intended to lay out all planned city facilities, sorted by community, in order to give communities an opportunity for feedback and input (see figure 8). The 2014-15 Statement of Needs omits far more than it discloses.

Figure 8: Screenshot of NYC Citywide State of Needs, 2014 - 2015

Citywide Statement of Needs for Fiscal Years 2014-2015			5	Citywide Statement of Needs for Fiscal Years 2014-2015			6				
Proposed Location	Agency	Facility Type		Proposed Location	Agency	Facility Type					
SUMMARY OF NEEDS BY BOROUGH AND COMMUNITY DISTRICT											
CITYWIDE											
TBD	HRA	Permanent Supportive Congregate Housing		CD1	HRA	Relocation of HRA's Administrative Headquarters					
TBD	HRA	Transitional Supportive Congregate Housing		CD 4 or 5	NYPD	Relocation of Manhattan Traffic Enforcement Division					
N/A	HRA	Relinquishment of HRA's Multi-Service Centers (MSC) Buildings		CD 6	DSNY	Consolidation and Relocation of Sanitation Garages for Manhattan Community Districts 6 and 8					
TBD	DHS	Replace/Upgrade Transitional and Assessment Shelter Facilities for Homeless Individuals and Families		CD 9	NYPD	Relocation of Manhattan North Detective Operations and Manhattan North Internal Affairs Bureau					
BRONX											
TBD	HRA	Relocation of Bureau of Eligibility and Verification (BEV)		CD 11	DSNY	Replacement of Manhattan Community District 11 Garage					
TBD	HRA	Consolidation of Bronx Medicaid Offices		QUEENS							
BROOKLYN											
CD 7	DOT	Relocation of Citywide Concrete Unit of the Sidewalk Management (SIM) Unit		CD 7	QL	Mitchell-Linden Library – New Expanded Replacement Facility					
TBD	DOT	Relocation of Brooklyn Safety City Program		CD 7	DPR	New Visitor Center at Bowne House					
CD 17	DPR	New Cultural Education Center for Wyckoff House		CD 13	DOT	Relocation of Queens Safety City Program					
STATEN ISLAND											
TBD	DOT	Consolidate Staten Island Roadway Repair and Fleet Unit		TBD	DOHMH	Relocation of DOHMH Health Center Offices					
				CD 3	DCLA	New Building at Staten Island Historical Society (SIHS)					

The projects disclosed here are but a tiny fraction of the city's \$10 billion capital budget. A random sample of the things that are left out includes: green infrastructure, plazas, bike share stations, Brooklyn Bridge Park, new sanitation facilities, the Brownsville Community Justice Center, and the city's plan for affordable housing (other than city shelters, which are mentioned in one line, but with no discussion of location).

In the absence of a coordinated infrastructure plan, individual agencies make key public investments through internal plans, figuring out neighborhood politics, and navigating the ULURP or other necessary approval processes. They often view community feedback, and even coordination with other agencies, as a roadblock to be overcome, or problem to be solved, not as an opportunity to leverage outcomes through coordination and planning.

This challenge will become clearer later this spring when the Bloomberg administration releases the results of its Strategic Initiative for Recovery and Rebuilding (SIRR), in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. SIRR will likely set forth proposals for investments in climate protection. But absent a comprehensive, strategic infrastructure plan, how will it be possible to decide the priority of investments, given the opportunity costs? The Citywide Statement of Needs – especially as part of a comprehensive planning process, integrated with annual capital budgeting – could serve to put forward priorities in infrastructure planning and development.

In addition, the city's infrastructure investments can be better leveraged to strengthen neighborhoods. Just as the affordable housing program launched in the Ed Koch administration became the backbone of community development efforts, many of today's infrastructure investments can do the same:

- ↳ **Green-infrastructure and green-building investments:** Even before Hurricane Sandy, the City was making multi-billion dollar investments in greener infrastructure and buildings – through the, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), School Construction Authority, and Department of Citywide Administrative Services – but with little attention to the possibilities of leverage for neighborhood development. With relatively modest attention to coordination and community input, these efforts can deliver significant neighborhood benefits: new school green roofs that function as science labs, on-street green infrastructure that helps achieve neighborhood goals for traffic calming, climate protection that creates more public open space.¹¹ With better links to the workforce development system, these neighborhood-level infrastructure investments can also create job opportunities, in both construction and operations.¹²
- ↳ **Streetscape and plazas:** The NYC Department of Transportation, under the leadership of Janette Sadik-Khan, has done an enormous amount to reshape the urban environment, through streetscape, pedestrian enhancements, bike-lanes, benches, and plazas. While some early projects prompted controversies, DOT has adopted inclusive planning practices. The planning processes for the bike-share network, and some neighborhood traffic calming efforts (e.g., Jackson Heights, Brooklyn's 4th Avenue, and slow zones) have featured innovative online portals that integrate data with online and offline feedback. The plazas program has enabled community groups to partner formally with the city to design new spaces, obtain capital investments, and establish operating partnerships. This program should grow – and can be significantly improved by establishing models for maintenance and program partnerships that work in low-income and immigrant communities (not only where well-financed Business Improvement Districts can foot the bill) as well as better links to other NYC cultural, health, or community programs (e.g., Department of Cultural Affairs funding).¹³ The companion piece by Caron Atlas offers a broader vision for how arts and culture can be a stronger part of the City's community development strategy.
- ↳ **Libraries and schools that function as community centers and anchors:** As a recent study by the Center for an Urban Future concluded, "New York City's public libraries are serving more people in more ways than ever before ... but they have been undervalued by policymakers and face growing threats in today's digital age." Circulation has grown by 59 percent and program attendance by 40 percent, but city funding has shrunk by 8 percent and capital needs are in the billions. Largely abandoned by New York City, the Brooklyn and New York Public Libraries have recently proposed real estate deals to sell off libraries to raise funds for maintenance and upgrades for other branches. While some footprint changes may make sense – libraries need to be different kinds of community centers now than they were 100 years ago – these plans should be visionary and proactive, rather than rearguard defensive actions. Other cities have developed new libraries as anchors to revitalize

¹¹ As *New York Times* architecture critic Michael Kimmelman recently noted, during Hurricane Sandy the new Fresh Kills park absorbed significant storm surge and saved some nearby Staten Island neighborhoods from much worse flooding (2012).

¹² Such as the Bronx Environmental Stewards Training program of Sustainable South Bronx or Job Training Partnership (JTP) programs of the Parks Department.

¹³ These could build on grassroots models established at the Jackson Heights plaza by Councilmember Danny Dromm, at Corona Plaza by the Queens Public Library, and at Kensington Plaza in District 39 and a grassroots group of plaza stewards.

dilapidated commercial areas, or co-developed with affordable housing, or programmed together with after-school, cultural, job training and other programmatic funding. The Queens Public Library system has done better at this, with an array of new branches and programs, like the new Flushing Branch that serves a dizzying set of immigrant communities, or a new storefront branch in Far Rockaway that serves teenagers (and was open days after Hurricane Sandy). School buildings can also play a far stronger role as community hubs, as Aaron Pallas suggests in his chapter, around the “community schools” model, where schools become hubs for community learning, programming, and organizing on evenings and weekends. This requires seeing – and planning for – schools and libraries as public infrastructure. Schools provided most of the shelters after Hurricane Sandy, and libraries are designated as cooling centers in heat waves. With more thoughtful planning, they can serve multiple purposes during normal times as well.

- ↳ **Affordable housing investments:** New York City’s unparalleled municipal investment in affordable housing continues, somewhat unsung, with \$200 to \$300 million per year in city funds, is by far the most ambitious affordable housing program in the nation. The city’s Department of Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD) has gotten smarter about targeting code enforcement to areas where it is most needed, but otherwise has relatively little focus on neighborhood planning beyond housing. Integrating HPD’s affordable housing investments into neighborhood planning can offer mixed-use development opportunities including supermarkets, libraries, day care centers, small business incubators and freelancer shared-space, not-for-profit offices, and more. HPD undertook one large-scale project – Via Verde in the South Bronx – that featured tremendous innovations in sustainability, health, and neighborhood opportunity. But a process is needed to replicate these innovations (on a more affordable scale) in a much wider array of projects.

Seek a better balance of development goals (beyond condos and offices)

The vast majority of Bloomberg administration development plans have focused on residential development, with some plans for office construction. While the next administration should attend to residential and office growth, it should also plan to make room for 21st century manufacturing, small businesses and neighborhood commercial strips, grocery stores in underserved communities, and other neighborhood infrastructure and amenities.

- ↳ **Manufacturing:** As Laura Wolf-Powers notes in her chapter, diversifying our economy requires making a more serious commitment to space for manufacturing. Some of this can take place in city-owned industrial parks, but with extremely low vacancy rates there, we must also maintain – and invest in – space for manufacturing in privately owned areas. While the Bloomberg administration established Industrial Business Zones, it has consistently allowed hotels, big box stores, homeless shelters, and residential loft conversions to undermine them, renegeing on its commitments to implement planning studies for these areas. Following the model of Chicago, New York City should adopt “Industrial Employment Districts” (i.e., stronger protections that would not allow hotels, big-box retail, self-storage, or large-footprint office buildings), and for new models of durable mixed-use zoning that don’t simply allow full residential conversion as-of-right. The city should also better fund and coordinate the network of service providers that support manufacturers.

- ↳ **Bring supermarkets to “food deserts” through coordinated development policy:** As part of its food policy strategy, New York City established a goal of spurring the creation of new supermarkets in low-income communities without access to nutritious, affordable food. The NYC Economic Development Corporation has established the FRESH program, with modest success. But the program is essentially developer-driven (offering a mix of zoning and tax incentives). If neighborhood planning were coordinated, it would be a priority when the city engaged in a much wider range of potential investments: EDC projects, affordable housing developments, libraries, and new bus rapid transit (BRT) lines or transit hubs.
- ↳ **Regularize underground housing:** Estimates of illegal housing construction over the past two decades range as high as 100,000 units – both subdivisions of multi-family units and basement units in one- and two- family homes. The Bloomberg administration deserves credit for targeting building code enforcement to those locations where data suggests danger, and for opening a new conversation about micro-units (albeit high-end). But attention to neighborhood quality of life in growing immigrant neighborhoods requires a program to look seriously at where these conversions have taken place, to regularize those that can be made safe, and to invest in the infrastructure neighborhoods need to support additional population (where growth was not planned, but took place nonetheless).

Fix the “fair-share” process for siting municipal facilities

In 1989, as part of the city’s most significant Charter Revision in the last half-century, New York City sought to embark on an experiment in seeking a “fair-share” of municipal infrastructure – both those generally perceived as negative (e.g., waste transfer stations and homeless shelters) and as positive (e.g. parks, libraries). Agencies preparing to site a new facility are supposed to report their plans in the Citywide Statement of Needs (offering borough presidents and community boards an opportunity to consider alternative locations), and publishing fair-share statements that disclose and address potential issues of concentration.

Unfortunately, evidence collected in a year-long City Council investigation (soon to be published) makes clear that the New York City fair-share system is badly broken.¹⁴ Data is not made available in a meaningful way. Most fair-share statements are never made public and almost none are available online. It is difficult to access and analyze data about where city facilities are, so it is difficult to know how concentrated facilities are. Agencies have little incentive to pay any attention to concentrations of facilities or services.

The evidence is clear in the one area where data is made public in a way that permits rigorous examination – homeless shelters and other residential bed facilities. Over the past decade (during the tenure of the Bloomberg administration), and over the past 20 years (since the fair-share rules were adopted), these facilities have been increasingly concentrated in communities with concentrated poverty (even after accounting for the neighborhoods in which homeless families lived before entering shelter).

¹⁴ This evidence was undertaken by Brad Lander’s office, in his capacity as chair of the Council’s Land Use Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting, and Maritime uses. The study included a public hearing, interviews, review of fair-share statements accessed through freedom of information requests, a survey of community boards, and regression analysis of the limited siting data that exists.

While comparable data is not available for other types of facilities, there is strong reason to believe that facilities such as waste transfer have been similarly concentrated in low-income communities.

The city's fair-share system can and should be dramatically improved:

- ↳ **Make real use of the Citywide Statement of Needs as a planning document:** As noted above, many agencies simply fail to put contemplated new facilities (or closures of existing ones) in the Citywide Statement of Needs. In the absence of a real citywide statement, it is impossible to assess fairness at the citywide level. While this is a violation of the City Charter, there is no cost for doing so. Agencies who do not disclose their plans – with geographic specificity – should be held to higher standards when they seek to cite new facilities.
- ↳ **Disclosure:** The Department of City Planning should provide an accessible map and database of facilities, showing not just the location of existing facilities, but their orders of magnitude (e.g., volume of waste processed). Fair-share statements should be required to be placed online (they are not currently). Together, the map, database, and statements would show which communities are actually over-burdened with particular types of facilities (and, therefore, which are not).
- ↳ **Make it more difficult for agencies to accomplish “least-fair” siting:** Agencies that propose to site a new city facility within a community that is already amongst the 20 percent most concentrated in that area should be required to explain to the City Planning Commission (and perhaps the City Council) why this “presumptively unfair” siting should nonetheless be allowed.

Modify environmental review to focus on mitigation

As Hope Cohen (then of the Manhattan Institute) wrote in 2007, the environmental review process in New York:

“has lost its connection to good planning. Instead, it has become an expensive and time-consuming annoyance to large projects and a potentially project-ending burden to small ones. Environmental review today is a wide-ranging effort to identify “impacts” for the purpose of legal disclosure only. It is not the planning activity that people commonly assume it to be, nor is it the one that New York desperately needs as its aging infrastructure struggles to meet the demands of an ever-increasing population and citizens move into previously underdeveloped areas of the city — areas that require new access to transportation, sewage treatment, electricity, and schools.”

Cohen offers a four-point plan to fix the environmental review process in New York City: 1) exempt smaller projects from EIS requirements, 2) narrow the scope of review to infrastructure and services, 3) set time limits, and 4) designate an office to focus on and implement mitigations.

While community-oriented planners might be inclined to oppose the exemptions and the narrowing of review, it would be far better to have a meaningful review process – that actually resulted in binding mitigation action – covering a smaller scope and narrower set of more impactful projects, rather than the current opportunity for shouting. The implementation of mitigations could be coordinated and tracked by the Department of City Planning, the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, or the Mayor's Office of Operations.

Preserve proactively

Planning for growth and development does not mean abandoning the treasures of the neighborhoods and places we have. Just the opposite: when growth without planning, there is little thought to protecting, preserving, or enhancing the things most needed in a growing community. When planning occurs first, it can integrate preservation thoughtfully.

Currently, however, preservation is a reactive endeavor – without planning, transparency, or resources. The Landmarks Preservation Commission is not transparent about how it sets priorities for landmark designations for the hundreds of potential actions citywide. They are not integrated with City Planning's rezoning actions (except sometimes as one of the last-minute concessions made as part of the rezoning process). They do not provide resources for restoration, conservation, curation, or programming. And they are generally limited to one tool – landmark designation – rather than a broader and more creative array.

One counter-example shows the power of other possibilities: the High Line. In that case, as part of City Planning's West Chelsea Plan, development rights were sold in a way that helped achieve the acquisition, planning, engineering, and landscaping work. A conservation group was empowered for maintenance, operations, and programming.

Proactive planning for preservation includes designation, but is not limited to it. As part of comprehensive and neighborhood-level planning, the City Planning should work with the Landmarks Preservation Commission to set and prioritize preservation plans and integrate them with the growth and development plans, which not only identify and designate those buildings to be protected, but identify resources that will help with their restoration, programming, and linkages.

It is also time to make the preservation process more transparent and rule-bound. Like other agencies, the LPC should set its priorities in a more transparent manner (with flexibility, but at least with the opportunity for the public to see and comment on priorities), and with timeliness for decision-making (rather than leaving both preservation advocates and building owners in limbo for decades).

Improve the planning process for community benefits and development

As argued above, the city's current developer-driven framework for planning has amplified tensions between competing interests. These tensions were highlighted in the negotiation process around several "community benefits agreements" in New York City (e.g., Yankee Stadium, Shea Stadium, and Brooklyn Atlantic Yards). Negotiations between the developers and community groups were fully separate from the public planning process. The Memoranda of Agreement reached between the Bloomberg administration and the City Council around many area rezonings (Hudson Yards, Greenpoint-Williamsburg, Flushing Commons, Willets Point, and Coney Island) have not been better. They were disconnected from planning, negotiated at the last minute, and lack any framework for oversight or implementation.

Enacting the recommendations in this paper would go a long way to addressing some of these tensions. The "cross-acceptance" element of good comprehensive planning gives communities an incentive to engage in a real dialogue around growth, and to bring neighborhood vision to the table early.

Infrastructure planning maximizes the likelihood that investments will be made to match growth and need. The fair-share process makes it possible for neighborhoods to believe they are being treated fairly, and to have their claims heard when they are not. Incorporating preservation into planning means that communities can hold onto what makes them great places while envisioning their future. Improving environmental review to focus on mitigation would place negotiations in a stronger context, looking at infrastructure and services needed for sustainable growth (rather than items that appeal to elected officials as good “wins”). To enhance community engagement further, the next administration should consider several additional adjustments:

- ↳ **Establish a new, legally appropriate, transparent framework for negotiations** (by Executive Order or Local Law) through which both public and private commitments within the development process can be negotiated, memorialized, implemented, and tracked.
- ↳ **Adopt uniform standards for development** – especially for development benefiting from city subsidies and tax breaks – such as wage and hiring standards (outlined in Laura Wolf-Powers’ and Cecilia Estolano’s papers on economic development), and mandatory inclusionary zoning (outlined by Benjamin Dulchin and colleagues’ chapter on housing). This would help insure that development generates good jobs, affordable housing, and community benefits – and simultaneously remove some of the contentious items that are frequently at the center of area rezoning and development debates.
- ↳ **Provide modest additional resources to Community Boards** – better access to professional planners, data, and training – to participate in the comprehensive and community planning processes. The Campaign for Community-Based Planning has recommended a thoughtful series of broader transformations of NYC’s community boards, changing how they are appointed, trained, and monitored (though some may require City Charter change).
- ↳ **The planning process should also explicitly welcome and include community development, civic organizations, environmental justice advocates, the arts, and others in the planning process.** While these groups should not be delegated to make decisions “for” the public, they can be integrated into the process. They can conduct outreach and organizing to insure that many more voices are at the table; generate ideas for community planning and development; and participate in the process of dialogue and negotiations about mitigation, community benefits, and amenities. In addition, these groups can be formal partners in implementing the resulting community-scale infrastructure and community development projects – including maintenance and programming of local plazas, community-based public art installations, community environmental projects, affordable housing, and community economic development projects.

Confront segregation and discrimination

The city should revive and empower the New York City Commission on Human Rights to identify and reduce patterns of discrimination. Segregated and unequal neighborhoods have significant negative impacts on the life chances of young people who grow up there, through education, health, and other factors. New York City’s schools remain among the most segregated in the country; black isolation in schools has persisted even as segregation has declined. Half of the city’s schools are over 90 percent black or Hispanic (“A Portrait of Segregation in New York City’s Schools” 2012). Even in more integrated

neighborhoods, segregated schools remain the rule (as Aaron Pallas shows in his paper in this volume). Low-income communities of color in New York City have significantly worse access to health and mental health care, higher rates of infant mortality, lower birth weights, more obesity, more children killed or injured in traffic accidents (Transportation Alternatives n.d.).

New York City has one of the most aggressive human rights laws in the country, offering groundbreaking protections from discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations based on race, religion, color, creed, age, national origin, citizenship status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, marital and partnership status, or source of income. Unfortunately, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) – charged with implementing the city’s Human Rights Law – has been woefully inadequate to the task. Attorneys and advocates report that even at the basic level of responding to complaints, the CHR has done a poor job. And it has very rarely sought to proactively identify and rectify patterns of discrimination, whether by landlords, employers, or public agencies.¹⁵

The next mayor should transform the CHR into a professional, effective, and proactive agency working to identify patterns of discrimination and to implement remedies. Several ways it could move forward in this direction:

- ↳ **Establish a housing discrimination testing program**, using “paired” testers to identify and prosecute housing discrimination along lines of race, immigrant status, LGBTQ status, and source of income. The CHR could utilize its own system of fines, assessments, and remedies, and/or work with prosecutors (plus, this would be a great employment program for some of New York City’s out-of-work actors).
- ↳ **Set goals, propose remedies, and monitor progress against discrimination** in key areas of public accommodation:

Education: Work with the city Department of Education to set targets for reducing public school segregation, monitor progress against goals, and increasing promising practices that do so (e.g., non-zoned schools with affirmative admissions criteria¹⁶).

Affordable housing: The city’s significant affordable housing programs could be a force for integration. However, at present there is scant effort in this direction; at best, HPD and NYCHA seek to comply with federal fair housing law (both agencies have been sued for failure to do so). There is little genuine effort to “affirmatively further” integration, as required by HUD. CHR should work with HPD and NYCHA to track current data, set goals, identify best practices, and track progress.

- ↳ **City Agency employment, pay, and leadership:** The CHR could also play a far stronger role in making the City of New York itself an affirmative employer.

The next administration should learn from Seattle’s Race & Social Justice Initiative, which requires every Seattle city department to use a Racial Equity Toolkit to analyze budget proposals, policy and program

¹⁵ In preparing this paper, a web-search was done for news articles on the New York City Commission on Human Rights. The response: “Your search - ‘new york city commission on human rights’ - did not match any news results.” In several hearings before the City Council (e.g., on its enforcement of the City’s new source-of-income discrimination ban), the CHR has provided little evidence of any strategy to identify and confront systemic discrimination.

¹⁶ The Bloomberg administration recently agreed to do this for the first time with the newly expanded PS 133 in Park Slope, after a lengthy organizing campaign by the local Community Education Councils, only when it was necessary to achieve a broader DOE school rezoning plan.

decisions. This has resulted in hundreds of changes, in every department, including a new approach to school suspensions, new community fire safety programs in immigrant neighborhoods, and new social equity criteria for prioritizing transportation projects.

Encourage deeper forms of civic engagement

As we saw in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, civic activism can make the difference between life and death. In some places, volunteers, not-for-profits, and civic and activist groups stepped up where government had not been deployed (e.g., with food distribution, canvassing, and supplies where people had sheltered in place). In other places, the city established a programmatic framework established that allowed volunteers to contribute in deep ways to the physical and emotional well-being of evacuees (e.g. in the City's evacuation shelter in the Park Slope Armory). One relatively new feature was the widespread use of social networking tools to help groups organize and target their giving and volunteering more effectively. While the outpouring that follows a disaster cannot be matched in more normal times, the City of New York could do much more to leverage the value of civic contributions.

The Bloomberg Administration has created some of the institutional framework needed here, through NYCService (a portal for volunteer opportunities) and through its strong investment in 311 and website improvements. But these efforts have been limited in their impact because they are framed narrowly as volunteering (as a nice, but incidental activity). Even NYCService's motto, "Use your BLANK for good," conveys the idea that service is something incidental to the cause served, and committed randomly as part of one's leisure activities. While the city's social networking, website, and 311 have been put to great use providing information, they are organized around a customer service orientation that relates to New Yorkers as consumers, not as partners.¹⁷

These efforts could achieve far more if we conceive of them as part of shared stewardship of the public realm, as part of a central component of the "organized compassion" and planning that is the core work of government. Integrating citizen¹⁸ service, a greater expectation of participation, new tools for civic participation, and connecting opportunities to contribute with opportunities for input can help augment the power of civic energy to transform neighborhoods.

One promising new tool that start to reveal these possibilities is "participatory budgeting" (PB), pioneered in NYC by a growing group of City Council members working with not-for-profit and community partners.¹⁹ PB is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget – in this case, \$1 million from the Council Member's capital budget discretionary allocations for physical improvements and projects in our districts.

The annual process begins with a series of neighborhood assemblies where hundreds of residents suggest concrete ideas for improving their neighborhood's schools, parks, streets, and libraries, etc. Volunteer "budget delegate" committees then meet over several months to develop the ideas into

¹⁷ One strong exception here was the city Department of Transportation's bike share portal and process, which included extensive opportunities for input and feedback – online, at community meetings, with community boards and elected officials, and in the streets.

¹⁸ Understanding "citizen" here to mean city residents, including immigrants.

¹⁹ See www.pbnyc.org.

concrete projects, figure out which are most needed, meet with city agencies to establish feasibility and cost, and prepare the projects for the ballot.

In the first week of April 2013, more than 10,000 residents in eight City Council districts across the city came out to have their say. We extended voting rights so that anyone over the age of 16 living in the neighborhood could vote, regardless of immigration or criminal justice status, held voting across several days, translated ballots into the languages spoken in our communities, and partnered with community groups like Community Voices Heard to conduct extensive outreach and “get-out-the-vote” operations.

The results are encouraging – not only in the projects selected, but in the deepening of local democracy. As documented by the Urban Justice Center, participation in PB was both deeper and more diverse than typical elections (Kasdan and Cattell 2012). The proportion of voters with household incomes below \$25,000 was nearly ten times higher than in the last municipal election. More Latinos came out in East Harlem, more people from public housing in East Flatbush and the Rockaways. In District 39, the Bangladeshi community in Kensington came out in a far higher percentage than in any previous election, especially Bangladeshi women:

Men felt like they have a power that they can make a choice, but for the first time the women felt like, ‘Oh, I can do that too,’ ” said a resident, Annie Ferdous, who translated the voter information into Bengali. “They saw the ballot in Bengali and thought, ‘O.K., maybe I can understand and get involved’ (Sangha 2012).

The scene at the Windsor Terrace Library, where Bangladeshis, Latinos, long-time residents, and young families came out in large numbers, patiently waited in a long line, met their neighbors, and had a chance to talk about the 20 projects on the ballot across lines of race and class, was one of the most inspiring examples of participatory democracy that many voters had ever witnessed.

While bread-and-butter projects like road paving or increased street lighting were very popular, so too were a variety of projects that sought to enhance the public realm – rebuilding a subway station entrance, adding more benches on commercial strips, digital displays that indicate when the next bus arrives, converting a little-used street segment into a public plaza or enhancing the local park. In East Harlem, the biggest vote-getting project is bringing playground improvements in public housing complexes. In Queens, voters chose a project to preserve the community’s beaches from erosion and flooding. In East Flatbush, where crime makes some neighborhood parks so unsafe that many residents fear using them, they chose security cameras and lighting. In District 39, voters chose to improve decrepit bathrooms in a public school, create a new community composting site, and make repairs to the path system in Brooklyn’s Prospect Park.

PB made it clear that people are both hungry for a better public realm, and for more inclusion in the governance and shaping of the public spaces they use every day. As 16-year-old Marcus Monfiston, a student at Tilden High School who worked together with classmates to create and campaign for a proposal to add lights to their ball fields, told a *New York Times* reporter: “I was like, I can really make a change,” he said. “We’re not just here to go to school. We can be more, do more” (*Ibid*).

More than 1,000 cities around the world – especially in Latin America and Europe – currently use participatory budgeting. Toronto has used PB with public housing residents to prioritize repairs and

improvements. Boston's revered outgoing mayor, Thomas Mennino, has just agreed to implement a youth-oriented participatory budgeting process.

In a city with a \$70 billion annual budget, of course, it would be impractical to make most decisions this way. Residents might undervalue the importance of waste-water treatment plants or child protective services. Most decisions need to be based on data, existing contracts and regulatory frameworks, and not subject to change from year to year. But there is substantial room both to expand PB – to City Council members across the city, through partnerships with City agencies, as part of the comprehensive planning process proposed in this paper – and to learn from its example.

Participatory budgeting reveals the power of including people far more deeply in shaping their neighborhoods and hints at the benefits for local democracy and public stewardship. It suggests the potential for the rediscovery of community development argued for throughout this paper. An administration interested in deeper civic engagement through community development – integrated with broader planning processes – could find many other opportunities, for example:

- ↳ **Community-based partnerships for arts and culture**, like the “naturally occurring cultural districts” proposed in the companion piece by Caron Atlas.
- ↳ **Expanded public stewardship groups** for parks, plazas, and libraries in all neighborhoods.
- ↳ **Environmental partnerships**, such as the “block-by-block” approach organized by the Pratt Center for Community Development to reduce energy use.
- ↳ **Neighborhood-based traffic safety task forces** could bring together the NYPD, DOT, and community residents to reduce dangerous driving and further drive down traffic deaths by focusing on enforcement, engineering, and education.
- ↳ **The “community justice center” model** used in Red Hook and now being expanded to Brownsville, which utilizes a coordinated, community development approach in the criminal justice system to “build multiple off-ramps for young people … to step off the fast track that leads to incarceration, unemployment, and poverty.”

Public/private partnerships hold risk as well as opportunity. Too often, the current model of parks conservancies works in wealthier neighborhoods where they can serve as a fundraising vehicle. But the examples of community development corporations, and other models from low-income and immigrant neighborhoods (e.g., the Bronx River Alliance or the Jackson Heights pedestrian plaza championed by Councilmember Danny Dromm) show that these models can work more broadly. Thoughtful attention to structure, governance, and funding makes the difference between privatizing models (e.g., that reward wealth, put decisions in a smaller number of hands, and eliminate transparency) and those that deepen public engagement (e.g., that involve more people at diverse levels of decision-making, offer expanded opportunities for creative involvement, build leadership, encourage shared stewardship, and guarantee transparency). A mayor with a genuine commitment to expanded civic engagement through community development will find many avenues to make it real.

5. Conclusion

Truly rediscovering city planning and community development and how to do them together is not a simple task. It would be much easier for the next mayor to shop on local commercial strips, eat ethnic food, and take part in community clean-ups, while leaving the current, separate approaches to both city planning (developer-driven rezonings for condos and offices) and community development (friendly, but usually patronizing support) in place.

This chapter argues for a harder path, but one with great rewards. This path will require a leap of imagination in the possibilities of comprehensive planning and community development, real attention to neighborhoods, a stronger insistence on equality, and efforts to unleash civic energy for a more dynamic and better-stewarded public realm. This path is more challenging, but offers the rewards of a more sustainable, inclusive, vibrant, and livable city.

Getting there will require some restructuring. The “Deputy Mayor for Economic Development” will need to be the “Deputy Mayor for Planning, Development, and Neighborhoods.” Several separate entities that analyze planning data – the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, the data-geeks at the Office of Policy and Strategic Planning, the demographics unit at City Planning, and the strategic planning unit at the Economic Development Corporation – need to be brought together (or, at minimum, coordinated). Attention to community development needs to be revived and coordinated, across agencies where it remains strong (e.g., HPD), where it has languished (e.g., City Planning), and where it has not yet become a priority (e.g., DEP).

Conflicts will continue to exist at every step of planning and development. Many neighbors will still, quite naturally, resist new development on their block. Many developers will still, quite naturally, continue to seek loopholes that allow the largest development with the fewest required concessions to sustainability, affordability, or community benefits. But the framework outlined here would go a long way to aligning interests for a more sustainable, fair, inclusive, and economically vibrant city.

Neighborhood policy cannot eliminate inequality. Solutions to concentrated poverty require that more people have living-wage jobs. Better health outcomes require that more families have health insurance and good preventative care. Stronger macroeconomic policy and health care reform don’t come at the municipal level, much less at neighborhood scale. Nonetheless, planning for more equal neighborhoods can create opportunities for people in low-income neighborhoods to thrive. Rather than organizing municipal investments like parks and transit primarily to augment market-led growth, New York City should organize its investments to increase opportunities, reduce costs, improve health, and strengthen social capital across the city, with a focus on places that need that most.

In the days after Hurricane Sandy, New Yorkers came together in profound ways, to provide food, shelter, clothing, comfort, supplies, and hope. Much of this was organized outside of government, some by government, and sometimes – at best – through a combination. Author Rebecca Solnit, who has looked at similar reactions in *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster*, suggests that the extraordinary power of people coming together in the wake of tragedy to create powerful communities of relief that offers “a glimpse of who else we ourselves may be and what else our society could become.”

The spirit of community that arises in disaster can fade quickly (well before the need for relief and recovery is actually gone). But in an era when our city's growth is so closely related to the challenges of climate change, when our communities' quality of life is deeply linked to their resilience, when our choices for infrastructure are tied to the future of our economy, surely we should sincerely incorporate that spirit into our planning for the future of New York City. "The recovery of this purpose and closeness without crisis or pressure," as Solnit tells us, "is the great contemporary task of being human."

By rediscovering city planning and community development together – with attention to sustainability, economic vitality, neighborhood livability, and genuine efforts at equity – we might rise to that task.

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