

# NEW YORK CITY'S SHARED HOUSING ROADMAP



Department of  
Housing Preservation  
& Development

Office of Neighborhood  
Strategies

OCTOBER 2025



Yates' candleers Inc.  
20 ALBERS & SONS

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# LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONER

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It is no secret that New York City faces an acute housing crisis that touches all corners of the five boroughs. This crisis is multifaceted, with many drivers and no one-size-fits-all solution. The Adams Administration's *Housing Our Neighbors* plan and *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* initiative bring together partners from across City and State government to deploy creative and forward-thinking strategies to tackle the many aspects of the housing crisis from a variety of angles.

One potentially impactful step in that strategy is our *Shared Housing Roadmap*. Shared housing was once a vital component of our housing ecosystem. In the early 20th century, rooming houses, boardinghouses, and single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels played a critical role in New York City's housing landscape, providing affordable and secure accommodations that functioned as a safe harbor for generations of single individuals looking for independence, employment and opportunity. A century later, New York City continues to be a place of opportunity, and our population of single-person households is growing quickly. However, our severe housing shortage means that there are not enough options to house these single people. As a result, New Yorkers are doubling or tripling up with roommates, outcompeting families for a limited supply of family size units and oftentimes accepting to live in dangerous conditions with few tenant protections. Restoring shared housing options for apartment seekers creates a new housing choice for one and two person households, one that centers community-oriented living.

The *Shared Housing Roadmap* charts a path for bringing back shared housing models. It builds on the success of *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*, which laid the foundation for reintroducing shared housing by removing zoning barriers and is the product of a multi-year, collaborative process that builds on the expertise of City and State agencies, policy experts, shared housing operators, and peer cities. The *Roadmap* puts forth a set of strategies to ensure that new shared housing that gets built in New York City is well-designed, well-managed, and centers resident well-being and experience. It adds a new tool to the City's toolbox to deliver affordable housing to New Yorkers and can help unlock other leading strategies for creating new housing in New York City, such as office conversions.

The *Roadmap* is not merely an informational resource but a component of a broader plan of action outlining our next steps to bring this to fruition. Its release coincides with the next step toward reintroduction: new legislation designed to remove outdated code barriers to shared housing and provides clear and consistent standards for design, occupancy, and management in the Housing Maintenance Code and Building Code. This legislation reflects the lessons learned from shared housing's long history in New York City and the best practices across operators today. The report contextualizes this legislation, both situating it within the historical and current context and providing in-depth explanations about how each piece of this legislation contributes to safe, secure, and affordable shared housing. While legislation is a huge step forward, the *Roadmap* also outlines additional policy changes needed to fully realize as-of-right shared housing in New York City and the path to implementation.

All New Yorkers deserve to live in thriving communities and have a place to call home. The strategies for getting to this vision will vary based on individuals' wants and needs, so it is imperative that we create solutions to expand housing choice. Putting the *Shared Housing Roadmap* into action will do just that, by allowing for the creation of new shared housing in New York City, expanding opportunities for single New Yorkers to access both a stable home and a built-in community.

**Ahmed Tigani**

*Acting Commissioner*

*New York City Department of Housing Preservation  
and Development*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In the first half of the 20th century, shared housing models, such as boarding houses and single room occupancy (SRO) hotels, constituted a substantial and affordable part of New York City's housing stock. They served a wide range of households, from immigrants newly arrived on the city's shores to young people flocking to the city for factory jobs, to people looking for a short-term place to stay as they navigated life changes. However, policies implemented in the mid-20th century—intended to improve housing quality—led to a prohibition on the construction of new shared housing and a sharp reduction in the existing stock.

The impacts of these policies reverberate across the city today. New York City's average household size is shrinking, but the city's housing supply is not adjusting to meet the needs of these small households, with growing numbers of single adults taking on roommates to mitigate high housing costs and the lack of affordable homes for single persons. A burgeoning unregulated market of co-living operators shows that there is demand for this type of housing in New York City at a variety of price points, and that

operators are interested in growing this market in New York City.

The *Shared Housing Roadmap* lays out a path for reintroducing shared housing as one means of creating more housing options and opportunities for single New Yorkers. It builds on the success of the recently passed *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*, which removed zoning barriers to shared housing—among other zoning changes—to create a little more housing in every neighborhood. Incorporating the lessons learned from 20th century shared models as well as newer models from other cities, the *Roadmap* charts a strategy for removing the remaining code, financial, and operational barriers to enable shared housing that ensures robust design, management, and tenant protection standards. The report accompanies and contextualizes legislative amendments that are being introduced to remove code-related hurdles in the New York City Housing Maintenance Code and Building Code.

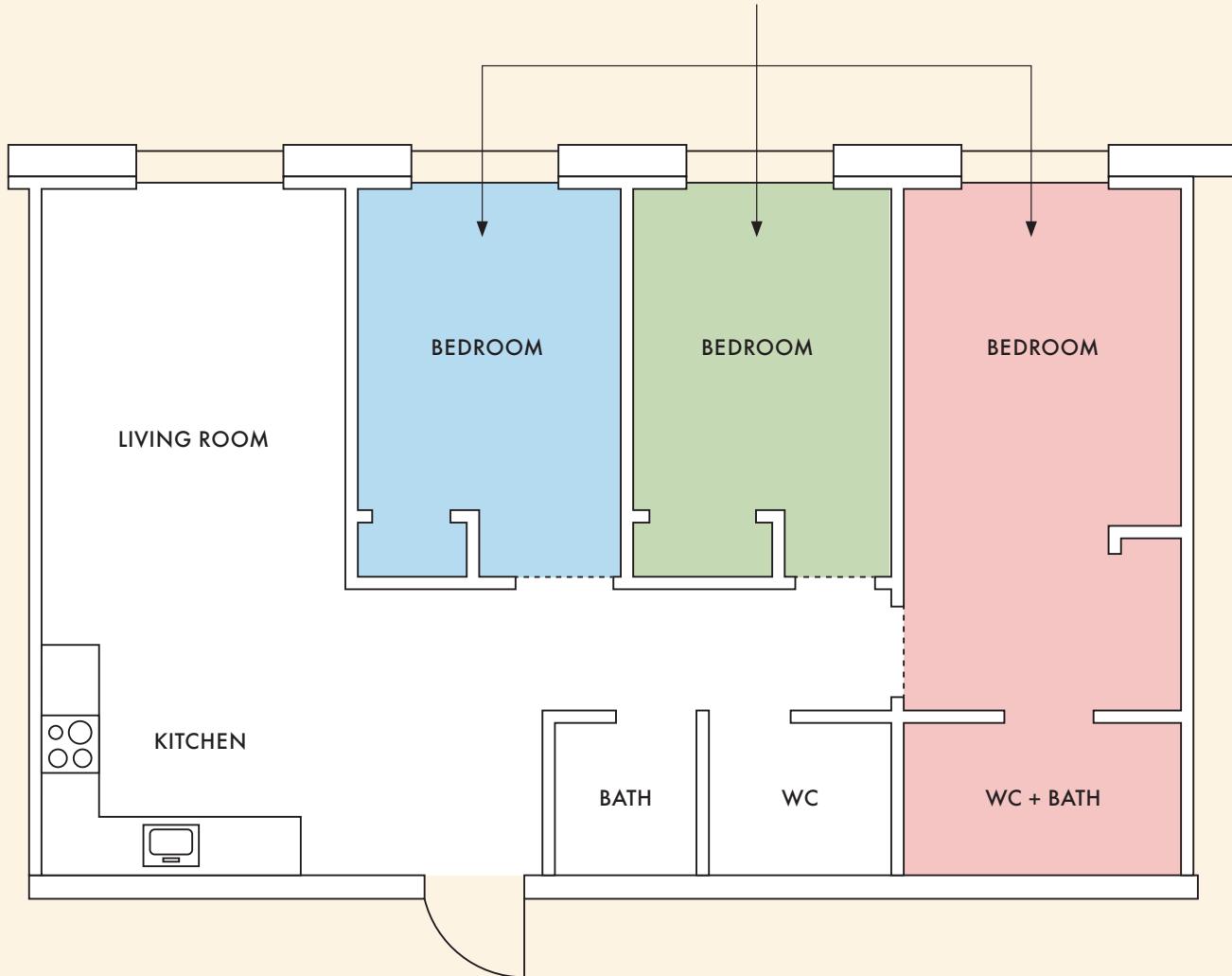
# SHARED HOUSING

(including private and shared spaces)

Shared housing consists of two or more independently occupied rooms that share living facilities, like bathrooms and kitchens. This example looks similar to an apartment, but the tenants in each rooming unit hold individual leases and have locks on their doors. This is one of many possible layouts for shared housing.

## ROOMING UNITS

(private rooms, with or without a bathroom)



The report not only provides a roadmap for needed changes but situates shared housing within the broader New York City housing ecosystem to make the case for its reintroduction. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the state of housing for small households and the City's recent efforts to address the ongoing housing crisis. Chapter 2 discusses the ways in which shared housing can help address New York City's housing shortage: by addressing the mismatch between the city's population and its housing stock, increasing tenant protections for the thousands of renters living in informal shares, facilitating office conversions, reducing the pressure on family-sized apartments, serving households with diverse needs, and adding a new tool to HPD's affordable housing toolkit while lowering costs. Chapters 3 and 4 lay out the history and current context of shared housing in New York City and across the United States, including HPD's ShareNYC pilot program. Chapter 5 breaks down the barriers to the creation of new shared housing rooming units across design and occupancy, building operations and management, tenant protections and safety, the financing of affordable shared housing, the applicability of rental assistance, and zoning. Finally, chapters 6 and 7 chart the path to reintroduction across zoning, legislation, and policy:

## ZONING

*City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*, passed by the City Council in December 2024, removed all zoning obstacles to shared housing. These amendments:

- Clarified the definition of a “rooming unit,” the technical term for a shared housing bedroom<sup>1</sup>
- Lifted the ban on the conversion of existing floor area to rooming units
- Ensured limits on housing imposed by parking requirements and dwelling unit factor do not impede shared housing
- Enabled shared housing to take advantage of zoning-based housing incentive programs, securing some measure of affordability even in privately financed projects
- Expanded the geographic scope of where shared housing is permitted

## LEGISLATION

The legislation introduced alongside this report will unlock the potential of shared housing by updating the Housing Maintenance Code and Building Code to:

- Revise the criteria for receiving rooming unit approval to allow for the creation of shared housing rooming units as-of-right
- Revise and clarify the standards for rooming units, bathrooms, and kitchens to ensure high housing quality standards

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1. Per the New York City Housing Maintenance Code, a rooming unit as one or more living rooms arranged to be occupied as a unit separate from all other living rooms, and which does not have both lawful sanitary facilities and lawful cooking facilities for the exclusive use of the family residing in such unit. Colloquially, many refer to rooming units as SROs or SRO units (See Appendix D).

- Ensure rooming units meet or exceed existing fire safety and egress, accessibility, common space, and privacy requirements
- Align property management requirements with modern-day best practices
- Streamline and clarify the rules and definitions governing rooming unit occupancy

to create new housing through adaptive reuse of hotels and office buildings, provides an alternative for individuals who would otherwise double up and split multi-bedroom units to keep housing costs affordable, and helps expand housing choice and access for New Yorkers.

## POLICY

In the coming months and years, HPD and its partner agencies will advance policy changes to complement the zoning and legislative amendments to ensure high-quality and well-functioning shared housing, including:

- Align building operations and management policies with industry best practices
- Develop HPD policy to guide the financing of affordable projects with shared housing rooming units
- Develop policies and procedures for administering rental assistance in shared housing

Shared housing can once again play an important role in the New York City housing ecosystem, providing new housing typologies that are responsive to the needs of single New Yorkers in the face of the ongoing housing and affordability crisis. When compared to buildings consisting of studio apartments, buildings with shared dwellings are less expensive per unit and, in certain scenarios, have lower overall development costs, which can be combined with more efficient use of public subsidies to drive down the overall cost of housing. Shared housing presents an opportunity

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

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New York City is facing a housing crisis, with a constrained housing supply that is unaffordable, especially to low-income New Yorkers—a disproportionate number of whom are people of color, people with disabilities, and families with children.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, demographics are shifting in New York City, with the number of single-person households increasing 8.1% between 2016 and 2023.<sup>3</sup> However, the housing supply in New York City does not match the needs of these small households, with growing numbers of adults taking on roommates to mitigate high housing costs and the lack of affordable homes for individuals.

To meet the housing needs of all New Yorkers, it is imperative for the City to allow and encourage housing suited to all types of households. The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and

Development (HPD) is publishing this *Shared Housing Roadmap* to chart a path for reintroducing a once-popular housing type to meet the needs of single-person and small households, which constitute a significant portion of New York's communities. An expansion of housing options for small households will also alleviate market pressure on larger homes that are in high demand among both multi-person households and families.

Shared housing consists of two or more independently occupied rooms—called “rooming units”—that share a kitchen, a bathroom, or both. Typically, tenants in rooming units have independent relationships with the landlord or property manager, with a separate lease for each rooming unit.

Shared housing historically constituted a vital and affordable part of New York City's housing stock, serving a wide range of households and taking many forms, from SRO (single room occupancy) hotels, to rooming houses and boarding houses. As New York's population increased in the early 20th century, residences became overcrowded, and New Yorkers in shared living faced housing quality issues.

2. “2023 NYC True Cost of Living Report”, United Way of New York City, <https://unitedwaynyc.org/true-cost-of-living/>.

3. US Census Bureau, “American Community Survey, Table B09019 (Household Type (Including Living Alone) by Relationship),” “B11016 (Household Type by Household Size),” United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.



Policymakers and reformers came to associate these poor housing conditions with shared housing itself, and crafted policies to prevent the construction of new shared housing, and to incentivize apartments and homes for nuclear families instead.

As shared housing became further stigmatized, housing quality conditions continued to deteriorate, and many existing shared housing buildings were demolished or converted to other uses.<sup>4</sup> With shared housing in decline, small households turned instead toward to larger, multi-bedroom apartments, where they competed with larger households for available space and illegally—and sometimes unsafely—subdivided units for single room occupancy. This remains the case today, with small and especially low-

income households crowding into larger apartments.

Across the city, many New Yorkers, including low-income singles, homeless individuals, youth and young adults, older adults, and new arrivals are in need of stable, affordable housing, and shared housing can serve them as they move through new life stages. Allowing for a wider range of housing typologies for small households is a critical strategy for promoting a sustainable city. The strategies put forth in the *Shared Housing Roadmap* ensure that the reintroduction of shared housing features robust design, management, and tenant protection standards to ensure that housing is safe, secure, and affordable for residents.

The *Roadmap* provides the pathway for making this vision a reality, and the City has already taken steps to enact that vision. In December 2024, the New York City Council passed *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*, which amended the Zoning Resolution to—among other actions—remove zoning barriers to the development of shared housing. This report

<sup>4</sup>. Blackburn, Anthony. 1996. *Single Room Living in New York City: A Report*. pg. 7. New York: Department of Housing Preservation and Development. See also, HMC §27-2077 “Conversions to rooming units prohibited,” and HMC §27-2078 “Rental of rooms to boarders.”

accompanies and contextualizes the next step in fully unlocking the potential of shared housing, legislation to update the Housing Maintenance Code (HMC) and Building Code (BC). This legislation will introduce streamlined design and operational standards for shared housing projects and strong tenant protections for shared housing residents. Beyond legislative action, the *Shared Housing Roadmap* also outlines policy changes necessary for HPD to finance affordable models of shared housing.

## EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS THE HOUSING CRISIS

New York City is in a housing crisis. Housing costs are too high for most New Yorkers, and there are not enough homes available to meet demand across the city. Due to these interlocking issues, New Yorkers have limited choices for what kinds of housing they can live in, and in which neighborhoods they can find that housing.

As of 2023, vacancy rates were extremely low, especially among less expensive apartments. For apartments with asking rents of less than \$2,400, the vacancy rate was less than 1%.<sup>5</sup> For New Yorkers who can find housing, paying for that housing can be burdensome, with approximately one-quarter of all households spending more than 50% of their income on rent.<sup>6</sup> The all-time low vacancy rate and high cost

burden severely limit housing choice for New Yorkers, especially low-income New Yorkers.

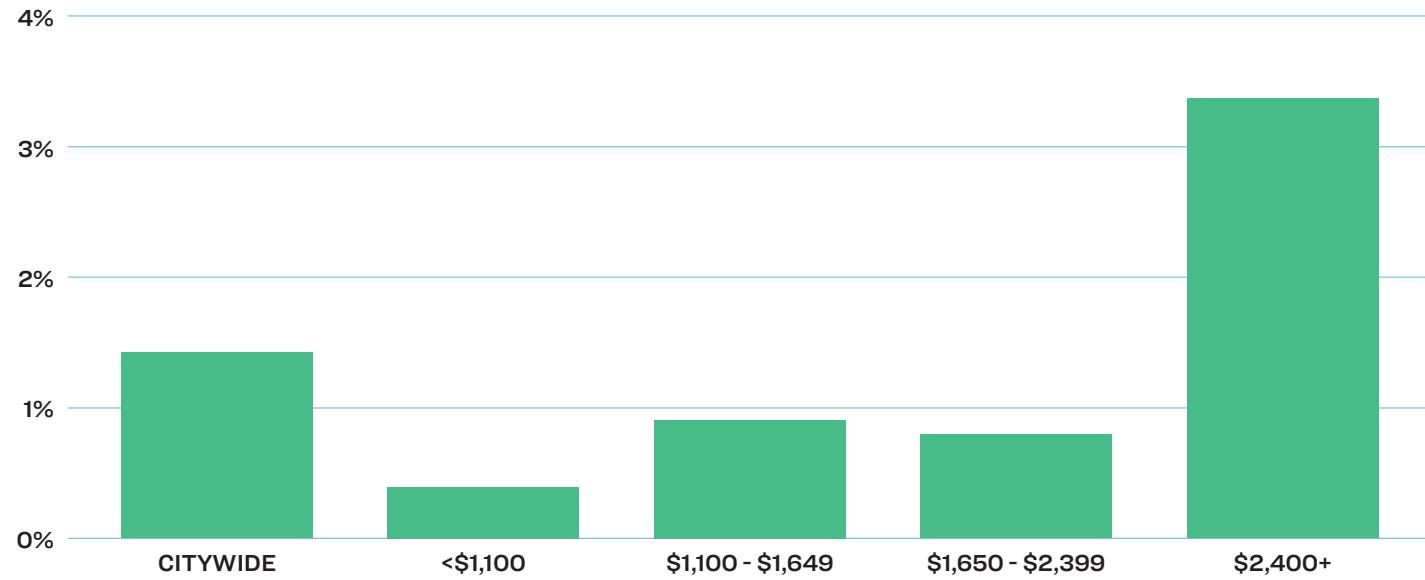
Many households take on roommates or boarders to make ends meet. When multiple small households come together in this way, they pool multiple incomes, giving them a competitive advantage in the housing market, and seek out larger apartments intended for families. Multiple-person, nonfamily households, which include any nonrelated adults living together in one home grew by 11.3% between 2018 and 2023.<sup>7,8</sup> This growth puts additional pressure on the stock of larger apartments.

New Yorkers who are unable to find housing that is affordable to them may face homelessness. Many turn to City-administered or non-profit-run shelters. As of January 2025, more than 129,000 people were sleeping in City-administered shelters on an average night.<sup>9,10</sup> The City should do all that it can to remedy this problem by reducing barriers to the construction of new, quality housing and reducing the cost of that housing production. Shared housing can help reduce

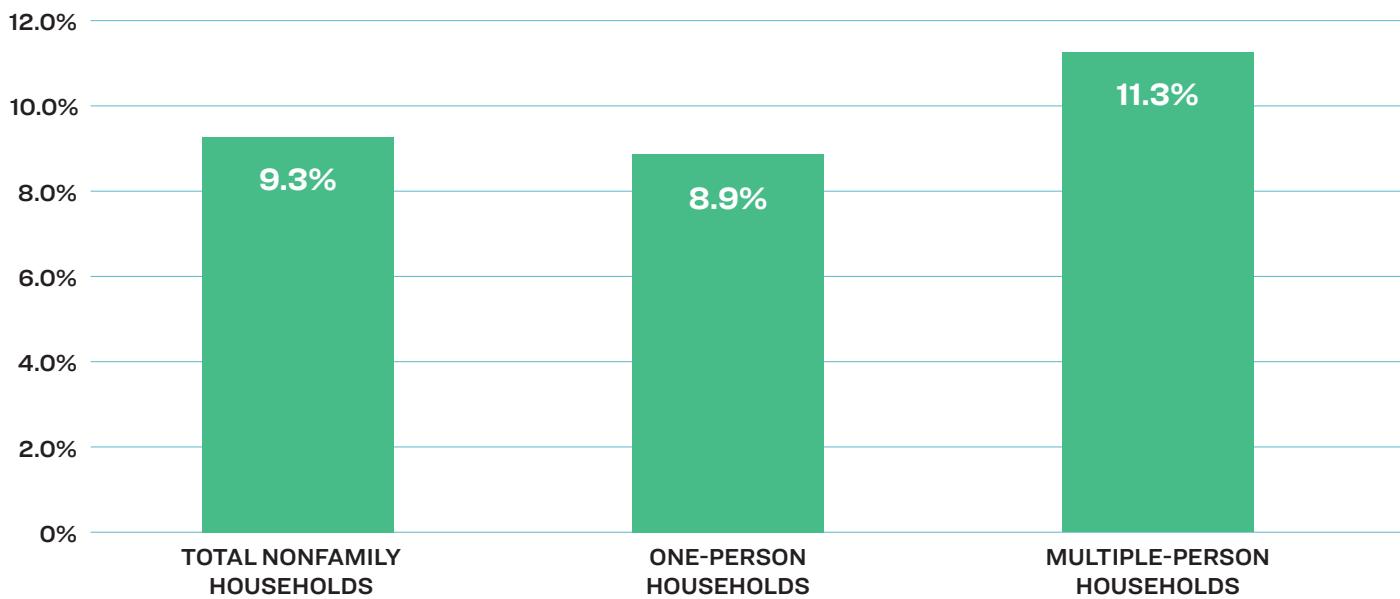
7. "U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2018, 2023, Table B09019: Household Type (Including Living Alone) by Relationship," United States Census Bureau, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2022.B09019?g=B09019%20Household%20Type%20\(Including%20Living%20Alone\)%20by%20Relationship](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2022.B09019?g=B09019%20Household%20Type%20(Including%20Living%20Alone)%20by%20Relationship).
8. "U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2018, 2023, Table S1101: Households and Families, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2021.S1101>.
9. "Local Law 79/2022 and 136/2024 - Temporary Housing Assistance Usage", NYC OpenData, [https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/Local-Law-79-2022-and-136-2024-Temporary-Housing-A/jiwc-ncpi/about\\_data](https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/Local-Law-79-2022-and-136-2024-Temporary-Housing-A/jiwc-ncpi/about_data).
10. Multiple City agencies administer their own shelter systems. This number includes 89,100 individuals who stayed in facility administered by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) on an average night, as well as individuals who stayed in facilities administered by HPD, the Housing Resources Administration (HRA), the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD).

5. "2023 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey, Selected Initial Findings", p. 21, New York City Housing Preservation and Development, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdfs/about/2023-nychvs-selected-initial-findings.pdf>.

6. Ibid.

**FIGURE 1. Net Rental Vacancy Rate by Asking Rent, 2023**

Source: NYCHVS, 2023

**FIGURE 2: Percent Change in Nonfamily Households, 2018-2023**

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B09109, S11O1.

the pressure on the housing market by expanding housing choice for low-income households.

## TRENDS ACROSS SINGLE-PERSON AND SMALL HOUSEHOLDS<sup>11</sup>

Recent demographic changes and trends in household size and housing stock composition illustrate a range of unmet needs across single-person and small households that could benefit from shared housing.

While the number of small households (one or two adults) in New York City increased 11.1% between 2013 and 2023 (206,700 additional households), the city's small-unit stock (studios or one-bedroom apartments) failed to keep pace, growing only 7.5% over the same period (approximately 96,400 additional units). Meanwhile, the city's stock of units with four or more bedrooms grew by 8.3% (just over 21,300 units), while the number of households with five or more people fell by 0.7% (a loss of almost 2,200 households) in that same decade.<sup>12,13</sup> While New York City faces an acute shortage of housing of all sizes, the lack of new options for small households is particularly notable, given the rapid increase in the number of new small households.

To better match population trends, New York City needs to increase the housing options for small households. Shared housing offers a pathway for doing so, at potentially lower cost than new construction of studios and one-bedroom apartments.

Between 2018 and 2023, the number of nonfamily households grew by 9.3% and multiple-person, nonfamily households, which includes any nonrelated adults living together in one apartment, grew by 11.3%.<sup>14</sup> While some individuals may prefer to live with friends or roommates, others are pooling incomes and sharing larger apartments due to an inability to find affordable alternatives on their own. For those adults who are pressured into informal shares, new, purpose-built shared housing may provide a safe, legal, and low-cost housing alternative, and the preservation

14. "Glossary," United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/glossary>.

**Household:** A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit (such as a house or apartment) as their usual place of residence. A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit such as partners or roomers, is also counted as a household. The count of households excludes group quarters. There are two major categories of households, "family" and "nonfamily."

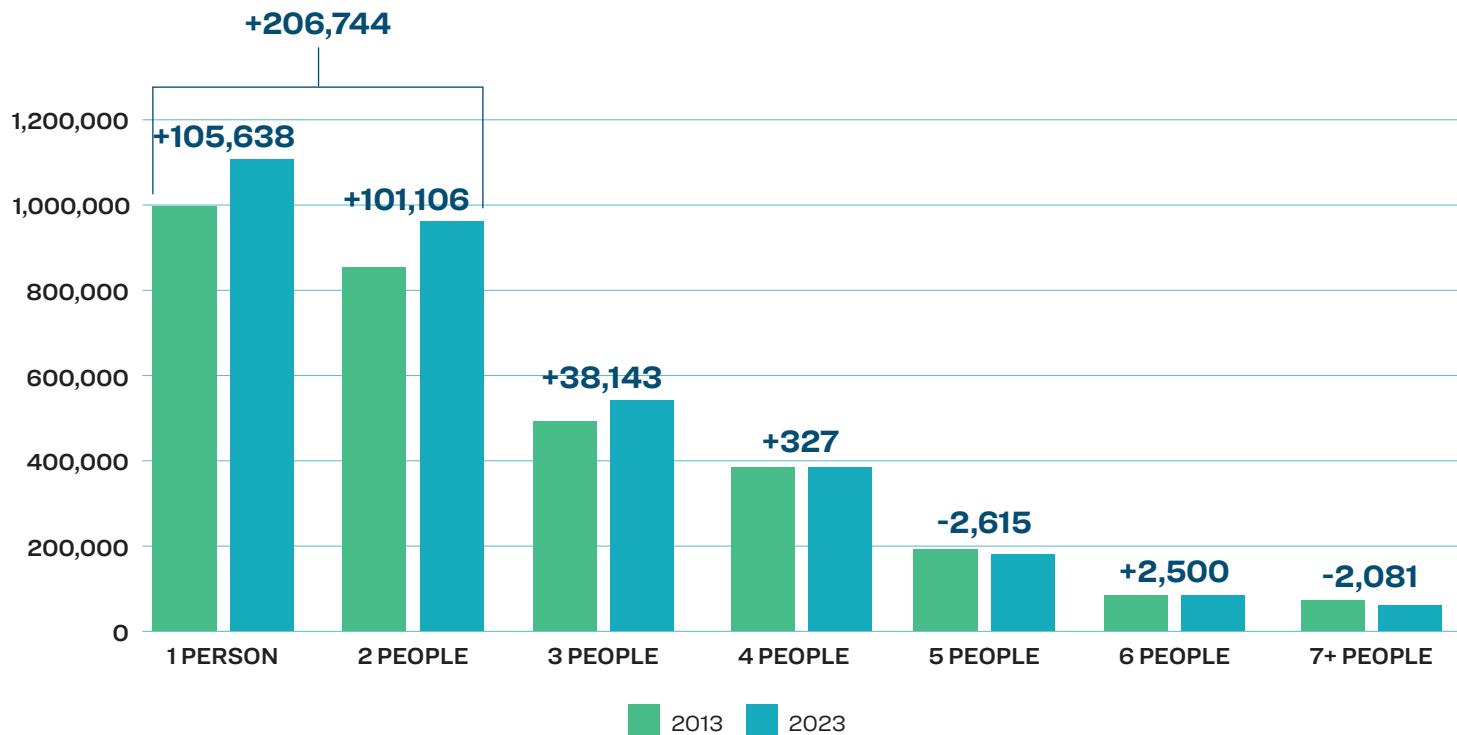
**Family household:** A family includes a householder and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. All people in a household who are related to the householder are regarded as members of his or her family. A family household may contain people not related to the householder, but those people are not included as part of the householder's family in census tabulations. Thus, the number of family households is equal to the number of families, but family households may include more members than do families. A household can contain only one family for purposes of census tabulations. Not all households contain families since a household may comprise a group of unrelated people or one person living alone.

**Nonfamily Household:** A nonfamily household consists of a householder living alone (a one-person household) or where the householder shares the home only with people to whom he/she is not related (e.g., a roommate).

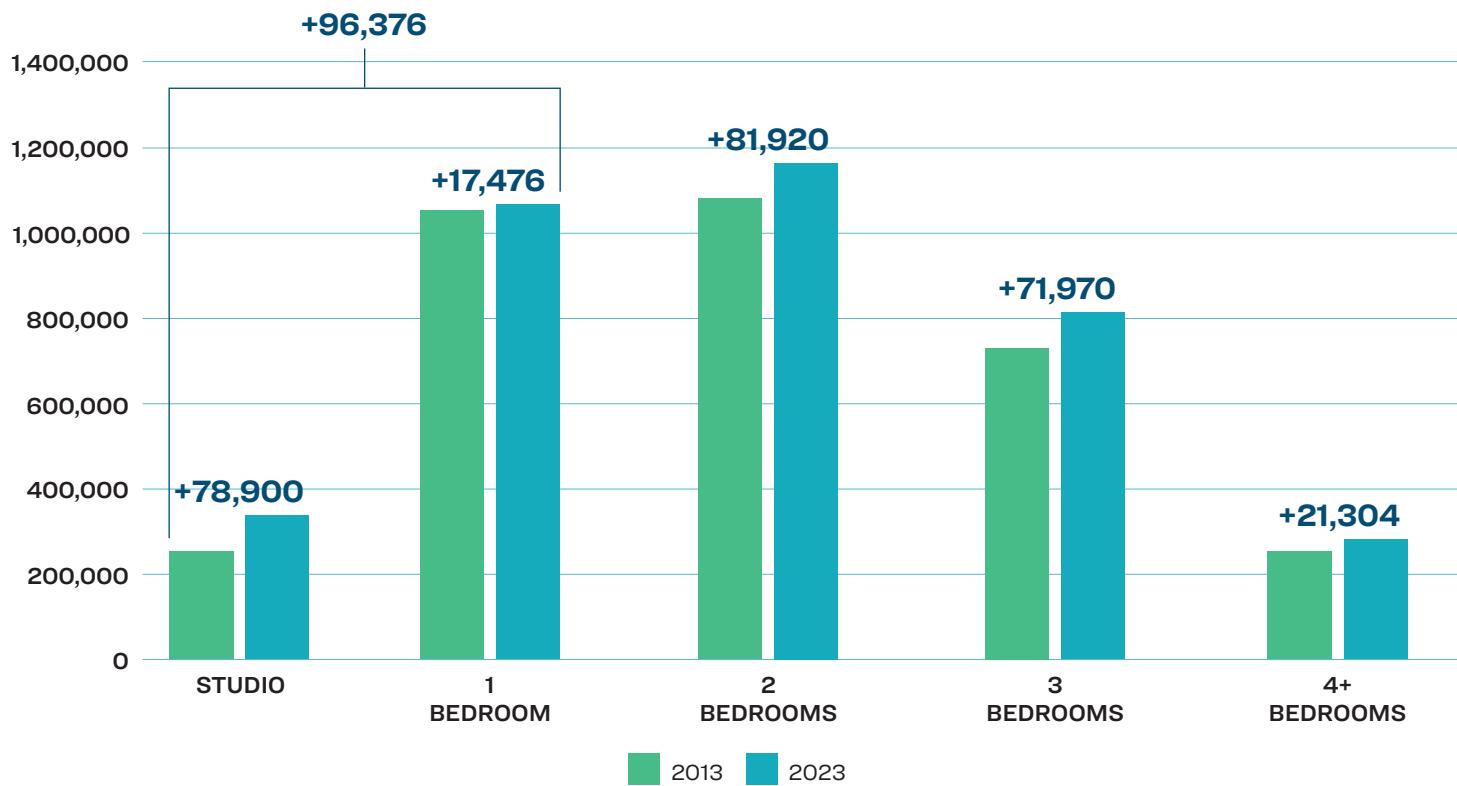
11. See Appendix A for details on the data sources and methodology employed in this section.

12. "U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2009-2013, 2019-2023, Table B25041: Bedrooms," United States Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B25041?g=B25041::20BEDROOMS&tid=ACSDT1Y2021.B25041>.

13. "U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2009-2013, 2019-2023, Table B11016: Household Type by Household Size," United States Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B11016?g=b11016&tid=ACSDT1Y2022.B11016>.

**FIGURE 3: Change in Number of Households by Size, 2013-2023**

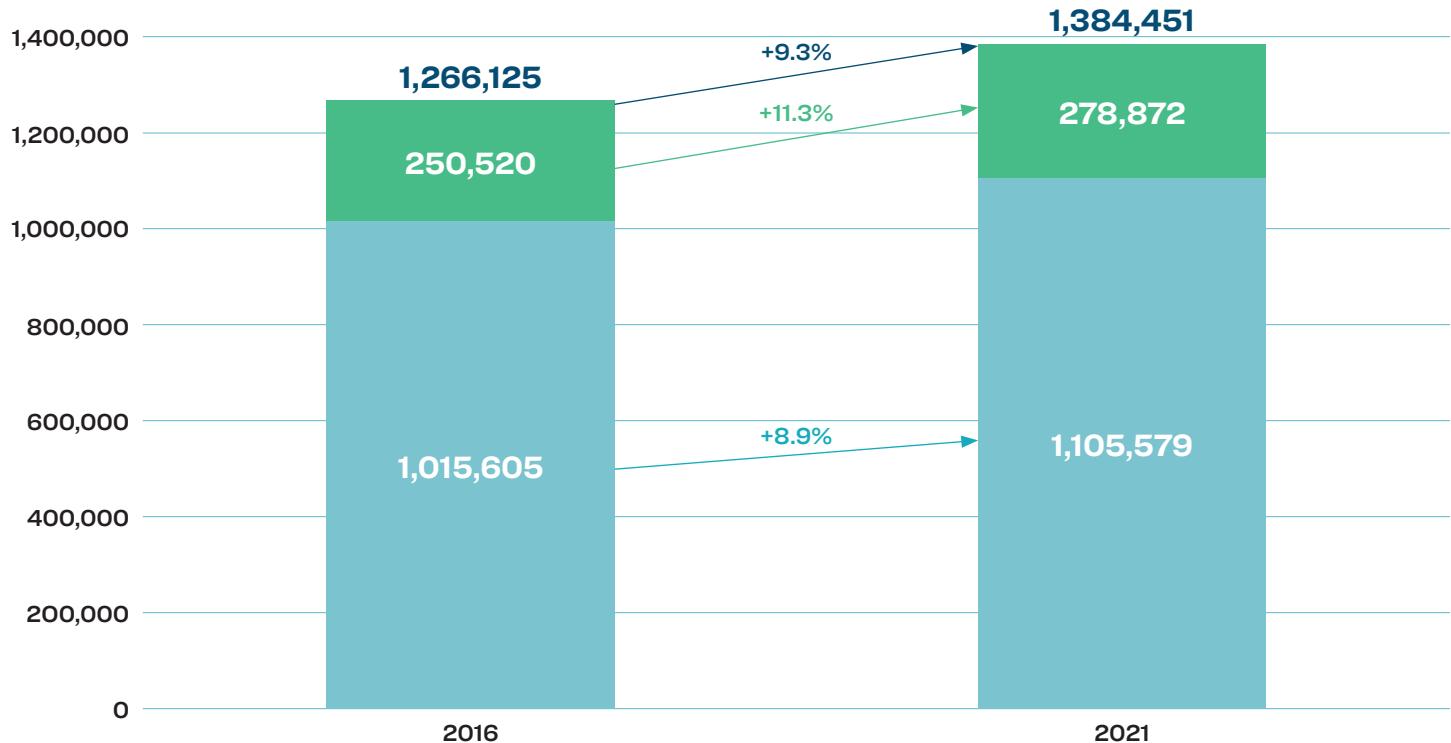
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2009-2013 and 2019-2023 5-year Estimates, Table B11016.

**FIGURE 4: Change in Number of Housing Unit by Bedrooms, 2013-2023**

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2009-2013 and 2019-2023 5-year Estimates, Table B25041.

and legalization of existing informal units can help reduce dangerous housing conditions. Additionally, creating new options for single adults to live alone would free up the family-size units they are currently sharing for larger families.

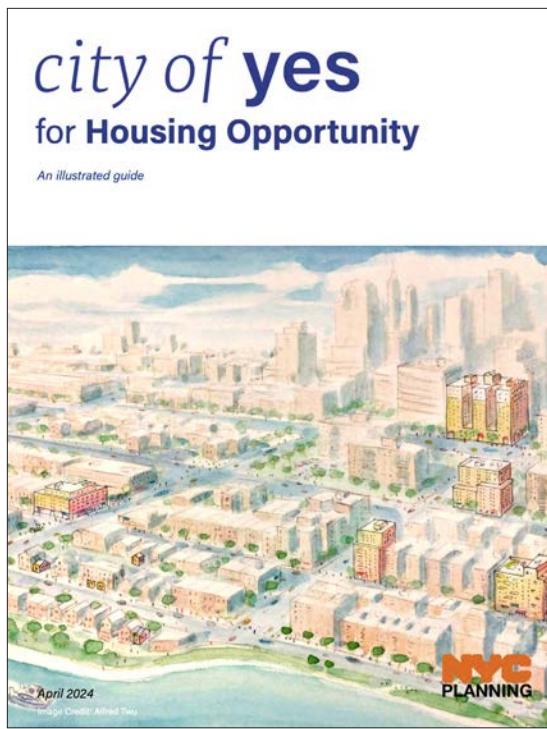
**FIGURE 5: Change in Number of Nonfamily Households, 2018-2023**



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2018, 2023, Table B09109, S1101.

# MAYOR ADAMS' HOUSING INITIATIVES

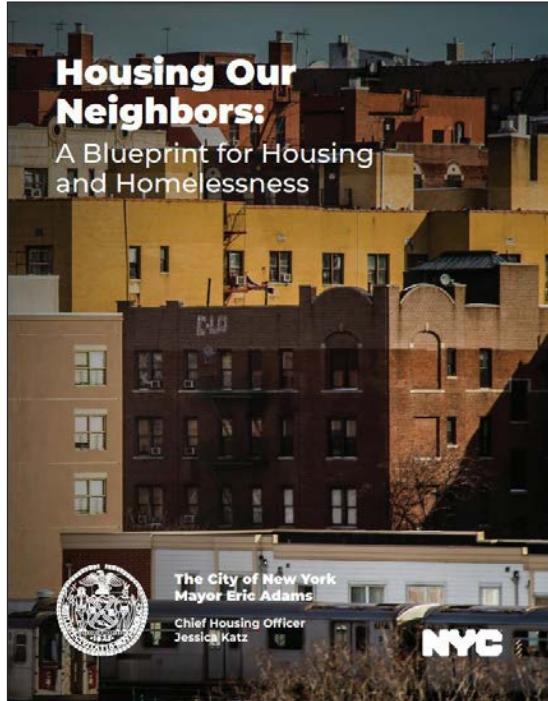
Through four key initiatives, the Adams Administration is working to tackle the affordable housing crisis and underlying housing shortage.



## CITY OF YES FOR HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

*City of Yes* is the Adams Administration's plan to modernize the Zoning Resolution to promote sustainability, support small businesses, and create affordable housing.<sup>15</sup> *City of Yes* proposed three zoning text amendments: Carbon Neutrality, Economic Opportunity, and Housing Opportunity. *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* aims to create a little more housing in every New York City neighborhood by simplifying complex and restrictive zoning. Adopted by the City Council in December 2024, *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* removes zoning barriers to creating new shared housing. HPD and its partner agencies are currently implementing *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* and related non-zoning efforts, including the strategies of the *Shared Housing Roadmap*.

15. City of New York. *City of Yes: Overview*. New York: City of New York. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/city-of-yes/city-of-yes-overview.page>.



## HOUSING OUR NEIGHBORS

Mayor Eric Adams unveiled *Housing Our Neighbors: A Blueprint for Housing and Homelessness* in June 2022.<sup>16</sup> This comprehensive housing plan unites HPD, the Housing Development Corporation (HDC), the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the NYC Department of Social Services (DSS), the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB), and many other City agencies in tackling the affordable housing crisis.

By breaking down government silos and looking at housing holistically, City agencies can better work together to pool the benefits housing can provide to reinforce access to opportunity, promote economic opportunity, improve health and safety, and increase racial equity. *Housing Our Neighbors* includes a strategy to accelerate and increase capacity for new housing supply citywide by encouraging a wider range of unit sizes and housing types, including shared housing.



## GET STUFF BUILT

In December 2022, the Building and Land Use Approval Streamlining Taskforce (BLAST) released the *Get Stuff Built* report, a comprehensive effort to address the City's affordable housing crisis and housing shortage by responsibly reducing procedure to improve the pace of housing production.<sup>17</sup>

By recommending improvements to:

1. The City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR),
  2. The Land Use approval process, and
  3. The Department of Buildings' permitting process, the City seeks to cut red tape, streamline
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- 16. City of New York. 2022. *Housing Our Neighbors: A Blueprint for Housing and Homelessness*. New York: City of New York. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/office-of-the-mayor/2022/Housing-Blueprint.pdf>.
  - 17. City of New York. 2022. *Get Stuff Built: A Report of the Building and Land Use Approval Streamlining Taskforce*. New York: City of New York. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/press-releases/2022/GetStuffBuilt.pdf>.

processes, and remove administrative burdens that will improve the City's ability to deliver affordable housing, support the creation of small businesses, and develop capital projects. While not directly related to *Get Stuff Built*, the *Shared Housing Roadmap* offers several strategies to streamline the process for building shared housing, in the spirit of removing bureaucratic roadblocks.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

The Department of City Planning (DCP) works with residents, organizations, elected officials and government agencies to develop neighborhood plans. A neighborhood plan typically leads to zoning changes and new capital investments, programs and services to address community needs. Zoning changes may allow for the creation of more homes, jobs, and public spaces, while ensuring that new buildings contribute positively to their surroundings<sup>18</sup>. DCP has advanced five neighborhood plans in this administration to increase both housing capacity and neighborhood investments in transportation, open space, and infrastructure: Bronx Metro North Station Area Plan, Atlantic Avenue Mixed-Use Plan, Midtown South Mixed-Use Plan, Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, and OneLIC Neighborhood Plan.

18. Department of City Planning. Neighborhood Planning. New York: City of New York. <https://www.nyc.gov/content/planning/pages/planning/neighborhood-planning>.

## CHAPTER 2

# THE VALUE OF SHARED HOUSING

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As New York City continues to grapple with growing housing demand, rising rents, and high construction costs, shared housing has reemerged as an opportunity to relieve some of these pressures. New York City can leverage shared housing to realize several compounding benefits for New Yorkers' housing choice and access.

### **Address the mismatch between population demographics and housing stock**

As discussed earlier in this report, the number of small households has increased rapidly over the last decade, but the growth in New York City's small-unit-sized stock has failed to keep pace. Shared housing can help fill this gap by creating housing that is purpose-built for single adults, particularly those who may want more privacy and independence than offered by a roommate setup but still seeking community in their housing.

### **Increase tenant protections for the thousands of renters residing in co-living arrangements**

Enabling as-of-right shared housing creates a pathway for co-living arrangements currently operated in the unregulated market to legalize and offer stronger protections to tenants. Operators of legalized shared housing can offer individual leases, which benefit both operators and tenants. Tenants are able to live in shared settings where their housing rights are formally delineated. If each tenant has their own lease—ensuring a separate and independent relationship with the landlord—any actions taken by a landlord (such as eviction for nonpayment) will only impact one tenant, rather than all residents in the shared apartment, as is currently the case in informal shares. Individual leases make it easier for residents to move between units or otherwise take control of their housing situation without impacting their roommates.<sup>19</sup>

19. Citizen Housing and Planning Council. 2019. *Making Shared Housing Work*. New York: Citizen Housing and Planning Council. <https://chpcny.org/publication/making-shared-housing-work/>.

## Facilitate office conversions

As the City considers how to best utilize vacant offices in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, shared housing may provide a pathway to bring life to struggling commercial districts. Shared housing offers the potential to not only create more units within a large office floorplate, but to also develop less costly conversions by clustering bathrooms and kitchens around centrally located, pre-existing plumbing networks.<sup>20,21</sup> Furthermore, in 2024, the State legislature adopted the Affordable Housing from Commercial Conversions Tax Incentive Benefits (467-m), allowing eligible non-residential buildings that convert to residential use to benefit from property tax exemptions. This tax incentive, combined with lower construction costs for shared housing, allows for significant cost savings for non-residential conversions -- without the need for additional City subsidy.

## Reduce market pressure on family-sized units

By increasing the supply of smaller units that better match demographic trends, shared housing can help to relieve pressure on the existing supply of larger units, which are increasingly occupied by unrelated adults. Shared housing can provide an alternative for many New Yorkers who would otherwise split multi-bedroom units with roommates to keep housing costs

affordable. A greater push for affordable housing targeted at single-person and small households can help shift the overall supply of housing to better match the city's demographics.

## Serve households with diverse needs

Many models of shared housing are built to serve specific populations, such as caregivers, older adults, or youth. These models create opportunities for communal caregiving, shared responsibilities, and light-touch services for households who may be isolated or vulnerable in traditional housing, but who do not need the depth of care provided by supportive housing. Examples of these types of communal living models are discussed later in the report.

## Lower construction costs

While maintaining high quality construction, shared housing offers the opportunity for additional value by lowering construction costs in two ways: lowering hard costs and stretching City subsidy dollars further. All other conditions equal, as units decrease in size, they nearly always become less expensive to build at the per-unit level.<sup>22</sup> Shared housing offers not only more efficient unit sizes, but also fewer kitchens and bathrooms, which are some of the most expensive aspects of any residential construction. Shared housing buildings are less expensive at the unit scale, and, in certain scenarios, have lower overall development costs than traditional apartments.

20. Gensler and The Pew Charitable Trusts. 2024. *Flexible Co-Living Housing Feasibility Study*. Washington, DC: Gensler and The Pew Charitable Trusts. <https://www.gensler.com/doc/pew-gensler-flexible-co-living-housing-feasibility-study.pdf>.

21. Developers have cited the costs of conversions as one of the driving reasons why New York City does not convert as many office buildings as other cities in the United States, see: Badger, Emily, Buchanan, Larry. 2023. "Here's How to Solve a 25-Story Rubik's Cube." *New York Times*, March 11, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/11/upshot/office-conversions.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>.

22. Stern, Eric, Yager, Jessica. 2018. *21st Century SROs: Can Small Housing Units Help Meet the Need for Affordable Housing in New York City?* New York: NYU Furman Center.



A rendering of a shared housing building to be built by Ascendant Neighborhood Development and the Ali Forney Center through the ShareNYC pilot program.

The construction cost savings may be complemented by more efficient use of public subsidy. By creating more affordable units for each dollar of subsidy or tax incentive, creating a greater number of deeply affordable units, and/or making the City's subsidy programs more competitive in high-value markets, shared housing can play an important role alongside the City's many existing tools to preserve and develop affordable housing.

### Add a new tool to the affordable housing toolkit

Shared housing can once again play an important role alongside the City's existing tools to preserve and develop affordable housing. Through increased development of smaller units, shared housing can help relieve pressure on the already oversubscribed

supply of larger units, helping create more affordable options for both small and large households. Creating a wider array of quality housing options at every income tier and in a range of neighborhoods can also affirmatively further fair housing by increasing access to housing. For New Yorkers already in or at risk of sliding into precarious living situations, a greater number of accessible housing options can provide safe, legal alternatives that support greater tenant protections, help prevent harassment and allow the City to more accurately assess a community's infrastructure and service needs.

## CHAPTER 3

# OVERVIEW OF SHARED HOUSING

## HISTORY OF SHARED HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY

Historically, shared housing has been a crucial component of New York City's housing market, catering to diverse populations through various forms, such as single room occupancy (SRO) hotels on the Upper West Side and boarding houses in brownstone Brooklyn. These arrangements provided affordable housing with flexible leasing options, accommodating tenants on daily, weekly, or monthly terms.

Dating back to the early 19th century, shared dwellings initially included nuclear families living alongside apprentices or household servants who occupied smaller quarters within the larger home.<sup>23</sup> However, as the industrial economy emerged, new residents seeking economic opportunity streamed into New York City and the demand for

inexpensive housing close to job opportunities surged. Subsequently, large, upper-class residences were subdivided to accommodate lower-income households, marking the genesis of multiple dwellings in New York City.<sup>24</sup>

The city's housing landscape continued to evolve to meet the persistent demand for affordable options. Around the turn of the 20th century, housing choices fell into several categories, each serving different socioeconomic groups and most including some form of shared living. Lodging houses, the most economical, provided shared sleeping areas and communal facilities, while boardinghouses offered meals and private furnished rooms. Rooming houses, typically converted brownstones, lacked cooking facilities and common areas but provided private living spaces. Tenements, a legal classification for all multiple dwellings built before 1929, originally lacked private (or any) sanitary facilities. Over time, the rules governing conditions in tenements evolved to first require shared, and later, private sanitary facilities.

23. Cromley, Elizabeth Collins. 1998. *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments*. New York: Cornell University Press.

24. Ibid.

Apartments and single-family homes offered private sleeping, cooking, and living spaces and generally served the wealthiest New Yorkers.<sup>25</sup>

In the early 20th century, New York City again experienced rapid population growth. With over a million people added to the city's population every decade from 1900 to 1930, the city saw a surge in shared dwellings, including formal models like SRO hotels and informal shares with families doubled up in apartments that were meant for a single family. The shortage of housing led to overcrowding, exacerbating poor living conditions and prompting reform efforts.

Policy responses in the mid-20th century sought to regulate and mitigate the challenges associated with shared housing in New York City. Amid concerns about deteriorating living conditions and overcrowding, policymakers introduced reforms to enforce habitability standards and address the proliferation of shared dwellings.

In 1939, the State legislature passed the "Pack Law," establishing habitability standards for shared dwellings in Section 248 of the New York State Multiple Dwelling Law to improve living conditions and curb the exploitation of tenants in shared housing.<sup>26</sup> However, these reforms faced criticism and limitations. While some advocated for improved housing standards, such as the Pack Law, to alleviate poverty and promote social welfare, others viewed

substandard housing as a moral failure or feared that low-cost housing would attract undesirable populations.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, living conditions in shared housing continued to deteriorate along with an overall decline in the city's housing stock. Overcrowding was rampant, highlighting the low supply of affordable units and high demand from New Yorkers who lived on the margins. Building staff were under-resourced and overwhelmed, leading to unsanitary conditions and poorly maintained and deteriorating buildings.

In response, the 1950s saw new restrictions on shared housing, including a prohibition on the construction of new rooming units and restrictions on occupancy, particularly for families with children.<sup>27,28</sup> These measures were intended to address overcrowding and mitigate the strain on housing resources. However, they inadvertently led to a further decline in housing quality, and paradoxically, increased vacancy rates as landlords sought evictions to comply with these burdensome regulations.

By the 1960s, the City embarked on active efforts to re-convert certain classes of SROs back into tenements. Local Law 56 of 1967 mandated the re-conversion of so-called "Section 248 SROs" within ten years, reflecting a desire to reshape the city's housing landscape towards family-sized units.

In the 1970s and 1980s, alarmed at the deterioration of the SRO stock and a rise in street homelessness,

25. Blackburn, Anthony. 1996. *Single Room Living in New York City: A Report*. pg. 5. New York: Department of Housing Preservation and Development; Plunz, Richard. 1990. *A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Types and Social Change in the American Metropolis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

26. Blackburn, Anthony. 1996. *Single Room Living in New York City: A Report*. pg. 6. New York: Department of Housing Preservation and Development. Notably, while these rules were designed for mostly for converted tenements, they would apply to any new single room occupancy building constructed today as well.

27. Housing Maintenance Code §27-2077.

28. Blackburn, Anthony. 1996. *Single Room Living in New York City: A Report*. pg. 7. New York: Department of Housing Preservation and Development; See also, HMC §27-2077 "Conversions to rooming units prohibited," and HMC §27-2078 "Rental of rooms to boarders."

the State and local legislatures introduced interventions to preserve these units. Initiatives like the J-51 Program and the Certificate of No Harassment aimed to protect existing SROs from conversion or demolition.<sup>29,30</sup> However, loopholes and legal challenges hindered their effectiveness, contributing to the continued loss of affordable housing options. By the late 1980s, the city faced a crisis as the bulk of its SRO stock had dwindled significantly.

For the shared housing that remains today, regulations governing standards are codified in the Housing Maintenance Code and the Multiple Dwelling Law. Many provisions established in the mid-20th century are still in effect, reflecting the enduring complexities of managing shared housing in New York City. Due to the limitations imposed by these regulatory frameworks, the city's housing stock remains inflexible, with limited alternatives to traditional family apartments on year-long leases. Meanwhile, existing shared housing continues to grapple with issues of quality and accessibility.

29. Burke, Johnathan and Sullivan, Brian. 2013. "Single-Room Occupancy Housing in New York City: The Origins and Dimensions of a Crisis." *City University of New York Law Review*, Vol. 17, Iss. 1: 123, citing Schanberg, Sydney H. July 20, 1982, "New York; Arson and J-51," *New York Times*, which speaks to an unreleased report by the City's Arson Task Force that found a clear link between J-51 benefits and "deliberate arson." Housing Commissioner Anthony Gliedman in turn said that "the connection 'obviously concerns us tremendously,' but [said] he wants to wait for the final findings, which won't be ready for a year, 'to see if the facts are supportable. We want to be very sure.'"

30. Blackburn, Anthony. 1996. *Single Room Living in New York City: A Report*. pg. 8. New York: Department of Housing Preservation and Development; Burke, Johnathan and Sullivan, Brian. 2013. "Single-Room Occupancy Housing in New York City: The Origins and Dimensions of a Crisis." *City University of New York Law Review*, Vol. 17, Iss. 1: 128; See also, Vorsanger, Debra S. 1984. "New York City's J-51 Program: Controversy and Revision." *Fordham Urban Law Journal* Vol. 12, Iss. 1:106, footnote 23. This modification excludes conversions of single-room occupancy from receiving J-51 benefits if those units weren't also government subsidized.

## SHARED HOUSING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Shared housing is not unique to New York City. While single room occupancy housing has fallen out of favor across the country in the last seventy years, a few cities have begun to explore opportunities to bring it back. Understanding how other cities and municipalities across the country are approaching shared housing informs our best practices, provides inspiration for future avenues to explore, and highlights potential roadblocks and challenges that HPD could face as the agency continues to explore how to implement shared housing in New York City.

### HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Hennepin County (home to Minneapolis) commissioned a task force in late 2020 to research and develop strategies to support single room occupancy housing. The task force released a report in September 2021 that defined modern SRO housing and offered recommendations on project siting, zoning and code changes, construction and conversions, operations and management, and financing.<sup>31</sup>

As part of its implementation plan, Hennepin County used government funds and capital to purchase hotels and motels that were underutilized during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hennepin County lightly refurbished these buildings, which were naturally set up for single room occupancy. In partnership with

31. Hennepin County, Minnesota. 2021. *Single Room Occupancy Task Force Report*. Minnesota: Hennepin County. <https://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepin-us/your-government/research-data/documents/sro-task-force-report.pdf>.

affordable housing developers, the County created no-frills housing opportunities for individuals at 30% to 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI). As of late 2024, Hennepin County has fully leased two of the former hotel properties that it acquired; other properties are still in development.

HPD has explored converting underutilized hotels and motels to long-term housing but found little interest among developers because conversion is cost-prohibitive in New York City. The agency should re-examine the feasibility of hotel conversions in the context of shared housing.

### PORTLAND, OREGON

Portland is using both new and existing SROs to house those with the lowest incomes and those in need of supportive services. As of 2019, the City of Portland has invested over \$20 million in SRO housing projects.<sup>32</sup> In some cases, Portland uses SRO housing to serve as the last line of defense for those who would normally find their way to shelters and, in others, to stabilize people as they save up for their next housing opportunity. To save on construction costs and ensure affordability for residents, Portland has developed SRO-style housing using prefabricated construction methods.<sup>33</sup>

Given the enormity and acuteness of New York City's housing crisis, the City should leave no stone

32. Harbarger, Molly and Elliot Njus. 2019. "Portland banking on low-rent SRO hotels to ease housing policies." Oregon: *The Oregonian*, April 27, 2019. <https://www.oregonlive.com/business/2019/04/officials-look-to-sro-hotels-as-model-for-low-income-housing.html>.

33. Libby, Brian. 2020. "A Colorful Portland Prototype Reinvents the SRO." Oregon: *Metropolis*, September 16, 2020. <https://metropolismag.com/projects/argyle-gardens-portland-prototype-sro/>.

unturned in exploring opportunities to move New Yorkers into stable housing. Shared housing presents an opportunity to provide community-oriented living for those who may not be in need of the depth of services provided by supportive housing. Exploring prefab and modular construction models is also critical to ensuring that housing can be built quickly and cost-effectively.

## SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

In January 2018, Salt Lake City Housing and Neighborhood Development released *Growing SLC: A Five-Year Housing Plan*, a set of strategies and actions to increase housing options and promote affordability.<sup>34</sup> This plan promoted shared housing by redefining SROs as “shared housing” and proposing an expansion of where it can be built. In October 2022, the Salt Lake City Council voted to expand where shared housing is allowed to areas with strong transit access, commercial corridors, and downtown districts to take advantage of office conversions. (New York City passed similar changes through *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*.) Facilitated by the changes put forth in the Growing SLC plan, a 300-unit shared housing project in Salt Lake City’s Hardware District opened in July 2024.<sup>35</sup>

## BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

In 2018, the Boston Planning and Development Agency adopted the Compact Living Pilot, which sought to develop well-designed micro-units in the transit-rich areas of Boston.<sup>36</sup> As part of the design guidelines of this pilot, management companies built, operated, and programmed shared resident amenity spaces, such as large communal kitchens, interior event space, and exterior playgrounds. Two years into the pilot, 15 compact living projects in nine neighborhoods were approved and are under construction. As the pilot ended at the end of 2022, the Mayor’s Housing Innovation Lab, looking to unlock an additional tool in addressing Boston’s affordable housing need, shifted focus toward exploring co-living housing opportunities operated by nonprofits as an extension of the Compact Living pilot.

34. Salt Lake City Housing and Neighborhood Development. 2018. *Growing SLC: A Five-Year Housing Plan, 2018-2022*. Utah: City of Salt Lake. [https://www.slcdocs.com/hand/Growing\\_SLC\\_Final\\_No\\_Attachments.pdf](https://www.slcdocs.com/hand/Growing_SLC_Final_No_Attachments.pdf).

35. Garrott, Luke. 2024. “Hardware District co-living, dorm-style project nearing completion.” Utah: Building Salt Lake, February 12, 2024. <https://buildingsaltlake.com/hardware-district-co-living-dorm-style-project-nearing-completion/>.

36. City of Boston. 2023. *Compact Living Pilot*. Massachusetts: City of Boston. <https://www.boston.gov/departments/new-urban-mechanics/compact-living-pilot>.

# TYPOLOGIES OF SHARED HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY

Shared housing in New York City consists of four typologies that differ in design, occupancy, and operations; legal status; and how the tenants are related to building management and to one another:

- Shared Housing Rooming Units
- Co-Living
- Informal Shares
- Traditional SROs

## SHARED HOUSING ROOMING UNITS

### WHAT IS IT?

Shared housing rooming units comprise buildings that are purpose-built to serve as shared housing. Rooming units can be arranged dorm-style with shared facilities for the entire floor or building, or suite-style, where residents in a smaller cluster of rooming units share a kitchen and bathroom(s) within the suite. Suite-style units bear a resemblance to traditional apartments, but are distinct in their legal structure, as tenants in each rooming unit have their own lease and individual relationship with their landlord. Other projects may be hybrid models, with variations in how shared spaces are arranged. Unlike other typologies of shared housing, shared housing rooming units are built to meet specific needs of shared housing, rather than retrofitted and adapted. This allows for flexibility in how buildings are designed, maximizing the utility of shared and private spaces for tenants. See Chapter 4 for example floor plans.

### HOW IS IT BUILT?

Currently, the construction of new rooming units is only allowed in certain circumstances and with HPD approval, as outlined by Section 27-2077 of the New York City Housing Maintenance Code (HMC). In order to receive approval to build new rooming units, a housing project must either be:

1. Owned and operated by a hospital for occupancy by its staff; or
2. Owned and operated by an educational, religious, or charitable institution as a residence for older adults, children, or students; or,
3. Approved by the commissioner of HPD and developed with substantial government subsidy; or
4. Approved by the commissioner of HPD and owned, operated, or used by a federal, State, or local government agency or non-profit organization.<sup>37</sup>

The various laws that regulate housing in New York each provide some requirements for the design, occupancy, and operation of rooming units. While HPD is currently advancing a shared housing rooming unit project through its Supportive Housing Loan Program (SHLP) as part of the ShareNYC pilot program, the agency would like to explore the applicability of shared housing to other HPD financing programs.

37. Housing Maintenance Code §27-2077.

## CO-LIVING

### WHAT IS IT?

In co-living, companies known as *co-living operators* rent apartments or entire buildings on the private market and sublease individual rooms within the existing apartments to tenants. Residents are often given the impression that they have full leases with all the rights and protections those entail, but they instead sign subleases or occupancy agreements, which offer fewer tenant protections.

In NYC, most co-living properties are existing residential buildings that operators have re-purposed for co-living without seeking formal approvals. As such, buildings are laid out like conventional apartment buildings, with rooming units organized in suites. Tenants either rent out a single bedroom, or a bedroom with an ensuite bathroom. In some cases, co-living operators provide locks on bedroom doors, which is prohibited under the Housing Maintenance Code and Building Code.

In recent years, co-living operators have also constructed a few shared housing projects. These buildings feature larger common spaces (e.g., large kitchens, lounges, activity rooms) and efficient storage mechanisms (e.g., murphy beds, folding kitchen tables). While these buildings may serve as case studies to show the opportunity for shared housing at-scale in the private market, they fail to meet the requirements to obtain rooming unit approval from HPD under HMC §27-2077.

### WHERE IS IT?<sup>38</sup>

HPD surveyed the four co-living operators with the most active listings within New York City in June and July 2025: Cohabs, Outpost Club, Roomrs, and SharedEasy. Collectively these operators manage at least 125 buildings across the city, with most units concentrated in North and Central Brooklyn (Crown Heights, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Williamsburg, Bushwick, and Greenpoint) and Northern Manhattan (Central and East Harlem).<sup>39</sup>

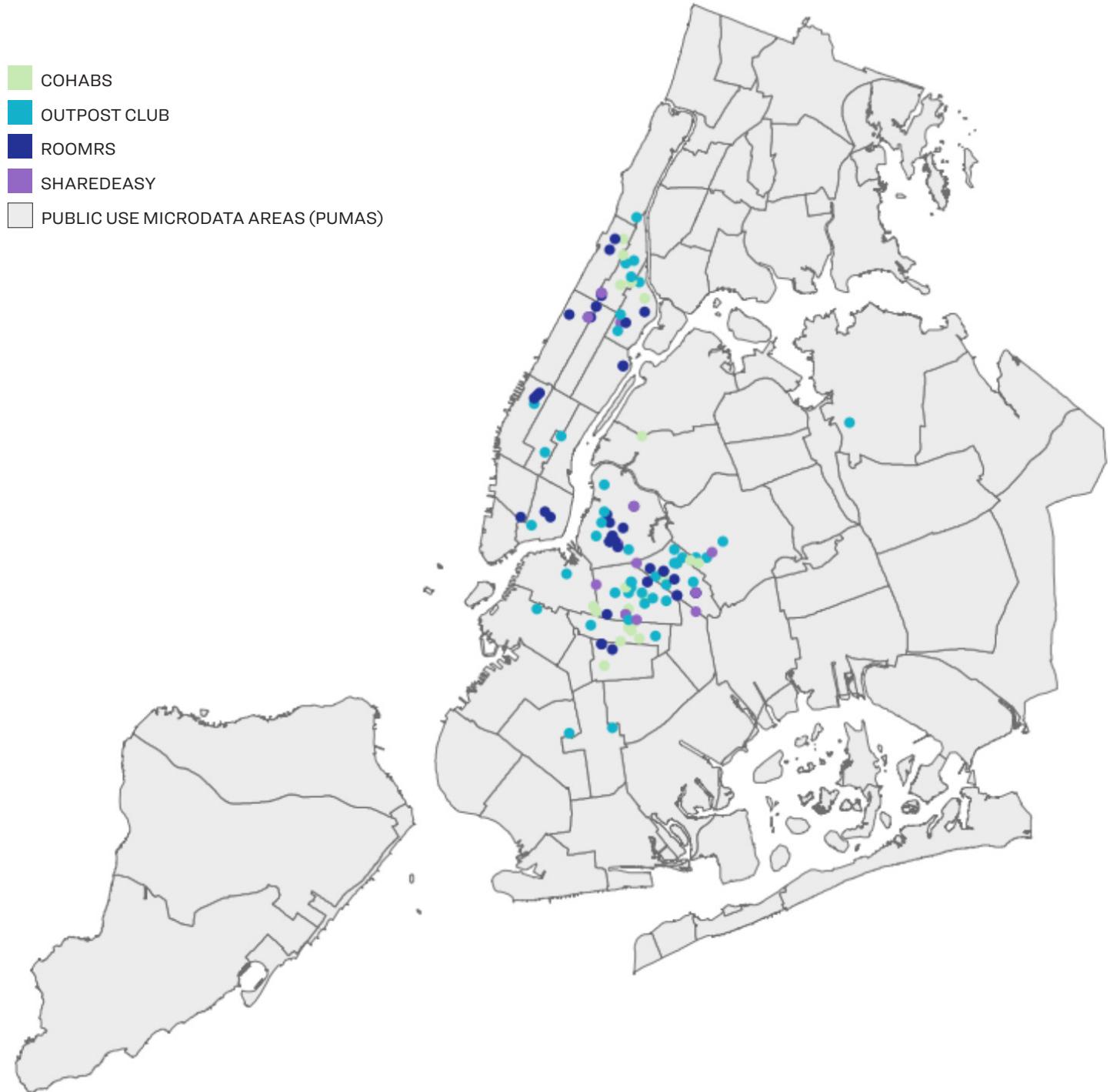
HPD conducted interviews with current and former staff of these co-living operators to better understand their location choices. Operators consider this housing model a good fit for young professionals, and thus launched their model in neighborhoods with high demand among young professionals that can also support lower rents than in the Manhattan core. Demand for these units has remained robust even throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

38. See Appendix B for details on the data sources and methodology employed in this section.

39. These operators may manage additional buildings in New York City. This dataset only includes buildings that had active listings at the time of data collection in June and July 2025.

**FIGURE 6: Buildings Managed by Select Co-Living Operators, 2025**

As of 2025, the top four co-living operators managed 125 buildings, clustered in North and Central Brooklyn and Northern Manhattan.



Source: Company websites; NYC Open Data, "2020 Public Use Microdata Areas", [https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/2020-Public-Use-Microdata-Areas-PUMAs-/pikk-p9nv/about\\_data](https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/2020-Public-Use-Microdata-Areas-PUMAs-/pikk-p9nv/about_data).

## RENTS IN PRIVATE CO-LIVING

Across the top four co-living operators, rents ranged from \$1,547 to \$2,488, which is affordable to New Yorkers earning between 89% and 101% of HUD Income Limits (HUDILs) in 2025.<sup>40</sup> These rents include fees and utilities, including some fees that are specific to shared housing, such as those for cleaning in shared areas basic kitchen and bathroom supplies.

**FIGURE 7: Rents for the Top Four Co-living Operators, 2025**

COMPANY NAME	# OF BUILDINGS	AVG. STARTING RENT <sup>a,b,c</sup>	AVG. MAX RENT <sup>a,b,c</sup>	APPROX. 2025 "AMI" HUDIL EQUIVALENCY FOR RENT RANGE <sup>d</sup>
Cohabs	21	\$1,882	\$2,119	89% - 100%
Outpost Club	43	\$1,714	\$2,415	105% - 117%
Roomrs	44	\$2,227	\$2,488	73% - 83%
SharedEasy	17	\$1,547	\$1,772	89% - 108%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>\$1,900</b>	<b>\$2,304</b>	<b>89% - 101%</b>

- a. Only includes rents for single rooms with shared facilities (some operators also offer studios and/or shared rooms in the same buildings).
- b. Some buildings charge separate monthly fees for utilities, cleaning services, etc. Where applicable, rents are inclusive of monthly fees.
- c. Rents can vary within a building. These numbers are an average of the lowest and highest rents in each building, respectively.
- d. Affordable rents for co-living units are calculated as 75% of the affordable rents for studios.

40. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines Income Limits for affordable housing that determine income eligibility and rent prices for subsidized affordable housing projects. HUD Income Limits (or HUDILs) vary across the country and change every year. In New York City and in other high-cost metropolitan areas, HUD develops income limits based on Fair Market Rent. In other words, HUDIL is tied to the cost of housing in New York City, rather than median incomes. HUD Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R), *Income Limits*, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html>.

## WHAT CO-LIVING SHOWS US ABOUT THE NEED FOR SHARED HOUSING<sup>41</sup>

The growing unregulated market of co-living operators shows that there is demand for this type of housing in New York City, even at higher prices. This housing typology thrives in many neighborhoods, with operators interested in growing further in the NYC market.<sup>42</sup> In conversations with HPD, co-living operators noted that the inability to operate fully on the legal, open market restricts their ability to grow, and that they are interested in the City exploring pathways to legalize this housing type more broadly.

Tenants also have an interest in the regulation of this housing type. Recent reports have uncovered poor building conditions in some existing co-living buildings, and the uncertainty of the legality of this housing type has left housing inspectors unsure of how to best enforce in these buildings.<sup>43</sup> Creating a pathway for construction of purpose-built shared housing would allow existing operators to grow their businesses in New York City, while providing the City with better tools to regulate existing co-living buildings and to hold operators accountable when housing conditions do deteriorate. This expanded toolbox would allow HPD and tenants to ensure that shared housing is safe and secure.

41. HPD staff met with current staff of Outpost Club, and former staff of Quarters and Common in September and November 2023 to better understand the co-living market. These discussions inform the findings in this section.
42. "Minutes of HPD & Outpost Club Discussion: Exploring Shared Housing in NYC." NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, November 1, 2023.
43. Rabiyah, Sam and Suhail Bhat, "‘Coliving’ Landlords Turned \$800 Rent-Stabilized Apartments into \$7,000 Suites. Now Tenants are Pushing Back", The City, August 15, 2023, <https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/08/15/coliving-outpost-bedstuy-ridgewood-bushwick/>.

## INFORMAL SHARES

In informal shares, one leaseholder lives with additional roommates that have either written or verbal subleases and share expenses, including rent and utilities. In these situations, individuals pool their incomes to rent a larger apartment with better access to amenities than they could otherwise afford on their own. Informal shares are common across New York City—typical roommate situations—and arise for a variety of reasons: the single person housing stock in New York City is extremely limited, the lack of affordable housing across the board requires households to double up to afford the housing that is available, and small households may prefer to live together for companionship or other reasons.

While extremely common, informal shares can have negative externalities on the housing market. When individuals pool their incomes to informally share an apartment, they outcompete single-income families for larger units, thereby limiting those families' housing opportunities. Additionally, some informal shares may lead to dangerous conditions, such as overcrowding or landlords or tenants putting up flex walls that block egress, light, and air.

doors and shared bathrooms and/or kitchens in the common areas.

Rooming unit buildings fall into two categories: regulated—those buildings with legal classifications pursuant to the Certificate of Occupancy or I-Card<sup>45</sup>—and informal—those that may have been converted from existing residential or commercial buildings without permits. Reliable data are not available to estimate the universe of either regulated or informal rooming unit buildings in New York City, though through enforcement efforts, HPD has identified specific rooming unit buildings.

HPD's Office of Enforcement and Neighborhood Services is charged with enforcing housing standards in both legal and informal rooming unit buildings to ensure housing quality and tenant protections are maintained. HPD's Office of Development may also provide rehabilitation loans to improve the physical conditions, operations and maintenance, and finances of existing rooming unit buildings. While outside the scope of this initiative, more research and analysis are needed to understand the existing rooming unit stock in New York City and how to best support the tenants living in these buildings.

## TRADITIONAL SROS

While New York City largely limited the creation of new single room occupancy housing in the mid-20th century, many rooming unit buildings still exist in New York City. This typology includes a variety of buildings, including “Section 248” SRO buildings, rooming houses, boardinghouses, and SRO hotels. These existing, privately owned rooming units were largely built prior to 1955. Tenants living in rooming unit buildings reside in one or more individual units pursuant to written or oral leases, with locks on their

45. I-Cards, or improvement cards, were used by HPD in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to indicate what structural improvements buildings required in order to meet the standards of the Tenement House Act of 1901. This act mandated modern standards of habitability and sanitation while also providing a clear method of enforcement through the newly established Tenement House Department.

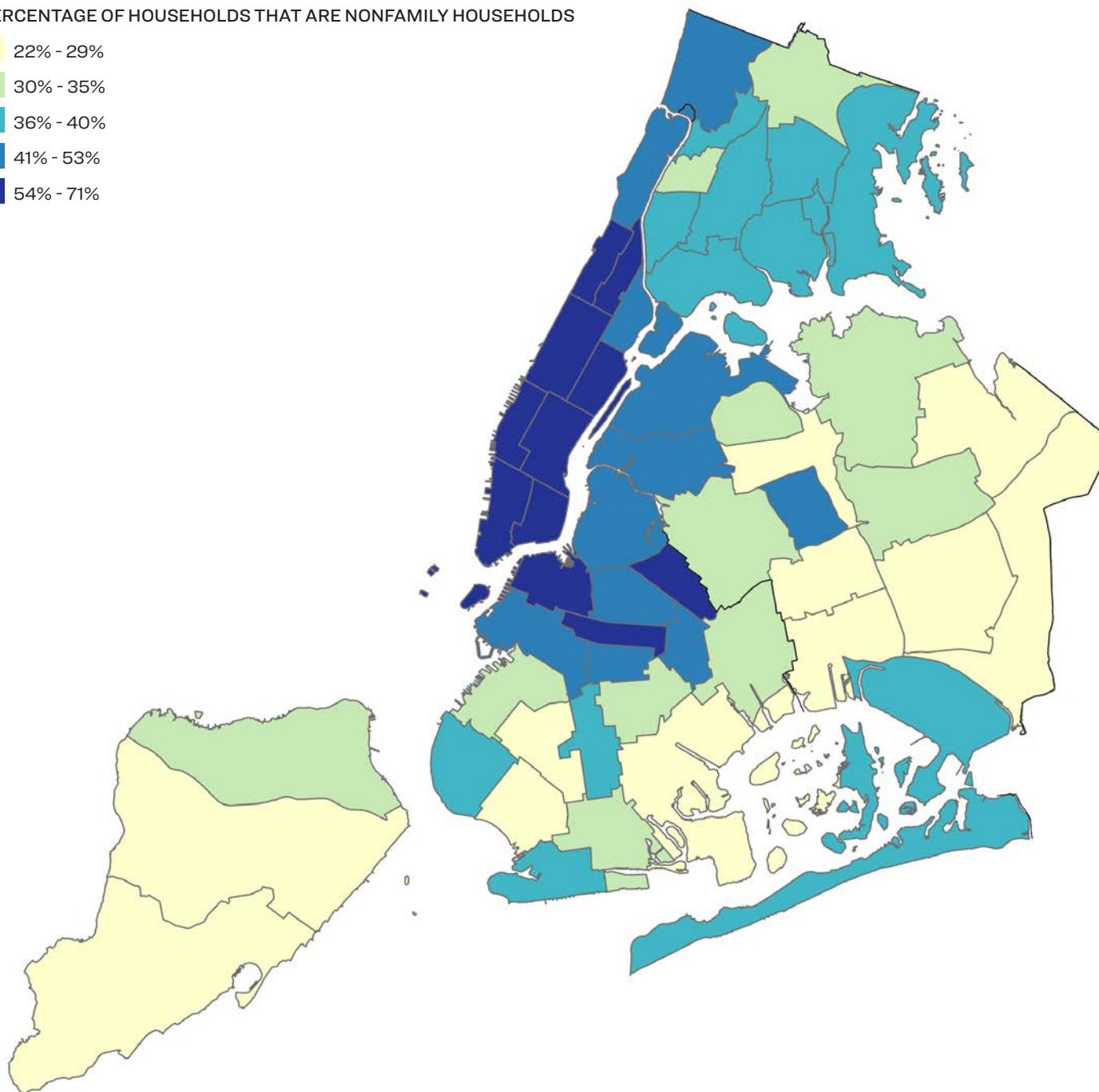
Citizen Housing and Planning Council. *I-Card Mystery Solved*. New York: Citizen Housing and Planning Council. <https://chpcny.org/i-card-mystery-solved/>.

**FIGURE 8: Distribution of Nonfamily Households by PUMA, 2023**

New Yorkers live with roommates in every neighborhood. It is especially common to live with roommates in Manhattan, North and Central Brooklyn, and Western Queens.<sup>44</sup>

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS THAT ARE NONFAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

- 22% - 29%
- 30% - 35%
- 36% - 40%
- 41% - 53%
- 54% - 71%



44. U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2018, 2023, Table S1101: Households and Families," United States Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1101?q=S1101%20Households%20and%20%20Families&tid=ACSST1Y2022.S1101>.

# WHO SHARED HOUSING CAN SERVE

Shared housing has historically served a wide range of New Yorkers, providing small households with no-frills places to stay in both the short- and long-term. Through the *Shared Housing Roadmap* strategies, HPD is reintroducing this tool to our housing toolbox to better serve many types of New Yorkers with varying housing needs.

## POPULATIONS IN TRANSITION

When researching and identifying the populations most likely to benefit from shared housing, a key theme emerged — many of the populations most likely to benefit from shared housing are households in transition, looking for short-term (ranging from one to several months) or long-term housing as they navigate from one life stage to another. The flexibility of shared housing gives people a backstop as they navigate transitory phases in life before later moving into different housing typologies as they enter new phases with new housing needs. The real-world examples below showcase a slice of the diversity of people who could benefit from shared housing, with many more examples to be found across New York City and the country.

### Young Adults Living Alone for the First Time

Shared housing provides an opportunity for young adults to learn independent living, sharing costs and responsibilities with their fellow residents while maintaining a support system through communal living arrangements. The Ascendant/Ali Forney Center ShareNYC project ensures that formerly homeless young adults learn life skills to move into independent living, while Neighborhood Coalition

for Shelter's Scholars Program provides unhoused CUNY students with the stable housing and educational supports so they can see themselves through to graduation.<sup>46</sup>

### Caregivers

Children, older adults, adults with disabilities, or other populations with special needs and their caregivers living together with others creates opportunities for flexible living arrangements, shared caregiving responsibilities, and right-sized levels of independence, relieving the burden on individual caregivers. The New York Foundling's Mother and Child Program provides shared housing for new mothers, who are themselves young adults in foster care, where they can find employment and learn how to care for their children.<sup>47</sup>

### Older Adults

As older New Yorkers are less able to manage the upkeep of their own homes, shared housing can enable semi-independent living and aging in place. The communal orientation of most shared housing also creates opportunities for combating isolation that is on the rise among older adults. Co-living communities oriented toward older adults, such as Phoenix Commons in Oakland, California, lead with the opportunity for community to be a major benefit of their model over traditional housing.<sup>48</sup>

46. Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter, 2024. *NCS Scholars*. New York. <https://www.ncsinc.org/scholars>.

47. The New York Foundling, 2024. *Mother and Child Program*. New York. <https://www.nyfoundling.org/what-we-do/our-programs/child-welfare/mother-and-child-program/>.

48. Phoenix Commons. 2024. *Phoenix Commons*. Oakland, California. <https://phoenixcommons.com/>.

## FAIR HOUSING IN SHARED HOUSING

Fair housing laws prohibit housing discrimination against members of protected classes, which include race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, familial status, and lawful source of income, and requires localities that receive government funding to affirmatively further fair housing by proactively taking meaningful steps to promote housing choice and eliminate disparities in opportunity. Every five years, the City of New York releases a comprehensive fair housing report, *Where We Live NYC*, that analyzes barriers to fair housing and proposes strategies to expand housing opportunity and choice. Shared housing helps to advance the City's fair housing goals: the model expands housing choice for single-person households by offering a new, communally oriented model, and increases housing opportunity by not only creating a new housing type to serve small households, but reducing competition for larger apartments that can serve larger households.

However, shared housing legislation and policy must be crafted carefully so as not to impose additional access barriers that disproportionately affect members of protected classes and could be interpreted as discriminatory. This is particularly critical when crafting rules around occupancy, which inform who can live in shared housing. For example, rules prohibiting children from living in rooming units could constitute discrimination against families with children. Policies and procedures that match tenants in suite-style shared housing could inadvertently discriminate against people of color, people with disabilities, or people who fall in other protected classes. The strategies put forth in the *Shared Housing Roadmap* were crafted with fair housing requirements in mind, but additional guidance will need to be provided to developers and operators to maintain compliance with fair housing law.

### New Arrivals

As it has since its inception, shared housing provides a short-term landing place as new arrivals find their footing and search for a more permanent home in the city. Residences, such as International House in Harlem, provide a first home for students and young professionals from abroad who do not have credit scores or other resources necessary to access housing on the private market, and offer opportunities for new arrivals to settle into a purpose-built community.<sup>49</sup>

This model can benefit many types of people through increased housing flexibility. While HPD is aware of the stigma and history of shared housing, the proposed legislation that accompanies the *Shared Housing Roadmap* sets appropriate standards to ensure safe, secure, and quality housing combined with robust management, design, and tenant protections.

49. International House. 2024. *International House*. New York. <https://www.ihouse-nyc.org/>.

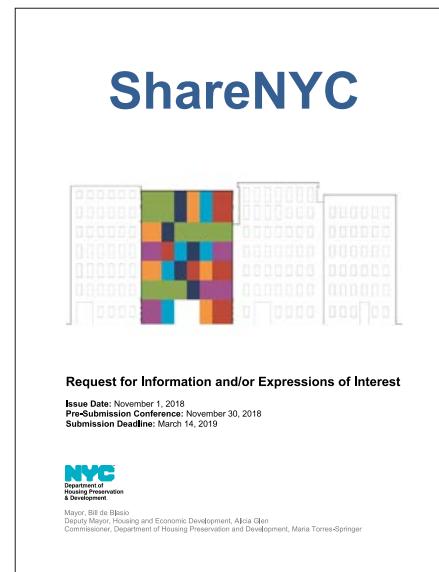
## CHAPTER 4

# SHARENYC PILOT PROJECTS

## OVERVIEW

In November 2018, HPD released the ShareNYC Request for Information (RFI) and Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI). The RFI sought input from a wide range of organizations that have operated or studied shared housing to help shape the standards for this type of housing. The RFEI sought proposals for the design, construction, and management of shared housing by qualified development teams on privately owned sites throughout the city.

HPD received six responses to the RFI from private and nonprofit shared housing operators, researchers, and advocacy organizations. Many of the lessons learned from the RFI respondents inform the strategies developed through this Roadmap. In October 2019, HPD selected three shared housing proposals from the RFEI to participate in the ShareNYC pilot program. Both design and management were key evaluation criteria for the ShareNYC projects. The RFEI respondents included detailed management and operations plans that were evaluated on how well the plans address potential tenant concerns or issues and ensure effective, long-term operation of the building,



HPD issued the ShareNYC RFI/RFEI in 2018.

including successful lease-up and re-rental. Proposals were also evaluated on how well the design facilitates high-quality living spaces, particularly in smaller units, and how well the size, distribution, and design of building-wide amenities enhance overall housing quality and encourage integration of all tenants within the building.

## RFEI PROJECTS

The Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation project rehabilitates an existing legal single room occupancy building in East New York, Brooklyn. After rehabilitation, the project will include 11 rooming units, arranged dorm-style. All units will be affordable to extremely low- to low-income households. Rents will include all utilities and furniture. Improvements will redesign the building's layout to include thoughtful space planning, spacious common areas, and a shared rear yard. This project has completed financial closing and is under construction.

The Ascendant Neighborhood Development and Ali Forney Center project proposes a new 10-story shared housing development with 32 rooming units in East Harlem, Manhattan. The rooming units will be arranged into duplex shared units. All housing will be affordable to low-income households and filled with referrals from the shelter system. The building will be fully furnished, and rent will include all utilities. The units are designed to encourage a sense of community and create a home-like environment. Residents will also have access to onsite social services operated by the Ali Forney Center, including those oriented to formerly homeless LGBTQ+ young adults. This project completed the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) in Fall 2023 and is advancing towards financial closing.

The third winning proposal faced significant code and policy barriers. While those challenges informed the scope of the *Roadmap* and the ensuing strategies, the project did not advance beyond the predevelopment stage.

### ShareNYC RFEI Projects



#### CYPRESS HILLS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

**Neighborhood:** East New York, Brooklyn

**Rooming Units:** 11

**Type and Affordability:** Preservation of existing SRO building; 100% affordable for extremely low- to low-income households

**Financing sources:** HPD preservation loan



#### ASCENDANT NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND ALI FORNEY CENTER

**Neighborhood:** East Harlem, Manhattan

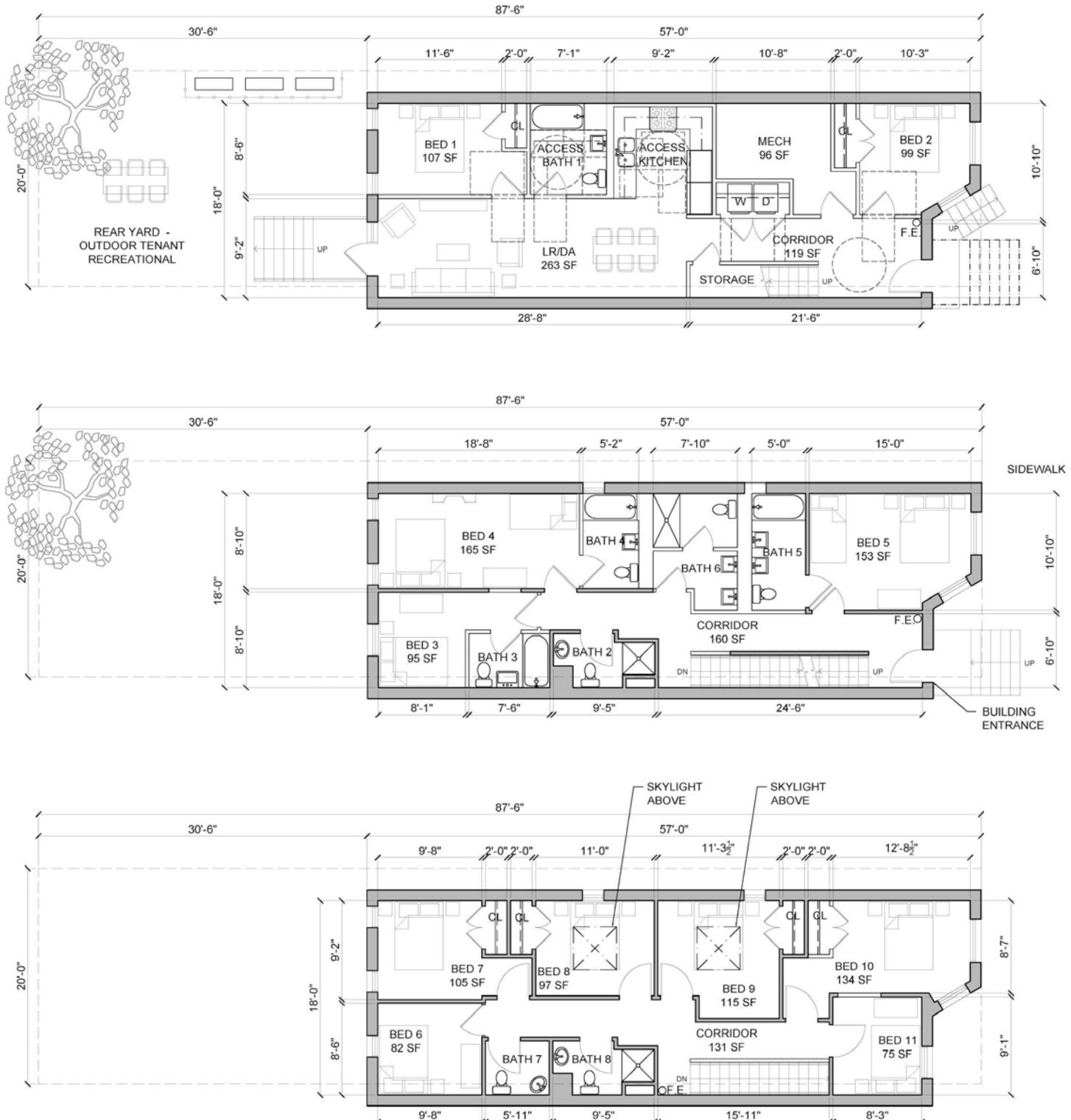
**Rooming Units:** 32

**Type and affordability:** 100% supportive with units filled by referrals; oriented to formerly homeless LGBTQ+ young adults

**Financing sources:** Supportive Housing Loan Program, 15/15 rental assistance

## FIGURE 9: Dorm-Style Units—Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation

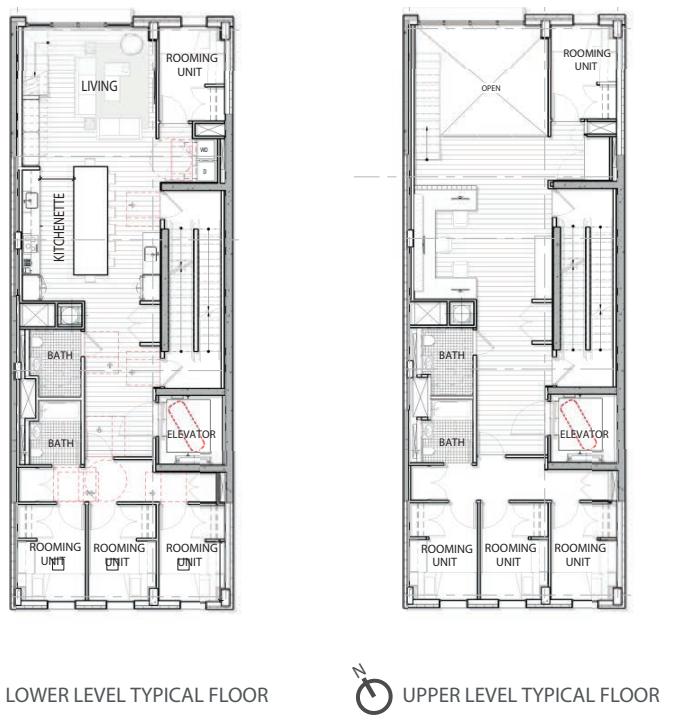
Rooming units in the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation ShareNYC project are arranged dorm-style. Some bedrooms feature their own ensuite bathrooms, while others share bathroom facilities. All residents can access common areas including the shared kitchen, living room, and rear yard.



**FIGURE 10: Suite-Style Units—Ascendant Neighborhood Development/Ali Forney Center**



Rooming units in the Ascendant Neighborhood Development/Ali Forney Center ShareNYC project are arranged in suites in a duplex layout. Each two-level suite contains eight rooming units that are individually leased. All residents have access to the bathrooms, living rooms, kitchen and study areas across their two-level suite. This layout is more similar to traditional apartments



## CHAPTER 5

# BARRIERS TO CREATING SHARED HOUSING ROOMING UNITS

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The combination of the laws, regulations, and code requirements passed in the mid-20th century to limit new rooming units pose barriers to creating new shared housing today. Understanding these barriers is critical to ensuring that changes to allow new shared housing are responsible and set the highest standards for design, operations, and tenant protections.

Challenges fall into six topic areas:

1. Design and Occupancy
2. Building Operations and Management
3. Tenant Protections and Safety
4. Financing Affordable Shared Housing
5. Rental Assistance Applicability
6. Zoning

## DESIGN AND OCCUPANCY

Shared housing has not been built in New York City for decades, and the existing regulations governing design and occupancy are either outdated or unclear. To address this, HPD is working to modernize standards to ensure new shared housing meets current design practices, management styles, and living needs. This includes addressing key questions about who can live in shared housing, who can build it, and the design standards that it should follow.

Two main challenges affect who can live in shared housing. First, the definition of “family,” varies across City codes, dictating different limits on the number



A rendering of the yard proposed for the Ascendant Neighborhood Development/Ali Forney Center ShareNYC project.

of unrelated people who can live together. This creates confusion for developers and restrictions on the design of shared housing, such as prohibiting locks on bedroom doors. Second, the Housing Maintenance Code (HMC) prohibits children between the ages of one and 16 from living in rooming units, effectively displacing shared housing families when they grow. Some policymakers and advocates have raised legitimate concerns about the safety and security of children in shared housing. However, these concerns must be balanced with the City's obligation to uphold local, State, and federal fair housing law, which prohibits housing discrimination based on membership in a protected class, including family status.

The HMC restricts the construction of new rooming

units to specific types of projects, such as those owned by nonprofits or subsidized by government funding. Co-living operators, in particular, are operating outside the legal bounds of HMC §27-2077,<sup>50</sup> leaving tenants in these buildings with fewer tenant protections. A pathway to legalizing existing co-living buildings is necessary to bring these

50. HMC §27-2077 sets the conditions that a shared housing building must meet to receive rooming unit approval and operate legally as shared housing in NYC:
  - Owned and operated by a hospital for occupancy by its staff; or
  - Owned and operated by an educational, religious, or charitable institution as a residence for older adults, children, or students; or
  - Approved by the commissioner of HPD and developed with substantial government subsidy; or
  - Approved by the commissioner of HPD and owned, operated, or used by a federal, State, or local government agency or non-profit organization.

buildings into compliance and provide protections for tenants, while ensuring that they are not displaced.

The current design standards are vague, inconsistent, and difficult-to-interpret, especially regarding unit size and space requirements. For example, the minimum square footage requirements for rooming units differ across the HMC, Building Code (BC), and Multiple Dwelling Law (MDL). These conflicting rules were particularly challenging for the ShareNYC projects, with HPD architects and DOB plan examiners coming to conflicting conclusions. The design requirements for bathrooms — one bathroom per six residents—are higher than industry best practices and resident preferences, creating potential for conflict over cleanliness and equitable access. Furthermore, the relevant codes include no specific guidelines for accessibility, kitchens, or communal spaces, which makes it difficult to ensure that shared housing is well-designed and responsive to tenants' needs. Lastly, current rules limit the use of small cooking appliances in rooming units in response to fire risk, though newer technology has made these appliances safer and permitting them significantly improves residents' quality of life.

Operations and management structure-related challenges focus on barriers to effective property management and staffing. Shared housing buildings typically have two types of building staff—tenant relation specialists to handle tenant concerns and janitorial staff to handle maintenance issues. Current regulations require all buildings used for single room occupancy to have a live-in “super.” This requirement creates staffing inefficiencies and additional costs that many operators find burdensome. Today, most building operators employ shift-based staffing for maintenance and security, ensuring better coverage. Staff turnover is another challenge, as the hands-on nature of shared housing management can lead to burnout among tenant relations staff, which can negatively impact both residents and building operations. Poorly managed resident relations may lead to unhealthy power dynamics, with some residents dominating shared spaces and creating conflict within the building.

Managing common spaces is another area of concern. Effectively run buildings will put into place systems to head off foreseeable challenges before they occur and clear policies for managing issues when they do arise. Cleanliness is the most common issue in shared housing, particularly in shared kitchens and bathrooms, which can affect both health and harmony among residents. Property managers must strike a balance between keeping these areas clean while also encouraging residents to take responsibility for maintaining shared spaces. The provision of household supplies, such as soap and toilet paper, is common in shared housing. While it can mitigate potential conflict, residents may be dissatisfied if they feel the supplies are inadequate. Conflict can also arise when just a few residents dominate common spaces, invading others' sense of privacy and access to shared amenities.

## BUILDING OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Shared housing presents unique property management challenges; its communal nature requires a more hands-on approach than traditional apartment buildings. Key challenges fall into two categories: operations and management structures and common space management.

*Rooming units in the Ascendant Neighborhood Development/Ali Forney Center ShareNYC project are arranged in a duplex layout, allowing for large common spaces.*



## TENANT PROTECTIONS AND SAFETY

The stability and security of tenants in shared housing are critical for the long-term success of the model. However, the current tenant protection system is uneven; tenants in co-living and informal shares do not have the same protections as those in traditional housing, while tenants in SROs are afforded additional protections through special provisions in the New York State Rent Stabilization Law.

Because co-living operators and landlords of informal shares cannot obtain rooming unit approval, they are unable to offer independent leases or related tenant protections, which puts tenants at risk of harassment and displacement. For example, if one tenant in a co-living suite violates the lease terms, such as by not paying rent or causing conflicts with other tenants, and the operator chooses to pursue an eviction against that tenant, all tenants in the suite could face eviction because all are listed on the same lease agreement. In other cases, tenants may only receive “occupancy agreements,” not formal leases, denying them the tenant protections afforded to them under New York State law.

Unregulated co-living and informal shares also raise privacy and fire safety concerns. Residents on the same lease are considered part of a “common household,” which requires equal access to all areas of the home. HPD and DOB have interpreted this requirement to mean that residents cannot have locks on bedroom doors. Despite this rule, many operators reconfigure traditional apartments as suites of private rooms with locks on individual bedroom doors. This creates fire safety risks, as locked doors could block emergency exits like windows or fire escapes.



*A rendering of the lobby proposed for the Ascendant Neighborhood Development/Ali Forney Center ShareNYC project.*

In some cases, co-living operators have installed smart locks to address privacy concerns and evade prohibitions on keyed locks on bedroom doors, but these solutions exacerbate fire safety concerns. Smart locks do not have master keys that can be overridden by building management or the Fire Department (FDNY) in emergencies.

Operators have also attempted to address safety concerns through security cameras pointed at individual rooms and common areas. This raises privacy concerns because operators are able to monitor residents as they move about their day, including when they come and go from their private rooming units or common spaces. While video surveillance in public areas, like stairwells and elevators, is common in multifamily buildings, New York State law restrict surveillance of private residential spaces.<sup>51</sup>

51. New York State Penal Law §250.05.



A rendering of a rooming units in the Ascendant Neighborhood Development/Ali Forney Center ShareNYC project. This space would be private to an individual tenant, with locks on the doors.

## FINANCING AFFORDABLE SHARED HOUSING

To support the creation of affordable shared housing, developers need access to financing tools that can accommodate rooming units, while maintaining both affordability and high operational standards. HPD, along with its state and federal partners, must adapt existing financing tools and develop new ones for income-restricted shared housing. The rules that govern these financing tools should strike a balance between promoting affordability, upholding high occupancy and operational standards, and ensuring a diversity of housing types—not just shared housing—is financed to meet the needs of all New Yorkers.

With little new affordable shared housing built in the past seventy years, HPD lacks clear policies to guide its financing of this typology. The agency has no established design, occupancy, or management criteria specific to shared housing models. Because rooming units operate differently than traditional dwelling units, HPD's existing guidelines and requirements are not sufficient to meet the unique needs of shared housing. HPD lacks a process for integrating shared housing into Housing Connect, the City's affordable rental and homeownership lottery platform. While many tenants seek out shared housing for community living, others may be hesitant to share spaces with people they do not know. This calls for a thoughtful strategy for tenant placements and a robust policy for transfers, ensuring tenants' housing stability and residential harmony. Without a process, it is unclear how to fill vacancies for shared housing projects that balance compatible residential pairings with the requirements of fair housing law.

While some may fear that HPD will pivot to only financing affordable shared housing in an effort to save costs and stretch subsidy dollars further, the agency has a mandate to provide affordable housing for all New Yorkers. The agency should have the ability to finance affordable shared housing, to better serve the needs and preferences of single person and small households, but it still has the obligation to provide financing for larger units as well, to meet the needs and preferences of larger families.

## RENTAL ASSISTANCE APPLICABILITY

In New York City, four agencies—HPD, the New York City Department of Social Services (DSS), the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), and New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)—administer three major rental assistance programs: Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV, or Section 8), City Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS), and Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (FHEPS). Both HCV and CityFHEPS allow for voucher holders to rent entire apartments, individual rooms within apartments, or SROs in New York City. However, FHEPS, which provides rent supplements for families facing eviction or housing instability, cannot be used for shared housing or SROs due to restrictions on children occupying rooming units.

While most major rental assistance programs allow vouchers for shared housing, New York City's administering agencies historically have not applied these programs to rooming units in shared housing. This poses several administrative and programmatic challenges. When tenants utilize HCV in rent-

stabilized apartments, HUD requires each unit to have a separate lease with a contract rent. To meet this requirement in rent-stabilized shared housing, such as HPD-financed projects, operators would need to provide separate leases for individual rooming units. HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) stipulate that inspectors must inspect all rooms in an apartment where the voucher holder will live. Locks on rooming unit doors could obstruct inspectors' access, potentially putting a voucher holder's subsidy at risk. With few rooming units built in the last several decades, New York City lacks comparable units to establish rent reasonableness standards to set appropriate subsidy levels. Finally, the administering agencies lack internal processes and operating procedures for administering rental assistance in shared housing.

## ZONING

As described in the next section, *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity* removed all zoning obstacles to shared housing. Prior to its passage, New York City's Zoning Resolution includes restrictions on the development of rooming units. The Zoning Resolution's definition of "rooming unit" was convoluted and difficult to interpret, and thus difficult to apply across residential uses. Any new rooming units that were built had to be filed under Use Group 3 (community facilities) rather than Use Group 2 (residential uses). This complicated the development process, as Use Group 3 requires space to be dedicated to community services, reducing the amount of space available for housing and virtually guaranteeing that the only shared projects that get built are supportive housing.

Another key constraint was a ban on converting existing floor area to rooming units. This limitation prevented owners of underutilized commercial buildings from converting them into shared housing, even though these spaces could be well-suited for such purposes.

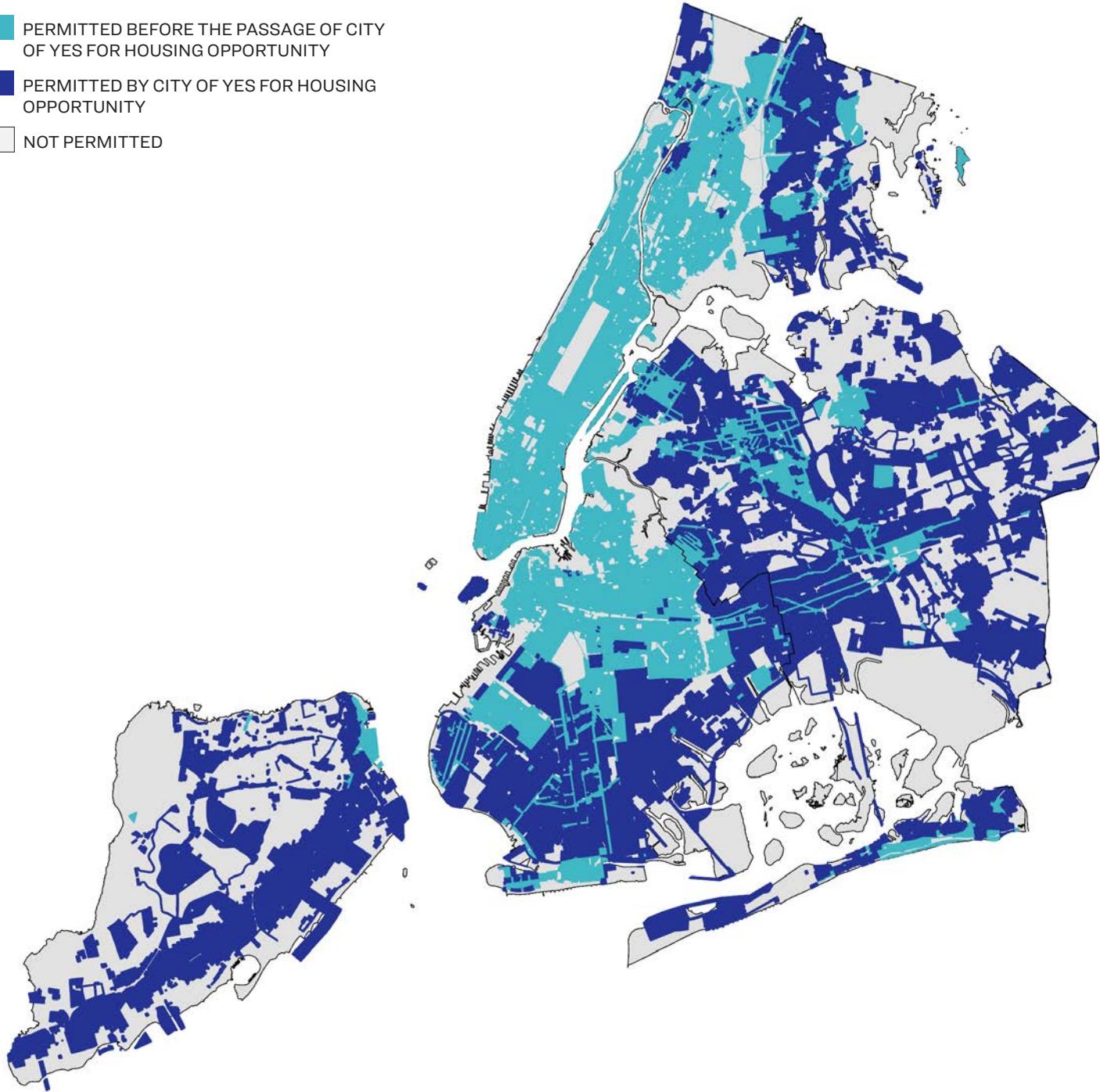
Moreover, the Zoning Resolution did not allow for the efficient and affordable creation of new rooming units. It did not include explicit requirements for parking or Dwelling Unit Factor (DUF) for rooming units. The Department of City Planning (DCP) has interpreted this silence to mean these requirements do not apply; because virtually no rooming units have been built in New York City, this is a theoretical assessment, not citywide policy. If the City were to apply these requirements, they would drive up costs and make it impractical to build rooming units. The Zoning Resolution did not address how Class A rooming units can comply with the requirements of the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) program, thereby disqualifying rooming unit projects from taking advantage of a key affordability tool.

Finally, the Zoning Resolution restricted where rooming units could be built to specific zoning districts (R6-R10, C1-C2, and C4-C6). These limits made it difficult to integrate this housing model into broader areas of the city.

**FIGURE 11: Geographies for Shared Housing**

Prior to the passage of *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*, shared housing was only permitted in areas of the map highlighted in teal. The zoning amendment has expanded the areas where shared housing to include the areas in dark blue.

- █ PERMITTED BEFORE THE PASSAGE OF CITY OF YES FOR HOUSING OPPORTUNITY
- █ PERMITTED BY CITY OF YES FOR HOUSING OPPORTUNITY
- █ NOT PERMITTED



## CHAPTER 6

# STRATEGIES TO ENABLE SHARED HOUSING ROOMING UNITS

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Informed by policy research, conversations with stakeholders, and collaboration with City government partners, HPD has developed a series of strategies to overcome barriers to the creation of shared housing rooming units, which it is implementing through three key pathways: zoning, legislation, and policy.

## ZONING

*City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*, which the City Council approved in December 2024, removed all zoning obstacles to shared housing rooming units. The amendments to the Zoning Resolution clarified the definition of rooming units and lifted the ban on the conversion of existing floor area to rooming units. Changes made to parking and DUF requirements removed the barriers these imposed to shared housing. Rooming units are now able fulfill MIH and other affordable housing incentive programs, such

as the Universal Affordability Preference (UAP), creating a pathway for affordable shared housing. *City of Yes* also expanded the geographic scope of rooming units, permitting them in any residential district where multifamily housing is allowed and the corresponding commercial districts. The legislative and policy strategies of the *Shared Housing Roadmap* complement these zoning changes by cementing stronger and more comprehensive standards for shared housing design, occupancy, and management.

## LEGISLATION

To fully unlock the potential of new construction shared housing, HPD and the Department of Buildings (DOB) are proposing amendments to the New York City Housing Maintenance Code (HMC) and New York City Building Code (BC). These changes will streamline and modernize code requirements, ensure

strong tenant protections and safety, and ease the creation of new shared housing. The proposed legislation is intended to:

### **Revise the criteria for receiving rooming unit approval to allow for the creation of shared housing rooming units as-of-right**

- **Allow shared housing rooming units to be built as-of-right.**
- **Allow conversions of non-residential buildings to shared housing rooming units** in accordance with applicable City adaptive reuse rules and requirements.
- **Prevent conversions of existing residential buildings to shared housing rooming units, allowing exceptions only under narrowly defined circumstances and subject to HPD approval,** in addition to adaptive reuse requirements.

While HPD does not intend to permit the widespread conversion of existing residential buildings to rooming units, leaving open a pathway for residential conversions is necessary to ensure the protection of tenants currently living in co-living arrangements or other types of informal shares. Allowing for existing co-living operators to apply for rooming unit approval for existing unregulated shared housing will ensure that tenants living in these buildings are able to access all of the protections afforded to them under the law, including individual leases and avenues for seeking enforcement action if their landlord fails to uphold quality standards, without fear that they will lose their home. HPD will develop an approval process that prioritizes tenant protections and building safety when determining whether to permit unregulated co-living buildings to convert to regulated shared housing.

### **Revise and clarify standards for shared housing rooming units, bathrooms, and kitchens**

- **Revise shared housing rooming unit size and occupancy requirements**
  - » Establish minimum shared housing rooming unit size of 100 square feet (SF) for shared housing rooming unit accommodating one person and 150 SF for shared housing rooming units accommodating two people.
  - » Clarify the distinction between minimum unit size for rooms used for single room occupancy and rooming units
- **Clarify minimum standards for bathrooms**
  - » Require at least one set of bathroom facilities (water closet, washbasin, and bath or shower) for every three shared housing rooming units to ensure adequate access and cleanliness.
  - » Bathroom facilities may be arranged as private, semi-private, or dorm-style facilities.
- **Establish minimum standards for kitchen facilities**
  - » Require at least one full-sized refrigerator and set of permanent cooking equipment (e.g., oven, range, sink) for every three shared housing rooming units to ensure sufficient storage and cooking space, as well as adequate access and cleanliness.
  - » Allow the use of small, electric food warming apparatuses (microwaves, coffee makers, electric kettles, etc.) and mini-fridges in shared housing rooming units to give residents an additional measure of privacy in storing and preparing food and medications.

## **Ensure shared housing rooming units meet existing fire safety and egress, accessibility, common space and privacy requirements**

- **Ensure sufficient egress and fire safety requirements for shared housing.**

- » Require every egress stair to have an intervening public hall in shared housing buildings four stories or higher.
- » Ensure all shared housing buildings are fully sprinklered and provided with a fire alarm system to match the requirements of student dormitories and student apartments.
- » Apply the fire separation requirement for apartments between shared housing rooming units.
- » Require all locks on shared housing rooming unit doors to have fail-safe systems (keys or fobs), approved by the FDNY, that have the ability to be released for an approved location within the building.
- » Ensure sufficient electrical load in rooming units to accommodate small, electric food warming apparatuses and other electronics.
- » Ensure shared housing is classified as R-2 occupancy and Class A multiple dwellings and meet all applicable standards.
- » These standards are, at minimum, in line with the standards required for traditional multiple dwellings. In some instances, such as the sprinkler requirement, the standards go beyond the minimum standards.

- **Establish accessibility requirements for shared housing.**

- » At least 5% of all shared housing rooming units must be built to BC Chapter 11 accessibility standards. All accessible shared housing rooming units must have access to at least one bathroom and one kitchen that meets BC Chapter 11 accessibility standards. These requirements match accessibility requirements for other types of housing.

- **Introduce requirements to address privacy concerns in rooming units.**

- » Permit locks on the doors to individual shared housing rooming units by revising the family and rooming unit definitions in the HMC, such that shared housing rooming units are not subject to the “common household” clause of the family definition.
- » Ensure the occupant load of shared housing rooming units reflect the maximum permitted number of adults and children.
- » Apply the sound attenuation requirement of apartments walls to walls of shared housing rooming units.
- » Ensure each shared housing rooming unit has its own intercom.

## **Align property management requirements with modern-day best practices.**

- **Remove requirement for a live-in super.**

- » Permit operators of shared housing buildings to provide operational, maintenance, and janitorial services on round-the-clock shift schedules, rather than through the current live-in super requirement, if desired.

- **Revise cleaning and maintenance requirements for shared housing rooming units to streamline building operations and ensure tenant privacy.**

- » Remove requirement for weekly cleaning of shared housing rooming units by building staff.

## Streamline and clarify rules and definitions governing rooming unit occupancy

- **Introduce a new classification for a “shared housing rooming unit,”** for which the specific requirements laid out in this section apply.

- » Creating a new category of rooming unit will allow HPD to tailor requirements for shared housing rooming units to meet the standards set forth in the *Shared Housing Roadmap* without bringing other types of rooming units (e.g., shelter units, existing SROs) into noncompliance with new rules.

- **Clarify occupancy limits.** Permit no more than two persons to occupy a rooming unit.

- **Ensure different types of families can access shared housing if they so choose.**

- » Shared housing can offer benefits to families, as exhibited by the New York Foundling’s Mother and Child Program and shared caregiving models, and allowing families with children to access rooming units is in line with HPD’s fair housing goals to maximize housing choice for New Yorkers. HPD aims to balance expanding housing choice with appropriate safeguards for families that choose to live in fair housing to address concerns about the security and safety of children living in shared housing. Operators of shared housing will be required to provide a lease rider to all tenants attesting to the fact that children may live in the building and share spaces

with adults that they do not know. Additionally common spaces will be required to meet the safety standards required of private apartments with children, such as provision of window guards and lead paint testing, and operators may choose to layer on additional safety measures to encourage safe and harmonious living. No individual or family will be required to live in shared housing, but the option will be made available to all New Yorkers if they so choose.

## POLICY

To complement the zoning and legislative strategies, HPD has developed policy recommendations to guide effective property management, tenant protections, and the financing of affordable shared housing. These recommendations aim to:

### Provide tenants with individual leases.

The proposed legislative changes will enable the creation of shared housing rooming units, which will allow operators to provide tenants with individual leases. It is imperative that a tenant receives a lease tied only to their rooming unit to formalize the independent relationship between the tenant and their landlord, so that the actions of one tenant do not put their neighbors’ housing stability at risk.

### Align building operations and management policies with industry best practices.

These guidelines, while not mandatory, serve as a guide for shared housing operators interested in working in New York City and reflect the highest industry standards for shared housing and are critical to maintaining well-run buildings.

- **Establish a clear and robust property management plan**, implemented by the operator and communicated to tenants via lease agreements. Property management plans ensure tenants receive clear guidance about building operations and have avenues of recourse when those standards are not being met.

- » Delineate the roles and responsibilities of the property management staff with expected timelines for responses to maintenance requests, follow up for tenant relations concerns and provision purchases.
- » Hire resident relations staff that are experienced in mediation and conflict resolution to manage tenant engagement. Depending on building size and operator practices, resident relations staff may serve one or more buildings.
- » Hire janitorial or maintenance staff that are responsible for building operations and maintaining common/shared spaces, in accordance with existing maintenance staffing requirements in the HMC and MDL.
- » Establish and post clear schedules for resident relations and janitorial staff, as well as standard procedures for communicating with staff, requesting maintenance, and escalating issues, to reduce staff burnout and turnover.

- **Set clear policies and procedures to deter and mitigate tenant conflict.** Well-defined management policies can help promote harmony by addressing known points of conflict. Communicating these policies to tenants in their lease agreements will ensure tenants are informed of all policies and have agreed to adhering to them.

- » Require tenants to adhere to anti-discrimination, -violence, and -harassment policies as part of their lease agreement.

- » Establish and post in a public place tenant grievance and mediation procedures, tenant relocation policies and processes, and grounds for immediate removal to guide operators' and tenants' responses should conflict arise.
- » Establish guest, noise, and common space usage policies that balance tenants' right to socialize with their roommates' safety and security.
- » Disclose the location of all security cameras to residents and make clear through the lease agreement the permitted use of any security camera footage.<sup>52</sup>

52. The New York State Penal Code does not permit surveillance in places where “a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy,” but shared housing operators may want to require security cameras in common areas. Some tenants may take comfort in knowing there is additional surveillance of shared spaces, while others may see common areas as extensions of their private living space. By disclosing the location of security cameras in the lease, tenants will know ahead of time what the expectations are for surveillance and can decide for themselves whether they are comfortable with the building’s policy. See New York State Penal Law §250.05.

- » Clearly delineate repercussions for one-off and repeat violations of building policy, as well as procedures for escalating issues with building conditions, building staff, and other tenants.
- **Set a schedule and scope for cleaning kitchens, bathrooms, and communal spaces.** Regular cleaning of shared spaces reduces inter-tenant conflict by removing messes and different tolerances for untidiness as flashpoints for disagreement.
  - » Provide regular, professional cleaning services for shared spaces.
  - » Require residents to clean and maintain private and semi-private spaces (typically, rooming units and private or semi-private bathrooms).
  - » Provide basic kitchen, bathroom, and cleaning supplies, and a process for requesting additional provision products.
- **Engage residents in the drafting and implementation of community guidelines and programming.** Community guidelines are mutually agreed upon by the residents and may be fluid in nature, as they serve to promote a common understanding and shared expectation for living in a communal space. They may include topics, such as building programming or expectations about tenant-to-tenant communications, that tenants and building staff agree enhance community spirit, but are not critical to baseline building functioning. Community guidelines should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they are responsive to changing conditions and tenant turnover.
- **Provide residents with a copy of both the property management plan and community guidelines upon lease signing and post both in a space that is accessible to all residents.**

## Develop HPD policy to guide financing of affordable projects with shared housing rooming units

- **Integrate shared housing as an option into existing term sheets and loan programs.**
  - » Develop shared housing-specific criteria, such as subsidy allocation criteria and maintenance and operating expense (M&O) standards.
  - » Introduce the submission and approval of a property management plan, including tenant grievance and transfer policies and procedures.
- **Update HPD's New Construction Design Guidelines to include shared housing-specific design requirements.**
  - » Require at least 5% of all rooming units be designed to accommodate two-person households.
  - » Require a minimum of 5% of rooming units, bathrooms, and kitchens meet Uniform Federal Accessibility (UFAS) or Section 504 accessibility standards, as is required for all HPD projects under the HPD New Construction Design Guidelines.
  - » Require 5% of floor area be dedicated to common/amenity space in HPD-financed projects. This expands upon a zoning requirement that 3% of floor area be dedicated to amenity space in all residential projects.
  - » Minimize variation in rooming unit sizes.
- **Establish minimum criteria for sponsors of HPD-financed shared housing projects,** to ensure operators have experience in managing complex housing projects and have considered seriously the criteria for successfully managing shared housing. HPD will prioritize sponsors with:

- » Expertise in managing affordable housing with diverse populations and/or shared housing.
- » Robust resident management experience focused on conflict mitigation and resolution for common shared living challenges.
- » Strong understanding and execution of financials and budgeting.
- **Update Housing Connect to accommodate marketing and lease up of shared housing.**
- » Ensure that the tenant selection process in HPD-financed shared housing projects is incorporated into the Housing Connect lottery process. Units will be filled via the housing lottery or referral, as is appropriate for the relevant term sheet and funding source. Prospective tenants will know they are entering the lottery for a shared housing rooming unit and, if selected, they will have the opportunity to view the unit and decide whether or not to move forward.

individual units, inspectors may be able to inspect only the rooming unit of the voucher holder and the common spaces, not the rooming units of other tenants, to ensure units comply with HQS.

- **Develop a strategy for setting rent reasonableness standards in the absence of adequate comparable units.**
- **Develop internal processes for administering rental assistance for shared housing,** including identifying and removing operation and procedural barriers.

## Develop policies and procedures for administering rental assistance.

The four agencies that administer rental assistance (HPD, NYCHA, DSS, and HCR) need to develop coordinated processes for issuing and administering rental assistance for shared housing that balance simplicity and efficiency.

- **Treat each rooming unit as an individual unit for the purposes of rental assistance.** Changes proposed elsewhere in the *Shared Housing Roadmap* will allow for individual leases, locks on doors of rooming units, and for individual rooming units to meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS).
  - **Develop guidance for administering agencies to ensure HQS compliance in shared spaces.**
- Because rooming units will be treated as

## CHAPTER 7

# IMPLEMENTATION

## ZONING

### Strategy:

**Modernize and streamline the Zoning Resolution to ease zoning restrictions on shared housing.**

ACTION ITEM	CHALLENGE ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMELINE
Clarify and simplify the definition of "rooming unit."	Zoning	DCP	HPD	COMPLETE
Remove the limits on conversion of existing floor area to rooming units.	Zoning	DCP	HPD	COMPLETE
Ensure rooming units are not subject to parking or Dwelling Unit Factor requirements.	Zoning	DCP	HPD	COMPLETE
Enable rooming units to fulfill Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and Universal Affordability Preference.	Zoning	DCP	HPD	COMPLETE
Allow rooming units wherever multifamily housing is allowed.	Zoning	DCP	HPD	COMPLETE

# LEGISLATION

## Strategy:

**Revise the criteria for receiving rooming unit approval to allow for the creation of shared housing rooming units as-of-right.**

ACTION ITEM	CHALLENGE ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMELINE
Allow shared housing rooming units to be built as-of-right.	Design and Occupancy	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025
Allow conversions of non-residential buildings to shared housing rooming units.	Design and Occupancy	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025
Permit conversions of existing residential buildings to shared housing rooming units only in limited circumstances and subject to HPD approval.	Design and Occupancy	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025
Enable rooming units to fulfill Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and Universal Affordability Preference.	Zoning	DCP	HPD	COMPLETE
Allow rooming units wherever multifamily housing is allowed.	Zoning	DCP	HPD	COMPLETE

**LEGISLATION (CONTINUED)****Strategy:****Revise and clarify standards for shared housing rooming units, bathrooms, and kitchens.**

ACTION ITEM	CHALLENGE ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMELINE
Revise shared housing rooming unit size and occupancy requirements to establish minimum shared rooming unit size (100 SF for rooming units accommodating one person, 150 SF for rooming units accommodating two people).	Design and Occupancy	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025
Clarify minimum standards for bathrooms to require at least one set of bathroom facilities for every three shared housing rooming units.	Design and Occupancy	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025
Establish minimum standards for kitchen facilities to require at least one set of permanent kitchen equipment for every three shared housing rooming units.	Design and Occupancy	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025
Allow the use of small, electric food warming apparatuses and mini-fridges in shared housing rooming units.	Design and Occupancy	HPD	DOB, FDNY, LAW	Fall 2025
Allow rooming units wherever multifamily housing is allowed.	Zoning	DCP	HPD	COMPLETE

## LEGISLATION (CONTINUED)

### Strategy:

**Ensure shared housing rooming units meet existing fire safety and egress, accessibility, common space, and privacy requirements.**

ACTION ITEM	CHALLENGE ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMELINE
Ensure egress and fire safety standards, including intervening public hall and stairway rules, fire separation requirements, electrical load minimums, and door lock requirements, are in line with requirements of traditional multiple dwellings.	Tenant Protections and Safety	HPD	DOB, FDNY, LAW	Fall 2025
Require all shared housing buildings to be fully sprinklered and provided with fire alarm systems to match the requirements of student dormitories and student apartments.	Tenant Protections and Safety	DOB	HPD, FDNY, LAW	Fall 2025
Require at least 5% of all shared housing rooming units in a project be built to Building Code Chapter 11 accessibility standards and that each accessible shared housing rooming unit has access to at least one accessible bathroom and kitchen facility.	Design and Occupancy	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025
Ensure occupant load of shared housing buildings reflect the maximum permitted number of adults and children.	Design and Occupancy	DOB	HPD, FDNY, LAW	Fall 2025
Apply sound attenuation requirements for apartment walls to walls of shared housing rooming units.	Design and Occupancy	DOB	HPD, LAW	Fall 2025
Ensure each shared housing rooming unit has its own intercom.	Design and Occupancy	DOB	HPD, LAW	Fall 2025

## LEGISLATION (CONTINUED)

### Strategy:

**Align property management requirements with modern-day best practices.**

ACTION ITEM	CHALLENGE ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMELINE
Remove the requirement for a live-in super.	Building Operations and Mgmt.	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025
Revise cleaning and maintenance requirements for shared housing rooming units to streamline building operations and ensure tenant privacy.	Building Operations and Mgmt.	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025

### Strategy:

**Streamline and clarify rules and definitions governing shared housing rooming unit occupancy.**

ACTION ITEM	CHALLENGE ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMELINE
Introduce a new classification for a "shared housing rooming unit" for which all relevant legislation applies.	Design and Occupancy	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025
Clarify occupancy limits to permit no more than two persons to occupy a shared housing rooming unit.	Design and Occupancy	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025
Allow for children to live in shared housing rooming units.	Tenant Protections and Safety	HPD	DOB, LAW	Fall 2025

# POLICY

## Strategy:

**Provide tenants with individual leases.**

ACTION ITEM	CHALLENGE ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMELINE
Require landlords provide leases to tenants that are tied only to their shared housing rooming unit to formalize the independent relationship between the tenant and their landlord.	Tenant Protections and Safety	HPD	DOB, FDNY, LAW	Fall 2025

## Strategy:

**Align building operations and management policies with industry best practices.**

ACTION ITEM	CHALLENGE ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMELINE
Draft guidelines and templates for clear and robust property management plans for operators.	Building Operations and Mgmt.	HPD		Spring 2026
Provide guidance on clear policies and procedures to deter and mitigate tenant conflict, such as grievance, guest, and transfer policies.	Tenant Protections and Safety	HPD		Spring 2026
Advise on appropriate scopes and schedules for cleaning kitchens, bathrooms, and communal spaces.	Building Operations and Mgmt.	HPD		Spring 2026
Establish best practices for engaging residents in the drafting and implementation of community guidelines and programming.	Building Operations and Mgmt.	HPD		Spring 2026
Ensure residents receive a copy of both the property management plan and the community guidelines upon lease signing.	Building Operations and Mgmt.	HPD		Spring 2026

**POLICY (CONTINUED)****Strategy:**

**Develop HPD policy to guide financing of affordable projects with shared housing rooming units.**

ACTION ITEM	CHALLENGE ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMELINE
Integrate shared housing as an option into existing term sheets and loan programs.	Financing Affordable Shared Housing	HPD		Summer 2026
Update HPD's New Construction Design Guidelines to include shared housing-specific design requirements.	Financing Affordable Shared Housing	HPD		Summer 2026
Establish minimum criteria for sponsors of HPD-financed shared housing projects.	Financing Affordable Shared Housing	HPD		Summer 2026
Update Housing Connect to accommodate marketing and lease up of shared housing.	Financing Affordable Shared Housing	HPD		Summer 2026

**POLICY (CONTINUED)****Strategy:****Develop policies and procedures for administering rental assistance.**

ACTION ITEM	CHALLENGE ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMELINE
Enact legislative changes to occupancy requirements to allow the administering agencies to treat each shared housing rooming unit as an individual unit for the purposes of rental assistance.	Rental Assistance Applicability	HPD	DSS, HCR, NYCHA	Fall 2026
Develop guidance for administering agencies to ensure Housing Quality Standards compliance in shared spaces.	Rental Assistance Applicability	HPD	DSS, HCR, NYCHA	Fall 2026
Develop a strategy for setting rent reasonableness standards in the absence of adequate comparable units.	Rental Assistance Applicability	HPD	DSS, HCR, NYCHA	Fall 2026
Develop internal processes for administering rental assistance for shared housing.	Rental Assistance Applicability	HPD	DSS, HCR, NYCHA	Fall 2026

# APPENDIX A

## UNIT SIZE ANALYSIS

### Data Sources

This analysis uses data from the following tables of the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates (2009–2013, 2014–2018 and 2019–2023):

1. B09019: Household Type (Including Living Alone) by Relationship<sup>53</sup>
2. B11016: Household Type by Household Size<sup>54</sup>
3. B25041: Bedrooms<sup>55</sup>
4. S1101: Households and Families<sup>56</sup>

53. U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2018, 2023, Table B09019: Household Type (Including Living Alone) by Relationship," United States Census Bureau, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B09019?q=B09019%20Household%20Type%20\(Including%20Living%20Alone\)%20by%20Relationship&tid=ACSDT1Y2022.B09019](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B09019?q=B09019%20Household%20Type%20(Including%20Living%20Alone)%20by%20Relationship&tid=ACSDT1Y2022.B09019).
54. U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2018, 2023, Table B11016: Household Type by Household Size," United States Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B11016?q=b11016&tid=ACSDT1Y2022.B11016>.
55. U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2018, 2023, Table B25041: Bedrooms," United States Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B25041?q=B25041%20BEDROOMS&tid=ACSDT1Y2021.B25041>.
56. U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2018, 2023, Table S1101: Households and Families," United States Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSSST5Y2023.S1101?q=S1101%20Households%20and%20Families&tid=ACSSST1Y2022.S1101>.

### Analysis

This analysis compares current housing production in New York City and the city's changing demographics. In April 2025, HPD compared five-year estimates from the ACS to see how the number of households and the number of housing units changed over time. The analysis broke down homes by number of bedrooms and households by number of people to observe the changes to the housing stock and the changes in household composition between 2009–2013 and 2019–2023 (Fig. 3: Change in Number of Households by Size, 2013–2023, Fig. 4: Change in Number of Housing Units by Bedrooms, 2013–2023).

### Limitations

The Census Bureau updates the questions in the ACS over time, so in some cases it is not possible to make exact comparisons of data year to year. For example, the ACS aggregated several categories in the table B09019: Household Type (Including Living Alone) by Relationship between 2018 and 2023. As a result, it is not possible to disaggregate the number of roomers, boarders, housemates, or roommates living with family households in 2023.

Instead of looking at the relationships of members of households, HPD examined data on nonfamily households to understand where unrelated adults most commonly live together in New York City. As a result, data on informal shares does not constitute all informal shares in the city, assuming family households also engage in informal shares.

# APPENDIX B

## CO-LIVING ANALYSIS

### Data Sources

In June 2025, HPD collected data on active rental listings, including rents and fees, tenure requirements, and information about shared amenities, from the websites of four co-living operators: Outpost Club, Roomrs, SharedEasy, and Cohabs.<sup>57,58,59,60</sup>

### Analysis

- Rents and Income Limits:** HPD derived rent affordability for shared housing and SROs from 2025 HUD Income Limits (HUDIL) for studio apartments in NYC. Affordable rents for shared housing and SRO units are calculated as 75% of the studio apartment affordable rent. For example, in 2025, the maximum affordable rent for a studio at 100% HUDIL was \$2,835. Using this formula, the rent for an SRO unit at 100% HUDIL in 2025 was \$2,126.<sup>61</sup>

To understand co-living operators' behavior over time, HPD compared rents collected on the above co-living operators in September 2020, July 2023, and June 2025. To calculate the change in rents from 2020 to 2025, HPD converted the September 2020 rents to June 2025 dollars using the Consumer Price Index.<sup>62</sup>

- “Coliving”, Outpost Club. <https://www.outpost-club.com/coliving-1>.
- “Rooms for rent in New York”, Roomrs, <https://www.roomrs.com/apartments>.
- “SharedEasy”, SharedEasy, <https://sharedeeasy.club/>.
- “Coliving in New York”, Cohabs, <https://cohabs.com/cities/new-york>.
- “Area Median Income,” New York City Housing Preservation and Development, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/area-median-income.page>.
- “Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)”, United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/ CUURO100SAO?amp%253bdata\\_tool=XGtable&output\\_view=data&include\\_graphs=true](https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/ CUURO100SAO?amp%253bdata_tool=XGtable&output_view=data&include_graphs=true).

- Addresses:** Some operators list building addresses on their websites. Others show the approximate location of their buildings on a map. For buildings with unknown addresses, HPD used addresses in the immediate vicinity as a proxy, allowing for analysis of trends at the neighborhood level for all buildings and mapping approximate locations of co-living buildings (Fig. 6: Buildings Managed by Select Co-Living Operators, 2025).

### Limitations

- Incomplete Picture:** This dataset included only those buildings with active listings on the respective co-living operators' websites as of June 2025. These operators may manage other buildings which were either fully occupied or not currently leasing, which did not appear on the listing websites at the time of data collection. The buildings with active listings included in this dataset may also include other rooms that were not available for rent and therefore did not appear on the listing websites at the time of data collection. Because operators only list available units on their website, not all the units or buildings that they own, it is impossible to have a full picture of their complete portfolios.
- Addresses:** Some operators do not publish the exact addresses of their buildings. Instead, they provide a small radius that a building may be in, or a neighborhood. For buildings with unknown addresses, HPD used addresses in the immediate vicinity as a proxy for the purposes of mapping and neighborhood-level analyses. However, buildings that appear close to a community district line may be in neighboring community districts.

## APPENDIX C

# ACRONYMS

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

<b>DCP</b>	New York City Department of City Planning
<b>DOB</b>	New York City Department of Buildings
<b>DSS</b>	New York City Department of Social Services
<b>FDNY</b>	Fire Department of the City of New York
<b>HCR</b>	New York State Homes and Community Renewal
<b>HDC</b>	Housing Development Corporation of New York City
<b>HPD</b>	New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development
<b>HUD</b>	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
<b>NYCHA</b>	New York City Housing Authority

### LEGAL CODES

<b>BC</b>	New York City Building Code
<b>HMC</b>	New York City Housing Maintenance Code
<b>MDL</b>	New York State Multiple Dwelling Law
<b>ZR</b>	New York City Zoning Resolution

### ADDITIONAL TERMS

<b>ACS</b>	American Community Survey
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>CityFHEPS</b>	City Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement
<b>FHEPS</b>	Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement
<b>HUDIL</b>	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Income Limits
<b>HCV</b>	Housing Choice Vouchers
<b>NYCHVS</b>	New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey
<b>MIH</b>	Mandatory Inclusionary Housing
<b>NPISA</b>	Non-Profit Institutions with Sleeping Accommodations
<b>RFEI</b>	Request for Expressions of Interest
<b>RFI</b>	Request for Information
<b>SRO</b>	Single Room Occupancy
<b>UAP</b>	Universal Affordability Preference
<b>ULURP</b>	Uniform Land Use Review Procedure

## APPENDIX D

# GLOSSARY

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

A federal law that requires that public entities make reasonable accommodations to avoid discrimination of individuals with disabilities. This act governs structural modifications in housing, alongside Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**Apartment** Per the HMC, an apartment is one or more living rooms, arranged to be occupied as a unit separate from all other rooms within a dwelling, with lawful sanitary facilities and a lawful kitchen or kitchenette for the exclusive use of the family residing in such unit.

**Building Code (BC)** - Legal code that regulates the construction, alteration, and occupancy of buildings and other structures in New York City. The Department of Buildings (DOB) is responsible for enforcing the Building Code.

### **City Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS)**

**Supplement** A rental assistance supplement to help individuals and families find and keep housing. It is administered by the Department of Social Services (DSS), which includes both the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and the Human Resources Administration (HRA).

**Co-Living** - A typology of shared housing in which private companies rent individual rooms in multiple dwelling apartments to tenants on the private market as if they were shared housing. In this typology, apartments are not purpose-built as shared housing.

**Co-Living Operators** Private companies that rent apartments or entire buildings on the private market as co-living. They may own the buildings or also act as property managers. This report examines five operators: Cohabs, Common, Outpost Club, Roomrs, and SharedEasy.

**Common Household** Per the HMC, a common household is deemed to exist if every member of the family has access to all parts of the dwelling unit. Lack of access to all parts of the dwelling unit establishes a rebuttable presumption that no common household exists.

**Dwelling Unit** Per the HMC, a dwelling unit is any residential accommodation in a multiple dwelling or private dwelling.

**Dwelling Unit Factor** A measure that is used to determine the allowable number of units on a zoning lot.

**Existing Rooming Unit Housing** A typology of shared housing that includes any single room occupancy housing that currently exists in New York City, including single room occupancy units (SROs), rooming houses, boarding houses, and SRO hotels. If they were built today, these buildings would qualify as *shared housing*.

**Family** Per the HMC, a family is:

- (a) A single person occupying a dwelling unit and maintaining a common household with not more than two boarders, roomers or lodgers; or
- (b) Two or more persons related by blood, adoption, legal guardianship, marriage or domestic partnership; occupying a dwelling unit and maintaining a common household with not more than two boarders, roomers or lodgers; or
- (c) Not more than three unrelated persons occupying a dwelling unit and maintaining a common household; or
- (d) Not more than three unrelated persons occupying a dwelling unit in a congregate housing or shared living arrangement and maintaining a common household; or

- (e) Members of a group home; or
- (f) Foster children placed in accordance with provisions of the New York state social services law, their foster parents, and other persons related to the foster parents by blood, marriage or domestic partnership; where all residents occupy and maintain a common household with not more than two boarders, roomers or lodgers; or
- (g) Up to seven unrelated students enrolled at a single accredited college or university occupying a student apartment, as such term is defined in the New York city building code, and maintaining a common household pursuant to a lease, sublease, or occupancy agreement directly with such college or university, provided that:
  - (i) The entire structure in which the dwelling unit is located is fully sprinklered in accordance with chapter 9 of the New York city building code; and
  - (ii) Such occupancy does not exceed the maximums contained in subdivision a of section 27-2075; and
  - (iii) Prior to commencement of such occupancy, and on an annual basis thereafter such college or university has submitted a fire safety plan containing fire safety and evacuation procedures for such dwelling unit that is acceptable to the fire commissioner and in compliance with any rules promulgated by the fire commissioner; and
  - (iv) The dwelling unit complies with additional occupancy and construction requirements as may be established by rule by the department of housing preservation and development or its successor.

**Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention**

**Supplement (FHEPS)** A rent supplement for families with children who receive Cash Assistance and have been evicted or are facing eviction, who lost their housing due to a domestic violence situation, or who have lost their housing because of health or safety issues. It is administered by DSS.

**Household** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit (such as a house or apartment) as their usual place of residence. A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit such as partners or roomers, is also counted as a household. The count of households excludes group quarters. There are two major categories of households, "family" and "nonfamily."

- **Family Household** - A family includes a householder and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. All people in a household who are related to the householder are regarded as members of his or her family. A family household may contain people not related to the householder, but those people are not included as part of the householder's family in census tabulations. Thus, the number of family households is equal to the number of families, but family households may include more members than do families. A household can contain only one family for purposes of census tabulations. Not all households contain families since a household may comprise a group of unrelated people or one person living alone.

- **Nonfamily Household** - A nonfamily household consists of a householder living alone (a one-person household) or where the householder shares the home only with people to whom they are not related (e.g., a roommate).

**Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)** A rent supplement, also known as Section 8, that provides federal funding for subsidies that help eligible low-income families to rent decent, safe, and affordable housing in a neighborhood of their choice. In New York City, HPD, NYCHA, and HCR administer HCVs.

**Housing Maintenance Code (HMC)** Legal code that sets standards for decent housing maintenance, enumerating duties and responsibilities for both owners and tenants in New York City. HPD is responsible for enforcing this code.

**HUD Income Limits (HUDIL)** The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines Income Limits for affordable housing, which determine potential tenants' income eligibility and rent prices for subsidized affordable housing projects. Income limits vary across the country, depending on local economic conditions, and are updated annually. In New York City and other high-cost metropolitan areas, HUD calculates Income Limits based on the area's high housing costs, *not* the Area Median Income. In New York City, HUD's annual 100% AMI calculation is derived from the cost of market-rate housing and is not tied to incomes of current area residents.

**Informal Shares** A typology of shared housing where one leaseholder lives with additional roommates, who have either written or verbal subleases, in the same apartment or house. In informal shares, roommates commonly share rent, as well as utility expenses like gas, internet, and electricity.

**J-51 Program** A property tax exemption and abatement for renovating a residential apartment building, including SRO buildings. The benefit varies depending on the building's location and the type of improvements. HPD determines eligibility for this program, and the Department of Finance (DOF) administers the benefit.

**Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH)** A zoning framework that requires a share of new housing to be permanently affordable in medium- and high-density areas that are rezoned to promote new housing production. This policy was first enacted in 2016 and applies both to areas rezoned as part of city neighborhood plans, and from private rezoning applications.

**Multiple Dwelling** Per the HMC, a multiple dwelling is a dwelling which is either rented, leased, let or hired out, to be occupied, or is occupied, as the residence or home of three or more families living independently of each other.

**Multiple Dwelling Law (MDL)** New York State legal code that establishes proper housing standards in the State of New York.

**Non-Profit Institutions with Sleeping Accommodations (NPISA)** A use permitted as-of-right in Use Group 3 (community facilities) of the Zoning Resolution, which provides transient or permanent sleeping accommodations with associated services for residents. Rooming units may be built using the NPISA designation.

**Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504** A federal law that protects individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance

from any federal department or agency. This act governs structural modifications in housing in conjunction with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All HPD-assisted projects with five or more dwelling units must comply with the accessibility requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**Rent Stabilization** A policy that protects tenants in certain privately-owned buildings from illegal rent increases while allowing owners to maintain their buildings while realizing a reasonable profit. Rent stabilization applies to buildings with 6 or more units built prior to 1974 or that receive substantial government assistance. The New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (HCR) administers rent stabilization provisions.

**Rent Stabilization Law** A group of New York State laws that regulate rents across the New York State.

**Rooming Unit** Per the HMC, a rooming unit as one or more living rooms arranged to be occupied as a unit separate from all other living rooms, and which does not have both lawful sanitary facilities and lawful cooking facilities for the exclusive use of the family residing in such unit. Colloquially, many refer to *rooming units* as *SROs* or *SRO units*.

**Shared Housing** Consists of two or more independently occupied rooms that share living facilities such as a kitchen, a bathroom, or both. In shared housing, tenants will often, but not always have separate and independent relationships with their landlord. This housing comes in a variety of layouts, including but not limited to the following:

- **Suite-Style** Mimics a traditional apartment layout with multiple rooming units, a shared kitchen, private and/or shared bathroom(s), and communal living space within a single space.

- **Dorm-Style** Most similar to university accommodations or traditional single occupancy rooms (SROs), consisting of a hallway of rooming units with shared bathroom facilities for the entire area or floor. Communal spaces, such as kitchens and living rooms, are centrally located.
- **Commune-Style** Typically consists of individual rooming units as standalone structures private bathrooms may or may not be included in the standalone structure with a central main structure that hosts the kitchen and communal spaces.

**Shared Housing Rooming Units** A typology of shared housing in which rooming units are purpose-built to serve as shared housing. Today, these rooming units can only be built if they meet the provisions of HMC §27-2077. Shared housing that is owned or controlled by a non-profit or receives significant government subsidy is eligible under this provision.

**ShareNYC Pilot Program** An initiative that HPD launched in 2018 to explore existing and potential shared housing models to meet the needs of small households. See Section IV of this report for a detailed discussion of ShareNYC.

**Single Room Occupancy (SRO)** Per the HMC, occupancy by one or two persons of a single room, or of two or more rooms which are joined together, separated from all other rooms within an apartment in a multiple dwelling, so that the occupant or occupants thereof reside separately and independently of the other occupant or occupants of the same apartment. Colloquially, many refer to the *room or rooms* that a resident occupies as an SRO, instead of referring to the *condition of occupancy itself* as SRO.

**Universal Affordability Preference** A zoning framework that allows buildings to include at least 20% more housing if the additional homes are permanently affordable. This policy was first enacted in 2024 and applies to all medium- and high-density neighborhoods (R6 zoning and above) in New York City.

**Use Group** A use is any activity, occupation, business or operation which is conducted in a building or on a tract of land. Uses that have similar functional characteristics and/or nuisance impacts and are generally compatible with each other are listed in one or more of 18 groups that are categorized as residential uses (Use Groups 1–2), community facility uses (Use Groups 3–4), retail and service uses (Use Groups 5–9), regional commercial centers/amusement uses (Use Groups 10–12), waterfront/recreation uses (Use Groups 13–15), heavy automotive uses (Use Group 16) and industrial uses (Use Groups 17–18). Use group charts can be found in Chapter 2 of Articles II, III, and IV of the NYC Zoning Resolution.

### **Zoning Resolution of the City of New York (ZR)**

Legal code that regulates building height, bulk, and land uses in New York. The Department of City Planning (DCP) is responsible for maintaining the text and maps of this resolution and the Department of Buildings (DOB) is responsible for enforcing the Zoning Resolution.

## APPENDIX E

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