



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

1 Centre Street, 19th floor, New York, NY 10007  
(212) 669-8300 p (212) 669-4306 f  
431 West 125th Street, New York, NY 10027  
(212) 531-1609 p (212) 531-4615 f  
[www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov](http://www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov)

**Gale A. Brewer, Borough President**

## **Manhattan Borough President's Office Public Hearing Zoning for Quality and Affordability/Mandatory Inclusionary Housing November 16, 2015**

Welcome to this public hearing of the Manhattan Borough President's Office. I am Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer. I am here tonight to listen to your comments and hear your views and concerns on two really important proposals to change our Borough's zoning. The Administration has proposed two citywide amendments to our Zoning Resolution which will change the way in which affordable housing is built and the requirements for building that housing. These proposals are moving through a public review process so it is really important for me to hear your views and concerns on these proposals. That is what tonight is about.

The first proposal, "Zoning for Quality and Affordability," alters how senior housing is classified and constructed, reduces parking requirements for the construction of affordable housing, and changes the allowable shape of buildings, including height, when buildings contain affordable or senior housing.

I appreciate the goals of this text amendment but have concerns with the specifics -- especially around the changes to the building envelopes when senior or affordable housing is provided. There is an across the board five foot height increase for a qualifying ground floor. However, most of the additional height increases would be tied to the provision of senior housing or affordable housing. Today, a developer can build affordable housing under two voluntary or "opt-in" programs: (1) The older R10 program which allows affordable housing in return for a generous density bonus in our densest residential districts; and (2) and a voluntary inclusionary housing program which gives a bonus to developers in medium to high density residential districts specifically mapped for this program, in return for providing affordable housing. Under ZQA, in combination with the five feet across the board increase for qualifying ground floors, these height increases would in most cases result in increases of up to 25 feet, but in some cases could be up to 50 feet in total.

If we are going to consider this additional height, I think the voluntary inclusionary housing program should be fixed so that we know it is providing us with the maximum and best opportunities for affordable housing in return for this added height. That means prohibiting poor doors, requiring more affordable housing in our hottest neighborhoods, and preventing double dipping with the 421-a program.

The "Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Program" is the second proposal to create affordable housing. This program would apply to specific future developments needing "special permits," or to neighborhood-wide rezonings, such as those that may result from the discussions ongoing in East Harlem and Inwood, which would allow for significant new residential development. This program would require developers to provide either 25 percent or 30 percent affordable housing depending on the degree of affordability or target AMI levels.

I support mandatory inclusionary housing. If it were up to me all new significant residential developments would require some affordable housing. I especially support the idea of allowing the

program to apply to special permits, or those actions that apply to a single development that come through ULURP, so that the City could decide that developers converting buildings to residential use have to build affordable housing or contribute to a fund.

But we do have concerns about implementation, including when exactly the provisions requiring affordable housing in the case of special permits are triggered, protections against harassment for rent stabilized tenants, and transparency and assurances that money in the fund from Manhattan projects gets spent in the same Manhattan communities. Also, we have heard from many of our Manhattan Community Boards that the affordable housing income bands are inadequate and should allow for more housing at both the lowest and more moderate income levels.

We have worked very closely with our Community Boards, Manhattan elected officials and organizations to support them in their review of these proposals:

- DCP came to October 15, 2015 Borough Board to present both proposals.
- Our Land Use staff ran additional informational sessions for CB Chairs, Land Use/Housing committee chairs and any members who wished to attend, on October 16, 2015 and October 30, 2015 to supplement the Borough Board presentation.
- My Land Use staff ran an additional session for MBP staff, community liaisons on October 8, 2015.
- I have met twice with all of the Manhattan delegation staff and officials on these proposals.
- My Office has already met with the Landmarks advocacy groups and with affordable housing non-profits in October 2015.

Letters which my office has written to the Department of City Planning where my questions and concerns are laid out more fully are available in the back of the room.

I want to thank the Department of City Planning and HPD for being here tonight to listen to the concerns of my constituents. I especially want to thank Commissioner Anna Levin, our amazing appointee to the City Planning Commission, who works so hard and takes her position so seriously and who is here tonight to listen to your concerns as well.

My comments on these proposals are not due until Monday November 30<sup>th</sup>, two weeks from now. So although you have heard some of my thoughts, it is important for me to hear and consider yours. I want to thank you all for coming and taking this opportunity to inform my position on these zoning changes.

There are a lot of people here so I ask that we all listen respectfully to each other.