

# POLICY AND DESIGN FOR HOUSING

## Lessons of the Urban Development Corporation 1968-1975

### Part 3 The current state of housing

Here the first two parts of the exhibition are brought further into the current context; the current national and local housing crises are highlighted, and we critically ask what lessons we can draw from the experiences of the UDC. This last section also presents several current housing development models that aim to address some of the issues that were of concern to the UDC. These examples, of both housing crisis and housing design, are drawn from the New York City context.

# Maintaining the commitment

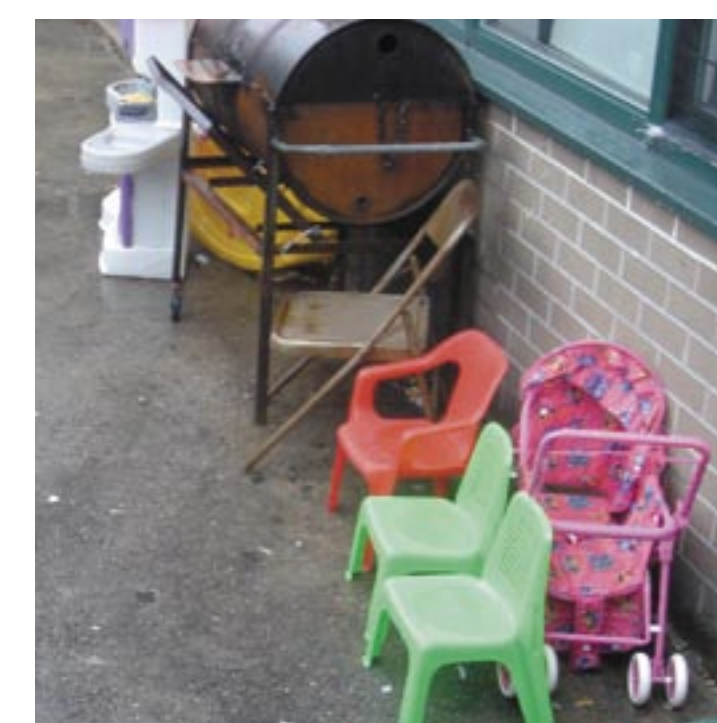
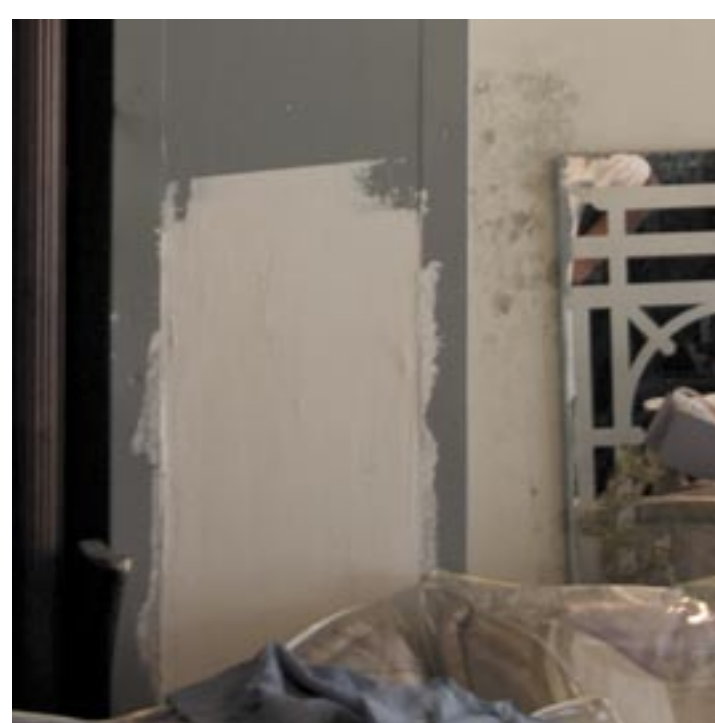
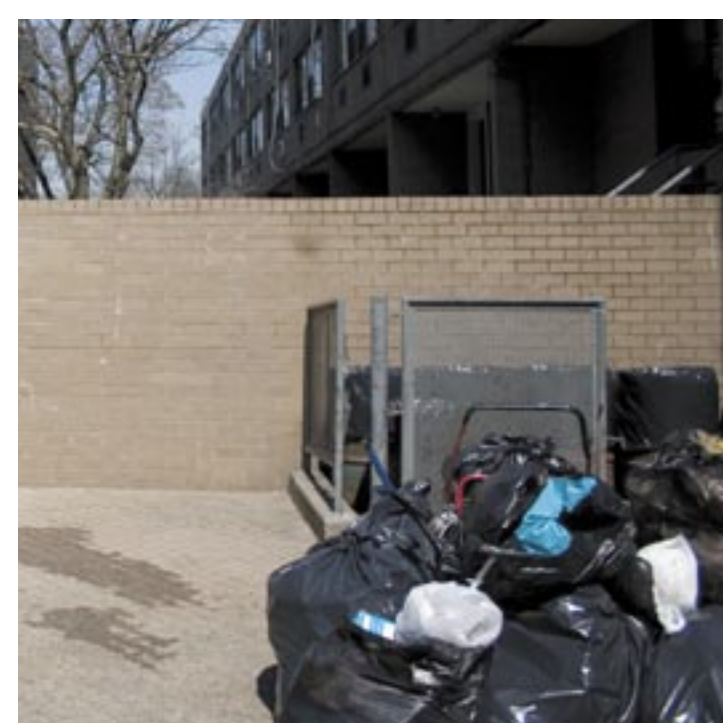
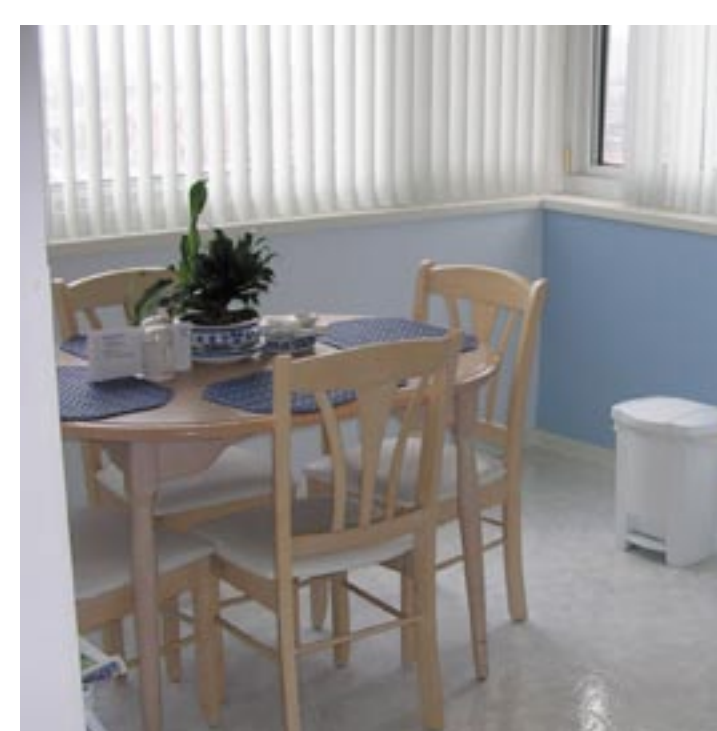


## New York State, 2005

UDC developments have been an important part of the social fabric of the communities where they are located. While some are seen outwardly in need of repair, the dwellings within are still treasured homes of the residents. The photographs below were taken in the past year by student researchers, documenting problems that emerged long after the UDC's involvement in the management of its housing ended. In some instances, without the UDC's continued role in ensuring maintenance of the buildings and grounds, deterioration of public spaces has become evident.

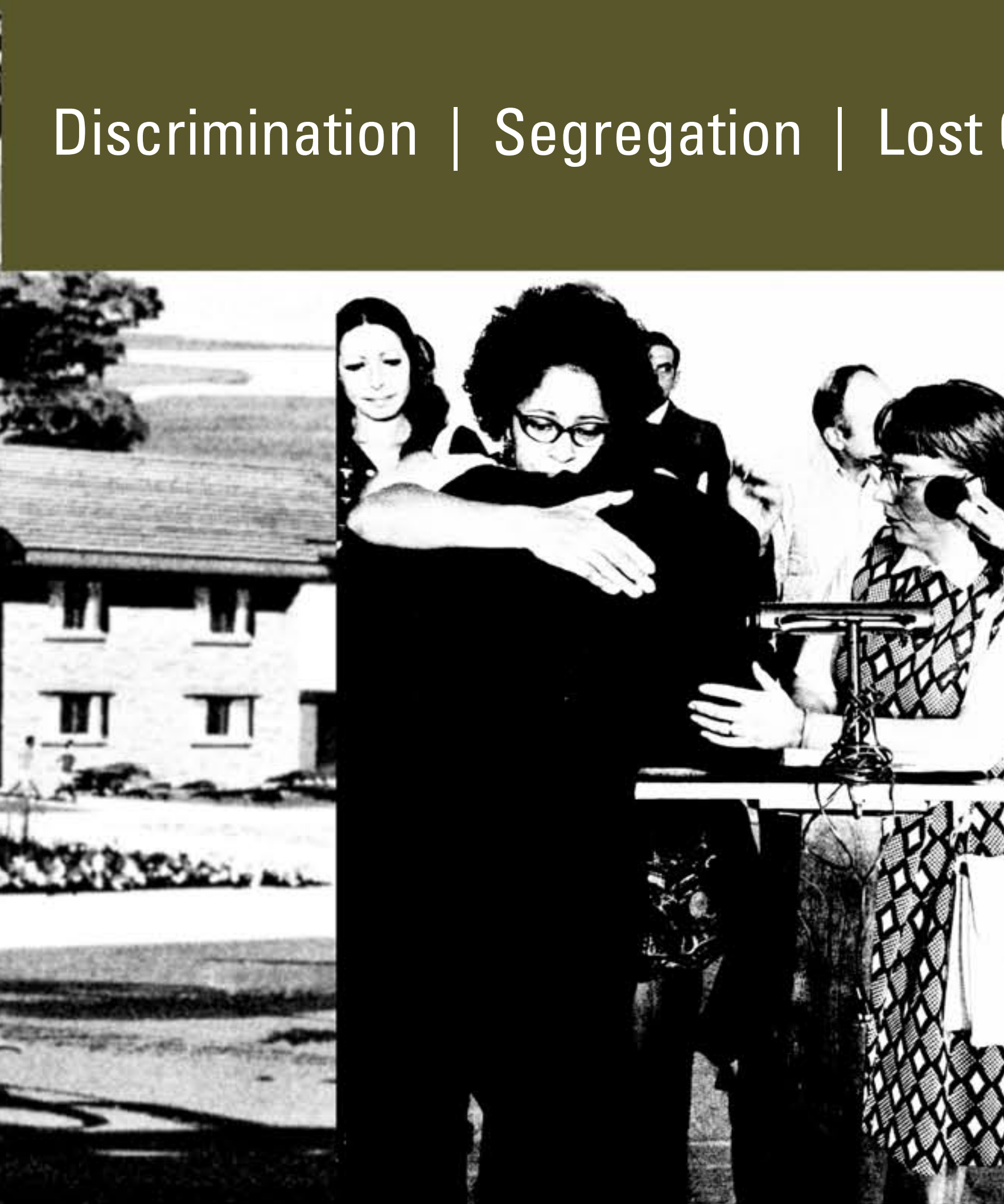
Shown here are evidence of lack of maintenance, as well as maintenance that defies the original communitarian goals of the UDC developments.

Also shown are some spaces in which residents are themselves maintaining the commitment, keeping living spaces beautiful and communities strong.



# Housing unbuilt: Politics over people

Discrimination | Segregation | Lost Opportunity



1970

2005

## The UDC attempts to address Wyandanch housing issues:

### July 1970

At the behest of church leaders, the UDC agrees to finance a Housing and Planning study. Wyandanch churches organize the Wyandanch Task force comprised of 20 organizations to “improve the existing Wyandanch housing stock and to build new homes and better the hamlet’s living conditions.”

### November 1971

The Wyandanch Community Development Corporation [WCDC] and the UDC enter a letter of agreement to build new housing.

### June 1972

Plans completed for 29 clustered two-story buildings with 182 garden apartments to serve a low- and moderate-income population.

### September 1972

The Deer Park Conservative Club holds a meeting to oppose the proposed development. A racially charged debate ensues.

### Spring 1973

In reaction to a UDC proposal to build 100 units of low- and moderate-income housing in Westchester County, a State bill passes, curbing the UDC’s power in suburban areas by giving towns and villages veto power over UDC housing developments.

### June 1973

The WCDC garners the support of many local political and church leaders and in July, 1000 people attend a rally and sign a petition in support of the UDC proposal.

### August 26, 1973

Before “90 silent onlookers,” the five-member Babylon Town Board votes 3-2 to reject the proposal.

### August 2004

In a visioning process for Wyandanch, a call is made for low-rise housing, similar to the UDC housing proposed more than 30 years ago.

## The Emergence of Suburban New York: The unbuilt case of Wyandanch, Long Island, NY 1970-73

The development of the areas outside New York City changed dramatically with the development of the region’s highway and parkway system and the availability of cheaper long-term finance promoted by the newly developed federal home mortgage programs. Underlying both these actions were policies of exclusion based on race and gender that were codified in federal loan underwriting policies and the “redlining” practices of banks and realtors. These exclusionary policies set up the pattern of racial and economic segregation in New York’s suburban communities that continue to plague our region today.

In the early 50s, the first large-scale moderately priced suburban housing development on Long Island, known as Levittown, was built. Levittown, consisting of over 17,000 houses on 4,000 acres housed 82,000 residents all of whom were white. Wyandanch was one of two areas that were set-aside by local realtors to house African-Americans. By 1969, 68 percent of Wyandanch residents were on public assistance due in part to poorly crafted public policies. Because few enterprises chose to locate there, the economic base of Wyandanch was limited, resulting in poor schools and a dearth of public services.

In the summer of 1967, Wyandanch experienced four days of social unrest. Local political leaders, recognizing that this was the result of a pattern of “restrictive zoning regulations,” initiated a number of meetings with local youth and community leaders. A county report launched at that time highlighted the housing needs and related issues of poverty that plagued the community.

**Levittown was 100% white in the 1950s; today less than 1% of residents are African-American.**

**Wyandanch is 78% African-American and still one of Long Island’s lowest-income communities.**

While the UDC worked to address the housing issues in Wyandanch, the plans were deeply undermined. The housing planned for Wyandanch was never built. There is still a pressing need for housing in Wyandanch.

# New York's housing crisis



## New York still faces a housing crisis of enormous proportions

with homeless New Yorkers, people of color and immigrants facing one of the most severe housing shortages in the City's history.

Tens of thousands of moderate- and middle-income New Yorkers are trapped in apartments too small for their growing families and pay more than 30% of their income for rent. New York has seen a growth of 33% in average rents along with only a 3% increase in the average income of renters. In 2004 a New Yorker needed to earn a minimum of \$18.88 per hour to afford the rent for a modest two-bedroom apartment – if indeed one could be found.

In excess of **500,000 families** pay more than **50% of their income** in rent.

There is a housing **shortage of between 250,000 to 500,000** units.

Currently **224,000 households are on the Section 8 rental voucher waiting list**, and 141,000 households are on waiting lists for public housing. It is an average of 8 years on the waiting list.

The issues of "expiring use" facing many housing developments arise because the affordability of housing units receiving these subsidies is not permanently assured. The restrictions on rent levels, tenant eligibility, and overall operations last only for a specific time period. Today in New York City **36,000 units including many built by the UDC are facing the loss of their subsidies** as their owners consider "opting out" of the subsidized housing market.

**Homeless New Yorkers staying in the city's homeless shelters is at an all time high** -- more than 29,000 people, (12,000 children) on an average night in recent months.

In 2000, the citywide vacancy rate for rentals was 3.2 percent, down from 4.1 percent in 1990 and the **lowest rental vacancy rate of the last decade**.

There are at least **150,000 doubled-up renter households** in the city, and **11 percent of renters live in overcrowded apartments**, according to the most recent Census Bureau housing survey in New York City.

Due to our growing dependence on market solutions to our housing problems and recent zoning and development policies, **New York City today has one of the highest rates of racially and economically segregated neighborhoods in the country** – a reversal of our historical pattern of development.

# The national affordable housing crisis



Since 1965, federal and state governments have supported the production of low- and moderate-income housing primarily by giving subsidies to private developers of multifamily housing.

In the 1990s **the federal government's role in the provision of housing for low-income households was drastically reduced**, after forty years of gradual decline.

Responsibility without financial resources devolved to state and local governments, with heavy reliance on the private market and homeownership.

**Existing subsidies for housing are being cut**, restrictions on how much low-income residents can be charged are being eliminated and many of the contracts for subsidized housing are expiring, allowing those properties to charge market-rate rents.

Plans for downsizing public housing, demolishing it or converting it to market-rate housing or private ownership are proceeding unabated.

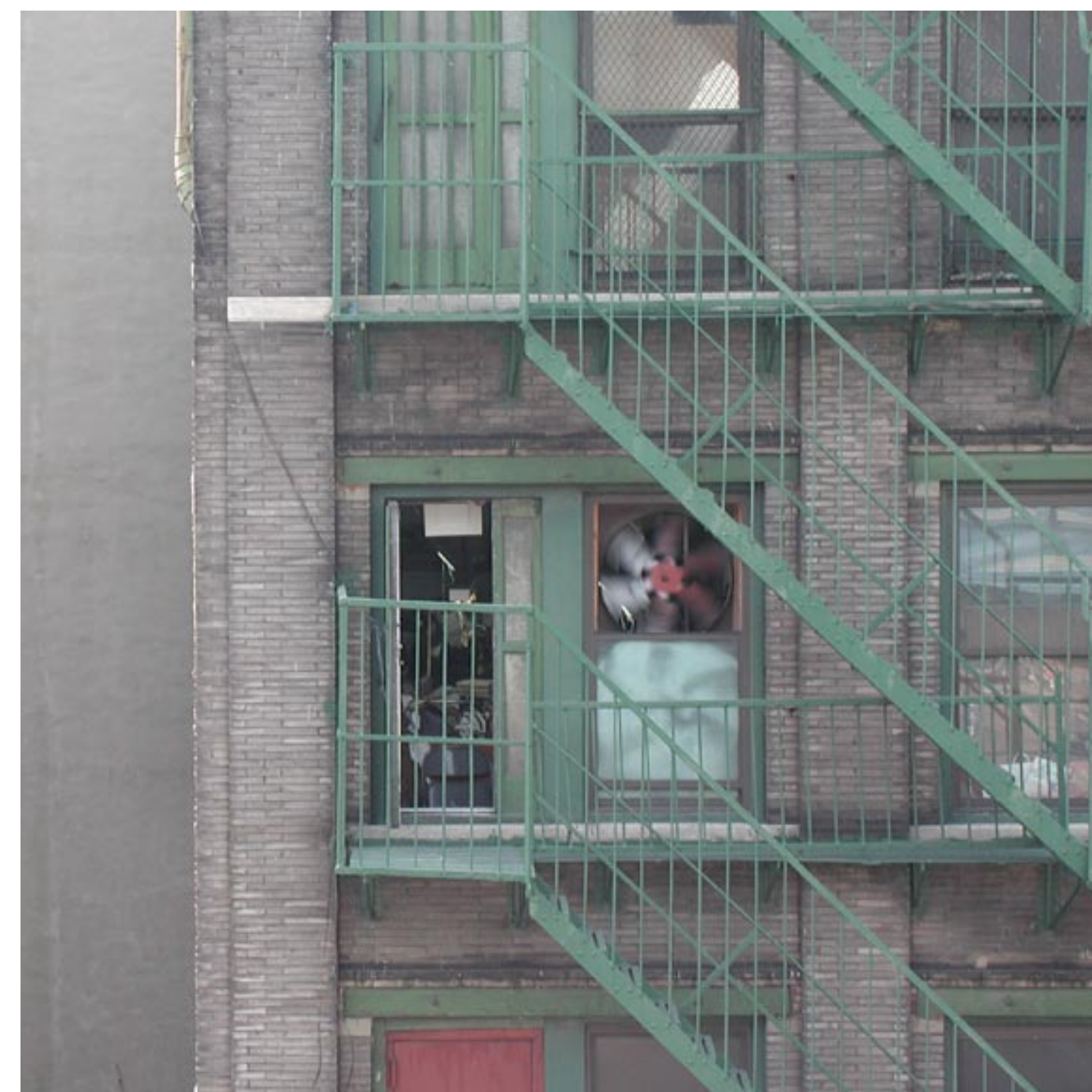
**Housing costs are increasing at a rate far greater than the average wage of working families.**

Coupled with a shrinking rental sector and predatory lending to poor and minority households, this has led to a situation where, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition:

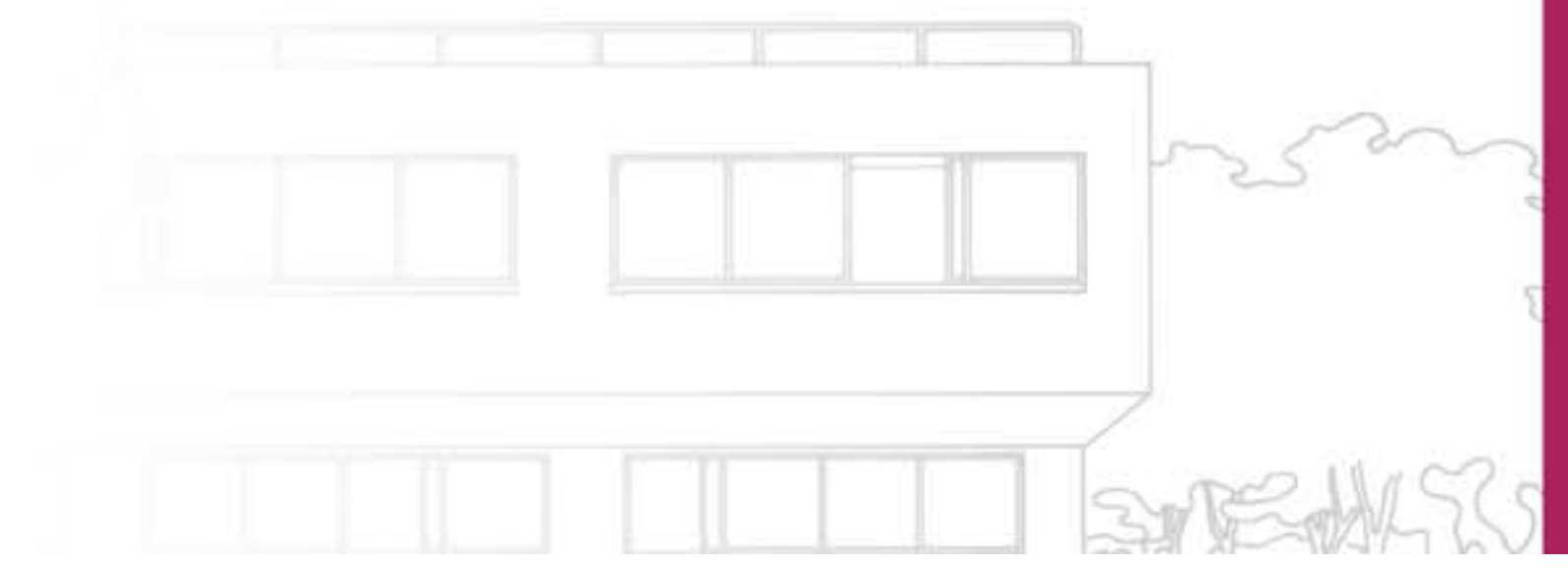
**Housing is out of reach** in more counties across the country than ever before, even for a working family with two full-time minimum-wage workers.

Renter households in over 990 counties, home to almost 79% of all renter households in the nation, must have at least 80 hours a week of work at the local minimum wage to afford a two-bedroom apartment at the local fair-market rent.

Photography © Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani



# New York renewing leadership



New York has had the greatest housing need in the United States. It has also been a leader in finding creative solutions for adequate and affordable housing for lower- and moderate-income people in the face of a federal withdrawal of housing production resources.

## New York City has again assumed leadership.

We applaud Mayor Bloomberg's establishment of a Housing Trust Fund, and the New York City Council and the Bloomberg Administration's recent action in establishing significant inclusionary zoning requirements for new development outside of Manhattan. This is the result of enlightened political leadership and 25+ years of advocacy by community-based housing organizations, notably the Campaign for Inclusionary Zoning and Housing First! They have made a tremendous contribution to meeting New Yorkers' affordable housing needs.

## In addition, we propose that the City:

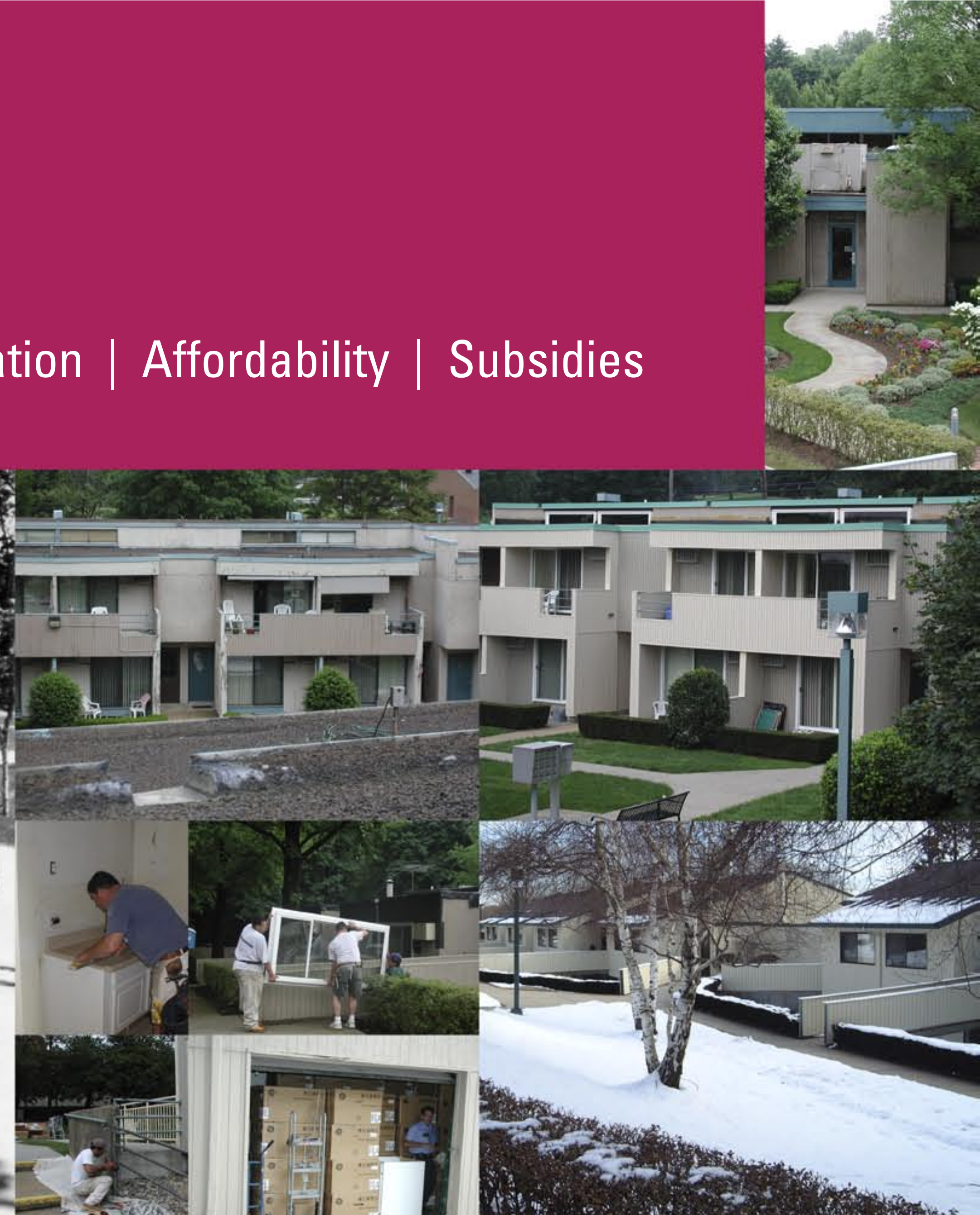
- Explore **establishment of a new public entity** to work with community-based development organizations, housing intermediaries, the New York City Housing Authority, the City of New York Housing & Preservation Development, and private developers to provide high quality affordable housing. This entity could partner with, lease portions of, and engage in the development and/or management of new and substantially rehabilitated housing.
- Continue to implement land use and **zoning policies that maximize choice** and provide diversified housing and employment opportunities for all New Yorkers.
- Require that, as in London, **50% of all new housing be set aside for affordable housing** and that a combination of incentives, subsidies and regulations be adopted to achieve this objective.
- Create **new housing**, upgrade substandard apartments, preserve existing housing, **protect units facing the loss of subsidies** and stimulate investment by undertaking a sustained ten-year capital plan to preserve at least 100,000 affordable housing units and build 200,000 new units of well-designed and environmentally sustainable affordable housing.

## The State should join the City to increase Battery Park City monies for affordable housing.

- In the 1980s, City and State officials committed \$1 billion in excess revenues generated by the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) to the creation of affordable housing throughout the City. **Only a small portion of BPCA funds were ever dedicated or used for affordable housing.**
- The Battery Park City Authority generates more than \$75 million in excess revenues annually and could produce \$1 billion over the next decade, **enough to finance the production of more than 10,000 new affordable housing units** and the preservation of at least 5,000 units in the City.
- A significant step is the Mayor's proposal, **creating a Housing Trust Fund** using \$130 million in surplus funds from the Battery Park City Authority to build or preserve 4,500 apartments citywide over four years. We urge the Governor to join the Mayor in ensuring that at least \$1 billion is made available for this purpose.

# Sustaining UDC Housing

Rehabilitation | Affordability | Subsidies



1975

2004



## The case of Walnut Hill, Haverstraw, NY 1975 and 2004

Walnut Hill is comprised of 180 units and is located on 7.75 acres north of New York City. All of the one-bedroom units were for low- and moderate-income families, primarily the elderly. The project's eight two-story structures occupy a sloping site, stepping down in a linear pattern conforming to the land. Each structure consists of upper and lower apartments with every resident having a private entrance and no stairs to climb. All units have convenient access to automobiles, pedestrian ways and community facilities, and have views of the courtyards. Upper level apartments have balconies, while the lower units have small garden areas. Walnut Hill's site plan created a community identity and scale using a ring road, pedestrian spine and community facility.



In 2004, Walnut Hill Apartments completed a process of rehabilitation undertaken by Related Apartment Preservation, LLC. Related prepaid the UDC mortgage under HUD's Section 236 decoupling program using tax-exempt bonds from the New York State Housing Finance Agency and as-of-right four percent Low Income Housing Tax Credits. This financing scheme obligated Related to extend the project's affordability for 40 years from the date of refinancing. Related also reengineered the property physically, improving and extending its life, while allowing the current residents to stay in their homes. Each family was moved out for the duration of the interior renovations, typically kitchens and bathrooms, which took only a few days. The original Texture 111 exterior finish was covered with new vertical vinyl siding.

Architect: Smotrich & Platt // Structural engineer: Atlas/Balogh Associates // Soils engineer: Woodward Clyde  
 Mechanical engineer: Robert Ettinger Associates // Landscape design: Environmental Systems Planning  
 Renovating architect: Kurzon Architects  
 Photography © Smotrich & Platt; © Related Apartment Preservation; Aerial image © US Geological Survey, Microsoft Terraserver-USA



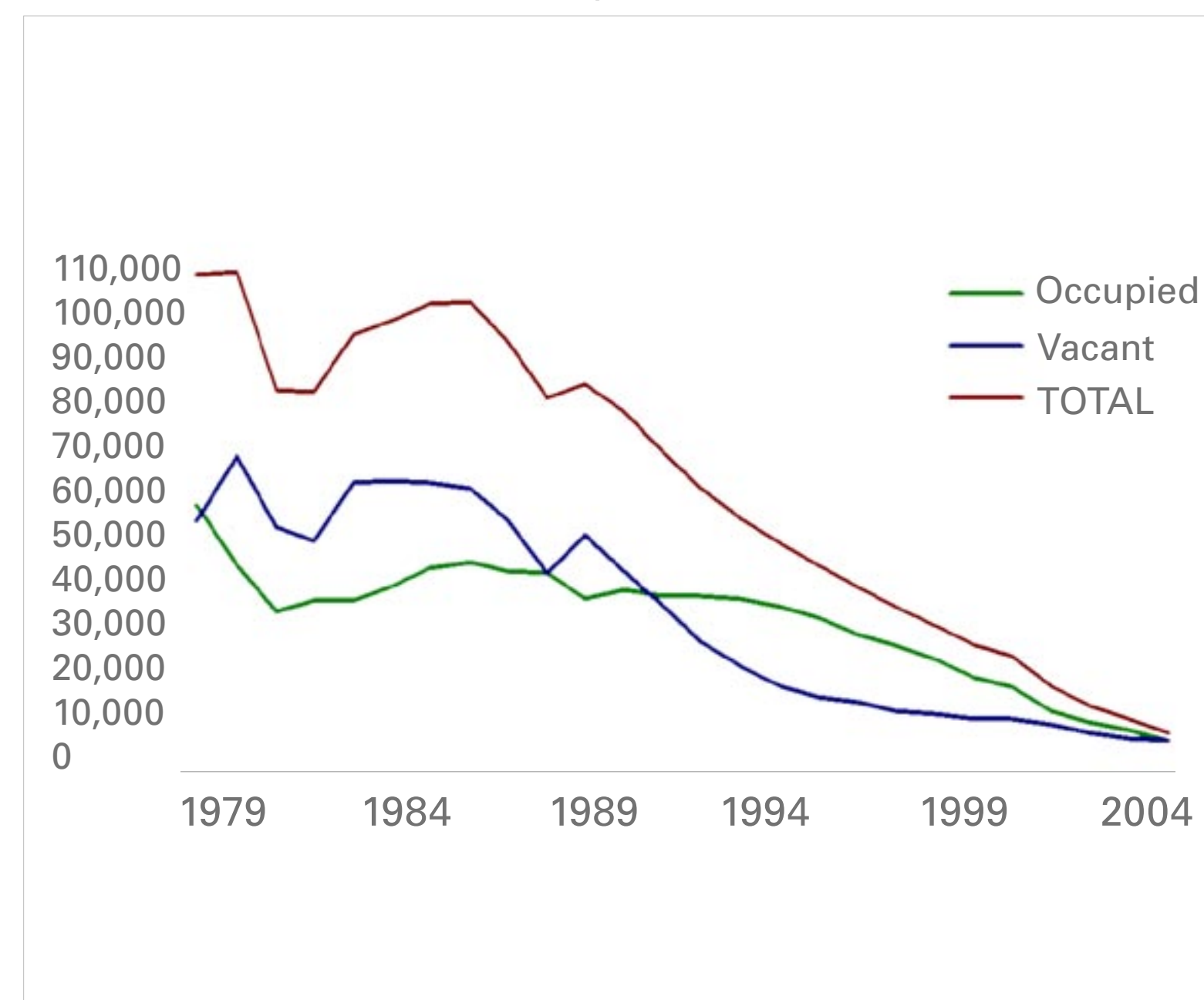
# NYC Housing Preservation and Development

## HPD Accomplishments, 1978 - 2004

In 1978, responsibility for the management of residential property taken by the City in lieu of taxes was transferred from the Department of Real Estate to the newly created Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). There were 9,261 buildings totaling 108,372 units in HPD's portfolio in July 1978. Property managers labored through the worst years of New York City's housing crisis, salvaging the properties that would become the building blocks for the largest affordable housing preservation and development effort in the nation.

Over the past thirty years, the inventory has been reduced dramatically through a variety of innovative programs that rehabilitated and returned thousands of buildings to responsible private owners — both for profit and not-for profit. Today, just 3,000 units remain in the City's portfolio. HPD has rehabilitated more than 90% of its inherited portfolio of abandoned housing and returned it to the affordable housing market. When completed, the disposition of the City-owned housing stock will be the biggest rehabilitation effort undertaken by any city in the country, keeping more units affordable for the citizens of New York.

Number of Units in *In Rem* Stock in New York City, 1979-2005  
Source: HPD Production Credit System



HPD Investment in New York City by Neighborhood  
Source: HPD Production Credit System



Top to bottom:  
Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn  
Boston Road, Bronx  
Morton Place, Bronx



In 1993, before redevelopment  
In 1993, before redevelopment  
In 1992, before redevelopment

In 1995, after redevelopment  
In 1998, after redevelopment  
In 1999, after redevelopment





# NYC HPD Today



## The New Housing Marketplace Plan

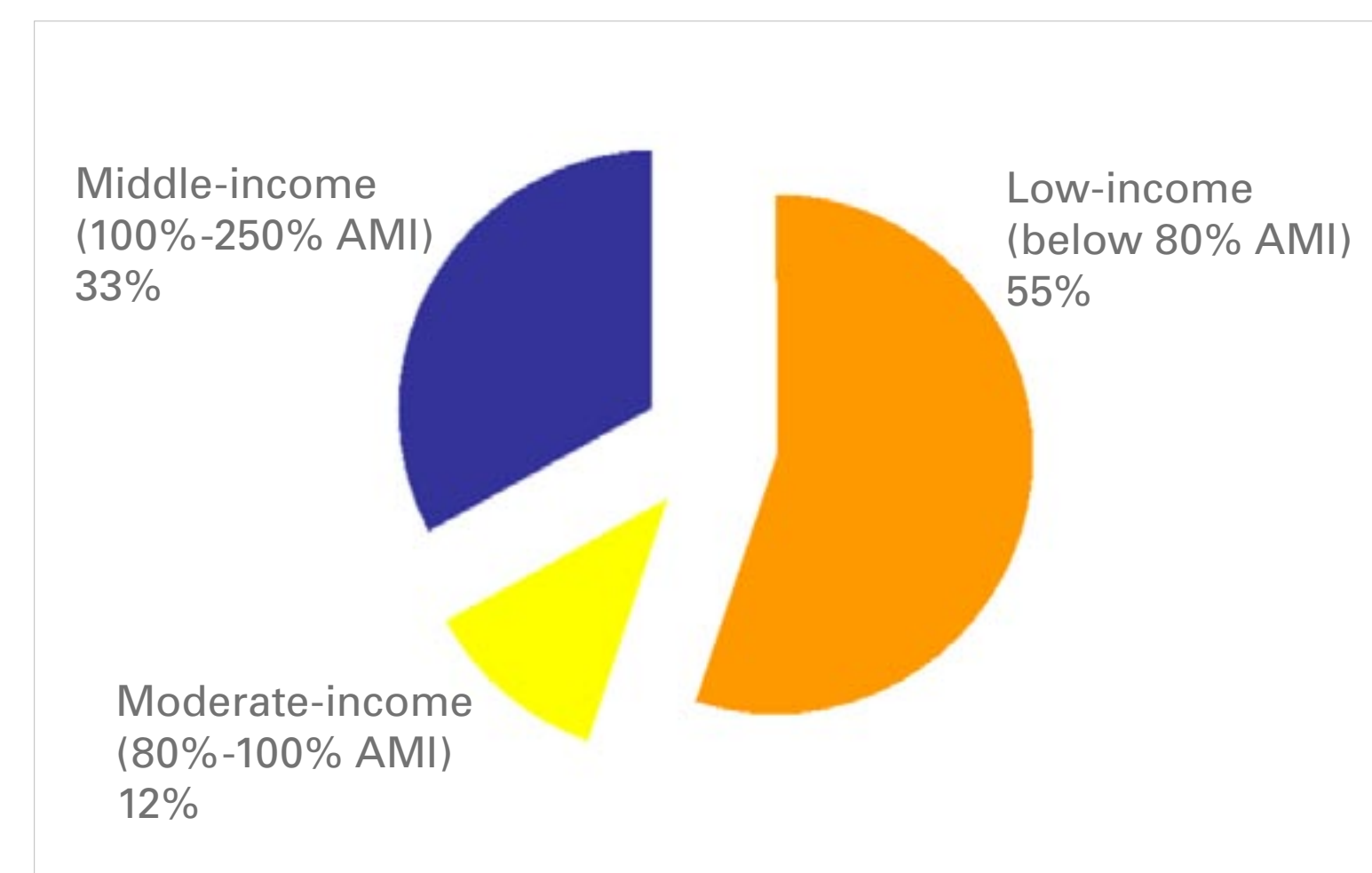
Without the substantial portfolio of city-owned buildings for affordable housing development, HPD is finding new tools to create affordable housing in partnership with private owners and non-profits. In December 2002, Mayor Bloomberg announced a new five-year \$3 billion housing plan to create and preserve 65,000 units of affordable housing. The New Housing Marketplace Plan enhances and expands residential planning and increases the production of affordable housing. The plan also expands homeownership opportunities, preserves existing affordable housing and focuses on improving the enforcement of the City's Housing Maintenance Code.

### the new housing MARKETPLACE

CREATING HOUSING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION



Area Median Income (AMI) for New York City is \$62,800 for a family of four. Shown below is the range of income levels the Housing Plan targets.



In the second year of the five year plan, the City is meeting its goal. By the end of June 2005, at least 26,000 units – or 40% of the total – will be completed or in the development pipeline.

As part of the New Housing Marketplace Plan, the Administration is pursuing a range of new initiatives. Two recent examples include:

### Rezoning

Greenpoint/Williamsburg, Brooklyn and the Hudson Yards in Manhattan will create and preserve over 25,000 units of housing. In these rezonings, up to 33% of the units will be affordable, breaking new ground in affordable housing by developing the most aggressive inclusionary zoning program in the country. Other rezonings throughout the city will create tens of thousands of units of new housing.

### Housing Trust Fund

The City has proposed the creation of the New York City Housing Trust Fund, which would be funded by \$130 million in Battery Park City Authority revenues. This Fund would be used to create or preserve 4,500 affordable housing units for more than 11,000 New Yorkers over the next four years.

Map of rezonings to create housing - as of May 2005



Mayor Bloomberg celebrates announcement of the New York City Housing Trust Fund with affordable housing advocates.



# “New Housing New York” Competition



## Seeking the next generation of affordable housing, 2004

The New Housing New York (NHNY) competition was launched in the fall of 2003 by the City Council of New York, the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter and the City University of New York. On February 9th, 2004 the jury announced the winners, and cash prizes of \$43,000 were awarded.

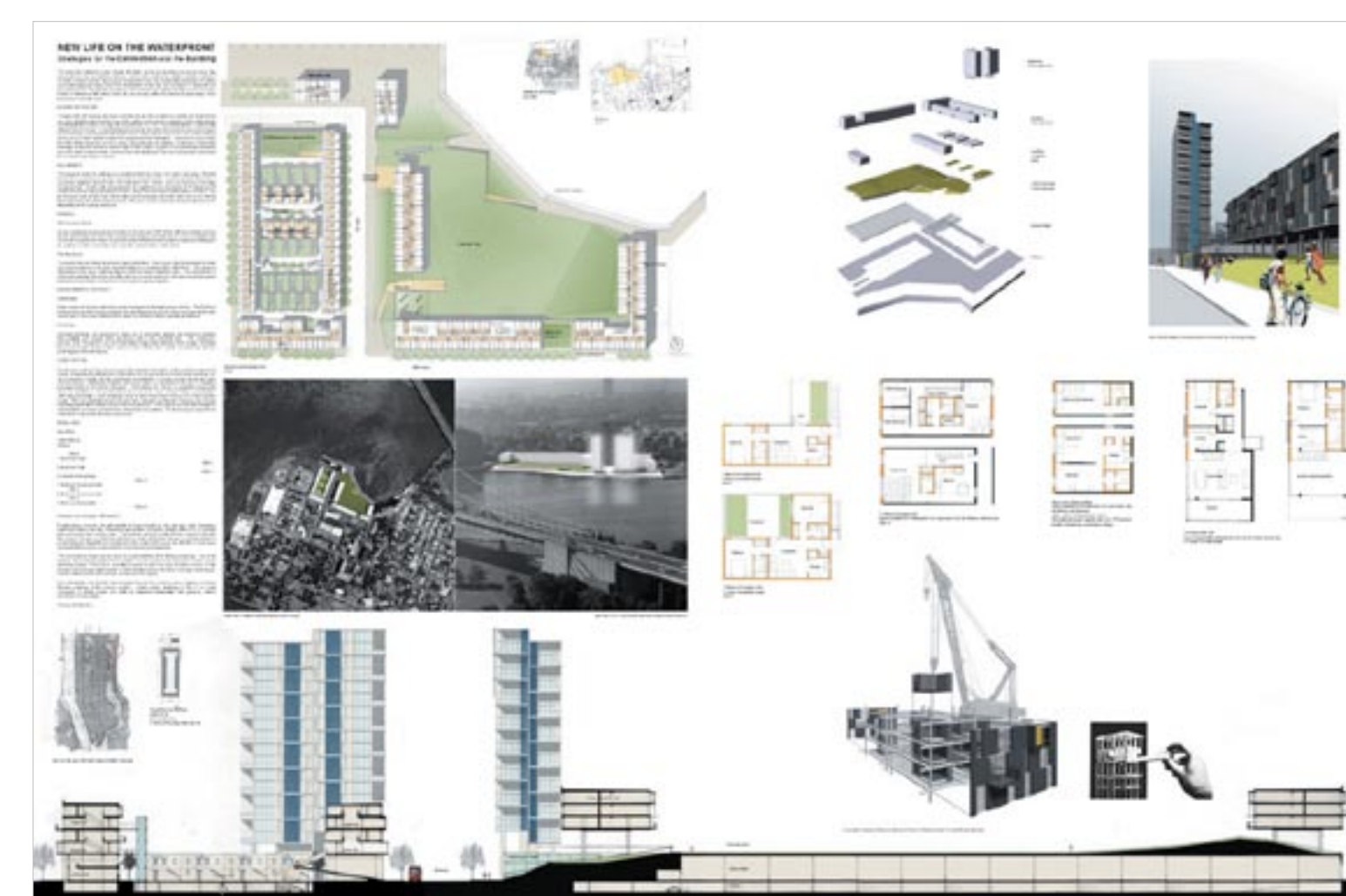
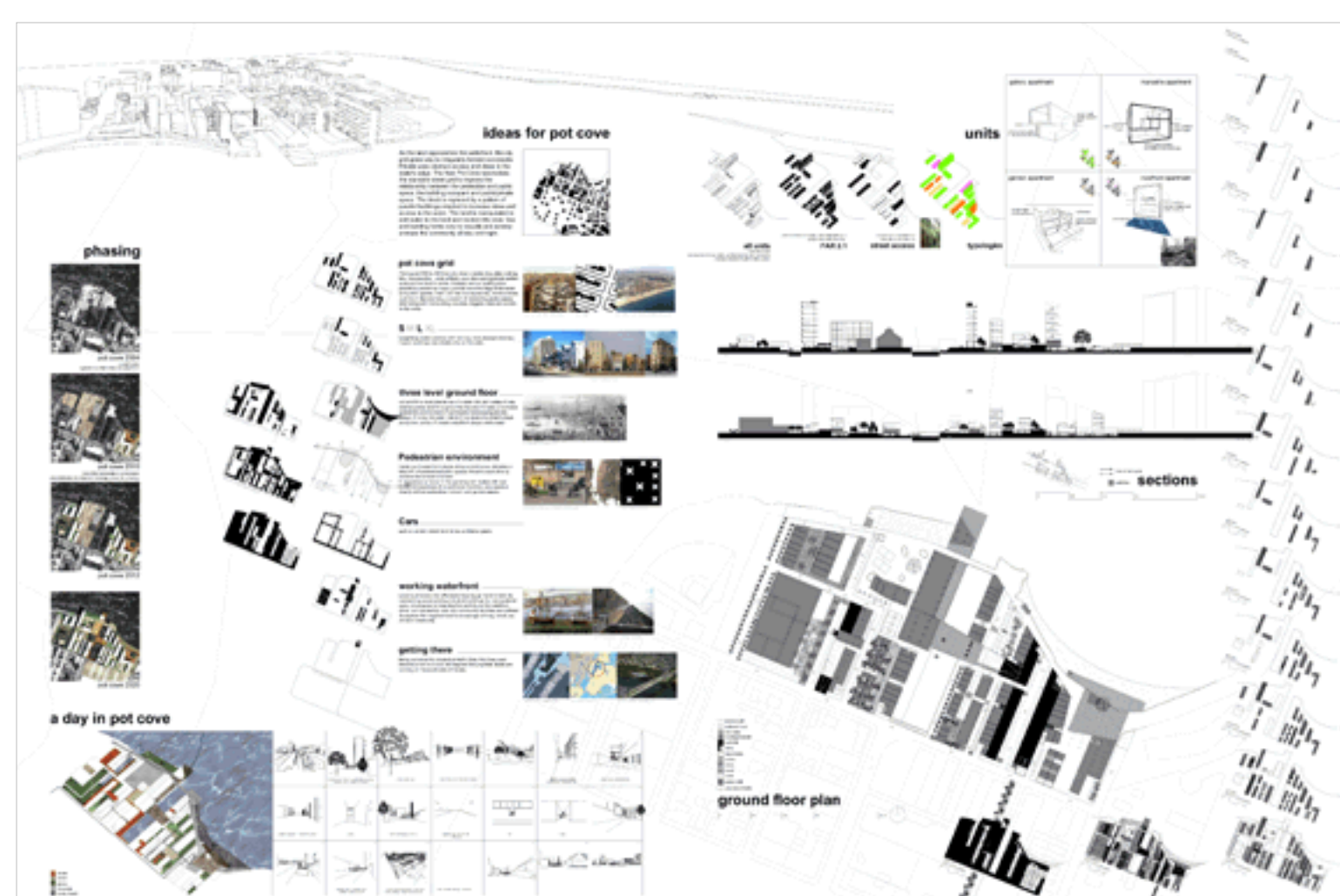
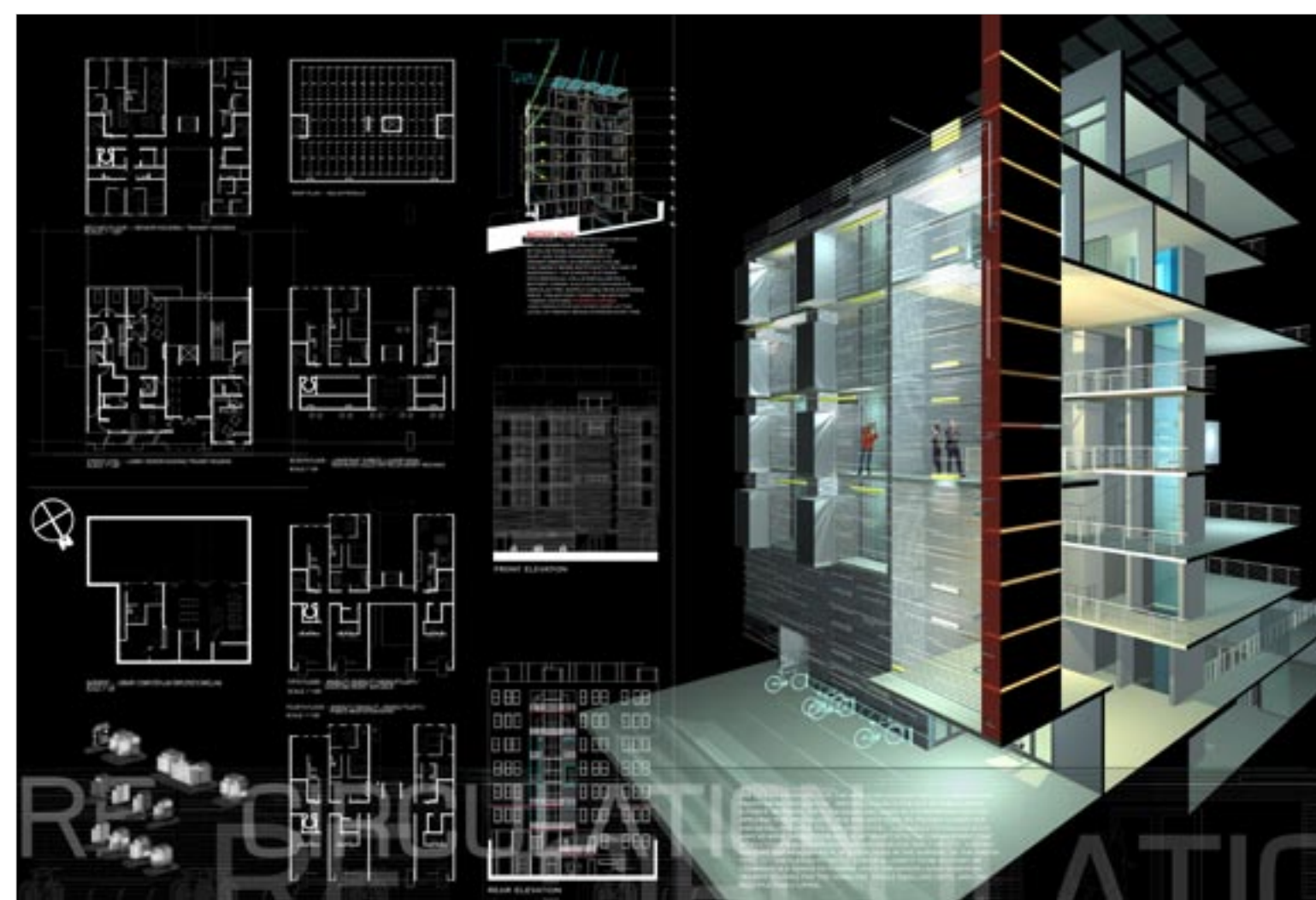
The goal of the NHNY competition was to expand existing concepts for high quality affordable housing in New York City. The competition was held on three sites throughout the city that represent prototypical contexts for future affordable housing development: in East Harlem, an infill in a row of brownstone houses; in Brooklyn, the development of a block front facing the 4th Avenue corridor; and, in Queens, an entire block in an underutilized manufacturing zone to be rezoned for low and/or mid-rise construction. Competitors were invited to design one, two or all three of the typical sites in the NHNY competition program, and to propose residential buildings and neighborhoods that illustrate innovative approaches to affordable housing that contribute to the building of neighborhood.

The competition provided a forum for discovering new possibilities for developing affordable housing in New York City and addressed statutory limitations, including current zoning and building code regulations.

Top to bottom:

Manhattan 1st Prize: Clinton W. Brister, Choi Law & Melody Yiu  
 Brooklyn 1st Prize: Blostein/Overly Architects  
 Queens 1st Prize: ARTE New York

2nd Prize: Andrew Berman Architects  
 1st Honorable Mention: Karen Hock and Sven Schroeter  
 2nd Prize: Schwartz-Kinnard Architects



# We call for commitment!



In response to the growing housing crisis there have been a number of coalitions on a city, state and federal level that have put forth ideas to move from where we are to where we should be going. They all have developed agendas worthy of consideration, many of which are on view in this exhibition.

## Housing initiatives must be undertaken at all levels of government.

First, there is a role and responsibility for **the federal government** that has for far too long withdrawn from active involvement in addressing the nation's housing needs.

**The states** must also play a key role in addressing issues of affordable housing finance as well as smart growth, equitable land use and development patterns.

The role of **the City** and of **community-based advocacy** and development groups continues to be critical and should be recognized and supported by all levels of government.

**The city, state and federal government** must work together to confront the difficult issues of racial and economic segregation that continue to plague our society.

## Where will we live?

Photography © UDC Annual Reports; © Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani



# POLICY AND DESIGN FOR HOUSING

## Lessons of the Urban Development Corporation 1968-1975

### Comments From visitors and the press

Regarding "...an architecture that conjures up grim associations - the housing projects conceived in New York City between 1968 and 1975 - a show at the Center for Architecture offers a more nuanced view of these urban projects... Today, their unbridled optimism may even spark a brief moment of nostalgia."

-The New York Times, Sunday June 12, 2005

Architects need to be more socially conscious in their design work and address real needs of people. Thanks for bringing this to light!

-Exhibition Visitor, June 2005

Magnificently organized exhibits in a setting that makes you feel the architects are among us. The case studies here really are thought provoking. The fact that most of them are right in our own backyard makes them all the more interesting. I will surely be back to visit soon!

-Exhibition Visitor, July 2005

Let us renew our commitment to provide affordable and safe housing for all Americans. We can do this, but we must constantly tell our legislators this and get their commitment.

-Exhibition Visitor, August 2005