

Basement Apartment Conversions

Affordable Housing
New York City Needs Now



**BASEMENT
APARTMENTS
SAFE FOR
EVERYONE**

Introduction

AGENDA

- Background
- Coronavirus & Basements
- Why Basements Matter
- Join the Campaign

SPEAKERS TODAY:

- Chhaya CDC
- Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
- Queens Legal Services
- Pratt Center for Community Development

Background



2009

2006

The Basement Apartments Safe for Everyone (BASE) Campaign has been working for over 10 years to mobilize New York communities for the creation of a citywide program to streamline basement and cellar conversions into code-compliant, safe living spaces.

Pratt Center and Chhaya
CDC publish “New
York’s Housing
Underground”

Background

2009

Pratt Center and Chhaya
CDC publish “New York’s
Housing Underground”

2016
East New York
Rezoning



2019

Won the East New York Basement
Conversion Pilot which established a
three-year pilot in Brooklyn Community
District 5 to test the feasibility of
converting basements and cellars into
safe, habitable, legally recognized
apartments with goal of converting 40
basements/cellars to apartments

East New York Basement Pilot Legislation



2020

2019
WHAT WAS LEGISLATED?

HOUSING →

TYPES OF HOMES THAT CAN PARTICIPATE:

BUILDING CODE

ADMINISTRATIVE

- One-, two- and three-family homes
- Basements and cellars eligible for conversion

East New York Basement Pilot Legislation



2020

2019
WHAT WAS LEGISLATED?

HOUSING
BUILDING CODE →
ADMINISTRATIVE

RULES FOR HOW UNITS* ARE CONSTRUCTED:

- Minimum ceiling height
- Automated sprinkler systems
- Emergency escape openings
- Smoke/CO alarms
- Fire separation of stairs, boilers, upstairs apartment
- Egress requirements
- Windows in habitable rooms

*only applicable for one- and two-family homes

East New York Basement Pilot Legislation



2020

2019
WHAT WAS LEGISLATED?

HOUSING

BUILDING CODE

ADMINISTRATIVE →

PILOT STRUCTURE & CONSTRUCTION
FILING PROCESSES:

- City financing option w/ rental regulatory requirements
- Violations deferment/waiver for permit issuance
- Waiver of DOB/DEP* application, permit, and inspection fees

* And other agencies if deemed appropriate

Background

2019

Won the East New York Basement Conversion Pilot



2020

Mayor's January 2020 "Blueprint to Save Our City" includes plan to bring basements citywide and legalize 10,000 basement apartments and accessory dwelling units over the next decade.

BASE kicks-off campaign in February to ensure the Mayor keeps his promise and citywide program becomes a reality

BASE Steering committee includes:

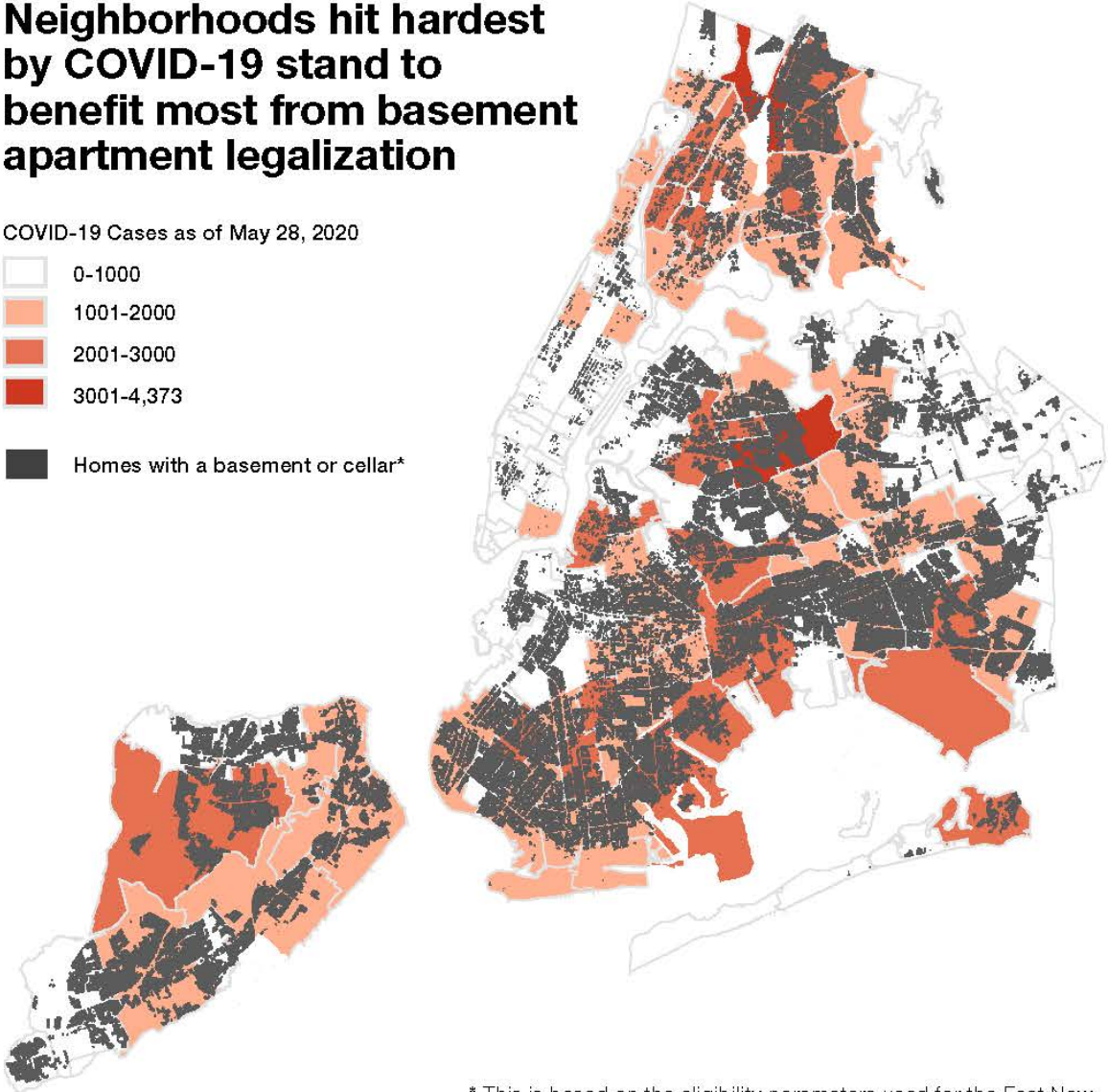
- Center for NYC Neighborhoods
- Chhaya CDC
- Cypress Hills LDC
- Pratt Center for Community Development
- Queens Legal Services
- Take Root Justice

COVID-19 and Basements

Neighborhoods hit hardest by COVID-19 stand to benefit most from basement apartment legalization

COVID-19 Cases as of May 28, 2020

- 0-1000
- 1001-2000
- 2001-3000
- 3001-4,373
- Homes with a basement or cellar*



Data Sources: NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene, PLUTO 2018 v2

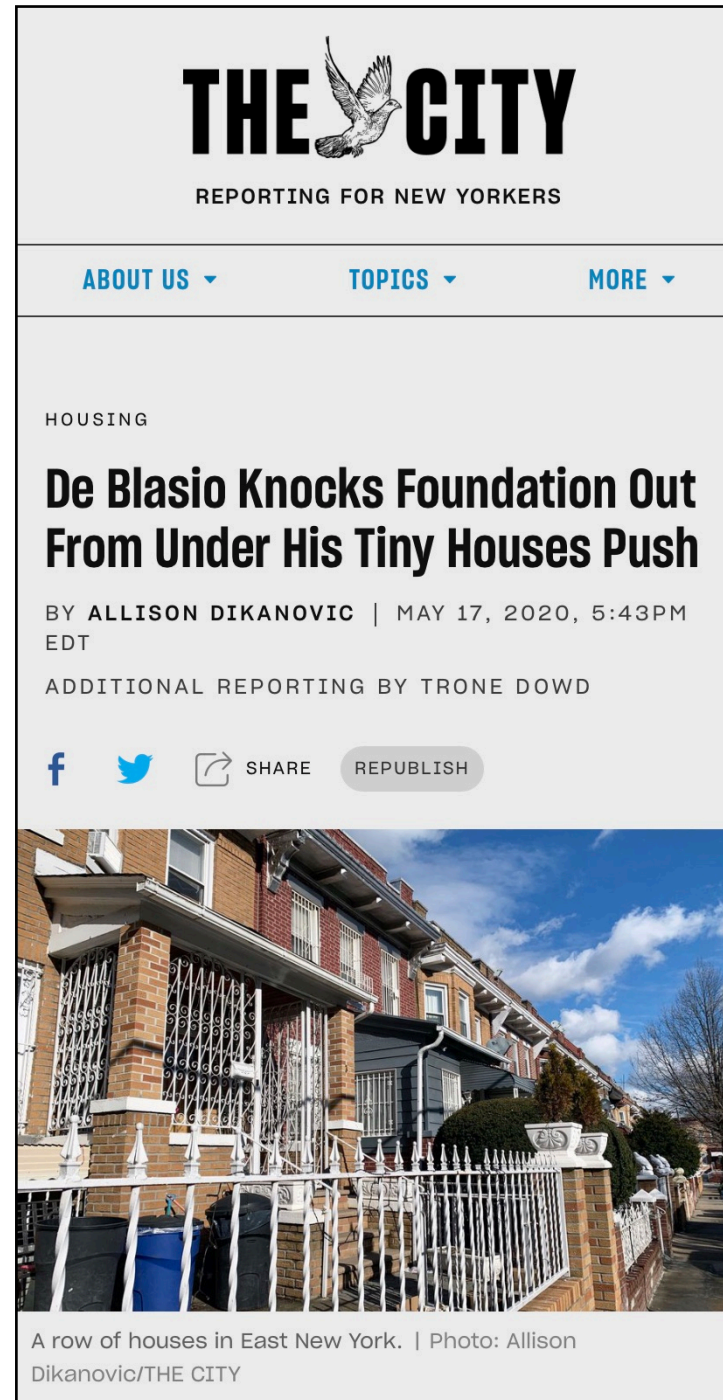
* This is based on the eligibility parameters used for the East New York Basements Pilot, as set forth by NYC HPD, and extrapolated out to the city as a whole, and includes one-, two-, and three-family homes with basements or cellars; View the full set of parameters and interact with our basements map online at prattcenter.net/basementsportal

COVID-19 Impact on Tenants and Basements

NYC HPD slashes funds to the East New York Pilot, a critical program in a community that finds itself on the frontline of the pandemic's health and economic impacts.

Housing protections changed due to COVID crisis – but basement tenants are not protected

- NYC housing courts are accepting new cases for eviction proceedings although the eviction moratorium has been extended through September 4, 2020.
- Department of Buildings continues to conduct home inspections and issue vacate orders for illegal basement apartments despite the risk of CoVid-19.



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REPORTING FOR NEW YORKERS

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HOUSING

De Blasio Knocks Foundation Out From Under His Tiny Houses Push

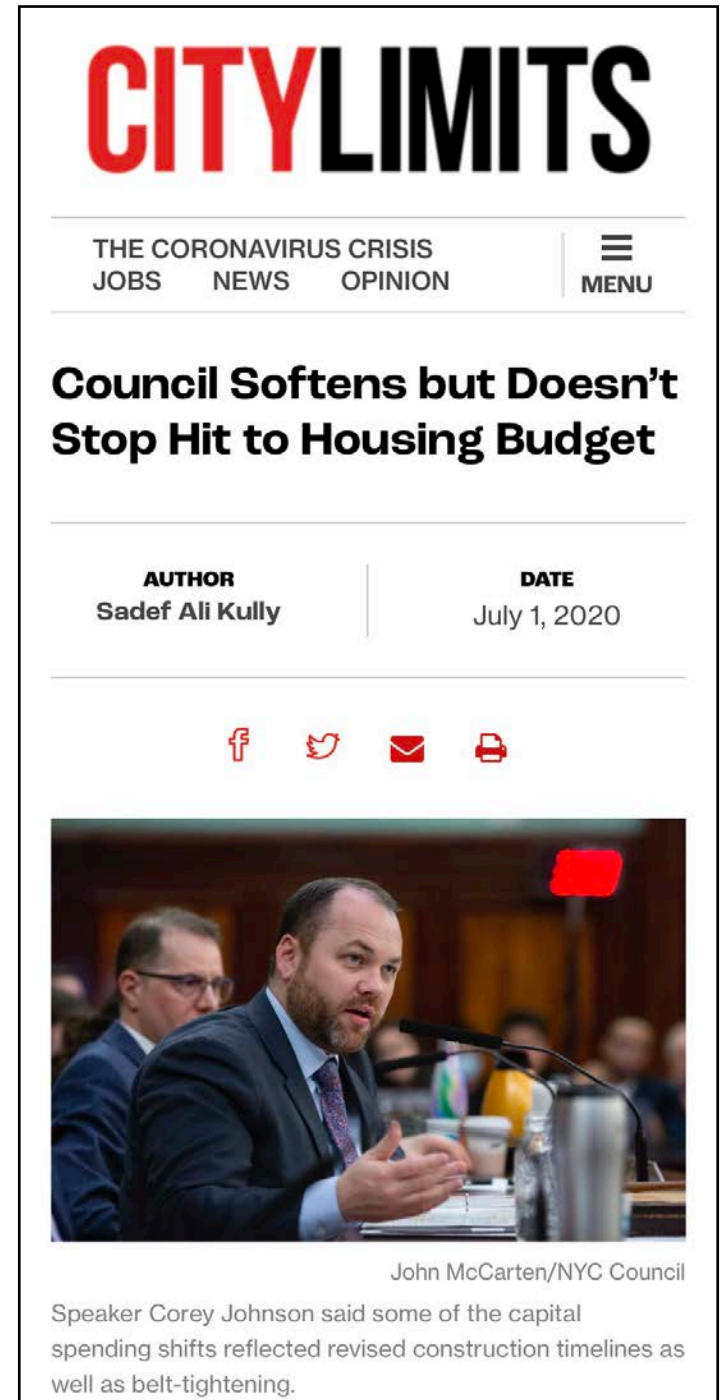
BY ALLISON DIKANOVIC | MAY 17, 2020, 5:43PM EDT

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY TRONE DOWD

f t SHARE REPUBLISH



A row of houses in East New York. | Photo: Allison Dikanovic/THE CITY



CITYLIMITS


THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS
JOBS NEWS OPINION

≡ MENU

Council Softens but Doesn't Stop Hit to Housing Budget

AUTHOR: Sadeef Ali Kully | DATE: July 1, 2020

f t e p



John McCarten/NYC Council

Speaker Corey Johnson said some of the capital spending shifts reflected revised construction timelines as well as belt-tightening.

COVID 19's Impact on Basement Pilot

- BASE advocacy campaign to save the Pilot throughout spring
- NYC Council fails to restore program funding for FY21
- Pilot's future uncertain as budget cut cripples program capacity
- Despite this setback, fight for the pilot and citywide expansion continues at city and state

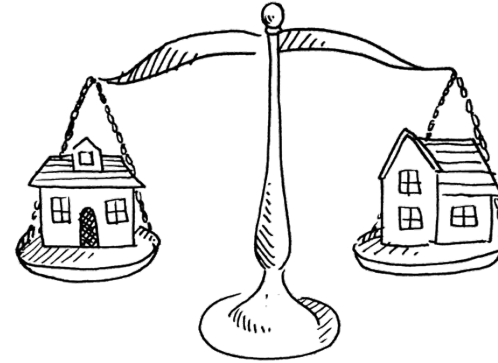


Why basement apartments matter now more than ever



Housing is Health Care

- A safe home to shelter in place.
- Sick or at-risk tenants can ask for help from neighbors without fear of DOB violations
- Existing basement apartments can become safer, healthier homes



Housing is Economic Justice

- Increase the amount of affordable housing
- Increased revenue for homeowners
- Increased economic activity for local businesses
- More equitable access to city housing subsidies for underrepresented communities

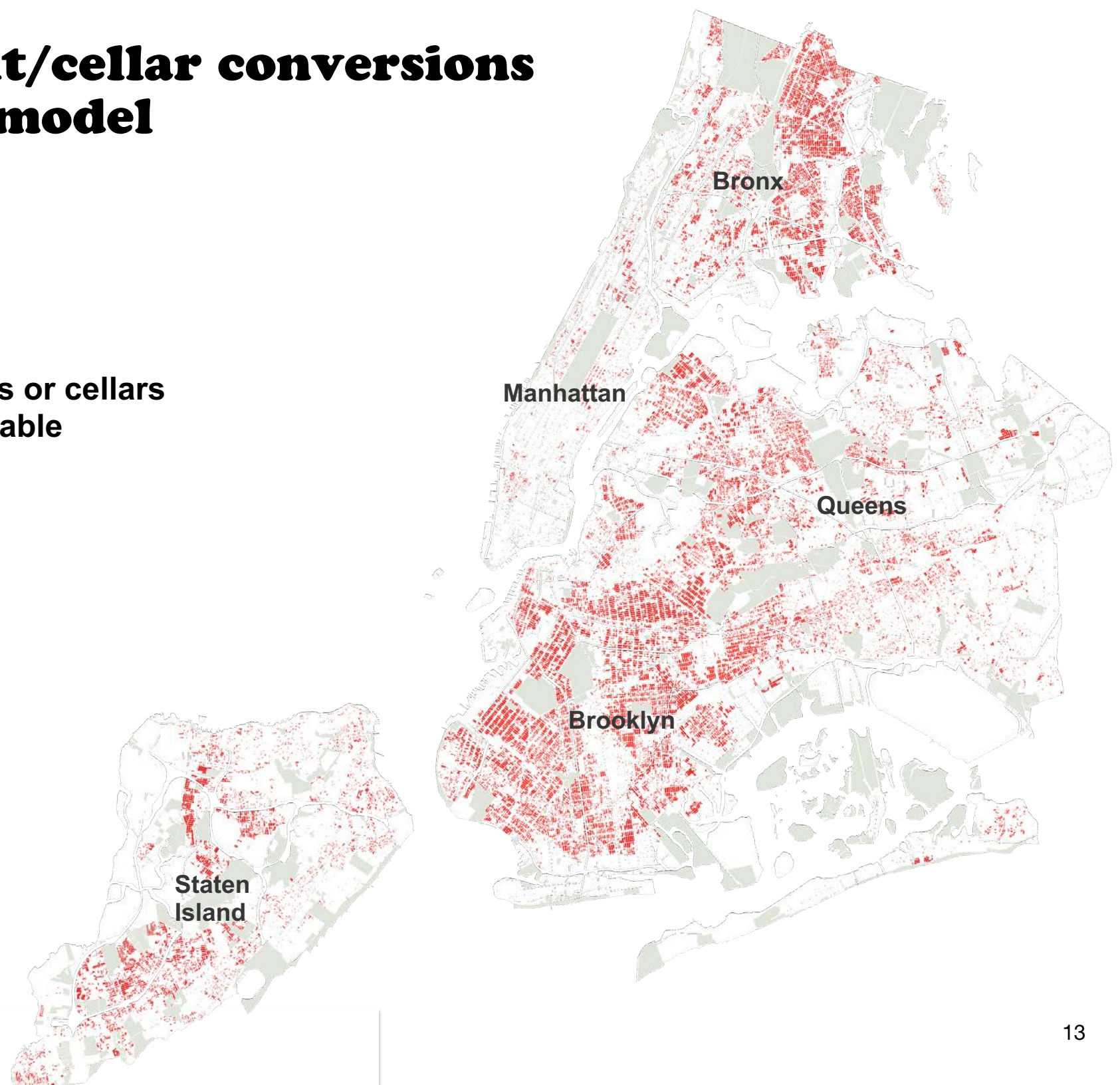


Housing is Social Justice

- Basement tenants get same protections as other tenants
- Need for city services (i.e. schools, hospitals) can be more accurately measured
- If applied universally, could bring new housing to neighborhoods that don't typically see affordable housing

Homes eligible for basement/cellar conversions under the **CURRENT** pilot model

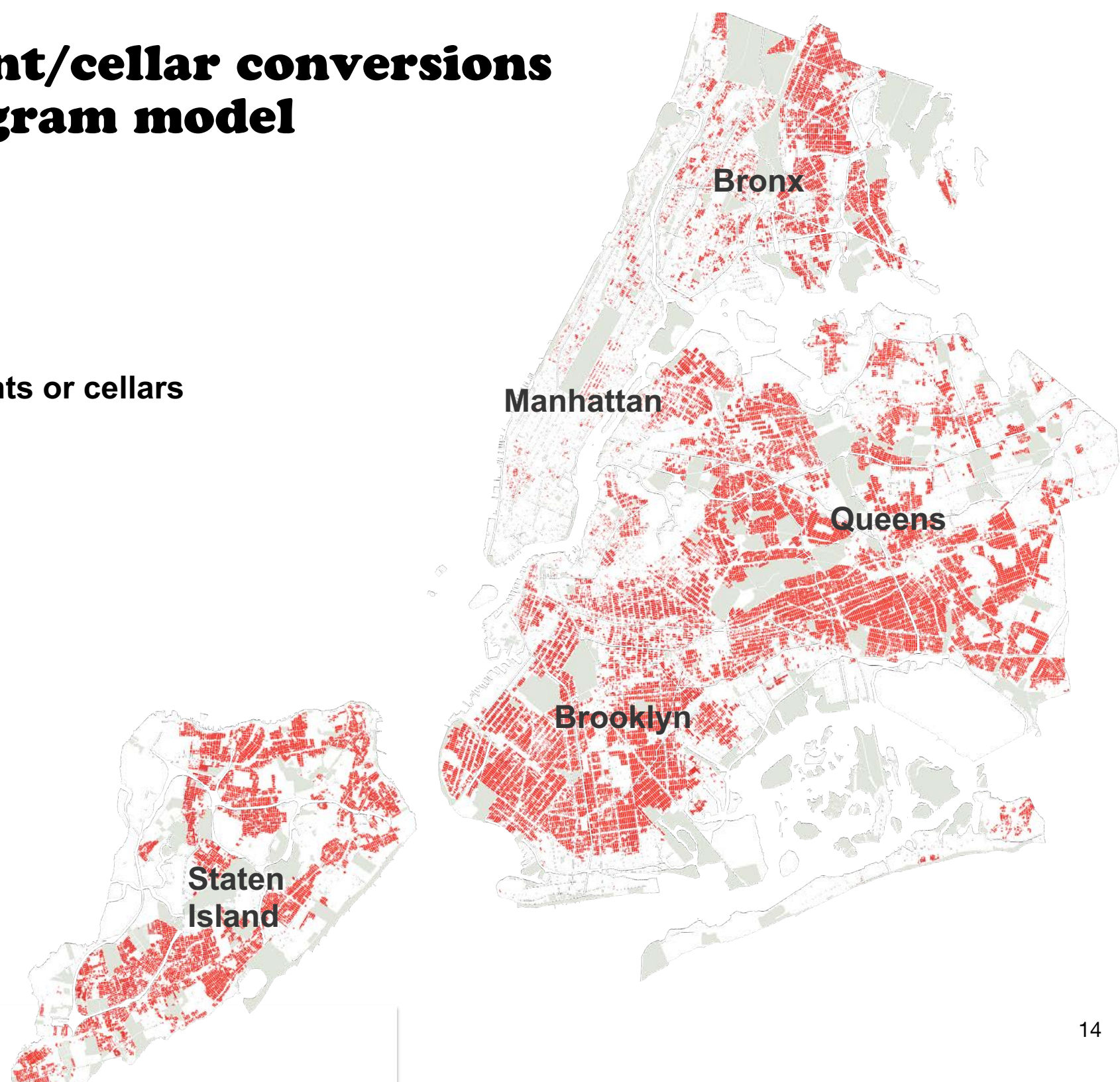
■ Properties with basements or cellars with at least 0.5 FAR available
Total 209,700



Sources: NYC DCP PLUTO 2018 v1, NTA 2016 NYC DCP.
Map prepared by Pratt Center for Community Development, 2020

Homes eligible for basement/cellar conversions under an **EXPANDED** program model

■ Properties with basements or cellars
Total 424,500

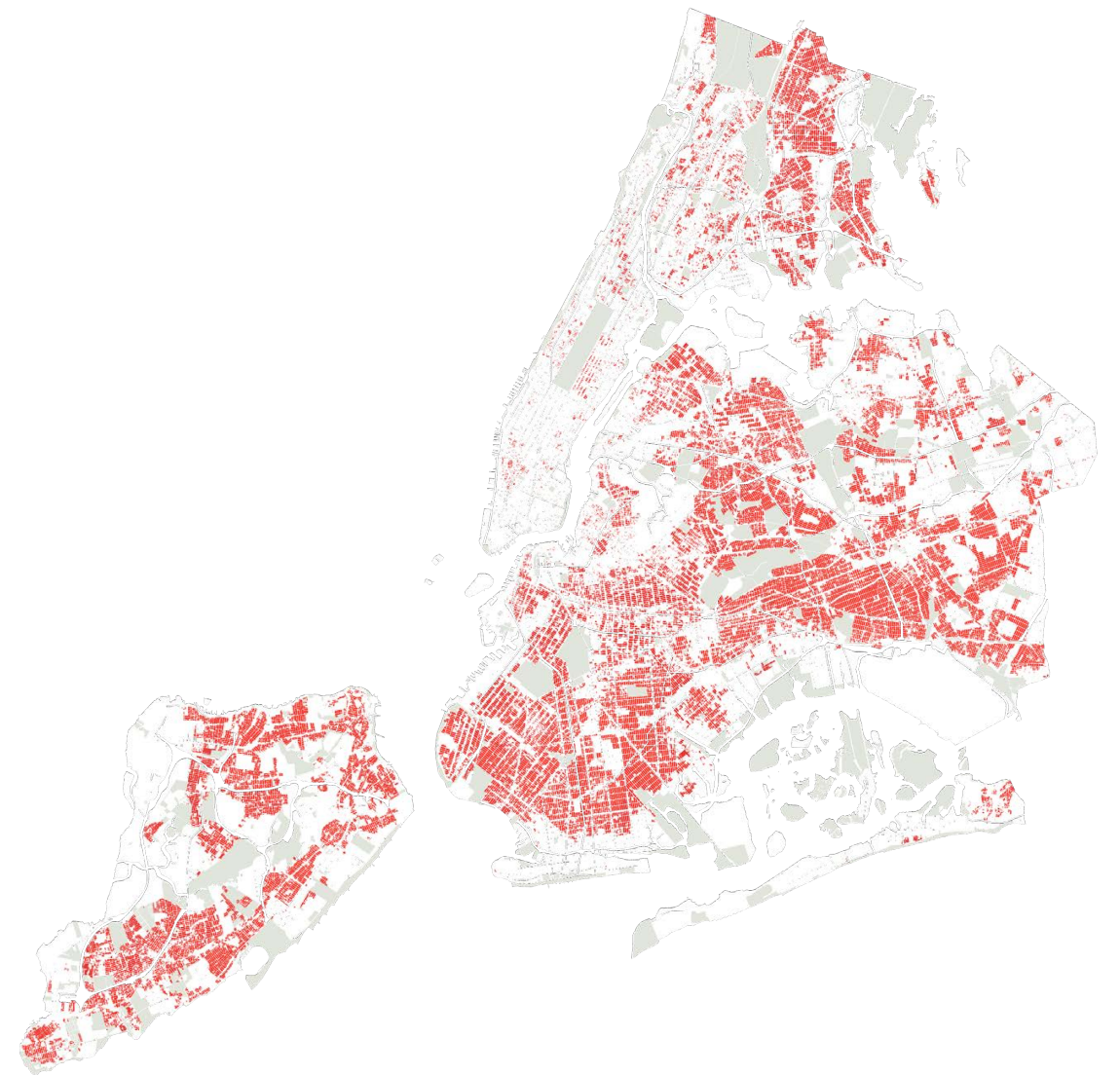
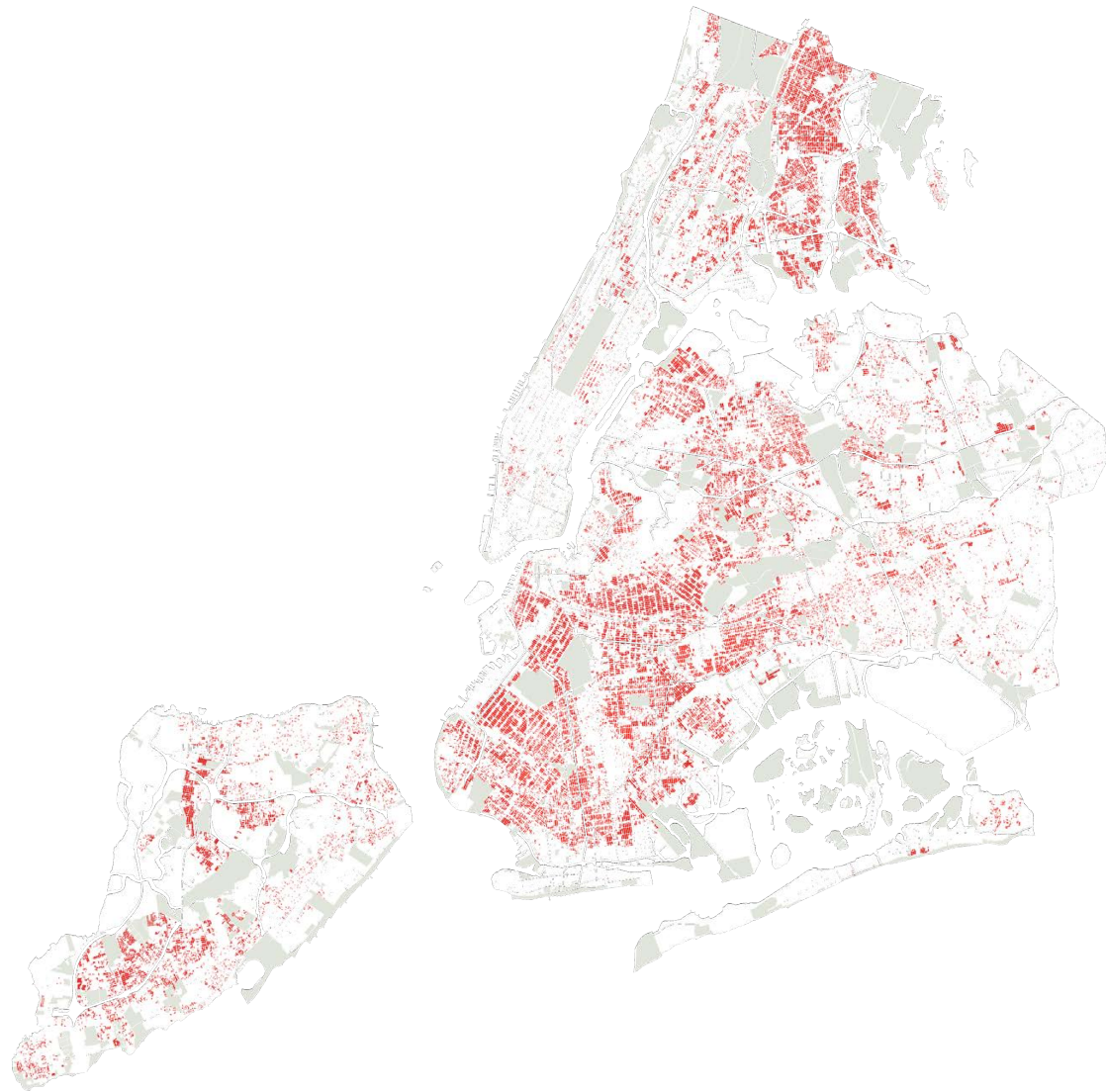


Sources: NYC DCP PLUTO 2018 v1, NTA 2016 NYC DCP.
Map prepared by Pratt Center for Community Development, 2020

Potential New Apartments in NYC

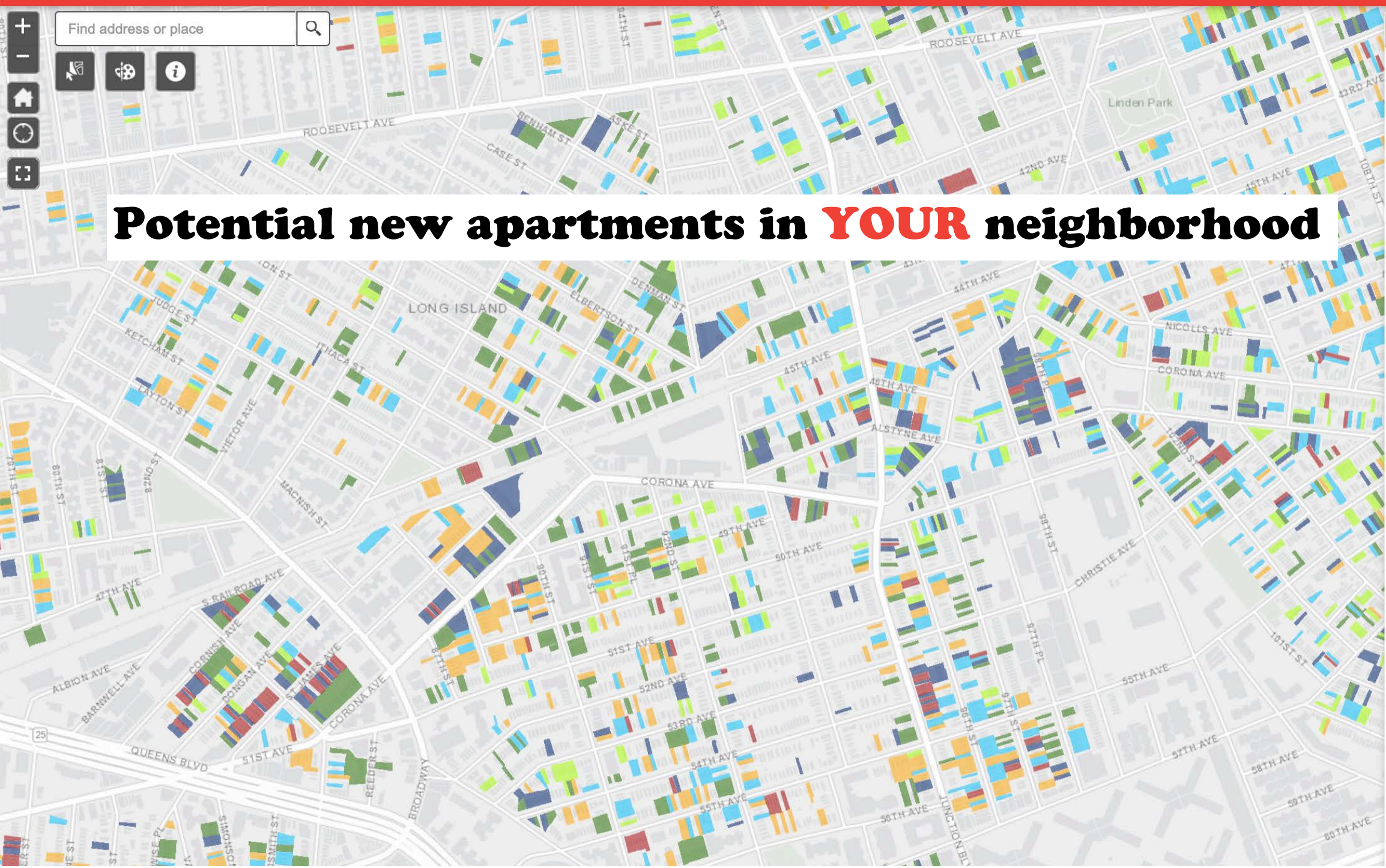
Current Model 209,700

Improved Model 424,500 ↑ 102%





Find address or place



Potential new apartments in **YOUR** neighborhood

Layer List

Layers


- Single Family Homes with Basement
- Single Family Homes with Cellar
- Two Family Homes with Basement
- Two Family Homes with Cellar
- Three Family Homes with Basement
- Three Family Homes with Cellars
- Neighborhood Tabulation Areas
- NYC Community Districts
- NYS Senate Districts
- NYC Council Districts
- NYS Assembly Districts
- NYC Census Tracts Boundaries (2010)
- Subway Lines
- Foreign Born Population

The BASE Campaign Platform

1. Establish funding for a citywide program
2. Update zoning and building codes
3. Simplify the participant experience
4. Make it affordable

The upcoming year:

1. Education campaign for NYC electeds & political candidates
2. State ADU campaign
3. Ongoing support of limited ENY Pilot
4. Growing BASE's "Base"



THE BASE CAMPAIGN'S Blueprint for Basement Apartments

- 1 Establish Funding for a Citywide Program**

Guarantee sufficient funding to continue and complete the East New York Basements Pilot. This will ensure baseline learnings for design of a citywide program that works. Expand the pilot to more neighborhoods in New York City.

Fund the legalization and conversion of basement and cellar apartments. Include enough money as a line item in the FY2022 budget to fund low-interest or evaporating loans, additional administrative personnel and grants for CBOs to support homeowners and tenants through the legalization process.

Ensure program permanence. Protect the continuity of the program through the next mayoral administration to ensure the 200,000 potentially eligible buildings can participate.
- 2 Update Zoning and Building Codes**

Legalize cellar conversions. Change housing codes and amend zoning to allow habitable cellars to be legalized, as they have for the East New York Basement Pilot. Ensure the conversion of cellars will not put a building out of compliance with its zoned Floor Area Ratio (FAR) by exempting the cellar unit from the FAR calculation.

Address parking restrictions. The City should waive parking requirements triggered by the addition of a basement unit.

Allow for 7 foot ceilings. Allow for the approval of seven-foot ceilings with minimal protrusions, and other modifications, when it is safe and efficient.
- 3 Simplify the Participant Experience**


Offer easy-to-understand financing. All financing options for homeowners should include financial counseling assistance and have clear terms and conditions.

Establish an Office of Small Homes. Create an independent office that is specifically fluent in the needs of the 1-to 4-family market to manage basement conversions and accessory dwelling unit creation, along with all other 1-4 family building city programs.
- 4 Make it Affordable**

Provide low-interest and evaporating loans. Ensure that low- and moderate-income homeowners benefit from basement conversions by providing low-interest and evaporating loans, based on income.

Create regulatory agreements to protect tenants. The City should create a regulatory policy to keep rents affordable and apartments accessible to low-income New Yorkers.

Create an amnesty program for homeowners who already have tenants living in basements to allow them to bring units up to code and into the legal housing market.



twitter **NYC_BASE**
facebook **BASECampaign**

Join the fight to bring affordable, safe basement apartments to New York City

Three types of membership opportunities

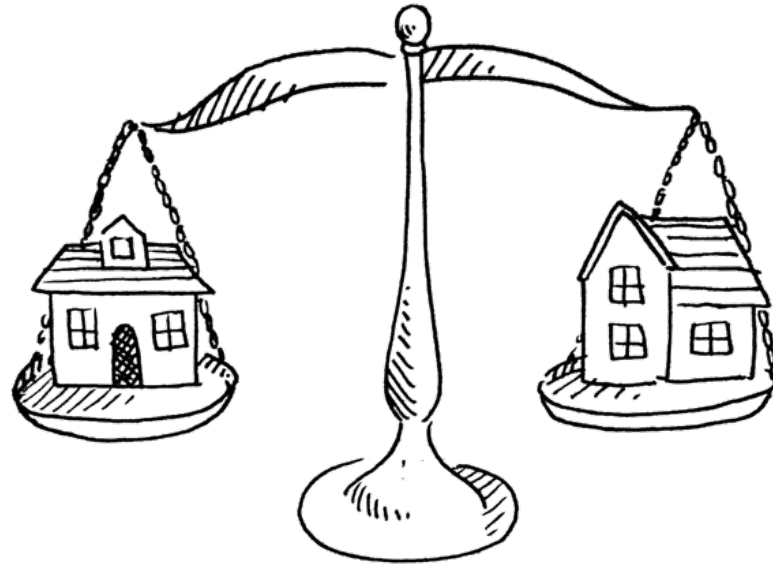
Role	Supporting	Collaborating	Core
Share and promote BASE events, campaign updates and asks of electeds/city/state	✓	✓	✓
Be a community-based organization or collective with a community-based membership or clientele			✓
Join at least one committee		✓	✓
Co-lead at least one committee			✓
Attend all committee meetings		✓	✓
Be involved and committed to participating in decision-making processes			✓
Assist in decision-making within committee and larger meetings		✓	✓
Attend monthly check-ins		✓	✓
Attend weekly check-ins	✓		✓
Identify basement tenants and homeowners to be part of the campaign	✓	✓	✓
Send members/staff to press conferences, actions and other events	✓	✓	✓
Collaborate with coalition partners on press and research opportunities	✓	✓	✓
Send members/staff to meet with elected officials and city/state agencies	✓	✓	✓

✓ Required ✓ Suggested ✓ When possible

Join the fight



**HOUSING IS
HEALTH CARE**



**HOUSING IS
ECONOMIC JUSTICE**



**HOUSING IS
SOCIAL JUSTICE**

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?



BASEMENT APARTMENTS SAFE FOR EVERYONE

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