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Housing Experts Offer Innovative Ideas for New Mayoral Administration

New York - Housing experts from organizations across New York City met today to discuss innovative ideas for preserving affordable housing. The discussion focused on lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy, the foreclosure crisis, and decades of tenant organizing. The panel presented a range of strategies the incoming mayoral administration can consider to increase access to affordable housing for New Yorkers.

During a roundtable on preserving affordable housing, hosted by the Center for NYC Neighborhoods at Talking Transition, experts offered detailed solutions to combat the city's housing crisis and needs in local communities and ensure residents are able to stay in their homes.

Experts made the following recommendations for the new administration:

- Legalize the estimated 100,000+ currently-illegal dwellings, with requirements to ensure they are safe, in order to increase affordable rentals and homeowner income
- Create a climate where landlords and financial institutions work with the city to prevent bidding up properties to unsustainable prices that lead to disinvestment and displacement
- Increase funding to housing counseling and legal services groups to fight evictions and prevent foreclosures
- Increase funding for NYCHA repairs by eliminating duplicative payments from NYCHA to the NYPD
- Place all housing and community development agencies in the city under one Deputy Mayor in order to ensure coordination and consistency
- Engage communities from the beginning of any future disaster response to determine what programs are most valuable to communities
- Ensure that property acquired through the Build it Back program that is redeveloped for housing purposes is affordable to the community
- Encourage strong public/ private partnerships to address complex challenges

“The next mayoral administration will face complex housing issues that affect every city resident. In order to protect and expand affordable housing, the administration should heed the recommendations of experts and groups that are entrenched in local communities where families are being priced out of their homes and need sustainable solutions,” **said Christie Peale, Executive Director at the Center for NYC Neighborhoods.**

"While creating affordable housing is critical to addressing New York City's housing shortage, equally important is preserving the approximately 45,000 units at risk of losing affordability," **said Shola Olatoye, Vice President and New York Market Leader at Enterprise Community Partners.** "Given the limited public funds available to keep housing affordable and finance necessary upgrades, the next administration needs to build upon the City's success in developing innovative public-private funding partnerships like the New York City Acquisition Fund. These partnerships create opportunities for below-market financing with flexible terms and enable the renovation and green retrofit of privately-owned rent stabilized housing, addressing current and long term needs of these buildings."

"In the past year LISC New York City in partnership with the City, community development organizations and philanthropies, including the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, the American Red Cross, the Robin Hood Foundation and our newest partner JP Morgan Chase, has developed a successful model that has helped thousands of homeowners on the road to recovery, first through mold treatment, and now a new home repair program," **said Denise Scott, Managing Director at LISC NYC.** "Going forward, this model can serve as a template for community development organizations as they respond to communities hard hit by disasters."

"Public housing desperately needs money for repairs. Instead of building luxury housing on public housing grounds, NYCHA should stop paying for special police services raising over \$70 million for needed repairs," **said Judith Goldiner, Supervising Attorney at The Legal Aid Society**

"We look forward to working with Mayor-elect de Blasio to devise a balanced approach to affordable housing so we can meet a critical need for many New Yorkers. By providing incentives for private landlords to invest in preservation, we can keep low- and moderate-income families in decent, safe, affordable housing; at the same time, real consequences are needed for developers and lenders that drive up rent costs through speculation, which puts low- and moderate-income residents at risk of losing their apartments because of unaffordability and hazardous living conditions.," **said Ismene Speliotis, Executive Director at MHANY Management Inc.**

"Basement apartments already play a critical role in providing affordable housing for many of the city's low income immigrant tenants. Rather than an enforcement-only policy we need to allow for flexibility in our building and zoning codes - in the form of an accessory dwelling unit designation - to bring safe units out of the shadows," **said Drew Goldsman, Project Manager at Chhaya Community Development Corp.**