



NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:
Neysa Pranger, Regional Plan Association
(212) 253-5796 or (917) 532-0567
Nicolas Ronderos, Regional Plan Association
(212) 420-6609 or (917) 696-7263

New Report: East Harlem Housing Stock Analyzed

Findings: Unregulated Housing on the Rise; Public Housing and Stabilized Units Still Dominate

Recommend: Greater Community Access to and Use of Data; Explore Community Land Trust

(New York, NY) Regional Plan Association today released a report commissioned by Manhattan Community Board 11 East Harlem/El Barrio which analyzed housing stock in the area. Overall the report shows unregulated housing is on the rise while public housing and rent-stabilized units still dominate the overall share of units available. The report recommends strategies to preserve rent regulated housing, including increasing community access to, and use of, housing data including warning systems for when units are about to be deregulated and creation of tenant associations to create their own listings of housing stock. The report also recommends exploring establishment of a community land trust which will preserve housing for future generations in the community.

The analysis, entitled, "East Harlem Rent Regulated Housing: Inventory and Preservation Strategies," was written by Regional Plan Association. The report details information and policy strategies needed for the East Harlem community to preserve its stock of regulated affordable housing. The project is a collaborative neighborhood revitalization effort between Regional Plan Association and East Harlem Community Board 11, funded by Citi Foundation and E*Trade.

-more, more, more-

The project was undertaken after the East Harlem/Manhattan Community District 11 Board identified gentrification of the District, and more specifically the conversion of rent regulated housing into market rate housing, as the major issue in its 2010 and 2011 Statements of District Needs. The Board sought to remedy the current a lack of reliable information on how many regulated housing units currently exist in its area or their rate of conversion.

The East Harlem community is located in the Upper Manhattan section of New York City and is generally bounded by 96th Street to the South, Fifth Avenue to the West and the Harlem and East Rivers to the East. As of 2009 the Community District has an estimated 122,051 persons and is predominantly minority (Hispanic 49% and African American 32%). 90% of the population is considered low- and moderate-income in 2010. There were about 36,330 rent regulated units in the community in 2008.

The approximate share of rent regulated housing units in 2008 for the various existing programs was as follows: Public Housing 44%; Stabilized units 39%; Mitchell-Lama Rental units 9%; HUD Regulated units 7% and Rent Controlled units 1%. This information is based on data collected from New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey publications and RPA calculations.

“In the course of research for this report RPA has encountered that data for housing policy in New York City is fragmented and difficult to access,” said report author Nicolas Ronderos, Director of Economic and Community Development. “This report looks to fill a gap specifically in East Harlem to identify the number and types of rent regulated housing acknowledging that data lags a couple of years.”

Proposed preservation strategies for this housing stock include city-wide changes that need to be undertaken for the whole of New York City given their regulatory or public nature, and local and community changes that could be undertaken by East Harlem residents given their community development and empowerment nature.

City-wide preservation strategies include:

- Better information and coordination that provides data to:

- Extend Public Housing units availability through informed and continued maintenance;
- Allow Stabilized, Controlled Housing and Mitchell-Lama units continued participation in those programs by providing advocates with warning systems to address their de-regulation; and
- Coordinate potential HUD Regulated Housing transition into city ownership and ensure tenants well-being.
- Extension of funding access and financial incentives to potential HUD Regulated Housing or other housing to be owned by the city should be undertaken through use of existing tax breaks of programs to extend their preservation.

Community-based preservation strategies include:

- Support Public Housing tenant associations for residents to become active stewards of their buildings;
- Stabilized, Controlled, HUD regulated and Mitchell-Lama buildings should develop their own warning systems to organize for housing preservation and establish safety nets for tenant potential relocation, and
- A community land trust can also provide a way for the community to acquire at risk of becoming market rate (especially Stabilized, Controlled and Mitchell-Lama) and ensure its long-term community control.

The complete report can be found online at <http://www.rpa.org/2011/07/east-harlem-housing.html>