

March 6, 2020

ATTN: Where We Live NYC
NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street, 9X Area
New York, New York 10038

On behalf of thousands of licensed real estate professionals living and practicing in New York City, the New York State Association of REALTORS® (NYSAR) submits the following public comment regarding the Where We Live NYC Draft Plan.

REALTORS® recognize the importance of affordable housing in New York City and the challenges associated with its accessibility and availability. Additionally, REALTORS® condemn all illegal housing discrimination and support enforcement of federal, state and local fair housing laws. Maintaining the integrity of fair housing policies in New York is of the utmost importance, and NYSAR continues to work with elected officials and government agencies to achieve this goal.

NYSAR is supportive of the Draft Plan's goal to promote homeownership and address discrimination in the cooperative transaction as stated in Chapter 6 of the report. NYSAR is also supportive of public funding for fair housing testing, believing that testing is one of the most effective methods to combat illegal housing discrimination.

NYSAR has initial concerns with some aspects of the Draft Plan, however. NYSAR would suggest more details and clarity on the following proposals lined out in the report:

- “Explore opportunities in the private market to address financial barriers that impede residents’ housing choices and may be used as proxies for discrimination (including credit history and broker fees) without causing unintended consequences, such as increased rents or more stringent guarantor requirements;
- Explore establishment of “Cease and Desist Zones” to protect homeowners from aggressive real estate solicitation and scams.”

It should be noted that NYSAR believes that the imposition of cease and desist zones is overly restrictive and will not achieve the intent of the proposal. Additionally, imposing cease and desist zones will not create a single unit of affordable housing and will only do harm to legitimate licensed real estate professionals while allowing unlicensed individuals to continue their practices unfettered.

REALTORS® appreciate the opportunity to provide public comment and believe the goal of the Draft Plan should incorporate a balanced approach that creates new affordable housing units in New York City that does not place an undue burden on hardworking licensed real estate professionals.

The New York State Association of REALTORS® is a not-for-profit trade organization representing more than 59,000 of New York State's real estate professionals. The term REALTOR® is a registered trademark, which identifies real estate professionals who subscribe to a strict code of ethics as members of the National Association of REALTORS®. These REALTORS® are also members of the New York State Association of REALTORS® as well as their local board or association of REALTORS®.