



THE COUNCIL *of* THE CITY OF NEW YORK

## **Council Member Crystal Hudson Announces New Comprehensive Development Framework for District 35**

*Created by Hester Street, the Framework Will Ensure All Private Applications Meet  
Basic Community-Identified Needs to Secure Council Approval*

*For Immediate Release:* Friday, April 12, 2024

*Contact:* Alejandro Gonzalez, (646) 771-2363, [algonzalez@nyc.council.gov](mailto:algonzalez@nyc.council.gov); Sarah Pritchard, [sarah@hesterstreet.org](mailto:sarah@hesterstreet.org)

**Brooklyn, NY** — Seeking to address the gap left by a city without a comprehensive approach to land use planning, Council Member Crystal Hudson today announced the release of a first-of-its-kind pilot program, created by Hester Street, that establishes a model of community-based land use planning to ensure more transparent and equitable decisions around land use and development in Council District 35.

Hester Street developed a community-led framework that the Council Member will use to evaluate proposed projects going through the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The framework can be used by community members as an accountability mechanism to ensure their priorities are considered in the early phases of development; by the Council Member’s office as a checklist to ensure that community needs are integrated into new development; and by developers as a guide to understand the types of development that residents demand.

To create the framework, Hester Street developed and drove an engagement process that incorporated town hall style public meetings, focus groups on specific land use-related topics, and a community-wide survey that received over 1,000 responses. Read the full survey findings and framework [here](#).

*“It’s no secret that the land use and development process in our city is flawed. The status quo has yielded a massive discrepancy between what our communities need and what is actually produced,” said Council Member Crystal Hudson, Chair of the Committee on Aging. “It’s become a process guided by those with the deepest pockets and has meant the proliferation of luxury high rises where rents far exceed what the average New Yorker can afford; it’s meant little consideration for the needs of an area’s existing community—the families, institutions, and businesses that shape it; and it’s meant uneven development in neighborhoods across the five boroughs. To address the crisis of affordability plaguing our city, we need to build. But we need*



THE COUNCIL *of* THE CITY OF NEW YORK

*to build with families, with low-income and moderate income tenants, with older adults, and with the generations of long-standing New Yorkers threatened by displacement in mind. For my community—the 35th District—this document puts developers on notice: Our community has made clear its priorities, preferences, and needs when it comes to development; any proposal short of meeting the requirements set forth is a non-starter.”*

*“Hester Street is proud to have engaged Council District 35 residents in discussions about their needs and vision for land use in their neighborhood. The outcome of that process, the framework being launched today, is a significant victory for the community because it sets the terms for future development in District 35. We look forward to seeing the framework put into action by Council Member Hudson and others during decision-making for sustainable and equitable development, infrastructure, housing, open space, and other neighborhood services,”* **said Eva Neubauer Alligood, Executive Director of Hester Street.**

*“Comprehensive planning is vital to ensuring that neighborhood development and growth meet the needs of our diverse communities,”* **said New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams.** *“I’m proud the Council allocated funding through the city budget to support Council Member Hudson’s vision for community-led planning efforts with Hester Street that advanced this important framework for District 35. Residents identified affordable housing, improved community infrastructure, and support for small businesses as critical to the health and success of this district, and key priorities to guide development. I look forward to the continued partnership between Council Member Hudson, community members, and all stakeholders to advance projects that support District 35 and contribute to solving our city’s housing and affordability crises.”*

*“For too long, our city has failed to implement citywide planning efforts that are comprehensive, community-led, and anchored in the public good. By advancing this districtwide development framework, I’m excited to see Council Member Hudson take matters into her own hands on behalf of the residents of Council District 35. This framework is driven by data and supported by community input, and I look forward to seeing the Council Member put it to use as we seek to address our city’s deep housing crisis,”* **said Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso.**

Over the course of last year, Hester Street conducted a range of outreach and engagement initiatives to uncover residents’ current needs and priorities for the district. The project team conducted 3 public meetings, held 6 focus groups, hosted 4 advisory committee meetings, surveyed more than 1,000 residents



THE COUNCIL *of* THE CITY OF NEW YORK

from across the district, and hosted over 25 informal or small civic engagement activities to understand community needs and priorities on a variety of land use topics.

Key findings include:

- **Housing:** Across the District, 41 percent of survey respondents want more affordable and/or supportive housing, followed by 24 percent of respondents requesting more green and open spaces for residents. Fifty nine percent of district-wide respondents say it's 'very challenging to find affordable housing; 78% of respondents pay 30 percent or more of their gross income on rent. And residents shared the need for more affordable housing for families (3+ bedrooms), stating that affordable units are normally smaller 1-bedroom or studio units.
- **Public Space & Infrastructure:** For those older than 65, inaccessible transit and lack of ramps and elevators in buildings ranked as the highest accessibility need to be able to age in the district (56 percent of respondents). From 2000 to 2020 the population that is 65+ in Council District 35 has increased by over 6,000 people. Across the district, residents requested more accessible infrastructure.
- **Small Businesses:** There is a high need for rent stabilized, long term leases for businesses and non-profit organizations. 44 percent of respondents shared that commercial rent prices are the biggest challenge for small businesses. Across the district, residents shared the need for affordable grocery stores, notably in Crown Heights.

“New York City has never had a comprehensive plan to help guide land use and address community needs. The District 35 Framework was developed with community input and data which reflect the prime concerns of its residents. It will be a crucial tool in preventing displacement and advocating for a future where the neighborhood can grow and meet the needs of residents. We look forward to continuing our work with Council Member Hudson and the rest of the community to ensure the framework’s goals are prioritized in land use planning within District 35,” said **Tara Duvivier, Pratt Center for Community Development**.

Any developer seeking a rezoning through the ULURP process in District 35 will need to first meet the criteria outlined in the community-informed framework to secure the Council Member’s potential support. Developers will have an opportunity to clarify questions about the framework early in the pre-development process if needed. When it comes to the City Council vote, Council Member Hudson intends to vote according to the framework.



THE COUNCIL *of* THE CITY OF NEW YORK

The Hester Street project team prioritized affordability in the development framework to be responsive to the overwhelming feedback about lack of access to truly affordable units and the issues with HUD's AMI calculations. Instead of relying on the area median income (AMI) determined for the New York City region by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (and which is often too expensive for District 35 residents), the development framework includes the actual median income for District 35 neighborhoods and parses it further by race to identify which AMI brackets to prioritize in each neighborhood. The framework cross-references the preferred AMI brackets against Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) options and term sheets used by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to finance affordable housing. As such, developers will generally need to exceed the affordability criteria for these programs to build in Council District 35.

Aside from affordability levels, the framework seeks to address other needs surfaced by the community engagement process by establishing baseline criteria all projects will have to incorporate: universal design principles, proactive pest management strategies, sustainable design, and a living wage labor standard for construction with a plan to locally recruit workers and prioritize disadvantaged and underrepresented workers.

Projects will then have to meet additional criteria related to open space amenities, housing upgrades, and non-residential uses. In order to incentivize deep affordability, projects that pursue a deep affordability option for rentals or homeownership will have to meet fewer of the additional criteria than projects that are higher on the affordability range.

The City Council allocated \$200,000 in FY23 to Hester Street for this work.

The full framework and checklist can be found [here](#).

###