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# TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF CITY OF YES: HOUSING OPPORTUNITY TO CITY COUNCIL OCTOBER 22, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Howard Slatkin, and I am the Executive Director of Citizens Housing & Planning Council (CHPC), a nonprofit research organization. I am also a former City Planning official responsible for policy on affordable housing and zoning.

I am pleased to testify strongly in support of this proposal for CHPC, and to encourage the Council to approve it in substantially its current form. In my limited time today I'd like to focus on a handful of key priorities for the Council's review.

First, we urge the Council to adhere to the vision of fair housing that the Speaker has so eloquently articulated during her tenure. Every neighborhood has a responsibility to contribute toward meeting our housing needs.

CHPC's research has shown how highly restrictive zoning has decimated the ability to add housing in low-density districts – eliminating 37% of the land zoned for low-density apartment buildings and barring the legal addition of a unit to small homes. This disproportionately hurts communities of color. Black homeowners are three times more to rely on rental income, and are more vulnerable to being squeezed out when all we allow are single family homes.

Second, we encourage the Council to think expansively and inclusively about housing of all types. Our vast and diverse city needs all the subsidized affordable housing we can

finance publicly, as well as privately financed housing for all kinds of households. The more we restrict new housing to a narrow, “just right” formula, the more we limit the options available to New Yorkers, consigning them to expensive and ill-fitting housing, and fanning the flames of gentrification.

We need not just adequate zoning but to harmonize it with affordable housing resources and programmatic support for housing. The Council and administration should work together to launch a basement legalization program based on the recommendations of the BASE campaign.

CHPC urges the Council to expand the applicability of UAP’s off-site option to everywhere UAP applies. This will enable the creation of supportive and 100% affordable housing in high-income neighborhoods, rather than only in the lower-income neighborhoods where it is typically built today.

Finally, it’s important to recognize that UAP gives an advantage to buildings using affordable housing subsidy programs but comes with no subsidies of its own. It’s not a program, but rather “a box to put your program in.” So making its requirements significantly stricter – making the box smaller – would mean that fewer buildings would qualify for additional floor area, and less affordable housing would get built. The ability to produce more and more affordable housing is a function of the quantity and efficiency of funding for affordable housing.

I would also like to refer the Council to CHPC’s detailed written comments to the City Planning Commission on this proposal, and would be happy to answer any questions the Council may have.