

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

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NYCHA GETS MUCH-NEEDED FINANCING AUTHORITY; THE RIVERDALE PRESS

By ABIGAIL NEHRING

JUNE 10, 2022

The New York City Housing Authority will soon move forward in its plan to place some 25,000 apartments into a new NYCHA Preservation Trust — a public benefit corporation state lawmakers voted to establish last week.

The creation of the trust is the first major hurdle in a plan NYCHA chair and chief executive Gregory Russ outlined two years ago to raise billions of dollars necessary to bring its portfolio of over 177,000 apartments into a state of good repair and comply with basic health and safety standards.

Once Gov. Kathy Hochul signs the legislation, NYCHA will be able to apply for valuable Section 8 housing vouchers for apartments placed in the trust, and issue bonds backed by their revenue from the leases. The so-called “Blueprint for Change” offers a novel interpretation of the U.S. Housing Act and ushers the country’s largest public housing authority into a new funding paradigm.

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The bill is a revised version of a similar one that foundered last year. Its fate remained uncertain this year until the final weeks of the legislative session when Sen. Julia Salazar, a former Republican turned Democrat, stepped in to sponsor it alongside Democratic Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz, forming an unlikely alliance that pushed the bill through the Assembly by a vote of 132-18 Wednesday and onto the senate, where it passed Thursday by a vote of 38-25.

With units placed in the trust, NYCHA can apply for Section 8 tenant protection vouchers for units placed in the trust, gaining access to a more accessible funding stream that has proven historically more reliable than Section 9 of the Housing Act, which funds public housing. NYCHA will then be able to issue municipal bonds backed by the revenue from the units' leases.

“To a certain extent this is subjecting public housing to market forces,” said Elizabeth Gyori, a staff attorney with Legal Services NYC/Manhattan. “You are allowing bonds to finance public housing and therefore there is a market logic behind that. It’s how a lot of public infrastructure is funded.”

In the lead up to last week’s vote, the bill won support from several groups that had been reluctant to endorse it, including Community Service Society and The Legal Aid Society, which said the preservation trust was a “one-time opportunity” for NYCHA to access full capital funding to remediate living conditions in its buildings.

“This is a major win for New Yorkers who call NYCHA home,” Hochul said in a statement after last week’s Senate vote. “This legislation has the power to unlock additional federal funding and lead to billions of dollars in renovations — after decades of federal disinvestment — and provide for critical improvements at developments across the city.”

The atmosphere was jubilant outside the Nostrand Houses in Sheepshead Bay Saturday, where Mayor Eric Adams and state representatives gathered with residents to celebrate a key victory in the mayor’s Albany agenda.

“The bottom line is tenants, you did it,” Adams said. “Because none of us would have supported this, if you didn’t advocate for it.”

But the bill’s reception was more tepid among the remaining 400,000 NYCHA residents living in 335 developments across the city, some of who received packets of information about it in a language they could not understand.

“A lot of tenants I speak with have concerns about this plan,” said Gyori. “In particular NYCHA says they’re going to contract back the management to NYCHA after the conversion of a bundle of buildings. Why would you have NYCHA continue the operations of this building? NYCHA might not be properly reformed, and they’ll be stuck with the same management they have right now.”

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Many of the 3,176 residents of Marble Hill Houses, which are currently undergoing a \$42 million heating system overhaul, came home last March to find copies of a 60-page PowerPoint slung on their doorknobs in plastic bags.

“There are certain unknowns,” said tenant association president Tony Edwards. “The rent is still supposed to be 30 percent of your income. But how much can you really trust it? The housing authority itself does not have the best track record. People are suspicious of what they say.”

Edwards said it’s a struggle to find space for tenants to discuss their options.

“The thing is, we have the opportunity to go into the program or stay out. In order to really get a full consensus of people, I have to create a large enough forum to have a pro/con discussion. When it comes to a meeting, I’m lucky if I get 25 residents. At the tenants last meeting, only a handful showed up.”

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, who voted for the trust, was persuaded to make that vote based on some last-minute changes.

“One thing that tipped me over is that residents will have a vote,” Dinowitz said, pointing to a key revision that gives residents a say in the decision to transfer units into the public trust. It calls for a “minimum percentage” of tenants to participate, though questions remain about how NYCHA will interpret this language.

“If only 5 percent of residents vote, it’s hard to consider that a legitimate vote,” he said. “What the magic number is, I’m not sure. The board will have to determine that, and it has to be a democratic action.”

Dinowitz voted for the bill despite some reservations. He said the Bailey Houses on 193rd St were in better shape when he lived there.

“At the time I never gave it much thought. It didn’t have a lot of problems. It wasn’t that old at the time. It breaks my heart when people have to live in terrible conditions.”

And lawmakers continued to express concerns NYCHA residents in their districts have raised.

Public housing represents one of the few truly affordable options available to New York renters, and NYCHA plays an outsized role in housing low-income families. A 2017 survey found the average income of NYCHA residents was \$24,000. Yet its properties have deteriorated dramatically in recent decades, due in part to federal disinvestment, which has perpetuated a cycle in which deferred repairs further widen the funding gap every year. Hazards abound, from peeling lead paint to frequent heat and hot water outages, rat infestations, leaks, and ceilings carpeted with mold. NYCHA estimates it needs about \$40 billion to bring its buildings into a state of good repair.

The idea for a public trust originated in guidance the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued in 2018 creating a path for NYCHA to preserve units deemed obsolete

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according to health and safety criteria. NYCHA will lease these units to the public trust while retaining ownership and continuing to manage them. The law calls for a nine-member board of trustees to govern the preservation trust, with seats held by NYCHA's chief executive and chief financial officers, the deputy mayor for housing and economic development, and three appointed each by the mayor and NYCHA's chief executive. The appointments will include at least four NYCHA residents.

A South Bronx-based group called Save Section 9 has fought to highlight the lack of tenant engagement in the lead up to last week's Albany vote and the broader plan NYCHA began rolling out in 2019 and 2020 dubbed the Blueprint for Change.

I think "25,000 units is too many all at once. We call the blueprint RAD/PACT on meth," said co-founder Ramona Ferreyra, referring to NYCHA's Rental Assistance Demonstration program, which converts units to Section 8 in the U.S. Housing Act and leases buildings to private management companies to renovate them.

Ferreyra lives at Mitchel Houses in Mott Haven, and previously participated in NYCHA's tenant forums, but soon became disillusioned with the housing authority's focus on Section 8 conversions.

"When we're talking about saving Section 9, one thing we really highlight is the lack of tenant engagement, she said. "The fact is you have a cluster of folks in the Bronx who are not supporting the legislation. The only public housing recognized in America is the one under the congressional code Section 9. Section 8 doesn't have those protections built into the law."

Louis Flores, who founded a Bronx group called Fight for NYCHA had similar criticisms.

"The number one problem we have with the trust is that NYCHA has never wanted to submit to any oversight or accountability," Flores said. "They've never wanted anybody to tell them what to do. We know this for a fact and that's how they let the conditions get so bad."

<https://www.riverdalepress.com/stories/nycha-gets-much-needed-financing-authority,79079?>

BUSINESS IMPACT AFTER ALBANY'S RECORD-BREAKING LEGISLATIVE SESSION; *CRAIN'S NY*

By BRIAN PASCUS

June 8, 2022

All told, it was a record-breaking session in Albany. A series of new bills affecting hotel conversions, health insurance, public housing, cryptocurrency, clinical peer review and minority-and-women-owned business enterprises were passed.

NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust
S9409 (Salazar) A7805 (Cymbrowitz)
Status: PASSED

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Public housing advocates scored their biggest win in a generation. Both chambers passed the New York City Housing Authority Public Housing Preservation Trust bill, legislation that is expected to finance the repair of 25,000 units and help the troubled public housing authority address \$40 billion in capital needs.

NYCHA CEO Gregory Russ called it “a momentous event in the history of public housing,” and noted that the new trust gives NYCHA the ability to raise billions of dollars in capital funds to invest in repairs for properties.

Kavanagh said the next steps include gaining support to transfer buildings into the trust from resident organizations at specific housing complexes. He also noted that Albany will require the approval of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to use lucrative tenant protection vouchers that will double the flow of funding.

“It’s a significant and complex process,” Kavanagh said. “But HUD has expressed support in writing for this. It does appear they’re prepared to go forward and make the vouchers available.”

<https://www.crainsnewyork.com/politics/what-passed-albany-2022-legislative-session-and-what-did-not-pass>

NEW YORK STATE PASSES BILL ALLOWING NYCHA TO ACQUIRE FUNDING FROM PRIVATE INVESTORS; ARCHINECT

By NATHANIEL BAHADURSINGH

June 6, 2022

Last Thursday, the state Legislature passed a bill that would allow the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to establish a public-benefit corporation that could raise billions for much-needed renovations across 25,000 apartments. Called the Public Housing Preservation Trust, the entity would allow NYCHA to issue bonds and borrow money from private investors to pay for repairs. Under the program, the Authority would move away from direct federal subsidies, converting housing units from public housing under Section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act to the voucher-based system known as Section 8 that allows access to additional federal funding. Through Section 8, eligible low- and moderate-income families are provided assistance to rent housing in the private market.

Many tenants and some legislators oppose the plan, however, citing concerns that the legislation could threaten certain protections NYCHA residents have, such as the right to an administrative hearing before a proposed eviction and the ability to pass an apartment down to the next generation. There is also the fear of potential financial troubles if the trust can’t pay back its loans in the future. While this move has its risks, proponents of the plan say the NYCHA has little choice but to pursue funding where it’s available, given federal budget cuts in recent decades.

<https://archinect.com/news/article/150312331/new-york-state-passes-bill-allowing-nycha-to-acquire-funding-from-private-investors>

CASH INFUSION TO REMEDY SHAMEFUL PUBLIC HOUSING CONDITIONS; CRAIN’S NY

By ROSS BARKAN

JUNE 6, 2022

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In recent days, the Democrat-controlled state legislature took an ambitious if controversial step to meeting the dire capital needs of public housing in New York City. A bill passed to create a public benefit corporation for NYCHA, the city public housing authority, which could potentially unlock several billion dollars to repair 25,000 units.

The Public Housing Preservation Trust deserves scrutiny, but it must be recognized as the first serious move in years to address NYCHA's staggering \$40 billion backlog in repairs. A crown jewel of the city's housing stock in the early postwar period, NYCHA has struggled mightily with mismanagement and disinvestment over the last few decades. Walls and ceilings crumble, mold grows in bathrooms, elevators routinely break, and the heat goes out in the winter. More than 330,000 residents occupy about 162,000 apartments, making NYCHA very much a city within a city.

In an ideal world, enormous amounts of federal money would flow directly to NYCHA to meet its capital needs. The state, which has routinely underfunded public housing, would step up their commitment drastically. But Albany doesn't earmark billions just for NYCHA and even a Democrat-controlled federal government won't do enough to overhaul the city's public housing authority, one of the last in America. Absent significant federal investment, a public trust for NYCHA is the best interim solution.

Both Mayor Eric Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul championed the idea of a trust, first pitched in 2020, and many on the left are wary of any scheme that could lead to the privatization of NYCHA. Some leftists in the housing movement were angry at the socialist state senator Julia Salazar, for example, for pushing forward the legislation with other Democrats. They are skeptical because the trust would move some housing developments from NYCHA to another program that would attach federal subsidies under Section 8 to specific apartments. The public benefit corporation could then borrow money against that revenue stream to pay for repairs.

NYCHA would retain ownership of the buildings and keep a cap on rent payments no larger than 30 percent of the household income. The new corporation would be run by a nine-member board. Members would include NYCHA's chief executive, its chief financial officer, a deputy mayor, four NYCHA residents, a member appointed by the housing authority's chief executive and a member appointed by the mayor to represent NYCHA employees.

Bond financing may be the only way, at this juncture, to get much-needed funds to public housing. This itself does not represent the privatization some fear: public housing was originally built this way. The trust is also a much better solution than RAD, or rental assistance demonstration, which has already turned over a small chunk of public housing to private management. A full-scale conversion of NYCHA to RAD would pave the way for the kind of privatization many housing activists and public housing tenants fear, possibly hiking rents in the future. In a sense, the public housing trust is a check against the aggressive expansion of RAD.

For the left, the public housing trust can be viewed as a quasi-victory—such an idea gaining purchase with Adams, Hochul and NYCHA leadership proves that RAD is no longer the viable, long-term alternative. Public housing residents should remain skeptical and vigilant, as always, but there is reason to believe borrowing money to pay for repairs can quickly address problems

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that have festered for decades. The federal government left NYCHA behind. Now it's up to the city and state to safeguard one of New York's great democratic legacies.

<https://www.crainsnewyork.com/politics/new-nycha-trust-entity-will-infuse-cash-repair-shameful-public-housing-conditions>

NEW YORK CREATES CONTROVERSIAL TRUST TO FINANCE URGENTLY NEEDED REPAIRS FOR NYCHA; BROWNSTONER

By BEN BRACHFELD

JUNE 6, 2022

State lawmakers on Thursday approved the formation of the New York City Housing Authority Preservation Trust, a new public entity that proponents say will allow for a massive influx of money into the city's beleaguered public housing stock, where 350,000 New Yorkers live in properties all across the five boroughs.

The measure, which passed the State Assembly on Wednesday and the Senate on Thursday, would create a new city-owned public benefit corporation with the power to borrow money by issuing bonds, allowing for a significant stream of revenue into the nation's largest public housing agency, which through years of defunding, neglect, and deferred maintenance by all levels of government, has about \$40 billion in outstanding capital needs.

The legislation would allow NYCHA to lease 25,000 apartments to the trust, converting them from the feds' Section 9 funding program to Section 8. Proponents say the move would unlock billions of dollars for repairs to NYCHA's aging properties, where outages of heat, hot water, and elevators are constant, ancient boilers are in desperate need of replacement, mold and vermin run rampant, and crucial repairs to residents' apartments are unaddressed for long periods of time.

"For decades, NYCHA residents have been promised repair after repair that never materialized, but, with the Public Housing Preservation Trust, we will finally deliver on those promises and offer NYCHA residents the dignity and safe, high-quality, affordable homes they deserve," Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement upon the bill's passage through both houses. "My administration fought tirelessly alongside residents and our partners in Albany to pass this bill that will unlock critical resources, with legal protections, to keep residents at the center of the process of improving their homes."

Soon after passage, Hochul said she would sign the bill into law.

"This is a major win for New Yorkers who call NYCHA home," the governor said. "This legislation has the power to unlock additional federal funding and lead to billions of dollars in renovations — after decades of federal disinvestment — and provide for critical improvements at developments across the city."

The measure had support from a wide range of the city's leading Democratic officials, from Mayor Eric Adams to socialist Brooklyn State Sen. Julia Salazar. Many considered it the best of a host of unsavory options to bring desperately needed money to NYCHA: others have included

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Rental Assistance Demonstration, where thousands of apartments have been brought under private management or selling air rights at the authority's sprawling complexes.

The trust will be city-owned, and properties taken over by the trust will remain under permanent ownership by NYCHA. Tenants will still be eligible for automatic lease renewals and succession rights and be able to form tenant associations. Crucially, rents would still be capped for NYCHA residents at 30% of their income.

The most recent version of the legislation also prioritizes buy-in from residents before developments undergo conversion: tenants would be able to vote on whether their complex converts to Section 8, and on which vendors will be chosen to take on repair work.

Nonetheless, many residents have expressed hesitation over the trust, for reasons similar to apprehension over RAD. Many fear the trust is a beckon for privatization of public housing and eventual displacement; nine of ten members of the "Citywide Council of Presidents," a consortium of tenant association leaders, were against the proposal, The City reported last month.

While NYCHA properties leased to the trust would remain under public stewardship, their repairs would be at least partially financed with private investment dollars, rather than public subsidy.

While Albany managed to pass major legislation for public housing residents, tenants in private housing were not so lucky. Lawmakers failed to pass "good cause eviction," which would cap rent increases statewide at 3% in most cases and prohibit landlords from evicting tenants unless they could prove "good cause," like nonpayment or lease violations. Housing advocates hitched their wagon to good cause and spent months lobbying for its passage, amid extreme price gouging in the city's rental market forcing many tenants to leave their homes, but they were met by a massive lobbying blitz from landlords that stopped the legislation in its tracks.

Albany also failed to repeal-and-replace 421a, a controversial but widely used property tax break for real estate developers building housing in the city. The tax break is now expected to formally expire on June 15.

Editor's note: A version of this story originally ran in Brooklyn Paper.

<https://www.brownstoner.com/real-estate-market/nycha-preservation-trust-affordable-housing-repairs-bonds-new-york-state-assembly/>

STATE LAWMAKERS APPROVE NEW PUBLIC TRUST THAT COULD FUND REPAIRS AT 25,000 NYCHA; 6SQFT

By MICHELLE COHEN

JUNE 6, 2022

New York state legislators last week passed legislation that would allow the New York City Housing Authority to raise billions of dollars for desperately needed repairs at 25,000 apartments in the system. Championed by Mayor Eric Adams and proposed by public housing authority chair Gregory Russ, the Public Housing Preservation Trust is seen as a rescue measure for funding

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needed for the NYCHA system—by far the nation’s largest public housing authority. The new public trust could raise billions of dollars to upgrade thousands of units, The City reports.

“This is a momentous event in the history of public housing — in New York City and across the nation,” Russ said. “The passage of the Public Housing Preservation Trust gives NYCHA the ability to raise billions of dollars in capital funds to invest in its properties and residents a true voice in the future of their homes.”

The roughly 400,000 residents living in NYCHA apartments have spent decades living in squalid conditions, from lead paint and mold to broken elevators—problems that stem from many years of underfunding, according to the New York Times. By NYCHA estimates, the persistent problems will require \$40 billion to fix.

The new law would lease as many as 25,000 apartments to a public preservation trust; the newly-created trust could then borrow money to cover the upgrades and repairs. NYCHA residents would be front and center in the trust’s implementation, with all current rights and protections remaining intact—including the promise that no resident would have to pay more than 30 percent of their income toward rent.

More than a dozen changes recommended by resident leaders are also included in the legislation, including:

A first-in-the-country resident opt-in voting process, under which residents will have the right to vote on any proposed changes to their development; Resident participation in vendor selection; and Resident representation on quality assurance committees.

The trust would allow NYCHA access to twice as much federal funding as it currently receives while keeping its public status and moving to specific apartment-based Tenant Protection Voucher funding under the Section 8 program.

Additionally, the bill contains improved rules to reduce costs, speed up construction and respond to resident requests more quickly. NYCHA will still own all of the housing complexes and the land beneath them, and their employees will continue to manage the properties. The new trust would be helmed by a publicly-appointed board with nine members, four of whom are residents. Residents will also be able to aid in choosing the companies identified to do repair work.

Last year a similar bill was voted down in Albany based on the argument that it would take control of housing developments away from the public, and that it might be risky to issue significant amounts of debt to the agency. This time around, a provision giving residents in each development a vote on whether to accept the new structure mollified some previous skeptics, though a number of residents still oppose the bill for reasons that include the fear that the federal government won’t follow up with the financial support it requires.

The bill fills a highly publicized need since the omission of public housing in last year’s congressional infrastructure bill and the death of President Biden’s Build Back Better plan, which contained billions of dollars for NYCHA.

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“For decades, NYCHA residents have been promised repair after repair that never materialized, but, with the Public Housing Preservation Trust, we will finally deliver on those promises and offer NYCHA residents the dignity and safe, high-quality, affordable homes they deserve,” Adams said in a statement.

The bill passed in the New York State Assembly in a 132-18 vote, and in the Senate in a 38-25 vote. As a final step, Hochul is expected to sign the new bill. <https://www.6sqft.com/state-lawmakers-approve-new-public-trust-that-could-fund-repairs-at-25000-nycha-apartments/>

NEW YORK STATE LAWMAKERS APPROVE MAJOR SHIFT IN NYCHA FUNDING; ***GOTHAMIST***

By CHAU LAM
JUNE 3, 2022

City leaders and lawmakers say thousands of public housing residents in New York City who have been forced to live with leaks, mold, broken elevators, and busted boilers may finally see better living conditions in what could amount to a fundamental shift in how public housing is funded in the city.

The state Legislature passed a bill on Thursday that would allow the New York City Housing Authority, or NYCHA, to create a public-benefit corporation that could raise billions to renovate up to 25,000 apartments.

The newly created entity, the Public Housing Preservation Trust, would enable the housing authority to issue bonds and borrow money from private investors to pay for repairs. The model has been in the offing for NYCHA since 2020 and is designed to move the authority away from direct federal subsidies — which Congress has increasingly targeted with budget cuts in recent decades — and more towards a voucher-based system.

The legislation, backed by Mayor Eric Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul, was adopted in the Senate by a vote of 38 to 25 on the final day of the legislative session. The Assembly approved it on Wednesday in a 132-18 vote. The bill is now heading to Hochul’s desk, and the governor is expected to sign it.

“For decades, NYCHA residents have been promised repair after repair that never materialized, but, with the Public Housing Preservation Trust, we will finally deliver on those promises and offer NYCHA residents the dignity and safe, high-quality, affordable homes they deserve,” Adams said in a statement.

With about 176,000 apartments under its control, NYCHA is the largest source of affordable housing in the country for low-income and moderate-income New Yorkers. For decades, its more than 400,000 residents have lived in aging buildings that require an estimated \$40 billion in repairs.

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Under the proposal, up to 25,000 apartments could be leased to the newly established trust, which would convert the units from public housing under Section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act, to the system of rental vouchers known as Section 8, allowing NYCHA to access additional federal funding. The housing authority would continue to own and operate the buildings and the land.

In 2019, the average unit in the public housing program received \$1,250 a month in federal funding, while the average Section 8 Tenant Protection Voucher received \$1,900 a month, an extra \$650 per unit per month, according to Greg Russ, NYCHA's chairperson and chief executive officer. Russ said the trust could then leverage the extra funding as a way to borrow additional money from private investors to pay for maintenance and repairs.

Residents have the option to join the program. Under the legislation, NYCHA can go back to state lawmakers each year and ask the Legislature to authorize additional apartments to be transferred to the trust.

The newly formed public-benefit corporation would be run by a nine-member board, which would include four NYCHA residents, two NYCHA executives and a deputy mayor. The remaining two positions would be appointed by the housing authority's chief executive and by the mayor.

Many tenants and some legislators opposed the plan, including the bill's original sponsor, Sen. Brian Kavanagh, who ultimately voted against it on Thursday. Sen. Julia Salazar of Brooklyn reintroduced the bill last week after Kavanagh withdrew his support. Kavanagh did not respond to a request for comment on why he dropped his support. Salazar also did not respond to questions on why she stepped in at the last minute as the bill's sponsor.

The Citywide Council of Presidents of NYCHA Tenant Associations, the leadership group that represents all public housing residents, also opposed the bill. Only one of its 10 members supported it.

Tenants and advocacy groups say they're concerned that the plan could threaten or weaken many of the rock-solid protections NYCHA residents currently enjoy, such as the right to an administrative hearing before the housing authority can move to evict them, and the ability to pass an apartment on to the next generation. They also fear that giving the trust the power to borrow money exposes NYCHA to potential financial troubles in the future if the trust can't pay back its loans.

Marquis Jenkins, co-founder of Residents to Preserve Public Housing, which formed to oppose the legislation when it was first introduced in 2020, said he's disappointed that legislators voted in favor of the program.

"We will continue to fight," Jenkins said. "The next battle is with [the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development] and Congress."

Nicholas Dagen Bloom, a professor of urban policy and planning at Hunter College and author of "Public Housing That Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century," said that while direct

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

federal funding for public housing under Section 9 may have worked in the past, NYCHA now has little choice but to pursue funding where it is available.

“If you don't follow the federal money, then you cannot succeed because that's who basically pays for it,” said Bloom.

He said the federal government has wanted to get out of the public housing business since the 1970s and has been largely successful by cutting funding to the Section 9 program.

While he admits that moving to the trust model has its risks, Bloom said the bigger risk is to do nothing, given the dilapidated state of many NYCHA buildings. “It's going to make a massive difference, enormous difference,” Bloom said. <https://gothamist.com/news/new-york-state-lawmakers-approve-major-shift-in-nycha-funding>

LEGISLATURE APPROVES PUBLIC TRUST FOR NYCHA; NY1

By COURTNEY GROSS

JUNE 3, 2022

Barbara McFadden has been the resident leader here at Nostrand Houses for a dozen years. And at this development, like so many public housing authority properties, the residents have genuine issues in their apartments.

In one apartment, there were broken tiles all across the bedroom. In another, there was peeling paint and plaster in the living room and bedroom. Water damage was clear in the bathroom—the wall bubbling from moisture.

McFadden is one of NYCHA's tenant leaders who supports a new way of trying to fix things.

“One of the reasons why I support the trust is because the trust will allow NYCHA to get the funding to do the necessary repairs in the New York City Housing Authority apartment,” McFadden said.

For two years, housing authority officials have been pushing a plan to create a public housing preservation trust — a public benefit corporation that will raise the cash to cover millions of dollars in renovations. The state legislature approved that proposal this week.

“The point here is to fix the property, fix the apartments and make sure we don't lose a single apartment or a single family,” NYCHA chair and CEO Greg Russ said, in an interview with NY1.

They plan to start with 25 thousand apartments — converting them to section 8, which is a more reliable, affordable housing voucher from the federal government. The trust can then borrow cash and issue bonds to cover repairs.

Developments will have the choice of opting in by a yet to be determined voting process.

“Give us a chance to show we can make these buildings look, be and operate as they should as modern apartments,” Russ said.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Mayor Adams had endorsed the plan and Gov. Kathy Hochul is expected to sign the legislation.

It's still created some controversy and some tenants have opposed the move.

McFadden certainly hopes Nostrand Houses are first in line.

"The trust is a game changer. It's a new beginning, and it's also a new start," she said.

<https://www.ny1.com/nyc/staten-island/politics/2022/06/03/nycha-trust-approved-by-legislature>

PRESERVATION TRUST COULD BRING MUCH-NEEDED REPAIRS TO NYCHA APARTMENTS; CBS NEW YORK

By LEAH MISHKIN

JUNE 3, 2022

NEW YORK - Much-needed repairs may be coming to New York City Housing Authority residents.

CBS2's Leah Mishkin breaks down the bill awaiting the governor's signature and the reaction from the people who have experienced dangerous conditions inside their homes.

For the past year, Aida Robles has been sleeping in her living room. The NYCHA resident says she had water damage in her bedroom and repairs have still not been made. She also says her unit has mold.

NYCHA's chair and CEO Greg Russ acknowledges all of the 170,000 NYCHA units need repairs. The cost to do the work? About \$40 billion.

"Inside the current federal rulebook, there's only very few paths that you can take as a public housing authority to sort of enhance your subsidy," Russ said.

Now there's a new path to funding. A bill that made it through New York state legislature Thursday looks to create a New York City public housing preservation trust.

"We've retained all the rights and protections of public housing, but we're going to fund it with Section 8 subsidy," Russ said.

Twenty-five thousand NYCHA apartments would be eligible to transfer into the new trust in the first wave.

"We need to do the whole portfolio, but we added the cap because we felt everyone is more comfortable with us being able to show proof of concept," Russ said.

Legal Aid Society attorney Lucy Newman says this trust is a great opportunity to make much-needed critical repairs.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

"There are protections built into the legislation that ensure all of those critical points that make public housing the stable, affordable housing that we know," she said.

Residents will have the choice of whether they want to opt into the trust or not.

Barbara McFadden is in favor.

"It will give NYCHA the funding that they need to do this backlog of repairs," she said.

Others who spoke to CBS2 fear it'll cost them more out of pocket down the line.

"Residents don't lose any of their current rights, any of their current opportunities of public housing, but they wind up with a new apartment at the end of the day," Russ said.

Mayor Eric Adams said this trust will deliver on "promised repair," and Gov. Kathy Hochul called it "a major win," adding she looks "forward to signing it into law."

<https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/nycha-preservation-trust-repairs/>

MAYOR ADAMS, ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS CELEBRATE PASSAGE OF NYCHA PUBLIC HOUSING TRUST IN ALBANY; HARLEM WORLD MAGAZINE

By STAFF

JUNE 2, 2022

New York City Mayor Eric Adams today celebrated the state Legislature's passage of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Public Housing Preservation Trust legislation, A7805D/S9409A. The bill passed the New York State Senate today on 38-25 vote, after passing the Assembly yesterday on a 132-18 vote.

"For decades, NYCHA residents have been promised repair after repair that never materialized, but, with the Public Housing Preservation Trust, we will finally deliver on those promises and offer NYCHA residents the dignity and safe, high-quality, affordable homes they deserve," said Mayor Adams. "My administration fought tirelessly alongside residents and our partners in Albany to pass this bill that will unlock critical resources, with legal protections, to keep residents at the center of the process of improving their homes. NYCHA residents deserve a menu of options to choose the approach and the tools that they think will best deliver the quality of life they deserve, and, with Governor Hochul's signature, the Public Housing Trust will be a major addition to that menu. Thank you to all of our partners in Albany for making real change for tens of thousands of New Yorkers and to the NYCHA residents who stood up to 'Get Stuff Done.'"

"This is an incredible moment for the residents of NYCHA and New York City as a whole. Through the Trust legislation, NYCHA residents are the only people who will decide the future of their homes going forward — they finally have choices and the power to drive the conversation on how their homes are preserved," said New York City Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz. "NYCHA housing is our most vital affordable housing stock, and the NYCHA Preservation Trust

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

will allow us to ensure these homes not only exist long into the future but also remain permanently affordable for thousands of families. After years of relying on the whims of Congress, NYCHA residents will finally get the repairs they deserve and homes they can be proud of once again. We anchored the rights of public housing residents at the heart of this bill to ensure that while New Yorkers see their quality of life vastly improved through the Trust, they are not sacrificing any of their rights. This is a long-term, permanent solution for NYCHA. Thank you to our allies in Albany and, most importantly, the NYCHA residents who have advocated for themselves, their families, and their communities to preserve public housing in New York City.”

“This is a momentous event in the history of public housing — in New York City and across the nation,” NYCHA Chair and CEO Gregory Russ. “The passage of the Public Housing Preservation Trust gives NYCHA the ability to raise billions of dollars in capital funds to invest in its properties and residents a true voice in the future of their homes. With the support of New York City Mayor Eric Adams, New York State Governor Kathy Hochul, NYCHA residents, community leaders, and advocacy partners, the New York State Senate and Assembly have led the way with the vision and courage necessary to put an end to decades of disinvestment and the status quo and, most importantly, to transform the quality of life for public housing residents. NYCHA is profoundly grateful to bill sponsors Assemblymember Steven Cymbrowitz and Senator Julia Salazar, as well as the New York State Legislature and all of our partners for making possible real change and lasting solutions for public housing residents in New York City.”

The Preservation Trust would be a new, entirely public entity that would unlock billions of dollars in federal funding to accelerate repairs and make long-overdue investments for tens of thousands of NYCHA residents across all five boroughs. The legislation would keep NYCHA residents at the center of the Trust’s implementation process, preserving all resident rights and protections, including a guarantee that no NYCHA resident will have to pay more than 30 percent of their income towards rent. NYCHA needs over \$40 billion to fully restore and renovate all its buildings.

The legislation also includes over a dozen changes recommended by resident leaders, including:

A first-in-the-country resident opt-in voting process, under which residents will have the right to vote on any proposed changes to their development; Resident participation in vendor selection; and Resident representation on quality assurance committees.

Passage of the Trust would allow NYCHA to double the amount of federal subsidy it receives while remaining entirely public by switching to project-based Tenant Protection Voucher funding.

It will also provide NYCHA with improved procurement rules that would reduce costs, speed up construction timelines, and allow faster responses to resident requests.

NYCHA would continue to own all residential complexes and the land on which they are built, with NYCHA employees continuing to manage the properties.

The Trust would have a publicly appointed nine-member board, which includes four resident members. <https://www.harlemworldmagazine.com/mayor-adams-administration-officials-celebrate-passage-of-nycha-public-housing-trust-in-albany/>

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

NYCHA RESCUE TRUST APPROVED BY NEW YORK STATE LAWMAKERS: MUSLIM COMMUNITY REPORT

By ABDULHAQQ OBISEASAN OLADIMEJI
JUNE 4, 2022

City leaders and lawmakers say thousands of public housing residents in New York City who have been forced to live with leaks, mold, broken elevators, and busted boilers may finally see better living conditions in what could amount to a fundamental shift in how public housing is funded in the city.

The state Legislature has passed a bill on Thursday that would allow the New York City Housing Authority, or NYCHA, to create a public-benefit corporation that could raise billions to renovate up to 25,000 apartments.

McFadden is one of NYCHA's tenant leaders who supports a new way of trying to fix things.

“One of the reasons why I support the trust is because the trust will allow NYCHA to get the funding to do the necessary repairs in the New York City Housing Authority apartment,” McFadden said.

For two years, housing authority officials have been pushing a plan to create a public housing preservation trust — a public benefit corporation that will raise the cash to cover millions of dollars in renovations. The state legislature approved that proposal this week.

“The point here is to fix the property, fix the apartments and make sure we don't lose a single apartment or a single family,” NYCHA chair and CEO Greg Russ said, in an interview with NY1.

They plan to start with 25 thousand apartments — converting them to section 8, which is a more reliable, affordable housing voucher from the federal government. The trust can then borrow cash and issue bonds to cover repairs.

Developments will have the choice of opting in by a yet to be determined voting process.

“Give us a chance to show we can make these buildings look, be and operate as they should as modern apartments,” Russ said.

Mayor Adams had endorsed the plan and Gov. Kathy Hochul is expected to sign the legislation. It's still created some controversy and some tenants have opposed the move.

McFadden certainly hopes Nostrand Houses are first in line. “The trust is a game changer. It's a new beginning, and it's also a new start,” she said.

<https://muslimcommunityreport.com/2022/06/04/nycha-rescue-trust-approved-by-new-york-sate-lawmakers/>

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

STATEMENT FROM GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL ON PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION CREATING THE NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC HOUSING PRESERVATION TRUST; OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

By GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

June 2, 2022

"This is a major win for New Yorkers who call NYCHA home. This legislation has the power to unlock additional federal funding and lead to billions of dollars in renovations — after decades of federal disinvestment — and provide for critical improvements at developments across the city. My administration has been working closely with City Hall, community groups, and local leaders to find real solutions to deliver support to NYCHA residents. The revised legislation that passed ensures there is increased resident feedback and input, giving residents at each development the power to opt in or reject participating in this program, and I am confident this process of engagement and collaboration will continue now that the bill has passed. I am grateful to Mayor Adams, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie and our legislative and advocate partners for collaborating on this crucial legislation and look forward to signing it into law."

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/statement-governor-kathy-hochul-passage-legislation-creating-new-york-city-public-housing>

MAYOR ADAMS, ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS CELEBRATE PASSAGE OF NYCHA PUBLIC HOUSING PRESERVATION TRUST IN ALBANY; NYC.GOV

By PRESS OFFICE

June 2, 2022

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today celebrated the state Legislature’s passage of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Public Housing Preservation Trust legislation, A7805D/S9409A. The bill passed the New York State Senate today on 38-25 vote, after passing the Assembly yesterday on a 132-18 vote.

“For decades, NYCHA residents have been promised repair after repair that never materialized, but, with the Public Housing Preservation Trust, we will finally deliver on those promises and offer NYCHA residents the dignity and safe, high-quality, affordable homes they deserve,” said Mayor Adams. “My administration fought tirelessly alongside residents and our partners in Albany to pass this bill that will unlock critical resources, with legal protections, to keep residents at the center of the process of improving their homes. NYCHA residents deserve a menu of options to choose the approach and the tools that they think will best deliver the quality of life they deserve, and, with Governor Hochul’s signature, the Public Housing Trust will be a major addition to that menu. Thank you to all of our partners in Albany for making real change for tens of thousands of New Yorkers and to the NYCHA residents who stood up to ‘Get Stuff Done.’”

“This is an incredible moment for the residents of NYCHA and New York City as a whole. Through the Trust legislation, NYCHA residents are the only people who will decide the future of their homes going forward — they finally have choices and the power to drive the conversation on how their homes are preserved,” said New York City Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz. “NYCHA housing is our most vital affordable housing stock, and the NYCHA Preservation Trust will allow us to ensure these homes not only exist long into the future but also remain

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permanently affordable for thousands of families. After years of relying on the whims of Congress, NYCHA residents will finally get the repairs they deserve and homes they can be proud of once again. We anchored the rights of public housing residents at the heart of this bill to ensure that while New Yorkers see their quality of life vastly improved through the Trust, they are not sacrificing any of their rights. This is a long-term, permanent solution for NYCHA. Thank you to our allies in Albany and, most importantly, the NYCHA residents who have advocated for themselves, their families, and their communities to preserve public housing in New York City.”

“This is a momentous event in the history of public housing — in New York City and across the nation,” NYCHA Chair and CEO Gregory Russ. “The passage of the Public Housing Preservation Trust gives NYCHA the ability to raise billions of dollars in capital funds to invest in its properties and residents a true voice in the future of their homes. With the support of New York City Mayor Eric Adams, New York State Governor Kathy Hochul, NYCHA residents, community leaders, and advocacy partners, the New York State Senate and Assembly have led the way with the vision and courage necessary to put an end to decades of disinvestment and the status quo and, most importantly, to transform the quality of life for public housing residents. NYCHA is profoundly grateful to bill sponsors Assemblymember Steven Cymbrowitz and Senator Julia Salazar, as well as the New York State Legislature and all of our partners for making possible real change and lasting solutions for public housing residents in New York City.”

The Preservation Trust would be a new, entirely public entity that would unlock billions of dollars in federal funding to accelerate repairs and make long-overdue investments for tens of thousands of NYCHA residents across all five boroughs. The legislation would keep NYCHA residents at the center of the Trust’s implementation process, preserving all resident rights and protections, including a guarantee that no NYCHA resident will have to pay more than 30 percent of their income towards rent. NYCHA needs over \$40 billion to fully restore and renovate all its buildings.

The legislation also includes over a dozen changes recommended by resident leaders, including:

A first-in-the-country resident opt-in voting process, under which residents will have the right to vote on any proposed changes to their development;

Resident participation in vendor selection; and

Resident representation on quality assurance committees.

Passage of the Trust would allow NYCHA to double the amount of federal subsidy it receives while remaining entirely public by switching to project-based Tenant Protection Voucher funding.

It will also provide NYCHA with improved procurement rules that would reduce costs, speed up construction timelines, and allow faster responses to resident requests. NYCHA would continue to own all residential complexes and the land on which they are built, with NYCHA employees continuing to manage the properties. The Trust would have a publicly appointed nine-member board, which includes four resident members. <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/360-22/mayor-adams-administration-officials-celebrate-passage-nycha-public-housing-preservation-trust>

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

NEW YORK LAWMAKERS EMBRACE NEW FUNDING PLAN TO RESCUE PUBLIC HOUSING; NY TIMES

By MIHIR ZAVERI

June 2, 2022

Every year, the plight of New York City's hundreds of thousands of public housing residents astonishes: walls and ceilings crumble and leak, mold grows in kitchens and bathrooms, elevators cease to function, the heat goes out in the dead of winter.

The problems, officials have maintained, are the result of decades of underfunding. But state legislators passed a bill on Thursday that could unlock several billion dollars for the New York City Housing Authority, which oversees the city's public housing, by leasing up to 25,000 apartments to a newly created public benefit corporation, which could then borrow money for needed repairs.

The passage of the bill, which Gov. Kathy Hochul is expected to sign, is part of a desperately needed financial rescue for the largest public housing system in the nation, which has become an emblem of the deterioration of America's aging public housing stock.

It was also a victory for Mayor Eric Adams, who has pledged to address the housing authority's longstanding problems in his first term and has otherwise struggled to push his housing agenda in Albany.

NYCHA first proposed involving the corporation, which would be known as the Public Housing Preservation Trust, two years ago.

The plan would move some housing developments from the traditional public housing program, funded by the federal government, to another program that would attach federal subsidies under the Section 8 program to specific apartments. The corporation could then borrow money against that revenue stream to pay for repairs.

NYCHA would retain ownership of the land and buildings, and residents would continue to have the same protections they do under the current program, officials said, including a cap on rent payments set at 30 percent of a household's income.

"This is a momentous event in the history of public housing," said Greg Russ, the housing authority's chief executive officer. "The passage of the Public Housing Preservation Trust gives NYCHA the ability to raise billions of dollars in capital funds to invest in its properties, and residents a true voice in the future of their homes."

For decades, public officials have failed to maintain the more than 170,000 homes that make up NYCHA's vast network of aging buildings, most of which were built in the 1950s, leaving residents with low incomes living in apartments plagued with lead, mold and crumbling infrastructure.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

In more than 40 percent of NYCHA apartments, or about 73,400 homes, residents reported three or more maintenance problems, compared with 8 percent of residents in private apartments, according to a recent city housing survey.

The agency estimates it needs a staggering \$40 billion for repairs and renovations.

As New York grows more expensive, and decent, affordable housing becomes harder to come by, NYCHA residents are often trapped in these conditions, said Susan Popkin, a fellow at the Urban Institute, a nonprofit research organization based in Washington, who has studied public housing.

“There really is nowhere else for low-income people to rent in this city at this point,” she said.

The median monthly rent for NYCHA apartments is about \$500, and the median household income is around \$18,500 per year, compared with \$1,500 and \$50,000 citywide. More than 43 percent of NYCHA households have at least one person employed, according to city estimates.

There are more than 250,000 families on a wait-list for a NYCHA apartment, according to the agency.

The issues mirror those in public housing systems across the nation. But with an official population of some 360,000 people living in more than 330 developments — more than the entire populations of Pittsburgh, Orlando or St. Louis — the scale of NYCHA’s problems dwarf those in other cities.

The newly formed corporation would be run by a nine-member board, whose members would include NYCHA’s chief executive, its chief financial officer, a deputy mayor, four NYCHA residents, a member appointed by the housing authority’s chief executive and a member appointed by the mayor to represent NYCHA employees.

The bill calls for up to 25,000 units to be leased to the corporation, and for that number to be reviewed annually, with the possibility of the Legislature authorizing an increase.

Ms. Popkin said few, if any, housing authorities had attempted a similar plan.

The effort has had a rocky path to passage. A similar bill died in Albany last year, after detractors argued it would erode public control over housing developments and that issuing large amounts of debt could present a new risk should the agency not be able to repay it in the future.

The agency managed to win over several skeptics, in part by adding a provision that would allow residents of each development to vote on whether they wanted it to be part of the scheme. (They would not be able to then vote to return a development to the traditional public housing program.)

Residents would also be able to help select the companies tapped to do repair work, according to the bill.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Karen Blondel, a community organizer who has lived in public housing for some 40 years, including more than 30 in her apartment in the Red Hook West development in Brooklyn, said she initially viewed the trust as yet another flawed plan to fix public housing that would be thrust on residents without their input.

But Ms. Blondel, a co-founder of the Public Housing Civic Association, a nonprofit resident group, said she was now in favor of it, as long as the voting process included a requirement that a high number of residents turn out.

She said that while she wanted residents to gain additional seats on the board of the corporation, the needs in public housing were too great to oppose the new plan.

“I’m not so afraid of change that I’m frozen,” she said.

The passage of the bill also became more urgent after Congress left public housing out of an enormous infrastructure bill last year, and President Biden’s spending bill known as Build Back Better, which would have included billions of dollars in funding for NYCHA, stalled.

Other major housing proposals — including a lucrative tax break for developers and a measure to limit evictions and restrict rent increases in private apartments — have all but failed in Albany because of intraparty divisions. But the trust proposal united many moderate and progressive Democrats, given the dire situation in public housing.

Without adequate federal funding, local officials have grasped at ways to address the needs. They have floated proposals calling for the housing authority to build new, mixed-income buildings on NYCHA property and to sell “air rights” — essentially unused development capacity — over some of developments.

Some progressives came to view the trust as a more palatable option than another solution NYCHA is pursuing, in which the agency has moved some developments out of the traditional public housing program and allowed private companies to manage them.

But among some residents, skepticism about the deal remains.

Ramona Ferreyra, 41, has lived in the Mitchel Houses in the Bronx for four years, and her grandmother lived there for some 30 years before that.

While she has a crack in the ceiling of her apartment and is missing tiles on her floor, she opposes the idea of a preservation trust because she does not believe that tenants would retain their protections under it.

Instead, she would like to see Congress allocate more money under the traditional housing program.

“You’re opening up the floodgates for an organization that has proven time and time again that it is failing and that it needs to be reinvented completely,” she said.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Ms. Ferreyra helps lead an advocacy group called Save Section 9, a reference to the section of federal law that governs public housing. The group plans to go to Washington later this month to lobby for more funding for NYCHA — something she said the housing authority itself should have done more of.

She also said her group was preparing to file a lawsuit to stop the trust plan.

“The fight is not going to end,” she said. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/02/nyregion/nycha-housing-bill.html>

NYCHA RESCUE TRUST APPROVED BY STATE LAWMAKERS; THE CITY

By GREG B. SMITH

June 2, 2022

Albany legislators passed legislation Thursday that would allow NYCHA to create a public trust that can raise potentially billions of dollars to upgrade thousands of public housing units in the nation’s biggest housing authority.

For decades the 400,000 tenants of NYCHA have endured squalid conditions from mold infestations to non-working elevators to toxic lead paint, living in aging buildings that NYCHA estimates need \$40 billion in repairs.

And for decades the authority relied on incremental fixes that have failed to keep up with increasingly unsafe and unhealthy conditions. The so-called Preservation Trust — proposed by NYCHA Chairperson Gregory Russ — creates a new funding mechanism to free up huge amounts of money for repairs.

The plan required an Albany sign-off, which the Assembly approved in a 132-18 vote late Wednesday. The bill was then sent to the Senate, where legislators on Thursday okayed it by a vote of 38 to 25. It now requires the signature of Gov. Kathy Hochul.

The approval was a victory for Russ, Assemblymember Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Brooklyn), and Mayor Eric Adams, who two weeks ago threw his support behind it, rallying with tenants at the Polo Grounds Houses in Washington Heights.

“This is a momentous event in the history of public housing - in New York City and across the nation,” Russ said. “The passage of the Public Housing Preservation Trust gives NYCHA the ability to raise billions of dollars in capital funds to invest in its properties and residents a true voice in the future of their homes.”

The trust would float bonds to raise funds NYCHA could use to upgrade apartments. When first proposed two years ago it would have applied to 110,000 of NYCHA’s 172,000 apartments. It’s since been scaled back and turned into a pilot program for 25,000 apartments.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

The buildings would continue to be owned and run by NYCHA, though tenants would switch out of traditional public housing and rely instead on Section 8 housing vouchers.

Last year its sponsors withdrew the bill after tenants and multiple housing advocates expressed concerns. But Russ mounted an aggressive campaign to get it back on track, and this year groups that expressed skepticism — including the Legal Aid Society, the Citizens Budget Commission and the Community Service Society — all got behind it.

Many tenants and some elected officials fought against the trust, and its original sponsor, Sen. Brian Kavanagh (D-Manhattan/Brooklyn), withdrew his support. Sen. Julia Salazar (D-Brooklyn) stepped in as a last-minute sponsor.

Nine of the 10 members of the Citywide Council of Presidents, the tenant leadership group representing all public housing residents, came out against it, complaining that NYCHA rolled it out during the pandemic, limiting how much say tenants got in its formation.

Several legislators from the New York City delegation who represent districts that include multiple housing developments voted against the bill, including Assemblymember Harvey Epstein (D-Manhattan).

“I represent 13 NYCHA developments in New York City. I have met with my NYCHA leaders numerous times and they are uniformly opposed to this NYCHA trust bill,” he said. “Standing up for our residents means voting against this bill.”

<https://www.thecity.nyc/2022/6/2/23152132/nycha-preservation-trust-approved>

LEGISLATURE PASSES NYCHA TRUST BILL; CRAINS

By BRIAN PASCUS

June 2, 2022

The state Senate and Assembly have passed the New York City Housing Authority Public Housing Preservation Trust bill, legislation that is expected to finance the repair of 25,000 units and help the troubled public housing authority address \$40 billion in capital needs.

The bill passed the Senate by a 38-25 vote, following its passage in the Assembly by a 132-18 vote.

Both Mayor Eric Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul advocated tirelessly for the bill’s passage alongside the legislation’s primary sponsors: Manhattan state Sen. Brian Kavanagh and Brooklyn Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz, the chairs of the Senate and Assembly housing committees. The legislation will create a new public housing entity within NYCHA, triggering additional federal subsidies and allowing the authority to bond out repairs.

With more than 177,000 apartments, 400,000 residents and 13,000 employees, NYCHA is the largest public housing operation in the country. But the authority faces a huge capital shortfall—\$40 billion—mainly from decades of disinvestment from the federal and state government.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

“For decades, NYCHA residents have been promised repair after repair that never materialized, but, with the Public Housing Preservation Trust, we will finally deliver on those promises and offer NYCHA residents the dignity and safe, high-quality, affordable homes they deserve,” Adams said.

In April, NYCHA CEO Gregory Russ told Crain's that public housing units in New York were in “the roughest condition” he’s seen in 25 years working in the field. He emphasized that the Public Housing Preservation Trust bill was NYCHA’s best hope to acquire additional capital funding for repairs.

On Thursday he expressed both exuberance and relief.

“This is a momentous event in the history of public housing—in New York City and across the nation,” Russ said. “The passage of the Public Housing Preservation Trust gives NYCHA the ability to raise billions of dollars in capital funds to invest in its properties and residents a true voice in the future of their homes.”

By allowing NYHCA to create a public benefit corporation, the bill facilitates the transfer of 25,000 units into a public trust and radically changes how NYCHA receives federal funding.

This transfer will trigger the flow of federal tenant protection vouchers and double the amount of funding these units receive each month from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The trust will also allow NYCHA to outsource the repairs to private developers while still maintaining public management.

“For the first time in decades, New York now has a pathway to close the \$40 billion capital deficit plaguing NYCHA through the public housing preservation trust,” said Rachel Fee, executive director of the New York Housing Conference. “This is a major victory for public housing in New York City.”

One aspect of the legislation that kept the bill in limbo was the lack of support from public housing resident leaders. Late-stage negotiations in Albany added provisions into the bill that give tenants more power over the function of the trust, notably the right to vote on any proposed changes to their properties and the right of residents to participate in private vendor selection for repair work.

“The revised legislation that passed ensures there is increased resident feedback and input,” Hochul said in a statement. “I am confident this process of engagement and collaboration will continue now that the bill has passed.” <https://www.craigslist.com/politics/ny-legislature-passes-nycha-trust-bill-finance-public-housing-repairs>

NEW YORK LAWMAKERS PASS NEW FUNDING PLAN TO SAVE PUBLIC HOUSING; NEWS 24

By MERLIN CHARPIE

June 2, 2022

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

For decades, officials failed to maintain the more than 170,000 homes that make up NYCHA's vast network of aging buildings, most of which were built in the 1950s, leaving low-income residents to live in apartments plagued by lead, mold and crumbling infrastructure.

In more than 40% of NYCHA apartments, or about 73,400 homes, residents reported three or more maintenance issues, compared to 8% of residents in private apartments, according to a recent city housing survey.

The agency estimates it needs \$40 billion for repairs and renovations.

As New York City becomes more expensive and decent, affordable housing becomes harder to find, NYCHA residents are often trapped in these conditions, said Susan Popkin, a fellow at the Urban Institute, a nonprofit research organization Washington-based profit, which has studied the public. lodging.

“There really isn't anywhere else for low-income people to rent in this city at this point,” she said.

The median monthly rent for NYCHA apartments is about \$500, and the median household income is about \$18,500 per year, compared to \$1,500 and \$50,000 citywide. More than 43% of NYCHA households have at least one employed person, according to city estimates.

According to the agency, more than 250,000 families are on the waiting list for a NYCHA apartment.

The problems mirror those of public housing systems across the country. But with an official population of about 360,000 living in more than 330 developments — more than the populations of Pittsburgh, Orlando or St. Louis combined — the scale of NYCHA's problems dwarfs those of other cities.

The newly formed corporation would be governed by a nine-member board of directors, whose members would include NYCHA's chief executive, its chief financial officer, a deputy mayor, four NYCHA residents, one member appointed by the authority's chief executive housing and one member appointed by the mayor to represent NYCHA employees.

The bill provides that up to 25,000 units will be leased to the corporation and that number will be reviewed annually, with the possibility that the Legislative Assembly authorizes an increase.

<https://news-24.fr/les-legislateurs-de-new-york-adoptent-un-nouveau-plan-de-financement-pour-sauver-le-logement-public/>

NYCHA ‘PRESERVATION TRUST’ PASSES STATE LEGISLATURE; BROOKLYN PAPER

By BEN BRACHFELD

June 2, 2022

State lawmakers on Thursday approved the formation of the New York City Housing Authority “Preservation Trust,” a new public entity that proponents say will allow for a massive influx of

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

money into the city's beleaguered public housing stock, where 350,000 New Yorkers live in properties all across the five boroughs.

The measure, which passed the State Assembly on Wednesday and the Senate on Thursday, would create a new city-owned public benefit corporation with the power to borrow money by issuing bonds, allowing for a significant stream of revenue into the nation's largest public housing agency, which through years of defunding, neglect, and deferred maintenance by all levels of government, has about \$40 billion in outstanding capital needs.

The legislation would allow NYCHA to lease 25,000 apartments to the trust, converting them from the feds' Section 9 funding program to Section 8. Proponents say the move would unlock billions of dollars for repairs to NYCHA's aging properties, where outages of heat, hot water, and elevators are constant, ancient boilers are in desperate need of replacement, mold and vermin run rampant, and crucial repairs to residents' apartments are unaddressed for long periods of time.

"For decades, NYCHA residents have been promised repair after repair that never materialized, but, with the Public Housing Preservation Trust, we will finally deliver on those promises and offer NYCHA residents the dignity and safe, high-quality, affordable homes they deserve," Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement upon the bill's passage through both houses. "My administration fought tirelessly alongside residents and our partners in Albany to pass this bill that will unlock critical resources, with legal protections, to keep residents at the center of the process of improving their homes."

Soon after passage, Hochul said she would sign the bill into law.

"This is a major win for New Yorkers who call NYCHA home," the governor said. "This legislation has the power to unlock additional federal funding and lead to billions of dollars in renovations — after decades of federal disinvestment — and provide for critical improvements at developments across the city."

The measure had support from a wide range of the city's leading Democratic officials, from Mayor Eric Adams to socialist Brooklyn State Sen. Julia Salazar. Many considered it the best of a host of unsavory options to bring desperately needed money to NYCHA: others have included Rental Assistance Demonstration, where thousands of apartments have been brought under private management, or selling air rights at the authority's sprawling complexes.

The trust will be city-owned, and properties taken over by the trust will remain under permanent ownership by NYCHA. Tenants will still be eligible for automatic lease renewals and succession rights, and be able to form tenant associations. Crucially, rents would still be capped for NYCHA residents at 30% of their income.

The most recent version of the legislation also prioritizes buy-in from residents before developments undergo conversion: tenants would be able to vote on whether their complex converts to Section 8, and on which vendors will be chosen to take on repair work.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Nonetheless, many residents have expressed hesitation over the trust, for reasons similar to apprehension over RAD. Many fear the trust is a beckon for privatization of public housing and eventual displacement; nine of ten members of the “Citywide Council of Presidents,” a consortium of tenant association leaders, were against the proposal, The City reported last month.

While NYCHA properties leased to the trust would remain under public stewardship, their repairs would be at least partially financed with private investment dollars, rather than public subsidy.

While Albany managed to pass major legislation for public housing residents, tenants in private housing were not so lucky. Lawmakers failed to pass “good cause eviction,” which would cap rent increases statewide at 3% in most cases and prohibit landlords from evicting tenants unless they could prove “good cause,” like nonpayment or lease violations. Housing advocates hitched their wagon to good cause and spent months lobbying for its passage, amid extreme price gouging in the city’s rental market forcing many tenants to leave their homes, but they were met by a massive lobbying blitz from landlords that stopped the legislation in its tracks.

Albany also failed to repeal-and-replace 421a, a controversial but widely-used property tax break for real estate developers building housing in the city. The tax break is now expected to formally expire on June 15. <https://www.brooklynpaper.com/nycha-preservation-trust-passes-state-legislature/>

IN THE TRUST WE TRUST: PUBLIC HOUSING PRESERVATION TRUST CAN DELIVER FOR BELEAGUERED NYCHA RESIDENTS; NY DAILY NEWS

By EDITORIAL BOARD

June 3, 2022

In the waning hours of their session, the Assembly and Senate did something very big and potentially very good: They advanced the single best plan on the table to potentially save a falling-apart New York City Housing Authority whose residents have been plagued for a generation by leaks, mold, lead paint, rodents, broken elevators, broken boilers and, more than anything, a broken and unaccountable bureaucracy. There’s little time for congratulations, but pass them around quick — then, Gov. Hochul, sign this bill so that the rescue of NYCHA can begin in earnest.

The aging housing stock that is NYCHA’s 335 developments and 177,000 apartments has capital needs adding up to \$40 billion — just to provide the system’s 400,000-plus residents with basic standards of livability. For years, politicians have begged the feds to reverse their disinvestment. For years, Washington has essentially said, get bent.

Finally, New York has chosen to give the authority the authority to control its own destiny. The Trust, a public corporation, will take over tens of thousands of units and leverage new federal funding streams, moving far more swiftly to make necessary repairs and procure crucial services, all while maintaining the same critical legal protections that NYCHA itself currently owes its residents. For once, an excellent idea will actually get a real-world test.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

As we said, congratulations are in order — but victory laps are premature. It would be beyond folly to think that a restructuring or new income stream will lead seamlessly to a resolution of the persistent neglect and disrepair that has been inflicted on tenants.

What will help this new body succeed is robust oversight that will demand it deliver for residents and hold leaders accountable if they fail to efficiently utilize the billions of dollars that this arrangement will unlock. No more workers collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars via overtime fraud, no putting up with ineffective contractors, no vast delays for needed projects like elevator repair. This is a chance to start fresh, and we must make the most of it.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-edit-nycha-trust-20220603-qi2jbwnaivcndb2dwstj5yjxlq-story.html>

NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE PASSES NYCHA PRESERVATION TRUST; CBS NEW YORK

By CBS NY TEAM
June 2, 2022

NEW YORK -- Thousands of crumbling NYCHA apartments could finally be getting desperately needed repairs.

Thursday, the state legislature passed the New York City Public Housing Preservation Trust. NYCHA chair Gregory Russ says the trust gives the agency the ability to raise billions of dollars in capital funds to speed up repairs and make long-overdue investments.

NYCHA estimates it needs \$40 billion to fully renovate all of its buildings. Gov. Kathy Hochul is expected to sign the bill into law. <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/nycha-preservation-trust/>

NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY ON WNYC-FM (RADIO); WNYC-FM

By JON CAMPBELL
June 3, 2022

State lawmakers have passed a bill that supporters say could convert thousands of New York City public housing units into section 8 Housing supporters say they plan to help the New York City housing authority access bill Millions in New funding to make desperately needed repairs to the buildings but the plan has also raised fears from NYCHA tenants and Housing advocates. They say it could threaten the protections residents already enjoy. The bill would create a trust that could then raise additional funding from private invested private investors. Mayor Adams backs the legislation and says it will unlock critical resources for public Housing residents.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-edit-nycha-trust-20220603-qi2jbwnaivcndb2dwstj5yjxlq-story.html>

NYCHA BUILDING DWELLERS TO BENEFIT FROM REPAIRS APPROVED BY NEW YORK SENATE; UNIVISIÓN

June 3, 2022

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

The time has come to repair the buildings of NYCHA, in the state legislature approved the trust for the preservation of public housing in New York City that will allow to raise billions of dollars so they can accelerate the works that were delayed by lack of resources, according to NYCHA they would need about \$ 40,000,000,000 to be able to renovate the apartments like the ones they see and everything will begin to operate when Governor Kathy Hochul precisely sign this law.

<https://www.univision.com/local/nueva-york-wxtv/habitantes-de-edificios-nycha-se-beneficiaran-de-reparaciones-aprobadas-por-el-senado-de-nueva-york-video>

HOUSING AUTHORITY ON WABC-NY (ABC); WABC-NY

By EYEWITNESS NEWS THIS MORNING

June 3, 2022

Legislators passed a bill to fund the housing authority and a major win for Mayor Adams. several billion dollars to accelerate repairs. <https://abc7ny.com/11921909/>

ALBANY LAWMAKERS APPROVE NYCHA TRUST, LET 421-A TAX CREDIT EXPIRE AND FAIL TO ACT ON ‘GOOD CAUSE’ EVICTION; NY DAILY NEWS

By DENIS SLATTERY

June 2, 2022

ALBANY — New York lawmakers approved a restructuring of the city’s embattled Housing Authority on Thursday, creating a public trust that could unlock federal funds and borrowing power for much-needed repairs.

The measure adopted on the final day of the legislative session allows NYCHA to transfer 25,000 apartments into a publicly owned trust with the ability to issue bonds and borrow money to cover capital repairs.

“This is a major win for New Yorkers who call NYCHA home,” Gov. Hochul said in a statement. “This legislation has the power to unlock additional federal funding and lead to billions of dollars in renovations — after decades of federal disinvestment — and provide for critical improvements at developments across the city.”

Mayor Adams also applauded the passage of the bill, saying that it will enable the city to “offer NYCHA residents the dignity and safe, high-quality, affordable homes they deserve.”

NYCHA, which is already being overseen by a federal monitor, has been plagued by problems as buildings and apartments have fallen into disrepair. Tenants have been forced to contend with failing boilers, lead paint and mold for decades. <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/new-york-elections-government/ny-albany-budget-nycha-trust-421-a-good-cause-eviction-20220602-zlqrmuazancbrj2h3m62hfijkq-story.html>

OPINION: ALBANY CAN GIVE NEW YORK CITY MORE POWER TO FIX THE HOUSING CRISIS; GOTHAM GAZETTE

By RACHEL FEE

June 2, 2022

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

State lawmakers clearly understand that New York faces an emergency-level housing crisis and have acted accordingly: adopting a five-year housing plan to invest \$25 billion in affordable and supportive housing across the state. But the job is not over, there are several important housing bills under consideration that would help New York City fight the housing crisis.

In the final days of the state legislative session, Albany has a chance to help the city help itself by giving it new authority and without spending another dime this year.

Perhaps the most pressing housing issue in New York City is the living conditions at the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). NYCHA public housing needs \$40 billion in repairs and while there was optimism last summer that the president's Build Back Better bill would provide needed funding, there is now little hope of the federal government coming to the rescue.

There are more than 535,000 New York residents living in 177,500 NYCHA apartments, and we cannot afford to lose a single unit without exacerbating our grave housing crisis. Fortunately, there is legislation in Albany that would give NYCHA new tools to raise capital, while leaving public housing in the hands of the public, where it belongs.

The proposed legislation would create a public trust to raise the additional funding and allow procurement capabilities that NYCHA doesn't have for contracting repairs. Most importantly, the new plan puts tenants in the driver's seat. The current bill allows tenants to vote on whether their properties are involved with the preservation trust. The unacceptable conditions residents live with every day should give extra resolve for lawmakers to approve the creation of a Public Housing Preservation Trust that unlocks new financing for NYCHA while preserving tenant protection and public control.

At the same time, the state can also give the city tools to improve, preserve, or convert affordable housing in the private market. There are several ways it can do so.

First, the state must allow New York City to modernize its housing programs for the 21st century by updating outdated lending authority. The proposed Affordability Plus legislation would allow the city to align their housing programs with market lending term periods and provide more flexibility on loan amounts and income requirements. This will help streamline many of the affordable housing finance programs. The legislation would also help to make affordable homeownership and community land trusts for housing possible. Currently, state law prevents the city from lending to the types of community ownership projects that many support in the city; outside of city-owned land.

The city can also add more affordable housing through legal and safe conversions. We now know that a good portion of the hotels that shuttered during the COVID-19 crisis are occupied by tourists again, but many are still in financial trouble. These properties can and should be converted into affordable units, which can be done far more quickly than building new construction and provide relief in a matter of months. But the conversion process is over-regulated and therefore cost-prohibitive. The state must amend the law to allow hotel conversions while retaining their existing Certificates of Occupancy.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Lastly, the state can help New York City take action on legalizing basements to improve safety and compliance in each borough. State legislative action will allow the city to fast-track solutions that have been stalled due to the complexities of the building and zoning codes. Following the devastating eleven drownings in basements during Hurricane Ida, there is renewed urgency to legalize basements that can be made safe and to enforce dangerous noncompliance.

These are common-sense solutions to complex problems, and they are uncontroversial: housing leaders in and out of City Hall agree that they would make a difference and are asking Albany to implement them. That means the only impediment is advancing these bills in Albany in the final days of legislative session. During a crisis of this magnitude, we need all hands on deck to solve a housing crisis and we have no time to waste. <https://www.gothamgazette.com/130-opinion/130-opinion/11350-albany-new-york-city-fix-housing-crisis>

SUPPORT FOR NYCHA PUBLIC HOUSING PRESERVATION TRUST; QUEENS GAZETTE

By JOHN A. TOSCANO
June 2, 2022

New York City Mayor Eric Adams, along with government, labor, and community leaders, stood with New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents on May 23 at Polo Grounds Houses in support of the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust. The Trust — which requires authorization from the state Legislature — would be a new, entirely public entity that would unlock billions of dollars in federal funding to accelerate repairs and make long-overdue investments for tens of thousands of NYCHA residents across all five boroughs. The current legislation — A7805C — would keep NYCHA residents at the center of the Trust’s implementation process, preserving all resident rights and protections. NYCHA needs over \$40 billion to fully restore and renovate all its buildings.

“For too long, our NYCHA communities have been ignored and denied their fair share of investments and services. But we’re changing that with this legislation, and my administration is all-in on fighting for NYCHA,” said Mayor Adams. “Every New Yorker deserves a safe home with working utilities, and the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust will help make that a reality. I know that with the combined force of NYCHA residents, the union workers who serve them every day, and our partners fighting in Albany, we can give these New Yorkers the homes they deserve.”

The legislation being considered in Albany — which was approved by the Assembly Housing Committee earlier this month — retains all current rights and protections for NYCHA residents, including a guarantee that no NYCHA resident will have to pay more than 30 percent of their income towards rent. The legislation also includes over a dozen changes recommended by resident leaders, including:

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

A first-in-the-country resident opt-in voting process, under which residents will have the right to vote on any proposed changes to their development; Resident participation in vendor selection; and Resident representation on quality assurance committees.

Approval of the Trust would allow NYCHA to double the amount of federal subsidy it receives while remaining entirely public by switching to project-based Tenant Protection Voucher funding. It will also provide NYCHA with improved procurement rules that would reduce costs, speed up construction timelines, and allow faster responses to resident requests. NYCHA would continue to own all residential complexes and the land on which they are built, with NYCHA employees continuing to manage the properties. The Trust would have a publicly appointed nine-member board, which includes four resident members.

“While we’ve seen incredible progress at NYCHA over the last few years, we won’t be able to give residents the homes they deserve, unless something major happens — and that is the Public Housing Preservation Trust,” said New York City Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz.

“I want to applaud Chair Russ, the executive team, Mayor Adams, and all the many advocates of the Trust, especially those who worked tirelessly to explain its purpose and extraordinary benefits to the residents of public housing,” said Bishop Mitchell Taylor, CEO and co-founder, Urban Upbound. “The preservation of public housing should be public objective number one. The trust will create a vehicle to drive that objective. This is a great day for the residents of public housing. I want to thank the mayor for his promise not to forget public housing. His presence today just puts an exclamation point on his ongoing commitment to make public housing a place people can call home and feel good about it.” <https://www.qgazette.com/articles/i-on-politics-288/>

STATE PRESSED ON REVAMP OF NYCHA; MANHATTAN TIMES NEWS

By GREGG MCQUEEN

May 31, 2022

Time for the Trust?

As the New York’s 2022 state legislative session winds down, lawmakers are being pressed to finalize pending legislation that would establish a public entity known as the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust.

Mayor Eric Adams is making a late appeal for Albany lawmakers to approve a plan that will overhaul the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

During a rally outside of the Polo Grounds Towers in Harlem on Mon., May 23rd, Adams urged state lawmakers to finalize pending legislation that would establish a public entity known as the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust.

The move would unlock billions of dollars in federal funding to accelerate repairs and jumpstart other improvements at NYCHA, Adams said.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

“This time, we have a real stream of resources that can come through, through the Trust,” said Adams. “Let’s make this happen.”

The plan requires authorization from the state legislature, which is slated to wrap its current session in early June.

“Now let’s get it over the finish line, so we can finally stop the years of neglect with NYCHA and keep kicking the can down the road,” remarked Adams, who said public housing residents are living in “a destructive environment.”

“We can finally stop the years of neglect,” argued Mayor Eric Adams. Since 2019, NYCHA has operated under a federal monitor following years of financial mismanagement and poor living conditions for residents, who have endured mold, rats, and a lack of heat and hot water.

According to NYCHA, the agency is in need of \$40 billion to catch up on long-overdue repairs.

“The Trust will bring the money, the repairs, and the rights that every New Yorker’s home should have. And even more, this legislation guarantees that these apartments will remain permanently affordable for future generations,” said NYCHA Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz. “It is on us to fight for that future. And the Trust is how we will get there.”

Establishing the Trust would allow NYCHA to qualify for federal funding currently reserved for Section 8 housing, Katz explained.

“Albany has the opportunity to deliver the biggest windfall to NYCHA residents since it was created 85 years ago, and this is about the residents,” she said.

If approved, the plan would split NYCHA into two bodies – a city-run agency that oversees the operation and repairs of public housing complexes, and a nonprofit public benefit corporation that would own the properties and allow the federal government to provide Section 8 tenant protection vouchers to NYCHA units.

Approval of the Trust would allow NYCHA to double the amount of federal subsidy it receives by switching to project-based tenant protection voucher funding. It would also provide NYCHA with improved procurement rules that would reduce costs, speed up construction timelines, and allow for faster responses to resident requests, argued city officials.

The legislation pending in Albany would also establish a resident opt-in voting process, under which residents will have the right to vote on any proposed changes to their housing complex. In addition, it would allow for resident participation in vendor selection and on quality assurance committees.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

“The tenants will be able – not just the TA [Tenants’ Association] presidents, but the tenants themselves – will be able to take a vote and decide which type of program they would like to select in order to make their development and to improve their development,” said Katz.

Adams said the city’s Chief Technology Officer is creating a series of dashboards to monitor NYCHA repairs.

“So, while we get the resources through this Trust, we also have my CTO building out these dashboards so we can see what is happening in our cities,” Adams said. “How long does it take to do a repair? Where’s the money coming into NYCHA? Where’s the contractors that we are using? How long the boilers have been online. We have to start analyzing this stuff in real time. And that is the difference.” <https://www.manhattantimesnews.com/state-pressed-on-revamp-of-nycha-el-estado-presionado-por-la-renovacion-de-nycha/>

FATE OF 25,000 NYCHA APARTMENTS IN THE BALANCE AS END OF LEGISLATIVE SESSION NEARS; J NEWS

By ADI TALWAR

June 1, 2022

Proposed legislation would allow NYCHA to transfer 25,000 apartments into a publicly owned trust with the power to issue bonds and borrow money for addressing desperately-needed capital repairs. Supporters say it’s the only real shot to drum up the funds in lieu of substantive federal aid. But many public housing tenants are opposed or skeptical of the plan.

As the end of New York’s legislative session approaches, state lawmakers appear poised to approve a measure intended to shore up cash for thousands of deteriorating NYCHA apartments despite concerns from many tenant leaders.

The legislation would allow NYCHA to transfer 25,000 apartments into a publicly owned trust with the power to issue bonds and borrow money for addressing desperately-needed capital repairs. To unlock those investments, the proposed New York City Public Housing Preservation Trust would convert the federal funding mechanism for each unit from a public housing operating fund outlined in Section 9 of the US Housing Act to Section 8 rental assistance vouchers, which come with more money from Washington.

The Trust has been billed as a “public option” in contrast to the ongoing conversion to private management at dozens of NYCHA campuses under the Rental Assistance Demonstration-Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (RAD-PACT) model. About 400,000 New Yorkers are authorized to live in NYCHA’s 177,00 apartments — the Trust would potentially apply to about 15 percent of those units — but the actual number of residents is undoubtedly higher (experts say it is more like 500,000 to 600,000).

The bill gained little traction before its sponsors pulled it last year, but now has support across the Democratic Party spectrum, uniting Gov. Kathy Hochul and Mayor Eric Adams — who rallied for its passage May 23 at the Polo Grounds housing complex — with progressive elected officials like Comptroller Brad Lander, and socialist legislators, like Senate sponsor Julia Salazar.

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“One thing that’s clear, we need to stop playing with this,” Adams said of the crumbling conditions at NYCHA campuses citywide. We are not getting money from the federal government this year. They’re not. They already told us, ‘We are not concerned with NYCHA residents.’ ”

Congress failed to pass the Build Back Better package, which would have directed about \$ 80 billion to public housing nationwide — much of that going to NYCHA, the nation’s largest public housing system, and its estimated \$ 40 billion in needed capital repairs.

“So we must do it on our own,” Adams said. “Here’s a way to do it.”

Trust the Trust?

Despite that encouragement, the measure has proved a tough sell for many NYCHA residents, including nine of the 10 members of the Citywide Council of Presidents (CCOP), a representative body that issued an open letter May 9 opposing the Trust or any conversion efforts to Section 8. ”

NYCHA residents have already been burned by decades of disinvestment, mismanagement and unfulfilled pledges to revitalize their ailing infrastructure, remove toxic lead paint and fix routinely-busted boilers, said Manny Martinez, South Jamaica Houses Residents Association President and interim CCOP chair of Queens South.

“You fool me once, shame on you. You fool me twice, shame on me, ”Martinez said. “We’ve been fooled. How many times are we going to be fooled? ”

Martinez said he fears tenants will lose their public housing rights under the Preservation Trust, a key component of the NYCHA’s two-year-old “Blueprint for Change,” though the legislation explicitly states that tenants in Trust buildings will maintain the same rights they have under Section 9 housing.

Many public housing advocates have joined NYCHA tenants at rallies and written op-eds to amplify concerns about accountability, bond repayment and a fundamental end of public housing.

If the Trust’s debt grows too onerous, the entity could potentially use tenants’ voucher revenue to pay off loans rather than make repairs, said Kristen Hackett, a doctoral student and executive committee member in Queens’ Justice For All Coalition.

“Rather than alleviating the current deficit and deterioration created by federal disinvestment, the Trust would likely create a larger public debt problem that will continue to cause problems for residents,” Hackett said. “Only in that scenario, there are more barriers to public oversight and accountability than exist now.”

CCOP Chair Daniel Barber, who represents Bronx South as a tenant leader at the Andrew Jackson Houses, also signed the letter opposing the Trust plan, but said he thinks all residents should get to choose the future of their homes.

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“I, Daniel Barber, do not support it, but I, Daniel Barber, still feel that my residents should be able to hear it, listen, direct it, digest it, comment, ask questions and if they choose to vote if they want it or not, that’s a process that the residents have to choose, ”he said.

That’s the crux of the pitch being made by supporters of the Preservation Trust.

The latest text of the bill would give tenants the chance to vote to opt into the model and convert their subsidized units to Section 8 Tenant Protection Vouchers. That subsidy comes with more funding from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and would allow NYCHA to borrow money. While the average Section 9 unit received \$ 1,250 a month in federal funding in 2019, the average Section 8 unit received \$ 1,900 a month, Gothamist reported.

“The tenants will be able — not just the [tenant association] presidents — but the tenants themselves will be able to take a vote and decide which type of program they would like to select, ”said New York City’s Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz.

Adams also touted the options that tenants will have if lawmakers pass the current version of the Trust. He pointed out that residents will serve on “quality assurance committees” and get to vote on vendors contracted to make repairs.

But the bill’s opt-in clause has raised questions. The vote would require a “minimum percentage” of tenants to participate, according to the text of the legislation, but, as THE CITY noted, the bill does not spell out what constitutes that percentage. That means a small minority of residents who show up to vote could determine the housing future for entire complexes.

“There needs to be a threshold. Twenty residents should not be able to vote to enter the Trust, ”Queens Assemblymember Khaleel Anderson, an opponent of the current version of the bill, told City Limits Friday.

Anderson was one of 10 assemblymembers who drafted a list of changes they want to see added to the bill before they support it, but he said he expects it to pass even without their backing. The measure advanced out of the Housing and Codes Committees earlier this month. “They’re trying to strong-arm us,” Anderson said.

A NYCHA spokesperson said residents and other members of the public will have a chance to weigh in on the voting percentage issue before the agency releases a set of proposed requirements. They would have 60 days after the Trust becomes law to release the proposal. The Trust cannot take over a building until a vote is finalized, the spokesperson said, citing text of the legislation.

Mayor Eric Adams rallied with NYCHA tenants in support of the Trust on May 23, 2022.

Federal aid ‘just not on the horizon’

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Residents from around the city flanked Adams and Katz as they stumped for the Trust, with the lone member of CCOP to sign off on the plan urging state lawmakers to enact the proposal so that the agency could raise revenue and fund repairs.

“The legislation would allow NYCHA to get the federal resources that all my residents deserve,” said Barbara McFadden, the tenant association president at Sheepshead Bay’s Nostrand Houses.

McFadden said she understands the skepticism among many of her peers. She told City Limits she was “dead set” against the Trust when she first heard the proposal but warmed to it as she learned more details.

“No one is going to be displaced,” she said. “We still pay 30 percent of our income.”

Support among some progressives and socialists — who would otherwise prefer direct federal investment in housing — boils down to pragmatism. Staying the course dooms NYCHA because federal aid is “just not on the horizon,” Lander said.

“If we do not fix the roofs, and fix the system and modernize the buildings, there will come a time and it will not be that long from now when the buildings themselves simply can not be saved and renovated,” he added. “And if we get past that point we will be in an impossible situation.”

And while Adams repeated the slogan “Trust the Trust” and asked for the words to be written on a t-shirt, he acknowledged that public housing tenants should indeed be wary of the latest plan to fix their homes.

In fact, no one should be more skeptical than NYCHA residents, said Community Preservation Corporation CEO Rafael Cestero, a former city Housing commissioner. But Cestero, a Trust supporter, said the restructuring will result in concrete remedies for NYCHA’s festering problems.

“NYCHA residents are the single most practical people I’ve come across: They want the roof over their bathroom fixed, they want their plumbing fixed, they want their toilet to work,” he said. “Residents’ skepticism is only overcome by action, by fixing things.”

In an interview Friday, Cestero declined to predict whether state lawmakers will actually pass the measure.

There is political calculus involved for incumbent lawmakers heading into the heat of primary season. It’s an issue potentially hindering other housing proposals, like a replacement for an expiring developer tax break and a measure to protect renters in non-stabilized apartments.

While Anderson said he believed the bill would pass, seven other state lawmakers contacted Friday morning said its fate was far from certain. Hours later, after spending most of the day discussing proposals to limit gun ownership in the wake of mass shootings in Buffalo and Uvalde, Texas, Senate Democrats had begun to conference the NYCHA bill by evening time Friday.

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“Looking good,” one senator told City Limits.

An assemblymember with a handful of NYCHA complexes in their district said they had received little feedback from constituents. “I got more pushback on RAD,” the lawmaker said.

So will it pass?

“No clue,” they said. “NYCHA pushing hard though.”

A third lawmaker said the bill seemed to have the votes and the momentum behind it, but added a caveat.

“Nothing’s ever certain in Albany,” they added. <https://jnews.uk/fate-of-25000-nycha-apartments-in-the-balance-as-end-of-legislative-session-nears/>

FATE OF 25,000 NYCHA APARTMENTS IN THE BALANCE AS END OF LEGISLATIVE SESSION NEARS; CITY LIMITS

BY DAVID BRAND

May 31, 2022

As the end of New York’s legislative session approaches, state lawmakers appear poised to approve a measure intended to shore up cash for thousands of deteriorating NYCHA apartments despite concerns from many tenant leaders.

The legislation would allow NYCHA to transfer 25,000 apartments into a publicly owned trust with the power to issue bonds and borrow money for addressing desperately-needed capital repairs. To unlock those investments, the proposed New York City Public Housing Preservation Trust would convert the federal funding mechanism for each unit from a public housing operating fund outlined in Section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act to Section 8 rental assistance vouchers, which come with more money from Washington.

The Trust has been billed as a “public option” in contrast to the ongoing conversion to private management at dozens of NYCHA campuses under the Rental Assistance Demonstration-Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (RAD-PACT) model. About 400,000 New Yorkers are authorized to live in NYCHA’s 162,143 apartments—the Trust would potentially apply to about 15 percent of those units—but the actual number of residents is undoubtedly higher (experts say it is more like 500,000 to 600,000).

The bill gained little traction before its sponsors pulled it last year, but now has support across the Democratic Party spectrum, uniting Gov. Kathy Hochul and Mayor Eric Adams—who rallied for its passage May 23 at the Polo Grounds housing complex—with progressive elected officials like Comptroller Brad Lander, and socialist legislators, like Senate sponsor Julia Salazar.

“One thing that’s clear, we need to stop playing with this,” Adams said of the crumbling conditions at NYCHA campuses citywide. “We’re not getting money from the federal

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

government this year. They're not. They already told us, 'We are not concerned with NYCHA residents.'”

Congress failed to pass the Build Back Better package, which would have directed about \$80 billion to public housing nationwide—much of that going to NYCHA, the nation’s largest public housing system, and its estimated \$40 billion in needed capital repairs.

“So we must do it on our own,” Adams said. “Here’s a way to do it.”

Trust the Trust?

Despite that encouragement, the measure has proved a tough sell for many NYCHA residents, including nine of the 10 members of the Citywide Council of Presidents (CCOP), a representative body that issued an open letter May 9 opposing the Trust or “any conversion efforts to Section 8.”

NYCHA residents have already been burned by decades of disinvestment, mismanagement and unfulfilled pledges to revitalize their ailing infrastructure, remove toxic lead paint and fix routinely-busted boilers, said Manny Martinez, South Jamaica Houses Residents Association President and interim CCOP chair of Queens South.

“You fool me once, shame on you. You fool me twice, shame on me,” Martinez said. “We’ve been fooled. How many times are we going to be fooled?” Martinez said he fears tenants will lose their public housing rights under the Preservation Trust, a key component of the NYCHA’s two-year-old “Blueprint for Change,” though the legislation explicitly states that tenants in Trust buildings will maintain the same rights they have under Section 9 housing.

Many public housing advocates have joined NYCHA tenants at rallies and written op-eds to amplify concerns about accountability, bond repayment and a fundamental end of public housing.

If the Trust’s debt grows too onerous, the entity could potentially use tenants’ voucher revenue to pay off loans rather than make repairs, said Kristen Hackett, a doctoral student and executive committee member in Queens’ Justice For All Coalition.

“Rather than alleviating the current deficit and deterioration created by federal disinvestment, the Trust would likely create a larger public debt problem that will continue to cause problems for residents,” Hackett said. “Only in that scenario, there are more barriers to public oversight and accountability than exist now.”

CCOP Chair Daniel Barber, who represents Bronx South as a tenant leader at the Andrew Jackson Houses, also signed the letter opposing the Trust plan, but said he thinks all residents should get to choose the future of their homes.

“I, Daniel Barber, do not support it, but I, Daniel Barber, still feel that my residents should be able to hear it, listen, direct it, digest it, comment, ask questions and if they choose to vote if they want it or not, that’s a process that the residents have to choose,” he said. That’s the crux of the pitch being made by supporters of the Preservation Trust.

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The latest text of the bill would give tenants the chance to vote to opt into the model and convert their subsidized units to Section 8 Tenant Protection Vouchers. That subsidy comes with more funding from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and would allow NYCHA to borrow money. While the average Section 9 unit received \$1,250 a month in federal funding in 2019, the average Section 8 unit received \$1,900 a month, Gothamist reported.

“The tenants will be able—not just the [tenant association] presidents—but the tenants themselves will be able to take a vote and decide which type of program they would like to select,” said New York City’s Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz.

Adams also touted the options that tenants will have if lawmakers pass the current version of the Trust. He pointed out that residents will serve on “quality assurance committees” and get to vote on vendors contracted to make repairs.

But the bill’s opt-in clause has raised questions. The vote would require a “minimum percentage” of tenants to participate, according to the text of the legislation, but, as THE CITY noted, the bill does not spell out what constitutes that percentage. That means a small minority of residents who show up to vote could determine the housing future for entire complexes.

“There needs to be a threshold. Twenty residents shouldn’t be able to vote to enter the Trust,” Queens Assemblymember Khaleel Anderson, an opponent of the current version of the bill, told City Limits Friday.

Anderson was one of 10 assemblymembers who drafted a list of changes they want to see added to the bill before they support it, but he said he expects it to pass even without their backing. The measure advanced out of the Housing Committee earlier this month. “They’re trying to strong-arm us,” Anderson said.

A NYCHA spokesperson said residents and other members of the public will have a chance to weigh in on the voting percentage issue before the agency releases a set of proposed requirements. They would have 60 days after the Trust becomes law to release the proposal. The Trust cannot take over a building until a vote is finalized, the spokesperson said, citing text of the legislation.

Federal aid ‘just not on the horizon’

Residents from around the city flanked Adams and Katz as they stumped for the Trust, with the lone member of CCOP to sign off on the plan urging state lawmakers to enact the proposal so that the agency could borrow money to fund repairs.

“The legislation would allow NYCHA to get the federal resources that all my residents deserve,” said Barbara McFadden, the tenant association president at Sheepshead Bay’s Nostrand Houses.

McFadden said she understands the skepticism among many of her peers. She told City Limits she was “dead set” against the Trust when she first heard the proposal but warmed to it as she learned more details.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

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There is political calculus involved for incumbent lawmakers heading into the heat of primary season. It’s a similar issue potentially hindering other housing proposals, like a replacement for an expiring developer tax break and a measure to protect renters in non-stabilized apartments.

While Anderson said he believed the bill would pass, seven other state lawmakers contacted Friday morning said its fate was far from certain. After spending most of the day discussing proposals to limit gun ownership in the wake of mass shootings in Buffalo and Uvalde, Texas, Senate Democrats had begun to conference the NYCHA bill by evening time Friday. “Looking good,” one senator told City Limits.

An assemblymember with a handful of NYCHA complexes in their district said they had received little feedback from constituents. “I got more pushback on RAD,” the lawmaker said.

So will it pass? “No clue,” they said. “NYCHA pushing hard though.”

A third lawmaker said the bill seemed to have the votes and the momentum behind it, but added a caveat.

“Nothing’s ever certain in Albany,” they added. <https://citylimits.org/2022/05/31/fate-of-25000-nycha-apartments-in-the-balance-as-end-of-legislative-session-nears/>

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NYCHA TRUST PROPOSAL GAINING MOMENTUM IN ALBANY AS SESSION NEARS END; *POLITICO*

By JANAKI CHADHA

May 31, 2022

NEW YORK — A City Hall-backed proposal to help overhaul the beleaguered New York City Housing Authority is gaining momentum in Albany, with proponents optimistic the measure will pass the state Legislature before the session ends this week.

Details: The proposal, known as the public housing preservation trust, would allow the housing authority to transfer a portion of its apartments to a new public benefit corporation controlled by a board of NYCHA and City Hall appointees, including resident leaders. The public nonprofit established under the state legislation would allow NYCHA to access federally-funded rental vouchers, giving it a new income stream for repairs and allowing it to access bond financing.

“NYCHA has worked very hard on it, and we’re optimistic that it’ll pass,” Assemblymember Steve Cymbrowitz, chair of the body’s housing committee and lead sponsor of the measure in his chamber, said in an interview on Friday.

The proposal has been approved by the Assembly’s housing and codes committees, and Cymbrowitz said he’s expecting it to be on the ways and means committee agenda for Tuesday, setting it up for a floor vote.

A corresponding bill was introduced in the Senate Wednesday by state Sen. Julia Salazar, and supporters are optimistic that it will reach a full Senate vote before the end of the session. The measure is also supported by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

“There seems to be greater and greater support for the bill as legislators understand what it does and how it protects tenants rights,” Sen. Liz Krueger, one of the co-sponsors on the Senate measure, said Friday in an interview. “If it’s conferenced, I think we’ll find very little objection to it, just based on checking in with various members. That’s why I’m cautiously optimistic that it will be a bill we can get done.”

Carolina Rodriguez, a spokesperson for Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, said in a statement Friday, “We are still discussing it as a conference but are hopeful we can move this to the full Senate.”

Key context: The public trust has been framed by proponents as one of the only lifelines available to NYCHA, which faces a \$40 billion capital backlog alongside a rapidly deteriorating housing stock. An infusion of federal funding sufficient to fill that gap remains unlikely, particularly after the failure of the Build Back Better bill last year.

“I think people are recognizing that it’s really our only option to get the funding that NYCHA needs,” said Judith Goldiner, an attorney at the Legal Aid Society.

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The proposal has faced opposition from some resident leaders and legislators, but Cymbrowitz pointed to one change made in recent months that has helped the measure gain wider support: giving NYCHA residents the ability to vote on whether their development goes into the trust, once it's established.

“The option was key, giving tenants the option whether to participate in the trust or not participate at all,” Cymbrowitz said.

The change hasn't allayed all concerns around the proposal, with some arguing there isn't enough detail in the bill on how exactly the resident input piece would work. Assemblymember Harvey Epstein, who has opposed the proposal, said he doesn't think there's enough time left in session to address some of the outstanding questions.

“There's a lot of issues in the bill that you would need to flesh out, presuming we get to a point where this is the strategy we want to move towards,” he said in a recent interview.

The proposal is one of Mayor Eric Adams' top asks from Albany this year.

“We need to stop playing with this,” the mayor said at a rally last Monday in support of the trust with advocates and resident leaders. “We're not getting money from the federal government this year... They did not pass that \$35 billion that we needed, so we must do it on our own. Here's a way to do it.”

A spokesperson for Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie didn't return a request for comment. NYCHA says its properties will still be public and current tenants will keep their full rights and protections and not lose their homes.

However, advocates say the blueprint opens room for privatization, which would put tenants at risk of displacement, harassment and homelessness.

Advocates went door-to-door to inform Stuyvesant Gardens tenants about the plan and collect signatures for a petition against the blueprint.

Housing advocates also plan to camp outside of Sen. Julia Salazar's office to further push against the preservation trust. <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2022/05/proposed-nycha-trust-gaining-momentum-in-albany-as-session-end-nears-00035798/>

ADVOCATES FEAR NYCHA'S PLANS TO TRANSFORM SECTION 9 HOUSING WILL PUT TENANTS AT RISK; NEWS 12

By STAFF

May 30, 2022

Public housing advocates are calling on NYCHA to stop its Blueprint for Change plan in an effort to save Section 9 housing.

The Blueprint for Change was introduced by NYCHA Chair Greg Russ to address tenants' needs, such as improving conditions and repairs by securing more funding.

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The blueprint proposes transferring current Section 9 tenants into a public housing preservation trust, in which they will receive Section 8 vouchers instead. <https://bronx.news12.com/advocates-fear-nychas-plans-to-transform-section-9-housing-will-put-tenants-at-risk>

PUBLIC HOUSING LEADERS DON'T TRUST PRESERVATION TRUST 'PRIVATIZATION' BILL; THE VILLAGE SUN

By DASHIELL ALLEN

May 28, 2022

Resident leaders of New York City Housing Authority developments citywide are raising the alarm about a bill currently in front of the state Legislature that they say would privatize their homes, effectively ending public housing as it's currently known.

The Public Housing Preservation Trust Act would raise funds to complete desperately needed NYCHA repairs across the five boroughs. Among its most fervent supporters are Mayor Eric Adams and Comptroller Brad Lander.

The proposal would create, as its name suggests, a nonprofit "preservation trust," transferring entire housing developments out of their current federal Section 9 program into Section 8 project-based vouchers supervised under private management, which would finance repairs. Additionally, this move would allow NYCHA "to borrow and loan funds and issue bonds," to be paid back at a later date. The current bill, considered a pilot program, would include 60,000 apartment conversions.

On Mon., May 23, several dozen NYCHA residents and advocates rallied on the steps of City Hall to fight against the Preservation Trust Act, which they view as a privatization scheme. The rally was held before the City Council's executive budget hearings on public housing.

"People over profit!" "NYCHA lives matter!" they chanted. "Fund NYCHA now!"

Aixa Torres, T.A. president of the Smith Houses, said the new plan will make NYCHA residents "homeless." (Photo by Dashiell Allen)

"We are human beings. We have families. We have paid our dues. And God knows that we will be homeless if this trust goes through, because that's what they're doing," said Aixa Torres, the tenant association president of the Alfred E. Smith Houses, located next to the Brooklyn Bridge. Torres charged that NYCHA residents were shut out of the bill's conception.

She was joined by Danette Chavis, T.A. president of LaGuardia Houses in the Two Bridges neighborhood, as well as Councilmembers Christopher Marte and Alexa Aviles, the latter who chairs the City Council Committee on Public Housing.

"We know that NYCHA cannot be trusted to handle finances. We know that NYCHA cannot be trusted to tell the truth, which is why we oppose the public trust and also RAD," Chavis said.

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“I also wish there would be some compensation for current residents living in dilapidated conditions today, where people have died as a result of negligence and mismanagement,” she added.

The Rental Assistance Demonstration, program, known as RAD, is an Obama-era Department of Housing and Urban Development program, similar in many ways to the trust proposal. RAD also transfers ownership of affected public housing complexes into the Section 8 voucher program, while allowing housing agencies like NYCHA to “leverage public and private debt and equity in order to reinvest in the public housing stock.”

Once again, the privately raised funds are supposed to be used to make repairs and building upgrades. In New York City, RAD was rebranded PACT (Permanent Affordability Commitment Together). RAD conversions have been carried out in thousands of apartments across the city since 2016.

This January, a Human Rights Watch study found that two of six NYCHA developments converted under RAD saw increased eviction rates. Notably, Ocean Bay Houses in Far Rockaway saw 50 evictions after the shift to private management, resulting in a 1.4 percent eviction rate in 2017, and 1.1 percent in 2018 and '19 — more than double the citywide average of 0.5 percent.

NYCHA tenant leaders and residents rallied on City Hall’s steps against the Preservation Trust plan. (Photo by Dashiell Allen)

Recently, NYCHA has touted the completion of repairs at nine complexes in Brooklyn, dubbed the “Brooklyn bundle,” as a testament to the program’s success. Human Rights Watch’s report found, however, that many tenants’ perception of how repairs were handled remained unchanged after the conversion process. A 2021 investigation by THE CITY also found that several private contractors under the RAD program “botched renovations.”

Residents fear that the Preservation Trust is nothing more than a repackaging of RAD. Simply put, they want NYCHA to be fully funded in its current form, without converting it to another program.

“I don’t think it’s going to succeed,” said Chavis of the Preservation Trust. “In NYCHA I feel they’ve totally abandoned these residents because their total focus is on privatizing, on getting developers to redevelop it. So I don’t believe whatever money they even have that they’re sincerely applying toward rebuilding or refining anything.”

“In 2016 I stood here calling for \$2 billion to fund NYCHA,” said Saundra Coleman, a resident of Holmes-Isaacs Houses on the Upper East Side. “Now we’re at \$40 billion: Understand the picture. They have disinvested in us. Why? Because it’s Black and brown people, the majority of us living in public housing. If the white flight didn’t exist it wouldn’t be a problem.” (Back in 2011 it was estimated that NYCHA needed just \$17 billion in capital funding.)

“I never understand why the city and state always wants to invest billions of dollars in new programs when they can’t fix and fund the programs that are working today, like public housing,” Marte added.

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Josh Barnette, a union representative with Local 375 DC37 and a full-time NYCHA employee, blasted breaks that are doled out to private developers.

“Every time we come here, just from the steps, we can see one more luxury tower that has apartments that we could never dream of living in,” he said. “That was built with public subsidy. There’s always money for that, but there’s no money for housing as a human right.”

Mayor Eric Adams held a separate event in favor of the Preservation Trust scheme. As the City Hall protest occurred, Mayor Adams simultaneously held a rally of his own in support of the Preservation Trust at the Polo Grounds Houses in Washington Heights.

“Trust the trust!” his supporters chanted.

“I’m very optimistic that the Public Housing Trust is an opportunity to create a new start, or shall I say a new change in New York City housing,” Barbara McFadden, T.A. president of the Sheepshead Bay Nostrand Houses, said at Adams’s rally. “I came far, and I’m not leaving without that bill.”

Comptroller Brad Lander, who introduced himself as a “housing nerd,” agreed.

“I sure understand why NYCHA residents don’t have a lot of trust,” he said. Still, he added, “This keeps public housing public, it preserves tenant rights, and it is the most significant legislation I have ever seen for giving resident leadership and resident involvement in choice and decision-making in the future.”

Lander was also joined by Jessica Katz, the city’s chief housing officer, and Adriene Holder, chief attorney at the Legal Aid Society.

One of the key benefits of the Trust legislation, Lander noted, is that it would codify tenants’ rights. Unlike other Section 8 residents, who normally pay 40 percent of their income toward rent, NYCHA residents would continue to pay 30 percent, and would enjoy the same rights to organize tenant associations.

“There are many rivers that feed the dysfunctionality we have in our cities,” Adams said. “We need to dam each one, but this time we have a real stream of resources that can come through with the Trust.”

Adams also praised the Trust for giving the residents of individual developments the option to opt in or out.

For his part, NYCHA Chairperson Greg Russ dismissed the idea that the Trust is privatization as “propaganda” at the Council’s budget hearings.

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“Unless we raise \$40 billion, we are not going to be able to sustain the buildings. It’s that simple,” he warned. (Russ has been criticized in the past for overseeing RAD conversions in other cities, such as Minneapolis.)

Downtown Assemblymembers Harvey Epstein and Yuh-Line Niou are among just four members of the Assembly Housing Committee that voted against the Trust last week.

It’s more about privatization than preservation, the NYCHA residents said. (Photo by Dashiell Allen)

In a recent interview, Epstein explained to The Village Sun that the option to opt in or out of the Preservation Trust was unclear at best.

“The voting mechanisms around that are really unclear,” he said. “It just says, ‘NYCHA will create regulations on voting,’ which is not really appropriate. Why is NYCHA creating regulations on voting, instead of letting the legislation say anyone who’s a lawful tenant or a lawful occupant has the right to vote?”

“There’s nothing that says how many people need to vote, so you could have a 1,000-unit complex and 50 people vote and if 26 of those 50 vote yes, are you saying that those 1,000 units are now part of the Trust?”

Epstein said in the future he would like to see a fully resident-controlled model for NYCHA, “like we do in community land trusts.”

More than anything, however, Epstein said he was listening to his constituents when he cast his vote.

“I represent 13 NYCHA developments and so I met with my leaders, and they all told me to vote against it,” he said. “Why are we not listening to the people who have been in power to lead our public housing developments? The decades of experience they have should be meaningful and impactful to all of us.”

Despite assurances that their rights would be protected after Section 8 conversions, residents could still be left in a precarious position, given that their federally protected rights would be codified only through state law.

“I think it’s a legitimate concern because you can change the statute now and you can change it later,” Epstein said.

Ramona Ferreyra agrees. A longtime resident of the Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx, she is the founder of the grassroots organization Save Section 9.

“If you can’t take out asbestos and lead from my home, what makes somebody think that NYCHA’s gonna sit there and support the existence of tenant associations?” she told The Village Sun. “Because it’s no longer a federal right. If they were to truly leave us in Section 9 we could sue them for those rights.”

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Among the rights Ferreyra is most concerned about losing are job training, the freedom to organize and the ability of residents to continue paying 30 percent of their income on rent.

At the same time, she said, “I’m not trying to save NYCHA. NYCHA to me is a complete failure, but that doesn’t mean that the policy is wrong. It just means that the authority and HUD are not fulfilling the congressional laws.” Instead, she said she wants “the Housing Authority that existed in 1967.”

Ferreyra is in the process of organizing a lobbying trip to Washington, D.C., in mid-June. She called the federal government disinvestment from public housing “a national problem.” That’s why she’s planning to unite residents from cities across the country, tentatively including Memphis, Minneapolis, Boston, Oakland, Chicago and more.

With Albany’s legislative session scheduled to end on June 2, it still remains unclear whether the Public Housing Preservation Trust Act has a chance of passing. Last year, a previous version of the same bill was shelved, just two weeks after it was introduced.

As to the bill’s chances, Epstein quipped, “There’s four days left in session, I have no idea. This is Albany, strange things happen every day.” <https://thevillagesun.com/public-housing-leaders-dont-trust-preservation-trust-privatization-bill>

TENANTS WARN THEY’RE EXPENDABLE IN NYCHA RESTRUCTURING BILL; ***THE CITY***

By GREG B. SMITH
May 26, 2022

For two years, legislation that would allow NYCHA to raise billions of dollars for much-needed repairs by placing apartments into a publicly controlled trust has been touted as the cure for what ails the nation’s biggest public housing authority.

And for two years it’s been dead in the water in Albany.

But after an initial bumpy reception, the so-called Preservation Trust now appears on track to win approval before this year’s state legislative session wraps up next week.

The trust would enable NYCHA to issue bonds to pay for potentially billions of dollars in upgrades, a significant step toward confronting what it estimates is \$40 billion in needed repairs to its aging portfolio. Tenants have suffered for decades with deteriorating conditions from mold infestations to busted elevators to toxic lead paint.

NYCHA can’t use the revenue raised by traditional public housing as collateral. The bill lets it switch the funding to federal Section 8 vouchers, which can be used as collateral to borrow money. Under the trust, NYCHA continues to own and run the properties.

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On Monday the bill was okayed by the Assembly Codes Committee, while the Senate version was moved to the Rules Committee Wednesday. Both now appear headed for a floor vote imminently.

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But while lawmakers' support for the trust has grown, so has the concern of many of NYCHA tenants about promises made in the runup to the vote in Albany assuring them they'll have a meaningful say in how this all plays out.

Touting the proposal Monday, Mayor Eric Adams claimed that tenants will have a "first-in-the-country resident opt-in voting process," stating, "Number one, you can vote in and out. If you don't want it, then don't do it."

And NYCHA Chair Gregory Russ this week told a City Council hearing, "The trust bill now includes an opt-in feature...where the residents get to express their desires."

But the bill requires a "minimum percentage" of residents in the development to vote and nowhere does the bill define that percentage, leaving it to be decided later. On average, less than 10% of tenants vote in tenant association president elections. It's possible that a tiny number of residents could determine a development's fate.

"Now the question is, is it the people who show up to do the voting?" asked Aixa Torres, a tenant leader at Smith Houses in Lower Manhattan and an interim co-chair for NYCHA's Citywide Council of Presidents for southern Manhattan, the umbrella group representing all of NYCHA's 400,000 tenants.

"I have 1,926 families (at Smith). Nine hundred and something people have to vote? It's not clear," she said. "It's insane. It is so vague."

Speaking Thursday with THE CITY, NYCHA's Chief Counsel Lisa Bova-Hiatt acknowledged that the minimum percentage is not spelled out in the bill, but said NYCHA will propose rules — including a specific minimum percentage — 120 days after the bill takes effect. NYCHA will solicit tenant comments and hold a public meeting but will have the final say on the rules.

And Paula Segal, senior staff attorney in the equitable neighborhoods practice of the nonprofit TakeRoot Justice housing advocacy group, questioned whether the language of the bill truly allows for tenants to vote yes or no on opting in to the trust.

"The bill does not require the 'opt-in' vote that NYCHA staff has been describing in public forums," Segal said. "It only requires a vote on what the Trust will do with a property after it receives it from NYCHA. It nowhere addresses resident involvement in deciding whether NYCHA will transfer the property to the Trust at all."

NYCHA's Bova-Hiatt insisted the language does allow for an opt-in vote, pointing to language that states if tenants vote to reject participation in the trust, "None of the proposed options shall be implemented at such housing facility until another vote is undertaken at such housing facility."

Backing Out

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Russ first proposed the trust in July 2020, modeling it on similar programs he ran while operating housing authorities in Minneapolis and Cambridge, Mass.

He immediately ran into headwinds in New York and significantly scaled plans back in 2021, trimming the number of apartments to be placed in the trust from his original plan of 110,000 — two-thirds of NYCHA’s 172,000 apartments — to 25,000.

But concerns remained about what was seen as inadequate tenant participation in determining what the trust will do with individual developments. The original sponsors, Assemblymember Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Brooklyn) and Sen. Brian Kavanagh (D-Manhattan), withdrew the bill just before the close of session last year, realizing it would not be approved.

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This year they added language they claim gives tenants more of a say on some aspects of the program, including the hiring of contractors to perform renovations and resident participation on quality assurance committees to make sure upgrades are performed as promised.

Yet a significant number of tenants still oppose it for a variety of reasons — including concern that the federal government may not come through with needed financial support.

Nine of the 10 members of the Citywide Council of Presidents — tenant leaders who represent all of NYCHA’s 400,000 residents — are against it. Only the Brooklyn South member favors the trust. Four of the 28 Assembly housing committee members voted against it.

One was Assemblymember Harvey Epstein (D-Manhattan), a longtime tenant advocate who said that he met with all 13 tenant association presidents in his Lower East Side district — all opposed. “They all said we have issues with it,” he told THE CITY. “I have every development I represent telling me to vote no.”

Even Kavanagh no longer supports it, according to tenant leader Torres.

Torres says during a virtual meeting Monday, the tenant association leaders of all 45 Manhattan developments she represents as a Council of Presidents member came out against it, and when she communicated this to Kavanagh, “He said, ‘If you’re going to fight it, I’m going to fight it.’”

As of Tuesday, Kavanagh had withdrawn as the sponsor of the bill. He’d been replaced by Sen. Julia Salazar (D-Brooklyn). Kavanagh did not respond to requests seeking comment.

‘How Do You Tell the Tenants?’

Torres says she and other tenant leaders question NYCHA Chair Russ’ claim to have performed adequate tenant outreach about the trust before seeking Albany’s approval, at a time when COVID-19 was causing tenants to avoid public settings.

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“How do I tell the residents what is going to happen — and this is a major change — in the middle of a pandemic?” Torres said, citing one of her elderly neighbors “who won’t come out because of the pandemic. There’s a lot of people who won’t come out because of this pandemic. And the numbers are going up again. So how do you tell the tenants?”

And she and several elected officials who oppose the trust worry that needed Section 8 housing vouchers could get choked off in the future should the Republican party again gain control of Congress.

This week Russ made his case for the trust at a City Council budget hearing, noting the defeat last year of President Biden’s Build Back Better bill that would have steered billions of dollars to NYCHA. The bill was passed again this year by the House again but is now languishing in the Senate.

“We are continually reminded that we cannot depend solely on federal grant funding alone, and that we must implement creative strategies to bring residents the quality of life they deserve,” he wrote in prepared testimony. “Despite the best efforts of our advocates in federal government, it is clear that the only serious and viable plan on the table right now for massive, systemic improvements is the public trust.”

Speaking at the virtual hearing, Russ said, “It is the only path out.”

This argument that you can’t wait for the feds to show up convinced some groups that initially had been skeptical about the plan to sign on, from the Citizens Budget Commission to the Legal Aid Society to the Community Service Society.

On Monday Adams led tenants in a cheer of “trust the trust” at a rally at the Polo Grounds Houses in Washington Heights. And NYCHA management says 36 resident associations signed a letter of support, while a long list of Assemblymembers have signed on and several labor unions representing NYCHA workers.

One key supporter, U.S. Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-The Bronx), emphasizes “there is no magic bullet” to eliminate NYCHA’s many quality-of-life issues, but say he’s comfortable with using multiple tactics — the trust, promised city funding and the Obama-era Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program.

Unlike the trust, in which NYCHA continues to manage the developments, RAD turns over day-to-day operations to for-profit building managers. To date 15,000 units have been placed into RAD, with another 15,000 scheduled for conversion by year’s end.

“The public trust, it has the benefits of renovation without the cost of privatization,” said Torres. “NYCHA has no good options.” <https://www.thecity.nyc/2022/5/26/23143621/nycha-preservation-trust-tenants>

STATE PRESSED ON REVAMP OF NYCHA; MANHATTAN TIMES

By GREG MCQUEEN

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

May 27, 2022

Time for the Trust?

As the New York's 2022 state legislative session winds down, lawmakers are being pressed to finalize pending legislation that would establish a public entity known as the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust.

Mayor Eric Adams is making a late appeal for Albany lawmakers to approve a plan that will overhaul the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

During a rally outside of the Polo Grounds Towers in Harlem on Mon., May 23rd, Adams urged state lawmakers to finalize pending legislation that would establish a public entity known as the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust.

The move would unlock billions of dollars in federal funding to accelerate repairs and jumpstart other improvements at NYCHA, Adams said.

“This time, we have a real stream of resources that can come through, through the Trust,” said Adams. “Let’s make this happen.”

The plan requires authorization from the state legislature, which is slated to wrap its current session in early June.

“Now let’s get it over the finish line, so we can finally stop the years of neglect with NYCHA and keep kicking the can down the road,” remarked Adams, who said public housing residents are living in “a destructive environment.” “We can finally stop the years of neglect,” argued Mayor Eric Adams.

Since 2019, NYCHA has operated under a federal monitor following years of financial mismanagement and poor living conditions for residents, who have endured mold, rats, and a lack of heat and hot water.

According to NYCHA, the agency is in need of \$40 billion to catch up on long-overdue repairs.

“The Trust will bring the money, the repairs, and the rights that every New Yorker’s home should have. And even more, this legislation guarantees that these apartments will remain permanently affordable for future generations,” said NYCHA Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz. “It is on us to fight for that future. And the Trust is how we will get there.”

Establishing the Trust would allow NYCHA to qualify for federal funding currently reserved for Section 8 housing, Katz explained.

“Albany has the opportunity to deliver the biggest windfall to NYCHA residents since it was created 85 years ago, and this is about the residents,” she said.

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If approved, the plan would split NYCHA into two bodies – a city-run agency that oversees the operation and repairs of public housing complexes, and a nonprofit public benefit corporation that would own the properties and allow the federal government to provide Section 8 tenant protection vouchers to NYCHA units.

The Trust would have a publicly-appointed board featuring nine members, including four NYCHA tenants.

Approval of the Trust would allow NYCHA to double the amount of federal subsidy it receives by switching to project-based tenant protection voucher funding. It would also provide NYCHA with improved procurement rules that would reduce costs, speed up construction timelines, and allow for faster responses to resident requests, argued city officials.

The legislation pending in Albany would also establish a resident opt-in voting process, under which residents will have the right to vote on any proposed changes to their housing complex. In addition, it would allow for resident participation in vendor selection and on quality assurance committees.

The Trust would have a publicly appointed board which would include NYCHA tenants. “The tenants will be able – not just the TA [Tenants’ Association] presidents, but the tenants themselves – will be able to take a vote and decide which type of program they would like to select in order to make their development and to improve their development,” said Katz.

Adams said the city’s Chief Technology Officer is creating a series of dashboards to monitor NYCHA repairs.

“So, while we get the resources through this Trust, we also have my CTO building out these dashboards so we can see what is happening in our cities,” Adams said. “How long does it take to do a repair? Where’s the money coming into NYCHA? Where’s the contractors that we are using? How long the boilers have been online. We have to start analyzing this stuff in real time. And that is the difference.” <https://www.manhattantimesnews.com/state-pressed-on-revamp-of-nycha-el-estado-presionado-por-la-renovacion-de-nycha/>

PUBLIC HOUSING FINANCING REVAMP COULD BE RISKY FOR NYCHA

RESIDENTS; GOTHAMIST

By CHAU LAM

May 25, 2022

Mayor Eric Adams stood with public housing residents in Harlem on Monday and urged lawmakers in Albany to pass legislation that supporters said would unlock “billions” in new funding from the federal government and private investors to make much needed repairs to the city’s deteriorating public housing stock.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) oversees a sprawling network of about 176,000 apartment units that currently requires an estimated \$40 billion to fix busted boilers and broken elevators, replace water pipes, and make other desperately needed repairs. But the

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legislation under debate in Albany has been controversial because it entails fundamental changes in how thousands of public housing units are classified with the federal government, raising fears for many tenants and advocacy groups who said the plan could threaten many of the rock-solid protections that NYCHA residents currently enjoy.

“They definitely will lose rights under federal law,” said Assemblyman Harvey Epstein, who opposed the bill, and who’s district contains 13 NYCHA developments in Manhattan. As it’s written, the legislation, introduced May 2021, would establish a new entity called the New York City Public Housing Preservation Trust, a public-benefit corporation that would be responsible for converting thousands of NYCHA units from what’s known as Section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act that first established funding for public housing in the 1930s to the program known as Section 8, which provides vouchers for eligible low- and moderate-income families to rent housing in the private market.

The majority of NYCHA units are funded under Section 9. But because the program largely benefits public housing developments in urban areas, Congress has tended to reduce funding for Section 9 in recent decades in favor of increased funding for Section 8 vouchers, which are more widely used across the United States and also benefit private landlords.

In 2019, the average unit in the Section 9 program received \$1,250 a month in federal funding, while the average Section 8 Tenant Protection Voucher received \$1,900 a month, an extra \$650 per unit per month, according to Greg Russ, NYCHA’s chairperson and chief executive officer. Under the pending legislation, the newly formed trust could then use that steady stream of extra federal dollars to issue bonds as a means to raise additional funding — essentially borrowing money from private investors.

“So, for example, you could have a dollar extra income that could leverage \$5 in debt,” Russ said. If passed, the legislation is estimated to convert roughly 25,000 NYCHA units from the Section 9 program, though Russ said NYCHA will continue to own the buildings and land they sit on. And, he said all residents can vote to opt into the new program.

Out of 50 residents associations, 35 groups representing about 50,000 tenants support the legislation, Russ said. But opponents of the proposal are skeptical. Earlier this month, the Citywide Council of Presidents of NYCHA Tenant Associations, a body that represents residents across the five boroughs, wrote to state lawmakers urging them not to pass it.

“We fight for Section 9 Public Housing because it belongs to us - these are our homes,” said Daniel Barber, the group’s chairperson. “The promise of stability, opportunity and equity was guaranteed through legislation by way of the Section 9 lease.” Marquis Jenkins, co-founder of Residents to Preserve Public Housing, formed three years ago to oppose the legislation when it was first introduced in 2019, said lawmakers are pushing the plan on residents.

“The vast majority of residents do not understand this plan,” said Jenkins, who urged state lawmakers not to pass it this year. “They have time. They can take six months and educate the residents and get real feedback and try to introduce this again in January.” Jenkins argued that, because the proposal loads more debt onto NYCHA developments – an arrangement he likened to

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taking out a mortgage on a property – it opens the housing authority up to risk if the trust was unable to pay those debts in the future.

“The developments or the property then goes into foreclosure,” Jenkins said, adding that if the law passes, he believes it will further erode the Housing Act’s guarantees to provide public housing for low- and middle-income Americans. “There’ll be no more public housing in New York City if this plan goes through,” Jenkins said.

Opponents also said they were concerned about eligibility. Unlike Section 8, they said NYCHA tenants are not subject to income limits under Section 9 in determining their eligibility to stay in their homes. “Section 8, you have to qualify for that. There’s no guarantee,” said Aixe Torres, 69, president of the Alfred E. Smith Resident Association, a NYCHA development in downtown Manhattan. “Unlike in section 9, you pay 30% of your income for rent, and that’s it.”

Russ, NYCHA’s chairman, said there is a provision in the bill that would permit tenants with income over the federal limit to receive Section 8 vouchers to remain in public housing. “The bill also makes it clear that those higher-earning families will retain their units,” said Russ.

The bill’s sponsor, Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz, who chairs the Assembly Committee on Housing, said he’s confident the bill will pass the lower house before the legislative session ends on June 2. Gov. Kathy Hochul, who also said she supports the bill, said on Tuesday that the Senate may pass a similar bill. If it doesn’t she said the legislation will be introduced again next year. “I do believe that has a chance of survival,” Hochul said.

<https://gothamist.com/news/mayor-adams-supports-revamp-of-public-housing-financing-some-residents-arent-so-sure>

MAYOR ADAMS CALLS ON ALBANY TO PASS BILL TO REPAIR 25,000 NYCHA UNITS; CRAIN’S

By BRIAN PASCUS

May 24, 2022

Mayor Eric Adams wants Albany to pass legislation this session that would alter the federal funding stream and finance the repair of 25,000 public housing units. The New York City Housing Authority currently has \$40 billion in capital repair needs and inadequate ways to fund them.

Adams announced his support for the Public Housing Preservation Trust bill—legislation in Albany sponsored by Manhattan Sen. Brian Kavanagh and Brooklyn Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz, the chairs of the Senate and Assembly housing committees. The legislation would create a new public housing entity within NYCHA that would act as a trust and trigger additional federal subsidies. It could allow the authority to bond out the costs of new capital repairs.

The bill was approved by the Assembly Housing Committee earlier this month. A source in the Senate said that the bill appears to be favored by “most members of the Senate,” and will likely move by next week. As he spoke from the Polo Grounds Towers in Harlem on Monday beside NYCHA chair and CEO Gregory Russ, the mayor declared his intention to fight for passage of the bill before the legislative session ends on June 2.

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“For too long, our NYCHA communities have been ignored and denied their fair share of investments and services,” Adams said. “But we’re changing that with this legislation, and my administration is all-in on fighting for NYCHA.” The Public Housing Preservation Trust bill would allow NYCHA to create a public benefit corporation that would facilitate the transfer of 25,000 units into a public trust. The transfer would trigger the flow of federal tenant protection vouchers and double the amount of funding these units receive each month from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The trust would also allow NYCHA to outsource the repairs to private developers while still maintaining public management.

The trust would have a nine-member board, split between five publicly appointed members and four resident members. During a Crain’s breakfast last month, Russ said NYCHA’s housing conditions are “the roughest” he’s seen in 25 years in the public housing field, and he held up a copy of the Public Housing Preservation Trust bill. “This is the future,” he said. “We have an opportunity to create a sister entity to bookend, into perpetuity, public housing funded by the Section 8 program. So this is a chance. We’re not going to get too many more.”

New finance methods

The Public Housing Preservation Trust would transform the way a large portion of NYCHA’s portfolio is financed. NYCHA currently uses two different federal assistance programs to channel outside money into its capital budget to fund repairs.

The Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program is presently the only utility that brings in private investment into public housing. Started in 2011 under the Obama administration, RAD takes individual public housing units funded by traditional Section 9 guidelines and places them under the Section 8 umbrella, which provides public subsidies for private rentals. The RAD conversion allows public housing to receive additional capital assistance in the form of private investment on a per-unit basis.

The Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) program blends small levels of RAD capital assistance with lucrative tenant protection vouchers from the federal government that only apply to units deemed by HUD to be in such poor conditions as to be rendered obsolete. The per unit funding levels under PACT are much higher than RAD, roughly \$650 more per month. Under Russ’ direction, NYCHA has moved to convert 62,000 of its 177,500 units into RAD-PACT designated apartments. Russ told the City Council in a hearing this month that NYCHA will have converted about 30,000 units into RAD-PACT by the end of 2022.

The problem, according to Rachel Fee, executive director of the New York City Housing Conference, is the private and public investment levels under RAD-PACT aren’t enough to fund \$40 billion in necessary repairs. “They’ve actually been moving at a good clip in the conversion and getting private investments,” said Fee. “But it leaves out two-thirds of the portfolio that has no path for capital repairs. There’s insufficient funding for two-thirds of the portfolio.”

Innovative solution

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Russ said the Public Housing Preservation Trust bill could fill the gap for the remaining NYCHA portfolio. By forming a public trust that can fund a larger number of housing units beyond the scale of the RAD or PACT programs, Russ expects an “enormous amount of money” to be raised for repairs. “We must act now if we are going to save the homes of over 400,000 New Yorkers,” Russ said. “We cannot continue to do things the same way and expect different results.”

At least 25,000 units would be permitted entry into the trust under the proposed legislation. The trust would also authorize the use of design-build, a process of placing all the entities of a construction project—designer, contractor, subcontractor—under a single ownership and contracting umbrella.

Both NYCHA and the Adams administration expressed belief that these reformed procurement rules will reduce the cost of repairs and speed up construction timelines.

“We won’t be able to give residents the homes they deserve, unless something major happens—and that is the Public Housing Preservation Trust,” said Jessica Katz, New York City Chief Housing Officer. <https://www.craigslist.com/politics/mayor-eric-adams-calls-albany-pass-public-housing-preservation-trust-bill-nycha>

NYCHA’S PACT PROGRAM DELIVERS RESULTS; BROOKLYN PAPER

By JOEL GROSS & SAMUEL GUTTMAN

May 24, 2022

We are both longtime residents at New York City Housing Authority communities, and we know it wasn’t always this desperate of a situation. We remember when NYCHA was once celebrated as a national example of affordable housing for working families. But as leaders at our respective developments, we’ve seen how far the conditions have deteriorated.

It’s impossible to know the emotional, mental and physical toll living in NYCHA can take on our families unless you have known what it’s like to have holes in your floors or walls for years on end. Or to go through cold winter nights without consistent heat. We’re exhausted. And we deserve better.

As resident leaders, we represent two different developments in Brooklyn, but whether you’re at Armstrong Houses or Williams Plaza or at any other NYCHA development, the issues that public housing residents face are all too often the same.

In addition to a failure to provide adequate heating or make repairs, we’ve had safety issues related to constantly broken door locks. Our seniors and less mobile residents have been forced to stay in their apartments every time an elevator broke down. The lack of accountability to residents has allowed these systemic failures to go unattended for years.

A few years ago, rumors began swirling in our neighborhoods about private management taking over our homes and providing repairs. It understandably set off fears with our fellow NYCHA residents. We’ve been lied to so many times over the years, and the idea of repairs finally coming to our homes sounded too good to be true. After countless promises and conversations, what we needed were results in our homes.

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In our case, our developments at Armstrong Houses and Williams Plaza were two of nine in Brooklyn that would receive \$350 million in overdue investments across 2,625 apartments. Omni, The Arker Companies, Dabar Development Partners, and Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation came to our developments, and many of our fellow 6,300 residents had a lot of questions.

Today, we are so happy that NYCHA's Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) program came to our communities. Modeled after the Obama administration's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) initiative, the program allows private companies to invest millions of dollars in repairs to apartments and manage the day-to-day operations for a development, all while residents preserve both the affordability and the tenant rights we had before.

Some people, including many who don't live in our communities, continue to resist the idea entirely. They argue NYCHA shouldn't partner with any private developers or managers. These people insist that the federal government deliver more than \$40 billion that public housing residents across the city need to repair their homes.

But we've been waiting for Washington D.C. — not just this year but for decades. Every year that passes means another \$1 billion we need to keep up with needs. Maybe some people outside of public housing can keep waiting, but residents need help now.

We cannot emphasize enough how much PACT has changed our lives. By working with residents, Omni and the Arker Companies transformed our homes. From new kitchens and appliances, to state-of-the-art security cameras and elevators, and everything in between. Our residents are starting to take pride in having beautiful apartments and communities once again.

Our new management company through the PACT program is present and accountable to us. Managers and staff also respond when we're facing an issue, not months or years after we file a complaint but within days. If we have a question, there's a person on site to help or a super who lives in our building who also takes pride in our community. If there's a problem, we aren't kept waiting for a solution — we are a part of it.

It's time to stop the fear-mongering pushed by those who refuse to engage in a real dialogue about what is needed to help NYCHA residents and let those of us who live with the results speak for ourselves. NYCHA should continue to push forward with PACT conversions so more New Yorkers who are desperate, like we were, can have safe, affordable, and beautiful housing. No public housing residents should be in danger or ashamed of where they live because of someone else's neglect. There is a solution on the table and it's time to embrace it.

<https://www.brooklynpaper.com/op-ed-nychas-pact-program-delivers-results/>

MAYOR ADAMS SUPPORTS RENEWAL OF PUBLIC HOUSING FINANCE. SOME RESIDENTS ARE NOT SO SURE; GOTHAMIST

By CHAU LAM

May 25, 2022

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Mayor Eric Adams stood with public housing residents in Harlem on Monday and urged lawmakers in Albany to pass legislation that supporters said would unlock “billions” in new funding from the federal government and private investors to make much needed repairs to the city’s deteriorating public housing stock.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) oversees a sprawling network of about 176,000 apartment units that currently requires an estimated \$40 billion to fix busted boilers and broken elevators, replace water pipes, and make other desperately needed repairs. But the legislation under debate in Albany has been controversial because it entails fundamental changes in how thousands of public housing units are classified with the federal government, raising fears for many tenants and advocacy groups who said the plan could threaten many of the rock-solid protections that NYCHA residents currently enjoy.

“They definitely will lose rights under federal law,” said Assemblyman Harvey Epstein, who opposed the bill, and who’s district contains 13 NYCHA developments in Manhattan.

As it’s written, the legislation, introduced May 2021, would establish a new entity called the New York City Public Housing Preservation Trust, a public-benefit corporation that would be responsible for converting thousands of NYCHA units from what’s known as Section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act that first established funding for public housing in the 1930s to the program known as Section 8, which provides vouchers for eligible low- and moderate-income families to rent housing in the private market.

The majority of NYCHA units are funded under Section 9. But because the program largely benefits public housing developments in urban areas, Congress has tended to reduce funding for Section 9 in recent decades in favor of increased funding for Section 8 vouchers, which are more widely used across the United States and also benefit private landlords.

In 2019, the average unit in the Section 9 program received \$1,250 a month in federal funding, while the average Section 8 Tenant Protection Voucher received \$1,900 a month, an extra \$650 per unit per month, according to Greg Russ, NYCHA’s chairperson and chief executive officer.

Under the pending legislation, the newly formed trust could then use that steady stream of extra federal dollars to issue bonds as a means to raise additional funding — essentially borrowing money from private investors.

“So, for example, you could have a dollar extra income that could leverage \$5 in debt,” Russ said.

If passed, the legislation is estimated to convert roughly 25,000 NYCHA units from the Section 9 program, though Russ said NYCHA will continue to own the buildings and land they sit on. And, he said all residents can vote to opt into the new program.

Out of 50 residents associations, 35 groups representing about 50,000 tenants support the legislation, Russ said. But opponents of the proposal are skeptical.

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Earlier this month, the Citywide Council of Presidents of NYCHA Tenant Associations, a body that represents residents across the five boroughs, wrote to state lawmakers urging them not to pass it.

“We fight for Section 9 Public Housing because it belongs to us - these are our homes,” said Daniel Barber, the group’s chairperson. “The promise of stability, opportunity and equity was guaranteed through legislation by way of the Section 9 lease.”

Marquis Jenkins, co-founder of Residents to Preserve Public Housing, formed three years ago to oppose the legislation when it was first introduced in 2019, said lawmakers are pushing the plan on residents.

“The vast majority of residents do not understand this plan,” said Jenkins, who urged state lawmakers not to pass it this year. “They have time. They can take six months and educate the residents and get real feedback and try to introduce this again in January.”

Jenkins argued that, because the proposal loads more debt onto NYCHA developments – an arrangement he likened to taking out a mortgage on a property – it opens the housing authority up to risk if the trust was unable to pay those debts in the future.

“The developments or the property then goes into foreclosure,” Jenkins said, adding that if the law passes, he believes it will further erode the Housing Act’s guarantees to provide public housing for low- and middle-income Americans.

“There’ll be no more public housing in New York City if this plan goes through,” Jenkins said.

Opponents also said they were concerned about eligibility. Unlike Section 8, they said NYCHA tenants are not subject to income limits under Section 9 in determining their eligibility to stay in their homes.

“Section 8, you have to qualify for that. There's no guarantee,” said Aixe Torres, 69, president of the Alfred E. Smith Resident Association, a NYCHA development in downtown Manhattan. “Unlike in section 9, you pay 30% of your income for rent, and that's it.”

Russ, NYCHA’s chairman, said there is a provision in the bill that would permit tenants with income over the federal limit to receive Section 8 vouchers to remain in public housing.

“The bill also makes it clear that those higher-earning families will retain their units,” said Russ.

The bill’s sponsor, Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz, who chairs the Assembly Committee on Housing, said he’s confident the bill will pass the lower house before the legislative session ends on June 2.

Gov. Kathy Hochul, who also said she supports the bill, said on Tuesday that the Senate may pass a similar bill. If it doesn't she said the legislation will be introduced again next year.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

“I do believe that has a chance of survival,” Hochul said.

NYC MAYOR COMES OUT IN SUPPORT OF PLAN THAT WOULD FUEL NYCHA IMPROVEMENTS; *SI LIVE*

By PAUL LIOTTA

May 23, 2022

State legislation that would help unlock billions in federal funding for New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) improvements got two big supporters Monday.

Mayor Eric Adams and Comptroller Brad Lander joined NYCHA residents at the Polo Grounds Houses in Harlem for a morning media conference and rally supporting the New York City Public Housing Preservation Trust.

“For too long, our NYCHA communities have been ignored and denied their fair share of investments and services. But we’re changing that with this legislation, and my administration is all-in on fighting for NYCHA,” Adams said. “Every New Yorker deserves a safe home with working utilities, and the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust will help make that a reality.”

Approval of the trust at the state level would make billions in federal aid dollars available, but the deadline for that approval is quickly approaching with Albany’s legislative session set to end June 2.

Prior versions of the bill, all sponsored by Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz (D-the Bronx), have been unsuccessful in the legislature, and neither Adams nor Lander voiced public support for those pieces of legislation creating the Trust.

Lander said additional language in the latest version of the bill with a focus on tenants’ input caused him to come out in support of the bill.

“The changes that empower residents and give them real choice in the Trust are very recent,” Lander said. “I’m much more ready to come out publicly, and say ‘we got to have it’ because of those amendments.”

Provisions include resident input in vendor selection, representation on quality assurance committees, and a resident opt-in voting process under which residents will have the right to vote on any proposed changes to their development.

The Trust would also provide an alternative to the federal housing program called Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) that turns NYCHA properties’ management over to the private sector while allowing the city to maintain ownership of the properties.

New York City Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz said the Trust would create a public benefit corporation that will own the properties, but allow the use of funds from the U.S. Department of

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Housing and Urban Development to make improvements. It will also allow NYCHA to spend more efficiently, she said.

“While we’ve seen incredible progress at NYCHA over the last few years, we won’t be able to give residents the homes they deserve, unless something major happens — and that is the Public Housing Preservation Trust,” she said.

“Let’s finally get the money, reforms, and resident decision-making necessary to save this critical housing supply and return dignity to our neighbors who live in NYCHA.”

Assemblyman Mike Cusick (D-Staten Island) and Assemblyman Charles Fall (D-North Shore/Manhattan) are co-sponsors of the legislation in their chamber. State Sen. Diane Savino (D-North Shore/Brooklyn) has been a co-sponsor of prior versions of the legislation.

NYCHA has long been a target of criticism for the dilapidated living conditions of its buildings citywide, and the authority’s nine Staten Island developments have had their own trouble.

For the fourth year in a row, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams’ office named NYCHA as the overall worst landlord in the city when it released its annual list of worst landlords in December.

Representatives from Williams’ office toured the Stapleton Houses in March, and found the conditions to be unacceptable. Residents of the development’s 197 Gordon St. address were without cooking gas for nearly a year causing outrage from local officials.

“I’ve been just disheartened and frankly disgusted by what I’ve seen, not only here at the Stapleton Houses, but around the city. NYCHA itself needs to do much better immediately to fix these terrible conditions we’re seeing,” First Deputy Public Advocate Nick Smith told the Advance/SILive.com. “Here at Stapleton, I’ve been shocked by a lot of things.”

<https://www.silive.com/news/2022/05/nyc-mayor-comes-out-in-support-of-plan-that-would-fuel-nycha-improvements.html>

‘FIGHT ON OUR BEHALF’: NYCHA RESIDENTS DEMAND HELP FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS; AMNY

By ISABEL SONG BEER

May 23, 2022

Residents of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) buildings rallied today outside of City Hall to protest the path to privatization that residents and advocates believe will only exacerbate the issues of disrepair or inequity they are already experiencing.

Over 600,000 New Yorkers reside in NYCHA public housing buildings, with NYCHA being the largest public housing system in North America.

Privatization – advocates and residents said on May 23 – will only negatively impact public housing and will make it harder for residents to be in the know when it comes to their housing rights and public housing availability.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

“Many of our questions have yet to be answered,” said Councilmember and Public Housing Chair Alexa Avilés during the press conference. “We have been asking questions and [for] services for decades. And what we are getting is wholly, wholly inadequate. There are several bills moving in Albany right now, among them the NYCHA Utility Accountability Act – requiring NYCHA to maintain open databases of code violations. But there is also the Trust Bill, which we know is on its second or third – some may argue its fifth – iteration [which will] privatize NYCHA and take it out of the public domain. There are some significant gaps that I am deeply concerned about. This notion that residents will be engaged is a fallacy in the legislation. I ask NYCHA and my colleagues; if you cared about resident engagement, you would have asked that question, you would have funded the pursuit of that question with rigor prior to putting legislation on the table.”

The move to take NYCHA out of the public domain – a move supported by New York City Mayor Eric Adams – aims to upgrade some of its public-housing developments with private funds, with maintenance provided by private managers.

Over \$1.8 billion in repair work has been completed across the city through the Permanent Affordability Commitment Act (PACT), which may put residents at a disproportionate risk of eviction.

A year after the Ocean Bay development in Bayside, Queens was converted in 2016, the eviction rate was 1.4%, compared to the citywide NYCHA housing eviction rate of 0.3%.

This higher eviction rate would devastate the already higher-risk residents who are low-income and put them at an increased risk of homelessness. The median household income for NYCHA residents is \$18,473 — just 30% of the median income for residents citywide, which stands at \$61,297.

Further issues on the transparency of NYCHA were called into question during the press conference.

“NYCHA says that they have a \$40 billion deficit,” said one resident who spoke during the press conference. “And we don’t know how true that is, because what we do know is that NYCHA’s problem isn’t solely financial. It’s mismanagement, they have squandered \$40 billion over the years, and now they say that we need to do this plan. They say we need to bring the private market in because we are not getting the money from the federal government. And yet, our mayor turns around and throws another \$1.2 billion at the private market.”

Other residents and community leaders doubled down on the need to keep NYCHA public and out of the private sector, especially during the midst of an economic crisis.

“New York City and NYCHA have let the conditions of our homes – homes to over 600,000 New Yorkers – decay, rot and poison our people,” said NYCHA resident and housing activist, Brenda Temple. “Someone is hurting our people! We are here today to tell our elected officials to stop the [privatization] at the Trust Act. NYCHA and the city of New York have been turning management of public housing over to private developers who will make money on our backs.

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Privatization of public housing ends public housing and NYCHA won't provide the oversight we residents need from the developers.”

The agency has been operating under a partial federal takeover since 2019 following years of damning news reports that revealed officials left lead-poisoned children in toxic apartments, failed to treat mold and vermin infestations or to complete basic repairs.

<https://www.amny.com/politics/fight-on-our-behalf-nycha-residents-demand-help-from-elected-officials>

ADAMS MAKES LAST MINUTE PUSH TO GET ALBANY OK FOR NYCHA OVERHAUL; NY POST

By NOLAN HICKS AND BERNADETTE HOGAN

May 23, 2022

Mayor Eric Adams is making a last minute push to convince state lawmakers in Albany to support plans to restructure the Big Apple's scandal-scarred public Housing Authority — changes that officials say are needed to unlock billions in federal funds for needed repairs.

The agency needs an estimated \$40 billion to get its apartments back to a state of good repair, as a toxic combination of aging complexes, decades of state and federal funding cuts and rampant city mismanagement have pushed New York's biggest landlord to the brink.

“Let's get it over the finished line so we can stop the years of neglect with NYCHA and keep kicking the can down the road,” said Hizzoner during a rally outside of the Polo Grounds Towers in Harlem.

“If you were living in a luxury condominium somewhere, you wouldn't have these conditions,” he added.

NYCHA's plan would, essentially, divide the agency into two entities: a city-run agency that provides landlord services and repairs to the estimated half-million New Yorkers who call public housing home; and a city-owned corporation, dubbed a “trust,” that would own the Big Apple's 300-plus public housing projects and the land underneath them.

The restructuring would allow NYCHA to qualify for federal funding that's currently reserved for corporations and other landlords, known as Section 8, potentially providing an extra \$1,000 a month per unit for badly needed repairs and upgrades, experts say.

That's because Congress has for decades allocated far more funding on a per-unit basis to provide vouchers for privately-run housing than it does for public housing. The legislation, carried by state Sen. Brian Kavanagh (D-Manhattan) and Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Brooklyn), would allow NYCHA to initially place 25,000 apartments in the new public trust.

NYCHA's restructuring needs the approval of state lawmakers in Albany, who are currently scheduled to wrap up their annual session June 2. Despite the urgency, Adams' rally Monday was his first to boost NYCHA's long-proposed overhaul since he took office in January.

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

The timing raised new questions about City Hall's dysfunctional Albany operation and larger lobbying strategy, which Adams batted away during the Harlem press conference. "I got wins. I know Albany," he retorted. "The last week is when stuff gets done up there."

Sources told The Post that Adams has brought up the NYCHA overhaul during recent calls with state lawmakers and while on his trip to Albany last week. The trust is similar to another conversion program that then-Mayor Bill de Blasio opted into in 2018 after years of delays, in which NYCHA formed public-private partnerships with developers to manage complexes as another way to access Section 8 funding.

At the time, officials hoped those conversions would finance \$13 billion in repairs over 10 years — enough to fix about 62,000 units, one-third of NYCHA. So far, officials have converted about 15,000 units.

They also hoped to raise another \$3 billion by selling unused development authorities — known as air rights — to private developers and allowing new market-rate housing to be built on empty or underutilized land owned by NYCHA, like parking lots and playgrounds.

However, City Hall's first major attempt at an infill project at the Chelsea Houses on Manhattan's West Side ran into significant tenant opposition and was eventually aborted. Even if NYCHA's projections come true, the agency would still need at least another \$16 billion for its repairs, a gap that officials hope the trust can close. <https://nypost.com/2022/05/23/adams-makes-last-minute-push-to-get-albany-ok-for-nycha-overhaul/>

AS RENTS RISE, MAYOR ADAMS FACES PRESSURE ON NEW YORK'S HOUSING CRISIS; NY TIMES

By MIHIR ZAVERI AND DANA RUBINSTEIN

May 24, 2022

Shortly after becoming mayor of New York City, Eric Adams said he would roll out a "comprehensive housing plan" within a couple of weeks to tackle the rising housing costs and homelessness that have made the city an emblem of a growing national crisis.

But four months later, Mr. Adams has yet to make good on promises he made during his campaign and has dialed back at least one, prompting criticism over how strong a priority he has placed on a top issue for many New Yorkers.

The details of the plan are still being worked on, ahead of an expected release next month. It will arrive as rising rents and the end of pandemic era safety nets are building pressure on the new administration to aggressively address a seemingly intractable set of problems that Mr. Adams inherited and that have an enormous impact on the city's economy and social fabric.

"I do think what we're seeing with rising rents now, it was really unimaginable just a couple of years ago," said Rachel Fee, executive director of the New York Housing Conference, a nonprofit group, who was listed as a contributor for a housing committee on Mr. Adams's transition team. "It has to be a top issue for the mayor. I do think City Hall has to address it with more urgency."

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Members of the City Council, which is negotiating the budget with the mayor, have also called for more spending on building and preserving affordable housing, after Mr. Adams proposed only a modest increase over the previous administration's spending for the next several years in his capital budget plan.

At a rally on the steps of City Hall last week, Pierina Sanchez, the chair of the City Council's housing committee, said, "New York City needs to treat the affordable housing crisis, the housing crisis, like the No. 1 problem."

Adrienne Adams, the speaker of the City Council, echoed calls for a bigger investment in a "State of the City" speech last weekend. The mayor has defended his pace, even as a staffing shortage in the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has hobbled the city's ability to move ahead with affordable housing projects.

"I know it feels like I have been the mayor for five years, but I've been here for five months," Mr. Adams said at a news conference last Friday. "I've inherited a broken city, with broken systems. We can either put a Band-Aid on top of these broken systems, or go to the core and fix them." But he added, "There's no rush to doing this. We've got to get it right."

In New York City, roughly one-third of renters are "severely rent-burdened," meaning they spend more than 50 percent of their income on rent, according to a survey of the city's housing stock issued last week. More than 48,000 people slept in New York City shelters each night in March, according to the Coalition for the Homeless, with the number of single adults in shelters increasingly steadily over the last several years.

The pandemic accentuated many of those problems, as tens of thousands of people struggled to afford rent or mortgage payments and sought government assistance. Many places across the nation are grappling with housing affordability, and there is a growing recognition that a root cause is the shortage of available homes. This week, President Biden announced a new plan to address the housing crisis that would incentivize reforming zoning laws to allow for more density, among other provisions.

The city's affordability crisis has been underscored more than once in recent weeks. A report released this month by the brokerage firm Douglas Elliman showed that rents in some parts of the city continue to surge: In Manhattan, for example, the median effective rent in April 2022 was \$3,870, more than 38 percent higher than a year before and the highest level ever recorded.

The survey of the city's housing stock underscored a longstanding trend of dwindling affordability: Between 2017 and 2021, New York City lost almost 100,000 units that had rented for less than \$1,500 per month, while it added 107,000 units that rent for at least \$2,300 per month.

A panel effectively controlled by the mayor recently voted to back some of the biggest rent increases in nearly a decade for rent-stabilized homes — where more than two million people

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

live, many who are lower income. Evictions are slowly on the rise, after the state's pandemic moratorium expired in January.

The forthcoming housing plan is likely to include provisions to cut down on homelessness, improve the conditions in public housing and boost homeownership opportunities for middle-income and lower-income New Yorkers, according to testimony from housing officials.

During his campaign, Mr. Adams made solving the housing crisis and housing shortage top issues. He said he would double the city's capital investment in housing, including public housing and the preservation and development of affordable homes, to \$4 billion annually, roughly double the amount spent by the previous administration. Instead, Mr. Adams has called for spending on average \$500 million more every year for the next 10 years.

Mr. Adams also promised to reform zoning rules that keep many neighborhoods from building bigger buildings, particularly in wealthier neighborhoods — which he called “sacred cows — that have resisted new development.

He specifically pointed to blocks within a swath of Manhattan — from 14th Streets to 42nd Street, and between Park and Ninth Avenues — as targets for rezoning. Mr. Adams did not answer questions last week about whether that would still be part of the housing plan. And even when a plan becomes final, it is not clear his housing agency has enough staff to carry it out.

In May, Adolfo Carrión, the city housing commissioner, said staffing remains “one of the biggest challenges that we face.” “We have a shortage of project managers,” Mr. Carrión said during testimony before the City Council. “We have a shortage of attorneys to close these deals.”

The department's legal team that deals in real estate transactions has had a steady exodus of transaction attorneys and is now short at least three of five supervising attorneys — one deputy general counsel, and two associate deputy general counsels, according to two housing officials — depriving the department of necessary legal expertise.

The city has moved to fund 77 new positions at the department, but it is not clear how quickly the city can fill them or how much of an impact they will make. Mr. Carrión noted that while agency's housing inspector corps is budgeted for nearly 470 inspectors, it is short more than 140.

The staffing situation is so dire that the department has posted a notice on its website, warning some applicants for city subsidies that because of “limited staff capacity and a significant backlog of projects,” it will take “up to a year” to assign them a project manager.

The mayor did not respond to questions about the impact of the shortage. Previous administrations also took several months or longer to develop a housing plan. Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg issued his housing plan in December, and while he is credited with helping redevelop the city and securing affordable housing, critics also blame his plans for allowing for displacement and inequality.

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Mayor Bill de Blasio, who made housing a centerpiece of his campaign, issued a housing plan roughly five months after he took office that ultimately evolved into a goal of building or preserving 300,000 affordable homes by 2026. While that was a significant increase in investment compared with previous administrations, the plan drew criticism for focusing too much on numerical targets and too little on affordability for lower-income families.

Charles Lutvak, a spokesman for Mr. Adams, said the housing plan “will replace counterproductive metrics with real results.” The plan, which the city says is being formulated with input from people who have experienced homelessness and from public housing residents, will focus on measuring how quickly people can get into affordable homes as well as the overall number of units filled during a specific time period, according to the mayor’s office.

“It doesn’t come out on Day 1,” said Moses Gates, the vice president for housing and neighborhood planning at the Regional Plan Association, a nonprofit group, said of the housing plan. “It takes collaboration and it takes some real nose-to-grindstone kind of work, and I think that it is still early in this administration.”

Beverly Rivers, 66, has lived in a rent-stabilized unit in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn for 25 years, and her \$1,009 rent already exceeds the money she receives from disability payments, her only income. Any rent increase will add to the more than \$8,000 she said she owes her landlord, who sued to evict her last month.

Ms. Rivers said she voted for Mr. Adams, believing he would fight for poor people, but she was disappointed that he did not back a rent freeze or rollback. “He didn’t do anything for us,” she said. “He’s not for us.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/24/nyregion/nyc-housing-adams.html>

THEY PRESSURE THE STATE ASSEMBLY TO PASS A LAW THAT WOULD “OPEN THE DOOR” TO EMERGENCY REPAIRS IN NYCHA COMPLEXES; *EL DIARIO*

By FERNANDO MARTINEZ

May 23, 2022

So that residents of hundreds of buildings in the Big Apple that are managed by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) at least have the hope of having a long-term plan to repair structural failures, mold, leaks and humidity , an investment estimated at \$40 billion is required in principle. So far it is not close, neither this amount, nor the plan.

But this Monday, the mayor of the city of New York, Eric Adams, together with community leaders and residents of these complexes, once again pushed a formula that would open the door to the flow of money from the federal government and the start of repairs, which for the most part are already an emergency and are part of what has been called a "humanitarian crisis" in the city. This is NYCHA's Public Housing Preservation Trust.

This Trust, which requires authorization from the state Legislature, would be a new fully public entity that would unlock billions of dollars in federal funds to make overdue investments in the five boroughs.

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“This initiative is truly different. Since it is a 100% public entity. Protect tenant rights and rents, treat residents as true partners, and find a way to get the funds we need to modernize developments ,” explained NYCHA Director Gregory Russ.

It all depends at this time on the passage of legislation A7805C , which is about to be voted on in the State Assembly. “For too long, our NYCHA communities have been ignored and denied their fair share of investments and services. But we are changing that with this legislation, and my administration is determined to fight for NYCHA ,” said Mayor Adams outside the Polo Grounds House complex in Upper Manhattan.

protections remain

The legislation under consideration in Albany, which was approved by the Assembly Housing Committee earlier this month, preserves several protections for NYCHA residents and the next legislative session is scheduled for June 2.

“The Public Housing Preservation Trust would provide access to funds to address a huge backlog of major repairs, while keeping local public housing in the public domain. We are calling on state legislators to enact this critical legislation before the end of this year's sessions,” said Adriene Holder , attorney at the Legal Aid Society of NY.

What does the new legislation include?

It guarantees that no NYCHA resident will have to pay more than 30 percent of their income for rent.

Residents will have the right to vote on any proposed changes to their development and the selection of vendors that would execute the restoration projects. Residents will have representation on quality assurance committees.

NYCHA Facts:

1 in 14 New Yorkers relies on NYCHA housing, through their housing plan or Section 8.

177,657 are NYCHA's residential units in the five boroughs.

90% of these units require repairs. <https://eldiariony.com/2022/05/23/presionan-a-asamblea-estatal-para-que-pase-ley-que-abriria-la-puerta-a-reparaciones-de-emergencia-en-complejos-de-nycha/>

NINE BROOKLYN NYCHA COMPLEXES NOW UNDER PRIVATE MANAGEMENT WRAP RENOVATIONS; BROWNSTONER

By BEN BRACHFELD

May 24, 2022

Local and federal officials on Friday announced the completion of \$434 million in repairs at nine NYCHA complexes in Brooklyn, all of which have undergone conversion to private management under the controversial Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program.

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The nine complexes include Armstrong Houses I and II and Marcy-Greene Avenues A and B in Bed Stuy; Berry Street-South 9th Street, Independence Towers and Williams Plaza in Williamsburg; 572 Warren Street in Boerum Hill; and Weeksville Gardens in Crown Heights. The complexes comprise over 2,600 apartments and house 6,000 residents in total.

“All New Yorkers have the same right to public safety and quality of life, no matter where they live,” Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement. “Today we take one major step closer to realizing those rights for 6,000 New Yorkers.”

The developments converted to private management through NYCHA’s Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) program (a local version of RAD) back in February 2020. RAD, a program of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, infuses public and private money into decaying public housing stock in exchange for converting them to private management. NYCHA, with \$40 billion in unmet capital needs, has been increasingly turning over its housing stock under RAD in hopes that the private sector would be able to more efficiently handle the massive repair log.

RAD has been controversial at every NYCHA development where it’s been pursued, with many fearing it portends the privatization of public housing and potential displacement. Some developments have seen high numbers of evictions, and new management often has trouble fixing long-term issues with heat, elevators and the like, though at others, the tenants sing the praises of the new management.

The nine complexes, deemed the “Brooklyn Bundle II,” saw long-unmet repairs completed, such as fixes to roofs, elevators, pipes, repairs within apartments, new security cameras, renovated community centers and, perhaps most crucially, a new boiler at every development. Four of the developments will now derive energy from rooftop solar panels.

Tenant association presidents said they were pleased with the completed repairs. “Before PACT, too many of our residents at Independence Towers suffered through extremely cold nights every time our ancient boiler system fell apart,” said Samuel Guttman, tenant association president at Independence Towers, in a statement. “We can now sleep more easily thanks to new, modern boilers that keep us warm, provide hot water, as well as everything else that our residents deserve so they can have a better quality of life.” <https://www.brownstoner.com/interiors-renovation/nycha-brooklyn-repairs-private-management-rental-assistance-demonstration-rad-program/>

WITH LEGISLATIVE CLOCK TICKING, ADAMS CALLS ON ALBANY TO PASS NYCHA TRUST BILL; POLITICS NY

By ETHAN STARK-MILLER

May 23, 2022

Less than two weeks before the end of the state legislative session, Mayor Eric Adams rallied with public housing residents at Polo Grounds Towers Monday to demand Albany lawmakers pass a bill establishing the New York City Housing Authority Preservation Trust.

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The bill – S6999A in the State Senate and A7805 in the Assembly – would establish a new city agency, which proponents say would allow the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to access higher levels of federal funding to making much needed repairs to the 25,000 NYCHA apartments across the five boroughs. State Senator Brian Kavanagh (D – Manhattan, Brooklyn) and Assembly Member Steven Cymbrowitz (D – Brooklyn), each the chair of their chamber’s housing committee, are sponsors of the measure.

The trust also aims to put tenants at the center of the decision making process and preserve their rights and protections. Adams said this bill is sorely needed because the federal government can’t be relied upon to provide the over \$40 billion that’s needed to fully rehabilitate NYCHA buildings across the city anytime soon, especially considering the Build Back Better bill seems unlikely to pass the U.S. Senate.

“One thing that’s clear, we need to stop playing with this,” Adams said. “We’re not getting money from the federal government this year. They’re not. They already told us, ‘we are not concerned with NYCHA residents.’ They did not pass that \$35 billion that we needed. So, we must do it on our own. Here’s a way to do it – the trust. Let’s get the trust passed. And I want to thank our colleagues in Albany. They’re those in Albany who support this, they believe this is the right thing to do. Now, let’s get it over the finish line, so we can finally stop the years of neglect with NYCHA. And [stop] kicking the can down the road.”

Joining Adams at the Harlem public housing complex were the city’s Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz, Comptroller Brad Lander, Nostrand Houses Residents Association Barbara McFadden and many others.

In response to a reporter’s question about whether he thinks the bill can get through with less than two weeks left in session, Adams said as a former state Senator, he knows “the last week is when stuff gets done up there.” He added that although his strategy to get items passed in Albany has been criticized, he’s already delivered wins for the city on items like the earned income tax credit, childcare funding and rollbacks to criminal justice reforms.

“We had a successful record in Albany, yet people said we didn’t have the right strategy,” Adams said. “I always thought good strategies mean that you get wins, I got wins.”

On the NYCHA trust legislation, Katz said it’ll allow for crucial repairs to be made to the public housing system that’s seen divestment from the federal government for decades while continuing to protect tenants. “Albany has the opportunity to deliver the biggest windfall to NYCHA residents, since it was created 85 years ago,” Katz said. “The trust will bring the money, the repairs and the rights that every New Yorker’s home should have. And even more, this legislation guarantees that these apartments will remain permanently affordable for future generations.”

The legislation would allow NYCHA to apply for federal Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPV) – project based funding the housing authority currently isn’t able to access, according to a release. It would also give NYCHA new procurement rules that will lower the costs of making repairs and speed up construction. It would ensure NYCHA continues to own and operate all of its properties, as well as the land they’re built on.

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Lander said the city can't wait any longer to rehabilitate NYCHA properties across the city, because many of the buildings are reaching a point where they'll structures will no longer be salvageable. "The buildings themselves are beginning to be in jeopardy," Lander said. "So, it's not only that we're leaving people in appalling conditions, it's that if we don't fix the roofs, and fix the systems and modernize the buildings, there will come a time and it will not be that long from now, when the buildings themselves simply cannot be saved and renovated. And if we get past that point, we will be in an impossible situation with half a million of our fellow New Yorkers. We can't wait any longer."

Additionally, the bill preserves current NYCHA residents rights and protections. These include requiring tenants to pay no more than 30 percent of their income on rent, succession rights and city and local residents associations. It also aims to empower NYCHA tenants by allowing residents to opt into the trust in the first place, vote on proposed changes to their buildings and participate in selecting vendors to make the repairs. Plus, four residents would get to sit on the trust's nine member appointed board.

Lander said it was the recent addition of these provisions that give residents more power in the decision making process that won his support for the legislation. "The most significant set of changes that have been made to this legislation are to say 'resident voices, first and foremost, developments will only go into the trust, if their residents choose it,'" Lander said. "And that is a profound and important step that really strengthened the preservation trust. It's what took me across the finish line from somebody who was supportive, but not coming out there and saying, 'let's get it done.' To someone who's saying 'we must do it right now. The legislation needs to pass in Albany.'" <https://politicsny.com/2022/05/23/with-legislative-clock-ticking-adams-calls-on-albany-to-pass-nycha-trust-bill/>

MAYOR ADAMS, NYCHA TENANTS, ELECTEDS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS, UNITE IN SUPPORT OF NYCH PUBLIC HOUSING PRESERVATION TRUST; HARLEM WORLD

By Staff;
May 23, 2022

New York City Mayor Eric Adams, along with government, labor, and community leaders, stood with New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents today at Polo Grounds Houses in support of the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust.

The Trust — which requires authorization from the state Legislature — would be a new, entirely public entity that would unlock billions of dollars in federal funding to accelerate repairs and make long-overdue investments for tens of thousands of NYCHA residents across all five boroughs. The current legislation — A7805C — would keep NYCHA residents at the center of the Trust's implementation process, preserving all resident rights and protections.

NYCHA needs over \$40 billion to fully restore and renovate all its buildings. "For too long, our NYCHA communities have been ignored and denied their fair share of investments and services. But we're changing that with this legislation, and my administration is all-in on fighting for NYCHA," said Mayor Adams. "Every New Yorker deserves a safe home with working utilities,

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

and the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust will help make that a reality. I know that with the combined force of NYCHA residents, the union workers who serve them every day, and our partners fighting in Albany, we can give these New Yorkers the homes they deserve.”

The legislation being considered in Albany — which was approved by the Assembly Housing Committee earlier this month — retains all current rights and protections for NYCHA residents, including a guarantee that no NYCHA resident will have to pay more than 30 percent of their income towards rent. The legislation also includes over a dozen changes recommended by resident leaders, including:

A first-in-the-country resident opt-in voting process, under which residents will have the right to vote on any proposed changes to their development; Resident participation in vendor selection; and Resident representation on quality assurance committees. Approval of the Trust would allow NYCHA to double the amount of federal subsidy it receives while remaining entirely public by switching to project-based Tenant Protection Voucher funding. It will also provide NYCHA with improved procurement rules that would reduce costs, speed up construction timelines, and allow faster responses to resident requests.

NYCHA would continue to own all residential complexes and the land on which they are built, with NYCHA employees continuing to manage the properties. The Trust would have a publicly appointed nine-member board, which includes four resident members. “While we’ve seen incredible progress at NYCHA over the last few years, we won’t be able to give residents the homes they deserve, unless something major happens — and that is the Public Housing Preservation Trust,” said New York City Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz. “This is a critical moment as our partners in Albany consider the legislation, and the city stands with NYCHA and residents in support of the Trust. Let’s finally get the money, reforms, and resident decision-making necessary to save this critical housing supply and return dignity to our neighbors who live in NYCHA.”

“I want to thank Mayor Adams for making public housing a priority and recognizing that we must act now if we are going to save the homes of over 400,000 New Yorkers,” said NYCHA Chair and CEO Gregory Russ. “We cannot continue to do things the same way and expect different results. What makes the Trust truly different is that it is a 100-percent public entity, protects tenants’ rights and rents, treats residents as true partners, and finds a way to get the funds that we need in order to modernize the developments. I am encouraged by the leadership that I’ve witnessed in Albany over the past few weeks, especially from our sponsor, Assemblymember Steve Cymbrowitz. With the mayor, elected officials, labor leaders, advocates and especially NYCHA residents, I am confident that we can chart a new course for public housing in New York City.”

“We believe in the Trust because it will give us the opportunity to work together to get the repairs that we so desperately need,” said Barbara McFadden, Brooklyn South member, NYCHA Citywide Council of Presidents; and president, Nostrand Houses Residents Association. “Our rights and rents will be protected, and we will have a true voice when it comes to decisions that impact our communities. Now we need the state Legislature and governor to work with us to make this strong plan a reality.”

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

“If we want to see improvements, we have to be open to positive ideas that can bring about real change. Last week, I went to Albany to tell our elected officials exactly why I support the Trust,” said Bernadette McNear, president, Rangel Houses Tenant Association. “I love my community and want to see it get even better. At Rangel, we had inconsistent heat and hot water all winter, and now there is scaffolding around the buildings due to brick issues. We can do better, and the Trust will help get us there.”

“We urge our state lawmakers to pass this important legislation, which will help return New York City’s public housing to a place of pride in which to live and work,” said Gregory Floyd, president, Teamsters Local 237.

“For decades, NYCHA residents have suffered horrendous living conditions — including frequent utility outages, raw sewage floods, toxic mold, lead paint, and rodent infestations — stemming from government disinvestment, and this must end,” said Adriene Holder, chief attorney, civil practice, Legal Aid Society. “The Public Housing Preservation Trust would enable NYCHA to access funds to address an enormous backlog of capital repairs, while keeping local public housing in the public domain. The bill also includes an ‘opt-in’ provision, which would empower residents with an unprecedented say in determining and prioritizing needs. We call on Albany to enact this critical legislation before session concludes in early June.”

“The Preservation Trust assures the future of NYCHA and its residents, even if Washington doesn’t come through,” said Victor Bach, senior housing policy analyst, Community Service Society. “It has the potential to restore decent conditions at all developments and address the \$40 billion capital backlog, while keeping public housing public and giving residents unprecedented choice in whether and how the process moves forward.”

“I want to applaud Chair Russ, the executive team, Mayor Adams, and all the many advocates of the Trust, especially those who worked tirelessly to explain its purpose and extraordinary benefits to the residents of public housing,” said Bishop Mitchell Taylor, CEO and co-founder, Urban Upbound. “The preservation of public housing should be public objective number one. The trust will create a vehicle to drive that objective. This is a great day for the residents of public housing. I want to thank the mayor for his promise not to forget public housing. His presence today just puts an exclamation point on his ongoing commitment to make public housing a place people can call home and feel good about it.” <https://www.harlemworldmagazine.com/mayor-adams-nycha-tenants-electeds-and-community-leaders-unite-in-support-of-nych-public-housing-preservation-trust/>

ADAMS MAKES FINAL MINUTE PUSH TO GET ALBANY OK FOR NYCHA OVERHAUL; *MTV GOV*

By STAFF

May 24, 2022

NYCHA DOC TRUST ARTICLE DIGEST

Mayor Eric Adams is making a final minute push to persuade state lawmakers in Albany to assist plans to restructure the Huge Apple's scandal-scarred public Housing Authority — adjustments that officers say are wanted to unlock billions in federal funds for wanted repairs.

The company wants an estimated \$40 billion to get its residences again to a state of fine restore, as a poisonous mixture of getting older complexes, many years of state and federal funding cuts and rampant metropolis mismanagement have pushed New York's greatest landlord to the brink.

“Let's get it over the completed line so we will cease the years of neglect with NYCHA and maintain kicking the can down the street,” mentioned Hizzoner throughout a rally exterior of the Polo Grounds Towers in Harlem. “In case you had been dwelling in a luxurious condominium someplace, you wouldn't have these circumstances,” he added.

The company has been working below a partial federal takeover since 2019 following years of damning information experiences that exposed officers left lead-poisoned kids in poisonous residences, did not deal with mildew and vermin infestations or to finish primary repairs.

Mayor Eric Adams called on state lawmakers in Albany to restructure the New York City Housing Authority at a rally in Harlem on May 23, 2022.

NYCHA's plan would, primarily, divide the company into two entities: a city-run company that gives landlord providers and repairs to the estimated half-million New Yorkers who name public housing residence; and a city-owned company, dubbed a “belief,” that may personal the Huge Apple's 300-plus public housing tasks and the land beneath them.

The restructuring would permit NYCHA to qualify for federal funding that's at present reserved for firms and different landlords, often known as Part 8, probably offering an additional \$1,000 a month per unit for badly wanted repairs and upgrades, specialists say. That's as a result of Congress has for many years allotted way more funding on a per-unit foundation to offer vouchers for privately-run housing than it does for public housing. The laws, carried by state Sen. Brian Kavanagh (D-Manhattan) and Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Brooklyn), would permit NYCHA to initially place 25,000 residences within the new public belief.

NYCHA's restructuring wants the approval of state lawmakers in Albany, who're at present scheduled to wrap up their annual session June 2. Regardless of the urgency, Adams' rally Monday was his first to spice up NYCHA's long-proposed overhaul since he took workplace in January.

The timing raised new questions on Metropolis Corridor's dysfunctional Albany operation and bigger lobbying technique, which Adams batted away through the Harlem press convention. “I bought wins. I do know Albany,” he retorted. “The final week is when stuff will get executed up there.”

Sources informed The Submit that Adams has introduced up the NYCHA overhaul throughout latest calls with state lawmakers and whereas on his journey to Albany final week. The belief is just like one other conversion program that then-Mayor Invoice de Blasio opted into in 2018 after

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years of delays, wherein NYCHA fashioned public-private partnerships with builders to handle complexes as one other technique to entry Part 8 funding.

On the time, officers hoped these conversions would finance \$13 billion in repairs over 10 years — sufficient to repair about 62,000 models, one-third of NYCHA. To date, officers have transformed about 15,000 models. In addition they hoped to boost one other \$3 billion by promoting unused growth authorities — often known as air rights — to non-public builders and permitting new market-rate housing to be constructed on empty or underutilized land owned by NYCHA, like parking heaps and playgrounds.

Nevertheless, Metropolis Corridor's first main try at an infill undertaking on the Chelsea Homes on Manhattan's West Facet bumped into vital tenant opposition and was finally aborted. Even when NYCHA's projections come true, the company would nonetheless want not less than one other \$16 billion for its repairs, a niche that officers hope the belief can shut.

<https://mtvgov.org/adams-makes-final-minute-push-to-get-albany-ok-for-nycha-overhaul/>

CBC URGES LEGISLATURE TO PASS A WELL-CRAFTED SUCCESSOR TO 421-A AND CREATE NYCHA'S PRESERVATION TRUST; CITIZENS BUDGET COMMISSION

By ANDREW S. REIN

May 17, 2022

Citizens Budget Commission (CBC) President Andrew S. Rein released this statement on behalf of the CBC: "With three weeks remaining in the Legislative session, the Citizens Budget Commission (CBC) calls on State lawmakers to support two priorities critical to improving the supply, affordability, and quality of New York City's rental and public housing: a 421-a successor and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Preservation Trust. These are among the top priorities on which we hope Mayor Eric Adams and Legislative leaders and members focus during the Mayor's Albany visit.

NYCHA Preservation Trust

Critical to improving quality of life and preserving public housing for NYCHA's 400,000 residents are comprehensive renovations funded through both the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD) and the Preservation Trust. The Preservation Trust legislation, A.7805B, would allow NYCHA to secure lucrative federal Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs) to raise funding for repairs and to partner with construction management and design firms to oversee renovations.

With buy-in from residents, the Trust would offer a truly transformative future for public housing in New York City. However, the fate of the Trust depends on State legislative action and on federal government approval and funding of TPVs. We urge State lawmakers to pass the Trust legislation."

<https://cbcny.org/research/cbc-urges-legislature-pass-well-crafted-successor-421-a-and-create-nychas-preservation-trust>

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SAVE NYCHA NOW: IT'S PAST TIME FOR THE STATE LEGISLATURE CREATE A PUBLIC HOUSING PRESERVATION TRUST FOR THE CITY'S HOUSING

AUTHORITY; NY DAILY NEWS

By EDITORIAL BOARD

May 16, 2022

For hundreds of thousands of NYCHA residents, leaks and mold and lead paint and rodents and broken boilers and broken elevators and broken entry doors are infuriating daily reminders that the government is unable or unwilling to guarantee the basics of a safe and livable home. It's a funding problem and it's a management problem and arguing over which is bigger is a fool's game. The systematic disinvestment from the feds, who were supposed to support public housing, stretches back decades. Current capital needs total about \$40 billion. Meantime, the dysfunction of the bureaucracy in charge is incalculable, which means that even if all that money started flowing, far too much of it would be spent unwisely.

There is a brilliant way to kill both birds with a single stone, leveraging current funding streams to generate revenue while making the authority more accountable: creating a Public Housing Preservation Trust, a separate but still publicly owned entity that would be subject to the same standards and legal agreements as NYCHA but could apply for federal protection vouchers to raise capital for repairs. Along with it would come a more effective procurement process that would speed renovations and repairs.

NYCHA residents, holding on as they are to a lifeline in a city with ever-increasing rents and cost of living, are understandably wary of anything that will fundamentally transform NYCHA's management and unit ownership structure. But this is not a sell-off. Public housing would stay entirely public. In their strong legislation — which has a chance of passage this session — state Sen. Brian Kavanagh and Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz have built in critical protections for tenants.

Albany politicians are practiced at lamenting the deteriorating condition of NYCHA as emblematic of how Washington or city bureaucracy or both have failed the poor and working class. They should take a break from these lamentations and do something real: Pass this bill, and give the nation's largest public housing system, a vital institution on the brink of definitively failing its residents, a fighting chance at survival. <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-edit-nycha-public-housing-funding-albany-legislature-housing-20220516-5lbaxz747vbenmz77kjdxdxgh6q-story.html>

OPINION -HOW TO SAVE THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY; NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

By KAREN BLONDEL

April 29, 2022

When I first heard about NYCHA's proposal to create a Public Housing Preservation Trust, I didn't trust it at all. As a 40-year public housing resident, tenant-rights leader and environmental justice advocate, I had to do my own research and encourage my neighbors to do the same. NYCHA residents, having been

misled many times before, have many reasons to be skeptical of another new plan to improve public housing. Therefore, I met with NYCHA leadership, listened to residents' ideas and

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concerns, conducted meetings and workshops, and began advocating for changes to the plan that would bring more power to the people who live in public housing and more revenue to the developments.

The concept has undergone important changes since it was first discussed in 2019 and legislation was first introduced in the Legislature in 2021. Today, I can confidently say that I support the Preservation Trust as a viable solution to stabilize the massive agency and keep public housing public.

Under the current model, NYCHA, as a public housing authority, can only legally receive one type of housing subsidy, which is underfunded and unreliable, and consistently at the mercy of Washington politics.

The Preservation Trust — an entirely new entity — would allow NYCHA to initially transfer approximately 25,000 apartments to Section 8 units and apply for federal Tenant Protection Voucher (TPV) subsidies, which offer more money than the traditional public housing subsidy. NYCHA would remain the permanent owner of the land and buildings, and NYCHA's obligations under the 2019 federal agreement and other consent decrees would carry over to the Trust.

The legislation creating the Trust that will be re-introduced in the Assembly in the coming weeks would guarantee residents core rights, including rents capped at 30% of income and succession rights for family members who are living in apartments to become the head of household if the NYCHA tenant of record has left or has passed away. Additionally, the Trust legislation would codify the existing HUD rules for NYCHA's citywide and local resident associations.

This means that these essential resident governing bodies would continue to hold elections, operate and be held accountable under federal regulations, and through the Trust, they would be protected under state law. Furthermore, current HUD regulations allow public housing resident associations to form Resident Management Corporations (RMC). With the Trust, resident groups that want to manage a NYCHA development would be able to become an RMC and there would be a formal process to bring their management proposal to the Trust board for consideration.

Importantly, the Preservation Trust legislation will empower residents to make decisions about what happens at their properties. Over the past two years, NYCHA heard from residents across the city that resident decision making was critical, and so the bill will clearly state that residents will be able to opt in to the Trust through a voting process. The votes would be development specific. Within 60 days of the effective date of the law, NYCHA would issue proposed rules related to the voting process. There would be a public comment period, after which NYCHA will post the final rules. As part of this process, residents could also vote for Federal Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), which is private management of public housing as an option or until another vote is called.

The state would also authorize a more effective procurement process, which would allow NYCHA to hire vendors and renovate properties much quicker, with far less red tape. Residents will play a role in selecting vendors for renovation work and will serve on committees that check

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the quality of the work. The bill will also include energy efficiency requirements, and requirements to hire NYCHA residents for the thousands of jobs this model would create.

For too many years, NYCHA has suffered from disinvestment. This is not just a catchphrase to excuse our living conditions or the serious problems with a dysfunctional bureaucracy. It's a fact. Every year the federal government has given public housing less and less money, leaving Black and Brown and immigrant families to live in squalor. Our buildings are getting older; infrastructure such as roofs, heating systems and pipes are breaking down; apartment appliances, cabinets and bathrooms are falling apart; and there isn't enough money to fix these things properly, or even renovate or upgrade them. We have had to endure repair backlogs, lack of basic utilities and poor customer service.

New York officials have pointed to the federal government as the answer for NYCHA's woes. We need a new path. It is time for these officials to step up to the plate themselves. NYCHA residents are New Yorkers and should not have to beg every year for capital and operational funding. The Trust solves this problem.

Blondel is president of the Red Hook West Resident Association and a Loeb Fellow at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-oped-only-one-way-to-save-nycha-20220429-yb2zhe7nkrge6p2syd26jq3a-story.htm>

ADAMS PLEDGES \$5B IN ADDITIONAL NYCHA FUNDING OVER NEXT DECADE; **CRAIN'S NY**

By NATALIE SACHMECHI

April 26, 2022

Mayor Eric Adams has pledged an additional \$500 million per year for the next 10 years in funding for the New York City Housing Authority, the city's provider of public housing.

The housing agency, which spent \$4.1 billion in 2021, is in need of \$40 billion to make necessary fixes to its current housing stock, which suffers from ancient infrastructure and poor maintenance. The additional capital will be used "make critical repairs at NYCHA, subsidize those who need help staying in their existing homes, and build more deeply affordable housing for the entire city," Adams announced Tuesday at his first State of the City address.

But the additional funding is a far cry from the \$1.5 billion in annual funding housing advocacy groups have called for.

"Unfortunately, the Adams administration's modest capital increase for housing merely treads water and will not make a meaningful dent in this emergency," said Rachel Fee, executive director of the New York Housing Conference, a nonprofit affordable housing policy and advocacy organization.

NYCHA's current portfolio of housing includes 177,000 apartments across 335 housing developments in the boroughs, many of which suffer from mold, vermin, lead and heat outages.

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The agency's chief executive Gregory Russ said that he's put his faith for new capital funding into the Housing Preservation Trust bill that has been proposed by Manhattan Sen. Brian Kavanagh and Brooklyn Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz.

The bill would create a new public housing entity within NYCHA that would act as a trust and trigger additional federal subsidies that could allow the authority to bond out the costs of new capital repairs. <https://www.crainsnewyork.com/real-estate/eric-adams-pledges-5b-additional-affordable-housing-funding-over-next-decade>

ADAMS PROPOSES \$5B INCREASE IN HOUSING SPENDING OVER 10 YEARS; PRO POLITICO

By JANAKI CHADHA

April 26, 2022

NEW YORK — Mayor Eric Adams is proposing a \$5 billion increase in housing capital spending over the next decade in his executive budget.

Details: The sum would be split between the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the New York City Housing Authority. It would represent \$500 million, on average, in additional money annually — far short of the nearly \$2 billion annual increase housing advocates and the City Council have been pushing for.

The funds will go toward the preservation and new construction of affordable housing, as well as NYCHA's Permanent Affordability Commitment Together program, through which the city outsources the management of public housing buildings to complete repairs. The sum will also fund in-unit repairs at the Gowanus Houses and Wyckoff Gardens developments in Brooklyn.

Key context: Adams signed a campaign pledge during the primary to commit \$4 billion in annual capital spending toward housing preservation, affordable and supportive housing construction and public housing — almost \$2 billion above the city's current spending.

Housing advocates have called on him to keep to that promise, and they've been joined by Council Speaker Adrienne Adams and other Council members in pushing for the \$4 billion commitment. Of their total ask, \$2.5 billion would go toward affordable and supportive housing and \$1.5 billion would go toward NYCHA.

<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2022/04/adams-proposes-5b-increase-in-housing-spending-over-10-years-00027850>

NYCHA TRUST MAY ALLOW RESIDENTS TO OPT-IN. HERE'S THE LATEST; PRO POLITICO

By JANAKI CHADHA

April 19, 2022

NEW YORK — A key tenet of the New York City Housing Authority's plans to overhaul its crumbling housing stock hinges on state approval of controversial legislation that would allow it to tap into new funding sources for repairs.

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So as the Adams administration works to build support for this plan, they're pursuing a new approach: including a provision in the proposal that would allow NYCHA residents at a given development to vote on whether to opt in.

The proposed preservation trust, which needs to be established through state legislation, would allow the housing authority to transfer a portion of its apartments to a new public benefit corporation that would be controlled by a board of NYCHA and City Hall appointees, including resident leaders.

Under the model, the agency would be able to access federally-funded "tenant protection vouchers," providing a new income stream for repairs and allowing the agency to access bond financing.

According to City Hall, under the latest version of the legislation, a given NYCHA development would only enter the trust if its residents affirmatively vote to be part of it, following outreach and technical education. The administration is looking to get the trust proposal approved this year before the legislative session ends in June.

"NYCHA needs a financial lifeline immediately — doing nothing is not an option, and the mayor is doing something," City Hall spokesperson Charles Lutvak said in a statement. "The preservation trust is a creative solution that would unlock billions of dollars in much-needed funding without in any way compromising the affordability NYCHA offers or resident rights."

Supporters see the proposal as key to stabilizing NYCHA, which is facing a \$40 billion capital backlog as an infusion of federal money to make up that deficit remains unlikely.

The legislation has been met with opposition from some state lawmakers and resident leaders, and the effort was put on pause by the state Legislature last year after facing pushback. Whether the Legislature can change course before the end of legislative session — one that's occurring during an election year — remains unclear.

Sen. Brian Kavanagh (D-Manhattan), the chair of the body's housing committee and a lead sponsor of the legislation introduced last year, told the group Residents to Preserve Public Housing in January he's been "made fully aware of the concerns, and it's not something that we are proceeding with at all at this point," according to a video released of his comments.

Kavanagh is facing a primary challenge from Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou (D-Manhattan), a critic of the proposal.

"I have committed to many people on this call, including my own resident leaders in my district, that we are not moving forward with that unless there is some version of it or some discussion that can be had that makes people think there is something worth moving forward with," Kavanagh said in January. He didn't return a request for comment.

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Others lawmakers say the case for the trust is urgent as NYCHA's deficit grows and as its buildings further deteriorate.

Assemblymember Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Brooklyn) who introduced the legislation last year with Kavanagh, said in a recent interview it's "essential" for the proposal to get done this year.

"We have an opportunity now that we've never had before, and my concern is that if we wait much longer, the NYCHA infrastructure, the buildings will just not last," Cymbrowitz said.

Cymbrowitz and others noted the failure of the federal Build Back Better proposal, which was expected to include funds for NYCHA, as the latest indication a federal rescue is not coming anytime soon.

"To be honest, I haven't heard a better idea apart from magically getting tens of billions of dollars from the federal government," state Sen. Julia Salazar (D-Brooklyn) said of the proposed preservation trust.

"I think that maybe a year ago, people who live in and care about public housing in New York were willing to wait and see and really put hope into seeing the federal dollars," she said. "But now that it's clear that at least for the foreseeable future we're not going to receive those funds, we really, really need to urgently consider the creation of a trust."

She and others who have been critical of the Rental Assistance Demonstration program — another model NYCHA has used to repair its building stock — say approving the trust could allow the housing authority to move away from that program, which critics have characterized as a potential move toward privatization.

Similar concerns have been raised with the trust as well, however.

Bringing NYCHA apartments into the trust would transfer them from the traditional public housing funding stream, known as Section 9, to Section 8 subsidies. This has prompted concerns tenants would be left without the same protections.

"I am right now not in support of any kind of mechanism that would take Section 9 protections away from Section 9 public housing," Niou said in a recent interview. Moving away from the Section 9 structure, she said, "in effect ends public housing as we know it."

The bill details a range of tenant protections that would apply to buildings transferred to the trust, and it says those protections would be "consistent with those afforded to a public housing resident."

If the Legislature approves the proposal with the provision that developments would need to opt-in by majority vote, the onus would still be on NYCHA to convince longtime residents of the plan's merits.

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Sharon Cadiz, who has lived at Ravenswood Houses in Queens for over 40 years, said for now, she's skeptical.

"I'm nervous about changes to the way that things are organized," she said. "The preservation trust, I think they're throwing the jargon out there — but I still need proof that it's a goodwill effort to sustain public housing."

Proponents of the trust said the inclusion of resident buy-in is key to building support for the plan.

"It's hard for the opponents to really object to that," said Judith Goldiner, an attorney at the Legal Aid Society. "What's the reason to object to a proposal that allows tenants to choose?"

<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2022/04/latest-proposal-for-nycha-trust-would-allow-residents-to-opt-in-00026424>