

# Housing New York

## Zoning for Quality and Affordability



# Housing New York

## A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan

**Housing New York** is a comprehensive plan to build and preserve 200,000 units of high-quality affordable housing over the next decade. The Plan will create opportunities for New Yorkers with a range of incomes, from the very lowest to those in the middle class, and will foster vibrant and diverse neighborhoods.

Key Facets of

# The Affordable Housing Crisis

- **Gap Between Rents and Incomes**

Over the past decade, average rents rose by more than 10% while wages stagnated

- **High Rent Burden**

55% of renter households are “rent-burdened” and 30% are “extremely rent burdened”

- **Insufficient Housing Production**

The marketplace is not meeting the needs of existing residents, let alone new ones

- **Limited Supply of Affordable Units**

Despite significant public investment, only a fraction of eligible New Yorkers served

- **Population Growth**

230,000 new residents arrived since 2010 and 600,000 more are expected by 2040

# Housing New York: Implementation

## Create More Affordable Housing

- Create 80,000 new affordable units
- Reform 421-a tax exemption program
- Improve zoning to promote affordability

## Preserve Existing Housing and Prevent Displacement

- Preserve affordability of 120,000 existing units
- Strengthen rent regulations
- Protect tenants facing harassment

## Plan for and Invest in Strong Neighborhoods

- Collaboratively plan with communities
- Create Neighborhood Development Fund
- Align planning with strategic investments

# Zoning for Quality and Affordability



# Goals

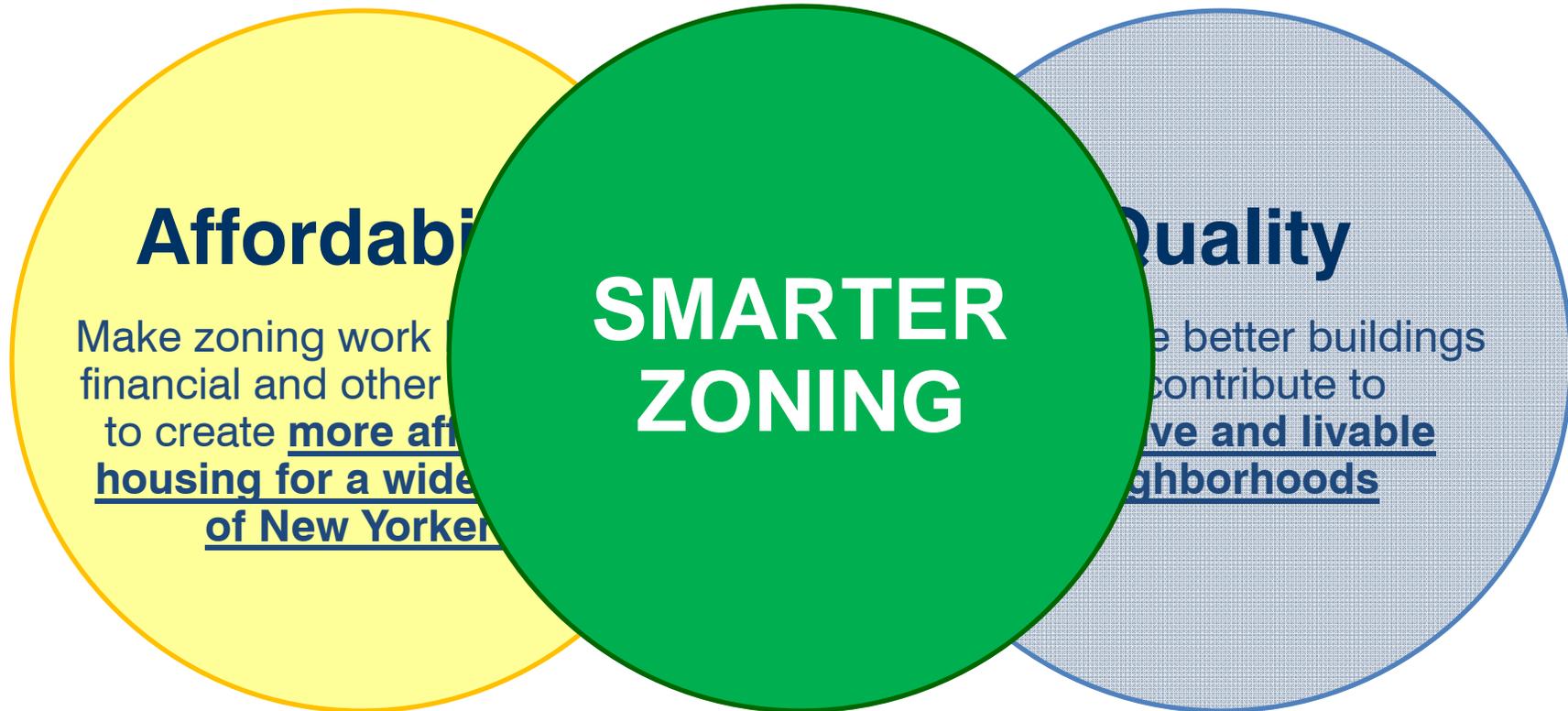
## Affordability

Make zoning work better with financial and other programs to create more affordable housing for a wider range of New Yorkers

## Quality

Encourage better buildings that contribute to attractive and livable neighborhoods

# We can achieve BOTH



# Affordability

- Help seniors remain in their communities by making it easier to provide **affordable senior housing and care facilities**
- Support the creation of **Inclusionary Housing**
- Free up resources to create more affordable housing by enabling cost-effective, **transit-accessible affordable housing**

# Why Does Zoning Need to Change?

- Population 65 years and older is projected to increase 40% by 2040 – over 400,000 additional seniors
- Dated zoning does not recognize **today's spectrum of senior housing and care facilities**, such as
  - independent living
  - assisted living
  - nursing care
- In medium and higher density districts: affordable senior housing is allowed more floor area, but **zoning doesn't allow room for it all to fit** in a well designed building
- In lower density multifamily districts: zoning is based on walkup houses, but **seniors need elevator buildings**

# Key Elements of the Proposal

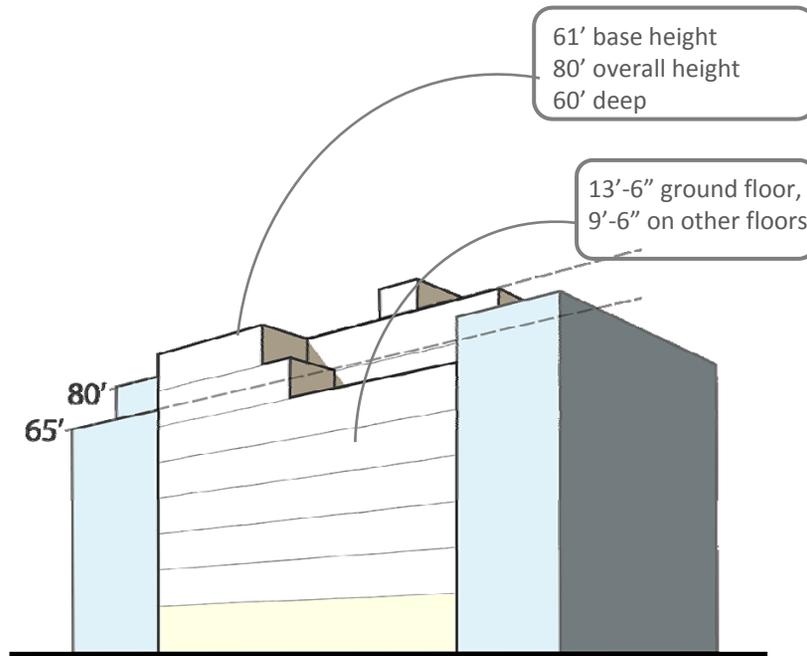
Goal: Help seniors remain in their communities

- Update regulations to allow a spectrum of affordable senior housing and care facilities, alone or mixed

## **In medium- and high-density districts:**

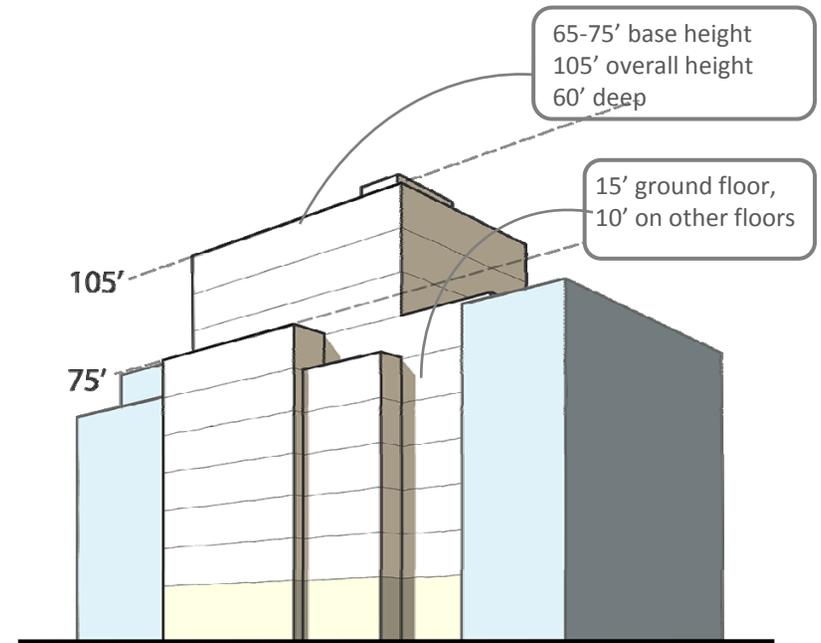
- When buildings provide affordable senior housing, allow limited additional height to fit all floor area in a well designed building
- Allow the same, higher floor area for affordable senior housing as well as care facilities

# How Much Additional Height Is Needed for Affordable Senior Housing and Care Facilities?



Existing R7A envelope on narrow street, interior lot

**Existing**



Proposed R7A envelope on narrow street, interior lot

**Proposed**

**Medium- and high-density districts: In over 95% of affected areas, no more than 1 or 2 additional stories**

# Key Elements of the Proposal

Goal: Help seniors remain in their communities

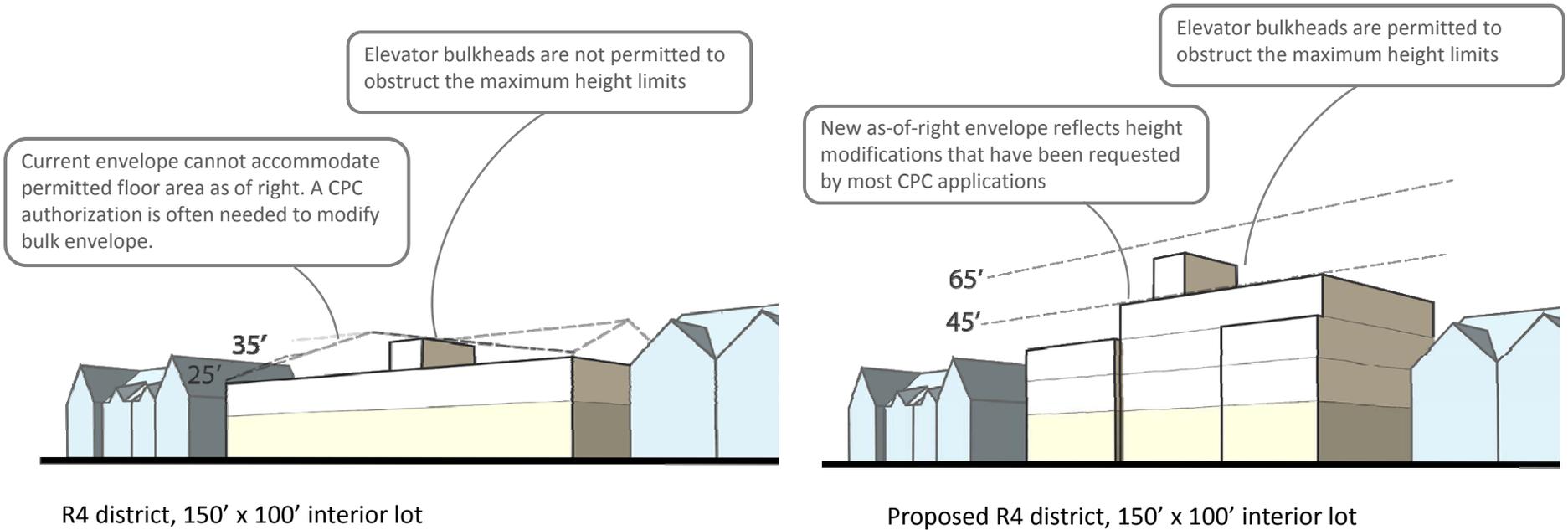
- Update regulations to allow a spectrum of affordable senior housing and care facilities, alone or mixed

## **In lower-density districts that allow multifamily housing:**

- Allow affordable senior apartment buildings with an elevator, not exceeding 4 to 6 stories
- Allow the same, higher floor area for affordable senior housing as well as care facilities

## AFFORDABLE SENIOR HOUSING

# How Much Additional Height Is Needed for Affordable Senior Housing and Care Facilities?



**Low-density districts that allow multifamily housing: Buildings would not exceed 4 to 6 stories**

## Why Does Zoning Need to Change?

- In designated medium and higher density areas, the Inclusionary Housing program promotes mixed-income housing
- Like senior housing, Inclusionary Housing is allowed more floor area, but **zoning doesn't allow room for it all to fit** in a well designed building
- This results in less participation in the program, and **less affordable housing**

# Key Elements of the Proposal

Goal: Support the creation of  
Inclusionary Housing

- When buildings participate in the Inclusionary Housing program, allow the same **height as proposed for buildings providing affordable senior housing**
- Would apply where:
  - The voluntary IH program applies today
  - The proposed new Mandatory IH program is applied in the future

# Why Does Zoning Need to Change?

## Current parking requirements make it harder to meet the need for affordable housing

- Off-street parking can cost as much as \$30,000-\$50,000 per parking space to provide
- Residents of affordable housing cannot pay the fees necessary to support this cost (approx. \$200-300+/month)
- Lower-income households own fewer cars, especially in transit-served areas – and low-income seniors own extremely few
- Operators report that low-income residents rarely park in these facilities

## Why Does Zoning Need to Change?

Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens, the largest developer of affordable housing for low-income seniors in New York City:

*“We have thousands and thousands of low-income seniors on our wait lists for housing. We even have wait lists for our tenant gardens. We do not have a single wait list for parking.”*

# Key Elements of the Proposal

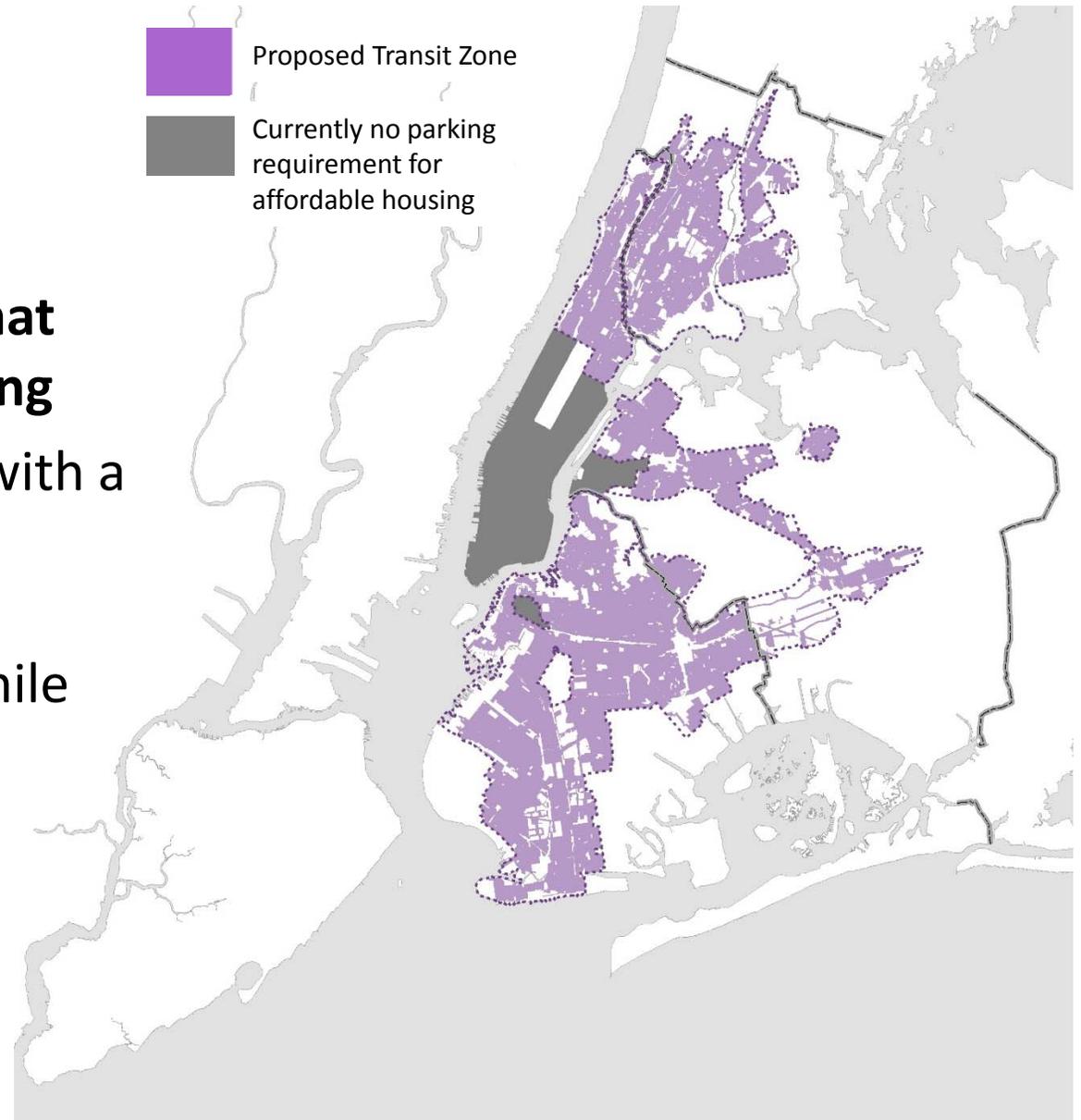
Goal: Make taxpayer dollars go further by enabling cost-effective, **transit-accessible affordable housing**

Designate a “transit zone” where auto ownership and commutes by car are low, in which:

- Parking would be **optional** for new Inclusionary Housing or low-income housing
- Where appropriate, other modifications allowed:
  - Removal of parking for existing affordable senior housing
  - For other affordable or mixed-income housing, reduction of requirements possible on a case-by-case basis

# Proposed Transit Zone

- Includes only **districts that allow multifamily housing**
- Denser neighborhoods with a variety of public transportation options, generally within a half-mile of a subway station
- Reflects existing low car ownership rates within Transit Zone



# Quality

- Encourage **better ground-floor retail and residential spaces** and apartments with adequate ceiling heights
- Change rules that lead to flat, dull apartment buildings to encourage **visual variety and features common in traditional apartment buildings**
- **Maintain rules that work well today**, including the essential rules of “contextual” zoning districts and lower-density zoning districts

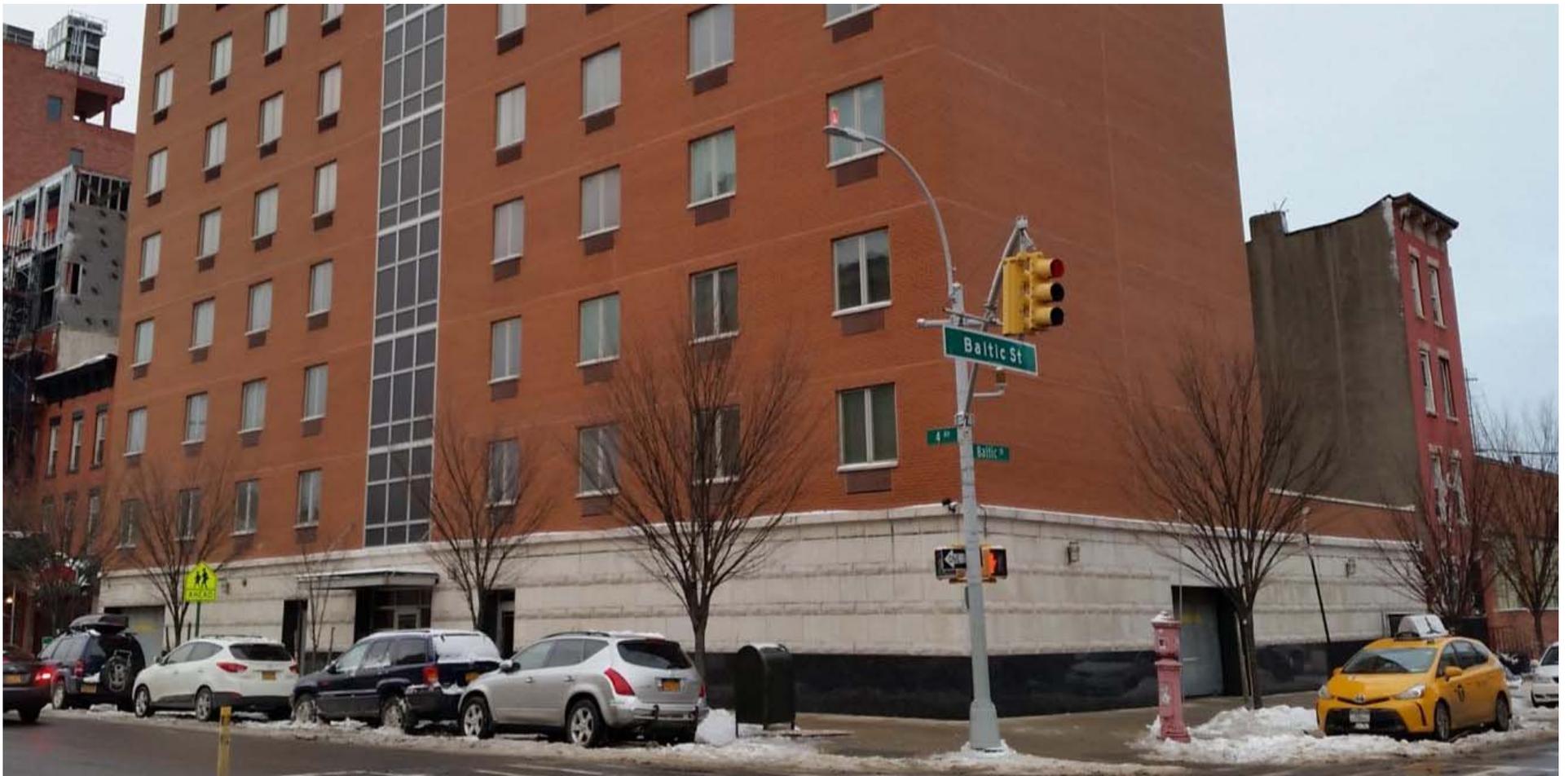
# Why Does Zoning Need to Change?

Bad ground floors in medium- and high-density contextual districts



# Why Does Zoning Need to Change?

Flat, dull buildings in medium- and high-density contextual districts



# Key Elements of the Proposal

Goal: Encourage better ground-floor retail and residential spaces and apartments with adequate ceiling heights

## In medium- and high-density contextual districts:

- Allow limited additional height if buildings provide taller ground floors
  - No more than **five feet**, in over 95% of affected areas
- Introduce a cap on the number of stories

# Key Elements of the Proposal

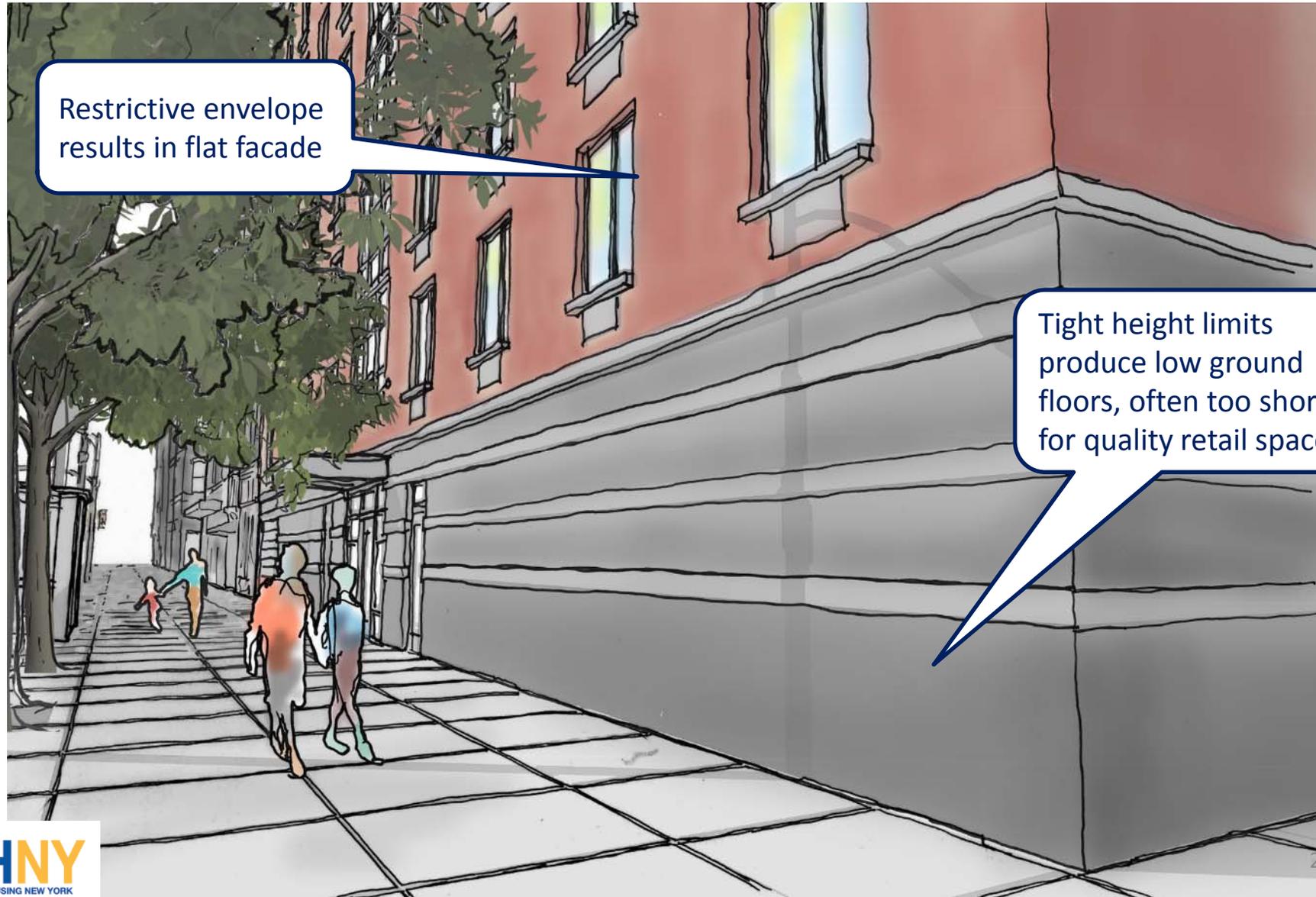
**Goal:** Change rules that lead to flat, dull apartment buildings to encourage visual variety and features common in traditional apartment buildings

## **In medium- and high-density contextual districts:**

- Allow buildings to set back a few feet from the sidewalk and provide garden areas in front of the building
- Allow more flexibility for courtyards, bay windows, and other features typical of the city's older buildings
- With targeted changes to setback and coverage requirements, allow better interior layouts and reduce blank walls

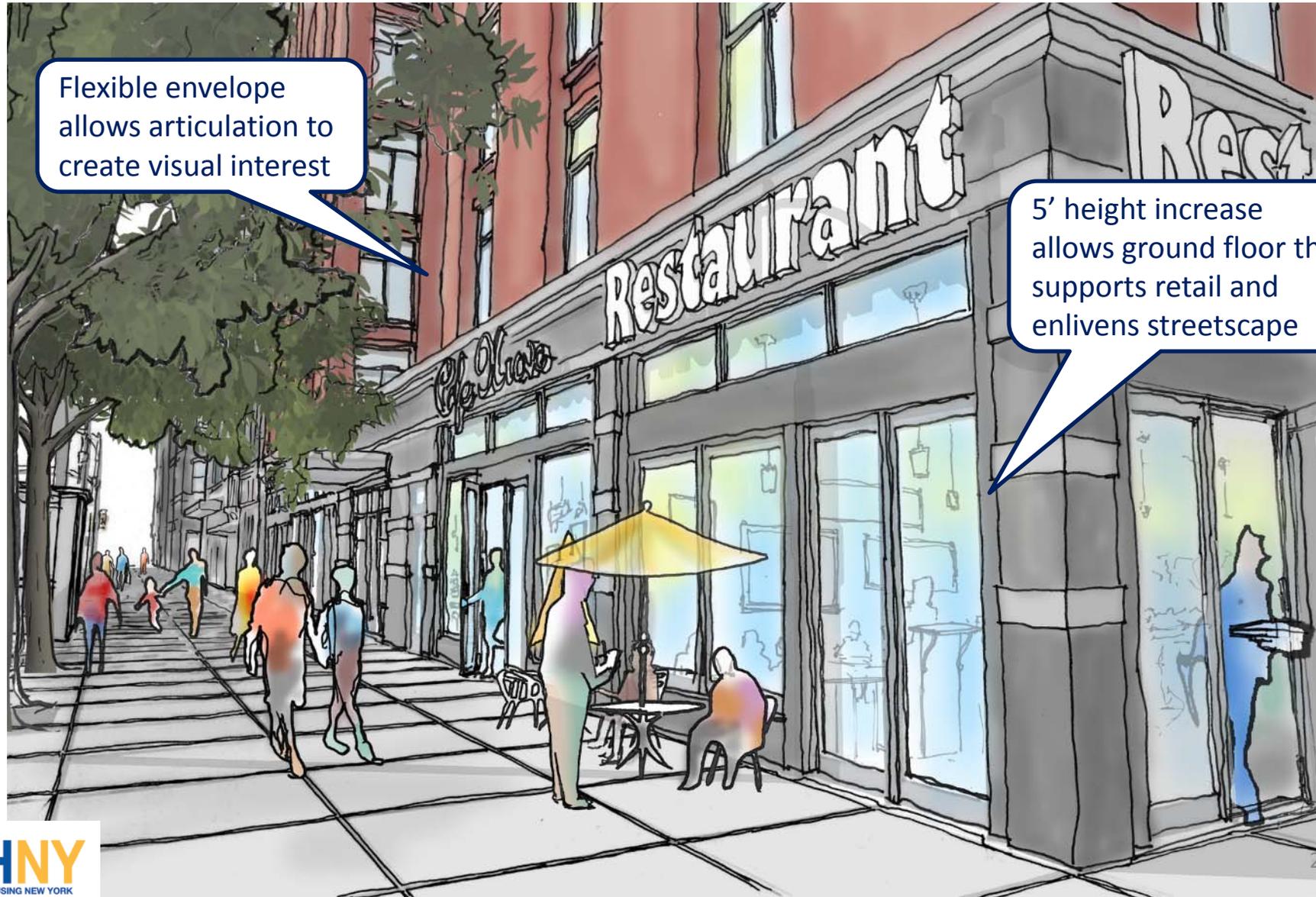
## PROPOSAL

# Current Rules – Commercial street



## PROPOSAL

# With Proposal – Commercial street



## PROPOSAL

# Current Rules – R7A district

Restrictive envelope encourages flat facade

Street wall breaks the line up of adjoining buildings



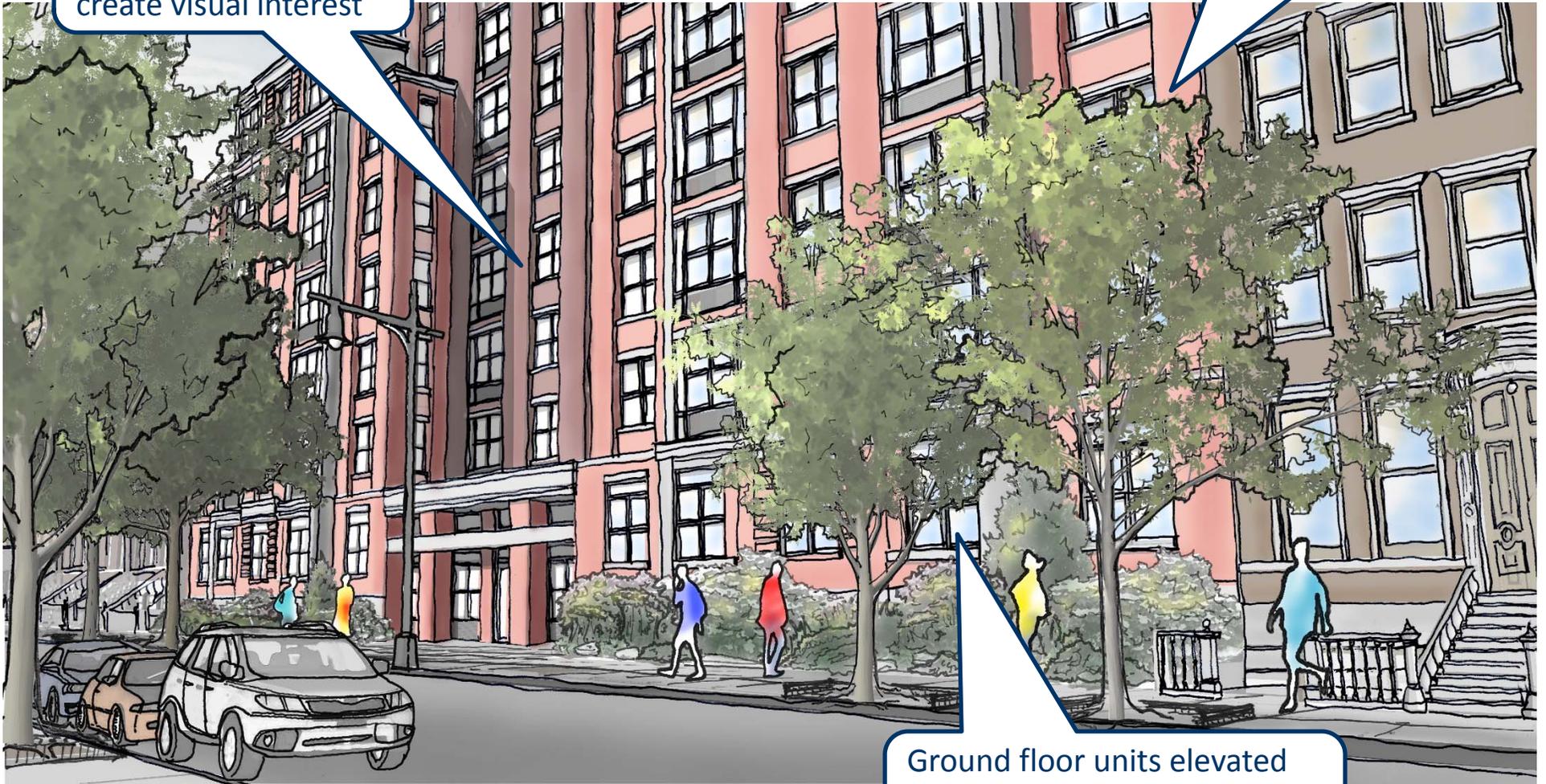
Ground floor units front directly on sidewalk at eye level

## PROPOSAL

# With Proposal – R7A district

Flexible envelope allows articulation to create visual interest

Street wall aligned with adjoining buildings



Ground floor units elevated above sidewalk and set back so planting can be provided.

# What Wouldn't the Proposal Do?

**Goal: Maintain rules that work well today, including the essential rules of “contextual” zoning districts and lower-density zoning districts**

- No additional market-rate floor area
- No provisions that encourage tear-downs
- No elimination of any contextual zoning district, or re-mapping of any zoning district
- All projects in historic districts or landmarked buildings remain subject to review by the Landmarks Preservation Commission
- No change to as-of-right residential rules in 1- and 2-family districts
- No reduction in the amount of green or open spaces required for buildings
- Proposal would not produce dramatic changes in development in any neighborhood

## **What Changes Have Been Made Since the Proposal was First Announced?**

To focus more squarely on the core goals of quality and affordability:

- Reduction in the additional height initially proposed for buildings in R8B, R7A, and R6B districts
- Making the additional extra 5 feet of height available only to buildings providing taller ground floors

To ensure a transparent public process:

- Extended comment period on environmental scope
- Draft zoning text and “Community Profiles” on DCP website
- CB info sessions conducted before public review, with CB review period occurring after the summer recess

# Public Review Process



The proposed changes will go through the City’s public land use review process

- Concurrent with review for Mandatory Inclusionary Housing proposal

For complete information, including Community District profiles showing which parts of the proposal would apply in individual areas,  
**visit DCP's website:**

**[nyc.gov/planning](https://nyc.gov/planning)**