



Testimony for the 2026 New York City Charter Revision Commission on Government Efficiency from the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD)

Thank you Chair and Commissioners for the opportunity to submit testimony before this Charter Revision Commission. We are submitting this testimony on behalf of The Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development (ANHD). ANHD is a membership organization of NYC neighborhood-based housing and economic development groups, including CDCs, affordable housing developers, supportive housing providers, community organizers, and economic development advocates and service providers. Our mission is to build community power to win affordable housing and thriving, equitable neighborhoods for all New Yorkers. We believe housing justice is economic justice is racial justice.

Proposal 1: Comprehensive Planning

ANHD convenes the Thriving Communities Coalition (TCC) - a citywide movement of grassroots organizing, advocacy, policy, and technical assistance groups working across issue areas and neighborhoods. ANHD and TCC are united in the belief that our current ad-hoc approach to planning and land use in New York City does not effectively deliver for most New Yorkers, and that we need meaningful reform to ensure a more equitable distribution of development and investment to truly overcome inequality, exclusion, and displacement.

ANHD and TCC have long called for a comprehensive planning approach for NYC. We believe such an approach can better align and coordinate existing plans, while centering racial, economic, health, and climate equity alongside intentional and representative community engagement, to help build trust and achieve fairer, more informed, and more democratic decisions and outcomes citywide and in our neighborhoods.

To help advance a more equitable and comprehensive approach to planning, ANHD calls on this commission to:

- **Amend the charter to mandate that NYC create a comprehensive plan on a recurring timeline, with the following essential components:**
 - Establishment of *equity goals*, including
 - Ensuring an equitable distribution of development and investment
 - Increasing access to affordable housing

- Promoting social, economic & racial integration
- Advancing environmental justice, open and green space
- Through the coordination of existing plans' goals and mandates (such as the Fair Housing Plan, Long-term sustainability plan)
- Establishment of **citywide and Community District level targets** across a host of issues, including for
 - Housing
 - School seats & community facilities
 - Open space
 - Infrastructure & Resiliency
 - Through the coordination of existing plans' quantifiable targets (such as the Fair Housing Plan)
- Committing all 59 Community Districts to create **Community District level plans** to achieve these targets, with the necessary resources to conduct this process with robust, deliberative and inclusive community engagement, including budgetary and technical assistance needs to achieve this
- Requiring land use, annual expense budget, capital budget and policy decisions to detail how they **are in accordance with the comprehensive plan** so as to achieve its goals and targets

Proposal 2: Reform nonprofit contracting and payment processes

Nonprofit organizations are the lifeblood of New York City's communities. ANHD's members, along with numerous other organizations, provide critical services ranging from meal delivery for seniors, to afterschool programs, to affordable housing development, to know your rights trainings, and much much more. The City relies on non-profit organizations to fulfill both its legal and moral obligations to provide safety, care, and essential services for New Yorkers every single day.

Unfortunately, rather than treating non-profit organizations as valued and respected partners, the City has, for many years now, treated them like an afterthought or even a piggy bank, delaying payments and shifting the City's budget challenges onto the backs of non-profit organizations.

Widespread and persistent delayed payments have had significant and detrimental impacts on the City's nonprofit sector, and on the New Yorkers it serves. A 2025 report from the City Comptroller notes that, as of April 2025, 2,508 contracts valued at \$4.6 billion awaited

registration even though their start dates had already passed. While problems are widespread across many agencies, the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) was found to exhibit the “worst overall delays,” with contractors waiting an average of over 2 years after the start of a contract for their first payment¹.

These delays have real impacts. Some organizations have been forced to lay off staff due to payment delays. Others take on significant debt to fill gaps while they wait for city payments, spending money that could otherwise go directly to services paying interest on private loans. This is an existential crisis for the nonprofit sector, with close to 100% of ANHD’s members experiencing registration delay. ANHD has heard from members who are beginning to actively limit their city funding, declining to apply for new contracts because they simply can’t afford it - despite the clear and urgent need for ongoing and increased services in their communities.

To address this issue we ask this commission to amend the City charter as recommended by the Human Services Council in their July 13, 2026 testimony before this commission, and applicable to **all** of the City’s contracts with nonprofit organizations²:

- **Require prompt contracting timelines** to address the extreme delays and hurdles nonprofits experience in getting their contracts registered.
- **Require interest on late payments** to both provide a financial incentive to the city to make timely payments, and ensure that nonprofits are able to cover their losses in the event of payment delays.
- **Improve transparency** to ensure accountability.
- **Reform guidelines for the Procurement Policy Board** to require regular meetings and facilitate public engagement.
- **Provide sample budgets in procurement RFPs** and **survey current nonprofit contractors** to support realistic work scopes and budgets in bids and contracts.

¹ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/nonprofit-nonpayment/>

² The line between human services contracts and other nonprofit contracts is not always intuitive. Services performed by non-profits such as eviction prevention counseling, assisting people with access to benefits, etc are performed under a range of contracts through various agencies. The changes recommended by the Human Services Council, and the rationale behind these changes, should be broadly applied.

In addition to our above proposals we are commenting on two specific sections of the Commission's Preliminary Report.

1. Streamline outdated requirements that impede the City's ability to activate city property

a. ANHD would urge this Commission to *not* consider substantive changes to how the City disposes of public land - other than for smaller, undevelopable parcels like those included in the SAIL Away program.

- i. Publicly owned land is an invaluable and increasingly scarce resource in New York City. ANHD and our member organizations have been working to ensure the City designates public land to be used in the public's interest, in perpetuity, and with both local and citywide needs in mind, especially for the development of deeply affordable housing. It is imperative that communities, advocates, and their elected officials have the ability to engage through the ULURP process to help determine the best uses and most appropriate, equity-focused projects that serve the most pressing needs in our communities and citywide.
- ii. This is particularly true in light of recent charter changes in 2025 that allow for an expedited ULURP (ELURP) for certain affordable housing and resiliency project dispositions. ANHD supports those changes given their focus on 100% affordable housing. These are the types of projects that should be incentivized and prioritized in the disposition process. The Commission should not consider additional changes to the disposition process for developable public land at this time as we wait for the impacts of these recent changes to be felt.

2. Make better use of taxpayer dollars by eliminating outdated reporting requirements

- a. ANHD supports the idea of consolidating and streamlining reporting requirements, particularly to advance comprehensive planning. **We support A Stronger RABRC that includes a mandate to consider how existing reporting requirements can be consolidated and/or synchronized to advance comprehensive planning.** RABRC's consideration of specified factors should include whether and how a report is used for planning purposes, where it might be duplicative of other reports used for planning purposes, and how differing timelines across reports can be aligned to better advance their shared planning goals.

Finally, ANHD wishes to note that the timeline and public engagement process for this commission has been deeply flawed. There were less than 2 weeks between the announcement of the commission on May 28th and the first public hearing on June 9th. The commission's preliminary report was released on July 2nd, and the first of the next round of hearings was scheduled for July 6th, leaving only a holiday weekend for the public to actually read the report before being asked to respond. All told, this commission has allowed less than 2 months for the public to testify or otherwise engage. Realistically, most New Yorkers will not have been aware of its existence. The community organizations and advocates who often do the work of public engagement and civic education did not have time to inform, activate, and support folks to testify at the commission's hearings. And more marginalized communities were undoubtedly disproportionately adversely affected and disempowered by the commission's extraordinarily short timeline. Poor public engagement processes undermine our democracy and reinforce a system in which the most powerful, wealthy, and connected voices are disproportionately loud, while those with less access to institutional power are locked out. It is disappointing to see from a Mayoral Administration that has been broadly focused on addressing inequities and encouraging civic participation among historically marginalized communities. We encourage the commission to consider recommendations for improvements to commission processes in the future, and encourage the Mayor and others who may consider appointing future commissions to do so in ways that actually empower New Yorkers to participate in the process and support marginalized communities' meaningful engagement.

We welcome the chance to work with this commission and its staff to realize these recommendations. Please contact Chris Walters, Associate Director for Policy and Research at ANHD at christopher.w@anhd.org for any questions or follow-up.