

Media Contact:

Shannon Moriarty
sm4901@nyu.edu
w 212-998-6492
c 617-824-0069

Report: Despite NYC's All-Time Population High, Typical New Yorker Lived in Less Dense Neighborhood in 2010 than in 1970

NYU Furman Center also finds that new housing units and fewer people-per-unit have contributed to changes in New Yorkers' experienced density

New York, NY: In 2010, New York City reached an all-time population high. Yet, the average New Yorker in 2010 lived in a lower-density neighborhood than in 1970, according to a report released today by the NYU Furman Center. The report also finds that, despite common fears, density is related to certain positive neighborhood amenities and unrelated to many negative attributes, such as higher crime rates, crowded classrooms, and lower-performing schools.

The [*State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods in 2014*](#) report, which was released today by the NYU Furman Center, includes a special feature: Focus on Density in New York City, which examines the evolution of the city's density over the past 40 years and the variation across neighborhoods.

"Despite our notorious housing costs, New York City remains a highly desirable place to live, so people continue to move here. To accommodate this growth and alleviate rent pressures, the city is planning a number of rezonings to add density," said Ingrid Gould Ellen, faculty director at the NYU Furman Center. "Given the concerns some have expressed about the effect that higher density might have on residents' quality of life, we decided to examine how New Yorkers today are experiencing residential density."

Between 1970 and 2010, the distribution of the city's population shifted from high-density to moderate-density neighborhoods. Nearly one million people moved out of the city between 1970 and 1980, and some of the neighborhoods that had the highest density levels in 1970—such as the South Bronx, Lower East Side, and Harlem—did not recover this loss in population. Meanwhile, several less-dense neighborhoods, such as Elmhurst/Corona and Ozone Park in Queens saw significant population gains over the last four decades.

The addition of new housing units contributed to changes in the city's population density. Between 1970 and 2010, the city's housing stock rose 15%. Meanwhile, parts of the city that lost housing stock in the 1970s—such as the South Bronx and Central Harlem—have not rebounded; their housing units remain below 1970 levels.

The [report](#) also finds that the average number of people-per-unit decreased between 1970 and 2010. In 1970, an average of 2.7 people lived in each housing unit. By 2010, this had fallen to 2.4 people per unit.



The report also finds that density is related to certain positive neighborhood amenities and unrelated to many negative attributes. Schools in the highest density neighborhoods, for example, had the fewest pupils-per-teacher in 2013. And neither educational proficiency nor crime rates appear to be correlated to neighborhood density levels. Yet residents of the city's higher-density neighborhoods enjoy slightly more retail options and shorter average commute times.

“Community residents often resist higher levels of density, voicing concerns about congestion and livability,” said Ellen. “Yet, at least in 2014, greater density does not seem to negatively correlate with these indicators of New Yorkers’ quality of life.”

The report also finds that density is not associated with overcrowded apartments. New Yorkers living in the densest neighborhoods live in the largest apartments. Residents in the Upper East Side have the most square footage per person, with 750 square feet per person, while residents of Elmhurst/Corona in Queens claim just 287 square feet on average.

#

The State of New York City’s Housing and Neighborhoods in 2014 is now available at:
<http://furmancenter.org/research/sonychan>

For more information, contact: Shannon Moriarty, sm4901@nyu.edu, 212-998-6492

#

About the NYU Furman Center

The NYU Furman Center advances research and debate on housing, neighborhoods, and urban policy. Established in 1995, it is a joint center of the New York University School of Law and the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. More information can be found at furmancenter.org and [@FurmanCenterNYU](https://twitter.com/FurmanCenterNYU).

#

KEY FINDINGS

[State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods in 2014](#) (See Part II: City-Wide Overview)

LAND USE & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- City approved more units for construction in 2014 than 2013, which were primarily in large projects with 50 units or more. However, the number of approved units remained below that of the mid-2000s. Permitting activity was concentrated in Manhattan, parts of Brooklyn, and Long Island City.

HOMEOWNERS & THEIR HOMES

- Home prices for all property types in each borough rose in 2014 over 2013 levels, marking the third consecutive year that prices have increased. Housing prices have surpassed pre-recession peaks in both Manhattan and Brooklyn.
- Foreclosure filings fell 18% from 2013 to 2014. However, the total number of properties receiving foreclosure filings was still significantly elevated compared to early 2000s levels. The number of total filings in 2014 was close to double the number of filings in 2000.

RENTERS & THEIR HOMES

- In the past eight years, rent increases have far surpassed income growth. Between 2005 and 2013, median rent increased by nearly 12%, while median income of renter households increased by only 2.3% as measured in real terms.
- In 2013, median asking rent for an NYC apartment was \$2,900 — more than double the median rent paid by all renters in the city. The highest median asking rents for apartments on StreetEasy were in Manhattan and neighborhoods close to Manhattan. Eight neighborhoods had median asking rents above \$3,000.

RESIDENTS

- Between 2000 and 2013, the share of the working age population over 18 grew, while the population below 18 declined. The share of working age population grew the most—nearly two percentage points—reaching 66% of the city's population in 2013. Meanwhile, the share of children under 18 in the city declined from 24.2% of the city's population in 2000 to 21.2% in 2013.
- New York City grew more diverse. Between 2000 and 2013, the city's Asian and Hispanic population shares increased, while the city's white and black population shares decreased. The share of Asian residents grew the most, from 9.7% in 2000 to 13.4% in 2013. There was also a slight increase in the share of the city's foreign-born residents, which grew from 35.9% of the city's population in 2000 to 37% in 2013.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & CONDITIONS

- Indicators of school performance and public safety continue to improve citywide, though wide disparities persist across neighborhoods. The share of high school students who graduate on time increased by 10 percentage points between 2005 and 2014. However, significant disparities remain between boroughs. In Staten Island, more than three-quarters of the Class of 2014 graduated on time, while less than 55% in the Bronx received a diploma on time.
- The city's serious crime rate remained relatively unchanged between 2013 and 2014. Serious crime rates have remained steady in recent years following a dramatic decline over the past two decades.
- More New Yorkers are commuting without a car. Between 2000 and 2013, the share of New Yorkers commuting without a car decreased six percentage points. The share of bicycle commuters increased slightly (0.8%); however, the bulk of this increase in car-free commuters came from the growth in the share of commuters using public transit.