

The State of Land Use and the Built Environment

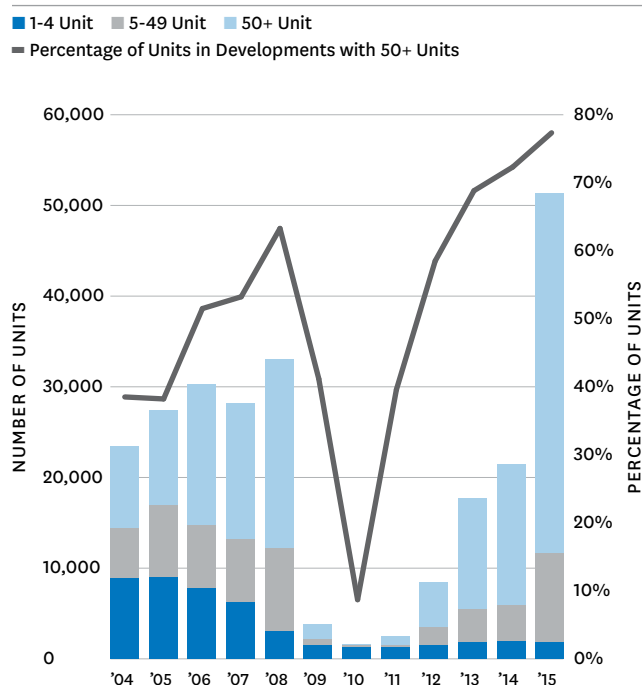
In 2015, New York City saw a large spike in the number of residential units authorized for construction, due in part to the uncertainty surrounding the 421-a property tax exemption program. Between 2014 and 2015, the number of completed residential units increased by 6.8 percent. There were few zoning changes in 2015, and only two dozen special permits approved, concentrated in Manhattan. The Landmarks Preservation Commission designated significantly more lots as part of historic districts in 2015 than in prior years, but it only designated six individual landmarks.

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY FINDING #1

In 2015, New York City saw a spike in the number of permits issued for new housing units, including a large jump in the number of permitted units in large buildings with at least 50 units.

New York City experienced a spike in the number of new residential units authorized for construction in 2015. Over 39,000 of more than 51,000 newly permitted housing units were slated to be in buildings with 50 or more units, more than in any year since at least 2004. The 421-a property tax exemption program was slated to expire on June 15, 2015, and uncertainty surrounding the fate of that tax exemption (which was extended to construction commenced through December 31, 2016) likely pushed developers to rush to apply for permits under the old regime.

Figure 1: Residential Units Authorized by New Building Permits by Property Size, New York City



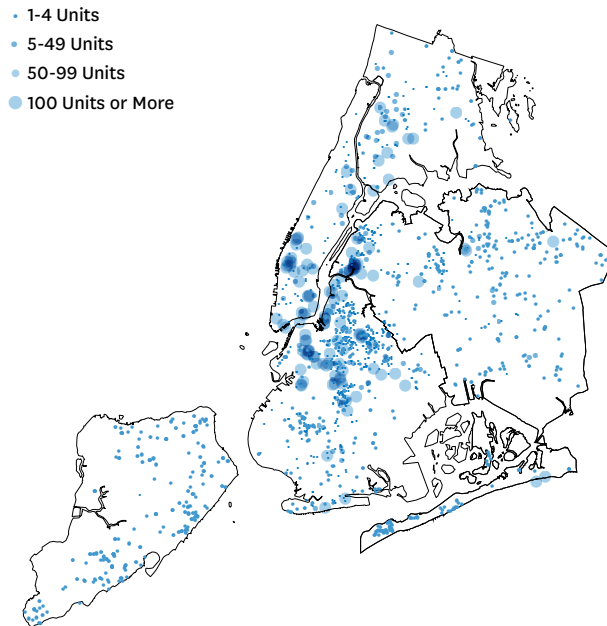
Sources: New York City Department of Buildings, NYU Furman Center

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY
FINDING #2

New construction permits in 2015 were concentrated in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

New buildings authorized in 2015 were largely concentrated in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. The size of buildings authorized by new permits varied across the city's boroughs. One-to-four-unit buildings were concentrated in Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens. Permits for buildings with 100 or more units were granted in all boroughs except for Staten Island.

Figure 2: Housing Units Authorized by New Building Permits by Project, 2015



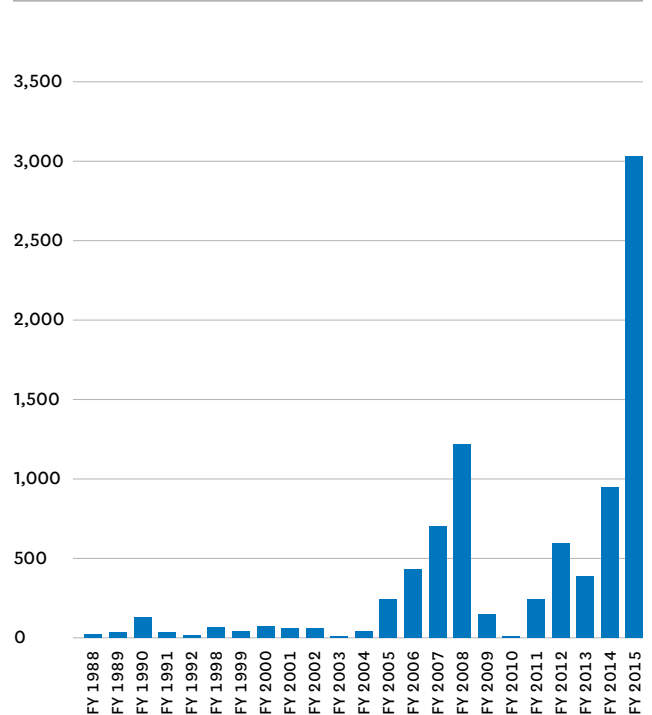
Sources: New York City Department of Buildings, NYU Furman Center

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY
FINDING #3

New York City saw a record number of commitments for new affordable units under the Inclusionary Housing Program.

New York City's Inclusionary Housing Program allows housing development in certain areas of the city to build more floor area in exchange for the provision of affordable housing. In fiscal year 2015, developers signed regulatory agreements committing to build, preserve, or rehabilitate more than 3,000 new affordable units through the program, more than three times the number of units committed in the previous fiscal year and more than twice as many units as were committed in any year since the program's inception in 1987.

Figure 3: Number of Affordable-Unit Commitments through the Inclusionary Housing Program, New York City



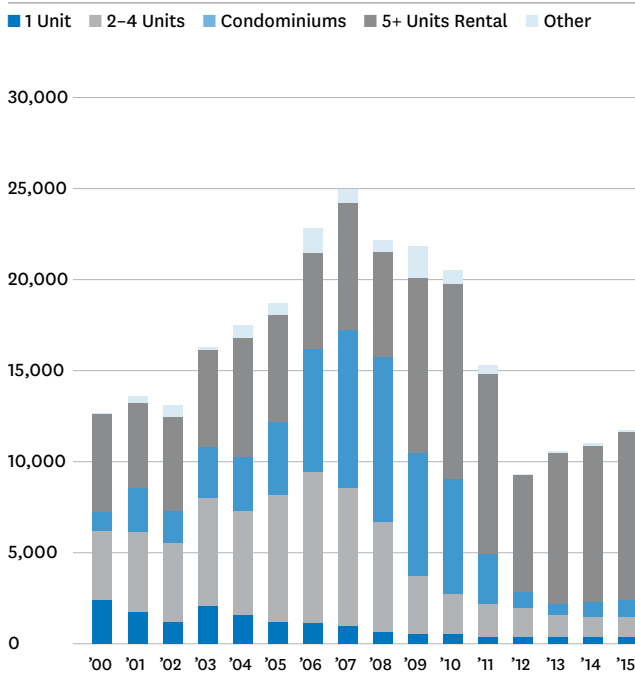
Sources: New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, NYU Furman Center

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY
FINDING #4

The number of completed residential units authorized for occupancy rose between 2014 and 2015 by seven percent, but remains below pre-2012 levels.

The number of new residential units authorized for occupancy rose in 2015 for the third straight year, but remains below pre-2012 levels. Seventy-nine percent of the new units receiving a certificate of occupancy were in rental buildings with 5 or more units. Just eight percent were condominiums, down from the height of 41 percent in 2008. Ten percent of new units were in buildings with 2-4 units and only three percent of them were single-family homes.

Figure 4: Types of Completed Residential Units Issued Certificates of Occupancy, New York City



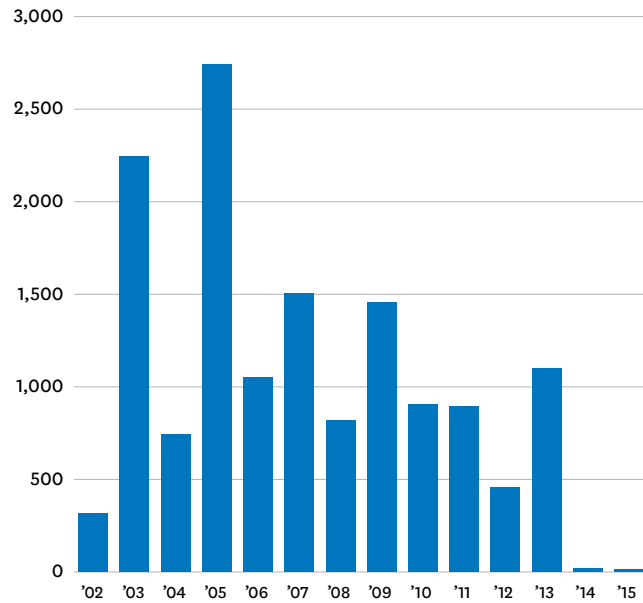
Sources: New York City Department of Buildings, NYU Furman Center

LAND USE REGULATION
FINDING #5

In 2015, New York City made zoning map amendments to only 16 blocks.

In 2015, New York City adopted eight rezonings (defined here as a zoning map amendment or a special-district boundary change) covering only 16 tax blocks, about the same as in 2014 (20 tax blocks). By comparison, the fewest number of blocks affected by rezonings during a single year during the Bloomberg administration was 317 in 2002.

Figure 5: Number of Blocks Affected by Rezonings, New York City



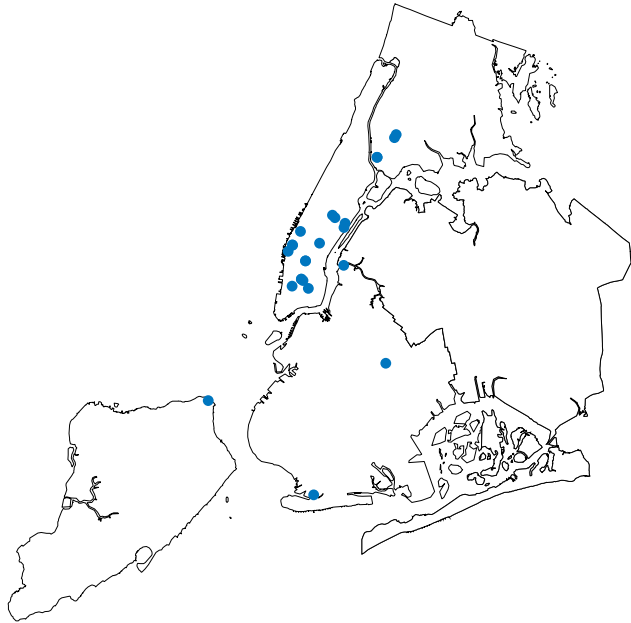
Sources: New York City Department of City Planning, NYU Furman Center

The New York City Department of City Planning approved 24 site-specific special permits in 2015, most of which were located in Manhattan.

Site-specific special permits enable development or use of an existing structure that does not strictly conform with bulk, use, or other regulations in the Zoning Resolution. Special permits allow modifications for a specific proposal and do not change the underlying zoning for a lot. In 2015, the New York City Department of City Planning approved 24 such permits. As shown in Figure 6, most special permits were in Manhattan.

Figure 6: Location of Special Permits Approved in 2015, New York City

● Sites of Approved Special Permits



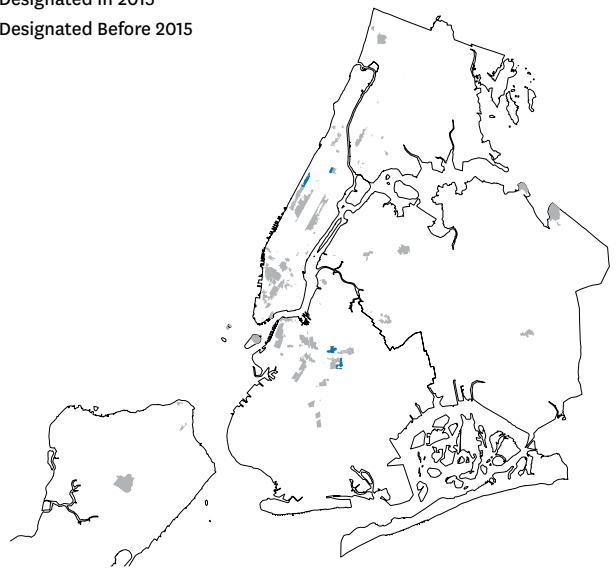
Sources: New York City Department of City Planning, NYU Furman Center

In 2015, the city approved four new historic districts.

In 2015, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated four new historic districts in Brooklyn and Manhattan, the two boroughs with the greatest concentration of historic districts. The LPC designated the Riverside-West End Historic District II on Manhattan's Upper West Side and the Mount Morris Historic District Extension in Harlem. In central Brooklyn, the LPC designated the Bedford Historic District and the Crown Heights North III Historic District.

Figure 7: Historic Districts, New York City

■ Designated In 2015
■ Designated Before 2015

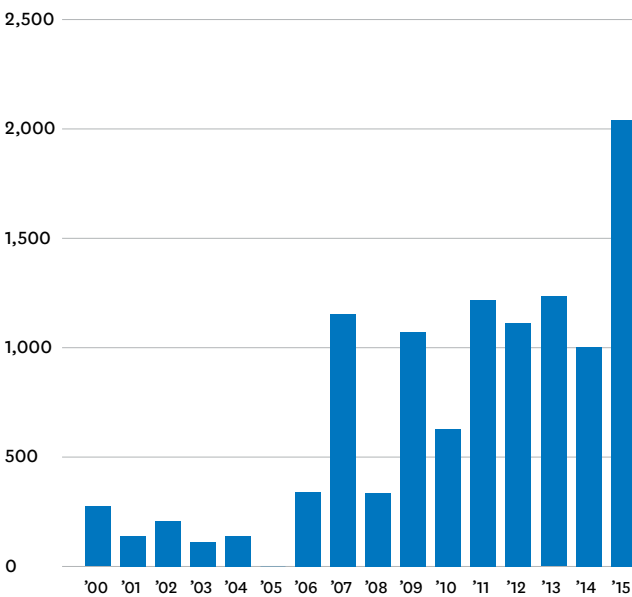


Sources: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, NYU Furman Center

Over 2,000 lots were located in the four new historic districts designated in 2015—the largest number of lots in newly designated districts in a given year since 1981.

In 2015, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission designated four historic districts that comprised over 2,000 individual tax lots, over 800 more lots than were included in newly designated districts in the peak year during the Bloomberg administration (2013).

Figure 8: Number of Lots Added to Historic Districts, New York City

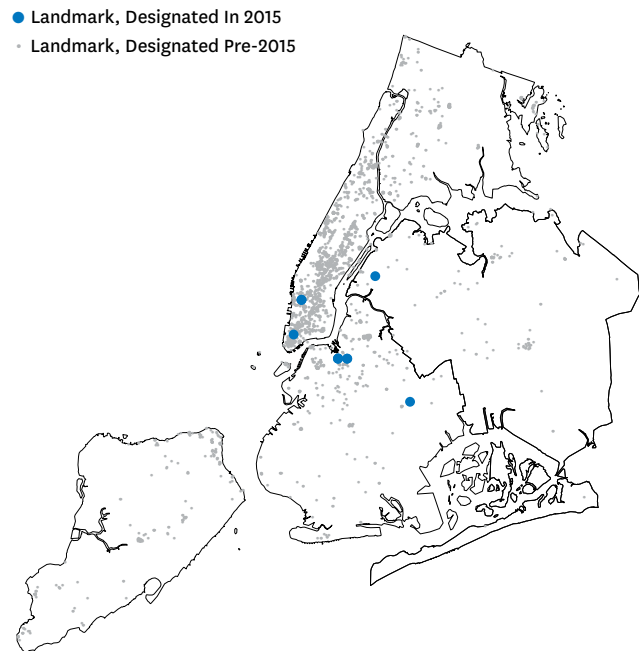


Sources: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, NYU Furman Center

The city designated six individual landmarks in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens in 2015.

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated six individual landmarks in 2015. In Manhattan, the LPC designated the Stonewall Inn and the Corbin Building. In Brooklyn, it designated the M. H. Renken Dairy Company Office Building and Engine Room Building, the Henry and Susan McDonald House, and the Brooklyn Public Library Stone Avenue Branch. In Queens, the LPC designated the Bank of the Manhattan Company Building in Long Island City.

Figure 9: Individual and Interior Landmark Designations, New York City



Sources: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, NYU Furman Center