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## Landlords Court De Blasio in Fight to Limit Landmarking

By Hiten Samtani

Landlords are hoping that Mayor Bill de Blasio will be a strong ally in their quest to reduce large-scale landmarking in the city, a phenomenon that they argue hurts development and reduces the city's affordable housing stock.

Developers and lobbyists are betting that they can win de Blasio's support by tying landmarking to de Blasio's core campaign issues – namely the creation or preservation of at least 200,000 affordable units over the next decade.

“What I am concerned about is that we're taking out of development and redevelopment a very large portion of the city,” Richard Anderson, president of the New York Building Congress, told the Wall Street Journal. “You've got a big chunk of the city that's just off limits.” Anderson is asking the city for a freeze on the creation of new historic districts while the landmarking process is scrutinized, according to the newspaper.

Under Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the number of historic districts rose 50 percent, from 86 to 129, according to the Journal.

Steven Spinola, president of the Real Estate Board of New York, told the Journal that during the Bloomberg era his organization was “watching silently as we see opportunities for the creation of new jobs, new housing, new affordable housing and new tax revenues” lost.

For their part, preservationists are ready for battle, saying that they would push for the landmarks process to remain unchanged.

“We're counting on the new mayor and the new commission to hold the line,” Peg Breen, president of the New York Landmarks Conservancy, told the newspaper.

A spokesperson for de Blasio told the Journal that the mayor was “committed to not only protecting the character of our neighborhoods, but also securing the ability of New Yorkers who built those neighborhoods to remain in them.” [WSJ] – Hiten Samtani