



DEMOCRAT FOR MAYOR

SHIELD

Safeguarding **H**istoric
Infrastructure through
Effective **L**and-use **D**efenses

**A New Zoning Measure to
Preserve Public Use of
NYC's Federal Properties**

“New Yorkers fought to build these institutions, and we depend on them every day—from veterans’ health care to Social Security. If Donald Trump thinks he can auction off our civic infrastructure to the highest bidder, he’s got another thing coming. We’re not just zoning for the future—we’re drawing a line in the sand. These buildings belong to the people, and we’re going to protect them.”

OVERVIEW

As part of a sweeping push to privatize government assets, the Trump administration has proposed offloading hundreds of federal buildings—some of them historic, many of them located in New York City. These buildings often house essential federal services that millions of New Yorkers rely on: veterans’ healthcare centers, Social Security offices, IRS branches, immigration services, and more.

Selling these properties for private development would not only strip communities of critical public services, but also undermine local control of buildings in New York. To stop Trump from upending New York’s public infrastructure, we must act now.

This policy ensures that these sites that provide valuable services that New Yorkers depends on can’t be sold without public oversight, local accountability, and a meaningful role for communities in deciding what happens on their blocks. It also signals to would-be buyers that these sites are not blank slates for profit. New Yorkers have a say—and we should have the tools to protect our civic infrastructure. If Trump wants to gut our federal presence in New York, he’ll have to go through us first.

SOLUTION:

A Zoning Text Amendment to Protect “Federal Use” Sites

Scott Stringer is calling on the City of New York to adopt a zoning text amendment that creates a new land use classification—“Federal Use”—for federally owned buildings that currently house public services.

Dubbed SHIELD, this text amendment to the city’s zoning code would ensure that if the federal government seeks to convert or sell these buildings for any private use, the new owner must undergo a full public land-use review. This gives communities a voice, preserves public oversight, and ensures essential services are not lost without due process.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

As mayor, Scott Stringer will propose that the City Planning Commission and City Council immediately initiate this zoning text amendment and create a legal firewall around our federal buildings.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE PROPOSAL

1. New Zoning Classification: “Federal Use”

The amendment would add a new designation within the City’s Zoning Resolution that applies to any building currently owned by the federal government and used for public services as of the date of adoption. These properties would retain their existing zoning designation, but would gain an added “special use” condition—similar to how new hotels, ministorage, or parkland are treated under specific land-use rules.

City can restrict / change uses when it wants if it connects to a public purpose like in parks where we do not allow any non-public use.

2. Required Public Review for Redevelopment

If the federal government sells one of these properties, or a new private owner seeks to convert the site for any non-federal use, the developer must obtain a special permit from the City Planning Commission. That process triggers **the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)**—a robust, public-facing review that includes the relevant local Community Board and Borough President, as well as the City Planning Commission, and New York City Council.

3. Clear Public Standards for Approval

Under the new policy, any proposed redevelopment must show:

- That public services are not being displaced without replacement;
- That the new use fits the character of the surrounding neighborhood;
- That the proposal conforms with environmental and planning standards.



STRINGER

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