



The 2026 Trailblazers in Real Estate

Staff, 8.17.26



City & State presents the 2026 Trailblazers in Real Estate. KESTON DUKE; GOTHAM ORGANIZATION; ANDREW MATUSIK

In late June, the New York City Rent Guidelines Board approved a controversial rent freeze on rent-stabilized apartments. In early July, the conversion of the former Pfizer headquarters into residential apartments was halted due to buckling support columns and concerns about the midtown Manhattan building's structural integrity. In late July, the Mamdani administration published a list of properties potentially subject to new pied-à-terre tax, prompting an outcry and a legal challenge.

Amid these headline-grabbing developments, significant policy changes aimed at spurring more housing production are advancing with widespread support. As part of her Let Them Build agenda, Gov. Kathy Hochul passed legislation this year streamlining the State Environmental Quality Review Act. New York City's Expedited Land Use Review Procedure is being implemented, and the Mamdani administration has launched its Block by Block housing plan that aims to create or preserve hundreds of thousands of affordable, rent-stabilized homes.

City & State's Trailblazers in Real Estate puts a spotlight on the key players who will determine how successful New York will be in combating the housing crisis. This list, researched and

written in partnership with journalist Lon Cohen, features developers, policymakers, nonprofit leaders, attorneys and other top figures who are rebuilding New York.

{...}

David L. Pickett
Principal and CEO, Gotham Organization



David L. Pickett / Gotham Organization

David L. Pickett has built his career taking the long view, noting that “development does not afford immediate gratification.” Since joining his family’s business in 1991, the fourth-generation real estate executive has been an early mover in New York City’s multifamily housing revival. Recognizing the potential in Manhattan’s Midtown West, Pickett has reshaped an entire Hell’s Kitchen block with the mixed-use Gotham West development. His public-private partnerships

pair incentives with affordable housing and public benefits. Picket also co-founded Project Parachute to help keep vulnerable New Yorkers housed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

{...}