

Living and Working in One New York Neighborhood

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One reason that New Yorkers use **so much less energy** than other people? A lot of us don't go very far to get to work.

In its **annual study** of New York City housing and neighborhood, New York University's Furman Center looked for the first time at commuting patterns and found that "11.5% of employed New Yorkers work in the same neighborhood in which they live." They also found that in neighborhoods that provided a lot of jobs -- neighborhoods that many people from other neighborhoods travel to in the morning and leave at night -- an even higher proportion of residents stay put for work. In Greenwich Village and the Financial District, for instance, the Furman Center found that 30.2% of the workers who live in the neighborhood also work there.

Most of these neighborhoods, however, are really expensive to live in: Chelsea, Midtown, Stuy Town, Williamsburg, and the Upper East Side are all on the list. And people living in the more affordable boroughs, Queens and Staten Island, aren't strolling to work on bustling sidewalks: They have **some of the longest commutes** in the entire country.

One of the criticisms leveled at Mayor Michael Bloomberg is that he's trying to make Manhattan nice only for rich people. Walkable cities are great, but if it's only lawyers and bankers who have the luxury of walking to work, you end up with a different sort of social problem. To a certain extent, the city is dealing with this by encouraging the construction of mixed-income housing.

It could also help encourage the development of more neighborhoods outside of Manhattan where people both want to live and work. One way to do this is by making it easier for companies to operate in more far-flung neighborhoods. In the Furman Center study, only two neighborhoods outside of Manhattan, Sunset Park and Brooklyn Heights, had a net inflow of workers, and both are borough-central business districts, which make room for more commercial uses and greater density. They're designed to be that way, and more of the city could be too.