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No exodus after all? Manhattan luxury market sales accelerate under Mamdani

Luxury brokers say that on-the-ground activity mirrors the numbers



Article Summary

Despite warnings of a luxury exodus after Zohran Mamdani took office, Manhattan's high-end market is accelerating. Inventory sits at 0.8 months, median prices exceed \$8 million and sales pace has doubled year-over-year. Brokers at Compass and Douglas Elliman report continued steady business. *AI Summary*

For months, some affluent New Yorkers warned they would leave if progressive policies took hold at City Hall.

With Zohran Mamdani now mayor and debate intensifying over a possible city wealth tax or [property tax](#) increase, early market data shows no sign of a luxury exodus.

Instead, [Manhattan's](#) top tier appears to be accelerating.

HousingWire Data through Feb. 13 shows just 54 single-family properties on the market boroughwide — a segment widely viewed as a proxy for concentrated wealth.

Median list price stands at \$8.25 million.

Inventory sits at 0.8 months — far below the four to six months typically considered balanced. Year-to-date, 53 properties have been absorbed in seven weeks — about 7.6 per week.

In 2025, 182 homes were absorbed over 52 weeks — roughly 3.5 per week. Median pricing has climbed 21% year-over-year to \$7,106,071.

Luxury brokers say that on-the-ground activity mirrors the numbers.

"I have not had a single person tell me that they're going to leave New York City, and I am transacting at a level that is significantly higher than before (Mamdani) was mayor, or before we knew he was going to become mayor," **Elevated Team at Compass** co-founder Zeve Salman told HousingWire. "I have not felt a quantitative slowdown on what's going on in the market. It's been quite the opposite."

Salman said no contracts have collapsed due to political concerns and no sellers have cited [Mamdani](#) as a reason for delisting.

"This is New York. We've been beat up before," he said. "We've had bad mayors. We've had good mayors. We've had significant events here, and the city just always pushes forward. Not a single person has told me they're leaving the city because of this, nor have I done a deal with somebody who's left the deal because of Mamdani. I haven't sold an apartment because the seller's leaving. It's just been business as usual across the board."

Frances Katzen, founder and leader of **Douglas Elliman**-affiliated **The Katzen Team**, described a brief pause around the mayoral election — followed by aggressive positioning by [affluent buyers](#).

"Whenever you have an election year, there's always this sort of cautious pause of, 'Do I do it or do I wait?'" she said. "What happens is people assess risk versus reward a lot, and New York is one of those capitalistic towns that tends to always surprise people."

"So, that luxury buyer is buying like a stock. They're all still trying to get in when there's a bit of the unknown."

History of post-election flight warnings

Warnings that wealthy residents would "flee" cities or states after election results are a recurring theme in U.S. political discourse.

After the 2018 passage of California's Proposition 13, critics warned of capital outflow.

However, an [analysis](#) from the **California Budget & Policy Center** found little evidence of mass migration tied to tax changes.

Similarly in 2021 and 2022, widespread commentary suggested tech executives were leaving cities like San Francisco due to progressive policies and high costs.

Reporting from [Reuters](#) and other outlets showed that corporate relocations had complex motives beyond political rhetoric.

Studies of state-to-state migration patterns by the **National Bureau of Economic Research** indicate that tax policy and election outcomes have only modest effects on wealthy migration decisions over time.

Katzen said that in one recent stretch, there were 22 condo deals, seven co-ops and 13 properties trading above \$10 million — including two of her own, one for \$17.5 million.

[Inventory](#) constraints are central to the dynamic and the scarcity is intensifying competition among cash-rich buyers.

Roughly two-thirds of Manhattan transactions are all-cash, but Katzen said cash dominance is less disruptive than in prior cycles.

"It used to be that cash was king, because nobody wanted to deal with the heartache of an appraisal or the time lag," she said. "But there's so much efficiency now. Most people are putting down a substantial amount, even if they're financing, and these guys are working so fast to lend. Banks don't make money without lending, so they're much more efficient."

Debate over taxes looms

The market's resilience comes as Mamdani pushes proposals that include a possible 2% city wealth tax — and discussion of a 9.5% property tax increase if state wealth tax approval doesn't materialize.

Katzen warned that either scenario carries risk.

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“(A wealth tax) is going to deter a lot of the ultra, ultra, ultra wealthy people,” she said. “Then, you’ve got that 9.5% (property) tax [and] that’s not cheap for families and growing businesses. It’s not great either way. Either way, someone’s hurting, and it’s going to cause impact.”

Mamdani has proposed a series of tax increases on high earners to help close a projected \$5.4 billion budget gap in fiscal year 2027. His plan includes a 2% surcharge on annual incomes above \$1 million, which is projected to generate roughly \$4 billion per year.

The administration says revenue would fund universal child care, affordable housing, education and transit. The mayor has also argued that targeting roughly 33,000 top earners would prevent the broader 9.5% property tax hike on residents citywide and protect middle-income households.

Salman suggested that political volatility is a constant part of city residents’ long-term outlook.

“We stay here when we know it’s harder to live here,” he said. “We know it’s more expensive. We know the weather can be terrible. We do it because we want to. There’s a conscious choice that’s being made. That comes with a potentially bad mayor and it comes with a potentially great mayor. It doesn’t matter.

“(Mamdani) could turn out fantastic for all of us, but you just kind of take it with the ebbs and flows in New York.”

Metro area mixed

Across the broader New York City metro area, conditions are cooler but still tight.

Inventory is down 19% year-over-year. Median prices have dipped 1.3% while weekly transaction pace has declined 24% compared with 2025.

Inventory remains roughly 80% below levels seen in 2015.

Within Manhattan, Katzen described stratification in the luxury tiers, with distinct patterns between \$6 million to \$10 million properties and those above \$15 million.

“I mean, I think the luxury market is exempt from market movement,” she said. “They choose what they want to do, when they want to do it and at whatever cost. The (luxury) markers also remain hyper-competitive, not a lot of inventory. It really is like buying a stock. You buy in the West Village and someone buys in Midtown East, and everyone is looking where the performance has built up value.”

For now, both brokers describe robust pipelines.

Salman summarized his year succinctly.

“We’ve had a record year and no one I know has left,” he said. “No one is telling me they want to sell their apartment because they’re leaving. It’s just upgrades and continuing to invest in the city across the board.”

As debate over taxes unfolds in Albany and City Hall, Manhattan’s top tier shows rising prices, doubled sales velocity and historically tight supply.

If affluent residents are preparing to leave, brokers say, they are not seeing it in contracts — or in the closing room.