



city of **yes**

**Informal Briefing for MN
Community Board 3**

March 15th, 2023

city of yes

“We are going to turn **New York** into a ‘**City of Yes**’ — yes in my backyard, yes on my block, yes in my neighborhood,”

"These proposals focused on economic recovery, affordable housing, and sustainability will remove red tape for small businesses, expand housing opportunities in every neighborhood, and accelerate the transition to our energy future. New Yorkers are not going to wait around while other cities and other countries sprint towards a post-pandemic world, and now we won't have to."

-Mayor Eric Adams





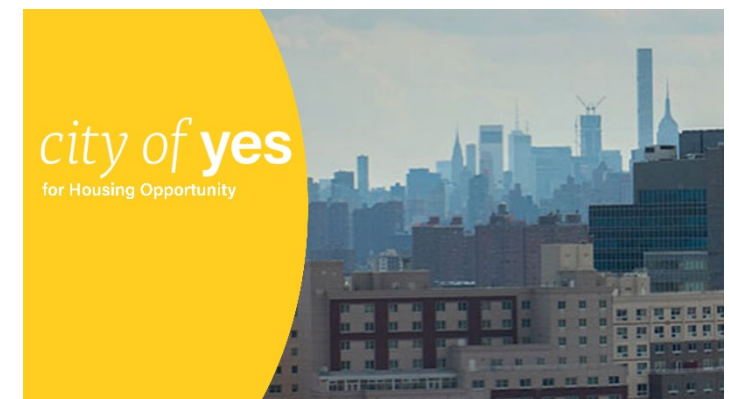
for Carbon Neutrality

Expanding opportunities for decarbonization projects



for Economic Opportunity

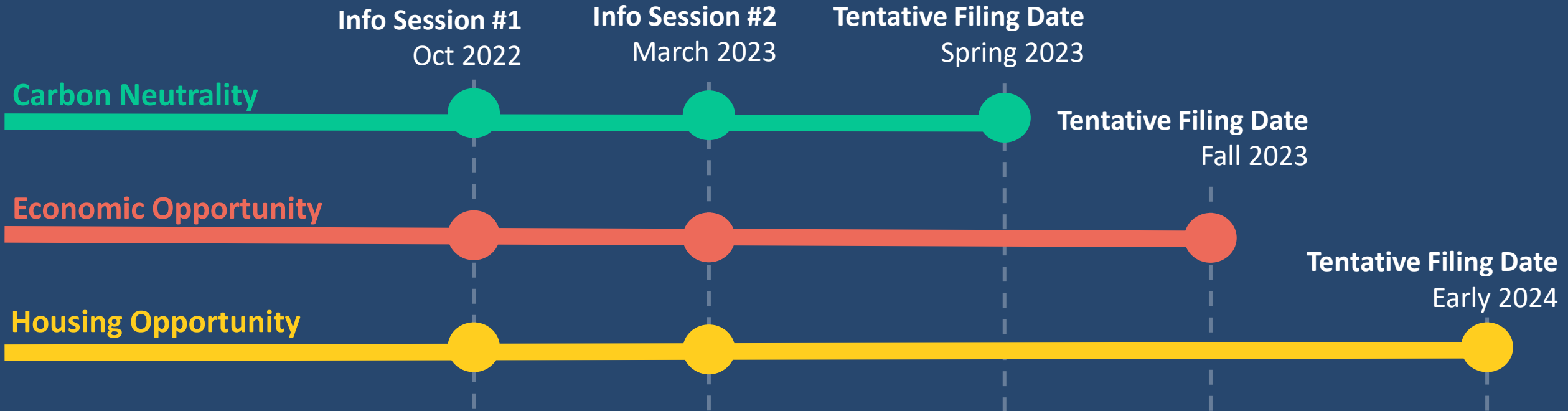
Growing jobs and small businesses with more flexible zoning



for Housing Opportunity

Ensuring all neighborhoods are meeting the need for housing opportunities

Timeline



city of **yes**

for Carbon Neutrality



Why carbon?

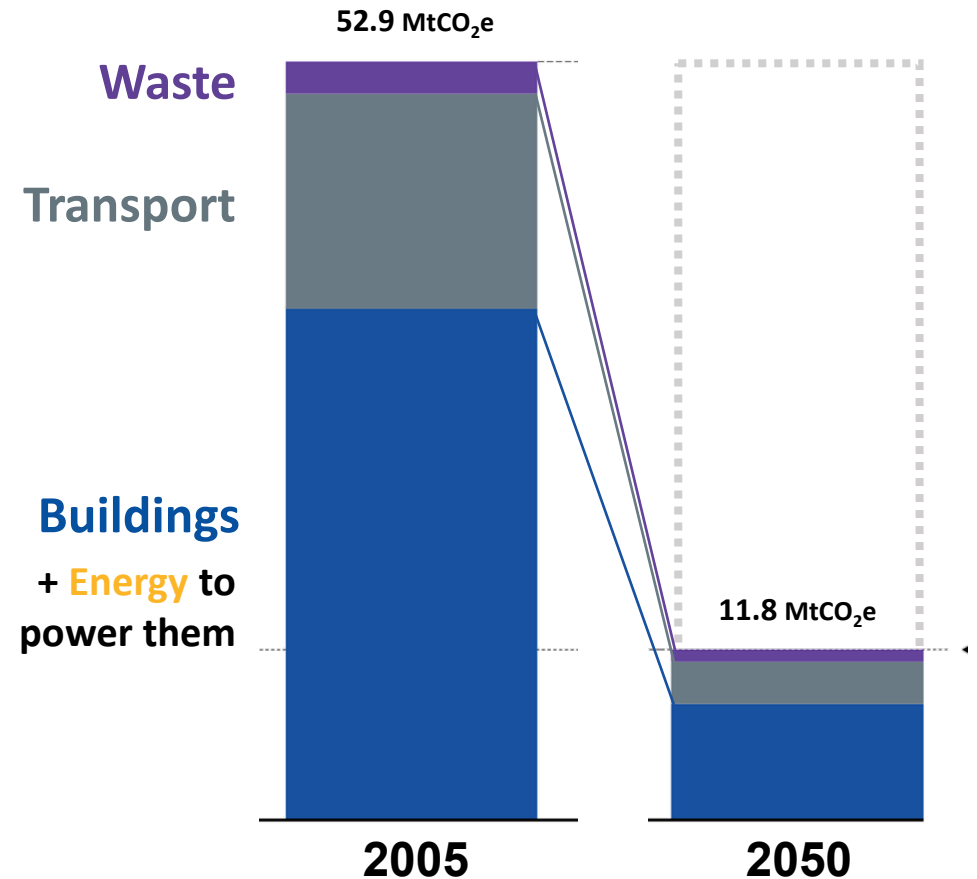
- Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the **primary greenhouse gas** (GHG) emitted through human activities - **80% of US GHG** emissions in 2019.
- CO₂ is largely produced through the **burning of fossil fuels**
- Paris Agreement hopes to limit global warming to 2°C and forestall greater climate damage by curbing GHG
- Since 2013, NYC has committed to implementing this goal under the policy umbrella '80x50'



What is a "carbon-neutral city"?

It's a city where we've...

1. **Reduced our energy needs**
(retrofit buildings to be efficient)
2. **Cleaned the grid**
(decarbonize the source of electricity)
3. **Electrified buildings + vehicles**
(all remaining energy needs are powered by the clean electric grid)



Necessary operational carbon reductions to meet 2050 goals, in millions of metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.
Source: NYC's Roadmap to 80x50

What have we already done?



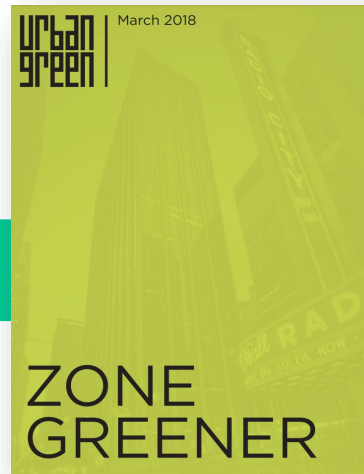
Zone Green 2012

Our first overhaul of zoning to support **green building features**



80x50 Roadmap 2016

A **concrete plan** for how NYC could achieve its climate goals.



Lessons learned 2012 – 2018+

Practitioners have identified **improvements** (a key example is the 'Zone Greener' report)



Local Laws 2019

The City Council passed the most ambitious climate rules in the nation, including **finances for low performance**.



NYS CLCPA 2019

Ambitious statewide goal of net-zero grid by 2040, and **massive increase in solar, storage, and wind**.

What would this initiative do?



Zoning for Carbon Neutrality would:

- **Remove impediments:**
Ensure that zoning rules are not hindering the installation of new wind, solar, or energy storage; or the retrofitting of existing buildings to promote efficiency
- **Fix existing incentives:**
Encourage the development of new buildings which perform 'better-than-code'
- **Promote solar & storage:**
Support the City's 80x50 goals and the State's solar and storage goals.

What would this initiative do?

Zoning for Carbon Neutrality would focus on fixing impediments in **four key areas**:

ENERGY

Support the greening of our grid by broadly allowing for distributed generation (wind + solar) as well as critically needed energy storage.

BUILDINGS

Get out of the way of making our buildings clean and efficient by accommodating a wider range of building retrofits.

TRANSPORTATION

Support the growth of electric vehicles and micro-mobility by removing restrictions on where this infrastructure can be placed.

WASTE & WATER

Complement other City efforts to reduce our solid waste and stormwater output by updating and clarifying related zoning regulations.

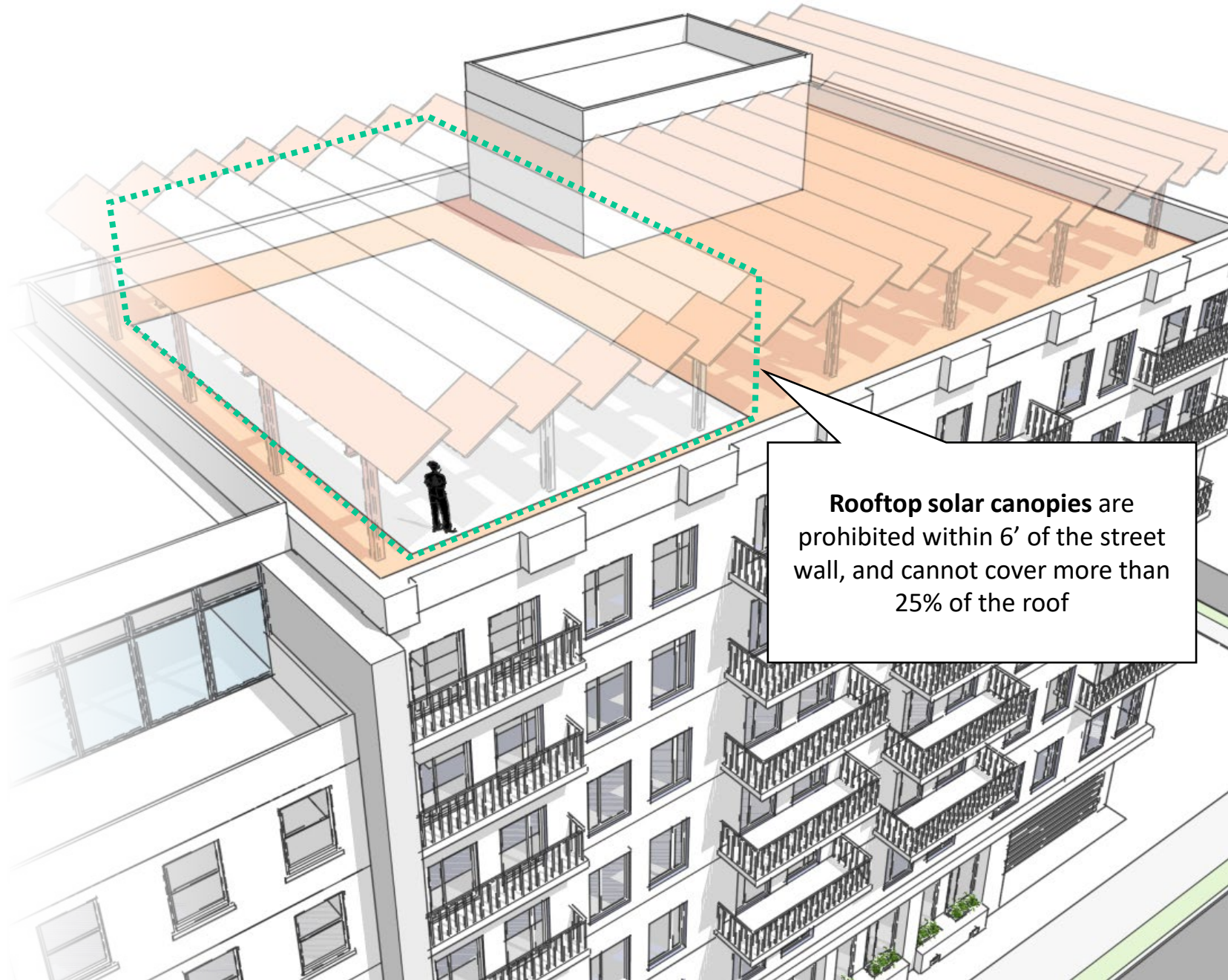
Example 1

Building owners looking to add solar hit zoning obstacles

Zoning already allows solar energy systems above the height limits – provided it adheres to strict height limits, offsets, and coverage caps

Combined with other rooftop demands (HVAC equipment, recreation areas, and FDNY access requirements) these zoning limitations leave very little room left for rooftop solar.

In many examples, these zoning limitations render a solar installation infeasible.



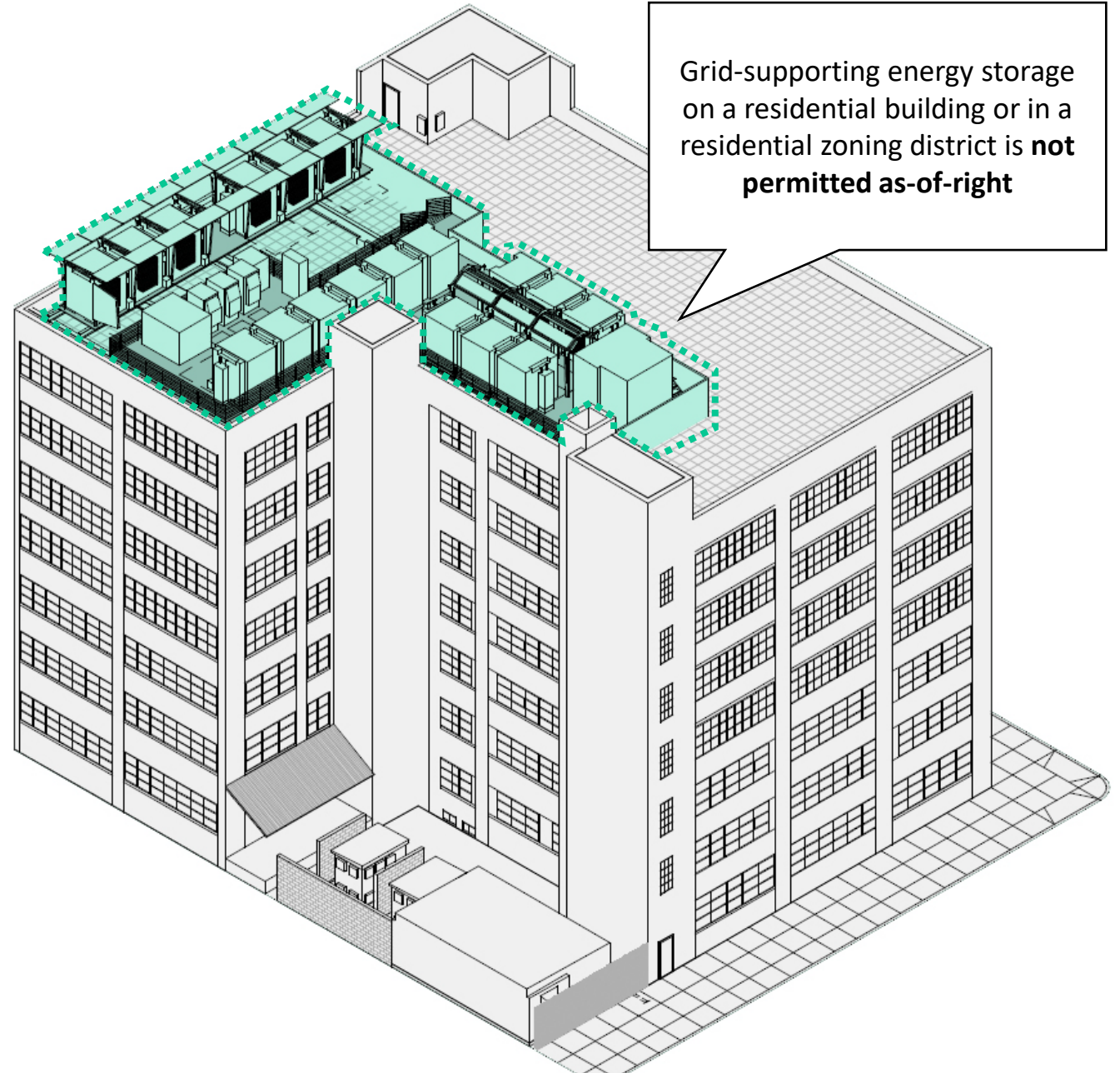
Example 2

Building owners are unable to add critical energy storage

The City and State have set ambitious targets for the installation of ESS, and ConEdison is actively seeking new installations.

However, zoning rules don't address this crucial emerging technology.

ESS that supports the grid (and thus prevents brownouts and reduces the need for dirty 'peaker plants') is not permitted as of right in many places. This leads to a lengthy and difficult special permit process at the Board of Standards & Appeals (BSA).



Grid-supporting energy storage on a residential building or in a residential zoning district is **not permitted as-of-right**

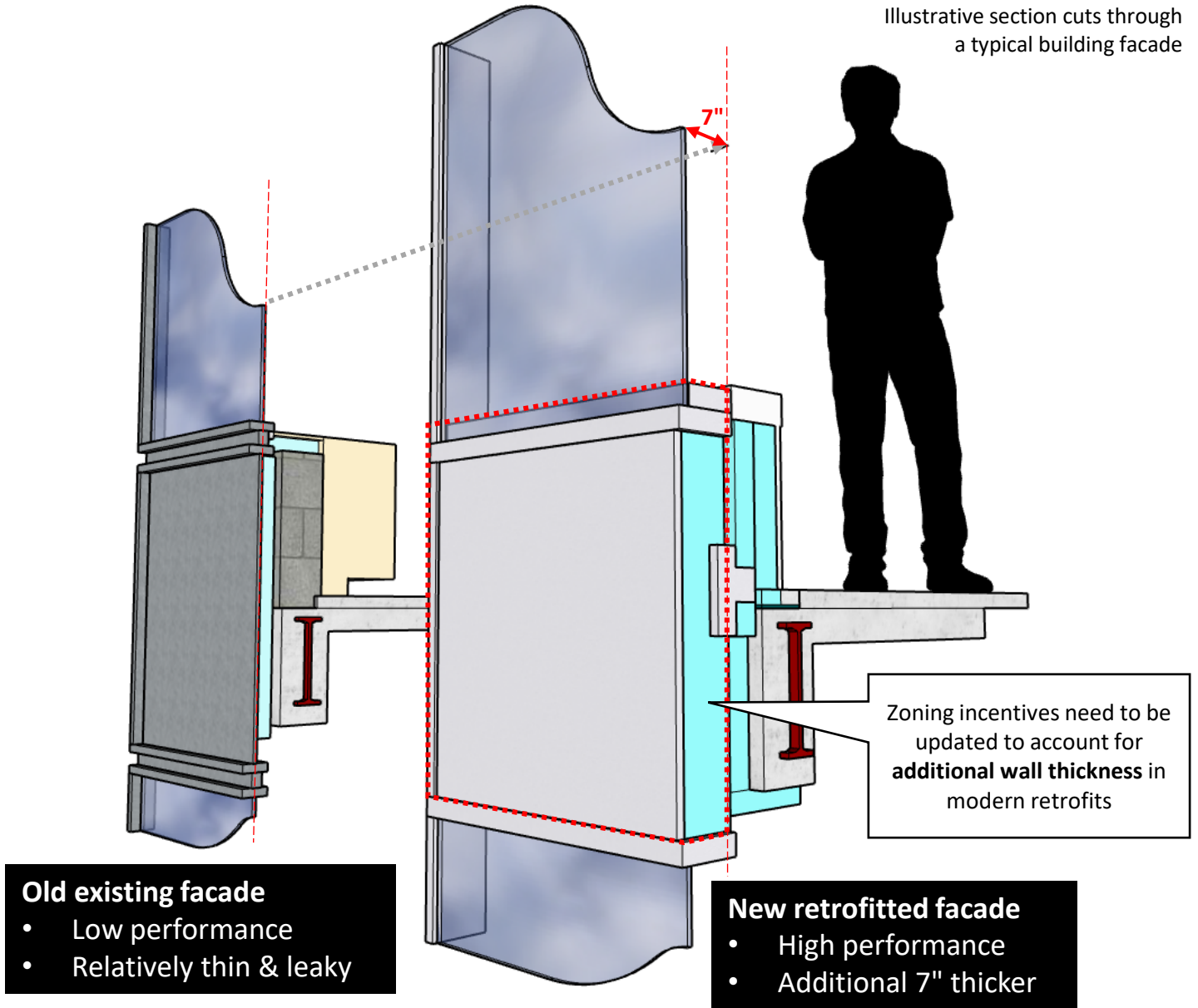
Example 3

Building owners looking to retrofit their facades face obstacles.

Wall thickness counts against FAR. Zoning promotes efficiency by allowing portions of high-performing walls to be deducted. Over time, practitioners have found issues with the current framework.

As an example: for new buildings and re-clads of existing buildings, only the thickness of the wall beyond 8" is exempted, up to an additional 8".

For buildings at (or over) FAR, this zoning rule makes the retrofit impermissible.



Example 4

Electric vehicle owners can't find places to charge their EVs

Less than 1% of the nearly two million private vehicles registered in NYC are zero-emission vehicles.

One of the reasons EV adoption has lagged in dense cities like NYC is the lack of off-street charging locations.

Zoning permits standalone commercial charging stations (UG7), but they are not permitted in many Commercial Districts and all Residence Districts.

In addition, in some residential parking facilities, off-site users are not permitted to visit to charge their cars.

The New York Times

April 5, 2022

Here's How Slowly New York City Is Moving on Electric Vehicles

New York has ambitious electrification goals, but it lags behind other major cities in the United States significantly.

EVCSs in "accessory residential off-street parking facilities" are limited to use by the residents.

Example 2

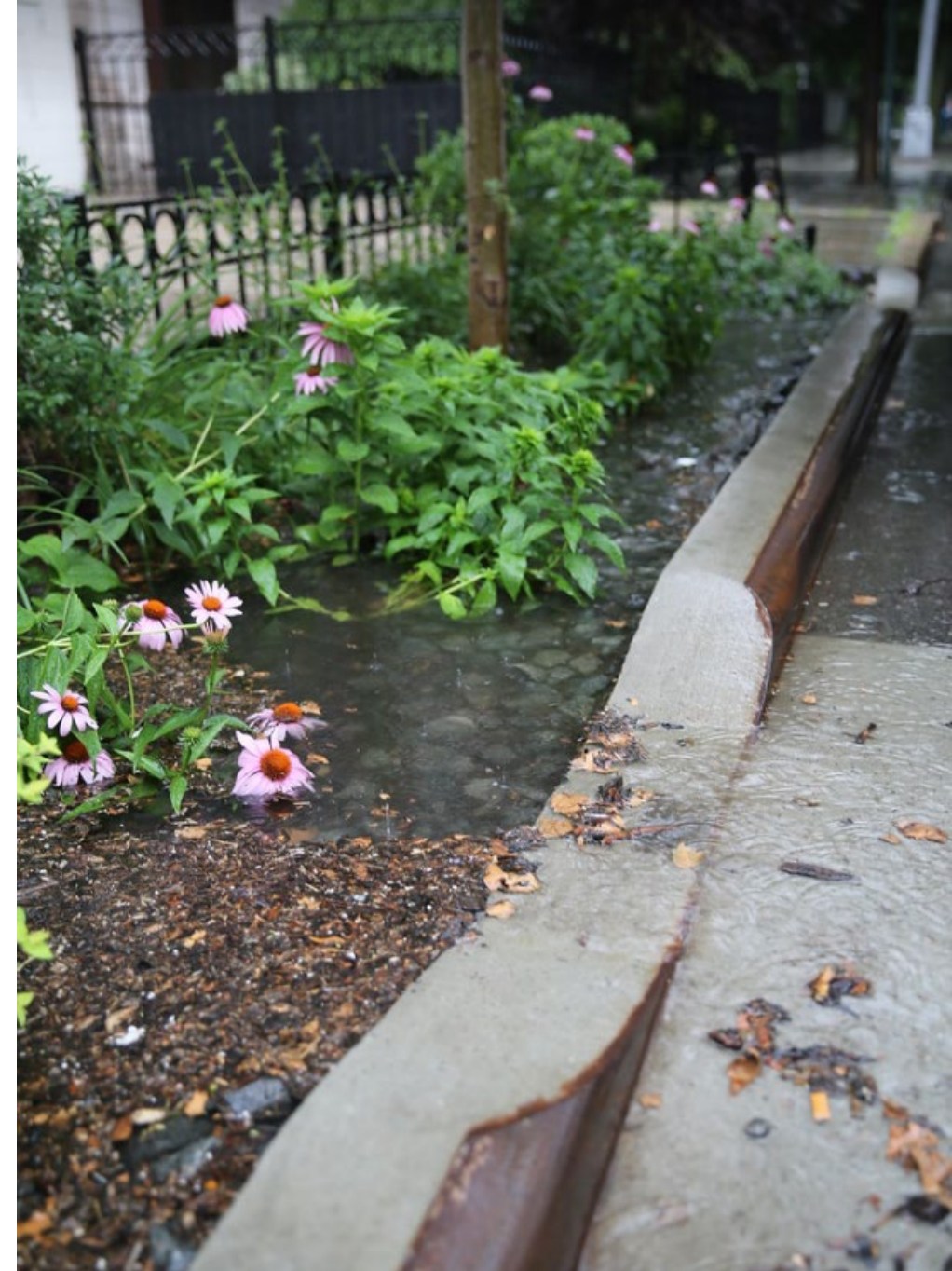
Zoning regulations for street trees need to be updated

Stormwater management is key to reducing carbon emissions from our combined stormwater treatment facilities.

One opportunity is to capture stormwater in curbside raingardens.

Zoning requires street trees to be installed whenever new development occurs.

However, these requirement need to be updated to reflect new streetscape prototypes for connected tree pits and raingardens developed by DOT and DEP.



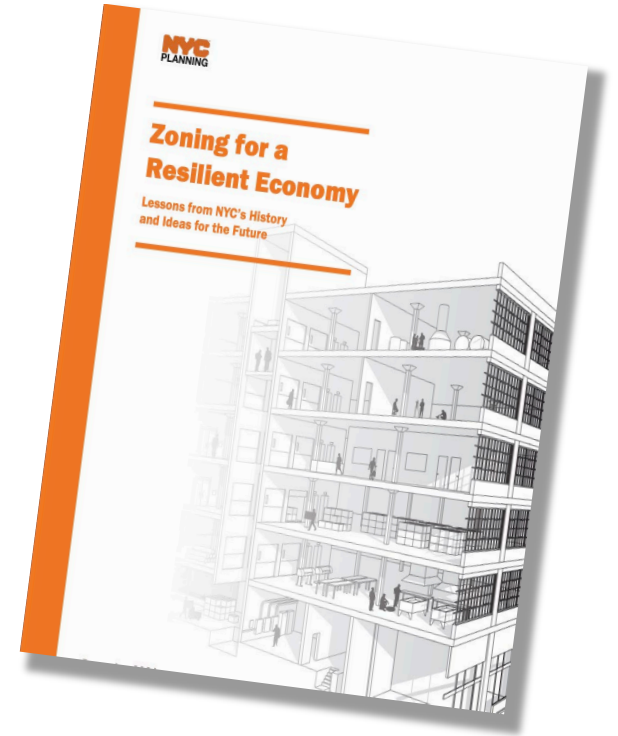
city of **yes**

for Economic Opportunity



Goals

- Support economic recovery and resiliency by **allowing existing space to be repurposed** to support economic activity
- Provide for future economic growth and resiliency by modifying rules to help **create flexible new space** that meets the needs of businesses
- Bring jobs closer to New Yorkers by **supporting the growth of job centers** in transit-accessible areas across the five boroughs



Precursor DCP publication - 2021

Example 1

Ground floor design rules are confusing and inconsistent.

Lucy is concerned about “dark stores” that don’t allow public or visual access into their establishments. She thinks this is harming the pedestrian experience of the city’s commercial streets.

While zoning has some ground floor use design requirements, they are not applicable in most of the city and don’t address many of the design issues she is raising.

Image credit: Google Street View



Example 2

Zoning prohibits many businesses from locating in higher density commercial districts.

Ahmed is a professional artist and wants to open a studio space to teach arts to children in Harlem. He is eyeing this space along 125th Street. He is hoping the high foot traffic will help draw students.

The space is in a C4 district—one of our higher density commercial districts. Art studios and many other activities are not permitted on the ground floor under current zoning.



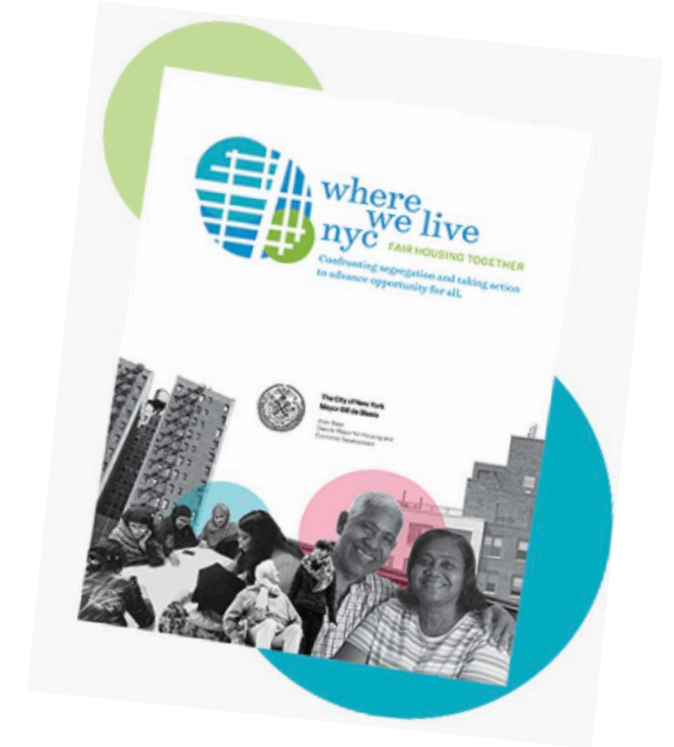
city of **yes**

for Housing Opportunity



Goals

- Implement the actions from Where We Live to affirmatively **further fair housing** and address the human costs of the housing shortage
- **Simplify decades of increasingly complex and restrictive zoning** to facilitate equitable housing development across New York City
- **Make relatively small changes across a broad geography** to produce more housing in low-, medium-, and high-density districts
- When all neighborhoods do their part, fewer neighborhoods are overburdened or face dramatic changes



Types of Changes to Achieve our Goals

- Allow **housing types that serve everyone** – such as ADUs, smaller units, and shared housing
- Ease **conversions** of obsolete and underutilized buildings to housing
- Reduce or eliminate unnecessary **parking requirements** to unlock housing potential
- Give all **supportive and affordable housing** the same preference given to affordable senior housing (AIRS)
- Make it easier for **owners of homes and small buildings** to alter and update their buildings over time

Example 1

Medium and Higher Density - Smaller units

Citing great buildings from NYC's past, and declining household size across America in recent decades, Gary proposes to build a project of no-frills studios for the many people in NYC who want to live alone but can't.

He finds out that "dwelling unit factor" mandates a minimum average unit size. If half the building were 450 sf studios, the other half would have to be massive 1300 to 1400 sf apartments.

Adjustments could make these possible again.



Example 2

Higher Density - Conversion

A housing nonprofit acquires a vacant hotel and wants to convert it to supportive housing.

They discover that the relaxed rules for conversion are not available for supportive housing, and the building is overbuilt and does not comply with light and air standards.

When they try to convert to residential, they find that "dwelling unit factor" would require a gut rehab to combine multiple hotel rooms into individual apartments.

Changes to the rules could enable these conversions.



Image credit: Google Map



for Carbon Neutrality

Expanding opportunities for decarbonization projects



for Economic Opportunity

Growing jobs and small businesses with more flexible zoning



for Housing Opportunity

Ensuring all neighborhoods are meeting the need for housing opportunities