

city of **yes** for economic opportunity

Myths and Facts: Laboratories

- ✗ **Myth:** City of Yes for Economic Opportunity would allow dangerous laboratories near homes.
 - ✓ **Fact:** It would clarify outdated and confusing language about the environmental standards laboratories need to meet in mixed-use settings, so everybody knows how to follow the rules.
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- ✗ **Myth:** Laboratories are currently restricted to Manufacturing zones.
 - ✓ **Fact:** Laboratories are currently allowed in nearly all Commercial and Residence districts within hospitals or higher education settings. Under City of Yes, size limitations and environmental standards would prevent large manufacturing laboratories from locating in neighborhood commercial corridors.

What is the proposed zoning change?

Today, laboratories are permitted in nearly all Commercial Districts (C2-C6) and in Residential Districts when located within a hospital or higher education setting. However, the zoning – unchanged since 1961 – uses unclear language to describe the environmental standards necessary when locating in mixed-use settings. This outdated terminology is confusing and raises questions for industry and the public alike.

City of Yes for Economic Opportunity would make this language clearer, so safe, certified research could take place near important partners like hospitals and universities. Specifically, City of Yes would:

- Modernize the zoning definition for a lab to be consistent with current practice by directly referring to the relevant section of the Building Code used to regulate labs.
- Allow commercial labs in C1 districts similar to how they are already allowed in C2, C4, C5, and C6.
- Expand the geographic applicability of an existing CPC Special Permit for labs, which would require full environmental review, Community Board review, and City Council vote to be used.

Are laboratories in New York City strictly regulated?

Yes - Laboratories are among the most highly regulated industries in the United States. Locally, we have regulations from DOB, FDNY, DEP, and DOHMH that help to ensure that any laboratory that opens has strict oversight, which include health and safety guidelines and inspections from the FDNY, DOB, and State health agencies.

Additional layers of regulatory review and guidance come from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), as well as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

All laboratories in New York City have to meet the standards of NYC Building Code Section 427, which includes standards for fire protection, quantity limitations of liquids, solids, and other materials, storage, and ventilation. Cross-references to Fire Code and Mechanical Code section standards must also be met.