

*city of* **yes**

**for Economic  
Opportunity**

**Info Session**

**June 13, 2023**



Please click on the interpretation icon for Spanish, Mandarin, or Cantonese to hear a simultaneous interpretation of the session. During the Q&A, staff will be available to provide language assistance for Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese speakers as needed. Spanish, Mandarin, or Cantonese speaking participants may also contact us for additional assistance via email at [DCPCityofYes\\_DL@planning.nyc.gov](mailto:DCPCityofYes_DL@planning.nyc.gov)

Por favor haga clic en el símbolo de interpretación en Español, Mandarín o Cantonés para escuchar la interpretación simultánea de la sesión. Durante la sesión de preguntas y respuestas, estará disponible asistencia para interpretación en Español, Mandarín y Cantonés para quien lo necesite. También nos puede contactar para asistencia adicional por el correo electrónico [DCPCityofYes\\_DL@planning.nyc.gov](mailto:DCPCityofYes_DL@planning.nyc.gov)

请点击同声传译的图标以收听会议的西班牙语，普通话或粤语的同声传译。在提问环节期间 (Q&A)，工作人员将根据需要为您提供西班牙语，普通话或粤语的翻译帮助。如需更多帮助，讲西班牙语，普通话或粤语的参与者也可以通过电子邮件的方式 ([DCPCityofYes\\_DL@planning.nyc.gov](mailto:DCPCityofYes_DL@planning.nyc.gov)) 与我们联系。

請點擊同聲傳譯的圖標以收聽會議的西班牙語，國語或粵語的同聲傳譯。在提問環節期間(Q&A)，工作人員將根據需要為您提供西班牙語，國語或粵語的翻譯幫助。如需更多幫助，講西班牙語，國語或粵語的參與者也可以通過電子郵件的方式 ([DCPCityofYes\\_DL@planning.nyc.gov](mailto:DCPCityofYes_DL@planning.nyc.gov)) 與我們取得聯繫。

# Info Session Format

7:05 – 7:20 PM: Welcome & Opening Remarks

7:20–8:20 PM: Zoning for Economic Opportunity

7:20–8:55 PM: Live Q&A

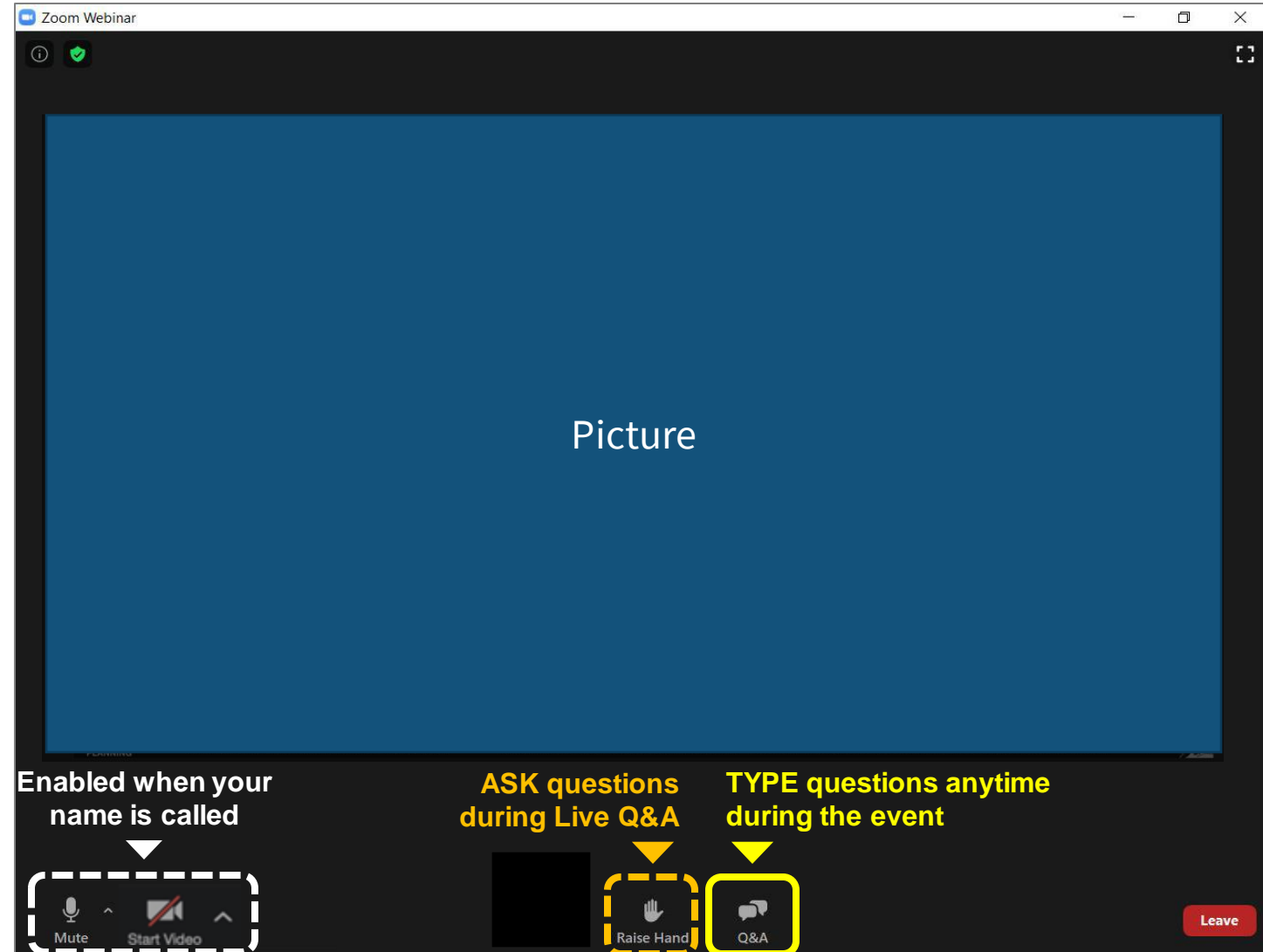
Prior to Live Q&A, all microphones are muted.

TYPE written questions via Zoom Q&A feature.

During Live Q&A, ask questions in two ways:

1. TYPE – using the zoom Q&A feature
2. ASK – using the zoom raise your hand feature (two-minute time limit to ask question). You will be able to unmute yourself and turn on your camera when you are called on by the moderator.

If you are dialing in by phone, press \*9 to ask your question during Live Q&A.



# city of yes

Instructions to speak at this meeting by [computer, smartphone, or tablet](#) are posted at:

- **Web Address:** [nyc.gov/engage](https://nyc.gov/engage) under “[Upcoming Meetings](#)”

If you wish to participate in the meeting by phone, please dial:

- **Toll Free Numbers:** [\(877\) 853-5247](#) or [\(888\) 788-0099](#)
- **Toll Numbers:** [\(212\) 338-8477](#) or [\(253\) 215-8782](#)

When prompted enter:

- **Meeting ID:** [864 6760 2082](#)
- **Participant ID:** [press pound \(#\) to skip](#)
- **Password:** [1](#)

If you are experiencing any technical difficulties, DCP staff are available to provide support. Please dial any of the phone numbers listed above. Then enter the following meeting ID and password when prompted.

- **Meeting ID:** [618 237 7396](#)
- **Participant ID:** [press pound \(#\) to skip](#)
- **Password:** [1](#)

After this session, the project team can be reached by email at [EconomicOpportunity@planning.nyc.gov](mailto:EconomicOpportunity@planning.nyc.gov)

# 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





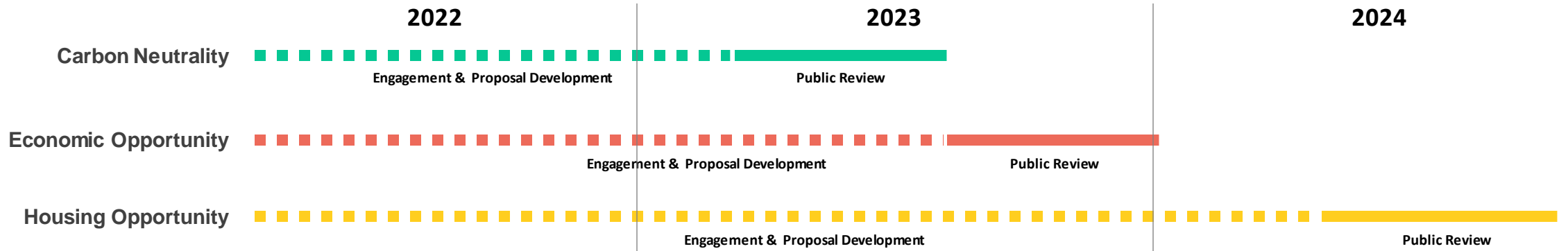
**for Carbon Neutrality**  
Expanding opportunities for decarbonization projects



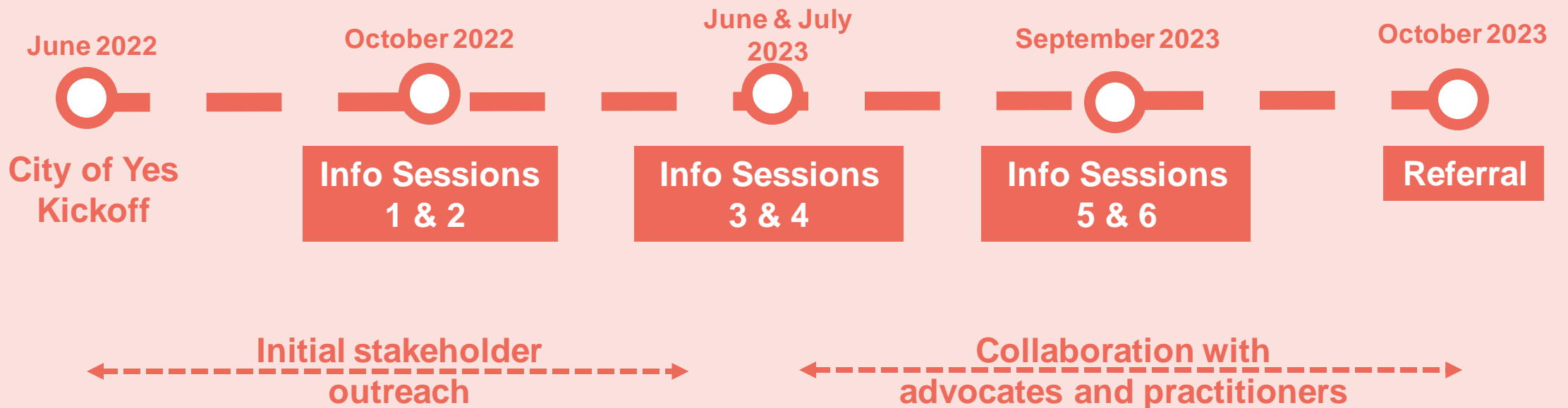
**for Economic Opportunity**  
Growing jobs and small businesses with more flexible zoning



**for Housing Opportunity**  
Ensuring all neighborhoods are meeting the need for housing opportunities



# Engagement process to date

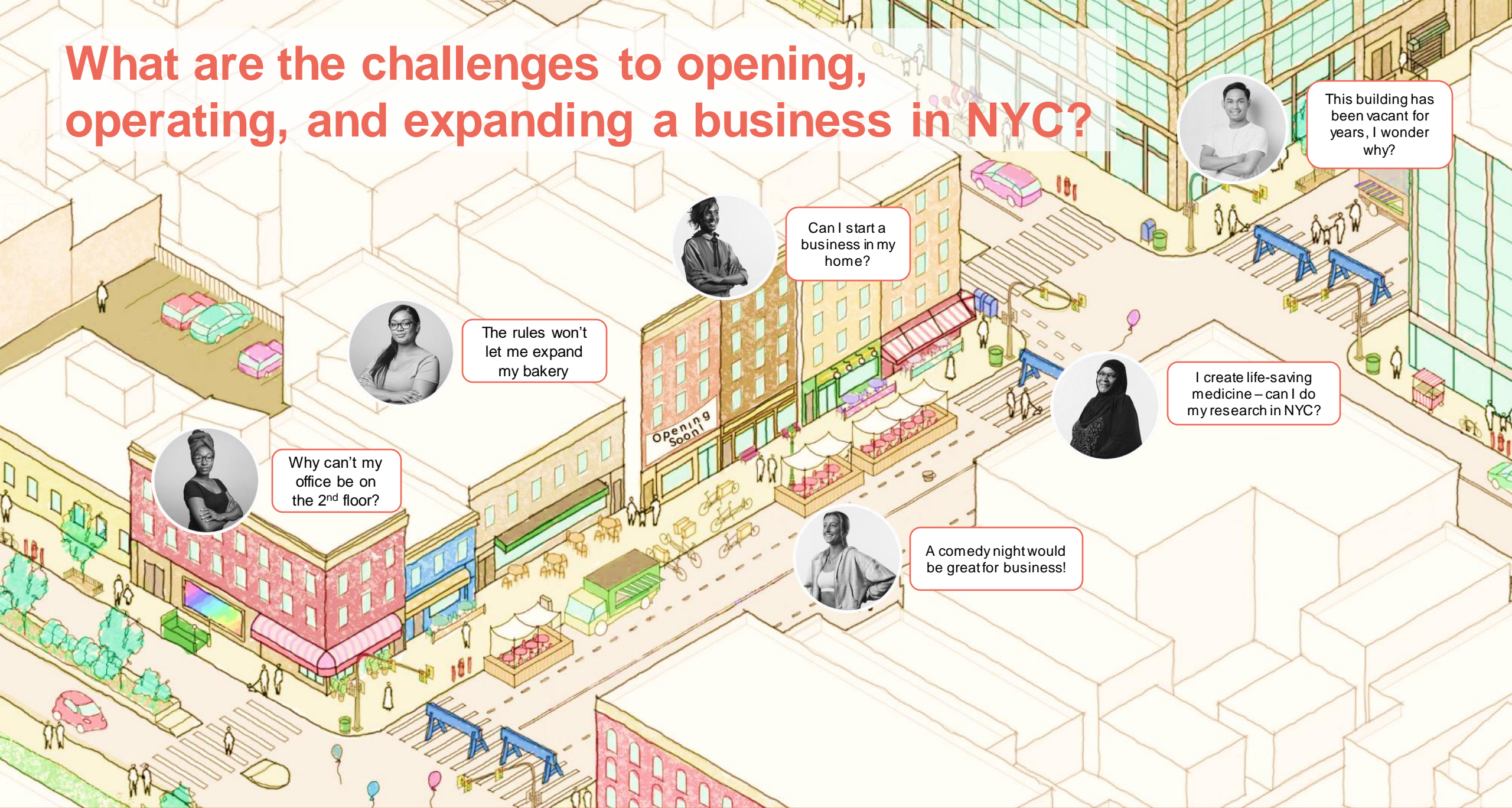


*to date:*

**Two** open-to-the-public pre-referral info sessions

Meetings with **100+** stakeholder organizations

# What are the challenges to opening, operating, and expanding a business in NYC?



Why can't my office be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor?



The rules won't let me expand my bakery



Can I start a business in my home?



A comedy night would be great for business!



I create life-saving medicine – can I do my research in NYC?



This building has been vacant for years, I wonder why?



# NYC is still recovering from economic crisis, which can be an opportunity for adaptation



Many businesses were forced to close or change their operations during the COVID pandemic



Remote work presents challenges for neighborhoods with office spaces but opportunities for neighborhoods where people live



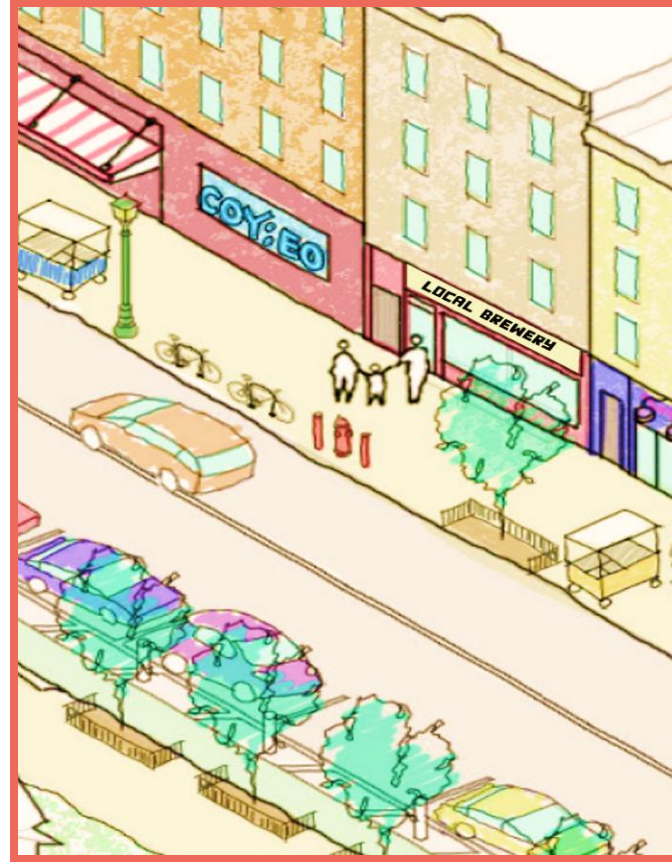
Emerging industries can help accelerate our city's recovery and create good jobs.



# How does zoning affect businesses in NYC neighborhoods?



Where can I open my business?



What can I do in my space?



Where can I expand?

# Why are zoning changes needed?

Businesses need flexibility and clarity to adapt to a changing economy, but today's zoning rules are too:



Complex



Restrictive



Outdated

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*city of* **workers**  
*city of* **yes**  
*city of* **shops**  
*city of* **choice**  
*city of* **business**  
*city of* **inventors**  
*city of* **fun**

A photograph of a diverse crowd of people at what appears to be a business or community event. In the background, a large, stylized sign reads 'OPEN'. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter.

**Saying yes to  
business opportunity**

# City of Yes for Economic Opportunity: Goals

## **Goal 1:**

**Allow more businesses to locate near their customers**

By expanding where businesses can locate

## **Goal 2:**

**Support business and industry growth**

By removing specific impediments for businesses to thrive

## **Goal 3:**

**Foster vibrant neighborhoods**

By activating our commercial streets and increasing access to local businesses and services

## **Goal 4:**

**Give businesses more certainty and predictability**

By clarifying and modernizing rules

# Summary of proposal

## Expand options for businesses to locate

1. Enable more businesses to locate in **ground floor storefronts**
2. Remove **arbitrary barriers** to appropriate uses on commercial streets
3. Expand opportunities for **small-scale clean production**
4. Allow for **upper floor commercial** activity
5. Create **new job-intensive zoning districts** for future

## Support growing industries

6. Ensure **life science** facilities can expand
7. Provide bulk relief for new buildings such as **film studios**
8. Support **nightlife** with common-sense dancing and live entertainment rules
9. Simplify rules so **amusements** & experiential businesses can flourish
10. Potentially enable state licensure of **casinos**
11. Clarify rules to enable indoor uses, such as **urban agriculture**

## Foster vibrant neighborhoods

12. Ease pathways to **reactivate vacant storefronts** in Residence Districts
13. Create process for new **corner stores** in residential areas
14. Increase allowances for **home occupations**
15. Introduce **corridor design rules** that ensure buildings contribute to surroundings
16. Clarify **small-scale wholesale & storage rules** to facilitate safe and sustainable deliveries

## Provide clarity and predictability

17. Simplify and modernize **use definitions** to clarify where businesses can locate
18. Modernize **loading dock** rules to allow buildings to adapt over time

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**Expand options  
for businesses  
to locate**

## Proposal 1

# Enable more ground floor uses

- **Issue:** Certain common neighborhood service businesses, such as dance studios, instructional facilities, and clothing rental shops, are only allowed above the ground floor on commercial streets in regional business districts.
- **Proposal:** Allow all permitted commercial uses to locate on the ground floor in major commercial districts like Midtown, 125<sup>th</sup> Street in Harlem, and Main Street Flushing.



Source: Google Streetview



## Proposal 2

# Remove arbitrary distinctions between similar zoning districts

- **Issue:** Commercial zoning districts that aim to foster similar retail environments often do not allow the same types of businesses.
- **Proposal:** Make similar districts (C1/C2, and also C4/5/6) allow the same uses – a common sense fix that reflects the diversity of neighborhood businesses.

### C1 versus C2 Districts

C1	C2
Retail	Retail
Bike sales	Bike sales
<del>Bike rental &amp; repair</del>	Bike rental & repair
<del>Mini-golf</del>	Mini-golf
<del>Movie theaters</del>	Movie theaters



Source: Google Streetview

## Proposal 3

# Expand opportunities for small-scale clean production

- **Issue:** Small scale manufacturing and maker spaces that rely on retail foot traffic or prefer to locate near customers are only permitted in less accessible industrial areas.
- **Proposal:** Allow small scale, clean production businesses in commercial areas—subject to environmental standards to ensure they are appropriate to locate near residences and other businesses.



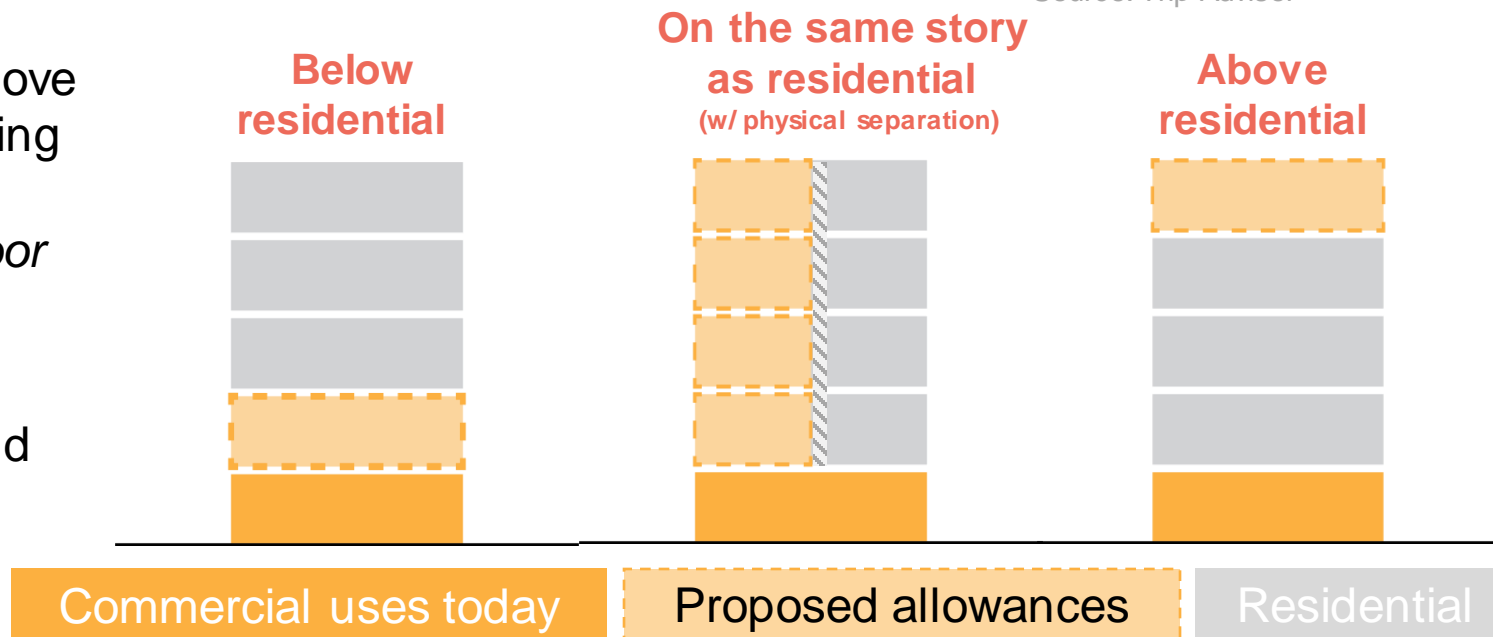
## Proposal 4

# Allow for more commercial activity on upper floors

- **Issue:** Commercial uses are not allowed on the same floor or above residences in mixed-use buildings, limiting options for commercial amenities.
- **Proposal:** Allow commercial uses above the ground floor of a residential building in all commercial districts and permit commercial *above or on the same floor* as residences in higher density locations.
- Separate entrances for residential and commercial portions of the building would still be required.



Source: Trip Advisor



## Proposal 5

# Create new job-intensive zoning tools that can be mapped through future actions.

- **Issue:** Current zoning in most industrial areas favors low-scale warehouse construction, preventing the construction of new multi-story buildings to support growing jobs, particularly near transit.
- **Proposal:** Create a range of new job-intensive zoning districts to allow for modern loft-style buildings by permitting higher densities, more flexibility on permitted building form, and right-sized parking and loading requirements.

Considered functionally obsolete by current zoning



Modern loft-like buildings



Gantry Point, Queens,

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**Support  
Growing  
Industries**

## Proposal 6

# Ensure life science facilities can grow

- **Issue:** Zoning uses outdated terms for laboratories, creating ambiguity on where safe and modern research and development space is allowed.
- **Proposal:** Clarify the definition of a laboratory to allow any life science business to occupy office space if it can meet environmental standards that protect neighbors.
- The proposal would also expand applicability citywide for an existing special permit that allows commercial life science facilities to locate on campuses, such as hospitals and universities.

Source: NYC EDC



## Proposal 7

### Provide bulk relief for new buildings such as film studios

- **Issue:** Many growing businesses run into physical constraints of zoning that are incompatible with the shape of their building. For instance, a soundstage requires high walls, which in many districts conflict with zoning limitations on maximum street-wall heights. Today these businesses would have no path except a rezoning to be able to build.
- **Proposal:** Create a pathway in zoning that allow businesses to appeal to the City Planning Commission to seek limited bulk relief to construct new buildings that exceed current setback and yard requirements.



Source: NYC Mayor's Office of Media & Entertainment

## Proposal 8

# Create more common-sense regulations for dancing, comedy, and musical entertainment

- **Issue:** Zoning prohibits musical entertainment, comedy, and dancing in many appropriate locations, regulating bars, restaurants, and venues based on the type of live entertainment offered rather than on the capacity of the business.
- **Proposal:** For businesses with maximum occupancy under 200 people, dancing, comedy, and musical acts with posted show times or cover charges would no longer be prohibited in zoning.
- Larger nightlife venues would continue to be limited to higher density or industrially zoned areas of the city.
- Venues would still be subject to permitting by other agencies, such as DOB, SLA, and FDNY.



Source: New York Times



Source: Miami & Beaches.com



Source: concreteplayground.com



## Proposal 9

# Create more opportunities for amusements to locate

- **Issue:** Amusement activities like arcades, virtual reality, and children's entertainment are mostly permitted only in Coney Island and the city's industrial areas, far from their customers.
- **Proposal:** Allow indoor amusements up to 10,000 SF in neighborhood commercial districts (C1/C2) and at a larger scale in more dense commercial areas.
- Businesses could apply to allow outdoor amusement activities through a BSA Special Permit process.



Source: Kanga's Indoor Playcenter

## Proposal 10

# Potentially enable state licensure of casinos

Casinos represent a great economic opportunity for NYC. The Mayor looks forward working with the Council with the State's process.



Source: Powerpoint

## Proposal 11

# Clarifying indoor and outdoor commercial rules

- **Issue:** In commercial districts, enclosure rules prohibit most stores from having an outdoor component. This can prevent businesses like florists from having outdoor displays, which can beautify commercial streets. The same rules limit urban agriculture's ability to locate indoors, creating obstacles to the growth of the sector.
- **Proposal:** Clarify how enclosure rules work to ensure that businesses with passive outdoor spaces are permitted, and that indoor commercial agriculture is permitted in commercial areas (including cannabis cultivation if licensed by the state).

Source: Farm.One



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**Foster vibrant  
neighborhoods**

## Proposal 12

# Remove time limits on vacancy reactivation

- **Issue:** Stores in some Residence and Historic Districts that have been vacant for more than two years are not permitted to be re-occupied, contributing to long-term vacancy.
- **Proposal:** Allow reoccupation of vacant commercial storefronts in all Residence Districts and Historic Districts.



Source: Google Streetview

## Proposal 13

# Create a pathway for corner stores in residential areas

- **Issue:** Residential areas of the city prohibit all new stores, which means new neighborhood services cannot open in large swaths of the city.
- **Proposal:** Allow for new, small professional offices, retail, or service uses in any Residence District by CPC Authorization, provided the space is located within 100 feet of an intersection, or within a Large-Scale Development.



Source: Google Streetview

## Proposal 14

# Modernize regulations for home occupations

- **Issue:** Zoning allows certain kinds of business to occur in the home, such as law offices or music teachers, while restricting others, such as barber shops, interior decorators' offices, or advertising or public relations agencies.
- **Proposal:** Relax size limitations on home occupations and expand the types of occupations allowed, while maintaining noise/environmental rules, limits on signage, and restrictions on selling items not produced on-site.



Source: Powerpoint

## Proposal 15

# Ensure buildings contribute to vibrancy of their surroundings

- **Issue:** Outside of Manhattan and some Special Purpose Districts, most areas of the city have no rules to protect against new buildings that create unsafe or unpleasant conditions for pedestrians and customers, diminishing economic vibrancy of commercial areas.
- **Proposal:** Establish a consistent and easy to understand citywide framework for commercial ground floor design requirements that is more stringent in places with greater pedestrian activity and more flexible in auto-oriented corridors.

## New tiered design rules will protect against:



Blank walls along retail streets that create unwelcoming sidewalks



Parking on the street wall that disrupts retail corridors



Parking in front of buildings that can make pedestrian access unsafe



Long residential lobbies that do not provide access to goods and services

## While continuing to allow businesses flexibility for design

Source: Google Streetview



## Proposal 16

# Enable neighborhood scaled wholesale and micro-distribution spaces

- **Issue:** Small wholesale and storage businesses today face confusing rules on the amount of space they can use. There is no way to easily accommodate new forms of delivery spaces like “micro-delivery” in commercial districts, which could alleviate truck congestion and foster alternative modes of safe and sustainable neighborhood delivery.
- **Proposal:** Allow wholesale and storage businesses to locate at a limited scale in neighborhood commercial districts, and in larger ground floor spaces in Central Business Districts and other higher-density commercial areas. These facilities would be subject to proposed streetscape rules to ensure their design is appropriate to commercial contexts.

Source: Revolution X



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**Clarify and  
modernize rules**

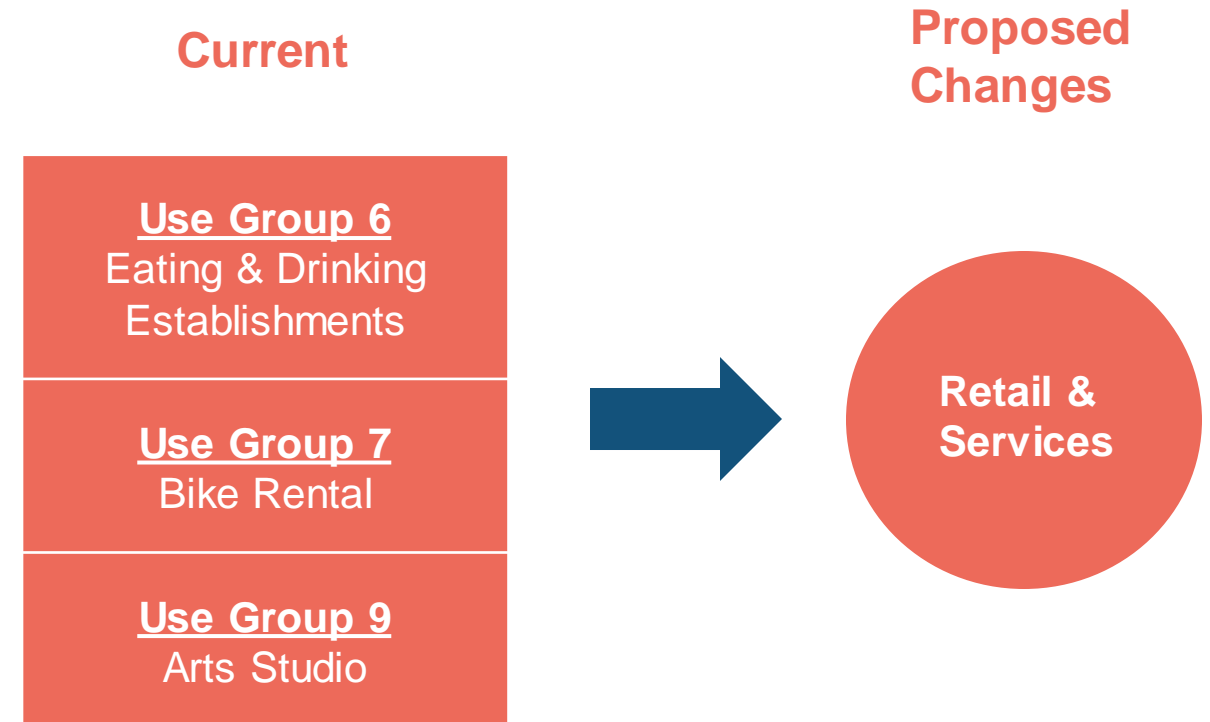


## Proposal 17

# Simplify and modernize the terms for classifying businesses in zoning

- **Issue:** Zoning has similar uses in many different places in the Zoning Resolution, making it very confusing to know where you can locate and what you can do in your space.
- **Proposal:** Reorganize the current Use Groups into more coherent categories using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), so that common sense understanding of businesses of similar sectors and building types are categorized together. Update Special District rules to refer to these new classifications.

## An example of use streamlining



## Proposal 18

# Modernize loading rules to enable adaptive reuse

- **Issue:** When existing businesses expand, or a new type of business moves into an existing building, they may be required to provide more loading bays. This is often unnecessary and cost-prohibitive.
- **Proposal:** Remove the mandate for new tenants in *existing* buildings to provide additional loading berths based on a change in use, allowing building occupancy to evolve over time.

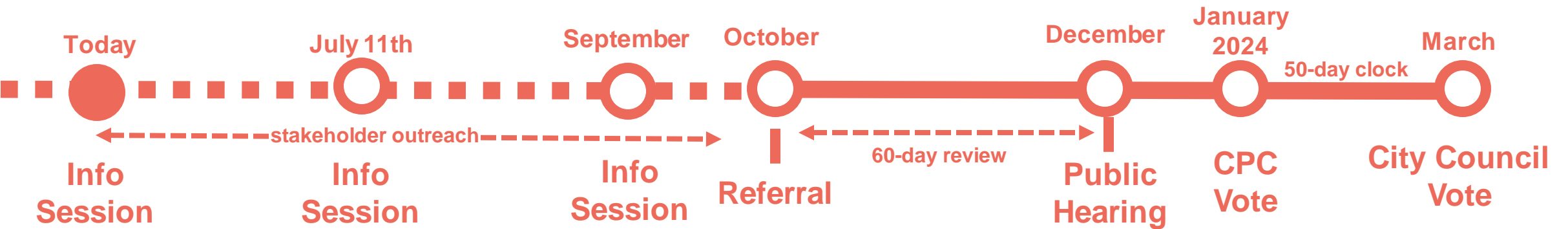




### Stay in touch!

Email the project team at **EconomicOpportunity@planning.nyc.gov** with questions, concerns, and to be signed up for email alerts on this project.

**for Economic Opportunity**  
Growing jobs and small businesses  
with more flexible zoning



*Approximate schedule of public review, for illustrative purposes only*