

Glossary of Zoning Terms

This glossary provides brief explanations of planning and zoning terminology, including terms highlighted in the Zoning Handbook. Words and phrases followed by an asterisk (*) in the Glossary are legally defined terms in the Zoning Resolution of the City of New York, and can be found primarily in [Section 12-10](#) of the Resolution for the complete legal definitions.

Accessory Use*

An accessory use is a use that is incidental to and customarily found in connection with the principal use. An accessory use must be conducted on the same zoning lot as the principal use to which it is related, unless the district regulations permit another location for the accessory use. (Off-site accessory parking facilities, for example, are permitted in certain zoning districts.)

Air Rights (see [Development Rights](#))

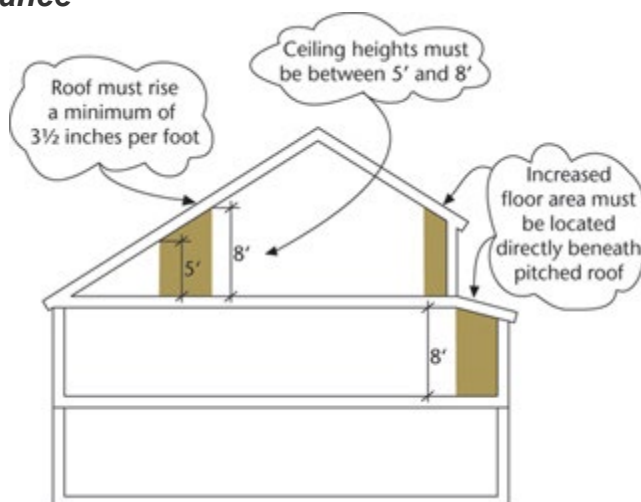
Arts Bonus (see [Incentive Zoning](#))

As-of-right Development

An as-of-right development complies with all applicable zoning regulations and does not require any discretionary action by the City Planning Commission or Board of Standards and Appeals. Most developments and enlargements in the city are as-of-right.

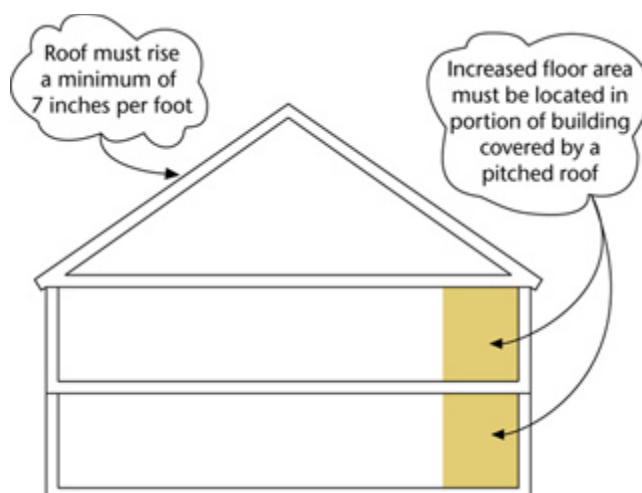
Attached Building* (see [Building](#))

Attic Allowance



Attic Allowance

An attic allowance is an increase of up to 20 percent in the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for the provision of a pitched roof. The allowance is available in R2X districts and all R3 and R4 (except R4B) districts.



Attic Allowance in Lower Density Growth Management Areas

Outside of Lower Density Growth Management Areas (LDGMA), the increased floor area must be directly beneath the pitched roof and have a ceiling height between five and eight feet.

Authorization

An authorization is a discretionary action taken by the City Planning Commission, often after an informal referral to the affected community board(s), which modifies specified zoning requirements if certain findings have been met.

Base Height

The base height of a building is the maximum permitted height of the front wall of a building before any required setback. A building is required to meet a minimum base height only when the height of the building will exceed the maximum base height.

Base Plane*

The base plane is a horizontal plane from which the height of a building is measured. It is utilized in most lower-density and contextual districts, and for

property subject to waterfront zoning. Often, the base plane is at curb level; on sites that slope upwards or downwards from a street, or on large lots where buildings are far from a street, the base plane is adjusted to more accurately reflect the level at which the building meets the ground.

Basement*

A basement is a building story that has at least one-half of its floor-to-ceiling height above curb level or the base plane. By contrast, a cellar has at least one-half of its floor-to-ceiling height below curb level or the base plane. A basement is included in floor area calculations.

Bioswale

A bioswale is a landscape element designed to capture storm water run-off from adjacent surface areas. It has inverted sloped sides that allow rainwater to drain into it and contains vegetation and mulch designed to remove pollutants before the water infiltrates into the soil. They are required in certain parking lots accessory to commercial and community facility uses.

Block*

A block is a tract of land bounded on all sides by streets or by a combination of streets, public parks, railroad rights-of-way, pierhead lines or airport boundaries.

Blockfront

A blockfront is that portion of a block consisting of all of the zoning lots fronting on a single street.

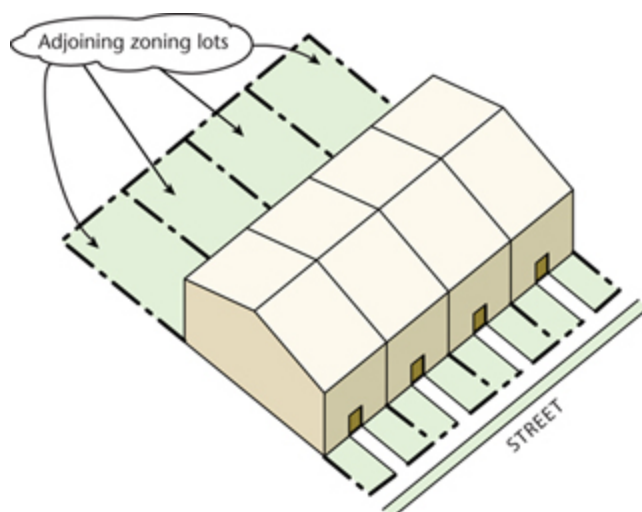
Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA)

The BSA, composed of five commissioners appointed by the Mayor, reviews and grants applications for special permits, as prescribed in the Zoning Resolution, for certain proposed developments and uses. The BSA also grants variances for zoning lots with irregular physical conditions where construction might not otherwise be possible. In addition, the Board hears and decides appeals to determinations by the Department of Buildings.

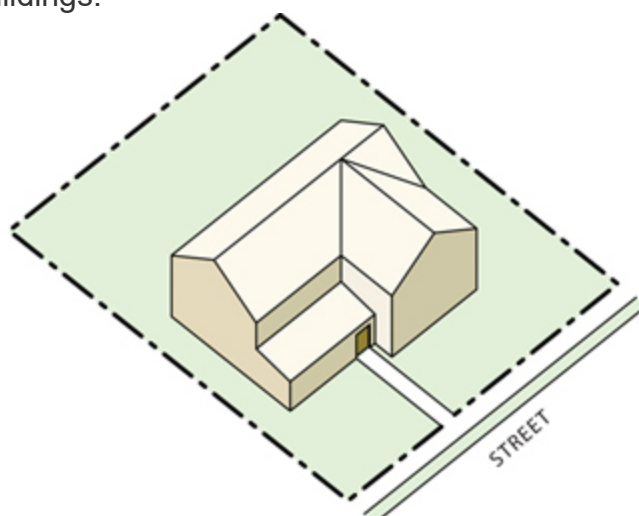
Bonus (see [Incentive Zoning](#))

Building*

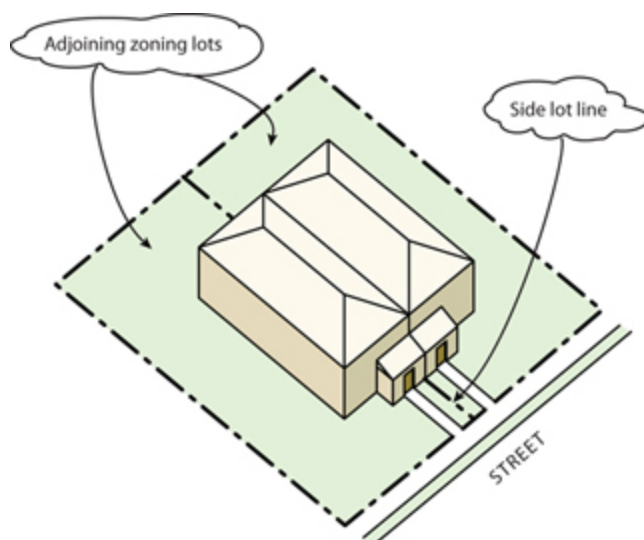
A building is a structure that has one or more floors and a roof, is permanently affixed to the land and is bounded by open areas or the lot lines of a zoning lot.



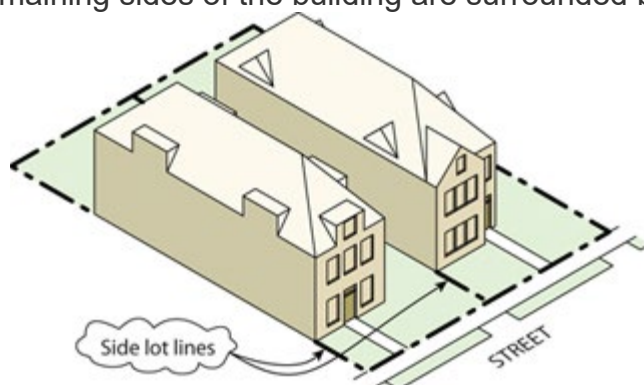
An ***attached building**** abuts two side lot lines or is one of a row of abutting buildings.



A ***detached building**** is a freestanding building that does not abut any other building and where all sides of the building are surrounded by yards or open areas within the zoning lot.

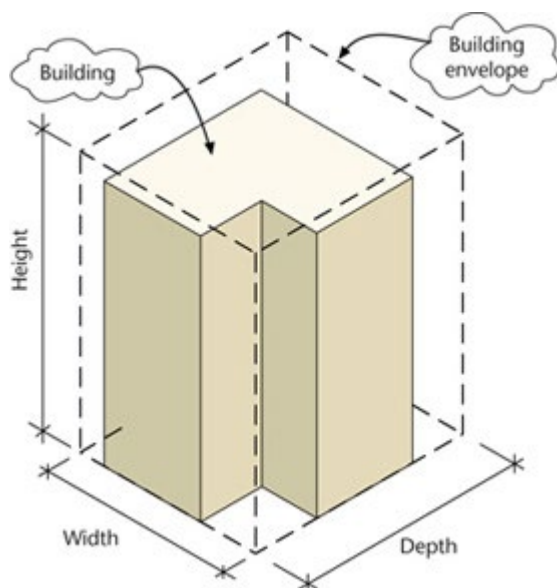


A **semi-detached building*** is a building that abuts or shares a wall, on a side lot line, with another building on an adjoining zoning lot and where the remaining sides of the building are surrounded by open areas or street lines.



A **zero lot line building*** is a freestanding building that abuts one side lot line of a zoning lot and does not abut any other building on an adjoining zoning lot.

Building Envelope



A building envelope is the maximum three-dimensional space on a zoning lot within which a structure can be built, as permitted by applicable height, setback and yard controls.

Building Height

Building height refers to a building's elevation as measured from the curb level or base plane to the roof of the building (except for permitted obstructions, such as elevator bulkheads).

Building Segment*

A building segment is a portion of a building where each portion has one or more dwelling units served by a separate entrance. For example, a row of attached townhouses is comprised of building segments.

Bulk

Bulk regulations are the combination of controls (lot size, floor area ratio, lot coverage, open space, yards, height and setback) that determine the maximum size and placement of a building on a zoning lot.

Bulkhead

A bulkhead is an enclosed structure on the roof of a building that may include mechanical equipment, water tanks and roof access from interior stairwells. It is not counted as floor area and is permitted to exceed zoning height and setback requirements, within limits specified in the Zoning Resolution.

Bulkhead Line (see [Waterfront Area](#))

Cellar

A cellar is a level of a building that has at least one-half of its floor-to-ceiling height below curb level or the base plane. By contrast, a basement has at least one-half of its floor-to-ceiling height above curb level or the base plane. A cellar is not included in floor area calculations.

Certification

A certification is a non-discretionary action taken by the City Planning Commission, or its Chairperson, informing the Department of Buildings that an as-of-right development has complied with specific conditions set forth in accordance with provisions of the Zoning Resolution. Certification is also the beginning of the ULURP process indicating that the Department of City Planning has determined that an application is complete and ready for formal public review.

City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR)

Pursuant to state law, the [City Environmental Quality Review](#) (CEQR) process identifies and assesses the potential environmental impacts of discretionary actions that are proposed by public or private applicants. A discretionary action, such as a zoning map amendment, cannot begin public review until a “conditional negative declaration” or “negative declaration” has been issued, stating that no significant environmental impacts have been identified or, if any potential impacts have been identified, a draft environmental impact statement has been completed, evaluating the significance of identified impacts and proposing appropriate mitigation.

A letter “E” designation assigned to a zoning lot indicates a site where environmental requirements must be satisfied before a building permit may be issued for any development, enlargement or change of use.

City Map

The City Map is a collection of maps that show legal streets, grades, parks, pierhead and bulkhead lines, public places and other legally established map elements. It is the official map of New York City and is the base for the zoning maps in the Zoning Resolution. The office of each borough president contains the city maps for that borough.

City Planning Commission

The **City Planning Commission**, established in 1936, is a 13-member panel responsible for the conduct of planning relating to the orderly growth and development of the city. The Commission meets regularly to hold public hearings and review and vote on applications related to the use and improvement of land, subject to city regulation and a consideration of environmental impacts. The Mayor appoints the Chairperson, who is also Director of the Department of City Planning (DCP), and six other members; each Borough President appoints one member and one member is appointed by the Public Advocate. The DCP provides technical support for the work of the Commission.

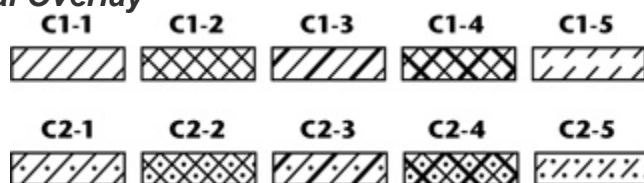
Commercial Building*

A commercial building is any building occupied only by commercial uses, as listed in Use Groups 5 through 16.

Commercial District*

A commercial district, designated by the letter C (C1-2, C3, C4-7, for example), is a zoning district in which commercial uses are allowed. Residential and community facility uses may also be permitted.

Commercial Overlay



A commercial overlay is a C1 or C2 district mapped within residential districts to serve local retail needs (grocery stores, dry cleaners, restaurants, for example). Commercial overlay districts, designated by the letters C1-1 through C1-5 and C2-1 through C2-5, are shown on the zoning maps as a pattern superimposed on a residential district.

Unless otherwise specified on the zoning maps, the depth of C1 overlay districts, measured from the nearest street, is 200 feet for C1-1 districts, 150 feet for C1-2, C1-3, C2-1, C2-2 and C2-3 districts, and 100 feet for C1-4, C1-5, C2-4 and C2-5 districts. When mapped on the long dimension of a block, commercial overlays extend to the midpoint of that block.

Commercial Use

A commercial use is any retail, service or office use listed in Use Groups 5 through 16, or allowed by special permit.

Community District (CD)

New York City is organized into 59 community districts. Each CD is represented by a Community Board, composed of volunteer community members appointed by the Borough President, that assist neighborhood residents and advise on neighborhood and citywide planning and service issues.

Community Facility Building

A community facility building is any building occupied only by a community facility use(s).

Community Facility Use

A community facility use provides educational, health, recreational, religious or other essential services for the community it serves. Community facility uses are listed in Use Groups 3 and 4.

Contextual Zoning

Contextual zoning regulates the height and bulk of new buildings, their setback from the street line, and their width along the street frontage, to produce buildings that are consistent with existing neighborhood character. Residential and commercial districts with an A, B, D or X suffix are contextual zoning districts.

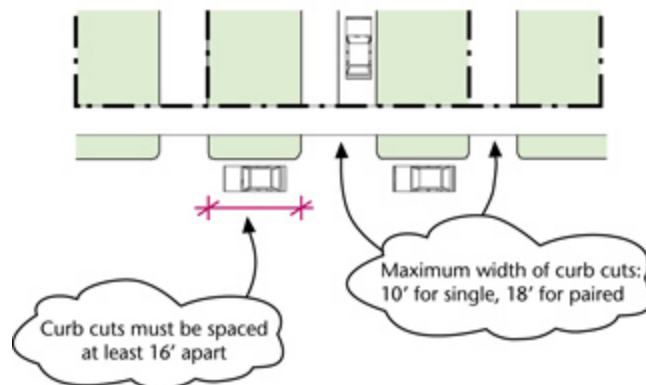
Conversion

A conversion is a change of a building's use to another use.

Court

A court is any open area, other than a yard or a portion of a yard, which is unobstructed from its lowest level to the sky, and is bounded by building walls, or building walls and one or more lot lines.

Curb Cut



A curb cut is an angled cut in the edge of a curb that permits vehicular access from a street to a driveway, garage, parking lot or loading dock. In residential districts, width and spacing rules for curb cuts ensure adequate curbside parking.

Curb Level

Curb level is the mean level of the curb adjoining a zoning lot. In general, it is the basis for building height and setback controls in medium- and higher-density non-contextual districts and manufacturing districts.

Density

Residential Density	
District	Dwelling Unit Factor
R1-1	4,750
R1-2	2,850
R2 R2A	1,900
R2X	2,900
R3-1 R3-2 ¹	625
R3A	710
R3-2 R4 R4-1 R4B	870
R3X	1,000
R4A	1,280
R5 R5D	760
R4(infill) R5(infill) R5B	900
R5A	1,560
R5B ²	1,350
R6 R7	680
R8 R8A R8X R9 R9A	740
R9-1 R9X R10	790

¹ for single- and two-family detached and semi-detached residences

² for single- and two-family residences

Density refers to the maximum number of dwelling units permitted on a zoning lot. The factors for each district are approximations of average unit size plus allowances for any common areas. Special density regulations apply to mixed buildings that contain both residential and community facility uses.

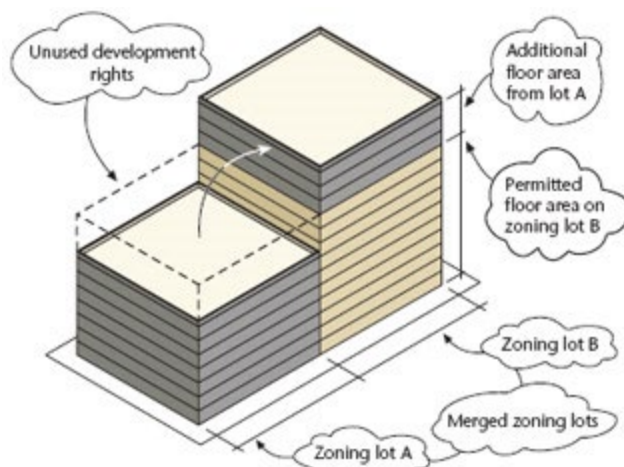
Detached Building* (see [Building](#))

Development

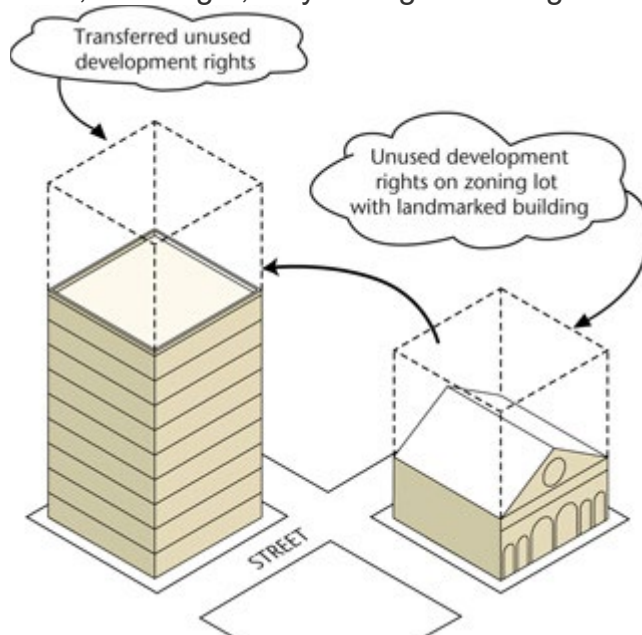
A development includes the construction of a new building or other structure on a zoning lot, the relocation of an existing building to another zoning lot, or the establishment of a new open use on a tract of land.

Development Rights

Development rights generally refer to the maximum amount of floor area permissible on a zoning lot. When the actual built floor area is less than the maximum permitted floor area, the difference is referred to as “unused development rights.” Unused development rights are often described as air rights.



A **zoning lot merger** is the joining of two or more adjacent zoning lots into one new zoning lot. Unused development rights may be shifted from one lot to another, as-of-right, only through a zoning lot merger.



A **transfer of development rights (TDR)** allows for the transfer of unused development rights from one zoning lot to another in limited circumstances, usually to promote the preservation of historic buildings, open space or unique cultural resources. For such purposes, a TDR may be permitted where the transfer could not be accomplished through a zoning lot merger. In the case of a landmark building, for example, a transfer may be made by CPC special permit from the zoning lot containing the designated landmark to an adjacent zoning lot or one that is directly across a street or, for a corner lot, another corner lot on the same intersection.

Discretionary Action

A discretionary action requires the review and approval of the City Planning Commission or the Board of Standards and Appeals. Zoning amendments, special permits, authorizations and variances are discretionary actions.

Docket

A docket is the Department of City Planning's official description of a proposed land-use action. The docket description is incorporated in the Commission's and City Council's resolution of approval and, except for City Map actions, is the legal and binding description of the action.

Dormer



A dormer is a permitted obstruction within a required setback area that may exceed the height of a building. In lower-density districts, it is often a window protruding from a sloped roof to provide light and air to the top floors of homes. In R6 through R10 contextual districts, dormers are portions of buildings allowed to penetrate a required setback above the maximum base height in order to provide variety to the base heights of buildings along a street. Both types of dormers are subject to size limitations.

Dwelling Unit

A dwelling unit consists of one or more rooms that contain lawful cooking and sanitary facilities, inhabited by one or more persons living together and maintaining a common household, in a residential building or residential portion of a building.

Enlargement



An enlargement is a built addition to an existing building that increases the floor area of the building.

Extension

An extension is an expansion of the existing floor area occupied by an existing use.

Fence

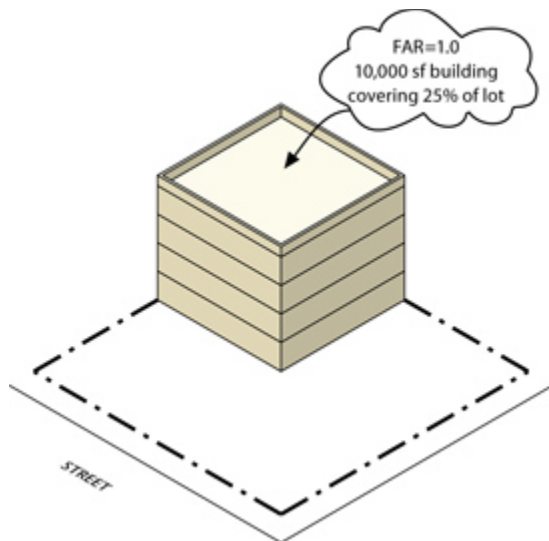
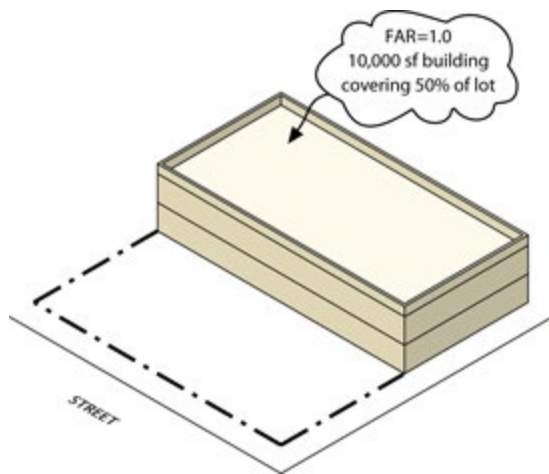
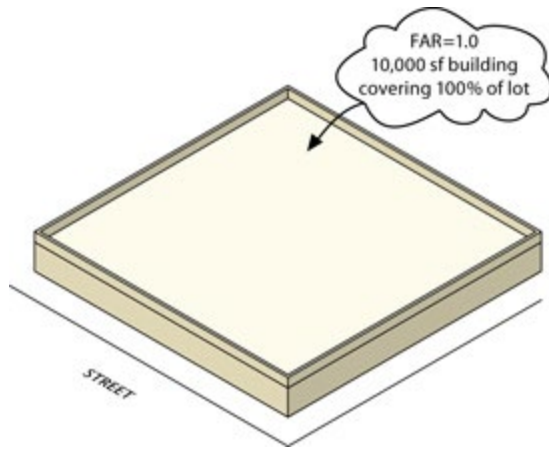
In residential districts, the maximum height of a fence constructed along a front lot line is four feet above ground level. The maximum height of a fence along the side or rear lot line is six feet. In most instances, fences are considered permitted obstructions.

Floor Area

The floor area of a building is the sum of the gross area of each floor of the building, excluding mechanical space, cellar space, floor space in open balconies, elevators or stair bulkheads and, in most zoning districts, floor space used for accessory parking that is located less than 23 feet above curb level.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

The floor area ratio is the principal bulk regulation controlling the size of buildings. FAR is the ratio of total building floor area to the area of its zoning lot. Each zoning district has an FAR which, when multiplied by the lot area of the zoning lot, produces the maximum amount of floor area allowable on that zoning lot. For example, on a 10,000 square foot zoning lot in a district with a maximum FAR of 1.0, the floor area on the zoning lot cannot exceed 10,000 square feet.



FRESH Food Store*

A **FRESH food store** is a full-line grocery store, established in underserved neighborhoods through zoning incentives, that promotes the sale of fresh food products.

Front Yard* (see ***Yard***)

Front Yard Line*

A front yard line is a line drawn parallel to the front lot line at the depth of a required front yard.

Group Parking Facility

A group parking facility is a building, structure or lot used for parking that serves more than one dwelling unit.

Height Factor

The height factor of a building is equal to the total floor area of the building divided by its lot coverage (in square feet). In general, the height factor is equal to the number of stories in a building constructed without setbacks.

Height Factor Building

A height factor building is a building containing residences whose residential bulk is determined by a complementary range of height factors, floor area ratios and open space ratios, and is set within a sky exposure plane. Height factor regulations promote tall buildings surrounded by open space. Height factor buildings are permitted only in R6 through R9 non-contextual districts.

Home Occupation

A home occupation is a business operated by the occupant(s) of a dwelling unit, which is accessory to the residential use. It is generally restricted to no more than 25 percent of the floor area of the dwelling unit (500 sq ft maximum). Occupations that may generate excessive noise, odors or pedestrian traffic are not permitted.

Incentive Zoning

Incentive zoning provides a bonus, usually in the form of additional floor area, in exchange for the provision of a public amenity or affordable housing. There are incentive bonuses for the provision of public plazas (privately owned public spaces), visual or performing arts spaces, subway improvements, theater preservation, FRESH food stores and affordable housing (Inclusionary Housing Program).

Inclusionary Housing Program

The **Inclusionary Housing Program** provides two optional floor area incentives in exchange for the creation or preservation of affordable housing, on or off-site, predominantly for low-income households.

The original ***R10 Program*** provides a floor area bonus of up to 20 percent, increasing the maximum FAR of 10.0 to 12.0 for the provision of affordable housing in applicable residential and commercial districts with R10 density.

In ***Inclusionary Housing designated areas**** mapped in medium- and high-density residential neighborhoods and commercial districts with equivalent density, a bonus of 33 percent of floor area can be obtained for providing 20 percent as affordable housing. The base FAR in designated areas is, in most cases, lower than the maximum FAR allowed in the same zoning district located outside a designated area.

Income-restricted Housing Unit

A **dwelling unit** that complies with the definition of an affordable housing unit under one of the **Inclusionary Housing Programs**, or any other dwelling unit with a legally binding restriction on household income at or below 80 percent of Area Median Income.

Infill Housing (see Predominantly Built-up Area)

Joint Living-Work Quarters for Artists*

Joint living-work quarters for artists are spaces in nonresidential buildings used for living quarters and work space by artists and their households.

Large Scale Development

A **large-scale development** is a development generally involving several zoning lots planned as a unit. Large-scale development regulations allow modifications to various zoning regulations, such as the distribution of floor area without regard to zoning lot lines, by CPC discretionary action. Such modifications can allow for design flexibility to achieve a superior site plan.

A ***large-scale general development**** is a development or enlargement for any uses permitted by the underlying district regulations in commercial districts (except C1, C2, C3 and C4-1 districts) and in all manufacturing districts. The development must be on a tract of land that is at least 1.5 acres and may include existing buildings.

A **large-scale residential development*** is a development designed predominantly for residential uses in residence districts and in C1, C2, C3 and C4-1 districts. The development must be on a tract of land that is either at least three acres (130,680 sq ft) with a minimum of 500 dwelling units or at least 1.5 acres (65,340 sq ft) with a minimum of three principal residential buildings. Existing buildings may not form any part of a large-scale residential development.

A **large-scale community facility development *** is a development or enlargement predominantly for community facility uses in residential districts and in C1, C2, C3 and C4-1 districts. The development must be on a tract of land that is at least three acres (130,680 sq ft) and may include existing buildings.

Limited Height District

A limited height district may be superimposed on an area designated as an historic district by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. It is mapped in areas of the Upper East Side, Gramercy Park, Brooklyn Heights and Cobble Hill. The maximum building height is 50 feet in a LH-1 district, 60 feet in a LH-1A district, 70 feet in a LH-2 district and 100 feet in a LH-3 district.

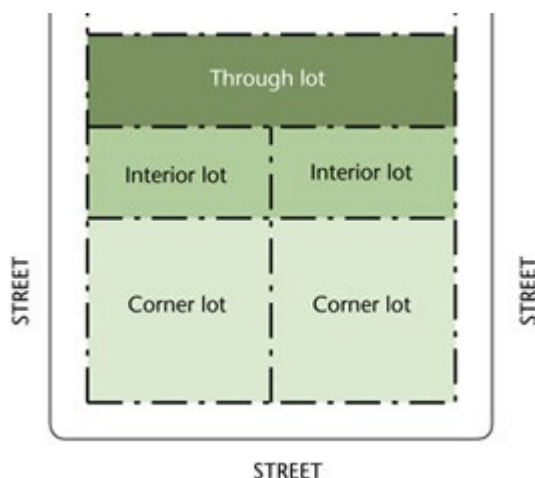
Loft

A loft is a building or space within a building designed for commercial or manufacturing use, generally constructed prior to 1930. In certain manufacturing districts, lofts may be converted to residential use by CPC special permit.

Lot or Zoning Lot

A lot or zoning lot is a tract of land comprising a single tax lot or two or more adjacent tax lots within a block. An apartment building on a single zoning lot, for example, may contain separate condominium units, each occupying its own tax lot. Similarly, a building containing a row of townhouses may occupy several separate tax lots within a single zoning lot, or two or more detached homes on one zoning lot may each have its own tax lot.

The zoning lot is the basic unit for zoning regulations and may be subdivided into two or more zoning lots, and two or more adjoining zoning lots on the same block may be merged, provided that all resulting zoning lots comply with applicable regulations.



A **corner lot*** is a zoning lot that adjoins the point of intersection of two or more streets; it is also a zoning lot bounded entirely by streets.

An **interior lot*** is any zoning lot that is neither a corner lot nor a through lot.

A **through lot*** is any zoning lot that connects two generally parallel streets and is not a corner lot.

Lot Area

Lot area is the area (in square feet) of a zoning lot.

Lot Coverage

Lot coverage is that portion of a zoning lot which, when viewed from above, is covered by a building. Permitted obstructions are not counted towards lot coverage calculations.

Lot Depth

Lot depth is the mean horizontal distance between the front lot line and rear lot line of a zoning lot.

Lot Line or Zoning Lot Line

A lot line or a zoning lot line is a boundary of a zoning lot.

A **front lot line***, also known as a street line, is that portion of a zoning lot line that fronts upon a street.

A **rear lot line*** is any lot line that is generally parallel to a street line bounding the zoning lot and does not intersect a street line.

A **side lot line*** is any lot line that is neither a front lot line nor a rear lot line.

Lot Width

Lot width is the mean horizontal distance between the side lot lines of a zoning lot.

Lower Density Growth Management Area

A **Lower Density Growth Management Area** is a designated area that is generally distant from mass transit and characterized by rapid growth and high auto ownership, such as Staten Island or the Throgs Neck area of the Bronx. New developments must provide more off-street parking, larger yards and more open space than would otherwise be required in the mapped zoning districts.

Manhattan Core

The Manhattan Core extends from the southern tip of Manhattan at The Battery to West 110th Street on the West Side and East 96th Street on the East Side. It is the area covered by Manhattan Community Districts 1 through 8.

Manufacturing District

A manufacturing district, designated by the letter M (M1-1, M2-2, for example), is a zoning district in which manufacturing uses, most commercial uses and some community facility uses are permitted. Industrial uses are subject to a range of performance standards. Residential development is not allowed, except in M1-1D through M1-5D districts by CPC authorization, and in M1-6D districts, as-of-right or by CPC certification.

Manufacturing Use

A manufacturing use is any use listed in Use Group 17 or 18, or an industrial use only allowed by special permit.

Mixed Building*

A mixed building is a building in a commercial district used partly for residential use and partly for community facility or commercial use.

When a building contains more than one use, the maximum FAR permitted on the zoning lot is the highest FAR allowed for any of the uses, provided that the FAR for each use does not exceed the maximum FAR permitted for that use.

In a C1-8A district, for example, where the maximum commercial FAR is 2.0 and the maximum residential FAR is 7.52, the total permitted FAR for a mixed residential/commercial building would be 7.52, of which no more than 2.0 FAR may be applied to the commercial space.

Mixed Use District*

A mixed use district is a special purpose district where one set of regulations applies to many different areas shown on the zoning maps as MX with a numerical suffix (MX-8, for example). In MX districts, an M1 district is paired with a residential district (M1-2/R6, for example) and new residential and non-residential uses are permitted as-of-right within the same building. In this district, a building that contains a residential use and any other use is a mixed use building.

Narrow Street* (see [Street](#))

Non-complying or Non-compliance

A non-complying building is any building that no longer complies with one or more of the bulk regulations of the applicable zoning district. The degree of non-compliance may not be increased. Regulations governing non-complying buildings can be found in Article V, Chapter 4, of the Zoning Resolution.

Non-conforming or Non-conformity

A non-conforming use is any use that no longer conforms to one or more of the use regulations of the applicable zoning district. The degree of non-conformance may not be increased. Regulations governing non-conforming uses can be found in Article V, Chapters 2 and 3, of the Zoning Resolution.

Open Space*

Open space is the part of a residential zoning lot (which may include courts or yards) that is open and unobstructed from its lowest level to the sky, except for specific permitted obstructions, and accessible to and usable by all persons occupying dwelling units on the zoning lot. Depending upon the district, the amount of required open space is determined by the open space ratio, minimum yard regulations or by maximum lot coverage.

Open Space Ratio (OSR)

The open space ratio is the amount of open space required on a residential zoning lot in non-contextual districts, expressed as a percentage of the total floor area on the zoning lot. For example, if a building with 20,000 square feet

of floor area has an OSR of 20, 4,000 square feet of open space would be required on the zoning lot (0.20 × 20,000 sq ft).

Overlay District

An overlay district is a district superimposed upon another district which supersedes, modifies or supplements the underlying regulations. Limited height districts and commercial overlay districts are examples of overlay districts.

Paired Districts

A paired district matches an M1 district with an R3 through R10 district (M1-5/R10, for example) to permit a mixture of residential and non-residential (commercial, community facility, light manufacturing) uses in the same zoning district, block or building. Paired districts are mapped in [Special Mixed Use Districts](#) and in the [Special Long Island City Mixed Use District](#).

Parapet

A parapet is a low wall or protective barrier that extends vertically above the roof of a building or other structure. A parapet wall that is no higher than four feet is a permitted obstruction and may penetrate a maximum height limit or required setback area.

Parking Requirement Category (PRC)

PRC	Types of Uses
A	Food stores (larger than 2,000 sf) - high traffic volume
B	Local retail or service uses (bakeries, restaurants, department and appliance stores) - high traffic volume
B1	Offices and stores that sell large items (furniture, carpets, appliances) - low traffic volume
C	Miscellaneous (court houses, auto showrooms) - low traffic volume
D	Places of assembly (theater, bowling alleys, stadiums) - high traffic volume
E	Outdoor amusement areas - high traffic volume
F	Light manufacturing (ceramics, dental products, commercial laundries) - moderate traffic volume
G	Storage uses (warehouses, trucking terminals) - low traffic volume
H	Other uses (hotels, funeral parlors, post offices, boat rentals) with unique traffic characteristics

Parking requirements for commercial uses are grouped into nine parking requirement categories based on the compatibility of the uses and the amount of traffic generated.

Performance Standard

A performance standard is a minimum requirement or maximum allowable limit on noise, vibration, smoke, odor and other effects of industrial uses listed in Use Groups 17 and 18.

Perimeter Wall

Perimeter walls are the outermost walls of a building in a lower-density district that enclose floor area and rise from the base plane to a specified maximum height.

Permitted Obstruction

A permitted obstruction is a structure or object that may be located in a required yard or open space or penetrate a height limit, setback area or sky exposure plane. A balcony, trellis, air conditioner, gutter or fence is a permitted obstruction in required yards or open space. Certain structures on a roof, such as elevator bulkheads, water towers or parapets are permitted obstructions that may penetrate height limits, setback areas or sky exposure planes.

Pierhead Line (see [Waterfront Area](#))

Planting Strips

Planting strips are grassy areas that extend along the edge of the curb within which street trees are planted in R1 through R5 districts. Planting strips are a required [streetscape improvement](#) in certain districts.

Predominantly Built-up Area

A predominantly built-up area is a blockfront entirely within an R4 or R5 district (without a suffix) in which optional regulations that permit higher floor area ratios and lower parking requirements may be used to produce infill housing. At least 50 percent of the area of the block must be occupied by zoning lots developed with buildings, and the zoning lot that will be developed with infill housing may not exceed 1.5 acres (65,340 sq ft). Infill regulations may not be used to redevelop a lot occupied by a one- or two-family detached or semi-detached house unless the blockfront is predominantly developed with attached or multifamily housing.

Private Road

A private road is a right-of-way that gives vehicular access to developments with five or more dwelling units that are located at least 50 feet from a public street in R1 through R5 districts. Developments on private roads must comply with special design rules. In lower density growth management areas, a right-of-way that provides access to three or more dwelling units is a private road.

Privately-owned Public Space

A privately owned public space is an amenity provided and maintained by the property owner for public use, usually in exchange for additional floor area. Located mainly in the high-density, central business districts of Manhattan, these spaces are typically in the form of an arcade or a public plaza with seating and landscaping and may be located within or outside a building.

Public Park

A public park is any publicly owned park, playground, beach, parkway, or roadway within the jurisdiction and control of the New York City Commissioner of Parks & Recreation. Typically, public parks are not subject to zoning regulations.

Public Parking Garage

A public parking garage is a building or part of a building that is used on a daily basis for public parking. A public parking garage may include some accessory off-street parking spaces for uses on the same zoning lot.

Public Parking Lot

A public parking lot is a tract of land that is used on a daily basis for public parking and is not accessory to a use on the same or another zoning lot.

Public Plaza

A public plaza is a privately owned open area adjacent to a building and accessible to the public. It must generally be at the level of the sidewalk it adjoins and be unobstructed to the sky except for seating and other permitted amenities. In certain high-density zoning districts, a floor area bonus is available for the provision of a public plaza.

Qualifying Ground Floor

A ground floor of a development or enlargement of a Quality Housing building, where the start of the second story is 13 feet or more above

the level of the sidewalk and, in certain instances, where additional supplementary use provisions are met. In some **zoning districts**, buildings with a Qualifying Ground Floor are permitted a higher maximum base and overall height.

Quality Housing Program

The Quality Housing Program, mandatory in contextual R6 through R10 residence districts and optional in non-contextual R6 through R10 districts, encourages development consistent with the character of many established neighborhoods. Its bulk regulations set height limits and allow high lot coverage buildings that are set at or near the street line. The Quality Housing Program also requires amenities relating to interior space, recreation areas and landscaping.

Railroad or Transit Air Space

Railroad or transit air space is space directly over an open railroad or transit right-of-way or yard in existence on or after September 27, 1962. Development may be permitted only by CPC special permit.

Rear Yard* (see Yard)

Rear Yard Equivalent (see Yard)

Residence*

A residence consists of one or more dwelling units or rooming units, and any common areas, including one-family and two-family houses, multifamily dwellings or apartment hotels.

A ***single-family residence**** is a building on a zoning lot containing one dwelling unit occupied by one household.

A ***two-family residence**** is a building on a zoning lot containing two dwelling units occupied by two households. In R3-1, R3A, R3X, R4-1 and R4A districts, two-family houses, both detached and semi-detached, must have at least 75% of one dwelling unit directly above or below the other.

A ***multifamily residence*** is a building on a zoning lot containing at least three dwelling units.

Residence District

A residence district, designated by the letter R (R3-2, R5, R10A, for example), is a zoning district in which only residences and community facilities are permitted.

Residential District Equivalent

A residential district equivalent is a residential district designation assigned to a C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 or C6 district that establishes the regulations for residential development within the district. Any residential development in a C4-4 district, for example, must follow the bulk regulations of its residential equivalent, an R7 district.

Residential Use

A residential use is any use listed in Use Group 1 (single-family detached residences) or Use Group 2 (all other types of residential development).

Restrictive Declaration

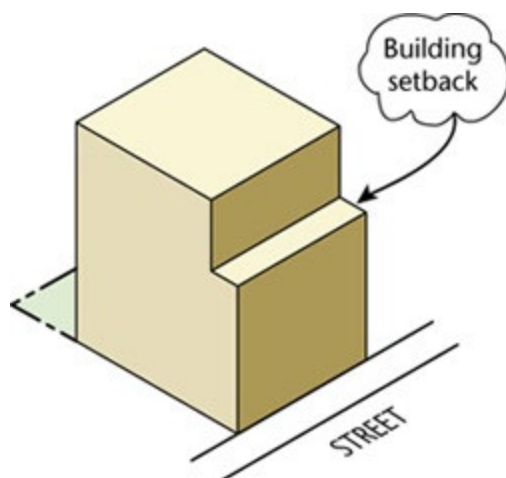
A restrictive declaration is a covenant running with the land that binds the present and future owners of the property. Restrictive declarations are used to implement the conditions of a land use approval or ensure implementation of environmental mitigations and project components.

Rezoning

A rezoning or remapping occurs when the zoning designation(s) for an area is changed on the zoning map to facilitate policy initiatives, such as preserving neighborhoods and promoting economic development around transit hubs. A zoning map amendment is subject to the ULURP review process.

***Semi-detached Building** (see [Building](#))**

Setback, Building

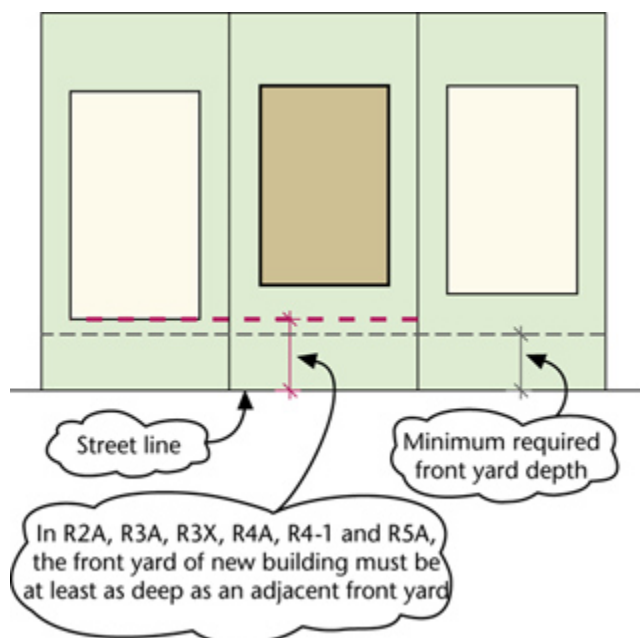


A setback is the portion of a building that is set back above the base height (or street wall or perimeter wall) before the total height of the building is achieved. The position of a building setback in height factor districts is controlled by sky exposure planes and, in contextual districts, by specified distances from street walls.

Setbacks, Front Yard or Ground Level

Front yards are required in R1 through R5 districts; rules governing the depth of open areas at ground level between the front building wall and the street line apply in R6 through R10 districts. Front yards and open areas must be planted and have a minimum depth that meets the following requirements:

R2A, R3A, R3X, R4A, R4-1 and R5A



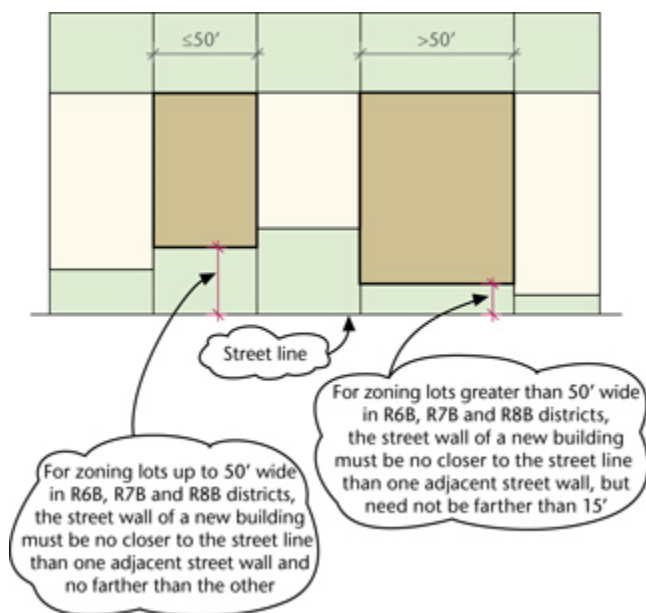
In R2A, R3A, R3X, R4A, R4-1 and R5A districts, if the adjacent front yards are deeper than the minimum required front yard, a new building must provide a front yard at least as deep as one of the adjacent yards, but it need not be deeper than 20 feet.

R4B, R5B and R5D



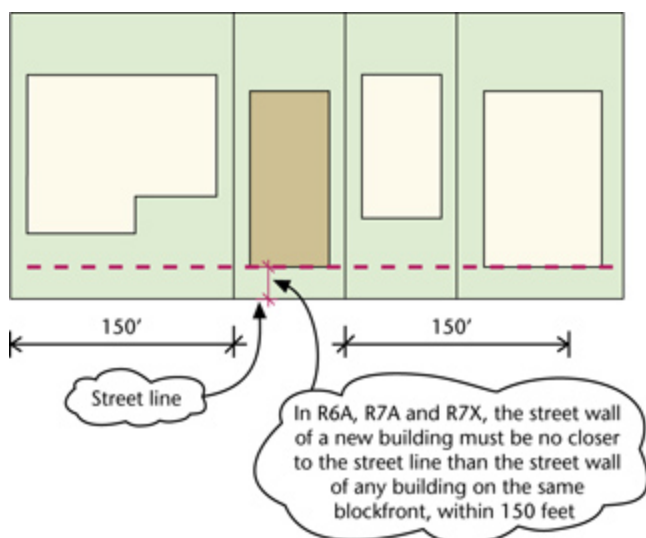
In R4B, R5B and R5D districts, if the adjacent front yards are deeper than the minimum required front yard, then the front yard of a new building must be at least as deep as one adjacent front yard and no deeper than the other, but it need not be deeper than 20 feet.

R6B, R7B and R8B



In R6B, R7B and R8B districts, the street wall of a new building, on any lot up to 50 feet wide, must be as deep as one adjacent wall and no deeper than the other. On lots wider than 50 feet, the street wall of a new building may be no closer to the street line than the street wall of an adjacent building. A street wall need not be located farther from the street line than 15 feet.

R6A, R7A and R7X

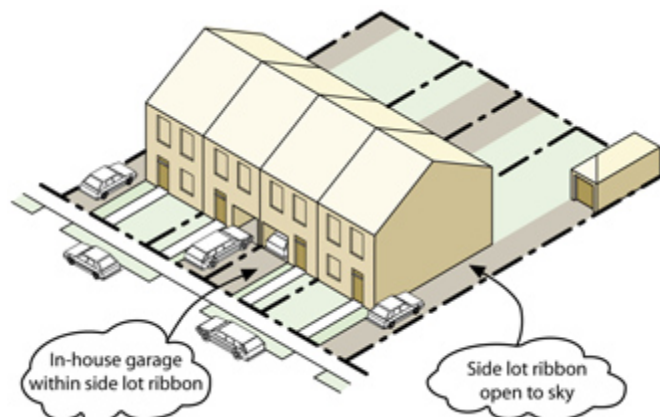


In R6A, R7A, 7D and R7X districts, the street wall of a new building may be located no closer to the street line than the street wall of any building within 150 feet on the same blockfront, but need not be located farther from the street line than 15 feet.

Shore Public Walkway* (see [Waterfront Public Access Area](#))

Shoreline (see [Waterfront Area](#))

Side Lot Ribbon



A side lot ribbon is an 8 to 10 foot wide strip that extends along the length of the side lot line of a zoning lot. It is not required to be open to the sky and can extend through an attached house set along the side lot line. In R3, R4 and R5 districts, if a zoning lot is less than 35 feet wide, parking must be located in a side lot ribbon.

Side Yard* (see [Yard](#))

Sidewalk cafe

A sidewalk cafe is a portion of an eating or drinking establishment that is located on a public sidewalk. Sidewalk cafe regulations are administered by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

An **enclosed sidewalk cafe*** is a sidewalk cafe that is contained within a structure.

An **unenclosed sidewalk cafe*** contains readily removable tables, chairs or railings, with no overhead coverage other than umbrellas or a retractable awning.

A **small sidewalk cafe*** is an unenclosed sidewalk cafe containing no more than a single row of tables and chairs in a space no greater than 4½ feet from the street line, with no barrier between the café and the sidewalk.

Sign

A sign is any writing—words, pictures or symbols—that is on or attached to a building or other structure.

An **accessory sign*** directs attention to a business, profession, commodity, service or entertainment conducted, sold or offered upon the same zoning lot.

An **advertising sign*** directs attention to a business, profession, commodity, service or entertainment conducted, sold or offered on a different zoning lot.

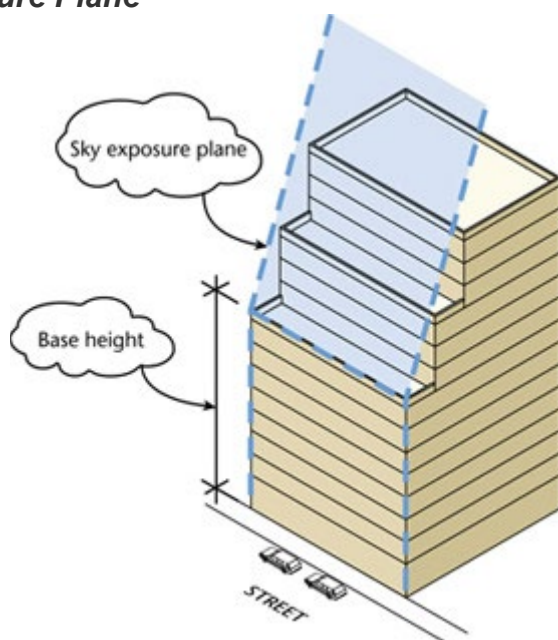
A **flashing sign*** is any illuminated sign, whether stationary, revolving or rotating, which changes light or color.

An **illuminated sign*** uses artificial light or reflected light from an artificial source.

Sketch Maps

A sketch map is an illustration of a proposed change to the Zoning Map or the City Map that provides a graphic, easy to read version of the change. The sketch map is attached to the Notice of Certification (NOC) when an application for a Zoning Map or City Map change is certified as complete by the Department of City Planning and distributed for public review. Sketch maps are limited in scope and scale to include only the area affected by the proposed action and do not necessarily reflect the final action.

Sky Exposure Plane



A sky exposure plane is a virtual sloping plane that begins at a specified height above the street line and rises inward over the zoning lot at a ratio of

vertical distance to horizontal distance set forth in district regulations. A building may not penetrate the sky exposure plane which is designed to provide light and air at street level, primarily in medium- and higher-density districts.

Sliver Building

A tall building or enlargement that is 45 feet wide or less, in an R7-2, R7X, R8, R9 or R10 district, is commonly called a sliver building. Such buildings are generally restricted to a height equal to the width of the abutting street or 100 feet, whichever is less.

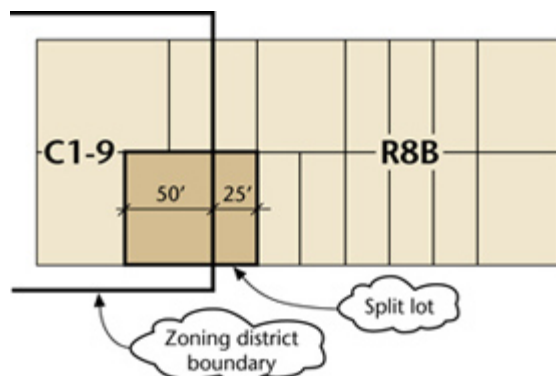
Special Permit

A special permit is a discretionary action by the City Planning Commission (CPC), subject to ULURP review, or the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA), which may modify use, bulk or parking regulations if certain conditions and findings specified in the Zoning Resolution are met. Applications for special permits under CPC jurisdiction generally concern use or bulk modifications with potential for greater land use impacts than those reviewed by the BSA.

Special Purpose District

The regulations for special purpose districts are designed to supplement and modify the underlying zoning in order to respond to distinctive neighborhoods with particular issues and goals. Special purpose districts are shown as overlays on the zoning maps and are in Articles VIII–XIII of the Resolution.

Split Lot



A split lot is a zoning lot located in two or more zoning districts and divided by a zoning district boundary. In most cases, zoning regulations for each district must be applied separately for each portion of the lot. Special rules for zoning

lots that existed prior to 1961, or prior to any rezoning that splits a lot, can be found in Article VII, Chapter 7, of the Zoning Resolution.

25 Foot Rule

The 25 foot rule applies to an existing zoning lot split between two or more zoning districts that permit different uses or have different bulk rules (C1-9 and R8B, for example). When the width of one district measures 25 feet or less at every point, the use and bulk regulations of the larger district can be applied to the entire zoning lot.

Story

A story is that part of a building between the surface of one floor and the ceiling immediately above. A cellar does not count as a story.

Street

A street is any road (other than a private road), highway, parkway, avenue, alley or other way shown on the City Map, or a way at least 50 feet wide and intended for public use which connects a way shown on the City Map to another such way or to a building or structure. A street refers to the entire public right-of-way (including public sidewalks).

A **narrow street*** is a street that is less than 75 feet wide.

A **wide street*** is a street that is 75 feet or more in width. Most bulk regulations applicable to wide streets are also applicable to buildings on intersecting streets within 100 feet of a wide street.

Street Line*

A street line is a front lot line separating the zoning lot from the street.

Street Wall

A street wall is a wall or portion of a wall of a building facing a street.

Supplemental Public Access Area* (see [Waterfront Public Access Area](#))

Tax Lot

A tax lot is a parcel of land identified with a unique borough, block and lot number for property tax purposes. A zoning lot comprises one or more adjacent tax lots within a block.

Tower

A tower is a portion of a building that penetrates the sky exposure plane and is allowed only in specified high-density areas of the city. A tower may be occupied by residential, commercial or community facility uses.

The standard ***tower rules*** generally permit the tower portion of a building to cover no more than 40 percent of the area of the zoning lot, or up to 50 percent on lots smaller than 20,000 square feet. The tower portion of a building must be set back at least 10 feet from a wide street and at least 15 feet from a narrow street. These regulations are modified for different uses and districts.

A ***tower-on-a-base*** requires a contextual base between 60 and 85 feet high that extends continuously along the street line. The height of the tower is controlled by a minimum lot coverage requirement and a rule that at least 55 percent of the floor area on the zoning lot be located below a height of 150 feet. On a wide street in R9 and R10 districts and their C1 or C2 equivalents, a building that includes a residential tower must comply with tower-on-a-base regulations in addition to the standard tower rules.

Transfer of Development Rights (see [Development Rights](#))

Transit Zone

An area where special lower accessory parking requirements apply for various types of affordable housing including [income-restricted housing units](#). These are generally areas of the city beyond the Manhattan Core within one-half mile of a subway station where auto ownership rates are among the lowest in the city.

Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)

The [Uniform Land Use Review Procedure \(ULURP\)](#) is the public review process, mandated by the City Charter, for all proposed zoning map amendments, special permits and other actions such as site selections and acquisitions for city capital projects and disposition of city property. ULURP sets forth a time frame and other requirements for public participation at the Community Board, Borough Board and Borough President levels, and for the public hearings and determinations of the Community Boards, Borough Presidents, City Planning Commission (CPC) and City Council. Zoning text amendments follow a similar review process, but without a time limit for CPC review.

Upland Connection* (see [Waterfront Public Access Area](#))

Use

A use is any activity, occupation, business or operation, listed in Use Groups 1 through 18, or identified in a special permit, which is conducted in a building or on a tract of land. Certain uses are allowed only by special permit of the CPC or BSA.

Use Group

Uses that have similar functional characteristics and/or nuisance impacts and are generally compatible with each other are listed in one or more of 18 groups that are categorized as residential uses (Use Groups 1–2), community facility uses (Use Groups 3–4), retail and service uses (Use Groups 5–9), regional commercial centers/amusement uses (Use Groups 10–12), waterfront/recreation uses (Use Groups 13–15), heavy automotive uses (Use Group 16) and industrial uses (Use Groups 17–18). Use group charts can be found in Chapter 2 of Articles II, III and IV of the Zoning Resolution.

Variance

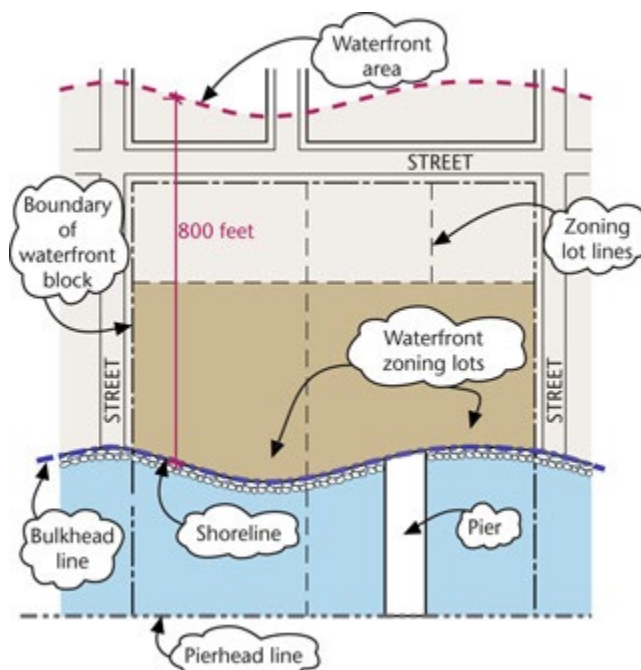
A variance is a discretionary action by the Board of Standards and Appeals which grants relief from the use and bulk provisions of the Zoning Resolution to the extent necessary to permit a reasonable or practical use of the land. A variance may be granted, after a public hearing, when unique conditions on a specific parcel of land would cause the property owner practical difficulty and undue hardship if it were developed pursuant to applicable provisions.

Waterfront Access Plan (WAP)

A waterfront access plan is a detailed framework set forth in the Zoning Resolution, that tailors waterfront bulk regulations and public access requirements to the specific conditions of a particular waterfront. Development of individual waterfront parcels governed by the plan triggers a requirement to build and maintain public access areas in accordance with the WAP.

Waterfront Area

A [waterfront area](#) is the geographical area adjacent to a body of water at least 100 feet wide, comprising all blocks between the pierhead line and a parallel line 800 feet landward from the shoreline. Blocks within the waterfront area are subject to waterfront zoning regulations.



The **bulkhead line** is a line shown on the zoning maps which divides the upland and seaward portions of waterfront zoning lots.

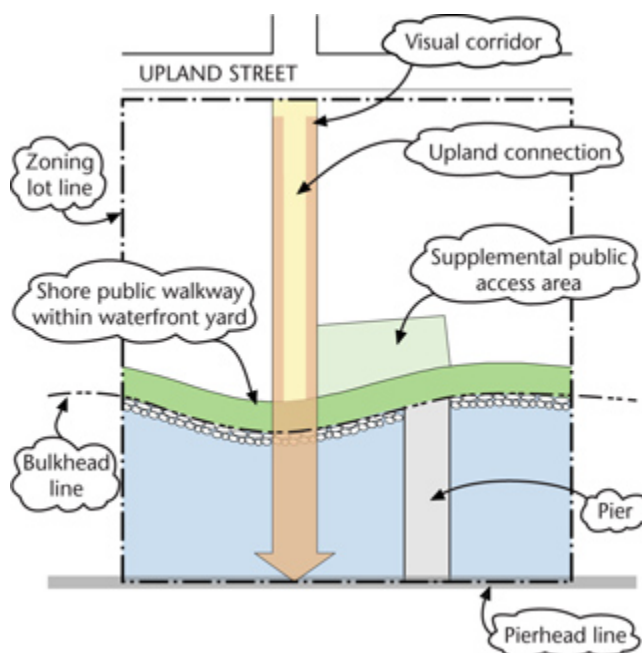
The **pierhead line** is a line shown on the zoning maps which defines the outermost seaward boundary of the area regulated by the Zoning Resolution.

The **shoreline*** is the mean high water line.

A **waterfront block***, **waterfront public park*** or **waterfront zoning lot*** is a block, public park or zoning lot in the waterfront area that is adjacent to or intersected by the shoreline.

Waterfront Public Access Area*

A **waterfront public access area** (WPAA) is the portion of a waterfront zoning lot where publicly accessible open space is provided to and along the shoreline. All WPAA's are required to be improved with landscaping and trees, seating and other amenities. WPAA's can include a shore public walkway, an upland connection, a supplemental public access area, a public access area on a pier or floating structure, or any additional area improved for public use. The minimum amount of waterfront public access area required is a specified percentage for the zoning lot.



A **shore public walkway*** is a linear public access area running alongside the shore.

An **upland connection*** is a pedestrian way between a public place (a street, a sidewalk or a park, for example) and a shore public walkway. Upland connections may be provided along a private road.

A **supplemental public access area*** is a public access area required in order to fulfill the minimum percentage of WPAA required on a waterfront zoning lot, once a shore public walkway and upland connection have been provided.

Waterfront Yard*

A waterfront yard is the portion of a waterfront zoning lot extending along the entire length of the shoreline which must be open and unobstructed from the lowest level to the sky, except for certain permitted obstructions. Depending upon the zoning district, the minimum depth is typically 30 to 40 feet. Shore public walkways are required to be located within the waterfront yard.

Wide Street* (see [Street](#))

Window, Legally Required*

Legally required windows are mandated in dwelling units to provide necessary light, air and ventilation. Legally required windows cannot be located on or closer than 30 feet to a lot line.

Yard

A yard is a required open area along the lot lines of a zoning lot which must be unobstructed from the lowest level to the sky, except for certain permitted obstructions. Yard regulations ensure light and air between structures.

A **front yard*** extends along the full width of a front lot line. In the case of a corner lot, any yard extending along the full length of a street line is considered a front yard. (See also [Setbacks, Front Yard or Ground Level](#))

A **rear yard*** extends for the full width of a rear lot line. In residential districts, the minimum depth of a rear yard is 30 feet, except in R2X districts. In commercial, manufacturing and R2X districts, the minimum depth of a rear yard is 20 feet. A corner lot is not required to have a rear yard. In commercial and manufacturing districts, and for some community facility buildings in residence districts, the rear yard may be occupied entirely by a single-story building up to a height of 23 feet.

A **rear yard equivalent*** is an open area on a through lot required to comply with rear yard regulations.

A **side yard*** extends along a side lot line from the required front yard, or from the front lot line if no front yard is required, to the required rear yard, or to the rear lot line if no rear yard is required. In the case of a corner lot, any yard that is not a front yard is considered a side yard.

Zero Lot Line Building* (see [Building](#))

Zoning District

A zoning district is a residential, commercial or manufacturing area of the city within which zoning regulations govern land use and building bulk. Special purpose zoning districts have distinctive qualities where regulations are tailored to the neighborhood. Zoning districts are shown on the zoning maps.

Zoning Lot* (see [Lot](#))

Zoning Lot Merger (see [Development Rights](#))

Zoning Maps

The 126 New York City zoning maps indicate the location and boundaries of zoning districts and are part of the Zoning Resolution. Each map covers a land

area of approximately 8,000 feet (north/south) by 12,500 feet (east/west).
Zoning map amendments, or rezonings, are subject to ULURP review.

* Words and phrases followed by an asterisk (*) are defined terms in the Zoning Resolution, primarily in Section 12-10. Consult the Zoning Resolution for the official and legally binding definitions of these words and phrases.