

# GET STUFF BUILT

A REPORT OF THE BUILDING  
AND LAND USE APPROVAL  
STREAMLINING TASKFORCE



**NYC**



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# Letter from Mayor Adams

To my fellow New Yorkers:

New York City is emerging from two years of uncertainty into a transformative new era. Yet our city's housing crisis remains. More than one-third of New Yorkers spend over half their income on rent, and last night thousands of children slept in a shelter bed.

The City's decades-long housing crisis requires policies that respond with urgency and help New Yorkers secure safe, quality housing as quickly as possible. There's no time for creaky bureaucracy, outdated policies, and endless documents that do not help New Yorkers.

That's why I convened the Building and Land use Approval Streamlining Taskforce (BLAST), co-chaired by Maria Torres-Springer, Deputy Mayor for Economic & Workforce Development; Melanie La Rocca, the Chief Efficiency Officer; and Jessica Katz, the Chief Housing Officer—all of whom have years of experience with these issues. With 25 City agencies and scores of advocates, local communities, and experts, we identified 111 ways the City's processes governing development are broken and, most importantly, how to fix them.

We're streamlining approvals and services to support innovation and investment. We're making the entire development process simpler and easier to plan for, especially for non-profit and minority and women-owned businesses who often have less resources to tackle the bureaucracy and survive financial risks caused by these delays. And we're reducing costs and barriers and accelerating our approvals process, without sacrificing environmental health, public engagement, or safety.

Through implementing the initiatives contained in this report—which has already begun—we will reduce the time to proceed through our development processes by 50 percent and improve the overall experience of the applicants who use these processes, as well as of the everyday New Yorkers impacted by them.

We are taking one step closer to turning New York into a "City of Yes." Yes to more affordable housing. Yes to homeowners improving their property and building generational wealth. Yes to supporting our small businesses. And yes to city agencies efficiently delivering for New Yorkers.



Eric Adams  
Mayor of the City of New York



# Letter from the Deputy Mayor, Chief Efficiency Officer and Chief Housing Officer

To our fellow New Yorkers:

Quite often, the topic of land use and development in New York City feels like the limited domain of a small number of planners, government officials, and real estate experts. When, in fact, it is essential to every New Yorker because it creates the most fundamental need for all: stable housing and economic opportunities.

But bureaucracy and years of outdated policies have gotten in the way of addressing these fundamental need. Together, these processes hinder our goals of more affordable housing, more small businesses, more jobs, and more infrastructure investment for New Yorkers.

When affordable homes for our most vulnerable New Yorkers are shelved because our land use processes take too long and are too costly to navigate, something is broken.

This Administration has already addressed the slowdown of government by cutting red tape and costs for businesses to conduct business in New York City through [Executive Order 2](#); overhauling the City's capital project process and ability to build through [the Capital Process Reform Task Force](#); and creating a plan to tackle New York City's affordable housing crisis through [Housing Our Neighbors: A Blueprint for Housing and Homelessness](#).

To fix the broken development process, we convened the Building and Land use Approval Streamlining Taskforce (BLAST)—comprising over two dozen agencies—and identified 111 ways the City's administration of development is broken and, most importantly, how to fix it. The 111 improvements contained in this report will help accelerate the creation of affordable housing, drive economic growth, and build stronger communities by reducing regulations, streamlining business and development processes, and modernizing the relationship between the responsibilities of government and the needs of the public.

The building approval process also disproportionately burdens property owners or single-family homeowners that do not have easy access to capital. A smooth predictable permitting process reduces risk for entrepreneur businesses and emerging developers such as non-profits or minority and women-owned business enterprises (M/WBEs). Streamlining the approval process creates a more equitable economy where all property owners can benefit from growth and development opportunities.

We want to offer our thanks to the 25 city agencies who were members of the Taskforce as well as the scores of advocates, local communities, and experts who helped inform the BLAST recommendations. And a special thanks to Robert Holbrook, who served as the Executive Director of the Taskforce.

The BLAST recommendations offer us the opportunity to provide more efficient and effective government processes that will allow for the vibrant and inclusive growth the City needs. We must seize this opportunity.



Maria Torres-Springer  
Deputy Mayor of the City of New York



Melanie E. La Rocca  
Chief Efficiency Officer



Jessica Katz  
Chief Housing Officer

# **Executive Summary**

The City's ability to deliver affordable housing, support the creation of small businesses, and deliver capital projects for the benefit of New Yorkers depends heavily on three governmental processes: (1) City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), (2) the Land Use approval process, and (3) the Department of Buildings' permitting process. These three processes were created to safeguard the environment, ensure public participation, and protect public safety, respectively.

While these protections are necessary, these processes have become unnecessarily complicated, costly, and time-consuming—delaying critical projects like affordable housing. These increased costs are then passed down to New Yorkers in the form of higher rents, fewer units of affordable housing, and reduced job opportunities. In short, New York has become the “City of No”.

To tackle this complicated issue head on, the Building and Land use Approval Streamlining Taskforce (BLAST) was convened from more than two dozen agencies to cut red tape, streamline processes, and remove administrative burdens. Over the span of two months, BLAST held 18 working group meetings and 4 roundtables with over 50 external stakeholders.

**To turn New York into the “City of Yes”, BLAST makes 111 recommendations across City Environmental Review (CEQR), Land Use approvals, and Building Permitting with the following goals:**

1. Increasing the speed of compliant projects while decreasing costs;
2. Ensuring environmental protection and meaningful public participation;
3. Promoting an increase in affordable housing and environmental sustainability—both of which are broader policy goals of the Adams Administration, and;
4. Reducing risk for entrepreneur businesses and emerging developers by improving predictability of the development process.

Together, these improvements **will reduce delays by about 50%**; speeding up critical projects, saving money, improving public participation, and making our city more efficient for all New Yorkers.

**The 45 improvements to the City Environmental Review Process (CEQR) will:**

- Streamline and update the present CEQR process to produce information that's more useful to the public and decision-makers, as well as reduce the time and cost of CEQR review;
- Improve the data inputs for CEQR analysis, as well as data provided to the public about potential environmental impacts of projects;
- Facilitate better coordination between agencies to shorten the timeline for the CEQR process, without a reduction in quality; and,
- Improve clarity, accessibility, and utility of the environmental review documents produced in the CEQR process to reduce burdens on applicants and improve public understanding.

**The 19 improvements to the land use approval process will:**

- Reduce time and costs of land use processes by minimizing the rounds of review and complexity of applications in the pre-certification stage;
- Maintain and improve the public's opportunity for meaningful participation in land use processes;
- Improve legibility and notice of documents for public review; and,
- Simplify the requirements, findings, and rules in the Zoning Resolution.

**The 47 improvements to the Department of Buildings' permitting process will:**

- Reduce the time and cost of the permitting process by improving coordination between agencies and streamlining agency review;
- Maintain public safety and oversight of the construction process, and;
- Improve the transparency and predictability of the permitting process for applicants.

City agencies have already implemented several of these improvements, with about half of the improvements to be implemented in the next 12 months, and the remaining half of the improvements in the next 24 to 36 months.

# **Planning and Building for an Inclusive Future**

Housing is the foundation for everything else in our lives. Without a stable and safe place to live, no one can be expected to thrive.

New York City’s housing stock needs to grow to meet today’s demand. Over 53 percent of New York City residents are rent burdened—the highest on record—paying more than 30 percent of their income towards rent. As of May 2021, only 4.5 percent of the city’s housing supply was vacant; of the homes that rent below \$1500 per month, less than 1 percent were available.<sup>1</sup> And too many New Yorkers sleep in the shelter system each night.

New Yorkers need more housing—and more affordable housing—now. So that all our neighbors can thrive, not just a fortunate few.

As detailed in the [Administration’s Housing Our Neighbors plan](#), this administration is taking a new approach to this crisis—to make New York a “City of Yes”—by investing in the creation and preservation of affordable housing, transforming NYCHA, addressing homelessness and housing instability, and reducing the administrative burden in getting housing built.

These administrative burdens include the City’s time-consuming, costly, and unnecessarily complicated development processes—specifically, (1) the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process; (2) the Land Use approval process; and (3) the Department of Buildings’ permitting process.

While these processes were each created with laudable goals—reducing adverse environmental impact, ensuring robust public review, and protecting public safety—they have created an overly burdensome system that prevents our ability to address the urgent need for more housing.

Often, these processes result in months- or years-long delays in the production of much-needed new housing and the improvement of our existing housing. They increase the costs of building new or improved housing—costs that are then passed on to New Yorkers through higher rents or fewer affordable units in a development. And, at times, they discourage the construction of new housing altogether because these delays and increased costs render new housing projects economically infeasible.

### **Development Process Costs Are Passed Down to New Yorkers and Decrease Affordable Housing Production**

“[T]he review process is estimated to increase total [project] costs by 9 percent, or approximately \$67,000 per unit, for a high-rise building,” for a typical two-year process for land use approvals.”

— [the Citizens Budget Commission](#), 2022

“The costs associated with a 3-month delay due to permitting during construction on a 100-unit building are \$1.4 million, equal to the HPD subsidy for 11 units.” — the New York State Association for Affordable Housing<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [2021 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey](#)

<sup>2</sup> Comment letter to BLAST from the New York State Association for Affordable Housing. Available upon request. Calculations assumes HPD ELLA term sheet.



The improvements identified in this report will cut the cost of land use approvals in projects subject to CEQR and the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) in half—resulting in over \$2 billion per year in savings—and is estimated to unlock at least another approximately 50,000 units of additional housing production over the next 10 years.<sup>3</sup>

These savings have the potential to be passed on to tenants. Based on projections from the Citizens Budget Commission, the costs added by the CEQR and ULURP processes to a new building increase monthly rents by \$430<sup>4</sup> for an average apartment. It is unacceptable that bureaucracy has kept money out of the pockets of New Yorkers for so long. This stops in the Adams Administration.

Sometimes, these burdens stop development of housing altogether. For example, an emerging M/WBE housing developer sought to buy a parcel of land and build a 100% affordable housing complex. Current zoning law allowed only 155 affordable units on this land. The developer considered seeking a moderate zoning change, to keep with the scale of the neighborhood, to build 75 more affordable units for a total of 230 new affordable homes. Unfortunately, the uncertainty, time, and financial cost of the City's development processes created a significant financial risk. For example, the M/WBE developer would need to make interest payments on their loans during the multiple years of CEQR and ULURP review without corresponding rental income. Ultimately, the owner decided to build fewer affordable units because it could not take on this additional financial risk.

In addition to building more affordable housing, the City must also remove barriers that prevent New Yorkers from creating more small businesses and deliver faster capital projects for the benefit of New Yorkers. However, the Department of Buildings' current permitting process—coupled with arcane zoning requirements—hinders the opening of new businesses and the expansion of existing ones and results in the delay or cancellation of capital projects by city agencies.

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<sup>3</sup>These estimates are based on City data of number of projects; the Citizens Budget Commission's estimates of project costs, including CEQR/ULURP soft costs, and financing costs; recent per unit mid-rise housing production costs.

<sup>4</sup>Assuming additional development costs are financed over 20 years.

# **Summary of Work by the Taskforce**

## Taskforce Scope and Structure

Co-Chaired by Deputy Mayor for Economic, and Workforce Development Maria Torres-Springer, Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz, and Chief Efficiency Officer Melanie La Rocca, the Building and Land use Approval Streamlining Taskforce (BLAST) kicked off with a call-to-action meeting followed by one-on-one interviews with agency Commissioners, Executive Directors, and Chief Officers from 25 agencies. Over 40 hours of meetings were held in three separate agency working groups, to address the three workstreams: Environmental Review, Land Use, and Building Permitting. BLAST staffers from each agency created a process map to explain how their agency administered the review and approval process and recent performance metrics. BLAST staffers then submitted proposed initiatives and policy changes regarding their own and other agencies.

Simultaneously, BLAST engaged over 50 stakeholder groups, including professionals that utilize these development processes, organizations that represent community interests, the customers of the City's agency services and the biggest critics of these processes most familiar with the frustrations and inefficiencies involved. Four roundtable discussions were held—one for each workstream subject and one dedicated solely to affordable housing development. In addition, individual outreach was conducted to trades and industry representative groups. The suggestions from these stakeholders were coupled with proposals from agencies, resulting in the recommendations in this report.

In addition, during these roundtable discussions, stakeholders were asked: What city does this better? Based on these recommendations, several peer municipalities were consulted—including Boston, Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami—to identify their best practices and understand the streamlining efforts they have undertaken to their development processes.

A list of city agencies that were members of the Taskforce, along with the stakeholders engaged, is enclosed in Appendix B.

111 proposals from all of these sources were combined and refined by the Taskforce members.

## Implementation Timeline & Mechanisms

In the months since the launch of BLAST, city agencies have already completed implementation of several improvements, with approximately half of the identified improvements to be implemented in the short term, over the next 12 months. Then most of the second half will be implemented in the longer term, generally over the next 12-24 months. And several major improvements—including those requiring ULURP review or major technology upgrades—may take up to 36 months to implement. In some cases, a quick and easy change may be implemented first, followed by a more significant and substantial change to the same process.

### The method for implementing these 111 improvements varies:

- 91 can be implemented by city agencies through updates to technical manuals, other internal process changes, and new Agency initiatives.
- 3 require agency rule-making through the [CAPA process](#).
- 4 are subject to the ULURP process—including approval by City Council.
- 11 require changes to local law or adopting new code—and approval by the City Council.
- 2 require rule-making by a State agency.

For each of the 111 improvements, the implementation mechanism is identified in the detailed descriptions in Appendix A.

Stakeholder experts that utilize these approval processes will be invited to act as an implementation advisory board. The advisory board will provide guidance and input into the details of implementing proposals over the next 24 months.

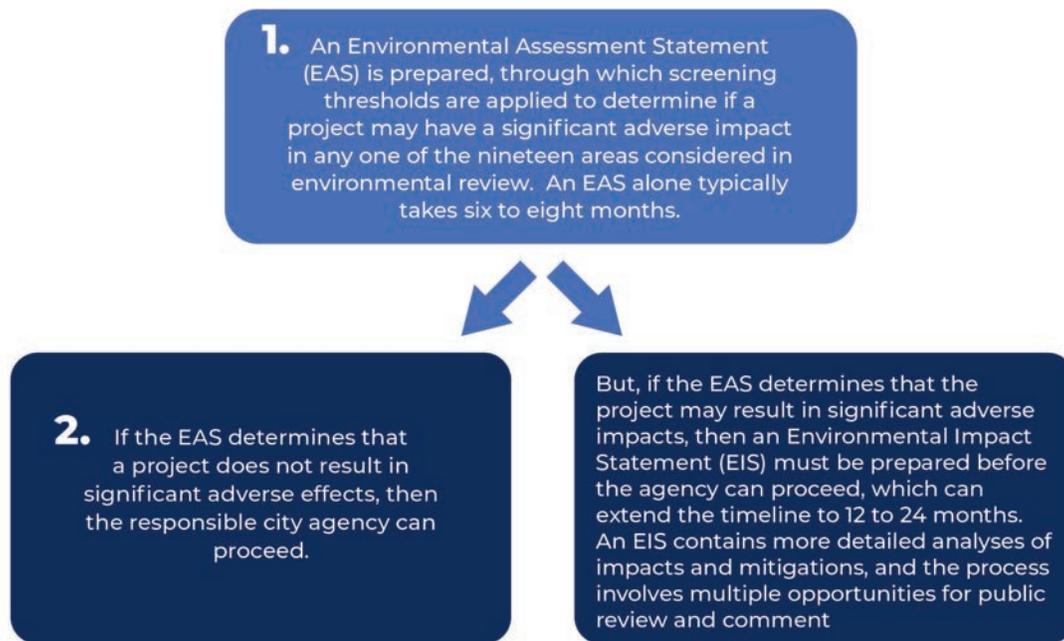
# **City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR)**

City Environmental Quality Review—or CEQR—is a disclosure process by which New York City agencies evaluate what effect, if any, a discretionary action may have on the environment.<sup>5</sup> The CEQR process is required, for example, when city agencies utilize their discretion to approve a rezoning necessary to build affordable housing, to approve a special permit application, or approve public funding of construction projects. These discretionary actions can be initiated by the City (for example, a neighborhood-wide rezoning or a city capital project) or by private applicants (for example, a privately-built affordable housing development).

CEQR is New York City's process for implementing the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).<sup>6</sup> If federal funding or approvals are needed, a project must also comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

CEQR requires city agencies to assess, disclose, and mitigate to the greatest extent practicable the significant environmental impacts of projects. It considers up to nineteen areas of analysis, including, but not limited to, open space, shadows, noise, public health, sanitation, infrastructure, and socioeconomic conditions.

### The CEQR process involves two basic steps.



The Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC) publishes and periodically updates the *CEQR Technical Manual*, which provides guidance to agencies in undertaking the CEQR process and contains technical guidance and methodologies for environmental review of the nineteen areas of analysis.

Over the past ten years, an average of 350 housing, commercial and infrastructure projects per year went through the CEQR process. All 350 went through the first step—the production of an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS). Of those, approximately twelve projects each year required the more involved process of the production of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

<sup>5</sup>SCEQR Rules of Procedure are published in Title 62 of the Rules of the City of New York (RCNY), Chapter 5 with provisions of Executive Order No. 91 published as an Appendix and also in Title 43 of the Rules of the City of New York, Chapter 6.

<sup>6</sup>SEQRA is Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law. The State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulations are published in Part 617 of Title 6 New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (NYCRR).

## Process Blocking Progress – Costs to the Creation of New Housing and Jobs

- A developer sought to build a new affordable housing complex with a hotel in West Midtown.
- The current CEQR process required a detailed analysis of the development's impact on traffic. This analysis occurred in 2019 and 2020—taking two years to complete—and resulting in a recommendation to change the signal timing of 10 traffic lights along 10th and 11th Avenues by only *1-3 seconds*.
- The work necessary to complete this analysis of this project increased development costs.
- The signal timing measures from this analysis provided limited benefit to the public. The building will not be completed until 2025—by which time the recommendations may need to be reconsidered as traffic patterns change in unanticipated ways.

### Appendix A details 45 recommendations from the Taskforce to improve the CEQR process in four critical ways:

- (1) improving the quality of environmental impact analyses required in the CEQR process;
- (2) getting better data inputs for environmental impact analyses and better sharing of that data with the public through an online public portal;
- (3) breaking down silos among city agencies and increasing the capacity of city agencies who participate in the CEQR process, and;
- (4) streamlining content in public-facing reports produced in the CEQR process to improve legibility and public understanding.

These recommended initiatives will reduce the time and complexity of the CEQR process, while ensuring meaningful analyses of a project's environmental impact and increasing information available to the public.

### Examples of the improvements to CEQR include:

- Overhauling the traffic analysis method of the traffic analysis in CEQR to expedite the review process;
- Allowing certain project types—including shelters and small housing developments—to avoid unnecessary analysis in the CEQR process, while still ensuring appropriate protections for the environment;
- Streamlining some of the 19 analyses required under CEQR, including;
  - Removing the portions of construction analysis that are already regulated in other ways,
  - Combining similar chapters to reduce unnecessary work,
  - Removing the assessment of a project's effects on parking;
- Improving the City's digital document sharing system among agencies to facilitate more efficient coordination; and

- Creating a public-facing web tool that automates certain CEQR analyses, developing a tool that allows the input of a project's location and program to automatically generate basic analysis assumptions such as the amount of transit users that a project will generate.

In total, each of these recommendations will meaningfully improve the process for everyday New Yorkers and those in the environmental review process alike, while keeping the protections needed for our city's health and environmental goals.

## Initiatives Spotlight: Improving Traffic Analysis

Generally, a proposal to build housing beyond current zoning limits must go through the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process.

Revising the methodology for the traffic analysis is the single largest opportunity to improve the environmental review process—and shorten the overall time required. The City will replace the existing methodology of vehicle delay based traffic analysis at a lane group scale in the transportation analysis of CEQR by updating the *CEQR Technical Manual*.

Today, traffic analysis for a single project usually takes 6 to 12 months. Under the *CEQR Technical Manual's* current guidance, the analysis must use best available information at the time to (1) project future traffic conditions, (2) determine whether the project may have adverse traffic impacts upon completion by increasing vehicular delay, and (3) if so, issue recommendations on how to mitigate those traffic delays upon completion.

Currently, the traffic analysis must project the future traffic patterns upon a project's completion with a high level of detail—including, for example:

- The *number of cars* on the streets surrounding the project in the future;
- The behaviors of future residents or workers in the building, including *their use of vehicles versus transit, the number of occupants in each vehicle, and their ultimate destination*.

And then the analysis must predict a project's impact on future delays in the local traffic networks—upon construction completion, several years (possibly seven or more) down the road—with the same high level of detail, namely determining the *number of seconds* of delay per vehicle experienced at one or more intersections nearby the project during the peak periods of travel.

The City should stop spending months conducting detailed traffic modeling focused on limiting vehicular delays. Instead, we will revise the CEQR traffic analysis methodology and eliminate the detailed accounting of current and future traffic conditions down to the number of seconds of delay at each intersection. Traffic analysis can use simple, modern data tools that monitor traffic patterns in real time. The analysis can then base conclusions about traffic impacts of a project on that readily available data and the size and type of the proposed project. The description of a project will still provide information about a project's travel demands such as total volume of vehicles and transit users. This reimagined analysis will result in meaningful conclusions about significant adverse impacts and will identify potential types of mitigation measures that could be adopted.

The City will continue to use current traffic modeling methods until a new methodology is established and included in the CEQR Technical Manual and will continue to use the current transit and pedestrian analysis methods as well as the traffic modeling methods for analyses performed for safety, planning, and operational projects, including street improvement projects, new signal installations, signal modification, bus lanes, and bike lanes. The City will focus efforts where it is meaningful to provide safety and operational improvements to the public.



## Initiatives Spotlight: Exempting Small Housing Projects from EAS

Most housing projects subject to land use approvals or public financing must conduct an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) that takes six to eight months to complete and can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Yet, the vast majority of these smaller projects are found to have no significant impacts on the environment.

Existing city rules exempt a number of development actions from conducting an EAS—for example, retrofitting an existing building to incorporate green infrastructure, or a small expansion to an educational facility. This list of exempt actions is called the “City Type II” list. These exemptions were created over time through the identification of types of projects that have repeatedly shown no significant adverse impacts.

The city Type II list will be expanded to include a greater number of projects—for example, HPD-financed affordable housing buildings up to a certain size and private rezonings for small increases to housing density—based on dozens of past environmental reviews for similar projects to determine whether projects up to a particular size will not adversely impact the environment. Based on an initial analysis of past environmental reviews, housing developments of up to 200 units generally do not appear to exceed most thresholds for analysis in the *CEQR Technical Manual* and do not result in adverse impacts. If this is confirmed based on a thorough review, including analysis of the significant record of past similar projects, housing developments below a determined number can and will be added to the list of actions exempt from further environmental review and will no longer be required to complete a costly and time-consuming EAS.

Exemption from CEQR for smaller affordable housing development will decrease their overall cost and deliver new homes faster to residents that need housing today.

# **The City's Land Use Processes**

Over the past 10-year period starting in July 2012, 2,822 projects have completed ULURP.

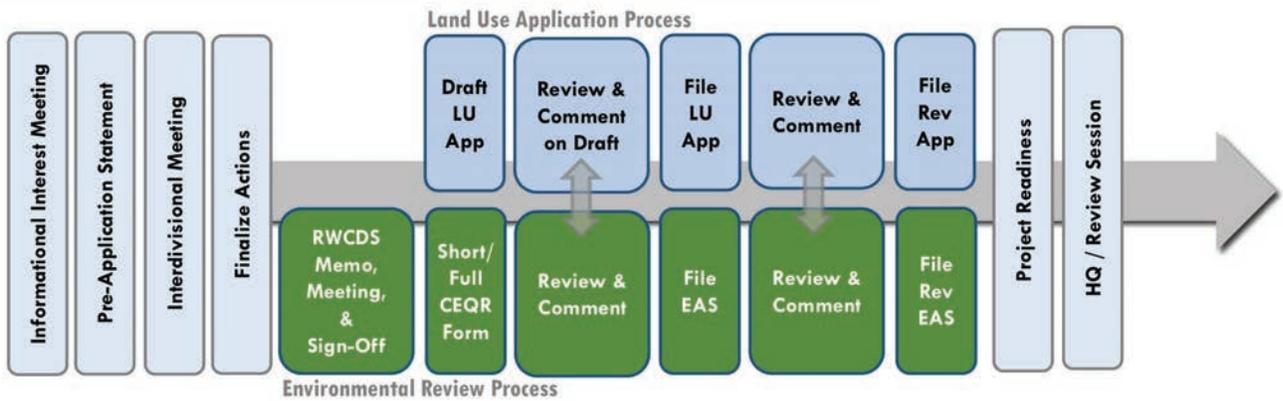
Most development in New York City is as-of-right, meaning that a proposed development complies with the existing [Zoning Resolution](#) and can seek a building permit administered by the Department of Buildings without going through a land use approval process. However, some projects require special review or approvals, or modifications to existing zoning regulations, as set forth in Chapter 8 of the City Charter. Some are required to be reviewed by the Department of City Planning (DCP) and the City Planning Commission (CPC) in a formal public review process, known as the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, or ULURP. The duration of the formal process is dictated by the City Charter and is limited to seven to eight months. However, that formal process does not begin until an indefinite “pre-certification” process is completed by the Department of City Planning.

**The pre-certification process has no mandated timeline and can often take 2 years before public review in [ULURP](#) can begin. It includes the following agency-required steps:**

- **Informational Interest Meeting:** Applicants submit materials and meet with DCP staff to discuss the proposal, and DCP staff provide guidance to shape the proposal.
- **Pre-Application Statement:** When enough information has been provided, DCP informs the applicant to submit a pre-application statement (PAS).
- **Interdivisional Meeting:** The applicant presents the project and PAS to DCP staff who identify necessary actions, guide the preparation of application materials, and ensure completeness.
- **Draft Land Use Application and Filed Application Review:** DCP staff review all the materials for the land use application and require edits and modifications until the application is deemed ready to be filed. Filed applications are made publicly available on DCP’s website and distributed to the affected Borough President, Community Board, and City Council. Applications undergo multiple rounds of review by DCP staff to ensure they are ready for certification by the City Planning Commission Chairperson and ULURP.

Once certified into the ULURP process by CPC, public review begins with 60 days for review by the relevant Community Board, followed by 30 days for review by the Borough President. Community Boards and Borough Presidents issue advisory votes. The City Planning Commission then has 60 days to hold a public hearing and issue a vote in the form of a CPC Report on the application. Within 50 days of receiving the CPC Report, the City Council will hold its public hearing and vote. Finally, the Mayor may opt to veto a Council vote, in which case the City Council can attempt to override a Mayoral veto by a two-thirds vote. If approved through public review, zoning changes or other actions that were part of the application go into effect. The property owner may then file for building permits or other approvals needed.

## Pre-Certification Application Process



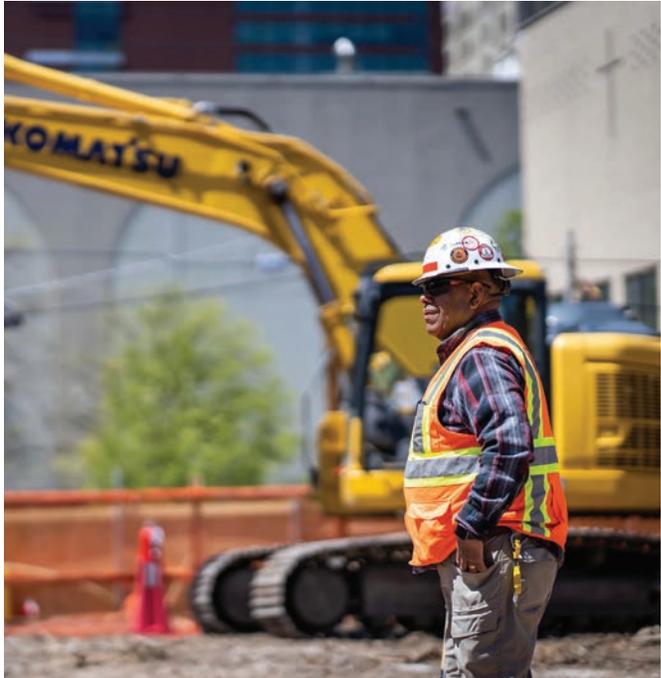
## Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)



The Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) is also an integral part of the City’s system for regulating land use, development, and construction and was established as an independent board to grant “relief” from the zoning code and grant certain special permits.

**Process Blocking Progress - Delaying the Production of Affordable Housing**

- In 2014, the property owner of a vacant corner lot in the Wakefield neighborhood of the Bronx initiated a rezoning application for the block.
- The proposed rezoning and associated Mandatory Inclusionary Housing text amendment would facilitate mixed-use development with approximately 186 units of affordable housing and ground-floor retail space.
- Despite community and elected support, public review was delayed until 2018 due to the Environmental Review and Land Use Approval processes.



**Appendix A details the 19 recommendations from BLAST to improve the City’s land use processes three ways:**

- (1) reducing the back-and-forth between DCP staff and applicants during the pre-certification stage;
- (2) creating a fast lane for review in the pre-certification stage by DCP staff for smaller-scale projects, and;
- (3) improving public participation in the land use process.

These recommended initiatives will reduce time and costs of the land use process and improve the public’s opportunity for meaningful participation in local development.

## The Adams Commission

On September 14th, 2022, Mayor Eric Adams and the DOB kicked-off a 90-day public process to review current DOB operations including permitting and DOB NOW, the department’s digital permitting system. DOB is committed to removing obstacles to building permitting caused by inefficient processes. BLAST and the Mayor’s Office continue to coordinate with DOB to develop recommended streamlining initiatives uncovered in this report, particularly where coordination with other agencies can remove silos and improve integration of the City’s permitting functions. This includes streamlining construction related permitting of fire alarm systems, an issue raised in both BLAST stakeholder groups and the 90-day public process.

**Examples of improvements to land use processes include:**

- Implementing significant project management changes at DCP, such as
  - minimizing the number of rounds of review between DCP staff and applicants in the pre-certification phase, and
  - allowing most applications to be filed and available for Community Boards and the public earlier in the process;
- Supporting the “City of Yes” Citywide Zoning Resolution text amendments as proposed by the Adams Administration to modernize and update our city’s zoning regulations to support small businesses, create affordable housing, and promote sustainability. Amendments include:
  - City of Yes Carbon Neutrality will modernize our city’s zoning regulations to support our climate goals,
  - City of Yes Economic Opportunity will update zoning regulations that affect businesses across the city to promote an equitable and resilient economy for all New Yorkers,
  - City of Yes Housing Opportunity is part of an inclusive, citywide approach to expand and diversify the housing supply, in which every neighborhood contributes to help meet housing needs and provide equitable access to opportunity for New Yorkers; and
- Proposing additional changes to the Zoning Resolution, including:
  - Standardizing public review processes for similar actions,
  - Lowering burdens on actions to as-of-right rules or more minor review,
  - Simplifying overly detailed design rules in the Zoning Resolution, and
  - Revising little-used BSA and CPC special permits.

## Initiatives Spotlight: Speeding Up the Pre-Certification Process and Making it More Transparent

Historically, applicants can get stuck in review and revision loops at any point in the 4 steps of the pre-certification process with DCP. The pre-certification process has no mandated timeline and can often take two years or more before proceeding to ULURP.

In the ULURP process, the local Community Board notification is the first opportunity for community participation. The Community Board receives the Land Use Application only near the end of the pre-certification process, after the application is filed.

As part of the recommendations emerging from BLAST, DCP will remove draft application requirements from most action types. This will make filed application materials available to the Community Boards and the public significantly earlier in the pre-certification stage. This will also expedite DCP-staff review in pre-certification.

In addition, DCP will take measures to cut down the time it takes for applicants to complete the pre-certification stage, including:

- Eliminating the practice of holding multiple informational meetings prior to interdivisional consultation to shorten the process and provide greater consistency and transparency,
- Front-loading the most substantive comments in the review process to cut down on the number of review and revision cycles between DCP staff and applicants,
- Simplifying application requirements and standards, and
- Improving pre-certification performance measures to enable DCP to track progress on these goals.

These improvements will cut down the time for applicants to get through the pre-certification process while making it more predictable and transparent.

# **The City's Building Permitting Process**

New York City has a built environment unlike any other city. As the primary regulator of building construction, the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) administers regulations for the compliant construction of housing and commercial space for our growing city, while promoting safety on construction sites and in the City’s nearly 1.1 million buildings. To further this mission, DOB enforces the City’s Construction Codes, Zoning Resolution, and the New York State Multiple Dwelling Law.

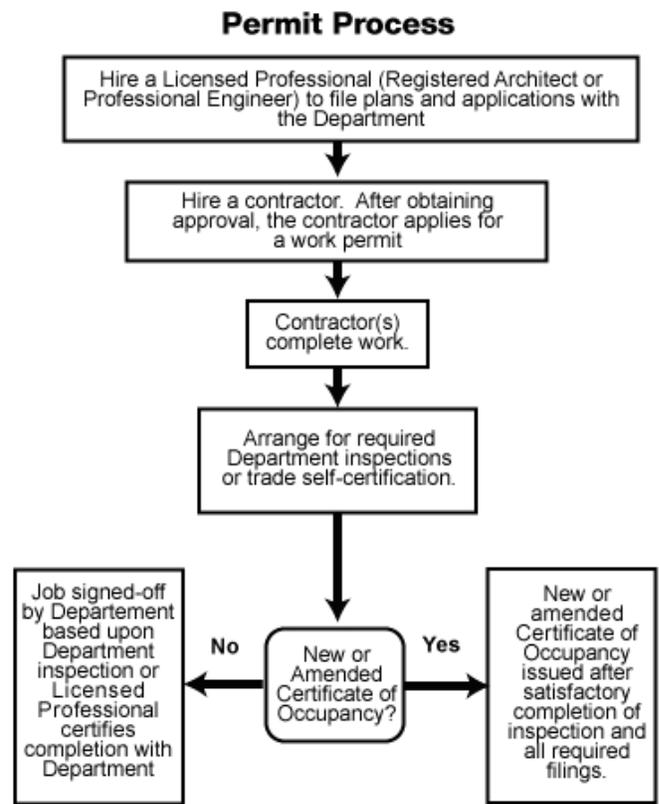
This complicated permitting process to build, while necessary to ensure the safety of all New Yorkers and compliance with applicable laws, can take months and cost developers hundreds of thousands of dollars, leading to higher costs and less development.

When a homeowner wants to make a basic renovation or add an accessory dwelling unit, or a developer wants to construct a new affordable housing complex, or a small business wants to open a new location, they must go through the Department of Buildings’ permitting processes.

Currently, this applicant must navigate the complex permitting processes themselves including multiple agencies such as FDNY, DEP and DPR—or hire a filing representative at an additional cost. In addition, applicants currently have no way of knowing how long it will take to complete all the various steps in this permitting process.

The existing systems at the Department of Buildings (DOB)—Buildings Information System (BIS) and DOB NOW—only exacerbate these issues by the following:

- Not taking a holistic view of the building process—which is to build a building, not measured by a series of types of construction work and related permits;
- Not providing a roadmap to the building permitting process, limiting the ability of applicants to appropriately plan when their projects will begin;
- Not facilitating interagency communication, and putting the obligation on the applicant to gather and deliver proof of approvals from other agencies;
- Not providing clear, digestible information about a construction project; and,
- Not providing a single reviewer for multiple permit types.



**Appendix A details 47 BLAST recommendations to improve the City’s building permitting process in four ways:**

(1) breaking down silos and reducing the ping pong between city agencies using technology tools;

(2) focusing DOB review on what matters most: safety;

(3) reducing bottlenecks in DOB review by removing duplication of work by licensed professionals, and;

(4) addressing gaps in the building code, rules, and local law.

The recommended initiatives will minimize the time it takes for entrepreneurs and developers to receive permits while maintaining the highest level of safety for both workers and the general public.

Examples of proposed reforms to the building permitting process include:

- Improve the DOB NOW platform to provide a centralized “one-stop shop” portal to process construction related transactions across all city agencies involved in construction approval, permitting, and sign-off activities;
- Transfer existing FDNY plan review and installation inspection functions for some types of construction related permits to DOB to align review with similar building systems using a two-step process;
- Propose legislation in partnership with the City Council requiring Transportation Management Plans for certain projects and uses, including as-of-right projects that introduce significant commercial truck traffic and loading bays such as last-mile-delivery hubs;
- Establish DOB improvement processes with input from customers to assess and improve DOB NOW;
- Allow small homeowner renovation projects to be filed without a professional plan filing; and,
- Update or publish new building codes for particular uses, such as battery storage (ESS), existing buildings and marine structures.

**Process Blocking Progress – Delaying the Opening of New Businesses & Jobs**

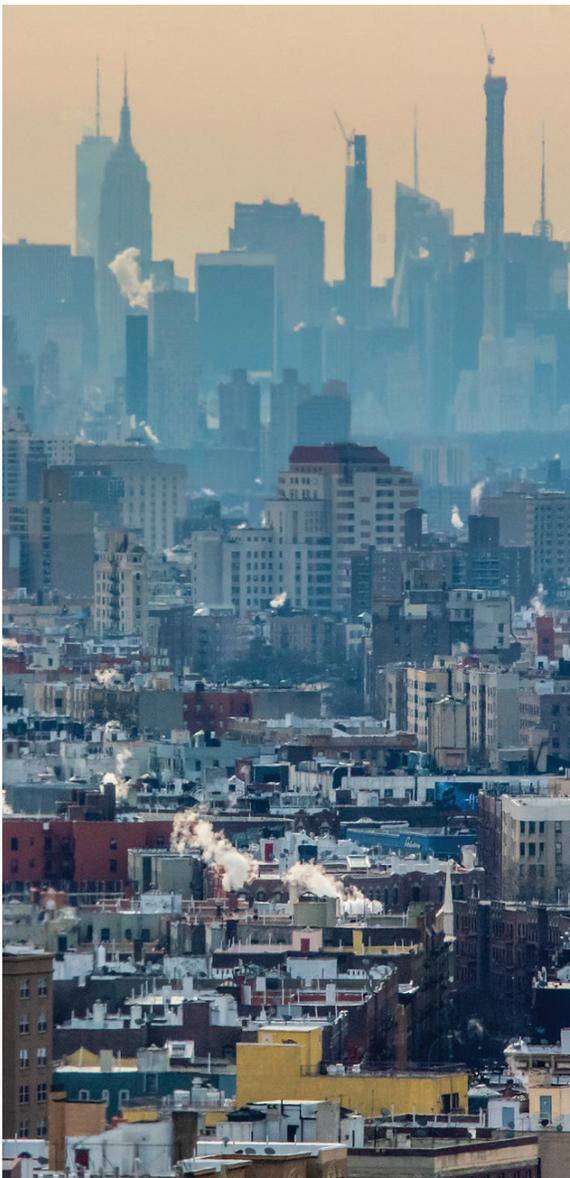
- In 2021, a small business folded before it could even open, in part because it took over 6 months for the City to approve a restaurant renovation.
- A new restaurant can wait 10 weeks for the Fire Department to approve a permit to install a new range hood for their commercial kitchen, all while the chef continues to pay rent, the business remains unopened, and the restaurant staff are left without jobs.

## Initiatives Spotlight: DOB NOW Improvements

The City will improve DOB NOW to establish a centralized, “one-stop shop” portal to process construction related transactions across all city agencies involved in construction approval, permitting, and sign-off activities.

### DOB NOW will improve by:

- Breaking down silos between agencies and providing clear and consistent information to applicants;
- Creating a single point of contact for applicant communication;
- Creating a transparent dashboard for an applicant to track progress;
- Enabling applicants to submit a single set of project drawings for use by all agencies;
- Allowing agencies to electronically communicate approvals to DOB with the click of a button;
- Creating flags for other agencies of upcoming review needs; and,
- Creating and maintaining a simplified user manual to guide all users of the system.



## Initiatives Spotlight: Transfer New York City Fire Department (FDNY) construction permit responsibilities to DOB

Currently, the Department of Buildings is responsible for plan review and inspections of most building systems, such as plumbing and electrical components, whereas FDNY issues permits for construction activities for Fire Alarms, Fire Suppression, and Rangehoods. Two separate plan reviews and field inspections occur, one from DOB and one from FDNY, to review connected and similar systems.

DOB traditionally performs examinations, permitting, and inspections for construction related activities of buildings, and FDNY traditionally monitors operation, maintenance, and compliance for fire safety of buildings after completion of construction.

The City will reorganize these two agencies oversight functions along those lines by transferring examination, permitting, and inspections from FDNY to DOB for construction-related work while maintaining FDNY authority in operation and maintenance of buildings for fire safety compliance. This transfer will occur in a two-stage process, initially, FDNY and DOB will conduct a coordinated plan review. Ultimately, authority for DOB to conduct plan review and inspections responsibilities for those 3 permit types will be created with revisions to the building code. This will remove the redundancy of separate inspections during the construction process and integrate the review of fire safety systems with other systems in a building.

With the pressing need for more housing, more support for small businesses, and faster capital projects exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic impacts, the moment to act is now. Bureaucracy and years of outdated policies have gotten in the way of addressing these fundamental needs. New York City renters and small businesses have paid a high price, waiting for the affordable homes and business space they so desperately need.

It has also hindered the growth of less-resourced businesses in the development and construction fields, making the Kafkaesque experience of navigating government bureaucracy impossible.

This stops now.

City agencies have already completed some improvements outlined in this report to reform the City's outmoded, inflexible, and unnecessarily bureaucratic development processes. Once completed, these 111 improvements will shorten the time necessary for these processes by 50% and decrease the associated cost, without reducing health outcomes, public participation, or public safety.

We look forward to working with the NYC City Council and stakeholders across all five boroughs to address these issues and invest in the future of New York City.

Let's get to work.



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## APPENDIX A: DETAILED LIST OF INITIATIVES

# City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR): Detailed Descriptions of 45 Improvements

## Improving the quality of CEQR analyses

The 20 recommendations below will streamline and update the current CEQR process to produce information that is more useful to the public and decision makers, as well as reduce the overall time and cost of CEQR review.

### 1. RESTRUCTURE DETAILED TRAFFIC AND MOBILE SOURCE AIR QUALITY/NOISE ANALYSIS

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Protection, and Department of City Planning; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – *CEQR Technical Manual* update

**Description:** The City will replace the existing methodology of vehicle delay-based traffic analysis at an intersection scale in the transportation chapter by updating the *CEQR Technical Manual*. A new methodology would assess a project's potential for significant adverse impacts based on a proposed project's transportation demands, location, the surrounding conditions in the transportation system and the City's established transportation policy. The methodologies for mobile air quality and noise will also be updated to establish an equally appropriate and protective process to identify significant impacts.

### 2. AMEND THE CITY TYPE II LIST (RCNY SECTION 5-05(C) (D)) TO EXEMPT SOME TYPES OF ACTIONS FROM CEQR

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agency:** Law Department and Department of City Planning; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CAPA rulemaking

**Description:** The City Type II List identifies actions that have been found to not have significant adverse impacts on the environment or were statutorily exempted from review under SEQRA, and correspondingly, CEQR. No action or class of actions listed as Type II requires further review under CEQR. Adding more actions that have repeatedly shown no significant adverse impacts to the City Type II List (RCNY Section 5-05(c)(d)), will exclude these actions from unnecessary and time-consuming environmental analyses. MOEC and partner agencies will identify which actions can be added to the City Type II list based on a history of past environmental reviews and determinations of significance. The City will then undergo the appropriate rulemaking process, including preparing the appropriate environmental review analyzing the proposed changes (some potential examples: contracts for some homeless shelters; development of housing projects up to a determined size; establishing Business Improvement Districts; and acquisition of land to establish parkland).

### 3. ADVOCATE FOR AMENDMENT OF STATE TYPE II LIST (6 NYCRR PART 617.5) TO EXEMPT SOME ADDITIONAL TYPES OF ACTIONS FROM SEQRA

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agency:** Law Department; **Implementation Mechanism:** State Agency Rulemaking

**Description:** Advocate for the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to add more actions to the State Type II List (6 NYCRR Part 617.5) that repeatedly show no significant adverse impacts so that these actions are exempted from environmental analysis. Such actions include development of housing projects limited to a certain size, funding for some resiliency measures and alternative energy installations. Amending the State Type II List to reflect additions to the City Type II list may be advisable for actions that are typically subject to both SEQRA and CEQR. This amendment will require environmental review under SEQRA and NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) rulemaking.

### 4. PROVIDE CEQR TECHNICAL MANUAL GUIDANCE TO DISTINGUISH ANALYSIS OF SITE-SPECIFIC VERSUS AREA-WIDE ANALYSIS FRAMEWORKS

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning and Law Department; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – *CEQR Technical Manual* update

**Description:** Many analysis methodologies are designed for analyzing site-specific developments and are difficult to apply when analyzing multi-site projects or area-wide projects such as large neighborhood-scale rezonings. Clear guidance will be provided in the CEQR Technical Manual where it is appropriate for methodologies to distinguish distinct approaches for such large-scale projects.

### 5. CREATE STANDARD TEMPLATES FOR EAS FORMS, CHAPTERS, APPENDICES AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning and Law Department; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** MOEC will develop templates for common components and exhibits of the CEQR process. This will streamline the production of CEQR documents for basic projects allowing preparers to fill in specific details on pre-formatted documents. In addition, this will improve accessibility of documents to the public who will have an easier time finding information in a consistent format.

### 6. STANDARDIZE EAS FORMAT FOR PROJECTS WITHOUT IMPACTS

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning and Law Department; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** MOEC will create a template format for a standard EAS to streamline an efficient determination document once the analysis concludes that there will not be significant impacts. For example, site-specific actions that screen out of detailed analysis based on the technical

analysis discussed on the EAS form. Limited supplemental analysis may be required but providing a template format will reduce the time to prepare and review these types of EASes. The template form would be a plain-language summary that includes sufficient information to establish that the ‘hard look’ standard for a negative declaration has been met without performing unnecessary analysis or providing extraneous documentation.

## 7. STANDARDIZE EAS FORMAT FOR PROJECTS WITH IMPACTS

**Owner Agency:** Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning and Law Department; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Create a template format for a standard EAS where it has been shown there will be impacts. The template form will include plain language and a summary of sufficient information to meet the ‘hard look’ standard. The new template will allow for issuance of a Positive Declaration of impacts without reciting information that will be covered in detail in future documents, such as the Draft Scope of Work, allowing applicants to move to Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) analysis faster.

## 8. STREAMLINE REASONABLE WORST CASE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO GUIDANCE AND REVIEW

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Partner Agency:** Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** DCP will implement improvements to streamline the Reasonable Worst Case Development Scenario (RWCDs) step of CEQR review. The RWCDs establishes the analysis framework for the environmental review and identifies the increment between the future without the action being reviewed (referred to as the “No-Action Condition”) and the future with the action (referred to as the “With-Action Condition”). DCP, in consultation with MOEC, will improve guidance in the *CEQR Technical Manual* related to the RWCDs, and provide robust staff training to establish reasonable assumptions and reduce time-intensive revisions loops.

## 9. UPDATE METHODOLOGY FOR SOCIOECONOMIC ANALYSIS

**Owner Agency:** Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning, Law Department; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** MOEC will aggregate and publish available data, such as population projections, displacement vulnerability, and other socioeconomic data needed to prepare a detailed socioeconomic analysis to reduce preparation and review time.

## 10. UPDATE METHODOLOGY FOR COMMUNITY FACILITY ANALYSIS

**Owner Agency:** Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update;

**Description:** MOEC will align screening and analysis methods with best planning practices, and provide tools to automate analyses with existing datasets (population, schools utilization, and early childhood programs)

Public Schools: Update the screening threshold to align with significant adverse impact criteria when an analysis is required for public schools. In 2021, the CEQR methodology for public school analysis was revised to establish a significant adverse impact criterion when a project creates more than 100 students and causes enrollment levels to exceed 100% of capacity. However, changes to the guidance screening levels that determine if a detailed analysis is required were not considered. Guidance for this area of analysis' screening threshold will be updated to ensure consistency with new methodology to avoid unnecessary detailed analyses.

Libraries: Update screening threshold and analysis methodology. Update methodology about holdings per resident. Develop new methods to reflect the modern practices of NYC library systems, which are not limited by the number of books at a particular branch when volumes move fluidly between branches.

Early Childhood Programs: Focus analysis on children aged 0-2 as other age groups are largely served by Universal Pre-K and 3K. Explore changing study area geography (e.g., by Community District) to better align with service areas. Aggregate and make available datasets for analysis including state-certified home-based childcare facilities.

Health Care Facilities, Fire and Police Services: Develop methodologies that warrant analysis only if a project has a direct impact on such a facility.

## **11. ESTABLISH STANDARD DEVELOPMENT MITIGATION FUNDS**

**Owner Agency:** Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CAPA rulemaking;

**Description:** For projects that result in CEQR Open Space impacts, negotiations around mitigation can be a long, drawn-out process between the lead agency, other city agencies, and the applicant. The resulting mitigations vary from project to project due to numerous factors. To streamline this process DPR will develop steps to replace individual project negotiations with a standard mitigation fund structure that can be applied to mitigate project impacts. Regarding open space impacts, depending on the degree of the impact, develop guidance and a budgeting mechanism that will allow the Applicant to pay into a fund for park improvements that is targeted to any park directly impacted by the project, as well as other local parks affected by the project or used to acquire park areas in the study area.

## **12. ADJUST THRESHOLDS FOR DETAILED TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS AND IMPACT CRITERIA**

**Owner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – *CEQR Technical Manual update*

**Description:** Revisit the minimum thresholds for detailed analyses as well as the impact criteria. Review opportunities to modify thresholds for review in table 16.1 in the *CEQR Technical Manual*.

### 13. SIMPLIFY BACKGROUND PROJECT NO-ACTION TRIP ASSIGNMENTS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT); **Partner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Currently when determining “No-Action” increments to traffic, transit, and pedestrian volumes, the lead agency or applicant applies a general background growth rate to the existing conditions as well as travel demand assumptions for known developments. This process can be time consuming and involve several rounds of review and discussion between the lead agency or applicant and NYC DOT as well as other agencies with specific knowledge about other projects planned for the area. Instead, NYC DOT proposes to set growth rates appropriate for each neighborhood in the city based on the “New York Metropolitan Transportation Council Best Practice Model” estimates or another model from DCP, if available. These growth rates could be used as an option to replace the bespoke trip assignment process for each individual background project into the “No-Action” study area network.

### 14. SIMPLIFY PARKING ANALYSIS AND ELIMINATION OF PARKING SHORTFALLS AS AN IMPACT CRITERIA

**Owner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Simplify the parking analysis by eliminating on-street parking analysis and disclosure of parking shortfalls for both on-street and off-street parking from the CEQR process. The lead agency or applicant would still need to collect appropriate parking data (i.e. parking lot supply, utilization, and accumulation for site generated trips).

### 15. UPDATE STATIONARY SOURCE AIR QUALITY ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

**Owner Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Update the *CEQR Technical Manual* methodology guidance related to the analysis of Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems in proposed buildings to accommodate new local laws such as the recently adopted natural gas ban (Local Law 154-2021).

### 16. REVISE MOBILE AIR QUALITY SCREENING

**Owner Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Update the threshold in the *CEQR Technical Manual* that establishes when a detailed analysis of air quality is required due to a project’s traffic and the related increase in vehicular exhaust. The update will include up to date consideration of pollutants affecting NYC and representative traffic conditions. If concentrations of carbon monoxide are no longer causing adverse impacts in the city, then that single component of vehicular exhaust will no longer be required in the mobile air quality analysis. Other mobile air quality contaminants will continue to be considered in the analysis. The analysis methodology will be updated to incorporate emission factors from the latest Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) models.

## 17. ELIMINATE TRANSPORTATION SECTION OF CONSTRUCTION ANALYSIS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Eliminate the transportation component from the construction analysis within CEQR review. Currently a construction analysis is necessary for any project requiring more than two years of construction. Because CEQR analysis is often conducted years in advance of construction, before building plans have been submitted to DOB for approval and prior to identifying construction contractors, limited information is available regarding the specific Maintenance for the Protection of Traffic Plans at the time of environmental review. DOT's Office of Construction Mitigation and Coordination (OCMC) is responsible for controlling construction traffic. This control will ensure that construction traffic related significant impacts will not occur, making the environmental review analysis unnecessary. The CEQR construction traffic analysis is duplicative with the oversight provided by OCMC, who will review permit applications at time of permit submission and can act nimbly when conditions on the ground warrant modifications to those standard controls.

## 18. UPDATE CONSTRUCTION AIR QUALITY ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

**Owner Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning (DCP) and Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** After careful consideration of past environmental reviews and current technological capabilities, update the *CEQR Technical Manual* construction air quality analysis methodology to provide guidance that, in recognition of the effectiveness of current technology and in most cases, if a project commits to rely on best available control technology (such as those required for public works contracts under Local Law 77 of 2003), then construction would not have a significant air quality impact and further quantitative analysis is not likely to be needed. The City will investigate tracking and enforcement mechanisms as it updates these analysis requirements.

## 19. UPDATE CONSTRUCTION NOISE ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

**Owner Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning (DCP) and Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Use past analyses to develop a threshold for detailed construction noise analysis. Below this threshold, conclusions of no significant construction noise impact could be drawn. Above that threshold, there would need to be a process discussion of the construction noise code compliance (i.e. – that they would need a noise mitigation plan). Once the threshold is established, the City will provide guidance regarding what impact levels will constitute a significant adverse impact conclusion in the analysis.

## 20. ESTABLISH TRAINING PROGRAM FOR CEQR CONSULTANTS

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** MOEC will develop a training program for CEQR consultants, particularly aimed at new and emerging consultant teams. This would include specific training on general standards and expectations regarding CEQR milestone documents, document structure, figures, tables, and graphs. The training will also include workshops scheduled after the release of a revised *CEQR Technical Manual* to cover the updates and changes.

# Getting Better Data Inputs, and Sharing Data Through a Public Portal

The 8 recommendations below will expand access to high quality, standardized data used in CEQR analyses for both applicants and the public.

## 21. REVIEW THE POTENTIAL TO USE PORTAL DATA SAMPLING FOR TRAFFIC COUNTING

**Owner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Review a sample project when an applicant provides portal data technology (wireless data transmitted from certain vehicle types that is commercially available for all locations for all time periods) and traditional count methods to determine if and what data sources could be used to determine traffic volumes. Investigate how other agencies and municipalities are using portal data for vehicular volume counting.

## 22. DEVELOP SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT FACTORS FOR TRAFFIC COUNTING

**Owner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Currently, counting traffic cannot be done within the moratorium periods over summer and winter holidays and major holiday weekends. This can result in the delay of environmental reviews that seek to begin analysis during these periods. Using consultant services, develop appropriate seasonal and temporal adjustment factors for traffic counts taken during the traffic counting moratorium periods.

### 23. CREATE CEQR DATA HUB

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning and Department of Transportation; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** MOEC and DCP, in coordination with other agencies as appropriate, will develop new and updated features of the CEQR App to standardize and automate analysis. For quantitative screening and analysis methods warranted by the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the updated CEQR App will include tools related to additional impact categories. Currently the tool includes community facility and transportation screening and analysis. MOEC and DCP will update these tools with the newest data and methodology. In addition, MOEC and DCP will include additional technical analysis areas such as socioeconomic conditions, open space, water and sewer infrastructure, air quality, and noise. The CEQR data hub will also house data related to noise, historic resources, and open space resources.

### 24. RESEARCH AND EXPAND THE LIST OF ACCEPTED TRAVEL DEMAND FACTOR ASSUMPTIONS AND DEVELOP AN AUTOMATED DIGITAL TOOL

**Owner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT); **Partner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Expand the land use trip generation factors provided in Table 16-2 of the *CEQR Technical Manual* by conducting surveys of different land uses across multiple sites per land use to determine NYC- and borough-specific trip generation rates, modal splits, and vehicle occupancies. DOT and DCP will coordinate this data development within DCP's CEQR App.

### 25. EXPAND TRANSPORTATION DEMAND FACTORS (TDF) DATA ACCESSIBILITY AND ANALYSIS TOOLS

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Partner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP's CEQR App, the data hub described above, provides DOT-approved transportation demand factors for certain land uses (currently limited to residential and office uses only), which helps expedite preparation, review, and approval of transportation analyses for CEQR. As described above, additional land uses such as retail, community facilities, and manufacturing at multiple locations will be surveyed to expand the documentation of accepted trip generation characteristics. The CEQR App will use those accepted characteristics to automatically generate transportation demand factors using Census and other data based on project location and program, trip generation rates, temporal distribution, and mode share. Currently, the first step in preparing a transportation analysis is proposing a bespoke set of travel assumptions for a project to be reviewed and confirmed by DOT or DCP staff. This review typically takes 30 days before a consultant team can begin the next step of analysis. The development of this automated tool will allow applicants to move directly into document drafting as soon as a project's location and program is finalized.

## 26. PROVIDE OPEN ACCESS TO TRAFFIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (TIMS)

**Owner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Currently DOT maintains a database of traffic, pedestrian and bicycle counting data from public projects that is made available to consultants on a limited basis when projects have begun a CEQR transportation analysis. DOT will provide open access to traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle count data within TIMS for consultant work regardless of project duration or assignment. Additionally, DOT will require that consultants collect and submit data in TIMS format for all projects, regardless of whether they are for private or public entities. This system would include indemnification releases of DOT and the City when third parties use the data. By making this system openly available, consultant teams will be able to make preliminary assessments and understand what data is available and what will need to be captured in the early stages of a project.

## 27. CREATE NOISE SAMPLING INFORMATION DATABASE

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning and Department of Environmental Protection; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** In support of the CEQR Data Hub, MOEC will create an equivalent of DOT's Transportation Information Management System (TIMS) for noise sampling data. Currently, noise analysis requires new site-specific noise monitoring data to be collected when a noise analysis is warranted. Noise sampling data that has been submitted to the City in support of a CEQR review will be made available to the public in an open-source database. That information will be useful for applicants preparing CEQR reviews for nearby projects and could reduce the effort of noise sampling. MOEC and DCP will coordinate with DEP to create a data sharing portal.

## 28. DELINEATE SHARE OF ACTIVE/PASSIVE OPEN SPACE AT PARKS FACILITIES

**Owner Agency:** Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Determine and publish the percent share of active versus passive open space at as many DPR facilities as possible to provide efficiencies for those conducting open space analyses per *CEQR Technical Manual* guidance.

# Breaking Down Silos Among City Agencies and Increasing Agency Capacity

The 9 recommendations below will facilitate better coordination between agencies involved in the CEQR process—shortening the overall timeline while maintaining and improving the quality of review and oversight.

## 29. UPGRADE TO CEQRVIEW 2.0 DATABASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation**

**Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** CEQRView is the database management system that is used by all city agencies to manage projects in the CEQR review process and to publish final documents on a public web portal. Upgrading the existing software from a localized application to a new web-based environment with enhanced project management and online file sharing capabilities will streamline the review process and allow documents and reports under review by agencies to be linked to comments and technical review requests. Review tasks will then be able to be managed systematically and assigned to staff efficiently. Digital links to documents under review will be shared among agencies, eliminating redundancies in file sharing.

## 30. UPGRADE TO CEQRVIEW 3.0 DATABASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation**

**Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** A further update to the database management system with MOEC independent management of the new software application will create a custom environment for enhanced document and review management. Dynamic access to documents will allow live editing and comment management directly in shared documents, further expediting timeframes for review.

## 31. PRIORITIZE HIRING AN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SENIOR DEVELOPER TO MANAGE CEQRVIEW

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation**

**Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** MOEC will prioritize the hiring of a network administrator. The position will maintain the digital platform that all agencies use to manage interagency coordinated reviews and the CEQR publication process. The administrator will bring new skills that are necessary to manage the development of the two CEQRView system improvements identified above.

### 32. PRIORITIZE DOT TRAFFIC ENGINEERING AND PLANNING (TEP) STAFFING

**Owner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DOT will prioritize and fill five staff vacancies at DOT TEP that support transportation and traffic modeling. In addition to expediting the review of transportation analysis in the CEQR process, increasing DOT's capacity to analyze traffic modeling improves the City's abilities to conduct neighborhood transportation planning that occurs outside of CEQR as operational and capital projects are planned, prioritized, and designed by DOT.

### 33. PRIORITIZE HIRING STAFF AT DEP BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ANALYSIS (BEPA)- AIR QUALITY AND NOISE

**Owner Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Prioritize and speed hiring of two additional staff members at DEP BEPA to provide air quality/noise modeling. Many projects subject to CEQR as well as other important city policy initiatives rely on DEP BEPA staff to review air quality and noise models. This is a very technical area of expertise that cannot be assigned to untrained staff, limiting the total volume of projects that can be reviewed simultaneously to the number of staff available. As the mobile air quality analysis is the final section to be completed in the critical path of preparing an environmental review, this analysis can become a bottleneck for many projects. Air Quality modeling is a vital technical skill to understand the disparate impacts to public health in our most vulnerable and historically marginalized neighborhoods. New staff capacity will allow DEP to meet the many demands to review air quality modeling related to emission activities in disadvantaged communities.

### 34. ESTABLISH TRAINING PROGRAM FOR CITY CEQR STAFF

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Many agencies that conduct a high volume of projects subject to CEQR have dedicated staff trained to conduct and manage CEQR reviews. However, some agencies have very few projects that require CEQR review yet are obligated to act as the lead agency in the review process when they do. MOEC will establish a training program for city CEQR staff to support staff that are new to the process, including new staff at all agencies, and ensure all agencies can efficiently manage reviews and utilize the process management tools, such as CEQRView.

### 35. ESTABLISH INTERAGENCY PROCESS TO CLARIFY CEQR INTERPRETATION

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Establish a city-wide interagency process to interpret and resolve differences between agency practice and interpretations.

### 36. EXPAND MECHANISMS SUCH AS (e) DESIGNATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL ACTION TYPES

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Partner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation; **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – ULURP required

**Description:** (e) Designations are institutional controls established in the New York City Zoning Resolution (ZR) to ensure that potential hazardous materials, air quality, or noise impacts which could accompany development resulting from proposed actions are avoided. The Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation (OER) and the Department of Buildings (DOB) manage the (e) Designation Program as an efficient means to ensure the impact avoidance obligations resulting from CEQR analysis are met at an appropriate time within the building permitting and/or construction process. For example, soil testing for hazardous materials may be appropriate prior to constructing a new proposed building, but not possible during the CEQR process while an existing building stands on a property. However, currently (e) designations are only available when a zoning action is undertaken and for three areas of analysis: hazardous materials, air quality and noise. DCP, in consultation with OER, DOB and expert agencies, will explore expanding the eligibility of the (e) Designation Program or establishing a new mechanism to allow non-zoning actions (e.g., city map amendments or property dispositions) and other potential areas of potential impact with a post-approval process like the (e) Designation Program. Expanding this mechanism will ensure greater predictability for applicants, reduce the need for restrictive declarations, and accelerate the review process.

### 37. ESTABLISH CEQR MITIGATION TRACKING SYSTEM

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** MOEC will develop a centralized mitigation tracking system for all mitigation measures identified in New York City environmental impact statements. This effort would include the development of a publicly accessible website including detailed mitigation information (such as dedicated funding, responsibility of mitigation implementation, status of implementation completion, and anticipated completion). MOEC would develop a system of cyclical agency reporting of completed EIS documents and identified mitigation measures.

# Improving Brevity in CEQR to Improve Legibility

The 8 recommendations below will focus on reducing the volumes of text that goes into the documents and public-facing reports produced during the CEQR process—improving clarity, accessibility, and utility of the documents; reducing the burden on applicants in the process; and making the environmental review documents more legible and accessible to the public.

## 38. STREAMLINE THE STRUCTURE OF EIS DOCUMENTS

**Owner Agency:** Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agencies:** Department of City Planning and Law Department; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** The components of an EIS can have different shapes and looks. They can be organized in more efficient and accessible ways. The *CEQR Technical Manual* will include guidance advising how the analysis components should be written in easily understood language, made more accessible, and make use of appendices to present technical analyses in one streamlined location without obscuring the fundamental narrative analysis and conclusions of a document.

## 39. CREATE STANDARD TEMPLATE FOR TARGETED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

**Owner Agency:** Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** MOEC will develop a template format for a targeted EIS and will provide guidance in the *CEQR Technical Manual* establishing a streamlined and efficient approach to CEQR documents that will meet the “hard look” obligation. A targeted EIS is a CEQR review that only discloses significant adverse impacts in one or two subject areas of analysis. This standardization and guidance of how a targeted EIS should be structured will reduce time and cost by focusing the documentation to the important area (or areas) of analysis.

## 40. SIMPLIFY LAND USE CHAPTER OF CEQR

**Owner Agency:** Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agency:** Department of City Planning; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Provide guidance for projects that do not require a detailed land use, zoning and public policy analysis, or where a preliminary analysis under current methodology can be embedded in the project description section of the EAS/EIS. Alternatively, a template format can be used to simplify the language of the section. DCP and MOEC will develop a glossary of boilerplate language to be used in this section. Links to online resources like NYC’s Zoning and Land Use map from NYC Planning Labs (ZoLa) and DCP’s online Zoning Handbook can be used to reduce the need for wordy descriptions of zoning districts.

#### 41. COMBINE URBAN DESIGN, VISUAL RESOURCES AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER CHAPTERS OF CEQR

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agency:** Department of City Planning; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Neighborhood character is often a finding for zoning actions that requires a proposed structure to be described in the context of surrounding buildings, which is illustrated in the urban design section in CEQR. There is overlap and duplication with these two analyses. Under the current methodology, neighborhood character also includes a summary section highlighting cumulative effects from a range of other analysis areas. This analysis can be embedded in the combined chapter. In the future, MOEC will build a tool to auto-generate zoning envelopes to reduce the time and technical skills needed to prepare the graphic components of this analysis.

#### 42. SIMPLIFY SOLID WASTE CHAPTER OF CEQR

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** Projects without a direct impact on solid waste and sanitation services should not be required to complete a detailed analysis. MOEC will update methodology to consider rulemaking of solid waste management plans. MOEC will develop updated guidance to the methodologies of this subject area based on a recently adopted rule that all buildings with more than 150 residential units must submit a solid waste management plan to the Department of Sanitation when submitting for construction permits.

#### 43. COMBINE ENERGY, GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE CHAPTERS OF CEQR

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CEQR Technical Manual update

**Description:** These chapters in the *CEQR Technical Manual* will be reorganized to allow them to be read together in order to improve readability and remove redundancy in methodology. Calculations from the energy analysis are also used in the Green House Gas Emission and Climate Change (GHG) chapter. The energy analysis utilizes outdated data that should be updated, and methodologies will be revised. The CEQR Technical Manual will provide guidance that qualitative content from the energy chapter can be embedded in GHG chapter. The GHG chapter will be updated regarding relevant local laws on emission reductions (Local Law 97-2019) and the building natural gas ban (Local Law 154-2021). With these regulations in place, certain analysis components will be redundant, and the methodology will be revised to align with these regulatory frameworks.

#### 44. IMPROVE PUBLIC NOTICE PROCESS

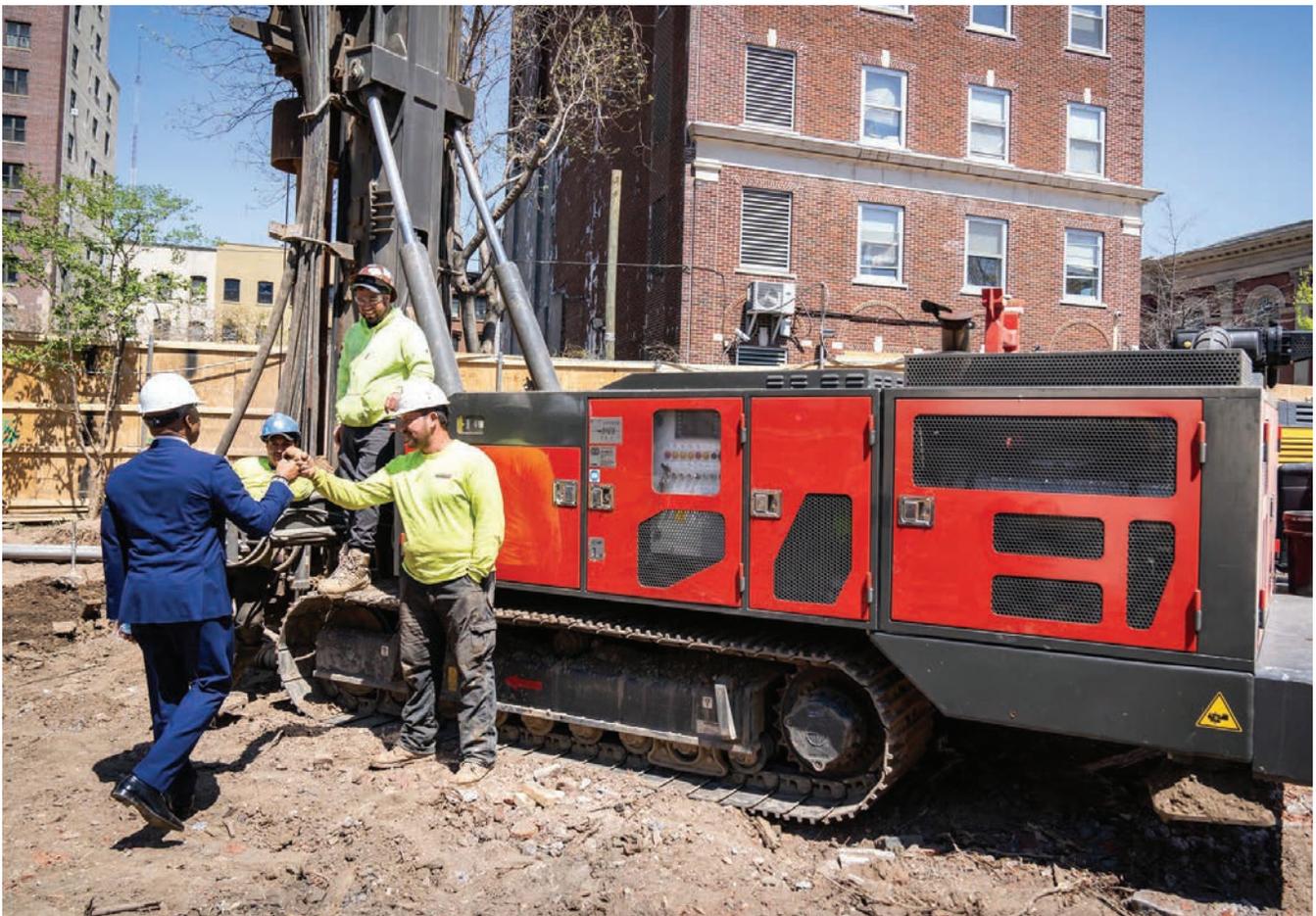
**Owner Agency:** Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agency:** Law Department; **Implementation Mechanism:** State Agency Rulemaking

**Description:** MOEC will develop and propose alternatives to notice requirements in the States’ Environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB). NYC will establish an equally robust process for projects within the city that will be managed by city agencies.

#### 45. DEVELOP A CEQR HANDBOOK FOR THE PUBLIC

**Owner Agency:** Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC); **Partner Agency:** Department of City Planning; **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** The CEQR Handbook will provide a layperson’s level guidance on how to read and understand CEQR documents. The purpose of the handbook is to provide the public and Community Boards with additional guidance on CEQR methodologies and how to participate in the CEQR public comment process. This creation of a CEQR Handbook will improve opportunities to participate in both the CEQR process and any related public participation process. The Handbook will also improve the response to public comment process by reducing unrelated and out-of-scope commentary.



# THE CITY'S LAND USE PROCESSES: DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF 19 IMPROVEMENTS

## Reducing the Back-and-Forth Between DCP Staff and Applicants

The 5 recommendations below will minimize the rounds of review in the pre-certification process (prior to ULURP certification)—reducing the time and costs of achieving land use approvals.

### 46. REFORM DCP EARLY PRE-CERTIFICATION PROCESS TO FACILITATE FASTER INTERDIVISIONAL CONSULTATION AND STANDARDIZATION OF REVIEW ACROSS DIVISIONS

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** In conjunction with simplification of application requirements and standards, DCP will reform the early pre-certification process to allow applicants to move forward faster in the process to appropriate milestones. Improvements will include elimination of multiple informational meetings prior to interdivisional consultation and aligning the goals, timelines and steps of urban design and policy review across the agency. DCP will review removing the Pre-Application Statement (PAS) requirement and other components when not necessary. These changes will be coupled with regular managerial review and prioritization of in-progress projects so that projects stay on track.

### 47. IMPROVE LAND USE APPLICATION REVIEW COMMENTS

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will add transparency to the application review and comment process while managing project timelines more closely and sharing exhaustive, actionable comments in the first round of land use application review. In any subsequent reviews, DCP will also limit comments to only critical errors. Applicants will receive improved agency comment letters and will have opportunities for technical and comment review meetings to clarify requirements and comments. DCP will also include recommendations to applicant teams to improve proposals and clarify when it does not support proposals. Combined with simplified application standards and more transparency on turn-around times, this proposal will decrease the pre-certification process significantly.

#### 48. SIMPLIFY APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will review existing application standards and simplify requirements to be more easily understood by the public and ULURP stakeholders while meeting the requirements of the Zoning Resolution and the needs of DOB and the public. DCP will replace certain application requirements with materials required by other agencies, including DOB, and will update its online guidance and create a library of application samples. DCP will review the usefulness of these changes with stakeholders to ensure applications are clear, succinct, and easy to understand.

#### 49. IMPROVE PRE-CERTIFICATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will improve transparency and pre-certification performance measurement by tracking the full length of each project timeline from start to finish, identifying applicant-owned time delays and DCP-owned time delays. DCP will also track and report new metrics such as housing units and projected jobs created by ULURP applications to further connect progress towards administrative goals.

#### 50. FACILITATE INTERAGENCY LAND USE TRAINING

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will co-facilitate land use trainings for planners and project managers (applicants) in DCP, HPD, DOB, EDC, DPR and other sister agencies. Among others, DCP's topics for these trainings will include project management, zoning, environmental review, and land use law.

# Creating a Fast Lane for Review by DCP Staff for Smaller-Scale Projects

The 10 recommendations below will provide the dual benefits of speeding up the process of ministerial matters for approval at DCP and freeing up staff time to focus on more complicated and substantial matters that require more thoughtful oversight or interpretation.

## 51. CREATE EXPRESS APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will create a process to expedite application review of ministerial actions and incrementally expand it to apply to other simple actions that generate small-scale outcomes. The new process will include removal of certain pre-certification steps and consolidating comments to minimize review rounds, dramatically speeding up the pre-certification process for applicable project types such as FRESH special permits and CPC Chairperson Certifications for waterfront zoning compliance.

## 52. ESTABLISH FASTER, CLEARER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AT DCP

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will facilitate faster, clearer decision-making so that applications do not get stuck awaiting policy decisions. DCP will regularize its policy review committee and train planners to manage projects with policy questions to promptly raise with the policy review committee and deliver answers and alternatives to applicants. Additionally, DCP will develop a process for applicants with unresolved CEQR, technical, or policy issues to escalate concerns for faster triage. DCP, working with DOB, will also explore publishing DCP's zoning interpretations outcomes.

## 53. IMPROVE AND ENHANCE DCP DIGITAL TOOLS

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will continue to enhance, improve, and support its online tools, such as the Applicant Maps, that facilitate a faster and simpler pre-certification process. DCP will continue to expand tools to automate application materials and processes, as well as fix bugs in the current tools.

#### 54. FILL VACANCIES AT DCP

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will advance hiring to fill all vacancies and ramp up training to support new hires. The department's new hire training program will be updated to allow more immediate time for technical training within divisions and to support managerial development for better staff mentorship and retention. These new technical training opportunities will allow new planning staff to provide quick and accurate feedback to applicants without convening large review meetings, consistent with the pre-certification streamlining initiatives identified above.

#### 55. UPDATE NYC STREET MAP TO INCLUDE ALTERATION AND SECTION MAPS

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will update the online *NYC Street Map* application to include scans of the Section Maps in addition to the alteration maps that are now available. This will provide City Map information for the entire city and will represent a significant improvement over the approximately 30% now covered by the *NYC Street Map* Application. With these improvements, the public will be able to see up-to-date City Map information for any block in the city. However, this will only provide a snapshot in time of the paper-based maps, not a dynamic digitized system.

#### 56. CONVERT THE CITY MAP FROM PAPER TO DIGITAL

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** The City Map is the official adopted map of the City. It shows the location, dimension and grades of streets, parks, public places, and certain public easements. DCP will convert the City Map from fractured, legacy, paper-based map system into unified city-wide digital Geographical Information System (GIS) map. This will allow NYC to catch up with many cities around the world that already have this technology. It will allow for faster and more powerful research by the public and city agencies and will also allow the City to simplify documentation requirements for changes to the City Map. To implement this change, every block dimension within the City must be read from the Section Maps and entered into a GIS map.

#### 57. CREATE A PUBLIC-FACING LAND USE PROPERTY FILE SYSTEM

**Owner Agency:** Mayor's Office of Efficiency (MOE); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Establish a public facing, web-based property information system, to function as a repository of property information and associated agency actions across city government. Database will connect relevant agencies and compile all property related information in one location for ease of use and process.

## 58. RIGHT-SIZE DISCRETIONARY REVIEW PROCESSES THAT DO NOT BENEFIT FROM EXTENSIVE FEEDBACK

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Partner Agency:** Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – ULURP required

**Description:** DCP will propose changes to the Zoning Resolution that would simplify special permits through unified findings and requirements. DCP will also propose standardizing referral processes and other public review procedures for similar action types and reducing scope of discretion for certain application types by modifying special permits to certifications or authorizations. DCP will also propose simplifying design requirements throughout the Zoning Resolution for Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) and other action types. DCP, in partnership with BSA, will also propose changes to the Zoning Resolution to eliminate several BSA special permits that have never or rarely been used and are redundant with other regulations, such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airport glide path certification and establish as-of-right status for data transmission towers.

## 59. REMOVE SPECIAL PERMITS FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS

**Owner Agency:** Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA); **Partner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – ULURP required

**Description:** Include in the City of Yes Carbon Neutrality text amendment a proposal to establish as-of-right status for battery storage throughout the city. The text amendment will remove Zoning Resolution section 73-14 Special Permit for Public service establishment (which includes batteries). This action will be taken in conjunction with the development of Battery Storage Building code, as described below.

## 60. PURSUE APPROVALS FOR LAND ACQUISITION OF INLAND FLOOD PRONE PROPERTIES FOR BLUEBELTS OR CLOUDBURSTS AND NEW PARKLAND

**Owner Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR); **Partner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP) **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – ULURP required

**Description:** Facilitate CEQR review and ULURP applications for land acquisition using criteria-based triggers in appropriately defined areas. Pursuing approvals for a group of properties non-contiguous and covering areas of the City where a programmatic need is identified, rather than one at a time, creates efficiencies while preserving opportunities for public participation. This process could be used to expedite DEP's acquisition of Bluebelt properties or other agencies' focused acquisition needs. Similarly, DPR will pursue ULURP applications at a neighborhood scale to obtain acquisition approval for the creation of parks in underserved areas of the City. This will provide broad authorization in areas where the department is seeking negotiated property acquisition for new parks and will allow new parks to move more quickly from planning to construction.

# Improving Public Participation in the Land Use Process

The 4 recommendations below will improve the useability and clarity of public-facing documents, as well as provide better notice to the public—improving the public’s opportunity for meaningful participation in the land use process.

## 61. ESTABLISH PROCEDURE FOR EARLIER FILING OF ULURP APPLICATIONS

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will amend the default application process to allow most projects to skip a draft review and file materials earlier in the application process. This will make applications available to Community Boards and the public well in advance of certification and in advance of the 30-day required notice. DCP will first roll this out with Zoning Map amendment applications and expand this initiative by application type.

## 62. PROVIDE NOTICE OF LAND USE APPLICATIONS TO PUBLIC LISTSERVS

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will add a feature to the Zoning Application Portal to allow anyone to subscribe to automatic notices for relevant alerts in a particular area. DCP will investigate the use of including SMS notifications as well as email notifications. Notifications will be sent when an application is filed within the subscribed Community District.

## 63. ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC FORUMS ON LAND USE

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** During the pandemic, DCP hosted remote City Planning Commission (CPC) public hearings and other engagement events that allowed more and new voices to participate in these public forums. As the CPC transitions back to in-person meetings, DCP will maintain and enhance a hybrid format with remote participation options for members of the public to observe or participate.

## 64. FACILITATE COMMUNITY BOARD AND CIVIC GROUP LAND USE TRAINING

**Owner Agency:** Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DCP will expand training modules and instructional materials for Community Boards and other civic groups. Training will cover the City’s environmental, land use, and building permitting processes to help members of the public prepare to participate in the land use process.

# THE CITY'S BUILDING PERMITTING PROCESS: DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF 47 IMPROVEMENTS

## Breaking Down Silos—and Reducing the Ping Pong Between City Agencies—Using Technology Tools

The 27 recommendations below will improve direct communication between agencies and coordinate the efforts of the many agencies involved in the permitting process. New technology tools will be deployed to increase transparency of the permitting process for applicants and members of the public.

### 65. CREATE A DIGITAL PLATFORM SINGLE PERMIT PORTAL SOLUTION

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DOB will establish a centralized, “one-stop shop” portal to process construction related transactions across all city agencies involved in construction approval, permitting, and sign-off activities. Uniform formats for digital document submissions will be established that support all agency needs. Agencies will communicate with each other to anticipate upcoming projects subject to their review. This change will simplify the obligation on the applicant to obtain evidence of multiple agency signoffs, and instead will incorporate the tracking of those approvals in an integrated permitting system. The new portal will provide a means for applicants to track progress of a project approval and understand what further steps need to be taken to achieve approvals. DOB will create and maintain a simplified user manual.

### 66. COORDINATE FDNY AND DOB PLAN REVIEW AND CONSTRUCTION INSPECTIONS OF FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

**Owner Agency:** Fire Department (FDNY); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** As a short-term action, FDNY will direct construction permit applications for Fire Alarms, Fire Suppression Systems, and Range Hoods in New Buildings or Major Alterations to be submitted directly to DOB. DOB and FDNY will establish a process for a coordinating plan review, while final sign-off and approval authority will remain with FDNY.

## 67. TRANSFER FDNY CONSTRUCTION PERMIT RESPONSIBILITIES TO DOB

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** As a long-term system improvement, the City will consider formally transferring responsibility to DOB for the plan review and inspection of construction-related permits for Fire Alarms, Fire Suppression Systems, and Range Hoods. DOB is already responsible for plan review and inspection of other buildings systems. These permitting processes will be improved by having a single agency process all required permits for a construction project, removing redundancies and increasing efficiency.

## 68. FACILITATE REMOTE DOB INSPECTIONS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DOB will establish protocols to facilitate inspections using remote technology and identify areas where remote technology may be accepted or mandated. Digital technologies for remote video interactions have recently become commonplace. With the appropriate framework for successful field inspections, significant time savings and efficiencies can be achieved for applicants and DOB staff. Ideally, remote inspections will become a widespread option.

## 69. ESTABLISH A METHOD FOR DOB TO MANAGE TEMPORARY BUILDING IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS (TBINS) IN DOB NOW

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Establish the use of TBINS in the DOB NOW system where new building and demolition applications overlap to avoid lost permit data. DCP has provided a BIN-on-DEMAND application to DOB, allowing DOB to create TBINS as needed.

## 70. CREATE A DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR FILING APPLICATIONS FOR TAX LOT SUBDIVISIONS AND CONDOMINIUMS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Finance (DOF); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Currently DOF only accepts physical paper applications for subdivisions of tax lots and the creation of condominiums, known as RP-602 forms. DOF will digitize the filing process of RP-602 forms and prepare for its integration with the single application portal system described above.

## 71. CREATE PILOT PROGRAM TO UTILIZE AUTOMATED CODE CHECK SOFTWARE

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DOB will pilot software that will perform automated plan review for code compliance of construction documents to allow faster plan review service. This technology will free DOB staff to focus on issues that require discretion and thoughtful review and reduce the time they spend reviewing repetitive calculations and code references.

## 72. DIGITIZE AND SPEED SEWER CONNECTION APPLICATIONS, AND INTEGRATE WITH DOB

**Owner Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DEP will streamline and digitize sewer connection permitting processes (i.e., House Connection Proposals and Site Connection Proposals) by (a) enabling online records requests, (b) creating a “smart form” for the Phase I application and Phase II permitting approval that enables electronic completion, dynamic sections, database calls and electronic submission, and (c) providing a mobile app so that inspectors can close out inspections immediately when at the project site.

## 73. SIMPLIFY SEWER LINE INSPECTIONS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** The latest NYC Building Code extends DEP’s jurisdiction of the sewer/house connections beyond the property line to the building line. Prior to this revision, DEP inspectors were only able to inspect installations from the main to property line and then DOB inspectors covered inspection from the property line into the building. This meant applicants had to liaise and review essentially two parts of the same connection with two different agencies. Going forward, DEP will handle both inspections to streamline the process for applicants. The City will work to speed DEP hiring to cover these new responsibilities.

## 74. IMPROVE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIFIED STORMWATER RULE (USWR) FOR DPR PROJECTS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Department of Parks and Recreation will be allowed to submit design documents prior to 100% design completion so some of the USWR reviews can happen concurrently to the design process. DPR will hire a stormwater engineer with DEP support to assist DPR’s landscape architects with concept plans.

## 75. IMPROVE UNIFORM STORM WATER RULE APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS - PRIORITIZE RESUBMITTALS AND CREATE TRACKING METRICS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DEP will track process timing over the next year and commits to review data on cycle times to inform staffing planning. To reduce process timing, DEP will ensure that applicants who have to resubmit amended applications based on DEP comments will be prioritized for re-review.

## 76. CREATE AN INTERAGENCY PROCESS TO RESOLVE STREET TREE CONFLICTS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** The City will empower a panel of decision makers from appropriate agencies to improve coordination and resolve conflicts between development design and trees, mainly related to parking, and street and sidewalk expansion, rather than requiring applicants to independently seek approval from separate agencies whose policies or priorities may not align.

## 77. REVIEW DPR PERMITTING PROCESS OF EXTERNAL PROJECTS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DPR will conduct a comprehensive review of its construction permit processes (required when other agencies or private developers perform work on parkland) to ensure the agency is issuing approvals/permits as efficiently as possible.

## 78. COMBINE THE WATERFRONT PERMITTING FUNCTION OF SBS WITH DOB

**Owner Agency:** Department of Small Business Services (SBS); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** SBS Waterfront Permits Unit currently issues work permits and certificates of completion for properties under its jurisdiction along the City's 520-mile coastline, for applications that comply with NYC Building Code. For privately-owned properties, DOB has jurisdiction of the buildings and upland work, and SBS has jurisdiction over the maritime structures such as piers, docks, seawalls and bulkheads. For publicly-owned properties such as sanitation marine waste transfer stations and park buildings located on waterfront parcels, SBS has jurisdiction over the upland as well as maritime work scopes. Going forward, the work of SBS waterfront permitting unit will be combined with functions at DOB to provide consistent and comprehensive administrative oversight. This change will be implemented in conjunction with the development of a Waterfront Structure Code described below.

## 79. SIMPLIFY PROCESS FOR FLAGGING AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS AT DOB

**Owner Agency:** Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Currently, DOB offers expedited service to affordable housing projects through the affordable housing hub. Because flagging affordable housing projects to DOB occurs in various ways, the process needs to be streamlined to avoid the back-and-forth between the applicant, HPD and DOB, and to provide further clarity on the associated requirements or characteristics that may impact DOB review. On the back end, there are also issues with getting DOB inspections and signoffs in a timely manner so that every project can obtain a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) before their critical deadlines. HPD will work with DOB to establish a more efficient process for flagging affordable housing projects, communicating project info, and obtaining completion signoffs and TCOs for affordable housing projects.

## 80. FAST-TRACK HPD DESIGN REVIEW STRATEGIES

**Owner Agency:** Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD); **Implementation**

**Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Currently, HPD-assisted projects are required to undergo a Building and Land Development Services (BLDS) design review as a pre-requisite to loan closing. To expedite the design review process, BLDS will create a two-track process that allows for development projects that meet certain criteria to receive an expedited and limited design review. HPD will develop criteria that will identify what types of projects will be eligible for the limited design review. Standard comments and a checklist outlining the scope of the design review will also be created to further streamline and standardize the design review process.

## 81. STREAMLINE THE FILING PROCESS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS ON CITY-OWNED PROPERTY

**Owner Agency:** Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD); **Implementation**

**Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** For HPD-financed affordable housing projects developed on city-owned properties, HPD currently signs as “owner” on all filing forms for several city agencies (e.g. DOB, FDNY, DEP, Parks) until such time that ownership is transferred to the private developer at loan closing. This requires project applicants to circulate multiple forms to HPD for signature. The overwhelming volume of paperwork involved in this process can delay the applicant’s ability to secure signatures and file projects. HPD will work with other city agencies to simplify the process by eliminating the need for HPD to sign all these forms as owner, while ensuring it is clear the property is city-owned and HPD has given the authority for the developer to start the filing process prior to land disposition.

## 82. LAUNCH LPC DIGITAL TOOLS

**Owner Agency:** Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** LPC recently launched a photo database of images of designated buildings used in regulatory work. Previously, applicants requested such photographs via email to preservation staff, which was inefficient for staff and applicants. The database will streamline pre-application research and application submissions for applicants.

## 83. SIMPLIFY THE LPC PROCESS FOR APPROVING PROJECTS WITH AS-OF-RIGHT ZONING AND REMOVE DOB ZONING REVIEW AS A PREREQUISITE TO LPC APPROVAL

**Owner Agency:** Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** LPC will seek to simplify the process for some new buildings in historic districts. LPC’s existing permit review process for new buildings that are as-of-right (AOR) for bulk, massing, and height (per Zoning Resolution and Building Code) is that LPC refers the applicant to DOB, the applicant files with DOB for zoning review, and after the zoning objections are cleared by DOB then the LPC permit is processed. That LPC/DOB handoff is a process that is confusing for applicants, lacks clarity and can add significant time. LPC will eliminate the need for DOB zoning review prior to LPC approval.

#### 84. STREAMLINE LPC/DOB HANDOFF

**Owner Agency:** Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** LPC and DOB will eliminate two letters often requested by applicants to satisfy DOB requirements. One is a “status letter,” a letter that indicates whether or not a property is designated by LPC, which is requested by some applicants for demolition permits. The need for this could be addressed through maps and data. The second is a letter for energy code exemptions for buildings listed on the NYS or National Register of Historic Places. This letter is also redundant with various maps and data tools, but still requested by applicants and currently provided by LPC.

#### 85. HIRE DDC/DOB PERMITTING LIAISON

**Owner Agency:** Department of Design and Construction (DDC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DDC will hire a project advocate to work in close coordination with DOB to handle all permitting/approvals for DDC projects. The project advocate will aid DDC project teams in navigating DOB filing pathways, review, and approval, and code determination processes that ensure adherence to the NYC Construction Codes, Local Laws, Energy Code, and Zoning Resolution; and interface regularly with DOB to support timely approvals and provide constructive feedback on applications related to DDC projects.

#### 86. DESIGNATE DOB STAFF TO NYCHA REVIEW

**Owner Agency:** New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** NYCHA is a significant applicant in the DOB pipeline with more than 700 open applications. NYCHA will be establishing a single designated point of contact and will work with assigned DOB staffing to provide for improved communication and prioritization.

#### 87. RESCIND OUTDATED OPEN JOB APPLICATIONS AND VIOLATIONS

**Owner Agency:** New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** NYCHA and DOB will collaborate on a “clean sweep” effort to resolve outdated job applications and violations that are not relevant to safety on public housing properties. Any historic open job applications and violations that predate a certain year will be removed from the system to clean-up record-keeping, by engaging an appropriate licensed professional or licensed trade member to certify that open work permits can be closed or violations have been addressed.

## 88. REDUCE ZONING ANALYSIS OF NYCHA CAMPUSES

**Owner Agency:** New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Permit applications for small building changes on NYCHA campuses, such as reduction of parking or changes to maintenance spaces, currently require extensive documentation of existing buildings or a zoning override for the entire zoning lot. NYCHA will execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with DOB that reduces the workload of preparing permits where a licensed professional can certify that buildings on a campus are duplicated by limiting the zoning analysis of bulk, height, setbacks and yards of existing buildings on NYCHA campuses that is currently required.

## 89. ALLOW PDC STAFF TO CONDUCT MINOR SCOPE REVIEWS

**Owner Agency:** Public Design Commission (PDC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** To streamline review and expedite design, the Commission will delegate review of minor projects to staff. On October 11, 2022, PDC passed a resolution to delegate minor scope reviews to PDC staff. Approximately 20% of total PDC submissions per review cycle will be delegated to the Executive Director for review. For those minor projects which are delegated to the Executive Director, the PDC review cycle will be shortened from one month to approximately two weeks.

## 90. CREATE PDC COMMISSIONER HANDBOOK

**Owner Agency:** Public Design Commission (PDC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** PDC will create a handbook to educate Commissioners on process, jurisdiction and project review standards to facilitate the design review cycle.

## 91. CLARIFY PDC SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

**Owner Agency:** Public Design Commission (PDC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** The PDC will undertake a comprehensive study of ways to streamline and expedite design review and clarify submission guidelines, including engaging design consultants to hear feedback on process and ideas. Potential solutions include developing example presentations, creating templates, updating checklists, and editing the PDC website for clarity on monthly review cycle. The PDC Executive Director will host industry conversations to hear feedback from consultants on the PDC process.

# Focusing DOB Review on What Matters Most—Safety

The 6 recommendations below will remove administrative barriers and paperwork that can delay completion of construction projects without providing meaningful benefits to public safety.

## 92. EXPAND USE OF INTERIM AND AMENDED CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** Revise current limitations for the issuance of interim certificate of occupancy to allow partial occupation of a building where life and safety issues have already been addressed in the process of obtaining a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy. The use of interim Certificate of Occupancies is currently limited to larger buildings. The City will amend code requirements to remove those limitations and allow interim Certificates of Occupancy for mid-rise buildings with more than 3 dwelling units and non-residential buildings. The City will advocate for amendments to the Multiple Dwelling Law to allow partial final Certificates of Occupancy.

## 93. REMOVE ADMINISTRATIVE BARRIERS TO ISSUING OF TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Applicants should be able to self-certify correction of minor objections to submitted TCOs, such as clerical errors. Large projects that need multiple, separate TCO requests cannot submit for an issuance of a separate TCO until the other request has been fully processed and approved. Applicants should be able to submit multiple TCO requests rather than wait for final approval of other TCO requests before submitting a new one.

## 94. REMOVE UNNECESSARY ADDRESS PAPERWORK FOR ALT 1 APPLICATIONS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DOB will no longer require verification of addresses forms for Alt 1 applications where there is no change to a building entrance. Alt 1 applications are submitted when changing a certificate of occupancy or getting a new certificate of occupancy, but no actual construction work is done.

## 95. REVISE THE REQUIREMENT FOR NEIGHBORING BUILDING PRE-CONSTRUCTION SURVEY

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DOB will move the pre-construction survey from a “Plan Approval Required Item” to a “Permit Required Item.” A neighbor pre-construction survey is currently required for plan approval. This can cause delays since typically license agreements with neighboring buildings are negotiated simultaneously while plans are reviewed by DOB. Moving this requirement to a later stage in the review process will allow project review to advance while also ensuring protection of neighboring buildings prior to the start of construction.

## 96. REVAMP LETTER OF NO OBJECTION

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Many older buildings in New York City were constructed before a certificate of occupancy was required in the permitting and construction process. Those buildings are often “grandfathered” and legally occupied without a certificate of occupancy. DOB will digitize and streamline the process for businesses that require operating licenses to confirm legal use of a building in absence of a certificate of occupancy.

## 97. RECOGNIZE OWNER-CONTROLLED INSURANCE PROGRAMS (OCIP)

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Traditionally construction activities are insured by each individual contractor providing their own insurance coverage. Those insurance costs are passed onto the property owner as part of the cost of construction. A relatively new type of insurance coverage, Owner Controlled Insurance Programs (OCIP), insures the property owner, general contractor and all subcontractors under a single policy for a development site. DOB will recognize projects utilizing OCIP to improve property owner cost savings and risk management, streamline claims processing, and increase opportunities for Minority, Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs).

# Reducing Bottlenecks in DOB Review by removing duplication of work by Licensed Professionals

The 8 recommendations below will streamline building permitting to reduce redundant and unnecessary review of low-risk projects and rely on the expertise of design and engineering professionals.

## 98. IMPROVE OBJECTION AND AUDIT PROCESS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** DOB will establish a standardized audit checklist, inspection checklist, and standardized list of objections. Some job types such as construction fences and equipment, and small apartment renovations will be accepted and a permit issued upon submission, and any audit will be conducted within a limited timeframe based on the risk of the project.

## 99. ESTABLISH DEDICATED EXPERTS FOR MAJOR PROJECTS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DOB will establish a program to have dedicated single points-of-contact and a dedicated team to support large, complex construction projects. This will avoid delays of major projects due to scheduling of site inspections and utilize inspectors with expertise with complex projects to expedite resolution of corrections.

## 100. AUTHORIZE 1, 2, AND 3 FAMILY HOMEOWNERS TO FILE PERMITS WITHOUT A PROFESSIONAL FILING

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** The City will remove the burden of plan submittal for home improvement projects that create no risk to public safety where 1, 2, and 3 family homeowners are making minor changes to their homes, such as kitchen and bathroom remodels. For these kinds of home improvement projects, homeowners should not have to carry the cost of hiring professionals to submit drawings to make minor changes to fixtures. Homeowners should have a simple process to permit renovation projects, including minor relocation of plumbing and electrical fixtures. Other municipalities in the country have created this streamlined approach. Additions to the building code can create a regulatory framework to define what kinds of projects could use this pathway.

## 101. EXPAND AUTHORITY OF LICENSED PROFESSIONALS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** Allow more construction activity to be performed without the need for plans and plan review prepared by a registered design professional.

### **102. IDENTIFY WORK TYPES THAT DO NOT NEED PERMITS**

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DOB will identify areas where city agencies can perform work without requirements for DOB-issued permits based on standard details pre-approved by DOB (e.g. Parks, DOT, DDC, DCAS). Allowing agencies to perform their own permitting work based on standard details will free DOB staff time to focus on property owner applications.

### **103. REDUCE PLAN REVIEW TIMES AT FDNY BY ALLOWING PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION FOR MINOR REQUESTS**

**Owner Agency:** Fire Department (FDNY); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** Pilot professionally certified plan review with School Construction Authority projects with future expansion to other minor project types for all permit applicants.

### **104. EXPAND AUTHORITY OF DDC CONSTRUCTION MANAGERS (CM)**

**Owner Agency:** Department of Design and Construction (DDC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** DDC CMs should have authority to conduct special inspections on CM managed jobs. DDC will delegate approval and inspection authority to DDC's licensed professionals where possible, with the goal of removing administrative burdens from DDC staff on CM managed projects and consolidating work.

### **105. ALLOW DPR SELF-PERMITTING OF SITE WORK**

**Owner Agency:** Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR); **Implementation Mechanism:** City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** DPR will be allowed to permit/self-certify certain elements of their own site work. Examples include but are not limited to certain retaining walls, flag poles and handball courts.

# Addressing Gaps in the Building Code, Rules and Local Law

The 6 recommendations below will improve predictability of the building permitting process by establishing clear updated code requirements and provide appropriate regulatory frameworks to protect the public.

## 106. REQUIRE A TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR ALL SIGNIFICANT FREIGHT- AND TRAFFIC-GENERATING PROJECTS AS A REQUIREMENT OF THE BUILDING PERMITTING PROCESS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of City Planning (DCP); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** The Mayor’s Office, working in collaboration with the City Council, will propose local legislation requiring projects, including as-of-right buildings, which generate significant truck and vehicle traffic to provide a Transportation Management Plan (TMP). The goals of these TMPs will be to identify measures to improve transportation safety and operations, while promoting citywide traffic reduction by prioritizing marine and rail freight movement. In addition, TMPs will also be required to address air quality, including through prioritizing alternative fuel vehicles. As a functional step of the building permitting process, this requirement would apply to all projects meeting the established criteria, whether they are as-of-right or subject to CEQR and include last-mile-delivery centers built in manufacturing districts if they generate significant vehicle traffic.

## 107. DEVELOP CODE REQUIREMENTS UNIQUE TO WATERFRONT STRUCTURES

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** DOB will develop a Waterfront Code, including design, construction, and maintenance requirements for building and structure typologies unique to the waterfront, such as piers, docks, and bulkheads. The Department of Small Business Services (SBS) currently administers and enforces the City’s construction code on waterfront properties within its jurisdiction, including waterfront properties used in conjunction and furtherance of waterfront commerce and or navigation. The Building Code, and specifically its requirements for constructions within flood-zones, are relevant for all applications filed with SBS. SBS relies on DOB to support key work scopes such as gas, elevators, electrical, boilers, excavations, and scaffolding. FDNY supports SBS with all fire prevention and fire suppression scopes. In exceptional cases where the Building Code is not explicit for waterfront applications, SBS seeks case-by-case Construction Code Interpretation from DOB. Completing the Waterfront Code will provide clarification for such exceptions and address other gaps such as cranes on barges. It will also facilitate seamless coordination of plan exam, inspections, and enforcement between SBS, DOB, FDNY, and DCP, and enable the City to provide a one-stop permitting shop for applicants.

### 108. ADOPT BATTERY STORAGE CODE

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** DOB will issue updated rules removing regulatory barriers to the development of Energy Storage Systems. DOB code requirements should be made consistent with national standards for design, permitting and installation of battery storage systems. To meet its green energy goals, the City will need to dramatically increase the rate of installation of storage systems at both the building and grid infrastructure scale.

### 109. CREATE A BUILDING CODE FOR OLDER EXISTING BUILDINGS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Buildings (DOB); **Implementation Mechanism:** City legislative approvals – City Council Local Law or Code approval required

**Description:** DOB will adopt a code for alterations to existing buildings built to older codes and create standards to facilitate renovation, maintenance, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

### 110. CREATE HPD PRESERVATION DESIGN GUIDELINES AND STREAMLINE THE REVIEW PROCESS FOR PRESERVATION PROJECTS

**Owner Agency:** Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD);  
**Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – Internal Processes / New Initiatives / Staffing

**Description:** HPD's Building and Land Development Services (BLDS) will streamline the review process for preservation projects by creating Preservation Design Guidelines that will outline the Agency's requirements for projects undergoing moderate or substantial rehabilitation and by relying on cost reviews by the entities that are financing the project rather than completing duplicative analyses. HPD will seek input from affordable housing partners (e.g., developers/ owners, architects, general contractors, and lawyers) to develop a deeper understanding of pain points in the preservation loan process, including opportunities to streamline the design, scoping, bid and cost reviews processes in service of improving the housing quality for current and future residents in NYC affordable housing buildings.

### 111. STREAMLINE RULES TO ALLOW EFFICIENT PERMITTING AT LPC

**Owner Agency:** Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC); **Implementation Mechanism:** City agency operational change – CAPA rulemaking

**Description:** LPC will introduce several new rules to allow for streamlined processing of permits by the end of 2022. Topics include allowing increased flexibility in storefront windows and signs, sidewalk cafes, and solar panel installations, among others.

## The 25 city agencies that served as members of the Building and Land use Approval Streamlining Taskforce (BLAST):

- Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA)
- Department of Buildings (DOB)
- Department of City Planning (DCP)
- Department of Design and Construction (DDC)
- Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Department of Finance (DOF)
- Department of Homeless Services (DHS)
- Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)
- Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR)
- Department of Sanitation (DSNY)
- Department of Small Business Services (SBS)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC)
- Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC)
- Mayor's Office of Environmental Justice (MOEJ)
- Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation (MOER)
- Mayor's Office of Operations (OPS)
- New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)
- New York City Fire Department (FDNY)
- New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)
- Office of the Chief Housing Officer (CHO)
- Office of the First Deputy Mayor (FDM)
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
- Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI)
- Public Design Commission (PDC)
- School Construction Authority (SCA)

## **The 50+ stakeholder groups that participated in our roundtable discussions and/or provided feedback and recommendations:**

- City of Miami Building Department
- City of Seattle Building Department
- City of Boston Building Department
- City of Los Angeles Building Department
- City of Chicago Building Department
- Citizens Budget Commission
- Real Estate Board of New York
- Regional Plan Association
- New York State Association for Affordable Housing
- Citizen's Housing and Planning Council
- Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development
- New York Housing Conference
- Supportive Housing Network of New York
- Center for NYC Neighborhoods
- New York Real Estate Chamber
- Queens and Bronx Building Association
- Queens Chapter - American Institute of Architects
- New York Building Congress
- Food Industry Alliance of New York State
- National Supermarket Association
- NYU Furman Center
- The Municipal Art Society of New York
- Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP
- Kramer Levin
- Duval & Stachenfeld LLP
- Akerman LLP

- Holland & Knight LLP
- Sheldon Lobel, PC
- Eric Palatnik, PC
- VHB Inc
- Langan
- AECOM
- WSP
- Phillip Habib and Associates
- AKRF Inc
- Sam Schwartz
- American Council of Engineering Companies of NY
- Archdiocese of NY
- Genesis Companies
- Enterprise Community Partners, Inc
- LISC NYC
- TF Cornerstone, Inc.
- COVE Property Group, LLC.
- Brookfield Properties
- The Durst Organization
- L&L Holding Company
- Extell Development
- The Brodsky Organization
- Mega Contracting Group, LLC
- Rise, Light and Power, LLC
- Microgrid Networks, LLC
- New Lab, LLC
- Center for Zero Waste Design
- Karp Strategies
- Cornell Tech