

city of **yes** for economic opportunity

Guide to Commercial Adaptations for Office Space

Today's restrictive zoning rules make it difficult to repurpose underused office space. In turn, businesses may have trouble adapting to a changing economy, bringing more vacancy to NYC streets.

city of yes for economic opportunity would allow for adaptive reuse of office buildings to help a wide range of businesses more easily find or repurpose space in NYC.



Lifting Unnecessary Restrictions

Loading: When new businesses move into an office building, today's zoning often requires them to add loading docks on-site – even beyond what is appropriate for the business. *city of yes* would lift this cost-prohibitive and outdated rule.

Stacking: Today's zoning includes “stacking rules” that only allow businesses on lower floors in residential buildings. Therefore, owners have few financially-viable options to convert their buildings into mixed-use spaces. *city of yes* would remove stacking rules for buildings, while requiring a physical separation between residential and commercial uses.

Boosting Emerging Industries

Amusements: New Yorkers must travel to industrial areas for many arcades, virtual reality games, and other amusements. To bring recreational businesses closer to where people live, and to fill unused space, *city of yes* would allow small amusements on neighborhood commercial streets and larger amusements in office districts.



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Life Sciences: Today's zoning is getting in the way of life sciences innovation. Unclear zoning terminology prevents labs from setting up in offices near research centers that could benefit these labs. *city of yes* would allow life science businesses that meet environmental standards to find space in commercial offices.

Makerspaces: Existing zoning forces many "maker" businesses—such as apparel makers, 3-D printers, and other high-tech or artisan manufacturing—to locate in industrial areas far from their customer base. *city of yes* would allow some small-scale, clean production businesses in offices, provided they meet relevant environmental standards.



Urban agriculture: As technologies change, entrepreneurs can increasingly grow food for their communities safely and cleanly indoors – but zoning has not kept up. Urban agriculture in most areas of NYC is only allowed outside or in a greenhouse. *city of yes* would permit indoor agriculture in commercial spaces, including converted offices.

Questions or comments?

Please email NYC Planning at EconomicOpportunity@planning.nyc.gov.

