

# city of **yes** for economic opportunity

## Overview of the Proposal and CPC Modifications

*City of Yes for Economic Opportunity* is a comprehensive overhaul of New York City's zoning rules to **support small business and entrepreneurs, foster vibrant streetscapes and commercial corridors, and boost New York's continued economic recovery.**

It is the second of Mayor Adams and the Department of City Planning's three "City of Yes" initiatives; it follows *City of Yes for Carbon Neutrality*, which was adopted by the City Council in December 2023, and precedes *City of Yes for Housing Opportunity*, which will begin public review this spring.

As New York City adapts and recovers from the effects of the pandemic, it is clear that we must update our rules governing which types of businesses can locate where. Zoning regulations that were created in 1961 are holding back our economy's growth and flexibility; exacerbating storefront vacancies; and restricting life sciences and other cutting-edge research and industries.

### Proposals:

#### Make it easier for businesses to locate and grow close to customers

1. Lift time limits for reactivating vacant storefronts
2. Simplify rules for business types allowed on commercial streets
3. Expand opportunities for small-scale clean production
4. Modernize loading dock rules so buildings can adapt over time
5. Enable commercial activity on upper floors
6. Simplify and modernize how businesses are classified in zoning

#### Reduce obstacles for new and growing types of businesses

7. Clarify rules to permit indoor urban agriculture
8. Give life sciences companies more certainty to grow
9. Support nightlife with common-sense rules for dancing and live entertainment
10. Create more opportunities for amusements to locate
11. Enable entrepreneurship with modern rules for home-based businesses

#### Deliver active, safe, and walkable streets for businesses and residents

12. Introduce corridor design rules that promote active ground floors
13. Reduce conflicts between auto repair shops and pedestrians
14. Encourage safe and sustainable deliveries with micro-distribution

#### Create zoning tools to give businesses opportunities to open or grow

15. Facilitate local commercial space on residential campuses
16. Create a process for allowing corner stores in residential areas, with public review
17. Rationalize waiver process for adapting spaces for industries like film
18. Create new kinds of zoning districts for future job hubs

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### Review and Modifications

*City of Yes for Economic Opportunity* was referred for public review in October, and community boards, borough boards, and borough presidents offered their recommendations on the proposal. In total, DCP attended 175 community board meetings, often presenting multiple times at each board. In response to feedback from community boards and borough presidents, the City Planning Commission made modifications to the proposal:

- **Proposal 3:** In response to concerns about what qualifies as “clean production,” the CPC provided additional specificity on what uses are and are not eligible to locate in Commercial Districts.
- **Proposal 5:** In response to concerns about the potential of upper-floor commercial to compete with the need for housing, the CPC barred conversion of space used for existing residences to commercial space.
- **Proposal 8:** In response to concerns about environmental protections for life sciences research, the CPC added an explicit reference to the section of the NYC Building Code that is currently used to interpret the environmental standards for laboratories in Commercial Districts.
- **Proposal 9:** In response to concerns about nightlife enforcement, the CPC clarified that regulators can consider the presence of a dance floor in enforcement.
- **Proposal 11:** In response to concerns about home occupations creating competition between housing and commercial activity, and concerns about potential environmental effects and nuisances, the CPC made three changes:
  - Reinstated a cap of no more than 1,000 square feet or 49% of the space.
  - Clarified that home occupations cannot utilize residential common areas like hallways and lobbies.
  - Clarified that additional potential environmental hazards are not permitted, giving DOB and building management more clearly-defined guidance.

Additional modifications to clarify enforcement or make technical edits can be found at [nyc.gov/YesEconomicOpportunity](https://nyc.gov/YesEconomicOpportunity). The City Council can further modify the proposal, within scope, as part of its consideration.

### Support for City of Yes for Economic Opportunity

*City of Yes for Economic Opportunity* has been crafted in consultation with neighborhood and citywide business advocacy groups, with industrial job advocates, with policy experts in small business, storefront vacancies, and economic adaptation from the pandemic, and with the New York City agencies responsible for enforcing zoning regulations. Among the supporters of the initiative are: Partnership for NYC, all five borough Chambers of Commerce, business improvement districts (BIDs) from across the city, Dance/NYC, Dance Parade, industrial service providers, Freelancers Union, the Regional Plan Association, and the NYC Hospitality Alliance.

A full list of supporters and letters of support are available online at [nyc.gov/YesEconomicOpportunity](https://nyc.gov/YesEconomicOpportunity).