

City Planning is working with communities throughout the floodplain to identify zoning and land use strategies to reduce flood risks and support the city's vitality and resiliency through long-term adaptive planning. The Flood Resilience Zoning Text is one part of a wide range of efforts by the City to recover from Hurricane Sandy, promote rebuilding, and increase the city's resilience to climate-related events.

Overview

The Flood Text enables and encourages flood resilient building construction throughout designated floodplains.

The Flood Text modified zoning to remove regulatory barriers that hindered or prevented the reconstruction of storm-damaged properties by enabling new and existing buildings to comply with new, higher flood elevations issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and to comply with new requirements in the New York City Building Code.

It also introduced regulations to mitigate potential negative effects of flood resilient construction in the public realm. The text was adopted in 2013 on a temporary, emergency basis. Therefore a future update of this text, guided by community input, will aim to make the text permanent, and to incorporate lessons learned during the recovery and rebuilding process.

Where is the Flood Text Applicable?

The Flood Text is available to buildings located entirely or partially within the 1% annual chance floodplain*.

These rules can be found in Article VI, Chapter 4 of the Zoning Resolution and, if utilized, typically require the building to fully comply with flood resilient construction standards found in Appendix G of the New York City Building Code. However, some provisions, such as elevation of mechanical spaces, are available to all buildings located in the floodplain, even if not fully compliant with Appendix G.

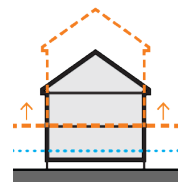
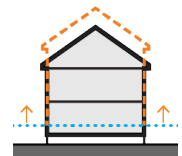
For more information about the Flood Text, visit: www.nyc.gov/floodtext

*Per the more restrictive of the 2007 FIRMs or 2015 PFIRMs.

Summary of the Flood Text

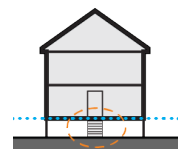
Height

The Flood Text recognizes elevation requirements in Building Code and allows buildings to measure height from the flood level to ensure the same amount of floor area above the flood elevation. Where flood elevations are moderate, additional height is allowed to improve the utility of spaces subject to flooding for parking, access, and storage.



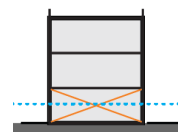
Access

Stairs, ramps, and lobby can be discounted from floor area or be repositioned as permitted obstructions.



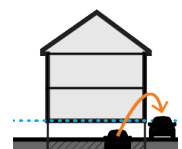
Ground Floor Use

Ground floors can be discounted from floor area to overcome use limitations below the flood level when wet floodproofing or offset the cost when dry floodproofing.



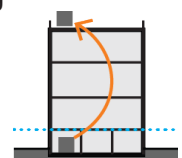
Parking

More flexibility is allowed for the accommodation of off-street parking above grade.



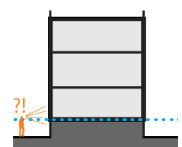
Mechanical Systems

More flexibility is allowed for locating mechanical systems above flood levels as permitted obstructions, as well as more allowances for floor area calculations.



Streetscape

Design mitigation elements are required when the first occupiable floor is elevated above moderate heights, in order to mitigate blank walls.

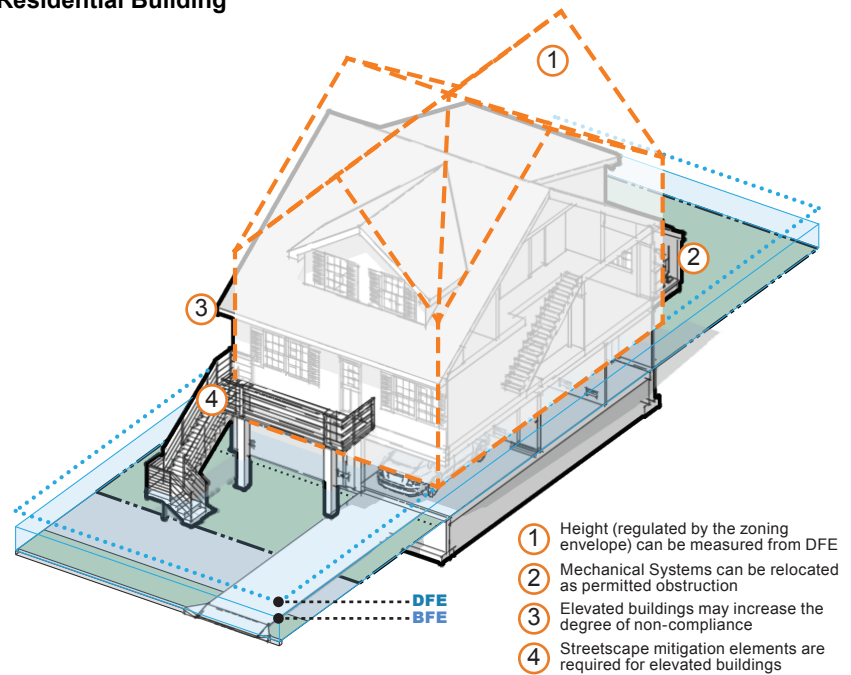


Examples of how the Flood Resilience Zoning Text can be used to enable resilient construction

Existing Buildings

The Flood Text provides special allowances to facilitate retrofitting existing buildings, as this is a considerably more difficult process than building a new, flood resilient building. For example, single- and two-family homes that need to be elevated can be elevated despite height limits set by zoning. The rules also allow the building to be shifted backwards on the lot to provide adequate space in the front yard for stairs, ramps, and lifts. In addition, mechanical systems can be relocated to the rear or side yard as permitted obstructions. Although these allowances are optional, streetscape mitigations are required whenever a building's height is increased in order to maintain neighborhood character.

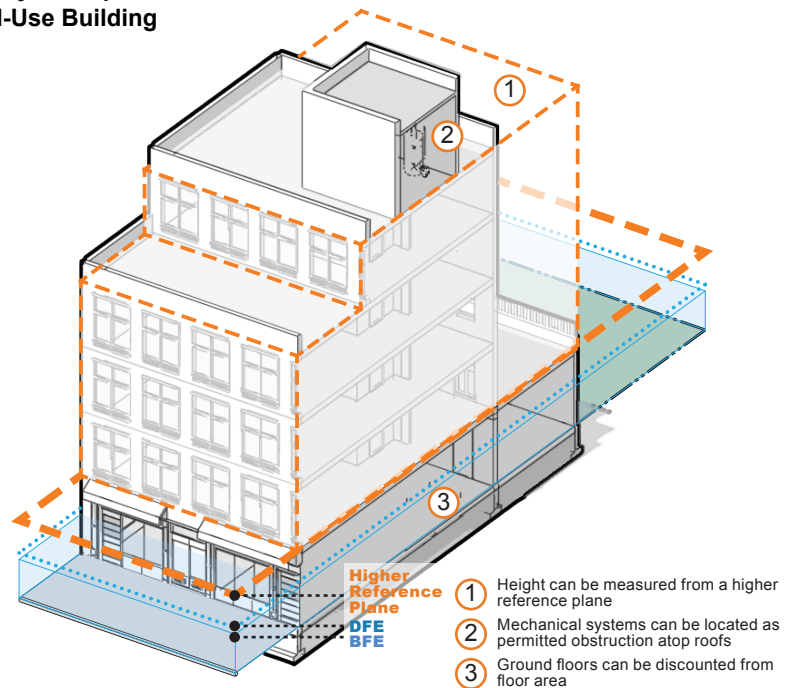
Retrofitted Wet Floodproofed Residential Building



New and Existing Buildings

The Flood Text modifies underlying regulations in order to facilitate construction of flood resilient buildings. It recognizes buildings in the floodplain cannot have subgrade spaces, such as basements or cellars. Ground-floor use is limited to parking, storage or access in residential buildings, since this space has to be wet floodproofed. It also takes into consideration the high cost of dry floodproofing, which is the best option for commercial or mixed-use buildings, since it allows active uses to remain at grade and therefore encourages active streetscapes. The Flood Text changes height, floor area, and permitted obstruction regulations in order to ensure neighborhoods in the floodplain are kept vibrant.

New Dry Floodproofed Mixed-Use Building



To learn more about terms used here, download the info briefs on flood risk, flood resilient construction, and flood insurance at www.nyc.gov/resilientneighborhoods.

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