

First “City of Yes” Zoning Initiative Approved by NYC Council

On December 6, 2023, the New York City Council approved the first of Mayor Adams’ three “City of Yes” zoning initiatives (Res. 0858-2023). The initiative, known as the City of Yes for Carbon Neutrality (COYCN), eliminates burdensome zoning requirements to facilitate opportunities for decarbonization projects across New York City, bolstering the city’s efforts in addressing the climate crisis.

“This is the most ambitious, far-reaching initiative in the history of New York’s zoning to combat climate change,” said Department of City Planning Director Dan Garodnick in a [press release](#). “From solar panels to energy storage and EV charging to building retrofits, these changes will unlock a massive increase in green infrastructure in all corners of our city. This puts us on a path for a more sustainable future for ourselves, our children, and generations to come.”

This initiative includes changes to the NYC Zoning Resolution that aim to remove impediments to building a sustainable energy grid, support environmentally sensitive building retrofits, and encourage a larger network of electric vehicle charging stations across the city.

Notably, these changes include the loosening of restrictions that make it difficult for owners of buildings over 25,000 square feet to comply with Local Law 97, which aims to cap buildings’ carbon emissions and attain carbon neutrality by 2050. For example, previous limitations on building heights and permitted obstructions would be lifted to allow larger areas of buildings’ roofs or required yards to be used for green energy infrastructure equipment, such as solar panels. The changes would also create additional floor area deductions available for fully electrified buildings in compliance with Local Law 154.

“This administration has been clear that in order to meet our city’s ambitious climate goals, we must provide support to property owners as they undertake this necessary work. The City of Yes for Carbon Neutrality plan brings innovative updates to our city’s zoning regulations — removing regulatory barriers for building owners looking to implement green building retrofits and smoothing their path on the road to comply with Local Law 97,” stated New York City Department of Buildings Commissioner Jimmy Oddo.

The two remaining proposed zoning initiatives are City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, which is currently in public review, with the City Council vote anticipated to take place in March 2024, and City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, which is expected to enter public review in Spring 2024.

We welcome any requests for further information.



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