

AIA New York 2025 Policy Platform

American Institute of Architects New York (AIANY) is thrilled to present our 2025 Legislative Agenda for New York City and New York State. AIANY represents over 5,000 architects and design professionals committed to positively impacting the physical and social qualities of our city. The purpose of this document is to share an overview of the top policy priorities of the architecture and design community for the coming year and present recommendations to improve the built environment. Our attention in 2025 will be set on housing, procurement, public realm, sustainability, and transportation and infrastructure policy. New York City is facing crises like never before with affordable housing being out of reach for many New Yorkers, more frequent extreme weather events, and an uncoordinated use of public space. This document presents a number of recommendations to remedy these persistent challenges for New Yorkers and details opportunities to take legislative action.

Housing

State

- Encourage Transit Oriented Development via zoning to enable increased density and reduced parking minimums
- Amend the Multiple Dwelling Law to Enable Office to Residential Conversions and remedy inconsistencies and incompatibilities with the NYC Zoning Code
- Reform SEQR to streamline process of building sustainable housing by cutting red tape that adds onerous time and costs to projects, modeled off Green Fast Track for Housing
- Expand the pilot program for basement apartment legalization to regulate units and enable conversions of units to meet life and safety standards
- Create a program encourage the development of affordable housing, modeled off NJ's Fair Share Act, and increase the capital investment for housing development and fair housing funding

City

- Increase Capital Budget for Affordable Housing Development based on Speaker Adams' Fair Housing Framework
- Eliminate parking mandates citywide to enable housing development
- Support homeowners with ADU development by providing financial and technical assistance
- Support neighborhood rezonings – Midtown South Mixed-Use Plan and Atlantic Avenue Mixed-Use Plan

Procurement

State

- Improve quality and enable innovation for public projects by supporting agencies and authorities exploring alternative delivery tools such as joint bidding, progressive design build, and CM-Build/CM-at-risk; expand the use of alternative delivery for more project types to provide flexibility so the procurement method fits the project's goals
- Eliminate low bid procurement for capital projects and use quality-based selection (QBS) for design and construction

City

- Support paying design professionals fair wages that reflect the value of architecture, and the scope/scale of work involved in quality public projects
- Amend city procurement rules to follow Best Value Procurement in lieu of lowest first cost (low bid) awards for design and construction
- Ensure firm size definitions in RFPs reflect AIA definition, particularly for small firms
- Improve MBE and small firm access and engagement in public work/contracts

Public Realm**City**

- Fund public spaces like the City funds public infrastructure to ensure that these spaces can be design and activated to be both functional and resilient; allocated this investment to existing spaces to ensure they can be useable, maintained, and feel safe
- Create a citywide Public Realm Plan that includes an evaluation of current infrastructure and neighborhood disparities; makes the connection between maintenance, activation, and creation; expands the scope of what is considered the public realm; reimagine the use of curb and corner space; and explore community centered initiatives, such as the expansion of outdoor dining and creation of pedestrian-friendly spaces
- Employ creative value-capture mechanisms to fund public realm projects; explore alternative funding mechanisms via trash and parking to fund DSNY, DOT, and SBS projects
- Ensure strong leadership and oversight over public realm; increase support/budget/staff for the Chief Public Realm Officer and maintain role in future mayoral administrations

Sustainability**State**

- Set limits on embodied carbon for specific materials and require project life cycle assessments; reward buildings focused on creative design solutions, using less materials, supporting low carbon products, and valuing durability and de-constructability
- Support the NY HEAT Act
- Increased investment in decarbonizing and increasing clean energy grid capacity
- Support adaptive reuse of existing buildings through incentives
- Advance a circular economy and material reuse industries

City

- Set limits on embodied carbon for specific materials and require project life cycle assessments; reward buildings focused on creative design solutions, using less materials, supporting low carbon products, and valuing durability and de-constructability
- Support Local Law 97 implementation and programs to provide financial assistance for residential buildings to make necessary retrofits to comply with greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets
- Set regulations on bird safe buildings for retrofits
- Invest in citywide resiliency measures and coastal resiliency to protect at-risk communities from extreme weather events and increased global warming impacts

- Set regulations and incentives on demolition to require salvage assessments, deconstruction for reuse, recycling, and other measures to reduce waste, save embodied energy, and promote circular economy

Transportation and Infrastructure

State

- Assure funding for ongoing state-of-good repairs for local transportation infrastructure to maintain and protect critical assets; Secure full funding for the MTA 2025-2029 Capital Program
- Secure funding for critical transportation projects during the planning, design, or construction phases – specifically, Penn Station Redevelopment, Penn Access, Gateway, Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, Cross Bronx Expressway, Inter-Borough Expressway, and Second Avenue Subway Phase Two

City

- Develop flexible curb use management strategies and regulations; adopt street design guidelines that balance goods movement with other street activities and facilitate deliveries by micro-delivery modes such as cargo bikes; invest in Blue Highway infrastructure
- Set more rigorous urban design streetscape regulations for industrial and mixed-use districts; require off street loading with limited curb cuts and screening at large freight distribution facilities
- Support a less car-centric city by investing in a citywide greenway network, comprehensive bike network and expanding the bus system and frequency
- Amend zoning to allow last mile facilities as of right to positively improve freight and mobility that protects neighborhoods

Other

- Amend plumbing code to create pathway for all gender bathrooms as of right

For more information about AIANY's Legislative Agenda, please contact Bria Donohue (bdonohue@aiany.org).