

October 4, 2023

AIA New York Testimony to the City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises on City of Yes for Carbon Neutrality Zoning Text Proposal

Thank you, Chair Riley and members of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, for holding this hearing today. I am Bria Donohue, Government Affairs Manager at AIA New York. We represent architects and design professionals committed to positively impacting the physical and social qualities of our city.

AIA New York strongly supports Mayor Adams' proposed citywide zoning text amendment, *City of Yes for Carbon Neutrality*. The proposal makes critical updates to NYC's zoning regulations to help us meet our emission reduction goals and remove existing barriers and expand opportunities for decarbonization projects. We are particularly supportive of the elements of the proposal that enable and reward: energy efficient design and retrofits; building electrification and associated equipment; rooftop and other elevated solar; battery storage; electric vehicle charging; and infrastructure to support bicycles and other micromobility options.

While AIANY strongly supports the zoning text amendment, we urge the council to make adjustments to proposal 8 to "Fix Zone Green". We support the goals laid out to create more ultra-low energy buildings in the city; however, the proposal's language has raised concerns regarding the feasibility of the targets outlined.

AIANY makes the following recommendations with the purpose of adding more nuance so that the goals are ambitious, achievable, and specific to various building typologies.

Recommendation #1: Reconsider a 50 percent reduction from the ASHRAE 90.1. Instead, consider setting a very progressive yet potentially achievable reduction factor or adopting a tiered approach for energy reduction, such as 30 percent reduction for 3 percent area exclusion and 50 percent reduction for 5 percent area exclusion.

Recommendation #2: Amend EUI language from 38kbtu source EUI to 38kbtu site EUI. Consider EUI targets specific to building use, as energy use will differ significantly amongst different building uses. These targets could be similar to goals and thresholds set by other local laws.

Recommendation #3: Establish an expert group to review and refine the Ultra-Low Energy Building criteria.

Without these changes, today's most progressive design will not be able to achieve the current performance standard in proposal 8 for most building typologies. This will result in a net worsening of energy performance since Zone Green incentives will effectively disappear, leaving practitioners with little motivation to strive towards the out of reach current definitions of ultra-low-energy buildings.

City of Yes for Carbon Neutrality will be essential to meeting our climate targets, decarbonizing building stock, deploying renewables, and enabling New Yorkers to access a wide variety of low-carbon transportation options. We urge the City Council to pass the proposed zoning text amendment with the recommended changes to proposal 8.