2026 Charter Revision — Ballot Proposals

Community Board 8 Manhattan · Charter Revision Task Force

September 23, 2026

What this meeting is — and isn't

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Reading the actual amendment language, line by line
- Showing the wording that appears on your ballot
- Explaining what a YES and a NO vote each do
- Answering questions and pointing you to the full text

WHAT WE ARE NOT DOING

- Recommending a YES or NO vote on any question
- Taking a Board position or issuing a resolution
- Telling you how to vote

The Task Force takes no position for or against any ballot question.

How tonight works

For each of the three questions, we follow the same three steps.

1

The amendment text

We share our screen and scroll the actual language, reading what is added and what is struck.

2

The ballot wording

The exact words you will see in the voting booth.

3

YES and NO

What each vote would do.

Five questions on the November ballot

Tonight we cover Questions 1, 3 and 4. Questions 2 and 5 follow on October 1.

1	Using public space: cafes, ramps, benches, planters	Tonight
2	City contracting paperwork and the Procurement Policy Board	October 1
3	Street safety projects, City land, and office leases	Tonight
4	Building permits and waterfront permitting	Tonight
5	Rainy day fund targets and contributions	October 1

QUESTION 1

Using public space: cafes, ramps, benches, planters

Charter Proposal 1 — Using public space: cafes, ramps, benches, planters

Question 1 — What appears on your ballot

Speed Up Process for Granting a Revocable Consent to Use Public Space

“Simplify process to use public space for uses such as ramps, planters and cafes, by removing mandatory hearings and Council disapproval of sidewalk cafes, while maintaining community and Council input.”

This is the full text of the question as it will appear. Source: Appendix A, Proposed Ballot Questions, July 23, 2026.

YES Question 1 — What would change with a YES

- The mandatory public hearing would be removed. The Department of Transportation could still hold one at its discretion.
- Applicants would no longer pay for newspaper ads, and City Record notice would drop from 15 days to 6.
- Sidewalk cafe and roadway cafe applications would merge into a single process, estimated at about two months.
- The community board, Council member and Borough President would instead receive notice of each application and at least 15 days to comment.

NO

Question 1 — What a NO vote does

Nothing. The current process stays exactly as it is:

- The current process would remain in place: a mandatory public hearing for every revocable consent, newspaper notice published twice at the applicant's expense, 15 days of notice in the City Record, community board review of sidewalk cafes & roadway, and the City Council's authority to disapprove them. Sidewalk cafe and roadway cafe applications would continue as two separate filings.

QUESTION 3

Street safety projects, city land, and office leases

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Charter Proposal 3 — Street safety projects, City land, and office leases

Question 3 — What appears on your ballot

Speed Up Street Safety Projects, Disposition of Unused City Property, Office Leasing

“Simplify review of street safety projects to reduce construction timelines. Fast track disposition of unused City property with approval from City Planning Commission. Expedite leasing offices used for City workforce.”

This is the full text of the question as it will appear. Source: Appendix A, Proposed Ballot Questions, July 23, 2026.

YES Question 3 — What would change with a YES · Streets

- Agencies consulted about a major transportation project would no longer have to confer with anyone below the agency head — ending the requirement that the Fire Department poll individual firehouses.

- The DOT Commissioner could determine that a project requires immediate implementation to preserve public safety, based on crash data, & begin work before notifying the community board & elected officials.

- Failure to consult an agency would no longer affect a project's validity, so technical errors could not be used in court to stop a project.

YES Question 3 — What would change with a YES · City property

- **Small lots:** City-owned lots up to 10,000 square feet that are not individual landmarks could be sold through the 90-day ELURP process instead of the seven-month ULURP.
- **Landmark air rights:** unused development rights above City-owned landmarks could transfer through the same 90-day process, with proceeds available for landmark upkeep.
- **Sliver lots:** the program allowing sale of undevelopable lots to adjacent owners without auction would become permanent rather than requiring renewal from Albany every five years.
- **Office leases:** the Planning Commission hearing and the Council's disapproval vote would be removed, replaced by a notice of intent to the community board, Council member and Borough President, but no vote.
- An extra public hearing now required when more than two years pass between approval of a sale and its execution would be eliminated.

NO

Question 3 — What a NO vote does

Nothing. Everything described stays as it is today:

- Agencies keep conferring with their own sub-units, including individual firehouses
- Technical errors in that process can still be raised in court to halt a project
- Small lots and landmark air rights stay in the seven-month ULURP with a final Council vote
- The sliver lot program continues to expire and require renewal by the State Legislature
- Office leases keep the Planning Commission hearing and remain subject to Council disapproval
- The additional hearing after two years remains

Question 3 — To read in full

Question 3 leans on three sections of the city charter. Sharing here for transparency with the public.

Administrative Code § 19-101.2

codelibrary.amlegal.com → Administrative Code → search 19-101.2

Defines "major transportation project" and sets the full notice and presentation timeline.

City Charter § 197-e

codelibrary.amlegal.com → City Charter → search 197-e

The 90-day ELURP procedure itself. The amendment changes only which properties are eligible.

City Charter § 203

codelibrary.amlegal.com → City Charter → search 203

Criteria for the location of City facilities — the "fair share" rules. Cited three times in the new section.

QUESTION 4

Building permits and waterfront permitting

Charter Proposal 4 — Building permits and waterfront permitting

Question 4 — What appears on your ballot

Simplify Building Permitting and Move Waterfront Permitting to Department of Buildings

“Create centralized construction permits hub to simplify permitting. Move waterfront permitting from Department of Small Business Services to Department of Buildings. Allow construction approval by additional Department of Buildings officials.”

This is the full text of the question as it will appear. Source: Appendix A, Proposed Ballot Questions, July 23, 2026.

YES Question 4 — What would change with a YES

- The City would be directed to build one centralized system for submitting construction permit applications and issuing permits across agencies.
- The amendment sets a deadline of December 1, 2029, subject to budget appropriations, and lets the Buildings Commissioner extend it if earlier completion is not feasible.
- The Buildings Commissioner could appoint additional deputy commissioners and borough commissioners with authority to approve construction documents and certificates of occupancy.
- Permitting for waterfront construction and demolition would move from Small Business Services to the Department of Buildings. Permits already issued by SBS would stay in force.

NO Question 4 — What a NO vote does

Nothing. Permitting continues as it is today:

- Applicants keep filing separately with each agency, with no requirement that the City build a single point of entry
- The Department of Buildings stays limited to two deputy commissioners and one superintendent per borough
- Waterfront permitting remains divided between Small Business Services and the Department of Buildings

Question 4 — To read in full

One section is amended but not fully reproduced in the amendment text.

City Charter § 645, subdivisions (b) and (d)

codelibrary.amlegal.com → City Charter → search 645

These subdivisions list the powers the Commissioner would be able to delegate to the new deputies and borough commissioners. The amendment changes who may exercise them without reprinting what they are.

Question 4 also refers to the Zoning Resolution, the Building Code, the Multiple Dwelling Law and the State Labor Law. These appear in the unchanged portions of Charter § 643 shown for context and are not altered by this proposal.

Read everything yourself

Every document we used tonight is public.

The proposals
nyc.gov/site/charter

Reports tab. The Adopted Final Report, Proposed Charter Amendments, Ballot Questions and Ballot Abstracts.

The Charter & Admin Code
codelibrary.amlegal.com

The current law, updated continuously. Search by section number — e.g. 197-e or 19-101.2.

Your ballot & polling place
vote.nyc

Confirm your registration, find your poll site, and see your full ballot before Election Day.

Questions?

Next meeting: Thursday, October 1 — Ballot Questions 2 and 5

City Contracting & the Procurement Policy Board · The rainy day fund

The Charter Revision Task Force takes no position for or against any ballot question.