

PUBLICATION

Construction Work through Green Zoning

Authors: Vincent G. Nelan

February 29, 2012

Local government and owners can help the construction industry get back to work through changes to zoning ordinances to allow for green development or green remodeling.

As we previously mentioned, green remodeling of existing and unused space is an area of growth and opportunity for construction work. With commercial office vacancies of about 16%, industrial vacancies at about 12%, retail vacancies at about 12%, and little, if any, new commercial construction, green changes to zoning ordinances can affect the use of property and provide opportunities for new construction work.

New York City is attempting to do just this with its proposed Zone Green amendments to the New York City zoning ordinances. Perhaps spurred by the success and positive press received by the Empire State Building's green remodel, New York City is proposing to allow some of the following changes:

- construction of energy efficient walls on existing buildings that would have previously encroached on set-back areas;
- installation of sun control devices on the facades of buildings;
- fitting solar energy panels on roofs; and
- adjustment of rooftop limitations to allow green roofs, storm water retention systems, sky lights, greenhouses, and wind energy generation.

Granted some of these changes should have been made years ago, or should never have been limitations on the use of one's land; however, this is a great first step and will provide opportunities for the construction industry.

We can use this as an example in our own communities as we seek and secure more work.