

# Reauthorize Joint Bidding for NYC Infrastructure



Delivering underground water mains and sewers requires coordinating with the utility companies whose lines run beneath the street. Joint Bidding allows the City to bid project and utility work together under one contract, avoiding yearslong delays. DDC has used Joint Bidding for nearly two decades, but the existing authorization sunsets in 2024. We need the Joint Bidding law extended to deliver essential infrastructure upgrades for New Yorkers in every neighborhood, adapting the City to more extreme weather.

## Utilities and public infrastructure are co-located beneath city streets

Sewer and water mains run under city roads alongside private utilities like gas, electrical, and telecommunications lines. At the start of a construction on an infrastructure project, the first dig into the roadway is to locate the existing private utilities. These utilities are frequently uncovered as a tangled and

jumbled mess, since they were added under the street over many decades. Private utility companies are required to relocate their lines to make room for new water mains and sewers, which requires coordinating with the City contractor.







---

## Coordination between contractors and private utilities can get messy

Before Joint Bidding, utility companies had no other feasible option but to hire the firm performing the underlying City construction project and negotiate directly for the price of the work after construction had begun. The City's contractors, aware of the utilities' position, could demand steep prices for utility interference work. This resulted in

lengthy deadlocks, during which dug-up streets remained open, construction stopped, and the City had no recourse to advance the project. The City's public works projects remained stalled for months and sometimes years, draining taxpayer dollars and impacting communities.

---

## Joint Bidding speeds the process and saves years on projects

The City addressed the problem of lengthy standoffs by bidding the public work and utility interference work in a single contract, a practice known as Joint Bidding. Under Joint Bidding, the private utility companies are required to conduct pre-engineering **before** the project is bid and construction begins. They are responsible for both

the cost of the utility work and a portion of the shared costs at a predetermined amount, taking individual utility-contractor negotiations out of the equation. The result is a fair, transparent, and consistent process that speeds construction of critical infrastructure.

---

## Joint Bidding works for our partners

Now in its fifth iteration, or "Joint Bid 5.0," the process includes a fixed price list for utility work to be performed by the City contractor doing the infrastructure work. DDC developed Joint Bid 5.0 by analyzing more than a decade of bid data, spot checking utility costs on current construction, and introducing terms like escalation and reimbursement for overtime costs. DDC continues to meet with industry partners, analyze data for new bids, and improve pre-engineering with all utilities.

**Joint Bidding was first written into law in 2004, and the current authorization from 2014 sunsets in 2024.**

**It needs to be reauthorized for effective delivery of essential public infrastructure in NYC.**