Waterfront Zoning Goals

Waterfront zoning applies city-wide and has the following over-arching goals:

• Inviting waterfront public access areas

• High-quality design elements

• Greening of our waterfront

• Function ecologically
  • Planting
  • Edge conditions

• Variety of amenities and programs

• Variety of designs

• Improved connectivity to upland streets
Waterfront Zoning

Applicability
What types of development would require waterfront access

Public Access
Creation of publicly accessible open spaces along the waterfront & physical/visual connections to the waterfront

Bulk Controls
How buildings relate to the waterfront

Design Requirements & Standards
Include minimum design requirements and standards to ensure spaces are accessible to a variety of users while allowing for flexibility in design outcomes
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A “development” includes: new buildings, *enlargements*; *extensions*; any change of use; or alterations that increase *height* or *coverage* of an existing building.

- Existing building
- Use *extension*
- Building *enlargement*
Public Access is required when:

• Lot Area is greater than 10,000 SF

• Shoreline length is greater than 100 feet in length
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Waterfront zoning lots must provide **waterfront yards**

They are typically **40 feet**, measured from a stabilized shoreline
(or mean high water line)
Waterfront Public Access Area Components

**Visual Corridor**
Create a continuous path along the water

**Supplemental Public Access Area**
Provide additional public space on the waterfront

**Upland Connection**
Connects the City to the water

**Shore Public Walkway**
Create a continuous path along the water
Zoning lots must provide 15-20% of the lot area as WPAA.

If the Shore Public Walkway and Upland Connection do not equal this required amount of WPAA, **Supplemental Public Access Areas** are required.
Supplemental Public Access regulations:

• Any SPAA must be located adjacent to a streetend or along a SPW, maximizing open areas

• Requires same amenities as the SPW (planting, seating, lighting, etc.)
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Waterfront Public Access Design Requirements

Design Requirement
The amount of a certain amenity that needs to be provided

Design Reference Standards
The type and shape of each amenity
Waterfront Zoning

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Waterfront Zoning Bulk

Height and setback regulations

- **Maximum heights**
  - Height is measured from the Design Flood Elevation when in the flood zone

- **Setbacks**
  - 30’ setback from waterfront yard line

- **Ground floor streetscape requirements** to prevent blank walls
  - Active uses
  - Screening
  - Transparency
What is a Waterfront Access Plan (WAP)?

A Waterfront Access Plan (WAP) is a detailed framework in zoning that tailors waterfront bulk regulations, visual corridors, and public access requirements to the specific conditions of a particular geography.

Development of individual waterfront parcels governed by the plan triggers a requirement to build and maintain public access areas in accordance with the WAP.
Waterfront Access Plans in New York City

It is a plan used to develop specialized requirements along a waterfront area to address unique conditions.
What guided the development of the Waterfront Access Plan for Gowanus?
Gowanus Waterfront Access Plan Key Principles

- Maintain consistency with city-wide waterfront zoning
- Ensure buildings along the canal complement its open space
- Relate to the unique character of the Canal
- Allow for additional flexibility with public access requirements
  - site constraints and adjacencies
  - Site-planning in flood zones
- Support variety of experiences and programs
- Protect against long-term daily tidal flooding
- Support designs that have ecological and performative benefits
  - softer edge conditions and natural shoreline
  - Interaction with the water’s edge
  - Performative landscapes
  - Storm water management
Generally the canal can be divided into three distinct segments, each providing variety of open space opportunities and experiences along the canal.
Bulk Controls

How buildings relate to the waterfront?
Guiding Principles for Canal Bulk

- Shift bulk away from the canal to ensure light and air.
- Keep the base of the building as low as possible.
- Limitations on building form above certain height.
- Flexibility of street walls along the canal.
- Provide transition to adjacent lower context.
- Tower locations provide sufficient light and air to inner courts.
- Flexibility in built form.
- Buildings may rise sheer if additional open space is provided.
Bulk envelopes shaped from the pedestrian perspective:

- Shift bulk away from the canal: portions above the building base set back from the water's edge
- Façade articulation: break down the scale of the developments
- Footprint controls above certain height thresholds
- Setbacks required on narrow side streets
- Buildings may rise shear only when providing additional setbacks + open space

Illustrative sketch looking north from 3rd Street
Design Flexibility Along the Canal

- Encourage excellent and varied building designs
- Encourage a unique and resilient waterfront

Proposed envelopes along the western side of the canal (Bond Street)

Proposed envelopes along the eastern side of the canal (Nevins Street)
Pedestrian Experience

Bulk envelopes with design flexibility:

Allowing for variety in building heights, typologies and uses across the canal

Lower base heights along the shore public walkway

Flexibility with street wall location along the canal

Illustrative sketch looking north from Union Street
Public Access

Where would access be required and how much?
Waterfront Public Access Areas (WPAA)

WPAA Amount

For Canal sites with FAR of 5.0: 20% requirement

For Canal Sites with FAR of 3.0: 15% requirement
Shore Public Walkways:
Create a continuous path along the water

- 40'-wide
- 30'-wide on shallower sites
- 30'-wide on irregular sites
Public Access Easements and New Streets

Upland Connections, Visual Corridors and Street Mappings

• Upland connections at prolongation of the street grid
• Visual corridors to visual resources such as the turning basin and BRT Powerhouse
• Street mapping on largest sites including public place

Legend:
- Upland Connection
- Visual Corridor
- Street Mapping
- Supplemental Public Access Area
- Future SPW
- Existing SPW

Nevins Street looking south
Supplemental Public Access Areas

- Over half of sites along the waterfront will require a supplemental public access area.

- Any SPAA must be located adjacent to a street end or along a SPW → maximizing open areas.

- Requires same amenities as the SPW (planting, seating, lighting, etc.).
Additional Required Access: 1st St Turning Basin

- Will be excavated and restored as part of the superfund cleanup
- The basin will be 50 feet wide
- Required access: 20’ wide
Street Ends

- Critical connections between properties along the waterfront
- Facilitate its build-out as a continuation of the Shore Public Walkway
- Function as additional resiliency and drainage strategy

City Mapped, built as public street, recently improved by City – Sponge Park

- Upland Connection
- Visual Corridor
- Street Mapping
- Supplemental Public Access Area
- Future SPW
- Existing SPW
Design Requirements

How would the waterfront be designed?
Design requirements to promote a resilient waterfront

- Establish elevations along Canal Waterfront blocks to protect against long-term daily tidal flooding
- Ensure physical access to the water’s edge
- Grading controls that ensure buildings can meet higher design flood elevations

Greenpoint Landing

Illustrative drawing showing a bi-level waterfront
Design requirements to promote ecologically sensitive waterfront

- Rightsize planting requirements to accommodate resilient designs associated with grade changes
- Expand definition of planting to encourage softer edge conditions
- Promote vegetation that has ecological benefits
- Allow for flexibility in design outcomes
- Ensure physical access to the water’s edge is achievable
Design requirements to promote variety and other programming

- Rightsize planting requirements to facilitate a variety of experiences
- Allow for flexibility to locate various programs such as:
  - Art
  - Play Areas
  - Water/boat access
  - Dog runs
  - Historic interpretation and placemaking strategies
- Require companion ADA compliant companion seating
Proposed Zoning // Waterfront Access Plan

It is a plan used to develop specialized requirements along a waterfront area to address unique conditions and includes:

- Upland connections & visual corridors
- Requirement for additional access
  - Supplemental access areas
  - Turning basins
- Special design requirements & standards
  - Variety
  - program
- Resiliency measures
  - Elevation (SLR) of portions of shore public walkway
- Continuity across sites and bridges