

What's Wrong with the City's Self-Storage A-Text?

Since launching the City certified a proposal to limit self-storage in core industrial areas, pressure from industry groups has distorted a necessary reform for Industrial Business Zones into a giveaway for self-storage developers. While framed as a compromise, this new "A-Text" is anything but.

Here are five key problems with the City's proposed A-Text:

1. The A-Text prioritizes space for stuff over space for jobs.

We need to strengthen our core industrial areas is to ensure that the good jobs manufacturing creates stay in the city. If we're interested in creating equitable economic development, we should be preserving and growing more opportunities for manufacturers to be in New York. The A-Text does not do this. The A-Text approach is to provide some space for manufacturing in new self-storage developments in Industrial Business Zones. Rather than draft zoning language to preserve a status quo that ensures a place for people's stuff, the City should adopt language that will prioritize the need for good jobs in our core industrial areas.

2. The A-Text runs against communities' broad support for the original proposal.

A key part of the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) is the weighing of support (or opposition) of local communities. 27 community boards would be directly impacted by the self-storage proposal. On the original proposal, 14 voted in favor, while only 4 voted in opposition (9 community boards made no recommendation). None of them voted on the A-Text as it was introduced after their part of the ULURP process.

Community Board Support For Original Proposal

14

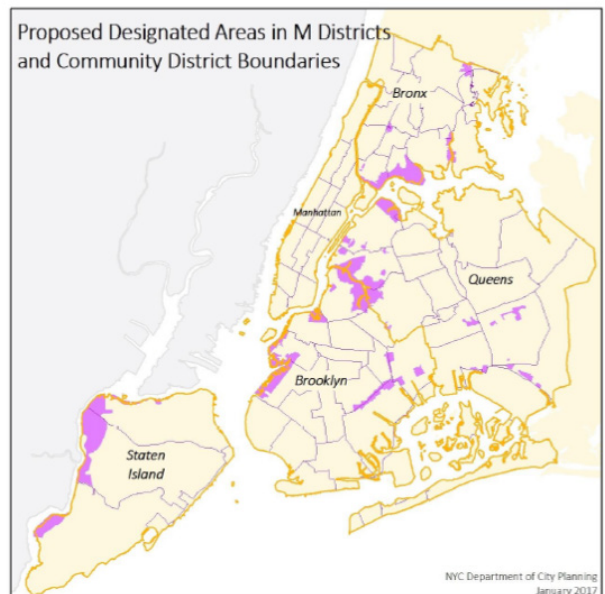
in favor

4

in opposition

3. The A-Text sets a terrible precedent for protecting core industrial areas.

This proposal is about much more than self-storage. The original proposal creates, for the first time, zoning protections for the city's 21 Industrial Business Zones.¹ It would effectively restrict a competing use and lay the foundation for future use restrictions. By contrast, the A-Text - if enacted - would put a bullseye on the Industrial Business Zones and demonstrate that industry interests can undermine even the City's own stated policy goals. It is up to the City to set the right precedent.



1. NYC DCP, Environmental Assessment Statement: Self-Storage Text Amendment, Page 31.

4. The A-Text doesn't limit self-storage development; it caters to it.

The framework of the original proposal to limit self-storage was through a City Planning Commission (CPC) special permit that would be applied in the Industrial Business Zones. It was clear how self-storage was being limited - direct community oversight. The same can't be said of the A-Text. It continues to allow self-storage as-of-right, introduces different development tiers depending on lot size, and actually grants a density bonus for self-storage developers in M1-1 areas. The fact that there are ways for self-storage developers to follow the A-Text precisely and end up with zero industrial space demonstrates just how far we've come from the original proposal. The priorities have been flipped.

5. The A-Text runs counter to the Administration's own Industrial Plan.

In 2015, the de Blasio Administration and the City Council announced a 10-Point Industrial Action Plan. The second pillar of that plan was land use and zoning: "Limit New Hotels and Personal Storage in Core Industrial Areas to Reduce Use Conflicts and Support Diverse Economic Growth". The Administration itself noted that self-storage "facilities do not create a high number of jobs and thus do not align with the Mayor and Council's vision for economic development in core industrial areas."²



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