

Report Outlines Solutions for New York's "Accidental Skyline"

MAS identifies ten areas for reform, calling on City to close loopholes and respect the needs of all New Yorkers

(October 16, 2017 | New York, NY) The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) called for immediate reform with the release of the third in a series of reports quantifying an unprecedented boom in as-of-right, out-of-scale development. The report and interactive tools, which include updated shadow projections, air rights maps, and endangered view corridors, were released at the organization's Eighth Annual Summit for New York City, held at the Morgan Library and Museum. They are available to the public at mas.org/accidentalskyline

"Our report lays out a comprehensive package of ten reforms that will empower the City to level the playing field between private development and the public interest," said Elizabeth Goldstein, President of MAS. "New York doesn't have to settle for an 'accidental skyline.'"

MAS identified several loopholes in the City's existing regulations, which have been exploited to create larger buildings than ever intended by zoning, including the gerrymandering of zoning lots, excessive floor height dedicated to exempt structural voids, and the lack of any review mechanism for projects that ultimately exceed the bulk estimates in their approved environmental impact assessment.

The report lays out a 10-point plan for reform, explained in detail beginning on page 32:

Close loopholes that allow developers to skirt zoning rules and environmental regulations

- Strengthen regulations that control height and bulk
- Clarify zoning regulations and definitions
- Evaluate zoning floor area bonuses
- Strengthen mitigation requirements for environmental review
- Comprehensively evaluate and disclose the impacts of development

Give Neighborhoods a Seat at the Table

- Increase local representation and opportunities for review of land use actions
- Increase resources and opportunities for community planning

Hold the City and developers accountable to the public interest

- Improve development and land use applications
- Improve online resources by making data standardized, comprehensive, and accessible
- Create new accountability measures and strengthen existing ones

About The Municipal Art Society of New York

For nearly 125 years, MAS has worked to educate and inspire New Yorkers to engage in the betterment of our city. Through three core campaign areas, MAS protects New York's legacy spaces, encourages thoughtful planning and urban design, and fosters complete neighborhoods across the five boroughs. For more information, visit mas.org.