

The Municipal Art Society of New York

MAS **NYC**

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**MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY AND REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION
LAUNCH INTERACTIVE WEBTOOL AND RELEASE REPORT ON
CITYWIDE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS**

—Panel event on March 27 to share report insights and demonstrate [webtool](#)—



NEW YORK, NY –The [Municipal Art Society of New York](#), (MAS), [Regional Plan Association](#) (RPA) and the Pratt Institute’s Spatial Analysis and Visualization Initiative (SAVI) present groundbreaking research into New York City’s past environmental review, including an interactive mapping tool and a companion report entitled [SITE x SITE \(Site by Site\)](#).

SITE x SITE is an unprecedented retrospective study of citywide development of soft sites in the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process. The research illustrates the limitations of current CEQR methodologies and recommends improvements so that city planners and decision makers can better serve communities.

The research reveals an unreliable CEQR process because of the current methods of analyzing soft sites. (Soft sites are parcels where development is not projected but may be reasonably expected to occur due to uses, bulk and size of a parcel, along with real estate trends and other factors). For recent rezonings, the CEQR process has underestimated and overestimated the development of soft sites, which means city planners' estimates for the impacts of a rezoning or other land use action routinely miss the mark.

For example, the East New York Neighborhood Plan in 2016 was the first rezoning to implement Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, which requires at least 25 percent of new residential development in a rezoning to be permanently affordable. The city pledged 1,200 affordable housing units would be built by 2018. But, by 2021, just 100 permanently affordable units were open to tenants and the median rent in the neighborhood increased by 29 percent.

Downtown Brooklyn was rezoned in 2004 to incentivize development of high-density office buildings by leveraging transit access. The SITE x SITE research shows that more than three-quarters of the parcels developed did not fit the CEQR soft site criteria. The actual development that occurred diverged significantly from what was anticipated in the CEQR process: residential floor area developed was almost nine times higher than the estimate and commercial space has significantly lagged behind.

The report and [webtool](#) are made possible by the support of New York Community Trust. The project is an initiative of the CEQR Reform Coalition (Coalition), which includes the Municipal Art Society of New York, Regional Plan Association and the New York University Guarini Center on Environmental, Energy and Land Use Law (NYU Guarini Center).

"The Municipal Art Society is pleased to unveil the SITE x SITE report and webtool, which provides a wealth of dependable information to city planners and decision makers who serve our communities. We hope this project opens the door for more tools to help planners and community advocates understand the full impacts of future rezonings." said **Elizabeth Goldstein, President of the Municipal Art Society**. "We are so thankful for the partnership with RPA, for the generous support from the New York Community Trust, and Pratt Institute's tenacity in executing this webtool from start to finish."

"SITE x SITE provides an unprecedented retrospective study of citywide development," said **Marcel Negret, Senior Planner, Regional Plan Association**. "Its findings and insights shed light into new methods that will streamline and improve integrated planning efforts aimed at better aligning land use decisions with infrastructure commitments and future needs. We are proud to have partnered with MAS on making this project a reality, and look forward to using it to educate and engage our elected leaders and the public."

MAS and RPA will host a panel discussion and webtool demonstration, entitled *New Perspectives on Refining CEQR: A Look Back at Citywide Development*, on Monday, March 27 from 6-8 p.m. The event will be held at the Center for Architecture located at 536 LaGuardia Place. The event is \$10 for the public and free for MAS and AIANY members. [RSVP](#).

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) lifts up the voices of the people in the debates that shape New York's built environment and leads the way toward a more livable city from sidewalk to skyline.

MAS envisions a future in which all New Yorkers share in the richness of city life—where growth is balanced, character endures, and a resilient future is secured. Over more than 130 years of history, our advocacy efforts have led to the creation of the New York City Planning Commission, Public Design Commission, Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the Tribute in Light; the preservation of Grand Central Terminal, the lights of Times Square, and the Garment District; the conservation of more than 50 works of public art; and the founding of such civic organizations as the Public Art Fund, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, P.S. 1, the Historic Districts Council, the Park Avenue Armory Conservancy, and the Waterfront Alliance.

Regional Plan Association is an independent non-profit civic organization that develops and promotes ideas to improve the economic health, environmental resiliency, and quality of life of the New York metropolitan area. RPA conducts research on the environment, land use, and good governance, and advises cities, communities, and public agencies.