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MAYOR ADAMS TAKES MAJOR STEPS TO REFOCUS DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS ON IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE, NYC'S RECOVERY

90-Day Commission and New Customer Service Units Will Reorient Buildings Department to Work Better for New Yorkers and Help Move City Forward

New Effort Follows Initiatives from Commissioner Ulrich to Enhance Customer Service

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) Commissioner Eric A. Ulrich today announced major steps to refocus the DOB on providing improved customer service and supporting the city's economic recovery. Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich kicked off the "Adams Commission" — a 90-day commission convening stakeholders from labor, industry, the nonprofit sector, and city government to produce a comprehensive blueprint recommending structural improvements at DOB.

Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich kicked off the effort with immediate action, launching two new customer service units: the Small Business Support Team (SBST) and the Major Projects Development Unit (MPDU). These new units will accelerate project timelines by providing dedicated services to ensure applications avoid unnecessary pitfalls.

"Now is the time to change what it's like to do business with the Department of Buildings and make this agency run more efficiently," said **Mayor Adams**. "New Yorkers deserve an agency that prioritizes customer service and safety at the same time, all in service of moving our city forward. Our administration has been cutting red tape since day one, and we will keep going until we have a city that truly works for New Yorkers."

"The 90-day commission and new service centers tailored to both large and small projects will bring much-needed customer perspective to all DOB processes without ever sacrificing our lifesaving safety standards," said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi**. "These changes will improve response times and remove unnecessarily complex regulatory hurdles to get shovels in the ground — and projects off the ground — efficiently and safely for all New Yorkers and visitors."

“When Mayor Adams appointed me as commissioner, he told me to look under the hood of this agency and get to the bottom of what wasn’t working,” said **DOB Commissioner Ulrich**. “In the past several months, we have been hard at work implementing incremental repairs and tune-ups. With this new commission and these new customer service units, we are announcing the official start of a wholesale rebuild to the way we do business.”

“Adams Commission”

In the next 90 days, [64 industry groups, trade organizations, ownership associations, advocacy groups, and government agencies](#) — with support from DOB experts — will meet and formulate recommendations to improve the DOB, culminating in a report to Mayor Adams and the City Council. Recommendations will focus on eliminating unnecessarily complicated practices, onerous regulatory hurdles, and inefficient workflows. The report will be public once complete.

With the report as a blueprint, the agency will begin implementing recommendations as appropriate in early 2023 through a combination of policy changes, operational modifications, and regulatory reforms. The administration will work with the City Council to make changes requiring legislation.

Small Business Support Team and Major Projects Development Unit

The two new development units at the DOB — the SBST and the MPDU — are fully staffed and now operational. They are helping to troubleshoot project issues, get small businesses up and running, and streamline the development process to help the city’s largest building construction projects break ground. These specialized groups will operate similarly to the existing Affordable Housing Unit, providing guidance and expertise to move projects thoroughly and efficiently through the development pipeline to propel the city’s recovery.

The SBST is dedicated to handling inquiries and project applications from New York City small businesses. Small business owners and entrepreneurs looking to open a new place of business — or renovate an existing one — can receive individualized guidance on any planned construction projects from dedicated SBST plan examiners and project advocates, who will focus on reviewing and approving projects for construction needed to open more small businesses. Dedicated SBST inspectors will also work directly with small businesses to reduce wait times for critical development-related inspections.

The agency has created new internal workflows in its existing online application portal to automatically funnel small business projects to the SBST. Small businesses can avail themselves of the benefits of this new program at the DOB without needing to file an application and at no additional cost.

The new MPDU is dedicated to assisting with proposed tower developments, significant new building and enlargement projects, and other complex projects deemed eligible by the DOB. The unit is now accepting applications for enrollment in this program via the public [DOB NOW](#) portal. This initiative will provide one-on-one consultation services for developers of these major projects throughout the development process — helping to improve safety and efficiency

by increasing support and collaboration at all stages of the project, helping construction projects start safely, and avoiding costly work stoppages that can draw out construction timelines. This program is first-come, first-served with limited space.

Customer Service Initiatives

Since the start of the Adams administration, the DOB has launched multiple initiatives to enhance customer service operations, including:

- Extending in-person customer service hours at borough offices,
- Reinstating an option for in-person plan examination appointments for construction projects, and
- Committing to [significantly reducing overregulation](#) of small businesses.

At the same time, the DOB has continued to expand its robust online transaction services via DOB NOW.

Most recently, the DOB launched “Buildings After Hours,” a weekly customer service event held every Tuesday night from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the five borough offices. This reoccurring open house enables homeowners, small business owners, tenants, buildings managers, and others the opportunity to meet with DOB experts to discuss buildings-related issues. Meetings with DOB staff are completely free, and no appointment is required to attend.

“We applaud Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich for turning over every stone and examining every process to find ways to help our city recover and prosper,” said **Chief Climate Officer and New York City Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Rohit T. Aggarwala**. “DOB will be at the center of our work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our building stock and we will need government, industry and the private sector working together if we are to be successful in this existential effort.”

“This is yet another great step to remove administrative burdens and to make government work better for New Yorkers,” said **New York City Department of City Planning Director Dan Garodnick**. “We look forward to continuing our partnership with DOB to better enforce our zoning rules and to create a more dynamic, efficient city.”

“We’re proud to serve as part of this commission and we look forward to helping the Department of Buildings reassess and reimagine what’s possible as they deliver critical services to New Yorkers,” said **New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner Dawn M. Pinnock**. “Through collaboration and thought partnership there is an opportunity to lay a new foundation to build upon that will benefit countless New Yorkers for generations to come.”

“Coordination with oversight agencies such as DOB is an important part of our plan to improve the city’s capital construction process and the way we build firehouses, libraries and other public buildings,” said **New York City Department of Design and Construction Commissioner Thomas Foley**. “We’re happy to work with DOB and our sister agencies to make the process more efficient.”

“The economic revival and long-term success of our city depends on our ability to work together as a team and develop bold ideas that better serve all New Yorkers,” said **New York City Department of Finance Commissioner Preston Niblack**. “We look forward to joining our partners on this commission and assisting the Department of Buildings with laying the groundwork for more effective, efficient, and customer-friendly service in our city.”

“The Health Department looks forward to working alongside DOB and its sister agencies to help improve efficiency and coordination,” said **New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasani**. “We thank Mayor Adams for this initiative that will continue to promote the health and safety of New Yorkers.”

“HPD works hand-in-hand with DOB to ensure residential buildings are up to code and safe for New Yorkers to live in - both existing buildings and new affordable housing developments that we finance,” said **New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Adolfo Carrión Jr.** “We share a commitment to putting people over process and improving customer service for New Yorkers and our partners. This commission will play an important role in improving city processes, and we look forward to working with all of the participants in the days to come.”

“We are proud to be a part of this first of its kind commission to bring positive improvements to the city’s Department of Buildings,” said **New York City Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner Sue Donoghue**. “With a bevy of top-notch design, construction, and permitting professionals, we look forward to sharing our expertise in the building process to provide improvements to the system while pursuing our mission of stewarding the city’s green infrastructure.”

“Mayor Adams has set a paradigm shift in motion to ensure city government is a true partner to small businesses,” said **New York City Department of Small Business Services Commissioner Kevin D. Kim**. “SBS is excited to work together with DOB and all our sister agencies to put small businesses at the forefront of our economic recovery. Together, we will ensure New York City says ‘Yes’ to greater opportunity, faster timelines, and more efficient processes for the small businesses at the heart of our economy.”

“DOT is excited to take part in this commission and work collaboratively with DOB to improve agency operations and coordination,” said **New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez**. “We thank Mayor Adams for launching this commission and promoting cross-agency strategy.”

“We are proud to partner with the Department of Buildings and our partners in industry to ensure businesses can thrive and grow in New York City,” said **New York City Fire Department Acting Commissioner Laura Kavanagh**. “Working together, we know we can create a safe, streamlined, and customer-centric experience for all those doing business in our city.”

“This commission will offer a much-needed forum for understanding how to streamline our construction processes while also enabling the authority to provide input on the unique industry

challenges created by our aging infrastructure,” said **New York City Housing Authority Chair and CEO Greg Russ**. “We are excited to lend our voices to this vital interagency initiative and look forward to seeing how the common-sense recommendations that come out of this program can be implemented across our portfolio and serve to improve the quality of life for our residents.”

“The School Construction Authority is excited to partner with DOB and other city agencies to further collaborate and improve construction protocols that deliver state-of-the-art facilities while keeping our workers safe,” said **New York City School Construction Authority President and CEO Nina Kubota**.

“The Port Authority looks forward to participating in a commission of experts drawn from the public and private sectors, who have been tasked with making recommendations to improve the New York City Department of Buildings and its customer service,” said **Jim Starace, chief engineer, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey**.

“With the recent growth of New York City’s housing market coupled with a heightened focus on affordable housing, I applaud the mayor’s decision to create a comprehensive blueprint to upgrade and improve the administering of services offered through the Department of Buildings in a way that brings transparency, while also providing equity and access for all,” said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson**. “The ‘Adams Commission’ will create the structural improvements needed as 70 industry groups and organizations convene over the next 90 days to review and provide recommendations in areas that include the permitting process, enforcement operations, emergency and complaint response, audits and professional certification programs, sustainability programs, and more. I want to thank Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich for their foresight in seeing this as a necessary step to ensure the Department of Buildings is there to meet the new demands of our ever-evolving housing market.”

“Challenging the status quo and aiming to make constituent processes more efficient and goal-oriented should be a priority for all elected officials and city agencies. DOB’s intended blueprint and newly launched Small Business Support Team and Major Projects Development Unit are examples of this mindset,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. “Thank you, Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich, for challenging status quos and making life for New Yorkers better.”

“Ensuring that the city works efficiently is a high priority as we work to make New York City stronger and better for all,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “I’m looking forward to working with the administration to help streamline and improve the way our city engages with all New Yorkers, and I applaud the mayor and Commissioner Ulrich for their leadership.”

“I commend Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich for understanding the complexities of the agency’s operations and being willing to tackle them and improve the customer experience. This is an example of how a government agency should aspire to serve its constituents,” said **Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella**. “We look forward to having Robert Englert and Dr. Ram Raju as a part of the commission to represent Staten Islanders and their interests.”

“The Department of Buildings is tasked with keeping 1 million buildings safe in our city, while promoting safe conditions for workers on construction sites, yet its tools for interfacing with industry and members of the public are outdated and too often inaccessible,” said **New York City Councilmember Pierina Sanchez, chair, Committee on Housing and Buildings**. “This commission will provide long overdue feedback to improve the structure and output of the agency. I applaud the Mayor and Commissioner Ulrich for their proactive approach in ensuring this city agency adjusts to the needs of the diverse constituencies they serve.”

“The work of this commission will likely define the city’s built environment for the next century, both in terms of quality, timing, and cost of development,” said **Kathryn Wylde, president and CEO, Partnership for New York City**. “We thank the Adams administration for bringing the business community to the table to help streamline agency processes and reform antiquated practices.”

“Streamlining DOB’s development process and improving communication between DOB and building owners will help ensure that major construction projects in New York City can get underway safely and efficiently,” said **James Whelan, president, Real Estate Board of New York**. “These improvements will play a key role in promoting much-needed economic development and job creation at a critical phase in the city’s path to long-term recovery. We applaud the Adams administration for advancing the blueprint initiative and launching the Major Projects Development Unit, and we look forward to working with city officials to make these efforts a success.”

“New York City’s Department of Buildings serves as the primary gatekeeper for the built environment. Mayor Adams’ 90-day commission represents great progress in ensuring industry coordination and allowing our partners in government to better serve the architects, engineers, and construction firms that shape our city’s infrastructure and housing,” said **Carlo A. Scissura, president and CEO, New York Building Congress**. “I am proud to represent the New York Building Congress’ 500-plus member organizations and look forward to contributing to sound policy changes, operational modifications, and regulatory reform at the DOB, under the guidance of new commissioner Eric Ulrich.”

“If New York is to successfully complete major infrastructure upgrades and reap the full benefits of the thousands of middle-class careers and economic stimulus they create, we’ll need to ensure these projects maintain the safety and regulatory standards that are in the best interest of onsite workers and surrounding communities,” said **Gary LaBarbera, president, Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York**. “We thank Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich for committing to these critical details through the creation of this commission, which will focus on the fundamental ways we can improve the Department of Buildings and how it functions. We look forward to working with our fellow committee members to provide solutions for making our construction sites and key development projects safer, more efficient, and as beneficial as possible to our city’s future.”

“We applaud Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich’s efforts to improve the operations of the Department of Buildings with broad public input and mechanisms for greater partnerships

between the department and those who engineer New York City's buildings," said **John Evers, president and CEO, American Council of Engineering Companies of New York**. "By soliciting recommendations from the engineering industry, Mayor Adams is showing he values the input of design professionals. We look forward to serving as active participants on the commission and to continuing the engineering community's strong partnership with DOB to promote safety, sustainability, design excellence, and efficient processes in the building sector."

"The Structural Engineer's Association of New York appreciates the opportunity to continue our support for the Department of Buildings and the people of New York through Mayor Adams' new initiative," said **Erik Madsen, P.E., president, Structural Engineer's Association of New York**.

"We commend the Adams administration for recognizing the need for major reforms within the Department of Buildings," said **Ben Prosky, executive director, American Institute of Architects New York**. "An improved DOB will allow for buildings, especially much-needed housing, to be designed and built faster and safer."

"It is great that Mayor Adams initiated a dialogue with the design community and builder partners," said **Arpad Baksa, FARA, president, New York Council, The Society of American Registered Architects**. "I believe that this dialog will be mutually beneficial and beneficial for the city also."

"The collaboration of various industry professionals, DOB, City Council, and government agencies will enable the implementation of recommendations to streamline and improve the efficiency and functionality of the DOB," said **Ida Galea, AIA + NCARB, Brooklyn chapter, American Institute of Architects**. "The success and execution of the 90-day commission recommendations will conceivably promote change across other city agencies establishing a transparent interagency process."

"Events like Superstorm Sandy have delivered the game-changing message that emergency preparedness needs to be continually reevaluated and developed," said **Timothy Boyland, AIA, Staten Island chapter, American Institute of Architects**. "Effective disaster response requires a comprehensive team approach, public and private concerns working together. The Emergency Response subcommittee of the mayor's 90-day commission is a unique, resourceful, and vital mechanism to bring city agencies together with the expertise of private sector organizations in a facilitated forum."

"The Associated General Contractors of New York State (AGC NYS), New York's leading statewide association of general contractors and construction managers, greatly appreciates being invited to participate in this commission," said **Mike Elmendorf, president and CEO, AGC NYS**. "We look forward to rolling up our sleeves and working to improve the Buildings Department and its interactions with our industry — with our shared goal of building a better New York safely."

"The New York City Department of Buildings is on the frontlines of decarbonizing our buildings, and the creation of the 'Adams Commission' exemplifies the importance of DOB in

the provision of safe and reliable energy for new and existing buildings. This work will become more important as we continue to electrify and move towards meeting our city and state’s policy goals,” said **Matthew Glasser, general manager, energy services, Con Edison**. “Through our ‘Clean Energy Commitment,’ we are committed to collaborating with all interested stakeholders, including local municipalities and the real estate community, to identify key changes needed to foster a more ‘electrification-ready’ environment to ensure infrastructure investments, planning, land use, building codes, and other policies are in place to ensure a seamless energy transition.”

“Mayor Adams and the team at City Hall continue to take the input from the business community seriously,” said **Lisa Sorin, president, The Bronx Chamber of Commerce**. “The establishment of this Department of Buildings commission is another step forward in streamlining business processes, making government more efficient, and modifying antiquated methods with modern solutions to move New York City forward. The Bronx Chamber of Commerce is delighted to support this commission and the new business- and customer-focused departments created within the Department of Buildings.”

“The chamber is encouraged that the Adams administration is tackling much-needed improvements at the Department of Buildings,” said **Linda Baran, president and CEO, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce**. “For many years, the small business and development communities have conveyed to the chamber that complicated practices and onerous regulations stifle projects and often bring them to a halt. We commend Mayor Adams and DOB Commissioner Ulrich on this long-overdue review and know it will be welcome news to the business community.”

“BOMA New York has a long history of close collaboration with the New York City Department of Buildings,” said **Lori Raphael, executive director, Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater New York (BOMA New York)**. “We welcome this opportunity to join the ‘Adams Commission’ alongside a wide array of stakeholders and work with Commissioner Ulrich to create efficiencies, as well as develop innovative policies and processes to further improve DOB customer service.”

“In the midst of a housing crisis, we need to be thinking of new ways to streamline longstanding processes to ensure that new construction, preservations, and inspections happen as efficiently as possible — and that is exactly what this new commission sets out to do,” said **Jolie Milstein, president and CEO, New York State Association for Affordable Housing**. “We commend the Adams administration and all of our partners at the Department of Buildings for convening a wide array of experts and groups. We look forward to rolling up our sleeves and finding ways to speed up the delivery of much-needed affordable housing to New Yorkers.”

“The professional community of engineers and architects applauds Mayor Adams and new Commissioner Eric Ulrich for welcoming our feedback and ideas to improve the efficacy of the Department of Buildings and support the city’s economic revival while ensuring public safety,” said **Kathleen Needham Inocco, P.E., Council of New York Cooperatives and Condominiums**.

“The New York City District Council of Carpenters know all too well that the Department of Buildings is in need of long-overdue reforms,” said **Joseph Geiger, the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of The New York City District Council of Carpenters**. “This commission is a testament to Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich’s commitment to transforming New York City’s government and putting it back on the side of working men and women. It is a privilege and an honor to be a part of this effort.”

“As New York City enters a new era of infrastructure, resiliency, and expanded housing construction, it is critically important to hear the voices of the men and women who will be doing the work,” said **Edwin Christian, business manager, International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 14-14B**. “The crane and equipment operating engineers of IUOE Local 14-14B undergo the most rigorous training, certification, and licensing procedures to ensure that they are qualified to operate the most sophisticated construction equipment in New York City’s unique urban landscape. We are looking forward to participating in the commission’s deliberations to make certain these critically important projects are completed swiftly, and, more importantly, safely and by qualified and properly licensed hoisting machine operators.”

“The intention of Mayor Adams is to establish a blueprint for the long-ball strategy for DOB to create velocity in the city’s development and reconstruction channels, which will lead to increased revenue streams and long-term vitality,” said **Domenick A. Chieco, chair, New York City Coalition of Code Consultants**. “I am thrilled to participate to bring about excellent outcomes to ‘Get Stuff Done’ for all New Yorkers.”

“Multifamily housing providers rely on the Department of Buildings every day, whether it is to get permits for work or make sure they are in compliance with new laws,” said **Jay Martin, executive director, Community Housing Improvement Program**. “Getting answers quickly can save property managers time and money, allowing them to take better care of their buildings and make renters’ lives better. We are excited to work with this commission and help make New York City housing better.”

“The Plumbing Foundation City of New York is honored to be a part of the mayor’s ‘Adams Commission’ and looks forward to working on improving the relationship of the construction industry and DOB in various areas, including increasing safety and enforcement as well as combatting unnecessary red tape,” said **April McIver, executive director, Plumbing Foundation**.

“I commend Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich for enlisting this DOB blue-ribbon commission,” said **Terence O’Brien, executive vice president, The Association of Contracting Plumbers**. “The department is integral to not only maximizing the safety of construction workers and laypeople alike, but DOB must also focus on streamlining construction processes, on all construction projects from small repairs to new skyscraper construction, to ensure projects run efficiently and expeditiously. I look forward to helping this commission enact changes to better the industry and department.”

“The New York Electrical Contractors Association looks forward to participating in the ‘Adams Commission,’” said **Edwin Lopez, executive secretary, New York Electrical Contractors Association**. “We herald this opportunity to work with the department to modernize the longstanding operations that all our members utilize on a regular basis. We thank Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich for their leadership on this important topic.”

“We commend Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich for recognizing the need for improvement within the Department of Buildings and their receptiveness to industry involvement in the process,” said **Tony Saporito, executive vice president, Mechanical Contractors Association of New York**. “The recommendations of this commission will ultimately result in a more efficient, innovative, and streamlined department and a safer New York City for all.”

“We applaud the ongoing actions taken by Mayor Adams and Commissioner Ulrich to improve chapter 33 enforcement and create new efficiencies in the license and permit processes, while maintaining the high safety standards set by the Construction Safety Act,” said **Veronika Sikorski, president, New York City Special Riggers Association**. “These efforts will make façade restoration safer and more efficient, eliminate bureaucratic delays that prevent people from working, and allow much-needed restoration work to get completed in a timely fashion. We thank Mayor Adams, Commissioner Ulrich, and the whole DOB leadership team for their partnership and look forward to continuing to work together to maintain New York City’s skyline and ensure proper safety measures for workers and passing pedestrians alike.”

“New York City is already a leader among American cities in the sustainability and decarbonization of its buildings,” said **Ellen Honigstock RA, LEED AP, director of education, Urban Green**. “Urban Green Council is proud to participate in the ‘Adams Commission’ to ensure a safer, healthier city for all New Yorkers.”

“The New York City Master Plumbers Council applauds Mayor Eric Adams and the New York City Department of Buildings Commissioner Eric A. Ulrich for the creation of this commission,” said **George Bassolino, technical director, New York City Master Plumbers Council**. “Their vision to seek input from all stakeholders to evaluate the operations of the department will benefit all New York City residents.”

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