

City of New Rochelle
Development

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

Thru: Wilfredo Melendez, City Manager

Date: December 9, 2025

From: Adam Salgado, Development Commissioner

Subject: PROPOSED STATEMENT OF INTENT TO DECLARE LEAD AGENCY
RELATED TO DOWNTOWN OVERLAY ZONE (DOZ) AMENDMENTS

Background: Over the past decade, the Downtown Overlay Zone (DOZ) has driven transformative growth in New Rochelle attracting billions in private investment, thousands of new residential units, activation of the urban core, and a strengthened tax base. The City is now entering a refinement phase designed to optimize quality, future-proof development, and increase economic value, not overhaul what works.

This update advances zoning from a passive regulatory framework to an active market-shaping tool that attracts high-value commercial users, supports retail viability, embeds resilience and equity standards, and allocates future growth in a manner that is responsive to community feedback and market needs.

The following memo outlines the steps required to initiate this update, summarizes the key proposed adjustments, and identifies the actions needed to advance the environmental review and legislative process.

Issue:

The City must initiate the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process to begin the process for amending the DOZ. This requires the preparation of a Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) and the adoption of legislation by Council stating its intent to declare “Lead Agency” for the review.

The Department of Development has engaged the firms Buckhurst, Fish and Jacquemart (BFJ) and MPact Collective for assistance. These nationally recognized firms have collaborated to prepare the accompanying FEAF, which includes a detailed project description.

These proposed amendments stem from a detailed evaluation of how the Downtown Overlay has

performed over nearly a decade of implementation. This includes shifts in market dynamics, the impact of recent and forthcoming infrastructure investments, and clearer patterns in the types and locations of development emerging across downtown. Together, these insights indicate where targeted adjustments can strengthen the framework's effectiveness and long-term alignment with the City's goals.

Below is a list of the primary updates:

- Adjusting the DO-1/DO-2 boundary in the area of Huguenot Street east of North Avenue to support viable retail formats and design standards.
- Refining/expanding DO-8 to better orient development toward the LINC and west end neighborhood. This expansion bolsters the requirement that fees generated in DO-8 stay within the community and concentrates value capture where the City is making significant infrastructure investments.
- Strengthen controls on civic spaces and other public amenities in the Street Right of Way
- Recalibration of the Theoretical Development Scenario (TDS)
 - Targeted increase of approximately 2,800 residential units across select Downtown Overlay districts to concentrate housing growth where infrastructure, transit access, and civic investment can best support additional density
 - Correct imbalances between residential and nonresidential allocations reflecting contemporary economic development principles suggesting retail should be focused in concentrated areas.
 - Targeted removal of additional residential density in western portion of DO-2 that has already experienced substantial redevelopment and densification. This is a planning intervention and does not affect existing projects or vested rights.
- Adjusting the framework to promote housing diversity and support family-scaled, neighborhood-friendly development. This approach encourages “missing middle” building types such as townhomes and brownstones which improve streetscape quality outside of concentrated commercial areas.
- Integration of the updated GreeNR framework into zoning controls, embedding climate resilience, racial equity, and environmental justice into land-use regulations.
- Establishing limits on the use of valet parking to discourage any adverse impacts that may result from its application. This regulatory clarification will establish standards and limits for Valet operations as part of a proactive parking strategy.
- Eliminate Waterfront fee from non-waterfront overlay zones and increase Fair Share mitigation fees to support vital infrastructure investment throughout the city

Recommendation:

The Department of Development recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution stating its intent to declare Lead Agency for updates to the Downtown Overlay as described in the attached project description. This step is needed to coordinate review, but does not suggest a pre-approval of the proposed amendments.

Subsequent to this step, Council can adopt Parts 2 and 3 of the FEAF and issue a Positive Declaration in January, followed by the preparation of a Draft Supplemental Generic

Environmental Impact Statement (DSGEIS) and public hearing in March. With input from the community, a Final SGEIS can be completed and the zoning can be adopted in May.

Attachments:

1. Full Environmental Assessment Form

RESOLUTION NUMBER:
MEETING DATE: December 9, 2025

Item # 9.

LEGISLATION

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL STATING ITS
INTENT TO DECLARE LEAD AGENCY STATUS
RELATIVE TO THE PROPOSED UPDATES TO THE
DOWNTOWN OVERLAY ZONE.**

WHEREAS, the Department of Development has prepared a Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) describing proposed amendments to the Downtown Overlay Zone (DOZ), including adjustments to district boundaries, revisions to development standards, integration of the updated GreeNR framework, and other targeted modifications intended to strengthen the effectiveness of the DOZ; and

WHEREAS, the proposed updates stem from a detailed evaluation of the DOZ's performance over the past decade, including changes in market conditions, recent and anticipated infrastructure investments, and emerging development patterns; and

WHEREAS, the proposed action constitutes a Type I action under SEQRA, requiring coordinated review; and

WHEREAS, the City Council is the appropriate body to serve as Lead Agency for SEQRA review of the proposed action.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council hereby states its intent to declare itself Lead Agency for the coordinated environmental review of the proposed updates to the DOZ as described in the accompanying project materials; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this Resolution expresses only the Council's intent to assume Lead Agency status for the purpose of SEQRA coordination and does not constitute any determination regarding the significance of the proposed action nor any approval to the proposed zoning amendments.