



Legislation Text

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**File #:** Int 2246-2021, **Version:** A

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Int. No. 2246-A

By Council Members Brannan, Yeger, Kallos, Rosenthal, Perkins, Louis, Koslowitz, Riley, Levine, Moya, Ampry-Samuel, Gjonaj, Dinowitz, Gennaro and Rose

A Local Law in relation to the establishment of a task force to study and make recommendations regarding the potential conversion of vacant or commercially unviable office space to other uses

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Definitions. For purposes of this local law, the term “task force” means the office conversions task force established by this local law.

§ 2. Task force established. There is hereby established a task force to be known as the office conversions task force.

§ 3. Duties. The task force shall study the potential for the conversion of vacant or commercially unviable office space in the city to other uses including, but not limited to, affordable housing, and shall make recommendations for legislation and policy in furtherance of that objective. The recommendations shall take into account potential effects on the health and welfare of persons in the city, implications for business and economic activity within the city, consistency with other plans and policies for the districts and neighborhoods in which such office buildings are located, the projected estimated costs to the city of implementing any recommendations, anticipated effects on stakeholders, and any other considerations the task force determines relevant.

§ 4. Membership. a. The task force shall be composed of the following members to be appointed within 150 days of the effective date of this local law:

1. The commissioner of housing preservation and development or such commissioner’s designee;

2. The director of the department of city planning or such director's designee;

3. The president of a not-for-profit corporation of which a majority of its members are appointed by the mayor that is under contract with the city to provide or administer economic development benefits on behalf of the city or such president's designee;

4. The commissioner of buildings or such commissioner's designee;

5. Eight members with experience relevant to studying and making recommendations about the potential for conversion of vacant or commercially unviable office space to other uses, one of whom shall be appointed by the speaker of the council, one of whom shall be appointed by the public advocate, and six of whom shall be appointed by the mayor. At least one of the members appointed by the mayor shall be a representative from a labor union.

b. The mayor shall appoint the chair of the task force. The chair may invite officers and representatives of relevant federal, state, and local agencies and authorities to participate in the work of the task force.

c. Each member of the task force shall serve at the pleasure of the officer who appointed the member. In the event of a vacancy on the task force, a successor shall be appointed in the same manner as the original appointment for the remainder of the unexpired term. All members of the task force shall serve without compensation.

§ 5. Meetings. a. The chair shall convene the first meeting of the task force no later than 60 days after the last member has been appointed, except that where not all members of the task force have been appointed within the time specified in section four, the chair shall convene the first meeting of the task force within 30 days of the appointment of a quorum.

b. The task force may invite experts and stakeholders to attend its meetings and to provide testimony and information relevant to its duties.

c. The task force shall meet as appropriate to carry out the duties described in section three.

§ 6. Report. a. No later than 2 years after the effective date of this local law, the task force shall submit a report to the mayor, the speaker of the council, and the public advocate setting forth its recommendations regarding the following:

1. Identification of types of office buildings likely to be unviable as commercial office space in the long term and that could be converted to other uses;

2. The feasibility of converting vacant or commercially unviable office space to other uses;

3. Under what circumstances commercially unviable office conversions to affordable housing units could be implemented, any costs or tradeoffs to the city associated with such conversions and proposals for how to fund or mitigate such costs; and

4. Any zoning or other regulatory provisions that currently impede the conversion of commercial office buildings to other uses such as housing.

b. The report shall include a summary of the information that the task force considered in formulating its recommendations.

c. The chair of the task force shall publish the task force's report electronically on the websites of the department of housing preservation and development and the department of city planning no later than 10 days after its submission to the mayor, the speaker of the council, and the public advocate.

§ 7. Agency support. The task force may request each agency affected by this local law to provide appropriate staff and resources to support the work of the agency related to the task force.

§ 8. Termination. The task force shall terminate after the date on which it submits its report, as required by section six.

§ 9. Effective date. This local law takes effect immediately.

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LS #16161

12/07/2021 10:09 p.m.