Proposals on Your November Ballot

By District Leader
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With very little fanfare, there are five proposals on the November ballot, initiated by the Mayor's Committee on Government Efficiency (COGE, a positive local twist that echoes the infamous federal agency Department of Government Efficiency led by trillionaire Elon Musk in the beginning of the second Trump administration). COGE is benevolent, with notable nonprofits New York Lawyers for Public Interest and Citizens Union and former Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger endorsing all five ballot proposals, stating that they will make New York safer and more accessible.

According to COGE, the proposals are "intended to make city government work better, faster and more efficiently for New Yorkers. [They] address outdated, unnecessary and redundant requirements in the City Charter to speed up permits and contracts, save small businesses money, accelerate housing and street safety improvements, strengthen fiscal responsibility – and ultimately, build a more modern city government."

While Three Parks has not had a chance to endorse them as a club as of yet, the broad support for the initiatives should provide the reassurance that this year's ballot measures are beneficial and not the workings of a Mayor's office seeking to arrogate power

indirectly as Adams and others before him did to the city's detriment. The proposals are the culmination of 10 public hearings attended by 1,220 New Yorkers across the five boroughs. They are as follows:

Prop 1: Speed Up Timeline for Using Public Space – Including Outdoor Dining, Ramps and Benches

- Cut the eight-month outdoor dining application process by 75% (to 2 months)
- Save small businesses up to $1,800 on application costs and thousands of dollars of staff time

This proposal would modify the revocable consent process that determines the use of public space by combining the sidewalk café and roadway dining revocable consent process into a single application and modernizing public notice requirements.

Prop 2 and related non-Charter reforms: Reform the Contracting Process to Improve Procurements, including for Small Business and Nonprofits

- Ballot prop will save up to 30 days on procurements
- Internal reforms to cut qualified nonprofit procurement time by more than half (13 months to 6)

This proposal would reduce burdens on small businesses and nonprofits by simplifying the pre-contracting questionnaire and requiring quarterly meetings of the Procurement Policy Board (PPB) to ensure consistent and transparent regulation of the City's procurement system. The proposal would

also allow the Mayor to delegate certain contract approvals to agencies, make permanent a public comment period instead of a public hearing for contract awards and streamline the issuance of the client services plan.

Prop 3: Fast-Track Street Safety Infrastructure Including Bike Lanes, Acquisition of Office Space and Activation of City Land

- Speed up street safety projects, including bike lanes, by at least 33%
- Reduce time for sale of small plots of City land from seven months to 90 days
- Unlock more than $200 million in revenue for the City from sale of small surplus lots

This proposal streamlines how the City uses its own property. The proposal would simplify review of street safety projects to reduce construction timelines and allow the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation to fast-track critical street infrastructure improvements where there is an identified, immediate safety need.

Prop 4: Simplify Building Permitting

- Bring 40 approvals from 18 separate offices and agencies into one place, saving builders time and frustration

This proposal would create a centralized permitting hub through which applicants could access and manage construction-related permits and approvals across City agencies.

Prop 5 and related internal reforms: Set Contributions Goals for Rainy Day Fund to Ensure Sufficient Budgetary Reserves

- Ballot prop establishes reserves target of 12%, aimed at ensuring long-term fiscal stability
- Internal reforms commit to review standard hires and promotions within 14 days and capital project initiation applications within 40 days

This proposal would set a target amount of funds held in reserve — 12% percent of the City's total tax revenues. The proposal would also require the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in consultation with the Comptroller, to establish a deposit formula that would govern mandatory contributions to the rainy day fund.