

Citizens Union Announces Support for All Five 2026 Ballot Questions

New York's oldest good government group recommends New Yorkers vote YES on charter proposals to streamline city permitting, procurement, and land use, and to strengthen the Rainy Day Fund, while calling for reform of the charter revision process itself.

To view Citizens Union's full positions on the 2026 ballot questions, [click here](#)

New York, NY (October 1, 2026) – Today, Citizens Union announced its support for the five ballot questions that New York City voters will consider in the November general election. All five were proposed by the Commission on Government Efficiency (COGE), the 2026 Charter Revision Commission established by Mayor Zohran Mamdani, and aim to remove bureaucratic hurdles that slow down how city government serves New Yorkers.

After a thorough review process, including roundtable discussions with government reform experts and meetings with city officials and stakeholders, Citizens Union encourages voters to support all five proposals, which will appear on the ballot in the following order:

- Proposal 1: Speed Up Process for Granting a Revocable Consent to Use Public Space
- Proposal 2: Reduce City Contractor Paperwork; Require Regular Meetings of Procurement Policy Board
- Proposal 3: Speed Up Street Safety Projects, Disposition of Unused City Property, Office Leasing
- Proposal 4: Simplify Building Permitting and Move Waterfront Permitting to Department of Buildings
- Proposal 5: Set Contribution Targets for Rainy Day Fund to Promote Sufficient Budgetary Reserves

"New Yorkers deserve a government that works, and these five proposals are measured, practical steps toward that goal," **said Grace Rauh, Executive Director of Citizens Union.**

"These reforms cut red tape for small businesses and nonprofits, speed up street safety projects, and put stronger structure around the city's finances. At the same time, we can't lose sight of the importance of public input and oversight guardrails in the push for faster government. These proposals strike a reasonable balance. We encourage New Yorkers to vote yes on all five."

"This package is a strong start, but there is more work to do," Rauh added. "Transformative reform will require tackling the city's byzantine hiring processes, modernizing government use of technology, and bolstering internal watchdog agencies in the process. And the charter revision process itself is overdue for reform, so charter commissions are not rushed or misused for political gamesmanship."

Citizens Union's voter guide explains what each ballot proposal would do, why we support it, and how we view the process that produced it. Giving New Yorkers nonpartisan information on

ballot questions has been central to our mission for more than a century, and we have weighed in on every statewide and citywide proposal throughout that time.

Question 1: Revocable Consents and Outdoor Dining - VOTE YES

- **In short:** This proposal would streamline the approvals businesses need to place items like outdoor dining setups on sidewalks and streets. Public hearings would be replaced with comment periods, and a separate review process for sidewalk cafés, including the City Council's "call-up" power, would be eliminated.
- **Our view:** This is a positive step for the outdoor dining culture that has greatly benefited our city, simplifying the cumbersome and costly permitting processes that hindered license approvals, while maintaining avenues for public input, albeit more limited. [Read our full position](#)

Question 2: City Procurement - VOTE YES

- **In short:** This proposal would streamline how the city buys goods and services, including by adjusting the pre-contract questionnaire, delegating down contract approvals, and eliminating sparsely attended hearings.
- **Our view:** These changes could help agencies get money out the door faster instead of being bogged down by the city's notoriously complex procurement system. However, we are concerned about giving the administration authority to rewrite the vendor questionnaire, some of whose current questions help prevent corruption and ensure vendor integrity and accountability. If this measure passes, the Department of Investigation must be involved in the rewriting of the questionnaire. [Read our full position](#)

Question 3: Street Safety, City Property, and Office Leasing - VOTE YES

- **In short:** This proposal would speed up major transportation projects, fast-track the disposition of certain unused city property, and shift authority over city office acquisitions from the City Council and City Planning Commission to the administration.
- **Our view:** These are reasonable fixes to streamline some land use processes. But the proposal also bundles unrelated policy areas into a single question. Omnibus ballot questions make it difficult for voters who support one part but oppose another. [Read our full position](#)

Question 4: Building Permitting - VOTE YES

- **In short:** This proposal would require the Department of Buildings to create a single online permitting hub by 2030, gives it more flexibility over who can sign off on certificates of occupancy, and also move waterfront structure permitting into the agency .
- **Our view:** This modernization would make it easier to navigate the construction permitting process and give the Buildings Commissioner room to organize the agency for modern workloads. [Read our full position](#)

Question 5: Rainy Day Fund - VOTE YES

- **In short:** This proposal would establish, for the first time, a reserve target of 12% of the prior fiscal year's tax revenues, require a standing deposit formula to build toward it, and align reserves withdrawal rules with existing State law.
- **Our view:** This is an incremental step to build rules for the relatively new Rainy Day Fund. Though the proposal is not perfect - it does not require annual deposits and it allows the City to count other reserve funds toward the 12% goal - it would strengthen the city's finances in the long run. [Read our full position](#)