



Comments of Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal to the New York City Department of Buildings regarding Proposed Sidewalk Shed Rules

April 27, 2026

I write as Borough President of Manhattan to submit comments on the NYC Department of Buildings' proposed rules implementing Local Laws 48 and 51 of 2025. These rules begin to address one of New York City's most pervasive quality-of-life issues, the longstanding sidewalk sheds that line our streetscape, some of which have been up for over a decade without any repair work. The City must get implementation right.

As of April 27, 2026, there are 7,894 sidewalk sheds up across New York City, with an average age of 556 days.¹ Manhattan alone accounts for nearly half of the city's sheds: 3,563 up across the borough, amounting to almost 140 linear miles of sidewalk sheds covering our sidewalks. Citywide, sidewalk sheds span nearly 350 miles; laid end to end, they would stretch from New York City to the Canadian border. Five of the ten oldest sidewalk sheds in the city are in Manhattan, and the oldest, at 605 East 9th Street, is more than 15 years old.² Wherever sheds linger, they darken storefronts, deter foot traffic, and degrade public safety and the public realm. We are long overdue to tackle this pervasive issue head on.

As State Senator of New York's 47th Senate District, I spotlighted the worst offenders through my "Sheddies" awards; the overall winner was a nearly 20-year-old shed at 51 West 86th Street.³ The very next day, work finally started to bring that shed down. However, thousands more, several of which I named at our "Sheddies" awards, are still up and awaiting repairs. Enforcement is sorely needed to ensure that building owners are doing façade repairs on time, and DOB's proposed rules are a strong start.

¹ "Active Sidewalk Shed Permits," NYC Buildings, last modified April 24, 2026, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/html/sidewalk-shed-map.html>.

² *Ibid.*

³ "Senator Hoylman-Sigal & Assemblymember Lasher Unveil New Scaffolding Legislation & Announce Sheddies 'Winners'," *Former New York State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal*, March 6, 2025, <https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2025/brad-hoylman-sigal/senator-hoylman-sigal-assemblymember-lasher-unveil>.

The DOB's proposed fines for inaction are well balanced to incentivize quick action while still allowing owners who face circumstances preventing repairs that are beyond their control to apply for exemptions and waivers. DOB must review these requests in a timely and fair manner.

The new rules allow DOB to evaluate hardship requests involving neighboring property access. When doing so, DOB should consider the new state law passed in 2025, S3799/A357, of which I was a proud cosponsor, which will ease the process for accessing neighboring property. DOB must ensure that building owners are seeking licenses for access under the new State codified process.

DOB should also clarify how it intends to handle the thousands of existing longstanding sheds across the city and what constitutes a "second permit renewal" for these sheds. I urge the DOB to begin outreach to building owners as soon as possible, especially to those that currently have sheds up and are not actively doing repairs, so that they are aware of their obligations under the law and can work expeditiously towards compliance.

Finally, it is critical that the City holds itself accountable to these new laws and leads private owners by example through the removal of longstanding sheds on city-owned buildings.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important proposed rule to advance the implementation of Local Laws 48 and 51 of 2025. I look forward to seeing these laws implemented and urge the City to promulgate the strongest possible rules to remedy the stain of forever sheds on our city's streetscape.