NYC GREEN CODES
LEGISLATION AT A GLANCE

GCTF Proposal
Construct Sustainable Sidewalks

In Progress
Local Law 80 of 2013

Summary
Well-designed sidewalks and roadways -- ones with permeable paving and adequate space for trees and plantings -- have the potential to reduce flooding, mitigate the urban heat island effect, promote the use of recycled materials and reduce air pollution. Unfortunately, city rules and regulations for sidewalks are inconsistent and are, in some cases, impediments to sustainable sidewalks and roadways. A uniform standard for sidewalk design that includes both hardscape and planning elements will help ensure that new sidewalk construction aids NYC sustainability goals.

Local Law 80 of 2013 directs several city departments to work together to study alternative sidewalk and roadway design for better stormwater control. This study will represent an important step toward the uniform standard needed. However, it focuses on permeable paving materials, and does not address tree and planting. Trees and plantings moderate the urban heat island effect, increase natural shading and cooling through evapo-transpiration, and reduce air pollution. This study is a laudable step towards improving the hardscape portion of sidewalks, and Urban Green will continue to work for a uniform standard for sidewalk design that also includes tree and planting elements.

New Requirements or Changes
Effective: October 2, 2013

Adds a new section 19-155 to the NYC Administrative Code, Title 19, Chapter 1, Subchapter 1:

This legislation directs the departments of Transportation and Environmental Protection to deliver a report, within thirty months of enactment (that is, by 4/2/2016), concerning alternative materials and design for city streets and sidewalks. The report is to be posted on the department’s website, and must include:

• An analysis on the types of materials available for paving, including their cost, durability and absorption capability;
• Possibilities for changing the angulation of streets in flood-prone areas near bodies of water;
• Estimates of the amount of water that may be diverted from the sewer system; and
• The effect on any changes on utilities and other entities who need to make cuts in the streets;
• Recommendations regarding the use and limitations of permeable materials by private property owners on private roadways, parking lots and sidewalks
• The results of a pilot program (also mandated by this legislation) on the use of permeable materials on roadway and sidewalk surfaces;
• A determination on whether a uniform standard on the use of permeable materials in sidewalks within the city of New York is appropriate, based on the results of the study and pilot. If a standard is appropriate, the report is to include recommendations on what the standard should comprise.

**Implementation**

There are no known issues for the implementation of this law.