NYC GREEN CODES
LEGISLATION AT A GLANCE

GCTF Proposal
Increase Allowable Size of Solar Shades

Implemented
Zone Green Text Amendment to the Zoning Resolution, and Local Law 28 of 2012 amending the Building Code

Summary
Shading devices help combat heat gain and prevent glare, decreasing cooling energy requirements. The Building Code only permitted these shading devices to extend 10 inches from the building, thus restricting their effectiveness. They were also not “permitted obstructions” under the Zoning Resolution.

The Zone Green Text Amendment and Local Law 28 reduced barriers to sun control devices by permitting them to extend 2½ feet into yards, setbacks, and street lines.

New Requirements or Changes


Amendments to the Zoning Resolution:

• “Sun control devices” are added to the list of permitted obstructions within a required yard, open area or setback, and treated like awnings for the purposes of zoning.
• When located above the ground floor:
  o Permitted to project a maximum of 2 feet 6 inches into a required yard, setback, or other open area.
  o The total area of the façade covered by awnings and sun control devices (when viewed in elevation) is limited to 30 percent of the surface area of the building wall from which they project.
• When located on the first story above required setback, limited to half the depth of required setback and half the width of the building wall.
• Allowed to project above the permitted building height limit to match the height of the parapet wall or guardrail.
• Not counted as floor area if inaccessible except for maintenance (otherwise considered a balcony).

Amendments to Sections 202, 1607.11.2.4, 3101.1, 3105, 3202.2.1 of the Building Code:

• Adds a definition for “Sun Control Device” as an architectural projection attached to the building that provides shading for glazed areas and that may be fixed, retractable or rotating. The definition does not include awnings and canopies.
• Sun control devices that are at least 8 feet above ground may project 2 feet 6 inches beyond the street line.
• Removes sun control devices from the definition of architectural details (which may only project 10 inches beyond the street line).
• Subject to area limitations that cannot exceed 10 square feet within any 100 square feet of wall area.
• Must be designed for a live load of 5 psf as well as snow loads and wind loads specified in the Building Code.
• If located above sidewalk vaults and less than 40 feet above the ground must be removable or retractable to less than 10 inches beyond the street line.
• Permitted projection of balconies beyond the street line modified to match the permitted projection for sun control devices, at 2 feet 6 inches.

Enforcement

These new and revised provisions are standard parts of the Zoning Resolution and Building Code. They will be enforced by the Department of Buildings in the same manner as any other element of the Zoning Resolution or Building Code.

Implementation

These zoning and building code amendments reduce impediments and are not expected to have any impact on capital costs.

Sun control devices are fabricated from standard construction components. In addition to custom devices, many curtain wall and window manufacturers offer them as options in their systems. One concern sometimes expressed about solar shades is ice and snow build-up. This is an issue for all projections such as cornices, eaves, lintels and sills, railings, ornamental work, sculpture, signage and signage supports, air conditioning units, and fire escapes. Snow and ice buildup can be mitigated by providing:

• A canopy or awning at sidewalk level;
• Less solid horizontal surface areas for ice and snow to build up on, such as fin-shaped or vertical louvers, or perforated metal; or
• If horizontal surfaces are used, include projections, such as fins at the edge of a device that will catch snow and ice so that it melts gradually rather than blows off in large portions.