

## New York City Mass Timber Studio Questions & Answers October 27, 2023

In connection with the **Request for Applications** relating to the **New York City Mass Timber Studio** released by NYCEDC on **September 20, 2023**, the questions from potential Respondents and answers provided by NYCEDC are below.

- 1. We're involved in mass timber research and projects elsewhere, but none in NYC. How can we get involved in this new initiative? Is there a way to match-make between us and other teams?**

A: A matchmaking form was released to NYC Mass Timber Studio ("Studio") applicants on October 11, 2023, and interested applicants were asked to respond by October 18, 2023. The form is now closed, but responses are available for download at [edc.nyc/masstimber](https://edc.nyc/masstimber). NYCEDC and Studio Partners will not facilitate the matchmaking beyond making the form results publicly available. It is up to the respondents to collaborate and submit proposals that meet the November 8, 2023, by 11:59pm EST deadline.

- 2. Is there a recording of the launch event at AIA?**

A: A recording of the 'Building to Net Zero with Mass Timber' launch event at AIANY can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/874160875>

- 3. Does the team submitting the application need to have a commissioned project already underway in NYC?**

A: Yes. If you do not have an active project and are seeking one, please refer to the [matchmaking form responses](#).

- 4. Do all members of the team need to be licensed in the state of NY? Or just one entity of the team (either Architectural or Structural if an Architectural and Structural team happens to team up?)**

A: At minimum the project team needs a registered architect licensed in NY State.

- 5. Can the project be theoretical? Meaning, can the design team find an empty site in NYC and do an early-stage design assessment of it?**

A: No, submissions must be an active development project within the 5 boroughs.

- 6. Are there resources and tables available for calculating the required thickness of beams and floor slabs for various Fire Ratings needed in NYC?**

A: Please see the following links for resources on (1) [sizing beams and floor slabs](#) and (2) [fire-rating tested assemblies](#).

**7. What aspects of the design team are you looking to be confirmed? Are there any specific capabilities required in the team?**

A: Please refer to the Program Eligibility and Application Requirements sections at [edc.nyc/masstimber](https://edc.nyc/masstimber) for team profile requirements. At minimum the submission needs to include an architect or developer, but please review the terms of the Request for Applications (“RFA”) for other capacities that may be helpful such as a structural engineer, construction manager and/or general contractor, and any important specialty consultants relevant to the success of the project (fire safety, life cycle assessment, acoustics).

**8. What are the criteria that the projects are going to be evaluated against? Are larger projects likely to be favored?**

A: Description of the selection criteria can be found at [edc.nyc/masstimber](https://edc.nyc/masstimber). Criteria include (1) planning and permitting status, (2) priority building uses, typologies, and heights, (3) commitment to sustainability and resiliency, (4) commitment to equity, and (5) potential for implementing mass timber practices. Applicants should be in the early stages of the project to actively participate and fulfill the Studio requirements. Preference will be given to projects nearing or in the early stage of permitting, and to those projects that demonstrate potential to accelerate adoption of mass timber (“MT”) in innovative applications.

Applications will be evaluated on the basis of their commitment and approach to reducing embodied carbon emissions, incorporating clean construction practices, and developing projects that benefit underserved New Yorkers. While larger projects won’t be directly favored, the Selection Committee will aim to select a cohort representing a range of different building uses, affordability, scales, and heights that are permissible under the 2022 iteration of the New York City Construction Codes.

**9. For an application to be valid, does the developer have to own the site? What if they are in negotiations?**

A: Developers should own the site by the date of submission, November 8, 2023.

**10. Are there any government construction capital projects that might apply to the accelerator and are looking for support from the private sector?**

A: Please refer to the [matchmaking form responses](#) if you are seeking an active project. NYCEDC cannot pair applicants with projects.

**11. We have mass timber expertise and would like to share our experience. How can we get involved?**

A: If you would like to share your experience but are not applying to the program, NYCEDC will be hosting events in 2024 highlighting ongoing work and inviting experts to join the conversation.

**12. What oversight, if any, will be involved in the allocation of funds to the project? Could the funds be used for anything CLT related - from consultants' fees to procuring the actual materials?**

A: Awarded applicants will be subject to all applicable rules, executive orders, laws, and regulations (as they may be affected by applicable variances) of the United States, the State of New York, and the City of New York, including those regulations set forth by the USDA 2 CFR Part 400 and 200.331-.333. The grant funds are intended to support tasks related to early design phase mass timber technical and financial feasibility studies. Funds may not be used towards material procurement and/or construction fees. Awarded teams will be required to submit designated program deliverables to receive payment of the full grant award.

**13. Is there any more info on the format of the pdf document other than what is described on the website? Document size, orientation, max no. of pages, max file size, etc.? Will this be reviewed on screen or as prints? Is a ppt format better? Will the documents be reviewed by individuals or as a group?**

A: Applicants should submit a single, PDF formatted, searchable document and labeled "[PRIME BUSINESS NAME]\_Mass Timber Studio RFA". Application focus and brevity will enable the Selection Committee to best understand and appreciate the merits of each proposal. Please refer to the webpage and procurement language for more information, but there are no requirements related to document sizing, orientation, proposal length, or file size. The proposals will be reviewed digitally.

**14. Do you need info on past project/portfolio experiences?**

A: Applicants may include examples of past projects as it pertains to the team profile, expertise, and experience.

**15. Do we need to submit documents to prove that the project is a "real" commissioned project? If so, what would that be?**

A: Applicants should include a letter of support or intent from the owner or developer indicating strong interest and intent to leverage mass timber within the commissioned project. If this is not feasible, please provide more information about projected or confirmed mass timber use within the Project Description.

**16. My firm is in the process of applying for the MWDBE status. Does this count?**

A: NYCEDC does not certify MWDBE firms. Respondents pending MWDBE certification should indicate this by attaching their application number with their MWDBE forms. The MWDBE team at NYCEDC will help expedite review but cannot count this toward MWDBE goals until businesses gain certification. For assistance with certification, please contact [MWDBE@edc.nyc](mailto:MWDBE@edc.nyc).

**17. Who are the review committee members, groups? Will help to know the audience better.**

A: The Section Committee is composed of representatives from NYCEDC, the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice, USDA Forest Service, and the Softwood Lumber Board.

**18. What technical assistance will be provided?**

A: WoodWorks, the Studio technical assistance partner, will provide advice on acoustics; fire-resistance; structural gravity and lateral design; grid and timber volume optimization; mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection integration; durability; and hybrid system selection and detailing at differential material intersections. Additional guidance will be provided by WoodWorks on cost benefit assessments for MT/CLT (time, materials, labor), facilitating discussions on supply and budgets with WoodWorks mass timber manufacturing partners and to use the WoodWorks Innovation Network to identify contractors experienced with mass timber. The New York City Department of Buildings (NYCDOB) will provide advisory feedback on project specific questions related to complying with the 2022 New York City Construction Codes and the New York City Zoning Resolution.

**19. Will additional consultants be required for life cycle assessment of embodied carbon, and/or technical performance such as fire-ratings and resistance and acoustics?**

A: No, additional consultants will not be required for Life Cycle Assessments ("LCA"), acoustics or technical performance. WoodWorks, the Studio technical assistance partner, will provide guidance and feedback to the selected teams to complete these assessments.

**20. How many group sessions (and public presentations) are expected/anticipated of design team over 9 months?**

A: Selected teams must participate in at minimum four (4) individual working meetings with program partners, WoodWorks and NYCDOB, to discuss project specific ideas, opportunities, and challenges. Two (2) meetings (in-person or virtual) must occur prior to the mid-term event, and two (2) meetings prior to the final presentation. WoodWorks will be available to provide technical support throughout the Studio activities period, and the design teams are encouraged to engage with WoodWorks throughout the duration of the Studio activities.

**21. The design team has a proposal for the Studio to build mass timber affordable housing, with a developer, contractor, architect, MT acoustic consultant, and MT fabricator already involved. The site is currently vacant and owned by the City of New York, and the City does not yet have any direct involvement in the project. With the Studio's support, the project will become much more feasible for City involvement, for example to sell the land to the project team. The project is not theoretical, but the land is not owned by the design team yet. Would this be eligible for the studio as a speculative project?**

A: Developers should own the site by the date of the NYC Mass Timber Studio application submission, November 8, 2023. Grants will not be awarded to speculative proposals at this time.

**22. The RFA indicates that "Priority building uses" include residential - medium multifamily affordable and market rate housing. Please clarify "medium" and if a 4-story infill affordable housing project with 6 to 10 units would qualify for the studio or if there is a minimum number of dwelling units or target density for the studio.**

A: 'Residential – medium multifamily affordable and market rate housing' refers to residential buildings with four or more dwelling units. An in-fill residential project with 6-10 units may apply.

**23. Regarding the project cost estimates and schedule of expenses, can you clarify whether this is for the timber design and feasibility planning portion of the project only (in other words, the scope of the application), not the full construction cost of the project?**

A: Project cost estimates and schedule of expenses should be submitted for the current project phase, and full construction if applicable.

**24. What level of Life Cycle Assessment of embodied Carbon is required. For Example, Cove-Tool type Analysis? Or is an EC3 and TallyLCA analysis required?**

A: Specific LCA tools will not be prescribed by the Studio. Design teams will determine LCA analysis that best demonstrates the carbon benefits of mass timber design integration into their project scope.

**25. Does the Life Cycle assessment of embodied carbon comparison need to evaluate the embodied carbon of the entire building or just the comparison between structural systems? (ex: cast-in-place concrete vs mass-timber for the building)**

A: The level of LCA will be determined together with projects teams based on project phase. For projects that are in the preliminary stages, LCA comparisons between different material structural systems will be encouraged.

**26. Will WoodWorks be able to assist with preliminary cost benefit assessment for mass timber based on prior per-square foot projects? Or will detailed construction cost estimating be required?**

A: The Studio does not require a per square footage cost estimate. WoodWorks will provide project specific guidance on cost benefit assessments for mass timber (time, materials, labor), facilitate discussions on supply and budgets with WoodWorks mass timber manufacturing partners. The following links can be a helpful resource for cost benefit assessments: (1) [mass timber business case studies](#) and (2) [mass timber cost and design optimization checklists](#).

**27. To what extent will the NYC Fire Department be involved in the studio? What efforts will NYC EDC, Mayor's Office for Climate and Environmental Justice, WoodWorks and AIANY be making in this studio to engage with the Fire Department? This is a critical element to overall industry adoption of mass timber.**

A: NYCEDC and its Studio partners will seek to engage with City agencies with subject matter experience that are well positioned to support the work of the Studio. More information will be provided upon selection of awarded project teams.