



Zoning Resolution

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Zohran K. Mamdani, Mayor

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Daniel R. Garodnick, Chair

81-261 - Definitions

File generated by <https://zr.planning.nyc.gov> on 2/25/2026

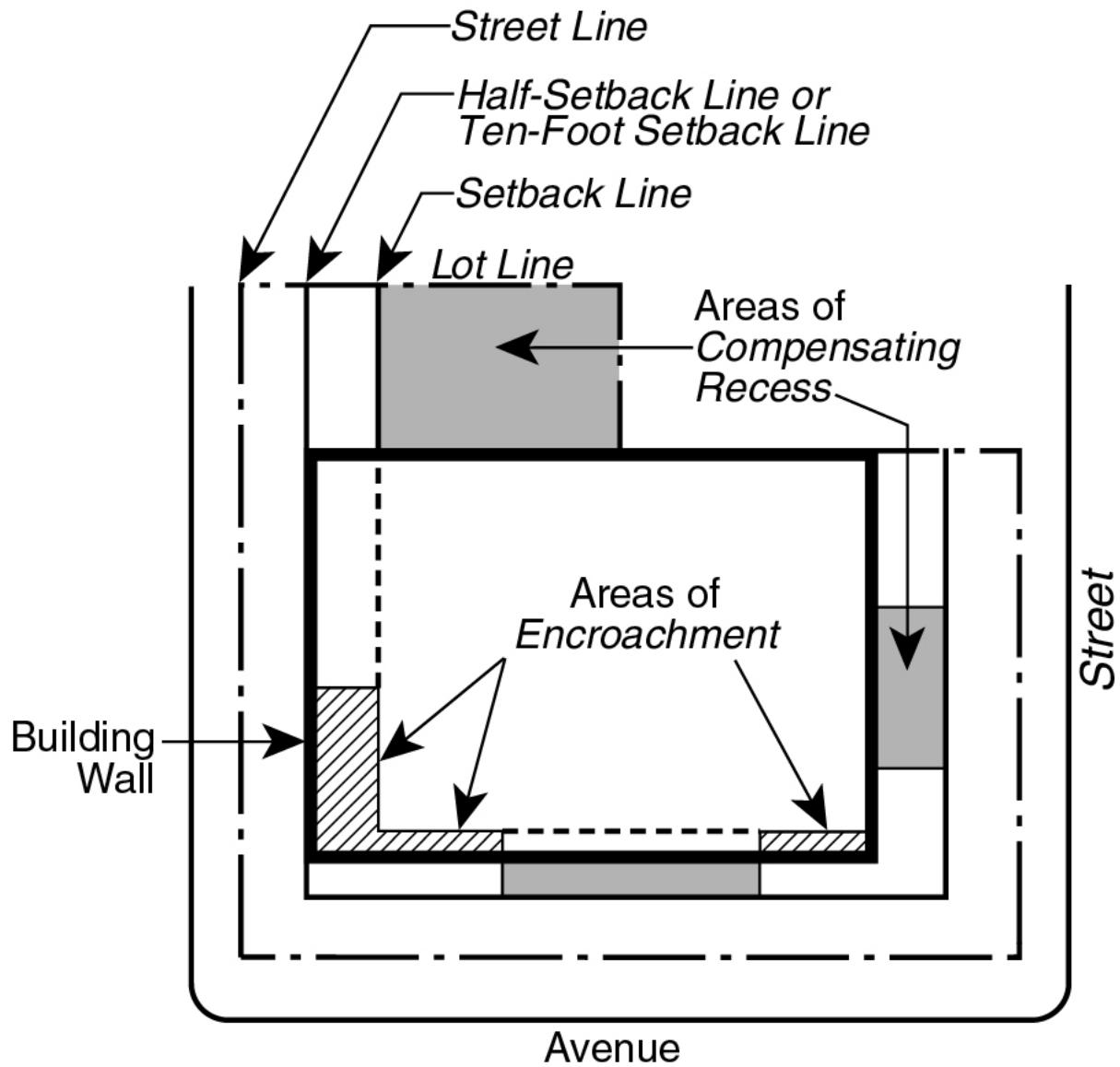
81-261 - Definitions

LAST AMENDED

2/2/2011

Compensating recess

A portion of a #zoning lot# which, at the #building# height selected for determining compliance with the provisions of Section [81-26](#) (Height and Setback Regulations--Daylight Compensation), lies in the #free zone# (Zone A on the #encroachment grid#), is not covered by any portion of a #building# and qualifies as compensating for #encroachments# beyond the #free zone# under the provisions of Section [81-264](#) (Encroachments and compensating recesses). (See illustration of #Compensating Recess# and #Encroachment#)



COMPENSATING RECESS AND ENCROACHMENT

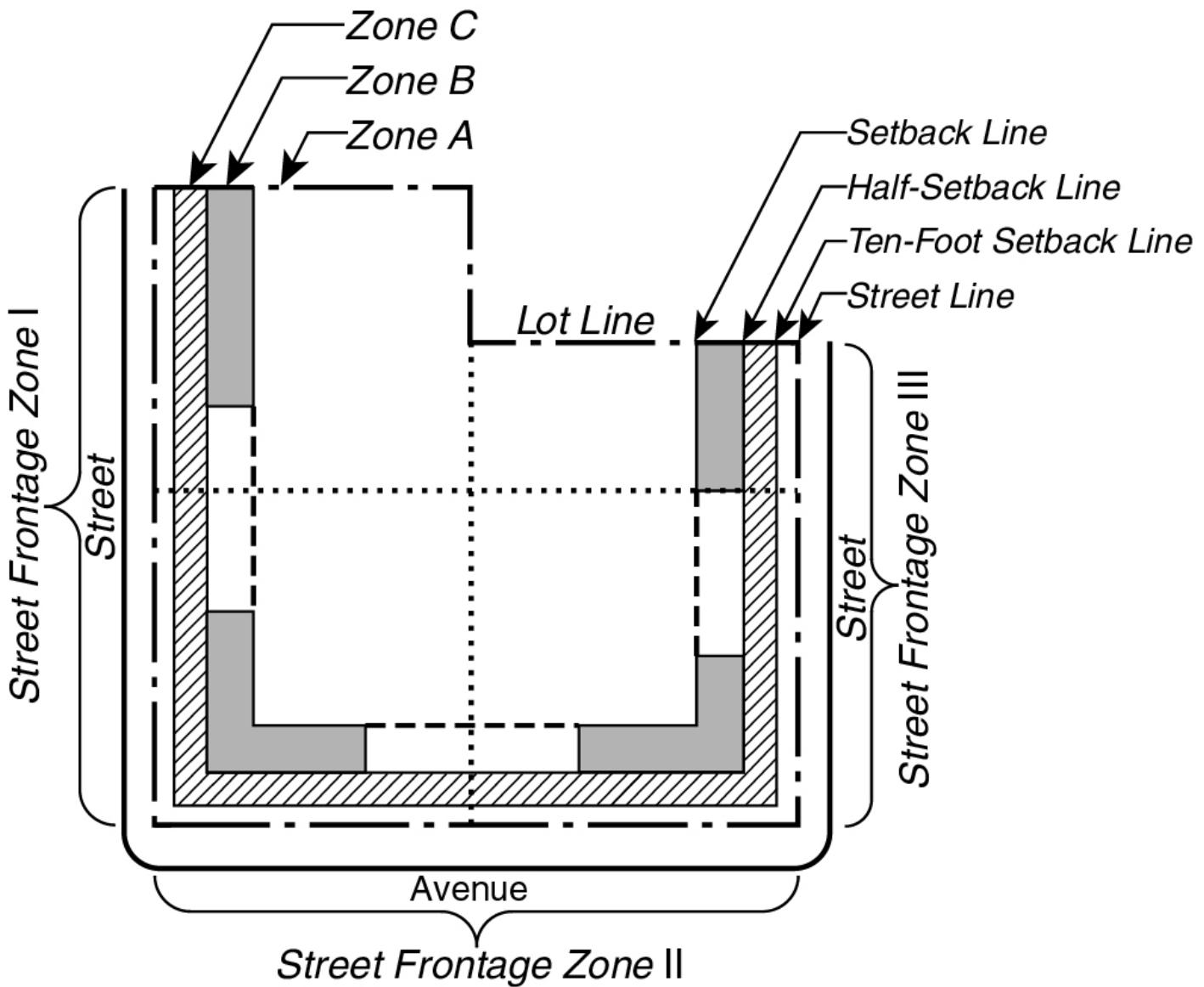
(81-261.1)

Encroachment

A projection beyond the **setback line**, the **free zone** or the **half-setback line** by any portion of a **building** that exceeds the maximum height permitted at the **street line**. (See illustration of **Compensating Recess** and **Encroachment**)

Encroachment grid

A plan drawing of the **#zoning lot#** at any given height above **#curb level#** selected to determine compliance with the provisions of Section [81-26](#) and showing, for that height, **#street lines#**, **#setback lines#**, **#half-setback lines#**, **#Zone A#** (the **#free zone#**), **#Zone B#** and **#Zone C#** (**#encroachment zones#**) and, where applicable, the **#ten-foot setback line#**. The **#encroachment grid#** serves as a device for measuring areas of **#encroachment#** beyond the **#free zone#** and areas of **#compensating recess#** within the **#free zone#**. (See illustration of **#Encroachment Grid#**)



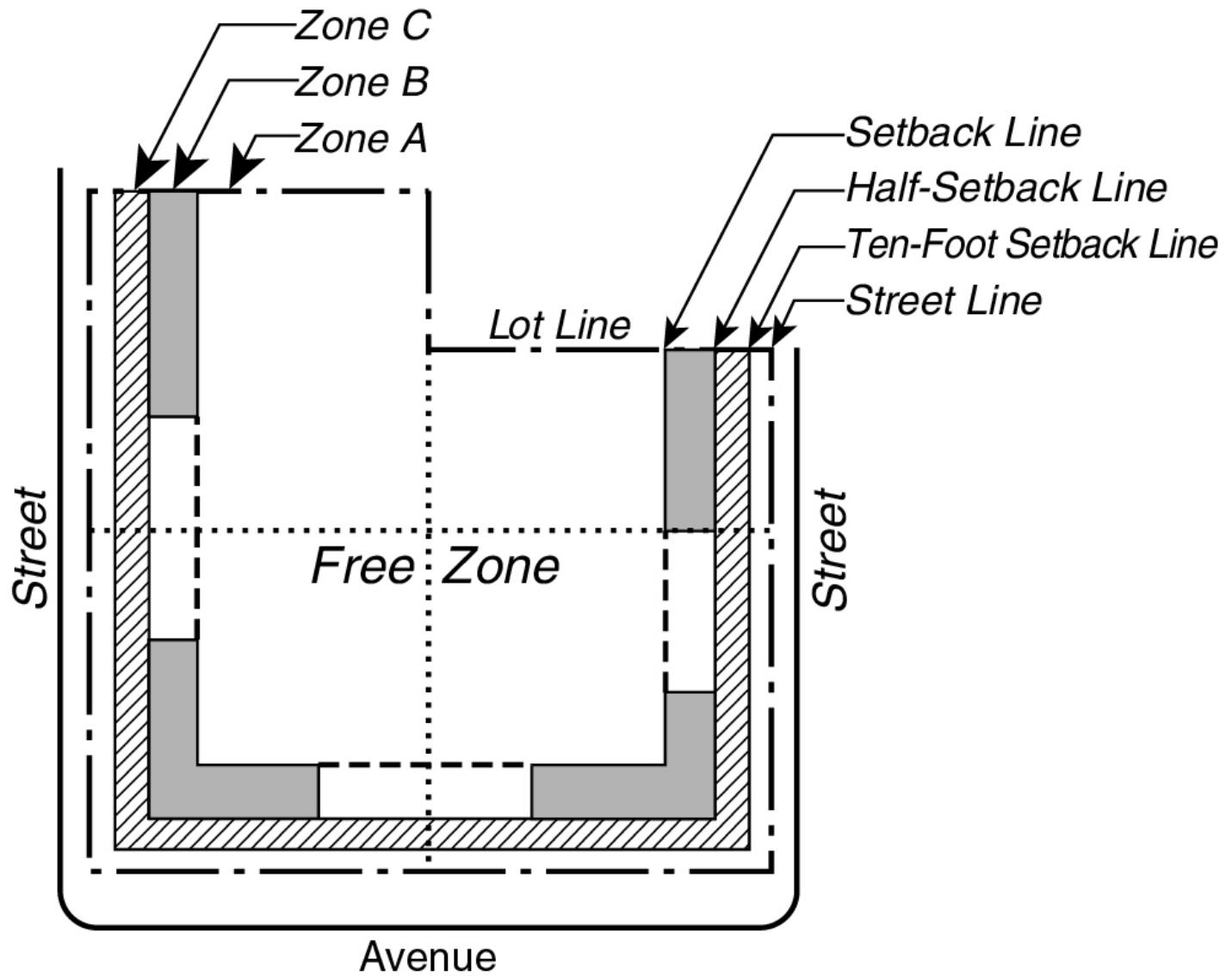
ENCROACHMENT GRID

(81-261.2)

Free zone

That portion of a #zoning lot#, at any given height, which may be covered by a #building# without coverage constituting an #encroachment# that requires daylight compensation.

In addition to the area that lies behind a #setback line# or #setback lines#, the #free zone# shall include areas between the #setback line# and either the #half-setback line# or the #ten-foot setback line#, whichever is further from the #street line#, and which qualify as #free zone# areas under the #middle one-third rule#. The #free zone# is referred to as #Zone A# on the #encroachment grid#.



FREE ZONE

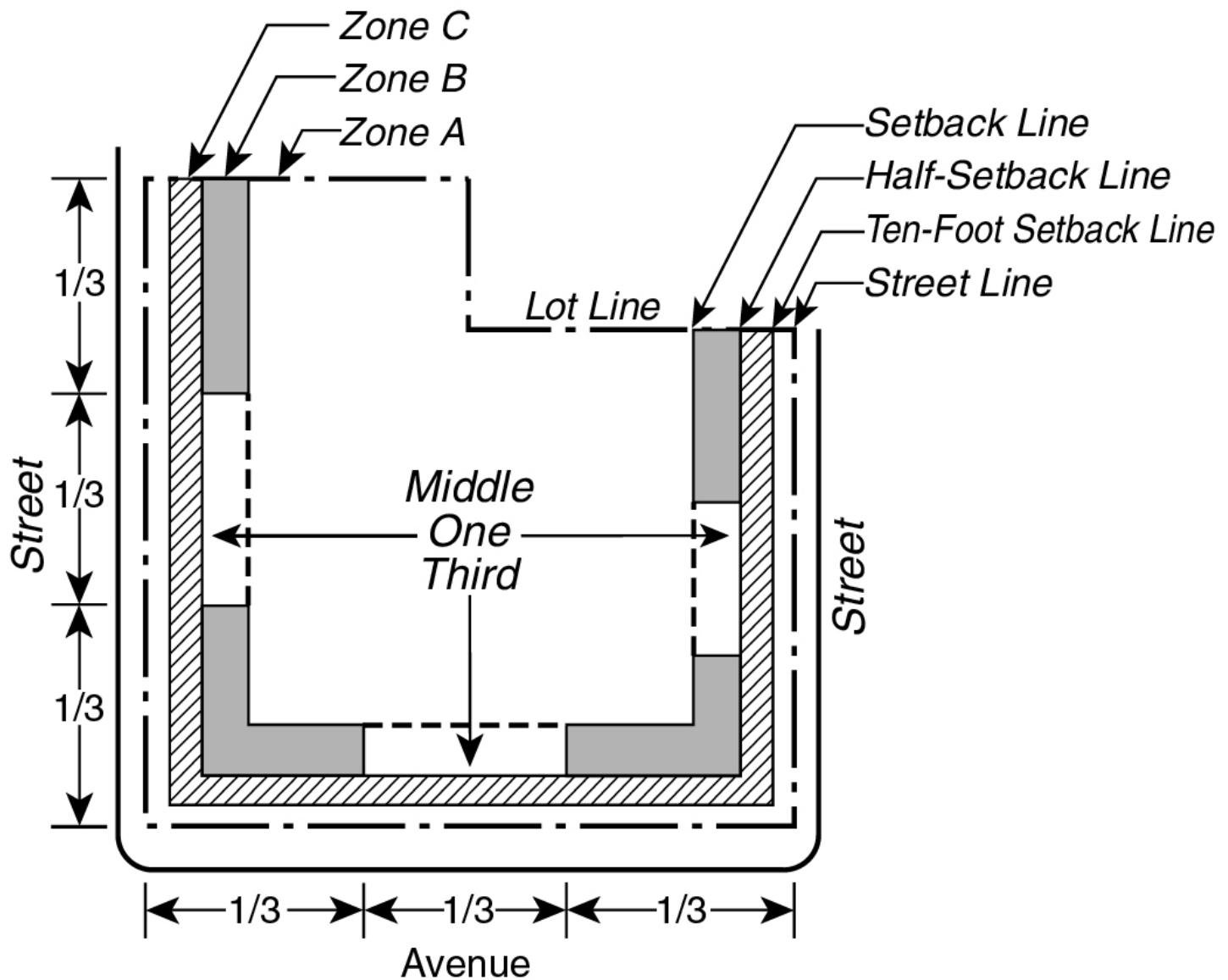
(81-261.3)

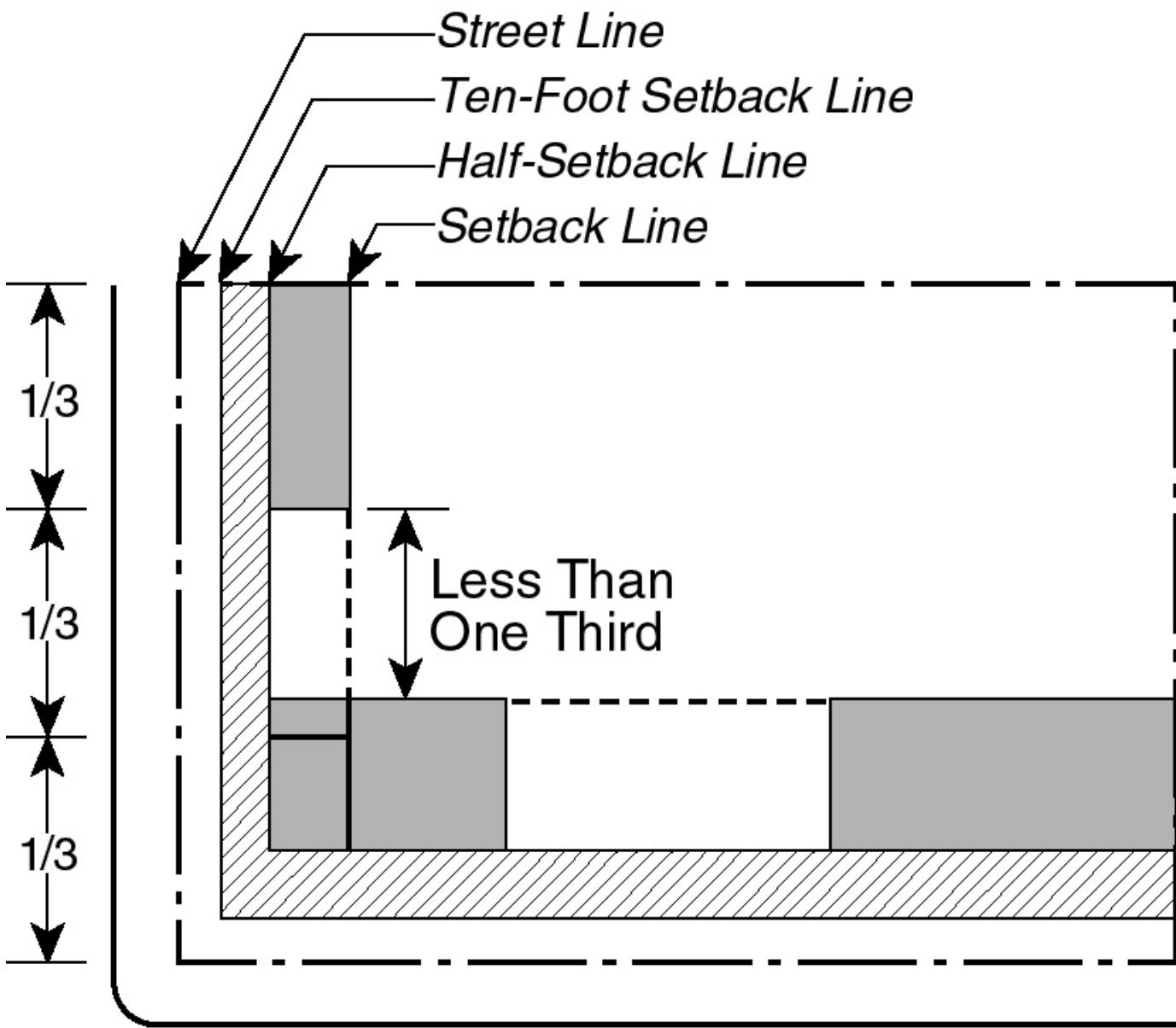
Half-setback line

A line drawn parallel to a #street line# and halfway between the #street line# and the #setback line#. (See illustration of #Setback Line# and #Half-Setback Line#)

Middle one-third rule

The rule under which, for the middle one-third of the #front lot line# length, the #free zone# includes area between the #setback line# and either the #half-setback line# or the #ten-foot setback line#, whichever is further from the #street line#. However, on a #corner lot# the #free zone# does not extend beyond the #setback line# along an intersecting #street#. (See illustrations of #Middle One-Third Rule#)





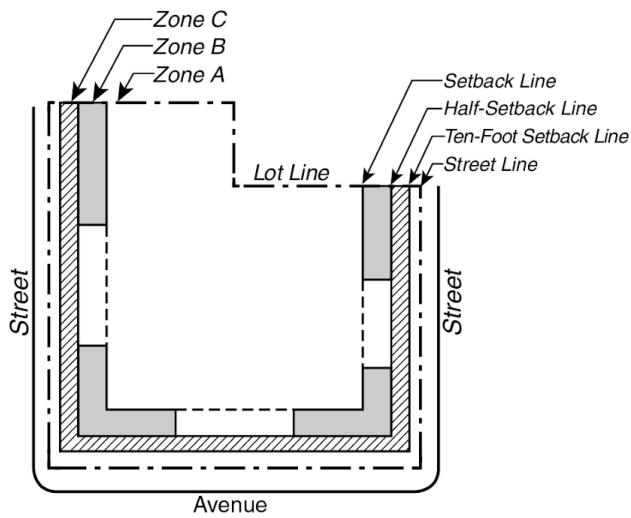
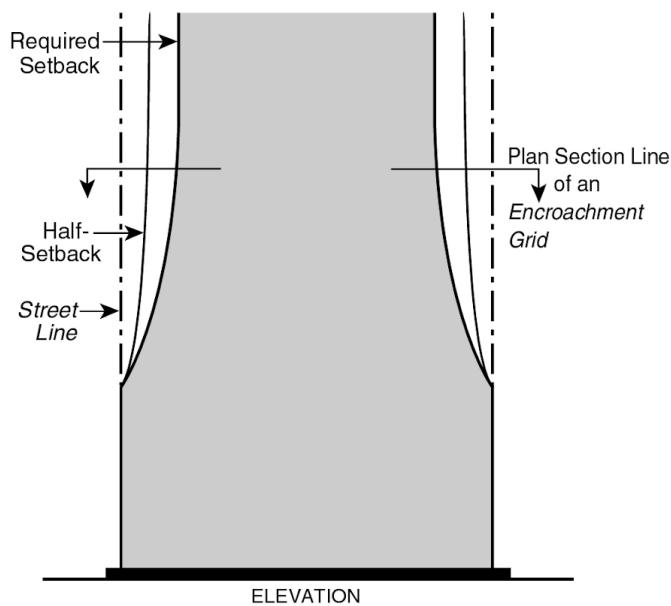
MIDDLE ONE-THIRD RULE

(81-261.4)

Setback line

A line drawn in plan parallel to a #street line# and showing for a given #building# height the minimum depth to which a #building# is required to be set back from the #street line# by the applicable depth to height chart in Section [81-263](#) (Standard setback requirements). Required

setbacks, established by the chart, increase with the #building's# height. (See illustration of #Setback Line# and #Half-Setback Line#)

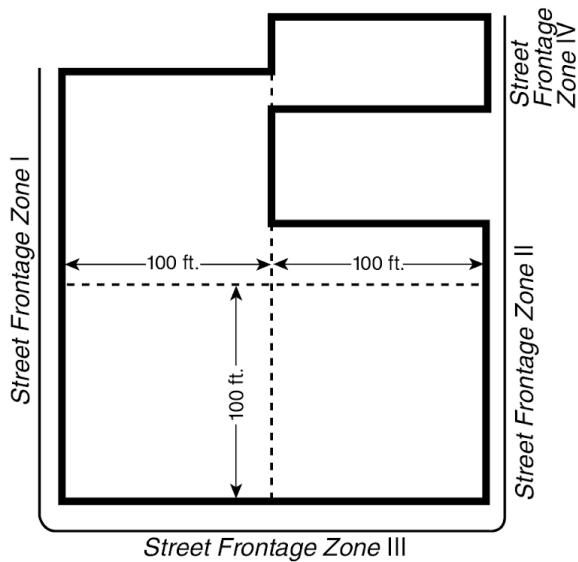
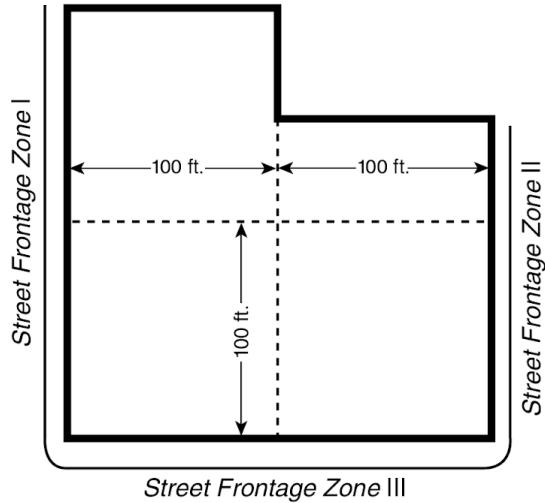


SETBACK LINE AND HALF-SETBACK LINE

(81-261.5)

Street frontage zone

A portion of a #zoning lot# which lies within an area bounded by a continuous #front lot line# and either the center line of the #block# or a line 100 feet distant from and parallel to that #front lot line#, whichever is closer to that #front lot line#. There shall be a #street frontage zone# for each #zoning lot# #street# frontage. (See illustration of #Street Frontage Zones#)



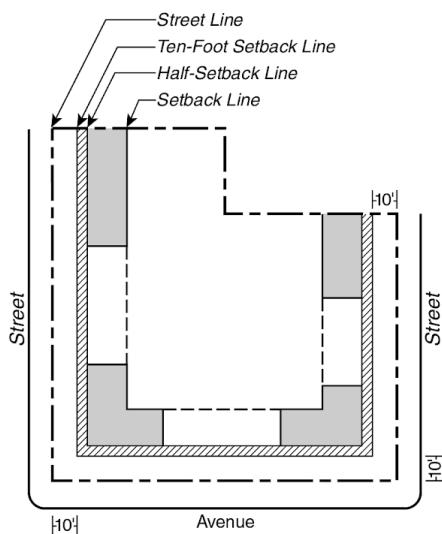
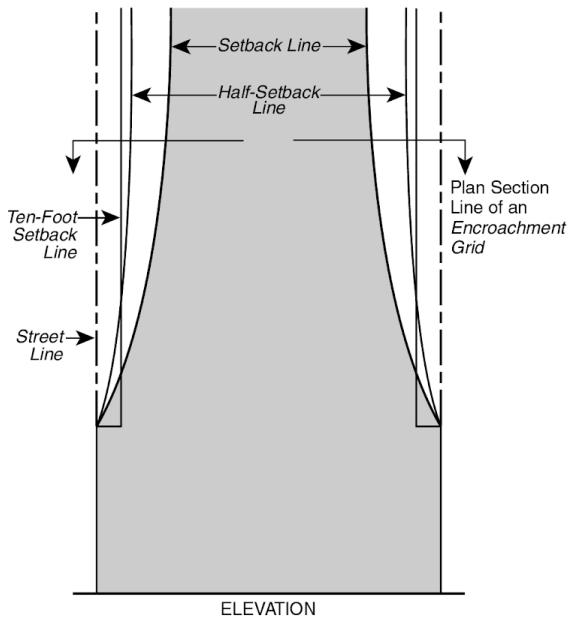
Zoning Lot
 Street Frontage Zone Boundary

STREET FRONTAGE ZONES

(81-261.6)

Ten-foot setback line

A line which is parallel to the #street line# at a depth of 10 feet and represents the minimum distance any portion of a #building# exceeding the maximum height at the #street line# is required to be set back from the #street line#. A greater setback distance may be required by a #setback line# or a #half-setback line# depending upon the #building# height for which such #setback line# or #half-setback line# is established.



TEN-FOOT SETBACK LINE ON AN ENCROACHMENT GRID

Zone A, Zone B, Zone C

"Zone A," "Zone B" and "Zone C" are zones on an #encroachment grid# defined as follows:

- (a) #Zone A# is the #free zone#.
- (b) #Zone B#, an #encroachment# zone, is the zone, exclusive of any area in #Zone A# and any area closer to the #street line# than the #ten-foot setback line#, which lies between the #setback line# and either the #half-setback line# or the #ten-foot setback line#, whichever is further from the #street line#.
- (c) #Zone C#, an #encroachment# zone and penalty zone, is the zone, exclusive of any area closer to the #street line# than the #ten-foot setback line#, which lies between the #half-setback line# and the #ten-foot setback line#.