



Special Bay Ridge District Rezoning - **Approved!**

Overview



80th St between Fourth and Fifth Aves

Sixth Ave between 76th and 77th Sts

77th St between Fourth and Fifth Aves

The Department of City Planning proposes zoning map changes and text amendments for the 249-block Special Bay Ridge District (SBRD) in Brooklyn's Community District 10. The proposed rezoning reflects the varied character of this neighborhood. It would provide protections against out-of-scale development on Bay Ridge's unique limestone townhouse blocks and it would triple the number of blocks where only detached homes would be permitted. In other parts of the neighborhood, the proposed zoning is also tailored to the prevailing neighborhood context, allowing opportunities for apartment house construction with ground floor retail on the neighborhood's main thoroughfares, as well as supporting a continued auto showroom and commercial presence in the neighborhood's commercial core surrounding 86th Street.

The Special Bay Ridge District is among the city's largest and was one of the first adopted specifically to preserve the scale and character of a distinctive, built-up residential neighborhood. When it was originally adopted in 1978, the SBRD was in fact the precursor to the contextual zoning regulations created in the mid-eighties and since mapped widely throughout the city.

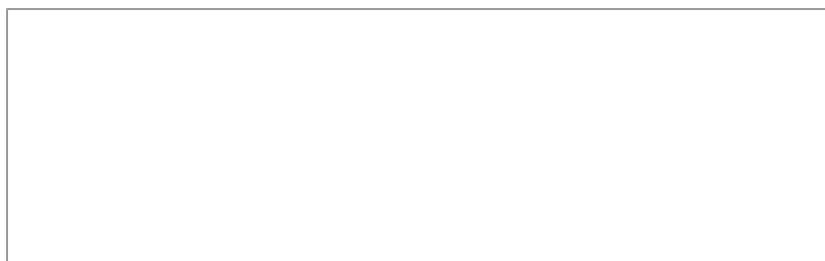


Bay Ridge Locator Map

Prompted by development in the 1970's of two large residential complexes, the Bay Ridge Towers in two buildings of 27 and 30 stories and the Shore Hill Apartments in two 13-story buildings, the SBRD regulations imposed customized building height and size restrictions, and controls pertaining to yards, lot coverage, open space, curb cuts, parking and landscaping. A height limit of 32 feet was established on most midblocks and five preservation subareas were created with additional regulations modifying the underlying zoning district regulations.

However, even with the SBRD controls, multi-family and attached housing can be developed in place of single-family, detached homes in parts of the district. With increasing frequency, single-family homes on large lots have been replaced with multi-family residences. As a result, there is growing community concern about the potential for eroding the character of some blocks within the special district.

The proposed zoning changes would better preserve neighborhood scale and character by replacing many of the underlying zoning districts with lower density and contextual zoning districts, and by retaining certain provisions of the existing special district. Although the proposed contextual zoning districts would eliminate the need for SBRD's preservation subareas, a limited number of SBRD regulations would be retained to provide protections greater than those afforded by the proposed underlying districts.





80th St between Fourth and Fifth Aves



Bay Ridge Parkway between
Ridge Blvd and Colonial Rd

95th St between Marine Ave
and Shore Rd

These fine-tuned zoning changes would protect the character of most neighborhood midblocks, some of which are defined by detached homes, some by semi-detached one- and two-family homes, and others by rows of attached limestone houses. The proposal would also reinforce the character of Third, Fourth and Fifth Avenues as corridors for mid-rise mixed retail/residential buildings, and of appropriate commercial districts as centers for retail and auto related uses. Additional height and bulk controls would be prescribed for community facility uses.

Public Review

Community Board 10 recommended approval with conditions and the Brooklyn Borough President recommended approval of the proposal. The City Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposal on February 2, 2005 and voted unanimously on March 23, 2005 to approve the zoning map and text applications with modifications based on concerns raised during the public review process. (see [the CPC reports](#) and view the [Adopted Zoning Map](#)).

On March 23, 2005, the City Council adopted the zoning changes which are now in effect.

For more information about the Special Bay Ridge District zoning proposal, please contact the Brooklyn Office of the Department of City Planning, 718-780-8280.

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Existing Context and Zoning

Like most New York City neighborhoods of its size, Bay Ridge does not have a single context, but a variety of land uses and housing types typical of the times in which they were built. Whatever the housing type, however, the scale is generally low, six stories or less with few exceptions. About 40 percent of the 249 blocks in the special district are characterized by one- and two-family detached and semi-detached homes.

The special district is bounded by 65th Street on the north, Shore Road and The Narrows to the south and west, and Seventh Avenue and the Gowanus Expressway to the east. Zoning regulations in the SBRD designate five separate preservation areas: Area A, the midblock preservation area; Areas B, C, and D, avenue preservation areas; and Area E for other designated locations. Table 1, SBRD Preservation Areas ([below](#)) summarizes the maximum [floor area ratios](#) (FAR) and height limits of the underlying zoning districts in each of the preservation areas.



Area A

In 1961, approximately 125 of Bay Ridge's low-rise midblocks were zoned R6, a medium-density height factor (non-contextual) zoning district. The 1978 SBRD regulations established the midblock preservation area (Area A) limiting FAR to 1.65 (compared to 2.43 in R6 districts outside the SBRD) and building height to 32 feet to eliminate the potential for midblock tower construction on these low-rise streets. There is a broad mix of housing within these blocks: single-family detached homes, semi-detached and attached residences, and rowhouses and small multi-family dwellings.

Area B

Third and Fifth Avenues contain a mix of multi-family three- to six-story residential buildings with a continuous ground floor retail presence on the blocks with commercial overlays. Most Third and Fifth Avenue blockfronts are within Area B of the SBRD and are zoned R6 with commercial overlays. There is also a 48-foot height limit in this area .

Area C

The commercial core of Bay Ridge is along 86th Street, between Fourth Avenue and Fort Hamilton Parkway in a C4-2 district (Area C). It is occupied by large retail stores, typically two to three stories, as well as six-story elevator apartment buildings. The underlying C4-2 district permits up to 2.0 FAR of commercial development and a 2.43 FAR for residential development. Area C limits building height to 60 feet and allows an additional 0.275 FAR in a mixed building if all the additional floor area is located on the ground floor and occupied by a commercial or community facility use. Three other sections of Bay Ridge characterized by six-story apartment buildings are also subject to Area C regulations: southern Fourth Avenue, northern Ridge Boulevard and northern Shore Road.

Area D

Fourth Avenue north of 86th Street (Area D) is characterized by six- to eight-story elevator apartment buildings, as well as the 30-story Bay Ridge Towers. The corridor is zoned R7-1 with commercial overlays, a maximum FAR of 2.75 and a height limit of 80 feet.

Area E

All other sections of the Special Bay Ridge District are within Area E. Much of Area E is a low-density residential section of the neighborhood between Shore Road and Third Avenue. In this area, the underlying zoning districts are R2 and R3-1, both permitting only detached and semi-detached homes, and R3-2, permitting all housing types, with FARs of 0.5 in R2 and 0.6 in R3-1 and R3-2. Area E modifies only the R3-2 district regulations, imposing a building height limit of 32 feet rather than the standard 35 foot limit.

The R7-1 district along southern Shore Road overlooking the harbor and a small section of Ovington Avenue west of Third Avenue within an underlying R6 district are also part of Area E. The built character is six- to eight-story elevator apartment buildings, and the SBRD imposes a height limit of 60 feet in the R6 district and of 80 feet in the R7-1 district.

Also within Area E are Bay Ridge's auto dealership row, on Fourth Avenue south of 86th Street, zoned C8-1, and a small M1-1 light manufacturing district bounded by 65th Street, the Gowanus Expressway, Fourth Avenue and Seventh Avenue. The underlying district regulations remain unchanged by the special district within these areas. Most of the

uses within the C8-1 and M1-1 districts are auto-oriented including gas stations, auto repair shops, and dealership showrooms. There is a row of non-conforming rowhouses within the M1-1 district on 66th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues.

TABLE 1 - SPECIAL BAY RIDGE DISTRICT PRESERVATION AREAS

Preservation Area	Underlying Zoning	Maximum FAR	Maximum Height	Other regulations
A: Mid-Block Preservation Area	R6	1.65	32 feet	Parking prohibited in the side or rear yard for sites with fewer than 3 dwelling units, no required distance between curb cuts
B: Avenue Preservation Area 1	R6 with C1 and C2 overlays	2.43 R only 2.705 if ground floor commercial or community facility	48 feet	Area Coverage/Open Space Regulations specify zones for Primary Building, Required Open Space, and Restricted Building Open Space
C: Avenue Preservation Area 2	R6, R6/C2 and C4-2	2.43 R only 2.705 if ground floor commercial or community facility	60 feet	Area Coverage/Open Space Regulations specify zones for Primary Building, Required Open Space, and Restricted Building Open Space
D: Avenue Preservation Area 3	R7-1, R6/C2 and C4-2	2.75	80 feet	Area Coverage/Open Space Regulations specify zones for Primary Building, Required Open Space, and Restricted Building Open Space
E: Other areas	R2, R3-1, R3-2	0.5 (R2) 0.6 (R3-1) 0.6 (R3-2)	R3-2: 32 feet	
	R6, R7	2.43 (R6) 3.44 (R7)	R6: 60 feet R7: 80 feet	
	C8-1, M1-1	1.0		

Special Bay Ridge District Rezoning - **Approved!** Proposed Zoning

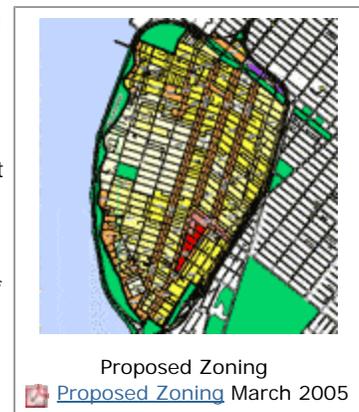
The rezoning proposal seeks to:

- Preserve neighborhood scale and character by rezoning to lower density and contextual districts and further fine-tuning those districts to reflect the context of midblocks with a detached character, those with both detached and semi-detached building types, and the blocks lined predominantly with limestone rowhouses;
- Reinforce several of the avenues as corridors for mid-rise mixed retail and residential buildings by mapping appropriate moderate-density contextual zoning districts;
- Preserve the central commercial district through contextual rezoning and increase permitted density in the auto district to provide for the expansion of commercial and community facility uses; and
- Retain the SBRD and a limited number of its protective regulations to work in concert with the contextual districts.

The rezoning proposal selects from a wide range of lower density and contextual zoning districts – R2, R3X, R3-1, R3-2, R4-1, R4A, R4B, R5B, R6A, R6B, R7A and R7B – to match the diverse built contexts that together create the neighborhood character so valued by Bay Ridge residents.

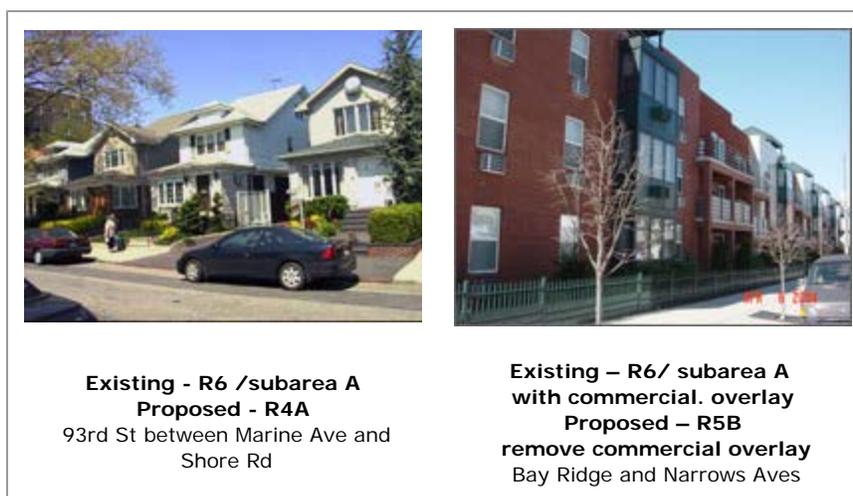
(View the [Proposed Lower Density and Contextual Zoning Districts](#) table). The bulk regulations of these lower density and contextual districts govern building type, FAR, lot width, lot area, height, density, side yards, curb cuts and parking, providing substantially more protection than the existing SBRD regulations. Table 2, [Proposed Zoning Districts](#) gives further details about each of the proposed districts. In addition, certain SBRD regulations would be retained to provide protections greater than those of the proposed underlying districts.

Of the 249 blocks in the district, currently 15 are zoned for detached and 17 are zoned for semi-detached homes. Under the proposal, 42 blocks would be zoned for detached homes and 59 for semi-detached. In total, 101 blocks would be zoned for one and two-family homes, as compared to the current 32 blocks.



The proposed zoning map changes for each subarea within the district, as well as proposed changes to the SBRD zoning text, are as follows:

Midblocks east of Third Avenue and blocks southwest and northwest of Third Avenue (former Area A) - Proposed R3X, R4A, R4-1, R4B, R5B and R6A



The underlying zoning in this portion of the SBRD is currently R6, which would be replaced by a series of contextual districts matching the prevailing housing types. The R3X and R4A districts permit one- and two-family detached residences, the R4-1 permits one- and two-family detached and semi-detached houses, and the R4B and R5B districts are designed for rowhouses and permit all building types (R4B permits attached one- and two-family homes and R5B

permits multi-family housing). The blockfronts on Marine Avenue with six-story apartment houses would be zoned R6A.

The permitted FAR would be reduced from the 1.65 maximum to a range between 0.5 (plus a 0.1 attic allowance) and 1.35. The current height limit of 32 feet would be replaced by a maximum perimeter wall height of 21 feet in R3X, R4A districts and 25 feet in R4-1 with an overall maximum height of 35 feet. The R4B district permits a maximum building height of 24 feet. The R5B regulations permit a 30-foot perimeter wall with a maximum building height of 33 feet.

The parking requirement for R3 and R4 districts is 100% (one space for each unit) and 85% for R5 districts. Parking would be permitted in side lot ribbons, within buildings or in rear yards. Front yard parking would be prohibited in most cases. In R3X, R4A and R4-1, there must be 16 feet of uninterrupted curb space between curb cuts, and 34 feet between curb cuts in R4B and R5B districts.

Westside Blocks (former Area E) - Proposed R2, R3-1, R3-2 and R4A



Existing – R2 / subarea E
Proposed – R2
82nd St between
Colonial Rd and Narrows Ave



Existing – R2 / subarea E
Proposed – R2
80th St and Narrows Ave



Existing – R3-2 to remain
72nd St between Colonial Rd
and Narrows Ave



Existing – R3-2 / subarea E
Proposed – R4A
74th St between Colonial Rd
and Narrows Ave

The 1978 SBRD retained the pre-existing R2, R3-1 and R3-2 zoning here and limited the height of buildings within the R3-2 district to 32 feet. Only single-family detached homes are permitted in R2 zoning districts, one- and two-family detached and semi-detached houses are permitted by the R3-1 district regulations, and multi-family housing of all building types is permitted in R3-2 zoning districts.

No changes are proposed for the 15 blocks that are currently zoned R2. The R2 district, which permits only detached, single-family housing with a maximum FAR of 0.5, is consistent with the extremely low density, detached character of these blocks. The R2 district would be extended south to adjacent blocks with the same character: one block currently zoned R3-1 and a half-block currently zoned R3-2.

Fifteen blocks in the existing R3-1 and R3-2 zoning districts with a concentration of detached one- and two-family residences and an average FAR of 0.9 would be rezoned to R4A to better preserve the existing character. The remaining parts of Area E, where detached housing does not predominate, would remain zoned R3-1 and R3-2.

The R3-1 district regulations permit detached and semi-detached one- and two-family residences while R3-2 zoning district regulations permit multi-family housing of all types. Both have a maximum FAR of 0.5 (plus a 0.1 attic

allowance) with a perimeter wall height of 21 feet and a maximum permitted building height of 35 feet. R4A districts have the same height limits.

The parking requirement for R2, R3 and R4 districts is 100% (one space for each unit). Parking would be permitted in side lot ribbons, within buildings or rear yards and front yard parking would be prohibited. New curb cuts must have 16 feet of uninterrupted curb space between them in these districts.

Northern Third and Fifth Avenues (former Area B) - Proposed R6B

Three- and four-story buildings with ground floor commercial uses predominate on Third and Fifth Avenues north of 90th Street. R6B with commercial overlays would be mapped along these corridors, as it most closely approximates the built character. The existing FAR maximum of 2.705 with a height maximum of 48 feet would be replaced by a maximum FAR of 2.0 and a streetwall base height of 40 feet with a maximum building height of 50 feet.

Development in R6B districts is required to line up with adjacent structures to maintain a uniform streetwall. New multi-family residences must provide one off-street parking space for 50 percent of the dwelling units. A minimum of 34 feet between curb cuts for existing buildings is required and curb cuts for new residential developments on lots less than 40 feet wide are prohibited, minimizing the potential for front yard parking.

Southern Third & Fourth Avenues, northern Shore Road and Ridge Boulevard (former Areas B and C) and Marine Avenue (former Area A) - Proposed R6A

These existing R6 areas are predominantly residential with six-story apartment buildings and some three- and four-story mixed residential and commercial buildings on the blocks with commercial overlays. R6A allows a maximum FAR of 3.0 for residential, mixed residential/commercial, and community facility buildings, with a maximum base height of 60 feet and a maximum building height of 70 feet. New structures in R6A districts are required to line up with adjacent structures to maintain the streetwall. New multi-family residences in R6A districts must provide one off-street parking space for 50 percent of the dwelling units.

Southern Shore Road; 87th Street to Third Avenue (former Area E) - Proposed R7A

The existing R7-1 district is predominantly comprised of six- to eight-story buildings on the blocks between 87th Street and Third Avenue. The proposed R7A district would allow a maximum FAR of 4.0 for all permitted uses with a maximum base height of up to 65 feet and a building height limit of 80 feet. As is the case with other moderate-density contextual districts, new development in R7A districts is required to line up with adjacent buildings to maintain the existing streetwall. One off-street parking space must be provided for 50 percent of the dwelling units.

Northern Fourth Avenue; 67th to 85th Street (former Area D) - Proposed R7B

The existing R7-1 district is predominantly residential with six-story apartment buildings and some three- and four-story mixed residential and commercial buildings on the blocks with commercial overlays (between Ovington Avenue and 67th Street). The proposed R7B district would allow a maximum FAR of 3.0 for all permitted uses with a maximum base height of up to 60 feet and a building height limit of 75 feet. Like other contextual districts, new development in R7B districts must line up with adjacent buildings to maintain the existing streetwall and must provide one off-street parking space for 50 percent of the dwelling units.

Commercial Core: Fourth Avenue & 86th Street to Fort Hamilton Parkway (former Area C) - Proposed C4-2A

The C4-2 area surrounding 86th Street, with its large retail stores, is the commercial core of Bay Ridge. It would be replaced by a C4-2A contextual district with a maximum FAR of 3.0 for commercial, residential and community facility



**Existing – R6 / subarea B
Proposed –R6B**
Third Ave between
88th and 89th Sts



**Existing – R6 / subarea C
Proposed – R6A**
75th St and Shore Rd



**Existing – R7-1 / subarea E
Proposed – R7A**
99th St and Shore Rd



uses, with a maximum base height of 60 feet and a maximum building height of 70 feet. The new C4-2A district would extend one block farther east than the existing commercial district, to include the blockfronts between Fort Hamilton Parkway and the Gowanus Expressway where there are retail stores and a six-story apartment building. There would be no change in the range of permitted uses and second story retail use would continue to be permitted in mixed residential/commercial buildings. Parking requirements would be reduced from the current requirement of one off-street parking space per 300 square feet of commercial space for most commercial uses to one per 400 square feet (with a waiver for developments requiring fewer than 25 off-street parking spaces).



86th St between
Fourth and Fifth Aves

**Auto District: Fourth and Fifth Avenues, 89th through 95th Streets
(former Area E) -
Proposed C8-2 with SBRD modifications**

The existing C8-1 area has mostly auto-related uses (e.g., car dealerships with service facilities, automobile repair shops, car washes) with some recent office and medical office construction. The proposed C8-2 would increase the permitted commercial FAR from 1.0 to 2.0. An amendment to the SBRD would impose a height limit of 70 feet for all uses and limit community facility FAR to 3.0. This would allow for medical office development and for expansion of auto-related and other permitted commercial uses. As in the adjacent proposed C4-2A district, parking requirements in this area would be reduced from one space per 300 square feet to one per 400 square feet.



Fourth Ave between
89th and 90th Streets

**Light Manufacturing District: 65th Street to the Gowanus Expressway, Fourth Avenue to Seventh Avenue
(former Area E) - Proposed M1-1 and R5B**

While most of the land uses within this small M1-1 area are auto-related or light manufacturing, there is a group of non-conforming rowhouses on 66th Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues. The proposal would map an R5B district in this area to bring these two-to three story, attached residential structures into conformance with the zoning regulations.

Proposed Changes to Commercial Overlays

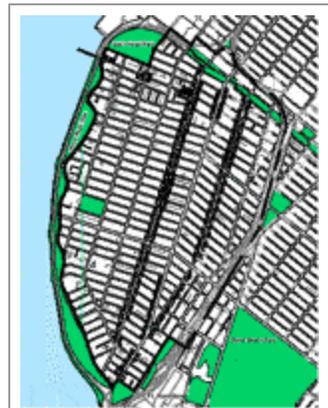
Throughout the SBRD, all existing C1-2 overlays would be changed to C1-3, and all C2-2 overlays to C2-3 to provide for more liberal parking requirements. Parking for most retail uses would be reduced from one space per 300 square feet of floor area to one per 400 square feet. The existing 100-foot depth of the overlays is not large enough to accommodate the current higher parking regulations without several floors of costly underground parking.

In addition, new commercial overlays are established and existing commercial overlays are changed to accurately reflect existing land uses. These areas include:

- Fifth Avenue, adding a C2-3 overlay for a half-blockfront (at 92nd Street) and changing an existing C1-2 to C2-3 for two blockfronts (92nd - 95th Streets);
- Fourth Avenue, changing an existing C1-2 to C2-3 for one blockfront (95th - 96th Streets) and modifying a C1-3 to a C2-3 for seven blockfronts (67th Street to Ovington Avenue);
- Third Avenue, adding a C1-3 overlay for a three blockfronts (78th - 81st Streets) and a C2-3 for one blockfront (81st - 82nd Streets); and
- Bay Ridge Avenue, adding a C1-4 overlay for approximately two blockfronts (3rd Avenue - Bay Ridge Place).

Changes to the Special Bay Ridge District Text

The proposed lower density contextual zoning districts diminish the need for most of the existing SBRD provisions, which were created to modify higher density underlying zoning districts. The proposal would eliminate the SBRD's five preservation subareas but retain a limited number of SBRD regulations to provide additional protections. View the  [proposed zoning text amendment](#) to the special Bay Ridge district.



Commercial Overlays
 [Commercial Overlays](#)
March 2005

These protections include maintaining the 32 foot height limit for community facility development in R3X, R3-2, R4A, R4-1, R4B and R5B zoning districts, and continuing to limit permitted FARs for community facility uses to 1.65 in R4A, R4-1, R4B and R5B districts. Under the underlying zoning regulations for these districts, the height and bulk regulations for community facility developments, including churches, schools, hospitals and medical offices, are less restrictive than those for residential construction, with no height limits and higher permitted FARs. In the proposed amended SBRD, community facilities on the midblocks would continue to be restricted to a maximum FAR of 1.65 (1.0 in R3X) and a height limit of 32 feet. The maximum permitted FAR for these uses in R2 and R3 districts is 1.0 (which would not be modified by the SBRD); in R4 and R5 districts it is 2.0.

The proposed changes to the SBRD would also limit community facility FAR in the proposed C8-2 district, to 3.0, equal to that permitted in the adjacent proposed C4-2A district surrounding 86th Street to the north. The SBRD would also impose a height limit in the proposed C8-2 district to a total building height of 70 feet after a setback at 60 feet, similar to that in the proposed, adjacent C4-2A district.

The street tree planting provision of the SBRD would also be retained, though amended to require street tree planting for all developments and enlargements only in districts that permit residential development, including commercial overlay districts and the C4-2A district on 86th Street. The current SBRD regulations mandate street tree planting for all developments within the Special District, including those within the M1-1 and C8-1 districts.

The proposed SBRD would also modify the regulations of Section 33-42, Permitted Obstructions, to allow elevators, stair bulkheads, roof water tanks, cooling towers and other mechanical equipment to exceed the maximum height limit in R7A, R7B, R6A, R6B, C4-2A and C8-2 districts. This change recognizes the tighter envelopes of the contextual districts, and the practical necessity for sufficient flexibility to allow new buildings to be constructed in these districts.

Related Notes

-  Items accompanied by this symbol require the [free Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).
- Brief explanations of terms in *green italics* can be viewed by [visiting glossary page](#). Words and phrases followed by an asterisk (*) are defined terms in the Zoning Resolution, primarily in Section 12-10. Consult the Zoning Resolution for the official and legally binding definitions of these words and phrases.