

Long Island City Rezoning: Executive Summary - updated October 2, 2001

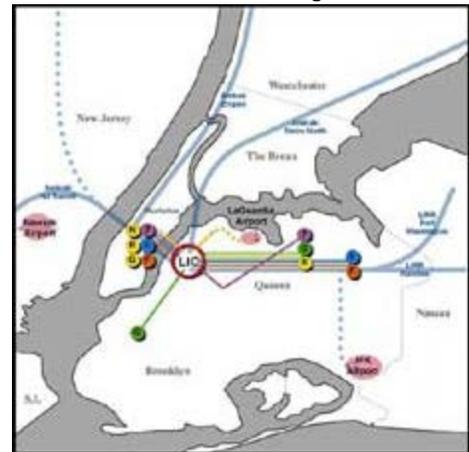
The Department of City Planning identified central Long Island City as a growth area with significant potential for [office, retail and residential development](#) and on July 26, 2001, the City Council adopted the Department's initiative to rezone 37 centrally located blocks in the area. This new zoning will facilitate commercial development at increased densities and allow new residences to mix with commercial and light industrial businesses which are already allowed. The goal of the zoning is to foster reinvestment and redevelopment that takes advantage of Long Island City's excellent mass transit access and its supply of large, underdeveloped properties.

 The [adopted Zoning Text Amendment](#) is in pdf format.

Located in the center of the New York region and five minutes from Midtown Manhattan by subway, Long Island City provides a great opportunity for companies needing reasonably priced office space. The area's traditional base of industrial and distribution firms has broadened to include offices, services and institutions as the city's economic activity has diversified during the past half-century. In the Long Island City core, the rezoning replaces existing low density light manufacturing zones with higher density, mixed commercial and residential zones to allow as-of-right developments, including office buildings with large, efficient floor plates. The rezoning effort, combined with additional city and state initiatives to develop more attractive streetscapes, renovate subway stops, improve the flow of traffic and provide new targeted tax and economic development incentives, lays a strong foundation to support Long Island City's continued growth and enhance its distinct sense of place.

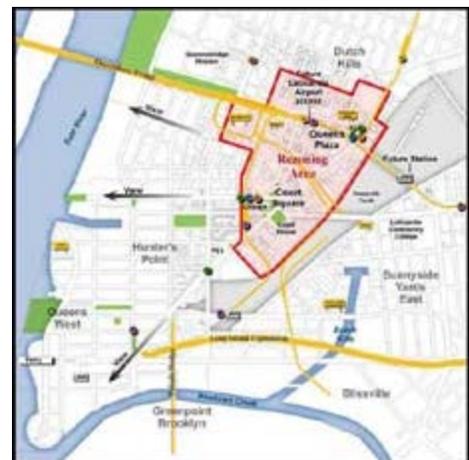
The rezoning area is at the eastern end of the Queensboro Bridge, generally between 23rd Street on the west, 41st Avenue on the north and the Sunnyside Yards on the east. Busy transit stops at Court Square and Queens Plaza are hubs within the area. The rezoning adds 34 blocks to a three-block section located at Court Square that was rezoned in 1986 for high density development and facilitated the construction of the Citibank building, a 1.25 million square-foot office tower. The rezoning area forms a compact, pedestrian- and transit-oriented precinct characterized by a mix of industrial, residential and commercial uses. Elevated mass transit and roadway structures traverse the area's streets and blocks, while small landscaped seating areas and a public park near Court Square offer respite to area employees and residents. Several underbuilt sites, containing at least 50,000 square feet of space, provide development opportunities near area subway stations.

Regional Context



d [View a full size graphic](#)

Local Context



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Rezoning Area

The rezoning establishes the Special Long Island City Mixed Use District (LIC District) in the core of Long Island City, extending diagonally along Jackson Avenue from Vernon Boulevard to 41st Avenue and consisting of the Hunters Point, Court Square, and Queens Plaza subdistricts (illustrated on page three). Most of the blocks within the former Special Hunters Point Mixed Use District (HP District) are included in the Hunters Point Subdistrict, and special mixed-use provisions for these blocks remain in effect. The Court Square Subdistrict (shown at right), an existing three-block subdistrict of the HP District, continues to be a three-block subdistrict within the LIC District. The rezoning eliminates restrictions on residential development in the Court Square Subdistrict, but the subdistrict's other provisions linking high density development to subway and other improvements are unchanged. The most significant zoning changes are embodied in the Queens Plaza Subdistrict, which consists of a triangular-shaped area between Court Square and Queens Plaza. This area has been rezoned from light manufacturing zoning districts to mixed-use zoning districts.

 The [adopted Zoning Text Amendment](#) is in pdf format.

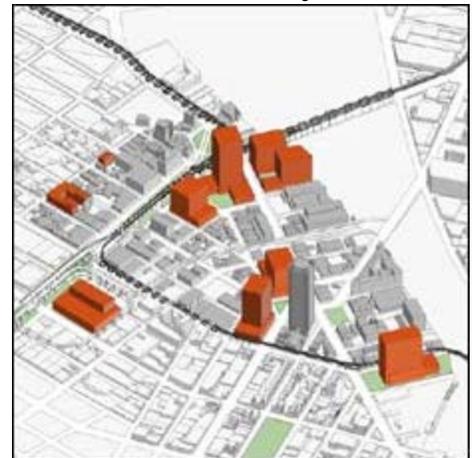
Under the development scenario outlined in the Environmental Impact Statement, approximately 5.0 million square feet of office development and 300 housing units, in addition to retail and institutional developments, could be developed on several sites over the next decade.

Zoning Change



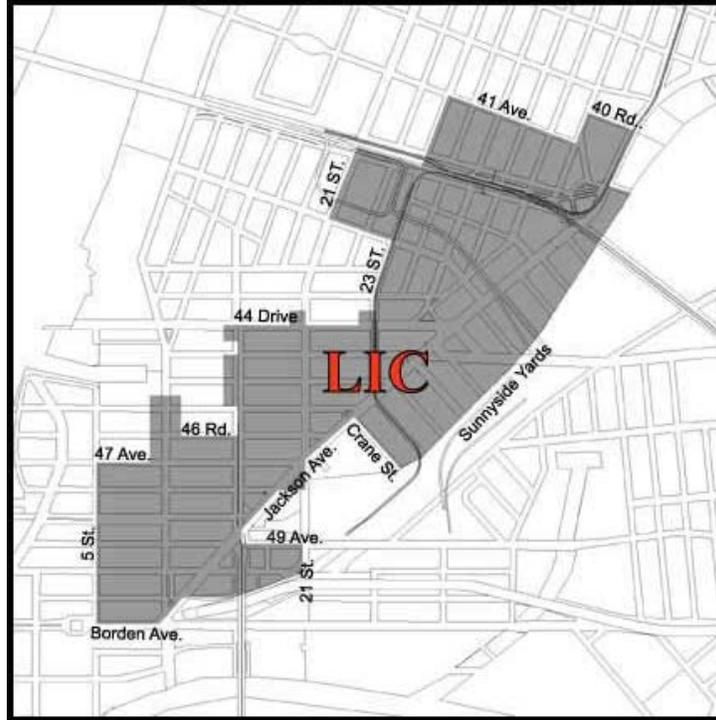
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Buildout as Analyzed in the EIS

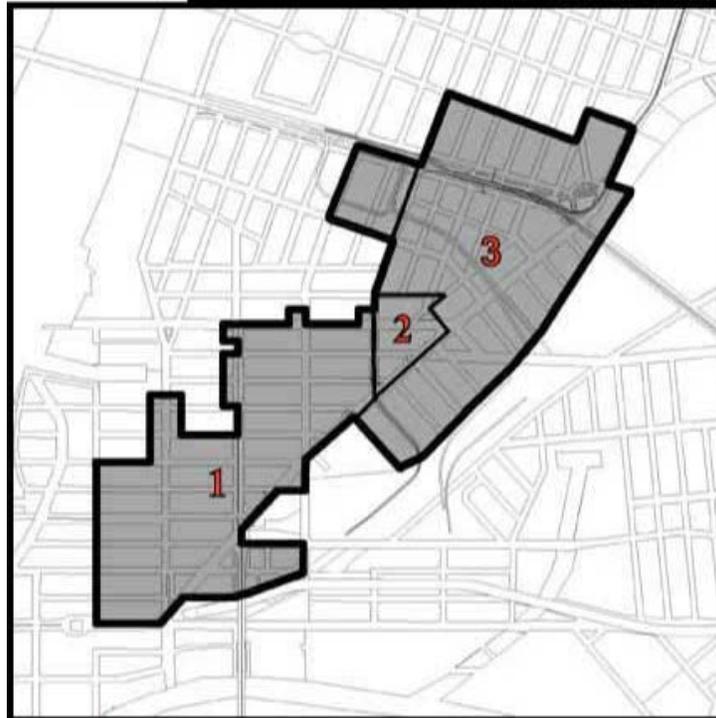


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Special LIC District Boundary



LIC Subdistricts



- 1 Hunters Point Subdistrict**
(Provisions unchanged, boundaries modified slightly)
- 2 Court Square Subdistrict**
(Changes to certain provisions, boundaries unchanged)
- 3 Queens Plaza Subdistrict**
(New)

Elements of the Queens Plaza Subdistrict

The Queens Plaza Subdistrict regulations apply to the 34 blocks illustrated at right. The subdistrict has four areas where a Residence District is paired with a Manufacturing District and special FARs are established:

Areas A-1 and A2:	M1-6/R10	12.0 FAR
Area B:	M1-5/R9	8.0 FAR
Area C:	M1-5/R7-3	5.0 FAR

Special provisions for use, bulk, parking and loading, mandatory sidewalk widenings and other urban design requirements are stipulated in the Queens Plaza Subdistrict to supplement the underlying pairs of zoning districts.

Queens Plaza Subdistrict



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The subdistricts provisions were developed around the following principles:

- Mixed-use Development.** Light manufacturing and other industrial uses, as well as commercial, residential, and community facility uses, are generally allowed as-of-right. These provisions reflect the rezoning area's mixed-use character and facilitate 24-hour activities.
- Strong Relationship between Density and Transit.** A high-density, 12.0 FAR district encompasses blocks at Queens Plaza and Court Square, the subdistrict's two largest subway stations. Most of these blocks are characterized by large vacant or underused sites. An 8.0 FAR district includes blocks characterized by large, bulky loft buildings along Queens Plaza, portions of the Sunnyside Yard, and the 23rd Street El; and a 5.0 FAR district is located on blocks characterized by small row houses and factories or located next to existing low-scale neighborhoods.
- Variety of Building Types.** The subdistrict's proposed height and setback provisions allow towers in the 12 FAR districts and high lot coverage, street wall buildings in the 5.0 and 8.0 FAR districts to ensure a continued diversity of building types and help to ensure a continued mixed-use development pattern.
- Active Ground Floors.** Glazing and non-residential uses are mandatory on the ground floor of most developments, thereby contributing to a lively, pedestrian-oriented environment.
- New Open Space.** Sidewalk widenings are mandatory on blocks at Queens Plaza and additional open space may be provided on two blocks near the Hunter's Point and Dutch Kills mixed-use communities through a City Planning Commission special permit provision that would allow additional floor area on those blocks.

Office Towers



Loft Buildings



Mixed-use Small Scale Development



Planning and Development Initiatives

The Department's zoning proposal stems from its Plan for Long Island City: A Framework for Development (Framework, 1993), which outlined a planning and development policy for Long Island City, organized around four principal land use goals:

1. Reposition 37 blocks between Court Square and Queens Plaza as a 24-hour, pedestrian oriented mixed-use and office district by increasing the allowed zoning densities and range of uses on these blocks and requiring urban design provisions consistent with other high density urban areas in the city (implemented July 2001);

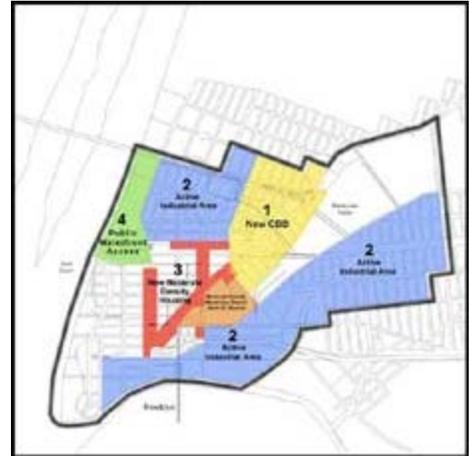
2. Support continued industrial activity in the areas industrial precincts by retaining low density manufacturing districts (implemented in 1995);

3. Create opportunities for infill housing in the mixed-use Hunters Point community (implemented in 1995); and

4. Provide for continuous public waterfront access between Queens West and Queensbridge Park through the adoption of a Waterfront Access Plan (implemented in 1997).

The Framework was undertaken to integrate zoning changes and development projects approved in Long Island City beginning in 1986, including the Court Square Subdistrict, a three-block high density zoning district, and the Queens West residential and commercial East River waterfront project. These approvals have resulted in a 1.25 million square foot office building at Court Square for Citibank and a 522-unit residential building at Queens West. Ground-breaking for the second residential building occurred in December 2000.

Framework Recommendations



[View a full size graphic](#)

Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements

The Department is also developing several initiatives to improve the area's infrastructure and physical appearance. The most significant initiative to date involves a traffic and pedestrian analysis of Queens Plaza, the 250-foot-wide approach to the Queensboro Bridge and the front door to the rezoning area and Queens in general. Working closely with the city's Department of Transportation, the Queens Borough President's Office and other appropriate agencies, the Department will develop recommendations to improve vehicular flows and movements, enhance pedestrian safety and improve the street's overall appearance. The study's estimated \$2 million budget is financed through a federal traffic congestion improvement program (CMAQ). The Department is also seeking additional federal funds to develop a plan for pedestrian and transit improvements to better connect the rezoning area with the larger Long Island City neighborhood.

Efforts are also underway by the Department, the Queens Borough President's Office, the departments of Transportation and Parks and Recreation, and the Economic Development Corporation to identify potential sites within the rezoning area for public park land, and to improve unused city-owned property, such as land adjacent to the Queensboro Bridge upper deck ramp and street ends along the Sunnyside Yard. Funding is needed for acquisition,

Open Space Studies



- 1 Queensboro Bridge Ramp Land Study
- 2 Queens Plaza Improvement Project (CMAQ Grant)
- 3 Sunnyside Yard Street Ends Study

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development and maintenance.

The Queensboro Plaza subway station (#7, N) is currently under renovation, and the Queens Plaza subway station (E, F, G, R) will be renovated beginning in Fall 2001. Commuter rail access to the rezoning area will be improved significantly by 2010, when a new LIRR station resulting from the LIRR's Grand Central Connection will be constructed in the Sunnyside Yard. The LaGuardia Airport Access proposal would include a stop at the Queensboro Plaza subway station, further improving Long Island City's connection to the region's transportation network.



Queens Plaza Improvement Project (CMAQ Grant)



Sunnyside Yards Street Ends Study



Development Plan for Queens Plaza Municipal Garage

Consistent with the City's efforts to facilitate development in Long Island City, the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) issued a Request for Proposals for development of the Queens Plaza Municipal Garage in October 2000. The garage is located at the intersection of Queens Plaza South and Jackson Avenue. Its public parking capacity is 1,150 spaces and it also includes 180,000 square feet of commercial space. Ground floor retail and office uses occupy a portion of the Queens Plaza South frontage and all of the Jackson Avenue frontage. Under the department's rezoning proposal, an approximately 1.5 million square foot building could be constructed on the site. Developers of the site will be required to retain the public parking on site.

Jackson Avenue and Queens Plaza South

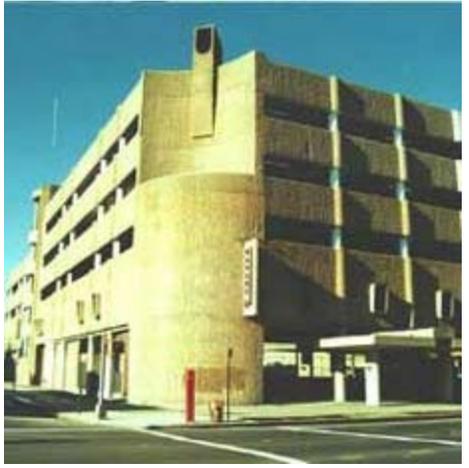


Municipal Garage Site



42nd Road and Jackson Avenue

[View a full size graphic](#)



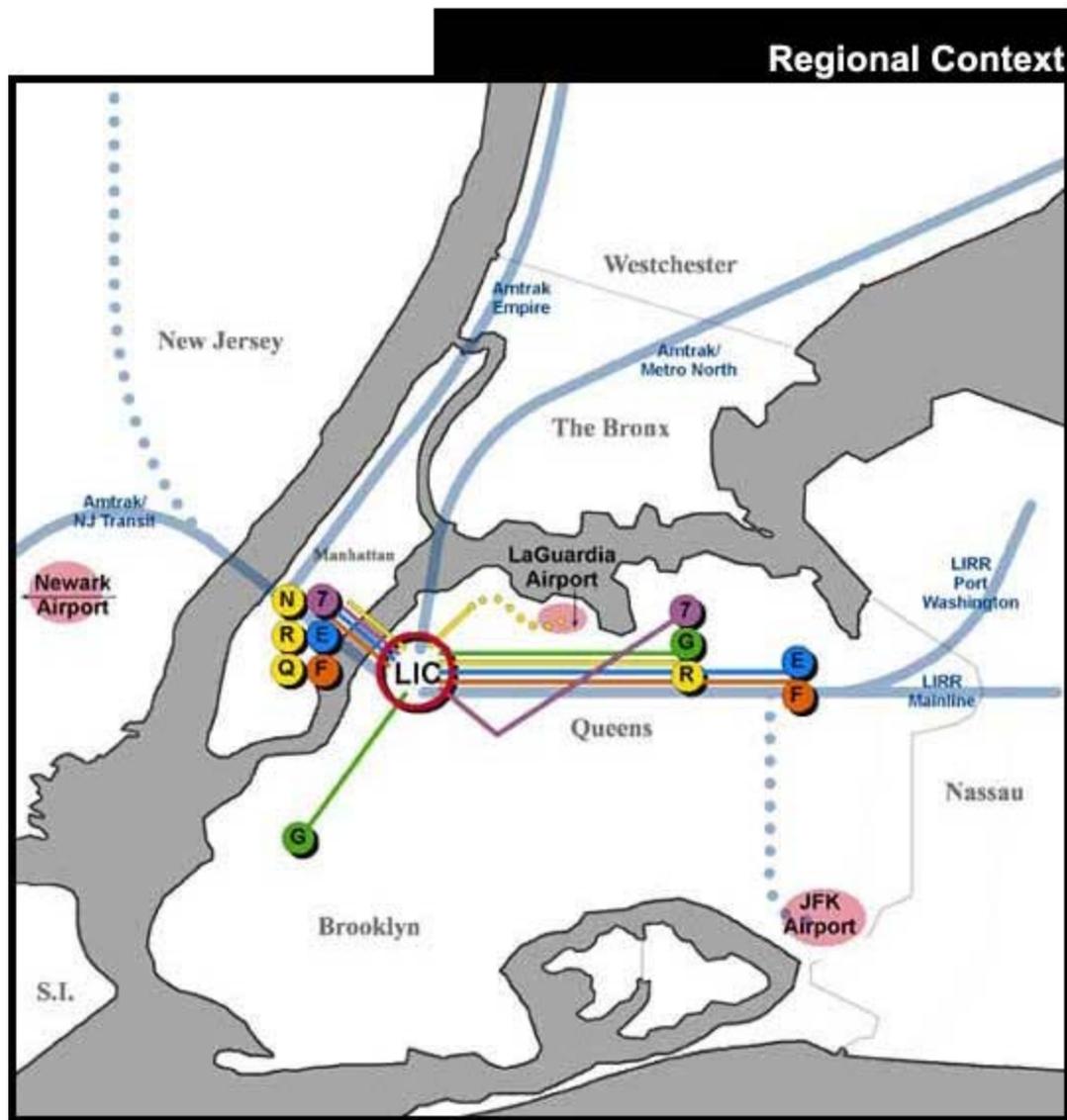
42nd Road



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New York City Department of City Planning Long Island City Executive Summary: Description of Regional Context Map

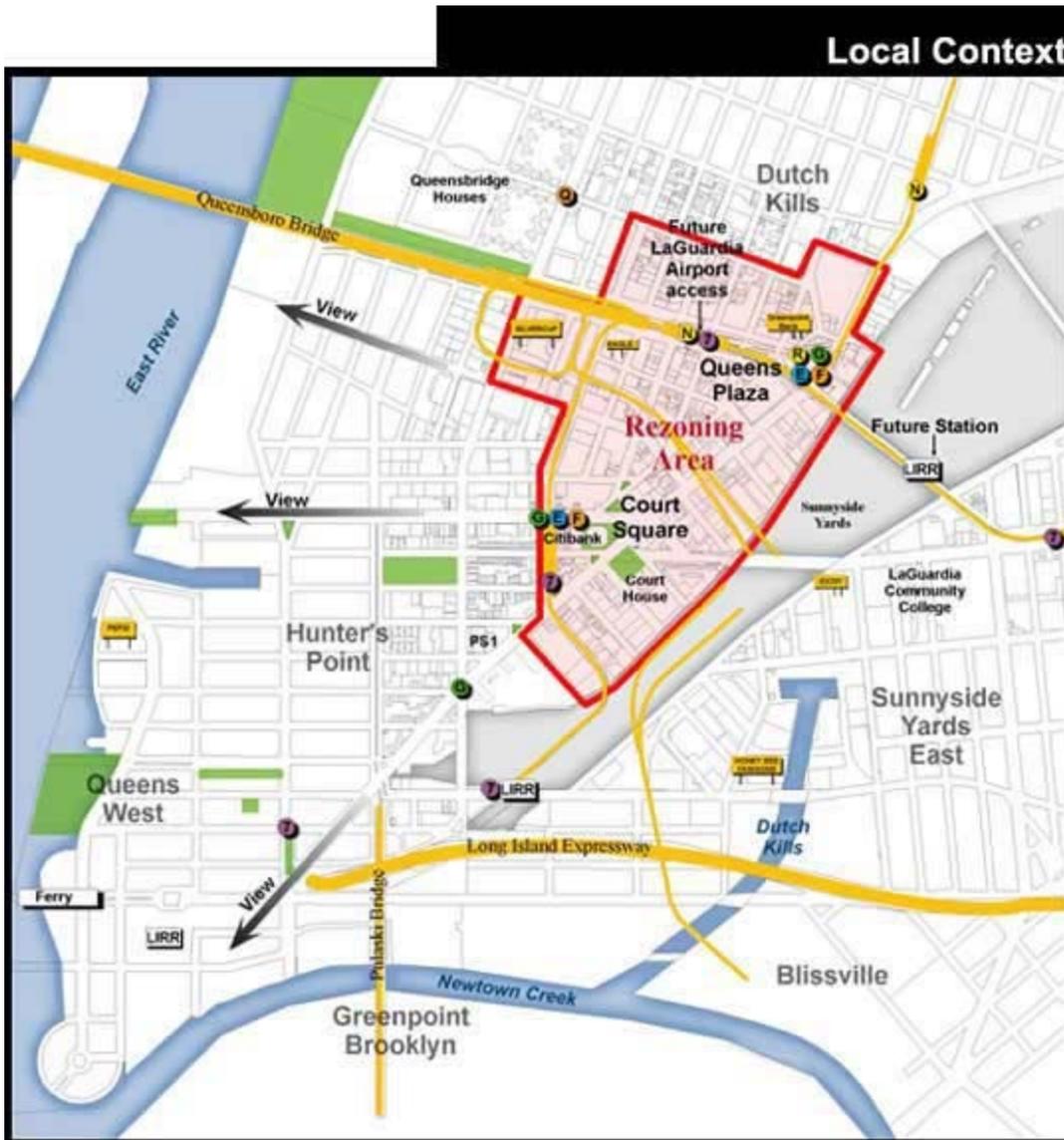
This map shows the general Long Island City area in context of its local and regional transportation connections. It shows the seven MTA subway lines (E, F, G, N, R, Q, and 7) that stop within the rezoning area neighborhood. It also shows the regional Amtrak and commuter lines of MetroNorth, Long Island Railroad, and New Jersey Transit all of which use the Sunnyside Yards.



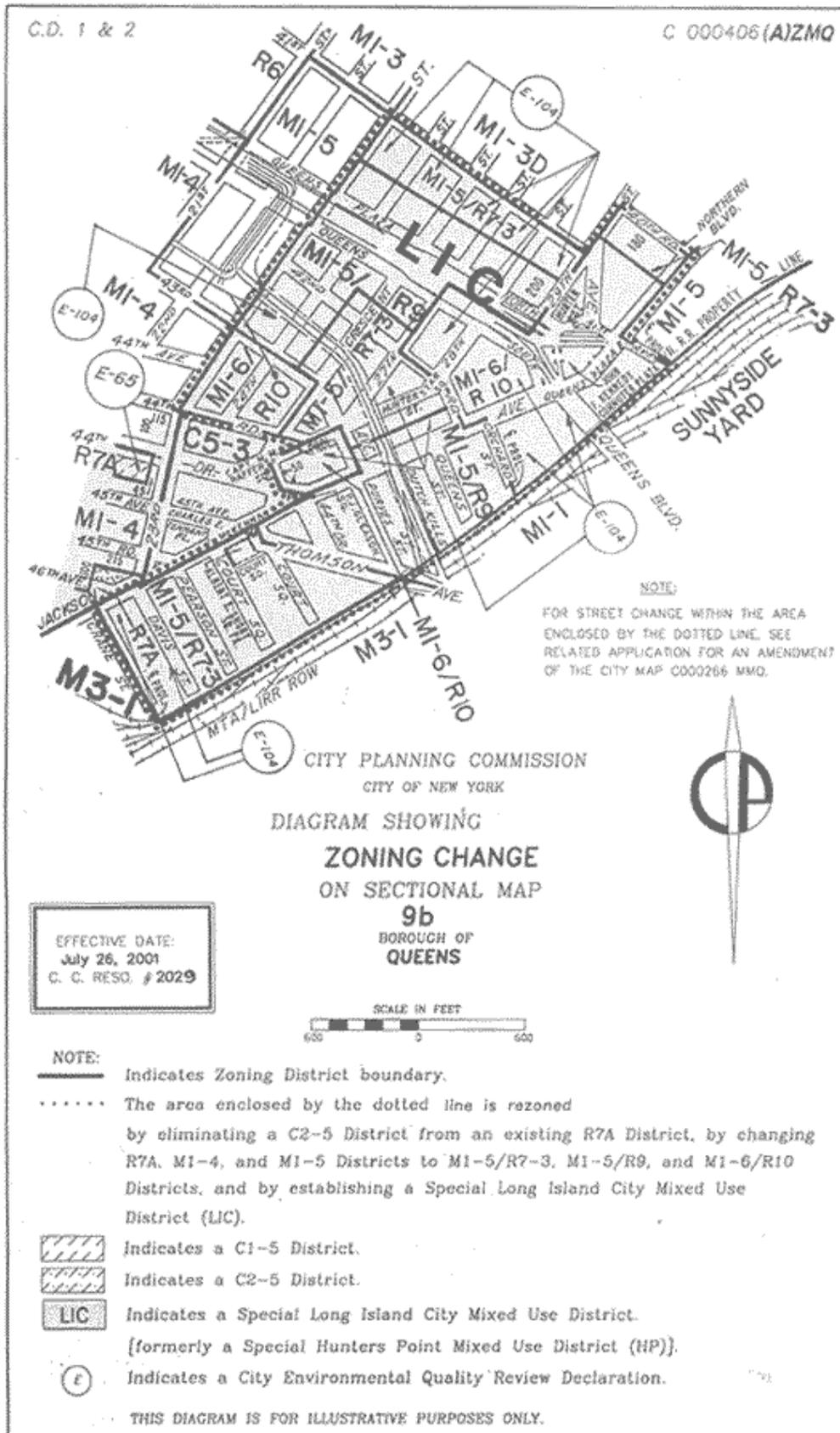
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New York City Department of City Planning Long Island City Executive Summary: Description of Local Context Map

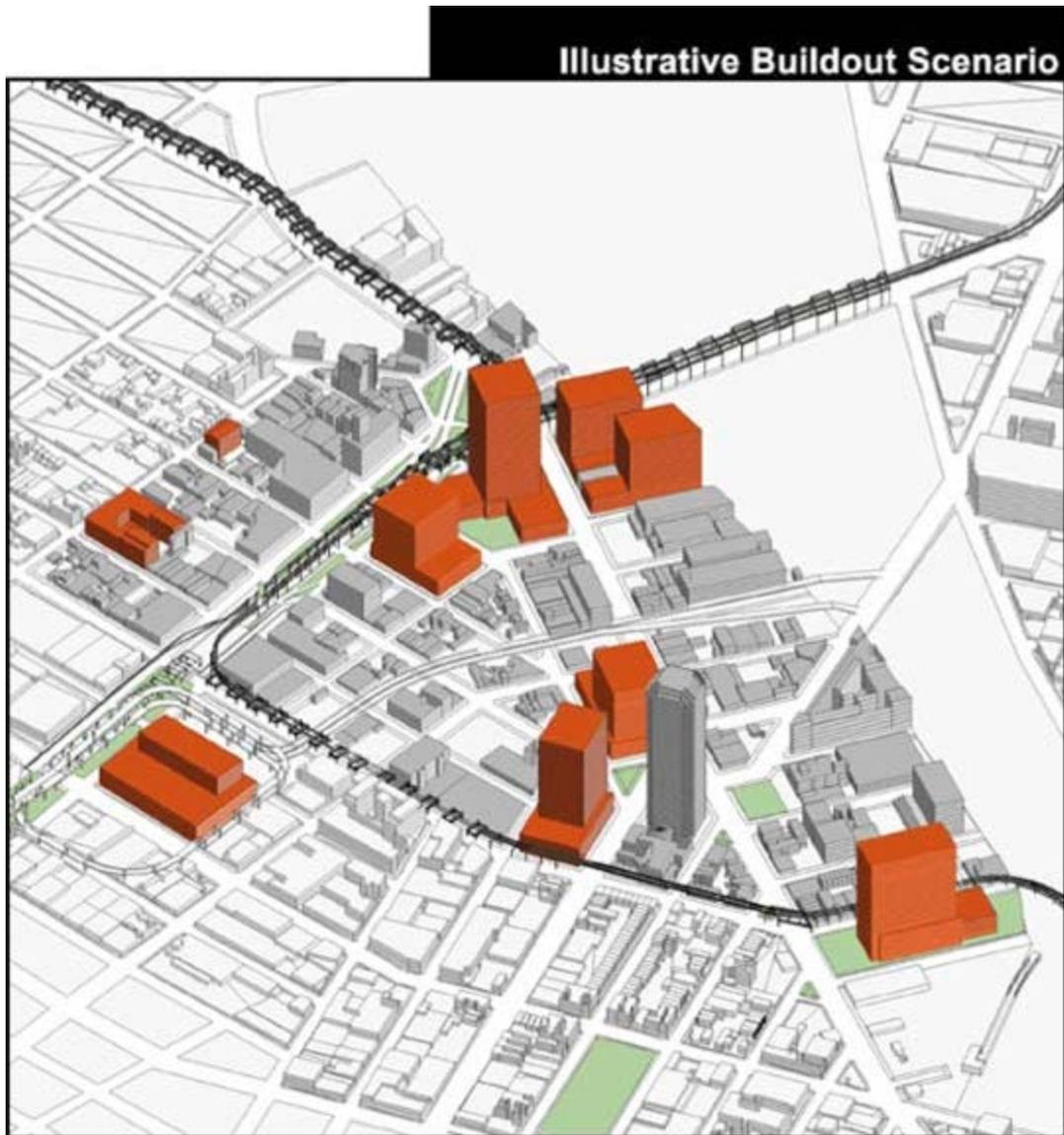
This map shows the rezoning area in its local Long Island City context. It identifies landmarks such as the Sunnyside Yards, the Citibank building, P.S. 1, La Guardia Community College and notable billboards (IDCNY and Silvercup). It also shows the elevated structures of the 7 and N subway lines, the Queensboro Bridge and the Long Island Expressway. Two potential new transit connections in the rezoning area are also shown: the planned Long Island Railroad stop on the Queens Boulevard viaduct and the potential new La Guardia Airport connection at the Queensboro Plaza subway stop on the N line.



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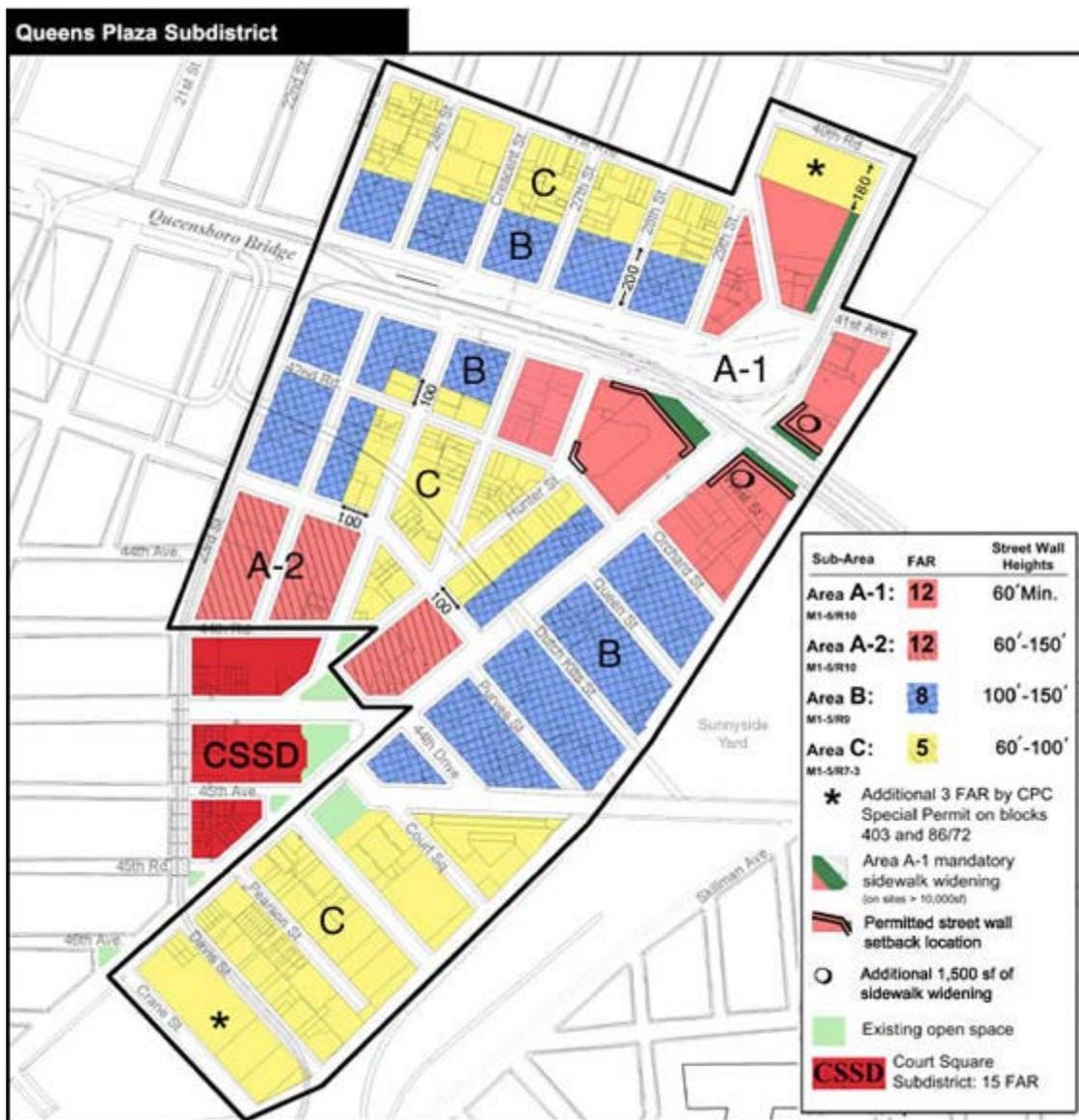
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New York City Department of City Planning Long Island City Executive Summary: Description of Queens Plaza Subdistrict Map

This map shows the Queens Plaza subdistrict and its four areas: A-1, A-2, B and C. These areas have different manufacturing/residential zone pairings and bulk regulations as follows:

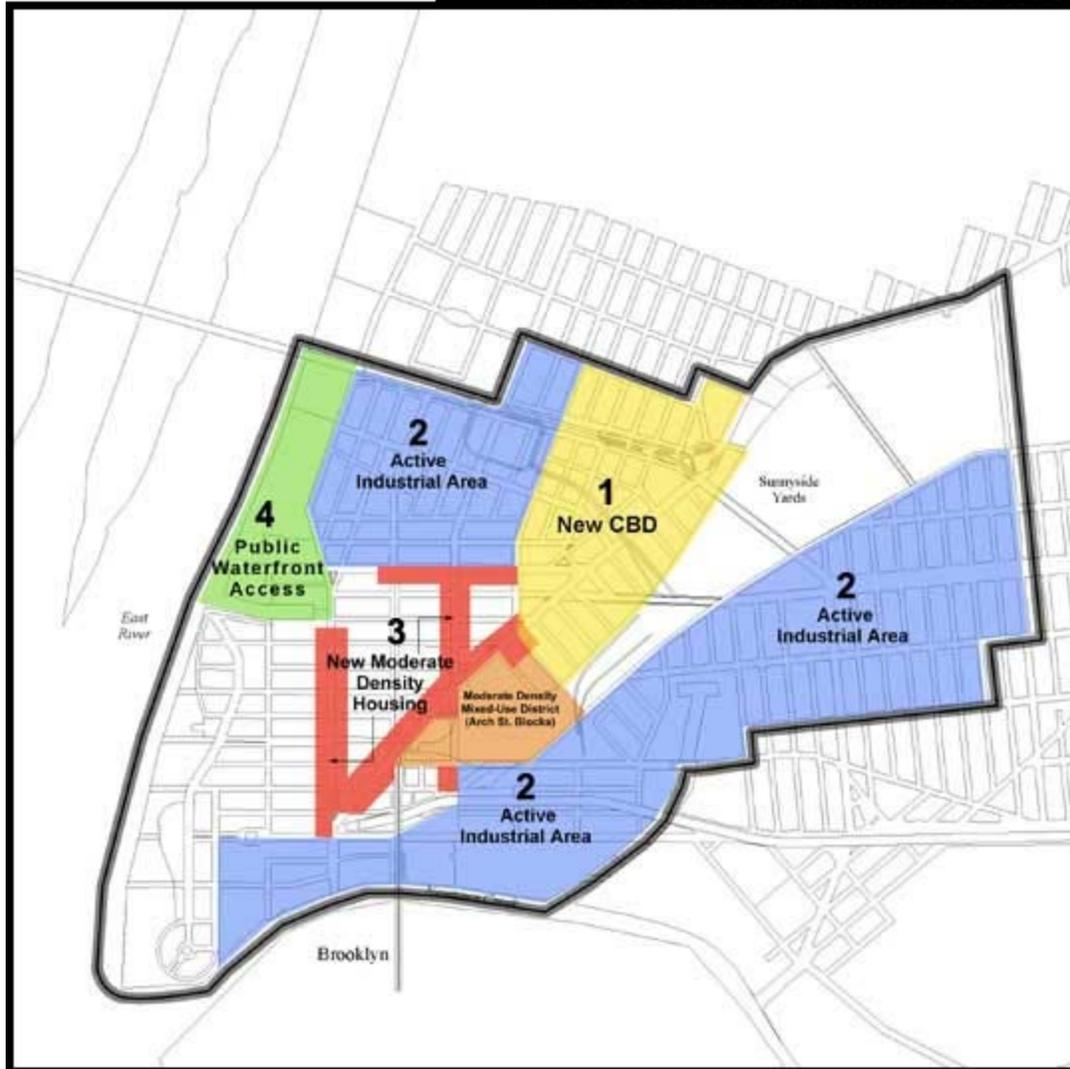
- Area A-1: M1-6/R10, 12 FAR, minimum street wall height of 60', no maximum street wall height.
- Area A-2: M1-6/R10, 12 FAR, minimum street wall height of 60', maximum street wall height of 150'.
- Area B: M1-5/R9, 8 FAR, minimum street wall height of 100', maximum street wall height of 150'.
- Area C: M1-5/R7-3, 5 FAR, minimum street wall height of 60', maximum street wall height of 100'.

Also identified are sidewalk widenings and permitted streetwall setbacks in Area A-1 and special permit sites for additional three FAR on two blocks in Area C.



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Framework Recommendations



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New York City Department of City Planning Long Island City Executive Summary: Description of Open Space Studies Map

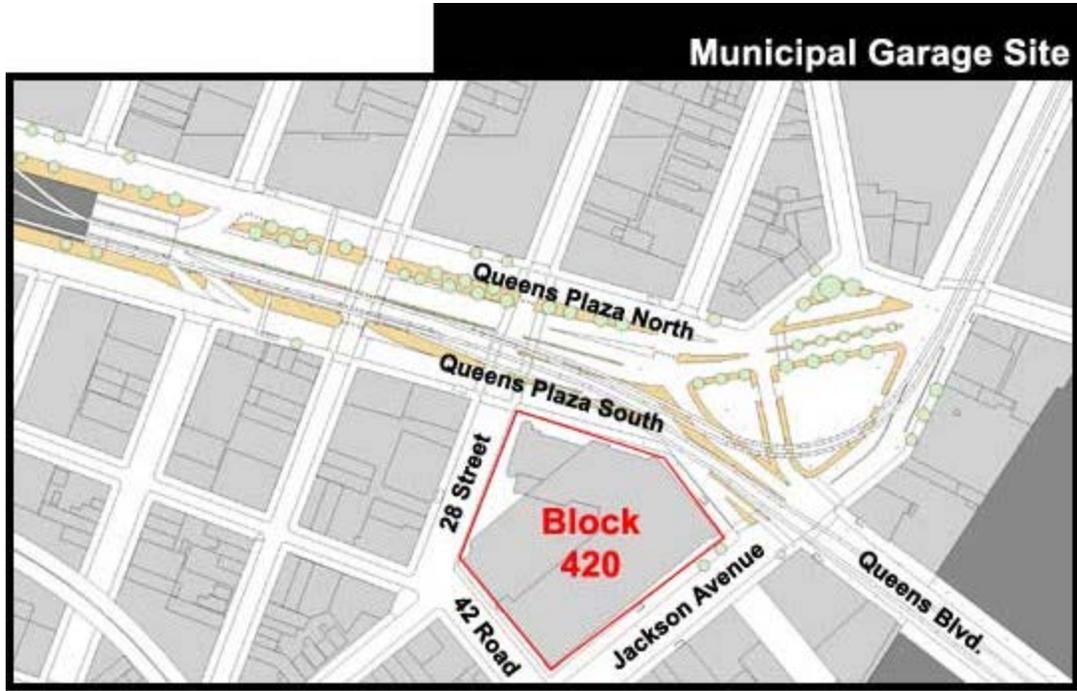
Ongoing public open space and pedestrian improvement studies are identified on this map of the Queens Plaza Subdistrict. These studies include:

1. the Queens Plaza Improvement Project
2. the Queensboro Bridge Ramp Land Open Space Study
3. the Sunnyside Yards Street Ends Study



- 1** Queensboro Bridge Ramp Land Study
- 2** Queens Plaza Improvement Project (CMAQ Grant)
- 3** Sunnyside Yard Street Ends Study

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Related Notes

-  Items accompanied by this symbol require the [free Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).