Special Purpose Districts

Some specific areas of the city have special regulations that modify the underlying zoning rules to implement a plan for that area. These special purpose districts are generally one of two types. The more common type addresses related planning issues within a single area that can range in size from a few blocks to a much larger area, depending on the district’s goals and needs. The second type is more specific to a set of planning issues than to a single geography, and can be mapped in multiple areas of the city that have similar needs.

These special purpose districts are always found in the zoning text and on the zoning maps. On the zoning maps, they are shaded in grey with a specific letter designation (e.g., the Special Ocean Parkway District is "OP"). The special purpose district provisions are located in Article VIII through XIV in the Zoning Resolution with each district having its own chapter.

Special purpose districts are generally created where area-wide conditions warrant modification of some generally applicable zoning provisions. This frequently occurs for one or more of the following planning reasons:

- Preserving specific special features — either uses, building form or natural conditions, such as ecosystems in the Special Natural Areas Districts or the historic look of Fifth Avenue and Park Avenue in the Special Park Improvement District
- Allowing a broader mix of uses than would otherwise be permitted, such as the mix of uses allowed in the Special Long Island City Mixed Use District
- Supporting revitalization efforts for central business districts, whether central to the region or to a borough, as in the Special Midtown or Special Downtown Jamaica Districts
- Carrying out comprehensive redevelopment strategies for underused areas — through special requirements for new streets, public spaces or building forms — as in the Special Willets Point District.

To accomplish one or more of these objectives, special purpose districts either modify or replace the use, bulk, parking and streetscape regulations of the underlying zoning districts mapped in the area. The first special purpose district was created in 1967 and there are over 50 today. Some early special purpose districts have been removed from the Zoning Resolution, either because their purpose had been achieved or because the original purposes had become outdated. Some have been substantially modified since they were first created to achieve new or different planning objectives, while others have been expanded in size to regulate adjacent areas with similar needs. Over time, special purpose districts have become more complex and have been used to implement, or complement, relatively broader planning goals. These have included a West Chelsea district in Manhattan, which was created to facilitate the creation of the High Line Park; the establishment of a district to provide a framework for the mixed-use growth of Downtown Brooklyn; and the development of an entire new neighborhood in Southern Hunters Point in Queens.

The following sections contain short descriptions of each special purpose district, starting with those that have applicability anywhere in the city, with the others then grouped by borough. The accompanying charts show where the use, bulk, parking and streetscape regulations have been modified or superseded in each of the special purpose districts.
Citywide Special Purpose Districts

Coastal Risk (ZR 137-00)
The Special Coastal Risk District (CR) was first created in 2017 to address coastal areas that are currently at exceptional risk from flooding and may face greater risk in the future. This special purpose district places appropriate limits on new development in each of these highly vulnerable areas and, in certain instances, protects sensitive natural areas to ensure that new development is consistent with open space and infrastructure plans. Three Coastal Risk Districts are currently mapped in areas of Broad Channel and Hamilton Beach in Queens, and portions of Graham and Oakwood Beach in Staten Island.

Limited Commercial (ZR 83-00)
The Special Limited Commercial District (LC) was created in 1969 to preserve the character of commercial areas within a historic district by permitting only those commercial uses that are considered to be compatible with the historic district, and by mandating that uses be located in completely enclosed buildings. This special purpose district has been mapped only in Greenwich Village in Manhattan.

Enhanced Commercial (ZR 132-00)
The Special Enhanced Commercial District (EC) was first created in 2011 to help enliven street activity and maintain ground floor retail character in well-established or emerging commercial corridors. To address the particular needs of each corridor, the special purpose district includes a menu of different use, transparency, street wall and parking requirements that can apply in different combinations depending on the area's needs. Enhanced Commercial districts have been mapped along major streets in Brooklyn such as Fourth Avenue, as well as along the major avenues of the Upper West Side in Manhattan.

Limited Commercial (ZR 83-00)
The Special Limited Commercial District (LC) was created in 1969 to preserve the character of commercial areas within a historic district by permitting only those commercial uses that are considered to be compatible with the historic district, and by mandating that uses be located in completely enclosed buildings. This special purpose district has been mapped only in Greenwich Village in Manhattan.

Natural Area (ZR 105-00)
The Special Natural Area District (NA) was first created in 1974 to guide new development and site alterations in areas endowed with unique natural characteristics, including forests, mature trees, rock outcrops, erratic boulders, steep slopes, creeks and a variety of botanic and aquatic environments. There are four Special Natural Area Districts in the city: the tidal wetlands and serpentine, hilly spine of central Staten Island (NA-1); portions of the Riverdale Ridge in the Bronx (NA-2); and two smaller districts in the Shore Acres area of Staten Island (NA-3) and Fort Totten in Queens (NA-4).

Mixed Use (ZR 123-00)
The Special Mixed Use District (MX) was first established in 1997 to recognize the varied character of mixed residential and industrial neighborhoods by permitting the expansion and new development of a wide variety of uses, as well as to create new opportunities for mixed use areas. The Special Mixed Use Districts are currently found in all boroughs except Staten Island. These include Port Morris (MX-1), in the Bronx; Greenpoint-Williamsburg (MX-8) in Brooklyn; the Northern Hunters Point Waterfront (MX-9) in Queens; and West Harlem (MX-15) in Manhattan. More information can be found in Chapter 5 on Manufacturing Districts.

Planned Community (ZR 103-00)
The Special Planned Community Preservation District (PC) was first created in 1974 to protect the unique character of certain communities that have been planned and developed as a unit on large tracts of land. Planned...
Community Preservation Districts have been mapped in Sunnyside Gardens and Fresh Meadows in Queens, Parkchester in the Bronx and the Harlem River Houses in Manhattan.

**Scenic View (ZR 102-00)**
The Special Scenic View District (SV) was created in 1974 to prevent the obstruction of outstanding scenic views from certain public parks, esplanades or mapped public places. To date, the only district extends over an area west of the Brooklyn Heights Promenade to protect the panoramic views of the Lower Manhattan skyline, Governors Island, Statue of Liberty and Brooklyn Bridge.
The Bronx Special Purpose Districts

**City Island (ZR 112-00)**
The Special City Island District (CD), encompassing all of City Island in Long Island Sound, was created in 1976 to preserve the balance between the area's nautical heritage, commercial uses and low-rise residential character, all of which contribute to its “village” quality.

**Grand Concourse Preservation (ZR 122-00)**
The Special Grand Concourse Preservation District (C), extending almost the entire length of the boulevard, from East 151st Street to Mosholu Parkway, was created in 1989 to preserve the distinctive composition and scale of the apartment buildings that line this wide thoroughfare. The district consists of Residential Preservation Areas as well as Commercial Areas located around major commercial intersections where retail uses are considered consistent with the district’s residential character.

**Harlem River Waterfront (ZR 87-00)**
The Special Harlem River Waterfront District (HRW), extending south along the water’s edge just north of the 145th Street Bridge for approximately a mile, was created in 2009 to support the redevelopment of this underutilized area into a vibrant, mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood with waterfront access.

**Hunts Point (ZR 108-00)**
The Special Hunts Point District (HP), adjacent to the city’s primary wholesale food distribution center at Hunts Point, was created in 2008 to support the expanding food industry sector and establish a mixed-use area with manufacturing and commercial uses between the established Hunts Point residential neighborhood and adjacent heavy industrial areas.

**Jerome Corridor (ZR 141-00)**
The Special Jerome Corridor District (J), was created in 2018 as part of a comprehensive neighborhood plan to foster a vibrant mix of residential, commercial and community facility uses along a two-mile stretch of Jerome Avenue in the southwest Bronx. The Special District regulations include provisions that respond to the challenges of building adjacent to the elevated rail line on Jerome Avenue, enable improved walkability between residential neighborhoods, and help facilitate development on irregularly shaped parcels. The majority of the special district is located within a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area.

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Special Purpose Districts

- City Island
- Grand Concourse Preservation
- Natural Area
- City Island
- Jerome
- Planned Community Preservation
- Mixed Use
- Hunts Point
- Harlem Waterfront
- Mixed Use

City wide

Borough specific
### Brooklyn Special Purpose Districts

**Bay Ridge (ZR 114-00)**
The Special Bay Ridge District (BR), encompassing the entirety of this southwest Brooklyn neighborhood, was created in 1978 to preserve the neighborhood’s existing scale and character. The special purpose district was substantially modified in 2005 in conjunction with the mapping of contextual and lower-density zoning districts.

**Coney Island (ZR 131-00)**
The Special Coney Island District (CI), encompassing the amusement area and surrounding blocks, was created in 2009 as part of a comprehensive, long-range plan to re-establish Coney Island as a year-round entertainment and amusement destination. The amusement area is at the core of the special purpose district, and special regulations encourage new housing opportunities and neighborhood amenities in the surrounding area.

**Coney Island Mixed Use (ZR 106-00)**
The Special Coney Island Mixed Use District (CO), located between Neptune Avenue and Coney Island Creek, was created in 1974 to stabilize this mixed-use area by allowing investment in existing residences and light industrial uses.

**Downtown Brooklyn (ZR 101-00)**
The Special Downtown Brooklyn District (DB), encompassing the borough’s largest economic, civic and retail center, was created in 2001 to support the mixed-use growth of its central business district, while providing a transition to the surrounding lower-scaled neighborhoods. The special purpose district includes two subdistricts along two of the area’s primary streets. Along Atlantic Avenue, special regulations preserve the scale, character and architectural features of the street, while along Fulton Mall regulations are intended to support an attractive shopping environment.

**Ocean Parkway (ZR 113-00)**
The Special Ocean Parkway District (OP) encompasses Ocean Parkway between Prospect Park and Brighton Beach as well as a band of blocks east and west of the thoroughfare. It was created in 1977 to enhance the qualities of this broad, landscaped boulevard which had recently been designated a scenic landmark and the neighborhoods immediately flanking it. The regulations were intended to preserve the existing scale and character of the surrounding area and require large front setbacks and landscaping for buildings along the parkway itself.

**Sheepshead Bay (ZR 94-00)**
The Special Sheepshead Bay District (SB), which covers much of the area between Sheepshead Bay and the Belt Parkway, was created in 1973 to encourage a particular type of development to strengthen and protect the character of this mixed-use community as a location for waterfront-related commercial and recreational uses.

<table>
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<th>Special District</th>
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# Manhattan Special Purpose Districts

## 125th Street (ZR 97-00)
The Special 125th Street District (125), encompassing both sides of 125th Street between Broadway and Second Avenue, was created in 2008 as part of a city initiative to enhance Harlem’s “Main Street” as a major arts and entertainment destination as well as a regional business district.

## Battery Park City (ZR 84-00)
The Special Battery Park City District (BPC), encompassing the entirety of this new community between the Hudson River and Lower Manhattan, was created in 1973 — and substantially modified in 1981 — to reflect the master plan for residential and commercial development, as well as public space.

## Clinton (ZR 96-00)
The Special Clinton District (CL), generally between West 41st and West 59th Streets west of Eighth Avenue, was created in 1974 to preserve the residential character of this community bordering Midtown, maintain a broad mix of incomes and ensure that the area was not adversely affected by the expansion of the central business district underway at the time. Special regulations for designated perimeter areas provide transitions between the lower-scale side streets of the neighborhood and its higher density surroundings.

## East Harlem Corridors (ZR 138-00)
The Special East Harlem Corridors District (EHC) was created in 2017 as part of a plan to foster a dynamic, mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood in East Harlem. The special district regulations apply only to the area’s major avenues and crosstown streets and include minimum requirements for non-residential uses in certain areas, unique height and setback controls and ground floor requirements to improve walkability. The majority of the special district is also located within a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area.

## Garment Center (ZR 121-00)
The Special Garment Center District (GC), encompassing the area bounded by West 35th and West 40th Streets, Broadway and Ninth Avenue, was created in 1987 to maintain opportunities for apparel production as well as wholesale and showroom uses in designated Preservation Areas in the district’s mid-blocks. In 2005, the portion west of Eighth Avenue was updated to recognize the mixed-use nature of the midblocks in that area by permitting a wider range of uses, including residences.

## Governors Island (ZR 134-00)
The Special Governors Island District (GI), encompassing the northern portion of the island in Upper New York Harbor, was created in 2013 to support the reuse and redevelopment of the former military base’s existing historic structures in the Governors Island Historic District and further the vision of the island as a mixed use, year-round educational, cultural and recreational destination within a park-like landscape.

## Hudson River Park (ZR 89-00)
The Special Hudson River Park District (HRP), encompassing sites along West Street/Route 9A and near Hudson River Park, was established in 2016 to allow the transfer of floor area from property within the park to upland sites to facilitate their redevelopment with a mix

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of residential and commercial uses. Funds generated by the floor area transfer will support the repair and rehabilitation of facilities within Hudson River Park.

**Hudson Square (ZR 88-00)**
The Special Hudson Square District (HSQ), encompassing much of the area bounded by Canal Street, Sixth Avenue, West Houston Street and Greenwich Street, was created in 2012 to support the growth of a mixed-use neighborhood and business center by permitting the development and expansion of residential, commercial and community facility uses while maintaining a supply of commercial and light manufacturing space.

**Hudson Yards (ZR 93-00)**
The Special Hudson Yards District (HY), generally encompassing the area west of 8th Avenue between West 30th and West 41st Streets, was established in 2005 to extend the Midtown business district further west through capital improvements including a subway extension and new public park, new opportunities for substantial commercial and residential development and publicly accessible open spaces, as well as preservation of the scale of adjoining residential neighborhoods.

**Lincoln Square (ZR 82-00)**
The Special Lincoln Square District (L), encompassing the arts complex and the blocks that face it, was created in 1969 to preserve and enhance the area surrounding Lincoln Center as an international center for the performing arts.

**Little Italy (ZR 109-00)**
The Special Little Italy District (LI), located mostly in the area between Bleecker, Canal and Lafayette Streets and the Bowery, was established in 1977 to preserve and enhance the historic and commercial character of the area by encouraging residential rehabilitation and new development on a scale consistent with existing buildings and discouraging the demolition of the area’s noteworthy buildings.

**Lower Manhattan (ZR 91-00)**
The Special Lower Manhattan District (LM), encompassing the area south of Murray Street, City Hall Park and the approaches to the Brooklyn Bridge (excluding Battery Park City), was created in 1998 to support the continued revitalization of Lower Manhattan, home to the city’s oldest central business district and a growing residential community. Regulations encourage a dynamic mix of uses in the area while protecting its distinctive skyline and historic street patterns. Three subareas are located within the special purpose district. The South Street Seaport Subdistrict protects the scale and character of the area’s existing 18th and 19th century mercantile buildings. The Historic and Commercial Core ensures that new development will be compatible with existing buildings. The Water Street Subdistrict was added in 2016 to support the improvement of the existing privately owned public spaces along that street.

**Madison Avenue Preservation (ZR 99-00)**
The Special Madison Avenue Preservation District (MP), encompassing the Madison Avenue blockfronts between East 61st and East 96th Streets, was created in 1973 to
preserve the retail and residential character of the avenue, including its famed specialty shops, and to provide a transition to the lower buildings typically found on the side streets in the surrounding area.

**Manhattanville Mixed Use (ZR 104-00)**
The Manhattanville Mixed Use special purpose district (MMU), encompassing much of the area between Broadway and the Hudson River between West 125th and West 135th Streets, was created in 2007 to implement the plan for Columbia University’s new campus with state-of-the-art educational and research facilities and extensive below-grade development, alongside commercial and residential development in the surrounding area.

**Midtown (ZR 81-00)**
The Special Midtown District (MiD), encompassing the entirety of the Midtown central business district, was created in 1982 to guide long-term development within this high density area and to improve its working and living environment. Portions of the special purpose district are included in five subdistricts. The Theater Subdistrict, for example, helps to preserve the area’s numerous theaters and ensure the continued vibrancy of the area around Times Square. In the East Midtown Subdistrict, special regulations established in 2017 encourage new office development, preservation of the area’s landmarks and improvements to the area’s pedestrian and transportation network.

**Park Improvement (ZR 92-00)**
The Special Park Improvement District (PI) was created in 1973 to preserve the residential character and architectural quality of Fifth Avenue and Park Avenue from East 59th to East 111th Streets by requiring that new development be of a scale and character consistent with existing buildings.

**Southern Roosevelt Island (ZR 133-00)**
The Special Southern Roosevelt Island District (SRI), encompassing a portion of the island south of the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge, was created in 2013 to implement the mixed-use master plan for a new Cornell NYCTech applied sciences and engineering campus, which includes new publicly accessible open areas.

**Transit Land Use (ZR 95-00)**
The Special Transit Land Use District (TA), mapped along portions of Second Avenue between Chatham Square and 125th Street, was created in 1973 to align development with the construction of the then-future Second Avenue subway line by requiring that new developments next to planned subway stations reserve space for station entrances and other facilities.

**Tribeca Mixed Use (ZR 111-00)**
The Special Tribeca Mixed Use District (TMU) was originally enacted in 1976 and modified in 1995 and 2010 to guide development in this mixed-use 62-block area within the triangle below Canal Street, west of Broadway, and north of Murray Street. Regulations encourage a mix of uses by allowing many light industrial and commercial uses in addition to residences, at a scale consistent with the area’s existing buildings.

**Union Square (ZR 118-00)**
The Special Union Square District (US), encompassing the blockfronts facing Union Square Park, was established in 1985 to support the revitalization of the area by encouraging mixed use development and ensuring that new development is compatible with existing buildings and the park.

**United Nations Development (ZR 85-00)**
The Special United Nations Development District (U), encompassing a small area at the intersection of First Avenue and East 44th Street, was created in 1970 to implement a master plan for the area adjacent to the United Nations, consisting primarily of the United Nations Plaza buildings.
West Chelsea (ZR 98-00)
The Special West Chelsea District (WCh), bounded generally by Tenth and Eleventh Avenues between West 14th and West 30th Streets, was created in 2005 to provide a framework for the development of a dynamic mixed-use area centered around the improvement of the High Line park, which runs through the area. The district's regulations provide for the transfer of development rights from the High Line right of way, funding for the improvement of the park, and special bulk regulations to preserve light, air and views to and from the structure.
Queens Special Purpose Districts

College Point (ZR 126-00)
The Special College Point District (CP), encompassing the College Point Corporate Park, was created in 2009 to help maintain the area as an attractive, well-functioning business environment while ensuring that there are minimal effects on adjacent residential areas.

Downtown Far Rockaway (ZR 136-00)
The Special Downtown Far Rockaway District (DFR) was created in 2017 as part of a plan to revitalize this area by fostering significant mixed-use development on vacant and underutilized sites near mass transit and along the area’s primary corridors.

Downtown Jamaica (ZR 115-00)
The Special Downtown Jamaica District (DJ), spanning Downtown Jamaica, its multimodal transportation hub, and surrounding neighborhoods, was created in 2007 to help transform the downtown business district into a mixed-use, transit-oriented neighborhood, to expand housing and economic opportunities along the area’s major streets and to protect adjacent low density neighborhoods.

Forest Hills (ZR 86-00)
The Special Forest Hills District (FH), bounded by Queens Boulevard, Ascan Avenue, the Long Island Railroad and Yellowstone Boulevard, was created in 2009 to support the vibrant commercial hub around Austin Street, including a successful mix of shops and restaurants that serve the residents of Forest Hills and the surrounding area.

Long Island City Mixed Use (ZR 117-00)
The Special Long Island City Mixed Use District (LIC) encompasses a large area generally centered on Jackson Avenue, Court Square and Northern Boulevard. It was created in 2001 to support the continuing growth of the longstanding mix of residential, commercial, industrial and cultural uses in the area. The district includes four Subdistricts. The Court Square and Queens Plaza Subdistricts comprise a 37-block area where moderate to high density development is permitted. The Dutch Kills and Hunters Point Subdistricts share a similar scale and density pattern and both permit a wide range of uses, including manufacturing and residences.

Southern Hunters Point (ZR 125-00)
The Special Southern Hunters Point District (SHP), where Newtown Creek flows into the East River, was created in 2008 as part of a master plan to transform the waterfront area into a high density mixed-use development with residential and retail uses, community facilities, a public park and waterfront open space.

Willets Point (ZR 124-00)
The Special Willets Point District (WP), located to the east of Citi Field baseball stadium, was created in 2008 as part of a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform a 61-acre site into a lively, mixed-use community and a regional retail and entertainment destination.

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<tr>
<td>125 Southern Hunters Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>124 Willets Point</td>
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Special Purpose Districts

- Natural Area
- College Point
- Willets Point
- Planned Community Preservation
- Mixed Use
- Long Island City
- Southern Hunters Point
- Planned Community Preservation
- Forest Hills
- Downtown Jamaica
- Coastal Risk
- Downtown Far Rockaway
- City wide
- Borough specific
Staten Island Special Purpose Districts

Hillsides Preservation (ZR 119-00)
The Special Hillsides Preservation District (HS) was created in 1987 to reduce erosion, landslides and excessive storm water runoff along Serpentine Ridge, an area of approximately 1,900 acres in the northeastern part of the borough, defined by its topography and steep slopes.

South Richmond Development (ZR 107-00)
The Special South Richmond Development District (SRD) was established in the southern part of Staten Island in 1975, a time of rapid development following the recent opening of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. It was intended to manage growth and avoid destruction of natural and recreational resources in this 12,000-acre area, which includes undeveloped land and historic town centers.

St. George (ZR 128-00)
The Special St. George District (SG), encompassing the mixed-use neighborhood adjacent to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, was created in 2008 to bolster the borough’s civic center, a major transit hub and the thriving, pedestrian-friendly business and residential district that is one of Staten Island’s oldest neighborhoods.

Stapleton Waterfront (ZR 116-00)
The Special Stapleton Waterfront District (SW), on the north shore of Staten Island, was created in 2006 as part of a plan to develop the former U.S. Navy homeport. The special purpose district was designed to encourage a walkable, mixed-use district, including a 12-acre waterfront esplanade, as well as retail and pedestrian connections to the Stapleton town center and surrounding community.