Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency

Resilient Neighborhoods:
Gerritsen Beach and Sheepshead Bay

Update for Brooklyn Community Board 15
May 21, 2019
A more resilient NYC is one where neighborhoods, buildings and infrastructure can withstand and recover quickly from flooding and climate events.

Coastal defenses are strengthened as first line of defense against flooding and sea level rise.

Buildings are designed to withstand and recover from flooding.

Infrastructure is protected from climate hazards.

Residents and businesses are prepared.
DCP’s work since Hurricane Sandy

2013
Flood Resilience Zoning Text Amendment: Initial temporary regulations to facilitate recovery

2015
Special Regulations for Neighborhood Recovery: Additional temporary regulations to expedite recovery in certain neighborhoods

2014 - 2017
Citywide / Neighborhood Studies

2016 - Present
Community Outreach

2019
Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency and Resilient Neighborhood Actions
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Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency and Resilient Neighborhood Actions
Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency

Citywide Proposal

Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency would provide building owners flexibility to design or retrofit buildings to reduce damage from flooding, be resilient in the long-term, reduce flood insurance costs, and expedite future-storm recovery.

1. Encourage resiliency throughout the current and future floodplains
2. Support long-term resilient design of all building types through flexibility in zoning
3. Allow adaptation through incremental retrofits
4. Facilitate future storm recovery
Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency

Citywide Proposal

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**Applicability extended**

- Building Envelope flexibility
- Partial Resiliency allowances
- Ground Floor Design
- Emergency Rules
Resiliency Challenges in Gerritsen Beach

- **Limited street widths**
  Streets as narrow as 20 feet pose safety risks and accessibility issues during emergencies.

- **Sunken lots, residential use below DFE**
  Vulnerability to coastal flooding exacerbated by high DFEs.

- **Shallow lots, large homes**
  Narrow yards pose challenges for existing zoning compliance, light and air access, elevation strategies, access, streetscape, neighborhood character.

- **Density allowance**
  Current zoning designation allows multi-family development, which could over-stress existing infrastructure.
**Limited services in commercial corridor**

Current zoning limits uses on Gerritsen Avenue. Some business uses that could support residents and homes in flood preparation and recovery – including plumbing, electrical, and appliance repair – are not allowed today.
Gerritsen Beach Proposed Actions

- **New Special Coastal Risk District**: Limit new residential development to only single-family homes on small lots (< 3,000 sf), with height limit to two stories above the flood elevation/Reference Plane.

- **Residential areas**: Current R4 and C3 districts allow attached and multi-family homes. Proposed zoning to R4-1 and C3A will limit new development to one- and two-family homes in residential areas.

- **Gerritsen Avenue**: Expand variety of uses allowed to enable provision of a wider range of services that can better support the local community, and reduce parking requirement to reflect existing development on Gerritsen Ave.
Allows for multi-family buildings
Maximum building height is 35 feet above DFE (6-8 feet above street level)
Challenging side yard requirements encourage taller buildings on narrow lots

Reduce side yard requirements to allow for a better building layout
Limit height to two stories to match existing built character
Further limit new development to one-family homes for lots <3,000 sf through Special Coastal Risk District
• **Update commercial overlays to C2-3** to allow uses to serve community needs and reduce parking requirement to match existing conditions

• **Reduce overlay depth** to Gerritsen Ave. frontage only; prevent retail, parking on residential Aster Ct.
SSBD was created in 1973 to promote waterfront related uses and encourage the creation of new public open space.

- Special District does not have any guidance on resiliency.
- Public open space requirements are not aligned with today’s resiliency design standards.
- Plazas are allowed to be sunken two feet below grade, which creates risk of flooding and safety hazard.
Resiliency Challenges in Special Sheepshead Bay District

- High flood elevation (4-6 ft. BFE)
- Flood-prone public open spaces without resilient design standards
- Below-grade retail
Special Sheepshead Bay District Report Recommendations

**SUPPORT ACTIVE GROUND FLOORS**
Require retail spaces have optimal floor to ceiling heights to allow for a range of uses.

**UPDATE PUBLIC SPACE REGULATIONS**
Align SSBD text with resiliency and urban design best practices to ensure open space is accessible and can withstand flooding.
SUPPORT ACTIVE GROUND FLOORS
Require retail spaces have optimal floor to ceiling heights to allow for a range of uses.

UPDATE PUBLIC SPACE REGULATIONS
Align SSBD text with resiliency and urban design best practices to ensure open space is accessible and can withstand flooding.
Sheepshead Bay Proposed Zoning – Citywide

- Update Special Sheepshead Bay District (SSBD) regulations with citywide Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency

- PROPOSED: Floor area exemption available to floodproofed commercial ground floor spaces built to full height (13’)

Current:

- Exempted floor area – “CELLAR”

Proposed citywide:

- Exempted floor area – Floodproofed with inviting commercial
Update SSBD regulations to encourage flood-resilient and active public realm design

Text updates to SSBD:

- Establish resilient design requirements for Plazas:
  - Planting and seating types
  - Grading requirements – no ‘sunken’ plazas
  - Maintenance standards
Update SSBD regulations to encourage flood-resilient and active public realm design
Zoning for Coastal Flood Resilience Update

Project Timeline

2017 2018 2019
Q3 Q4 Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4

Outreach Summary
Interagency Coordination on Non-Zoning Recommendations

Plain Language Proposal
Interagency Coordination on Zoning Items

Finalize Recommendations and Write Zoning Text
Environmental Review
Scoping
Referral
Public Review Process

+ Concurrent Local actions
(Gerritsen Beach, Sheepshead Bay)

Summarize Feedback
Weekly DCP Working Group meetings
Additional Research
Coordination with Other Agencies

Public engagement on plain-language proposal

Broad public engagement on resiliency (briefings, newsletter, events, video)

Timeline subject to change

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