



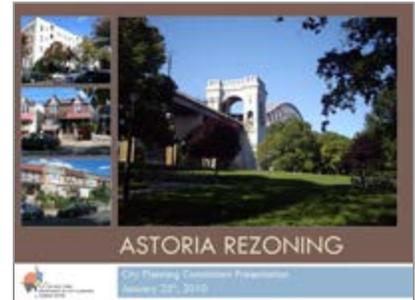
Astoria Rezoning - **Approved!**

Overview

Update May 25, 2010:

On May 25, 2010 the City Council adopted the Astoria Rezoning. The zoning map and text changes are now in effect.

The Department of City Planning proposes to amend the Zoning Map on all or portions of 238 blocks in Astoria, Community District 1, in Queens, to preserve the existing scale and character of the area while allowing for a modest increase in residential and commercial density in appropriate limited locations. A related action would also make the [Inclusionary Housing Program](#) applicable in certain zoning districts within the rezoning area to incentivize the development of affordable housing. The study area, which comprises 248 blocks, is bounded by 20th Avenue on the north, Steinway Street on the east, Broadway on the south, and Vernon Boulevard, 8th Street, 14th Street, and the East River on the west.



[View the slide show presentation](#)

Astoria is a neighborhood in northwestern Queens that stretches along the East River roughly from 36th Avenue to 20th Avenue and as far east as the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and La Guardia Airport. The neighborhood is developed with a wide variety of housing types. Blocks developed with two- and three-story row houses and semi-detached buildings are common in the area north of the Grand Central Parkway. Blocks with larger prewar apartment buildings are more common in the area to the south of the Grand Central Parkway. All building types can be found throughout the rezoning area.

Astoria is also known as a popular destination for shopping and nightlife. Vibrant commercial strips can be found on 31st and Steinway Streets, Ditmars and Astoria Boulevards, 30th Avenue, and Broadway.



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The proposed actions would protect neighborhood character from out-of-scale development by mapping [contextual zoning districts](#) that more closely reflect the scale and form of existing buildings and set firm building height limits. On blocks fronting Vernon Boulevard, 21st Street, and 31st Street, moderate density increases are proposed along with incentives for the development of affordable housing through the Inclusionary Housing Program. Building height limits would ensure that the scale of new buildings generally remains consistent with the existing development patterns. New commercial zoning districts are also proposed to reflect existing commercial uses and provide opportunities for new commercial uses to serve area residents.

The proposal builds upon the success of three previously adopted contextual rezonings in the area, including the Broadway (2001), Steinway Street (1998), and West Astoria (1989) rezonings, each of which were more limited in scope.

Over the past decade, as the pace of development increased throughout the neighborhood, concerns were raised by the community that new development was inconsistent with the prevailing scale, density and built character of many blocks. The proposal was developed in close consultation with the local council member and area stakeholders represented by the Community Board and various local neighborhood organizations.



Apartment buildings on 34th Street



Attached rowhouses on 28th Street



Semi-detached buildings on 36th Street

Astoria Rezoning - Approved!

Existing Zoning & Context

The rezoning area contains two large existing zoning districts—R5 to the north of the Grand Central Parkway and R6 to the south. These residential districts have not been modified since their initial implementation in 1961, and since they allow a variety of building envelopes and housing types, newly constructed buildings have been increasingly inconsistent with prevailing scale, density and built character. The proposed actions would also affect existing R4 and R6B districts, as well as C1-2, C2-2, C1-3, C1-4, and C2-4 [commercial overlay](#) districts. [View the zoning comparison chart.](#)



[View a larger image](#)

R5

R5 districts are located north of the Grand Central Parkway and on certain midblocks in West Astoria. R5 zoning districts allow all housing types including detached, semi-detached, attached and multi-family residences. The maximum [floor area ratio \(FAR\)](#) for all housing types is 1.25. On blocks that are predominantly built up, a maximum FAR of 1.65 is permitted through R5 infill provisions. R5 zoning requires a minimum [front yard](#) depth of 10 feet, which is increased to 18 feet if front yard parking is provided. The maximum building height is 40 feet with a maximum perimeter wall height of 35 feet. [Community facilities](#) are permitted an FAR of 2.0. Off-street parking in a grouped facility is required for 85 percent of the dwelling units.

On many of these blocks, R5 zoning controls do not closely reflect some of the important characteristics of existing development, especially on blocks where building heights and yard depths are highly consistent for the length of the block.

R6

R6 districts are currently located throughout most of the rezoning area south of the Grand Central Parkway and east of 21st Street, as well as along Vernon Boulevard. R6 districts allow all housing types. R6 is a [height factor](#) district where [residential](#) and community facility uses are permitted with no fixed height limits and building envelopes are regulated by a [sky exposure plane](#). A maximum FAR of up to 2.43 is allowed for residential uses and up to 4.8 FAR is allowed for buildings containing community facility uses. Residential development under the optional [Quality Housing Program](#) has a maximum FAR of 2.2 on [narrow streets](#) (defined as less than 75 feet wide) with a 55-foot building height limit and a maximum of 3.0 FAR on [wide streets](#) (defined as 75 feet wide or greater) with a height limit of 70 feet. Off-street parking is required for 70 percent of the [dwelling units](#). This requirement is lowered to 50 percent of the units if the lot area is less than 10,000 square feet or if Quality Housing provisions are used. In R6 districts, if fewer than five spaces are required, then the off-street parking requirement is waived.

Since R6 districts have no firm height limits and the maximum allowable FAR varies substantially between residential and community facility uses, the existing zoning has resulted in the recent construction of several out-of-scale buildings that contrast sharply with the existing surrounding development.

R4

An R4 district is located in a portion of the rezoning area on the block bounded by 30th Avenue, 21st Street, 30th Road, and 14th Street. The R4 district allows a variety of housing types, including garden apartments, row houses and semi-detached and detached houses. The maximum FAR is 0.9, which includes a 0.15 [attic allowance](#). On predominantly built up blocks, a maximum FAR of 1.35 is permitted through R4 [infill](#) provisions. R4 requires a minimum front yard depth of 10 feet, which is increased to 18 feet if front yard parking is provided. The maximum building height is 35 feet with a maximum [perimeter wall](#) height of 25 feet. Community facilities are permitted at an FAR of 2.0. One parking space is required for each dwelling unit.

The wide variety of housing types allowed by R4 does not closely match the predominantly semi-detached character of this block.

R6B

R6B districts are located on either side of 14th Place between Astoria Park South and 27th Avenue, as well as along both sides of Broadway between 21st Street and Steinway Street. R6B zoning allows all housing types at a maximum FAR of 2.0, and limits overall building heights to 50 feet after a setback at the *base height* of 30 to 40 feet. The front walls of new developments in R6B districts must line up with adjacent structures to maintain existing street wall characteristics. New multifamily residences must provide one off-street parking space each for 50 percent of the dwelling units, and off-street parking may be waived if five spaces or fewer are required.

R6B allows building heights that are substantially taller than the predominant context on 14th Place, while on Broadway, the built context includes is generally exceeding the R6B maximum FAR of 2.0.

Commercial Overlays

Commercial overlays currently include C1 and C2 districts along retail corridors, such as Broadway, 30th Avenue, 31st Street, Steinway Street and Ditmars Boulevard. C1 and C2 overlays are mapped in residence districts and serve the local retail needs (e.g., grocery stores, restaurants) of the surrounding residential neighborhood. C2 districts permit a slightly larger range of service uses (e.g., funeral homes, repair services). The maximum floor area in both C1 and C2 districts is 1.0 FAR with commercial uses limited to the first floor in mixed use buildings. Among the area's existing commercial overlays, C1-2 and C2-2 districts have higher parking requirements than C1-3 and C1-4 overlays.



Out-of-character four-story building within an R6 district on 36th Street



Out-of-character ten-story building in an existing R6 district on Crescent Street



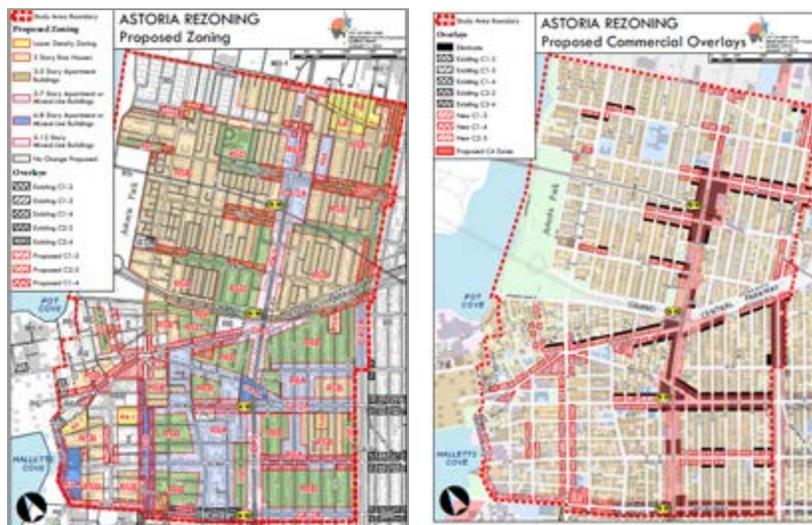
Recently enlarged three-story building in an existing R5 district on 37th Street

Astoria Rezoning - **Approved!** Proposed Zoning

The rezoning's main goal is to preserve Astoria's scale through the mapping of *contextual zoning* districts to more closely reflect existing residential building types and development patterns that characterize the neighborhood on a block-by-block basis.

The proposed rezoning also would encourage new mixed-used, moderate-density development along some of the area's wider streets, commercial corridors and at sites located close to transit hubs. The Inclusionary Housing Program would be applied in key locations to provide incentives for the development or preservation of affordable housing units.

Proposed modifications to the *commercial overlay* districts are intended to prevent encroachment of commercial uses onto residential blocks, and create new districts that would reflect existing commercial uses and provide new business location opportunities. [View zoning comparison chart.](#)



[View a larger image](#)

[View a larger image](#)

[View map modified by CPC \(4/28/10\)](#)

R4-1 (from R4, R5)

The proposed R4-1 districts include a) portions of 7 blocks facing 20th Road between 33rd and 38th Streets; b) portions of one block bounded by 14th Street, 21st Street, 30th Avenue, and 30th Road; and c) portions of one block bounded by Vernon Boulevard, 12th Street, Welling Court, and 30th Road. R4-1 districts permit one- and two-family detached and semi-detached residences, which is consistent with development patterns in these areas.

R4-1 allows an *(FAR)* of 0.9 (including a 0.15 *attic allowance*) and the maximum building height is 35 feet with a *perimeter wall* height limit of 25 feet. Front wall lineup is required and the parking requirement is 100% (one space for each unit).



Semi-attached buildings in a proposed R4-1 district on 30th Road

R4 (from R5)

The proposed R4 district includes portions of 4 blocks bounded by 33rd Street, 38th Street, 20th Avenue, and 20th Road. This area is characterized by attached two-story, single-family homes with relatively low lot coverage and FAR. The proposed R4 district allows a maximum building height of 35 feet, and a

maximum perimeter wall height of 25 feet. The maximum FAR is 0.9, including a 0.15 FAR attic allowance. This maximum FAR more closely matches existing FARs and limits out-of character development on these blocks. One parking space is required for each dwelling unit. Since these blocks are partially within contextual zones, infill zoning provisions are not applicable.



Varying housing types in the proposed R4 district on 37th Street

R4B (from R6)

The proposed R4B district includes portions of 2 blocks facing 36th Street between 30th and 31st Avenues. This area is characterized by two-story row houses. R4B allows one- and two-family development of all housing types. The maximum residential FAR is 0.9. The maximum building height is 24 feet. Front wall lineup is required, and parking must be provided at a rate of one space per dwelling unit, but front yard parking would be prohibited.

R4B would more closely match the low-scale character of this area and protect its planted front yards.



Two-story attached buildings in the proposed R4B district on 36th Street

R5 (from R6B)

The proposed R5 district includes portions of 3 blocks facing 14th Place between Astoria Park South and 27th Avenue. This area is characterized by a mix of housing types and mostly two- and three-story buildings. The proposed R5 district allows all housing types including detached, semi-detached, attached and multi-family residences.

The maximum FAR for all housing types is 1.25, which is consistent with existing development. . The maximum building height is 40 feet, with a maximum perimeter wall height of 35 feet, and this scale would also more closely match the built fabric. Off-street parking is required for 85% of the dwelling units. Since these blocks are partially within contextual zones, infill provisions would not be applicable.



Small apartment building in the proposed R5 district

R5B (from R5, R6)

The proposed R5B districts include all or portions of 125 blocks located throughout the study area. These blocks are characterized by two- and three-story attached and semi-detached buildings.

R5B allows all housing types. The maximum residential FAR is 1.35, and buildings are limited to 33 feet in height, with a 30 foot maximum perimeter wall. In the areas where R5B is proposed, the FAR and height regulations would typically allow modest horizontal or vertical expansion of residential buildings while maintaining the two- and three-story scale of these blocks. Front wall lineup is required. Parking must be provided for 66% of dwelling units. Front yard parking is prohibited, thereby protecting the planted front yards that are typical in the proposed R5B districts.



Three-story attached buildings in a proposed R5B district

R5D (from R5, R6)

The proposed R5D districts include all or portions of 60 blocks located primarily in the northern portion of the study area. These proposed districts are predominantly developed with three- and four-story attached buildings and some small apartment buildings. Many proposed R5D districts correspond with main corridors in the northern portion of the rezoning area.

R5D allows all housing types. The maximum FAR for all development is 2.0, which is generally consistent with existing buildings in the proposed districts. Buildings are limited to 40 feet in height. Front wall lineup is required and parking must be provided for 66% of dwelling units.



Four-story buildings in a proposed R5D district

R6B (from R5, R6)

The proposed R6B districts include all or portions of 48 blocks located primarily in the southern portion of the study area. These proposed districts are typically developed with three- to five-story buildings. They would reinforce the typical scale of development on many of Astoria's streets in the southern portion of the rezoning area.

R6B allows all housing types. The maximum FAR for all development is 2.0 and buildings are limited to 50 feet in height, with a base height ranging from 30-40 feet above which a front setback is required. Front wall lineup is also required. Parking must be provided for 50% of dwelling units, but this requirement is waived if 5 or fewer spaces are required.



Four-story buildings in a proposed R6B district

R6A (from R5, R6)

The proposed R6A districts include all or portions of 65 blocks located primarily in the southern portion of the study area. These proposed districts would include many of the avenues in the southern portion of the rezoning area, including Astoria Boulevard, Newtown Avenue, 28th Avenue, 30th Avenue, 31st Avenue, and Broadway.

R6A allows all housing types. The maximum FAR for all development is 3.0 and buildings are limited to 70 feet in height, with a *base height* of 40-60 feet above which a front setback is required. These requirements are consistent with the predominant built character of four- to six-story elevator buildings on large lots with high lot coverage. Front wall lineup is required. Parking must be provided for 50% of dwelling units, but this requirement is waived if 5 or fewer spaces are required.



Five-story buildings with high lot coverage in a proposed R6A district

R7A (from R5, R6)

The proposed R7A districts include a) portions of 12 blocks facing 21st Street between 28th Avenue and Broadway; and b) portions of 5 blocks facing Vernon Boulevard between Broadway and Welling Court. The proposed R7A districts would encourage development of new market rate and affordable housing on these wide streets. An associated proposed action (discussed below) would allow optional Inclusionary Housing Program provisions in the proposed R7A zones.

Under the *Inclusionary Housing Program*, the base residential FAR is 3.45, and the maximum FAR, achieved by designating 20% of units as affordable, is 4.6. The maximum *Community facility* FAR is 4.0. Buildings are limited to 80 feet in height, with a base height ranging from 40-65 feet, and front wall lineup is required. Parking must be provided for 50% of dwelling units, but this requirement is waived if 15 or fewer spaces are required.



Seven-story building in a proposed R7A district

C4-3 (from R5, R6)

The proposed C4-3 districts include a) all or portions of 20 blocks facing 31st Street between 21st Avenue and Newtown Avenue, and facing Astoria Boulevard between 29th Street and 35th Street; and b) portions of 7 blocks facing 31st

Street between 30th Avenue and 34th Avenue. C4-3 is proposed along the 31st Street "spine," which features the elevated tracks that currently carry the N and W trains.

C4-3 districts have similar bulk and height controls to R6, the [residential equivalent](#). Maximum FAR is 2.43 for residential development and 3.4 for commercial development. Community facility uses are allowed a maximum of 4.8 FAR. Like R6, the proposed C4-3 districts also allow residential development pursuant to the [Quality Housing program](#). This allows maximum heights of 55 and 70 feet, with maximum FARs of 3.0 and 2.2 on [wide](#) and [narrow streets](#), respectively. Mixed use buildings may contain up to two floors of commercial uses with residential above. C4-3 districts also have flexible [street wall](#) location and setback regulations that would be appropriate for developments along this corridor.



Seven-story mixed-use building in a proposed C4-3 district

C4-2A (from R5, R6)

The proposed C4-2A districts include all or portions of 43 blocks facing 30th Avenue between 30th Street and Steinway Street, Newtown Avenue between 32nd Street and 33rd Street, Steinway Street between Astoria Boulevard South and 28th Avenue, Broadway between 31st Street and Steinway Street, and 31st Street between Ditmars Boulevard and the Hell Gate Bridge approach viaduct. C4-2A districts are characterized by mixed-use development including local and regional retail, office uses, and residential uses.

C4-2A has similar bulk and height controls to R6A, the residential equivalent. Maximum FAR is 3.0 for all types of development. Maximum building height is 70 feet, with a base height ranging between 40 and 60 feet. Mixed use buildings may contain up to two floors of commercial uses with residential above. The proposed C4-2A districts would allow a mix of commercial and residential buildings to strengthen the vitality of the locations where it is proposed.



Six-story mixed-use building in a proposed C4-2A district

C4-4A (from R6)

The proposed C4-4A district includes portions of 4 blocks facing Newtown Avenue between 30th Street and 32nd Street. Like the proposed R7A districts, the proposed C4-4A district would encourage development of new market rate and affordable housing at this transit hub. The optional Inclusionary Housing Program would be applicable with the same terms as proposed in the R7A districts.

C4-4A has similar bulk and height controls to R7A, its residential equivalent. The base residential FAR is 3.45, and can be increased to a maximum of 4.6 with the Inclusionary Housing bonus. Commercial and community facility uses are allowed at a maximum FAR of 4.0. Maximum building height is 80 feet, with a base height of between 40 and 65 feet. Mixed use buildings may contain up to two floors of commercial uses with residential above.

Commercial Overlay District Modifications

The proposal includes changes to certain existing commercial overlays within the rezoning area to more closely match existing land use and development patterns.

Several C1-2 and C2-2 overlays would be changed to C1-3 and C2-3 overlays and their depths would be changed from 150 feet to 100 feet to preclude commercial intrusion into residential mid-blocks. Changing the existing C1-2 and C2-2 commercial overlays to C1-3 and C2-3 commercial overlays would reduce the required parking from generally one parking space per 300 square feet of commercial floor area to one space per 400 square feet of commercial area. In the proposed C1-4 districts, most retail uses would require one accessory parking space per 1,000 square feet of commercial floor area.



Ground-floor commercial uses in a proposed C1-3 overlay

The proposal also would establish new C1-3, C2-3, and C1-4 districts in order to recognize existing commercial land use patterns and provide new business location opportunities, and it would eliminate existing C1-2, C2-2, C1-4, and C2-4 overlay districts that overlap proposed C4-2A, C4-3, and C4-4A districts.

Proposed Zoning Text Amendment

A zoning text amendment is being proposed to make the Inclusionary Housing Program applicable in the proposed R7A and C4-4A districts along Vernon Boulevard, 21st Street and 31st Street to provide incentives for the creation and preservation of affordable housing in conjunction with the development of new residential units.

For residential development without an affordable housing component, the maximum FAR would be limited to 3.45. Under the Inclusionary Housing Program, developments providing affordable housing are eligible for a floor area bonus, within contextual height and bulk regulations tailored to the area. Developments could qualify for a maximum FAR of 4.6 (within the 40'-65' base height limit and the 80' maximum building height limit) in the designated districts by providing 20 percent of the residential floor area in the development as permanently affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households. Affordable units can be provided either on-site or off-site. Off-site affordable units must be located within Community District 1 since no other community district is within a half-mile of sites that would be eligible for the floor area bonus. Other city, state and federal housing finance programs may be used to provide further assistance in creation of affordable units. The combination of a zoning bonus with housing programs would establish a powerful incentive for the development and preservation of affordable housing in the Astoria neighborhood.

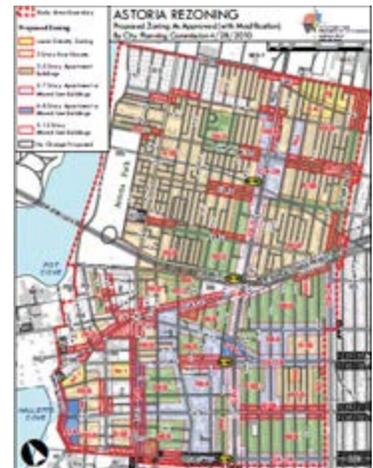
Astoria Rezoning - **Approved!** Public Review

The Astoria rezoning proposal began formal public review on January 25, 2010 with the Department of City Planning's Certification of the [Uniform Land Use Review \(ULURP\)](#) application (100199 ZMQ and text amendment N 100200 ZRO).

Milestones	Target Dates
Department of City Planning certification	January 25, 2010 - view the presentation
Community Board 1 Approval	February 16, 2010
Queens Borough President Approval (with conditions)	March 19, 2010
City Planning Commission Hearing	March 24, 2010
City Planning Commission Approval (with modifications*) Read the CPC Reports.	April 28, 2010
City Council Hearing	May 17, 2010
City Council Approval	May 25, 2010

* **City Planning Commission Modification**

On April 28, 2010 the City Planning Commission (CPC) approved the applications for the Astoria Rezoning with a modification to the Zoning Map amendment application (C 100199 ZMQ). The approved Zoning Map amendment was modified by the CPC to retain R6 zoning on a portion of the block bounded by 31st Avenue, 33rd Street, Broadway, and 32nd Street in response to testimony at its public hearing.



Proposed Zoning Map - modified by CPC 4/28/10

[View a larger image](#)

For more information about this proposal please contact the Queens Office of the Department of City Planning at (718) 520-2100

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.