



## Bensonhurst - **Approved!**

### Overview



61st Street and 23rd Avenue



West 3rd Street near Quentin Road



Avenue P at West 8th Street

#### Overview

The Department of City Planning proposes zoning map changes for approximately 120 blocks in the Bensonhurst neighborhood of Brooklyn's Community Board 11. The area proposed for rezoning is a predominantly low-rise residential community bounded by Bay Parkway and 61st Street on the north, McDonald Avenue on the east, Avenue U on the south and Stillwell Avenue on the west.



Settled primarily during the 1920s after the BMT subway company acquired the former Sea Beach and West End Railway, the area is characterized by two- and three-story residences, mostly one- and two-family homes, with corridors of six-story and taller apartment houses on Quentin Road, Avenue P, and parts of Kings Highway and 65th Street. Commercial activity is concentrated on Bay Parkway, 65th Street, Kings Highway and Avenue U, and parts of Highlawn Avenue and Avenues O, S and T.

Although the area was mainly built up by World War II, small-scale construction continued into the 1980s – mostly groups of three- or four-story rowhouses with ground floor garages. Recently, however, some taller apartment buildings have been constructed on neighborhood midblocks and on some predominantly low-rise wide streets such as 65th Street.

The proposed rezoning would preserve the existing neighborhood scale and character with lower density and contextual zoning districts, preventing new development inconsistent with that low-rise character. The proposal encourages residential development on selected wide streets with good access to mass transit and a character already defined by large apartment buildings – Avenue P, Quentin Road and Kings

Highway and, to a lesser extent, along Bay Parkway and 65th Street. Along these corridors, the mid-density contextual zoning districts proposed would establish height limits consistent with neighboring apartment houses and would prevent development of overly large community facility and mixed residential/community facility buildings.

#### Public Review

On February 14th, 2005, the Department of City Planning certified the [Uniform Land Use Review Procedure](#) application for the Bensonhurst rezoning to begin the formal public review process. Community Board 11 held a public hearing on the proposal on March 9th and unanimously voted to recommend approval on March 10th. The Brooklyn Borough President recommended approval of the proposal on April 11th. The City Planning Commission held a public hearing on the application on April 27, 2005 and on May 25, 2005 adopted the proposed zoning changes with one modification ([View the modified proposed zoning map.](#)) On June 23, 2005, the City Council voted to adopt the application with one modification.

The City Council's modification removed from the rezoning area a one and a half block area between 65th Street, Avenue O and West 4th and West 5th Streets. That area will remain zoned R6. The zoning map changes are now in effect.

[View a color map illustrating the adopted zoning map change.](#)

For more information on the Bensonhurst Rezoning, please the Brooklyn Office of the Department of City Planning at (718) 780-8280.

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### Existing Context and Zoning

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Most of the narrow side streets and midblocks in the Bensonhurst rezoning area are lined with two- and three-story houses, detached or semi-detached homes for one or two families. Only some of the wide avenues are characterized by taller, bulkier apartment buildings and commercial uses. Yet the two zoning districts mapped throughout the area, R6 and R5, do not make these distinctions, permitting instead all housing types, including multifamily housing.

North of Kings Highway, an **R6** residential district permits construction of tall towers on large lots under the standard 1961 height factor regulations, which have no height limits and a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.43 for residential buildings. The optional Quality Housing program permits an FAR of 2.2 on narrow streets and 3.0 on wide streets, but limits building heights to 55 feet and 70 feet, respectively. Under R6 regulations, community facility buildings (such as hospitals, schools, houses of worship and medical offices) and mixed residential/community facility buildings can achieve an FAR of up to 4.8. Many of the out-of-scale buildings constructed recently in the neighborhood include both residential and community facility uses and, as a result, are much bulkier and taller than surrounding buildings.



Existing Zoning Map  
[View a larger map](#)



2469 65th Street - out of character development in proposed R4-1



1460 West 5th Street - out of character development in proposed R5B



1633 West 6th Street - out of character development in proposed R5B

South of Kings Highway, **R5** is the predominant zoning district. R5 is a residential zoning district with a 40-foot height limit and a maximum standard FAR of 1.25. R5 regulations allow an FAR of 1.65 in blocks that are mostly built up to encourage infill construction, but any such building cannot exceed a height of 33 feet and must have an 18-foot front yard.

A **C4-3** commercial zoning district is located on Bay Parkway between Avenue O and 65th Street. The C4-3 district regulations permit commercial buildings with a maximum FAR of 2.0, residential and mixed commercial/residential buildings up to 2.43 using standard height factor regulations and 3.0 using the optional Quality Housing regulations. Community facility and mixed residential/community facility buildings can achieve an FAR of up to 4.8 with no height limit.

**C1 and C2** commercial overlays are mapped within the R5 and R6 residential districts on a number of the major east-west thoroughfares. The predominant C1 commercial overlay allows the local retail and service shops needed in residential neighborhoods. C2 overlays, which permit a slightly broader range of service uses including small appliance repair and upholstery shops, are mapped along Kings Highway near McDonald Avenue and on Avenue U near Stillwell Avenue.



## Bensonhurst - **Approved!** Proposed Zoning

### Proposed Zoning

Housing throughout the Bensonhurst study area is predominantly low-rise and low-density, with the exception of the large apartment buildings along, 65th Street, Avenue P, Quentin Road and the western end of Kings Highway. The goals of the rezoning proposal are to:

- Reinforce the established built context and prevent out-of-character development;
- Establish a three-story height limit where low-rise housing predominates;
- Permit apartment house construction, with height limits, on major east-west avenues; and
- Eliminate the potential for extra-large community facility and mixed use buildings.



Proposed Zoning Map  
 [Proposed Zoning](#) May 2005  
 [Adopted Zoning](#) June 23, 2005

**R4A**, a residential district that permits only one- and two-family detached houses, is proposed for seven small areas – about five percent of the rezoning area – where detached houses, often on large lots, predominate. Three of the areas are now zoned R6 and four R5. The R4A designation allows an FAR of 0.9 and requires side yards and one parking space for each dwelling unit. It has a perimeter wall height limit of 21 feet and an overall permitted building height of 35 feet.



West 3rd Street near Avenue P - detached house in the proposed R4A

**R4-1**, a residential district that permits both detached and semi-detached one- and two-family houses, is proposed for approximately 40 percent of the rezoning area where the homes are either entirely or primarily semi-detached (such as the area bounded by 61st and 64th Streets, Twenty-fourth Avenue and Bay Parkway). R4-1 allows an FAR of 0.9 and requires two side yards for detached houses and one if semi-detached. One parking space is required for each unit. The perimeter wall height is limited to 21 feet and the overall building height to 35 feet.



West 9th Street between Wave Street and Avenue U - Semidetached housing in proposed R4-1

**R5B**, a residential district that permits all housing types, is proposed for approximately 30 percent of the rezoning area where rowhouses predominate (e.g. West 8th Street from Kings Highway to Avenue S) and where there is a mix of housing types. R5B permits detached, semi-detached and attached houses, with a maximum FAR of 1.35. Front yards of new buildings must be five feet deep or as least as deep as adjacent yards. One parking space is required for each unit or 66 percent of the units if grouped. R5B has a maximum streetwall height of 30 feet and a maximum permitted building height of 33 feet. Multifamily housing is permitted in R5B districts.



West 7th Street between Avenue S and T - Attached housing in the proposed R5B

**R6B**, a contextual residential district, is proposed for one small area currently zoned R5 – the triangle formed by Kings Highway, Quentin

Road and 78th Street. These irregularly-shaped blocks, which are characterized by a mix of auto repair uses, single-story commercial buildings and low-rise residential buildings, form a transitional buffer between the R7A apartment house district proposed for the north side of Kings Highway and the low-rise blocks south of Quentin Road. The R6B district allows rowhouses with a maximum FAR of 2.0 and a height limit of 50 feet, a suitable step-down between the 80-foot height limit of the proposed R7A district and the three-story context of the southern midblocks.

**R6A**, also a contextual residential district, is proposed along part of 65th Street and along Bay Parkway north of 65th Street, as well as two blockfronts on Avenue P. These streets already contain some large apartment buildings, which would provide a visual anchor for future apartment building development. In addition, these are wide streets with good subway access and bus service on Bay Parkway. R6A allows an FAR of 3.0, with a 70-foot height limit which generally results in six-story apartment buildings. Parking must be provided for half the units. New community facility or mixed use buildings would no longer be permitted to exceed the maximum residential FAR of 3.0.



65th Street at West 4th Street -  
Apartment building in the  
proposed R6A

**R7A** is proposed along Avenue P west of West 6th Street, Quentin Road west of West 3rd Street and along Kings Highway from Bay Parkway to McDonald Avenue. These are all wide streets and Quentin Road and Avenue P have an existing character of six-story apartment houses. Kings Highway is a mix of six- to seven-story apartment buildings, three-story mixed commercial and residential attached buildings and a significant number of underutilized and vacant lots that could be redeveloped with apartment houses. There is excellent public transit access along Kings Highway, with an N-line station between West 7th and West 8th Streets and an F-line station just outside the rezoning area on McDonald Avenue. The R7A is a contextual district with a maximum FAR of 4.0 with a maximum building height of 80 feet and requires parking for half the units. As in other contextual districts, community facility or mixed use buildings cannot exceed the maximum permitted residential FAR.


### ***Proposed Commercial District Changes***

**C4-2A**, a zoning district that permits commercial, residential and community facility uses with a maximum FAR of 3.0 for all uses and a 70-foot height limit for all new construction, is proposed for Bay Parkway between Avenue O and 65th Street, replacing the C4-3 district.

The current mix of **commercial overlays** (C1-3, C2-3, C2-2) would be standardized to a C2-3 designation mapped to a depth of 100 feet from the street line to prevent commercial uses from encroaching on midblock residential uses. New commercial overlays are proposed only for existing commercial corridors that are not zoned for commercial use, including small portions of Kings Highway, Highlawn Avenue and Avenues O and T. The C2-3 overlay permits residential (guided by the regulations of the underlying residential zoning district), commercial, community facility and mixed buildings. Commercial uses have a maximum FAR of 1.0 in underlying R4 and R5 districts and 2.0 in underlying R6 and R7 districts.

## Related Notes

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-  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.