



DUMBO Rezoning - Approved!

Introduction

Update July 29, 2009:

On July 29, 2009, the City Council adopted the DUMBO Rezoning. The zoning map and text changes are now in effect.

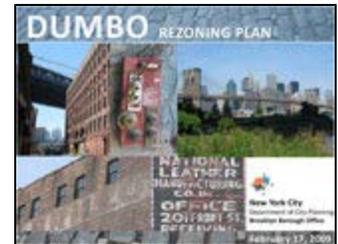
Introduction

Since its heyday in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as one of Brooklyn's foremost industrial hubs, DUMBO has transitioned to a burgeoning, mixed-use community through the adaptive reuse of its historic loft and warehouse buildings with new light industrial, arts, commercial and residential uses. Following the departure of its manufacturing base, in the 1970's and 1980's DUMBO became an attractive home to artists who found the large floorplate loft buildings ideal artisan workspaces. Through both private and City initiatives over the last decade, Mixed-Use zoning regulations were introduced to the section of DUMBO between the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. The mixed-use zoning encouraged private reinvestment that has resulted in the successful transformation of this area into a thriving, mixed-use neighborhood with a variety of shops, markets, offices and arts-related uses comingling aside a new residential population within DUMBO's rich and unique architectural fabric. The Department of City Planning (DCP) seeks to expand on the success of the mixed-use regulations that have fostered the resurgence of DUMBO to the section of the neighborhood east of the Manhattan Bridge.

In consultation with Community Board 2, local civic groups and elected officials and in coordination with the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), the Department has developed a rezoning proposal for the section of DUMBO east of the Manhattan Bridge that would allow residential conversion of existing loft buildings and foster new mixed-use construction while providing predictability and height limits that reflect the area's historic character. It would also, for the first time in DUMBO, provide zoning incentives for the creation of affordable housing in new construction.

To those ends, DCP is proposing to rezone existing M1 and M3 zoning districts to mixed-use zoning districts that would better reflect and preserve the unique character of the neighborhood. The proposed [contextual, mixed-use zoning districts](#) --M1-4/R7A and M1-4/R8A. In conjunction with the rezoning, a related zoning text amendment would permit the use of the [Inclusionary Housing program](#) which provides incentives and opportunities for the development of affordable housing in DUMBO.

The proposal advances Mayor Bloomberg's sustainable planning goals by promoting the preservation of neighborhoods with special character while also providing opportunities for modest growth and affordable housing along wide corridors well served by mass transit.



[View the slideshow presentation](#)



Location Map

[View a larger image](#)



DUMBO neighborhood context looking east from the Manhattan Bridge

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Existing Context and Zoning

Neighborhood Character

The DUMBO neighborhood is located along Brooklyn's East River waterfront and is situated between the historic neighborhoods of Fulton Ferry and Brooklyn Heights to the west and south, Vinegar Hill and the Brooklyn Navy Yard to the east and Downtown Brooklyn and Bridge Plaza to the south within Community District 2. The proposed rezoning area is generally bounded by the Manhattan Bridge and Anchorage Place to the west, John Street and the East River to the north, Bridge Street to the east and Front Street to the south.



Existing Land Use Map

[View a larger image.](#)

DUMBO's emergence in the early 19th century as a bustling manufacturing hub resulted from the success of steam ferries that crossed the East River from the nearby Fulton Ferry Landing. The development activity that was generated by this commerce had a profound impact on the neighborhood. Industrial companies began to develop the area with high density brick and reinforced concrete loft buildings to take advantage of the ease of storing, refining and shipping materials from this transportation hub. These loft buildings that continue to define DUMBO's character today, rise at the street line without setback and are punctuated with large windows, which allowed sunlight into the industrial workspaces. Following the general trend of industrial decline in Northeastern cities, the companies and workforce that operated from loft buildings in DUMBO gradually diminished by the middle of the 20th century.

Following land use and market trends of recent decades, DUMBO has evolved from its industrial past into a dynamic, mixed use community that has adapted by housing a new generation of uses. A residential presence grew in the late 1970s as artists priced out of gentrifying Manhattan neighborhoods transformed the large spaces into work studios and residences. Beginning in the mid-1980s, the New York City Loft Board regulated the legalized conversion of many of these units as Interim Multiple Dwellings (IMD). Since this time there has been a steady increase in residential occupancy within the existing loft buildings, both through illegal conversions and Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) [variances](#). Art galleries and local retail shops, among other design-oriented users, have located predominantly in ground-floor spaces to service the increased activity in the neighborhood. The neighborhood's large footprint loft spaces and attractive rental prices have attracted creative commercial companies in new media fields such as web and design, music production and promotion, and graphic arts.

In recognition of DUMBO's unique built character, the neighborhood has received two historic district designations in recent years. The proposed rezoning area is completely within the DUMBO Industrial District established by the State and National Register of Historic Places in 2000, and is almost entirely within the DUMBO Historic Districts established by the LPC in 2007.

Land Use

The proposed rezoning area contains approximately 12 blocks situated along Jay Street and Bridge Street the neighborhood's two predominant north-south corridors. Buildings along the Jay Street corridor vary greatly in their respective size, ranging from 1 to 12 [stories](#). The few low-rise buildings of 1 to 3 stories typically have ground floor uses of neighborhood services such as restaurants or local retail with upper floors containing residential use. Buildings of 3 to 7 stories rise from 50 to 80 feet, due to the tall ceiling heights of the loft structures. These are more likely to be uniformly occupied by warehousing or studio uses as several of these buildings have loading docks or other structural conditions that have prevented ground floor conversions. Lastly, the largest loft buildings of 6 to 12 stories, or 80 to 120 feet in height, are typically of mixed-use character. Although there are some vestiges of earlier light-manufacturing uses such as waste paper transfer, ground floor uses typically include dry cleaners, art galleries, garment production, and furniture sales. The remaining floors of these lofts contain an array of uses, including architectural, graphic design, and other business services, printing companies, woodworking and similar light industrial work, and art studios.

Buildings in the Bridge Street corridor commonly range from 4 to 7 stories, or 50 to 75 feet. Smaller foundries and garages of 20 feet in height are also interspersed. Both of these building types do not typically have ground floor uses that interact with the street and are more likely to be occupied by industrial uses including furniture production, woodworking, and metal sculpting that have remained during the area's transformation. There are also concentrations of office space and residential units throughout the Bridge Street area as well.

DUMBO is served by the F train with a stop one block south of the rezoning area at the intersection of York and Jay Streets. Subway service is also available on the A and C trains with a station at High Street, seven blocks to the southwest. The B61 and B25 bus routes also have stops near the proposed rezoning area.

Recent City Actions

The proposed action follows six previous private and DCP rezonings in the past ten years in the surrounding and adjacent areas that have increased the mixed-use character of the neighborhood. These include the mapping of a C6-2A district in 1998 to allow for the mixed-use conversion of buildings along Main Street; the contextual residential rezoning of Vinegar Hill, in conjunction with the LPC designation of an historic district; the creation in 1999 of Brooklyn's first Special Mixed Use District, M1-2/R8A (MX-2) to allow for mixed-use conversion and new construction between the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges from Water to York Streets; and several private rezoning applications to facilitate new mixed use developments. These actions have generated over 900 new residential units with the capacity for creation of an additional 900 units in the future.



Historic Districts

[View a larger image.](#)

In December 2007, LPC designated the DUMBO Historic District. Twenty-five lots within the proposed rezoning area contain style buildings as determined by the LPC, requiring these buildings to undergo LPC review of any proposed alteration or demolition.

by the LPC, requiring these buildings to

Existing Zoning

The rezoning area is currently zoned M1-2 and M3-1. Four blocks north of Plymouth Street, as well as a property at the southeast corner of the Bridge Street and Plymouth Street, are zoned M3-1. Portions of eight blocks south of Plymouth Street are mapped M1-2. The M3-1 zoning has been in place since the current Zoning Resolution was adopted in 1961 while the M1-2 zoning was mapped in 1986, reducing the size of the M3-1 district to reflect the shift in types of industrial uses in the area.



Existing Zoning

[View a larger image.](#)

M1-2

An M1-2 district is currently mapped over approximately two-thirds of the rezoning area generally located south of Plymouth Street. M1-2 districts permit Use Groups 4-14, and 16-17, which include light manufacturing and industrial uses, many commercial uses and certain community facility uses. The district has a 60-foot or four-story street wall height limit, whichever is less, before an initial setback of 15 feet on a wide street, and 20 feet on a narrow street. All of the streets within the study area are narrow streets for zoning purposes, at less than 75 feet wide. Building envelopes are governed by the sky exposure plane. M1-2 permits 2.0 FAR; however buildings containing community facility uses are permitted up to 4.8 FAR.

M3-1

An M3-1 district is currently mapped in the area north of Plymouth Street or approximately one-third of the rezoning area. M3-1 districts permit Use Groups 6-14, and 16-18, which include heavy manufacturing and industrial uses up to 2.0 FAR and certain commercial uses. The district has a 60-foot or four-story street wall height limit, whichever is less, before an initial setback of 15 feet on a wide street, and 20 feet on a narrow street. All of the streets within the study area are narrow streets for zoning purposes, at less than 75 feet wide. Building envelopes are governed by the sky exposure plane.

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Proposed Zoning

DUMBO Proposed Zoning

The DUMBO rezoning would change the existing M1-2 and M3-1 zoning to mixed use, contextual zoning districts (M1-4/R8A and M1-4/R7A, (MX-2)) and extend the adjacent Special Mixed Use District (MX-2) established in 1999. The proposed rezoning would allow residential conversion of existing loft buildings and promote new construction at densities consistent with the existing built character.

In conjunction with this rezoning, there is a related zoning text amendment to permit the use of the [Inclusionary Housing](#) bonus to create incentives for the development and preservation of affordable housing throughout the proposed rezoning area. In addition, the proposed zoning text amendment would update references to the Special Mixed Use District to refer to DUMBO.



Proposed Zoning

[View a larger image.](#)

[DUMBO Rezoning Zoning Comparison Chart](#)

M1-4/R8A (MX-2) from M3-1 and M1-2

Ten full or partial blocks, along the Jay Street corridor would be rezoned to an M1-4/R8A mixed-use district. This area is generally bounded by Adams Street to the west, John Street and the East River to the north, Front Street to the south, and the properties along the east side of Jay Street to the east. Buildings with large floor plates that rise without setback to their maximum height are the predominant development on of these blocks.

The proposed M1-4/R8A mixed use district would allow residential and community facility uses within Use Groups 1-4, and commercial and manufacturing uses within Use Groups 5-15 and 17. The proposed M1-4/R8A district requires new buildings to have a street wall height of 60 to 85 feet and a maximum building height of 120 feet.

In conjunction with the related zoning text amendment to extend the Inclusionary Housing program to the proposed M1-4/R8A district, residential developments would have a maximum base FAR of 5.4 which could be increased to 7.2 FAR with the provision of affordable housing. Manufacturing and commercial uses would retain their current limit of 2.0 FAR, and community facility uses would have an FAR limit of 6.5. The contextual height limits established by the M1-4/R8A district would apply to all new development.

Proposed M1-4/R7A (MX-2) from M3-1 and M1-2

Five partial blocks along the Bridge Street corridor are proposed to be rezoned to an M1-4/R7A mixed-use district. This area extends east of the proposed R8A district, and is generally bounded by John Street to the north, the properties on the east side of Bridge Street, and Front Street to the south. This corridor is characterized by five to seven story lofts buildings that rise without setback.

The proposed M1-4/R7A mixed use district would also allow residential and community facility uses within Use Groups 1-4, and commercial and manufacturing uses within Use Groups 5-15 and 17. The proposed M1-4/R8A district requires new buildings to have a street wall height of 60 to 85 feet and a maximum building height of 120 feet.

In conjunction with the related zoning text amendment to extend the Inclusionary Housing program to the proposed M1-4/R7A district, residential developments would have a maximum base FAR of 3.45 which could be increased to 4.6 FAR with the provision of affordable housing. Manufacturing and commercial uses would retain their current limit of 2.0 FAR, and community facility uses would have an FAR limit of 4.0. The contextual height limits established by the M1-4/R7A district would apply to all new development.

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS

Inclusionary Housing Program

The related zoning text amendment will make the Inclusionary Housing Program applicable in the proposed M1-4/R7A and M1-4/R8A districts within the rezoning area establishing incentives for the creation and preservation of affordable housing in conjunction with the development in the area.

Under the Inclusionary Housing program, developments providing affordable housing are eligible for a floor area bonus, within contextual height and bulk regulations tailored to this area. Affordable units can be provided either on the same site as the development earning the bonus, or off-site either through new construction or preservation of

existing affordable units. Off-site affordable units must be located within the same community district or within a half-mile of the bonused development. Available City, State, and Federal housing finance programs may be used to finance affordable units. The combination of a zoning bonus with housing programs would establish an incentive for the development and preservation of affordable housing in DUMBO.

MX-2, DUMBO

The related zoning text amendment will also change the name reference to the location of the Special Mixed Use District 2 (MX-2) from Fulton Ferry to DUMBO to more accurately reflect the name of the area.

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Public Review

On February 17th, 2009 the Department of City Planning certified [Uniform Land Use Review \(ULURP\)](#) application (C 0900310 ZMK) for the DUMBO rezoning and referred the related non-ULURP text amendment (N 090309 ZRK) to begin the formal public review process.

Milestone	Date
Department of City Planning Certification	February 17, 2009 –  View the presentation
Community Board 2 Public Hearing	March 18, 2009
Community Board 2 Disapproval	April 7, 2009
Brooklyn Borough President Public Hearing	May 7, 2009
Brooklyn Borough President Conditional Approval	May 27, 2009
City Planning Commission Public Hearing	June 3, 2009
City Planning Commission Approval (Read the CPC Reports.)	July 1, 2009
City Council Approval	July 29, 2009

For more information, contact the Brooklyn Office of the Department of City Planning at (718) 780.8280.

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.