

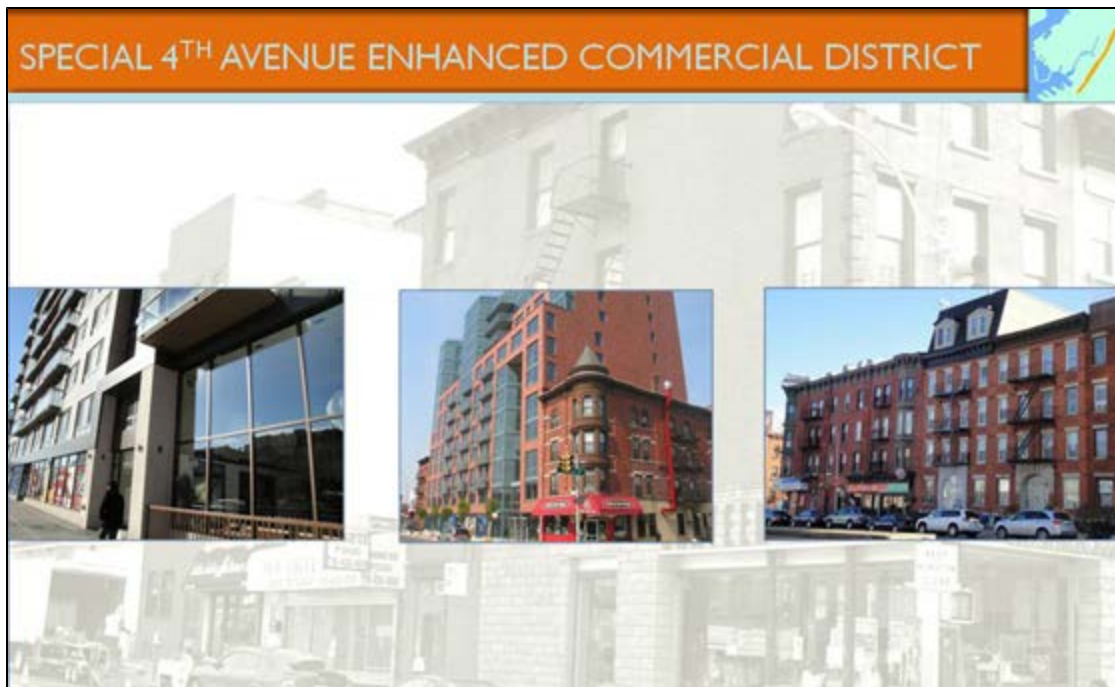
Special 4th Avenue Enhanced Commercial District - **Approved!**

Overview



Update November 29, 2011:

On November 29, 2011 the City Council adopted the Special 4th Avenue Enhanced Commercial District. The zoning text and map changes are now in effect. [View the adopted text amendment.](#)

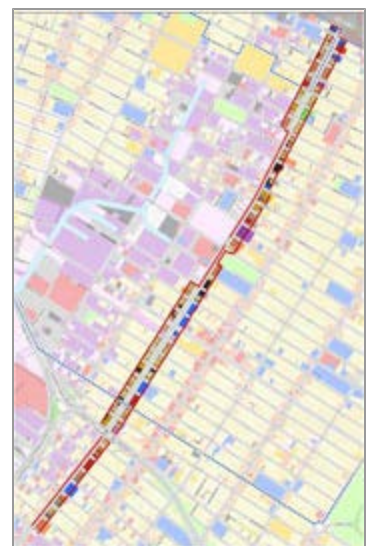


Introduction

The Department of City Planning (DCP) is proposing a zoning text amendment and zoning map change to create the Special Fourth Avenue Enhanced Commercial District for the portion of Fourth Avenue from Atlantic Avenue to 24th Street in Brooklyn [Community Districts 2, 6 and 7](#). The proposed special district would ensure the continued development of Fourth Avenue as a lively, mixed use neighborhood by establishing regulations to promote a vibrant mix of commercial and [community facility uses](#) on the ground floor of new [developments](#) and [enlargements](#), and would apply certain streetscape and sidewalk continuity guidelines in place to enhance the pedestrian environment.

The proposed actions are the result of close collaboration with the local community boards, civic groups and elected officials. The portions of Fourth Avenue to which these regulations would apply have been rezoned in recent years to encourage mid-density mixed use development with ground floor commercial uses. The proposed Special District would ensure that this trend of creating a vibrant mixed use corridor would continue.

While many of the more recent mixed use [developments](#) and proposals along this portion of Fourth Avenue have included a mix of uses at the ground floor to better engage the growing pedestrian population, the Department has been engaged with the local community to explore regulations that would ensure a more lively streetscape context with streetscape controls and ground floor neighborhood services and amenities to better serve the growing residential population. The proposed changes would apply to new developments and enlargements along 56 [blockfronts](#) of



Study Area - [View a larger image.](#)

Fourth Avenue zoned R8A/C2-4 or R8A in the Park Slope and South Park Slope neighborhoods of Brooklyn.

Special 4th Avenue Enhanced Commercial District - **Approved!** Existing Zoning

Existing Context

The portions of Fourth Avenue to which the proposed Special Fourth Avenue Enhanced Commercial District would apply have been rezoned in recent years to encourage a medium density mix of uses, beginning with the Park Slope North rezoning in 1994 which rezoned the blocks between Atlantic Avenue and Warren Street to R8A/C2-4. In 2003, the Department rezoned approximately 110 blocks of Park Slope, including 39 [blockfronts](#) to R8A/C2-4 and R8A on Fourth Avenue. The Department followed up this rezoning with its 2005 South Park Slope contextual rezoning, which applied the R8A/C2-4 and R8A district designations on an additional 12 blockfronts along Fourth Avenue. Park Slope and South Park Slope are predominantly residential neighborhoods with a historic rowhouse context on the side streets and moderately larger multi-family apartment buildings on the avenues ranging generally from 6 to 12 stories. The block frontages along Fourth Avenue that would be governed by the proposed special district are zoned to permit buildings up to 12 stories after a [building setback](#). Several new buildings which have been built since this portion of the corridor was rezoned to R8A now dot this wide corridor, alongside existing 3 and 4 story rowhouse apartment buildings, some single family home, commercial and automotive uses, and a number of schools, churches and other larger community facilities.



Mixed Use - 4th Avenue at Bergen Street



Residential Block - 4th Avenue and 10th Street



P. S. 124 - 4th Avenue and 13th Street

Since the area to which the proposed special district regulations would apply has been rezoned in recent years, the character of this portion of Fourth Avenue has slowly been changing from that of an arterial thoroughfare lined with automotive repair and [commercial uses](#) on the northern blocks to a more mixed use neighborhood, with higher density apartment buildings up to 12 stories in height beginning to line the avenue alongside associated retail and service uses such as new cafes and restaurants.



4th Avenue and Butler Street



4th Avenue and 7th Street



4th Avenue and 19th Street

The area is well served by mass transit with the M, N, and R subway lines running below Fourth Avenue with stations at Pacific Street, Union Street, 9th Street and Prospect Avenue. The F subway train stops at 9th Street and Fourth Avenue, and several bus lines run in the vicinity with connections to Manhattan and other parts of Brooklyn.

Existing Zoning

Of the 56 blockfronts on Fourth Avenue to which the proposed Special Fourth Avenue Enhanced Commercial District regulations would apply, 52 are zoned R8A with a C2-4 [commercial overlay](#). There are four blockfronts that are zoned R8A without a commercial overlay which are developed with houses of worship or schools. The R8A zoning district on Fourth Avenue is a [contextual zoning](#) district that permits residential and community facility uses; no changes to the underlying zoning district regulations are proposed as part of this proposal. The maximum [floor area ratio \(FAR\)](#) for residential uses on the portions of the study area between Atlantic Avenue to 15th Street is 6.02 FAR. Between 15th Street and 24th Street, the R8A district permits a maximum FAR of 7.2 for residential use if affordable housing units are provided. For residential development that does not include any affordable housing units, the FAR is limited to 5.4 FAR. [Community facility uses](#) throughout the proposed special district area are limited to 6.5 FAR. Above a [base height](#) of 60 to 85 feet, buildings must set back before rising to a maximum [building height](#) of 120 feet. The contextual [building envelope](#) regulations would apply to all types of development, regardless of use or density.

C2-4 zoning districts are commercial overlays mapped within the R8A zoning district to which the proposed special district regulations would apply. C2 districts serve local retail needs and permit a range of uses including grocery stores, restaurants, and repair services. In mixed buildings, commercial uses must always be located below the residential use. The FAR for a C2-4 zoning district is 2.0 or one commercial floor in mixed residential/commercial buildings.

The proposed Special District regulations would not have any impact on the underlying [zoning district](#) regulations, which would remain R8A/C2-4 or R8A where applicable.



Existing Zoning Map - [View a larger image](#).

Special 4th Avenue Enhanced Commercial District - **Approved!** Proposed Zoning

The proposed Special Fourth Avenue Enhanced Commercial District would establish regulations to require a broad range of engaging, pedestrian-friendly commercial and community facility uses on the ground floor of buildings fronting on Fourth Avenue, and limit the location of less pedestrian-friendly residential and parking uses on the ground floor. It would apply certain streetscape and parking entrance location guidelines on the ground floor to further enhance the pedestrian streetscape environment. The proposed Special Fourth Avenue Enhanced Commercial District text amendment would be shown on the zoning map by mapping a Special District denoted "EC" for Enhanced Commercial. This Special District follows the existing zoning line for the R8A and R8A/C2-4 [zoning district](#) that is mapped along this portion of 4th Avenue.

Each of the three major components to this text amendment seeks to address a specific issue and will result in diverse commercial and retail developments in this emerging new neighborhood.

 [View the proposed text amendment.](#)



Proposed Zoning -

 [View a larger image.](#)

Enlivening Ground Floor Uses

To ensure a mix of commercial and retail uses as already permitted by the underlying zoning, the proposal would require that the first 30 feet of the entire ground floor frontage be developed with certain permitted commercial or community facility, non-residential uses. Of the ground floor frontage of a lot, at least 50% must be occupied by retail uses. The remaining frontage of the lot (but not more than 50%) may be occupied by uses otherwise permitted in the C2-4 zoning district, with the exception of public parking garages, as well as lobby spaces and parking entrances where applicable. This flexibility in permitting a range of uses will encourage the development of a varied, active streetscape.



Ground Floor Uses -  [View a larger image](#)

While parking and residential uses remain desirable and would continue to be permitted, these uses would be accommodated elsewhere in the building as otherwise permitted by zoning or beyond the first 30 feet of the building on the ground floor. Residential lobby sizes would be limited to 25' at most to ensure that the maximum feasible ground floor space be occupied by shops and offices that serve the neighborhood and its new residents.

Sidewalk Continuity/Curb Cuts

To ensure that cars do not overshadow the pedestrian experience, [curb cuts](#) serving new buildings would generally be limited to the side streets. This would minimize interruptions to the sidewalk and streetwall and assure that Fourth Avenue developed and evolved with an improved pedestrian environment. A curb cut would only be permitted on Fourth Avenue if it serves an interior zoning lot which does not have access to a side street AND has a [lot width](#) along Fourth Avenue greater than 60'.



Curb Cuts -  [View a larger image](#)

Streetscape Design/Transparency

To ensure an interactive and social space along 4th Avenue, all uses fronting on

Fourth Avenue, including lobbies, must adhere to a minimum level of streetwall transparency of 50% measured between 2' and 12'. Shops and uses with glass storefronts allow pedestrians to look at activities inside from the sidewalk. Blank streetwalls necessary for building elements such as columns or fire doors could not exceed 10' in width.



Transparency - [View a larger image](#)

Schools, houses of worship and pre-existing lots of less than 20' would be exempted from the ground floor use and streetscape design/transparency regulations but curb cut regulations would apply to these uses.

When an area within the Special Fourth Avenue Enhanced Commercial District is zoned R8A only, transparency requirements and ground floor commercial use regulations would not apply.

Special 4th Avenue Enhanced Commercial District - **Approved!** Public Review

The Special Fourth Avenue Enhanced Commercial District proposal began formal public review on June 20, 2011 with the Department of City Planning's Certification of the [Uniform Land Use Review \(ULURP\)](#) application (C 110386ZMK) and the [City Planning Commission's](#) referral of the associated zoning text amendment (N 110387ZRK).


<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Target Dates</i>
Department of City Planning Certification	June 20, 2011
Community Board 2 Approval Community Board 7 Approval Community Board 6 Approval	July 26, 2011 July 5, 2011 September 13, 2011
Brooklyn Borough President Approval	August 22, 2011
City Planning Commission Hearing	September 21, 2011
City Planning Commission Approval (with modifications*)  Read the CPC Reports.	October 19, 2011
City Council Approval	November 29, 2011

*** City Planning Commission Modification**

On October 19, 2011 the City Planning Commission (CPC) approved the zoning text amendment (N 110387 ZRK) with one modification in response to testimony at its public hearing and the comments of the Brooklyn Borough President. The modification is an adjustment the location of required transparency on the ground floor of developments and enlargements facing Fourth Avenue. The zoning map amendment (C 110386 ZMK) was approved without modification.

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.