



Greenpoint-Williamsburg Contextual Rezoning - **Approved!**

Overview

Update July 29, 2009:

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

TYPICAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



Ainslie Street between Leonard and Lorimer Sts



Morgan Avenue between Nassau and Driggs Ave

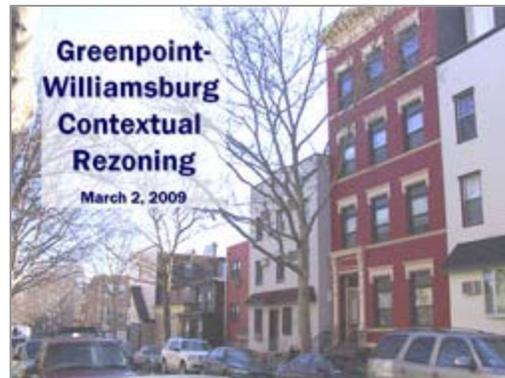


Kent Street between Franklin St and Manhattan Ave in the Greenpoint Historic District

Introduction

At the request of Community Board 1 and local elected officials, the Department of City Planning proposes zoning map and text amendments for an approximately 175 block area in the Greenpoint and Williamsburg neighborhoods within Community District 1 in Brooklyn. Separate from the 2005 Greenpoint-Williamsburg Waterfront Rezoning, this rezoning seeks to protect the existing character of residential areas east of the 2005 rezoning area.

The rezoning area contains residential blocks from Clay Street in the north to Scholes and Maujer Streets in the south. It is bounded on the west by the area rezoned by the 2005 Greenpoint-Williamsburg Waterfront Rezoning and on the east by the manufacturing areas in Eastern Greenpoint and Williamsburg. This area does not include property rezoned in 2005 or any area zoned for manufacturing.



 [View the slideshow presentation](#)

The rezoning aims to preserve neighborhood character and scale by limiting the height of new development, to create opportunities and incentives for affordable housing through inclusionary zoning, and to support local retail corridors while protecting the residential character of nearby side streets.

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Existing Zoning and Context



Locator Map

 [View a larger image](#)



Land Use Map

 [View a larger image](#)



Existing Zoning Map

 [View a larger image](#)

The neighborhoods of Greenpoint and Williamsburg are located at the northern tip of Brooklyn, directly south of Long Island City in Queens. The East River and Newtown Creek form their western, northern, and eastern boundaries. Williamsburg is served by the G, L, and J-M-Z subway lines, connecting to lower Manhattan and points in Brooklyn and Queens. Greenpoint is served by the G subway line, connecting to Carroll Gardens in Brooklyn, and points in Queens.

Neighborhood Character

The blocks within the rezoning area were originally developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries as residential neighborhoods to house workers attached to the vibrant industry located along the East River and Newtown Creek. These industries included ship building, metal and glass production, and oil and sugar refining.

Industry in this area declined steadily throughout the 20th century. However, the area has seen considerable growth during the last decade as a residential neighborhood. In response to these changes, industrial and mixed use areas on and near the waterfront were rezoned to permit residential development under the 2005 Greenpoint-Williamsburg Land Use and Waterfront Plan. The areas rezoned in 2005 lie to the west of the residential blocks that are the subject of this action.

Today, most blocks in the area subject to this rezoning consist of 2-4 story wood-frame *attached* houses and apartment buildings, while some buildings rise to five or six stories. Neat rows of brick and masonry row houses can also be seen in Greenpoint east of Monsignor McGolrick Park. The Greenpoint Historic District, designated in 1982, features distinctive 19th century brick row houses commissioned by business owners, foremen, and professionals who had worked on the nearby waterfront.

These buildings often include ground floor *commercial uses* when located along the commercial corridors of Manhattan, Driggs, Nassau, Graham and Metropolitan avenues, and Grand and Franklin streets. *Community facilities* such as schools and churches are common. Scattered industrial uses occur in Northern Greenpoint, and on Metropolitan Avenue west of Bushwick Avenue.

RESIDENTIAL SIDE STREETS



Humboldt Street between Skillman Ave and Jackson St in an existing R6 District

COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS



Manhattan Avenue between Norman and Meserole Aves in an existing C4-3 District

WIDE STREETS



McGuinness Boulevard between Norman and Nassau Aves in an existing R6 District

UNIQUE CONDITIONS



Elevated Roadway of the BQE at Graham Ave in an existing R6 District



Automotive uses at Humboldt St and Metropolitan Ave in an existing C8-2 District

OUT OF CONTEXT DEVELOPMENT



Eckford Street between Greenpoint Ave and Calyer St in an existing R6 District



Richardson and Humboldt Streets in Williamsburg in an existing R6 District

Existing Zoning

The area is predominantly zoned **R6**, with two small **C4-3** districts and a **C8-2** district. **C1** and **C2** *commercial overlays* occur on blocks along retail corridors. The area north of the BQE was rezoned from **R4** to **R6** in 1974. Zoning in the rest of the rezoning area is largely unchanged since 1961.

R6 is mapped over approximately 92% (161 full or partial blocks) of the rezoning area. **R6** is a *height factor* district with no height limits and which permits *lower* construction on large lots. Building heights are regulated by the *sky exposure plane*. The maximum *floor area ratio* (FAR) in **R6** is 2.43 for *residential buildings* and 4.8 for *community facilities*. The optional *Quality Housing program* permits an FAR of 2.2 on *narrow streets* and 3.0 on *wide streets* and limits building heights to 55 feet and 70 feet, respectively. Off-street parking is required for 70 percent of the *dwelling units*, or for 50 percent of the dwelling units when the Quality Housing program is utilized.

C4-3

C4-3 districts cover 16 full or partial blocks along Manhattan Avenue in the northern portion of the rezoning area and along Grand Street in the south. **C4-3** district regulations permit general commercial uses to an FAR of 3.4 and community facility uses to an FAR of 4.8. Unlike C1 and C2 commercial overlays, C4-3 districts permit commercial uses on multiple floors when residences are located above, and permit larger and more varied retail establishments such as department stores. Residential uses are also permitted and are largely governed by the **R6** regulations described above. C4-3 districts do not have height limits and building envelopes are regulated by the sky exposure plane.

C8-2

A **C8-2** district covers six full and partial blocks at the intersection of Bushwick and Metropolitan Avenues and Humboldt Street. **C8-2** districts permit commercial and community facility uses, including heavy commercial uses such as automobile repair and warehouses. Residential uses are not permitted. Commercial uses are permitted to 2.0 FAR and community facility uses are permitted to 4.8 FAR. There is no height limit in a **C8-2** district.

Commercial Overlays

C1-3, **C2-2**, **C2-3**, and **C2-4** commercial overlays are mapped within the **R6** district on the commercial corridors of Manhattan, Driggs, Nassau, Graham and Metropolitan avenues, and Grand Street. These overlays permit local retail and service uses. **C1** overlays permit basic small-scale retail shops, grocery stores and offices. **C2** overlays permit a slightly broader range of service uses, such as local repair services. **C1** and **C2** overlays have a maximum commercial FAR of 2.0 when mapped in **R6** districts, though commercial uses are limited to the first floor when residences are located above. These overlays require parking for general retail space at rates of between one space per 300 square feet and one space per 1000 square feet.

Greenpoint-Williamsburg Contextual Rezoning - **Approved!** Proposed Zoning

The recent surge in residential construction developed as-of-right under the existing R6 and C4-3 zoning has produced apartment buildings that are much taller than the surrounding rowhouse context. This type of development is inconsistent with, and disruptive of, the low-rise attached residential context found within the rezoning area.

The proposed zoning map and text amendments would:

- Preserve neighborhood scale and character by replacing the existing R6 district with [contextual zoning](#) districts that have height limits. All proposed districts are contextual districts.
- Provide opportunities and incentives for affordable housing through the establishment of an [inclusionary housing](#) bonus on certain wide streets.
- Recognize and preserve existing commercial uses while protecting the residential character of lots adjacent to retail corridors by adjusting commercial zoning districts.

Description of the Proposal

Zoning Map Changes View the  [zoning comparison chart](#)



Proposed Zoning Map
 [View a larger image](#)



India Street between Franklin St and Manhattan Ave in a proposed R6B District



Metropolitan Avenue between Union Ave and Lorimer St in an proposed R7A district



Grand Street between Graham Ave and Humboldt St in a proposed C4-4A District

R6B

R6B, is proposed for approximately 80% of the rezoning area (162 full or partial blocks). R6B would be mapped on residential side streets that are narrower and are not major commercial or transportation corridors. These areas are currently zoned R6 or C4-3.

R6B permits residential and community facility uses to an FAR of 2.0. [Base heights](#) are required to be between 30 and 40 feet, and the maximum building height is 50 feet after a setback from the street. This typically

produces a 4- to 5-story building. New development in the proposed **R6B** district would be required to line up with adjacent structures to maintain the existing street wall. New multifamily residences in **R6B** districts must provide off-street parking for 50% of the dwelling units.

R6A

R6A, is proposed for approximately 6% of the rezoning area (31 partial blocks and one full block). R6A would be mapped along wide streets including the northern portion of McGuinness Boulevard and Graham and Maspeth avenues. These areas are currently zoned R6 or C4-3.

R6A permits residential and community facility uses to an FAR of 3.0. Base heights are required to be between 40 and 60 feet, and the maximum building height is 70 feet after a setback from the street. This typically produces a 6-7 story building. New buildings in **R6A** districts must be located no closer to the street than a neighboring building. Off-street parking is required for 50% of the residential units.

R7A

R7A is proposed for approximately 9% of the rezoning area (44 partial blocks). R7A would be mapped along certain wide streets that are major commercial or transportation corridors. These locations include the northern portion of Manhattan Avenue, the southern portion of McGuinness Boulevard, Grand Street, and Metropolitan, Union, and Bushwick avenues. These areas are currently zoned R6, or C8-2.

As part of the related zoning text amendment, the [Inclusionary Housing program](#) would be made applicable within R7A and C4-4A districts in this area. R7A permits residential and community facility uses to a base FAR of 3.45. The FAR may be increased to 4.6 if affordable housing is provided. Base heights are required to be between 40 and 65 feet, and the maximum building height is 80 feet after a setback from the street. This typically produces 6- to 8-story buildings. New buildings in **R7A** districts must be located no closer to the street than a neighboring building. Parking is required for 50% of the residential units.

C4-3A

C4-3A is proposed for 3% of the rezoning area (10 full or partial blocks). C4-3A would be mapped over the commercial center at the southern end of Manhattan Avenue. This area is currently zoned C4-3.

C4-3A districts are mapped in commercial centers that are located outside of central business districts. These districts permit specialty and department stores, theaters, and offices, which are not permitted in C1 or C2 overlays. C4-3A permits residential, commercial, and community facility uses to an FAR of 3.0. Base heights are required to be between 40 and 60 feet, and the maximum building height is 70 feet after a setback from the street. This typically produces a 6-7 story building. Parking is required for 50% of the residential units and requirements vary by use for commercial space.

C4-4A

C4-4A is proposed for 3% of the rezoning area (10 partial blocks). C4-4A would be mapped along Grand Street, which is currently a commercial center.

C4-4A districts, like C4-3A districts are mapped in commercial centers that are located outside of central business districts. C4-4A is an R7A-equivalent district that permits commercial and community facility uses to an FAR of 4.0. As part of the related zoning text amendment, the Inclusionary Housing program would be made applicable within C4-4A districts in this area. Any building containing residences is limited to a base FAR of 3.45, which can be increased to 4.6 FAR if affordable housing is provided. Base heights are required to be between 40 and 65 feet, and the maximum building height is 80 feet after a setback from the street. Parking is required for 50% of the residential units and requirements vary by use for commercial space.

C2-4 Overlays

The proposed rezoning would also change all existing **C1-3**, **C1-4**, **C2-2**, and **C2-3** commercial overlays to **C2-4** and would reduce overlay depths from 150 feet to 100 feet. This would allow a slightly wider range of local uses and prevent commercial uses from encroaching on the residential side streets.

New C2-4 overlays would be mapped at specific locations where stores already exist, including areas without an existing overlay or where existing C4 or C8 zoning is being removed. These locations include Franklin Street, Greenpoint, Driggs, Metropolitan, and Graham avenues.

Zoning Text Change

Inclusionary Housing Program

The Greenpoint-Williamsburg Contextual rezoning proposal applies the Inclusionary Housing program to the proposed R7A and C4-4A districts, establishing incentives for the creation and preservation of affordable housing in conjunction with new development.

For residential development without an affordable housing component, the maximum FAR within the areas proposed to be rezoned to R7A or C4-4A would be limited to a base FAR of 3.45. Under the Inclusionary

Housing program, a development providing affordable housing is eligible for a floor area bonus within the underlying contextual height and bulk regulations. Developments could qualify for a maximum FAR of 4.6 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 or within a half-mile of the bonused development if in a different community district. Other city, state and federal housing finance programs may be used to provide further assistance in creating affordable units.

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Public Review

On March 2nd, 2009 the Department of City Planning certified [Uniform Land Use Review \(ULURP\)](#) application (C 090334 ZMK) for the Greenpoint/Williamsburg Contextual rezoning and referred the related non-ULURP text amendment (N 090333 ZRK) to begin the formal public review process.

Milestone	Date
Public presentation of scope and goals at CB1 full board meeting	October 2006
Public presentation of zoning proposal at CB1 ULURP Committee meeting	December 2007
Public information session on zoning proposal with general public	October 2008
Department of City Planning Certification	March 2, 2009 –  View the presentation
Community Board 1 Approval with Conditions	April 13, 2009
Brooklyn Borough President Public Hearing	May 7, 2009
Brooklyn Borough President Approval	May 20, 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.