



Laurelton Rezoning - **Approved!**

Overview

Update September 4, 2008:

On September 4, 2008 the City Council adopted the Laurelton Rezoning changes as proposed. The zoning changes are now in effect.



Single-family homes on 236th Street north of Merrick Boulevard

Introduction

The Department of City Planning is proposing Zoning Map changes for approximately 220 blocks in the southeast Queens neighborhood of Laurelton in Community District 13. The rezoning area is located two miles north of John F. Kennedy International Airport, less than a half mile west of Nassau County and is generally bounded by Montefiore Cemetery and 121st Avenue to the north, Laurelton Parkway to the east, South Conduit Avenue and Belt Parkway to the south and Springfield Boulevard to the west.

The proposed rezoning and changes to the commercial overlay districts aim to protect Laurelton's established lower density, one- and two-family character and ensure that future residential development reflects the context of the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed rezoning would also provide modest housing opportunities along a section of Merrick and Springfield boulevards by establishing a medium-density residential district where the existing zoning now does not permit residential development. In addition, establishing new commercial overlays on the area's primary corridors and reducing the depth of existing overlay districts would match existing land use patterns and prevent commercial uses from encroaching on residential side streets.



 [View a larger image.](#)

The study was initiated in response to local concerns that recent residential development in the area was inconsistent with the scale and character of the existing neighborhood. The proposed zoning recommendations are the result of extensive consultation with the local City Councilmember, Laurelton's civic and block

associations and with Community Board 13.

Background

Residential development in Laurelton began early in the 20th century in the southwest part of the neighborhood after the opening of a railroad station at the juncture of the Atlantic and Montauk branches of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR). Replacing gristmills and farmland, single-family, detached homes were constructed. Post-World War II residential construction focused on providing housing for returning veterans and city residents looking for the suburban lifestyle and consisted primarily of single-family, detached homes and rental apartments in a garden apartment complex.

In recent years, new housing that has been constructed under the existing zoning is inconsistent with the established building patterns in the area. New development has begun to alter the one- and two-family detached character of this neighborhood. Lot subdivision has been common and sound single-family homes are being replaced with attached, semi-detached or multifamily structures. The existing zoning also allows alterations and new single-family homes that are out of scale with the predominant development in sections of Laurelton.



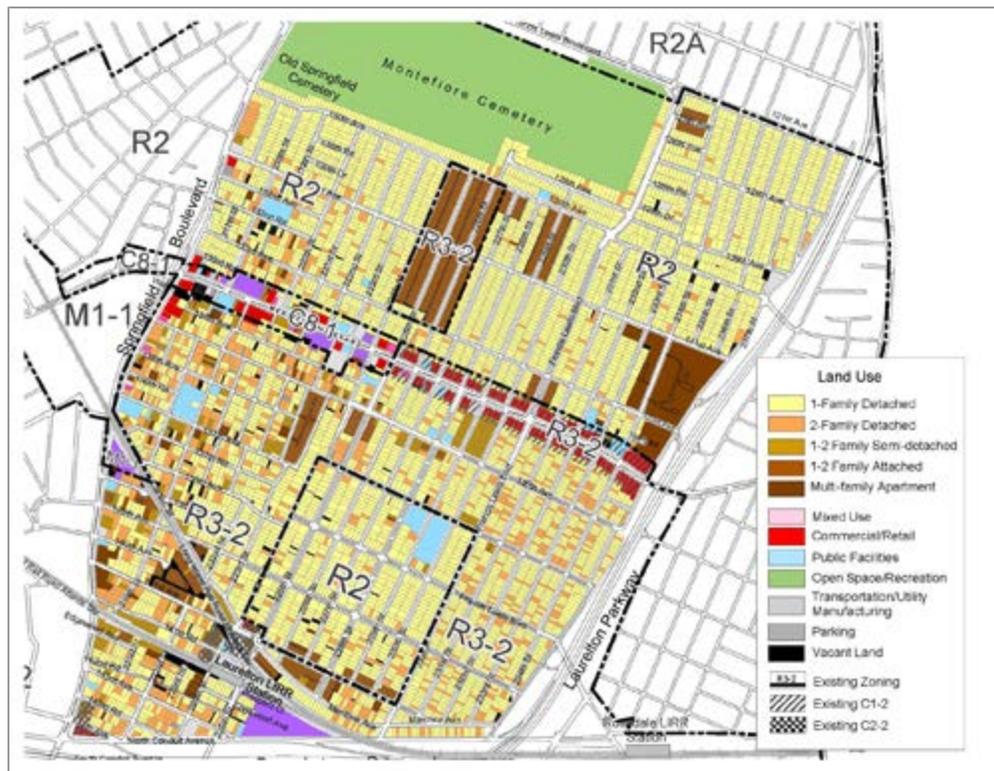
Out-of-character construction on 224th Street near 138th Avenue

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Existing Zoning and Context

Existing Zoning

The Laurelton rezoning area has two residential districts – R2 north of Merrick Boulevard - which allows only single-family detached residences, and R3-2, a general residence district south of Merrick Boulevard that allows a range of housing types. C1-2 and C2-2 commercial overlay districts and a C8-1 district are mapped along Merrick Boulevard and Springfield Boulevard which are the area’s commercial corridors. There are C2-2 overlay districts also mapped on the blocks surrounding the Laurelton LIRR station at 141st Avenue and 225th Street. A C8-1 district, which precludes residences, encompasses the block fronts on Merrick Boulevard between Springfield Boulevard and 225th Street. All of the existing zoning designations have been in place since the 1961 Zoning Resolution went into effect.



Laurelton Existing Zoning Map

[View a larger image.](#)

R2

The R2 district permits only single-family, detached residences on lots that have a minimum area of 3,800 square feet and a minimum lot width of 40 feet. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is 0.5. Community facilities are permitted an FAR of 0.5. There is no established maximum building height; instead the building’s maximum height is determined by its Sky Exposure Plane, which has a varying height depending on where a building is located on its zoning lot. One parking space is required for each dwelling unit. R2 districts cover most of the rezoning area north of Merrick Boulevard and in the center of rezoning area south of Merrick Boulevard.



Single-family homes in the existing R2 district on 236th Street north of Merrick Boulevard

R3-2

The R3-2 district is the lowest-density general residence district in which multi-family structures are permitted. A variety of housing types are permitted including garden apartments, row houses, semi-detached and detached houses. The maximum FAR is 0.6 (includes a 20% attic allowance); community facilities are permitted an FAR of 1.0. The maximum building perimeter wall height is 21 feet, and the maximum building height to the top of the roofline is 35 feet. Minimum lot width and lot area depend upon the housing configuration: one- and two-family detached structures require a 40-foot lot frontage and 3,800 square feet of lot area; other housing types require a lot width of at least 18 feet and lot area of at least 1,700 square feet. One parking space is required for each dwelling unit.



Detached homes on 138th Avenue in the existing R3-2 district

C8-1

The C8-1 district is a general service district that allows commercial and community facility uses in Use Groups 4 through 14 and 16. The most prevalent uses in C8 districts are automotive and heavy commercial uses such as auto repair and showrooms, warehouses, gas stations and car washes. Residential uses are not permitted. The maximum commercial FAR in C8-1 districts is 1.0. The maximum building height is determined by its sky exposure plane, which begins 30' above the street line. Community facilities are permitted an FAR of 2.4. Off-street parking requirements vary with the use, but generally most uses require one accessory parking space per 300 square feet of commercial space.



Auto Repair uses in the C8-1 district on Merrick Boulevard at 220th Street

C1-2 Commercial Overlay Districts

There are existing C1-2 commercial overlay districts along Merrick Boulevard between 225th Street and Laurelton Parkway. C1 districts are mapped within residential districts and permit Use Groups 1 through 6, which allow a broad range of retail and service establishments that serve residential neighborhoods. Maximum commercial floor area can reach 1.0 FAR with commercial uses limited to the first floor in mixed-use buildings. Most retail uses require one accessory parking space per 300 square feet of commercial floor space, though the requirements may range between one space per 200 square feet and one space per 800 square feet of commercial floor area.



Local shopping in the existing C1-2 overlay district on Merrick Boulevard at 231st Street

C2-2 Commercial Overlay

There are C2-2 commercial overlay districts mapped along the east side of Springfield Boulevard between 143rd Road and 144th Avenue and on four block fronts surrounding the Laurelton LIRR station at 224th Street between 141st Avenue and Prospect Court.

C2 districts are mapped within residential districts and permit the Use Groups 1 through 9 and 14, which include a wider range of commercial uses than allowed in C1. Maximum commercial floor area can reach 1.0 FAR with commercial uses limited to the first floor in mixed-use buildings. Most retail uses require one accessory parking space per 300 square feet of commercial floor space, though the requirements may range between one space per 200 square feet and one space per 800 square feet.

Laurelton Rezoning - **Approved!** Proposed Zoning

Proposed Zoning



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The Department's proposal, encompassing more than 200 blocks throughout the Laurelton neighborhood, has three components:

- **Residential Rezoning:**
Rezoning all or portions of approximately 215 blocks from R2, R3-2 and C8-1 to lower-density or contextual zoning districts (R2, R2A, R3A, R3X, R3-1, R3-2 or R4B);
- **Commercial Corridor Rezoning:**
Rezoning of 17 partial block fronts along Merrick and Springfield boulevards from C8-1 and R3-2 to R5D in order to permit moderate growth in housing opportunities where the current zoning precludes residential uses; and
- **Commercial Overlay Modifications:** Changing existing C1-2 and C2-2 commercial overlay districts throughout the rezoning area to C1-3 or C2-3 and reducing the overlay depth to coincide with commercial development patterns and preclude extension of commercial uses into the residential side streets; eliminating C2-2 overlay districts on four partial blocks where residential development exists; and establishing a C2-3 commercial overlay district along Merrick and Springfield boulevards within the proposed R5D zoning district west of 225th Street.

Together these actions would protect predominant lower-density character of Laurelton, ensure that future development would be consistent with surrounding building patterns; modify the commercial zoning to correspond to existing commercial uses, prevent commercial uses from encroaching onto residential streets, and provide limited opportunities for new housing where existing zoning currently prohibits residential development.

View the [Laurelton Zoning Comparison Chart.](#)

R2 from R3-2 and C8-1

Existing R2 districts are proposed to be extended in two areas that are currently zoned R3-2 or C8-1. The rezoning areas include 10 partial blocks that are located 100 feet north of Merrick Boulevard, between 222nd Street and Francis Lewis Boulevard, six blocks generally bounded by 135th Avenue, 224th Street, Carson Street and 222nd Street and, one block bounded by 141st Avenue, 226th Street, Mentone Avenue and 225th Street.

The R2 district permits only single-family, detached residences on lots that have a minimum area of 3,800 square feet with a minimum lot width of 40 feet. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is 0.5. Community



Single-family homes in the proposed R2

facilities are permitted an FAR of 0.5. There is no established maximum building height; instead the building's maximum height is determined by its Sky Exposure Plane, which has a varying height depending on where a building is located on its zoning lot. One parking space is required for each dwelling unit. R2 districts cover most of the rezoning area north of Merrick Boulevard and in the center of rezoning area south of Merrick Boulevard.

The proposed change from R3-2 and C8-1 to R2 would more closely reflect the predominant single-family detached character of the area.

R2A from R2 and R3-2

R2A zoning is proposed for all or parts of 87 blocks of the existing R2 district north of Merrick Boulevard and all or portions of 24 blocks south of Merrick Boulevard. The proposed R2A district north of Merrick Boulevard is generally bounded by 121st Avenue, Laurelton Parkway, and Springfield Boulevard and is predominantly developed with one- and one-and-one-half story, single-family, detached homes. The two areas south of Merrick Boulevard are generally bounded by 137th Avenue, 230th Place, 141st Avenue and 221st Street.



The proposed R2A zones permits only single-family, detached homes at a maximum FAR of 0.5. Unlike R2 districts, in the R2A there is no attic allowance and floor area exemptions are more limited and include no more than 300 square feet for enclosed accessory parking.. The maximum building height in R2A districts is 35 feet and the maximum perimeter wall height is 21 feet. In addition to the 15-foot minimum front yard requirement, a deeper front yard would be required (up to 20 feet) if needed to line up with the yard depth of an adjacent building. The maximum lot coverage under R2A is 30%, including any exterior garage in the calculation.

Typical single-family homes in the proposed R2A district North of Merrick Boulevard

The proposed R2A zoning would reflect the character of the area which is predominantly developed with one and 1/2 story detached single family homes.

R3A from R3-2 and C8-1

An R3A district is proposed for all or portions of 56 blocks in the western and eastern sections of the rezoning area, south of Merrick Boulevard. The western R3A district is generally bounded by Springfield Boulevard, 218th Street, Merrick Boulevard and Carson Street. The eastern R3A district is generally bounded by 230th Street, Laurelton Parkway, Merrick Boulevard and North Conduit Avenue.

The proposed R3A district would limit new residential development to one- and two- family detached homes with maximum FAR of 0.6 (including a 20% attic allowance). R3A districts require a minimum lot width of 25 feet, and a minimum lot area of 2,375 square feet. In addition to the 10-foot minimum front yard requirement, a deeper front yard would be required to match the yard depth of an adjacent building up to 20 feet. The maximum building height is 35 feet with a maximum perimeter wall height of 21 feet.

The proposed change from R3-2 and C8-1 to R3A would more closely reflect and protect the predominant character of one- and two-family detached buildings on narrow lots.



230th Place near 141st Avenue in the proposed R3A



R3A would mandate front yard match-ups

R3X from R3-2

Portions of 49 blocks in two areas are proposed to be rezoned from R3-2 to R3X. The proposed R3X districts are generally bounded by 135th Avenue, 221st, 223rd and 225th streets, North Conduit Avenue and Springfield Boulevard with a smaller area bounded by Merrick Boulevard, 228th Street, 137th Avenue and 225th Street.

The R3X district would limit new residential development to one- or two-family detached houses with a maximum FAR of 0.6 (including a 20% attic allowance). R3X districts require a minimum lot width of 35 feet and a minimum lot area of 3,325 square feet. In addition to the 10-foot minimum front yard requirement, a deeper front yard would be required to match the yard depth of an adjacent building up to 20 feet. The maximum building height is 35 feet with a maximum perimeter wall height of 21 feet. The proposed R3X district better reflects the existing one- and two- family detached buildings on larger lots in these areas.



Detached one- and two-family homes in the proposed R3X district 219th St., North of 138th Ave.

R3-1 from R3-2

All or portions of five blocks are proposed to be rezoned from R3-2 to R3-1 in the area is generally bounded by Merrick Boulevard, 230th Street, 135th Avenue and 227th Street.

The R3-1 district permits one- or two-family detached or semi-detached homes with an FAR of 0.6 (including a 20% attic allowance). The minimum lot width for detached structures is 40 feet and the minimum lot area is 3,800 square feet. Semi-detached homes require lots that are at least 18 feet wide with a minimum 1,700 square feet. The maximum building height is 35 feet with a maximum perimeter wall height of 21 feet. One parking space is required for each dwelling unit. The R3-1 zoning would reflect the existing building pattern in the area which is one- and two-family semi-detached structures.



Semi-detached homes in the proposed R3-1 district on 229th Street south of Merrick Boulevard

R3-2 from R2

The proposed R3-2 district encompasses all or portions of four blocks north of Merrick Boulevard, generally bounded by 131st Avenue, Laurelton Parkway, Merrick Boulevard and 232nd Street.

The R3-2 district is the lowest-density general residence district in which multi-family structures are permitted. A variety of housing types are permitted including garden apartments, row houses, semi-detached and detached houses. The maximum FAR is 0.6 (includes a 20% attic allowance). Minimum lot width and lot area depend upon the housing configuration: one- and two-family detached structures require a 40-foot lot frontage and 3,800 square feet of lot area; other housing types require a lot width of at least 18 feet and lot area of at least 1,700 square feet. One parking space is required for each dwelling unit.



Laurelton Gardens garden apartment complex in the proposed R3-2 district

The proposed R3-2 district encompasses only the blocks that where the Laurelton Gardens garden-apartment complex is located and would bring the development into conformance and compliance with zoning regulations.

R4B from R2 and R3-2

The proposed R4B zoning district includes all or portions of 15 blocks in two areas. The area north of Merrick Boulevard is generally bounded by 130th Avenue, 227th Street, 133rd Avenue and 224th Street. The area south of Merrick Boulevard is generally bounded by 141st Avenue, 230th Place, Mentone Avenue and 225th Street. These areas are developed with attached, one- and two-family residences with parking in the rear.

The proposed R4B district allows only one- and two- family homes with maximum FAR of 0.9. Detached residences require lots with a minimum lot area of 2,375 square feet and a minimum lot width of 25 feet. All other housing types require lots with a minimum area of 1,700 square



Rowhouses in the proposed R4B district 226th Street near 131st Avenue

feet and a minimum lot width of 18 feet. The maximum building height is 24 feet. One off-street parking space is required for each dwelling unit. Accessory parking is not permitted in the front yard.

R5D from C8-1 and R3-2

The proposed R5D district would include all or portions of 17 blocks along Merrick Boulevard from Springfield Boulevard to 225th Street. Most of the blocks are zoned C8-1 and are developed with automotive, auto repair, vehicular and equipment storage yards. The blocks along Springfield Boulevard are zoned R3-2 and occupied by retail, office or community facility uses.

R5D zoning district permits all types of residential buildings with a maximum FAR of 2.0 and a maximum building height of 40 feet. Typical buildings in R5D districts range between three- and four-stories. In R5D districts, off-street group parking is required for 66% of the dwelling units.

The proposed R5D will provide for modest new residential opportunities by allowing residential development as-of-right in an area where the existing zoning precludes housing. The new zoning will encourage redevelopment of vacant, underutilized and open storage areas with residential or mixed-use buildings that better complement surrounding residential development.

Commercial Overlay District Modifications

The proposal includes changes to existing commercial overlays within the rezoning area to more closely match existing commercial land use and development patterns or to encourage local retail and service establishments. In Laurelton, there are C1-2 commercial overlay districts currently mapped to a depth of 150 feet on 22 block fronts along Merrick Boulevard between 225th Street and Laurelton Parkway. These overlay districts are proposed to be rezoned to C1-3 and most reduced to a depth of 100 feet.

The application proposes the following changes relating to commercial overlay districts:

- Changing the existing C2-2 commercial overlays to C1-3 on portions of five blocks on the east side of Springfield Boulevard between 144th Avenue and North Conduit Avenue and in the vicinity of the LIRR station, generally bounded by 141st Avenue, 225th Street, Prospect Court and 224th Street; and reducing the depth of the overlays from 150 feet to 100 feet to prevent intrusion of commercial uses onto residential side streets.
- Mapping new C2-3 commercial overlays on 17 block fronts within the new R5D district along Springfield Boulevard and Merrick Boulevard west of 225th Street. The depth of these commercial districts will vary with the lot depths, but most will be 100 feet deep.
- Eliminate existing C2-2 overlay districts on four blocks:
 - the northwest corner of 225th Street and 141st Avenue;
 - the southwest corner of 225th Street and 141st Avenue;
 - the west side of 224th Street between 141 Avenue and 141st Road and
 - the southeast corner of Springfield Boulevard and 143rd Road.

The proposed modifications to the commercial overlay districts would result in a change in parking regulations. Most retail uses in the existing C1-2 and C2-2 zones require one accessory parking space per 300 square feet of commercial floor area, though the requirements may range between one space per 200 square feet and one space per 1,000 square feet. Parking regulations in the proposed C1-3 and C2-3 zones would be less stringent. Most retail uses in the proposed C1-3 and C2-3 districts would require one accessory parking space per 400 square feet of commercial floor area, though the requirements would range between one space per 300 square feet and one space per 800 square feet.

Laurelton Rezoning - **Approved!**

Public Review

Public Review

On June 2, 2008 the Department of City Planning certified the Uniform Land Use Review ([ULURP](#)) application (C 080462 ZMQ) for the Laurelton Rezoning to begin the formal public review process.

Milestone	Date
Department of City Planning Certification	June 2, 2008
Community Board 13 Approval	June 23 , 2008
Queens Borough President Approval	July 15, 2008
City Planning Commission Public Hearing	July 23, 2008
City Planning Commission Approval ( Read the CPC Report)	August 11, 2008
City Council Approval	September 4, 2008

For more information about this proposal please contact the Queens Office of the Department of City Planning at (718) 286-3170.

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.