




Upper West Side Rezoning - **Approved!**

Overview

Update September 25, 2007:

On September 25, 2007, the City Council adopted the Upper West Side Rezoning map changes with modifications ( [View map of zoning modifications](#)). Zoning changes are now in effect.

Overview

The Department of City Planning, together with area residents, Community Board 7 and the Upper West Side Rezoning Task Force, the Manhattan Borough President, local elected officials, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the Landmarks Preservation Commission, has developed a comprehensive rezoning proposal for the northern portion of the Upper West Side which seeks to:

- Promote appropriate development that respects established built form;
- Create opportunities for the development of affordable housing; and
- Preserve historic assets.

The rezoning proposal follows a planning study and neighborhood survey of the area bound by West 97th Street to the south, West 110th Street to the north, Riverside Drive to the west and Central Park West to the east. In total the area covers 51 city blocks or 240 acres.

Upper West Side Rezoning Study Area

Situated within close proximity to both Riverside and Central parks, and with excellent access to public transportation, the study area has become an increasingly desirable place to live. While it lacks an abundance of traditional development sites such as vacant parcels or underdeveloped lots, recent trends in new construction demonstrate the potential for out-of-scale buildings of excessive height. In particular, two mixed-use buildings of 37 and 31 stories, under construction between West 99th and West 100th streets on Broadway, have raised community concern about their potential to change the neighborhood's character and create quality-of-life impacts.





Study Area -

 [View a larger image.](#)

Planning Process

Beginning in September 2005, the Department of City Planning met with community residents to listen to concerns and discuss a proposal for rezoning the northern portion of the Upper West Side. Community Board 7 formed an Upper West Side Rezoning Task force in December 2005 and the Department presented its rezoning proposal to the Task Force in public forums on March 15, 2006 and May 17, 2006.

 [View the March 15th, 2006 Presentation](#): Study area: existing zoning, character and potential development sites; Recommended zoning. (5.7 mb)

 [View the May 17th, 2006 Presentation](#): Analyses of height, FAR and streetwall compliance. (4.1 mb)

On April 23, 2007, the Department of City Planning certified the [Uniform Land Use Review Procedure \(ULURP\)](#) application (C 070427 ZMM) for the Upper West Side rezoning and referred the related non-ULURP zoning text amendment (N 070428 ZRY) to begin the formal public review process.

Upper West Side Rezoning - **Approved!** Existing Context and Zoning

Existing Context and Zoning

The study area has a wide variety of built environments, from the modernist "tower-in-the-park" developments of Park West Village and Frederick Douglass Houses, to the three-story town houses between Riverside Drive and Broadway, to the up-and-down character of Broadway itself – the area's curvilinear commercial center. Generally, however, the study area can be separated into three distinct sub-areas.

Subarea 1: West of Amsterdam Avenue

Development in the area west of Amsterdam Avenue is fairly consistent, of a type that has become synonymous with the residential neighborhoods of the Upper West Side, where dense, tall buildings on wide avenues share the same block with small-scale townhouses and multifamily apartment buildings on narrow streets. Large, pre-war apartment buildings with high *street walls* are found on Riverside Drive and West End Avenues, and to a lesser extent along Broadway. Between the avenues, three- to five-story townhouses or multiple dwellings generally line the narrow side streets. Broadway contains a mixture of building types and styles, ranging from one- and two-story commercial structures to 17-story apartment buildings.



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



Broadway between 107th and 108th Streets



Broadway between 105th and 106th Streets



105th Street between West End Avenue and Riverside Drive

Despite the variation in built form, virtually the entire area west of Amsterdam Avenue is zoned **R8** (a small area surrounding Straus Park is zoned R10A and C2-8A, which allows 10 FAR and a building height of 210 feet and is not proposed to be changed). The R8 zoning district, which has remained in place since 1961, is a medium-high density residential district that permits a maximum *floor area ratio (FAR)* of 6.02 for residential uses and 6.50 for community facility uses. The vast majority of buildings on the avenues exceed 6.02 FAR while most midblock buildings have FAR's less than 6.02. The R8 district is a *height factor* district that does not set absolute building height limits and permits taller buildings set back from the street and surrounded by private open space. The two mixed-use buildings under construction on Broadway between West 99th and West 100th streets, while not typical, demonstrate the type of buildings that can be constructed on a large site (with *development rights transfer*) under R8 zoning regulations.



New development on the west side of Broadway



New development on the east side of Broadway

Subarea 2: Manhattan Valley

Manhattan Valley consists of the area east of Amsterdam Avenue generally from West 104th Street to West 110th Street. Manhattan Valley is notable for its consistent four-to five-story apartment buildings and row houses built to the street line, on both avenues and streets. This building type, generally constructed between 1900 and 1920, creates a lower-scale neighborhood framed by Central Park West, West 110th Street and West 106th Street, which are *wide streets* with several larger residential and community facility buildings.

The predominant zoning district in Manhattan Valley is **R7-2**, a medium-density height factor, residential district that permits a maximum FAR of 3.44 for residential uses and 6.50 for community facility uses. A smaller portion of the neighborhood, from Manhattan Avenue to Central Park West, from West 100th Street to West 107th Street is zoned **R8** which permits 6.02 FAR for residential uses and 6.50 FAR for community facility uses. Most of the buildings in this area slightly exceed the R7-2 FAR maximum for residential buildings. As in R8 districts, the maximum height of residential buildings in R7-2 districts is regulated by a *sky exposure plane*, which begins at a height of 60 feet above the front lot line in R7-2 districts. The potential for taller buildings, set back from the street line, would be inconsistent with the existing built form of Manhattan Valley. In addition, the disparity between residential and community facility FAR in the R7-2 district creates an incentive for larger and potentially taller community facility and mixed- buildings within this area.



West 109th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues



West 106th Street between Central Park West and Manhattan Avenue

Subarea 3: Park West Village and Frederick Douglass Houses

These two large, "tower-in-the-park" developments were constructed in the 1950s and have a dramatically different built form than the rest of the study area. These developments are characterized by tall, slender towers between 14 and 20 stories in height that are surrounded on all sides by private open space. The strong street wall presence that characterizes the other parts of the study area is non-existent here.



Park West Village viewed from West 97th Street



Park West Village

Park West Village and Frederick Douglass Houses are zoned **R7-2**, which permits a maximum 3.44 FAR for residential uses and 6.50 FAR for community facility uses. The types of towers constructed in this area exemplify the R7-2 development.

Commercial Overlay Districts

Within the study area, two commercial overlay districts (C1-5 and C2-5) provide for retail uses intended to serve the area's residents. The C1-5 and C2-5 overlay districts are mapped along Broadway, Amsterdam, and Columbus Avenues. Both commercial overlay districts allow a maximum 2.0 FAR for local retail uses on the ground floor (and potentially on the second floor) of buildings within 100 feet from each avenue. C2 overlays permit a slighter wider array of local retail services than C1 overlays.

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Proposed Zoning

Proposed Zoning

The Department proposes to rezone a large portion of the study area to three contextual zoning districts. Contextual zoning districts limit building heights, require buildings to be built to the street line or line up with abutting buildings and have maximum and minimum street wall heights, and require residential developments to comply with the Quality Housing program. The controls of the proposed districts would help ensure that new development throughout the rezoning area relates to the area's existing scale and character.

The different densities and building forms permitted by the three contextual zoning districts proposed – R8B, R8A and R9A – would reflect the variation in existing built environments. Generally, the higher-density districts (R8A and R9A) that allow mid-sized buildings are proposed along wide avenues where public transportation is readily accessible, while the R8B district, with its lower FAR and height limit, is proposed for narrow streets, in the middle of blocks. The key requirements of these zoning districts are summarized as follows.



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

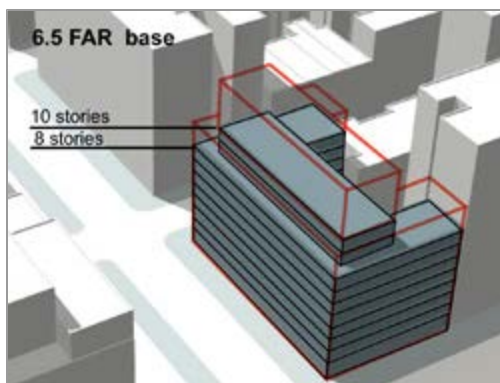
9/25/07
[View final adopted zoning map as modified by City Council](#)

District	FAR	Street Wall Requirements	Maximum Building Height
R8B	4.00 Res./ 4.00CF	55-60 feet	75 feet
R8A	6.02 Res./ 6.50CF	60 -85 feet	120 feet
R9A	6.50-8.50 Res./ 7.50CF	60 -102 feet	145 feet

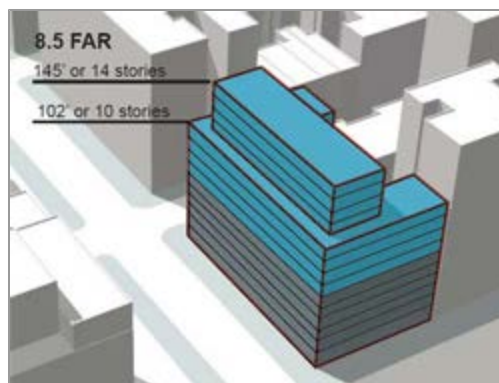
The existing zoning would remain unchanged along portions of Riverside Drive, West End Avenue, Amsterdam Avenue, Columbus Avenue and Central Park West where the existing built character reflects the existing zoning or even higher densities.

Broadway

R9A, mapped to a depth of 100 feet along Broadway, allows a maximum building height of 145 feet and a maximum street wall height of 102 feet. Through a related zoning text amendment that would apply the Inclusionary Housing Program to this portion of Broadway, the base FAR of 6.5 could be increased up to 8.5 if 20% of residential floor area is provided for households with incomes below 80 percent of Area Median Income (AMI). The affordable units could be provided within the new building at below-market rates, or provided in new or rehabilitated affordable units off-site. Off-site units could be provided within Community District 7 or in an adjacent community district within one half mile radius of the development site.



Hypothetical R9A development without Inclusionary Housing bonus - [View a larger image.](#)

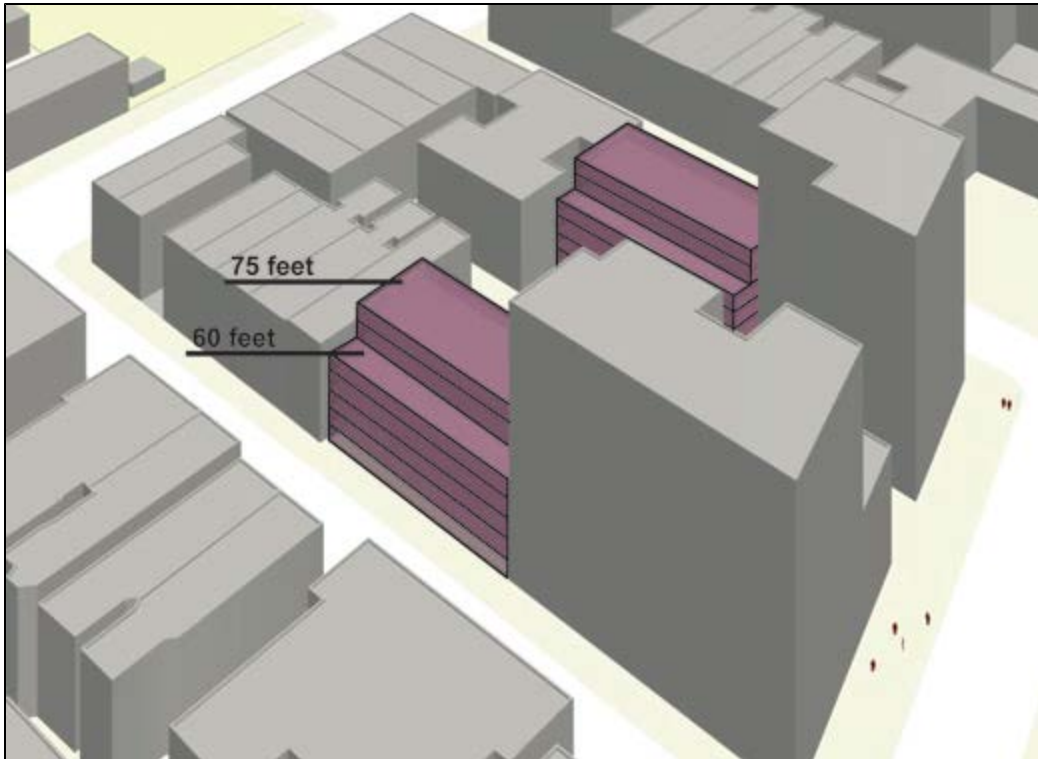


Hypothetical R9A development with Inclusionary Housing bonus - [View a larger image.](#)

Midblocks and Manhattan Valley

To better reflect the existing character of the midblocks west of Amsterdam Avenue and throughout much of Manhattan Valley, the Department is proposing to change existing R8 and R7-2 zoning districts to R8B. The R8B

zoning district allows up to 4.0 FAR for both residential and community facility uses and limits building heights to 75 feet. In addition, buildings in R8B districts have a maximum base height of 60 feet and must be built to the street line or have street walls that match-up with adjacent buildings.



Example of typical R8B development

Amsterdam Avenue and West 106th Street

Along Amsterdam Avenue above West 104th Street and along most of West 106th Street, the existing R8 and R7-2 zoning districts would be changed to R8A. This would limit the maximum building height to 120 feet.

Historic District

As part of the comprehensive study of the area, historic assets were identified in Manhattan Valley. To further preserve the character of the blockfronts on Manhattan Avenue between West 104th and 106th streets with their three-story structures built in the early years of the 20th century, the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) is seeking to propose a new historic district. The LPC is planning to schedule public hearings on its proposal to coincide with City Planning's public review of the rezoning proposal. More information about the proposed Manhattan Avenue historic district can be obtained from the LPC. No zoning changes are proposed for the area proposed for designation.




Manhattan Avenue between 105th and 106th streets in proposed historic district

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Public Review

On April 23, 2007, the Department of City Planning certified the [Uniform Land Use Review Procedure \(ULURP\)](#) application (C 070427 ZMM) for the Upper West Side rezoning and referred the related non-ULURP zoning text amendment (N 070428 ZRY) to begin the formal public review process.

Milestone	Date
Department of City Planning Certification	April 23, 2007
Manhattan Community Board 7 Approval	June 5, 2007
Manhattan Borough President Approval	June 6, 2007
City Planning Commission Public Hearing	July 11, 2007
City Planning Commission Approval ( Read the CPC Reports.)	August 8, 2007
City Council Approval (adopted with modifications*)	September 25, 2007
*Retained the existing R7-2 zoning district on the midblock portion of the block bounded by Amsterdam Avenue, West 106th Street, Columbus Avenue and West 105th Street.	

For more information, contact the Department of City Planning's Manhattan Office at (212) 720-3480.

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.