



Proposed rezoning for Crown Heights now under review

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A formal public review of a proposal to rezone 55-blocks of the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn is now underway following the Department of City Planning's certification of the plan on March 18th.

The goals of the Crown Heights West Rezoning proposal include: maintaining the existing scale and character of the neighborhood by establishing height limits for new development; creating incentives for affordable housing; and matching the commercial zoning to the retail character along the commercial corridors.

The proposed rezoning plan covers an area roughly bounded by Atlantic Avenue, Pacific, Dean, and Bergen Streets on the north; Nostrand Avenue to the east; Eastern Parkway to the south; and Washington and Grand Avenues to the west.

Within the proposed rezoning district there are two inclusionary housing areas where developers would be allowed to build larger structures if 20% of the units are set aside for renters earning at or below 80% of the area's median income and these units remain affordable permanently.

One inclusionary housing area runs along Franklin Avenue from Sterling Place to Dean St. Under the proposal, zoning would change from R6 to R7A, which permits a base FAR of 3.45 as-of-right. The FAR may be increased to 4.60 if affordable housing is provided.

The second inclusionary housing area runs along Bedford Ave. from Eastern Parkway to St. John's Place. The zoning here would change from C8-2 and R6 to R7D, which permits a base FAR of 4.2 as-of-right and can be increased to 5.6 FAR if affordable housing is provided.

As part of the city's Inclusionary Housing Program, affordable units can be provided either on-site or off-site, or by acquiring and preserving existing housing at affordable rents. Off-site affordable units must be located within the same community district or within a half-mile of the bonused development. Additionally, city, state, and federal housing programs are available to finance the affordable units.

The rezoning also would update the commercial overlays along the commercial corridors to reflect the existing patterns and trends of commercial use on portions of the north-south avenues. The proposed rezoning would update all C1-3 and C2-3 commercial overlay districts to C2-4 districts, which will bring existing commercial uses into conformance and increase the predictability of new development.

Over the next several months, the proposal will be reviewed by Community Board 8, the Brooklyn Borough president, City Planning Commission, and City Council.

If approved, it's expected the Crown Heights West Rezoning will be the first in a series of rezoning proposals introduced in the Crown Heights community. It's possible an industrial zone along Atlantic Avenue will be modified to accommodate the high demand for market-rate and affordable housing. Also, other parts of Crown Heights may be rezoned to encourage affordable housing development.

The Bloomberg administration has been aggressively rezoning the city since 2002. To date, 36% of

the city has been rezoned, and 119 rezonings covering over 11,000 blocks have been adopted. Jonathan Berman is vice president of investment sales at Ariel Property Advisors, New York, NY.

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