

The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan



Community Planning Partners

Thousands of community members shaped the planning process by sharing their ideas and perspectives for Jamaica's future alongside a steering committee formed by Council Member Nantasha Williams. The steering committee consists of community leaders, local organizations, businesses, institutions, and elected officials who advised on this process. Council Member Williams also formed an executive committee of local, state, and federal elected officials who represent Jamaica to deepen their understanding of local concerns and equip them to better advocate for these issues in their respective roles. Finally, we coordinated closely with city and state agencies to help ensure that future policies, programs and services align with the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan.

Steering Committee

- A Better Jamaica
- Addisleigh Park Civic Association
- All Nations Apostolic Tabernacle
- Allen Community Senior Citizens Center
- American Recycling Management
- Assemblyman David Weprin
- Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman
- Assemblywoman Vivian Cook
- Calvary Baptist Church
- Chhaya Community Development Corporation
- Commercial Rentals LLC
- Community Board 12, Queens
- Community Education Council District 28
- Concerned Citizens of Downtown Jamaica
- Congressman Gregory Meeks
- Council Member James Gennaro
- Council Member Linda Lee
- Council Member Nantasha Williams
- CUNY York College
- BHALO
- District Leader AD33b
- Downtown Jamaica Partnership
- First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica
- Foundation Church Bethel Gospel Tabernacle
- Greater Allen AME Cathedral
- Greater Jamaica Development Corporation
- Haitian Americans United for Progress, INC (HAUP)
- Islamic Circle of North America
- Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning
- Jamaica Community Partnership
- Jamaica Muslim Center
- Jamaica YMCA
- King Manor Museum

Executive Committee

- Congressman Gregory Meeks
- Senator Leroy Comrie
- Senator James Sanders
- Senator Toby Ann Stavisky
- Queens Borough President Donovan Richards
- Assemblywoman Vivian Cook
- Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman
- Assemblyman David Weprin
- Council Member Nantasha Williams
- Speaker Adrienne Adams
- Council Member James Gennaro
- Council Member Linda Lee

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Letter from Chair Garodnick



Message from DCP Director and City Planning Commission Chair Daniel R. Garodnick

It is with immense pride and optimism that we present the draft Jamaica Neighborhood Plan—a comprehensive vision crafted in collaboration with the vibrant community of Jamaica, Queens.

Jamaica is one of New York City's most dynamic neighborhoods, known for its rich cultural diversity, strong transit connections, and deep-rooted history. Despite its many strengths, however, it hasn't always received the public or private investment that it needs.

The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan represents our chance to lean into this neighborhood's strengths to deliver much-needed housing, including permanently affordable income-restricted housing, more space for jobs, an improved public realm, and infrastructure investments to support an even stronger and more vibrant neighborhood.

The plan is the result of extensive community engagement, reflecting the aspirations and insights of residents, businesses, and local organizations, provided through a community-based steering committee, 38 in-person and virtual events, and an online survey. As we enter the public review process, the community will have even more opportunities to make their voices heard and help build the neighborhood's future.

This plan book provides an accessible guide to the proposal—its goals and strategies, and how it would shape the future of different parts of the neighborhood, from industrial areas around the MTA LIRR Railyard to the blocks surrounding Jamaica Station, the fourth-busiest train station in North America.

As this plan moves into public review, I am deeply grateful for the partnership and support of all the local stakeholders who helped craft this proposal, especially Speaker Adrienne Adams and Council Member Nantasha Williams. Together, we can ensure that Jamaica continues to be a place where diversity thrives, opportunities abound, and every resident feels a profound sense of belonging.

Thank you for your commitment to our community's future.

Daniel R. Garodnick

Director of the New York City Department of City Planning
Chair of the New York City Planning Commission

Letter from Council Member Dr. Williams

Message from Council Member Dr. Nantasha Williams

Jamaica is a community with a rich history, a vibrant present, and a promising future. As your Council Member, I am proud to share the draft Jamaica Neighborhood Plan—a vision shaped by the voices of our residents, business owners, and stakeholders.

From the beginning, my priority has been transparency and inclusivity. Through in-person workshops, virtual meetings, surveys, and countless conversations, we have ensured that the needs and aspirations of those who work and call Jamaica home are reflected in this plan. I am especially proud that members of the NYC Department of City Planning team leading this effort are Jamaica residents themselves, bringing invaluable firsthand knowledge to the process.

A neighborhood plan must address the needs of its people—creating affordable housing, expanding economic opportunities, improving public spaces, and upgrading infrastructure. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan aims to do just that. It will help alleviate our housing shortage, require deeply affordable housing, and foster a more livable, prosperous community. Just as importantly, it will ensure the city is held accountable for delivering on these promises—not just today, but for generations to come.

As we enter the public review process, I encourage you to stay engaged and continue making your voices heard. Your participation is essential to shaping a plan that truly serves Jamaica.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this effort—from our Steering Committee, which includes dedicated residents and local organizations, to our partners at NYC Planning. Together, we are laying the foundation for a stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient Jamaica—one that will continue to grow and prosper well into the future.

In Service,

Dr. Nantasha Williams

New York City Council Member, District 27

The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan At A Glance

Vision

Jamaica is prosperous thanks to its affordability & inclusivity, diverse community, investment activity & business opportunities.

Goals

1. **Maintain cultural diversity and nurture inclusivity in Jamaica.**

Creating more housing options that are affordable to residents, expanding support for small businesses and artists, and strengthening community hubs where people can connect.

2. **Foster a thriving local economy and help residents prosper.**

Supporting small businesses, improving transportation, and increasing connections between Downtown Jamaica and surrounding neighborhoods.

3. **Achieve equitable health and safety outcomes for current and future residents.**

Improve access to healthcare, mental health support, fresh food, and well-maintained public spaces while making streets safer and homes healthier.

Zoning Changes

The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan would update zoning rules to spur housing, create jobs and encourage community-supporting uses. Zoning updates include:

- Requiring permanent income-restricted affordable housing through Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH)
- Encouraging the growth of new housing and businesses near transit
- Requiring active ground floor uses to support job growth and community-supporting uses
- Support industrial growth in manufacturing districts that are appropriate near certain residential districts

The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan is Projected to Create:

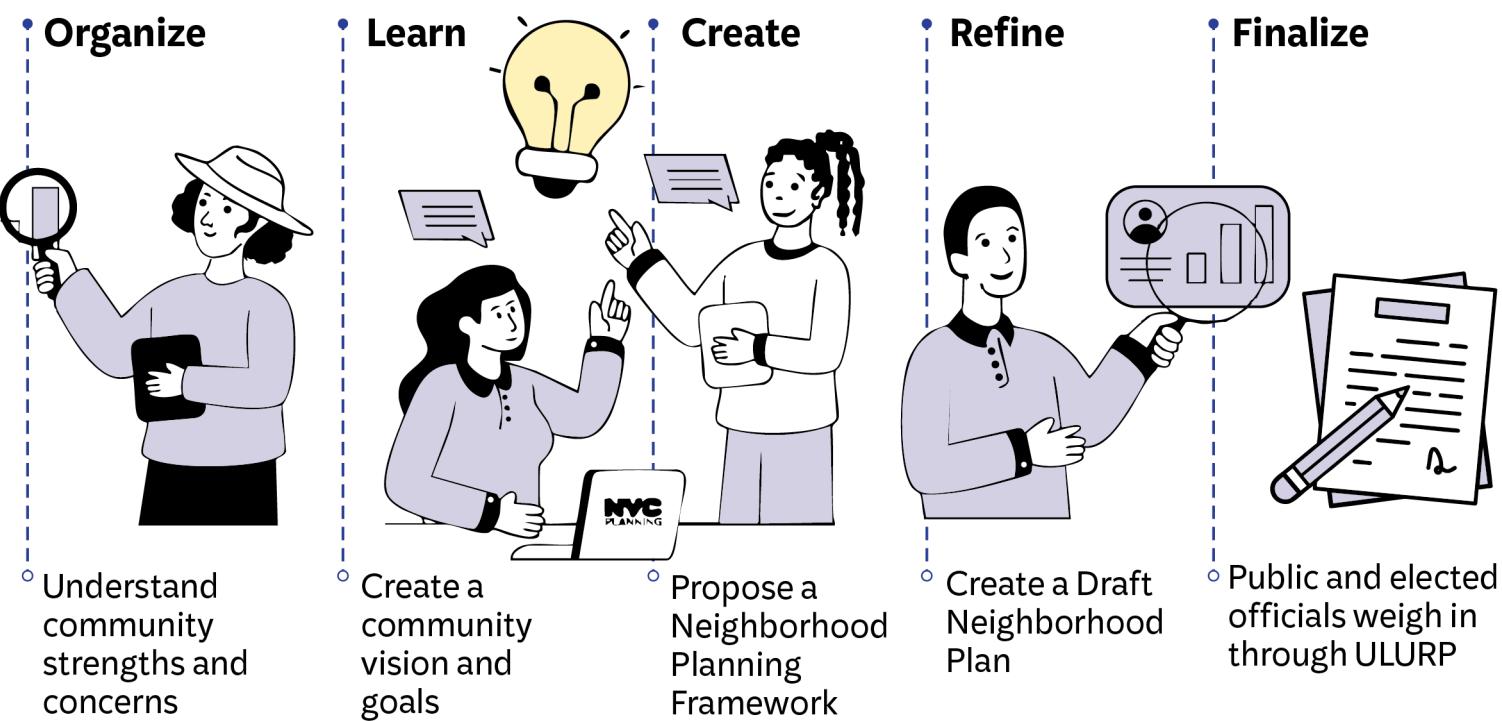
Over 12,000 new homes

About 4,000 income-restricted affordable homes

Over 2,000,000 sq ft of commercial and community facility uses

More than 7,000 jobs

The Planning Process



What We Heard

I want there to be more affordable housing, so that I and others can continue to live here and raise families.

I would love for there to be less traffic, more bike friendliness, and more greenery.

My biggest hope is that daily quality of life improves.

Job creation and major businesses would go a long way in the revitalization of the area.

Planning Process

The Jamaica Neighborhood Planning Process launched in **May 2023** with extensive community engagement, including pop-ups at local events, a kick-off meeting, six working groups, and an online survey.



This process led to the establishment of a shared **Vision and Goals** for Jamaica's next 15 years in **January 2024**.

Partner agencies worked together to identify projects & policies that could complement these zoning changes.



Now, as the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan enters public review, this **Draft Neighborhood Plan** offers the most comprehensive picture of the plan yet, incorporating the shared goals, corresponding draft strategies, and an updated zoning proposal.

Alongside the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the Land Use Application, this Draft Neighborhood Plan will guide public discussions throughout the **Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)** process. During this process community members and civic leaders weigh in on whether the plan should move forward. If approved, the plan will shape future development, and guide investments in infrastructure, programs, and services to support the neighborhood as it grows.

Building on this foundation, additional outreach—including a Youth Summit, town hall meeting, and a week-long display at the Queens Central Library—helped to shape the **draft zoning proposal and draft strategies**.



The zoning proposal was analyzed through the **City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR)** Process to understand how these changes might impact neighborhood air quality, traffic, infrastructure, schools, and other factors.



The draft zoning proposal and draft strategies were shared in **June 2024**, followed by a series of “Deep Dive” conversations.

Voice to Vision

Voice to Vision is an online tool developed in partnership with MIT’s Center for Constructive Communication and a team of community co-designers. This tool visualizes how feedback gathered through community engagement shaped the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan’s vision and goals.

To learn more, please visit:
v2v-jamaicaplan.ccc-mit.org/



Why Here, Why Now?

Early Jamaica History

Pre-1700s

- Jamaica was historically home to the Jameco or Yameca indigenous people, who used the route today called Jamaica Avenue for travel and trade.

1700s

- Jamaica Avenue was known as “Kings Highway” by European colonialists

1800s

- The Green, one of NYC’s oldest African American communities established.
- Brooklyn and Jamaica Railroad built.
- Electric trolley carts introduced.
- 1897-98, Former Jamaica Savings Bank was built.

1900s

- 1918, BMT Jamaica Line (Elevated Train) built over Jamaica Avenue and the Gertz Department Store opened.
- 1920-1940, Jazz musicians move to Jamaica.
- 1960-1970, GJDC and JCAL were established and Black and immigrant populations grow.
- 1970's, Elevated train torn down and Macy's closes
- 1980s, York College and Jamaica Urban Renewal and Jamaica In-Place Industrial Park (IPIP) were established
- 1996, First Jamaica JAMS Festival took place.



Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library. (1960). Street near the Long Island R.R. station in Jamaica. N.Y. Retrieved



NYC Department of Records and Information Services. Image from 1940s.

Recent Jamaica Planning History

Early 2000s: Protecting Industrial Businesses

To support and grow industrial jobs, NYC designated some of Jamaica’s industrial areas as an Industrial Business Zone, which allows manufacturing uses, commercial and community facility uses, while restricting new housing.

2007 New Housing and Jobs

Led by the Department of City Planning, the 2007 Jamaica rezoning introduced zoning changes to encourage growth in transit-accessible areas of Jamaica, including Jamaica Center. It also created a special district known as the Downtown Jamaica Special District.

Late 2000s: Foreclosure Crisis

From 2006-2008, home foreclosures surged across the United States due to the financial crisis, hitting South Jamaica particularly hard and causing hundreds of residents to lose their homes. New York City and State responded to the crisis with new programs to support homeowners through mortgage assistance, legal protections, and counseling, as well as initiatives to ensure mortgage lenders and servicers secured and repaired dilapidated properties. Nevertheless, many longtime residents of Jamaica still describe the pain of losing so many neighbors and friends.

2014 Increasing Neighborhood Investments

The 2014 Jamaica NOW Action Plan, lead by the Mayor’s Office and the NYC Economic Development Corporation, laid out recommendations to create quality jobs, support small businesses, promote commercial growth and economic development, and improve quality of life in Jamaica.

2017 Expand Career Opportunities

As part of New York State’s Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), Downtown Jamaica was selected as one of 10 to receive investments. The plan’s three primary goals were to expand career opportunities and strengthen career pathways, activate the downtown area through programming and marketing, and connect major centers of activity.

Community Vision for the Future

Jamaica is prosperous thanks to its affordability & inclusivity, diverse community, investment activity & business opportunities.

Goal 1

Maintain cultural diversity and nurture inclusivity in Jamaica

Jamaica's cultural diversity is one of its greatest strengths. This plan can help ensure the neighborhood remains a diverse and inclusive place into the future by creating more housing options that are affordable to residents, expanding support for small businesses and artists, and strengthening community hubs where people can connect. These efforts will help preserve Jamaica's identity and keep it a welcoming, vibrant neighborhood for all.



What We Are Planning

Create more housing that's affordable for residents

Like much of New York City, Jamaica faces a housing shortage, especially for income-restricted affordable homes. To address this issue, the plan would apply Mandatory Inclusionary Housing for the first time in Jamaica, ensuring that 20-30% of all new homes are permanently income-restricted affordable housing. The City would also build 100% affordable, income-restricted housing on public sites to reach a greater number of residents.

Help ensure that schools have space for students

Jamaica's schools serve many children, and recent class size reductions have increased the need for more space. This plan would encourage the creation of new school space by providing a floor area exemption for schools in future developments, giving the city more flexibility to plan for new schools based on demand.

Support community hubs

Gathering spaces like the South Jamaica Community Center, Roy Wilkins Recreation Center, senior centers, and local libraries are essential for fostering a sense of community. Proposed zoning changes would make it easier to create new community facility space for recreational and community centers like these.

Better connect local creatives to grants, programs, and services

Jamaica's local creatives could benefit from city programs and grants. Strengthening connections between these communities and citywide resources would help them thrive, ensuring they have the support needed to develop their craft and contribute to Jamaica's cultural landscape.

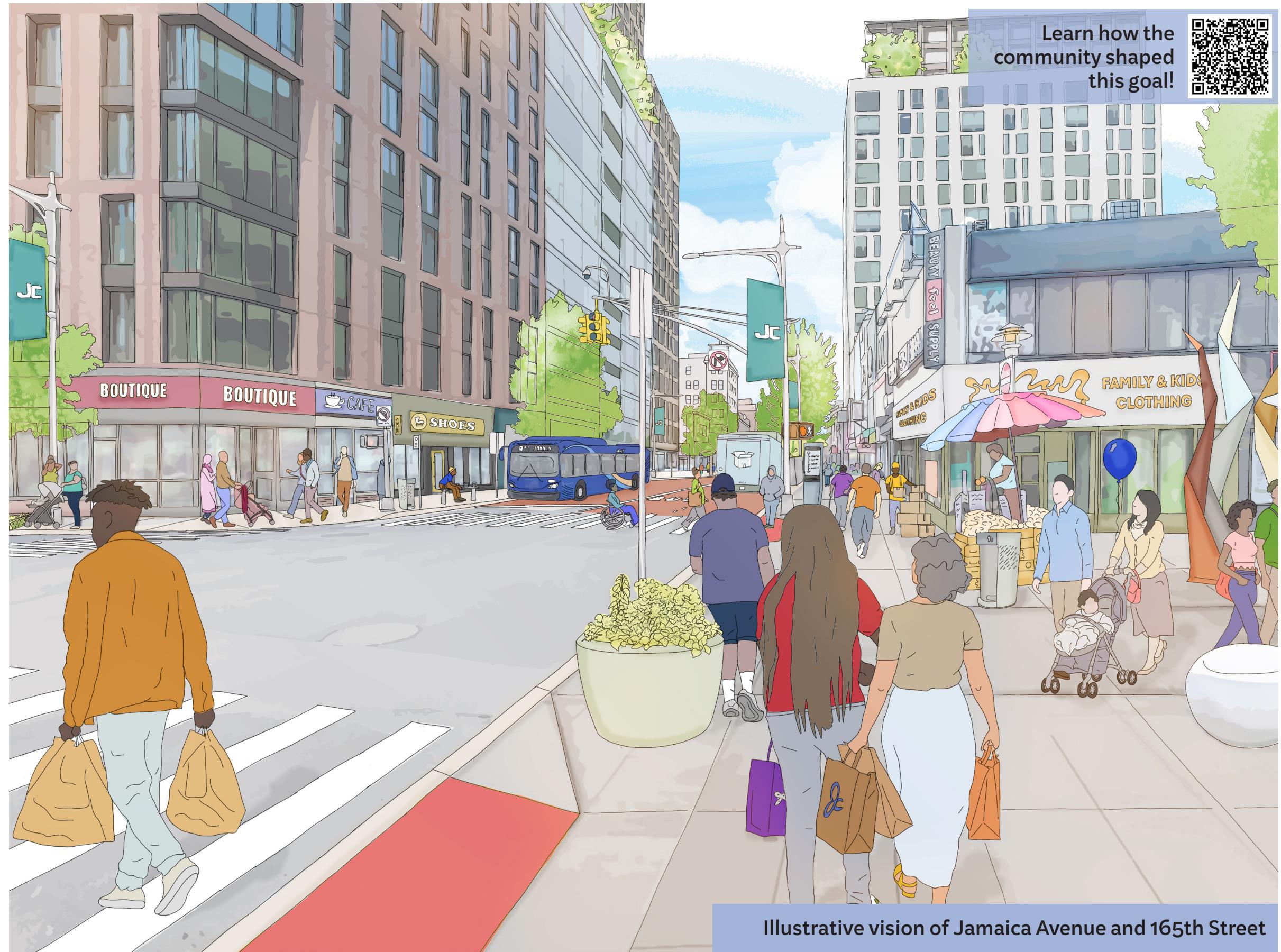
Strengthen local small businesses with better access to programs and assistance

From Jamaican restaurants to Central American markets, Bengali food shops to African braiding salons, Jamaica's small businesses reflect its diverse culture and help create vibrant shopping corridors. New York City offers a wide range of resources to help them succeed, but awareness of these opportunities is often limited. The plan would explore strategies to better connect small businesses to existing programs and assistance so they can help the neighborhood thrive.

Goal 2

Foster a thriving local economy and help residents prosper

A strong local economy creates opportunities for everyone. By supporting small businesses, expanding job pathways, and strengthening homeownership, the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan seeks to help residents build wealth and thrive. The plan would also improve transportation and the street experience, as well as enhance connections between Downtown Jamaica and surrounding neighborhoods, so the area remains a vibrant, accessible, and dynamic place to live and work.



What We Are Planning

Create a supportive environment for businesses to open and grow

Many residents want to see local businesses — especially those owned by Black, immigrant, and other diverse communities — thrive alongside larger retailers in Jamaica. Proposed zoning changes would expand opportunities for more business space, while other non-zoning strategies focus on supporting existing and future businesses owners.

Establish Downtown Jamaica as a destination

A common theme heard throughout the planning process for the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan was a desire to establish Downtown Jamaica as a destination for tourists and residents of surrounding areas. Through the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, stakeholders, including local businesses and cultural groups, can increase opportunities for activities, entertainment, and cultural experiences to attract visitors and boost the local economy.

Support existing homeowners and expand homeownership opportunities

Many Jamaica residents aspire to become homeowners and build generational wealth. At the same time, many existing homeowners in the neighborhood struggle with repair and maintenance costs. Through support services, financial assistance, and new development, the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan would support existing homeowners and create more homeownership opportunities.

Expand opportunities for local creatives

Jamaica has a large and diverse creative community, but spaces to create, develop, and showcase work in the neighborhood are limited. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan would encourage the creation of more space that can be activated by local creatives to help them build their careers, gain exposure, and contribute to the neighborhood's cultural and economic vitality.

Make it easier to get around Downtown Jamaica and surrounding neighborhoods

Jamaica residents rely on a mix of transportation modes, including personal vehicles, and public transit to get around the neighborhood, Southeast Queens, and the city at large. To improve transportation access and connectivity, this Neighborhood Plan would continue to build on the City's goals of enhancing transit, walking, and bicycle infrastructure between Downtown Jamaica and surrounding neighborhoods. The Plan would also explore strategies to balance the needs of parking, loading, and pedestrian amenities to more closely match the activity of a growing neighborhood.

Goal 3

Achieve equitable health and safety outcomes for current and future residents

Everyone deserves to live in a safe and healthy environment. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan seeks to improve access to health care, mental health support, fresh food, and public spaces while making streets safer and homes healthier. These strategies can help reduce health disparities, support underserved communities, and ensure the neighborhood remains a place where residents can thrive.



What We Are Planning

Increase access to fresh, affordable food

Throughout the planning process, there were clear calls for a wider variety of healthier food choices, such as markets with fresh foods or restaurants offering nutritious prepared meals. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan can help to support health through the Food Retail Expansion Program to Support Health (FRESH) program, which provides zoning and financial incentives for new buildings to include grocery stores with fresh food.

Promote healthier homes through new quality housing and support for existing residents

Jamaica residents have a right to live in safe, well-maintained buildings that are free from pests, leaks, and hazardous conditions. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan would help ensure residents enjoy cleaner air, safer living conditions, and healthier outdoor areas by supporting new, high-quality, sustainable, income-restricted housing, as well as support for tenants to understand their right to live in homes that are free from lead and mold.

Create safer streets for all, especially vulnerable street users

People get around Jamaica by walking, driving, biking, and using public transit. The Neighborhood Plan can explore changes to the design of streets and enforcement of street regulations that enhance and prioritize safety for the most vulnerable street users such as cyclists, older adults and people with disabilities, by making it easier and more pleasant to cross wide streets and navigate sidewalks.

Improve public spaces

Jamaica's public spaces serve many purposes, including family gatherings, dog walking, socializing, street vending, and providing a place to rest. Community members emphasized the need for proper maintenance to keep these spaces safe, inviting, and usable for everyone, ensuring they remain usable for everyone. Through the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, the City can explore strategies to deliver these services.

Expand awareness of and access to mental health and healthcare resources

Jamaica is served by Queens Hospital Center and Jamaica Hospital, but community members voiced concerns about access to specialized care like maternal health and services for older adults. There's also a need to raise awareness of mental health resources locally and citywide. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan can help promote local organizations and services to address these gaps.

Goal 4

Preserve and bolster Jamaica's rich multicultural history

Preserving and bolstering Jamaica's rich multicultural history means ensuring that the community's past continues to shape its future. Jamaica is proud of its legacy, from its arts and jazz history to key transit infrastructure projects to the achievements of community leaders and groups. Celebrating this history can provide direction for the future, highlighting how the community has evolved, guiding long-term goals, honoring the past, and planning for growth that respects the surrounding area's context. These efforts ensure Jamaica's cultural legacy will continue to be preserved.



What We Are Planning

Encourage a balanced approach to housing that considers neighborhood context

Jamaica's built character reflects a mix of mid-rise, high-rise, and smaller homes shaped by past planning decisions. This Neighborhood Plan would enable new housing near transit and major corridors while preserving the look and feel of single- and two-family home areas. This balanced approach supports growth while respecting the neighborhood's existing context.

Foster intergenerational connections and support networks

Jamaica's population includes many young people and older adults. Fostering connections between these generations can strengthen community bonds and support networks. The Draft Neighborhood Plan was developed through a robust, intergenerational planning process. The planning process will continue to explore opportunities to support shared, intergenerational activities that encourage learning, collaboration, and mutual support.

Celebrate and preserve Jamaica's cultural legacy

Jamaica has a rich cultural history, as evidenced by its many landmarks, murals, historic churches, and musical legacy. This Neighborhood Plan helps celebrate the neighborhood's history through the Jamaica Memory Box, an initiative to record, preserve, and share people's stories of the neighborhood.

Promote Jamaica's arts and culture, including festivals, events, and entertainment venues

Jamaica is home to a wide variety of artists, musicians, dancers, and performers who share their experiences through various celebrations and events at the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, the Jamaica Performing Arts Center, King Manor Museum, Black Spectrum Theatre, and other locations. The Neighborhood Plan would explore strategies to promote Jamaica's arts and culture, including festivals, events, and entertainment venues.

Goal 5

Improve quality of life for current and future residents

Improving the quality of life for current and future residents means improving everyone's overall living experience by ensuring that residents feel safe, valued, and connected within their neighborhood. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan seeks to advance this goal by supporting lively streets and public spaces, neighborhood cleanliness and sanitation, and increased access to public programming and arts and cultural resources.

Learn how the community shaped this goal!



Illustrative vision of Sutphin Boulevard & Archer Avenue

What We Are Planning

Create opportunities for mixed use buildings that offers a variety of uses to serve the needs of the community

Jamaica has diverse needs, and its buildings should be flexible enough to serve them. By allowing a mix of uses—such as housing, businesses, community spaces, and services—the proposed zoning changes would provide more spaces to meet these needs.

Improve neighborhood cleanliness and sanitation

Keeping Jamaica clean is a shared effort. City agencies manage garbage collection and street cleaning, while the Downtown Jamaica Partnership enhances cleanliness around Jamaica Center. Local businesses and property owners maintain their areas, and individuals help reduce street litter. The plan would support the expansion of education, enforcement, and services to address ongoing sanitation challenges.

Expand safety strategies to address the root causes of crime and violence

Many community members are concerned about violence and illegal drug activity, as well as specific locations like train stations. The root causes of violence include poverty, housing instability, and limited mental health resources. Through the Neighborhood Plan, local safety advocates, including police and local organizations, would work together to coordinate existing resources and identify new strategies.

Enhance public spaces with greenery and amenities

Throughout the planning process, community members called for more greenery and amenities like seating, exercise areas, dog runs, and community gardens to enhance public spaces. This Neighborhood Plan would explore ways to make these enhancements, as well as outdoor activity to foster a sense of community.

Increase access to arts and cultural education

Jamaica is home to arts and cultural education providers like JCAL, as well as community centers, libraries, schools, and outdoor spaces—most of which are concentrated in the downtown area. However, many residents want to see more spaces like these throughout the neighborhood. In response to this feedback, the plan would aim to expand spaces for creative expression and learning beyond downtown, ensuring more equitable access for all.

Goal 6

Create a climate resilient and environmentally just Jamaica

A climate-resilient and environmentally just Jamaica means everyone can live in a sustainable and healthy environment. Improved air quality, accessible green space, and infrastructure would meet the community's needs and address historic inequities. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan would manage the types of industrial businesses developed near homes, improve infrastructure, and expand access to green jobs.



Learn how the community shaped this goal!



Illustrative vision of Liberty Avenue, Detective Keith Williams Park

What We Are Planning

Help industrial businesses thrive while addressing potential impacts on nearby neighborhoods

Jamaica's industrial businesses offer job opportunities that don't always require advanced degrees. Strengthening the industrial areas, where these businesses are located, through zoning changes will support job-generating industries while allowing more flexibility for growth. These changes would also address potential environmental impacts, such as air quality, by requiring new buildings near residential areas to be fully enclosed.

Improve infrastructure to manage environmental challenges like flooding, air quality and climate change

All New Yorkers feel the effects of climate change and aging infrastructure, but Jamaica's residents are more deeply impacted by heat, flooding, and poor air quality due to social and economic disparities. Investing in infrastructure improvements is essential to building a more resilient Jamaica and addressing longstanding environmental challenges.

Support creation of new green or public spaces that meet the needs of the community

Green public spaces like Rufus King Park, Archie Spigner Park, Howard Von Dohlen Park and Major Mark Park provide important areas for relaxation, recreation, community connection, and nature. While these parks are well-loved, there is a continued need for improvements to these and new spaces to ensure as many people in Jamaica are within walking distance of a park.

Explore strategies to expand locally grown food options through urban agriculture

Urban agriculture from community gardens, school learning gardens, urban farms, and rooftop farms are strategies for providing fresh, local food to the community. Jamaica currently has two community gardens that are important to the local food ecosystem. Expanding access to and production of locally-grown food is crucial for strengthening food systems in Jamaica.

Increase awareness of existing and emerging local career paths that support the green economy

Jamaica's commercial and industrial center offers a range of job opportunities, from public sector roles to health care jobs at Jamaica and Queens Hospitals. As zoning changes and new industries, like the green economy, emerge, it's essential to raise awareness of local career paths, helping residents access these new opportunities to build careers and wealth.

Introduction to Zoning

What is Zoning?

Zoning is a set of rules that tell us what can be built, including the height and size of buildings and where they can go. In NYC, zoning divides land into categories based on use: residential districts for homes, commercial districts for shopping and services, manufacturing districts for making, storing, and shipping goods, and community facilities for libraries, medical centers, cultural institutions, and places of worship.

Zoning Key Terms

Zoning District: A specifically delineated area of the city within which various combinations of the zoning regulations govern land use, building bulk, parking and streetscape.

Residential District: A zoning district where in which residences and community facilities are permitted.

Commercial District: A zoning district where in which retail, residences and community facilities are permitted.

Manufacturing District: A zoning district where in which industrial and commercial activity are permitted.

Bulk: A combination of controls including lot size, floor area ratio, lot coverage, open space, yards, height and setback, that determine the maximum size and placement of a building on a zoning lot.

Uses: Refers to the any activity, occupation, business or operation that may be conducted within the building or tract of land.

What Zoning Can Do

Zoning is a set of rules that controls the size and use of new buildings and how existing buildings can be changed.

Regulate Use



Zoning decides how land and buildings can be used. It creates different areas for specific purposes like housing, commercial, community facilities or industrial. Zoning also tells us what activities are allowed in different parts of a building.

Encourage Affordable Housing & Public Amenities



Zoning can encourage income-restricted affordable housing and public amenities in exchange for more density or taller buildings.

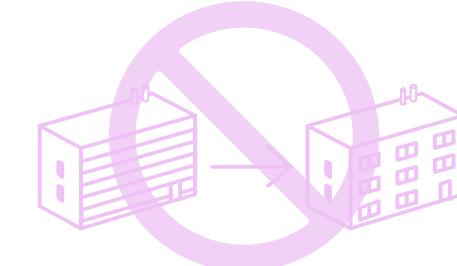
Building Size and Site Design



Zoning controls height, setbacks, and the density of new buildings.

What Zoning Can't Do

Require Existing Buildings to Change



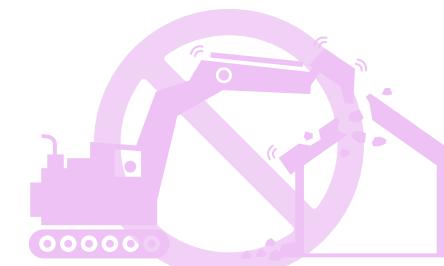
Zoning can't require existing buildings to change to the new rules.

Locate Certain Businesses in a Building



Zoning can't require certain businesses to locate into a building.

Tear Down Buildings



Zoning can't tear down buildings or take them from private owners.

Zoning Proposal Summary

Why do we need to update zoning in Jamaica?

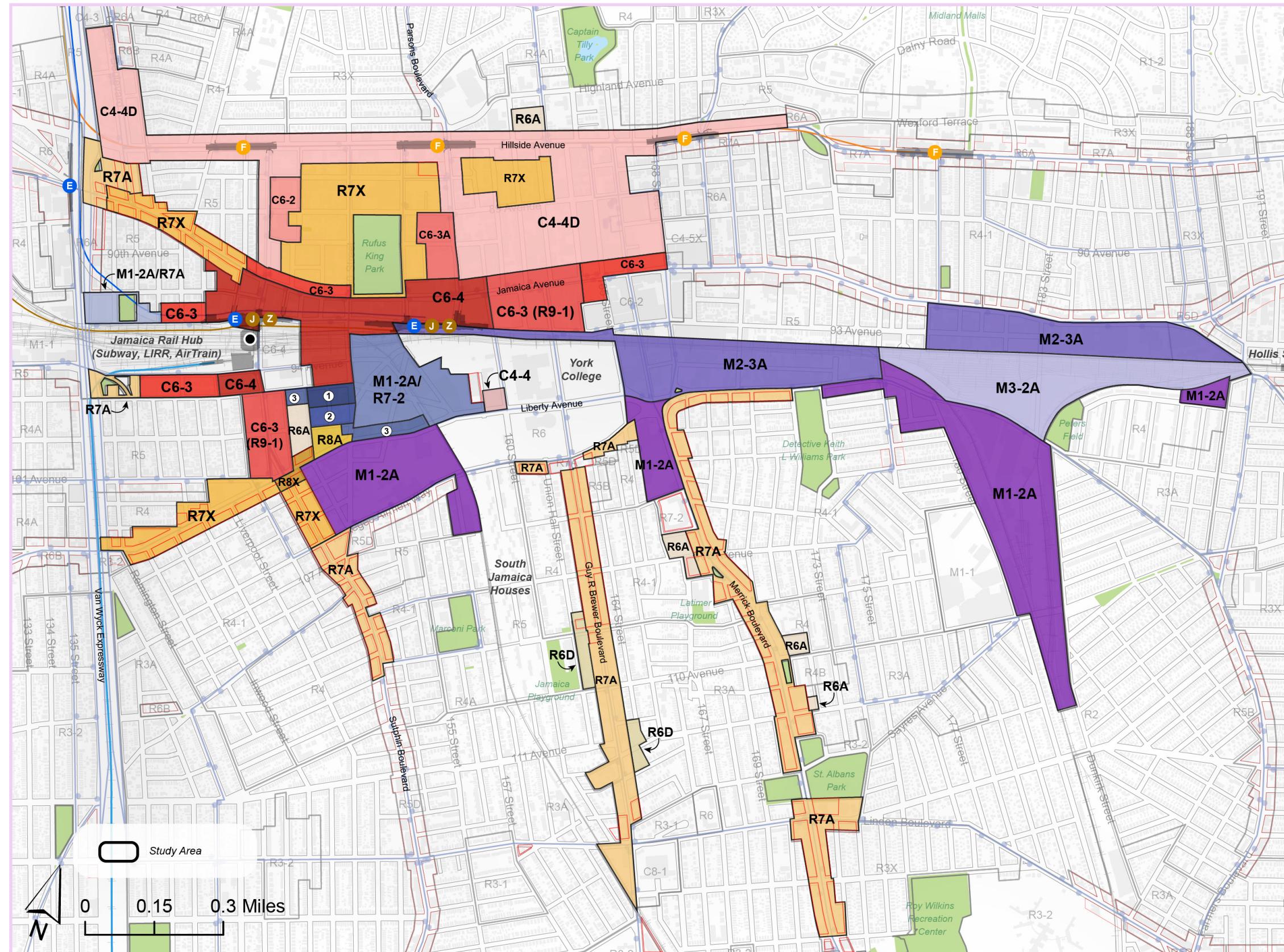
The zoning changes proposed through the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan are designed to support the long-term vision and goals of the neighborhood plan — to create a more prosperous, affordable, inclusive, and diverse neighborhood, with more economic opportunity. The zoning proposal shows where the neighborhood's land use rules should change and where they should stay the same. It describes places where there are more opportunities for housing, including affordable housing, as well as places where jobs and businesses can grow. While zoning changes don't automatically lead to new buildings, they serve as a key tool to shape what can be built. Updating Jamaica's zoning is about planning for the neighborhood's future and ensuring it reflects the community's vision.

Jamaica Special District

The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan will establish specific regulations to supplement and modify the underlying zoning in order to respond to the neighborhood's particular issues and goals. Highlights include:

- Requiring certain uses allowed in manufacturing districts, such as waste transfer stations, to be fully enclosed when they are within a specific distance from homes
- Allowing developments in higher density districts to create larger buildings in exchange for on-site public space
- Creating opportunities for new schools to be built on large properties that meet certain conditions

For detailed information about zoning changes please visit jamaicaplan.nyc



Map of Zoning Proposal

Industrial Areas

Zoning Districts: M1-2A, M2-3A, M3-2A

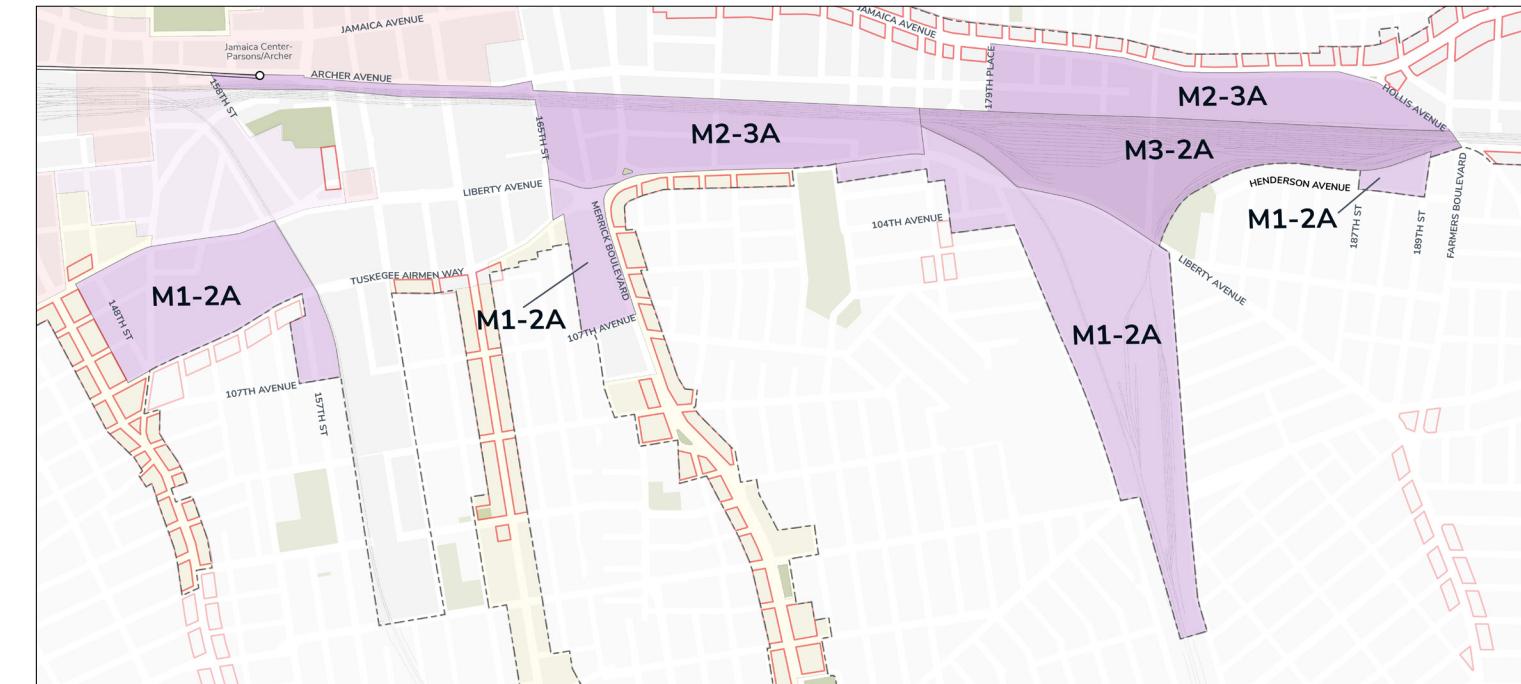
Zoning Today

These areas are zoned for manufacturing and commercial uses, and make up the Jamaica Industrial Business Zone (IBZ), where additional programs are provided to support and protect industrial businesses. That means that today, zoning:

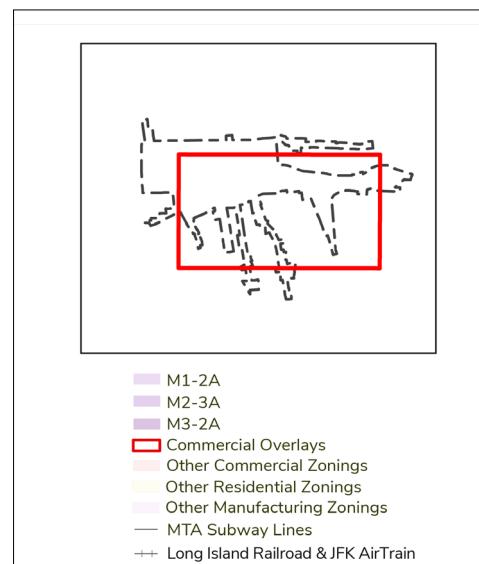
- Does not allow any residential development
- Allows a mix of light industrial businesses such as repair shops, wholesale services, and storage facilities
- Allows commercial uses like hotels, offices, and retail stores
- Allows certain community facilities, like houses of worship
- Allows larger development on the former Elmhurst Dairy Site
- Strictly limits specific uses and building dimensions, limiting job growth and adaptation

Proposed Zoning Changes

To support and grow the mix of business and employment opportunities in these areas, the proposed zoning would create three manufacturing zoning districts to encourage new types of industrial businesses, while supporting the City's ongoing facility needs at the LIRR railyard. Residential development would not be allowed in any of these areas.



Jamaica's industrial businesses provide jobs and resources to the local community and the city as a whole. Today, zoning limits how much space these businesses can use, which poses obstacles for light industries like maker spaces or urban farms that need room for equipment, storage, and operations. Offices and commercial businesses in these areas could also benefit from flexible layouts that allow them to adapt as they grow, which they cannot do today. These new zoning districts could diversify opportunities for new businesses and make it easier for existing businesses to expand.



The zoning for the area between Tuskegee Airmen Way, 180th Street, Dunkirk Street, and Henderson Street would provide more flexibility for a range of businesses while continuing to maintain as a buffer between industrial businesses and nearby homes.

Finally, the zoning for the MTA LIRR Railyard, which does not include any privately owned businesses, could ensure that the MTA can continue maintaining the yard and have room to grow their facilities as their needs may change in the future.

Zoning Chart

Zoning District	Max. Residential FAR	Max. Commercial FAR	Max. Community Facility FAR	Max. Manufacturing FAR
M1-2A	0.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
M2-3A	0.0	3.0	4.0	4.0
M3-2A	0.0	1.0	0.0	3.0

Industrial Areas

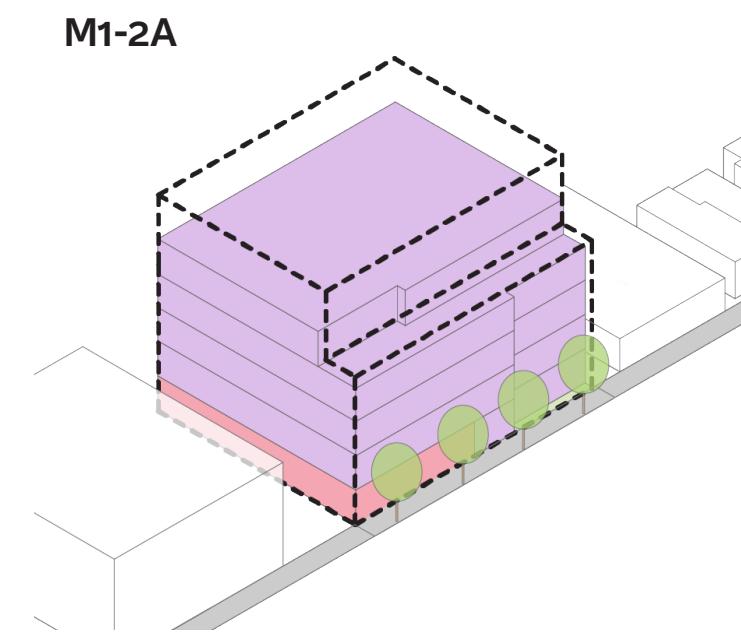
Zoning Districts: M1-2A, M2-3A, M3-2A

A Deeper Dive into the Industrial Area Zoning by District:

Tuskegee Airmen Way, 180th Street, Dunkirk Street, and Henderson Street
M1-2A

The proposed zoning for the area between Tuskegee Airmen Way, 180th Street, Dunkirk Street, and Henderson Street is M1-2A. This would:

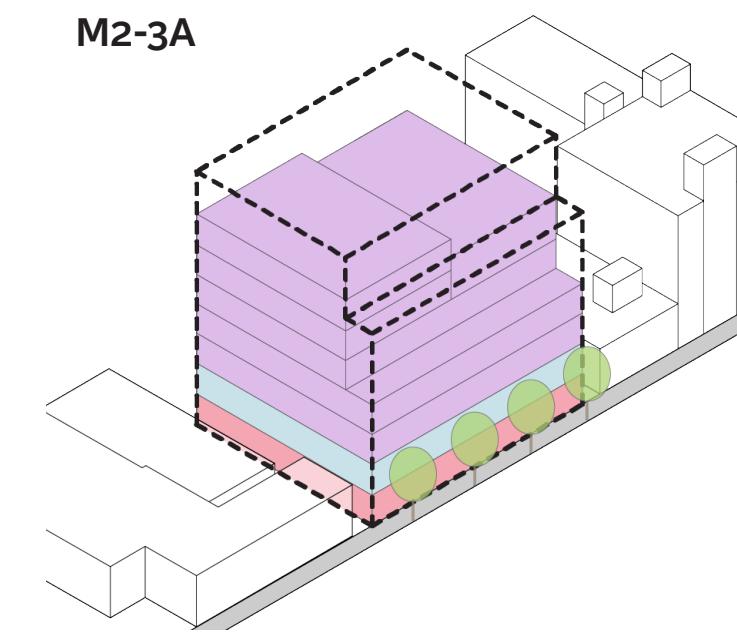
- Continue to allow a mix of light industrial, commercial, and community facility uses
- Allow 4-6 story loft-style buildings with high floor-to-ceiling heights, and larger floor plates that are suited to accommodate a greater range of businesses
- Limit retail stores to 10,000 square feet, except for food stores like supermarkets



North of Liberty Ave
M2-3A

The proposed zoning for the area north of Liberty Avenue is M2-3A. This would:

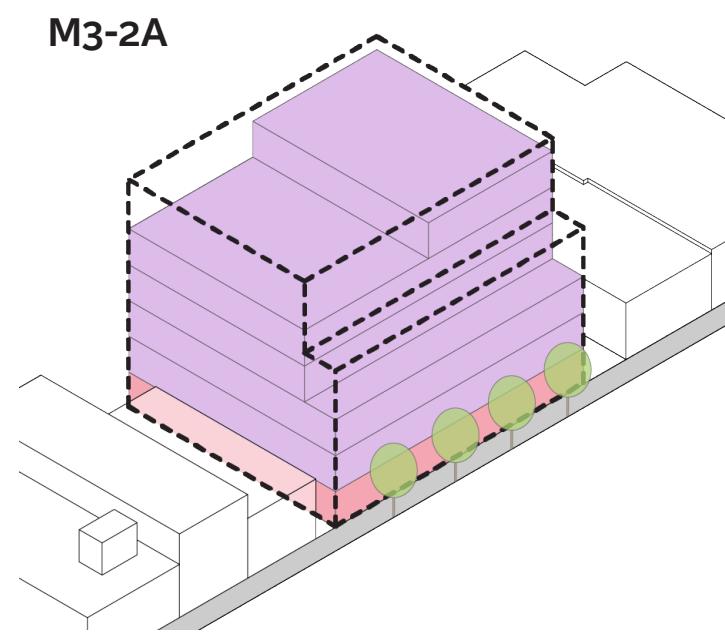
- Continue to allow a mix of light industrial, commercial, and community facility uses
- Allow 10-12 story loft-style buildings
- Limit retail stores to 10,000 square feet, except for food stores like supermarkets, which would be limited to 30,000 square feet



MTA LIRR Railyard
M3-2A

The proposed zoning for the area covering the MTA LIRR railyard is M3-2A. This district would:

- Allow 4-6 story loft-style buildings
- Allow heavier uses like fuel supply depots
- Allow some commercial uses



Merrick Blvd, Guy R. Brewer Blvd., Sutphin Blvd

Zoning Districts: R7X/R7A/R8X with C2-4

Zoning Today

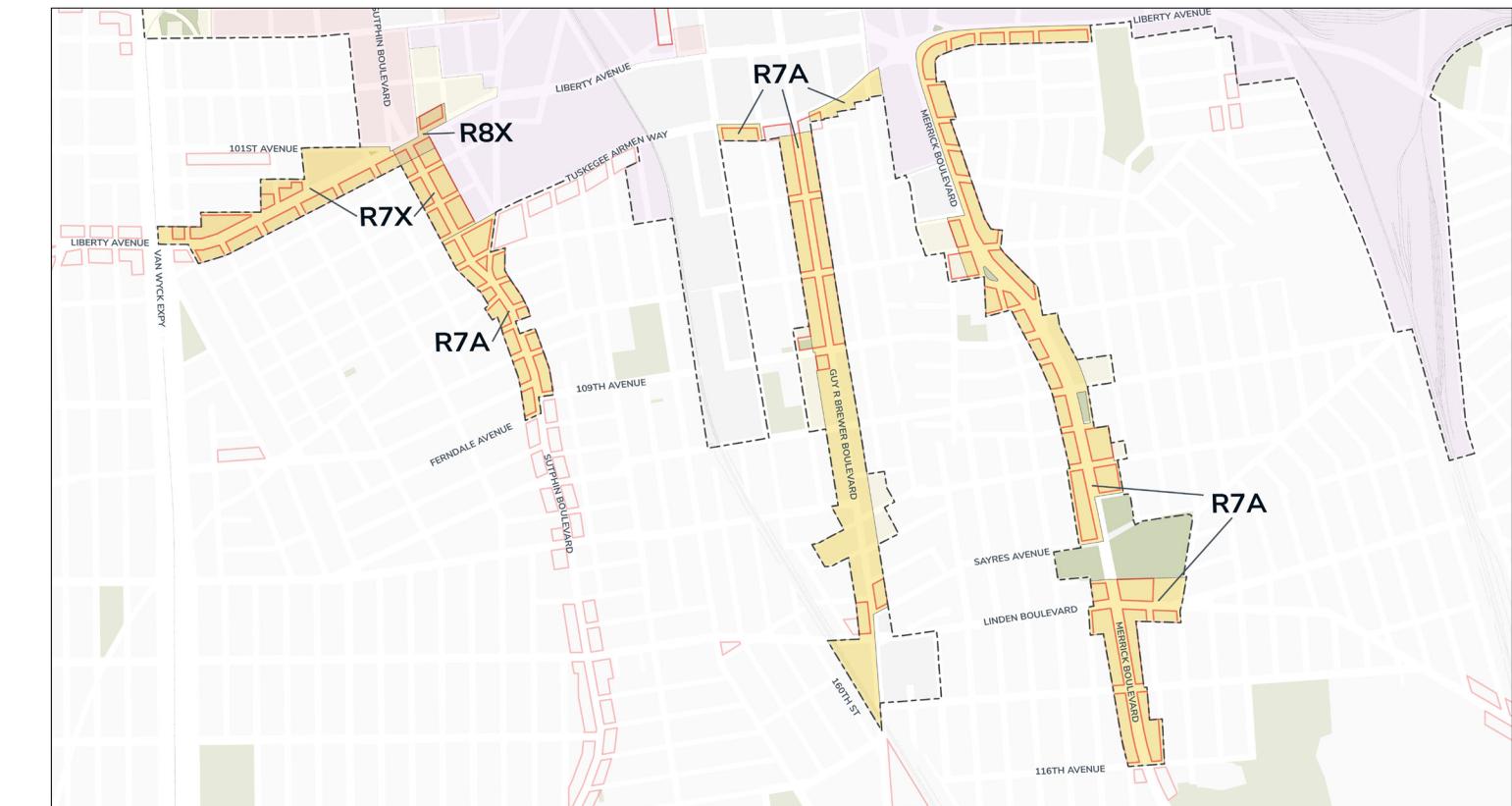
Merrick, Guy R. Brewer, and Sutphin Boulevards have long served as central arterials for shopping, services, faith-based institutions, and transit. Today, zoning along these corridors:

- Allows low-rise buildings
- Allows housing above commercial ground floor uses
- Does not require any income-restricted affordable housing

Proposed Zoning Changes

The proposed zoning for these areas is a mix of R7A, R7X, and R8X with a C2-4 overlay. This would:

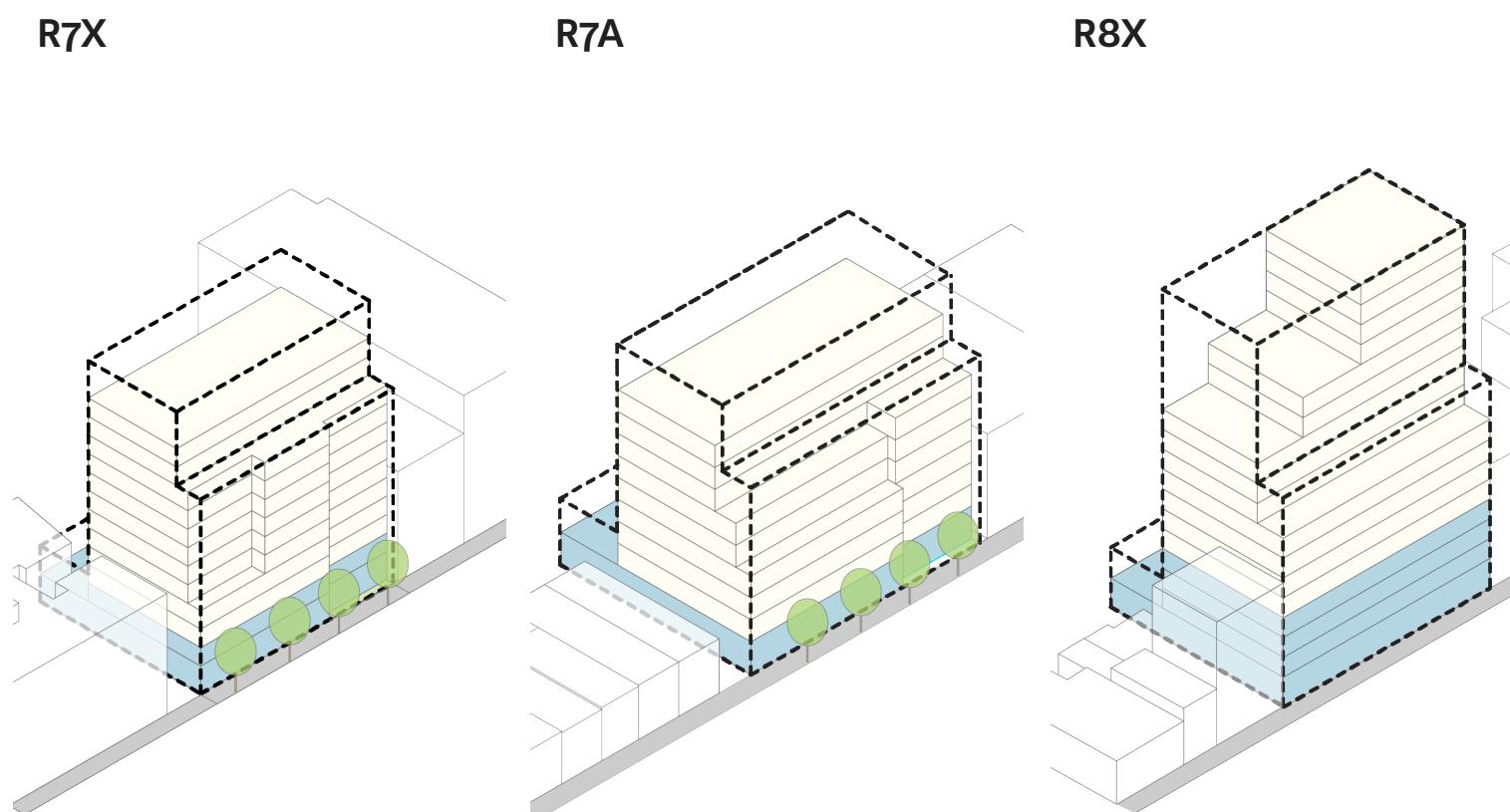
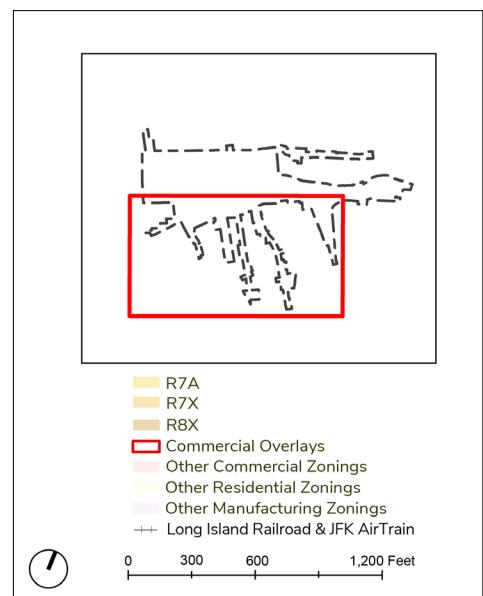
- Enable medium-density buildings with residential, commercial, and community facility uses
- Encourage mixed-use buildings with local retail or services on the ground floor, with apartment buildings above, including rental, condominium, and cooperative units
- Require permanently affordable, income-restricted housing as part of any residential development



These zoning changes are designed to maintain what is special about these corridors while expanding opportunities for more housing, including income-restricted affordable apartments, as well as a variety of small businesses and community facilities. By supporting mid-rise buildings with ground-floor businesses, the proposed changes would help these corridors grow in a way that keeps them active, walkable, and serving the needs of the community.

Zoning Chart

Zoning District	Max. Residential FAR	Max. Commercial FAR	Max. Community Facility FAR	Max. Manufacturing FAR
R7A	5.01		4.0	n/a
R7X	6.0		5.0	n/a
R8X	7.2		6.0	n/a
C2-4 OVERLAY	n/a	2.0	n/a	n/a



Hillside Avenue to Jamaica Avenue

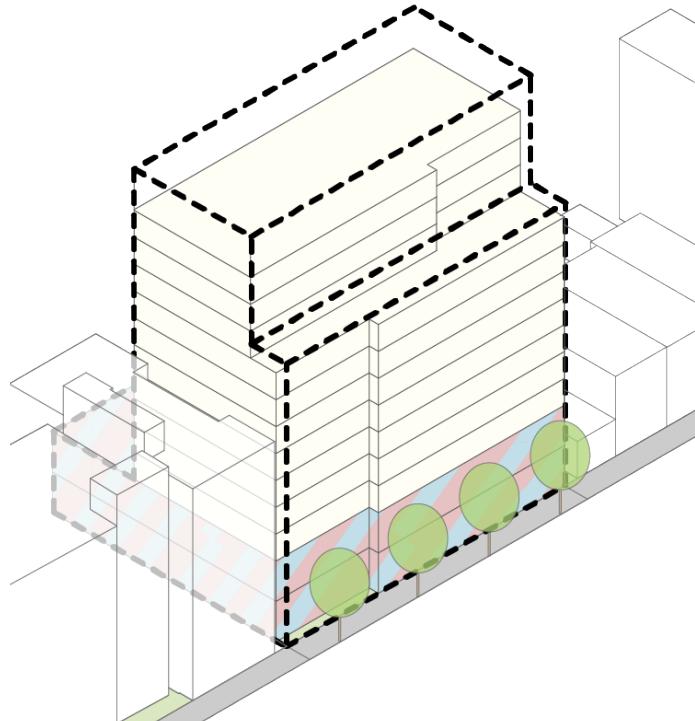
Zoning District: C4-4D and R7X

Zoning Today

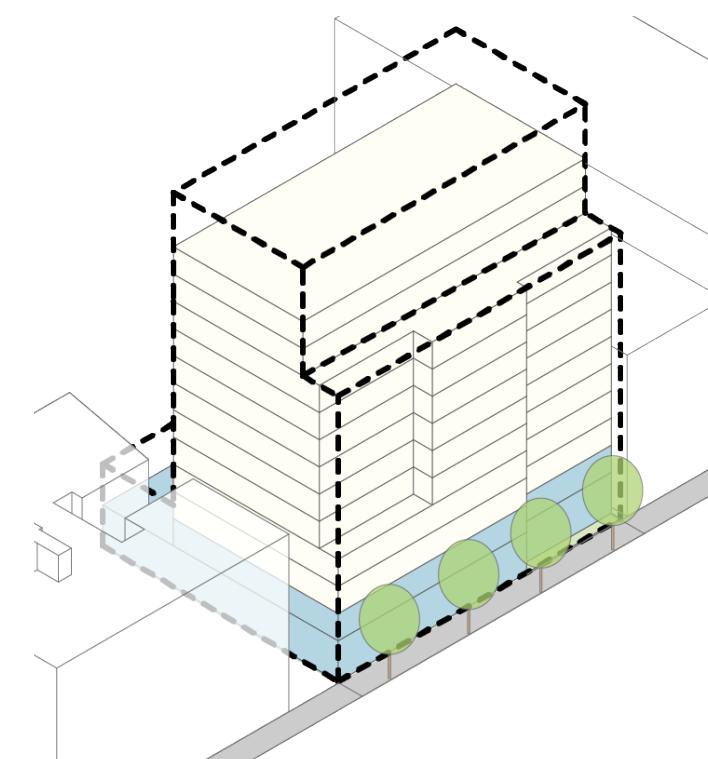
The zoning on Hillside Avenue and the area between Parsons Boulevard, 168th Street, and Jamaica Avenue currently:

- Allows medium-sized residential buildings with ground-floor businesses
 - Larger commercial stores
 - Does not require any income-restricted affordable housing

C4-4D



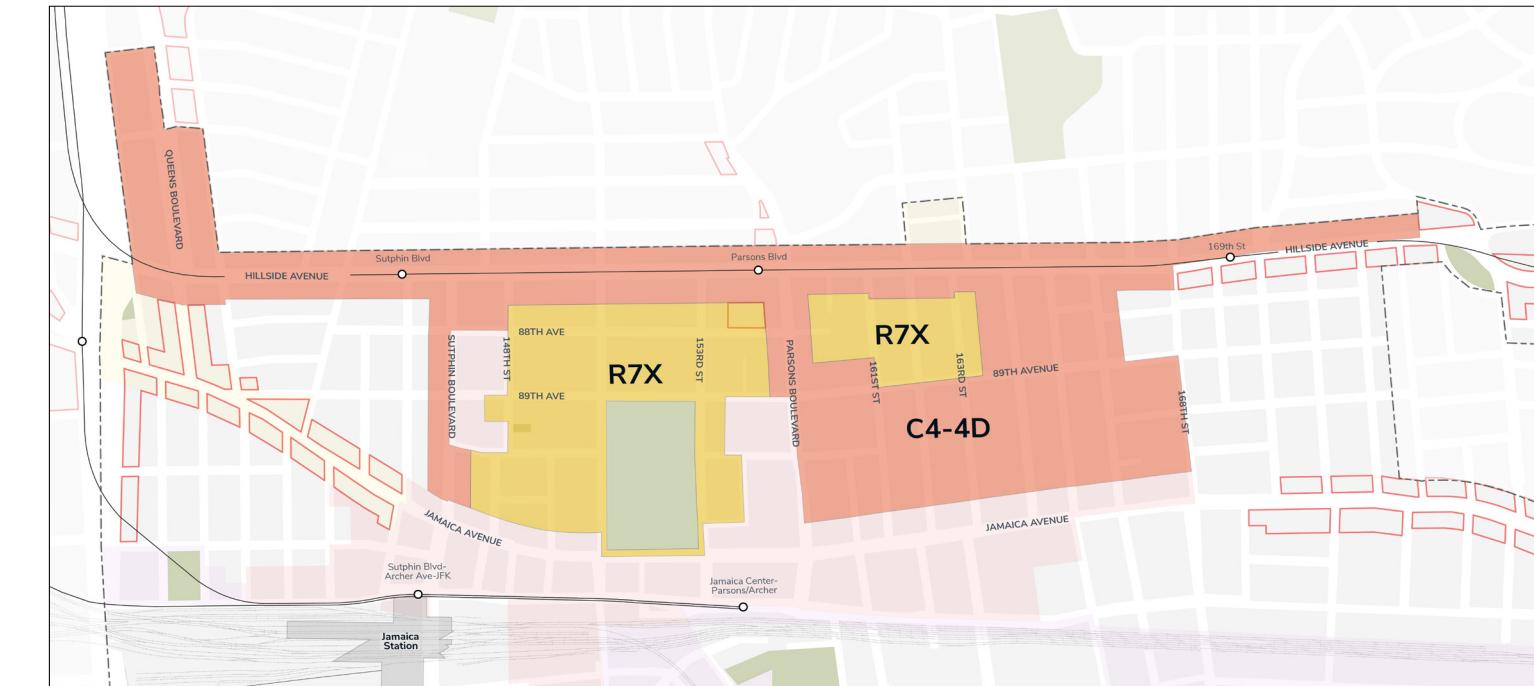
C4-4D R7



Proposed Zoning Changes

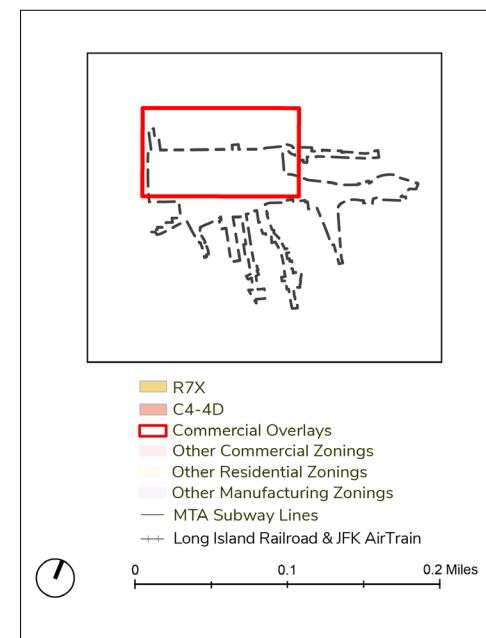
The proposed zoning for this area is C4D and R7X. This zoning district would

- Permit larger residential and larger community facility uses, such as schools, libraries, and medical clinics, as well as commercial uses in C4-4D areas
 - Require permanently affordable, income-restricted housing as part of any residential development



Hillside Avenue is a major corridor with strong transit access, local businesses, and community services. The proposed zoning would:

- Create opportunities for more mixed-use developments to reinforce Hillside Avenue as a walkable and convenient area
 - Support local businesses
 - Provide new housing opportunities near trains and buses
 - Strengthen the connections between Hillside Avenue and Jamaica Avenue, like around Sutphin Boulevard and the areas east of Parsons Boulevard
 - Activate the ground floor with local retail that encourages greater pedestrian activity, delivering a better walking experience



Zoning Char

Zoning District	Max. Residential FAR	Max. Commercial FAR	Max. Community Facility FAR	Max. Manufacturing FAR
R7X	6.0	0.0	5.0	n/a
C4-4D	7.2	3.4	6.5	n/a

Downtown Jamaica

Zoning Districts: C6-4 and C6-3

Zoning Today

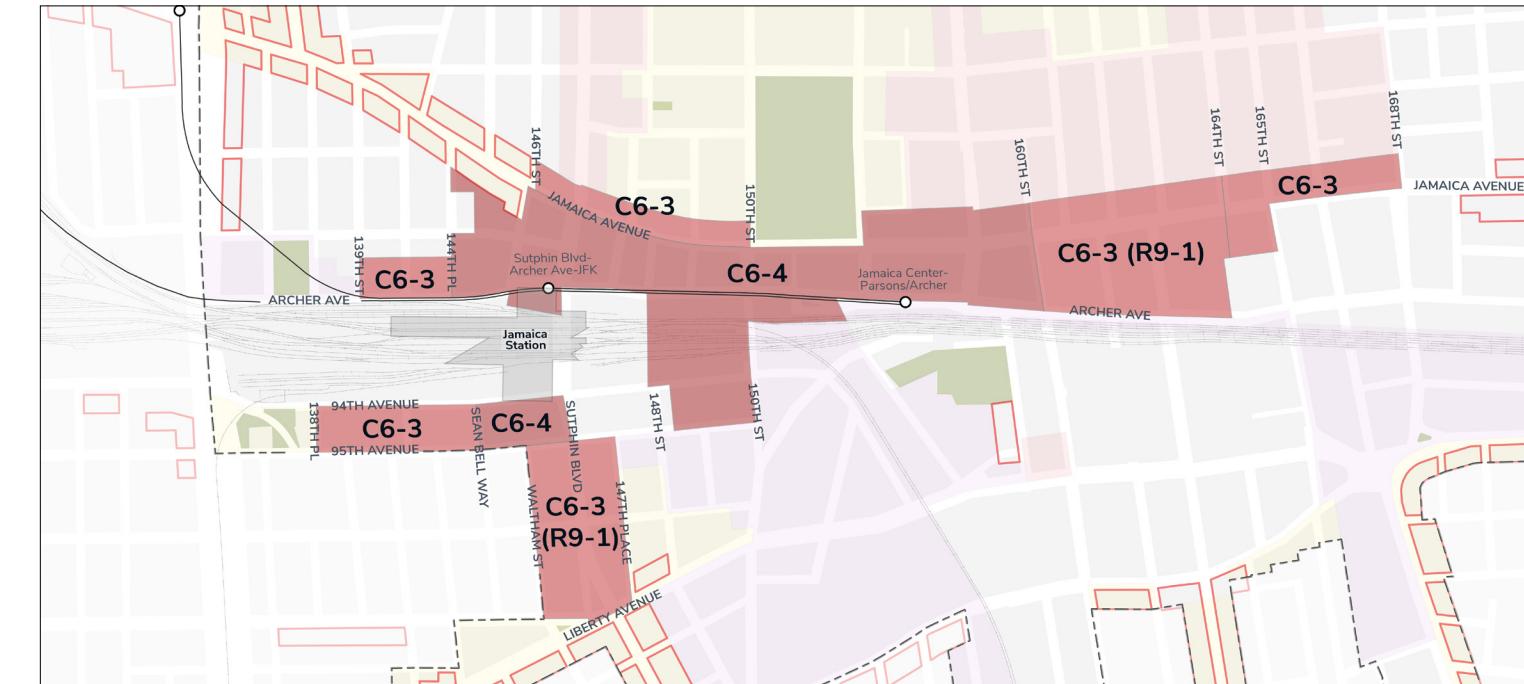
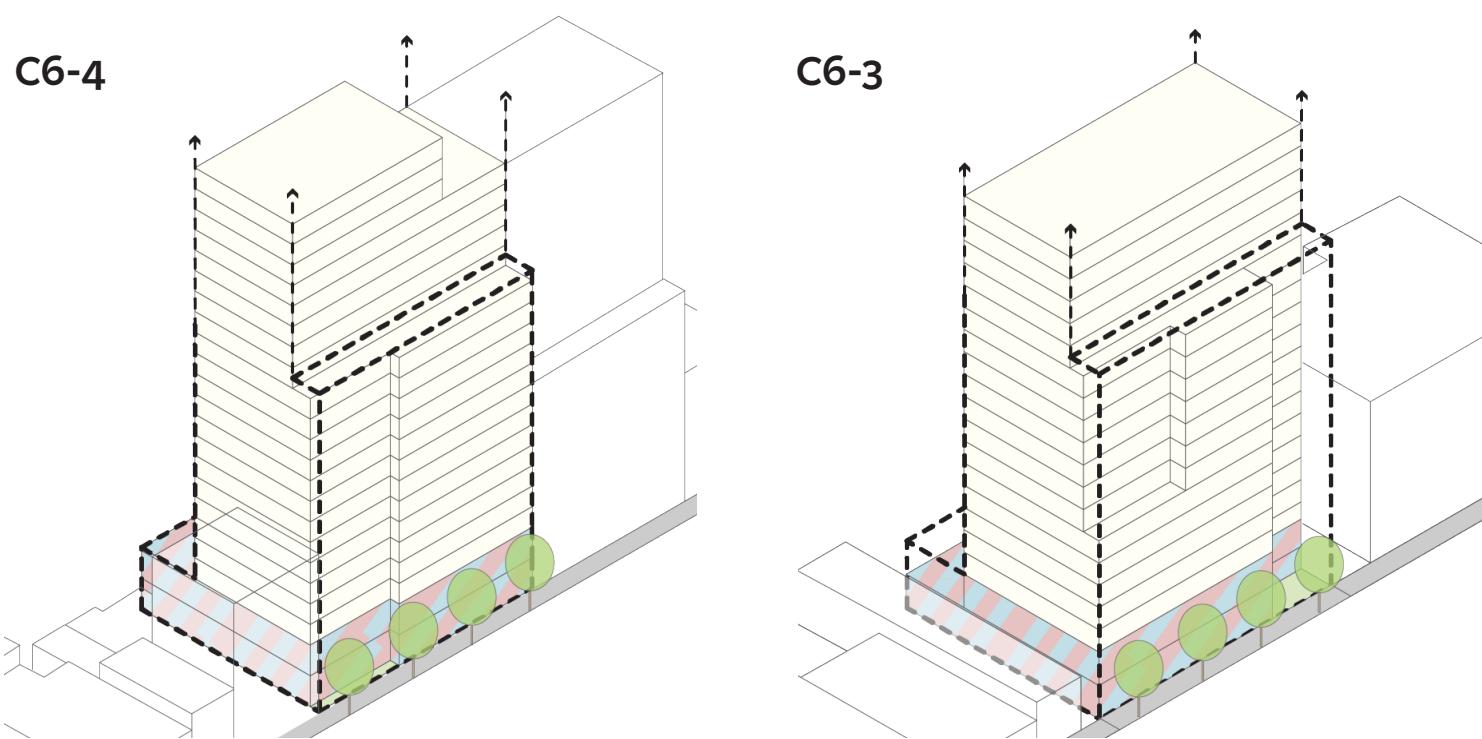
Today, Downtown Jamaica's zoning:

- Allows high-rise residential or commercial uses, including hotels or department stores
- Does not require any income-restricted affordable housing

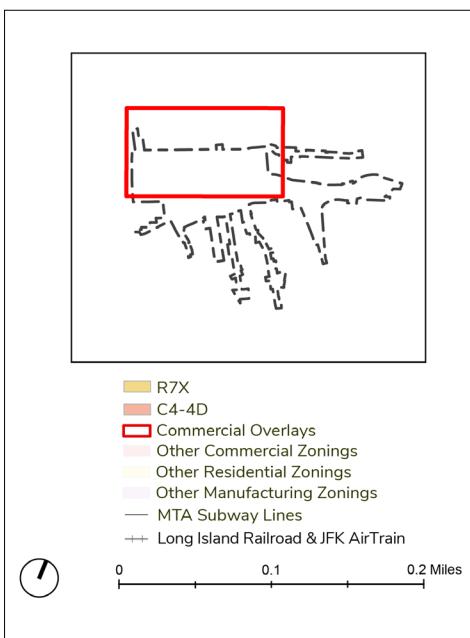
Proposed Zoning Changes

The proposed zoning for Downtown Jamaica is C6-4 and C6-3. These zoning districts are designed for major commercial centers where there is strong access to transit, housing jobs, and services. They would:

- Continue to allow high-rise residential or commercial uses
- Generate new jobs and business opportunities through larger office spaces, retail, and entertainment venues
- Require active ground-floor spaces to enliven the streets and make them more walkable
- Require permanently affordable, income-restricted housing as part of any residential development



With its strong connections to the subway, Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), and major bus routes, Jamaica Center has a long history as a commercial and transit hub in this part of Queens. Current zoning is hindering the development of the jobs, housing, and amenities that residents want to see. Growth in Jamaica Center can provide more opportunities for housing—some of which will be income-restricted—while also expanding the spaces available for businesses, all in an area with excellent access to transit.



Zoning Chart

Zoning District	Max. Residential FAR	Max. Commercial FAR	Max. Community Facility FAR	Max. Manufacturing FAR
C6-4	12.0	12.0	10.0	n/a
C6-3	9.02	8.0	10.0	n/a
C6-3A	9.02	6.0	7.5	n/a

Western Liberty Avenue

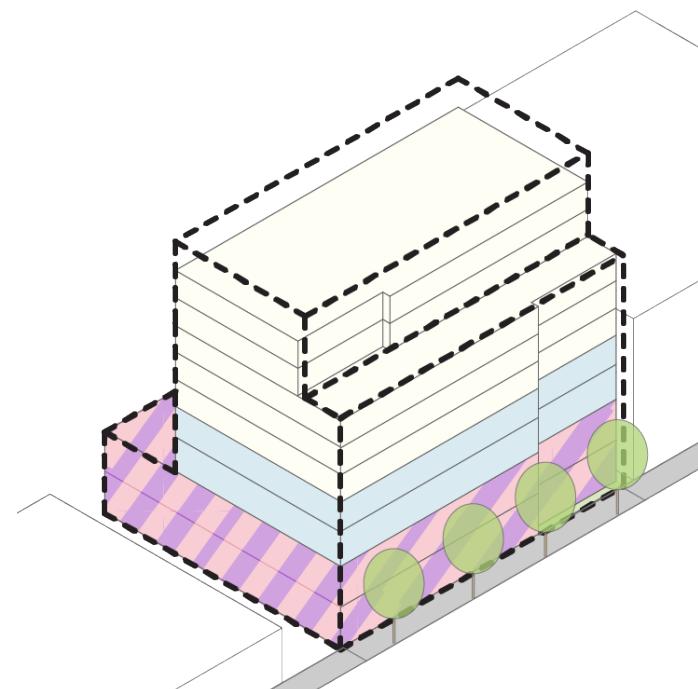
Zoning Districts: M1-2A/R7A, M1-8A/R9X, M1-3A/R7X

Zoning Today

In the area south of the LIRR between 150th Street and 159th Street extending south to Liberty Avenue, zoning currently:

- Allows light industrial businesses such as repair shops, wholesale services, and storage facilities
- Allows commercial uses like hotels, offices, and retail stores
- Allows certain community facilities, like houses of worship
- Does not allow new multifamily residential construction
- Contains a number of “non-compliant” buildings that are larger than zoning would allow today

M1-2A | R7A

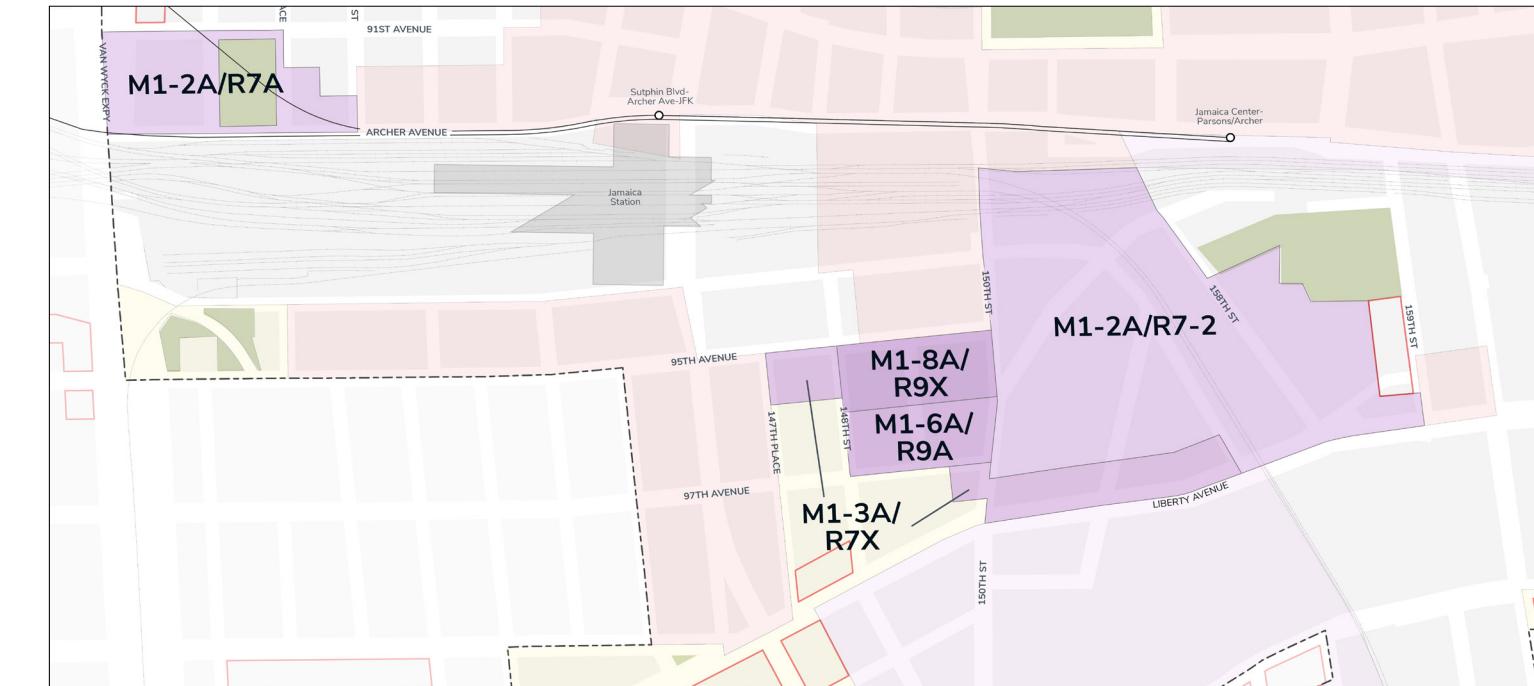
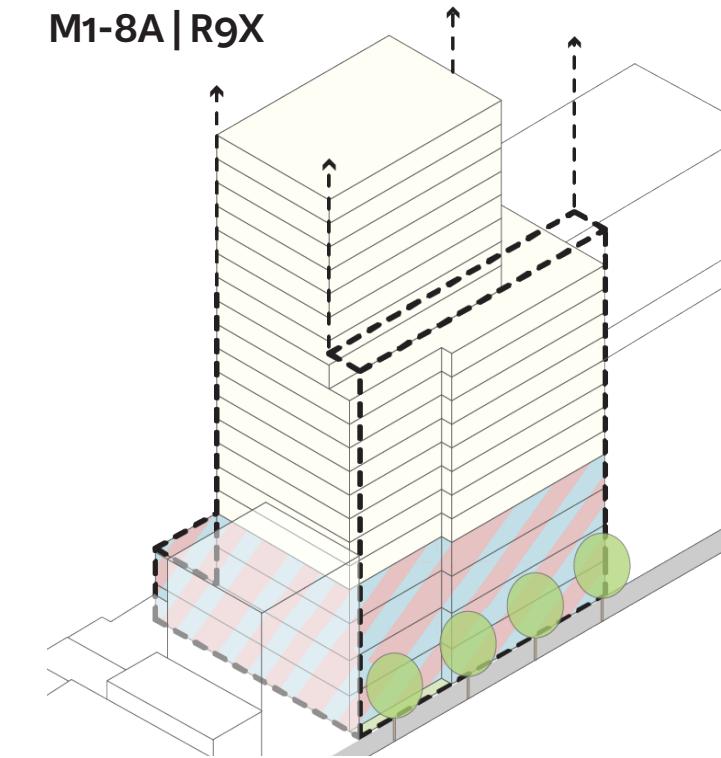


Proposed Zoning Changes

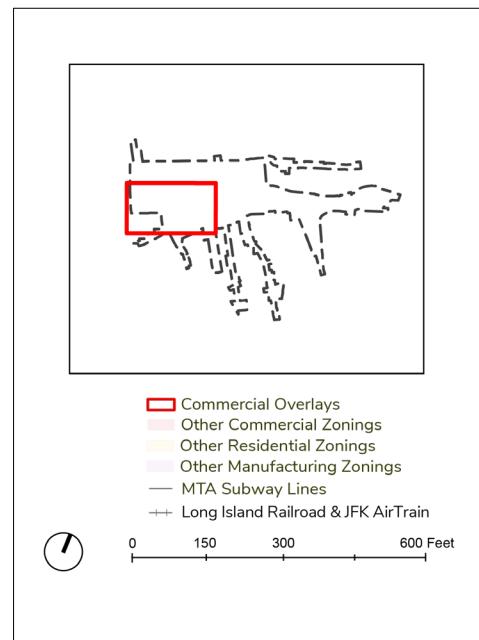
The proposed zoning for this area is a series of “paired” zoning districts that would allow for both residential and non-residential uses to exist in the same building or on the same block. For example, these districts could:

- Enable mixed residential and clean manufacturing buildings, such as one where people live above a coffee shop that roasts its own beans, or a makerspace where local artisans craft jewelry
- Allow commercial uses like supermarkets on the ground floors
- Require permanently affordable, income-restricted housing as part of any residential development

M1-8A | R9X



This area is zoned as a manufacturing district that allows a range of non-residential uses. Although new residential is not allowed, there are many existing homes in the area that were built before these zoning regulations were established. This proposal seeks to align zoning with the way the neighborhood has naturally developed over time, with a mix of homes and businesses. Given the area's proximity to transportation options, including buses and the Long Island Rail Road, it is an ideal place to add new housing, and support local jobs and businesses.



Zoning Chart

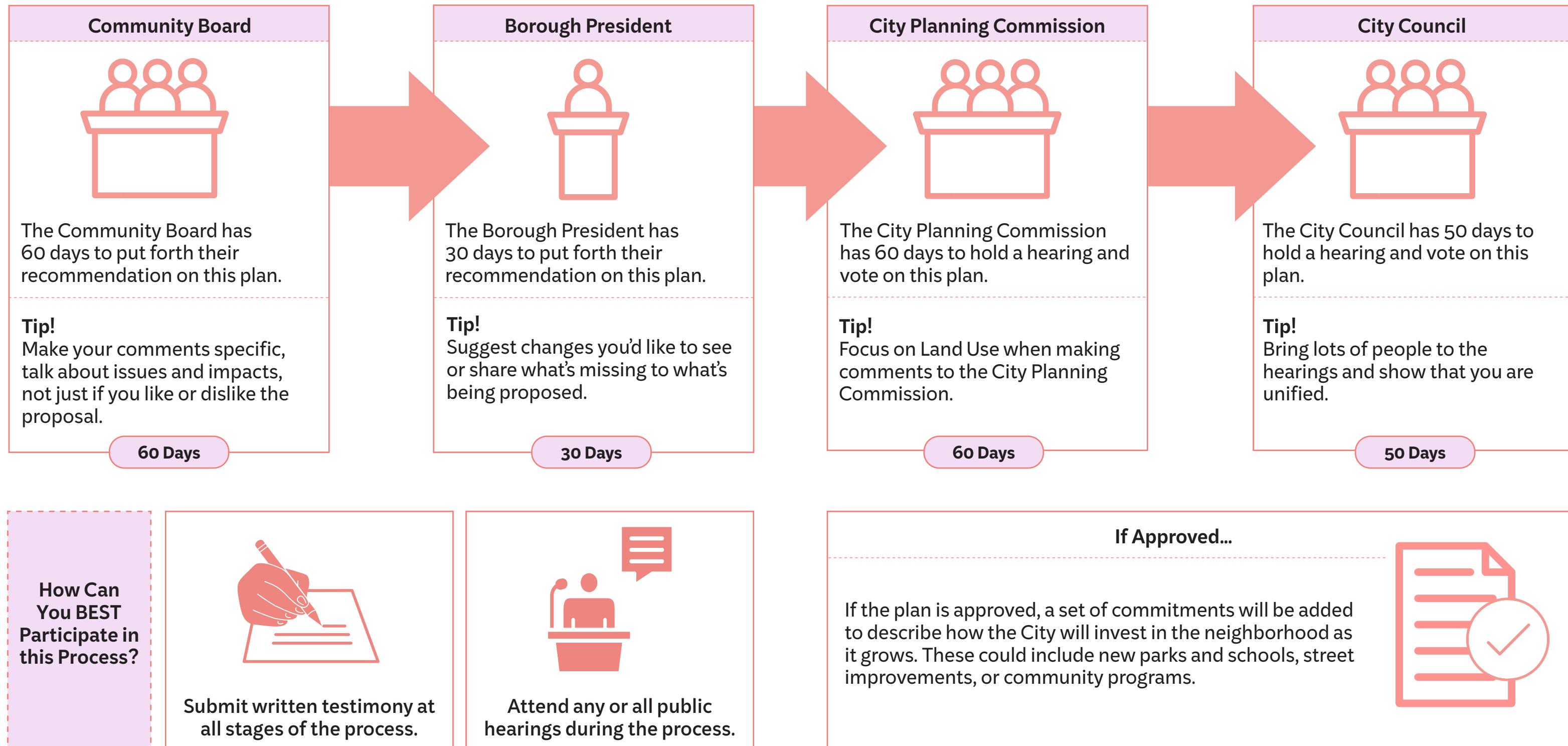
Zoning District	Max. Residential FAR	Max. Commercial FAR	Max. Community Facility FAR	Max. Manufacturing FAR
M1-2A R7-2	5.01	3.0	6.5	3.0
M1-8A R9X	10.8	12.0	12.0	12.0
M1-6A R9A	9.02	8.0	8.0	8.0
M1-3A R7X	6.0	4.0	4.0	4.0

What's Next? Public Review

Once we have a complete draft of the neighborhood plan, and the public review process begins. During this process, people deliberate two questions:

1. What Land Use Changes Should be Made?
2. What Investments Should Accompany Them?

In total, this process takes about 7 months.



City Agency Planning Partners

The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan was developed in collaboration with staff across New York City Agencies. Special thanks to the following staff who provided key support to the planning process:

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- Laura Bozzi
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In this Draft Neighborhood Plan, you will find the ideas we have crafted with the community to achieve our vision. Our vision: Jamaica is prosperous thanks to its affordability & inclusivity, diverse community, investment activity & business opportunities.

Visit www.jamaicaplan.nyc to learn more.

