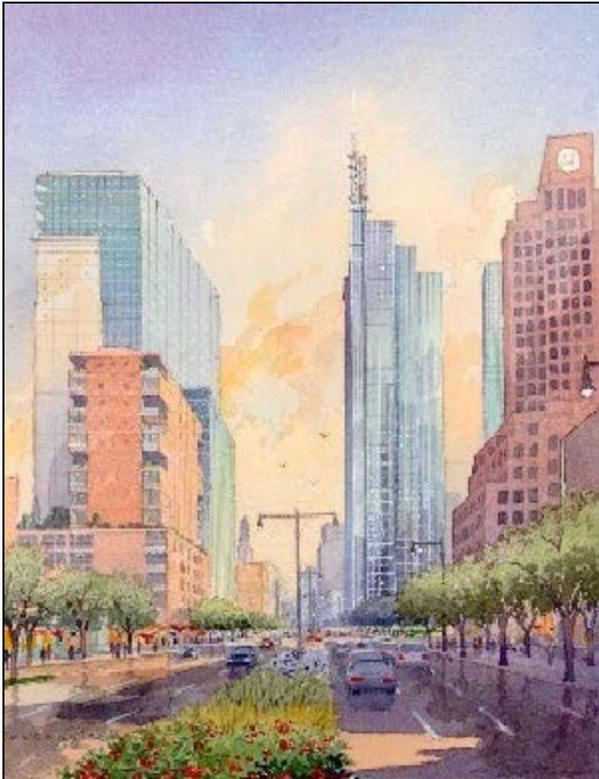




## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### INTRODUCTION



*Flatbush Avenue: Enhanced Pedestrian Environment*

The Department of City Planning and the [New York City Economic Development Corporation \(EDC\)](#), in partnership with the Downtown Brooklyn Council (DBC), a local business organization, are proposing a new comprehensive development plan to facilitate the continued growth of Downtown Brooklyn. The plan recommends a series of zoning map and zoning text changes, new public open spaces, pedestrian and transit improvements, urban renewal, street mappings and other actions that would foster a multi-use urban environment to serve the residents, businesses, academic institutions and cultural institutions of Downtown Brooklyn and its surrounding communities. Building on the success of previous development efforts that have retained and attracted companies in New York, the plan would create new retail and housing, and would foster expanded academic and cultural facilities.

Downtown Brooklyn is the city's third largest central business district after Midtown and Downtown Manhattan. Because of its close proximity to lower Manhattan and excellent local and regional mass transit access, Downtown Brooklyn occupies a valuable and unique position in New York City as a competitive, back-office alternative to New Jersey. Generally bounded by Tillary Street to the north, Ashland Place to the east, Atlantic Center and Schermerhorn Street to the south, and Court Street to the west, it is a diverse area with a high concentration of major office buildings, regional stores, residential buildings, government offices and a number of major academic and cultural institutions.

 [View and print full set of Downtown Brooklyn slides](#) (1.2 mb)

 [Summary of Downtown Brooklyn Development Plan](#) (3.5 mb)

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** INTRODUCTION



*Downtown Brooklyn Development Opportunities*

### Downtown Brooklyn's Assets:

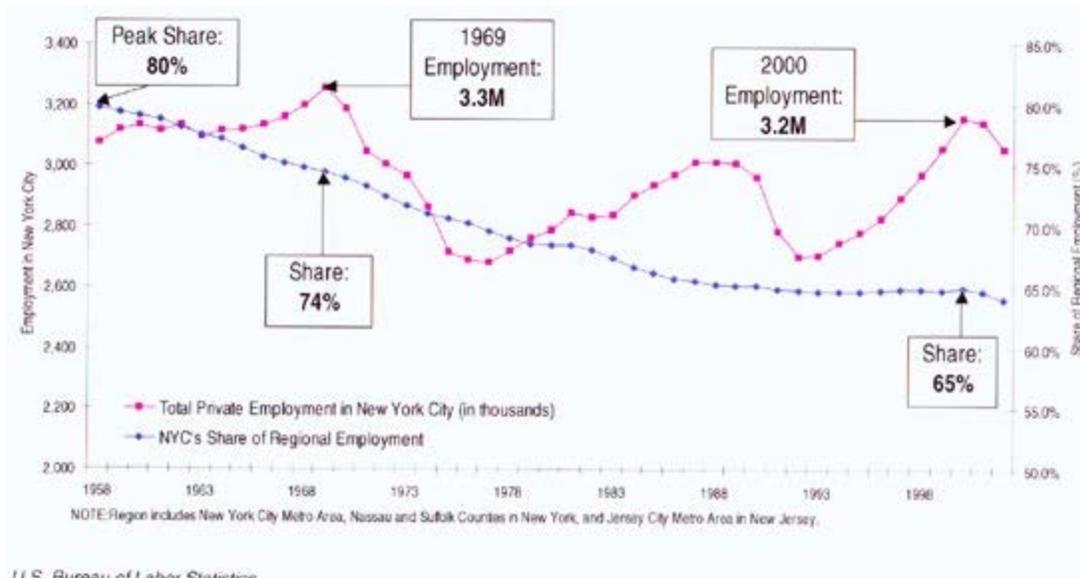
- Office Space: 11 million square feet of office space in the commercial core, including six million square feet of prestigious Class A space with a vacancy rate of 0.2 percent. These buildings have high quality standard finishes, state of the art systems, exceptional accessibility and a definite market presence.
- Corporate Tenants: critical mass of Class A tenants, including Chase, Keyspan, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, SIAC and Bear Stearns
- Employment: 70,000 workers in Downtown Brooklyn, many at operations centers for financial service companies
- Academic Institutions: seven institutions in and around the Downtown area with over 32,000 students
- Housing: exceptional housing stock in surrounding brownstone neighborhoods and 500 units in the core with 1,200 residents
- Cultural Resources: 300,000 square feet of cultural space drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors annually
- Infrastructure: comprehensive transit network and infrastructure systems

Zoning enacted in 1961 did not foresee extensive change to the existing business district, as it was then defined by Court Street, the Civic Center and Fulton Streets department store corridor. Since that time most commercial redevelopment has required publicly sponsored zoning changes and other government actions, such as urban renewal and direct investment, to facilitate enlargement of the office core on sites that were dominated by lofts, small buildings and parking lots. These actions resulted in the development of the Pierrepont Plaza office building, the 5.5 million square-foot MetroTech campus, and the Renaissance Plaza office and hotel complex. Most recently, in July 2001, the City Planning Commission approved the Special Downtown Brooklyn District (SDBD) with more flexible height and setback controls and several upzonings that have resulted in construction of new apartment houses.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

### Decline of New York City's Regional Position

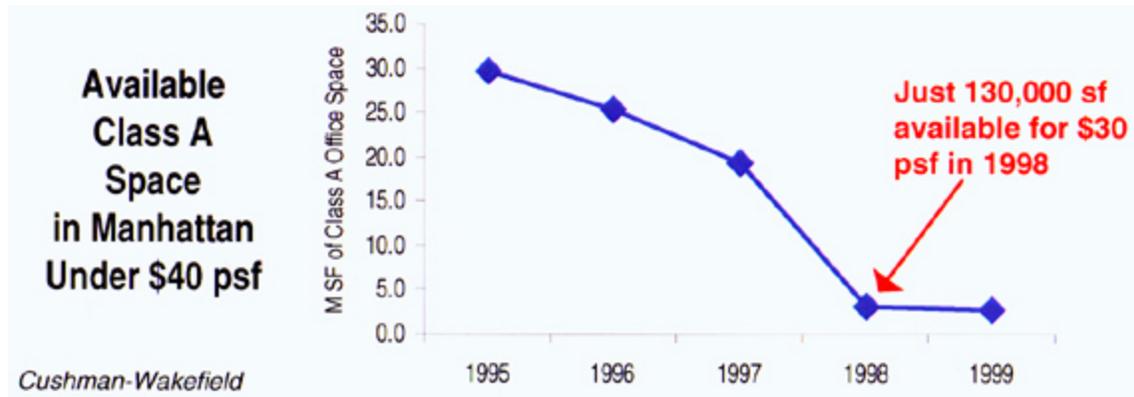
While the city captures a large number of jobs, its employment share in the region has declined. In 1958 New York City had over 3.1 million workers, representing 80 percent of the total employment of the region. Yet in 2000, when the city had 3.2 million workers, its employment share in the region had dropped to 65 percent.



## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

### Office Space Shortage

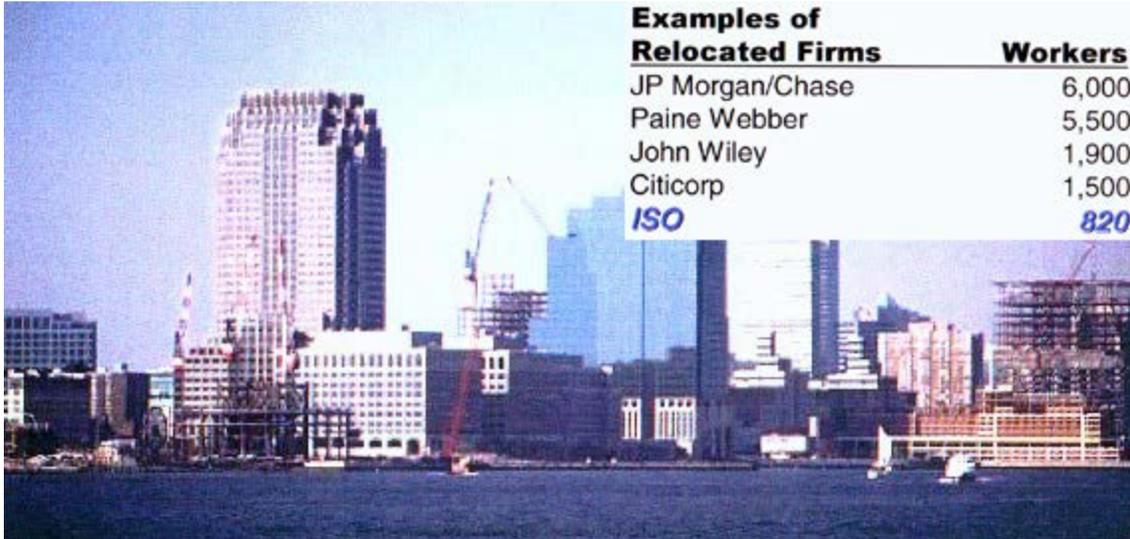
During the 90's boom years, expanding corporations were unable to find less expensive, ready-to-go opportunities in Manhattan. Between 1995 and 2000, rent for Class A space in Manhattan increased by 100 percent while vacancy dropped by 80 percent. However, the Class A space inventory increased by only 4.7 million square feet, two percent of the total.



## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

### Impact of New Jerseys Growth

While the citys Class A office space inventory barely grew, New Jerseys Hudson River waterfront developments experienced tremendous growth. Between 1990 and 2000 some 12 million square feet of low-cost office space was built on the waterfront. This amount of office space represents enough space for 50,000 employees that, if located in New York City, would be the equivalent of \$150 million in 2003 tax dollars. New Jersey offers inexpensive, large floorplate office buildings that are ready to be occupied in a short time frame. In 2000 alone, 32 New York City companies relocated to New Jersey taking with them approximately 9,000 jobs.



*New Jersey Shoreline*

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

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*ISO Office Building*

### **Case Study: ISO Relocation**

In 1999, the ISO corporation, an insurance information provider, sought to consolidate its New York City offices into one location. They required large floorplates in a new building at a maximum of \$35 per square foot, but no sites in Manhattan met their needs and no other borough had inexpensive, ready-to-go sites.

As a result, the company leased a 780,000 square-foot building in Jersey City where a site was immediately available. The cost to New York City was a loss of 820 jobs, representing \$6 million in lost annual tax revenues.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

### Strategy for Growth of NYC Business Districts

To enhance its competitive position in the region, New York City has a strategy for growth of its Central Business Districts, including Lower Manhattan, Hudson Yards, Long Island City and Downtown Brooklyn, as well as its specialty office markets in Jamaica, Harlem and the HUB in the Bronx. The strategy calls for providing an array of market options, ensuring that key sites are readied for development, accommodating businesses that need to disperse their functions and investing in the public environment.



## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

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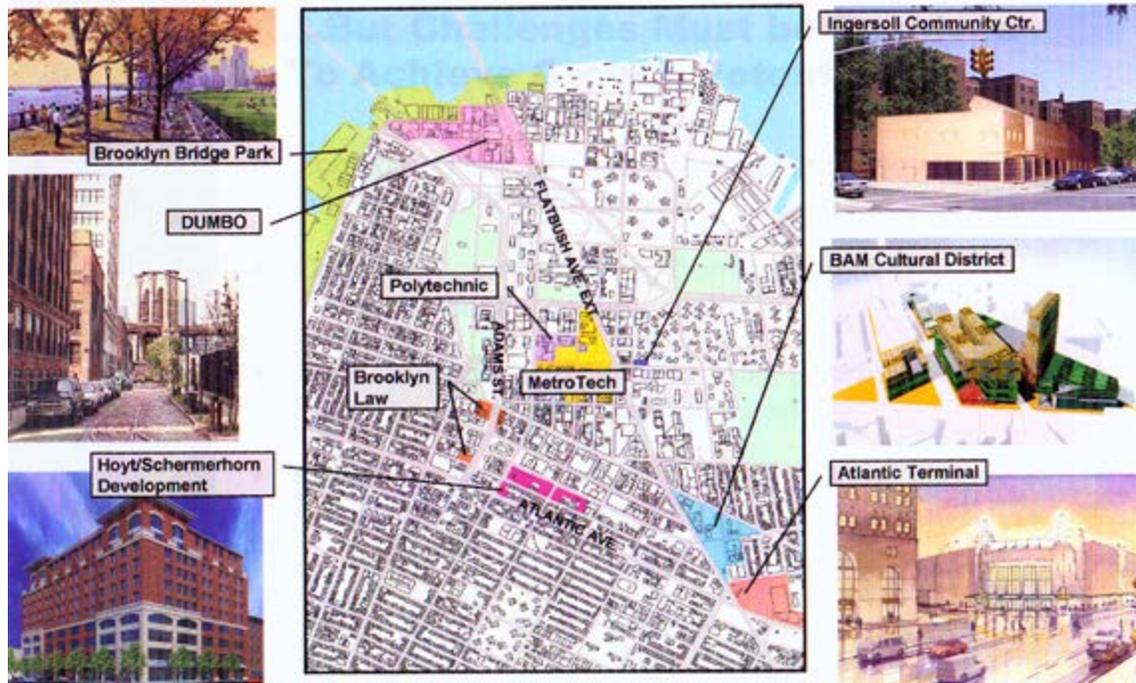
#### **Key Role for Downtown Brooklyn**

Downtown Brooklyn is a key part of New York City's strategy for growth by providing an affordable option for businesses and a competitive alternative to New Jersey.

The area offers an alternative and competitive office district with a focus on back-office functions for firms seeking to disperse operations from central locations. It offers Class A space without Class A rents, boasts a vibrant and varied urban environment, has the benefit of close proximity and easy access to Manhattan and is connected by a wide variety of transportation options. Downtown Brooklyn is poised to retain and grow the city's at-risk back-office jobs, preserve its tax base and generate new revenues.

# Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

Important Initiatives Are Underway



## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

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### **Obstacles to Achieving Growth**

Downtown Brooklyn has the following issues to overcome:

- Zoning and lack of adequate development sites limit opportunities for growth
- Downtown core is isolated from surrounding strong residential communities
- Poor streetscape experience limits desirability as business and residential destination
- Downtown has not tapped into vast cultural and educational resources

### **Guiding Principles to Achieve Downtown Brooklyn's Potential**

The Downtown Brooklyn Plans guiding principles include ensuring a comprehensive planning process, partnering with local stakeholders, understanding the areas strengths and weaknesses, focusing on strategic problem-solving and making catalytic public investments.

### **Progress to Present**

To date, the city has dedicated significant resources to the pre-development planning phase. Community outreach is already well under way. In addition, an inter-agency task force meets regularly to carefully craft this plan and chart its progress so that the public approval process will proceed expeditiously and new development can start by 2005.

### **The Vision**

With enactment of the plan, the future of Downtown Brooklyn promises to be bright:

- The economic center of what would be equal to America's 4th largest city
- Strong and diverse commercial & retail markets
- Residential communities that are integrated in Downtown
- Expanding premier cultural and educational destinations
- A vibrant public environment served by enhanced transit network

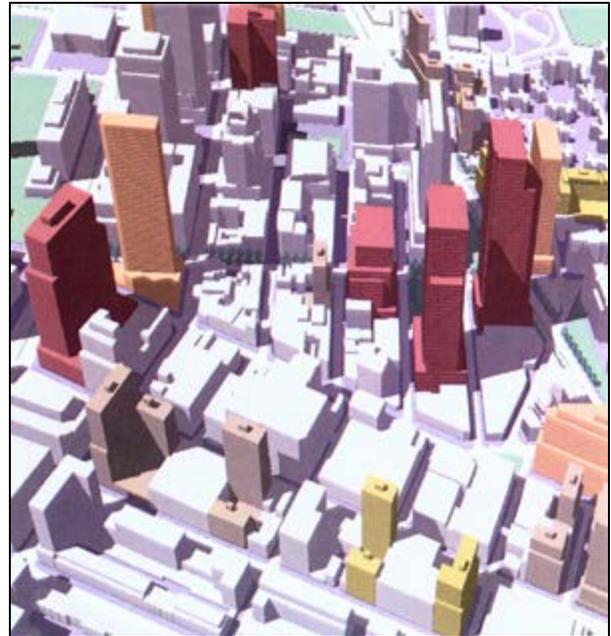
## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** THE PLAN

### The Plan

The Plan for Downtown Brooklyn calls for enacting major zoning changes, creating high quality public spaces, providing adequate parking facilities, improving transit infrastructure, strengthening retail, expanding cultural resources and enhancing the pedestrian environment.



*Expanded Development Areas*



*Willoughby Street Commercial Development*

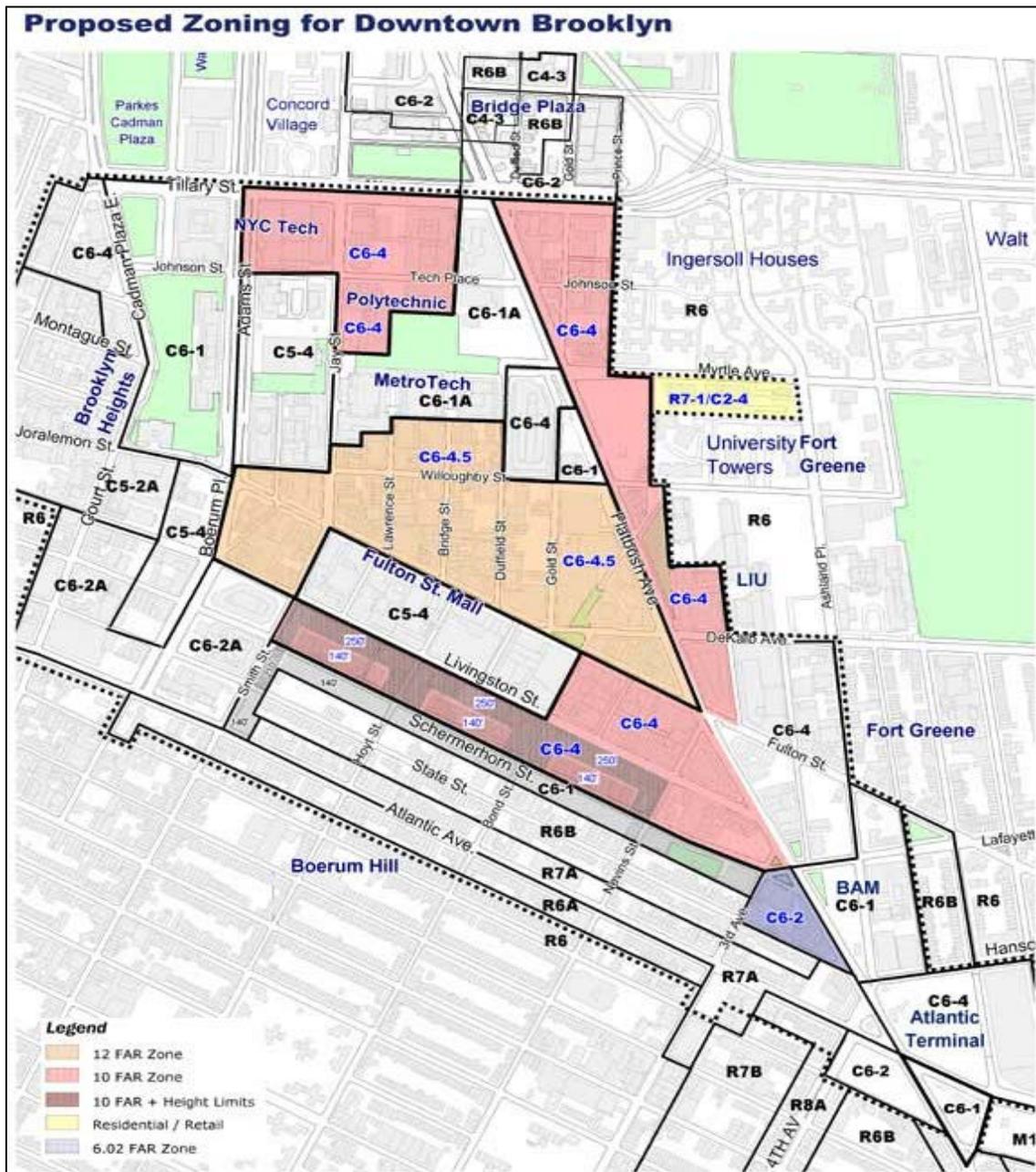
## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** THE PLAN

### Existing Zoning

The predominant existing zoning in Downtown Brooklyn is either C6-1 (6 FAR), C5-4 or C6-4 (10 FAR), mid- to high-density commercial districts allowing a range of office, retail, residential and community facility uses. C6 districts allow a slightly greater range of retail uses, such as auto services and theaters, than a C5 district. The Special Downtown Brooklyn District (indicated by the dotted line on the map below) includes urban design guidelines for major streets in Downtown Brooklyn. These guidelines require streetwall and retail continuity, street tree plantings and restrictions on new curb cut locations along important pedestrian corridors, including Flatbush Avenue, Atlantic Avenue, Willoughby and Court Streets.

### Zoning Changes

The proposed zoning changes, as revised on April 29, 2004, are designed to encourage new office development and academic expansion space within the commercial core and, in the surrounding areas, new residential development with attractive ground-floor retail.



## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** THE PLAN

### Proposed Zoning Text and Map Amendments

- Expand commercial development with high density, flexible zoning that will encourage attractive new buildings on underutilized sites.



#### Rezone Downtown Brooklyn Core Area to C6-4.5

The area south of MetroTech would be rezoned to C6-4.5, increasing the allowable FAR from 6 and 10 to 12 for commercial and community facility buildings. Residential buildings would be limited to an FAR of 10 but could achieve an FAR of 12 through a plaza bonus or inclusionary housing. This area, between Willoughby Street and the Fulton Street Mall, Flatbush Avenue Extension and Adams Street, is currently zoned C6-1 (6 FAR) and C5-4 (10 FAR).

The rezoning would promote new office building construction to extend the MetroTech office core south to the Fulton Mall. The area is now dominated by many small underdeveloped commercial and residential buildings, and parking lots fronting on Willoughby, Gold, Duffield, Bridge and Lawrence Streets. Along the Fulton Mall, the rezoning area contains department stores, retail and office buildings. Tower building forms would continue to be permitted (with no height limit) and a 250-foot height limit would be established for a non-tower building form.

View 1



*Boerum Place and Willoughby Street Commercial Development*

View 2



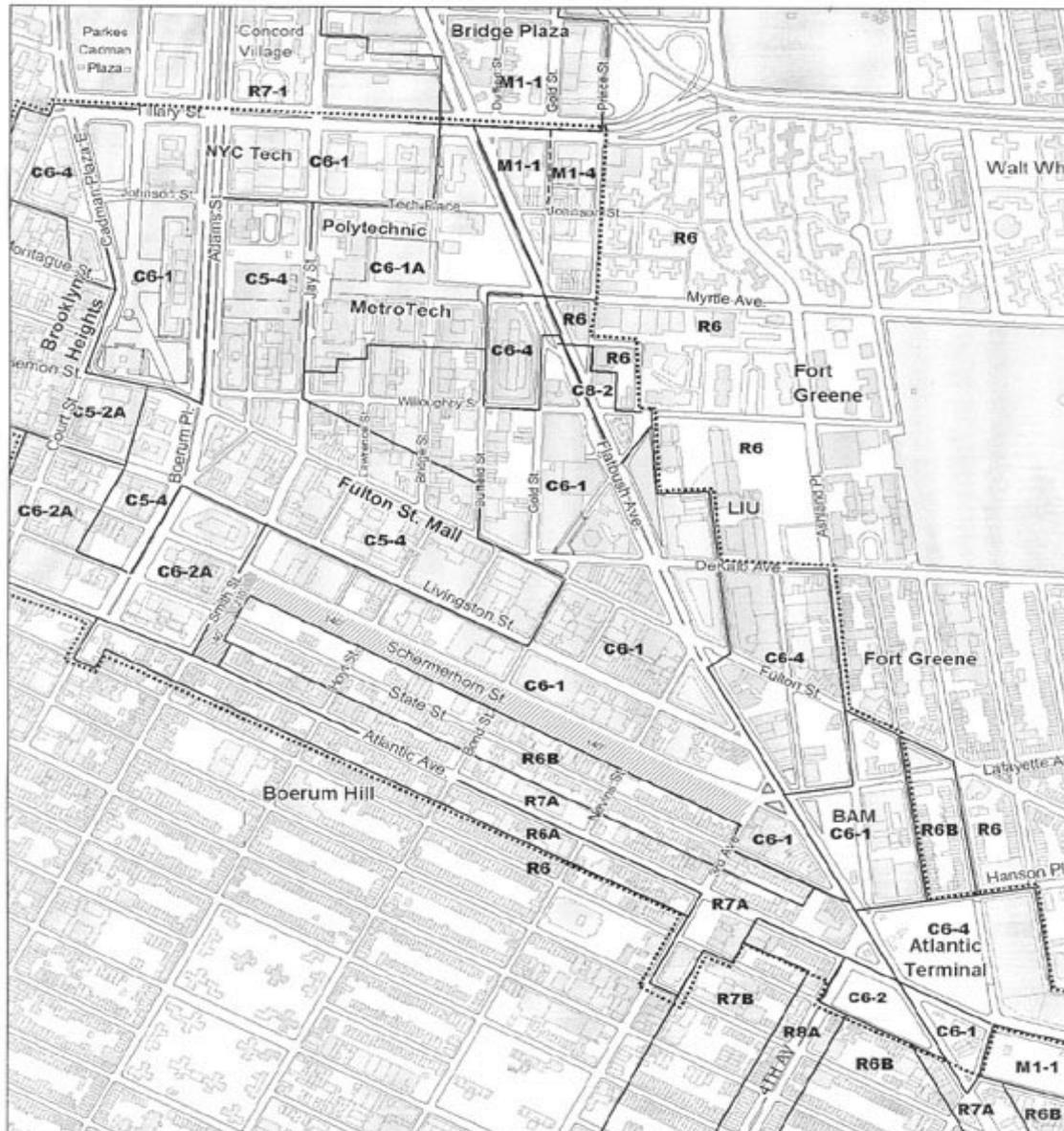
*Willoughby Square Commercial Development*

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** THE PLAN

### Existing Zoning:

The predominant existing zoning in Downtown Brooklyn is either C6-1 (6 FAR), C5-4 or C6-4 (10 FAR), mid- to high-density commercial districts allowing a range of office, retail, residential and community facility uses. C6 districts allow a slightly greater range of retail uses, such as auto services and theaters, than a C5 district. The Special Downtown Brooklyn District (indicated by the dotted line on the map below) includes urban design guidelines for major streets in Downtown Brooklyn. These guidelines require streetwall and retail continuity, street tree plantings and restrictions on new curb cut locations along important pedestrian corridors, including Flatbush Avenue, Atlantic Avenue, Willoughby and Court Streets.

### Downtown Brooklyn: Existing Zoning



## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** THE PLAN

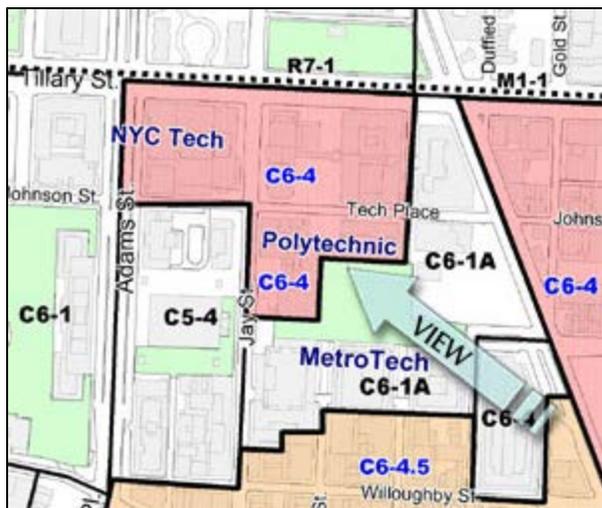
### More Zoning Text and Map Amendments...

- **Expand academic and commercial uses by facilitating public/private development and promoting mixed-use opportunities.**

#### Rezone Jay Street Area to C6-4

Two blocks at Tillary, Johnson, Jay and Adams Streets that contain the New York City College of Technology, a Polytechnic University dormitory and Westinghouse High School, currently zoned C6-1 (6 FAR), and Polytechnic University's portion of the MetroTech campus, currently zoned C6-1A (6 FAR), are proposed to be rezoned to C6-4 (10 FAR).

The rezoning would facilitate new mixed-use academic and office buildings. The proposed zoning change would allow the NYC College of Technology and Polytechnic University to expand their academic facilities and develop revenue-producing office buildings within their campuses. The development of Polytechnic's site, which now contains the Jacobs Building and a power plant, would also require a revision to the previously approved MetroTech large-scale plan.

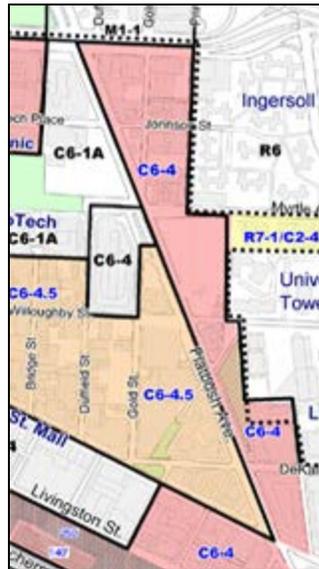
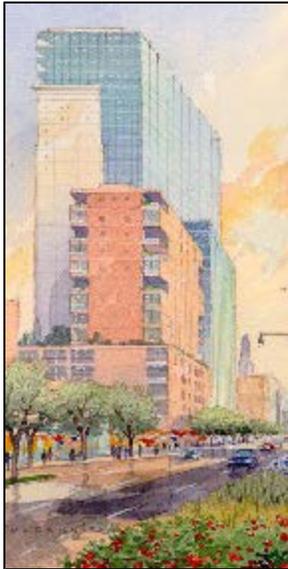


*Promote Academic and Commercial Uses*

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** THE PLAN

### More Zoning Text and Map Amendments...

- Expand residential development with higher density zoning, providing opportunities for integrating new housing and retail with academic and cultural communities and leveraging low-cost financing for affordable housing.



*Expand Housing east of Flatbush and at Myrtle Avenue*

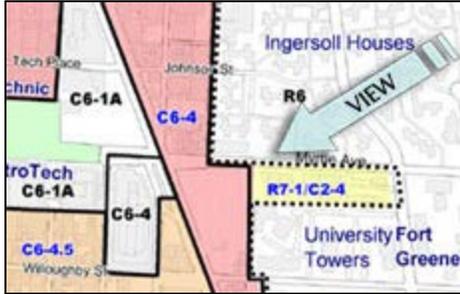
#### **Rezone East of Flatbush Avenue Area to C6-4**

The blocks along the east side of Flatbush Avenue Extension, from Tillary Street to Myrtle Avenue, currently zoned M1-1 (1 FAR), M1-4 (2 FAR) and R6/ C2-3 (2.43 FAR) would be rezoned to C6-4 (10 FAR). Several blocks along the east side of Flatbush Avenue Extension, from Myrtle Avenue to Fulton Street, currently zoned R6 (2.43 FAR), R6/ C2-3 (2.43 FAR), C8-2 (2 FAR) and C6-1 (6 FAR) would also be rezoned to C6-4 (10 FAR).

Under the proposed zoning change, many blocks containing auto-related uses, loft buildings, small stores and residential buildings could be redeveloped with higher-density residential and commercial buildings. The proposed zoning would develop the avenue as a gateway to Brooklyn connecting the Fort Greene community with downtown.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** THE PLAN

More Zoning Text and Map Amendments...



### Rezone Myrtle Avenue frontage to R7-1 with a C2-4 Overlay

The southern block frontage along Myrtle Avenue east of Flatbush Avenue Extension to Ashland Place is proposed to be rezoned from R6 (2.43 FAR) to R7-1 with a C2-4 overlay (4 FAR residential/ 2 FAR commercial). The Special Downtown Brooklyn District would be extended to include this property and would require streetwall and retail continuity.

The site currently contains one-story commercial retail buildings and surface parking across Myrtle Avenue from the NYCHA Ingersoll Houses. This zoning change would limit building heights to 160 feet, similar to other nearby buildings, and it would support construction of new housing above ground-floor retail, creating a new gateway to the Fort Greene community.

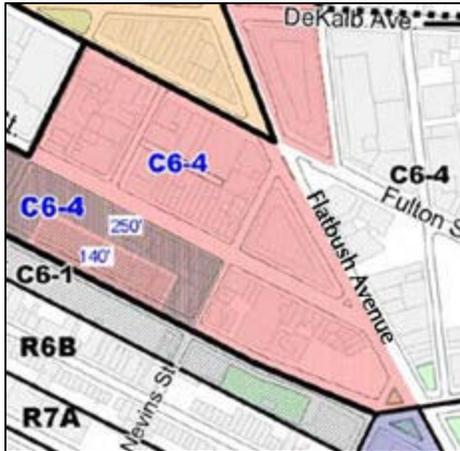


*Support Residential along Myrtle Avenue*

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### THE PLAN

More Zoning Text and Map Amendments...



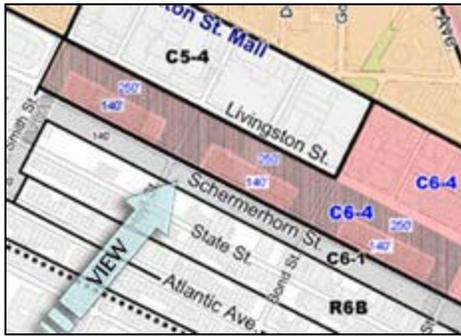
#### Rezoning Southern Fulton Street Mall and Flatbush Avenue to C6-4

The four blocks bounded by Livingston Street, Bond Street, Fulton Street, Flatbush Avenue and Schermerhorn Street would be rezoned from C6-1 (6 FAR commercial/ 3.44 FAR residential) to C6-4 (10 FAR).

These blocks contain multi-story retail buildings fronting on Fulton Street and Flatbush Avenue and mixed-use residential buildings with ground-floor retail on Livingston Street. The rezoning would more accurately represent the actual built FAR and would encourage mixed-use residential-commercial development.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** THE PLAN

More Zoning Text and Map Amendments...



### Rezone Livingston-Schermerhorn Street to C6-4

The area between Livingston and Schermerhorn Streets, currently zoned C6-1 (6 FAR commercial/ 3.44 FAR residential) would be rezoned to C6-4 (10 FAR) to encourage new residential and mixed residential-commercial development. The Schermerhorn Street Height Limitation Area of the SDBD would be extended to these blocks to provide a transition between the low- to mid-rise Boerum Hill community to the south and the high-density core of Downtown Brooklyn to the north.

The southern half of the blocks along Schermerhorn Street would be mapped within Area "B" with a 140 foot height limit and the northern half of the blocks along Livingston Street would be within a new Area "C" with a height limit of 250 feet. This would support residential building development on both sides of the block.

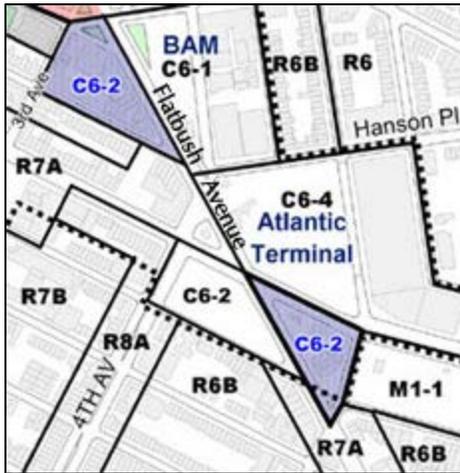


Encourage Residential  
Expansion of Boerum Hill

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### THE PLAN

[More Zoning Text and Map Amendments...](#)



#### **Rezoning Southern Flatbush Avenue Area to C6-2**

Two blocks on Flatbush Avenue, one between Schermerhorn and State Streets and the other between Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street, would be rezoned from C6-1 (6 FAR commercial/ 3.44 FAR residential) to C6-2 (6 FAR).

Increasing the residential FAR from 3.44 to 6.02 would encourage new residential development on these two blocks and support development surrounding Atlantic Terminal.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### THE PLAN

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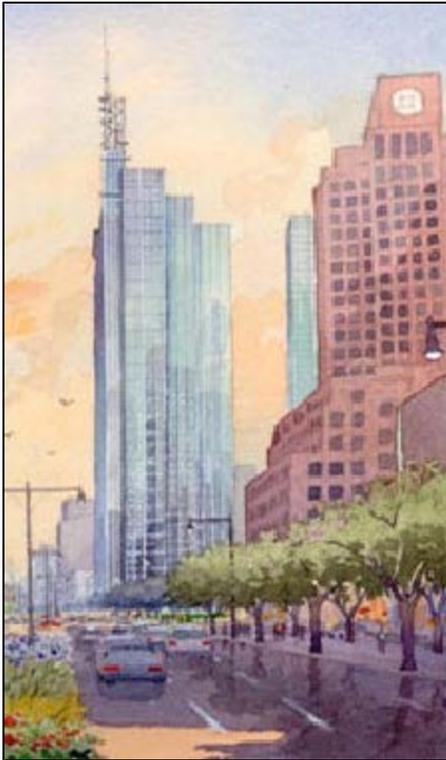
#### **More Zoning Text and Map Amendments...**

#### **Modify Tower Regulations in the SDBD**

The existing tower regulations in the SDBD would be modified to accommodate new office development on small sites in Downtown Brooklyn. The new regulations would be similar to regulations in the Lower Manhattan Special District. Development sites that could potentially take advantage of these new regulations are concentrated on the south side of Willoughby Street and at Adams Street and the Fulton Street Mall. Tower coverage regulations would maintain an 85 foot base but setbacks would be 20' and tower lot coverage would be limited to 65%, with tower lot coverage above 300 feet limited to 50%.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### THE PLAN



*Willoughby Square East on Flatbush Avenue*

#### **Establish Urban Design Controls**

The development site between Gold Street and Flatbush Avenue, south of Willoughby Street would be allowed to have its north and east elevations rise without setback. This building would mark the entrance to the 1.5 acres of new public spaces and signal the expansion of the Downtown Business District. The facades of new buildings fronting the Willoughby Square public space would be required to setback at 85 feet. All new developments along the south side of Willoughby Street would be required to provide a 5 foot sidewalk widening to enhance the pedestrian experience.

#### **OTHER ACTIONS TO FACILITATE THE PLAN**

##### **Urban Renewal Actions**

Where necessary to assemble suitably sized development sites, additional private property would be acquired through phased urban renewal actions. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and a relocation specialist hired expressly for this purpose, will work with all residential and commercial parties affected by any urban renewal actions.

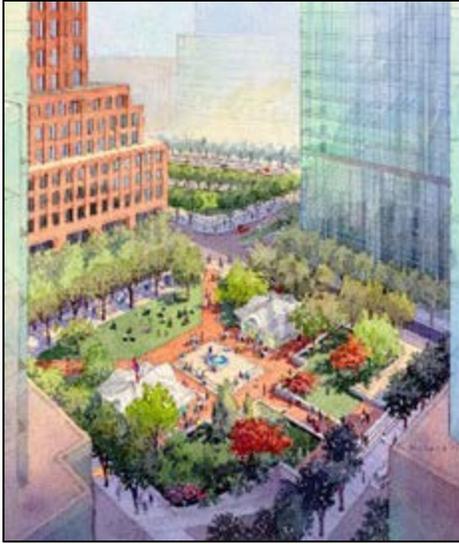
##### **Changes to the City Map**

Several street map changes are proposed to create larger, more viable development sites, to improve traffic flow and to provide landscaped street medians. These actions include closing some low-volume streets and extending and widening some other streets.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### THE PLAN

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*Willoughby Square Public Open Space*

#### **Creation of Public Spaces**

The city is committing scarce public resources to develop open space that will attract new development and create an attractive downtown environment for workers, residents and visitors. These spaces will enhance the corporate addresses for new development just as the Channel Gardens at Rockefeller Center did decades ago.

Willoughby Square is proposed south of MetroTech to establish a corporate address for the new commercial office buildings and to provide an attractive environment for evening and weekend use by residents and employees. The space would include cafes, restaurants and new retail establishments.

A triangular park is proposed on Flatbush Avenue Extension at the entrance to Willoughby Street. This park will provide a gateway from the Fort Greene community to Willoughby Square and the new commercial core office buildings.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### THE PLAN

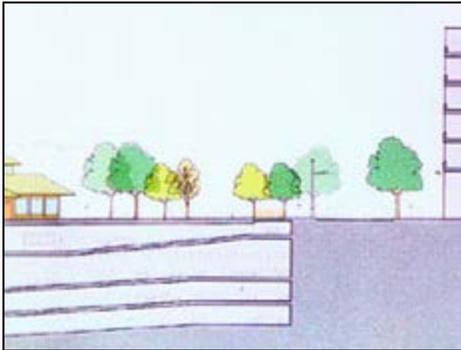


*Post Office Square in Boston*

#### **New Public Parking**

To accommodate the parking demand associated with the Downtown Brooklyn Plan, new, integrated public parking facilities would be constructed and accessory parking within new office buildings would be encouraged.

One public parking facility for approximately 700 cars would be located below the newly created Willoughby Square public open space and would be modeled after the successful Post Office Square parking garage in Boston, Massachusetts. Another public parking facility would be situated behind ground-level retail in the proposed new residential development at Flatbush Avenue Extension and Myrtle Avenue.



Section through below-grade garage

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### THE PLAN

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*Jay Street Transit Gateway*

#### **Transit Improvements**

Public transit is abundant in Downtown Brooklyn and the proposed zoning will require new developments to incorporate adjoining station entrances. The city is committed to continue working with the MTA to allocate funds and coordinate planning, design and construction for key station upgrades, to create an attractive new transit gateway at Jay Street and Lawrence Street to capitalize on the connection of IND and BMT subway lines slated for construction in 2008.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### THE PLAN

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*Support Retail Development*

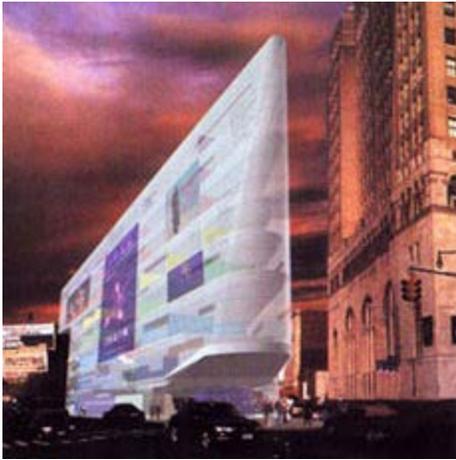
#### **Retail Support**

The Downtown Brooklyn Plan seeks to strengthen retail by fostering new, varied retail for employees, residents and visitors alike. It would promote a more attractive retail environment through new signage and facade controls and requirements for new ground-floor retail on key shopping corridors.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### THE PLAN

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*Brooklyn Public Library of Visual and Performing Arts by TEN Arquitectos*

#### **Expanded Cultural Resources**

The plan would facilitate growth of the new BAM cultural district centered around the Brooklyn Academy of Music with a new Brooklyn public library of visual and performing arts on Flatbush Avenue and a new theater on Lafayette Avenue across from the BAM opera house. Other cultural, residential and commercial projects involving a cross-section of the surrounding community are planned for the district. These new projects would improve the street-level experience in the district and further integrate the cultural organizations with Downtown Brooklyn.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### THE PLAN

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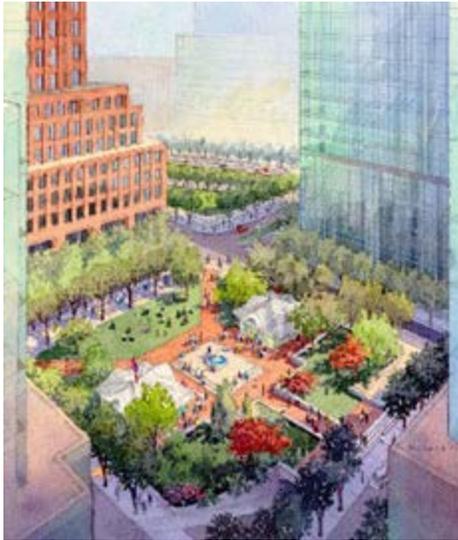
*Flatbush Avenue Pedestrian Improvements*

#### **Enhanced Pedestrian Environment**

Key to the success of the Downtown Brooklyn Plan is enhancing the pedestrian streetscape by improving safety and by fostering connections between the Downtown Brooklyn commercial core and the surrounding residential communities. Flatbush Avenue would be a gateway and a 'seam' tying both sides of the avenue together, rather than its current function as an eyesore and a divider. Signage throughout Downtown Brooklyn would be upgraded through new zoning regulations that limit size, location and illumination.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!** PUBLIC COMMITMENT

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*Willoughby Square Public Open Space*

### **Economic Development**

The public investment provided for in this plan would act as a catalyst to generate an estimated 4.5 million square feet of new commercial office space, creating 18,500 office jobs and 8,000 construction jobs. It would add some 1,000 new housing units and result in the addition of new, vibrant public spaces and cultural resources.

### **Traffic and Parking**

The city is funding a separate, long-term comprehensive transportation blueprint: a traffic and parking analysis of Downtown Brooklyn and surrounding areas. This effort would enable communities and elected officials to participate in the transportation planning process. In addition, a senior staff position at the Department of Transportation will be created to improve traffic conditions in Downtown Brooklyn.

## Downtown Brooklyn - **Approved!**

### PUBLIC REVIEW



*Jay Street Transit Gateway*

development in Downtown Brooklyn).

On December 1, 2003, the Department of City Planning certified the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) applications for the Downtown Brooklyn Development Plan as complete. The applications were referred to Community Board 2 for a public hearing and a recommendation. Following the Community Board, the Brooklyn Borough President issued a recommendation approving the Plan with conditions/ modifications.

In response to comments received during the public review process, the Departments of City Planning and Housing Preservation and Development revised portions of the Plan on April 29, 2004. The revisions include deleting several existing and proposed urban renewal sites, removing proposed changes to urban renewal sites and removing two proposed rezonings.

On May 10, 2004, the City Planning Commission unanimously approved all of the actions of the Downtown Brooklyn Development Plan (read the [CPC Reports](#) and [DPC Press Release](#)). On June 28, 2004, the City Council adopted the proposal with a modification to the zoning text amendment. The modification establishes a building height limit of 400 feet south of Tillary Street, east of Flatbush Avenue Extension and north of Willoughby Street within the Special Downtown Brooklyn District (read the [Mayor's Press Release](#) on the plan's approval and new economic

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is available from the [NYC Economic Development Corporation](#).

## Related Notes

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-  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.