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Comprehensive Planning and Planning Together

4/14/2021

In March, you heard about Planning Together, a bill that would require New York City to have a Comprehensive Plan



PLANNING TOGETHER

**A New Comprehensive Planning
Framework for New York City**



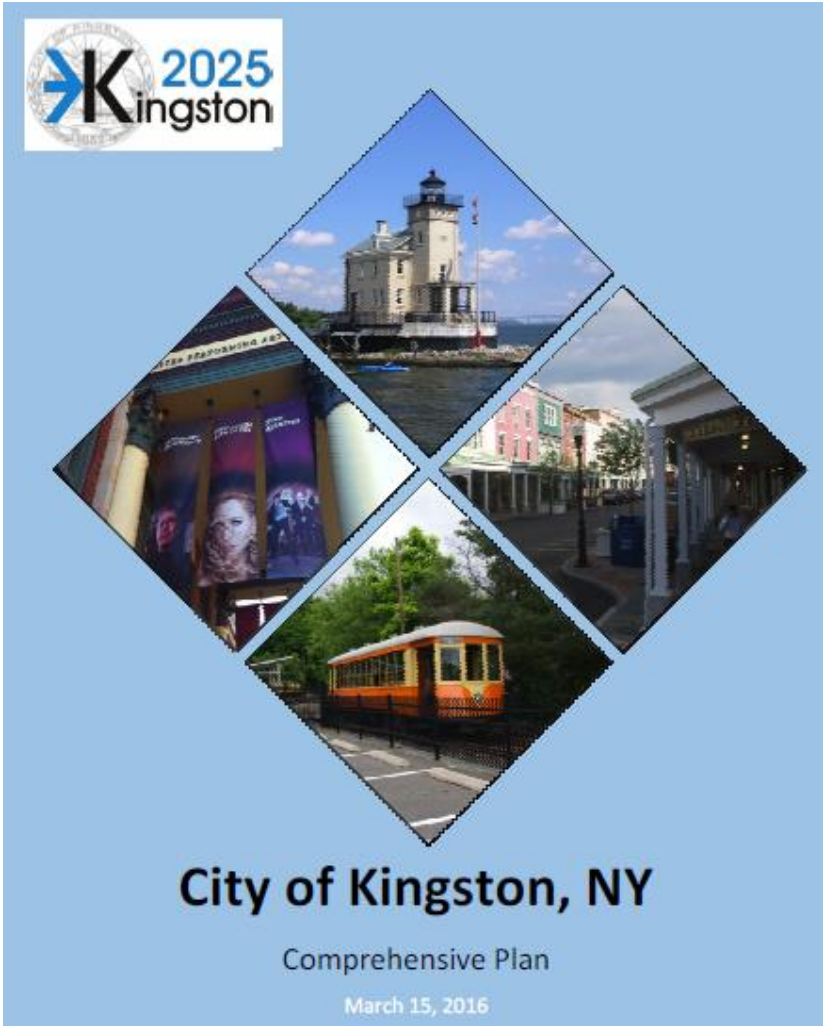
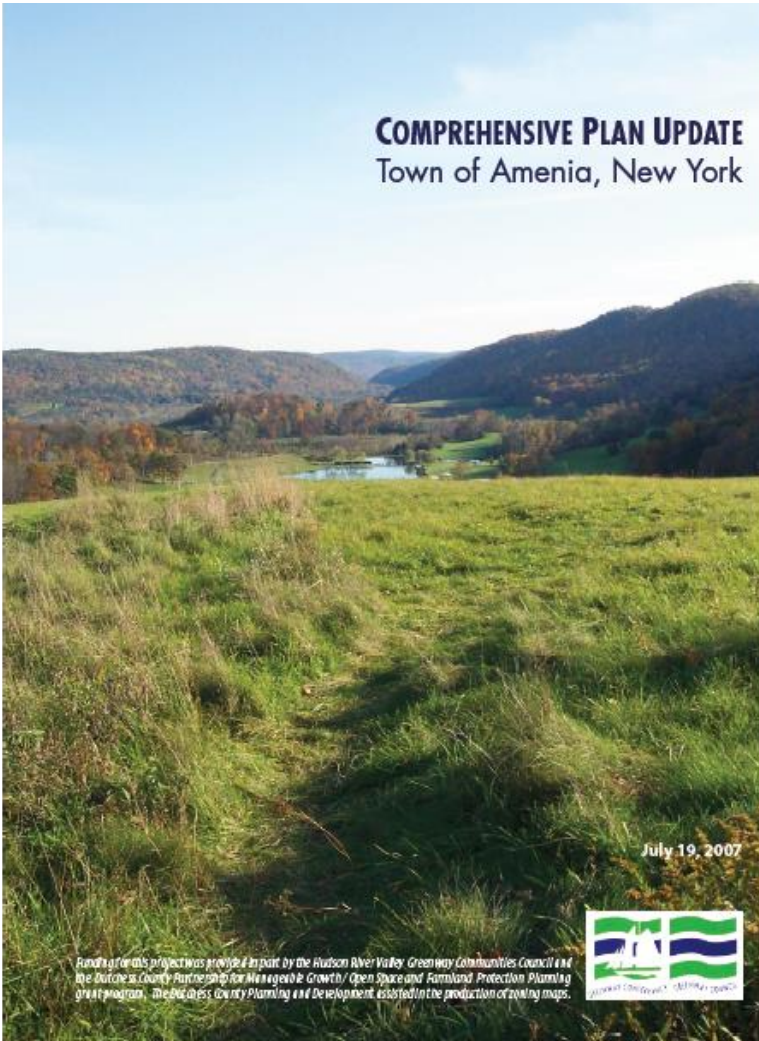
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL SPEAKER

COREY JOHNSON

DECEMBER 2020



Most jurisdictions in New York have a Comprehensive Plan



New York State has regulations that govern Comprehensive Plans

Chief among them:

- Zoning changes must be consistent with a “well-considered plan.”
In most jurisdictions, this is their Comprehensive Plan
- New York City doesn't have a comprehensive plan and its zoning serves as a *de facto* comp plan
- This means we evaluate zoning changes on a case-by-case basis justified by a land use rationale developed for the specific project

One exception was the
East Harlem
Neighborhood Plan,
which is a district-level
comprehensive plan

EAST HARLEM *Neighborhood* PLAN

Office of City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito
Manhattan Community Board 11
Community Voices Heard
Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer

FEBRUARY 2016

WWW.EASTHARLEMPPLAN.NYC

The EHNP covered a comprehensive list of topics:

- Arts & Culture
- Open Space and Recreation
- Schools and Education
- Pre-K, Daycare & Afterschool
- NYCHA
- Housing Preservation
- Small Business, Workforce and Economic Development
- Affordable Housing Development
- Zoning & Land Use
- Transportation, Environment & Energy
- Safety
- Health & Seniors

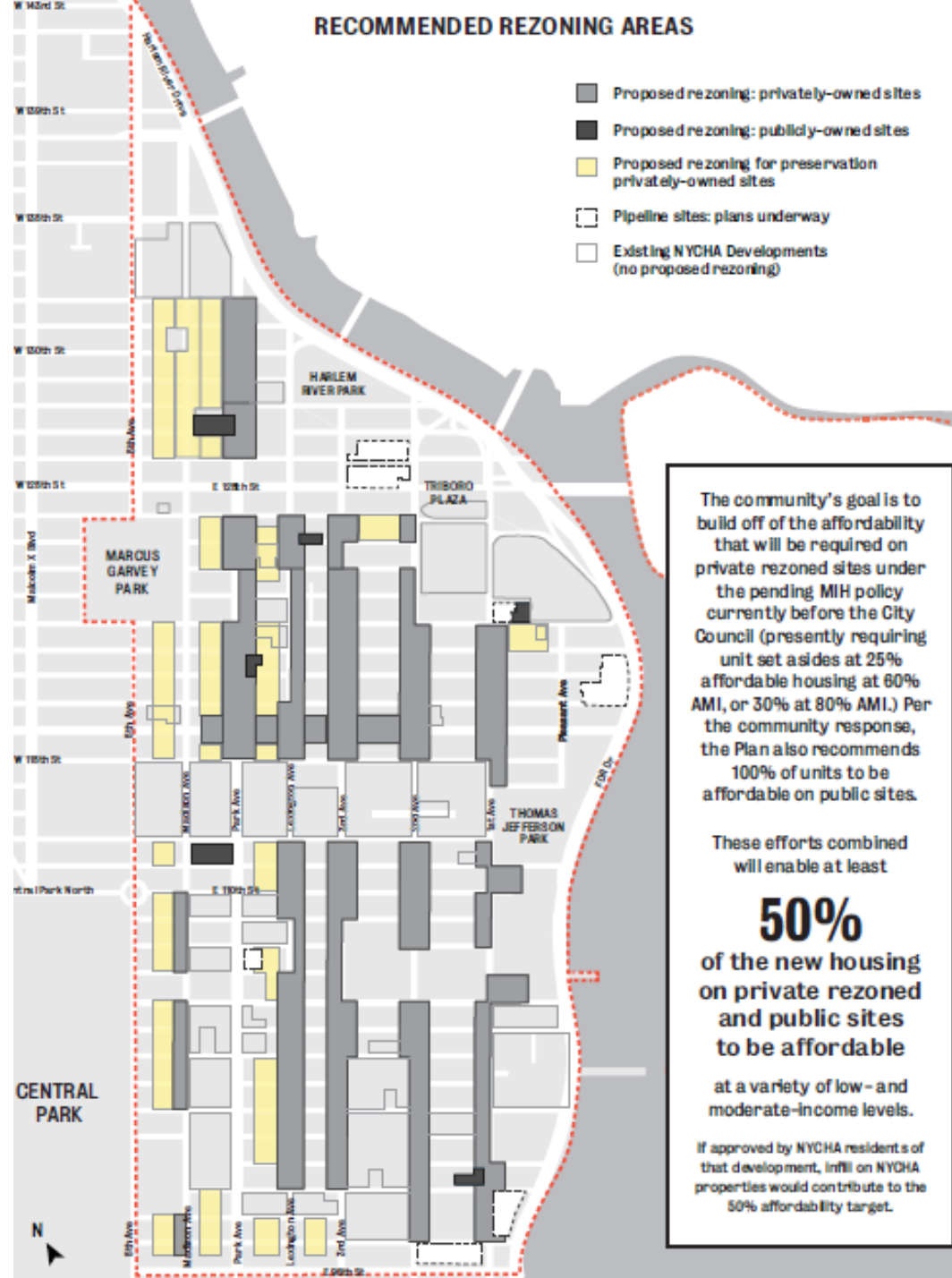
Zoning and land use was just one part of it . . .

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It specifically identified areas for rezoning

Some areas were planned to be up-zoned for Mandatory Inclusionary Housing

Others area were planned to be preserved through down-zoning or contextual zoning

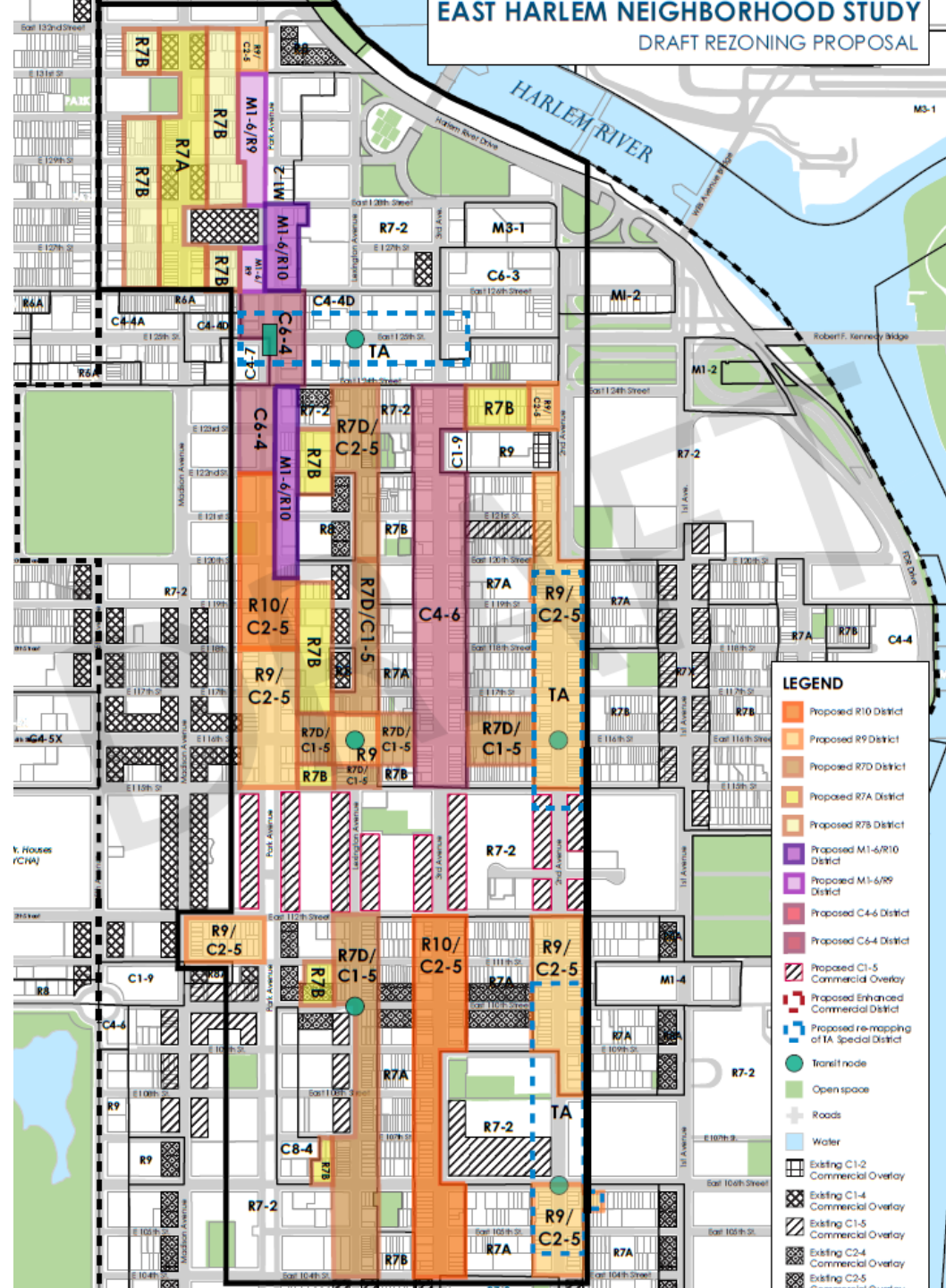


The draft EH rezoning did not match the EHNP recommendations perfectly . . .

But it was consistent with the recommendations

The final zoning adopted was even closer to the recommendations

EHNP proved it is possible to do community-driven, district-wide plan land use plans that informed zoning changes in NYC



The Council's Comprehensive Planning Framework includes a land use plan for each community district, like the EHNP

- But it doesn't use EHNP or any 197a planning processes as a model
- Still it's incredibly ambitious
- What are the details?

What are some of the details?

- Each CD will be assigned binding growth targets developed by a Long-Term Planning Steering Committee
 - The Steering Committee will be made up of 13 appointees
 - The targets will be binding and include:
 - “Housing,
 - jobs and associated commercial, retail, and industrial space,
 - open space,
 - resiliency infrastructure,
 - city facilities,
 - school seats,
 - public transportation, & utilities,
 - and other infrastructure that the director of the office of long-term planning finds appropriate”

“CBs may adopt suggested amendments to the corresponding community district level targets”

What are some of the details?

- There will be community engagement about where and how this growth will be accommodated
 - The community engagement will be led by the Mayor's office (OLTPS)
 - The Community Board and its members will be one of the stakeholders in the engagement process

“As a Mayoral office, OLTPS is well positioned to coordinate across City agencies . . . to complete necessary analyses, develop potential land use scenarios, and conduct public outreach and engagement.”

What are some of the details?

- After community engagement, the Mayor's office will develop three different land use scenarios to accommodate growth
 - “the long-term planning steering committee, borough presidents, and community boards shall each submit a recommended preferred land use scenario for each applicable community district and may adopt suggested amendments to the corresponding community district level targets.”
- CBs, BPs and the Steering Committee can recommend their own plan, which could be based on one developed by OLTPS, or not
- They would be given no responsibility or resources to develop such a plan, however

What are some of the details?

- City Council will have final say on the land use scenario that will be adopted. So, in sum:
 - LTP Steering Committee sets growth targets
 - Mayor's office does community engagement
 - Mayor's office develops three plans
 - CBs, BPs and the LTP Steering Committee each make a recommendation on a land use plan
 - City Council adopts one

What are some of the details?

- The adopted land use plan does not have to be followed
 - Applicants must file a “statement of alignment” that states if the proposal is consistent with plan. If not, **it can still go forward**
 - If this were a Comprehensive Plan under NYS law, rezoning proposals must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

What are some of the details?

- The adopted land use plan does not have to be followed
 - Applicants must file a “statement of alignment” that states if the proposal is consistent with plan. If not, **it can still go forward**
 - If this were a Comprehensive Plan under NYS law, rezoning proposals must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- The proposal should make rezonings easier, if they are consistent with Plan
 - The City will do a Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the land use plan
 - If a rezoning is consistent with plan, then a full EIS is not required, and the application will be easier. It will be harder to oppose outright
 - If a rezoning is inconsistent with plan, then it would go through ULURP as it does today

What are some of the unknowns?

- A big unknown is how seriously land use plans will be taken
 - Will council members support rezonings that are not consistent with plan?
 - They can, but will they?

What are some of the unknowns?

- A big unknown is how seriously land use plans will be taken
 - Will council members support rezonings that are not consistent with plan?
 - They can, but will they?
- Real Comprehensive Planning is an opportunity for a community to come together on shared values and goals
 - If growth targets are instituted from the outside, how does that work? What if the community disagrees? There is an appeal process, but it's at the end of the process & doesn't involve the Steering Committee or OLTPS
 - If the Mayor's office is leading the process, interpreting the feedback and developing the land use scenarios. How does that work in practice?
 - The CB can come up with their own scenario if they disagree with the Mayor's office, but will they be taken seriously? And with no resources, how will that happen?

It could have been designed differently

- Many of the ideas in Planning Together come from this report
- It calls for an “Office of Community Planning:”

“The Office should have the technical expertise and resources to support community planning, including 197A efforts, but should also be independent enough to allow work to be driven by communities”



Inclusive City

Strategies to achieve more equitable and predictable land use in New York City

January 2018

How could it have been designed differently?

- Community Boards could have been given much more responsibility, especially as it regards the local planning process
- The CB could identify stakeholders, develop a locally led community engagement process, perhaps in conjunction with the BP's office
- The CB could then develop its own land use plan for the district, which would then be provided by Borough Presidents and the Mayor's office for their input and recommendation
- City Council would still have the final say on the land use scenario adopted
- This would require new resources, and likely some CB reform, but .
..

We know it can work

EAST HARLEM *Neighborhood* **PLAN**

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[https://www.dropbox.com/s/xpugk6p03nq8glc/
EHNP_FINAL_REPORT.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/xpugk6p03nq8glc/EHNP_FINAL_REPORT.pdf?dl=0)

Planning Together is about much more than land use. It's supposed to address these issues:

- Fragmented and insufficient planning mandates
- Lack of coordination across City agencies
- Insufficient proactive planning for our neighborhoods
- Uneven zoning landscape that exacerbates socio-economic inequality
- Uncoordinated long-term budget and capital infrastructure planning
- Unrealistic Ten-Year Capital Strategy
- Insufficient capital needs assessments

Much of Planning Together is NOT about land use and zoning, and has not been discussed

- Lack of coordination across City agencies
- Uncoordinated long-term budget and capital infrastructure planning
- Unrealistic Ten-Year Capital Strategy
- Insufficient capital needs assessments

These changes look important, and even if you want changes to the land use planning component of this, you may wish to consider a nuanced recommendation

Next steps:

- While the hearing is closed, City Council has invited comments from CBs. Make them!
- Try and be specific about what needs to be improved and how important those improvements are
- City Council would like these comments ASAP. No vote is scheduled, but is expected after the budget is done, likely July
- Consider coordinating with like-minded CBs and/or the BP

Discussion



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