

BEDFORD-UNION ARMORY

A NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY



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BFC Partners
Slate Property Group
Hunter College
Medgar Evers College

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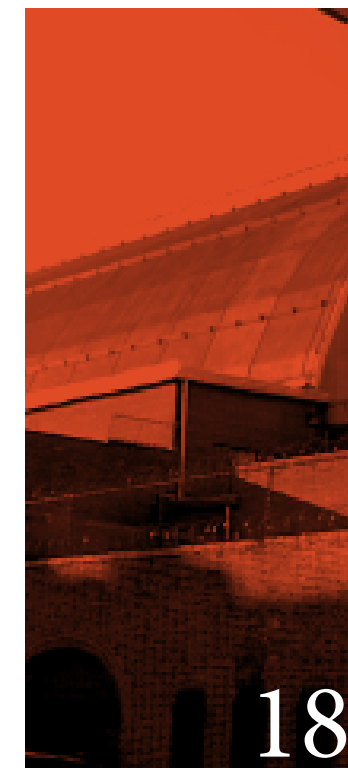
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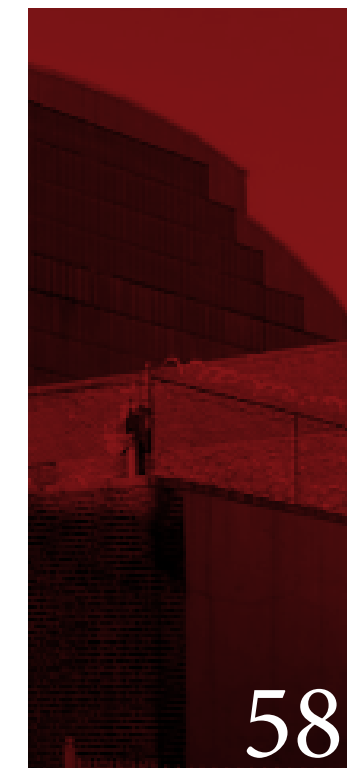


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bedford-Union Armory: A Neighborhood Study is a neighborhood planning study that aims to strengthen and build upon the community's considerable assets, while identifying new opportunities that support the overarching goals of developing and preserving affordable housing, improving utilization of local institution resources, and revitalizing the streetscape environment. The neighborhood study is intended to complement the vision of an ongoing large-scale, mixed-use redevelopment project located at the Bedford-Union Armory site led by BFC Partners and Slate; this development will create 300 residential units—half of which are to be affordable—along with recreational facilities such as indoor basketball courts, a swimming pool, and a soccer field.

In addition to the Armory, Medgar Evers College (MEC) has been identified as a major community asset within the study area. The college is an important neighborhood resource and plays a key role in the stabilization and revitalization of this community. MEC needs to effectively maximize resources to accommodate for growth. As such, a combination of zoning changes and public-private partnership recommendations were explored to better capitalize on untapped MEC resources.

In addition to accommodating for growth, upzonings that trigger Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) regulations were also investigated in order to both add and preserve affordable housing within the neighborhood; specifically, reasonable and contextual upzonings were considered where appropriate.

In order to activate the streetscape and create a more pedestrian-friendly neighborhood, numerous interventions are recommended, including sidewalk widenings, increased green space and natural features, increased seating opportunities, safer and more attractive bicycle infrastructure, improved bus stations, and traffic-calming strategies. In unison, the recommendations laid out in this neighborhood planning study intend to create a more vibrant, livable, and equitable community presence.



Site In Relation To Bouroughs



Site Boundaries

BACKGROUND

Under the instruction of BFC Partners, our team of undergraduate and graduate students from Hunter College and Medgar Evers College was tasked with developing a master plan for Crown Heights, Brooklyn in coordination with the redevelopment of the Bedford-Union Armory. Given their proximity to the Bedford-Union Armory site, Medgar Evers College's properties are included in—and integral to—the development of the master plan and designated study area.

Goals

The goal of our plan is to identify opportunities within the study area that will enhance the Bedford-Union Armory redevelopment site, Medgar Evers College, and the overall neighborhood. We aim to achieve this goal within the scope of urban design, zoning, and land use. This plan attempts to revitalize the neighborhood and activate the streets by connecting the college, the redevelopment site, and other identified neighborhood assets. Additionally, it confronts the area's weaknesses by improving general connectivity, functionality, and neighborhood character.

Boundaries

Keeping in mind the location of both the Bedford-Union Armory site and the properties owned by Medgar Evers College, the study area has been designated as being bounded by Eastern Parkway to the north, Nostrand Avenue to the east, Empire Boulevard to the south, and Washington Avenue / Classon Avenue to the west.

Neighborhood Assets

Some of the key neighborhood assets include Prospect Park, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Medgar Evers College, and the Bedford-Union Armory. The study area also has the history of the Brooklyn Dodgers associated with it, since Ebbets Field used to be within its boundaries. Additionally, this site is close to the pedestrian and bicycle paths on Eastern Parkway, and is in proximity to the vibrancy of Northern Crown heights.

METHODOLOGY

Site Visits

Our team conducted several site visits of our study area. On the initial site visit, we walked around the neighborhood to get a sense of the area. During our second visit, we walked each block of the study area and took note of uses, building typology, and building heights. Additionally, we examined the social context of the area, the social life of the streets, the conditions of the existing buildings and streets, and traffic patterns.

Meetings

To learn more about the interests of Medgar Evers College in regards to this project, our faculty advisor met with representatives of the college and BFC Partners. Additionally, our team members met with Don Capoccia and others from BFC Partners and Jonathan Marvel from Marvel Architects to gain more background knowledge about the project.

Data Analysis/Surveys

To learn about the interests of the Medgar Evers College community, we conducted a Student/Faculty Sampling Survey. We surveyed 128 students and faculty in the B-building and the S-building at Medgar Evers College. The data was then input into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and was analyzed with said software.

Pipeline

As part of this project, Medgar Evers College asked us to look into Medgar Evers College's Pipeline Partnership Program. Information about the pipeline program was obtained by reaching out to members of the Medgar Evers community, including Christina Chow, the Director of Data and Evaluation for the Pipeline Program. Data related to the schools within the pipeline system was obtained by reaching out to Bennett Baruch, the Director of Capital Budget and Special Assistant to the Deputy Borough President at the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President.

Hunter College and Medgar Evers College
Joint Project

Questionnaire:
 Faculty/Staff Student

ID: _____ Date: ____/____/____
NAME: _____ ZIP: _____

1. GENDER: Male Female Other _____

2. AGE GROUP: 18-22 23-27 28-35 36-40 41-50 51-60 61-70

3. RACE/ETHNICITY:
 African American Caribbean Hispanic Asian White Other _____

4 a) ENROLLMENT: Part-time Full-time
b) TIME: Weekdays Week ends PERIOD: Morning Night
c) ACADEMIC YEAR: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior | I am Faculty/ Staff

5. From where are you commuting? _____

6. What mode of transportation do you use to come to college?
 Walk Bicycle Motorcycle Car Bus Subway

7. What route do you use to come to college?
(i.e. Canarsie @ B103 Flatbush Junction @ 2 train President Street)

8. Are you satisfied with the amenities/services provided in Medgar Evers College? Yes No
a) If Yes, could you rate it from 1-10 in ascending order of approval: _____
b) If no:
c) Briefly explain why/why not: _____

9. What changes or additional amenities/services would you like to see at your college?
 Community Hall for MEC students Separate Athletic building
 More recreational spaces Better pedestrian access and connection between MEC buildings
 Access to public spaces /gathering space Art studio
 Access to terraces Student dormitories
 More computers in the labs/library Student parking lot
 Better wi-fi Bicycle lane and parking
 Better gym equipment and bigger space
 Other concerns/suggestions: _____

10. Fill in the blank. To Me Medgar Evers is _____

Survey



Ebbets Field

HISTORY

Ebbets Field

According to data from the United States Census Bureau, Brooklyn had over 2 million residents in the 1950s and 1960s. Brooklyn's population has not grown significantly since that time, yet Brooklyn—with its estimated population of around 2.6 million—remains the most populous borough in New York City, “the most populous county in New York and the second-most densely populated county in the United States”.¹

Within this borough, our study area holds great historical significance due to the location of Ebbets Field. This stadium was home to the Major League Baseball team the Brooklyn Dodgers. The Brooklyn Dodgers played in this location from 1913 to 1957 and proudly represented working class Brooklyn residents; they were even referred to as “Dem Bums”.² This team made history in 1947 by signing Jackie Robinson onto their team, thus becoming the first Major League Baseball team to have an African American player.³ Then in 1955, the Dodgers went on to win the World Series against the Yankees.⁴ However, the team was moved out to Los Angeles in 1957 when the team needed a bigger stadium.⁵ Consequently, the area suffered economic losses from which it never fully recovered.⁶ Three years after the Dodgers left, Ebbets Field was torn down and Ebbets Field Apartments was built in its place.⁷ Now, the only thing remaining that shows the history of this location is a plaque outside of this housing development.⁸

Bedford-Union Armory

The Bedford-Union Armory was built in 1907 and was historically used for a cavalry unit; specifically, it was built for Squadron C cavalry unit and the armory was thus used for horses and other equipment.⁹

Medgar Evers College

Medgar Evers College was created in 1970 and was named after Medgar Evers, a civil rights activist who worked to end segregation in Mississippi.^{10, 11}

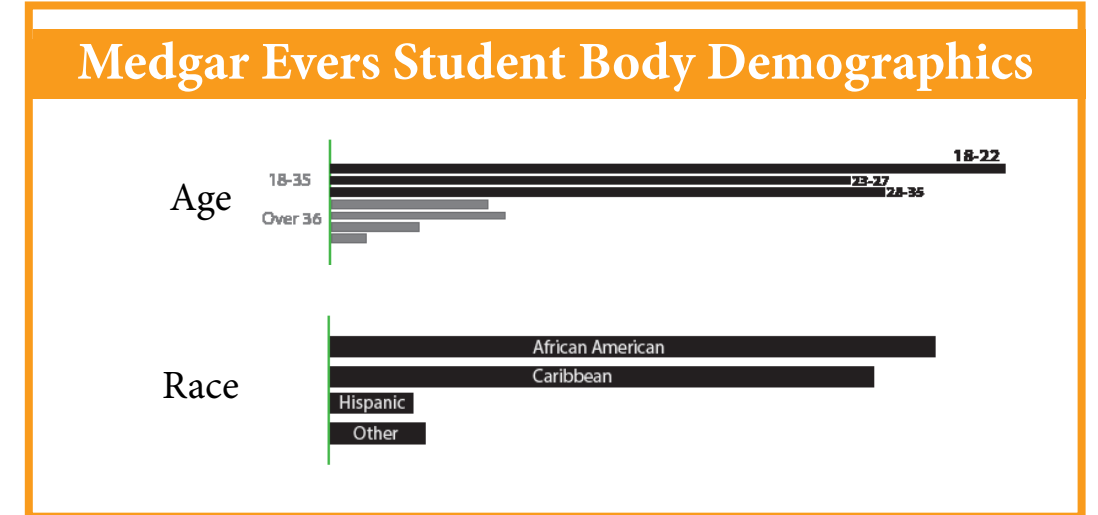
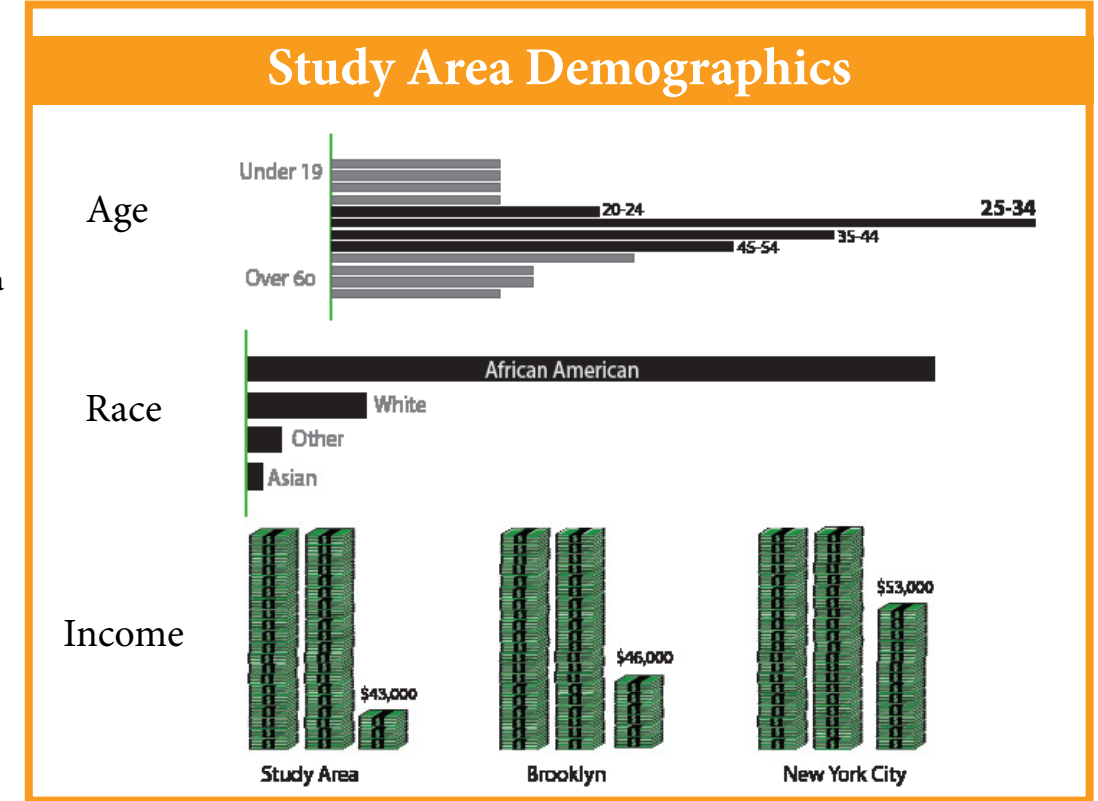


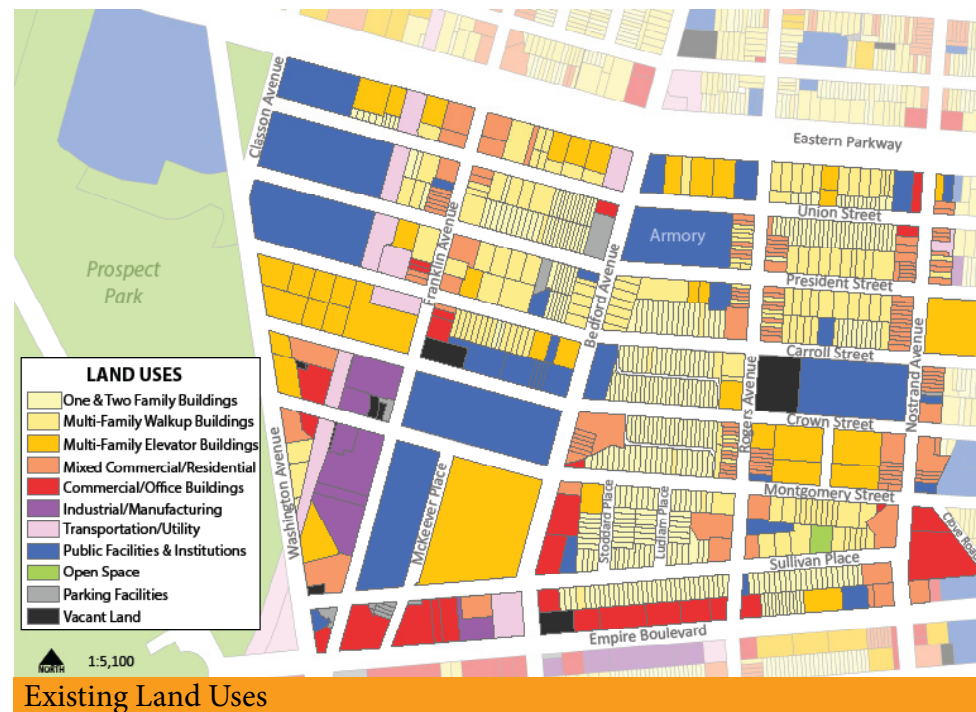
Bedford-Union Armory

DEMOGRAPHICS

Within the study area, most residents are between 20 and 54 years old, with the most populous age range being 25-34.¹ This is a predominantly African American area, with 81% of its residents identifying as African American and 14% of residents identifying as White.² This area has a lower Area Median Income (AMI) than the rest of the borough and the city as a whole. The AMI for the study area is \$43,000, whereas the AMI for Brooklyn is \$46,000 and the AMI for New York City is \$53,000.³

According to our survey, the median age of Medgar Evers students is slightly less than the median age of the study area's residents. Specifically, most students are below the age of 35, with the most populous age range being 18-22. Most students identify as being African American (46%), with the second highest percentage identifying as Caribbean (41%).





BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Land Use

The Bedford-Union Armory is on Bedford Avenue; this street also has the main entrances to three Medgar Evers College buildings, which comprise the main part of the campus. Bedford Avenue has mainly residential uses between Eastern Parkway and Medgar Evers College, with the exception of a few commercial uses adjacent to the college and near Eastern Parkway. Franklin Avenue—parallel to Bedford Avenue—is a vibrant commercial corridor with many restaurants and corner stores. However, the vibrancy of the street life tapers down in areas that are closer to Medgar Evers and farther from Eastern Parkway. Aside from these two Avenues, the majority of the north/south Avenues within the study area have entirely residential buildings or residential buildings with first floor commercial uses.

As for the Streets, the majority of the buildings on the Streets have residential uses. The exception to this is Empire Boulevard. This street has almost exclusively commercial uses, but with uses such as gas stations and self-storage, this corridor lacks the vibrancy of Franklin Avenue.

The study area as a whole has a large number of educational facilities. In addition to Medgar Evers, there are also four other educational facilities: Ebbets Field Middle School, Clara Barton High School, Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment, and Saint Francis de Sales School for the Deaf. These institutions are mainly concentrated in the Western and Southern portions of the study area.





Building Heights



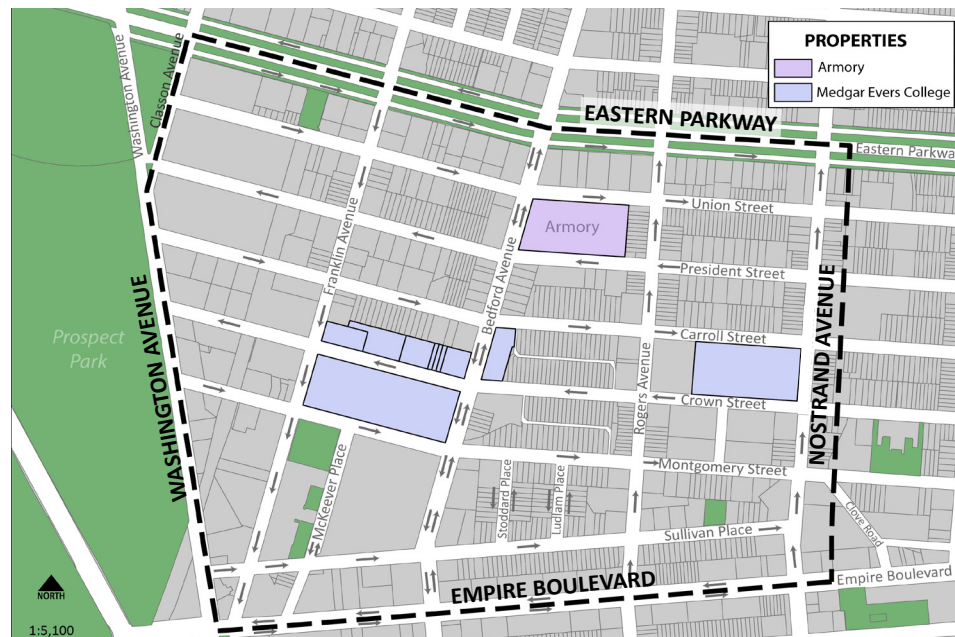
Out-Of-Context Apartment Height at Ebbets Field Apartments

Height and Bulk

On the streets, most of the residential buildings are two to four story walk-up buildings. Along the Avenues, the buildings are slightly higher; they tend to be four to seven stories. There are a few distinct anomalies, however, and those are two residential towers, which reach to 25 and 33 stories.

Most buildings throughout the area have a consistent street wall along the street line. However, the tall residential buildings and the buildings with educational uses do not have a consistent street wall. This results in open spaces around these buildings.





Streets

Within the study area, the main North/South vessels are Franklin Avenue (southbound), Bedford Avenue (two-way street), Rogers Avenue (northbound), and Nostrand Avenue (southbound). The East/West vessels are Eastern Parkway (two-way street), Union Street (eastbound), President Street (westbound), Carroll Street (eastbound), Crown Street (westbound), Montgomery Street (eastbound), Sullivan Place (westbound), and Empire Boulevard (two-way street).

The only two-way streets in the area are Eastern Parkway, Empire Boulevard, and Bedford Avenue. As such, these are the widest streets in the study area.

Open Space

The Figure Ground diagram to the left shows the built areas and open spaces in the study area. An observation of this map shows that—aside from Prospect Park and Eastern Parkway—the areas near Medgar Evers College have the largest amount of open space within the study area. The presence of this excess open space influenced our recommendations.



ZONING OVERVIEW

The majority of our study area is zoned Residential. Specifically, R6 zoning is seen throughout most of the site. There are also some areas with R2, R6A, R7-1, and R8A zones. Only residential and community facility uses are permitted in these areas.

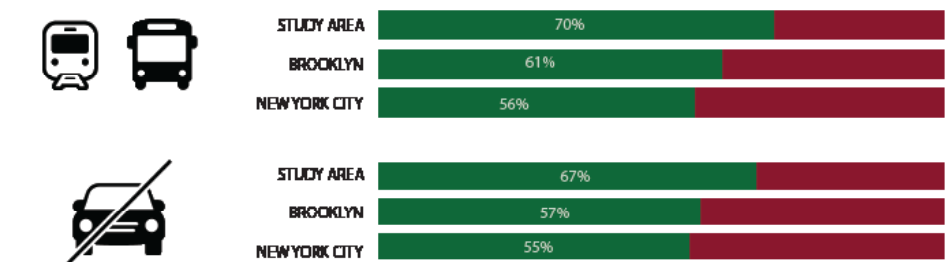
There are also C1-3 and C2-3 Commercial overlays along Franklin Avenue, Nostrand Avenue, and portions of Sullivan Place and Bedford Avenue. The overlays allow commercial uses on the first two stories of these buildings, and residential and community facility uses are permitted above this height. According to the Department of City Planning, typical uses in these overlay districts include grocery stores, restaurants, and beauty parlors.¹

The exception to this zoning is seen along Empire Boulevard and the portion of Bedford Avenue just south of Eastern Parkway, which both consist of Commercial zoning. Specifically, these areas are C8-2 districts. Like other commercial districts, C8-2 districts are permitted to have benign uses such as hotels, certain community facility uses, retail, restaurants, and offices. However, these districts are known for permitting heavier commercial uses, including automotive uses and other semi-industrial uses. According to the Department of City Planning, typical uses in these districts include automobile repair shops, warehouses, gas stations, and car washes.² These uses are typical of these areas since these are not permitted uses in any other Commercial or Residential districts and they are thus limited to these areas or Manufacturing districts.





Transportation Options



Transportation Patterns for Residents in Study Area



Transportation Patterns for Medgar Evers College Students

TRAFFIC AND TRANSIT

Transit Options

The neighborhood is well served by subways. There is an express stop at the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Eastern Parkway where the 2, 3, 4, and 5 subway lines. Within our study area, there is also a local stop that serves 3 trains and a local stop that serves the 2 and 5 trains. Additionally, there is a shuttle bus stop within this area.

Our study area is also well served by buses. There are the B48 and B49 local buses running North/South and the B43 local bus running along Empire Boulevard. There is also the B44 SBS route traveling South on Nostrand Avenue and North on Rogers Avenue.

Within the Medgar Evers campus itself, there is a small shuttle bus that takes students around the neighborhood. It has stops at each of the academic buildings, as well as the Franklin Street subway station and the corner of Eastern Parkway and Bedford Avenue. This is a free service that is available to Medgar Evers students, faculty, and staff.

Transit Use

Overall, 70% of the study area's residents are using transit.¹ This is greater than the Brooklyn average of 61% and the New York City average of 56%.² Similarly, there are fewer people in the study area who own cars; only 33% of residents own cars, compared to 43% of Brooklyn residents who own cars and 45% of New York City residents who own cars.³

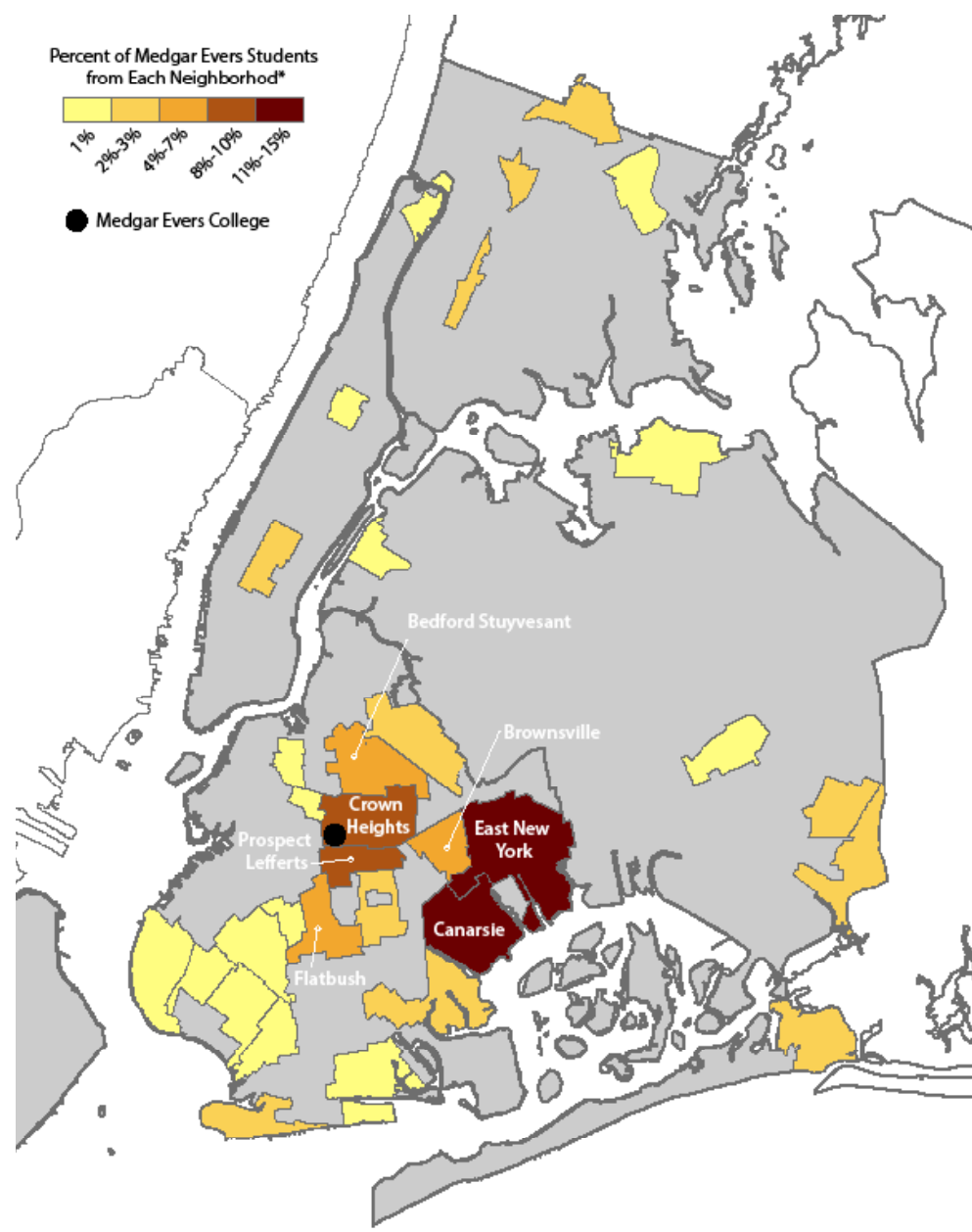
Despite the relatively heavy transit use in the area, parking is still seen to be a problem. This is because in addition to residents, there are students and professors from Medgar Evers who are commuting to the area and competing for on-street parking. According to our survey, 23% of students are using cars to get to class. Though these students are not all on campus at the same time of day or day of the week, they still generate a need for more parking spaces. As a result, one in ten students that we surveyed said that they want more student parking.

Origin of Travel

In terms of the Medgar Evers student population, 76% of students are traveling from their residence in Brooklyn with relatively small percentages of students commuting from other boroughs, New Jersey, and Westchester. Focusing on the Brooklyn population, 26% of Brooklyn-residing students are from Canarsie, 24% are from East New York, 17% are from Crown Heights / Prospect Lefferts, 13% are from Flatbush, 11% are from Bedford/Stuyvesant, and 10% are from Brownsville.



Origin of Travel For Medgar Evers Students



Origin of Travel For Medgar Evers Students

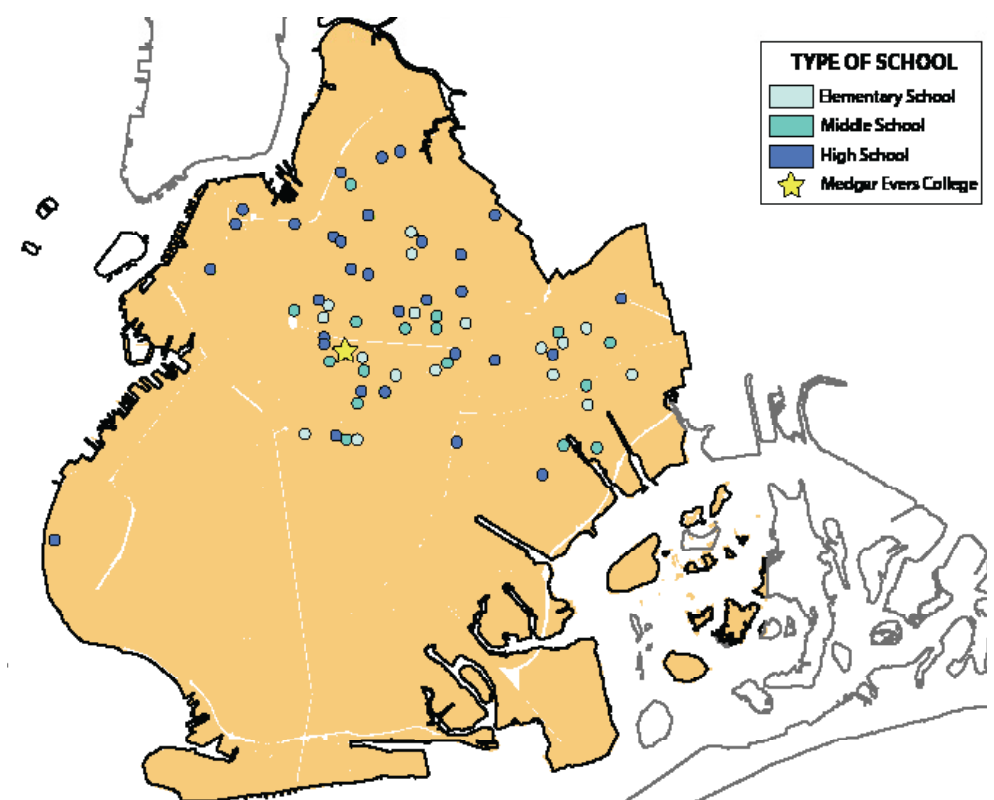
PIPELINE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Background

Medgar Evers College has a pipeline program where it partners with local schools and offer programs to prepare students for college. This program offers a multi-faceted approach to teaching where the faculty of the Education Department at Medgar Evers lead 50 workshops and programs for teachers, administrators, parents, and students K-12 from these local pipeline schools.¹ Though only one of these programs is open to students, each program has the ultimate goal of giving all students the opportunity to attend college.²

There are 96 partner schools in the pipeline program; within this, there are 40 high schools, 19 middle schools, and 37 elementary and/or K-8 schools.³ The pipeline schools are all in Brooklyn, with virtually all of the schools in the northern half of Brooklyn. As of 2014, approximately 20,931 high school students attended high schools in the Pipeline Partnership program.⁴ Of these students, 3,010 were seniors who took the SAT; this therefore represents the students who intended to attend college.⁵

Over the past two years, 250 students from the Pipeline program enrolled in Medgar Evers College. This represents 8% of graduating high school seniors from pipeline schools who took their SATs.⁶ These pipeline students that come to Medgar Evers College enter programs such as College Now, Smart Scholars, Healthcare Career Plans Pathways, and Pipeline Scholars.



Medgar Evers Pipeline Partnership Schools

Specialty Programs at Affiliated Schools

To determine if Medgar Evers offers programs that are attractive to graduates of pipeline-affiliated high schools, we looked at the main academic programs that are currently being offered at these schools. The top five specialty fields of study are:

<p>Computer Information Systems Specialty programs offered in 8 of these High Schools</p> <p>Healthcare Nursing, Dental, CNA, Phlebotomy, and EMT programs offered at 6 High Schools</p> <p>Math Specialty programs offered in 5 High Schools</p> <p>English Specialty programs offered as a major in 4 High Schools</p> <p>History Specialty programs offered as a major in 4 High Schools</p>
--

Medgar Evers College offers degree programs in all these academic disciplines. The Nursing Program at Medgar Evers is one the best in the city. Information like this should be disseminated to high school students interested in this field of discipline, and their parents. Pursing high school students that are interested in these fields of study that the school currently offers should be a priority for the administration at Medgar Evers College.



Medgar Evers

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations are divided into two main sections: Streetscape Design and Zoning. These two overall categories of intervention were seen as the most appropriate, based on the neighborhood's current strengths and areas for improvement.

Additionally, when deciding on interventions, we took into account the needs of the Medgar Evers student body, as identified by our survey. Of these identified needs, our plan incorporated improvements that are related to the bars in dark grey. This accounts for the needs of 60% of students.

Incorporating Medgar Evers Survey Results

Based on the survey results, we found that more recreation spaces, public spaces, and terraces were the amenities/services that students most wanted to see at their school; specifically, one in five students are interested in these amenities. To meet this need, we created a streetscape plan that has a heavy emphasis on public space. The streetscape portion of this plan also aims to improve pedestrian access and connection between MEC buildings, as requested by almost one in ten students. Additionally, this streetscape plan proposes new bike lanes, which some students would like to access to.

In terms of better gym equipment and a separate athletic building—the second most requested amenity—the partnership between Medgar Evers College and the Bedford-Union Armory will be able to meet this need. Additionally, a suggestion to improve the lack of parking has been proposed in the zoning section of the recommendations.

More Recreation Spaces, Public Spaces, or Terraces	20%
Better Gym Equipment and Separate Athletic Building	15%
More Student Parking	12%
Better Wifi	11%
Better Pedestrian Access & Connection Between MEC Buildings	9%
Dormitories	9%
More Computers in Computer Lab and Library	8%
Community Hall	6%
Art Studio	6%
More Bike Lanes and Bike Parking	4%
Survey Results: Item lines in dark grey have been incorporated in this plan	

ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSED REZONINGS

After conducting a thorough zoning analysis within the Study Area, we discovered a number of inconsistent and inappropriate zoning designations. Many of the current districts do a poor job of matching the existing building envelopes, while other districts have the potential to create out-of-context and undesirable development. We found the current zoning to be incoherent and poorly executed in terms of both use and bulk.

Specifically, we found the existing R6 zoning to be inappropriate in regards to building bulk and envelopes, even though this zoning governs the largest portions of the Study Area. Due to the neighborhood's generally low building heights which average between 2 to 4 stories, we felt that generic, non-contextual zoning districts would allow for tall, out-of-context new buildings. Proof of this can be found at the northwest corner of Franklin Avenue and Crown Street, where a 33-story building was erected under an R8 District. Though the R8 district has since been changed to a more contextual R8A district, the remaining R6 generic district still poses similar issues of context. For instance, an R6 district permits an FAR of 0.78 to 2.43, yet the average existing building in these areas has and FAR of 0.5 to 1.15. This mismatch in permitted versus existing conditions becomes especially problematic when considering the historic, charming, single- and two-family, semi-detached or attached households that are found throughout the neighborhood. Since an overwhelming majority of the buildings were built either at or prior to the turn-of-the-century, many were not governed by the 1916 or 1961 zoning resolutions; as a result, there are numerous unique building types, much of which are nearly impossible to duplicate in today's zoning regulations. The existing zoning can ultimately threaten the existence and preservation of these community assets and, thus, should be changed through either downzonings and historic district designations.

At the other end of the spectrum, we discovered many areas of

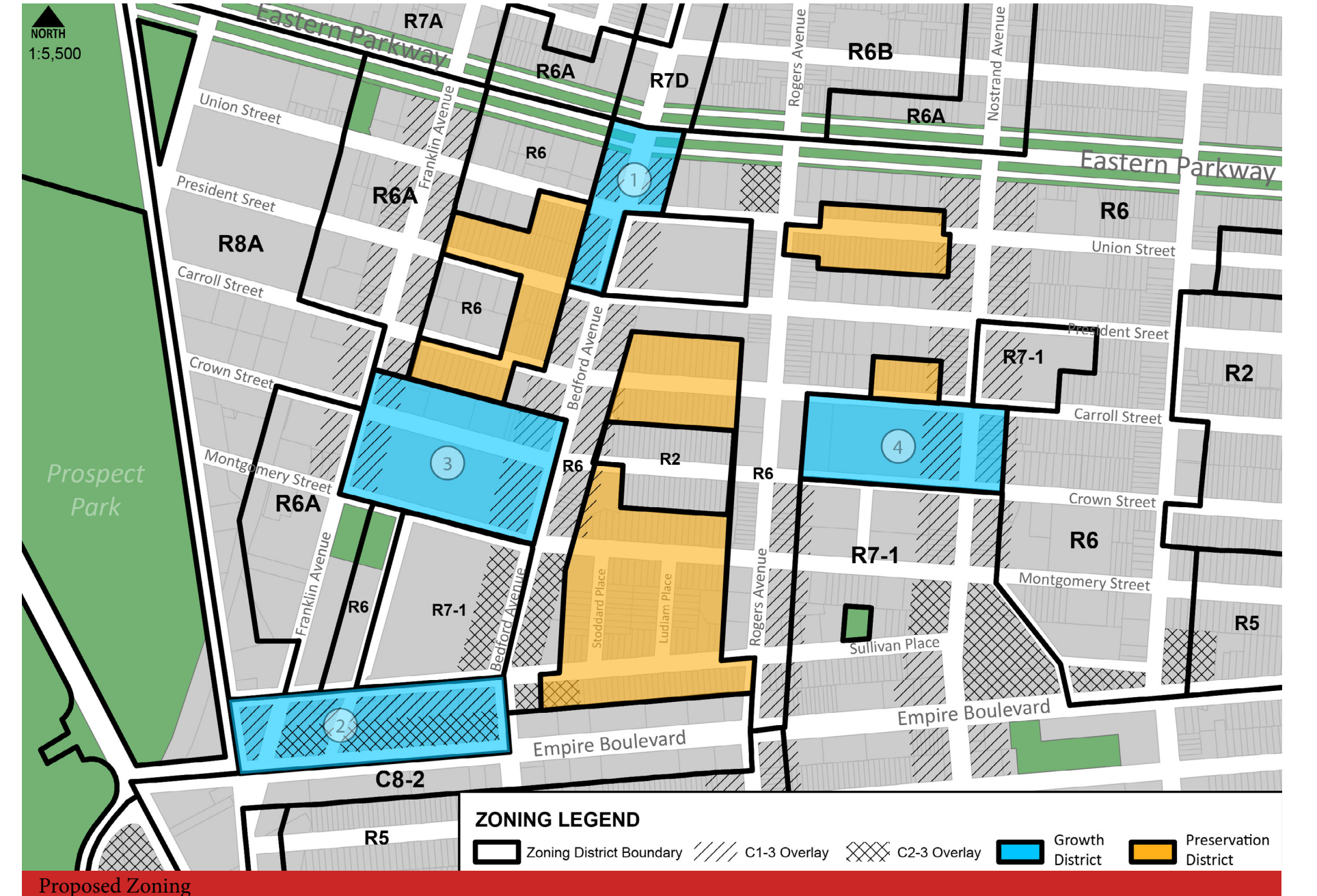
opportunity where space was either poorly managed or severely underutilized; both vacant lots and buildings beyond repair can be found scattered throughout the Study Area. We aim to encourage development and growth in these areas.

In addition, we understand that Medgar Evers College is currently sitting on acres of underdeveloped lots within the Study Area, but they do not have the necessary finances to expand its campus network that it so desperately needs. However strategic zoning solutions can be used to help affordably facilitate their growth.

Furthermore, we found that some zoning districts within our Study Area are limited to uses that are not adding benefit to the community; in particular, we feel that the C8-2 districts found on Bedford Avenue and Empire Boulevard are leading to these inappropriate uses. Lots in these districts are either vacant, in poor condition, or are used for automobile- or storage-related uses. In the future, there is opportunity for even more inappropriate development since a growing trend in C8-2 districts is the creation of out-of-context hotels, due to the district's allowance of transient uses. Auto, storage, and transient uses are ultimately inappropriate for this overwhelmingly residential community. This section of Crown Heights has outgrown its industrial past and deserves zoning that is more suitable to serve the community's needs.

Lastly, it was discovered that though Bedford and Franklin Avenues serve as the Study Area's major thoroughfares, these roads do not all have commercial overlay districts, and thus lack desirable ground floor retail opportunities. The current zoning shows an almost haphazard placement of commercial overlays, creating a fragmented and inconsistent streetscape, especially on Bedford Avenue. These fragmented ground floor retail districts make it difficult to effectively activate the streetscape, resulting in mostly pedestrian-deficient areas.

With these various issues in mind, we felt it was important to create a new zoning plan that strikes a balance between preservation and growth. While some parts of the Study Area are considered to be invaluable and crucial to the neighborhood character, others were seen as prime opportunities for growth. As such, specific districts were identified and designated as 'Preservation Districts' and 'Growth Districts'. These proposed districts explore a combination of downzonings, upzonings, historic district designations, and new commercial overlays, while identifying opportunities for the inclusion of much needed affordable housing and institutional spaces.



PRESERVATION AREAS

Existing Zoning

R6

R6 zoning districts are most prevalent throughout the study area. These zoning districts are general districts that represent built-up, medium-density areas throughout Brooklyn. These areas have zoning that permits either Height Factor buildings or Quality Housing buildings; height factor buildings are governed by the sky exposure plane and open space ratio, whereas quality housing buildings have optional alternative regulations that typically limit height. Since quality housing regulations are not required, typical buildings in these districts follow the sky exposure plane regulations. This results in lots that have an FAR of 0.78-2.43, which varies based on the number of stories built and the amount of open space provided. 30' rear yards are required but front yards are not required.

R6 zoning districts are not appropriate for the proposed preservation areas since the zoning permits buildings that do not reflect the character of the neighborhood. The lack of strict bulk regulations that are consistent with existing buildings leaves this area susceptible to development that is inconsistent with the existing character of the neighborhood, such as tall buildings that are set back from the street line.

R2

R2 zoning appears in a small portion of our study area. This district is unusual for a densely-built area; it is typically associated with single-family detached buildings and as such is an atypical zoning district for Brooklyn. This district leads to more dense areas than R1 districts, but still resemble suburban development. Buildings in R2 districts are governed by the sky exposure plane and have an FAR of .5. Lots must be at least 40' wide and 3,800 square feet in area. Front yards must be at least 15' long and rear yards must be at least 30' long. Side

yards must be at least 5' wide on each side, and must overall be at least 13' wide.

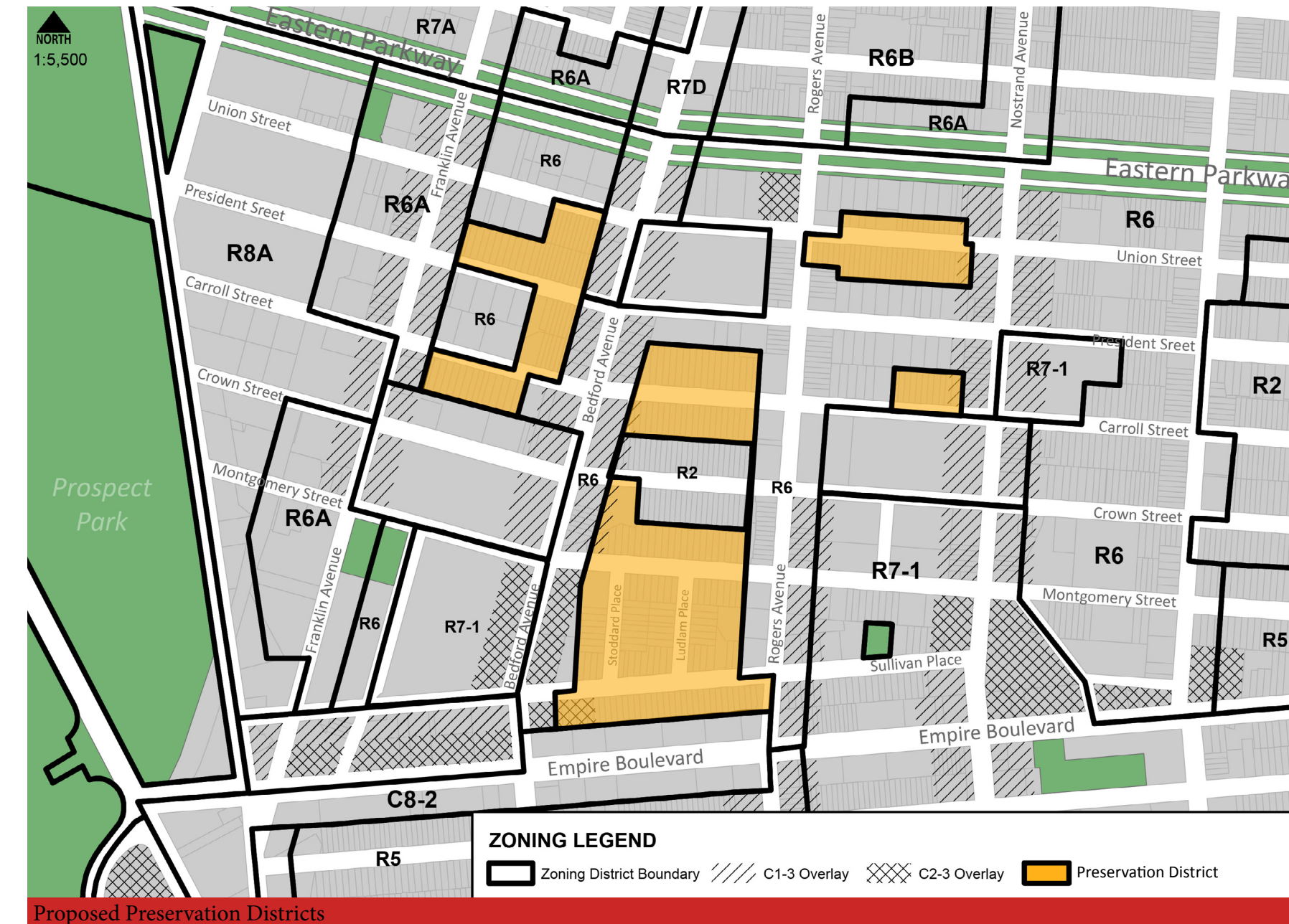
R2 zoning is not appropriate for the proposed preservation areas because this area does not have any detached buildings.

Proposed Zoning

The areas highlighted as potential preservation areas were chosen because they have a distinct, cohesive, and charming character that we believe should be preserved. These buildings are attached or semi-detached, two-story homes. The semi-detached homes have driveways that extend beyond the house.

By changing the zoning, there will be no additional FAR available on these lots. Therefore, there will not be a financial incentive to demolish these buildings. This will help to preserve the existing buildings in these areas.

Unfortunately, the existing built conditions do not perfectly match any existing zoning district. However, there are a few zoning districts that resemble the built conditions and any of these zoning districts, if chosen, would be effective at preserving the character of these areas. If rezoned, R3-1, R3-2, and R4B districts could possibly be the most appropriate options for the preservation areas, as detailed below.



Proposed Preservation Districts



Proposed Preservation Buildings on Union Street



Proposed Preservation Buildings on Union Street

R3-1

R3-1 zoning districts are the lowest density districts that allow for semi-detached residences. Zoning lots in this district must be at least 18' wide for semi-detached homes with a minimum lot area of 1,700 square feet. There is a maximum permitted lot coverage of 35% and a maximum FAR of .5. These buildings can rise 21' before setbacks and can have a maximum height of 35'. Front yards must be at least 15' deep, rear yards must be at least 10' deep, and one 8' side yard is required for each semi-detached home. Parking should be located in the side yard, rear yard, or garage.

R3-1 is an appropriate district for most of these preservation areas because these are two-story buildings with appropriately sized front and rear yards. They also have the required side yards, which consist of driveways to accommodate their required parking. They also have approximately the right lot coverage and lot sizes. Therefore, this district is appropriate for the semi-detached homes in this area.

R3-2

R3-2 zoning districts allow for low-rise attached and semi-detached residences. The regulations are similar to R3-1 districts, with the notable exception that attached houses are permitted and they can have a street wall length up to 125'.

An R3-2 district is an appropriate choice for areas where there is a mix of attached and semi-detached homes. This could be appropriate zoning for all of the above areas that were recommended for R3-1 zoning.

R4B

R4B zoning districts allow for low-rise attached rowhouses. These districts have a maximum FAR of .9 with a maximum height of 24'. A 5' front yard is required and it must be consistent with adjacent rowhouses. Attached rowhouses must have an 8' side yard after the last of the attached buildings, which allows access to shared driveways in the rear of the buildings.

R4B districts are appropriate for portions of the South preservation area, since that area consists of attached 2-story buildings with a consistent street wall and shared rear driveways.

Landmark District

Another alternative for preserving the residential districts identified above is to designate these areas as historic districts. According to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission's (LPC) criteria regarding historic district designation, an area may be considered as a historic district if it possess architectural and historical significance, has a distinct "sense of place," and has a coherent streetscape.

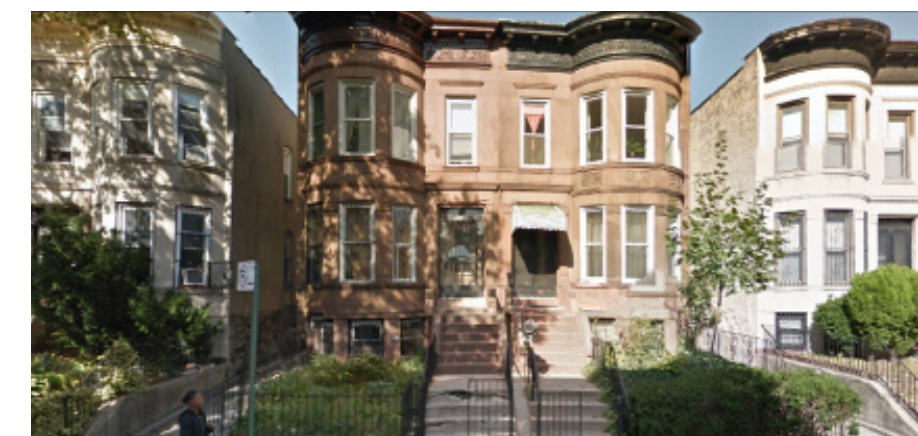
After reviewing the areas with semi-detached and attached single- and two-family homes within the proposed preservation districts, we determined that an historic district designation would be appropriate considering the age and unique architecture of these buildings.

The most appropriate area for an historic district is the preservation district identified as stretching from Carrol Street to Sullivan Place, between Bedford Avenue and Rogers Avenue. The majority of these buildings were built either in the late 19th or early 20th Century, mostly producing 'brownstone' architecture which was popular in Brooklyn during the turn of the century. On the north side of Carroll Street between Bedford and Rogers, building designs have unique roof gables and balconies that stand out to passersby. The brownstones and the consist style of architecture establish the district as satisfying the LPC criteria for architectural and historical significance. Additionally, since these buildings have been preserved and little-to-no contemporary development has disrupted each street's architectural uniformity, this district establishes a "sense of place" with a coherent streetscape.

If granted an historic district designation, a downzoning in the R6 districts would be unnecessary since this measure would preserve these buildings. In addition to preserving the size and design of existing buildings within the proposed historic district, future development within the district will produce interesting and contextual new buildings.



Proposed Landmark District



Proposed Preservation Buildings on Carroll Street

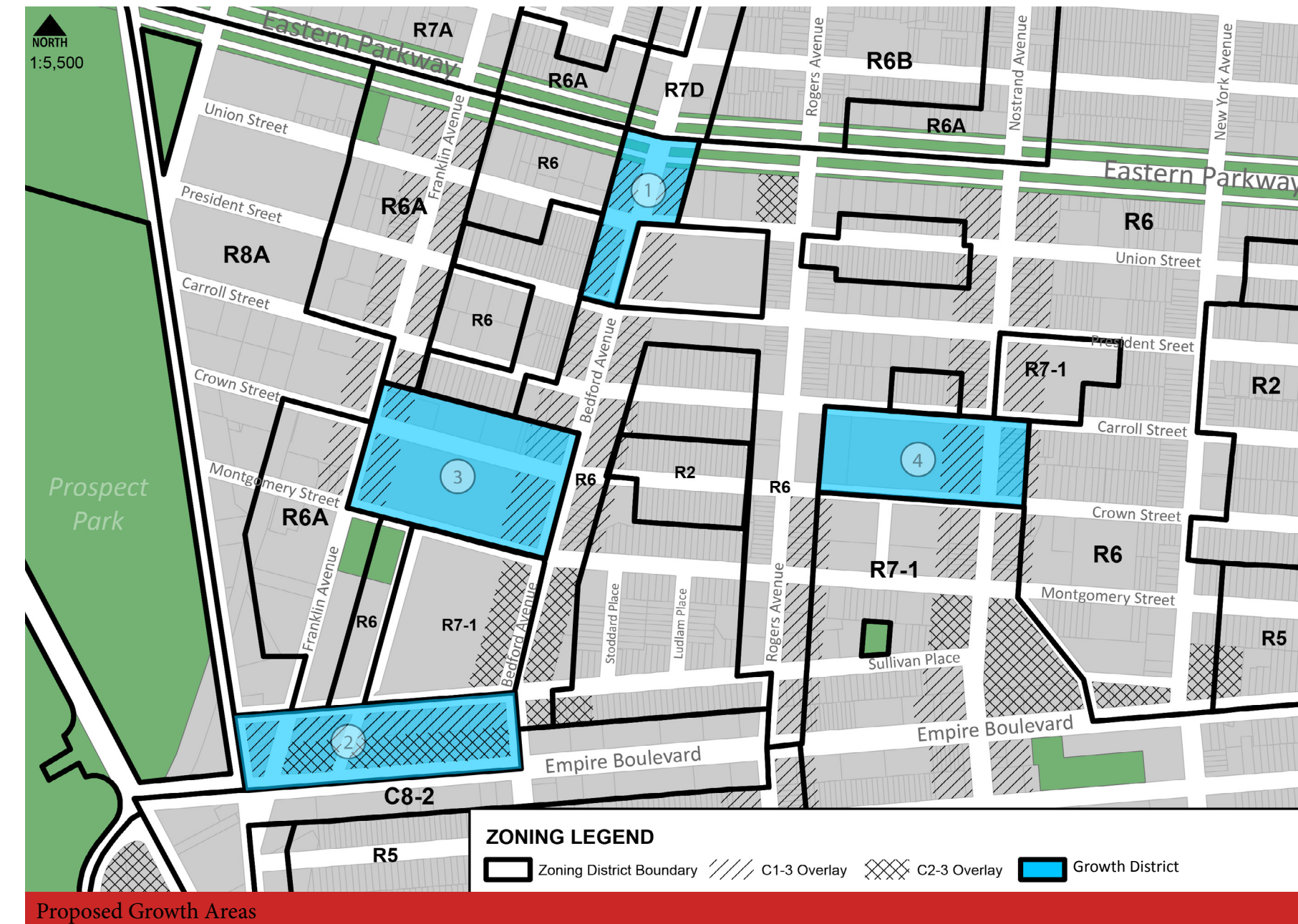
GROWTH AREAS

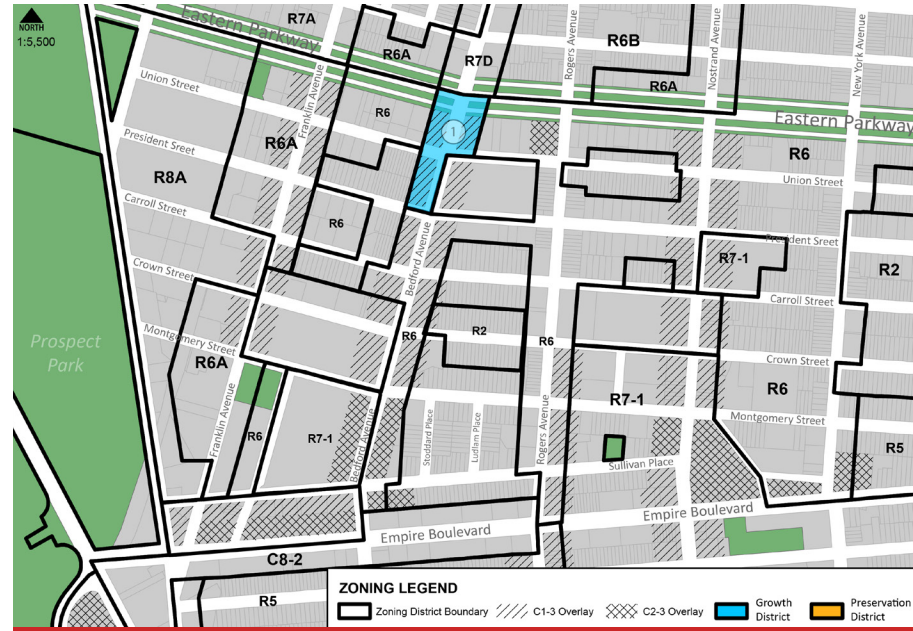
In addition to the downzoning recommendations to help preserve the neighborhood's character, we also propose a collection of upzonings to accommodate for the future growth of both the neighborhood and Medgar Evers College. Through extensive analyses of the study area, we found the designated growth areas to be the most appropriate and strategic locations for upzonings. We focused primarily on two underutilized and arguably inappropriate C8-2 Districts on Bedford Avenue and Empire Boulevard, as well as the zoning districts governing several of the Medgar Evers College lots. There are three driving forces that led us to ultimately decide that several upzonings were appropriate within the study area: the neighborhood's need for more affordable housing units, Medgar Evers' need for growth and expansion, and the interest in cohesion of the built environment.

Understanding that the community has been very skeptical of rezonings for fear of gentrification and rent hikes, it is important that any new developments include a percentage of permanent affordable housing.^{1,2} Currently, the City of New York's recently approved Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) zoning text amendment works to improve affordable housing conditions in New York City. New residential development will need to comply with these regulations if the development is in a district that was upzoned after March 22. To briefly summarize the new text, projects including more than 25 residential units will be required to provide a certain percentage of affordable units, based on the area median income (AMI); for instance, developers will be given the choice to either reserve 20% of their residential units at 40 AMI, 25% of units at 60 AMI, or 30% of units at 80 AMI. Since any upzoning will trigger MIH requirements, upzoning portions of this area will work to accommodate growth while preventing unintended displacement.

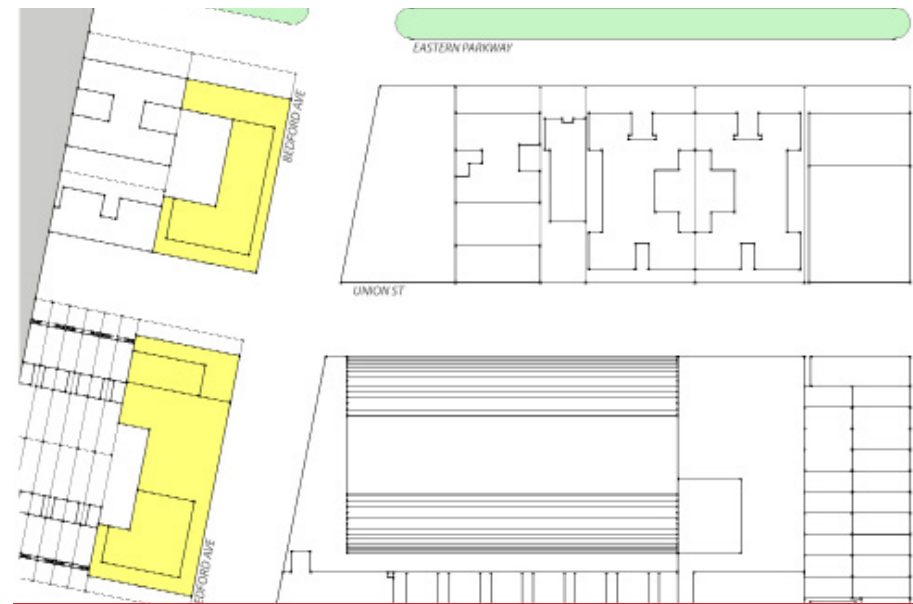
It is also important that the zoning proposal recognizes the potential for development in Medgar Evers College's lots. Medgar Evers College currently owns several underdeveloped properties within the study area; unfortunately, financial obstacles prevent the college from being able to take advantage of their existing development rights. As such, we are proposing upzonings on Medgar Evers College's lots to give the college greater leverage and allowing space for the development of mixed-use projects on their properties.

For each proposed upzoning, we have listed several potential zoning districts that may be suitable for each area, as a way to provide flexibility based on the college's needs and preferences. Typically, the recommended zoning districts differ in their bulk regulations rather than their permitted FAR. Additionally, these zoning changes represent a move away from generic zoning districts whose building heights are governed by the sky exposure plane, which would have allowed room for non-contextual developments in this area that has an average building height at 4 stories.





Proposed Growth Areas



Proposed Conditions

Bedford Avenue Growth Zone | Site 1

Currently, the area in the Bedford Avenue Growth Zone is designated as a C8-2 district, which has an FAR of 2 for commercial uses and typically leads to industrial, auto- or storage-related uses. This is an inappropriate designation for the area, considering that the surrounding neighborhood is overwhelmingly residential. The vacant lots in the southwest corner of Eastern Parkway and Bedford Avenue highlight the difficulties of operating a C8-2 conforming building in a residential neighborhood. These vacant lots are an eyesore and are deterring pedestrian activity on Bedford Avenue. Another concern regarding C8-2 districts is that transient uses such as hotels can be built as-of-right, thus risking highly out-of-context development. For these reasons, the C8-2 districts should be replaced with a more appropriate, contextual zoning district that would help to activate the streetscape.

The historic MTA-owned building directly across from the Bedford-Union Armory is also in this C8-2 district. This historic building's design features and architecture are similar to that of the Armory; as such, this site could serve as a great opportunity for redevelopment schemes similar to those proposed for the Armory site. Ideally, a redevelopment of the MTA building would include a mixture of both preservation and new design concepts, while also reserving a percentage of affordable units within a mixed-use building. In order to trigger any potential redevelopment of the site, however, a zoning change would have to make sure that the site is transformed into a 'soft-site'.

Additionally, creating commercial overlays would preserve the commercial nature of the study area's Avenues, while activating this section of Bedford Avenue. These overlays would encourage new developments to incorporate desired ground-floor retail in their designs. To remain consistent with the existing commercial overlays found on Bedford, a C1-3 commercial overlay would be the most appropriate overlay district for this section of Bedford Avenue.

R7D District

The preferred zoning change is to replace the C8-2 district with an R7D district. Since this rezoning would constitute as an up-zoning from the original C8-2 district, MIH requirements would be triggered.

R7D districts normally allow for a 4.2 FAR allowance, but due to the MIH FAR bonus, the permitted FAR is increased to 5.6. The base height in this district ranges from 65' – 85' while the maximum building height is set at 105'. Lot coverage is limited to 65% for interior lots and 80% for corner lots. Normally, R7D districts require parking for 50% of a building's units; however, due to the text regarding 'transit zones' laid out in the ZQA zoning text, this percentage is significantly reduced, dependent on the housing type. An R7D district is appropriate in terms of neighborhood context since the district directly north of the existing C8-2 district is an R7D district that replaced a previously existing C8-2 district.

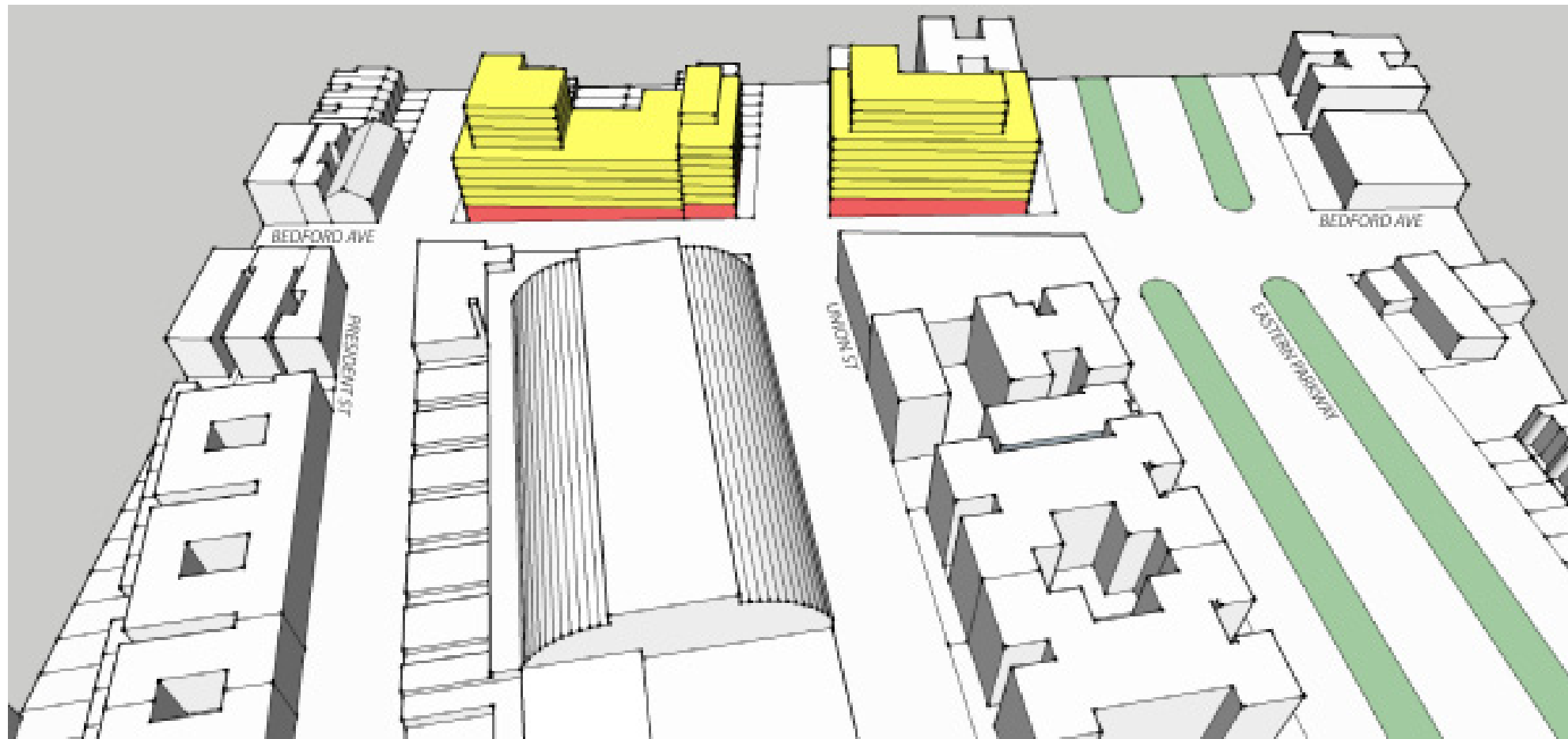
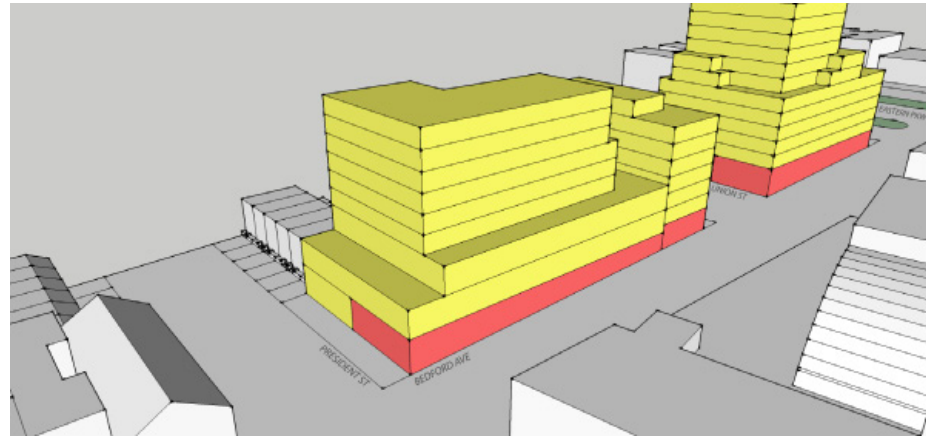
Based on R7D regulations, three of the four zoning lots located within the district could become potential development sites. The vacant lot on Eastern Parkway and Bedford Avenue (block 1266, lot 36), a small lot with an existing convenience store (block 1273, lot 40), and the MTA building (block 1273, lot 46) would all be soft-sites under a 5.6 FAR. Based on R7D regulations: 'block 1266, lot 36' would permit a 107,520 sq ft building; 'block 1273, lot 40' would permit a 33,600 sq ft building; and 'block 1273, lot 46' would permit a 113,120 sq ft building. Examples of potential build-outs for each site can be seen on the next page.

R7X District

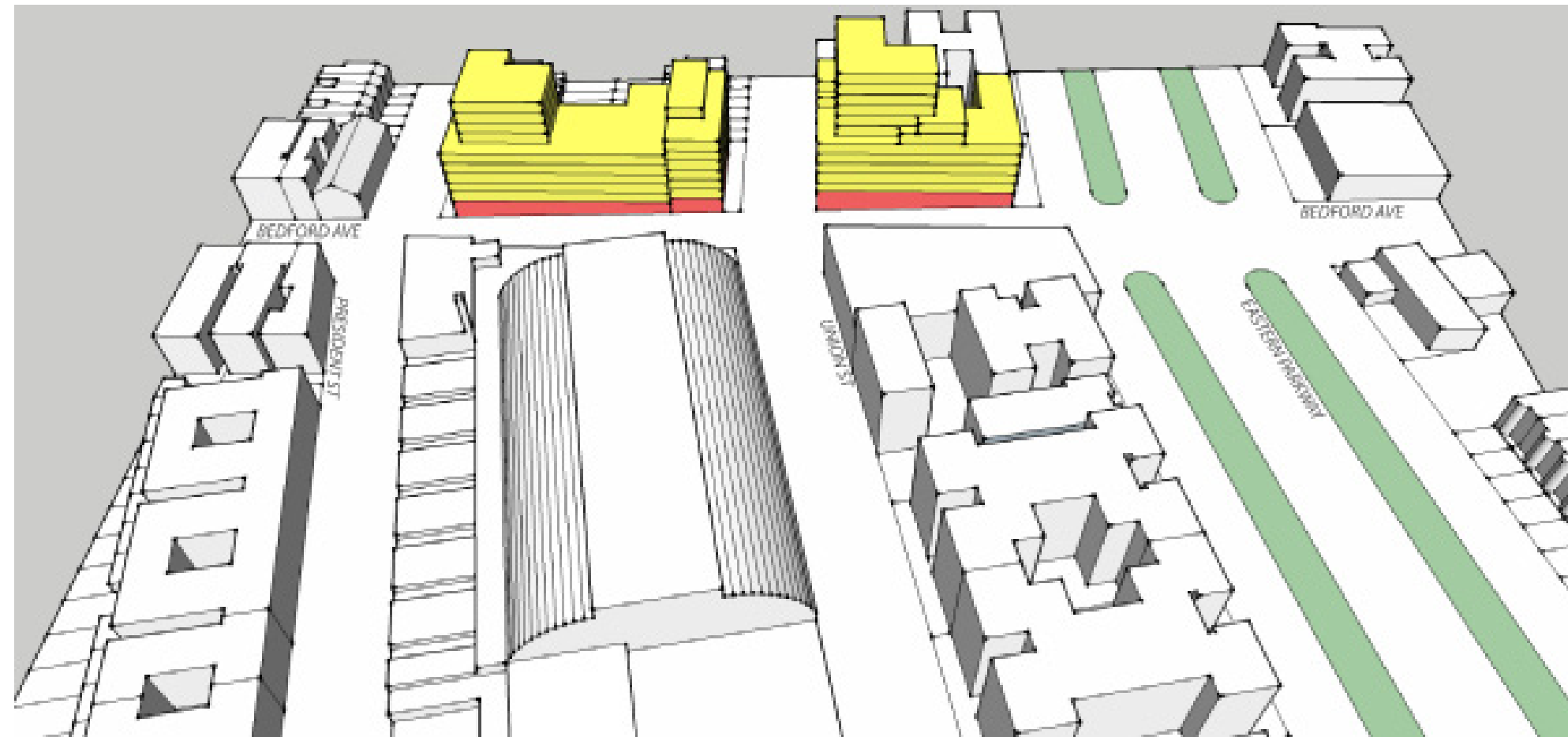
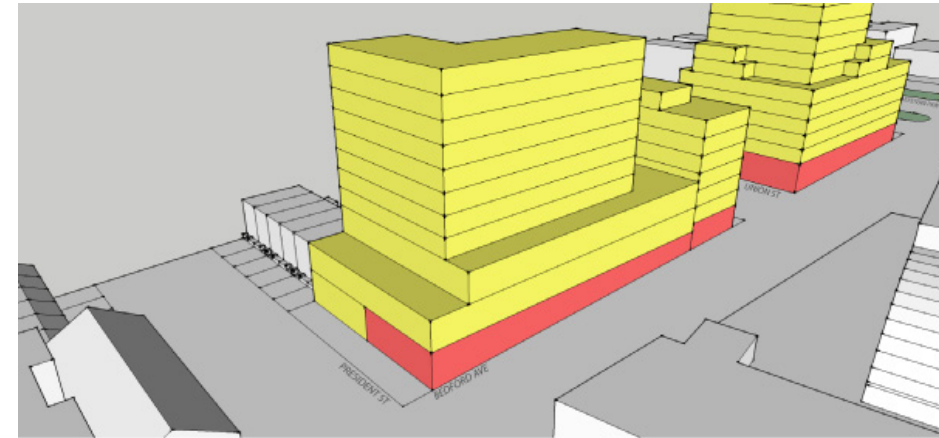
R7X districts would have essentially the same regulations as R7D districts in regards to FAR (after MIH is triggered), base heights, and parking. However, R7X had a 155' height limit instead of R7D's 125' limit. Also, for interior lots, lot coverage allowance is increased to 70% in R7X districts. Since the rezoning would be considered an "upzoning," MIH requirements will be activated, just as in R7D. Examples of the potential build-outs for each site can be seen on the next page.

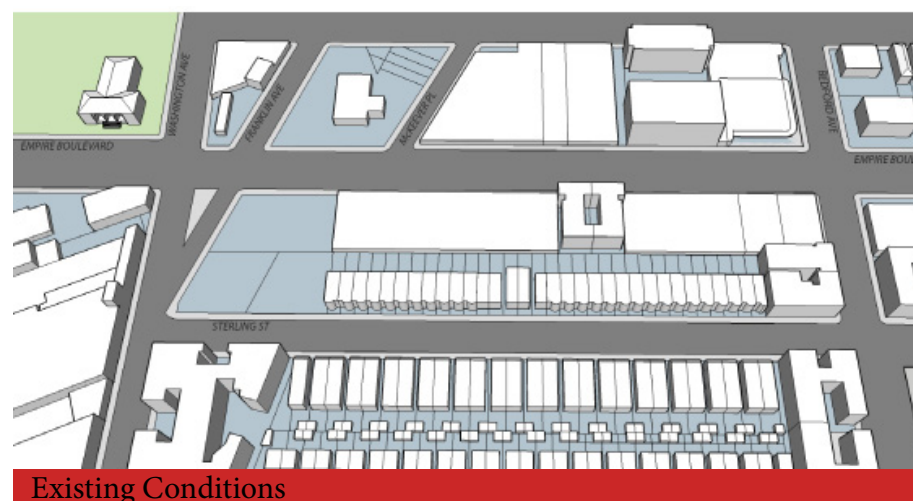
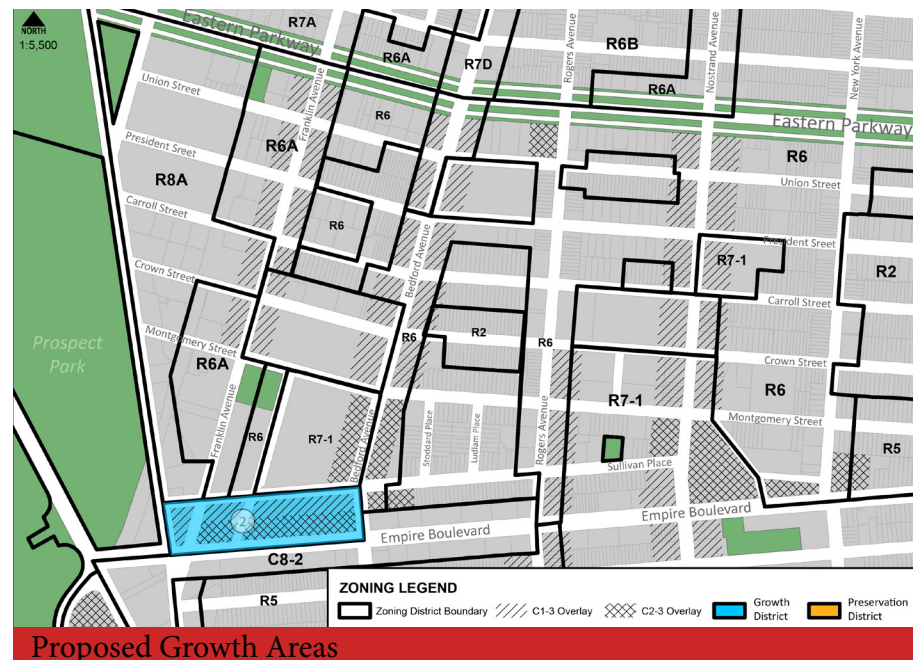


Bedford Avenue Growth Zone
Alternative 1: R7D



Bedford Avenue Growth Zone
Alternative 2: R7X





Empire Boulevard Growth Zone | Site 2

For the last decade or so, Empire Boulevard has been the subject of a heated debate over whether or not the area should be rezoned to accommodate residential uses. Currently, much of the boulevard is zoned C8-2. As previously discussed, C8-2 districts often result in auto- and storage-related uses, which explains why these are the predominant uses found on Empire Boulevard. However, these uses have a tendency to produce out-of-context uses such as hotels; this is an issue that the neighborhood of Gowanus has faced in recent years. Many neighboring residents are fearful that a rezoning of the area would result in gentrification and displacement, so community members have organized and fought hard against the City in what has thus far been a successful attempt to delay zoning studies by the Department of City Planning.

Understanding the sensitivity of the situation, our team was prudent in formulating an appropriate zoning change for the area. Ultimately, however, we felt a zoning change was necessary for at least a portion of the C8-2 district based on the existing conditions of Empire Boulevard. Many buildings are greatly neglected and in disrepair, making an unfriendly, uninviting, and occasionally unsafe environment. It is important to bring investment back to Empire Boulevard, while remaining mindful of the residents' concerns and keeping future developments contextually appropriate.

The Empire Boulevard Growth Zone boundaries—as seen to the left—were chosen so that no low-rise attached or semi-detached houses were adjacent to the growth zone so as to mitigate potential impacts. Block 1306—which is encapsulated by the Empire Boulevard Growth Zone—is currently split in half by two zoning districts: C8-2 in the southern half, and R6 in the northern half. The block currently contains a McDonalds, a storage facility, a tire and automobile repair shop, a nightclub that is closed during the morning and afternoon hours, and a 5-story residential building. The remaining buildings are vacant and are deteriorating. The Empire Boulevard proposed rezoning strives to resolve the issues of vacancy and create a more vibrant area with uses that better serve the overwhelmingly residential neighborhood. This small-scale rezoning could serve as a pilot program to demonstrate that a zoning change to the greater Empire Boulevard C8-2 district can have

a positive impact on the community. This piecemeal approach to rezoning Empire Boulevard's C8-2 district is a more feasible way to rezone, and the Empire Boulevard Growth Zone is a proper place to start.

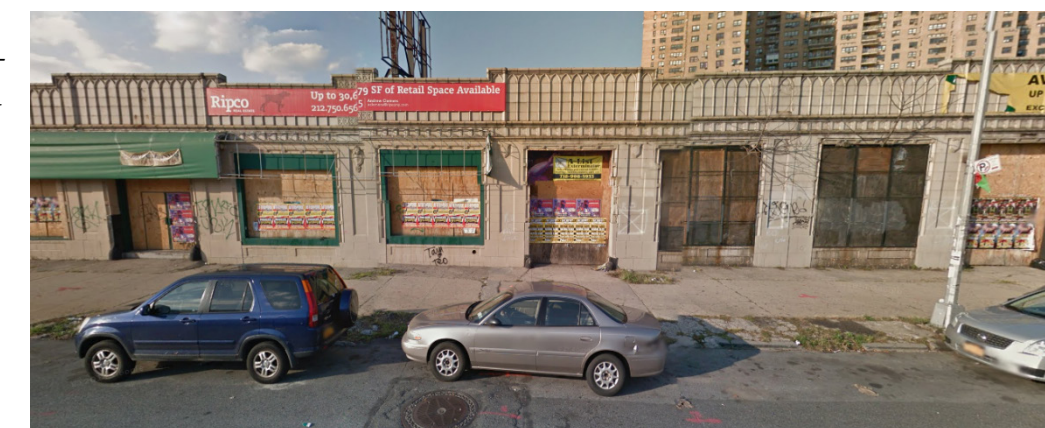
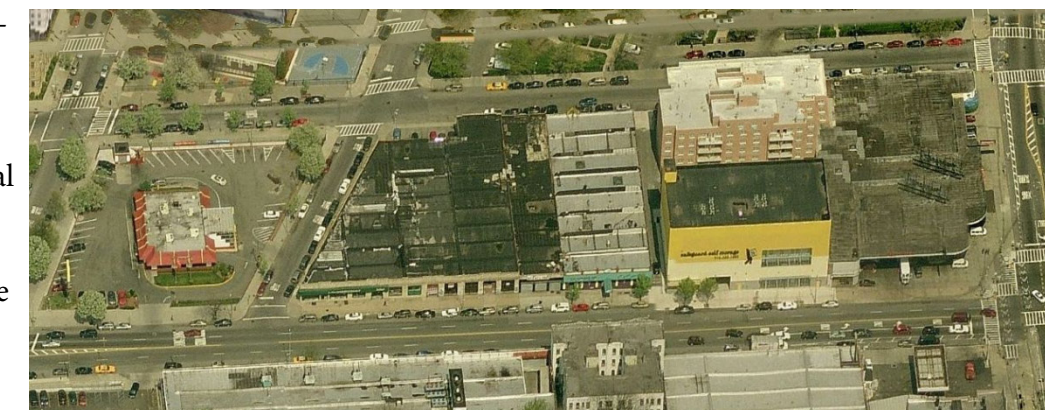
Additionally, since the zoning will be changed from a commercial district to a residential district, it is important to include commercial overlays to retain ground-floor retail and thus preserve Empire Boulevard as a commercial corridor. Keeping in mind the surrounding commercial overlays found on Bedford Avenue and Sullivan Place, a mixture of C1-3 and C2-3 commercial overlays would be the most appropriate designations.

R7A District

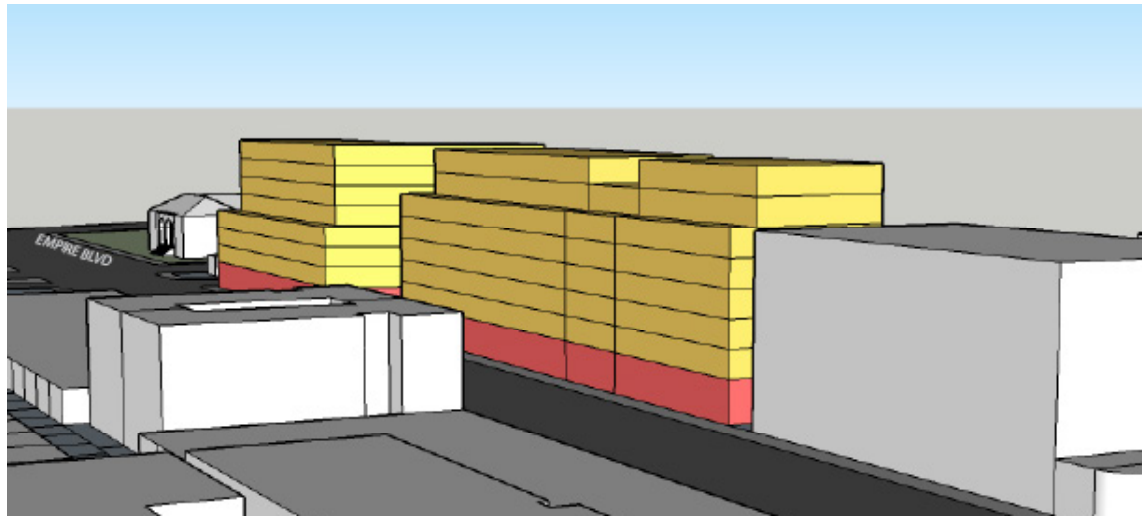
The preferred zoning district recommended for the Empire Boulevard Growth Zone is R7A. In R7A districts, new developments would be allowed an FAR of 4.6 through MIH, a minimum/maximum base height of 40'/65', a maximum building height of 85', and lot coverage of 65% for interior lots and 80% for corner lots. This zoning district fits well with Empire Boulevard's more intensely developed structures, such as the 5-story residential building and the storage facility, which both reach between 55' and 65' in height. With an FAR of 4.6, a total of four zoning lots would be assessed as soft-sites, thus attracting new development (i.e. Block 1306, Lots 1, 28, 35, and 37). Due to the contextual heights, the R7A is most likely the more appropriate rezoning choice.

R7D District

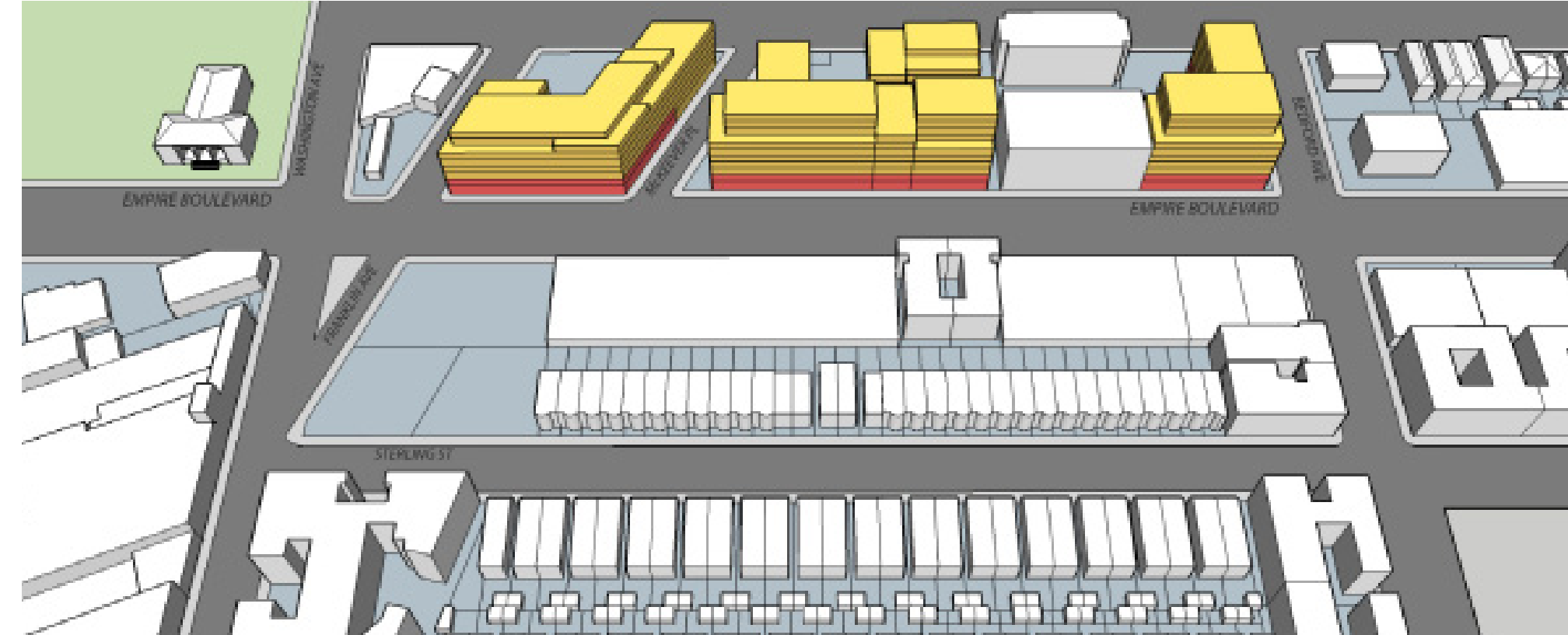
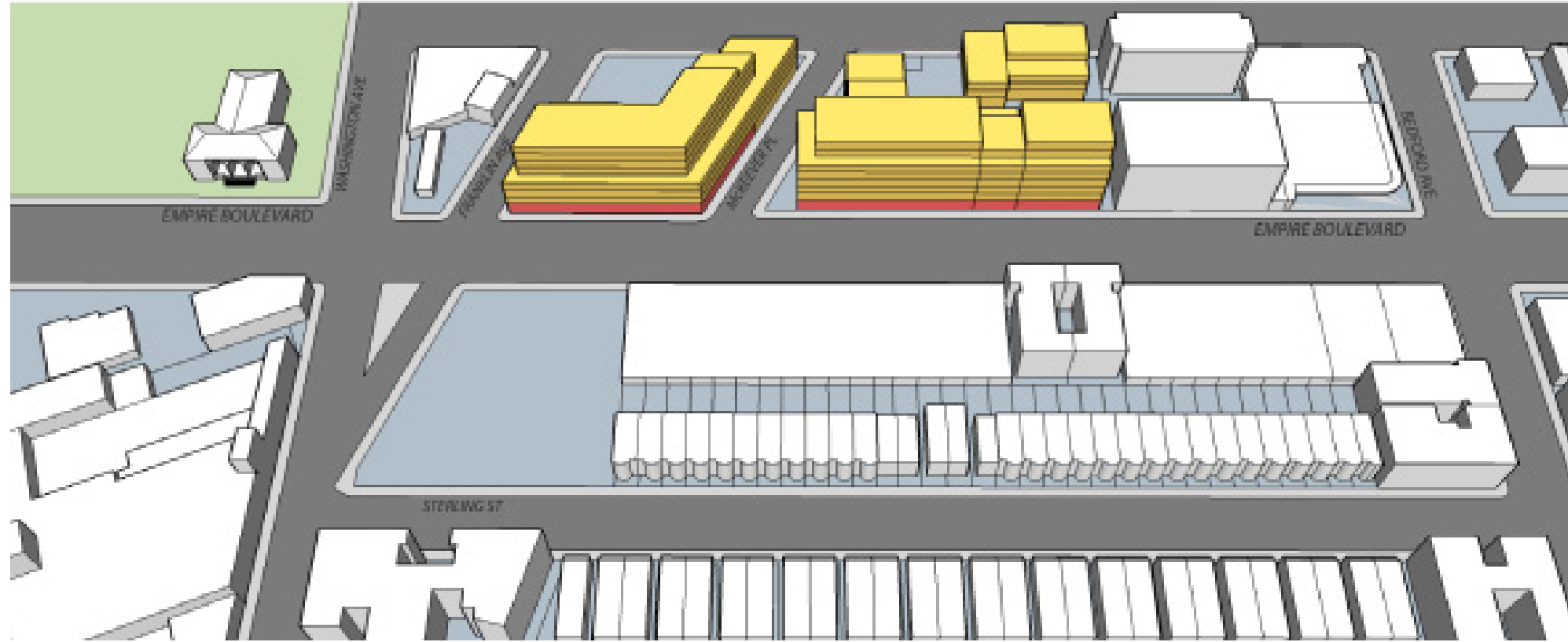
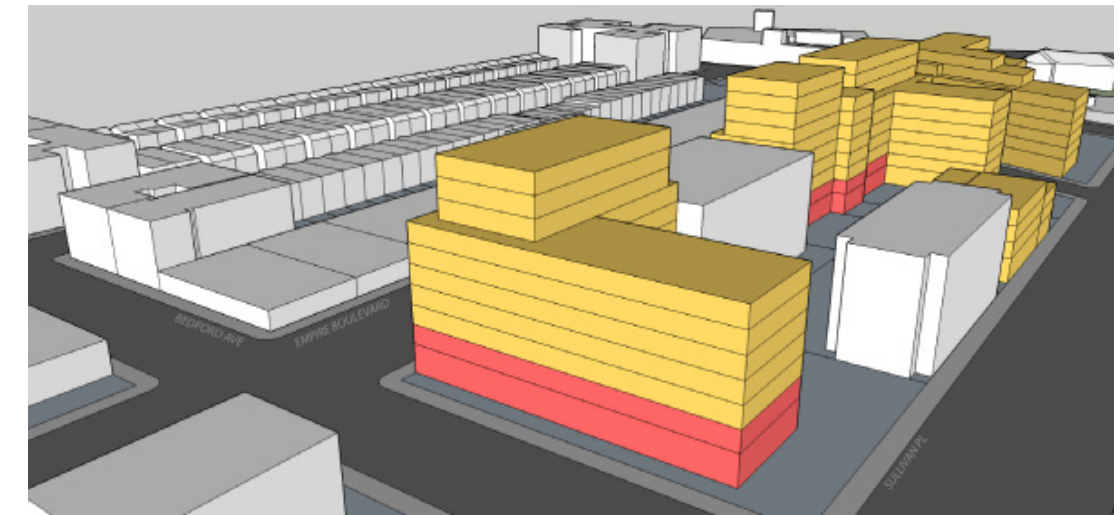
Though perhaps not as contextually appropriate as R7A, an R7D district may also be a suitable fit for the Empire Boulevard Growth Zone. Under R7D, new buildings would have a maximum FAR of 5.6 through MIH, a minimum/maximum base height of 60'/85', a maximum base height of 105', and lot coverage of 65% for interior lots and 80% for corner lots. Though the 105' height limit allows buildings to surpass the existing building heights found on the block, it is not necessarily out-of-context. In addition, a total of five zoning lots would be assessed as being soft-sites under R7D zoning, making an additional lot susceptible to redevelopment (i.e. Block 1306, Lot 49). Though R7D may result in slightly larger developments compared to R7A, the R7D district has the ability to attract more investment due to the greater FAR.



Empire Boulevard Growth Zone
Alternative 1: R7A



Empire Boulevard Growth Zone
Alternative 2: R7D



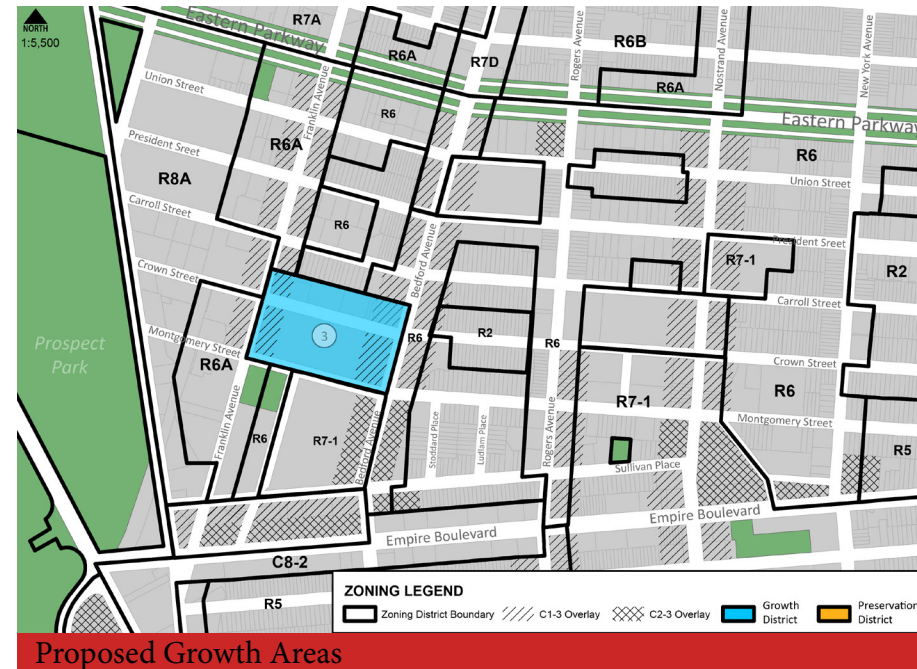
Medgar Evers Growth Zone I | Site 3

Medgar Evers Growth Zone 1 is arguably the most pivotal growth zone we evaluated. This area covers the entire block bounded by Bedford Avenue, Crown Street, Franklin Avenue, and Montgomery Street, and stretches 100' into the block north of that. Every property located within this district is owned by Medgar Evers College.

As previously mentioned, our goal for this district is to create a strategy that helps Medgar Evers expand its resources through more effective utilization of their land assets. From what we understand, Medgar Evers College is looking to grow physically but is deficient of the means to fund such development projects. One realistic and effective way to facilitate this expansion would be to establish a partnership with a private developer and coordinate the development of mixed-use buildings that include a combination of institutional, commercial, and residential uses. Ideally, this would consist of space for Medgar Evers college with retail uses on the ground floor and a mixture of affordable and market-rate residences above.

There are a number of zoning and financing strategies that can be utilized to accomplish such a coordinated effort, but at the core of such a partnership, Medgar Evers would lease out a portion of their land for this development. This public-private partnership has a number of benefits. Among them, it would enable Medgar Evers College to capitalize on its land holdings, leverage much needed improvements, and expand its facilities. Similarly, it provides an opportunity to create a campus environment. The leasing structure of this partnership creates a long-term, sustainable approach to managing the college's land assets.

Overall, this approach allows Medgar Evers to expand its network, thus allowing for increased growth in admissions and resources. Funds earned through lease agreements will help pay for the costs of development and maintenance of the proposed buildings. In order for the private-public partnership to be financially feasible for the up-front costs taken on by developers, a minimal 2:5 ratio would be required for institutional-to-residential/commercial



Proposed Growth Areas

uses. This means that for every square foot of institutional space, the mixed use development project would need at least 2.5 square feet of residential and/or commercial space.

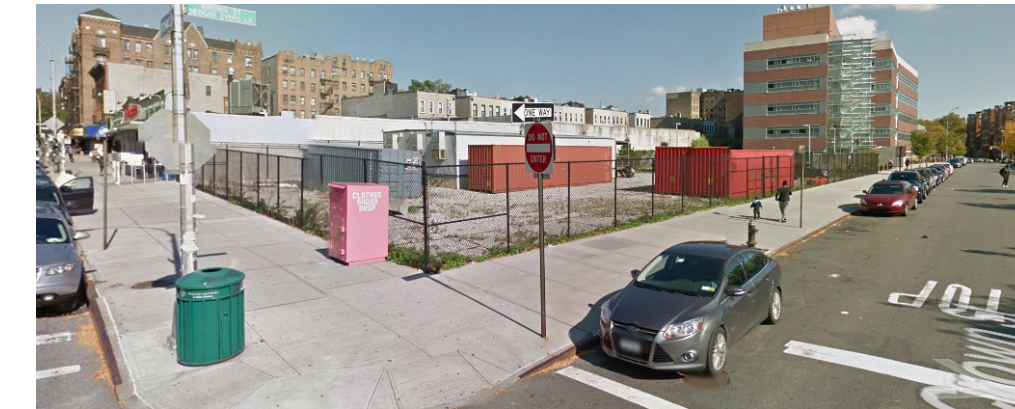
R8A and R8X Districts

For this growth zone—which is currently designated as R6 (with a small section of R6A)—R8A and R8X districts are the most appropriate districts for three reasons: (1) an upzoning would activate the MIH requirements, (2) greater FAR with contextualized regulations would result in appropriate and desirable building bulks, and (3) this higher FAR would generate enough floor area to make the project practical and viable.

R8A and R8X zoning would create two major development sites for Medgar Evers District 1: one on the western portion of 'block 1294, lot 1' (currently utilized as a parking lot for Medgar Evers faculty and staff), and the other on both 'block 1287, lot 1' and the western portion of 'lot 70'. Both sites are either vacant or used as surface parking. After an R8A or R8X rezoning, 'Block 1294, lot 1' will permit 1,320,480 sq ft of floor area, leaving 1,172,530 sq ft of floor area available for development.^a For the development site located on 'block 1287, lots 1 and 70' 324,623 sq ft of floor area would be permitted for development.

R8A and R8X are quite comparable in terms of bulk allowances. Both permit an FAR of 7.2 under MIH (without, both districts are 6.02 FAR), have a minimum/maximum base height ranging from 65 – 85 feet, allow 70% lot coverage for interior lots and 80% lot coverage for corner lots, and require parking for 40% of the total dwelling units.^b However, the two districts are separated by maximum building height regulations, where the R8A limits buildings to 125' in height while the R8X districts allows buildings to reach 155'. As such, we recommend R8X.

Furthermore, we recommend commercial overlays for the Franklin Avenue portion of the district to allow for more dynamic, mixed-use developments. C1-4 and C1-5 overlay districts may be the most appropriate due to their permitted uses.



Footnotes

- a. It should be noted that the 1,172,530 sq ft of floor area would essentially be impossible to fully develop on that site due to the contextual bulk regulations. Instead, the unutilized floor area can be transferred to the eastern portion of the block at a later point if Medgar Evers decides to redevelop the existing building on the same lot.
- b. Under ZQA, however, the parking requirement is significantly reduced, depending on the residential building type.

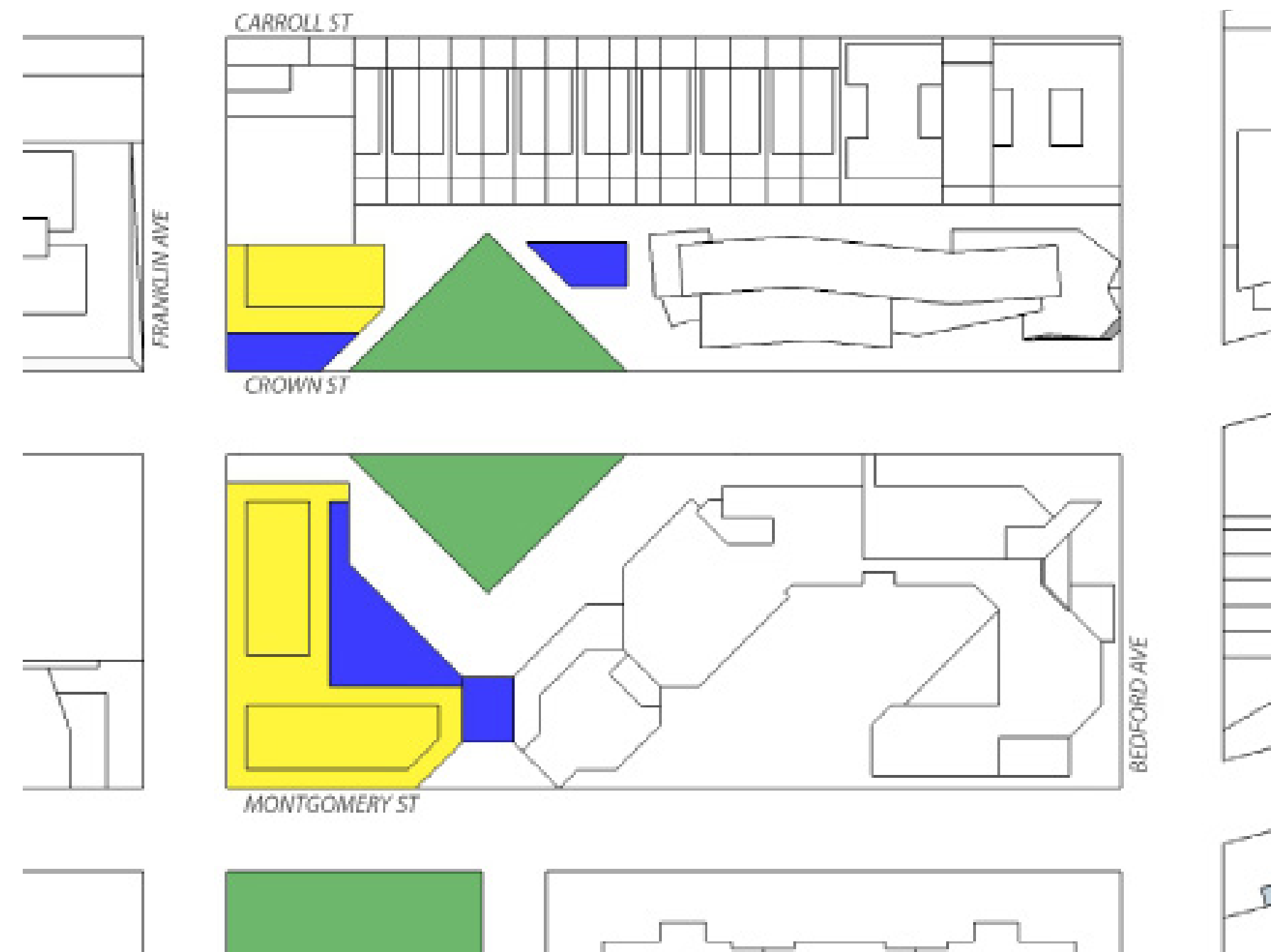
Proposed Layouts

In addition to suggesting two possible zoning districts for Medgar Evers District I, we have devised optimal design layouts for the development sites, as shown on the following pages. These representations of the development sites adopt our recommendations laid out in the ‘Streetscape’ section of the plan. Because this site plan works in harmony with our streetscape plan—which seeks to create a campus quad for Medgar Evers students and neighboring residents—it is the preferred course of action. We believe that the combination of the proposed streetscape plan, bulk regulations, and design layout make for the most compelling plans for this district and thus should be more seriously considered rather than attempting to maximize on development rights.

Assuming this preferred design layout and the 2:5 ratio of community facility space to residential/commercial space, an R8A district would result in approximately 108,100 square feet of institutional space and 270,400 square feet of residential/commercial space, while an R8X district would result in approximately 118,800 square feet of institutional space and 297,000 square feet of residential/commercial space.

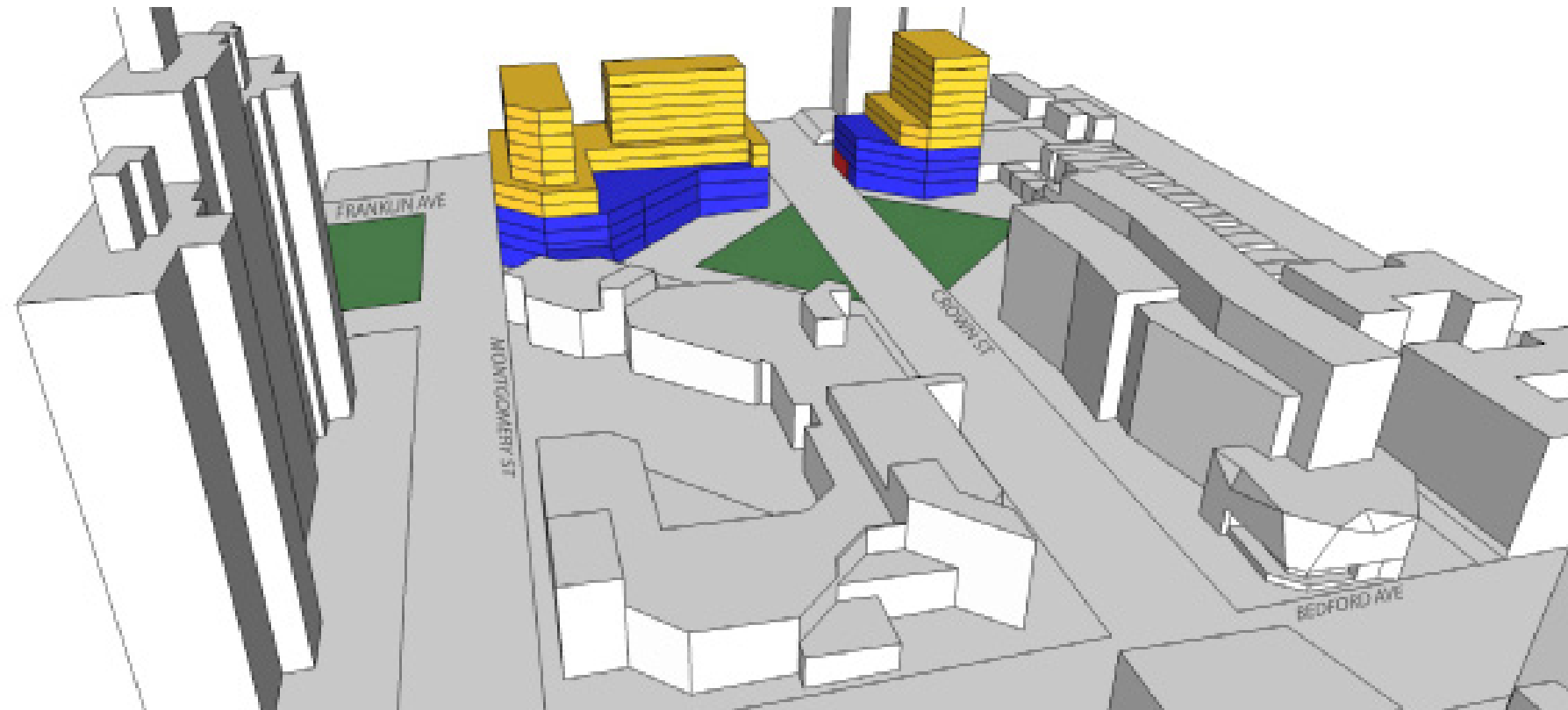
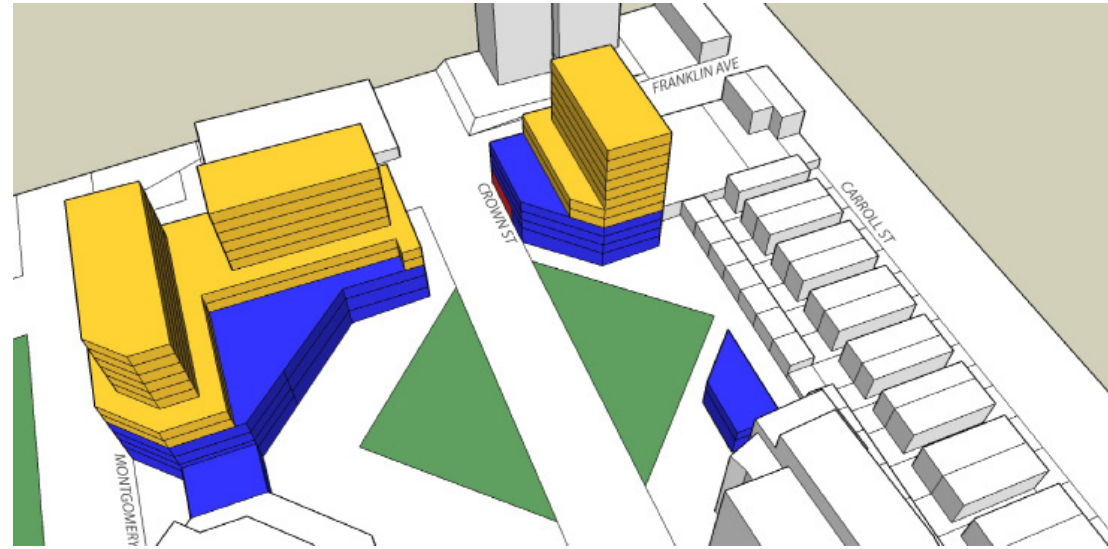
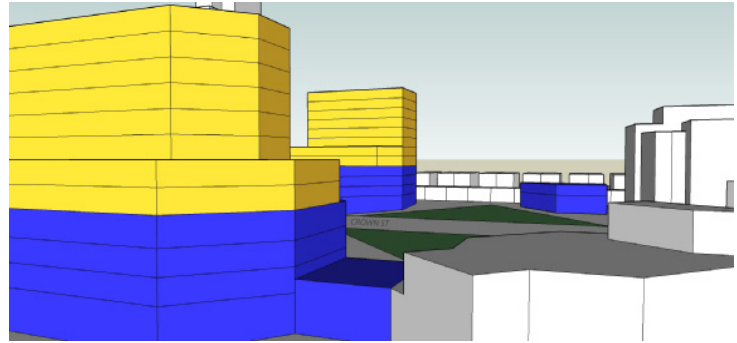
It is also important that despite ZQA’s parking requirement reductions for Transit Zones, any developments within Medgar Evers District I should retain the original 40% parking requirement and add another 10% to compensate for the loss of on-street parking on Crown Street. Echoing our survey results, we discovered that one of the most concerning issues for Medgar Evers students and faculty was the lack of parking. As such, it is important that any new Medgar Evers projects meet this need, despite the new regulations laid out by ZQA.

Furthermore, we are also recommending that commercial overlays be placed on the Franklin Avenue portion of the district to allow for more dynamic, mixed-use developments. To remain consistent with existing adjacent commercial overlay districts, C1-3 commercial overlays would be the most appropriate.

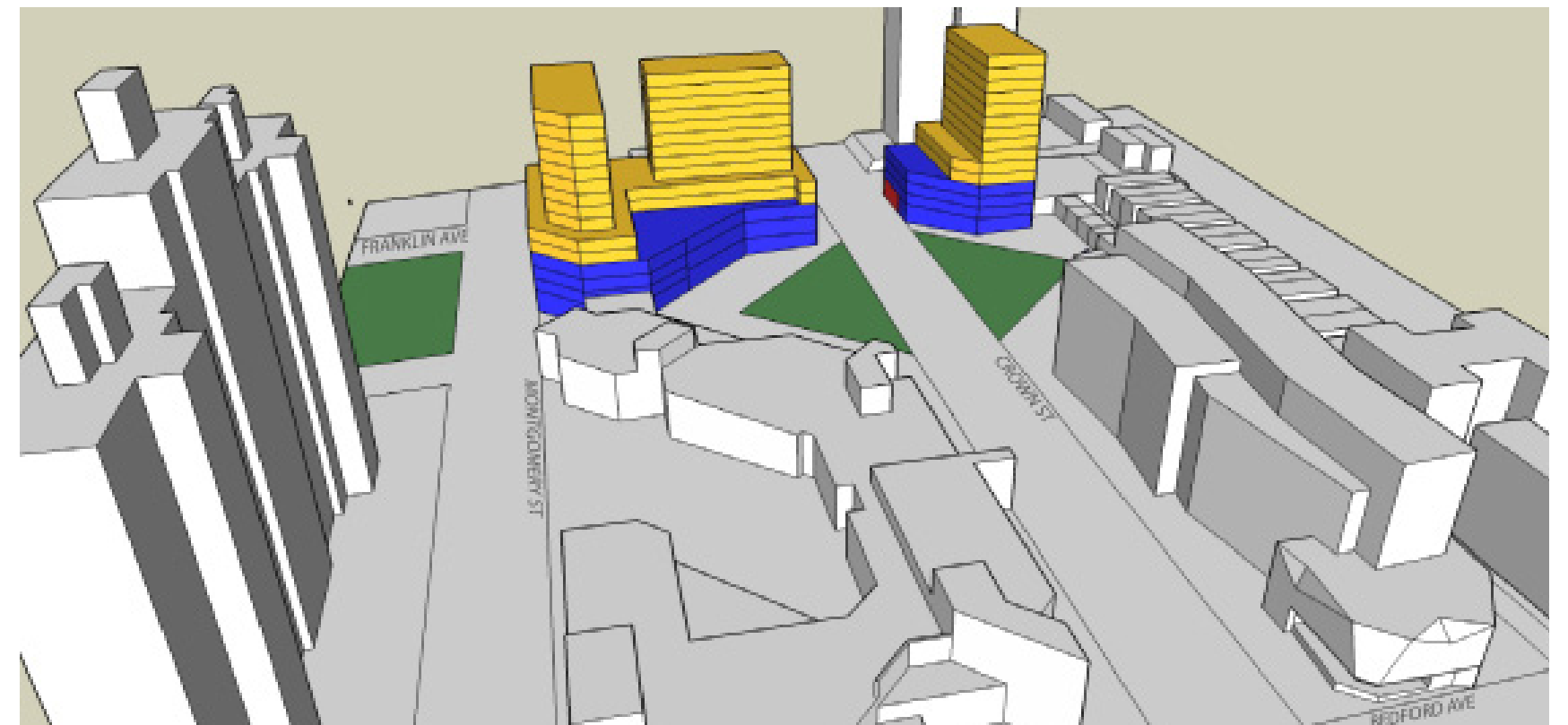
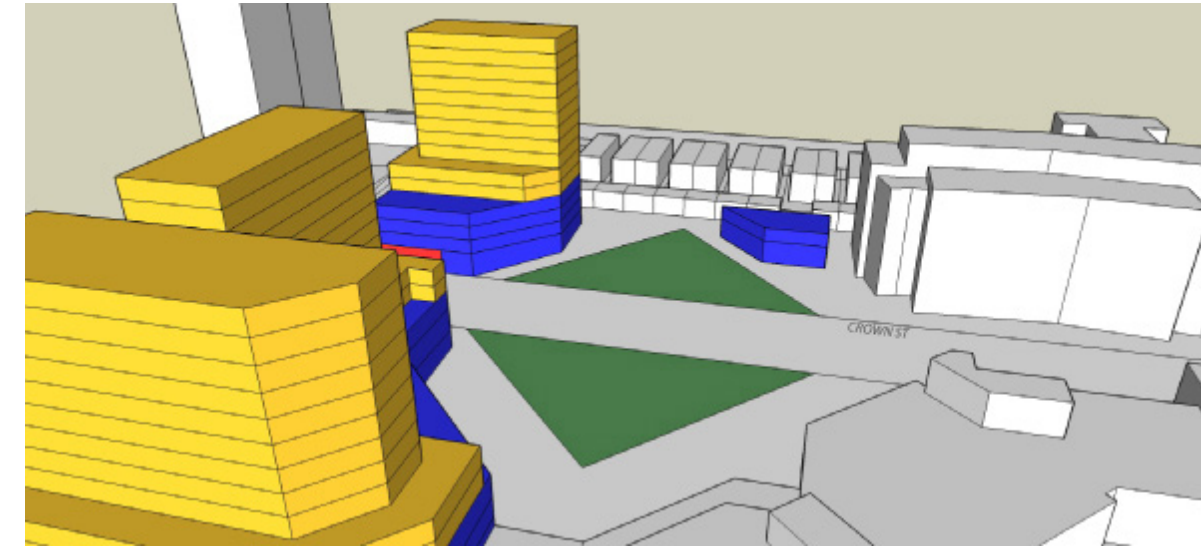
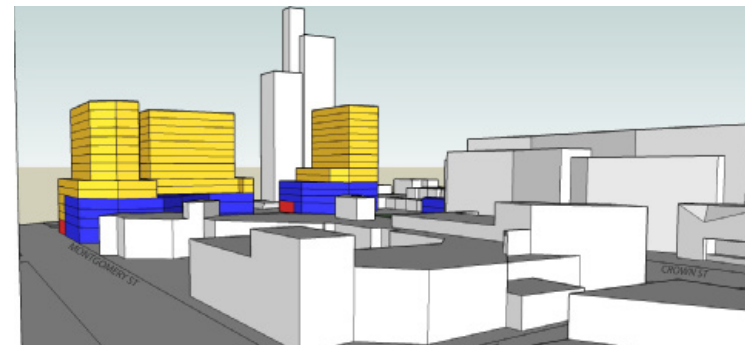


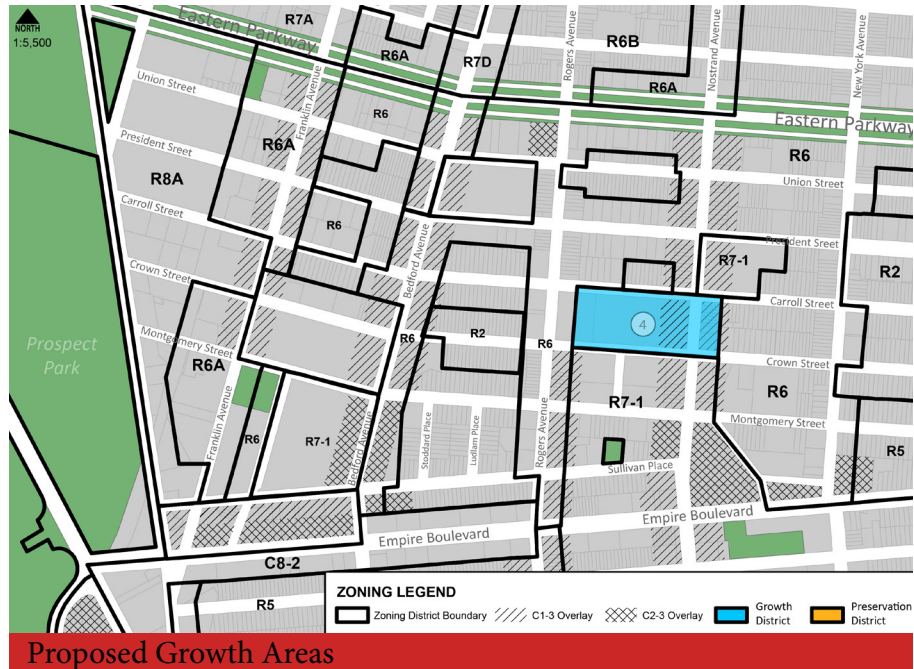
Proposed Conditions

Medgar Evers Growth Zone 1
Alternative 1: R8A

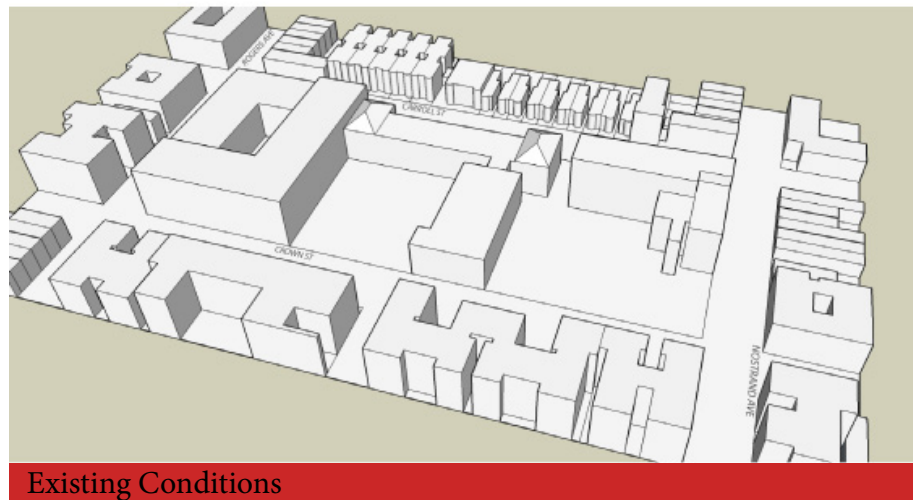


Medgar Evers Growth Zone 1
Alternative 2: R8X





Proposed Growth Areas



Existing Conditions

Medgar Evers Growth Zone II | Site 4

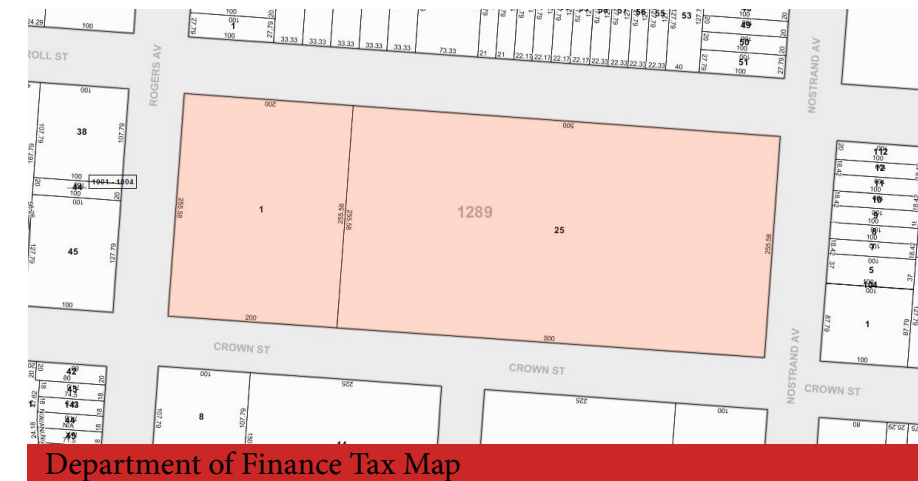
Similar to the previous district, we are also proposing a private-public partnership structure for the Medgar Evers District II. Again, by mixing residential and commercial uses with institutional uses and including a private developer in the planning process, Medgar Evers College will be better equipped to more effectively leverage their property assets.

The proposed district is bounded by Carroll Street, Nostrand Avenue, Crown Street, and Rogers Avenue, taking up the entire block (Block 1289), which only consists of two lots. Lot 25—the significantly larger of the two—is owned entirely by Medgar Evers and is located on the eastern portion of the block. The smaller block to the west is currently under development, and will soon be a 5-story residential building grossing approximately 131,000 square feet. The Medgar Evers site currently holds both a college and a preparatory school on the northern portion of the lot, leaving much of the southern portion undeveloped and open. It is on this southern portion that we are proposing a mixed-use building that would approximate 132,770 square feet; roughly 38,000 square feet would be devoted to institutional uses and the remaining 94,000 square feet would be devoted to a combination of residential and ground-floor retail, which satisfies the aforementioned 2:5 ratio.

R7A District

Based off surrounding building bulks and heights, an R7A district would be most appropriate for this site. Many of the surrounding buildings are between 60' and 80' tall, making the R7A district's 85' maximum building height suitable. With MIH, the floor area bonus would allow for a 4.6 FAR. Also, despite being in a Transit Zone, we would insist that this growth district retain the original parking requirement of 50% to accommodate the parking needs of Medgar Evers students and faculty.

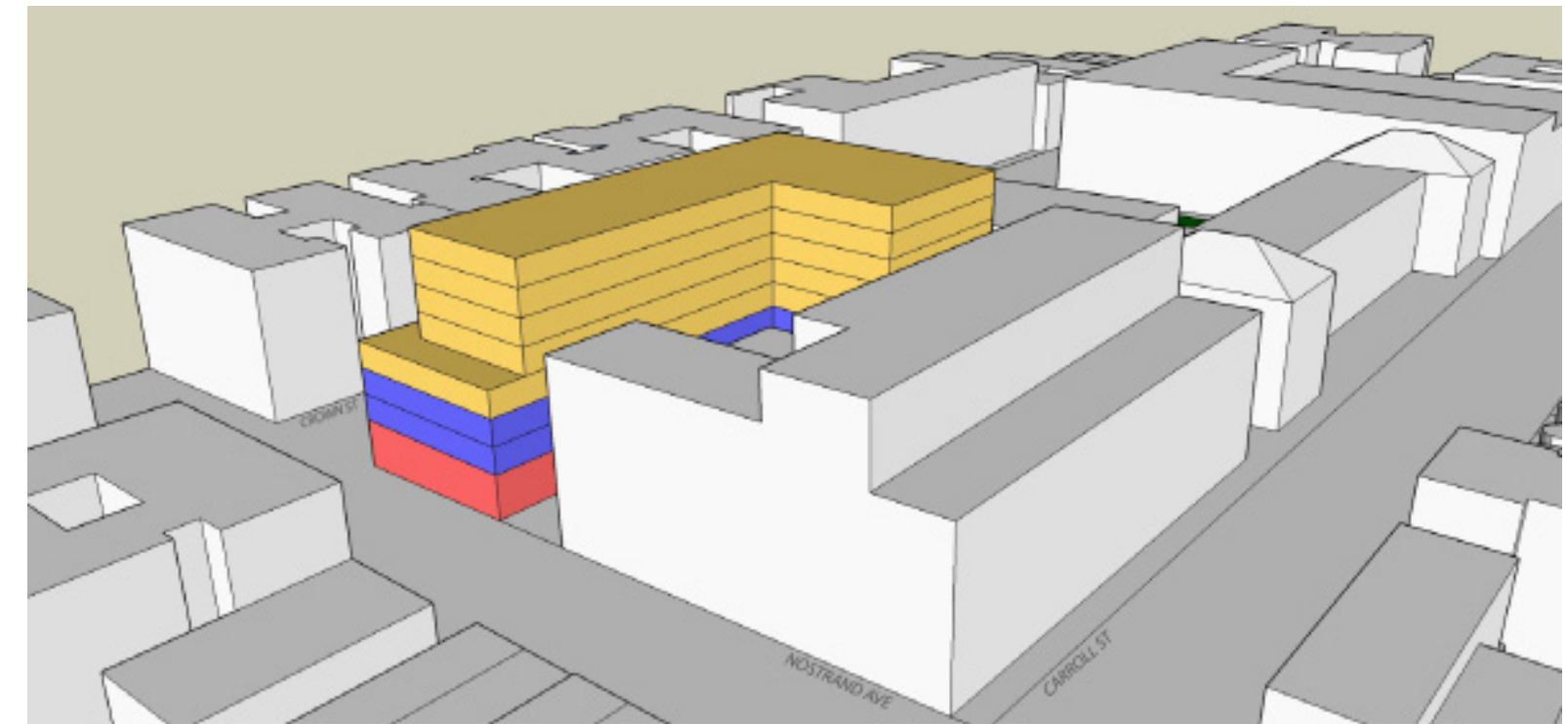
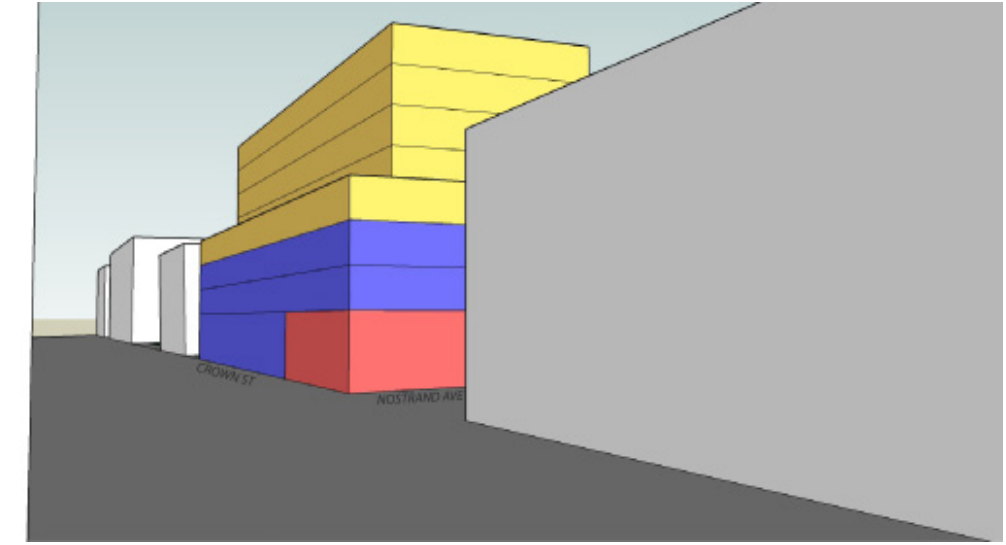
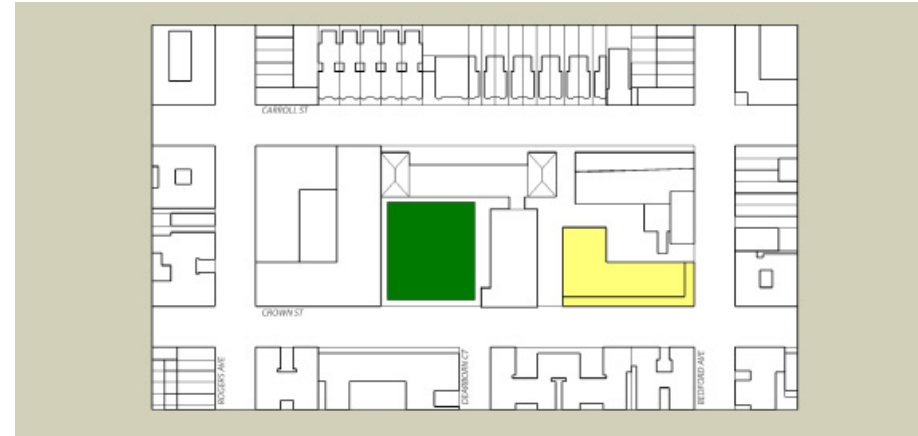
Lastly, we recommend the designation of commercial overlays along the western side of Nostrand Avenue between Carroll and Crown Streets. Providing a commercial overlay here would allow for new mixed-use developments on the Medgar Evers site to include ground-floor retail. This would connect the otherwise disconnected ground-floor retail along Nostrand Avenue, thus establishing an uninterrupted commercial corridor. Considering the adjacent commercial overlays districts found in the surrounding area, a C1-3 commercial overlay would be appropriate for the new commercial overlay.



Department of Finance Tax Map



Medgar Evers Growth Zone II
Alternative 1: R7A



**STREETSCAPE
RECOMMENDATIONS**

In addition to zoning recommendations, our team also devised interventions that relate to the streetscape conditions in our study area. The intention of the streetscape design is to eliminate the negative characteristics of existing streets—while enhancing the positive aspects—in an effort to make the streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists, emphasize and enhance Medgar Evers College’s presence, celebrate the area’s history, and create an overall positive user experience.

Locations of Streetscape Interventions

Within our study area, we chose to focus on five streets: Bedford Avenue, Franklin Avenue, and the portions of Eastern Parkway, Crown Street, and Montgomery Street that are between these two avenues. These areas were chosen as a way to create a loop of interventions that focus on Medgar Evers College and the paths that carry people to the college.

Intensity of Interventions

Within the adjacent map of interventions lies a hierarchy, in terms of intensity. Since Medgar Evers College owns the properties to the North and South of Crown Street between Franklin Avenue and Bedford Avenue, we feel there are opportunities for the college here; as such, Crown Street has the highest level of intervention. Since most people travel on Franklin Avenue and Bedford Avenue to reach Medgar Evers College, these streets have a medium level of intervention. Though there are some opportunities for intervention on Montgomery Street and Eastern Parkway, they are not as integral to the plan, and as such have the lowest levels of intervention.

METHODS FOR VISUAL COHESION

As mentioned earlier, the interventions on Bedford Avenue, Franklin Avenue, Eastern Parkway, and Crown Street create a loop of interventions. As such, the changes in the streetscape design use thematic similarity in urban design elements as a way to emphasize the existence of this loop and create a sense of visual cohesion within this loop. When implemented, the interventions should have a consistent color scheme (such as Medgar Evers College’s golden color scheme) and should use materials that have similar visual properties.

Walk of History

Another method for achieving visual cohesion is developing a “Walk of History”. This concept is heavily inspired by the sidewalk installations found throughout New York City, such as the Fashion Walk of Fame in Manhattan’s Garment District.

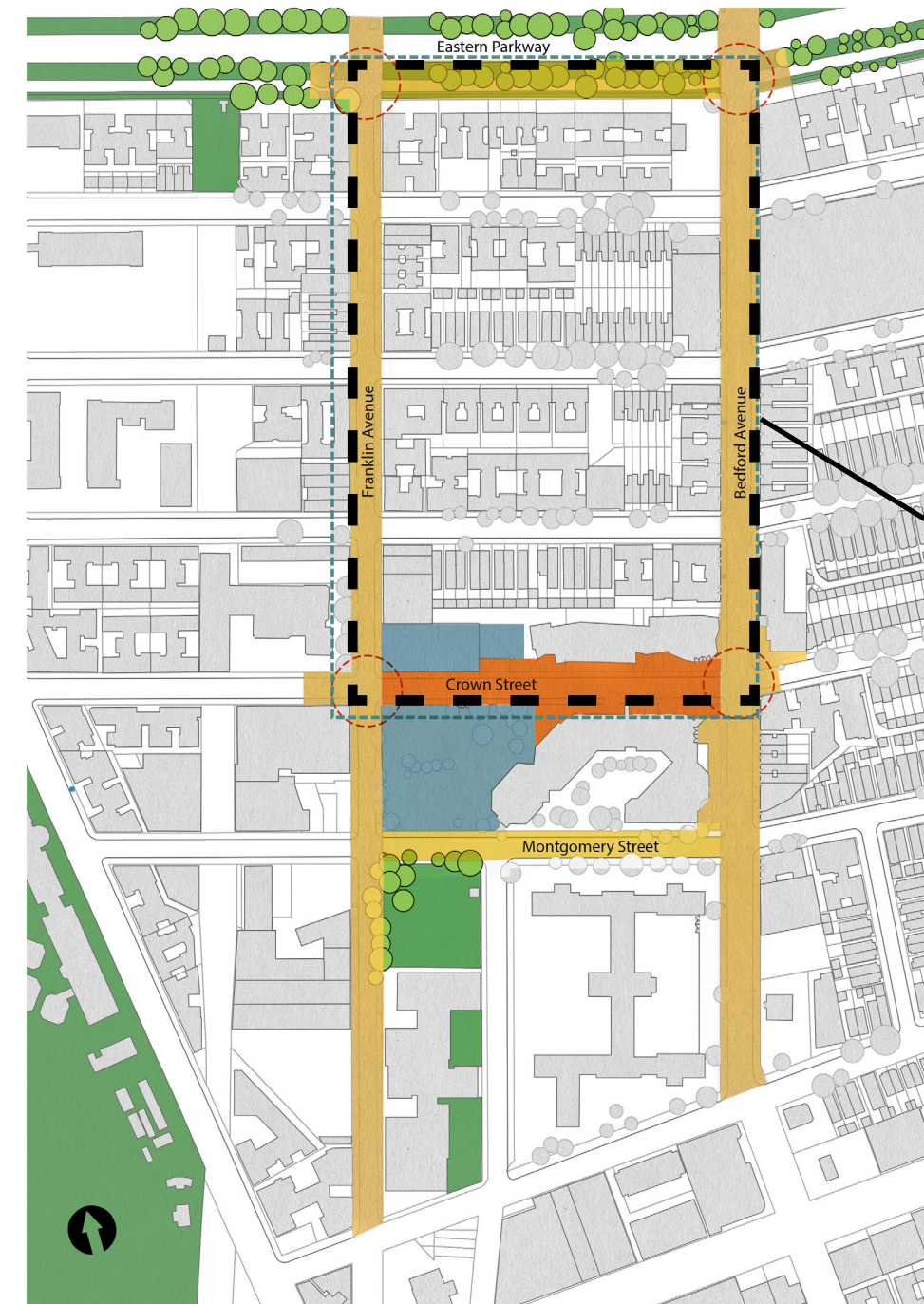
As previously discussed, Crown Heights has a rich history. Ebbets Field once stood in this study area; here, baseball Hall-of-Famer Jackie Robinson helped pave the way for Civil Rights activists for years to come. The historical significance of the armory and Medgar Evers—the influential political activist after which the college is named—is also notable and should be celebrated. Currently, such events and sources of pride are being lost in the pages of time. The “Historical Walk” aims to revisit these moments and bring them back to the forefront.

We propose to further articulate the existence of the loop by placing plaques on the sidewalks at consistent distances throughout the loop, similar to the pattern seen in the Garment district. The plaques would contain information on specific points or people in history that are related to Crown Heights or Civil Rights.

The material for the sidewalk plaques can be brass or any other material that is durable and has longevity. The intention is to unify the streets with a common thread and integrate it into the surrounding context, not only through a literal physical element but also through history.

Level of Intervention

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Potential Development Site



Example of street marker for Walk of History



INTERVENTIONS AT NODES

The land use and transit connections create major nodes at Bedford Avenue and Franklin Avenue at the points where they intersect with Eastern Parkway and Crown Street. Therefore, we focused on these nodes as locations for visually celebrating the identity of the area, through a combination of signage, sitting arrangements, and other urban elements.

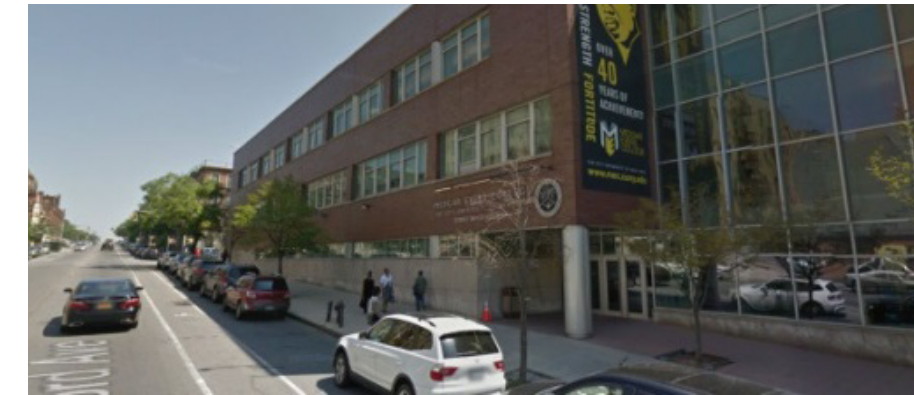
The proposed interventions attempt to integrate the Armory and MEC to the surrounding context through the use of urban elements so as to create a dialogue with built masses and streets. The interventions on portions of Bedford Avenue, Franklin Avenue, Crown Street, and Eastern Parkway allowed us to essentially create a pedestrian loop that is identified and highlighted by the similarity in color and the design aesthetic of the urban elements.

Signage

The intersection of Franklin Avenue and Eastern Parkway is an important node since it is the exit point for the 2, 3, 4, and 5 trains; when people arrive at the Franklin Avenue subway station, they are most likely not aware of all of the important buildings, institutes, and amenities this area has to offer. Near this station, there is Prospect Park, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Bedford-Union Armory, Medgar Evers College, and the site of the former Ebbets Field. The subway exit would thus be an ideal place for custom signs that directs visitors to their destinations while informing them of the area's focal points; they may have come to visit the Botanic Gardens, but we will inform them that the Bedford-Union Armory and Medgar Evers College are also in proximity. As such, we propose having improved signage that lists local destinations, gives orientation towards them, and states how far they are from the pedestrian's current location.

Murals

Both Franklin Avenue and Bedford Avenue intersect with Crown Street and these nodes were identified as potential gathering spots for students. Therefore, these are ideal places for sitting arrangements and natural shading from trees. In addition to signage in these areas, blank spaces or walls at these nodes should be converted to murals as a way of celebrating the cultural identity of the place. An example of an ideal place for this type of intervention is the facade of the 'School of Business and Student Services' building located on the Northeast corner of Bedford Avenue and Crown Street's intersection.



INTERVENTIONS ON EASTERN PARKWAY AND MONTGOMERY STREET

Compared to Bedford Avenue and Franklin Avenue, the level of intervention at Eastern Parkway and Montgomery Street is low; it mainly consists of improving the street condition where necessary and changing the texture of the pedestrian street so that there is a consistency in terms of aesthetics with the other streets.



INTERVENTIONS ON BEDFORD AVENUE AND FRANKLIN AVENUE

Bedford Avenue and Franklin Avenue have different characteristics in terms of land use on both sides of the streets. They also differ in terms of the physical width of the streets; Bedford Avenue is 80' wide with a priority on vehicular flow, while Franklin is 65' wide with an intimate neighborhood atmosphere. We kept these differences in mind when providing design solutions, while simultaneously maintaining a cohesive aesthetic expression.

Bedford Avenue

For Bedford Avenue, the main focus was to make the street more efficient and pedestrian friendly. Currently, Bedford Avenue has two-way driving lanes, two-way bike lanes and two-way car parking lanes. Additionally, Bedford Avenue has decent pedestrian sidewalks. Even with all these features, there is excess width that is not fully being utilized and, as such, there is room for improvement. For the driving lanes, the widths are greater than they need to be. For the bike lanes, the simple painted designation of the lane without the iconic DOT green-fill paint does a poor job of creating a safe environment for cyclists and drivers. Furthermore, the bike lane is wedged between on-street parking and oncoming traffic, with no designated buffer zones for safety; this layout increases the possibility of collision with fatal consequences. In terms of vegetation, many of Bedford Avenue's pedestrian sidewalks lack trees, thus limiting opportunities for shade. Lastly, bus stop locations on this street do not have proper sitting or waiting arrangements.

Our first response for improving these existing shortcomings was to suggest a safe distance between bike lanes and car lanes by switching the placement of the bicycle lanes with the current location of on-street parking spaces. These new bike lanes should have green-fill paint, thus making them more discernible for drivers and decreasing the risk of accidents.

To protect cyclists in this new street layout from accidents in-

volving swinging doors from parked cars, we suggest creating a buffering system of either a 3'-wide raised planting strip or a 9'-wide bus shelter with proper sitting arrangements. The inclusion of these buffers will make the car lanes tighter and more efficient. These changes intend to segregate pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular components as a way of improving the pedestrian experience and increasing bike safety.

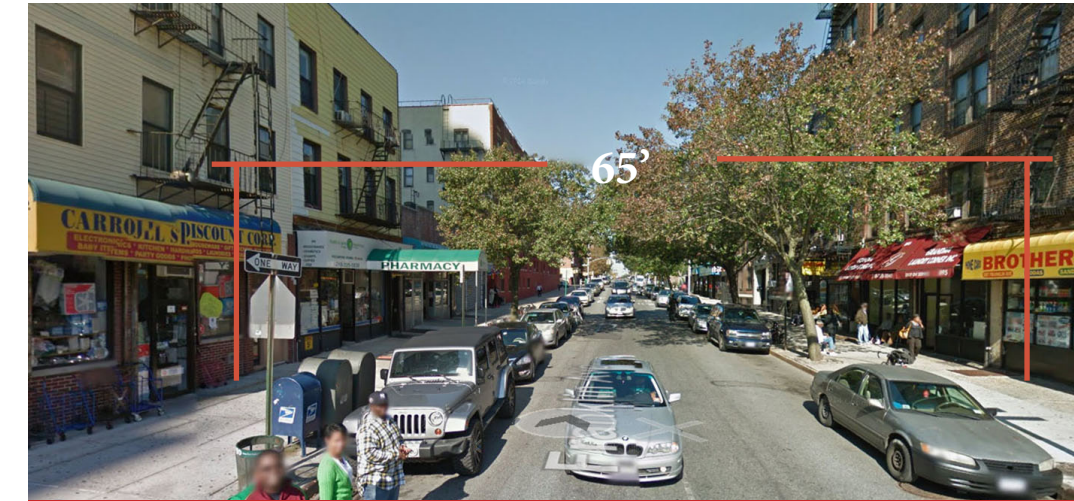
Franklin Avenue

Franklin Avenue is notable in that it has an intimate neighborhood character. Our intentions are thus to enhance that experience. We tried to achieve this by expanding the sidewalk while increasing vegetation and street plantings. The increased vegetation and sidewalk widths would help create a more pleasant and shaded walking experience.

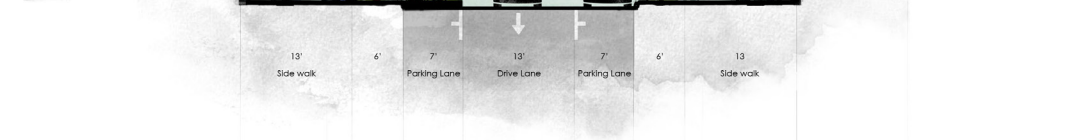
Additionally, the creation of Parklets would be an innovative method for improving the pedestrian experience. Parklets are sidewalk extensions that provide more space for pedestrians by creating small park-like spaces in existing parking spaces. They can be used for sitting arrangements, bicycle parking, landscaping, or a combination of these amenities. These are temporary elements; this makes them easy to install and later dismantle, which allows for a fluid, dynamic character in terms of use and shape.



Parklet



Existing Franklin Avenue Layout



Proposed Franklin Avenue Layout



Existing Bedford Avenue Layout



Proposed Bedford Avenue Layout

INTERVENTIONS ON CROWN STREET

Since Crown Street is sandwiched between Medgar Evers College-owned properties, the greatest level of intervention is proposed for this street. The location of the street in relation to the Medgar Evers College buildings creates an opportunity for this space to be more than just a street. We believe this street can be transformed into a public space that can serve as a space for recreation and interaction before, after, and in-between classes for Medgar Evers Students while also serving as an invaluable asset for the local community. If implemented, these interventions will drastically change the use, character, and overall environment of this street.

The existing width of Crown Street is 65'. Currently, this width is used for a one-way vehicular pathway with two rows of on-street parking. We propose removing the on-street parking spaces and retaining the driving lane at a reduced width of 10'^a. This creates space for expanding the sidewalks to 43' on the northern side of the street while maintaining a 12' pedestrian walkway on the southern side of the street. This substantial gain in pedestrian walkway width will effectively transform the space into a linear plaza. This plaza will create an active public space that connects to the proposed Quad that was briefly mentioned in the Zoning section of this plan. The Quad itself will be a central space for congregation as it will effectively act as the heart of the campus. It will be an open space surrounded by Medgar Evers College and proposed new development buildings. This Quad will include landscaping, shading, and urban furniture to encourage daily campus activity. These changes will transform Crown Street from an auto-oriented street into a crucial public space for Medgar Evers College students and residents of the surrounding community.

Footnote

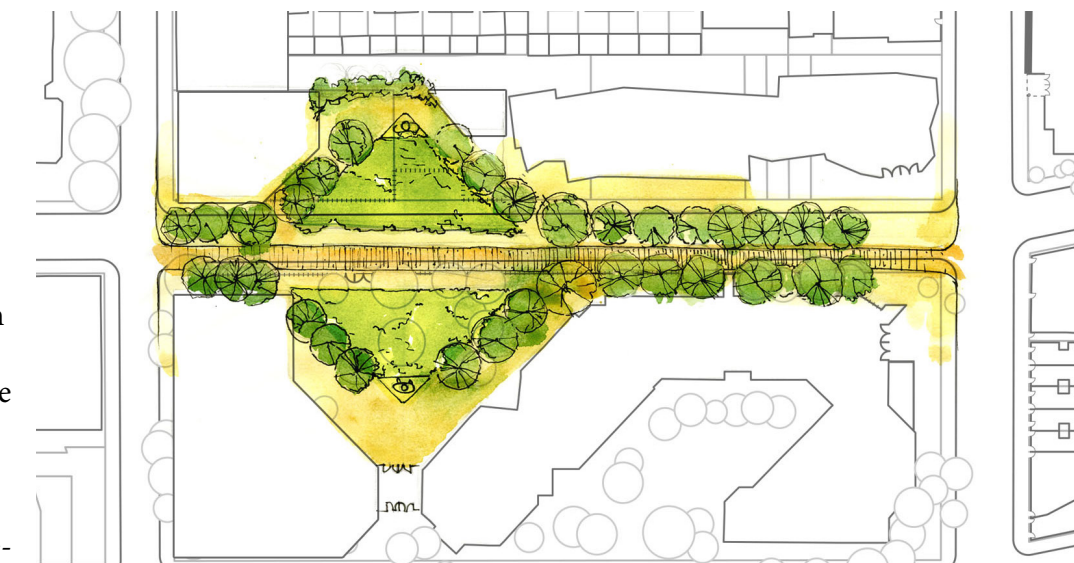
a. As mentioned in the zoning recommendations, we suggest that any lost on-street parking spaces be replaced by off-street parking spaces in the proposed new buildings in the 'Medgar Evers District I'

Crown Street Design Alternatives

There are two design options for Crown Street: geometric (Option One) or organic (Option Two). Option One is a literal translation and a physical manifestation of the ideas expressed above. It is simple and practical, making this the more feasible option in terms of design execution. This option reflects our intention to convert Crown Street into a vibrant breathing space, full of activity and local pride.

Option Two executes the same ideas; however the physical expression of the design is much more fluid, organic, and natural. The idea for Option Two is to create a relaxing, informal oasis for this much needed campus environment. At their leisure, students or local residents can come here to simply lie down amidst the lush green landscape and partake in social interactions.

No matter which option is chosen, we believe that this new space will have a positive impact on students and local residents. Both options intend to provide a vital space for social interaction and congregation; the difference lies in construction cost, execution, and aesthetic expression. Option One is more feasible in terms of cost and construction logistics. This option may be preferred if expenses are the deciding factor. However, both the aesthetics and ambience of Option Two have an intrinsic value that is not captured in a financial cost-benefit calculation. Therefore, we recommend pursuing Option Two despite potential additional costs and implementation time.



Option One



Option Two

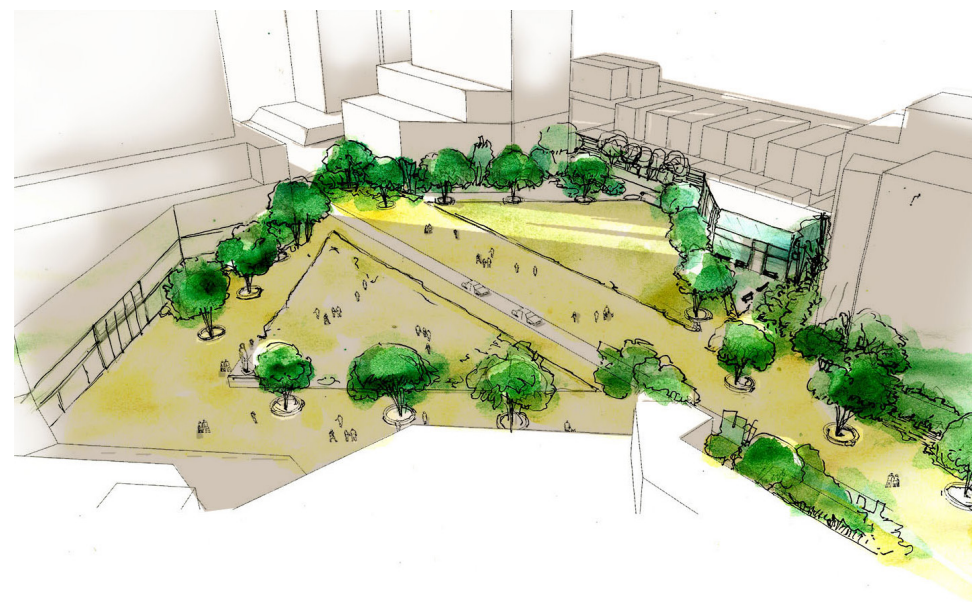
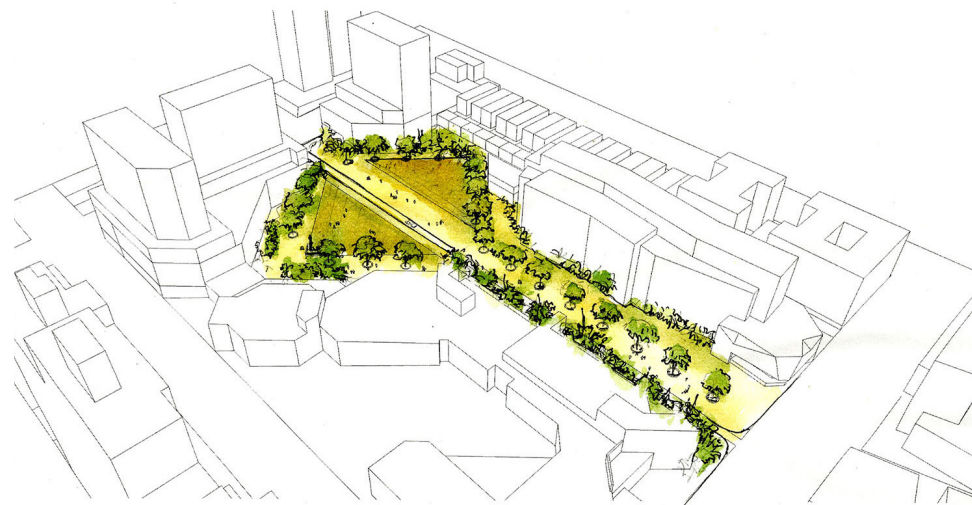


Existing Crown Street Layout

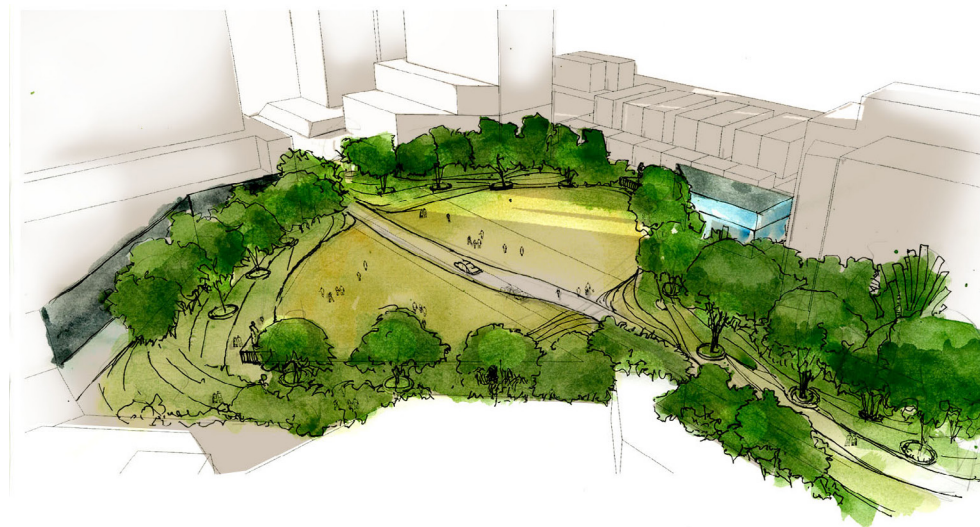
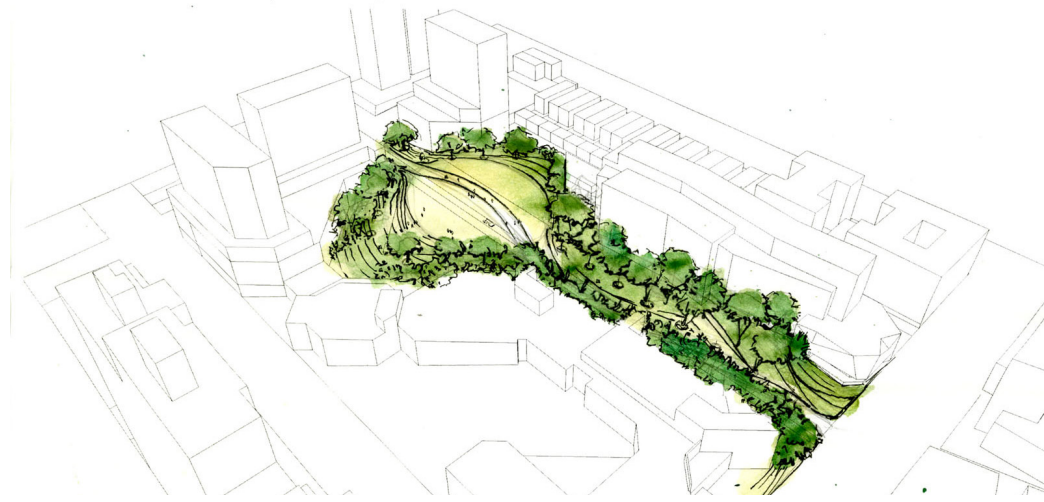


Proposed Crown Street Layout

Option One



Option Two



HISTORY

- 1 New York State. *Counties: The counties of New York State*. Retrieved from <http://www.ny.gov/counties>.
 - 2 Spellen, S. (June 2011). Past and present: Ebbets Field. *Brownstoner*. Retrieved from <http://www.brownstoner.com/history/past-and-present-ebbets-field/>.
 - 3 Ibid.
 - 4 Ibid.
 - 5 Ibid.
 - 6 Ibid.
 - 7 Ibid.
 - 8 Ibid.
 - 9 Spellen, Suzanne. (September 2011). Building of the Day: 1579 Bedford Avenue. *Brownstoner*. Retrieved from <http://www.brownstoner.com/architecture/building-of-the-day-1579-bedford-avenue/>.
 - 10 Medgar Evers College. *History*. Retrieved from <http://www.mec.cuny.edu/AboutMEC/History.aspx>
 - 11 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (2009). *Medgar Evers*. Retrieved from <http://www.naacp.org/pages/naacp-history-medgar-evers>
- Image New York City in 60 Seconds. (May 2011). *Ebbets Field*. Retrieved from <https://nycin60.wordpress.com/2011/05/30/ebbets-field/>.
- Image The Q at Parkside. (January 2012). *This could be huge: open house monday*. Retrieved from http://theqatparkside.blogspot.com/2012_01_01_archive.html

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 1 NYC Census Factfinder. *Demographic and housing: 2010-2014 5-year estimates*. Retrieved from <http://maps.nyc.gov/census/>.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.

ZONING OVERVIEW

- 1 NYC Department of City Planning. *Commercial districts: C1 & C2 overlays*. Retrieved from <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/districts-tools/c1-c2-overlays.page>.
- 2 NYC Department of City Planning. *Commercial districts: C8*. Retrieved from <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/districts-tools/c8.page>.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSIT ANALYSIS

- 1 NYC Census Factfinder. *Demographic and housing: 2010-2014 5-year estimates*. Retrieved from <http://maps.nyc.gov/census/>.

- 2 American Community Survey. *Community facts: 2010-2014 5-year estimates*. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.
- 3 Ibid.

MEDGAR EVERS PIPELINE PROGRAM

- 1 Christina Chow, e-mail message to Armando Varela, May 26, 2016.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.

ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Movement to Protect the People. (2014). Movement to Protect the People v. Pearl R.Miles, District Manager of Brooklyn's Community Board 9 and Brooklyn Community Board 9. *Civil petition*. Retrieved from <http://www.mtopp.org/ed%20petition.html>
- 2 Taub, M. (2014). Study to rezone Empire Boulevard rescinded, group claims. *Brooklyn Brief*. Retrieved from <http://brooklynbrief.com/study-rezone-empire-boulevard-rescinded-group-claims/>

While finishing our plan, we discovered that there were previous failed attempts at converting Crown Street into a public gathering space. Since the previously proposed streetscape interventions are very similar to our proposed plans, we would like to acknowledge these previous interventions and note that these plans did not in any way influence our ideas for improving Crown Street.

While the previous designs are similar to what we are proposing, we believe that the environment created by our design—specifically Option Two—would be more appealing to the students of Medgar Evers College. This design would create an informal and relaxed environment outside the classroom. We also feel that a public-private partnership on the proposed development sites would improve the likelihood that this quad would be implemented.

Further, we presume that the previous attempts failed because they eliminated on-street parking. While our plan removes on-street parking as well, we have recommended that additional parking be incorporated in the proposed new developments on the Medgar Evers College properties. This is a way to maintain the same number of parking spaces in the area and thus alleviate the controversy surrounding this matter.

If this design still encounters resistance, two moving lanes can be maintained as a way of decreasing potential traffic impacts. What is important is that Crown Street be redesigned as a destination center that slows traffic, encourages pedestrian activity, and acts as the organizing spine of the Medgar Evers College campus.

Blau, R. (July 2014). Medgar Evers College finally moves forward with \$15M plan to transform Crown Heights St. into green campus. *Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/medgar-evers-college-finally-moves-15m-plan-transform-crown-heights-st-green-campus-article-1.1863723>.