



Queens Civic Congress

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2005

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QUEENS CIVICS SUPPORT BAYSIDE REZONING

Prepared and Presented

By

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to

Queens Borough President's Hearing

The Queens Civic Congress is pleased to support this proposal to appropriately preserve the low-density fabric of Bayside's currently R-2 zoned blocks. The new R-2A will save Bayside residents from encroachments that attack the very character of their neighborhoods.

Existing R-2 land use regulations do not sufficiently protect many low-density neighborhoods. Loopholes not envisioned in 1961 encourage real estate speculators and developers to promote the almost universally loathed and ridiculed "McMansion." These behemoths, on relatively small lots, hulk over their neighbors, block sun and light and rob their neighbors of their privacy.

Less than ten months ago, hundreds of Queens residents demonstrated on the steps of Borough Hall. They expressed their anger at overdevelopment in their low-density neighborhoods. Supported by many Queens residents and their elected officials, they were and remain deeply troubled at the loss of the physical character and fabric that make Queens communities great places to live and raise families. The Queens Civic Congress looks at the R-2A text change and the related mapping actions as the first of a series of rezonings to correct a great wrong against too many of our Queens communities. The Congress stood with these communities last year and continues to stand with them today.

The R-2A text recognizes the problem caused by the loopholes in the Zoning Resolution that allow basement/first floors to go uncounted and attic space undercounted. Most neighborhoods currently zoned R-2 could benefit from this protection as well.

We urge the Borough President to use her good offices to implement zoning changes that will eliminate "exempt" space in R1 and all R-3 districts as well as R4A, R-4B and R-4-1 low density contextual districts. Communities that wish to benefit from the same protections being

provided to Bayside by the R-2A designation should be given the same protections in a timely fashion.

The Borough President knows logjams in rezoning applications occur at the beginning of the process with the Department of City Planning. We urge the Borough President to call on the Mayor to direct the Department to expedite certification of zoning applications from low-density districts seeking the new R-2A designation, especially those from neighborhoods that recently completed the rezoning process. Closing the same loopholes in the R-1 and R-3 zones as well as in the R-4 contextual zones will equally protect these neighborhoods from the abuses that afflict neighborhoods across the borough and city.

We look forward to these needed new zoning text amendments that will close the remaining loopholes that imperil the work of the Borough President's Zoning Task Force, whose work has been critical to preserving Queens neighborhoods. The Queens Civic Congress looks forward to supporting these amendments in the near future.

The Queens Civic Congress thanks the Bayside community leadership and the public officials who worked long and hard for their neighbors, the members of Community Board 11, Community Board 11 Chairman Jerry Iannece, Senator Frank Padavan; Council Member Tony Avella; City Planning Department Queens director John Young; Brixton Doyle and Queens Civic Congress zoning chairperson Paul Graziano for their vision, commitment and dedication to the best of Queens.

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The entire Queens Civic Congress Platform may be viewed on the internet at:
<http://www.queensciviccongress.org/Platform/final2004Platform-forvote.pdf>

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