

IN THE REZONE

# Drumbeat to Downzone Bushwick Continues, Despite Skepticism on Affordable Housing

By Stephen Jacob Smith 3/29 3:24pm

Twitter6Facebook1RedditEmailPrint



Bushwick’s urban fabric hasn’t changed much since the early 20th century, and Community Board 4 would like to keep it that way. (Photo courtesy Holly Dutton, Real Estate Weekly.)

The Williamsburg and Greenpoint rezonings in the 2000s allowed for tens of millions of square feet of new residential development—between 30 million and 32 million square feet, Vicki Been at NYU’s Furman Center told *The Observer*—but for developers looking to meet the torrent of demand flooding into northern Brooklyn, it hasn’t been anywhere near enough. Builders have been pushing into Bushwick for years—the last market cycle saw new development as far down the L train as the Halsey stop. Now, builders are starting to return to the frontier and the neighborhood, it seems, is ready to push

back.

Councilwoman Diana Reyna [said in October](#) that she was ready to see the neighborhood rezoned to prevent the sort of luxury development that has washed up on the shores of Williamsburg, and now Brooklyn Community Board 4, representing Bushwick, has weighed in in favor of a rezoning as well.

“To help manage the growth and rebirth of the neighborhood,” the members of CB4 wrote to Councilwoman Reyna, “we feel the time is right to begin rezoning,” as reported by [DNAinfo](#). The specifics of what they are asking for are unclear, though they did mention “down-zoning” and referenced the recent Bed-Stuy rezonings, which have for the most part restricted development in the neighborhood. Community Board 4 did not respond to *The Observer’s* request for comment.

If the downzoning happens, it would continue the Bloomberg administration’s strategy of focusing northern Brooklyn’s growth on the waterfront, while limiting development in the built-up neighborhoods farther inland, leaving these vast tracts of land more or less as they were a century ago.

While anti-growth sentiment is strong in northern Brooklyn, those in the real estate industry remain skeptical that restricting growth would keep rents from rising or produce more affordable housing—the goal of Bushwick resident Rolando Guzman of Greenpoint- and Williamsburg-centric St. Nick’s Alliance, who told [DNAinfo](#), “The last thing Bushwick needs is high-rises. It needs affordable housing.”

“I’m a big proponent of affordable housing,” David Behin of MNS brokerage told *The Observer*. “But there’s already a mechanism for affordable housing to come into the

CELEBRITY HEALTH ISSUES

## Lil Wayne Is Epileptic, Almost Died From *Not* Drugs [Video]

Location:

Enter a neighborhood or street

Price Range

to

Type

Bed (#)

Bath (#)

SEARCH LISTINGS

Enter your email for updates

Send an anonymous tip

Five Essay Prompts for Game of Thrones 3×1: ‘Valar Dohaeris’

No Longer Gone: After 20 years, Renata Adler Is Back In Print

Could There Be Hope For the Bank-Gluttled UWS?

A.J. Daulerio Is Leaving Gawker for ‘Who the F#@K Knows’


neighborhood.” Mr. Behin, who runs MNS’s investment sales and advisory division, was referring to the city’s 80/20 program, which gives developers tax advantages and density bonuses in exchange for renting 20 percent of a building’s units at below-market rates.

“Almost every developer I speak to, whether it’s 10 to 15 units up to 500 units,” said Mr. Behin, “they are all strongly considering doing 80/20s, and many, if not most, are “going forward with the program.”

Matthew Cosentino, who works in investment sales at TerraCRG, was not ready to take a position on whether the neighborhood should be rezoned, but he was skeptical that clamping down on development would stop the upward march of prices. A rezoning, he said, “would affect how the area develops, but not what’s happening in terms of the gentrification.”

“We’re kind of at a nice point right now where although prices have gone up,” Mr. Cosentino continued, “it’s still working okay for a large group [of longtime residents]. But I don’t think it’ll last forever, and I don’t think the downzoning will change that.”

Follow Stephen Jacob Smith [on Twitter](#) or [via RSS](#). [ssmith@observer.com](mailto:ssmith@observer.com)



Add a comment...

Comment

Facebook social plugin

Twitter 6

Facebook 1

Reddit

Email

Print

- See also
- Megaproject Developers Promise To Get Around To Affordable Housing Someday

Who Wants to Turn This Old Architecture Graveyard in Williamsburg into Affordable Housing?

Rents Are Rising, But At Least Bed-Stuy Has a New Affordable Housing Development

Top Officials Leave City Housing Agency

Developers Pare Housing Plan for Albee Square

topics: [David Behin](#), [Diana Reyna](#), [Downzonings](#), [Furman Center for Real Estate & Urban Policy](#), [In the Rezone](#), [MNS](#), [Matthew Cosentino](#), [TerraCRG](#), [Vicki Been](#), [bushwick](#)

Drumbeat to Downzone Bushwick Continues, Despite Skepticism on Affordable Housing

- Today’s Tweens Demand Double Beds So They Can Snuggle With Their Laptops
- Best Tech Events This Week (FinTech Hackathon, Newark Tech Week, Kaplan EdTech Accelerator, Blueprint Demo Day, NYU Stern Summit, FinTech Meetup)
- In Soviet Russia, Internet Blocks You (Sort of)

- Morning Read: ‘Blah Blah Blah’
- Governor’s Office Rumored to Be Negotiating Sale of Marcy Armory to Satmar Factions
- Mayor Bloomberg Vows to Veto Paid Sick Day Compromise

- Morning Links: Baby Shower Edition
- Judge Dismisses Collector’s Lawsuit Against William Eggleston
- Jean-François Prat Prize to Matt Saunders

- Once Johnny Carson's Punchline, Seventh Floor 30 Rock Commissary To Be Home For Jimmy Fallon's "Tonight Show"
- Once Johnny Carson's Punchline, Seventh Floor 30 Rock Commissary To Be Home For Jimmy Fallon's "Tonight Show"

Michael Malice Will Write an Autobiography of Kim Jong-il

Could There Be Hope For the Bank-Gluttled UWS?

On the Market: Bloomberg Is Bananas For Historic Districts; Rich People Demand Ridiculous Concierge Services; Is It Better to Have a Park or a Parking Spot?

Once Johnny Carson's Punchline, Seventh Floor 30 Rock Commissary To Be Home For Jimmy Fallon's "Tonight Show"

Once Johnny Carson's Punchline, Seventh Floor 30 Rock Commissary To Be Home For Jimmy Fallon's "Tonight Show"

Once Johnny Carson's Punchline, Seventh Floor 30 Rock Commissary To Be Home For Jimmy Fallon's "Tonight Show"

To Do Saturday: Strut Their Stuff

Stopping the Next Steubenville

Obama in Israel

Anti-Cop Pandering

TOWN Renews at 110 Fifth Avenue, H&M Could Follow

Once Johnny Carson's Punchline, Seventh Floor 30 Rock Commissary To Be Home For Jimmy Fallon's "Tonight Show"

660 Madison Avenue Welcomes Trevi Health Capital



SUBSCRIBE NOW

Find us on Facebook



The New York Observer

Like


17,174 people like The New York Observer.



Facebook social plugin

Once Johnny Carson's Punchline, Seventh Floor 30 Rock Commissary To Be Home For Jimmy Fallon's "Tonight Show"

THE HIGH COST OF BANKING



Could There Be Hope For the Bank-Gluttled UWS?

UP & DOWN THE STREET



The *New York Times* Ought to Stop Its Wild Bank Chase

Once Johnny Carson's Punchline, Seventh Floor 30 Rock Commissary To Be Home For Jimmy Fallon's "Tonight Show"

MOVIES



Jim McGreevey's Second Act

Classifieds

Legal Advertising

Subscriptions

About Us

Advertising

Privacy Policy

Terms of Service

 Powered by [WordPress.com](#) VIP