

Rezoning the South Village's R7-2 Zone

The South Village's R7-2 zoning dates to 1961, a much different time; it reflects some pretty outdated notions about good planning and good development.

R7-2 zoning encourages tall towers, and allows the construction of bigger buildings if a “community facility” use is included, such as dormitories or other university-related facilities.

For example, NYU's Law School and 159 Bleecker Street were built using the “community facility bonus;” this makes these buildings out-of-scale, and in the case of 159 Bleecker Street, encourages questionable attempts to claim the inclusion of “community facilities” that never materialize. Right now, a 300 ft. tall tower could be built on the site of NYU's Vanderbilt Hall.

Many R7-2 and other similar zoning districts in the Village and East Village have recently been rezoned to more recent “contextual zoning” instead. Contextual zoning prohibits tall towers and instead encourages new development to match the scale of the existing neighborhood with specific height limits and streetwall requirements. It also eliminates the “community facility” zoning bonus.

Contextual zoning would NOT require any changes to the rules governing commercial uses on the lower floors (the “commercial overlay”), and we are not proposing any.



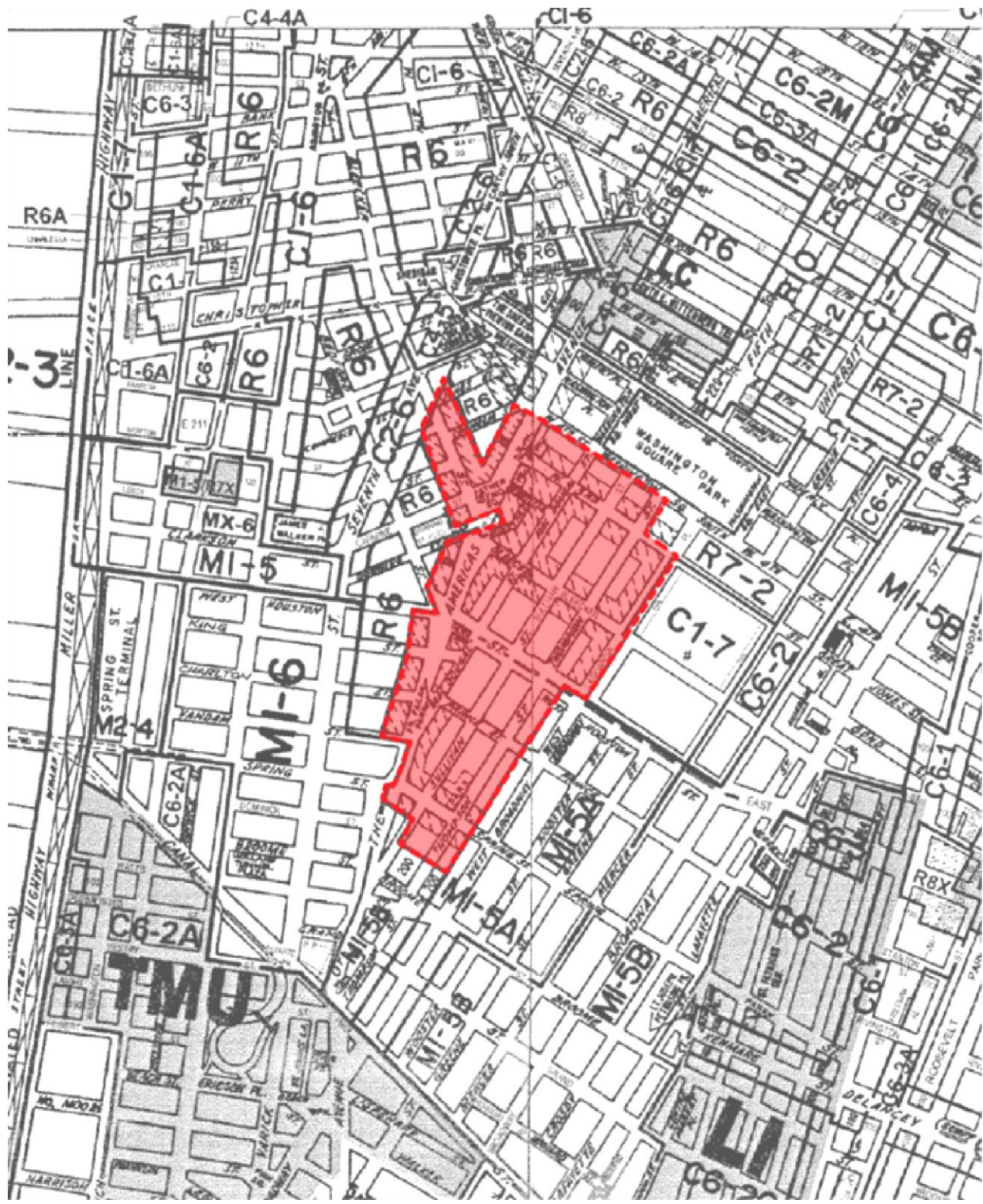
An example of the type and form of development which the R7-2 zoning encourages

Using the model of other successful nearby rezonings, we are considering proposing two contextual zoning districts to replace the existing R7-2 district: R7-A for “wide” streets (as defined by NYC zoning), and R7-B for narrow streets.

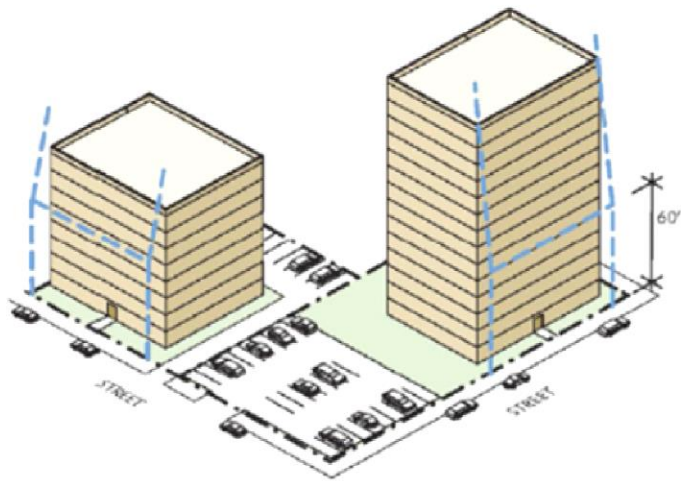
This chart explains the differences between the existing and potentially proposed zoning districts:

Zoning District	Residential FAR*	Community Facility FAR*	Commercial FAR*	Height limit
R7-2 (current)	3.44	6.5	Up to 2 where commercial overlay exists, none except where grandfathered otherwise	None
R7-A (draft proposal – for wide streets)	4	4	Same	40-65 ft base ht (min/max) 80 ft max (after setback)
R7-B (draft proposal – for narrow streets)	3	3	same	40-60 ft base ht (min/max) 75 ft max (after setback)

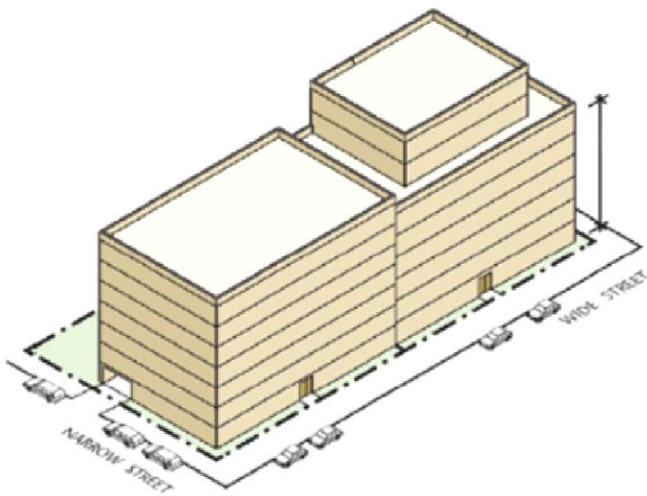
FAR = Floor Area Ratio, a basic component of NYC zoning. That is the ratio of how many square feet you are can build as compared to the number of square feet on the lot. For example, if you are allowed 4 FAR for a 10,000 sq ft lot, you can build a 40,000 sq ft building. If you built straight up on the entire lot (which almost never happens), that would be a 4-story building. If you built straight up on half the lot, that would be an 8-story building. And so on.



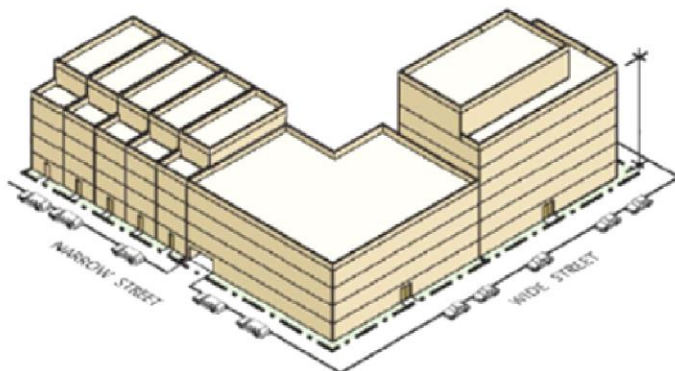




R7-2
Existing Zoning



R7A
Proposed Zoning for Wide Streets



R7B
Proposed Zoning for Narrow Streets

