

Rezoning seeks limit on dividing properties

By Evan Weinberger

Now that the most urgent parts of Community Board 8's plan to rezone the Riverdale-Kingsbridge area have been implemented, the Department of City Planning is moving ahead on the rest of the board's agenda.

Next up on City Planning's docket is the so-called estate area west of the Henry Hudson Parkway. Already restricted to single-family homes, the new zoning would govern the size of building lots.

Most homes in the area are on 10,000-square-foot lots, according to Board 8 chairman Tony Cassino. The rezoning would not permit homes to be built on any lot smaller than that, preventing developers from dividing existing lots and building two homes where there is now one.

The Department of City Planning has not yet drawn the boundaries of the area that would be governed by the new regulations, but it would extend roughly from west of the Henry Hudson Parkway to the Hudson River and from just south of West 230th Street to the city line, and could include several large institutions, including Riverdale Country School's river campus, the Hebrew Home for the Aged and the College of Mount Saint Vincent, although it is unclear what affect the rezoning would have on them, Mr. Cassino said.

The board chairman said there has been no opposition to rezoning the area. "Because it has a high compliance rate, I would imagine that a lot of the people who live there want to hold onto that character, which is why we may not have heard a lot of resistance to it," he said.

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Both he and Charles Moerdler, the chairman of the board's land use committee, expect the planning department to complete its work on the estate area in June. The board would then review it in the course of the summer.

Rachaele Raynoff, a spokeswoman for the City Planning Department, said that the department was continuing its work on the 13 rezoning pro-

posals Board 8 submitted five years ago. In an e-mail she said the department "has already completed seven and we are hoping to certify the so-called Riverdale Estate area proposal possibly as early as June, with more to follow later in the year."

What comes next are extensions of the Special Natural Area District to include the Vinmont area, between West 253rd Street and 255th streets and Riverdale Avenue and Fieldston

Road, and the Tibbett Avenue area, including parts of the Manhattan College campus where it borders Fieldston, according to the board's plan.

There are still more rezonings of residential and commercial areas to come. Mr. Moerdler has asked the planning department to work on Kingsbridge from Gaelic Park at West 240th Street, west of Broadway, to the U-Haul

depot at West 230th Street and Tibbett Avenue.

Also on the radar, Mr. Moerdler said, are the areas along Broadway overlooking Van Cortlandt Park and farther south. The challenge, he said, is to maintain the mix of housing that currently exists.

Right now, those areas include housing that new immigrants can afford and that beckons Dominicans and Albanians in particular, he said.

Further up the economic ladder is the middle class housing in parts of Kingsbridge and Van Cortlandt Village. Up the hill and toward the river, housing prices climb. The mix is what makes the city and the neighborhood vibrant, Mr. Moerdler said.

"You have to do all the things you can to preserve that kind of housing," he added. "The city and the community desperately need the mix."