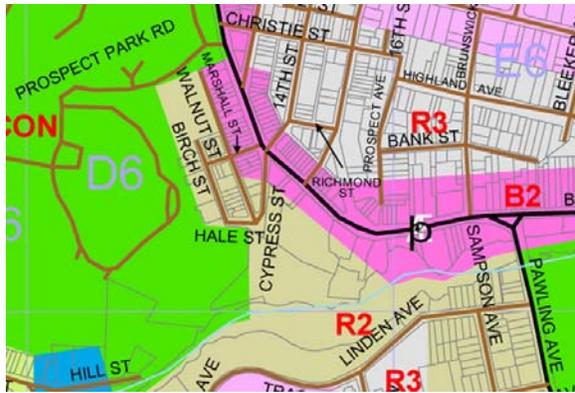


Land Use and Zoning



The Mount Ida neighborhood is divided into three zoning districts, B-2 Community Commercial, R-2 ____, and the Conservation area that makes up Prospect Park. The lots adjacent to Congress Street is zoned B-2 and is surrounded by areas which are zoned residential. The residential part of this neighborhood goes from Prospect Park on the west, Pawling Avenue to the east, the Poesten Kill Gorge to the south and Congress Street to

the north. The philosophy of the B-2 district is that it is designed to accommodate commercial users that serve a more that the immediate neighborhood and must be primarily accessed by automobile. It also states that the intensity and nature of these uses make it an inappropriate residential district. This appears to be a suburban code, similar to a code that would be used where there is a strip mall, and it is not conducive to maintaining the character of this area. The land use in this area appears to be primarily residential; approximately 65% of the land use in the total project area (yellow properties next page). Commercial uses (red properties below) account for approximately 29% of the land use and community services (teal) and public services (blue) account for the last 4% and 1% respectively.

The uses that are allowed in this area are primarily small service type businesses and restaurants with residences above the first floor, non-intensive health related facilities, and small business offices. The lots can be no bigger than 20,000 square feet with minimum front setback of 10' and minimum rear setback of 40'. The maximum lot coverage is 60% and the maximum building height is 40'. There are uses that are allowed in this area only by special permit, for example funeral parlors, membership clubs, bed-and-breakfasts, and gasoline filling stations. Business signs in the B-2 district may not exceed 100 square feet in area and 50 square feet for each business, home occupation, or office unit on the property and only one sign may protrude more than 9" from the building. The letters should be 9" high. There are design guidelines for signs to encourage appropriate and "compatible" graphic design, colors, etc. the Commission has the final say on signage.



Parking regulations in respect to zoning may be an issue in this area as well. Parking for residential rehabilitation requires 1 space per existing unit and for general merchandise stores 1.5 spaces are required for every 300 sq. ft. of floor area. There are

other parking requirements that may apply in this area which can be found in Section 6.500 of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Troy.

There are areas of the project area that are zoned R-2 (see map above) where the philosophy is "... to maintain the integrity of existing traditional two family unit residential neighborhoods and to encourage the construction of duplex units either as infill housing or on a larger scale at a low to medium density." The minimum lot area for a single family detached is 5800 sq. ft. and a two-family property is 3500 sq. ft. per unit. The maximum lot coverage is 50% and the setbacks are 50' in the front, 30' in the rear, and 5' on either side or 10' on one side if there is a zero lot line designation. The maximum building height is 35'.

It appears that if this area is to retain its character, the zoning in these areas should be changed. Zoning B-4, central commercial and R-4 urban neighborhood residential seem to be a better fit of this neighborhood. The B-4 zoning has no setback requirement and allows for more commercial uses on the first floor. The R-4 philosophy in part states that it is "...designed to continue the stabilization and upgrading of the City's oldest and most well established neighborhoods. " The only issue with the R-4 may be that it does not allow for single family detached houses.

DOT Plans for Congress St. (Route 2) Improvements

The NYS Department of Transportation plan drawings were created by the Laberge Group. The prints are dated 9/10/2004. The proposed work will begin slightly west of 11th Street to slightly east of the Stuarts Shop at Pawling Avenue. The plans contain a large amount of information as to who owns (or owned in 2004) the buildings and land along Congress Street.

- The entire area is getting new sidewalks except where the bluestone sidewalks are being repaired.
- In all areas the plan includes drop curbs at pedestrian crosswalks and brick laid in a herringbone pattern outside the "walking area" of the sidewalks.
- It also features on street and off street parking. From 11th Street to 14th Street the road is divided into two equal lanes with parking lanes along most of both sides of the street. The parking is delineated by the shape of the curbs.
- In many areas the sidewalk is widened.
- At Christie Street a parking lot is shown and this street is closed to through traffic between 13th Street and Congress Street.
- It also shows 13th Street being one way with slanted parking spots along the street. This also adds a large amount of sidewalk at the corner of 13th Street.
- The intersection of Marshall Street, Cypress Street and 14th Street is made narrower and becomes a one way headed NE.
- There is a large amount of sidewalk added between Cypress and Marshall streets.
- On the east side of the street between 14th and 15th the drawing states that, "Repair bluestone sidewalk using acceptable materials from within the project limits." There is some infill with herringbone patterned brick.

- The stairs leading up the hill to the houses west of Brunswick Avenue are being replaced.
- There is a new retaining wall shown where the bank has fallen away.
- The iron fence at the cliff area is called out to be repaired and a guiderail added.
- A new curb cut is shown for “Jerry Hart Auto Service”.
- Congress Street continues to be one lane until very close to Brunswick Ave. where a turn lane has been added. The apartments at #550-554 where tenants are currently parking up on the sidewalk have had parking added in front of them.
- At the intersection of Congress St., Pawling Ave., and Brunswick Ave. a traffic circle has been added.
 - The billboard currently in this area will be removed and replaced with a retaining wall.
- The road improvements continue up Brunswick Rd. slightly past Norell Health Care.
- The road improvements continue up Pawling Ave. slightly past Linden Ave.
- No trees are shown on these early schematic plans but this is likely to change with the final drawings.

These plans show positive changes for the character of the neighborhood. This work will cause a period of upheaval along the street but in the end the changes should be positive and may help to draw new businesses and new people to the area.

State/National Register Listed Buildings/Areas

The Poesten Kill Gorge Conservation Area appears to be the only National Register Listed Area within the project boundaries. There are portions of the conservation area that overlap our project area. These are the area behind the Polytech Apartments and the Hudson Valley Travel Agency up to the Cookie Factory and the Upper Mill Dam that is just below the bridge across the gorge a Pawling Ave.

The dam was constructed in 1919 to replace the earlier one built about 1850. It was used to control the flow of water to the downstream industries. The survey of this area was performed in 1977 and some of the structures that were extant at that time are no longer extant. A portion of the Kellogg Machine Wire Mill still stands and the Troy File works is now the Cookie Factory and is in use as a bakery. This appears to be the only extant building which is still in good shape.

Although this is the only listed area, there is National Register Eligibility (NRE) recommendation data in the Hartgen Report. The report states that 381 Congress, the Free Church of Ascension at 548 Congress and 550-554 Congress Street were all previously evaluated and suggested for the NRE, but as of this date nothing has come of it. The following is a much more extended list by the Hartgen report:

- Congress Street: 240, 243, 245, 247-251, 267, 273-275, 277, 295-297, 303, 305, 307, 316-St Francis de Sales Church and Rectory, 324, 326, 328-330, 331, 332 (Anna's Alterations), 333, 335, 336 (Fisher's??), 337-339, 340 - Hardwood Floors and Window Treatments?, 341-351 - all numbers even and odd, 361-369 odd

numbers only, 370, 374- Emerald's Athletic Club, 377-383- odd numbers only, 387, 520, 521, 523, 529, 531, 535, 539, 541- Greek Cottage, 545-Farnam Institute Building, 548 - Church of the Ascension, 549, 550-554, 560-563, 565-571 - odd numbers only, 575, 577, 579, 587, 589

- 11th Street: 8-10
- Cypress Street: 1, 3, 5
- Ida Place: 3, 5
- 13th Street: 3, 5, 9, 11, 13 , 26 (aka 311 Congress Street- St Francis Academy)

This is an extensive list and our study area starts at 316 Congress Street so it excludes the 200's. At this time our group has no intent to make a NRE recommendation in this area.