
This thesis focuses on the neighborhood of Dutch Kills, Queens, its transition from a rural residential neighborhood in the 19th Century to an important commercial and industrial center by the mid-20th Century, the prospect of change in the neighborhood as a result of the recent 2008 rezoning, and the competing visions for the neighborhood’s future. It seeks to demonstrate the manner in which zoning regulations have served as an important instrument of change to the neighborhood’s character in the past and how local residents and businesses see zoning about to change it once again. Based upon interviews with local residents, businesses, property owners and experts, this paper examines the ways in which the zoning and rezoning of the neighborhood have affected local stakeholders, the process according to which the rezoning took place and the local hopes and fears associated with the rezoning. Specifically, it examines the extent to which the rezoning process considered the interests of the neighborhood’s local residents and commercial and industrial business property owners, the implications of the rezoning upon such local interests and what lessons can be derived from their narratives.