

Pols Unveil Proposal to Revitalize Roosevelt Avenue

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CORONA — A group of Queens politicians and business owners unveiled a proposal Tuesday to revitalize a major stretch of Roosevelt Avenue, including increased sanitation services, new lighting and painting to combat crime, and updated zoning.

While a number of improvements have been underway on 82nd Street in recent years, Roosevelt Avenue, between 82nd and 114th streets, has been plagued with crime, outdated zoning, trash and a glut of illegally parked vehicles that marred the stretch, the officials said.

"If you take a walk down Roosevelt Avenue, there is no denying that a change needs to be made," said City

Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras. "There is no reason why our community cannot have a thoroughfare as nice as Fifth Avenue."

The pols outline a seven-part plan that includes increased sanitation services, new lighting and painting, creating a business improvement district, updating zoning, making Corona Plaza car-free and reinstating the Roosevelt Avenue Task Force, which helped combat illegal enterprises there two decades ago.

Changes to Corona Plaza, a pedestrian space in the bustling neighborhood, began last year with doubling the number of garbage pick-ups from six times-a-week to 14 and increasing the number of trash cans.

Now she is seeking community input about the second phase of the project, which aims to transform the Parks Department space, which was once cluttered with illegally parked vehicles, to "a safe outdoor refuge where the community can shop, eat, exercise and play," Ferreras said.

The plan also looks to make the corridor more friendly to businesses with the formation of a Jackson Heights-Corona Business Improvement District and rezoning that will allow businesses to more easily make improvements to their stores.

"Zoning along Roosevelt Avenue is hopelessly out of date," Ferreras said. "This leads to businesses not making improvements, landlords having difficulty renting spaces and other long-term problems."



The move, which is set to take effect this spring, would change the zoning for the south side of the street, between 90th and 114th streets, which is residential, to commercial, making room for more businesses.

Recently, the BID for 82nd Street, another major commercial stretch in the neighborhood, was rebranded the 82nd Street Partnership,

Small Business Services
Commissioner Robert Walsh, Deputy Mayor Howard Wolfson, and Council Member Julissa Ferreras (l-r) unveiled a proposal to revitalize Roosevelt Avenue at Iglesia Aliento de Vida in Corona on Tuesday.

(DNAinfo/Stefanie DeAngelo)

helmed by a veteran of the high-powered 34th Street Partnership in Manhattan. Now there are plans to expand the 82nd Street Partnership along Roosevelt Avenue to 114th Street as part of the new BID.

In order to combat crime on the stretch, including theft and prostitution, new lighting will be installed between 82nd and 111th streets, the officials said.

The \$500,000 in improvements will also include new security cameras throughout the district.

Another integral element of the plan is the revival of the Roosevelt Avenue Task Force, which helped closed "brothels and illegal businesses in the early 1990s," said state Sen. Jose Peralta.

The task force will be composed of elected officials, government agencies, and community-based programs collaborating to address complex issues in the area.

"The Task Force is an opportunity for finally the agencies to talk about one area at the same time. We can do coordinated efforts, things that make sense for the community," Ferreras said.