

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 120044PPX
CROSSROADS PLAZA
3/29/12

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

CD 1-ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 120164 HAX-IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- 1) pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
 - a) the designation of property located at 500/539 Union Avenue (Block 2582, Lots 47, 64 and 65) as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - b) an Urban Development Action Area Project or such area; and
- 2) pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer selected by HPD;

To facilitate development of an eight-story building, a 13-story building and a 15-story building with a total of approximately 428 dwelling units, 20,910 square feet of community space and 36,770 square feet of commercial space, to be developed under the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's moderate and low income affordable housing programs.

CD 1-ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 120165 ZMX-IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 6c, by changing from an R7-2 District to an R8X District property bounded by East 149th Street, Prospect Avenue, Southern Boulevard, East 147th Street, and Union Avenue and its southerly centerline prolongation, Borough of the Bronx, Community District #1, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated January 23, 2012.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this ULURP is to dispose City property located at Block 2582, Lots 47, 64 and 65 facilitating the development of three buildings containing 428 residential units, 20,910 square feet of community space, 36,770 square feet of commercial space, 155 accessory parking spaces and 214 bicycle spaces. The site is bound by East 149th Street to the north; Prospect Avenue to the east; Southern Boulevard to the southeast; East 147th Street to the south and mid-block between Union and Tinton Avenues and East 147th and 149th Streets to the west. The site also contains a demapped portion of Union Avenue totaling 405 feet in length.

In addition to the disposition of City property, the application will amend the Mott Haven East Urban Renewal Area by allowing a R7-2 zone change to a R8X. This change will result in increased FAR from 3.44 to 6.21, and allow buildings with a maximum of height of 150 feet and streetwall height of 85 feet. A portion of the site on the western side of the demapped portion of Union Avenue will remain R7-2, which maintains the 3.44 FAR with a maximum building height of 75 feet, and a maximum streetwall height of 60 feet. Maximum lot coverage for the site will be 70 percent.

The site is characterized by primarily vacant land, except for a one-story accessory building for a former gas station and an unregistered community garden. Building 1 will be located at the corner of East 149th Street and Prospect Avenue with a height of 15 stories; Building 2 will be located along Southern Boulevard with an additional entrance facing the demapped portion of Union Avenue with a height of 13 stories; Building 3 will face the demapped portion of Union Avenue and will be eight stories in height. The demapped portion of Union Avenue will also be used as an accessible public walkway and planted landscaped area. Underground parking will be accessible to Buildings 1 and 2 along Southern Boulevard, and to Building 3 along the remaining mapped portion of Union Avenue southbound from East 149th Street.

Building 3 at Block 2582, Lot 47 will be constructed first and contain 126 mixed-income units ranging from 40 to 80 percent of area median income. The first floor will house an Easter Seals Child Development Center, operating Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., serving approximately 115 students and employing 50 people. Building 3 will house 42 accessory parking spaces. Half of the structure will have a green roof and adhere to Enterprise Green Communities standards.

Buildings 1 and 2 will be constructed at later dates on Block 2582, Lot 65. Building 1 will contain 166 units and 18,272 square feet of ground floor retail with 61 accessory parking spaces. Building 2 will contain 136 residential units, 18,497 square feet of ground floor retail with 52 accessory parking spaces.

The immediate surrounding area is characterized by one-story commercial buildings to the north and east; one and two-story commercial and manufacturing structures and a five-story apartment building to the southeast; a five-story apartment building and one-story commercial and manufacturing structures to the south; and five and six-story apartment buildings to the west. The general surrounding area is characterized by a mix of one-story commercial structures, two and three-family homes, and four to six-story apartment buildings to the north and east; one and two-story commercial and manufacturing buildings, and two to three-family homes to the southeast; one-story commercial and manufacturing buildings, and a three-story public facility to the south; and two to three-family homes and five to six-story apartment buildings to the west.

The area is well-served by transportation with the IRT 6 East 149th Street station at the corner of the site at East 149th Street and Prospect Avenue. The IRT 2 and 5 trains at the Jackson Avenue station are five blocks to the northwest. The site is immediately served by the BX17 and 19 buses, which stop at the corner of East 149th Street and Prospect Avenue, and also served by the BX4 and 4A, which runs along Westchester Avenue five blocks away. The site is also three

blocks away from the Bruckner Expressway and less than a mile from the Major Deegan Expressway and the Triborough/Robert F. Kennedy Bridge.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to SEQRA and CEQR. An Environmental Assessment Statement was prepared for this application and designated as an unlisted action on January 4, 2012.

COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #1 held a public hearing and approved this application on February 23, 2012, with a vote of 19 in favor, three against, and two abstentions.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President held a public hearing on this application on March 13, 2012. The applicants were present and spoke in favor of this application. One member of the public was present that spoke against the application, noting community concerns about the removal of an unregistered community garden from the site and the community notification process.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

The development of this site will represent a major transformation to the surrounding Mott Haven, Port Morris, Longwood and Hunts Point communities. I am pleased that after multiple attempts and proposals that this major intersection see a new vibrancy. As the country revisits transit-oriented developments and their social, environmental and economic benefits, underutilized stations such as the IRT 6 149th Street Station need to be leveraged as new focal points for existing communities. I am comfortable with the scale of the project, as the site represents not only the juncture of three major Bronx streets (East 149th Street, Southern Boulevard and Prospect Avenue), it will utilize a demapped portion of Union Avenue for new, passive recreation, which is desperately needed in Bronx Community District #1.

Crucial to this project is its mixed-income nature. This project can only be successful if a variety of incomes are accommodated to help create aspirational communities, where residents can move up and not out. Having incomes up to 80 percent of area median income assures that hard-working Bronx residents that grow their family do not get pushed out. Although income levels have only been identified for the first building, all three buildings should contain a mix of incomes ranging from low to middle-income units. I base my strongest support on this point.

There has been some concern over the presence of a community garden at the site. While I am whole-heartedly supportive of community gardens, no location on this site has ever been registered as a community garden. According to testimony, this community garden sprung up in

2009, well after initial plans for a three-building, mixed-income development were proposed. Given the longstanding plans to develop this site as mixed-use, mixed-income housing, and no formal registry for a community garden, the developers should be allowed to complete the vision for this site.

I recommend approval of this application.