

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION**  
**ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 130120 ZMY**  
**River Plaza Rezoning**  
**June 13, 2013**

**DOCKET DESCRIPTION**

**IN THE MATTER OF** an application submitted by Kingsbridge Associates, LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 1d:

1. eliminating from within an existing R6 District a C1-3 District bounded by the former centerline of Broadway, West 225<sup>th</sup> Street, a line 100 feet southeasterly of the former southeasterly street line of Broadway, and the northeasterly boundary line of the Penn Central Railroad with-of way;
2. changing from an R6 District to a C8-3 District, property bounded by Broadway, West 225<sup>th</sup> Street, a line 100 feet southeasterly of the former southeasterly street line of Broadway, and the northeasterly boundary line of the Penn Central Railroad right-of way; and
3. changing from an M1-1 District to a C8-3 District property bounded by a line 100 feet southeasterly of the former southeasterly street line of Broadway, West 225<sup>th</sup> Street, the westerly boundary line of a railroad right-of way, a line 625 feet southwesterly of West 225<sup>th</sup> Street, and the northeasterly boundary line of the Penn Central Railroad right-of way;

Borough of Manhattan and Borough of the Bronx, Community District #7, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated March 18, 2013, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-303.

**BACKGROUND**

Approval of this application will facilitate expansion of retail and storage space at an existing shopping center complex known as River Plaza. This site is located on Block 2215, Lots 652, 653, 654, 665, 670, 672, Part of 672, and 700 in the Bronx. In Manhattan this site is located on Block 3245, Part of Lots 12 and 60. This shopping center is bounded by Broadway to the west, West 225<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, the Major Deegan Expressway to the east and the Hudson Line of the Metro North Railroad to the south. Kingsbridge Associates (the applicant) is seeking an amendment of the Zoning Map eliminating an existing M1-1 District and Part of an R6/C1-3, to the proposed C8-3 District.

The site includes 436,010 square feet of property, accommodating development consisting of 408,220 square feet. Current zoning mandates a minimum of 804 parking spaces be allocated on site, whereas 807 are provided. However, the physical limitations of this site, notably the numerous easements that exist, severely restrict the locating of any new structures and the required additional parking spaces that would be mandated under current zoning. Therefore, the applicant seeks to amend the Zoning Map by eliminating the existing M1-1 and R6/C1-3 District, and establish instead a C8-3 District, which if approved will substantially reduce the required number of parking spaces from 804, to 284.

Environmental review undertaken by the applicant does indicate that, during peak hours, (Saturday evenings between 4 p.m.-7 p.m.) current demand for on-site parking approximates 546 spaces. The applicant does intend to preserve 665 spaces, leaving an approximate surplus of 119 spaces that would be available during peak demand.

The applicant's preliminary plans include construction of two additional facilities;

- 1) Expansion of retail space consisting of 25,680 square feet. This additional space will be constructed on the roof of an existing building, on which rooftop parking is now provided. The retail occupants of this existing building include Target. It is situated on the south side of West 225<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 2) A storage building consisting of 10,695 square feet. This new structure will augment an existing storage building. This new addition will be situated on an undeveloped section of the shopping center complex, located on the southwestern boundary of River Plaza, immediately east of the Metro North Railroad right-of way.

Existing residential development in the surrounding community is dominated by the Marble Hill Houses, a public housing development operated by the New York City Housing Authority, (NYCHA). This high rise complex is located on the north side of West 225<sup>th</sup> Street, opposite the River Plaza shopping complex. Mid rise residential development is also located west of the shopping complex, west of Broadway and to the east, east of the Major Deegan Expressway. Mass transit via the Number 1, Broadway line is accessible on Broadway where additional retail activity is also located. The area is also extensively served by various bus routes. Access to the Major Deegan Expressway (Interstate 87) is available within a ¼ mile of River Plaza.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION**

This application has been reviewed pursuant to SEQR and CEQR and received a Conditional Negative Declaration. This declaration allows this application to proceed, however prior to the construction of any new structures on the site, CEQR Declaration E-303 must be resolved. This application was certified as complete by the Planning Commission on March 18, 2013.

## **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING**

A public hearing on this application was convened by Bronx Community Board #7 on May 21, 2013. A unanimous vote recommending approval of this application was 21 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstaining.

## **BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION**

River Plaza is one of the most successful shopping centers in New York City, and includes one of the most profitable Target department stores in the United States. Given the comprehensive array of public transportation systems serving River Plaza, coupled with its convenient location to the Major Deegan Expressway, at my public hearing the applicant boasted that this shopping center successfully attracts clientele from both the local community and beyond. Of comparable importance is that the success of this center enables it to secure approximately 1,000 jobs. Consequently, I am especially pleased to know that even the most preliminary expansion plans for River Plaza are being considered.

The irony of this application is that perhaps the least utilized convenience at River Plaza are its off-street parking facilities. Testimony given at my public hearing yields the following considerations:

- 1) Of the 807 parking spaces provided fewer than 550 are utilized during peak shopping hours (Saturday between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.),
- 2) During off peak hours, of the 807 spaces provided, fewer than 50 percent are utilized,
- 3) As proposed, the C8-3 zone will require 284 off-street parking spaces, 665 such spaces will be retained,
- 4) 90 percent reach River Plaza using alternatives to the private automobile.

Nonetheless, under current zoning if any expansion of retail venues were constructed, additional parking would be needed, despite what currently appears to be an ample number of available spaces. Consequently, if any additional, job producing retail development is to occur at River Plaza, only by reducing the number of required parking spaces can such development take place. I am therefore very pleased to support this application that would establish a C8-1 zone for River Plaza and by so doing reduce the number of required parking spaces. I concur with the unanimous support Community Board #7 gives this matter.

I recommend approval of this application.