

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 140282 MMX
Library Lane City Map Change
December 20, 2014

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Design and Construction, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter, for an amendment to the City Map involving:

- The establishment of Library Lane between Briggs Avenue and Bainbridge Avenue; and
- The adjustment of grades necessitated thereby;

Including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District 7, Borough of the Bronx, in accordance with Map No. 13135 dated September 3, 2014 and signed by the Borough President.

BACKGROUND

Approving this application will facilitate the mapping, acquisition and name change of a street currently known as Coles Lane, a portion of which is privately owned (Block 3293, Lot 16 and part of Lot 18) to a city-owned street to be known as Library Lane. This location is zoned R7B, C4 and is in the Fordham community of the Bronx. It is situated between Briggs Avenue on the west and Bainbridge Avenue to the east. The total amount of area associated with this application consists of 7,500 square feet. Coles Lane is 35-foot wide and 230 feet in length. It provides the only two-way vehicular access to Poe Place, a privately owned drive which intersects Coles Lane from the north, approximately fifty feet west of Bainbridge Avenue. West of Poe Place, the north side of Coles Lane is characterized by a step street providing pedestrian access to a privately owned "sidewalk landing." This landing offers secondary access to a five story, multi-unit residential building which fronts on Briggs Avenue. Pedestrian passage on the south side of Coles Lane includes a sidewalk in poor condition and one set of four-steps. As a consequence of these steps the current configuration of Coles Lane fails ADA-mandated standards. In addition, as this area is not owned by the City of New York it lacks adequate lighting, offers no street trees or other amenities that otherwise would provide the surrounding community an appealing and safe passage.

Upon the successful purchase of this property, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) (the applicants) will reconstruct the entire site and as such, this public passage will comply with ADA standards. Highlights of this plan include:

- New curbs
- New sidewalks
- Restored and reconstructed street bed
- Reconstructed step-streets designed pursuant to current standards

- A series of ramps for wheelchair accessibility
- Relocated and upgraded utilities
- New pavement markings
- New street lights
- Benches
- Street trees

To date, no specific acquisition or construction costs have been projected. Federal funds however, have been committed to this project's fruition.

Development of the surrounding community is dominated by the presence of the recently constructed main branch of the New York Public Library in the Bronx which is located on west side of East Kingsbridge Road and from which is an unobstructed view of what will be Library Lane. Residential development is typified by five and six story buildings. Retail activity and access to bus transportation are located on East Fordham Road and on East Kingsbridge Road, both of which are within one block of Library Lane. Fordham Road boasts the highest pedestrian traffic in the Bronx and one of the busiest commercial corridors in New York City. Subway access is available within a four block radius of the proposed mapped street and found on the Grand Concourse at either Fordham Road or Kingsbridge Road via the "D" Concourse Line.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application has been reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and received a Negative Declaration meaning that this action poses no threat to the environment. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on September 15, 2014.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board 7 held a public hearing on this application on November 18, 2014. A unanimous vote recommending approval of this application was 22 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on December 9, 2014. Those representing the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. There being no members of the public in attendance, the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

As it is currently configured, Coles Lane is a dark, foreboding and poorly maintained public passage, a portion of which is privately owned. Coles Lane is located near Fordham Road, the busiest retail venue in the Bronx, and the borough's recently constructed main branch of the New York Public Library. Approving this application will allow the City of New York to purchase the entirety of Coles Lane, make substantial improvements to this location that include the

construction of ramps for wheel chair access, and change the name to the more appropriate “Library Lane.” I am especially pleased to note that new streetlights and the planting of trees will enhance both the visual profile of Library Lane but also reduce the potential for injury and crime.

I concur with the unanimous vote of support this application has gotten from Community Board 7. I look forward to the opportunity of reviewing the proposed redesign plans for this location.

I recommend approval of this application.