

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 170377 ZMX
1675 Westchester Avenue

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF AN application submitted by 1675 JV Associates, LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 4d:

1. Changing from an R6 District to and R8A District property bounded by a line 200 feet northerly of Westchester Avenue, a line midway between Fteley Avenue and Metcalf Avenue, a line 100 feet northerly of Westchester Avenue, Fteley Avenue, Westchester Avenue, and Metcalf Avenue; and
2. Establishing within the proposed R8A District a C2-4 District bounded by a line 100 feet northerly of Westchester Avenue, Fteley Avenue, Westchester Avenue and Metcalf Avenue;

Borough of The Bronx, Community District #9, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated May 22, 2017, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-425

BACKGROUND

The Zoning Map Amendment approving this application will facilitate is applicable to property located on the north side of Westchester Avenue, (Block 3780, Lots 1 and 51), between Metcalf Avenue on the west and Fteley Avenue on the east. It is proposed that an existing R6 District be eliminated and an R8A District be established. Within the R8A District, a C2-4 commercial overlay be established on the north side of Westchester Avenue, between Metcalf Avenue and Fteley Avenue, 100 feet north of Westchester Avenue. A zoning text change is required to include a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area (MICHA) at this location.

Existing development on this site (Block 3870, Lot 1) includes a vacant one-story building which formally accommodated a health clinic. Also included within the boundaries of this proposed rezoning is an occupied one-story commercial building which currently accommodates a wine/liquor store and a dry cleaners. This occupied commercial building is on Block 2870, Lot 51, and while subject to the proposed zoning changes, need not be vacated. Taken together, Block 2870, Lots 1 and 51, consists 33,737 square feet of property.

Phipps Houses and the Acacia Network have collaborated to establish the 1675 JV Associates LLC, (the applicant). Pending approval of this application, the applicant will construct a 12-story residential building to be located on Block 2870 Lot 1, (the development site). This proposed building will be entirely located within the R8A zone which will allow an FAR of approximately 7.06. This site consists of 28,872 square feet. Highlights of this project include:

- 13-story mixed use building offering 203,000 gross square feet (gsf) of floor area
- 7,570 gsf retail space
- 6,800 gsf community facility space
- 204 residential units, including:
 - 21 studios, which is two percent of the total number of units, each unit approximating 360 square feet
 - 73-one bedroom units, which is 36 percent of the total number of units, each unit approximating 500 square feet
 - 79-two bedroom units, which is 39 percent of the total number of units, each unit approximating 670 square feet
 - 30-three bedroom units, which is 15 percent of the total number of units, each unit approximating 910 square feet
 - 1-three bedroom unit for the superintendent

Amenities to be accessible from the building's 11th floor includes;

- A fitness center-offering 783 square feet
- A community room-offering 874 square feet
- Computer room offering 378 square feet
- A play room offering 445 square feet to be located adjacent to the laundry room
- An exterior terrace area consisting of 2,015 square feet
- 24-hour doorman service will supplement security camera monitoring

A fully landscaped garden for passive recreation will be accessible on the first floor from the entry-lobby area. This area will offer 9,871 square feet. An additional "side yard measuring 1,960 square feet is also planned.

The building will be constructed pursuant to Passive Home Guidelines. In addition, due to the close proximity this new building will have to the existing elevated subway trestle serving the #6 train, specific sound and noise reduction requirements will be included. No on-site parking is planned.

The proposed project will be financed by HDC/HPD ELLA or Mix and Match Program. Percentage of unit count affordability includes:

- 10 percent of the units for formerly homeless
- 10 percent of the units for 30 percent of Area Median Income (AMI)
- 30-50 percent of the units for 40-60 percent of AMI
- 30-50 percent of the units for 80 percent of AMI

This proposed development will cost approximately \$85.9 million. The applicant is also committed to providing maintenance workers earning union scale wages and benefits.

Development of the surrounding community is typified by commercial venues located on Westchester Avenue. These include two shopping center complexes with off-street parking lots on the south side of Westchester Avenue. Residential development includes low-rise, one and two family homes. High-rise residences are also located within a one-mile radius of the development site. Access to the #6 Train is at either St. Lawrence Avenue or Morrison Avenue/Soundview stations. Bus service operates on Westchester Avenue.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to SEQR and CEQR and was given a Type II Designation. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on May 22, 2017.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #9 held a public hearing on June 15, 2017. 13 voted in favor, one against, with three abstentions.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on July 6, 2017. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. A member of the public offered written comment expressing opposition to this application. A copy of this statement is included herein. As there were no other members of the public wishing to comment, the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENATION

Reviewing the details of this application I am pleased to see a large, vacant building that is today a community liability be demolished. In its place will be built a new residence offering desperately needed affordable housing. Although on its face, a R8A zoning district among R6/C4-2 and R5 districts may seem out of character, the unique location across from a park, the Bronx River Parkway, and a suburban-style shopping center, as well as its positioning along the IRT 6 train, make the R8A designation acceptable and will not negatively impact surrounding development. I especially appreciate the inclusion of a computer room, fitness center and terrace garden, all of which will be located on the building's top floor. The novelty of placing the building's laundry room and adjacent play room on this floor is also to be commended. Other amenities including 24-hour doorman services will certainly be most appreciated by both residents and their guests. The design is attractive and will visually add to the neighborhood. Finally, I am pleased to see that 54 percent of the 204 units to be constructed will offer two and three bedrooms.

Acknowledging the positive features 1675 Westchester Avenue will offer, I once again must note that I am opposed to the proposed current square foot size these units will provide. It is simply unacceptable that a family of four or even five people will be forced to share a three- bedroom unit offering only 910 square feet of living space. Units offering fewer bedrooms are equally unacceptably confining. It remains my contention that family members must have their own "private space." This is especially relevant, given that for those who will occupy these units, this will likely be their shared home for many years. I therefore insist that this applicant revisit their proposed plan and consider how unit size can be made larger. Perhaps by acknowledging that for the vast majority of Bronx residents, studio units are not nearly as important as are larger, and more accommodating two- and three-bedroom units. I therefore call upon this applicant to make the necessary changes reviewed and discussed at my public hearing.

With this modification included, I recommend approving this application