

CD #6-ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 210027 ZMX - Arthur Avenue Hotel Rezoning:

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION submitted by 2461 Hughes Associates LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No.3C:

1. Eliminating from within an existing R6 District a C2-4 District bounded by a line 145 feet northeasterly of East 188th Street, a line midway between Arthur Avenue and Hughes Avenue, East 188th Street, and Arthur Avenue;
2. Changing from an R6 District to a C6-1 District property bounded by a line 145 feet northeasterly of East 188th Street, Hughes Avenue, East 188th Street, and Arthur Avenue; and
3. Establishing within an existing R6 District a C1-4 District bounded by the southwesterly boundary line of Vincent Ciccarone Playground and its northwesterly and southeasterly prolongations, Hughes Avenue, a line 100 feet northeasterly of East 188th Street, and Arthur Avenue;

Borough of The Bronx, Community District #6, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated January 4, 2021, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration, E-599.

BACKGROUND

The site of this location is at the northern intersection of East 188th Street encompassing the full width of the block bound between Arthur Avenue to the West and Hughes Avenue to the East. The full width of the proposed development encompassing this block would be 169 feet, 6 and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches while the length of the “L-shape” proposed development would be 95 feet heading along Arthur Avenue and 145 feet heading along Hughes Avenue. The proposed land use actions would involve a Zoning Map Amendment and Zoning Text Amendment.

- *Zoning Map Amendment* to rezone Bronx Block 3077, Lots 29, 31, 33, p/o 34, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58 (“Rezoning Area 1”) from R6 and R6/C2-4 zoning districts to a C6-1 zoning district and to rezone Bronx Block 3077, Lots p/o 4, p/o 6 (“Rezoning Area 2”) from an R6 zoning district to an R6/C1-4 zoning district.
- *Zoning Text Amendment* to Appendix F: Inclusionary Housing Designated Areas and Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (“MIH”) Areas for Community District 6, Bronx to establish Rezoning Area 1 as an MIH Area (Option 2 and the Workforce Option).

Approval of this application will facilitate the proposed mixed-use development featuring two newly construction buildings. The building flanked by Arthur Avenue to the West will be a 13-story hotel while the building flanked by Hughes Avenue to the East will be a 7-story residential building. Combined, both buildings will encompass 122,694 square feet of floor area (6.0 FAR).

The proposed hotel will include:

- 13-story building with 72,027 square feet of hotel floor area
- 146 rooms
- Active ground-floor uses along Arthur Avenue and East 188th Street
- Outdoor amenity space
- 128 accessory parking spaces
- An entrance along both Arthur Avenue and 188th Street

The proposed residential building will include:

- 7-story building with 52,667 square feet of residential floor area
- 56 dwelling units with 17 permanently affordable units pursuant to MIH Workforce Option (Option 4)
- 28 accessory parking spaces
- An entrance along 188th Street, adjacent to the hotel

Residential unit counts are anticipated to include:

- Studio Units: 6
- 1 Bedroom Units: 24
- 2 Bedroom Units: 20
- 3 Bedroom Units: 6
- Total Unit Count: 56

Concrete benefits that this project will yield include:

- New employment
 - 231 direct construction jobs
 - 127 indirect jobs
 - 58 permanent jobs
- New housing
 - 56 new quality housing units in Belmont neighborhood
 - Including approximately 17 permanently affordable MIH units

There are numerous destinations and institutions within the development site and its broader Belmont neighborhood that would allow for reasonable demand for a hotel. Visitors to Fordham University, Montefiore Medical Center and St. Barnabas Hospital would allow for year-round attraction. Furthermore, the New York Botanical Garden, The Bronx Zoo and the many cultural and culinary institutions along Arthur Avenue are well-established attractions that draw both local and global visitors. As it currently stands however, The Bronx represents only 7% (64 total) of New York City's entire hotel inventory (906 total). Further, there are only 10 hotels within an immediate one-mile radius of the project area, though most are still in pre-development or mid-construction phases and none of which will exist directly on Arthur Avenue.

This proposed development has garnered letters of support from:

- D’Bari Funeral Home
- Wildlife Conservation Society of Bronx Zoo
- Montefiore Medicine
- Tinos Delicatessen
- Mike’s Deli
- Albanian Yellow Pages, Inc.
- New York Botanical Garden
- Dea an Authentic Eatery, LLC
- Belmont Business Improvement District
- Fordham University

This proposed rezoning is modestly served by public transportation. Although, the closest subway service is the IND B and D Fordham Road station, slightly more than 2/3 mile west, the area is well-served by public bus routes. The BX9, 12, 12 SBS, 17, and 22, and the Westchester Bee Line 60 and 61, run two blocks north along East Fordham Road, the BX17 can also be accessed along Crotona Avenue four blocks east, and the BX9 can also be accessed, along with the BX19, on Southern Boulevard, six blocks east. The BX15 runs along Third Avenue four blocks west. The BX41 and 41 SBS run along Webster Avenue 7 blocks west. The BX36 also runs nine blocks south along East 180th Street. The area is also served by the Fordham Metro-North station, six blocks to the Northeast. Highway access is easily accessible to the Bronx River Parkway, under ¾ miles east.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

A CEQR review was completed and a Negative Declaration was issued on January 4, 2021.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was conducted by Bronx Community Board #6 on January 19, 2021. A vote to recommend approval of this application was 17 in favor, 0 against, and 6 abstentions.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on February 16, 2021. Representatives of the applicant participated in this hearing and spoke in favor of this application. No members of the public participated and the hearing was closed.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S RECOMMENDATION

Arthur Avenue has been one of the borough's prime tourist destinations for many decades. The historical Italian flavor of the neighborhood still remains strong, even as the Italian immigrant and Italian-American resident population has dwindled in recent years. The investment and dedication in the area has kept it as New York City's true Little Italy. While resident changes have happened, other cultural groups have made it their home, including one of the largest Albanian populations in the United States, as well as members of the Mexican, Central and South American, Puerto Rican, Dominican and African-American communities. Despite its continued popularity, Belmont and Arthur Avenue have not had a proper hotel to serve the tens of thousands of visitors the area gets each year. Additionally, Belmont's location adjacent to Fordham University, Bronx Zoo, New York Botanical Garden and New York City's third busiest shopping district along Fordham Road, makes it a perfect destination for a quality, multi-star hotel. The neighborhood and surrounding institutions have been gravely underserved by the hotel industry. While a number of hotels have popped up around The Bronx, including along nearby Third Avenue, they have been either small in scale, of questionable reputation or both. The addition of a quality brand-name hotel to Belmont will help the neighborhood, surrounding institutions and surrounding Fordham community thrive at a level it has strived to for decades. With some minor aesthetic tweaks, this building can serve as a beacon to the community. The addition of a residential structure with affordable, Mandatory Inclusionary Housing units is also notable. The only thing I implore the developer to do is to make all the units affordable to the community.

I recommend approval of this application.