

BRONX PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 210338 PSX
Fordham Building CTAC Site Selection

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the site selection of property located at 2556 Bainbridge Avenue (Block 3286, Lot 14) for use as a Computer-based Testing and Application Center, Borough of The Bronx, Community District #7.

BACKGROUND

Approval of this application will facilitate the repurposing the second story of a city-owned building located at 2556 Bainbridge Avenue (Block 3286, Lot 14). Constructed in 1923, this building served as the Fordham branch of the New York Public Library until 2005. At that time preparations were made to relocate this facility to a newly constructed building on Kingsbridge Road. This new building opened in 2006. 2556 Bainbridge Avenue has remained vacant since.

The site, Block 3286, Lot 14, consists of 14,168 square feet. It is bounded by East 193rd Street to the north, East Fordham Road to the south, Bainbridge Avenue to the west and Marion Avenue to the east. It is zoned R7B/C4-4. Pending approval of this application the proposed use is Use Group 6. The building occupying this site is two stories in height, (41 feet) approximating 24,200 square feet. Access is provided on Bainbridge Avenue. It is also accessible on Marion Avenue (2545-2555 Marion Avenue).

The applicant proposes to occupy the second story of 2556 Bainbridge Avenue, where a Computer-based Testing and Application Center (CTAC) will be installed. The new facility will approximate 10,200 square feet. ADA compliant access will be through the Marion Avenue entrance.

The CTAC will provide the public with applications for exams potential employees may take as a prerequisite for being hired by the city. A full service application center and examination area will be on site, along with space for conferences and employment training. It will operate Monday-Saturday from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. A full time staff of 11 employees will be on site. It is anticipated that 200 visitors per day will access this facility Specific functions at the CTAC include:

- 1) An office of Citywide Recruitment Civil Service 101 Sessions as provided by DCAS
- 2) A training and testing room where DCAS can offer training for exam administration
- 3) An application center
- 4) Interpreter and translation center will be available
- 5) Voting registration facilities
- 6) Application center for upcoming exams
- 7) On-line education facilities

- 8) Testing at workstations for 100 candidates
- 9) Examination rooms for post-testing review sessions.

The anticipated investment necessary to retrofit this site for these purposes approximates \$34 million.

The Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) currently occupies a CTAC at 1932 Arthur Avenue. This CTAC location is expected to close. .

The ground floor and mezzanine level of this building will be accessed via Bainbridge Avenue. Currently these stories will remain vacant, it is anticipated that a community use facility will be situated here.

Development of the surrounding community is typified by midrise residential multifamily buildings. Within a two-block radius of the Bainbridge Avenue site are East Fordham Road and East Kingsbridge Road. Pedestrian activity on Fordham Road is one of the highest in New York City. Subway access to the “D” train is found on the Grand Concourse at either Fordham Road or Kingsbridge Road. Both stations are approximately four blocks west of the Bainbridge Avenue building. The “4” train is also accessible approximately ½ mile west of the proposed project. Metro North Commuter Railroad services are available at the intersection of Webster Avenue at East Fordham Road, approximately four blocks east of Bainbridge Avenue. Bus transportation operating on East Fordham Road includes the BX 22, BX 9, BX12, BX17, and SBS-BX12. So too, the BEE Line serving Westchester County operates routes 60, 61, and 62 on East Fordham Road. The BX 34 operates on Bainbridge Avenue.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on April 19, 2021.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community District #7 did not submit a recommendation on this matter prior to the deadline of June 28, 2021.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on June 15, 2021. Representatives of the applicant participated and spoke in favor of this application. There being no other persons wanting to comment the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

It has been fifteen years since 2556 Bainbridge Avenue was closed and essentially “mothballed” by the city’s Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). I am therefore most pleased that DCAS has identified a repurpose for a portion of this building by installing a Computer-based Testing and Application Center (CTAC) on its second story. This will not only place a vacant building back into productive use, but also offers Bronx residents access to employment opportunities that are potentially life-long careers.

Reviewing the details of this application it is clear that 2556 Bainbridge Avenue (the site) is perhaps one of the best locations for those who rely on public transportation. Being so close to Fordham Road which is one of New York’s busiest pedestrian venues, suggests that someone looking to buy something new may wind up working for someone new. As such, I believe this is the ideal location for a computer based testing and application center, (CTAC).

My only additional observation pertains to the yet-to-be-determined purpose for the first and mezzanine stories. I acknowledge that a community use facility is the likely option. While I have no reason to object to this possibility, it would be my hope that whomever the tenant is, that the services offered be compatible with the CTAC. Given the proximity of Fordham University to the Bainbridge Avenue location perhaps it can consider a service that benefits both the university and the community in which this school is located.

I recommend approval of this application.