

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 210321 ZMX
OUR LADY OF PITY-272 EAST 151ST STREET**

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Our Lady of Pity Apartments, LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 6a, by changing from an R6 District to an R7A District property bounded by East 151st Street, a line 220 feet southeasterly of Morris Avenue, a line midway between East 150th Street and East 151st Street, a line 270 feet southeasterly of Morris Avenue, East 150th Street, and Morris Avenue, Borough of The Bronx, Community District 1, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated November 1, 2021, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-652.

BACKGROUND

The Zoning Map amendment approval of this application would facilitate is changing an existing R6/C1-4 District to the proposed R7A/C1-4 District. This change pertains to Block 2410, Lots 1, 3, thru 9, 14, 72, and 77; the Project Area. It is bounded by Morris Avenue on the west, East 151st Street on the north, Courtlandt Avenue on the east and East 150th Street on the south. R6 Districts permit a residential Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 2.43. The proposed R7A District offers an FAR of 4.0. Remaining unchanged is the C1-4 overlay which permits grocery stores, restaurants, beauty parlors and bakeries; uses that are typical in residential communities. This commercial overlay encompasses all lots located on the east side of Morris Avenue, between East 150th and East 151st. Streets. Existing zoning on adjacent blocks includes R7-1 to north, C4-4 to the south and east, and R7-2 to the west.

Within the Project Area is the Development Site which is owned by the applicant. This site specifically includes Block 2410, Lots 14, 72 and 77. It is situated 70 feet east of Morris Avenue, extending approximately 236 feet to the east. It offers 200 feet of frontage on East 150th Street and 150 feet of frontage on East 151st Street. This undeveloped parcel is composed of 40,795 square feet and is secured by fencing. Related to this application is N 210322 ZRX- which will map a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) within the Project Area.

Pursuant to approval of this application, the applicant is proposing to construct two, 9-story residential buildings (95 feet in height). Together these buildings will consist of 201,334 gross square feet (187,334 zoning square feet). The applicant is proposing two unit count scenarios pending the finalization of financing. Taken together these buildings will offer a total of either 191 or 202 dwelling units, all of which will be affordable. So too based on financing, of this total, 32 units will comply with MIH. The projected rent range will be 30 to 70% of Area Median Income (AMI).

289 East 150th Street will include 111,759 gross square feet (104,759 zoning square feet) and front onto East 150th Street, providing for 112 units. 276 East 151st Street will include 89,575 gross square feet (82,575 zoning square feet) and offer 90 units. Total development costs will approximate \$70 million.

There are currently two scenarios the applicant is proposing. Consequently, the specific unit size and exact number of units is not finalized. The following table provides a general overview of what the two potential scenarios may be depending on financing.

Unit Counts	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Studio Units:	48	66
1 Bedroom Units	46	42
2 Bedroom Units	71	72
<u>3 Bedroom Units</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>22</u>
Total Unit Count	191	202

Unit Size	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Studio Units	377 Square Feet	472 Square Feet
1 Bedroom Units	502 Square Feet	569 Square Feet
2 Bedroom Units	803 Square Feet	862 Square Feet
3 Bedroom Units	953 Square Feet	1,142 Square Feet

Proposed Rent

Studio Units	Rent Range: \$722-\$1,310 per month
1 Bedroom Units	Rent Range: \$769-\$1,409 per month
2 Bedroom Units	Rent Range: \$914-\$1,682 per month
3 Bedroom Units	Rent Range: \$1,046-\$1,933 per month

Additional amenities in both buildings include:

- A welcoming lobby area in each building
- Intercom system connecting all units
- Cellar Bicycle parking:
 - 259 East 150th Street: 56 bicycles
 - 276 East 151st Street: 45 bicycles(Zoning requires at least one bicycle space for every two dwelling units)
- Community rooms in each building will include a warming kitchens and accommodations for meetings
Community room at 259 East 150th Street will approximate 600-800 square feet
Community room at 276 East 151st Street: will approximate 400 square feet
- Indoor youth recreation room at 276 East 151st Street measuring 600-800 square feet
- Sustainable/green building systems including a solar array to be constructed on the roof of each building. Both buildings will be entirely reliant on electric utilities
- 8-hour security coverage, controlled access at all entry points using key fob technology
- Mail room, laundry room and package delivery room

Residents will also have access to on site programs and services to be provided by The Catholic Charities Community Services and Housing Support Program. Highlights of this service include:

- A comprehensive resource center for addressing current and anticipated needs of the residents
- Job training opportunities
- Good health programs
- Affording residents with connections to community resources

A landscaped garden area approximating 15,000 square feet will be situated between the two buildings. This garden area will feature a wide range of recreational options for both passive and active activities. Benches, landscaping and a water feature are envisioned as key components of this green space. Trees will be introduced specifically to minimize any potential intrusion from garden activities on those units facing this garden area. So too, the lighting plan for this area will prevent ambient light from intruding into residences.

This proposed development will not include any retail development. It is anticipated that upon completion, six full time permanent jobs will be created. Walk-in candidates seeking employment during construction will be considered, with approximately 100 jobs available during this time. Outreach to local community groups regarding this project will be undertaken.

Residential development of the adjacent community is typified by two family wood frame homes approximating two stories, low and midrise multiunit buildings approximating four, five and six stories. A complex of three high schools are located in one building. These include Alfred E. Smith High School, The Bronx Design and Construction Academy and Bronx Haven High School. These facilities are located on the north side of East 151st Street, opposite the development site. Commercial activity is found on Morris Avenue and on East 149th Street.

This area is well served by mass transit. As such, it is designated a Transit Zone. Subway service via the #2 and #5 trains is available at the junction of East 149th Street and Third Avenue. Service via the #4 is accessible at East 149th Street and the Grand Concourse. Bus transportation via the Bx32 operates on Morris Avenue. The Bx2 and Bx19 operates along East 149th Street. The BX1 stops at East 149th Street and the Grand Concourse. The BX 15, 21, 41 and 41SBS stop at The Hub, four blocks southeast from the site. Metro North Railroad's Harlem Division can be accessed at the Melrose Station at Park Avenue at East 162nd Street, and Hudson Division at the Yankees-153rd Street Station at East 153rd Street, off of Exterior Street.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application has been reviewed pursuant to SEQR and CEQR and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on November 1, 2021.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was held by Bronx Community District #1 on December 16, 2021. A vote recommending that this **application be denied** was 22 in favor of denying this application's approval, 1 in favor of approving this application and -0- abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a virtual public hearing on January 11, 2022. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. The District Manager of Bronx Community District #1 spoke against approval of this application. No other comments were offered and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

As the newly elected Borough President I am acknowledging that this application is my administration's first. This being true, my professional experiences serving the people of The Bronx is a long one, one that has acquainted me with just how urgent is the need for affordable housing and even more, the need for services that provide guidance and assistance to our communities. Approving this application will facilitate development that satisfies both observations.

Across The Bronx there is a critical shortage of affordable housing accommodations that can meet the needs of growing families. Indeed, owing to the lack of multi bedroom units, if our Bronx neighborhoods are to thrive, a family with more than two children should not have to sacrifice their ties to a neighborhood and find housing elsewhere. I am therefore very pleased to note that plans for this development allocates a potential total of 94, two and three bedroom units, out of a total of 202 units in the larger scenario, and 97 out of 191 units in the smaller scenario. The inclusion of an indoor recreation room for young people is also an accommodation that provides our youth with a safe alternative to the streets. So too, is the outdoor garden area which, as planned will offer 15,000 square feet of space for both passive and active recreation.

Thanks to the Catholic Charities organization, this development will provide residents with a host of supportive services that may be necessary to assist those in need. These include access to employment, job training, connecting residents to services they may not know about and social services organizations. Knowing their track record, I am confident that what will be offered by Catholic Charities will be comprehensive and competent.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the decision made by Community Board #1 recommending that this application be denied. Two reasons for their denial I believe warrant a direct response. The first of these is a lack of parking and the traffic congestion that may occur during construction. Whether it is this project or any other development that will occupy what is now a vacant lot, it remains the obligation of the developers and city agencies to assure that traffic congestion never impedes an emergency vehicle, no matter when that call may be sounded. I would also urge Community Board #1 to advocate construction of the East 153rd Street Bridge. Since the Bloomberg administration this bridge between the Grand Concourse and Morris Avenue has been “shovel ready.” It has been mapped for over a century and has not been in place for nearly half a century. It is within three blocks of the site this application is considering. On-street parking is always sought. I am however confident that based on the Area Median Income (40-70% AMI) the introduction of these families will not pose a significant burden on the availability of parking spaces. So too, as this site is within a Transit Zone, mass transit options are a viable, if not more desirable choice. I do acknowledge that the height of the proposed buildings is considerably taller than all adjacent buildings. I do believe however, that the setbacks and “terraces” to be incorporated into the design will minimize the height impact of these structures. I propose that prior to the start of construction, the developer and Community Board #1 agree upon a comprehensive plan whereby ongoing communication can occur and thereby resolve any matter of concern that arises.

Ultimately, I believe that this is a well-designed project, one that will offer families affordable accommodations and a support system on which they can always rely.

I recommend approval of this application.