

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 160251 ZMX
East 147th Street Rezoning
July 10, 2016

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF AN application submitted by MLK Plaza LLC pursuant to Section 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the amendment of the Zoning Map Section No 6c:

1. Changing from an M1-2 District to an R7X District property bounded by Southern Boulevard, a line perpendicular to the southeasterly street line of Southern Boulevard distant 275 feet northeasterly (as measured along the street line) from the point of intersection of the southeasterly street line of Southern Boulevard and the northeasterly street line of East 147th Street, a line 100 feet northeasterly of East 147th Street, Austin Place, East 147th Street, Timpson Place, and a line 100 feet southwesterly of East 147th Street;
2. Changing from an M1-3 District to an R7X District, property bounded by Timpson Place, East 147th Street, Austin Place, and a line 100 feet southwesterly of East 147th Street; and
3. Establishing within a proposed R7X District a C1-4 District bounded by Southern Boulevard, a line perpendicular to the southeasterly street line of Southern Boulevard distant 275 feet northeasterly (as measured along the street line) from the point of intersection of the southeasterly street line of Southern Boulevard and the northeasterly street line of East 147th Street, a line midway between Southern Boulevard and Timpson Place, and a line 100 feet southwesterly of East 147th Street.

Borough of The Bronx, Community District #1, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated May 9, 2016, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-385.

BACKGROUND

MLK Plaza LLC (the applicant) is the owner of property located on Block 2600, Lots 187, 213, 220 and 222. This site is located on the North side of East 147th Street, between Timpson Street on the East and Austin Place on the West. In total this site consists of approximately 24,143 square feet. Existing land use on each lot includes:

Lot 187: A one-story parking garage with nine bays and an exterior parking area able to accommodate a multiple vehicles. Lot 187 consists of 6,863 square feet.

Lot 213: This site is used as an outdoor parking facility. Lot 213 consists of approximately 12,280 square feet.

Lot 220: A two-story residential building occupies this lot. The lot area approximates 2,500 square feet. This building is vacant

Lot 222: A two-story residential building occupies this lot. The lot area approximates 2,500 square feet. This building is vacant.

Approving this application will amend the Zoning Map, including the Development Site and surrounding Lots, thusly:

From: M1-2, to R7X: Block 2600, Lots p/o 30, 47, 49, 50, 51, p/o 89, 96, 99, 100, 103, 131, 186, 187, 213, 220 and 222

From: M1-2 to R7X, M1-2 to R7X/C1-4, & M1-3 to R7X/C1-4, C1-4 overlay measuring 100 feet deep from Southern Boulevard on the northeast and southeast corners of East 147th Street: On portions of Lots 30, 47, 49, 50 and 131

In addition, approving this application will offer a text amendment of the New York City Zoning Resolution (“ZR”) Appendix F to classify the Project Area as a mandatory inclusionary housing (MIH) designated area.

These zoning amendments will facilitate construction of a 12-story residential building, offering 165 units of affordable housing to low and moderate income families under the ELLA program.

Details of the proposed residential building include:

- 12-story residential building, rising a maximum of 125 feet. The building will feature three vertical sections, the first rising 1-6 stories, the second rising 6-9 stories and the third rising 9-12 floors.
- The proposed building will consist of 164,592 gross square feet of development with 6 FAR.
- Unit size will include:
 - 16 studio units approximating: 525 square feet
 - 67 one-bedroom units approximating: 640 square feet
 - 61 two-bedroom units approximating: 820 square feet
 - 21 three-bedroom units approximating: 1,060 square feet

The applicant intends to offer:

46 units for the formally homeless
13 units with a family income at or below 90% of AMI
106 units with a family income at or below 60% of AMI

Additional features offered in each unit will include:

- Granite countertops
- Cherry wood flooring
- Dishwasher in each unit
- Stainless steel appliances in each unit.

These features will be offered to all those residing in this building regardless of income eligibility.

It is intended that this development will satisfy a LEED Gold status with common areas featuring:

- Naturally lit corridors
- A community room approximating 1,003 square feet
- On-site laundry facilities
- No on-site parking is proposed, given the waiver as available pursuant to the Zoning for Quality and Affordability Act text amendment dated March 22, 2016. The applicant reserves the option of including some interior parking prior to the building's final design being adopted.
- Recreational access and Green roof access from four separate landings:
 - B-Level: 1,462 square feet
 - 1st Floor: 1,428 square feet
 - 7th Floor: 1,341 square feet
 - 9th Floor: 950 square feet

Street trees and foundation plantings will grace the building's sidewalk areas and main entrance

Existing development of the surrounding community is predominately characterized by low and mid-rise industrial buildings, numerous off-street parking enclosed garages, one and two family homes and mid-rise residential buildings. Present as well are numerous undeveloped, vacant properties. Much of the industrial functions pertain to auto-related uses. Noticeably absent is easy access to retail activity that typifies a residential community. Subway service via the #6 Lexington Avenue line is located on East 149th Street at Southern Boulevard, approximately two blocks northwest of the site. Bus service operates on Southern Boulevard and on East 149th Street.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and given a Negative Declaration meaning that the proposed action this application will facilitate will have no impact on the environment. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on May 9, 2016.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #1 held a public hearing on this application and voted to approve it with modifications. The vote was 13 in favor, four opposed and zero abstaining. The modifications included:

1. That the Rental Management Company hired by MLK Plaza LLC seek to obtain another management company besides Wavecrest Management for the site.
2. That the property which the Community Board voted to exclude from the proposed rezoning be continued the street address is 860 East 147th Street, Bronx, New York (Block 2600, Lot 96), and not be included in the rezoning action for residential use
3. That the rezoning doesn't harm any other businesses within the area where the rezoning is to occur.
4. That Bronx Community Board #1 receive 50 percent Community Preference as to building rentals.
5. Upon approval of the rezoning that the Board receives ongoing reports on how many Community Board #1 residents are hired during the construction period and post-construction permanent hiring for the development.
6. During the development process that MLK Plaza LLC provides optimal greening of project area and along the streets immediately surrounding the project.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on this application on June 23, 2016. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. Also present was the owner of property located across East 147th Street. A representative of the owner spoke to request that the scope of this proposed rezoning exclude their property in order that a hotel be constructed on this site. It was noted that if the current Manufacturing District is rezoned to an R7X District, the hotel could not be constructed. MLK Plaza LLC, requested that this exclusion not be granted. No other members of the public were present and no other testimony was given. The hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Residential development in The Bronx continues to break all records. So too, the need for affordable housing in New York City has reached unprecedented levels. Therefore properties heretofore zoned for manufacturing uses; where such use is marginal if not entirely absent, it is I believe entirely appropriate to rezone for residential purposes.

In this specific case, MLK Plaza will transform a block where much of the existing development consists of vacant wood-frame buildings and underutilized garages, into a well-conceived residential building featuring 165 units of affordable housing. I am especially pleased to note that this project will seek a LEED Gold rating and that a Platinum rating may be realized. Key to this is objective is the substantial amount of green-roof space that will be included and that the common areas will benefit from natural lighting. Given the overall “mixed-built profile” of the surrounding community, the inclusion of a two-story glass entrance will not only allow for substantial natural lighting in the new building’s lobby, but at night this entrance will serve as a beacon to all who walk through this community.

At my public hearing I note that owners of property located across East 147th Street from where MLK Plaza will be constructed, have asked that their lots be excluded from this rezoning proposal. After reviewing the matter, I believe that it is necessary to include all those lots that have been identified for the R7X designation. I base my position on the fact that to date, no development pursuant to the M1-1 District has taken place within the proposed rezoning area and that construction of affordable residential development is urgently needed throughout our city.

I recommend approval of this application, and that the full scope of what the Zoning Amendment as proposed herein be approved.