

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 090196 MMX
PUTNAM GREENWAY CITY MAP CHANGE**

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

In the matter of an application, submitted by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter, Section 5-420 *et. seq.* of the New York City Administration Code, for an amendment to the City Map involving:

- The establishment of a park running generally alongside the Major Deegan Expressway, between West 230th Street and Van Cortlandt Park South; and
- The establishment of a park addition to Van Cortlandt Park, between Van Cortlandt Park South and The Bronx-Westchester County Line,

Including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District #8, Borough of The Bronx, in accordance with Map. No. 13129, dated May 21, 2010, and signed by the Borough President.

BACKGROUND

Approving this application would amend the City Map by:

- Mapping as parkland a 2.5 mile segment of the decommissioned Putnam Railroad Right-of-Way (ROW) extending from the Bronx/Westchester County Line through Van Cortlandt Park to West 230th Street as a pedestrian and bicycle greenway.

This property, the Putnam Line Greenway, is comprised of two distinctly different portions. The northern portion of the greenway begins at Van Cortlandt Park South and extends north through Van Cortlandt Park to the border of Westchester County. This northern portion of the greenway is 1.7 miles long and is currently functioning as a pedestrian and bicycle path. Part of this portion of the greenway, closest to Van Cortlandt Park South, already contains an asphalt path. However, the majority of this portion of the greenway consists of a woodchip path. This portion of the greenway is located within a former rail right of way, and some of the historic railway infrastructure still exists, such as abandoned train stop shelter structure. This portion of the greenway is approximately 70 feet wide and extends through a scenic wooded portion of the park. The path is presently used by walkers and off-road bicyclists.

The southern portion of the greenway consists of approximately .8 mile of abandoned rail right-of-way (ROW) owned by CSX. This portion of the greenway ranges from 20 to 50 feet wide and does not currently have any public access. The entire southern portion of the greenway is currently unimproved and unutilized. Tall marsh grasses grow along the corridor, indicating that this land is marshy, with possible standing water. This portion of the greenway is not maintained and contains litter and rubbish.

This portion of the greenway runs immediately adjacent to the Major Deegan Expressway (I-87) for its entirety. From West 230th Street to West 238th Street, the greenway is bordered on the west by vacant parcels, industrial uses and street ends. It passes underneath West 231st, West 233rd, West 234th and West 238th Streets and Van Courtlandt Park South. Throughout this area, the greenway is separated from the Major Deegan on the east by a barrier and chain link fence and from vacant and industrial lands on the west by another chain link fence.

The Parks Department has reported that it has dedicated \$2.3 million in the budget for the development of the northern portion of the greenway within Van Cortlandt Park from Van Courtlandt Park South, north to the Westchester County line. Presently no funds are dedicated to the acquisition or development of the southern portion of the greenway.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on August 9, 2010. This application has been reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and received an Unlisted Declaration. Unlisted actions are not identified as either Type I or Type II Actions. In this matter the Department of Parks and Recreation received an Unlisted Action, pursuant to SEQRA.

COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #8 held a public hearing on this matter on October 12, 2010. A vote recommending approval of this application was 33 in favor, two against and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on this matter on October 14, 2010. Representatives of the Parks Department were present and spoke in favor of this application. No other members of the public testified and the hearing was closed.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

The development of a network of bicycle and pedestrian greenways throughout the Bronx is a high priority of the Bronx Borough President's Office and something that will serve the health, recreation and travel needs of Bronx residents. The Putnam Greenway will provide a recreational outlet as well as an alternative transportation route for residents and visitors, and will serve as a potential link to the envisioned Harlem River Greenway.

Approval of this application will establish as mapped parkland the existing bicycle and pedestrian path within Van Cortlandt Park and lay the groundwork for the development of the southern portion of the greenway from Van Cortlandt Park South to West 230th Street. Recognizing that the southern portion of the greenway has yet to be acquired and developed, I intend to work closely with the Parks Department to ensure completion of this project in the near term and to monitor the undeveloped site to avoid the attraction of litter and illegal dumping within the interim.

I recommend approval of this application.