

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NOS:
C 150152 ZMX, C 150153 HUX, C 150154 HAX, C 120323 MMX
Melrose Commons North RFP Site C
January 12, 2015

DOCKET DESCRIPTIONS

C 150152 ZMX

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter, for an amendment of the Zoning Map Section Nos. 6a and 6c:

1. Changing from an R7-2 District to an R8 District property bounded by the centerline of the former Melrose Crescent*, a line 100 feet northeasterly of East 161st Street, a line 320 feet southeasterly of Melrose Avenue, East 162nd Street*, and a line 270 feet southeasterly of Melrose Avenue;
2. Establishing within an existing R7-2 District a C1-4 District bounded by East 163rd Street, a line 270 feet southeasterly of Melrose Avenue, a line midway between East 163rd Street and East 162nd Street, and Melrose Avenue; and
3. Establishing within existing and proposed R8 Districts a C1-4 District bounded by:
 - a. East 163rd Street*, the southwesterly boundary line of a Park* and its northwesterly and southeasterly prolongations, Washington Avenue, Elton Avenue, a line 160 feet southwesterly of East 163rd Street, and a line 270 feet southeasterly of Melrose Avenue; and
 - b. East 162nd Street*, Elton Avenue, the centerline of the former Melrose Crescent*, a line 100 feet northeasterly of East 161st Street, and a line 320 feet southeasterly of Melrose Avenue;

Borough of The Bronx, Community District #3, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only), dated November 17, 2014.

*Note: Melrose Crescent is proposed to be de-mapped, East 162nd and East 163rd Streets are proposed to be re-aligned and a Park is proposed to be mapped under a concurrent related application (C 120323 MMX) for a change to the City Map.

C 150153 HUX

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) pursuant to Section 505 of Article 15 of the General Municipal (Urban Renewal) Law of New York State and Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the Third Amendment to the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan, Borough of The Bronx, Community District #3.

C 150154 HAX

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- 1) Pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
 - a) The designation of property located at 427/441 East 161st Street, 432/446 East 162nd Street, and 897/903 Elton Avenue (Block 2383, Lots 19, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, and 39), including a proposed to be de-mapped portion of the street bed of Melrose Crescent between East 161st Street and East 162nd Streets, as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - b) An Urban Development Action Area Project for such areas; and

- 2) Pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer to be selected by HPD;

To facilitate development of a six to 12-story mixed-use building with approximately 203 units of affordable housing, 60 units of supportive housing and 8,903 square feet of ground-floor retail space, Borough of The Bronx, Community District #3.

C 120323 MMX

IN THE MATTER OF an application, submitted by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter, and Section 5-430 *et/ seq.* of the New York City Administrative Code for an amendment of the City Map involving;

- The elimination, discontinuance and closing of Melrose Crescent between East 163rd Street and Elton Avenue;
- The establishment of the prolongation of East 163rd Street east to Brook Avenue;
- The establishment of the prolongation of East 162nd Street east to Elton Avenue;
- The elimination of Public Place between East 162nd Street and East 163rd Street;
- The establishment of Parkland between East 162nd Street and East 163rd Street;
- The extinguishment of portions of sewer easements; and
- The adjustment of grades necessitated thereby;

Including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District #3, Borough of The Bronx, in accordance with Map No. 13134 dated May 29, 2014, and signed by the Borough President.

BACKGROUND

Approval of these four applications will facilitate the construction of a mixed use development which will include construction of two buildings offering approximately 262 residential units, plus ground floor retail space consisting of 8,699 square feet. The site is known as Melrose Commons North, Site C. The four ULURP applications requiring approval will:

- **Amend the Zoning Map: C 150152 ZMX**
- **Amend the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan: C 150153 HUX**
- **Designate property as an Urban Renewal Action Area & Disposition of said property: C 150154 HAX**
- **Amend the City Map: C 120323 MMX**

The project area for these applications includes Block 2383 (Lots 19, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35 and 39) as well as Block 2384, (Lots 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 25, 28, 32, 38, 48, 8900, 8901, AR023). The site also includes property currently located in the bed of Melrose Crescent, between East 161st Street and East 163rd Street, as well as property located in the bed of Brook Avenue, between East 163rd Street and Elton Avenue. In total, the Project Area is comprised of thirty tax lots, the boundaries of which include East 163rd Street on the north, East 161st Street on the south, Elton Avenue on the east and Melrose Avenue on the west. The project area approximates 88,100 square feet of property, of which 32,000 square feet defines the development site for Melrose Commons Site C. The remaining property, approximately 56,100 square feet is to be developed under a separate ULURP known as Melrose Commons Site B.

A majority of the property included in this application are vacant lots and/or fall within the bed of unbuilt streets. Exceptions include Block 2383, Lot 19 on which there is a vacant industrial

building which is owned by HPD and will be demolished pursuant to the development of Site C. There are two occupied four-story residential buildings located on Block 2384, Lots 7 and 9. A Green Thumb Community Garden is located on Block 2384, Lots 9, 10, 12, and 13. Industrial buildings occupy Block 2384, Lots 14, 16 and 20. These locations fall within Melrose Commons Site B.

C 150152 ZMX

The Project Area comprised of Blocks 2383 and 2384 is currently zoned R7-2 and R8, with a C1-4 overlay along East 161st Street and on Melrose Avenue. This application will extend the existing R8 District within Block 2383 and 2384, west towards Melrose Avenue and extend the existing C1-4 overlay along East 161st Street, from the corner of Elton Avenue and East 161st Street to the corner of Elton Avenue and along a portion of East 162nd Street, and establish an C1-4 overlay extending along East 163rd Street, between Melrose and Elton Avenues.

C 150153 HUX

Pending approval, this application is the third amendment of the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan (MCURP). This amendment will, among other actions:

- Eliminate Melrose Crescent
- Remapping of East 162nd Street
- Removal of height restrictions associated with Melrose Commons Site C
- Removal of height restrictions associated with Melrose Commons Site B
- Designate Site 61A and Site 62 as Public Open Space

C 150154 HAX

Approval of this application designates property located at:

- 427/441 East 161st Street
- 432/446 East 162nd Street
- 897/903 Elton Avenue
- Plus a de-mapped portion of the bed of Melrose Crescent between East 161st and East 162nd Streets

As an Urban Development Action Area.

C 120323 MMX

Approving this application will amend the City Map, including

- De-mapping of Melrose Crescent between East 163rd Street and Elton Avenue;
- De-mapping of Public Place between East 162nd & East 163rd Street
- Establishing a park on the former Public Place, between East 162nd & East 163rd Streets

Mayoral Zoning Override

Due to the narrow width of East 162nd Street (50 feet wide), a Mayoral Override is necessary to allow the proposed residential development project to proceed as proposed and conform with the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Section of the Zoning Resolution Section ZR77-22. The R8 zone allows different FAR values based on frontage at wide and narrow streets. Due to the unique site configuration of the development area, the building's mass will front onto East 162nd Street (a narrow street), where the maximum FAR is 6.2. The development calls for a FAR of 7.60, thus the non-compliance with ZR77-22. The Mayoral Override will allow the building to be designed as proposed. Taken as an entirety however, the proposed building does conform to FAR requirements.

Existing development of the surrounding community is typified by mid-rise, recently constructed residences. Commercial activity and bus transportation are found on East 161st and East 163rd Streets, Melrose Avenue, and Third Avenue. The main campus of Boricua College is situated to the east of Melrose Commons Site C. There is no subway access within a five block radius of this site.

Development Proposal for Melrose Commons Site C

The project scope of development includes construction of two residential buildings to be located on Melrose Commons Site C.

Building 1: Elton Crossing-Family Development **Total Development Investment \$72 Million**

To be known as Elton Crossing, this mixed use building will be located on the north side of East 161st Street at the junction of East 161st Street and Elton Avenue. The proposed "U" shaped building will extend north on Elton Avenue to East 162nd Street, occupying the south side of East 162nd Street, including property located in the bed of Melrose Crescent, an unbuilt street which is to be de-mapped pursuant to **Application C 120323 MMX**. It will range in height between six stories on the western section of the building fronting on East 161st Street, to a maximum of 12 stories (maximum height 116.8 feet) which will front on Elton Avenue and on East 162nd Street. Elton Crossing will approximate a total of 220,000 square feet. Residential access to Elton Crossing will be provided on East 162nd Street, as will vehicular access to the off-street parking facility.

Features of Elton Crossing include:

- Doorman services between Noon--Midnight
- 203 units, including;
 - 3% studios-approximating: 450-500 square feet
 - 43% one-bedroom-approximating: 600-650 square feet
 - 48% two-bedrooms-approximating: 800-900 square feet
 - 6% three-bedrooms-approximating: 900-1,000 square feet

- Roof garden area offering 2,600 square feet accessible on the 11th floor
- Landscaped court yard for passive recreation
- Children's interior play room approximating 300 square feet (adjacent to laundry room)
- Landscaped court yard for passive recreation
- Basement storage area for bicycles
- Off street parking accommodating 32 vehicles
- Solar panel roof installments to provide electric service for common areas.

Retail space approximating 8,200 square feet will be accessible on East 161st Street.

Affordable rents will range from the very low (\$17,000 annual households earnings) to moderate income families (\$70,000 annual household earnings) including:

- 8% of the units affordable to 30% of Area Median Income (AMI)
- 11% of the units affordable to 40% AMI
- 11% of the units affordable to 50% AMI
- 46% of the units affordable to 60% AMI
- 24% of the units affordable to 80% AMI

Building 2: Melrose Commons Veterans Supportive Housing
Total Development Investment \$20 Million

Construction of a new nine-story residential building will offer permanent housing for homeless veterans with mental health conditions. Included will be supportive housing accommodations for 58-residents residing in studio apartments, each apartment consisting of between 350-360 square feet. Kitchen areas are to be located in each unit. A full one-bedroom unit will be provided to the building's superintendent. Residents will also have access to:

- On site case workers
- Substance abuse counsellors
- Programming and job training sessions
- Community room approximating 800 square feet
- Exterior garden area for passive recreation
- Installation of solar panels to provide for common area energy (lighting)

Additional commitments to the community include:

- Employment to qualified residents residing in Bronx Community District #3
- Community room & kitchen will be available for neighborhood meetings and events
- Local maintenance contractors will be solicited for bids
- A Community Advisory Committee made up of local residents and elected officials will be established to address operational issues

This project will benefit from a New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Project Based Section 8 Program. Pursuant to this program, any resident accepted will be assured that no more than 30% of their income will be required for monthly rental charges. The balance will be financed through this Section 8 Program. Critical to this program, these benefits are associated with the residential unit, not the resident. As such, a resident need not apply for Section 8 subsidies.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

These applications have been reviewed pursuant to SEQR and CEQR and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified these applications as complete on November 17, 2014.

BRONX COMMUNITY DISTRICT PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community District #3 held a public hearing on December 9, 2014. A unanimous vote recommending approval of these applications was 26 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on January 6, 2015. Representatives of the applicants were present and spoke in favor of these applications. No other members of the public were in attendance and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

I am especially proud to acknowledge that upon the approval of these applications and the build-out such approvals will facilitate, development of Melrose Commons will have created approximately 3,700 units of newly constructed residences. I am even more proud to note that the realization of this milestone offers residents a wide range of accommodations including town houses, cooperative apartments, affordable senior citizen housing, affordable rentals and market rate housing. The realization of this endeavor is in no small part a tribute to the residents of Melrose, the dedication of people like the late Yolanda Garcia, and to our elected officials and city agencies who have stood by and supported the reconstruction of this community for the past 20 years.

I offer my enthusiastic support for the two projects approving these applications will facilitate with one notable caveat pertaining to Elton Crossing. I recommend that the number of three-bedroom units be increased from the present 6% of total units, to 10%. Given the demographics of this community, I believe it is essential that significant projects of this kind include a larger percentage of three-bedroom residences.

I am very appreciative of the dedication and professionalism of those who will oversee and manage the residence for homeless veterans that approval of these applications will facilitate.

This is a population that desperately requires our compassion and care, both of which this new facility will provide. I also support the creation of a Community Advisory Committee which will include a diverse representation of neighborhood residents and elected officials. As such I am assured that together we will be able to provide all that is necessary in order that these worthy men and women can live in dignity and with purpose.

Beyond the many benefits development of Melrose Commons Site C will bring to this Bronx community, Elton Crossing will accommodate residents with an expanded range of income variations. This range includes a low of 30% AMI, to as much as 80% AMI, all residing within this one development. At a time when our city's neighborhoods are increasingly segregated based on income, the broader income diversity to be offered at Elton Crossing is very timely and is vital for a community such as Melrose.

Just as exciting is the way by which rent subsidies will be afforded to those seeking accommodations at the veterans supportive housing development. Here, rather than requiring an individual to apply for rent subsidies, such benefits will be assigned to the unit through the New York City Housing Authority's Section 8 Program. As such, whomever resides in this facility, their rent will never exceed more than 30% of their monthly income. This not only reduces the rent-stress placed on low-income individuals, but virtually guarantees those operating this facility that their support services costs will be satisfied by a reliable source of income. Both these programs are a tribute to our current administration and the realization that if we are to resolve homelessness and improve the quality of housing for our diverse population, innovative ways to address these challenges are essential.

I am very pleased to concur with the unanimous decision of Bronx Community Board #3 and recommend approval of these applications.