

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION  
ULURP APPLICATION NOS: C 150197 ZSX & N 150196 HAX  
February 13, 2015**

**DOCKET DESCRIPTION**

**IN THE MATTER OF** an application submitted by the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) and South Bronx Overall Economic Development Organization pursuant to Section 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the grant of a special permit pursuant to Section 74-902 of the Zoning Resolution to modify the requirements of Section 24-111 (Maximum floor area ratio for certain community facility uses) to permit the allowable community facility floor area ration of Section 24-11 (Maximum Floor Area Ratio and Percentage of Lot Coverage) to apply to a non-profit institution with sleeping accommodations in connection with a proposed eight-story building on property located at 986-996 Washington Avenue a.k.a. 489-493 East 164<sup>th</sup> Street (Block 2369, Lots 1-5, 53, 54, 90 & 153), in an M1-1/R7-2 District, with a Special Mixed Use District (MX-7), Borough of The Bronx, Community District #3.

Plans for this proposal are on file with the City Planning Commission and may be seen in Room 3N,22 Reade Street, New York, N.Y. 10007.

**BACKGROUND**

Approving these applications will facilitate two objectives:

1. Pursuant to the approval of a Special Permit, increase the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) from 3.44, up to 6.5 pursuant to Zoning Resolution Section 74-902 *et.seq.* as defined in Section 24-11 as it applies to the proposed development to be located at 986-996 Washington Avenue, (Block 2369, Lots 1-5, 53,54, 90 & 153), *the site*; The building will not exceed 5.6 FAR
2. Construction of an eight-story building with a cellar, which will offer a total of 95 units of housing for low income families, including 54 units for individuals who are the formerly homeless with persistent mental health disorders.

The site is located in Bronx Community District #3 and is zoned MX-7 (M1-1/R7-2).

As proposed by the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Organization and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (the applicants) the development of Block 2369, Lots 1-5, 53, 54, 90 & 153, will accommodate a-not-for-profit institution with sleeping accommodations (Use Group 3). The building will offer 94 units (+1 superintendent) of housing, with approximately 60 percent (57 units) of these units devoted to accommodating homeless individuals with mental disabilities that are deemed able to care for themselves. The residents offered the studio units will be assigned to them by Urban Pathways, which specializes in single men and women supportive housing programs. The remaining 38 units will accommodate families at or below 60 percent of Area Median Income (AMI). As this

development is considered “supportive housing” the units will not be subject to HPD’s lottery.

The proposed building site is located on the northeast corner of Washington Avenue at East 164<sup>th</sup> Street. The property consists of nine contiguous lots, offering a total lot area of 12,543 square feet. Lots 1, 2, 53, 54, 90 and 153 are vacant and owned by HPD. Block 2369, Lots 3-5 consist of two vacant privately owned homes and one occupied home. All three structures will be demolished.

The proposed building consists of 86,032 square feet. Features of the proposed development include:

- 57- Studio Units measuring: 450 square feet
- 19- 1 bedroom units measuring: 700-750 square feet
- 19- 2 bedroom units measuring: 800-850 square feet

- An interior recreation room (aka community room) offering 798 square feet of space
- An exercise room offering 481 square feet
- An on-site laundry room
- A tenant’s bicycle storage room
- Three tenant storage rooms
- Security Office
- Administrative Offices and conference rooms to be used by Urban Pathways
- No off-street parking will be provided
- No on-site commercial or retail space is being provided.

Additional amenities will include a rear exterior garden for passive recreation consisting of 2,800 square feet, plus an additional children’s garden and active play area for youngsters offering 691 square feet, yielding a total of approximately 3,491 square feet. An outdoor terrace and green roof will be accessible to residents on the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor. This area will offer 1,788 square feet of space for quiet relaxation. Additionally, an extensive installation of green roof native plantings will be installed on the building setback and visible on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. No access to this area will be possible. The gross total of all green roof installation will approximate 7,000 square feet.

Energy conservation will include the installation of a co-generating facility that will continuously provide the facility with electric power for all common area lighting as well as hot water. In the event of a power failure, the co-generating function will offer electricity to power elevator service and common area illumination. This co-generation will also provide electric power to the 60 percent of the units that are supportive housing (studios).

Employees include, three on-site case managers, one peer-specialist, as well as two porters, and six security personnel providing 24-hour coverage. SOBRO is also participating in NYSERDA’s NPP Enterprise Green Communities Program.

Existing development of the surrounding community is typified by recently constructed mid-rise residential buildings and two family wood-frame homes. Located within this same community are low-rise industrial buildings and commercial development offering auto-related services. Commercial activity and bus transportation are available on East 163<sup>rd</sup> Street. There is no subway service available within a four block radius of the site.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION**

These applications have been reviewed pursuant CEQR and SEQRA and received a Negative Declaration. These applications were certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on January 5, 2015.

## **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING**

Bronx Community Board #3 held a public hearing on these applications on January 13, 2015. A vote recommending approval of these applications was 24 in favor, three against, and zero abstaining. This vote is considered non-complying given that the date of the Community Board's hearing occurred prior to the time allocated for such a hearing.

## **BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING**

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on these applications on February 5, 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**

Providing permanent shelter for our city's homeless and constructing affordable housing for our city's families are two prime objectives the proposed development known as New Roads Plaza will achieve. Indeed, I was so impressed with this project I allocated \$1 million to facilitate its construction.

Highlighting the numerous aspects of this project that warrant attention include:

- Urban Pathways' excellent track record for the care of our homeless citizens;
- The inclusion of a comprehensive green roof installation throughout the facility;
- The co-generation of electric services which will dramatically reduce energy consumption by heating the building's water supply and guarantee electric power for common area lighting, elevator service and electricity for the studio units in the event of a power failure;

- A comprehensive staff including three case managers and one peer specialist to care the formally homeless population and a full staff of maintenance personnel to oversee the operation of the building and offer security.

I acknowledge that to achieve the build-out of this project approval of the Special Permit allowing an increase in the FAR from 3.44 to a maximum of 6.5, is necessary. This substantial increase in FAR requires this project be subject to the comprehensive review ULURP does facilitate. As such, I note that New Roads Plaza will not exceed 5.26 FAR and that this 8-story building compliments the contextual profile of the surrounding community. I also acknowledge the endorsement given to this matter by Bronx Community Board #3.

I am very pleased to recommend approval of this application.