

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 150301 MCX
Fordham Plaza Major Concession
July 10, 2015

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Transportation, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for a major concession to Fordham Road Business Improvement District (BID) at Fordham Plaza bounded by East Fordham Road, Third Avenue, and East 189th Street.

BACKGROUND

Approving this application will facilitate the establishment of a major concession agreement as pertaining to Fordham Plaza. This major concession agreement will be between the New York City Department of Transportation which has direct jurisdiction of Fordham Plaza and the Fordham Road Business Improvement District (BID) whose boundaries include Fordham Plaza. Pursuant to ULURP, this review is necessary given that the size of Fordham Plaza exceeds 42,000 feet and is in fact 75,000 square feet. Fordham Plaza is located on the south side of Fordham Road, bounded by Third Avenue on the east, Webster Avenue on the west and East 188th Street to the south.

Fordham Plaza is sustaining a complete and total reconstruction, the cost of which is anticipated to be \$25 million. Completion of construction will occur in the Fall 2015. Highlights of this construction project include:

- 1) Installation of standard Department of Transportation pavers and lighting to minimize ongoing maintenance costs
- 2) Extensive use of LED-street lighting and pedestrian lighting to improve security and enhance evening use of the plaza
- 3) Improved access to railroad and bus services as available at Fordham Plaza
- 4) Reconfiguration of roadbeds to improve traffic flow and expand pedestrian use of Fordham Plaza

Amenities to be included:

- 1) 68 trees
- 2) 548 shrubs
- 3) 734 perennial flowering plants
- 4) 30 moveable tables
- 5) 120 moveable chairs
- 6) 2 reduced pressure water valves for on-site maintenance and plant care

Metro North Commuter Railroad operates and maintains commuter railroad services below Fordham Plaza. Bus transportation operating on Fordham Road includes Transit Authority bus routes serving The Bronx, plus Bee-Line Bus Transit which connects Bronx commuters to destinations in Westchester County. Subway service is available on the Grand Concourse, approximately five blocks west of Fordham Plaza.

Facts pertaining to Fordham Plaza include:

- 1) 80,000 pedestrians pass through Fordham Plaza daily
- 2) Fordham Road is the busiest commercial district in The Bronx
- 3) 12 major bus routes converge at Fordham Plaza accommodating 41,000 passengers daily.
- 4) SBS-12 express bus service includes a stop at Fordham Plaza
- 5) Fordham Station of Metro North is the 4 busiest station in the system serving 11,000 passengers daily
- 6) Fordham University's main campus is one block north of Fordham Plaza.

Finalization of the major concession agreement between the DOT and Fordham Road BID will result in:

- 1) The BID will assume full responsibility for maintaining Fordham Plaza. This includes:
 - Sanitation and routine cleaning of the plaza
 - Snow removal
 - Maintaining of all planted installations and landscaping
 - Maintaining of all moveable furniture
- 2) The BID will assume full liability insurance costs
- 3) The BID will assume responsibility for issuing sub-concession agreements to vendors and in return realize income as paid to the BID by these concessionaires. Preliminary concessionaires include:
 - 1 food concession
 - 3 retail concessions
 - A Farmers Market

In addition, the BID will be able to offer "limited sponsorship" rights to businesses. Examples include:

- Provision of tables, umbrellas, benches which can be labeled "as provided by This label cannot exceed 10 percent of the total space of the table, umbrella or bench
- WI-FI services provided by Yahoo, etc.

Commercial events such as the showing of movies, a street fare, or concerts, can be sponsored at Fordham Plaza in return for which the BID will receive a permit fee.

- 4) The DOT will maintain infrastructure including roadbeds, pedestrian sidewalks, lighting and stairways.
- 5) Any income realized by the BID that exceeds the anticipated operating costs associated with maintaining and operating the major concession will be placed into an escrow account. These funds may only be used for expenses associated with maintaining and/or expanding the overall profile of Fordham Plaza.
- 6) The DOT will require quarterly reports as provided by the BID which will show all monetary activity.

Development of the surrounding community includes Fordham University to the north, Theodore Roosevelt High School and a “Class A” office building known as 1 Fordham Plaza to the east, commercial venues to the west. Residential development is typified by five- and six-story residences.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQR and received a Type II Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on April 20, 2015.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #6 held a public hearing on this application on June 10, 2015. A vote unanimous vote recommending approval of this application with modifications was 25 in favor, zero opposed, and zero abstaining. The modifications associated with this vote are attached to this document.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on this matter on June 12, 2015. No speakers were present and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S RECOMMENDATION

Fordham Plaza, Fordham Road and the Fordham Road Business Improvement District together represent one of the most important assets to The Bronx and indeed the City. Fordham Plaza serves as a junction for all forms of mass transit, including the most popular SBS bus service in New York City and the fourth busiest Metro North station in the entire service region, serving 11,000 commuters daily. Additionally, this plaza provides a pedestrian passage way for over 80,000 people per day, and a public space that caters to the thousands of residents and tourists alike. Fordham Road is one of New York City’s busiest commercial hubs, offering essential east-west access across the borough. The Fordham Road Business Improvement District (BID) represents some of the most successful locally owned retail outlets and professional offices in Bronx County.

I believe that it is entirely appropriate that the Fordham Road BID and the City's Department of Transportation resolve and establish a major concession to be installed on Fordham Plaza. This binding agreement will allow the BID to realize income from the minor concessions that will be located on the plaza, while also maintaining the plaza in a manner most appropriate for such a central location.

I recommend approval of this application.