

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION C160161 PQX
LSSNY-Early Life Child Center 2**

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF AN application submitted by the Administration for Children Services (ACS) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the acquisition of property located at 888 Westchester Avenue (block 2696, Lot 30) for continued use as a child care facility.

BACKGROUND

Approval of this application will facilitate a lease renewal for property located at 888 Westchester Avenue, (Block 2696, lot 30) This one story building occupies the southwest corner of Westchester Avenue and Rev. James A. Polite Avenue, in Bronx Community District #2, in an R7-1 zone. It includes 26,058 square feet and has been serving the surrounding community as a child day care center since 1971.

The child day care center is operated by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and provides daily activities for up to 135 children ages 3 to 4. The center's program commences at 7:30 a.m. and concludes at 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Children are taken to and from the center by parents. A program staff includes 32 professional and paraprofessional employees, as well as a support staff supplemented by volunteers and interns. The day's programming includes:

- Breakfast, lunch and a mid-afternoon snack each day
- Supervised playtime composed of both indoor and outdoor recreational activities.
- Educational programming specifically designed to three and four year old toddlers.

The child care center occupies the entire one-story building, including a cellar level and rooftop, for a total of 18,978 square feet of interior space and approximately 7,080 square feet of rooftop play area. The cellar level includes three pre-school classrooms, one for 3 year old children and the remaining two for 4 year olds. It also has a multi-purpose room, a warming kitchen, a library, storage room, janitor's closet, several offices, a staff lounge, and bathroom facilities for children and staff. The first floor consists of five pre-school classrooms, three for 3 year old children, one for 4 year old children, and the fifth one for both 3 to 4 year olds. The first floor also includes a lobby, bathroom facilities, a commercial kitchen, several offices and storage closets.

The surrounding community is typified by mid-rise multifamily residential buildings. Retail activity can be found three blocks southwest of the child care center on Prospect Avenue and East 160th Street. An elementary school is located one block south of the center, along Rev. James A. Polite Avenue between Westchester Avenue and Dawson Street.

Subway service is available within a three block radius via the 2 and 5 train stations at Prospect Avenue and Intervale Avenue. It is also accessible by the Bx4, Bx4a, Bx17, and Bx6 buses with stops within three blocks of the facility.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

The application has been reviewed and has been determined that it is a type II action pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.5(c)(26) and as such does not require CEQR review. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on April 23, 2018.

COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community District #2 waived its public hearing on this matter.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a meeting on this application of July 17, 2018. A representative was present and spoke in favor of this application. There being no other members of the public present, the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Child day care facilities are an essential service every community requires. Such facilities are beneficial to children, parents and the extended community. For children, they provide a space for social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth. They also provide parents opportunities for personal growth, providing them with time to work, attend school and acquire vocational training.

As I review this application I am mindful of the fact that the building in which this facility is located provides space for the many functions it must satisfy as a daycare center. I am however increasingly aware that this facility, like so many others in The Bronx, is located in a building that lacks ample windows for light inside and therefore appear more like modified industrial buildings on the outside. Perhaps considered an advantage in years past, I believe today these buildings must let the sunshine in. How to rectify this challenge is a matter that warrants consideration between the building's private sector owner and the various city agencies that lease this building. So too is the inclusion of fire retardant sprinkler systems that may save the lives of those who work and attend programs in this building. Over time we have come to better appreciate the importance of building design, most notably how buildings can best safely serve those who use it.

I recommend approval of this application.