

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: 190143 ZMX
Betances VI

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment to the Zoning Map, Section No. 6a;

1. Eliminating from within an existing R6 District a C1-4 District bounded by Willis Avenue, East 147th Street, a line 100 feet southeasterly of Willis Avenue, and East 146th Street;
2. Changing from an R6 District to an R7X District property bounded by Willis Avenue, East 147th Street, a line 175 feet southeasterly of Willis Avenue, a line midway between East 147th Street and East 146th Street, a line 100 feet southeasterly of Willis Avenue and East 146th Street; and
3. establishing within the proposed R7X District a C2-4 District bounded by Willis Avenue, East 147th Street, a line 100 feet southeasterly of Willis Avenue, and East 146th Street;

Borough of The Bronx, Community District #1, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated October 15, 2018.

BACKGROUND

Approving this application will facilitate a Zoning Map amendment sought by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the applicant, in order to pursue construction of a 15-story residential building with commercial space accessible from the ground floor. This Development Site totals approximately 27,490 square feet of property and divided into two Lots, (Block 2991, Lot 1) and (Block 2991, Lot 101). The site is bounded by Willis Avenue on the west, East 147th Street on the north, East 146th Street on the south and Brook Avenue to the east. This proposed development is known as Betances VI.

Block 2991, Lot 1

Lot 1 approximates 27,164 square feet of property, with frontage on East 147th Street. Located on Lot 1 is 400 East 147th Street, a 5-story, 49 unit residential building owned by NYCHA. This lot also includes a 1-story commercial building the addresses of which are 472 and 474 Willis Avenue, and a playground. This playground approximates 7,093 square feet. The NYCHA building and playground will remain.

Block 2991, Lot 101

Lot 101 consists of approximately 326 square feet of vacant property fronting Willis Avenue. This parcel is approximately 1-foot, 7 inches wide, extending two hundred feet from East 146th Street to East 147th Street, forming the western edge of the Development Site.

Reapportion Lot 1 and Lot 101

The applicant is requesting that the Department of Finance reapportion Existing Tax Lot 1 and Tax Lot 101. The Department of Finance has agreed to utilize the same tax lot numbers as heretofore defined as the Development Site. Based on this agreement:

Tax Lot #1:

Currently is: 27,164 square feet

Will be: 17,490 square feet

Tax Lot #101:

Currently is: 326 square feet

Will be: 10,000 square feet

The Proposed Development

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) (the applicant) is proposing to facilitate the construction of a mixed use, 15-story residential building offering approximately 101 units of housing for low-income families as well as space for retail activity. NYCHA will not be funding construction nor will it manage the building, however the site on which this proposed building will be constructed is under NYCHA's jurisdiction. A consortium of organizations will be responsible for construction, ongoing management and on site programming. Total development cost will approximate \$60 million. A key source of this cost will be funded through the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development's Extremely Low and Low Income Affordability (ELLA) Program.

The proposed building will approximate 110,282 gross square feet. The commercial space will offer 8,560 gross square feet. This building will be located on the northeast corner of Willis Avenue at East 146th Street. Residential access will be via East 146th Street, while retail access will be found on Willis Avenue. This development will satisfy Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Option 2, which requires 30 percent of the residential floor area remain permanently affordable.

Unit allocations include:

	# of Units	Gross Square feet (gsf) Ranges
Studio Units:	19	430-- 465 gsf
1-Bedroom units	44	506-- 590 gsf

2-Bedroom units	24	720-- 790 gsf
3-Bedroom units	14	1,101-1,155 gsf

Amenities will include:

Green Roof (not accessible) 2 nd Floor	1,782 net square feet
Green Roof (not accessible) 7 th Floor	1,010 net square feet
Community Room:	713 net square feet
Exterior Terrace for passive recreation	1,100 net square feet
Program Offices:	547 net square feet
Laundry Room:	677 net square feet
Interior Play area for youngsters:	311 net square feet
Bicycle storage room:	768 net square feet

In addition, this proposed building will include retail space approximating:

Commercial Space #1:	1,250 net square feet
Commercial Space #2:	4,250 net square feet + 2,900 net square feet on lower level

Unit Affordability Distribution

The applicant remains in discussion with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the City Council member who represents the community in which Betances VI will be constructed. Preliminary income caps include:

- 30 units will satisfy Option 2
- 5 units will be allocated at 40% of Area Median Income (AMI)
- 5 units will be allocated at 50% of AMI
- 50 units will be allocated at 60% of AMI
- 10 units will be allocated at 80% of AMI
- 1 unit for the superintendent

30 Units for the Homeless and Mentally Disabled

Betances VI will include a set-a-side of 30 units for the formally homeless (as required by Option 2) but who have also been diagnosed with mental disabilities and/or substance abuse and are in recovery. Candidates for these units will be referred by the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene and the Department of Homeless Services. Upon being accepted for residence at Betances VI, this accommodation is considered to be permanent unless the resident fails to satisfy the terms as agreed upon when assuming tenancy. A full-time staff of professional caretakers will be on site during the work week from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Office space composed of 547 square feet has been allocated for staff. During “off hours” the needs of these residents will be overseen by on site security.

Surrounding Development

Residential development in the surrounding community is typified by five-story residences. Retail activity is found on Willis Avenue, Third Avenue and on East 149th Street in an area referred to as The Hub. This area represents one of the busiest shopping districts in The Bronx. This community is also very well served by mass transportation. Access to the #2 and #5 trains is available on East 149th Street, two blocks north of the Betances VI site. Bus transportation operates on Willis Avenue, Third Avenue and on East 149th Street, via the Bx2, Bx4, Bx15, Bx19, Bx21 and SBS41.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to SEQRA and CEQR and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on October 15, 2018.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #1 held public hearing on this application on October 25, 2018. A vote recommending Disapproval with Modifications was taken. Voting to approve this application are three, voting to disapprove this application with modifications are 23 and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on this application on November 14, 2018. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. Representatives of SEIU/32BJ submitted a written statement and offered testimony. A copy of that statement is made part of this recommendation. There being no other members of the public wishing to speak, the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Betances VI represents a unique collaboration that will bring to the Mott Haven community of The Bronx, affordable housing, new retail development, and perhaps most importantly of all, accommodations for some of our city's most needy citizens.

As proposed, this \$60 million project will facilitate development of a NYCHA site located within a two block radius of The Hub, one of our borough's most active retail communities. Consisting of 101 units, and additional retail development, Betances VI will bring to Mott Haven affordable housing ranging from 40% of Area Median Income (AMI) to as much as 80% of AMI. Beyond this however, I am especially supportive of the plan to allocate 30-units to those

who while once homeless, are now able to realize a home of their own. To be sure, these folks will require ongoing assistance as they now attain one of the most important milestones of their lives. To that end, “The Bridge” a social service organization with a proven track record of success, these residents will have access to a host of comprehensive job training programs coupled with mental health care for those with a history of substance abuse. Best of all these accommodations are permanent for those who satisfy their obligation; a financial commitment to pay the rent coupled with a determination to succeed.

I understand Community Board #1’s concerns, particularly around their desire to maintain a continuous dialogue with the partners, and to work towards accommodating area residents.

For me, however, affordable housing is vital, as too is giving people with a troubled past a chance to achieve success, no matter how modest this success may be. As Betances VI will make this possible, I recommend approval of this application.