

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 230060 PQX
Pratt Avenue Retaining Wall and Roadway Reconstruction**

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Transportation, the Department of Design and Construction and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the acquisition of property located on Marolla Place (Block 4922, p/o Lots 12 and 15 to facilitate the reconstruction, maintenance, and inspection of a retaining wall for Pratt Avenue Borough of The Bronx, Community District 12.

BACKGROUND

The Project Area of this application is located on Pratt Avenue which is a narrow street approximately thirty feet wide. It is bounded by Needham Avenue on the south and Marolla Place north. This Project Area includes two privately owned rear yards located on Block 4922, Lots 12 and 15. Lot 15 is composed of 9,605 square feet of property and includes a two-story residential dwelling the address of which is 3653 Marolla Place. This dwelling is composed of 2,316 square feet. Lot 12 includes 4,700 square feet. There is no building address for Block 4922, Lot 12. This area also includes Block 4922, Lot 17 which is vacant and is an unbuilt, mapped portion of Pratt Avenue's right of way. Lot 17 is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation (DOT). In addition, there is an existing temporary easement agreement between the City of New York and the RMJ Motel Corporation that includes a portion of Block 4922 Lot 101 which is a mapped right-of-way of Pratt Avenue. The motel address is 2101 Needham Avenue. It is composed of a low-rise, two story building, consisting of approximately 11,634 square feet. This building currently serves as a homeless shelter. This area is zoned R4.

The existing retaining wall which is in poor condition is located on the east side of Pratt Avenue. It runs 260 linear feet (adjacent to Lots 17 and 101) commencing to the south at Needham Avenue. It turns west, extending an additional 115 linear feet (adjacent to Lots 12 and 15) for a total of 375 linear feet. On the southern end of Pratt Avenue, the wall rises approximately three feet, with a maximum height of 12 feet above grade on the northern end of Pratt Avenue. There is an embedded guardrail with defines the wall's entire length. The Pratt Avenue roadway is in need of repair.

As proposed, a new retaining wall will be constructed, running parallel to the existing retaining wall. Approval of this application will provide for the acquisition of a 25 foot wide permanent easement within a portion of the privately owned Lots 12 and 15. The amount of property proposed to be acquired from Lot 12 is 1,217 square feet and 1,813 square feet from Lot 17. It is this acquisition that mandates ULURP. This easement will allow for routine maintenance of the new structure with a minimum of conflict with activity on Pratt Avenue. The total construction costs for this project will be approximately \$15 million.

The full scope of this project calls for:

- Installing new foundations and supports;
- Installing new wall panels;

- 300 linear feet of new combined sewer infrastructure within Pratt Avenue;
- Reconstructing the built portions of Pratt Avenue including the widening of the street to the façade of the new retaining wall;
- Repaving Pratt Avenue, installing new sidewalks, installing new manhole frames and covers;
- Where necessary, public and private utilities will be replaced;
- When completed, the width of Pratt Avenue is expected to remain at 30-feet;
- Any trees requiring removal will be compensated for by the applicants pursuant to the replacement tree mandates as followed by the City of New York;
- Noise and vibrations caused by construction will be measured and monitored;
- A comprehensive emergency vehicle plan will require the approval of the New York City Fire Department; and
- It is anticipated that this project will conclude in 2027.

Development of the surrounding area is typified by two- to three-story, two-family attached homes. Commercial activity is found on Boston Road and is typified by a laundromat and car dealerships. Bus access via the Bx30 operates on Boston Road. Subway access via the #5 train at the Baychester Avenue station is approximately 0.4 miles from the Pratt Avenue Project Area.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application has been reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on September 19, 2022.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

On October 27, 2022, Bronx Community Board #12 held a public hearing on this application. A unanimous vote recommending approval of this application was 30 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on November 22, 2022. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. There were no other speakers, and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

It is an essential responsibility of city government that the infrastructure on which the public relies is appropriately maintained. In New York the fact that much of this infrastructure was constructed during the first half of the twentieth century means that we must double our vigilance to make certain that public safety is never compromised. It is overwhelmingly apparent that this retaining wall is deteriorating and that it currently poses a potential threat to safety. Therefore, until the new structural improvements can be made to repair the wall, which the full scope is not planned to be completed until 2027, I call upon the Department of Transportation to ensure that appropriate monitoring is being carried out and that any interim measures that need to be taken to protect the structural integrity of the current wall are made. It is concerning that a public safety project will take nearly 5 years to be completed and I would call on the city to coordinate expediting the work as much as possible.

The scope of this retaining wall project poses several additional challenges that I must acknowledge. These include making certain that emergency vehicles have adequate access to the dwellings on Pratt Avenue. I was surprised to learn that this critical issue has yet to be resolved. I would advise DOT, DDC, and DCAS to reach out to FDNY to coordinate any emergency vehicle access needs.

Based on my review of the project, it is clear that trees will need to be removed. Trees are a sensitive issue and one that I am passionate about. As a supporter of the million trees initiative, I believe that trees have a direct correlation with a persons' quality of life. It is important that the local residents are made aware of any trees being removed in advance and commitments need to be made for replanting new trees to replace any that are removed.

Noting my observations, advice, and concerns, I concur with the unanimous decision of Community Board #12 and recommend approval of this application.