

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 230291 ZMX
1460-1480 SHERIDAN BOULEVARD**

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Simone Companies pursuant to Section 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 3d:

1. Changing from an M1-1 District to an R7-3 District property bounded by the northwesterly centerline prolongation of East 172nd Street, The U.S. Pierhead and Bulkhead Line, the westerly boundary line of the New York New Haven & Hartford Railroad right-of-way, a line 300 feet northerly of Westchester Avenue and its westerly prolongation, and Sheridan Expressway; and
2. Establishing within the proposed R7-3 District a C2-4 District bounded by the northwesterly centerline prolongation of East 172nd Street, the U.S. Pierhead and Bulkhead Line, the westerly boundary line of the New York New Haven & Hartford Railroad right-of-way, a line 300 feet northerly of Westchester Avenue and its westerly prolongation, and Sheridan Expressway;

Borough of The Bronx, Community District 9, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated April 10, 2023, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-714.

Related Application: N 230292 ZRX

BACKGROUND

Approval of this application will amend the Zoning Map, Section No. 3d, changing an existing M1-1 District to the proposed R7-3 District and a C2-4 commercial overlay. The Project Area for this proposed zoning change includes Block 3017, Lots 29, 60, 65, 68, 74, and portions of Lots 6 and 28. The total lot area is composed of 194,394 square feet. It is bounded by East 172nd Street and Starlight Park to the north, Sheridan Boulevard to the west, and the Bronx River to the east. Westchester Avenue is located 300 feet south of the Project Area's southern boundary. The Project Area provides a frontage of 1,011 feet onto Sheridan Boulevard, 782 feet along the Bronx River and 134 feet onto East 172nd Street.

Site Facts

- Current M1-1 Zone prohibits residential/commercial development.
- Proposed R7-3 Zone offers a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 6.0 with Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH)
- Proposed C2-4 Commercial Overlay offers a maximum FAR of 2.0.
- The location of this proposed development's proximity to the Bronx River requires compliance with waterfront regulations under Zoning Resolution Section 62-00.

Existing development within the Project Area conforms to the current M1-1 zone. This development includes:

1460 Sheridan Boulevard, Block 3017, Lot 74: A one-story automobile mechanic training facility approximating 2-stories and composed of approximately 14,508 square feet;

1458 Sheridan Boulevard, Block 3017, Lot 68: An off-street truck parking facility. This lot does not belong to the applicant;

1440 Sheridan Boulevard, Block 3017, Lot 65: A three story hotel grandfathered. This lot does not belong to the applicant;

1428 Sheridan Boulevard, Block 3017, Lot 60: A one-story manufacturing building. This lot does not belong to the applicant;

Block 3017, Lot 29: Includes a truck parking facility and four accessory office buildings.

Development located on Block 3017, Lot 74 and Lot 29 will require demolition.

Block 3017, Lot 28: This lot is composed of 8,500 square feet. It is occupied by a auto repair facility. Most of this lot will remain M1-1.

Block 3017, Lot 6: This lot is composed of 97,985 square feet. It is used as a right-of-way by Amtrak.

The Project Area is located within a Coastal Zone, Flood Zone, Transit Zone and a FRESH Zone.

Full Scope of Development Pursuant to HPD's Mix and Match Program

Pursuant to the proposed Zoning Map amendment, the applicant will construct three mixed use buildings approximating a total of 866,017 gross square feet of floor area. The three proposed buildings will occupy two development sites. Development Site #1 will accommodate one building, (Building 1). Development Site #2 will accommodate two buildings, (Building 2 and Building 3).

- Total Development Cost: \$500,000,000.00
- Total Number of Permanent Jobs: 105
- Total Number of Construction Jobs: 615
- Total Number of Buildings: 3
- Total Number of Residential Units: 970
- Total bicycle parking spaces: 465
- Total Number of Unit Type Breakdown:
 - Studios: 219 @ 400 square feet
 - 1 Bedrooms 463 @ 550 square feet

Existing development on Site 1 includes an industrial building comprised of 14,508 square feet, approximating 25 feet (two stories) in height.

The proposed development of Site 1 includes construction of a 24-story building rising approximately 240 feet. This building will offer 304 affordable dwelling units composed of 229,684 square feet. Commercial space will include 5,000 square feet. This yields a total of 234,684 zoning square feet. This “L” shaped building will offer an interior courtyard that opens towards the Bronx River. Residential access will be via Sheridan Boulevard or the shore public walkway which will be constructed pursuant to waterfront access requirements. Commercial access will also be via Sheridan Boulevard and the shore public walkway, towards the north end of the building adjacent to Starlight Park. Building 1 will offer 144 spaces for bicycle parking.

The Waterfront Public Access Area (WPAA) for Development Site 1 will include a total of 17,998 square feet of which 13,292 square feet is the shore public walkway and 4,760 square feet for the upland connection. The public walkway will approximate 40 feet in width, the upland connection will be 35 feet wide.

Development Site #2: 1480 Sheridan Boulevard, (Block 3017, Lot 29)

Bounded by: Lot 60 to the north, Lot 28 to the south and Lot 6, Sheridan Boulevard to the west, Starlight Park and the Bronx River to the east. This is comprised of 97,892 square feet. Existing development on Site 2 includes an off street parking lot and four accessory office buildings. These buildings range in height between 13 and 25 feet. An open-air garage approximating 25,197 square feet is also located on Development Site #2.

The proposed development of Site 2 includes construction of two buildings (Building 2 and Building 3).

The WPAA will include 20,317 square feet of which 10,754 square feet will be the shore public walkway. The remaining 9,563 square feet will be the upland connection. Development of Site 2 also includes visual corridor as established by the extension of Jennings Street, east of Sheridan Boulevard. It will offer a 70 foot wide venue, situated on the site’s northern lot line between Sheridan Boulevard and the Bronx River. A second visual corridor will be located between Building 2 and 3. This corridor will be accessible the southern end of Lot 29 at Sheridan Boulevard. It will vary in width between 50 and 60 feet

Building 2: Construction of a 24-story building, rising approximately 240 feet. This building will offer 345 dwelling units. It will consist of 268,952 square feet of which 263,952 will be for residential purposes, with 5,000 square feet for commercial use. This “L” shaped building will be sited 70 feet from the site’s northern lot line (Lot 60). The building will be approximately 30 feet from the shore public walkway and 70 feet from the Bronx River. A garage located on the cellar level of Building 2 will be accessible via Sheridan Boulevard. It will accommodate 100 vehicles. Parking for 164 bicycles will also be located on the cellar level which will be shared with Building 3. Residential and commercial access to Building 2 will be at the north end of the building on Sheridan Boulevard.

Building 3: Construction of a 24-story building, rising approximately 240 feet. This building will offer 321 dwelling units. It will consist of 240,091 square feet of which 237,091 will be for residential purposes, with 3,000 square feet for commercial use. The siting of Building 3 yields a 60-foot wide open area between Building 3 and Building 2. An amphitheater, plantings and lighting will be sited within this common open area.

Residential access to Building 3 will be via this corridor and on Sheridan Boulevard. Access to the garage located in building 2 will be available to Building 3. Interior residential access to Building 3 from this garage will be via the shared cellar area with Building 2.

Development in the surrounding community is defined by Starlight Park to the north and east, east of which is the Bronx River. This park is composed of 17 acres. It features access to the Bronx River and includes a boat house, kayak launch. It also features areas for active recreation. The Bronx Rive Alliance maintains an office within this area.

Development to the west is defined by Sheridan Boulevard, which prior to 2022 functioned as a segment of the Sheridan Expressway. Residential development west of this boulevard is typified by a six building development complex known as Compass Residences. These 16-story buildings were completed within the past decade. Commercial activity is found on Westchester Avenue, approximately ¼ mile from the proposed development site. Subway access via the #6 train is found at Whitlock Avenue, approximately 0.3 miles from the site. Access to the #2 and #5 trains is available at the Freeman Avenue station, approximately 0.4 miles from the site. Bus transit is provided by the Bx4, Bx4A, Bx27 and Bx35. These routes are all available within 0.05 miles.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application has been reviewed pursuant to SEQRA and CEQR and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on April 10, 2023.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board 9 held a public hearing on this application on May 18, 2023. A vote recommending approval of this application was 27 in favor, 2 opposed and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on June 15, 2023. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. Verbal testimony from members of the public included concerns about the impact construction of this proposed development may have on the Bronx River, the affordability of the units being proposed, and the additional population this development will bring into the established community. Upon receiving all those wishing to offer testimony, the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

For over four decades, Simone Development Companies define what I consider to be one of the best development companies in The Bronx. A family-owned and Bronx-headquartered business that is responsible for the Hutchinson Metro Center which includes a major hotel, numerous Class A office buildings, as well as a portfolio of other developments and properties across the Bronx and greater tri-state area. Simone has owned the sites in this application since 1978 and are looking to make another investment in the Bronx.

Under the proposal, the applicant will build three buildings across two sites, which would create approximately 970 units of affordable housing, as well providing ground floor commercial uses that will active the area. This is important as these buildings will be built along the west side of the Bronx River and will include a number of public space amenities, including publicly accessible space that will run along the Bronx River.

These lots are currently located on industrial land which has historically been a cause of pollution problems from either direct or indirect runoff into the Bronx River. While some of the public testimony stated concerns for developing these sites, based on environmental concerns, I believe the proposal will actually improve the Bronx River as it will allow for the river to be better activated for the public and mitigation measures will be put in place to ensure stormwater runoff doesn't contaminate the river. Over time, and once all the sites are fully developed, there will be a complete corridor abutting the river that anyone can walk along and connect directly to Starlight Park, as the public walkway will serve as an unofficial connection to the Bronx River Greenway.

While the applicant team has proposed how the northernmost site will connect into Starlight Park, I recommend that the applicant team and Parks Department continue working together to ensure a seamless transition from the shore public walkway into the park. A development project of this scale has the potential to set a gold standard for waterfront access where enjoying a walk along the Bronx River or having fun in Starlight Park is both affordable and pleasurable.

While development of these sites for affordable housing will be a great improvement, I do have some general concerns. While I am confident that the developers will build high-quality buildings with state-of-the-art amenities, I have only seen a conceptual rendering of the proposal which I have concerns with. These three proposed 24-story buildings will abut the Sheridan Boulevard and are near the Bruckner Expressway, New England Corridor Amtrak line (which will soon add Metro-North service), and will be visible across a number of neighborhoods. With such an important and prominent location, I want to understand the specifics which the applicant team noted they are still designing. One recommendation is that the applicant team return with an updated version of the project for my feedback prior to filing at DOB to ensure any comments I have may be incorporated into the proposal. This project needs attractive buildings in order to have my support and right now this project doesn't meet that threshold.

This project is proposing approximately 970 units of affordable housing that will benefit the Bronx and local community. While this project is proposing approximately 30-percent of units be two-bedroom and three-bedrooms, I believe more can be done to increase this number and that there can be several four-bedroom units added to the project. I also recognize the applicant team is

providing units with sizes based on the mix-and-match term sheets, but I would also like to see units that are larger than what is in the HPD range. Creating family-sized units is important and I will continue to advocate for larger units and units with two- (or more) bedrooms to ensure families can stay and build a community rather than having to move once their family gets larger. I recommend that the project reduces the number of studio units in order to achieve the goal of more family-sized units.

As I previously noted, there are three 24-story buildings being proposed. The height of these buildings is concerning on its face, but as I consider the project, I recognize there are tradeoffs that need to be made. As the city is in a housing crisis, maximizing the amount of housing being produced is incredibly important. Additionally, my recommendation for family-sized units means that if any of the units get larger or if more two-, three-, or four-bedroom units get added, this would reduce the overall number of units and housing that can be built. I then considered the larger context, as all projects need to work not just for the new development, but for the existing community as well. When I consider this project, there isn't an immediate residential community next to these development sites that would be impacted as the Sheridan Boulevard creates over 200 feet from the nearest residential development to the west and the Bronx River and manufacturing districts are located to the east. Finally, the urban design of these buildings are a tower-on-a-base, where there is a 65-foot base development, before setting back on all sides, then rising to approximately 175-feet, before another setback rises to the maximum building height of 240-feet. These setbacks will reduce the perception of height when at the ground level and along the waterfront. When considering all these aspects of the proposal and the need to support affordable housing and family-sized units, I believe the height of these buildings can be supported as long as the final buildings are designed with features that further enhance the buildings.

In addition to the affordable housing this project will create, this proposal will create 720 jobs, split between 105 permanent jobs and 615 short-term construction jobs. With all three buildings having space for commercial uses, I recommend that ownership work to find uses that will enhance the local community and waterfront space experience, such as a restaurant, café, supermarket, day care, recreational, or educational uses, rather than uses that will detract. When hiring, I recommend the use of union labor, hiring locally, and MWBE's. It was noted in the public hearing that there are discussions with several unions. I believe that any project of this scale should be able to negotiate for some union labor and that outreach can begin now to start discussing what agreements can be made. This can include using building trades where there are union apprenticeships to achieve prevailing wage jobs that have a focus on Bronx hiring.

I conclude by acknowledging the hard work and dedication Simone Properties continues to make for the people of The Bronx. I am confident that the buildings will be designed under the highest standard, but must also ensure my own oversight is included so that I can make certain the right balance is achieved for such a high-profile project. I therefore recommend **conditional approval** of this application, for the reasons noted above.