



BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT VANESSA L. GIBSON

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 240319 PCX
1680 SOUTHERN BOULEVARD - CASA BORICUA**

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department for the Aging and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the site selection and acquisition of property located at 1680 Southern Boulevard (Block 2983, Lot 7) for use as a senior center, Borough of The Bronx, Community District 3.

BACKGROUND

The Neighborhood SHOPP Casa Boricua Older Adult Center (Casa Boricua) has occupied the space located at 910 East 172nd Street since 1972. Owing to the expansion of a daycare facility at this same location, it is necessary that Casa Boricua relocate.

Approving this application will facilitate the relocation of Casa Boricua Adult Center from its current location at the southwest corner of Southern Boulevard at East 172nd Street, to 1680 Southern Boulevard, which is two blocks north of the current site. The proposed location occupies the east side of Southern Boulevard, (Block 2983, Lot 7) between East 173rd Street on the south, East 174th Street to the north, and between Hoe Avenue to the east and Boston Road to the west. Constructed in 1970, the site is composed of a two-story, vacant, 19,200 square foot building. The site is zoned R7-1/C2-4.

Upon acquisition of the 1680 Southern Boulevard facility pursuant to a long-term lease agreement which has yet to be ratified, a comprehensive renovation of the site's interior will commence. The scope of this renovation includes:

- Installation of a 975 square foot commercial grade kitchen
- A 2,470 square foot dining room that can accommodate 126 guests
- 5,330 square feet of private offices for case management staff
- Approximately 3,305 square feet of activity and socializing space that includes:
 - Computer classrooms
 - Billard room
 - An exercise room
 - Arts room
 - A stage located in the dining area
- Dedicated sidewalk area for passive relaxation

The renovation will take approximately six months. During construction, Casa Boricua will continue to operate simultaneously at its current location. Once relocated, Casa Boricua will offer programming from Monday-through-Friday, 9:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Meal services will also be offered on two Saturdays each month.

Those who are to be employed at this location includes:

- 12-office workers
- 33 case workers/managers
- 5 food service/maintenance workers
- 5 volunteers/interns

Both those participating in programming at this location and those employed are expected to rely on public transportation. As such, no off-street parking facilities will be allocated. This location is served via the #2 and #5 subway lines at the 174th Street station. Bus transit is available via the Bx11, Bx21 and the Bx19. In addition, it is anticipated that a drop-off designation at the main entrance to the facility will be established to accommodate para transit operators.

Development of the surrounding community is typified by mid-rise, multi-unit residences. Commercial and retail activity is located on Southern Boulevard.

In addition to the location this application is considering, other Neighborhood SHOPP Older Adult Centers in The Bronx include:

- Leon: 735 East 152nd Street
- Guess: 2070 Clinton Avenue
- Soundview: 1674 Seward Avenue

Collectively, Neighborhood SHOPP serves 10,000 older adults annually.

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 May 13, 2024.

COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #3 held a public hearing on this application on June 11, 2024. A unanimous vote recommending approval of this application was 21 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

On July 23, 2024, a virtual public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President. Representatives of the applicants were present and spoke in favor of this application. No other members of the public were present or spoke and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

One of the major challenges with aging is how older adults manage to avoid loneliness. I am deeply concerned for those who live isolated lives and for those who are not able to continue their social networks after retirement. This has a direct impact on the health and well-being of our aging adults. Creating places that foster community and bring people together is one of the best ways for people to make new connections and form new networks that will help them offset the loss of their prior work-related social networks.

For decades, Neighborhood SHOPP has been a vital resource in providing a place for older adults to meet and create new friendships. I am pleased to support this application, knowing that the essential activities being provided at the current site will not be interrupted, even as the new location is under renovation and that this new older adult center will remain in the same community. The dedication of Neighborhood SHOPP to retaining current volunteers and interns is commendable, ensuring a consistent level and quality of care for their guests.

I am pleased to concur with the unanimous recommendation of support provided by Bronx Community Board 3 and recommend approval of this application.