

Queens Borough President Recommendation

APPLICATION: ULURP #200178 ZMQ

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q06

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by 63-68 RWKOP LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 14a:

1. eliminating from within an existing R4 District a C2-2 District bounded by Austin Street, a line 100 feet southeasterly of 63rd Drive, the northerly boundary line of the Long Island Railroad Main Line Right-of-Way, and 63rd Drive;
2. changing from an R4 District to an R7A District property bounded by Austin Street, a line 100 feet southeasterly of 63rd Drive, the northerly boundary line of the Long Island Railroad Main Line Right-of-Way, and 63rd Drive;
3. establishing within the proposed R7A District a C2-3 District bounded by Austin Street, a line 100 feet southeasterly of 63rd Drive, the northerly boundary line of the Long Island Railroad Main Line Right-of-Way, and 63rd Drive (Related ULURP #200179 ZRQ);

as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated October 5, 2020, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-568.

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held by the Borough President via Zoom webinar and livestreamed on www.queensbp.org on Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 10:30 A.M. pursuant to Section 82(5) of the New York City Charter and was duly advertised in the manner specified in Section 197-c (i) of the New York City Charter. The applicant made a presentation. There were no other speakers. The hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

Subsequent to a review of the application and consideration of testimony received at the public hearing, the following issues and impacts have been identified:

- This application proposes a zoning map amendment to change portions of Block 3104 (p/o Lot 14 and Lot 16) from an existing R4/C2-2 District to an R7A/C2-3 District. The proposed actions would facilitate development of a nine-story residential building on the applicant's property;
- Another application (ULURP #200179 ZRQ) concurrently filed with this application proposes a zoning text amendment to Appendix F to establish and map the rezoning area as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area (MIH);
- The area to be rezoned (Block 3104 p/o Lot 14 and Lot 16) is generally bounded by Austin Street to the north, 63rd Drive to the west, the north side of the Long Island Rail Road Main Line to the south, and a line 100 feet from and parallel to 63rd Drive. The area to be rezoned is currently mapped with an R4-2 District with a C2-2 overlay mapped to a depth of 100 feet from 63rd Drive. The proposed zoning map change is to an R7A/C2-3 District. The westernmost portion of Lot 14, owned by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, is included in the rezoning area to avoid isolation of an existing R4 District adjacent to the development site;
- The proposed development is a 9-story mixed-use residential and commercial building with 68,656 SF of floor area (FAR 5.0). Setbacks of 10 feet and 15 feet would be provided above the 65 feet base. The proposed building would have 58,338 SF of residential space for 74 dwelling units, 10,318 SF of ground floor commercial space, and 45 accessory off-street parking spaces (17 residential, 28 commercial) in the cellar with access cut on Austin Street. Approximately 24 affordable units would be provided using MIH Option 2 (30% of units @ 80% AMI). The affordable units would be Affordable Independent Residences for Seniors which is reserved for persons 62+ years old;
- The proposed development site (91-32 63rd Drive, Block 3104 Lot 16) is located at the southeast corner at the intersection of 63rd Drive and Austin Street with 140 feet and 100 feet of frontage respectively. The 13,731 SF lot is currently unimproved and vacant. There is a history of commercial use on the site. The surrounding area is characterized by residential and commercial uses along 63rd Drive and Queens Boulevard, and C8-1 zoned portion of Austin Street. Zoning districts within the surrounding area include R4/C2-2, R4/C1-2, R7-1, R3-1, and C8-1 Districts. This portion of 63rd Drive is a major north-south connector street beneath the elevated LIRR track. Community facility uses in the surrounding area include the Rego Park branch of the Queens Public Library directly west of the project site, Our Savior Church, P.S. 139 elementary school, and the Rego Park Day School. The project area is well served by public transit including the M/R subway lines, the Q38, Q60, Q72, QM11, and QM18 bus lines;

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- The applicant met with the Community Board 6 Land Use Committee (LUC) on November 10, 2020. Some concerns expressed during the meeting included: possible increased traffic on 63rd Drive, compounded construction impacts in the general area, affordability determined by AMI not reflective of zip codes 11375 and 11374. The CB 6 LUC, by a vote of ten (10) in favor and four (4) against, recommended approval to the full community board;
- Community Board 6 (CB 6) approved this application by a vote of thirty-six (36) in favor with five (5) against and none (0) abstaining at their monthly board meeting held on November 12, 2020. Discussion at the monthly meeting reflected concerns raised during the LUC meeting. Based on the request for lower levels of affordability at the LUC meeting, the applicant soon after submitted a letter to CB 6 committing to provide 16 of the 24 affordable units at 60% AMI. Councilmember Koslowitz's representative stated that the councilmember supports the project and that there should be more studio and 1-bedroom units to maximize number of affordable units;
- At the Borough President's Land Use Public Hearing, the applicant affirmed that they are committed to providing 16 of the 24 affordable units reducing the average AMI to 60%. The applicant also stated they are open to increasing the number of studio and 1 bedroom units as requested by the councilmember.

RECOMMENDATION

There is clearly need for more affordable housing in New York City and particularly for seniors. Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend approval of this application with the following condition:

- There should be a goal of 30% for local hiring and use of MWBE businesses in the construction and development of this project. There should also be quarterly reporting on the numbers of people hired and if the 30% is reached.



PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

December 23, 2020

DATE