

Queens Borough President Recommendation

APPLICATIONS: ULURP #220206 MMQ

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q01

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

ULURP #220206 MMQ – IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Herrick Feinstein LLP on behalf of Astoria Owners LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter for an amendment to the City Map involving:

1. the elimination of 3rd Street within the area bounded by 8th Street, 26th Avenue, 2nd Street and the U.S. Pierhead and Bulkhead line;
2. the adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby;

including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in accordance with Map No. 5037, dated March 14, 2022 and signed by the Borough President. (Related ULURPs #N220164 LDQ, 220196 ZMQ, N220197 ZRQ, 220198 ZSQ, N220199 ZCQ, N220200 ZAQ, N220202 ZAQ, N220353 ZAQ).

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held by the Borough President via Zoom webinar and livestreamed on www.queensbp.org on Thursday, April 28, 2022 at 11:30 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 three (3) speakers. The hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

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

- The proposed City Map Change would de-map 3rd Street, extending approximately 520.57 feet north from its intersection with 26th Avenue, for pedestrian and light vehicle usage abutting the Proposed Development. The proposed street de-mapping would facilitate the development of a mixed-use, three-tower development within the Project Area;
- Other applications (N220197 ZRQ, 220198 ZSQ, N220199 ZCQ, N220200 ZAQ, N220202 ZAQ, 220206 MMQ, N220353 ZAQ) concurrently filed with the lead application propose multiple land use actions related to the multi-tower development. A Zoning Map Amendment proposes to change an area generally bounded by the Pierhead and Bulkhead line of the East River to the north, currently-mapped 3rd Street to the west, 26th Avenue to the south, and Block 907 to the east (Block 911, Lots 1 and 49) from an M1-1 District to an R7-3/C2-4 District; a Zoning Text Amendment to Appendix F of the Zoning Resolution proposes to establish and map the Rezoning Area as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Area; a Waterfront Special Permit to waive height, setback, size and maximum width of walls facing the shoreline proposes increased density and height toward the water's edge; and three Waterfront Authorizations to modify requirements for location, area and minimum dimensions of public access and visual corridors proposes waterfront usage and views;
- The Proposed Development is a multi-story, 986,137 SF (6.00 FAR) mostly residential mixed-use building with approximately 1400 dwelling units including 350 affordable units under MIH Option 1 (25% of 60% AMI). Building heights would increase as they approach the waterfront with non-residential uses concentrated along 26th Avenue. There would be 1,787 SF of commercial use and 21,508 SF of community facility use. There would be a 3-story, 525-vehicular space accessory self-park, cellar and mezzanine garage behind and underneath portions of Segments 1 to 3. The garage would also hold 525 bicycle spaces. Clean fill would be used to elevate the site by 8 to 9 feet so that it sits 3 feet above base flood elevation;
- The three-tower development features three Building Segments. Building Segment 1 (S1) would be located along 26th Avenue and would be developed as a 249,560 SF (1.52 FAR) 23-story, 238 foot tall mixed-use building. It would include 1787 SF of commercial use on the ground floor and 16,451 SF of community facility use on the second floor intended for Urban Upbound's job incubator space in partnership with Zone 126. Building Segment 2 (S2) would be located along 3rd Street and north of S1. It would be developed with a 310,787 SF (1.89 FAR) 31-story, 318 foot tall mixed-use building. It would include 5507 SF of community facility space located on the ground and 2nd floor intended for Theradynamics, a physical therapy provider. Building Segment 3 (S3) would be located at the end of 3rd Street along the waterfront esplanade, north of S2. It would be developed with a 426,690 SF (2.6 FAR), 34-story 350 foot tall residential building. The eastern portion of the building will be used as ~7105 SF lounge area with East River views;
- The Applicant Team would explore the opportunity for geothermal energy on site. They also would work on restriping and adding new bike lanes around the site as well as collaborate with local organizations to create new bike storage. The Applicant is currently discussing plans with the MTA to provide a shuttle bus from the Development Site to 30th Avenue Station. They will also pursue LEED Silver;

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- There would also be 41,604 SF of publicly accessible open space. With the exception of the zoning lot directly west of the Development Site, the proposed waterfront esplanade would connect 2.5 miles of green space from Astoria Park to the northeast to Rainey Park to the southwest. Access to the waterfront would begin at the intersection of 26th Avenue and 3rd Street. A 14,197 SF shore public walkway will connect directly to the approved shore public walkway at Astoria Cove. It would include four rain gardens, terraced/turfed seating areas facing the water, and five fitness stations;
- The Rezoning Area consists of Block 911, which includes part of currently-mapped 3rd Street, Lot 1, and non-Applicant controlled Lot 49. It is currently mapped as an M1-1 District within Flood Zone AE (1% annual flooding). The Development Site (Block 911, Lot 1) is a 198,975 SF L-shaped site bounded by 26th Avenue to the south, East River to the north, Block 912 to the west, the Astoria Cove site to the east and currently sits vacant. Due to the site's history of heavy industrial operations, the team voluntarily entered the Brownfield Cleanup Program in 2018 and received Certification of Completion in December 2019;
- The Proposed Development and Rezoning Area are located on the northeastern portion of Halletts Point in western Astoria. The surrounding area is characterized by industrial, manufacturing, commercial, low- and medium density residential uses. There is also proposed high-density residential development such as the Astoria Cove project immediately east, currently with warehouses and vacant industrial buildings. Directly west across 3rd Street is a large 2-story distribution center for airport enterprise tech. The Halletts Point development is located three blocks southwest. The blocks south of the project across 26th Avenue include 1- and 2-story light industrial buildings, warehouses, open and enclosed storage yards, 1- and 2-family residences, and several 3- and 4-story multi-family walkups. Located further south is NYCHA Astoria Houses. There are three new schools proposed for the peninsula. The development is located approximately one mile west of both Astoria Boulevard and 30th Street subway stations. 27th Avenue is served by the Q18, Q19, Q102, and Q103. The Astoria Ferry stop is an eight minute walk away. A CitiBike dock is located on the corner of 27th Avenue and 3rd Street;
- Community Board 1 (CB 1) held a monthly meeting on April 19, 2022. CB approved the 3rd Street de-mapping with thirty-one (31) in favor, two (2) against, and two (2) abstaining and the rest of the ULURP package with nineteen (19) in favor, fourteen (14) against, and two (2) abstaining. The conditions were as followed: Provide a comfort station at Whitey Ford Park to mitigate DEIS open space impact; Explore feasibility of onsite generation of geothermal energy; Pursue feasibility of constructing an overlook to provide interaction with water and cove. Concerns revolved around deepening the affordability of the MIH Units, questions about whether tenants in nearby NYCHA housing would be able to afford to live within project, and water access programming for the public. Leading up to the full board meeting, the Applicant increased the number of 2-bedrooms from 175 to 315 and 3-bedrooms from 35 to 75 due to prior requests from CB 1;
- At the Borough President's Land Use Public Hearing, the Borough President requested more affordable units at 30% AMI and for a goal of 30% MWBE/ local hiring to be reached. Although the Applicant Team has committed to LEED Silver, pursuing LEED Gold was suggested. The Borough President discussed exploring opportunities with this office and the local Council Member to invest in surrounding open space. According to the Applicant Team, the City requested improvements to Triboro Bridge Playground. However, the Borough President stated prioritizing investments for open space around Astoria Houses. The Applicant Team also stated they were currently in talks with the NYC Parks Department to turn over their green space to them for maintenance. A 32BJ SEIU representative spoke on the Applicant's commitment to prevailing wage building service jobs. They estimated 22 building service workers would be permanently staffed at the project site.

RECOMMENDATION

The Applicant has worked with the community board and local stakeholders to propose a mixed-use development proposal that fits with the residential, commercial and industrial character of the surrounding neighborhood. The Proposed Development would facilitate local economic development and job placement as well as affordable housing needs. Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend approval of this application with the following conditions:

- There should be a goal of 30% for local hiring and use of M/WBE 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% hiring goal has been reached to the Borough President, Council Member and Community Board;
- The Applicant should commit to knocking on doors of local residents to promote the Proposed Development, its community benefits and partnerships;
- The Applicant should continue to partner with Urban Upbound and other local community-based organizations to host job fairs at Ravenswood, Queensbridge and Astoria Houses NYCHA Developments to bring awareness of upcoming job opportunities;
- The Applicant should simultaneously commit to exploring deeper levels of AMI affordability such as 30% AMI, as well as expanding the minimum percentage of affordable units;
- The Applicant should ensure that the route to the Waterfront Public Access Area has easy-to-read signage and wayfinding in the surrounding neighborhood and streets written in multiple languages as dictated by Census demographic data, and should ensure that the Waterfront Public Access Area and connections have appropriate maintenance and security to promote a safe quality of life;

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- In addition to the Waterfront Public Access Area, the Applicant should make reasonable improvements to Triboro Park and Astoria Houses as they relate to the Project's EIS;
- The Applicant should collaborate their designs and construction timelines with the surrounding Astoria Cove and Halletts Point developments to not overwhelm the area;
- The Applicant should commit to 50%-100% geothermal energy usage;
- The Applicant should continue working with the NYC Department of Transportation and New York City Transit to incorporate appropriate bike lanes and bus networks to and from the Proposed Development site; and
- The Applicant should incorporate CB1's conditions to the best of their ability, wherever possible.



PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

05/23/2022

DATE