

Queens Borough President Recommendation

**APPLICATION: ULURP #210389 ZMQ
ULURP #210390 ZRQ**

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q02

DOCKET DESCRIPTIONS

ULURP #210389 ZMQ – IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by 58-02 Northern Blvd LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 9d:

1. changing from an R5 District to an R6B District property bounded by Northern Boulevard, 60th Street, a line 100 feet southerly of Northern Boulevard, and 58th Street; and
2. establishing within the proposed R6B District a C2-2 District bounded by Northern Boulevard, 60th Street, a line 100 feet southerly of Northern Boulevard, and 58th Street;

Borough of Queens, Community District 2, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated June 6, 2022, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-672. (Related ULURP #210390 ZRQ).

ULURP #N210390 ZRQ – IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by 58-02 Northern Blvd LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for a zoning text amendment to designate the Project Area as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (“MIH”) area, Borough of Queens, Community District 2, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated June 6, 2022, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-672. (Related Item ULURP #210289 ZMQ).

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held by the Queens Borough President via Zoom webinar and livestreamed on www.queensbp.org on Thursday, September 29, 2022 at 9:30 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 was one (1) speaker. 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:

- The applicant is proposing to rezone an existing R5 District to an R6B/C2-2 District in the Woodside neighborhood of Queens. The area to be rezoned (Block 1182, Lot 40 and p/o Lots 37 and 38) is bounded by Northern Boulevard to the north, 60th Street to the east, a line 100 feet in depth from Northern Boulevard to the south, and 58th Street to the west. The proposed rezoning would facilitate construction of a new boutique automobile showroom;
- The applicant has also concurrently filed another application (ULURP #N210390 ZRQ) to amend Appendix F of the Zoning Resolution to map and establish the proposed rezoning area as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Area. The Proposed Development does not include residential use, but the zoning text amendment would facilitate future MIH units;
- The Proposed Development would include a 2-story, 25-foot, 8,349-SF (1.59 FAR) building with a cellar. The first floor would contain an automobile sales showroom, the second floor would contain accessory office space for employees, and the cellar would act as vehicle storage with a service elevator. The Proposed Development also includes four (4) rear driveway parking spaces and three (3) electric vehicle chargers. Based on feedback from the Community Board 2 (CB2) Land Use Committee, the applicant increased the number of electric vehicle chargers from three to five, included street tree plantings, added rooftop solar panels and widened the rear driveway opening from 8 feet to 10 feet;
- With frontage along Northern Boulevard, 60th Street and 58th Street, the Development Site (Block 1182, Lot 40) is an approximately 5,259-SF, irregularly-shaped lot improved with a vacant, nonconforming restaurant originally built in 1930. Because of the lot dimensions, size and permitted bulk, the current R5 zoning has made residential development difficult. The proposed rezoning would allow commercial uses to replace the vacant building;
- Within a 600-ft radius of the Rezoning Area, the predominant zoning has been R5 and M1-1 since 1961. The surrounding uses range from nonconforming commercial and manufacturing businesses to multifamily residences along the side streets off Northern Boulevard. Many of the commercial nonconforming uses include automobile sales and repair businesses, such as Koppel Ford, Paragon Honda, and Queensboro Toyota dealerships. The Development Site is also within a half-mile of P.S. 152 and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway;

- At a public hearing held on September 8, 2022, CB2 voted to oppose this application by a vote of seventeen (17) in favor, fifteen (15) against and one (1) abstention with the chairperson present and not voting. During the public hearing, six (6) public speakers testified with one (1) in favor, four (4) opposed and one (1) asking for more clarification. During the discussion, some Board members felt that another automobile showroom was not an appropriate use for Northern Boulevard, citing the number of pedestrian deaths along the corridor. Other Board members had concerns about flooding at and around the Proposed Development as well as the lighting and safety along Northern Boulevard for cyclists and pedestrians. CB2 confirmed it would send a list of organizations the Applicant team could speak with to offset future carbon emissions from automobile sales;
- At the Borough President's Land Use Public Hearing, the applicant's team addressed concerns about flooding, traffic calming, pedestrian safety and local hiring. The Applicant confirmed that, given any construction study that would suggest flooding issues in the cellar, they would explore dry flood-proofing the cellar or strike it from the plans altogether. The owner stated they planned to hire eighteen (18) total employees: twelve (12) for the new automobile showroom and six (6) additional service employees at a separate location in Jamaica for repairs. In terms of pedestrian safety, the Applicant stated they would have an audible and visual signal at the rear driveway to warn pedestrians of possible cross-traffic. One (1) public speaker testified in favor of the application;
- The Borough President's Office has received three (3) letters of public testimony in opposition of this application. These letters echo similar concerns from the CB2 Public hearing, citing that Northern Boulevard is a NYC Vision Zero policy priority, and adding another automobile showroom within Queens obscures any climate change imperative to curb emissions from personal vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION

I understand the concerns about pedestrian safety and climate change, and I acknowledge that Northern Boulevard has been a dangerous corridor for cyclists and pedestrians alike. However, these interests can coexist with proper mitigation. Suggestions from the CB2 Land Use Committee have improved the application, and the Proposed Development would contribute to the local economy, facilitate local hiring, and would be appropriately sited near other car dealerships and automobile repair shops.

Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend approval with the following conditions:

- There should be a minimum 30% goal to include MWBE firms, hiring of local residents and working with locally-based organizations and community groups for outreach and job fairs when hiring and contracting for this project. There should be quarterly reporting of these hiring initiatives to the Borough President and Council Member until the hiring goal has been reached;
- The Applicant should use porous concrete in all parking areas and add passive natural landscaping along the Development Site for better drainage, and to improve the atmosphere of the car-saturated corridor;
- The Applicant should work with Community Board 2 to identify and partner with environmental group(s) to offset any sale of carbon-emitting vehicles;
- The Applicant should consider funding and implementing bike racks within Community District 2 at the discretion of Community Board 2 and other local community-based organizations; and
- The owner, wherever possible, should prioritize the sale of electric or hybrid vehicles at the Proposed Development location.



PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

10/11/2022

DATE