

Queens Borough President Recommendation

APPLICATION: ULURP #220250 ZMQ

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q04

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by SWDM 57 LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section Nos. 10b & 14a:

1. eliminating from within an existing R6A District a C1-2 District bounded by a line 100 feet northwesterly of 57th Avenue, 98th Street, 57th Avenue, and 97th Place;
2. establishing within an existing R6B District a C2-4 District bounded by a line perpendicular to the northeasterly street line of 97th Place distant 185 feet northwesterly (as measured along the street line) from the point of intersection of the northeasterly street line of 97th Place and the northwesterly street line of 57th Avenue, a line midway between 97th Place and 98th Street, a line perpendicular to the southwesterly street line of 98th Street distant 160 feet northwesterly (as measured along the street line) from the point of intersection of the southwesterly street line of 98th Street and the northwesterly street line of 57th Avenue, 98th Street, and a line 100 feet northwesterly of 57th Street; and
3. establishing within the existing R6A District a C2-4 District bounded by a line 100 feet northwesterly of 57th Avenue, 98th Street, 57th Avenue, and 97th Place;

Borough of Queens, Community District 4, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated June 6, 2022, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-680.

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 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:

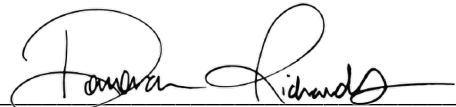
- The Applicant is requesting a zoning map amendment to establish a C2-4 Overlay in an existing R6A/R6B split-zoned District, and to eliminate the current C1-2 Overlay. The area to be rezoned (Block 1906, Lot 1 and p/o Lots 11 and 43) is generally bounded by 57th Avenue to the south, 98th Street to the east, a line approximately 185 feet in depth from 57th Street to the north, and 97th Place to the west. The proposed rezoning would facilitate an enlargement of a current supermarket as well as bring the supermarket use into compliance;
- The Applicant is proposing to add approximately 8,606 sf to the existing supermarket (which is currently 23,894 sf) and build 62,000 sf of residential floor area, totaling 88,400-sf within a new, 6-story mixed-use building. The supermarket would have an enlarged sales floor of 22,000 sf, up from 16,953 sf in the existing development, and a 3000-sf cellar area for back-of-house space. The number of supermarket parking spaces would more than double, from 21 to 46. To mitigate traffic, the supermarket loading dock would be moved to 97th Place instead of 57th Street. Both loading and waste would be enclosed to improve odor and vermin conditions. The Applicant proposes approximately 82 dwelling units and 47 residential parking spaces with the possibility of affordable housing, pending available state subsidy programs;
- The Development Site (Block 1906, Lot 1) is an approximately 34,178-sf, irregularly-shaped lot currently improved with a one-story supermarket originally built in the 1960s. The split-zoning districts make this site somewhat unique: the Development Site has approximately 20,000 sf of its area in an R6A/C1-2 zoning district and approximately 14,000 sf of its area in an R6B zoning district, which allows for a total FAR of 3.0. In 1989, the Development Site was rezoned from R6 to R6A (with a coterminous C1-2 overlay) and R6B. Because the C1-2 overlay did not extend over the R6B District, the supermarket has required a use variance since it was first constructed;
- Zoning in the 600-ft surrounding area also includes R5, M1-1, R6, and R7B, and the predominant land uses include multifamily residential buildings, ground-floor commercial retail, public institutions and light industrial (ConEdison facility). Notably, the LeFrak City residential development superblock is located to the south, which contains two churches, a mosque, a New York Public Library, a post office, a food distribution center, and day care facilities. The area is well served by public transit based on the four (4) bus lines that stop along 57th Avenue and the Site's half-mile proximity to the Woodhaven Boulevard M/R subway station;

- At a public hearing held on September 27, 2022, Community Board 4 (CB4) voted to unanimously oppose the application by a vote of zero (0) in favor, twenty-three (23) opposed and two (2) abstentions. CB4 raised issues concerning traffic congestions because of the potential residential parking garage on 98th Street, and the lack of affordable housing included with the proposal. The Applicant responded to the traffic concerns and stated there would overall fewer residential trips than supermarket trips based on their environmental review data;
- At the Borough President's Land Use Public Hearing, the Deputy Borough President asked questions related to community facility space, local and MWBE hiring, relocating current employees. The Applicant responded to the community facility question and stated that the Council Member is interested in adding such space as well. The Applicant responded to the local hiring goals question and stated they hope to use the Industrial & Commercial Abatement Program (ICAP) with the new redevelopment. The Applicant also stated that current employees would be relocated to other nearby stores during construction, and be given first priority to be rehired when the new store opens. A question was raised about composting organic waste on or off-site, to which the Applicant responded they will discuss the possibility of implementing a process with the store manager.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend the approval of this application with conditions:

- In addition to the rehiring of current employees, 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;
- In lieu of a mandated affordability program, the Applicant should still reserve 25% of the residential floor area as affordable units to families and individuals earning an average 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) as a sign of forthright community development;
- With regard to including community facility space, the Applicant and the Queens Public Library system should discuss the possibility of relocating the LeFrak City branch within the Proposed Development to prevent future flood issues and to upgrade services;
- The Applicant should use porous concrete in all outdoor parking areas and add passive natural landscaping along the Development Site for better drainage;
- The Applicant should disclose a composting plan when the Proposed Development is completed and update the Borough President and Council Member quarterly on such efforts; and
- The Applicant should explore adding bike racks and electric scooter storage on the supermarket parking lot to accommodate shoppers who may alternative modes of transportation.



PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

10/11/2022

DATE