



**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

April 1, 2015/ Calendar No. 5

C150175HAX

---

**IN THE MATTER OF** an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- 1) pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
  - a) the designation of property located at 1561 Walton Avenue (Block 2845, Lot 47), as an Urban Development Action Area; and
  - b) an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
- 2) pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of property (Block 2845, Lot 47) to a developer to be selected by HPD;

to facilitate development of a nine to eleven-story residential building with approximately 60 units (55,113 square feet) of rental housing affordable to low-income and homeless individuals or families, Borough of the Bronx, Community District 4.

---

Approval of three separate items is required:

- a) the designation of property located at 1561 Walton Avenue (Block 2845 Lot 47).
- b) an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
- c) the disposition of property (Block 2845, Lot 47) to a developer selected by HPD.

The application was submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) on December 2, 2014.

Approval of this action will facilitate the construction of a nine- to eleven-story residential building containing approximately 60 dwelling units of rental housing affordable to low-income and homeless individuals or families.

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development states in its application that:

The Project Area consists of underutilized property that tends to impair or arrest the sound development of the surrounding community, with or

without tangible physical blight. Incentives are needed in order to induce the correction of these substandard, insanitary, and blighting conditions. The project activities would protect and promote health and safety and would promote sound growth and development. The project area is therefore eligible to be an Urban Development Action Area and the proposed project is therefore eligible to be an Urban Development Action Area Project pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law.

## **RELATED ACTIONS**

In addition to the UDAAP designation and project approval, and disposition of city-owned property, which is the subject for this report, implementation of the proposed development also requires action by the City Planning Commission on the following application which is being considered concurrently with this application.

C150174PQX            Acquisition of property located at 1561 Walton Avenue (Block 2845, Lot 47).

## **BACKGROUND**

The applicant, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is proposing the acquisition of privately-owned property, an Urban Development Action Area Project designation and the disposition of city-owned property, for a site located at 1561 Walton Avenue (Block 2845, Lot 47) to facilitate the construction of a residential building in the West Concourse neighborhood of Bronx Community District 4.

The site was previously conveyed to a subsidiary of the project sponsor on December 29, 1989 pursuant to an accelerated UDAAP process. The disposition was approved by the Board of Estimate on December 29, 1989. This accelerated process allows the renovation of existing buildings, but does not permit new construction. To facilitate the proposed new construction of a 60-unit residential building, HPD needs new disposition authority. This current application seeks land use approvals that would enable the project site to be developed for the proposed new construction project.

The project site currently serves as a parking lot for staff of the project sponsor. However, the lot is underutilized and is no longer needed for parking. The parking will be removed and the applicant proposes to develop approximately 55,113 square feet of rental housing, affordable to low-income and homeless individuals or families on the lot. The apartment distribution will be one studio unit, 19 one-bedroom units, 31 two-bedroom units, and 9 three-bedroom units. Nine units or 12% of the total units will be for the homeless. Nine other units will go to persons earning approximately up to 40% of AMI, 18 units will go to persons earning approximately up to 50% of AMI, 14 units will go to persons earning approximately up to 60% of AMI and 9 units will go to persons earning approximately up to 90% of AMI. One two-bedroom unit will be for the superintendent. The proposed development will have a 6.0 FAR and will include a 402 square-foot community facility space. No parking will be provided, pursuant to the zoning requirements for buildings in R8 districts on lots less than 10,000 square feet. A 280 square foot bicycle room will provide 30 bicycle spaces.

The proposed building height will range from nine to eleven stories (approximately 80 to 98 feet) and will include an approximately 602 square-foot rooftop terrace for residents' use. The building would cover approximately 67 percent (6,134 square feet) of the total lot area. The remaining lot area will be developed with landscaping and a play area for use by the residents, to be located in the rear yard.

The surrounding area consists primarily of six-story multi-family residential buildings. Fourteen buildings on Walton and Townsend avenues, seven of which are on the same block as the project site, were rehabilitated under HPD's Construction Management Program to provide rental housing for very low-and moderate income individuals and families. Another six-story residential building, rehabilitated under HPD's Neighborhood Redevelopment Program, is adjacent to the project site. Commercial uses located along East Mount Eden Avenue include a supermarket, laundromat, dry cleaners and various retail businesses.

Several religious institutions are located in close proximity to the project site as well as two schools, one including an early childhood center. Bronx Lebanon Hospital is located a few blocks east of the site. West of the site, along Jerome Avenue, are various automotive businesses. Claremont Park, a large open space, is located a few blocks east of the site. Nearby public transportation consists of buses which connect to the George Washington Bridge Bus Terminal as well as to the nearest subway lines, the B, D and 4 trains.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This application (C 150175 HAX) was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and the SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 et seq. and the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The lead agency is the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. The designated CEQR number is 15HPD007X. After a study of the potential impacts of the proposed action, a Negative Declaration was issued on November 20, 2014.

### **UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE**

This application (C150175 HAX), in conjunction with the related application (C150174 PQX), was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on December 15, 2014, and was duly referred to Bronx Community Board 4 and the Bronx Borough President, in accordance with Title 62 of the Rules of the City of New York, Section 2-02(b).

### **Community Board Public Hearing**

Community Board 4 held a public hearing on this application on January 15, 2015, and on that date, by a vote of 28 in favor, 0 opposed with 1 abstention, adopted a resolution recommending approval, subject to the following conditions:

**Employment Opportunities:**

Settlement Housing Fund, Inc. and Briarwood Organization/L. Riso & Sons, Co, Inc. is to commit that 50% of the construction and operating jobs related to this project are filled by minorities, females and **community residents** from within the Borough of the Bronx.

A report of actual hiring for the project will be provided to Community Board Four:

**Contracting Opportunities:**

Settlement Housing Fund, Inc. and Briarwood Organization/L. Riso & Sons, Co, Inc. will make a best effort to achieve 40% Local, Minority and/or Woman Owned Business Enterprise (L/M/WBE) participation as consultant(s), prime contractors(s), consultant(s), supplier(s), and vendors(s) throughout all phases of the development and construction and in accordance with the following administrative procedures:

**Borough President Recommendation**

The Borough President held a public hearing on this application on January 21, 2015, and issued a recommendation on February 5, 2015, approving the application.

**City Planning Commission Public Hearing**

On February 18, 2015 (Calendar No. 4), the City Planning Commission scheduled March 4, 2015 for a public hearing on this application (C 150175 HAX). The hearing was duly held on March 4, 2015 (Calendar No. 20) in conjunction with the related application (C150174 PQX). There were three speakers in favor of the application and none in opposition.

A representative from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development described the project, the actions and the significance of the project within this area.

A representative of the Settlement Housing Fund stated that the Settlement Housing Fund has a good track record in housing development and is responsible for 17 buildings within its 25 year history in this neighborhood. She added that the sponsor also owns the adjacent building to the north of 1561 Walton Avenue and that 1561 Walton Avenue would be its 18<sup>th</sup> development. She informed the commission that their community programs utilize available development programs in the sponsor's long term commitment

to this neighborhood, including their College Access Center, proposed to be located at 1563 Walton Avenue, which provides counseling youth or adults interested in attending college.

A representative the architectural firm constructing the facility described the architectural features of the proposed building and added that both the windows and boilers will be energy efficient. She described how the façade hits the lot lines at four different angles in order to achieve south facing windows.

### **CONSIDERATION**

The Commission believes that the application for UDAAP designation, project approval and disposition of City-owned property (C 150175 HAX), in conjunction with the related application for acquisition of property located at 1561 Walton Avenue (Block 2845, Lot 47), is appropriate.

The proposed actions would facilitate the construction of a nine- to eleven-story residential building containing approximately 60 dwelling units of rental housing affordable to low-income and homeless individuals or families.

The Commission notes that this building will provide open space and recreational amenities to serve its residents and will facilitate the development of much needed housing for low income and homeless individuals and families.

The Commission recognizes that the project sponsor, the Settlement Housing Fund, has a good track record in housing development and is responsible for 17 other buildings serving low income populations this neighborhood. In addition, the project will provide a ground floor community facility space for the sponsors programs serving young persons and adults who are interested in attending college.

The Commission notes that Community Board 4 issued a conditional recommendation approving the project provided that the sponsor hire and contract a certain percentage of community residents who are minority or female within the Borough of the Bronx.

However, employment or contracting opportunities are not under the jurisdiction of the City Planning Commission as it relates to the review of land use actions pursuant to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure.

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, that the City Planning Commission finds that the action described herein will have no significant impact on the environment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development have recommended the designation of property located at 1561 Walton Avenue (Block 2845, Lot 47) as an Urban Development Action Area;

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development have also recommended the approval of an Urban Development Action Area Project for such Area;

**THEREFORE**, be it further **RESOLVED**, that the City Planning Commission, after due consideration of the appropriateness of the actions certifies its unqualified approval of the matters pursuant to the Urban Development Action Area Act:

- a) the designation of property located at 1561 Walton Avenue (Block 2845, Lot 47) as an Urban Development Action Area, and
- b) an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination and the consideration described in this report, the application of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development for the disposition of city-owned property located at 1561 Walton Avenue (Block 2845, Lot 47) in Community District 4, Borough of the Bronx, to a developer to be selected by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, is approved.

The above resolution (C 150175 HAX), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on April 1, 2015 (Calendar No. 5), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council, and the Borough President in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.

**CARL WEISBROD**, *Chairman*

**KENNETH J. KNUCKLES**, *Esq.*, *Vice Chairman*

**RAYANN BESSER, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., ALFRED C. CERULLO, III,**

**MICHELLE R. DE LA UZ, JOSEPH I. DOUEK, RICHARD W. EADDY,**

**CHERYL COHEN EFFRON, BOME E JUNG,**

**ANNA HAYES LEVIN, ORLANDO MARIN, LARISA ORTIZ** *Commissioners*