



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;

as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated June 6th, 2022, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-672.

This application for a zoning map amendment was filed on April 23, 2021 by 58-02 Northern Blvd LLC in conjunction with the related zoning text amendment. The proposed actions would facilitate the construction of a new two-story, 8,000-square-foot auto showroom in the Woodside neighborhood of Queens, Community District 2.

RELATED ACTION

In addition to the zoning map amendment (C 210389 ZMQ) that is the subject of this report, the proposed project also requires action by the City Planning Commission on the following application, which is being considered concurrently with this application:

N 210390 ZRQ Zoning text amendment to designate a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area

BACKGROUND

The applicant seeks a zoning map amendment (C 210389 ZMQ) to change an existing R5 zoning district to an R6B zoning district with a C2-2 commercial overlay and a zoning text amendment (N 210390 ZRQ) to create an MIH area coterminous with the project area. The project area is

comprised of three tax lots (Block 1182, Lot 40, part of Lot 37, part of Lot 38) and is located on the south side of Northern Boulevard between 58th and 60th streets in the Woodside neighborhood of Queens. The project area is comprised of the development site (Lot 40) and portions of two non-applicant owned lots (Lot 37 and 38).

The project area is approximately 6,700 square feet in area and is bounded by Northern Boulevard to the north, 58th Street to the west, 60th Street to the east, and a line 100 feet from and parallel to Northern Boulevard to the south. Northern Boulevard, a major borough thoroughfare, is a wide street with 100 feet in width. 58th and 60th streets are narrow one-way streets at 60 feet in width. The project area has approximately 37 feet of frontage on Northern Boulevard, approximately 115 feet of frontage on 58th Street and approximately 100 feet of frontage on 60th Street.

The development site is a 5,259-square-foot, irregularly shaped lot with three street frontages. The lot tapers from approximately 82 feet at its southern lot line on the midblock to a width of approximately 37 feet at the Northern Boulevard frontage, with approximately 80 feet of frontage on 58th Street and 108 feet of frontage on 60th Street. The lot is improved with a one-story, 2,986-square-foot vacant commercial building with a cellar that was built in 1930. The building was previously occupied with an eating and drinking establishment since at least 1981 but the previous restaurant tenant discontinued operation approximately six years ago. Within the project area, Lot 37 is improved with a two-story mixed residential and commercial building and Lot 38 is improved with a two-story residential building.

The project area is located on Northern Boulevard, a major commercial corridor that stretches across Queens from Long Island City to Long Island. This portion of the corridor is predominantly characterized by commercial and industrial uses in one- and two-story buildings with unenclosed parking. Many are auto-related uses, including sales and repair, which are non-conforming uses in this of the corridor. The surrounding mid-blocks to the north and south of Northern Boulevard are predominantly characterized by two- and three-story, one- and two-family homes and multi-family walkup buildings in an R5 zoning district. One block to the west and two blocks to the east of the project area are light manufacturing M1-1 zoning districts that

about a private railroad line and the Brooklyn Queens Expressway, respectively. These areas are largely characterized by one-story warehouses, parking facilities, and auto-related uses.

There are three schools in the surrounding area including P.S. 152 Gwendoline N. Alleyne School, located two blocks east of the project area, the Academy of the City Charter School, located two blocks north of the project area, and Monsignor McClancy Memorial High School, located approximately one half-mile northeast of the project area. Additionally, St. Michael's Playground, which contains baseball fields and handball courts, is located approximately one half-mile north of the project area and Hart Playground, which contains basketballs courts and playground equipment, is located approximately one half-mile southeast of the project area.

The project area is within the Transit Zone and is well served by public transit. The Northern Boulevard station serving the M and R subway lines is located approximately a quarter mile to the west of the project area. The Q66 (Flushing/Long Island City) bus line runs along Northern Boulevard and stops at 56th Street. The Woodside Long Island Railroad station and the 61st Street-Woodside subway station, which serves the 7 subway line, are located approximately three-quarters of a mile to the south of the project area. Additionally, the project area is approximately three blocks west of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, which can be accessed via Northern Boulevard.

The project area is zoned R5 and has not changed since the time of adoption of the Zoning Resolution in 1961. The R5 district and the project area share a boundary with an M1-1 zoning district located immediately to the west, which was mapped in 1966 (CP 19360 A). The most recent land use actions in the surrounding area include the Sunnyside and Woodside Rezoning (C 110207 ZMQ), which was adopted by the City Council on July 28, 2011, and affected 130 blocks located a quarter mile to the south of the project area. The rezoning changed the zoning of non-contextual residential, commercial and manufacturing districts to lower density and mid-density contextual residential and commercial districts. The rezoning was intended to protect the neighborhood character from out-of-scale development, more closely reflect established development patterns, direct opportunities for moderate residential and commercial growth to

locations along wide streets and transit resources, and provide incentives for the production of affordable housing.

R5 zoning districts allow low-density housing, including detached, semi-detached, attached and multi-family residences, at a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.25 (or 1.65 in predominantly built-up areas utilizing the R5-infill provisions) and community facilities at a maximum of 2.0 FAR. R5 districts typically produce three- to four-story attached houses and small apartment buildings set back from the street with parking in the front yards. The maximum street wall height of a new building is 30 feet, and the maximum building height is 40 feet. Above a height of 30 feet, a setback of 15 feet is required from the street wall of the building. In addition, any portion of the building that exceeds a height of 33 feet must be set back from a rear or side yard line. Off-street parking is required for 85 percent of the dwelling units in the building.

The applicant proposes to develop a two-story automobile sales showroom building with approximately 8,000 square feet of commercial floor area, including approximately 4,500 square feet of automobile sales use and 3,500 square feet of accessory office use. The first floor would be occupied by an automobile showroom with display areas for vehicles. The northern portion of the first-floor showroom would have a ceiling height of 19 feet and the southern portion would have a ceiling height of 11 feet under a second-floor mezzanine. The second-floor mezzanine of the building would be occupied with accessory offices. The building would rise to a maximum height of 25 feet.

An enclosed driveway area at the southern end of the building would allow for additional display and access to a vehicle elevator to the cellar. The cellar would be used for accessory vehicle storage of up to 12 vehicles. Four attended permitted parking spaces would be provided in a side yard at the southernmost edge of the development site, which would be accessible from the existing curb cuts on 58th Street and 60th Street.

To facilitate this development, the applicant proposes to rezone the project area from the existing R5 zoning district to an R6B/C2-2 zoning district. R6B zoning districts are contextual zoning

districts that permit residential uses with a maximum FAR of 2.2 with the provision of Inclusionary Housing. Certain community facility uses are also permitted in the R6B zoning district with a maximum FAR of 2.0. The minimum street wall height is 30 feet, the maximum street wall height is 45 feet, and the maximum building height is 50 feet and 55 feet with a qualifying ground floor. Above the base height, a setback with a depth of at least 10 feet is required from any street wall fronting on a wide street, and at least 15 feet on a narrow street. Parking is required for 50 percent of the non-income-restricted dwelling units.

C2-2 commercial overlay districts allow a range of local retail and service uses. The maximum commercial FAR permitted in the C2-2 overlay is 2.0 when mapped with an R6B zoning district. In mixed-use buildings, commercial uses must be located on floors below residential or community facility uses. C2-2 districts require one parking space per 300 square feet of floor area for general retail or service uses.

In addition to the zoning map amendment, the applicant also proposes a zoning text amendment (N 210390) to designate the project area as an MIH area with Option 1 and Option 2. Option 1 requires that 25 percent of residential floor area be set aside for permanently affordable housing units for household with incomes averaging 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI), with 10 percent of the residential floor area set aside for households with incomes averaging 40 percent of the AMI. Option 2 requires that 30 percent of residential floor area be set aside for permanently affordable housing units for residents with incomes averaging 80 percent of the AMI.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 210389 ZMQ), in conjunction with the related application for a zoning text amendment (N 210390 ZRQ), 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 City Planning Commission. The designated CEQR number is 22DCP117Q.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed actions, a Negative Declaration was issued on June 3, 2022.

The Negative Declaration includes an (E) designation (E-672) related to air quality and noise to avoid the potential for significant adverse impacts. The requirements of the (E) designation are described in the Environmental Assessment Statement and Negative Declaration.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 210389 ZMQ) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on June 6, 2022, and duly referred to Queens Community Board 2 and the Queens Borough President, in accordance with Title 62 of the rules of the City of New York, Section 2-02(b), along with the related application for a zoning text amendment (N 210390 ZRQ), which was referred for information and review in accordance with the procedures for non-ULURP matters.

Community Board Public Hearing

On September 8, 2022, Queens Community Board 2 held a public hearing on this application (C 210389 ZMQ) and the related action for a zoning text amendment (N 210390 ZRQ), and on that date, by a vote of 17 in favor, 15 opposed, and one abstaining, adopted a resolution recommending disapproval of the application. On September 19, 2022, Queens Community Board 2 submitted their recommendation to the Chair of the City Planning Commission, stating that their disapproval of the application is based on opposition of any further development of auto related uses on the Northern Boulevard corridor.

Borough President Recommendation

The Queens Borough President held a public hearing on this application (C 210389 ZMQ) and the related action for a zoning text amendment (N 210390 ZRQ) on September 29, 2022. On October 11, 2022, the Borough President issued a recommendation to approve the application with 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.”

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On October 11, 2022 (Calendar No. 2), the City Planning Commission scheduled a public hearing on this application (C 210389 ZMQ), in conjunction with the related application for a zoning text amendment (N 210390 ZRQ). The hearing was duly held on October 26, 2022 (Calendar No. 10). Three speakers testified in favor of the application and three testified in opposition.

Speakers testifying in favor of the application included three members of the project team. The applicant representative described the site history and stated that the existing R5 zoning district, mapped in 1961, does not allow for a feasible redevelopment of the site largely due to its small and irregular size. He stated that this portion of Northern Boulevard contains many non-conforming uses, many of which are industrial and auto-related uses, and that the existing building constructed in 1930 has historically been used for non-conforming restaurant uses. He also explained that the mid-blocks in the surrounding area are predominantly characterized by

two- to three-story multi-family homes and walk-up buildings. He then described what is allowed in the existing R5 and proposed R6B/C2-2 zoning districts.

The applicant stated that he expects to sell electric vehicles through the showroom and that the share of electric vehicles being sold will increase over time compared to traditional cars powered by fossil fuels.

The architect described the proposed building that would be located on the irregularly shaped development site, which would have a 10-foot rear yard to accommodate surface parking with electric vehicle chargers. She shared the second-floor plan, which included accessory office space, and the roof plan, which included solar panels. She also stated that the proposed development would include bioswales within the streetscape and a paving filtration system called “geo-pavers” in the side yard to reduce runoff as well as grey water systems to recycle water.

Speakers testifying in opposition of the application included three members of the public. The first speaker expressed a desire for Northern Boulevard to transform into a bike-friendly and multi-modal corridor in which traffic injuries and fatalities are reduced or eliminated. She stated that an auto sales use would prevent this type of environment from emerging due to safety concerns related to the addition of more vehicles to the street, and that these vehicles put children walking to and from nearby schools at risk of injury or death in the event of an accident. She also said that she felt that the applicant did not seriously consider other uses that could benefit the community and that the sales of more vehicles contributes to carbon emissions that are harmful to the environment. Additionally, she noted that auto-related businesses tend to accrue many complaints from neighbors related to use of the public realm that conflicts with pedestrian use.

The second speaker stated that more housing and less auto sales and repair shops are needed in Queens. He expressed concern for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists that interact with Northern Boulevard and felt that the addition of an auto sales use would perpetuate existing conflicts between motorists and other users of the street. He stated that the neighborhood is too

accommodating to cars today and that this is at odds with a city moving towards multi-modal transportation options.

The third speaker stated that the proposed auto sales use would contribute to climate change and that the proposed solar panels and electric vehicle chargers are insufficient to address the underlying proposed use. She also expressed her view that Northern Boulevard is unsafe for street users outside of vehicles and that the sale of SUVs would extend existing issues with collisions.

There were no other speakers, and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that this application for a zoning map amendment (C 210389 ZMQ), in conjunction with the related application for a zoning text amendment (N 210390 ZRQ), is appropriate. Together, the requested actions will facilitate the development of a new two-story, 8,000-square-foot auto showroom that will replace a vacant building that has historically been used for commercial uses.

The project area is well suited for the modest increase in height and density of a R6B/C2-2 zoning district. The project area has three street frontages, one of which is a wide street, that will provide access to light and air for a future residential or mixed-use development that utilizes the R6B zoning district. Although an increase in height and density is permitted, mandatory Quality Housing requirements will encourage development of a building form, street walls, and yards that align with the pre-war built form that characterizes the existing one- to three-story residences located on the mid-blocks of the surrounding area. Taller street walls with transparent glazing on the ground floor for commercial uses will improve the streetscape experience along the block end of the 100-foot-wide Northern Boulevard, which is currently characterized by busy vehicle traffic, parking lots, and buildings set back from the street that are not pedestrian friendly.

The Commission finds that the C2-2 commercial overlay is appropriate. The commercial showroom allowed by the commercial overlay will transform a vacant building into a productive commercial use that aligns with the low-rise, auto-oriented nature of Northern Boulevard today. The proposed development will improve the streetscape with taller street walls located at the lot lines on three sides and transparent glazing facing Northern Boulevard. The nature of the auto showroom and the need for a select number of vehicles to be located on-site allows for accessory parking to be limited to the cellar and four spaces in the rear of the building, which limits conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles and improves the streetscape with active commercial uses rather than surface parking or blank walls. Additionally, the C2-2 commercial overlay allows for a variety of other commercial uses should the site be redeveloped utilizing the R6B zoning district.

The Commission finds that the zoning text amendment to establish an MIH area is appropriate. The R6B/C2-2 zoning district will enable the creation of permanently affordable housing located near transit and recreation amenities. In the event that the site be redeveloped, mapping an MIH area ensures that any future development require at least 25 percent permanently affordable housing.

The Commission acknowledges Community Board 2's opposition to the proposed development and auto-related uses along Northern Boulevard. The Commission notes that the development site has been vacant for six years and that the proposed development would activate a block end on a major commercial street. The Commission also believes that the C2-2 district is appropriate to limit more intensive auto uses and allow for a range of commercial uses in the future if the character of Northern Boulevard shifts towards a less auto-oriented character.

The Commission received comments from the borough president related to hiring of minority- and women-owned business enterprises as well as efforts to hire locally. The Commission acknowledges the applicant's agreement to meet these requests but notes that hiring practices are beyond the scope of this application.

The Commission is pleased to receive comments from the borough president related to environmental concerns including the use of porous concrete, natural landscaping, sale of electric or hybrid vehicles, provision of electric vehicle chargers on-site, and partnering with Community Board 2 to connect with groups that can help provide methods of offsetting carbon emissions and to install bike racks in appropriate locations in Community District 2. The Commission notes that requests for environmentally-friendly materials and practices is beyond the scope of this application.

The Commission believes that the proposed development will make productive use of a vacant, underutilized property and that future residential and commercial development allowed by the zoning district could occur at an appropriate density along a wide street. The Commission is pleased that future residential development will include affordable housing units located near transit.

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that having considered the Environmental Assessment Statement, for which a Negative Declaration was issued on June 3, 2022, with respect to this application (CEQR No. 22DCP117Q), the City Planning Commission finds that the action described herein will have no significant impact on the environment; and be it further

RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 200 of the New York City Charter that based on the environmental determination and the consideration described in this report, the Zoning Resolution of the City of New York, effective as of December 15, 1961, and as subsequently amended, is further amended by changing the Zoning Map, Section No. 9d:

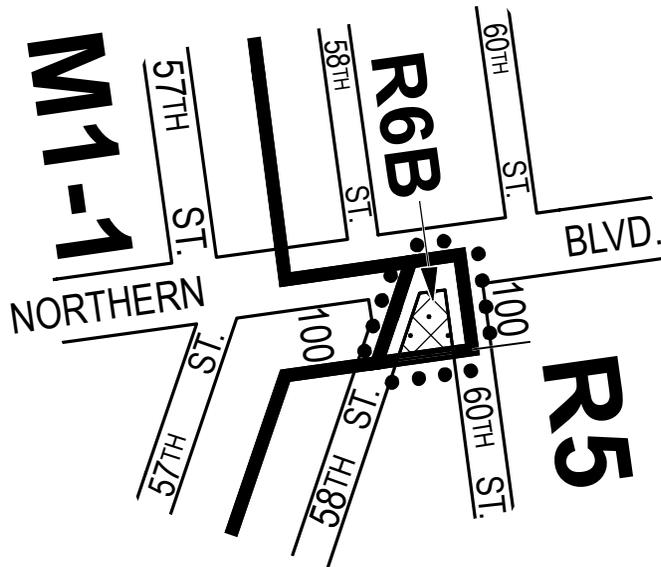
1. changing from an R5 District to an R6B District property bounded by Northern Boulevard, 60th Street, a line 100 feet southerly of Northern Boulevard, and 58th Street; and
2. establishing within the proposed R6B District a C2-2 District bounded by Northern Boulevard, 60th Street, a line 100 feet southerly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

as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated June 6th, 2022, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-672.

The above resolution (C 210389 ZMQ), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on November 30, 2022 (Calendar No. 5), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, the City Council, and the Borough President, in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.

DANIEL R. GARODNICK, Esq., *Chair*
KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., *Vice Chairman*
GAIL BENJAMIN, LEILA BOZORG, ALFRED C. CERULLO, III,
ANTHONY CROWELL, JOSEPH DOUEK, DAVID GOLD, Esq.,
RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE, ORLANDO MARÍN,
JUAN CAMILO OSORIO *Commissioners*

RAJ RAMPERSHAD, *Commissioner, RECUSED*



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
 CITY OF NEW YORK
 DIAGRAM SHOWING PROPOSED
ZONING CHANGE
 ON SECTIONAL MAP
9d
 BOROUGH OF
QUEENS



New York, Certification Date:
 June 06, 2022

S. Lenard
 S. Lenard, Director
 Technical Review Division



NOTE:

- Indicates Zoning District Boundary
- The area enclosed by the dotted line is proposed to be rezoned by changing an existing R5 District to an R6B District, and by establishing a C2-2 District within the proposed R6B District.
- Indicates a C2-2 District



Donovan Richards
Queens Borough President

Community Board No. 2

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Morry Galonoy
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

September 8, 2022

Mr. Daniel Garodnick
Chairperson
City Planning Commission
Calendar Information Office
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10271

RE: DCP ULURP Application – 58-02 Northern Boulevard, Woodside, NY (210389 ZMQ, N 210390 ZQR)

Dear Mr. Garodnick:

On September 8, 2022, Community Board 2 held a public hearing concerning the DCP ULURP Application for 58-02 Northern Boulevard, Woodside, ULURP Number: (210389 ZMQ, N 210390 ZQR).

At that meeting, with a quorum present, a motion was made and seconded to oppose any further development of any auto related use on the Northern Blvd corridor.

The vote was 17 in favor of the motion to oppose the application; 15 opposed and 1 abstention with chairperson present and not voting.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Community Board 2.

Sincerely,

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

DMK/mag

cc: Honorable Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, US Congress
Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney, US Congress
Honorable Grace Meng, US Congress
Honorable Nydia M. Velazquez, US Congress
Honorable Michael Gianaris, NY State Senate
Honorable Brian Barnwell, NYS Assembly
Honorable Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, NYS Assembly

Honorable Catherine T. Nolan, NYS Assembly
Honorable Robert Holden, NYC Council Member
Honorable Shekar Krishman, NYC Council Member
Honorable Julie Won, NYC Council Member
Honorable Donovan Richards, Queens Borough President
Vicky Garvey, Queens Borough President's Office
Alexis Wheeler, Department of City Planning
Teal Delys, Department of City Planning
Morry Galonoy, Chairperson, Community Board 2
Lisa Deller, Chair, Land Use and Housing Committee
Jordan Press, Constantinople & Vallone Consulting
Frank St. Jacques, Akerman

DCP ULURP 58-02 Northern Blvd. Rezoning

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