



IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter for an amendment to the City Map involving:

- the elimination of parkland within the area bounded by the Grand Central Parkway, 49th Street, 30th Avenue and the Brooklyn Queens Expressway; and
- the adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby;

including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District 1, Borough of Queens, in accordance with Map No. 5027 dated June 7, 2018 and signed by the Borough President.

This application for an amendment to the City Map was filed by The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) on December 12, 2017. The proposed City Map amendment, along with its related action, would facilitate the elimination and disposition of a 3.24-acre existing park parcel, which is currently under the jurisdiction and management of DPR, to the adjacent St. Michael's Cemetery in the Jackson Heights neighborhood of Queens, Community District 1.

RELATED ACTION

In addition to the City Map amendment (C 180175 MMQ) that is the subject of this report, implementation of the proposed initiative also requires action by the City Planning Commission on the following application, which is being considered concurrently with this application:

C 180174 ZMQ Zoning map amendment to establish an R4 district over the eliminated parkland.

BACKGROUND

The project site is a long and narrow irregularly shaped 3.24-acre or 141,134-square-foot parcel that is bounded by Astoria Boulevard to the north, 30th Avenue to the south, the Brooklyn Queens Expressway (BQE) to the east, and St. Michael's Cemetery to the west. It was acquired by the City of New York on April 4, 1941 and subsequently assigned to DPR for park purposes. The parcel has not been improved with park amenities and is currently landscaped with grass and

trees. It functions primarily as a green buffer, separating the BQE on the east from St. Michael's Cemetery on the west. The park elimination and subsequent disposition of property to St. Michael's Cemetery would facilitate an expansion to meet the cemetery's demand for additional burial spaces.

In 2015 the New York State Senate and Assembly authorized the alienation of St. Michael's Park and its conveyance from the City of New York to St. Michael's Cemetery subject to the condition the City of New York shall use the proceeds of such sale for the acquisition of additional parkland, and/or for capital improvements to existing park and recreational facilities within the borough of Queens. In addition, the alienated St. Michael's Park, which will be added to St. Michael's Cemetery, currently does not have zoning, as parklands are not zoned. The proposed establishment of an R4 zoning district on the parcel to facilitate the project is the subject of related application (C 180174 ZMQ), also being reviewed concurrently with this application.

St. Michael's Cemetery is one of the oldest religious, nonprofit cemeteries in the New York City metropolitan area. The original property was purchased in 1852 and occupied approximately seven acres of land. Since then, the cemetery has grown and expanded to its present size of approximately 88 acres. St. Michael's Cemetery like many other cemeteries in the New York City metropolitan area, is running out of burial space and is currently projected to be unable to respond to the needs of the community in the year 2023. Purchasing the 3.24 acres will allow St. Michael's Cemetery to continue to serve the citizens of the city for an additional 14-17 years.

The project site is located approximately a half-mile southwest of LaGuardia Airport in the Jackson Heights neighborhood. Area land uses are predominantly commercial, multi-family residential, open space and recreation. The surrounding area has multiple parks, including St. Michael's Playground, a 5.76-acre park with baseball fields, handball courts, fitness equipment, and playgrounds located just south of the project site. The nearest subway stop is the N/W line's

Astoria Boulevard stop, approximately a half-mile west of the project site. The site is also served by the Q19 bus that runs along Astoria Boulevard.

Affected agencies and utilities were polled by email on January 25, 2018 regarding the proposed amendment to the City Map. Currently, no City agencies have any objections to the proposal.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 180175 MMQ), in conjunction with the related application (C 180174 ZMQ) 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 Parks and Recreation. The designated CEQR number is 18DPR001Q.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed action, a Negative Declaration was issued on September 15, 2017.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 180175 MMQ), in conjunction with the related applications (C 180174 ZMQ) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on June 11, 2018 and, along with the related application (C 180174 ZMQ), was duly referred to Queens Community Board 1 and the Queens 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 1 held a public hearing on this application (C 180175 MMM) on June 19, 2018 and on that date, by a vote of 41 in favor, one opposed, and none abstaining, the Board adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application with the following conditions:

“All proceeds from the sale of the subject parkland to St. Michael’s Cemetery will be used to improve parks or playgrounds only located within Community District 1;

The local council representative and CD1 will be consulted in selecting the parks and playgrounds and the types of improvements to be made from the proceeds of the park sale

DPR will get an opinion from the City Department of Transportation before finalizing the sale to determine whether part of the parkland should be retained as a city owned easement for future roadway realignment and or safety improvements at the Astoria Boulevard South Intersection with the BQE entrance ramp; and

Decorative fencing and dense planting will be placed along the new property line to screen the cemetery from the roadway and replace the existing densely landscaped buffer.”

Borough President Recommendation

This application (C 180175 MMQ) was considered by the Queens Borough President, who on July 23, 2018 issued a recommendation of approval of the application.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On August 8, 2018 (Calendar No.10), the City Planning Commission scheduled August 22, 2018, for a public hearing on this application (C 180175 MMQ). The hearing was duly held on August 22, 2018 (Calendar No. 46). Two speakers testified in favor of the application.

A representative of the applicant described the application and explained that the amendment was needed to dispose of the undeveloped parkland to the adjacent St. Michael’s Cemetery. A representative of St. Michael’s Cemetery described the cemetery and the need for the acquisition of the undeveloped parkland.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that this amendment to the City Map (C 180175 MMQ), in conjunction

with the related zoning map amendment (C 180174 ZMQ), is appropriate.

The Commission notes that the parkland to be eliminated from the City Map is currently City-owned, has never been developed as a park and is currently functioning as a landscaped buffer between St. Michael's Cemetery and the BQE. The Commission further notes that the elimination of this parkland from the City Map and related disposition of the property would allow St. Michael's Cemetery to expand cemetery operations and is projected to provide burial inventory for an additional 14 to 17 years. The proceeds from the disposition of the parkland are to be used for the acquisition of additional parkland, and/or for capital improvements to existing park and recreational facilities within the borough of Queens. The Commission encourages DPR to work with Community Board 1 and elected officials when selecting the parks, playgrounds and the types of improvements to be made from the proceeds of the park sale.

The Commission also believes that the R4 zoning designation for the former St. Michael's Park parcel is appropriate and consistent with the adjacent R4 zoning district and uses.

RESOLUTION

Therefore, the City Planning Commission, deeming the proposed amendment to the City Map and any related acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto to be appropriate, adopts the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that 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 199 of the New York City Charter that based on the environmental determination and the consideration described in this report, the application (C 180175 MMQ) for the amendment to the City Map involving:

- the elimination of parkland within the area bounded by the Grand Central Parkway, 49th Street, 30th Avenue and the Brooklyn Queens Expressway; and
- the adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby;

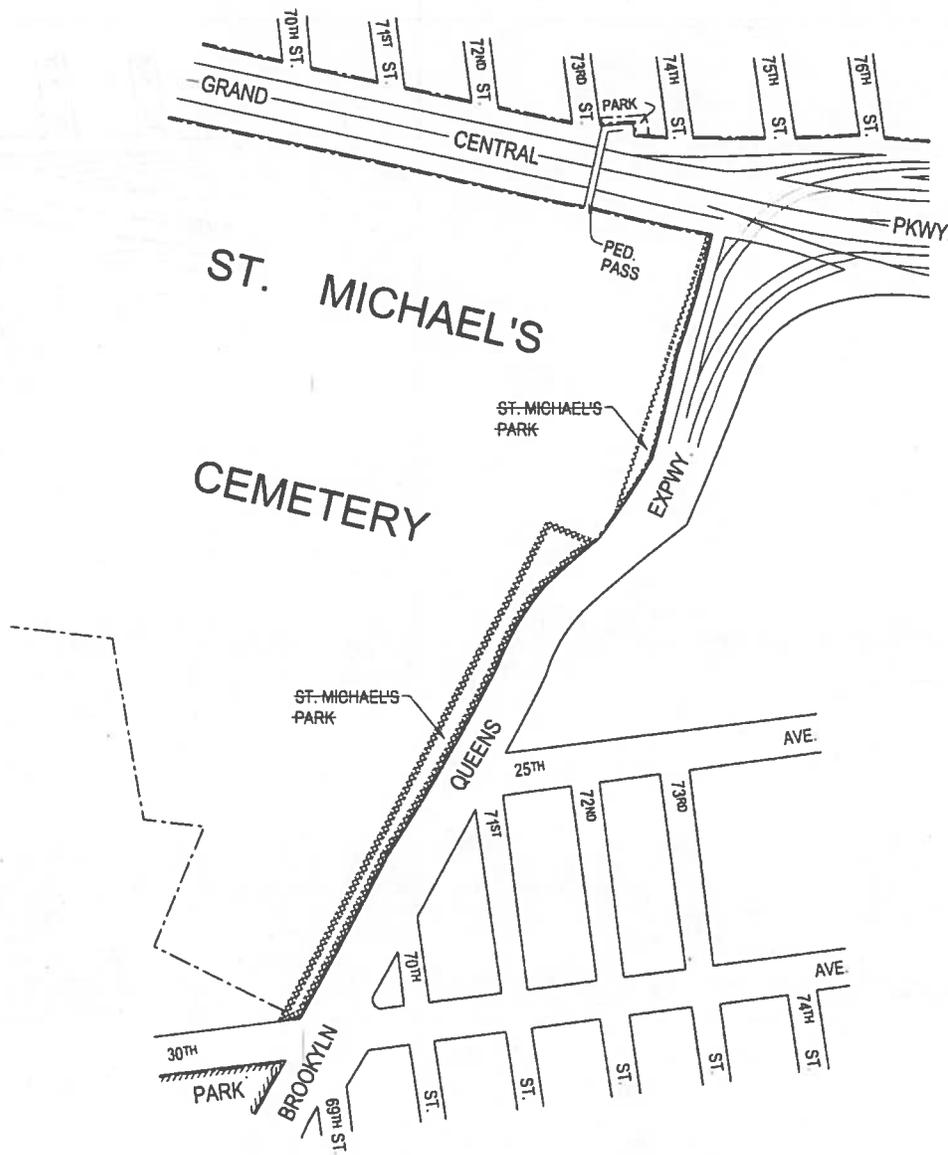
including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District 1, Borough of Queens, in accordance with Map No. 5027 dated June 7, 2018 and signed by the Borough President is approved.

All such approvals being subject to the following conditions:

- a. The subject amendment to the City Map shall take effect on the day following the day on which certified counterparts of Map No. 5027 dated June 7, 2017 are filed with the appropriate agencies in accordance with Section 198 subsection c of the New York City Charter.
- b. The subject amendment to the City Map shall not be filed with the appropriate agencies in accordance with condition “a” above until the applicant shall have executed a mapping agreement protecting the city's interest, the need for which shall be determined and the form of which shall be approved as to form and sufficiency by the Corporation Counsel and accepted by the City Planning Commission (the “Mapping Agreement”).

The above resolution (C 180175 MMQ), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on September 26, 2018 (Calendar No. 24), 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.

MARISA LAGO, *Chair*
KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., *Vice-Chairman*
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CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF NEW YORK
DIAGRAM SHOWING PROPOSED
MAP CHANGE
ON SECTIONAL MAP
9
BOROUGH OF
QUEENS

New York, Certification Date
JUNE 11, 2018

PM
P. Montgomery, P.E.
Chief Engineer



- NOTE:
- Indicates line of street legally adopted.
 - Indicates Park line heretofore established and hereby eliminated.
 - Indicates Park line heretofore established and hereby retained.

THIS DIAGRAM IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.



**City of New York
Community Board #1, Queens**

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**JUL 16 2018
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RE: C 180175 MMQ St. Michael's Park Demapping and
Authorization for Disposition of real property and
C 180174 ZMQ St. Michael's Park Rezoning

Dear Chair Lago,

On June 19, 2018 Community Board 1 Queens (CB1Q), after a duly advertised public hearing and on recommendation of the Land Use Committee, voted to recommend conditional approval of St. Michael's Park demapping/disposition application (41 in favor, 1 opposed and 0 abstentions) and the rezoning application (42 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions). The conditions for approval include:

1. All proceeds from the sale of the subject parkland to St. Michael's Cemetery will be used to improve parks or playgrounds only located **within** CD1Q;
2. The local council representative and CB1Q will be consulted in selecting the parks and playgrounds and the type of improvements to be made with the proceeds from the St. Michael's Park sale;
3. The applicant will get an opinion from City DOT before finalizing the sale to determine whether part of the parkland should be retained as a city-owned easement for future roadway realignment and/or safety improvements at the Astoria Boulevard South intersection with the BQE entrance ramp; and
4. Decorative fencing and dense planting will be placed along the new property line to screen the cemetery from the roadway and replace the existing densely landscaped buffer.

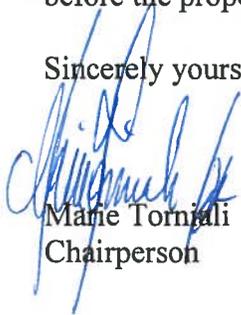
The parkland to be eliminated measures 3.24 acres, was originally acquired by the City of New York in 1941 from St. Michael's Cemetery and subsequently assigned to DPR for park purposes. The parcel has never been improved with park amenities, is currently landscaped with grass and trees and functions primarily as a dense, green buffer, separating the BQE from St. Michael's Cemetery to the west. The intended future use of the site will be additional burial space and an interior access road.

The NYS Senate and Assembly authorized alienation of the park parcel and its conveyance and sale to Saint Michael's Protestant Episcopal Church (St. Michael's Cemetery) under Chapter 399 of the Laws of 2015. The statute requires that the City use the proceeds from the sale for acquisition of additional parkland and/or for capital improvements to existing park facilities within Queens.

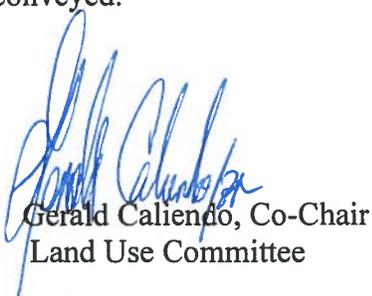
During review of the applications, unsafe conditions were noted for vehicles along Astoria Blvd. South as they approach and enter the BQE. There is inadequate signage to define the entrance location, poor curbing conditions, a very narrow ramp width and an almost 90 degree turn required for entry. Guardrails and lighting here require repair. The Board believes an easement should be retained by the City to improve this corner.

The DPR representative indicated during the public hearing that there is an existing water main easement, but it's unclear whether its location and size could accommodate street improvements. He also stated that DOT had no comments or objection to the demapping. The Board believes a second look at this intersection is warranted before the property is conveyed.

Sincerely yours,



Marie Tornjali
Chairperson



Gerald Caliendo, Co-Chair
Land Use Committee



Elizabeth Erion, Co-Chair
Land Use Committee

Queens Borough President Recommendation

APPLICATION: ULURP #180174 ZMQ

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q01

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application filed by the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the NYC Charter, for the amendment of Zoning Map, Section No. 9c & 9d, by establishing within a former park* (St Michael's Park) an R4 District bounded by the northwesterly boundary lines of a former park (St. Michael's Park), the southerly street line of Astoria Boulevard South, the northwesterly street line of Brooklyn Queens Expressway, and the northerly street line of 30th Avenue, Astoria, Borough of Queens, Community District 1, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated June 11, 2018.

*Note: a park (St. Michael's Park) is proposed to be demapped under a concurrent application (ULURP # 180175 MMQ) for changes to the City Map.

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held in the Borough President's Conference Room at 120-55 Queens Boulevard on Thursday, July 12, 2018, at 10:30 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 (l) of the New York City Charter. The applicant made a presentation. There were no other speakers. The hearing was closed.

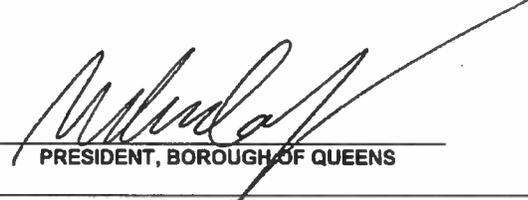
CONSIDERATION

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

- o This application was filed by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to rezone demapped parkland by extending an existing mapped R4 District to cover that area;
- o The area to be rezoned is approximately 3.24 acres of land that was purchased by the city in 1941. The land was never improved for park use. Instead, it is a grassy area with trees that is a buffer between St. Michael's Cemetery and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway between Astoria Boulevard South and 30th Avenue;
- o A related application (ULURP #180175) was filed concurrently to eliminate the mapped parkland which includes a disposition provision for the demapped property. The parkland was alienated by an act of the State Legislature in 2015.;
- o St. Michael's Cemetery opened in 1852 as a 7-acre cemetery and has expanded since to its present 88-acres. To meet continued demand for burials St. Michael's Cemetery is proposing to purchase the 3.24 acre parcel from the city. DPR has committed to use the proceeds of the sale of this property for park improvements in Queens Community District 1 ;
- o Community Board 1 (CB1) approved this application by a vote of forty-two (42) in favor with none (0) against or abstaining at a public hearing held on June 19, 2018.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend approval of this application.


PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

7/23/18
DATE

Queens Borough President Recommendation

APPLICATION: ULURP #180175 MMQ

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q01

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application filed by the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the NYC Charter, for an amendment of the City Map involving:

- the elimination of parkland within the area bounded by the Grand Central Parkway, 49th Street, 30th Avenue and the Brooklyn Queens Expressway; and
- the adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby;

including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District 1, Borough of Queens, in accordance with Map No. 5027 dated June 7, 2018 and signed by the Borough President. (Related application ULURP #180174 ZMQ)

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held in the Borough President's Conference Room at 120-55 Queens Boulevard on Thursday, July 12, 2018, at 10:30 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:

- This application was filed by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to demap parkland that was alienated by an act of the State Legislature in 2015. This application also includes a provision for disposition of the property;
- The portion of land to be demapped as a park is a 3.24 acre grassy area with trees that is a buffer between St. Michael's Cemetery and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway between Astoria Boulevard South and 30th Avenue. The land was purchased by the city in 1941. The land was never improved for park use.;
- A related application (ULURP #180174 ZMQ) was filed concurrently to rezone the approximately 3.24 acre parcel. The proposed rezoning would extend the R4 District that is mapped on St. Michael's Cemetery.;
- St. Michael's Cemetery opened in 1852 as a 7-acre cemetery and has expanded since to its present 88-acres. To meet continued demand for burials St. Michael's Cemetery is proposing to purchase the 3.24 acre parcel from the city. DPR has committed to use the proceeds of the sale of this property for park improvements in Queens Community District 1.;
- Community Board 1 (CB1) approved this application by a vote of forty-two (42) in favor with none (0) against or abstaining at a public hearing held on June 19, 2018.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend approval of this application.


PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

7/23/18
DATE