



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
 OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
 NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

POSITIVE DECLARATION

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE
 DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

<p><u>PROJECT:</u> Plaza at the Hub Borough of the Bronx CEQR: 06DME005X ULURP: PENDING</p>	<p><u>LEAD AGENCY:</u> Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding 100 Gold Street, 2nd floor New York, New York 10038</p>
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DATE ISSUED: November 1, 2005

TYPE OF ACTION: Type I

NAME, LOCATION, AND DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

Plaza at the Hub
 Bronxchester Hub Sites 6, 7a and 7b
 Community District #1, Borough of the Bronx

Plaza at the Hub is a mixed-use commercial and residential development proposed to contain local and destination retail establishments, an office tower, a supermarket, a multiplex cinema, below- and above-grade parking, and two residential buildings (the Proposed Project). The Proposed Project would be located in the Hub neighborhood of the Bronx on Block 2294, Lots 28, 29, 32, 43, 55, 59, and 60 (southern block); and Block 2361, Lot 1 (northern block). The project site is bounded by Bergen Avenue on the west and Brook Avenue on the east, with the southern block running from East 149th Street to Westchester Avenue and the northern block running from Westchester Avenue to East 153rd Street.

The project will consist of four buildings: Building A on the southern block will include three floors of retail uses containing approximately 356,420 square feet, three stories of elevated parking containing approximately 714 spaces, and a ten-story office tower containing approximately 291,725 square feet. Since the southern block is currently bisected by a NYCT Subway line which emerges from underground at the corner of 149th Street and Bergen Avenue, Building A will be constructed both adjacent to and spanning above this elevated rail line. Building B on the northern block will include approximately 3,860 square feet of ground floor

retail, an approximately 44,545 square-foot supermarket on the ground floor, and a cinema of approximately 122,915 square feet on the second and third floors. Buildings C and D on the northern block will be 11 stories and contain a total of approximately 271,900 square feet of residential space, approximately 16,550 square feet of retail space and a community room of approximately 3,150 square feet. In addition to Buildings B, C, and D, the northern block will also contain approximately 214 parking spaces below grade and 81 parking spaces at grade. In total, the project will comprise approximately 1,425,000 square feet of new development on the site. The maximum height of buildings on the site would be approximately 235 feet. The project is expected to be complete and operational in 2010.

The Proposed Project involves disposition of City-owned property for private development. Disposition will require approval through the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) under City Charter Section 197(c) and separate Borough Board and Mayoral approval pursuant to City Charter Section 384(b)(4). In addition, a number of other discretionary actions will be required, as follows:

- A change to the City Zoning Map from an M1-1 and a C4-4 district to a C6-1 district;
- A General Large-Scale District will be declared and several special permits will be required, including:
 - Special permit pursuant to ZR Section 74-743 for bulk modifications for height, setback, and distance between buildings;
 - Special permit pursuant to ZR Section 74-53 to permit an accessory group parking facility in excess of 150 spaces;
- A Special Permit pursuant to ZR Section 74-681 for development within or over a railroad or transit right-of-way;
- A modification of the January 1995 Bronxchester Urban Renewal Plan.

In addition to the above, the project may qualify for inclusion in the Brownfield Cleanup Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and an application to participate in that program may be submitted to NYSDEC at a later date. To facilitate construction of buildings on the northern block, an existing sewer easement will need to be relocated within the project site to a location approximately 240 feet north of its existing location.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT EFFECT:

In accordance with Executive Order 91 of 1977, as amended, and the Rules of Procedure for City Environmental Quality Review, found at Title 62, Chapter 5 of the Rules of the City of New York (CEQR), the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding, in the Office of the Mayor, lead agency for the referenced project, has determined that the proposed project may have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is required to evaluate and disclose the extent to which impacts may occur. Aspects that may require evaluation of potential environmental impacts include:

- 1) The potential for substantial impacts related to land use and zoning;
- 2) The potential for substantial socioeconomic impacts;

- 3) The potential for substantial open space impacts;
- 4) The potential for substantial impacts as a result of shadows;
- 5) The potential for substantial impacts related to archaeological resources;
- 6) The potential for substantial urban design/visual resource impacts;
- 7) The potential for substantial impacts related to neighborhood character;
- 8) The potential for substantial impacts related to hazardous materials;
- 9) The potential for substantial impacts related to infrastructure;
- 10) The potential for substantial impacts related to solid waste and sanitation services;
- 11) The potential for substantial impacts related to traffic, parking, transit & pedestrians;
- 12) The potential for substantial impacts related to air quality;
- 13) The potential for substantial impacts related to noise;
- 14) The potential for substantial construction impacts; and
- 15) The potential for substantial public health impacts.

Statement in Support of Determination:

The above determination is based on the finding that:

- 1) The proposed project would require, among other actions, the disposition of an approximately 6.1-acre parcel of land, a zoning map amendment, the declaration of a general large scale district, and the modification of the Bronxchester Urban Renewal Plan. The project would result in the development of more than 376,800 sq. ft. of retail, 291,700 sq. ft. of office, up to 250 residential dwelling units, 3,150 sq. ft. of community facility use, a supermarket, a multiplex cinema, more than 1,000 parking spaces, and some accessory open space. These actions and the anticipated development would result in a major change in land use and zoning on the project site, and would amend an urban renewal plan, and therefore warrant a detailed assessment.
- 2) The proposed development would include approximately 376,830 sq. ft. of retail and a 44,545 sq. ft. supermarket. Thus, there is potential for the retail and service industries in the surrounding area of the project site to be adversely affected by the proposed action and a detailed socioeconomic conditions analysis is required to determine whether retail and service businesses would be specifically affected by the proposed action.
- 3) The proposed project would result in the introduction of up to approximately 250 dwelling units with an estimated 763 residents, as well as create more than 376,800 sq. ft. of local and destination retail, about 291,700 sq. ft. of office, a 3,565-seat multiplex cinema, a supermarket, and a community room of approximately 3,150 sq. ft., which are expected to generate more than 500 employees and a substantial number of other users. Therefore, the proposed project would have an effect on the utilization of open space and recreational facilities in the surrounding area and an assessment of the proposed project's potential to affect open space and recreational facilities is required.

- 4) The proposed project includes four new structures that would exceed 50 feet in height, including one building that would rise up to approximately 235 feet tall on the block bounded by Westchester Avenue, East 149th Street, Brook Avenue, and Bergen Avenue. Although there are no historic resources or important natural features that contain sunlight sensitive features within the vicinity of the project site, there are several open space resources in the vicinity of the site, including three athletic fields. Therefore, the proposed project could result in incremental shadow impacts on light-sensitive open space resources and a detailed assessment is warranted.
- 5) Because the proposed action would induce development that would result in new in-ground disturbance and excavation on the project site, the proposed action has the potential to result in adverse impacts related to archaeological resources on a portion of the project site, and warrants a detailed assessment of archaeological resources.
- 6) The proposed project would substantially alter the appearance of the project site by replacing the existing parking, low-density commercial use, and vacant land with a mixed-use commercial and residential development of more than 1.1 million square feet. Given the scale of the project, it has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources. Therefore, a discussion of the project's effect on urban design and visual resources is warranted.
- 7) By developing a currently underutilized and partially vacant site with a major mixed-use development, the proposed project would represent a dramatic change in the land use, building bulk and scale on the project site, and thus would be expected to affect the character of the surrounding neighborhood. It would also result in a substantial addition to employment in the area, and would create a large amount of commercial space, consisting of local and destination retail, cinema, supermarket, office, and residential uses, in an area that is characterized by a significant amount of vacant and underutilized land. As such, the proposed project has the potential to alter certain constituent elements of the affected area's neighborhood character, and a detailed assessment is warranted.
- 8) The historical on and off-site uses and conditions indicate the potential for adverse impacts related to hazardous materials requiring a detailed analysis.
- 9) The proposed project would involve the construction of more than 1.1 million square feet of commercial, residential and community facility uses, which could place additional demands on infrastructure due to increased demand for services and the additional volume of sewage produced as well as resultant utility and infrastructure relocations and could potentially result in infrastructure impacts. Thus, a detailed infrastructure screening analysis is warranted to identify whether the proposed project has the potential to result in significant impacts.
- 10) The proposed project would involve the construction of more than 1.1 million square feet of new development that would require sanitation services. It is expected to exceed 10,000 pounds of solid waste per week, given the scale of the expected development. Accordingly a detailed assessment is warranted.

- 11) The proposed large-scale retail project is expected to generate significant traffic and transit trips and will contain approximately 1,000 on-site parking spaces. Therefore detailed traffic, parking, transit, and pedestrian analyses are warranted.
- 12) The proposed project would likely exceed the *CEQR Technical Manual* threshold of 100 vehicle trips through an intersection during the peak hour traffic periods and could have significant mobile source air quality impact. The proposed project would involve the construction of new residential buildings in an existing manufacturing district, which may contain industrial/manufacturing uses which could adversely affect residents of the proposed project. The project would also result in the construction of four new buildings that would be located relatively near each other, and would be of similar height and scale. As such, the boiler emissions from each new building may potentially affect the other three new buildings in the proposed development resulting in significant stationary source air quality impacts. Therefore, the project could have significant mobile source and stationary source air quality impacts and detailed analyses are warranted.
- 13) The proposed project would be located within 1,500 feet of existing rail activities and would have a direct line of sight to those rail facilities, as well as be located near heavily trafficked thoroughfares, and would generate substantial amounts of vehicular traffic. Therefore, there is the potential that high ambient noise levels from rail and vehicular traffic could affect the project site and that the proposed project could have potential noise impacts on sensitive land uses. An analysis will need to be conducted to determine whether the proposed project would generate sufficient vehicle trips to have the potential for causing a significant noise impact. Therefore, a detailed screening technical analysis of noise conditions for the project site is warranted.
- 14) The Hub site could have impacts during construction, which need to be assessed.
- 15) The project may result in significant impacts in the following areas, thereby triggering a public health analysis: increased vehicular traffic or emissions from stationary sources resulting in significant adverse air quality impacts; increased exposure to heavy metals and other contaminants in soil/dust resulting in significant adverse impacts; solid waste management practices that could attract vermin and result in an increase in pest populations; potentially significant adverse impacts to sensitive receptors from noise and odors; vapor infiltration from contaminants within a building or underlying soil that may result in significant adverse hazardous materials or air quality impacts or exceedances of accepted federal, state, or local standards. Therefore, depending on the results of these analyses, a public health analysis may be warranted.

Accordingly, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding directs that a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement be prepared in accordance with 6 NYCRR 617.9(b) and Sections 6-08 and 6-09 of Executive Order No. 91 of 1977, as amended.

Public Scoping:

Public Scoping is a process whereby the public is invited to comment on the proposed scope of analysis planned for the Draft EIS. A Scoping Document has been prepared outlining the proposed content of the Draft EIS.

The Public Scoping meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 7, 2005 at 6:30 P.M. at:

Lincoln Hospital Auditorium
234 East 149th Street
Bronx, New York

A copy of the Scoping Document may be obtained by any member of the public from the Lead Agency:

Robert R. Kulikowski, Ph.D.
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Telephone: (212) 788-9956

Or from:

Ms. Meenakshi Varandani, Director, Planning
New York City Economic Development Corporation
110 William Street
New York, New York 10038
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Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 P.M. on Monday, December 19, 2005 and may be submitted at the public scoping meeting or to Ms. Meenakshi Varandani at the above address.

The Positive Declaration has been prepared in accordance with Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law.



Robert R. Kulikowski, Ph.D., Assistant to the Mayor
For the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding