

Queens Borough President Recommendation

APPLICATION: ULURP #180265 ZMQ

COMMUNITY BOARD: Q02

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP on behalf of 69-02 Queens Blvd Woodside LLC, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the NYC Charter, for the amendment of Zoning Map, Section No. 9d:

1. Changing from an M1-1 District to an R7X District property bounded by a line 150 feet southerly of Queens Boulevard, 70th Street, 47th Avenue, and 69th Street; and
2. Establishing within the proposed R7X District a C2-3 district bounded by a line 150 feet southerly of Queens Boulevard, 70th Street, 47th Avenue, and 69th Street;

Woodside, Borough of Queens, Community District 2, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated April 9, 2018, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-472. (Related applications ULURP #180266 ZRQ, ULURP #180267 ZRQ)

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held in the Borough President's Conference Room at 120-55 Queens Boulevard on Thursday, June 21, 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:

- The applicant is proposing to rezone the southern portion of the property of the applicant's development site from M1-1 to R7X/C2-3. The proposed rezoning would extend an existing R7X/C2-3 on the northern portion of property;
- The project site is an irregularly shaped 1.65 acre parcel located between the northwest corner of 69th Street and Queens Boulevard and the southeast corner of 70th Street and 47th Avenue. An elevated railroad bridge cuts diagonally across the corner of 69th Street and 47th Avenue (southwest corner of site) and is supported by a berm built on property owned by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The total lot area is 71,984 sf. Existing development on the site consists of a variety of low-scale residential, retail, commercial and industrial buildings. The split zoning of the site was mapped as part of the Maspeth-Woodside rezoning approved in 2006;
- The proposed project is two L-shaped towers at the northwest and southeast corners of the site. The proposed total square footage for the entire project is 431,904 sf with 426,264 sf residential space 5,640 sf of retail space. There would be 561 dwelling units of which 30% (169 dwelling units) would be affordable pursuant to Option 2 (30% of units with an average 80% AMI) of the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) program. The northwest tower is proposed to be 17-stories (181.5 feet) and the southeast tower is proposed to be 14-stories (151.5 feet). Parking for 242 cars would be provided in a structure built between the two towers with access from 69th Street. A public landscaped walkway with seating areas would be provided along the southwest portion of the lot along side the berm and the elevated railroad bridge from 69th Street to 47th Avenue. The rooftop of the parking structure would be landscaped as a green space available to the residents of the project;
- In addition to the proposed rezoning, the applicant has also filed an application for a Special Permit for a Large Scale General Development that would allow modification of regulations regarding maximum height and the number stories for the project. A zoning text amendment to Appendix F is also required to establish the rezoned area as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area;
- The areas north and southwest of the site are predominantly developed with low-scale housing. The areas south of the property are developed with a mix of low-scale commercial and industrial buildings with some housing mixed in. Queens Boulevard is developed with a mix of low-scale commercial and auto-related uses with some housing. There is some newer residential construction on Queens Boulevard east of the site that are 7-, 9- and 11-stories in height;

- o Community Board 2 disapproved this application by a vote of twenty-nine (29) against with one (1) in favor with none (0) abstaining at a public hearing held on June 7, 2018. CB 2's concerns included: the site was rezoned in the 2006 Woodside-Maspeth rezoning that mapped the R7X/C2-3 District on Queens Boulevard with consideration that the zoning would yield appropriate building heights and density for that area with or without affordable Inclusionary Housing; the proposed 15- and 18-story towers are out of context with the immediate neighborhood; the cost of the affordable and market rate housing would be higher than the median income of the census tract for the area and might cause increases of neighborhood land values and rent levels; the added population would further burden school overcrowding with no new schools planned; the project would exacerbate existing traffic congestion and safety issues on 69th Street and the shortage of street parking in the area; the developer's lack of commitment to use union labor; and the proposed rezoning and development does not benefit the community.

RECOMMENDATION

The 2006 Maspeth-Woodside rezoning was approved through the ULURP public review process. This portion of Queens Boulevard, which is surrounded by predominantly low-scale buildings, was identified as an appropriate area for taller buildings up to 14-story buildings while maintaining the scale of the neighborhoods around the boulevard.

Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend approval of the zoning change with modification of the proposed project:

- Instead of the requested modification of the R7X 14-story height limit the project building heights should be lowered and bulk redistributed to stay within the 140 feet height restriction. This would make the scale of the project closer to the newer development near the applicant's site on Queens Boulevard;
- Overcrowding of the area schools is a major problem in this neighborhood. To help alleviate the shortage of school seats in this neighborhood the applicant should work with the School Construction Authority on siting a school on the site, and deliver the core and shell for a school of appropriate size;
- Consideration of adjusting the depth of the proposed income bands for the affordable housing to provide more housing opportunities for area residents who are priced out at the proposed levels.


PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

7/23/18
DATE