

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

May 10, 2017/ Calendar No. 18

C 170150 ZMX

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Azimuth Development Group, LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the amendment of the Zoning Map, Section Nos. 3d and 4b:

1. eliminating from within an existing R5 District a C1-2 District bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 300 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commonwealth Avenue;
2. changing from an R5 District to an R7A District property bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 310 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commonwealth Avenue; and
3. establishing within the proposed R7A District a C1-4 District bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 310 feet northerly of Watson Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue;

Borough of the Bronx, Community District 9, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated December 12, 2016 and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E- 403.

This application for an amendment of the Zoning Map (C 170150 ZMX) was filed by Azimuth Development Group LLC on November 16, 2016 to facilitate the development of a mixed-use development containing approximately 286 affordable dwelling units, commercial, and community facility space in the Soundview section of the Bronx, Community District 9.

RELATED ACTIONS

In addition to the zoning map amendment which is the subject of this report (C 170150 ZMX), 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:

N 170151 ZRX Zoning text amendment to designate a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area.

BACKGROUND

The applicant seeks approval of zoning map and zoning text amendments to facilitate construction of a new mixed-use development comprising approximately 286 dwelling units and commercial and community facility space in four buildings to be constructed on a single zoning lot located at 1755 Watson Avenue (Block 3751, Lot 1) in the Soundview neighborhood of the Bronx. The applicant is proposing to rezone the development site from R5 and R5/C1-2 zoning districts to an R7A/C1-4 zoning district.

The development site is a corner lot, approximately 63,000 square feet in area, located on Watson Avenue between Rosedale and Commonwealth Avenues. It is currently occupied by the Bronx Pentecostal Deliverance Center, a one-story, 12,240-square-foot church. This building was previously used as a supermarket and auto sales and service facility; it was converted to a church in 1985. The church is a co-developer and non-profit partner for the proposed project.

Most of the project area is currently zoned R5/C1-2, while a small portion of the lot is zoned R5. The R5 district and C1-2 overlay have been in place since the early 1960s. The surrounding area is primarily mapped with R5 and R6 districts with some C1-2 overlays.

R5 zoning districts allow a maximum residential floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.25, a maximum community facility FAR of 2.0, a maximum height of 40 feet and a maximum lot coverage of 55 percent. These districts typically feature three- and four-story attached houses and small apartment buildings. Off-street parking is required for 85 percent of the dwelling units in a building.

The applicant is seeking to change both the area currently zoned R5/C1-2, and the small portion of the area currently zoned R5, to an R7A/C1-4 zoning district. The area being rezoned excludes a very small triangular portion of the zoning lot, which would avoid mapping portions of the adjacent lots containing two small homes (Block 3751, Lots 23 and 66) with a commercial district. Those lots will remain in an R5 district.

In addition to the proposed zoning map amendment, the applicant proposes a zoning text amendment to Appendix F to designate the rezoning area as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area. Under the MIH program, permanently affordable housing would be required within new residential development, enlargements, or conversions from non-residential to residential uses. The applicant is proposing to map the site with MIH Option 2, which requires that 30 percent of the residential floor area be provided for housing affordable to households at an average of 80 percent of AMI

The proposed R7A/C1-4 district, utilizing the MIH provisions, allows a maximum residential FAR of 4.6 and a maximum community facility FAR of 4.0. Accessory parking for affordable residential units is not required because the site is located within the Transit Zone. The proposed R7A/C1-4 zoning district has a maximum base height of 75 feet and a maximum overall height of 95 feet with the MIH provisions.

C1-4 commercial overlay districts permit grocery stores, dry cleaners, drug stores, restaurants and local clothing stores that cater to the daily needs of the immediate neighborhood. This commercial overlay has a maximum commercial FAR of 2.0 within R6 to R10 districts. The difference between the existing C1-2 commercial overlay and the proposed C1-4 commercial overlay is that the parking requirement in the C1-4 commercial district is lower.

Under the proposed zoning district and mapped MIH area, the site could be developed with up to 286,000 square feet of floor area. The applicant proposes to develop a mixed-use development on Watson Avenue between Rosedale and Commonwealth Avenues consisting of four attached buildings containing residential, community facility and retail uses. In addition, 56 at-grade vehicle parking spaces would be provided in a covered garage in the center of the development including 146 bicycle parking spaces.

The residential component of the proposed development would have an apartment distribution of approximately 50 studio units, 110 one-bedroom, 76 two-bedroom, and 50 three-bedroom units. Under MIH and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and

Development (HPD)'s ELLA program, 100 percent of the units would be affordable to households earning between 25 percent to 100 percent of the area median income (AMI).

Building A will front on Rosedale Avenue. It is a proposed nine-story residential building with approximately 107,459 square feet of residential floor area. Building A will contain approximately 120 dwelling units and will have an apartment distribution consisting of 12 studio units, 42 one-bedroom units, 38 two-bedroom units, and 28 three-bedroom units.

Building B will occupy the entire block front of Watson Avenue between Rosedale and Commonwealth Avenues with an eight-story mixed use building, with approximately 113 dwelling units and approximately 16,592 square feet of ground floor retail, and approximately 101,434 square feet of residential floor area. The apartment distribution will be 12 studio units, 41 one-bedroom units, 38 two-bedroom units, and 22 three-bedroom units. The ground floor retail space is intended to target local retailers with potential uses such as supermarkets or local pharmacies.

Building C will front on Commonwealth Avenue. It is a proposed nine-story residential building with approximately 48,713 square feet of residential floor area and 53 dwelling units. It will have an apartment distribution of 26 studio units, and 27 1-bedroom units.

Building D will also front on Commonwealth Avenue and will be the new home for the Bronx Pentecostal Church. The proposed building will be a three-story structure with approximately 10,407 square feet of floor area. It will provide a large sanctuary to host community groups.

The area surrounding the proposed development is generally characterized by residential uses on side streets with local retail uses and community facilities, including some mixed use residential and commercial buildings, on major streets. A large park, the Watson/Gleason playground, which contains basketball and handball courts and play equipment for children, occupies the entire block to the west of the site.

The area north of the development site is generally developed with three-family attached homes. The block to the east contains a large four-story residential building that houses veterans. The remainder of this block contains two- and three-family attached and semi-detached homes. The area immediately south of Block 3751 is generally developed with the Justice Sotomayor Houses, a group of 28 of seven-story multiple dwellings containing approximately 1,500 dwelling units owned by the New York City Housing Authority.

Major roads near the project area include the Bruckner Expressway, Bruckner Boulevard, Westchester Avenue, the Bronx River Parkway, and the Cross Bronx Expressway. The area is also within the Transit Zone, with access to the St. Lawrence Avenue station on the 6 subway line and multiple bus routes (BX 4, BX 22, BX 5, BX 39) running along Westchester Avenue, Bruckner Boulevard, the Bronx River Parkway/Boston Road, Rosedale Avenue and White Plains Road. The site is well served by public transit including the number 6 elevated subway line which runs along Westchester Avenue and has a stop at the Parkchester station, which is approximately one and a half blocks away from the development site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 170150 ZMX), in conjunction with the related action (N 170151 ZRX), 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 designated CEQR number is 17DCP075X. The lead is the City Planning Commission.

After a study of the potential impacts of the proposed actions in the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) issued on December 9, 2016, a Negative Declaration was issued on December 12, 2016.

To avoid the potential for significant adverse impacts related to hazardous materials, air quality, and noise, an (E) designation (E-403) is proposed to be assigned to the project site as described below.

The (E) designation (E-403) text related to hazardous materials is as follows:

Block 3751, Lot 1

Task 1-Sampling Protocol

The applicant submits to OER, for review and approval, a Phase II of the site along with a soil, groundwater and soil vapor testing protocol, including a description of methods and a site map with all sampling locations clearly and precisely represented. If site sampling is necessary, no sampling should begin until written approval of a protocol is received from OER. The number and location of samples should be selected to adequately characterize the site, specific sources of suspected contamination (i.e., petroleum based contamination and non-petroleum based contamination), and the remainder of the site's condition. The characterization should be complete enough to determine what remediation strategy (if any) is necessary after review of sampling data. Guidelines and criteria for selecting sampling locations and collecting samples are provided by OER upon request.

Task 2-Remediation Determination and Protocol

A written report with findings and a summary of the data must be submitted to OER after completion of the testing phase and laboratory analysis for review and approval. After receiving such results, a determination is made by OER if the results indicate that remediation is necessary. If OER determines that no remediation is necessary, written notice shall be given by OER.

If remediation is indicated from test results, a proposed remediation plan must be submitted to OER for review and approval. The applicant must complete such remediation as determined necessary by OER. The applicant should then provide proper documentation that the work has been satisfactorily completed.

A construction-related health and safety plan should be submitted to OER and would be implemented during excavation and construction activities to protect workers and the community from potentially significant adverse impacts associated with contaminated soil, groundwater and/or soil vapor. This plan would be submitted to OER prior to implementation.

The (E) designation (E-403) text related to air quality is as follows:

Block 3751, Lot 1

Any new development or enlargement on Block 3751, Lot 1 with residential/commercial/community facility uses on the above-referenced property must use natural gas as the type of fuel for heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and ensure that one HVAC stack is used for the entire development, located at the highest tier or at least 98 feet above grade on Building B facing Watson Avenue, to avoid any significant adverse air quality impacts.

The (E) designation (E-403) text related to noise is as follows:

Block 3751, Lot 1

To ensure an acceptable interior noise environment, future residential/commercial uses must provide a closed-window condition with a minimum window/wall attenuation of 28 dBA on the facade facing Watson Avenue to maintain an interior noise level of 45 dBA. To maintain a closed-window condition, an alternate means of ventilation (AMV) must also be provided. Alternate means of ventilation includes, but is not limited to, air conditioning.

With the implementation of the above (E) designation (E-403), no significant adverse impacts related to air quality, noise and hazardous materials would occur.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 170150 ZMX) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on December 12, 2016, and was duly referred to Bronx Community Board 9 and the Bronx 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 the zoning text amendment (N 170151 ZRX), which was referred for information and review in accordance with the procedures for non-ULURP matters.

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 9 held a public hearing on this application on January 24, 2017, and on February 16, 2017, by a vote of 25 in favor, none opposed and with no abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending approval with the following modifications:

1. Develop a senior housing component to this project with a possible veteran preference, with dedicated space for senior center programming.
2. Allocate space for a volunteer ambulance/rescue squad and technology center that will support our mission to increase programming for youth and young adults.
3. Commit to 24 hour on-site security guards, for the protection of future residents.
4. Commit to creating high quality building service jobs that pay all building service workers the industry standard prevailing wage and benefits.
5. Collaborate with the independent non-profit, United Hispanic Construction Workers (UHCW) to facilitate and ensure that up to 25% of the construction work forces of these developments are residents in our Community Board's ZIP codes and The Bronx. (ZIP codes: 10473, 10472, 10462, 10460).

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Bronx Borough President, who held a public hearing on this application on March 9, 2017 and issued a recommendation on March 23, 2017, approving the application.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On March 22, 2017 (Calendar No. 2), the City Planning Commission scheduled April 5, 2017 for a public hearing on this application (C 170150 ZMX). The hearing was duly held on April 5, 2017 (Calendar No. 19). There were three speakers in favor, all part of the applicant team, and one speaker opposed.

The applicant team testified in favor of the application and described the project to the Commission. They informed the Commission that the Bronx Pentecostal Church has been at this location for approximately 30 years and that the project has obtained ELLA financing from HPD. The team also testified that the applicant is considering providing below-grade accessory parking and that all three residential buildings will have large common areas.

The project architect, as part of the applicant team, stated that the rear of the buildings will be used for mechanical space and that the accessory parking will be covered by a second-floor terrace. He also stated that Building C has been redesigned to blend in with the smaller homes abutting their proposed development. The applicant said that he has engaged city agencies regarding the 100 percent affordability of his project and that the Bronx Pentecostal Church owns the property and is working to ensure that all units remain affordable. He also stated that he has completed over 400 units of affordable housing and currently has approximately 1,000 units under construction.

One speaker representing SEIU 32 BJ testified against the project, stating that the applicant had not responded to their request for good paying service jobs at this development.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that this application (C 170150 ZMX) for a zoning map amendment, in conjunction with the related application for a zoning text amendment (N 170151 ZRX), is appropriate.

The proposed project would create approximately 286 dwelling units including 50 studio units, 110 one-bedroom, 76 two-bedroom, and 50 three-bedroom units. Because the applicant has secured ELLA financing from HPD, all of the units would be affordable to households earning 25 percent to 100 percent of AMI. As required by the MIH program,

30 percent of the units would be permanently affordable. These units would help address the urgent need for affordable housing in the Bronx and in the City as a whole.

The mixed-use development with commercial and community facility space that the requested actions will facilitate will put this currently underutilized property to more productive use and will reinforce existing residential land uses within the rezoning area.

The proposed R7A/C1-4 zoning district is appropriate. The Commission notes that the existing zoning districts were mapped more than 50 years ago, and today the surrounding built environment is not reflective of an R5 zoning district. The superblock to the south, for example, contains the 28-building, seven-story-tall Sotomayor Houses. This site, at the intersection of two wide streets and very close to transit and a large City-owned park, is appropriate for housing at the proposed density. While it is outside the scope of the proposed actions, the Commission is pleased that the architect has stated an intention to design the proposed “Building C” in a manner that fits with the context of the small homes adjacent to the development site.

The Commission notes that although accessory parking is not required, based on the project’s level of affordability and the development site’s location in the Transit Zone, the applicant intends to provide 56 accessory parking spaces, which will be available to residential tenants as well as members of the house of worship.

The Commission acknowledges Community Board 9’s proposed modifications, including suggestions for uses within the building, security and job creation. While the Commission recognizes that the application is for a zoning map amendment and zoning text amendment, and not for review of a specific building or site plan, the Commission is pleased that the applicant and the community board continue to discuss elements of the project.

The Commission believes that proposed zoning text amendment (N 170151 ZRX) is appropriate. The designation of an MIH area will ensure permanent affordability for a portion of the units on the site. The application seeks to make Option 2 available in this

area. Option 2 requires that 30 percent of residential floor area be set aside for families with incomes averaging 80 percent AMI.

The Commission also notes that Councilmember Annabel Palma submitted a letter of support for the project dated January 19, 2017.

RESOLUTION

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

RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 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 Nos. 3d and 4b:

1. eliminating from within an existing R5 District a C1-2 District bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 300 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commonwealth Avenue;
2. changing from an R5 District to an R7A District property bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 310 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commonwealth Avenue; and
3. establishing within the proposed R7A District a C1-4 District bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 310 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commerce Avenue;

Borough of the Bronx, Community District 9, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated December 12, 2016, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-403.

The above resolution (C 170150 ZMX), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on May 10, 2017 (Calendar No. 18), 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*

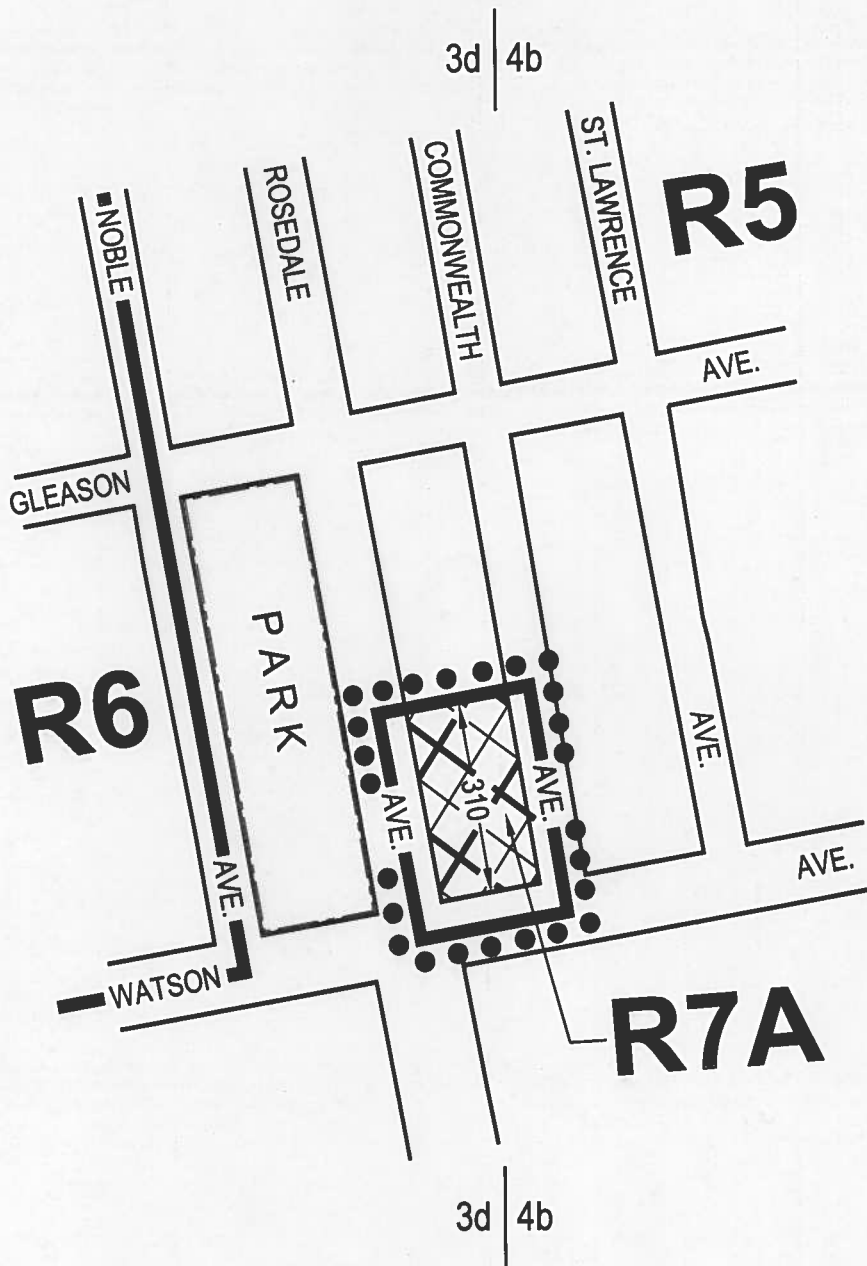
KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, *Esq.*, *Vice Chairman*

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, HOPE KNIGHT, ANNA HAYES LEVIN,

ORLANDO MARIN, LARISA ORTIZ, Commissioners



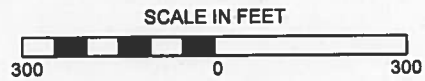
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
 CITY OF NEW YORK
 DIAGRAM SHOWING PROPOSED
ZONING CHANGE
 ON SECTIONAL MAP
3d & 4b
 BOROUGH OF
BRONX



SL

S. Lenard, Director
 Technical Review Division

New York, Certification Date
 DECEMBER 12, 2016



- NOTE:**
- Indicates Zoning District Boundary.
 - The area enclosed by the dotted line is proposed to be rezoned by eliminating a C1-2 District from an existing R5 District, changing an R5 District to an R7A District, and by establishing a C1-4 District within the proposed R7A District.
 - Indicates a C1-4 District.

Application #: **C 170150 ZMX**

Project Name: **Watson Avenue Rezoning**

CEQR Number: 17DCP075X

Borough(s): Bronx
Community District Number(s): 9

Please use the above application number on all correspondence concerning this application

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- Complete this form and return to the Department of City Planning by one of the following options:
 - EMAIL (recommended):** Send email to CalendarOffice@planning.nyc.gov and include the following subject line: (CB or BP) Recommendation + (6-digit application number), e.g., "CB Recommendation #C100000ZSQ"
 - MAIL:** Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, 120 Broadway, 31st Floor, New York, NY 10271
 - FAX:** to (212) 720-3488 and note "Attention of the Calendar Office"
- Send one copy of the completed form with any attachments to the applicant's representative at the address listed below, one copy to the Borough President, and one copy to the Borough Board, when applicable.

Docket Description:

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Azimuth Development Group LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section Nos. 3d and 4b:

- eliminating from an existing R5 District a C1-2 District bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 300 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commonwealth Avenue;
- changing from an R5 District to an R7A District property bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 310 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commonwealth Avenue; and
- establishing within the proposed R7A District a C1-4 District bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 310 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commonwealth Avenue;

Borough of Bronx, Community District 9, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated December 12, 2016, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-403.

Applicant(s): Azimuth Development Group LLC 40 Fulton Street, 12th Floor New York, NY 10038		Applicant's Representative: Steven Sinacori Akerman LLP 666 Fifth Avenue, 20th Floor New York, NY 10103	
Recommendation submitted by: Bronx Community Board 9			
Date of public hearing: JAN 24, 2017		Location: Community Bronx Deliverance Center 1755 WATSON AVE, Bronx NY 10472	
Was a quorum present? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		<i>A public hearing requires a quorum of 20% of the appointed members of the board, but in no event fewer than seven such members.</i>	
Date of Vote: FEB 16, 2017		Location: BXC89 General Board Meeting KIPS BAX BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB 1950 RANDALL AVE, Bronx NY 10473	
RECOMMENDATION			
<input type="checkbox"/> Approve		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve With Modifications/Conditions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Disapprove		<input type="checkbox"/> Disapprove With Modifications/Conditions	
Please attach any further explanation of the recommendation on additional sheets, as necessary.			
Voting			
# In Favor: 25		# Against: 0 # Abstaining: 0 Total members appointed to the board: 32	
Name of CB/BB officer completing this form: William Rivera		Title: District Manager Bronx CB9 City of New York	Date: 2/21/17



COMMUNITY BOARD NUMBER 9

CITY OF NEW YORK
1967 TURNBULL AVENUE
BRONX, NEW YORK 10473



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RUBEN DIAZ JR.
BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT

NICHOLAS HIMIDIAN JR.
CHAIRPERSON

WILLIAM RIVERA
DISTRICT MANAGER



February 21, 2017

New York City Department of Planning
Calendar Office
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York NY 10271

REF: CB Recommendation #C170150 ZMX

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to notify your office, that on February 16, 2017, the Community Board voted to approve the above mentioned recommendation with the modifications and conditions listed below, in pursuant to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure. (Community/Borough Board Recommendation form attached)

Recommended Modifications/Conditions: Azimuth Development Group LLC to

Develop a senior housing component to this project with a possible veteran preference, with dedicated space for senior center programming.
Allocate space for a volunteer ambulance/rescue squad and technology center that will support our mission to increase programming for youth and young adults.
Commit to 24 hour on-site security guards, for the protection of future residents.
Commit to creating high quality building service jobs that pay all building service workers the industry standard prevailing wage and benefits.
Collaborate with the independent non-profit, United Hispanic Construction Workers (UHCW) to facilitate and ensure that up to 25% of the construction work forces of these developments are residents in our Community Board's zip codes and The Bronx. (Zip codes: 10473, 10472, 10462, 10460)

If you have any questions please feel free to contact our office.

Thank You,

William Rivera
District Manager

CC: Chairman Nicholas Himidian, Bronx Community Board 9
Land, Zoning, Planning, & Economic Development Committee, Bronx Community Board 9
Manny Lagares, NYC Department of City Planning.
Local Elected Officials

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Nicholas Himidian Jr.
Chairperson

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1st Vice Chairperson

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2nd Vice Chairperson

Benigno Cuevas
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Bronx River
Bruckner
Castle Hill
Clason Point
Harding Park
Parkchester
Soundview
Unionport
Shorehaven
Zerega

**BOROUGH PRESIDENT
RECOMMENDATION**

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
22 Reade Street, New York, NY 10007
Fax # (212)720-3356**

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Return this completed form with any attachments to the Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E at the above address.
2. Send one copy with any attachments to the applicant's representative as indicated on the Notice of Certification.

APPLICATION # C 170150 ZMX-Watson Avenue Rezoning

DOCKET DESCRIPTION-PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT FOR DOCKET DESCRIPTION

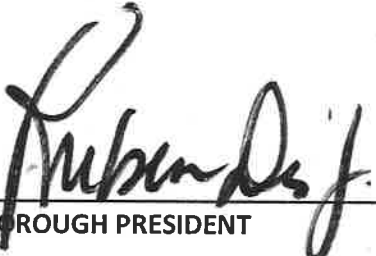
COMMUNITY BOARD NOS. 9

BOROUGH: BRONX

RECOMMENDATION

- APPROVE**
- APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS (List below)**
- DISAPPROVE**

EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION-MODIFICATION/CONDITIONS (Attach additional sheets if necessary): PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT FOR THE BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION


BOROUGH PRESIDENT

3/23/17
DATE

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 170150 ZMX
Watson Avenue Rezoning

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Azimuth Development Group LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section Nos. 3d and 4b:

1. Eliminating from an existing R5 district a C1-2 District bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 300 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commonwealth Avenue;
2. Changing from an R5 District to an R7A District property bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 310 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commonwealth avenue; and
3. Establishing within the proposed R7A District a C1-4 District bounded by Watson Avenue, Rosedale Avenue, a line 310 feet northerly of Watson Avenue, and Commonwealth Avenue;

Borough of Bronx, Community District #9, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated December 12, 2016, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-403.

BACKGROUND

Approval of this application would amend the Zoning Map, Section Nos. 3d and 4b (Block 3751, Lot 1) by changing an existing R5 District to the proposed R7A District. This site is located on the Northern Side of Watson Avenue, with 198 feet of frontage, between Commonwealth Avenue and Rosedale Avenue. This lot has a depth of 325 feet, yielding 63,525 square feet. The site is currently occupied by a one-story, 12,240 square feet church called the Bronx Pentecostal Deliverance Center. They would be the co-developer and non-profit partner of the proposed development.

Lot 1 would become a R7A District on Block 3751. The remaining lots on Block 3751 would remain within the R5 Zoning District.

This proposed R7A District would facilitate the construction of a mixed-use development project consisting of 4 attached buildings containing residential, community facility, and retail uses. The proposed development would include 284,606 square feet of space. Highlights include

- 320 dwelling units
- 125 parking spaces
- 146 bicycle parking spaces

The proposed development would be built with a total of approximately 4.6 FAR, under Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH).

This proposed development would include the existing Bronx Pentecostal Deliverance Center which would be housed in a newly reconstructed three-story church building with approximately 10,407 square feet. The total scope of development includes:

BUILDING A

- Front on Rosedale Avenue
- Proposed nine-story residential building
- 124 units
 - 12 studio apartments
 - 44 one-bedroom apartments
 - 40 two-bedroom apartments
 - 28 three-bedroom apartments
- Approximately 107,459 square feet

BUILDING B

- Entire block front of Watson Avenue between Rosedale Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue
- Proposed eight-story mixed-use building
- 116 units
 - 12 studio apartments
 - 42 one-bedroom apartments
 - 40 two-bedroom apartments
 - 22 three-bedroom apartments
- Approximately 16,592 square feet of ground floor retail and 101,434 square feet of residential

BUILDING C

- Front on Commonwealth Avenue
- Proposed nine-story senior housing space stepped down to X-stories heading north on Commonwealth Avenue
- 80 units
 - 40 studio apartments
 - 40 one-bedroom apartments
- Approximately 48,713 square feet

Bronx Pentecostal Deliverance Center (Building D)

- Front on Commonwealth Avenue
- Proposed three-story reconstruction adding 10,407 square feet to the existing structure consisting of 12,240 square feet.
- Approximate total = 22,647 square feet

Residential Access on Watson Avenue

As proposed, 1755 Watson Avenue would offer 320 dwelling units, including:

- 64 studio apartments, averaging 400 square feet, 20 percent of the total units
- 126 one bedroom apartments, averaging 550 square feet, 40 percent of the total units
- 80 two bedroom apartments, averaging 700 square feet, 25 percent of the total units
- 50 three bedroom apartments, averaging 925 square feet, 15 percent of the total units

Of these 320 dwelling units, approximately 80 apartments (40 studio, 40 1 bedroom) would be set aside for Senior Housing.

Based on the Average Median Income (AMI) of the 320 dwelling units to be constructed

- 32 units at 30 percent of AMI, 10 percent of the total units
- 48 units at 40 percent of AMI, 15 percent of the total units
- 48 units at 50 percent of AMI, 15 percent of the total units
- 128 units at 60 percent of AMI, 40 percent of the total units
- 64 units at 80 percent of AMI, 20 percent of the total units

Amenities to be offered to the residents of 1755 Watson Avenue

- Each building would have a 1,500 square feet community room
- 3,300 square feet of recreational space over the parking lot
- 125 parking spaces
- 146 bicycle storage spaces
- Day Care Center

Existing residential development in the area include three-story multifamily row housing on Rosedale Avenue. Further south there is the Justice Sotomayor Houses (seven-story buildings with approximately 1,497 units) owned by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). The Blessed Sacrament school is located on 1160 Beach Avenue approximately two blocks west of the proposed development. MTA access in this area includes the IRT 6 train and a walking distance to the BX4, 4A (Westchester Avenue); 7, 8, 9 (Bruckner Boulevard); 11 (Bronx River Parkway/Boston Road); 27(Rosedale Avenue); 36 & 39 (White Plains Road) buses.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application has been reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and received a Negative Declaration, meaning this project poses no threat to the environment. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on December 12, 2016.

COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #9 held a public hearing on January 24, 2017. A vote recommending approval of this application was 25 in favor zero against, zero abstaining.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Borough President convened a public hearing on this application on March 9, 2017. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. Representatives of SEIU Local 32BJ were also present and offered a written statement which was read at the hearing. A copy of this statement is attached to this recommendation.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

The Bronx has experienced a surge in affordable housing developments throughout the borough over the last two decades. It continues to emphasize the need for income-based affordability in the city that would allow for comfortable living at moderate prices. The projected development at 1755 Watson Avenue would continue this trend and I am pleased it would offer 320 units of affordable housing. Approximately 80 of those units would be for senior living which is a prominent issue in our community. The distribution of two and three bedroom apartments within this development makes up over half of the total number of apartments.

However, as I have noted in previous applications, the size of these apartments is not consistent with an appropriate living standard. According to the development group:

- Studio apartments would be approximately 400 square feet
- One-bedroom apartments would be approximately 550 square feet
- Two-bedroom apartments would be approximately 700 square feet
- Three-bedroom apartments would be approximately 925 square feet

This is simply unacceptable. The amount of apartments constructed should NOT surpass the need for apartments that offer comfortable living. Quantity of apartments should not compromise quality of the living space. A three-bedroom apartment at approximately 925 square feet is rather small if there are about four to five people in residence. I understand that these smaller sized units are approved by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). I believe it is my obligation to recommend larger units be incorporated in HPD projects. While developers may argue that HPD is forcing their hand toward smaller units, it is incumbent upon them to negotiate in providing adequate-sized living quarters that accommodates mid-size to large families that live in The Bronx. Yes, there is a dire need for more affordable housing, but The Bronx will not be a testing ground for a numbers game the City is struggling to win.

The developer is providing units for our working professionals by offering 20 percent of units at 80 percent of AMI. I believe they should increase the percentage of units at 80 percent AMI to at least 30 percent in order to improve the availability of these apartments to middle-class families.

The Bronx has seen a lack of apartments for working middle-class residents. I, therefore, believe a higher percentage of 80 percent of AMI units will allow for the inclusion of middle-class residents and not just low-income residents. It is indeed ironic that the children of many Bronx residents whose incomes are expected to rise over time are being forced out of the Bronx because either they earn too much to qualify for the type of the development proposed here or they earn too little to afford a market rate rent.

I am satisfied with the expansion of the church building and the amount of parking spaces that would be available in this development. I again urge the developer to reevaluate the proposed development to provide larger units and greater diversify incomes. I understand the City has made a shift in policy to stack smaller units in developments, causing developers to scramble in accommodating these stringent and arbitrary requirements, but future applications that do not meet my criteria listed above will be more deeply scrutinized and unlikely to gain my approval.

Nonetheless, in this instance to redevelop a long-underutilized parcel and provide a new home for the church is a worthy endeavor. The developer also made accommodations at the request of this office to adjust the massing of the development to have less impact on the small homes lining Commonwealth Avenue. I recommend approval of this application.



**Testimony of Greg Murray, SEIU 32BJ Member
Testifying In Opposition to the Watson Avenue Rezoning
Bronx Borough President Hearing, March 9, 2017**

Good morning, my name is Greg Murray. I am a Bronx resident and SEIU 32BJ member. I am here today testifying on behalf of my union. 32BJ is the largest property service workers union in the country. 32BJ represents 70,000 building service workers in New York City. Over 33,000 of us work in residential buildings like the one Azimuth is proposing to develop. Over 4,000 of us live in CD9, where the proposed development would be located.

I am here to tell you just how important it is that Azimuth commit to creating high quality jobs at 1755 Watson Avenue. My union job provides wages and benefits that allow me to live and support a family in this City. I know that this is increasingly difficult for many working people. That's why my union strongly supports building more affordable housing in the Bronx. But, we know we can't build our way out of the affordable housing crisis. As long as hardworking people are paid poverty wages, they will struggle to make ends meet in this City.

The community board recognized how important good jobs are in its recommendations. At its vote on this development, board members insisted that the developer commit to creating good jobs that pay the industry standard wage and benefits for similar jobs in the Bronx before this project moves forward. My union is calling on the Borough President to formally adopt this recommendation.

This is an important step towards ensuring that new developments in the Bronx truly benefit the neighborhood by creating high quality permanent jobs.

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THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
ANNABEL PALMA

SUBCOMMITTEES
LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING
& MARITIME USES

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COUNCIL MEMBER, 18TH DISTRICT, BRONX

January 19, 2017

Hon. Marisa Lago
Chairwoman

City Planning Commission
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10271

Re: Watson Avenue Rezoning

ULURP Nos. C 170150 ZMX and N 170151 ZRX

Dear Chairwoman Lago and Commissioners:

I am writing to express my support for the Watson Avenue Rezoning and the above-referenced actions being sought by the developer, Azimuth Development Group LLC. The developer proposes a zoning map amendment to rezone a portion of Block 3751 in the Soundview neighborhood of the Bronx from R5 and R5/C1-2 zoning districts to an R7A/C1-4 zoning district as well as a zoning text amendment to Appendix F of the Zoning Resolution to designate the development site a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Area.

The proposed development at 1755 Watson Avenue is an excellent project for District 18. This project will produce over 300 new housing units that are 100% affordable at an average of 80% of the AMI, in addition to a new and improved community facility space for the Bronx Pentecostal Deliverance Center that is currently located at the site. This proposal includes a mix of units from 30% to 100% AMI including 30%, 40%, 50%, 60% and 80% of AMI. Further, 30% of the dwelling units, or approximately 86 units, will be permanently affordable at 80% of the AMI pursuant to the MIH text amendment.

The proposed R7A/C1-4 zoning district with an MIH text amendment is appropriate for this site because of its location on Watson Avenue, a wide street, 80 feet in width, and is in line with the Department's policy to position higher density developments along wide streets that can support such development. The Development Site is also located within a Transit Zone that the Department has recognized as an area well-served by public transportation. Additionally, the proposed development and zoning is in context with the heights and development in the area, just south of the Development Site are the Justice Sotomayor Houses which are 28 multifamily residential apartments that are seven-story and cellar buildings with approximately 1,497 units owned by the New York City Housing Authority. Directly west of the Development Site is Watson Gleason Playground, public open space that includes a playground with spray showers, basketball courts, open soccer field. This public open space spans the entire block bounded by Watson Avenue to the south, Rosedale Avenue to the west, Noble Avenue to the east and Gleason Avenue to the north and acts as a counterbalance to the higher density development proposed for the site. On the south side of Watson Avenue there is a green space divider that runs down Rosedale Avenue that also acts as a counterbalance to the increased development on Watson Avenue.

The Bronx Pentecostal Deliverance Center has longstanding community ties and the developer, Azimuth Development Group LLC, has an extensive track record of developing outstanding affordable housing projects. I am very excited to see such a dynamic partnership moving forward. I appreciate the hard work that your office has done to make this project achievable and I look forward to a 2017 groundbreaking.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Annabel Palma". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Annabel Palma
Council Member
District 18, Bronx