



IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- 1) pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
 - a) the designation of property located at Elton Avenue between East 162nd Street and East 163rd Street (Block 2384, Lots 20, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48, 8900 and 8901, ARO Lot 23¹), including the de-mapped street-beds of Brook Avenue between East 163rd and Elton Avenue, a portion of East 162nd Street at Elton Avenue, and a portion of Melrose Crescent, as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - b) an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
- 2) pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer to be selected by HPD;

to facilitate development of a twelve-story mixed-use building with approximately 277 units of affordable housing, 25,390 square feet of community facility space, and 26,700 square feet of ground-floor retail space in Community District 3, Borough of the Bronx.

Approval of three separate items is required:

- a) the designation of property located at Elton Avenue between East 162nd Street and East 163rd Street (Block 2384, Lots 20, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48, 8900, 8901, ARO Lot 23²), including the de-mapped street-beds of Brook Avenue between East 163rd and Elton Avenue, a portion of East 162nd Street at Elton Avenue, and a portion of Melrose Crescent, as an Urban Development Action Area; and
- b) an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
- c) pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer to be selected by HPD.

The application was submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) on March 20, 2015.

¹ Deleted Lot 23 and added ARO Lot 23.

² Deleted Lot 23 and added ARO Lot 23

Approval of this action will facilitate the development of approximately 277 dwelling units, 26,700 square feet of retail use, 25,390 square feet of community facility use, 36 parking spaces and 139 bike parking spaces.

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development states in its application that:

The Project Area consists of underutilized property that tends to impair or arrest the sound development of the surrounding community, with or without tangible physical blight. Incentives are needed in order to induce the correction of these substandard, insanitary, and blighting conditions. The project activities would protect and promote health and safety and would promote sound growth and development. The project area is therefore eligible to be an Urban Development Action Area and the proposed project is therefore eligible to be an Urban Development Action Area Project pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law.

RELATED ACTIONS

In addition to the UDAAP designation, Project Approval and disposition of city owned property which is the subject for this report, implementation of the proposed development also requires action by the City Planning Commission on the following applications which are being considered concurrently with this application.

C150303 ZSX	Special Permit pursuant to Section 74-681 of the Zoning Resolution to allow development over a discontinued railroad right- of- way.
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BACKGROUND

The applicant, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is seeking the approval of two actions to facilitate a new mixed-use development in the Melrose neighborhood in Community District 3 of The Bronx. The actions include disposition of City-owned property, designation of that property as an Urban Development Action Area

Project (UDAAP) and Project Approval; and, a Special Permit pursuant to Section 74-681 to allow development over a discontinued railroad right- of- way. Approval of these actions will facilitate the development of approximately 277 dwelling units, 26,700 square feet of retail use, 25,390 square feet of community facility use, 36 parking spaces and 139 bike parking spaces. The site is zoned R8/C1-4.

The approximately 80,945 square-foot development site is located in Bronx Community District 3 and is generally bordered by East 163rd Street, Washington and Brook avenues, Elton Avenue and East 162nd Street. All of the tax lots and demapped street-beds which comprise the site are City-owned.. The site is listed as Site 61 in the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan (MCURP) and currently consists of vacant land, and a vacant commercial building which is proposed to be demolished. The site is designated for residential, commercial and community facility uses. The site is encumbered with a sewer easement that continues to Brook Avenue and an abandoned railroad right-of-way that bisects the project site. Vacant, City-owned land, which is proposed to be developed as public open space, is adjacent to the development site.

The proposed development, to be known as Bronx Commons, will be constructed through HPD's and the New York City Housing Development Corporation's extremely low and low income housing program by a developer selected by HPD. The project will provide approximately 328,296 square feet of residential floor area which will produce approximately 277 units of housing including 31 studio units, 45 one bedroom units, 192 two bedroom units and 9 three bedroom units.

The development would consist of two attached buildings wrapped around a central courtyard. A landscaped plaza, fronting the intersection of Elton Avenue and East 163rd Street, will be created over the sewer easement area, which is adjacent to an existing triangular NYC park. As part of the project, a deck will be built over the abandoned rail-bed creating a tunnel with a height of fifteen feet – ten inches. The building height will vary, stepping up from six stories along East 162nd Street to eight stories facing the park (approximately 82.5 feet) and 10- and 12- stories along East 163rd Street and Elton Avenue

(approximately 126 feet). The development will have a landscaped courtyard at the second story level (above the ground floor retail and community facility space) and a 10,224 square-foot rooftop greenhouse on the roof of the eighth story, facing the future City owned public open space

The Bronx Music Heritage Center is proposed to occupy approximately 13,700 square feet of community facility space on the first floor. The main entrance for the Bronx Music Heritage Center will be located off of the plaza at the corner of Elton Avenue and East 163rd Street. The residential entrance will be located along East 162nd Street. The development will have approximately 36 below-grade parking spaces and 139 enclosed bicycle spaces. It will be developed in accordance with Quality Housing regulations, including double-glazed windows in the residential portion and separate enclosed refuse storage for residential and commercial/community facility.

The surrounding area is characterized by a mix of residential, community facility, commercial, industrial and open space uses. The block on which the development site is located currently comprises vacant land, a community garden and two, six story residential buildings. There are several recently completed new developments in the vicinity. To the east of the project site, along Elton Avenue, is Boricua Village, completed in 2010, which consists of approximately 689 affordable residential units and a 14-story community facility which serves as the Bronx Campus for Boricua College. Adjacent to Boricua Village, fronting along Elton Avenue is O'Neill Triangle, a small park providing passive recreational space. Melrose Commons North Site C, located across 162nd Street is proposed to be developed with 201 units of affordable housing and 15,000 square feet of retail space and 60 units of supportive housing. Immediately west of the project site is approximately 70,000 square feet of vacant land, proposed for public open space in the MCURP. The vacant block to the north, bounded by East 163rd Street, Washington Avenue and East 164th Street is proposed to be developed with a grocery store.

Public transportation in the area consists of buses which run east-west along East 161st Street/East 163rd Street (Bx 6) and north-south along Melrose Avenue (Bx 2 and Bx 41)

with four bus stops located within a block of the site. In addition, the Metro North Melrose Station is located on East 162nd Street between Courtlandt and Park Avenues, three blocks west of the site. The nearest subway stations (accessible by bus) are on East 161st Street and the Grand Concourse (the B, D and 4 trains) and on East 149th Street and Third Avenue (the 2 and 5 trains) located at a distance of one mile and three quarters of a mile respectively.

To facilitate the proposed development, the following two actions are required:

UDAAP/Project Designation, disposition of City owned property (C150154 HAX)

HPD requests the disposition of City-owned property to a developer to be selected by HPD. The properties being disposed include Block 2384, Lots 20, ARO 23, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48, 8900 and 8901, and the de-mapped street-beds of Brook Avenue between East 163rd Street and Elton Avenue, a portion of East 162nd Street at Elton Avenue, and a portion of demapped Melrose Crescent between East 163rd and 162nd Streets. Designation as an Urban Development Action Area (UDAA) and Urban Development Action Area Project (UDAAP) are also requested as part of this application.

Special Permit pursuant to 74-681 (C 150303 ZSX)

The applicant also seeks a Special Permit pursuant to Section 74-681 (a)(2) of the New York City Zoning Resolution. This action is required to permit development on or over, any portion of the right-of-way or yard where railroad or transit use has been permanently discontinued or terminated to be included in the lot area for such development or enlargement.

The rail line, New York Central Lines, LLC, was officially declared abandoned in March and April of 2003, by the Surface Transportation Board. The total lot area of this former right-of-way is 12, 708 square feet. The city acquired the air rights of the abandoned right-of-way in 1998, and it is currently under the jurisdiction of HPD.

The findings for the Special Permit require that: the streets providing access to the proposed development be adequate to handle the additional traffic resulting from the proposed development, and that the distribution of floor area and the number of dwelling units does not adversely affect the character of the neighborhood.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 150306 HAX), in conjunction with the application for the related action 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 Housing Preservation and Development. The designated CEQR number is 14HPD030X. After a study of the potential impacts of the proposed action, a Negative Declaration was issued on October 9, 2014.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE

This application (C 150306 HAX), in conjunction with the related application (C 150303 ZSX), was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on March 30, 2015, and was duly referred to Bronx Community Board 3 and the Bronx 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 3 held a public hearing on this application on April 14, 2015, and on that date, by a vote of 21 in favor, 6 opposed with 0 abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending approval.

Borough President Recommendation

The Borough President held a public hearing on this application on May 7, 2015, and issued a recommendation on May 19, 2015, approving the application.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On May 20, 2015 (Calendar No. 2), the City Planning Commission scheduled June 3, 2015 for a public hearing on this application (C 150306 HAX). The hearing was duly held on June 3, 2015 (Calendar No. 17) in conjunction with the related application (C 150303 ZSX). There were eight speakers in favor of the project and none in opposition.

A representative from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development spoke in favor of the application. She stated that the Melrose Commons North RFP Site B marks a significant milestone for the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan, this being the last of the large residential sites in the Urban Renewal Area. Construction began in 2000 and about 3000 new units have been constructed to date in the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area. She also stated that in 2008, HPD issued RFPs for three sites in the MCURA including Sites A, B and C. While Site A was straightforward and has been built and occupied Sites B and C had unique site issues that took an extensive amount of time to resolve. Site C has completed ULURP and HPD plans to close on the project in June 2015. The current application relates to Site B, the last of the large urban renewal sites.

The owner of Blue Sea Development Corporation, who is a partner of the development team also spoke in favor of the application and described the various sustainability features of the building including the rooftop urban farm. He stated that the building strives towards energy efficiency through a tight building envelope and pre-cast components. He also stated that the development will strive to minimize any potential conflict between co-located uses by choosing equipment which minimize noise and emission and locate such equipment at a place where it is least obstructive such as the roof.

A representative from Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WhedCo) spoke in favor of the application. She stated that WhedCo envisions Bronx Commons as a destination for residents of the Bronx, New York City and beyond. The

speaker described the retail demand analysis and community survey conducted by WhedCo which found that there is high unmet retail demand (\$ 403 million within a mile of Bronx Commons) in the neighborhood.

The co-artistic director of the Bronx Music Heritage center spoke in favor of the application and described the Bronx Music Heritage Center as a non-profit institution founded by WhedCo with a mission of promoting and preserving the musical legacy of the Bronx. She noted that many traditional forms of music have flourished in the borough for decades. However many cultural venues were lost when buildings were destroyed through the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The BMHC aims to fill that void in cultural venues. The Center has been temporarily located in WhedCo's Intervale Green building on Louise Nine Boulevard since 2012 and successfully ran 250 days of programming in 2014.

The project architect also spoke in favor of the application. The speaker described how the building relates to the surrounding context and pointed out that the building maintains a lower scale on 162nd Street which is a narrow street and steps up along 163rd Street which is a wide street. The architect noted that the residential entrance is located on 162nd Street and is adequately separated from the entrance to the commercial and community facility entrance located off the plaza on Elton Avenue.

The designer of the public open space spoke in favor of the project and described the design principles behind the plaza. He stated that the space was intended to be open and dynamic and one which is welcoming to the public.

The director of Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation expressed support for the application. She commended the Housing Plan and the comprehensive neighborhood planning efforts underway in the City in order to address all needs in the community, including housing. She stated her opinion that Bronx Commons furthers this approach by creating a building which caters to a wide range of uses including active destination retail and cultural amenities.

The last speaker was a representative from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development who also spoke in favor of the application. He stated that determining the financing sources can be difficult for a project of the size and complexity of Bronx Commons and commended the development team for working diligently towards putting it together. With regards to the public open space to the west of the site, the speaker stated that the site was only recently reconfigured to its current boundaries through the amendment to the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan approved by the City Planning Commission in February 2015. Describing investments in the park in the area, the speaker noted that a park planned for a location two blocks south of Bronx Commons will commence construction later in 2015. The speaker expressed his optimism that the Department of Parks and Recreation would move their focus to the site next to Bronx Commons when the park to the south is completed.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that the proposed UDAAP designation, Project Approval and disposition of city-owned property (C 150306 HAX), as well as the related application for a Special Permit pursuant to 74-681 to allow development over railroad right of way, are appropriate.

The Commission believes that the development Bronx Commons will be an asset to the Melrose neighborhood that will replace vacant lots, a vacant building and will deck over an abandoned railroad right of way. The addition of 277 units of affordable housing targeted towards extremely low and low income families will be a valuable addition to the housing stock given that Community District 3 is one of the fastest growing districts in the Bronx and has a need for affordable units at that income level.

In addition, the Commission believes that the Bronx Music Heritage Center (BMHC), which will relocate to the proposed building, will be a cultural anchor in the neighborhood and will add vibrancy to the neighborhood. The BMHC which supports

local artists has been in operation since 2012 in a smaller temporary location. Bronx Commons will provide the center with dedicated space for performances, labs, exhibition and a café among other functions.

The Commission believes that the public plaza fronting the Bronx Music Heritage Center, proposed as part of this project, will be an invaluable asset to the area. The plaza will provide a gathering space with increased activity during events at BMHC and passive recreation space at other hours.

The Commission also believes that the mixed use building will provide essential services to the growing community and add to the vibrancy of the public space. The ground floor retail space would provide much-needed commercial activity along 163rd Street and Washington Avenue and meet the needs of local residents.

The Commission also believes that it is important that the proposed public open space (Site 62) to the west of the site is developed as a park. The park is a much needed amenity to serve an area which has seen considerable new development and population growth in the recent past and is the capstone in the implementation of the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan. The Commission urges the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure a commitment for capital funding is made in the near future.

Special Permit pursuant to Section 74-681 of the Zoning Resolution

The Commission believes that the streets providing access to the residential, commercial and community facility uses are adequate to handle traffic resulting from the proposed development.

The Commission also believes that the distribution of floor area and dwelling units will not adversely affect the character of the neighborhood. The proposed building, which ranges from one to twelve stories, relates to the scale of the surrounding buildings which range from two to fourteen stories. Bronx Commons will be similar in scale to the

proposed Melrose Commons Site C development on the block to the south which will be twelve stories at its tallest portion at the intersection of 162nd Street and Elton Avenue.

The Commission further believes that the residential, commercial and community facility uses will not adversely affect one another. The Commission notes that the main entrance for the community facility and commercial spaces will be located off of the plaza at the corner of Elton Avenue and East 163rd Street, while the residential entrance will be located along East 162nd Street. Also, the Bronx Music Heritage Center has been designed as a single story structure which minimizes transmission of noise from the cultural venue to other parts of the building.

RESOLUTION

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

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has recommended the designation of property located at Elton Avenue between East 162nd Street and East 163rd Street (Block 2384, Lots 20, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48, 8900, 8901, ARO Lot 23³), including the de-mapped street-beds of Brook Avenue between East 163rd and Elton Avenue, a portion of East 162nd Street at Elton Avenue, and a portion of Melrose Crescent as an Urban Development Action Area; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has also recommended the approval of an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area;

THEREFORE, be it further **RESOLVED**, that the City Planning Commission, after due consideration of the appropriateness of the actions, certifies its unqualified approval of the matters pursuant to the Urban Development Action Area Act:

³ Deleted Lot 23 and added ARO Lot 23

- a) the designation of property located at Elton Avenue between East 162nd Street and East 163rd Street (Block 2384, Lots 20, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48, 8900, 8901 and ARO Lot 23⁴), including the de-mapped street-beds of Brook Avenue between East 163rd and Elton Avenue, a portion of East 162nd Street at Elton Avenue, and a portion of Melrose Crescent, as an Urban Development Action Area; and
- b) an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination and the consideration described in this report, the application of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development for the disposition of city-owned property located at Elton Avenue between East 162nd Street and East 163rd Street (Block 2384, Lots 20, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48, 8900, 8901 and ARO Lot 23⁵), including the de-mapped street-beds of Brook Avenue between East 163rd and Elton Avenue, a portion of East 162nd Street at Elton Avenue, and a portion of Melrose Crescent in Community District 3, Borough of the Bronx, to a developer to be selected by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, is approved.

The above resolution (C 150306 HAX), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on July 1, 2015 (Calendar No. 5), 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.

CARL WEISBROD, *Chairman*
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, BOME E JUNG,
ANNA HAYES LEVIN, ORLANDO MARIN, LARISA ORTIZ *Commissioners*

⁴ Deleted Lot 23 and added ARO Lot 23

⁵ Deleted Lot 23 and added ARO Lot 23



Community/Borough Board Recommendation

Pursuant to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure

Application # **C 150306 HAX**

Project Name **MELROSE COMMONS NORTH RFP SITE B**

CEQR Number: 14HPD030X

Borough(s): Bronx

Community District Number(s): 3

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, Room 2E, 22 Reade Street, New York, NY 10007
 - FAX:** (212) 720-3356 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 the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
 - the designation of property located at Elton Avenue between East 162nd Street and East 163rd Street (Block 2384, Lots 20, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48, 8900 and 8901, ARO Lot 23, the de-mapped street-beds of Brook Avenue between East 163rd and Elton Avenue, a portion of East 162nd Street at Elton Avenue, and a portion of Melrose Crescent, as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
- pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer to be selected by HPD;

to facilitate development of a twelve-story mixed-use building with approximately 277 units of affordable housing, 25,390 square feet of community facility space, and 26,700 square feet of ground-floor retail space, Borough of the Bronx, Community District 3.

Applicant(s): NYC Department of HPD 100 Gold Street New York, NY 10038 (212) 863-5000		Applicant's Representative: Winifred Campbell (hamiltow@hpd.nyc.gov)	
Recommendation submitted by: <u>John W. Dudley</u>			
Date of public hearing: <u>4/14/15</u>		Location: <u>Childrens Circle Day Care Ctr.</u> <u>1332 Fulton Ave, Bx NY</u>	
Was a quorum present? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		A public hearing requires a quorum of 20% of the appointed members of the board, but in no event fewer than seven such members.	
Date of Vote: <u>4/14/15</u>		Location: <u>Childrens Circle Day Care Ctr.</u> <u>1332 Fulton Ave, Bx NY</u>	
RECOMMENDATION			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve		<input 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: <u>21</u>		# Against: <u>6</u> # Abstaining: <u>0</u> Total members appointed to the board: <u>40</u>	
Name of CB/BB officer completing this form <u>John W. Dudley</u>		Title <u>DISTRICT Manager</u>	Date <u>4/16/15</u>



Community/Borough Board Recommendation

Pursuant to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure

Application # **C 150303 ZSX**

Project Name **Melrose Commons North RFP Site B**

CEQR Number **14HPD030X**

Borough(s) **Bronx**

Community District Number(s) **3**

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, Room 2E, 22 Reade Street, New York, NY 10007
 - FAX:** (212) 720-3356 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 NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the grant of a special permit pursuant to Section 74-681 of the Zoning Resolution to allow that portion the right-of-way or yard where railroad or transit use has been permanently discontinued or terminated to be included in the lot area, in connection with a proposed mixed-use development, on property located at Elton Avenue between E. 162 Street and E. 163 Street (Block 2384, Lots 20, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48, 8900, 8901, ARO Lot 23, and portions of demapped Brook Avenue, Melrose Crescent and E. 162 Street), in R8 and R8/C1-4 Districts, within the Melrose Commons (Urban Renewal Area), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 3.

Plans for this proposal are on file with the City Planning Commission and may be seen in Room 3N, 22 Reade Street, New York, N.Y. 10007.

Applicant(s): NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development 100 Gold Street New York, NY 10038		Applicant's Representative: Winifred Campbell NYC Department of HPD 100 Gold Street New York, NY 10038	
Recommendation submitted by: John W. Dudley			
Date of public hearing: 4/14/15		Location: Childrens Circle Daycare Ch. 1332 FULTON AVE, BX NY	
Was a quorum present? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		A public hearing requires a quorum of 20% of the appointed members of the board, but in no event fewer than seven such members.	
Date of Vote: 4/14/15		Location: Childrens Circle Daycare Ch. 1332 FULTON AVE, BX NY	
RECOMMENDATION			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve		<input 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: 21 # Against: 6 # Abstaining: 0 Total members appointed to the board:			
Name of CB/BB officer completing this form: John W. Dudley		Title: District Manager Date: 4/16/15	

**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 150303 ZSX, C 150306 HAX**DOCKET DESCRIPTION-PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT FOR DOCKET DESCRIPTION****CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
2015 MAY 21 PM 3:30
DEPT OF CITY PLANNING****COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 3****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


DATE

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NOS: 150303 ZSX, C 150306 HAX
May 20, 2015**

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

C 150303 ZSX

IN THE MATTER OF application submitted by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the grant of a special permit pursuant to Section 74-681 of the Zoning Resolution to allow that portion of the right-of-way or yard where a railroad or transit use has been permanently discontinued or terminated to be included in the lot area, in connection with a proposed mixed-use development, on property located on Elton Avenue between East 162nd Street and East 163rd Street (Block 2384, Lots 20, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48 8900, 8901, ARO Lot 23, and portion of demapped Brook Avenue, Melrose Crescent and East 162nd Street), in R8 and R8/C1-4 Districts, within the Melrose Commons (Urban Renewal Area), Borough of The Bronx, Community District #3.

Plans for this proposal are on file with the City Planning Commission and may be seen in Room 3N, 22 Reade Street, New York. N.Y. 10007.

C 150306 HAX

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- 1) Pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
 - a) The designation of property located at Elton Avenue between East 162nd Street and East 163rd Street (Block 2384, Lots 20, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 48, 8900, and 8901, ARO Lot 23, the demapped street-beds of Brook Avenue, between East 163rd Street and Elton Avenue and a portion of Melrose Crescent, as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - b) An Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
- 2) Pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer to be selected by HPD;

To facilitate development of a 12 story mixed-use building with approximately 277 units of affordable housing, 23,390 square feet of community facility space, and 26,700 square feet of ground-floor retail space, Borough of The Bronx, Community District #3.

BACKGROUND

Approving these applications will facilitate construction of a mixed-use building composed of residential units, community facility space and venues for retail activity. The entire site for this development includes 125,127 square feet of property situated on Block 2384, Lots 20, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38, 48, 8900, 801, ARO Lot 23, and portion of the demapped Brook Avenue, Melrose Crescent and East 162nd Street) Known as **Melrose Commons North, Site B**, it is bounded by East 162nd Street on the south, East 163rd Street and Washington Avenue on the north, Melrose Avenue on the west and Elton Avenue on the south-east corner of the site. This site is zoned R8 and R8/C1-4, Bronx Community District #3.

Associated with the development of the Block and Lots these applications are changes to the City Map (ULURP Application C 120323 MMX) which was approved by the City Council on March 11, 2015. These changes include:

- The elimination and closing of Melrose Crescent between East 163rd Street and Elton Avenue;
- The establishment and continuation of East 163rd Street, west of Brook Avenue;
- The establishment and continuation of East 162nd Street, west of Elton Avenue.

ULURP Application C 150303 ZSX which is currently proposed, if approved would grant a special permit made necessary given that a portion of the site identified for development includes the right-of-way of an abandoned railroad bed. This single track bed was taken out of service by CSX Railroad approximately 10 years ago.

Highlights of the proposed development of Melrose Commons North Site B includes

- A mixed use building composed of 12 stories;
- A residential structure offering providing 277 units of housing for low and moderate income households plus one additional unit for the superintendent;
- The proposed building will offer:
 - 328,296 square feet of residential space
 - 26,700 square feet of retail space
 - 15,166 square feet of community facility space
 - 10,224 square feet of rooftop space for the inclusion of a greenhouse.

The 277 units include:

- 31- Studio units composed of 450-513 square feet*
- 45- One bedroom units composed of 628-737 square feet*
- 192- Two bedroom units composed of 780-945 square feet*
- 9- Three bedroom units composed of 1,169-1,200 square feet*

*Unit size varies based on the specific apartment layout.

Two community use facilities are planned for this proposed development, including:

- 10,000 square feet set aside for a rooftop greenhouse. This greenhouse will provide residents horticultural options including the planting of fruit and vegetables. Residents will be afforded an opportunity to grow produce for local distribution within the surrounding community.
- 15,100 square feet for the Bronx Music Heritage Center (BMHC). Included in this space will be a full-functional auditorium providing seats for 250 guests, a recording studio and classroom space. Also envisioned is a café.

Retail space composed of 26,700 square feet will front onto East 163rd Street.

A public plaza will be situated at Washington Avenue at the East 163rd Street junction. A feature of this plaza will be an amphitheater designed to passive recreation, outdoor concerts and public gatherings. From this plaza access to either the BMHC or retail location will be provided

By way of encouraging local artists to visit and participate in the variety of programs to be based at the BMHC, at the entrance to this center the building's wall will offer artists a canvas for artistic expression. Such exhibits will vary from season to season. After dark a comprehensive series of LED lighting will illuminate the artwork and thereby draw attention to the entrance used by BMHC.

Underground parking for 36 vehicles and parking for 139 bicycles is to be provided.

Sustainable feature highlights include:

- LEED Gold, Energy Star and National Green Building Standards
- Micro combined heat and power cogeneration providing 100% of the domestic hot water supply
- USB charging outlets in each room
- LED light fixtures throughout the building
- 100% smoke-free

Existing development of the surrounding community includes the Boricua College campus, recently constructed high-rise residential buildings and mid-rise residences. Retail activity is available on East 161st Street, East 163rd Street and on Washington Avenue. Situated approximately one block south of this site is the Pyramid Center (formally a YMCA) that provides shelter for homeless men pursuant to an agreement between the center's owner and the city's Department of Homeless Services (DHS).

Mass transportation via bus is available on East 161st Street, East 163rd Street and on 3rd Avenue. There are no subway services located within a five block radius of the site. Metro North Commuter Railroad's Harlem Division's services are accessible five blocks east of the site at the Melrose Station.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

These applications were reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQR and received a Negative Declaration, meaning that the proposed development will have no impact on the surrounding environment. The City Planning Commission certified these applications as complete on March 30, 2015.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #3 held a public hearing on April 14, 2015. A vote recommending approval of these applications was 24 in favor, six opposed and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was convened by the Borough President on May 7, 2015. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of these applications. No other members of the public were in attendance and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

During my tenure as Borough President numerous plans to develop affordable housing throughout The Bronx have been presented to me for comment. All are appreciated and most are well conceived. Even so, there are those plans that are exceptional and in so many ways, set a new benchmark for all future development. This is just such a proposal, as it brings together a comprehensive vision for residential, commercial and cultural functions.

Known as Bronx Commons, this project will include 277 units of affordable housing, which we all acknowledge is urgently needed throughout our city. What I especially appreciate, however, is that this project also recognizes a community's need for artistic expression and a shared space where both resident and neighbor can enjoy what our local talent is able to create. Consequently, I welcome the news that the Bronx Music Heritage Center (BMHC) will be based here. To that end, a theater accommodating 250 people, a sound-proof recording studio, rehearsal and classroom space will be an integral part of this project. Thanks to a well-designed outdoor "amphitheater" neighbors will be able to enjoy outdoor performances. I am intrigued by the idea that graphic artists will be encouraged to express their perspectives on a "wall canvass," which at night will be illuminated to further attract attention and make this site an evening community-destination, something that is sorely lacking in this area of The Bronx.

Not to be outdone by similar projects, Bronx Commons will offer a roof-top greenhouse approximating 10,000 square feet. Here, not only will residents be able to grow produce for themselves, but as planned a good deal of what will be farmed will also be distributed to nearby retail outlets. As you may be aware due to a lack of fresh produce and access to healthy food options, this community is considered a "food desert." Therefore it is not only good environmental policy to encourage local fruit and vegetable farming, but as a result of this

greenhouse, those who reside nearby will be able to take advantage of what will be grown on the roof of this complex.

As for employment and job creation, the construction of Bronx Commons will create 150 construction jobs and 60 permanent jobs. This project includes 26,750 square feet of retail space and I have been assured that it will be commercial venues that will occupy this space. Finally, a LEED Gold rating indicates that this complex will satisfy some of our city's most stringent environmental provisions.

I conclude my enthusiastic support for this project by noting those affiliated with this project have a proven track record in The Bronx. WHEDCO offers a host of programs designed specifically to assist women in need, be they battered and homeless or seeking to simply improve their future prospects by taking advantage of the many training programs available. Blue Sea also represents one of our borough's most accomplished developers, as for upwards of twenty years this firm has played a major role in the development of Melrose Commons.

As I recommend approval of these applications I do so knowing that this development and the adjacent Melrose Commons Site C essentially represent the full build-out of Melrose Commons pursuant to the Melrose Common Urban Renewal Plan adopted in 1994. This milestone is also a tribute to all associated with Melrose Commons and especially the late Yolanda Garcia, founder of Nos Quedamos.