



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

January 28, 2004 Calendar No. 8

C 040060 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 1271 - 1285 Merriam Avenue (Block 2559, Lots 25, 28 and 30), 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 selected by HPD;

to facilitate construction of an eight story building tentatively known as University Senior Housing, with approximately 84 units of housing for the elderly, to be developed under the federal Section 202 program, Borough of the Bronx, Community District 4.

Approval of three separate matters is required:

1. The designation of 1271 - 1285 Merriam Avenue (Block 2559, Lots 25, 28 and 30) in the Borough of the Bronx, as an Urban Development Action Area;
2. An Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
3. The disposition of such property to a developer selected by HPD

The application for the disposition of city-owned property and Urban Development Action Area designation was submitted by HPD on August 19, 2003. Approval of this application will facilitate the construction of an eight story building tentatively known as University Senior Housing, with approximately 84 units of housing for the elderly, to be developed under the federal Section 202 program.

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

The Disposition Area consists of underutilized vacant lots which tend to impair or arrest the sound development of the surrounding community, with or without tangible 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 proposed 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.

BACKGROUND

The proposed project, tentatively known as University Senior Housing, consists of the construction of an eight story residential building with 84, one-bedroom units of affordable housing for the elderly and one unit for the superintendent. The project would provide a multi-purpose room, community kitchen, laundry room, conference room, reception area and administrative offices. In addition, an accessory parking lot with 12 spaces and a patio and garden area for residents are also proposed.

The site is located in the Highbridge Neighborhood, on the west side of Merriam Avenue between East 169th Street and Ogden Avenue. It is within an R7-1 zoning district. The site is vacant and has an area of 18,460 square feet. A six story apartment building and a City owned park, Merriam Playground, are located on the same block as the site. The surrounding area is characterized by five and six story apartment buildings and two-story attached and semi-detached homes. Ogden Avenue, a local commercial corridor located one block to the east, contains an assortment of convenience retail uses. Public School 11 is located across Merriam Avenue from the site.

The area is served by public transportation. The 167th Street station of the number 4 line is four blocks east of the site. The Bx 11, Bx 13 and Bx 35 buses have stops within one block of the site and go across the Washington Bridge to Manhattan and to the east and south Bronx.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 040060 HAX) 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.

This application was determined to be a Type II action which requires no further environmental review.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 040060 HAX) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on September 22, 2003, and was duly referred to Community Board 4 and the Borough President, in accordance with Article 3 of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) rules.

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 4 held a public hearing on this application on October 28, 2003, and on that date, by a vote of 29 to 0 with 0 abstention, adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application.

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Borough President who issued a recommendation approving the application on December 12, 2003.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On December 3 , 2003 (Calendar No. 1), the City Planning Commission scheduled December 17, 2003 for a public hearing on this application (C 040060 HAX). The hearing was duly held on December 17, 2003 (Calendar No. 14). There was one speaker in favor and non in opposition to the project.

A representative from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development was present to answer questions.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that the application for Urban Development Action Area Project designation and disposition of city-owned property located at 1271 - 1285 Merriam Avenue (Block 2559, Lots 25, 28 and 30) to facilitate the development of University Senior Housing is appropriate.

The project will contain approximately 84 units of low-income housing for seniors. The City Planning Commission believes that the project will help fill the need for affordable housing in the city and that the neighborhood is an appropriate location for the populations served, due to the proximity of mass transit, recreation and retail services. The Commission also believes that the project complements the physical and aesthetic context of the neighborhood and represents sound growth and development.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has recommended the designation of 1271 - 1285 Merriam Avenue (Block 2559, Lots 25, 28 and 30), 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 property; 1271 - 1285 Merriam Avenue (Block 2559, Lots 25, 28 and 30).

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

1. the designation of 1271 - 1285 Merriam Avenue (Block 2559, Lots 25, 28 and 30), as an Urban Development Action Area; and
2. an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area

and the City Planning Commission recommends that the New York City Council finds that:

- a. The present status of the area tends to impair or arrest the sound development of the municipality;
- b. The financial aid in the form of tax incentives to be provided by the municipality pursuant to Section 696 of the Urban Development Action Area Act is necessary to enable the project to be undertaken; and
- c. The project is consistent with the policy and purposes stated in Section 691 of the Urban Development Action Area Act.

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 determinations 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 1271 - 1285 Merriam Avenue (Block 2559, Lots 25, 28 and 30) within Community District 4, Borough of The Bronx, to a sponsor/developer selected by HPD is approved (C 040060 HAX).

The above resolution (C 040060 HAX), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on January 28, 2004 (Calendar No. 8), 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.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP, Chair
ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, R.A.,
RICHARD W. EADDY, ALEXANDER GARVIN, JANE D. GOL, CHRISTOPHER KUI,
KAREN A. PHILLIPS, DOLLY WILLIAMS, Commissioners