Roosevelt Avenue Rezoning
61-26, 61-32, 62-02, 62-04 through 62-26 Roosevelt Avenue,
39-50 & 39-56 63rd Street, Queens
August 14, 2019

1. Introduction

VS PBS Venture 1, LLC and Mare Nostrum Elements, Inc. are co-applicants (collectively, the "Applicant") seeking a zoning map amendment and zoning text amendment to change the zoning district on the southwest corner of Roosevelt Avenue and 63rd Street (Block 1294, Lots 55, p/o 56, 58, 60, 68, p/o 73 and 76) in the Woodside neighborhood of Queens, Community District 2, from an R6 district with a C1-4 overlay measuring 100 feet deep from Roosevelt Avenue to a C4-4 zoning district. The Applicant also seeks a zoning text amendment to designate the Project Area as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing ("MIH") area.

These actions will allow the development of a new 13-story mixed-use building on Lots 58, 60, 68 and p/o 73. The proposed development will contain a total of 201,453 square feet of floor area consisting of approximately 162,516 square feet of residential floor area, 38,749 square feet of commercial floor area, and 188 square feet of community facility floor area. Accessory parking spaces will be provided for 160 cars. In accordance with MIH Option 2, 30% of the residential floor area (approximately 64 dwelling units) will be designated as permanently affordable to households at an average of 80% of area median income (AMI).

2. Background

On June 6, 2011, the City Planning Commission (CPC) approved the Sunnyside and Woodside Rezoning (C 110207 ZMQ) that rezoned 130 blocks generally bounded by the Sunnyside Rail Yard, 37th Avenue, Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, NY Connecting Railroad, 72nd Street, Woodside, Roosevelt and 48th Avenues, and 39th Street and encompasses portions of the Sunnyside and Woodside neighborhoods that are located in the eastern portion of Community District 2. The rezoning from R4, R5, R6, R7-1, C4-2, C8-1 and M1-1 districts to R4, R4-1, R5B, R5D, R6A, R7X and C4-5X districts, and updating certain commercial overlay districts, was intended to protect neighborhood character from out-of-scale development, more closely reflect established development patterns, direct opportunities for moderate residential and commercial growth to locations along wide streets and transit resources, and provide incentives for the production of affordable housing. The Sunnyside and Woodside Rezoning rezoned Block 1294 Lot 60 and portions of Lot 58 and 68 from an existing R6 to an R6/C1-4 overlay district. The New York City Council adopted CPC's decision on August 9, 2011.

3. Description of the Surrounding Area

The Project Area is located in the Woodside neighborhood of Queens Community District 2. The Project Area's block is comprised of mixed residential and commercial uses. The larger surrounding area includes commercial and transportation-related uses, multiple dwellings, one- and two-family residences and public facilities and institutions.

Properties to the west along both sides of Roosevelt Avenue consist of 1-story convenience retail and service establishments located in an R6/C1-4 district, including a bakery, beauty salons, eating and drinking establishments, a hardware store and office buildings. Several 6-story buildings exist one block west of the Project Area within R6, R6/C1-4 and R5B districts. Along or near Woodside Avenue are four 6-story multiple dwellings within a R6/C1-4 district; two buildings contain a total of 88 units and two contain 53 and 48 units, respectively. Two blocks west of the Project Area, in an R5B district, is another 6-story multiple dwelling containing 105 dwelling units.

Two blocks south of the Project Area in an R6B district are two more 6-story multiple dwellings each containing 56 units, fronting on 61st and 62nd Streets. Also to the south, in an R6A/C1-3 district are 4- and 5-story multiple dwellings and a 4-story office building fronting on Woodside Avenue in the area between 61st and 63rd Streets. To the south is a parking lot owned by the Long Island Railroad, and tracks and LIRR Woodside station bound the Project Area to the south and southwest.

Properties to the east along both sides of Roosevelt Avenue also consist of 1- and 2- story convenience retail and service establishments in an R6/C1-4 district, including grocery stores, a supermarket, a liquor store and drug stores. The two blocks to the west of the Project Area consist mainly of two-family semi-detached residential buildings in an R4-1 district.

North of the Project Area beyond Roosevelt Avenue are 3-, 4- and 5-story multiple dwellings, one- and two-family 2-story detached residences, and 2- and 3-story attached residences in an R5D district. Along 39th Avenue are 4-, 5- and 6-story multiple dwellings containing 42 dwelling units, 41 dwelling units and 85 dwelling units, respectively, in an R5D and R5D/C1-4 district. A 1-story US Post Office and house of worship are located on 61st Street within a R5D/C1-4 district.

Small pedestrian plazas, the Carl L. Sohncke Square and Woodside Plaza, are located at the east and west sides of 59th Street at the intersection of Woodside Avenue and Roosevelt Avenue. Doughnoy Park, a 1.71 acre public park, and the adjoining Lawrence Virgilio Playground, a 3.01 acre public park, are located approximately .4 miles northwest of the Project Site on Woodside Avenue 56th Street and 39th Road. Hart Playground is located approximately .4 miles northeast of the Project Site at 37th Avenue and 65th Street. Big Bush Park, a 2.5 acre public park is located approximately .6 miles from the Project Site on Laurel Hill Boulevard between 61st and 64th Streets. Calvary Cemetery is located about one mile southwest of the Project Site at Queens Boulevard between 51st and 58th Streets.

Roosevelt Avenue is a two-way street measuring 80' wide and 63rd Street is a one-way street measuring 60' wide. The elevated No. 7 subway train runs above Roosevelt Avenue and has a station at Woodside – 61st Street. The LIRR Woodside station is also located nearby at Roosevelt Avenue and 61st Street. The westbound Q32, and the terminus for the Q53 and Q70-SBS stop, are on Roosevelt Avenue west of the intersection. The eastbound Q32 is across 63rd Street on the south side of Roosevelt Avenue. The Project Area is located within a Transit Zone (Appendix I: Transit Zone, Transit Zone Map 5).

4. Description of the Proposed Project Area

The Project Area is located on the southwest corner of Roosevelt Avenue and 63rd Street (Block 1294, Lots 55, p/o 56, 58, 60, 68, p/o 73 and 76) in the Woodside neighborhood of Queens, Community District 2. The Project Area is bounded by Roosevelt Avenue to the north, the Long Island Railroad tracks to the southwest, and 63rd Street to the east. The Project Area has approximately 304 feet of frontage on Roosevelt Avenue and approximately 292 feet of frontage on 63rd Street. Frontage along Roosevelt Avenue is zoned R6/C1-4 at 100 feet in depth and the remainder of the Project Area is zoned R6.

Roosevelt Avenue, which fronts the property to the north, has a width of 80 feet. 63rd Street, which fronts on the Project Area to the east has a width of 60 feet. The LIRR tracks are located on a lot that measures approximately 172 feet wide. There are three existing curb cuts on 63rd Street; one 9'-6" wide curb cut and two 7' wide curb cuts. 63rd Street ends at the Long Island Railroad tracks at the intersection of Trimble Road. 63rd Street rises in elevation as the street extends away from Roosevelt Avenue; the southwest portion of the lot is 14.73' feet higher than the southeast portion of the lot.

The Project Area is improved with six buildings.

A one-story retail building exists on Lot 55 with approximately 46 feet of frontage on Roosevelt Avenue, having an address of 61-26 Roosevelt Avenue. The lot adjoins the Long Island Railroad tracks to the west.

To the east of Lot 55 is Lot 56, which is improved with a one-story building operating as a beauty salon having an address of 61-32 Roosevelt Avenue. Lot 56 has approximately 34 feet of frontage on Roosevelt Avenue. The majority, but not all, of Lot 56 is included within the rezoning area.

Further east is a two-story building exists on Lot 58 with approximately 31 feet of frontage on Roosevelt Avenue, having an address of 62-02 Roosevelt Avenue. The building contains an eating and drinking establishment on the first floor and offices on the second floor.

A one-story building on Lot 60 with approximately 193 feet of frontage on Roosevelt Avenue comprises the remainder of the Project Area's frontage on Roosevelt Avenue. This building has addresses ranging from 62-04 Roosevelt Avenue through 62-26 Roosevelt Avenue. The building contains eight convenience retail and service establishments: a carpet store, laundry, furniture store, watch and jewelry repair shop, variety store, eating and drinking establishment, barber shop and photography store.

Adjoining Lot 60 to the south along 63rd Street is Lot 68, improved with a one-story building that contains a factory and offices. Lot 68 has approximately 110 feet of frontage on 63rd Street and an address of 39-50 63rd Street.

South of Lot 68 is Lot 73 with approximately 50 feet of frontage on 63rd Street. Lot 73 is improved with a one-story building that contains a factory, storage and office and has an address of 39-56 63rd Street. The majority, but not all of, Lot 73 is included within the rezoning area.

Further south of Lot 73 is Lot 76, which adjoins the LIRR tracks. Lot 76 is an unimproved parking lot used by the LIRR that measuring 3,088 square feet of lot area, with approximately 42 feet of frontage on 63rd Street.

The Project Area is located within R6 and R6/C1-4 districts. Residences of all types and community facility uses are permitted as-of-right in an R6 district. Local retail uses classified in Use Group 6 are permitted within the C1-4 overlay along Roosevelt Avenue.

For buildings located in R6 and R6/C1-4 districts that are developed under optional Quality Housing regulations, maximum residential floor area ratio (FAR) is 3.0 within 100' of a wide street and 2.2 beyond 100' of a wide street. Maximum residential lot coverage for a corner lot is 100%, and the maximum lot coverage for an interior lot or through lot portion of the zoning lot is 65% for portions of a zoning lot located within 100' of a wide street and 60% for the remaining portion of the zoning lot. Maximum community facility FAR is 4.8. A C1-4 overlay in an R6 district allows a maximum commercial FAR of 2.0. For portions of zoning lots located within 100' of a wide street, minimum base height is 40', maximum base height is 65' and total building height is 70'. For zoning lots or portions thereof on a narrow street beyond 100' of a wide street, minimum base height is 30', maximum base height is 45' and total building height is 55'. At a height not lower than minimum base height or higher than maximum base height, a setback distance of at least 10' from any street wall fronting on a wide street and at least 15' from any street wall fronting on a narrow street is required.

For buildings located in R6 and R6/C1-4 districts that are other than those developed under the Quality Housing regulations, the minimum required open space ratio and maximum FAR are determined by the height factor of the zoning lot, with FAR varying from .78 to 2.43. The maximum height of a street wall located at the street line, or within an initial setback distance of 20' on a narrow street or 15' on a wide street, is 60' or six stories, whichever is less. Above this maximum height and beyond the initial setback distance, building height is governed by a sky exposure plane of 2.7 to 1 on a narrow street and 5.6 to 1 on a wide street.

Front yards are not required in R6 and R6/C1-4 districts. Side yards are not required; however, an open area must have a minimum width of 8'. A rear yard measuring a minimum depth of 30 feet must be provided for buildings containing residential or community facility uses, except that no rear yard is required within 100 feet of a corner. A rear yard measuring a minimum depth of 20 feet must be provided for commercial uses, except that no rear yard is required within 100 feet of a corner and portions of buildings used for permitted uses other than residences not exceeding one story or 23' above curb level is a permitted obstruction within the rear yard.

In R6 and R6/C1-4 districts, accessory off-street parking spaces are required for at least 50% of the dwelling units in a Quality Housing building and for 70% of the dwelling units in all other buildings. Required parking for community facility uses varies according to the use; one space required for every 400 square feet of floor area in medical offices classified under Use Group 4.

One parking space is required for every 1,000 square feet of general retail or service use floor area.

5. Description of the Proposed Development

The Applicant proposes to demolish the existing buildings located on Lots 58, 60, 68 and p/o 73 (the "Development Site") and construct a new building on the Development Site pursuant to Quality Housing regulations containing residential, commercial and community facility uses (the "Proposed Development"). The existing buildings on the Development Site were constructed prior to 1960. The proposed residential, commercial and community facility uses will support the housing and service needs of the busy neighborhood's growing population.

The Proposed Development will contain 201,453 square feet of floor area on a 35,330 sf zoning lot for a total FAR of 5.7. The Proposed Development will consist of 13 stories and 135'-0" in height. The base height of the building is 25'. Lot coverage is 65% over the interior lot portion of the zoning lot, and 100% over the corner lot portion. The zoning lot will have a 30' rear yard.

The Proposed Development will include 38,749 square feet of commercial floor area (in addition to 38,845 square feet of commercial floor space not included under the definition of zoning floor area), 188 square feet of community facility floor area (in addition to 7,825 square feet of community facility floor space not included as zoning floor area), and 162,516 square feet of residential floor area. A total of 213 dwelling units is proposed, including approximately 64 units of affordable housing.

The Proposed Development will have frontage along Roosevelt Avenue and 63rd Street. Commercial and retail entrances will be located on Roosevelt Avenue. Community facility and residential entrances will be located on 63rd Street.

Parking spaces for 160 cars accessory to residential, commercial and community facility uses are located at the sub-cellar level. On-site parking spaces will be made accessible by an 18-foot wide curb cut on 63rd Street that will be located 232 feet from Roosevelt Avenue.

The Proposed Development will include approximately 1,082 square feet of indoor recreation space and approximately 5,300 square feet of outdoor recreation space. Proposed amenities include a laundry room, gym and lounge. The proposed façade is masonry. The brick veneer is intended to fit within the context of adjacent structures.

The building will comply with Enterprise Green Communities Criteria, the green building framework designed for affordable housing. The building will fully comply with applicable provisions of the NYC Energy Conservation Code, and even exceed certain energy code standards. Exterior walls will be constructed with additional insulation for more efficient heating and cooling of the building's interior spaces. Energy Star appliances, windows and gas boilers will be installed in the building. Energy-efficient LED lighting will be used in common areas. The building will be provided with a recycling room.

Out of 213 proposed dwelling units, approximately 64 dwelling units (30% of the residential floor area) will be designated as affordable to households at an average of 80% of AMI per MIH Option 2. The permanently affordable dwelling units will be distributed throughout the buildings. The Applicant will be seeking conventional financing for the Proposed Development.

6. Actions Necessary to Facilitate the Project

In order to facilitate the proposed development, the following actions are necessary: 1) a zoning map amendment to change from R6 to C4-4 and R6/C1-4 to C4-4; and 2) a zoning text amendment to make the affected area subject to the MIH Program. The proposed C4-4 district will appropriately allow moderate residential and commercial growth at the location of a wide street intersection along a commercial corridor with convenient access to several public transportation options. The Proposed Development will comply and conform to the applicable proposed district regulations.

The Project Area's location between a wide street and the LIRR railroad tracks provides adequate light and air to support additional density. Roosevelt Avenue, which fronts the property to the north, has a width of 80 feet. The LIRR tracks adjoining the southwest side of the Project Area are located on a lot measuring approximately 172 feet wide. 63rd Street, which fronts on the Project Area to the east has a width of 60 feet.

In addition, the Project Area is an appropriate location for additional density because it is located at a significant transit nexus. The Project Area lies within a Transit Zone, which is an area of the city beyond the Manhattan Core within one-half mile of a subway station where auto ownership rates are among the lowest in the city. The elevated No. 7 subway train is easily reached on Roosevelt Avenue at the Woodside – 61st Street station. The LIRR Woodside station is located nearby at Roosevelt Avenue and 61st Street. The westbound Q32, and the terminus for the Q53 and Q70-SBS stop, are on Roosevelt Avenue west of the intersection. The eastbound Q32 is across 63rd Street on the south side of Roosevelt Avenue.

Residential uses of all types are permitted in C4-4 districts. C4-4 districts also allow community facility uses, and a range of commercial uses classified under Use Groups 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 12. Accordingly, the proposed district allows commercial and community facility uses that serve the needs of residents and that fit within the context of the existing uses along and near Roosevelt Avenue, a commercial corridor that includes restaurants, retail stores and supermarkets.

The proposed C4-4 district allows for the development of a building envelope with a low base height and setbacks that are compatible with the adjacent elevated subway line. The applicable residential bulk regulations in C4-4 districts are the bulk regulations for R7-2 districts. Maximum FAR for an MIH development is 4.6. The maximum allowable community facility FAR is 6.5. The maximum allowable commercial FAR is 3.4. In C4-4 districts, the height of a MIH development within 10' of a wide street and 15' of a narrow street is limited to a maximum base height of 75' and a maximum building height of 135', or 13 stories, whichever is less. Maximum lot coverage is 100% on corner lots and 65% on the interior and through lot portions of the zoning lot.

Front yards are not required. Side yards are not required; however, an open area must have a minimum width of 8'. A rear yard measuring a minimum depth of 30 feet must be provided for buildings containing residential or community facility uses, except that no rear yard is required within 100 feet of a corner. A rear yard measuring a minimum depth of 20 feet must be provided for commercial uses, except that no rear yard is required within 100 feet of a corner and portions of buildings used for permitted uses other than residences not exceeding one story or 23' above curb level is a permitted obstruction within the rear yard.

Accessory off-street parking spaces are required for at least 50% of the dwelling units in a Quality Housing building and for 70% of the dwelling units in all other buildings, except that no accessory off-street parking spaces are required for income restricted housing units within a Transit Zone. Required parking for community facility uses varies according to the use; one space required for every 1,000 square feet of floor area in medical offices classified under Use Group 4. One parking space is required for every 1,000 square feet of general retail or service use floor area.

The proposed C4-4 district along Roosevelt Avenue will facilitate the development of affordable housing consistent with Mayor Bill de Blasio's comprehensive housing plan. The proposed zoning text amendment would make the Project Area a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing designated area in which MIH Option 2 would be applicable. Option 2 requires that a minimum of 30% of the residential floor area be designated as affordable to households at an average of 80% of AMI. The Applicant intends to rely on conventional financing for the Proposed Development.

7. Conclusion

The Applicant seeks a zoning map amendment to change from R6 and R6/C1-4 to C4-4 and a zoning text amendment to designate the Project Area as an MIH area. These actions would facilitate the development of a new mixed-use building with 213 residential units, including approximately 64 permanently affordable units, as well as commercial and community facility uses on the Development Site, located on a wide street and at a transportation hub in the

Woodside neighborhood of Queens. The proposed text amendment to make the area subject to the MIH program would ensure that the project provides permanent affordable housing.