LR Item 3: Description of Proposal

50-25 Barnett Avenue, Queens
Block 119; Lot 143

1. Introduction

The Applicant, Phipps Houses, proposes a zoning map amendment and a zoning text amendment to facilitate a new mixed-use development containing of affordable housing and community facility space (the "proposed project") at property located at 50-25 Barnett Avenue in Sunnyside, Queens (Block 119, Lot 143) (the "Project Site"). A zoning map amendment is proposed to rezone the Project Site, from M1-1 to R6A. A zoning text amendment is also proposed to establish a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Area at the Project Site.

The proposed actions would facilitate the development of a new residential building with approximately 167 affordable units for low- and moderate-income households and 5,323 square feet of non-profit office (community facility) space on the ground floor along Barnett Avenue. Together, the proposed actions are necessary to construct residential uses on the existing underutilized site, provide new affordable housing for the surrounding area, and provide new community facility space.

The project will also require funding actions on the part of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC).

2. Background

The Applicant acquired the Project Site in the 1950s and has been operating it as a public parking lot with 223 spaces. There have been no land use actions affecting the Project Site.

A land use application for ULURP and related non-ULURP requests (C 160103 ZMQ, N 160101 ZRQ & N 160102 ZRQ) for the Project Site was filed on November 10, 2015. These actions included proposing a Special Mixed-Use Districts and M1-1/6 rezoning, in conjunction with a proposed text amendments to designate an MIH Area and modify bulk regulations of the underlying MX district. The requested actions would have facilitated a seven- to ten-story, mixed-use, 100 percent affordable development containing 220 housing units. The applications were unanimously approved by the CPC in August 2016, and were withdrawn prior to the City Council vote in September 2016.

Phipps Houses is the nation's oldest and one of its largest not-for-profit developer/owners and managers of affordable housing. Its mission is to create and sustain enduring communities through housing development, attentive property management, and residential- and community-based human services in New York City neighborhoods. Phipps has been operating Sunnyside Gardens development across the street from the Project Area since those buildings were constructed in the 1930s. The Project Area is already owned by the Applicant and presents an opportunity for Phipps to develop underutilized land and advance its mission by creating new affordable housing on it.

3. Description of the Surrounding Area

The Project Site is located within the Sunnyside neighborhood in Community District 2 in Queens. As shown in the attached Area Map, the surrounding area is defined as a 600-foot radius from the Project Site.

The Project Site is zoned M1-1, a high performance manufacturing zoning district that permits up to 1 FAR of commercial or industrial use and up to 2.4 FAR of community facility uses. The properties north of the Project Site and to the east and west along the north side of Barnett Avenue are also zoned M1-1. The blocks south of Barnett Avenue are zoned for residential use with R4 and R5B districts. R4 districts allow all types of housing (one- and two-family homes as well as apartment buildings) with a maximum FAR of 0.75, plus an attic allowance of up to 20% for inclusion of space under a pitched roof. R5B is a contextual district that allows a maximum FAR of 1.35, a maximum street wall height of 30 feet, and a maximum building height of 33 feet.

The Sunnyside Planned Community Preservation District (PC) is mapped to the south and west of the Project Site. The Special Planned Community Preservation District designation is designed to protect the unique character of communities that have been planned and developed as a unit. Those communities characteristically have large landscaped open spaces and a superior relationship of buildings, open spaces, commercial uses, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Within the Sunnyside area, this district provides special bulk, floor area, density, height, yard, and parking regulations.

The surrounding area is characterized by a mix of land uses, including residential, industrial, commercial, transportation, and open space (refer to the attached Area Map). As noted above, the northern edge of the project site is bordered by the LIRR right-of-way. To the east of the Project Site along Barnett Avenue there are commercial and industrial buildings ranging from one to three stories. Bus parking and open storage of vehicles and equipment occupy the narrow lots to the west of the Project Site along Barnett Avenue. Large one- and two-story shopping centers surrounded by expansive surface parking lots, occupy the area north of the LIRR right-of-way along Northern Boulevard.

The area to the south of the Project Site is characterized by several types of residential uses. Directly south of the Project Site is the Phipps Sunnyside Gardens apartments, which is a multi-family elevator building six stories in height. In the southwestern portion of the study area is the Sunnyside Gardens development, a community of two-story attached townhouses with a shared courtyard. The development was constructed in the 1920s and is spread across 16 blocks. In the southwest portion of the study area are several attached and semi-attached single- and two-family houses. These buildings generally are setback from the street, include a small front yard, and range in height between two and three stories.

The only open space in the surrounding area is Sunnyside Gardens Park, a 3.5-acre private park owned by a community organization. This park, which features grass playing field, running track, clay tennis courts, basketball courts, and a playground, accepts a limited number of members from the surrounding community.

The surrounding area also includes a portion of the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District, which is a New York City Historic District that is also listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. This historic district is bounded roughly by Barnett and 38th Avenues to the north, 43rd and 46th Streets to the west, Skillman Avenue and Queens Boulevard to the south, and 48th and 52nd Streets to the east.

Roadways surrounding the Project Site general carry one-way local traffic. Barnett Avenue, which borders the Project Site to the south, is a two-way street that also carries local traffic east-west through the surrounding area. The northern border of the Project Site is formed by the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) right-of-way. The Project Site is served by several bus and subway lines. To the north of the Project Site, the E, M, and R trains that run along Broadway – the closest station is the Northern Boulevard Station. The 7 train runs to the south of the Project Site along Queens Boulevard. The closest station on the 7 subway line is the 46th Street – Bliss Street Station. The area is served by the Q104 bus, which runs along 48th Street. Other nearby bus lines include the Q32, which runs along Roosevelt Avenue, and the Q18, which runs along 58th Street.

Major vehicular roadways in the area include Queens Boulevard to the south and Northern Boulevard to the north. Smaller streets that provide access to the Project Site include Woodside Avenue, 48th Street, and 39th Avenue.

4. Description of the Proposed Rezoning Area and Project Site

The Project Site is located on the north side of Barnett Avenue between 50th and 52nd Streets on Block 119, Lot 143. There are no other properties that would be affected by the proposed actions, and therefore the Proposed Rezoning Area and Project Site are the same. The 64,366-sf site is owned by the Applicant and is currently used as a public parking lot with approximately 223 spaces. The only structure in the Project Site is a parking attendant's booth, which is a one-story building approximately 15 by 25 feet.

The Project Site is long and narrow with an east-west orientation along Barnett Avenue. The site extends 560 feet along Barnett Avenue and is 64 feet deep at its western edge and 150 feet deep at its eastern edge. Barnett Avenue, at 60 feet wide, is classified as a narrow street under the Zoning

Resolution. As there is no curb along the north side of Barnett Avenue at this location, there are no existing curb cuts at the Project Site, but there are driveways into the parking lot at the eastern end and middle of the site.

5. Description of the Proposed Development

The proposed development is a mixed-use building with approximately 161,085 square feet (161,230 gross square feet (gsf)) of floor area (2.5 FAR), including approximately 155,762 square feet (155,907 gsf) of residential floor area and 5,323 square feet (5,323 gsf) of community facility floor area, which is expected to be used as non-profit office space, on the ground floor.

The proposed building would be oriented along Barnett Avenue and would occupy approximately 446 feet of the lot frontage. Variations in the height of the building and the setback distance from the street would break up the building's mass and create the sense of a courtyard around the building entrance. The base of the proposed building would rise to a height of seven-stories, approximately 69 feet, in the middle portion of the building. On the ends of the Proposed Development, the building would rise six-stories to a height of 59 feet. The seven-story base of the building along Barnett Avenue would be set back from the sidewalk at distances ranging from 7'6" to 11'3". The seven-story central portion of the building would be set back from the sidewalk at distances ranging from 29'10" and 35'11", creating a small courtyard around the entrance to the residential lobby.

The proposed building is expected to include approximately 167 housing units. The Applicant intends for all of the housing units in the project area to be affordable to low- and moderate-income households. It is anticipated that 50% of the units would be affordable to households earning up to 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and the remaining units would be for moderate income households earning up to 110% AMI. The Applicant proposes to designate the Project Site a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area as part of the rezoning.

The ground floor would include the residential lobby and "maisonette" apartments with small front yards along Barnett Avenue. The western end of the ground floor would include the approximately 5,323 square feet of non-profit office space.

The proposed development would include a parking facility containing approximately 170 parking spaces including a minimum of 59 attended accessory parking spaces reserved for the use of the tenants of the proposed building and 111 attended parking spaces that would be made available for public use. The accessory parking spaces would be located at grade on the northern part of the project area at the rear of the building and underneath a portion of the building. A portion of the second floor of the structure would be supported on columns with open parking at grade beneath, which is where the public parking spaces would be located. There would be two curb cuts leading to driveways by which vehicles could enter the parking lot: a 12-foot wide curb cut (excluding splays) at the eastern edge of the project site and a 30-foot wide curb cut (excluding splays) at the western edge of the site. The driveway at the western end of the site would also be used as the exit from the parking lot. The western curb cut would be located across Barnett Avenue from the intersection of 50th Street, where traffic flows one-way north. The eastern curb cut would be across Barnett Avenue from the intersection of 52nd Street, where traffic flows one-way south.

6. Action(s) Necessary to Facilitate the Project

The proposed actions include a proposed zoning map amendment to rezone the Project Site from M1-1 to R6A and a zoning text amendment to establish the Project Site as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area. The proposed zoning district is appropriate as it is located on an underutilized site that is appropriately sized and shaped to encourage development; is directly north of existing residential uses of similar heights that would be permitted in the proposed R6A zoning district; is directly adjacent to the LIRR right-of-way and located within a transit zone resulting in a site where additional density is appropriate; and the proposed R6A zoning district requires a streetwall which would encourage a more active streetscape relative to the existing public surface-level parking lot Approval of the proposed actions are intended to create new permanently affordable housing on an underutilized lot in an area surrounded by residential uses.

A.) Zoning Map Amendment

The Applicant proposes to rezone the Project Site from M1-1 to R6A. The proposed R6A district would be bounded by the LIRR right-of way on the north side, the prolongation of the centerline of 52nd Street on the east side, Barnett Avenue on the south side, and the prolongation of the western edge of 50th Street on the west side.

The proposed zoning map change is necessary because current zoning does not permit residential use. The Project Site's current M1-1 zoning allows up to 1 FAR of commercial or light industrial uses and up to 2.4 FAR of community facility use. The Project Site is proposed to be mapped with a R6A district, a medium-density residential contextual zoning district, which would facilitate the production of affordable housing, better match the built character of the surrounding area south of the Project Site, have predictable bulk and height regulations and activate the streetscape. The proposed residential and community facility uses would conform with the use regulations of the proposed R6A district. The proposed development would be approximately 2.50 FAR and would comply with the maximum 3.60 allowable FAR in the proposed R6A district. Finally, the proposed development's seventh story would rise to a maximum height of 69 feet and would be less than the maximum height (85-feet) allowed in the proposed R6A district.

B.) Zoning Text Amendment

The Applicant proposes zoning text amendments to the following sections of the Zoning Resolution:

- **Appendix F:** The Project Area would be added to the list and maps of Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Areas.

A minimum of 25% of the project's residential floor area would be affordable to low-income households earning up to 60% of AMI with a minimum of 10 % of the residential floor area being affordable to households at 40% of AMI, and therefore the requirements for the Inclusionary Housing FAR bonus under Option 1 would be satisfied.

In addition to the zoning actions described above, the project will also require funding actions on the part of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC).

7. Conclusion

The proposed actions would advance the affordable housing production goals of the mayor's Housing New York plan by facilitating the development of a new residential building with approximately 167 affordable units for low- and moderate-income households. The proposed zoning map amendment is required in order to allow residential use on a site currently zoned for light industrial and commercial uses.

The proposed project, with its residential and community facility uses, would be consistent with land uses in the Sunnyside neighborhood, which include the Sunnyside Gardens apartment complex directly across Barnett Avenue to the south as well as other large apartment buildings with elevators, smaller multifamily walkup buildings, and one- and two-family houses. In addition to providing much-needed affordable housing, the proposed project would improve an underutilized stretch of Barnett Avenue which currently has only surface parking. The proposed new building would bring activity to this block and create an inviting streetscape with plantings and a new sidewalk.