58-75 Queens Midtown Expressway Rezoning
Queens Community District 2
May 25, 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

Lucky Supply Holding, LLC (the "Applicant") proposes a zoning map amendment to change the existing M1-1 zoning district mapped on a portion of Block 2656, including Lots 20**,** 64, and parts of Lots 65 and 115 (the "Rezoning Area")**,** to an M1-4 zoning district. The proposed zoning map amendment would facilitate the horizontal and vertical enlargement of the existing one-story warehouse building on Block 2656, Lot 64 (the "Development Site"), which is operated as a restaurant supply business by the Applicant. The Rezoning Area is located within the Maspeth neighborhood in Queens Community, District 2. Additionally, the Applicant proposes the removal of a sewer easement shown on the City Map within the Development Site.

2. BACKGROUND

The M1-1 zoning district mapped within the Rezoning Area was established with the enactment of the 1961 Zoning Resolution. In 2017, the Rezoning Area was established as one of the Designated Areas in M districts pursuant to Appendix J of Zoning Resolution, where the development of new self-storage facilities is subject to restrictions (N 174025(A) ZRY). The only recent land use action in the surrounding area was the 59-02 Borden Avenue Self-Storage Special Permit (C 200031 ZSQ), which was approved in 2020. This private application for a self-storage special permit in accordance with Zoning Resolution Section 74-932 [Self-Service Storage Facility in Designated Areas within Manufacturing Districts] was to facilitate the development of a six-story self-storage facility within a larger as-of-right retail development, including a Home Depot store, at 59-02 Borden Avenue (Block 2657, Lots 40, 50, 70 and 90) to the south of the Rezoning Area.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE SURROUNDING AREA

The Rezoning Area is located in the Maspeth neighborhood of Queens, Community District 2. The surrounding area is characterized by predominantly industrial uses divided into northern and southern segments by the Queens Midtown Expressway, a major highway that connects Queens to Midtown Manhattan and connects to Brooklyn and Long Island via the Brooklyn-Queens and Long Island Expressways. Maurice Avenue is a significant north-south corridor that traverses the surrounding area to the east of the Rezoning Area. The Rezoning Area is located within the Maspeth Industrial Business Zone ("IBZ"), which is an area designated by the City to protect and grow industrial businesses by excluding new residential uses and providing targeted support through business support services and area-wide improvements.

The prevailing built form in the surrounding M1-1 zoning districts is generally characterized by low-scale, high lot coverage warehouse buildings and open yards that house construction, warehouse/distribution, and auto-related uses. The M1-1 zoning district is generally mapped between 54th Avenue to the north, Maurice Avenue/60th Street to the east, 56th Drive/Maurice Avenue to the south and Rust Street/50th Street/58th Street to the west. To the northeast of the Rezoning Area, there is a C8-1 zoning district mapped along Maurice Avenue north of 54th Avenue that includes industrial and commercial uses, such as an open-yard building supplies store and a four-story hotel. To the east of the C8-1 zoning district, the area is characterized by low-density residential development within a R4 zoning district.

Furthermore, there is a residential neighborhood containing one- to two-story duplexes, attached and detached townhomes, and apartment buildings in the R4 district located to the east of Maurice Avenue. This district stretches across Maurice Avenue north of 54th Avenue, encapsulating New Calvary and Mt. Zion cemeteries to the west of Maurice Avenue and adjacent to the Rezoning Area's northern boundary. Residential uses are located solely to the east of Maurice Avenue. Additional open space resources to the cemeteries include Frank Principe Park, an 8.9 acre park and playground with handball, basketball & tennis courts, located one block to the east of the Rezoning Area, adjacent to the residential neighborhood.

The Rezoning Area has limited transit options but has access to several bus lines. The Q67 bus line (Middle Village - Long Island City) is available at Maurice Avenue and the Q39 bus line (Long Island City - Ridgewood) is available at 58th Avenue.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED REZONING AREA

The proposed Rezoning Area consists of four contiguous tax lots and portions of tax lots on Block 2656, including the following properties:

> Block 2656, Lot 20 is a 53,144 square foot lot that is improved with a one-story warehouse building occupied by a construction business and an open yard.
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> Block 2656, Lot 64 (the Development Site) is an 80,890 square foot lot that is improved with a one-story and mezzanine warehouse building occupied by a restaurant supply business.
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> Block 2656, Lot 65 is a 13,890 square foot lot that is improved with a one-story garage building. Only the westernmost portion of Lot 65 is included within the Rezoning Area.
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> Block 2656, Lot 115 is an 81,552 square foot lot that is improved with a one-story warehouse building occupied by a baking supply business. Only the westernmost portion of Lot 115 is included within the Rezoning Area.

The proposed Rezoning Area is within an M1-1 zoning district and in the Maspeth IBZ.

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE

The Development Site consists of Block 2656, Lot 64, an 80,890 square foot, irregularly shaped through and interior lot. It is improved with a one-story and mezzanine warehouse building built in 1969 that is occupied by a restaurant supply business. The existing building at the Development Site has approximately 69,699 square feet of floor area and rises to a height of 18 feet 9 inches. There are four loading berths accessible from 54th Avenue via an existing approximately 98-foot wide curb cut. The Applicant purchased the Development Site in 2013 and has operated their restaurant supply business, Lucky Supply, from the site since that time.

A historic sewer easement was established along the western edge of the Development Site by the Board of Estimate and City Planning Commission in 1957 (CP-8830), modifying earlier easements from 1950. Subject to verification, the sewer easement is no longer in use. This portion of the Development Site has remained unimproved due to the sewer easement.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is a horizontal and vertical enlargement of the existing warehouse at the Development Site. The proposed enlarged building would result in a three-story and mezzanine building with 161,780 square feet of manufacturing floor area (2.0 FAR) for Use Group 16 warehouse use. It would rise to a height of 54 feet 9 inches with a full second floor and partial third floor. Required 20-foot rear yards are provided on the north and south of the building above the first floor. The enlarged building would have five loading berths and nine accessory off-street parking spaces. The existing curb cut on 54th Avenue would remain and a new 15-foot wide curb cut would be added from the Queens Midtown Expressway service road. A bicycle room would be provided on the first floor for 17 bicycles. The new floor area within the enlarged building, including the mezzanine would be used for storage of inventory for the restaurant supply business that will continue to occupy the building.

7. ACTIONS NECESSARY TO FACILITATE THE PROJECT

The actions necessary to facilitate the proposed development are: (1) a zoning map amendment to change the existing M1-1 zoning district mapped within the Rezoning Area to an M1-4 zoning district; and (2) the removal of a sewer easement shown on the City Map within the Development Site.

The proposed M1-4 zoning district is bounded by 54th Avenue to the north, the Queens Midtown Expressway to the south, 58th Street to the west, and a line 560 feet from and parallel to Maurice Avenue to the east. The proposed M1-4 zoning district allows for growth within the Rezoning Area with a maximum industrial FAR of 2.0. The proposed M1-4 district would permit the same uses (subject to M1 performance standards) as the M1-1 district. The maximum front wall height before setback is 60 feet or four-stories, whichever is less, with building height controlled by a sky exposure plane. Off-street parking is not required in M1-4 districts. Overall, in contrast to the existing M1-1 zoning district, which allows a maximum FAR of 1.0 for industrial uses and requires parking, the proposed M1-4 zoning district allows a higher maximum industrial FAR of up to 2.0 and no parking is required for industrial uses.

The Applicant recognizes that it can better serve its clientele, increase efficiency, and remain competitive in the market by maintaining more inventory onsite. By enlarging the existing building at the Development Site, the Applicant can increase its storage capacity, reduce incoming deliveries, and accommodate larger outgoing orders. The proposed zoning map amendment would facilitate the horizontal and vertical enlargement of the existing warehouse at the Development Site. The proposed enlargement would not be permitted in the existing M1-1 zoning district because it would exceed the maximum permitted FAR of 1.0. The proposed M1-4 zoning district has a higher maximum FAR of 2.0, which is sufficient to accommodate the proposed enlargement.

The land use rationale for the proposed zoning map amendment to establish an M1-4 zoning district in the Rezoning Area is that it would promote the growth of existing industrial use within the Maspeth Industrial Business Zone (IBZ). The proposed M1-4 zoning district is consistent with the industrial land use patterns in the surrounding area. The Rezoning Area is an appropriate location for an increase in industrial uses with the proposed M1-4 zoning district because of its adjacency to the Queens Midtown Expressway and relative isolation from residential uses. Although residential uses and Frank Principe Park are located within one to three blocks of the Rezoning Area, these uses are separated by Maurice Avenue, a significant corridor in the area. Additionally, on-ramps to the Queens Midtown Expressway are located adjacent to the expressway via frontage roads within two blocks of the Development Site, so the proposed increase in industrial bulk at the Development Site would not encroach on the nearby residential neighborhood. The increase in bulk is also appropriate for the Rezoning Area as it is situated between the wide expressway and a cemetery that provide access to light and air on either side of the block.

Finally, the proposed M1-4 zoning district is consistent with City's New York Works Plan, which seeks to create 20,000 jobs within the industrial and manufacturing sectors. The proposed M1-4 zoning district would facilitate job creation by allowing the Applicant to maintain and increase its workforce.

The removal of the sewer easement from the City Map is necessary because the easement otherwise encumbers construction within that portion of the Development Site.

8. CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposed zoning map amendment is consistent with existing land uses within the surrounding area and promotes industrial growth within the Maspeth IBZ on a suitable, underutilized property. The zoning map amendment will further the objectives of the IBZ and the New York Works Plan by promoting the creation of new jobs in the industrial sector. The existing M1-1 zoning designation within the Rezoning Area does not promote growth of existing industrial businesses. However, the proposed rezoning to an M1-4 zoning district facilitates the proposed enlargement of Lucky Supply and would contribute to the overall local industrial economy.