Project Description (LR Item 3)
Project ID: 2019Q0065

98-81 Queens Boulevard

October 2020

1. Introduction

Trylon, LLC (the "Applicant") seeks a series of actions to facilitate a new mixed-use development in the Rego Park section of Queens Community District #6. The Applicant seeks a zoning map amendment from R7-1/C1-2 to R8X/C2-4 that would affect the entirety of Block 2105 (Lots 1, 10, 14 and 16; the "Development Site" and also "the Rezoning Area"). In addition, a zoning text amendment to *Appendix F* of the Zoning Resolution ("ZR") is required that would make the Rezoning Area applicable as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area with Options 1 and 2 mapped (the "Proposed Actions").

The Proposed Actions would facilitate a new 15-story, mixed use (residential-commercial) building (the "Proposed Development") that would occupy the entirety of the subject block. The building would rise to a height of 174 feet after a setback at 104 feet and include approximately 153,400 square feet of floor area (7.16 FAR). There would be 162 dwelling units in approximately 136,000 square feet (6.35 FAR), 113 of which would be market rate and 49 would be affordable under MIH (Option 2). The proposed commercial space would contain approximately 17,400 square feet or 0.81 FAR on the ground floor. 45 accessory parking spaces would be provided on the second floor via a single curb cut along 66th Avenue.

2. Background

The underlying R7-1/C1-2 district has existed since the creation of the 1961 ZR and has not been modified since that time period. The area several blocks to the north of the Rezoning Area was amended in 1992 as part of the Forest Hills/Rego Park Rezoning (910483 ZMQ), which affected portions of twenty-one blocks in an area generally bounded by 62nd Drive to the north, 108th Street to the east, 66th Avenue to the south and 99th Street to the west. The action proposes to rezone from R7-1, R4 and C1-2 to R4B, R5, R6A, R7-1 and C1-3.

A second Forest Hills/Rego Park rezoning was completed 2002 (020629 ZMQ) for the area to the south of Queens Boulevard. This second rezoning amended R7-1 districts to R4B; R4 districts to R4 and R3A; R3-2 districts to R3-1 and R2. The rezoning was initiated because at the time, zoning designations within the Forest Hills/Rego Park area had been in place since the 1961 ZR and

residents were concerned that current zoning allows new residential development that was of scale with the existing character of the area.

Further south and east, Forest Hills area was rezoned in 2009 as part of the creation of the Special Forest Hills District (C 090104 ZMQ), which affected the area to the south of Queens Boulevard. This project, initiated by DCP and Queens Community Board 6, aimed to update the initial zoning districts from 1961 which were zoned C8-2, C4-2 and R7-1 and resulted in predominantly open-envelope buildings under Height Factor regulations. The rezoning created new R5D/C2-3, C4-4A and C4-5X contextual districts. These new districts were mapped to reinforce the existing built context by providing predictable building envelopes, a broad and vibrant mix of uses and a transition in scale and density from north to south. However, the Rezoning Area and northern side of Queens Boulevard were unaffected by the above map amendments and the underlying R7-1 district from 1961 remains.

In addition to the Special Forest Hills District and rezoning, the area to the north was also rezoned in 2009 as part of the Cord Meyer-Forest Hills Rezoning (C 090283 ZMQ). This rezoning also aimed to create contextual districts but at a lower density (R1-2A), reflecting the predominately low-rise character of areas to the north of Queens Boulevard. The Premises and north side of Queens Boulevard were also unaffected by this project, as Queens Boulevard contains buildings at much higher densities than the predominantly low-rise residential area to the north.

3. Description of the Surrounding Area

The Rezoning Area is located along Queens Boulevard near 66th Avenue. Queens Boulevard is a principal arterial thoroughfare that travels east-west through the Borough of Queens and correspondingly contains a mix of uses and densities. Queens Boulevard itself is lined with apartment buildings rising between 6- and 13-stories and some older two-story commercial buildings. Within 10 blocks are buildings that rise over 20-stories. Examples include 23-story mixed-use complex located at 98-04 Queens Boulevard (Block 3086, Lot 7) to the south of the Rezoning AREA. In addition, a 31-story building is located one block to the east of the Rezoning Area at 102-10 66th Road (Block 2133, Lot 16). Interspersed with older apartment buildings are segments of attached one- and two-family homes that rise to two-stories, as explained in greater detail below.

The surrounding area contains a mix of community facility uses. Notable uses include Rego Park Jewish Center at 97-30 Queens Boulevard, Our Lady of the Angelus Church at 63-63 98th Street on the corner of 98th Street and 64th Avenue and P.S. 175 located at 64-35 102nd Street on the corner of 102nd Street and 65th Avenue.

Parks and other open spaces located near the Rezoning Area include Federoff Triangle, located at 100-25 Queens Blvd, Horace Harding Playground, located along 62nd Drive between 97th Place and 98th Street, Yellowstone Park, located at 106-21 68th Avenue, MacDonald Park, located at 8720 Queens Boulevard, Plaza 67, located at 67-04 Austin Street, Annandale Playground, located at Yellowstone Boulevard between 64th Road and 65th Avenue, and Russell Sage Playground, located at 68-98 Booth Street.

The Rezoning Area and surrounding area are in a large R7-1 district that dates from the 1961 ZR (as noted above). Queens Boulevard is also lined with C1-2 commercial overlays. Also in the 600-foot radius are two separate R4B zoning districts, which coincide with the clusters of attached one and two-family homes. These two districts are located to the northeast near 65th Road and to the south of Queens Boulevard between 66th and 67th Avenues.

R7-1 district is a general residential district that permits both Quality Housing and Height Factor regulations. The Height Factor regulations for R7 districts encourage small apartment buildings on small zoning lots, and tall, narrow buildings that are set back from the street on larger lots. Quality Housing regulations encourage buildings with higher lot coverage set at or near the street line. Under Height Factor regulations, the R7-1 district allows a maximum FAR from 0.87 to 3.44 for residential use and the required open space ratio (OSR) ranges from 15.5 to 25.5 percent. Height limitations ensure that these buildings are often more compatible with older buildings in the neighborhood. As an incentive to pursue the Quality Housing option, a higher floor area ratio of 4.0 FAR is permitted on wide streets outside Manhattan. For Height Factor buildings, the height is controlled by the sky exposure plane, which begins at 60 feet. Under Quality Housing regulations, a base height of 40-75 feet is permitted, with a maximum height between 75-85 feet depending on the location on a wide or narrow street. For Height Factor buildings, 60 percent of dwelling units require parking, while for Quality Housing buildings, 50 percent of dwelling units require parking.

In R7-1 districts, the C1-2 district permits a commercial FAR of 2.0 to be located on the first floor of buildings. The C1 district permits limited neighborhood retail (Use Groups 5 & 6). For most retail uses in C1-2 districts, one parking space per 300 square feet is required, which reflects a relative dependence on automotive use with a mix of transit availability.

R4B is a contextual zoning district that permits single- and two-family attached rowhouses, as well as semi-detached buildings. The maximum FAR is 0.9 with a maximum building height of 24 feet. This district predominantly creates two-story flat-roofed houses with 5-foot deep front yards. Parking must be contained in the rear of the building and one space is required per dwelling unit, unless only one space is required.

The area is well served by public transit. The New York City Transit (NYCT) R train stop two blocks east of the Rezoning Area. In terms of bus service, the Q60 make stops along Queens Boulevard at 67th Avenue, as well as the QM11 and QM18 express bus service. Accordingly, the Rezoning Area is located in the Transit Zone.

4. Description of the Proposed Development Site

The Proposed Development Site consists of the entirety of Block 2105, which includes Lots 1, 10, 14 and 16 (98-81 Queens Boulevard). The Development Site is a triangular block with a total lot area of 21,472 square feet and has approximately 260 feet of frontage along Queens Boulevard, 186 feet along 99th Avenue, 180 feet along 66th Avenue. As noted above, the affected area is zoned R7-1/C1-2.

Queens Boulevard is classified as a 'wide' street with 200 feet of mapped width, while 99th Street is also classified as a 'wide' street with 80 feet in width. 66th Avenue is classified as a 'narrow' street with 60 feet in width.

Lot 1 (98-33 Queens Boulevard) is improved with a single-story commercial building containing 6,530 square feet of space (approximately 1.0 FAR), constructed in approximately 1939. The building is currently occupied with an eating and drinking establishment and office space.

Lot 10 (98-69 Queens Boulevard) is improved with a two-story commercial building containing approximately 8,396 square feet of space (approximately 1.99 FAR), constructed in approximately 1948. The building contains ground-floor retail units with office space above.

Lot 14 (98-81 Queens Boulevard) is improved with a single-story building containing 5,700 square feet of space (approximately 1.0 FAR), constructed in approximately 1939. The building is currently occupied with a house of worship (Ohr Natan).

Lot 16 (66-02 99th Avenue) is improved with a single-story building containing 5,038 square feet of space (approximately 1.0 FAR) constructed in 1939. The building is currently occupied with retail uses.

5. Description of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Actions would facilitate a new 15-story, mixed use (residential-commercial) building with 162 dwelling units in approximately 153,400 square feet (7.16 FAR). The building would contain 162 dwelling units, with 49 income-restricted dwelling units pursuant to MIH under

Option 2 or 30 percent of the proposed residential floor area. The ground floor would contain approximately 17,400 square feet (0.81 FAR) of new retail commercial space along all three frontages, proposed as three commercial units. The residential lobby would be located along 99th Avenue.

The proposed building would rise to 174 feet after a 10-foot setback at the 9th floor, for a maximum street wall height of 104 feet. 45 accessory parking spaces would be provided on the 2nd floor and made accessible via ramp from a single curb cut at 66th Avenue. The cellar level would provide accessory space to the residential units. The proposed 162 dwelling units are preliminary proposed as a mix of 23 studio apartments, 105 one-bedrooms and 34 two-bedrooms.

6. Actions Necessary to Facilitate the Project

The Proposed Actions consist of a zoning map amendment that would rezone Tax Block 2105, Lots 1, 10, 14 and 16 (the "Rezoning Area" and the "Development Site") from R7-1/C1-2 to R8X/C2-4 with an area bound by Queens Boulevard; 66th Road; 99th Street and 66th Avenue. In connection with the proposed zoning map amendment, the proposed Rezoning Area would also be made applicable to MIH through a text amendment to Appendix F of the ZR under Option 2 (the "Proposed Actions").

The R8X residential district allows for buildings up to 7.2 FAR (with MIH). Maximum lot coverage is 70 percent for interior and through lots and 100 percent on corner lots. Above a base height of 105 feet, the building must set back before rising to a maximum of 175 feet (with a Qualifying Ground Floor) or 17-stories (with MIH). Parking is required for 40 percent of all dwelling units and is not required for income-restricted dwelling units at 80 percent AMI and below in the Transit Zone. The proposed C2-4 district permits a maximum of 2.0 FAR of commercial use with neighborhood retail and general service uses permitted (Use Groups 5-9 & 14). Parking varies by use for commercial uses, with most uses requiring one space per 1,000 square feet, and the requirement is waived where under 40 spaces and under are required.

The proposed zoning text amendment, pursuant to *Appendix F* of the Zoning Resolution, would make the Rezoning Area a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area and would be mapped as Options 1 and 2, pursuant to §123-154(d). All residential developments, enlargements, and conversions within this MIH area must comply with the program by providing 25 percent of residential floor area as income-restricted dwelling units for residents with incomes averaging 60 percent AMI and below (Option 1) or 30 percent of residential floor area as income-restricted dwelling units for residents with incomes averaging 80 percent AMI and below (Option 2). 30 percent of residential floor area as income-restricted dwelling units for residents with incomes averaging 80 percent AMI and below (Option 2). As such, the Proposed Development would

comply with MIH under Option 2 by providing 49 permanently affordable dwelling units or 30 percent of the proposed 162 dwelling units. These units would be made permanently affordable to incomes averaging 80 percent AMI.

Currently, the Rezoning Area is underdeveloped with a series of one- and two-story buildings on a singular block, in an area otherwise developed with mid-rise apartment buildings. The Proposed Actions would result in productive use of the Rezoning Area at an appropriate density of 15-stories, with new dwelling units including required affordable units, a demonstrated need for all areas of the city.

The Proposed Actions are appropriate for this area, which would result in an increased but appropriate amount of density along Queens Boulevard and 99th Street. The Rezoning Area is situated along a heavily trafficked mixed-use thoroughfare (Queens Boulevard) and in close proximity to transit and is believed to be appropriate for additional permitted density beyond the underlying R7-1 zoning district, with no maximum height limit. In addition, the proposed maximum permitted height of 17-stories under the proposed R8X/C2-4 district would not be inconsistent with the surrounding area, where numerous buildings are consistent with or rise above that height, including 102-10 66th Road (30-stories), 104-20 Queens Boulevard (20-stories), 70-25 Yellowstone Boulevard (24-stories), and 62-54 97th Place (17-stories). Furthermore, the map amendment would affect a single block and the Proposed Development would not affect access to light and air on an adjoining parcels or developments in the remaining R7-1 district.

As noted above, the proposed R8X district would require contextual developments under Quality Housing regulations, which would serve to improve the urban design of this intersection when compared to the underlying R7-1 district, which permits Height Factor buildings with no maximum height or mandatory street wall heights. The proposed C2-4 district would also be appropriate for this location, as the district is a commercial overlay intended for areas in close proximity to transit and thus requires less parking (one per 1,000 square feet and is waived where under 40 spaces are required) than the underlying C1-2 district, which requires greater parking for an area in close proximity to transit. The proposed C2-4 district would also increase the range of permitted uses from Use Groups 5-6 (local retail) to an expanded range of neighborhood retail (Use Groups 5-9 & 14). This would be consistent with the arterial commercial nature of Queens Boulevard and proximity to transit.

7. Conclusion

The Proposed Actions would result in an increased amount of density under contextual building requirements for an appropriate location along a heavily trafficked arterial thoroughfare (Queens Boulevard) in close proximity to transit. This increased density would facilitate a new 15-story

building that would be consistent with the surrounding area, where numerous buildings rise between 13- and 30-stories and would require maximum height limits when compared to the existing R7-1 district, thus improving the urban design and pedestrian environment of this intersection.

Given the underdevelopment of the Rezoning Area with the underlying R7-1/C1-2 district, it is believed the Proposed Actions would put productive use of these properties by permitting increased housing capacity in an appropriate location, including approximately 49 income-restricted dwelling units, as well as commercial retail space with a reduced parking requirement, consistent with the transit rich environment of the immediate area.