Project Description (LR Item 3)
Project ID: 2022Q0387

18-15 Francis Lewis Boulevard

April 2025

1. Introduction

Medident Corp. the "Applicant") seeks a zoning map amendment in the Clearview neighborhood of Queens, in Community District 7. The Applicant seeks a zoning map amendment from R3-2 to R3-2/C1-2 (the "Proposed Action") that would affect Block 4748, Lot 35 (the "Development Site" and "Rezoning Area"), which is oriented along the east side of Francis Lewis Boulevard at the intersection of 160th Street.

No new development is proposed as part of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action is intended to legalize a pre-existing medical office building containing approximately 5,866 zoning square feet (1.97 FAR) square feet in a single-story and basement. The building was constructed prior to 1961 and requires a zoning map amendment to enable the continued operations of the building, which was enabled by a grant from the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) in 1960.

2. Background

The Development Site has historically been zoned R3-2 since in the inception of the 1961 Zoning Resolution ("ZR") but was constructed in the year prior (1960) with a professional office building containing approximately 2,978 zoning square feet (2.0 FAR) in a single-story and cellar. The building was constructed pursuant to a variance by the BSA under 612-59-BZ that permitted an initial term of 20 years (expiring February 24, 1980). Another 10-year term was granted by the BSA in 1980, and a series of renewals have been granted until the present, with some minor amendments occurring to reflect the existing conditions of the property.

Immediately adjacent the Development Site, 20-02 & 20-14 Francis Lewis Boulevard were amended from R3-2 to R3-2/C1-2 in 1967 (CPC A-731, March 16, 1967) while the Site remained in a residential district, despite the presence of a commercial use.

This zoning remained until 2005, when the Whitestone Rezoning was approved (060055 ZMQ), which created new R2A district on the west side of Francis Lewis Boulevard, as well as new overlays along the roadway. The Whitestone Rezoning affected 311 blocks in Whitestone,

Beechhurst and Robinwood. The rezoning replaced some R3-2 districts, which permitted multi-family housing, with lower-density zones such as R2, R3A, and R3X to restrict development to single- and two-family homes. In addition, C1-2 and C2-2 commercial overlays were extended to reflect existing commercial uses. However, the Development Site was not mapped to include a commercial use, despite the presence of a longstanding commercial use.

There are no other approved land use actions or changes in the last 10 years of the Rezoning Area within 1000 feet.

3. Description of the Surrounding Area

The Rezoning Area is located along Francis Lewis Boulevard at the four-way intersection of 18th, Avenue (60 feet wide), 19th Avenue (60 feet wide), 160th Street (70 feet wide) and Francis Lewis Boulevard (100 feet wide). The Development Site is located on a mixed-use thoroughfare (Francis Lewis Boulevard) with residential uses on side streets. Development Site serves as the northern end of Clearview's main street business district serving the surrounding residential area - that extends along Francis Lewis Boulevard from 20th Road in the south to 17th Road in the north. Side streets radiating from Francis Lewis Boulevard and Willets Point Boulevard are predominantly low-rise residential. In particular, the area extending up 160th Street, to the rear of the Development Site is Clearview Gardens, which is a low-rise apartment complex encompassing 88-acres in the subject R3-2 district. To the west of Francis Lewis Boulevard is predominantly detached one and two-family dwellings in a R2A district. As noted above, the R2A district was created in 2005 as part of the larger Whitestone Rezoning low-rise detached character. Further west are some community facility uses, including a long-term care facility at 157-15 19th Avenue. In addition, a Department of Education facility (JHS 194 Wiliam Car) is located at 157th Street and 17th Road to the north (154-60 17th Avenue). Adjacent that school, is Clintonville Playground which is a 1.55-acre Jointly Operated Playground between DOE and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR).

The eastern side of Francis Lewis Boulevard is mapped with C1-2 overlays from 17th Road to 20th Road, where a larger intersection is mapped with C1-2 and C1-3 overlays, surrounding a cluster of neighborhood services, including restaurants, a gym, banks, drug stores, real estate services, barbers, and laundromats. As noted above, the adjacent 20-02 & 20-14 Francis Lewis Boulevard contains a C1-2 overlay that was mapped in 1967.

The Development Site is zoned R3-2. In the surrounding 600-foot radius, there are R2A, R3-1, R3X and R3-2/C1-2 and R3-2/C1-3 overlays. The Development Site and surrounding area are located outside the Greater Transit Zone.

The R3-2 district permits a variety of single- and two-family houses, as well as small multi-family buildings. The maximum FAR for R3-2 districts is 0.75 is reduced to 0.60 FAR on lots that exceed 4,000 square feet. A minimum lot size of 2,850 square feet is required with a minimum lot width of 30 feet. The maximum building height is 35 feet. Parking is required for 50% of dwelling units outside the Greater Transit Zone. Without the inclusion of a commercial overlay, commercial uses are not permitted.

R2A districts are low-density contextual districts characterized by single-family detached homes on lots with a minimum width of 40 feet. They permit a maximum FAR of 0.75 and is reduced to 0.60 FAR on lots that exceed 4,000 square feet. A minimum lot size of 2,850 square feet is required with a minimum lot width of 30 feet. Detached homes require side yards of at least 5 feet each with a total combined side yard width of 13 feet. A minimum of 15-foot front yards is required. The maximum building height is fixed at 35 feet, and the perimeter wall may rise no higher than 21 feet. One off-street parking space is required for each dwelling unit.

R3-2/C1-2 and R3-2/C1-3 districts permit mixed-use buildings at 1.6 FAR. C1 overlays generally permit limited local retail uses and office (Use Groups VI and VII) and other limited commercial service uses. On lots larger than 5,000 square feet and located along a wide roadway, R3-2 districts with commercial overlays that are Qualifying Residential Sites and permit 1.6 FAR under all residential development types (single-family, two-family and multifamily) along with commercial use.

Given the location outside of the Greater Transit Zone, this particular area of Queens does not contain immediate rail or subway service - but is well serviced by New York City Transit (NYCT) buses. The Q76 provides service along Francis Lewis Boulevard, connecting College Point with Downtown Jamaica. In addition, the QM20 makes stops at Francis Lewis Boulevard and Willets Point Boulevard, providing service to Midtown Manhattan. Furthermore, the Q16 provides service along Willets Point Boulevard to the south, connecting the immediate area with Fort Totten.

4. Description of the Proposed Rezoning Area

The Proposed Rezoning Area comprises a is a single triangular-shaped zoning and tax lot (Block 4748, Lot 44) with an address of 18-15 Francis Lewis Boulevard. The Site is located at multiple intersections and contains approximately 82 feet of frontage along 160th Street; 10 feet along 19th Avenue; 97 feet along Francis Lewis Boulevard; and 62 feet along 18th Avenue. Accordingly, the lot contains approximately 2,978 square feet of lot area. The Site is improved with a single-story and basement with 5,866 zoning square feet (1.97 FAR) professional office building, currently occupied by a dental practice since the 1960s, which is now classified as a professional office use

per ZR 32-171 (Use Group VII). The building is constructed with full lot coverage and no accessory off-street parking is provided. The building rises to a height of 20 feet.

5. Description of the Proposed Development Site

The Development Site and Rezoning Area are the same.

6. Description of the Proposed Development

No new development is proposed for Development Site. The Proposed Action would facilitate the legal use of the existing professional office building with tenants that provide dental services. The Proposed Action would enable the continued use of the Development Site with a professional service office building (Use Group VII).

7. Actions Necessary to Facilitate the Project

The Proposed Actions consist of a zoning map amendment from R3-2 to R3-2/C1-2, which would encompass the Rezoning Area, which is a lone parcel on the east side of Francis Lewis Boulevard between 17th Road and 21st Avenue that is otherwise surrounded by C1-2 commercial overlays.

The Proposed Action would legalize the existing professional office building, which has been continuously occupied by a professional office use since 1960 (a dental practice). This action would allow the property owner to continue operations without the need to return to the BSA every 10 years to renew the commercial use. Given the long-standing use of the site and the presence of nearby commercial uses, continued operations are consistent with the area's historic character.

The C1 zoning district is a commercial overlay mapped within a residential district. C1-2 commercial overlays permit local retail and office (Use Groups VI and VII), such as grocery stores, restaurants and beauty parlors and generally require one off-street parking space per 300 square feet of use, although the requirement ultimately varies by use. Within lower density residential districts, such as R3-2, the C1-2 district permits a commercial or community facility FAR of 1.6. Since the existing development on the Site predates the 1961 Zoning Resolution, no accessory parking would be required, and the existing development would remain as a legal noncomplying development at approximately 1.97 FAR.

8. Conclusion

It is requested to amend a small portion of Francis Lewis Boulevard to reflect an otherwise continuous C1-2 commercial overlay along the eastern side of the street. The commercial overlay is appropriate for this area, as a commercial use has existed on the Site for over 60 years and provides a valuable service to the surrounding residential community. The Proposed Action would not otherwise result in a substantial material change to the property. Rather, it would enable the Site to legally operate as a commercial use with the need for recurring renewals at the BSA.