Project Description (LR Item 3)
Project ID: 2018K0300

1160 Flushing Avenue

February 2021

1. Introduction

This application seeks a zoning map amendment by 1160 Flushing Avenue LLC, the lease-holder of the above-referenced property ("the Applicant) in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn Community District 4. The Applicant seeks City Planning Commission ("CPC") approval for a zoning map amendment that would amend Block 3167, Lots 12 (p/o), 18, 24, 26, 29, and 40 (the "Proposed Rezoning Area" or "Project Area") from a M1-1 district to a M1-5 district (the "Proposed Action").

The Proposed Action is sought to facilitate a new nine-story mixed-use development comprising approximately 189,559 zoning square feet (5.0 FAR) on a combined zoning lot (the "Proposed Development") located at 1160 Flushing Avenue or Block 3167, Lots 18 and 24 (the "Development Site").

2. Background

The Project Area has been zoned M1-1 since the 1961 Zoning Resolution. Since that time period, no zoning map amendments have affected the Project Area or surrounding area.
The Project Area is located within the boundaries of NYCDCP's *"North Brooklyn Industry and Innovation Plan"* (2018) study area. The plan was released on November 19th, 2018 and an update was shared in April 2019 at Brooklyn Community Board 1 (April 9, 2019) and Community Board 4 (April 17, 2019). Utilizing input from the local community, the plan identifies strategies to promote job growth and economic activity and ensure that core industrial areas (i.e., areas of the most intensive industrial activity) provide the necessary businesses for industrial areas to thrive. The plan explores new models for innovation districts to support 21st century businesses and jobs, with opportunities, as appropriate, for a mix of light industrial and commercial uses. Using zoning and other policy tools, the goals of the plan are to (1) create a better business environment for all, by preserving and growing industrial jobs, as well as other compatible jobs in the creative and innovative sectors; (2) improve the quality of life for workers and residents within the area and nearby; (3) address the potential for conflicts between industrial and non-industrial uses; (4) identity improvements to transportation and infrastructure conditions that would support growth in economic activity; and (5) address environmental and resiliency challenges.

The North Brooklyn Plan also establishes a land use framework that identifies subareas based on existing trends and assets, which include the "Core Industrial Area," which is the central hub for essential industrial business; the "Growth District," which is a dynamic, transit-accessible district for creative and tech-driven jobs of the future; the "Transition Area," which is a mix of industrial and non-industrial uses serving as a buffer between subareas; and the "Stable Areas," or small peripheral areas where no change in land use is recommended, such as the "Mixed Edge," the "Commercial Edge," and the "Established Residential" area. Of the proposed subareas, the Project Area is located in the "Growth District" at the southern-most edge of the North Brooklyn Industrial Business Zone (IBZ). The Growth District is described as being the most transit-accessible subarea with the greatest concentration of multistory industrial loft buildings. It has a rapidly evolving mix of artist studios, restaurants, "TAMI" (technology, advertising, media, and information) and other office-based businesses, artisanal manufacturing, and other industrial uses. According to the plan, the goal of the proposed Growth District is to promote an ecosystem of creative and tech-driven jobs in office-based and industrial sectors near transit by (a) increasing density for commercial and industrial uses; (b) creating new loft-like building envelopes; (c) reducing parking requirements; and (d) modifying loading requirements to reflect business needs.

Additionally, two significant land use studies have recently been conducted in the area. The Department of City Planning ("DCP") issued the Bushwick Neighborhood Plan Update, a draft planning framework for Bushwick, in April 2019 ("Bushwick Plan"), which generally provides for: (1) mid-block preservation, medium-density housing development along key corridors, (2) higher-density housing along transit corridors, and (3) a mix of industrial-commercial buffer zones and mixed-use zones in industrial areas. The Bushwick Plan builds on collaborative work conducted as part of the Bushwick Community Plan by DCP, other City agencies, community residents and stakeholders. The Bushwick Community Plan was initiated in 2014 as a community-based planning process that intended to formulate a comprehensive plan for the neighborhood that balanced concerns for affordable housing with the need to preserve the character of the neighborhood.

There are no other relevant proposals or approved land use actions within the last ten years within 1,000 feet of the proposed Project Area.

3. Description of the Surrounding Area

The Project Area is in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn Community District 4 and the surrounding area is generally defined as Cypress Avenue to the north, Johnson Avenue/Varick Avenue to the west and Irving Avenue to the south. Flushing Avenue is a notable arterial that travels diagonally northeast/southwest and connects North Brooklyn and Bushwick with Queens.

This area is characterized by a wide variety of industrial, commercial, and residential land uses and various building types. The predominant land use within a 600-foot radius is light manufacturing/warehouse. The 600-foot radius also includes several commercial uses and residential buildings. Current land uses within the 600-foot radius reflect both longstanding manufacturing and industrial building types. The sole community facility use within surrounding area is the SCO Family of Services building located directly north of the Project Area, which provides transitional housing for vulnerable populations.

The Project Area and the areas to the south and east are mapped as M1-1, whereas the areas to the west and north are generally mapped as M1-2. Additionally, a small, southwestern portion of the 600-foot radius is zoned R6.

The underlying M1-1 district allows for a variety of light manufacturing uses at a maximum of 1.0 FAR. Typical uses include repair shops, wholesale service and storage facilities, as well as heavier industrial uses subject to stringent performance standards (Use Groups 4-14, 16-17). Building heights for M1-1 districts are governed by a sky exposure plane that begins at 30 feet or two-stories, whichever is less. The M1-2 district is similar to the M1-1 district but permits buildings up to 2.0 FAR. The district permits the same uses with an increased height limit pursuant to the sky exposure plane. Off-street parking and loading facilities requirements vary in M1 districts.

R6 is a general residential district that permits buildings under both Quality Housing and Height Factor regulations. For height factor buildings, the district allows a maximum FAR from 0.78 to 2.43 for residential use and a corresponding required open space ratio (OSR) range of 27.5 to 37.5 percent. For Quality Housing buildings, 3.0 FAR is permitted for buildings on or within 100 feet of a wide street. For height factor buildings, 70% of dwelling units require parking, while for Quality Housing buildings, 50% of dwelling units require parking.

Residential uses are common on blocks to the south of the site, including immediately south of Irving Avenue and as noted above this area is experiencing population growth. Most of the residences are low-rise, single-family buildings and predate the 1961 Zoning Resolution as legal nonconforming uses. Several clusters exist southeast of the Project Area along Troutman Street and Irving Avenue and further east.

In terms of new development, a planned nine-story hotel across from Flushing Avenue, located at 25 Stewart Avenue, would be 115-feet tall with 140 hotel rooms. Permits for the proposed 79,798 square-foot building were approved in 2015.

There are no notable public open spaces in the surrounding area, with the closest park located to the south (outside the 600-foot radius) at Irving Avenue and Starr Street (Maria Hernandez Park).

Flushing Avenue is a Vision Zero corridor. Vision Zero is a City initiative to reduce traffic crashes and improve the pedestrian environment. At this time, no known improvements are planned by the Department of Transportation (DOT) for Flushing Avenue in close proximity to the Project Area.

The Project Area is located within the North Brooklyn Industrial Business Zone (IBZ). The North Brooklyn IBZ is the third largest in New York City, covering hundreds of blocks along Newtown Creek in the Greenpoint, East Williamsburg and Bushwick neighborhoods. The designation of an IBZ fosters high-performing business districts by creating competitive advantages over locating in areas outside of New York City.

The Project Area is well served by several public transit. The Jefferson Street L subway station, located to the north at the intersection of Jefferson Street and Wyckoff Avenue, is directly adjacent to the Project Area. In terms of bus service, the B57 bus (connecting Maspeth, Queens and Red Hook, Brooklyn) runs along Flushing Avenue. The B57 bus also makes a wide variety of connections to other local bus lines along Flushing Avenue in Brooklyn, including connections with the B15, B43, B44, B44 SBS, B46, B46, B47, B48, B60, B62, B69 bus lines. There are two nearby CitiBike stations, at the corner of Jefferson Street and Irving Avenue and on Wyckoff Avenue between Jefferson Street and Flushing Avenue. Accordingly, the Project Area is located inside the Transit Zone.

4. Description of the Proposed Project Area

The Proposed Project Area encompasses Block 3167, Lots 12 (p/o), 18, 24, 26, 29, and 40. Block 3167 is bordered by Flushing Avenue to the west (70 feet wide, 'narrow' street) , Wyckoff Avenue to the north (70 feet wide, 'narrow'), Jefferson Street to the east (60 feet wide, 'narrow'), and Irving Avenue to the south (70 feet wide, 'narrow'). Lots 18 and 24 are controlled by the Applicant and comprise the Development Site, which is discussed in greater detail below.

Lot 12 (1154 Flushing Avenue) is a 19,265-square foot parcel currently zoned M1-1 with a maximum permitted commercial/industrial FAR of 1.0. The lot is currently occupied by a one-story lumber yard building and contains approximately 19,874 square feet of industrial use (0.98 FAR). Only a small portion of Lot 12 is in the Project Area, with an approximately four-foot-wide portion (less than four percent) proposed to be amended as part of the Proposed Action.

Lot 26 (1182 Flushing Avenue) is a 15,200-square foot, non-Applicant-owned lot currently zoned M1-1 with a maximum permitted commercial/industrial FAR of 1.0. Lot 26 is currently occupied by a three-story warehouse constructed in approximately 1931 containing approximately 45,780 square feet of industrial uses (2.87 FAR).

Lot 29 (1224 Flushing Avenue) is an 18,530-square foot, non-Applicant-owned lot currently zoned M1-1 with a maximum permitted commercial/industrial FAR of 1.0. Lot 29 is currently occupied by a single-story building that, according to New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) records, is currently undergoing a conversion from industrial (warehouse) and commercial office uses to commercial retail uses (DOB job no. 340525300), which will result in a building containing approximately 20,475 square feet of commercial retail space on a 18,530-square foot lot (1.05 FAR).

Lot 40 (379 Jefferson Street) is a 7,450-square foot, non-Applicant-owned lot currently zoned M1-1 with a maximum permitted commercial/industrial FAR of 1.0. Lot 40 is currently occupied by a single-story warehouse building containing approximately 7,613 square feet of industrial uses on a 7,450-square foot lot (0.97 FAR). In addition, a small, northeastern portion of Lot 40 is encumbered by a Real Estate of Utility Companies (REUC) easement due to the location of street stairs serving the adjacent MTA Jefferson Street Station.

5. Description of the Proposed Development Site

The Development Site (1160 Flushing Avenue), is comprised of Block 3167, Lots 18 and 24. The Development Site encompasses a total of approximately 37,928 square feet of lot area and has approximately 221-feet of frontage on Flushing Avenue (narrow) and approximately 216 feet of frontage on Jefferson Street (narrow). Lots 18 and 24 are currently occupied by one single-story vacant industrial (warehouse) building and are currently zoned M1-1 with a maximum permitted commercial/industrial FAR of 1.0. While the existing buildings on Lots 18 and 24 are currently vacant (0.0 FAR), the building contains approximately 30,388 sf of former warehouse floor area (0.80 FAR). Lot 24 also contains a small portion of vacant, underdeveloped land on the northernmost portion of the lot, totaling approximately 3,750 square feet. The Development Site has 3 pre-existing curb cuts. Lot 18 has a single 16-foot curb cut along Flushing Avenue, while Lot 24 has two curb cuts. The first is located on the Flushing Avenue frontage of the property and is approximately 16 feet in width. The second is located along Jefferson Street and is approximately 20 feet in width.

6. Description of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Action is intended to facilitate a new nine-story mixed use development on the Development Site to contain 189,559 zsf (5.0 FAR). The Proposed Development would consist of a single-story building and nine-story building separated by a pedestrian alleyway (approximately 28 feet wide) with a maximum height of 138 feet. The single-story structure and first two floors (and cellar floor) of the nine-story building would contain a combined total of approximately

36,730 zsf of retail uses (0.97 FAR), while the second and third floors of the proposed nine-story building would contain approximately 37,846 zsf of light industrial uses (1.0 FAR). The remaining floors (three through nine) of the proposed nine-story building would contain approximately 114,983 zsf of commercial office uses (3.03 FAR).

As noted above, the building would rise to a maximum height of 138 feet. The building would contain a street wall of 85 feet along both frontages, after which the building would set back 28 feet on each side. The first three floors would contain 18-foot floor-to-ceiling heights, while the remaining six floors would contain 14-foot floor-to-ceiling heights. Private open spaces would be located on the second and sixth floors, as terrace areas. 9 new street trees would be planted along each frontage, providing 18 total new street trees.

Three loading bays would be provided with a single curb cut (30 feet wide) along Flushing Avenue to satisfy the M1-5 zoning requirements associated with the proposed office, retail, and industrial uses. The loading bay area is proposed to be located along Flushing Avenue, as Jefferson Avenue is narrower (60 feet) and less appropriate for truck traffic. No accessory parking spaces would be required under the proposed M1-5 zoning district.

7. Actions Necessary to Facilitate the Project

The Proposed Action consists of a zoning map amendment from M1-1 to M1-5. The proposed new M1-5 district would be mapped along the northern portion of Block 3167 at a depth of 250 feet from Irving Avenue. This would include Block 3167, Lots 12 (p/o), 18, 24, 26, 29, and 40. It should be noted only a small portion of Lot 12 would be included (approximately 4 feet).

The Proposed Action is intended to facilitate additional commercial, light manufacturing, industrial density at a key location, along Flushing Avenue near the Wyckoff Avenue, where the MTA L-Train station offers a stop at the Jefferson Avenue station. While mapped as a 'narrow' street, Flushing Avenue is notable corridor for the Bushwick area and connects North Brooklyn neighborhoods, such as Williamsburg, Greenpoint and Bushwick, with Queens and points northeast.

The new district is proposed from Wyckoff Avenue and extends to a point 250 feet from Irving Avenue. This dimension is to recognize the more vibrant and commercial nature of Flushing Avenue and Jefferson Street near Wyckoff Avenue, which is located adjacent transit with entrances to the Jefferson Street subway station, located directly adjacent the Project Area across Wyckoff Avenue. When compared to Flushing Avenue and Jefferson Street near Irving Avenue, the area is more industrial in character and more appropriate to remain in the M1-1 zoning district. As such, the proposed new M1-5 district extends to an area 250 from Irving Avenue, to preserve

the pre-existing character of properties closer the intersection of Irving Avenue and Flushing Avenue, whereas the M1-5 district is proposed extending from Wyckoff Avenue to recognize and promote a more mixed-use and vibrant commercial and mixed-use character.

The proposed M1-5 district and increased density is appropriate for this area. Currently, the Bushwick area is transitioning from an area of industrial and warehouse buildings with a mix of older residential uses, to a thriving mix of new semi-industrial firms, commercial uses (including TAMI firms) and neighborhood services (eating and drinking establishments and retail), which co-exist with increasing residential development to the east and south under the R6 district. In tandem, the demand for office space has increased. In recent years, the population of North Brooklyn and the demand for workspace has increased substantially. Between 2010 and 2016, job growth in North Brooklyn increased by 8% for industrial jobs and 23% for non-industrial jobs[1]. However, despite the growing investment momentum and demand for commercial space, there has been limited new construction in the area due to the high parking requirement of M1-1 and M1-2 districts, as well as the limited density permitted. For instance, in M1-1 and M1-2 districts, most office uses require one parking space per 300 square feet of floor area and the M1-5 district generally does not require parking.

The proposed M1-5 district would not alter the permitted uses in the underlying M1-1 zoning district but would serve to increase the permitted density from 1.0 FAR to 5.0 FAR and eliminate off-street parking requirements. The M1 district permits a mix of commercial, light industrial and manufacturing uses (Use Groups 4-14, 16-17). The bulk parameters of the proposed district allow for buildings up to 5.0 FAR, built to the front and side lot lines, with a 20-foot rear yard. Building heights for M1-5 districts are also governed by a sky exposure plane that begins at 85 feet, which can rise 2.7 to 1 along narrow a street. Off-street loading requirements vary by use and off-street parking is generally not required, as noted above.

In North Brooklyn, due to underlying density and parking constraints, M1-1 and M1-2 districts, which are envisioned to employ many local workers, are often being used for warehousing and freight distribution where average employment is often less than one job per 2,500 square feet. Frequently, as is the case for the Project Area, the narrow streets of these districts are not appropriate for the large trucks associated with heavy industrial uses, and the small footprint buildings are unsuited for the high-cube mechanized warehouses of today. Moreover, high off-street parking requirements constrain the development of new commercial buildings, as noted above. While warehousing and freight distribution facilities can serve as appropriate uses in certain sections of North Brooklyn, transit accessible areas, such as the Project Area, are better served by high-density commercial office and retail uses.

[1] *North Brooklyn Industry & Innovation Plan* (2018), New York City Department of City Planning.

The proposed M1-5 zoning district would allow for the development of commercial uses at higher densities at a strategic location, along Flushing Avenue and near a subway station along Wyckoff Avenue. Specifically, the proposed zoning map amendment would facilitate the development of new office and retail space in the Project Area by increasing the buildable commercial FAR from 1.0 to 5.0 and removing most parking requirements. Introducing additional commercial office space on Flushing Avenue would address a borough-wide need for more commercial office space, particularly. The Proposed Actions would result in new Class A office space that could accommodate a wide variety of tenants, including TAMI firms, as well as industrial uses, generating new employment opportunities in the Project Area, in close proximity to residential areas, near potential works.

The Proposed Action would also be consistent DCP's *North Brooklyn Industry and Innovation Plan*. Accordingly, the Project Area is identified in the plan as a "Growth District" at the southern-most edge of the North Brooklyn IBZ, being the most transit-accessible subarea with the greatest concentration of larger loft buildings, with a rapidly evolving mix of artist studios, restaurants, TAMI and other office-based businesses, artisanal manufacturing, and other industrial uses present. Moreover, the proposal would reduce parking requirements near transit, a noted goal of the plan.

The proposed M1-5 zoning district would eliminate any requirements for accessory on-site parking at the Applicant-owned site and within the Project Area. As the Project Area is within a Transit Zone and is located adjacent a subway entrance, the Proposed Action would encourage and support transit-oriented development within the Project Area in an appropriate area of Brooklyn, and would support the goals of *OneNYC* by facilitating greater opportunities for transit-oriented growth throughout the city.

In addition to promoting new commercial density, the Proposed Development would also help preserve essential light industrial uses in the North Brooklyn IBZ, as the Applicant is committed to providing approximately 1.00 FAR (approximately 40,732 gross square feet) of light industrial uses (Use Groups 11, 16, 17) in the Proposed Development. As such, the Applicant has partnered with Evergreen, a local organization that organizes and supports manufacturing, creative production and industrial service businesses in North Brooklyn. Moreover, the proposed commercial office and light industrial development would align with the goals of the *New York Works* policy, which is a series of 25 initiatives to spur 100,000 jobs over the coming decade. Specifically, the plan calls for the need to bring jobs closer to where New Yorkers live, to reduce commuting times and minimize the strain on the transit network. This is also consistent with recent events, including the COVID pandemic, which has reinforced the need for greater access to commercial office space in closer proximity to residential communities than a central business district.

8. Conclusion

The Proposed Action would amend portions of an M1-1 district to M1-5, resulting in additional density in a strategic location, in proximity to transit and along a notable thoroughfare (Flushing Avenue). The Proposed Action would increase density and reduce the overall parking requirement within the Project Area, facilitating much needed new space for offices, light industrial uses and other commercial uses (TAMI firms), creating new jobs in close proximity to growing residential communities, a demonstrated and urgent need in response to the COVID pandemic. Moreover, the Proposed Action would continue to permit light industrial and manufacturing uses in the North Brooklyn Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) and would reserve at least 40,000 square feet for those uses (1.0 FAR). As such, the Proposed Action is appropriately located and would be consistent with recent City-initiated policy proposals, including the *North Brooklyn Industry and Innovation Plan, New York Works, OneNYC* and the City's IBZ program, creating additional office space capacity and new jobs in an appropriate location.