# LR 3: Project Description

## Introduction

Grace Housing Development Fund Co. Inc (the "Applicant") requests approval of a zoning map amendment and zoning text amendment (the "Proposed Actions") of approximately 82,555 square feet, comprising block 3705, lots 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.8.9.10, 14 (partial), 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 38, 39, 40, 42 and block 3704, lots 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 35, 36 (the "Project Area"), which is bonded by Liberty Avenue to the north, Vermont Street to the east, Glenmore Avenue to the south, and Pennsylvania Avenue to the West, and split by New Jersey Avenue in East New York neighborhood within Brooklyn Community District 5. The zoning map amendment would rezone the Project Area from an R5B zoning district to an R6A zoning district. The zoning text amendment would modify Appendix F to map MIH Options 1 and 2, to facilitate the development of a 131,404 gross square feet ("GSF"), 98,795 zoning square feet ("ZSF"), seven-story, residential building (114 units), on Projected Development Site 1, and a 65,824 GSF (51,034 ZSF), five-story mixed residential and community facility building on Projected Development Site 2 (39 units). All of the residential units will be affordable.

## Background

The Project Area is located at the western edge of the East New York neighborhood, just south of the Jackie Robinson Parkway and Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, NY. East New York was originally farmland but grew extensively when elevated transit lines connected it to Queens, Downtown Brooklyn, and Manhattan in the 1880s and 1890s. Residential, commercial and manufacturing land uses were built up around transit and vehicular corridors throughout the early 20th century. However, this trend of growth waned in the latter half of the 20th century including significant disinvestment and abandonment of property throughout the 1960s and 1970s, mirroring other working-class neighborhoods throughout the City. During this time period, the foreclosure and vacancy rates climbed, and many properties deteriorated and were abandoned.

Additionally, significant net out-migration was experienced, including a decrease in population by approximately one-third, and decrease in the number of housing units by half.

With the stabilization of the City's finances after the crisis of the mid 1970s, along with ambitious new publicly-sponsored housing plans and other grass-roots initiatives, came renewed development in the 1980s that stemmed the tide and began to reverse the cycle of out-migration and disinvestment. These initiatives removed physical blight from many blocks, helped stabilize the remaining buildings, and rehabilitated existing structures. Through the 1990s, programs like these helped rehabilitate and recover much of the lost human and physical capital of East New York, increasing population from a low point of approximately 40,000 in 1980 to approximately 66,000 residents.

While it did not include the project area, the East New York Rezoning Proposal (C 160035 ZMK), which was passed in 2016, was intended to facilitate vibrant, inclusive residential neighborhoods with a wide variety of local retail options, job opportunities, and attractive streets for residents, workers, and visitors. Opportunities for new housing, including affordable housing, along key corridors, particularly Atlantic Avenue, provided more housing choices for existing and future residents. Along with zoning map changes, the East New York Rezoning included amendments to the text of the Zoning Resolution, to apply a new mandatory Inclusionary Housing Program (MIH) to the project area. Amendments to the Zoning Resolution to establish a new residential district for moderate residential density along transit corridors, and to establish an Enhanced Commercial District within the rezoning area along Atlantic Avenue, Pitkin Avenue, and Fulton Street, were approved.

## Description of the Surrounding Area

The proposed Project Area is located in the East New York neighborhood within Brooklyn Community District 5.

The surrounding area consists of predominantly industrial buildings to the west of the Project Area, past Pennsylvania avenue, predominantly one and two-family and multifamily walk-up residences to the east, south and north of the Project Area, commercial and office buildings, and public facilities and institutions. Notable public facilities include the Grace Baptist Church, on New Jersey Avenue and Liberty Avenue, the four-story, 30,000 square foot NYPD 75th Precinct and Police Athletic League, at the corner of Liberty Avenue and Pennsylvania Ave, the East New York Health Hub is located to the north of the NYPD building. South of Glenmore Avenue on Pennsylvania Avenue is the 14,000 square foot Orthodox Church of Holy Trinity. South of Holy Trinity, at the corner of Pitkin Avenue, is the four-story, 70,000 square foot Treasure Islan storage facility.

To a lesser degree, transportation and utility uses, light industrial uses (mostly storage) and vacant land are present. Atlantic Avenue is a major thoroughfare in the area and contains a mix of high-density multi-family, commercial, and mixed residential and commercial uses.

The Project Area falls within an R5B zoning district. The R5B district includes all of the Project Area, less the northern half of Block 3705, Lot 14, generally extending to the east. South of this district, along Pitkin Avenue, the area is generally zoned R7A with C2-4 commercial overlay. North of the R5B district is a mix of small commercial, manufacturing, and residential districts, including R6B, M1-4/R6A, and M1-4/R8A. West of the R5B is a corridor along Pennsylvania Avenue of R7A with a C2-4 commercial overlay, and manufacturing districts M1-1 and M2-2 as well as smaller commercial districts, including C4-4.

Zoning districts within the surrounding area include R5B (1 and 2 family, 2-story houses with a 1.35 FAR); R6A (3.6 FAR, 6-story residential buildings); R6B (2.2 FAR, 2-story row houses); R7A (4.6 FAR, 7-story residential buildings); C2-4 (commercial overlay in R7A districts, with a 2.0 FAR); M1-4 (manufacturing districts with a 2.0 FAR); R8A (7.2 FAR, 12 to 14-story residential buildings).

Major commercial corridors in the vicinity include Atlantic Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, and Pitkin Avenue.

The area is well served by transit. The Liberty Avenue A/C train subway station one block west of the Project Area. The nearest transfer station to another subway is one stop away at Broadway Junction to the northwest. The A/C line also provides connectivity to Atlantic Terminal, which includes the LIRR, and JFK Airport via the AirTran. MTA bus lines in the vicinity include the Q24, which runs East/West along Atlantic Avenue, has 52 stops departing from Archer Avenue/Merrick Blvd in Jamaica, and ending at Fulton Street/Van Sinderen Avenue in East New York; and the B20 and B83, which run North/South along Pennsylvania Avenue, from East New York to Bushwick.

The area is also home to the 141 acre Highland Park, located approximately one mile north of the Project Area, between Jamaica Ave and Highland Ave. Highland Park is bordered by Cypress Hills and East New York, Brooklyn to at the south, and Glendale and Ridgedale, Queens to the north.

## Description of the Project Area

The Project Area is located in Brooklyn Community District 5, on portions of Block 3705 and Block 3704. The lots within the Project Area are a mix of residential, community facility/religious facilities, parking lots, and vacant lots. Block 3705 and 3704 are bounded by Liberty Avenue to the north and Glenmore Avenue to the south. Block 3705 is bounded by Vermont Street to the east and New Jersey Avenue to the west, while Block 3704 is bounded by New Jersey Avenue to the east and Pennsylvania Avenue to the west. The Project Area is within an R5B zoning district with an FAR of 1.35

Grace Baptist Church is located on Block 3705, lots 9, 10, and 14, which is in poor condition, with sidewalk bridging erected because the road and the bell tower is in danger of falling, which causes unsafe conditions. No church services are allowed to be conducted at the church due to these conditions.

Applicant-owned lots in the Project Area, on Block 3705 are lots 5, 9, 10, 14, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 38, and 39 are summarized below:

- Lot 5 is a 2,100-sf lot that is improved with an 1,800 GSF (0.86 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 9 is a 2,500-sf lot that is improved with a 1,350 GSF (0.54 FAR) community facility building;
- Lot 10 is an 8,000-sf lot that is improved with a 13,200 GSF (1.65 FAR) building that is location of the Grace Baptist Church sanctuary;
- Lot 14 is a 4,350-sf lot that is improved with a 1,880 GSF (0.43 FAR) 2-story building that is part of Grace Baptist Church;
- Lot 27 is a 2,500-sf lot that is improved with a 1,980 GSF (0.79 FAR), 3-family house;
- Lot 28 is a 2,500-sf vacant lot;
- Lot 29 is a 1,767-sf vacant lot;
- Lot 30 is a 1,767-sf lot that is improved with a 1,325 GSF (0.75 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 31 is a 1,767-sf lot that is improved with a 1,310 GSF (0.74 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 32 is 2,917-sf lot that is improved with a 2,008 GSF (0.69 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 34 is a 1,725-sf lot that is improved with a 1,148 GSF (0.67 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 35 is a 6,000-sf lot that is currently unimproved and used for surface parking by NYPD;
- Lot 38 is a 4,000-sf lot that is currently unimproved and used for surface parking by NYPD;
- Lot 39 is a 2,500-sf lot that is currently unimproved and used for surface parking by NYPD

Applicant-owned lots on Block 3704 are lots 26, 27, and 28 are summarized below:

- Lot 26 is a 2,500-sf lot that is improved with a 2,080 GSF (0.83 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 27 is a 2,500-sf lot that is improved with a 2,080 GSF (0.93 FAR) 2-family house;

- Lot 28 is a 2,500-sf lot that is improved with a 2,200 FSF (0.88 FAR) single-family house;

Non-applicant owned lots on Block 3705, on which development is not anticipated, are lots 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 40, and 42 and are summarized below:

- Lot 1 is a 2,430-sf lot that is improved with a 2,584 GSF (1.06 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 3 is a 1,687-sf lot that I improved with a 2,268 GSF (1.34 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 4 is a 1,687-sf lot that is improved with a 2,268 GSF (1.35 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 6 is a 2,100-sf lot that is improved with a 1,680 GSF (0.80 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 7 is a 2,083-sf lot that is improved with a 1,440 GSF (0.84 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 8 is a 2,500-sf lot that is improved with a 2,100 GSF (0.84 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 40 is a 2,500-sf lot that is improved with a 3,876 GSF (1.00 FAR) retail establishment that is a non-conforming use;
- Lot 42 is a 2,865-sf lot that is improved with a 3,876 GSF (1.35 FAR) 3-family house.

Non-applicant owned lots on Block 3704, on which development is not anticipated, are lots 25, 29, 31, 33, 35, and 36 and are summarized below:

- Lot 25 is a 2,500-sf lot that is improved with a 2,080 GSF (0.83 FAR) 2-family house;
- Lot 29 is a 4,375-sf lot with a 15,400 GSF (3.52 FAR) 4-story, 16-unit apartment building built in 1920. This is a non-conforming use;
- Lot 31 is a 4,375-sf lot with a 11,712 GSF (2.68 FAR) 4-story, 16-unit apartment building built in 1920. This is a non-conforming use.

- Lots 33, 35, and 36 are combined to form an 11,242-sf lot with a 31,847 GSF (2.83 FAR) community facility building built in 1995 and is occupied by a NYC Department of Education public school.

## Description of the Proposed Development Site

The Proposed Development Site, located between Liberty Avenue to the north, Glenmore Avenue to the south, New Jersey Avenue to the West and Vermont Street to the east, is located on thirteen lots on Block 3705 (lots 9, 10, 14, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 38, and 39), with a land area of approximately 42,000 square feet. The Proposed Development Site is zoned R5B, with a 1.35 FAR (part of lot 14 is zoned R6A, with a 3.60 FAR), which results in total allowable buildable area of 56,700 square feet. Five of the lots on The Proposed Development Site consist of dilapidated, vacant 2-family houses, and another five lots are vacant. The remaining three lots consist of the Grace Baptist Church sanctuary and Rectory buildings, and community facility space. The Church is surrounded by scaffolding to support the crumbling roof, bell tower, and façade. A Property Condition Report was prepared by an engineer in April 2019 concluded that the church was in poor condition, requiring substantial interior and exterior repairs, including mold remediation.

## Description of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development would consist of two new buildings: one on Vermont street, on Block 3705, Lots 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 38, and 39 (Proposed Development Site 1), and a second building on New Jersey Avenue, on Block 3705, Lots 9. 10, and 14 (Proposed Development Site 2). The proposed developments are summarized below:

**Proposed Development Site 1 (Block 3705, Lots 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 38, and 39)**

Proposed Development Site 1, located on Vermont Street between Liberty Avenue and Glenmore Avenue, will have a lot size of 27,443 SF, and would be developed with a 131,404 GSF (98,795 ZSF; 3.60 FAR), 7-story residential building. There will be 24,313 GSF of parking at the cellar level (52 parking spaces with an entrance on Vermont Street) and 103,539 GSF (98,795 ZSF; 3.60 FAR) of residential use above grade, with 114 dwelling units. The building will have a height

of 67 feet, 8 inches after a 15-foot setback above a base height of 60 feet. At the rear of the building will be an outdoor recreation area, which will be sandwiched between a rear yard on each side. The building will receive Enterprise Green Communities Certification and LEED Certification, and would be fully electric.

Proposed Development Site 1 would be within the proposed MIH area, which would require new developments to set aside 25-30% of the residential floor area for affordable housing at an average of 60-80% of AMI per MIH Options 1 or 2. The Applicant, however, is pursuing a 100% affordable residential development for all 114 dwelling units, utilizing the Mix and Match programs of NYC Housing Preservation and Development ("HPD"), and NYC Housing Development Corp ("HDC"), which provide tax exempt bond financing with 4% low income housing tax credits, and subsidized subordinate financing. The Mix and Match program requires that at least half of the units are affordable at under 60% of the area median income, and the other half of the units at under 120% of the AMI. The Mix and Match program also requires a homeless set aside for at least 15% of the residential units.

**Proposed Development Site 2 (Block 3705, Lots 9, 10, and 14)**

Proposed Development Site 2, located on New Jersey Avenue, between Liberty Avenue and Glenmore Avenue, will have a lot size of 14,850 SF, and would be developed with a 5-story mixed residential and community facility building of 65,824 GSF (51,034 ZSF; 3.44 FAR). There will be 10,767 GSF of parking at the cellar level (1,167 sf of this will include a parking ramp on the first floor), with 24 parking spaces in an enclosed parking garage with an entrance on New Jersey Avenue, 18,635 GSF (15,911 ZSF; 1.07 FAR) of community facility space, which includes a new 15,453 GSF Grace Baptist Church, and 3,182 GSF of general community facility space in the cellar, first floor and mezzanine level, and outdoor recreation space on the roof. Residential uses include 2,466 GSF in the cellar, 1,131 GSF first floor lobby, and 32,825 GSF on the upper floors. The total residential area will be 36,422 GSF (33,956 ZSF; 2.29 FAR), with 39 dwelling units that will be 100% affordable. The proposed building will have a height of 60 feet after a 15-foot setback on New Jersey Avenue, above a base height of 22 feet, 8 inches. The building will receive Enterprise Green Communities Certification and LEED Certification, and will be fully electric.

Proposed Development Site 2 would be within a proposed MIH area which would require new developments to set aside 25-30% of the residential floor area for affordable housing at an average of 60-80% of AMI per MIH Options 1 or 2. The Applicant, however, is pursuing a 100% affordable residential development for all 39 dwelling units, utilizing the Mix and Match programs of NYC Housing Preservation and Development ("HPD"), and NYC Housing Development Corp ("HDC"), which provide tax exempt bond financing with 4% low income housing tax credits, and subsidized subordinate financing. The Mix and Match program requires that at least half of the units are affordable at under 60% of the area median income, and the other half of the units at under 120% of the AMI. The Mix and Match program also requires a homeless set aside for at least 15% of the residential units.

## Actions Necessary to Facilitate the Project

The actions necessary to facilitate construction of the Proposed Development are as follows:

- A Zoning Map Amendment to rezone Block 3705, lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, partial 14, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 38, 39, 40, 42 and Block 3704, lots 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 35, and 36, from an R5B zoning district to an R6A zoning district; and

- A Zoning Text Amendment to amend the Brooklyn Community District 5, Map 17c in Appendix F: Inclusionary Housing Designated Area to establish the Project Area as an MIH Area.

Under the first action, the proposed R6A district would permit a maximum FAR of 3.0 for basic residential, and 3.60 for inclusionary residential uses. Above a minimum base height of 40 feet, the building must be set back by at least 10 feet on a wide street and 15 feet on a narrow street, before rising to its maximum height of 70 feet. Additionally, off-street parking requirements are 50% of the building's dwelling units (25% for IRHU).

Currently Grace Baptist Church, along with much of the project site and surround area, are in dilapidated condition and cannot be salvaged for their original purpose or use. Given the existing zoning regulations and bulk restraints, further investment in the Project Area and surrounding area is unlikely and will result in the lack of revitalization in the area. The rezoning, however,

would mitigate these issues by allowing greater density, which would foster development, particularly much needed affordable housing development, in the area. With respect to the over 100 year old Grace Baptist Church, an engineer's report completed in 2019 showed that that the church required almost $3 million of renovations, and that the bell tower was at risk for falling down (services have not been conducted the church for several years). The proposed rezoning will allow for a new church to be built, because without the additional residential units created with the proposed development, it is financially infeasible.

The second action would map a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area throughout the entirety of the Project area, by amending Appendix F of the Zoning Resolution. A zoning text amendment to Appendix F of the Zoning Resolution is requested to designate the Project Area an MIH area which requires permanently affordable housing be provided within residential use within the mapped "Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Areas" (MIH). The proposed action includes a zoning text amendment to establish an MIH for the Project Area. This action will require compliance with Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Option 1 or 2, which mandates a 25% to 30% set aside of floor area for affordable housing. This action will ensure that, as the demand for affordable housing in East New York increases, a certain portion of the newly developed units will remain affordable.

## Conclusion

The shortage of affordable housing in New York City is at a crisis point. Additional housing, at various affordability levels, must be constructed to meet existing and future market demand. This Proposed Development provides the City of New York, and East New York in particular, with an opportunity to both increase the much the amount of affordable housing.

The Applicant, Grace Housing Development Fund Co, Inc, proposes A Zoning Map Amendment to rezone Block 3705, lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, partial 14, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 38, 39, 40, 42 and Block 3704, lots 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 35, and 36, from an R5B zoning district (1.35 FAR) to an R6A zoning district (3.0 to 3.60 FAR), which will more than double the amount of affordable units the Applicant can created on the Proposed Development Area, from 70 units to over 150 much needed affordable housing units.