BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
110 EAST 138TH STREET/63 EXTERIOR STREET
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 260193 HAX and C 260190 ZSX
Non-ULURP APPLICATION NOs: N 260194 ZAX, N 260195 ZAX, N 260336 ZAX, and N 260191 ZCX

DOCKET DESCRIPTIONS

C 260193 HAX:

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)

1) pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:

   a. the designation of property located at 63 Exterior Street (Block 2323, Lots 28 and 29) and 110 East 138th Street (Block 2323, Lot 43), as an Urban Development Action Area; and

   b. an Urban Development Area Project for such area; and

2) pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of property located at 63 Exterior Street (Block 2323, Lots 28 and 29) to a developer to be selected by HPD;

to facilitate the development of two buildings containing approximately 537 income restricted units and commercial community facility, community facility, and publicly accessible open space, Borough of the Bronx, Community District 1.

C 260190 ZSX:

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development and East 138th Street JV Associates LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the grant of a special permit pursuant to Section 62-837 of the Zoning Resolution to modify the height and setback requirements of Section 23-432 (Height and setback requirements) and 23-433 (Standard setback regulations), the special height and setback regulations of Section 87-322 (Base heights and transition heights) and 87-323 (Tower provisions), and the waterfront yard requirements of Section 62-332 (Rear yards and waterfront yards), to facilitate the development of two new mixed buildings on property located at 63 Exterior Street and 110 East 138th Street (Block 2323, Lots 28, 29 & 43), in an R7-2/C2-4 District, within the

Special Harlem River Waterfront District (Core Subdistrict), Borough of the Bronx, Community District 1.

Related Applications: N 260194 ZAX, N 260195 ZAX, N 260336 ZAX, and N 260191 ZCX

BACKGROUND

This project is located in the Mott Haven neighborhood of Community District 1 in the South Bronx. Development of the surrounding community is largely manufacturing in nature, including light industrial uses, storage facilities and parking lots, in addition to numerous new medium to high density residential developments to the south and east of the Project Area. Transit options serving this area include the 4 and 5 trains at 138 St - Grand Concourse as well as the Bx1 and Bx 2 buses, in addition to the Bx33, which provides service to Upper Manhattan. The Project Area is served by numerous open spaces, including Deegan Rock, La Finca Del Sur Community Garden, and Mill Pond Park. Institutional, educational, and community facility uses in the area include Family Life Academy Charter School III, X427 Community School for Social Justice, KIPP NYC College Prep High School, Success Academy Charter School Bronx 1 Elementary, HOSTOS Community College, South Bronx Classical Charter School II, and NYC Health + Hospitals Lincoln Medical Center.

The proposed Project Area includes two City-owned lots on Block 2323, Lots 28 and 29 (63 Exterior Street), and one privately-owned parcel on Lot 43 (110 East 138th Street). The site is bounded by the north at East 138th Street and the Madison Avenue Bridge, Exterior Street and the Major Deegan Expressway to the east, the Park Avenue viaduct and bridge for the Metro North Railroad to the south, and the Harlem River to the west. The Proposed Development site consists of the same lots and is currently an R7-2 zoning district with a C2-4 commercial overlay.

The site is also located within the Special Harlem River Waterfront District (SHRWD), which modifies the underlying R7-2 regulations to account for the unique conditions on the Harlem River waterfront. As per the Special District, the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for zoning lots containing standard residential uses or such residential uses with community facility or commercial uses is 3.33. This maximum can be increased to 4.0 for the provision of qualifying affordable or senior housing. The Development Site includes part of Parcels 7 and 8 within the Core Subdistrict of the Special District. For Parcel 7 (110 East 138th Street – Block 2323, Lots 43 & 30) and Parcel 8 (63 Exterior Street – Block 2323, Lots 20, 25, 28, & 29) (Former Lot 28), the Special District requires that portions of a building within 50 feet of the Shore Public Walkway (SPW) have a max base height of 85 feet; portions of a building within 50 feet of the Major Deegan have a permitted base height between 15 feet and 105 feet; and portions of a building fronting East 138th Street have a permitted base height between 40 and 85 feet. Above the base heights, buildings are required to setback 15 feet from the SPW and 10 feet from a wide street. The street wall above the required setback, within 50 feet of the SPW, may rise up to a maximum transition height of 125 feet; all other street walls above the required setback may rise up to a maximum transition height of 155 feet. Zoning lots that have 130,000 square feet (sf) or less are permitted one tower and zoning lots with more than 130,000 sf are permitted to have two towers that are separated by a minimum of 50 feet. Towers must comply with setback requirements; not exceed

10,000 gross square feet ("GSF") for each story; have a maximum height of 300 feet or 400 feet when the zoning lot is larger than 100,000 sf; and for Parcel 7, the maximum width of towers facing the shoreline is 130 feet.

The proposed Project Site currently contains a moving and storage company (The Padded Wagon) and a one-story vacant commercial property. The Proposed Development would consist of a mix of senior and multi-family housing across two new buildings with a shared enclosed entryway, containing a total of approximately 377,630 ZSF (3.89 FAR) and approximately 537 units of affordable housing including two superintendents' units, in addition to residential amenity space, a small commercial space, an SPW, and approximately 8,209 square feet of additional publicly accessible open space. To allow for the maximum FAR of 4.0 within the Special Harlem River Waterfront District, floor area in excess of the maximum permitted base floor area (3.33 FAR) will be designated as qualifying affordable housing and subject to permanent affordability. The buildings would be built in one or two phases. One mixed-use building would be constructed at 110 East 138th Street ("Building 1"), and another building would be constructed at 63 Exterior Street ("Building 2"). Residents of both buildings would enter through the shared glass lobby along Exterior Street that would have 24/7 security and serve to promote an intergenerational community within the development. There would be a vehicle drop-off/pick-up area set back from the street in the sidewalk-widening area located in front of the lobby that would allow for the safe drop-off and pick-up for residents of the development.

Building 1 would range in heights between five- and 13-stories (inclusive of a basement level) and would contain a total of approximately 98,639 ZSF, including approximately 96,676 ZSF of residential floor area and approximately 1,963 ZSF of retail space located on the ground floor at the corner of East 138th Street and Exterior Street. The residential component of the building would include approximately 183 units of affordable housing as well as amenity space and social service space for the residents.

Building 2 would range in heights between eight- and 27-stories (inclusive of a basement level) and would contain a total of approximately 278,991 ZSF, including approximately 276,263 ZSF of residential floor area and 2,728 ZSF of community facility space on the ground floor along Exterior Street. The residential component of the building would include approximately 354 units of affordable housing and resident amenity spaces.

The Proposed Development will offer a total of 537 rental units of affordable housing (including 2 superintendent units), with the distribution as follows:

Unit Mix:	**Building 1 (Senior Building):**	**Building 2 (Family Building):**	**Total:**
Studios	130	71	201
1 BR	52	110	162
2 BR	--	134	134
3 BR	1*	39*	40
Grand total:	183	354	537

*Includes Superintendent's unit

For all rental units, the development offers income-restricted housing for Area Median Income (AMI) bands of 30%, 40%, 50%, 60% and 80% with rents ranging from $576 to $3,168. Additionally, a portion of units will be reserved for formerly homeless seniors.

Amenities to be provided in the Proposed Development include:

- Laundry rooms
- Bike rooms
- Fitness facilities
- Communal spaces
- Senior services
- Rooftop solar array

Amenities in the SPW available to the public include:

- A picnic area
- Exercise equipment
- Playground
- Dog run

The applicant is seeking the following Land Use Actions (with respective ULURP numbers):

- (C 260193 HAX – Lead Action) Designation of an Urban Development Action Area ("UDAA"), approval of an Urban Development Action Area Project ("UDAAP");
- Disposition of City-Owned Block 2323, Lots 28 & 29 ("Disposition Area");
- (C 260190 ZSX) Special Permit pursuant to ZR Section 62-837(a) to modify the Special Height and Setback Regulations in the Core Subdistrict of the Special Harlem River Waterfront District and Waterfront Yard Regulations;
- (N 260191 ZCX) Chairperson Certification pursuant to ZR Section 62-811 for waterfront public access and visual corridors;
- (N 260336 ZAX) Authorization pursuant to 62-822(a) to allow for the Waterfront Public Access Area to be accessible from a direct connection or upland connection along the shore public walkway at an interval that is greater than 600 feet;
- (N 260194 ZAX) Authorization pursuant to ZR Section 62-822(b) to reduce the minimum width of the screening buffer along the upland boundary of the shore public walkway, to allow the height of a fence or wall along the waterfront boundary of the shore public walkway to reach 10 feet;
- (N 260195 ZAX) Authorization pursuant to ZR Section 62-822(c) to phase building out the Shore Public Walkway; and
- (260192 LDX) Approval of a restrictive declaration in accordance with ZR Section 62-72, in connection with the Chairperson Certification pursuant to ZR Section 62-811.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application has been reviewed pursuant to SEQR and CEQR and received a Negative Declaration (25HPD040X). The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on June 15, 2026.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was convened by Bronx Community Board 1 on June 25, 2026. A vote was held with 11 votes against with 2 in favor and 3 abstentions, resulting in an unfavorable recommendation. The reasons cited by the Board for their recommendation included concerns regarding vehicular traffic on East 138th Street, affordability of the housing units, the lack of a guarantee of local hiring for the project during and post construction, and access to the waterfront for recreational use post construction.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

On September 15, 2026, a virtual public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President. Representatives of the applicant were in attendance and spoke in favor of this application. Two members of the public were in attendance and spoke in favor of the project. Some of the comments suggested adding a public restroom for the WPAA, to keep working on pedestrian safety improvements including access under the Madison Avenue Bridge, and to build to the highest resiliency and remediation standards.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

When evaluating this project, I considered its context, scale, community impact, and whether it would positively benefit the larger community. For this project, I believe there are a lot of positives that will help further the development of the South Bronx and will enhance the waterfront. Though I do have some conditions for my support.

1. The applicant must continue to work with NYC DOT on improving pedestrian safety at this intersection. This project sits next to the very busy intersection of 138th Street/Madison Avenue Bridge and Exterior Street, which is an access point to the Major Deegan Expressway. While the 138th Street bridge reconstruction should be wrapped up by the time this development opens, the fact remains that there will still be a very high volume of traffic in this area. Pedestrians walking to or from the nearby 4 and 5 trains would need to cross this intersection and we need to ensure it is safe. With this location being a direct connection to the Harlem River waterfront and bike paths, the non-vehicular traffic coming to the area is only expected to increase as the area continues to be built up. I am encouraged to see that Phipps and HPD have been working with DOT and have proposed numerous safety improvements, but these discussions must continue and should be modified to address overall safety needs, as needed.

   While not related to public safety, in further collaboration with DOT, it was noted in the public hearing that the applicant team is looking to create a mural along the wall of the Madison Avenue bridge. This is a great idea and I encourage that collaboration as a way to further enhance and beautify the area. For any mural or art on a public space, my recommendation is that it is done by a Bronx artist.

2. The applicant must ensure that enough resources are allocated to the maintenance, operations, and security of the Waterfront Public Access Area (WPAA). It is promising that the neighborhood will be receiving over 34,000 square feet of new public open space on the waterfront with a dog run, playground, exercise area, fishing pier, and picnic area. With this public area being isolated between two bridges, it could create some difficulties with maintenance of this space. We have seen such issues with other WPAAs in the area and are noting the concern so resources can be planned before any maintenance issues arise.

   I would further recommend the applicant team look into the possibility of adding a restroom that can be used by the public. There have been advancements in modular, pre-fabricated restroom technology that requires less upkeep and could be implemented at a minimal cost compared to a traditional restroom but at a great benefit to the community.

3. While I am pleased to see that the proposed family building will contain approximately 50% 2- and 3-bedroom, family-sized units, the unit mix of the senior building could be improved. Modern studio apartments are simply too small for our seniors who may be downsizing from larger apartments, and which provide very little extra space for guests or for those who require assistance from a home aide, for example. I would like to see a modification of the unit-mix for the senior building to have fewer studios and more 1-bedrooms to better accommodate seniors of all needs.

4. Lastly, given that this project is on the waterfront, the applicant must provide as much protection as possible from coastal flooding. While the site does sit on the higher grade portion of the site, measures should be taken to ensure protection for residents from any sea level increases or storm surges. This should include an evacuation plan at the ready in case of a major event.

Overall, this is a really great project located on a difficult waterfront site and I appreciate the applicant's creativity in designing the building to work for the larger community, in addition to the new development. The applicant is including a number of public amenities, such as the dog run, playground, exercise area, fishing pier, and picnic area within the WPAA, while taking on maintenance responsibilities, essentially creating a public waterfront park at no cost to the city. They have committed to meeting waterfront edge design guidelines, which are some of the highest standards of waterfront design. I also appreciate that the applicant team noted they would work with the city on the extension of the shore public walkway on the areas under the bridges to the north and south to make a complete waterfront connection as those sites get built out in the future.

The unit breakdown for the family building is also a plus — with nearly 50% of the units being 2- and 3-bedrooms, this provides much-needed family-sized units. Building amenities such as a glass shared-lobby creates a visually impressive entrance that also promotes intergenerational connections between the two buildings that creates community at a location that can feel isolated, being sandwiched between two bridges, a highway, and the Harlem River. In order to provide additional support for the older adults in the senior housing building, Phipps Neighborhoods will be managing the senior building which will provide activities for these residents while also providing a permanent shuttle service that will further connect these older adults to nearby neighborhood amenities. This shuttle has been accommodated by creating a pickup/dropoff point near the entrance that can be used for rideshare pickups and package or food deliveries while being

large enough to accommodate an ambulance or firetruck and not impacting traffic along the roadway. I want to recognize that this development will be the first affordable senior housing building that is built along the waterfront in The Bronx.

This project is incorporating a number of energy efficiency systems that I am quite pleased with, including the incorporation of solar and geothermal along with building to Passive House design standards which can create a significant energy reduction and cost savings for residents. As I have noted in previous recommendations, geothermal is an underutilized energy system that should be incorporated into more projects. If a project that abuts the waterfront can take advantage, then most sites in The Bronx should also have the capability of incorporating geothermal energy.

Additionally, this project is expected to create between 1,500 to 2,000 construction jobs and between 20 to 25 permanent jobs. These good-paying, sustainable jobs help New Yorkers and Bronx residents build pathways to the middle-class. I will continue to advocate for local hiring and job opportunities going to Bronx residents.

Finally, I appreciate the outreach that was done to get community input for this project from a very early point, my office was a part of the community advisory group and we were able to advocate for more family-units and active uses within the WPAA and the applicant team listened and incorporated many of these features. It is this type of early collaboration that allows us to start these conversations early enough to get real changes integrated and I hope other applicants follow a similar process when they are looking to develop projects of this scale.

This is a project that stands to bring 537 units of affordable housing for a range of income levels for both seniors and families while providing a number of public amenities and site improvements. This area has experienced a construction boom in recent years, yet these new buildings provide little to no affordability. This project will add some much needed affordable housing to the Mott Haven neighborhood. Therefore, I recommend approval of this application with the aforementioned conditions.

Vanessa L. Gibson
Bronx Borough President