



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

July 7, 2016

Carl Weisbrod  
Chair, City Planning Commission  
Department of City Planning  
120 Broadway, 31<sup>st</sup> Fl  
New York, NY 10271

Re: CEQR Lead Agency Designation  
CEQR Number: 16DME011M  
126<sup>th</sup> St Bus Depot Project  
2460 Second Avenue  
Block 1803, Lot 1  
Borough of Manhattan

**- By Electronic Mail Only -**

Dear Chair Weisbrod:

In accordance with Executive Order 91 of 1977, as amended, and the Rules of Procedure for City Environmental Quality Review found at Title 62, Chapter 5 of the Rules of the City of New York (CEQR), the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development proposes to assume the role of lead agency for the environmental review of the above-referenced project. This assumption of lead agency status is consistent with the underlying mandate of CEQR that the appropriate lead agency should be the agency “primarily responsible for carrying out, funding or approving an action” as well as with the criteria listed in Section 5-03(h) of the Rules of Procedure for CEQR. Likewise, it is consistent with the criteria established by the SEQRA regulations with respect to selection of the lead agency for an environmental review, as set forth in 6 NYCRR §617.6(b). This project is an Type I action (under 6 NYCRR 617.4(b)(9)) subject to environmental review under CEQR.

## **Project Description**

The New York City Economic Development Corporation, on behalf of the NYC Department Citywide Administrative Services, is proposing a series of land use actions (the “Proposed Project”, described below) to facilitate the redevelopment of a City-owned full block site in the East Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan. The Proposed Project is located at 2460 Second Avenue in Manhattan’s Community District 11. The project site consists of the block bounded by E. 127th Street to the north, First Avenue to the east, E. 126th Street to the south, and Second Avenue to the west. It includes all of the approximately 105,710-square-foot (sf) existing Block 1803, Lot 1, a City-owned property which since the 1940s has been occupied by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) 126<sup>th</sup> Street bus depot, as well as an adjoining approximately 9,792-sf bus parking area located immediately west of Lot 1. The MTA is in the process of vacating the bus depot, which has been operated pursuant to a lease, and returning it to the City.

## **Required Approvals**

It is anticipated the following actions would be necessary to facilitate the Proposed Project:

- A zoning map amendment (Zoning Sectional Map 6b) to change the zoning on the project site (Block 1803, Lot 1 and the adjacent demapping area) from the existing M1-2 light manufacturing district (high performance) to a C6-3 general central commercial district;
- A zoning text amendment to map the project site as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area in ZR Appendix F, pursuant to ZR 23-154;
- A change to the City Map to narrow a portion of Second Avenue from 174 feet to 125 feet and the conveyance of that area to the adjoining City-owned property (Block 1803, Lot 1) pursuant to § 4-105 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York; and
- Disposition of the project site (the City-owned Block 1803, Lot 1 and the adjacent demapping area) by the City of New York in accordance with the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), New York City Charter Section 197(c), and approval of the business terms of the sale of the disposition pursuant to Section 384(b)(4) of the New York City Charter.

The site is historically significant having once contained the historic Dutch Reformed Low Church of Harlem and its associated cemeteries. A recent archaeological investigation conducted in consultation with the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and members of the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force, uncovered disarticulated human remains confirming the likelihood that the site once contained a cemetery. Any development at the project site will require consultation with

LPC and others as appropriate such as the SHPO and the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force.

The proposed project is anticipated to result in a mixed-use development, including a mix of permanently affordable and middle income residential, commercial, and community facility uses and a memorial commemorating the Harlem African Burial Ground and its important role in the history of Harlem and New York City. The memorial component of the project would require approval from the NYC Public Design Commission.

Subject to ULURP approval, a Request for Proposals (RFP) soliciting proposals for development under the approvals would be issued. It is anticipated that the Proposed Project could stipulate location and programming elements of the Harlem African Burial Ground Memorial, including an outdoor area and an indoor cultural facility. In order to address the potential range of responses to the RFP, the environmental review will analyze a reasonable worst-case development scenario (RWCDS) that conservatively considers for each impact category the reasonable worst-case potential for environmental effects. While the discretionary approvals that comprise the Proposed Project have been defined, the specific development program and site plan under the Proposed Project would be dependent on the RFP response. Thus, pursuant to CEQR, a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) will be prepared that will consider the environmental impacts based on the RWCDS.

The RWCDS assumes the Proposed Project would result in approximately 655,215 gross square feet (gsf) of residential development (comprising approximately 730 DUs, of which 50 percent would be affordable to households earning at or below 80 percent Area Median Income); approximately 315,000 gsf of commercial uses (including retail and office uses); approximately 30,000 gsf of community facility uses (including a 15,000 gsf historical and cultural center as part of the memorial); approximately 146 accessory parking spaces (as required by zoning); and a minimum of approximately 18,000 sf of outdoor, unbuilt memorial space. It is anticipated that the proposed project would be completed by 2022.

Lastly, the Proposed Project would likely require the use of public financing for the development of permanently affordable housing. The selected private developer may seek public financing from New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development or the New York City Housing Development Corporation to facilitate the development of permanently affordable housing and/or the public financing by New York City Industrial Development Agency for economic development purposes. Depending on the public funding source for the affordable housing and economic development, review under SEQRA may be required, including review by the SHPO.

Please advise me by August 6, 2016 if you have questions or issues concerning the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development assuming lead agency status for this project. If I do not hear from you by this date, we will assume that you have no objections.

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Sincerely,



Nilda Mesa  
Assistant to the Mayor  
On behalf of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development

- c: Denise Pisani, New York City Mayor's Office of Sustainability
- Maria Torres-Springer, New York City Economic Development Corporation
- Hardy Adasko, New York City Economic Development Corporation
- Rob Holbrook, New York City Economic Development Corporation
- Robert Dobruskin, New York City Department of City Planning
- Olga Abinader, New York City Department of City Planning
- Aaron Werner, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development
- Naim Rasheed, New York City Department of Transportation
- Catherine Townsend, New York City Housing Development Corporation
- Rose Harvey, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
- Jeremy Parnes, Metropolitan Transit Authority, New York City Transit
- Dina Rybak, New York City Industrial Development Agency