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*Queens* **Tribune** **PRESS**

# Real Estate

## MARKETPLACE

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# Housing, Jobs, School Proposed for LIC Site

**BY TRONE DOWD** Editor

**A** 1.5 million-square-foot mixed-use development in Long Island City is bringing along promises of new housing, jobs and a school for the rapidly developing western Queens neighborhood.

The project is being handled by New York City's Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) in conjunction with TF Cornerstone (TFC), Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center (GMDC), C4Q and BJH Advisors.

The building will bring approximately 1,000 housing units to the Long Island City waterfront, 250 of which will be affordable units, as well as industrial, commercial, residential and educational space to the neighborhood. This will include a new 600-seat school, which will be fully funded by the city's School Construction Authority, as well as workforce training programs, 25,000 square feet of art space, more than an acre of open space and ground-floor retail. The site is also expected to bring 1,500 permanent jobs to the community.

The newly developed site could also provide space for new businesses and startups. In fact, the NYCEDC said that the development would contribute to Mayor Bill de Blasio's "New York Works" plan to create 100,000 well-paying jobs in innovative and industrial sectors throughout the city.

"Long Island City has emerged as one of the fastest-growing centers of our city's economy, especially when it comes to innovation and modern industrial jobs," NYCEDC President and CEO James Patchett said. "With this project, we are creating a first-

of-its-kind work-live-play structure, with affordable housing, incubators and space for cultural institutions. We're investing in the continued revitalization of the Long Island City waterfront and delivering on our commitment to create good middle-class jobs for New Yorkers."

In an effort to make good on protecting this investment, the building will feature 100,000 square feet of light industrial space, including 50,000 square feet of affordable workspace co-developed by GMDC. It will also have 400,000 square feet of commercial space, including pre-

built incubator spaces; education, training, incubation and economic opportunities; classroom space for workforce development and career training; and 80,000 square feet set aside primarily for startup office space.

Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer said that the development will help to bolster Long Island City's identity as a top spot for new industry and housing.

"This dynamic new development on the Queens waterfront will bring

new diverse assets to this community," Torres-Springer said. "The project will include critically needed affordable housing for an area that will undergo a major transformation."

And Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña said that new space allocated for schools is always beneficial.

"New schools are an incredible investment in our communities, and this state-of-the-art facility will provide hundreds of new seats for families in the area, while helping to alleviate overcrowding," Fariña said.

Construction is expected to wrap up in 2022.

## Nine-Floor Apartment Building Planned For Flushing

**BY JON CRONIN** Editor

**A** developer is planning to construct a nine-story residential building on 35th Avenue in Flushing.

Chuck Apelian, vice chairman of Community Board 7 and chairman of its planning committee, said that the original plan was to include retail space on the first floor, but the board told the developer, Flushing's Stemmax Realty, that the building would not be approved unless that component was eliminated.

Apelian said that there is plenty of shopping on Northern Boulevard near 35th Avenue and that Flushing needed more apartments.

The *Queens Tribune* reported in June that the building would have 93 apartments priced at 80 percent of the area median income and the property would include 52 parking



spaces. The building will have 30 percent affordable housing, in compliance with the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing rule signed into law in 2015.

The site is designed by Raymond Chan Architects and will have 111,312 square feet of space.

CB 7 approved the plan on June 12 and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz signed off on it on July 18.

"The height factor is—in a contextual zone—95 feet, so we're not getting a tower in the sky; we're get-

ting something that's going to fit in with the rest of the neighborhood," Apelian said at CB 7's June meeting. "And how many times do we get the opportunity to actually effectuate a change?"

The proposal has yet to go through the seven-month Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process, during which it will be reviewed by the Department of City Planning (DCP) and City Planning Commission (CPC), community boards, Borough Board, City Council and the mayor. No application has yet been submitted to the city's Department of Buildings.

"I don't expect them to break ground soon," said Apelian, who noted that the area has not yet been rezoned by the city in order to accommodate the size of a residential building.

The site is currently a one-story Benjamin Moore paint store and zoned as M-1 commercial.

According to YIMBY, the tentative completion date is in 2020.

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# Hotel Planned For Jackson Heights Sparks Concern

**BY ARIEL HERNANDEZ** Staff Writer

**A** seven-story residential hotel that is being planned for construction in Jackson Heights has raised concerns with local leaders, who say that there is little information available on what the community can expect at the site.

Plans for the 22-unit building, which will be located at 37-38 73rd Ave., have been filed by Faisal Development LLC owner Mohammad Aziz with the city's Department of Buildings. According to the plans, the building would be constructed as a residential hotel.

Currently, a two-story commercial building exists at the site. But according to plans filed with the city, the new building would allow guests to use the hotel as a place to stay as they search for permanent homes.

The narrow building would con-

tain seven floors, with five bedrooms on the third through sixth floors and two bedrooms on the seventh. The first floor would contain a lobby area, and a 1,900-square-foot community center would be located on the second floor. An outdoor recreational center would be built on the rooftop.

State Sen. Jose Peralta (D-Elmhurst) said he hopes that Aziz will seek input from Community Board 3 before beginning construction. He said that he wants to know what impact the hotel would have on the community's quality of life. He is also seeking information on the site's plans for extra garbage pickups, whether or not there would be extra street cleaning around the perimeter of the hotel and how the property would affect traffic in the area.

"Plans to construct a hotel on a small lot located in a very congested area of Jackson Heights has one too many unanswered questions, especially since the developer is describing the project as a residential hotel," said Peralta. "Since the area

## New Regulations Curb Real Estate Solicitations In Queens

**BY JAMES FARRELL** Staff Writer

**P**arts of Queens will be able to opt out of receiving real estate solicitations, state Sen. Tony Avella (D-Bayside) announced last week.

For Bay Terrace and parts of Auburndale, Bayside, College Point, Malba, Murray Hill, North Flushing and Whitestone, new Department of State (DOS) regulations will allow residents to file a cease-and-desist notice that would prevent real estate brokers from soliciting the sale of residents' houses.

In 1989, the state legislature designated Queens as a "cease and desist" zone, according to Avella. But the size of the zone was scaled

back in 2009 and the zone itself was removed after the DOS regulations expired in 2014. According to Avella, constituents often complained about repeated solicitations from real estate agents leaving notices, making phone calls or knocking on doors to inquire about selling residents' houses.

"They feel harassed," Avella said of some constituents who received repeated solicitations despite not wanting to sell their houses.

In 2016, DOS held several public hearings in Queens after Avella raised complaints. The meetings attracted spirited debate at the time, with many residents and civic activists describing harassment at the hands of realtors, and a large number of realtors defending the solicitation practice. The new regulations are DOS's response to the testimonies at those hearings.

The new DOS regulations are not an all-encompassing ban on solici-

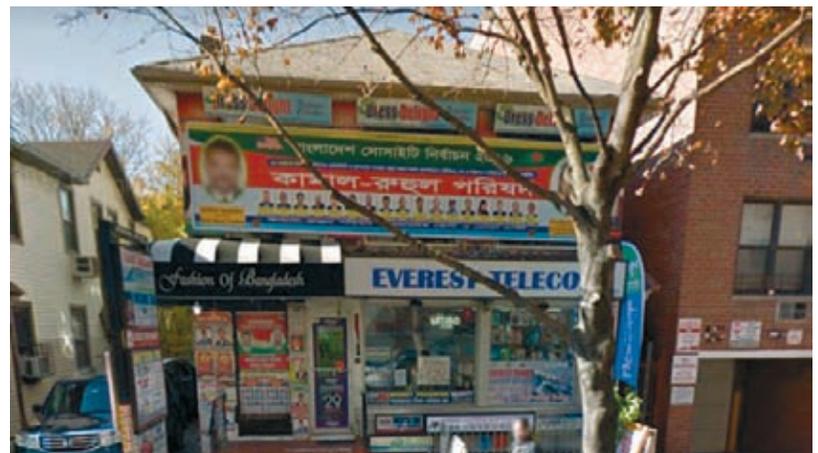


PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE MAPS

*The two-story building at 37-38 73rd Ave., which is projected to become a seven-story hotel*

already has limited public services available, bringing more people into the community will put an extra burden on these limited resources. It is my hope the developer seeks input from the community board and community-based organizations to study if a seven-story, 22-unit hotel in this overcrowded area is needed."

Faisal Development LLC also owns the two-story building that is currently located on the lot. The developer has proposed the construction of the hotel since the current building is in need of repair and is losing money.

Assemblyman Francisco Moya (D-Jackson Heights) announced on Tuesday that he opposes the project, and called on the city not to approve the plans. He said that the community has been kept in the dark in regard to plans for the site, and cited the fact that Aziz had formerly pleaded guilty to charges of partaking in a pay-to-play scheme in Brooklyn in 2012.

Aziz had been caught attempting to give \$5,000 in cash to former Brooklyn Councilwoman Darlene

Mealy in exchange for help obtaining a contract through the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development. He did not serve jail time, but agreed to pay a \$1,000 fine.

"We do not repair New York's image as a swamp of political corruption by welcoming the same criminals to return back into the community to continue their business as usual," said Moya. "Mr. Aziz pleaded guilty for the one pay-to play scheme he was caught in the act for. It is unknown whether there were more instances of corruption beforehand and it is unknown whether there will be more in the future, but we do know he has the character for that kind of behavior. Jackson Heights does not welcome Mr. Aziz's new hotel because we do not have trust in his integrity."

Although he has filed plans with the Department of Buildings, the project has not yet been approved. Aziz said that he hopes the hotel will be in operation by 2019.

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tations, Avella said. Residents must register to be put on a cease-and-desist list that will indicate to real estate agents their unwillingness to be solicited.

"It still requires a property owner to be proactive and register," Avella said. Additionally, Avella said, the cease-and-desist zone does not encompass certain neighborhoods in Queens that have had complaints about excessive solicitation in the past, such as Holliswood, Bellerose and Jamaica Estates.

"We're going to continue to work on these other neighborhoods," Avella said.

The new regulations will undergo a 45-day public comment period that began on July 26.

Bill Gans, an associate broker with Keller Williams Realty who had spoken out in defense of solicitations at one of the 2016 public hearings, said that he is supportive of the

regulations as long as it is an opt-out program.

"My opinion is an American citizen has a right to choose whether they're approached or not," he said.

His concern when he came out to the meeting in 2016 was that the practice of soliciting business was being portrayed in an overly negative light, and that it could be banned completely.

"Politicians do it," he said of the practice. "Religious groups do it, foundations do it and Jesus did it."

Avella said he wouldn't be surprised if the real estate industry sued over the new regulations, but that he felt that there was no need for concern over how they could affect business.

"There are still plenty enough people that will not sign on to the list that they can solicit," he said.

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