



OFFICE OF THE

MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

1 Centre Street, 19th floor, New York, NY 10007
(212) 669-8300 p (212) 669-4306 f

431 West 125th Street, New York, NY 10027
(212) 531-1609 p (212) 531-4615 f

www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov

August 8, 2025

Recommendation on ULURP Application Nos. C250300ZMM and N250301ZRM – MTA 125th and Lexington Rezoning By Metropolitan Transportation Authority

PROPOSED ACTION

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is seeking zoning map and text amendments to enable a transit-oriented, mixed-use development above the planned 125th Street terminal station of the Second Avenue Subway in East Harlem. The zoning map amendment would change a portion of an existing C4-4D zoning district within the Special 125th Street District and Special Transit Land Use District in the Rezoning Area, to a C6-11 district. The requested actions would facilitate up to 684 new units of housing including up to 171 income-restricted units. To facilitate the proposed rezoning, the MTA is recommending the following actions:

Zoning Map Amendment:

- a. Changing the zoning of the Rezoning Area (Block 1773, Lots 20, 27, and 33) from C4-4D to C6-11 to allow for increased residential and commercial density

Zoning Text Amendments:

- a. Creating a new Subdistrict B within the Special 125th Street District
- b. Mapping a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Program Area (Options 1 and 3) over the Rezoning Area to require affordable housing
- c. Modifying non-residential floor area requirements, base height limits, and height/setback rules to harmonize with the adjacent zoning (especially the Park Avenue Hub Subdistrict)
- d. Reducing or eliminating non-residential FAR requirements for parcels containing MTA transit facilities

BACKGROUND

East Harlem has long faced transit disinvestment, and the MTA's proposal for this site seek to both address this inequity and help ease New York City's ongoing housing crisis. The proposed development would support these goals by anchoring the eastern entrance of the new station at

Nos. C250300ZMM and N250301ZRM

East 125th Street and Lexington Avenue and generating up to 684 new housing units, including 171 affordable units. This crucial transit hub has been historically underserved following the removal of the Second Avenue Elevated Line in 1940. Phase II of the Second Avenue Subway will significantly improve transit access in the area with three new stations at East 106th, 116th, and 125th Streets. These stations are projected to serve over 300,000 riders daily.

The MTA has acquired several properties along the 125th Street corridor to build new station entrances, ventilation facilities, and underground tunnel infrastructure. The proposed zoning actions would enable residential development on Block 1773, Lot 20, a site the MTA already owns. Additionally, the proposal maps a new Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area and establishes Subdistrict B within the Special 125th Street District to allow for greater density while preserving the neighborhood's urban character.

This proposal is part of a broader, coordinated effort between city and state agencies to activate publicly controlled sites for housing, especially in high-transit areas, to better meet the evolving needs of residents. These actions align with the goals of the “City of Yes for Housing Opportunity” initiative and build on the planning foundation laid by previous efforts, including the Harlem-East Harlem Urban Renewal Plan, the creation of the Special 125th Street District, and the East Harlem Corridors rezoning.

Proposed Development

The proposed development would bring a high-density, mixed-use building to Lot 20 of Block 1773, a site currently owned by the MTA. Primarily residential in nature, the project would include up to 684 dwelling units, with approximately 25 percent or 171 units intentional set aside as income-restricted under Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Options 1 or 3. In total, the building would span roughly 543,420 square feet of zoning floor area, with 528,786 square feet dedicated to residential use and 14,634 square feet reserved for retail. The structure would have a base height of approximately 125 feet. The residential tower designed to sit on top of it would be between 405 and 535 feet or roughly 40 to 53 stories. The design is intended to carefully balance density with contextual sensitivity, aligning with local height guidelines while integrating critical MTA infrastructure on-site.

The ground floor of the proposed development would include a new entrance to the Second Avenue Subway, along with retail spaces designed to activate both East 125th and East 124th Streets. On East 124th Street, the site would also feature a 160-foot-tall ventilation building to support subway fire safety and climate control systems. To maintain a vibrant commercial streetscape, retail space would be incorporated into the base of this structure as well.

Nos. C250300ZMM and N250301ZRM

Due to the site's constrained and irregular footprint, the proposal includes zoning text amendments to modify floor area and base height regulations. Specifically, the application seeks to rezone the site from a C4-4D district to a C6-11 district, within a newly designated Subdistrict B of the Special 125th Street District. This change would allow for a higher floor area ratio (FAR), increased building height, and the removal of non-residential use minimums on lots containing transit infrastructure.

Area Context

The proposed development site is located within Manhattan Community District 11 in East Harlem, at the intersection of Lexington Avenue, East 125th Street, and Third Avenue. The surrounding area features a diverse and evolving mix of uses, including older tenement housing, recent high-rise developments, and long-vacant parcels such as the former Pathmark grocery site. Over the past decade, significant public and private investments have transformed the area, with projects like Harlem Center, Gotham Plaza, and One East Harlem. These changes are part of the city's long-standing vision for East 125th Street as a central artery of Harlem's cultural and economic life.

The neighborhood is well connected by transit, including the 4, 5, and 6 subway lines at Lexington Avenue and 125th Street, the Metro-North Harlem Line at Park Avenue, and numerous bus routes. The site falls within the City's Inner Transit Zone, where off-street parking requirements are waived to promote higher-density development near transit hubs. Zoning nearby includes high-density commercial and mixed-use districts such as C6-4, C4-7, and R10 equivalents, along with mid-density zones like R7-2 to the east and south. Community facilities, including public schools, senior centers, gardens, health clinics, and cultural sites, are within walking distance. Historic and civic landmarks like the Fire Hook and Ladder 14 Building, the Mount Morris Bank Building, and the New York Public Library's 125th Street Branch are nearby. Parks such as Harlem River Park, Carver Community Garden, and Marcus Garvey Park enhance neighborhood livability. The proposed development offers an opportunity to integrate new housing and retail into this vibrant, transit-rich part of Manhattan.

COMMUNITY BOARD RESOLUTION

Manhattan Community Board 11 ("CB 11") held a public hearing on the project on July 9, 2025. On July 29, 2025, CB 11 voted 37 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstentions to recommend approval of the project with the following conditions:

1. The Land Use Application be adjusted from a zoning map amendment from C4-4D (current) to C6-11 (proposed), to C4-4D (current) to C4-11 (revised).

Nos. C250300ZMM and N250301ZRM

2. The MTA include in its Requests for Proposals (RFP) for a joint mixed-use residential development (RFP) a priority for proposals that include additional affordable housing units and deeper affordability levels above the requirements of MIH and where at least 75% of the MIH units are two-bedrooms or greater, and activate all available tax credits for affordable housing as possible for maximized affordability.
3. The MTA include in the RFP a priority for proposals that include additional affordable housing units and deeper affordability levels above the requirements of MIH and where at least 75% of the MIH units are two-bedrooms or greater and activate all available tax credits for affordable housing as possible for maximized affordability.
4. The MTA include in the RFP a requirement for the future developer to commit to proactively establish partnerships with local workforce development organizations to source qualified residents of CD11 for employment opportunities created by all phases of the Proposed Development.
5. The MTA include in the RFP a requirement for the future developer to commit to presenting the proposed project in the Schematic Design phase or earlier to the CB11 Land Use, Landmarks and Planning committee, despite its non-requirement for what would eventually be considered as-of-right development, allowing for the Community Board and CD11 residents to weigh in on the design and development of the project site.
6. The MTA include in the RFP a requirement for the future developer to commit to providing a community benefits agreement (“CBA”).
7. The MTA is required to utilize all funding generated from the lease of this property to go directly to the Phase II Second Avenue Subway work and maintenance, excluding any original purchase costs.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS

The MTA's proposal for transit-oriented development at the 125th Street Second Avenue Subway station represents a critical opportunity to address Manhattan's severe housing crisis while providing needed transit expansion, and I offer my strong support for this project. New York City desperately needs housing at all income levels, and this project's commitment to 684 new units, including 171 affordable units, is a meaningful contribution to our housing supply. However, given the severity of our affordability crisis and the unique opportunity presented by this publicly controlled site, I urge the MTA to work collaboratively with City and State agencies to identify additional sources of subsidy that would allow for a significant increase in the proposed number of affordable units and achieve deeper levels of affordability beyond the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing requirements.

Public land must be leveraged for the greatest public good while balancing critical infrastructure needs, and this project presents an ideal opportunity to exemplify how transit agencies can fulfill

Nos. C250300ZMM and N250301ZRM

their operational requirements while addressing broader community needs. I fully support the thoughtful recommendations put forward by Manhattan Community Board 11, which would enhance the project's community benefit. Specifically, the MTA should include in its Request for Proposals a priority for proposals that provide additional affordable housing units and deeper affordability levels above MIH requirements, with at least 75% of the affordable units being two-bedrooms or greater to accommodate families. The RFP should also require activation of all available tax credits to maximize affordability, mandate that the future developer establish partnerships with local workforce development organizations to source qualified local residents for employment opportunities throughout all phases of development, and require the developer to present the proposed project to the Community Board 11 Land Use, Landmarks and Planning committee during the Schematic Design phase or earlier, to ensure meaningful community input on the design and development process.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, I recommend **approval** of ULURP Application Nos. C250300ZMM and N250301ZRM with the following conditions:

1. Work with City and State agencies to identify additional subsidy sources to increase the number of affordable units beyond the proposed 171 units and deepen affordability levels beyond MIH requirements.
2. Include in its Request for Proposals a priority for proposals that provide additional affordable housing units and deeper affordability levels above MIH requirements, with at least 75% of the affordable units being two-bedrooms or greater and activate all available tax credits to maximize affordability.
3. Require the future developer to establish partnerships with local workforce development organizations to source qualified Community District 11 residents for employment opportunities throughout all phases of development.
4. Require the developer to present the proposed project to the Community Board 11 Land Use, Landmarks and Planning committee during the Schematic Design phase or earlier, ensuring meaningful community input on the design and development process.



Mark Levine

Manhattan Borough President