Brooklyn Borough President Recommendation
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
22 Reade Street, New York, NY 10007
calendaroffice@planning.nyc.gov

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Return this completed form with any attachments to the Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E at the above address.
2. Send one copy with any attachments to the applicant’s representatives as indicated on the Notice of Certification.

APPLICATION
EBENEZER PLAZA – 170189 ZMK AND 170190 ZRK

In the matter of the applications submitted by Brownsville Linden Plaza, LLC, pursuant to Section 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter, seeking zoning map and zoning text amendments for three blocks bounded by Hegeman Avenue, New Lots Avenue, Mother Gaston Boulevard, and Powell Street, in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn Community District 16 (CD 16). The zoning map amendment would rezone the existing M1-1 district to R7A and R7D districts, with a C2-4 overlay, and the zoning text amendment would designate the blocks as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area. Such actions would facilitate two mixed-use developments, consisting of a total of 406,918 square feet of residential floor area, 27,185 square feet of commercial retail floor area, and 34,481 square feet of community facility floor area, for use by the Church of God of East Flatbush. Together, the developments will include 531 affordable dwelling units, of which 315 units will be set aside for households earning up to 60 percent of area median income (AMI) and 216 units will be set aside for households earning up to 80 percent of AMI.

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY DISTRICT NO. 16
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

RECOMMENDATION

☐ APPROVE
☒ APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

☐ DISAPPROVE
☐ DISAPPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

SEE ATTACHED

Brooklyn Borough President

Eliot L. Alem

June 2, 2017

DATE
RECOMMENDATION FOR: EBENEZER PLAZA – 170189 ZMK AND 170190 ZRK

The applications submitted by Brownsville Linden Plaza, LLC, pursuant to Section 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter, seek zoning map and zoning text amendments for three blocks bounded by Hegeman Avenue, New Lots Avenue, Mother Gaston Boulevard, and Powell Street, in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn Community District 16 (CD 16). The zoning map amendment would rezone the existing M1-1 district to R7A and R7D districts, with a C2-4 overlay, and the zoning text amendment would designate the blocks as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area. Such actions would facilitate two mixed-use developments, consisting of a total of 406,918 square feet of residential floor area, 27,185 square feet of commercial retail floor area, and 34,481 square feet of community facility floor area, for use by the Church of God of East Flatbush. Together, the developments will include 531 affordable dwelling units, of which 315 units will be set aside for households earning up to 60 percent of area median income (AMI) and 216 units will be set aside for households earning up to 80 percent of AMI.

On May 3, 2017, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams held a public hearing on this item. There were no speakers on this item.

In response to Borough President Adams’ inquiry to clarify details with regard to the affordable housing, the representative stated that the full regulatory agreement has not yet been negotiated with the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) but it is anticipated that the affordability will be in place for at least 60 years. In the first phase of the project, approximately 20 percent of the units will use HPD’s Our Space Initiative, which targets the formerly homeless working population, and includes six studios, 37 one-bedrooms, nine two-bedrooms, and 10 three-bedrooms. The rents for Our Space Initiative units have not yet been released for 2017 but are usually between 10 and 27 percent of AMI, and will run currently with the other HPD programs set in place. Additionally, initial transitional services will be provided for such residents. The 50 percent community preference will be spread equally across each program for each phase of the project.

In response to Borough President Adams’ inquiry to clarify the marketing strategies for the tenant selection process, the applicant stated that a management company has been identified and will follow the guidelines and regulations set by HPD regarding utilizing the Housing Connect program through the lottery system. Additionally, the Church of God of East Flatbush has a subsidiary non-profit, the Hope Center Development Corporation, committed to educating both Brownsville and East Flatbush residents on financial literacy and housing lottery.

In response to Borough President Adams’ policy of providing more family-sized affordable housing units, the applicant stated the current unit mix is the result of conversations with Brooklyn Community Board 16 (CB 16), which voiced the need for more family-sized units from the initial proposal. The current unit mix provides the greatest number of such units as is financially feasible utilizing the proposed programs. The applicant stated that HPD guidelines do not allow for mixing the terms sheets for such programs as the Extremely Low and Low-Income Affordability (ELLA) and the Senior Affordable Rental Apartments (SARA). The applicant is open to continued conversations with HPD regarding the reworking of the proposed unit mix and providing affordable housing units for seniors.

In response to Borough President Adams’ inquiry regarding the inclusion of a Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) supermarket and local non-profit organizations in the ground-floor spaces, the applicant’s representative stated that the developer initially reached out to a couple of supermarkets. However, in accordance with the FRESH program floor area ratio (FAR) bonus, if the grocer was to vacate the building, the developer would lose the Certificate of
Occupancy for the units affected. The representative stated that the conversations are not off the table and they will continue discussing any potential future opportunities for a FRESH supermarket. Additionally, the developer has already reached out to Made in Brownsville (MiB) and the Melting Pot Foundation regarding utilizing the ground floor retail space.

In response to Borough President Adams’ concerns regarding pedestrian safety along Hegeman Avenue, between Linden and Mother Gaston boulevards, the representative acknowledged that this is in fact a dangerous intersection as cars merging off Linden Boulevard are traveling at high speeds. However, the traffic study performed as part of the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) did not reveal any significant impacts. The applicant is open to working with the office of Borough President Adams and the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding any potential efforts to create a safer pedestrian experience along this stretch of Hegeman Avenue.

In response to Borough President Adams’ policy of promoting the use of renewable and sustainable energy resources and promoting practices to retain stormwater runoff, the applicant’s representative stated that the development will include white roofs. The representative stated that a solar study revealed that the layout of the proposed roofs and the natural orientation of the buildings will not provide a sufficient return on investment, thus the developer has decided not to incorporate solar panels. The representative also stated that stormwater retention techniques will be incorporated throughout the development, including the landscaped areas, which will contain permeable pavers and other sustainable techniques. While Passive House design was considered for this development, it was not deemed feasible. However, the applicant is willing to explore the idea of Passive House design for the second phase of the development.

In response to Borough President Adams’ policy of maximizing job opportunities for Brooklynites and procuring supplies locally through the inclusion of Local Business Enterprises (LBE) and Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE), the applicant stated that they are working with several non-profit organizations in order to ensure the participation of the aforementioned enterprises. The applicant will also be utilizing the New York City Hiring Program, which has a mandated participation of 30 percent of LBEs and MWBEs. The applicant also stated that they have already started conversations with New York State Chapter of the National Association of Minority Contractors and other local organizations. Additionally, demolition of the existing conditions on the site is already slated to begin within the next couple of months, utilizing Brooklyn-based minority- and veteran-owned business.

**Consideration**

CB 16 approved this application without conditions.

The proposed land use actions seek to transform three blocks bounded between Hegeman and New Lots avenues, Mother Gaston Boulevard, and Powell Street, into a vibrant mixed-use area by adding population density and a house of worship, while also creating retail opportunities. The Ebenezer Plaza development will consist of seven-, nine-, and 11-story mixed-use buildings with a total of 531 affordable housing rental units, ground floor retail, and space for a house of worship.

Ebenezer Plaza would occupy two eastern blocks of the three blocks containing the rezoning area, west of Christopher Avenue, now zoned to accommodate light manufacturing use. Most recent uses include one light manufacturing business, a mix of auto repair and sales lots, and limited local retail uses.

The developer would be utilizing a combination of HPD programs to finance the construction of the proposed development. HPD’s ELLA program will be used for the 100 percent affordable housing development of the block bounded by Hegeman, New Lots, and Sackman avenues, and Powell
Street, with all units affordable to households earning up to 60 percent of AMI. HPD's Mix and Match (M²) program will be used to finance the construction of the 100 percent affordable housing development on the block bounded by Christopher, Hegeman, New Lots, and Sackman avenues, with all units at low-income rents affordable to households earning up to 80 percent of AMI.

Pursuant to New York City Zoning Resolution (ZR) Appendix I, there is no requirement for on-site parking due to the project's 100 percent affordability, as these blocks are located within the Transit Zone, with close proximity to the L 14th Street – Canarsie Local line's New Lots Avenue station located approximately one-quarter mile to the east of the development site at Van Sinderen Avenue. In addition, there are multiple public transit options in the area including the B8 line along Linden Boulevard, the B15 and B35 bus lines along Hegeman Avenue, and the B60 line along Rockaway Avenue.

The proposed development is also located within a FRESH program area that provides discretionary tax and zoning incentives.

Borough President Adams supports development that addresses the City's affordable housing objectives by facilitating development of underutilized land for productive uses that address the City's need for additional affordable housing. He supports facilitating such development through the mapping of height-based zoning districts as a means to promote certainty within the host community of how many stories would be permitted.

Borough President Adams supports rezoning when paired with the ZR’s MIH program as a means to achieve permanently affordable housing units. The affordability options of the MIH program provide a range of opportunities to address the need for housing that serves a broad range of diverse incomes, consistent with Borough President Adams’ objectives to provide affordable housing to households through various income band targets.

Borough President Adams believes that there are limited and unique circumstances when it is appropriate to rezone manufacturing-zoned blocks. Such blocks must be located outside of the designated Industrial Business Zones (IBZ) and existing and/or recent land use should generally exclude those uses that require a manufacturing zoning district designation. The existing context should be adjacent to residential development and uses that are supportive of the residential community. In addition, such resulting development must further Borough President Adams' policies to promote housing affordability across multiple income tiers. With this proposed zoning map amendment, no sections of these blocks are located within or adjacent to an IBZ. The existing and/or recent uses are/were primarily automotive-related that would conform with a C8 zoning district designation. Residential use would be established in a manner that would better connect the Brownsville Recreation Center to the residential core of the Brownsville community. The predominant residential use within Ebenezer Plaza is compatible with the prevailing residential character of the area north of New Lots Avenue and west of Mother Gaston Boulevard. The area is characterized by two-story, attached, single-family homes developed under the Nehemiah Program in the 1980s; community gardens, and the Plaza Residences with 385 units of affordable housing in three six-story buildings built in the 1960s. The proposed development would provide housing opportunities to a diverse range of household incomes to apply for apartments through the affordable housing lottery.

Brooklyn is one of the fastest growing communities in the New York metropolitan area and the ongoing Brooklyn renaissance has ushered in extraordinary changes that were virtually unimaginable even a decade ago. Unfortunately, Brooklyn's success has led to the displacement of longtime residents who can no longer afford to live in their own neighborhoods. Borough President Adams is committed to addressing the borough's affordable housing crisis through creation and preservation of much-needed affordable housing units for very low- to middle-income Brooklynites.
The rezoning would be consistent with Mayor Bill de Blasio’s goal of achieving 200,000 affordable housing units over the next decade, according to “Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan,” through the development of affordable and supportive housing for the city’s most vulnerable residents. In addition, the proposed rezoning for the Ebenezer Plaza site is a result of Borough President Adams’ Faith-Based Development Initiative, which works to harness the power of faith-based institutions in Brooklyn, widely known as the “Borough of Churches,” to help solve the challenge of housing affordability.

Borough President Adams’ Faith-Based Development Initiative connects local houses of worship with information and resources to explore opportunities for developing their properties to create affordable housing and other community benefits. The Church of God of East Flatbush is one of many faith-based organizations in the borough that, in this location, would have air rights where affordable housing can be developed pursuant to the proposed rezoning.

It is Borough President Adams’ policy to support the development of affordable housing and seek for such housing to remain “affordable forever,” wherever feasible. This development would result in some permanent affordable housing according to MIH as well as units remaining affordable for at least 30 years of the regulatory agreement. Somewhere between 25 and 30 percent of the residential unit zoning floor area is intended to be constructed pursuant to MIH program, with its generated bonus floor area. In the first phase of development, this floor area would include a portion that would be permanently affordable to households earning 40 percent of AMI, with an average rent roll affordable to households earning 60 percent of AMI. For the second phase, the average rent roll would be 80 percent of AMI. Development adhering to the MIH program is consistent with Borough President Adams’ policy for affordable housing development to remain permanently affordable. For the remaining residential floor area, there is no formal commitment that would guarantee the duration of affordability for these housing units. As tenants move out after the expiration of such regulatory agreement, those units would no longer be a mandated affordable housing resource. Borough President Adams understands that the Church of God of East Flatbush would have discretion at that point to continue to maximize affordable housing opportunities or address other priorities through these non-MIH units.

Borough President Adams is generally supportive of the proposed development. He does believe that there are opportunities to improve the proposal while furthering his policies as well as improve the immediate surroundings. Borough President Adams has interest in advancing his policies regarding the appropriateness of the unit bedroom mix; enhancing opportunities for community preference, including access to these units for homeless families and improving affordability eligibility standards; accommodating community use, access to fresh food and jobs; advancing pedestrian safety measures; advancing resilient energy and sustainable and stormwater management policies; improving train station lighting, and improving transportation options.

**Achieving a Family-Sized Affordable Housing Unit Mix**

According to the application documents, Ebenezer Plaza would consist of approximately nine percent studio apartments, 60 percent one-bedroom apartments, 15 percent two-bedroom apartments, and 16 percent three-bedroom apartments. A recent report identified that the rent-burdened households, which typically represent those households applying to the City’s affordable housing lotteries, are more likely to require family-sized unit types. Therefore, Borough President Adams is concerned that the mix of the proposed affordable housing units would not adequately reflect the unique needs of CD 16’s low- to middle-income rent-burdened communities. Borough President Adams believes that right-sizing the bedroom distribution is more important than maximizing the number of affordable housing units.
Borough President Adams believes that discretionary land use actions are appropriate opportunities to advance policies that constrain what would otherwise be permitted as-of-right. He believes that Ebenezer Plaza presents an opportunity to achieve more family-sized units for the non-elderly and believes that a minimum threshold for non-independent residences for senior housing to accommodate family-sized apartments must be significantly increased, particularly for the HPD ELLA-financed units. Borough President Adams ideally supports having at least 50 percent of two- or more bedroom affordable housing units and at least 75 percent of one- or more bedroom affordable housing units, consistent with zoning text for Inclusionary Housing floor area, pursuant to ZR 23-96(c)(1)(ii).

During the public hearing on May 3, 2017, the developer stated that the existing bedroom mix reflects conversations with representatives of CB 16 in which it was urged to reduce the number of studio units. As a solution, the developer also significantly reduced the number of two- and three-bedroom units. According to the developer, the presented unit mix provides the greatest number of such units as is financially feasible utilizing the proposed HPD programs.

Borough President Adams believes that the residential floor area should be designed to provide for an increase in the number of two- and three-bedroom dwelling units as a means to accommodate a greater percentage of families with children, ranging from rents meant to accommodate households qualifying at 30, 40, 50, and 60 percent AMI. In addition, he believes that such floor area should have an expanded number of studio units with rents at 30, 40, and 50 percent AMI, as a means to accommodate a greater percentage of senior households, including formerly homeless seniors according to HPD’s Our Space Initiative.

HPD’s Our Space Initiative funds the new construction of rental units affordable to formerly homeless households whose incomes are at or below 30 percent of AMI. Homeless referrals to Ebenezer Plaza must come from HPD and rents will be underwritten based on public assistance shelter allowance. The Our Space Initiative subsidy is in addition to the HPD funding available through HPD New Construction Finance programs.

Therefore, Borough President Adams seeks that HPD provide a commitment in writing to the City Council to the extent that it would work with the developer to enable the dwelling units financed by the ELLA program, to provide as near to 50 percent two- and three-bedroom units, and to enable more studio units at 30, 40, 50, and 60 percent AMI, as feasible.

**Community Preference: Proximity to Community District Boundary**

City local preference policy is at times unfair to community residents who live just beyond the border of a community district. Given that these development sites are near the border shared with CD 5, HPD should extend the local preference to the boundaries, such as extending out through the ZIP code. Residents living in nearby blocks, just within CD 5, are also in need of quality affordable housing, especially considering the local subway station is shared by residents of both community districts, making the development apparent to residents of both neighborhoods.

This is particularly important given that the residential neighborhoods of Brownsville and East New York are inclusive of small buildings that are not subject to rent protection laws. In considering the potential for direct and indirect displacement due to investment in the context of the East New York Rezoning (which includes both CDs 5 and 16), Borough President Adams believes this development has potential to lend itself as a relocation resource. Therefore, prior to the vote of the City Council, HPD should memorialize in the financing regulatory agreement between the developer and HPD that local preference would be given for community residents of both CDs 5 and 16.
Enhancing Access to Fresh Food

It is one of Borough President Adams’ policies to review all appropriate land use applications to determine whether it is appropriate to include a supermarket within the plans. He is concerned with the limited access to affordable fresh food stores in many neighborhoods. In order for all of Brooklyn to flourish, it is imperative that the borough’s residents have an adequate supply of grocery stores and supermarkets in their neighborhoods so as to access fresh and affordable foods. Access to healthy food options, whether creating more options and/or maintaining access to healthy food options has been a top priority for Borough President Adams.

The Brownsville community, a designated food desert, is an area underserved by fresh, quality food options. In response, the ZR recently established FRESH program incentives and the City has financing available through its FRESH initiative. The location of this site makes it eligible for these financing and zoning initiatives and its proposed retail footprint provides the opportunity for supermarket use to be established as part of the development of this site.

Borough President Adams commends the developer’s stated interest to pursue a supermarket operator as a tenant. Securing such a tenant would greatly improve fresh food access in the neighborhood. Subsequent to the hearing, the office of Borough President Adams provided the developer with contacts of those who might be interested in operating a supermarket as part of this development. Borough President Adams believes that though the developer is not in a position to utilize the ZR’s FRESH incentives, there would be an opportunity for a supermarket tenant to utilize the financing available through the FRESH initiative. He believes that it is appropriate to memorialize the developer’s intent to seek a supermarket operation in a manner consistent with the FRESH program as part of the HPD financing regulatory agreement.

Therefore, prior to the City Council vote, HPD should memorialize in the financing regulatory agreement between the developer and HPD the extent and duration of effort, based on reasonable lease terms, toward securing a FRESH supermarket or its equivalent.

Accommodating Community Uses

It is one of Borough President Adams’ policies to assist community-based non-profit organizations with securing affordable space. These organizations play an important role in the neighborhoods they serve, though it is too often a challenge to secure sufficient affordable space to maintain their programming and to flourish.

Last June, Borough President Adams released “All the Right Moves: Advancing Dance and the Arts in Brooklyn,” a report examining the challenges facing artists in the borough, along with accompanying recommendations. The report highlights the benefits of arts and dance, including maintaining physical fitness and enjoying creative self-expression, as well as contributions to the vibrant culture of Brooklyn.

Data shows that such cultural activities create a variety of positive contributions, including combating the borough’s high rate of obesity — 59 percent of adults as of 2013 are obese, according to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) — and helping children succeed in school, a finding supported by research released by the Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York, Inc. Moreover, dance has been a significant part of the impact that the arts have had on economic development in Brooklyn; a 2015 report from the Center for an Urban Future found a 20 percent increase since 2006 in attendance at events organized by local cultural institutions, benefitting the borough’s business community. Borough President Adams’ findings also detail many challenges facing the local arts community, such as an absence of diversity — fewer than half of the individuals working in dance in Brooklyn are people of color, based on 2000 United States Census data. Additionally, funding for the arts has decreased dramatically in New York City
in recent years, including by 37 percent from the New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA), 15 percent from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and 16 percent from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA).

There are many cultural and dance organizations that have contacted Borough President Adams seeking assistance securing space to grow and sustain the programming provided. In response to those concerns, Borough President Adams’ policy is to review discretionary land use actions for their appropriateness to promote cultural and dance activities.

The location for the proposed Ebenezer Plaza development is well-suited for inclusion of locating conveniently accessible cultural and/or dance activities and other community uses given the proximity to the bus and subway lines that serve Brownsville and East New York. Some of the proposed retail frontage along New Lots Avenue might make a suitable location for community uses. Borough President Adams believes that a portion of the proposed retail space could be marketed to local art groups, and/or locally-based community organizations, though such uses cannot afford to compete with the rent that retail use would likely pay to lease at this location.

Borough President Adams believes that the developer should actively solicit cultural and dance organizations as well as other community uses as potential building occupants. In addition, HPD should memorialize in the funding regulatory agreement between the developer and HPD that a portion of the proposed retail space be marketed to art groups, and/or locally-based community organizations in consultation with CB 16 and local elected officials. Furthermore, the applicant should provide in writing to the City Council, prior to its vote, the extent of commitments to include cultural space within the building.

**Advancing Vision Zero Policies**

As a supporter of the Mayor’s Vision Zero strategy, Borough President Adams seeks opportunities through his review of discretionary land use actions through the City’s ULURP process. In consideration that the pending Ebenezer Plaza would be constructed across Hegeman Avenue from the Brownsville Recreation Center and that this segment of Hegeman Avenue is essentially a deceleration lane exiting from westbound Linden Boulevard, Borough President Adams believes that the roadway should be redesigned as part of the Vision Zero initiative.

One component of Vision Zero is to extend sidewalks into the roadway as a means of shortening the path where pedestrians cross in front of traffic lanes, such as DOT’s Safe Routes to School program in which DOT installs traffic-calming infrastructure, such as sidewalk extensions or neck-downs at intersections where there is increased presence of children. These sidewalk extensions make drivers more aware of pedestrian crossings and encourage drivers to slow down at intersections where pedestrians are present.

In 2015, Borough President Adams also launched his own initiative, Connecting Residents on Safer Streets, or CROSS Brooklyn. This program supports the creation of curb extensions or sidewalk extensions at dangerous intersections in Brooklyn. During the program’s first year, $1 million was allocated to fund five dangerous intersections in Brooklyn. By installing more curb extensions, children and seniors will benefit because more of their commute will be spent on sidewalks, especially near dangerous intersections. At the same time, all users of the roadway will benefit from safer streets.

With the eastern terminus of Hegeman Street essentially serving Linden Boulevard as a westbound deceleration exit lane, Borough President Adams believes safety enhancement should extend beyond the incorporation of curb extensions. He believes that in development of the design of the Builders Pavement Plan there should be an opportunity to promote state-of-the art speed reduction traffic-calming practices to advance the mayor’s Vision Zero initiative in coordination,

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with DOT. In addition to bulbouts/curb-cut extensions, such traffic-calming measures might incorporate chicanes — a series of road bed narrowing and/or horizontal deflection of the road bed expected to reduce vehicle speed, mid-block curb extensions — also known as pinchpoints, signage, street-placed trees, and vertical speed control elements (raised intersection, speed bumps/speed tables). Such features should be further coordinated with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in terms of bioswale placement opportunities.

Borough President Adams believes that the developer should coordinate with DOT to investigate the intersection of Hegeman Avenue with Christopher Avenue and Powell and Sackman streets with the goal of providing sidewalk extensions as a means of increasing pedestrian safety. He recognizes that the cost associated with construction of sidewalk extensions can be very high based on the need to modify utilities and/or infrastructure. Therefore, Borough President Adams would urge DOT to at least explore the implementation of protected painted sidewalk extensions until available capital resources are secured. Should implementation meet the criteria of DOT, it should consult with CB 16 and local elected officials before undertaking such improvements, as such painted extensions require a maintenance agreement that indemnifies the City from liability, contains a requirement for insurance, and details the responsibilities of the maintenance partner. In order to be implemented, Borough President Adams believes that any combination of applicant and/or the Church of God of East Flatbush, would be appropriate parties to enter into such a maintenance agreement.

Therefore, the developer should coordinate the design of Builders Pavement Plan with DOT to promote state-of-the art practices to advance the mayor’s Vision Zero initiative inclusive of traffic-calming measures such as: bulbouts/curb-cut extensions, chicanes, pinchpoints, signage, and vertical speed control elements (raised intersection, speed bumps/speed tables). As a measure to partially expedite such improvements, he believes that DOT should have the intersection investigated for implementation of protected painted sidewalk extensions, per Borough President Adams’ CROSS Brooklyn initiative at Hegeman Avenue with Christopher Avenue and Powell and Sackman streets. To the extent DOT supports such implementation, the applicant and/or the Church of God of East Flatbush should agree to execute DOT’s required maintenance agreement. Borough President Adams furthermore encourages the integration of bioswales as part of new tree plantings and as part of traffic calming elements such as bulbouts/curb-cut extensions, chicanes, and/or pinchpoints.

**Advancing Resilient and Sustainable Energy and Stormwater Management Policies**

It is Borough President Adams’ sustainable energy policy to promote opportunities that utilize blue/green/white roofs, Passive House construction, solar panels, and/or wind turbines. He encourages developers to coordinate with the New York City Mayor’s Office of Sustainability, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), and/or New York Power Authority (NYPA) at each project site. Such modifications would increase energy efficiency and reduce the development’s carbon footprint. Furthermore, as part of his flood resiliency policy, Borough President Adams also encourages developers to incorporate permeable pavers and/or establish bioswales that advance DEP green-water/stormwater strategies. Bioswales, blue/green roofs, and permeable pavers would deflect stormwater from entering the City’s water pollution control plants. According to the “New York City Green Infrastructure 2014 Annual Report,” green infrastructure plays a critical role in addressing water quality challenges and provides numerous environmental, social, and economic co-benefits.

The developer represented that the design of the first phase site has progressed beyond a point to where it would be too late to pursue a Passive House design though suggested that Passive House construction would be given consideration for the second site. The rooftop would be white across all roof surfaces. The developer intends to reach out to the environmental consultant to determine if inclusion of a wind turbine would make sense. In terms of advancing DEP’s green-
water/stormwater strategies, it would be realized by incorporating permeable pavers in the construction of the plaza.

As an additional resiliency and sustainability measure, Borough President Adams encourages the developer to pursue the construction of bioswales as part of the proposed Builders Pavement Plan in coordination with DEP. Such bioswales could also be incorporated into the aforementioned traffic-calming measures.

Prior to the granting of its approval, the City Council should obtain the developer’s commitments in writing to the extent that it would be pursuing additional resiliency and sustainability measures.

Jobs
Borough President Adams is concerned that too many Brooklyn residents are currently unemployed or underemployed. It is his policy to promote economic development that will create more employment opportunities. According to the Furman Center’s “State of New York City’s Housing and Neighborhoods in 2015,” double-digit unemployment remains a pervasive reality for several of Brooklyn’s neighborhoods, with more than half of our community districts experiencing poverty rates of nearly 25 percent or greater. Prioritizing local hiring would assist in addressing this employment crisis. Additionally, promoting Brooklyn-based businesses and including those that qualify as LBE and MWBE is central to Borough President Adams’ economic development agenda. This site provides opportunities for the developer to retain a Brooklyn-based contractor and subcontractor, especially those who are designated LBEs, consistent with section 6-108.1 of the City’s Administrative Code, and MWBEs, as a means to meet or exceed standards per Local Law 1 (no fewer than 20 percent participation).

As Ebenezer Plaza’s funding includes financing/subsidizing participation for which HPD contributes no less than two million dollars, the developer must participate in HPD’s MWBE Building Opportunity Initiative’s Build Up program. For these projects, at least a quarter of HPD-supported costs are to be spent on certified MWBE construction contractors and professional service providers. Borough President Adams believes that according to the Build Up program there would be reasonable opportunities to address demonstrated disparities in MWBE participation in affordable housing development process. Developments required to participate in this program requires developers/borrowers to spend at least one quarter of HPD-supported costs on certified MWBEs over the course of design and construction of an HPD-subsidized project. Developers may adopt a goal higher than the minimum. All payments to certified MWBEs performing construction or providing professional services count toward the goal. For example, payments going towards an MWBE architect or an MWBE painter will count toward the goal. As part of the process to meet the minimum participation of MWBE, prior to construction loan closing, developers/borrowers are required to complete an implementation plan to identify MWBEs either under consideration or in contract and describe what steps will be taken to meet the project’s applicable MWBE participation goal. The construction loan closing document contains a set dollar value of the MWBE participation goal and requires the developer to adhere to all program requirements. During construction, there are quarterly submission requirements for documenting progress and payment made to eligible MWBE businesses. HPD stands behind this initiative with staffing to support borrowers/developers and their general contractors’ efforts to meet the project’s MWBE participation goal including compiled resources to help borrowers/developers and their general contractors find MWBEs.

Through HPD’s initiative, Borough President Adams believes that the project developer should continue the emphasis to retain Brooklyn-based contractors and subcontractors, especially those who are designated LBEs, consistent with section 6-108.1 of the City’s Administrative Code, and LBE and MWBE establishments, as a means to meet or exceed standards per Local Law 1 (no fewer than 20 percent participation). To date, demolition of the existing buildings would be
undertaken by a Brooklyn-based minority contracting company that includes military veteran participation.

Prior to the granting of its approval, the City Council should obtain a commitment in writing from the developer to the extent that it would be promoting such Brooklyn-based workforce participation measures.

**Community Preference: Inclusion of Homeless Shelter Student Population by School Zone**

The City’s housing lottery selection preference policy includes a pathway for achieving a preference of 50 percent or more for applicants residing in the community district where such affordable housing is being provided. There are additional pathways identified for priority lottery selection to become the tenant for such affordable housing units, such as United States Armed Forces veteran status, qualified disabilities, and more. Given the extent of the increase in homeless families with school-age children entering the public shelter system, Borough President Adams believes it is appropriate for HPD to also extend lottery local preference to include the school zone and any nearby neighboring school zone attended by a child of a household residing at a City-funded or -operated homeless shelter.

This is especially important given the number of students living in homeless shelters. The New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO) recently produced a report analyzing homeless rates in schools. School student registration data identifies those residing in public shelters as Students in Temporary Housing (STH). Using data from as recent as the 2014-2015 school year, a review of the 50 schools in Brooklyn with the highest percentage of STH enrollment identifies approximately 4,300 students attending such Brooklyn schools with more than 18 percent of the enrollment categorized as STH.

Research indicates that students managing such living accommodations are most challenged in achieving optimum academic performance. Such students are more likely to lack access to technology, such as computers, that would aid with homework and research assignments, as well as access to a quiet space to complete such assignments and study for exams. In addition, commuting from the shelter to and from the school for many students consumes significantly more time. Such commutes often make it difficult to participate in extracurricular educational and/or social school activities, which might otherwise enhance the school academic and community experience.

Many parents and students find it important to retain school continuity despite the circumstances that require the household to be dependent on the City’s homeless shelter system. Borough President Adams believes that it should be the policy of the City to take actions that would eliminate such hardships. One such action would be to enable the working income-challenged households with children attending public schools to qualify for community local preference on the basis of where the child is enrolled in school.

According to the interactive map provided by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness (ICPH), there are five elementary schools within a few blocks of the proposed the Ebenezer Plaza development site, within the New York City Community School District (CSD) 23, containing a combined total of approximately 300 homeless students. Such students and their families should be considered as part of the 50 percent local preference.

Borough President Adams believes that HPD should modify its affordable housing apartment lottery community preference standards to include the school zone attended by a child of a household residing at a City-funded or -operated homeless shelter.
Accommodating Rent-Burdened Households in Lieu of Strict Area Median Income Standards

Borough President Adams supports Mayor Bill de Blasio’s goal of achieving 200,000 affordable housing units over the next decade. Brooklyn is one of the fastest growing communities in the New York City metropolitan area and the ongoing Brooklyn renaissance has ushered in extraordinary changes that were virtually unimaginable even a decade ago. Unfortunately, Brooklyn’s success has led to the displacement of long-time residents who can no longer afford to live in their own neighborhoods. Borough President Adams is committed to addressing the borough’s affordable housing crisis through the creation and preservation of much-needed affordable housing units for very low- to middle-income Brooklynites. Among numerous strategies and approaches, Borough President Adams is committed to advancing his affordable housing policy through his role in the ULURP. The development of much-needed affordable housing provides opportunities to existing neighborhood residents at risk for displacement or increased degree of being rent-burdened.

Data shows that more than 80 percent of those making 50 percent of AMI or less are rent-burdened. The crisis is even worse among the lowest-income citizens, those making 30 percent of AMI or less, currently $23,310 for a family of three. Among this population, well over 50 percent pay more than half of their income toward rent. More than a fifth of New York City households — over two million people — earn less than $25,000 a year and almost a third make less than $35,000. As the City’s housing crisis gets worse, the burden falls most heavily on these low-income households, many of them senior citizens.

Many residents living in rented apartments within CD 16 live in unregulated housing, or regulated apartments subjected to legal regulated rent increase in which landlords have been renting below the legally permitted regulatory rent (preferential rent) and have been seeking to increase rent, at lease renewal, according to the legal amount permitted. The continued significant increase in rents has resulted in residential displacement or increased rent burden. Therefore, there is a pressing need to provide more affordable housing units in this area.

In this section of CD 16, in proximity to the proposed Ebenezer Plaza development site, too many households fall into low- and very-low income categories and are often rent-burdened. Given the risk for displacement, the City should take steps to increase the probability that rent-burdened households qualify for as many affordable housing lottery as possible.

A strict rent-to-income requirement of not exceeding 30 percent of income for yearly rent payment ends up disqualifying many income-challenged households from the affordable housing lottery. As a result, these rent-burdened households do not meet the housing lottery’s minimum household earnings because too often they are already paying the same rent, or in excess of the rent stated for the affordable housing unit. Thus, the requirement to pay no more than 30 percent of household income is actually hurting people who are already living in substandard housing and are paying more than 30 percent of their income toward housing.

As noted in his East New York Community Plan ULURP recommendation, Borough President Adams believes that it is time to break the mold in which families that are already paying too much rent for substandard housing are disqualified. Borough President Adams seeks to qualify rent-burdened households to be eligible for selection through the housing lottery process. Such eligibility would ensure rent-burdened households receive the maximum opportunity to secure regulated affordable housing units, expanding the number of eligible households for government-regulated housing lottery.
One means to address rent burden should be achieved by amending the ZR to adjust the AMI qualifications so they include such households that would maintain or reduce their rent burden. For such lotteries resulting from MIH housing lottery offerings, the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) needs to amend the ZR to allow for exceptions to the 30 percent of income threshold so that households that are burdened, though paying the same or more rent than the lottery unit rent, would be eligible to live in affordable, newly-produced, quality housing accommodations.

Borough President Adams believes that the New York City Planning Commission (CPC) and/or the City Council should echo his call to seek for the modification of the MIH section of the ZR pertaining to MIH-designated areas to be adopted with a requirement that permits households with rent-burdened status to qualify for such affordable housing units pursuant to MIH.

**Light Improvements Along New Lots Avenue**
The adjacent entrance to the New Lots Avenue L subway station and the B15 bus stop are both located under the dimly lit elevated train trestle. While this is an area that receives a lot of pedestrian traffic, the adequacy of the lighting under the elevated trestle has been a major complaint from the residents of both CD5 and CD16. As Borough President Adams stated his belief in his 2015 ULURP recommendation for Van Sinderen Plaza, he reiterates that in order to make this a safe and vibrant atmosphere, especially in accommodating the anticipated population increase in this area, it is important to significantly improve the lighting along this section of New Lots Avenue. Borough President Adams continues to believe that local arts groups should play a role in designing and instrumenting a light installation that will give this area the attention it deserves and its residents a safe and vibrant transit hub.

Borough President Adams continues to believe that the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)/New York City Transit (NYCT) along with DOT should proceed in consultation with CB5 and CB16, as well as local elected officials, to facilitate lighting improvements under the elevated train trestle, by introducing a lighting installation that includes participation by such local arts as Arts East New York.

**Promoting the Use of Car Sharing Vehicles**
While Borough President Adams supports the establishment of Transit Zones in the ZR for the purpose of enabling affordable housing developments to be constructed without a requirement to provide car-parking accommodations, he acknowledges that access to automobiles would enhance mobility for the lives of the residents of Ebenezer Plaza. The cost associated with individual car ownership can be very challenging for households with less financial means, particularly where such vehicles play no role on a daily basis such as commuting to places of employment. However, there can be moments throughout the year when affordable access to automobiles would be considered a quality-of-life enhancement based on the type of mobility that an automobile can accommodate.

To some extent, access to car service enhances mobility for certain trips though it is not as flexible as having direct access to a car for a set amount of time and can be expensive for longer trips. Car rental requires, at minimum, a full day rental as well as time and effort to access such rental facilities. Car-sharing membership provides another alternative though such services have not been extended to neighborhoods such as Brownsville. In addition, research has suggested that car share availability reduces car ownership for individuals who already own cars, creating environmental benefits and reducing congestion. Given the more than 500 households that would be residing at Ebenezer Plaza, who are less likely to own private automobiles, Borough President Adams believes that car-sharing entities should be engaged by DOT for the purposes of setting up car placements in immediate proximity to the development.
Locations established for the placement of car-sharing vehicles should be established through a process in which DOT directly consults with CB 16 and local elected officials, in dialogue with car-sharing companies.

**Recommendation**

Be it resolved that the Brooklyn borough president, pursuant to sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter, recommends that the City Planning Commission (CPC) and the City Council approve this application.

That the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) incorporates the following in the funding regulatory agreement commitment in writing to the City Council:

1. The extent that it would work with the developer of Ebenezer Plaza to enable the constructed ELLA-financed dwelling units, through its project financing, to provide as near to 50 percent two- and three-bedroom units as a means to accommodate a greater percentage of families with children, and enable more studio units with rents at 30, 40, 50, and 60 percent AMI, as feasible, in tandem with an enhanced percentage of studio units that might provide opportunities for senior households, including formerly homeless seniors according to HPD’s Our Space initiative

2. That local preference be extended to include residents of both Brooklyn Community Districts 5 and 16 (CDs 5 and 16)

3. That the developer be committed to an explicit duration and extent of effort, based on reasonable lease terms:
   a. Toward securing a FRESH supermarket tenant or an equivalent tenant
   b. That a portion of the proposed retail space be marketed to art groups, and/or locally-based community organizations in consultation with Brooklyn Community Board 16 (CB 16) and local elected officials. Furthermore, the developer shall provide in writing to the City Council, prior to its vote, the extent of commitments to actively solicit cultural organizations as potential building occupants include cultural space within the building

4. That the applicant coordinate with the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as follows:
   a. That the design of Builders Pavement Plan be developed in coordination with DOT and DEP to promote state-of-the-art practices to advance the mayor’s Vision Zero initiative inclusive of traffic-calming measures such as bulbouts/curb-cut extensions, chicanes, pinchpoints, signage and vertical speed control elements (raised intersection, speed bumps/speed tables)
   b. Encourage the implementation of protected painted sidewalk extensions, per Borough President Adams’ CROSS Brooklyn initiative at the intersections of Hegeman Avenue at Christopher Avenue and Powell and Sackman streets
   c. Pending the feasibility of protected painted sidewalk extensions, that maintenance be provided by the developer and/or the according to DOT’s standard maintenance agreement that indemnifies the City from liability, contains a requirement for insurance, and details the responsibilities of the maintenance partner
d. Encourage the integration of bioswales as part of new tree plantings and as part of traffic-calming elements such as bulbouts/curb-cut extensions, chicanes and/or pinchpoints

2. Prior to the granting of its approval, the City Council should obtain the developer's commitments in writing to the extent that it would be pursuing additional resiliency and sustainability measures

3. The developer should provide a written commitment to the City Council prior to its grant of approval, to the extent that the developer would be promoting Brooklyn-based workforce participation measures

Be It Further Resolved:

1. That HPD modifies its affordable housing apartment lottery community preference standards to be inclusive of the school zone attended by a child of a household residing at a City-funded or operated homeless shelter, and

2. That the CPC and/or the City Council, in order to establish AMI equivalent affordable housing eligibility as a qualifier for those rent-burdened households that would be able to pay the same or have a reduction in their rent by leasing an MIH lottery unit, should advocate for the modification of the MIH section of the ZR pertaining to MIH-designated areas, to be adopted with a requirement that provides eligibility while taking into account rent-burdened status

3. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)/New York City Transit (NYCT) along with DOT, in consultation with CBs 5 and 16 and local elected officials, should facilitate lighting improvements under the elevated New Lots Avenue train trestle, by introducing a lighting installation that includes participation by such local arts groups as Arts East New York

4. That DOT, in consultation with CB 16 and local elected officials, should facilitate a dialogue with car-sharing companies to stage the placement of automobiles in proximity to Ebenezer Plaza