

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REVIEW | STAFF REPORT

DATE : 08.21.2023
TO : Planning Board Commissioners
FROM : Matthew da Silva, Senior Planner
Matt Ward, PP, AICP, Supervising Planner
CASE : P23-108
PROJECT : 693-701 Newark Ave.
Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan

I. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- General Development Application Form dated 08.08.2023
- Survey by Gary V. Marmo, PLS dated 03.02.2023
- Site Plan and Engineering Plan Set by Brian Liebeskind, PE of Dresdner Robin Environmental Management, Inc. revised 08.04.2023
- Architectural Plan Set by Paul Freitas, AIA of C3D Architecture PLLC revised 08.01.2023
- Traffic, Access & Circulation Study by Dolan & Dean Consulting Engineers, LLC dated 06.02.2023
- Stormwater Management Report by Dresdner Robin Environmental Management, Inc. revised 08.2023

II. APPLICATION BACKGROUND + PROPOSAL



- Existing Conditions:** The site is currently a 40-space public parking lot owned by the Jersey City Redevelopment Authority (JCRA) in the Journal Square 2060 Redevelopment Plan. Earlier phases of the Homestead Place pedestrian walkway are in various states of completion to the

south of the site. The site is a conforming 13,846 sq. ft. lot situated between Summit Ave. and John F. Kennedy Blvd.

- **Proposed Conditions:** The Applicant proposes to construct a 34-story tower containing 360 housing units, of which 72 will be affordable, 2,279 sq ft of ground floor retail, and 189 bicycle parking spaces. As required per the Homestead Place Extension Bonus, the applicant is providing a 20 ft. high and 22 ft. wide enclosed pedestrian tunnel through the middle of the project connecting the Homestead Place Extension to Newark Avenue.
- **Variances & Waivers:** No variances are proposed. Applicant is proposing a waiver from forestry standards to provide only 4 trees plus pay an in-lieu fee instead of the required 5.

III. STAFF COMMENTS

The project is utilizing Bonus A – Affordable Housing within the Homestead Place Extension Bonus. In addition to the privileges granted via the Homestead Place bonus, this bonus allows a Designated Redeveloper subject to a Redevelopment Agreement (RDA) with JCRA to build up to thirty-five (35) stories, be exempt from the Required Retail standards along Newark Ave., as well as certain other dimensional exemptions, provided they meet the following conditions:

- No less than 20% of the total units in the project be restricted as affordable housing units for a term no less than thirty (30) years.
- Developers are required follow Chapter 188 of the Municipal Code and obtain an Affordable Housing Agreement with the Division of Affordable Housing as a condition of site plan approval.
- A majority of gross floor area is designated for residential use.

The applicant has expressed in their General Development Application (GDA) that they intend to utilize two affordable housing funding sources to finance their project: the 4% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and the Aspire Program. Both programs have requirements regarding the unit sizes and the income levels of the affordable housing component that will guide the ultimate affordability breakdown in this project.

The project contains the northern terminus of the Homestead Place Extension. Once this project is complete, a major planning goal of the Journal Square 2060 RDP to provide a public pedestrian connection from Pavonia Ave. and Journal Square Transportation Center to Newark Ave. will be fulfilled. Unlike other sections of Homestead Place which involve the creation of an open-air walkway via the improvement and dedication of privately held land, Homestead Place will pass through the building in the form of a 20 ft. high and 22 ft. wide pedestrian tunnel and terminate at the north side of Newark Ave. The applicant is proposing to restripe the section of Newark Avenue in front of their project in order to install a raised crosswalk allowing users of Homestead Place to safely cross to the north side of Newark Ave. This is necessary in order to safely accommodate the anticipated pedestrian volumes that Homestead Place Extension will generate.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

The staff recommends the following conditions to satisfy the requirements of the bonuses being utilized:

1. All testimony given by the Applicant and their expert witnesses in accordance with this application shall be binding.
2. The Applicant shall address and/or comply with all comments and recommendations of municipal review agents and will submit revised plans to the Division of City Planning if necessary.

3. All materials and color selections shall be shown on Final Plans. No change to the facade and site design, including materials as well as any changes that may be required by the Office of Construction Code, shall be permitted without consultation and approval by planning staff.
4. The Applicant shall agree to receive signoff from the Divisions of Transportation & Traffic Engineering regarding the final configuration of the proposed crosswalk across Newark Ave. and associated signs and signals prior to submission of Final Plans.
5. The Applicant shall agree to receive sign-off from the Divisions of Transportation & Traffic Engineering ensuring the crosswalk and associated signs and signals have been installed to proper specifications prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO).
6. The Applicant shall agree to responsibility for providing ongoing maintenance of the Homestead Place pedestrian tunnel, as well as effective illumination for allowing safe and comfortable passage through the Homestead Place tunnel at all hours of the day. Any change to the configuration or lighting in the tunnel must be submitted to the Divisions of City Planning & Transportation for administrative approval.
7. The Applicant shall provide an affidavit from the architect of record representing that the constructed project is consistent with final approved plans prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO).
8. All street trees and landscaping shall be installed in accordance with the Jersey City Forestry Standards prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO).
9. Per the requirements of Bonus A – Affordable Housing, the Applicant shall agree to comply with Chapter 188 of the Municipal Code and coordinate as necessary with the Jersey City Division of Affordable Housing to obtain a fully executed and recorded Affordable Housing Agreement and any related state approvals or agreements prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO).
10. The Applicant shall agree to enter into an agreement with the City regarding the onsite public access to the Homestead Place pedestrian tunnel in the form of a non-exclusive perpetual public access agreement prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO).
11. The Applicant shall agree to record the executed deed of easement with the office of the Hudson County Registrar prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO).