

**Brooklyn Borough President Recommendation**  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
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**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 #: 115 WILLIAMS AVENUE - 150380 HAK**

In the matter of an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) seeking approval of an Urban Development Action Area Project (UDAAP) designation and project approval and disposition of City-owned property located at 115 Williams Avenue, between Liberty and Glenmore Avenues, for the expansion of an existing parking lot that is owned and operated by the adjacent business.

COMMUNITY DISTRICT NO. 5

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

**RECOMMENDATION**

APPROVE  
 APPROVE WITH  
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

DISAPPROVE  
 DISAPPROVE WITH  
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

SEE ATTACHED

BOROUGH PRESIDENT

July 27, 2015

DATE

## **RECOMMENDATION FOR 115 WILLIAMS AVENUE - 150380 HAK**

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is seeking approval of an Urban Development Action Area Project (UDAAP) designation and project approval and disposition of city-owned property located at 115 Williams Avenue, between Liberty and Glenmore Avenues, in an M3-2 zoning district within the East New York Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) of Brooklyn, Community District 5.

The resulting project would be the development of an expanded truck parking area, which will allow for the adjacent owner-operated business to improve its accessory truck parking lot function.

On July 1, 2015, the Borough President held a public hearing on the application. There was one speaker for this item, Director of Economic Development for the Local Development Corporation for East New York (LDCENY). The speaker supports and encourages this development and notes the significance of Watkins Poultry, not only as a respected employer to many local residents, but as a longstanding champion within the community. The speaker also added that the building would require demolition because it's been decrepit and vacant for many years and is an eye sore to the community.

In response to Borough President's policy to promote the use of sustainable and renewable energy resources as well as practices to retain storm-water runoff, the representative from Watkins noted the company would be open to consideration though would first seek a cost/benefit analysis in order to make any final decisions. Examples of such practices include solar canopies for truck parking, incorporating permeable pavers and creating a large bioswale along Williams Avenue, integrating the existing mature trees.

In response to the Borough President's concern regarding light pollution and noise coming from the truck activity and parking lot, as it impacts the Women's Center across the street, Watkins representative stated that in order to minimize noise all vehicle egress and ingress occurs at the Alabama Avenue entrance. It is not believed that the expansion would result in the installation of more lighting fixtures though light shields would be considered if additional lighting is introduced. The acquired lot would likely be enclosed by the same type of fence along its Williams Avenue frontage.

In response to the Borough President's policy to maximize job opportunities for Brooklynites, the representative noted that the demolition and construction that will take place on this site will be bid out, but considerations will be made for prioritizing MWBE and LBE participation. The company's hiring process is nondiscriminatory and Watkins makes it a point to hire locally and promote from within.

## **Consideration**

CB 5 approved this application unanimously.

The proposed development is compliant with the East New York II Industrial Urban Renewal Plan. The property would be disposed to the adjacent owners, Watkins Poultry Merchants of New York Inc., a live poultry wholesale distributor business, selected through a Request for Offers that HPD issued through the Asset Sales Program in April 2012.

Established in 1994, Watkins Poultry has expanded to accommodate its growth through the purchase of the adjacent property which contains its one-story 18,650 sf building. It now employs approximately 65 employees, with a starting wage that is significantly higher than minimum wage. Approximately 85 percent of the workforce resides in the community, within a bike ride or just a few transit stops. Jobs at Watkins range from entry level general labor, truck driving, maintenance, administrative and management positions.

An average day consists of unloading, sorting and reloading of several tractor-trailer trucks containing live poultry onto smaller trucks for delivery to various customers located in the tri-state area and parts of Pennsylvania. The acquisition would facilitate the provision of an expanded accessory parking lot for use by Watkins' fleet of tractor-trailer trucks. The expanded parking lot will also allow for easier access for the trucks to maneuver in and out of the parking areas and would improve the overall daily operations of the business. As Watkins Poultry intends to continue growing and to remain a community staple, the truck parking lot expansion would help to facilitate this growth.

Though located in the East New York IBZ, Watkins is across the street from a Department of Homeless Service's Brooklyn women's shelter. The shelter provides temporary sanctuary and serves as an intake and assessment center for referral of single homeless adult women to permanent housing resources. While not an ideal use to be located in an IBZ, those who sleep there have little choice. The Borough President appreciates Watkin's procedures to route its trucks through Alabama Avenue and willingness to install a shielded lighting fixture should a need arise in subsequent years.

The Borough President believes UDAAP designation is appropriate based on the land use and generally supports efforts that facilitate the creation and/or growth of Brooklyn-based businesses. This includes opportunities that are consistent with the predominant land-use patterns and provide an opportunity for one business to grow in a manner that enables seasonal hiring and activates this IBZ.

Though the Borough President is generally supportive of the proposed development he has concerns regarding the lack of clarity in terms of sustainability and resiliency opportunities and participation of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) and Locally-Based Enterprises (LBE).



## **Jobs**

The Borough President is concerned that too many residents of Brooklyn are unemployed or underemployed. It is his policy to promote economic development as a means of creating more employment opportunities as well as promoting Brooklyn-based businesses, including those that qualify as MWBE and LBE. As new construction, this development provides an opportunity for the developer to retain Brooklyn-based contractors and subcontractors, especially those that are designated LBEs, consistent with section 6-108.1 of the City's Administrative Code, and MWBE establishments, as a means to meet or exceed standards per Local Law 1 (not less than 20 percent participation).

Though Watkins has expressed giving consideration for prioritizing, given that Watkins will be receiving a city asset, the Borough President believes it would be appropriate to memorialize such intent as an actual commitment. He believes that such standards should be memorialized in the Land Disposition Agreement or Regulatory Agreement between the developer and HPD.

The City Council should obtain such a commitment from HPD in writing that such terms would be incorporated into the lease prior to waiving its right to call up the application or otherwise grant its approval.

## **Advancing Sustainable and Resilient Energy and Storm Water Management Policies**

The Borough President seeks opportunities to utilize solar panels and/or blue/green/white roofs. In addition to aligning with the Borough President's sustainable energy policy, such modification would reduce the facility's carbon footprint and reduce energy costs. In addition, blue/green roofs and bio-swales would defer storm-water from entering the City's water pollution control plants.

According to the NYC Green Infrastructure 2014 Annual Report, Green Infrastructure plays a role in addressing water quality challenges as well as provides numerous environment, social, and economic co-benefits. DEP is developing its Jamaica Tributary and Bay Long Term Control Plan (LTCP), which is affected by this site's waste- and storm-water. Therefore, by incorporating bioswales and green/blue roof strategies Watkins Poultry would be consistent with the LTCP.

Considering the relative low height of surrounding structures that support this location's exposure to direct sunlight, incorporating renewable energy features such as roof top solar panels and parking lot solar canopies would be advantageous opportunities to generate sustainable energy. The Borough President believes that Watkins should give consideration to following the lead of Whole Foods Gowanus in terms of installing solar canopies above parking areas. It should also give consideration to using the building's roof for any combination of solar, blue, green and/or white roof improvements. There are several rooftop agricultural establishments now operated in Brooklyn that are interested in having such

operations that should be consulted. The Borough President's Office is available to facilitate such connections.

The Borough President also believes that Watkins should look into using permeable pavers and constructing a bioswale. Incorporating permeable pavers in the surfacing of the expanded parking area, in combination with establishing a bioswale along Williams Avenue, integrating the existing mature trees, would help to advance the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) green-water storm-water strategies. Landscaping of the bioswale would also provide for a more pleasant environment for those who depend on the women's shelter for living/sleeping accommodations.

Watkins should undertake a structural assessment of its roof to determine the feasibility to what extent it might pursue sustainable and resilient rooftop features. It should engage the appropriate government agencies such as the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, DEP, NYSEDA and/or NYPA, possibly with the guidance and assistance of the LDCENY, to give consideration to government programs and grants. One such program is the City's Green Roof Tax Abatement (GRTA), which provides a reduction from City property taxes of \$4.50 per square foot of green roof, up to \$100,000. DEP's Office of Green Infrastructure advises property owners and their design professionals through the GRTA application process. Watkins should also explore DEP's incentives to construct green-water projects, such as permeable pavers for the expanded parking lot surface and the adjacent opportunity to construct a bioswale.

### **Recommendation**

Be it resolved that the Borough President of Brooklyn, pursuant to section 197-c of the New York City Charter, recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council approve the land use action requested according to the following conditions:

That the Department of Housing Preservation and Development incorporates in either the Regulatory Agreement or Land Disposition Agreement that requires the project sponsor to retain Brooklyn-based contractors and subcontractors, especially those that are designated LBEs consistent with section 6-108.1 of the City's Administrative Code, and MWBE and LBE establishments, as a means to meet or exceed standards per Local Law 1 (not less than 20 percent participation), as well as to coordinate the monitoring of such participation with an appropriate monitoring agency;

The City Council has such stipulations incorporated into such agreements prior to granting its approval.

Be it Further Resolved that Watkins Poultry:

1. Should undertake a study of the structural condition of its roof in terms of furthering sustainable and resilient initiatives;

2. Should consult with appropriate government agencies that might be of assistance to further sustainable solar, blue, green and/or white roof strategies and parking lot solar canopies; and,
3. Should consult with the Department of Environmental Protection in terms of green-water initiatives that might advance permeable paving and/or a bioswale that incorporates the existing mature trees along Williams Avenue.