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NYC planners OK 970-unit affordable housing project in Bronx — but some ask: What is affordable?

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A rendering showing 1460-1480 Sheridan Blvd. in the Bronx. (Joshua Simoneau (DCP)/NYC City Planning)

The City Planning Commission on [Wednesday OK'd a high-rise development](#) of 970 affordable units on the Bronx River waterfront amid questions about whether its rents would be affordable enough.

The decision to back the project in the Bronx's Crotona Park East neighborhood now goes to the City Council for final approval.

The proposal spreads the 970 apartments among three 24-story buildings, and also includes more than 20,000 square feet of commercial space.

“That is a truly significant amount of housing for one single proposal,” Dan Garodnick, director of city planning and chair of the commission, said before the vote.

The [project, by Simone Companies at 1460-1480 Sheridan Blvd.](#), also proposes more than an acre of public open space along the river next to the [newly redesigned Starlight Park](#).

But several commission members echoed local concerns about the project’s affordability levels, the potential for gentrification and negative environmental impacts.



A rendering showing 1460 Sheridan Blvd. in the Bronx. (Joshua Simoneau (DCP)/NYC City Planning)

Wednesday’s vote was the second-to-last step in the project’s [land use review process](#) before it can be officially greenlit by the City Council. Bronx Community Board 9 [gave it the go-ahead in May](#) despite pushback from the community, which several members of the commission brought up during the vote.

Leah Goodridge, a tenant rights attorney, voted against the plan and urged the developers to include more deeply affordable housing in their proposal.

“Affordable housing should actually mean affordable housing,” Goodridge said. “I want to see less people that I’m meeting in the street say affordable housing is a scam ... [but] it’s true if we’re passing \$2,100 studios in the Bronx.”

That \$2,100 monthly rent would be for a studio among the 40% of units in the building set aside for “moderate income” tenants, which the developers

say include a one-person household earning \$84,100 to \$112,000 a year or a four-person household earning \$120,100 to \$160,000 a year.

Twenty percent of the units will be allotted to “low income” tenants earning \$56,000 to \$74,700 for one-person households and \$80,000 to roughly \$106,700 for a four-person household. Studios would rent for between \$1,400 and \$1,870; rents for a two-bedroom apartment would be between \$1,800 to \$2,400.

Some 25% of apartments would be for “very low income” tenants making \$37,400 to \$46,700 in one-person households and \$53,400 to \$66,700 a year in four-person households. Studio rents in this category would rent for between \$930 and \$1,170, and two-bedroom apartments would rent for \$1,200 to \$1,500.

Fifteen percent of the units in the project will be set aside for “extremely low income” households earning up to \$28,000 a year in a one-person household or up to \$40,000 in a four-person household. People in the “extremely low income” category would pay \$700 for a studio and \$900 for a two-bedroom home.



A rendering showing 1480 Sheridan Blvd. in the Bronx. (Joshua Simoneau (DCP)/NYC City Planning)

According to [U.S. Census data](#), the area’s median household income was \$31,990 in 2021, about 56% less than the citywide median of \$72,150.

Simone Companies has owned the site, which was previously an auto shop, for [nearly 40 years](#). A spokesperson for the developer said in a statement that the project would “help meet a critical need” amid the ongoing housing crisis. “We appreciate the City Planning Commission’s strong support and will explore ways to incorporate their thoughtful feedback.”

Affordability wasn’t the only issue raised by commissioners.

Commission member Juan Camilo Osorio, who voted “no” in the hope the project could be more affordable, also cited the “complexity” of the environmental impact on the Bronx River, the only freshwater river in the city.

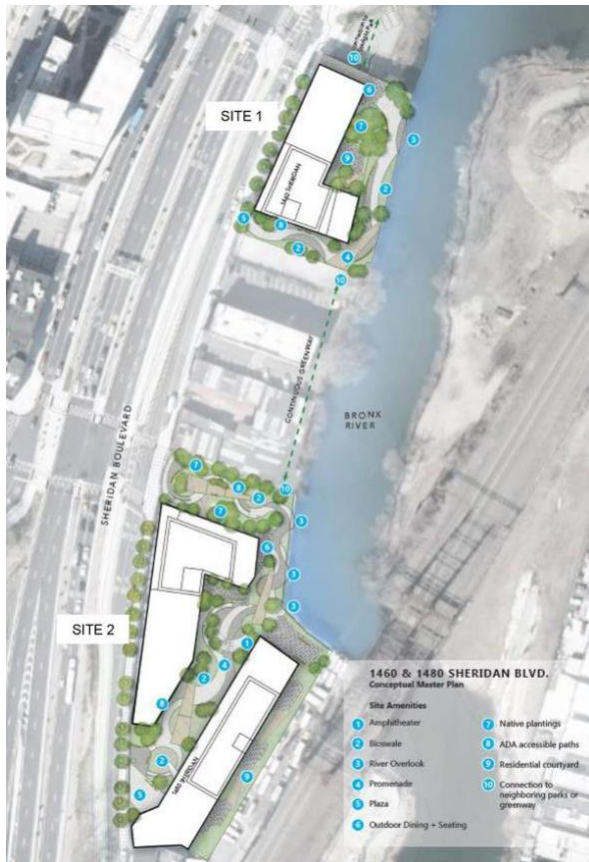
“Ultimately no mitigation actions fully address the impact of a development of this scale if the people who fought to recover this waterfront are displaced by gentrification,” he said.



A rendering showing 1480 Sheridan Blvd. in the Bronx. (Joshua Simoneau (DCP)/NYC City Planning)

The Bronx River Alliance, a local environmental group, previously [testified against](#) the development to Community Board 9, citing a number of concerns including public access to the waterfront, stormwater capture and the impact the buildings’ shadows would have on river wildlife.

Mundo Martinez, who chairs the alliance’s Greenway Advocacy Team, said the development is “setting a precedent that you can build high-rise buildings along the Bronx River that don’t meet ecological and environmental standards that could essentially roll back a lot of the work that’s been done over the last three decades by community members.”



A map showing 1460-1480 Sheridan Blvd. in the Bronx. (Joshua Simoneau (DCP)/NYC City Planning)

Martinez also criticized the lack of transparency he observed during the land-use process.

“When I talk to community members, the overwhelming majority of people have no idea that [the development] is happening,” he said. “But yet all these people and agencies and [organizations] are making decisions for them. And that’s just horrible.”