

Jamaica garage to be redeveloped: City

BY IVAN PEREIRA

The city has started the ball rolling in the first major redevelopment project for the newly rezoned areas of downtown Jamaica.

The city Economic Development Corporation issued a Request for Proposals Monday for the sale and redevelopment of a 45,000-square-foot lot at the northeast corner of 168th Street and 93rd Avenue.

The site, currently an 84,000-square-foot, two-story parking garage, is to incorporate 35,000 to 70,000 square feet of retail space, mixed-income housing units and parking facilities, according to the EDC. The developer selected to build on the site will be responsible for demolishing the garage.

The site is the first to undergo the redevelopment process since the City Council approved a massive 368-block rezoning of Jamaica Sept. 10.

"This RFP is the first step in implementing that plan and seeks to create a dynamic retail and high-quality, mixed-income housing development complex that will be the model and catalyst for future growth in the area," said Robert Leiber, the EDC president.

About 20 percent of the residential units are to be permanently affordable rental properties, the EDC said.

The RFP is the first step in the development project, according to the EDC. Developers and other interested parties submit proposals that suggest the best use of the space.

After thorough review, one proposal is chosen and the developer

builds the project.

"The responses to this RFP are extremely important and we look forward to the selection of a comprehensive proposal that will capitalize on the area's ongoing revival and bring much-needed housing, parking and retail space to one of our borough's transportation hubs," said Queens Borough President Helen Marshall.

Three weeks ago the City Council approved a plan to rezone 368 blocks of Jamaica, from the Van Wyck Expressway to 191st Street, starting just north of Hillside Avenue and extending south to 110th Avenue. Under the so-

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called Jamaica Plan, the site's zoning designation was changed from M1-5 to C6-2, shifting its usage and complexion from a lower-rise manufacturing or warehouse structure to a mixed-use one that could be as tall as eight stories.

In a statement, the EDC called for "high quality, sustainable design" and jobs for minorities and women in the project by participating in the Targeted Hiring and Workforce program, which emphasizes permanent job opportunities for local and disadvantaged residents.