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**REZONING TO REVITALIZE THIRD AND TREMONT AVENUES IN THE BRONX BEGINS PUBLIC REVIEW**

*Proposal Would Promote Investment in Housing, Retail and Office Development, Strengthen Commercial Corridors and Protect Lower Scale Residential Neighborhood And Advance the Mayor's Five Borough Economic Opportunity Plan*

May 24, 2010 – City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden today launched public review for a plan to revitalize important crossroads in the central Bronx long inhibited by antiquated zoning along the route of the former Third Avenue elevated train that was demolished in 1973. The proposed rezoning of Third and Tremont Avenues between the Cross Bronx Expressway and Fordham Road would spur investment in mixed-income housing as well as in commercial development to strengthen these major corridors, while protecting the lower density character of the residential neighborhood west of Third Avenue. By encouraging a variety of uses that are prohibited by existing zoning, the proposal seeks to make these two key corridors more welcoming, lively and walkable so that they knit together and better serve the neighborhoods of Tremont, Belmont, Fordham and Bathgate.

Commissioner Burden said, "We worked closely with Community Board 6 and local civic leaders to develop a plan that meets the various needs of these communities at the heart of The Bronx. By revising zoning that has been in place since 1961, we can foster nearly 700 units of new and affordable housing, reactivate Third Avenue and reinforce Tremont Avenue as the area's downtown. The new zoning would provide predictability by establishing height limits throughout the rezoning area and would also protect the scale of some 27 blocks of an established residential neighborhood."

Although the area is well served by public transit with two Metro-North stations and numerous bus lines along both Third Avenue and Tremont Avenue, the range and amount of commercial uses is constrained by existing zoning. Residential development is now prohibited along Third Avenue. The proposed plan is tailored to expand the range of permissible uses according to the goals of each area with height limits to ensure that new development will be at a scale appropriate to each section.

In addition, in areas that have viable light manufacturing and auto-related uses, proposed mixed-use contextual districts would allow these uses to continue to exist, while encouraging redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land with residential and commercial uses. These mixed-use districts would also permit commercial and community facility uses, and height limits would apply.

**Third Avenue Corridor**

The Third Avenue corridor from the Cross Bronx Expressway north to Fordham Road is now primarily zoned for automotive and light industrial use. New residential uses are not permitted along the stretch, and the area has no height limit. Third Avenue currently has underutilized lots, low scale industrial development, auto related businesses and parking lots, and it is deserted and intimidating to pedestrians after closing hours. West of Tremont Park at the southern end of the rezoning area, several residential and community facility buildings have been built with zoning variances granted by the Board of Standards and Appeals. The proposed zoning would allow residential use there as-of-right. St. Barnabas Hospital fronts on Third Avenue from East 181st to 184th Streets, and the proposed zoning would allow it to grow.

The proposed rezoning would expand the uses along the corridor by allowing mid-density mixed residential and commercial uses. In areas where there is a concentration of firms today, the proposal would permit the expansion of light industrial businesses. These include a five block area west of Tremont Park, blockfronts largely between East 184th and 188th Streets, as well as four blockfronts between East 180th Street and Tremont Avenue.

The Inclusionary Housing Program would apply along the length of Third Avenue to provide an incentive for the creation and preservation of affordable housing. Building heights would range from 80 to 125 feet, with higher densities permitted at major intersections and near the Fordham and Tremont Metro North stations. Buildings would be required to line up at the sidewalk.

**Tremont Avenue**

Tremont Avenue, from Webster Avenue in the west to Daly Avenue in the east, is the only shopping corridor between Fordham Road and the Hub, and has the potential to accommodate additional commercial uses and investment.

The Tremont Avenue corridor is primarily zoned for residential use with commercial overlays that permit neighborhood retail on the lower floors. The proposed new zoning districts would increase the allowable floor area to encourage a wider range of retail and office development as well as residential use and to create a 24/7 downtown. Here, too, the Inclusionary Housing Program would provide floor area bonuses combined with subsidies as incentives for creation or preservation of affordable housing.

Buildings would be required to line up at the sidewalk. Heights would range from 80 to 125 feet with the larger buildings permitted near Tremont Avenue's major intersections with Webster Avenue, Third Avenue and Southern Boulevard.

### **Neighborhood Preservation**

The plan also contains zoning changes to prevent out-of-character development in the lower-scale residential neighborhood paralleling Third Avenue to the west. Proposed contextual districts would ensure that future development more closely matches streets where residential buildings range from two- and three-story detached homes to four- to six-story apartment buildings.

### **Public Review**

The community board now has 60 days to review the proposal, after which it will go to the Borough President, the City Planning Commission and the City Council as part of the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). For specifics of the zoning proposal or more details on the [ULURP timeline](#), please visit the DCP website at [www.nyc.gov/planning](http://www.nyc.gov/planning).

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### **Department of City Planning**

The Department of City Planning (DCP) promotes strategic growth and development in the City, in part, by initiating comprehensive, consensus-based planning and zoning changes for individual neighborhoods and business districts. It supports the City Planning Commission and each year reviews more than 500 land use applications for actions such as zoning changes and disposition of City property. The Department assists both government agencies and the public by providing policy analysis and technical assistance relating to housing, transportation, community facilities, demography and public space.