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CONTACTS:

Roberta Rewers, APA, 312.786.6395

Rachaele Raynoff, NYCDCP, 212.720-3471

**New York City's Unique Zone Green
Earns National Award for Environmental Planning**

WASHINGTON, DC – New York City Department of City Planning will receive the American Planning Association's 2013 National Planning Excellence Award for Environmental Planning for its [Zone Green](#), an initiative to change zoning regulations to foster greener buildings. The Environmental Planning Award honors efforts to create greener communities that reduce the impact of development on the natural environment and improve environmental quality.

Zone Green is a coordinated package of zoning amendments, city legislation, and state legislation that promotes the construction and retrofitting of greener buildings and represents the most comprehensive effort of any US City to sweep aside obstacles to green buildings and energy efficiency. The regulatory changes and zoning incentives adopted through Zone Green affect all categories of buildings throughout New York City, from single-family detached homes to high-density office buildings, and give owners and builders more choices for investments to save energy, save money, and improve environmental performance.

"New York City is once again demonstrating leadership with creative and actionable strategies for tackling climate change with Zone Green," said Ann C. Bagley, FAICP, 2013 APA Awards Jury chair. "Incentivizing green construction and retrofits, while reducing the regulatory hurdles, will benefit the citizens and business community in New York."

New York City's per-capita greenhouse gas emissions are the lowest of any major American city's; however, more than three-quarters of these emissions come from buildings. Provisions in Zone Green promote not only the construction of new green buildings, but also the retrofitting of existing buildings to improve their energy efficiency, management of storm water, and contributions to the city's ecology.

"While zoning often focuses on new buildings, Zone Green focuses just as much on existing buildings. In 2030, 85 percent of our buildings will be buildings that exist today – so improving the performance of existing buildings is critical to reducing New York City's energy use and carbon emissions," said New York City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden. "By removing prohibitions and penalties that have prevented buildings from better insulating their walls, adding solar panels on their roofs, or growing fresh, local food on rooftops, Zone Green will help bring our buildings into the 21st century while protecting the character and quality of life of our neighborhoods."

Key changes in Zone Green include the following:

- Exempting external insulation from floor area calculations will encourage existing buildings to become more energy efficient while new buildings that exceed energy code requirements will be rewarded by partially exempting more efficient walls from floor area. Regulations are modified to allow solar panels on roofs to penetrate maximum building height limits.
- Sun control devices will be permitted to project from building facades over required open areas, reducing the need for air conditioning and lighting.
- Green roofs, skylights, storm water management features, efficient boilers, or cogeneration facilities can be placed on rooftops, with flexibility for bulkheads to accommodate multiple rooftop uses.
- Floor area and height limits may be waived for rooftop greenhouses on non-residential buildings.
- Small wind turbines are now allowed above height limits on taller buildings and near the waterfront, where winds are more consistent.

Zone Green's changes will not only facilitate greener buildings, but also the preservation of affordable housing by allowing buildings to be retrofitted with external insulation, eliminating the need to relocate existing tenants. In the coming decades, the changes enacted under Zone Green will yield enormous environmental benefits, including substantial savings – it is estimated that the provisions allowing external insulation and solar panels would unlock the potential for as much as \$800 million a year in energy savings.

New York City Department of City Planning's Green Zone will receive the Environmental Planning Award in a special awards luncheon held during APA's National Planning Conference in Chicago on Tuesday, April 16, 2013. The initiative also will be featured in *Planning* magazine, APA's flagship publication.

To view all of the APA 2013 National Planning Excellence and Achievement Award recipients, visit www.planning.org/awards/2013. APA's national awards program, the profession's highest honor, is a proud tradition established more than 50 years ago to recognize outstanding community plans, planning programs and initiatives,

public education efforts, and individuals for their leadership on planning issues.

The American Planning Association is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning -- physical, economic and social -- so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. Members of APA help create communities of lasting value and encourage civic leaders, business interests and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives. APA has offices in Washington, D.C., and Chicago, Ill. For more information, visit www.planning.org.

Department of City Planning

The Department of City Planning (DCP) promotes strategic growth, transit-oriented development, and sustainable communities in the City, in part by initiating comprehensive, consensus-based planning and zoning changes for individual neighborhoods and business districts, as well as establishing policies and zoning regulations applicable citywide. 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, waterfront and public space.