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**CONTACT:**

Rachaele Raynoff (DCP) (212) 720-3471

**CITY PLANNING INTRODUCES NEW PROPOSAL TO ENLIVEN WATER STREET**

January 24, 2011 – City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden today announced a proposed zoning change that would enliven the streetscape of Water Street in Lower Manhattan and make it more economically vibrant. Although Water Street is a main corridor for Lower Manhattan’s financial core, it is a lackluster environment for pedestrians, with underutilized arcades and few active ground-floor uses. The new Lower Manhattan Arcades Modification would encourage public use of this important street by allowing tables and chairs to be located year-round in arcades, giving these spaces a new purpose and providing an amenity to employees and visitors. The proposal would help Water Street become a lively pedestrian corridor connecting visitors from the South Street Seaport area down to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, with outdoor cafes and new signs of life. The text amendment builds on the success of City Planning’s many initiatives to improve the pedestrian realm, and furthers Mayor Bloomberg’s commitment to revitalizing Lower Manhattan.

“Having a lively and attractive pedestrian realm is key to promoting vibrant retail corridors throughout the five boroughs,” said Commissioner Burden. “How New York City looks and feels at the street-level affects how we all experience the city. By allowing tables and chairs to locate in Water Street arcades, this proposal will help the street reach its potential as a vibrant and dynamic place where office workers, residents and tourists will be able to have their lunches, or simply rest and linger, under the shelter of public arcades. It may seem like a small change, but it will greatly enhance the public use of this underutilized street and become an asset to the Lower Manhattan community.”

In some zoning districts throughout New York City, a floor area bonus is given to developments that create public arcades. The area in which this proposed zoning change would apply is generally bounded by Pearl Street, South Street, Fulton Street and Whitehall Street, where 17 of these arcades are located. The zoning text amendment, called the Lower Manhattan Arcades Modification, would allow movable tables and chairs to be located year-round in these arcades, supporting active ground-floor uses such as cafés to help enliven Water Street. The tables and chairs would also serve as a continuous visual cue of seating, possibly with umbrellas, drawing people along Water Street. This will transform the underutilized arcades into attractive and active environments for pedestrians.

This proposal builds on the many streetscape improvements City Planning has implemented since 2002, including greening of parking lots and front yards, mandating street-tree planting for all new developments, allowing sidewalk cafes in Manhattan and creating specific design rules for privately-owned public spaces to ensure they are inviting and well used. These initiatives enhance the goals of PlaNYC, the Mayor’s plan for a greener, greater New York.

The text amendment also adds to the many improvements going on in Lower Manhattan, including the construction of the East River Esplanade South, a 2.5-mile public waterfront esplanade that will transform the once neglected waterfront into an attractive and vibrant destination; the recently completed security and streetscape improvements at the New York Stock Exchange; and the Fulton Nassau Crossroads Program to improve pedestrian and retail conditions along Fulton Street, a major retail corridor. These initiatives further Lower Manhattan’s transformation into a mixed-use, 24/7 neighborhood, where people can live, work, shop and recreate in a walkable, bikeable community.

The [text amendment](#) will now be referred to Manhattan Community Board 1 and the Borough President Scott Stringer’s office for a 60-day review period, followed by a City Planning Commission and City Council review.

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**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.

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