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**MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES NEXT STEPS IN
BATTLE AGAINST OVERDEVELOPMENT ON STATEN ISLAND**

*Staten Island Growth Management Task Force to Address Problems in Commercial Zones;
Mayor Also Kicks Off West Shore Land Use and Transportation Study and Initiates Program to Purchase Vulnerable Sites*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today announced next steps in the battle against overdevelopment on Staten Island, and charged the Staten Island Growth Management Task Force, chaired by Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro and City Planning Director Amanda M. Burden, with the task of evaluating and addressing the pressing issues of development in commercial areas, and charting a course for the 5,700 acres on the Island's West Shore that are currently zoned for manufacturing. The Mayor also announced that the administration would develop a bold, new program to purchase significant sensitive sites in order to safeguard them from development that is at odds with local neighborhoods. The Task Force, which adopted rules last year to curb inappropriate development in residential districts, will address overdevelopment in commercial zones as part of the Administration's aggressive response to the latest challenges to the character of Staten Island. Borough President Molinaro, Councilmembers James Oddo, Andrew Lanza and Michael McMahon, City Planning Director Burden, Special Natural Area District Advisory Committee Chair George Bramwell and Clove Lakes Civic Association President Mary Ann McGowan attended the announcement at the Greenbelt Nature Center.

"As I said in the State of the City, regulating development, and preserving the quality and character of our neighborhoods is one of our Administration's highest priorities," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Staten Islanders should know that their passion for protecting their neighborhoods is matched with equal zeal and dedication by the Department of City Planning, which has worked hand-in-hand with the Mayor's Growth Management Task Force to safeguard Staten Island. Just as we tackled inappropriate development in the Island's low-density residential districts, we will continue the job and find zoning solutions to the assault on its commercial areas. We will also safeguard the future of the West Shore's vast areas by creating a planning framework, including a hard look at the opportunities it offers to improve the Island's transportation network. And when necessary, we will find resources to purchase sites in order to protect them from inappropriate development."

As part of the effort to aggressively find solutions to maintain and enhance the neighborhood character of Staten Island, the Task Force will:

- Consider proposals made by City Planning to appropriately curtail commercial development in 24 areas throughout the borough. These areas are predominantly residential and zoned for one-and two-family houses. Once they are removed, the Lower Density Growth Management rules become applicable (they are not applicable in commercial zones or overlays today).
- Develop new rules for all commercial districts to ensure appropriate commercial development. City Planning will outline issues and suggest approaches specific to different types of commercial areas.
- Hear details of the West Shore transportation and land use study in order to create a planning framework for the area and identify needed transportation infrastructure to improve traffic flow on the Island. City Planning obtained funding from the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council and has prepared background research on the 5,700 acres zoned for manufacturing. A local Advisory Committee will be formed later this month to help guide the work on the West Shore study. The Mayor also directed City Planning to consider the study in its review of any private applications for the area while it is underway.
- Provide a progress report on nine additional downzoning applications. This winter, City Planning will certify the rezoning applications for Tottenville, Eltingville, Tottenville & Great Kills Waterfront proposed by Council Member Lanza. The agency is also working with Lanza on rezonings for Oakwood, Richmond Valley, Bay Terrace, Prince's Bay, and working with North Shore local civics on rezonings for Willowbrook and Westerleigh.

The Task Force will also review proposals by the Department of City Planning for a proposed new text amendment for the South Richmond district, focusing on a minimum lot size of 3,800 square feet for each house in that district.

"I applaud Mayor Bloomberg for reconvening the Growth Management Task Force to continue its important work of reforming the zoning rules affecting Staten Island," said Borough President James Molinaro. "The recent downzonings and zoning text changes have been the most beneficial accomplishments for Staten Island since the closing of the Dump. I am most grateful to the Mayor for his leadership in working with the Staten Island community to control out-of-character development."

"With the immediate reconvening of the Growth Management Task Force, we are sending a message to the people of Staten Island that we recognize that problems with development continue to exist, that significantly more work needs to be done, and most importantly, that we are committed to doing those things, big and small, to save what is left of what is good about this community," said Councilmember Oddo.

"By reconvening the Task Force, the Mayor has once again demonstrated his commitment to join us in protecting Staten Island from reckless and out of character development," said Councilmember Lanza. "This announcement to address commercial zones I believe will finally meet a comprehensive solution to Staten Island's overdevelopment problems and I commend the mayor for acting so swiftly."

"As our struggle against overdevelopment continues, I look forward to redoubling the efforts of the Task Force to ensure common sense development," said Councilmember McMahon. "This renewed effort is a clarion call to review our past efforts and require our commercial areas be developed properly for Islanders and not lay vulnerable to overzealous developers to exploit or ignore the will of the people, at the cost of our infrastructure and quality of life."

"City Planning is already on the case," said City Planning Director Burden. "Having done the groundwork leading up to today's announcement, we are ready to fulfill the Mayor's directive to create zoning solutions for inappropriate development in commercial areas and plan for the future of the West Shore. We heeded the concerns of the Task Force about vulnerable areas and have been diligently working on several fronts to protect the special character of Staten Island. We look forward to working with the Task Force to expand on that work, beginning with our first meeting the week of March 7th."

Today's announcement is the latest in an extensive program that the Bloomberg Administration has spearheaded to protect neighborhood character on Staten Island. Since the Task Force last met in July 2004, City Planning has completed rezonings of the Clove Lakes, Great Kills and Southern Great Kills communities. In February 2005, the City Council adopted stronger Special Natural Area District (SNAD) regulations developed by DCP to ensure that lots with significant natural features such as trees, steep slopes and rock outcroppings will not be damaged by development. Staten Island is one of two areas of the city with such districts. The Greenbelt Nature Conservancy, site of today's announcement, is located in the heart of the Special Natural Area District and is typical of the type of features the special zoning is designed to preserve.

The City Planning Commission also approved several new Bluebelt applications in the past year, and two Bluebelt expansions last month. The Staten Island Bluebelt program provides a unique opportunity for areas of the South Shore and Mid-Island to collect and convey storm water runoff in a natural way that is designed to preserve open space and natural features instead of requiring new costly sewer infrastructure. An application to create the newest Bluebelt on Staten Island, the South Beach Bluebelt, was certified in December 2004.

All of these efforts build upon the Lower Density Growth Management rules, passed in August of 2004, that maintain and enhance the existing neighborhood character of residential districts by reducing the density of new residential development, increasing the parking requirements, mandating adequate front and back yards, and by ensuring better quality site design. The rules include stricter guidelines for developments along private roads. The Mayor announced the formation of the Staten Island Growth Management Task Force in July 2003, and at that time, he directed the Task Force to report back to him within 120 days with concrete recommendations for change. A final report was issued December 2, 2003, meeting that deadline.

 [Map of Staten Island Action Plan](#)

About City Planning

The Department of City Planning is responsible for the City's physical and socioeconomic planning, including land use and environmental review; preparation of plans and policies; and provision of technical assistance and planning information to government agencies, public officials, and community boards.