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CITY PLANNING LAUNCHES PUBLIC REVIEW OF DUMBO REZONING TO PRESERVE SCALE AND ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT IN HISTORIC MIXED-USE LOFT NEIGHBORHOOD

February 17, 2009 – City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden today announced the beginning of public review for a rezoning in the Brooklyn neighborhood of DUMBO, Community District 2 that seeks to build on DUMBO's success and vitality by reinforcing its vibrant mix of light industrial, commercial, local retail and residential uses, while respecting the area's industrial heritage. Building on the success of the 2007 DUMBO Historic District designation by the City's Landmarks Preservation Commission as well as recent City and private rezonings on adjacent blocks, this proposal would foster the residential conversion of existing loft buildings and allow for new mixed-use construction at heights and densities consistent with the historic built context. For the first time in DUMBO, this proposal would map Inclusionary Zoning to provide incentives for the creation and preservation of affordable housing. The proposal advances Mayor Bloomberg's sustainable planning goals by promoting the preservation of neighborhoods with special character while also providing opportunities for modest growth and affordable housing along wide corridors well served by mass transit.

"The DUMBO rezoning will catalyze investment and economic opportunities that complement this unique industrial area, adding new mixed-income housing to a dynamic neighborhood that has become a haven for artists, furniture makers, music and film production, textile design, architectural offices, neighborhood retail, web-design and other design-oriented businesses," said City Planning Commissioner Burden. "Providing predictability, height limits and opportunities for affordable housing will enhance the DUMBO success story of adaptive reuse of its historic loft and warehouse buildings, and make this an even more exciting neighborhood."

The DUMBO neighborhood is located along the East River waterfront largely between the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges in Brooklyn Community Board 2. The 12 block area proposed for rezoning is sandwiched between the Manhattan Bridge and Vinegar Hill, with Jay Street and Bridge Street as its two main north-south corridors. The rezoning area is generally bounded by the Manhattan Bridge and Anchorage Place to the west, John Street and the East River to the north, Bridge Street to the east and Front Street to the south. Jay Street and Bridge Street are its two main north-south corridors and it is well served by subway and bus service.

The rezoning proposal was developed in consultation with Community Board 2, local civic groups and elected officials and in coordination with the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). It would provide for an estimated 891 new units of housing in new and renovated loft buildings and provide regulations to ensure that new development is in keeping with the neighborhood's historic built character.

The rezoning follows LPC's designation of the DUMBO Historic District in December 2007, which was subsequently approved by the City Planning Commission and City Council in 2008. As a result, 25 lots within the proposed rezoning area contain buildings that would be required to undergo LPC review of any proposed alteration or demolition. New buildings would also require LPC approval.

The proposed rezoning would change the current M1-2 and M3-1 manufacturing zoning designations, which neither permit residential use nor have height limits, to mixed-use contextual zoning districts that would better reflect and preserve the unique character of the neighborhood. Moreover, unlike the heavy industrial uses permitted in the M3-1, uses in the mixed use zoning districts would be more compatible with the changing land use patterns. Much of the growth is expected to be in conversions of existing loft buildings.

[Inclusionary Zoning](#) incentives like those established in the Greenpoint-Williamsburg contextual rezoning would encourage the provision of up to 100 units of permanently-affordable housing in new construction in DUMBO in order to help meet Mayor Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace Plan goal of creating over 165,000 units of affordable housing over 10 years. Under the Inclusionary Zoning program, developers would only be able to build the maximum allowable residential floor area if they provide 20 percent of the floor area as permanently affordable housing either on site or off site in new or existing buildings, and they would have to do so within the height limits of the contextual zoning districts. Tax abatements and City, State and Federal financing will provide an added incentive for use of the inclusionary program. The affordable units can be provided either on the same site as the development earning the bonus, or off-site either through new construction or preservation of existing affordable units. Off-site affordable units must be located within the same community district or within a half-mile of the bonused development.

Jay Street corridor

Roughly ten blocks along the Jay Street corridor would be rezoned from manufacturing zoning to an M1-4/R8A (MX-2) mixed-use district which would also allow residential and community facility uses and establishes bulk controls within the area. The proposed M1-4/R8A district permits buildings a maximum streetwall height of 60 to 85 feet and a maximum building height of 120 feet after a 10 foot setback on a wide street or a 15 foot setback on narrow streets. Under the proposed inclusionary zoning, developments in this district would have a maximum base FAR of 5.4 which could be increased to 7.2 FAR with the provision of affordable housing. The mixed-use district also permits 2.0 FAR of commercial and manufacturing and 6.02 FAR of community facility use. The contextual height limits established by the M1-4/R8A district would apply to all new development. Because the existing built FAR on many of the lots within the proposed M1-4/R8A district nearly achieve or exceed the base FAR of 5.4, it is anticipated considerable growth in the area will be in conversions of existing buildings.

Bridge Street corridor

Approximately five blocks along the Bridge Street corridor are proposed to be rezoned to an M1-4/R7A (MX-2) mixed-use district to allow residential and community facility uses with its respective bulk controls. In M1-4/R7A districts, buildings have a maximum streetwall height of 40 to 65 feet and a maximum building height of 80 feet after a 10 foot setback on a wide street or a 15 foot setback on narrow streets. The proposed inclusionary zoning would enable the maximum base FAR of 3.45 to be increased to 4.6 FAR with the provision of affordable housing. The mixed-use district also permits 2.0 FAR of commercial and manufacturing and 4.0 FAR of community facility use. The contextual height limits established by the M1-4/R7A district would apply to all new development. Here, too, the existing built FAR on many of the lots within the proposed M1-4/R7A district nearly achieve or exceed the base FAR of 3.45, so it is anticipated the rezoning will encourage conversions of existing buildings.

The proposed mixed-use zoning would allow existing businesses to remain and expand. No changes are proposed to the manufacturing zoning covering active industrial land to the east, on blocks adjacent to the ConEd Substation, and the Brooklyn Navy Yard, two blocks east of the rezoning area, where businesses may continue to expand.

The proposed rezoning plan builds on the success of six previous private and Department of City Planning (DCP) rezonings in the past ten years in the surrounding and adjacent areas that have increased the mixed-use character of the neighborhood. Together, these actions have generated over 900 new residential units with the capacity for creation of an additional 900 units in the future.

Public Review

The DUMBO rezoning will now be reviewed by Brooklyn Community Board 2, 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.

Department of 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.