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CITY PLANNING BEGINS PUBLIC REVIEW TO BRING ZONING PROTECTIONS TO 250 BLOCKS IN CANARSIE, BROOKLYN

*Proposal Would Protect and Preserve the Low-Scale Character of the Community
Largest Rezoning Undertaken by the Bloomberg Administration in Brooklyn*

February 17, 2009 – City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden today announced the beginning of the public review to update the zoning for the first time in 47 years for the Brooklyn neighborhood of Canarsie. Undertaken at the request of Council Member Lew Fidler, Community Board 18 and local civic groups, the sensitively-tailored, 250-block contextual rezoning would be the largest rezoning under the Bloomberg Administration in Brooklyn. The proposal underscores the Bloomberg Administration's neighborhood preservation and sustainable planning strategy and would protect Canarsie's neighborhood character and strengthen its retail corridors.

"The Bloomberg Administration recognizes that New York's lower density neighborhoods are vital to the city's health; since 2002, 12 neighborhoods in Brooklyn covering over 1100 blocks have been rezoned by City Planning to protect and enhance lower density character," said Commissioner Burden. "Our strategy, which relies heavily on community consensus building, is exemplified by today's milestone for the 250-block rezoning of Canarsie. In some instances, the existing zoning in Canarsie has led to out-of-scale buildings and higher density development that undermines the quality of life. Our proposal will protect Canarsie's low-scale built form, implementing zoning that better reflects the distinctive character of this quiet, residential community."

The rezoning area is generally bounded Foster Avenue to the north, Fresh Creek Basin and E. 108th Street to the east, the Belt Parkway and Seaview Avenue to the south and Paerdegat Basin and Paerdegat Avenue North to the west. The existing built character is predominantly low-rise with residential blocks one- to three-stories in height and commercial or mixed use buildings along retail corridors (Rockaway Parkway, Flatlands Avenue and Avenue L) containing a mix of one- story commercial buildings and one- to four-story, mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail.

The existing R4 and R5 zoning districts mapped throughout Canarsie currently permit all housing types, including small multi-family buildings. In recent years, the neighborhood has been experiencing development pressure and new development has been inconsistent with the prevailing scale, density and built character of many blocks. As a consequence of this development activity, the community is concerned with an increased frequency of one- and two-family homes being replaced with new, attached multi-family developments eroding the character of one- and two-family home blocks.

The fine-tuned zoning changes would:

- Preserve the existing scale and character of Canarsie's predominantly low-rise residential blocks, by rezoning portions of approximately 155 blocks within the rezoning area to be limited to one- and two-family homes (R3-1, R3X, R4A and R4-1) and lowering the permitted density of new buildings on portions of approximately 33 blocks (R4).
- Strengthen Canarsie's commercial shopping corridors, wide streets and areas close to transit. Existing zoning along Rockaway Parkway, Flatlands Avenue and Avenue L would be replaced with the moderate-density contextual zoning district R5D. Together with commercial 'overlay' zones, mixed-use buildings with stores on the ground floor and apartments above would be allowed with heights capped at four stories.
- Commercial 'overlay' zones (zoning districts that permit local retail and services) would be mapped or modified to better reflect the existing commercial retail and service uses along these shopping corridors and prevent such uses from encroaching on residential side streets.

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.

Department of City Planning

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