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**PUBLIC REVIEW STARTS FOR CITY PLANNING'S WOODHAVEN AND RICHMOND HILL REZONING**

February 27, 2012 – City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden today announced the beginning of public review for a 229-block rezoning in the Woodhaven and Richmond Hill neighborhoods in central Queens. The proposed rezoning would reinforce the area's one- and two-family residential character with contextual zoning, and direct new mixed-use development opportunities to major corridors, including Jamaica and Atlantic Avenues. The proposal would also update commercial overlay zones to support economic development along commercial corridors and ensure that business uses won't encroach on residential uses on area side-streets. The rezoning proposal was crafted in response to concerns raised by Community Board 9, local civic organizations and local elected officials about out-of-character development. Zoning in these neighborhood areas has not been examined since the Zoning Resolution was adopted in 1961.

Commissioner Burden said, "The Woodhaven and Richmond Hill neighborhoods in Queens are characterized by very appealing one- and two-family wood-frame homes built in a variety of traditional styles. The neighborhoods have seen their populations grow in recent years but due to antiquated zoning, they are experiencing growth in the wrong places. Numerous homes have been demolished and replaced with out-of-character buildings, while major corridors that have access to transit and can accommodate growth have not seen development opportunities. This rezoning proposal will protect the low-density residential character and direct new mixed-use development to the major corridors of Jamaica and Atlantic Avenues."

City Council Member Eric Ulrich said, "The Woodhaven and Richmond Hill rezoning plan represents a balanced approach to city planning. This proposal will preserve the residential character of these communities and allow for modest growth along our major shopping corridors, Jamaica and Atlantic Avenues. I congratulate Community Board 9, City Planning Commissioner Burden and my colleagues in the City Council for their work on this proposal."

City Council Member Elizabeth Crowley said, "The rezoning of Woodhaven and Richmond Hill will strengthen the neighborhoods' appearance by preserving its characteristic one and two family homes. The new zoning plan will also encourage economic growth along the commercial areas on Jamaica and Atlantic Avenues. I want to thank the Department of City Planning and community leaders for making rezoning a key priority in the neighborhood."

City Council Member Ruben Willis said, "This rezoning will bring much needed protections by maintaining the residential character of Woodhaven and Richmond Hill. In tandem, the new rezoning rules have made allowances for the rapid growth of these neighborhoods by encouraging development along the wider commercial corridor of Atlantic Avenue where it can be best accommodated."

City Council Member Karen Koslowitz said, "I applaud the work of the City Planning Department and the community in keeping the integrity and character of the neighborhoods intact as the public review begins for the rezoning of Woodhaven and Richmond Hill. It is important that the rezoning allows for responsible growth and development of these areas."

Queens Community Board 9 Chair Andrea Crawford said, "CB9 is delighted and thankful that the character of these two unique communities will be preserved for future generations. With appropriate zoning that allows for growth along the wide commercial corridors, Richmond Hill and Woodhaven will be able to safely accommodate the growing population coming to these communities. Additionally by stabilizing the zoning that encompasses single and two family homes, the current practice of tearing these homes down is decertified, thus stabilizing and preserving the vitality and balance of these communities. It is this type of a balanced and rational approach to zoning that preserves our neighborhoods and supports appropriate growth."

The rezoning area is generally bounded by Park Lane to the north, 103rd Avenue to the south, Eldert Lane to the west, and the Van Wyck Expressway to the east. The rezoning area has two distinct commercial corridors – Jamaica Avenue and Atlantic Avenue – which are well-served by transit, including the elevated J/Z train above Jamaica Avenue and numerous bus lines.

Because of the outdated residential zoning districts (R3-1 and R5), recent development has caused the demolition of detached one- and two-family houses, resulting in semi-detached, attached, and multi-family buildings that do not match the area's built character. The proposed fine-grained rezoning plan addresses community concerns with new lower-density and contextual zoning districts (R3A, R3X, R4A, R4-1, and R4B) to preserve the one- and two-family residential development patterns that characterize these neighborhoods. The proposed contextual zoning strategy is intended to protect the character of Woodhaven and Richmond Hill's residential blocks and ensure that future residential

development is predictable and consistent with the surrounding neighborhood's building patterns.

The proposed rezoning will also provide opportunities for moderate growth in select locations along wider corridors where it could reinforce and strengthen already established mixed-use areas.

Jamaica Avenue serves as Woodhaven's primary shopping corridor. Jamaica Avenue is well-served by transit, including the elevated J/Z trains and numerous bus lines. To foster new moderate-density mixed-use development, with ground-floor retail and offices with apartments above, this proposal would rezone Jamaica Avenue, between Eldert Lane and 102nd Street, to R6A with C1-4 and C2-4 commercial overlays. This new proposed zoning is an extension of the 2005 Kew Gardens-Richmond Hill rezoning, which rezoned a portion of Jamaica Avenue to the east of this proposed rezoning area to R6A. R6A districts have a maximum building height of 70 feet, after a required set-back above a maximum base height of 60 feet.

To promote similar new moderate-density mixed-use development along Atlantic Avenue, a busy 120-foot wide street that serves as Richmond Hill's primary shopping corridor, R6A with a C2-3 commercial overlay is proposed between 104th Street and 121st Street. The depth of the commercial overlays on Jamaica and Atlantic Avenues will be reduced from 150 to 100 feet to prevent commercial uses from encroaching onto residential streets.

A new C2-3 commercial overlay is also proposed for a portion of Lefferts Boulevard south of Jamaica Avenue where existing commercial uses are located, but don't conform to existing residential zoning. This change will bring these commercial uses into conformance, provide predictability for residents and business owners and allow a range of businesses to locate there and provide services to the surrounding community.

Community Board 9 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 time line, please visit the [DCP website](#).

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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.