

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER AMANDA M. BURDEN REGARDING THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION'S UNANIMOUS APPROVAL OF TWO PLANYC INITIATIVES AIMED AT GREENING THE CITY AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT**

March 25, 2008 – The City Planning Commission this week approved [two innovative proposals](#) from the Department to encourage the greening of our city. One will require mandatory street tree planting for new developments which will generate an estimated 10,000 street trees a year, helping to achieve the Mayor's Million Tree goal. The other will prevent paving over of front yards. Over time these two green initiatives are likely to change the face of the city more than any single project.

As part of the Mayor's PLANYC 2030 Sustainability Plan, we're greening the city wherever we can. Together with our new, already-adopted requirements for landscaping of commercial parking lots, this "trifecta of green initiatives" will cool the air, absorb greenhouse gas emissions, relieve storm sewers, and improve our quality of life.

Under the changes the Commission approved, one street tree must be planted for every 25 feet of street frontage of a zoning lot. This applies to new developments, major enlargements, and certain use conversions, in all zoning districts throughout the city. The proposal would also establish requirements for sidewalk planting strips in lower density residential districts.

Another change approved by the Commission will prevent excessive paving of front yards by requiring a minimum percentage of all front yards in lower density neighborhoods to be landscaped. This is a significant measure in that lower density districts comprise roughly 70 percent of the City's residentially zoned districts. These new rules also encourage rear yard garages in order to maximize planting area in the front yard. And they provide predictability regarding side and rear yards to ensure that all homes have adequate open spaces. The changes will improve the quality and quantity of open spaces in these areas – thereby improving the environment of the city we will leave our children.

Green spaces do a much better job of delaying, detaining and infiltrating storm water run off than pavement, absorbing between half to two thirds of the storm water where paved surfaces would shed between 90 to 100 percent.

We hope both green initiatives will be adopted by the City Council in time for spring planting season. What better way to mark Million Tree month in April, which is part of Mayor Bloomberg's plan to plant a million trees city wide in conjunction with PlaNYC!

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**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.