

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21st, 2008

CONTACT:

Rachaele Raynoff, Press Secretary -- (212) 720-3471

CITY PLANNING PROPOSAL TO PROTECT 280 BLOCKS OF THE ROCKAWAY PENINSULA BEGINS PUBLIC REVIEW

Proposal Would Protect Famed Bungalows and Establish Low-Scale Framework to Preserve Built Character

April 21, 2008 – City Planning Director Amanda M. Burden today announced the beginning of public review for the Department’s comprehensive rezoning proposal of 280 blocks of the Rockaway Peninsula extending more than six-miles in Queens Community District 14. The proposed contextual rezoning represents a careful block-by-block approach that reinforces and protects the special character of five Rockaway neighborhoods -- Far Rockaway, Edgemere, Somerville, Rockaway Park and Rockaway Beach. Developed with extensive outreach and input from elected officials, Community Board 14 and local civic associations, the proposal augments the Bloomberg Administration’s commitment to curb overdevelopment in the city’s primarily lower density communities. The proposed zoning changes would protect the scale of the peninsula’s distinctive housing stock, including nearly 200 of Rockaway’s famed bungalows as well as blocks containing one- and two-family homes. The proposal would also provide for moderate retail and housing opportunities in select locations near transit and establish new regulations to address parking demand generated by new development.

“The Rockaway peninsula has evolved from a summertime destination to a series of unique and varied oceanfront communities, but today’s zoning is outdated and does not relate to the area’s existing built character,” said Commissioner Burden. “Working closely with the community, we have developed a comprehensive proposal that reflects and enhances the Rockaway’s magnificent seashore location and protects the beloved Rockaway bungalows.”

In recent years there has been a rapid increase in new development on the Rockaway peninsula, buoyed by the success of the Arverne-by-the-Sea project and the desirability of living at or near the city’s oceanfront. Much of the development, however, has been out of context with the existing neighborhoods due to outdated zoning that has remained since 1961. The area’s R3, R4, R5 and R6 residential districts allow a variety of multi-family apartments and housing types that are inconsistent with the area’s prevailing lower scale, density and built character.

The proposed rezoning extends from Beach 129th Street to the border of the Queens and Nassau County line and would:

- Establish low-scale framework to protect and reinforce established building scale. In areas primarily containing one- and two-family homes, including the Rockaway’s emblematic oceanside bungalows the proposal would rezone approximately 245 blocks with lower density contextual zoning districts (R3A, R3X, R4, R4A, R4B, R4-1, R5 R5A, and R5B) to protect neighborhood character.
- Enhance yards, open space and streetscapes. The proposed lower-density contextual districts would ensure the provision of much needed front and side yards, street trees and sidewalk planting strips. Current R6 zoning has limited requirements for yards.
- Address community concerns for additional accessory parking requirements in auto dependent locations. The proposal would increase accessory residential parking requirements for new developments zoned R6 and above throughout Community District 14 from one accessory parking space for 50% or 70% of total dwelling units to one accessory space for 85% of the dwelling units.
- Provide zoning flexibility for residents to enlarge their one-family homes in a 22-block portion of Far Rockaway where the zoning is proposed to be changed from R2 to R2X. Currently mapped only in Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn, the proposed R2X zoning would allow more floor area and lot coverage for detached single-family residences.
- Allow for additional locations along primary streets for retail and service establishments and provide for a mix of residential and commercial activities by updating commercial overlays throughout the peninsula.
- In very select locations allow for moderate growth to spur reinvestment while strengthening the existing context along wide streets and in areas close to transit through modest contextual zoning (R5D, R6A, R7A and C4-3A).

The proposal builds upon contextual zoning changes in the [Far Rockaway and Mott Creek](#) community approved in September 2005 and the [Bayswater](#) neighborhood approved in April 2006, both of which adjoin portions of the current rezoning area. The rezoning would also enhance the City's efforts currently underway for residential and economic improvements in an adjoining portion of Arverne known as Arverne East, for which the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, working with the community and elected officials, developed a master plan and selected a development team in November 2006. Arverne East will consist of 47-acres of housing and commercial space, a 35-acre nature preserve and a 15-acre dune preserve. Nearly 1,600 units of middle-income housing, consisting of condominiums, two- and three-family homes, will be built with a percentage of the units reserved for moderate-income households.

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

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.