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**NYC DOT, CITY PLANNING AND COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK ANNOUNCE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS FOR EAST MIDTOWN STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS**

*East Midtown Public Realm Vision Plan builds on Rezoning proposal to address community and elected official requests for world-class streets and public spaces*

New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan and the Department of City Planning (DCP) Commissioner Amanda Burden today announced the selection of the international team of the Jonathan Rose Company, Gehl Architects and Skanska to lead the City's public planning and design process for the *East Midtown Public Realm Vision Plan*, a blueprint for re-envisioning world-class streets for one of City's premier commercial districts. The consultant is being contracted in response to requests by Council Member Daniel Garodnick and by the Community Board led East Midtown Task Force, which is seeking "a comprehensive plan describing specific improvements to the East Midtown streetscape that will make the area a desirable place to live, work, pass through and visit." The new consultant team will lead three public workshops in the spring and summer to facilitate discussions with local stakeholders and identify priorities and preferred approaches to enhance the public realm in this area, such as landscaping and public seating, among other treatments.

"East Midtown's much-needed street makeover will reinvigorate its streets, bringing them into the 21st century and worthy of one of the busiest transit-oriented commercial districts in the world," Commissioner Sadik-Khan said. "Building on DOT's Sustainable Streets strategic plan, Street Design Manual and World Class Streets study, this plan sets a path forward to engineering safer, more sustainable and inviting streets to walk, shop and work."

"Today's announcement of the selection of the Jonathan Rose Company and Gehl Architects to produce a comprehensive public realm vision plan signals the City's continuing commitment to working with the community to build on East Midtown's iconic character," said Commissioner Burden. "We believe that an extraordinary public realm is key to the continued success of a globally competitive business district. And we heard Council Member Garodnick and community leaders loud and clear when they called for a detailed vision for street level improvements as well as to the pedestrian and subway network beneath and around Grand Central. We are excited about this key partnership and believe the process will complement the rezoning already underway."

"From the beginning, we told the City that a comprehensive public realm plan was a crucial piece of this proposed rezoning," said Council Member Dan Garodnick. "In order to achieve a Class A office district, we need more than just new office towers. My colleagues and I asked the City to approach the public realm with the same level of detail that they studied other elements of this proposal. And, to their credit, the City heard our calls and responded. I am pleased that they will bring on a consultant to engage the community in identifying the areas that need attention, and look forward to this analysis."

The consultants will distill insights and findings from the public discussions and other meetings with local stakeholders to produce the East Midtown Public Realm Vision Plan, expected to be released in fall 2013. The Plan will serve as a guide and feature design tools and action-oriented strategies for improving pedestrian access and other streetscape enhancements to encourage walking and active transportation. Better street designs can significantly improve quality of life and positively affect local businesses.

The Vision Plan complements DCP's proposed rezoning of a 73-block area of East Midtown that is designed to ensure the area's future as a world-class business district and major job generator for New York City for years to come. The rezoning would provide incentives to develop a handful of Class A office buildings in East Midtown, ensuring the area remains attractive to a broad range of businesses and corporate tenants. Utilizing a District Improvement Bonus (DIB) zoning mechanism, qualifying new commercial building sites would be allowed to achieve higher densities through contributions to a District Improvement Fund (DIF), a city-controlled fund dedicated to transit and pedestrian network improvements over the next two decades. Based on development projections, this DIF has the potential to generate over half a billion dollars for improvements over the next two decades as new buildings utilizing the DIB are developed. In addition to improvements to the Grand Central subway station, the DIF created by the East Midtown rezoning would facilitate significant streetscape and pedestrian circulation improvements over time. The Vision Plan would serve as a guide for the street level improvements in East Midtown to be funded by the DIF. The rezoning proposal began the City's official public review process (ULURP) on April 22, 2013.

For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dot](http://nyc.gov/dot) or [nyc.gov/dcp](http://nyc.gov/dcp).

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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.