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CITY PLANNING LAUNCHES PUBLIC REVIEW FOR DUTCH KILLS REZONING

Plan Would Reinforce Scale of Mixed-Use Neighborhood, Promote New and Affordable Housing

May 19, 2008 - A long anticipated rezoning to preserve the existing scale and reinforce the mixed-use character of the western Queens neighborhood of Dutch Kills began public review today, City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden announced. This detailed rezoning proposal, developed in concert with community groups and elected officials, would provide more appropriate densities for a wide range of land uses consistent with the uses and scale of the existing community and allow residents to expand their homes. Along the Northern Boulevard corridor which is well served by bus and subway lines the proposal would promote new and affordable housing opportunities. Consistent with Mayor Bloomberg's sustainable planning strategy, the proposed zoning seeks to encourage appropriate, transit-oriented development while supporting the unique mixed-use character and scale of a neighborhood that is located just north of Queens Plaza and the Long Island City core.

"This complex rezoning will achieve multiple goals advocated by many stakeholders in Dutch Kills, including preserving their lower scale neighborhood, and giving residential property owners flexibility they do not have today while continuing to provide for light industrial businesses," said Commissioner Burden. "It would also prohibit inappropriate and out-of-scale development and channel new development to Northern Blvd with new and affordable housing using our inclusionary zoning."

The rezoning area encompasses 40 blocks located north of Queens Plaza and west of Sunnyside Yards, generally bounded by 36th Avenue on the north, Northern Boulevard on the east, 41st Avenue on the south, and 23rd Street on the west. The rezoning area is highly accessible by mass transit and is served by eight subway lines including the E, R, V, G and #7 trains at Queens Plaza, the N and W elevated trains along 31st Street, the F train at Queensbridge Houses and five bus lines.

Dutch Kills is a mixed-use community with residential uses primarily located in the center of the rezoning area. On these blocks, one-and two-family homes occupy the mid-blocks, while multi-family walk-up buildings of up to five stories are scattered along the avenues. Some light industrial uses also occupy one-and two-story light manufacturing buildings interspersed among the residences. Warehouses and commercial office buildings along with vacant and underutilized land characterize Northern Boulevard, a primary thoroughfare that is in the eastern edge of the rezoning area.

The existing M1-3D District, which encompasses 36 blocks of Dutch Kills, was established in 1989 to legalize pre-existing residences, but the zone severely limits new residential developments or enlargements. M1-3D zoning also permits commercial and light manufacturing uses at densities three times greater than residential uses are allowed and the zone has no fixed height limit. In recent months, the construction of several high-rise hotel buildings from nine to sixteen stories has increased community concerns about the incompatible development allowed by the current M1-3D zoning. The rezoning area also includes four mostly residential blocks north of 37th Avenue currently in an M1-1 District, a low-density manufacturing district which does not permit residential uses.

The rezoning would designate most of the rezoning area with four mixed-use (MX) zoning districts - M1-2/R5B, M1-2/R5D, M1-2/R6A and M1-3/R7X – carefully tailored to set height limits closely matched to the scale of each area of the rezoning. In addition, the proposal would remove current restrictions on residential development and conversions and provide incentives to promote affordable housing largely in the area along and adjoining Northern Boulevard. More than 1,500 housing units, of which roughly 190 units would be affordable, are projected to be developed over a 10-year time period.

Specifically, City Planning's proposal, which reflects continuing consultation with the Dutch Kills Civic Association, Community Board 1 and Council member Eric Gioia's office, would:

- Protect the established neighborhood scale by introducing a blend of contextual mixed-use zoning districts for the rezoning area (for the lower rise areas: M1-2/R5B zoning along mid-blocks and M1-2/R5D on the avenues where residential development would be permitted with height limits of 33 and 40 feet respectively; and in areas with existing multi-family buildings near the N and W lines, M1-2/R6A zoning with a height limit of 70 feet). These mixed-use districts would foster a variety of uses including residential, commercial, light industrial and community facilities.

- On 11 blocks or block portions along Northern Boulevard, new housing opportunities would be fostered through M1-3/R7X zoning with a height limit of 125 feet. Under the [inclusionary housing program](#), buildings can only achieve the maximum 5.0 allowed density if they provide 20 percent of their floor area as permanently affordable housing, subject to the 125 foot overall height limit. Tax abatements and public financing provide an added incentive for use of the inclusionary program.
- Require new buildings to line up at the street line with neighboring structures, in keeping with the traditional built character of the neighborhood.
- Ensure that the maximum floor area for community facilities and commercial uses more closely matches the allowable floor area for residential uses, and in the M1-2/R6A and M1-3/R7X have such uses follow the same height limits that apply to residential uses.

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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