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CITY PLANNING KICKS OFF REVIEW OF EAST FORDHAM ROAD REZONING

May 20, 2013 – City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden today launched the official public review of the Department's proposed rezoning of a 12-block area along East Fordham Road, a major east-west thoroughfare in the Belmont section of the central Bronx. As part of the City's economic development strategy of strengthening commercial districts city-wide, this rezoning is designed to create new opportunities for growth while reinforcing the commercial character and vibrancy of East Fordham Road, and extend the success of the borough's busiest retail district eastward. It would also create a stronger commercial connection to the heart of nearby Belmont, The Bronx's Little Italy, and promote new and affordable housing along East Fordham Road. The rezoning area abuts some of the City's most popular tourist attractions, the Bronx Zoo and New York Botanical Garden, as well as Fordham University. Development under the proposed zoning could also capitalize on the \$26 million reconstruction of the Fordham Plaza transit hub to the west, a Metro-North station where numerous bus lines intersect.

Commissioner Burden said, "With our proposed rezoning, East Fordham Road is positioned to become a great gateway to the central Bronx with a lively mix of uses and a more unified look and feel. The rezoning will build on recent public and private investment nearby, facilitating new, predictable and appropriately scaled development that meets the sidewalk -- thus creating new economic and housing opportunities along a far more walkable, vibrant and welcoming pedestrian street. This plan is the result of collaboration with Bronx Community Board 6, local elected officials, and the institutions that anchor this area of The Bronx."

The rezoning area is generally bounded by East 187th Street to the south, East 191st Street to the North, Southern Boulevard to the east and Bathgate Avenue to the west. It complements the Department of City Planning's (DCP) Third Avenue and Webster Avenue rezonings, each of which strengthened those corridors by allowing for commercial and residential development.

The majority of the rezoning area concentrated along East Fordham Road between Bathgate Avenue and Southern Boulevard is zoned C8-1 which is generally intended for low scale auto and heavy commercial uses. Auto dealerships, repair shops and automotive retail establishments were once the predominant land use in the area but have declined over time. In recent years, new development along this section of East Fordham Road has been limited to one to three story retail or medical-related facilities. This is in stark contrast to the bustling retail portion of the corridor to the west.

In order to promote a vibrant mix of commercial, residential and community facility uses that are appropriate for a wide street with good mass transit access, the C8-1 zoning district would be replaced with a C4-5D zoning district. The C4-5D increases the allowable floor area for these uses, and establishes height limits.

Buildings would be required to line up at the street line with a street wall of 60 to 85 feet in height before setting back, and would have a maximum building height of 100 feet or roughly ten stories. The proposed zoning would also require that ground floor uses in new developments be non-residential, and could include retail, offices and community facilities. In addition, new developments would also be required to provide glazing or other transparent treatments at the ground floor. Shops and offices with glass storefronts, instead of blank walls, remove the barrier between the pedestrian and the activities inside, fostering an engaging pedestrian environment and a vibrant streetscape.

To incentivize affordable housing the Inclusionary Housing Program would be established within the C4-5D zoning district giving developers a 33% floor area bonus in exchange for the 20% of the floor area being made available for permanently affordable housing. Under the Inclusionary Housing program, developers only receive a floor area bonus to build the maximum allowable residential floor area if they provide permanently affordable housing either on site or off site in new or existing buildings. All new buildings, including those utilizing the bonus, would have to comply with the new height limits. Off-site affordable units must be located within Bronx Community District 6 or within a half-mile of the site receiving the bonus. Other city, state and federal housing finance programs may be used to provide further assistance in creation of affordable units. The combination of a zoning bonus with housing finance programs establishes a powerful and proven incentive for the development and preservation of affordable housing.

Reinforce Neighborhood Retail Streets

New commercial overlays are proposed along Arthur Avenue from East 187th Street to East Fordham Road to reflect the existing neighborhood retail character and to facilitate expansion of commercial properties where appropriate. This area, The Bronx's Little Italy, is famous for its small town character, butchers, pasta and pastry shops and old-world cafes as well as the Arthur Avenue Retail Market.

Neighborhood Preservation

The plan would also protect the character of low and medium scale residential blocks abutting East Fordham Road where existing zoning permits out-of-character development. New residential zoning districts are proposed to ensure that future development matches the predominant building types and uses in these areas.

Public Review

The proposed rezoning will now be reviewed by Bronx Community Board 6, 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 (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.