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CITY PLANNING BEGINS PUBLIC REVIEW FOR 418-BLOCK REZONING OF AUBURNDALE, OAKLAND GARDENS AND HOLLIS HILLS

Proposal would preserve neighborhood character and limit appropriate growth to major corridors

May 24, 2010 – City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden today announced the beginning of public review for City Planning’s largest rezoning to date, a proposal for more than 400 blocks in Auburndale, Oakland Gardens and Hollis Hills in northeast Queens. The proposed rezoning would reinforce neighborhood character by protecting one- and two-family homes and preventing out-of-scale development. The proposal would also update zoning to reinforce commercial uses along wide corridors but prevent them from intruding on residential blocks. The rezoning was developed in response to community concerns about out-of-character development.

“Our City’s residential districts have long been threatened by inappropriate development due to out-of-date zoning. Since 2002, we have been correcting this by introducing contextual zoning to preserve the unique character of each neighborhood,” said Commissioner Burden. “This rezoning proposal will ensure that the many quiet blocks of Auburndale, Oakland Gardens and Hollis Hills that are lined with one- and two-family homes are protected, that future development is predictable, and that moderate density development is limited to wide streets.”

“The administration and I agree on the need to downzone Auburndale to preserve its single-family residential character. And I share the concerns of residents regarding the effects that commercial truck noise and heavy industrial businesses on Station Road have on neighborhood quality of life,” said Council Member Daniel J. Halloran. “I am working with the Mayor, the Department of City Planning and the residents of Auburndale to address these critical issues and also maintain the unique integrity of Auburndale, the neighborhood where I grew up.”

“The owners of single-family homes in Oakland Gardens and Hollis Hills have waited a long time for this downzoning,” said Council Member Mark S. Weprin. “The change from R2 to R2A in these areas will help to combat overdevelopment and maintain the housing types that residents sought when they moved here.”

Council Member Peter Koo said, “I would like to thank my colleagues in government, the City Planning Commission and members of the community for all the hard work to make this rezoning a reality for residents of Auburndale, Oakland Gardens and Hollis Hills. This rezoning will protect the one- and two-family homes and prevent commercial uses from encroaching on residential streets. A rezoning of this size inherently raises community concerns and issues that need to be addressed. I am confident however, that working together with elected officials, the City Planning Commission and local residents we can realize a community rezoning of which we can all be proud.”

Auburndale, Oakland Gardens and Hollis Hills are predominantly residential communities with a variety of housing types, including one and two-family detached and semi-detached homes, with six- and seven-story apartments in certain areas. There are also commercial and retail stretches along major thoroughfares, such as Northern Boulevard, Springfield Boulevard and Bell Boulevard. These communities are largely auto-dependent, and accessible by the Long Island Expressway, Clearview Expressway, and Grand Central Parkway.

The rezoning proposal is split into two sections: Auburndale and Oakland Gardens-Hollis Hills. The Auburndale area is generally bounded by the Long Island Expressway to the south, by Francis Lewis Boulevard, Rocky Hill Road, and 208th Street to the west, by Station Road to the north, and by 164th and 166th Streets to the west. In addition, it includes several blocks near Kissena Park bounded by Laburnum and Holly Avenues to the north, Burling and Robinson Streets to the west, Rose and Oak Avenues to the south, and 164th Street to the east. In Auburndale:

- R2, the predominant zoning district in Auburndale, would be replaced with R2A to protect the character of single-family, detached homes and set a building height limit of 35 feet.
- R3-2 districts would be replaced with R2A, R3X, R3-1 and R4-1 to more closely reflect patterns of single-family or one- and two-family housing.
- R5 zoning would be replaced with R4 and R4B districts to decrease the maximum allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR), and lower the building heights from 40 feet to 35 and 24 feet, respectively.

The Oakland Gardens-Hollis Hills section is generally bounded by the Clearview Expressway to the west, the Long Island Expressway to the north, and Alley Pond Park and Grand Central Parkway to the east and south. In addition, the section includes several blocks located north of the Long Island Expressway extending to 56th Avenue and between Springfield and East Hampton Boulevards. In Oakland Gardens-Hollis Hills:

- R1-2 and R2 zoning would be replaced with R1-2A and R2A to establish a building height limit of 35 feet in these single-family housing areas.
- R3-1 zoning would be replaced with R2A and R3X to prevent semi-detached homes from being built on blocks consisting primarily of detached houses.
- R3-2 districts allow all housing types, so they would generally be replaced with R2A, R3X, R3-1 and R4-1 to match the existing single-family or one- and two-family built character.
- R4 zoning would be replaced by R4-1 to reflect the existing character of one- and two-family, semi-detached houses. New R5D zoning would replace portions of R3-2 and R4 districts that are developed with six-story apartment buildings along wide streets such as Bell and Springfield Boulevards.

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 time line, please visit the [DCP website](#).

Department of City Planning

The Department of City Planning (DCP) promotes strategic growth and development in the City, in part, by initiating comprehensive, consensus-based planning and zoning changes for individual neighborhoods and business districts. 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 and public space.