

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATEMENT BY CITY PLANNING COMMISSION (CPC) CHAIR AMANDA M. BURDEN AT THE CPC VOTE ON THE CITY'S CONEY ISLAND REZONING**

June 17, 2009 – Today is a major milestone in the Bloomberg Administration's comprehensive plan for Coney Island. At this critical juncture, with the amusements shrinking and the peninsula strewn with vacant lots our vote today advances our only opportunity to help Coney Island reclaim its mantle as the world's greatest open, affordable and accessible, urban amusement park. It will also make possible the revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood, where jobs and housing that are so sorely needed have been lacking for decades.

This plan before us is the result of hundreds of meetings with local residents, businesses and elected officials, amusement industry professionals and property owners.

Designed to meet multiple and diverse needs, our plan does justice to the area's illustrious past and gives it the best chance for an equally celebrated future. Above all, it is comprehensive and doable.

The City's plan will catalyze the development of a 27-acre amusement and entertainment district, with a 12-acre urban amusement park as its centerpiece. We are mapping the core amusement area as parkland, to forever ensure that Coney Island's amusements are protected. And, in the vacant and underutilized land outside of the amusement area, it will provide opportunities for 4,500 new units of housing, including affordable housing, and a broad range of neighborhood retail and services that the Coney Island community has lacked for decades. With the 6,000 permanent and 20,000 construction jobs it will result in, the Coney Island plan is a key component of the Mayor's Five Borough Economic Opportunity Plan.

As always is the case, public review helps to improve and refine our plans. Some refinements have already been made response to comments from the Community Board and Borough President's public meetings and through our ongoing public outreach. On April 9, the Department submitted an Alternative Zoning Text or "A" text application to enhance the goals of the Coney Island Plan.

The "A text" revisions strengthen the ground-floor requirements for traditional amusement uses--such as arcades, games of chance and rides-- to maintain Coney Island's one-of-a-kind amusement character in the Coney East amusement and entertainment district. We've also reduced the height limits for building streetwalls along Surf Avenue in Coney East to ensure direct visibility to the amusement park and boardwalk upon arrival in Coney Island.

Since the City Planning Commission's public hearing on May 6th, the Department has recommended additional modifications; these include increasing the amusement requirements in Coney East, as well as innovative text changes for floodplain mitigation measures to enhance the Coney Island streetscape. Other modifications include refinements of the text to encourage extraordinary design as well as the integration of Coney's historic icons in the future development.

We believe that these modifications strengthen the [rezoning proposal](#) and enhance this comprehensive, long range strategy to preserve and grow Coney Island as a one-of-a-kind urban amusement area to help secure the area's economy, and, very importantly, to provide housing and employment opportunities for its residents.

The timing could not be more urgent. Without action and investment in Coney Island today, we will have lost a true New York City icon forever. This carefully crafted framework for development will support Coney Island as an economic driver for all of South Brooklyn, protect and enhance the historic amusements and create opportunities for the next generation.

This complex plan was made possible by a tremendous interagency effort. City Planning has been working closely with the Economic Development Corporation, the Departments of Housing Preservation and Development, Parks and Recreation, Environmental Protection, Small Business Services, Landmarks Preservation Commission Transportation and Buildings and many more, ably coordinated by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development. The Department will continue to work closely with the interagency group coordinated by Deputy Mayor Lieber as we seek to address issues of concern to local elected officials and other stakeholders.

The Coney Island Plan has been shaped by numerous participants during its development. I want to thank the area's local civic and business organizations and elected officials – including Council Member Domenic M. Recchia Jr., Borough President Marty Markowitz, State Senators Diane Savino, and Assembly Member Alec Brook-Krasny and Congressman Jerry Nadler who have taken time to meet with me or other members of the Administration to discuss Coney Island's

future. I'd also like to commend Community Board 13. Chair Marion Cleaver and District Manager Chuck Reichenthal have worked incredibly hard on behalf of their communities to make this a better plan.

And of course, this plan is only the beginning in what must be a sustained effort at all levels of government, to ensure that Coney will never go dark, and that it will realize the vision that the Administration, together with thousands of stakeholders, set out to achieve. This is Coney Island's moment, and I know, together, we will not and cannot let this opportunity pass us by.

With the modifications I have described, I am especially proud to vote yes.

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**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.