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**DEPUTY MAYOR ROBERT K. STEEL ANNOUNCES PLANS TO STREAMLINE CITY'S
LAND USE PROCESS**

City Planning's BluePrint Reforms Will Save Time, Money & Stimulate Economic Development

June 21, 2012 – Deputy Mayor Robert K. Steel announced today an initiative by the Department of City Planning (DCP) to streamline the agency's review of land use applications. As part of the Bloomberg Administration's commitment to helping New Yorkers do business with the City and improve customer service, DCP's Business Process Reform (BluePrint) simplifies and streamlines the City's pre-certification process, creating predictability for applicants and allowing projects to enter ULURP, the City's official public land use review process, more expeditiously. When BluePrint is fully implemented, DCP will be able to review the majority of all applications up to 50 percent faster than today, saving applicants time and money, and getting projects built and onto the city tax rolls sooner. The improved review process was developed in partnership with industry professionals and will be available to property owners and developers throughout the city beginning this July.

BluePrint will impact projects requiring discretionary approval by the City Planning Commission and City Council and focuses on the pre-certification review period – the time between an applicant's first contact with DCP to the start of the formal public review of an application, known as the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure or ULURP, which follows a charter mandated maximum seven-month "clock." During the pre-certification period, DCP works with developers and property owners as they develop their land use proposals and engages in environmental and technical analysis of the applications required for ULURP review.

BluePrint will also benefit other city agencies who regularly apply for discretionary actions, speeding up the creation of affordable housing, economic development projects and open space. This comprehensive transformation of pre-certification includes the creation of a new review process involving fewer and more predictable steps, clear and published standard application material templates, improved coordination among specialized divisions and a tracking system to manage the overall pipeline of applications and measure performance. This initiative strengthens DCP's role as an economic engine for the city while retaining the highest planning standards to ensure that New York City remains attractive and globally competitive.

Speaking at a forum sponsored by the Association for a Better New York, Steel said that the approximately 500 private and public applications City Planning typically reviews every year translate into substantial investments in the city's neighborhoods, and that a streamlined review process will yield significant economic benefits to the city.

"Streamlining the review of development applications will allow New York City to build upon the economic progress we've made and position us for continued growth in the future," said Deputy Mayor Steel. "BluePrint's process enhancements will make it easier to do business with the city and increase transparency in the review of land use projects. These improvements will save applicants up to \$100 million per year in soft costs and carrying costs. More development means more jobs for New Yorkers, and BluePrint simplifies the way applications are reviewed so those jobs can be created as soon as possible. City Planning's BluePrint initiative is part of making New York City a better place to do business."

"BluePrint will transform the way the land use process works for both private and public applications" said City Planning Director Amanda M. Burden. "We have spearheaded zoning initiatives to create affordable housing, green the city, facilitate economic development and transportation options as well as new public open spaces throughout the five boroughs, and BluePrint will enable all these projects to be realized faster, without sacrificing high standards and careful review. BluePrint benefits all parties involved in the review process: faster service for property owners looking to invest for the long-term in their properties; a more collaborative and efficient system for planners reviewing applications; and, most importantly, a process that fosters New York City's growth and New Yorkers' quality of life. We have worked with industry practitioners to develop and test these solutions and we are now ready to introduce them to the entire applicant community."

Councilman Leroy Comrie said, "As chair of the NYC Land Use Committee, I commend the DCP's efforts to streamline the review of the land use application process. The BluePrint initiative has already been successfully tested as a pilot program creating a more efficient pre-certification process that will incentivize economic development in the city. I look forward to the implementation of the program, when the application will be submitted, tracked, and viewed online, bringing greater transparency and access to applicants."

REBNY Chair Mary Ann Tighe said, "The pre-ULURP process has been the most problematic aspect of the public review process for real estate development. It has been time-consuming, costly and unpredictable. BluePRINT is taming this unwieldy process bringing transparency, efficiency and greater certainty to this critical stage of a development project. We commend the city for reforming this integral component of economic development activity in New York."

Rick Bell, Executive Director, American Institute of Architects New York Chapter, said, "Streamlined processes with clear standards will enable architects to improve the quality of what we design since more attention can be given to the things that matter most in creating new buildings for New York. The American Institute of Architects New York Chapter applauds the Department of City Planning's BluePRINT initiatives which will make the city's land use process simpler and more rational."

Jerilyne Perine, Executive Director, Citizens Housing & Planning Council, said, "By transforming the pre-certification process DCP will ensure that more affordable housing projects are developed and built. With a reliable, stream lined process projects will have a better chance of accessing public and private funds in a timely fashion. For projects that are being built on narrow margins, it can make all the difference between a project that goes forward and one that doesn't. These changes are a welcome companion to the Mayor's extensive track record in planning for and building affordable housing in New York City."

Among the BluePRINT improvements to date:

- Revised review process involving fewer steps and new tools that are designed to share critical information at the beginning of the process and allow DCP to provide coordinated early guidance to applicants.
- Coordinated review among City Planning divisions from the moment the applicant walks in the door with a project idea to reduce the required review time.
- Development of clear and concise standard templates for 10 application materials required for most land use applications to eliminate ambiguities and guide applicants in the preparation of their applications.
- Creation of three new positions focused on implementing and managing this new process: a Pre-Certification Manager dedicated to monitoring and managing the application pipeline and addressing issues that may arise within the pre-certification process; a Standards Coordinator to lead the coordination of the design and implementation of standard application material templates, guidelines, manuals, samples and instructions; and a Training and Development Manager to enhance DCP staff skills in the new process and ensure that resources are allocated efficiently.
- Development of an internal technology system to collect, measure and provide ongoing analysis of metrics to better manage the application pipeline and provide critical data for the Department's leadership.
- Internal cross training programs to increase skills redundancy and proactively manage potential bottlenecks in the application pipeline.

BluePRINT has been developed in partnership with industry professionals. In order to assess the effectiveness of these comprehensive improvements before their implementation, DCP piloted its new review process and application standards with a small number of rezoning applications that required substantive review from multiple divisions. Accordingly, effective July 2nd, all applicants will be able to use the new process and standards, which will be available on DCP's new applicant portal on the agency's website at nyc.gov/planning. The applicant portal is a simple, user-friendly guide to the new pre-certification process, where property owners will easily access information and standards. In order to make the new process and standards official City requirements, DCP plans to bring forward these changes through the city's public rulemaking process in 2013.

To complete the BluePRINT effort, City Planning is working on further improvements:

- Creation of standards templates for two-thirds of the most common application types by the end of 2013.
- Creation of a separate and faster track for simpler applications that do not require extensive technical and environmental analysis.
- Development of service level targets by land use action to enable applicants to accurately estimate how long their project's pre-certification review will take and when they will be ready to enter the formal ULURP process.
- Creation of performance measures and metrics to monitor the pipeline of applications and manage DCP's overall performance with the new process.
- Development of a robust tracking and IT system that will permit electronic filing of applications and allow applicants and the public to view the status of applications and obtain other important related data by the end of 2015.

DCP received critical project management, technical assistance, and contract services from the New York City Economic Development Corporation to support BluePRINT. DCP used the services of Accenture for 18 months in developing and implementing this process overhaul. DCP also benefited from a public-private partnership, receiving pro bono assistance from MetLife in planning a program of skills development and structured training to better deploy talent across the agency. Full implementation, which will be phased in between 2012 and 2015, will bring benefits to the city of \$100 million due to early capture of tax revenue related to faster development.

To learn more about BluePRINT and upcoming improvements, visit City Planning website at www.nyc.gov/planning and

follow the link to the "BluePrint" section.

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.