

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 11, 2006

CONTACTS:

Rachaele Raynoff, Press Secretary -- (212) 720-3471

CITY PLANNING PROPOSES SIMPLIFIED VESTING PROCESS FOR HOME ALTERATIONS IN NEW R2A REZONINGS AND INITIATES REVIEW OF REZONING TO PRESERVE SCALE OF DOUGLASTON AND LITTLE NECK

July 11, 2006 - City Planning Director Amanda M. Burden announced proposed new objective standards and procedures to enable homeowners who are caught in the process of improving their homes when more restrictive R2A zoning is adopted to complete their alterations. The measure to streamline the vesting process responds to issues raised by Queens Council Member Tony Avella on behalf of homeowners who had been stymied in the midst of such renovations during recent rezonings in his district. Under the proposal Avella crafted with the City, if homeowners have completed structural framing at the time an R2A rezoning goes into effect, they will be spared the hardship of time consuming and expensive appeals to the City's Board of Standards and Appeals. Instead, if the Buildings Department finds that required structural framing for the alteration is complete, they will be considered vested and may complete their project.

"Working with Council Member Avella and the Department of Buildings, we've identified changes to the vesting alteration requirements that will simplify the process for homeowners in areas to be rezoned R2A, effectively eliminating an unnecessary hardship," Director Burden said. "In addition, as we have done so successfully in numerous lower density communities, our proposed rezoning will preserve the character of Douglaston and Little Neck with their single and two-family homes at an appropriate scale for these neighborhoods. The Bloomberg administration values the neighborhoods of New York and continues to refine and update zoning to reinforce their unique character."

Public review also began yesterday on a rezoning proposal to preserve the suburban neighborhood character of a 135-block area in the northeast Queens neighborhoods of Douglaston and Little Neck. As in other neighborhoods in Queens, much of the existing zoning in these areas has been in place since 1961. In Douglaston and Little Neck, the Department is proposing contextual and lower-density zones, including R2A and others, that would better reflect the current neighborhood character of one- and two-family dwellings, and prevent out-of-scale development.

"I am extremely pleased that the Departments of City Planning and Buildings have accepted my solution to eliminate the vesting discrepancy between a homeowner renovation/alteration and a completely new building application," said Council Member Tony Avella. He added, "The residents of Douglaston and Little Neck, who have been anxiously awaiting the proposed rezoning of their neighborhoods, will be delighted to learn that the application has been certified and will begin the public review process."

Council Member David Weprin, who represents the southern portion of the rezoning area, between the Long Island Expressway and the Grand Central Parkway, said "The re-zoning of Little Neck/Douglaston has been a complex yet thorough process. I am pleased that this new procedure will address the need to preserve our community's integrity. I thank City Planning and Councilman Avella for their hard work and congratulate them on another great accomplishment for our community."

The rezoning encompasses an area bordered by Little Neck Bay and Long Island Sound to the north, the City border with Nassau County to the east, Grand Central Parkway to the south and Douglaston Parkway and Alley Pond Park to the west. For additional details on [existing and proposed zoning districts for this rezoning](#), as well as on the [public review process](#), please see www.nyc.gov/planning.

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.