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**CONTACT:**

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

**CITY PLANNING BEGINS PUBLIC REVIEW ON PROMISED HEIGHT REDUCTION FOR 125TH STREET CORE**

*Fulfills Commitment Made During Adoption of Comprehensive Rezoning in April*

July 21, 2008 - City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden today announced the beginning of public review on a zoning text change to reduce the allowed maximum building heights in the "core" of the 125th Street corridor, fulfilling a commitment made by the City at adoption of the Department's historic 125th Street Rezoning in April of this year. In addition to reducing the height, this zoning change will also reduce permitted densities and reflect a preference for commercial over residential uses. Commercial uses will be allowed higher densities than residential uses, consistent with the goal of the rezoning to promote and facilitate 125th Street as a regional business district.

The City's comprehensive plan for Harlem's Main Street will strengthen this corridor and bolster its historic role as a 24/7 arts, entertainment, and retail center. The rezoning, the first such plan in over 40 years, included height limits for the first time, innovative regulations unique to 125th Street to catalyze arts uses, limits on ground floor bank frontages and protections for the area's noted brownstone blocks. Under the proposed text amendment, as promised, the allowed maximum building heights would be reduced in the highest density centered around the Harlem State Office Building from 290 feet to 195 feet. Height limits established by the April rezoning along the rest of the corridor would remain unchanged.

Commissioner Burden said, "The zoning text change that we are submitting today for public review is a reflection of community concerns and a continuation of the ongoing collaboration between the greater Harlem community and the City. It fulfills a promise made to the City Council to encourage commercial development and to ensure that it reflects the scale of Harlem's Main Street. I look forward to continuing to work with the local Council members, the community boards and my colleagues in City government on our commitments to promote the arts, expand the availability of income-targeted affordable housing, including affordable home ownership opportunities, and make certain that the priorities expressed by the community for the 125th Street corridor are achieved."

Council Member Inez Dickens said, "I am pleased that the FUCA action [Follow Up Corrective Action] is being done in a timely manner. I have repeatedly said that I intended to make sure that there were protections in perpetuity for my community. Our work here is not yet finished but we are making significant progress and I will continue to monitor every aspect of 125th St. Rezoning very closely."

The 125th Street rezoning covered the corridor between 124th and 126th Streets from Second Avenue to Broadway. The zoning text change that begins public review today affects the C4-7 district on the north side of 125th Street between Frederick Douglass Boulevard and 545 feet east of Lenox Avenue/Malcolm X Boulevard. The existing regulations as adopted by the City Council on April 30th, 2008, allow a maximum building height of 290 feet on the north side of the street with a base commercial FAR of 10, a base residential FAR of 9 and a maximum FAR of 10 for community facility use. Subject to current height limits, the base commercial floor area may be increased by 2 FAR up to a maximum FAR of 12 by providing space for non-profit visual and performing arts organizations. This is the first such arts bonus in the city. Similarly, the base residential floor area may be increased by 3 FAR up to a maximum of 12 FAR, the in exchange for providing income-targeted affordable housing through the Inclusionary Housing Program or through the use of the arts bonus.

During the ULURP process for the 125th Street rezoning, concerns were expressed about the height of new buildings along this portion of the 125th Street corridor. The proposed zoning change would reduce the allowed building height on the north side of 125th in the Core Subdistrict from 290 feet to a maximum of 195 feet. Under the modified zoning text, the maximum FAR for commercial use would be 8.65 but residential and community facility use would be limited to a maximum 7.2 FAR. The proposed text change would permit a base commercial FAR of 7.2, bonusable up to a maximum FAR of 8.65 through the use of the arts bonus, and a maximum FAR of 7.2 for community facility use. Similar to the south side of the street, new developments would be permitted a base residential FAR of 5.4, which could be increased to a maximum FAR of 7.2 through the use of the arts bonus or the Inclusionary Housing program. With the highest permissible floor area for commercial use, these FARs are intended to provide incentives for new commercial development with non-profit visual or performing arts space.

Across from the C4-7 district, the C6-3 district on the south side of 125th Street has a lower permitted FAR and a maximum height of 160 feet, to reflect the height of the famed Hotel Theresa. This height limit will remain unchanged. Under the leadership of Council Member Dickens, the City Council previously reduced the residential density in this C6-3 District in order to give preference to new commercial uses in the commercial core.

Also as promised, a Community Task Force composed of elected officials, city agencies, community board chairs and other stakeholders under the coordination of Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Robert Lieber has begun meeting. The Task Force began discussion last month of an implementation timetable for various commitments made at adoption related to affordable housing, small business assistance, arts and culture, parks, transportation and health. Among these commitments was the follow-up zoning action begun today.

The proposed zoning text change was referred out for review to Community Board 10 and the Borough President for 30 days after which it will be reviewed by the City Planning Commission and City Council. For more information on the [land use review process](#) or further details on the [125th Corridor plan](#) or the text amendment, please visit the Department of City Planning web page at [www.nyc.gov/planning](http://www.nyc.gov/planning).

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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.