

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 10, 2003

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CITY PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVES MAJOR HARLEM REZONING PLAN TO BALANCE GROWTH AND PRESERVATION

September 10, 2003, New York, NY – Department of City Planning Director Amanda M. Burden announced today that the City Planning Commission has voted unanimously to approve the Frederick Douglass Boulevard Rezoning Proposal, the first comprehensive revision of south-central Harlem zoning since 1961. The plan aims to recapture the best elements of the style of historic Harlem while paving the way for increased opportunities for new housing in a 44 block area bounded by West 110th Street and West 124th Street, Morningside Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard. Coming on the heels of City Planning's recently adopted East Harlem rezoning, this is another of the Bloomberg administration's efforts to balance growth and neighborhood preservation.

"As more and more people aspire to live in Harlem, this rezoning not only preserves the best characteristics of Harlem's strong residential neighborhoods, but it also contributes to the mayor's ongoing efforts to increase the housing supply on major avenues," said Ms. Burden. The new zoning would facilitate construction of 50 percent more housing units along Frederick Douglass Boulevard than currently permitted, accommodating the increased density in apartment buildings which would be limited in height to 12 stories. The current zoning permits towers that would be out of scale with the prevailing character along the Boulevard.

"We are enabling new development to take place in the style that distinguished Harlem during its Renaissance" said Ms. Burden. She also noted that the plan provides new opportunities for ground floor retail development on West 116 Street "so that existing and new residents can shop in their own neighborhood".

To preserve the quintessential Harlem row house block fronts and elegant residential avenues, the proposal calls for contextual zoning districts that mandate new buildings of comparable scale and height.

The rezoning proposal will make vacant land on Frederick Douglass Boulevard and neighboring blocks more attractive for development, according to planners. The Boulevard, which is served by the Eighth Avenue subway, can accommodate additional density. Notably, population in the rezoning area has jumped approximately 16 percent in the last decade. The proposed rezoning would help accommodate Harlem's growing population, expand future residential development opportunities and facilitate construction of more affordable housing units through public and private initiatives. In this regard, the Department has been coordinating this rezoning with the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development to ensure that affordable housing opportunities are maximized on both city-owned and privately owned sites.

The project has received unanimous approval and unqualified support from Community Boards 9 and 10, the Manhattan Borough President and Manhattan Borough Board. This plan builds on a study conducted by Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields.

As provided for by the City Charter, the rezoning plan now goes to the City Council for vote on final approval. For information on the public review process, please see the [Land Use Review Process](#).

The department's web site also details existing and proposed zoning designations for areas within the [Frederick Douglass Boulevard](#) plan.

About 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.