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CITY PLANNING ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO STREAMLINE LAND USE PROCESS

November 8, 2013 – City Planning announced the adoption of new agency rules that streamline the review of land use and environmental review applications. The new rules formalize the improved application review process developed and tested over the past 24 months in close consultation with industry professionals as part of the agency's Business Process Reform (BluePRint) initiative. The streamlined review process and application standards make it clearer, simpler, and easier for New Yorkers to do business with the City and allow projects to enter public review more expeditiously, saving applicants time and money, and getting projects built and onto the City tax rolls sooner.

The agency's new rules impact projects requiring discretionary or other approvals by the City Planning Commission and City Council. They focus on the time between an applicant's first contact with DCP to an application's certification. When an application is certified it begins the formal public review process, known as the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The new agency rules provide a clear roadmap and improved coordination for both applicants and the Department during this pre-certification period.

Deputy Mayor Robert K. Steel said, "City Planning's BluePRint initiative is part of our Administration's commitment to making New York City a better place in which to do business. Having already proven to be an effective tool in simplifying and expediting the review of development applications, this initiative will continue to ensure that jobs will be created and tax revenue will be generated sooner. The projects that City Planning reviews translate into substantial investments in the City's neighborhoods, and this new streamlined review process will yield significant economic benefits to the City."

"BluePRint enables projects – both public and private – to be realized faster, without sacrificing high standards and careful review," said City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden. "By changing the agency rules to implement the streamlined process, we are ensuring that these improvements will be sustained into the future. These changes demonstrate City Planning's continued commitment to provide better service to the public, facilitate a more collaborative and efficient system for planners, and most importantly, establish a process that fosters New York City's growth and New Yorkers' quality of life."

Steven Spinola, REBNY's President, said, "The Real Estate Board of New York and its members provided extensive feedback and comments to the Department as it developed BluePRint, ensuring that it would benefit projects of all types and sizes that require public review. BluePRint is an important step towards streamlining processes, providing timeframes for review, and improving coordination between land use and environmental reviews. We would like to commend the Department for the collaborative effort on this initiative. It is a positive step towards innovation in government to ensure that the city remains competitive within the global marketplace."

"The AIA New York Chapter has been working with City Planning for the last two years to clarify and simplify the pre-cert process while ensuring that sound planning principles are maintained" said Rick Bell, Executive Director, American Institute of Architects New York Chapter. "Municipal government and its regulatory processes should encourage and facilitate timely private investment. BluePRint has been developed in close consultation with New York City's stakeholders in the design profession and development industry, including those of us in the architectural community. We thank the Department of City Planning for the dialogue on agency processes and for proposing workable solutions."

"The testing period has already shown improvements for applicants by establishing predictable time periods for pre-application discussion, accountability for agency actions, and by institutionalizing crucial meeting dates" said Jerilyne Perine, Executive Director, Citizens Housing & Planning Council. "The development of BluePRint has also showcased the remarkable work of DCP staff. The testing period involved close consultation with the industry and their feedback was well-utilized in order to direct the new standards and procedures. CHPC applauds the Department of City Planning's efforts to standardize the pre-certification process."

"The improved review process is the product of more than two years of analysis, planning, and pilot use. It provides greater clarity and predictability for applicants and supports the professionalism of planners. By establishing formal application standards and a more collaborative process, BluePRint improvements help planners focus their effort on project issues that benefit from their professional expertise," said Carol Samol, who has led DCP's Business Process Reform efforts for more than two years and is also the director of City Planning

Bronx Borough Office.

In the last 16 months, more than 90 applicants have voluntarily participated in the improved review process, and thus far, it has reduced the estimated processing time by more than 50%. Through customer surveys, the majority of applicants reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the predictability and clarity of the new pre-certification application review process and the ease of doing business with City Planning. As of October 31, 2013, all applicants are required to use the improved process.

To support the streamlined process, DCP launched an *Applicant Portal* on the [DCP website](#) to provide a user-friendly guide to the application process for both experienced and first-time applicants alike. The Portal provides access to the application standards, templates, and samples, which make the application process easier and clearer.

DCP has also created an internal project management system to manage, coordinate and track projects through the entire life of the review process. It is also in the process of building a robust tracking and IT system that will permit electronic filing and review of applications, as well as allow applicants and the public to view the status of applications. This is scheduled for implementation in 2015.

Learn more about [BluePrint](#) or visit the [City Planning website](#).

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.