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**Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Remarks at Zoning the City Conference, as Delivered
By Deputy Mayor Robert K. Steel**

I think that the Mayor would want to tell you that when he thought about this ten years ago, that basically people weren't sure about the position of New York.

It was ten years ago that Amanda Burden joined the administration, when New York City was still reeling after the 9/11 attacks.

And basically what we've seen is at that time people thought all over that New York might never recover. And in fact Mayor Bloomberg said at the time that he would rather have New York's hand to play than anyone else's. And some people thought he was boastful, but I'd like to say I think instead he's proven to be prescient.

And a good person who was side by side with the Mayor throughout all of this was Amanda Burden and the City Planning group.

Many people have seen that New York has not only survived but really prospered, and the evidence is all around you. The commercial real estate market in New York is the strongest in the nation. We've regained 90% of the jobs lost during the national recession. And people are voting for New York – with their feet. We see people want to live, work and visit in New York and the evidence is all around us.

The population today is at an all-time high of 8.4 million – and we see and are beginning to plan for another million people moving to New York by 2035.

What Amanda and her team at City Planning have done to frame all of this and help us think about it has been critical. They all understand New York and all great cities have to have things in common. They grow and change with changing times. And in that spirit, they've used the 1961 Zoning Resolution – whose birthday we're here celebrating – to carefully and creatively re-sculpt the city.

To date, they have steered 114 rezonings through New York City's "uniform land use review procedure," known as "ULURP," and with great success.

These rezonings, and other major projects they've accomplished, cover almost 37% of the land area of all five boroughs. By far the most extensive re-shaping of the city in the last 50 years. And that's really an astonishing accomplishment, in and of itself, almost 40% of the city having been rezoned.

And what's more striking is not just the fact of the rezonings but what that's done to basically change and adjust to make New York more competitive in the future. And the way we think about it is it's not just each individual aspect, but the sum of the parts and what is created is even more important.

Because of these efforts, we've dramatically re-cast the future of the entire city in four major ways that today's conference will address: Making New York more economically competitive; more equitable; more aesthetically pleasing; and more sustainable.

And that's all continuing today. Because today also the Mayor plans to announce a comprehensive new set of "green zoning" proposals – which we'll talk about a bit more in a few minutes.

Now in terms of economically competitive, what we mean is a better home for people of all income levels, improving the quality of life, and also increase the environmental sustainability for the years ahead.

But the past is prologue – so let's talk about what we intend to do and how we think about our accomplishments to date.

And that really starts with how we're making New York a far more competitive city – one that's better equipped to succeed in the rough-and-tumble world which we've all seen is the reality of today's global economy.

To do that, we've zeroed in on what we view is long under-used land throughout the city, and – combining zoning policy with targeted public investment – have begun unlocking this potential of this property to create jobs and make the economy continue to grow. This means jobs in restaurants and entertainment, offices and shops, and, of course, jobs in construction.

Our work has ranged from Willets Point to Downtown Brooklyn, and from Coney Island to an area where an important engine of New York's future is moving into high gear: And that's Hudson Yards on Manhattan's Far West Side.

Six years ago, the City Council approved our proposed extensive rezoning of more than 60 square blocks around the Hudson Yards: The first step toward making it a vibrant new mixed-use community, and an extension of Midtown's central business district.

Because we know that when new mass transit blazes the way, private development follows, we've also financed and begun building the first major addition to our subway system in many, many years. The extension of our Number 7 line from Times Square right into the Hudson Yards area – is set for completion about two years from today. I know because I have been down seen the cavern and the new station all look terrific and the Mayor is excited about taking a ride on this new train before he leaves office.

The result is clear.

Last week, we broke ground on \$555 million worth of new housing that's going to go up on a tract of the West Side that's been vacant for more than 45 years. And the week before, we announced plans for the first major office tower to go up in the Hudson Yards area. 1.8 million square feet of a fantastic new building. Together, these projects will produce thousands of construction jobs in the very near future.

The leading edge of thousands more jobs to come, in an entirely new community – and the largest transit-oriented new development in the nation – that's going to help to define New York City's future.

Second, we're also making New York a more equitable city. Most of you know that New York is in the midst of the largest affordable housing initiative ever undertaken by any American city: A commitment to create and preserve enough housing for half a million people by the year 2014.

Our goal is to keep New York a city for people of all income levels. And zoning – specifically inclusionary zoning – has been a key element of our strategy to accomplish just that. In a nutshell, inclusionary zoning doesn't impede the private housing market; instead we believe it incentivizes the market. It allows developers to build more – so long as producing more affordable housing is part of the bargain.

In some communities where inclusionary zoning has been employed – such as Greenpoint and Williamsburg – affordable units now make up as much as a third of new housing that's been built or planned. That creates affordable housing where it might not otherwise exist. And it promotes the kind of ethnic and economic diversity that defines urban living at its best.

Third, we've used rezoning to make New York a more physically attractive and inviting city – one with an unsurpassed quality of life.

A few minutes ago, I spoke about unlocking the economic potential of long-overlooked parts of our city. The same can be said about tapping into the neglected recreational and aesthetic potential of all of the city's assets. That certainly includes much of New York's beautiful, and often sorely mistreated, 520 miles of shoreline along the bays and rivers.

When people first came to New York, they dreamed of moving inland and upward in the island of Manhattan. Today, our goal is to take them back to the edge of the water to live and enjoy, and also have a viable commerce at the same place.

Opening up our waterfront to the public is one of Amanda's great passions. And all of the administration is looking forward to following her. On our watch, we have created more than 370 acres of new waterfront parks and some 20 miles of new shoreline greenways along, for example, the rezoned East River waterfront of Greenpoint and Williamsburg.

In the same vein, we have, through rezoning, led the reclamation of what just 10 years ago was considered a derelict eyesore – A rusting relic of the past that everyone thought absolutely needed to be demolished. Of course, I'm speaking of the High Line.

It is to Amanda's ever-lasting credit, and we all enjoy it whenever we go, that when she looked at the High Line, she saw something that could be better and infinitely more exciting for the whole area.

She took the lead in transforming it into what it is today: The most visually stimulating and most widely discussed new

city park, not just in New York, but in the country and outside the borders of the United States.

It's done everything a park should do, and even more. It's catalyzed some \$2 billion in new private investment along its path; 30 projects, 22 of which are built, 4 of which are coming out of the ground and four on the drawing board are what's going on right now in that area.

It's also become an international destination, and burnished New York's reputation as the place you come to see the future.

The Fourth point I want to mention and finally, our rezonings are also creating a more sustainable city.

And that really illustrates how we thoroughly modified the 1961 Zoning Resolution – which envisioned a future of automobile-dependent development in New York City's periphery. Instead – and in keeping with our PlaNYC sustainability agenda – we're now encouraging transit-oriented development.

Hudson Yards, which I previously mentioned, is a gold-star example of that plan. We've also pursued that goal through rezonings of Coney Island, along Harlem's 125th Street and in the St. George area of Staten Island.

And in what's destined to become one of New York City's largest middle-income communities, in the long-abandoned industrial area of Hunters Point, on the East River waterfront of Queens.

In fact, the new ferry service launched earlier this year that serves Hunters Point has already proved wildly popular with residents all along the East River in Queens and Brooklyn.

Transit-oriented development is good policy, both environmentally and economically. And so are the City's comprehensive new "green zoning" proposals, which will go out for public review next month.

They'd remove current regulations that impede new construction of "green buildings" and also, very importantly, discourage or prevent energy-efficient retro-fits in existing buildings. Installing solar panels and sun-control shades and awnings; creating green roofs; building roof-top greenhouses where fresh local produce can be grown: All would become easier for developers and current building owners.

And that would not only further shrink our carbon footprint: It would create construction jobs in making building upgrades. It would improve the quality of the air we breathe by reducing our dependence on electricity generated by using fossil fuels, and also cut energy costs for businesses, residential landlords, and individual homeowners too.

That's a good note for me to make my final point for this morning: That the rezoning goals I've just ticked through – making New York more competitive, equitable, aesthetically pleasing, and environmentally sustainable – And in no way are these four ambitions mutually exclusive. Instead they come together and support each other. This is what we are focused on in this administration.

Keeping New York a livable city with a strong quality of life; Diversifying our economy; And replacing a "Manhattan-centric" economic focus with a strategy that builds on assets and creates jobs in all five of our boroughs.

That's the plan we're charting for New York's future.

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.