

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

CONTACT:

Michael Sherman/Janel Patterson (EDC) -- 212-312-3523

Rachaele Raynoff (City Planning) -- (212) 720-3471

NYC Economic Development Corporation and Department of City Planning Roll Out Development Framework for Downtown Flushing

Plans Call for Reconnecting and Renewing Downtown, Revitalizing the Waterfront and Redeveloping Willets Point

Deputy Mayor Daniel L. Doctoroff joined representatives of New York City Economic Development Corporation, Department of City Planning and the Downtown Flushing Consultant team today to present the Development Framework for Downtown Flushing to the Flushing Task Force. The Development Framework, which presents a land use planning strategy for the future growth and sustainability of Downtown Flushing, the Flushing River waterfront and the Willets Point peninsula, is the result of nearly a year's collaboration among City and State agencies, the City's consultant team and task force members.

"Redeveloping this area of Queens is a critical component of Mayor Bloomberg's strategy for developing and investing in regional economic centers in all five boroughs," said Deputy Mayor Doctoroff. "When implemented, the vision of this Framework will provide a dynamic and diverse mixed-use community, with significant public spaces and strong connections to the waterfront that builds on the rich history and diversity of Flushing. I commend all those who have participated in this truly collaborative effort."

"This Framework is the result of a truly successful exercise in consensus-building among City and State agencies, elected officials, community organizations and business leaders," said EDC Chief Operating Officer Joshua J. Sirefman. "With the continued commitment and dedication of the stakeholders involved, we will reach our goal of making Flushing a center of urban activity where people will come to experience the best of Queens."

In Downtown Flushing, the Framework for Development provides opportunities for high-quality, mixed-use development, improved connections with adjacent regional destinations, enhancement of public spaces and waterfront access, and improvements to parking and transportation systems. It makes preliminary recommendations for improving downtown traffic patterns, but calls for a more in-depth traffic analysis to support the recommendations. Recommended streetscape upgrades and creation of new open spaces will improve the quality of life downtown and make the area more pedestrian friendly. Signature signage will be used to highlight the historic district and connections to other nearby destinations.

"These important transportation and streetscape improvements and a revitalized Flushing River waterfront will position Flushing and adjacent Willets Point as an even more vibrant regional economic center and great place to work and shop," said Amanda M. Burden, Director, Department of City Planning.

The Framework also prepares the way for a Request for Proposals for redevelopment of Municipal Lot 1 into a new mixed-use community with lively street-level retail, civic open space, and community/cultural uses. Zoning changes would be considered to enhance development potential and ensure high-quality development.

On the Flushing River waterfront, the Framework recommends that the City work with State and Federal authorities to clean up the river and restore its tidal wetlands. A waterfront promenade, to be built in conjunction with private development and underlying zoning requirements, and proposed new community open space will help the public access the developing waterfront. A future pedestrian bridge may eventually connect Downtown Flushing to a redeveloped Willets Point.

On the Willets Point Peninsula, the Framework envisions large-scale development to provide significant economic benefits and transform Flushing into a true regional destination. A Call for Ideas will be issued to solicit a broad range of compelling responses from the development community. In the meantime, the City will pursue site acquisition and remediation in partnership with the State.

The Development Framework for Downtown Flushing was prepared by the City's consultant team in close cooperation with EDC, DCP, other City and State agencies and a working group consisting of local community leaders. The planning firm of Cooper Carry Inc. and Economics Research Associates led the consultant team. Other members of the team include Jeanne Giordano, Inc., Thomas Baisley Associates, Eng Wong Taub, and Geto & de Milly.

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.