

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, November 25, 2003

CONTACT:

Ed Skyler / Paul Elliott (Mayor's Office) -- (212) 788-2958

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

Ilyse Fink (Buildings Dept.) -- (212) 566-3473

MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES ZONING IMPROVEMENTS FOR THROGS NECK

Measures will curb overdevelopment in densely populated neighborhood

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today announced a comprehensive zoning proposal for Throgs Neck. In announcing the administration's efforts to keep communities livable and vital, the Mayor is delivering on a promise he made in July at a meeting with the Throgs Neck Homeowners Association – the same group the Mayor addressed today, only 120 days after the initial meeting. The proposed changes will ensure that new construction will better conform to the size and form of existing buildings. The proposal also aims to minimize obstruction of water views by shoreline development and increase parking requirements. Joining Mayor Bloomberg in announcing the pending zoning improvements was Department of City Planning (DCP) Director Amanda M. Burden and Department of Buildings (DOB) Commissioner Patricia J. Lancaster, AIA.

"The residents of Throgs Neck are like the vast majority of New Yorkers who want communities that are safe and secure and viable places to raise families," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Today we are giving the residents of Throgs Neck the tools to preserve the physical character of their community. Housing expansion and public transportation extension is crucial to meeting the needs of our City's ever increasing population. However, the ability of a community to meet and support the weight of such infrastructure development should be considered carefully and in consultation with residents and experts."

"Many communities in the east Bronx are facing major challenges associated with over-development which has created tremendous overcrowding," said Congressman Joseph Crowley. "I am pleased that Mayor Bloomberg has announced a plan to ease this problem. While development in the Bronx is positive, over-development many times has negative consequences. Every resident of the Bronx should have the quality of life they deserve and have worked for, and this is a great first start."

Following a labor-intensive lot-by-lot analysis of existing buildings in the area, City Planning proposes to rezone neighborhoods with new designations that most closely match the existing conditions. In many of the areas to be rezoned, new townhouse development would be prohibited. The study includes all the lower density zoning districts in Community Board 10 that permit attached housing. Areas of the community district that already prohibit attached housing, such as most of Country Club and Spencer Estates or areas zoned for medium density development, such as portions of Pelham Bay, were not included in the current study.

Among the solutions offered in the proposal:

- Change the zoning in most of the study area to prohibit townhouses, and permit only detached housing in some of these areas, and detached and semi-detached homes in others. Newly mapped districts would impose new size, height, and yard regulations that are more contextual with existing homes.
- Create a new waterfront-zoning district for Throgs Neck that would continue to allow marinas and other waterfront uses, but would limit new residential development to detached houses.
- Increase parking requirements by 50 percent: A one-family home would now require two spaces instead of one, and a two-family home would require three parking spaces instead of two.
- Close a zoning loophole to ensure that all lots that are physically on the water are subject to more stringent waterfront zoning regulations.
- For purposes of floor area calculations, waterfront lots extend to the US Bulkhead Line, which is far from the shore in parts of Community Board 10. By mapping a new City Bulkhead Line closer to the shore, the City will drastically reduce the under water lot area used to calculate floor area, and therefore address the problem of bulkier developments along the waterfront.
- New zoning guidelines will help reduce disparities building heights caused by floodplain regulations.

While changes to the Zoning Resolution are underway, the Department of Buildings will mandate that builders and developers comply with existing regulations while launching an effort to educate homeowners, developers and builders

about the pending zoning improvements. Environmental reviews are scheduled to begin soon and ready for certification by the summer 2004, beginning the formal land use public review process.

"When you walk this neighborhood as I have, its appeal is as apparent as the need to protect it from out-of-scale construction that can overwhelm the capacity of its infrastructure and threaten the quality of its life," said City Planning Director Burden "we are delighted to give this community real zoning solutions to maintain its unique character and maximize its spectacular views of the Long Island Sound."

"Two months ago, I toured the entire Throgs Neck area with community representatives and was distressed by some of the out-of character development. Two weeks ago, I met with elected officials and civic group members from Throgs Neck. It was the beginning of what I hope will be a partnership between the community and the Department," said DOB Commissioner Lancaster. "Together, we can preserve the unique character of this neighborhood, which is what attracted people to it in the first place."

All professionally certified new building applications in Bronx Community Board 10 will be audited for zoning and applications in waterfront zoning areas will be specially screened. In addition, the DOB is offering workshops for architects, engineer, and builders on flood zone regulations on December 10 and December 12.

And, to assist Bronx homeowners, the Department of Buildings will hold an open house at its borough office at 1932 Arthur Avenue on January 17, 2004.

Under the existing zoning, which dates to 1961, a recent surge in development has resulted in large rows of multi-family attached townhouses, often with inadequate parking, looming over the low density detached homes in the area. The average number of building permits granted each year since January 2000 in Community District 10 is more than twice the average for the second half of the 1990. At the densities that the zoning currently permits, parking shortages are becoming a pervasive quality of life problem in this two-fare zone, located at the end of East Bronx bus routes. Among the households typically moving in to new housing in CD 10, car ownership is among the highest (1.8 cars per household) of any community district in the City except Staten Island, where parking and development densities are also major issues. In the coming weeks, the Mayor will release a comprehensive report on curbing development on Staten Island, "[Staten Island Growth Management Task Force](#) Report."

For details of the land use review process that must precede its adoption, please visit the [Land Use Review Process](#).

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.