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MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES ZONING AND ENFORCEMENT IMPROVEMENTS FOR STATEN ISLAND

Mayor's Task Force Plan Will Protect Character of Borough Neighborhoods, Increase Required Parking and Hold Builders Accountable

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today announced a package of zoning changes and administrative actions to address over-development issues on Staten Island. These initiatives, the result of an intensive four-month effort by the members of the Mayor's Staten Island Growth Management Task Force, will preserve and reinforce Staten Island's quality of life and the character of its neighborhoods. The Mayor was joined by Borough President James P. Molinaro, and Task Force Co-Chairs Vincent La Padula and City Planning Director Amanda M. Burden, who detailed proposed new zoning rules that will ensure more appropriate residential development across Staten Island, as well as additional planning and zoning efforts to be undertaken in the upcoming months; Department of Buildings Commissioner Patricia Lancaster outlined measures that will enhance customer service for homeowners and increase performance standards for builders to ensure accountability.

"Recognizing that over-development and inappropriate development were undermining many of our Staten Island neighborhoods, four months ago, I formed the Staten Island Growth Management Task Force and directed its members to quickly come up with legislative and administrative solutions to address these vital concerns," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Their substantial and creative solutions will ensure that future housing development does not overwhelm the borough and make it a less desirable place to live in the long run. Staten Island deserves well-thought out rules to guide new development that will complement this residential haven in our City."

"I want to commend the Mayor for giving us the resources necessary to live up to his timetable of 120 days to introduce text changes that assure future homebuyers of an improved quality of life," said Borough President James Molinaro. "These text change amendments would not have been possible without the dedication, hard work and cooperation of City Planning and the coordination of Vincent La Padula. These proposed text changes will enhance the quality of life of all Staten Islanders for many years to come."

"Regulations often are seen as rules designed to stop some activity, and in this case, we are proposing regulations meant to preserve the character of our communities on Staten Island," said Task Force Co-Chair Vincent La Padula, Senior Advisor to the Mayor. "The people of Staten Island had a legitimate concern about runaway building expansion and the Mayor heard their concerns."

"Earlier this fall, the Department of City Planning expedited the approval of the Borough President's six applications to rezone 40% of the borough's residential lots to ensure that new development in these areas is a better fit with the prevailing neighborhood context," said City Planning Director Burden. "Now, we are pleased to unveil the Task Force zoning proposals that will further improve the standards for residential development in all of Staten Island's lower density residential districts. The proposed zoning changes will mandate that new developments provide more on-site parking, more yards and open space to increase distances between buildings, and amenities like sidewalks, landscaping, and street trees to reinforce the neighborhood character."

The Task Force recommendations are intended to stop inappropriate development and manage future growth consistent with the capacity of the Island's infrastructure. The proposed zoning changes cover yards and open space, parking and related changes, and private road developments:

- **Yards and Open Space:** Zoning changes would address inadequate spacing between buildings in part by increasing yard requirements to ensure that buildings not fronting on a public street would have to have a much larger open space buffer around them, and their distance from adjoining lot lines would be increased. These changes would preclude - except for extremely large lots - the development of new residential buildings behind other homes fronting on a street. For lots near corners, yard requirements would also be increased, resulting in more appropriate development. Street tree planting would also be required for all new development, enhancing the character of the neighborhoods.
- **Parking and Related Changes:** With an increase in population of nearly 20% since 1990, Staten Islanders are coping with a volume of cars that is taxing the capacity of local streets. Noting that the borough has the highest car ownership in the city, the Task Force recommendations include requiring more on-site parking for new

homes. For the first time in New York City, a new, one-family home would require two on-site parking spaces instead of one, and a two-family home would require three parking spaces instead of two. Increased minimum lot widths would accommodate the higher parking requirements, garages would be encouraged, and parking would be prohibited in the front yard. Steeply pitched driveways - one of the more objectionable characteristics of new development - would be prohibited. In addition, a new attic design rule would encourage the traditional pitched roofline design found on many older Staten Island homes, rather than the more flat-roofed homes built in recent years. The overall height limit of 35 feet would remain in place.

- **Private Road Developments:** All residential projects on private roads would be governed by the same zoning regulations as those on public streets for yard and setback requirements. No longer will residential developments on private roads be built without rear yards, or with inadequate front yards. In addition to requiring more on-site parking, parking spaces on the private roads could no longer count toward meeting the parking requirement, freeing up more on-street spaces for visitors. Additional planting strips in the fronts of houses, and wider buffers between the private roads and other developments would all contribute toward improving the quality of development. The results of these changes will be reduced density and more appropriate development in keeping with Staten Island's suburban neighborhood character.

The Department of City Planning, which is already at work on implementation, estimates that the public review process will start in June and that before this time next year, the new regulations should be in place. For details on the proposed zoning changes or the public review process, log onto www.nyc.gov.

To help ensure development that is appropriate, the Department of Buildings has strengthened its enforcement of codes by:

- Sharply restricting issuance of temporary certificates of occupancy and more than doubling the amount of escrow deposits required to ensure that all legally required work is completed.
- Proposing increases of fines for conditions of special concern to Staten Islanders for illegal demolition, removal of trees, and unpermitted occupancy.
- Conducting additional reviews of plans for buildings in the Special Hillside District where builders may not understand requirements.

Department of Buildings is providing its services more efficiently and in a more customer friendly way by removing unnecessary administrative barriers and delays and educating those involved in construction of new homes. Examples include:

- Cutting in half the number of steps required to submit and process an application for a Certificate of Occupancy.
- Drastically reducing the time required to obtain key inspections and approvals such as plumbing (12 days to 5 days) and electrical (10 days to 2 days).
- Providing next day access to inspection and approval data as well as information regarding permits, complaints, and violations via the Building Information System on the City's website at www.nyc.gov.
- Complaints can be registered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 311.
- User-friendly brochures, guides and notices have been published and are available on the web to help homeowners understand when a permit is needed, what specific requirements must be fulfilled prior to occupancy, and how to resolve outstanding violations.
- "Open Houses" to help homeowners understand and resolve issues before they become problems.

"New York City needs to grow in order to thrive, but development has to proceed in a rational way," said Buildings Commissioner Lancaster. "The Staten Island Growth Management Task Force faced a difficult challenge: preserving the borough's quality of life – the very reason that makes the borough such an attractive place to live – while devising a plan that leaves room for future growth. The Department of Buildings is committed to ensuring that this vision is fulfilled."

The Mayor convened the task force in July 2003; members of the Task Force include Vincent La Padula, Senior Advisor to the Mayor, and Amanda M. Burden, Director, Department of City Planning, Co-Chairs; James Molinaro, Staten Island Borough President; Council Members James Oddo, Andrew Lanza and Michael McMahon; Patricia Lancaster, Commissioner, Department of Buildings; Iris Weinshall, Commissioner, Department of Transportation; Anthony Licciardello, Staten Island Director, Mayor's Community Assistance Unit; Pamela Adamo, Vice President, Community Development, Keyspan, Inc.; Robert Englert, President, Staten Island Chapter of the American Institute of Architects; Lester J. Figueroa, Real Estate Attorney; Joseph E. Markowski, President, New Dorp Central Civic Association; Michael Morrell, Westerleigh, Improvement Society, Inc.; R. Randy Lee, Leewood Real Estate Group, Builder; Dr. Kenneth J. Saccaro, Former President, Staten Island Greenbelt Conservancy; James Scarcella, President, Natural Resources Protective Association; and Pablo Vengoechea, Architect, Zone Architecture.

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.