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**THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING CERTIFIES LONG ISLAND CITY REZONING APPLICATION THAT WILL
CREATE NEW CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

The New York City Department of City Planning today began the public review process for the Departments proposal to create special zoning regulations for 37 centrally located blocks in Long Island City in Queens. The proposed zoning changes address critical commercial development needs of the City by allowing large mixed-use buildings to be constructed on sites located one or two subway stops east of Midtown Manhattan.

Joseph B. Rose, Chairman of the City Planning Commission, said, "This rezoning will transform Long Island City into a major business district, joining the Citys other central business districts in Midtown, Lower Manhattan and Downtown Brooklyn. Long Island City will accommodate the Citys expanding economy by providing development opportunities that are in short supply elsewhere in the City. Companies that are now being pushed out of Manhattan because of high costs or unavailability of sites will be able to build as-of-right in Long Island City."

The proposed rezoning area lies at the eastern end of the Queensboro Bridge and encompasses a roughly triangular set of blocks generally bounded by the Sunnyside Yards on the east, 23rd Street on the west, and 41st Avenue on the north. Included within this area are important transit stops at Court Square and Queens Plaza. Sites at these locations would be able to develop the largest buildings under the proposed rezoning, fulfilling the promise heralded by the Citibank Building built in 1989 at Court Square. Investment spurred by the rezoning is expected to produce approximately 5 million square feet of new office development over the next ten years. The proposed zoning changes would create a new Special Long Island City Mixed Use District including the following general regulations:

- New commercial, residential and community facility uses will be allowed as-of-right, in addition to light manufacturing uses, to reflect the areas mixed use character and to facilitate 24-hour activities.
- High density developments (floor area ratio [FAR] of 12) would be allowed on blocks at Queens Plaza and Court Square and moderate density developments (FARs of 5 and 8) would be allowed on surrounding blocks.
- Floor area bonuses (an additional 3 FAR) are specifically targeted to the provision of publicly accessible open space by new developments on two blocks adjacent to the Dutch Kills and Hunters Point neighborhoods.
- A lively, pedestrian oriented environment would be fostered by requiring sidewalk widenings along principal circulation corridors at Queens Plaza and Northern Boulevard and ground floor glazing treatments for most developments.

The rezoning stems from the Departments comprehensive planning approach for the broader Long Island City neighborhood outlined in the Plan for Long Island City: A Framework for Development. This report, issued in 1993, called for enhancing the areas multi-purpose character through the creation of a new Long Island City central business district, the establishment of low density manufacturing districts for surrounding industrial areas, and encouragement of new infill residential development in the adjacent Hunters Point area. Implementation of the manufacturing and residential rezonings took place in 1995.

In conjunction with the rezoning, the City is encouraging redevelopment in the area by proposing the sale of the municipal parking garage located on a full block measuring approximately 126,000 square feet and located at the intersection of Queens Plaza South and Jackson Avenue. The block has several entrances to the Queens Plaza subway station, and under the rezoning, the site could be redeveloped with a structure containing 1.5 million square feet of floor area. Any redevelopment of the four-story parking garage would have to provide 1,150 public parking spaces. The Citys Economic Development Corporation issued a Request for Proposals in October for the site, and responses are due on January 8, 2000.