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**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVES THE LONG ISLAND CITY REZONING APPLICATION THAT WILL  
CREATE NEW CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

The City Planning Commission today unanimously approved the Department's 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 is one the most important actions the Commission can make to ensure the future growth of New York City. This proposal allows Long Island City to realize its potential to emerge as one of the City's major business centers an important part of our continued effort to embrace economic expansion. It does so in a way that balances the infrastructure capacity of the area, as well as the surrounding areas that have a significant manufacturing and residential presence. This is a carefully constructed and balanced plan that is a significant first step to address the future growth and development of 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 area's 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.

During the course of its hearings, the Commission heard substantial testimony regarding potential effects of the rezoning on manufacturing and industrial businesses in the broader Long Island City area. The rezoning is part of the Department's comprehensive planning approach to enhance the Long Island City neighborhood's multi-purpose character as outlined in the 1993 [Plan for Long Island City: A Framework for Development](#). In 1995, the Commission implemented one of the framework's key recommendations when it approved the Department's application to rezone 90 blocks of Long Island City surrounding the proposed central business district, thereby, supporting light industrial and related uses. The City remains committed, through programs managed by the City's Economic Development Corporation, to support industrial businesses in Long Island City.

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 City's Economic Development Corporation issued a Request for Proposals in October, 2000 for the site, and responses are currently under review.

The proposal will be referred out to the City Council for 50 days for review.