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CITY PLANNING LAUNCHES PUBLIC REVIEW FOR SUNNYSIDE AND WOODSIDE REZONING

Proposal would preserve neighborhood character and promote affordable housing

February 28, 2011 – City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden today announced the beginning of public review for a 130-block [rezoning in the Sunnyside and Woodside](#) neighborhoods in western Queens. The proposed rezoning would protect the built fabric and character of these communities while directing moderate new development opportunities to a portion of Queens Boulevard, a major corridor well-served by mass transit. The proposal also provides incentives for the creation and preservation of permanently affordable housing through the Inclusionary Housing Program, and would allow small sidewalk cafes to locate along Queens Boulevard in Sunnyside to foster an even livelier streetscape. The proposal was developed in close consultation with community members; several civic organizations, including the United 40's Civic Association in Sunnyside, Woodside On The Move, the Sunnyside Chamber of Commerce and the Sunnyside Shines Business Improvement District; local elected officials, including Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer; and Community Board 2.

Commissioner Burden said, "The Sunnyside and Woodside neighborhoods have seen their populations grow in recent years because of their proximity to mass transit, attractive and vibrant streetscapes and convenient commercial corridors. But we must ensure that these neighborhoods grow in the right places. This important rezoning proposal will set height limits on the low-density blocks lined with one- and two-family homes and small apartment buildings, channel growth opportunities to main corridors such as Queens Boulevard and support the creation and preservation of much needed affordable housing."

Sunnyside and Woodside are vibrant and diverse neighborhoods in western Queens. The rezoning area is generally bounded by 37th Avenue and the Sunnyside rail yard to the north; the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, the New York Connecting Railroad and 72nd Street to the east; Woodside, Roosevelt and 47th Avenues to the south; and 39th Street to the west. The current zoning allows unpredictable building types without height limits, resulting in out-of character development. Major corridors Queens Boulevard and Roosevelt Avenue are served by the elevated 7 train. The Long Island Rail Road also serves the area with a stop at Woodside Station.

Since the establishment of the current Zoning Resolution in 1961, the only update to the zoning in this area was the 1974 zoning designation of Sunnyside Gardens as one of several Special Planned Community Preservation Districts whose regulations were changed in 2009 in order to better coordinate with the designation of the area by the Landmarks Preservation Commission as a Historic District. The current rezoning proposal includes extending R4 zoning in two areas to ensure that the entire Sunnyside Gardens Special Planned Community Preservation District has the same underlying R4 designation, consistent with the zoning text changes adopted in 2009.

For many residential blocks in the rezoning area that are lined with one-, two- and three- family attached and semi-detached homes the existing zoning allows all buildings types to be constructed without height limits. To protect these blocks, R4-1, R5B and R5D designations are being proposed to prevent out-of-character development by establishing height limits of 33 to 40 feet where there currently are none, and limiting housing types in R4-1 districts to one- and two-family detached and semi-detached homes. Along blocks with taller apartment buildings, R6A and R7A designations are being proposed with height limits of 70 to 80 feet to ensure that future development matches existing context.

In order to ensure that the growth of Sunnyside and Woodside includes permanently affordable housing, the rezoning would apply the Inclusionary Housing Program along portions of Queens Boulevard in proposed R7X and C4-5X districts. The Inclusionary Housing Program provides zoning incentives to create or preserve affordable housing in exchange for additional residential floor area, and enables property owners to take advantage of financial incentives provided by the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development. The R7X designation is proposed along Queens Boulevard, between 39th and 44th Streets. Developments are allowed a maximum height limit of 125 feet and a floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.75, or up to 5 with the Inclusionary Housing Program. A C4-5X designation is proposed for Queens Boulevard between 44th and 50th Streets which covers the core of the Sunnyside business district anchored by the intersection of Queens Boulevard and Greenpoint Avenue. Community facility and residential uses would be allowed an FAR of 5 and commercial uses would be allowed 4 – an increase from the 1 FAR allowed in existing C8-1 districts and 3.4 in C4-2 districts – to allow for new business opportunities. Overall, the proposed zoning changes are projected to produce an additional 249 dwelling units by 2019, including 74 affordable units.

The proposal would also replace existing C1-2 and C2-2 commercial overlay districts in the area with C1-3 and C1-4 districts and generally reduce the depth of commercial overlays from 150 to 100 feet to prevent the encroachment of commercial uses on residential streets. New C1-3 and C1-4 districts are proposed in certain locations in order to recognize existing commercial land uses and provide new business location opportunities. C1-4 commercial overlays would be established along portions of Greenpoint Avenue and C1-3 commercial overlay districts would be established on portions of 39th Avenue, Skillman Avenue, Woodside Avenue, 43rd Avenue, and 47th Avenue where commercial uses currently exist.

To create a more vibrant and attractive streetscape, this proposal would also allow small sidewalk cafes to locate along Queens Boulevard (between 39th and 48th Streets), where they are currently prohibited, and along portions of Skillman Avenue (between 45th and 51st Streets), where all types of sidewalk cafes are currently permitted.

Community Board 2 now has 60 days to review the proposal, after which it will go to the Borough President, the City Planning Commission and the City Council as part of the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). For specifics of the zoning proposal or more details on the ULURP time line, please visit the [DCP website](#).

Department of City Planning

The Department of City Planning (DCP) promotes strategic growth, transit-oriented development, and sustainable communities in the City, in part by initiating comprehensive, consensus-based planning and zoning changes for individual neighborhoods and business districts, as well as establishing policies and zoning regulations applicable citywide. It supports the City Planning Commission and each year reviews more than 500 land use applications for actions such as zoning changes and disposition of City property. The Department assists both government agencies and the public by providing policy analysis and technical assistance relating to housing, transportation, community facilities, demography, waterfront and public space.