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CONTACTS:

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

PUBLIC REVIEW BEGINS FOR CITY PLANNING'S OZONE PARK REZONING

September 9, 2013 – City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden today announced the beginning of the public review process for the rezoning of approximately 530 blocks within the Ozone Park neighborhood in southeast Queens. The proposal would reinforce the predominant one- and two-family residential character found on most blocks while directing new residential and mixed-use development to locations along the area's main commercial corridors and near access to mass transit. This rezoning proposal was undertaken by the Department in response to concerns raised by the community, local civic organizations, and local elected officials that existing zoning does not reflect established building patterns or guide new development to appropriate locations. This proposed rezoning is among the largest of the Department of City Planning's rezonings in Queens. Since 2002, 44 neighborhoods in Queens have been rezoned, encompassing more than 6,600 blocks.

Commissioner Burden said, "We have worked hard over the past decade to protect the residential character of many of Queens' distinctive neighborhoods. This rezoning, which was developed in close consultation with the community and the councilmember, would ensure that new development in Ozone Park reinforces the one- and two- family residential context. Additionally, this rezoning would build on this diverse area's vibrancy by providing new opportunities for housing and a mix of uses along major corridors like Liberty Avenue near access to mass transit."

Councilmember Eric Ulrich said, "Now more than ever, Ozone Park demands a smarter and more flexible blueprint that protects the character of the residential parts of the neighborhood and strengthens the commercial districts to stimulate economic development. I want to thank the Department of City Planning for initiating this study. As someone who was born and raised in Ozone Park, it will give me great pleasure to participate in the public review process and to vote on its final approval when it reaches the City Council."

The rezoning area is generally bounded by Rockaway Boulevard, Atlantic Avenue and 101st Avenue to the north; the Van Wyck Expressway and Lefferts Boulevard to the east; the Belt Parkway to the south; and the Brooklyn borough line to the west.

The area primarily consists of three existing residential zones: R3-2, R4, and R5. These zoning districts have remained unchanged since 1961, when the current Zoning Resolution was adopted. The existing zoning has allowed the development of three- to four-story, multi-family attached houses and apartment buildings that do not reflect the scale and character of the prevailing one- and two-family attached, detached, and semi-detached houses found within Ozone Park.

The rezoning area also covers portions of three primary corridors: Rockaway Boulevard, 101st Avenue, and Liberty Avenue. These thoroughfares are lined with a mix of residential and retail uses, and they are well-served by transit, including numerous bus lines and the elevated "A" train that runs along Liberty Avenue. Existing zoning, however, does not distinguish the scale of buildings along most of these major commercial corridors from buildings on residential side streets. Current zoning prohibits development of buildings of a moderately greater scale and density that could reinforce and strengthen these well-established mixed residential and retail areas.

The proposed rezoning seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Reinforce neighborhood character and established building patterns by updating existing zoning with new lower density and contextual zones;
- Direct a modest amount of new opportunities for housing and a mix of uses to major corridors and locations near mass transit resources; and
- Prevent commercial encroachment into residential areas by reducing the depth of commercial overlays and match land use patterns with commercial overlays.

The fine-grained rezoning strategy addresses concerns about recent development through the use of new lower-density and contextual districts (R3A, R3X, R4A, R4-1, R4B, and R5B) to better reflect the two- to three-story, one- and two-family residential development patterns that characterize these neighborhoods on a block-by-block basis. The proposed rezoning would also provide opportunities for strengthening the mixed-use character of the neighborhood's shopping streets, including portions of Rockaway Boulevard, 101st Avenue, and Liberty Avenue by mapping new residential districts (R6B and R6A) and new commercial overlay zones (C1-3 and C2-3). This would allow for the development of four- to seven-story, multi-family apartment buildings with ground floor retail, recognizing existing commercial uses and providing opportunities for new business. In addition, modifications to commercial overlay districts will prevent commercial uses from encroaching onto residential side streets.

The proposed rezoning will now be reviewed by Queens Community Boards 9 and 10, the Borough President and the borough board, after which it will go to 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 timeline](#), 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.