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## **Community, Labor Leaders Join to Demand Gowanus Rezoning Include Affordable Housing, Good Jobs, Better Environment**

*Coalition releases "responsible development" principles ahead of proposals for new buildings*

October 24, 2007 - A large and diverse coalition of community organizations, labor unions, and advocates for blue-collar jobs released its set of principles today for the proposed redevelopment around the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn—including demands to guarantee that a significant portion of any new residential development be affordable, to preserve space for artists, artisans and light manufacturing, to create good jobs, to require responsible contractors, and to maintain high environmental standards.

The coalition - which has an unusually diverse membership of community-based and pro-development groups, including the area's premier community organizations, some of the City's major trade and service unions, and development watchdogs - submitted its principles to the Department of City Planning as they finalize a framework for land use changes in the one-and-a-half-mile area around the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn.

"The redevelopment of the Gowanus is a critical opportunity to create a unique neighborhood for Brooklynites that offers desperately needed affordable housing and good jobs while keeping the community, workers, and the environment in mind," said Brad Lander, Director of the Pratt Center for Community Development and a local Community Board 6 member. "With commitments to these principles from the City and developers, we can ensure that we strike this important balance for the future of our community."

"The time for the responsible development of the Gowanus Canal area is finally here," said Buddy Scotto of the Carroll Gardens Association, who has been fighting for the cleanup and redevelopment of the canal for decades. "We have fought so long, and made enormous progress. We can have it all here—mixed-income housing, decent jobs, some areas preserved for manufacturing, a better environment, and a better community."

"All New York City rezoning and development projects must protect the rights, safety and dignity of workers," said Ed Ott, executive director of the New York City Central Labor Council. "We need guarantees from developers and contractors that the Gowanus Rezoning and other developments that the paychecks, security and federal freedoms of the workers building and servicing them will be fully honored, respected and protected."

"Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corp. is thrilled to have been able to find so much common ground with such a diverse group of stakeholders," said Phaedra Thomas, executive director of the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corp., and also a member of Community Board 6. "It goes to show that there is a real understanding in this community of the value of industrial businesses because of the goods and services they provide and the good blue collar jobs they create. We are

confidant that a significant portion of the Gowanus Canal corridor will remain zoned for manufacturing and we hope that in those areas that the City will rezone for mixed use, that every effort will be made to retain and grow the manufacturing sector.”

"New York City is facing an affordable housing crisis that can only be staved off by taking full advantage of market interest in newly rezoned areas," said Michelle de la Uz, executive director of the Fifth Avenue Committee, a Brooklyn community development and advocacy organization. "We must strike while the iron is hot and get as many permanently affordable apartments as we can out of this rezoning-which means at least 30% of private development must be affordable and 60% of buildings built on City-owned land."

“Redevelopment of the area around the Canal is consistent with making this a more sustainable community,” said Bob Zuckerman, executive director of the Gowanus Canal Community Development Corporation and the Gowanus Canal Conservancy. “Development can bring more open space and waterfront access. We must make sure that the cleanup and infrastructure investments are in place and well-coordinated between all government agencies, so that recreational uses are emphasized, and that developers build green buildings.”

The Gowanus area of Brooklyn between Carroll Gardens and Park Slope has been the focus of many new proposals for development recently, including a plan by Shaya Boymelgreen to build 350 new apartments and a plan by Toll Brothers for a large building. In February, 2007 the City proposed a land-use change for Gowanus which could lead to a rezoning, but has yet to set a timetable for its completion. Toll Brothers is expected to begin presenting its project to community members next week.

The "Platform for Responsible Development of the Gowanus Canal" (attached) was drafted by a coalition including ACORN, Fifth Avenue Committee, Gowanus Canal Community Development Corp., AFL-CIO, Mason Tenders' District Council of Greater New York, Laborers' International Union of North America, New York and Vicinity Carpenters Labor Management Corporation, Local 32BJ SEIU, NYC Central Labor Council, NYC District Council of Carpenters, New York Industrial Retention Network, New York Hotel & Motel Trades Council, Pratt Center for Community Development, Public Housing Communities, the Carroll Gardens Association, Inc., Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation and UNITE-HERE.