



## **Sunnyside, Queens no longer needs an introduction!**

November 26, 2012 - New York City

Sunnyside has spent most of its history in relative obscurity—viewed for years as just another mundane, middle-income Queens neighborhood. However, in the past decade Sunnyside has shed that stereotype.

Today it is better known as being a vibrant, bustling and highly sought-after area. There has been an influx of artists and professionals, a mushrooming of upmarket restaurants, and an expansion in desirable stores.

In fact, in April 2010, New York Magazine ranked Sunnyside No. 3 of The 50 Best Places to Live In New York City, calling it a hidden gem! The ranking was based on measures such as affordability, commuting times, schools, safety and shopping experiences.

In short, Sunnyside is thriving. As a member of the Sunnyside Chamber of Commerce for the last four years, and as its current president, I can proudly say that at no time has the area been more "buzz-worthy" and poised to move ahead.

In 2011, the city rezoned Sunnyside, which brought much excitement for developers. The rezoning now permits higher-density property along the main thoroughfares of Queens Blvd. and Greenpoint Ave. Meanwhile, the rezoning has preserved the charm of the residential streets, while allowing for sidewalk cafes and outdoor dining.

So it's not surprising that the Sunnyside commercial real estate market has returned to its 2008 highs, aided by a firmer retail marketplace. Additionally, a strong residential market has helped bolster rents and keep vacancies low. Many owners have noted the quick turnaround in renting apartments when tenants leave.

Property owners who bought commercial real estate before the downturn have fared well. While other neighborhoods underwent significant declines, Sunnyside was one of the few areas in Queens that remained stable which is a true testament to the quality of the area.

Sunnyside offers the essential components that any business owner or resident seeks. It's just a 16-minute ride to Grand Central Station, while the crime rate is low and the public schools are good. While Sunnyside has traditionally been an Irish neighborhood, in the past decade immigrants from South America, Korea, Turkey and Romania have settled here. The town is viewed as being very open and tolerant. It's the home of the gay-friendly, "St. Pat's for All Parade" and is represented by Jimmy Van Bramer, an openly gay councilman. Culturally, Sunnyside has its own film festival and arts groups.

The area has two main sections, both unique and desirable. On the southern side of Queens Blvd., there is Spanish theater, Irish bars and inexpensive ethnic cuisine. Meanwhile, on the northern side, there are several restaurants as well as the beautiful homes that are part of the Sunnyside Gardens district.

With the influx of new residents, many popular restaurants have opened throughout the

neighborhoodâ€”from Salt & Fat, The Dog and Duck, and Takesushi, to name a few. In the past two years, several supermarkets have expanded and two new banks have arrived. Bank of America opened its branch in 2010 and TD Bank is expected to open its doors in November.

Currently, the two main public parks are undergoing an upgrade, with one of them getting the neighborhood's first dog run. Meanwhile, Sunnyside Gardens Park, one of the city's two members-only parks, has seen its expansive grounds revamped and its membership reach all time highs.

With everything that this flourishing town has going for it right now, it's fair to say that things have never looked "sunnier" for Sunnyside."

Swain Weiner is the president/partner of Greiner-Maltz Investment Properties, Queens, N.Y.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540