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RECOVERY FOR ALL OF US: DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION, DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS CELEBRATE COMPLETION OF NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN FAR ROCKAWAY

City delivers on key commitments made for Downtown Far Rockaway rezoning

Beach 21st Street project will bring 224 units of mixed-income 100% affordable housing; 10% of units to be set aside for formerly homeless households

NEW YORK—Today, Mayor de Blasio joined New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), New York City Housing Development Corporation, New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC), Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, The Community Builders, Inc., and community leaders for the topping off ceremony of the Beach 21st affordable housing development in Far Rockaway, Queens.

The project will activate a previously underused City-owned lot to create 224 units of mixed-income 100% affordable housing, serving a wide range of New Yorkers earning extremely low- to moderate-incomes. Ten percent of the units will be set aside for formerly homeless households. The development will include approximately 7,000 square feet of community facility space, which is anticipated to include a daycare center, and approximately 21,000 square feet of retail space adjacent to a planned DOT pedestrian plaza. This transformational project, which broke ground earlier last year, will be delivered by The Community Builders, Inc. (TCB), a leading non-profit developer of affordable and mixed-income housing.

The project is expected to create over 59 permanent jobs and over 589 construction jobs. TCB has committed to 35% M/WBE participation, and participation in the City's HireNYC initiative, with expected construction completion in 2022.

“The Rockaways are the embodiment of New York City’s strength and resiliency. This neighborhood deserves affordable housing, accessible streets, and community space, and I’m proud to work with partners across government to deliver it,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “A recovery for all of us means making this city more affordable than ever, and investing in communities that have been hard hit by this crisis.”

“Since the Far Rockaway rezoning in 2017, we’ve made tremendous progress on our affordable housing efforts, one of the goals of the Downtown Far Rockaway Roadmap for Action. Far Rockaway was hit hard by the pandemic, which is why the construction progress of this new development will be invaluable to the community and many New York City families,” said **NYCEDC President and CEO James Patchett**. “I’d like to thank and congratulate Queens

Borough President Donovan Richards, the Downtown Far Rockaway Working Group, our partners New York City Housing Preservation and Development, New York City Housing Development Corporation, New York City Department of Transportation, New York City Department of Design and Construction and The Community Builders Inc. on today's progress."

"This Administration is committed to bringing much-needed affordable housing, new infrastructure, and jobs to communities like Downtown Far Rockaway that were hard hit by the pandemic," said **HPD Commissioner Louise Carroll**. "Since the launch of the Downtown Far Rockaway Plan, we've financed more than 1,800 affordable homes in this community. Beach 21st Street exemplifies the kind of projects we're committed to pushing through now under *Your Home NYC*—the Mayor's comprehensive approach to helping New Yorkers get, afford, and keep their homes—deals that not only benefit residents but also strengthen the whole community. I want to thank our many partners including Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, The Community Builders Inc, and the City agencies whose efforts made today possible."

"This transformational project will provide 224 households, including formerly homeless, with affordable homes at a time it's needed most" said **HDC President Eric Enderlin**. "Upon completion, additional community and retail space will further support the revitalization of Downtown Far Rockaway. I would like to thank all our partners for their dedication to advancing construction on this important project, while navigating the challenges of the pandemic."

"NYC DOT is proud to stand alongside our elected leaders, agency partners and community members to unveil this transformative, once-in-a-generation reconstruction of Downtown Far Rockaway streets to support affordable housing and the quality of life for residents," said **NYC DOT Queens Borough Commissioner Nicole Garcia**. "In addition to the housing we're celebrating today, our vision for this residential, commercial and transit hub will include a new plaza designed to be a town square and community gathering space, along with brand new roads, sidewalks and other infrastructure that renew the streetscape, making it safer and more attractive for residents and visitors alike."

"DDC is completing two major projects in the vicinity: the beautiful new \$41 million Far Rockaway Library and a large \$139 million enhancement of infrastructure, streetscapes and pedestrian areas that includes the Beach 21st Street Plaza," said **NYC Department of Design and Construction (DDC) Commissioner Lorraine Grillo**. "Both projects are going very well, and we're proud to work with our private and government partners to contribute to the revitalization of the area."

"TCB's commitment to a 35% MWBE participation goal will go a long way towards building MWBE capacity in the high-demand field of affordable housing," said **Magalie D. Austin, Senior Advisor and Director of the Mayor's Office of M/WBEs**. "I applaud TCB's support in ensuring equity and access to opportunity for the City's MWBEs."

"1047 Beach 21st Street is an integral component of the Downtown Far Rockaway Road Map for Action which will bring homes for 224 families to the peninsula, along with neighborhood amenities that can be enjoyed by all," said **President and CEO of The Community Builders, Inc., Bart Mitchell**. "On behalf of our organization, I'd like to extend my deepest thanks and a well-earned congratulations to our many partners, stakeholders, and neighbors in achieving this important milestone. To the Downtown Far Rockaway Working Group, Queens Borough

President Donovan Richards, Mayor DeBlasio, and all the organizations involved in this effort, thank you for choosing TCB to be your partner and neighbor in this exciting, transformative development.”

“Today’s ceremony is an important milestone in the effort to expand housing and economic opportunities in Queens and across New York City,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** “The progress that has been made on this important project at Beach 21st Street shows we are going in the right direction toward creating new housing in our neighborhoods and in promoting economic and community development. Let us continue to build on this momentum as we make our City an even better place to live and raise a family.”

“Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation is pleased with the progress of the Beach 21st Street development project and excited to be engaged by The Community Builders and Mega Contracting Group in helping them with their local workforce recruitment, commercial retail space attraction and community engagement efforts,” said **Kevin W. Alexander, President & CEO of Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation.** “We are equally excited for our residents, area workers and local businesses who will directly benefit from the opportunities that Beach 21st Development project provides and will continue to bring to Downtown Far Rockaway for years to come. I cannot emphasize enough our ongoing gratitude to Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, the City Council, Mayor DeBlasio and a host of City agencies – for being so supportive of the Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Project.”

In September 2017, the City Council approved the de Blasio Administration’s plan to rezone Downtown Far Rockaway, which helped to bring \$288 million of investment to the area. The City’s comprehensive plan for Downtown Far Rockaway includes efforts from a range of City agencies, and investments in infrastructure, parks, community facilities, housing resources, and small-business support. Highlights of the City’s Far Rockaway investments include:

- Building a new public open space on the site of a vacant Department of Sanitation site at Brunswick and Nameoke.
- Construction of a new Downtown Far Rockaway Library.
- Upgrading sewer infrastructure, expanding sidewalks, and creating new public plazas, including the new plaza adjacent to this site on Beach 21st Street.
- Providing free legal services for Rockaway residents facing unlawful evictions and tenant harassment.
- Supporting existing businesses through free legal services and increasing access to other small business resources.
- Sourcing grants for cultural organizations and increased arts programming.
- Installing real-time bus arrival displays at key bus stops.

The Downtown Far Rockaway Roadmap for Action was developed based on the vision of the Downtown Far Rockaway Working Group — a team of local stakeholders convened by Queens Borough President Donovan Richards in 2015 — to develop a set of goals and recommendations to support the revitalization of the neighborhood.

The Downtown Far Rockaway Working Group received input from hundreds of community

members and delivered their recommendations to Mayor de Blasio in February 2016, asking that the City activate long-vacant sites, increase access to housing and retail opportunities in the neighborhood, and help the area once again realize its potential as the commercial hub of the peninsula.

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