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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**, October 29, 2017

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## **MAYOR ANNOUNCES MAJOR INVESTMENTS TO PROTECT THE ROCKAWAYS FROM FUTURE STORMS**

**\$145 million in new and upgraded parks and facilities will help protect the Rockaways  
from coastal storms and flooding**



Conceptual Rendering of Proposed Bayswater Park; Image courtesy NYC Parks

**NEW YORK**◆◆ On the 5th Anniversary of Hurricane Sandy, Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced a \$145 million investment for up to seven resilience projects to help protect communities in the Rockaways from the impacts of climate change. Each project will be designed to improve quality of life, build more resilient neighborhoods in the Rockaway peninsula that will be better prepared to withstand future flooding and coastal storms. All seven projects were identified by the City through extensive consultation with Rockaway residents and their elected officials. *Link to conceptual renderings of Bayswater Park available [here](#) and Beach 88<sup>th</sup> Street Park available [here](#).*

◆ These investments are an important step forward for Rockaways residents, connecting them with parks and the waterfront, while helping shield them from future storms, ◆ said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. ◆ The community will see a lot they will like in newly renovated parks, and will feel safer because of the flood protections that will be built in. New York is building this kind of smart infrastructure to fight climate change and inequality at the same time, so future generations will inherit a city that ◆s more resilient and just. ◆

This past February, the City submitted a list of recreational and resiliency projects to be considered by FEMA for funding from cost savings from the Rockaway Beach boardwalk

reconstruction. A total of \$480 million was obligated for the Rockaway Boardwalk project, and Mayor de Blasio committed to keep any additional funding that was not spent on the boardwalk in the Rockaways. \$120 million was saved from reconstructing the Boardwalk. Under FEMA 428 program rules, the city was able to allocate the saving to other resiliency projects. FEMA reviewed the City's application and approved the full amount to be used on the submitted recreational and resiliency projects pending approval of environmental and historical preservation reviews. This was supplemented by a contribution of \$25 million from the administration, Borough President Katz and other public and private sources. With FEMA's approval, the City will now be able to complete design on following seven projects, moving them another step closer to construction, subject to final FEMA approval.

- **Bayswater Park.** This project will install berm along the waterfront and other feature to help manage stormwater. It will also include new sports fields, play areas, a public plaza, a refurbished comfort station and access for kayaks.
- **Edgemere Raised Shoreline.** This project will raise the shoreline around the Edgemere neighborhood. It will include new vegetated berm and new bulkheads to help mitigate coastal flooding.
- **Shore Front Parkway Recreation Zone.** This project will include six new recreational facilities along Shorefront Parkway to replace those lost during Hurricane Sandy.
- **Rockaway Community Park.** This project will include a raising the shorelines around the park's eastern and western edges as well as restore the native wetlands as a natural buffer between the park and Jamaica Bay.
- **Beach 88th Street Park.** This new waterfront park will include a new seawall and restores wetlands to mitigate against tidal flooding in the Rockaway Beach neighborhood. It will also include play and seating areas and kayak access.
- **Thursby Basin Park.** This project will transform a vacant lot into a park with seawall and new resilient vegetation along the water to help protect against tidal flooding. It will also include new sport courts, play equipment, and a kayak launch.
- **NYC Parks Operations Headquarters for the Rockaways and Broad Channel.** This project will elevate part of the facility protect from future flooding to ensure it can as a response center in the event of a future storm.

FEMA shared their enthusiasm and appreciation of the City's ability to identify these projects which will provide additional resiliency features to the peninsula's shorelines, improve NYC Parks operations and emergency response throughout the peninsula and Broad Channel, and supply the communities with both renovated and new parks.

Public scoping meetings to begin these projects are expected to be held starting in Spring and Summer 2018.

"This administration has made clear our commitment to keeping all FEMA funding that was obligated for Rockaway Boardwalk within this community to make it safer and more resilient. And we are doing just that. The \$145 million investment we are announcing today will go a long way toward realizing the vision outlined in the 2014 Rockaway Parks Conceptual Plan and other resiliency projects," said **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP.**

◆ Five years ago, Hurricane Sandy roared ashore and brought with it the truth that climate change was no longer an abstraction for New Yorkers - it was our new reality. We remember the lives that were lost and the families whose lives were disrupted, ◆ said **Daniel Zarrilli, NYC's Senior Director of Climate Policy & Programs and Chief Resilience Officer.**

◆ Since that tragic day, New York City has worked tirelessly to prepare for the next wave of coastal storms, rising seas, and hotter summers. As we take stock of our progress today, we know our city is safer and more resilient than it was before Hurricane Sandy, and that we all have much more to do before we'll be satisfied. Today, we are also reaffirming our commitment to improve flood defenses and improve quality of life in vulnerable Rockaway peninsula communities, one more element in the City's \$20 billion program to achieve a more resilient and just city. ◆

◆ The City has been working hand-in-hand with community partners and residents in Rockaways to identify the best ways to meet the challenges we face from climate change, ◆ said **Jainey Bavishi, Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery & Resiliency.** ◆ These projects are great examples of how we can build resilience by integrating flood protection into the community fabric while at the same time improving the quality of life of our coastal communities. ◆

◆ Five years ago today, Hurricane Sandy exposed the vulnerability of New York City to coastal storms and sea-level rise, challenging us to take a new approach to planning for a stronger, more resilient future for our many waterfront communities, ◆ said **Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer.** ◆ Last spring, HPD released Resilient Edgemere, a groundbreaking, community-driven plan for the neighborhood that I hope serves as a model for areas across the United States confronting the threats of climate change. Today, I am thrilled that the City is investing in Bayswater Park, Rockaway Community Park, and the Edgemere Raised Shoreline -- projects that were vital components of the Edgemere plan ◆ and look forward to working with our fellow agencies and the community to build a stronger, more equitable, and more sustainable city. ◆

◆ Superstorm Sandy devastated communities, especially in neighborhoods in the Rockaways, and the risks posed by future storms remain high. These seven resilience projects are critical measures toward hardening our neighborhoods and protecting Queens families from future ◆ storms and flooding. The substantial investments are a reflection of New York's ◆ commitment to think creatively and act boldly to address climate change and mitigate its ◆ impacts, ◆ said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz.**

**State Senator James Sanders Jr.** said, ◆ The basic part of government is that we have to look out for the life and safety of the people and this initiative by the Mayor does that. I applaud the Mayor for identifying these recreational and resiliency projects through the process of community engagement. The Rockaways looks forward to the next stage in this effort. ◆

◆ Today's announcement of \$145 million sends a bold message that city government isn't ◆ retreating from investing in coastal communities anytime soon, ◆ said **Council Member Donovan Richards.** ◆ Ensuring the Rockaway community is more resilient, while enhancing

amenities on the waterfront for residents and tourists to enjoy is a boost for our local economy and quality of life. I would like to thank Mayor de Blasio for his commitment to addressing inequality, sustainability, and resiliency for the residents of my district. ♦

Hurricane Sandy struck New York City in October 2012, taking the lives of New Yorkers and causing \$19 billion in damages and lost economic activity. It also laid bare pre-existing challenges in the City's waterfront communities and highlighted our vulnerabilities to coastal storms and rising seas. The City's climate vulnerabilities, which also include increases in heat and precipitation, are also exacerbated by other challenges, including an increasing population, aging infrastructure and rising inequality.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, it was imperative that New York City emerge a stronger and more resilient city ♦ one that did not just prepare for the next storm, but one that invested against a wider range of threats. In March 2014, Mayor de Blasio created the Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR) to implement the City's comprehensive OneNYC climate resiliency program. Since Sandy struck, considerable progress has been made to recover from the storm and make the city ready for the future impacts of climate change.

To see the full list of the City's progress on its OneNYC \$20 billion multi-layered resiliency program, please visit our citywide resiliency map [here](#).

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