

# Mayor Adams Announces Significant Quality-of-Life Improvements, new Affordable Homeownership Opportunities in Southeast Queens

March 9, 2022

*Mayor Adams and Speaker Adams Return to Area Where They Grew up, Highlighting Major Investments in Infrastructure and Affordable Housing*

*City Has Completed \$50 Million Water Infrastructure Project Under Budget to Address Regular Flooding of Homes and Streets*

*Mayor Kicks off “Habitat Net Zero” Project, Creating 16 Green Homes for Affordable Homeownership Through Innovative Community Land Trust Model*

Video available at: <https://youtu.be/JxaLjG-C4rA>

**SOUTH JAMAICA** – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced milestones in two major projects that will improve infrastructure and quality of life, while tackling the affordable housing crisis in Southeast Queens. Mayor Adams and New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams — both of whom grew up in the area — celebrated the completion of a \$50 million project delivering more than six miles of new sewers and water mains to alleviate flooding of homes and streets in Rochdale under budget. They also kicked off construction of “Habitat Net Zero,” a project that will turn 13 dilapidated homes previously owned by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) into 16 green homes for affordable homeownership.

“This community represented the promise of a better life for my family, and I am going to keep that promise for generations of New Yorkers,” said **Mayor Adams**.

“Government has ignored this community for too long, denying them their fair share of investments and services — that ends in my administration. These projects will make life better for the residents of Southeast Queens today and those who will be able to move here in the future, and I’m proud to say that this is just the beginning.”

“For too long, Southeast Queens has endured systemic disinvestment and neglect, resulting in widening disparities that persist today,” said **Council Speaker Adams**.

“With the completion of the \$49.3 million water infrastructure project in Rochdale and the start of construction for Habitat Net Zero — a project to deliver new affordable homeownership opportunities — our communities are seeing the investments and improvements that we have always deserved. I thank Mayor Adams, Habitat NYC, Interboro CLT, and all of the city agencies involved in making these projects possible.”

“Ever since the residential development of Southeast Queens more than 50 years ago, neighbors have worried about any threat of rain in the forecast, because there were no catch basins or sewers built to drain the roadways, resulting in chronic flooding and property damage,” said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi**. “With a commitment of \$2.5 billion for a comprehensive drainage system, we are now correcting that past failure block by block, and I thank our teams at DEP, DDC, and DOT for completing this particular project under-budget.”

“Today, we are strengthening our promise to provide families not just homes they can afford but homes they can be proud of,” said **Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz**. “By using every tool available and leaning on great partners — including Habitat for Humanity, which will change the lives of 16 families through their work here — once again, Queens and New York City will be a place where you can raise your family, regardless of income.”

## **SEWER AND WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Prior to construction, stormwater would collect on 160th Street between 132nd Avenue and 134th Avenue for days (left). Since new streets and storm sewers were installed, the same location has remained clear (right).*

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), and New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC) have reached substantial completion on a \$49.3 million project, bringing more than six miles of new sewers and water mains to Rochdale — improving street conditions, alleviating flooding, and upgrading infrastructure, while staying \$5.7 million under budget. Work began in March 2018 and took place on 78 individual blocks.

More than one mile (5,535 feet) of new storm sewers was added to the neighborhood, and an additional 2,265 feet of existing storm sewers were replaced. To better capture stormwater and direct it to the new storm sewers, 55 new catch basins were installed, and 53 old ones were replaced. The holding capacity of the local sewers was increased with the installation of three new underground chambers and replacement of an old one. During construction, 9,235 feet of sanitary sewers were replaced, and 595 feet of new sewers was installed. More than three miles (16,160 feet) of water mains were replaced to improve water infrastructure reliability.

As part of the final street restoration, 490,240 square feet of asphalt were laid down over a new concrete base. Throughout the project area, 65,840 square feet of sidewalk and 19,370 feet of curbs were reconstructed, and 890 square feet of new sidewalk and 995 feet of new curbs were added. The new curbs and sidewalks were graded to help guide stormwater to the area's new catch basins and ensure adequate street drainage during storms. Fire protection was enhanced with the installation of six new fire hydrants and the replacement of 33 existing ones. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act was improved with the installation of four new pedestrian ramps and the replacement of 158 existing ones.

The project is part of the ongoing \$2.5 billion Southeast Queens Initiative, in which the city will build a comprehensive drainage system, improve street conditions, and alleviate flooding in neighborhoods throughout Southeast Queens. The program — the largest of its kind — consists of 44 projects overall, including 18 substantially completed, 14 in design, and three in active construction.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation (HPD), NYCHA, and Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester County have closed and started construction on “Habitat Net Zero,” bringing long-term affordable homeownership

opportunities to Southeast Queens. Through HPD's [Open Door](#) program, this project will see the demolition or rehabilitation of 13 vacant, dilapidated, previously NYCHA-owned houses to create 16 new and rehabilitated homes built to [Passive House](#) standards for affordable homeownership.

This project represents the first new construction of affordable homes where the land will be transferred to the Interboro Community Land Trust (CLT) to ensure long-term affordability. Developed by Habitat, the homes will be equipped with rooftop solar panels and highly efficient heat-pump technology for heating and cooling, reducing costs, and keeping homes at or near net zero energy use. Thirteen of the new homes will be new construction and built using modular construction; three will be gut rehabilitations of the existing structures.

Agreements with HPD, Interboro CLT, and the homeowners are structured to ensure that the homeowners have the support they need to maintain their homes and that the homes remain affordable in the long term. Initial sale prices and resale prices will be affordable to low- and moderate-income households. HPD will enter a 40-year regulatory agreement with Interboro CLT, and the CLT will enter into 99-year, renewable ground leases with each homeowner.

These sites were awarded to Habitat through a 2018 request for proposals from NYCHA. In addition to funding from HPD's Open Door program — which funds the new construction of homeownership opportunities for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households — funding for this project will be financed by the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation and with Reso A funds provided by Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, City Council Speaker Adams, and former New York City Councilmember I. Daneek Miller. HPD also facilitated an Article XI tax exemption, which will help keep ongoing housing costs affordable for lower-income households. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and Nonprofit Finance Fund are also providing construction financing.

“We have committed \$2.5 billion for building a comprehensive drainage system to ensure public safety and protect the homes and property of the residents and businesses of Southeast Queens,” said **DEP Commissioner Rit Aggarwala**. “We also hope this massive financial investment will improve the quality of life for residents who worked hard to buy a home and maybe raise a family in these neighborhoods. These

residents deserve the same infrastructure as the rest of the city, and we're making tangible progress on that promise."

"The city's investment in Southeast Queens infrastructure is growing and making a tangible difference in the lives of the half a million people who live in these historically underserved areas," said **DDC Commissioner Thomas Foley**. "Street conditions are greatly improved, curbs and sidewalks have been installed in some areas where there were none, and miles of new storm sewers now keep stormwater off the streets and out of people's homes. We are delighted to share that this project was delivered \$5.7 million under budget, and we look forward to working with DEP and DOT to complete this program of more than 40 individual projects."

"Everyone in New York City deserves the assurance that their streets or homes will not be inundated every time it rains, but for thousands of Southeast Queens residents, flooding has been a frustrating perennial issue," said **DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez**. "DOT has been proud to work with our partners at DEP and DDC on investments that are transforming the streets and sidewalks of these neighborhoods — improving quality-of-life while at the same time providing better access for pedestrians and the disability community."

"Soon, these old, vacant homes will become high-quality, energy-efficient, new affordable homeownership opportunities — a testament to our team at HPD, who looks at every opportunity to expand the supply and quality of affordable housing," said **HPD Commissioner Adolfo Carrión, Jr.** "And by transferring land ownership to the Interboro CLT, we are advancing equity in ownership, long-term affordability, and wealth building for families and communities alike. Thank you to our local partners at Interboro Community Land Trust, Habitat NYC and Westchester, and NYCHA for making this exciting project possible."

"NYCHA, in partnership with HPD and local non-profit organizations like Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester, has made great progress in connecting low- and moderate-income residents to housing opportunities across New York City," said **NYCHA Chair and CEO Greg Russ**. "By leveraging underutilized assets in our portfolio, we can facilitate the construction of homes that enrich our local neighborhoods, while making the dream of homeownership possible for a new generation of New Yorkers."

“This community has long suffered from flooding issues and deteriorating infrastructure, so we heartily welcome the new sewer system and repairs that the city is implementing,” said **New York State Senator James Sanders Jr.** “We have waited for a long time, and we are looking forward to an improved quality of life.”

“Through HCR’s Affordable Housing Corporation, New York State makes safe and affordable homeownership a reality for thousands of New Yorkers each year,” said **New York State Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas.** “Our \$560,000 award to support ‘Habitat Net Zero’ in Southeast Queens will expand economic opportunity and access to generational wealth building for low- and moderate-income households. Under Governor Hochul’s sweeping plan to make housing more equitable and climate-friendly, we will continue to work alongside our city and nonprofit partners to create and protect the healthy, secure, and affordable homes that New Yorkers deserve.”

“‘Habitat Net Zero’ creates more opportunities for more families in Southeast Queens to build equity and stability through homeownership,” said **Karen Haycox, CEO, Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester County.** “The positive impact of these healthy, energy-efficient, and affordable homes will benefit hard-working families now and for generations to come. Our city and our state are stronger when we make room for more of us to own a piece of our communities.”

“The ownership of the land by the community land trust, coupled with the net-zero features of the homes and the Article XI property tax exemption, constitute a potent trifecta that not only strengthens the permanent affordability of the homes but also reinforces the opportunity for homeowners to build personal as well as generational wealth,” said **John Edward Dallas, coordinator, Interboro Community Land Trust.** “Interboro thanks Habitat, HPD, NYCHA, LISC, and everyone else who made this trailblazing and much-needed permanently affordable homeownership project possible.”

“New Yorkers need more options to affordably stay in their neighborhoods, despite increasing land speculation and threats of displacement,” said **Olivia Pipitone, financing director, Nonprofit Finance Fund.** “As a community land trust, this project will give Queens homeowners greater control over assets in their neighborhoods — control that is needed to help close racial health and wealth gaps.”

“We’re thrilled to support this exceptional public-private partnership that will transform dilapidated and vacant buildings into new, highly-efficient, and affordable homes in Southeast Queens,” said **Valerie White, executive director, LISC NYC**. “This project is centered around equity and opportunity, providing safe, secure, and affordable housing for New Yorkers who need it most, while creating pathways for first-time homebuyers to help jumpstart the process of building generational wealth. We’re proud to partner with Interboro Community Land Trust, Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester, HPD, and NYCHA to advance this innovative and equitable project.”

###