



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION AND BROWNSVILLE COMMUNITY LEADERS
ANNOUNCE NYCX CO-LAB CHALLENGES IN BROWNSVILLE**

City invites tech community to propose and test new solutions to modernize public infrastructure, support neighborhood development, and bridge the digital divide

NEW YORK— Mayor Bill de Blasio, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, and Chief Technology Officer Miguel Gamiño, Jr. announced the launch of applications inviting startups, entrepreneurs and independent teams to propose tech solutions that address priority needs in the neighborhood of Brownsville, Brooklyn.

NYCx, the world's first municipal program to transform urban spaces into hubs for tech collaboration, research, testing and development was announced last week and will utilize Moonshot and Co-Lab Challenges to engage the tech industry to solve real-world problems and help the City advance its goals to be the most fair, equitable and sustainable city in the world.

"Technology is an inescapable, critical part of our lives and the future of our communities," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "Now, more than ever New York must take a leadership role in shaping a future that protects our values, strengthens inclusiveness and equity of our communities and presents a model of leadership for other cities around the world."

"NYCx represents an important step forward in spurring economic development while addressing the critical needs of our neighborhoods," said **Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Alicia Glen**. "This program allows New Yorkers to benefit from the opportunities that come with advancements in the tech ecosystem and confirms that NYC is the global capital of innovation."

"We're proud of the work that we've done with community leaders to identify their needs and to develop the NYCx Co-Lab challenges," said **Miguel Gamiño, Jr., Chief Technology Officer**

“It’s been truly collaborative, and NYCx Co-Labs is an evolution of our efforts and will benefit all New Yorkers as we expand this program to all five boroughs.”

The NYCx Co-Labs are neighborhood-based partnership to co-design a set of challenges and make neighborhood spaces available for testing new technologies aiming to address the neighborhood’s more pressing needs.

In Brownsville, Brooklyn, community partners and local youth are advising the City on areas of opportunity where technologies can play a role in improving neighborhood quality of life and local economic development.

Challenge respondents have until December 15, 2017 to submit proposals for solutions. Winners will receive funding, access to urban infrastructure and support from City agencies to deploy solutions in Brownsville neighborhood spaces in 2018.

The first Co-Lab Challenge: *Safe and Thriving Night Corridors* was developed in partnership with the Mayor’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO), NYC Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) and the the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) and calls for creative solutions to enhance public experience, encourage use of public spaces during evening hours, and increase night activity and community safety while boosting economic, civic and cultural opportunity for neighborhood residents. Selected proposals will receive up to \$20,000 in funding to test solutions in the Belmont Avenue Business Corridor.

The second Co-Lab Challenge: *Zero Waste in Shared Space* was developed in partnership with the Mayor’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO), NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and calls for creative solutions that increase resident participation in recycling and waste-reduction opportunities while reducing trash and litter in the common areas in public housing. Selected proposals will receive up to \$20,000 in funding to test solutions at Brownsville Houses, one of the larger public housing developments in the Brownsville.

The City also announced that the NYCx Co-Labs program will expand to all five boroughs in 2018.

Today’s announcement marks a milestone in the City’s tech equity efforts in Brownsville that started with the Neighborhood Innovation Labs, an initiative launched in March 2017 as part of the Brownsville Plan that brought together communities, government, educators, and technologists to research, develop and demonstrate solutions to improve quality of life and enhance city services. Neighborhood Innovation Labs are a public-private partnership led by the Mayor’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer, New York City Economic Development Corporation, and NYU’s Center for Urban Science and Progress. Brownsville Community Justice Center serves as the lead community partner for the City’s first Neighborhood Innovation Lab in Osborn Plaza.

"I believe wholeheartedly in the incredible untapped potential of Brownsville, and I believe in the potential of neighborhood solutions that can be fostered through collaboration with our

friends in the tech community,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**. “My administration is a proud partner at the NYCx Brownsville Co-Lab, an unprecedented initiative that is harnessing innovation to tackle long-standing challenges that impact residents on a day-to-day basis. We need better answers to issues such as addressing pervasive waste at public housing developments and promoting safe nightlife activity. As a native of Brownsville, I am particularly proud that my community will be the birthplace for innovative local tech solutions that may have global applications.”

“New York City's tech ecosystem is constantly evolving to meet new economic and urban challenges. We are thrilled to collaborate on NYCX, which will continue to strengthen our urban tech sector, create good jobs for New Yorkers, and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods across the city,” said **NYCEDC President and CEO James Patchett**.

“Across our city, neighborhood-based enhancements like public plazas have combined with simpler improvements like brighter LED lighting to improve the quality of life in great neighborhoods like Brownsville,” said **NYC DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “As City Hall comes to Brooklyn this week, DOT is excited to join other agencies in inviting creative technological solutions to support a thriving Belmont Avenue, and consider new additions to our agency’s toolkit for improving our city’s streets and public spaces.”

“The Department of Sanitation is pleased to be co-sponsoring the Zero Waste in Shared Space challenge with our partners at the New York City Housing Authority,” said **Kathryn Garcia, Commissioner of the Department of Sanitation**. “In order to achieve our ambitious goal of sending zero waste to landfills by 2030, we will need a new generation of creative thinkers to propose scalable solutions that deliver on the needs of New York City’s diverse communities.”

“This is an exciting partnership between the community, government and the tech sector – which will be a powerful force to address local needs in Brownsville,” said **Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice**. “When it comes to how to make our cities safer and more livable, we count on our local partners to guide us. We can’t wait to see the ideas that spring out of this initiative.”

“One in every 14 New Yorkers lives in a NYCHA apartment and they all deserve to live in healthy buildings equipped with sustainable technology,” said **NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly**. “Our NextGen NYCHA strategic plan demands that we create safe, clean and connected communities and the Mayor’s Zero Waste in Shared Space challenge in Brownsville Houses goes hand in hand with that commitment. This is an exciting next step towards environmental justice and equity for all New Yorkers.”

“The NYCx Co-Lab in Brownsville creates an unprecedented opportunity for researchers to work directly with residents to understand and address problems most important to the community,” said **Constantine E. Kontokosta, PhD, PE, Assistant Professor of Urban Informatics and Director of the Urban Intelligence Lab at NYU CUSP and NYU School of Engineering**. “By building on the lessons from our Quantified Community research initiative,

we hope to show how data can be used to help communities become empowered to take action based on rigorous, evidenced-based analysis of what civic technologies and urban innovations work best for them."

"NYCx Co-Labs is bringing together government, tech and community to help neighborhoods like Brownsville, and I'm thrilled to be part of the effort," said **Russell Simmons, Chairman and CEO, Rush Communications and member of NYCx Technology Leadership Council**. "The NYCx Co-Lab Challenges are an amazing way to engage innovators to help communities with real needs."

"We're always looking for new ways to be involved in solving civic challenges," said **Ben Fried, CIO, Google and member of NYCx Technology Leadership Council**. "NYCx is the perfect catalyst to generate the next great idea and technology breakthrough that could benefit all New Yorkers and support the growth of tech opportunities in NYC."

"All over our city, from Brownsville to Harlem and in between, there are opportunities to use technology more thoughtfully and inclusively—to enhance safety, advance equity, and drive economic development," said **Clayton Banks, Co-founder and CEO of Silicon Harlem and member of NYCx Technology Leadership Council**. "New York City residents care about the same things: safe public spaces for families and children, jobs and economic opportunities, and vibrant cultural life. Our Silicon Harlem team is excited about neighborhood-based partnerships such as the NYCx Co-Labs, because we're directly involving the community to identify and address some of the most pervasive challenges of urban living."

"In an ever increasingly technological world, we must do all we can to ensure New York stays up-to-date and technologically competitive," said **NYC Council Member Rafael Espinal (East New York, Bushwick, Brownsville)**. "There is no place better than Brownsville, Brooklyn, which for so long has been denied the investments it deserves, to be the site of these investments and our city's future innovation."

State Senator Jesse Hamilton said, "We need public and private sector cooperation to act as a spur to inclusivity and innovation in tech. Founding the first tech and wellness hub at a public housing site in the United States last year in Brownsville alongside, City, State, and community partners, advanced that vision. This announcement today of NYCx Co-Labs is a welcome step further. Community-based engagement with the tech sector will help both technologists and neighborhood residents innovate and include more voices in guiding that innovation. I welcome this investment in exploring new solutions and engaging all New Yorkers in finding those solutions."

"Brownsville Community Justice Center has been at the forefront of the community-led revitalization of Belmont Avenue," said **James Brodick, Executive Director of the Brownsville Community Justice Center**. "To all of us at the Justice Center, and the young people in Brownsville who we serve, we see a vital connection that links how economic opportunities that are available to Brownsville residents in their own neighborhood lead to a safer and more secure neighborhood. Our part of the collective work to transform Belmont Avenue into an engine of economic opportunity has revolved around our stewardship of Osborn

Plaza and making visible change in public space. We see a great need and opportunity to address the way our public spaces make people feel safe and secure at all hours of the day and night. The next great frontier for making visible change at Osborn Plaza and Belmont Avenue is transforming how those spaces function to create a livelier Brownsville at night. We are looking forward to working with the City and the technology community to accelerate progress on how next-generation urban infrastructure can play a transformative role in that quest to unlock Brownsville at night. As the lead partners of NYCx Co-Labs in Brownsville, the conveners of the Brownsville Community Technology Advisory Board, and the City's partner on the Young Innovators Program, we exemplify our focus on both immediate, visible change as well as long-term community wealth-building."

"The Fund for Public Housing has long recognized the potential for an urban technology revolution that begins with the needs of public housing residents," said **Rasmia Kirmani-Frye, President of the Fund for Public Housing and Director of NYCHA's Office for Public Private Partnerships**. "As an independent non-profit constituted to support the needs and potential of the public housing community in New York City, our partnership with the New York City Housing Authority is strategically focused on initiatives where the potential for innovation is high. Working collaboratively alongside NYCx Co-Labs will only accelerate that potential. The Co-Lab Challenge for Zero Waste in Shared Space acknowledges that the key to the smart city is the power of collective action, and aims to co-create with NYCHA residents the people-centered transformation of urban waste systems."

"3 Black Cats Cafe was founded by three sisters who love baking, love Brownsville, and want to support every effort to increase entrepreneurial opportunities in the neighborhood, to give more people the chance to turn their passion into their source of economic security and well-being," said **Iona Jimenez, Co-owner of 3 Black Cats Cafe**. "We participated in steering the tech challenge to create an attractive and safe nighttime experience on Belmont Avenue because we recognize how much people in Brownsville want to enjoy neighborhood spaces like ours to meet their friends and loved ones for a delicious dinner or to see the talented musicians and artists of Brownsville. We know many people in our neighborhood that have the potential to be the next wave of great hospitality entrepreneurs on Belmont Avenue. Let's inspire them by building the future of the 24-hour city right here in Brownsville."

"Brownsville is here. We are at the vanguard of place-making and urban tech, and we are open for business," said **Mary Tobin, Executive Director of Brownsville Partnership**. "Brownsville Partnership is leading on a number of local initiatives to leverage the power of smart infrastructure to benefit local businesses, and maximize local job creation. In the week ahead, as we celebrate our Hope Summit and execute a mammoth volunteer effort to install solar-powered, sensor-triggered smart lights on Belmont Avenue storefronts, we recognize that there is no better time to accelerate the progress that the neighborhood's social enterprises have been achieving in making Brownsville a safe, livable place. As members of the Brownsville Community Technology Advisory Board, and partners to NYCx Co-Labs in the development of the Co-Lab Challenges, we are looking forward to ushering in a new era for the smart neighborhood, right here in Brownsville."

"Young residents of Brownsville continue to exercise their collective agency by shaping the space outside of their doors," said **Quardean Lewis-Allen, Founder of Made in Brownsville**.

“Take a walk down Belmont Ave and you’ll find evidence that we are rich with art. Go to Osborn Plaza and you’ll see how local partners supported Brownsville's young creatives with the opportunity to design an environment that celebrates unity. Now, as a member of the Brownsville Community Technology Advisory Board and as a partner to NYCx Co-Labs, Made in Brownsville is looking forward to facilitating young Brownsville designers to contribute their creative voices to the collaborations emerging around smart city technologies in Brownsville. NYCx Co-Labs are generating a dialogue inclusive of many voices in Brownsville and we believe the launch of the first Co-Lab Challenges is a moment to celebrate a new era at the intersection of culture, environmental design, and urban tech.”

Pernell Brice III, Executive Director of The Dream Big Foundation, said: “The Dream Big Foundation is proud to be among the organizations that have partnered with NYCx Co-Labs in Brownsville. From our vantage point as the neighborhood’s first business incubator of its kind, we know that Brownsville is on its way to becoming a haven for tech entrepreneurship and that our entrepreneurs are aiming to solve meaningful problems that can be solved nowhere else. Dream Big is a member of the Brownsville Community Technology Advisory Board and it has truly been an eye-opening experience to learn how the City is aligning its resources and using its convening power to shift the research and development process of the technologies that will increasingly become foundational to urban life. The main thrust of NYCx Co-Labs seems to be diversifying the spaces and communities where this research and development is happening.”

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