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**MAYOR DE BLASIO MARKS SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF SANDY,  
ANNOUNCES MAJOR PROGRESS ON CITY'S RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY WORK**

*Build it Back Hits 762 Construction Starts, Nearly 1,090 Reimbursement Checks—Compared to None Earlier this Year—as a Result of Mayor de Blasio's Overhaul; Nearly Half of Applicants Have Now Been Made an Offer*

*Two Years after Sandy, NYC Is Much Safer Thanks to Significant Progress on \$20 Billion Comprehensive, Citywide Resiliency Plan—with Many More Improvements Ahead*

**NEW YORK**—Today, Mayor Bill de Blasio marked the second anniversary of Hurricane Sandy and announced continued progress on the City's housing and business recovery and climate change adaptation and highlighting a city that is much safer than it was two years ago, with much more work ahead.

Two years ago today, Sandy struck New York City, impacting homes and families across the five boroughs and marking the worst natural disaster in the City's history. Sandy's terrible toll on New York City included 44 lives and \$19 billion in damages and lost economic activity.

“Sandy was the worst natural disaster to ever hit our city. As we remember those lost and the destruction Sandy wrought, it's our responsibility to make every impacted family whole again, while building back stronger and safer to protect against the risks of climate change,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “When we took office, Build it Back wasn't delivering for families who needed it. Now, New Yorkers across the city have finally gotten the support they deserve, and we'll continue to speed up relief until every homeowner is served. At the same time, we're aggressively implementing our comprehensive resiliency plan. We are much safer now than we were two years ago—and there's much work ahead.”

“In the two years since Hurricane Sandy made landfall in New York City, we have made tremendous strides to rebuild a stronger and more resilient City. From Coney Island, to the Rockaways, to Breezy Point, to South Beach, to Red Hook, to Lower Manhattan and beyond, working with our partners in the city, state and federal government, we remain committed to ensuring all New Yorkers hit hardest by Sandy have the resources and assistance they need to fully rebuild their homes and their lives,” said **City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “I thank Mayor de Blasio and his administration for their commitment to strengthening our City and look forward to continue working with my colleagues, the City, and the state to build a safe, sustainable and revitalized future for all residents.”

“Two years ago, Superstorm Sandy crippled the metropolitan area, wreaking havoc on homeowners, business owners, our coastline and our infrastructure. We passed the \$60 billion Sandy Relief bill, which has poured critical federal investment into New York City and Long Island in order to help recover and rebuild stronger and smarter, so that we are better prepared for the next storm. With Sandy two years behind us, New York homeowners are finally getting the Sandy relief that they need, and I will work continue to work with Mayor de Blasio to make sure everyone who is entitled gets this aid as soon as possible,” said **U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer**.

When Mayor de Blasio took office, the City's housing recovery program, Build it Back, simply wasn't working, with not a single homeowner in construction or reimbursed. Earlier this year, the Mayor overhauled Build it Back to streamline the program and expedite relief to homeowners—resulting in the major progress now underway. As a result:

- Nearly half (almost 6,500) of Build it Back applicants have now been made an offer by the program—compared to only 451 earlier this year
- Over 4,100 have now accepted an offer—compared to 0 earlier this year
- Over 1,500 have now started design—compared to 0 earlier this year
- And 762 have moved into construction and another 1,090 have received reimbursement checks—both compared to 0 earlier this year

Last week, Mayor de Blasio committed to a goal of 1,000 construction starts and 1,500 reimbursement checks by December 31 of this year: <http://on.nyc.gov/1sDXj1x> He also announced a new procurement that will dramatically expand design and construction capacity to further expedite the pace of recovery. Build it Back is not simply rebuilding homes, but building them to be stronger and more resilient to protect against future climate events.

This morning, Mayor de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray joined Habitat for Humanity and local elected officials to help rebuild a home destroyed by Sandy in Coney Island, one of many service projects with City employees underway in impacted communities.

The service project with Habitat for Humanity highlighted one of the major changes made by the de Blasio administration, with Build it Back now partnering with community and non-profit organizations to expand and enhance recovery work. Build it Back is working with non-profits to meet construction needs not addressed by public funds, provide financial and legal counseling to homeowners, and expand the program’s capacity by contracting organizations like Habitat for Humanity through the Choose Your Own Contractor pathway.

The de Blasio administration has also kickstarted the Hurricane Sandy Business Loan and Grant Program, with over 100 businesses now approved for nearly \$15 million in grants and loans, compared to only seven approvals as of the beginning of the year. The administration has worked with the federal government to improve the program by providing more grants and making approval guidelines more flexible, while providing businesses with one-on-one guidance.

The City isn’t simply rebuilding back to where it was before Sandy—it is implementing a \$20 billion comprehensive resiliency plan that has already made New York City much safer than it was two years ago.

Last year, the Bloomberg administration released A Stronger, More Resilient New York, a comprehensive citywide resiliency plan based on the best available science. In March, Mayor de Blasio created the Office of Recovery & Resiliency, the first-ever City office dedicated to resiliency, which is aggressively moving forward the plan, integrating resiliency into how the City operates, securing critical federal funds and collaborating with government partners, and using the plan to expand economic opportunity for New Yorkers.

As a result, since Sandy, the City has made dramatic progress strengthening coastal defenses, upgrading buildings, protecting infrastructure and critical services, and making homes, businesses and neighborhoods safer and more vibrant. For examples:

- Short-term measures were quickly put in place to immediately reduce risk. For example:
  - 4.15 million cubic yards of sand placed on City beaches
  - 26,000 linear feet of dunes on Staten Island alone, with more to come
  - 10,500 linear feet of bulkhead repairs around the City
  - Updated building codes, including 16 new local laws to improve residential and commercial resiliency
  - \$1 billion in resiliency investments being made by ConEd to harden critical assets like substations and switches
  - Reforms to the national flood insurance program

- Longer-term measures are in development now across the entire City. For example:
  - Over \$400 million to construct new armored levees and other infrastructure along Midland Beach and Staten Island’s East Shore, to substantially reduce risk in the future
  - Substantial investment in the next phase of coastal protection in the Rockaways and the communities surrounding Jamaica Bay
  - T-groins in Sea Gate
  - Dunes and other coastal protection in Breezy Point
  - Flood protection in Red Hook
  - Over \$15 million in nature-based resiliency projects funded by the Department of Interior
  - Coastal protection projects funded by the federal Rebuild by Design program, including:
    - Lower East Side flood protection, for which the City started surveying work this fall
    - Hunts Point food supply protection
    - Living Breakwaters off of Staten Island’s South Shore, being implemented with the state
- Major investments in the Staten Island Bluebelt and other green infrastructure across the city to better accommodate stormwater
- Key resiliency upgrades at critical facilities, such as hospitals like SIUH
- NYCHA recovery and resiliency funds to elevate boilers and built emergency generators and flood protection systems; last month, the Mayor announced the model for this funding at Coney Island Houses
- Agency recovery and resiliency funds to restore and protect critical City agency services
- Major flood and coastal protection studies, including at Coney Island Creek, Gowanus Canal, Southern Manhattan, and Newtown Creek, and a raised shoreline study to protect the most vulnerable non-beach parts of our coastline
- Department of City Planning Resilient Neighborhoods studies to ensure that the City tailors long-term solutions to support the vitality and resiliency of individual communities in the flood zones
- Support for new resiliency technologies to be applied to small businesses through the NYC: RISE competition

“Our multi-billion dollar resiliency plan and the Build it Back program have made great strides this year, representing close coordination among City agencies and our state and federal partners,” said **Bill Goldstein, Senior Advisor to the Mayor for Recovery, Resiliency and Infrastructure**. “That coordination will need to continue as we move toward our goals. We’re also engaging the private sector through EDC’s RISE: NYC program, business loans and grants, and crucial investments by the public utilities to harden their infrastructure.”

“The City is safer today than it was two years ago, and that’s due to our aggressive implementation of a comprehensive climate resiliency plan,” said **Daniel Zarrilli, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Recovery and Resiliency**. “We have much work left to do, and the next phase of our \$20 billion program includes a wide array of short-term measures and long-term investments that are strengthening our coastal communities and preparing our city for the future. Working collaboratively with many stakeholders across the five boroughs, we are strengthening the coast, upgrading buildings, protecting infrastructure, and making communities safer and more connected as we build a stronger, more resilient New York.”

“Since the Mayor overhauled Build it Back, we have moved quickly to make sure that our homes not only get built, but that they are built to last,” said **Amy Peterson, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Housing Recovery**. “And we could only execute this mission with the help of our non-profit and philanthropic partners, who provide volunteer labor and flexible funding on projects outside of Build it Back’s scope, so that all of our homeowner needs are met.”

“As we mark the second anniversary of the horrific storm, the Department of City Planning is working with communities, elected leaders, and other agencies to support the recovery and long-term vitality of communities affected by Hurricane Sandy and others at risk of coastal flooding. Our recently released [manual](#), “Retrofitting Buildings for Flood Risk,” is designed to help homeowners identify strategies to make resilient retrofits to their homes to better weather future storms,” said **City Planning Chairman Carl Weisbrod**.

“The Department of Design and Construction took on the task of rebuilding what was destroyed by mother nature during Hurricane Sandy and worked round the clock with our parks department to get the beaches open for Memorial Day,” said **DDC Commissioner Dr. Feniosky Peña-Mora**. “Now, as the second anniversary is upon us, we look forward to our next task of building a more resilient city by working with Build it Back contractors and the Office of Recovery and Resiliency, constructing a more sustainable New York by improving the vast infrastructure of our great City, and implementing the Coastal Resiliency Plan in order to protect the most vulnerable New Yorkers living in evacuation zones.”

“New York City’s waterways are one of our greatest assets and we have invested more than \$10 billion over the last decade to make our harbor cleaner than it has been in a century,” said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. “We are committed to ensuring that our wastewater infrastructure is resilient and can stand up to the rising sea levels and extreme weather events associated with climate change.”

“Since the morning after Sandy struck, NYCHA has been working to make sure our residents and buildings are better prepared to withstand future storms,” said **NYCHA General Manager Cecil House**. “Our focus has been on repairs and long term resiliency, as well as pursuing funds needed to fix the damage and strengthen our properties. We have made great progress, and the effort continues.”

“In the immediate aftermath of the storm, HPD worked alongside our sister agencies in a coordinated effort to assess damage, restore essential services to buildings, and provide emergency shelter for displaced New Yorkers,” said **HPD Commissioner Vicki Been**. “We are pleased that on this anniversary of the storm, we can report significant progress towards rebuilding and repairing peoples’ houses and apartments to allow families to recover from the storm, and we are committed to working as hard as we can over the coming months to help many more families put the storm damage behind them. Importantly, we are using lessons learned from the Sandy, so that the City and its housing stock will be more resilient, stronger, and better prepared for future severe weather events.”

“We mark this anniversary with the promise that New Yorkers will be better protected from future storms,” said **Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**. “Protection from future storms has been the most important work our agency has done here on Staten Island and throughout the city in the two years since Sandy. We have installed 26,000 feet of emergency protective berms from South Beach to Conference House Park. In Rockaway, Queens, 3.5 million cubic yards of sand have been restored and beach grasses have been planted to keep the sand in place. Our new Rockaway boardwalk is under construction to provide further protection from future storms. In Brooklyn, we have added sand to build up Coney Island. At the same time we have been working to restore and improve recreational opportunities along the waterfront for all New Yorkers. Right here on Staten Island, we have repaired the treasured FDR boardwalk, restored the basketball courts at Midland Beach, repaired ballfields along the shore and even added a new amusement park. When the next storm hits, New York's parks and waterfront will be far more well prepared.”

“As we reflect during the second anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, I am grateful for the efforts of Amy Peterson and the Build It Back program and mindful of the tremendous work that still needs to be done in helping thousands of my people recover from the storm throughout Howard Beach, Hamilton Beach, Broad Channel, and the Rockaway peninsula. I can’t stop thinking of my constituents, who are still not in their homes, or who have exhausted their life savings, or who have maxed out their credit cards, or who are facing other extreme financial and emotional issues because of the storm. We take time to appreciate how far we have come since Sandy and must remain vigilant in the hard work that lies ahead until all victims of the storm are attended to,” said **Senator Joseph Addabbo**.

“On this second anniversary, we reflect on the devastation brought by Sandy. We remember those who were lost and reaffirm our commitment to work with Mayor de Blasio to continue to build back our community with an eye towards creating a more resilient and safe shoreline community,” said **Senator Andrew Lanza**.

“Two years ago today, many of our neighbors lost their homes and some lost loved ones as Hurricane Sandy devastated our community. We have come a long way since then, but have so much more to do before our community is made whole again. I am thankful that Mayor de Blasio has gotten the Build It Back program moving from a standstill. Now, I look forward to City Hall's partnership as we look to make the East Shore a more resilient and economically vibrant area. Out of this tragedy came opportunity, but we need the help of City Hall to seize it,” said **Assembly Member Nicole Malliotakis**.

“As we collectively approach the two year anniversary of Super Storm Sandy, it is important to note the significant strides made to prevent the level of loss and disruption experienced by many, from ever occurring again,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “From the increased responsiveness of Build it Back to the retrofitting of New York City Housing Authority developments against future catastrophic weather events, this administration has worked diligently to prevent the breakdown of resources we experienced during the aftermath of the storm. I look forward to continued collaboration with Mayor de Blasio as we build a resilient city for all New Yorkers.”

“Two years ago today, many of us watched helplessly as Hurricane Sandy swept through our communities with a wave of destruction this City had never seen before. For those who live in these devastated communities, life now has forever been divided into the world Before Sandy, and After Sandy. On this anniversary, we have a responsibility to remember the lives we lost—24 people on Staten Island alone—and what we lost in the storm. And we must redouble our efforts to bring our communities back, and to ensure that we are never unprepared again,” said **Council Minority Leader Vincent Ignizio**.

“It is important to remember where we were after Sandy and acknowledge that, little by little, progress has been made. The road to recovery is still a long one, but together we have to keep moving forward. It is important that we continue to pick up the pace and get everyone the help that they need to get back home. I believe that by working together that successes lie ahead, which will give us the momentum we need to undertake resiliency projects like the East Shore Sea Wall that will protect our communities from future storms,” said **Council Member Steven Matteo**.

Two years ago, our city suffered one of its worst natural disasters, with Staten Island taking a particularly heavy toll. Twenty-four Staten Islanders lost their lives, and countless others lost their homes and businesses. Though recovery has been too slow, it accelerated noticeably this year. Thousands of residents are finally receiving the relief they deserve. And just as Staten Islanders have shown strength and resilience in the face of disaster, I know that Mayor de Blasio and his able team are committed to learning from this disaster and building our borough back to be stronger and more resilient to future weather events,” said **Council Member Debi Rose**.

“On the anniversary of Hurricane Sandy, it's important to reflect on how far our community has come and identify the challenges that still remain,” said **Council Member Eric Ulrich**. “Build it Back is finally starting to produce real results for homeowners, and even though this progress is long-overdue, it's still good news nonetheless. As I've said since the very beginning of the city's recovery efforts—the day when every family impacted by the storm can be restored and made whole again cannot come soon enough!”

“New York City's impressive long term resiliency plan and the immediate actions already taken provide clear evidence of Mayor de Blasio's determination to ensure that our communities and infrastructure are strong enough to adapt to the risks posed by climate change. Two years after Superstorm Sandy, it is clear that we have not forgotten the lessons of that difficult time, and continue to take constructive and proactive steps to build a safer and more secure New York,” said **Steven Cohen, Executive Director, The Earth Institute, Columbia University**.

“Thanks to policies enacted by the City, our buildings are safer than they were two years ago,” said **Russell Unger, Executive Director of Urban Green Council, which led the City's Building Resiliency Task Force**. “Multi-family buildings are adding water faucets in common areas, allowing people to stay in their homes. It's easier to add flood barriers. We've become much better prepared. While there is, of course, still much work to do, there's no doubt we are a different city than we were two years ago.”

“We are thrilled to see the City acknowledge the great work accomplished by volunteer-driven, not-for-profit organizations in the effort to rebuild communities devastated by the storm. With the move to qualify community-based and non-profit homebuilders like Habitat for Humanity New York City as certified Build-it-Back contractors, the Housing Recovery Office is opening the door for more families to be served and more homes rebuilt,” said **Alex Havrilliak, Acting CEO, Habitat for Humanity New York City (Habitat NYC)**.

“St. Bernard Project & Friends of Rockaway are excited to partner with Build it Back to rebuild the homes and lives of Hurricane Sandy survivors still struggling to recover. We know from experience in New Orleans and Joplin, MO that a full recovery will take the full community. Under Amy Peterson’s leadership we have seen drastic improvement in the program, and we are excited to work hand-in-hand with the city to provide prompt, efficient, and predictable paths to recovery for New Yorkers in need,” said **Reese May, Director of Friends of Rockaway**.

“We appreciate the important steps that have been taken thus far to rebuild after Hurricane Sandy but we still recognize that there is still a long way to go before our communities are whole. The Hurricane Sandy rebuild presents a unique opportunity for New Yorkers to rebuild their communities through local jobs, thus rebuilding not only infrastructure but lives,” said **Father Fulgencio Gutierrez, St. Mary Star of the Sea Church, Far Rockaway & Faith in NY**.

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