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**GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF STORM RECOVERY AND CENTER FOR NYC
NEIGHBORHOODS ANNOUNCE EXPANSION OF PIONEERING \$13.5
MILLION RESILIENCY PROGRAM; OVER 500 HOMES AUDITED TO DATE**

*Home Resiliency Audit Program for Low- to Moderate-Income Homeowners
Expanding to Additional Brooklyn Neighborhoods to Include a Total of 2,500 Homes;
Select Participants May Also Be Eligible for Free Backwater Valve Installation to
Prevent Sewage Backups Caused by Flooding*

NEW YORK — The New York State Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery and its partner, the Center for NYC Neighborhoods, today announced that the \$13.5 million FloodHelpNY Home Resiliency Audit Program is expanding to include low- and moderate-income homeowners in additional South Brooklyn neighborhoods and offering qualifying participants in eligible communities free backwater valve installation to reduce the risk of flood-related sewage backup into their homes. The program, which was launched in the fall of 2016, has completed storm resiliency audits on nearly 500 flood-prone homes. Offered in specific Brooklyn and Queens neighborhoods, the program provides no-cost elevation certificates that can be used to lower flood insurance premiums.

The expanded Home Resiliency Audit can now reach 2,500 low- and moderate-income homeowners in the 100-year or 500-year floodplains. The audits outline key short-, medium-, and long-term measures that New Yorkers can pursue to increase the resiliency of their homes and lower insurance costs. The fitting of backwater valves, free to eligible homeowners through the expanded program, could cost as much as \$5,000. The program now encompasses Brighton Beach, Coney Island, Gerritsen Beach, Manhattan Beach, Sea Gate, and Sheepshead Bay in addition to Bergen Beach, Bensonhurst, Canarsie, Georgetown, Gravesend, Howard Beach, Lower Manhattan, Marine Park, Mill Basin, Mill Island, Red Hook, and Rockaway East.

“The RTAPP expansion into South Brooklyn neighborhoods, along with the new backwater valve installation program, lives up to Governor Cuomo’s goal of building back stronger and smarter by providing qualified low- and moderate-income homeowners with the tools they need to be better prepared for future storms,” said **Christopher Gorman, Deputy NYC Director at GOSR**. “The Center for New York City Neighborhoods has been an amazing partner in the rollout and implementation of these programs and we look forward to continuing our work with them.”

The Center’s technical experts have completed 492 single-family home audits, and issued 396 Elevation Certificates to date. Per surveys of participants, 88 percent of respondents said they had learned how to reduce their flood insurance through the Home Resiliency Audit program. The NYC Mayor’s Office of Recovery and Resiliency and Department of

Environmental Protection have provided technical assistance and guidance for the expanded program.

“We are tremendously excited to be working with the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery to expand our Home Resiliency Audit Program to additional coastal communities that are facing the dual threat of rising flood insurance rates and sea levels,” said **Christie Peale, Executive Director of the Center**. “By also offering eligible homeowners free backwater valve installations, we can help homeowners save thousands of dollars in repair costs in the case of future floods.”

“Central to New York City’s resiliency program is to ensure that residents in the floodplain are prepared for coastal storms and rising seas, which requires that the right tools, like flood insurance and backwater valves, are accessible and affordable,” said **Jainey Bavishi, Director of the NYC Mayor's Office of Recovery & Resiliency**. “We are proud to support the expansion of the Home Resiliency Audit Program to better serve our coastal communities as we seek to build a more resilient city.”

The Center brings together engineers, home improvement contractors, housing advocates, and flood insurance experts to analyze each homeowner’s flood risk and to create a plan for protecting property from future disasters while lowering flood insurance costs. Support from local officials has been essential to the success of the program.

“It is not just physical storms that threaten our coastal communities, but also a looming financial storm with the potential to displace thousands. FEMA is currently in the process of redrawing the flood maps, meaning more New Yorkers will be required to purchase flood insurance and rising costs for those already insured. Studies also show that over 80% of homeowners with flood insurance are already overpaying,” said **Council Member Mark Treyger**. “I have advocated intensely to make sure all of Southern Brooklyn is included in this program because we must increase affordability, so I'm excited that GOSR and the Center have agreed to expand this much-needed assistance to more of our communities. This program waves substantial fees and cuts costs on monthly insurance premiums, saving our homeowners thousands of dollars. After Superstorm Sandy devastated our area, we need to continue building physical and financial resilience. Toward that end, this is a common sense victory for our working families.”

“I am very pleased to partner with Councilmember Mark Treyger and the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery to announce that free Home Resiliency Audits and backflow preventers will now be available in our Southern Brooklyn districts,” said Council Member Chaim Deutsch. “Five years ago, Hurricane Sandy devastated our waterfront community, leaving significant damage in homes caused by floodwaters, heavy winds, and sewer backups. The Home Resiliency Audit program, administered through the Center for New York City Neighborhoods, will counsel homeowners about flood insurance reduction, offer risk mitigation measures like backflow preventers, and provide free elevation certificates. This is a huge victory for Southern Brooklyn, and I’m grateful to Councilmember Mark Treyger for joining me as an advocate and fighter for the communities that we represent.”

The program is accessible through FloodHelpNY.org, a website designed as a platform to engage all New York City residents living in coastal communities on the issues surrounding flooding and flood insurance. Since FloodHelpNY's launch in September 2016, New Yorkers have logged on to create more than 31,000 flood risk profiles that illustrate their current and potential flood zones based on FEMA maps. In addition to a resiliency audit, certain property owners may also qualify for a free backwater valve installation, which can typically cost anywhere from \$600 to \$5,000. The devices are designed to reduce the risk of raw sewage and storm water entering homes in the event of a sewer overflow. Sewer backups can occur during even minor flooding, creating potentially unsanitary conditions and health hazards. Backups can also cause damage to structures, mechanical and electrical equipment, and personal belongings, and are costly to clean up.

Audits are performed in partnership with engineering firms Dewberry and APTIM following a custom engineering template designed to analyze NYC's unique coastal building stock. Qualified master plumbers, selected through a competitive process, will install backwater valves.

The program also provides one-on-one counseling and homeowner assistance to guide participants through the audit-report process and to help them gain a better understanding of general resiliency measures, flood insurance and financing. Counseling services are provided through local non-profit organizations — New York Legal Assistance Group, NHS of Brooklyn, and NHS of Queens — in all the communities.

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About GOSR

Established by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in June 2013, GOSR coordinates Statewide recovery efforts for Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Through its NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program—as well as its NY Rising Housing Recovery, Small Business, Infrastructure, and Rebuild By Design programs—GOSR is investing more than \$4.5 billion made available through the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) CDBG-DR Program to help New Yorkers recover and prepare for future extreme weather events.

About the Center for NYC Neighborhoods

The Center for NYC Neighborhoods promotes and protects affordable homeownership in New York so that middle- and working-class families are able to build strong, thriving communities. Established by public and private partners, the Center meets the diverse needs of homeowners throughout New York State by offering free, high quality housing services. Visit www.cnycn.org for more information.