



For Immediate Release

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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF STORM RECOVERY ANNOUNCES \$300,000 IN FUNDING TO SUPPORT COMPLETION OF "GO TO HIGH GROUND" FEASIBILITY/ PLANNING STUDY

NY Rising Community Reconstruction Staten Island Committee proposal for signage, automobile evacuation, and local education campaign moves to next phase.

New York, NY (July 1, 2015)– The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) today awarded \$300,000 to the Research Foundation of the City University of New York (CUNY), on behalf of the College of Staten Island (CSI), to complete a "Go to High Ground" feasibility and planning study. The effort, which was developed by CSI and the Staten Island NY Rising Community Reconstruction (NYRCR) Planning Committee, aims to create a wayfinding signage program, examine potential locations for automobile evacuation, examine legal and regulatory barriers, and conceptualize education campaigns tailored toward the borough.

In October 2012, Superstorm Sandy caused extensive damage on Staten Island, leaving thousands of cars flooded and stranding residents without transportation. In addition, power was lost across the borough and gas pumps were incapacitated– causing fuel to become scarce for a community dependent on automobiles.

In response, the undertaking will recommend locations for signage and "Go to High Ground" parking areas and conduct transportation modeling/ demand analysis for flood-prone areas of the island.

"Working with the Research Foundation of CUNY and the College of Staten Island, we know that this study is an important first step for the 'Go to High Ground' initiative," said Interim Executive Director of GOSR, Lisa Bova-Hiatt. "From the outset, the State has been committed to applying lessons learned from recent storms, and using this knowledge to build a better, stronger New York."

The project is expected to begin immediately and is expected to be completed in 18 months.

"The severe flooding we witnessed during Hurricane Sandy destroyed thousands of vehicles across the borough," said Senator Andrew J. Lanza. "As a borough dependent upon automobile transportation, it is critical to consider how we can safeguard our vehicles in a secure location before a severe weather event. The 'Go to High Ground' initiative– a partnership with the College of Staten Island and the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery– will go far in developing a plan to protect against the loss of life and property. I'd like to thank Governor Cuomo, the College of Staten Island and the Staten Island NY Rising Community Reconstruction Committee on ensuring a plan is developed for vehicles along our vulnerable coastline."

"With automobile transportation playing an integral role in the lives and livelihood of many Staten Islanders, the Governor's funding of an automobile evacuation and recovery planning study will serve the residents and commerce of Staten Island very well in the event of further evacuation needs," said CSI

President Dr. William J. Fritz. “The ‘Go to High Ground’ study will determine how to best leverage the island’s unique features and resources to safely and efficiently move personal and commercial vehicles to very nearby high ground, safe from the flood-prone areas. I applaud the Governor and his team for taking a leadership role in the safety and wellbeing of all Staten Island residents.”

Throughout the planning process, collaborative efforts between a variety of State and City agencies, non-profit organizations and local businesses will also help to estimate program costs, identify an “Action Plan” for implementation, and develop a community outreach strategy to build cooperative partnerships utilizing a Citizen’s Advisory Board (CAB).

The study will also generate the design of outreach materials and brochures, as well as interpretive signage.

The project will be completed by assigned staff from CSI, with the Research Foundation procuring professional traffic analysis and emergency management services to ensure quality control.

Announced by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in April 2013, the NYRCR Program seeks to empower storm-impacted communities throughout the State, helping them to build back better and stronger than before. Altogether, more than 650 New Yorkers served on 66 NYRCR Committees, which have collectively proposed approximately 700 locally-oriented projects. Throughout the eight-month planning process, the program has held more than 650 Planning Committee meetings and more than 250 large scale Public Engagement Events. Funding for both planning and project implementation comes from HUD’s CDBG-DR Program.

Established in June 2013, GOSR coordinates Statewide recovery efforts for Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Through its NYRCR Program– as well as its NY Rising Housing Recovery, Small Business and Infrastructure programs– GOSR invests \$4.4 billion made available through HUD’s CDBG-DR Program to better prepare New York for future extreme weather events.

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