



PUBLIC NOTICE

COMBINED NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

CONIFER VILLAGE AT CAYUGA MEADOWS

MARCH 28, 2016

Name of Responsible Entity and Recipient: New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), 38-40 State Street, Hampton Plaza, Albany, NY 12207, in cooperation with the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC), of the same address. Contact: Lori A. Shirley (518) 474-0755.

Pursuant to 24 CFR Section 58.43, this combined Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact and Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds (FONSI/NOIRROF) satisfies two separate procedural requirements for Project activities proposed to be undertaken by HCR.

Project Description: The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR), an office of HCR's HTFC, is responsible for the direct administration of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program in New York State. GOSR proposes to provide CDBG-DR funding to carry out the Conifer Village at Cayuga Meadows Project (the Project), located at 100 West Hill Drive, Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York.

In 2011, Tompkins County was severely damaged by the combination of the effects of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. On August 28, 2011, Hurricane Irene made landfall in New York with tropical storm force winds, causing disastrous flash flooding, especially in the eastern part of Upstate New York. The rains saturated the soils, wetlands reached their storage capacity, and the runoff in the area brought the streams and the rivers to near flood conditions. When Tropical Storm Lee hit the county ten days later, on September 7, 2011, the conditions caused by Irene were magnified and resulted in major flooding.

The Project is located in the Western Ithaca Market Area, which is both tight and expensive. The vacancy rate in this area is near 1 percent and most affordable properties have long wait lists; there is a large, unmet demand for affordable housing in the area. In addition to the high rents and tight market area in Ithaca, New York State declared Tompkins County a Disaster Area resulting from impacts of Tropical Storm Lee. Parts of Tompkins County and the surrounding counties were devastated by Tropical Storm Lee. The Project will help alleviate the tight rental market, and will provide new housing opportunities for storm victims in the Tompkins County area. The Project's Affirmative Marketing Plan provides that storm victims will be provided a preference, and the project will actively market to local non-profits and community groups that may have an inventory of displaced residents.

CV at Cayuga Meadows LLC is proposing to construct a 21,000-square foot, three-story wood-frame building to provide affordable senior housing on a 4.9-acre undeveloped parcel of land owned by Cornell University. The University intends to sell the property for the purpose of fostering the development of more affordable housing in the area. The apartment building would include 68 apartments (59 one-bedroom units and 9 two-bedroom units), a community room with kitchenette, a computer room, and an exercise room. Common laundry facilities would be available on the second floor. The exterior of the building would consist of vinyl siding and brick. Outdoor spaces would include a community garden and two covered patios. Off-street parking would be available for resident use only. Access would be from West Hill Drive.

The sale of this land by Cornell University is part of an initiative to help foster the development of affordable housing in the community. This parcel is the first piece of land Cornell has made available under this affordable housing initiative. Adjacent and nearby land uses include the Cayuga Medical Center to the northeast, Cornell University academic campus buildings to the east, undeveloped land to the south and west, and an apartment complex immediately across West Hill Drive to the north. The Project site was re-zoned for multifamily apartments and received variances for setback, building height and density that would allow for the construction of the proposed project.

The Project would result in housing for 77-154 residents and would serve households with 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). Resiliency measures would include landscaping and infrastructure that designed to meet requirements specified by Tompkins County and be in line with the State’s Resiliency Toolkit. The Project elevation would be 926 feet, making it naturally resilient and not susceptible to flooding. Runoff from the parking lot, building, and adjacent access road, West Hill Drive, would drain into two “organic filters” that would allow for infiltration and filtering prior to the stormwater being discharged off-site.

The estimated total Project cost is \$14,535,000, funded with up to \$6,395,000 from the CDBG-DR program.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

An Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Project has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and HUD environmental review regulations at 24 CFR Part 58. The EA is incorporated by reference into this FONSI. Subject to public comments, no further review of the Proposed Project is anticipated. HCR has determined that the EA for the project identified herein complies with the requirements of HUD environmental review regulations at 24 CFR Part 58. HCR has determined that the Project would have no significant impact on the natural or human environment and therefore does not require the preparation of an environmental impact statement under NEPA.

Public Review: Public viewing of the EA is available online at <http://stormrecovery.ny.gov/environmental-docs> and is also available in person Monday – Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM at the following address: NYS Homes & Community Renewal,

Governor's Office of Storm Recovery, 38-40 State Street, Albany, New York 12207. Contact: Lori A. Shirley (518) 474-0755.

Further information may be requested by writing to the above address, emailing NYSCDBG_DR_ER@nyshcr.org or by calling (518) 474-0755. This combined notice is being sent to individuals and groups known to be interested in these activities, local news media, appropriate local, state and federal agencies, the regional office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency having jurisdiction, and the HUD Field Office and is being published in "*The Ithaca Journal*," a newspaper of general circulation in the affected community.

Public Comments on FONSI and/or NOIRROF: Any individual, group or agency may submit written comments on the Project. The public is hereby advised to specify their comments with "notice" and their address. Comments should be submitted via email, in the proper format, on or before Tuesday, April 12, 2016 at NYSCDBG_DR_ER@nyshcr.org. Written comments may also be submitted at the following address, or by mail, in the proper format, to be received on or before Tuesday, April 12, 2016: Governor's Office of Storm Recovery, 38-40 State, Albany, New York 12207, Attention: Lori A. Shirley. Comments may be received by telephone by contacting Lori A. Shirley at (518) 474-0755. All comments must be received on or before 5pm on Tuesday, April 12, 2016 or they will not be considered. If modifications result from public comment, these will be made prior to proceeding with the expenditure of funds.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS AND CERTIFICATION

On or about Wednesday, April 13, 2106, the HCR certifying officer will submit a request and certification to HUD for the release of CDBG-DR funds as authorized by related laws and policies for the purpose of implementing this part of the New York CDBG-DR program.

HCR certifies to HUD that Lori A. Shirley, in her capacity as Certifying Officer, consents to accept the jurisdiction of the U.S. federal courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities, and allows GOSR to use CDBG-DR program funds.

Objection to Release of Funds: HUD will accept objections to its release of funds and GOSR's certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later). Potential objectors may contact HUD or the GOSR Certifying Officer to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

The only permissible grounds for objections claiming a responsible entity's non-compliance with 24 CFR Part 58 are: (a) Certification was not executed by HCR's Certifying Officer; (b) the responsible entity has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the responsible entity has committed funds or incurred costs not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before release of funds and approval of environmental certification; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality.

Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58) and shall be addressed to Tennille Smith Parker, Director, Disaster Recovery and Special Issues Division, Office of Block Grant Assistance, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, 451 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20410, Phone: (202) 402-4649.

Lori A. Shirley
Certifying Officer
March 28, 2016