



**For Immediate Release**

**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF STORM RECOVERY ANNOUNCES \$8.2 MILLION IN IMPROVEMENTS TO BEACH 108<sup>TH</sup> STREET CORRIDOR**

*The project aims to improve the public realm of the corridor, with resiliency benefits that attract investment and support the local economy in Rockaway Park, Queens*

New York, NY (November 12, 2014) – The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) today announced an \$8.2 million Beach 108<sup>th</sup> Street project, improving the unique experience of this bay-to-beach community connection. Coupled with the potential for redevelopment of the adjacent National Grid site, Beach 108th Street may have redevelopment potential as a new hub of community and visitor activity. Improving the Beach 108th Street streetscape will have intrinsic benefits by upgrading the pedestrian experience on the corridor and contributing a unique sense of place to the beach-going experience.

The project, which was first proposed in the City's comprehensive climate resiliency plan, *A Stronger, More Resilient New York*, and further developed by the Rockaway West NY Rising Community Reconstruction (NYRCR) Planning Committee, is part of a larger strategy to strengthen and promote a more resilient Rockaway West economy. A more attractive streetscape could draw visitors further into the neighborhood and provide a more beautiful landscape for residents. The larger strategy, that would have a broad impact on the community, includes redeveloping the National Grid site, building the Beach 108th Street Harbor Park, and instituting stormwater drainage improvements.

"Residents and businesses are still working to rebound from the impacts of Superstorm Sandy," said Governor Andrew M. Cuomo. "Building on the distinct qualities of this passageway, while incorporating new resiliency measures, will help boost the economic recovery of this special community."

"This investment won't just make the Beach 108th corridor more beautiful -- it'll make it safer and more resilient for years to come," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "As we expedite recovery and move forward our comprehensive resiliency plan, this is yet another step forward for the Rockaways. Thank you to Governor Cuomo and NY Rising for partnering with us as we work toward a stronger and more resilient New York City."

Over an eight-month period following Superstorm Sandy, Rockaway West was one of 50 communities (representing more than 100 localities) to participate in the State's \$650 million NYRCR Program. Managed by GOSR, NYRCR is a grassroots planning and implementation process that strives to empower storm-impacted communities to rebuild, while becoming stronger and more resilient.

Altogether, more than 500 participants serve on NYRCR Committees throughout the State, having proposed approximately 600 projects with an aggregate cost of more than \$800 million. Each participating community was allocated between \$3 million and \$25 million to implement eligible projects

that incorporate and capitalize on local needs, strengths, and challenges. This past summer, New York State launched “Round 2” of the program, extending the opportunity to 16 new communities.

“Through our NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program, we have been able to maximize partnerships with local partners and develop strategies that incorporate unique local assets and needs,” said Executive Director of Storm Recovery, Jamie Rubin. “After an extensive planning process, we are pleased to see these projects being brought to fruition, and look forward to the continued positive impacts that they will have on our communities.”

“Beach 108<sup>th</sup> Street is a booming commercial corridor, and deserves the funds to stay as such,” said Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. “These upgrades will protect businesses, business owners, employees and consumers, ultimately safeguarding the local economy. The Rockaways are so unique and beautiful, and I am thrilled it is getting this recognition and furthermore protection. This corridor was severely damaged by Sandy, and now that we have rebuilt, it is my hope our local businesses can continue to thrive and these measures will keep us alive for years to come.”

“I commend Governor Cuomo and NYRCR for implementing this project and improving our infrastructure to create a better and more resilient Rockaway,” said Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder. “While we still have a long way to go, this is yet another step in the right direction for our families still recovering from Sandy.”

“It is very exciting to see the start of the Beach 108<sup>th</sup> Street improvement project,” said Joanne Smith, Co-Chair of the Rockaway West NY Rising Committee. “Our thanks goes to Governor Cuomo for entrusting the community to choose what is best for us. We hope the project will inspire future and ongoing investment in the area.”

GOSR is working with New York City to develop the final scope and approach of this streetscaping project. The proposal seeks to overhaul the streetscape of Beach 108<sup>th</sup> Street, from Beach Channel Drive to the beach at Shore Front Parkway. Investing in the physical improvement of this corridor would improve economic resiliency and create a safer and more inviting atmosphere for both residents and businesses. Streetscape elements would be anchored by resiliency measures. Stormwater drainage improvements could both green the streets and address ongoing ponding that occurs at several intersections by capturing stormwater runoff. Similarly, permeable gutters in the roadway would allow stormwater to infiltrate directly into the ground, and highly efficient LED streetlights with resilient means of backup power would be installed. These elements would create a more pleasant pedestrian experience, improve drainage after both common and extreme storm events, and provide a non-grid backup lighting source during an emergency. Non-grid light sources would facilitate a variety of other recovery and relief efforts, as well as support public safety.

“Strengthening neighborhoods is a key part of the City's climate resiliency plan,” said Daniel Zarrilli, Director of the New York City Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency. “Thanks to the State for its partnership on these targeted infrastructure improvements.”

The Rockaway West NYCRC Planning Committee’s Beach 108<sup>th</sup> Streetscape Project is one of several community-developed initiatives that will be executed through a collaborative City/State partnership. The State will be providing the City with funding from its U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) allocation, as well as technical assistance, to implement select NYRCR projects and programs.

Established in June 2013, GOSR coordinates Statewide recovery efforts for Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene, and Tropical Storm Lee. Through its NY Rising Housing Recovery, Small Business, Community

Reconstruction, and Infrastructure programs, GOSR invests more than \$4 billion made available through the HUD CDBG-DR Program to better prepare New York for future extreme weather events.

For more information go to [www.stormrecovery.ny.gov](http://www.stormrecovery.ny.gov).

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