

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Governor Cuomo Announces Start of Construction on \$126 Million Affordable and Supportive Housing Development in the Bronx**

*– 1159 River Avenue to Deliver 245 Affordable Homes to the South Bronx*

**(New York, NY, 10/30/20)** – Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the start of construction on 1159 River Avenue, a \$126 million development that will bring 245 homes to the South Bronx. The 19-story building will offer 148 apartments specifically for individuals and families who have previously been homeless, including those in need of supportive services.

"We continue to make unprecedented investments in affordable housing that will help tackle the dual inequality and homelessness crises," **Governor Cuomo said.** "New developments like this project demonstrate our ongoing efforts to provide Bronx residents with high-quality, energy-efficient homes with supportive services for the most vulnerable among us."

The Governor's commitment to providing all New Yorkers with access to safe, affordable housing is reflected in the State's unprecedented \$20 billion, five-year Housing Plan. The plan makes housing accessible and combats homelessness by building or preserving more than 100,000 affordable homes and 6,000 with supportive services.

Designed to provide good quality, affordable homes, 1159 River Avenue is part of the Governor's overall strategy to revitalize communities and grow the economy. Since 2011, New York State Homes and Community Renewal has invested over \$1.3 billion that has created or preserved more than 15,000 affordable homes in the Bronx.

1159 River Avenue will include 245 apartments with 148 set aside for individuals and families who have experienced homelessness and those recovering from mental illness. Of these units set aside, 128 households will have access to on-site services and rental assistance funded through the Governor's Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative administered by the New York State Office of Mental Health. The remaining rental units are reserved for low-income individuals and families. There is one apartment for a superintendent.

Supportive services will include linkage to and coordination of services with other community resources, including primary care and mental health services, and direct support in a variety of areas including: goal setting, systems navigation, self-advocacy, educational/vocational/employment information and referrals, nutrition, harm reduction strategies, and social supports. The supportive service provider is Community Access, Inc.

The development will meet Enterprise Green Communities Standards and Energy Star's Multi-Family High Rise standards and will include such energy-efficient features as Energy Star appliances and water conserving low-flow fixtures.

The 19-story building will have art, exercise, laundry and computer rooms. The ground floor will have 20,500 square feet of commercial space.

1159 River Avenue is four blocks from Yankee Stadium in a neighborhood that is near the 6, D and B subway lines; schools; houses of worship; supermarkets; convenience stores; and Mullaly Park which has ballfields, a playground, walking and bicycle paths and sitting areas.

HCR's financing for 1159 River Avenue includes \$25 million in permanent tax-exempt bonds, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits that will generate \$43 million in equity and \$16 million in subsidy. The ESSHI award administered by OMH will provide \$3 million annually for services and operations. The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development is providing an additional \$26 million of subsidy through its Supportive Housing Loan Program. The development team consists of Community Access, Inc. and J. Equities II, LLC, an affiliate of affordable housing developer Madd Equities.

**HCR Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas said,** "1159 River Avenue furthers Governor Cuomo's ongoing efforts to reduce homelessness and enhance quality of life in the Bronx by building new affordable housing with on-site supportive services. The 245 households that will live here will benefit from great amenities, excellent transit access, conveniently located stores and schools, and nearby recreational space. We are proud to partner with Community Access on this development to provide modern apartments and vital mental health care services to New Yorkers in need."

**OMH Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan said,** "Supportive housing allows individuals living with mental illness to receive the services they need in their homes and live independently and successfully in their own community. Governor Cuomo's Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative has brought safe and stable housing to thousands of individuals and families, providing invaluable assistance on the road to recovery."

**HPD Commissioner Louise Carroll said,** "Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is more important than ever, which is why as we push forward with the goals of Housing New York, we are putting our most vulnerable New Yorkers first. Thanks to our development partners, local elected officials, and the State, 245 homeless and low-income households will have the security and the supportive services that they need to thrive in a development that will bring jobs, commercial space, and permanent affordability to the neighborhood when 1159 River Avenue is complete."

**Senator Jose M. Serrano said,** "As we tackle the homelessness crisis, it's critical to provide families with affordable housing, while connecting them to the services they need to remain safe and healthy. The 1159 River Avenue development will protect vulnerable New Yorkers from homelessness, while providing them with the stability they need to lead fulfilling,

independent lives. Many thanks to Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Visnaukas for their commitment to creating and preserving affordable housing in the Bronx."

**Assembly Member Carmen Arroyo said,** "I applaud the Governor for his continued championing of affordable housing development here in the Bronx and across our state. Our borough is coming back united and stronger, and we must stand together and do all that we can to give struggling residents access to housing. This project is a major boost for our community."

**Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson said,** "Access to safe and affordable housing was a priority prior to COVID-19 and the pandemic has only exacerbated the need across New York City. This new project is a result of the Jerome Rezoning enacted by the City Council in 2017 and will bring permanent affordable housing to families and formerly homeless New Yorkers during a critical time in our city. I thank HCR, HPD, HDC, MADDD Equities, Community Board 4, and Community Access for their partnership on this monumental endeavor and commitment to providing vital resources to residents of the west Bronx."

**Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., said,** "Projects like the 1159 River Avenue are helping Bronx residents live safely in high-quality, affordable homes and achieve independence. Building more supportive housing is critical as we continue our fight against homelessness. I would like to thank Community Access and all the agencies and organizations that made this possible."

**Community Access CEO Cal Hedigan said,** "The COVID-19 pandemic has affirmed what those of us who provide supportive housing have long known: housing is healthcare. Safe, stable housing is necessary for individual well-being, for the well-being of families, and for public health. Community Access is proud to have continued our supportive and affordable housing development work throughout this pandemic, including opening our Bruckner Boulevard project and beginning construction at 1159 River Avenue. We applaud Governor Cuomo's commitment to addressing New York's affordable housing crisis."

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**About Community Access:**

Community Access' mission is to expand opportunities for people living with mental health concerns to recover from trauma and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy, and healing-focused services. We are built upon the simple truth that people are experts in their own lives.

[www.communityaccess.org](http://www.communityaccess.org)

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