



Changes to Landscapes, Buildings, Operations & Finance Can Achieve Resilience & Sustainability Goals at New York City Housing Authority’s Marlboro Houses, According to Urban Land Institute

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NEW YORK (November 16, 2021) – The Urban Land Institute (ULI) released a report today outlining strategies for enhancing the resilience of Marlboro Houses, a New York City Housing Authority development in Gravesend, Brooklyn. Ineligible for federal disaster recovery funding post-Hurricane Sandy, Marlboro Houses remains vulnerable to storm surge and other climate risks. The report’s recommendations focus on how NYCHA can protect the development from coastal flooding and extreme heat by enhancing campus green infrastructure, retrofitting buildings, and integrating resilience into upcoming operational and funding changes.

The report is based on recommendations from a panel of resilience and sustainability experts in architecture, landscape design, and real estate that convened in February 2021. The 7-member panel was assembled by ULI New York at the request of NYCHA to study the site, interview a wide range of stakeholders and make recommendations as to how Marlboro Houses could be made more resilient to climate-induced hazards, considering its landscape, buildings, operations, and financing.

“NYCHA welcomes the report issued by the Urban Land Institute as the Authority continues to holistically address the climate resiliency challenges of our developments,” said NYCHA Chair & CEO Greg Russ. “We are grateful to the Institute and Technical Assistance Panel for their guidance, and the recommendations derived from their analysis of Marlboro Houses will be instructive as we work towards integrating flood-protection and heat protection measures across all of our developments.”

The report recommends NYCHA:

- Build green infrastructure throughout campus, such as bioswales and rain gardens, and work with other city agencies to upgrade neighborhood green infrastructure to reduce impacts of flooding
- Pursue comprehensive building retrofits that floodproof lower floors and aim for net zero carbon and Passive House status, to boost protection from extreme heat
- Integrate resilience & sustainability upgrades into new funding streams
- Enhance transparency & accountability on chronic environmental concerns on campus that affect resilience through recent changes to management structure
- Consider resilient new construction and adjustments to first floors of existing buildings to create a vibrant, mixed-use campus that integrates with the surrounding neighborhood

The panel was chaired by ULI member Janice Barnes, managing partner, climate adaptation partners. “The Marlboro Houses TAP represents the type of innovative thinking that leads to transformational change,” Barnes noted. “With the wide range of expertise, the panel explored fiscal and operational risks and how these impact community members. It addressed NYCHA’s natural assets, seeing green spaces as urban parks benefiting residents and surrounding communities alike. Thinking holistically about systemic change for a climate-prepared future, the panel explored renovate-in-place retrofits, leaning toward near-Passive House standards in an effort to improve passive

survivability and to manage housing capacity while transformations occur. With this type of collaboration, NYCHA and ULI modeled the type of collaborative transformation that must occur for New York to prepare for its climate future.”

Barnes was joined on the panel by Ryan Cassidy, Director of Sustainability & Construction, RiseBoro Community Partnership, New York City; Satpal Kaur, Designer, New York City; Cecilia Kushner, Executive Vice President, Planning Division, NYC Economic Development Corporation; Matthew Kwatinetz, Managing Partner, QBL Partners, New York City; Amy Macdonald, Principal & Resilience Practice Leader, Thornton Tomasetti, New York City; and Pete Munoz, Senior Engineer and Practice Lead, Biohabitats, Portland, Oregon.

The New York virtual Technical Assistance panel is part of a larger series of resilience technical assistance and learning opportunities, called the Resilient Land Use Cohort (RLUC). The RLUC is a network of ULI district councils, member experts, and community partners in eight cities working together to identify strategies to be more resilient in the face of climate change and other vulnerabilities, including floods, extreme storms, drought, wildfire, and extreme heat, as well as the related social, environmental, and economic impacts. Funding for this engagement and the cohort is provided by the ULI Foundation with support from JPMorgan Chase.

Virtual Technical Assistance panels are a recent ULI offering, created as a response to continuing ULI's mission of creating vibrant, sustainable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lasting 2.5 days, they convene a multi-disciplinary panel of experts from across the United States who possess a range of professional backgrounds and use their collective skills to meet the needs of an identified land use or policy challenge.

You can find the New York City virtual Technical Assistance Panel report on ULI's Knowledge Finder platform [here](#).

About the Urban Land Institute

The [Urban Land Institute](#) is a nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. Established in 1936, the institute has more than 45,000 members worldwide representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. For more information on ULI, please visit [uli.org](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

About ULI New York

ULI New York is a District Council of the Urban Land Institute and comprises over 2,500 members that help carry out, at the local level, the mission of ULI by promoting an open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better neighborhoods. ULI New York offers in-depth analysis of current land use issues and educates real estate professionals on the impact of land use policies on the state's future. The organization also invests in the professional and personal development of the next generation of community and real estate industry leaders. For more information, visit <https://newyork.uli.org/>.

About the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the largest public housing authority in North America, was created in 1935 to provide decent, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers. NYCHA is home to roughly 1 in 15 New Yorkers across over 177,000 apartments within 335 housing developments. NYCHA serves over 350,000 residents through the conventional public housing program (Section 9), over 20,000 residents at developments that have been converted to PACT/RAD, and over 75,000 residents through federal rent subsidies (the Section 8 Leased Housing Program). In addition, NYCHA connects residents to opportunities in financial empowerment, business development, career advancement, and educational programs. With a housing stock that spans all five boroughs, NYCHA is a city within a city.