

The New York Recovery Network: E-Bulletin

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Headlines

Rebuild by Design: A snapshot of each proposal

Proposals for the Rebuild by Design competition, an initiative of the president's Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force, were submitted early this April. We've pulled together a brief snapshot of each proposal on the New York Recovery Network (NYRN).

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Mayor de Blasio: Build it Back changes forthcoming

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NY Rising launches programs for rental properties and co-op/condos

The NY Rising Housing Recovery Program announced two new initiatives to help eligible owners, landlords, condominium associations and co-op boards with rebuilding: the Rental Properties Program and the Co-Op and Condominium Recovery Program.

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Recovery News

April 8, 2014, *Natural Resources Defense Council*
[Preparing for Climate Change: Lessons for coastal cities from Hurricane Sandy](#)

April 7, 2014, *Newsday*
[New company will manage state's Hurricane Sandy rebuilding grants](#)

April 3, 2014, *Gothamist*
[How the Lower East Side, Red Hook and the Rockaways might look with Rebuild by Design visions](#)

April 1, 2014, *NBC New York*
[Town builds dikes to stormproof its neighborhoods](#)

Upcoming Events

May 1: *Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development*
[How home elevation works - elevating homes in the flood plain](#)

May 3: *The Municipal Arts Society of New York*
[Jane's Walk NYC](#)

May 19-20: *Antioch University New England and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
[Local Solutions: Northeast Climate Change Preparedness Conference](#)

May 23: *Enterprise Community partners*
[Flood Resilient Code](#)

Job Postings

[Build it Back Administrator, NYC Dept. of Buildings](#)

[Business Analyst / UI Designer, Universal Technologies](#)

[Program Manager, NYS Office of Storm Recovery](#)

[Project Director, NYC Dept. of Economic Development](#)

[Disaster Case Manager, Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty](#)

[Civil Engineer, HEPCO Inc.](#)

[Case Work Intake Assistant/Concierge, IEM](#)

[Mental Health Clinician, Urban Neighborhood Services](#)

Rebuild By Design: a snapshot of each proposal

In addition to devastating dozens of communities, Hurricane Sandy exposed vulnerabilities to future storms along the eastern seaboard. The Environmental Protection Agency predicts that in 50 years the East Coast will see waters rise up to eight inches and experience “superstorms” more frequently due to climate change.

Some of the world’s most talented design professionals were brought together to work with communities to develop projects through Rebuild by Design, a competition with a goal of making the region more resilient. The competition, a presidential directive, is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. Participants were asked to create designs that improve the physical, social, economic and ecological resilience of communities impacted by Sandy.

Common themes among the proposals include economic development components, a preference for landscaped berms over rocky sea walls or bulkheads, greater access to water, and multi-use spaces that can accommodate green infrastructure and recreational activity.

Each project proposal utilizes what nature offers – working with the water. Enhancements include modifying coastal landscapes to improve aesthetics and waterfront utility while also mitigating against sea rise and storm surge.

There were 41 initial concepts presented by 10 design teams. The 10 finalists are:

Living Breakwaters

This proposal seeks to create habitats and revive ecologies off Staten Island that would reduce storm-driven waves from further eroding the coastline and help protect against fierce storm surge. Forming a series of breakwaters, rocky sloped walls beneath the water surface would halt destructive wave energy before it reaches the coast. Designers also propose a “reef street,” bringing back the area’s finfish, oysters and lobsters.

The Big U

This project involves creating a raised protective system along lower Manhattan to guard neighborhoods like the Lower East Side, Wall Street and Times Square. It is designed to protect a 10-mile stretch of coast, starting from 57th Street on the west side, dipping to the southernmost point of the island and running back up to 42nd Street on the east side, forming a “U” pattern. The berm would serve as an elevated walking/bike trail along a series of upland knolls to be used for community gardens or recreation. Between Manhattan Bridge and Montgomery Street, walls mounted underneath the FDR Drive would be lowered to prevent flooding. At night, the area would be lit and transformed into usable space.

Blue Dunes – The future of coastal protection

This project entails developing a series of protective sand islands along the Atlantic coast from Cape Cod, Mass., to Cape May, N.J., creating habitats for sea birds and a place for offshore wind renewable energy. The dunes won't prevent but can weaken storm surge. Designers say they sought to work with nature to create a multilayer system with a capacity to adapt over time.

Resilient Bridgeport

This project is designed to reclaim the identity of Bridgeport, a Connecticut town founded on the relationship with its waterways, estuaries and beach. The plan suggests elevating streets, building a waterfront berm in Seaside Park and establishing offshore breakwaters. Its focus is on protection against storm surge and excessive rainfall. Designers propose reconnecting the town with the water by uncovering streams once filled in during urbanization.

Hunt's Point Lifelines

The Bronx neighborhood of Hunt's Point is a working waterfront and critical food distribution point. It is home to a \$5 billion industry that serves more than 22 million people along the East Coast and sustains more than 20,000 jobs. It is also the poorest Congressional district in the country.

This design seeks to enhance the port's importance to shipping and the region, linking surrounding neighborhoods to the waterfront through a series of cleanways which improve connectivity and provide safe walking access to markets. The design further incorporates new platforms for recreational use and a Levee Lab. The lab is a flood protection system that also serves as an outdoor classroom where students can observe the ecological system.

The Commercial Corridor Resiliency Project

This proposal for Red Hook, Brooklyn, Far Rockaway, Queens and Asbury Park, N.J., involves an urban water strategy using hard infrastructure and soft landscape to defend the coast. This project has a financial strategy that uses public and private funds to build resiliency for businesses. It was developed to protect coastal commercial corridors and surrounding neighborhoods by combining flood protection with revitalization. Designers propose creating multi-use public spaces and a beach-to-bay corridor in Far Rockaway to improve resiliency of critical transportation.

Living with the Bay

This resiliency plan for the south shore of Nassau County on Long Island is designed to protect areas most vulnerable to storm surge. Designers propose constructing marshes and dikes, improving green infrastructure along Long Island Rail Road stations, and creating a "smart barrier" to both protect and connect residents to the water. The proposed system would

effectively store, drain and filter stormwater into new marshlands. These islands are designed to reduce wave action, improve the bay ecology and create new recreational opportunities.

The New Meadowlands: Productive city and regional park

This proposal seeks to transform the Meadowland Basin in New Jersey while creating opportunities for urban development. It looks to connect and expand marshlands to create an intricate system of raised berms that collect rainfall and protect against storm surge. The berms would also create views of the ocean and the city. Proposed shifts in land-use zoning would make existing real estate more valuable and attract economic development.

Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge: A comprehensive strategy for Hoboken

This proposal for Hoboken, N.J., is designed to defend the city by installing a new pumping system. This urban water strategy focuses on keeping water out by creating a circuit of interconnected green infrastructure where rainwater can be captured using parks as water basins. This would help prevent flash flooding, discreetly absorbing water as opposed to washing contaminants into the drainage system and discharging pollutants.

Resilience and the Beach

This project involves creating protective dunes along the New Jersey shores, coupled with an accessible boardwalk system protecting Asbury Park, N.J. It also includes “green, hyper absorbent streets” – grass and trees planted between sidewalks and streets that collect, filter and slowly release rainwater into lakes which are surrounded by wetlands. Inland, this plan would expand lakes to hold more water. The design also includes developing the inland side of the barrier islands to serve as protection from the ocean.

Mayor de Blasio: Build it Back changes forthcoming

Mayor de Blasio laid out several changes to New York City's Build it Back program on April 17. The announcement followed a report (full text can be seen [here](#)) prepared by the mayor's [new recovery team](#) detailing some program design issues the administration is planning to address in the coming months.

According to the report, the city has been granted \$1.45 billion specifically for Build it Back through HUD's [Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery](#) (CDBG-DR) grant program to date.

Following is a summary of recommendations included in the report, [One City, Rebuilding Together: A report on the City of New York's Response to Hurricane Sandy and the Path Forward](#).

The strategy moving forward

The report outlines that a first round of policy and procedural changes was implemented to speed up relief for Sandy survivors in March. Part of this new strategy involves reallocating \$100 million to help homeowners recover from the storm regardless of their income or current priority level.

Other changes include expediting the rebuilding process for families and businesses, expanding eligibility, using the rebuilding and recovery process to create job pathways and improving coordination across all levels of government.

1. Expediting the rebuilding process

Among others, the report delineates the following procedural changes to speed up the rebuilding process:

- Schedule design consultations soon after a homeowner accepts a funding offer and before they need to make transfer payments
- Allow transfer payments to be used for temporary relocation expenses during construction
- Clear outstanding permits that have prevented some rebuilds and repairs from moving forward

2. Expanding eligibility

The report reflects the city's intent to expand eligibility for rebuilding, reimbursement or acquisition. A key change is eliminating priority levels so that regardless of income:

- Applicants who repaired homes that sustained damage estimated at less than 50 percent of the pre-storm value may now be eligible for reimbursement
- Applicants whose homes sustained damage that exceeded 50 percent of the pre-storm value may now be eligible for acquisition for redevelopment
- Applicants whose homes were destroyed can be eligible for rebuilding assistance

3. Supporting a workforce in rebuilding efforts

To better address Section 3 of CDBG-DR (which requires job training, employment and contracting opportunities for low- or very-low income residents), the report suggests:

- Creating a new position to focus on workforce development and employing local residents
- Partnering with local community groups and elected officials to recruit local residents for construction careers
- Engaging and coordinating with volunteer organizations providing home repairs
- Creating a working group that includes community groups and labor organizations

4. Improving coordination

The report documents several pathways to better coordinate recovery for homeowners and businesses impacted by Hurricane Sandy, including:

- Developing a plan to better address temporary displacement during construction
- Offering relief from city water bills for vacant homes
- Partnering with state legislators and the Department of Finance to provide property tax relief to Sandy-impacted residents
- Increasing Housing Recovery Office staff by 35 percent
- Establishing the Sandy Community Improvement Initiative to expedite and coordinate city services and enhance coordination with state and federal partners
- Expanding eligibility for the Business Recovery Loan and Grant program
- Expanding rental assistance to undocumented survivors
- Appointing borough directors to increase community engagement
- Developing a web portal that allows applicants to track their status

Many of these changes will require effective coordination among local, state and federal partners, and will take time to implement fully. As a start, officials say the city is committing to [500 construction starts and issuing 500 reimbursement checks](#) by the end of the summer.

NY Rising launches programs for rental properties and co-op/condominiums

The [NY Rising Housing Recovery Program](#) announced two new initiatives to help eligible owners, landlords, condominium associations and co-op boards with rebuilding: the Rental Properties Program and the Co-Op and Condominium Recovery Program.

The Rental Properties Recovery Program is available for rental properties that were residences full-time, year-round at the time of Tropical Storm Lee, Hurricane Irene or Hurricane Sandy. Properties offering affordable units to renters with income levels that are below 80 percent of the area's median income are given priority.

The Co-Op and Condominium Recovery Program will provide assistance for owner-occupied units or for condo/co-op units that are leased to renters as their primary residence. Condominium associations and co-op boards may also be eligible for funding to help repair storm-related damages to a building's common elements, such as lobbies, hallways and mechanical systems.

Second homes, seasonal rentals and non-permanent/non-primary rentals are not eligible for either program. For eligibility requirements and program applications, visit www.stormrecovery.ny.gov or call **855-697-7263**.