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NY RISING COMMUNITY RECONSTRUCTION PLAN FOR GRAVESEND/BENSONHURST RECEIVES RISING TO THE TOP AWARD FOR “BEST INCLUSION OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS”

Developed by Perkins Eastman and BFJ Planning, Plan Was Awarded \$1 Million in Additional Funding to Implement Resiliency Initiatives

New York, NY (June 24, 2015) Perkins Eastman and affiliate BFJ Planning are proud to announce that Governor Andrew Cuomo’s Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) has awarded the NY Rising to the Top Award for “Best Inclusion of Vulnerable Populations” to the NY Rising Community Reconstruction (NYRCR) Plan for Gravesend and Bensonhurst, which was completed by the Perkins Eastman/BFJ team last January. The award secures \$1 million in additional funding to implement community-specific recovery efforts in the two South Brooklyn communities. In an award ceremony held on June 19 at the U.S. Customs House, GOSR recognized five out of 16 second round proposals for their innovation and exemplary resiliency efforts, with awards totaling \$3.5 million.

The Gravesend and Bensonhurst Plan was singled out by GOSR for “[demonstrating] effective outreach to vulnerable populations, with evidence of inclusion in the planning process; [promoting] the retrofitting of existing buildings that serve vulnerable populations, thereby making them more resilient to flood damage ... and [furthering] the interests of elderly, disabled, minority, low-and-moderate income, or special needs individuals.” The Planning Committee was led by Eric Fang AIA, LEED AP, of Perkins Eastman, and Frank Fish FAICP, of BFJ Planning.

The NYRCR Plan was developed to help these communities rebuild from the damage caused by Superstorm Sandy and prepare for a more resilient future. Home to more than 95,000 mostly working- and middle-class residents, Gravesend and Bensonhurst are among New York City’s most ethnically diverse neighborhoods, with significant Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, and Russian speaking residents, as well as a large concentration of elderly residents. The two areas suffered significant flooding and inundation during Sandy. Additionally, the post-Sandy recovery exposed sensitive issues related to climate change and adaptation, including the fact that many of the most vulnerable areas are also home to the most socially and economically vulnerable populations.

Perkins Eastman/BFJ's Plan addressed these issues through close collaboration with a committee comprised of nine local civic leaders and residents, and extensive multilingual outreach. Among the specific proposals were an educational and technical assistance program to help local homeowners deal with new flood insurance regulations, enhanced communication tools for emergency planning, and a comprehensive plan to protect upland areas from inundation along the Belt Parkway.

To date, three of the six NYRCR Plans developed by a multidisciplinary team led by Perkins Eastman/BFJ Planning, in association with Louis Berger Group, have received Rising to the Top Awards. In April 2014, GOSR awarded two of the team's Plans for their innovative approaches to integrating economic development and green infrastructure into resiliency planning.

About Perkins Eastman

Perkins Eastman is among the top design and architecture firms in the world. With almost 900 employees in 14 locations around the globe, Perkins Eastman practices at every scale of the built environment. From niche buildings to complex projects that enrich whole communities, the firm's portfolio reflects a dedication to progressive and inventive design that enhances the quality of the human experience. With work in 46 states and more than 40 countries, the firm's portfolio includes transportation and public infrastructure, high-end residential, commercial, hotels, retail, office buildings, corporate interiors, schools, hospitals, museums, senior living, and public sector facilities. Perkins Eastman provides award-winning design through its offices in North America (New York, NY; Boston, MA; Charlotte, NC; Chicago, IL; Los Angeles, CA; Pittsburgh, PA; San Francisco, CA; Stamford, CT; Toronto, Canada; and Washington, DC); South America (Guayaquil, Ecuador); North Africa and Middle East (Dubai, UAE); and Asia (Mumbai, India, and Shanghai, China).

About BFJ Planning

BFJ Planning is a consulting firm providing professional expertise in planning and related fields. Since its establishment in 1980, BFJ has provided a variety of services for public, private, and non-profit clients, including planning, urban design, environmental analysis, real estate consulting, and transportation planning. This range of services enables BFJ to bring a project from the initial feasibility stage through planning and approval to detailed design and implementation. BFJ has successfully completed more than 1,000 projects in the U.S., Brazil, China, Ethiopia, Luxembourg, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Venezuela.

Images available.

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