



GROUNDWORK

Hudson Valley

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For Immediate Release

New Study Assesses Climate Resiliency in Yonkers Public Housing for First Time

February 23rd, 2021 – A comprehensive study was completed this month for the Municipal Housing Authority for the City of Yonkers (MHACY) that puts the agency in the vanguard of climate resiliency planning in the region. Developed in partnership with the nonprofit Groundwork Hudson Valley and leading urban design firm, Mark K. Morrison Landscape Architecture, it lays out a far-reaching plan for promoting environmental resiliency in one of the region’s largest affordable housing systems. The proposed work will benefit hundreds of low-income people by capturing rainwater and cooling the landscapes of high-rises, townhouses, and modest apartment buildings across the MHACY system.

The Hudson Valley region is expecting more intense rainfall over the next decade and many more heat waves due to climate change. Research shows that people living in low-income areas are more vulnerable to climate risks due to historic redlining policies that left them in more environmentally hazardous neighborhoods. “It is essential that we act quickly and in the smartest way possible to prepare for these threats from climate change,” says MHACY President and CEO Wilson Kimball, adding “Over the last five years, we’ve invested over \$800 million dollars to modernize MHACY buildings and improve the system’s overall efficiency. These efforts did not address most outdoor landscape issues, however, including erosion, heat, and stormwater concerns. The new study is our first blueprint for getting us ahead of the curve on these pressing issues.”

The study lays out an ambitious plan to retrofit ten MHACY properties over the next few years. And with interventions across Yonkers, it will significantly reduce stormwater pollution into four major waterways - the Hudson, Saw Mill, Sprain, and Bronx Rivers. Funding was requested this month to make the \$2.0 million plan a reality from the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation. Brigitte Griswold, Groundwork’s Executive Director, who is leading a broader Climate Safe Neighborhoods Initiative for the city, notes that “The new study will have a major long-term impact once it is carried out. Moving this forward in such a thoughtful way is a testament to MHACY’s leadership and vision to promote sustainable communities.” Groundwork’s youth leadership program, the Green Team, will help implement the plan once it is funded. Many of its participants live within or near MHACY properties and will benefit from the creation of green jobs to plant trees and build bioswales to reduce flooding.

Please find a link to the study here: <https://www.groundworkhv.org/2021/02/feasibility-study-for-green-infrastructure/>. For more information about the proposed plan or our Climate Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, please contact Karen Tumelty at karen@groundworkhv.org or 914-772-8590.

About Groundwork Hudson Valley: Groundwork Hudson Valley creates sustainable environmental change in urban neighborhoods through community-based partnerships that promote equity, youth leadership, and economic opportunity. For over twenty years, Groundwork has made neighborhoods more livable and sustainable through an array of on-the-ground environmental projects that directly involve local residents. We restore rivers and build trails, parks, and playgrounds. We engage community members in all of our work – with a particular focus on educating and employing young people. For more information, contact Groundwork Hudson Valley at 914-375-2151 or visit our website at groundworkhv.org.

About the Municipal Housing Authority for the City of Yonkers: The Municipal Housing Authority for the City of Yonkers (“MHACY”) owns and manages a wide variety of properties, and administers a Housing Choice Voucher Program, to provide affordable, stable, decent and safe housing opportunities within the City of Yonkers. In pursuing our mission we work collaboratively with federal and state officials, and with the City of Yonkers, as their participation and assistance is essential in addressing the housing needs of families with very low income.