

Yonkers Municipal Housing Authority launches \$300 million, three-year plan overhaul of 1,700 public housing units

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Shown (from left) are: MHACY board member Bob Cacace; MHACY board member Joan Deirlein; councilman Michael Sabatino; Patton; Shuldiner; Spano; Stewart-Cousins; Mayer; Marisel Fontan, president Tenant Council for Townhouses; and councilman Christopher Johnson.

Yonkers, NY In what is the culmination of nearly five years of negotiations, the Municipal Housing Authority of the City of Yonkers (MHACY) has launched a \$300 million, three-year plan to renovate more than 1,700 units of public housing.

Joseph Shuldiner, executive director of the MHACY, held a news conference on the project on July 20th. He was joined by mayor Mike Spano, state senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins; state assembly members Shelley Mayer and Gary Pretlow and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's new Region II administrator Lynne Patton.

Shuldiner thanked state officials for their efforts in getting \$125 million for public housing included in this year's state budget. It was the last piece of a complex linkage of public and private investment needed to restore the city's crumbling public housing stock, most buildings more than 40 years old.

The three-year plan will finance new bathrooms, kitchens, roofing, flooring, boilers and other interior and exterior upgrades at 20 properties across the city affecting about 10,000 residents including senior citizens. A complex financing plan under HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration Program

(RAD) allowed the city and the authority to leverage its properties and use tax credits to attract private investors.

The first project will be the rehabilitation of 200, two-and three-bedroom apartments and the creation of four new units at the Dr. James O'Rourke Townhouses in east Yonkers.

"Through RAD we have been able to leverage private investment through tax credit incentives to make these badly needed repairs. We would not have been able to do any of this without the help of New York State, and in particular, our local delegation with a yeoman's effort by Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer, who fought to obtain this funding. This project will provide safe, decent and affordable housing for the more than 10,000 residents in public housing, create hundreds of construction jobs and boost the economic revitalization of our city that Mayor Spano has been working so hard to bring about. This is a great day for Yonkers," said Shuldiner.

Mayor Spano, who attended today's news conference held at the Dr. James O'Rourke Townhouses, said the long-awaited housing rehabilitation is part of a winning strategy by the City of Yonkers to attract developers to invest in a rebirth of the downtown.

"Today's announcement recognizes Yonkers' commitment to provide quality homes for our public housing residents," said Spano. "I want to thank all our federal, state and local partners in making the funds available for this much-needed investment, especially Governor Cuomo, our state delegation led by Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer, HUD as well as MHACY's board and its executive director Joe Shuldiner for his leadership and perseverance in ensuring our residents live in safe and healthy environments."

Patton, HUD regional administrator for New York & New Jersey, said, "One of HUD's top priorities is the preservation of affordable housing and I am pleased that the Municipal Housing Authority of the City of Yonkers has chosen HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program to rehabilitate its public housing stock and insure it will provide safe and decent housing for low income residents in the City of Yonkers for decades to come. I look forward to having our New York Regional Office work with Yonkers to bring this project to fruition."

State officials said they were happy to have been able to deliver the funding.

Assemblymember Mayer said, "My colleagues and I were able to secure \$125 million in the 2017-18 New York State budget for municipal housing outside of New York City, the majority of which will go to the City of Yonkers. I am thrilled the Municipal Housing Authority for the City of Yonkers (MHACY) will receive the funding it needs to begin to renovate the aged municipal housing units under its authority. The seniors and families living in these units deserve housing that is proper and up to code. I am thankful to my colleagues and Joseph Shuldiner for their work, and to Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie for his leadership on this issue during State budget negotiations."

Senator Stewart-Cousins said, "The proposal and work to renovate these units has been in the

pipeline for some time now. I'm happy this year's state budget will allow needed housing funds to flow, and I look forward to watching these plans come to fruition. This effort signifies our commitment to affordable housing, and I will continue to work to ensure the state funds truly affordable housing."

Assemblymember Gary Pretlow said, "This is a great opportunity for our community to move forward with affordable housing that is decent, fully operational and safe which in turn will contribute to a productive and healthy society."

Obtaining the state funding was crucial, said Shuldiner, since the entire funding mechanism was based on private investment through tax credits. A recent downturn in the value of tax credits created a shortfall of money, which the state supplemented with the funding. "Without this funding we would have been back to square one, and years of hard work would have been lost. Luckily that did not happen, thanks to our State Legislators and Governor Cuomo," said Shuldiner.