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## **AIANY president's message: Architect|Activist - by Guy Geier**

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Over the past few decades, as major changes came to Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens, the Bronx saw comparatively little new development. This has suddenly changed, due in large part to efforts by policymakers to make the Bronx a destination once again.

The Jerome Ave. rezoning, extension of ferry service to Soundview, and the planning of four new Metro-North stations all show how much policy can directly impact the built environment. These actions are expected to open the borough to desperately-needed affordable housing development.

We are also excited about the new cultural institutions coming to the borough. While long home to the Bronx Zoo and New York Botanical Gardens, the Bronx will soon host the Universal Hip Hop Museum and the Kingsbridge Armory National Ice Center. Efforts by policymakers to push for these additions will help ensure that the Bronx is a mixed-use, 24-hour community.

While AIA New York is Manhattan-based, we have a long history of involvement in the Bronx. For instance, we worked with HPD to spearhead the Via Verde development, a nationally renowned example of well-designed affordable housing. More recently, we hosted borough president Ruben Diaz Jr. to present on all the exciting opportunities in the Bronx for architects. Currently, we are hosting “Close to the Edge: The Birth of Hip-Hop Architecture,” an exhibition on Hip Hop Architecture, a movement with strong roots in the borough. There is so much good that policymakers and those in the construction industry can do in the Bronx. Nevertheless, we need to be alert to the issues and mistakes of past development booms in other boroughs. What makes the Bronx unique and attractive is its incredible diversity, culture, and affordable housing options, all things we ought to preserve.

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