



## **Private investment remakes Mount Vernon**

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Mount Vernon, NY The city of Mount Vernon, in Westchester County is getting smarter. The community, which is just 22 minutes away from mid-town Manhattan via the Metro North Railroad, inked a contract with Hollywall Development Company, LLC (HWDC), of Washington, D.C. to transform it into a smart city.

HWDC is a minority-controlled infrastructure investment firm which focuses on energy, transportation, telecommunications, clean water and the environment, across the nation. Its other infrastructure projects include the cities of Baltimore, Charleston and Denver. Its technology partners in the transaction include Corbel Communications and Motorola Solutions.

The goal of the \$82 million project is to propel Mount Vernon today as a leading smart city that is safer and becomes more digitally connected, including a public Wi-Fi system.

HWDC will fund and install the buildout of a modern digital infrastructure backbone, that other service providers such as AT&T, Verizon, Google, Amazon and others can tap into in order to offer services to businesses and consumers.

“When we came to office three years ago, we had a city hall that actually lacked computer systems and lacked digital record keeping and had no public access broadcast channel for citizens to monitor public meetings. We were far behind the technology curve,” said mayor Richard Thomas. “Re-making Mount Vernon so it is a modern place for people to live and work was and remains a clear priority. Cities live and die by the quality of their infrastructure. I am grateful that Hollywall believes so much in the future of our community, that it is investing its own funds to make Mount Vernon a smart city.”

“Hollywall Development Company is honored to be partnering with Corbel Communications, the premier leaders in the telecommunications and cable industry, who are also the foremost authorities on Microtrenching; and Motorola Solutions, a global leader in mission-critical communications, to assist Mount Vernon, to upgrade and advance the city’s communications network,” said Darnell Sutton, founder/president & CEO, HWDC. “I look forward to working with the office of the mayor to integrate and upgrade the city’s communications system, which will make it one of the nation’s newest Smart cities.”

The two-phase project begins in 2019 with a new communication system for the city’s first responders. A modern emergency radio network will allow enhanced interoperability for law

enforcement to communicate with others connected to the network, including federal, state and local responder agencies. The cost for this portion of the project is estimated at \$2.3 million.

Phase 2 of the project includes a wider \$80 million investment, building out of the fiber optic network and the new Mount Vernon Smart City. It will begin with HWDC and technology construction partners conducting a process referred to as "Microtrenching." This process cuts a narrow, shallow trench of approximately ¾ inch to 2 inches along curbs where fiber optics are placed.

These fiber optic wires will eventually carry the smart city bandwidth of the many digital services that businesses, hospitals, schools and residents will be able to avail themselves of. Among the services that can tap into these smart city systems are kiosks and charging stations, parking meters, public bike-sharing systems, traffic cameras, gunshot detection technology and much more. It will also allow hospitals, and doctors' offices greater bandwidth to deploy futuristic telemedicine services.

"We believe that this Smart City-Mount Vernon project will be a catalyst for companies and innovators who have taken notice that our city is on the rise," said Marilyn Crawford, executive director of the Mount Vernon Industrial Development Agency (IDA). "The city was originally seeking to modernize its emergency communications systems. This company came to the table, willing to invest its funds to not only give us a new emergency communications spectrum, but also wire the entire 4.4 square miles of Mount Vernon. They are committed to a brighter future for Mount Vernon."

After it has transformed Mount Vernon into a connected smart city, HWDC will have the capacity to lease conduits to other providers for a fee in order to connect their services to the residential and business community.

This transformational digital infrastructure backbone will open up the city's various neighborhoods, including several that are federal Opportunity Zones to companies that require high capacity bandwidth and technological services.

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