



GJDC celebrates 50 years with its Golden Era Gala November 15th; Honored Cotton of PANYNJ and GF55 Partners

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Pictured above (from left) are: David Gross, Leonard Fusco, Shay Alster, Hope Knight, Jill Kaplan, Steve Priest, Lee Sander, Peter Kulka and Justin Bernbach.

Queens, NY On Thursday, November 15th, Greater Jamaica Development Corp. (GJDC) celebrated 50 years of trailblazing leadership at its “Golden Era Gala,” which was hosted at Battery Gardens in Battery Park.

Invoking the theme of “New Heights,” this year, GJDC honors two major players helping to transform the landscape and skyline of the greater Jamaica area: Rick Cotton, executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and GF55 Partners, a New York firm dedicated to the practice of architecture and the realization of concepts into structures. In just over a year at the Port Authority, Cotton has introduced key investments such as the \$32.3 billion 2017-2026 Capital Plan that will greatly impact Queens, including overhauls of LaGuardia and JFK Airports.

GJDC also recognizes the influences of GF55 Partners in ushering in a new architectural landscape throughout Downtown Jamaica with hallmark residential and commercial projects such as their design of the Hilton Garden Inn, Alvista Towers, Tree of Life, and Norman Towers. The evening will be emceed by Jill Kaplan, President of New York & New Jersey for United Airlines and former vice president and publisher at Crain’s New York Business.

“There are very exciting changes coming to Downtown Jamaica,” said GJDC President and CEO, Hope Knight. “We are thrilled to recognize the progress occurring in our district thanks to our partners in government and the private sector, as well area stakeholders, and funders. GJDC has partnered with the best of the best; two of which are honorees at our gala. Rick Cotton’s vision at the Port Authority and GF55’s projects are helping to propel Jamaica into a bright future, and we cannot wait for this work to be fully realized.”

Jamaica, Queens is seeing an economic resurgence. In the last ten years, over \$1 billion of public and private investments have been made in the area. In the next two years alone, 5.9 million square feet of residential, hotel, and retail space are slated to come online in Jamaica including over 4,800 new residential units and 2,200 hotel rooms. These developments will complement the broader Southeast Queens current population of 776,000 residents alongside the 575,000 commuters who pass through Jamaica each day, the 30,000 university students who attend area schools, and the numerous government agency employees who work in Jamaica. Upcoming projects plan to deliver

affordable housing, diverse retail and hospitality services to Jamaica.

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