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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

Construction begins for Rockaways - Atlantic Shorefront project

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Queens, NY On the 8th anniversary of Hurricane Sandy, governor Andrew Cuomo, mayor Bill de Blasio and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers colonel Matthew Luzzatto celebrated the start of construction on the Rockaways - Atlantic Shorefront project, which will protect communities and strengthen the shoreline along six miles of the Rockaway Peninsula. The project consists of a reinforced dune system designed to block storm surge and new extended tapered groins. These stone groins are jetty-like structures extending out into the ocean intended to trap sand and reduce beach erosion and help maintain a natural buffer between the Atlantic Ocean and local communities.

“Climate change is already impacting our everyday lives, and Hurricane Sandy demonstrated that the Rockaways in particular are vulnerable to damaging flooding from extreme weather driven by warmer temperatures,” Cuomo said. “New York State is proud to collaborate on this project as part of our ongoing efforts to build stronger and more resilient communities across the state.”

The Atlantic Shoreline component of this project is a joint effort undertaken by the city, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is being built at a cost of $336 million in federal funding.

“Eight years ago, Hurricane Sandy devastated our city and our shoreline,” said de Blasio. “We committed to building back stronger than ever, and I am thankful for our federal and state partners for working together to make this critically important project come to life. Together, we are protecting our shoreline and creating a more resilient New York City.”

This project will be critically important to protecting coastal communities from flooding, severe weather events, and other impacts in the Rockaways caused by climate change.

The first phase of construction will include the construction of 14 new stone groin structures and the rehabilitation of five existing groins on the Atlantic Ocean side of the Rockaway Peninsula. These new stone groins will provide stabilization for a re-nourished sand beach and dune and maintain the protective beach profile.

These improvements will also help restore local ecosystems and ensure the long-term viability of endangered species like the piping plover and sea amaranth. The high winds and fast-moving inundation caused by Hurricane Sandy disrupted the barrier island landscape that provides a home

to local flora and fauna.

The second phase of construction will include the construction of a reinforced dune system that will strengthen the shoreline against coastal storms, which are growing more frequent and more destructive due to climate change. The dunes will be constructed with armor stone and steel sheet pile walls at their core, which will reduce wave breaking pressure and limit storm surge inundation and cross-peninsula flooding. All public access points across the dunes will be rebuilt using resilient materials.

The design of this project resulted from extensive analysis to determine best practices for a more resilient beach and shoreline as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' East Rockaway Inlet to Rockaway Inlet, and Jamaica Bay Study, which was completed and released in 2018.

The U.S. Army Corps awarded the construction contact to initiate this first major project phase to H&L Contracting LLC of Bay Shore, Suffolk County, for approximately $114 million. Work has begun on the contract with the construction of new groins in the Beach 30s. The full Rockaways - Atlantic Shorefront Project is expected to reach completion within four years.

The Atlantic Shoreline component is the first of two U.S. Army Corps of Engineers major coastal infrastructure projects undertaken to strengthen Rockaway Peninsula. In close coordination with New York City and The New York State DEC, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is also advancing the Jamaica Bay component, which will involve constructing a system of berms, floodwalls, and nature-based features along the coastline in flood-prone communities bordering Jamaica Bay. This project is currently in the preliminary design phase and has an estimated cost of $237 million.

The Rockaway Peninsula was devastated by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. More than 1,000 structures were either substantially damaged or destroyed by the storm surge, which reached a height of 10 feet. Additionally, approximately 1.5 million cubic yards of sand was displaced from Rockaway Beach and deposited on adjacent communities or washed out to sea. Shortly after Sandy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers placed approximately 3.5 million cubic yards of sand back onto Rockaway Beach to restore the project to its original design profile and improve resiliency against erosion and coastal flooding. Following Superstorm Sandy, Senators Schumer and Gillibrand secured federal funding for this project as part of the Sandy supplemental appropriations bill (Public Law 113-2). The Senators fought to ensure that the construction of this project would be fully funded by the Federal government.