



## BOROUGH REPORT

*From*

# RUBEN DIAZ JR.

### Bronx Borough President

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE BOROUGH PRESIDENT

## Boro President Diaz Outlines a 'Transformative Agenda' in State of the Borough Address

In February, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. delivered his annual "State of the Borough" address, his sixth since becoming borough president in 2009. In his speech, which he delivered at the newly-constructed Mall at Bay Plaza, Borough President Diaz discussed the progress The Bronx has made since he took office, while also outlining new programs and initiatives his office will pursue in the coming year.

Borough President Diaz noted that, since 2009, more than 16,000 new units of housing and more than 15,000 new jobs have been created in The Bronx. He also noted that unemployment has dropped, and that The Bronx has seen record investment, including over \$1 billion in new investment last year alone.

"We've seen unprecedented, transformative growth since I became the borough president in 2009," said Borough President Diaz. The state of The Bronx is stronger than it has been in decades. We are maximizing our assets, while improving our quality of life."

Borough President Diaz announced several new initiatives during the speech, including the study of the potential decking of three borough train yards—149<sup>th</sup> Street, the Grand Concourse yards near my alma mater, Lehman College, and the 1 train yards connecting Riverdale and Kingsbridge.

"We will examine possible costs and potential density, and will take the first step towards

creating new space as a key component of our city's housing and economic development future," said Borough President Diaz.

The borough president also called for the expansion of "impact investing" in New York City. Impact investments are ventures made with the intention to generate measurable social and environmental benefit, alongside a financial return. Borough President Diaz's proposal would leverage a revolving fund with private sector investment to accelerate the greening of large residential buildings.

"We believe this proposal will clean our environment, create new jobs, reduce energy cost, and in the long run, keep our city affordable," said Borough President Diaz. "We are looking not only to do well, but to do good."

On education, Borough President Diaz noted the racial disparities in admissions at the city's three specialized high schools—the Bronx High School of Science, Stuyvesant High School and Brooklyn Technical High School. The borough president proposed the creation of new specialized high schools, one in each borough that would use a portfolio system to select its freshman class. These new schools would also guarantee admissions to the top two performers in each city middle school.

"We must ensure that the best and brightest from every community have a chance to excel," said Borough President Diaz.



In May, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. joined Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, Council Member James Vacca, State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Assembly Members Mark Gjonaj and Luis Sepulveda, Community Board #11 Chairman Tony Vitaliano, Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance Counsel Bob Nolan and the Bronx Charter School for Excellence to cut the ribbon on the renovated Van Nest Park. Borough President Diaz provided \$500,000 in capital funding towards the project. "This renovated playground is here just in time for summer, so I hope the youngsters of Van Nest and Pelham parkway take full advantage of this tremendous new amenity in the coming months," said Borough President Diaz.

During the speech, Borough President Diaz highlighted a number of new projects coming to the borough, including the redevelopment of the former Bronx General Post Office by Youngwoo & Associates, Freshdirect's relocation to Port Morris, York Studios' plan to build a new film and television studio in Soundview and the future Kingsbridge National Ice Center, among others.

Borough President Diaz also highlighted the future redevelopment of the Harlem River waterfront, urged the State to move on the reconstruction of the Sheridan Expressway, and called on the City to create a new freezer facility for the fish and produce markets at Hunts Point.

"It is time for the city to develop a plan to build a new freezer facility in Hunts Point. This will allow our markets to expand, lower costs for consumers, reduce truck traffic and pollution, create hundreds of new jobs and keep more revenue in The Bronx," said Borough President Diaz.

Borough President Diaz also discussed his office's efforts to employ Bronxites, highlighting

the success of "NY Works" in his speech. Launched in August in partnership with the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, Governor Andrew Cuomo and the State Department of Labor, "NY Works" puts Bronxites into direct contact with borough employers, and has so far led to more than 4,000 job placements.

"Without a doubt, these are tremendous numbers," said Borough President Diaz. "We are bringing together development and job placement like never before."

The borough president also highlighted his office's legislative agenda, including his continuing push for a citywide and statewide public gun offender registry. Borough President Diaz also discussed his proposal for a letter grading system for cosmetology businesses, which he announced in September.

"When I speak to people about this issue, every one—every single person—has their own horror story about a friend, a family member, or even themselves, who visited a salon to look good, and ended up with a major health issue," said Borough President Diaz. "We have

seen numerous cases of staph infections, hepatitis and other illnesses. Doesn't the evidence demand more oversight?"

Borough President Diaz noted several other future initiatives in his speech, and closed with a remembrance of former Bronx Borough President Herman Badillo and former Governor Mario Cuomo, both of whom passed away in 2014. Borough President Diaz noted the success of The Mall at Bay Plaza, citing it as a transformative development that is setting the tone for the future of the borough.

"We move forward, in the spirit of Herman Badillo and Mario Cuomo. We move forward, understanding that we can design and enact a transformative agenda for our future while also respecting the hardships and the glories of our past," said Borough President Diaz. "Look at where we are today. Look at the hundreds of Bronxites working here this morning. Look around you at this tremendous structure, and the new opportunities it has brought to our borough."

Borough President Diaz added, "We can. And we will. Because we deserve it."



Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. addresses the crowd at his sixth 'State of the Borough' speech held at the newly-constructed Mall at Bay Plaza back in February.



Ruben Diaz Jr.  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT



OFFICE OF THE BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
The Bronx County Building  
851 Grand Concourse  
Bronx, New York 10451

TEL: 718-590-3500  
FAX: 718-590-3537

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Dear Friends:

We are continuing to do great work in our borough. In partnership with our elected officials, community boards, neighborhood organizations, educational and business communities, first responders and all Bronxites together, we are enacting a transformative vision for the future of The Bronx.

Since 2009, more than 16,000 new units of housing and more than 15,000 new jobs have been created here. Unemployment has dropped significantly, and our borough has seen record investment, including over \$1 billion in new investment last year alone.

The state of The Bronx is stronger than it has been in decades. We are maximizing our assets, while improving our quality of life. We are seeing significant progress in our efforts to make The Bronx an even greater place to live, work and raise a family. We are continuing to establish ourselves as a sports mecca and a tourism destination.

I want to share that vision with you. In this publication we have showcased the many victories that our borough has seen over the past year, while also outlining a path forward to success in the future.

I remain as proud as ever to serve as your borough president. I would love to hear your thoughts on the future of The Bronx, and encourage you to contact me at [webmail@bronxbp.nyc.gov](mailto:webmail@bronxbp.nyc.gov).

Sincerely,

Ruben Diaz Jr.  
Bronx Borough President





## JOB CREATION IN BRONX SPURS DROP IN UNEMPLOYMENT

Over 16,000 new jobs result from aggressive economic growth agenda

The Bronx economy continues to improve.

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. is praising new job numbers from the New York State Department of Labor, which show an even greater drop in jobless rates from months past.

“As I have said in the past, what we are doing in The Bronx is working. Our efforts are bearing fruit. We are creating jobs, and we are making sure that Bronx residents are getting the jobs we are creating,” said Borough President Diaz.

In May, the New York State Department of Labor released new unemployment figures for March 2015 which showed The Bronx unemployment rate at 8.3%, down from a peak of 13.9% in January 2010. In addition, the latest numbers show that Bronx County is no longer the county with the highest unemployment rate in New York State.

Since Borough President Diaz took office in 2009, The Bronx has seen more than \$7 billion in total development, which has led to the creation of over

15,000 new jobs. In addition, a new partnership announced by Governor Andrew Cuomo announced in August between the New York State Department of Labor and the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, as part of the “NY Works,” program is placing Bronx residents in these jobs, helping to ensure that new development here benefits everyone, especially Bronxites.

Over 6,000 Bronx residents have been placed in jobs through this program, according to data from the New York State Department of Labor.

“We are making considerable progress in The Bronx, and this is very positive news. My office will continue to work with the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, our elected officials, business community, community boards, non-profits, and the 1.4 million people who call this borough their home to make The Bronx an even better place to live, work and raise a family. Great things are happening in The Bronx, and the best is yet to come,” added Borough President Diaz.



Freshdirect officially broke ground on their new Port Morris facility in December. The project will save 2,000 jobs while creating 1,000 new jobs in The Bronx. Pictured at the groundbreaking are (l to r) Assembly Member Marcos Crespo, State Senator Rev. Ruben Diaz, Freshdirect founder and CEO Jason Ackerman, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation President Marlene Cintron.

## BP Diaz launches #Not62 campaign for a healthier Bronx

At his “State of the Borough Address” in February, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. announced his “#Not62” Initiative, aimed at improving social and economic factors that will help promote more positive health behaviors within for Bronx residents, including help attain better access to clinical care as well as well improve social and economic factors.

The initiative comes on the heels of the County Health Ranking & Roadmaps Report, issued by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin, that showed Bronx County ranked last place – 62 out of 62 New York State counties – which measures important aspects of population health.

“This is unacceptable,” said Borough President Diaz. “We must change this. #Not62 initiative is looking to challenge all Bronxites to encourage one another to adopt a healthier lifestyle.”

The Bronx Borough President’s office has partnered with the Bronx Health REACH, the Bronx District Public Health Office, Montefiore Medical Center and the CUNY Institute for Health Equity at Lehman College, among others, as part of the initiative to change how Bronx residents go about living healthy.

The goal of “#Not62” is to bring together major stakeholders across multiple sectors to address the determinants of health, improve the health outcomes of Bronx residents, and

have the Bronx move up in the county health ranking in three to five years.

“#Not62” will utilize a social media campaign as part of its outreach efforts, seeking to engage Bronx residents as a whole, encouraging all those who live, work, play, and pray in our borough to share their health related tweets, pics, messages, and posts on social media using the hashtag #Not62.

The “#Not62” campaign hopes residents will motivate on another by posting their healthy meals, favorite workout routines, health tips, favorite restaurants that promote healthy options as well as connecting Bronxites to resources to encourage healthier lifestyles.

“So when you eat a healthy lunch or get in a good workout, hashtag #NOT62!” on your



Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. joins in some calisthenics during the 2015 Bronx Week Health Day in May, which featured dozens of healthy activities at Lou Gehrig Plaza on East 161<sup>st</sup> Street. The event was designed to promote the #not62 campaign, which works to make The Bronx a healthier place through social media.

social media,” said Borough President Diaz. “Let’s start trending toward a healthier Bronx together.”



### Diaz delivers Lehman commencement address



In May, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. gave the commencement address at his alma mater, Lehman College. “Remember, graduation is not the end. In fact, this is only the beginning. Ladies and gentlemen, life has just begun for you. Ladies and gentlemen, I am here to tell you that this is only the beginning, that there are so many different challenges that are ahead of you,” said Borough President Diaz in his remarks. He added, “The point is that, no matter what anybody says, your destiny is in your own hands. You’ve proven that today. It does not matter where you started out. It matters where you end up.”

# BP Diaz continues push for salon safety

## LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE LETTER GRADES, 'CUSTOMER BILL OF RIGHTS' MOVES FORWARD

Considerable progress has been made in reforming the cosmetology industry, following the introduction of a package of legislation by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

This legislative package, which was officially introduced in the City Council in January, includes a resolution calling on the state to allow New York City to create a letter grading system for salons and spas, as well as a bill creating a "Customer's Bill of Rights" for salon and spa patrons. A third item, a resolution, calls on the New York State Division of Licensing Services, which provides licensing for cosmetology professionals, to expand its health and safety training options.

"While most salon and spa owners operate clean, reputable establishments, some do not, and they are putting the health and safety of their customers at great risk. The procedures used in many salons can almost be medical in nature, yet oversight of these businesses is currently very minimal. We have to change that," said Borough President Diaz, who initially proposed this legislation in August 2014. "The health and safety of the people of this city is our top priority, and these bills will go a long way towards protecting New Yorkers from unhealthy, potentially dangerous conditions. I look forward to working with all of you to make our city's salons and spas safer for everyone."

More recently, following a major expose of the industry by The New York Times, both Mayor Bill de Blasio and Governor Andrew Cuomo are proposing sweeping changes that may have a lasting impact on the business of nail salons and beauty spas.

Gov. Cuomo has introduced a package of legislation and new regulations to help protect workers in the nail salon while Mayor de Blasio has announced an aggressive advocacy and educational initiative by the City to immediately address labor and health issues at local salons, support salon workers, and educate businesses and consumers. Both actions were praised by Borough President Diaz.

"For months, my office has been raising the issue of public health in local salons and other cosmetology businesses," said Borough President Diaz. "I want to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio and Governor Cuomo for moving quickly on this major public health issue. Together, with the governor, the mayor, appropriate agencies, public officials and responsible industry advocates and business owners, we are ensuring that the people of this city, employees and customers alike, have a clean and safe atmosphere to get their hair done, to get a manicure or pedicure, or any of the other practices typically found in spas and beauty establishments."

Not only would Borough President Diaz's letter grading proposal address a major health concern, it would be cost effective, as well.

### SALON CUSTOMER'S BILL OF RIGHTS



Call 311 with any compliments or complaints about your experience.



You have the right to:

- 1) See the inspection and letter grade of an establishment.
- 2) Verify the names, titles, license and credentials of professional providing the services.
- 3) Ask for proper ventilation to keep strong chemical odors from lingering.
- 4) Ask that all tools and implements be emerged in EPA approved disinfectant prior to each use.
- 5) Ask that those providing the service wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before each client and properly cover up any cuts, open sores or any abrasions that can put your health at risk.
- 6) Ask that all porous manicuring and waxing implements such as emery boards, block buffers, combs, waxing sticks and other implements that cannot be disinfected should not be used for more than one person.
- 7) Ask that styling stations, working stations and manicure tables be sanitized and cleaned between each client service.
- 8) Ask for a pre consultation before any service to explain service options, expected results and side effects.
- 9) File a complaint with the Department of State regarding an incompetent professional, establishment or an unlicensed person.
- 10) Be treated with courtesy and respect.

In April, the Independent Budget Office's (IBO) released an analysis of the proposed letter grading system. The analysis, which was requested by Borough President Diaz, shows that a salon and spa letter grading program would cost the city \$7.2 million at the high end. This would provide for the twice-yearly inspection of each of the more than 5,300 nail salons, beauty salons and other personal care facilities located throughout the city. The cost could vary depending on specific changes made to the city's health code and facilities covered under such an inspection system.

"I would like to thank the Independent Budget Organization for taking the time to score the potential cost of this major public health initiative," said Borough President Diaz. "While we should not put a price tag on the health and well-being of our city and its residents, the IBO's analysis suggests this program would be incredibly cost-effective. We can provide for the health and safety of salon customers and employees without placing a major burden on the city's budget."

Bronx Borough President Diaz has been making

the rounds discussing the issue, having spoken before business owners and industry leaders organized by both with the New York Hispanic Cosmetology Chamber of Commerce and the New York Women's Chamber of Commerce. As the legislation continues to gain momentum, Borough President Diaz noted that he would be reaching out to organizations across the city to seek their input and garner their support, a point that he emphasized when he testified in favor of his legislation in May.

"We are eager to work with any and all trade and business associations to hear their concerns about this legislation, and to develop ways to make this legislation work for the cosmetology industry while also protecting the health of the public," said Borough President Diaz.

He added, "Indeed, we have heard from numerous businesses who support this legislation, and who want their industry to be cleaner and safer. We have heard from industry representatives who understand that better health inspections, will only benefit their industry—and their customers—in the long run."

## Momentum grows for 'Herman Badillo Post Office'

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. is pushing a plan to name a historic borough post office for a Bronx political trailblazer.

In February, Borough President Diaz issued a letter to the United States Congress proposing that the United States Post Office's Morrisania branch, located at 442 East 167<sup>th</sup> Street, Bronx, NY, 10456, be renamed in honor of former U.S. Congressman and Bronx Borough President Herman Badillo, who passed away in 2014.

"Congressman Herman Badillo was a trailblazer in government," said Borough President Diaz. "He was an early advocate for bilingual education programs in the country as well as a crusader for worker's rights during his tenure in Congress. I am proud to have gotten to know him and call him my dear friend."

Herman Badillo was the first Latino to be appointed as a Commissioner of New York City, the first Latino to be elected to serve as a Borough President in New York City, the first Latino to be a Deputy Mayor for any New York City Mayor, the first Puerto Rican to serve as the Chairman of the City University of New York and the first Puerto Rican to be elected to the United States Congress as a voting member.

During his time serving in Congress, Badillo was one of the five Latino members of Congress to establish the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and helped create job training for unemployed



The current Bronx Borough President, Ruben Diaz, Jr., was pleased to honor a distinguished predecessor, Herman Badillo, with induction to the Bronx Walk of Fame back in 2010. Badillo's wife, Gail, is at right.

non-English speaking citizens under the "Comprehensive Manpower Act of 1973" bill. As a member of the Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee and the Small Business Committee, Ba-

dillo supported legislature that fought against discrimination in employment – including discrimination based on age and marital status.

Bronx Borough President Diaz believes

that renaming the Morrisania branch of the United States Post Office, a facility acknowledged by National Register of Historic Places and one of the borough's most significant federally-owned buildings, would be a fitting tribute for a true pioneer like Herman Badillo.

In March, United States Senators Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, together with Congressmembers Charles B. Rangel, José E. Serrano and Joseph Crowley introduced federal legislation to make Borough President Diaz's proposal a reality.

"It is so heartwarming to see the outpouring of feeling and respect for my husband, Herman Badillo. Herman was an outstanding public servant and an inspiration to so many people. His story of coming from humble beginnings, being orphaned at a very young age and rising to the top to become the first Congressman of Puerto Rican heritage in the history of our country, is truly extraordinary. It is with enormous gratitude that I thank Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz for setting into motion the idea of naming the only federal building in the Bronx after Herman and the New York Congressional delegation; including Congressman Jose Serrano and Senator Charles Schumer for their support in this project," said Gail Badillo.



### **Women's History Month**

In March, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. honored leading women of distinction at the annual Women's History Celebration held at the Pelham Bay and Split Rock Golf Courses. Pictured with Borough President Diaz are honorees Sonia Manzano, author and star of Sesame Street; Marissa Shorenstein, president of AT&T New York; Verona Greenland, President and CEO of the Morris Heights Health Center; and Deputy Borough President Aurelia Greene.



### **Bronx River Fish Passage**

In April, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. helped cut the ribbon at the new Bronx River Fish Passage. The new improvements are part of a more than a decade long effort by the NYC Parks Department's Natural Resources Group and the Bronx River Alliance to restore the river's herring habitat and ecosystem along the Bronx River. Borough President Diaz provided \$250,000 in funding towards the project's completion.



### **Historic High Bridge Reopens after Decades**

In June, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. was joined by a Bronx delegation across the bridge to Manhattan for the first time in decades. Included were NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, Congressman José E. Serrano, Councilmembers Fernando Cabrera and Vanessa Gibson, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Bronx-born author and actor Sonia Manzano (Maria from Sesame Street).



# Diaz, Klein & BOEDC launch Small Biz Fund

Small businesses in The Bronx have a new source of funding, thanks to a partnership between Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., State Senator Jeff Klein and the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (BOEDC).

The Bronx Revolving Loan Fund, a new small business lending program administered by BOEDC, has nearly \$500,000 in loans available to local small businesses -- of all sizes and sectors -- across The Bronx. The loans, ranging from \$2,000 to \$50,000, can be used as working capital, for the purchase of machinery or equipment, inventory and accounts receivable.

"We are working hard to support businesses of all types in The Bronx, and that includes, making sure that our small businesses have the resources and funding they need to succeed. We want to be sure our local businesses know that The Bronx Revolving Loan Fund is a source of capital that they can and should tap as they continue to plan for the future. I want to thank State Senator Jeff Klein for making these funds available to the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation,

and I look forward to utilizing these resources to help small businesses all over the Bronx expand and thrive," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

"Investing in our small businesses and providing them with the tools they need to be successful is the single most effective way we can strengthen our local economy, create good-paying jobs and build up hard-working Bronxites," said Senator Jeff Klein. "These new loans provide economic opportunity for hundreds of entrepreneurs and significantly increase access to capital for our many local businesses seeking to grow or expand. With so many obstacles to building a business these days, The Bronx Revolving Loan Fund represents a strategic investment in our borough that will encourage economic development and prosperity for years to come."

"BOEDC for the first time has the capacity to provide small business loans to any part of The Bronx as a result of Senator Klein's grant," said Marlene Cintron, President of the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation. "We are no longer limited in our capacity

to lend borough-wide. As a result, more jobs can be created in the borough and more business will receive the support they deserve."

In 2014, Senator Klein secured \$500,000 in state funding to jump start the availability of loans to Bronx-based business owners and entrepreneurs. With credit availability continuing to top the list of concerns for small businesses in The Bronx and across New York City, The Bronx Revolving Loan Fund aims to simplify the process and provide quick and easy access to capital.

The new lending program marks the first economic development initiative administered by BOEDC that does not place eligibility requirements like size or location on the condition of the loan. Eligible candidates consist of businesses registered in The Bronx for two or more years, including small retail businesses, construction companies, restaurants, technology firms, healthcare providers and more.

For more information on the revolving loan fund or to see if your business qualifies, call Michael Nixon at BOEDC at (718) 590-8310 or [mnixon@boedc.org](mailto:mnixon@boedc.org).

# Borough President releases Annual Development Report

## THE BRONX HAS SEEN OVER \$7-BILLION IN NEW DEVELOPMENT SINCE DIAZ TOOK OFFICE

In February, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. issued his annual development report, highlighting the total development seen in The Bronx since he first took office in 2009.

The report notes that, in total, The Bronx has seen more than \$7.178 billion in total development in all categories since 2009, when Borough President Diaz first took office. In 2014 alone, The Bronx saw over \$1.097 billion in new development.

"The Bronx continues to grow stronger and stronger each year, as we create new jobs, build new housing and improve quality of life in the borough," said Borough President Diaz. "We will continue to attract the type of investors that want to help The Bronx flourish and reach its full potential."

The report notes other development highlights from 2014, including a total of \$788 million in residential development, \$449 million in institutional development and \$134 million in commercial development across the borough.

"This is truly an exciting time to visit, work, live and do business in The Bronx. Since 2009, our borough has seen a transformation, with more than \$7 billion invested on improving the quality of life of all Bronxites, building more and better affordable housing units, greener business infrastructure and creating thousands of new jobs," said Marlene Cintron, President of the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation.

"We are witnessing an influx of people returning to their roots in The Bronx. It is a great time to invest in our borough -- build it and they will come," said Lenny Caro, President & CEO, Bronx Chamber of Commerce.

To read the complete report, visit <http://on.nyc.gov/1Ee3Udk>.



In May, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. along with Rockower Corporation, M. Melnick & Co., NYC Housing Development Corporation, NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development including city and state officials joined together to break ground on 810 River Avenue, a project that will offer energy efficient amenities that will help tenants save money while also building a greener borough.

# The 'Bronx Green Buildings Fund' kicks off

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. has developed an innovative new program to make our borough's housing stock greener and cleaner.

At his "State of the Borough" address in February, Borough President Diaz announced the creation of the "Bronx Green Buildings Fund," a partnership with Village Power Finance and Council Member Andrew Cohen. This is an innovative new platform for financing clean energy projects that will use public funds allocated by the borough president to catalyze private investment in the retrofits of these developments.

Owners of these affordable housing units, will, in turn, agree to maintain the affordability of these units for 20-30 years, helping to stem the dwindling supply of affordable housing in the city.

"We need to use our capital funds in smarter ways. If we really want to tackle issues of air pollution, asthma, and other health concerns

that come from burning dirty oil, we need to not only build new "green" housing, but examine the condition of our existing units as well," said Borough President Diaz.

He added, "We are looking not only to do well, but to do good.

"I am happy to partner with Bronx Borough President Diaz on his clean energy initiative," said Council Member Cohen. "It is an innovative program that will accelerate the transition of affordable housing buildings in the Bronx from ones that burn oil loaded with asthma-causing particles, to ones that use less energy and resources."

This new program would make tax dollars go further than ever before, through the power of "impact investing. Impact investments are ventures made with the intention to generate measurable social and environmental benefit, alongside a financial return.

Interest in the "Bronx Green Buildings Fund"

has already been high. In June, Borough President Diaz and Village Power co-hosted an information session on the program, which was attended by dozens of developers, housing advocates, non-profits, elected officials and others.

The City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development has been supportive of the program in its initial phases. In addition, Council Member Cohen is working on legislative solutions to make the "Bronx Green Buildings Fund" even stronger.

"Since coming to office, Borough President Diaz has taken steps towards improving the Bronx environment and this plan is a direct result of all those years of work," said Council Member Andrew Cohen.

"We believe this proposal will clean our environment, create new jobs, reduce energy cost, and in the long run, keep our city affordable," said Borough President Diaz. "That's a victory for everyone involved."



# DIAZ VISITS ISRAEL; BUILDS LATINO/JEWISH COALITION

In January, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. hosted a dialogue with the President of the State of Israel, H.E. Mr. Reuven Rivlin, and the Consul General of Israel in New York, Ambassador Ido Aharoni, at the Bronx Museum of the Arts. The event was designed to foster stronger ties between the Latino and Jewish communities, both in the United States and abroad.

The meeting came on the heels of Borough President Diaz's visit to Israel the week prior, hosted in conjunction with the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, which saw the borough president lead a delegation of Latino business and civic leaders from across the tri-state area on meetings with Israeli political leaders and tours of religious, historic and tactical sites.

"I am honored to welcome Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, as well as Latino and Jewish leaders from all over the city and the tri-state area, to The Bronx to kick

off this important conversation, which builds on my recent trip to Israel with a citywide delegation of Latino leaders. The Latino and Jewish communities of this city have demonstrated a deep commitment to one another for decades, and this event will help strengthen and expand on those connections," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

"The Latinos in The Bronx are going to become the majority, not as Latinos but as Americans. And we would like that both friends, American and Israeli, be together because we symbolized the way of how to fulfill and act according to the rules of democrats," said the President of the State of Israel, H.E. Mr. Reuven Rivlin, at the event.

Borough President Diaz and President Rivlin discussed the Jewish history of The Bronx, the roots of the state of Israel, Israel's role in the fight against terrorism, ways the bond between Latino and Jewish



In January, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. hosted a gathering of Latino and Jewish leaders from across the tri-state area with the President of the State of Israel, H.E. Mr. Reuven Rivlin, at the Bronx Museum of the Arts. The event was designed to foster greater strength between the Latino and Jewish communities, both here and abroad. At the event, Borough President Diaz presented President Rivlin with the official "Bronx Afghan" and named him an honorary Bronxite.

communities can be built even stronger and the important of strengthening the ties between the Jewish and Hispanic community.

In his remarks, Borough President Diaz noted that what he and his delegation saw in Israel was much different than what one might see in the media.

"But we were also able to experience, through this trip, the everyday life," said Borough President Diaz. "We quite often see the media, and the media wants to concentrate, rightfully so, on the conflict. But we saw average residents of Israel. We were able to visit a telecommunications company and see how they are not only with technology but also providing jobs and employment opportunities, especially for the women of Israel, how they are dealing with workforce diversity."

In an op-ed released prior to his visit to Israel, Borough President Diaz

spoke at greater length on the importance of supporting Israel and the reason for his trip.

"Does a borough president have an interest in promoting Israel? Of course. At one point more Jews lived in The Bronx than in Israel, and our Jewish community remains vibrant and strong. Across the entire city, Jews and Latinos are already working hand-in-hand on the issues that unite us, be it economic development, housing, education and more," wrote Borough President Diaz.

He added, "Israel has produced and continues to work on some of the most amazing technological and scientific advancements the world has ever seen. Israel is a partner in our security, and what keeps their country secure helps keep our borough and our city secure. Israel is worthy of not only our respect, but our support."



Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. prays at the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem during his visit to Israel on January 22, 2015. The borough president led a delegation of Latino business and civic leaders on the week-long visit, which was hosted by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

# Diaz & DiNapoli urge Bronxites to claim their money

New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. are urging Bronx residents to search for forgotten money belonging to them. More than 444,000 accounts valued at nearly \$245 million are currently owed to Bronx residents.

"There are about 245 million reasons why Bronx residents should be at Bronx Borough Hall today," said DiNapoli. "When an individual forgets about an old bank account or a utility deposit, that money can eventually be turned over to the State Comptroller's office. It's your money, come and get it. My thanks to Borough President Diaz for inviting my team and me to provide this service to his Bronx constituents."

"With this found money, poor and low income families can stretch their budget and have more to spend on essential needs, like rent, transportation, child care and utilities," said Diaz Jr. "I encourage Bronx resi-

dents to make the effort to track down their unclaimed money from the more than \$244 million in unclaimed funds currently being held by the state. I thank Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli and the Office of the New York State Comptroller for expanding their efforts to track down the owners of these unclaimed funds in The Bronx."

Unclaimed funds is money owed to New Yorkers dating back to the 1940s. The accounts are overseen by DiNapoli's office until the funds can be reconnected with their rightful owners. The money comes from old bank accounts, utility deposits, uncashed checks, insurance claims, stocks and other sources that have been dormant for a number of years.

DiNapoli's office oversees 444,181 unclaimed funds accounts valued at \$244,783,169.60 belonging to Bronx residents.

There are 31 million unclaimed funds accounts statewide valued at \$13 billion.



New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli shows Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. how to search for unclaimed funds currently being held by his office. \$245 million in unclaimed funds for Bronxites are currently being held by the State of New York.

New Yorkers can search for and claim money by using the Comptroller's easy-to-use online claiming system or by

calling the toll-free call center at 1-800-221-9311 to speak with English or Spanish-speaking representatives from 8:00 a.m.

through 4:30 p.m.

Visit <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/ouf/> for additional information about unclaimed funds.

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Office of the Bronx Borough President  
851 Grand Concourse  
Suite 301  
Bronx, NY 10451  
(718) 590-3500  
[webmail@bronxbp.nyc.gov](mailto:webmail@bronxbp.nyc.gov)

## PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE COMING TO VAN CORTLANDT PARK

In May, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. joined numerous city agency heads and elected officials to announce plans for a \$12 million pedestrian bridge that will span the Major Deegan Expressway and improve community access to Van Cortlandt Park by connecting the Croton Woods and the Allen Shandler Recreation areas in the northeast section of the park. The project is expected to be completed in 2019.

"The communities surrounding Van Cortlandt Park have waited years to realize the promise of this long-anticipated project," Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz said. "I am proud to have worked with my colleagues in government, the various city agencies, local activists, our community boards, neighborhood organizations and park enthusiasts whose vision for improved east/west access within Van Cortlandt Park will now be realized. This project is a bridge across the Bronx, uniting communities through recreation, and I am proud to be a part of this wonderful announcement."

"This project is a true collaboration between the City,



Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. joined his colleagues in government in May to announce the creation of a pedestrian bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway, connecting the east and west sides of Van Cortlandt Park. Pictured with Borough President Diaz at the announcement are Congressman Eliot Engel, New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, City Council Member Andrew Cohen, Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Emily Lloyd, Department of Design and Construction Commissioner Dr. Feniosky Peña Mora, Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner Mitchell Silver and State Senator Jeff Klein.

community leaders, and our elected officials," said Commissioner Emily Lloyd. "This new pedestrian bridge will improve the community's access to the

park and provide a connection between two recreation areas in one of New York City's largest and most beautiful parks."

"This pedestrian bridge proj-

ect is a realization of one of the many proposals in the Van Cortlandt Park Master Plan, a plan that is meant to guide future projects in the park," said Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver. "Thanks to additional funding secured by State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Senator Jeffrey Klein, Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz, and the Assembly Bronx Delegation, and our partnership with DEP and DDC, the City will be able to construct a new amenity for park users that will provide access to the park's natural areas and recreational opportunities."

"Van Cortlandt Park is the third largest Park in our great City and with the addition of this new pedestrian bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway it is fast becoming one of the most accessible to the public," said Commissioner Dr. Feniosky Peña Mora. "This new bridge will reconnect an especially isolated part of the park and will open up more opportunities for residents to enjoy the park's natural vistas. We are proud to work with our partners at DEP and Parks to provide additional and significant ways for visitors to enjoy the beauty that is Van Cortlandt Park."

"Van Cortlandt Park is a treasure of the Bronx," Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie said. This pedestrian bridge will increase access and use of the vast park space to all Bronx residents. I am proud of my colleagues in the Assembly for supporting the funding for the bridge and commend the hard work of the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Design and Construction for their hard work and dedication to this project."

"By investing in our parks, we are not only ensuring children and families have a top quality space to play and spend time, but significantly improving our city's infrastructure for future generations," said Senator Jeff Klein. "I'm proud to have secured \$1 million in state funding for the new Van Cortlandt Park Pedestrian Bridge. By opening up the park and better connecting previously isolated

sections, the new footbridge will increase access to a vital community asset for countless residents, visitors and tourists."

"The construction of the foot bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway is something I and all the other local elected officials have been working on for some time now," Congressman Eliot Engel said. "This was a major priority, not just for me and my colleagues in government, but also for the members of the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, as well as those in the community. This project was a long time coming, and I am excited for construction to get underway soon."

"Our community has fought for many years for a pedestrian bridge that would link the two sides of Van Cortlandt Park, which are currently divided by the Major Deegan Expressway," Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz said. "Van Cortlandt Park is perhaps the most beautiful park in the city, and among its largest. I am very pleased that the de Blasio administration has decided to fulfill a promise made to our community by supporting this important project."

"Residents of the Northwest Bronx have been waiting to see the Van Cortlandt Park pedestrian bridge project come to life since 1999," said Council Member Andrew Cohen. "This particular project has been a priority of mine since I was a Van Cortlandt Park activist and the construction of the bridge was the subject matter of one of the first meetings I had after taking office. The addition of a pedestrian bridge to the City's third largest park would allow members of its neighboring communities to easily access both sides of its 1,146 acre landscape, which was unfortunately divided after the construction of the Major Deegan Expressway."

Plans for the new bridge were developed with extensive input from the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, Community Boards 7, 8, and 12, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, the Croton Filtration Monitoring Committee, and local elected officials.

## BRONX TOURISM COUNCIL LAUNCHES NEW COMPREHENSIVE VISITORS GUIDE

In March, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and The Bronx Tourism Council jointly announced the launch of the first annual Bronx Visitors Guide.

The launch took place at the Port Morris Distillery, one of the borough's newest tourist destinations, and featured remarks from Borough President Diaz, Olga Luz Tirado, executive director of The Bronx Tourism Council; and Marlene Cintron, President of the Bronx

Overall Economic Development Corporation (BOEDC). The Bronx Tourism Council is a subsidiary of BOEDC.

The publication, printed in part with the support of NYC & Company, the City's official destination marketing organization, is available as a 44-page booklet to be distributed through Manhattan and Bronx-based visitor's centers, institutions, and top-tier hotels.

In addition to the book, a digital mobile-enabled version is also available online on [www.ilovethebronx.com](http://www.ilovethebronx.com), as most tourists prefer to access information on the go using hand-held devices. The digital version is equipped with finger-swipe technology and all links are active for easy access to specific attractions.

"Tourism is up 14 percent in the borough, and this year we will push that number even higher," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. "People visiting New York City are starting to realize that this town is enormous and that there are many great sights to see right here in The Bronx. The Bronx Visitors Guide is a great way to highlight the amazing tourist destinations, eateries and other attractions our great borough that we have to offer those visiting New York City."

"The Bronx has arrived!" says Bronx Tourism Council Executive Director Olga Luz Tirado. "This borough has become a viable destination for many visitors coming from, not just the continental United States, but from all over the world."

"The Bronx is getting more attention from tourists than ever, thanks to the promotion and support of NYC & Company, Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., and the Bronx Tourism Council," said Fred Dixon, President and CEO of NYC & Company. "This guide will play a huge role in telling visitors just how hot the Bronx is, from its must-see attractions to its cultural richness and history, and delicious cuisine. We can't wait to introduce even more of New York City's 56.4 million annual visitors to the Bronx."

"Tourism's double digit increase in The Bronx further fuels our economic engine while providing unique and exciting venues. We are working to insure that our new visitors continue to have many reasons to return to our borough to visit not just these destinations, but also our Bronx businesses and restaurants who provide added value to the New York experience," said Marlene Cintron, President of BOEDC.

