



Department of  
Housing Preservation  
& Development

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**MAYOR DE BLASIO, CITY AND STATE OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE WHEDCO AND BFC PARTNERS TO BREAK GROUND ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND BRONX MUSIC HALL**

*The Bronx Commons Development will introduce 305 affordable apartments and a new 300-seat arts and cultural center and performance space.*

*High resolution renderings of the Bronx Commons and Bronx Music Hall development courtesy of Danois Architects, WXY Architecture + Urban Design can be found in this [link](#).*

**THE BRONX, NY** – Mayor Bill de Blasio, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Commissioner Vicki Been, Housing Development Corporation (HDC) President Eric Enderlin, and New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) Commissioner Jamie Ruben join WHEDco, and BFC Partners to announce the start of construction on Bronx Commons – a 426,000 square foot, mixed-used development in the Melrose section of the Bronx that will include 305 affordable apartments, retail space, and the Bronx Music Hall, a new 14,000 square foot, 300-seat music venue and arts-centered community hub focused on the deeply-rooted history of cutting edge Bronx music. The affordable housing project received financing through the City’s [Mix and Match program](#) and received a special line of funding from the City’s [Our Space program](#).

“As we build more and more needed affordable housing, there is no finer tribute to New York’s deep artistic history than including a music hall in this Bronx development. The projects will transform long-vacant City land into a vibrant cultural mecca and residential community for the borough and the City. I congratulate the Melrose community, and the future residents of this 100% affordable development,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“As we create and preserve affordable housing at record pace, we aren’t just helping people, we are building better neighborhoods,” said **HPD Commissioner Vicki Been**. “Bronx Commons represents exactly the kind of dynamic, mixed-use development that Mayor de Blasio envisioned in Housing New York. The 305 affordable apartments will serve New Yorkers at a range of incomes, while also providing a cultural hub for the Melrose community with open space, quality retail, and a new music venue on land that had long been abandoned. I want to thank our colleagues at HDC and HCR and our partners at WHEDco and BFC for the hard work and vision that went into this dynamic project.”

**NYS Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner James S. Rubin** said: “On behalf of Governor Cuomo and the entire HCR team, congratulations to WHEDco and the community for bringing this last piece of the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal plan to fruition. The transformation of what was a collection of vacant and blighted properties into a vibrant and growing community is a remarkable and enduring achievement. The State’s investment in Bronx Commons – including a \$2 million Regional Economic Development Council Grant for the redevelopment of the theater – combined with that of our partners, is helping to complete this neighborhood and seal our shared legacy as pioneers of creative affordable housing development and preservation.”

“It’s not every day that we have the opportunity to create more than 300 units of 100% affordable housing serving New Yorkers at a wide range of incomes, let alone in such a unique development anchored by a state-of-the-art music venue and public recreation space,” said **HDC President Eric Enderlin**. “This project combines the affordability, diversity, open space, and access to the arts that contributes to vibrant, dynamic neighborhoods – the goal of Mayor de Blasio’s Housing New York plan. Thanks to our many

valued partners at HPD, HCR, BFC and WHEDco, today we are able to celebrate the start of construction on the Bronx Commons and the Bronx Music Hall - a remarkable affordable housing development and cultural center that the Bronx community can be truly proud of.”

“This long-awaited project will bring new housing and new amenities, including the innovative Bronx Music Hall, to the Melrose neighborhood of The Bronx. My office has always been a strong supporter of building affordable units at all income levels, and I was proud to provide this project \$300,000 in funding from my capital budget. I congratulate WHEDco on today’s groundbreaking, and for having the vision to meld our borough’s housing and cultural needs into one amazing project,” said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.**

“I’m thrilled to celebrate the groundbreaking of Bronx Commons, which will provide our residents with exciting new housing opportunities,” said **Councilmember Salamanca, Jr.** “With units available for a mix of incomes, Bronx Commons will add yet another beautiful building to the Melrose Commons community that has helped transform this neighborhood.”

Bronx Commons will transform long-abandoned, city-owned land -- the final undeveloped parcel of the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area -- into a vibrant center for living, working, learning, shopping and entertainment, honoring the neighborhood revitalization plan created by local residents more than twenty years ago. The development’s creative financing structure maximizes affordable housing financing and Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) equity along with public and private grants to create unique non-residential spaces – in addition to badly-needed affordable housing – that will serve as neighborhood anchors of development and revival.

“Bronx Commons will include hundreds of affordable apartments, a landscaped public plaza, places to eat and shop, all anchored by the Bronx Music Hall – a new music venue, gallery, and arts-based community center focused on the Bronx’s heritage of cutting edge music,” said **Nancy Biberman, Founder and President of WHEDco.** “For more than two decades, WHEDco has designed, with deep neighborhood engagement, civic anchors that not only create stable, affordable homes for Bronx families, but that serve as hubs for small business development, early childhood education, after school programs, healthcare, nutrition, and most especially music and arts education. While working to develop the Bronx Music Hall, WHEDco launched the Bronx Music Heritage Center as a ‘lab’ in a small storefront in our Intervale Green building, where for over four years we were able to test the concept. Raising \$2M in philanthropic support and hosting 400 events for nearly 14,000 attendees clearly demonstrated local appetite and enthusiasm for opportunities to hear, learn, and play music, and to dance.”

“We thank HPD, the de Blasio administration, and Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. for years of hard work to set this development on a solid foundation, and we are happy to be working with BFC Partners to create high-quality housing. We cannot wait to begin work on this truly pioneering development,” said **Biberman.**

“This is a huge step forward in our commitment to building a more affordable Bronx and strengthening the Melrose Commons community for generations to come,” said **Don Capoccia, principal at BFC Partners.** “Affordable housing is about more than four walls and a roof – and that is why the innovative, community-based plan for Bronx Commons will have such a powerfully positive impact on local families. We are grateful to WHEDco, HPD and Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. for their collaborative efforts on this project, which will be an important win for affordability and economic growth in the Bronx.”

Bronx Commons will be one of the most deeply and broadly affordable new developments in the City, including 305 apartments that span seven income bands. The units will be affordable to homeless individuals and families exiting the shelter system, individuals and households with annual household income ranging from \$22,032 for a household of three to \$89,760 for a household of three. Danois Architects is the design architect for Bronx Commons. WXY Architecture + Urban Design is the architect for the Bronx Music Hall. Local Projects, a renowned interactive-media design firm, are designing the Bronx Music Hall to serve as a top-tier music venue, performance space, and iconic cultural institution for the South Bronx.

Financing for Bronx Commons came from New York City (NYC) Housing Preservation and Development, NYC Housing Development Corporation, New York State (NYS) Housing & Community Renewal, NYS Empire State Development, the NYC Council, the Bronx Borough President, Citibank, Richman Housing Resources, and the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, with predevelopment and working capital provided by the Contact Fund, Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, and Enterprise Community Development.

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### **The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)**

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is the nation's largest municipal housing preservation and development agency. Its mission is to promote quality housing and diverse, thriving neighborhoods for New Yorkers through loan and development programs for new affordable housing, preservation of the affordability of the existing housing stock, enforcement of housing quality standards, and educational programs for tenants and building owners. HPD is tasked with fulfilling Mayor de Blasio's [Housing New York: A Five-Borough Ten-Year Plan](#) to create and preserve 200,000 affordable units for New Yorkers at the very lowest incomes to those in the middle class. For more information visit [www.nyc.gov/hpd](http://www.nyc.gov/hpd) and for regular updates on HPD news and services, connect with us via [www.facebook.com/nychpd](https://www.facebook.com/nychpd) and [www.twitter.com/nychousing](https://www.twitter.com/nychousing).

### **About the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC)**

HDC is the nation's largest municipal Housing Finance Agency and is charged with helping to finance the creation or preservation of affordable housing under Mayor Bill de Blasio's Housing New York plan. Since 2003, HDC has financed more than 120,000 housing units using over \$13.7 billion in bonds, and provided in excess of \$1.6 billion in subsidy from corporate reserves. HDC ranks among the nation's top issuers of mortgage revenue bonds for affordable multi-family housing on Thomson Reuter's annual list of multi-family bond issuers. In each of the last four consecutive years, HDC's annual bond issuance has surpassed \$1 billion. For additional information, visit: <http://www.nychdc.com>

### **About WHEDco**

The Women's Housing and Economic Development Corp. (WHEDco) is a community development organization founded on the radically simple idea that all people deserve healthy, vibrant communities. Working in the South Bronx, WHEDco builds award-winning, sustainable, affordable homes that serve as anchors for strong communities that residents can be proud of. WHEDco's mission is to provide the Bronx with access to all the resources that create thriving neighborhoods – from high-quality early education and after-school programs, to healthy food, cultural programming, and economic opportunity. For more information: [www.whedco.org](http://www.whedco.org)

### **About the Bronx Music Hall**

The Bronx Music Hall will be a state-of-the art venue where Bronx residents and visitors from around the city and the world can connect to music and dance through high-quality shows and exhibits; explore Bronx music history and understand its lasting legacy and contributions to today's popular music; and actively participate in music and art making. At 14,000 square feet, the Bronx Music Hall will feature flexible performance space with seating for 300 people, a permanent, interactive exhibit that connects visitors to the history and influences of Bronx music, rehearsal and classroom spaces, gallery space for temporary or traveling exhibitions, and an outdoor plaza for recreation and open-air performances.

Cutting-edge music has a deeply rooted history in the Bronx. A thriving Latin music scene gave it's the nickname, El Condado de la Salsa (The Borough of Salsa) and everyone knows that hip hop, now a global phenomenon, was born in its streets. The Bronx had not one, but two major centers of early R&B (doo wop) music, Morrisania and Belmont, which produced groups such as The Chords, the Chantels and Dion & the Belmonts; and a thriving jazz scene along Boston Road, which was home to many jazz legends (and even some future NEA Jazz Masters) including Jimmy Owens, Valerie Capers, Maxine Sullivan, Lou Donaldson, Herbie Hancock and even Thelonius Monk. The Bronx has also been the place where traditional music, as well as popular music, found a home—young Puerto Ricans have been able to return to their island percussive roots at the casitas that dot neighborhoods such as Melrose. Today the sounds of emerging communities who now make the Bronx their home fill the soundscape—the drums of the Garifuna, the plucked kora strings from the Gambia, and bachata from the Dominican Republic--creating new work, collaborating across genres and generations, and innovating music forms in one of the most diverse counties in the nation.

### **About BFC Partners**

BFC has been a developer of affordable and market-rate housing, as well as mixed use projects in New York City for more than 30 years. After starting in the East Village in the 1980s, BFC has established itself as a major developer in Brooklyn, completing the award-winning Toren in Downtown Brooklyn and the award-winning creative office building 1000 Dean Street in Crown Heights. BFC is currently nearing completion on 7 DeKalb at City Point on Flatbush Avenue and has broken ground on the city's first outlet center on Staten Island. Most recently, BFC was part of a team to be selected by the city to develop Bedford Courts in Crown Heights and Essex Crossing on the Lower East Side. Since the firm's inception in the 1985, BFC and its principals have completed over \$5 billion in development projects, encompassing the construction of more than 8,000 residential units and millions of square feet of mixed-use development. For more information about BFC Partners visit [www.bfcnyc.com](http://www.bfcnyc.com)