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L+M DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, BLUESTONE ORGANIZATION & TRIANGLE EQUITIES CLOSE ON FIRST PHASE OF NEW YORK CITY'S FIRST NET ZERO COMMUNITY



Thirty-five acre public nature preserve & Nature Center comprise \$30.3 million first phase of ambitious resilient, energy efficient, and sustainably focused Arverne East project on Rockaway Peninsula

Mixed-use development will feature 1,650 units of housing, including affordable, market rate and homeownership opportunities

Upon completion, Arverne East will be one of the most environmentally conscious developments in the United States, achieving net zero and eliminating the need for fossil fuels on site.

NEW YORK (December 15, 2021) -- L+M Development Partners, the Bluestone Organization and Triangle Equities have closed on \$30.3 million in financing for the first phase of Arverne East, an ambitious, socially and economically transformative project that will revitalize a vacant 116-acre oceanfront site in the Arverne and Edgemere neighborhoods in Queens' Rockaway Peninsula and set a new standard for resilient and energy efficient development in coastal areas. Funding for the first phase was provided by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

The project's first phase, a 35-acre nature preserve between Beach 44th Street and Beach 56th Place, is designed to restore and promote native ecology. It will include a new building featuring a welcome center, park ranger office, comfort station, and a community center that will be owned and operated by RISE, a non-profit organization that provides civic engagement and youth development programs that advance social equity and the physical well-being of the greater Rockaway community. RISE will provide educational programming to the community and work with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to steward the nature preserve. WBE firm Starr Whitehouse is the landscape architect for the nature preserve and WXY, also a WBE, is the architect for the nature center, which will set the energy efficiency and sustainability bar for the entire project by utilizing geothermal technology and an extensive photovoltaic array that will produce more power than is utilized on site.

"As committed members of the Arverne and Edgemere communities for over a decade, we are proud to bring this site to life through a project that will set a new standard for sustainable and resilient development," said **Sara Levenson, Senior Director at L+M Development Partners**. "Arverne East will provide a host of long-awaited neighborhood resources and further support the economic revitalization of the central and eastern sections of the Rockaway Peninsula. This project exemplifies how much can be accomplished for New Yorkers through thoughtful public-private, and community partnerships. We appreciate the unwavering efforts of our partners in helping us achieve this important milestone for Arverne, Edgemere, and the Rockaways."

"In moving forward with this long-envisioned plan for Arverne East, we are ushering in a more resilient and inclusive future for the Rockaways community," said **HPD Commissioner Louise Carroll**. "More than 1,300 affordable homes will follow this nature preserve, breathing new life into a site that has gone undeveloped and unused for decades. We're proud of the hard work and ingenuity from our development partners and staff that went into making this possible."

"We are excited to see these vacant lots transformed into a high-functioning ecosystem for the people, as well as the native plants and animals, that call Rockaway home," said **NYC Parks Commissioner Gabrielle Fialkoff**. "The preserve will add parkland in an underserved community, with pathways to provide safe and convenient connections between the Edgemere community and the boardwalk."

"Arverne East is a true community-first and environmentally-friendly project that will bring much-needed housing, stores, community space and other amenities to a long-neglected neighborhood," said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** "The fact that Arverne East will include an innovative nature preserve and be the City's first net zero community makes this development truly transformational in every sense of the word. I am very pleased that this ambitious project is moving forward quickly, and I look forward to seeing the residents of the Rockaways enjoy all of its benefits."

"I am pleased to see the Arverne East project staying on schedule as the first phase is approaching its final stages," said **State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.** "This project is extremely important

to the development of Arverne by getting rid of the vacant properties which have been a blight to the community, it creates jobs through the construction of the project and with the new retail space that will be coming. As we head into 2022, I will continue to work with my colleagues in government to ensure that this project progresses and is completed on time.”

“With the first phase of this historic Arverne East project complete, we look forward to the expansion of truly affordable housing and homeownership opportunities for families on Far Rockaway,” said **Assembly Member Khaleel M. Anderson**. “My role as the Assembly Member is to ensure that the developers honor their commitment to our community in prioritizing affordable housing, homeownership, local hiring, and environmental sustainability. I look forward to continued partnership with my colleagues in government, the Arverne East Community Advisory Board, and the developers to ensure the community has a voice in this project.”

“As an MBE with strong ties to New York City, Urbane is thrilled to join the Arverne East development team and contribute to the creation of the region’s first Net Zero community,” said **James Johnson-Piatt, Principal and CEO of Urbane**. “Majority-minority communities like Edgemere and Arverne have borne the brunt of decades-long environmental degradation and economic disenfranchisement. We see this new venture as an opportunity to reset the narrative with a development centered on local Rockaway talent and culture that puts economic and environmental resilience at its core. For more than a decade, Urbane has built a platform dedicated to strengthening community wealth that co-creates solutions with residents and small businesses in every part of the community and economic development process. Arverne East is an unprecedented opportunity for large-scale equitable development and a pathway to community wealth generation for the Edgemere and Arverne communities.”

The overall Arverne East development will include 1,650 units of housing -- 80 percent affordable and 20 percent market-rate -- serving low-income to middle-income individuals and families, a set aside for formerly homeless and market-rate townhouses and bungalows. The main retail corridor, connecting the 36th Street A train subway station to the beach, will be anchored by a new full production brewery and restaurant operated by the Rockaway Brewing Company as well as a beachfront hotel. The project will also include diverse neighborhood retail, responsive to community needs and promoting local businesses. MBE firm Urbane will join the tri-venture and serve as a development partner on the project, spearheading the curation of retail and small business within the development to promote the growth of new and existing local, small businesses. The project will also include a community center and numerous outdoor public open spaces.

As the Rockaways continue to recover from the devastation of Hurricane Sandy in 2012, climate change remains an existential threat to the entire Peninsula. Arverne East is designed to meet the challenge head-on – from an elevated topography to buildings that produce more renewable energy than they consume, making Arverne East the first net zero community in the city. The project plans to achieve net zero status through a number of strategies including passive house construction, which will create buildings that are highly insulated and airtight while also bringing

in fresh, filtered air through new energy efficient mechanical systems. At the heart of these mechanical systems will be a campus wide district geothermal loop that uses the earth's ambient temperature as a source for heat transfer allowing for efficient heating and cooling. Finally, photovoltaic panels across the development will produce enough energy to offset the energy used in the new buildings, allowing the project to achieve net zero status.

Additional project details:

NATURE PRESERVE

The development team worked with award winning landscape designers and WBE firm Starr Whitehouse, along with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation's Natural Resources Group to create an innovative public preserve equipped with critical resiliency infrastructure that will protect the fragile maritime ecology of the Rockaway Peninsula. Existing native trees have been tagged and protected and will anchor the new proposed plantings for this area. Pathways throughout the preserve have been designed to provide public access from the street, and to the boardwalk directly to the south, while minimizing habitat disturbance.

NATURE CENTER

The nature preserve will be supported by an approximately 6,000 square foot building that will provide offices for Park Rangers, storage space for maintenance equipment and public restrooms. RISE will operate a welcome center for the park, providing resources and educational opportunities to the public. To support the ongoing success of the nature preserve, RISE will operate a native plant nursery, raising seedlings and saplings to replenish the landscape of the nature and dune preserves. The Nature Center will be located on the eastern side of Beach 44th Street and will be a model in resilient and sustainable practices.

The nature center, like all of Arverne East, will be fossil fuel-free. A closed-loop, geothermal system will provide heating, and cooling, while a rooftop solar array will generate power to supply the building and provide additional energy to low-income residents in the neighborhood. A parking lot with approximately 30 spaces will also be constructed with a permeable asphalt system and a system of detention tanks and bioswales are designed to handle all storm water on site.

URBAN FARM

The Campaign Against Hunger will expand its urban farming production on the site with approximately 1.5 acres of farming area plus an indoor aquaponic system. Aquaponics is the symbiotic farming of aquaculture (fish for food) together with the hydroponic growing of fruits and vegetables. The Campaign Against Hunger provides free and low-cost healthy food to the community through local farm stands as well as its new healthy café and indoor farm stand, Beach Dunes Eats & Arts located two blocks away.

STORM RESILIENCY

The new development portion of Arverne East is located between Beach 32nd and Beach 41st and will be elevated to protect against sea surge, bay surge, and groundwater flooding. To

account for future sea-level rise, portions of the development area will be elevated from three to eight feet above the existing grade, higher than the flood waters of Superstorm Sandy and exceeding the New York City required Design Flood Elevation by four feet. Water management strategies also include the use of rainwater for on-site irrigation, and indigenous plantings to both beautify and create storm buffers for the area.

Arverne East will create a coastal buffer zone with its densest portions concentrated along Edgemere Avenue (Shore Front Parkway) at elevated grades. Each residential building of the development will be constructed using Passive House design standards. Other resiliency features at Arverne East will include a district geothermal ambient loop, which will tie into building systems for increased efficiency and reduced consumption. In addition, solar panel arrays will be placed throughout the community generating approximately 12.7 megawatt hours of renewable solar energy.

Many of the resilient and energy efficient measures set to be implemented at Arverne East were first piloted at nearby Beach Green Dunes I & II. Both are 100 percent affordable mixed-use residential developments by the development team. Beach Green Dunes I, which opened in 2017 and Beach Green Dunes II, which opened in 2019, are two of the most energy-efficient and resilient projects in New York City and served as a proof of concept for Arverne East. Beach Green Dunes II was recently awarded the 2021 ULI Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing Development.

Arverne East is the result of a public-private partnership led by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. Originally approved in 1968, the Arverne Urban Renewal Plan was adopted to facilitate the removal of structurally substandard housing for development of new low- and moderate-income housing. In the early 1970s, the City acquired and cleared most of the Urban Renewal Area for redevelopment. Since this clearing, the site has sat predominately vacant and underutilized for approximately the past 50 years. The Project received Uniform Land Use Review Procedure approval in 2003.

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