



NEWS

PRESS RELEASE

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SoBRO to Receive 2014 Outstanding BOA Award for Lower Concourse

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On June 2nd the New Partners for Community Revitalization will present the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO) with a "2014 Outstanding BOA Award" for the Lower Concourse Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA). The Brownfield Opportunity Area Program is an environmental planning and economic development initiative funded by the New York State Department of State. SoBRO, along with their urban design consultant, Magnusson Architecture and Planning, and planning consultant, Allee King Rosen & Fleming (AKRF), will participate in the awards ceremony. SoBRO's Senior Vice President, Lourdes Zapata, says that, "it is an honor to accept this award from New Partners on behalf of the Lower Concourse BOA and it is a testament to the hard work, advocacy, and innovative planning efforts that have defined the South Bronx community for decades."

In 2004, the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO) was awarded a Step 2 BOA Nomination grant from the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) to focus on the Port Morris neighborhood of the South Bronx. This area has a long history of heavy industrial use and is in the city's lowest-income community district and nation's lowest-income urban Congressional District. Under Step 2, SoBRO worked in partnership with the NYC Department of City Planning and local community groups to conceptualize and advocate for a rezoning of the Lower Concourse, the western section of Port Morris. This 30 block area was successfully rezoned in 2009 from manufacturing to mixed-use as a Special Waterfront District presenting significant commercial, residential, community facility and open space development potential. SoBRO has focused Step 3 efforts on forming partnerships with a diverse group of community stakeholders, property owners, and government agencies that can leverage a range of resources for BOA projects and activities. SoBRO has utilized BOA resources to explore massing, bulk, and waterfront access scenarios within as-of-right zoning for 12 catalyst sites along the Harlem River waterfront. Going forward, the planning firm, AKRF, will build upon the urban design analysis to prepare economic and market analyses, real estate feasibility studies, marketing materials, and traffic calming studies.

Cumulatively, BOA efforts have led five (5) strategic site owners to enter into discussions with developers, two (2) to complete brownfield cleanups, and another two (2) to undertake significant mixed use development projects. Currently, there is a 100-unit mixed use development project underway as well as another similarly sized project breaking ground within a year on a brownfield contaminated site. The program gained additional momentum in February 2014 when the Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz endorsed the Lower Concourse BOA Plan at his "State of the Borough" address. This, in turn, catalyzed public and private sector interest in the BOA area and generated significant media attention. The Lower Concourse BOA's successful track record in spearheading economic development in the South Bronx is a testament to the enormous opportunity BOA resources have presented the South Bronx community as well as the ability of private, public, and non-profit sector collaboration to achieve lasting community impact.

About SoBRO

SoBRO, a not-for-profit community development corporation, has been serving the South Bronx since 1972. SoBRO's programs include adult education and workforce training, real estate and community development, technical and financial assistance for businesses, and an array of programs for youth and adults. For additional information about SoBRO, call 718 292-3113 or visit www.sobro.org