



**SolBro**

# South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation

2020 Annual Report





SoBRO's mission is to enhance the  
quality of life in

**The Bronx**

by strengthening businesses and  
creating innovative economic,  
housing, educational, and career  
development programs for youth  
and adults.

It has been my pleasure and honor to serve my community and to work with an amazing and dedicated team of employees at SoBro.

This team has shown dedication, honor and commitment to our work and their efforts are reflected in the amazing accomplishments we have achieved over this past year.

We grieve for lost friends and family during this challenging time but optimistically look forward to the change and new opportunities that a new year brings.

This report provides you an overview of our efforts and successes in 2020 and insight on our ambitious goals for 2021. I hope you will be as proud of our collective achievements as I am.

Thank you for your support.

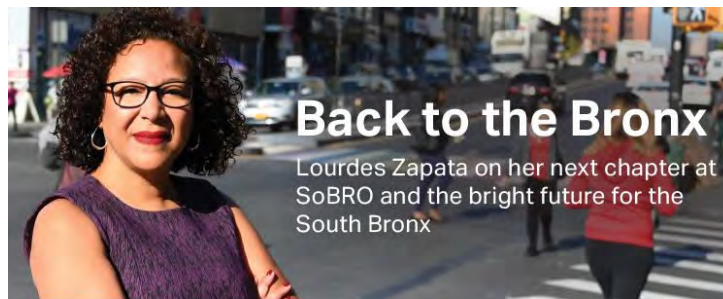
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lourdes".

Lourdes Zapata  
President/CEO



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020





## Back to the Bronx

Lourdes Zapata on her next chapter at SoBro and the bright future for the South Bronx





**Lourdes Zapata**  
South Bronx Overall Economic  
Development Corporation  
(SoBro)

**2020 VIRTUAL COMPETITIVE EDGE CONFERENCE** FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

**FutureReady**

**Meet the Speakers**

Introducing our Future Ready Experts, Game-Changers and Key Decision Makers

  
**Magda Acosta**  
Deputy Mayor and  
Chief of Policy and Planning  
Office of the Mayor of New York City

  
**Maria Theresa Dominguez**  
Commissioner  
NYC Department of Transportation

  
**Rosina Escamero**  
Executive Director  
Office of the Commissioner of  
Regulation and Planning



**BELLAS FIRESIDE CHAT**

**WELCOMES**  
**LOURDES ZAPATA**  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
SOUTH BRONX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION (SOBRO)

**THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2020**  
**3:00PM EST**

VIA **LIVE**

In partnership with:  
  
WWW.BELLASFIRESIDE.CHAT



(Left to right): Angelica O. Tang, Senior Advisor, Asia Value Advisors and Moderator; Jessica Walker, Chief Executive Officer and President, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce; Linda Baran, President and Chief Executive Officer, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce; Melva Miller, Chief Executive Officer, Association for a Better New York; Regina Myer, President, Downtown Brooklyn Partnership; Lourdes Zapata, President and Chief Executive Officer, South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBro); and Elizabeth Lusskin, President, Long Island City Partnership.



## Who We Are:

### SoBro Workforce

December 2020

Workforce Headcount	194 total employees
FTE	99
PTE	95
Employee Demographics...	
African American	53%
Asian	3%
Caucasian/Other	4%
Latino	40%
Bronx Residents	54% of all employees



# 2020 CEO Report: Operations

## IT:

- Consolidated and upgraded technology servers securing the organization's technical infrastructure.
- Installed...
  - Increased and improved Wi-Fi access points throughout SoBro's headquarters providing employees, clients, and guests a secured and reliable Wi-Fi connection.
  - Enhanced firewall protecting SoBro from external and internal viruses.
  - Mapped remote desktops to allow additional on-site and off-site staff to connect to their physical work desktop computers.
- Upgraded computer hardware throughout SoBro headquarters and offsite locations.

## Human Resources:

- Completed full auditing and electronic documentation for all personnel files.
- Engaged PEO platform to dramatically increase quality of benefits offered to employees and creating employee-managed payroll reporting systems – securing over \$174k in savings to our employees and organization.
- Converted outsourced security guard positions into Resident Assistant positions to improve resident/front desk relationships and environment.

## Administration:

- Established 30 operational policies to ensure strong organizational foundation.
  - Credit Card Policies and Procedures
  - Financing and Contacting Authority
  - Financial Fraud Policy and Reporting
  - General Safety Policy
  - Internet Usage and Social Media Policy
  - Procurement Policies and Procedures
  - Record Retention and Destruction Policy
  - Security and Privacy Awareness and Training Policy
  - Cost Allocation Plan



# 2020 CEO Report: Board Leadership

In 2020, SoBro was fortunate to be able to add eight incredibly talented and energetic community and business leaders to SoBro's Board of Directors.

These individuals bring decades of experience in the areas of real estate development, finance, non-profit management, and intergovernmental affairs.

Their counsel and expertise will enhance our long-serving Board – adding new energy to further strengthening SoBro's commitment developing mission-critical solutions to serve the Bronx community.

## New 2020 Board Members

**Cheryl  
McKissack  
Daniel**



- ✓ President & CEO of McKissack & McKissack is the oldest minority and woman-owned professional design and construction firm in the nation
- ✓ Cheryl serves on various boards, including the New York Building Congress, New York Women's Forum, Greater New York ACE Mentor Program and Women's Builders Council. Under the leadership of Mayor Bill de Blasio, she serves the One NYC Advisory Board, Jobs for New Yorkers Task Force and the MWBE Advisory Council.

**Conor  
McCarthy**



- ✓ AVP at the National Development Council's Grow America Fund focused primarily on the east coast market to underwrite and close SBA 7a loans.
- ✓ Served as AVP for the NY Business Development Corporation (NYBDC) as the underwriter for the New York City Community Lending Team ensuring compliance at all phases of loan processes; origination, analysis, approval/declination, modification, and closing.
- ✓ Worked at SoBRO from 2014-2015 managing the Entrepreneurial Assistance Program and administering Credit, Inc.

**Plinio  
Ayala**



- ✓ Current President/CEO of Per Scholas
- ✓ Plinio previously served as Director of Program Operations at SOBRO, and before that as Chief Program Officer at Jobs for Youth.
- ✓ Plinio has more than 20 years of nonprofit management experience and is deeply committed to the fight against poverty.

**Tiffany  
Blake**



- ✓ Dean of Students, New York Institute of Technology for the Long Island and New York City campuses in July 2019 after serving as dean of students at The College of New Rochelle.
- ✓ Previously, she was the special assistant to the CNR president for mission and board relations.
- ✓ She currently serves on the board of trustees of The Ursuline School in New Rochelle.

## New 2020 Board Members

Jennifer Rivera



- ✓ Current VP of Corporate and Legislative engagement at Kasirer
- ✓ Former Senior Director for Government Affairs at Altice USA
- ✓ Served in Governor Cuomo's administration, most recently as Assistant Deputy Secretary for Executive Operations

Prisca Salazar  
- Rodriguez



- ✓ Current Director of the NY Office of Hilltop Public Solutions
- ✓ Most recently served as the Director of Scheduling and Executive Operations for New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio
- ✓ Worked as deputy chief of staff in the Office of the Bronx Borough President and as director of scheduling and operations at the ESD

Laurel Brown



- ✓ Current Member of the Economic and Community Development Team at Google
- ✓ Former COO of the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation
- ✓ Former EVP of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership

William Bollinger



- ✓ Real estate development and urban planning for over 25 years.
- ✓ Provides consulting services to well-established development companies.
- ✓ Bulk of work on development of mid and high-rise residential and mixed-use development projects – affordable, mixed-use and market-rate condominium projects.
- ✓ Former SoBro VP for Community Development



As part of our community involvement efforts, SoBro's President/CEO participated in various public and private counsels and panels, as well as media opportunities to elevate SoBro's community presence.



# 2020 CEO Report: Public Engagement

## Panel Presentations:

- Reclaiming New York - Change Leaders: Women Recalibrating the Future (Oct 2020)
- NYS Competitive Edge Conference: Reimagine your Company (September 2020)
- Per Scholas: Hispanic Heritage Event (October 2020)
- Urban Design Forum: Worker's Cooperative Panel/NYC Local Law 97 Implementation (September 2020)
- Berkeley College's Women Entrepreneurship Forum (October 2020)
- Columbia University Executive MPA Student Presentation: "Social Enterprise in Community & Economic Development"

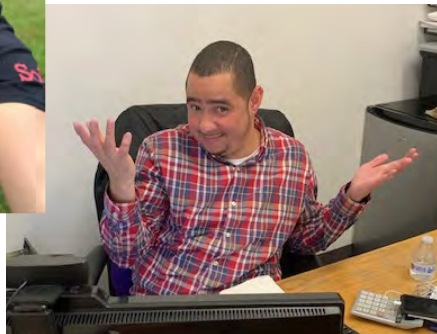
## Memberships/Appointments:

- NYC Brownfield Remediation Council
- National Development Council (NDC) Community Impact Loan Fund Advisory Board
- The Bronx Community Relief Effort: Partnership with Enterprise Community Partners
- NYS Climate Action Committee: Advisory Panel on Energy-Intensive Trade-Exposed Industries
- Urban Design Forum: Fellows Program
- NYC Mayor Small Business Reopening Task Force Appointee
- NYS Governor NY Forward Advisory Board Appointee

## Marketing/Outreach:

- NY1 Media Presentation: Impact of COVID on Small Business (April 2020)
- BronxNet: SoBro Reopens (September 2020)
- NY1 Media Presentation: Impact on COVID on Unemployment Rate in the Bronx (October 2020)
- City & State: The Power of Diversity – Latino 100 (#64)

# This is...





# 2020: Fiscal Impact



- Established a restructured and improved fiscal department ensuring improved fiscal accounting and management
- Secured over **\$2M** in funding during COVID crisis to ensure continuity of programs and services
- Created and funded an Operating reserve account
- Established an Operating Budget with a reduced deficit over 2018 budgets
- Completed and upgraded internal accounting systems





# 2020: Business Development Impact



- **378** businesses secured **\$26.7** million in relief funding from public and private sources;
- **26** minority and women-owned businesses secure **\$4.5** million in government contracts;
- **26** minority and women-owned businesses secure MWBE/DBE government certifications; and,
- **90+** workshops/webinars reaching more than **3,600** business owners providing information and resources for recovery, reopening and re-establishment.

# 2020: Youth and Workforce Programming



- Secured High School Equivalency (HSE) Diplomas for **34** youth and **17** job and postsecondary placements in YouthBuild.
- Provided academic and enrichment services to **1,200** youth through afterschool and weekend enrichment activities
- Managed **14** afterschool sites and **1** community center
- Served approximately **1,200** youth between 5 - 18 y/o
- Educated and prepped **50** youth who secured their HSE
- Trained **35** youth who secured credentials in customer service and security services
- Provided remote summer internship learning opportunities to **110** youth 16-18 y/o
- Served an average of **150** adults (Credentials Trainings; Customer service; CDL license; and security training)





# 2020: Property Management

- Hired “Dream Maintenance Team” – bringing significant repair needs and services in house – resulting in projected savings of over **\$350k** in construction/maintenance costs
- Completed beautification and improvements of supportive housing sites lobbies and offices
- Collected **\$450k** in arrears through November 2020
- Installed touchless sensors and soap dispensers throughout SoBro to ensure healthy sanitary services for staff and visitors

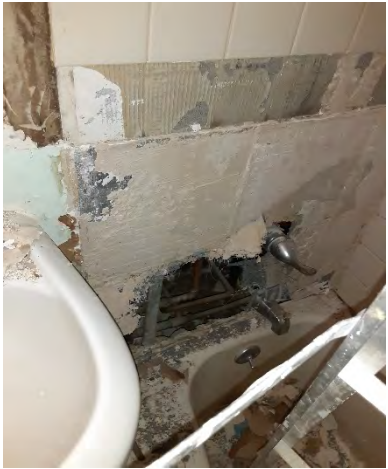


**SAMUEL PROCTOR  
139 WEST 138<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

**Before**



**After**

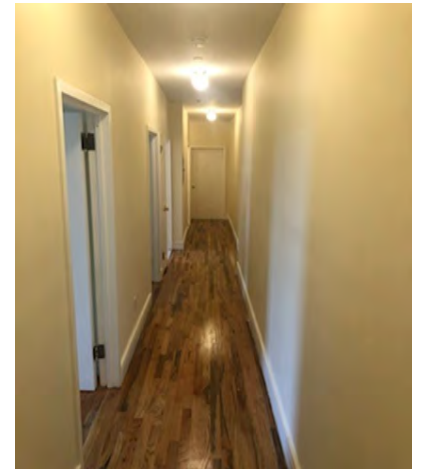
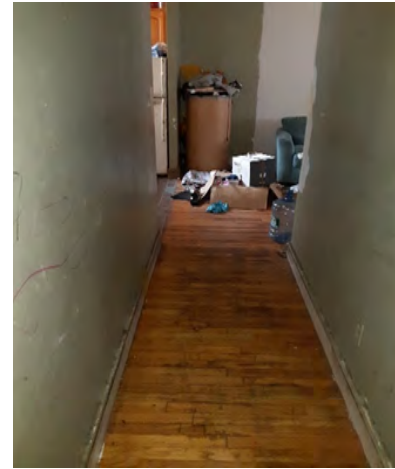


**SOBRO HARLEM  
35 WEST 131<sup>ST</sup> STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

**Before**



**After**



BUFNY STOOPS  
102/106/110/124/176 WEST 137TH STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW, NEW YORK

**Before**



**After**

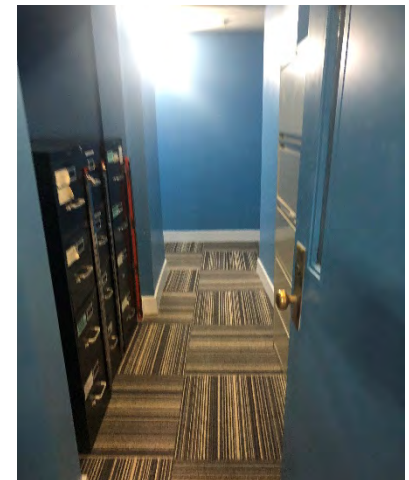
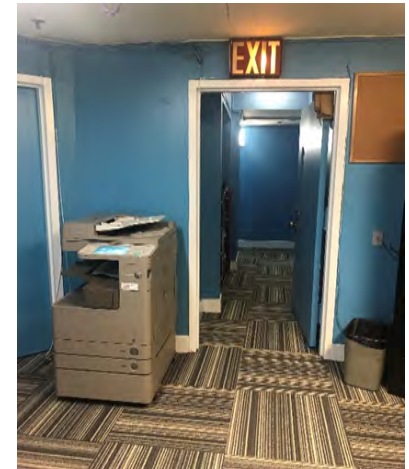


SAMUEL PROCTOR  
OFFICES  
139 WEST 138TH STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

**Before**



**After**







We have expanded our social media networks, allowing us to create a new avenue for facilitating daily information and communication needs.

[www.sobro.org](http://www.sobro.org)



@SoBronxNY



@sobroedc



@SBOEDC



@Sobro





## LEADING THE BRONX THROUGH THE CRISIS, WITH AN EYE TOWARDS THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY



### ➤ SoBro distributed over:

- ✓ **40,000** masks to business owners throughout the Bronx;
  - ✓ **10,000** sanitizing kits to residents;
  - ✓ **300** bags of groceries to seniors;
  - ✓ **70** AC units to our senior residents; and,
  - ✓ Nearly **300** turkeys for the holidays.
- SoBro hosted **2** blood drives in partnership with the New York Blood Center - **45** units of blood collected, providing aid to **135** patients!



### **SMALL BUSINESS: 2020 CHALLENGES, 2021 OPPORTUNITIES**

**November 16, 2020**

This session focused on challenges that affect small businesses in the Bronx - assessing the funding and educational needs for our entrepreneurs and the needed services they bring to our neighborhoods. We also explored systematic challenges to ensuring access to opportunities for our small businesses and highlighted creative avenues to address these dynamics.

### **SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUALITIES & ITS IMPACTS ON OUR YOUTH**

**December 14, 2020**

This session focused on our community's youth, the loss of educational attainment, limited socialization, and the inadequate resources for remote learning during this pandemic. We had also touched on racial inequalities existing in the educational system, how our youth are impacted, and what we can do as advocates to support the educational and vocational needs of our children.

### **BEYOND BRICKS & MORTAR: SERVING AT RISK POPULATIONS**

**February 16, 2021**

At risk and disenfranchised populations face a myriad of challenges impacting their efforts to secure permanent and quality housing. This panel will focus on the LGBTQ, disabled, and special needs communities-framing key issues, innovations in housing and services, and the focus on what priorities are needed in the future to serve these communities.

In the fall of 2020, SoBro launched a three-part virtual community panel series - conversations with key practitioners, government and community thought leaders and influencers to discuss the future of our communities and residents.

Our focus was on the current economic and programmatic impacts to supportive housing, youth development and small businesses, and the future opportunities of providers and advocates.

# SoBro2020 Building an Equitable Future

## VIRTUAL COMMUNITY SUMMIT

### Featured Panelists

#### SMALL BUSINESS: 2020 CHALLENGES, 2021 OPPORTUNITIES



**Jonnel Doris**  
*Commissioner*  
NYC Small Business  
Services



**Melissa Bradley**  
*Co-Founder*  
Ureeka



**Claire Kramer Mills**  
*Assistant Vice President and  
Director of Community  
Development*  
Federal Reserve Bank of NY

#### SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUALITIES & ITS IMPACTS ON OUR YOUTH



**Dr. Dia Bryant**  
*Deputy Director and Chief  
Partnership Officer*  
The Education Trust – NY



**Jared Fox**  
*Doctor of Education  
Leadership (Ed.L.D.)  
Candidate*  
2022 Harvard Graduate  
School of Education



**Susan Haskell**  
*Deputy Commissioner,  
Youth Services*  
NYC Department of  
Youth and Community  
Development



**Tim McChristian**  
*Executive Director*  
Madison Square  
Boys & Girls Club

#### BEYOND BRICKS & MORTAR: SERVING AT RISK POPULATIONS



**Sean Coleman**  
*Executive Director*  
Destination Tomorrow



**Stacy Bliagos, Esq.**  
*Executive Director*  
HANAC Inc.



**Alyson Zikmund**  
*Executive Director,  
Policy & Rental Assistance*  
NYC Department of Housing  
Preservation and Development



**SoBro2020**

# **Building an Equitable Future VIRTUAL COMMUNITY SUMMIT**



*In case you  
missed it...*

**Our virtual community summits  
can be re-visited at: [www.sobro.org](http://www.sobro.org)**

**BEYOND BRICKS & MORTAR:  
SERVING AT RISK POPULATIONS**

**SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUALITIES  
& ITS IMPACTS ON OUR YOUTH**

**SMALL BUSINESS:  
2020 CHALLENGES, 2021 OPPORTUNITIES**



hey  
2021  
we're comin' for ya!



## Vision 2021



SOBRO has shown remarkable resilience in times of the greatest need, and last year has been more challenging than most. As we look ahead to 2021, we are confident that we will continue to provide exceptional service to our community.

Our vision is put into action through programs and a focus on growing our programs, and most importantly, serve our community members in the Bronx where services are needed.

At SoBro, we're committed to achieving business and financial success while leaving a positive imprint on the Bronx - delivering what we call **Performance with Purpose**.

Built around the strong commitment to the community, employees, partners, and supporters, SoBro's leadership vision brings together what we believe are the essential prerequisites for maintaining the long-term health and growth of our organization.





## Vision 2021

The **Economic Development Department** will continue to provide comprehensive quality services that support the establishment and growth of business in the Bronx community, specifically targeting minority and women owned businesses, and to contribute to regional economic development through small business establishment and growth.

The Department will establish a compact ecosystem within the larger community setting of services to strengthen business and residents in the Bronx.



In 2020, the **Development Department** took important steps aimed at raising the visibility of the organization by strengthening our social presence on established platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Linked In, and Twitter, and through our three-part virtual community panels bringing important issues facing the Bronx community to the table for discussion.

Top priorities for 2021 will be to continue to build on last year's successes elevating SoBro's role in building a better Bronx.



## Vision 2021

**Supportive Housing** activity will meet and exceed NYC and NYS requirements and expectations for shelter program services and the environmental areas.

We will expand on family focused enrichment services with workshops to understand financial and household management, educational, cultural and milestone experiences during shelter stay, to have healthy outcomes and well-being, engage and collaborate with partners to develop linkages for services for the children and families on child development, mental health and parenting, professionally develop and train staff to understand the work and dynamics of the needs with families in shelter, and self-care to do the work well, and teach residents suitable life skills, so they are able to transition into permanent and independent housing.



**Housing/Property Management Vision** will continue to provide professional services while creating a positive impact in varied market conditions and for our diverse property types.

The “Dream Team” will continue to develop a knowledgeable maintenance team who can effectively assist our tenant needs, construct relationships with our tenants maintaining effectiveness when providing services that will exceed expectations and continue to maintain a portfolio with little to no violations and create safe and habitable environment for all.



The **Finance Department** will maintain SoBro's sound financial and internal control structure in alignment with SoBro's strategic plan and policies and continue to implement and strengthen internal controls, which are the most essential element within the Fiscal Department.

We emphasize a service-oriented, team approach to providing financial information, systems, and policies that meet fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities, address the operational needs of the organizations departments, and serve the needs of our youth, parents, small business owners, fellow employees, and sponsors.

## Vision 2021

**Information Technology** will see a completion of infrastructure upgrades that launched in 2020.

Upgrades will lead to less downtime, increased productivity, heightened security, and provide a more seamless remote work experience to the staff.



SoBro's **Human Resources Department** will continue to provide leadership in shaping an equitable and inclusive culture at SoBro, that drives diversity, excellence, and innovation by supporting talent, engagement, and the employee work experience.





SoBro thanks our new and long-term supporters and partners...

**Platinum Lead Sponsor:**



**Gold Level Sponsors:**

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.



**Tutorial Sponsor:**



BNY MELLON



**Leader Sponsors:**

LLSC NYC



**Supporters**

3A Communications  
Constantinople & Vallone (Consults)  
Dolphin Property Services  
Federated National Land  
Hilevel Pest SVCS Corp.  
Turner Construction

**Friends**

CJC Top Remodeling Inc.  
Ridgewood Savings Bank  
William Bollinger



**Change will not come** if we wait  
for some other person or some  
other time. We are the ones  
we've been waiting for.  
**We are the change** that we seek.

– *Barack Obama*

