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**MONTEFIORE PARK PLAZA REDESIGN TO GET \$6 MILLION IN FUNDING FROM NYC  
PLAZA PROGRAM**

*Harlem CDC partnership with Heritage Health and Housing will add a vibrant pedestrian gateway to  
City College and Hamilton Heights*

The Harlem Community Development Corporation (Harlem CDC) and its community partners have won first round funding under the New York City Department of Transportation (NYC-DOT) [Plaza Program](#) to revitalize Montefiore Park in West Harlem. Working in conjunction with Heritage Health and Housing (HHH) and the City College Architectural Center, Harlem CDC was among nine winning applicants out of twenty-two total submissions, and the sole recipient of Plaza Program funding in Harlem.

"Montefiore Park is located at one of the major crossroads of the community, and the quality of its streets and public spaces should reflect the same world-class character of the surrounding neighborhoods and the people who live there," said New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan. "Transforming the existing park into Montefiore Park Plaza will create an even more vibrant and alluring destination for residents of Harlem and Hamilton Heights, and a must-see attraction for others to discover," Sadik-Khan said.

Specifically, NYC-DOT will invest approximately \$6 million to improve the triangle now bounded by Broadway and Hamilton Place between 136<sup>th</sup> and 138<sup>th</sup> Streets leading up to historic Hamilton Heights. Currently, the intersections at 136<sup>th</sup> and 138<sup>th</sup> Streets are very dangerous for pedestrians, as cars zoom up Hamilton Place. By closing Hamilton Place from 136<sup>th</sup> to 138<sup>th</sup> Streets, the proposed plan will improve pedestrian safety while creating a more ample green space capable of hosting community events and fostering casual social interaction between residents and visitors.

"As a former west Harlem resident, I'm really excited to see new developments coming online to strengthen the community's cultural and commercial base," said Harlem CDC President Curtis L. Archer. "Transforming Montefiore Park into a pedestrian plaza capable of staging performances by local cultural arts groups and individual artists will greatly enhance the community's enjoyment of the space," Archer said.

The project will add 14,000 square feet of pedestrian space along the busy Broadway commercial corridor, as well as a gateway for students and visitors walking up from the subway station at 137<sup>th</sup>

Street and Broadway. The plaza will also enhance the approach to one of Harlem's leading educational institutions, City College New York (CCNY), whose campus includes Aaron Davis Hall, one of Harlem's leading cultural performance spaces.

The initiative to transform Montefiore Park began in 2007, when Harlem CDC Director of Planning Thomas G. Lunke asked a Harlem CDC urban planning intern to initiate inquiry regarding a park redesign. Lunke later reached out to City College, the NYC-DOT, and the HHH, and gained support from the Montefiore Park Neighborhood Association and Manhattan Community Board 9, as well as local business owners.

"We were all so thrilled about NYC-DOT's selection of our Montefiore Park Plaza project," said LaQuita Henry, who manages the Heritage Heights Village Commercial Revitalization Initiative for HHH. "We know that this project, along with park programming, will be an aesthetic as well as an economic boost to the area."

**Heritage Health and Housing** owns and operates residential facilities and provides a wide range of housing services in Upper Manhattan and the Bronx. Its Heritage Heights Village program supports the commercial revitalization of Amsterdam Avenue and portions of Broadway between 135th and 155th Streets. For more information, visit <http://www.heritagehousing.org>.

**Harlem Community Development Corporation**, a subsidiary of Empire State Development Corporation, serves the greater Harlem community through planning and implementing a range of community development and revitalization initiatives for restoring Upper Manhattan as an economically stable and culturally vibrant community. For more information on Harlem CDC and the Montefiore Park Plaza project, visit <http://www.harlemcdc.org> and [http://www.harlemcdc.org/Planning/planning\\_montefiore.htm](http://www.harlemcdc.org/Planning/planning_montefiore.htm).