

CONTACT: Eric Sumberg, (212) 669-3535, esumberg@comptroller.nyc.gov

NYC COMPTROLLER STRINGER ANNOUNCES SANDY OVERSIGHT UNIT AND AUDIT OF ‘BUILD IT BACK’

Town Halls to be Held in all Five Boroughs to Solicit Ideas

NEW YORK, NY – New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer announced today the formation of a Sandy Oversight Unit which will draw upon the Comptroller’s Audit, Contracts, Budget and Policy Units to hold government accountable in the rebuilding of New York City from Superstorm Sandy. Comptroller Stringer will hold Town Halls in the Rockaways, Breezy Point, Coney Island, Staten Island, and at other locations over the coming months to discuss program ideas and audit recommendations.

“Superstorm Sandy changed the lives of millions of New Yorkers and we are still grappling with its consequences today,” Comptroller Stringer said. “It is critical to have an accounting of how government has responded to this event, and what we can do to better prepare for the future. I am announcing the creation of a Sandy Oversight Unit and as part of that Unit’s first order of business, we will be auditing all aspects of the ‘Build it Back’ program. We will ensure government works for the people while finding ways to get New Yorkers the help they need.”

The Sandy Oversight Unit will be a first-of-its-kind initiative that will utilize the expertise and resources of the Comptroller’s Audit, Contracts, Budget and Policy Units. The group will focus on:

- Reviewing how federal aid was spent on recovery and resiliency programs;
- Identifying areas where controls can be strengthened to improve performance and service delivery to protect taxpayers from fraud, waste and abuse;
- Monitoring the budget, milestones and status of Sandy projects; and
- Proposing policy recommendations to help the City enhance its emergency preparedness capacity.

At the outset, audit staff will take a comprehensive look at the ‘Build it Back’ program to determine whether the Housing Recovery Office has set goals and timetables for the delivery of services and established procedures to reduce the backlog of applications. The unit will also monitor the speed and quality of services delivered and determine whether adequate control procedures have been implemented to detect fraud. The audit will focus on the Single Family Program, since the majority of the funding was allocated to those recipients.

Comptroller Stringer also announced that he will be holding Town Hall meetings across affected neighborhoods over the coming months to solicit community input on what his office should be examining as it develops an integrated audit plan of issues surrounding the City’s response to Superstorm Sandy. The meetings will include the following locations, with future Town Halls to be announced for June:

- April 30th in Breezy Point, NY from 6-8 PM
Bay House, 500 Bayside Drive, Breezy Point, NY
- May 6th in Coney Island from 6-8 PM
Coney Island Hospital, 2601 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn, NY
- May 20th in the Rockaways from 6-8 PM
Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, 348 Beach 71st Street, Arverne, NY
- May 28th in Staten Island from 6-8 PM
Olympia Activity Center (OAC), 1126 Olympia Blvd. Staten Island, New York

| Please check the comptroller's website for updates on town halls, audits and more at www.comptroller.nyc.gov.

###