



L-R: Carlo Scissura, Marisa Lago and James Patchett

Lago, Patchett focus on five borough economic development and rezoning

In the first appearances in their newly-appointed roles, New York City Planning Commissioner Marisa Lago and New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) President James Patchett laid out an aggressive agenda for economic development across the five boroughs.

During their introductions to the sold-out crowd of 400 at the March 31 Construction Industry Breakfast, Patchett called it “an incredibly exciting time for the economy,” citing the city’s record-low unemployment rate and the EDC’s ongoing mission to cultivate strong, accessible neighborhoods.

Lago, New York native, called her new position a “homecoming” and recounted her path to the Department of Planning.

During a wide-ranging conversation moderated by Building Congress president and CEO Carlo A. Scissura, Patchett explained that Mayor de Blasio and EDC are committed to smart growth across the entire city and will prioritize the need to accommodate population and employment increases.

In a trip around the five boroughs, Patchett said the City is focused on making Hunts Point in the Bronx more resilient. In Manhattan, he cited the de Blasio administration’s \$500 million life science initiative.

He noted the need for continued development along Staten Island’s North Shore, which

he described as the borough’s “Downtown.”

In Brooklyn, he is focused on redeveloping industrial assets, such as those in Sunset Park and in Queens, he named the development of Sunnyside Yards as a top project, calling it “the next Hudson Yards.”

Echoing his sentiment on Sunnyside Yards Scissura added, “I like to say we know about the projects of today and tomorrow, but what’s the project of the day after tomorrow? I think Sunnyside Yards can become one of those big projects.”

Answering from a planning perspective Lago focused primarily on the need for strategic rezoning.

She cited East Midtown and East Harlem a priorities in Manhattan. She told the attendee that a rezoning of Staten Island’s Bay Street would create housing development and that the Jerome Avenue rezoning, which involves a two-mile stretch in the Western Bronx, would enable economic development and investments in the public realm. For Brooklyn, Lago named Gowanus and Bushwick as priorities for future rezoning initiatives.

When discussing transportation initiatives, Patchett said the BQX light rail project will connect the jobs and residential corridors along the Brooklyn and Queens waterfronts. Lago plugged the planned city-wide ferry service as a future asset, citing the benefits of New Yorkers being more connected to the water.

In closing, Scissura asked Lago and Patchett to name the one project at the top of their list. Lago identified the Gateway Project, noting that New York is “a city that thrives when our suburbs thrive.” She added, “We need to think about the transportation of the future, and how we get people into our city is essential.”

Patchett identified the need for thousands of units of new housing. “We have a housing crisis in the city, and we are not making more land so we have to be creative,” he said.

Scissura assured them that both were also priorities for the Building Congress.