

## **MAYOR BARAKA ANNOUNCES THREE HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS TO PROTECT TENANTS AND SPUR POST-COVID-19 DEVELOPMENT**

**Newark, NJ—May 13, 2020**—Mayor Ras J. Baraka today announced a dramatic series of interventions to aid tenants in desperate need of help during the COVID-19 crisis and to keep Newark development on track during reopening and beyond.

The three actions are:

1. Emergency grants to provide rental assistance for affected families.
2. An executive order declaring a moratorium on rent increases for rent-controlled tenants.
3. Acceleration of land sales and redevelopment agreements to spur development and economic recovery.

“We are a city of renters with only 22 percent of us owning our own homes, said Mayor Baraka. “The COVID-19 crisis has left many tenants struggling to pay rent and some unable to pay anything. The actions today supplement our moratorium on evictions and will help tenants keep their homes. At the same time, we are taking steps to ensure that our extraordinary development progress will continue to spur recovery, provide jobs and increase home ownership.”

### **Emergency Grants for Housing Assistance**

To help Newark residents and their families struggling to pay rent as a result of COVID-19, the City will commit funding to provide grants to those who fall under 60 percent AMI (Area Median Income), to help with rental or utility payments through a One Million Dollar Emergency Housing Assistance Fund.

The City of Newark’s Economic Housing Development Department in partnership with Newark Housing Authority will coordinate this effort. The up to \$1,000 grant will help residents that have experienced loss of income, decrease of regular working hours, lay-off, or furlough, etc. Applications will be available starting Monday, May 18, at [newarkcovid19.com](http://newarkcovid19.com).

### **Moratorium on Rent Increases for Rent Controlled Tenants**

Today’s executive order imposes a temporary moratorium on all rent increases until no later than two months following the end of the State of Emergency. The moratorium will prevent any increase in rent including funds for parking, pets, the use of furniture, subletting, and security, damage and cleaning deposits in any property covered by the Newark Rent Control Ordinance.

The moratorium is retroactive to April 1, 2020, and will remain in effect throughout the State of Emergency declaration in the City of Newark and for a period of two months following the end of the Emergency declaration.

### **Spurring Redevelopment and Recovery**

In a burst of activity signaling Newark’s determination to continue its pre-COVID-19 development momentum, the City Council approved 18 projects at its last meeting on Wednesday, May 6, ranging from neighborhood small property rehabilitations to mixed use buildings, office space, affordable housing and a mega-development. 16 of the projects involved the sale of City properties for such uses as owner-occupied homes, redevelopment of dilapidated structures and vacant lots for affordable housing, supportive housing for homeless and re-entry residents, a hydroponic community farm with farmers market, office space and affordable apartments, and the rehabilitation of an existing structure to create a textile training facility.

Two of the projects approved by the Council involved redevelopment agreements:

Peddler's Square, near Broad Street Station, which will become one of the Newark's largest new development projects with approximately 1,000 housing units; and a new state-of-the-art Police and Fire Training complex on Bergen Street.

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