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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MAGNUSSON ARCHITECTURE + PLANNING SELECTED TO DESIGN CASA CELINA, AFFORDABLE SENIOR HOUSING IN THE BRONX**

*New 16-story building will add 200 senior units and over 3,000 sq ft of community space at Justice Sonia Sotomayor Housing Development*



*Rendering courtesy of Magnusson Architecture + Planning*

**New York, NY** — (March 18, 2019) Magnusson Architecture + Planning (MAP) will bring to fruition its exciting concept for 100% affordable senior housing at NYCHA’s Sotomayor Houses in the Soundview section of the Bronx. MAP worked with Xenolith Partners, The Kretchmer Companies, ELH Mgmt., and the Jewish Association Serving the Aging (JASA) whose joint proposal was selected through an RFP process. Part of the NYC Housing New York 2.0 “Seniors First” program, Casa Celina is the latest of MAP’s projects located in the Bronx, a borough where the firm has designed over 40 buildings and continues to advance the quality of affordable housing design.

Named in honor of the Justice Sonia Sotomayor's mother, Celina Baez, Casa Celina will be a 16-story building comprising 200 senior units (studio and one-bedrooms). Amenities will include an exercise/fitness room, laundry room, lounge areas throughout the building, a ground floor community space, and a landscaped rooftop terrace.

Approximately 3,350 square feet of community space will be accessible to NYCHA residents and the surrounding community. The development will also provide on-site social support, health services and cultural programming for seniors and the community.

Committed to the health of the residents, Casa Celina incorporates active design principles, particularly in the connection between the stairs and lounges. The stairs are given prominent placement in high traffic areas and will have clear wayfinding, large windows and doors with glass panels so that residents see ample light rather than a dark or closed-off area. As an additional enticement to walk up and down, the lounges are located next to the stairs throughout the building, creating a vertical network of social spaces, which helps to prevent isolation.

The north/south orientation of the site and building provides an opportunity for energy generation through a large solar array. The angled recesses of the windows and articulation of the façade were then added to shade the east/west facing units and mitigate heat gain. The building includes sustainability and resiliency measures intended to achieve LEED Gold Certification among other high standards.

Overall, the design is an evolution of the public housing typology, one that creates a much stronger relationship to the neighborhood particularly through the ground floor plan. The fully-glazed, double-height spaces will provide views through to the side garden and playground; and will ensure visual connections to all other parts of the community as well.

“Urban acupuncture was a theme of the design,” said Fernando Villa, Principal, Magnusson Architect and Planning. “There was an idea that this one point, this building, could radiate benefits throughout the neighborhood in the form of services and community programming, neighborhood investment, and architectural innovation, or more everyday impacts like improvements in open space and street illumination.”

NYCHA's Sotomayor Houses was built in 1955 and consists of 28, 7-story buildings located across 30 acres. Originally Bronxdale Houses, the development was renamed after Justice Sonia Sotomayor in 2010. Casa Celina will be located at the corner of Watson and Thieriot Avenues on an underused NYCHA site.

## **ABOUT MAP**

For over three decades, Magnusson Architecture and Planning (MAP) has worked with non-profit groups, municipalities, and for-profit developers to improve the lives of those who live and work in their communities. MAP's award-winning buildings and urban revitalization projects serve as the foundation for vibrant and sustainable neighborhoods. Since our founding in 1986, we have been at the forefront of quality housing, green building and urban design.

MAP offers comprehensive architectural and planning services that blend design excellence with technical and planning expertise. The firm specializes in mixed-use developments including: affordable, supportive, senior, mixed-income, and market-rate housing; schools; community facilities; urban design projects; and, community planning.

In 2015 MAP established a Volunteer Program. Every month a team of staff, friends, and family donate personal time to projects that serve residents of the buildings the firm has designed, improve features in those buildings or support the clients of MAP's nonprofit partners.

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