

For Immediate Release

September 25, 2020

Contact: dobcommunications@buildings.nyc.gov, (212) 393-2126

DOB ANNOUNCES WINNERS FOR “HACK THE BUILDING CODE” INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Four winning teams will present at Department’s first ever digital conference, Build Safe | Live Safe Digital 2020: Safety, Innovation, & Sustainability

New York, NY – The New York City Department of Buildings today announced the winners of the agency’s first ever “Hack the Building Code” Innovation Challenge for ideas on how to improve building safety and modernize the development process in NYC. Launched earlier this year in partnership with the NYC Economic Development Corporation and the Urban Tech Hub @ Company, this innovation challenge put out an open call to the design, construction and technology industries, inviting the public to submit their ideas on ways to improve our city’s built environment. Each of these winning submissions will be presented at DOB’s digital industry conference, *Build Safe | Live Safe Digital 2020: Safety, Innovation, & Sustainability*.

You can watch the presentations live today, Friday, September 25 at 12:00PM EDT by [registering here](#).

“Much like New York City itself, the work to improve our industry and building regulations is something that never stops,” said **Buildings Commissioner Melanie E. La Rocca**. “Innovative ideas can help keep our fellow New Yorkers safe and better suit the needs of our ever-changing city. I congratulate each one of the winners of this innovation challenge, who each provide unique and compelling ideas on how we can build a better city for all of us.”

The “Hack the Building Code” Innovation Challenge received submissions from a wide range of design, construction and technology organizations from across the region, with ideas ranging from improving worker safety to streamlining the development process. Members from DOB’s in-house Innovation Committee and a special panel of judges comprised of experts from the private sector selected winners based on feasibility, impact and innovation. In addition to showcasing the winners at this week’s digital industry conference, the winners of this challenge will be supported for recognition in the city’s construction practices.

Please note: The following descriptions were provided by the competition entrants themselves. The winners will not receive monetary compensation.

“Hack the Building Code” Innovation Challenge winners:

- **AJUSTCO ANCHOR THREAD** – Ajustco provides simple solutions to the hardware and construction industry. Our newest product, The Anchor Thread, greatly reduces the need to drill in newly poured concrete by providing a ready to use anchor point available for use immediately upon stripping form work.



- **aROBOTICSCo.** – ARoboticsCompany's Imager Robot allows for faster, safer, and better facade inspections. Easily transported and installed, our robot needs only two operators who can perform more than 4 drops per day on a typical 25 story building. Multiple custom cameras provide an excellent field of view with clarity and stability beyond that of human eyes. Recorded video can be viewed by engineers remotely while numerous digital and mechanical safety measures guarantee a safe run every time. Our system can handle most exteriors and drops of up to 370 feet in approximately 45 minutes (including setup and disassembly). Adherence to Local Law 11 no longer needs to be an ordeal; our imager robot will help better identify potential hazards before they become dangerous. By reducing risk during operation and increasing the quality of inspections, ARoboticsCompany will help make New York safer for all.



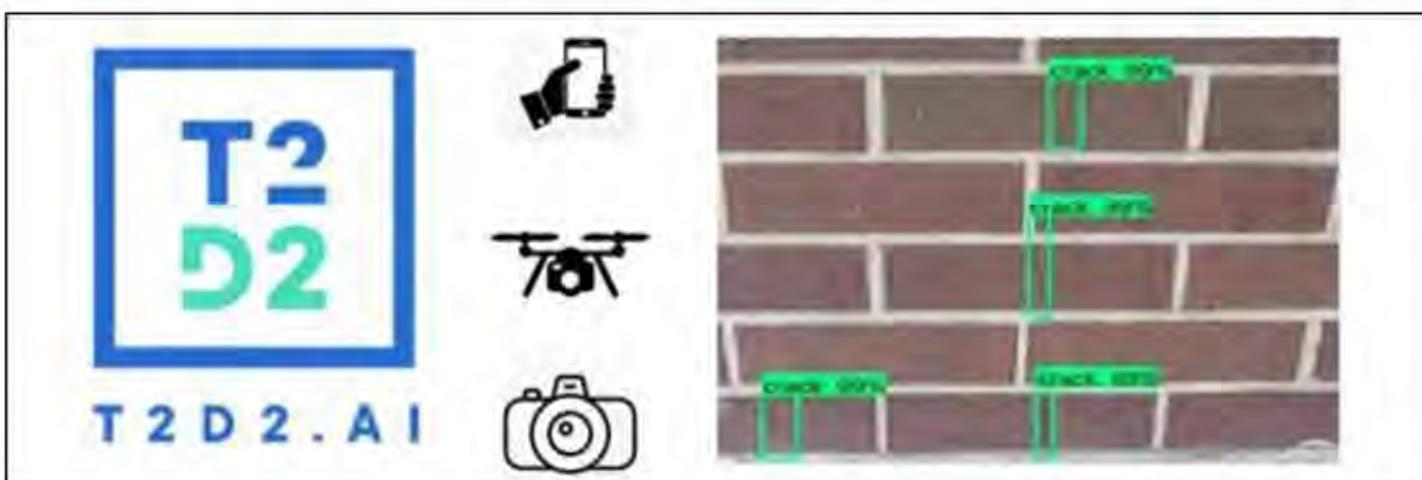
Uncompromising commitment
to quality



- **STERILYFT** – As an elevator cab and door manufacturer for decades, CEC has now turned our innovation and expertise to addressing health conditions within the elevator and have developed Sterilyft as an unmatched risk mitigation system for the purification and sterilization of the interior elevator air. Our intent is to remove air impurities and pathogens from the air to provide a safe and healthy elevator use for all passengers.



- **T2D2** – TT has developed T2D2, a tool for autonomous detection and classification of facade damage and deterioration from photographic and video images. T2D2 is powered by Computer Vision and Deep Learning and has been trained on thousands of images of actual projects from our database. We believe this tool will streamline the inspection process and greatly enhance real-time assessment of façade deterioration – helping to identify potential hazards BEFORE they become threats to pedestrian safety. The technology is not intended to replace hands-on inspection. Rather, it enables rapid and cost-effective initial assessments of façade damage and highlight areas of the structure where hands-on inspection can be more effectively deployed. We encourage the Department of Buildings to accept the use of this type of technology to be used to complement the traditional hands-on inspections mandated by the NYC Façade Inspection & Safety Program (FISP).



Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr., said, "This 'Hack the Building Code' Innovation Challenge represents precisely the kind of forward-thinking fostering of innovation we must pursue. NYC can lead the way in advancing new technology development, awareness, and adoption. Thanks to all those who participated in this innovation challenge and congratulations to all the competition winners. We all win when we advance a built environment that safely serves the needs of New Yorkers."

"As New York City continues to see its building developments evolve, it is extremely important for the buildings department to evolve in lock step with them," said **Council Member Robert Holden, Chair of the City Council Committee on Technology**. "Technology is playing a

crucial role in this process, and I am proud to see that so many participants in this challenge produced incredible innovations that will improve everything from façade inspections to elevator air quality. Congratulations to all of the winners of the contest, and thank you to everyone who participated and organized this great program."

"We are excited to see how our city government agencies are using, deploying and experimenting with technology and innovation to better serve the public," said **Assembly Member Clyde Vanel, Chair of the New York State Assembly Subcommittee on Internet and New Technology**. "The innovation challenge is a great way to connect with the public and the private sector to address opportunities for improvement."

"Through this challenge, the NYC Department of Buildings has started an excellent initiative to modernize the city building codes to accept cutting-edge technologies that can enhance the safety and efficiency of the prescriptive processes. Thornton Tomasetti is delighted to participate in this event and demonstrate the use of AI and computer vision technology in T2D2 to transform the façade inspection process and make it safer and more cost-effective," said **Badri Hiriyur, Ph.D., Vice President at Thornton Tomasetti**.

"It is our honor to have been considered and chosen for this recognition and hope to work side by side with the DOB and all parties to help in the fight of Covid and all that comes before us. The achievement of award is both humbling and greatly appreciated," said **Nick Gretzuk, Vice President of CEC**.

"We are honored to be named a winner of the DOB Innovation Challenge and look forward to bringing safer and more effective exterior inspection practices to NYC," said **Akaash Kancharla, CEO of aRoboticsCompany**.

"The whole Ajustco Team is proud to be a part of such an important and impactful event with New York City. Making construction safer and more efficient for the workers, residents, employers, and everyone involved is a top priority for everyone," said **Jason Stile, CEO of Ajustco, LLC**.

For more information about our NYC Construction Codes and regulations at the Department of Buildings, [please visit our website](#).

Follow us: twitter.com/nyc_buildings
facebook.com/nycbuildings
youtube.com/nycbuildings