Co-developers Phipps Houses and Jonathan Rose Companies, in partnership with Dattner Architects and Grimshaw, have created a new approach to green and healthy urban living in the South Bronx with Via Verde / The Green Way, the winning response to the New Housing New York Legacy Competition. The 1.5 acre site in the South Bronx is located in the Melrose neighborhood with access to mass transit and other urban amenities.

The mixed-use project serves a range of income levels by providing 151 rental apartments affordable to low-income households and 71 co-ops affordable to middle-income households. The diversity of unit layouts includes simplexes, innovative duplex units, and live-work units with a first floor ‘work’ space.

Via Verde’s stepped form is inspired by the integration of nature and city. At the heart of the project is a dynamic garden that serves as the organizing architectural element and spiritual identity for the community. The connected green rooftops of low-rise town homes, a mid-rise duplex building, and a 20-story tower are used to harvest rainwater, grow fruits and vegetables, and provide open space for residents. Other amenities that contribute to the project’s theme of healthy living includes open air courtyards, a health education and wellness center operated by Montefiore Medical Center, health oriented retail space, a fitness center, and bicycle storage areas.

Via Verde meets LEED Gold New Construction certification standards for environmentally responsible and energy-efficient design. The project utilizes low-tech strategies like cross ventilation, solar shading, and smart material choices, as well as planted green roofs, photovoltaic panels, high-efficiency mechanical systems, and energy-conserving appliances.