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# Introduction



*North Shore Richmond Terrace*

## **Staten Island Request to AIA:**

- Strategies to utilize the Island's diverse waterfronts as an integral part of design and community planning.
- Strategies to maximize the social, economic, residential, and recreational opportunities along Staten Island's coastal communities.
- Recommendations to update the existing infrastructure to accommodate appropriate future waterfront planning.
- Strategies that will foster community building with a balanced blend of natural open spaces based on solid planning standards.
- Strategies to implement sound design principles along the waterfront.

Residents and institutions on Staten Island have been grappling with the challenge of how to enhance the island's waterfront and related infrastructure. There appears to be near universal support on Staten Island that an improved waterfront with better public access and improved infrastructure are critical to the well being of Staten Island.

Many plans and individual implementation actions have been made addressing some aspects of waterfront issues. There has not been, however, a coordinated and comprehensive approach to waterfront issues and there is not community-wide consensus and an overall approach to solutions and implementation.

The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce and the Staten Island Chapter of the AIA, with support from the Borough President Molinaro, City Councilman Oddo and many others, requested that the American Institute of Architects (AIA) send a Regional/Urban Design Assessment Team (R/UDAT) to Staten Island to help the community move forward.

AIA was excited about the challenge posed by one of the largest underutilized waterfronts in any American city and the largest supply of vacant land in NYC. They agreed to send a R/UDAT to provide an outside set of non-biased experts to make recommendations and challenge the community to reexamine the challenge of improving the waterfront.

## **What is a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT)?**

Since 1967, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) has administered the R/UDAT (pronounced roo-dat) program. The R/UDAT is a results-driven community design program based on the principles of interdisciplinary solutions, objectivity, and public

# Introduction

participation. It combines local resources with the expertise of a multidisciplinary team of professionals, usually from the fields of urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, planning, economic development, who volunteer their time to identify ways to encourage desirable change in a community. They address the social, economic, and political issues as well as develop potential urban design strategies. This comprehensive approach offers communities a tool that mobilizes local support and fosters new levels of cooperation.

Following months of preparation, the team visits the community for four intense, productive days. At the end of the visit, the team presents an illustrated document of strategies and recommendations for addressing the community's concerns. Implementation is overseen by a local steering committee of community leaders and citizens dedicated to following up on the recommendations. Team members return within a year to review progress and advise on implementation strategies. The R/UDAT program has used this grass roots approach across the nation to help create communities that are healthy, safe and livable, as well as more sustainable.

Local Sustainability – what does this mean for Staten Island?

Everyone will agree that we must undertake action that will provide a healthy future for our grandchildren – this is an achievable and critical goal for Staten Island. The outcome of this agreement should be a set of collective principles that guide growth and the future of the island. Furthermore, a collective sustainable approach to the future will ensure an agreed upon implementation plan and will give ownership to the residents of Staten Island within the greater City of New York.

Embracing a collective focus on sustainable principals, understanding history, utilization of natural systems, local culture, and thoughtful development of land; all based on existing strengths may seem to be utopian dream. However, the simple agreement that Staten Island needs to be developed in a way that considers multiple generations will lead to a character of place that is defined by more than any one voice.

It has been suggested by multiple sources and studies that Staten Island should embrace and implement various rating systems for buildings and future development. The recommendation from this R/UDAT is to utilize the appropriate system for the highest sustainable outcome for building and public projects. These improvements will range from new maritime buildings to public institutions – all of which require a range of solutions to achieve the highest sustainable standards. LEED and other rating systems should be

utilized and certification for buildings should be a high priority. However, exterior influences, economic constraints, and potential sharing of services for each project should be considered prior to implementation. This holistic approach to implementing a sustainable plan will provide Staten Island with an approach that allows projects to build upon each others' potential strengths. For example, if a cluster of residential units is to be planned in an area they could potentially share renewable energy with other district energy options. This concept could be translated to other public projects and infrastructures. The final result will be collective sustainable development rather than pockets of random good deeds. A collective approach to this goal will put Staten Island on the map.

In some areas of the country towns, both large and small, have been wiped out from hurricanes or tornados. As a result, many of them have embraced this type of collective sustainable action. Their public and private decisions can be made from a singular starting point. This type of radical change is the result of a total loss of infrastructure. What will it take for Staten Island to collectively embrace change? There may not be a tornado, but there does need to be the same commitment to affect change.

Finally, sustainable action is not only about rating systems, it is also about environmental justice and a balance of public services across all economic levels. These services should be located to serve broad public needs and should aid in the definition of place – they are the center of community, not the marginal edge.

# Key Issues



*Staten Island Ferry c.1954*

*PHOTO CREDIT: Andreas Feininger*

## Context

Staten Island is simultaneously an island community and a borough of one the largest and most vibrant cities in the United States. The spectacular hills and shoreline, the distant vistas, the parks, and even the transportation challenges constantly remind residents and visitors that this is an island with a strong link to the natural environment and water. Staten Island is an island city composed of unique neighborhoods, most with a strong sense of place and community.

St. George, or downtown Staten Island, is the civic and community hub of the island. It has a strong sense of community and a small city feel. It provides the only direct link to Manhattan, the ferry. Since the Verrazano Narrows Bridge was built, St. George's role as the center of island commerce and the number of island visitors has declined, but St. George's identity as the primary downtown center remains and its waterfront is slowly improving.

Smaller town-centers, served by Staten Island Railway stops, provide commercial and neighborhood nodes and serve many of the denser population centers. Other areas of Staten Island, such as Port Richmond, Wagner College (named one of the 10 most beautiful campuses in the US), Teleport, the Staten Island Mall, form different types of commercial and residential nodes and serve different community needs.

# Key Issues

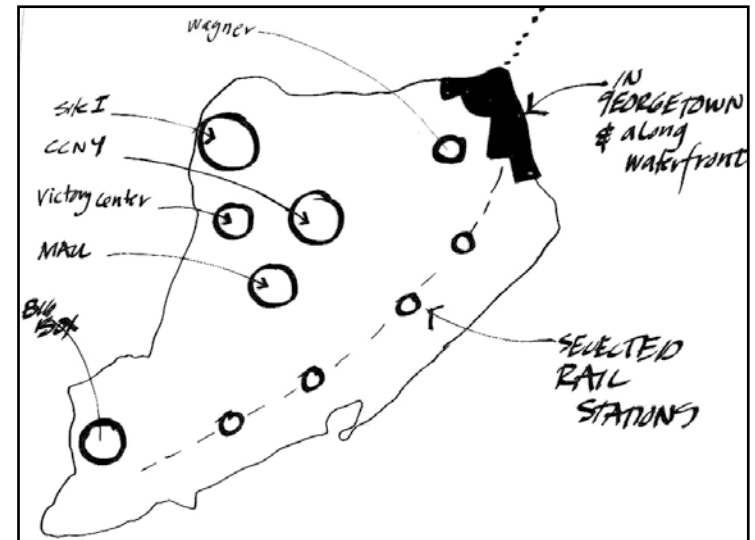
Staten Island residents told us that they loved living here because of their ability to access to the water, their rich arts community, their great natural areas and developed parks, their small town flavor within a big city, and their tightly knit civically engaged community.

Residents also told us that they felt challenged by antiquated infrastructure, primarily transportation but also utilities, schools, and hospitals, long commutes and limited on-island jobs, limited access to the water, limited bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and environmentally derogated water resources. Many also expressed fears that new development would threaten their water views, add congestion to already clogged roads, and threaten the basic character and affordability of the community and the quality of the environment.

For many non-island New Yorkers, Staten Island may be the forgotten borough, but not knowing Staten Island is their great loss.

## Initially we offer 5 specific recommendations:

1. Human link
2. Unified vision
3. Promote and protect maritime uses
4. Alternative travel
5. Downtown

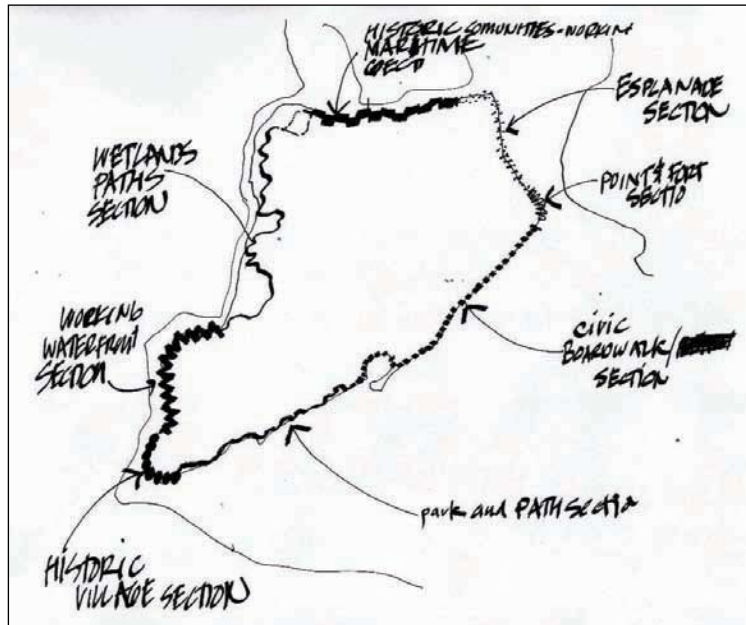


Key Staten Island Nodes

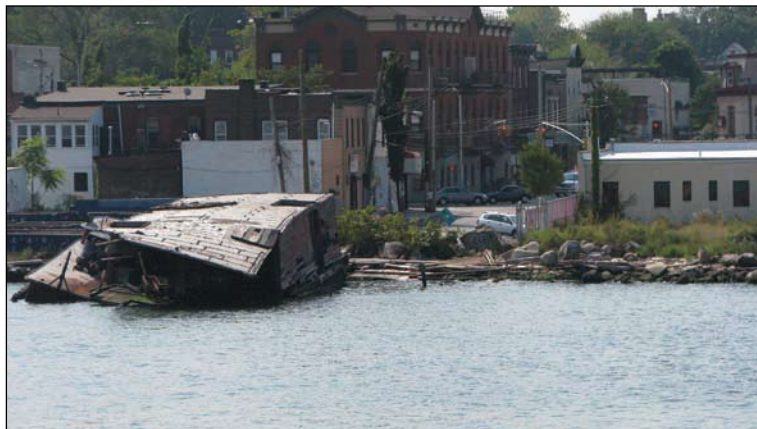
FOR MANY NON-ISLAND  
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THEIR GREAT LOSS.



## KEY ISSUES



*Public Access along the Waterfront*



*Opportunities for Limited Water Access*

## 5 Recommendations

### 1. Human Link Provide access to and along the waterfront around the entire island

The first recommendation is one that is both about physical accessibility and perceptual connection to the largest resource on Staten Island. It is also an attainable goal – culturally connect to the water front. This shift in attitude could be the basis for future decisions and would guide economic development for the future. The Human Link is multifaceted and complex.

Enormous strides have opened up major sections of Staten Island's waterfront to the public. More work is necessary to allow human access to circle the entire island.

In maritime use areas, waterfront access should be limited to narrow access points on the water, to avoid threatening those businesses. In those areas, public access should be provided on the landward side of the maritime use.

As new non-maritime sections of the waterfront are developed, without exceptions, developers should be required to provide a variety of public access nodes along the water and should also be located adjacent to existing public transportation.

In existing non-maritime developed areas, the City, neighborhoods, the National Park Service, conservation trusts, and other potential partners should work to provide public access adjacent to the water or as close to the waterfront as practical.

Public access should be multi-modal when appropriate and separated from major vehicular routes using natural barriers when possible. When site conditions allow, bicycles should be accommodated. In addition, soft and simple kayak launches and fishing access points should be created when feasible.

**Benchmark: A community event to walk the entire island, with 70% of the access on the water and the last 30% close to the water or remediated natural wetland areas.**

## 2. Create a consensus based unified vision for Staten Island and a plan to implement that vision

Staten Island should celebrate the history of planning and implementation efforts for the Borough. Greater consistency in communication, consensus, and integration of efforts, are all needed for this to be effective.

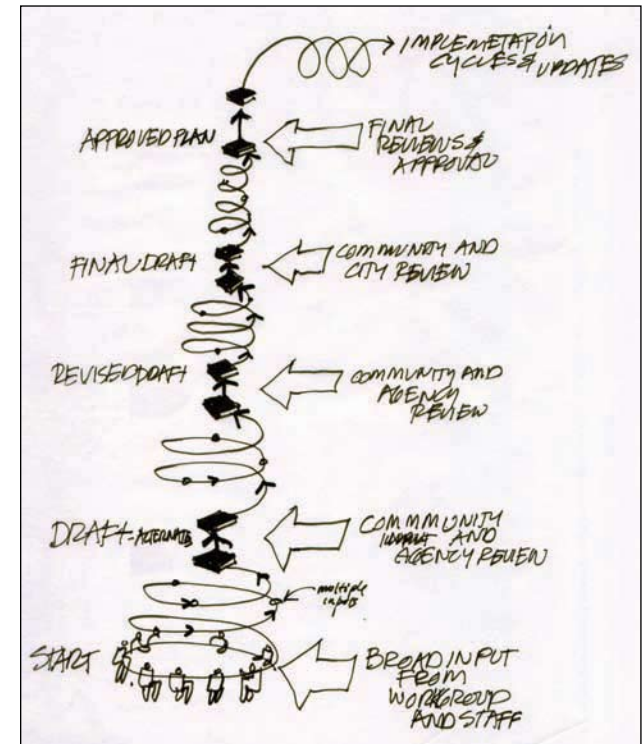
The accepted standard of good planning worldwide is a comprehensive plan, with zoning, public policies, and capital improvements all consistent with the comprehensive plan. Staten Island would benefit from this approach, but it is not the only approach.

Most important, is a clear borough wide vision with a clear implementation component, be it from one borough-wide plan or several linked plans, developed with extensive community involvement and a sense of community ownership. Every action, from capital improvements to significant public policy to rezoning, should then follow from the plan. This does not require the community to be on hold while a plan is developed; in effect, planning occurs during action and project implementation.

Ad hoc zoning in the absence of a plan is not a good policy neither is waiting for a specific development proposal. This method seems to be the predominant method for land use/ planning in the Borough and the City as a whole. Reactive ad-hoc zoning limits predictability and creates non-planning focused disputes that ignore the borough-wide vision.

If the City of New York is unable to coordinate a borough wide vision, Staten Island, institutional partners, community leaders, grassroots organizations, and local elected officials should step up and coordinate a plan. Although this would not create an "official" plan, it could still be presented to the Planning Commission and could create a clear borough preference to judge all City and Borough proposals. What does this accomplish for Staten Island – ownership!

**Benchmark:** No ad-hoc zoning changes.



Public Access along the Waterfront

## KEY ISSUES

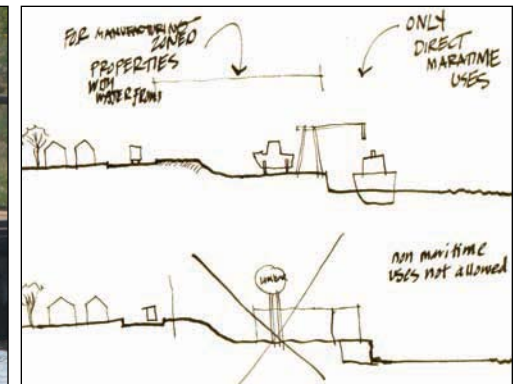
### 3. Promote and protect maritime uses and services from

Staten Island has a strong maritime industry that has partially recovered from some massive retrenchments. Maritime uses support and diversify Staten Island's economy, increase the average wage for the island, and preserve Staten Island's history and traditions. Additionally, increased maritime activity could be one of the major industries that aid in the redefinition of Staten Island's identity.

Zoning has threatened this unique industry by allowing the conversion of the waterfront to non-maritime uses. New businesses in critical maritime areas should be allowed only

if the business includes significant maritime aspects. Non-maritime industry is appropriate away from the water. This relocation would open up possibilities to relocate maritime uses that currently conflict with adjacent possibilities – such as the abandoned gypsum plant.

**Benchmark: Zoning that prohibits non-maritime uses in critical maritime areas.**





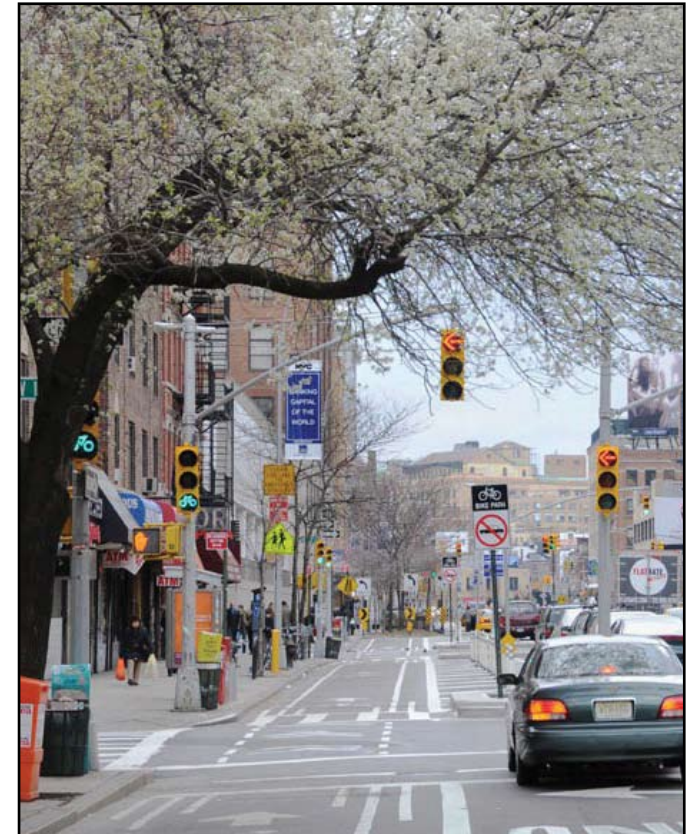
#### 4. Make transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel the preferred transportation choice

Staten Island has a strong transit system, with the ferry, Staten Island Railway, local buses, and express buses. It also has streets that generally are safe for pedestrians, and an increasing number of bicycle lanes have been installed.

The overall transportation system, however, is heavily optimized for single-occupancy automobiles, which leads to increased congestion and makes travel more difficult for everyone.

More detailed segregation of modes of transportation would help to intensify a variety of uses on streets, pedestrian ways, and bike paths mostly this would allow for families and greater numbers of people to use these alternative modes.

**Benchmark:** Every new transportation project (from simple asphalt reclaiming projects to massive new transportation capital improvements) should accommodate the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders in an appropriate and safe manner to promote usage and reduce congestion.



## KEY ISSUES



### 5. St. George and surrounding area is Staten Island's downtown

St. George has been, and remains, Staten Island's downtown for many generations. While the island population has grown and travel has shifted to the automobile, St. George's role has been compromised. A new focus on St. George and surrounding areas will help resurrect the area and revitalize its role as the transportation, art, civic, and culture center of Staten Island.

No community can be sustainable and no community can be healthy without a healthy center. Without a strong center, Staten Island's identity becomes eroded, and people may start confusing the rich culture and amenities of Staten Island with some of the other identity-less suburbs that surround Staten Island.

The operating principals should be that St. George is a community whose historic residents are happy and are able to remain, while at the same time retaining or regaining the critical mass necessary to support the arts, waterfront, new public services, educational facilities, and transportation amenities that Staten Island residents want. New development that helps build this critical mass while addressing basic design principals should be welcomed and integrated into the fabric of the area. Some road redefinition would be appropriate and required to achieve the collective goals.

All new St. George development should preserve or enhance waterfront public access, incorporate mixed income housing to the extent feasible, and preserve critical water views from the public realm. All downtown streets, especially corners, should be framed by buildings built to the street, with parking behind the buildings.

**Benchmark: Some significant share of new Staten Island development should take place in St. George and its environs.**



*Public Access along the Waterfront*

# Maritime Uses

## Maritime and Marine Services

The waters of New York Harbor have long been used for shipping and commerce. Today, these waters are filled with a variety of container, break-bulk, liquid, and bulk traffic, as well as tug boats and barges. To a visitor on the waterfront, the waters of Staten Island may seem busy, but in reality, the adjacent harbor and adjoining waterways are operating far from capacity. The terminals that are located along the shorelines of New York and New Jersey are overbooked, creating more activity, of which Staten Island is positioned to capture.



Harbor ships

The Staten Island waterfront has a long and diverse history of maritime use. Today it contains remnants of the past along with prospects for the future. The Staten Island waterfront is the remaining area for the growth and development of maritime uses and marine services in the surrounding New York area. The extent of these uses, although still in existence, has diminished from waterfront areas in other NYC boroughs. The existing tug boat services, dry dock and repair facilities and similar uses on Staten Island provide necessary services to the region, supporting maritime uses throughout the Port of New York and New Jersey (which is the third largest port in the nation), as well as the eastern seaboard.



Caddell



Harbor ships

# Maritime Uses

Staten Island, however, faces profound economic and infrastructure problems that it must solve if it is to have a prosperous economic future. These problems include:

- A highway system that is strangled by vehicular traffic
- A waterfront that is woefully underutilized
- Population surge that has increased residential growth and placed pressure on waterfront sites
- Greater community opposition to traditional maritime impacts
- Low wages and mounting housing costs
- A young population leaving for better opportunities or commuting to regional locations for better employment
- Inadequate roads, rail and bridges
- An environmental legacy of hazardous waste releases

The expansion of the maritime sector represents one of the best and most immediate means to attack the problems of jobs and wages through utilization of the waterfront. Maritime uses and marine services are important to the economy of Staten Island, as well as the economy of the greater outlying region. Of particular importance is container shipping. The New York Container Terminal (NYCT) on Kill van Cull was revitalized in 1996 and today is a major force on the working waterfront. The terminal employs on average 550 people, with a weekly payroll

of \$1.1 million (\$57 million per year) or an average wage of \$100,000 per year. Approximately 200 of the workers employed at this facility live on Staten Island (an estimated 35 to 40 percent). Upon completion of the expansion of NYCT, another 175 jobs will be added, which represents \$18 million in annual payroll. The impact of this does not factor in the economic multiplier effect of this earned income being spent locally. Additionally, the NYCT utilizes local suppliers and services, which is an added benefit to the economy. Lastly, the result of employing local workers, is a reduction of off-island commuter traffic.

The north shore of Staten Island is designated as one of six significant maritime and industrial areas in the NYC area. There is vast potential for this industry to grow and flourish on Staten Island; trade growth in containers is expected to grow from over 5 million TEU's in 2007 to approximately 16 million in the year 2020. This argues for not only the expansion of the terminal, but the supplemental improvements required in the industry. This industry provides the best opportunity for Staten Island to create well-paying jobs in the decades ahead.



Maritime Trade Growth"



## MARITIME USES



### Issues:

A number of issues have been identified that need to be addressed in order to enable this industry to expand and prosper in this area.

A thriving maritime industry relies on a strong and available workforce. Representatives of the maritime and marine services industry expressed difficulty in obtaining skilled labor (particularly welders, truck drivers and machinists) and a lack of apprentice programs. Nationally, the shortage of skilled workers is a problem that is growing at an alarming rate. This problem affects every contractor's ability to stay competitive, grow their business, decrease the number of reportable incidents, and complete projects efficiently. The non-profit organization Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend (CTCCB) is an example of an apprentice training program in Corpus Christi, Texas. Corpus Christi industrial owners and contractors are working together to solve the growing manpower shortages facing the South Texas construction industry.

The growth and prosperity of the maritime industry is critical to the future economic strength of Staten Island. As previously noted, it is the best opportunity to create well-paying jobs over the decades ahead. The areas available for the growth of this industry are limited, however. It was noted that there are a number of industrial and commercial uses, such as public storage facilities, located along the waterfront. These types of uses should not be prominent features in the waterfront area. It is important that priority be given to situating water-dependent (working waterfront) uses at locations that are directly on the water, with more general industrial uses situated inland of the shoreline, thereby ensuring that waterfront sites are used for the highest and best use in support of the maritime industry. The existing M2 and M3 classifications are too general in nature and do not differentiate between uses that require waterfront location and those that do not.



Staten Island has lands available for waterfront revitalization with maritime uses, but without an aggressive and effective program to successfully promoting this area for sustainable redevelopment, the borough can not expect to realize its full potential. Other ports of call along the eastern seaboard are being actively promoted to increase activity and build the volume of freight moving through their waterways. Competition with these other areas is increasing and for the Port of New York and New Jersey, and more specifically the Staten Island waterfront to hold a solid place in this marketplace, a strong marketing strategy must be developed and employed.

World trade in containerized cargo is expected to grow at a compound annual rate of 6.5%. This rate of growth will double the trade through the Port of New York and New Jersey, potentially including the NYCT, in twelve years. Present terminal capacity is inadequate to support that level of trade in an efficient manner. Infrastructure improvements are needed, concurrent with the expansion of terminal and trade, to support those uses. This provides further rationale for the continued expansion of the NYCT. It should also be noted that the expansion of the Panama Canal is expected to be completed in 2014. Once this has occurred, east coast ports will likely experience an increase in vessel calls in the Far East trade.

At present, the Goethals Bridge is inadequate for handling the volume of traffic that travels between Staten Island and New Jersey. Built in 1928, this bridge has reached its useful life and must be replaced. The Port Authority of New York/New Jersey is in the process of replacing the bridge with a modern six-lane structure. It is critical that the permitting, design, and construction process move forward without delays or impediments to enable Staten Island facilities, in particular the NYCT, to effectively handle potential waterborne traffic.



*Panama Canal*



*NYCT Aerial*

## MARITIME USES

The International Speedway Corp (ISC) property presents a special opportunity to encourage warehousing and distribution and an opportunity to develop a specialized ocean terminal, such as a temperature controlled warehouse to support the trade in chilled fruit. As noted above, in 2014, the expansion of the Panama Canal is expected to be complete and larger vessels will begin to offer all-water

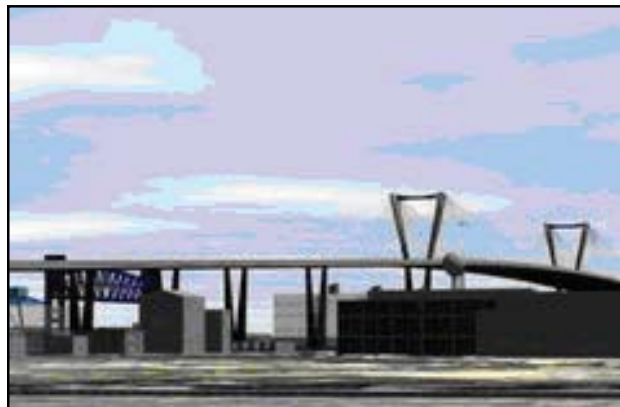
service between the East coast of the USA and Asia. These vessels have air drafts that preclude them from sailing under the Bayonne Bridge. Without a solution to the Bayonne Bridge air draft restriction, the Port of New York/New Jersey, including the NYCT at Staten Island, risk losing ship calls and the customers of those shipping lines.



*Goethals Bridge*



*Cargo Emma Maersk*



*Proposed Goethals Bridge*



*Bayonne Bridge*

There are a number of businesses and other interests with a desire to redevelop properties along the waterfront. It was strongly emphasized that the current environmental permitting and planning approval process is a hindrance to development projects. The extreme length of time that it takes for a business to secure the necessary permits for development has a serious impact on new investment or business expansion. It is probable that the time and cost of the permitting process has actually caused the value of waterfront property to decline. Ways to more effectively navigate the development permitting process must be identified.

Suggestions to improve the process include the scheduling of pre-application meetings between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and applicants prior to project design to allow for discussion of submittal of permit applications. Another option would be a pre-permitting process wherein up-front investment would be made to secure necessary permits for development, which could be recouped through project revenue generation.

Richmond Terrace was built to handle normal vehicular traffic. Truck traffic with heavy loads generated by the maritime businesses has robbed the road of its structural integrity. As the waterfront is revitalized with new and improved marine uses, this roadway will be subject to increased wear and tear. It is acknowledged that this

road is not fully mapped in some locations and that full out widening is not feasible. However, Richmond Terrace needs to be upgraded to handle heavier trucks with a reconstructed roadbed that is sufficient to accommodate the loads and volume of traffic.

It is understood that access cannot be realized on all sites, and that security and public safety issues exist at certain locations that precludes physical access. There are, however, opportunities for limited access.

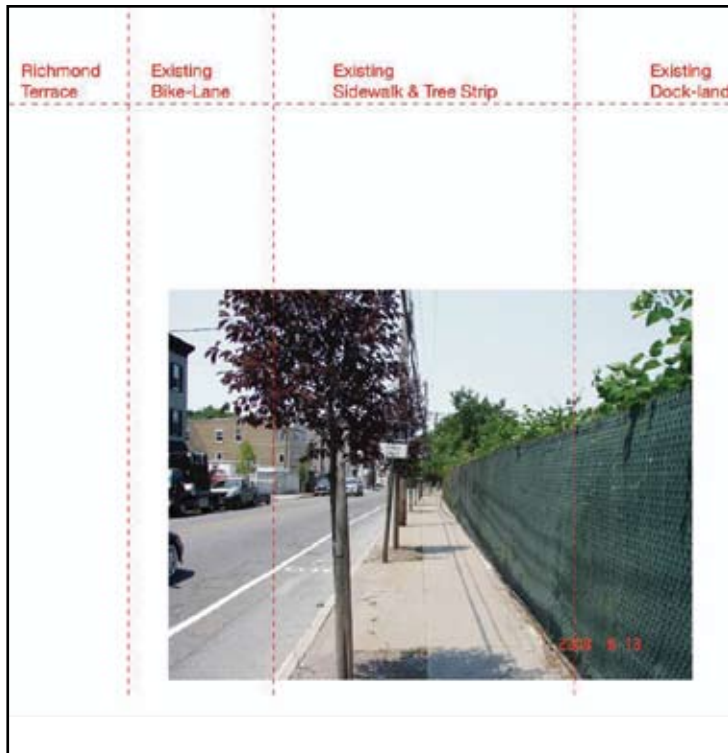
The Human Link around the Island is conceived to have fingers that extend off the link to offer direct views of the water and, where appropriate, direct access to the wetlands, water and other natural features on the lands near the maritime and marine service uses. This link is part of the greenway system that is being developed for all five boroughs. Maritime security and citizen safety are paramount issues when considering access. Even so, there are numerous opportunities to provide for views and occasional direct access that afford such safety and security through the fingers. Additionally, fences and walls built between Richmond Terrace and the maritime areas should be redesigned and improved to create a more pleasing and humane environment. We would recommend exploring vertical gardening options, natural fencing, and natural barriers in some areas.



## MARITIME USES



*Greenway map*



*Atlantic Salt Existing*

On the east and portions of the north shore sections of the island, residential and commercial buildings are adjacent to water-dependent industry and will require, in some cases, strict separation without providing visual access. In other cases, visual corridors can be established, without opportunities for direct physical access.

In reviewing the various reports, programs and studies that have been prepared for the Staten Island waterfront, it was noted that there is one section of the shoreline that has not been adequately planned for. The 1994 Plan for the Staten Island Waterfront identifies the working waterfront area of the Arthur Kill South area (Reach 20), but does not offer any recommendations for the future use or revitalization of this area. Hence, guidance was not carried over to the updated WRP policies. This area of the waterfront includes the former Mobil Port, which is now actively operated by Kinder Morgan. It also includes the unutilized liquefied natural gas storage tanks and the Witte / Don-Jon Marine facility, which is proposed for revitalization. This is an area of the waterfront that should be acknowledge and properly planned for in the EDC Maritime Study.



**Recommendations:**

- In cooperation with the marine services industry establish a Craft Training Center to provide skilled and certificated workers for the marine services industry including welders, pipe fitters, heavy equipment operators, crane operators, machinists, truck drivers and other skilled workers, as determined by the industry.
- A zoning classification specific to water-dependent marine industrial uses should be developed to take maximum advantage of future economic opportunities in the marine industrial sector.
- With input from the marine services industry and the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, and in cooperation with the Port Authority of New York/New Jersey, the Staten Island EDC should establish and implement a joint marketing effort to promote the growth of the marine services industry on Staten Island.
- In conjunction with the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce and the marine services industry, the Staten Island EDC should undertake a special marketing to promote the redevelopment of the ISC property as a site for warehousing, distribution and to attract, retain and support the trade in imported fruits and other commodities.
- Actively support the streamlining of the permitting, design, and construction processes for the proposed Goethals Bridge replacement project.
- At the east end of the bridge, ensure that the New York Container Terminal is provided direct access so that truck traffic does not inter-mingle with local traffic.
- Support efforts by the maritime industry and the Port Authority of New York/New Jersey to increase the air-draft of the Bayonne Bridge so that vessels transiting the Panama Canal following the Canal's expansion can serve ocean terminals west of the Bayonne Bridge.
- Actively support the expansion of the NYCT to a fourth berth at Port Ivory, including streamlining the permitting process for dredging and terminal development.
- Move forward with the reconstruction of Richmond Terrace to support the movement of truck traffic carrying heavy loads in support of the maritime industry.
- Establish mechanisms for expediting the permitting and approval process for environmental permits and other project approvals.
- Establish land use recommendations for the working waterfront portion of the Arthur Kill South area.
- Improve physical and visual access to the waterfront.

## MARITIME USES

### Implementation:

- Establish a Craft Training Center/apprentice program for skilled worker training – Short term (1 Year)
- Adopt a Marine Industrial (Maritime) zoning classification – Mid term (2 to 3 Years)
- Establish/implement a joint marketing effort to promote Maritime services for Staten Island – short term (1 year to on-going)
- Define future usable size of ISC site with relation to import/export activity
- Promote the redevelopment of the ISC property for import/export activity - Short term (1 year to on-going) along with a segregated park area as well as mixed use areas where appropriate
- Actively support and streamline the Goethals Bridge reconstruction project (on-going)
- Increase the air-draft of the Bayonne Bridge - Long Term (3 to 5 years)
- Support expansion of the NYCT terminal – (on-going)
- Reconstruct the Richmond Terrace road bed – Long Term (3 to 5 years)
- Streamline/expedite the environmental permitting and planning approval process - Short term (1 year)
- Development land use recommendations for the Arthur Kill South area – Short term (1 Year)
- Improve physical and visual access to the waterfront – Mid to Long Term (2 to 5 years)



*One of the many cargo ships that go through the island*

# Active Island Centers

Staten Island and its waterfront become strongest and most sustainable when the Downtown and neighborhood commercial areas become vital. This vitality has multiple facets and meanings for each resident of Staten Island... there is no single action that will create this strength.

## Why strong centers are important

There are at least five reasons why creating a strong Downtown—and other strong commercial areas—is critical to Staten Island:

1. To bolster identity and community pride. Time and again, the R/UDAT team heard fond remembrances of the retail vitality in times past of Port Richmond Avenue, New Dorp Lane and the other retail streets of Staten Island. Today, most retail sales—not just in Staten Island, but in America—occur somewhere other than in downtowns and neighborhood commercial areas—in “big-box” retail stores, shopping malls, “power centers” and on the internet. However, by focusing on improving its Downtown and neighborhood commercial areas, Staten Island can improve its identity and foster community pride and absorb the function of a “big-box” and reinterpret it for Staten Island.
2. To provide more jobs. A common complaint of Staten Islanders is that there are not enough jobs on the island to satisfy the current population. Further developing

its Downtown and neighborhood commercial areas will capture more retail sales and create more jobs for borough residents.

3. To ease future demand on public infrastructure, especially transportation. Since 1990, Staten Island has been growing by approximately 6,000 people per year, and growth is expected to continue. As the borough grows, one necessary strategy is to build more public infrastructure: mass transit, roads, sewers, schools, etc. Another achievable “smart growth” strategy is to build businesses, residences, hotels where infrastructure is present. Developing such uses near the Ferry Terminal and Staten Island Railroad stations is logical way to reduce pressure for new infrastructure elsewhere on the island.



# Active Island Centers

Active Island Centers could reduce pressure on other parts of Staten Island

4. To preserve neighborhood character and open space. As the number of Staten Island residents continues to rise, providing more housing and retail opportunities in and directly adjacent to the Downtown area and neighborhood commercial areas will mean relatively less demand for housing and retail in less dense areas of the island. This is a strategy to absorb the natural and population increase as well as the desired critical mass increase.
5. To keep young people in Staten Island and to attract and retain the “creative class.” As pointed out by urbanist Richard Florida, many of today’s educated young adults, the “creative class,” are attracted to places much unlike those of former generations. The “Three T’s,” “talent, tolerance and technology,” are keys to attracting and retaining the creative class, and, in turn, encouraging the economic development of the future. Producing authenticity by revitalizing Downtown and neighborhood commercial areas will help ensure that Staten Island retains and attracts young talent, while also preserving the character of existing centers.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

Staten Island’s Downtown and neighborhood commercial districts have a number of strengths and weaknesses:

### Strengths:

1. Proximity to Ferry Terminal. Staten Island’s Downtown includes the St. George Ferry Terminal, where 20 million passengers, many of them tourists, annually ride the Staten Island Ferry. The ferry terminal links directly to the Staten Island Railroad and several MTA bus routes. The terminal provides a ready market for retail, food and other services. However, there is relatively low critical mass in terms of population in the immediate area.





## ACTIVE ISLAND CENTERS

2. Historic buildings. The St. George, Stapleton and other centers have a number of historic buildings that lend to the fabric of the community. While not all of the historic buildings are in good repair, they provide authenticity and are good opportunities for future investment, not to mention the sustainable act of reusing existing building stock.
3. Emergence of new groups. A number of organizations, including the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, Community Boards 1, 2 and 3, and others historic, arts and business organizations have long paid attention to Downtown and neighborhood commercial areas. The more recent emergence of the Downtown Staten Island Council and other new or retooled organizations provide new energy toward urban revitalization.
4. Local entrepreneurship. While not prevalent, there are examples of Staten Island entrepreneurs who are choosing to revitalize small buildings in Staten Island's Downtown and neighborhood commercial areas. There is the necessary leadership to provide for critical catalyst projects.
5. Arts community. The St. George Theatre recently was renovated, providing a huge boost to Downtown arts. Arts by the Ferry, a public event in June 2008, provided community residents and visitors a glimpse of the strong arts community that exists in Staten Island. Public comment at the R/UDAT forum also offered evidence of the interest and commitment of the island arts community. Nationally, the impact of the arts on the revitalization of urban areas is prevalent.

### Weaknesses:

1. Lack of sense of identity. While the Downtown and neighborhood commercial areas of Staten Island have a number of interesting landmarks buildings and public spaces, there is a lack of coherence in the centers. There is also a lack of agreement on the need for a community center.
2. Lack of basic “clean and safe” services. The R/UDAT team’s walks and rides through Downtown Staten Island and some neighborhood commercial areas showed a lack of attention to basic “clean and safe” services. While Staten Island has the lowest crime rate of the five boroughs of New York City, the lack of attention to cleanliness and quality-of-life issues such as panhandling and public drinking in the Downtown area give the impression that it is unsafe.
3. Low quality of streetscapes. Streetscapes in Downtown and neighborhood commercial areas are typified by sidewalks that are in disrepair.
4. Lack of good connection with Ferry Terminal and the waterfront. Although the public buildings, stores and restaurants of Downtown are only a five-minute walk from the Ferry Terminal, the walk is an unfriendly one, on concrete sidewalks suspended above parking lots below. In other areas, it is almost impossible to reach the waterfront from Downtown. Prime waterfront land is consumed by parking adjacent to the Terminal. Additionally, there is no incentive for sustained tourism in the St. George area.



*Current streetscape conditions Downtown*

## ACTIVE ISLAND CENTERS



*Parking on the Waterfront*



*Vacant but new mixed use structures Downtown*

5. Stalling of Home Port project. Homeport, the former Naval Station New York, was closed in 1996 as the result of a decision of the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC). Other sites closed by BRAC action throughout the United States at the same time already have been redeveloped into commercial development, residential development, parks or—best of all—a mix of uses. This has not happened in Staten Island.
6. Lack of retail. Although the R/UDAT team did not receive figures on retail sales per resident in Staten Island, there is little question that Staten Island loses large amounts of potential retail sales to surrounding jurisdictions
7. Deterioration of building stock. There is evidence of significant deferred maintenance in vacant or underutilized facilities.

### What is needed:

1. Create a better street environment. Local government should team with private property owners and tenants to deliver enhanced “clean and safe” services to the Downtown area and neighborhood commercial areas. Sometimes private property owners and tenants voluntarily team with local government workers to make a commercial area cleaner and safer. Or, more formally, most of the 55 business improvement districts (BIDs) in New York City deliver enhanced “clean and safe” services, provided by uniformed workers who pick up litter and trash, plant flowers, remove graffiti, and provide an “eyes and ears” presence on the streets of commercial areas. This should also be linked to a sustainable attitude of native plantings and self sustaining elements.

Once public spaces are made cleaner and safer, programming public spaces can become a priority. Examining local laws governing and even encouraging sidewalk vendors, sidewalk cafes, and the proper use of newspaper boxes to provide more positive activities on the street.

More and better special events are a positive way to revitalize a Downtown area. Building upon the success of Arts by the Ferry 2008, Staten Island should consider offering a wider range of festivals and events to bring people to Downtown areas. Ultimately, these events will define Staten Island as a destination from the other Boroughs of the City.

Finally, the physical condition of the streetscapes of Downtown and other commercial areas need to be improved. Sidewalks that are broken or scarred by utility cuts, an abundance of above-ground utility poles, sidewalk benches in bad repair, non-working fountains all are signs of what social scientists James Q. Wilson and George Kelling generically call “broken windows.” Such “broken windows” inevitably lead to disorder in these public areas, they note, because they are signs to the community that “no one cares.”

2. Create and promote a tool kit for building renovation and tenant improvements . Federal, state and city governments currently offer a range of incentives to assist entrepreneurs who have plans to develop buildings or locate businesses in Downtown Staten Island or neighborhood commercial areas. Among such incentives are:
  - City tax abatements
  - State Empire Zone incentives
  - State energy assistance grant and loan programs

- Federal historic tax credits
- Multiple small-business grant and loan programs

Navigating the various incentive programs can be daunting for an individual whose main focus is running his or her business. A clear and simple “tool kit” that offers a way to make the process predictable will help.

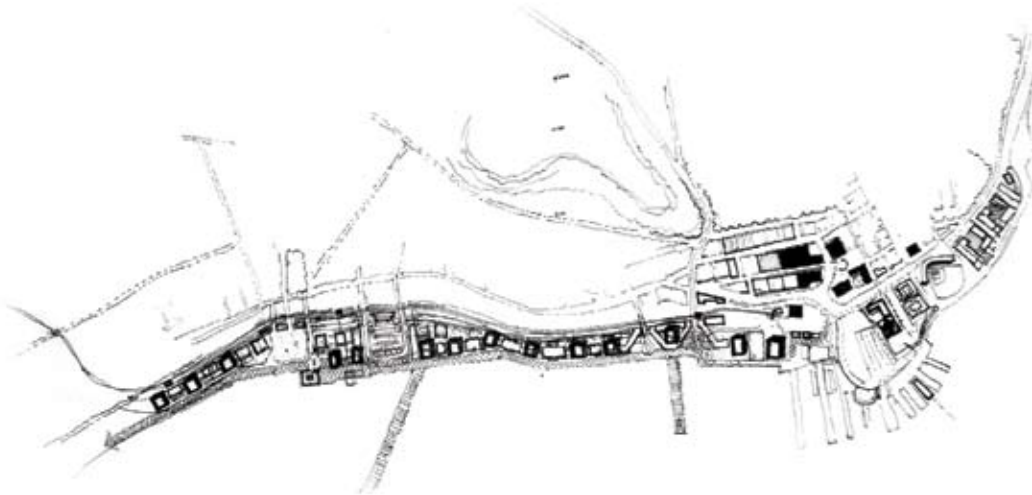
Such a “tool kit” also should offer comprehensive data on employment; office and residential markets; hospitality and tourism; culture and entertainment; retail market; and transportation.

3. Key development projects. Multiple studies consider approaches to redevelopment around the Staten Island Ferry and stress the importance of the waterfront to the development of St. George as a vital center. Documents like St. George Station: A Strategic Vision for Urban Revitalization, the Downtown Staten Island Plan, and others all present understandings of the need to address retail, hotel accommodations, housing and education facilities to support a vital urban center. They speak to the inadequacy of the Homeport redevelopment planning. They demand increased and coordinated attention to the quality of place and better address to waterfront assets.

## ACTIVE ISLAND CENTERS



*Human Link to Waterfront*



*Towers set in a waterfront landscape - framing views of Manhattan*

Sketches by the R/UDAT are based on the spirit of this previous work and explore some basic assumptions about the space between the light-rail right of way (ROW) and the waterfront as well as about vehicle and pedestrian movement to the waterfront perpendicular to the ROW. The work begins with the basic premise that the view corridors to the water belong to everyone on the street. However, views are not absolute and are often improved and re-energized by new frames and reference points. They further stress the economy of taking maximum beneficial use of existing edge and piers on the waterfront. Finally, like other schemes proposed for the area, the sketches stress the importance of a continuous promenade,

Some sketches illustrate the potential of small foot print towers as a way to frame views at the street front following the pattern of recent condominium construction. Other sketches assume the same density in lower height structures that create both interior streets for the residents as well as framing the more public promenade. Both approaches illustrate the ability to take maximum advantage of the streets connecting St. George to the water by creating park or cul-de-sac terminations at the waterfront promenade. This approach pulls the existing grid to the water edge thus directly connecting St. George to the water front.

Additional sketches are provided to illustrate ways to increase the density around rail stops taking maximum advantage of that infrastructure.





Existing condition



Revitalize Gypsum Plant as Art/Living Destination - North Shore Train

## ARTS BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

Participants in the September 23 forum on the R/UDAT as well as in the focus groups stressed balanced art programming as an important part of thinking about the vitality of Island centers. Considerations included the engagement of artists and their work as a way to jump start development and attract business. Arts based community and economic development has also been shown to enhance community pride and bring new attention to what might be otherwise forgotten or neglected places. The Boston based Bruner Foundation has run a series of forums across the country on "Transforming Community Through The Arts." The Forum's collectively suggest art is a tool for valuing and preserving culture, for partnering across racial and income groups, and they often serve as an educational tool that both inspires as well as empowers the youth of our communities.

### - Art based programming solves problems.

Arts programming of all types solves problems by addressing the occupancy and repair of existing buildings. It serves as a symbol of the transformation of places and a vehicle to add value to sites of historic, cultural or community significance.

### - Consider visual and performance art: established and new artists

It will be important to balance arts programming across types of visual and performing arts as well as supports for both well established artists and those who are just starting out. New artists with modest means would benefit from "Artspace" like developments that work with abandoned or underutilized structures. More established artists might be ready to invest more substantially in a full block of derelict or underutilized structures.

### - Implementation

Neither type of artist engagement will just happen. Models for the minimal investment approach include the way a single artist with vision started "Project Row Houses" in Houston, Texas. Essentially artist Rob Lowe took control of twenty-two derelict shotgun houses and fashioned an arts district from the bones of an historic African American community. Another alternative to minimal investments involves the way organizations like Artspace Projects based in Minneapolis pursue missions to "create, foster, and preserve

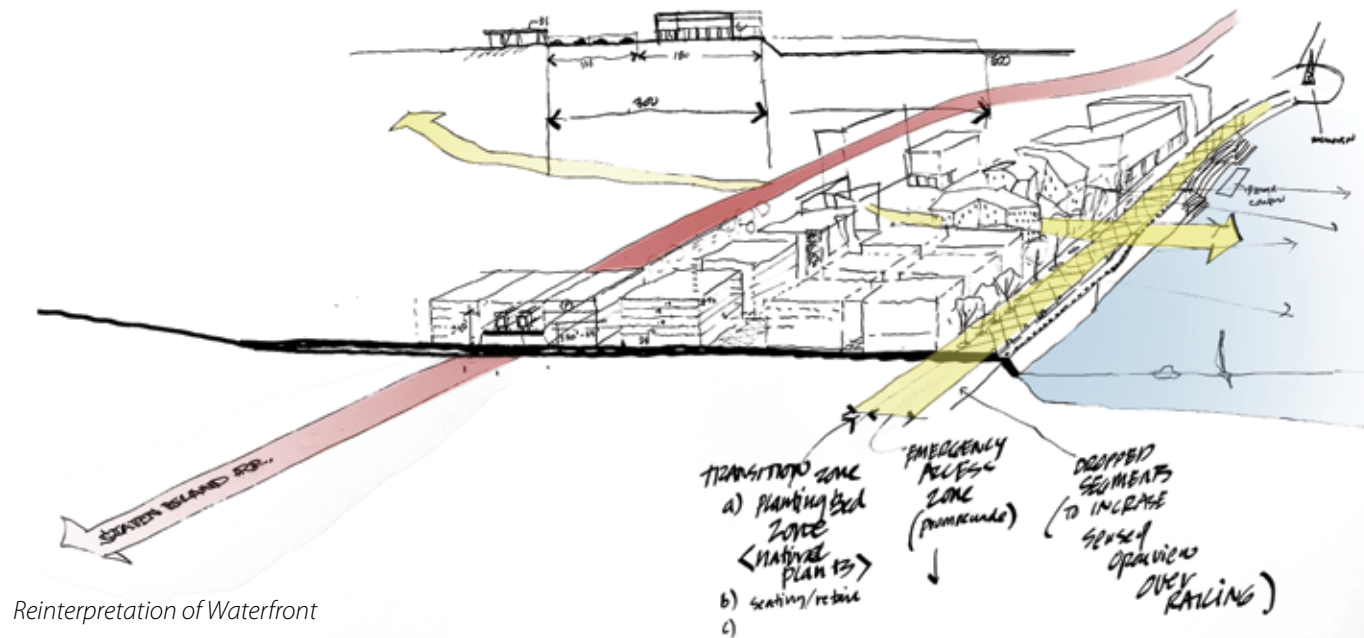
affordable space for artists and arts organizations. . Models for working with more established artists include the "Artist Relocation Project" in Paducah, Kentucky where senior artists were recruited to a distressed historic neighborhood adjacent to the town center, restored the structures, built thoughtful additions as studio or gallery space, and ultimately brought new life to 300 parcels of a previously blighted community.

### - Gentrification Controls

Both models' intent on developing artist communities could promote gentrification if there is inadequate attention to the maintenance of affordability and respect for the preservation of local culture. Ownership arrangements under non-profit structures offer one of several ways to assure the price of housing, studio and gallery space remains reachable to the audiences specified by the mission of the organizations. A broader real estate strategy would look at the size of the district desired for artists and start the process of property acquisition in advance of gentrification to control cost escalation.



## ACTIVE ISLAND CENTERS



4. Form a public-private partnership to lead Downtown revitalization. Great places rarely get developed by accident. Great places require the collaboration at the same table of a number of agencies and organizations, both public and private, with a singular focus and mission toward revitalization.

In a place as complex as Downtown Staten Island, a number of such organizations come into play: private property owners, major tenants, various city, state and federal departments, local institutions, nonprofit organizations, Community Boards and the like. Identifying and implementing catalyst projects is a key first step – this

could be the intensification of mix-use on the water in the Downtown.

In the March 2008 report, Downtown Staten Island Plan, issued by the Downtown Staten Island Council, it is stated:

*Government can facilitate this [revitalization] process by bringing together city and state agencies, residents and businesses in a Downtown Staten Island Task Force to address related issues as a team. A Downtown Staten Island Task Force could coordinate issues as diverse as clean-up programs, tax incentives to attract artists and art related uses, middle-income and live-work artist housing programs, new transit signage, zoning, and development and infrastructure improvements.*

Many of New York City's 55 Business Improvement Districts,

nonprofit organizations funded largely through special assessments on commercial properties, have been formed as the culmination of an initiative of such a task force. One BID, the Forest Avenue BID, already has been formed in a Staten Island neighborhood commercial area.

The boundaries of influence of the Downtown public-private partnership should include at least the RCB Ballpark and the Ferry Terminal and the Homeport site, as well as the commercial areas of the St. George and Stapleton, which have tremendous potential as mixed-use districts with retail, restaurants, institutions and housing.

Whether the public-private partnership should be a BID, a public-private development corporation, a combination, or some other type of entity should be decided by stakeholders; however the partnership should have sustainable funding from the public, private and institutional sectors.

### Recommendations:

#### Short-term:

Develop a property owner volunteer effort to improve cleanliness and public safety in the Downtown area – provide incentives to property owners that meet stated goals for property improvement. Lead by the Borough President

Create a “tool kit” of federal, state and city incentives for downtown building renovations, tenant improvements.

Develop comprehensive economic development data on employment; office and residential markets; hospitality and tourism; culture and entertainment; retail market; and transportation.

Produce a baseline audit for all public buildings including all energy use, consumption etc...

Develop a draft priority list of key Downtown physical development projects.

Convene a Downtown Task Force that continually works together as a mandate, comprised of key stakeholders from the private, public and institutional sectors.

#### Medium-term:

Examine and improve administrative efforts to manage sidewalk vendors, sidewalk cafes, newspaper boxes, and private and public art projects

Develop strategy to increase and improve Downtown-area public events.

Launch a promotion campaign for Downtown economic development “tool kits.”

Develop a consensus-based schedule of key Downtown physical development projects.

Develop a more permanent Downtown Revitalization Corporation or corporations, perhaps including a Business Improvement District, including sustainable programs and projects in design, development, maintenance and programming.

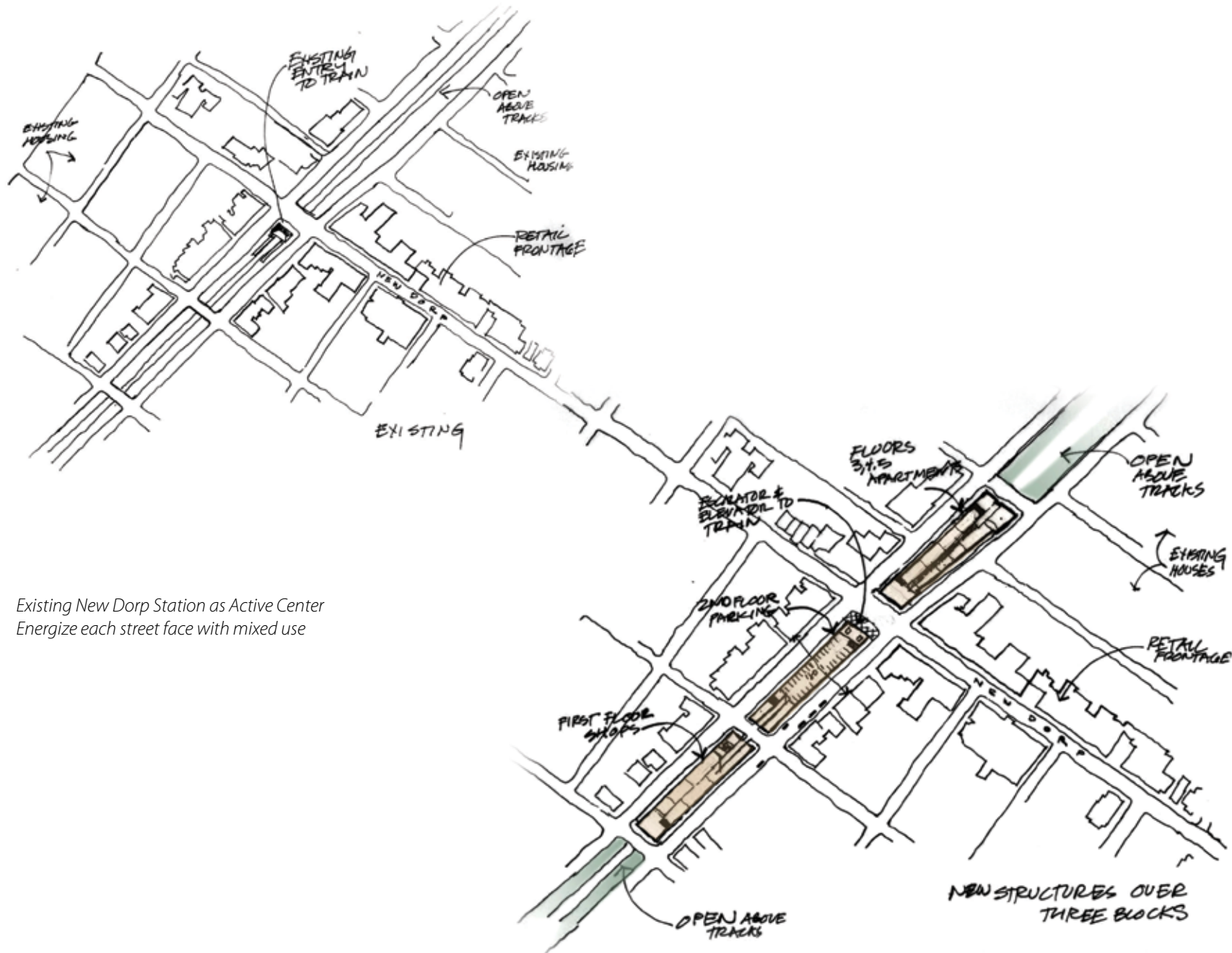
#### Long-term:

Develop plan to improve Downtown streetscapes.

Develop requests for proposal (RFPs) for key Downtown development projects.

Build on the existing rail transportation spine - intensify nodes at key stops to make meaningful and sustainable public centers.

## ACTIVE ISLAND CENTERS - BUILD ON CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE

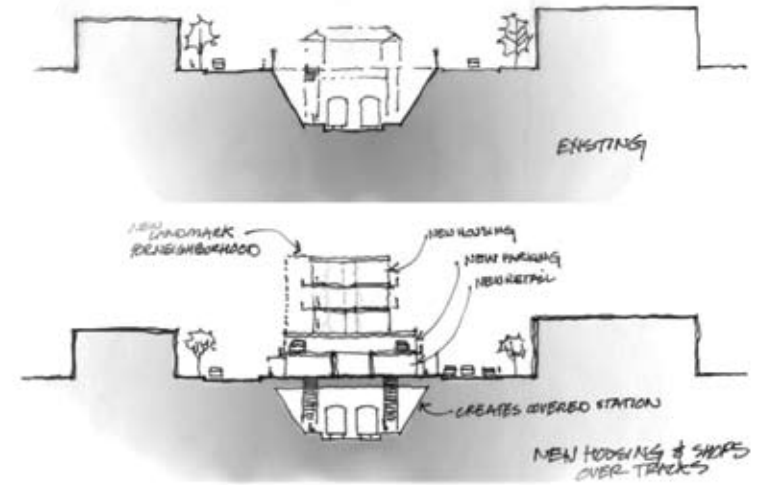


Existing New Dorp Station as Active Center  
Energize each street face with mixed use





Aerial view of proposed New Dorp above rail tracks



New Street Section Quality



# Transportation

## Overall Planning

### Creating Structures for Coordinating Agencies and Activities

Transportation is about connections. There are many excellent studies focused on aspects of transportation in Staten Island. However, Staten Island's transportation and land use development and redevelopment are currently regulated by numerous agencies and organizations with little coordination with other borough goals. A comprehensive borough master plan and inter-organizational working groups can help prioritize investments so that people can get where they need to go while minimizing traffic congestion and transit wait times.

- A master plan can bring people together to build general agreement about areas develop and to protect.
- Interagency coordination can help prioritize investments.

## Staten Island's Physical Structure

### Transportation System Elements

The elements of the transportation system represent an investment in the framework for using and improving land. The means of transportation include the waterways, roads, and transit systems. Deep water provides access to container ships, ocean freighters, deep draft sailing vessels. Regional routes and their bridges connect New Jersey and New York City's Boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn and points beyond. Arterial roads around the island link neighborhoods to jobs, services, and recreation. Collector and local streets are the means to connect individual properties to one another and to the larger transportation network. Finally, the public transit system of buses and rail focus on nodes of connectivity that permit movement from one mode or route to another. These nodes typically occur at intersecting roads and are supported by park and ride parking, shelters and schedule information, sidewalks & crosswalks, and bicycle routes and parking.

- Major corridors for movement, depending on their traversibility, create barriers. While Staten Island is part of the city, its vast waterfront has made it a very different place. Today the least expensive bridge over the New

# Transportation

York Harbor is the Staten Island Ferry. The quality of this connection to lower Manhattan will have a direct impact on the value of land adjacent to the Ferry Terminal in St. George and those neighborhoods best connected to it.

- The deep water channels around the Island are a link to international trade for Staten Island's economy and that of the region. In planning about transportation and its relationship to land use and development understanding and evaluating tradeoffs is a critical part of how the waterfront area should and hopefully will develop.

Transportation routes link activities, some concentrated in key centers, and some in a more scattered pattern. An approach to planning and investment that strengthens mixed use, walkable centers and some corridors will promote higher quality non-automobile travel while enhancing the sense of place in sub-areas of Staten Island. This includes residential clusters around transit stations and increased numbers of jobs so that more people who live on Staten Island can work there.

## Organizing Around Corridors, Centers, and Protected Places

Focus development on key corridors and centers while protecting special areas such as lower density residential

neighborhoods, maritime and industrial activities, and natural areas. The corridors and centers will become active, vital living, working, and gathering spaces that can support and take advantage of current and proposed transit.

- People the team talked to had a difficult time describing the structure of activity centers on Staten Island—although when pressed they could identify the locations of neighborhoods and shopping centers, as well as key green spaces. Many of these places are charming and accessible.
- Key shopping districts, historic town centers, rail station areas, and important bus connections provide opportunities for sensitive redevelopment. Some of the areas of redevelopment have already been identified, for example, near the ferry terminal and in the Stapleton area.
- Other areas can be preserved including maritime industrial and service areas, residential neighborhoods that are away from existing and proposed rail and bus lines, key natural areas and existing parks. Preservation of qualities unique to Staten Island may involve redevelopment.
- Zoning changes will likely be needed and could be tied to the comprehensive planning process or else created through a separate process of visioning and negotiation.

## TRANSPORTATION



*Farmers markets are one option for the St. George area of Staten Island. While it is an intensively developed areas such events help people connect with local food producers, artisans, and artists and experience the outdoors.*

The value of corridors is their function linking activity centers. Depending on the dominant mode of transportation, these routes will act as barriers or seams between communities and activities.

- High speed limited access highways typically form major barriers along their route. Interchange areas and any elevated infrastructure disconnect activities on either side. State Route 440 and Staten Island Expressway as they move through Staten Island create centers at several points, but typically are very prominent dividing features in the landscape.
- The Staten Island Railway can also appear as a barrier particularly at station areas where networks of fenced stairwells help riders navigate over or under the rails. In these key centers, reducing the visual and actual barrier should be a priority to tie the place together. Please see the graphics in the Active Island Centers Section.
- Arterial streets have the potential to be either barriers or seams depending on their size, traffic volumes and traffic speeds. It is important that these roads be particularly well designed at intersections and along edges, as they are the main routes for buses routing and need to serve pedestrians. Hylan Boulevard through Mid-Island and Victory Boulevard through St. George offer two very different examples of how arterials form seams through neighborhoods.

Preserving places with community character, natural benefit or economic opportunity can occur by focusing general transportation to centers and corridors that are designed for them.

- High quality traditional Staten Island neighborhoods can be protected from traffic and development pressure with plans that focus growth in more suitable locations, and through traffic circulation patterns that are enhanced with “soft” barriers where appropriate. Examples of a “soft” barrier to cut-through traffic might be a series of mini- circles reducing auto speed that can also act as a “bicycle boulevard” on local

streets running parallel to arterials. A more deliberate barrier may be the creation of one way streets on a single link that allows for the passage of bicycle and pedestrians but not vehicles.

- Natural areas and maritime uses at the water's edge will limit access points for vehicles and provide occasional and appropriate pedestrian and bicycle links to the resource area that will not disrupt the intended primary use or habitat.

### Taking Advantage of Demographic Change:

Over the past decades, in most places household size has declined as people marry later, have fewer children, more single parent households, and live longer as empty nesters and single elderly. The population has also aged. New development and redevelopment can help provide housing for a diverse population including seniors, younger households, and those working at home.

- Walkability and transit access are important to many of the types of households that are growing. This provides opportunities for redevelopment near train stations and bus lines.
- Such housing would need to be affordable to these smaller and fixed-income households.

### Improving the Transportation System

Traffic congestion is a real issue on Staten Island. People complain that it is hard to get around. Transit travel can seem daunting and doesn't reach all the places it needs to go. And economic development is being limited by road capacity. Staten Islanders have the highest car ownership rates in New York City and parking is a major concern when changes to traffic patterns or land use are being considered. Emergency response times are increasing. Toll revenues from the bridges to and from the island are not being spent in the borough.



*Staten Island has a number of existing main street style shopping areas. Some are vibrant and bustling while others need some attention. Such areas are often well served by transit and either are, or can become, important community assets.*

## TRANSPORTATION

In the past decade alone there have been a number of studies documenting these issues and authored by government agencies, business groups and transit advocates such as the Regional Plan Association and the College of Staten Island.

There is an emerging consensus among experts that the solution is improving transit by improving existing bus service and potentially adding new premier transit service. Rising fuel costs, environmental and health awareness also contribute to consumer demand for better transit options. This will get people out of cars freeing road space for freight movement, and improve accessibility for those who don't want to or who are unable to drive. Even motorists will gain benefits of congestion relief.

Water travel also provides an opportunity for transportation that does not rely on the road system—the Staten Island Ferry and maritime industries are already taking advantage of this option. Rail is another alternative and the recent reintroduction of freight rail service demonstrates the benefits of such alternatives.

### Key Topics for Transportation Improvements

#### *Upgrading Bus and Train Operations*

The current transit system is optimized to bring people to and from Manhattan. However, increasingly transit is being used to get around the island and to traverse bridges to points in New Jersey and Brooklyn. MTA recently began running the S89 across the Bayonne Bridge to the Hudson-

Bergen Light Rail Station. The College of Staten Island has begun shuttle service into Brooklyn across the Verrazano Bridge. Several improvements can be applied to the existing system without major physical infrastructure changes including route adjustments, schedule changes, automated traffic signal priority, better customer communications and facility enhancements.

- Traffic Signal Priority (TSP) has been introduced on buses traveling on Victory Boulevard. Buses in Staten Island are already fitted with emitters to trigger their approach at traffic signals for intersection priority. This should be expanded to other routes to make transit travel faster. Increasing communications between the buses and their schedules can help to reduce bus bunching (offering priority only when needed) and improve schedule adherence, particularly important for users connecting to ferry service.
- MTA representatives explained that current routes and timelines have been updated and are being revisited again. This work needs to be done comprehensively, recognize the need for transit to serve intra-island travel and add value to activity centers.
- Links to employment are important. For example, the College of Staten Island is 4.5 miles from the nearest train station so bus connections are key. Similar statements could be made about the maritime industry.
- In addition, real time information about transit arrival times at the stops and via the internet can improve the



transit experience by reducing the effective wait-time for transit service or connections. Adding fare to metrocards should be convenient and ubiquitous.

- Bus stops and transfer centers should be nice places to be. The New Eltonville transit center at Richmond Ave and Arthur Kill Road is clean, well lit and offers one of only two Metrocard add-fare machines. It includes a passenger drop-off area and vending machines. Bus stops can be located to take advantage of area amenities that create a comfortable and secure wait area.

### Improving the Road System

As the most common element of transportation, the road network must be ready to support a truly multi-modal travel system on Staten Island.

- Previous studies and observations by the team suggest that roads on Staten Island have significant needs for both routine maintenance and operating upgrades. Borough initiatives to increase left turning lanes are but one example of operations improvements that help auto as well as transit mobility.
- A number of road system improvements are planned including \$1.6 billion project to rebuild the Goethals Bridge. The additional travel lanes and direct interchange access to the New York Container Terminal will be essential to reducing truck impacts on local roads. The bridge is being planned to allow for future transit service potentially linking Staten Island to the Newark Airport and Amtrak. Bicycle and pedestrian travel will also be accommodated.
- In meetings participants mentioned several arterial roads that should be improved to be more amenable to transit and pedestrian use. However, in a short R/UDAT process we cannot hope to make specific suggestions but rather emphasize that some physical improvements to existing routes are needed. They should be prioritized to link employment and economic development destinations with one another and locations



*Locations where there are cross transportation linkages provide opportunities for investment and redevelopment. This map indicates areas where bus routes intersect with the rail line as well as where park and ride facilities are located.*

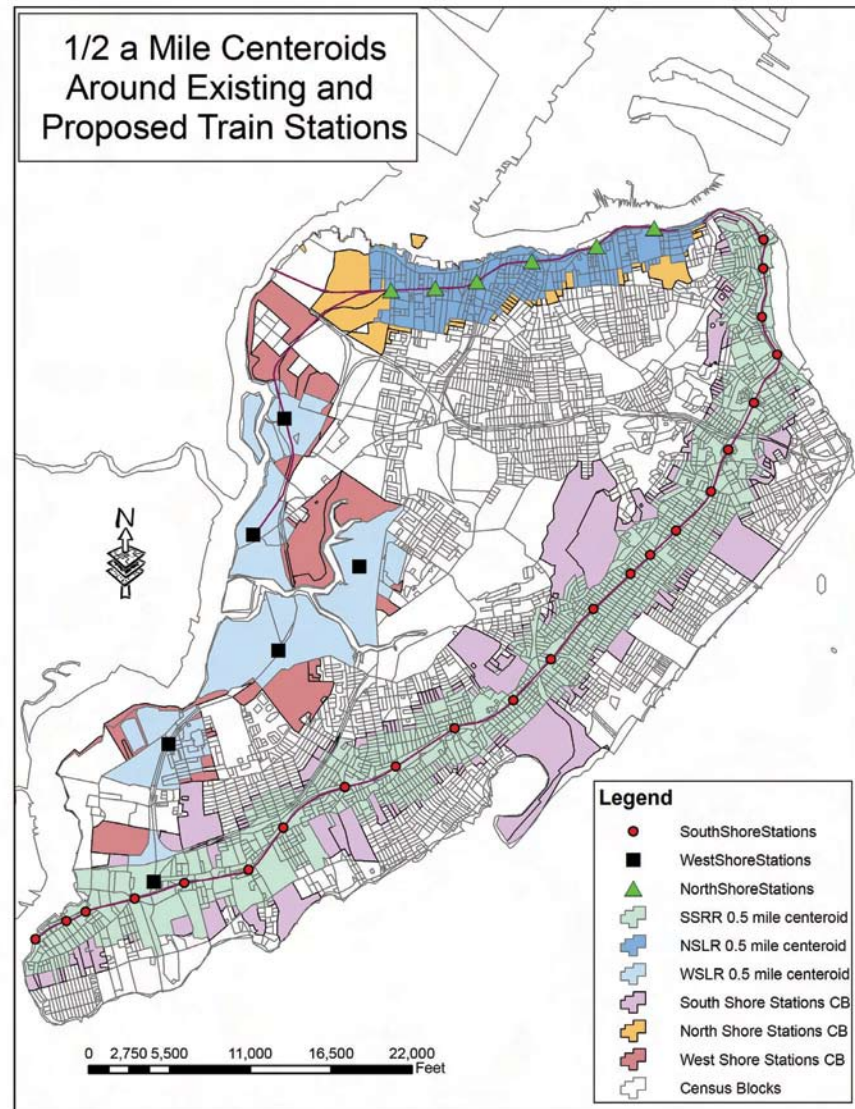
## TRANSPORTATION

serving residential areas. Streets within the walk radius of major transit nodes should be the focus of short-term pedestrian safety enhancements.

### *Creating an Improved Bicycle Network Feeding Transit and Taking Advantage of Low Traffic Roads*

The City of New York has a bicycle plan and Staten Island has some bicycle infrastructure such as bicycle lanes on arterials. As part of the transportation system upgrades, the bicycle network should be revisited to ensure that they serves a transportation function, specifically providing access to train and bus stops and secure parking where appropriate.

- Low traffic streets running parallel to major traffic routes are an existing resource for bicycle use and should be investigated for route identification and possible improvement. This could include traffic calming and access control features such as mini-circles mentioned above. Bicycle and pedestrian-only links on the existing platted streets might also be considered.
- While lighting and isolation are concerns, it may be possible to use links through parks and institutions such as the College of Staten Island.
- Crossings to and from Staten Island are key—at present bicycles are not allowed on the bridges. The planned Goethals Bridge will include a dedicated non-motorized lane in each direction. In the meantime, bus bike racks should



*Cameron Gordon from the University of Canberra and Jonathan Peters from the college of Staten Island have analyzed transportation on the island. This diagram from an April 2008 presentation shows the area within a half mile radius of existing and proposed rail stations. They have calculated that currently, 28.4% of the Staten Island population lives within a ½ mile of a transit rail station. They propose an additional rail station at Rosemount to include another area of transportation concentrations. With this station and proposed routes, including a BRT line on Richmond Avenue and Drumgoole Road, over half of the Staten Island population would live within half a mile of a premium transit service creating the potential for a significant shift in on-island use of transit and focused areas for population and employment growth.*

be provided to permit an increasingly popular transit option.

### *Adding Premier Transit Land Routes (Rail and/or Bus Rapid Transit)*

Several suggestions for new and restored rapid transit routes are currently being investigated by city agencies including reestablishing the North Shore line with rail or bus rapid transit, and creating a future West Shore Line. Bus Rapid Transit is a bus system that is similar to a train with limited stops and more amenities. A more central BRT line has been suggested by Cameron and Peters of the Staten Island Project based at the College of Staten Island..

- Each of these transit lines will represent a significant investment and planning must recognize their potential to open major new opportunities for land use and development. The North Shore line exhibits the most promise due to its connection to existing rail and population centers. It will require careful planning given maritime uses and existing development.
- Each line should be completely integrated with planning for shared space for bicycle and pedestrian use and access.
- Land use planning for stations should incorporate mixed use development at new stops or place them adjacent to retail in existing neighborhoods.

### *Adding Ferry Service*

Alternative passenger service on the island's waterways could reinforce the concept of centers oriented to the water and provide a wider range of transportation connections to, from and within Staten Island

- A successful high speed ferry could significantly reduce travel times between Staten Island and Lower Manhattan. This coupled with a clear development plan for St. George and vicinity could enhance development interest in the waterfront areas. An investment in a high speed ferry might also alter the value of real estate in such a way that rental households would be affected. A clear policy oriented to community



*One option for Staten Island is to diversify ferry options with smaller ferries on new routes, and faster ferries. These images from Australia and Sweden show smaller high and low speed ferries and small ferry stops in residential areas. In these areas ferry service connects to bus and rail transit.*



## TRANSPORTATION



*Large parking areas near the ferry terminal could be reduced.*

benefits with viable options to maintain housing for a range of households (e.g. via development agreements) should be articulated with any such plan.

- A ferry or water taxi service around the island would provide very scenic access to significant locations but does raise some questions about sustainable levels of demand. This is a trade-off. As an experiment a Staten Island Water Hopper could be created as a ferry or taxi service looping around a significant part of the island, either as a recreational route to points along the shoreline or as a link to the main Staten Island Ferry or Perth Amboy, New Jersey. A trial route could take advantage of several existing historical ferry stops and marinas.

### *Parking and Transportation-Demand Management*

A major factor contributing to whether or not people use transit is how difficult or easy it will be. Free parking, inconvenient transit routes and transfers, and problematic walking conditions such as distance and environment will all cause people to opt for the car in their driveway rather than using the bus. Transportation-demand management involves a set of education and policy measures that help overcome some of these barriers.

- Information about transit and carpool alternatives is available through transportation management programs. New York City's Commuter Link program provides this service on line for commuter travel assistance and helps employers to establish commuter benefits programs for their employees, initiate parking management plans, and receive available financial incentives.
- Parking pricing can be used to encourage people to seek out alternatives to driving where possible. Greater numbers of riders help to justify transit service and infrastructure investment. By putting driving and transit on a more equal footing both financially and for convenience, people will be more likely to choose the most efficient mode.

## Access to Blue and Green

Staten Island has rich resources in its waterways and natural areas, as well as significant historic areas and activity centers. People need to get to them.

### Human Link

Provide a continuous path around the entire island on, or close to, the waterfront. Where physical access is not possible, locate the path on upland areas and provide visual access with the water or connections to other natural areas, historic resources, and main streets. While cycling and walking would be a key focus, all or most of it could be open to motorized transportation. It should have clear signage, accessible maps, and a strong visual identity

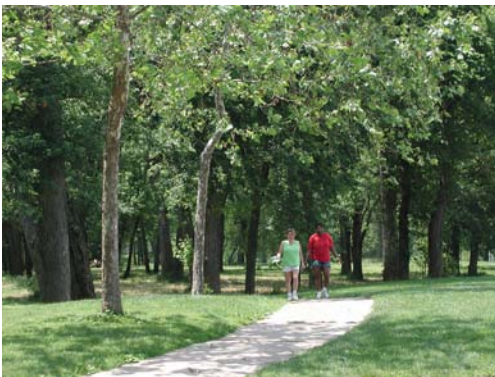
- There have been attempts to create continuous waterfront paths in the past and the R/UDAT team confirms that this is an important idea. Several plans have investigated how to make these connections. The city's South and West Shore Master Plan of 2003 builds on the 1993 Greenway Plan and the 1997 New York City Bicycle Master Plan.
- In some areas, maritime uses and other private ownership patterns block public access. In the case of maritime uses it is proposed that a combination of redesigned fencing, improved path locations, and spurs off the main loop can provide visual and physical access to the waterfront in many areas while still allowing important maritime uses. Abandoned ferry stops and other connections to the water could be reconsidered and reused as public spaces.
- In other locations people can get very near to the water but some barrier prevents them from obtaining access, either physical or visual. The examples of this situation are along the north shore where streets dead end at the water but views are blocked by walls, fences, and abandoned buildings. Where possible these should be redesigned to allow such access— including physical access in appropriate locations for some specific user groups such as kayak groups.



*Staten Island's extensive waterfront is not always accessible to the public. A number of physical and visual barriers prevent people connecting to the water. This report proposes a continuous path around the island providing physical or visual access to the water while respecting waterfront uses such as maritime industries and sensitive natural areas.*



## TRANSPORTATION



*These images demonstrate some of the different conditions that may occur along the length of the Human Link as it connects water, green spaces, historic areas, and activity centers.*

- The human link may occur in several phases. In some areas redevelopment of parks, roads, and other uses will provide opportunities for creating better located and designed paths. However, it would be possible to create an interim loop in the shorter term and provide enhanced infrastructure later.

### *Linking Green Places with Green Streets*

Staten Island is an island of parks and natural areas. Many are very large and together natural areas are a significant proportion of the land area of Staten Island with key green areas on the island's waterfront and central area—including parks, institutions, and natural areas. Small parks are distributed throughout the island. These green places can be further linked, however, by a network of designated “green” streets and paths, that is, streets with significant tree or other plantings, including plantings integrated into traffic calming elements. Many of these will be low-traffic roads.

- Such streets would link parks, landscaped areas (e.g. Staten Island College, Snug Harbor Museum), trails, and other recreational facilities (e.g. swim clubs).
- It would provide a loose net of green pathways to provide cross-island links for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The pathway network would be largely contained within the Human Link, the continuous path around the island.

## Summary of Recommendations

### Intermediate (1 year)

#### *Upgrading Bus and Train Operations*

The current transit system is optimized to bring people to the ferry and express buses for Manhattan. However, increasingly transit is being used to get around the island and to traverse bridges to and from it. Several improvements can be applied to the existing system without major physical infrastructure changes including route adjustments, schedule changes, automated traffic signal priority, better communication and facilities for passengers.

### *Creating an Improved Bicycle Network Feeding Transit and Taking Advantage of Low Traffic Roads*

As part of the transportation system upgrades, the bicycle network should be revisited to ensure that they serves a transportation function, specifically providing access to train and bus stops and secure parking where appropriate.

### *Parking and Transportation-Demand Management*

A major factor contributing to whether or not people use transit is how difficult or easy it will be. By putting driving and transit on a more equal footing both financially and for convenience, people will be more likely to choose the most efficient mode.

### **Longer term (5 years and beyond)**

#### *Creating Structures for Coordinating Agencies and Activities*

A comprehensive borough master plan and inter-organizational working groups can help prioritize investments so that people can get where they need to go while minimizing traffic congestion and travel costs on households.

#### *Transportation System Elements*

An approach to planning that strengthens centers and some corridors will allow development to be well served by transportation modes apart from the automobile, while enhancing the sense of place in sub-areas of Staten Island. This includes residential clusters around transit stations and increased numbers of jobs so that more people who live on Staten Island can work there.

#### *Organizing around Corridors, Centers, and Protected Places*

Focus development on key corridors and centers while protecting key areas such as lower density residential neighborhoods, maritime and industrial activities, and natural areas. The corridors and centers will become active, vital living, working, and gathering spaces that can support and take advantage of current and proposed transit.

#### *Taking Advantage of Demographic Change*

Over the past decades, in most places household size has declined as people marry later and have fewer children. The population has also aged. New development and redevelopment can help provide



*Traffic circles and other traffic calming devices can help cyclists and motorists share roadways.*

## TRANSPORTATION



*The human link draws on earlier proposals.*

housing for a diverse population including seniors, younger households, and those working at home.

### *Improving the Road System*

As the most common element of transportation, the road network must be ready to support a truly multi-modal travel system on Staten Island.

### *Adding Premier Transit Land Routes (Rail and/or Bus Rapid Transit)*

Several suggestions for new and restored rapid transit routes are currently being investigated

Each of these transit lines will represent a significant investment and planning must recognize their potential to open major new opportunities for land use and development.

### *Adding Ferry Service*

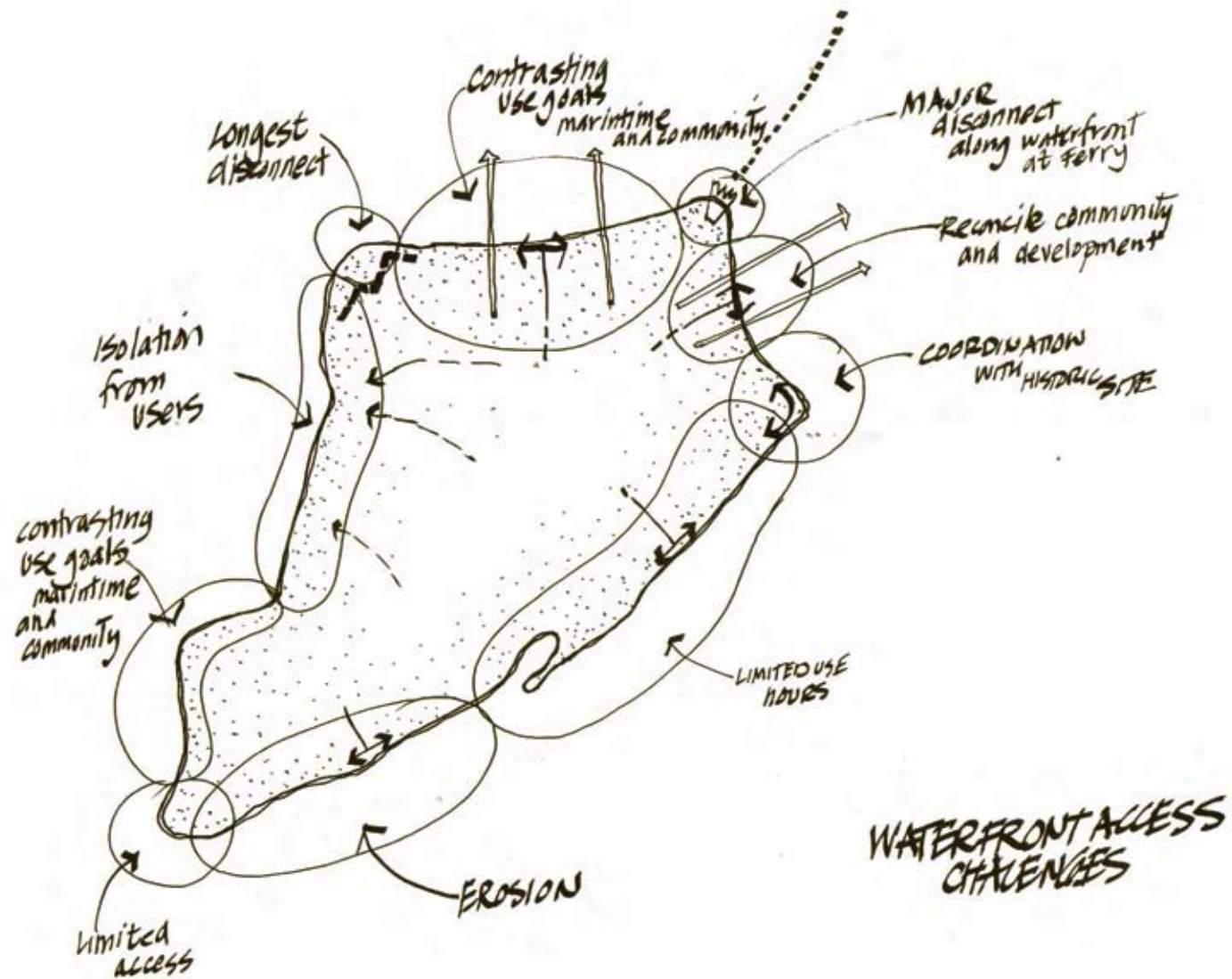
Alternative passenger service on the island's waterways could reinforce the concept of centers oriented to the water and provide a wider range of transportation connections to, from and within Staten Island.

### *Human Link*

Provide a continuous path around the entire island on, or close to, the waterfront. Where physical access is not possible, locate the path on upland areas and provide visual access with the water or connections to other natural areas, historic resources, and main streets.

### *Linking Green Places with Green Streets*

Staten Island is an island of parks and natural areas. These green places can be further linked by a network of designated "green" streets and paths that is streets with significant street tree or other plantings, including plantings integrated into traffic calming elements.



There are many opportunities to better connect people to the waterfront.



# Next Steps to Sustainability

Bringing *Your Staten Island* to fruition requires many actions by many different partners. Our hope is to challenge the community and decision makers to pick and choose the recommendations which are viable and desirable.

Our primary goal is to spark an improved community conversation.

Our short term recommendations are low hanging fruit that we think the community can accomplish quickly, if our recommendations achieve some community consensus. Our longer term recommendations require more study and consensus building and will take longer to achieve.

Our recommendation to create a consensus-based unified vision for Staten Island and a plan to implement that vision cuts across all of the issues that we looked at. We identified several implementation steps:

1. Create a planning process that develops a partnering relationship with the community, community groups, City and Borough government, institutions, especially educational and medical institutions (“Eds and Meds”) and non-profit civic groups, and major private sector partners. The planning process should reexamine current plans and identify how they connect together to create an implied overall vision for Staten Island and identify gaps in that vision.
2. Create a process to facilitate community discussion on Your Staten Island to build consensus on areas of agreement and identify areas which need further partnering and conversation.
3. Build agreement with the City of New York Planning Commission and local representatives that ad hoc zoning not clearly supported by a plan discussed at a Borough wide level is unacceptable.



# Next Steps to Sustainability

4. Identify ways to increase the predictability of the development process. This is critical for neighborhoods so they understand what the future of their neighborhood is. It is equally critical for developers so that discussions that should be taking place during the community planning process are not taking place during a specific development proposal. Development proposals need to be carefully vetted through the permitting process, but overall vision discussions should be settled earlier, and more comprehensively.
5. As a longer term goal, reach community and city agreement that a comprehensive Borough-wide plan or some other planning process to create a Borough-wide vision is necessary. This longer term planning process should not, however, become an excuse to do nothing during the planning process. The rich planning and implementation history and the Borough wide discussions mentioned above should serve to guide planning decisions in the shorter term.

## NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAINABILITY

| <b>Maritime Uses Actions</b>  | <b>By Whom</b>       | <b>When</b> |
|---|----------------------|-------------|
| Establish Craft Training/apprentice program for skilled worker training             | NYC and Borough      | 1 Year      |
| Adopt a Marine Industrial (Maritime) zoning classification                          | NYC                  | 2 Years     |
| Establish a marketing effort to promote Maritime services for Staten Island         | NYC and Borough      | 1 Year      |
| Promote the redevelopment of the ISC property for import/export activity            | NYC and Borough      | 1 Year+     |
| Actively support and streamline the Goethals Bridge reconstruction project          | NYC and Borough      | On-going    |
| Increase the air-draft of the Bayonne Bridge  | NYC and Borough      | 3-5 Years   |
| Support expansion of the NYCT terminal  | NYC and Borough      | On-going    |
| Reconstruct the Richmond Terrace road bed   | NYC                  | 3-5 Years   |
| Expedite the environmental permitting and planning approval process                 | NYC and Borough      | 1 Year      |
| Development land use recommendations for the Arthur Kill South area                 | NYC and Borough      | 1 Year      |
| Improve physical and visual access to the waterfront                                | NYC and Borough      | 2-5 Years   |
| <b>Island Centers Actions</b>   | <b>By Whom</b>       | <b>When</b> |
| Provide incentives to property owners meeting city property improvement goals       | NYC and Borough      | 1 Year      |
| Coordinate special events and festivals to define Staten Island as a destination    | Borough and SI EDC   | 1 Year      |
| Improve physical conditions of the streetscapes                                     | NYC and Borough      | 2-5 Years   |
| Create a toolkit of incentives for downtown bldg. renovations/improvements          | Borough and SI EDC   | 1 Years     |
| Address retail, hotel, housing and education facilities to support urban center     | NYC and Borough      | 2-5 Years   |
| Identify a continuous promenade between light-rail ROW and the waterfront           | NYC and Borough      | 2-5 Years   |
| Create park/cul-de-sac terminations at waterfront promenade (St. George)            | NYC and Borough      | 5 Years     |
| Develop comprehensive economic development data on socio-infrastructural conditions | NYC and Borough      | 2-3 Years   |
| Produce a baseline audit for all public buildings including all energy use          | NYC and Borough      | 2-3 Years   |
| Launch a promotion campaign for Downtown economic development "toolkits"            | NYC, Borough, SI EDC | 1 Year      |
| Build on existing rail spine: intensify nodes at key destinations/ public centers.  | NYC and Borough      | 3-5 Years   |

## NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAINABILITY

| <b>Transportation Actions</b>   | <b>By Whom</b>               | <b>When</b> |
|---|------------------------------|-------------|
| Bus and train operations, including route adjustments, schedule changes, traffic signal priority                              | MTA                          | 1 Year      |
| Coordinate bicycle networks to feed transit with secure bicycle parking   | NYC and Borough              | 1 Year      |
| Parking and transportation demand management to reduce demand   | NYC and Borough              | 1 Year      |
| Coordinate agencies and activities with a master plan and inter-organizational working groups                                 | NYC, Borough and partners    | 5+ Years    |
| Strengthen centers and some corridors for development to be well served by non-auto transportation                            | NYC, Borough and partners    | 5+ Years    |
| Focus development in desired corridors and centers while protecting sensitive environmental and low density residential areas | NYC, Borough and partners    | 5+ Years    |
| Take advantage demographic change for housing that generates less auto traffic  | NYC, Borough and partners    | 5+ Years    |
| Improve the road network to support a multi-modal travel system   | NYC and Borough              | 5+ Years    |
| Add premier transit land routes (rail and/or bus rapid transit)   | MTA                          | 5+ Years    |
| Add ferry service--Alternative passenger service on the island's waterways  | MTA, private partners        | 5+ Years    |
| Create the Human Link--a continuous path around the entire island on, or close to, the waterfront                             | NYC, Borough, NPS, partners  | 5+ Years    |
| Link green places with green streets and paths with significant street tree or other plantings                                | NYC and Borough              | 5+ Years    |
| <b>Cross-cutting Actions</b>  | <b>By Whom</b>               | <b>When</b> |
| Create a planning process to identifying current plans and identify how they connect together                                 | NYC Planning and Borough     | 1 Year      |
| Facilitate community discussion on Your Staten Island   | Camber, Borough and partners | 1 Year      |
| End ad hoc zoning changes not clearly supported by a plan   | NYC Planning                 | 1 Year      |
| Identify ways to increase neighborhood and developer predictability in the permit process                                     | NYC, Borough and partners    | 1 Year      |
| Clear consensus vision and implementation plan or comprehensive plan  | NYC Planning and Borough     | 2-3 Years   |

### **A Sample of the Reports and Resources Studied by the Staten Island R/UDAT Team**

2003 New Stapleton Waterfront Development Plan

1996 Comprehensive Waterfront Study

West Brighton Local Development Corporation North Shore Waterfront Study

North Shore Waterfront Study

North Shore Waterfront Conservancy of Staten Island's Gold Coast Report

Fresh Kills Park/Landfill Report

West Shore Land Use & Transportation Scope of Work

URS North Shore Rail Study

Present Problems and Future Solutions to Staten Island's Transportation System

Staten Island Transportation Task Force Draft Report

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Report

Staten Island 2020

A Vision for Staten Island- Final Report, Pre-Visioning Phase

Downtown Staten Island Plan- 2008

Department of City Planning St. George Special District Plan

1994 Plan for the Staten Island Waterfront

Staten Island's Gold Coast- 5.2 Miles from St. George to Arlington

Zoning Resolution for the City of New York

Maritime Support Services Location Study

St. George Station Phase II- A Strategic Vision for Urban Regeneration



# Acknowledgements



## **Peter Hind - AIA, LEED AP, RUDAT Co-Team Leader**

Peter Hind is a practicing architect and an assistant professor at the University of Nebraska, College of Architecture with a focus on design and sustainability. After architecture school and experience with both large and small firms, Peter and two other partners founded studio951. The 10 person office is an environment that allows for collaboration, discussion, critical thinking and sustainable action. Past professional experience includes exhibit design, civic buildings, museums, master planning, single-family residences, and research facilities. His teaching experience has lead to published papers on design education specifically dealing with the relationship of the creative process, sustainability, and materials and their relationship to practice. Peter's interest is in meaningful and collaborative design solutions that address the relationship between buildings and the environment. Peter has worked with the AIA Committee on the Environment (COTE) and participated in the Culver City SDAT in 2007.



## **Wayne Feiden, FAICP- R/UDAT Co-Team Leader**

Wayne Feiden is the planning director for the City of Northampton, Massachusetts and also works as a planning consultant in private practice. Wayne has twenty-five years of planning experience, with extensive experience on sustainability issues. Wayne's publications include two American Planning Association's Planning Advisory Service Reports, and numerous peer reviewed research papers, monographs and planning studies. Wayne is an adjunct professor at the University of Massachusetts and Westfield State College and an occasional site visit team member for the Planning Accreditation Board. Wayne has a BS in Natural Resources from the University of Michigan, a Masters in Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina. He has served as an Eisenhower Fellow to Hungary and a Fulbright Scholar to South Africa. Wayne has participated on six American Institute of Architects Design Assessment Teams: Longview, Washington, Northeast Michigan, New Orleans, Lake Havasu, Arizona, Central, Louisiana, and Culver City, California.

# Acknowledgements

## Ann Forsyth

Ann Forsyth currently teaches at Cornell. Trained in planning and architecture, she has focused her work on the social aspects of physical planning and urban development and focuses on land use and design related to transportation, as well as pedestrian planning, healthy cities, large-scale planned communities, and open space. Ann has mixed academic work and practice. From 2002-2007 she was a professor in both architecture and landscape architecture at the University of Minnesota, directing the Metropolitan Design Center. She has also taught at Harvard Design School (1999-2002) and at the University of Massachusetts (1993-1999) where she was co-director of a small community design center, the Urban Places Project. Ann has won over fifty awards, citations, and fellowships for individual and collaborative professional and research work. She has had visiting appointments at Columbia University, the University of Sydney, and Macquarie University. Ann has practiced in the private sector in both the United States and Australia and is a certified practicing planner in the Australian Planning Institute.



## Jake Jacobi

Jake Jacobi is former Deputy Director of Port of Corpus Christi, and understands waterfront development and port use. He began his career in the maritime industry following his graduation from the United States Merchant Marine Academy in 1962. After his tour in the Navy, Jake attended the University of Connecticut at Storrs and obtained a Master of Science. He began work at Electric Boat shipyard and during his stay with the company was primarily involved in the firm's efforts to develop a viable hovercraft. Jake spent five years at the Port of Charleston, SC and participated in the feasibility work on the Wando Welch container terminal. When he left the Port of Charleston, he became Vice President at Palmetto Shipping and Stevedoring Company with operations in Charleston and Savannah. Jake later served as Director of Business Development for the North Carolina State Ports Authority, where his responsibilities included business development at two ocean ports and two inland depots. Six years later, he moved to Texas to assume the position of Deputy Director of the Port of Corpus Christi. Much of his time was spent looking for ways to increase non-traditional trade and projects that could diversify the business of the port in the future. The best example of his work is the La Quinta Trade Gateway, which seeks to add a new containerport in the Western Gulf of Mexico. This project, twelve years in the making, will provide the much needed infrastructure to handle the growing trade in containerized cargo. Mr. Jacobi retired from the Port of Corpus Christi in 2005 but continues to work on the La Quinta Trade Gateway project.



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### **Tim McGinty, AIA**

Tim McGinty and his wife Idie are principals of the Boulder, Colorado based firm McGINTY, which specializes in all scales of retail design, including product development, fixtures, store planning and design, identity and signs, and design consulting for urban retail districts. Tim is an architect and the creative director for all architectural design, urban design and retail design projects. Tim has recently completed comprehensive store design, store planning, interiors, signage and graphics for Barnes & Noble College Bookstores at Texas Tech University, Texas A & M, Johns Hopkins University and Washington State University, as well as three mini-chains of espresso bars. The Neo-Library “store within a store” that he designed for Florida International University won an award from the 2002 ISP/VM&SD International Retail Store Interior Design Competition. Prior to co-founding McGINTY, Tim was a principal and senior designer at Kiku Obata & Company, and an architecture professor at Nebraska, Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Arizona State and a visiting professor at California-Berkeley, Temple and Washington University. Tim holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Kansas and a Masters Degree in Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania - Kahn Studio. Tim has participated on over two dozen design charrettes, including two AIA R/UDATs.



### **Rick Reinhard**

Rick Reinhard is Deputy Executive Director, Planning and Development, for the Downtown DC Business Improvement District, a non-profit organization that works to improve the environment, the economy, and the social equity of Downtown Washington to create a premier commercial, cultural and residential destination. Rick has spent more than two decades on the improvement of cities. Most recently, he directed the Infrastructure Initiative at the Urban Land Institute. He has managed urban revitalization organizations in Richmond, Buffalo, Atlanta, and Londonderry, Northern Ireland. Rick served as chief of staff to the Mayor of Buffalo and chief operating officer of a Toronto-based real estate development corporation. He began his career as a newspaper reporter in his hometown of Syracuse. As an adjunct faculty member, Rick teaches urban planning at Virginia Tech's National Capital Region campus and has taught planning and policy at the University at Buffalo, Emory University, Georgia State University and the University of Ulster. He has a bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary and a master's degree from Rice University. He was a Loeb Fellow in Advanced Environmental Studies at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

### **Wendy E. Weber Salvati, AICP**

Wendy Weber Salvati offers over 20 years of comprehensive knowledge and experience as a land use and environmental planner and project manager. At Wendel Duchscherer, she has been responsible for numerous projects involving waterfront planning, comprehensive planning, site planning, environmental review and zoning for Western New York and Long Island municipalities. She has assisted communities with the implementation of comprehensive plans and has vast experience facilitating public meetings and public participation programs. Wendy has extensive knowledge of the New York State Coastal Management Program and has prepared Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs and waterfront studies for a number of communities. She has also assisted a number of communities with the protection of their community character, including developing aesthetic and dimensional standards for site design. Wendy serves as the planning consultant to a number of Planning Boards in Western New York. She was awarded the “2001 Outstanding Planning Project Award” by the American Planning Association – New York Upstate Chapter, for the Village of Alden Comprehensive Plan and was recognized by Business First as a Woman of Influence in 2003. Wendy is the Vice Chairman of the Town of Clarence Planning Board and serves as the 1st Vice President on the Board of Directors for the New York Planning Federation.



### **Bob Shibley, AIA, AICP**

Bob Shibley is founder of The Urban Design Project at the University of Buffalo, which recently completed the “Queen City Waterfront Plan” for the entire expanse of Buffalo’s waterfront. As Director of the UDP, in partnership with the City of Buffalo and Buffalo Place, Inc, Mr. Shibley led the development of the City’s national award winning “The Queen City Hub: A Regional Action Plan for Downtown Buffalo” and its related implementation campaign (1999-2004). Working with David Carter International and the Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth, he was a primary author of the City of Buffalo’s first comprehensive plan in over thirty years (adopted in February 2006). In 2007, he was appointed as a Commissioner to the Erie Canalways National Heritage Corridor by the US Secretary of Interior based on a nomination by US Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. He currently serves as both a Senior Fellow at UB’s Regional Institute and as a Senior Advisor to the President at UB for Campus Planning and Design. Bob is the author of eight books and has authored more than one hundred articles in scholarly and professional journals and a dozen book chapters. He has served as a member of the AIA Center for Communities by Design Committee and has participated in numerous AIA DATs.



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### **Yolanda Takesian**

Yolanda Takesian has over 18 years experience in urban planning and community transportation design focused on bridging engineering, planning, urban design and economics to bring about walkable transit-friendly communities. As a key player in Maryland's Smart Growth strategy, Yolanda led efforts by MDOT to integrate context sensitive design into the development of highway and transit projects. She has engaged local leaders and communities in state transportation decisions and managed capital projects improving pedestrian, safety, transit environments, and revitalization support. Since joining KAI, she has led strategy studies to improve compatibility between local land use decisions and transportation facility design in walkable rural areas and transit accessible suburban communities. She has also prepared transportation analysis of urban design plans to balance and integrate mode choice and promote walking and transit including the integration of streetcars within the urban core. Yolanda has taught courses in Context Sensitive Design for State DOTs in California and Maryland and has received industry awards for innovation in transportation solutions. She has presented her work in seminars for the American Institute of Architects, the American Planning Association, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the Transportation Research Board, Kent State University Urban Design Center, Maryland Municipal League, Preservation Maryland, and the University of Maryland National Smart Growth Leadership Program.



### **Grace Perdomo – Assoc. AIA, Staten Island R/UDAT Project Manager**

Grace Perdomo is an architectural and urban designer with over 12 years of professional experience in urban design and planning projects with an interest in both the local and regional scale. As President of Wallace+Perdomo, Inc., Grace oversees a diverse practice that ranges from neighborhood and downtown redevelopment to waterfront planning and urban infill projects. Grace has led numerous community planning efforts which seek to address social, economic, environmental, political, and physical issues, as well as build consensus and foster new levels of cooperation between various community stakeholders. Over the years, she has worked to develop and revitalize cities by transforming inner city neighborhoods and dilapidated housing areas into traditional mixed income neighborhoods and has worked with public, private and non-profit organizations in downtown and waterfront communities to create and implement sustainable new and infill mixed-use developments. Grace has served on the AIA's Committee on Design Assistance and previously led the Cambridge Maryland R/UDAT, the Culver City, CA SDAT (Sustainable Design Assessment Team) and participated on the Albany, NY SDAT.



### **Toby Olsen**

Toby Olsen is a graduate student at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln working towards his Masters in Architecture. Currently, he is working on his Terminal Thesis Project. For the past two years, he has interned at HDR Architecture in Omaha, Nebraska, a leading firm which focuses on healthcare and bioscience design. This past summer, Toby had the opportunity to visit Palm Beach, FL to help the design team make presentations for a new hospital. While completing his Bachelor of Science in Design - Architecture, Toby had the unique opportunity to spend a semester abroad at the Dublin Institute of Technology in Dublin, Ireland. While in undergraduate school, he participated in the University Honors Program, Phi Delta Theta Fraternity, Phi Sigma Pi Honor Society, the Chancellors Leadership Class, The Emerging Leaders Class, and National Society of Collegiate Scholars.



### **Erin Simmons**

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the national component of the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. To date, Erin has served as staff lead on over 20 design assistance teams. Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as senior historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.



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