

New Stapleton Waterfront Site A



December 2020

Visioning Workshop Series Report & Findings


01 Introduction

Why: Development, Informed by the Community

Throughout the month of September 2020, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), with the help of City Council Member Deborah Rose, Staten Island Community Board 1, the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and the Department of City Planning (DCP), facilitated a series of community events and surveys to gather public input for the future development of new affordable housing and neighborhood amenities at a vacant site, known as the New Stapleton Waterfront Site A, on the north shore of Staten Island. The development of this site builds on previous land use actions and commitments made by the City through the 2019 Bay Street Corridor Neighborhood Plan.

The purpose of the workshop series was to safely engage the North Shore community on the site's conditions, HPD's affordable housing programs, and to better understand community priorities for future development from those who live and work in the vicinity and have an intimate understanding of neighborhood conditions and needs.

This public report summarizes the results of the workshop series and additional feedback received through online and paper questionnaires. This report is also available on HPD's website at nyc.gov/Stapleton-site-a and is attached to the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued for these sites. Development teams responding to the RFP are encouraged to consult the report and thoughtfully respond to the community visions heard as part of their proposals.

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Neighborhood Planning

Stapleton Site A - Get Involved!

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Site for Affordable Housing on Staten Island




Photo courtesy of NYCEDC

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How: Remote Community Engagement Series

Community engagement for this site was conducted through a series of online public meetings, an interactive website, and a questionnaire designed to gather community members' vision for the site. Three online public meetings served as an opportunity for City staff to present pertinent information about the site's conditions and facilitate activities to understand the participants' design preferences and affordable housing priorities. The interactive website contained more information about the site, allowed community members who could not join the online public meetings to review recordings, and also contained an interactive map where visitors could submit comments on things they liked or disliked, and improvements they would like to see made through the development of the site. Lastly, HPD created a paper and online questionnaire that asked similar questions to those asked in the workshop activities. HPD staff administered additional surveys in person after the workshops at the neighboring Urby development and at the GrowNYC GreenMarket in nearby St. George.

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Participants represented a variety of neighborhood organizations, community board members and residents of the surrounding area. To adhere to safe social distancing in outreach, HPD hung banners along Bay Street detailing information about the site and how to provide feedback through the website, on the phone, or through text messages. HPD also worked with various local organizations to add the flyer to their various newsletter content and also emailed residents that took part in engagement efforts related the Bay Street Neighborhood Plan.

Get involved with the

New Stapleton Waterfront: Site A Community Workshop Series

Share your ideas for the development of new affordable housing and neighborhood amenities being development on the Staten Island North Shore



LOG ON STARTING
September 10, 2020

- + Register for an online public meeting
- + Community Visioning activities
- + Find Housing Resources now
- + Questionnaire (available Sept 23rd)

Public Meeting Dates:

Kick Off Meeting
Thursday, September 10th

Affordability Info Session
Wednesday, September 16th

Urban Design Workshop
RESCHEDULED: Wednesday, September 30th

Visit the engagement site at nyc.gov/stapleton-site-a for full event details.
Have a question about this project? Email us at StapletonArfp@hpd.nyc.gov or give us a call at 929.475.1382

Please email stapletonarfp@hpd.nyc.gov for any reasonable accommodations you, or someone you know, may need in order to participate in the meeting at least 2 business days ahead of meeting.

Hosted by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)



Impacts of COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic presented and continues to present new challenges for HPD, causing us to think differently about how we address this neighborhood's needs. Through planning for remote engagement, HPD has deepened its understanding of the barriers to community participation in planning and expanded the toolkit of methods to engage with communities.

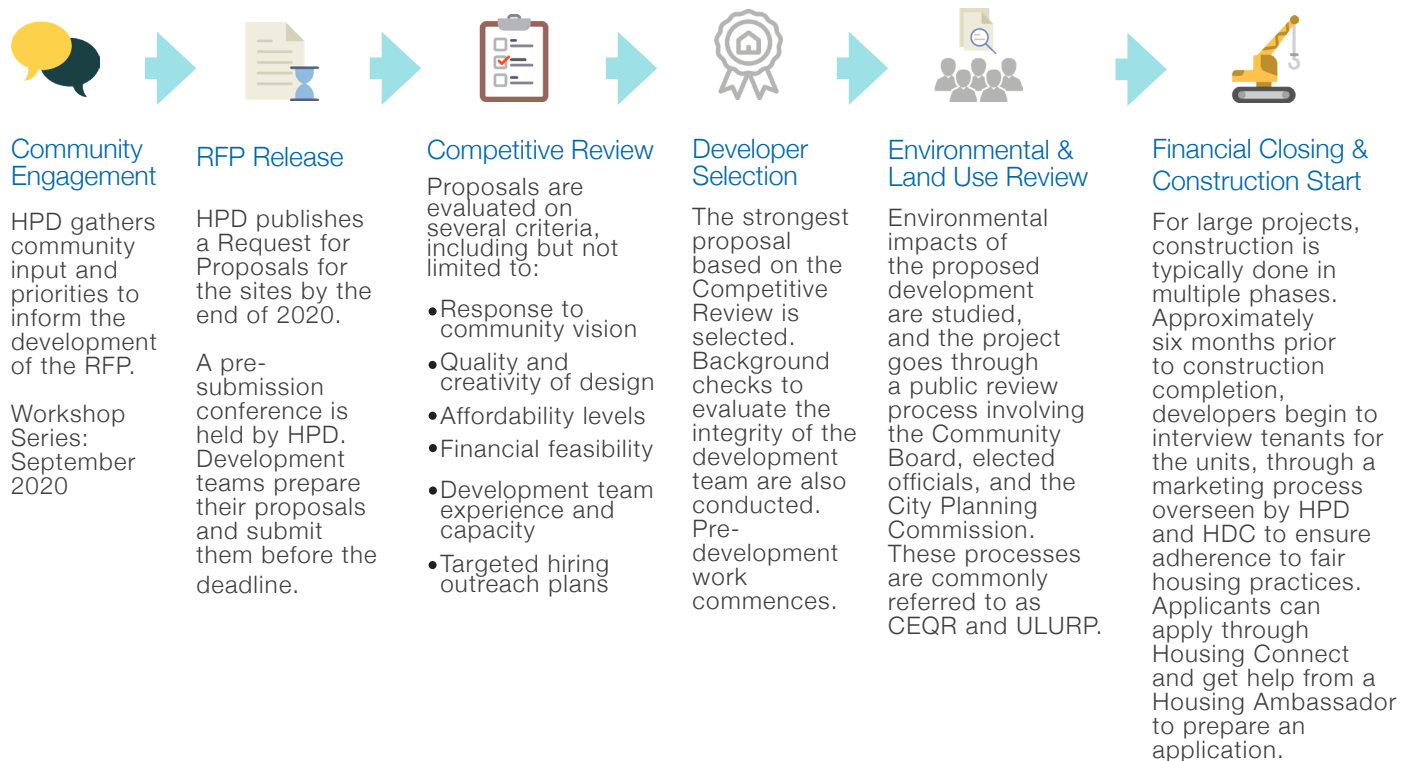
The neighborhoods within the North Shore of Staten Island have been identified as some of the hardest hit neighborhoods impacted by COVID-19. The opportunity to develop this site has also become critical to addressing issues that have been exacerbated by the pandemic such as access to open space, housing affordability and economic impacts that have been especially difficult for communities of color.

What: New Stapleton Waterfront - Site A

The New Stapleton Waterfront District is a 35-acre decommissioned Navy base that is being redeveloped into a mixed-use neighborhood with housing, waterfront open space and retail and community facility uses. It will also include significant infrastructure improvements such as road reconstruction, bicycle and walking paths, and better connections to public transit. As a result of the 2019 Bay Street Corridor rezoning, the City is issuing an RFP to develop part of Site A. The currently vacant site is located on the northern edge of the New Stapleton Waterfront, and is bordered by the New York Bay to the East, Site B1 to the South and the SIRR tracks to the West. It is accessible by both the SIRR Tompkinsville and Stapleton stations, and is a ten minute walk from the Bay Street commercial corridor.

The site is approximately 100,000 square feet in size and a portion is being set aside for a separate development project to be managed by the School Construction Authority (SCA). The site is zoned as a special district (C4-2/R6B) allowing for residential and ground floor non-residential uses. In a response to the community's expressed desire for affordable housing, this site has been designated for 100% affordable housing with at least 30% to be set aside for housing for families with low incomes.

What Does the RFP Process Look Like?



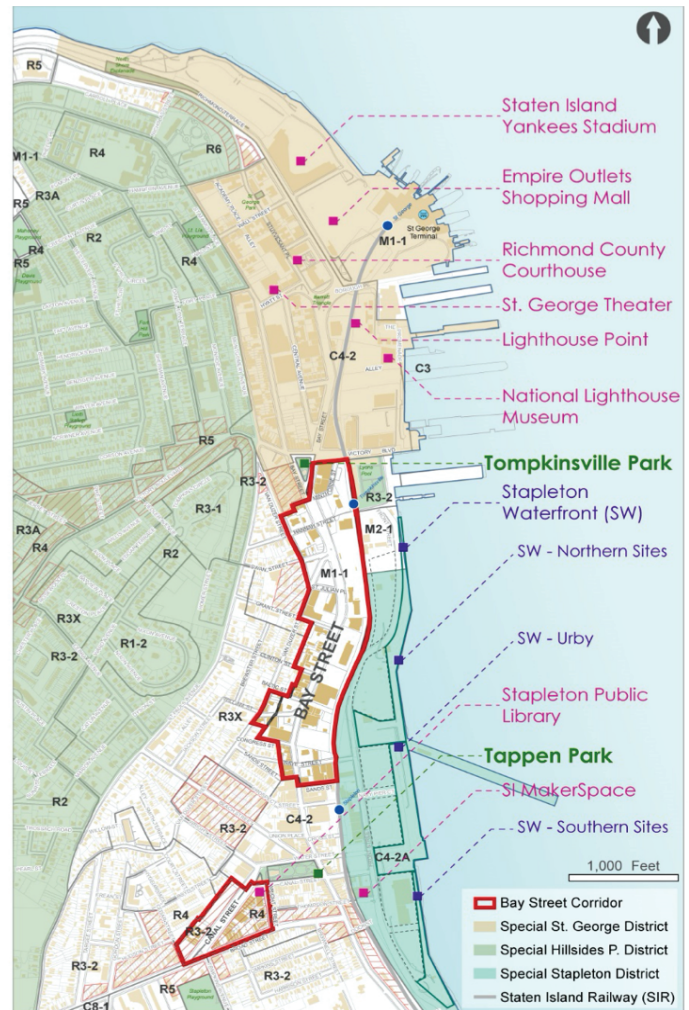
The Bay Street Corridor Neighborhood

Feedback on this site builds on the planning framework identified in the Bay Street Corridor Neighborhood Plan, the product of a community planning process concluded in June 2019. The Plan outlines a number of strategies to preserve and develop new affordable housing, including on this public site.

Previously Stated Community Goals

- Create a vibrant, resilient downtown providing stronger connections to the surrounding neighborhoods
- Support the creation of new housing, including affordable housing, for a wide range of North Shore residents
- Foster new and existing businesses and commercial development by encouraging job creation with a pedestrian-friendly retail/commercial corridor between St. George and Stapleton
- Align investments in infrastructure, public open spaces and services in the Bay Street Corridor to support current demands and future growth

Source: General principles paraphrased from the Bay Street Corridor Neighborhood Plan recommendations related to public sites. For more information, please visit nyc.gov/baystreetcorridor



Department of City Planning, 2018

02 Summary of Findings

Though there were many different visions for the site, the following points were common threads that workshop and questionnaire participants identified as priorities:

Programming

Housing Types:

- Affordability for a mix of household incomes from extremely low- to moderate-incomes
- Housing for seniors, formerly homeless, and first-time homeowners

Community Facility:

- Activities geared toward families that can be enjoyed across generations
- Access to healthy, fresh foods and health programming for larger community
- A design that will pay homage to the maritime history and diversity of the north shore

Connectivity & Community Needs

Site Connectivity:

- Improvements to pedestrian safety around the site to make the location feel less isolated and more connected to the surrounding community

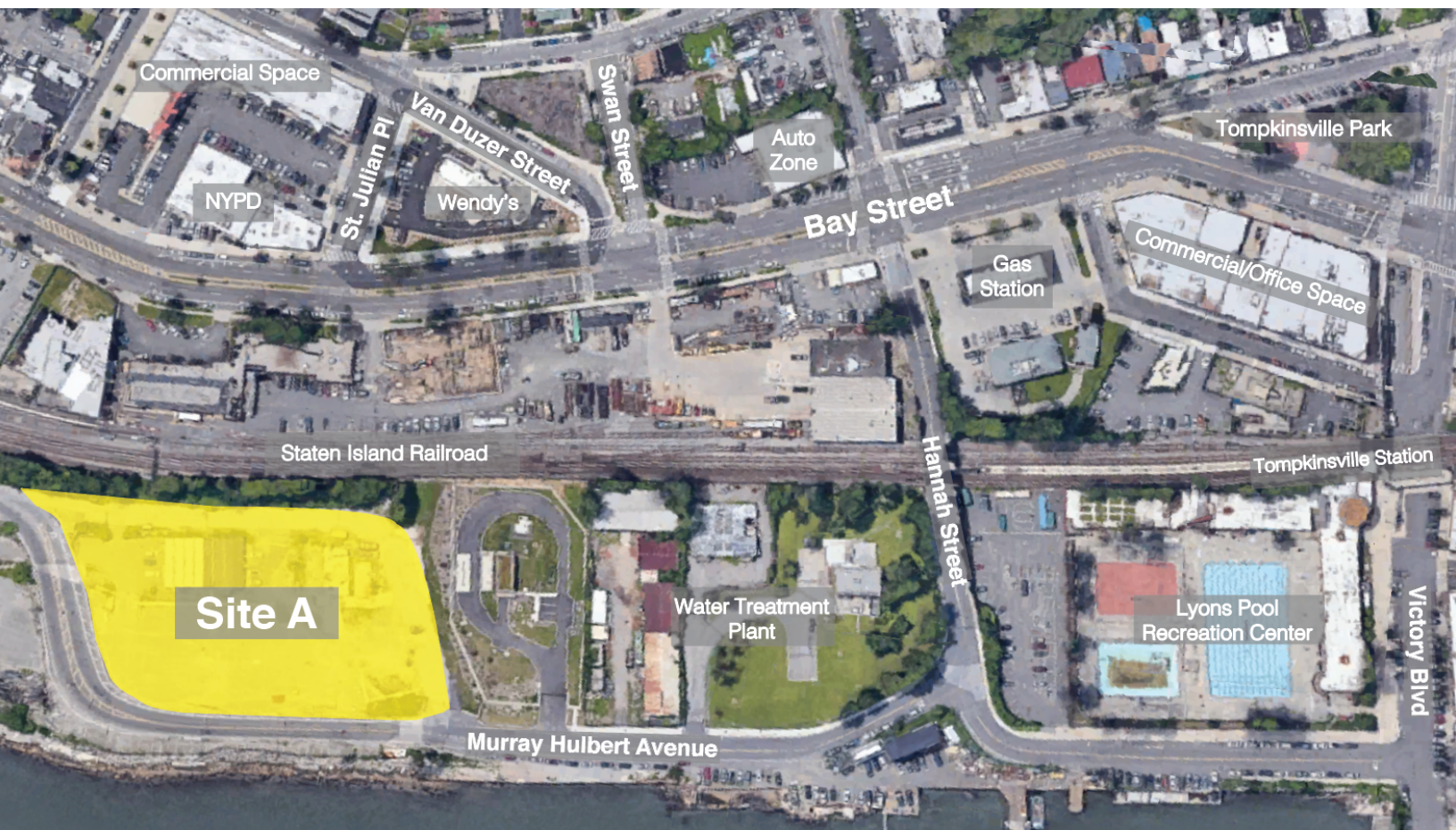
Community Needs:

- Multifunctional community space that can increase access to healthy foods, recreation and capitalize on the site being on the waterfront
- Expanded waterfront access and programming

These findings were presented to the Community Board 1 Land Use Committee Meeting on October 21, 2019 and to the full board on November 10, 2019. RFP submissions will be evaluated based on the quality and feasibility of the proposals, as well as how well they respond to the priorities articulated by the community.

// Connectivity between the commercial corridor along Bay St & lower Victory Blvd and the waterfront, including Site A is essential."

- Comment from Interactive Web Map



// A footbridge across the tracks around this location would be great for people at this residence to better access the nearby shopping strip and encouraging more walking will help build the local economy"

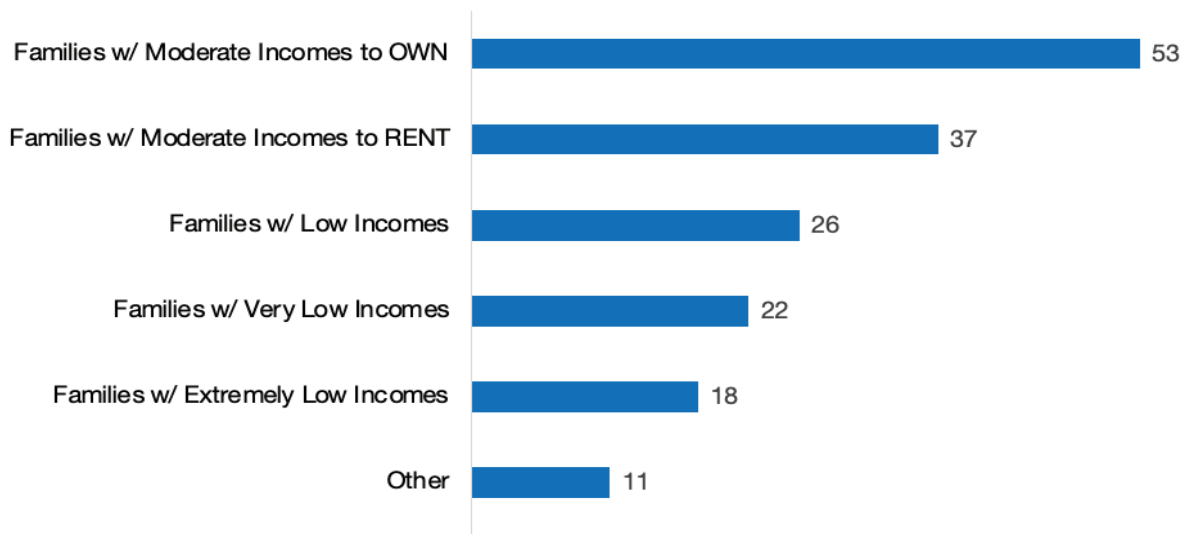
- Comment from Interactive Web Map

03 Affordability and Housing Types

Two key commitments the City agreed to as a result of the Bay Street Corridor Neighborhood Plan process were for this site to be developed as 100% affordable housing with 30% of the homes designated for families with incomes at or below 50% of the area median income. The second online public meeting HPD hosted in the engagement series was an Affordability Information Session. The purpose of this meeting was to review and further define the agency's role in creating affordable housing and provide community members with a deeper sense of the households that may benefit from HPD's housing programs. Shortly after this session, community members were asked to fill out the questionnaire to provide their feedback on which populations were in need of additional affordable housing options in the area. The survey asked community members to identify other populations that may be served through this project.

Survey respondents most often reported wanting to see more affordability opportunities for households with moderate incomes. However, in commenting on specific populations that may have needs, many of the responses expressed wanting to see housing that would be affordable for seniors on a fixed income and households that may include a member with disability. Others noted a desire to see housing that would be suitable for families with children, artists, and overall could provide opportunities for a mix of incomes.

Priority Populations for Affordable Housing



Respondents were given the option to select up to two categories that best suited their desires for affordability. In addition to the 30% of units set aside for families with low incomes, most survey participants hope to see additional affordability programs for families with moderate incomes.

These Neighborhood Demographics infographics were shown during the Stapleton Affordability Information Session, the second online public meeting held in September 2020. The session was an opportunity for attendees to learn how to apply for affordable housing and about the different populations that could possibly be served by HPD affordable housing.

Neighborhood Demographics

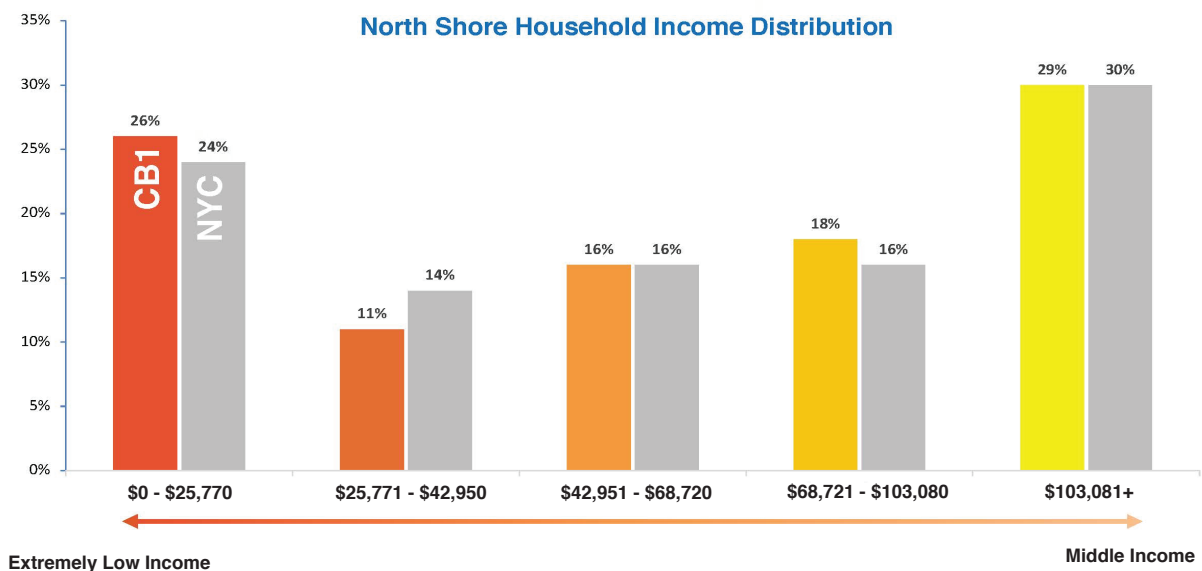
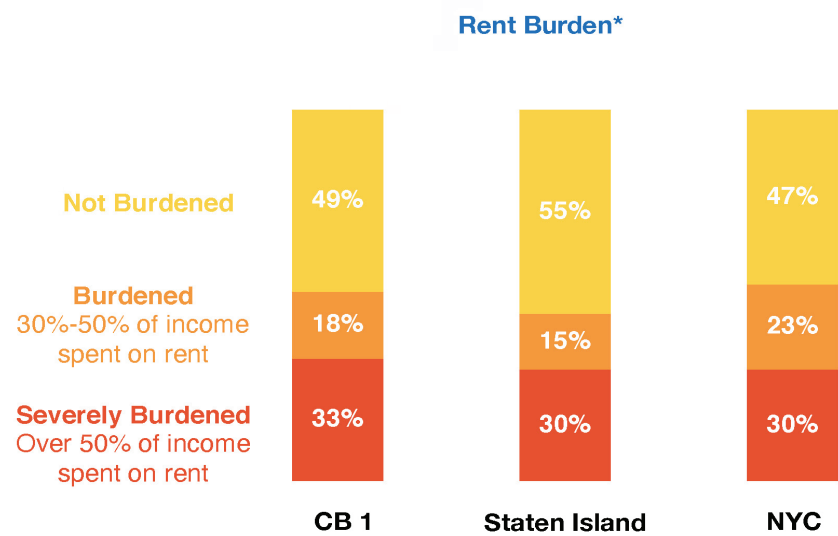


Figure 1 shows that community district 1, which includes the Stapleton neighborhood, the percentage of households with extremely low incomes is slightly higher than the citywide apportionment.



Source: New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (HVS), 2017 Household Record.
*Does not include households in public housing or with vouchers.

Figure 2 shows that community district 1 has more households that experience rent burden compared to the rest of Staten Island, and more families that are severely rent burdened in comparison to New York City. Rent burden does not account for families living in public housing or those that receive voucher assistance.

04 Setting Design Values

In addition to the questionnaire, HPD hosted an online urban design workshop to facilitate activities that would provide insight on the community's design values and understand the most desirable non-residential uses participants would want to see implemented at the ground floor. Participants were broken out into five groups with five to seven community members. Each group was led through the activities by three City staffers: a facilitator who walked participants through the activities and asked guided questions for the discussion; an on screen note taker who designed a group idea board through a screen share for participants to contribute to; and an off screen note taker who recorded themes and any key points expressed throughout the conversation.

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SUCCESSFUL

Take 1 minute and think of a place you enjoy. Without saying exactly what this place is, describe the space you are thinking of. Use your senses to describe the place – how does it look, feel, smell, and sound? What materials is it made out of (touch)?

Smells like...

- fresh air
- the ocean
- smells like...
- Greenery, flowers
- smells greenery

I can hear...

- quieter
- Childrens laughter
- passive and active activities
- children playing
- birds chirping
- music
- to hear the water and birds, peaceful place + seating and shade
- can see and hear the seagulls and other birds flying around, the water sounds is very peaceful
- fog horns, birds, ships passing
- quiet place, seating

I can see...

- interconnect-edness with existing context
- sufficient lighting
- play sports, etc.
- a lot of activities
- Soften waters edge, touch water
- access to water, kayaking
- amenities (bathrooms, water fountains, wayfinding)
- underpass or overpass for pedestrians direct access
- beautiful location and views
- lots of activities, green space, skating rink
- green infrastructure to deal with flooding and urban heat island effect
- Walkable, Seating, City view

It feels like...

- welcoming space
- sense of place: trees, open space, house around, the views, the calmness, the history of the site, cohesive streetscape
- buildings around make it feel like an appropriate scale
- safe space to walk, sidewalks, pedestrian friendly
- relaxing
- Serenity
- feels warm :)
- Accessibility Feels safe
- slower speed
- Peaceful
- Inclusive
- great cultural history
- public place, see different types of people in a welcoming environment
- accessible (bus, walk, etc.)

visual access & physical access

- accessible
- sidewalks, accessible for pedestrians and cyclists
- openness

Urby

Urby Bay Street

Tompkins Park

Snug Harbor

Gantry Park

Brooklyn Bridge Park

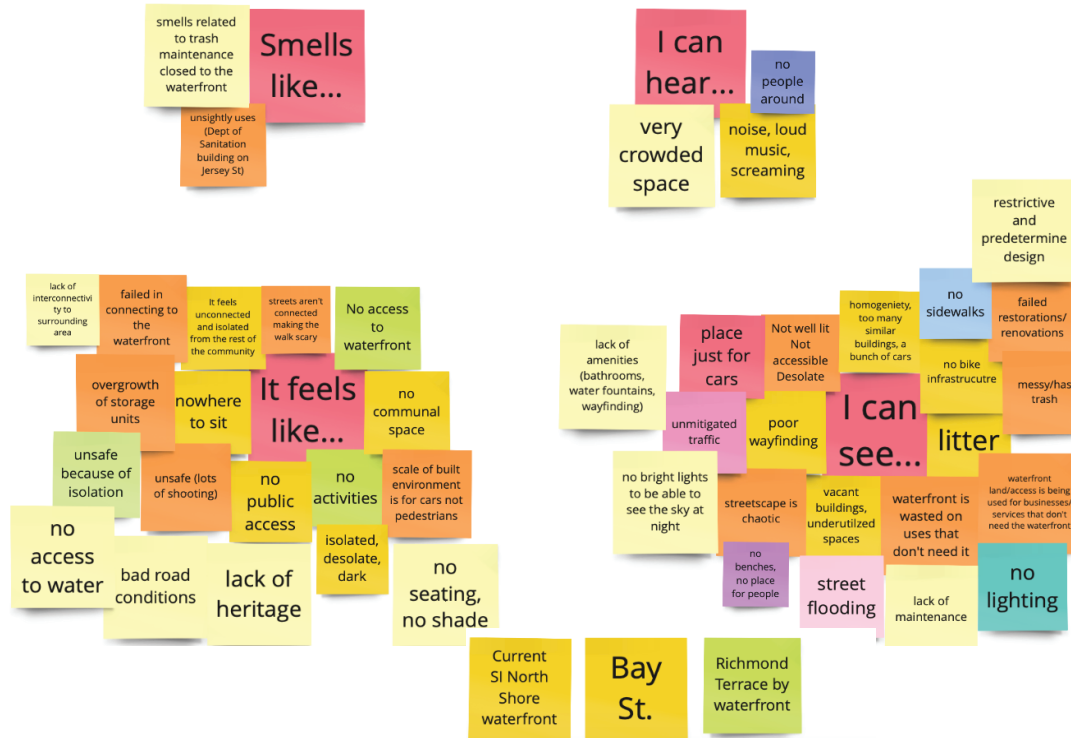
Hudson River Park

Battery Park City

The images shown above and on the next page show a screen share of the collective ideas participants contributed in discussions on what they thought made for successful or an unsuccessful place. The sticky notes at the bottom of the frame call out places in Staten Island and around the city that inspired their responses.

UNSUCCESSFUL

Think of a physical place in your community or the city that you consider to be bad. Without telling us exactly what this place is, describe the space you are thinking of. Use your senses to describe the place – how does it look, feel, smell, and sound? What materials is it made out of (touch)?



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As an introduction to the activities, the first task asked participants to share what aspects of the North Shore they enjoy and want to see captured in developing Site A. Through this activity we learned that community members value the Stapleton neighborhood for its cultural and ethnic diversity, as well as the scenic views and open access to the waterfront. In the second activity, HPD facilitators asked participants to envision and then describe aspects of a place that make it successful or unsuccessful. Participants were prompted to reference other parts of the North Shore or New York City to compare what they would and would not like to see happen at the Stapleton site. This activity allowed HPD to gain further insight and better define the community's design values. Major themes highlighted from the exercise include the following:

Successful

- Outdoor space that is serene, bucolic, and connects visitors to waterfront
- A destination that feels connected, walkable and big enough for passive and active recreational uses
- Replicate sense of community felt at Urby, a nearby housing development, and the scenery at other waterfront parks around the city

Unsuccessful

- Space that is poorly maintained and cuts off visitors from the waterfront
- Lack of infrastructure that makes public access difficult, feel unsafe and does not mitigate flooding
- Poor traffic and congestion on nearby Bay Street and concerns for circulation at the future site

05 Community Uses

The last set of activities asked participants to continue sharing ideas on how Site A can further shape placemaking on the Stapleton waterfront. This three-part activity asked community members to share how they envision this project will become a destination for the neighborhood through the non-residential uses and site design. Guiding questions and inspirational photos prompted participants to share their thoughts on: “What would you hope the vibe of this neighborhood might be?” “What non-residential uses would you like to see here?” “What building design elements do you find appealing?”

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Placemaking

When asked, “What do you imagine will be the ambiance or vibe of the uses [at Site A]?” participants shared their desire for the site to be a place that will attract residents and visitors, encourage engagement, preserve access to the waterfront, and build a bridge to the nearby commercial and retail amenities. Some community members struggled with the thought of this site being developed because its current isolation makes it difficult to envision how it might function and connect to the existing built form.

Non-Residential Uses

When asked what services or goods the surrounding neighborhood needs access to, participants in the online urban design workshop reported a need for outdoor and indoor meeting spaces for community members to gather safely. Other comments revealed a desire for uses that will increase access to fresh healthy foods, be multifunctional and welcoming to an intergenerational and culturally diverse population and could sustain foot traffic to the area. Workshop participants also discussed wanting to see community programming on maritime and ecological education for future visitors.

“ Create a touchable waterfront near the school, for students to have outdoor labs. Dedicate some of the residential ground floor to community environmental center uses.”

- Comment from website map

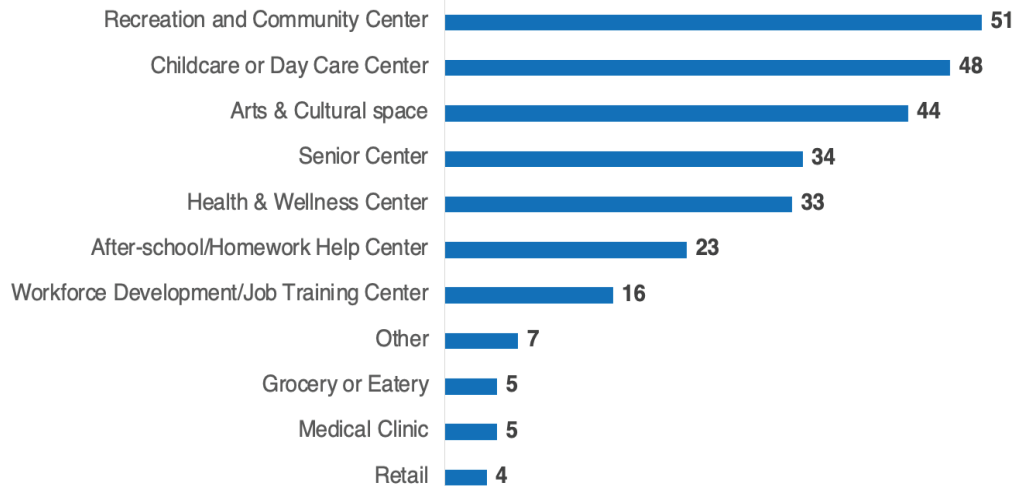
“ [This] area should include a community sports & recreation center. Perhaps the new developer [could] partner with the owners of the 50/50 skate park and create an outdoor park for the community as they have done at Faber Park. It’s the perfect location.”

- Comment from website map

“ [There] is no connection to the proud maritime heritage that the Stapleton developments are replacing. [Include] some signage with historic photos.”

- Comment from website map

Desired Uses for Non-Residential Space



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When prompted to think of what you often need to leave the neighborhood to find, respondents' top vote for a non-residential space was a community or recreation center. In workshop discussions, long-time residents mentioned the loss of the Cromwell Center, a community recreational center that was once located on the waterfront.



Pictured above are the collective notes captured during the Urban Design Workshop discussions. For this question community members shared when asked about which services or goods the Stapleton community would like to see incorporated into the use of the site.

06 Site Design & Resiliency

Building Design & Resiliency Features

Building and site design conversations were heavily focused on the sustainable and resilient infrastructure that could be implemented here. Some workshop participants were particularly concerned about flood impacts and noted how deeply this area was impacted by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. However, some participants became excited by design interventions like solar panels, bioswales and greenery that could add to the aesthetic appeal of the site while helping to address flooding. In terms of the building's architectural and design features, opinions varied but most agreed that they would like to see a design that struck a balance between traditional and modern design elements. Shown below and on the next page are the images shared with workshop participants alongside their comments about their vision for the site and building design features.

Which resiliency & sustainability design interventions seem most appealing?

landscape salt resistant	permeable pavers
green infrastructure	universal design-- accessible steps
resilient design	rain gardens
ramps and variety of ways to move through the space	love the terraced risers. nice curved form and could be seating
plan for maintenance of the bioswales. avoid trash buildup	tree canopy with bioswales to soak up the flood water
Incorporate all of them	sculpture garden on roof
make it as green as possible	Green roof solar panels

Some groups were able to discuss what resiliency features they would like to see embraced in the design of the site and building. The photos to the left show some of the images that were shared to spark discussion of how design might mitigate extreme heat and flooding.



What building design features do you find appealing?

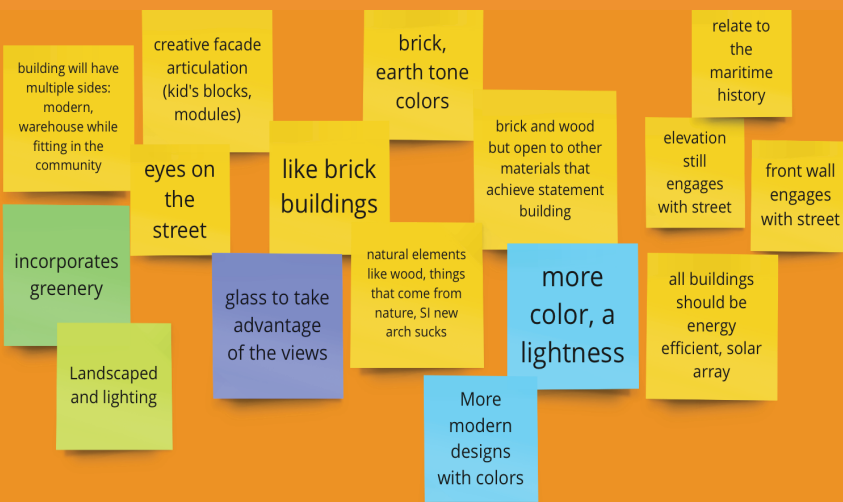
Building Shape and Form



Architectural Style



Building Facade and Materials



In discussions about the building's features, community members commented on what they would like to see from the building form, architectural style and materials. Each group was shown the four examples above to help them visualize which building would be most compatible with the existing built environment.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank members of the community for taking the time to share their concerns and ideas with us regarding the future development of the New Stapleton Waterfront and Site A. We would also like to thank City Council Member Deborah Rose, and Staten Island Community Board 1 for helping to conduct outreach and being active participants throughout the engagement series. We send a special thank you to the Staten Island Arts Center, the Staten Island Chamber, and the Housing Dignity Coalition for their part in making this effort possible. Finally, we thank the staff from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and the Department of City Planning (DCP) who helped to make the workshops possible.

