1 | Jobs, Growth and the West Shore

Study Area

Running the length of the Arthur Kill, the West Shore study area encompasses approximately 6,300 acres and 12 miles of shoreline. The area was historically defined by industrial uses and small residential neighborhoods which housed workers employed in local factories.

Today, the study area is home to only five percent of Staten Island residents, but adjoins many communities that have experienced growth over recent decades. While the majority of the study area is zoned for manufacturing (roughly 80 percent), only 20 percent of land in the area is used for industrial purposes. Over 50 percent of the area is existing or planned open space and natural areas, including wetlands.

For the purposes of this effort, the study area was divided into five zones based on differences in land use and geography (figure shown: bottom, right).

1 **Arlington – Port Ivory:** The Goethals Bridge, Staten Island Expressway (I-278), the New York Container Terminal (NYCT), the Arlington Rail yards, and the future Arlington and Mariners Marsh parks dominate this zone. NYCT is seeking to expand its freight-handling capacity with additional docks and other facilities. The City completed a major renovation of the tracks within the Arlington Yards and the Arthur Kill Lift Bridge, connecting the NYCT and West Shore industrial properties to New Jersey. Further rail improvements are being completed to serve this vital area. Forest Avenue provides a strong connection to North Shore neighborhoods.

2 **Bloomfield – Teleport:** This zone includes the well-established commercial corridor on South Avenue, with the Staten Island Corporate Park and the Teleport campus housing numerous office buildings and hotels, surrounded by wildlife and wetlands preserves. The former GATX site, a 440-acre former oil tank farm, is the City's largest privately-held tract of industrial land.

3 **Travis – Freshkills:** This area is rich in natural areas, with the planned Freshkills Park, extensive streams, and tidal and freshwater wetlands. Travis is the main residential community in this zone, and one of two residential areas in the entire study area. Residents

celebrate the neighborhood's historic and Main Street character.

4 **Rossville Waterfront:** This area includes vacant, private and publicly owned waterfront industrial sites, a historic cemetery and many abandoned ships along Arthur Kill. It has direct access to the West Shore Expressway and Arthur Kill Road and is adjacent to existing dense residential neighborhoods.

5 **Charleston – Tottenville:** This zone, which has direct access to the Staten Island Railway and Outerbridge Crossing, combines an industrial past and present with the natural, open space of Clay Pit Ponds State Park, the strong historical communities of Kreischerville and Tottenville, and new, regional retail developments.

A number of ongoing planning and infrastructure-building efforts have been reviewed and incorporated in West Shore 2030. These include the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation West Shore Light Rail Study; The Port Authority of NY and NJ Goethals Bridge study; and plans for the development of key City-owned open space and nature preserve areas.
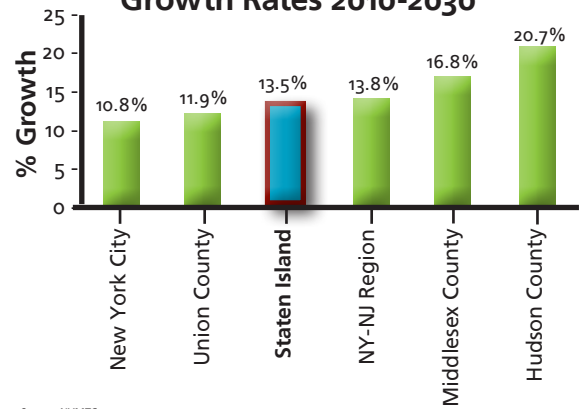
Major regional investments have recently been completed or are underway within the study area. These include: the City's 2007 renovation of the Arthur Kill Lift Bridge; reactivation of the Staten Island Railroad (SIRR) with 6,500 feet of new freight tracks known as the Travis Branch running from Arlington to Freshkills; and retail investments in Charleston. In addition, a number of current infrastructure improvements in the study area are incorporated, such as the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) widening of Arthur Kill Road, the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) efforts to construct east-west roads through the future Freshkills Park, and the proposed expansion of the New York Container Terminal (NYCT).

Staten Island Today and in 2030

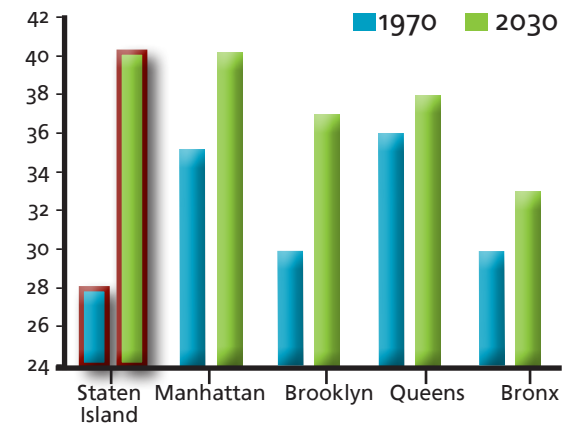### Continued Population Growth and Changing Demographics

- **The Borough and Region Continue To Grow** – Between 2000 and 2010, Staten Island once more achieved the fastest growing population of the City's five boroughs, adding 5.6 percent more residents compared to a citywide increase of 2.1 percent. By 2030, the borough is projected to grow by 65,000 residents and 25,000 households – a projection similar to the region's growth rate but less than adjacent New Jersey counties.

- **Staten Island's Growth Will Be Driven by Seniors and Young Adults** – 90 percent of Staten Island's population growth will come as a result of existing residents living longer and having larger families, not in-migration. The borough is projected to go from the youngest (in 1970) to the oldest in 2030, based on median age of the population. By 2035, the borough is projected to gain 35,000 seniors (65+ years) and 17,000 young adults (20-34 years).

- **The Borough's Housing Stock Is Not Geared To Serve Growing Populations** – Detached homes account for roughly 75 percent of the borough's total housing stock, which may be unaffordable to the growing population of young adults and too large for seniors seeking to downsize.

Projected Population Growth Rates 2010-2030

Source: NYMTC, 2009

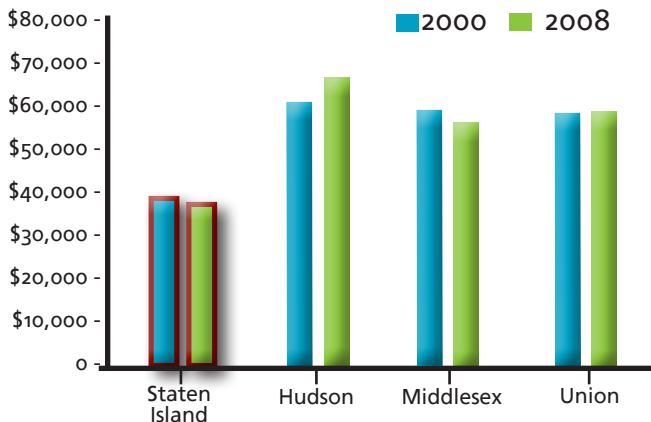**Median Age of NYC: 1970 & Projected 2030**

Source: NYMTC, 2009

Growth of Local Staten Island Economy in Question

- **The Borough's Economy Is Locally Oriented and Concentrated in Low-Wage Industries** – Staten Island's economy consists primarily of businesses that provide services to its residents. The majority of these jobs are in lower-paying retail and service sectors, with average wages well below similar nearby areas in New Jersey.

- **Residents Travel Off of Staten Island To Earn Higher Incomes** – Borough residents working outside Staten Island earn higher wages than those that work in the borough. In 2008, median wages for residents that live and work in Staten Island ($32,679) were lower than for those living and working in any other borough.

Private Sector Wage Levels by Location of Workplace (2000-2008)

Legend: ■ 2000 ■ 2008

Y-axis: $80,000 / $70,000 / $60,000 / $50,000 / $40,000 / $30,000 / $20,000 / $10,000 / 0

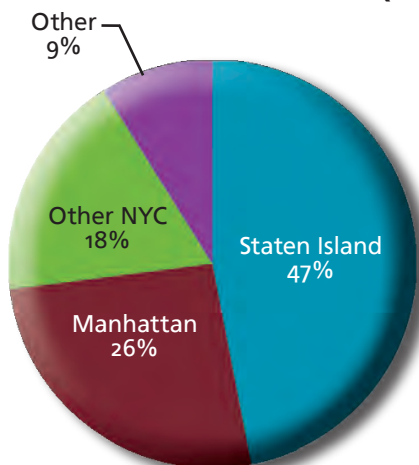Categories: Staten Island, Hudson, Middlesex, Union

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW Data

Long Commutes and Limited Transit

- **Off-Island Commuters Bear the Burden** – Off-island jobs require 2-½ times more commuting time than jobs located on Staten Island (1 hour versus 24 minutes) and the majority of Staten Island residents (53%) work outside the borough.

- **Most Residents and Businesses Are Auto-dependent** – 64% of Staten Island residents drive to work versus 29% citywide. Though transit usage has increased in recent years, much of the borough has limited transit service, focused on St. George and Manhattan Central Business Districts.

Where SI Residents Work (2008)

- Other 9%
- Other NYC 18%
- Staten Island 47%
- Manhattan 26%

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2008)

The West Shore's Challenges and Opportunities

The West Shore is centrally located in the region, with a concentration of large properties offering the potential for significant job creation, excellent highway and freight access, attractive and numerous natural areas, and small, historic and livable communities with an abundance of civic pride. However, the area faces many challenges to providing the jobs, services, and open spaces required by the borough, the City and the region:

- **Industrial Property Challenges** – Many industrial properties lack adequate roadway connections, utilities, maritime infrastructure, and connections to freight lines. Wetlands, floodplain levels, and environmental conditions further constrain the reactivation and reuse of many sites.

- **Wetlands and Open Space** – 45 percent of the study area's vacant land is occupied by wetlands which cannot be developed and are not yet fully utilized for public access or storm water management.

- **Incomplete Transportation Network** – Large areas of wetlands and historic industrial uses have contributed to incomplete highway and roadway connections, while many areas are without the roadway and transit services required for new development and investment.

- **Juxtaposition of Land Uses** – Local residential communities near industrial and commercial areas often lack protection from truck traffic, and land-use conflicts between job-producing and historic residential areas threaten the long-term success of both uses.

Visy Paper Recycling Center

Source: Visy Paper

- **Historic Communities –** Travis, Charleston, Tottenville and other nearby communities want to preserve their neighborhood character, but also lack housing options for young adults and seniors, local services, and sewer infrastructure.

- **Waterfront Conditions –** Past industrial uses, a deteriorated shoreline, permitting and regulatory challenges, and a lack of roadways limit maritime expansion and potential points of public access and amenities.

Community Priorities

The study's proposed actions are based on technical land use, transportation, and market studies, but they are grounded in an intensive public engagement process and partnership among multiple city agencies. Through 11 public meetings and interactive visioning workshops held across the study area, over 300 residents, elected officials, civic stakeholders, local business leaders, and state and regional partners, provided both a source and a sounding board for ideas and proposals.

That process established clear community priorities for the West Shore and also confirmed that the needs and goals of the West Shore community were very much in line with the conclusions of the extensive research conducted by the City and its consultant team. The public meetings and visioning workshops identified the following community priorities:

- **Quality Local Jobs –** high-paying jobs within or near the West Shore and access to them;

- **Local Retail and Services –** expanded community-based retail and services (e.g. health care and schools);

- **Upgraded Community Infrastructure –** especially sewer and storm water infrastructure in long-standing historic neighborhoods;

- **Housing Diversity –** to attract and to retain young people and seniors in the study area;

- **Preservation of Historic Communities –** to protect the unique, neighborhood character of the Travis and Charleston areas; and

- **Solutions for Residential-Industrial Conflicts –**using zoning controls and other actions to better separate needed job-producing uses from residential areas.

Public Open House

Community Vision Workshop

Community Vision Workshop