



Stapleton Waterfront - **Approved!**

Overview

Update October 25, 2006:

On October 25, 2006 the City Council adopted the Stapleton zoning changes as modified by the City Planning Commission (see [the CPC reports](#)). The zoning changes are now in effect.

The Department of City Planning (DCP) and the [New York City Economic Development Corporation \(EDC\)](#) propose creation of the **Special Stapleton Waterfront District** and related actions to facilitate redevelopment of the former U.S. Navy Homeport and surrounding area on the north shore of Staten Island. The redevelopment plan, including construction of an almost mile-long esplanade along New York Harbor, stems from recommendations made in 2004 by Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Task Force on Homeport Redevelopment.



The New Stapleton Waterfront (Illustrative)



Locator Map

Background

Stapleton is one of Staten Island's most walkable urban communities with a town center dating back to the early 19th century. The community's history is strongly identified with the waterfront. Ferry service in the area dates to 1752. Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, who was born in 1794 on the family farm in Stapleton, started running ferries out of Stapleton and built an international steamship and transportation empire that included Grand Central Station. During WWII both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy used the Stapleton waterfront as the New York State Port of Embarkation. After the war, the waterfront fell into disrepair as the shipping industry moved to New Jersey. For decades, the community has had insufficient waterfront access, and when the U.S. Navy established a homeport in Stapleton in 1990, the community was virtually cut off from the waterfront.

In 1995, after the Homeport was decommissioned as a naval base, New York City took ownership of the 35-acre site, including the 1,410-foot pier. In 2003, Mayor Bloomberg formed the Task Force on Homeport Redevelopment to envision a new future for the site and reconnect the community with the waterfront. The task force included local elected officials, community representatives, local business owners and residents, the Mayor's office and city agencies. Over the course of several community meetings, the task force considered different development scenarios for the site.



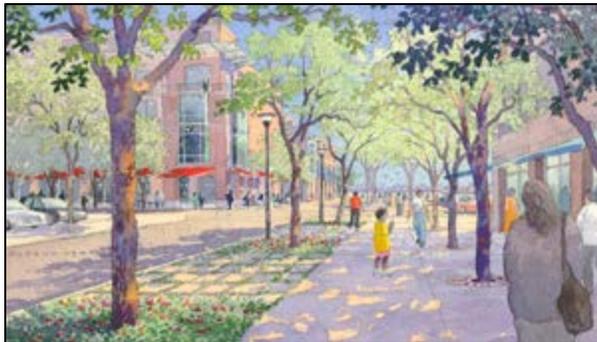
81 Water Street, a notable building in the Stapleton town center



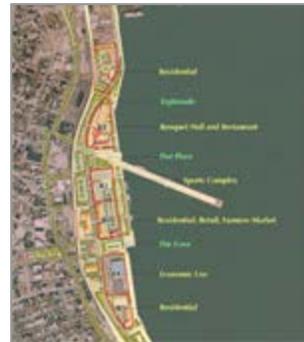
Since the Navy established the Homeport in the 1990s, Stapleton has had virtually no access to the waterfront

Task Force Recommendations

In 2004, the Task Force on Homeport Redevelopment made its final recommendations to the Mayor. [Recommendations](#) include development of an almost mile-long waterfront esplanade running the length of the site, residential units (sites A, B3, and B5), banquet hall and waterfront restaurant (B1), sports complex (B2), ground-floor retail and farmers market (B3); and a major economic use such as a movie studio or office space (B4). Mayor Bloomberg backed these recommendations and kick-started the efforts by budgeting \$66 million for the project for the public improvements, including the construction of the esplanade and open spaces.



Stapleton will be transformed from a manufacturing area to an active mixed-use extension of the Stapleton town center.



Stapleton Waterfront Recommendations
[View a larger image.](#)

In addition to the esplanade, two open spaces would be developed to link the esplanade and upland Front Street and extend the connections to the historic core of Stapleton with street improvements. Pier Place would be located near Baltic Street and would provide a public gathering space at the foot of the 1,410-foot naval pier. The pier is expected to be restricted to Navy use for the foreseeable future. The other proposed open space, the Cove, would be located between Canal and Water Streets and designed to emphasize the connection between the Stapleton town center, which is just west of the site, and the waterfront. The esplanade and open spaces would offer passive recreation including walkways, garden and picnic areas, and waterfront viewing platforms to take advantage of the beautiful views of the Manhattan and Brooklyn skylines and the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. Active recreation opportunities would include fishing platforms, volleyball and bocce courts, playgrounds, bicycle and walking pathways, and a kayak launch.

Views from the Stapleton Waterfront



Manhattan Skyline



Verrazano Narrows Bridge

Plan Implementation

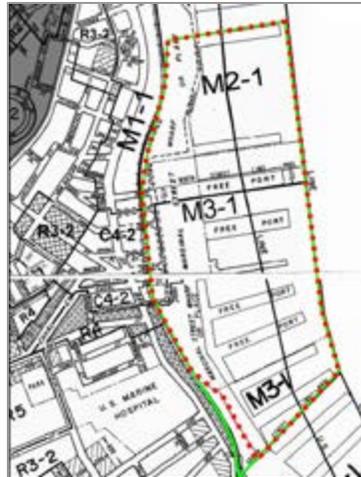
To implement the Task Force's recommendations, several land use actions are required including a zoning text amendment to create the Special Stapleton Waterfront District, a zoning map amendment to rezone the project area, mapping and demapping of city streets, and disposition of city-owned property.

A consultant team led by engineers Weidlinger Associates and landscape architects/planners Wallace, Roberts & Todd are to design the public improvements including the new esplanade, open spaces, roadways, streetscapes and other elements. EDC will oversee construction of the streets and preparation of the site for development, including razing the Navy buildings and construction of the public open spaces and esplanade. EDC will issue RFPs for the development parcels in late 2006. Preparation of the site and construction of the esplanade and streets are expected to begin in 2006-07.

Stapleton Waterfront - **Approved!**

Existing Context

The Stapleton waterfront study area consists of the 35-acre Homeport site and eighteen lots west of Front Street and east of the Staten Island Rapid Transit (SIRT) line. The area is currently zoned M2-1 and M3-1, manufacturing districts that do not permit residential uses. (See [Zoning Comparison Chart](#) for key provisions of existing and proposed zoning districts.) Former Navy buildings now on the Homeport site would be razed to prepare the site for redevelopment. Government offices and services that are temporarily located in the navy buildings would be relocated. Other land uses in the study area include several vacant lots, light manufacturing uses, marine and industrial repair shops, an electrical repair shop, a yacht-club house, auto-salvage yard, warehouses, furniture store, and pool hall



Existing Zoning Map
[View a larger image.](#)



Land Use Map
[View a larger image.](#)

Main access to the study area is from Front Street, which runs north-south through the study area. Bay Street, a main commercial and bus corridor in northeast Staten Island, is one block inland. The SIRT has three stations serving the area: Tompkinsville Station to the north, Stapleton Station at the heart of the site, and Clinton Station to the south. The St. George Ferry Terminal is a five-minute train ride to the north.



Mixed use buildings along Bay Street

The area immediately west of the SIRT is the core of the Stapleton town center surrounding Tappen Park. The town center is zoned C4-2 and comprised predominantly of low-rise buildings with ground-floor commercial spaces and community facilities and two or three stories of residential above. The surrounding residential neighborhoods to the west of the town center are zoned R3-2 and R4. The neighborhoods include the St. Paul's Avenue-Stapleton Heights Historic District, several townhouse developments, and the Stapleton Houses, a New York City Housing Authority complex. The Bayley-Seton Hospital complex and Edgewater Plaza, an eight-story office building on the waterfront, are near the southern boundary of the study area. The Cromwell Recreation Center, which is run by the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Bay Street Landing condominiums, the future National Lighthouse Museum, and the St. George Ferry Terminal are located to the north.

Stapleton Waterfront - **Approved!** Proposed Actions



The New Stapleton Waterfront (Illustrative)

City Planning Commission Actions

To implement the Task Force's recommendations, several land use actions are required including a zoning text amendment to create the special district, a zoning map amendment to rezone the project area, mapping and demapping of city streets, and disposition of city-owned property.

• Zoning Map Amendment and Special District

The proposed special district, combined with a change in the underlying zoning to a *contextual* commercial district, is expected to change the character of the Stapleton waterfront. The area will be transformed from an underused industrial enclave to an extension of the Stapleton town center.

The rezoning area encompasses the navy site (35-acres) and the area west of Front Street and east of the SIRT. The rezoning area runs from approximately 560 feet south of Hannah Street to the prolongation of Greenfield Avenue to the south. The Staten Island Rapid Transit right-of-way and the pierhead line define the western and eastern boundaries, respectively, of the rezoning area and special district.

The proposed zoning of C4-2A, modified by special district controls, will permit redevelopment of the Homeport site according to the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Homeport Redevelopment. It will also allow development that closely matches the character and scale of the upland portions of Stapleton, which are characterized by *street wall* development, ground-floor retail and low-rise buildings. The proposed contextual C4-2A district, generally mapped in regional commercial centers, encourages continuous retail frontage, permits mixed use buildings and requires residences to meet the standards of the *Quality Housing program*. Residential buildings in a C4-2A district must provide off-street parking for 70 percent of dwelling units. See [Zoning Comparison Chart](#).



Existing and Proposed Zoning Map

[View a larger image.](#)

The proposed **Special Stapleton Waterfront District** modifies some of the rules governing the underlying C4-2A zoning district and imposes additional regulations. The special district will establish eight subareas: the esplanade and public spaces, six city-owned development parcels (subareas A, B1 to B5) and the area west of Front Street which includes eighteen lots that are mostly privately owned (subarea C). View the [text and maps](#) of the proposed special district.

The special district will limit floor area ratio (FAR) to 2.0 for all uses and set a 50-foot height limit (approximately five stories). An exception to the height limit is made for subarea B2 (sports complex) which may rise to 60 feet without setbacks. The special district will require pedestrian connections to the waterfront esplanade at regular intervals and unobstructed visual corridors to the water from upland Stapleton. The position of building walls will be mandated in certain areas in order to frame public spaces and shape the streetscape to match the Stapleton town center. Buildings on certain streets will be required to have non-residential uses on the first floor to foster pedestrian activity on those streets and to link the waterfront to the town center. No parking will be allowed between any building and Front Street. An exception is made for subarea B5 to allow for more flexible site design. Parking lots must be screened from all adjacent zoning lots and public spaces by dense shrubbery, and parking lots must include trees within the parking field.

- **City Map Changes**

Changes to the city map include realignment of Front Street, mapping and extension of Baltic Street from Bay Street to Front Street to serve as a future connection, and demapping a portion of Willow Street, a mapped but unbuilt street. Existing side streets connecting Front Street and Bay Street will also be mapped at their current built widths. As part of the project, the city will improve Front Street for its entire length.

- **Disposition of City-owned Property**

The disposition of city-owned property will allow development of the six development parcels (A-B5) and limited uses on the waterfront esplanade, such as bike and kayak rentals or a small boat house. Two triangular city-owned properties in subarea C will also be disposed.

Stapleton Waterfront - **Approved!**

Public Review

ULURP: The Department of City Planning certified the applications for the Stapleton Waterfront proposal on May 8, 2006, initiating the formal public review process.

Milestone	Date
Department of City Planning certification / referral	May 8, 2006
Community Board 1 approval	June 13, 2006
Borough President approval	June 27, 2006
City Planning Commission Public Hearing	August 23, 2006
City Planning Commission Approval (with modifications to the text amendment application*) (Read the CPC reports)	September 27, 2006
City Council adoption as modified by CPC	October 25, 2006

* During the public review it was noted that the language of the proposed zoning text that exempts ground floor non-residential uses from the definition of floor area could have been interpreted as exempting such uses from other zoning requirements such as accessory parking. This was never the intent and the Commission modified the proposed text (N 060468 ZRR) so that all other zoning regulations apply to the exempted floor area.

CEQR: The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding, the lead agency for City Environmental Quality Review for the Stapleton proposal, issued a Positive Declaration for the proposed actions on October 31, 2005, and directed that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) be prepared. A Public Scoping meeting was held on November 30, 2005. The Final EIS Scoping Document was issued on Feb 15, 2006. A Notice of Completion of the DEIS was issued on May 3, 2006. Copies of the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS), Positive Declaration, Draft Scoping Document, and DEIS are available for download at the [New York City Office of Environmental Coordination](#).

For more information on the Special Stapleton Waterfront District and related land-use actions, contact the Staten Island Office of the Department of City Planning at (718) 556-7240 or the New York City Economic Development Corporation at (212) 312-3600.

Related Notes

-  Items accompanied by this symbol require the [free Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).
- Brief explanations of terms in *green italics* can be viewed by [visiting glossary page](#). Words and phrases followed by an asterisk (*) are defined terms in the Zoning Resolution, primarily in Section 12-10. Consult the Zoning Resolution for the official and legally binding definitions of these words and phrases.