

NorthShoreNYC

Downtown Staten Island Vision Plan

SEPTEMBER 2026



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING AND LAND USE DIVISION

MAJORITY WHIP KAMILLAH HANKS
COUNCIL DISTRICT 49

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Letter from Majority Whip Kamillah Hanks

Dear neighbor,

The North Shore has long been defined by its potential. Our communities are rich in history, culture, diversity, and opportunity. Yet too often, plans for our waterfront and surrounding neighborhoods have been delayed, scaled back, or simply never realized. The people who live, work, and play here have waited long enough for that promise to become reality.

Today, the North Shore stands at a pivotal moment. With strong transit connections, a growing waterfront, thriving commercial corridors, and sites ready for reinvestment, we have all the ingredients needed to create vibrant neighborhoods where people can live, work, shop, and enjoy the waterfront.

This report presents a vision for how we can build on the momentum already underway. It recognizes the important progress being made by public partners and agencies through the North Shore Action Plan, including efforts to deliver affordable housing, improve infrastructure, and advance long-planned waterfront projects. These initiatives are critical to the North Shore's future and deserve continued support, most urgently NYC Economic Development Corporation's current efforts to re-envision the Empire Outlets and former NY Wheel sites for much needed housing.

At the same time, this report acknowledges the reality that many residents see every day: the pace of change has not matched the potential of the North Shore. Too many key sites remain vacant or underutilized, and too many opportunities have sat idle for far too long. If we are serious about creating affordable homes, supporting local businesses, attracting investment, and reconnecting our communities to the waterfront, we must pursue a more proactive and ambitious path forward.

The NorthShoreNYC Vision Plan outlines that path. It identifies opportunities to encourage thoughtful growth, activate underutilized properties, strengthen our neighborhood commercial districts, and create the housing needed to support Staten Islanders at every stage of life. Most importantly, it offers a vision rooted in the belief that the North Shore can and should be one of New York City's great waterfront communities.

I am grateful to Speaker Julie Menin for her support of this initiative and to all of the residents, community stakeholders, and agency partners who have contributed their ideas and expertise throughout the years. Together, we can ensure that the North Shore's next chapter is defined not by unrealized potential, but by meaningful progress and lasting opportunity.

Sincerely,

Majority Whip Hanks

Executive Summary

For decades, Staten Islanders have envisioned the North Shore as the borough's downtown, a vibrant waterfront destination with housing, jobs, shopping, entertainment, and public spaces. Yet despite years of discussion and a growing number of public and private investments along the waterfront, that vision remains only partially realized. While neighboring New Jersey communities have transformed their waterfronts into thriving mixed-use neighborhoods, much of Staten Island's North Shore remains constrained by vacant and underutilized properties and a lack of coordinated planning.

From St. George to Stapleton, the North Shore has all the ingredients for growth: a waterfront, strong transit access, and large sites ready for redevelopment. Yet despite this potential, growth has occurred slowly and largely on a project-by-project basis. While the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) is currently advancing an ambitious plan to correct the mistakes of prior administrations on the sites of the troubled Empire Outlets and failed New York Wheel by proposing new development with up to 2,500 housing units, this is only the first necessary step. On private land, only a handful of major residential developments have been built over the past 15 years, often requiring public subsidy, while numerous vacant and underutilized sites remain. Recent development proposals seeking greater density make clear that a new approach is needed to unlock the North Shore's full potential.

NorthShoreNYC makes the case for a bolder approach. Released by Majority Whip Hanks with support from Speaker Menin's proactive planning agenda, the vision plan calls for ambitious city action to unlock the North Shore's full potential by allowing larger buildings, adding more permanently affordable homes, accelerating development on publicly owned land, and making the infrastructure investments needed to support growth.

The time for incremental change has passed. We can continue with piecemeal growth and slow progress, or we can take bold action to unlock one of New York City's greatest opportunities. With smart planning and targeted investments, the North Shore can become the vibrant downtown and waterfront destination Staten Islanders have envisioned for generations—creating new housing, jobs, businesses, and amenities while strengthening opportunities for existing residents. NorthShoreNYC provides the roadmap to make that vision a reality.

The current zoning framework is failing to drive the scale of growth and investment that matches the community's vision for Downtown Staten Island. In the last 15 years, only a handful of projects have actually been developed on private land.

Several key opportunity areas stand out for investment, including vacant, underutilized, and blighted sites that could support new housing, jobs, public amenities, and better neighborhood connections.

Connecting isolated communities to economic opportunities is vital, making public realm investments and better last-mile transit links imperative.

On public land, projects already in the pipeline need support to succeed, including efforts to remove regulatory barriers and streamline approvals that can help bring approved developments across the finish line.

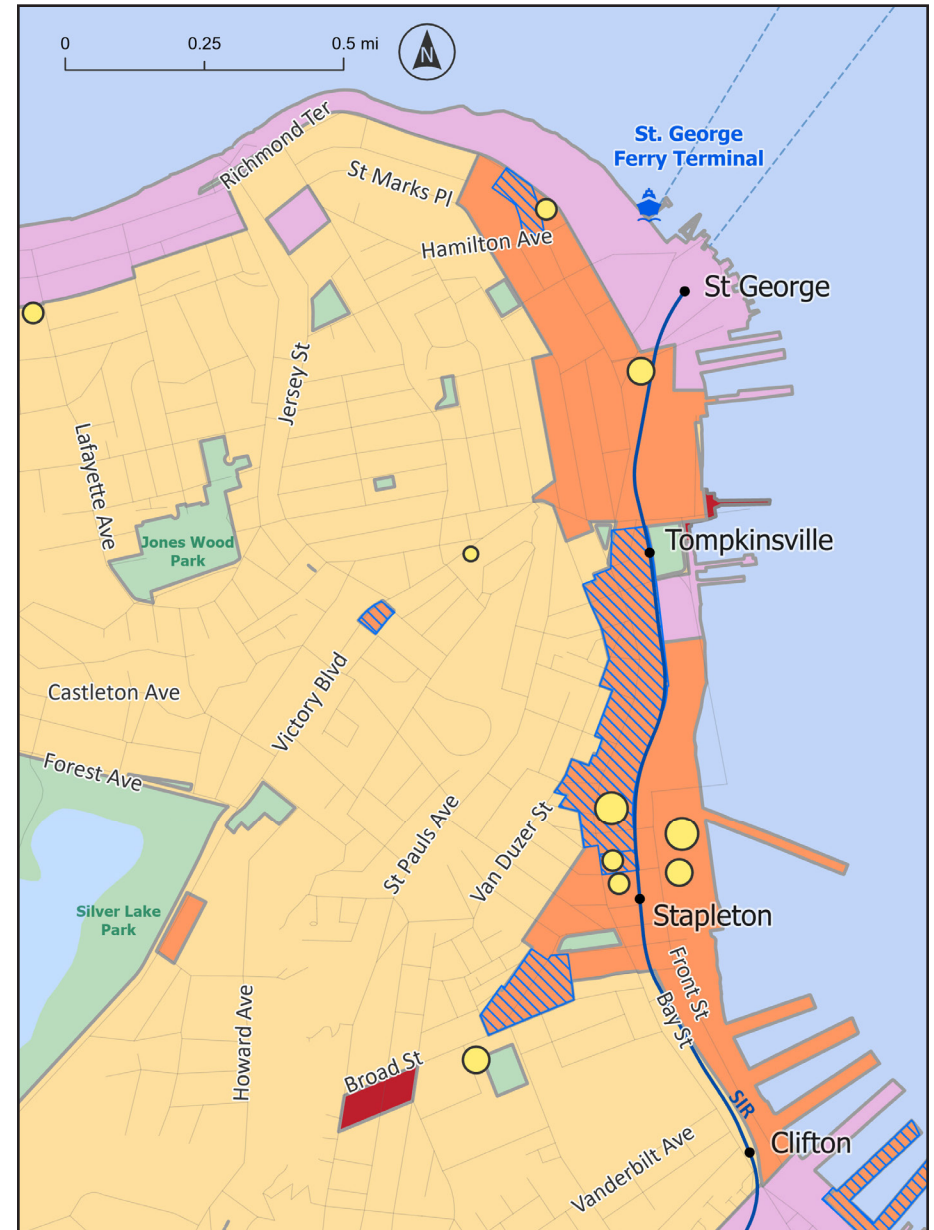
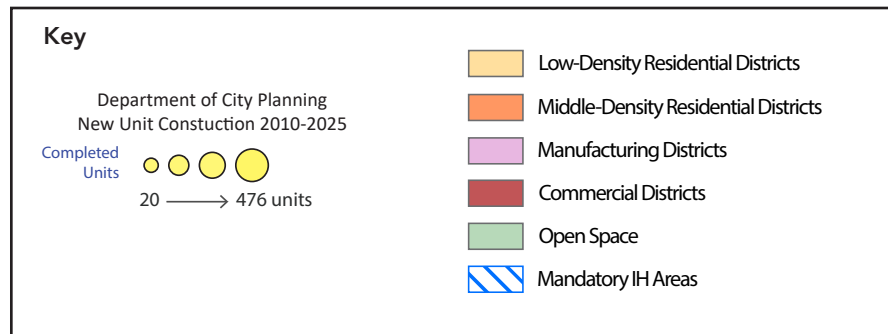
Overall, the City must support this ambitious vision for growth with continued public investment in schools, open space, transit, infrastructure, and connectivity to the waterfront.

North Shore Today

CURRENT ZONING FAILS TO DELIVER GROWTH

Through past City-led rezonings, “R6” zoning, which allows for mid-rise and mixed-use buildings, has been established in St. George, the Bay Street Corridor, and Stapleton—areas that define Downtown Staten Island. However, in the last 15 years, only a handful of projects like Urby, Lighthouse Point, and 475 Bay Street were completed, relying on significant government subsidy. Several recent private rezoning applications in St. George have sought to build larger buildings, reflecting demand for housing denser than currently allowed. Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH), which requires 25 to 30% of apartments to be income-restricted, is mapped on these sites as well as the area of the 2019 Bay Street Corridor Neighborhood Plan, but not on the rest of St. George and Stapleton.

To support a true Downtown Staten Island, more development is needed on the waterfront as well as inland. The area is currently home to approximately 21,000 residents living in about 9,000 housing units. As a point of comparison, Hoboken has roughly 60,000 residents within a similarly sized area, supporting a much broader mix of shops, restaurants, employment opportunities, and community amenities. Growth on the North Shore is needed to bring more people, customers, and investment to the area to support a thriving 24/7 neighborhood while building on its existing character and diversity.

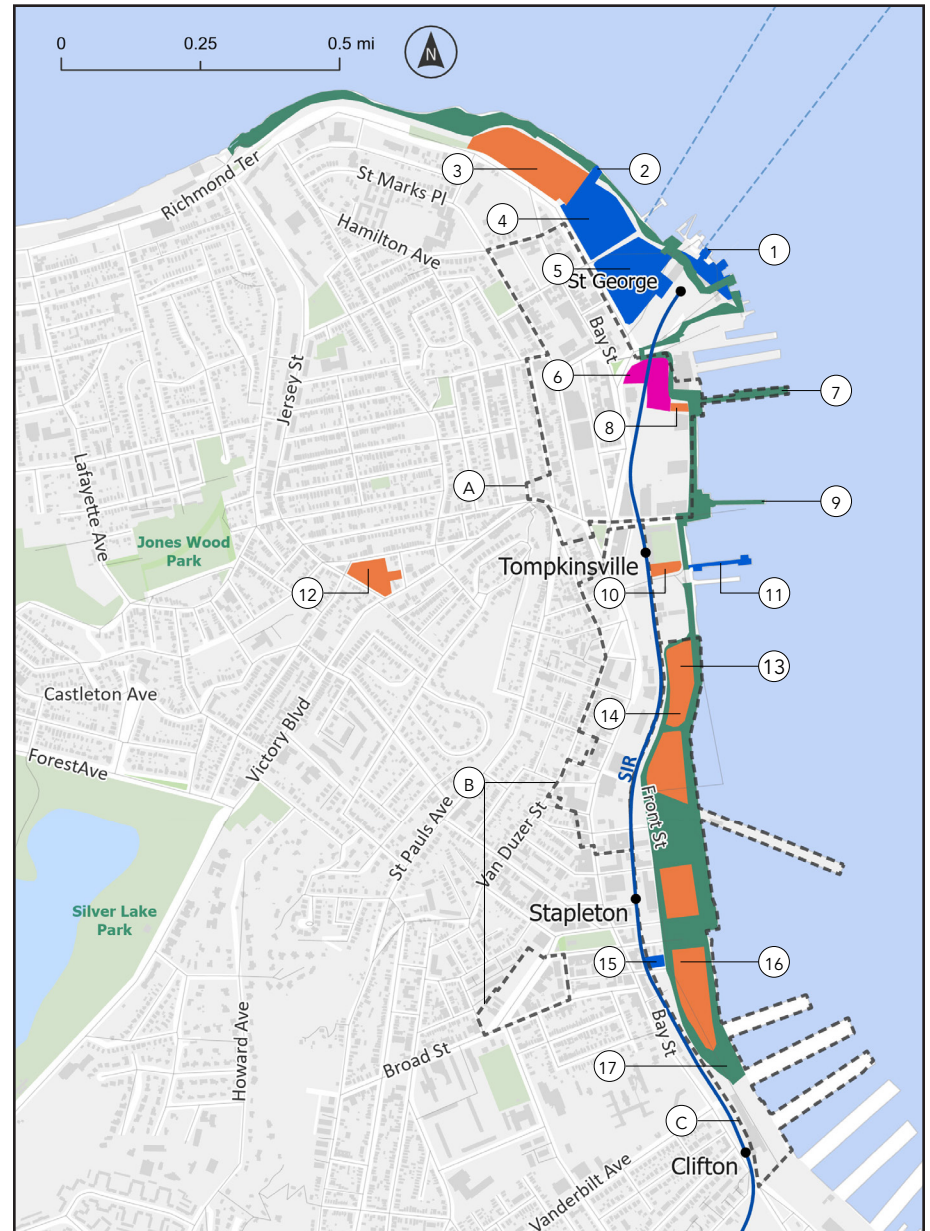


Existing Zoning and new housing construction outcomes

Recent Planning History

NYCEDC'S NORTH SHORE ACTION PLAN

The North Shore has seen ambitious projects before. Efforts led by NYCEDC, including Empire Outlets and the proposed New York Wheel, fell short of their long-term promises. Today, EDC is pursuing a different strategy: transforming these waterfront sites into a mixed-use community with up to 2,500 new homes, retail and cultural spaces, expanded parks, and better neighborhood connections. This vision is a key part of the 2023 North Shore Action Plan, which also outlines redevelopment of the long-vacant Stapleton sites with more than 2,000 homes, open space, and a new school. Nearby, HPD is advancing a 232-unit affordable housing development at the former Jersey Street Garage, while NYC Parks has begun construction of the Mary Cali Dalton Recreation Center. Across public sites, the North Shore is shifting toward a housing-first, community-focused approach that prioritizes homes, public amenities, and complete neighborhoods over destination attractions. However, Phase 2 of Lighthouse Point, a critical link between the Ferry and areas farther south, remains uncertain.



Ongoing Projects

Key	
① St. George Ferry Terminal	⑫ Jersey Street Garage
② September 11 Memorial	⑬ Stapleton Beacon
③ Former NY Wheel Site	⑭ New School
④ SIUH Community Park	⑮ SI Maker Space
⑤ Empire Outlets	⑯ New Stapleton Waterfront (southern phase)
⑥ Lighthouse Point	⑰ New Stapleton Waterfront Esplanade
⑦ Pier 1	Ⓐ St. George Rezoning Area
⑧ Building 10	Ⓑ Bay Street Corridor Rezoning Area
⑨ Tompkinsville Esplanade	Ⓒ New Stapleton Waterfront Rezoning Area
⑩ Mary Cali Dalton Recreation	
⑪ Miller's Launch	

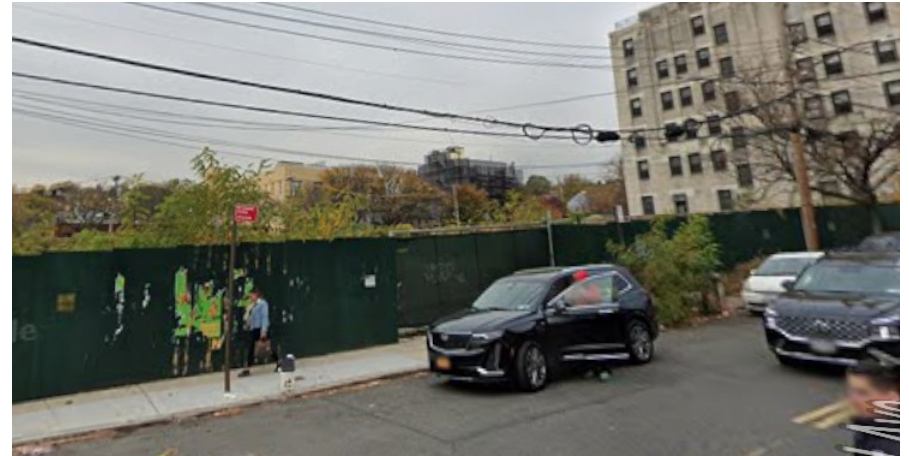
Recent Planning History

BAY STREET AND ST. GEORGE REZONINGS FAIL TO SPUR DEVELOPMENT

In contrast to the recent progress on public land, the experience of both Bay Street and St. George shows that R6 zoning alone has not been enough to spark significant private mixed income housing development on Staten Island's North Shore. On the Bay Street Corridor the only project built so far has been an HPD financed affordable and supportive housing development at 475 Bay Street. St. George and Stapleton tell a similar story. Nearly two decades after 2006 and 2008 rezonings, private development has remained limited, with multiple property owners seeking higher-density R7 zoning instead. The message is clear that without allowing larger buildings, these areas will not develop into the vibrant Downtown Staten Island that we envision.

NEW JERSEY'S WATERFRONT SUCCESS ATTRACTIVE TO STATEN ISLANDERS

While Staten Island's waterfront has struggled to gain momentum, communities just across the harbor in New Jersey have transformed their waterfronts into thriving places to live, work, and visit. Cities like Hoboken and Bayonne embraced new housing and mixed-use development, creating walkable neighborhoods filled with homes, shops, restaurants, and public spaces. As a result, they have attracted investment, new residents, and vibrant community life. While they may have gotten a head start, Staten Island has the opportunity to learn from their success and build a waterfront that works for residents and future generations alike.



BLIGHT affects everyone's experience of the neighborhood as it comes to be defined by empty, fenced lots and dead trees.



WEEHAWKEN Developments of scale feature significant amenities and are designed for waterfront resiliency in the event of flooding.

NorthShorenyc

The time for half-measures is over. NorthShoreNYC is about taking action to unlock the area's full potential by identifying key sites for growth, encouraging new housing, and creating the conditions for investment to move forward. By connecting already thriving commercial districts with active ground-floor businesses, better streets, and stronger links to the waterfront, we can build a more connected and vibrant North Shore. This vision will create affordable homes for every generation of Staten Islanders, from young professionals starting out to seniors looking to stay in their community. Most importantly, it will help transform the North Shore into a place where people want to live, work, shop, and spend time, creating the vibrant destination Staten Island deserves.

VISION: BOLD ACTION TO EXPEDITE DEVELOPMENT OF CITY-OWNED SITES AND INCREASE DENSITY

Most urgently, Staten Island can build on the momentum that is already underway for city-owned development sites. That means cutting red tape, prioritizing funding, and accelerating projects at Stapleton, Jersey Street, Lighthouse Point, and the Wheel and Outlets site. These are not new ideas; they are real opportunities that are already moving forward. If EDC and HPD can successfully deliver these investments, they have the potential to spark additional private development in surrounding neighborhoods, bringing new housing, jobs, and activity to the North Shore. Together, these projects can help turn years of planning into visible progress and finally bring the North Shore's vision to life. Quickly advancing the redevelopment of the former NY Wheel Site and a portion of the Empire Outlets for housing will finally set this part of the North Shore waterfront on a course for success.

SITE	STATUS
NY Wheel/ Outlets	Environmental Review Scope
Light House Point PH2	TBD
Stapleton Beacon	Approved/Developer Selected
New Stapleton Waterfront	Approved/Developer Selected
Jersey Street Garage	Approved/Developer selected

CITY-OWNED SITE STATUS Various city-owned sites would eventually bring more housing to the North Shore.

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EXPAND WHAT WORKS,
WHILE CREATING NEW CONNECTIONS



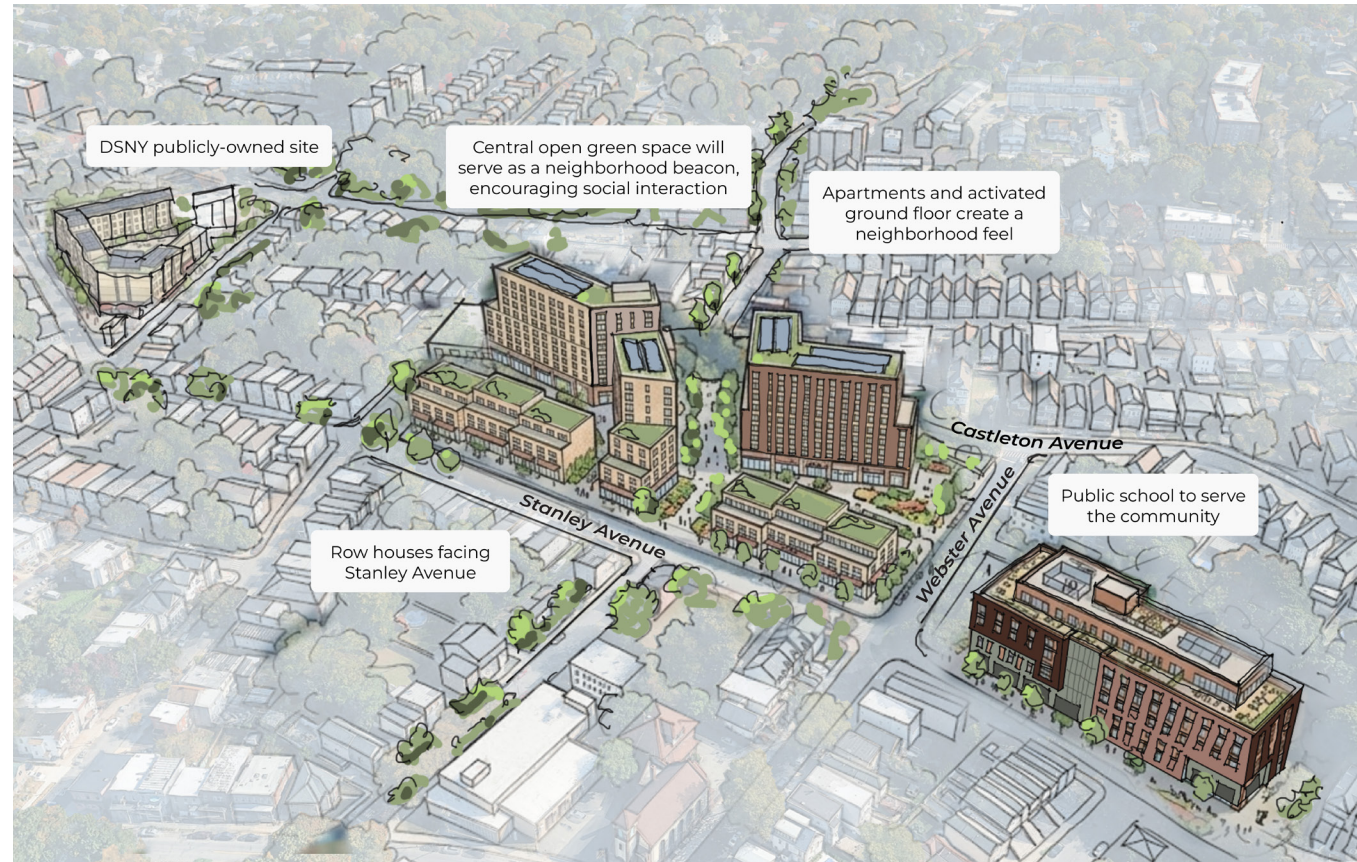
- Existing street life
- Linkages to be developed
- Connections to the waterfront

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CASTLETON

The Castleton site located at Castleton and Webster Avenues, has the potential to be much more than another housing project. This city-owned site, which was once abandoned hospital grounds, is now being analyzed for housing. While the Administration's Land Inventory (LIFT) Task Force currently identifies the site as a pre-RFP opportunity with 330 planned homes, this is a chance to think bigger. Analysis suggests the site could accommodate even more homes, including a mix of apartment buildings and affordable homeownership townhomes.

This housing combination of housing types would create opportunities for both renters and homeowners while providing the housing choices that many Staten Islanders are looking for. Together with the nearby Jersey Street development, it could help bring new residents, activity, and investment up Victory Boulevard, strengthening connection between the waterfront and surrounding communities. The site is also an ideal location for a much-needed school, creating a complete neighborhood where families can live, learn, and thrive. By taking a more ambitious approach, Castleton can become a catalyst for the next chapter of growth on the North Shore.



HOLISTIC NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING Considers the needs of existing residents, such as schools, while planning for new neighbors.

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New plaza for the residents and neighbors

Activated street through ground floor retail and community uses

HOLISTIC NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING Considers the needs of existing residents while planning for new neighbors.

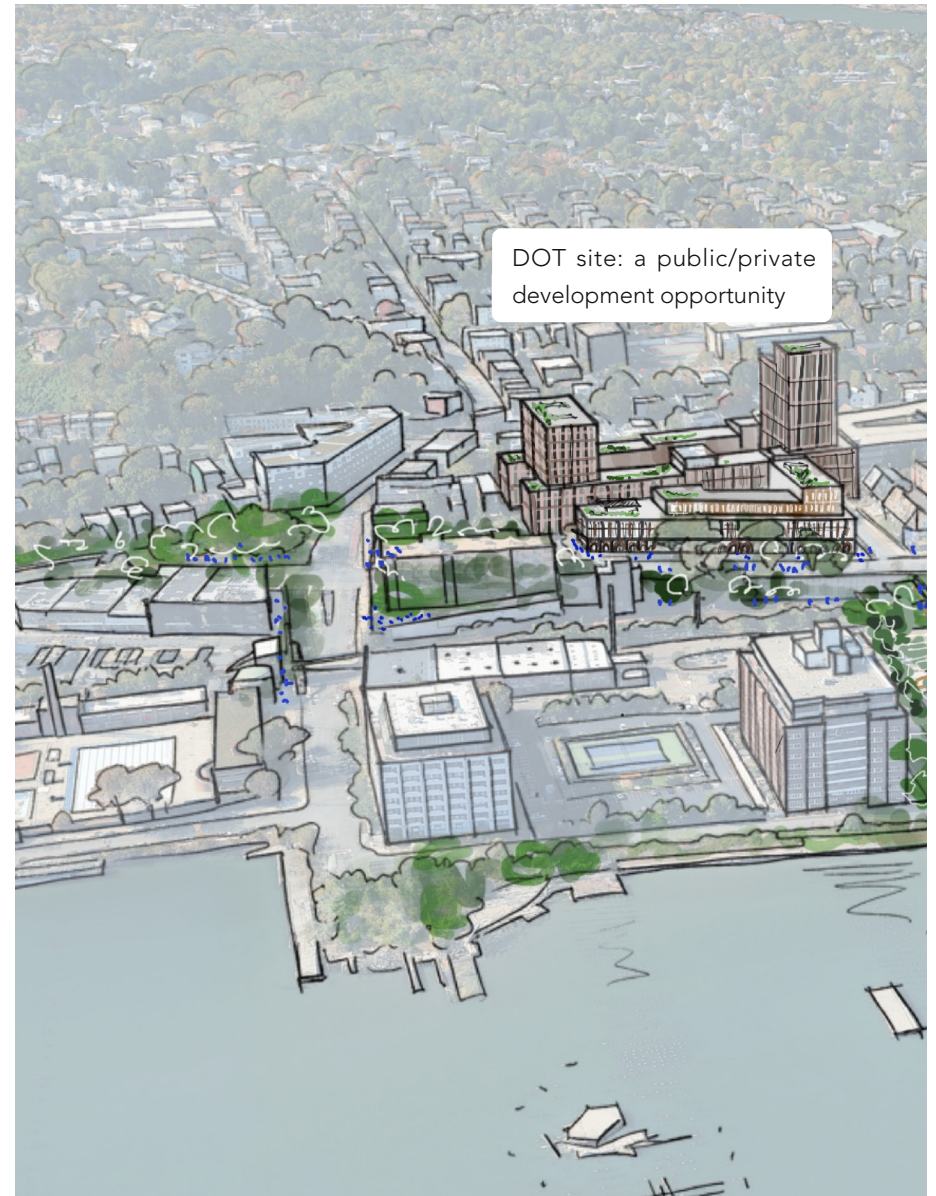
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VICTORY BLVD/BAY STREET

Victory Boulevard and Bay Street present a prime opportunity to reconnect St. George and unlock long-overdue investment. A developer has spent years assembling vacant and severely underused properties (below) with a vision to transform a blighted stretch that currently acts as a barrier between the upland neighborhood, the waterfront, and the St. George Ferry Terminal. By supporting this effort and exploring the future of the adjacent NYC Department of Transportation surface parking lot located at 54 Central Avenue, the City can help create a larger, more coordinated redevelopment opportunity. Together, these sites could deliver new housing, neighborhood services, public improvements, and stronger connections along Victory Boulevard and Bay Street, turning an empty gap in the neighborhood into an active gateway to the waterfront.



OPPORTUNITY Multiple lots at the intersection of Bay Street and Victory Boulevard are an opportunity to build on investments to improve the waterfront.



NEW DEVELOPMENT OF SCALE Larger buildings can be sensitive to their context with a base height that relates to neighboring buildings.

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FRONT STREET AND BAY STREET, STAPLETON

Front Street and Bay Street in Stapleton represent another one of the North Shore's biggest opportunities. Along these streets sit largely vacant and underused sites right next to transit, the growing Urby community, and the future phases of the Stapleton waterfront redevelopment. Yet after nearly 20 years, the existing R6 zoning has not generated the level of investment needed to transform this corridor. To unlock its full potential, we need a more ambitious vision that supports new housing, brings jobs and local services, improves connections to the waterfront, and delivers the public amenities that can help create a thriving, walkable neighborhood for both current and future residents. It is clear that unlocking critical density higher than R6 can catalyze development.



WATERFRONT BARRIERS Outmoded "big box" shopping and surface parking block waterfront access.



NEW CONNECTIONS Diverse building types, mixed uses, and public space can work together.

NorthShorenyc



DYNAMIC URBANISM Makes the most of existing assets by framing views and creating a sense of place, which introducing new amenities and the people that will help sustain them.

We would love to hear from you!

**OFFICE OF MAJORITY WHIP
KAMILLAH HANKS,
COUNCIL MEMBER FOR DISTRICT 49**

If you have ideas we have not considered, please get in touch with us or stop by our office.

You can also visit our webpage and take a survey here:
<http://council.nyc.gov/northshorenyc>



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