

A PLAN FOR



THE ST. GEORGE SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL DISTRICT

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A STUDY COMMISSIONED BY
THE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES FOR STATEN ISLAND

Hunter College, City University of New York
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New York, NY
Fall 2010

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Monica Valenzuela, COAHSI
Kate Van Tassel, NYC Economic Development Corporation
Jack Vokral, National Lighthouse Museum
Laura Jean Watters, Staten Island Foundation
Bill Woods
Bob Wright
Caroline Zappasodi

Thanks to everyone for the guidance and suggestions. See you in Art Hill!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The team would like to extend special thanks to Pablo Vengoechea for guiding us throughout the intensive process of creating the St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan and for introducing us to the wonders of tracing paper.

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PART I

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan is based on a vision articulated by Staten Island's cultural stakeholders. The artists and other creative producers and performers that have built a community on the North Shore of Staten Island. They have become a visible part of the revitalization of neighborhoods like St. George over the last 20 years. St. George needs to capitalize on that transformative energy by giving artists a permanent home in a place that can sustain the cultural community into the future.

The idea of a St. George Cultural District was first proposed in the Downtown Staten Island Urban Design Plan, released in 2008. Later that year the Staten Island Regional Urban Development Assistance Team (RUDAT) called attention to the special character of St. George and its role as Staten Island's downtown transit center, and the plan recommended increased development to support St. George's cultural activity. In 2009, the City Council adopted the Department of City Planning's St. George Special District to incentivize new development and protect the commercial character of certain streets downtown. The St. George Special District rezoning was a direct result of these plans, proving that planning can and does shape future development. Recognizing the power of planning, the Staten Island Vision process is an ongoing effort to involve the community in an inclusive, long-range planning process for all of Staten Island. One of the initial recommendations made by the Arts & Culture Working Group to the Vision for Staten Island Steering Committee was to establish an arts and cultural district in St. George.

Following this recommendation, the Council of the Arts and Humanities for Staten Island (COAHSI) engaged a studio team from Hunter College to plan a cultural district that would have a balance of production, participation and exhibition. The balance of these activities is important, because a healthy community of artists that invites participation is essential to an arts-led revitalization that is inclusive and sustainable. This Plan is the result of site surveys, interviews and a visioning session hosted by the Hunter planning team with members of the cultural community. The resulting Plan builds on the active artists' community and other existing assets to create a sustainable dynamic for St. George.

Sustainability is a part of this Plan in that it represents a balance between social, economic, and environmental goals. It requires the simultaneous reconciliation of three imperatives: the environmental imperative to stay within the biophysical carrying capacity of the planet; the economic imperative to provide an adequate material standard of living to all; and the social imperative to provide systems of governance that propagate the values of living. As applied to a cultural district, the concept of sustainability means that the revitalization of a neighborhood through the arts is just as important a goal as protecting the artists themselves, including the rest of the community in the process, and making sure this process respects and serves the environment.

Cities around the country are establishing cultural districts to achieve community and economic development goals. Economic development can be the result of increasing tourism or attracting new business development into an innovative new

downtown milieu. Community development is the result of an increased focus on public space and prioritizing pedestrian uses, creating places to communicate, forums to resolve conflicts and support for ongoing dialog and creative innovation in our communities. The most important elements of a successful cultural district are an active artists' community making art in both permanent and temporary forms, and an anchoring cultural institution with the capacity to help coordinate marketing and the ability to embed the new identity of the district into the physical fabric of the community.

The following are great examples of successful cultural districts that inspired some of the elements proposed in the St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan:

- The Fourth Arts Block is a prominent example of a cultural district in New York City that was established through the transfer of eight City owned properties to nonprofit theaters. The coordinating organization, the Fourth Arts Block, provides coordinated marketing, shared ticketing services and has spearheaded a number of place-making activities that have been funded by public officials. The Fourth Arts Block has leveraged \$18 million in public support for master-planning, streetscaping and façade improvements on one city block.

- Paducah, Kentucky started an innovative program to attract established artists to permanently relocate to the small town of Paducah. The City sold historic properties to artists for as little as \$1 and, in return, required that artists renovate the

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

properties to code, building upon the sweat equity that artists often invest in their communities. With an initial investment by the City of Paducah of \$3 million over seven years, the Artists Relation Program attracted 70 artists—which lead to the creation of a cultural district, generated \$27.8 million in direct economic impact, provided \$1.8 million in state and local tax revenue and leveraged \$35 million worth of investment in the built environment of Paducah’s historic Lower Town Arts District.

- Bordeaux, France, invested in a wholesale reorganization of its urban center to prioritize pedestrian activity. What was once a fast-moving boulevard along the Garonne River has been transformed into a pedestrian promenade that connects the historic UNESCO-designated civic center with cultural activity and public space to build community. This open space has become the heart of Bordeaux’s public life and a revenue generator as well.

St. George is just one step away from realizing similar benefits. According to the 2000 Census, St. George was the home of more than 200 full-time artists, comprising 3% of St. George’s occupied adults. Artists are the most concentrated in the downtown area of St. George, comprising 6% of occupied adults. This concentration is an asset that should be considered a growth target to achieve a concentration of artists that compares to a well-known naturally occurring arts district like Williamsburg or DUMBO, Brooklyn. This Plan recommends attracting 80 more artists to St. George through a number of strategies that create a sustainable and permanent home for the growing arts community.

St. George has tremendous assets that have yet to be utilized to their full potential. St. George is the transit center of Staten Island with 65,000 people riding the ferry everyday and another 67,000 people arriving by bus to the Ferry Terminal on 26 bus lines. St. George is just 20 minutes away from Manhattan; just 20 minutes away from the committed contemporary arts audiences that make New York City their home; just 20 minutes away from a network of the finest cultural institutions in the nation and just 20 minutes away from the 47 million tourists who visit New York City each year—the Staten Island Ferry is the third most popular tourist attraction in New York City. All of these factors make St. George’s location and transportation infrastructure an asset that should ensure that the St. George Sustainable Cultural District is accessible to audiences from Staten Island, New York City and around the world. This Plan recommends improving connections from the Ferry Terminal to the heart of the downtown area through safer street crossings and increasing space for pedestrians.



St. George has a charming neighborhood character that is wholly unique in New York City. The combination of the steep hills facing New York Bay and the downtown skyline of Manhattan create a number of spectacular views, especially at night with the City lights twinkling over the water. The presence of the maritime industry cruising through the Kill Van Kull channel adds to the unique views, especially when huge ships laden with containers or cruise ships twenty stories tall can be seen down the street, passing by the St. George waterfront.

The historic architecture and friendly “small-town” ambience in the residential areas of St. George are special characteristics that add to the attractiveness of the neighborhood. St. George’s ethnic, economic and racial diversity is also an asset in the context of our extremely multi-cultural city, where artists from all over the world feel at home. There remain physical and cultural challenges to a wholly integrated community, but this Plan contains recommendations for ongoing cultural community development as well as physical development of places for people to come together.

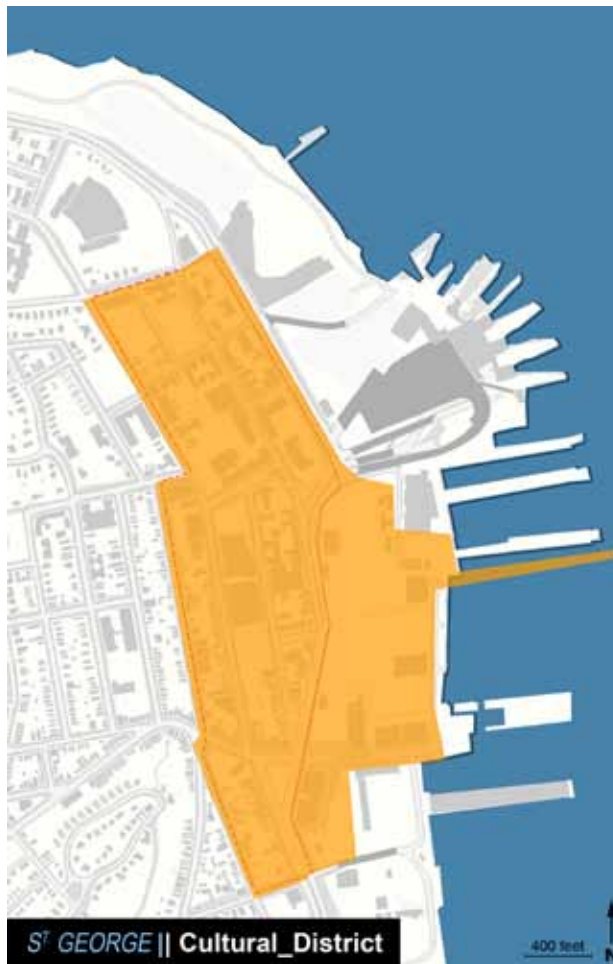


St. George is home to significant cultural infrastructure including established non-profit institutions like the Staten Island Museum, the St. George Theatre, Sundog Theatre and the Universal Temple of the Arts. Together, these four combined revenues of almost \$5 million dollars, and generate 129 full-time equivalent jobs, \$2.9 million in household income and close to \$300,000 in taxes to the City and State. St. George is also the center of informal gallery spaces on Staten Island. This informal infrastructure has gained more visibility this year through Second Saturday, a monthly gallery walk, which has provided places for the artists to gather regularly and a structure in which the community can participate. However, this structure is built on artists' generosity and investment, rather than on a stable organizational infrastructure.

This Plan recommends supporting this energy by creating more resources for artists including exhibition spaces and artist-centered, shared production spaces, as well as a central coordinating organization that can build capacity to carry out the St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan. The Plan recommends that coordinated promotion and shared marketing be spearheaded by a new umbrella organization that embodies the new dynamic for St. George and for Staten Island. The Plan proposes branding the St. George Sustainable Cultural District as "Art Hill," to expressly build on the significant assets of St. George.

The Plan articulates four main goals that require an ambitious approach to strengthen the organic community core in the heart of downtown St. George.

The four goals of the Plan for Art Hill include: to provide a permanent home for the arts, to connect the downtown streets to the Ferry Terminal in a manner that is safe and walkable, to position St. George as a high visibility gateway for cultural activity in Staten Island, and to ensure that culture supports economic and community vitality.



In order to achieve these goals the St. George Sustainable Cultural District is located in the core of activity downtown, which was also identified by community members at the Visioning Session, and in interviews, as the heart of the cultural community. The boundaries of the cultural district correspond with the boundaries of the St. George Special District, but extend the Eastern boundary past Victory Blvd to Hannah Street and Van Duzer Street, including the natural node of activity around Tompkinsville Park.

Some of the elements that are integral to achieving these goals include:

- New cultural infrastructure: Artists need places to produce and exhibit their work, and the growing artists' community in St. George lacks enough space to satisfy the demand. The St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan proposes a number of new facilities for artists in St. George, including the reuse of the landmarked Police Precinct building on Richmond Terrace and the adjacent Family Court Building to house an arts center and theater complex operated by COAHSI; renovating the Fishs Eddy building on Bay Street to house music and performance facilities including rehearsal spaces and production spaces; constructing an Artists Atrium building to connect St. Marks Place and Central Ave with a covered pedestrian walkway between human-scale buildings that accommodate artists studios on the upper floors and artists supply, exhibition windows and a small grocery store on the ground floor; and reuse of the Sanitation Garage on Victory Blvd and Jersey Street to accommodate heavy production uses and building material salvage center, as well as classrooms, exhibition space and flexible space for other creative needs.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Safe and Walkable Streets:** The St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan proposes street improvements that connect the natural centers of the community to each other, to the waterfront and to the transit center at the Ferry Terminal. The Plan includes proposals to create a safer crossing on Bay Street where it meets Richmond Terrace. It suggests the creation of a pedestrian plaza with wide steps, seating spaces, and room to host a farmers market. The Plan proposes an outdoor amphitheater for performers, traffic calming on Wall Street and Central Ave, and a pedestrian mall on Stuyvesant Street between Wall Street and Schuyler Street. These street improvements will transform the streets of St. George into people friendly public spaces that will be destinations in themselves.

- **Increase Presence of Art:** St. George currently has a concentration of artists in their downtown area, but this is often not apparent to visitors or current residents because of the lack of artistic expression displayed throughout the district. The Plan proposes increasing the presence of art in order to strengthen the visual identity of the district and create more vitality throughout the district that will highlight its unique attributes. The Plan proposes public displays of both temporary and permanent art, incorporating arts in streetscape elements, events that encourage participation, collaborations between artists and schools, and use of community gardens where artists can display their work. These proposals will establish a permanent presence of art that can be adapted by the community to bolster the unique identity of St. George.

- The Art Hill Plan includes revitalization in its goals, it is however intended to achieve this in a sustainable manner. Every artists' enclave in NYC, from SOHO to Williamsburg, from Chelsea to DUMBO, has developed at the expense of the artists themselves. This Plan seeks to address that issue. It includes protections and options for affordable housing and live-work space for the diversity of artists who would find St. George attractive. The first objective is to increase the concentration of artists in the Cultural District, therefore the Plan proposes partnering with real estate agents to advertise the existing affordable housing in St. George and market it to creative producers in New York City through a website. In the mid-term it will be important to protect the community as it grows, and this Plan proposes creating a Cultural Land Trust as a mechanism to restrict the allowable uses to cultural uses only. In the longer-term, it's important to maintain the affordability of the community, and this Plan proposes working with like-minded nonprofit developers to create sustainable, affordable housing. A model that has worked elsewhere in New York City is a blended supportive housing/affordable housing model, and this Plan proposes addressing the special needs in Staten Island in combination with the creation of low-income artists housing.

Implementing the St. George Sustainable Cultural District will require the dedication of a committed group of people to achieve consensus on a strategic plan and incorporate the Art Hill Cultural Development Corporation as a nonprofit tax-exempt entity. COAHSI has agreed to provide basic resources and convene the planning process for this distinct entity through an incubation period, after

which the newly formed board should employ a staff person to raise funds and implement this Plan. The board is a key resource to ensure the success of this Plan that must represent the stakeholders in St. George.

The St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan as it is presented here, builds on the assets of St. George as a gateway for all of Staten Island, and it recommends a number of improvements that will provide a permanent home for artists and increase the visibility of Staten Island's creative activity. There are opportunities today to create permanent cultural infrastructure that will serve as a beacon to the creative communities of New York City, and in the process develop a vibrant neighborhood in downtown Staten Island. This is Staten Island's opportunity to prove that, just like other boroughs in New York City, it can attract artists, create a renowned arts district, and develop a cultural aura at the city, the national, and the international level.





**St. George
SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL
DISTRICT**

- New Cultural Infrastructure
- Pedestrian Area
- Crossing
- Commercial Street
- Slow Street
- Art Street
- Peak Hour Bus Lane
- New Connections
- Bus Stop
- Bike Lane
- Entertainment Center
- Bulbout

ST GEORGE || Cultural_District

II. PROCESS AND PLANNING

II. PROCESS AND PLANNING

I. Prior Plans for St. George

There have been a number of plans and studies in recent years that lay a foundation for the St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan. The relevant recommendations and findings are described below.

Downtown Staten Island Urban Design Plan (March 2008)

The Staten Island Downtown Council commissioned an urban design plan for four distinct cultural districts along the Bay Street Corridor on the North Shore of Staten Island, one of which was the St. George Cultural District. Based on the presence of the existing arts community, the plan proposed strengthening and increasing the concentration of cultural facilities, arts organizations, individual artists and art-based businesses in mixed-use neighborhoods.

The plan also recommended coordinating the development of the entire downtown Staten Island core to preserve the scale of town centers while identifying opportunities to increase density near transit nodes. It also proposes new zoning regulations that would link the protection of historic town centers with the creation of transit-oriented development through the transfer of development rights, which would expire if developers fail to take advantage of the opportunity. The zoning regulations are intended to facilitate the creation of new cultural infrastructure, such as a school of art and design, a center for photography and media, an art park and a museum for contemporary art. The floor area incentives could be used for non-

Downtown Staten Island Urban Design Plan



*Reinventing the Bay Street Corridor and the St. George, Tompkinsville, Stapleton and Clifton Cultural Districts and SIR Transit Nodes
- Downtown Staten Island Council (DSIC)
Prepared by Pablo E. Vengoechea - Zone Architecture (March 2008)*

profit cultural facilities, artists' studios and rehearsal spaces, artists' live-work space and middle-income workforce housing. In addition, the plan proposes a Downtown Staten Island Development Fund, as well as a number of improvements in transportation, green space and pedestrian movement that will support the district's development, including linking cultural and retail areas with a downtown trolley or bus loop and a signage program that celebrates local cultural icons.

Staten Island R/UDAT Report (September 2008)

In 2008, the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce and the American Association of Architects' Staten Island Chapter was successful in obtaining a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team to engage in a comprehensive waterfront planning process. The team made a number of recommendations: people should be able to access the water all around the Island, the creation and adherence to a comprehensive plan, protect critical maritime uses and prioritize alternatives to car travel. In addition, RUDAT also identified St. George as Staten Island's downtown center and recommended that denser development happen in St. George to support new cultural and other infrastructure that Staten Islanders want. The study proposed mixed income housing, design guidelines that prohibit open parking lots, some street redefinition and mandating waterfront access in new developments.

The report cites a number of reasons to invest in St. George as Staten Island's downtown center. A vibrant downtown commercial district would bolster civic pride, support Staten Island's unique

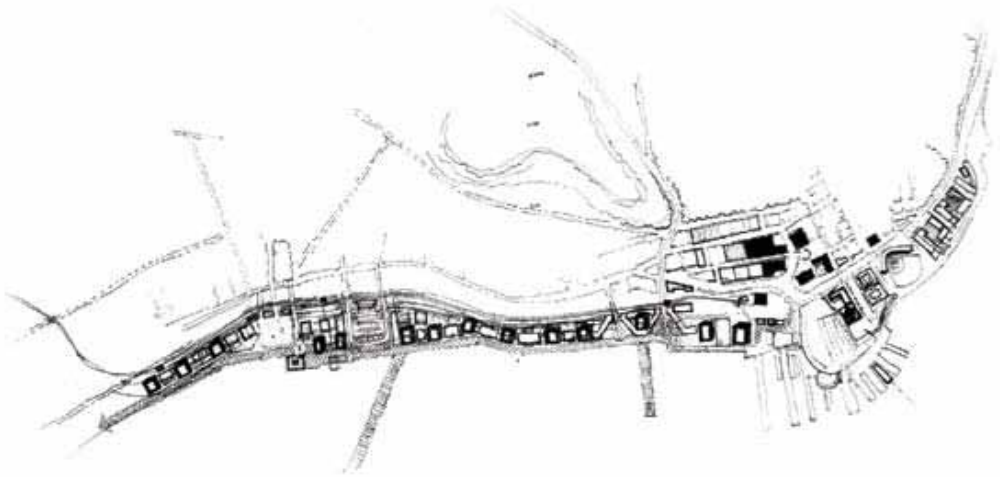
identity and create needed jobs in the retail sector. The team also saw increased development in St. George as a way to use the existing transit infrastructure and reduce the potential pressure on the rest of Staten Island's neighborhoods. In addition, RUDAT pointed out the need to create authentic urban centers that would be attractive to younger workers and members of the creative class. The plan singled out the arts community as a key strength, in addition to the Ferry Terminal, historic buildings and the civic and business activity in St. George. RUDAT identified St. George's biggest weakness as being a lack of stewardship of the street environment and recommended street improvements and the formation of a downtown taskforce or a business improvement district to take responsibility for the quality of the street environment.

The report also contained a special section on the benefits of the arts to community development. RUDAT notes that arts programming and artists solve urban problems, such as vacancy, by occupying and repairing properties in poor condition, and the arts provide a narrative of transformation that adds value to a place. Artists in different positions might be interested in different kinds of opportunities and have different kinds of needs, so efforts shouldn't focus on a single discipline or development model. Younger artists may be more attracted to affordable space, even if it is in poor condition, while it might take more investment to recruit established artists to move their practice to St. George. The study points out that either model may lead to gentrification if there is a lack of regard for the value of local culture or if property is not acquired ahead of time to ensure affordability.

ACTIVE ISLAND CENTERS



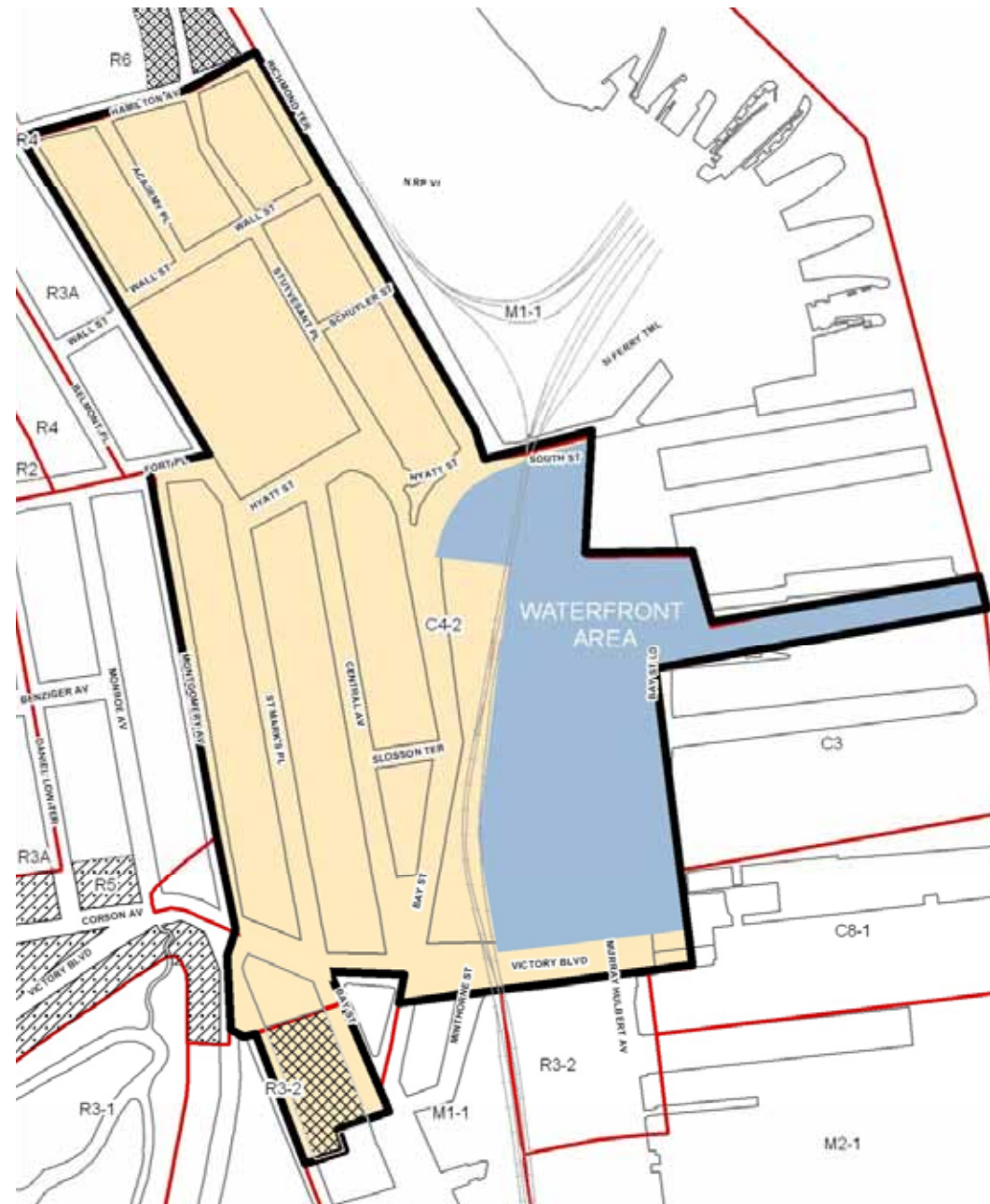
Human Link to Waterfront



Towers set in a waterfront landscape - framing views of Manhattan

*Special St. George District Rezoning
(adopted October 23, 2008)*

On April 10, 2008, the Department of City Planning proposed the St. George Special District with zoning regulations that would encourage new development in St. George while preserving the beautiful views and the commercial nature of certain streets. The goal of the proposal was to increase mixed-uses downtown by encouraging new, high-density, residential construction in the form of slim towers, and retrofitting of vacant office buildings for residential use. In addition, the rezoning proposed changes to the parking requirements that increased the number of parking spaces required for residential development or redevelopment from .8 spaces per unit to 1 space per residential unit. It also required off-street parking to be hidden from the street by either the building itself or landscaping. The St. George Special District was adopted by the City Council on October 23, 2008.



Vision for Staten Island - Working Groups Report to the Steering Committee (September 2010)



Vision for Staten Island is an ongoing inclusive community visioning process to reach consensus on what Staten Island should look like in the future, strategies to get there and a review of current issues. Between December 2008 and February 2009 more than 900 people participated in 50 idea-gathering sessions, and over 3,000 ideas were generated. Fourteen broad visions were drafted, based on these initial ideas, and were tested through 2009 and 2010 through “Reality Check Workshops” and “Topical Workgroups.” These follow-up sessions included experts and stakeholders who helped refine the goals, identify priority projects and propose implementation strategies.

The Vision process identified the core issues that concern Staten Islanders concerned that Staten Island does not receive its fair share of funding for health, education, social services and the arts, and the community wanted better metrics to bolster advocacy efforts. People would like to see more civic pride and community engagement and are

especially concerned that unengaged youth are likely to leave the island. Staten Islanders want to reaffirm and build on “core commitments,” such as the “small town feel,” and the historic commitment to environmentalism. While community networks of social service providers are effective, experts acknowledge that much of the service capacity is in the Island’s “Umbrella CBO’s” and recommends increasing support to these umbrella organizations so they can respond to the growing population. The most critical issues that Staten Islanders identified were related to transportation and governance, and the challenge of addressing these major issues while committing resources to navigating the social and demographic change happening on the Island.

One of the specific topic areas explored by a working group was Arts & Culture. A presentation of the Arts & Culture Working Group’s initial recommendations was made to the Steering Committee on September 14, 2010:

1. Cultivate arts at the grassroots and develop local audiences. This is already happening on the North Shore and the working group recommended establishing a cultural district in St. George to capitalize on existing activity and promote both arts activity and economic development.

2. Provide more resources for the arts including a new cultural center, rehearsal and performance space, low-cost and long-term apartments for artists, schools for the arts, and marketing campaigns. The public would like to see COAHSI, as well as the economic development organizations, be more active in supporting the efforts to generate vibrant

street life created by an active arts community and safe streets.

3. Build alliances of support on and off the Island, including the business community and elected officials, in order to sustain and grow Staten Island’s cultural infrastructure. Staten Island residents want to see the case for culture made on both an economic basis and a quality of life basis, and they want “fair-share” support from the government.

4. Experts identified a fourth goal: to build an institutional connection between the arts community and the schools and help connect artists who want to work in the schools to those opportunities.

Staten Island North Shore Land Use and Transportation Study (November 2010)

On November 10, 2010, the Department of City Planning and the New York City Economic Development Corporation shared draft recommendations following a study of the unique historic and economic assets of the North Shore communities from St. George to Mariners Harbor. The report identified opportunities to expand maritime industry, strengthen neighborhood centers, improve transportation connections, provide access to the waterfront and address environmental concerns. The recommendations centered around 6 geographic areas along the five miles of North Shore, including both downtown St. George and Jersey Street. Achieving this vision by 2030 will require overcoming the biggest challenge identified in St. George: the lack of access—notably for pedestrians—between the waterfront, the Ferry Terminal and the civic center.

The study singled out the intersection of Richmond Terrace and Bay Street as particularly problematic. The proposal identified public land along the waterfront and next to the parking facility that should be redeveloped, and recommended activating the lighthouse museum site with cultural uses, which was described as “underway.” The report also identified public sites that would be available in near future including the police precinct and the family court and recommends re-use for these assets. On Jersey Street, the report identified the perception of high crime and lack of safety on the street as the biggest obstacles, but also saw the potential for Jersey Street to become a vibrant commercial corridor serving and connecting diverse communities, since it sits on the boundary of St. George, New Brighton and Tompkinsville.

The report recommends incentivizing mixed-use infill development on the many empty lots on Jersey Street with contextual height limits (housing on the upper floors of commercial development), improving connections at major intersections for pedestrians and making bicycle connections to the waterfront. The report identified two sites for significant redevelopment: the former Staten Island Hospital site (once ownership questions are resolved), and the sanitation garage at the corner of Jersey Street and Victory Blvd (once the sanitation function has moved elsewhere). The study points out that the sanitation garage is publicly owned and presents a wonderful opportunity to anchor commercial development with community amenities.





Fourth Arts Block , New York City

2. Cultural District Precedents



Cultural districts are zones that have a special character that highlights arts and culture and/or a concentration of cultural activity. There is a huge variety in the composition of cultural districts across the country and around the world, but cultural districts are generally established with the goal of harnessing cultural resources to generate economic development and community revitalization. Cultural districts may put their focus on the arts front and center, or alongside other cultural domains such as heritage, historic preservation, recreation and entertainment. Activities and establishments may be organized as non-profit or for-profit entities. While tax incentives are designed for businesses, non-profit entities can access resources directly from government, and programs can be set-up by government agencies or by nonprofit entities to attract and support individual cultural producers, or artists.

A City's objectives for establishing a cultural district may be to attract artists, encourage business development and job growth, establish tourism, preserve and reuse historic buildings, enhance property values, and/or foster the development of a City's cultural identity. These are all measurable outcomes that feed the larger goals of economic and community development. Economic development is the product of increased tourism, but also of attracting business development that grows into an innovative new downtown milieu. Community development results when the focus is on participation and human development, increasing public space, and creating places for communication and forums to resolve conflicts. The following precedents illustrate some different cultural district strategies and contexts that have relevance for St. George.

Fourth Arts Block

The Fourth Arts Block (FAB) is a naturally occurring cultural district in the heart of the East Village, in New York City, and it is also a nonprofit membership organization representing 60 cultural organizations. The block is home to 12 theaters, 8 dance/rehearsal studios, 3 film-editing suites, and a large screening room. FAB is the first cultural district in Manhattan, and one of only two in New York City. The buildings on this block of East 4th Street have a long history of unions and dancehalls going back to the 1800's, but were seized by the City for an urban renewal project in the late 1950's. The community fought successfully to halt the demolition of their block through the Cooper Square Committee. Starting in the 1960's, theaters and cabarets signed leases with the City and the block filled up with activity. The Cooper Square Committee's mission was to maintain affordable housing, but over the years they also saw that the activity generated by the resident theaters increased economic activity and foot traffic, and they wanted the arts to have a permanent home on the block. FAB was formed as a separate organization in 2001 to negotiate with the City on behalf of the theaters.

Speaking with one voice, FAB convinced the City to transfer 8 buildings to the theaters in residence for \$1 each in 2005, with a deed restriction to ensure the buildings will always be used for a cultural purpose. The buildings had all

Paducah, Kentucky

Paducah, Kentucky is a small town with a population of 13,000 in the northwest corner of the state. Home to the Museum of the American Quilt, Paducah decided to build on that asset to create a cultural district by attracting artists to relocate to their town. Paducah's economic development department launched the Artist Relocation Program to attract artists to purchase buildings for as little as \$1 in a historic district called Lower Town. In return, artists are required to restore their buildings to a strict code and maintain creative workspace or revenue generating commercial activity or public activity. Additional incentives are offered to artists through a partnership with Paducah Bank: artists can apply for a \$2,500 grant for architectural fees as well as moving assistance up to \$2500, start-up business assistance up to \$2500, renovation costs up to \$5000, acquisition assistance up to \$15,000, and a restaurant incentive up to \$25,000.



The Paducah City Commission combined the City's efforts in 2008 to promote both areas under a new umbrella organization called the Paducah Renaissance Alliance. They combined Paducah's historic Downtown, Lower Town and the adjacent Riverfront Redevelopment District into a "Renaissance Area," and worked with City Planning staff to recruit and retain businesses and attract tourists. The continued work led to the Renaissance Area Masterplan, which included recommendations to unify branding, examine tourist traffic flow, develop a unified streetscape plan, as well as redevelop an old manufacturing site into the Paducah Arts School, which will directly connect to the arts district in Lower Town.

The artists of Lower Town have planned a number of volunteer and benefit events and festivals that build on their adopted community's sense of identity and their ownership in Paducah. Some of the galleries in the Lower Town Arts District are open to the public five days a week, but the artists also host a Second Saturdays studio and gallery walk every month with extended hours. One thing that new artists felt was most important was continuing



The program was proposed by an artist, and initiated by the Paducah City Planning Department. The first year the program was started, in 2000, Paducah attracted 8 artists into the program. The second year around 20 more moved to Paducah, and now there are 70 artists living in Lower Town. Based on the influx of artists and creative activity, the Lower Town Arts District was established. As a neighborhood adjacent to the historic downtown's cast iron district, the Lower Town Arts District benefited from the resources available through the established nonprofit organization, Paducah MainStreet, and its participation in the Federal Main Street program. Particularly in the areas of capacity building and technical assistance, the City created synergies between the two adjacent historic districts.

Bordeaux, France

arts education and opportunities for critique and creative developments. As a result, they organized the Paducah Arts Alliance to bring in well-regarded artists as Artists-in-Residence.

Americans for the Arts conducted a study for Paducah that measured the economic impact of Paducah's art scene to be \$27.8 million in 2007, most of which was brought into the community by tourists. The State collected \$1.3 million in sales tax and the City of Paducah collected \$473,000. The program leveraged \$35 million of investment in the built environment of LowerTown in addition to Paducah's \$3 million initial investment. While always actively planning in a changing environment, the City of Paducah considers the Artist Relocation Program to be a success that has allowed them to build a diverse and sustainable downtown and Arts District. This has led them to be even more ambitious in the Riverfront Redevelopment and the long term investment in their City.

The City Hall of Bordeaux, France engaged in an ambitious project of renewal by establishing a historic and cultural district in an area between the belt of an arterial boulevard and the Garonne River. The City's objectives were to create an active, friendly and inhabited cultural district, as well as make connections and add value to the central district of the City. This renewal project includes significant infrastructure projects: the tramway, the reorganization of places, the reconstruction of the waterfront and the boulevard. For the future of the cultural district, City government and private partners agreed on three goals, which were to prioritize quality of life and urban comfort, to assert the connection between economic and cultural activities, and to offer a contemporary housing environment in a protected heritage area.

Bordeaux is a Port City on the Garonne River in southwest France, with an estimated population of 250,082. The historic part of the City is on the UNESCO World Heritage List as "an outstanding urban and architectural ensemble" of the 18th century. With the project of renewal—including preserving the historic and cultural district and the waterfront renewal—a new dynamic was given to the city. The waterfront redevelopment created a public promenade along the bank of the river, which includes wide green spaces, playing fields, open spaces for temporary programming and commercial areas with outdoor cafes. The promenade supports a variety of cultural activities including street theater, festivals and artistic exhibitions today.

In addition, the City has been studying the repurposing of an industrial area that was the site of a number of maritime industries, collectively known as the Wet Docks. The project is progressing in dialogue with the community and is searching for financing. The plan includes the creation of a wine museum and showroom adjacent to the waterfront promenade, private and social housing in an ecological and sustainable district, housing for artists, educational facilities and creative production facilities.

One facility in the Wet Docks area is already in active cultural use; a former German submarine base has been re-purposed for exhibitions, performances and large concerts. The more extensive renewal of the Wet Docks will facilitate the transformation of a place of production to the exhibition of art in a dynamic new residential district.



Bordeaux, France-The Waterfront Project

The Waterfront Project

1. Green spaces + sport activities
2. Green Spaces + water mirror
3. Green spaces
4. Mineral and green spaces
5. Commercial spaces



CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL DISTRICTS

According to the *National Assembly of State Arts Agencies 2008 policy brief on State Cultural Districts*, a number of factors are important to the success of cultural districts:

- Strong and ongoing partnerships to leverage resources
- Developers and landowners
- Cultural organizations and artists
- Government agencies
- Inclusive visioning process and community support
- Demarcation of the district
- Coordinated marketing and promotion
- Accessible venues and events
- Amenities for visitors
- Sustainable live-work space for artists
- New artist recruitment that makes artists feel welcome
- Unique community identity

CHALLENGES OF ESTABLISHING A CULTURAL DISTRICT

A number of challenges can prevent cities from fully benefiting from a cultural district. According to the *National Assembly of State Arts Agencies 2008 policy brief on State Cultural Districts*, these are a number of challenges commonly faced by cities who want to establish cultural districts:

- Gentrification and the loss of the unique identity the district intended to promote
- Administration and sufficient staffing to meet goals
- Resource development and financing
- Relevance for local residents, not only tourists
- Ongoing planning and evaluation
- Speculators keeping vacant properties off the market

3. Sustainability

Sustainability can be conceptualized as an attempt to achieve a balance between social, economic, and environmental goals. As shown in illustration below, sustainability requires the simultaneous reconciliation of three imperatives: the environmental imperative to stay within the biophysical carrying capacity of the planet; the economic imperative to provide an adequate material standard of living for all; and the social imperative to provide systems of governance that allow people to live according to environmental and human values.



Too often, the social dimension of sustainability is overlooked. Sustainability is generally conceived as a tension between economic development and environmental preservation, looking toward technical solutions to improve the ecological efficiency of cities. However, true sustainability redefines the values and standards of society through a democratic process to find a new consensus on how and to whom resources are redistributed. It is by essence democratic with citizens involved in decision-making to ensure that the outcome is fair for all, including future generations. Sustainability reintroduces the importance of thinking about current and future generations in parallel. A balance has to be found between short-, mid-, and long-term goals, so short-term gains do not cause harm in the long-term.

The simultaneous pursuit of ecological, economic, and social imperatives as well as short-, mid-, and long-term goals may generate tensions between different sets of goals and values. These conflicts go beyond a mere problem of translation across disciplines or miscommunication between actors. They may reveal fundamental contradictions. For example, tensions may arise from imperative to grow the economy while at the same time remain within the carrying capacity of the environment. Alternatively, a strict adherence to environmental protection may exacerbate social inequalities and lead to environmental exclusion of the current residents.

By making sustainability integral to this Plan, these challenges must be addressed directly. The St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan intends to demonstrate that: (1) it is possible to revitalize the economy of a neighborhood through art and culture; (2) do so in a manner that will involve and benefit all current and future residents; and (3) do so while respecting and enhancing the natural environment within its boundaries now and in the future.

III. ST.GEORGE TODAY

III. ST. GEORGE TODAY

I. Neighborhood Character

Rich History, Beautiful Landscape, Unfortunate Perceptions

St. George has a unique neighborhood character with several aspects that give it a distinct personality. St. George's development history and dramatic landscape are assets that the St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan builds upon. Current street conditions, however, are a challenge that must be addressed if the Plan is to be successful. This section touches upon the history and landscape of St. George, as well as crime and perceptions of safety that haunt the district.

History

The long history of development on the northernmost point of Staten Island, now known as St. George, provides a number of assets that the St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan builds upon. It has been the most densely developed part of Staten Island, with a full range of urban functions located in St. George since the 19th century. Staten Island as a whole was populated by an agrarian society of well-to-do families engaged in the oyster harvesting, ship building and fishing industries. The community now called St. George was previously called New Brighton, after the English resort town, and was originally developed as a resort community for wealthy New Yorkers and Southern plantation owners looking for cooler climates during the summer.

The first steam ferry service began between Manhattan and the island in 1817, allowing wealthy New Yorkers to make their graceful homes year round in Staten Island. The growth of the area prompted civic leaders to build transportation networks to connect the Ferry Terminal to the rest of the island, including train and trolley lines. Legend has it that St. George was renamed as part of a real estate deal to obtain right-of-way for the train lines to connect to the Ferry Terminal.

By the beginning of the 20th Century, St. George was the center for civic activity in Staten Island, and a municipal center befitting this important function was designed and built by John Carrere and Thomas Hastings above the ferry, including Borough Hall, the County Courthouse and the St. George Public Library, all of which are designated Landmarks today. There are also 78 designated Landmarks in the St. George-New Brighton Historic District, designated in 1994, which protect mostly residential buildings in a mix of architectural styles. An extension of the Historic District is currently under consideration by the New York City Landmarks Commission.

By the late 19th Century, industrial uses had developed on the waterfront of St. George, where railroads brought industrial products to the docks and goods would be loaded onto waiting ships. St.

George today no longer has an industrial waterfront. The innovation of mechanized shipping and large container vessels shifted the industry to Port Washington and Port Newark, and the construction of the Verrazano Bridge in 1964, shifted the flow of commuters along with development and commerce to the interior of Staten Island. The neighborhood and all of the formerly industrial North Shore fell into decline for many years. In the last twenty years, many artists have been attracted to the historic homes and low cost of living on the North Shore, especially in St. George, and have slowly revitalized many of the North Shore communities.

The transportation hub is still a central feature in St. George, with both positive and negative affects. It allows for easy accessibility to Manhattan for St. George and other Staten Island residents, who rely on the infrastructure in St. George instead of spending time in the community.

St. George Historic Map

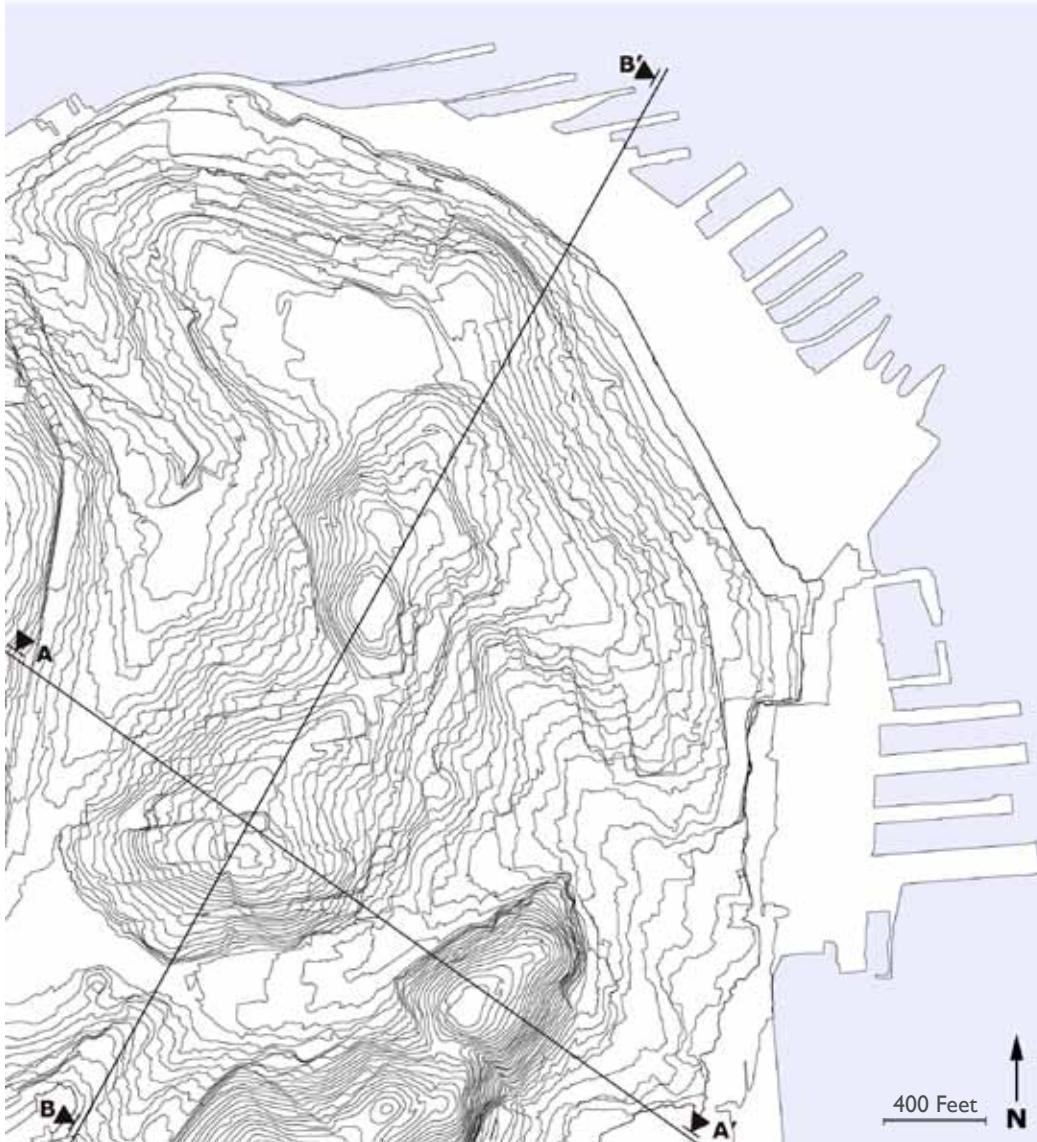


Landscape

The landscape in St. George is an essential aspect of the neighborhood’s character, with several hills towering over the waterfront and abundant green vegetation throughout. Its location near the transit hub allows for easy accessibility to other areas of Staten Island by bus or by foot, including the Green Belt and other park systems. The steep topography provides a number of beautiful vistas on New York Bay and across the Bay to Lower Manhattan. However, the steep topography has several consequences on the organization of the district. There is significant elevation change from sea level, where the ferry lands, to Richmond Terrace and Bay Street, where Borough Hall, the County Court, and the business corridors are located. This physical separation has the effect of breaking the link between St. George and its waterfront. The spatial lack of continuity between the waterfront and the community is a barrier for pedestrians traveling from the ferry to the district.

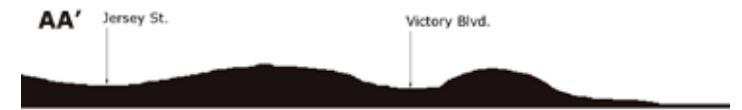
In the interior of St. George, the topography does not create the same kind of barrier. Houses were built jutting over steep hillsides or nestled into them, but the arterials street system was designed to follow the topography along the valleys on Jersey Street and Victory Blvd, with connections across some of the hills, or following the contour around the hills. Residents reported that the topography creates a barrier between the waterfront-facing part of the district and the valley along Jersey Street. The topography can also be difficult to navigate for persons with reduced mobility including the elderly, families with small children or strollers and people with other handicaps. The combination of these hills with the waterfront is one of the most striking landscape features. Unfortunately waterfront access is limited to four points along Richmond Terrace and Bay Street in St. George.





St. George Topography Map

Sections



Crime and Perceptions of Safety

Like the rest of New York City, Staten Island has become safer over the past 10 years. However, statistics indicate that the 120th Precinct, which covers the North Shore, has the highest concentration of crime on Staten Island. Of greater concern is the fact that assaults have been particularly high in the North Shore. Although the number of robberies and assaults have stabilized or declined in recent years, 64% of robberies and 65% of assaults that occur on Staten Island occur in the 120th Precinct, a disproportionate share. The perception of danger is particularly heightened at night where several features of St. George's built environment contribute to make visitors and residents feel isolated, and unsafe. Some of these features are listed below:

Poor Night-Time Lighting – At night, there are a number of areas of darkness; for example, in the corners of the Lighthouse Museum plaza, from the Ferry Terminal to Victory Blvd; next to public parks; on Slosson Terrace, and stretches of St. Marks Place, Academy Place, Stuyvesant Place and Hamilton Ave.

Parking Lots – After dark, parking lots become vacant lots with no natural street activity. Community residents have no reason to be there, so there is little possibility of positive street activity occurring at these locations at night. Vacant parking lots automatically become less desirable places to walk and deter pedestrians.

High Fence Walls – High walls are physical barriers that segregate one population from another. At Ralph R. McKee Career and Technical Education High School and at Nicholas Lia Memorial Park, the high walls on St. Marks Place may have been well intentioned based on building design and usage, but after dark these walls create a dark and threatening environment.

No Adjacent Street Uses – Streets that lack adjacent uses, such as residences, stores or buildings, are perceived to be unsafe. This characterization includes vacant lots and parking lots, but also pertains to stretches of sidewalk on Bay Street and Richmond Terrace that are isolated from the other, more active side of the street by a 60 to 70 foot wide roadway.

Areas with Little Foot Traffic – The areas described above have little foot traffic due to their surrounding features, but some areas of St. George have no foot traffic because they are simply inaccessible. The Lighthouse Museum plaza is a waterfront area that capitalizes on St. George's assets with pedestrian friendly walkways and views, but is only accessible through the underbelly of the Staten Island Ferry parking lot or by a high staircase on Victory Blvd. Unfortunately the isolation and lack of access to the area makes it a foreboding place, even though it is reasonably lit at night.

All of the features listed above have one overarching theme in common: they all lead a person to feel as if there is no one watching in case of an emergency. By contrast, a street that has sidewalk activity provides a critical number of eyes on the street, providing those who use that street a certain sense of safety and comfort. No one wants to be the only one walking down a street – no matter how well lit or technically “safe” that street may be. Perceptions of safety, and real reductions in crime, can be addressed by increasing the walkability of the district and decreasing the chances that someone will be isolated by a parking lot, a vacant lot or the wrong side of a wide street. In addition, by adding a mix of uses that attracts street activity in the day and the night St. George can make sure there are always “eyes on the street” to discourage crime and make residents and visitors feel safe.

Conclusion – St. George has a number of assets such as its beautiful hillside landscape, historic character and waterfront access, which are key to identify and are incorporated into the St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan. However, challenges such as perceptions of safety and accessibility must be addressed.

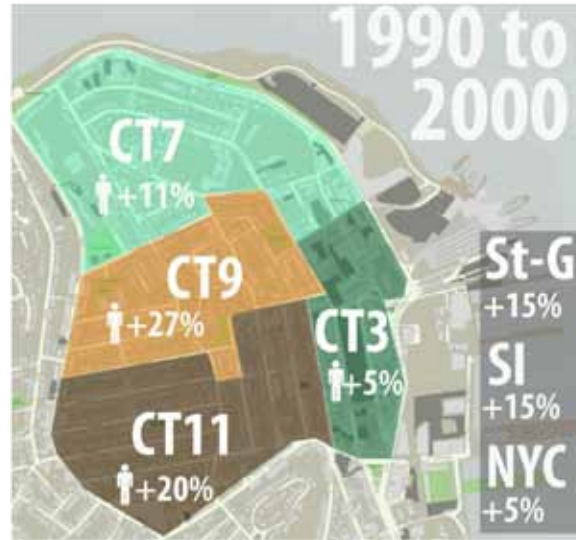
2. Community and Demographics

A Unique Neighborhood in NY

St. George is a rapidly growing community made up of less affluent but young, single, working, educated residents. Most residents belong to a minority racial or ethnic group. The overwhelming majority of St. George residents are also renters. There are significant differences in the spatial distribution of race, income and ethnic origin within the district. Many aspects of the neighborhood demography—including racial diversity, income, foreign-born population, age and type of family household—distinguish St. George from the rest of Staten Island. This community is unique and will not be amenable to a one-size-fits-all cultural district model.

This demographic analysis is based on data from the 2000 Census, which is accurate at the Census Tract level. The 2010 Census will provide updated data in 2011, which should be used to update this analysis, when it becomes available. St. George includes four Census Tracts (CT): CT3 adjacent to the ferry, CT7 along the north waterfront, CT9 in the interior and CT11 covering the South side of St. George.

St. George is growing fast, from 10,834 residents in 1990 to 12,503 in 2000. Just like the rest of the island, the population of St. George has grown at more rapid pace than New York City. From 1990 to 2000, the population in both St. George and Staten Island grew by 15%, while the rest of NYC grew



by 5%. As above map indicates, CT9 (+27%) and CT11 (+20%) are areas that have grown more rapidly than CT7 and CT3. As Staten Island is expected to grow by 24% from 2000 to 2030 according to NYC demographers, it is reasonable to expect the rate of growth to continue at this fast pace.

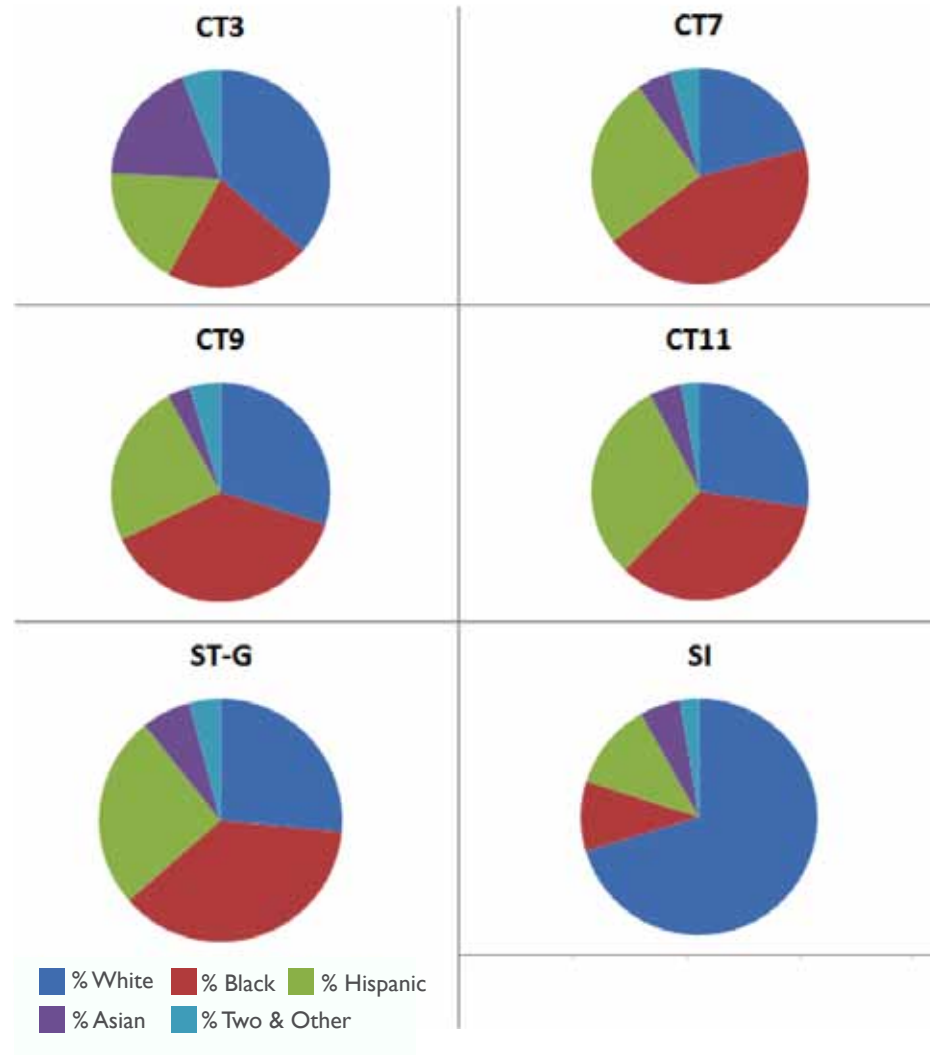
St. George has a younger, working age population, with fewer families and retirees than average. The percentage of non-family households (46%) is almost twice as high as that in Staten Island (27%) and higher than that of NYC (34%).

Residents are on average 31.5 years old, younger than the average for Staten Island (36 years old) or for New York City (36 years old).

St. George also has a larger immigrant population (28%) than Staten Island (16%) or New York City (20%). CT3 has the most immigrants (40%), CT9 has the least (18%).

St. George is a middle-class neighborhood where income is slightly lower, but more residents have college degrees. The neighborhood is neither as well off (\$36,670) as the rest of NYC (\$43,393) or Staten Island (\$55,039), nor an extremely poor community. Nevertheless, there are significant income disparities between racial groups. For example, Hispanics in CT7 and CT9 earn on average \$10,000 less than Hispanics in CT3 and CT11. High School education (77%) is similar to the New York City (79%) and slightly lower than Staten Island average (84%), but the percentage of residents with “at least a Bachelor degree” is much higher (32%) than New York City (23%) or Staten Island (23%).

Conclusion – As described above, St. George has specific demographic characteristics that make the neighborhood unique. In many regards, St. George has more in common with certain parts of Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx or Manhattan than with its direct surrounding area. The built environment is more urban and the population is more diverse: foreign born, young, working, single and less affluent. At the same time, St. George has a “small town feel” and an isolated context, relative to the other boroughs of New York City, that sets it apart. St. George is a rapidly growing middle-class neighborhood that welcomes individuals from all races, origins, and ages, and therefore demands a unique Plan for the St. George Sustainable Cultural District that is “inclusive,” “culturally sensitive” and “accessible” to all residents.





DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

Staten Island Ferry

3. Transportation Center

An Asset and a Liability

The St. George Ferry Terminal is the gateway between Staten Island and rest of New York City. The twice-hourly arrival and departure of the orange ferry boats structures the ebb and flow of pedestrians, cars, and buses in St. George. No other institution or land use exerts such a strong effect upon life in St. George. In terms of its sheer physical footprint and the number of people that use it, the Ferry Terminal (including its parking lots, bus ramps, car ramps, bus stations, rail stations, and pedestrian ramps) dwarfs everything else in the neighborhood. The “Ferry Terminal” is actually a massive transportation complex—a combination of terminals. It is at all times a ferry terminal, a subway terminal, a bus terminal, a car terminal, a pedestrian terminal, and a bicycle terminal. This section will show how the Terminal is St. George’s greatest potential asset, yet because of a misplaced focus on automobile rather than pedestrian access, it has been turned into a liability. An overview of each component of the Ferry Terminal is provided here.



Each weekday, the Staten Island Ferry transports 65,000 passengers between the Battery in Manhattan and St. George in Staten Island. According to the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), which operates the ferry service, the ferry’s annual ridership of 21 million passengers make it the 7th busiest transit station in New York City, between Penn Station (#6) and 59th Street - Columbus Circle (#8). The Staten Island Advance reported that ridership on the free ferry has grown by 10% over the past three years as the economy makes expensive commuting options less popular, such as express bus service to Manhattan. Ferry service is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by a fleet of 8 ships operating on a five boat shift Monday to Friday and a three boat shift on Saturdays and Sundays. The two largest ships can carry 6,000 passengers each, three newer ships carry 4,400 passengers each, and the smallest ships carry 1,280 passengers each. The St. George Ferry Terminal was officially reopened in 2005 after a \$130 million renovation. According to the 2000 Census, 28% of all workers living in St. George took the Manhattan bound Ferry to work each day.

Currently, the ramps leading to the Ferry Terminal are undergoing a \$175 million renovation with stimulus funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. According to DOT, the project includes the rehabilitation of 8 ramps, demolition and reconstruction of the North Ramp, architectural improvements to the bus gates and canopies, improvements to pedestrian access

and the creation of a bikeway and parking facility for cyclists. The project also includes refurbishing the Flute Sculpture, painting all structures, installation of new drainage and paving the North Municipal Parking Lot.

One of the widest of the 8 ramps is the Automobile Loading and Unloading Ramp. Once used for loading vehicles on and off the ferry, this ramp has not been used for its intended purpose since the 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, when ferry service for automobiles was discontinued. Two-thirds of this ramp is now being used for parking. The remaining lane is used as a temporary exit to the Kiss-and-Ride. The ramp creates a significant barrier for people walking to and from the Ferry Terminal because of its excessive width. Despite the fact that it is no longer being used for its intended purpose and hinders pedestrian access to the ferry, it is nonetheless being renovated as part of the ARRA project.

Despite the costly 2005 renovation of the Ferry Terminal, finding one’s way out of the Terminal remains a difficult task for anyone who is not intimately familiar with its unmarked exits. A fundamental task of signage in a transit station is to help passengers find “The Street” – if anything, safety requires it – yet this Terminal lacks any signs indicating where the street exits can be found. In addition to being a safety hazard, it may be a partial explanation as to why Staten Island cannot capitalize on the thousands of tourists who arrive at its doorstep each day.

III. ST. GEORGE TODAY - Transportation Center

The lack of signage may also explain why so many people exit the Terminal through the bus gates and continue walking past the canopies into the bus right-of-way: they are looking for the street. The DOT is currently trying to end these incursions by building a wall that blocks pedestrians. Perhaps a better way to resolve this safety issue is by putting up a sign. The signage problem goes beyond safety and finding the street – there are also no signs indicating nearby attractions like the adjacent Lighthouse Museum Plaza, the 9/11 Memorial and Esplanade, or even Borough Hall.

The Ferry Terminal is designed like an airport rather than a railroad station: it is surrounded by parking lots completely disconnecting it from the St. George community. It has its own train station, its own bus terminal, its own parking lots – even its own taxi stands. The Terminal has been designed to transport 65,000 daily passengers without ever interacting with the neighborhood. This is a loss to St. George. As businesses in St. George struggle to attract visitors - despite the 65,000 people surging through its borders every day – It is clear that the design of the Ferry Terminal deprives St. George of the foot-traffic all downtowns need to survive.



The Bus Terminal

The St. George Ferry Terminal is the site of the largest bus terminal in Staten Island. The 24 bus lines arriving and departing from the Terminal have a combined daily ridership of 67,500 passengers. This number actually exceeds the daily ridership of the Staten Island Ferry. Overwhelmingly, the majority of ferry passengers reach the ferry by bus. Almost all of the bus lines (20 of the 24) approach and depart the Ferry Terminal from the south via Bay Street. If the Ferry Terminal is the heart of public transportation in Staten Island, then the quarter mile long section of Bay Street between the Ferry Terminal and Victory Blvd is its jugular. Yet despite the importance of this critical artery, there are no dedicated bus lanes on this three-block strip, forcing the 67,500 Staten Island residents aboard these buses to contend with automobile traffic at this choke point.

St. George is surrounded by bus routes that link it to almost every neighborhood in Staten Island. It is the most transit rich neighborhood on the island. The neighborhood also benefits from two bus routes that serve its interior. On the other hand, these bus lines are all timed to reach the Ferry Terminal at the same time which means that on the weekends the buses only run at one hour intervals, and at 30 minute intervals on week days. That is a significant amount of time to wait between buses. Despite this fact, buses remain the most used form of mass transit in Staten Island. According to the 2000 Census, 18% of all workers living in St. George take a bus to their place of work every day.

The Staten Island Railway Station

According to the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), the Staten Island Railway station inside the Ferry Terminal serves approximately 13,000 riders per day. This is one of only two stations in the New York City Transit System which requires a Metrocard to be swiped upon entrance and upon exit – therefore the numbers are particularly precise for this station. In terms of ridership, this station ranks approximately 110 out of 468 subway stations, according to the MTA. As impressive as this may sound, this number is dwarfed by the 67,500 riders using the buses and the 65,000 using the ferry. If anything, one must wonder why the railroad is under-utilized as a mode to access the ferry. The Staten Island Railway runs the entire length of Staten Island and has 22 stations. According to the 2000 Census, 8% of all workers living in St. George take the railroad to their place of work every day.

Automobile access

As previously mentioned, the Ferry Terminal is surrounded by parking lots that physically separate it from downtown St. George. There are two lots: the North Municipal Parking Lot and the South Municipal Parking Lot. They contain a combined 750 parking spaces. These two parking lots use more land at the Ferry Terminal than all of the other transportation modes (bus, train, and ferry) combined, yet represent – at most – only 9% of the ferry's total ridership, assuming the two municipal parking lots are full every day, and assuming a

generous ratio of 2 passengers per vehicle, coming and going each day. Access over or into these parking lots is provided by five large ramps that make walking to the Terminal particularly difficult. 364 of the 750 municipal spaces are available at a rate of \$300 per quarter. This means that it is significantly less expensive to drive a vehicle to the ferry than to take the bus (\$3.30 per day versus \$4.50 per day). The combination of oversupplying and under-pricing incentivizes driving to the Terminal and creates congestion in the critical Bay Street transit artery. According to the 2000 Census, only 33% of St. George residents drive a car to work. The other 67% either walk, bike or take mass transit.

Pedestrian access

Pedestrian access from St. George to the Ferry Terminal is currently limited to two ramps. Neither ramp is positioned in a convenient location for access to downtown St. George. One ramp, adjacent to the baseball stadium, leads to the waterfront promenade first and adds several hundred feet to one's walk in order to circumvent the parking lots. The second pedestrian ramp is in front of the Borough President's Office and immediately next to the car and bus access ramps to the Terminal. The crosswalk leading to this ramp has been the site of a pedestrian death, and of less than a dozen non-fatal accidents involving pedestrians according to CrashStat.org. The crosswalk leading to the stadium

ramp is relatively safer, having been the site of less than 6 non-fatal accidents involving pedestrians, and no fatal accidents. Pedestrian access from south of the Ferry Terminal is particularly treacherous. An approach along the east side of Bay Street would force a pedestrian to cross 6 (multi-lane) access ramps before reaching the pedestrian walkway. An approach from south of the Ferry Terminal along the west side of Bay Street would force a pedestrian to cross the crosswalk where the pedestrian death occurred (and where multiple non-fatal accidents have occurred) and to also cross Borough Place (where another non-fatal pedestrian accident occurred.)

Pedestrians are accustomed to crossing streets at street corners, and the most prominent street corner near the Ferry Terminal is the corner where Richmond Terrace and Bay Street meet Borough Place. This corner has no crosswalks. Pedestrians are left wondering how to cross the dangerous intersection. Some hesitate before realizing that they must use a mid-block crossing that takes them 50 feet out of their way in order to reach the Terminal. Some simply walk into the dangerous 6-way intersection where the five ferry ramps meet Bay Terrace. All of these inconveniences add up to a very stressful, dangerous and dissatisfying walking experience to and from the Ferry Terminal for most pedestrians.

The DOT's plan for the rehabilitation of the existing ramps envisions the erection of a wall between the bus bays and the main pedestrian ramp located in front of Borough Hall. This is being done to address complaints by bus drivers that many pedestrians use the bus right-of-way to find their way to the street. The idea is to erect a wall between the sidewalk and the street all along the pedestrian ramp. However, this plan ignores the fact that due to the lack of signage in the Ferry Terminal many ferry passengers exit the Terminal through the bus bay exits and can only find their way back to the pedestrian walkway by walking across the bus terminal and onto the sidewalk. By erecting this wall, these people will be trapped in the bus bay with no access to the safety of the sidewalk. Erecting a wall along the pedestrian walkway seems like a solution that only increases the danger in an already dangerous place. According to the 2000 US Census, only 8% of St. George residents walk to work; however, 28% take the ferry to work. The number of residents who walk to the ferry is unclear.



Ferry Ramps



Ferry Ramps Wall

Bicycle Access

There is a Class 2 bike lane on Richmond Terrace, which ends abruptly at Borough Hall with no clear indication as to how to enter the Ferry Terminal. There is a Class 3 bike lane on Bay Street, which leads to the Ferry Terminal, and takes cyclists into the lower level parking lot with no indication where to go once they arrive there. There have been injuries to people riding bicycles at the point where the Richmond Terrace bike lane ends, and at the point where the Bay Street bike path meets the Ferry Terminal. People with bicycles may not enter the Ferry Terminal building. They must descend to the lower level parking lot where they must consent to search by a Homeland Security Administration officer and a bomb-sniffing dog. Cyclists must remain in a 20' by 10' area until the ferry arrives, at which point they are given the signal to walk their bikes to the ferry. The waiting area has no heating or air conditioning, but it is protected from the rain. Within this outdoor area there are bike racks, benches and a police booth. According to the DOT, a bike rack will be placed on the upper level of the Ferry Terminal as part of the improvements to the Terminal. It is not clear where the waiting and bomb-sniffing area will be. It is also not clear why passengers with bicycles must be treated so differently from ordinary passengers. According to the 2000 Census, only 1% of St. George residents ride a bike to work.

Conclusion

Due to its lack of pedestrian connectivity to St. George, the Staten Island Ferry Terminal is currently a liability rather than an asset to the economic vitality of the neighborhood. The Ferry Terminal contributes traffic, congestion and creates an insatiable demand for parking by residents outside of St. George. As the Land Use section will demonstrate, this insatiable demand for parking space has eaten away at the fabric of the downtown by converting large portions of it into parking lots. By the same token, the focus on automobile access to the Terminal has reduced what should be a torrent of foot-traffic between St. George and the Terminal into a trickle - depriving the downtown of thousands of potential shoppers, tourists, and commuters. The connection between the Ferry Terminal and St. George must be substantially strengthened so that there is a natural flow between the streets of St. George and the Ferry Terminal.



Bay St

KEEP
→
RIGHT

4. Urban Design

Unique and Diverse Forms, Lacking Overall Coherency and Connectivity

Geographically, St. George has three distinct areas: the waterfront, the upland civic center and further inland, the hills. The built environments within these areas have distinct differences in form and function. The waterfront features pedestrian promenades and marine infrastructure, while the upland civic center features government, commercial and institutional buildings. Further inland, the hilly topography is the setting for a residential neighborhood, primarily older, single-family homes. This section will discuss four distinct aspects of the built environment in St. George: architecture, open space and parks, connectivity and view corridors, and streetscape

Architecture

Architecturally, each area contains different forms and styles. Some of the most prominent building styles in the primarily residential area are Tudor, Colonial Revival, Second Empire and Victorian. Most homes in St. George are two and three story single-family detached residences. There are also a few multi-family residential buildings including two high-rise apartment complexes on St. Marks Place between Hamilton Ave and Nicholas Streets. The most recent residential development in the area includes houses with a New Urbanist aesthetic, which tend to be smaller than the older homes in the neighborhood. Many homes in St. George were

built around turn of the 20th Century, and some date back to the 1800's. The designated Landmark District is in the northwest quadrant of St. George, beginning a block inland from Richmond Terrace, encompassing homes on Westervelt Ave, St. Marks Place and Carroll Place. There may be a significant expansion of the district in the near future, though the new boundaries are not in place. The Landmarks Commission is considering extending the St. George Historic District to include additional properties on St. Marks Place, including Curtis High School, located on St. Marks Place and Hamilton Ave. Built in 1904, Curtis is the oldest High School on Staten Island.

In the upland area, large classical revival buildings are prominent. Many are five story governmental and institutional buildings, and are the most visible structures from the ferry. Their bulk, style and geographic context portray the significance of their official uses, including Borough Hall, completed in 1906, Richmond County Courthouse, completed in 1916, the Staten Island Borough Library, the Staten Island Police Department, and the Staten Island Savings Bank, all built in neo-classical styles. The Staten Island Museum, a neo-colonial three story building and the St. George Theater, an art deco building completed in 1929 are also nearby, on St. Marks Place and Hyatt Streets, bordering the residential district.

The majority of commercial buildings are also located in the upland area, adjacent to the residential district, most heavily concentrated on Victory Blvd between Bay Street and Jersey Street. Most of these buildings are two and three stories, with ground floor commercial and upper floor residential uses. Some newer, glass office buildings exist as well, within and around the civic center and downtown area. Taller office buildings are clustered and along Bay Street and Richmond Terrace.



Open Space and Parks

Although Staten Island has more parks and open space than any other borough, St. George itself is lacking. Council District 49, which encompasses much of the North Shore, including St. George, has relatively low proportions of parkland. According to New Yorkers for Parks, total acreage in District 49 is 8,397, but the total parkland acreage is 794, only 9%, while the New York City average is 14%. The 9% includes the 209 acres of Silver Lake Park, 198 acres of Clove Lakes Park and the 83 acres of Snug Harbor—almost 500 acres of parkland, all outside of St. George. This means that St. George is especially lacking in usable open space. In addition, the average number of community gardens per 1,000 acres is less than 1 in Council District 49, while the citywide average is 4 community gardens per 1,000 acres—quadruple the amount.

The total vacant lot acreage in District 49 is 616, or 7%, while New York City's vacancy average is of 4%. While parkland is lacking, vacant lots are not. Vacant lots by definition are unoccupied parcels of land. In St. George there are many vacant lots that occupy 100 feet or more of street frontage that have no current uses and no occupants, either residential or commercial. With no natural street activity happening at these sites and fewer community residents in the vicinity, there is little possibility of positive street activity occurring at these locations at night. Vacant lots automatically become less desirable places to walk and deter pedestrians. These conditions detract from the vitality and pedestrian presence. Downtown

St. George has an opportunity to increase open space significantly at waterfront areas on either side of the Ferry Terminal. One is the North Shore Esplanade, just north of the ferry on the waterfront side of Richmond Terrace, with the adjacent 911 Memorial, and the other is the plaza area by the Lighthouse Museum, south of the ferry. Accessibility to these areas is lacking and therefore

these spaces are underused. There are promenade areas integrated along the streetscapes of Richmond Terrace and also along Bay Street, with waterfront views and seating. However, these areas are lacking human use and pedestrian activity. St. George has a number of smaller parks including Lt. Lia Playground, Pinocchio Park, Fort Hill Park, and Mahoney and Davis Playgrounds.



Connectivity and View Corridors

Visually, St. George creates an interesting dilemma for connectivity and corridors. The bulk and scale of the larger buildings upland act as a barrier for connectivity throughout the town, and between the residential and waterfront areas. At the same time, the waterfront views that do exist from residential streets and public places provide remarkable views on the Upper New York Bay, the New Jersey waterfront, and Manhattan. Interior views are significant as well, especially when historic architectural features are emphasized. Generally, St. George lacks physical and visual connections between the residential, downtown and waterfront areas.

The map on the right documents some of the specific views and vantage points in St. George, illustrating visual barriers as well as assets.

1.View from Ferry Terminal towards downtown showing the blocking affect of governmental and institutional buildings on the hillside.

2.View toward water from Wall Street, portraying the feel of the hilly, residential area and its relationship to the waterfront. Views like this, with visibility of the water, are present within our study area on Wall Street, Nicholas Street, St. Peters Place, Westervelt Ave, and Schuyler Street.

3.View from St. Marks Place looking south on Hyatt Street toward civic buildings. The Hyatt Street corridor connects the residential neighborhoods of St. George to downtown and the waterfront. This vantage point reveals a direct view of the entrance to Borough Hall, the most prominent and central building downtown.

4.View toward the water from Bay Street. One of St. George's greatest assets is picturesque views like this one. Street furniture is present along this promenade on Richmond Terrace, although pedestrian use is light and there is no multi-functional infrastructure or apparent destination points.



Blocked View from Ferry Terminal to Downtown St. George



View 1

View of Waterfront from Wall Street , a Hilly Residential Area



View 2

View of Borough Hall from Hyatt Street



View 3

View 4

View from Bay Street



Streetscape

St. George's street grid is made up of exceptionally large super-blocks, which make it difficult to walk through the town. In addition, these long blocks encourage vehicles to speed by removing intersections and barriers to vehicle movement. Because of this characteristic, and lack of pedestrian connectivity, St. George feels less walkable and interconnected than a typical town or civic center.

In addition, a large proportion of the street is dedicated to cars. Whether for parking or for road space, car uses occupy 4 times as much real estate as sidewalk space. Though everyone starts out their day as a pedestrian, the abundance of wide roadways and cheap or free parking in St. George incentivizes driving - and makes walking feel unsafe. The design of the streets also includes broad street crossings, the widest measuring 103 feet at Bay Street and Richmond Terrace. In many places, there are no crossings for pedestrians, leaving residents and families to journey across a street at their own risk. In short, the streets of St. George portray a hierarchy in which the car reigns supreme.

A significant amount of people who do not reside in St. George capitalize on its function as a transportation hub. While St. George is merely a transfer stop in the commute of 65,000+ Staten Island Ferry riders, it is also a natural stopping point to

pick something up before going home, to meet friends, or to participate in other after work activities. These riders represent millions of dollars in revenue that could and should be captured properly.

However, the streets of St. George, especially around the Ferry Terminal, are a significant barrier to attracting this potential foot-traffic. These streets treat pedestrians as an afterthought, rather than as a driving force for economic revival. Each one of these 65,000 potential customers return from Manhattan as pedestrians, yet St. George has designed its streets exclusively for cars. Studies and travel patterns have shown that pedestrians (and bicyclists) are much more likely than drivers to patronize local businesses on the way to their destination. Car drivers on the other hand, are much more focused on arriving at their destination and are far less likely to stop and shop while on their way.

Conclusion

St. George has a diversity of building types, and features both prominent and historic civic buildings as well as beautiful residences in historic neighborhood setting. St. George has a few beautiful waterfront parks, but is lacking overall in parkland and community gardens. The parks that do exist are passive areas, rather than destination points for residents or for visitors. A lack of physical and visual connectivity, along with un-passable super-blocks

between these areas creates an environment that is less than ideal for pedestrians. Improvements to the streetscape should channel the extraordinary economic asset represented by pedestrians who arrive at Ferry Terminal.



An Unfriendly Street for Pedestrians in St. George



5. Zoning & Land Use

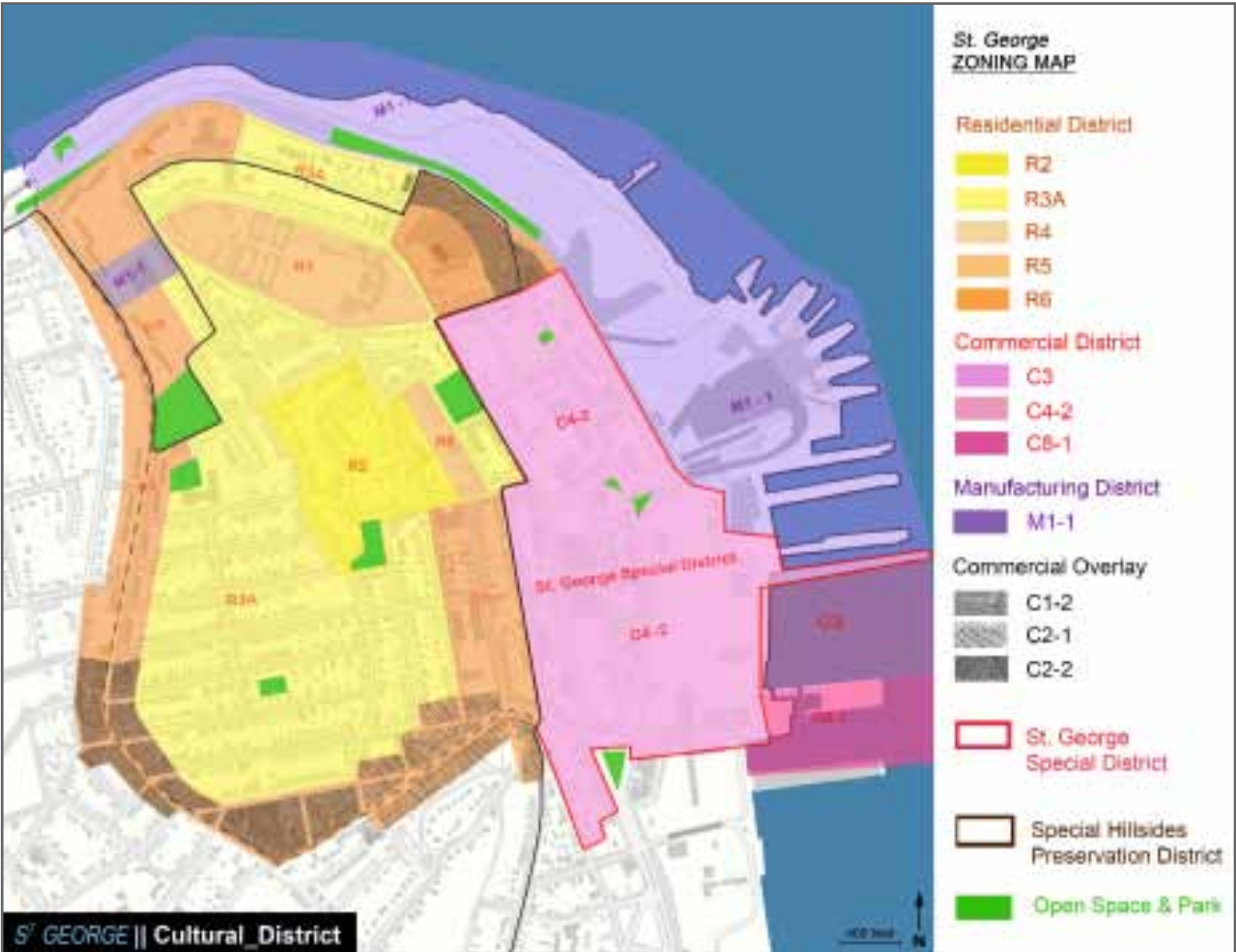
Zoning

The neighborhood of St. George contains designated manufacturing, commercial and residential land use zones. In addition, it contains a recently created special district known as the St. George Special District. These zones can be seen in the map to the right.

Despite its reputation as Staten Island’s downtown, St. George is overwhelmingly zoned low density residential. There are five types of residential zones in St. George: R2, R3A, R4, R5 and R6. 80% of the residential zoning in St. George is R3A – zoning which produces modest single-family and two family detached homes. Combined with an FAR of 0.5 this usually produces two story buildings, which dominate most of St. George’s residential landscape.

The second largest residential zone is R5. This type of zoning, along with an FAR of 1.25, allows a variety of housing types at a higher density. A typical building type in this zone is the three story attached house or small apartment building. The R5 zoning area wraps around St. George following Victory Blvd and Jersey Street from Richmond Terrace to Tompkinsville Square. Most of the Commercial Overlay in St. George can be found paired to an R5 zone.

R4 zoning is less prevalent than R5, and allows and FAR of .75. This usually produces small, three story buildings. The row houses behind Nicholas Lia Park are R4.



III. ST. GEORGE TODAY - Zoning & Land Use

The hilltop of Fort Hill Circle is zoned R2. This is the least dense zone in St. George and is limited exclusively to single family detached homes with an FAR of 0.5.

The R6 zone is the least prevalent zone in St. George, but due to the tall buildings it allows, it is one of the most visible. The towers at 151 St. Mark's Place are an example of what is permitted in this type of zoning district.

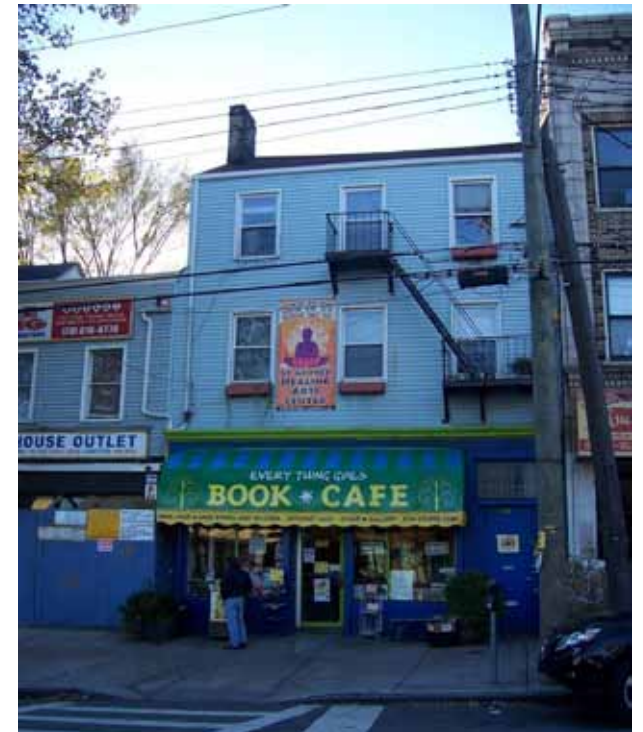
Practically all of St. George's waterfront is zoned for manufacturing. The entire area seaward of Richmond Terrace, from Jersey Street up to and including the Ferry Terminal, is zoned for manufacturing purposes. Specifically, this area is zoned M1-1. An M1-1 district is usually a light-manufacturing district, which can contain uses such as woodworking, auto storage and repair, wholesale services and storage facilities. It can also contain large entertainment centers, such as the Staten Island Yankee Stadium, and amusement establishments such as bowling alleys and movie theaters. Office and retail uses are also permitted.

The mixed-use character of the commercial corridor along Victory Blvd and Jersey Street in the south and south-western borders of St. George, is reinforced by what is known as a Commercial Overlay. The Commercial Overlay along this section of St. George is indicated by a cross-hatch marking on the zoning map on the previous page. There are three types of Commercial Overlays in St. George: C1-2, C2-1 and C2-2. Residential only

development is prohibited in all of these overlays. Ground floor residential uses are not allowed. Any new development is limited to retail, community facility, or mixed-use development with residences above the ground floor.

The commercial/civic area was previously zoned C4-2, but to foster future development the Department of City Planning (DCP) proposed the creation of a St. George Special District. This was approved in October of 2008. The district is a 12-block area in the heart of St. George comprised of 215 properties. It is roughly bounded by Hamilton Ave on the north, Richmond Terrace on the east, Victory Blvd on the south and Montgomery Ave on the west. The rezoning area also includes an area between Victory Blvd, Van Duzer Street, and Bay Street that is zoned R3-2 with a C1-2 zoning overlay.

According to the NYC DCP, the district was created with the following goals in mind: (1) to build upon St. George's existing strengths as a civic center, neighborhood and transit hub by providing rules that will bolster a thriving, pedestrian-friendly, business and residential district; (2) to establish zoning regulations that facilitate continuous ground floor retail and the critical mass needed to attract a broader mix of uses; (3) to require a tall, slender, building form that reflects its hillside topography and maintains waterfront vistas; (4) to encourage the reinvestment and reuse of vacant office buildings; (5) to accommodate an appropriate level of off-street parking while reducing its visual impact.



According to the NYC DCP , the St. George Special District has its own rules and protections, including: (1) wider sidewalk requirements for new developments and “Commercial Street” designations that mandate continuous ground-floor retail use on those streets; (2) allowing vacant office buildings to convert to residential uses; (3) allowing taller, more slender residential buildings that maintain waterfront views; (4) increasing parking requirements for residential buildings to one parking space per unit, and requiring those garages to have a portion of their rooftops landscaped; (5) allowing developers to build larger buildings in exchange for hiding parking structures from street view; (6) prohibiting open parking lots in front of buildings; (7) requiring a parking spot for every 400 sq. ft of commercial space; but (8) exempting stores under 10,000 sq. ft. from the parking requirement.

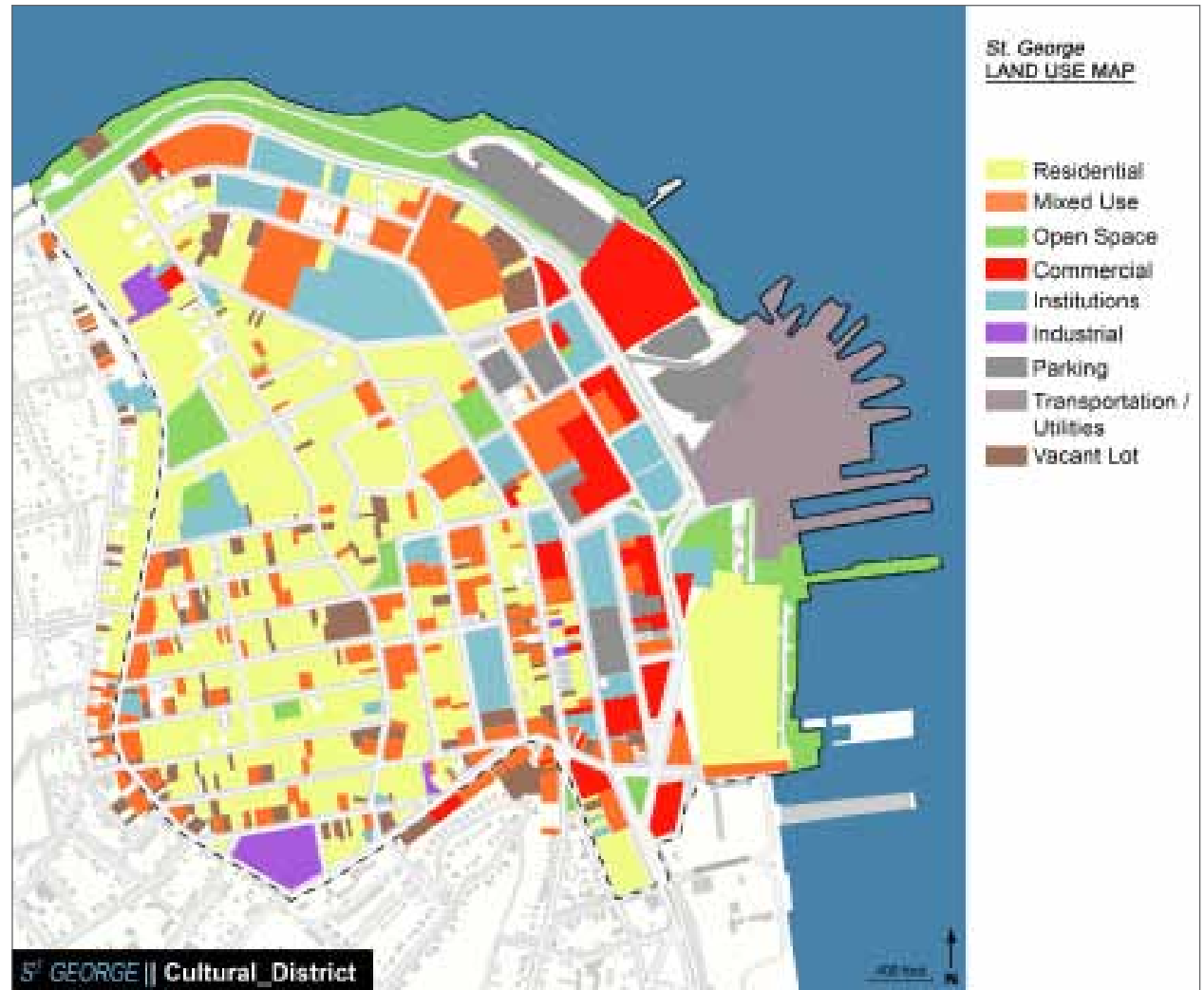


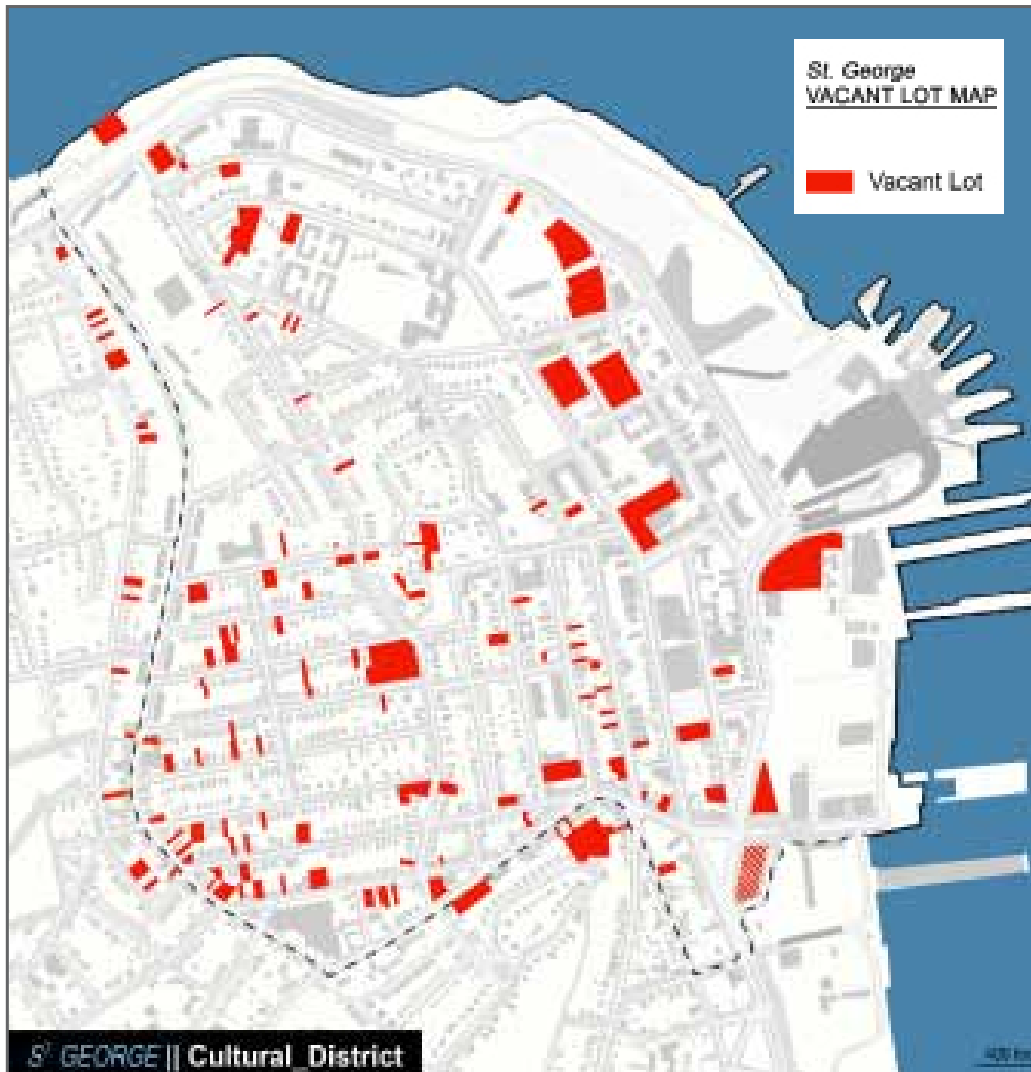
Land Use

Unlike the previous section on zoning, which describes what is allowed on the land going forward, a land use analysis describes types of uses in the district at present. St. George is a residential neighborhood with a “small town feel.” 82% of the property lots in the neighborhood are currently used for residential purposes. Single- and two-family homes form the vast majority of the homes on these lots, while multi-family dwellings are commonly found as well. The southwest portion of the neighborhood, between Westervelt Avenue and Jersey Street, is made up of many small lots with small dwellings. The higher terrain, near Fort Hill Place and along St Mark’s Place to the north, contains larger lots with larger dwellings.

On the other hand, St. George is also the civic center of the borough, and the land use reflects this status: 25% of all lots are devoted to institutional purposes such as Borough Hall, the Staten Island Court House, the Staten Island Museum, the Staten Island Ferry Terminal and various schools and religious institutions.

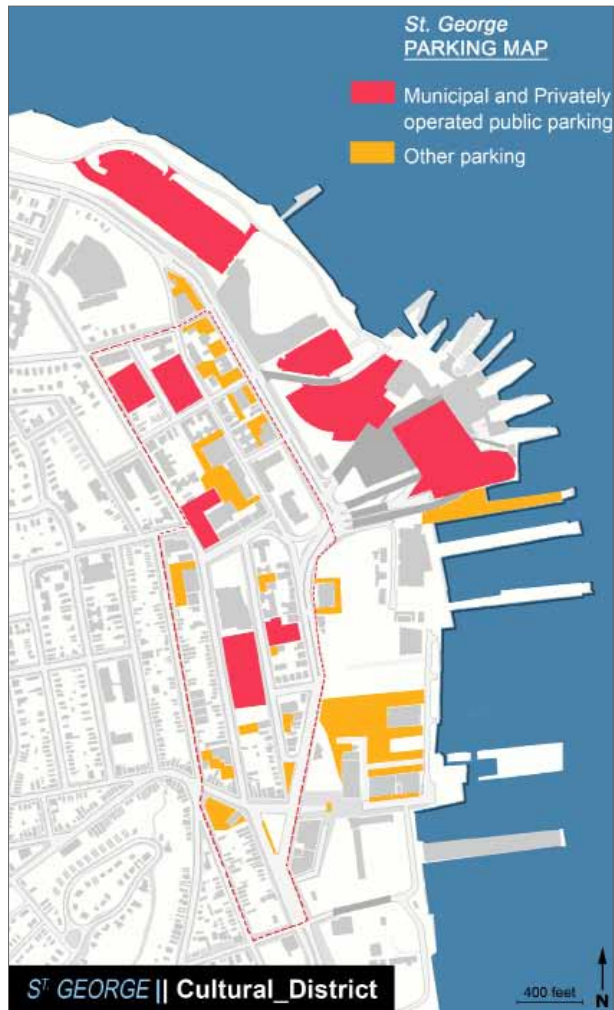
Despite the presence of these institutional uses, St. George suffers from a high incidence of vacant lots. In total, there are some 150 vacant lots in St. George. Some of these empty lots are used as parking lots, but many are completely vacant lots whose owners have adopted a “wait-and-see” approach to developing their land. These empty lots detract from feelings of safety and vitality, and give St. George “ghost town” feel – particularly at night and on weekends.





In addition to vacant land, a large portion of the land in St. George is devoted to parking lots. While there is a need for parking, parking lots often make places feel empty, unappealing and unsafe. In St. George, there are currently 19 lots whose primary purpose is parking. When added to the 150 vacant lots, many of which are used for parking as well – they can combine to create an empty, sterile landscape—particularly on nights and weekends when the lots are abandoned and empty. According to the Environmental Impact Statement that was prepared for the Staten Island Supreme Courthouse Project in 2006, there are approximately 2,200 offstreet parking spaces within ½ mile of the new, 700 space Staten Island Courthouse parking garage. That represents an astonishing amount of space devoted to the storage of cars in comparison to any NYC neighborhood, especially in light of the fact that this neighborhood is located directly adjacent to one of the largest mass transit hubs in the City.

Open space for parks and playgrounds comprises less than 1% of the total lots in St. George, with only 11 lots designated as such. In addition, the waterfront remains highly inaccessible to the residents of St. George due to the sharp drop in grade between it and Bay Street / Richmond Terrace. There are few places to cross over this steep dropoff, and where they exist, they are largely hidden from view. St. George needs more access to open space, and to its waterfront.

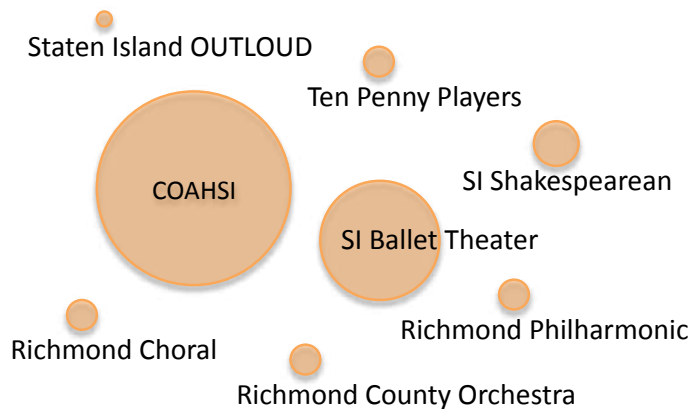


Conclusion

The recent rezoning of the St. George Special District shows that City government is finally showing an interest in revitalizing the area. The zoning provisions of the special district attempt to address many of the challenges presented herein such as improving walkability by expanding sidewalks, improving the look of the neighborhood by requiring parking lots to be hidden from view or landscaped with trees and shrubs, and by creating incentives for development which will hopefully reduce the amount of vacant lots in the area. However, many of these good ideas are offset by a new parking requirement that encourages even more parking lots to be created in St. George.

6. Cultural Infrastructure

St. George is a focal point for certain kinds of cultural activity in Staten Island, and could become a stronger asset for the North Shore community if cultural infrastructure were expanded. Given the rich and varied cultural activity in Staten Island, there are few formal performance venues to accommodate the need. Other community venues such as churches and eating establishments frequently host cultural activities for local audiences, making performances and concerts more accessible and frequent, however, these venues may not attract regional audiences. Adding more formal facilities in St. George while positioning the neighborhood as a gateway for culture in Staten Island is an excellent strategy for attracting new audiences and providing the infrastructure needed by artists to advance their careers.



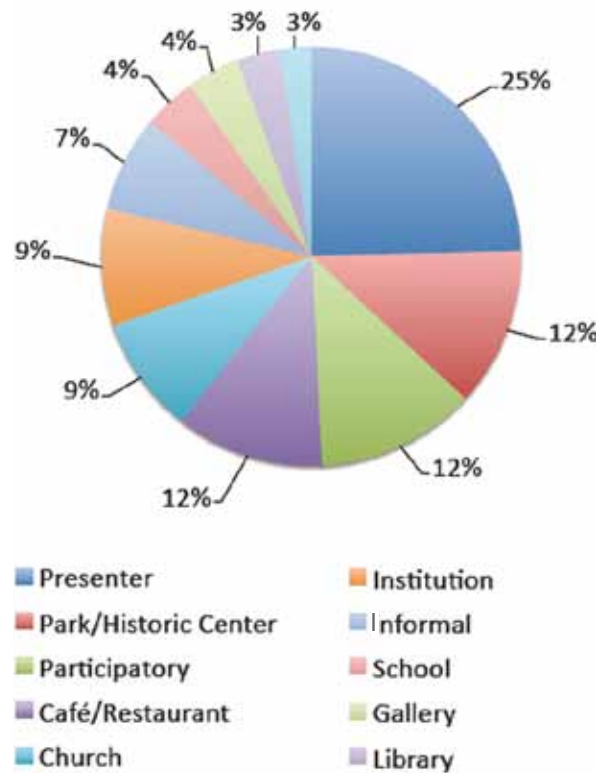
Current Venues for Art & Culture in Staten Island

Venues such as the St. George Theatre, the Seaview Playwrights Theatre and even the Hilton Hotel host cultural events and performances. The College of Staten Island, Wagner College, and Empire State College also have performance facilities and present works by both students and other artists, and Staten Island Academy and Curtis High School both have facilities and occasionally host performances. Four of Staten Island’s libraries, including the St. George Branch of the New York Public Library also serve as regular locations for less formal performances. In addition, there are eleven churches that regularly host concerts and sometimes other types of performances. Furthermore, 14 eating establishments hosted at least one cultural event in 2009.

Artists have also used 15 different park locations around Staten Island for performances and participatory arts and learning activities. These kinds of activities are often sponsored by participatory cultural organizations that involve people in the creation of art as a way to learn important life lessons and build community. Of the 15 organizations that develop community through arts and culture, only a third of them have their own spaces where activities happen on a regular basis. Organizations like Staten Island Community Television, Jewish Community Center of Staten Island and the Universal Temple of the Arts are

organizations that put on discrete projects which invite people to come together to be part of the creative process, such as the Laundromat Project, NYC Cypher and Youth Council of the Arts.

Staten Island Cultural Infrastructure



St. George in Context

It’s important to understand St. George in relationship to other cultural activity on Staten Island. Based on the events calendar published in COAHSI’s quarterly newsletters in 2009, a list was compiled of entities and venues that present or host cultural events and activities (full list in Appendix A). There are 122 unique entities in Staten Island that listed events, or served as a venue for one or more art events.

A quarter of these entities (29) are legally incorporated non-profit organizations, which are eligible for direct public resources. In 2009, these 29 non-profit organizations received a total of almost \$53 million in revenues, and served as formal venues for theater, music, exhibitions and participatory activities. Four of these key non-profits are located in St. George—the Staten Island Museum, the St. George Theatre, Sundog Theatre and Universal Temple of the Arts—and these four organizations receive annual revenues totaling almost \$4.3 million. According to the “Arts & Economic Prosperity Calculator,” published by Americans for the Arts in 2009, St. George’s four cultural institutions support approximately 129 jobs, \$2.9 million in household income and over \$300,000 in taxes to the New York State and City governments.

Arts in St. George

St. George is a visible center for the arts in Staten Island because of a number of visual art exhibition venues, including both formal galleries and informal spaces. While some galleries are incorporated as non-profits, most are managed as for-profit ventures, and are either sustained by artists who share the costs, or a community of collectors who regularly buy art. Five formal galleries were active in 2009, including the Creative Photographers Guild and SHOW Gallery, and three of the five were located in St. George.

In addition to formal galleries which can be distinguished by their regular business hours, there are also spaces where art is exhibited in a more informal context, often for brief periods with limited public hours. The nine informal spaces identified are located in the homes of artists or in a temporarily reclaimed industrial space like the Atlantic Salt facilities, which hosted the presentation of the Lumen festival this year. Eight of the nine informal spaces were also in St. George and Second Saturdays is a coordinated marketing effort to advertise St. George's informal spaces and attract audiences while partnering with established nonprofit institutions.

Looking at Staten Island's cultural infrastructure as a whole, there is plenty of creativity and excellent art being presented in ways that are accessible to the public, however, organizations that depend on volunteers and lack a permanent home leave

the Island's cultural infrastructure vulnerable and unstable. There is a need for significant capacity building to strengthen Staten Island's cultural infrastructure.

Staten Island: So Much Art, Too Few Venues

Staten Island needs more cultural performance venues. Only 11 organizations, or 9% of the entities that make up Staten Island's cultural infrastructure, are institutions that have a permanent home in Staten Island, over \$100,000 in annual revenue and at least one paid staff person. There are many organizations in Staten Island that present performances of various kinds to the public but have no permanent space. Out of the 122 entities that make up Staten Island's cultural infrastructure, the largest portion, almost a quarter (30) of the organizations, present culture at various locations around the island. If additional facilities for performances were available, these 30 presenting organizations would certainly use them.

However, more than half of the 11 well-funded institutions with permanent homes are located on the grounds of Snug Harbor's cultural campus. Snug Harbor is a unique setting for cultural production and participation because of its historic buildings and beautifully landscaped grounds. In addition, there is an artist studio program and two performance halls. Unfortunately, Snug Harbor's

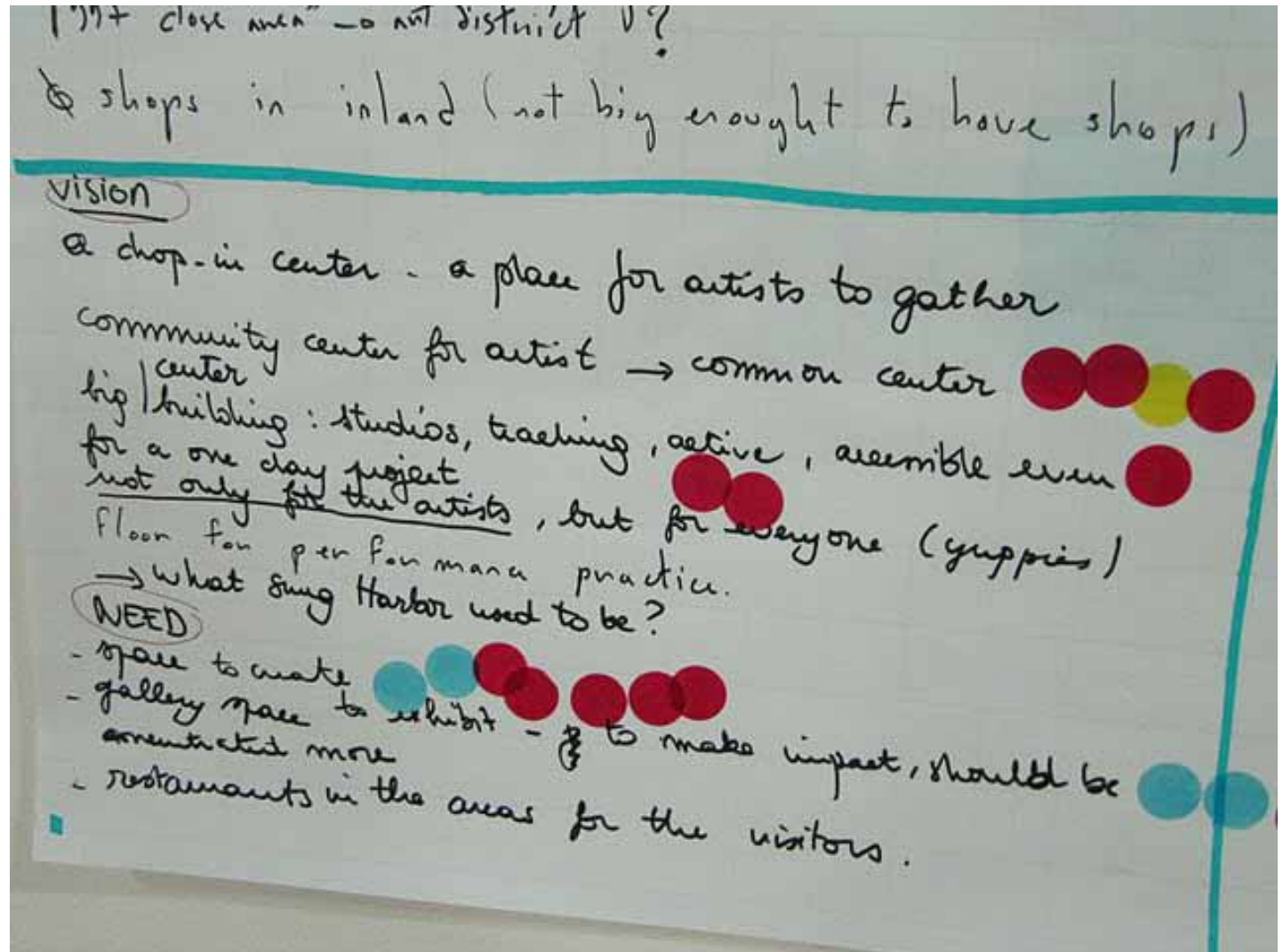
facilities are perceived to be inaccessible by many artists, because of the lack of transparency regarding decisions about the price and availability of space rentals. Staten Island's cultural stakeholders are hopeful that the new leadership at Snug Harbor will open the gates of this significant cultural asset so it can better represent the diversity of cultural activities that characterize Staten Island's culture.

Conclusion

Looking at Staten Island's active cultural infrastructure as a whole, there is a need for significant capacity building to strengthen Staten Island's cultural offerings. The concentration of cultural organizations in St. George along with easy access to mass transit make it a key site for cultural presentation, production and participation – the perfect location for the cultural gateway of Staten Island.

The Visioning Session

Held by the Hunter College Studio
with Staten Island Cultural Stakeholders
October 12, 2010
Staten Island Children's Museum



8. ONE STEP AWAY

St. George is a neighborhood that has strong assets on many levels and is just “one step away” from becoming a vibrant cultural district. The unique topography combined with its waterfront location provides residents and visitors with breathtaking views of the New York City harbor. It also creates distinct and beautiful geographic areas, which reveal different facets of the rich history of St. George as exemplified by the presence of a wide variety of architectural styles. This urban fabric is carefully woven into lush vegetation that contributes to the feel of an appealing small yet urban town.

St. George is also a unique and affordable place to live, the civic center of Staten Island, and a large transportation hub. The population has grown at the same rate as the rest of the island - much faster than NYC. However, the demographic pressure has not equalized the price of real estate with the rest of the City. One can still find a place to rent or buy at a very reasonable price compared to the other boroughs. The demographic composition of St. George makes the neighborhood stand out compared to the rest of Staten Island. It has a more urban feel because of the density of the built environment, and because of its more diverse, young, working, and single populations. The diversity component makes the neighborhood feel welcoming to people from all walks of life.

This is very important since 65,000 people commute to or through St. George every day. It is one of the most transit rich neighborhoods in NYC and the most easily accessible by public transportation in Staten Island. Once in St. George, one does not necessarily need a car to get around the neighborhood and conduct business. It is also important to note that a special district has been created to encourage development, promote the continuity of ground floor retail, and require that parking lots be hidden behind buildings or landscaped - a set of measures that will strengthen the vitality and walkability of the neighborhood.

St. George is more than just a civic center and is comprised of a wide array of cultural organizations. The Staten Island Museum and St. George Theater are strong anchors for culture while an additional thirty presenting organizations are thriving, often resorting to less formal infrastructure to present artistic productions. In addition, St. George has the highest concentration of informal and formal gallery spaces for visual art in Staten Island. All these elements constitute a fertile ground in which a cultural district can flourish. However, as discussed previously, St. George is also met by several challenges that must be addressed in the creation of a sustainable cultural district.

An entire set of challenges describes how individuals move around St. George: why they decide to come or not, what mode of transportation they elect, what information is available to them once they arrive and how they feel when walking around the neighborhood. It is important to establish that each of the successful art districts cited in the Planning Precedents section of this report are neighborhoods where pedestrians are prioritized over car users and are encouraged to participate in the “street vitality” necessary to make any district appealing.

Although 65,000 people walk through the Ferry Terminal each day, not many are inclined to explore St. George. This can be explained in large part by the design of the Ferry Terminal, modeled as it is after an airport. An airport is meant to move people in the most efficient manner to and from their destination, rather than explore the area directly surrounding it. While most areas surrounding airports are made of industries or empty space, the area directly surrounding the Ferry Terminal can be made attractive to tourists and commuters. Unfortunately, the path leading from the Ferry Terminal to St. George is not clearly marked – there is an absence of signage; it is unpleasant – as pedestrians are met by a sea of parking spaces and dull walkways; it is unsafe – as wanderers are virtually trapped on a narrow path surrounded by fast buses and dangerous car intersections.

Finally, Borough Hall's imposing stature at the foot of the entrance to St. George creates a wall between newcomers and the access to the community.

Once a pedestrian actually reaches downtown St. George additional obstacles arise - a plight shared by local residents and visitors. St. George was originally planned as a dense, pedestrian neighborhood; it has since been redesigned to accommodate car usage. The extent of that process is now at a point where it has diminished street vitality and the overall quality of life: there are too many parking spaces; the streets are too wide which encourage cars to speed, creating dangerous intersections and discourage pedestrian participation in street activity.

In an environment characterized by an abundance of vacant lots and empty buildings and by a higher level of poverty and crime, the dwindling street vitality reinforces the pedestrian's feeling of being unsafe. It is natural that St. George and Staten Island residents prefer to use their cars to move around St. George. But in doing so they are diminishing the street vitality and continuing the spiral of negative effects. Although this constitutes the main issue faced by St. George, additional challenges are worth mentioning.

Compared to the rest of the Island, St. George has the least amount of parks and outdoor recreational areas. Where these areas exist, as in the case of the Lighthouse Museum Plaza, they are difficult to find and access. This confirms the absence of proper signage and visual clues, generally making it difficult to find one's way around the neighborhood.

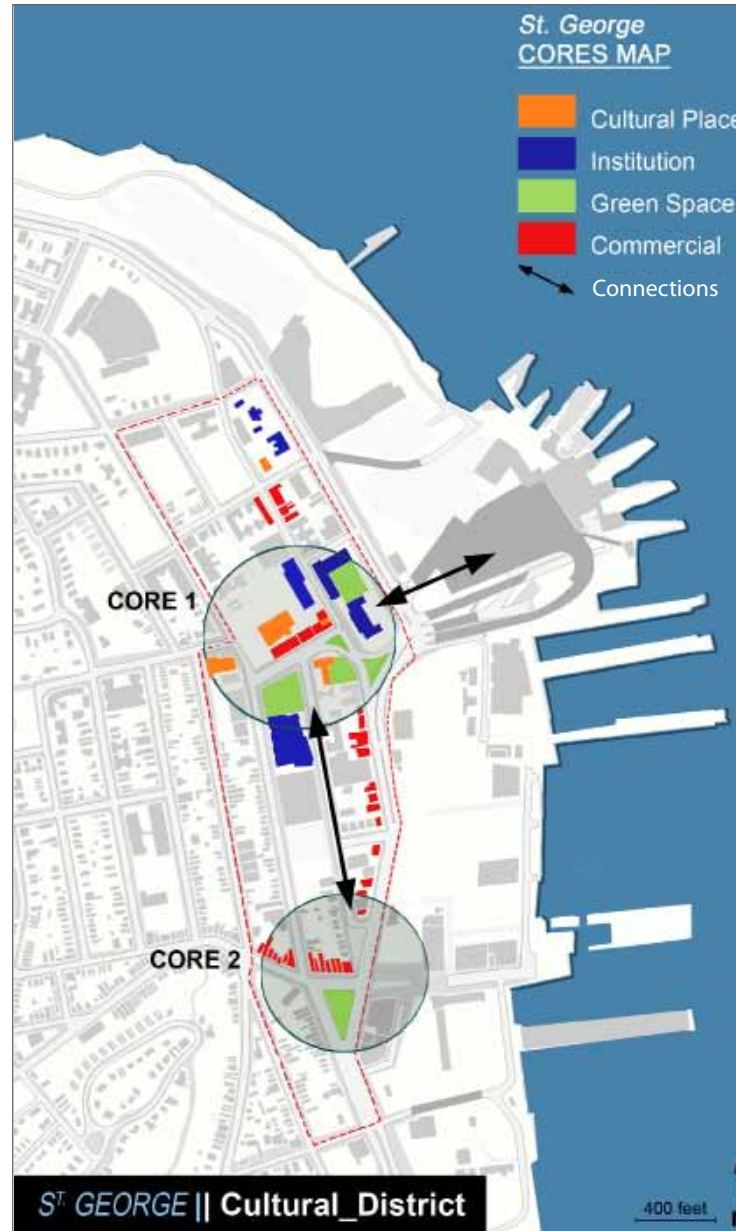
It is important to highlight obstacles presented by the current zoning of St. George. The current parking requirement for the construction of new buildings is an unnecessary barrier to development, especially given the substantial investment in mass transit in the area. It is not conducive to attracting new artists and makes new developments seek more expensive rents to cover the cost of building these parking spaces.

From a cultural standpoint, many organizations have limited capacity and lack a permanent home. Several entities are not properly incorporated which disqualifies them from receiving City funding, and many are operated by volunteers. Too many of them have no facilities, making them unstable or unsustainable over time. St. George has an art community, but does not have the visibility this community deserves. Finally, it is important to underline that if St. George's profile is raised and

the community starts attracting new artists and new investments, measures have to be taken so the current residents - who are in large part renters and less affluent - are protected against displacement. Furthermore, the diverse and vibrant community must be included in the scope of the art district. Only under these conditions can St. George be considered a sustainable cultural district.

Cultural District: Location

These findings informed the decision to establish the St. George Sustainable Cultural District in the location where the most vitality lies. Accordingly, two areas have been identified as the “organic cores” of St. George: the downtown area at Stuyvesant Street and the retail corridor around Tompkinsville Square Park. Just a few minutes away on foot from the Ferry Terminal, the downtown area combines an appealing palette of activities ranging from business, administration, culture, restaurants and social services. The area is dense, walkable and has a high level of foot traffic. It offers many opportunities to reinvest in vacant lots and building. About half a mile to the south west, the area surrounding Tompkinsville Square Park offers a large choice of dining and retail options. The ethnic diversity of mom and pop type shops and restaurants make this corridor very interesting and lively, in addition to offering quality open space in the form of the Tompkinsville Square Park. The St. George Sustainable Cultural District lies between the community core and the civic core, from established institutions to the emerging infrastructure, and it includes all of the possibilities in between.



PART II

IV. ST. GEORGE SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL DISTRICT PLAN

IV. ST. GEORGE SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL DISTRICT PLAN

I. Introduction to Art Hill

Methodology

The St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan was initiated by the Council for the Arts and Humanities of Staten Island (COAHSI), based on a recommendation made by the Arts and Culture working group from the Vision for Staten Island Steering Committee. COAHSI requested the assistance of the Hunter College Graduate Department of Urban Planning to access a team of graduate students to research and create this Plan for a cultural district as part of an intensive studio experience that serves as a thesis or “capstone” of an urban planning degree. The studio team started background research on August 26, 2010 and met with COAHSI to hear about their needs and determine the scope of the Plan on September 2nd.

The studio team worked in the field for the several months, conducting over 40 interviews with artists and attendees at cultural events, including Second Saturday on September 7th and The Staten Island Museum’s “Fence Show” at Snug Harbor on September 8th. A visioning session was held with fifteen members of the community on October 12th, and the ideas generated, along with the team’s initial findings, were presented to COAHSI on October 19th. Additional counsel was sought through interviews with local real estate experts, artist stakeholders, MTA transportation planners, the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation, and leaders of an existing cultural

district, the Fourth Arts Block. Based on these experiences and additional feedback from COAHSI, a Plan was developed and presented to the public on December 7 at the Staten Island Museum. This report incorporates feedback from the question and answer session following the presentation.

The St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan builds on the assets of St. George as a cultural gateway for Staten Island, and it recommends a number of improvements that will provide a permanent home for artists and increase the visibility of Staten Island’s creative activity. There are opportunities today to create permanent cultural facilities—infrastructure that will serve as a beacon to the creative communities of New York City, and in the process, develop a vibrant neighborhood in downtown Staten Island. This Plan addresses the priorities described by previous planning efforts, the community visioning meeting held in October, surveys of artists in the community and best practice research on successful cultural districts from around the country.

The Core

The idea of a “natural core of activity” is used to identify and demarcate what has been observed as the most vibrant part of St. George. A core is characterized by its vibrancy and its diversity, notably in terms of uses and users: it is the area where people meet naturally because of its attraction. The core is an asset, which can be improved upon to more visibly incorporate the arts, to become the community center for the St. George Sustainable Cultural District.

At the October 12th visioning session, participants were asked to identify the geographic “heart” of the arts community in St. George. The participants identified two areas: one centered on the cluster of activities where the farmers market is currently located (on the corner of Hyatt Street and Fort Place) which included the St. George Theater, the St. George Library, and the other centered around Everything Goes Book Café, the Cargo Café and Tompkinsville Park (intersection of Victory Blvd. and Bay Street).



Community Visioning Session, held in October 12, 2010

The boundary of the St. George Sustainable Cultural District was developed based on these identified community nodes and was also informed by the existing Historic District and the St. George Special District. The proposed St. George Sustainable Cultural District boundaries follow the existing St. George Special District but extend those boundaries to Hannah Street on the south to include the activity in Tompkinsville. The proposed district links the two nodes of activity to form a natural core bound by Richmond Terrace, Bay Street, Hannah Street, Montgomery Street and Hamilton Street. The St. George Sustainable Cultural District is referred to as the “core” of the Plan because it demarcates the district at the center of the community.

Participants cited several reasons why they consider this area the core of the community:

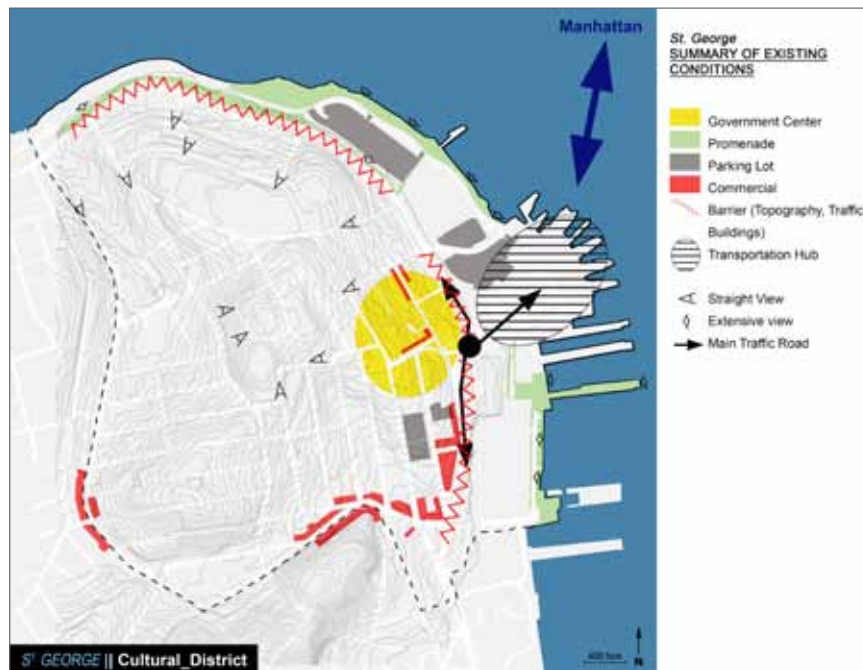
- The core is located adjacent to the transportation hub of Staten Island, just a few minutes by foot from the Ferry Terminal and the waterfront. Due to its location between the waterfront and the hills the topography is not too steep and the area is relatively accessible and walkable.
- The core is the area with the greatest variety of uses on the island: the area is characterized by a concentration of public institutions in the civic center and a diversity of shops, ethnic restaurants and cafés which provide places for people to gather.

- The core is one of only a few areas in the neighborhood where art is visible in comparison to the residential parts of St. George. The Staten Island Museum has a sign that can be seen from the ferry, and there is also a concentration of galleries and informal exhibition spaces.

There are significant challenges to community building in this identified area: the core is divided by the long blocks of Central Ave and St. Marks Place and is cut-off from the Ferry Terminal and the waterfront. This Plan includes reference to the waterfront as a largely unused and inaccessible asset that should be reconnected with St. George’s center through cultural activities. This Plan also includes recommendations for community building activity throughout St. George, beyond the boundaries of the St. George Sustainable Cultural District, and utilizes the hilly topography and its breathtaking view corridors as practical inspiration.

Art Hill

The implementation of the St. George Sustainable Cultural District includes a marketing and branding plan, which is playfully named Art Hill. The name references the unique topography of St. George, alludes to the historically named “hill” neighborhoods and the identity of the area as a growing art scene. The marketing and branding plan is described in detail in Section IV, Implementation. Art Hill is used through-out to refer to this Plan for the St. George Sustainable Cultural District.



2. The Vision for Art Hill

A Permanent Home for Art

Community members consistently expressed the need for more exhibition and production space, both in the October 12th visioning session and in interviews. Even though St. George is the epicenter of a thriving underground arts community, formal and permanent places to showcase art are limited. Exhibition and production space will attract artists, but will not necessarily sustain a community. Artists need places to live and work that are protected from the real estate market to ensure that they are not priced out of the district and displaced as rent goes up; a scenario that has taken place in SoHo, Williamsburg, etc. The Plan for Art Hill responds directly to this issue, and explicitly details proposals for the following facilities: a new home for COAHSI's offices and artistic uses, exhibition and production space, resources for art supplies and materials and importantly, residential facilities with protective mechanisms for maintaining affordability. These proposed facilities, located within the district boundaries, are opportunities to create permanent infrastructure for the arts community.



Artwork by St. George Artist Alice Sargent Johnson

The Plan proposes adaptive reuse of the historic St. George Precinct and the adjacent Staten Island Family Court, both soon to be vacant, to house COAHSI's new cultural center, which will include administrative offices, a small theater, recording studio and gallery space. Proximity to the Staten Island Museum make this a cultural cluster; an ideal anchor for the western end of the district core.

The former Fishs Eddy building on Bay Street has been used as a temporary music and exhibition venue for "Art by the Ferry," a recent addition to Staten Island's cultural calendar of annual events. Visioning session participants and community members expressed that the building would be an ideal home for the arts in St. George. The Art Hill Plan proposes transforming the building into a center for music and dance to anchor the eastern end of the core, across from Everything Goes Book Cafe.

The Plan for Art Hill proposes developing the City-owned parking lot, next to the parking structure between St. Marks Place and Central Ave, into an Artist's Atrium building with studio space on the upper floors and artists supplies, gallery space and a small grocery store on the ground floor. In addition, the Plan proposes to transform the Sanitation Garage on Jersey St., a blight on the southern part of St. George and a long-time neighborhood rallying point, into a heavy-duty arts production space where equipment and space for welding, pottery, woodworking and furniture upholstery can be shared along with studios and gallery space and a warehouse for salvaged construction and recycled building materials.

The Art Hill Plan proposes attracting 80 additional artist residents to the core of St. George. In the 2000 Census, 221 individuals in St. George reported that their primary occupation was within the realm of "arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations" as shown on Table I. This is not meant to represent an accurate count of artists, given that research has found that the majority of artists do not claim out to be their primary occupation. However, by using this census data, St. George can be compared to other naturally-occurring cultural districts in New York City in terms of the concentration of full-time artists among all occupied adults. This comparison assumes that the biases in the number of artists will be similar across the City.

The actual number of adults who reported art as their primary occupation in 2000 was relatively similar to the actual number in DUMBO or Bushwick, but about 6 times less than the number in Williamsburg. However, as a proportion compared to the total occupied population, neighborhoods known as naturally-occurring cultural districts in 2000, such as Williamsburg and DUMBO, have a population of artists that make up approximately 15% of the total number of occupied adults, while St. George's 221 artists comprise only 4% of the total number of occupied adults. In order for St. George to gain some visibility within the context of New York City, the neighborhood would have to attract a larger percentage of artists. Currently, the area defined as the core has the highest concentration of artists, making up 6% of the occupied population. The Art Hill Plan recommends efforts to attract additional artist residents in the core. If homes

are found for 80 additional artists, the proportion of artists would increase to the transformative 15% in the core. To reach this goal and to create protected spaces for artists to live, the Art Hill Plan includes short-, medium- and long-term housing solutions as critical elements that enable economic success without the long-term loss of the cultural community. These essential steps include collaborating with real estate owners and brokers to better promote the existing affordable live/work rental spaces and homes for sale to the cultural community in New York City (in the short-term); creating housing protections through the use of a community land trust operated by a non-profit arts housing organization that will acquire land and restrict it for cultural uses only (in the medium-term); and bringing together a coalition of developers to create affordable housing (in the long-term).

The St. George Sustainable Cultural District must be built on a stable foundation and therefore the Plan prioritizes creating a permanent home for the creation of art, the exhibition of art and the creators of art, which will enable the St. George Sustainable Cultural District to thrive.

Table 1 : 2000 Census Data for "Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations"

	Male	Female	Total Artists	Total Occupied Population	% of Artists
CT3	32	14	46	746	6.17%
CT7	48	57	105	2,296	4.57%
CT9	12	17	29	972	2.98%
CT11	18	23	41	601	2.56%
St. George	110	111	221	5615	3.94%
Bushwick	114	57	171	7530	2.27%
Williamsburg	711	811	1522	9538	15.96%
DUMBO	114	73	187	821	22.78%

Source: Sex by Occupation for the Employed Civilian Population 16 years and Over 2000 Census

Safe and Walkable Streets

Safe and walkable streets are a dominant characteristic of any vibrant neighborhood center. Creating more welcoming and dynamic streets will contribute to St George as a destination, encourage economic activity, support neighborhood cohesiveness and foster a safe environment. As it states currently, cars are almost to dominate St. George. Reversing this hierarchy is vital to the success of the cultural district.

Pedestrianizing streets and public spaces will help bring vitality to St. George and is a crucial element in creating a successful cultural district. Key principles to implement in the core include making it easier and safer to cross the street, enlarging sidewalks so pedestrians have more space, creating seating areas that take advantage of St. George's views, increasing connectivity so pedestrians can access the waterfront, adding plantings and mosaic art to make the street more attractive, and placing additional wayfinding devices (which may include signage and artistic paths or markers) that make St. George's Sustainable Cultural District more identifiable and enjoyable.

One element that will reorient the street to serve people is the proposal to create a new pedestrian plaza on Hyatt Street between Central Ave and Richmond Terrace/Bay Street. St. George is underserved by open space; a new public center would create needed space and also potentially serve as a new home for the farmers market.

During the visioning session, the farmers market was the most cited location for spontaneous public interaction with the community and artists in the neighborhood. The current site of the farmers market is slated for development, leaving its future location unknown, so a new pedestrian plaza could provide a permanent home as well as informal amphitheater-like space for performances and events.

The second pedestrianized area proposed to strengthen street vitality in the core is Stuyvesant Place between Wall Street and Schulyer Street. Closing the street to traffic and incentivizing outdoor cafés will allow the commercial street to flourish and create additional seating for the community and visitors to linger and contribute to street life. Additionally, sidewalk cafés should be encouraged on Richmond Terrace and Bay Street to promote interesting street frontage for pedestrians coming from the Ferry Terminal.

Central Ave provides an opportunity to link the two ends of the core as a special street with public art, sitting spaces, and additional pedestrian connections to break up the long super-block between Hyatt Street and Victory Blvd.

Bay Street is the most important street for mass transit in Staten Island. Bay Street allows 22 bus lines and about 65,000 people to travel to the Ferry Terminal on a daily basis with finely tuned hand-offs of passengers from ferry to bus and from bus to

ferry. The Plan recommends a dedicated bus lane be enforced during rush hour in order to reduce congestion on Bay Street.

At the Ferry Terminal itself, the St. George Sustainable Cultural District advises against putting up additional walls in the bus area. Walls merely make spaces even more formidable and dangerous. Instead, Art Hill recommends better signage and wayfinding devices so that passengers can find safe crossings.

Making people a priority will completely alter the feel of visiting St. George. The recommended changes in street hierarchy will lead to a more comfortable experience for pedestrians, encouraging people to linger rather than just pass through.



Economic and Community Vitality

Economic and community development can transform a neighborhood. From creating a special zoning district that lowers parking requirements to adding storefront requirements for a new commercial street, each brings direct economic benefits to St. George. Additionally, educational and community garden partnerships and an art-infused public life enhance the connection with a community, decrease crime and improve quality of life.

The goal of the St. George Sustainable Cultural District is to bolster the arts scene and generate both protections and incentives to bring new artists to St. George, which will lead to new development. Lowering the parking requirement or swapping low-cost artist housing with a reduced parking requirement is a win-win-win scenario for artists, developers, and the neighborhood at large. A new commercial street proposed by the plan on Wall Street between Academy Place and Richmond Terrace will be located adjacent to a view corridor to extend commercial activity from Stuyvesant Place.

Art Hill recommends several ways to incorporate the arts into the street to enhance the identity of St. George. Public artwork should be placed throughout the district to build the idea of St. George as a cultural gateway. To build capacity among individual community members, Art Hill proposes expanding COAHSI's Arts-in-Education program to create more partnerships between artists and schools. Schools can serve as exhibition spaces or production facilities that can be shared

by students (during the day) and the art community (at night). Community gardens are also spaces that lend themselves to serving as both formal and informal locations for art exhibition, performances and participation in the creation of culture.

Other stimulating visual cues will both increase and take advantage of additional foot traffic on the streets of St. George. Adding a cohesive creative element—such as mosaics and red buoys—as a wayfinding theme, creating functional art (benches, bike racks, etc) and art installations in public spaces—to be awarded by competition—will capture the imagination of St. George and make the district into a destination for people on the island and around the region.

Measures to create a special district, implement practical tools to benefit the community, share resources with schools and community gardens and infuse color and liveliness throughout the Sustainable Cultural District will catalyze economic and community vitality in St. George.



Cultural Gateway for Staten Island

St. George currently serves as a transportation gateway for Staten Island, but it should be a cultural gateway for the borough. Residents and visitors should be welcomed and given useful information, both online and in person. The Plan proposes a new structure on the waterfront, expanding upon the existing events and consistent marketing to increase the presence of arts and culture in St. George, making a visit worth it for Staten Islanders and providing a reason not to get on the next ferry going back to Manhattan for those hoping to experience all of New York City's diversity.

St. George has established events that should be bigger and in more central locations. Pairing the success of *Art by the Ferry* with a NYC Department of Transportation sponsored Weekend Walks format where multiple blocks can be closed for multiple weekends in the warmer season can make *Art by the Ferry* longer, more visible to casual passersby, and engage nearby or adjacent commercial interests. The same can be done with *Lumen*, a successful existing event that takes place near, but not in St. George. Relocating events to the heart of the Sustainable Cultural District instead of the fringe will show that St. George should be put on the arts map.

Converting an underutilized waterfront parking lot next to the ferry into an entertainment area or observation structure (inspired by the London eye) would significantly enhance the allure of the waterfront and would be a significant architectural anchor for St. George.

The St. George Sustainable Cultural District will need a marketing plan that includes a multi-media strategy, with both a web presence and information booths in the Ferry Terminals. Art Hill is a place and an idea that capitalizes on the strengths of the St. George Sustainable Cultural District and leaves the historical stigma of St. George and Staten Island behind. Art Hill can be used to formalize the partnership between stakeholders and include all of the cultural activity in St. George under one umbrella. If incorporated as recommended, it can be used as a tool or leverage to develop additional resources for the arts.



SHOW



Healthy Grill

24

STOP



3. Create New Exhibition and Production Space

“The Artists’ Atrium” - Artist Studios/Pedestrian Walkway/Atrium

One of the needs that was often expressed by the artist and cultural community in St. George was the need for more studios and workspaces. Community members also emphasized that art was not as visible as it should be given the size of the arts community in residence. There were also complaints about the long, unbroken block on Central Ave between Hyatt Street and Victory Blvd that acts as a barrier between the area around Borough Hall and the lively restaurants and retail on Victory Blvd.

The proposed Artists’ Atrium effectively addresses all of these concerns at once due to its proposed design and strategic location. The Artists’ Atrium will be located on a lot at the southern end of the new Staten Island Courthouse Parking Garage. The small parking lot at this site is owned by the City of New York and contains a relatively small number of parking spaces compared to the brand new 700 space parking structure immediately next to it. This lot is located at the halfway point between the two organic cores that form the cultural district: the Stuyvesant Street area and the Victory Blvd area. It fronts on Central Ave a critical pedestrian route connecting the two cores and St. Marks Place – a street that will benefit from the added pedestrian foot traffic.

Though not apparent, there is an right-of-way continuing Slosson Terrace mapped through the middle of this small lot. While this potential right-of-way would make the property less appealing to most commercial developers, this street connection can facilitate walking between the two organic cores of St. George and is a key aspect of the proposed design. Rather than create another large structure that acts as a barrier between the two parts of the district, the Atrium preserves the right-of-way as a pedestrian walkway. This cut-through allows for more pedestrian flow between the two cores of the district and the buildings would contain needed artist infrastructure such as an arts supply store and a grocery store as well as exhibition space on the ground floor with studios on the upper floors with windows to allow people to view artists at work. The atrium could be used for gatherings, small musical performances and art fairs.

The Artists’ Atrium would be a smaller version of a similar building in Paris, France – the Centquatre, pictured below. The Centquatre led to a redevelopment of the area surrounding it by attracting artists to its studio spaces, and by inspiring the redevelopment of the surrounding areas.



Fishs Eddy – Music Performance Venue and Rehearsal Space

The entryway to the ArtistAtrium pedestrian street would not be closed off by doors or any obstructions, save for pillars to obstruct car access and would be open to the street in order to create a friendly, and inviting impression. Artists would be encouraged to be in their studios at those times when the street flow was greatest, in order to attract visitors and gain exposure for their work. As the focal point of the Cultural District, the Atrium should be a piece of grand architecture and should inspire faith in the redevelopment of downtown St. George.

The site of the former Fishs Eddy store, 139 Bay Street, has occasionally been used as a music venue since 2005. The site has a funky, underground style and has lacked a tenant for 5 years. The entrance to the building is near the top floor. The majority of the building's 19,000 sq. ft of space is located below sidewalk level. Due to the building's relative isolation near the railway tracks and location below grade, it is a perfect location for loud performances and large crowds. The building is also within the boundaries of the Cultural District and near the outlet of the Central Ave Art Street and Plaza. This is the only site on this list that is not currently owned by the City of New York. The picture on the lower right is a suggestion of what this facility may look like.



Sanitation Garage – Architectural Salvage Center with Shared Industrial Workshops

The site of the current Jersey Street Sanitation Garage would be ideal for a reuse center similar to the one operated by Build It Green!, a non-profit organization located in Astoria, Queens. Build It Green!'s warehouse is like a Home Depot/thrift shop. Their business model involves salvaging and collecting surplus building materials from spaces that are undergoing renovation, demolition or construction and reselling those used parts at affordable prices to artists, developers, contractors, and homeowners. They have a unique niche in the market that caters to those in the home repair and installation industry, and a special relationship with artists in the neighborhood (artists receive a discount on materials that go towards their creative projects). The nonprofit keeps 450 tons of building materials out of landfills each year and has a largely self-sustaining nonprofit business model—the model is both environmentally and economically sustainable.

In addition to a Build It Green!-style reuse center, there is enough space in the facility that classrooms could be dedicated to heavy-duty workshops demonstrating both practical and artistic uses of the materials at the reuse center. A pottery workshop with a kiln, a welding/metalwork workshop, as well as a furniture upholstery workshop, would be suitable shared facilities for this location. The heavier, industrial nature of these uses are well suited to the sanitation garage. A gallery space to showcase the works of art produced within the space should also be carved out in this location.



COAHSI Offices and Art Studios

In 2009, COAHSI was awarded a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to plan a new arts center. As a result of that grant, COAHSI hired real estate consultants Denham Wolf to help them determine their needs in terms of office space, performance space and studio space. In 2010, Denham Wolf issued a report (“the Report”) with their complete analysis of COAHSI’s real estate needs and several recommendations on how this space should be laid out. COAHSI was presented with five alternate layouts – each totaling 30,000 sq. ft. of space. It was Denham & Wolf’s recommendation that COAHSI adopt a two building layout with a 13,000 sq. ft. production facility, and a 17,000 sq. ft. performance and administrative office facility. The report made no recommendations as to where these facilities should be located.

The St. George Sustainable District Plan proposes sites that fit COAHSI’s needs in the core of the district. The Staten Island Family Court House will be vacated next year after its functions are moved into the new courthouse building on Hyatt Street. This beautiful, iconic building was designated a New York City landmark in 2001 and has a gross floor area of 10,400 sq. ft. This building would make a fantastic production facility. The total lot area is 14,500 sq. ft. The building is within walking distance of the Ferry Terminal and has its own parking area. Its neo-classic white columns and graceful stairs face Richmond Terrace. In addition, the immediately adjacent building, 78 Richmond Terrace, with a gross floor area of 15,500 sq. feet will also become available next year, as its current

occupant, the 120th Police Precinct is moved to an new facility in Stapleton. 78 Richmond Terrace was built in 1922 and is also owned by the City of New York. The building has a historic façade, has parking and is also located adjacent to the Ferry Terminal. This building would serve as a wonderful performance and administrative office space, being very close to COAHSI’s space requirements.

In addition to the rare opportunity of obtaining two, adjoining historic buildings, COAHSI would also benefit from being located on the same block as the Staten Island Museum. The Staten Island Museum is the largest cultural institution in Staten Island and attracts many of the same audiences as COAHSI seeks to find. The addition of COAHSI to this block would create an instant cultural destination, and anchor the northern portion of the St. George Cultural District.



4. Make the Streets Safe and Welcoming

The Art Hill Plan proposes improvements to the streets of St. George to make the streets more pedestrian friendly—through streetscaping and interesting artistic details. These improvements will greatly improve the walkability and vitality of the area. Improvements can be made by:

- Making streets easier to cross
- Incorporating art and vegetation into the street
- Producing signage and visual cues for the neighborhood
- Creating new connections to break up bigger blocks
- Enlarging sidewalk space
- Encouraging sidewalk cafés on Richmond Terrace, Bay Street, and Stuyvesant Place
- Building seating into locations with view corridors (including steep hillsides)
- Connecting bike lanes to one another
- Creating pedestrian plazas
- Designating “Slow Streets” around pedestrian areas
- Establishing a dedicated bus lane on Bay Street

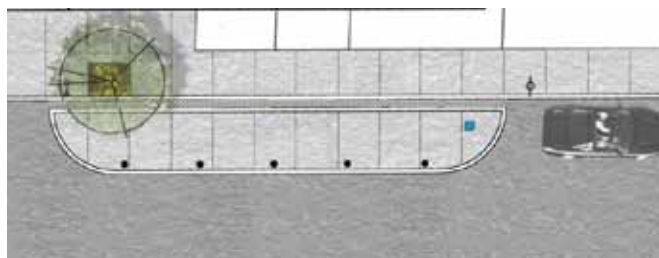
Making Streets Easier to Cross

Making streets easier to cross is the first priority of streetscaping. At some intersections and crossings in St. George, there are no crosswalks at any of the four corners, though people obviously have to cross the street. In this instance residents and families with young children are gambling every time they cross the street as cars traveling on wide roads at high speeds are not required to stop and may not see small children until it is too late.

Putting in crosswalks is an important first step, but short street crossings are better street crossings and slower driving speeds are better driving speeds. That does not necessarily mean sacrificing road space or parking. For example, a device as simple as bumping out corners to extend the sidewalk at the point that pedestrians cross the street is an effective tool that can be employed in St. George

Likewise, this same method of bumping out sidewalks can also apply to sidewalk spaces in front of theaters in the neighborhood. After a theater performance, the entire audience exits the theater

at once causing sidewalk congestion and sometimes spillage into the street. Instead of having lingering theater patrons on the street and vulnerable to cars passing by or cars attempting to leave their parking spaces, it would be more safe and welcoming to extend the sidewalk into the street. Dedicating space to theater patrons would be a design element that leads people to think of St. George as a cultural district where arts and culture comes first and everyone can be part of that prioritization. The Fourth Arts Block employed this strategy in their streetscape plan.



Wayfinding and Visual Cues

On streets more than 50 feet wide, a wide median should be introduced so that people, especially the disabled and the elderly, can have a safe place to start between light changes without cars passing by at an uncomfortably close distance. According to the New York City Department of Transportation's Street Design Manual, creating angled parking for these extremely wide streets will facilitate a new pedestrian orientation by serving as a traffic-calming device without sacrificing roadway space.

Incorporating Art and Vegetation

Incorporating artwork and softening buildings and corners with the addition of low maintenance vegetation will drastically and positively alter the feeling and impressions that are made when walking around St. George. Low maintenance vegetation which may include vines creeping up alongside a building enhances St. George's impression of being a green and lush oasis after breaking through the institutional building wall to the reach the heart of the community.

Art can present itself in many ways. For example, creating wayfinding signs and devices at a human scale, and removing distracting overhead signage can make the pedestrian experience better. Furthermore, wayfinding need not be solely on signage and words. Rows of planted vines or other vegetation and giving a sidewalk a "yellow brick road" treatment can just as easily lead a person to the hub of St. George. In addition, wayfinding signs can lead tourists and newcomers to the district through the Ferry Terminal's maze of tunnels and exits.

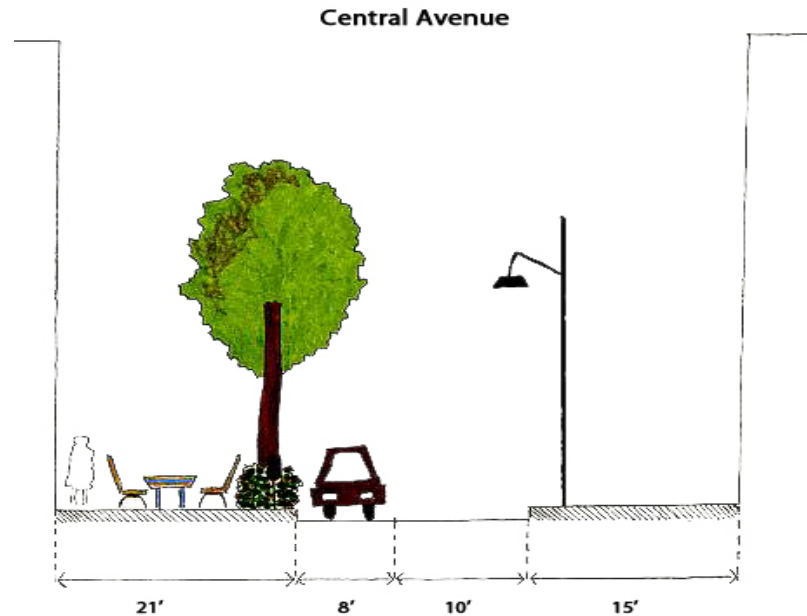


Creating New Connections

Creating new connections between streets can help break up the imposing wall of institutional buildings one sees when exiting the Ferry Terminal as well as on the longer blocks behind it. Urban planner Jane Jacobs touted the philosophy that shorter blocks give people more options getting to their destination, which encourages more frequent trips and contributes to more eyes on the street and therefore safer streets. Some areas of opportunity that were found to create new connections and shorter blocks include the long block bounded by Central Ave, St. Marks Place, Hyatt Street, and Victory Blvd. There are two parcels of open space currently on this block. One is a parking lot, which has been recommended as a site for the Artists' Atrium building and pedestrian street (see section on Infrastructure). The other is a vacant lot that appears to be in the early stages of construction. A welcoming pedestrian walkway can be introduced in both locations to help the flow of pedestrian traffic, create more eyes on the street to ensure the safety of the neighborhood and allow shorter routes to the Ferry Terminal. Both locations, and their potential for creating pedestrian connections, are discussed further in the zoning section of this report. Central Ave presents another opportunity in creating new connections as well. As suggested in

the visioning session that took place on October 12th, the heart and core of the neighborhood is both in the civic center near Borough Hall and also just slightly further south near the Everything Goes Book Cafe, the Cargo Cafe and the park triangle. These two locations both house lively activity and busy commercial strips. These two nodes are connected by Central Ave. Strangely, even though Central Ave serves as a connector between the two natural cores, in its current state, this avenue impedes activity between the two areas. As a result, Central Ave should be improved to facilitate an active flow of pedestrians from Stuyvesant Place to Victory Blvd and vice versa.

In order to reactivate this important corridor, visual interest and walkability should be added to the streetscape by including art installations (see the Art Street section p104), and reconfiguring the street to improve conditions for pedestrians. This can be accomplished by widening the sidewalks to enhance the walking experience, and creating room for sidewalk art and benches for sitting. The avenue itself would be narrowed and would be a one-way south-bound street encouraging drivers to move at a slower, safer pace.



Connecting Bike Lanes

Connective bike lanes can promote bike riding and healthier lifestyles. The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative show that 1-3% of short car trips are converted into bike trips with the proper infrastructure. Bike lanes also encourage drivers to drive slower, giving more time for pedestrians to be seen. Currently, the only bike lanes that exists in St. George are on Richmond Terrace and Bay Street. The neighborhood extends further than this one street and bike lanes should follow neighborhood use desire lines. The Art Hill Plan recommends creating a bike lane along the Lighthouse District near the waterfront, then connecting to the neighborhood via Hannah Street where Bay Street and Central Ave can serve as conduits to St. George neighborhood. This would allow ferry-bound cyclists to avoid the most heavily trafficked part of Bay Street, and avoid the dangerous Ferry Terminal ramp by approaching from the Lighthouse District.



View Corridor Seating

The view corridors found in St. George are a memorable part of this Staten Island neighborhood and a product of the close proximity of waterfront and hills. While the underused waterfront esplanade attempts to frame these views, the sections of the neighborhood that are located inland of Richmond Terrace and Bay Street fail to take advantage of the stunning views available from the higher elevations. Extending the sidewalk on streets with great view corridors, like Wall Street, and placing benches facing the waterfront would capitalize on this unique asset, as well as aid in a strenuous walk that may be challenging for St. George's specially abled visitors and residents. Business revenue on Bay Street and Richmond Terrace would certainly improve if wide sidewalks and sidewalk cafés were introduced to take advantage of the marvelous bayside views.



To help businesses in the area and create public hubs for the area, the Plan proposes pedestrianizing Stuyvesant Place between Wall Street and Schuyler Sreett in the commercial corridor area and configuring the street so that the street and sidewalk are at one level with special treatment given to the ground so that it looks distinctive like the Plaza areas adjacent to the lighthouse museum. Sidewalk cafés can also be set up in this neighborhood to stimulate business by creating additional seating and to encourage lingering. The longer that people linger on the streets, the safer the streets become. Likely, outdoor spaces such as pedestrian give the neighborhood a interactive quality that is intensely desirable.

Pedestrian Plaza - Stuyvesant Street



Pedestrian Plaza – Gateway to St. George, the Waterfront and the Ferry

Finally, the plan for Art Hill would like to give the residents of St. George and the ultimate public congregation space, and a fitting gateway to their Cultural District: a pedestrian plaza bordered by Hyatt Street, extending from Richmond Terrace/ Bay Street to Central Ave (see illustration). The pedestrian plaza would incorporate two existing triangles as well as close Borough Place to traffic in this area, with an exception for those wishing to make a right turn from Stuyvesant Place. Bus traffic will not be disrupted by these closures. The pedestrian plaza would be the welcoming pedestrian entrance and congregation space that St. George currently lacks. This plaza would serve as the gateway as well as the community center. The farmers market can permanently reside in this plaza instead of being constantly displaced, and it can serve as a conduit for street life. Performances and events, both formal and informal, can occur in this space, and it can serve as a natural gathering area for the community. Below are some additional design guidelines that can be used in making the pedestrian plaza user friendly:

- Low steps for sitting
- Flat wide spaces for farmers markets and performances
- Water feature or fountain
- 12 ft wide clearance for ADA accessibility and emergency vehicles
- Shade structures and/or tree plantings
- Welcome structure
- A new bus waiting area that allows visibility
- Red buoys from the Lighthouse area for additional seating/decor

The proposed pedestrian plaza can additionally serve as a gateway connecting the waterfront down to the Ferry Terminal, Lighthouse Museum and waterfront area. The Lighthouse Museum space is a brilliantly designed waterfront area, with the pitfall of having limited access to the public. By creating a direct pathway from the pedestrian plaza, via an extra-wide crossing for pedestrians, to the Lighthouse Museum area, the neighborhood can literally and figuratively knock down a section of a wall that prevents an existing pedestrian-oriented portion of the waterfront from being visible by the public. The pedestrian plaza is the connective link for the triangle that includes the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, the Lighthouse Museum area, and the public heart of the Art Hill District.

Hyatt Street Pedestrian Plaza



Slow Streets

Schuyler Street and on Stuyvesant Street from Schulyer Street to Hyatt Street , are proposed “slow streets”. Slow streets are streets where the sidewalks are wider, and the driving spaces are narrower. This is an effective measure to slow down traffic and ensure that adults, the elderly and children can cross the street safely and with ample room to walk.

Bay Street Bus Lane

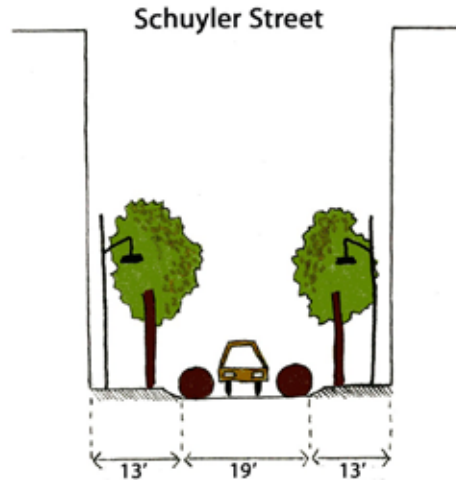
Bay Street is undoubtedly the most important street for mass transit in all of Staten Island. With the Staten Island ferry as the destination, 22 bus lines carrying close to 67,000 people traverse Bay St on a daily basis. As such, a bus lane should be implemented on either side of the street and dedicated exclusively to the expedited moving of buses during rush hours.

Ferry Terminal Ramp Bump-outs

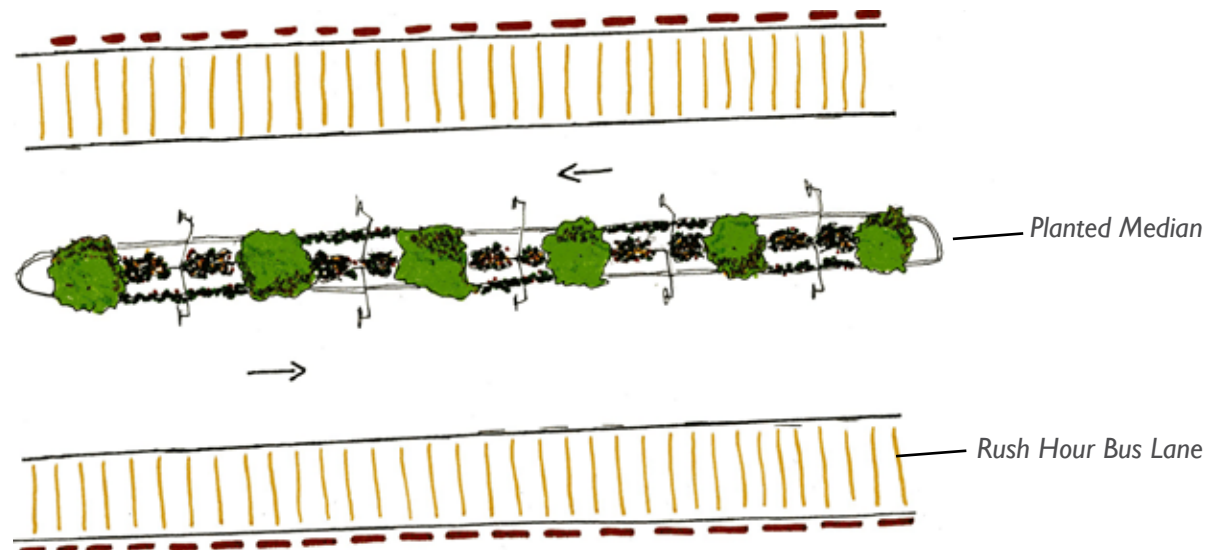
Corner bump outs can also be made in the Ferry Terminal ramps leading out to Bay Street in order to make a more concerted effort to make the crossing less dangerous for people, which is very wide at 70 feet to 103 feet at that particular section.

Conclusion

There is much to accomplish in the way of improving streetscape for people. St George must make street crossings safer and easier; make streets more welcoming by enlarging sidewalks and introducing art and plantings to soften the harshness of the street; produce wayfinding devices for visitors, commuters, and residents; create new connections to break up long blocks, connect bike lanes, encourage sidewalk cafes on Bay Street, Richmond Terrace and Stuyvesant Place, incorporate seating to take advantage of amazing view corridors and to help the elderly, and create a pedestrian plaza to unite the neighborhood with the transportation hub and the waterfront. Individual components of St. George like a theater, a commercial street, an art gallery, and the waterfront can be woven into a neighborhood that is designed for people.



Bay Street



5. Increase the Presence of Art in the Community

In creating a cultural district in St. George, it is critical to increase the perceived presence of art in order for residents and visitors to see the unique attributes of Art Hill as well as to increase involvement by all community members to create a flourishing arts and culture district. Increasing the presence of art will also support new art and a dialog that will be a vital and necessary achieving the District. This can be achieved in 4 key ways, which include collaboration between artists and local schools, the installation of both permanent and temporary art, art and cultural events and community gardens for all residents to use. All of these efforts will increase the visibility of the artists in St. George and create opportunities for the entire community to be involved and active in the arts and in neighborhood.

School Programs

Schools offer a great opportunity for local artists to contribute to the learning environment through creative and artistic programming. Strengthening a community in a sustainable way requires giving children ways to invest in their own communities. Using the arts to engage the community allows for creativity and self-expression, which can be powerful tools to establish a long lasting cultural district. The Staten Island Vision committee identified building an institutional connection between the arts community and the schools to serve as a clearinghouse for artists that wanted to work in the schools. Building upon their vision, the St. George Cultural District Plan suggests three

different types of programming between local artists and schools to increase the presence of art in the community and to use this cultural district to invest the community.

Artists In Schools: Program for schools to utilize the local art resources, which could include artists teaching their crafts in an afterschool program or guest-lecturing if time does not permit a consistent commitment.

Joint Ventures: Schools often have facilities where art can be displayed or performances can take place. There could be show spaces and events where both local artists and students display their art.

Shared Workspace: Artist's can utilize workspace and rehearsal space after school hours. In return artists can display some of their work throughout the school and surrounding areas to promote their work as well as develop a creative landscape.

The Plan suggests engaging three schools, located in close proximity to the core of the proposed cultural district, as sites for this integration program:

Curtis High School's current mission in their arts program is to empower students by offering professional opportunities to play and work in various performing groups by partnering with the Roundabout Theatre Company. This existing collaboration lays the foundation for other partnerships to occur. Local artists could become involved in the further education of the children

in the community. Curtis High School also offers an opportunity for artists to use the open space surrounding the school for art pieces produced by local artists and/or students.

The Ralph Mckee High School represents an opportunity to further develop the program and gear students towards professional careers in their chosen field. The school is currently set up with graphic design workspace that can be used for the "Joint Venture" program.

St. Peters Girls High School currently offers several art programs as well as a dance class, but is lacking in theater and music classes. Local musicians and entertainers could offer classes to students to increase their exposure to all forms of culture. The schools close proximity allows utilization of the waterfront area for any art projects done through the proposed "Artist in School" program and "Joint Ventures Program".

These collaborations create a consistent, permanent presence of art in the lives of community members that will put down roots and grow with the St. George Sustainable Cultural District.

Community Gardens Program

Community Gardens create an opportunity for the cultural district to expand community participation as well as exhibit art in a unique way. Community gardening improves people's quality of life by providing a catalyst for neighborhood development, stimulating social interaction and beautifying the neighborhood. All of these aspects will be key for creating a sustainable cultural district. Community gardens can be incorporated into the district in three ways:

- Strengthen the existing gardens
- Turn temporary or permanent vacant space into gardens
- Using the gardens as an educational tool to create collaboration between community gardens and cultural institutions.

St. George currently has two community gardens located on Jersey Street that contribute to the vitality of the street. Taller buildings with 10+ units surround these gardens, providing a good model for locating future gardens where residents lack access to backyards. Artists could work with these existing gardens to install art that could beautify what currently exists as well as install practical art pieces such as benches for people to socialize with their neighbors or visitors. The current volunteers could assist with the planning and opening of the new gardens by acting as consultants which could generate a partnership between existing and new gardens.

Current empty lots throughout St. George offer an opportunity to develop the unsightly spaces into community gardens that will immediately change the feel of the area. Vacant lots are blank canvases that can be turned into lively, energetic spaces. Instead of having a feeling of abandonment these spaces can become gathering places where both community members and visitors can congregate. The Plan suggests a new community garden on a vacant lot on Central Ave. It is located in the core of the art district on one of the streets the Art Hill Plan would like to strengthen and is close to the proposed Atrium. It is also near Cargo Café, which has become an important place for the neighborhood to gather.

Community gardens can be used as an educational tool by involving other institutions such as schools and museums, to create programs where both children and adults can take part in the process and help maintain the gardens. New gardens can also be located in open space controlled by the institutions, which can allow for a partnership to take place that will strengthen the purpose of the gardens as well as create an artistic and welcoming retreat for the institutions. A great example of where this could happen is at the Staten Islands Museum due to its proximity to the core of the art district and its location near the waterfront. The work of the Arelier le Balto is a good example of the collaborations as the studio creates events with institutions dedicated to the creation of ephemeral gardens and the transformation of urban public spaces and art spaces.

The increased presence of community gardens will benefit the art district by making it more inclusive and by promoting the environment, nature and the arts it will contribute to creating a sustainable district that will continue to evolve.



Public Art

Public Art can serve as a symbol of a community's pride. The Art Hill Plan proposes permanent and ephemeral works of art by local and foreign artists to be site-specifically installed in public places. Public art could take on the more traditional form of sculptures and murals, but should also be incorporated in the design of streetscape elements and in multi-media forms to be interactive and useful. The Art Hill Plan envisions recycle bins and planters made of mosaics, innovative benches and lamp posts, functional bike racks, and various infrastructural and streetscape elements enhanced by color and art. Public art can be installed throughout the district in pedestrian corridors - improving the experience of visitors and residents, helping people find their way in the district, serving as landmarks and enhancing civic pride. These bodies of artwork can permanently enhance the creative forces and civic identity of Art Hill as well as greater St. George and Staten Island as a whole. Their mere existence will also attract tourists and patrons. The presence of the Arts District can be emphasized by these public art forms.

An element that could enhance the district and serve as a theme throughout the area is the use of mosaics. Mosaics of various mediums could be used on sidewalks in order to provide color, vibrancy and a way-finder through major corridors in the district. Mosaics can be used as installations on benches, planters, garbage/recycling bins, lampposts and even manholes, with a special attention to adding and integrating mosaic streetscape elements in the proposed pedestrian areas.

To increase the involvement of all residents in the district there could be workshops for the public, including children, to help craft mosaics on planters, structures and sidewalks creating a deep rooted connection between those involved and the district. As sustainability is a central theme of the proposed district, the use of salvaged materials could be used to create the mosaics.

The brick wall that lines Bay Street from the lighthouse waterfront area up the hill, could incorporate the use of mosaics as this would help guide visitors coming from the ferry, into the heart of the Arts District through the new entrance plaza. It would also help to provide connectivity between the waterfront area up to Bay Street and Fishes Eddy. In addition, the proposed opening of an existing gate along the wall could be emphasized by a mosaic, in order make pedestrians feel drawn to the water and provide better connectivity between Bay Street and the Lighthouse Museum waterfront.



Red Spheres/Painted Streets/Wayfinding

An interesting element of public art that is currently integrated in the waterfront area by the Lighthouse Museum is the placement of bright red fishing buoys along the street. These structures are a striking feature in the area, distinguishing the space as a special, marine-influenced area. Building upon what is already in place, these structures act as a theme to create a recognizable symbol of the art district by integrating them into other locations. Painted surfaces can also create a theme throughout the district and can act as a dual purpose by creating safer pedestrian crossings and way-finding indicators to the district.



Bike Racks

Additional bike racks should be installed in St. George, particularly in the Art Hill as a form of public art. The design for the racks could be bright and eye-catching, emphasizing an advocacy for alternate means of transportation, and also adding an element of public art to the area.

Benches

Benches are a great way to provide both aesthetics and function. Saint George lacks this kind of installation so pedestrians are destined to walk long blocks without having resting spots at various street intervals. The experience of enjoying the beautiful views is undermined when pedestrians do not have a place to sit down and soak in the beauty. Benches serve the function of providing seating and they can be creative, innovative, and beautiful at the same time. Artists in Saint George could be encouraged to design benches for the public use through a design competition organized by COAHSI and other organizations. The NYC Design Commission should also vigorously locate bench installations at public street along intervals.



Sculpture Park

A minisculpture park or a series of small, medium and large sculptures can be installed within the core and along the waterfront to create permanent or ephemeral art accentuating St. George's Sustainable Cultural District and complimenting the current 9/11 memorial sculpture that has attracted attention and curiosity along the waterfront. A site-specific concentration in these areas will invoke civic participation in art education and cultural exchange. The bodies of work can be commissioned from local St. George and Staten Island artists through a contest to involve the opinions of the community.

Temporary installations, competition(s)

In an effort to add substantially more art to public areas in the district, and to incorporate local artist's work, temporary installations could be on display at various locations, particularly at public plazas and crossings. Artists could be chosen by a request for proposal or competition, a process that is engaging in itself for those involved. Funding for the installations could come from the City, potentially from the NYC Department of Transportation.

Currently, the NYC Department of Transportation has a successful public art/plaza program where they partners with community organizations to install temporary murals, sculptures, lighting and other art installations in plazas, medians, sidewalks, barriers and fences. This image shows an installation made possible by DOT and the DUMBO Improvement District as a community partner. Interestingly enough, this is located under the Manhattan Bridge in Brooklyn, and was completed by the artist Tattfoo Tan, who is a resident of St. George.

Public art should be integrated throughout Art Hill in order to increase the presence of art and the vitality of the streets. The suggestions above will create functional street infrastructure, which will be brightened and made more attractive by incorporating a variety of art work. The installation and display of public art will help make Art Hill more interesting, exciting and will promote community pride.

Events

As a compact, walkable community with several cultural institutions, an artistic community and access to the waterfront, St. George is an ideal location to organize large events. Events are a great way to showcase local talents among other artists, attract participants and foot traffic, increase the visibility of the neighborhood, and develop and strengthen a spirit of collaboration between cultural stakeholders. Successful events like the Fence Show, Art by the Ferry, Second Saturdays, Lumen Festival and many more are already part of the highlights of the cultural life of the community. The five recommended events below are either building off of existing successes or are transposing new concepts that have been successful elsewhere

"Arts by the Ferry" Weekend Walks

The value of combining the Weekend Walks format with "Arts by the Ferry" is tremendous. "Arts by the Ferry" currently offers great programming during two consecutive summer weekends. Unfortunately most of the events take place inside, thus greatly reducing the visibility of these events and failing to attract the crowds such programming deserves. The advantage of obtaining a weekend walks permit (only \$25, per block, per weekend) is that the event can now take over the streets, gain visibility, draw natural foot traffic and create a feel of connectedness within the community. A recommendation would be to close down Hyatt Street, and possibly Central Ave and Stuyvesant Place for the weekend events to take place.



SEVENTY BAY STREET
JUNE 6-7 AND JUNE 13-14 2009 11AM-6PM RAIN OR SHINE



WILLIE CHU, KRISTI PFISTER, SARAH YUSTER AND MALACHI MCCORMICK



An Art Installation by Tattfoo Tan, New York

A Full-Fledged Nuit Blanche

Cultural institutions coming alive for an entire night with glowing sculptures and public art installations are now a staple in many cultural capitals of the world such as Paris, St. Petersburg, and Montreal. The purpose of the event is to attract a crowd that is less familiar with the cultural institutions by making it a special event throughout an entire night. Such an event could build on the experience acquired by the Staten Island Lumen Festival and become part of a much larger event involving all the cultural institutions in St. George, big and small. Cultural institutions, like the Staten Island Museum, the St. George Theater, Snug Harbor and the galleries, would be invited to open their doors from 5 pm to 5 am and offer free exhibits, events, performances, while light infused public art would make the path from one location to the next.



St. George's Own Party Beach

Throughout the City, "water taxi beaches" have become a popular location during the summertime. Located right by the water, the Lighthouse Museum area offers the perfect location for a temporary beach. The site is intimate and accessible, yet away from local residences so loud music can be played during the day and in the evening. Montreal's Piknic Electronik and NYC's MOMA PS1 "Warm Up" are examples of current successful outdoor party events. The St. George site offers could as well be easily fenced off for a paid event.

Sailor's Summer Flix

Sailor's Summer Flix is a proposed outdoor film screening taking place for the entire summer on the Coast Guard esplanade. The event is modeled after Cinélac in Geneva, Switzerland, a very successful event that has now been running for over ten years. From early July to late August, Cinélac offers a broad selection of movies every evening after dusk to about 800 people - rain or shine - on a screen beautifully located right by the water, facing Lake Geneva. Such an event could be replicated on the north end of Victory Blvd, which offers a view, a natural slope and the necessary space to set up a screen. Sailor's Summer Flix might be an excellent first step to raise the profile of St. George as a movie destination for the surrounding communities in Staten Island, and pave the way for a permanent movie theater and/or a larger film festival.



An Indoor & Outdoor Music Festival

Compared to Europe or cities like Montreal, New York City does not have many specialized music festivals (jazz, classical, electro, reggae, soul). St. George offers a great opportunity for the creation of a network of outdoor and indoor stages. Among the sites considered: the Lighthouse Museum esplanade, the north waterfront, the Nicholas Lia Park, the Tompkinsville Square Park, the tip of Victory Blvd, Borough Hall gardens and the parking lot beside Taco Bell. Attendees would circulate from one to the other, shop and dine-out in the community. All of the recommended events should encourage St. George: to take better advantage of existing public spaces and increase the scale of the events through the notion of cooperation among local cultural institutions in the core. Individually, none of the institutions in St. George have the capacity to compete with other cultural institutions in the rest of the City. It is only through the collaboration of these institutions around specific events that the Art Hill will gain visibility.

The creation and presence of art is the foundation for all Cultural Districts. Therefore, in order for the District to thrive and be sustainable there needs to be involvement and effort from the entire community, it is therefore critical to increase the presence of art through the collaboration of different

programs and resources. Art allows people to explore their creativity and continually produce and discover new ways to express their thoughts and ideas and by reflecting these values in Art Hill it will establish a flourishing and vibrant district.





A Map Shows Future Event Venues in St. George

6. Art Hill: An Affordable and Inclusive Cultural District

Art Hill is indeed intended to revitalize the neighborhood by attracting more artists to the community and more attention and new investments. But just as important, it is seeking to protect current and future artists and residents from displacement. As stated previously, Art Hill's goal is to attract 80 new artists to its core by proactively marketing rental and ownership housing opportunity to the NYC artist community. However, throughout New York City, an increased arts population has been perceived as an early sign of gentrification and negative impacts are expected to follow: rent increase and the displacement of the most vulnerable residents, including the artists themselves. This scenario has unfolded time and again from SoHo, to Chelsea, from DUMBO to Williamsburg, and is now underway in Gowanus, Long Island City and Bushwick. If St. George attracts more attention through the creation of a cultural district, it has to put in place protection mechanisms for the current residents as well as for the artists. Therefore, the Plan recommends pursuing the following multi-pronged strategy:

1. *Short-term:* Collaborate with real estate brokers to locate (1) live/work rental spaces and (2) affordable houses for sale. These should be marketed to the NYC artist community in order to provide current St. George artists with better live/work spaces and attract new artists from outside St. George.

2. *Mid-term:* Create a land trust so as to ensure that the art community is anchored in St. George regardless of real estate trends. Also, pass zoning recommendations included in this report. These recommendations to the zoning code will increase live-work housing opportunities throughout the district.

3. *Long-term:* Bring together a coalition of developers, build a consensus around the vision of an "inclusive cultural district", and act as a conduit for municipal, state, and federal programs that fund the development of affordable housing.

Only through such a holistic and inclusive strategy of growth management can Art Hill be deemed a "sustainable" cultural district.

Promotion of Homeownership and of the Existing Live/Work Rental Spaces

St. George is currently a very affordable place to live compared to the rest of New York City. In 2000, the median lease was \$650 per month, and on average, St. George renters were paying less than 30% of their income in rent. In addition, car ownership is an unnecessary expense as public transit is plentiful in the area - saving households up to \$6,000 per year. Housing sales prices and rents are not expected to rise in the near future. The development of the

cultural district can potentially inflate real estate prices, but only in the mid- and long-term. This is why attracting new artists by actively promoting live/work opportunities in St. George should be an immediate priority.

The affordable rent and the presence of appropriate spaces for conversion into live/work spaces should be actively promoted to attract new artists. Interviews with several St. George developers and brokers have revealed that "low end", "raw" spaces - of the type artists are looking for - are more difficult to rent out to a "regular market". This finding represents a perfect convergence of interests: brokers are looking to rent these spaces and the cultural district is looking to increase the number of artists. The cultural district leadership organization could contact brokers, visit their rental spaces, agree on the type of art production that is acceptable given the owners restriction and then proactively market it to the NYC arts community.

There are currently twenty-five homes for sale in St. George that are listed at less than \$300,000 and a third of them are listed under \$200,000. This real estate market represents an opportunity for artists to make a capital investment and reap the rewards of their community building efforts. Eligible artists could purchase these houses with

Creation of a Community Land Trust

the assistance of an existing program called Home First that provides grants to first-time homebuyers for down payments and closing costs. This City-sponsored program, through the Housing Preservation and Development Department, provides grants of up to \$25,000 to apply to closing costs or the down payment of homes less than \$300,000 for first-time home buyers whose income qualifies (\$36,000 for a single person, up to \$83,000 for an eight person household). Homebuyers' education is required for participation in the program, and artists have specific needs in this area.

The St. George Cultural District Leadership Organization should take an active role in connecting New York City's artists with the abundant affordable real estate in St. George. A web-based real estate directory was used to great effect in Paducah, KY. There should be a central point of communication between real estate brokers and the creative community, and a listing website with information about properties relevant to artists. Organizations with expertise in this area should be asked to collaborate. Art Home would be an ideal collaborator, as a nonprofit that has created materials to educate artists about how to access home-ownership programs, such as Home First, as independent contractors. The two HPD licensed organizations in Staten Island, NHS of Staten Island and Northfield Community Local Development Corporation, should be engaged in targeted marketing and specialized education to encourage artists to invest in North Shore real estate and ensure the arts have a permanent home in St. George.

Community Land Trusts (CLT) are a highly effective but often underused mechanism for protecting land and housing. CLTs are also effective at guarding against the possible effects of speculation and ensuing displacement as was the case in Soho, Chelsea, and now, in Williamsburg. By protecting the purchased land and buildings by a deed restriction tied to a specific mission, a CLT can anchor a cultural district now and for a long time in the future.

CLT's are operated by a nonprofit organization that typically purchases the land. The acquired land is then protected by a deed that limits future uses based on a pre-established mission. A nonprofit can, for example, establish that the land in their possession can only be used for cultural or affordable housing purposes. Often, CLTs own the land but may sell the development rights to build property. In this case specifications of affordability and types of uses can be written into the deed to ensure that the intention and spirit of the land trust is preserved.

Having a member based decision-making model is also a characteristic of CLT's. The nonprofit creates a board that acts as the guardian of the CLT by ensuring that uses and developments conform to the mission. A board generally includes direct stakeholders like residents, artists, cultural institutions and a 2/3 majority vote is required to amend the mission in any way. This member based decision-making model guarantees community action, community participation, and consensus so that all decisions are democratically reached. This model has been applied with success in NYC.

The East Village Fourth Arts Block (FAB) is a perfect example of the successful use of a CLT. As described in the precedents section of this report, FAB is home to about 60 cultural organizations along with 12 theaters, 8 dance/rehearsal studios, 3 film-editing suites, and a large screening room. Given the real estate pressure in the neighborhood, it is safe to say that only a tiny fraction of these cultural institutions could have survived without the creation of a CLT.

The St. George Sustainable Cultural District Leadership Organization should explore the possibility of creating its own CLT in order to have ownership of the land, protect it from real estate fluctuations and secure a permanent location for the core of the cultural district based on a sustainable vision for the St. George arts and cultural community. FAB has proven that the CLT is adaptable, highly beneficial and perfectly feasible.

Affordable Housing

In the mid- to long- term, affordable housing should become the priority of the cultural district's Leadership Organization. In addition to bringing more artists to the community, establishing the different arts facilities and creating the land trust, the construction of affordable housing is necessary to ensure that current residents can weather the real estate pressure created by the very existence of a cultural district. Art Hill must remain accessible and inclusive. Supportive Housing and the New York Main Street Program are two examples of initiatives that should be pursued. The cultural district leadership organization should act as a clearinghouse for these programs as well as spearhead a coalition of "nonprofit developers" in supporting the cause of an inclusive cultural district.

The New York Main Street Program (NYMS) is a great source of funding to support Art Hill's effort to strengthen its heart. Administered by the Office of Community Renewal (OCR) under the direction of the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC), the NYMS could provide funding, from \$50,000 to \$500,000, to stimulate reinvestment in properties in the core of the cultural district. The bulk of the funding should be geared toward the development of art galleries, art studios, and affordable housing.

For example, NYMS could provide funding for the rehabilitation of "57 Victory Boulevard" where a gallery space could be created on the first floor along with 2 work / live studios in the upper floors. The boarded up ground floor is currently breaking the continuity of the shopping district. A gallery would be a great addition to the retail corridor. The NYMS program recognizes that "affordable, marketable housing in upper-floor spaces and on adjacent streets helps to strengthen the social and economic vitality of the business district". The two upper floors would allow for the creation of 4 artist work / live studios with an affordable rent.

Re-visioning a Boarded Up Building at 57 Victory Blvd



The supportive housing model will offer Art Hill an inclusive, affordable housing program that focuses on housing artists and non-artists with special needs. A supportive housing building is made of studio units and an office area for supportive services. Such a building would be an asset in that it would provide housing to artists as well as to the most vulnerable St. George residents.

The Supportive Housing Model offers studio apartments for single adults whose income generally ranges from \$39,000 to \$47,000 – i.e. 50-60% of the NYC area median income. One-third of the units will house artists while the other two-thirds would provide a home to people who have special needs following armed services, such as PTSD, or chronic street homelessness. The in-building services would provide case management and mental health support. Art therapy is strongly encouraged as one of the services as it would not only add a social dimension to the use of art within the cultural district, but it would also provide jobs to local artists with the proper background.

A good example of this model in practice is the Schermerhorn House in Brooklyn, which is owned and managed by the nonprofit Common Ground while the Actors Fund provides the services. The cost benefit for supportive housing has continuously been proven to save the local and federal government money, especially for the special needs population with the average supportive housing unit costing \$34 per day compared to a NYC hospital costing \$600-\$1600 per day.

A Coalition for Publicly Funding Housing

Several sources of funding exist to build and run supportive housing. To name a few, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, the HOME Investment Partnership program and project based Section 8, have been instrumental in the creation of supportive housing across the City.

For further information, the Corporation for Supportive Housing offers a ‘tool kit’ on their website with detailed information and a variety of financing options at stages of development. See Page 119 Resources Appendix for additional cost benefit data and further description of the available financing programs. In the end, supportive housing can help bring additional artist, protect vulnerable residents, and give art a social role.

Finally, the St. George Sustainable Cultural District leadership organization should actively promote the notion of an “inclusive cultural district” and get developers on board to build more affordable housing. Based on interviews, developers in St. George do not seem to be particularly familiar with the range of federal and state programs, nor inclined to resort to incentives designed to encourage the construction of affordable housing. Several incentives mechanisms can be found at federal and state level – see the list in the Appendix – and are crafted to make the construction of affordable housing profitable for developers. The role of the leadership organization would be to build capacity among developers through workshops and actively work with them on the development of affordable housing projects.

This strategy is intended to have a short-, a mid-, and a long-term impact. In the short term, a well-marketed program in close collaboration with real estate brokers to match artists with live/work rental spaces and houses for sale should allow the district to meet its goal of attracting 80 artists to the core. In the mid-term, the land trust will anchor the cultural district by acquiring land and vacant building while they are still affordable. The coalition of developers in partnership with cultural district’s leadership will then create more affordable housing for both artists and local residents. In the long run, these measures should offset the negative effects of the successful revitalization of the district.

Schermerhorn House in Brooklyn





V. IMPLEMENTATION

V. IMPLEMENTATION

I. Marketing and Promotion of “Art Hill”

In an effort to unify, provide identity and enhance marketability of the district, a promotion strategy should be pursued. It is crucial that the strategy incorporate thoughtful branding and a vigorous outreach campaign. Additionally, the “look” of St. George should be considered in this effort, as structural improvements and design guidelines can be significant in conveying the feel of the district - essential to the success of the proposed Plan. As described in previous sections, St. George has many assets, such as its geography and diversity of both culture and building types, which are currently lacking visibility and adequate recognition. The creation of the arts and cultural district can be a great opportunity to capitalize on these assets, to help create a positive image for St. George, and Staten Island on the whole. Therefore, a marketing effort should be pursued and at various scales: within the district itself in order to stimulate community pride, throughout Staten Island, and also in the other New York City boroughs. Staten Island is often forgotten when it comes to media and promotion, and also neglected when it comes to perceptions and public image. A planned strategy should help to promote not only the arts and cultural district but also the neighborhood itself, which is an asset to the borough and should be an asset to New York City as well.

Branding

The marketing strategy should be in line with the objectives of the district. In order to solidify the overall aim of the Plan, the project mission statement can be revisited: To create an arts and cultural district where art is produced, people can participate in the creation of culture and artists can showcase their work. A sustainable Plan for this district will create a new dynamic for St. George and build upon existing strengths. Branding for the district should be defined in line with, and furthermore inspire the achievement of these overall objectives. The district’s brand should incorporate historic and geographical assets of St. George and build upon existing pride and the experiences of residents. Branding and promotional efforts should also build upon the positive implications of the notion of St. George being small town. The senses of community and neighborhood camaraderie that are associated with a small town are present in St. George. Local artists should be the stewards of an added emphasis on the arts, the environment and progressive thinking. More vibrancy, more places to shop, walk, eat and attend cultural events will enhance the overall community feel. Furthermore, the brand should be enlivening, exciting and colorful – as the district is intended to be.

Name

The name proposed for the district is: “Art Hill”, St. George Sustainable Cultural District.” Art Hill is simple, easily spoken and reveals two of the major assets that St. George has to offer. The topography of the area is undoubtedly a distinguishing feature. The “hilliness” of St. George dates back to the earliest history of the area, when streets and blocks were named after particular hills, such as Fort Hill, Robbin’s View Hill, Sand Hill, Pavilion Hill, Orchard Hill and Cork Hill. A growing artist community is a characteristic of the newer St. George. The proposed district is intended to enhance the growing community that is organically taking shape. “Art Hill” unites these two attributes by building upon the history and current assets of St. George; it promotes a progressive look forward to the one of a kind district that it could be.

Logo

The Art Hill logo incorporates a few visual branding elements, and again highlights some of the existing assets of St. George. The bright orange color alludes to the Staten Island Ferry, which is particularly significant to St. George and important to the success of the district. The green hill not only highlights the natural topography, but also alludes to being “green” in the context of environmental responsibility and stewardship, as part of the overarching objective of the district to be sustainable. Although the waterfront is not referenced directly, the blue text is meant to be representative of the surrounding Bay. Additionally, the round, circular shape is meant to mimic the red buoys that are currently integrated into the streetscape and plaza in the waterfront area by the Lighthouse Museum. In Art Hill Plan, these red buoys will be further incorporated throughout the cultural district, and also referenced as a simple, iconic red circle in promotional materials. The dot on the lower-case “l” references one of these buoys with the simplified iconic shape.

To build upon existing assets of St. George, the Plan for Art Hill calls for art and streetscape elements that draw attention to surrounding views and vegetation. Welcoming corridors for pedestrian access will be created in the core district, luring

visitors and residents. These pedestrian-focused areas and will feature colorful and multipurpose benches to allow people to sit and enjoy views of the surrounding natural environment and waterfront. Benches can be multi-purpose, serving as both seating and planter beds. Adding planters wherever possible throughout the district will both improve the feel of the district and help enhance existing natural vegetation.



Promoting the Cultural district

Promotional materials including posters and brochures can include a map like the example below. An easy to read map can help guide tourists and residents to some of the cultural sites of St. George, both existing and those envision for the district. The visual branding of Art Hill can be incorporated in both print form and in public art throughout the district; particular elements in the streetscape can be used for promotional purposes and will provide recognition. A mosaic theme could be displayed on streetscape features throughout the core district and could also be included in promotional materials (as shown in the map below). The “organic” nature of mosaics can represent the diversity of uses and users that the district is meant to promote.

Promotional materials such as the map could be posted at locations around town, including bus stations and on buses, which could help inform the non-artist community of St. George about the resources and activities in their neighborhood that they might have otherwise been. Brochures with a map like this could be distributed at information booths and on the Ferry, and formatted for a “walking tour.” It may intrigue tourists enough to get off the boat, enjoy what St. George has to offer and influence them to walk away with a positive impression of Staten Island.



Public Relations

In order to have a successful district, it is imperative that people know about it. This includes not only artists, but also the surrounding community and boroughs. With more people coming to St. George, more financial resources will follow. Ferry riders should be seen as a potential opportunity. Visitors, both tourists and residents of other New York City boroughs, can help enliven the streets of St. George by adding pedestrian activity, and also help change perceptions by word of mouth. Information about galleries, studios and even restaurants in St. George should be readily available, particularly at the Ferry Terminals. Bringing more foot traffic to St. George will bring more resources and attention to the area. Spending money on local services and supporting local artists by buying their work will not only benefit locals directly, but could potentially influence City agencies to be more responsive and support added services and infrastructure for the town. The cultural district can make St. George into an asset of New York City.

Promotion at the Terminals and within the Ferry should be increased. There should be more information booths, and they should be located in prominent locations, unlike now. In order to adequately inform people about tourism opportunities and “things to do” in St. George, and to make a strong initial push to spread the word about the new district, a small information booth (staffed or unstaffed) could be set up within the

ferris themselves. The booth could help educate people who had no time to be aware in the Manhattan Terminal. Also, there is currently a video that plays in the Manhattan Terminal, showing some of the sights of Staten Island. The screen is very high up and not very noticeable. Additional digital media could be incorporated at the stations, (with added information about Art Hill) and a promotional video (possibly with low-volume sound) could play while riding the ferry.

In order to promote the cultural district and particularly to catch the attention of commuters, information about the district and all of its happenings should be incorporated in strategic locations on bus shelters and on the buses themselves.

A website should be established for Art Hill, and stronger press presence should be pursued. Relationships should be built with New York based publications (both on and offline) with younger audiences such as Time Out New York, the Village Voice and L Magazine, as well as the New Yorker, New York Times and New York Magazine. Events should be promoted on media sites, and a strategic advertising push should be pursued. Though the upfront cost may seem daunting, the potential to improve perceptions and succeed in achieving a one-of-a-kind district and destination for New York City is worth it.



Architecture as a Tool for Enhancing Image

As a tool in the marketing effort, St. George should exhibit its historically rich architecture to visitors and residents. The range of present architecture styles could help promote Saint George as a historical neighborhood and a cultural destination. In line with branding and creating an identity, new architecture and architectural structures in the district could embrace an intimate feel and be congruous with the existing environment. Some “natural” elements can be the use of mosaics, wood, stucco, cement, and stained glass aesthetic coupled with fiberglass, steel, and other modern materials.

An iconic building or structure could also make its presence in St. George to provide a landmark to attract the attention of visitors. Inspired by the London Eye in England, the structure could serve as a destination center, capable of providing functional elements such as information and recreation, while also providing aesthetic character. Incorporating an observation deck would be a particularly great feature for St. George, in order to take advantage of the beautiful views. A prime location for this structure will be the area that is currently a parking lot just north of the Ferry Terminal.

Design could be decided upon through a competition, and local artists work could be incorporated. The structure could be built to meet particular design guidelines, possibly decided upon by a competition, and could incorporate reused and recycled materials where possible. The iconic structure does not necessarily need to be permanent. Ephemeral architectural works can be temporarily installed to attract a variety of crowds and purposes. The advantages of a mobile exhibition is that it is prefabricated and less expensive, it requires minimum to no infrastructure support, and it offers regular, refreshing changes to its exhibition. It is also an excellent opportunity to host design competitions, putting art in the forefront of attracting visitors to St. George.

Additionally, parking structure could be transformed into iconic landmarks, as asset to promote the new image and identity of Staten Island. In Europe as well as in parts of the USA, parking buildings have become successful design objects. They can be well integrated and multi-purpose to include retail space on the ground floor and community uses on the roof. These design requirements would camouflage the vast, characterless parking lots and help enliven the streets. These design proposals would help forge a new image and identity in the area and provide a destination point and entertainment options for tourists and for New York City residents.

Conclusion

Overall, it is up to the implementers of the Plan to formalize branding and marketing objectives. The marketing element of the Art Hill Plan serves as examples to consider and elements could be included. Though this plan does not go as far as defining the specific stylistic or architectural guidelines, doing so is recommended in the earliest stages of Plan implementation, in order to develop a strong and recognizable presence and to reinforce a successful marketing strategy.



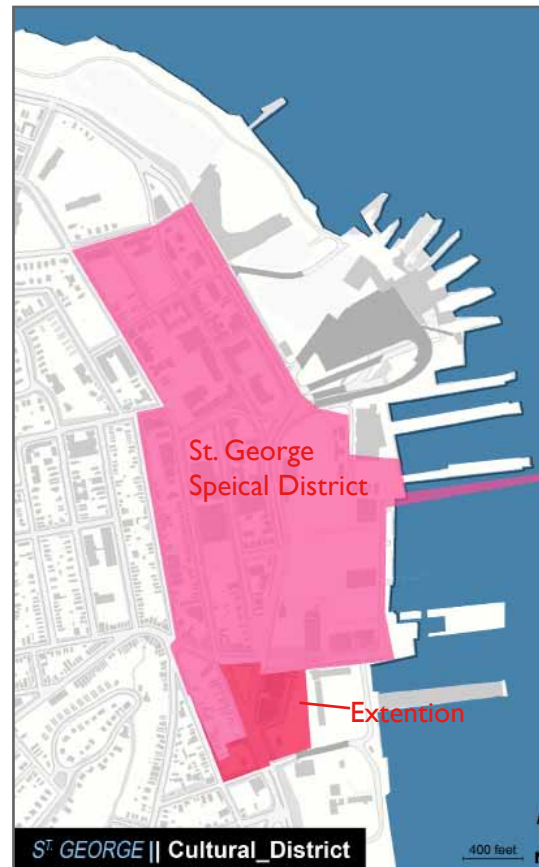
2. Zoning Recommendations

Zoning is a powerful tool that can be used to integrate and strengthen the ideas and concepts behind the Art Hill plan. It can be used to create new protection mechanisms, to create more pedestrian friendly places. In this section, several zoning recommendations are made that should benefit the Cultural District in ways that should make it more walkable, less car dependent, more lively and more economically vibrant for both artists, developers, businessmen and residents. The following are amendments to the zoning rules of the St. George Special District, whose boundaries are substantially the same as those of the St. George Sustainable Cultural District.

Boundaries

The boundary of the St. George Special District should be expanded to include the entire area surrounding Tompkinsville Square Park. Currently, the Special District ends at Victory Blvd, just across the street from Tompkinsville Square Park, and a small portion extends over the Blvd to include the Taco Bell/KFC lot and several other lots just south of it, but ends half-way through the block. This irregular boundary causes the Tompkinsville Square Park area, one of the Cultural District's "organic cores," to be split into two very different zoning sectors. This can cause the area to develop in a non-cohesive fashion. The Tompkinsville Square area should be treated as a cohesive neighborhood center whose central point is the triangular shaped park.

For the sake of continuity within a vibrant part of the neighborhood, it is recommended that the Special District be extended to incorporate the park and all of the blocks that surround it. This would extend the Special District to Hannah Street in the south, Van Duzzer Street in the west, and the Staten Island Railway tracks in the east.



Commercial Street

The St. George Special District has designed a set of rules to create and preserve storefront retail streets. These rules are applicable on streets with the designation "Commercial Streets." This ingenious zoning device preserves the visual continuity of commercial corridors and protects retail strips from the unwanted side effects of large buildings – such as long, empty walls. There are several Commercial Streets in the Special District. However, due to the addition of a pedestrian mall on Stuyvesant Place it was felt that the Commercial Street designation should also be applied to Wall Street between Academy Place and Richmond Terrace in order to: (1) complement the Stuyvesant Pedestrian Mall, (2) take advantage of the harbor views available from this street, (3) take advantage of upcoming development along this street, and (4) provide more sites for retail than are currently available on Stuyvesant Street. Extending the retail district to this section of Wall Street would provide the shopping district/ pedestrian plaza with much needed room for growth.

Breaking Up the “Barrier Block”

The extended block upon which the new Staten Island Courthouse and Garage are being built is a 500 yard long barrier that blocks foot-traffic between the Tompkinsville area and the Borough Hall area. The block provides no opportunities for foot traffic to flow between the active upper reaches of Victory Blvd and the active areas of Borough Hall. Given the size of this barrier, few people walk along St. Marks Place – giving it a desolate, uninviting feel and depressing business and property values along what should be a vibrant street. Due to the unfavorable walking conditions, it is no surprise that the properties opposite this “barrier block” feature some of the more distressed looking properties in the district. In order to revitalize this area of the district it is essential that this “barrier block” provide better access between the active cores of the district. This can be achieved by breaking up the block with streets and sidewalks (the city retains a right of way through the block at Slosson Terrace) or it can be achieved at a lower cost by strategically placing narrow pedestrian only streets between buildings at specific areas.

The Art Hill Plan envisions two pedestrian access streets as shown in the map below. A key aspect of both pedestrian streets is that they should be activated by small (1,000 sq. ft. or less), continuous, ground floor retail on both sides of the pedestrian walkway in order to prevent these streets from becoming desolate alleys. This requirement can

be effectively achieved through zoning. The first proposed pedestrian walkway, located within the Artists’ Atrium project, meets these criteria while simultaneously creating a place for artists to work and display their art. The second pedestrian walkway is located along the southern border of a large amalgamation of lots currently owned by St. Marks Home Realty. Placing the walkway at this site, would compliment the new plaza at the end of Central Ave as proposed in the Streetscape plan. This pedestrian street would provide an ideal location for a restaurant or a café on Central Ave, facing the plaza, and mark the beginning of the Central Ave Art Street (details of the Art Street follow). The owner of these lots should be provided with exemptions from the parking requirement in exchange for providing this public space.



St. Marks Place and Central Ave Art Streets

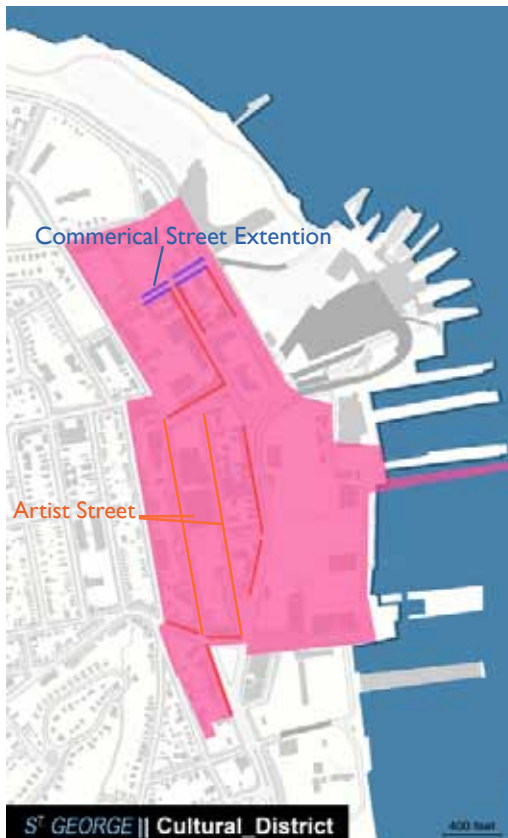
New York City commonly employs special zoning provisions to reinforce a district’s character. For example, large, bright signs are required on buildings located in Times Square, and entertainment uses are required for new developments on 125th Street in Harlem. In St. George, the community has decided to capitalize on its large arts community and the Art Hill Plan can support this goal through zoning. The Art Hill Plan proposes that St. Marks Place and Central Ave; between Hyatt Street and Victory Blvd should be designated as “Art Streets”. This designation would require that all properties located on these streets prominently display art by local artists (the “Art Displays”), and that all retail establishments on these streets devote a percentage of shelf space, wall space or square footage to locally produced art (“Art Sales”). These streets were chosen due to their vital importance in activating foot traffic between the two most vital sectors of the district.

Artist Display

Property owners would be required to provide one Art Display for every 20 feet of frontage on the Art Street. The art need not be purchased by the property owner and may be on-loan from the artist. The Art Display would provide the name of the artist, and the name of the artwork, in a visible location on the street in front of the property. Property owners may substitute works of art at any time. All Art Displays must be registered with the Art Hill Sustainable Cultural District leadership organization (discussed in the final chapter of this report) so that inquiries regarding the purchase of the art can be forwarded to the artist. The Leadership Organization will act as a clearinghouse between artists and property owners, showing property owners the range of artists and works that are available for display in front of their properties. In addition, the leadership organization for the Cultural District shall evaluate the artistic merit of the art work so as to maintain the artistic integrity of the Art Street. All art work on the Art Street must be certified by the leadership organization to ensure that the art was produced in St. George by a St. George resident artist. The art may be displayed on the street, on the building, but not inside the building unless it can be easily viewed from a passerby on the sidewalk.

Art Sale

Ground level retail stores, or eating establishments, on the Art Street must provide an Art Display as described above and also provide shelf space (20% of total shelf space), or wall space (20% of total wall surface area inside store), or square footage (20% of total square footage) to display and sell local art.



Artists Live/Work Zoning

In keeping with the community's goals of creating a home for artists, and attracting at least 80 more artists to the area, the Art Hill Plan also makes it easier for artists to live and work within the St. George Cultural District.

The Art Hill Plan will allow "Joint Living-Work Quarters for Artists", as defined by the City zoning code, anywhere within the St. George Cultural District. The zoning code defines Joint Living-Work Quarters for Artists as one or more rooms in a non-residential building with lawful cooking space and sanitary facilities meeting the requirements of the Housing Maintenance Code. These spaces can be used by no more than four artists, or an artist and his household, and includes a space for the artist to work. Currently, the City allows Joint Living-Work Quarters in light manufacturing districts and with special permission from the Department of City Planning (DCP). In the St. George Cultural District, Joint Live-Work Quarters should be allowed in any and all buildings.

By pre-approving the district for Artist Live-Work Quarters, the DCP can lift the cloud of doubt that exists over landlords who want to rent a residence, an unused office, or even a manufacturing space to artists. This action would allow vacant offices to become highly prized studio spaces, and would allow artists to practice their craft wherever they live within the Cultural District.

Swap Parking for Artists

In addition, conversion of offices to Artist Live Work space should exempt property owners from the Special District parking requirement, as artists who live at their place of work will not need a car to commute. Exemption from the parking requirement will lower a significant barrier to office space conversion in the district. Retail and commercial ground floor uses, however, should not be available for artist-live work conversion in order to maintain the integrity of the commercial streets in the downtown.

Who is an artist?

For the purposes of the current zoning law an “artist” is a person so certified by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. These are usually well established artists with major shows and credits to their name. However, in addition to these artists, the Art Hill District is intended to like to attract new and aspiring artists as well. Thus, the Cultural District leadership organization shall also establish guidelines for the certification of new, promising artists, and part-time artists who may work at unrelated jobs to support their craft. These aspiring and part-time artists shall also be recognized as “artists” for the purpose of Live/Work Zoning within the Cultural District. This would require a modification in the definition of “artist” in the zoning code to recognize the broader definition that will be employed in St. George.

The Cultural District will allow developers to exchange one required parking space for each unit of artist live-work housing that they provide within a new development or renovation. Currently, the Special District has one of the most onerous parking requirements in New York City: a developer building residential units in the Special District is required to provide one parking space for every unit. Each parking space can cost a developer between \$40,000 to \$60,000 to build. The larger the parking structure, the more expensive it is to build each parking space. By simply allowing developers to reduce their parking requirement by one space for every apartment devoted to Artist housing, developers would be saving between \$40,000 and \$60,000 per artist. This is tantamount to receiving an up-front \$40,000 to \$60,000 incentive to attract and house artists. Should the developer fail to house an artist as promised, he will be required to pay the parking cost he saved as a penalty (with interest). The developer will be committed to maintaining the artist housing for ten years. In addition, the rent for these units should be at least 20% below market value. At the end of the 10 year period the developer can choose to re-enter the program for another 10 year period in exchange for another parking exemption applicable to any development in the district. This right will be assignable, creating a marketplace between developers for artist parking swaps within the district.

There are various advantages to this system: A powerful monetary incentive to house artists is created at no cost to the community; developers win with lower development costs; artist housing is created; developers bear the burden of filling the apartments with qualified artists; large unsightly parking structures are reduced in size; less cars congest the streets of St. George. On the other hand, there will be less than one parking space per apartment in these new dwellings, which hypothetically may not be enough to satisfy the parking needs of all of the new residents. However, due to its proximity to the Ferry Terminal, St. George residents exhibit much lower rates of car ownership than the average in Staten Island, and 2000 Census figures show that 67% do not use a car to commute to work. Therefore the negative impacts of a reduction in required parking spaces is minimal – especially when weighed against the instant benefit to the community. With additional commercial development that Art Hill will stimulate, residents will need a car to access basic services.

Lower Parking Requirements

The current parking requirement for all uses within the district should be substantially reduced in order to achieve the Special District’s goals of producing a vibrant, walkable, pedestrian oriented neighborhood. Parking requirements are zoning regulations which force developers to build a certain number of parking spaces per housing unit they build. Large parking ratio requirements have been shown to increase the cost of housing (for car owners and non-owners) by forcing developers to build parking structures in neighborhoods where most people rely on mass transit. Parking requirements encourage car ownership and car use by subsidizing parking, which in turn, results in increased congestion in a neighborhood. The Special District current requirement of 1 parking space per apartment unit represents an 18% increase over the prior zoning. This requirement is substantially higher than that of most other areas situated next to a major regional transit hub such as the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. At a cost of somewhere between \$40,000 to \$60,000 per parking space, the current parking requirement has raised developer’s costs to put St. George at a competitive disadvantage over other NYC neighborhoods. Most importantly, it forces the creation of more parking lots in St. George, while at the same time inviting more automobiles and congestion into what should be a pedestrian friendly district. For all of these reasons, the parking requirement should be significantly reduced to match those of vibrant, walkable neighborhoods throughout New York City which are similarly located near a major transit hub.

The current parking requirement in St. George is unusually high for a New York City neighborhood located adjacent to mass transit. It has been noted in this report that the Staten Island Ferry Terminal is the 7th largest transit station in the City of New York, by number of passengers served on a daily basis. Its average daily ridership is 65,000 passengers per day. In a recent report published by NYU’s Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, the authors found that residences within a half-mile of the ten largest transit stations do not have a parking requirement - with the exception of St. George. Simply put, the Special District’s parking requirements do not take into account the presence of a major transit hub in the district.

The effect of this excessive parking requirement can substantially harm the prospect of development in St. George. A new tower with 100 apartments in the Special District would be required to build 100 spaces for cars within a costly parking structure, and then place a residential building on top of the parking garage. The garage would have to be hidden and 40% of the roof would have to be landscaped according to these rules. This would easily cost \$50,000 per car according to developers, and would unnecessarily add \$5 million to construction of this building. No other neighborhood, within half-a-mile of a major transit station, forces developers to shoulder such a penalty. In addition, this penalty calculation is a conservative figure as \$80,000 per parking space has also been cited. Not only is this parking requirement a significant hurdle to development in St. George, it is also raising the rental price of

new apartments to uncompetitive levels. According to the Furman Center report, the average required parking ratio within 1/2 mile of transit for the five boroughs is as follows:

Average Parking Requirements Per Unit in the 5 Boroughs Within 1/2 mile of Transit Station

Bronx	0.37
Brooklyn	0.40
Manhattan	0.06
Queens	0.56
Special District	1.00
Staten Island	1.36

The Special District, which is supposed to be a dense, walkable, “downtown”, has a parking requirement that is almost double that found in Queens. Overall, it is our recommendation that the Special District embrace its proximity to Manhattan and eliminate its parking requirement. This will immediately spur redevelopment in the neighborhood by lowering development costs to the conversion of abandoned office buildings. It will also create the type of neighborhood St. George residents have repeatedly expressed they want to see: a walkable, vibrant district with active streets and less congested roadways.

3. Leadership

Leadership Organization

The community expressed concern regarding the lack of an appropriate leadership organization to implement recommendations like shared marketing efforts, and take on the bigger projects like building construction and renovations. The Art Hill Plan therefore proposes that a Cultural Development Corporation be incorporated as a nonprofit and registered as a 501(c)(3). The purpose of this corporation should be to initiate and implement this Plan to create an arts and cultural district where art is produced, people participate in the creation of culture, and artists showcase their work, by building upon existing strengths to create a sustainable dynamic for St. George.

As many stakeholders pointed out, the capacity of cultural institutions in Staten Island is low. Most have small budgets and no paid staff. This cultural development corporation would need to combine the efforts of many stakeholders to build significant capacity. The organization would need to obtain funding and oversee capital projects to create additional exhibition and production space, and would require a paid staff member to keep projects moving forward and cultivate networks within the community and connect them to networks around the City.

The Art Hill Plan recommends that COAHSI serves in an initial convening role to host regular meetings to identify the founding board members. The Plan recommends that COAHSI commit to this role for a two-year period with COAHSI staff leading and familiarizing everyone with the process of founding a corporation and developing a strategic plan. COAHSI staff should also be available to help write grants, to fund events, incorporate the organization and hire an executive director, as needed.

The founding board of the cultural development corporation is key to assuring its success. The board must be a diverse representation of the stakeholders in the cultural community and the St. George community. Each board member must have the trust of their community and will be required to devote significant time and resources to achieve the goals of the corporation. Per nonprofit corporation law, no profits may accrue to these stakeholders- they must serve as volunteer trustees for any assets the corporation receives and ensure those assets are used to further the mission of the corporation. Because of the immensity of the tasks and fiduciary responsibility, the Plan recommends that the board start with 5 members and a robust committee structure that includes non-board members until funds have been raised for an executive director and part-time administrator.

In order to work effectively towards implementing an arts and cultural district, the founding board, or executive board, should include members with the following set of skills, expertise and resources:

1. The **Chairperson** of the board is the key position that will move the organization forward. The Chair should be able to personally contribute resources to meet the organization's goals, and be a neutral party without biases towards any of the stakeholders. The chair should serve as the strategic planning lead, and identify candidates for other board positions that have the skills necessary to accomplish the mission of the organization and represent the key stakeholders. The Chair should be the key lobbyist for the district and be able to win support from City agencies and elected officials. The Chair must also coordinate the efforts of the Executive Board.

2. The **Treasurer** of the board should be focused on building systems for tracking the resources of the organization starting with the organizations first contribution. The organization's plan must be to grow quickly from a volunteer-based organization to an organization that completes multi-million dollar capital projects funded by the City. The treasurer needs to be conversant with financial reporting standards and be able to develop electronic and hard copy internal control systems

to ensure the accuracy of financial information from day one to the organization's officers and managers, and create a level of transparency the community as a whole feels comfortable with. The treasurer must chair the Finance and Audit Committee.

3. The **Secretary** should consider themselves a compliance officer for the legal and outward facing communications of the corporation. While the organization is getting organized, it must maintain an open channel with the community, and the Secretary can ensure that happens. The Secretary should have experience in communications and be systematic in their approach to documentation; a legal background would be ideal. The Secretary of the board is responsible for maintaining legal documentation of meetings, decisions and actions of the board. The Secretary must chair the Communications Committee.

4. The **Vice-Chair** for Resource Development should be a dynamic individual with fundraising experience who will lead the resource development efforts of the organization including prospect identification, cultivation, requests and acknowledgement. They will oversee written requests for grants to corporations and foundations, government funding applications, requests to individuals and fundraising events. The Vice-Chair for Development must chair the Fundraising Committee.

5. The **Vice-Chair** for Outreach and Engagement must be able to galvanize support for the Plan and the organization by identifying and conducting active outreach to a broad range of artists, schools, and community entities. By engaging community residents in a meaningful way through presentations and one on one conversations with old, new and prospective members of the St. George Arts and Cultural District, the Vice-Chair for Outreach will serve as the promotion and media contact for events, as well as recruit board members and maintain the balance of artists in the leadership. The Vice-Chair for Outreach and Engagement must chair the Board Development Committee.

Once resources have been raised to hire paid staff member the board should expand and look for candidates to fill the following positions:

- Development - Membership
- Real Estate Land Acquisition - Housing/Land Trust
- Real Estate Developers – General Contractor
- Government Relations
- Event Planning

The identified committees of this new organization should strive to be inclusive and encourage new volunteers and members to join and contribute to the decision-making processes for the cultural development corporation. In this way, community support for the organization can grow and new leaders can be identified with the direct participation of the neighborhood. Artists should always be included in a meaningful way and the leadership group can explore different options to keep artist roles and influence strong within the leadership structure.

One of the first tasks of the leadership organization will be to create a workplan with short-, medium- and long-term goals. Additionally, external technical assistance should be consulted on a regular basis in order to focus the mission, goals and workplan of the group. It is best that this is led by a neutral external party so that everyone may participate equally and to avoid biased agendas. Some resources for technical assistance are provided by the Department of Cultural Affairs in Appendix B.

The leadership organization has the ability to propel the St. George Sustainable Cultural District into reality.

VI. CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

After many years of creative growth, the residents of St. George have produced an opportunity to formalize a permanent home for art and culture that will revitalize and re-energize the historic downtown of Staten Island. The Art Hill Plan presents a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to capitalize on this momentum and achieve this long-held goal. The momentum in St. George is palpable: the district is already home to a high percentage of artists and cultural institutions. The Art Hill Plan is intended to help St. George achieve the critical concentration of artists found in other well-known New York City creative centers such as DUMBO and Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Supporting this momentum with a formal cultural district plan has the potential to transform St. George, and redefine Staten Island in the popular imagination.

By way of summary, the Art Hill Plan addresses the following aspects of creating a sustainable cultural district in St. George:

- **Leadership Organization** - Implementing the plan will take considerable dedication by committed individuals who are willing to work together toward the realization of Art Hill. The plan describes how the organization can be formed, what tasks it should focus on, and who should be involved.
- **Marketing and Promotion** – As a means of providing identity to the neighborhood and helping to brand the district, the plan proposes the logo “Art Hill” and various means by which this identity can be promoted within and without the district.
- **Zoning** – This regulatory tool is used to provide more opportunities for showcasing art in the district, to reduce the amount of vacant land, to improve the walkability of the district, to make the district a friendly place for artists to live and work, and to make the area a place where developers will seek out artists as tenants in exchange for valuable incentives.
- **New Exhibition and Production Space** – The plan identifies five specific locations that are ripe for creative reuse as cultural pillars for the new district. They provide places for showcasing music, producing art, housing cultural institutions, and displaying the cultural wealth produced in St. George.
- **Make the Streets Safe and Welcoming** – The plan includes a visionary new gateway plaza which provides St. George with a “village center” while simultaneously linking the downtown with the waterfront and the Ferry Terminal. The new streets plan for St. George emphasizes pedestrian safety and foot-traffic over other modes of transportation in order to re-energize streetlife in the area.
- **Increase the Presence of Art in the Community** – Involvement by community members is crucial to the success of the arts district. The creative community must not only present art, but also engage the community in the arts. The Art Hill Plan contains various ideas which have been successfully implemented in arts districts throughout the world to bring art to schools, to community gardens, and to the streets.
- **Preserve Affordability and Inclusivity** – Most arts districts are a victim of their own success and rising housing prices often displace the very people responsible for the resurgence of a neighborhood or district. The Art Hill Plan includes strategies that have been shown to protect existing residents, and preserve the character of the neighborhood.

In short, the Art Hill Plan is an innovative approach to creating a distinctive and vibrant downtown arts destination that will be sustainable in spite of the dynamic renewal it drives. The Plan builds upon the needs and desires of the cultural community and the special assets of St. George: a thriving cultural center, a civic and transit gateway, a beautiful setting for unique architecture and geography, and a place that maintains a “small-town” feel despite being 20 minutes from Manhattan. The Art Hill Plan insures that this uniqueness is protected and enhanced by providing a permanent home for artists and increasing the visibility of Staten Island’s creative activity.

VI. CONCLUSION

The plan is anchored by pragmatic implementation methods and mechanisms for ensuring long-term success. Its success will be measured by the number of local artists calling the St. George Sustainable Cultural District their home while having access to the resources needed to produce their work, by the cultural resources and downtown vitality that will be available to the St. George community, by the benefits to Staten Island business and culture from a distinctive Civic Center, and by the engagement and investment by New York City and beyond. Stakeholders and representatives must make the St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan a priority to bring economic and community vitality to all of Staten Island. Art Hill can become a reality, producing a permanent, vibrant and sustainable district that Staten Islanders, and all New Yorkers, can be proud of. to bring economic and community vitality to all of Staten Island. Art Hill can become a reality, producing a permanent, vibrant and sustainable district that Staten Islanders, and all New Yorkers, can be proud of.

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VII. APPENDIXES

Appendix A: List of Programs to Support the Development of Affordable Housing and Home Ownership

Federally funded Programs

- HOME Investment Partnerships Program
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- Section 8 Project-based Contract Administration Program
- Community Development Block Grant Program

State-Funded Programs

- 421a Tax incentive
- Empire Zones
- Low-Income Housing Trust Fund Program
- Homes for Working Families Program
- HOPE/RESTORE Program
- Public Housing Modernization Program
- Public Housing Drug Elimination Program
- Access to Home Program
- Urban Initiatives Program
- 80/20 Program
- HPD Asset Sales Program

Local Programs

- Downtown Staten Island Council grant for facade improvements

Supportive Housing Financing Resources

-<http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageId=3664&nodeId=81>

HPD 80/20 Program

The 80/20 Program, sponsored by the New York State Housing Finance Agency, the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC) and the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), uses tax-exempt bonds to create affordable housing for low-income tenants in generally desirable locations throughout the city. The use of tax-exempt bonds to finance the construction of large residential buildings in the city greatly reduces costs. In exchange for the low-cost financing, 20% of the apartment units are reserved for low-income tenants earning no more than 50% of area median income. See Low Income Housing Tax Credit Rent and Income Limits

HPD Asset Sales Program

Asset Sales is designed to sell occupied City owned multiple dwelling buildings to prospective eligible residential and commercial tenants. Properties will be sold in «as is» condition. HPD will not provide construction or permanent financing. In the event that the residential or commercial tenants do not purchase, these properties will be made available through a Request for Offers (RFO) process. For additional information on Asset Sales, please call Bill Dunn at (212) 863-6118.

SONYMA Home Ownership programs

The State of New York Mortgage Agency's home ownership programs feature low down payment requirements and flexible underwriting guidelines.

Appendix A: List of Programs to Support the Development of Affordable Housing and Home Ownership (continued)

Affordable Housing Corporation Information

The NYS Affordable Housing Corporation provides prospective and approved grantees with program information and downloadable forms, including Request for Proposal forms.

The NYS Housing Finance Agency

Provides grants and loans for the development of mixed-income and all affordable housing for developers, municipalities, and other entities.

NYS Housing Trust Fund Corporation

Provides funding to construct low-income housing, to rehabilitate vacant or under-utilized residential property (or portions of a property) or to convert vacant non-residential property to residential use for occupancy by low-income homesteaders, tenants, tenant-cooperators or condominium owners. The Board of Directors of the Corporation is Chaired by the Commissioner of the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

Appendix B: Technical Assistance and Leadership Development

Mayor's Office of Contract Services

Capacity Building and Oversight Initiative provides classes on internal controls, governance, and accounting for nonprofits.
- <http://www.nyc.gov/html/mocs/html/home/home.shtml>

New York City Business Solution Centers

New York City Department of Small Business Services staff on hand to help identify permits and licenses required to open a small business in New York City, especially useful for artist entrepreneurs. One-on-one and small group technical assistance provided for marketing, accounting, and legal issues.
- <http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/nycbiz/html/home/home.shtml>

Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York

Information source for the New York nonprofit community, offers management services, courses, and other technical assistance.
- <http://www.npccny.org>

The Artful Manager

Discusses topics around business model development in arts administration.
- <http://www.artsjournal.com/artfulmanager>

Appendix B: Technical Assistance and Leadership Development (continued)

Alliance for Nonprofit Management

Membership organization that delivers management and governance support services to nonprofit organizations.

- <http://www.allianceonline.org>

Arts Manager

Resource of solutions to management challenges faced by nonprofit arts organizations. Hosted by The Kennedy Center Institute for Arts Management.

- <http://www.artsmanager.org>

Board Source

A comprehensive resource that provides classes, publications, and tools to help nonprofit organizations build effective boards.

- <http://www.boardsource.org>

Foundation Center's New Focus on Funding for the Arts website

A «one-stop shop» of free, easily accessible information including charts that show the geographic locations and giving interests of grantmakers supporting the arts, RFP listings, arts-related reference guides and resource lists.

-<http://www.foundationcenter.org/focus/arts>

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts

Provider of pro bono legal services, mediation services, educational programs and publications, and advocacy acts on issues vital to the arts community.

-<http://www.vlany.org>

Appendix C: Art Precedents & Toolbox

Districts in Maryland

- <http://visitmaryland.org/pages/marylandartsentertainmentdistricts.aspx>

Creating Art and Entertainment districts

- <http://www.artistlink.org/?q=spacetoolbox>
- <http://www.ccc.urban.org>
- <http://www.princeton.edu/~artspol/>
- http://www.artsusa.org/information_services/research/institute_community_development/default.asp
- <http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/SIAP/>
- <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/>

New Jersey Art Center

- <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/16/arts/design/16develop.html?scp=1&sq=new%20jersey%20art%20center&st=cse>
- http://www.fieldstonealliance.org/productdetails.cfm?SKU=069474&disc_code=borrup&repvendid=332

Community Arts Networks

- http://wayback.archive-it.org/2077/20100906194812/http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/overview_essays_all2/index.php

NASAA's *Creative Economy Resource Center* provides practical tools, timely information and strategic technical assistance to cultural leaders at the state and regional levels. The resources included here are designed to help state arts agencies make informed policy decisions about the creative economy in their state.

- http://www.nasaa-arts.org/artworks/creative_economy.shtml

Cultural Districts Handbook: The Arts as a Strategy for Revitalizing Our Cities, by Hilary Anne Frost-Kumpf, reveals how local cultural districts are established, the processes and players that can help define their shape and strategy, and how cultural districts can best reflect the unique strengths of cities as well as support local artistic and redevelopment goals.

- <http://www.americansforthearts.org/NAPD/modules/resourceManager/publicsearch.aspx?id=9257>

Artist Space Development research conducted by Maria Rosario Jackson, Florence Kawasa-Green and Christopher Walker of the Urban Institute addresses the process, support systems, key players, finance strategies and challenges for the development of artist spaces.

Artist Space Development: Making the Case

- <http://www.urban.org/publications/1001176.html>

Artist Space Development: Financing

- <http://www.urban.org/publications/1001175.html>

Creativity and Neighborhood Development: Strategies for Community Development by The Reinvestment Fund demonstrates how the arts and culture can be key ingredients in neighborhood revitalization. The publication calls for investing in community-based creative activity and offers investment ideas for three specific areas: creativity, development and knowledge.

- <http://www.trfund.com/resource/creativity.html>

APENDIX D: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Urban Design & Streetscape

Active Design Guidelines

- http://www.nyc.gov/html/ddc/html/design/active_design.shtml

Fourth Arts Block Streetscape Plan

- https://fabnyc.org/streetscape_plan.php

Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People*. Washington, DC: Island Press. 2010

International Study on Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

- <http://www.international.fhwa.dot.gov/pubs/pbs/index.cfm>

Project for the Public Spaces Concept of the Power of Ten

- <http://www.pps.org/the-power-of-10/>

Support for Cultural Districts

- Supporting Diverse Art Spaces Initiative-Ford Foundation
- Our Town program-NEA
- Artspace
- Rockefeller Foundation

Art Institution Capacity Funding

- Deutsche Bank (2 year capacity building grant)
- RSC (FAB received grant to build website)
- JP Morgan Chase (COAHSI recommended for advertising, staff)

General Neighborhood Renewal Funding

Kaplan Foundation (FAB received grant for streetscape plan)

Main Street Initiative(Minimum \$50,000, maximum \$500,000)

-NYMS provides funds to stimulate reinvestment in properties located within mixed-use commercial districts located in urban, small town, and rural areas of New York State. The New York Main Street Program (NYMS) is administered by the Office of Community Renewal (OCR) under the direction of the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC). HTFC contracts with the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) to administer the Corporation's activities and manage its affairs.

NYMS is a comprehensive grant program that provides funding for local revitalization efforts and technical assistance to help communities build the capacity required to grow their downtown or neighborhood retail district. Successful applicants will involve local residents, governments, businesses, and property owners in making decisions about program implementation; address design issues in a contextually appropriate manner; follow a coordinated outreach and communication strategy to publicize district activities; implement an effective business strategy to recruit appropriate businesses and measure and evaluate progress in meeting district goals.

Housing is a key component in any successful main street revitalization. Affordable, marketable housing in upper-floor spaces and on adjacent streets helps to strengthen the social and economic vitality of the business district.

HTFC believes that a holistic approach to Main Street revitalization that involves aesthetics, business creation/retention, and housing will lead to healthy and economically vibrant communities. A combination of capacity and capital is needed to revitalize Main Streets across the state. The NYMS program is designed to help address these needs.

Neighborhood Preservation Companies Program

-The Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) provides financial support for 222 non-profit community-based housing corporations to perform housing and community renewal activities statewide. These corporations, known as Preservation Companies, provide assistance including, but are not limited to, housing rehabilitation, home buyer counseling, tenant counseling, landlord/tenant mediation, community rehabilitation and renewal, crime watch programs, employment programs, legal assistance, and Main Street Development. A majority of Preservation Companies are also involved in the planning and development of capital projects including new construction and/or rehabilitation of older housing stock. Companies perform this work with the assistance of DHCR administrative funds and leveraged funds from the private sector and other governmental sources. In Richmond County, Neighborhood Housing Services of Staten Island is the body responsible for administering the programs and distributing the funds.

Arts Programming Grants

- DCA
- NYSCA
- SI Foundation
- Richmond County Foundation
- Northfield
- Con Ed
- Elected Officials

Governor's Smart Growth Initiative

-<http://Smartgrowthny.org/>

The Smart Growth Clearinghouse was created to connect New Yorkers with state agency services that promote Smart Growth and other sources of information on Smart Growth. The Clearinghouse provides an easy-to-use directory of relevant state agencies, with brief descriptions of their services and links to appropriate agency web site pages. This is a great source for a comprehensive listing for projects ranging from affordable housing, green building, to revitalization, to many more.

The Smart Growth Clearinghouse is generally organized around eight Smart Growth principles and sorted by four sub-categories: Grant and Financial Information; Technical Assistance (training publication, events and other information); Data and Regional Inventories; and Success Stories. These sub-categories are then organized by several topical areas, such as transportation, business, energy, environment, planning and zoning.

Top Principles of Smart Growth

- Compact, Mixed-Use Community Design
- Re-Use and Re-Development of Existing Buildings
- Regional Planning
- “Green” Buildings and Infrastructure
- Mobility Choices — Walking, Biking, Public Transit
- Well-Planned and Well-Maintained Parks and Public Spaces
- Targeted Investments in Affordable Housing
- Age-Integrated Communities
- Collaborative, “Bottom-Up”, Stakeholder-Driven Planning

Please forward comments and suggestions to the Smart Growth Clearinghouse Coordinator: QC@dos.state.ny.us.

