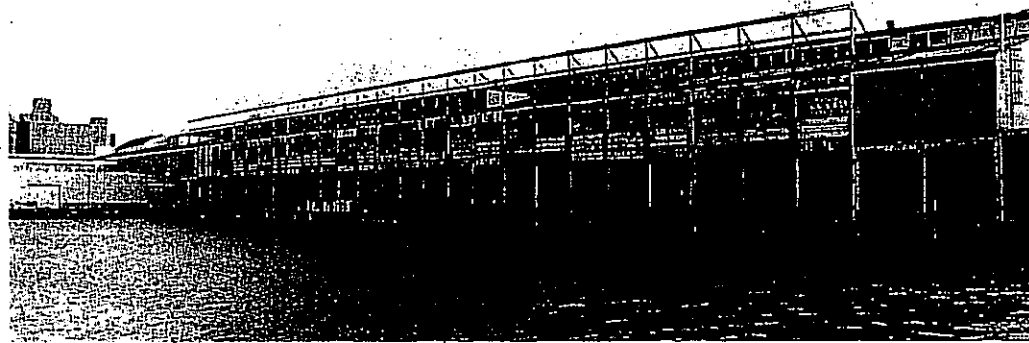


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Waterfront Opportunities

New York City's 578-mile waterfront offers one of the city's greatest opportunities for adaptive reuse. In the 19th century, New York City's economy flourished with shipping and trade along its waterfronts. Piers lined waterfronts in every borough as manufacturers, traders, and wholesalers sought to utilize access to docks. During the past 60 years, however, the city's shipping industry has experienced continuous decline as trucks and the highway system have become a cheaper and faster method to ship. New "container" facilities built in New Jersey during the 1950's, which transfer containers from ships to semi-trucks and rail cars, put hundreds of docks and warehouses in the New York Harbor out of business. As a result, piers sit abandoned throughout the city.

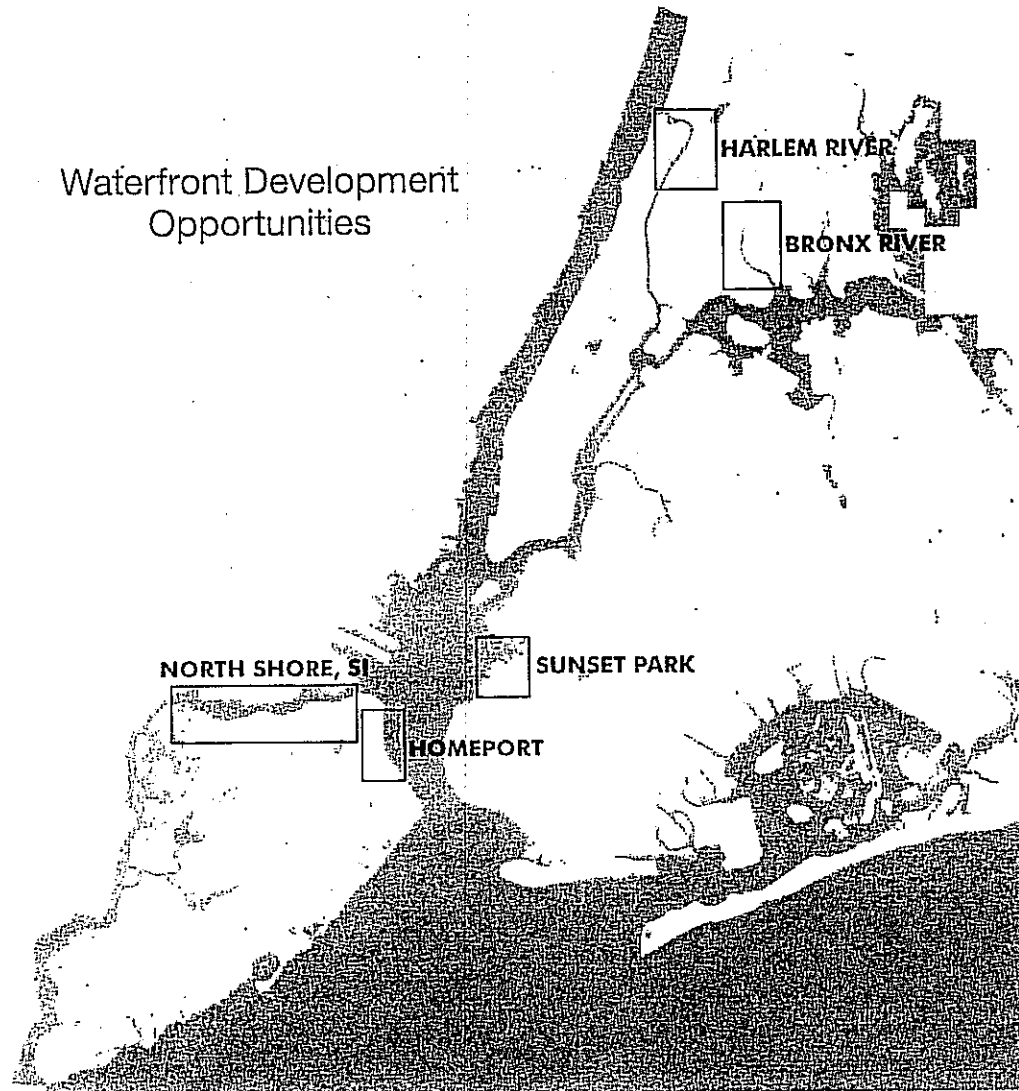
Meanwhile, the decline of waterfront manufacturing and industry has given rise to numerous opportunities. During the 1930s, several East River piers went out of use and were replaced with the FDR Drive and East River Park. In the 1990's, vacated piers along the Hudson River have given rise to the Chelsea Piers Sports & Entertainment Complex and Hudson River Park. More recently, the Williamsburg re-zoning has permitted high-rise apartments to line the river in place of former factories and warehouses.



Left: The once abandoned Chelsea Piers were transformed into a popular sports and entertainment complex.

Courtesy of Chelsea Piers Sports and Entertainment Complex

Waterfront Development Opportunities



Despite numerous adaptive reuse projects, much of the city's waterfront continues to lie inaccessible, abandoned, or otherwise underutilized. These areas offer New York City the chance to increase its access to the waterfront, to provide new recreational and housing opportunities, and thus, to absorb growth in the city's burgeoning economy and to improve quality of life.

This chapter highlights five waterfront development opportunities: three for further feasibility analysis and two for future study.

Projects for Further Feasibility Analysis

- Bronx River, Bronx
- Harlem River, Bronx
- North Shore, Staten Island

Projects for Future Study

- Homeport, Staten Island
- Sunset Park, Brooklyn



Left: The currently underused section of the Bronx River extending from the Bronx Zoo to Soundview Park and the East River could be transformed into a new waterfront neighborhood including housing, parks, and community facilities.

Bronx River Greenway, Bronx

The Bronx River is in the first stage of a major transformation between Soundview Park, the mouth of the river, and Bronx Park. This multi-year, multi-phase process, led by the Department of Parks & Recreation, will create a continuous greenway along a 23-mile stretch of waterfront, 8 miles of which are in New York City. With over \$30 million in city, state, and federal funding, the project will renovate and expand existing parks, add new parkland, and provide greenway connections

where the parks do not directly abut.

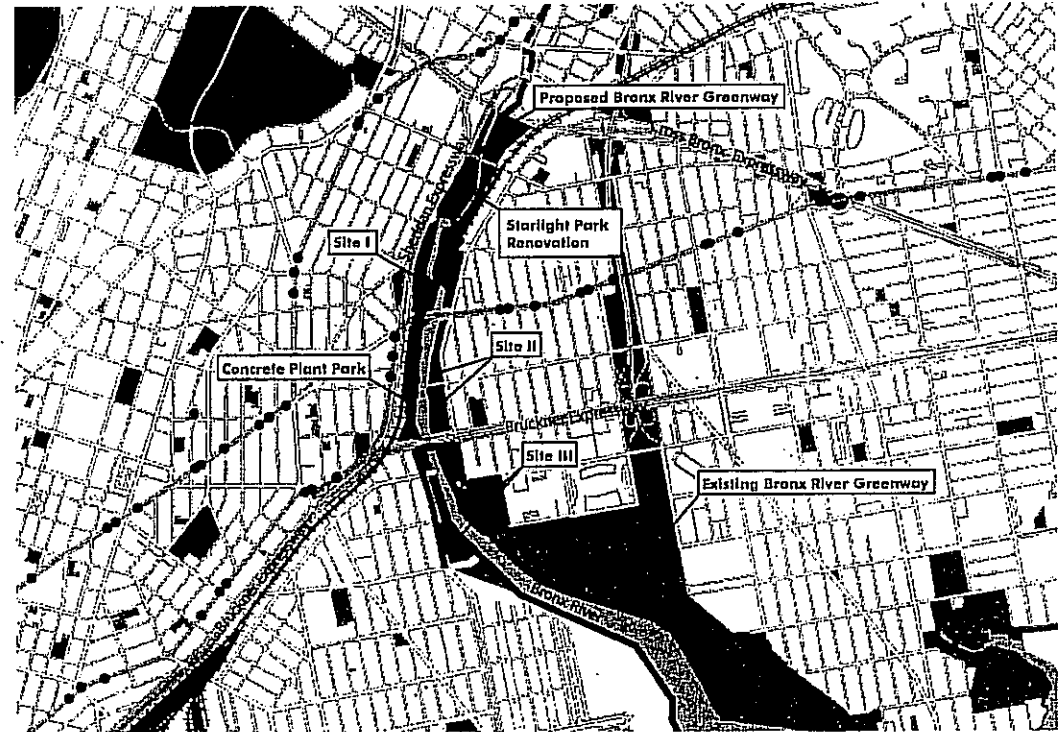
Due to the level of public investment in the Bronx River Greenway, the land directly adjacent could eventually become very attractive to developers. Just as market demand and land value dramatically increased along Hudson River Park, so too could the properties along the Bronx River become a popular place to live. In this case, however, luxury development is unlikely to occur. Instead, the market will probably attract

middle-class residents, who may find that the river, the open space, and easy transit access make the Bronx River a desirable place to live.

However, simply investing in parkland alone will not stimulate this private market reaction. Currently, the plan for the Bronx River Greenway is a strong, one-dimensional plan: it creates wonderful and much-needed open space. If the city takes a more comprehensive approach, the Bronx Greenway could become an entirely new community within which the

Bronx River Greenway Development Opportunities

Bronx River, All Sites Unit Calculations				
	Acres	Potential Units at FAR		
		R6	R7	R8
Site 1	5.6	500	700	1,200
Site 2	7.8	700	1,000	1,700
Site 3 (west)	8.0	700	1,000	1,800
Site 3 (east)	14.0	1,200	1,800	3,100
TOTALS	35.3	3,100	4,500	7,800



river and greenway will be featured attractions. This mixed-use public realm would include not only parks, but also places for people to live, shop, and indirectly monitor the park.

There are three potential development sites along the Bronx River. Collectively, they will provide new opportunities for middle class housing, increase the security along the greenway, and create a spectacular new community. Developing new housing along the Bronx Greenway is of paramount

significance. The table above shows that the combination of these sites, under R7 zoning, could yield 4,500 new units of housing. Or, under R8—which is not inconceivable given the proximity to the subway and separation from existing communities—the sites could yield up to 7,800 units. No longer would the city be investing in only open space and a greenway. Rather, the city would be investing in a new community, a new destination, a new place. Just as Riverside Park transformed

the western edge of Manhattan's Upper West Side into a mixed-use public realm, so too can Bronx Greenway transform the Bronx River. In order for this transformation to happen, the city must take a leadership role.

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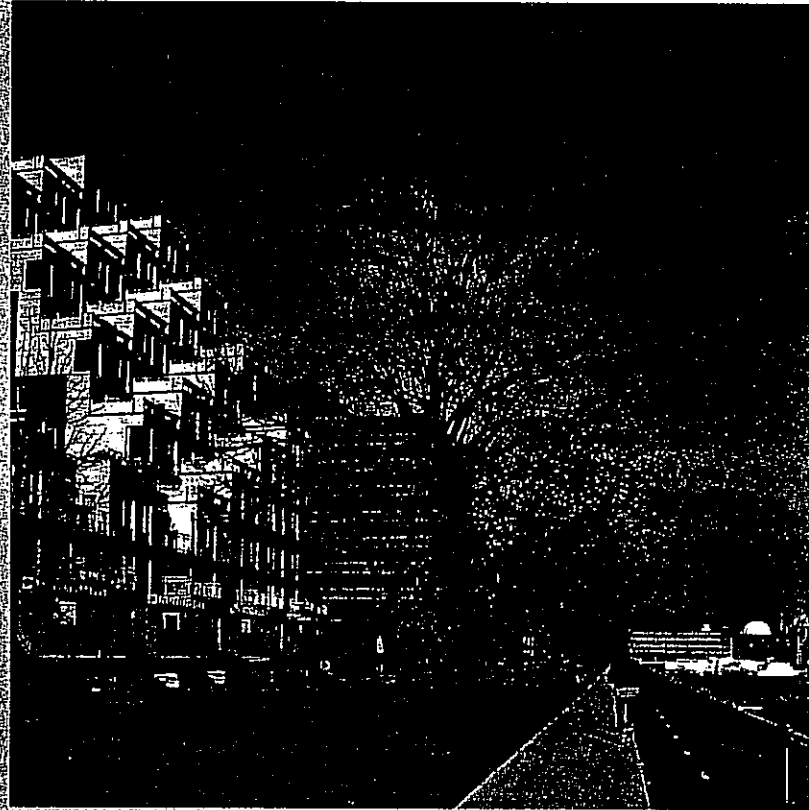


The combination of a waterfront parkland and housing along Lake Shore Drive in Chicago (at left) and the Charles River in Cambridge (below) has made them safe destinations for jogging, strolling, or just relaxing.

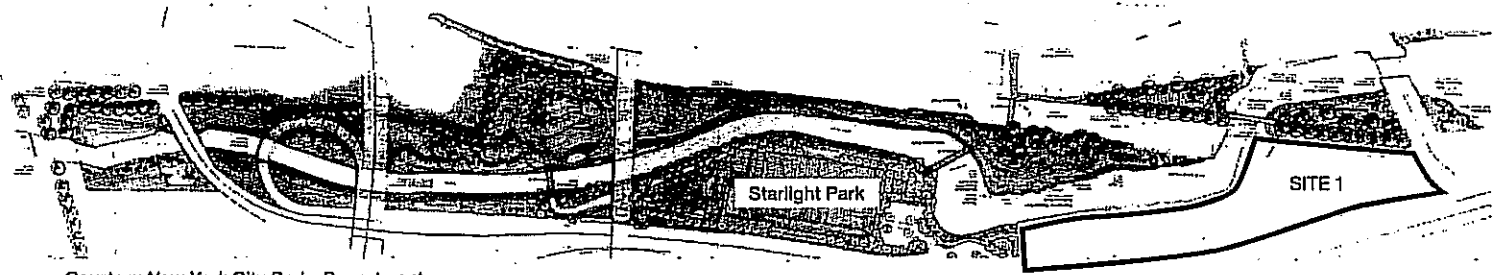
Greenway Safety

Along Chicago's Lake Shore Drive (above) and Boston's Charles River (at right), nearby housing makes the parkland safer. The presence, both indirect and direct, of residents provides what Jane Jacobs referred to as "eyes on the street" — people who watch and listen, whose presence ensures that park users are safe. The residents both provide a user base for the park and make others feel safer in it, at all hours. Through a virtuous cycle, the user base grows as the park becomes increasingly popular, thus making the park even safer. In New York, Battery Park City is a rare example of how new housing can be integrated with new open space to create a safe, attractive recreation area, as well as desirable new housing.

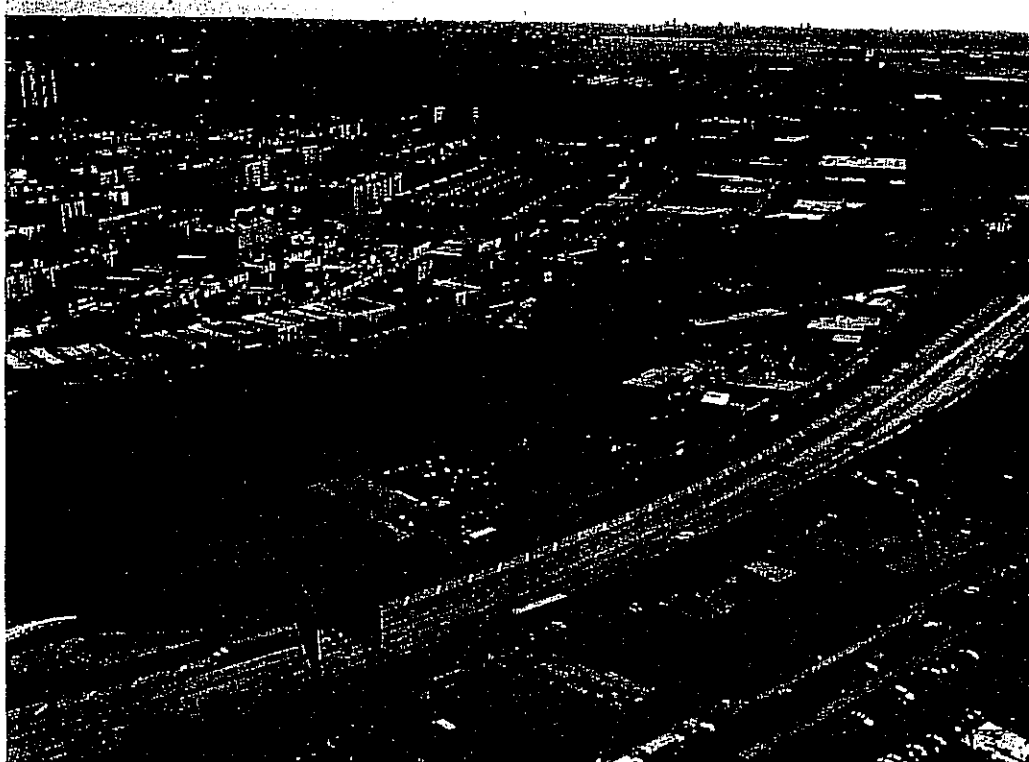
The greatest potential challenge for the future Bronx River Greenway is safety. Much of the greenway lies between the Sheridan Expressway, railroad tracks, and the backyards of a few row houses. Access will be cumbersome at best and visibility from adjacent streets will be minimal. If, however, housing is developed along the greenway, users will feel much safer and visit the park more often.



Site I Map & Starlight Park Renovation Plan



Courtesy New York City Parks Department



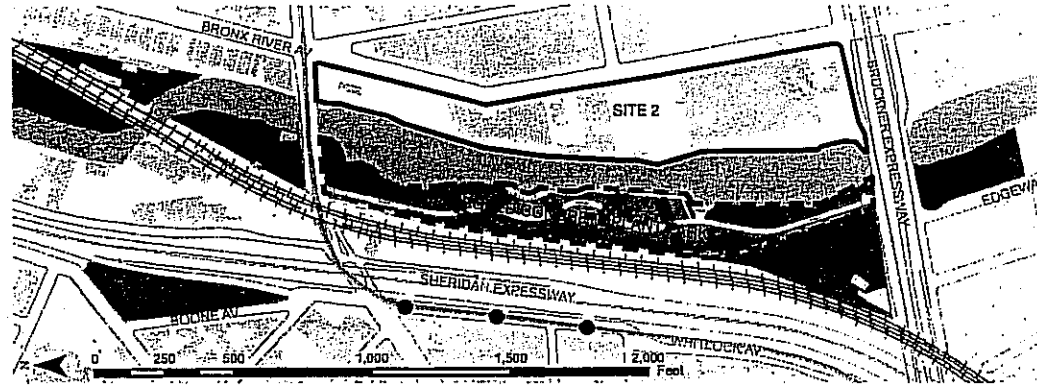
Site I

This 5.6-acre site is wedged between the Starlight Park Expansion, the Bronx River, and the Sheridan Expressway. Starlight Park is an existing park that sits midway along the Bronx Greenway. Construction was underway to renovate and expand the park (see plan) when workers uncovered hazardous environmental contamination. Con Edison, which is responsible for the contamination, will remediate the park within the next year, at which point the park expansion will resume.

Currently, the site consists of auto bodies, scrap yards, and storage facilities. Converting the site into housing is a design challenge because of the adjacent highway and rail line, but the proximity to Starlight Park, the river, and subway access to the 6 train make this site a remarkable opportunity. Given the local zoning in the area (R6 and R7-1), an R7 or R8 zoning may be feasible and would produce between 700 and 1,200 units.

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Site II Map & Concrete Plant Park Renovation Plan

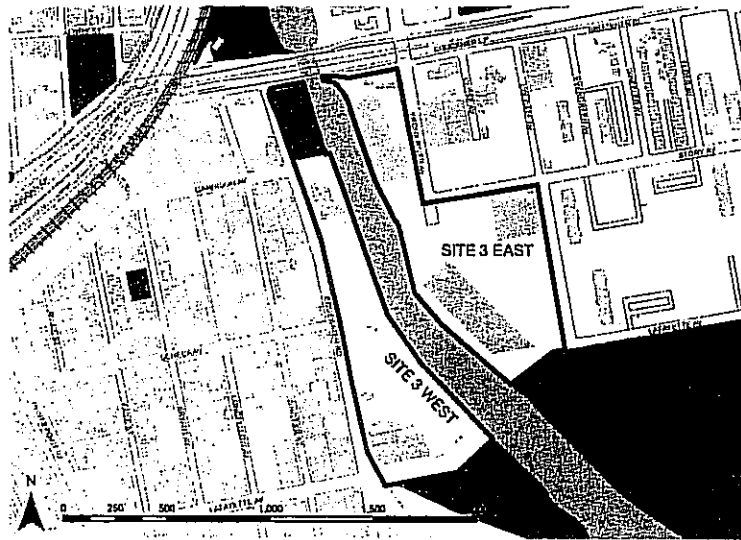


Site II

This site lies across the river from the future Concrete Plant Park (see plan above). Although potential housing sites directly adjacent to the new park do not exist, there are 7.8 acres of waterfront property directly across the river. This area would be highly marketable due to waterfront access and connections to the Bronx Greenway. Disparate ownership, however, including a warehouse for ABC carpets, is a significant obstacle that must be overcome. Despite the potential difficulty in assembling the site, this location could provide up to 1,700 units of housing at an R8 zoning.



Site III Map

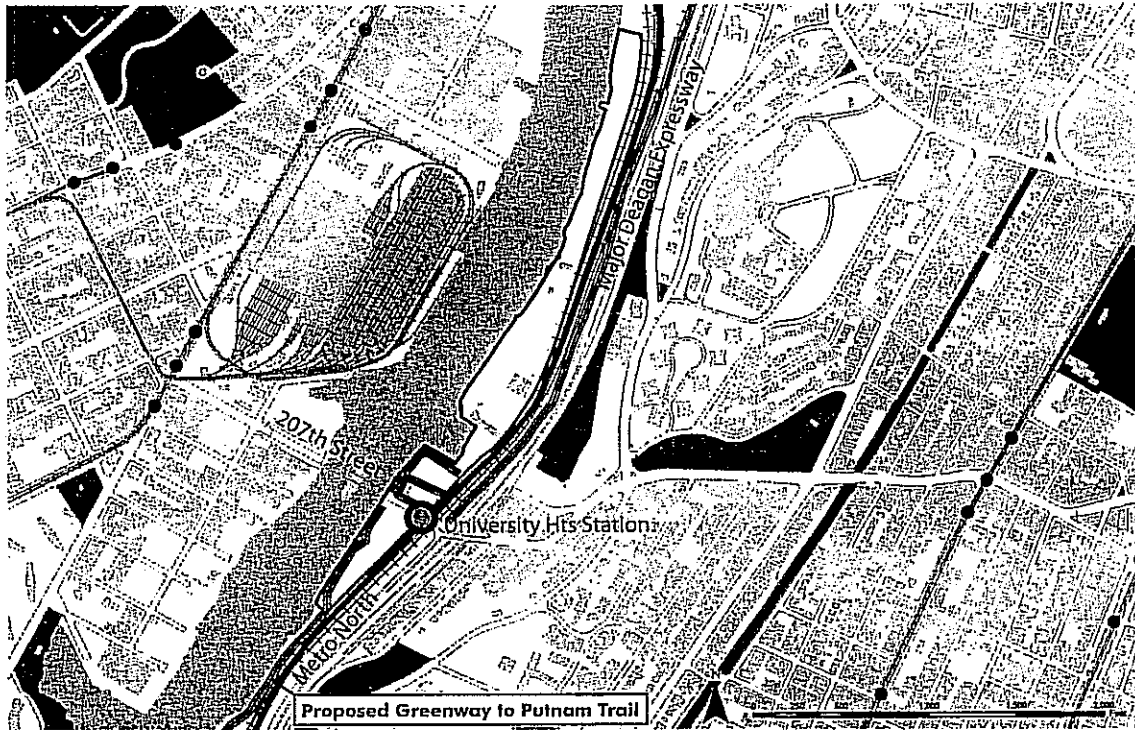


Site III

South of the Bruckner Expressway, the third site lies on either side of the Bronx River—14 acres on the eastern bank and 8 acres on the western bank. Acquiring at least one side of the river is critical because it would connect the final section of the Bronx Greenway. Currently, the greenway is diverted to the road between Sound View Park and the new Concrete Plant Park. By developing either side of the river as residential with waterfront access required in the zoning, the Bronx Greenway could become a continuous, dedicated greenway from Sound View Park all the way to Bronx Park.

Perhaps the best development site along the Bronx River lies on the east side of the river: an 11-acre parcel under single ownership that abuts Sound View Park. Whatever the level of environmental contamination on this site, with presumed remediation it could provide thousands of units of housing. In addition, developing this site and two additional parcels to the north would provide the connection for a single, continuous Bronx Greenway. Again using an R7 to R8 rezoning, the sites on both the east and west side of the river could provide a combined 2,800 to 4,900 new units of housing.

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Harlem River Development Opportunity

Harlem River, Bronx

Numerous opportunities for adaptive reuse lie along the Harlem River. Roberto Clemente Park and Park River Towers have already been transformed. Other projects are equally appealing. For example, the Department of City Planning is studying a potential rezoning of the Sherman Creek area. Many more opportunities exist along the river. Perhaps the ripest opportunity is at 207th Street in the Bronx, between the Major Deegan Expressway and the Harlem River.

This 6-parcel site covers 4,000 feet along the waterfront and varies between 110 and 350 feet in depth. It is cut off from the upland neighborhood of University Heights by the Major Deegan and by Metro North's Hudson line. The central location of the University Heights Station within the site makes this area ideal for medium- to high-density development. Because the upland communities are on a hill, new buildings would not block views.

An essential component of this development site is the creation of a critical mass of residents who can support the retail shopping and other facilities to make it a self-sustaining community. Developing only one site would not provide enough customers. If, however, the entire site was developed at an R8 zoning, it could produce over 3,800 units—more than enough to justify neighborhood retail around the Metro North Station. Furthermore, improved retail would benefit



Harlem River, Bronx Unit Calculations			
Area (acres)	Potential Zone	FAR	Units (Avg 1,000 sf)
16.9	R7A	4.0	2,500
16.9	R8	6.0	3,750
16.9	R9	7.5	4,700

the residents of University Heights, most of whom must cross the bridge at 207th Street to shop in Inwood.

Given the elevation of the 207th Street bridge over the site, the highway, and the railroad, the design for the development would be straightforward: the first two levels could be parking decks, retail would extend from street level down to the transit station, and the housing would be above street level. The northern half of the site would be reserved

for a new park. Housing and retail would be concentrated at the southern half of the site around 207th Street and the transit station.

In addition to creating an entirely new community, development of this site could also provide a key greenway connection between Roberto Clemente Park and the Putnam Trail rails-to-trails project, which will reach all the way to Van Cortland Park. The existing plan to connect these greenway trails calls for a path adjacent to the active Metro North line—an

unpleasant experience to say the least. If, on the other hand, this site is developed with waterfront access, the connection would make the greenway and waterfront accessible to the entire community.

Currently, the 6 parcels are under separate ownership, including CSX, Con Edison, and the City's Department of General Services. Potential relocation sites will have to be found for the existing facilities, including a recently constructed self-storage facility.

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North Shore, Staten Island

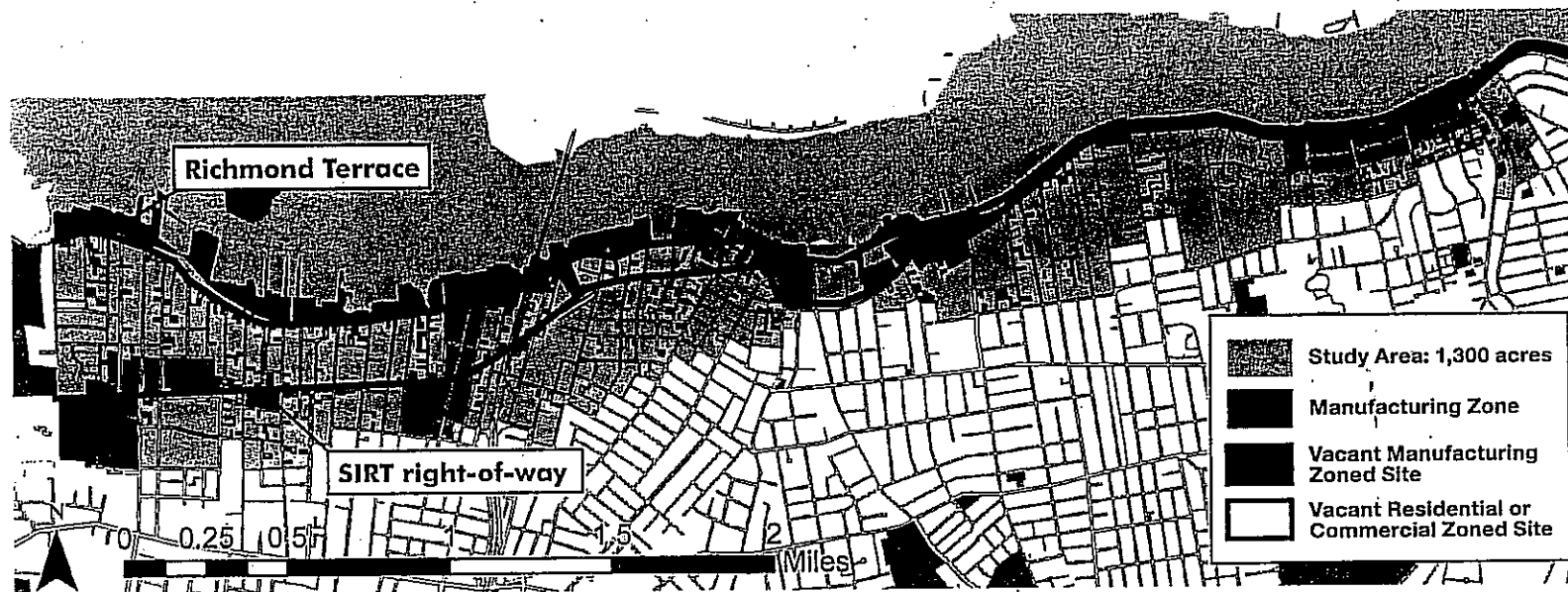
The North Shore of Staten Island is currently a hodgepodge of low-intensity land uses: junk yards, vacant and abandoned buildings, parking lots, and a few active docks. It possesses several outstanding assets, however, including a waterfront with magnificent views of the New York Harbor and the New York and New Jersey skylines, as well as the abandoned SIRT right-of-way that could be used for a transit connection and/or a bicycle and pedestrian path.

In Staten Island, as in Manhattan and Brooklyn, waterfront sites are no longer in high demand as locations for warehouses or manufacturing. Unlike those waterfront districts, however, the North Shore has experienced little of the real estate market pressures that are common along the Hudson and East Rivers. This is not just because existing zoning forbids residential reuse, but also because the area's transportation infrastructure has very limited capacity. The area's growth is constricted by the lack of mass transit and the narrow width of Richmond Terrace, the primary waterfront corridor, which carries only one lane of traffic in each direction.

Before further planning on the area can occur, the city must study current conditions along the waterfront, trends in maritime activity both in New York and nationwide,



North Shore: Manufacturing and Vacant Sites



and the demand for warehouses and factory buildings in Staten Island. The city must also analyze what would be necessary to transform Richmond Terrace into an urban arterial and/or to convert the SIRT right-of-way into a limited-access bicycle and pedestrian route, either in combination with light rail or as an exclusive greenway that could serve a revitalized North Shore.

Consequently, the opportunity to transform the North Shore requires three studies:

1. Status of maritime manufacturing and warehousing activity along the shore

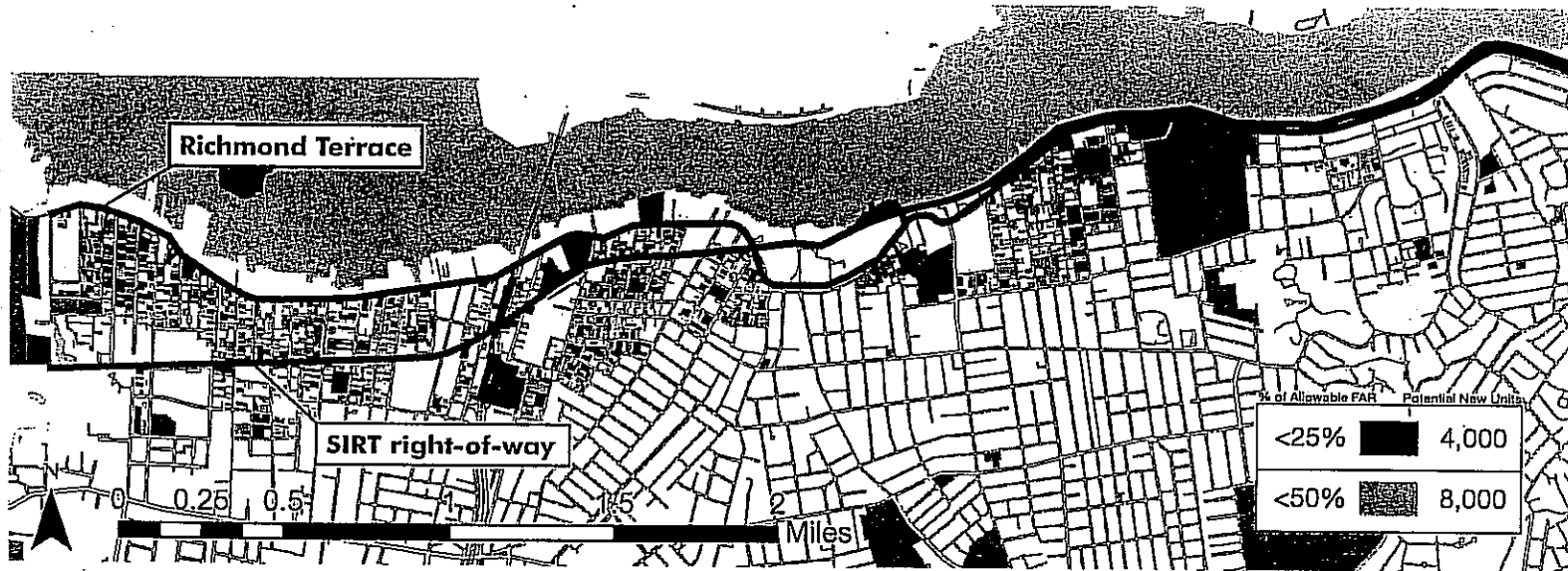
2. Potential reconfiguration of Richmond Terrace
3. Reuse of the SIRT right-of-way as a light rail and/or greenway

Existing trends indicate that the North Shore is ripe for change. If studies confirm that maritime uses will continue to decline and that the costs of reconfiguring Richmond Terrace and the SIRT are not prohibitive, the North Shore should be rezoned. Leaving existing zoning in place will do nothing to open the waterfront to the public or permit underutilized property to be used for anything but the

dwindling activities permitted in the city's manufacturing zones. But rezoning can only come after there is consensus regarding the future for the North Shore—one that is based upon a realistic investment in an improved public realm framework of streets, greenways, transit, open space, and waterfront facilities around which developers would transform the entire North Shore. This public realm framework must also include space for new schools, playing fields, parks, stores, and other community facilities needed to support the increased population.

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North Shore: Potential Development with rezoning of R3 to R4 & R4 to R5



If the capital investments were made to increase transportation capacity, rezoning manufacturing areas to R4 would open up sites for the production of 6,500 new residential units. Between 4,000 and 8,000 units could be added to the area if R3 zoned residential areas were rezoned to R4 and R4 areas were rezoned to R5.

There is no point in creating this new public realm framework or rezoning if current maritime uses can survive. Nor is there any point in dreaming of a future that is beyond the physical capacity of improved transportation or beyond the city's pocketbook. Thus,

the city should commission a serious study of their future. If the results conclude that redevelopment is physically, financially, and functionally feasible, the city should follow that study with a planning process that develops consensus around a vision for the future of the North Shore. The goal of the planning process would be to determine a series of alternative public realm frameworks along with the rezoning needed to make them a reality. The planning process should be carried out in partnership with the Borough President's Office, local businesses, and the surrounding communities.



Homeport, Staten Island

The shoreline between the St. George Ferry Terminal and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge is an industrial-zoned area that offers a unique opportunity for residential redevelopment. The SIRT connects the area to the Ferry Terminal. The views of the harbor are spectacular. Cromwell Pier, the Alice Austen House Museum & Park, Von Briesen Park, the Fort Wadsworth Gateway National Recreation Area, and nearby South Beach all offer unique recreational facilities to residents in the area.

During the early 1980's, the federal government announced the creation of a \$300 million naval center on a vacant and deteriorated one-

mile section of the waterfront. Ever since the federal government dropped the project in the early 1990's, the city has tried, repeatedly and unsuccessfully, to find industrial occupants to fill the site.

A recent plan created by the Economic Development Corporation is a move in the right direction. The plan proposes a mix of housing, retail, and sports facilities, along with redeveloped open space. This year, the city plans to initiate construction on a waterfront esplanade and a reconstruction of Front Street, part of a planned \$66 million of improvements over the next five years.

The city's plans are promising, but they fall short of the comprehensive effort needed for Homeport to reach its full potential. Homeport and the adjacent industrial properties should be rezoned from manufacturing to residential, and the city should reexamine all industrial property between Bay Street and the waterfront, not just the Homeport site. This area-wide rezoning should be accompanied by an entirely new public realm, including upgraded transit services, improved roads, parks, and all the other community facilities needed to support what could become one of the city's most unique waterfront new-towns-in-town.

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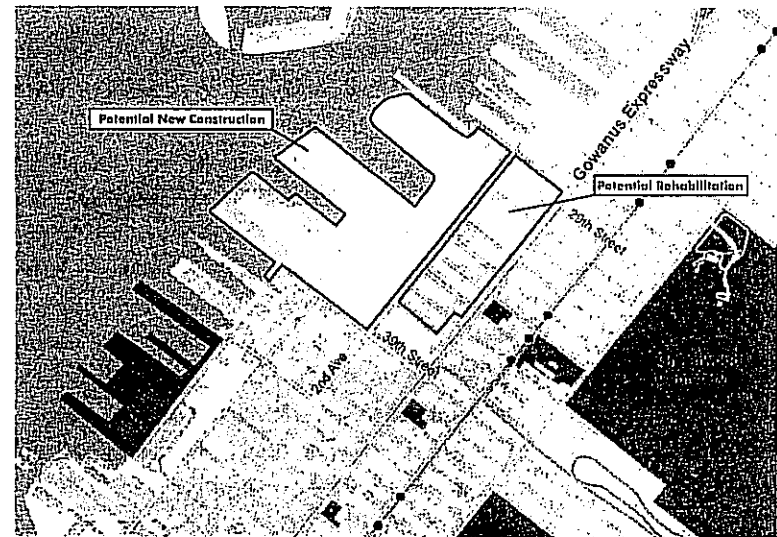


Sunset Park Waterfront, Brooklyn

For decades, the waterfront in Sunset Park, Brooklyn has been one of New York City's major industrial zones. Under the Administration's proposal for 16 Industrial Business Zones throughout the city, Sunset Park will continue to be one of the largest. At the same time, because some residents legally live in the area, the Economic Development Corporation and Parks Department are in the process of adding a new 23.7-acre park at the Bush Terminal Piers. Such an investment indicates a commitment to maintaining the industrial character of the neighborhood while providing neighborhood amenities for those already living in the area.

During its search for large-scale development throughout the city, the authors of this report identified an attractive opportunity to better utilize one section of Sunset Park as a mixed-use residential and industrial district. While areas with heavy industry are unsuitable for mixed use, some residential use is compatible with light industrial use, such as artist live/work lofts, design studios, or small-scale production workshops.

The site is between 28th and 39th Streets, between Third Avenue and the water. The site includes over 100 acres of parking (see aerial photo), which is operated by the Department of Small Businesses. If this parking was



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consolidated into a 12-story garage on 10 acres, it would open 90 acres to new development. The other half of the site, between 2nd and 3rd Avenues, includes a series of warehouses whose size and depth make them ideal for loft conversions.

This area is well-suited for mixed use development because 39th Street would serve as the barrier between the heavy Industrial sites of Sunset Park and the new development. Trucks exiting the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway can take the 39th Street exit and turn left onto either First, Second, or Third Avenues, which would not disrupt the new mixed-use enclave on this site. In addition, the location of an existing Costco at 3rd Avenue and 39th Street would help to anchor the commercial activity needed for a balanced community.

When the potential new development and rehab units are considered together, the potential for development at the site is 15,000 units at an R7-A zoning. Although this opportunity may not be available for quite some time, it is worth considering for the future.

Sunset Park Unit Calculations				
New Construction: 102 acres			Rehab: 31 acres	Total Units
Potential Zone	FAR	Units (Avg. 1,000 sf)	Units	
R6	2.4	9,100	4,700	13,800
R7A	4.0	15,100	4,700	19,800
R7X	5.0	19,000	4,700	23,700
R8	6.0	22,700	4,700	27,400

Chapter 3

New York City Subway Service Area:
Within 5-minute walk of stations

