

Next Steps

Many of the recommendations highlighted in this report are ready for implementation. Sunday Closings, for example, could begin as soon as this summer. Others opportunities appear feasible, but they will require further study before the city can begin to implement them. Many platform housing opportunities, for example, require easements (to allow construction over the rights-of-way). Still others require further planning, engineering, and financial feasibility analysis to determine whether public investment is justified.

Of those opportunities for further feasibility study, the following deserve the highest priority, with the first receiving top priority, and the rest in no particular order:

1. *Sunnyside Yards, Queens*: new mixed-use community around a regional intermodal transit station.
2. *Third Ave and 161st Street, Bronx*: improved mass transit.
3. *21st Street, Queens*: improved mass transit.
4. *Grand Concourse, Bronx*: mixed-use public realm with greening, protected bike lanes, and Sunday Closings along the entire corridor.
5. *Broadway, Manhattan*: mixed-use public realm with greening and protected bike lanes along the entire corridor, and potential pedestrian reclamations/closings in sections.
6. *BQE in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn*: new community built on platform over highway.
7. *North Shore Staten Island*: re-zoning with improvements to Richmond Terrace and SIRT light rail and/or greenway.

A plan to implement any one of these items would dramatically improve the City of New York, but the Sunnyside Yards offers by far the greatest opportunity because of its wide spectrum of benefits. This 21st century new-town-in-town would add tens of thousands of new housing units, connect existing communities, provide new jobs and retail shopping for the area, and improve transit connections for hundreds of thousands of commuters from Queens and Long Island on a daily basis.

The table on the facing page includes a summary of all potential housing opportunities from Chapter 1-3. Collectively, these opportunities include 3,500 acres of vacant or underutilized land that could add between 160,000 and 325,000 new units to the city's housing market.

These housing opportunities, as well as the public realm opportunities, each have different methods by which to proceed. Some methods can be generalized for the entire category and some are site specific.

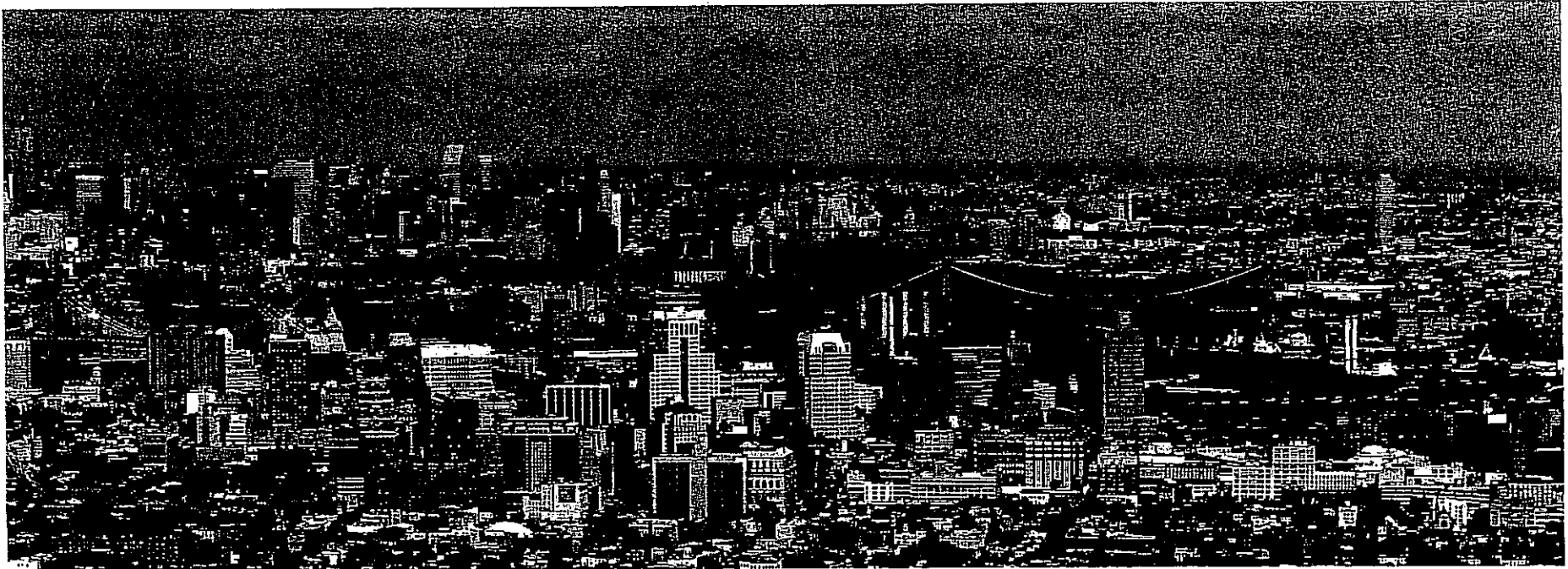
Platforms

Every potential site needs to be evaluated for physical, functional, financial, and political feasibility. Physical requirements include sufficient space to sink foundations in a way that does not disrupt the traffic below. Functional requirements include providing a means to ventilate the exhaust from automobiles and diesel trains. Financial and community demands will have to be carefully balanced to ensure that the site is developed at an appropriate scale and density to produce marketable prices for the area.

Summary Housing Opportunity Table

Opportunities	Area (acres)	Existing Housing	Gross Housing Units		Net Gain of Housing Units
			Min. Rezoning	Max Rezoning	
Platforms					
Sunnyside Yards	166	0	18,700	35,300	18,700 - 35,300
BQE Cobble Hill	4.6	0	200	1,500	200 - 1,500
Prospect Expressway	10.7	0	600	800	600 - 800
36th St Yards	23.1	0	2,400	6,000	2,400 - 6,000
Bay Ridge Line	20.2	0	800	1,300	800 - 1,300
Gowanus Expressway	28.4	0	3,000	5,000	3,000 - 5,000
BQE Williamsburg	2.3	0	400	600	400 - 600
Clearview Expressway	39.9	0	1,300	2,200	1,300 - 2,200
Cross Island Parkway	19.9	0	600	1,100	600 - 1,100
LIRR Flushing	5.7	0	900	1,000	900 - 1,000
LIRR Rego Park	29.3	0	1,600	3,100	1,600 - 3,100
Coney Island Creek + Yards	138	0	7,500	24,100	7,500 - 24,100
Jamaica IND yards	31.4	0	1,700	5,500	1,700 - 5,500
Sherman Creek Rail Yards	43.4	0	6,500	11,400	6,500 - 11,400
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>563</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>46,200</i>	<i>98,800</i>	<i>46,200 - 98,800</i>
Waterfronts					
Bronx River Site I	5.6	0	500	1,200	500 - 1,200
Bronx River Site II	7.8	0	700	1,700	700 - 1,700
Bronx River Site III East	8.0	0	1,200	3,100	1,200 - 3,100
Bronx River Site III West	14.0	0	700	1,800	700 - 1,800
Harlem River, Bronx sites	16.9	0	2,500	4,700	2,500 - 4,700
Sunset Park Waterfront	133	0	13,800	27,400	13,800 - 27,400
Staten Island North Shore	1,300	8,900	21,100	29,600	12,200 - 20,700
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>1,485</i>	<i>8,900</i>	<i>40,500</i>	<i>69,500</i>	<i>31,600 - 60,600</i>
Transit Oriented Development					
Bronx: 3rd Ave. & 161st St.	994	39,000	93,000	153,000	54,000 - 114,000
Queens: 21st St.	533	20,000	52,000	73,000	32,000 - 53,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>1,527</i>	<i>59,000</i>	<i>145,000</i>	<i>226,000</i>	<i>86,000 - 167,000</i>
TOTAL	3,576	67,900	232,000	394,000	164,000 - 326,000

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While each site must be analyzed independently, negotiating development rights individually would be expensive, time-consuming, and generate neighborhood pressures that can be avoided. Instead, the city should consider the sites collectively to identify consistent terms and conditions that make the platforms cost-effective. Thereafter, the city should negotiate with State and Federal DOT or with the MTA and Amtrak to determine a fair price for all development rights, and to establish the conditions for development. Only the Sunnyside Yards development is large enough in scale to justify independent, separate negotiations with the MTA and Amtrak.

Waterfronts

The waterfront opportunities on the Bronx and Harlem Rivers require the city government to acquire property, develop a plan for each area, sponsor re-zoning efforts, establish the ground rules for development,

and supervise housing production by the private real estate sector. These efforts, which require collaboration among the EDC, HPD, and the Parks Department, among others, should be managed from City Hall.

Currently, Sunset Park and Homeport are part of the city's efforts to retain industrial business. For housing to be built in these areas, the city must make a policy decision—as recommended by this report—that each site holds greater benefit to the city as a residential or mixed-use community than under its current uses. If and when such a decision is made, the city should develop a plan for each site that creates an appropriate balance between open space, waterfront access, new housing, commercial space, and various modes of transportation.

Future change on Staten Island's North Shore is contingent upon an economic study of the maritime businesses along the waterfront. If, as trends indicate, the study determines that the businesses along the pier are in decline, comprehensive planning should proceed for re-zoning the

manufacturing zones, for the expansion of the Richmond Terrace, and for the potential reuse of the SIRT right-of-way as a light rail transit line and/or greenway for pedestrian use. The Borough President should be involved with each of these steps, and, again, City Hall should lead these efforts.

Transit-Oriented Investments

A thorough feasibility study to determine whether a route justifies mass transit requires something quite different from the traditional transportation studies that consider only existing demand. Instead, a more appropriate study would determine future demand for development and, consequently, future transit demand based on that future level of development. The study would also compare different transit modes, their capacity, capital and operating costs, and their impact on pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Such work must consider the physical configuration of the mixed-use public realm—for pedestrians, motor vehicles, transit service, and recreational uses. Finally, the study must estimate the increase in tax revenue that would be generated by the transit investment. Initial conclusions from this report indicate that the development potential will justify such an investment for Third Ave/161st Street in the Bronx and 21st Street in Queens, and the city should proceed further study.

Public Realm Improvements

Four types of public realm improvements were highlighted in Chapter 5: boulevard greening, Sunday closings, protected bike lanes, and pedestrian reclamations. The first two require nothing more than targeted expansion of what the city is already doing. New protected bike lanes should be considered in combination with boulevard greening because trees, landscaping, and protected bike lanes collectively create

a mixed-use, mixed-mode public realm—the ideal configuration for most streets in New York City.

Such changes cannot all happen at once, but incremental change can begin on demonstration projects throughout the city. Full-length corridors along Grand Course in the Bronx, 4th Avenue in Brooklyn, and Broadway in Manhattan can become these demonstration projects. Doing so will require City Hall to coordinate efforts of the DOT, the Parks Department, and the appropriate business improvement districts and neighborhood associations along the routes. Collectively, these projects will build a wide spectrum of constituents and demonstrate the viability for such mixed-use public realm planning throughout the city.

Lastly, each pedestrian reclamation requires further evaluation that considers the balance among traffic demands (regional and local), conflicting agency policies, neighborhood impact, and economic benefit. The city should commission further study of all potential pedestrian reclamation opportunities to determine which should proceed before the end of the current Administration.

Conclusion

This report identifies actions the city can take right now to seize opportunities for financially sustainable investments by the private sector in new housing development and by government in the public realm. Collectively, these investments will make living in the city safer, more convenient, more attractive, and more desirable. They will improve the quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors, and in the process improve the city's competitive position within the global economy. As this report makes clear, a better New York is within reach. Now is the time to make it a reality.