

The Staten Island North Shore Action Plan: The Next Chapter

A New Vision for Empire Outlets and the Former
New York Wheel Site



Close your eyes and imagine yourselves 20 years into the future, standing on the St. George Waterfront.

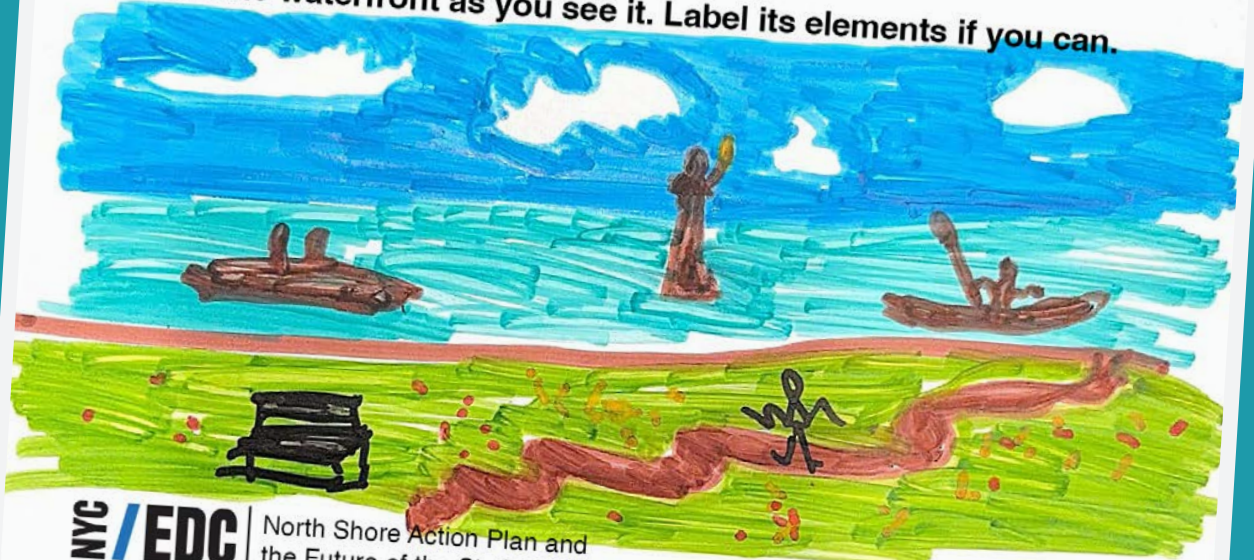
Write a letter from your future self, describing what you see.

Dear past me, walking along the water I see tons of foot traffic. I see an excess of apartments, buildings with businesses + supermarkets below. I see people enjoying artistic spaces + public areas, fun event spaces.

NYC / EDC | North Shore Action Plan and the Future of the St. George Waterfront

Close your eyes and imagine yourselves 20 years into the future, standing on the St. George Waterfront.

Draw the waterfront as you see it. Label its elements if you can.



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MAKE IT NICE + PRETTY



Construction at Tompkinsville Esplanade.

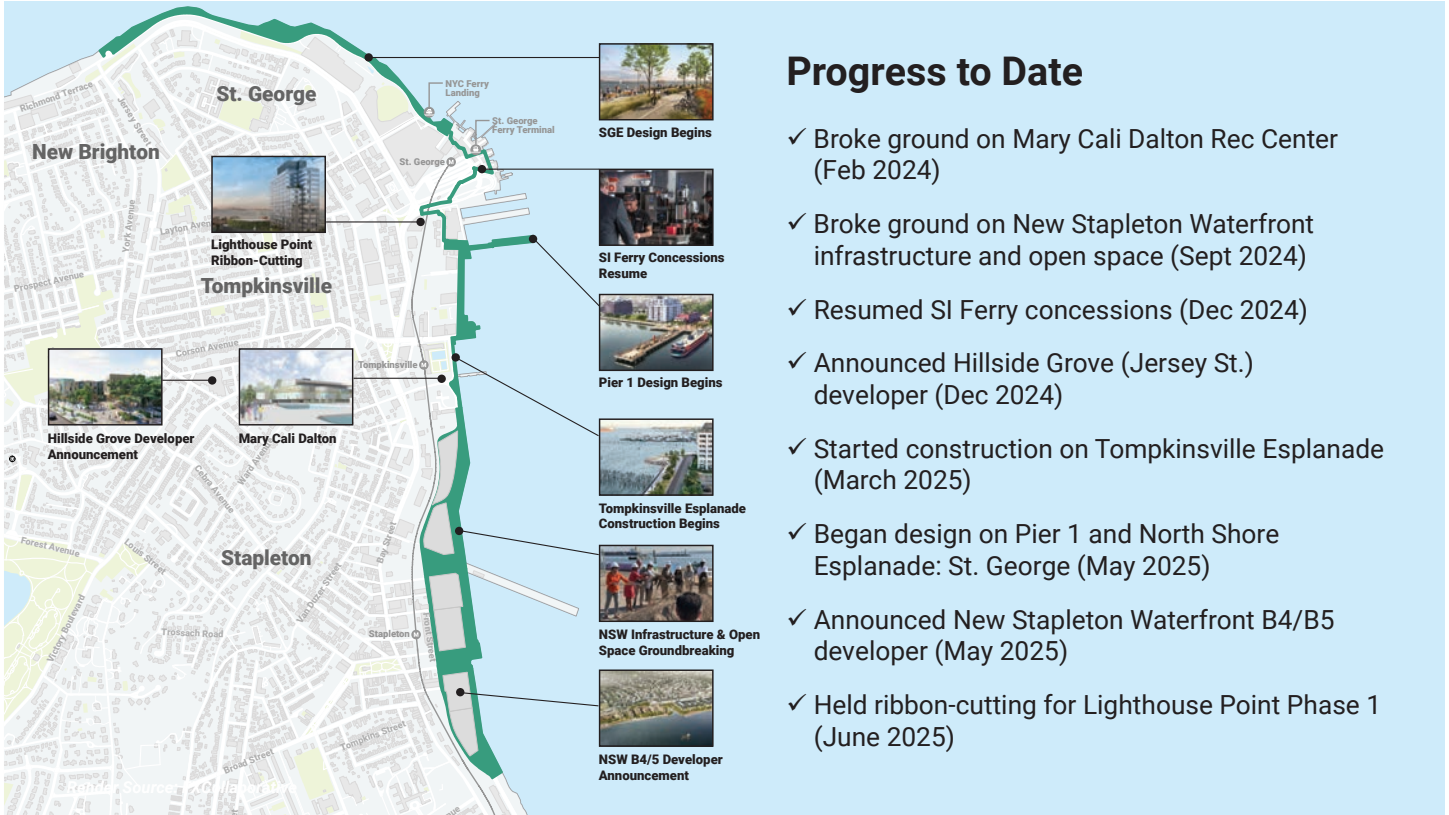


Groundbreaking at New Stapleton Waterfront.

Progress Across the North Shore

In 2023, Mayor Adams, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and Council Member Kamillah Hanks released the Staten Island North Shore Action Plan. To make the North Shore an even greater place to live, the Action Plan outlined a vision for a vibrant, mixed-income waterfront supported by infrastructure, public space, and community facilities.

Two years later, cranes are rising along the North Shore. The City and NYCEDC have met 10 of the milestones detailed in the Action Plan, including completing 115 homes at **Lighthouse Point**; beginning construction on a six-acre park at **New Stapleton Waterfront**; and selecting a developer for the city's largest mass timber residential development, also at **New Stapleton Waterfront**. Construction has also started on the new **Mary Cali Dalton Recreation Center** and two-acre **Tompkinsville Esplanade**. That esplanade will fill a critical gap in waterfront access and restore the long-deteriorated shoreline. And, earlier this year, NYCEDC kicked off the design process for a reimaged **Pier 1** and **North Shore Esplanade: St. George** (the area of esplanade in front of the former New York Wheel). Both projects will re-establish public access to two key waterfront open spaces for the community.

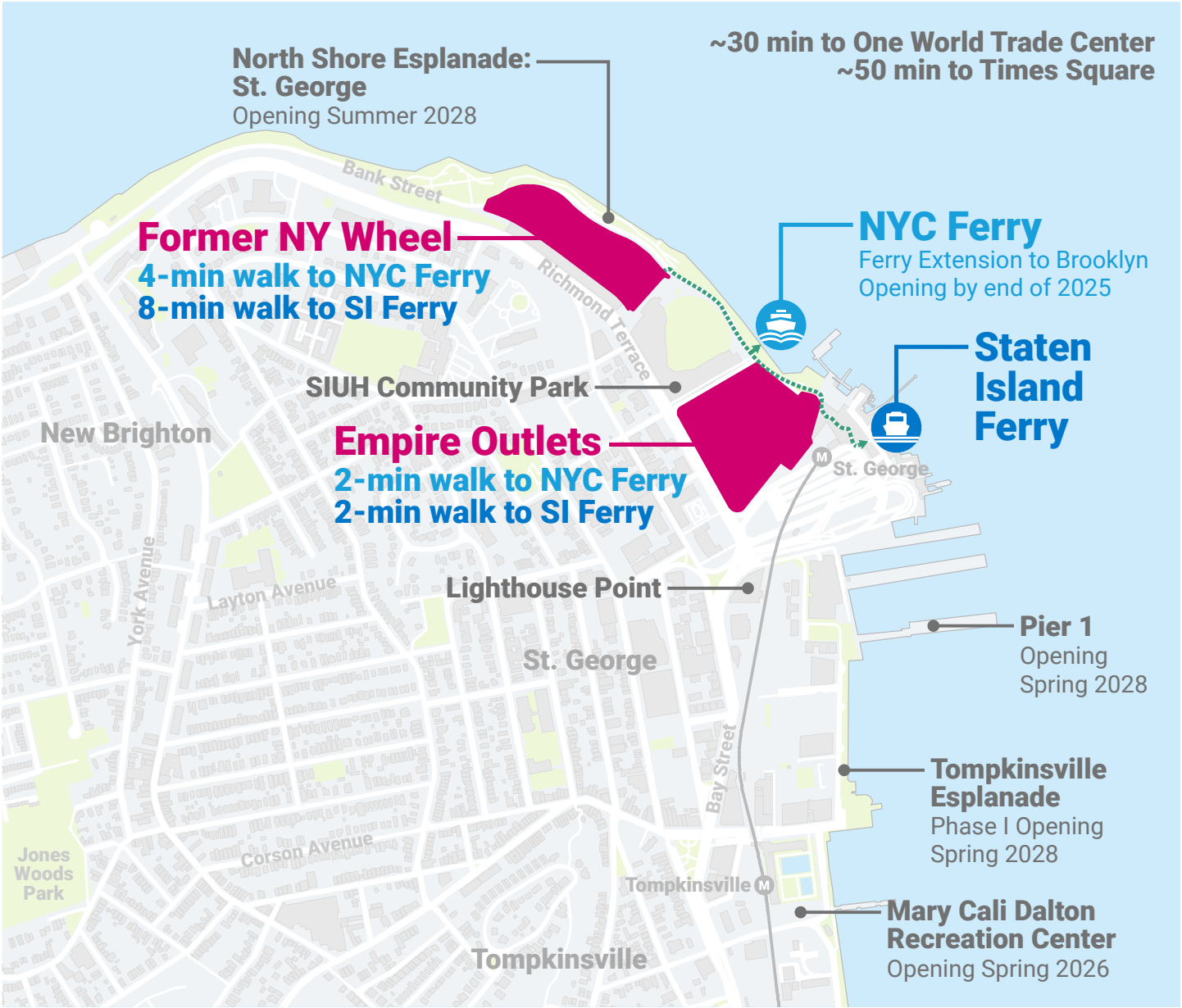


Progress to Date

- ✓ Broke ground on Mary Cali Dalton Rec Center (Feb 2024)
- ✓ Broke ground on New Stapleton Waterfront infrastructure and open space (Sept 2024)
- ✓ Resumed SI Ferry concessions (Dec 2024)
- ✓ Announced Hillside Grove (Jersey St.) developer (Dec 2024)
- ✓ Started construction on Tompkinsville Esplanade (March 2025)
- ✓ Began design on Pier 1 and North Shore Esplanade: St. George (May 2025)
- ✓ Announced New Stapleton Waterfront B4/B5 developer (May 2025)
- ✓ Held ribbon-cutting for Lighthouse Point Phase 1 (June 2025)

The North Shore is set for more milestones in the years ahead. Planning is underway for the second phase of **Lighthouse Point**, while construction is set to start on **Pier 1** and the **North Shore Esplanade: St. George** in 2027. Since 2022, NYCEDC has also added new seating, upgraded the concourse, and made other enhancements to the **Staten Island University Hospital Community Park**—home to the Staten Island FerryHawks. By the end of 2025, NYCEDC will begin upgrading the outdated stadium lights to improve current programming and open the door to hosting a wider range of future events. These investments point to an exciting future for the stadium.

NYCEDC is also making it easier to get from the North Shore to key destinations outside the borough. The North Shore already is home to the borough's major transit hub, with the Staten Island Ferry and NYC Ferry offering fast trips to jobs and recreation in Lower Manhattan. This year, NYCEDC released the **Ferry Optimization Plan** aimed at enhancing the rider experience and overall system efficiency. A key component of that plan is the reconfiguration of the St. George route, which responds to community feedback and connects Staten Island to Brooklyn, Wall Street, and the rest of the NYC Ferry system. This new route provides Staten Island residents access to all five boroughs via ferry, and re-establishes a historic ferry link to Brooklyn. It will be in operation by the end of 2025.



Two key City-owned sites on the North Shore can be re-imagined to better serve Staten Islanders.

A Fresh Approach for Two Key Sites

Despite major progress along the North Shore, there are two large City-owned waterfront sites that continue to struggle: Empire Outlets and the former New York Wheel. At these two sites, NYCEDC made big bets on tourism and entertainment, hoping to draw visitors to the North Shore waterfront with an outlet mall and Ferris wheel. Primarily because of shopping patterns transformed by e-commerce, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, that approach did not work. Empire Outlets, while praised for its architecture, has struggled with a limited mix of retail options and the New York Wheel project proved impossible due to funding and engineering challenges.

After almost 15 years spent on these projects, the City, NYCEDC, elected officials, and Staten Islanders all agree:

A new approach is needed. In June 2025, NYCEDC and Council Member Hanks, in close collaboration with Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella, launched a new community visioning process to reimagine these sites. Great waterfront public spaces thrive on activity.

Successful urban waterfront neighborhoods around the world bring together recreation, commerce, and residential communities. Empire Outlets and the former New York Wheel site lack many of these key ingredients. There are limited retail options, much of the waterfront lacks public access, and no one lives there. These sites could be so much more, with Staten Island's best transit connections minutes away and some of the best waterfront views in the world.

To ensure these sites succeed, people need to live there. Residents can ensure the sites are active, safe, well maintained, and that businesses have the customers they need to thrive. Re-thinking Empire Outlets and the former New York Wheel site can deliver the ingredients for a more successful neighborhood: new homes, shops, public spaces, and services for Staten Islanders.

Staten Island at a Glance

Economy

Staten Island

- First borough to fully recover its pre-pandemic population.
- First borough to recover all jobs lost during the pandemic.

North Shore

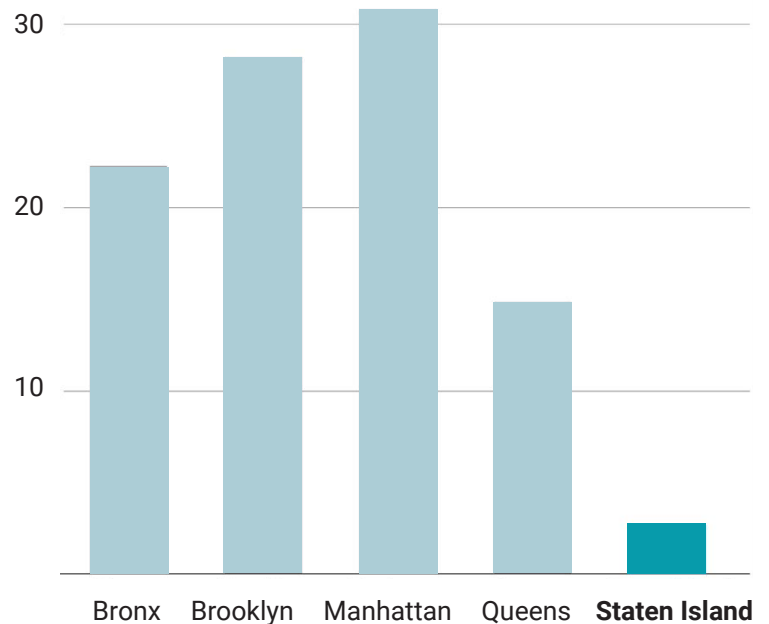
- Jobs +18 percent from 2013–2023.
- Median wage +32 percent from 2013–2023.
- The population of St. George increased 16 percent during the last 15 years, vs. five percent in New York City as a whole.

Housing

- Supply hasn't kept up with population growth on the North Shore and across Staten Island, pushing up rents and keeping vacancy rates low.
- As a result, rents have increased in Staten Island, and average rents for multifamily units on the North Shore are even higher than the rest of the borough—by roughly 10 percent.

Completed Units per 1,000 Residents

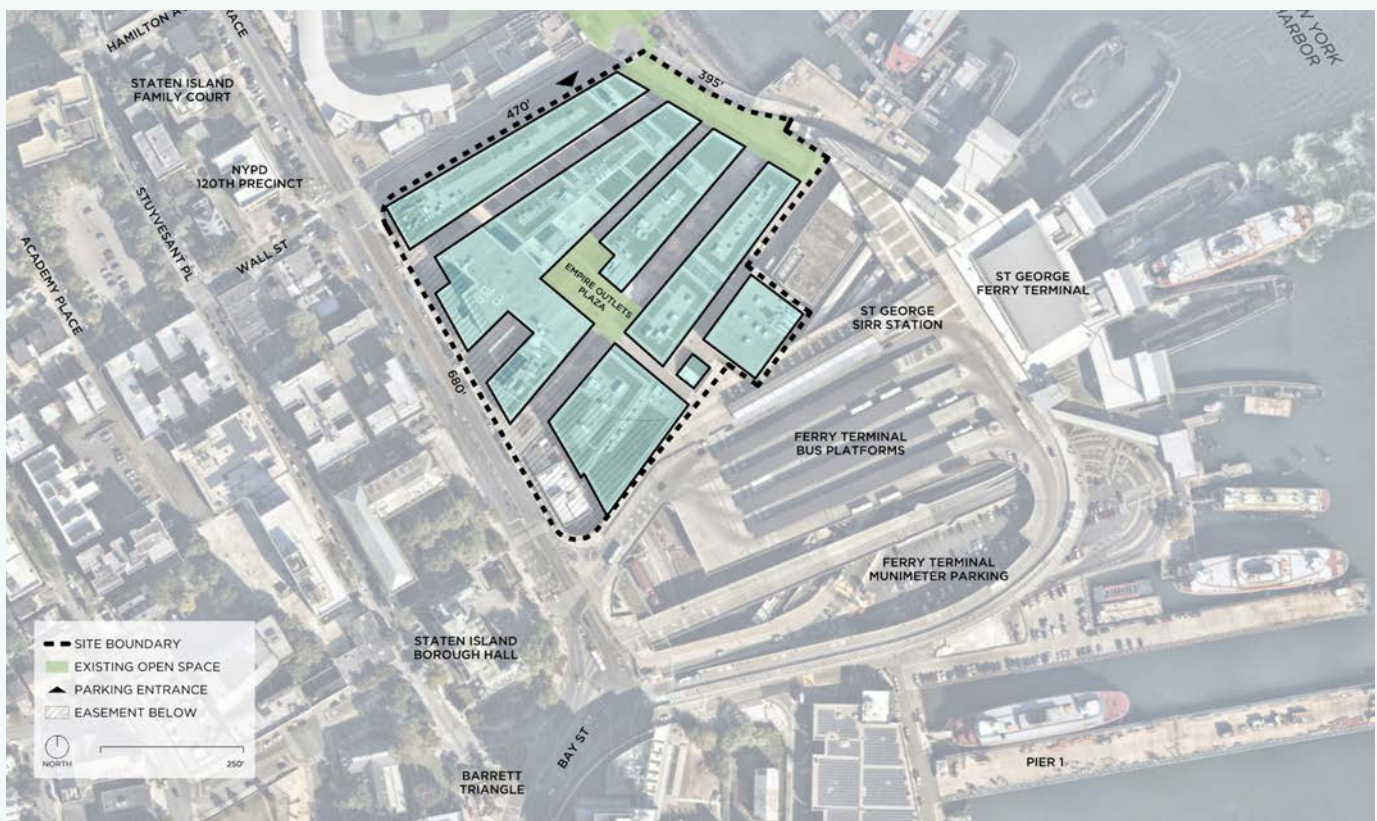
Staten Island built much less housing than other boroughs from 2010 to 2020.



Opportunities and Challenges at the Sites

Empire Outlets

Opened in 2019 with space for 100 retail storefronts.



Site plan of the present-day Empire Outlets.

Opportunities

- ➔ Waterfront views
- ➔ Existing public open space
- ➔ Strong transit access
- ➔ 1,250-space parking garage

Challenges

- ➔ Over 50 percent of the almost 350,000 SF of retail space is vacant
- ➔ Global shift to online shopping
- ➔ Not enough foot traffic and all-day activities
- ➔ Lack of stores serving local needs

Former New York Wheel Site

Eight-acre site with sweeping views of the New York City skyline, planned as a 630-foot-tall Ferris wheel—the world’s largest—before construction halted in 2017 and the project was cancelled.



Site plan of the former New York Wheel site.

Opportunities

- ➔ Waterfront views
- ➔ Nearly complete 70,000-SF Terminal Building designed for restaurants and entertainment as people waited to enter the Ferris wheel
- ➔ Existing 950-space parking garage
- ➔ Planned waterfront esplanade (North Shore Esplanade: St. George) with bike and pedestrian connections in front of the site set to be complete in 2028
- ➔ ~3 acres of unplanned space to be redeveloped

Challenges

- ➔ Difficult to build on existing buildings (designed for high tourist traffic)
- ➔ Existing Ferris wheel foundations built for the New York Wheel project

Community Engagement

Reaching Out to Staten Islanders

Since June 2025, NYCEDC has heard from over 1,000 Staten Islanders through workshops, small group discussions, conversations with youth, community events, and a survey.



Activity from Public Workshop 2.

Community Engagement by the Numbers

1,000+

Staten Islanders engaged

300+

Survey responses to date

2,000+

Comments received at in-person events

130+

Students and teenagers engaged

400

Participants across two public workshops



Public Workshop 1 presentation.



Activity from Public Workshop 1.



Activity from Public Workshop 2.



Activity from Public Workshop 2.



Focus group with the Snug Harbor Summer Youth Employment Program.



Engagement at We Love New Brighton Day.



Youth Tour with Department of City Planning (DCP).



Youth Tour with DCP.



Engagement at International Lighthouse Point Fest.



Engagement at NYC Soul Food Festival.

The two public workshops brought together community members to share ideas for the future of the North Shore waterfront. These sessions included interactive stations focused on housing, open space, retail, transportation, and community facilities. To gather input from a broader audience of residents and stakeholders, NYCEDC attended a series of community events and held small group discussions with local organizations. An online survey launched in August 2025 has collected over 300 responses to date, offering insights into community priorities across key categories. An important focus of the engagement process has been ensuring that youth

voices are heard through partnerships with local programs, including site tours and focus groups with high school and college students.

This wide-ranging engagement ensures that the future vision for Empire Outlets and the former New York Wheel site reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of Staten Island's North Shore community.

Key 2025 Community Engagement Dates

- **June 16** Public Workshop 1
- **June 28** Engagement at We Love New Brighton Day
- **July 16** Engagement at NYC Ferry Landing
- **July 23** Youth Workshop with College of Staten Island and New York City Planning
- **July 24** Engagement at Stapleton Waterfront Park
- **July 30** Engagement at NYC Ferry Landing
- **August 7** Youth Workshop with Snug Harbor Summer Youth Employment Program
- **August 9** Engagement at the FerryHawks Italian Heritage Night Baseball Game
- **August 10** Engagement at SummerStage at Stapleton Waterfront Park
- **August 12** Engagement at St. George Library Center
- **August 26** Engagement at St. George Ferry Terminal
- **August 31** Engagement at NYC Soul Food Festival at Snug Harbor
- **September 9** Presentation to Community Board 1
- **September 14** Engagement at Bike the Block Staten Island
- **September 25** Public Workshop 2
- **September 30** Engagement at Youth Wins Green Energy Symposium
- **October 5** Engagement at the International Lighthouse Point Fest
- **October 10** Workshop with Staten Island Chamber of Commerce's Young Entrepreneurs Academy

What We're Hearing

We've gotten an enthusiastic response to our community engagement efforts in 2025, with Staten Islanders sharing their biggest hopes—as well as their concerns—for the future of the sites.

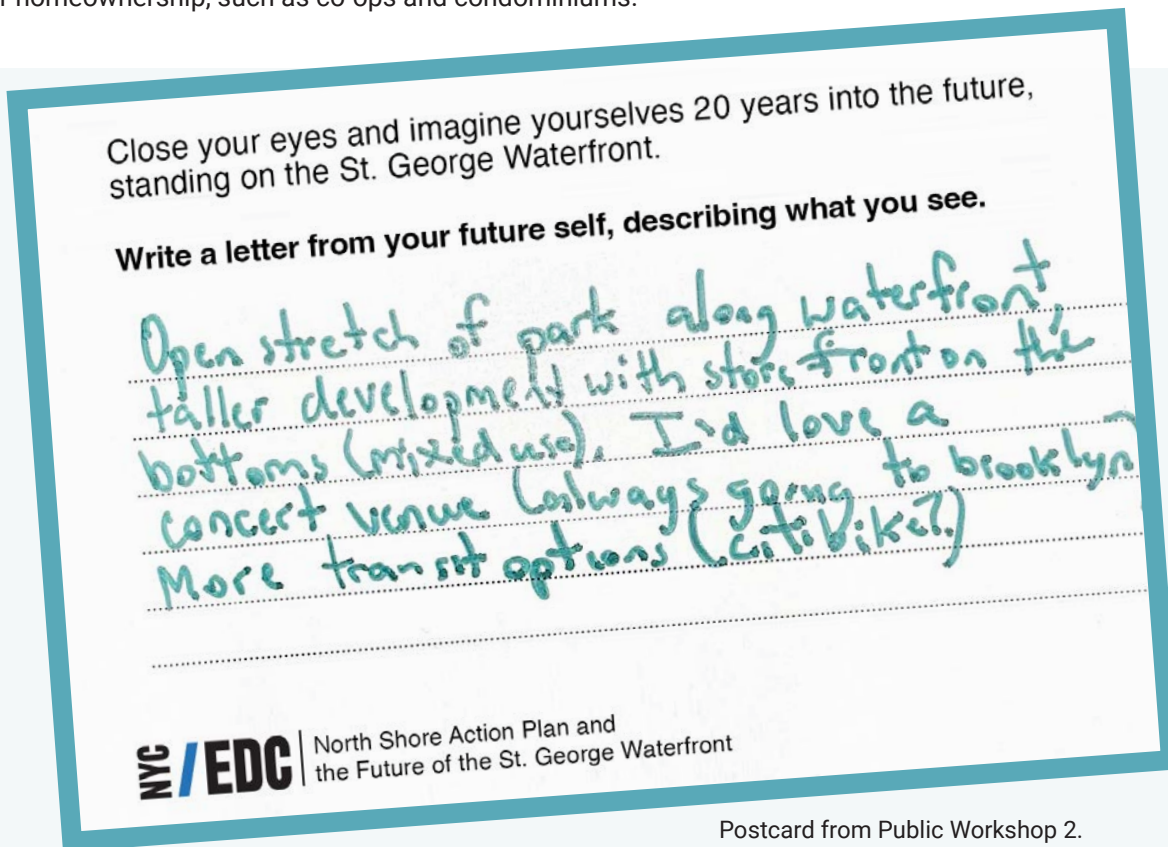
Throughout the engagement process, North Shore residents and community members highlighted six key principles to guide redevelopment on these waterfront sites:

Survey Says

- Respondents ranked **cultural spaces** as one of their top priorities.
- A majority of respondents said **more restaurants** are needed.
- There is a strong desire for **walking/running paths**.
- **Housing costs** are one of the biggest challenges facing the North Shore.
- **Proximity to neighborhood-serving retail**, like grocery stores, is a priority when looking for a place to live.

1. North Shore Residents Need More Places to Live that Meet Their Diverse Needs

Community members consistently emphasized the need for mixed-use buildings that combine housing with shops, community facilities, and waterfront access that together will not only activate public spaces but improve overall quality of life and public safety. New housing should support Staten Islanders across a range of income levels and life stages, especially young adults, seniors, and working-class families. Many also expressed a desire for a variety of housing options, including both rental apartments and opportunities for homeownership, such as co-ops and condominiums.



Postcard from Public Workshop 2.

“We really need housing that’s accessible to the middle class.”

Heard at the International Lighthouse Point Fest

“Mall culture is dying, and housing would be a really good fit here.”

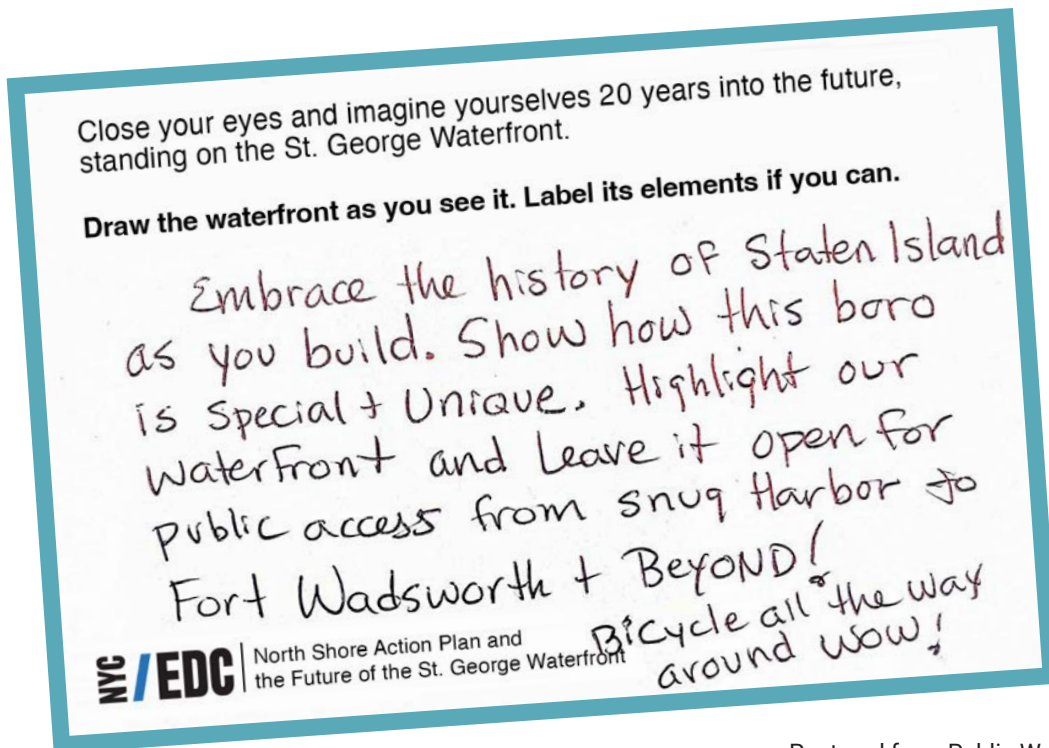
Heard during engagement near Pier 1 and the Tompkinsville Esplanade

2. The Waterfront Is an Incredible Amenity—But Residents Need More Access to It

Community members expressed a strong desire for specific amenities like a connected waterfront esplanade going all the way to Jersey Street, open lawns, skate parks, sports facilities, playgrounds, and spaces for arts and events. Creating open and flexible spaces geared to residents of all ages was also a common theme. There was also broad support for sustainable design, including native plantings and pollinator gardens, to promote environmental stewardship.

“Activate the waterfront. Make it accessible to the public. Provide public space that feels like it’s for locals.”

Heard at the International Lighthouse Point Fest



Postcard from Public Workshop 2.

“I want to see a holistically connected waterfront from Snug Harbor to Lighthouse Point to Alice Austen to Fort Wadsworth.”

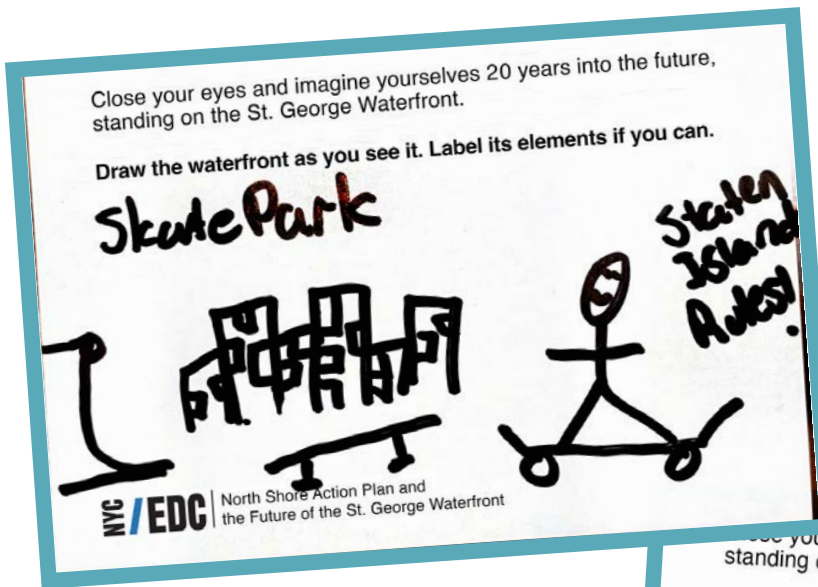
Heard at Public Workshop 2

“I would like to see more colorful flowers. Greenery always makes places more comfortable.”

Heard at the Youth Wins Green Energy Symposium

4. Young Staten Islanders Need More Spaces Geared Toward Them

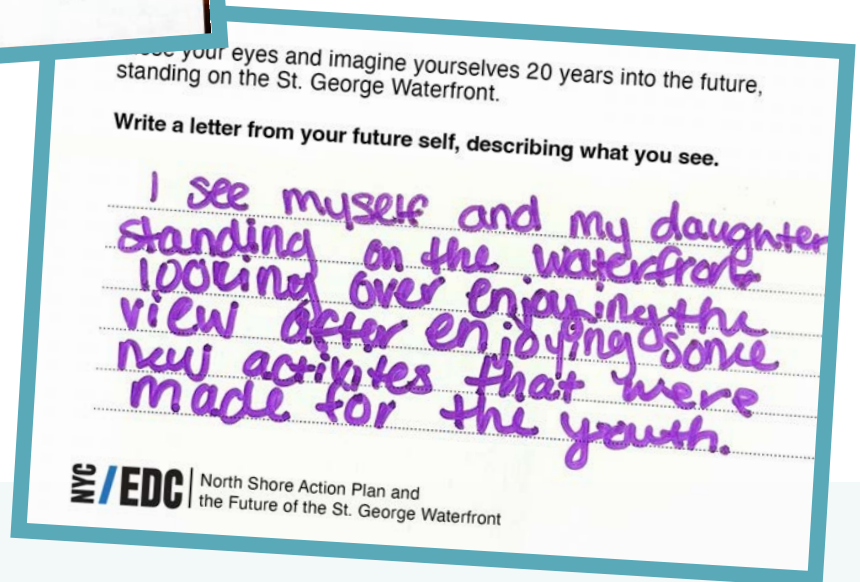
Young Staten Islanders value the borough’s strong community ties and peacefulness but said the lack of housing, activity, and jobs push them to leave Staten Island. They also regularly highlighted the need for more entertainment, culture, and recreation—things like skate parks, playgrounds, pools, arcades, sports facilities, and cultural spaces.



Postcards from Public Workshop 2.

“I’m bound to my house, there’s nothing to do here.”

Shared during the Youth Workshop at Snug Harbor



“I want to see roller skating.”

Heard at the Youth Wins Green Energy Symposium

“Build a skatepark!”

Heard at Public Workshop 2

Close your eyes and imagine yourselves 20 years into the future, living in the St. George neighborhood.

North Shore

Describe a day spend in St. George. Where do you live?

What places have you stopped at? What activities did you engage in?

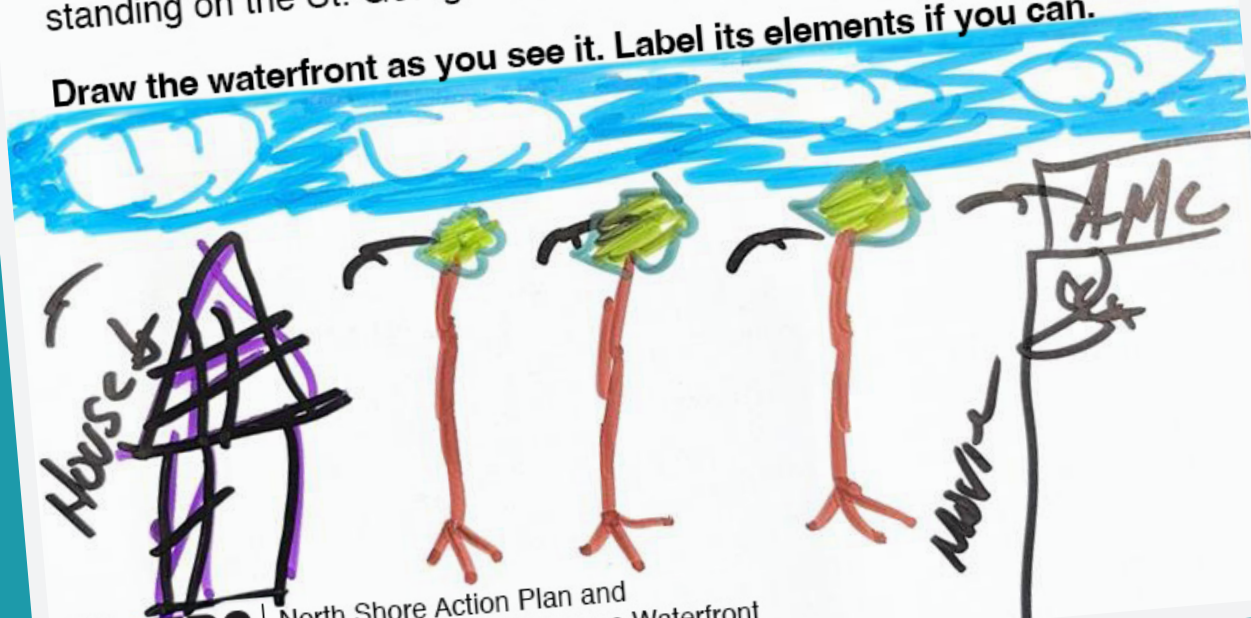
My dream for St. George is a skatepark on the water. I also would really love to see more affordable housing. as a 32 yr. old woman, I want to emphasize how much of an opportunity it would be to have a skatepark in this area. Thank you for your consideration

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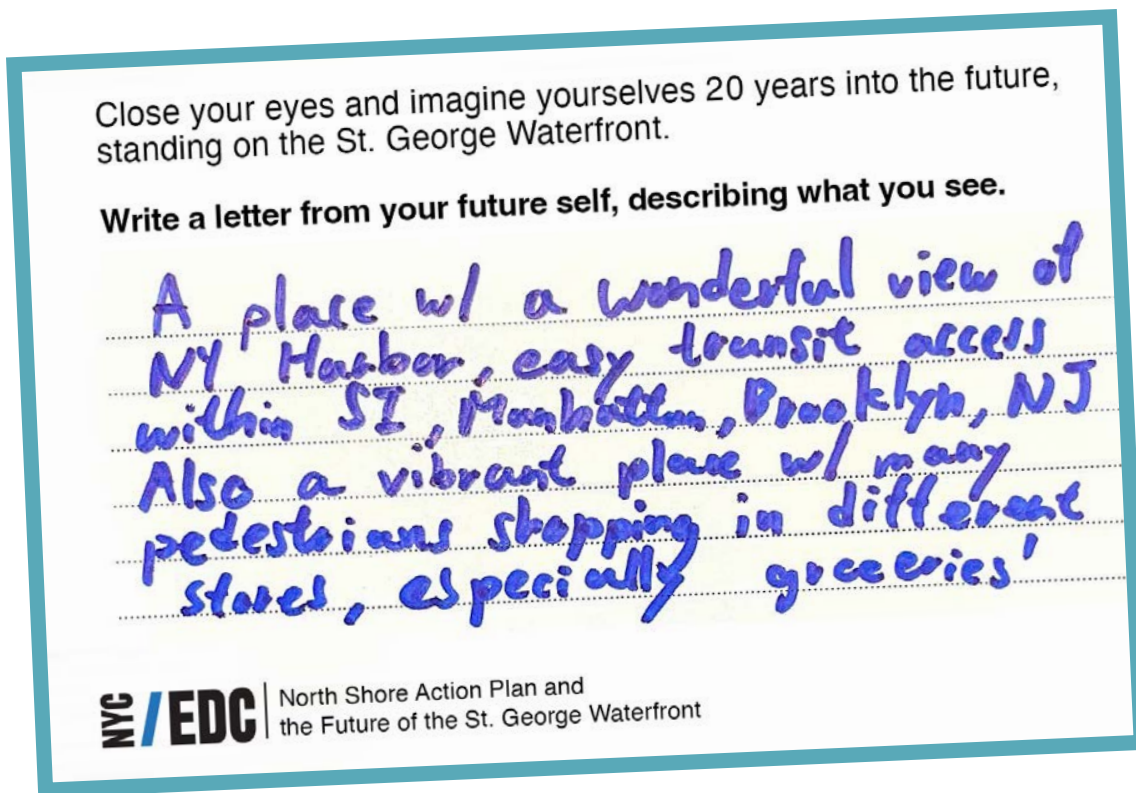
North Shore Action Plan and the Future of the St. George Waterfront

5. Staten Islanders Need Shops and Stores that Serve Them

A full-service grocery store, especially one with diverse offerings like Trader Joe's or Whole Foods, was one of the most popular requests. Community members also highlighted restaurants, bars, cafes, food halls, and bakeries. Other frequently mentioned needs included banks, day care centers, pharmacies, and clinics.

“We need food, restaurants, smaller stores, and a healing center.”

Heard at the International Lighthouse Point Fest



Postcard from Public Workshop 2.

“Please add a cinema and a Trader Joe’s.”

Heard at the International Lighthouse Point Fest

“I would love to see more shopping stores and food, plus more kid-friendly stuff by the ferry.”

Heard at the Youth Wins Green Energy Symposium



6. Residents Need Stronger, Safer Connections

This includes better walking and biking paths and expanded ferry, train, and bus options—to the rest of Staten Island and other destinations like Brooklyn and New Jersey. Drivers requested more parking options that are less expensive, clearer parking rules, and better street infrastructure.

“I think this is a great neighborhood, it has tons of potential. It just needs to be realized.”

Visitor to the St. George Library Center

“Open the bike path.”

Heard at the St. George NYC Ferry Landing



EMPIRE OUTLETS

7058

DON'T FORGET YOUR CAREER

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Looking Ahead

Throughout the rest of the year and into 2026, NYCEDC will continue to engage Staten Islanders on the future of these sites.

To deliver homes, shops, and services for Staten Islanders, the sites must be rezoned. Current zoning does not allow for housing and a mix of uses at Empire Outlets and the former New York Wheel site. That means NYCEDC will need to go through the public land use approval process—known as the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, or ULURP—to bring this vision to life. The immediate next step is for the City to build out the development and urban design framework for these sites and start the environmental review process, which will include several additional opportunities for engagement.

2025–2030: Projected Timeline for the Sites

- **2025:** Release Vision Report
- **2026:** Release Development and Urban Design Framework
 - Begin Environmental Review
 - Begin ULURP
- **2027:** ULURP approval
- **2028:** Anticipated developer selection
- **2029:** Design and approvals
- **2030:** Begin construction of first phase

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For more information, contact northshore@edc.nyc.