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SUNSET PARK

Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study Report

Prepared for
UPROSE



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Executive Summary

A Working Waterfront

Located at the heart of New York's Port District, the Sunset Park Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) has a strong connection with its waterfront as well as a rich industrial history. In the early 1900s, when Bush Terminal was developed on the harbor, it was one of the first intermodal shipping, warehousing, and manufacturing complexes in the Port District.

At one point, more than 300 firms operated out of Sunset Park, fuelling the area's local economy. The demand for workers led to the development of housing in the upland areas, establishing a close live-work relationship. This connection between waterfront jobs and nearby homes embedded the 'walk-to-work' neighborhood phenomenon that persists today.

During both the World Wars, the Sunset Park waterfront and Bush Terminal buildings served as the naval base for the US Army. The Brooklyn Army Terminal opened in 1919, became the largest military supply base in the US through World War II. However, in the decades after World War II, a number of factors such as the decline of the railways, introduction of containerized shipping, and the construction of Post Newark-Elizabeth Marine Terminal,

led to the gradual decline of manufacturing and industrial activities in the area, and thus a gradual loss of jobs. The construction of the Gowanus Expressway in the 1941 further severed connections between the waterfront and upland neighborhood, and most of Sunset Park's working class communities left the area.

However, the presence of high quality housing stock and the large swath of industrial land along the water drew new immigrants to the area. Even as millions of square feet of space continued to be underutilized, the industrial uses, building and the nature of employment within the BOA gradually began to adapt in favor of a diverse set of uses. This diversity has helped to maintain Sunset Park's status as a walk to work neighborhood even today, where 19% of its total population commutes to work by biking or walking. As a result, Sunset Park is one of the most active walk to work communities in New York City.

The uses across the BOA now include warehousing and distribution, auto repair, bakeries and a range of food services, furniture assembly, wholesale retail, utilities and other light manufacturing. In 1967, when Lutheran Medical Center opened its doors to the

neighborhood, it provided a huge infusion of service-oriented jobs in the area. Today it accounts for approximately 30% of the jobs in the BOA, engaging its population in over 6,000 quality jobs.

While manufacturing and construction jobs continue to be strong contributors to Sunset Park's employment base, the gradual diversification of employment types within the BOA, the shift in local resident job skills, and the new market demands for space requires a strategic approach to maximizing brownfield development, framing the area's assets, and enhancing the walk to work neighborhood.

The area's interconnectedness with regional markets, the availability of 20 million square feet of quality industrial and loft buildings directly linked to transportation infrastructure, access to local work force, and its dynamic industrial profile with a mix of industrial operations ranging from warehousing to textile product manufacturing, are valuable assets. Together, they provide a strong platform for the neighborhood to transform itself as a model for green industrial practices and quality jobs that will become the engine for a strong walk to work community.



Figure 1: Historic image of the Brooklyn Army Terminal

BOA Team and Project Goals

Given the area's history of industrial uses and many years of neglect, there is a large concentration of brownfields in the BOA. This community based Step 2 BOA Study is centered on identifying brownfield sites and putting them back to productive use. The study is being led by UPROSE, an environmental and social justice organization that is committed to increasing open space, decreasing environmental hazards, developing local jobs and facilitating community-inclusive decision-making in Sunset Park.

In December 2011, UPROSE commissioned WXY architecture + urban design to lead a multidisciplinary group of planning, design, environment and economic consultants for this project. Together with HR&A Consultants, Gannett Fleming, Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC), e-design Dynamics, and the Sunset Park community, WXY undertook a year long planning study. This effort involved establishing a clear vision and road map for the redevelopment of currently underutilized sites within the BOA.

Funded under the Department of State's New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program, this study considered the Sunset Park area from 15th Street to 65th Street, and from 3rd Avenue to the waterfront. The study has included the identification of eight "strategic sites" for the revitalization of Sunset Park.

The potential future uses identified for the sites

are to be closely aligned with the community's goals and priorities for Sunset Park:

1. Increase job opportunities for local residents especially through the encouragement of sustainable industry and green jobs;
2. Decrease environmental hazards and facilitate the remediation and redevelopment of key brownfield properties in the BOA study area;
3. Work with area businesses, the City and the State to develop environmentally friendly business practices;
4. Create new open space and areas of outdoor recreation in Sunset Park that will reconnect the residential community to its waterfront; and
5. Preserve existing affordable housing and encourage new housing development on brownfield sites where appropriate.

With these goals in mind, the team undertook a detailed evaluation of the area's physical, economic and environmental conditions. This assessment, coupled with community engagement helped frame a corresponding set of recommendations and implementable strategies that address Sunset Park's challenges and capitalize on its assets for revitalization.

Framework for Re-development

Over the last decade, City, State and Federal agencies have invested considerable capital in upgrading marine and freight infrastructure for industries, and creating new park space for area's residents and workers.

As a result of over \$125 million in bulkhead repairs, modernization of rail and terminal infrastructure and dredging, South Brooklyn Marine Terminal (SBMT) has become the focal point for manufacturing and distribution industries like Sims Recycling and Axis Automotive. Investment in Bush Terminal Piers and Park has created a new public realm destination, which in conjunction with the Brooklyn Greenway Plan will re-establish public access to the waterfront.

Moving further south, Lutheran Medical Center continues to invest in the local community and is the single largest employer in the area. Around its facilities have emerged support functions such as convenience retail that give this area its bustling character. Additionally, building renovation such as the Federal Building 2 and the Brooklyn Army Terminal (BAT) are setting a precedent for repurposing Sunset Park's historic warehouses. These modernized buildings will fulfill some of the real estate demands by small to medium scale industries that are continually looking to locate and grow in the area.

Meanwhile, in the midst of these investments targeted towards growing industrial uses, there has been an overall shift in favor of non-industrial employment. This trend is understood more clearly when one looks at Sunset Park in its regional setting and in the context of other Industrial Business Zones (IBZs), as shown in Figure 2. While Hunts Point and Newtown

NYC REGION'S INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS ZONES AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

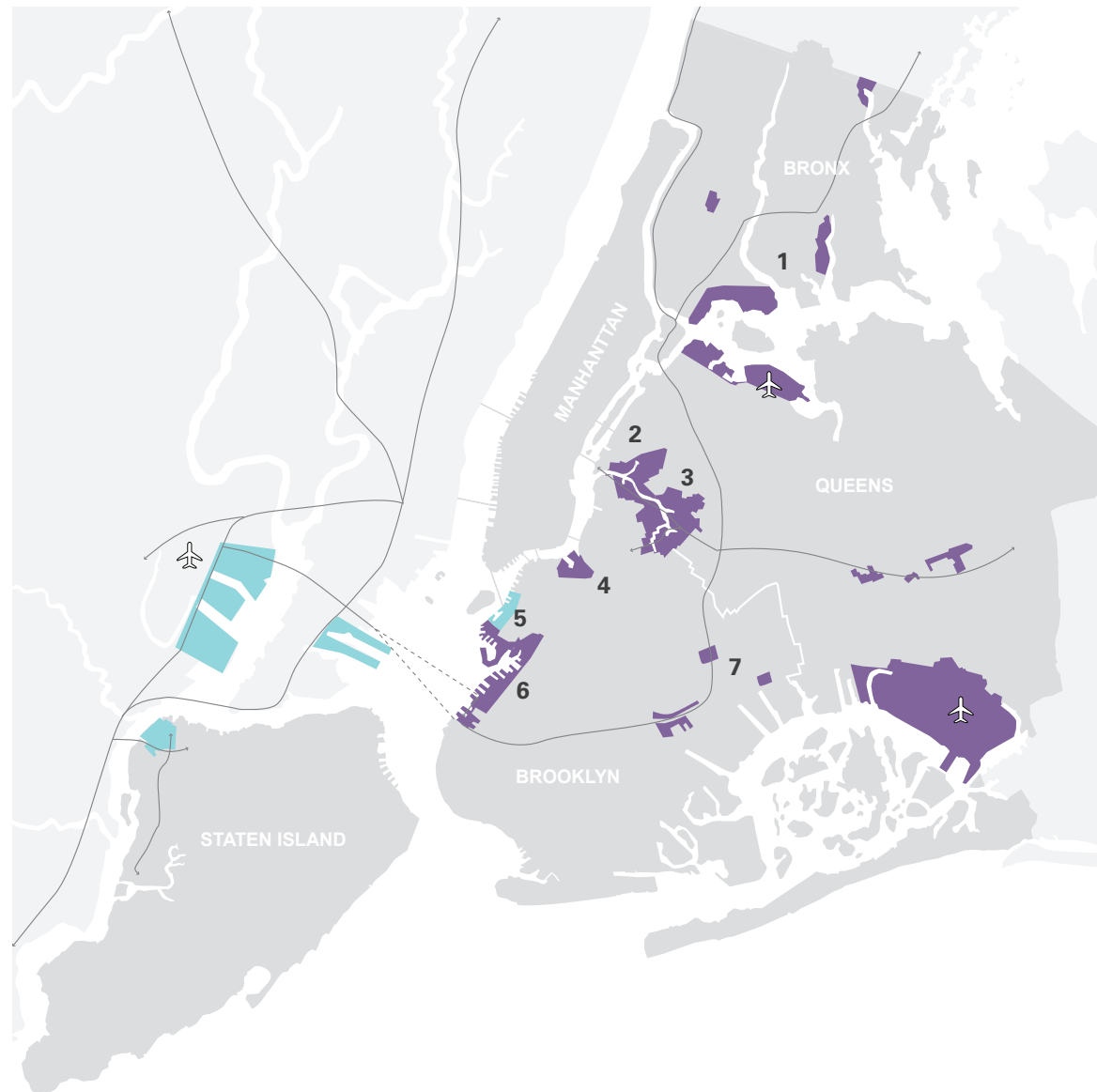


Figure 2: NYC's industrial business zones



	2000	2008
1. Port Morris/Hunts Point		
Industrial employment	78%	77%
Non-industrial employment	22%	23%
2. Newtown Creek		
Industrial employment	82%	77%
Non-industrial employment	18%	23%
3. Maspeth		
Industrial employment		58%
Non-industrial employment		42%
4. Brooklyn Navy Yard		
Industrial employment		52%
Non-industrial employment		48%
5. Red Hook		
Industrial employment		79%
Non-industrial employment		21%
6. Sunset Park		
Industrial employment	63%	51%
Non-industrial employment	37%	49%
7. East New York		
Industrial employment		36%
Non-industrial employment		62%

Creek, comparable in size to Sunset Park, have managed to maintain their industrial employment base, the Sunset Park IBZ has seen a 12% decline in industrial jobs. This decline is offset by a corresponding increase in jobs related to food, professional and technical services, education, real estate, utilities and information.

Collectively, the wide range of building types, ongoing investments, incoming industries and the emergence of new employment sectors require a more fine grain urban analysis. Consequently, as shown in Figure 3, the area has been divided into seven subzones based on current uses, building types and access to infrastructure.

Four subzones populate the waterfront; Industrial Incubation Spaces, Large Scale Distribution, Working Waterfront and Utilities and Large Format Retail. To the west of 2nd Avenue are Historic Warehouses, Small Scale Manufacturing and Services and Residential, that are more closely dependent on direct access to 3rd Avenue and the Gowanus Expressway. Each of these subzones has a distinct character and offerings.

The **Industrial Incubation Spaces** offers a variety of real estate, multimodal freight transportation facilities and ferry access for its workers. To its north, the **Large Scale Distribution** subzone is constituted of factory lofts directly associated with rail, but which will

also house the future Bush Terminal Park. The **Working Waterfront** stretches across SBMT and with tenants like Axis Automotive and Sims Recycling can encourage green industrial practices in the BOA. **Utilities and Large Format Retail** fronts both the waterfront and 3rd Avenue, providing the opportunity to create visual and physical waterfront access for upland neighborhoods.

The **Historic Warehouses** is a concentration of early 20th century warehouse buildings that in recent years have started to offer a variety of real estate for industrial, retail and office uses. Market sectors such as food, metal fabrication etc. that have grown in the last two years constitute the **Small Scale Businesses** subzone whose uniform lots can be configured in a number of ways, to provide single and multistory buildings.

Lastly, the **Service and Residential** subzone that is anchored by Lutheran Medical Center covers a good 20 blocks roughly between 50th and 65th Streets. Well frequented by workers and residents, this part of the BOA more of a 24X7 neighborhood.

Eight strategic sites were selected on the basis of their ability to capitalize on infrastructure investments, tie into and improve the public access routes to the waterfront, and catalyze redevelopment of the BOA and the subzones in which they are located. Figure 4 shows how these strategic sites relate to the ongoing

investments and suggested public realm improvements.

Programs and uses for each of the eight sites, set out below, were based on the findings from the real estate market and industry analysis, the community goals established in the BOA Pre-Nomination Study, proposed government initiatives, zoning regulations, and opportunities provided by the new industries and amenities soon to be located at the BOA. The study focused on identifying a mix of program alternatives that would create local jobs and provide new services to the BOA and adjacent neighborhood.

- 1) 5201 1st Avenue:** Multi-use facility with community spaces overlooking Bush Terminal Park.
- 38 43rd Street:** Small manufacturing center that becomes part of the northern gateway to Bush Terminal.
- 2) A M Cosmetics Building:** Sustainable and green business incubator.
- 3) Verizon Fleet Parking:** Electric vehicle charging facility with stormwater management green infrastructure.
- 4) EW Bliss Building and Atlantic Properties:** Film trade school with community use that activates 52nd Street approach leading to the waterfront.
- 5) Moore McCormack:** Waterfront facing, medium scale commercial and community space that provides public waterfront access.
- 6) SBMT:** Recycling and green technology

SUBZONES: SUPPORTING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT

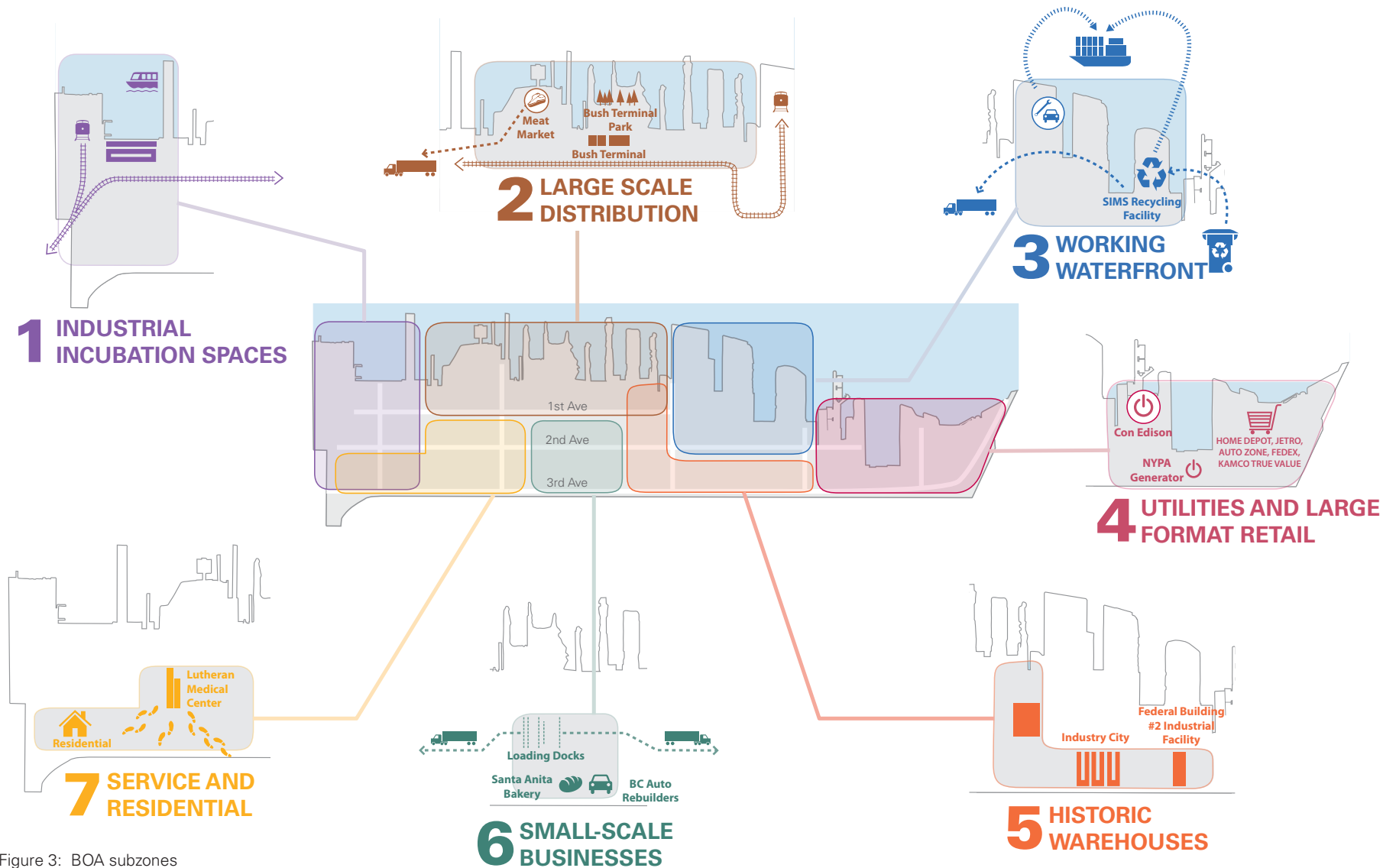


Figure 3: BOA subzones

center that encourages green industry practices

7) 244 39th Street: Retail, cafe and furniture workshop

8) 5201 2nd Avenue: Ground floor retail with commercial/industrial uses above.

Each site has the potential to contribute new green infrastructure that would improve the area's resiliency, through on-site work such as green or blue roofs or green walls and planting. These interventions would be complemented by streetscape improvements that both improve public access and capture stormwater. For example, green walls and plantings at the Verizon parking lot site would mitigate environmental hazards while allowing the existing use to continue. 43rd Street has emerged as a critical connector that would bring residents, workers and visitors to the gateway of new Bush Terminal Park. Another of the eight strategic sites, at the end of 43rd Street within Bush Terminal, would serve as a gateway to both a reinvigorated employment area and the new park.

Of the eight sites, four sites were selected for a more in-depth market analysis, including an estimate of the market value of a proposed program. The pro formas were used to establish each site's "Potential Development Value," which in turn established the redevelopment cost on a per square foot basis that the market could support. In the cases where redevelopment costs (which factored in high level remediation

costs but did not finalize the rebuild costs as part of the process) were in excess of the potential development value, the financial gap would need to be filled by a public or private subsidy. (Section 3.15 sets out the results of the pro formas.)

With the redevelopment analysis in hand, an outline of proposed next steps was developed that first, emphasized the need to establish critical success factors such as creating a vision for the BOA and its place in New York's economy, maximizing the existing assets, connecting to the new industries and promoting the area's competitive advantage. A coordinated effort will be required to create potential partnerships for the redevelopment, such as investment firms focused on green businesses, private niche manufacturers or the NYCEDC and to pursue funding opportunities at the federal, state and city levels. Examples of funding options include federal New Market Tax Credits, New York State Brownfield Cleanup Program Tax Credits and New York City Brownfield Incentive Grants.

Recommendations

1/ Increase job opportunities for local residents especially through encouragement of sustainable industry and green jobs.

In recent years there has been a substantial decline in the jobs in traditional industrial sectors, but at the same time, the overall employment in the BOA has stayed relatively stable. This trend can be attributed to the

growth of a range of other non-industrial sectors which has facilitated skills development in neighborhood residents. An effective way to capitalize on this trend is through supporting existing workforce development programs and encouraging new ones such as apprenticeship programs that prepare the workforce for skilled employment opportunities. In addition to this growth in non-traditional industrial sectors, there are a number of strong anchor institutes and businesses, such as the Sims Recycling, that can support additional growth through suppliers and/or customers. Organizations such as SBIDC can play an important role in helping the market by facilitating exchanges between existing and potential businesses that understand the growth needs of existing businesses, and space and asset needs of potential new businesses.

Investments such as those in Brooklyn Army Terminal, South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, Bush Terminal Park and the rail line extension will also substantially benefit the BOA. Currently, however these investments and their impacts are not known to many people outside the immediate area. The redevelopment of strategic sites in conjunction with the marketing efforts for these investments can attract more businesses and industries to the BOA.

2/ Decrease environmental hazards and facilitate the remediation and redevelopment of key brownfield properties in the BOA.

Approximately 90 out of a total 126 brownfield parcels within the BOA are underlain by historic

ALIGNING INVESTMENT, PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES AND A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

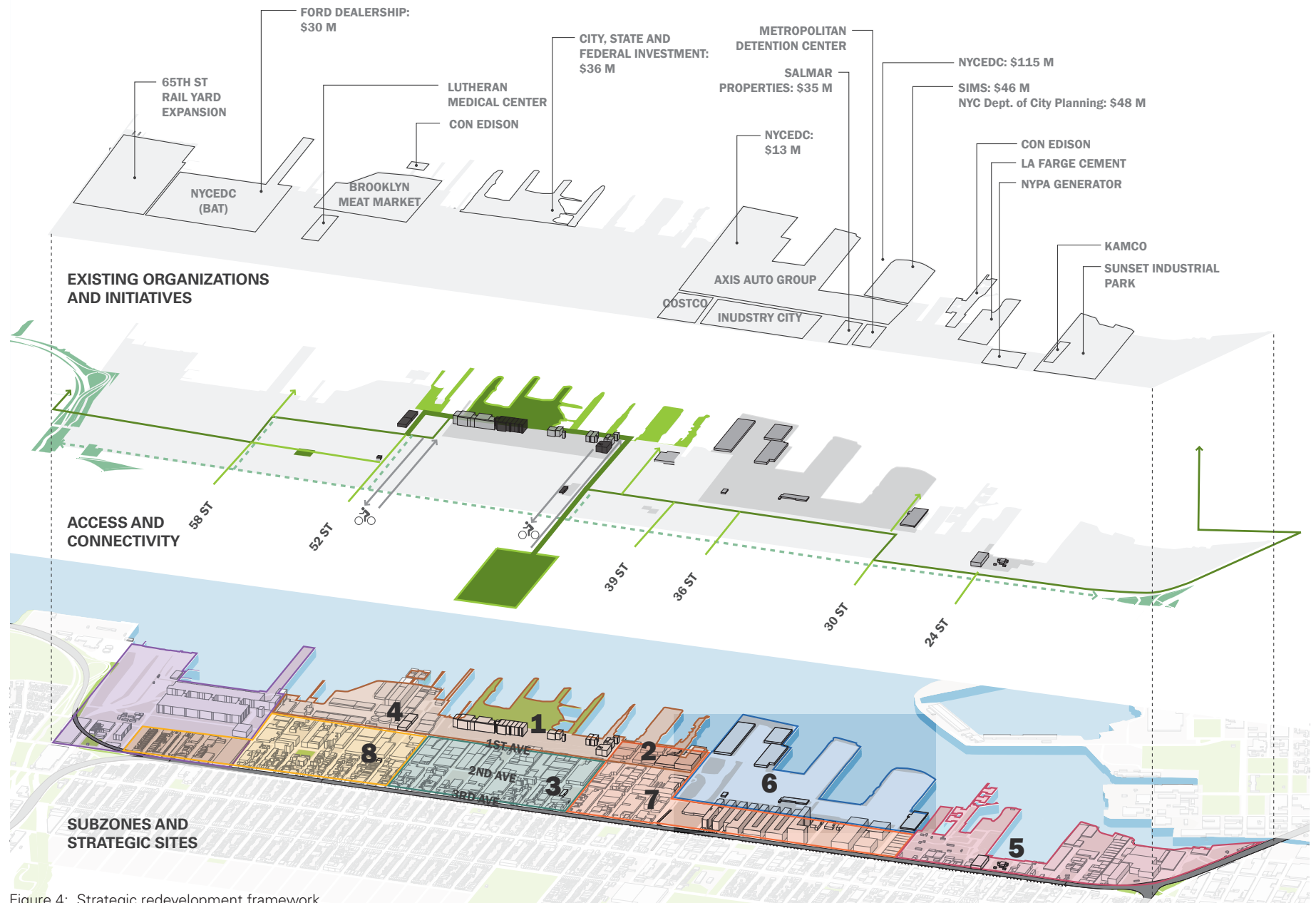


Figure 4: Strategic redevelopment framework

fill material which often contains PAHs and metals. While it may not be necessary to clean up all 90 parcels, remediation of strategic sites will reduce environmental hazards and may spur additional remediation and redevelopment within the BOA. UPROSE can bring together local developers and key municipal organizations to spur such key catalytic redevelopment opportunities. Additionally, unknown costs associated with the clean up of brownfield sites often poses a barrier to redevelopment. These unknowns can be reduced through Phase I and Phase II site assessments that provide more site-specific information about potential contamination. This in turn will help in identifying the most cost-effective remediation techniques and further advance redevelopment opportunities. At the same time, efforts should be made to consider sustainable environmental remediation over energy intensive remediation techniques that create significant carbon footprints. Where possible more sustainable remediation techniques that seek to reduce energy consumption and green house gas emissions and incorporate water conservation measures should be considered.

Heavy freight movement dependent on conventional fuel sources degrades the air quality in Sunset Park, risking higher incidence of respiratory disorder for BOA workers and residents. The rail spur within the BOA, which is benefiting from a major City investment, can greatly reduce polluting truck traffic that causes ongoing environmental pollution. Additionally,

alternative energy production through the potential development of a new anaerobic digestion plant at Sims and the installation of wind turbines on industrial buildings will help reduce dependency on conventional energy sources and create a healthier environment.

The Sunset Park BOA is also covered with impermeable surfaces, which contribute heavily to runoff. This runoff can create unsafe surface ponding conditions for pedestrians, and degrade the water quality by carrying surface contaminants deposited by automobiles, fertilization practices, aerial deposition and trash, into New York Harbor. Addressing stormwater runoff is addressed more fully under Recommendation 6/ on Climate Resiliency.

3/ Promote environmentally friendly business practices

The BOA benefits from several major and growing green businesses such as Sims recycling and AXIS automotive. Recently, the world's largest rooftop farm was announced atop the renovated Federal Building #2 and PANYNJ is investigating plans for a green business incubator. These plans demonstrate the potential for more growth of green businesses and can be used to brand the BOA as a green business cluster. This will in turn help attract more green businesses to the area. In addition to branding, encompassing a broad definition of green businesses that focuses on both businesses with an explicitly green end product, and demonstrates the value of green

business processes to other types of business, can promote environmentally friendly business practices in the area.

4/ Create public access links to the Sunset Park Waterfront

There has been a significant amount of investment at the Bush Terminal Piers and Park sites located at the waterfront, which is a precious public realm amenity for the neighborhood residents and workers. However, access to this new facility still remains a challenge. Some of this challenge can be attributed to the BOA's landscape and streetscapes that are dominated by loading docks and are mostly suited for vehicular movement and industrial uses. Just outside of the BOA, on 3rd and 4th Avenues, there are high instances of vehicular and pedestrian conflicts which is a major barrier for pedestrians who want to get into the BOA and to the waterfront. Some of these challenges can be overcome by creating safe environments for pedestrians and bicyclists that will encourage mobility. Specifically at key intersections on waterfront connectors, i.e. 3rd Avenue with 24th, 30th, 36th, 39th, 42nd, 43rd, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 58th and 59th Streets, increased lighting, proper crosswalk marking, pedestrian refuge islands and extensions to reduce crosswalk distances can greatly improve pedestrian safety.

In addition to strengthening waterfront corridors and key pedestrian intersections, the area around the E.W. Bliss and Atlantic Properties on

52nd Street, the Moore McCormack Building and Piers 5, 6 and 7 can be developed as publically accessible waterfront sites. This will further increase waterfront access and increase the overall public realm area in the BOA.

The historic resources within the BOA such as architectural details on buildings façades and critical infrastructure can contribute to strengthening the identity of the area and creating pleasing pedestrian environments. Efforts should be made to preserve these resources and to tell a story of the area through signage and information displays in open and community spaces. These efforts will support the creation of a dynamic waterfront and employment center that is an attractive place to work and visit.

5/ Preserve existing affordable housing and encourage new housing developments on brownfields where appropriate.

While the Sunset Park neighborhood remains more affordable than other parts of Brooklyn, growing price pressures on the market can make affordability a challenge for long-time residents of the neighborhood. The pressure will increase as the clean-up of brownfield sites, and investments in green businesses and public realm improvements increase the livability of the area and make it more attractive for residential development. Select sites should be supported for affordable housing development after conducting further conversations with key stakeholders.

6/ Build for greater climate resiliency

Though the Sunset Park BOA was once an integral part of the natural ecosystem that could buffer the impact of storm surges and sea level rise, today the waterfront no longer functions as a permeable floodplain marshland. As a result, Hurricane Sandy caused significant damage in Sunset Park and neighboring areas. The storm was accompanied by a 14- foot storm surge that caused back-ups and flooding, severe damage to infrastructure, and interrupted power for days, displacing a number of residents and businesses from the area. Forecasters predict an increase in the frequency of such extreme storm events and hurricanes, putting Sunset Park at an increased risk of flooding in the coming years.

Sunset Park's community, businesses and developers need to collectively adopt an environmentally responsible approach to any new building construction and should upgrade existing buildings where possible. New construction should respond to the 100- year floodplain and be situated on higher ground to prevent damage from storm surge. Building utilities should be located at higher levels to avoid damage from flooding. Within the existing industrial buildings, measures such as relocation of mechanical equipment to higher levels, waterproofing at lower levels, installing back up generators and other storm preparation plans can greatly reduce long term costs and recovery costs.

Area wide approaches such as habitat restoration, constructed wetlands and green infrastructure can also help attenuate storm surges, control stormwater runoff and revive a part of Sunset Park's ecological role. The Sunset Park waterfront was originally developed for heavy industries and is covered with impermeable surfaces, which contribute heavily to runoff. This runoff can add to the heat island effect and carry with it surface contaminants that can degrade the water quality of New York Harbor. A study area wide assessment to determine and categorize sources of runoff and ways for their mitigation would be a first step in developing interventions in the BOA that would improve stormwater management. A number of interventions such as constructed wetlands, rain gardens, curbside bioswales and blue-green roofs can be employed at specific locations in the BOA. These improvements can be implemented at both the neighborhood level and by individual property owners. A list of resources that can be used to assist in these initiatives are detailed in this report.

Project Description and Boundary

1.1 Lead Project Sponsors and BOA Team

The Sunset Park Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Step 2 Nomination Study is being led by UPROSE - an environmental and social justice organization that is committed to increasing open space, decreasing environmental hazards, developing local jobs and facilitating community-inclusive decision-making in Sunset Park.

In December of 2011, UPROSE commissioned WXY architecture + urban design to lead a multidisciplinary group of planning, economic, environmental and design consultants to craft a holistic plan for the revitalization of this brownfield opportunity area. Together with HR&A Consultants, Gannett Fleming, Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation and e-Design Dynamics, the WXY team brings experience in community based planning, urban design, economic strategies for neighborhood revitalization, environmental engineering and hazard mitigation strategies.

Throughout the Step 2 nomination process, the consultant team engaged with stakeholders, community members and municipal agencies who have all contributed their unique perspectives to this study.

Their engagement has been invaluable and has enriched the team's understanding of the area.

1.2 Project Overview and Description

The Sunset Park waterfront was filled to create land for industrial use (see Figure 5) and first came to thrive in the early 1900s as an industrial waterfront. The area's marine freight facilities such as the Brooklyn Army Terminal (BAT) and the cargo piers and buildings around Bush Terminal set the standard for port facilities through World War II. In addition to its marine industrial facilities, construction of the elevated rail line by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company along 3rd Avenue brought with it new residential construction and connected the area to the employment centers of downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan. This infrastructure also provided employees access to the expanding port operations along the Sunset Park waterfront, beyond those who lived within walking distance.

In the latter half of the 20th century, the shipping industry was going through a paradigm shift where industries no longer thrived by co-locating manufacturing with port and rail facilities. Sunset Park based companies were unable to compete with the expansive, single-story campuses adjacent to highways. Since

BOA FACTS

Brownfield: A Brownfield is any real property where redevelopment or re-use may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous waste, petroleum, pollutant, or contaminant.

BOA program: The BOA Program provides assistance to communities to undertake activities resulting in neighborhood revitalization strategies for areas affected by brownfields or economic distress. The program enables communities to assemble effective strategies to return dormant sites and areas back to productive use and simultaneously restore environmental quality by enabling communities to:

1. Address a range of opportunities and problems posed by multiple brownfield sites
2. Build consensus on the future uses of strategic brownfield sites
3. Establish the multi-agency and private-sector partnerships necessary to leverage assistance and investments to revitalize neighborhoods



Figure 5: Sunset Park area showing shorelines today and in 1869. The image shows the area that was filled to create land for the industrial use.

 Sunset Park BOA Boundary  Mean High Water Line in 1869

then the area has suffered disinvestment which has further reduced its ability to compete as an industrial working waterfront.

Today, while the area has a significant industrial inventory, the challenge is to adapt and re-use the infrastructure and buildings to reposition Sunset Park. In addition, as with other communities that have been home to manufacturing uses for many decades, Sunset Park has a number of brownfields that pose a major challenge in the revitalization of the neighborhood and the vision of its community.

The Sunset Park Step 2 Nomination Study will provide an in depth and thorough description and analysis, including an economic and market trends analysis, of existing conditions, opportunities, and reuse potential for strategic properties located in the proposed BOA that can serve as catalysts for revitalization.

/ Historic Development

1600 - 1800s: New Netherlands Farm

Initially Dutch, and later other European settlers, flocked to Sunset Park in the 17th and 18th centuries for the area's fertile soil and proximity to the river for trade. Despite the transfer of New Netherlands to the English in 1664, the residents remained predominantly Dutch. During the American Revolution, Sunset Park was the major field of battle during the Battle of Long Island.

With the incorporation of the City of Brooklyn,

South Brooklyn, as it was then called, began to develop along the newly laid-out street grid, moving eastward from the waterfront.

Early Urbanization

1825: Horse car lines and factories began to be built all across the area.

1834: The City of Brooklyn, was incorporated.

1891: The City of Brooklyn bought land for public parks, including Sunset Park. Named for the spectacular views achievable due to its rapid rise in elevation over the waterfront, the park would go through expansions and reconstructions, including a remodeling by the Works Progress Administration during the Depression.

Rapid Industrialization

1900 - 1930: As Manhattan's docks reached full capacity at the end of the 19th century, pressure for expanded shipping capability in Brooklyn spurred new development in Sunset Park. Soon, Sunset Park would become a cluster of waterfront factories and piers. The largest of these intermodal facilities, Bush Terminal, would become a model for the regional and national shipping industry.

3rd Avenue: Midway between the docks and the Park, 3rd Avenue operated as the center of the Sunset Park. The Avenue had seven movie theaters, and drew a large local crowd. Later, with the construction of Gowanus Parkway (later Gowanus Expressway, see Figure 6), 5th Avenue replaced 3rd Avenue as the main shopping street.

Immigrant Communities

1920s: Communities of Irish, Norwegians, Polish, among others, settled in the area, often working at the prosperous docks. Each of these groups left their mark on Sunset Park, bringing customs, trades, and especially churches to serve their community and spiritual needs.

The Height of Industry

1940s: Despite witnessing greatly reduced business during the Great Depression, activity at the port reached its apex during World War II. The U.S. Army Military Ocean Terminal, now Brooklyn Army Terminal (see Figure 7), was the embarkation point for most troops. The area was a hub of construction for the war effort.

Gowanus Parkway

1941: The Gowanus Parkway opened to traffic in 1941. To accommodate local traffic, 3rd Avenue was widened from four to ten lanes, condemning buildings fronting the street. Unlike the "el" which it replaced, the Gowanus served as a physical barrier to the waterfront for the rest of Sunset Park and displaced any community activity along the Avenue.

Port Decline

1960s - 1980s: The industrial activity provided by WWII proved fleeting. With the advent of containerized freight requiring vast amounts of space to stack goods, port activity soon moved elsewhere due to Sunset Park's older facilities, limited footprint, and lack of a good rail connection.

Departing Populations: Without the draw of jobs at the piers, much of Sunset Park's population left for the suburbs, as occurred throughout the city. With the opening of the Verrazano Bridge in 1964 in particular, the area and any jobs or cultural resources became easily accessible from Staten Island. This movement left poor housing conditions, and disinvestment for the area.

New Vibrancy

1980s - 2010: While existing populations left, a diverse group of new immigrants came to Sunset Park. With people from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and other Latin American countries, Latinos now represent a majority of the neighborhood. A significant Chinese population also exists, drawn by the area's accessibility to Manhattan's Chinatown. Chinese New Year is celebrated on 8th Avenue yearly.

Renewed City Interest: Beginning with the DCP's 1992 Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, the City has promoted industrial and manufacturing uses through the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Business Zone and funding through the Economic Development Corporation. Since then, several plans have been released, including CB7's 2009 197a plan, the Sunset Park Waterfront Vision Plan and the Significant Maritime and Industrial Areas designation.



Figure 6: Gowanus Parkway and 3rd Avenue
Source: <http://forgotten-ny.com>



Figure 7: Brooklyn Army Terminal (1949)
Source: <http://www.trainweb.org>