

# Sunnyside Yard Master Plan | Steering Committee 01

SUBJECT: Summary of the First Meeting of the Sunnyside Yard Steering Committee  
DATE: 28 June 2018  
TIME: 11:00a – 1:00p  
LOCATION: New York City Economic Development Corporation  
110 William Street, Conference Room 4A/B

The first meeting of the Sunnyside Yard Steering Committee achieved four primary goals:

- (1) Introduced the hosts, members and co-chairs to each other and the Sunnyside Yard Master Plan effort;
- (2) Communicated the goals of the City and Amtrak for the master planning process;
- (3) Established a shared understanding of Sunnyside Yard and the technical analysis to be undertaken by the consultant team; and
- (4) Discussed and established expectations of roles, responsibilities, and protocols for the Steering Committee members and co-chairs.

The meeting began with statements from the Steering Committee co-hosts, Alicia Glen, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development, and Anthony Coscia, Chairman of Amtrak. The co-hosts underscored how the Sunnyside Yard Master Plan presents a rare opportunity to develop a collective vision for one of the largest remaining open sites in New York City. Deputy Mayor Glen reiterated that the City has important policy priorities, such as affordable housing and jobs as part of a true mixed-use community, but stressed that there is no predetermined outcome for what might be developed on the Yard. Chairman Coscia explained that Sunnyside Yard is a critical site for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor operations and this is a unique moment in time for the City and Amtrak to advance a potential overbuild plan given Amtrak's investments in reconfiguring the Yard.

Following additional opening remarks from Queens Borough President Melinda Katz and Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer and a round of introductions, the co-chairs of the Steering Committee, Co-chair Sharon Greenberger, President & CEO of YMCA of Greater NY and Co-chair Elizabeth Lusskin, President of Long Island City Partnership explained their expectations for the Steering Committee. The co-chairs clarified their key roles: set agendas and facilitate Steering Committee meetings, ensure all voices are heard throughout the process, and establish processes for incorporating feedback into the technical master planning work.

The co-chairs introduced guidelines for participation, confidentiality, and process mechanisms, including:

- Meeting attendance and engagement during meetings is critical; consistent attendance by same member strongly preferred;
- Steering Committee members should serve as ambassadors for the process;
- If substantive questions/conversations occur with EDC outside of a meeting, responses and/or a summary of what was discussed will be shared with the group;
- In order for members to openly voice opinions, conversations and materials shared during Steering Committee meetings are intended to be confidential

and we ask for no attribution unless otherwise indicated;

- At the beginning of each meeting there will be a clear summary of how Steering Committee feedback has been incorporated into the master planning effort.

Steering Committee members added additional guidelines for the process:

- Ensure opportunities for discussion and debate during the meetings;
- Clearly articulate the programmatic and operational constraints from the outset; and
- Do not just talk about broad themes, get into the technical details of the master plan.

Following the discussion about the role of the Steering Committee, Cali Williams, the Director of Sunnyside Yard at NYCEDC, gave an overview of the Yard, the 2017 Sunnyside Yard Feasibility Study, and why the City is pursuing a master plan for the site. Jeff Gerlach, Director of Infrastructure Planning at Amtrak, elaborated on Amtrak's activities and priorities in the Yard. He outlined the track and facility reconfiguration planned for the Yard and explained how an overbuild would improve the conditions for the approximately 800 workers on site. Vishaan Chakrabarti, Founder of Practice for Architecture and Urbanism (PAU), who is leading the master planning consultant team, outlined his approach to the master planning exercise and the technical work his team will be undertaking.

The meeting ended with a brainstorm of ideas to guide the community engagement process:

- Begin with open discussions and open-ended questions of what community members would like to see before asking them to respond to any proposal;
- Clearly communicate analysis of infrastructure capacity, baseline conditions, and physical constraints;
- Create a three-dimensional model to understand planning concepts;
- Provide briefings on findings from the 2017 Sunnyside Yard Feasibility Study;
- Make some meeting materials public; and
- Begin with a clear understanding of what transportation challenges are like today.