

# Sunnyside Yard Master Plan | Steering Committee 02

PROJECT: Sunnyside Yard Master Plan  
DATE: 01 October 2018  
TIME: 9:30a – 11:30a  
LOCATION: LaGuardia Community College, Room E500  
Summary of Steering Committee Meeting 02

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

1. Introduced a preliminary set of Guiding Principles for the master plan, to be discussed and refined throughout the process by Steering Committee members
2. Reviewed the feedback to date from the Steering Committee survey and ongoing interviews with local stakeholders and civic groups
3. Produced a robust set of feedback via a visioning workshop in five small break-out groups to guide the Consultant Team in creating preliminary programmatic scenarios for the site
4. Announced the plan for the first public meeting on October 24 from 6-8pm at LaGuardia Community College

Co-hosts Alicia Glen, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development, and Tony Coscia, Chairman of Amtrak, kicked off the second meeting of the Sunnyside Yard Steering Committee. The co-hosts reiterated that this is a very unique opportunity for the City and Amtrak to collectively plan for the long-term future and set an example for other cities in the country and around the world. Deputy Mayor Glen emphasized that there is no predetermined outcome for what happens at Sunnyside Yard and that it is critical that everyone voices their opinions. Chairman Coscia reiterated Amtrak's commitment to the project and highlighted his dedication to working with City and State partners to make a project here successful. James Patchett, President and CEO of NYCEDC, reiterated that Sunnyside Yard is a priority for NYCEDC and he is grateful to the Steering Committee members for dedicating their time and energy to this process.

Following opening remarks, the co-chairs of the Steering Committee, Sharon Greenberger and Liz Lusskin, recapped the ground rules discussed in the previous meeting and discussed how the feedback from the first meeting has been incorporated into the process. This includes:

- Requests to begin the process with open-ended questions of what stakeholders would like to see at Sunnyside Yard, which guided the structure of this meeting with a visioning workshop in break-out groups
- Requests to clearly communicate the technical conditions and constraints on the site, which led to two Technical Briefings by Amtrak, MTA, and the Consultant Team on September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>
- Requests for a site tour with the Steering Committee, which took place on September 28<sup>th</sup>

Sharon Greenberger introduced the concept of a set of Guiding Principles for the master plan. The Guiding Principles are meant to serve as guideposts for the process and as aspirational principles that will evolve over the course of the master plan. Cali

Williams, Director of Sunnyside Yard, introduced some initial concepts based on input thus far:

- Respect and build on the heritage and diversity of the surrounding neighborhoods
- Create public spaces that support health, creative expression, community-building, and quality of life
- Design infrastructure and transportation systems to meet current needs and anticipate future trends
- Set ambitious standards and explore creative strategies for environmental sustainability and resiliency
- Explore new ways to create a mix of affordable housing
- Support creative approaches to education, careers, and industries that envision how we want to live and work in the future
- Ensure high-quality, human-centered design at every scale
- Test innovative approaches to technology and the “smart city”
- Be adaptable to evolve with the needs of western Queens and NYC over time

Steering Committee members had several ideas to be incorporated in the Guiding Principles including addressing phasing and financing considerations and incorporating additional ideas:

- Encourage more good jobs that lead to careers and workforce development strategies like union jobs, MWBE, local hiring, etc.
- Promote sustained economic diversity in the community
- Support new community services for people of all ages

A brief summary of the stakeholder engagement effort moving forward was shared as well as recent opportunities for engagement for the Steering Committee including the two technical briefings and site tour that took place the previous week. Cali Williams shared the responses from the Steering Committee engagement survey, which included affordable and mixed-income housing, open space and public realm, transportation, and education and anchor institutions as key priorities.

Vishaan Chakrabarti, Founder of Practice and Urbanism and lead of the Consultant Team for Sunnyside Yard, gave a brief recap of the Consultant Team’s work thus far which has included an intensive study of the track level and existing conditions of the Yard. A Steering Committee member asked the ownership breakdown of the Yard, included here for additional clarification: ownership of Sunnyside Yard is split between Amtrak (142 acres), MTA (31 acres), and a private owner (7 acres). Vishaan Chakrabarti then presented a series of slides to prompt conversation for the Visioning Workshop, which will guide the efforts of the Consultant Team to develop preliminary programmatic scenarios for the master plan.

During the Visioning Workshop, Steering Committee members were placed in groups of around six people and given the prompts listed below. Key insights for each prompt are included below.

- What kind of housing mix could be built here?
  - Build housing for the working and middle class of the City
  - Development should speak to and preserve surrounding communities
  - Provide housing for a spectrum of age and income groups, including senior housing

- What do you think public and open space could look and feel like?
  - A major open space for western Queens as well as a range of open and active spaces dispersed throughout the yard
  - Parks and open spaces that are fully public and accessible for all
  - Active and passive recreation space, public art, and cultural facilities for major events
- What is your vision for ways to improve mobility and infrastructure?
  - Interest in studying a new station that functions as a major regional transit hub
  - Potential for a transportation investment fund and other mechanisms to cross-subsidize needs
  - More walkable and bike-able streets, health-oriented neighborhoods, and live-work opportunities for all residents
- What types of institutions could anchor Sunnyside Yard?
  - Interest in multi-generational services for education, health care facilities and hospitals
  - Interest in bio-technology, life sciences, and technology and innovation jobs
- What types of jobs and careers could we plan for here?
  - Interest in entrepreneurial and incubator spaces
  - Opportunity for new job training models to build careers
  - Live-work spaces for artists
- What mix of uses at Sunnyside Yard could benefit the City and region?
  - Space for institutions that are rooted in the community
  - Multi-generational opportunities that could serve as an economic engine for the city
  - New cultural and community facilities and schools for all grades

James Johnson-Piatt, founder of Urbane Development and lead of the stakeholder engagement effort for the Consultant Team, highlighted the upcoming first Public Meeting which will occur on October 24<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8p at LaGuardia Community College. All Steering Committee members are requested to spread the word amongst colleagues and through their networks and attend as active participants in the meeting.

**The next Steering Committee Meeting will take place on December 10<sup>th</sup> from 12-2 pm in Western Queens.**