



National Group to Study Staten Island Waterfront

The American Institute of Architects (A.I.A.) approves Chamber application and agrees to send a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) to study Staten Island's waterfront



On Wednesday, October 3rd at the South Beach Boardwalk, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Linda Baran joined Councilman James Oddo, Bob Englert, Land Use Director for Borough President James Molinaro, and representatives of Staten Island's A.I.A. to announce that a Chamber application filed earlier this year has been formally approved by A.I.A.'s national office to study Staten Island's entire waterfront. A.I.A. will send their R/UDAT team of 6-10 architects to Staten Island in the coming months to begin a process that should take approximately one year.

"We are thrilled that A.I.A. has approved this application", stated Baran. "This is a national program that has been in existence for forty years and usually focuses on two to four communities per year. I think it clearly illustrates the strength of our application and I would like to thank the staffs of Councilman Oddo, Borough President Molinaro, and Staten Island A.I.A.'s leadership for assisting us through the process. We believe this study will be a catalyst towards transforming our underutilized waterfront."

"We certainly experience on a daily basis the downside of being an island, yet we probably have not taken advantage of the benefits of being an island," Councilman Oddo said."

Timothy Boyland, president of the Staten Island A.I.A. chapter noted that "R/UDAT is unique in that it involves an objective group of professionals. We can find out what they have to say and turn it into something can be implemented."

What is R/UDAT?

R/UDAT teams have completed similar studies across the country. The team assists communities that are facing challenges such as loss of major employers, new bypass roads, gridlock, unfocused suburban growth, crime, loss of open space, regional conflict, unaffordable housing, environmental problems, vacant storefronts and loss of identity. A R/UDAT team can help communities respond to these types of issues,

develop a vision for a better future for the community and most importantly, ***implement a strategy that will produce results.***

The studies are completed by Team members that are highly respected, interdisciplinary professional selected on the basis of their experience with the specific issues facing the selected community. The process ensures that all voices are given a fair hearing and that options are weighed impartially/ Active participation of all sectors of the community is encouraged.

Funding

The study is being funded predominantly by Councilman Oddo. That funding was augmented by Borough President Molinaro, and the Staten Island Foundation. This money will cover the entire cost of the project which encompasses all expenses incurred by the R/UDAT team

“This funding will enable us to have an objective group of qualified professionals provide us with a comprehensive evaluation of our entire waterfront; not just a segmented portion,” Baran added. “R/UDAT has the ability to analyze transportation, zoning, open spaces, industry, and housing. We are optimistic that we can develop an implementation plan which strikes the proper balance between economic and community development.”

The process

Chamber member Leonard Rampulla brought R/UDAT to the attention of the Chamber’s economic development committee and made the initial contact with A.I.A. The Chamber began the application process. This past summer, a planning committee met to prepare and finalize the application. The planning committee consisted of: Linda M. Baran, President & CEO, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce; Councilman James S. Oddo, 50th District; Steven Matteo, Chief of Staff, Councilman James S. Oddo, 50th District; Robert E. Englert, Land Use Director, Office of Borough President James P. Molinaro; Thomas Scarangelo, Chairman, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce; Patrick Hyland, Vice President, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce; Leonard Rampulla, A.I.A., Rampulla Associates Architects; Marcus Marino, A.I.A., Marcus Marino Architects; Timothy Boyland, President, American Institute of Architects, SI Chapter, Boyland Architecture; and David Businelli, A.I.A., Salvadeo Associates Architects. Additionally, other community representatives were added to form the official steering committee. They are, James Devine, President & CEO, New York Container Terminal; Timothy McGovern, United NY Sandy Hook Pilots; Jack Vokral, P.E., Richmond County Chapter, New York State Society of Professional Engineers; Joseph Carroll, Community Board 1; Deborah Derrico, Community Board 2; Marie Bodnar, Community Board 3; Sandy Krueger, Executive Director, Staten Island Board of Realtors; Lawrence Brinker, Executive Director, Building Industry Association; Cesar Claro, Executive Director, Staten Island EDC; and Captain Robert R. O’Brien, Jr. United States Coast Guard;

In early October, the application was formally approved. Next steps include a visit from the chosen team chairperson with the steering committee to familiarize them with the community and its concerns. After this, the 6 to 10 member team will be selected and will visit the community for four days. After listening to the concerns and ideas of residents, community groups and others and viewing both the study area and the surrounding community, the team prepares and publishes a report that is presented in a public meeting on the last day.