



Vision for Staten Island
www.sivision.org

900 South Avenue, Suite 61
Staten Island, New York 10314
T. 718.568.3561 F. 718.568.3562

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Author

November 2008

Dear Editor:

The enclosed information packet is about *Vision for Staten Island*, an initiative that brings together members of the community and encourages them to add their voice to a common vision.

To date, a group of diverse leaders have convened to help move this effort forward. They, like other communities across the country, recognize that the community of Staten Island needs a shared vision to address the issues facing the whole community in a fair, inclusive, and equitable way. They know that issues such as population growth, ethnic diversification, gentrification, lagging infrastructure and health care investments, and increased cost of living are reaching a crucial point.

But this group cannot do this alone. You will see that there are movements to gain input from many sources. Idea Gathering Sessions will be highly interactive and designed to encourage a broad range of citizens to share their ideas. They will represent the biggest civic brainstorm ever in Staten Island history.

Vision for Staten Island is an independent not-for-profit organization that has been formed to manage the Vision effort and support implementation. The Board of Directors of the organization is working with the Steering Committee and Friends of the Vision Effort to make this initiative as inclusive as possible. *Vision for Staten Island* has received initial support from the Staten Island Foundation. Additional funding sources throughout the city have also been approached.

We invite your questions and response to the Vision effort. Please call me at 718-568-3561 or email me at along@sivision.org.

Sincerely,

Adena Long
Executive Director



Contact: Adena Long

Executive Director
Vision for Staten Island
Phone: 718-568-3561
Email: along@vision.org
Website: sivision.org

For Immediate Release:

“VISION FOR STATEN ISLAND” PRESENTS A NEW APPROACH TO PLANNING ISLAND’S FUTURE

(Staten Island, New York – November 2008) An innovative community driven effort managed by **Vision for Staten Island** is taking shape and offering a new approach to planning Staten Island’s future. This newly created organization has initiated a “visioning” project, a process pioneered by **ACP Visioning+Planning**, which serves to bring the Staten Island community together with public and private leaders to create an inclusive and comprehensive vision for the future. The process begins with public Idea-Gathering Sessions, scheduled to be held in various locations throughout the Borough, from **December 1, 2008 through December 8, 2008**.

“Staten Island stands at a crossroads today. Its growing and diversifying population and gentrification during the past 30 years has changed the borough’s landscape, and continues to challenge its already stressed infrastructure, insufficient amenities and Staten Islander’s overall sense of community.” remarked **Patrick McDermott, Chairman of the Vision for Staten Island Board of Directors**. The process will result in a comprehensive vision that will identify shared goals for all aspects of the Island’s life, and specific steps to implement each goal.

Participants of the Idea-Gathering Sessions will be assigned to small groups; brainstorm ideas for the Island’s future with a trained facilitator, then clarify, and prioritize their ideas. **Adena Long, Executive Director of Vision Staten Island**, “the Idea-Gathering is geared so that you can speak your mind, there is no pre-set agenda. The public decides what is critical.” The ideas gathered from all of the meetings will form the foundation of the vision, and help frame the topics investigated over the remainder of the visioning effort, which continues throughout the spring of 2009.

Schedule of public meetings are as follows:

Idea Gathering Sessions for Adults:

Monday, December 1, 2008	7:00-9:00pm	Brighton Heights Reformed Church, 320 St. Mark’s Place
Tuesday, December 2, 2008	7:00-9:00pm	P.S. 58, S.S. Columbia School, 77 Marsh Avenue
Wednesday, December 3, 2008	7:00-9:00pm	I.S. 34 Tottenville, 528 Academy Avenue
Thursday, December 4, 2008	7:00-9:00pm	Port Richmond High School, 85 St. Joseph’s Avenue
Saturday, December 6, 2008	8:30-10:30am	Staten Island Academy, 715 Todt Hill Road
Monday, December 8, 2008	7:00-9:00pm	New Dorp High School, 465 New Dorp Lane

Idea Gathering Sessions for Youth (16 and over):

Thursday, December 4, 2008	4:00-6:00pm	Cromwell Recreation Center @ Pier 6, Murray Hulbert Avenue (off of Bay and Hannah Streets)
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About ACP Visioning + Planning: ACP Visioning+Planning was founded by Principals Gianni Longo and Jamie Greene to improve the livability of communities through the integration of visioning, strategic and physical planning and urban design. ACP's innovative approach relies on inclusion, collaboration and consensus-building. They have been called upon by some of the largest and most complex places in the country- New York City, Charlotte, Birmingham, Columbus, Houston, and Washington D.C.,— among others – to facilitate visioning and planning processes. ACP has emerged as a leader in helping numerous stakeholders in these communities to work together to develop mutual goals, strategies and plans.

About A Vision for Staten Island: Vision for Staten Island is new in name, but not in concept. Preparatory steps began in the fall of 2006, when the College of Staten Island (CSI) President's Roundtable engaged ACP Visioning+Planning to conduct a feasibility study to "plan for a vision" for Staten Island. ACP conducted numerous stakeholder interviews to learn about local concerns and determine how to best structure a vision process that would take into account the complex economic, political, and social reality of the borough. ACP developed a proposal for how Vision for Staten Island might proceed, and worked closely with the CSI President's Roundtable and the Staten Island Foundation to refine the approach. In 2007, a temporary Initiating Committee was tasked with recruiting and appointing a diverse Steering Committee for the visioning effort. The Initiating Committee evolved into an independent Board of Directors, who together with the 100-member Steering Committee convened in July 2008 to begin guiding the vision process forward. Adena Long was hired as the Vision's Executive Director in August 2008.

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Contact: Adena Long

Executive Director

Vision for Staten Island

Phone: 718-568-3561

Email: along@vision.org

Website: sivision.org

Vision for Staten Island: What do **you** see?

- *Vision for Staten Island* is an initiative that brings together members of the community and encourages them to add their voice to a common vision. The result is a comprehensive vision that will identify shared goals for all aspects of the Island's life, and specific steps to implement each goal.
- *Vision for Staten Island* starts with no agenda and no preconceived set of ideas. If you live, work, or study in Staten Island you are invited to participate. The Vision will address all topics raised by the public and will look at the whole Island – from Bay Street to Main Street.
- Who should participate in the vision process? Everyone. The more diversity, the better the Vision! You don't need to be an expert. If something is important to you, then it is important to the vision. Sharing will happen in a comfortable, safe environment, working with a trained facilitator. Each session lasts about two hours. Every idea counts and will be written down and discussed as we develop the vision.
- Staten Island needs a shared vision to address the issues facing the whole community in a fair, inclusive, and equitable way. Issues such as population growth, ethnic diversification, gentrification, lagging infrastructure and health care investments, and increased cost of living are reaching a critical point.
- *Vision for Staten Island* is an open and transparent citizen-driven process. There will be significant opportunities to participate in shaping the vision starting in early December 2008.
- Idea Gathering Sessions will be highly interactive and designed to encourage a broad range of citizens to share their ideas. *They will represent the biggest civic brainstorm ever in Staten Island history.* Sessions will be held at six locations throughout the community. There will also be many small sessions organized by civic associations, neighborhood groups, and by any other group that wishes to host an Idea Gathering Session. Participants will join a small group, brainstorm ideas about the future of Staten Island, clarify those ideas, and prioritize them.
- After the Idea Gathering Sessions all ideas will be data-based, sorted, and used in the steps that follow. These are:
 - *Reality Check Workshops.* These public workshops are designed to address significant topics that emerged from the Idea-Gathering Sessions and bring together the public and topical experts.
 - *Topical Work Groups.* These facilitated small groups of interested individuals and experts will be convened over a period of three to four months. Their job will be to translate the public's vision into goals and specific actions that can be measured, funded, and implemented.
 - *The Staten Island Congress.* This event is designed to draw a very large crowd (over 1,000 participants) to ratify the Vision and to set priorities for implementation.
- At the end of the Vision each goal and the specific steps to implement that goal will be assigned to an implementation task force. Their job will be to take whatever steps are necessary to turn the Vision into reality.

You can help carry out the Vision in any way that you feel comfortable. Volunteer for a task force, start a new project, or join an organization that shares the Vision. The choice is up to you.