

Environment 2

Introduction

During the recent Reality Check Workshops, topical experts and members of the public worked together in small groups to examine a particular topic in-depth. During the two-hour workshops they worked with a trained facilitator to complete the following exercises:

- 1) Review of Ideas. Participants reviewed all of the ideas related to their topic that were collected during the community Idea Gathering Sessions.
- 2) Critical Questions. Participants engaged in a discussion of two Critical Questions, which had been identified by the *Vision for Staten Island* Steering Committee. The facilitator recorded the results of the discussion on flipchart paper, and then helped the group summarize major areas of agreement and disagreement.
- 3) Implementation Recommendations. At the end of the discussion period, each participant wrote down two practical, specific strategies or implementation steps to help Staten Island achieve its vision for their topic.

Two small groups addressed the topic of Environment. The results from the second Environment group are provided below. Note that responses have been recorded verbatim, and some errors may remain due to handwriting legibility. Responses are numbered for reference purposes only; this does not indicate any sense of priority.

Critical Question 1:

What are Staten Island's most significant challenges and opportunities for protecting the environment and preserving natural resources? Write your ideas below and, if appropriate, use the map provided to indicate locations for specific suggestions.

1. Cleaner Air
2. Motivate people to value environment
3. Identify industrial waste
4. Protect freshwater and tidal wetlands, e.g. Arlington Marsh
5. Continue public school education on environmental responsibility
6. Fund Park Department to adequately maintain parks and forever wild areas and newly acquired areas, e.g. Blissenbach Marina
7. Acquire proposed addition to Huguenot Bluebelt at Huguenot Ave and Hylan Blvd
8. Cleaner water – eliminate contaminants
9. Teach public what clean natural areas look like

Critical Question 1 SUMMARY:

1. Educate public
2. Provide public funds
3. Actively protect areas
4. Enforce and strengthen environmental laws

Critical Question 2:

What can we do to balance the preservation of open space and natural resources with economic growth?

1. Get rid of pro-development power structure
2. Reward environmentally responsible development
3. City Planning set open space requirements, make clear plan, enforce the plan
4. Reuse existing properties, e.g. P&G, Teleport and Gypsum – “Incentivize” responsible development and creative reuse
5. Retrofit polluting vehicles, e.g. container ships and cars, businesses, gas stations, repair shops. Offer clear options
6. Question presupposes that preservation and growth oppose each other

Critical Question 2 SUMMARY:

1. Preserving the environment can be a source of economic growth
2. Advance and invest in green technology
3. Green technology to promote all economic development

Implementation Recommendations:

Consider the draft vision statement, the ideas gathered from the public, and your group’s discussion of critical questions. Please recommend two practical, specific strategies or implementation steps that you would recommend to help Staten Island achieve its vision for your topic.

1. Review of existing rules and regulations relating to environmental issues – aggressive enforcement of rules to bring in line with existing regulations
2. 20 or X year (specific) plan to get to desired vision without negatively impacting business or personal development to get there
3. Teach what a beautiful island would (will) look like with stories of beauty (flowers, homes, vistas) in newspapers and on TV by conducting weekly or monthly photo contests for “most representative of SI,” most beautiful (categories: waterfront, homes, natural areas with winners regularly; carry over of entries, large prizes at end, publishing winners in media, on buses, bus stations)
4. “Beautiful Staten Island.” Publicize charm and beauty over and over and over again. Most attractive businesses. Get youth into nature, not only sports – walking through natural areas contest, awards
5. NYS DEC tidal and freshwater wetland development permits need beefing up. The state docs do not provide enough protection to our wetlands
6. We currently have the South Richmond plan for SI. City Planning and DOB as the enforcement agency do not enforce environmental aspects of the plan
7. Enforce existing environmental laws – more enforcement personnel at city and state level
8. Better mass transit and rail transit to reduce car, truck, bus pollution
9. Add real life environmental studies to public school science curriculum
10. Institute environmental science green solutions contest in public schools. Ask public officials to be judges
11. Public education = inform and educate the public on specific topics – recycling, the importance of public/open and wild space, car pooling, biking, taking mass transit to improve SI’s air quality
12. Get buy-in from local businesses to develop green technology, build green/sustainable buildings and homes, purchase lower emitting vehicles – in the end this will save the company and promote economic development on Staten Island
13. Develop green jobs through education incentives for existing population that supports the overall plan = The

Environment Economic Plan

14. Tax incentives for all polluting businesses to minimize their “carbon foot print” including: cars, trucks, vessels
15. Stop selling household products that pollute! (fertilizers, cleaning, chemicals)
16. Green roofs everywhere
17. Partnership with organizations already doing work – knowledge sharing

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