

# Housing

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## 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.

The results from the Housing 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:

How can we ensure a balanced distribution of low income and special needs housing throughout the island?

1. Build a strong case for SI to show we have just as much need as the other boroughs
2. Gather information from state and city agencies (research studies) to help achieve balanced distribution
3. Provide development incentives for low income housing
4. To increase access to “aging in place” programs and resources (i.e. NORCS – Naturally Occuring Retirement Community)
5. Help seniors remain in their homes (more economical, pleasant, etc.)
6. Needs to be subsidized
7. Upzone certain areas – multi-level and multi apartments and units
8. Convert older buildings
9. Identify buildings going into default and foreclosure – would have to be subsidized as well
10. Create a realistic plan to promote balance (include cost of distribution)
11. Create residential overlay over low level commercial real estate
12. Encourage owners with unused space to convert to residential space
13. Encourage building of the multi-level housing over commercial
14. Encourage/incentives for owners to take Section 8

**Critical Question 1 SUMMARY:**

1. There is a need for balance
2. Build a strong case that SI is in need
3. Affordable housing has to be subsidized and/or incentives need to be offered
4. Helping seniors remain; “age in place” through providing resources, health care, social service, etc.
5. Encourage development and rehab of mixed use buildings (possible rezoning)
6. How do you raise the level of special need housing considering the number of units needed to retain special needs model

**Critical Question 2:**

How can we facilitate the creation of “complete” neighborhoods, where residents have access to a variety of amenities? (e.g. shops, services, parks, etc.)

1. Develop and/or renovate mixed use buildings
2. Increase housing development density
3. Planned walkable communities that gives access to the amenities
4. Identify the neighborhoods in need – what are the missing components?
5. Assess the infrastructure for the possibilities
6. There needs to be a “community process” to building communities. Use the old time “town square” planning process. May be helpful
7. Need for planning of mixed income communities
8. Create focal point
9. Convert industrial to residential or cultural
10. Convert abandoned residential or underutilized to commercial or cultural
11. Encourage incentives to provide
12. Promote community based leadership involved in planning
13. Link neighborhood development to district historical richness of each community
14. Revitalization of North Shore Rail Line
15. More tax credits for home buying
16. Reinstitute 421 B/tax abatement program
17. Incentives for retailers to come in

**Critical Question 2 SUMMARY:**

No summary was provided.

**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. Low income and special needs housing must be part of a community mandate and must have the community plan and identify where such housing can be built with planned number of units. A borough-wide task force with authority must create such a plan that includes the number of LI/SN units to be constructed boroughwide based on our borough's need. Site selection recommendations (realistic ones) should emanate from this community planning process
2. Rezone manufacturing areas for housing – once area has been vetted for toxic hazard. Recommendations: ID public land or purchasable private land for park/school creation in underdeveloped or undeveloped locations on SI; zone areas around planned parks/schools for mixed use and mixed income housing
3. Convene a local task force to study the potential sites where the rezoning of commercial areas to permit residential overlays can occur. Publish results as proposal for rezoning
4. Institute and enforce regulation that requires private and public developers to create and maintain “cooperative” housing as (illegible)
5. Develop and promote Staten Island as New York's most livable borough with communities that support long term (?) stability and secure tolerant and diverse neighborhoods
6. Communities and community leaders (51% residents) should provide the lead on how to build complete neighborhoods. This should not be a developer-driven process. Buy-in is important for mission support
7. Communities should have all the ingredients that promote economic stability as well as quality of life necessities
8. Build a case and educate city and state elected officials as to the need for affordable/senior/special needs housing on Staten Island
9. Encourage the development (or adaptive reuse or renovation) of mixed-use and higher density development
10. Chose three topics specifically and concentrate efforts for those topics
11. Concentrate on “neighborhood living” and how to achieve that for all income level residents (community planning board to monitor progress)

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