

## **Development on the Long Island City Waterfront Must Promote Inclusivity and Prioritize Job Creation, Finds New Study by Karp Strategies**

*Commissioned by Your LIC development team, the new report includes six recommendations for creating a jobs-focused, mixed-use district on 28-acre site along the Long Island City waterfront*

*With rising unemployment, New York City needs to kickstart economic activity and job creation outside of Manhattan to recover*

**Long Island City, NY (June 30, 2020)** – A new study lays out how to create an inclusive, equitable mixed-use development on the Long Island City waterfront, the Your LIC development team announced today. Taking best practices from job-dense districts around the world, the report – developed by Karp Strategies, a third-party urban planning and community development consultancy – found that a robust variety of office space, intentional industry focus, 24/7 activity, and equitable economic development practices will drive a successful mixed-use district. You can download the full report [here](#).

Your LIC is composed of four stakeholders – MAG Partners, Plaxall, Simon Baron Development, and TF Cornerstone – who launched a public community planning process for a 28-acre site at the Long Island City waterfront last year. Prior efforts to create a robust commercial district at this location, including Amazon’s HQ2, have not come to fruition, despite the neighborhood’s excellent access to public transit, proximity to local resources in western Queens, connections to Manhattan, and growing population. The development team tapped Karp Strategies to study the feasibility of a large-scale, mixed-use district that prioritizes job creation and inclusive growth at the site.

“For years, public and private stakeholders have explored ideas for this site in Long Island City. Our team looked at mixed-use, job-dense, large-scale economic development districts around the world to analyze what has made them thrive, and how these lessons can be implemented in Long Island City to best serve the neighborhood and New York City’s overall commercial real estate needs,” said **Rebecca Karp, managing principal and CEO of Karp Strategies**. “While this report was completed before the outbreak of COVID-19, our conclusions are now more critical than ever. With growing unemployment and increasing unaffordability citywide, fostering an equitable, jobs-dense district with much-needed affordable housing is what New York City needs to recover.”

Providing a detailed analysis of the feasibility of creating a 24/7, mixed-use district along the Long Island City waterfront, the report also examines Long Island City’s historic and current context, evaluates job-intensive mixed-use districts from across the world, and identifies where community development, workforce development, and small business support programs can be included to drive equitable outcomes.

“Through our community visioning process, we heard the strong desire not just for new jobs but for inclusive strategies to make sure that those in the local community could access them. Using lessons learned from Karp Strategies’ analysis, we will be able to leverage best practices from around the world as we continue our public engagement process and refine our plans for a new economic engine in western Queens,” said the **Your LIC team**.

The project site analyzed in the report encompasses 28 acres surrounding Anable Basin on Long Island City’s waterfront, roughly bound by 43rd Avenue to the north, Vernon Boulevard to the east, 46th Road to the south, and the East River to the west. It is under a mix of private and public ownership, and home to warehouses, parking lots, City-owned facilities, vacant land, industrial businesses, art studios, and a limited amount of housing.

“While COVID-19 has deeply hurt the entire city, the reality is that the crisis will have a particularly devastating economic impact on the boroughs outside of Manhattan. This is magnified by the lack of jobs in office sectors in the outer boroughs. Manhattan has 82.8% of all office jobs in the city, with 1.18 million to Queens’ just 94,400. A big part of recovering equitably should be prioritizing a stronger office sector in Queens, with new pipelines for local residents to access the jobs, and Long Island City is the perfect place to do it,” said **Jonathan Bowles, executive director of the Center for an Urban Future**.

The report analyzes local data up to December 2019. Since then, the outbreak of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on Queens and the City as a whole, disproportionately impacting low-income communities, communities of color, hourly workers, and small businesses. The report finds that mixed-use districts will play an important role as cities recover from COVID-19, creating economic engines for growth and diverse business networks that can provide support during times of crisis.

“Creating a new destination for jobs in Long Island City is an incredible opportunity for the people who live in and near the community and for all of Queens. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a pressing need to scale up training and create new job opportunities in industries that are growing, including technology, transportation and health care, and complement it with the ability to help people launch and grow small businesses. Implementing these recommendations with an ambitious new development proposal is the vision we need for the waterfront,” said **Thomas J. Grech, president and CEO of the Queens Chamber of Commerce**.

### **Findings & Recommendations**

The analysis conducted by Karp Strategies finds that there is potential to build a mixed-use district with inclusive economic development principles at the project site.

Key findings and recommendations from the report include:

**Inclusive, Equitable Economic Development Practices:** The economic impact of a new district—with tens of thousands of new jobs, thousands of housing units, and a growing market for local businesses—should be leveraged to close existing gaps in opportunity and to support the long-term health of the City. Critical to the community and quality of life enhancement is building mixed-income and affordable housing, incorporating a permanent, place-based workforce development infrastructure, providing support for small businesses, and continuing stakeholder engagement to ensure that the district addresses community needs.

**24/7 Activity Through New Uses and Integration with Long Island City's Character:** A new district will need engaging and active retail and amenity spaces to build new social and physical connections among workers and residents, while celebrating Long Island City's existing character and businesses.

**Intentional Industry Focus:** A well-defined industry drives job growth and talent attraction at all skill levels. Technology and healthcare sectors should be considered for their ability to amplify City and Long Island City economic assets, trends, and policy priorities. These sectors provide accessible jobs that, with purposeful workforce programs, can create opportunities for workers from wider ranges of educational attainment.

**A Robust Variety of Office Spaces:** Substantial office development is essential to achieving economic impact at scale for a diverse set of workers. A district with a vibrant mix of businesses should offer space at varied sizes and configurations that will allow industries with different needs to thrive in close proximity to one another. Offices must also incorporate high quality space that reflects the changing nature of work.

**Thoughtfully Phased:** Thoughtfully executing early phases of the district will make and sustain commercial occupancy at an intensity and scale that does not exist today. Early actions will require cross-sector investment in placemaking and the active care and upkeep of public spaces, followed by office development for a variety of tenants.

**Public Sector Support:** Thriving mixed-use districts require government leadership. In case studies, public support has taken the form of flexible regulations, facilitation of infrastructure investments and resiliency upgrades, creative financing tools, and/or policy alignment and streamlined coordination between different levels of government. For Long Island City, as-of-right commercial incentives are needed to address the barriers to private investment during the initial years of development. Recognizing the short-term financial constraints currently facing the City, developers should work with the City on a range of strategies to realize an equitable vision that leverages private investment and does not burden the City during recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

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