



INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2003, under the leadership of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, the Hunts Point Task Force was formed to provide a forum for addressing critical concerns about the Hunts Point peninsula. Through the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding, the Bloomberg administration worked closely with community leaders, particularly Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión, to identify a diverse group of business owners, local constituents, elected officials and government agencies who would bring energy and experience to the charge. Over the course of a year, the Task Force met more than twenty times to explore the issues of importance and to identify solutions.

The agenda for the Task Force was not predetermined, but instead was set by the Task Force itself during the first meetings. The Task Force collaboratively developed a vision plan for the Hunts Point peninsula. The plan sets the agenda for development policy in Hunts Point for the next twenty years, with an emphasis on recommendations that are implementable in the near term.

The Task Force was led by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding, which brought in a multi-agency team, including the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP), the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) and the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT).

THE CONTEXT FOR THE HUNTS POINT VISION PLAN

Over the years, many plans have been developed for parts of the Hunts Point peninsula, but few have addressed Hunts Point on a peninsula-wide basis. There have been several plans for the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, which is arguably the largest food distribution center in the world. There have been plans for the residential neighborhood and how to redevelop the housing stock; there have been plans addressing crime, prostitution and enforcement. But there has never been a plan that addressed such a variety of issues, nor one developed by such a broad spectrum of local and regional perspectives.

The South Bronx was once thought of as the archetypal case study of urban problems, with high rates of crime and unemployment. However, today many of the pressing issues have been resolved, thanks to the efforts of neighborhood groups such as the South East Bronx Community Organization (SEBCO), Hunts Point Economic Development Corporation (HPEDC), Seneca Center, the Point Community Development Corporation, Sustainable South Bronx (SSB) and Bronx Community Board 2. Community Board 2's district includes approximately 47,000 people, up from approximately 35,000 in 1980, in large part due to the nearly 2,300 new or rehabilitated housing units developed through New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

Elected officials have played a significant role in improving Hunts Point. Recent financial commitments from Congressman José E. Serrano, State Senator Ruben Diaz, Sr., Assembly Member Carmen E. Arroyo, Assembly Member Ruben Diaz, Jr., Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión and Councilman José M. Serrano for Hunts Point streetscape improvements, the South Bronx Greenway and programs serving children and seniors typify the local elected officials' unwavering dedication.

Hunts Point's turnaround is also due to business entrepreneurs who have invested in the South Bronx. According to the Department of Labor, Hunts Point provides nearly 10,000 jobs; some contend that the number of jobs is even greater—upwards of 20,000—when the transportation-related, agricultural-related, seasonal and informal-economy jobs are taken into account.

Over the past five years, NYCEDC, through funding from the City, State and federal governments, has invested more than \$130 million in improvements to the Food Distribution Center and its rail freight system. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is investing over \$700 million to upgrade the water pollution control plant in Hunts Point, which will greatly improve environmental quality in Hunts Point, the City and the surrounding waterways. Through the work of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and significant community involvement, the crime index—which includes violent and property crimes—has fallen 60 percent over the past nine years.

Yet the work in Hunts Point is not over. Some problems, such as vacant industrial lots and unemployment, persist. Some of the problems stem from the history of Hunts Point's development, including the design of the transportation infrastructure and an amalgam of potentially incompatible land uses in close proximity. Other problems, like air pollution from an increased number of vehicles, are, in a sense, unanticipated results from the success of Hunts Point's revitalization over the last two decades. As new developments are considered, we need to learn from the past and continue to battle the negative image the South Bronx developed in the 1970s. Addressing these issues is essential to helping Hunts Point reach its fullest potential as a sustainable, healthy and vibrant place to live and work.



Industrial businesses on East Bay Avenue and Faile Street



Drake Park