

*together for*  
**KINGSBRIDGE**  
*juntos para*



**Community Vision for the Future of the Kingsbridge Armory**

Community members tour the Kingsbridge Armory history exhibit at a Together for Kingsbridge public workshop on Saturday, November 5, 2022.



## Letter from the Mayor

It is an honor to present the *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* — a shared vision for the future of the Kingsbridge Armory. Over the last nine months, Kingsbridge Heights residents, workers, teachers, students, elected officials, business owners, and the City all worked together to create a plan for this incredible yet underutilized historic landmark.

One of the most important ways this administration “Gets Stuff Done” is by working collaboratively with community members and all levels of government on critical projects, often in neighborhoods that have historically seen too little public investment. Since taking office, we have made significant investments in the Bronx — I often say that I would spend all my time in the Bronx if I could. Why? I see the best of New York City in the people of the Bronx: hard-working, creative, and compassionate individuals who take pride in their borough. This was on full display one Sunday afternoon in February at Our Lady of Angels Church, when I attended a town hall hosted by US Representative Espaillat to discuss the future of the Kingsbridge Armory. Over 150 community members showed up to share their ideas and enthusiasm.

That was just one of many public events in an engagement process that reached over 4,000 community members. Throughout the process, participants consistently spoke to a shared vision for an armory redevelopment that creates quality jobs, supports career development, elevates entrepreneurs, and fosters intergenerational connections, all while preserving and enhancing this remarkable building.

While there is more work to do to make this vision a reality, the collaboration and unwavering support we’ve seen already are the key ingredients for “Getting Stuff Done.” Since my administration is focused on action, we are committing \$100 million to make the new Kingsbridge Armory a reality. We will move beyond words and planning to the next chapter of the armory, one that will support the people of the Bronx and the City of New York.

Sincerely,

  
Eric Adams  
Mayor

## Letter from NYCEDC's President and CEO

After a successful community engagement process, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and the *Together for Kingsbridge* Community Working Group are proud to release the *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan*.

This Vision Plan is not just the culmination of nine months of intensive community engagement, but of more than 30 years of community organizing around the adaptive reuse of the Kingsbridge Armory. We are so grateful for the continued leadership, commitment, and passion shown by the neighborhood's many community organizations in their decades-long work organizing and mobilizing support for reuse of the Kingsbridge Armory that transforms this long-underutilized facility into a beacon of opportunity for the community and the Bronx.

We are particularly thankful for the efforts of our partner, the *Together for Kingsbridge* Community Working Group, a 25-member group that has worked with us since the beginning of this effort. Without their leadership, we would not have reached this point. We are also so thankful for the efforts of Council Member Pierina Sanchez and other elected officials throughout this planning process. Because of their tireless work, the Kingsbridge Heights community has a seat at the table, helping to guide and shape the Armory's future.

Throughout this process, we heard about the need in the Bronx for quality jobs and career pathways for the borough's young and dynamic workforce. We are working to ensure that this project delivers those opportunities, contributes to equitable economic development, and ensures this community gets the investment it deserves, while strengthening New York City's economy.

Together with this unprecedented coalition of community members and elected officials at the City, State, and federal levels, we are excited to continue working to make this vision a reality.

Sincerely,



Andrew Kimball  
President & CEO  
New York City Economic Development Corporation

## Letter from the Congress Member

Dear Neighbors:

It is with great joy that I join New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), Governor Kathy Hochul, Mayor Eric Adams, Council Member Pierina Sanchez, Assembly Member George Alvarez, State

Senator Gustavo Rivera, State Senator Robert Jackson, and Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson in revealing the *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan*. This debut marks the end of a nine-month public community engagement process and the beginning of redeveloping the Kingsbridge Armory guided by Bronxites, for Bronxites.

Throughout my tenure in public service, I have advocated for intergovernmental support for the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory. My constituents have long supported transforming the Kingsbridge Armory into an economic engine to uplift working-class families in the Bronx. With renewed leadership and quality stakeholder input, we will move ahead with the most transformative economic project that the Bronx has ever seen. The opportunities for the Kingsbridge Armory are boundless, and we must meet the moment.

I thank Mayor Adams for acknowledging our recommendation and providing a \$100 million grant to the Armory, and I also thank Governor Kathy Hochul for heeding our suggestion to allow the \$100.5 million loan in the State budget for the Armory to be made available as a grant for project development. I also commend Council Member Pierina Sanchez for allocating \$12 million from the New York City Council for capital improvements, maintenance, and other purposes. Lastly, through the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, I was proud to secure federal funding for capital improvements for the Kingsbridge Armory to support community and institutional spaces, such as ensuring that the space is waterproof, free of hazardous materials, and structurally reinforced. Moreover, I deeply appreciate former U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh and the U.S. Economic Development Administration field team of U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo for coming to visit the Armory and assessing ways the federal government can support this metamorphic equity project.

These actions are a testament that revitalization of the Armory is a priority for every level of government and that we are all committed to executing the communities' vision for the Kingsbridge Armory. The *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* is a testament to over 4,000 community perspectives on the future of the Kingsbridge Armory. Together, we can Build Back the Bronx stronger than ever by creating good-paying jobs, promoting innovation and competitiveness, and preparing our community for growth and success in the worldwide economy.

Let's get to work and guarantee that the Kingsbridge Armory is an economic catalyst for the Bronx once and for all.

Sincerely,



Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

## Letter from The Council Member

The Kingsbridge Armory embodies the resilience of our community in times of adversity, and holds the promise of a prosperous future. As the New York City Council Member representing District 14, I am honored to have led a reinvigorated community engagement process for the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory that included over 4,000 neighbors during town halls, focus group meetings and more. The powerful, joint commitment by our community and local leaders even received a down payment in the form of a substantial \$200 million investment from the City and State, the first such public investment in this majestic structure.

The return on this investment will be immeasurable, because it represents the futures of an entire generation of Kingsbridge, Fordham, 183rd, Burnside, Tremont and Bronx youth. This investment is a message to our families that we're in this together. It is a promise to our vibrant Black, Latino, Asian, and immigrant community that our stability, our dignity, and our resiliency are a priority in this city and this state. Following nearly 30 years of community activism, this moment represents an important milestone in support of our collective vision.

I thank the community and all elected officials for seeing the opportunity in the Kingsbridge Armory, which I used to look up at everyday as a little girl growing up in its shadow. I remember wondering how a building so large and so beautiful could sit here in the middle of our neighborhood, empty, unused. Now, as a mother raising my own child here, I am proud the next generation will not have the same experience. Their families will have ownership over what happens in this building, and they will work in good paying, union jobs here. The road to implementation will be most important, and it is an honor to be part of setting such a strong foundation so that we may witness the manifestation of our communities aspirations. Together, we will shape a more vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous future for our beloved Bronx community.

Sincerely,



Pierina Sanchez  
Council Member

## Words from the Local Elected Officials

"The Kingsbridge Armory holds the potential to catalyze transformative change, usher in economic justice, and elevate the Bronx to its pinnacle of glory. The pivotal factor that will determine the armory's success in the future is the dedicated commitment to actively engaging with the community and seamlessly integrating the multitude of voices into the overarching vision. While our

journey is not yet complete, our steadfast progress, united momentum, and unwavering focus on community-centric approaches constitute the bedrock of our path to realizing this vision."



—Senator Robert Jackson

"As the Assemblyman for District 78th, the home of the largest Armory in the nation and a fixture of our community, I am pleased to join the Governor, Mayor, NYCEDC, and all the local elected officials, organizations and community groups in announcing this great victory for our district/community. As someone who grew up in this community, I know the potential this armory represents for the Bronx and Kingsbridge Heights. New Jobs, a place to strengthen our community bonds and gather. A fixture that can now serve the community it resides in. I am proud to say that today's announcement marks the delivery of this promise."



— Assembly Member George Alvarez

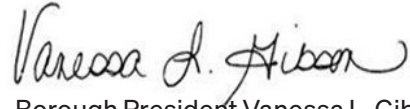
"The Kingsbridge Armory offers incredible opportunity for the Bronx and our community. The future of the Armory is being imagined and determined by the people who live here, who pass by it every day, and who will directly benefit from the redevelopment of this emblematic monument. Our community's will is reflected in the *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan*, which ensures that we transform this historic asset into an economic engine and neighborhood hub that serves our community. Dedicated community leaders have worked for decades to ensure that the Armory is transformed by the Bronx and for the Bronx and I'm proud to have supported this effort by securing over a hundred million dollars in state funding towards this critical project's success. I'm so grateful to all my neighbors in the Bronx who showed up and offered their input to make this plan a reflection of the vibrant, resilient community that we are."



—Senator Gustavo Rivera

"This Vision Plan represents a culmination of our commitment, dedication, hard work, and intentions to create a vision for the historic Kingsbridge Armory. From the beginning, I have always seen the promise and potential that The Armory can and should bring to our residents, families, and businesses. We have been extremely focused on creating an inclusive and engaging

process of the community’s vision. For years, the Armory has been an eyesore that generations of families have lived with in their community. Together Kingsbridge brought together community leaders, stakeholders, advocates, trusted neighbors, credible messengers, and those who have done the work, to organize, strategize, and put together a balanced, creative, and comprehensive document reflected of our ideas, priorities, and values. I am extremely proud of this vision plan and the labor of love it took to see the possibilities. The Bronx is a Borough of Opportunities and reimagining the Kingsbridge Armory is a cornerstone of our Strategic Policy Plan. I am thankful for our Co-Chairs, Council Member Pierina Sanchez and Executive Director of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition Sandra Lobo, Community Working Group Members, New York City EDC, my colleagues in government, our Deputy Borough President, and all who have worked to bring this to fruition. Today represents an important moment in the history of our Borough and my Team and I look forward to the proposals that will come forth with the release of our Community Vision Plan to reimagine the Kingsbridge Armory.”



— Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson

## Letter from the Community Working Group

The *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* marks a critical first step in the successful redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory. We are proud of the ways that this process has differed from previous efforts. There were town hall meetings, small group discussions, tours of the Armory, public workshops, a survey, and panel discussions, each a way to bring more people into this planning effort. This broad coalition of community groups, local elected officials, residents, workers, employers, business owners, and students worked together to proactively envision a future for the Kingsbridge Armory. Throughout the nine-month engagement process, almost 4,000 members of our community, from all parts of our neighborhood, have come together to tell us how the Armory can support the neighborhood and the Bronx. We listened to their input, and we built consensus that the Armory should create good paying union jobs and careers, bring economic democracy to our community, provide a safe space for the neighborhood’s multigenerational population, reflect the Bronx’s diverse cultures and faiths, and explore community ownership and governance within the development and operations of the Kingsbridge Armory.

Far too often, the picture of the Bronx is painted with a broad brush, and our community is mischaracterized, defined by its challenges and deficits. We know this isn’t true, this orientation overlooks our community’s

strengths. This orientation looks past the significant progress we have made over the last several decades, how our community has worked together, often collaborating with all levels of public and private sectors, to rebuild our neighborhoods, bolster our local economy, and foster innovation. Today, the Bronx is home to over 1.4 million diverse and youthful people, world-class parks and open spaces, and emerging economic hubs anchored by academic, cultural, and health-care institutions. The Kingsbridge Armory itself is a unique space, a large building with a 180,000 SF column-free drill hall (only such space in New York City) that is surrounded by vibrant commercial corridors, colleges and universities, health care facilities, and proximity to millions of residents within a larger region.

Our work has been centered around this recognition of the Bronx’s assets and the opportunity offered by the Kingsbridge Armory to leverage our resources, talents and potential. Culture, collaboration, and community have all been hallmarks of our borough’s resilience, all qualities infused into the *Together for Kingsbridge* public engagement process. While this Vision Plan is an important milestone, it is the first of many steps and there is more work to be done. We look forward to an ongoing partnership with all levels of government, elected officials, the Bronx community, and the private sector to achieve this plan’s goals.

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juntos para  
**KINGSBRIDGE**  
together for

# a Kingsbridge Armory for all

A Museum of the History of the Armory  
(from the very beginning with (now) who came up with the idea  
and as on having the soldiers' etc

Community Space  
For All Ages!  
Salsa Museum  
After School

A PLACE TO GATHER  
GROW TOGETHER

Community Space  
for all Bronx Residents  
to enjoy!  
Museum and  
School for our  
children

Youth Cadets  
Organizations to  
come back to the Armory

International Salsa Museum  
- Music - Education  
- Art - Financial Literacy  
- Dance - Community  
- Culture - Sports  
- Concerts - Entertainment  
- Social  
I/we want the something  
Museum

Celia Cruz HS of Music  
- Serving students in the  
neighborhood  
- Needs space for their  
performing arts program

Outreach programs - Adult learning  
Therapy & counseling  
Training programs to offer job opportunities  
Adult Advantages with  
we must build a union  
TRADE JOURNAL  
women

Recreational Programs for  
mental health & wellness program  
Revenue generating program  
Can do little  
etc etc

FOOD HALL  
& THEATERS

Studio space and  
gallery for local  
artists

**“The Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan is a culmination of nine months of extensive neighborhood planning, robust community engagement, and industry discussions for a practical and implementable vision for the adaptive reuse of the Kingsbridge Armory.”**

# Executive Summary

The Kingsbridge Armory will be a place of hope, a place of possibility, one that capitalizes on the community's strengths and assets to create jobs for the people of the neighborhood and the Bronx. Kingsbridge Heights, the neighborhood around the Armory, is home to a diverse population, thriving academic and health care institutions, and excellent transportation easily connecting the neighborhood to the entire tri-state area. The building is the largest armory in the United States with one of the largest column-free enclosed spaces in the city. Redevelopment at the Kingsbridge Armory is a special opportunity to transform an awe-inspiring landmark into a place that is catalytic for economic development for the local community, the borough, the city, and the region. The community, elected officials, and the City all understand this unique moment and opportunity, which is why they have come together on the *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* (the "Plan"). Through their work, they have created a set of Guiding Principles for the Armory, ones that mark a significant step toward the goal of turning the Armory into an economic engine for the neighborhood and the borough.

The Plan reflects extensive collaboration between the City, local elected officials, and the community. In October 2022, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), supported by engagement facilitators at Hester Street Collaborative and a technical team led by WXY Studio, teamed up with Council Member Pierina Sanchez and Sandra Lobo, Executive Director of Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition to assemble the *Together for Kingsbridge Community Working Group* (CWG). The CWG included a broad cross-section of elected officials and community stakeholders, representing faith-based organizations, cultural groups, local business organizations, educational institutions, labor unions, and economic development organizations.

The Plan captures a nine-month engagement process focused on the future of this iconic Bronx landmark, centering the local community's voice as we all prepare for the Armory's next chapter. This plan captures all of the feedback gathered during the process from conversations with over 4,000 people, which included over 1,000 participants attending four public workshops, over 900 survey responses, over 500 community members touring the Armory, nine Community Board meetings, 16 small-group discussions, three public information sessions, and feedback from over 75 industry stakeholders.

The engagement process began by identifying the community's numerous strengths and assets. Community members want to build upon these strengths and assets and envision a future Armory that is a sustainable economic engine for the Bronx — one that generates local jobs and fosters local wealth.



The *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* brings together two key components of what we heard from the community. The first is a set of **Guiding Principles**, which are actionable goals that would support a future development responsive to the community's strengths and needs. The second is a set of identified **Priority Uses** which offer a range of industries and uses that address the community's economic development priorities.

The **Guiding Principles** reflect input received from the different stakeholders in the community. These principles are the community's values translated into actionable outcomes and, if achieved, the community believes they will help to ensure that the future Kingsbridge Armory benefits the community and the entire borough.



The community identified two general categories of **Priority Uses** for the Kingsbridge Armory: **Potential Industries** which are envisioned as the main use of the Armory to attract major private investment that can transform the Armory into a sustainable economic engine for local jobs and local wealth, while generating enough revenue to make the project financially viable; and **Complementary Uses** that provide equitable access to services and work opportunities for Bronx communities (especially youth and senior community members), while infusing the Armory with Bronx culture.

When considering **Potential Industries** for the Kingsbridge Armory, community members consistently voiced two key principles: creating jobs and wealth for local workers and residents; and maximizing community ownership. Community members prioritized the following four industries for the Armory:

- Film and TV
- Sustainable Manufacturing
- Emerging Technologies
- Urban Agriculture

Community members identified many **Complementary Uses** that could help the Armory be an economic engine and at the same time respond to other community needs. While these complementary uses may not be significant enough to occupy most of the Armory or generate enough revenue to offset its costs, community members felt that these uses would respond to a community need, which in turn would help the Armory achieve the **Guiding Principles**. Complementary uses that follow are in ranked order based on what was heard through community engagement.

- Vocational Training and Small Business Incubator
- Retail, Food, and Beverage Uses
- Community Gathering and Organizing
- Bronx Arts and Culture Space
- Recreation and Health
- Sustainable Food Systems

There are two critical elements that differentiate today's effort to redevelop the Kingsbridge Armory from the efforts of the past. First, nine months of deep and intentional community engagement was foundational and resulted in the *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan*. Second is a shared sense of urgency from the community and every level of elected officials that now is the time to transform the Armory into a valuable resource. From the onset, elected officials at each level of government have been an integral part of this process, working together to ensure that the *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* is more than a vision: It is a significant public investment in the community's future that can create and sustain jobs and bring new programs and services to the neighborhood.

The *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* is an important and necessary step, but it is not the end of this process. This plan will be a part of a forthcoming request for proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory, helping to give future developers a real understanding of what the community would like to see in a future Armory.



Elected officials and community working group members at the *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Process* announcement in November 2022.



Workshop attendees participating in an activity to understand the Armory's scale.



Deputy Borough President Janet Peguero and Congress Member Espaillat at a City College of New York design studio focused on the reuse of the Kingsbridge Armory

# Introducing *Together for Kingsbridge*

Now is the time to get the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory right, by creating an economic engine for the Bronx and listening to the community's priorities for its future.



Elected officials pose for a photo with community members during the first *Together for Kingsbridge* public workshop on Saturday, November 5, 2022. Over 200 people attended the first public workshop to share their values for the Kingsbridge Armory.

The Kingsbridge Armory is the largest armory in the United States. It is an awe-inspiring and unique building, one with the potential to be catalytic for economic development in the local community, the borough, the city, and the region. The Kingsbridge Armory will be a place of hope, a place of possibility, one that capitalizes on the community's strengths and assets to create jobs for the people of the neighborhood and the Bronx. Redevelopment at the Kingsbridge Armory is a special opportunity, at a location that is well connected by transit and highways to the rest of New York City, making it a gateway to the greater region.

For too long the Armory has stood vacant and inaccessible to the public with its potential untapped. The City has twice tried to redevelop the Armory and turn it into an asset; the first, in 2008, was an attempt to turn the Armory into a mall and the second was an attempt to turn it into an ice-skating facility in 2013. The City is committed to capturing that potential by engaging in a different approach this time, one that is grounded in community priorities, industry potential, hearing from a wide range of industry and community stakeholders, and a deep understanding of the building's strengths and challenges.

In October 2022, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), Council Member Pierina Sanchez, and local leaders joined to launch the *Together for Kingsbridge* process, a comprehensive, community-led public engagement process that began with a simple question — "How can the Armory benefit your community?" NYCEDC believes strongly that community members and leaders should be the first ones to answer this question and should help shape the community engagement process, since this community has been working for decades regarding the future of the Armory and ensure that it is a beacon for Bronxites for decades to come. The *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* is the culmination of that process.

At the same time, NYCEDC began to engage leaders in key industries. Based on an understanding of industry potential and community priorities, NYCEDC, in collaboration with a technical team led by WXY Studio, completed a technical study of the opportunities, challenges, and condition of the building itself, ensuring that the engagement around the future of the Armory was grounded in what could really be successful in the building. Ultimately, this work helped build a shared understanding among stakeholders that redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory is about turning a historic asset into an engine for economic development.

Today's opportunity is different because of the strong partnerships between City, State, and federal elected officials. There is a shared sense of urgency that now is the time to transform the Armory into a valuable resource. From the outset, elected officials at each level of government have been integral to the process, working together to ensure that the *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* is more than a vision: It is a significant public investment in the community's future. The redeveloped Armory will create and sustain jobs and bring new programs and services to the neighborhood, the borough, and beyond.

The *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* captures a transparent and inclusive engagement process focused on the future of this Bronx landmark. Through this process and together with local leaders, community members identified a clear set of guiding principles and potential uses that reflect their vision for a redeveloped Kingsbridge Armory. The content of the Vision Plan is not intended to be a prescription for the future redevelopment efforts, but rather a compilation of the thoughts and ideas that have been shared through the *Together for Kingsbridge* process, to serve as a resource for potential respondents to the upcoming RFP.

## The *Together for Kingsbridge* Community Working Group included:

### Co-Chairs

New York City Council Member Pierina Sanchez  
Sandra Lobo, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC)

### Elected Official Offices

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson  
Congress Member Adriano Espaillat  
New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera  
New York State Senator Robert Jackson  
New York State Assembly Member Jose Rivera  
New York State Assembly Member George Alvarez

### Community Stakeholders

Bronx Community Board 7  
Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative (BCDI)  
Bronx Economic Development Corporation  
Burnside-Tremont-Jerome Merchant Association  
Community School District 10  
Dominicanos USA  
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center  
Kingsbridge Road Merchants Association  
Lehman College  
Labor Union 79  
Mekong NYC  
Monroe College  
Morris Heights Health Center  
NYC Central Labor Council; AFL-CIO  
Our Lady of Angels  
Street Vendor Project / Urban Justice Center  
The Gardiner Foundation



Borough President Gibson, Council Member Sanchez, and Executive Director of NWBCCC Sandra Lobo pose for a photo at the *Together for Kingsbridge* second public workshop held on Saturday, January 21, 2023.



Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams at the announcement of \$200M in City and State investments for the redevelopment of the Armory.

## The Community Working Group

To support the creation of an inclusive community engagement process, NYCEDC partnered with Council Member Pierina Sanchez and local community leader Sandra Lobo, Executive Director of Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition to assemble the *Together for Kingsbridge* Community Working Group (CWG). The CWG included a broad cross-section of community stakeholders, representing faith-based organizations, cultural groups, local business organizations, educational establishments, labor, and economic development organizations, as well as local elected officials at each level of government. The CWG's guidance has been crucial throughout the engagement process, shaping the project team's approach to engagement, providing feedback on outreach materials, identifying critical stakeholders, giving

*Together for Kingsbridge* a platform at community events, lending volunteers for facilitation and outreach activities, and most importantly — ensuring that their neighbors and communities were part of the process.

## The Project Team

NYCEDC hired a team to better understand the opportunity for the future of the Kingsbridge Armory. Hester Street Collaborative, a NYC firm with a history of community advocacy and inclusive approaches to bilingual engagement, led the community engagement process through a series of public workshops. WXY Studio, a leading WBE architecture and urban planning firm based in NYC, worked with a range of technical experts to understand the building's current condition and the investments needed to bring it to life.

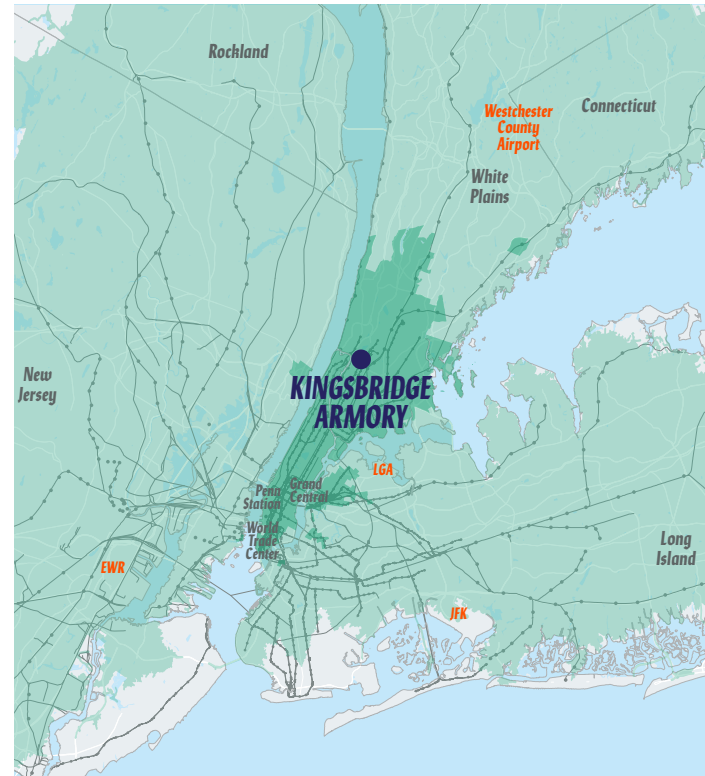
# Kingsbridge Heights Neighborhood

The Armory is located in Kingsbridge Heights, at the center of Bronx Community District 7. Bronx Community District 7 is home to a diverse population, thriving academic institutions, lush greenspaces, healthcare institutions, and transportation options connecting the neighborhood easily to the entire tri-state area. The area immediately around the Armory is full of vibrant retail and restaurants, reflecting the local cultural diversity.

## People

Kingsbridge Heights and the surrounding neighborhoods are home to a diverse community of over 85,000 people who inject culture, energy, and vibrance into the Northwest Bronx. The neighborhood's population growth during the 2010s was largely driven by newly arriving Dominican families. In addition to a large Dominican population, the Northwest Bronx is also home to a large Black/African American and Puerto Rican population. The area has long been a destination for immigrants from South and Southeast Asia, China, the Pacific Islands, Mexico, and the Caribbean, with over 40 percent of residents being foreign born.

The Northwest Bronx is also characterized by an inter-generational mix of residents where both youth and older adult populations are increasing. Twenty-three percent of residents are under the age of 18 (versus NYC average of 21 percent), making up the largest age cohort, while 13 percent of residents are over the age of 65 (versus NYC average of 10 percent). The combination of diversity, youth, and experience is an asset contributing to a future workforce that is skilled, multilingual, and ready to participate in a global economy—the Kingsbridge Armory could be a place of opportunity for the neighborhood's younger population entering the workforce.

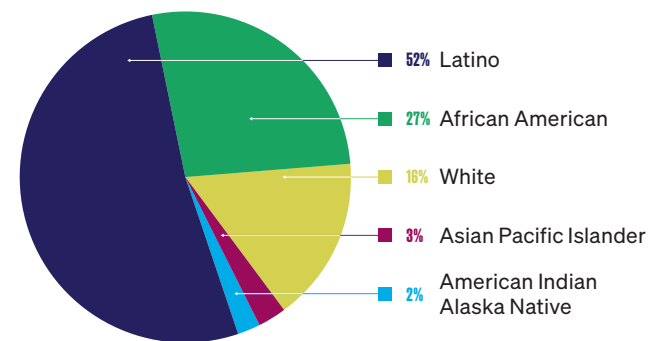


Over 14 million people live within a one-hour drive of the Armory and it is within an hour drive of three airports.

## Connectivity

Kingsbridge Heights is well connected both regionally and locally, benefitting from a mix of transit options. Just outside Community Board 7's borders are Van Cortlandt Park, Fordham University, the New York Botanical Garden, the Bronx Zoo, Bronx's Little Italy, and The Birthplace of Hip-Hop (1520 Sedgwick Avenue). These attractions bring over a million annual visitors to the surrounding community.

The 4 Train and B/D Trains, both within walking distance of the Armory, provide access to all of Manhattan, Western Queens, and Downtown Brooklyn within an hour. The Northwest Bronx is the gateway to the five boroughs, easily accessible for those coming from Westchester County, northern New Jersey and Connecticut. Metro-North's New Haven Line, also within walking distance



Kingsbridge Heights is home to a diverse population and has long been a destination for immigrants entering New York City.

*"I feel like the fact that St. James Park is usually full of people on nice days shows that this community wants opportunities to relax after working hard, and to support the businesses nearby."*



Street vendors line West Kingsbridge Road outside of the Kingsbridge Armory, bringing foot traffic to the neighborhood each day.



Diverse businesses on West Kingsbridge Road bring people together by providing important goods and services to local residents.



from the Armory, provides regional access and reaches Stamford within an hour, and the stop at Fordham is the fourth busiest station in the system. Over 10 bus lines and Citi Bike provide cross-borough connections. Transit accessibility to the Armory is high, with more than 3.6 million people residing within a one-hour transit ride. The Major Deegan Expressway, located just west of the Armory, connects the Armory to 14.4 million tri-state residents and each of the region's three major airports are all within an hour drive.



The Bronx is home to many important cultural institutions and landmarks.

### Cultural and Landmarks

The Kingsbridge Armory is one of many landmarks and architectural gems in the Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood. Other notable landmarks in the area include the Jerome Avenue Reservoir, the Bronx Hall of Fame at the Bronx Community College campus, Aqueduct Walk, and Edgar Allan Poe Cottage. The Loew's Paradise Theater, the second-largest-seat theater in the city with roughly 4,000 seats (second only to Radio City Music Hall), is located a few blocks away on the Grand Concourse, as is the Dollar Savings Bank Building on Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse built in 1933 in the Art Deco style.

The neighborhood is also home to wonderful public spaces, such as St. James Park, Poe Park, and Fordham Plaza. St. James Park, just a block from the Armory, has a variety of amenities and sports spaces. Bryan Park, which was renovated in 2015, hosts community events throughout the year, including the "Sparkling the Heart of Fordham," the largest holiday event in the Bronx. Fordham



Bronxites take pride in their borough, as shown in the mural above.

Plaza serves tens of thousands of people a day, folks who are either commuting or visiting local businesses, and is home to the Bronx Night Market, Bronx Celebration Day, and the Fordham Flea.

### Businesses and Anchor Institutions

The neighborhood's racial and ethnic diversity are reflected in the businesses on Kingsbridge Road, Jerome Avenue, Fordham Road, and Burnside Road, all of which are vibrant retail corridors with high foot traffic, lined with small businesses, direct evidence of the entrepreneurship mentioned by so many community members. The Fordham Road business corridor is one of the busiest retail corridors in the city, with a dense mix of locally owned businesses as well as regional and national chain businesses. A recent Small Business Services report noted that by 2027 local residents are expected to spend over \$2 billion each year on Fordham Road. Kingsbridge Road and Jerome Avenue are lined with food markets, bakeries, convenience stores, salons, and restaurants. Small businesses in the area have access to the nearby Department of Small Business Services Bronx Business Solutions Center which offers small businesses borough-wide a single point of contact. Moreover, community members feel that the street vendors on Kingsbridge Road are a critical part of the neighborhood's economy by attracting foot traffic to the corridor and offering essential goods to local households.

The James Peters Bronx Veterans Administration Hospital is two blocks from the Armory's historic main entrance. Jerome Avenue is a critical spine for the community connecting St. James Park, and anchor institutions such as Monroe College and Montefiore Medical Center Moses Campus. Reservoir Avenue connects the Kingsbridge Armory to the Educational Mile, which features Lehman College and a suite of elementary, middle, and high schools. To the southeast along Fordham Road is Fordham University's historic Rose Hill Campus. The institutions of higher learning in the area bring in over 20,000 students and 2,000 full- and part-time faculty staff.



Kingsbridge Heights is home to many small businesses, including the grocery store featured in the image above.

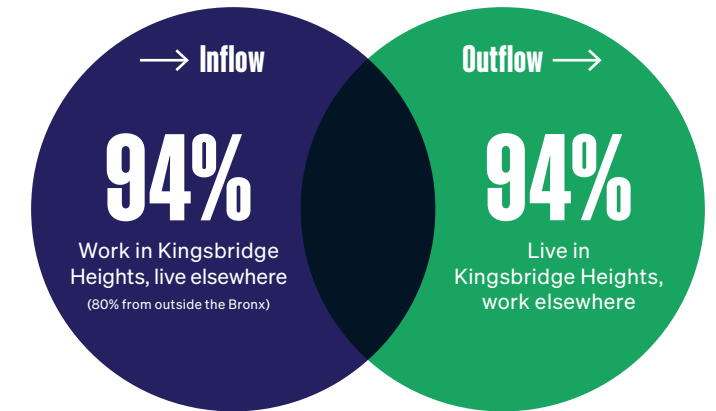
### Economy

These anchor institutions and businesses collectively play a crucial role in the regional economy by providing 7,000 jobs that pay an average annual salary of \$46,000. However, very little of that economic activity stays within the neighborhood. Just six percent of residents both live and work in the neighborhood, while 80 percent of workers reside outside of the Bronx. Instead, most residents endure long commutes to Manhattan for low-wage service jobs, with 10 percent of residents working in each of the following professions: healthcare support, food preparation and serving, building cleaning and maintenance, office administrative support, and transportation and materials moving. Inflation-adjusted income increased by 12 percent citywide during the 2010s, yet inflation-adjusted incomes in the neighborhood declined by 19 percent over the same period. The decline in inflation-adjusted household incomes between 2010 and 2020 is compounded by a 35 percent increase in rent. Finally, small businesses along Kingsbridge Road and Jerome Avenue are similarly burdened. Businesses on the corridors report lacking a place to access capital, not having a lease to their name, and a lack of basic amenities such as storage and heating.

Throughout the engagement process, community members said they want investments that restore access to middle-class jobs, stabilize households, connect the local economy to the regional economy, and contribute to sustained long-term growth. They want the Kingsbridge Armory to be a catalyst for economic growth that leverages the neighborhood's strengths to provide a path toward middle-class job creation, entrepreneurship, and addressing local infrastructure needs.

*"This is a vibrant and diverse community. The presence of Lehman College and the many other schools in the area adds greatly to the spirit and energy of the community."*

*"Leadership, perseverance, commitment and hard work are only a few of the values that represent our neighborhood. A community of true grit and determination."*



Despite the presence of well-paying jobs in the neighborhood, most residents commute outside of Kingsbridge Heights for work

# History of the Armory

The Kingsbridge Armory was built between 1912 and 1917 and designed by architect Lewis Pilcher for military use. At the time of construction, it was an engineering feat. The building was in military use until 1994, and in 1996 ownership of the Armory reverted to the City. Since the 1990s, the Armory has largely been vacant. The City has tried twice to redevelop the Armory and community groups have organized around advocating for a renewed Kingsbridge Armory.



The intersection of West Kingsbridge Road and Reservoir Avenue circa 1917



The Kingsbridge Armory drill hall circa 1917

## 1910s

### Construction of the Armory

#### 1917

The Kingsbridge Armory opened and became home to the Eighth Coast Artillery, a regiment-sized unit relocated from Manhattan, a unit which traces its history back to 1786 with the establishment of the peacetime militia in New York City. The regiment formed part of the honor guard at George Washington's presidential inauguration.



Drill hall during the construction of the Kingsbridge Armory

## 1940s

### World War II & Beyond

#### 1940 to 1945

The Armory was used as a registration site for immigrants from nations at war with the U.S. and the Allies.

#### After World War II

The City offered the Armory to the United Nations as a temporary meeting place until the main UN building was finished.

#### Through the 1950s

The Armory was a popular tourist destination, hosting motorboat shows, rodeos, and "doodlebug" car racing.

#### 1957

The two rear buildings on West 195th Street were constructed, which are still used by the National Guard today.

## 1970s-1980s

### Armory in Transition

#### 1974

The Armory was designated as a New York City historic landmark.

#### 1982

The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

#### Through the 1980s

Part of the Armory was used as a homeless shelter.



The Kingsbridge Armory hosted many events, including car races.

## 1990s-Present

### Restoration and Future Planning

For almost three decades, the Kingsbridge Heights community and the City have been engaging around the Kingsbridge Armory through development proposals, feasibility studies, and community discussions.

#### 1991

The Armory is decommissioned for military use, as military interest in urban armories dwindled.

#### 1996

Ownership of the Armory reverted back to the City of New York, paving the way for a potential reuse of the Armory.

#### 1997

NWBCCC and Pratt Institute worked together on a plan for the Armory that included a bookstore, restaurants, small businesses, and a community center.

#### 2003

NYCEDC and the City of New York committed \$31 million for renovations of the roof and windows.

#### 2005

The Kingsbridge Armory Redevelopment Alliance (KARA) formed, an umbrella group of institutions and community groups including NWBCCC, local merchants, the department store union, and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO) chapter.

#### 2006

Warner Bros. rented the Armory for six months to film "I Am Legend", starring Will Smith.

#### 2007

NYCEDC issued an RFP for the redevelopment of the Armory.

#### 2008

Related Retail Armory LLC was selected to redevelop the building with approximately 605,000 square feet (sf) of commercial and community facility uses and approximately 400 parking spaces. This project was unable to obtain the necessary Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) approvals, as the City Council voted against it because it didn't align with community priorities.



Community members have worked for decades envisioning a future for the Kingsbridge Armory.

#### 2012

NYCEDC issued another RFP for the redevelopment of the Armory. KNIC Partners, LLC proposed to redevelop the building as a national ice center and was selected as the developer in 2013. Their proposal included nine ice rinks, community space, retail space, and parking. The City Council approved the project in December 2013. The developer was not able to obtain the required financing for the project within the required timeframe.

*KARA negotiated a community benefits agreement with KNIC Partners, LLC and committed to support the project through the relevant approvals processes. The City was not a party to the agreement. The agreement included funding for construction of community facility space in the Armory and use of the ice by Bronx Title 1 public schools, living wage jobs, local hiring and training, partnerships with local businesses and contractors, community health and environmental sustainability measures, and the creation of a Community Advisory Committee.*

#### 2012

The Armory was used as an emergency supply and food distribution center following Hurricane Sandy.

#### 2020-2022

The Armory was used as an emergency food distribution center during the COVID-19 pandemic and for emergency services after the Twin Parks Fire.

#### OCT 2022

NYCEDC kicked off the *Together for Kingsbridge* engagement process, engaging a range of community leaders and stakeholders to understand how the future redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory could benefit the community.

#### 2023

The Armory has continued to be used for temporary film production sets.

# Building Opportunities and Challenges

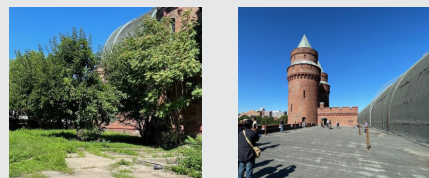
The Kingsbridge Armory is massive in size, with a number of discrete and unique spaces, from the ornate and remarkable headhouse entrance to the approximately 115-foot-tall column-free drill hall. These spaces each present their own opportunities for future redevelopment at the site.

## 1 Building Exterior & Site

The Armory's imposing structure and its large scale make it a significant landmark for the borough, one that is visible throughout the surrounding community. Its design, expansive brick and stone exterior, impressive 140' headhouse towers, and 115' high pitched drill hall roof bring to mind a medieval fortress. A large lawn wraps around the building's southwest corner.

### Opportunities

- Potential clean energy integration on drill hall roof via photovoltaic solar panels
- Activated public space along West Kingsbridge Road
- Potential for a new retail or community program along Jerome Avenue
- The 4 train stop is directly adjacent to the Armory



## 2 Drill Hall

The drill hall is the largest singular space in the Armory and was previously used by the military for events and practice, with the balcony level used for viewing. The Armory has a metal and glass roof with clerestory windows on the northern and southern sides and large panels covering the windows on the building's eastern and western ends. The roof's four-centered double truss arch spans the 300-foot by 600-foot drill hall, creating a vast column-free space.

### Opportunities

- The drill hall is column free and large enough to accommodate a wide range of programs and businesses with potential for multiple new levels
- Interior space is not landmarked, presenting a unique opportunity to divide it into multiple spaces to accommodate a variety of uses



## 3 Headhouse

With its main entrance to the building from West Kingsbridge Road and four flanking towers, the headhouse is the Armory's most striking and prominent feature. Under military use, it housed offices and other administrative spaces. There are three floors above grade and two below-grade levels totaling around 50,000 square feet. In addition to the main entrance, there are two additional side entrances on either end of the headhouse, adjacent to each tower.

### Opportunities

- Architecturally significant and unique entrance with potential to be highlighted as a notable space with street presence
- Comfortably sized rooms with generous windows provide access to adequate daylight and air

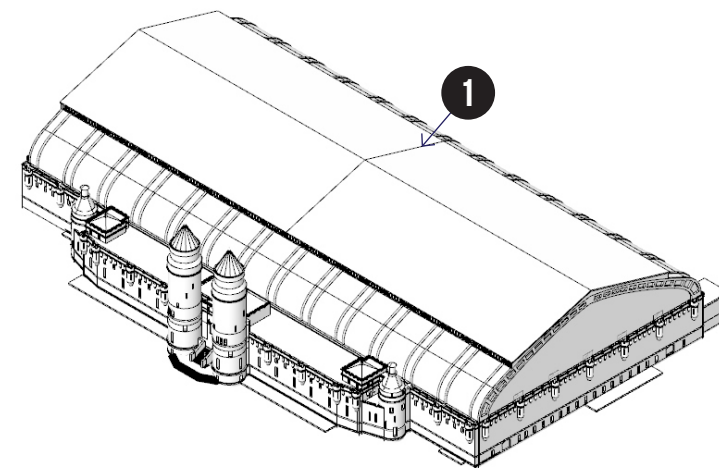
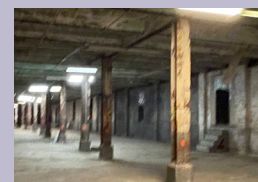


## 4 Basement Mezzanine

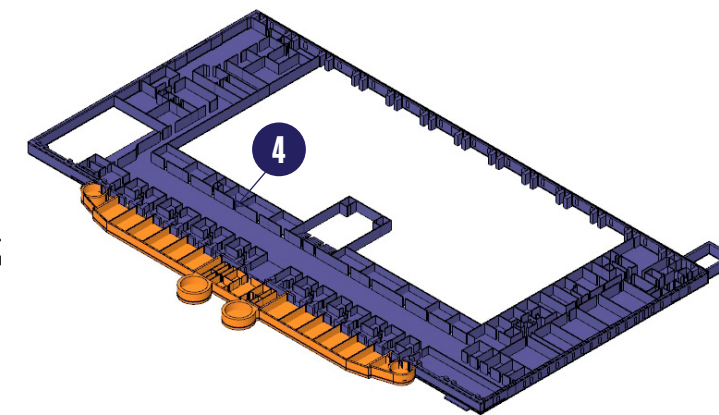
The basement mezzanine was used for vehicle storage, lecture halls, and support spaces. A portion of the basement mezzanine is below street level along Reservoir Avenue and West Kingsbridge Road, but there are street-level accessible entries on Jerome Avenue, creating an opportunity for public-facing uses.

### Opportunities

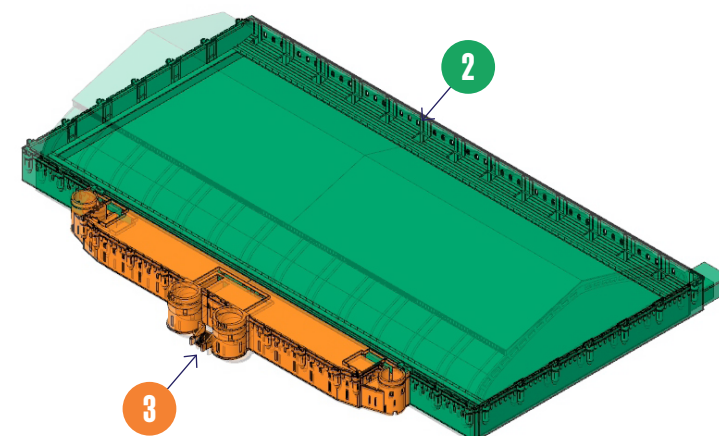
- Direct access along Jerome Avenue creates opportunities for retail or community uses
- Conducive for programs that require less light, such as performance and entertainment
- Large double-height space in center of floor opens to basement below, creating an opportunity for more program space



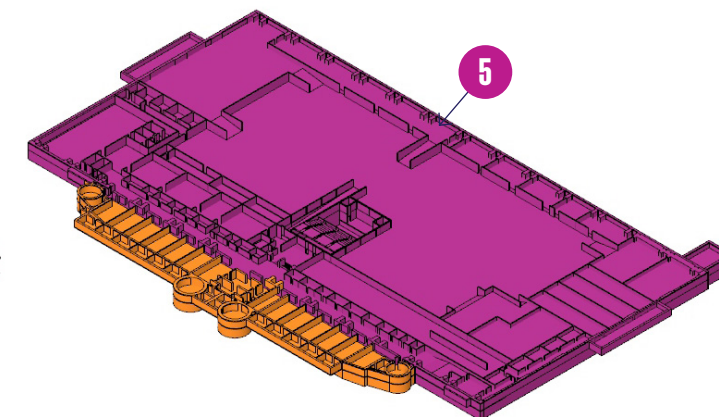
Exterior



One Level Down



Ground Level Interior



Two Levels Down

## 5 Basement

The basement, at almost 200,000 square feet, spans the entire site and has many different spaces, including storage, a basketball court, shooting ranges, a bowling alley, and lower-level theater access. These basement spaces are currently in a dilapidated condition. There is a vehicular ramp to the basement from West 195th Street through the adjacent National Guard property.

### Opportunities

- Large space that could accommodate many different uses or programs
- Potential for parking and vehicular access with large double height central space
- Conducive for entertainment and controlled light programs



## Zoning Code

The zoning code established by the City tells us what can be built, where it can be built, and the size and shape of what gets built. The Armory is currently zoned as a C4-4 commercial district, allowing for a range of businesses or community uses at the Armory.

Note that zoning can be changed through the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). Housing can technically be built according to the Armory's zoning, but given building constraints related to natural light and air, it would likely not be feasible within the building code.

## Overall Building Challenges

- Changes to the building's exterior will require New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission review and approval
- Water damage to exterior walls, brick detailing, and throughout basement will need to be addressed
- Adequate structural testing and reinforcement will be required for headhouse roof and drill hall floor depending on use
- Existing stairs, hallways, and main entrance do not meet current fire safety and ADA requirements
- Many room walls are load-bearing, making layout inflexible
- Abatement required to remove hazardous materials
- Depending on the future use, the large drill hall volume will require large mechanical, electrical, and ventilation infrastructure
- Not all rooms have access to natural light
- Use of entrances and exits on the north facade requires an easement through the National Guard site to the north

# Engagement Process

The *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* has the community's voice at its heart. This section will recap the nine-month-long engagement process undertaken by NYCEDC to hear from a range of stakeholders. Over the course of the process, NYCEDC heard from over 4,000 people, through surveys, workshops, town halls, and small group discussions.

## Public Engagement by the Numbers



Throughout the engagement process, the project team aimed to:

- 1 Listen to the community's values and priorities
- 2 Reconcile the community's nuanced and differing needs and wants
- 3 Build and develop sustainable relationships among community members
- 4 Create a process that reflects the community's experiences and needs

The *Together for Kingsbridge* Community Working Group (CWG) was crucial to a successful outreach process. The CWG met every month, either in-person at Monroe College King Hall or virtually over Zoom, from October 2022 to June 2023. They ensured that the wider community knew about the planning effort, helped to organize and attend small group discussions, and helped review and shape the Vision Plan.



Students from nearby PS 340 tour the Kingsbridge Armory in the winter of 2023.



A community member completes a worksheet during a *Together for Kingsbridge* public workshop on Saturday, January 21, 2023.



Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson leading a discussion with stakeholders from Bronx Cultural Institutions.

## Public Workshops

The public workshops were essential to the success of the engagement process. While each workshop focused on a different topic, the workshops were designed to give residents, workers, business owners, and other stakeholders an opportunity to share their vision for the Armory's adaptive reuse. The workshops were held in November 2022, January 2023, March 2023, and May 2023. All workshops were bilingual, providing materials and facilitation in English and Spanish.



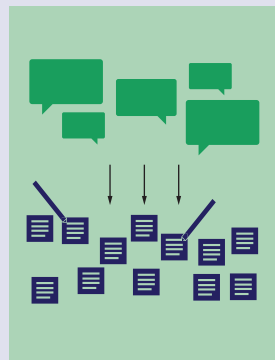
Community members share their ideas for the Kingsbridge Armory during the *Together for Kingsbridge* first public workshop on Saturday, November 5, 2022.

## How did we analyze feedback from the workshops?

Moving from what we heard at each workshop to a set of broader themes and understandings required four separate steps:

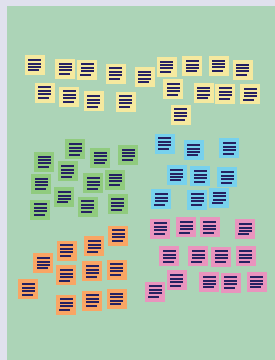
### 1 Transcribe everything we heard.

Each idea and opinion represents one data point. Ideas were either written down directly by community members or communicated verbally and written down by a workshop facilitator.



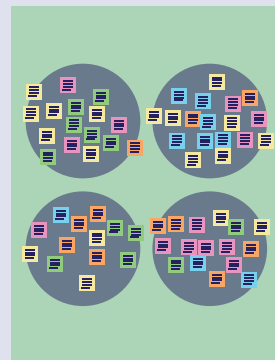
### 2 Cluster ideas and opinions.

We grouped everything based on what emerged as categories including shared values, shared ideas of what the Armory could be used for, and shared concerns.



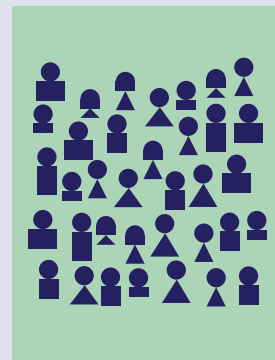
### 3 Re-cluster into broader themes and draw insights.

Throughout this step, we aligned data points with each other, and cross-referenced what we heard from previous workshops and engagements.



### 4 Analyze the demographics of those who attended the workshop.

This helped to make sure that we were inclusive and speaking with diverse groups across the community.



## How Is All This Feedback Captured?

To make sure that the future Armory benefits the neighborhood, this Vision Plan puts the local communities at the center of the project by:

- Recognizing and seeking to build on existing community strengths
- Developing guiding principles based on and upholding the community's values
- Outlining of the community's priority uses for the Armory based on all of the community engagement

Feedback from all engagement activities will be summarized in the next two sections of this document, first introducing what residents see as the community's strengths, and then looking to the community's *Vision for the Future of the Kingsbridge Armory*. Detailed feedback collected from each engagement session can be found on the project's website.

## Community Working Group

Surveys

Armory Tours

Community Board Meetings

Town Hall Meetings

## Sector-based Group Discussions



### Public Workshop 1

#### What are the strengths and values of the Kingsbridge and Bronx community?

Community members described the neighborhood's strengths and assets, as well as the values that define Kingsbridge Heights and broader Bronx communities. The workshop included an informational exhibit on the history and future of the Kingsbridge Armory, community survey posters, and a community banner that participants drew on throughout the workshop.



### Public Workshop 2

#### What are the potential uses for the Armory, based on community strengths and values?

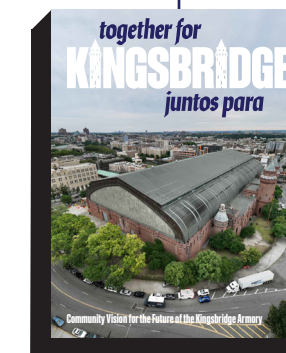
Community members learned more about the Armory's size and condition. They shared what uses they would like to see in the building with a focus on what future uses they believed would benefit the community.



### Public Workshop 3

#### How can potential uses maximize economic and community benefit?

Community members worked in small groups to plan their ideal Armory, coming up with a mix of uses for the Armory that could maximize both economic and community benefits. The groups discussed how to balance and combine revenue-generating uses that could pay for the building's rehabilitation and operating costs with other uses that may generate less revenue but have other direct community benefits.



### Virtual Public Information Session

On January 5, NYCEDC held a remote meeting for people who could not make the first workshop. NYCEDC presented the Armory’s history, the past redevelopment efforts, the history of community advocacy, the Armory’s size and condition, and what was learned at the first workshop. Community members were engaged through an open Q&A session.

### Surveys

NYCEDC collected surveys, both online and in person, throughout the entire engagement process. The survey questions mirrored the questions asked in the workshops, including:

- What values define this neighborhood and community?
- How can new development support this community’s values?
- What are your top concerns about this redevelopment project?
- What is the best way for a future Armory to support the community?

### Information Sessions

Information is power, and in response to Community Working Group feedback, NYCEDC hosted three virtual educational events intended to raise awareness about specific and important steps in the future redevelopment of the Armory.

These sessions were:

#### November 2, 2022: Land Use 101

This presentation focused on zoning, land use, landmarks status, and the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, which is the City’s standardized process for public review of applications affecting land use.

#### January 17, 2023: Adaptive Reuse Panel

This event included presentations and a panel discussion about other adaptive reuse projects, including Bedford Union Armory, The Peninsula in Spofford, community ownership models, the Brooklyn Army Terminal, and Kearny Point, New Jersey.

#### March 16, 2023: How Development Projects are Financed

This presentation focused on how financing for real estate development projects works, with the goal of helping community members understand the challenges and complexities of redevelopment projects, including the importance of financial feasibility.

### Sector-based Group Discussions



Local merchants gather for a small business focus group. The local merchant community has been an integral partner through this process.

NYCEDC held sector-based discussions as a way to hear directly from community groups with specific expertise and experience. The NYCEDC project team met at least once with representatives from each of the following sectors:

- Healthcare Institutions and Providers
- Economic Development and Workforce Development
- Bronx Cultural Institutions
- Small Businesses
- Street Vendors
- Labor/Unions
- Faith-based Organizations
- Residents and Housing Providers
- Higher Education
- Youth (KHCC Youth Leadership Council, ISLA, BASE and PS 340)
- 52nd Precinct Community Council

### Armory Tours



Elected officials including, Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh, toured the Kingsbridge Armory in July 2022.

Throughout spring 2023, NYCEDC led community tours through the drill hall. These tours gave community members the opportunity to see the space for themselves and to understand its size and scale. Over 500 people toured the Armory during these events.

### Town Hall Meetings



Community members attend a town hall hosted by Congress Member Espaillat at Our Lady of Angels church on Sunday, February 26, 2023.

In collaboration with the local elected officials, Congress Member Espaillat and Council Member Sanchez held a



Community members share their ideas on the type of businesses they would like to see inside the Kingsbridge Armory.

town hall meeting on February 26, 2022, at Our Lady of Angels Church. The project team presented about the engagement process and then answered community members’ questions about the Armory and the process, with approximately 250 community members in attendance. Mayor Eric Adams joined the event, highlighting the project’s importance to the administration. NYCEDC also partnered with Council Member Sanchez to host a town hall meeting at Abrar Masjid.

### Community Board Meetings

Each month, NYCEDC met with Community Board 7. These meetings included briefings for the Executive Committee, the Housing and Land Use Committee, the Economic Development Committee, and the Education and Library Committee. NYCEDC also met twice with the Community Board 8 Economic Development Committee.



Community members listen to a presentation delivered during the Together for Kingsbridge first public workshop on Saturday, November 5, 2022.

### Industry Discussions

As part of the engagement process, NYCEDC engaged stakeholders from industries that were of interest to

community stakeholders and aligned with NYCEDC’s goal of supporting growing industries that create quality jobs with career pathways, as they relate to the future development of the Kingsbridge Armory. The goals of the industry discussions were to:

- Identify industries for which space, workforce, and other business needs could be well-served by being located at the Armory
- Understand the compatibility/feasibility of their industry with the future of the Kingsbridge Armory
- Create awareness about the Kingsbridge Armory

Over 75 industry leaders/experts from the following industries were engaged:

- Tech
- Film and TV
- Gaming
- Cannabis
- Life Sciences
- Real Estate Development
- Urban Agriculture

### Resource Fair



Council Member Sanchez engaging with a local resident at the Kingsbridge Armory Resource Fair.

Council Member Pierina Sanchez hosted the Kingsbridge Armory Resource Fair on May 10, 2023 with over 15 stakeholders including local elected officials, community groups, and City agencies. The fair was held on West 195th Street, next to local schools, and close to 200 people, including many parents and children, learned more about the process and the engagement.

### Youth Engagement

Youth were a priority for engagement throughout the process, as the local youth will be the future users of a redeveloped Kingsbridge Armory. The project team engaged Kingsbridge Heights Community Centre Youth Leadership Council, International School for Liberal Arts, Bronx Academy for Software Engineering, and students at PS 340 and PS 310. Many of these groups toured the Armory and held focused discussions that were an important part of this vision plan. Notably, ISLA had over 200 students respond to a survey on the future of the Armory.



# Community Strengths

Members of the local community are proud of their neighbors and where they live. The community was characterized as hardworking, resilient, vibrant, and diverse, with a strong and rich history of community organizing for the betterment of their local community.

The visioning process began by identifying the community's strengths, to center them on the development of guiding principles and priority uses for the future Kingsbridge Armory. By leading with these strengths, we know that the future Armory will be a place of hope and prosperity. Community members identified the following strengths.

## VIBRANT CULTURE



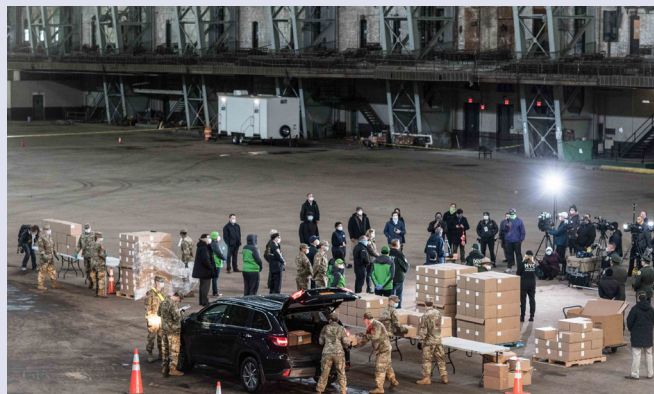
Salsa music and dancing is an important part of the Bronx's rich and unique cultural history. The International Salsa Museum is a Bronx-based non-profit leading the charge to educate, increase the public's awareness, and preserve Salsa music's rich cultural history.

The Bronx is the home of hip hop culture and salsa music. Its neighborhoods, including the ones directly surrounding the Kingsbridge Armory, are socio-economically and culturally diverse. These communities are full of creative people and entrepreneurs, which together make this borough and neighborhood such a vibrant and unique place.

*"Authentically Bronx [means] unapologetic loudness, vibrancy and possibilities."*

*"The Bronx produced break dance, hip hop, and graffiti art — what other city has had that influence on the world?"*

## RESILIENCE



New York City COVID-19 response operations were conducted from the Kingsbridge Armory in 2020.

Despite a history of disinvestment in their neighborhoods, the communities of the Bronx are hardworking, talented, tight-knit, persevering, and a source of inspiration. The people of the Bronx are proud members of their communities, enthusiastic about working to see their communities thrive, and share a strong and united identity.

*"This community is resilient and supports the community through organizing, strong work ethic, and looking out for each other."*

## ORGANIZING POWER



Community organizers play an important role in advocating for their neighborhood, by turning out to public engagement events, including those for the Kingsbridge Armory.

The Northwest Bronx neighborhood has a history of fighting for civil rights and justice, a legacy that continues to this day. The active involvement of community groups and institutions throughout the *Together for Kingsbridge Vision* Process is an example of this organizing power working to ensure that communities have a voice in redevelopment.

## LONG AND RICH HISTORY



Image of the Kingsbridge Armory in the early 20th century from the NYC Municipal Archives

The neighborhood and the Armory both have a long and rich history worth honoring. Some community members remember serving in the military or visiting the building when the Armory was open. The neighborhood contains the stories of generations of hardworking, immigrant families, as well the stories of organizing around the Armory and other community issues such as housing, health, and youth.

*"Here in this community of Kingsbridge Road, we care and support each other and treat them like family."*

## ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS



The Kingsbridge Armory is surrounded by an ecosystem of anchor institutions — schools, colleges, universities, and hospitals, like the Lehman College campus pictured above.

Community members take pride in the fact that their neighborhood is surrounded by some of the borough's most important educational, cultural, and employment institutions. Reservoir Avenue is known as Educational Mile, home to Lehman College, Bronx Science, the Walton High School campus, the Bronx High School of Music, Kingsbridge International High School, PS 340, and PS 86. Fordham University, Bronx Community College, and Monroe College are just down the road. The New York Botanical Garden and the Bronx Zoo, both world-class cultural institutions, are just to the east of the Armory. The Montefiore Medical Center's Moses Campus is to the north and the James J. Peters Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center is two blocks away on West Kingsbridge Road.

*"This community is an education hub. There is also great diversity of cultures and backgrounds, along with a wide range of age groups."*

*"The Bronx represents history that still lives until this day through culture and community... the community is what makes this neighborhood thrive. From the sounds of reggae-ton to the taste of the various Hispanic cuisines."*

A banner of the Kingsbridge Armory was brought to each public workshop as an opportunity for the community to write what they wanted to see in a redeveloped Kingsbridge Armory. The background images of the next two spreads are images of some of those contributions.

# Community Vision for the Future of the Kingsbridge Armory

Community members said loud and clear that they want the Kingsbridge Armory to be the economic engine for the Bronx. They want a place that creates good jobs and supports wealth-building for residents. They want an Armory that brings the neighborhood together and helps to sustain the community, rather than a place that leads to displacement. Throughout the process, community members highlighted the desire for the Armory to be redeveloped in a way that contributes to the environmental sustainability and resilience of the Bronx. The future Kingsbridge Armory should celebrate the building's iconic history while at the same time being an open and inviting space with a 21st-century identity.

Through this process and together with local leaders, community members identified a clear set of Guiding Principles and Potential Uses that reflect the community's vision for a redeveloped Kingsbridge Armory. This Plan brings together two key components of what the project team heard from the community. The first is a set of Guiding Principles, these are actionable goals that are agnostic to the future use of the Armory and would support a future development responsive to the community's strengths and needs. The second is identifying two sets of Priority Uses: The Potential Industries and the Complementary Uses, which offer a menu of industries and uses that respond to the economic development priorities of this community. The Potential Industries are envisioned as the main user, or economic engine of the future Armory. The Guiding Principles and Priority Uses, together, summarize the thoughts and ideas that have been shared through the *Together for Kingsbridge* process, to serve as a resource for potential respondents to the upcoming request for proposals.

The Guiding Principles reflect input received from the different stakeholders in the community. These principles are the community's values translated into actionable outcomes, and, if achieved, the community believes they will help to ensure that the future Kingsbridge Armory benefits the community and the entire borough.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGSBRIDGE ARMORY

### **PRIORITIZE YOUTH**

Outside of school and family, community members felt that youth need safe and affordable spaces for learning, playing, or simply hanging out with each other. The Kingsbridge Armory can meet the needs of Bronx youth by offering learning, training, and working opportunities, as well as being designed with public and accessible spaces for children and youth, including those from immigrant families and those with disabilities.

### **CREATE JOBS AND WEALTH FOR EXISTING WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES**

Community members believe the Armory should be an economic engine for the Bronx that creates good jobs with family sustaining wages and just labor standards. Community members felt this is essential as it will help to maintain socioeconomic diversity. Community members feel that, once a viable project has been secured with a development partner through EDC's RFP process, a project labor agreement, including state certified apprenticeship programs must be in place. The community also wants to prioritize community hiring, MWBE contracting, and workforce training programs that build career pathways into the middle class for Bronx residents. Community members would also like future tenants to take the community's existing skills into consideration when hiring, provide local workforce development to meet the need of future businesses, and commit to labor peace agreements for the permanent jobs thereby protecting workers' rights to organize. Such investments, along with buying locally, will honor the contributions and dignity of the workers that build, maintain, and operate the site.

### **WELCOME OLDER ADULTS**

Community members want the Armory to be a place for people of all ages. Career training and job opportunities at the Armory should be inclusive of older adults and elders. In practice this could mean job and vocational training for older adults, spaces that are accessible to older people with disabilities, and programming that is inclusive of, or specifically designed for, older adults. Welcoming older adults into the workforce also means leveraging the experience and skills that already exist locally.

### **GROW A REGENERATIVE LOCAL ECONOMY**

Together, these guiding principles contribute to a regenerative local economy that fosters mutually reinforcing economic, social, and environmental benefits. Community members stressed that the project should leverage community strengths to deliver goods and services that support the Armory's infrastructure and the neighborhood's economic, social, and environmental needs. In turn, a strengthened, stable, and resilient neighborhood contributes to the long-term success of the Armory.

### **PUT THE BRONX ON THE MAP**

The Bronx's rich history and thriving culture is a point of pride for its people. Community members want the Kingsbridge Armory to capitalize on this strength by serving as a destination for visitors from outside the borough by showcasing and uplifting Bronx local communities—its people, culture, and history.

### **FOSTER INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Community members want the Kingsbridge Armory to be a place that brings together all generations. This could mean spaces that support all-ages programming, skill-sharing between youth and older adults, and mentorship of the less experienced by community members who are skilled in areas like the trades, organizing, or cultural practices. It also means providing opportunities to strengthen multigenerational family relationships through cultural or art activities or by working and learning together.

### **MAXIMIZE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP**

Community stakeholders defined community ownership in two interconnected ways. First, the community wants to benefit from the development of the Armory through shared revenue. Next, the community wants to have an active, ongoing role in how decisions are made about the Armory, as well as community space that is cooperatively owned and governed by community members.

SPACE TO Celebrate the BX



# Priority Uses

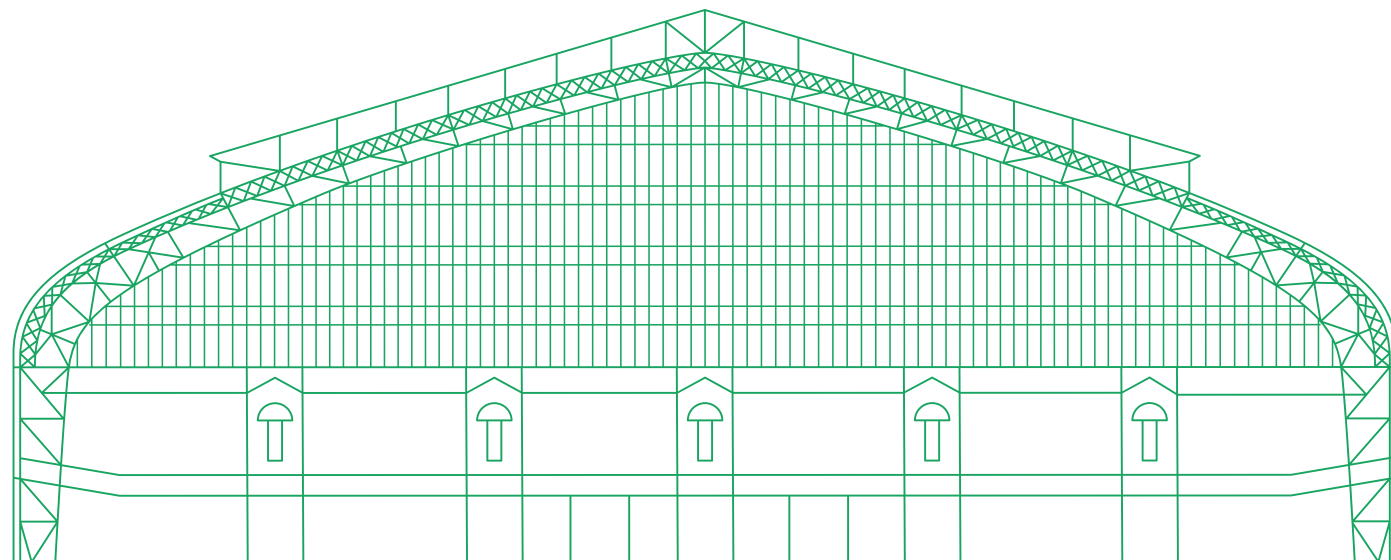
The community identified two general categories of Priority Uses for the Kingsbridge Armory: **Potential Industries** are envisioned as the main use of the Armory and can transform the Armory into a sustainable economic engine for the Bronx, creating local jobs and prosperity, while also generating enough revenue to offset costs for renovation and operations; and **Complementary Uses** that provide equitable access to services and work opportunities for Bronx communities (especially youth and senior community members), while infusing the Armory with Bronx culture. The next section describes what potential uses the community identified, how they are interconnected, and how they can work together to accomplish the Guiding Principles.

## POTENTIAL INDUSTRIES

When considering Potential Industries for the Kingsbridge Armory, community members consistently voiced two key principles: creating jobs and wealth for local workers and residents; and maximizing community ownership.

The Armory needs a considerable amount of investment to get it ready for future opportunities. With this in mind, community members felt that the main industry use must generate enough revenue to offset the future development and maintenance costs. Revenue-generating uses could also help to subsidize other uses in the Armory, ones that provide community benefits, but either do not generate revenue or have limited revenue potential. Addi-

tionally, community members expressed concerns about displacement of current residents and businesses, and identified that the main industry use should prioritize local hiring, avoid competing with local businesses, and consider community investments in its approach to creating local wealth, to ensure future development supports rather than displaces members of the community. Ultimately, community members wanted the future Armory to benefit the neighborhood. To maximize the use of the Armory, community members said there should be synergy and interconnection between the potential industry that is the economic engine of the building and complementary uses.



Community members prioritized the following four potential industries for the Armory:

### Film and TV

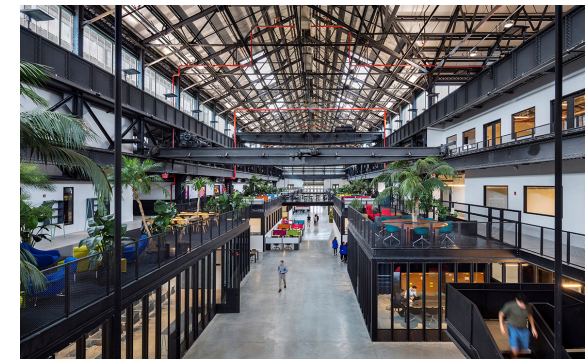
The community felt that the film and TV industry could capitalize on the Armory's size as well as its historic value and character. Film production uses like soundstages and studio facilities could be paired with more public uses like movie theaters, all of which have revenue-generating potential.



Construction of a sound stage within a movie studio

### Sustainable Manufacturing

Some community members see advanced manufacturing as a profitable and futureproof industry, like other technology-driven industries. They would like to see multi-purpose manufacturing space in the Armory, which could be space for "green" manufacturing, or manufacturing that follows sustainable practices. Types of manufactured products for the main armory use could include textiles, paper, cannabis and hemp. If the Armory becomes a space for manufacturing, it could also support light manufacturing or community-oriented makerspaces.



Advanced manufacturing is an emerging field in New York City, with many firms located at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

### Emerging Technologies

Some community members shared visions for the Armory as a place for emerging technology to thrive and grow. They mentioned fields such as renewable energy, vertical farming, robotics, information technology, medicine, materials/textiles, and construction technology. Green technology is seen as an umbrella category of technologies that aligns with sustainable and regenerative economy values. Under the umbrella of "green technology," multiple types of technology industries may be able to coexist in the Armory (for example, energy, agriculture, material science, and hydrology could all exist within a green technology hub.)

Regardless of which industry the Armory is home to, community members would like to see community benefits such as internship opportunities, collaboration on community initiatives, support of age-inclusive community digital literacy, and direct investment back into the local community.



The Green Economy sector is emerging and presents an opportunity to help restore the city's working-class neighborhoods.

### Urban Agriculture

Sustainable agriculture and healthy food production directly support the vision of the Armory becoming a catalyst for a regenerative economy. Some community members felt that the drill hall's size and scale made it a perfect location for urban farming, particularly indoor farming and vertical farming. Moreover, community members also identified other ways that the Armory could support the various components of a sustainable food system, such as a farmers market, a grocery store, community-supported agriculture, composting services (for commercial and residential use), and community gardens.



Investing in urban agriculture can support a more sustainable food system for the local community.

## COMPLEMENTARY USES

Community members identified many Complementary Uses that could help the Armory be an economic engine and at the same time respond to other community needs. While these Complementary Uses may not be significant enough to occupy most of the Armory or generate enough revenue to offset

their costs, community members felt that these uses would respond to needs in the community, which in turn would help the Armory achieve the Guiding Principles.

The Complementary Uses that follow were identified as priorities through the community engagement.

### Vocational Training and Small Business Incubator

The community would like to see vocational training and support for local small businesses in the future Kingsbridge Armory.

*What the community imagines:* Training programs through Potential Industries mentioned as desirable main uses; small business workspaces and marketplaces; dedicated vocational and small business training and learning spaces; medical and healthcare training; labor union training; business incubator and makerspace; co-working spaces; training center for youth; after-school programming; low cost, accessible, food co-op training; cooking classes; software and user experience designer; financial and IT professional mentorship.

*“I believe that the Armory should have career development programs to assist community members to develop trade skills and earn decent incomes. We also need computer training opportunities from coding to basic use of a computer for young people for middle-aged adults and for seniors.”*

### Retail, Food, and Beverage Uses

Marketplaces that are complementary to, and support local businesses, and food and beverage establishments that work with food production uses in the Armory.

*What the community imagines:* Shopping and dining options for local residents and people coming to the neighborhood.

### Community Gathering and Organizing

The Kingsbridge Armory is centrally located to many points in the borough and the region, making it a perfect location for a community center offering many different resources and services that directly meet community needs.

*What the community imagines:* Community composting; multi-use community event space; child care, and senior services; community library; worship houses for different communities; after-school space; and free internet access.

*“Provide a place to gather and participate in community activities, leisure, learning without having to travel into Midtown or beyond.”*

### Bronx Arts and Culture Space

With its historic character and large volume of space, the Kingsbridge Armory can accommodate multiple types of arts and culture spaces.

*What the community imagines:* A museum celebrating Bronx culture and history with rotating exhibits, guided tours and oral history storytelling and multimedia and interactive exhibits; space to celebrate veterans who served in the Armory; a visual arts center for Bronx artists that features art galleries and exhibition space, community murals, and studio and artist residency space; a performing arts center that includes performance spaces for dance, music, theater, and spoken arts, and flexible design so that the space can be adapted for different types of performances at different times.

### Recreation and Health

Community members mentioned the need to support the health of community members of all ages and abilities, through better access to both affordable care and recreation options.

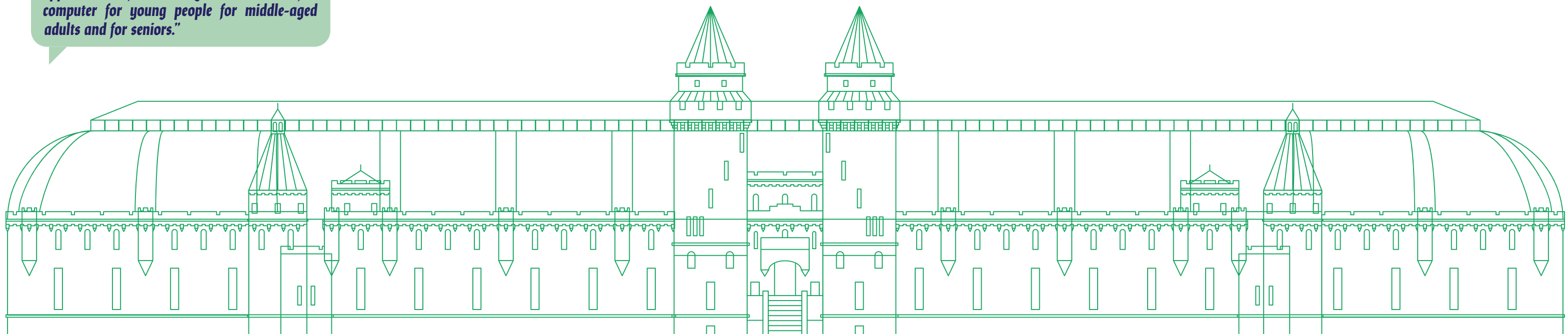
*What the community imagines:* Multi-purpose sports and recreation center with ballcourts, swimming pools, and space for a variety of activities and classes; indoor climbing and bouldering; indoor skate park; low-cost health services including primary care, urgent care, and pediatric care.

*“The Arts = Economic Development! The arts offer something for everyone; there are many different types of art, & different cultures bring their own aspects to the arts. It is a real connecting force in any community.”*

### Sustainable Food Systems

Community members felt that the Armory could be an example of a complete and sustainable urban food system with urban agricultural uses as well as other complementary and community-centered uses.

*What the community imagines:* Community horticulture and gardening (indoor and rooftop gardening, hydroponic gardening), community composting, healthy food options through produce market and dining options, community kitchen, farmers market / NYC greenmarkets, food hall with union jobs, learning opportunities in urban gardening and urban farming.



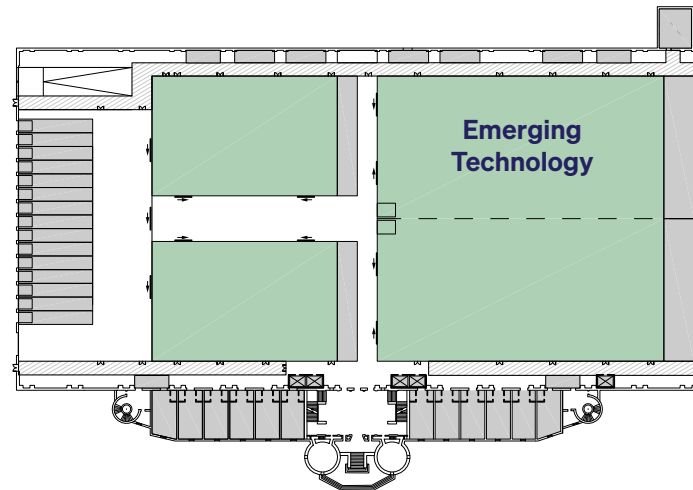
# Industry Feedback

Community members were enthusiastic about a range of uses in the building. As they began to prioritize the different Potential Industries through the various engagement steps, NYCEDC spoke with a leaders and stakeholders from those industries and researched successful projects in those fields. These steps were another way that the City demonstrated a commitment to supporting a successful activation of the Armory by ensuring that there is awareness of the opportunity among industry leaders and by learning about the keys to a successful use in such a unique building.

*All floor plans shown in this section are conceptual and illustrative to demonstrate the range of opportunities possible in the Kingsbridge Armory. These concepts have not been tested for technical or financial feasibility.*

## GREEN-TECH/EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

Stakeholders in the tech sector felt the Armory could support incubation, innovation, and manufacturing in energy, transportation, construction, and food-waste regeneration. They said that different uses require different space needs that the Armory could accommodate. For instance, the drill hall offers a large space to incubate and test new technologies or could be part of the solar panel manufacturing supply chain. The Armory's size also makes it a site that could accommodate assembly and maintenance of fleet electrification or prefabrication of buildings. Some stakeholders felt that recent federal and State grants intended to support onshore production could help offset redevelopment costs.



The Armory's drill hall offers an opportunity for large, flexibly sized spaces that could accommodate a number of emerging technology uses such as solar panel racking and distribution, electric vehicle charging and servicing, or vertical farming.



**Example:**  
**SunPower Corporation**  
**Richmond, CA**

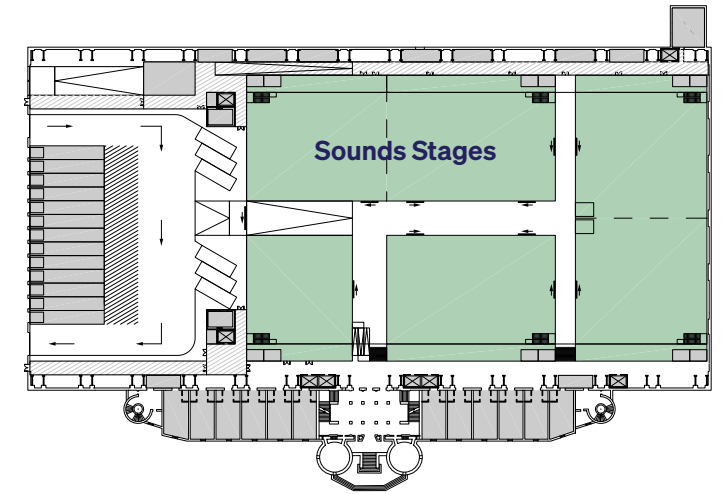
In 2009 solar manufacturer SunPower entered into an agreement with Orton Development and the

Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency to execute the adaptive reuse of the long-vacant Ford Assembly Plant along the San Francisco Bay. The

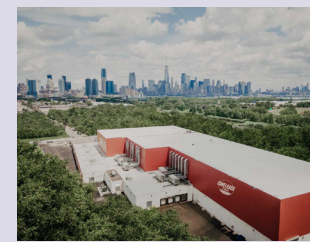
525,000-sf auto plant was transformed into a waterfront mixed-use space anchored by a solar semiconductor manufacturing plant and features a solar battery storage incubator, a 40,000-sf flexible event space, a women's sportswear company, a glass fabrication manufacturer, the *Rosie the Riveter* museum, a restaurant, and retail. This adaptive reuse project anchors Richmond's emerging renewable energy economy and has positioned the city, long known for its decades of hardship, as a center for the renewable energy industry.

## TV / FILM

Over the years, the Armory has been used to film TV shows and movies, and many of the industry stakeholders knew the building. Stakeholders felt that the drill hall could either be one large "back-lot" type studio or divided into multiple sound stages of various sizes. They also noted the unique opportunity of the high ceilings, something not offered by other studios in the city, and that there is potential for a permanent indoor backlot. It was also noted that a film studio use would require a significant amount of parking on site, which the Armory could accommodate through the existing below-grade levels.



The Armory's drill hall is an ideal space for accommodating a number of large sound stages.

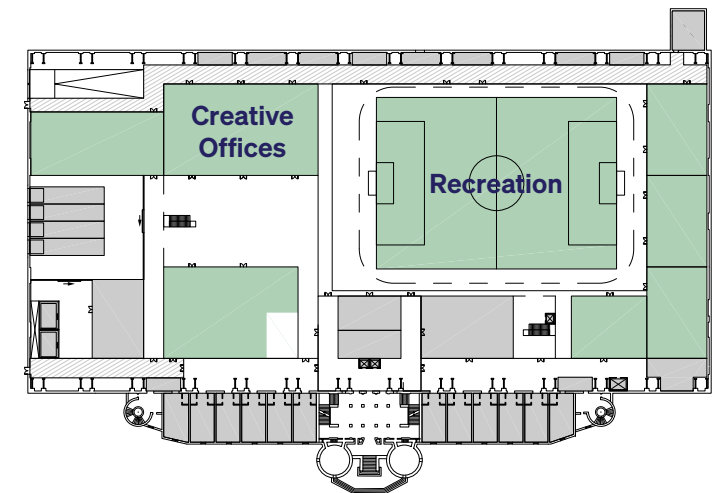


**Example:**  
**Cinelease Studios**  
**Caven Point**  
**Jersey City, NJ**

In 2021, New York City-based Criterion Group completed the adaptive reuse of a 1960s-era warehouse near Liberty State Park into a 112,000-sf movie studio. The movie studio, Cinelease Studios Caven Point, includes three sound stages, a workshop space, and several offices. This space supports multiple facets of film production, allowing filmmakers to produce an entire film within a single studio.

## VIDEO GAMING

Stakeholders in the video game development industry identified that a number of corporate headquarters in the industry are already located in New York City, but studios where the development actually happens are usually located elsewhere. They saw a unique opportunity to bring studios closer to company headquarters. Stakeholders identified the growing trend of successful smaller and indie game developers, pointing to a need for affordable space to support incubation for developers in earlier stages. They also identified an existing gaming program at Lehman College, which presents an opportunity for academic and industry partnerships.



The Armory could be home to a range of different types of creative office spaces in terms of both size and fit out. These spaces have the potential to be used as incubators for smaller or indie gaming developers.

**Example:**  
**Rocket Science Corporation, Glenville, NY**

In 2023, gaming developer Rocket Science Corporation announced plans to refurbish an 8,200-sf former fire station in Glenville, NY into their company headquarters and an incubator for smaller gaming studios. Over 90 percent of the \$1.6 million project will be funded by Empire State Development through a \$200,000 construction grant and \$1.2 million in tax credits.

## LIFE SCIENCES

Stakeholders in the life sciences industry identified a demand for affordable small-scale labs to support incubation of smaller innovative companies by providing a space to test and execute their innovative ideas. Stakeholders also noted the opportunity to partner with local institutional partners at Fordham University, Lehman College, Monroe College, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, the New York Botanical Garden, and the Bronx Zoo as well as the potential to use the headhouse for workforce development and creating a talent pipeline for the industry.

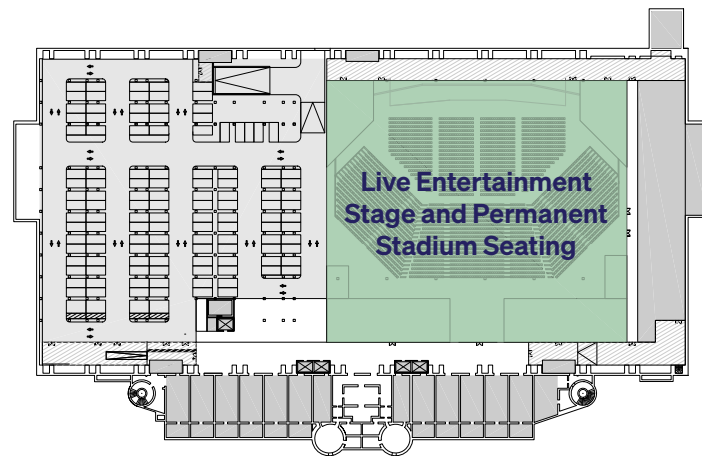


**Example:**  
**Peagasus Park**  
**Dallas, TX**

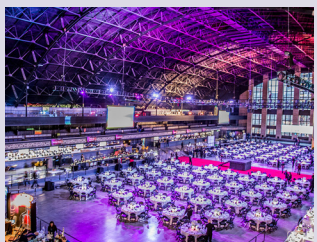
In 2022, J. Small Investments and Lyda Hill Philanthropies completed an adaptive reuse of the former Exxon-Mobil Oil Corporation campus into a 23-acre mixed-use campus. Programming within a building that sat vacant for over a decade includes a 37,000-sf Biotech Hub with flexible lab space, training facilities, and offices. The space is intended to offer affordable co-working space for emerging biotech start-ups and grow Dallas's life science ecosystem.

## LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Stakeholders from the live entertainment industry, including developers of event spaces and event promoters, identify a city-wide need for large, flexible event spaces that can host a variety of events. They point to the Bronx as a large, diverse, and culturally innovative borough that could support the industry, and the Kingsbridge Armory offers a large space that is regionally connected. Stakeholders believe the drill hall offers the size and flexibility to host concerts, festivals, cultural celebrations, community gatherings, e-gaming tournaments, and sporting events. Large events could benefit the local economy by attracting foot traffic to the area's existing small businesses, creating contracting and vending opportunities for existing businesses and creating new Bronx-based businesses.



The Armory's basement and basement mezzanine levels could be a space that accommodates a combination of flexible events space and parking.



**Example:**  
**Minneapolis Armory**  
**Minneapolis, MN**

The Minneapolis Armory is an 8,400-person event center in Downtown Minneapolis. Built in 1936, the Minneapolis Armory was used by several Minnesota National Guard units until 1985. In addition to military uses, the Minneapolis Armory was home to the Minneapolis Lakers (now the Los Angeles Lakers) and hosted several concerts. In 2018, the Minneapolis Armory was transformed from a parking facility into a multi-use event space. Since then, it has hosted several concerts, festivals, e-gaming tournaments, and events related to Super Bowl LII.

## URBAN AGRICULTURE

Stakeholders who specialize in urban agriculture see potential use for vertical farming within the Armory. The drill hall offers a tall, unobstructive space that could support the stacking of uses. The headhouse can offer flexible office spaces to support office-oriented business operations. They believe urban agriculture can offer regenerative economic benefits where food production, distribution, and waste are locally regenerated to perpetually provide the nutrients Bronxites need.



**Example**  
**Vertical Harvest**  
**Jackson Hole, WY**

Vertical Harvest is the first vertical greenhouse in the Northern Hemisphere. Built atop a municipal parking lot, the 13,500-sf greenhouse utilizes a 1/10-acre site to grow an annual amount of produce equivalent to 10 acres of traditional farming. Since opening in 2016, Vertical Harvest distributes to more than 80 grocery stores and restaurants across three states, while replacing 100,000 pounds of produce formerly trucked into the community.



## Next Steps

The *Together for Kingsbridge Vision Plan* will inform and be appended to the forthcoming request for proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory. When NYCEDC reviews responses to the RFP, consideration will be given to how proposals explain their alignment with the goals of the community. The overarching goal of the Vision Plan is to summarize the community's priorities for economic development by maximizing community ownership, creating jobs and wealth for the local community, welcoming community members of all ages, celebrating the history and culture of the Bronx, and growing a regenerative local economy.

All supporting documents associated with the engagement process can be found at [www.kingsbridgetogether.com](http://www.kingsbridgetogether.com).



## Acknowledgements

The project team would like to extend its deep gratitude to everyone who helped to shape *Together for Kingsbridge*. This Plan would not have been possible without the thousands of people from the community—residents, business owners, workers, and elected officials—who gave so generously of their time and their perspectives to create a true community vision for the Kingsbridge Armory. This Plan is for all of them. We would also like to give special thanks to the Community Working Group, many of whom have worked for decades to make a redeveloped Armory a reality. Their time, energy, and efforts ensured that the vision captured in this document was a true reflection of the community.

The Together for Kingsbridge Community Working Group, included members from:

Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC)  
Bronx Community Board 7  
Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative (BCDI)  
Bronx Economic Development Corporation  
Burnside-Tremont-Jerome Merchant Association  
Dominicanos USA  
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center  
Kingsbridge Road Merchants Association  
Lehman College  
Labor Union 79  
Mekong NYC  
Monroe College  
Morris Heights Health Center  
NYC Central Labor Council; ALF-CIO  
Our Lady of Angels  
Community School District 10  
Street Vendor Project  
The Gardiner Foundation

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New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera  
New York State Senator Robert Jackson  
New York State Assembly Member Jose Rivera  
New York State Assembly Member George Alvarez

We would also like to thank the many community-based organizations who took part in our sector-based group discussions. They lent invaluable insights and perspectives to the Plan.

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History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library. "Bronx: Kingsbridge Road (We - Reservoir Avenue)" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1938. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47dc-bd62-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>  
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juntos para

Community Vision for the Future  
of the Kingsbridge Armory

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