

Queensboro People's Space

FEASIBILITY REPORT



QUEENSBORO PEOPLE'S SPACE

Feasibility report prepared by Bagchee Architects
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Executive Summary

Note from the WQCLT Board co-chairs, Jenny Dubnau and Memo Salazar

Western Queens Community Land Trust (WQCLT) is a non-profit organization made up of activists, small business owners, academic advisors, artists, students and community members fighting for democratic and equitable land use in Western Queens. CLTs operate by way of community land ownership, which lasts in perpetuity.

WQCLT was formed in 2019, arising directly out of community struggles against multiple for-profit development plans in Queens. Anable Basin, sitting right on the waterfront with a mixture of public and private lots, is an especially contentious area. It has continually been offered up to developers for the construction of luxury towers, both residential and commercial. WQCLT became particularly interested in the massive, city-owned building at Vernon Boulevard and 44th Drive in particular, given its notoriety as one of the sites that the city and state proposed for Amazon’s HQ2 campus. The building’s wonderfully sturdy architecture, publicly-owned status, and proximity to both the waterfront and Queensbridge Houses make it a unique opportunity to showcase a different kind of economic development—one that is community-owned and led, with deep, permanent affordability baked into the land lease itself.

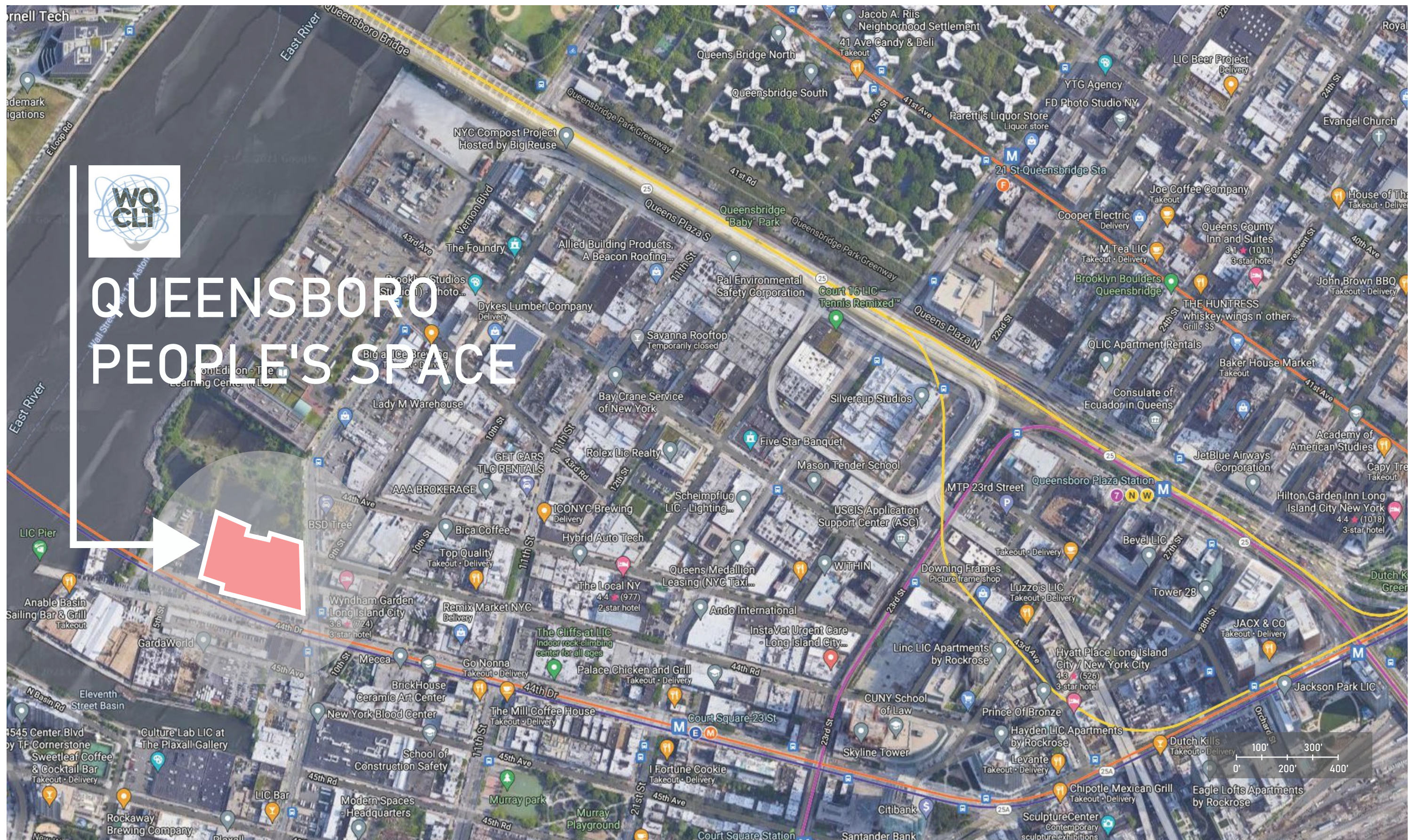
Just what is a Community Land Trust? CLTs are not-for-profit organizations that own and steward land on behalf of local communities. A fundamental component of a CLT is to ensure that the community itself maintains control of local resources (primarily land and buildings) by making decisions regarding their use and development. While community land trusts in urban settings are traditionally associated with housing—specifically single-family dwellings—the model is increasingly expanding into commercial, manufacturing, and public space contexts as well.

WQCLT’s board is evaluating all of these options in regard to acquiring land in Western Queens as we seek to create permanently affordable housing, community spaces, studios for working artists, and commercial and manufacturing spaces. All of these sectors are in danger of displacement due to a skyrocketing real estate market that has far outpaced incomes. The report that follows describes our proposal for the Queensboro People’s Space (QPS)—a people-centered hub tailored for manufacturing, art-making, and the provision of community benefits, including workforce training, food and nutrition services, and family-centered care. The Department of Education, the building’s current occupant, is an agency that WQCLT strongly supports and sees as an ally with a common goal of providing essential services for the population of New York. It is WQCLT’s express wish to partner with the DOE in adapting the building to better serve the needs of both the DOE and the greater Western Queens community.

The reimagined and transformed DOE/QPS building would allow small businesses, jobs and working artists to remain and thrive in Long Island City and would offer cultural and educational opportunities to local communities—particularly NYCHA tenants, immigrant communities, and low-income residents—that have historically been shut out of economic development. While QPS would be a hub for everyone in Western Queens, we are committed to ensuring that its workspaces remain deeply affordable specifically to Black and Brown small business owners and artists. Our vision is to make QPS an economically thriving, equitable development, generating over 500 new jobs for those who are too often passed over. It would be a win-win for both the local community and the city as a whole—an opportunity to create an affordable space that supports the economic growth of these communities and enables them to work together synergistically. It would be a space that nurtures and reflects the incredible diversity of Queens.



Anti-Amazon press conference at Queensbridge Houses, 2019.
(Courtesy The Justice for all Coalition)



Description of the Building

The city-owned building under consideration by the Western Queens Community Land Trust is located at the corner of 44th Drive and Vernon Boulevard in Long Island City, and was constructed by the Works Process Administration (WPA) as a warehouse facility for New York City's Department of Purchase in 1948. The building is currently assigned to the Department of Education (DOE).

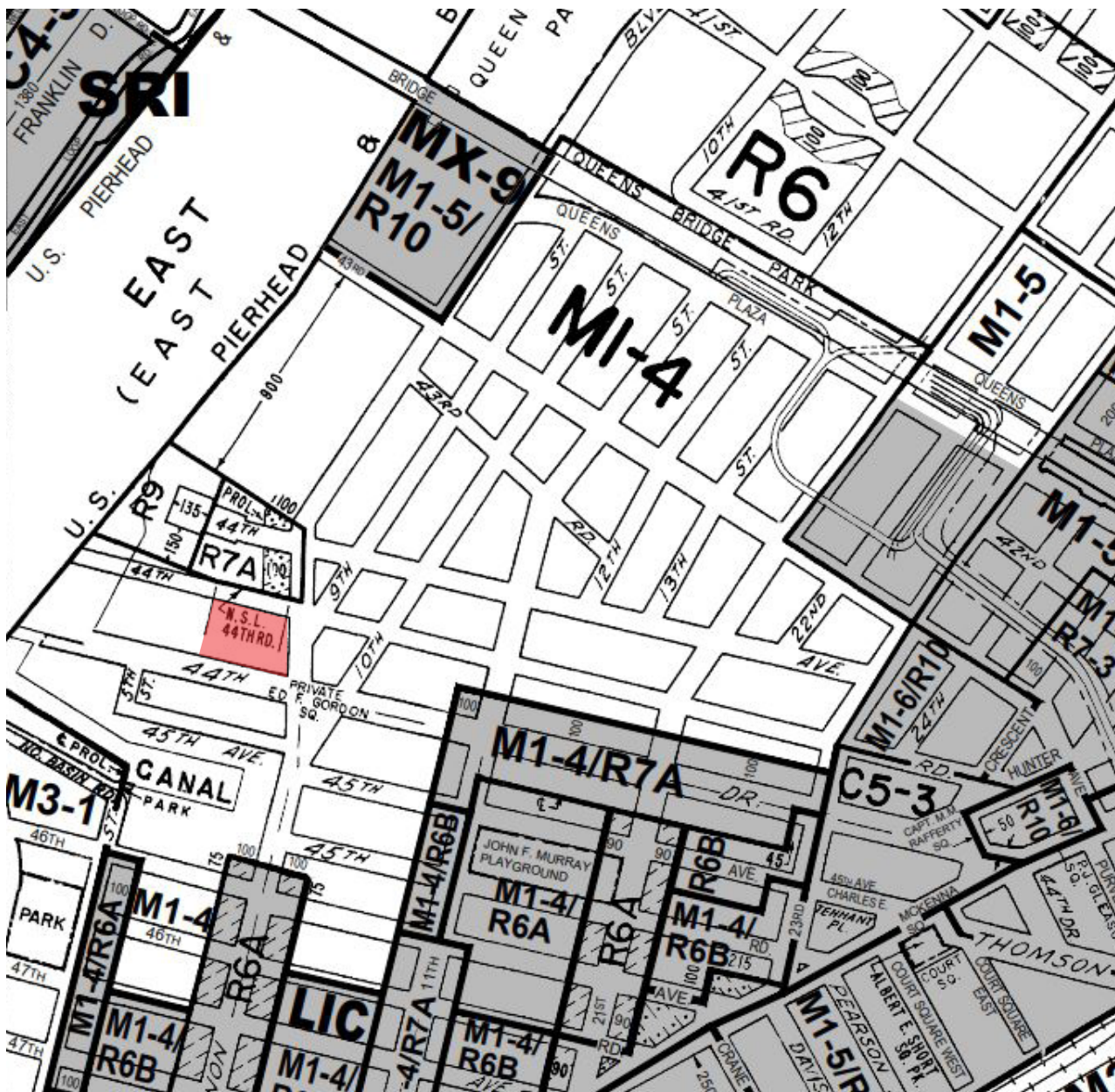
Situated in the Anable Basin area of Long Island City, the DOE building was one of many properties slated to be transferred to Amazon when the company announced its plans, in late 2019, to build an “HQ2” campus here. Those plans were upended just a few months later when activists advocated for the building to remain under public and community control. Zoned for manufacturing and having two sets of loading docks on both street fronts, the building is perfectly suited for the co-existence of small businesses, light manufacturers, working artists, and assorted programs (including jobs training) that would support the community.

The building is six stories tall (in addition to a basement) and has a trapezoidal footprint measuring 426 feet on 44th Drive and 270 feet on Vernon Boulevard. The gross area per floor is 93,500 square feet, and the total gross area for the building is 561,000 square feet. The building is made of a reinforced concrete frame and slab and has 22-foot bays in both directions. Its high ceilings are 15+/- feet throughout and it has large 8-foot-high windows along the entire perimeter. Located in an M1-4 manufacturing zone, it is one of the last remaining light manufacturing facilities along the Long Island City waterfront.

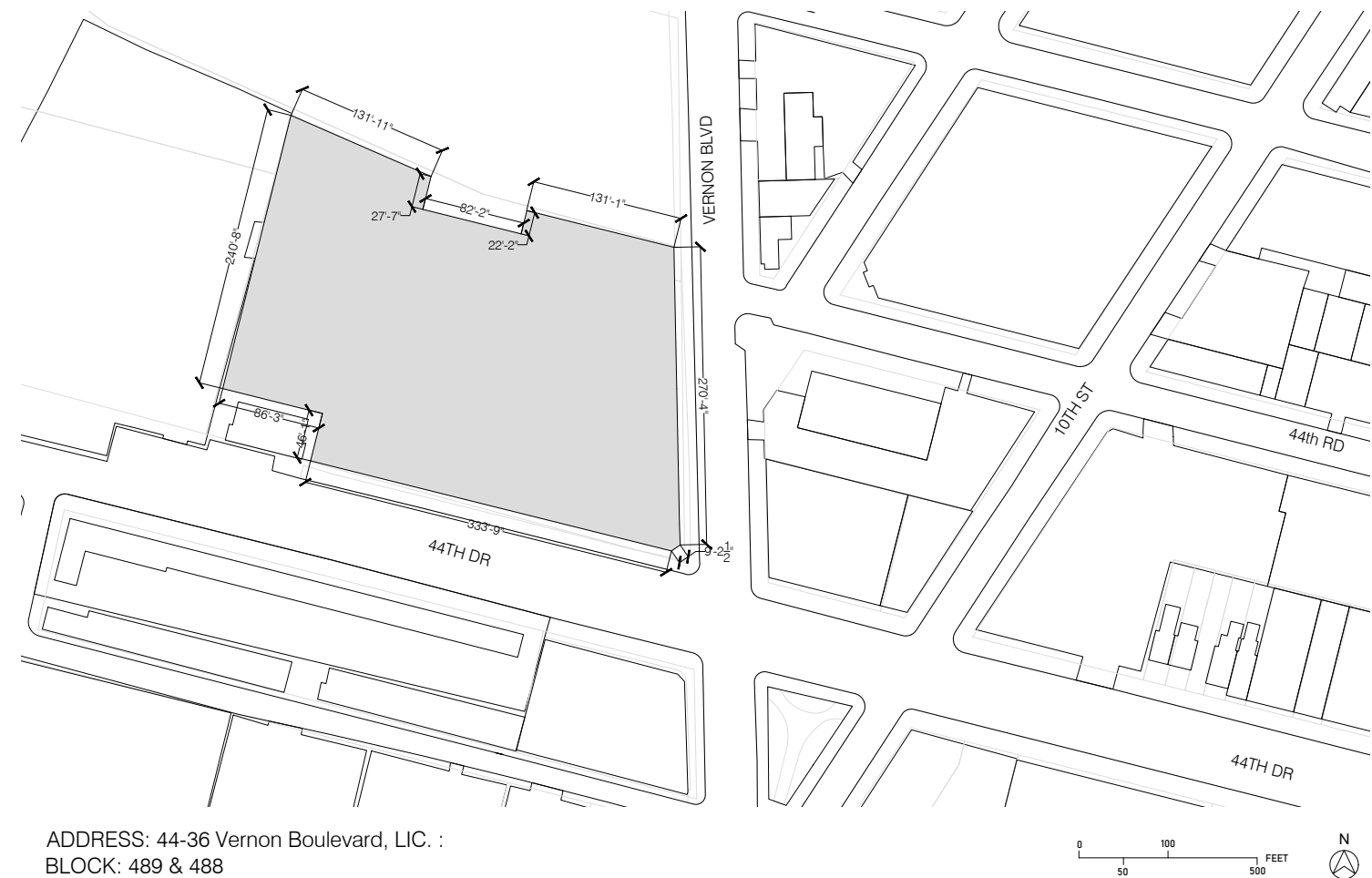
The Department of Education currently uses this massive structure for office space, storage, workshops, and for the distribution of dry food to schools in all five boroughs. It is used as well to store light fixtures, equipment, and replacement parts that the school system might need. A few related agencies, such as the Public Schools Athletic League, share a portion of the space. After consulting with different elected officials, as well as people familiar with the building, WQCLT has ascertained that the space, while an important public asset, could continue serving the same role it currently does for city agencies using a substantially smaller portion of the space. This would open up roughly two-thirds of the building for equally vital community needs.



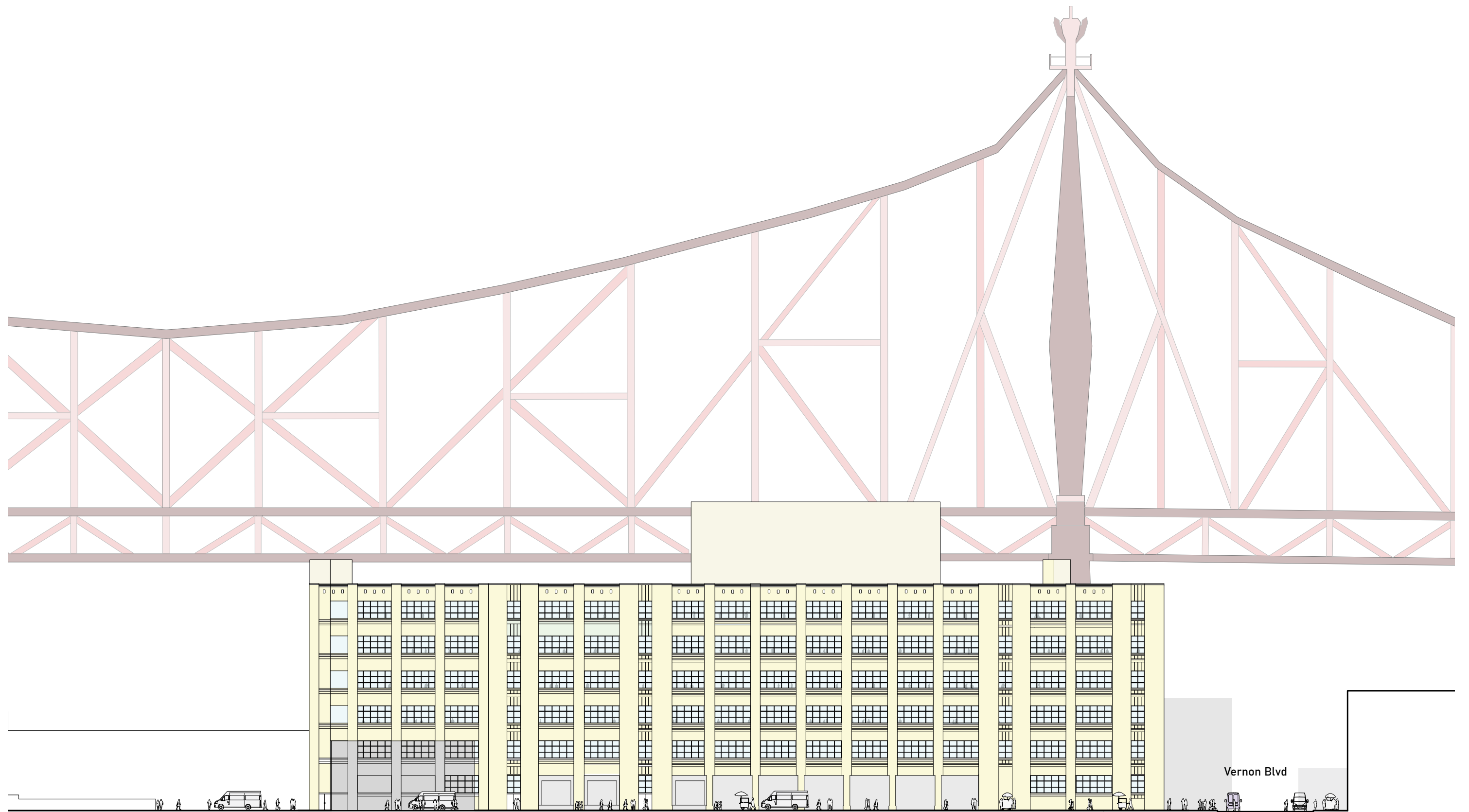
The DOE Building at the corner of Vernon Blvd and 44th Drive, Long Island City, Queens, New York.



Zoning Map, Long Island City, Queens, New York.

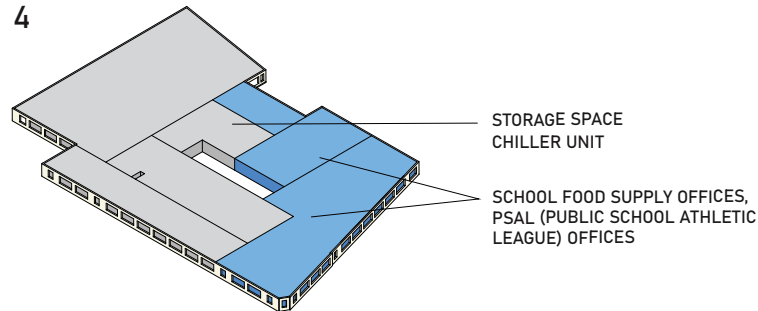
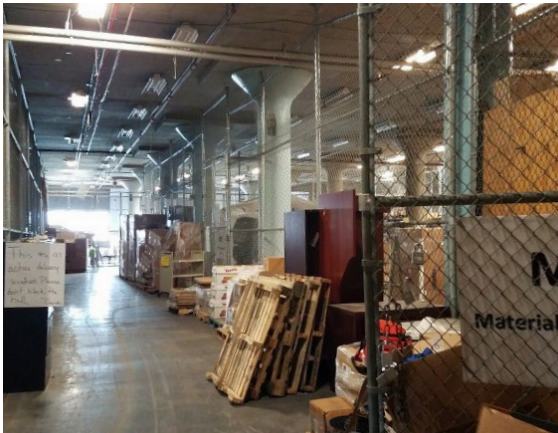
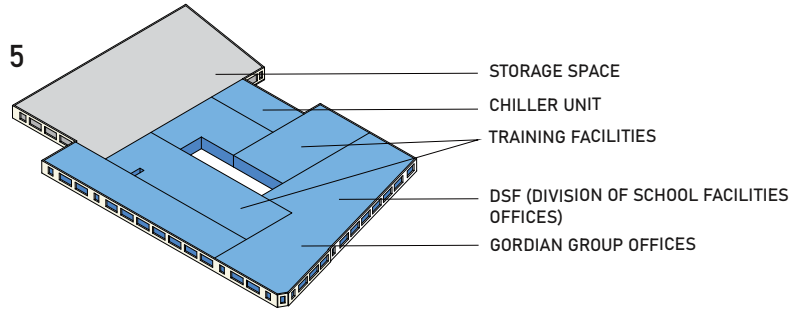
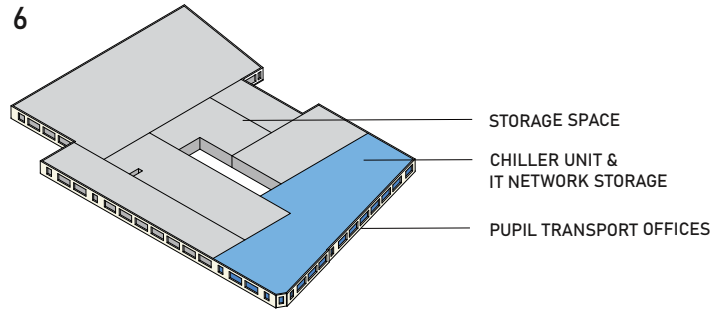
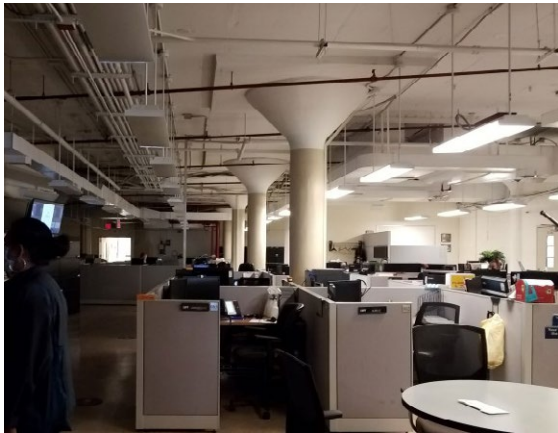
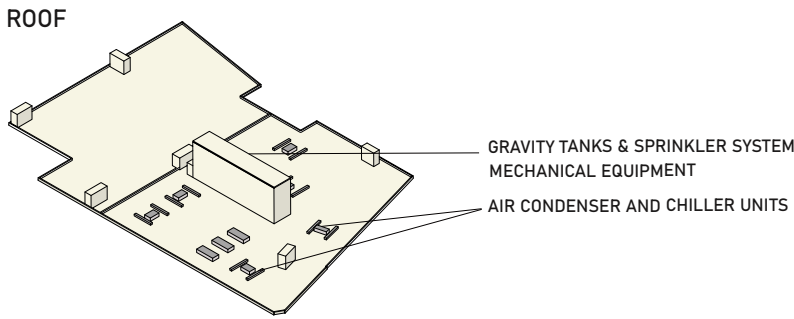


ADDRESS: 44-36 Vernon Boulevard, LIC. :
BLOCK: 489 & 488
TAX LOT: 1 & 11
LOT FRONTAGE: 207.8' + 31.17'
LOT DEPTH: 426'
LOT AREA: 90,489 sf + 13,363 sf= 103,864 sf
NUMBER OF BUILDINGS: 2
NUMBER OF FLOORS: 6
YEAR BUILT: 1948
BUILT AREA: 574,704 sf +2302.5 sf
ZONING DISTRICT: M1-4
ZONING MAP: 9b
F.A.R: 2.0
F.A.R WITH COMMUNITY FACILITY: 6.5

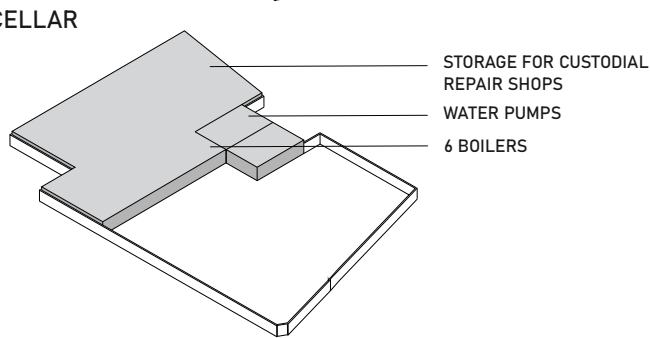
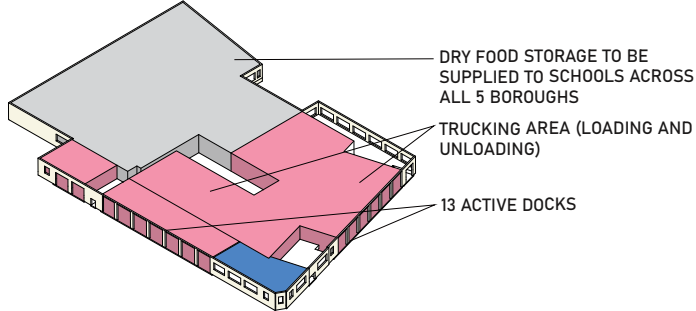
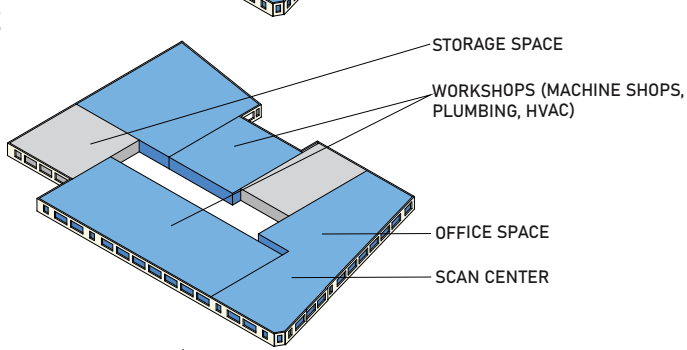
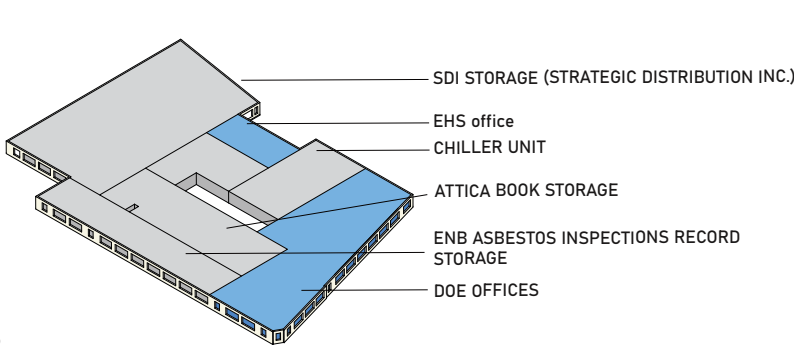


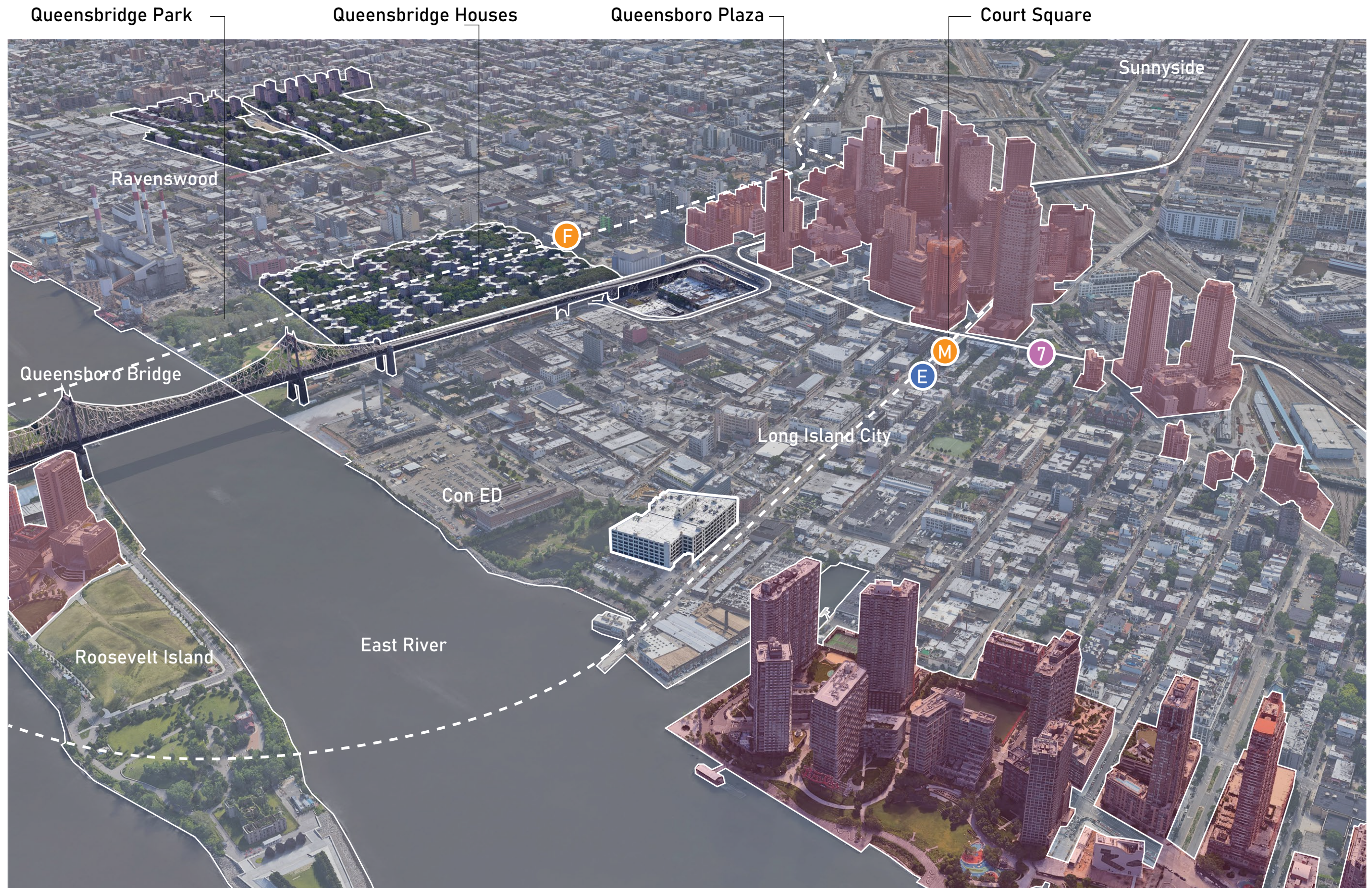
The DOE Building South Elevation (44th Drive)

Current Use



Current use of the building under the DOE.





LIC & WESTERN QUEENS

Long Island City is a dynamic neighborhood that has long sustained a mix of heavy industrial activity, small-scale urban “makers,” and commercial businesses—along with residents, working artists, actors, and musicians. Its position as the nexus of crisscrossing train lines connecting Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan makes it an economically and socially diverse community- and a hub for cultural activity. Its riverfront parks, including Queensbridge Park and Gantry Plaza, offer oases of green and recreational space that welcome New Yorkers of all backgrounds.

Since the early 2000s, city land use actions and zoning code exceptions, along with market forces, have enabled new, high-end development in Queens Plaza and Hunters Point sections of the neighborhood. New development and the conversion of industrial buildings for expensive apartments, offices, and hotel rooms have drastically raised land prices and rents, resulting in the displacement of longtime businesses, artists, and residents from the area’s industrial core. Residents of the nation’s largest public housing development, Queensbridge Houses, are increasingly divided from their neighbors to the south; the luxury development in Long Island City offers them little in the way of training or employment opportunities, and it threatens to marginalize small businesses and social resources they rely on.

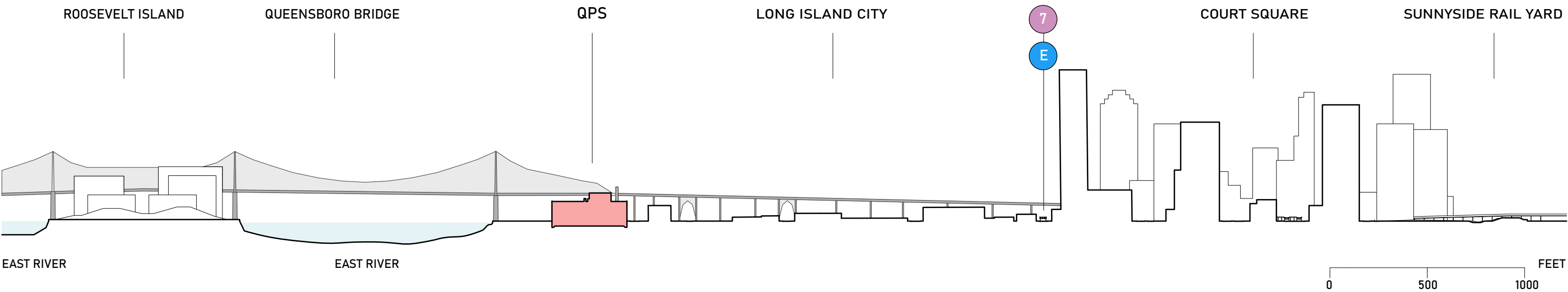
Mounting pressure in traditionally mixed-use areas is not unique to Western Queens; however, it is a force that disproportionately impacts traditional working-class environments and places that support employment for people without college degrees. The mixed character of the area faces the double threat of homogeneity and exclusivity. Keeping the land viable for that character requires interventions that preserve Long Island City’s income diversity and scrappiness.

“The “mixed use” rezoning designation that has been applied to much of Long Island City technically allows industrial businesses to exist alongside residential and commercial buildings, but in practice, landlords often push out their industrial tenants to take advantage of the higher profits from residential or commercial development. In addition, those areas of Long Island City that remain designated for only manufacturing uses have seen an influx of hotel development and storage facilities, uses that are permitted in manufacturing areas.”

—Abigail Savitch Lew, “Past Rezoning Shape Long Island City’s Feelings About De Blasio Plan” June 2016



Source: LIC Development map, The Long Island City Partnership



Manufacturing & Small Businesses in LIC

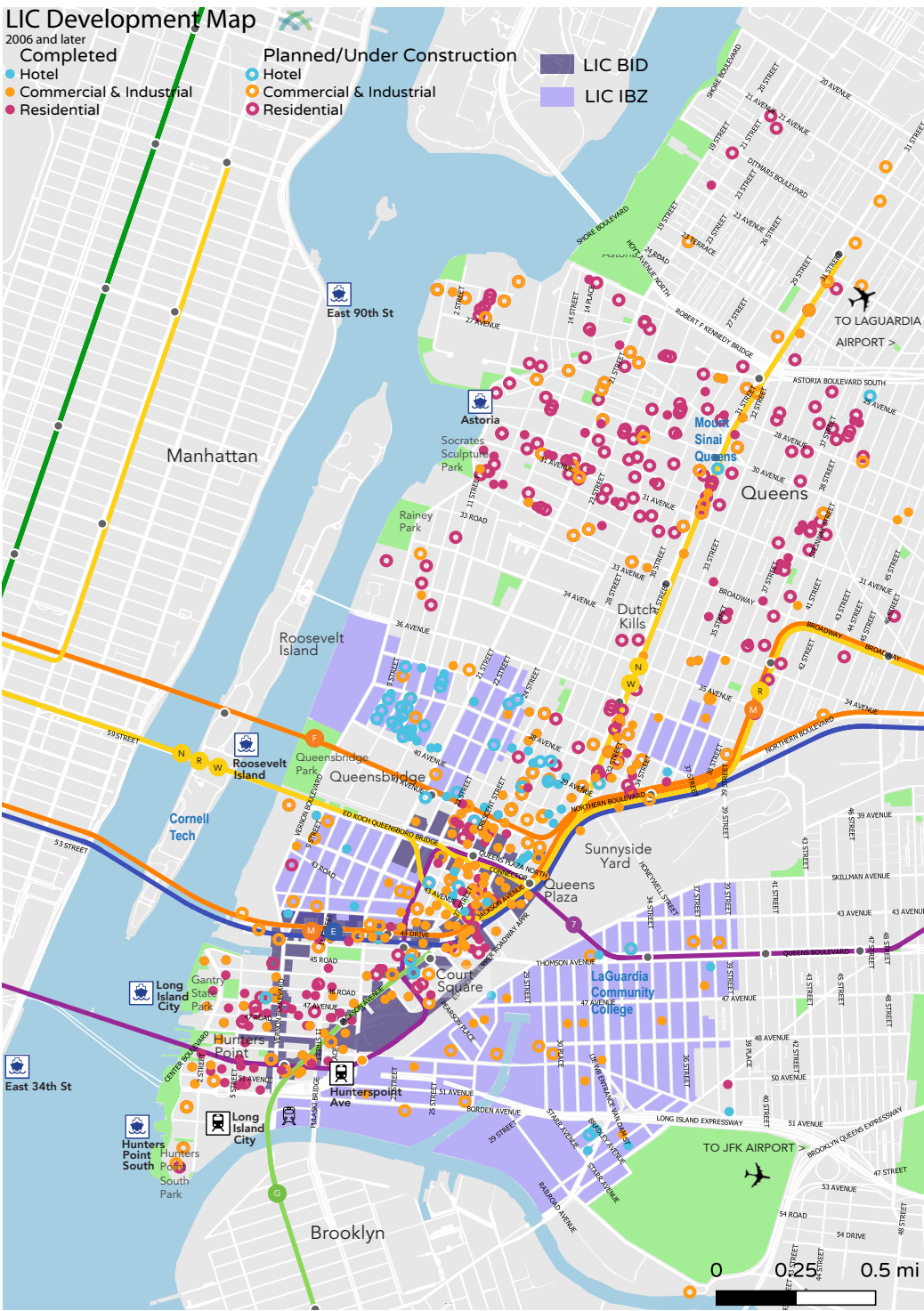
The DOE Building, zoned for manufacturing M1-4, is situated at 44th Road and Vernon Boulevard, right at the cusp of the Long Island City Industrial Business Zone (IBZ). Set up under the purview of Mayor Bloomberg's administration, IBZs aim to preserve and protect manufacturing zones from residential and commercial rezonings.

In Long Island City, affordable industrial and commercial business spaces are being pushed out by high-end development. This is a direct result of the economic development path taken by the city during the Bloomberg and De Blasio years. Under the expansion of the “innovation economy” and the growth of the tech industry, industrial real estate is increasingly being converted, as of right (i.e. without needing a city rezoning), to hotels, high-end offices, and upscale retail uses. City policy has also encouraged development that displaces industrial employers, as well as other small enterprises that cannot afford high rents, by changing zoning on the fringes of industrially zoned areas to a mixed-use zoning category (MX). According to an analysis by the Pratt Institute for Community Development, over 4.2 million square feet of industrial space was lost in New York City between 1997 and 2014 as a result of MX designations. Adding in the explicit conversion of industrial property for housing development, the city's actions have helped to decrease available space, and to drastically escalate rent costs for manufacturing firms and other industrial and commercial businesses that want and need to be in New York City. According to an analysis by the NYC Manufacturing and Industrial Innovation Council (housed within the city's Department of Small Business services), average industrial real estate costs have increased by about 30 percent over the past 5 years. This leaves businesses that rent small spaces, such as multiple enterprises displaced from the multitenant Silks Building at 37-24 24th Street in the late 2010s, vulnerable to expensive relocation and often closure.

Long Island City is at the epicenter of this trend. A spring 2021 snapshot report by the Long Island City Partnership registered 10 million square feet of new and renovated “commercial and industrial” space in the area since 2006, much of which is located in the nominally protected Long Island City Industrial Business Zone (IBZ). This elision of commercial with industrial conceals the displacement of industrial uses from the zone. The IBZ is also the location of a majority of the neighborhood's 42 new hotels, with 39 additional hotels in planning or construction as of April 2021.

The extraordinary diversity of our residents requires that we cultivate an economy that offers diverse opportunities for work and entrepreneurship and ensures pathways of economic opportunity for the 40% of New Yorkers who have only a High School degree or less. If New York is to have a thriving entertainment and tourism sector, it also needs space for making everything from movie sets to artisan bread. If we are to have a thriving fashion industry, businesses need space to cut and sew clothes, even on a small scale. Alongside spaces for production, we also need space for all the back office and maintenance operations that are essential for the city to function, from parking and repair for trucks, buses, cranes and cement mixers, to the actual fabrication of the architectural metal and woodwork that creates inspiring homes and offices.

—Pratt Center for Community Development, *What Makes the City Run*, 2016



Source: Long Island City Partnership, Neighborhood Snapshot, April 2021.



The former Scalamandre Silk manufacturing building at 37-24 24th St, owned by Time Equities, had been populated by artists and light manufacturers. Many of these tenants have been displaced by large rent hikes.

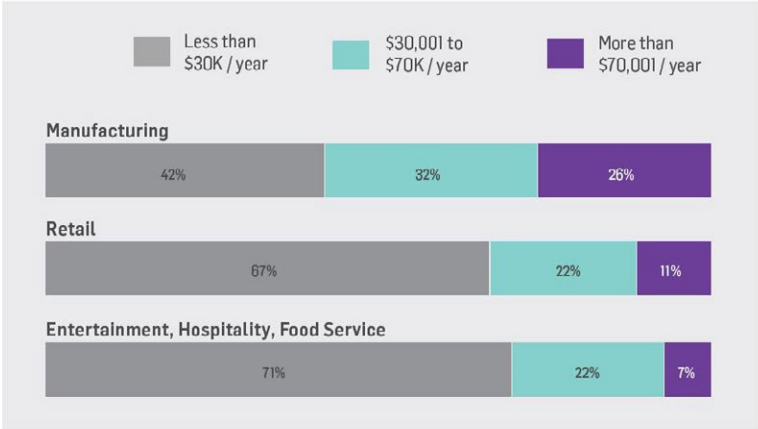
Consulted for a 2016 neighborhood plan, incumbent industrial businesses expressed concern about the imminent expiration of short-term leases and affirmed that they could not afford rent that exceeded \$16-\$25 per square foot. The same planning document noted, “Despite strong demand for industrial space and willingness from businesses to pay higher-end industrial rents (more than \$16 psf), substantial industrial inventory is being lost due to property owners’ decisions to shift space to commercial office uses and hotel development, both of which produce higher economic return for property owners, as well as rezonings that have allowed residential in previously industrial areas.” Between 2005 and 2015, according to the report, industrial and manufacturing lot area decreased 3.9 million square feet, and since many of the converted buildings were multi-story structures, the decrease in floor area was presumably much greater.

Amid the dynamics described above, the Queensboro People’s Space building could offer industrial and low-rent commercial users critically needed space that the market has virtually ceased to provide in the past decade. The structure was originally created as an industrial building in the 1930s and could be retrofitted to accommodate a variety of light manufacturing uses, both traditional (garment, furniture) and cutting edge (hydroponic farming, biotech). It could also provide flexible office space for community-oriented services businesses such as the members of the New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives.

The DOE building is perfectly suited to be transformed into a highly active, multi-functioning hub, offering affordable manufacturing and creative spaces, learning centers, a much needed affordable food coop, and a lot more in LIC.

Figure 1
Wages of HS
Graduates/GED
Holders by Sector
N=13028

Source: ACS PUMS 5
Year: 2013



Source: Pratt Center for Community Development, What Makes the City



GMDC, a non-profit industrial developer, operates six multi-tenant manufacturing buildings in Queens and Brooklyn; their work is one of the inspirations for the QPS building.

1155-1205 Manhattan Avenue, Greenpoint, Brooklyn.
Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center

Arts in LIC

As with manufacturers, working artists and arts collectives also need large, deeply affordable space, and access to such space is essential if New York is to support cultural diversity and equity. For decades, a significant population of working visual artists, dancers, and musicians has found studio and rehearsal space in Long Island City. The neighborhood's manufacturing zoning also accommodated performance and exhibition venues. But LIC manufacturing zone rents are now sky-high, a direct outcome of zoning changes.

The 2001 LIC rezoning under Mayor Michael Bloomberg allowed higher-rent commercial and residential towers to supplant manufacturing units, reducing their overall supply and exerting enormous upward pressure on rents. Working artists and arts organizations can generally afford to pay a maximum of \$15 per square foot annually, but the average rent for manufacturing space in LIC is now much higher (Class C rents in LIC are close to \$30 per square foot annually). Artists, arts collectives, and other cultural organizations are being priced out, and those like 5 Pointz, The Secret Theater, Spaceworks, Rioult Dance Center, and The Sandbox have already been lost or forced to move.

The displacement of artists and arts organizations from Long Island City is part of a citywide phenomenon. Across New York City, over 90 small performing arts organizations have closed in the past decade alone. This trend intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, when a massive number of studio and rehearsal spaces closed in Long Island City and across New York. The impact to artists and organizations in the outer boroughs was particularly keen, largely because NYC funding for arts and culture goes disproportionately to prominent institutions in Manhattan. According to the People's Cultural Plan, 77% of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs' funding in 2015 went to just 33 institutions; the other 23% was shared among 1000 organizations. That same year, Manhattan institutions received \$45.88 per capita in city cultural funding, 10 times the \$4.58 per capita awarded to institutions in Queens.

Local, non-professional artists and arts collectives—often hailing from immigrant and Black communities—also suffer when rents rise and they are priced out of the market for space. Queensbridge Houses has been a major source of rap music pioneers, yet it is doubtful that the young artists there can afford current rents for neighborhood music studios. We will likely never know how many more Western Queens visual artists, dancers, and filmmakers would thrive artistically if they had access to “rooms of their own.”

Part of the WQCLT's mission is to address these inequities by offering deeply affordable spaces to a broad range of individual working artists and arts organizations. Our hope is to offer all of our spaces at substantially below-market rents, but we aim to implement a sliding rental scale, so artists and organizations that can afford to pay more would make deeper affordability possible for those who have historically had no access to working space. We would love to bring the 5 Pointz collective and the Secret Theater back to Long Island City, where they belong. And we are looking to partner with arts organizations and collectives that could offer shared rehearsal and workspaces as well as free or deeply low-cost art classes to the Western Queens community.

Table 3: Borough Distributions of FY 2018 Non-CIG Grants

	No. of Organizations		Grants		Average
	Count	Share	Amount	Share	
Bronx	44	4.7%	\$3,308,625	8.1%	\$75,196
Brooklyn	194	20.7%	7,759,775	18.9%	39,999
Manhattan	608	64.9%	25,124,850	61.3%	41,324
Queens	71	7.6%	3,924,500	9.6%	55,275
Staten Island	20	2.1%	886,600	2.2%	44,330
Total	937	100.0%	\$41,004,350	100.0%	\$43,761

Source: <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Recreation/DCLA-Programs-Funding/y6fv-k6p7>

Table 4: Grants to Non-CIG Cultural Organizations FY 2014 and FY 2018

	FY 2014		FY 2018	
	Amount	Share	Amount	Share
Bronx	\$2,527,835	7.0%	\$3,308,625	8.1%
Brooklyn	5,846,085	17.8%	7,759,775	18.9%
Manhattan	19,942,585	63.0%	25,124,850	61.3%
Queens	3,373,580	10.1%	3,924,500	9.6%
Staten Island	651,855	2.0%	886,600	2.2%
Total	\$32,341,940	100.0%	\$41,004,350	100.0%

Close to one-third of the grants awarded in FY 2018 were to multi-disciplinary organizations, many of which support individual artists and organizations with resources, networks, and funding, such as the Queens Council on the Arts and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. As Table 5 shows, theater groups are the second largest recipient of non-CIG grants, followed by music organizations, museums, and dance companies.

Source: NYC Comptroller, Creative Economy. October 2019





The former 5Pointz Building, Long Island City, Queens, NY.

"Artists and cultural organizations...have a significant, unmet need for affordable space. Of those who responded to the survey, LIC's artists and cultural organizations reported that they expect to need a minimum of 175,000 additional square feet in the next five years; the overall demand for new space from the sector is likely greater. Additionally, artists and cultural organizations that responded to our survey indicated that the two most important space-related factors are availability of reasonably priced real estate and space that provides an industrial/open floor plan. Nearly half reported seeking rents below \$15 psf while just 18% indicated that rents above \$25 psf would be appropriate."

—Long Island City Partnership, Long Island City Comprehensive Plan Phase 1, 2016.



Culture Lab LIC.

Food Justice in LIC

Food security in Long Island City and across Western Queens is yet another casualty of the area’s gentrification. When fixed expenses like housing, transportation, medical bills and childcare go up, families are forced to cut out food. Moreover, as land prices and taxes rise, small neighborhood grocery stores can no longer afford to stay. As a result, Long Island City has earned a high score on the Department of City Planning’s Supermarket Need Index. Food quality is a related problem that seriously affects LIC’s low-income households, and residents of Queensbridge Houses have organized to demand better products and services from their campus grocery store.

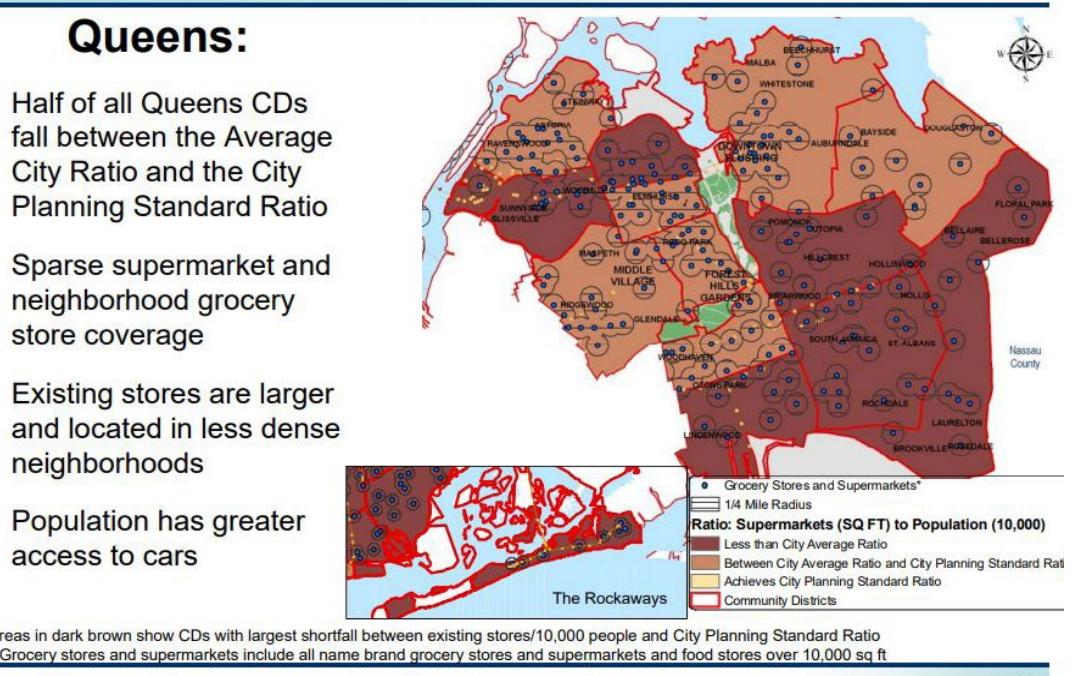
While food security and quality are of primary concern, food justice is also about the livelihoods of small businesses and their employees. New York City is home to tens of thousands of street vendors, many of whom are immigrants and people of color, and their ability to make a living, always tenuous, has become even harder. Whereas in the past, Long Island City was home to many commissary kitchens that served street vendors, new development has now displaced those kitchens. What’s more, vendors are facing escalating costs for reliable storage, kitchen spaces, ingredients and supplies, all of which eat into their already razor-thin profit margins and reduce the funds they need for licenses and permits.

A permanently affordable commissary space in QPS would significantly help Queens food truck vendors maintain their livelihoods. Similarly, a food co-operative under development by the Queens Action Council, which is interested in moving to the QPS, would provide residents of Western Queens with the healthy, affordable and culturally diverse food that is their right. The prospective food co-op has been enthusiastically endorsed by tenants from all four Western Queens NYCHA developments and by shoppers canvassed at City Harvest mobile markets and other community events. Finally, a rooftop garden and greenhouse managed by Hellgate Farms would provide fresh vegetables plus educational and workforce development services.

All of these enterprises—the commissary kitchen, food co-op, and farm—would generate jobs. The Food Co-op would sell food from the rooftop farm and be a wholesaler for street food vendors who do food preparation in the commissary kitchen. The community would benefit from lower food prices at the co-op, which would source not only from the rooftop, but from other local food producers. Street vendors would be able to purchase, prepare, and store food in one central and secure location. Coexisting in the building, these businesses would be community owned and democratically controlled—for the people, by the people.

In Queens, 12% of individuals and 21% of households receive SNAP benefits, as of 2019. The use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, or food stamps, is an indicator of food insecurity; the majority of households that receive SNAP are food insecure.
—Citizen’s Committee for Children of New York

Grocery Stores to People by Community District (CD)



Source: New York City’s Neighborhood Grocery Store and Supermarket Shortage presentation 2018.



The Smiling Hogshead Ranch, Sunnyside, Queens.



Pandemic mutual aid at Ravenswood Houses.

Care in LIC

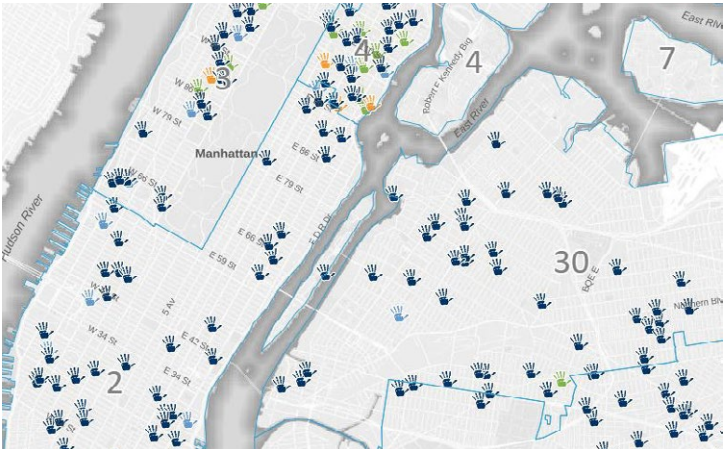
Urban policy makers increasingly recognize that childcare, healthcare, and youth development are forms of critical infrastructure. Neighborhood-based clinics, child and infant care centers, schools, and youth enrichment facilities develop and heal individuals, and they strengthen families. Their impact on a community's general well-being and quality of life is often significant, and they can also provide local employment opportunities. There is a particularly acute need for affordable childcare in New York City, where (as of 2019) 70 percent of single mothers, 68% of women overall with children under six, and 82 percent of single fathers were in the labor force.

In Western Queens, with its growing residential population, care infrastructure is struggling to keep pace with need. According to a 2019 report by former Comptroller Scott Stringer, Sunnyside and Woodside are among the top ten neighborhoods in the city with the lowest early-life childcare capacity in both center-based and home-based facilities. (Stringer's report also highlights the profound long-term social and economic benefits of quality infant and toddler care). And the US Health Resources & Services Administration has cited Long Island City and parts of Astoria as Medically Underserved Areas, with a shortage of primary care health services. Speaking with community members at the Western Queens Summer Jam, we learned that there is a particularly dire shortage of maternal and birthing care providers in Western Queens neighborhoods. The Queensboro People's Space would be able to centralize these essential providers in a convenient location.

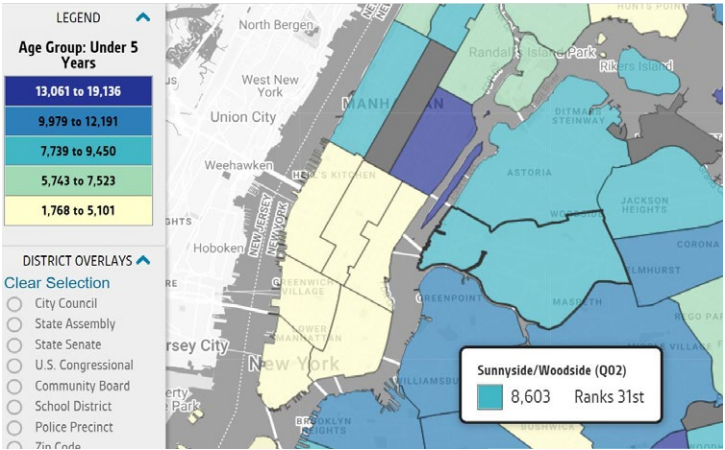
Access to good education and mentoring is another kind of care that is deficient in Western Queens. Public schools here are operating at near or above capacity, with elementary schools in School District 30 at 96% of capacity, middle schools at 93% capacity, combined elementary/middle schools at 114% of capacity, and high schools at 105% of capacity. During our focus groups, representatives of social services and child/youth development organizations expressed a serious desire to expand their enrichment programs, and NYCHA residents agreed that greater access to youth programming and workforce development are among their highest priorities. Yet there is little, if any, available space in which to provide these essential services.

Job training as a social support

The lack of well-paying jobs is an acute problem in LIC as elsewhere in the city. Many New Yorkers, particularly those without a college degree, struggle to get by with minimum wage or service economy jobs. One source of decent-paying employment has been the blue-collar sector, which has dwindled in NYC along with displacement in industrial areas. In addition to offering affordable rents for manufacturers, WQCLT hopes to house organizations that offer robust blue-collar and tech workforce training, with a particular focus on residents of nearby NYCHA developments. We also hope to create a jobs pipeline to firms that locate in the building.



Source: NYC Childcare providers.
nyc.gov



Source: Child Population
The Status of New York City Children

A family's child care bill can be one of their biggest expenses, if not the biggest. A space in a child care center for an infant in New York City costs over \$21,000 per year—more than three times as much as in-state tuition at The City University of New York and exceeding median rent in every borough.

—NYC Under 3: A Plan to Make Child Care Affordable for New York City Families. May 2019



Pandemic mutual aid at Ravenswood Houses.



The Floating Hospital, Queens, NY.

Community Engagement, Envisioning, and Programming



Community engagement is a vital resource in establishing trust and understanding within the diverse groups that call LIC their home.

WQCLT is committed to providing deeply affordable spaces that will bring much-needed jobs, workforce training, and affordable commercial space to western Queens via the community land trust model. We understand the importance of truly listening to the community and providing them with the resources to flourish.



Community Launch Event for WQCLT at Jacob Riis Center, Queensbridge Houses, Queens (2020)



Community tabling at Queens Solidarity Festival, Rainey Park, Astoria, Queens. (2021)

Envisioning



Community tabling at Queensbridge Houses, Queensbridge, Queens. (2021)



Community tabling at the Western Queens Summer Jam, Sunnyside, Queens. (2021)



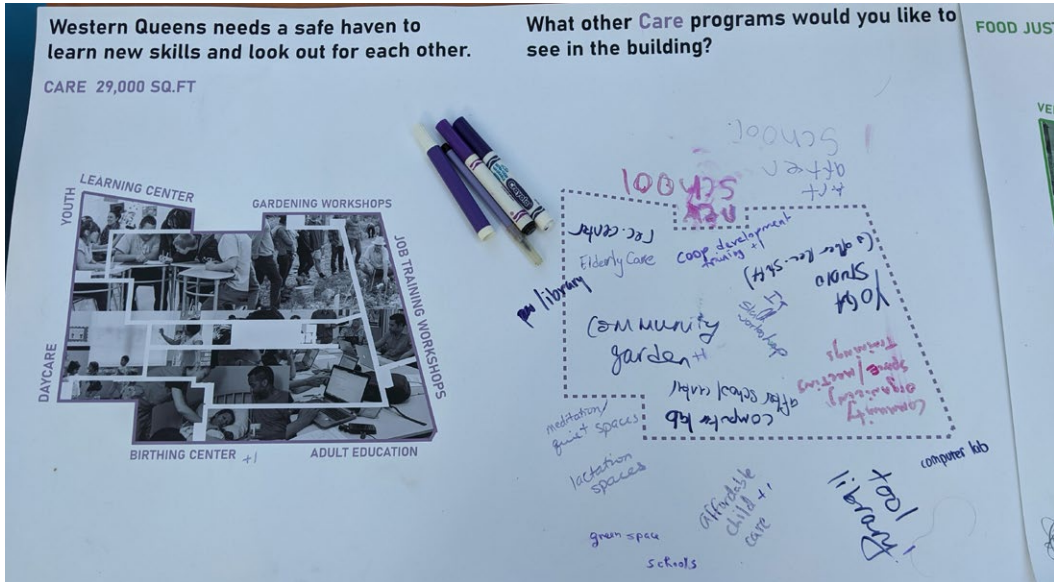
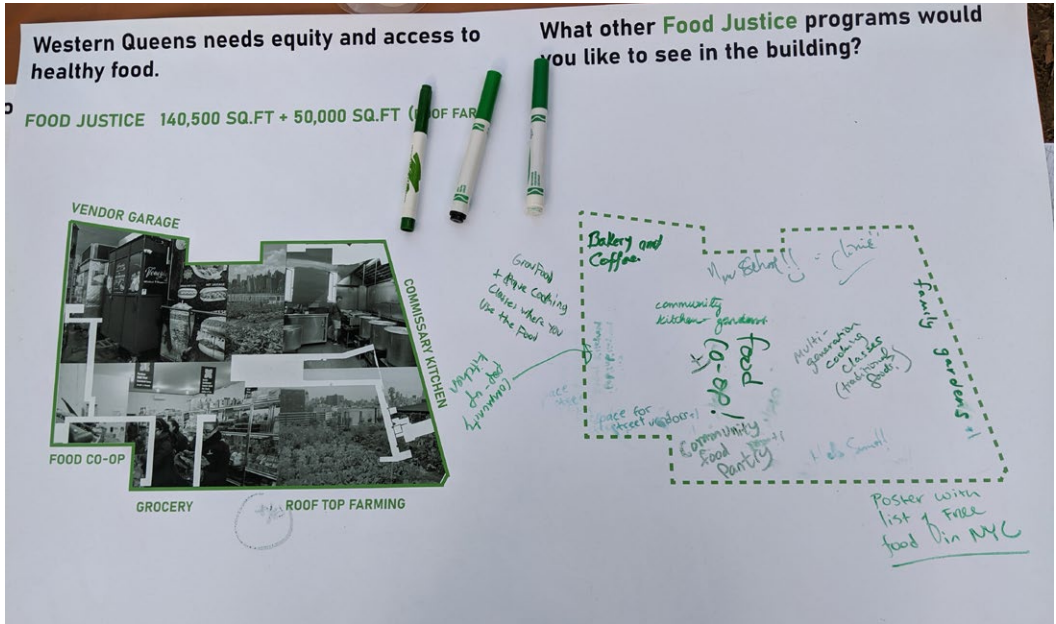
Community tabling at Queens Solidarity Festival at Rainey Park, Astoria, Queens. (2021)

Throughout the summer of 2021, WQCLT hosted several tabling events across Western Queens to speak directly with residents about the QPS project, to enlist their help and advice regarding how our project can best serve the needs of the community.

WQCLT also organized several online envisioning workshops with a cross-section of community groups and leaders, described on page 26.



Community tabling at the Public Land in People's Hands Community Festival at Queensbridge Park, Queens. (2021)



Residents wrote down programs that they would like to see in their neighbourhood at the Public Land in People's Hands Community Festival.



Queens Action Council discusses food justice with community residents at the Public Land in the People's Hands Community Festival. Queensbridge Park, Queens.



The Street Vendor Project distributing meals at the Public Land in the People's Hands Community Festival Queensbridge Park, Queens.



Community tabling at the Western Queens Summer Jam.
Sunnyside, Queens (2021)

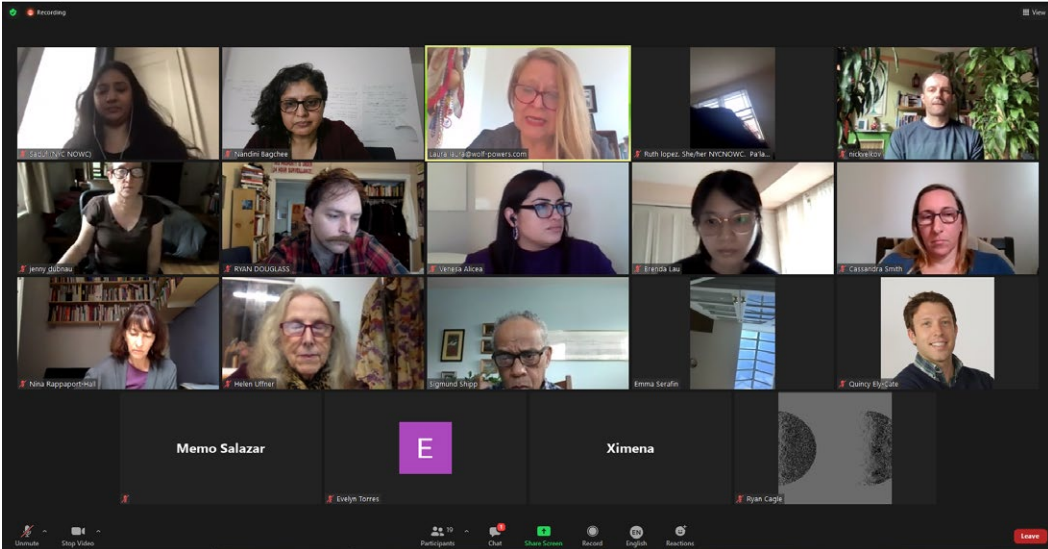


Public Land in People's Hands Community Festival at Queensbridge Park, Queens.
(2021)

Programming and Visioning

Our online envisioning workshops engaged a cross-section of community groups and leaders, non-profit organizations, artists, entrepreneurs, local businesses (big and small), and the public-at-large to discuss the obstacles they face trying to find and maintain affordable space. Workshops were divided

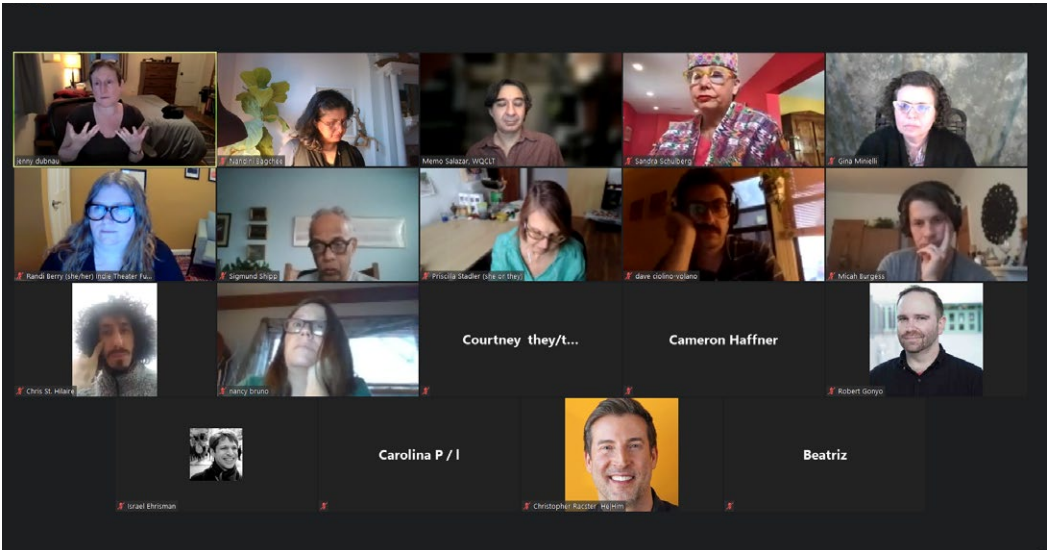
by program—Manufacturing, Food Justice, Arts, and Care—and additional workshops were held with key constituents, including NYCHA residents and local activists and organizers. The workshops provided first-hand information on how the deeply affordable spaces at QPS could best serve the idiosyncratic needs of these diverse groups.



Manufacturing Visioning workshop.
May 2021



Meeting with NYCHA residents and activists.
April 2021



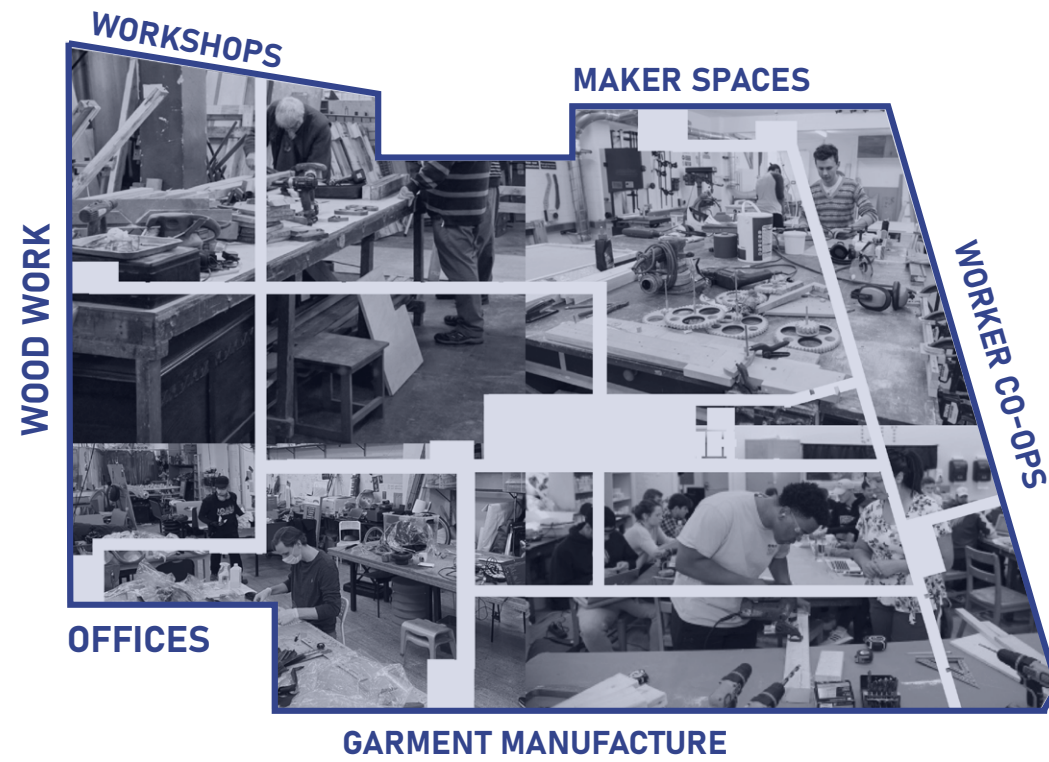
Arts Visioning workshop.
April 2021



Meeting with The Street Vendor Project.
June 2021



Tour of Best of The Best Garage & Commissary kitchen, located on Vernon and 38th, LIC, Queens. July, 2021



1155-1205 Manhattan Avenue, Greenpoint, Brooklyn.
Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center

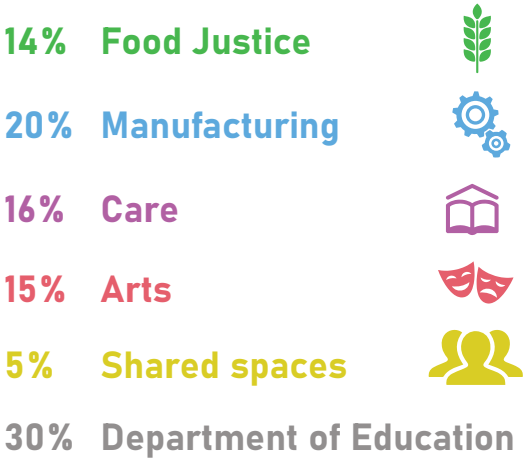
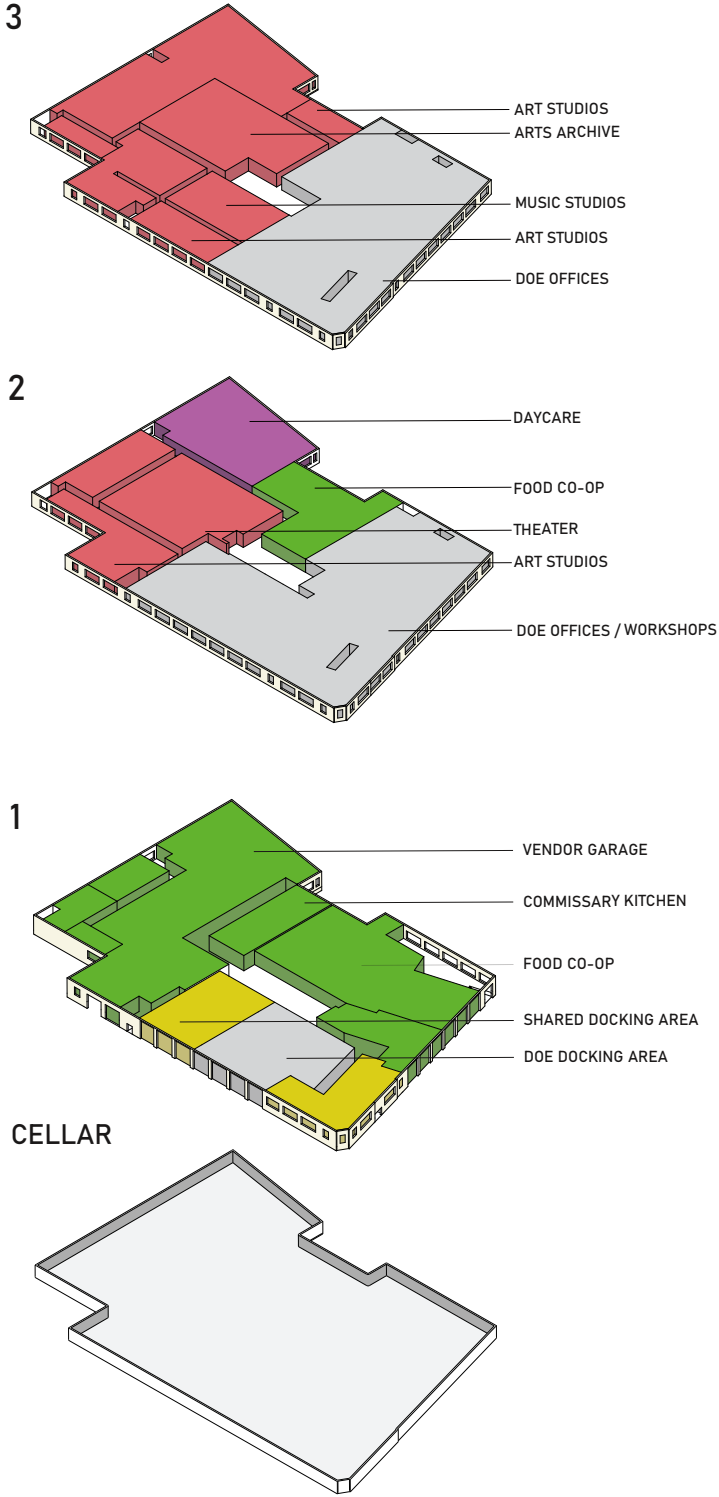
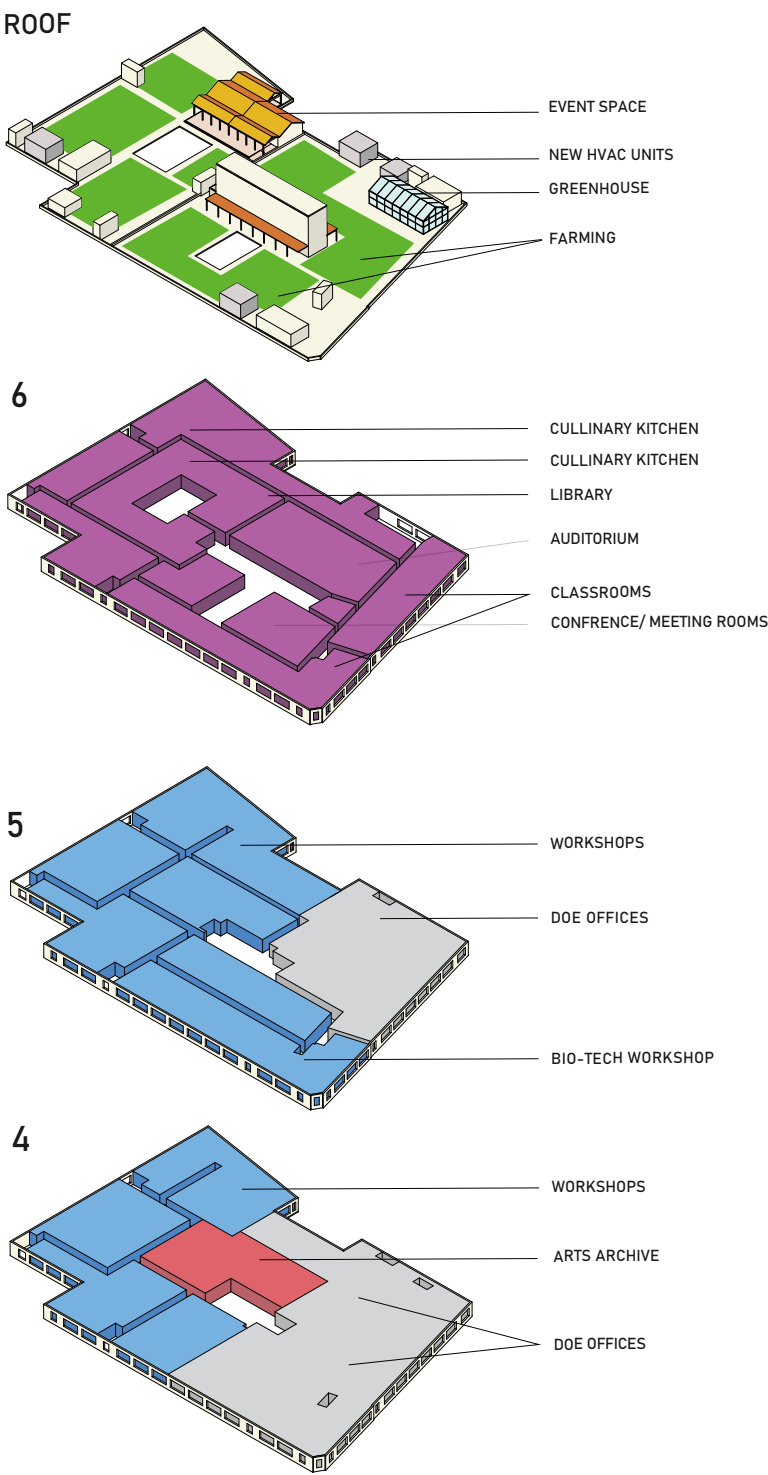


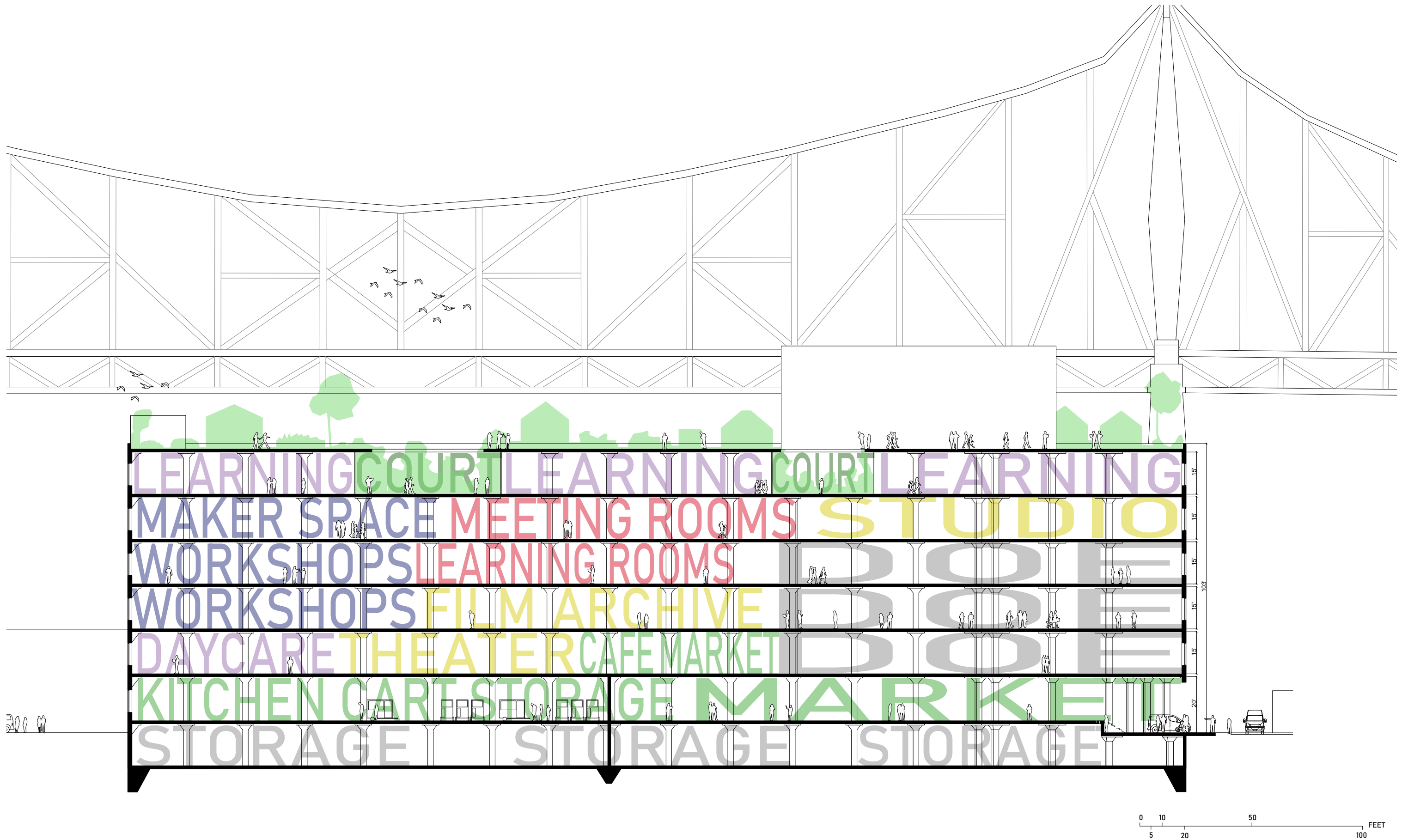
The Connected Chef, Long Island City, Queens.

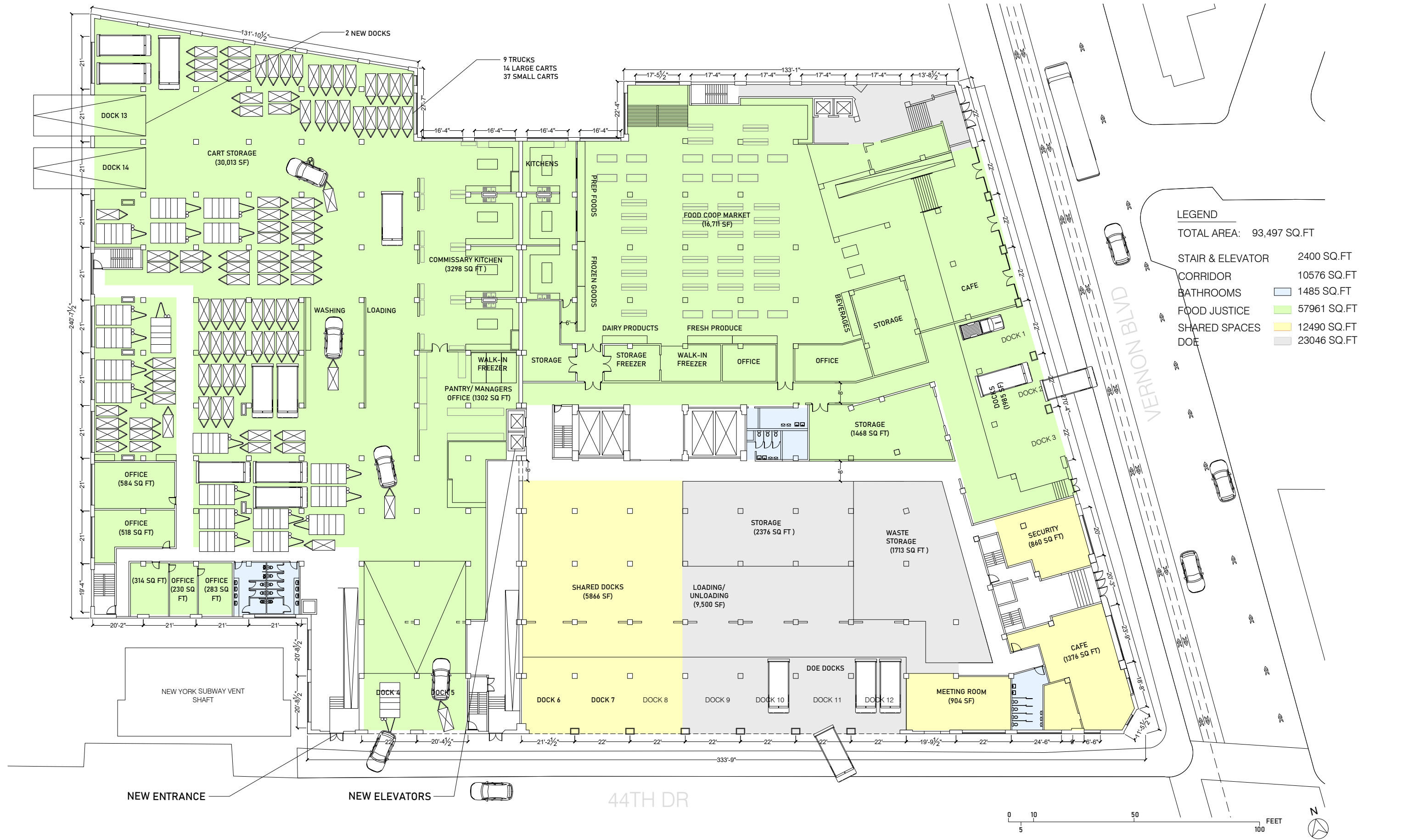


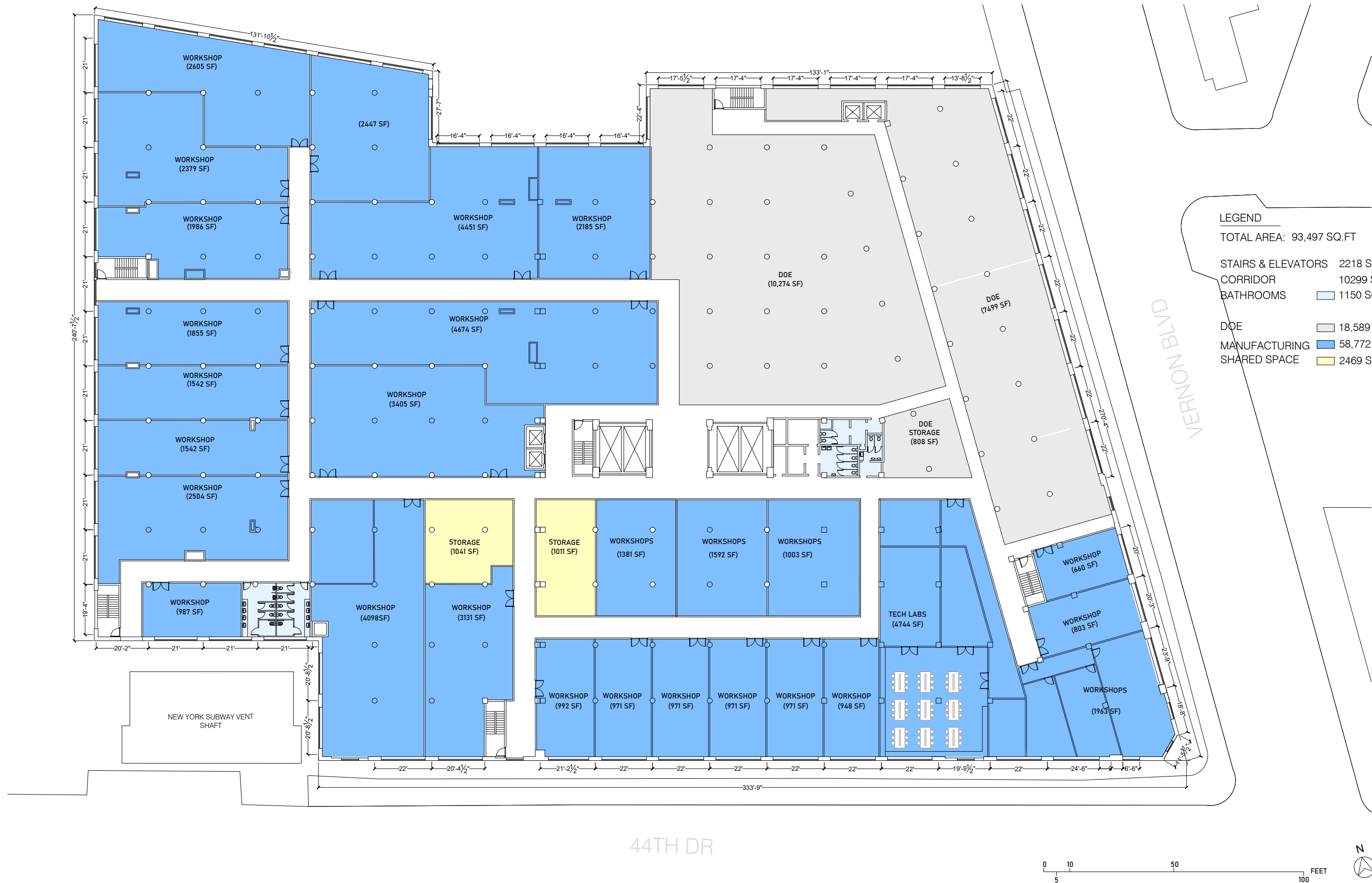
The Sunnyside Community Services pumpkin painting workshop, Sunnyside, Queens.

Proposed Use

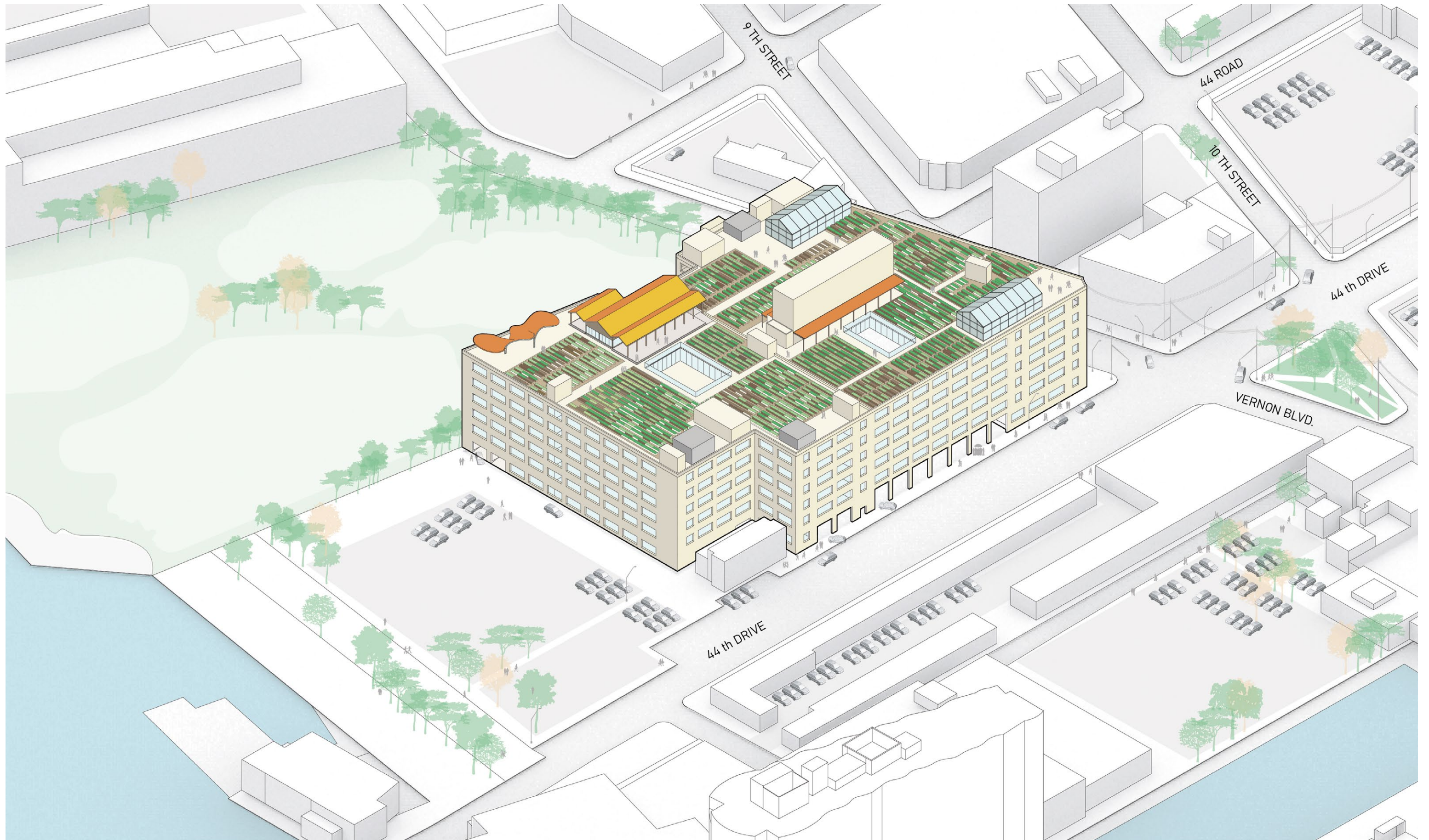


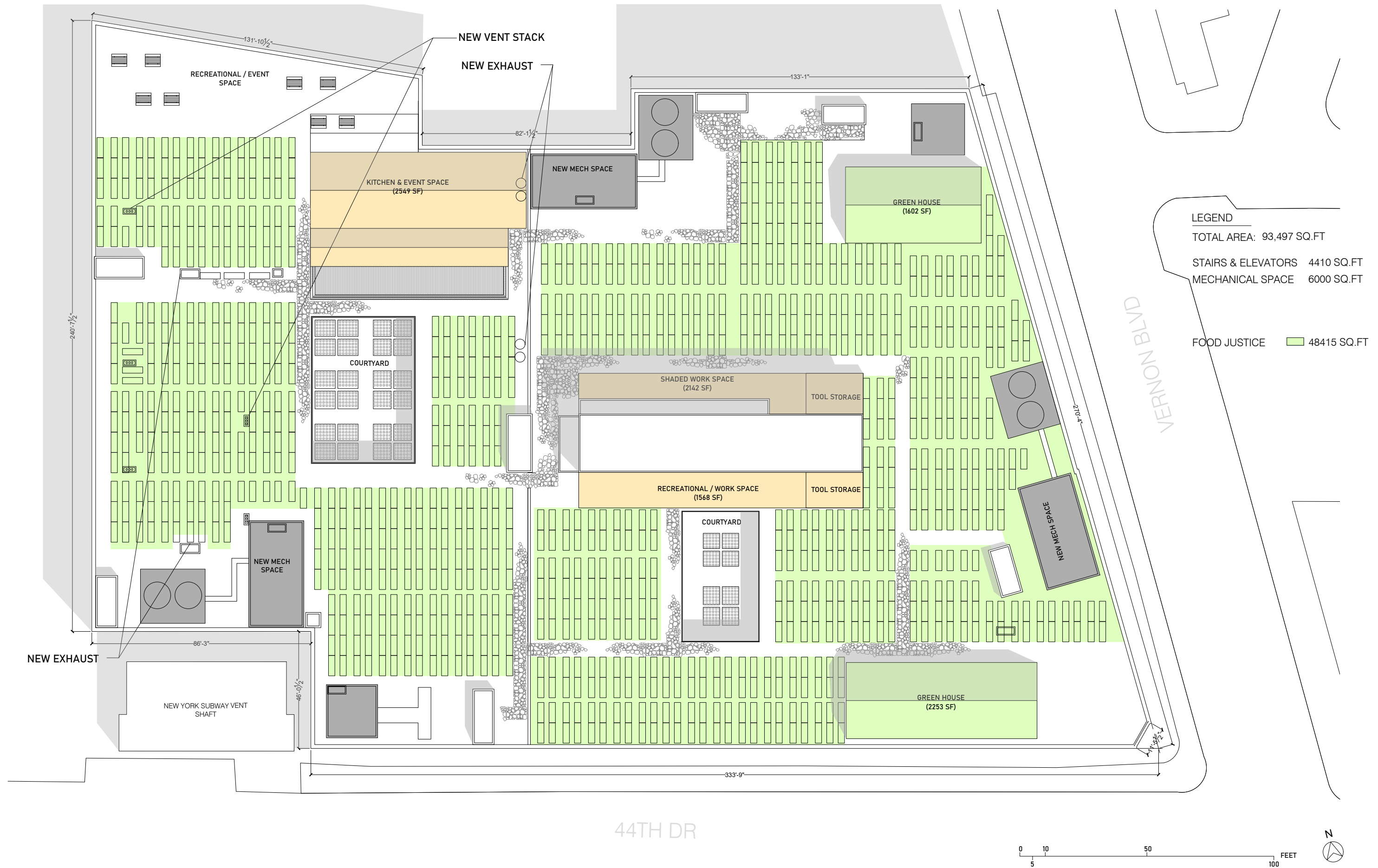












Space Allocation

WQCLT understands that this centrally located building is vital to multiple functions of the DOE. We have therefore envisioned thirty percent of the Queensboro People’s Space to remain occupied by the Department of Education. This number may expand or contract, as needed, based on future conversations.

Envisioning Partners

Note: The firms and organizations described in this report gave their time to help WQCLT understand the physical and infrastructural requirements needed to accommodate industrial, small business and arts tenants in a multi-use building. Because the Queensboro People’s Space is in a very early stage, it is impossible to know who will end up actually renting space, but we are grateful for everyone’s participation in the visioning process.

Food Justice

QUAC (Queens Action Council)

Queens Action Council is a coalition of Queens residents and advocates working together on food justice for the community.

Smiling Hogshead Ranch

Smiling Hogshead Ranch is an agriculture farm and community garden by day, and a social club and cultural venue by night. Through events and outreach, they strive to create a safer, green space within our urban jungle.

Street Vendor Project

The Street Vendor Project is a membership-based project with more than 1,800 active vendor members who are working together to create a vendors’ movement for permanent change. They reach out to vendors in the streets and storage garages and teach them about their legal rights and responsibilities.

Hellgate Farm

Hellgate Farm is network of satellite gardens in Northwest Queens, with a large farm in Canaan, New York. The farm has turned multiple underutilized spaces and non-agricultural land into productive gardens. They also run Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, and teach skills like gardening and carpentry to the community.

The Connected Chef

The Connected Chef is a collective of professional chefs who started off with teaching families how to cook and garden with what they had available. During Covid the Connected Chef launched the Lifeline Grocery Initiative and began ordering nutrient-dense groceries from restaurant wholesalers, repackaged the food into individual bags and directly delivered them to any household out of work and unable to collect unemployment.

Hot Bread Kitchen

Hot Bread Kitchen creates economic opportunity for immigrant women and women of color through job skills training, food entrepreneurship programs, and an ecosystem of support in New York City. Hot Bread Kitchen’s work builds on their 10-year history of providing social services, skills coaching, job placement and entrepreneurship programming as well as their vast connections and employer relationships that put workers and small businesses on a path to economic security and mobility.

WQCLT has also had input from other food justice organizations and collectives, including The Astoria Fridge, Transform America, and the Western Queens Food Co-op organizing committee.

The projected rents in the tables that follow are a conservative estimate, based on estimated rehabilitation costs. WQCLT is committed to achieving the lowest rents possible in the QPS building, and will continue to seek cost-savings and alternative funding sources to enable the lowest rents possible for the constituencies that we seek to serve. We are also exploring a sliding scale structure for greater equity.

Table 1. Preliminary Space Allocation and Rent Roll: First Floor

Floor	Use	Proposed Sq.Ft	Rent/ Sq.Ft	Total Rent
First	Commissary Kitchen & Garage	34985	15	524775
First	Food Coop Market	21626	20	432520
First	Café	1350	20	27000
First	Meeting Room (Time share)	904	24	21696
First	Security office/ Reception	871	N/A	
First	Building Management	4849	N/A	
First	Shared Dock	5866	N/A	
First	DOE Docks	9500	35	332500
First	Circulation/ Bathroom	13546		
Total		93497		1338491

First Floor

The first floor of the building has a total of 15 existing docks on both street fronts, three of which will be closed to extend the food co-op. Two new docks will be added on the western facade facing the parking lot to provide additional points of entry for the street vendor garage.

Care

A Child's Place Daycare Center

A Child's Place Daycare is a family-owned daycare center promoting academic learning in all their school programs, and across all stages.

21 Ethos

21 Ethos prepares students for the future through technical skills-building, innovative workshops and programming.

Sunnyside Community Services

Sunnyside Community Services offers a range of life-enhancing programs that benefit approximately 14,000 individuals per year. From Early Childhood Education to Senior Services, they provide programs for all ages.

Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement

The mission of Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement is to build and strengthen underserved communities in Western Queens and to act as a catalyst for change.

The Floating Hospital

The Floating Hospital been a charitable institution in New York City since its formation in 1866—shortly after the end of the U.S. Civil War. Since then, it has relied on the generosity of patrons to support and maintain its mission of providing medical care and compassionate relief to the city's most vulnerable populations. That mission today helps families and children experiencing homelessness receive essential primary care and health education.

Table 2. Preliminary Space Allocation and Rent Roll: Second Floor

Floor	Use	Proposed Sq.Ft	Rent/ Sq.Ft	Total Rent
Second	Market	6050	18	108900
Second	Daycare	10350	20	207000
Second	Art Studio (3)	1134	18	20412
Second	Art Studio (3)	831	18	14958
Second	Art Studio (3)	831	18	14958
Second	Art Studio (3)	831	18	14958
Second	Art Studio	778	18	14004
Second	Art Studio (4)	924	18	16632
Second	Art Studio (6)	1288	18	23184
Second	Theater Workshop	2840	15	42600
Second	150 seat Performance space /Theater (2)	10775	20	215500
Second	DOE Workshops/ Offices	39462	35	1381170
Second	Circulation/ Bathroom	17403		
Total		93497		2074276

Second Floor

The overall strategy for the upper floors is based on access to light. Following this strategy, the art studios are placed along the perimeter and two 150 seat performance theater are located at the center. This floor also houses the daycare center and the food co-op.

The DOE would remain on the eastern half of the building.



Queens Action Council (QUAC) at Ravenswood Houses. (page 40)

Arts

Indie Collect

The mission of Indie Collect is to save American independent films from the risk of extinction; educate filmmakers about the urgent need to preserve our collective body of work; secure long-term archival storage for indie films at no cost to the filmmakers; and register every indie title in their unique IndieCollect Index so that each film becomes discoverable.

Indie Space

IndieSpace creates permanent real estate solutions for the independent theater community. By delivering affordable creative space for a diversity of performing artists along with supportive programming, IndieSpace will help preserve and enhance a vital piece of the cultural lives of New Yorkers.

ART House Astoria

Art House Astoria is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a mission to bring high quality affordable visual and performing arts education for all ages and abilities to Astoria and the surrounding Queens area in a joyful and supportive environment.

WQCLT has also had input from other cultural organizations and collectives, including The Secret Theater, Theater Co-op East, Martinez Dance Studio, The Queensboro Dance Festival and the Artist Studio Affordability Project—along with many individual working artists struggling to afford space in Western Queens.

The Sound Mind Collective (SMC)

The Sound Mind Collective (SMC) is a musician-led community organization founded in 2017 by Chris St. Hilaire, Katherine Powell, and Nikhil P. Yerawadekar. SMC is devoted to empowering independent music makers to lead healthier lives and careers and to strengthening independent music culture in NYC.

Local Project

Since its beginning in 2003, Local Project has served as a gallery for art exhibitions, organizing multidisciplinary shows, bringing together both young and experienced artists for collective shows. The shows are put together between the artists, the Local Project crew, and volunteers. As artists, they understand the need for an alternative space and platforms for showing art as well as fostering community.

5Pointz

The 5Pointz collective of graffiti artists was famously displaced from their landmark building in LIC when it was destroyed by a real estate developer. The 5Pointz building was considered to be “the world’s premier graffiti mecca,” where aerosol artists from around the globe covered the walls with colorful graffiti art. The building was filled with affordable artist studios.



Art exhibition at Local Project.

Table 3. Preliminary Space Allocation and Rent Roll: Third Floor

Floor	Use	Proposed Sq.Ft	Rent/ Sq.Ft	Total Rent
Third	Art Gallery	3564	15	53460
Third	Arts Studio	1165	18	20970
Third	Arts Studio (2)	617	18	11106
Third	Arts Studio (2)	543	18	9774
Third	Arts Studio (2)	614	18	11052
Third	Arts Studio (2)	639	18	11502
Third	Arts Studio (5)	1192	18	21456
Third	Arts Studio (3)	920	18	16560
Third	Arts Studio (3)	981	18	17658
Third	Arts Studio (3)	1089	18	19602
Third	Arts Studio (3)	1198	18	21564
Third	Arts Studio (3)	927	18	16686
Third	Arts Studio (3)	944	18	16992
Third	Arts Studio (3)	926	18	16668
Third	Arts Studio (3)	821	18	14778
Third	Arts Studio (3)	801	18	14418
Third	Arts Studio (3)	847	18	15246
Third	Arts Studio (3)	962	18	17316
Third	Arts Studio (3)	784	18	14112
Third	Arts Studio (3)	801	18	14418
Third	Arts Studio (3)	781	18	14058
Third	Music Studio	1640	18	29520
Third	Music Studio	1214	18	21852
Third	Music Studio	1559	18	28062
Third	Music Studio	1477	18	26586
Third	Music Studio	1262	18	22716
Third	Music Studio	1262	18	22716
Third	Music Studio	1262	18	22716
Third	Arts Archive	12988	15	194820
Third	Storage	1000	15	15000
Third	DOE Workshops/ Offices	32,811	35	1148385
Third	Circulation/ Bath-room	15,906	N/A	
Total		93,497		1901769

Third Floor

The third floor includes additional art studios and music rooms.

Manufacturing and small businesses

New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives

The New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives (NYC-NOWC) is the trade association for worker cooperative businesses in the NYC Metropolitan Region. It was founded by a community of local worker-members, labor organizers, developers, lawyers, and academics in 2009 and currently supports dozens of worker-owned businesses through advocacy as well as “back office” services such as marketing, bookkeeping, digital media services and legal services.

Ferrara Manufacturing

Given the proximity of Long Island City to the recently rezoned Garment Center in Midtown Manhattan, the Western Queens Bridge Building could be part of a new fashion ecosystem emerging across the East River from the fashion hub. As part of its visioning, WQCLT held a conversation with Gabrielle Ferrara, the President of Ferrara Manufacturing and a member of the city’s Manufacturing and Industrial Innovation Council. Ferrara is currently located in Manhattan but is building a new headquarters in Dutch Kills; its owners would welcome new neighbors in the Long Island City Industrial Business Zone as pattern-makers, wholesalers, and contract manufacturers re-agglomerate outside of the city’s traditional fashion district.

Helen Uffner Vintage clothing

Helen Uffner Vintage Clothing has been renting authentic period clothing and accessories to the entertainment and fashion industries for over 43 years. Based in LIC with a meticulously racked 8,000 square-foot collection comprising of 1860’s-1980’s women’s, men’s and children’s clothing and accessories. Uffner Vintage Clothing was recently displaced from a space it was renting in Long Island City, and has been unable to find a similar affordable space anywhere in the area.

Yoga Agora

Yoga Agora is a neighborhood yoga studio in the heart of Astoria. Since 2010, Yoga Agora has been a local destination for anyone in need of a communal space to move, breathe and meditate.

MIBA (Maspeth Industrial Business Association)

The Maspeth Industrial Business Association Industrial (MIBA), a project of the Business Outreach Center Network, provides a collective voice in advocating the needs and interests of industrial and manufacturing businesses in Maspeth, Queens in New York City. MIBA promotes the development and retention of these businesses and connects them with resources and opportunities to maximize their competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center

The GMDC is a non-profit industrial developer that owns and manages flexible, affordable space for manufacturing businesses in six buildings across Brooklyn and Queens. During the visioning process, GMDC provided pragmatic support and advice about financing industrial development, managing space for industrial tenants, and navigating the architectural joys and challenges of pre-war industrial buildings.

Table 4. Preliminary Space Allocation and Rent Roll: Fourth Floor

Floor	Use	Proposed Sq.Ft	Rent/ Sq.Ft	Total Rent
Fourth	Arts Archive	9863	15	147945
Fourth	Workshop	1544	20	30880
Fourth	Workshop	1202	20	24040
Fourth	Workshop	1057	20	21140
Fourth	Workshop	3240	18	58320
Fourth	Workshop	3757	18	67626
Fourth	Workshop	1029	20	20580
Fourth	Workshop	2927	20	58540
Fourth	Workshop	3256	18	58608
Fourth	Workshop	1434	20	28680
Fourth	Workshop	987	20	19740
Fourth	Workshop	4904	18	88272
Fourth	Workshop	1736	20	34720
Fourth	Workshop	1759	20	35180
Fourth	Workshop	5141	18	92538
Fourth	DOE Workshops/ Offices	40,363	35	1412705
Fourth	Circulation/ Bath-room	9,298		
Total		93,497		2199514

Fourth Floor

The fourth floor is largely dedicated to manufacturing, with a large arts archival space located at the core. The floor also houses the DOE workshops and offices.



Helen Uffner Vintage Clothing (recently displaced from Long Island City).

Table 5. Preliminary Space Allocation and Rent Roll: Fifth Floor

Floor	Use	Proposed Sq.Ft	Rent/ Sq.Ft	Total Rent
Fifth	Bio-Tech Lab	4744	20	94880
Fifth	Workshops	1011	20	20220
Fifth	Workshops	1381	20	27620
Fifth	Workshops	1592	20	31840
Fifth	Workshops	1003	20	20060
Fifth	Workshops	992	18	17856
Fifth	Workshops	971	20	19420
Fifth	Workshops	971	20	19420
Fifth	Workshops	971	20	19420
Fifth	Workshops	971	20	19420
Fifth	Workshops	948	20	18960
Fifth	Workshops (3)	1963	20	39260
Fifth	Workshops	803	18	14454
Fifth	Workshops	660	20	13200
Fifth	Workshops	3131	18	56358
Fifth	Workshops	4098	18	20020
Fifth	Workshops	987	20	19740
Fifth	Workshops	2504	20	50080
Fifth	Workshops	1542	20	30840
Fifth	Workshops	1542	20	30840
Fifth	Workshops	1855	20	37100
Fifth	Workshops	1986	20	39720
Fifth	Workshops	2379	20	47580
Fifth	Workshops	2605	20	52100
Fifth	Workshops	2447	20	48940
Fifth	Workshops	4451	18	80118
Fifth	Workshops	2185	20	43700
Fifth	Workshops	4674	18	84132
Fifth	Workshops	3405	18	61290
Fifth	Storage	2469	18	44442
Fifth	DOE Workshops/ Offices	18589	35	650615
Fifth	Circulation/ Bath- room	13667	N/A	
Total		93497		1773645

Astoria Woodworkers Collective

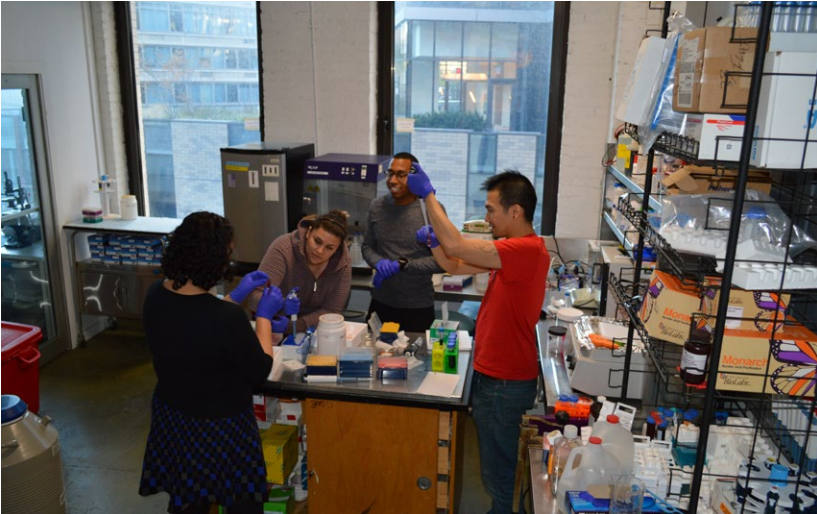
The Astoria Woodworkers Collective is a local nonprofit that provides resources and educational initiatives to aspiring woodworkers of all ages and abilities throughout the community. Through virtual and in-person classes, as well as community-centered projects for local nonprofits and mutual aid groups, AWC gives its members hands-on education, along with an opportunity to give back. They are in the process of creating a tool lending library, with the goal of establishing a shared workspace where members can hone their skills in and develop their own personal or professional relationship with woodworking.

Biotech Without Borders

Biotech Without Borders is a non-profit organization committed to increasing the accessibility of scientific resources and knowledge, especially among socially and economically marginalized groups. They provide education, lab facilities, and a forum for critical discussions to support responsible innovation in biotechnology.

Fifth Floor

The Fifth floor will house a variety of workshop spaces ranging from large shared workshops to small individually leased spaces.



Biotech Without Borders .

Custom Collaborative

Custom Collaborative is a non-profit organization and social enterprise that trains, mentors, and advocates for and with no/low-income and immigrant women to build the skills necessary to achieve economic success in the fashion industry. Custom Collaborative's training institute, garment production workshop, and business incubator program help women learn sewing and business management skills; the organization specializes in teaching how to construct made-to-measure clothing and personalized accessories for all body types. Their training includes extensive instruction in fashion business basics including marketing, sourcing, ethical manufacturing, and sustainability, along with personal finance. Custom Collaborative is seeking affordably priced workshop space proximate to the city's Garment Center.



Custom Collaborative, trains, mentors, and advocates for and with no/low-income and immigrant women to build the skills necessary to achieve economic success in the sustainable fashion industry and broader society.

Table 6. Preliminary Space Allocation and Rent Roll: Sixth Floor

Floor	Use	Proposed Sq.Ft	Rent/ Sq.Ft	Total Rent
Sixth	Classrooms A	7420	20	148400
Sixth	Classrooms B	7256	20	145120
Sixth	Classrooms C	7336	20	146720
Sixth	Classrooms D	3661	20	73220
Sixth	Classroom	1909	20	38180
Sixth	Classroom	1805	20	36100
Sixth	Library	7788	25	194700
Sixth	Auditorium	4565	25	114125
Sixth	8 Meeting Rooms (Time share)	10296	24	247104
Sixth	Offices A (9)	5949	24	142776
Sixth	Offices B (6)	3981	24	95544
Sixth	Offices C (3)	2332	24	55968
Sixth	Culinary Kitchen	4050	20	81000
Sixth	Auditorium	4265	20	85300
Sixth	Youth Learning Center	1108	24	26592
Sixth	Storage Room	1578	15	23670
Sixth	Building Management	1764	N/A	
Sixth	Circulation/ Bath-room	16434	N/A	
Total		93497		1654519

Sixth Floor

The sixth Floor is dedicated to education, encompassing a library, classrooms for after school programs, job training workshops, a culinary kitchen and youth centers.

Table 7. Preliminary Space Allocation and Rent Roll: Roof

Floor	Use	Proposed Sq.Ft	Rent/ Sq.Ft	Total Rent
Roof	Roof-top Farm	48415	10	484150
Roof	Event Space	2549	30	76470
Total		50964		560620

Roof

The roof is lined with nearly 30,000 linear square feet suitable for urban farming, including gardening beds and a large green house. The farm will be operated by local community farming groups such as Hellgate Farm, located in Astoria, and Smiling Hogshead Ranch in Sunnyside. For additional revenue, a large event space is also incorporated into the proposal, which can be leased out for community events.



Hot Bread Kitchen (page 40).

Financial Projection

Revenues:

Based on the preceding projected rent roll, the proposed project would generate **\$11,502,834** annually in gross leasing income. As outlined in the above tables and accompanying narrative, this projection is informed by current prices in LIC as of December 2021 and the desire to offer truly affordable spaces.

WQCLT is committed to achieving the deepest levels of affordability possible. We know that many NYCHA residents wanting to start a business, jobs-producing manufacturers, and working artists can only afford rents that are far below current market rates. We intend to pursue multiple alternative financing sources for building rehabilitation to bring down borrowing costs—and thereby rents. Our hope is to attain lower rents than we are currently projecting.

OPERATING PRO FORMA ESTIMATES—QUEENSBORO PEOPLE'S SPACE			
INCOME			
	Gross income	\$	11,502,834
	(Vacancy and non-collection)	\$	(805,198)
	Effective gross income	\$	10,697,636
EXPENSES			
	(Operating expenses)	\$	(5,669,746.88)
NET OPERATING INCOME		\$	5,027,888.74

Rehabilitation Cost Analysis

Existing conditions

These findings are based on conversations with the building’s chief Custodian Engineer.

- There are 24 hydraulic pumps installed in the basement to combat storm surges.
- The building does not have a functioning boiler—it was damaged during Hurricane Sandy (over 6 million dollars have been allotted for fixing the boiler—none of the allotted money has been used).
- Most of the building does not have central air conditioning (less than 300,000 square feet).
- Two of the four freight elevators are inoperable due to Hurricane Sandy.
- The building is structurally sound.
- The sprinkler systems are well kept and up to date. The sprinklers are gravity-fed by an intensive suppression tower system located on the roof.

Anticipated building infrastructure upgrade cost : \$135 per sq. ft *

*Note: All leasable spaces to be fitted by tenants.

TOTAL ESTIMATED REHAB COST	
Total Gross Area	560982 sq. ft
Building infrastructure upgrade per sq. ft	\$135
Total Rehab Cost	\$75,732,570

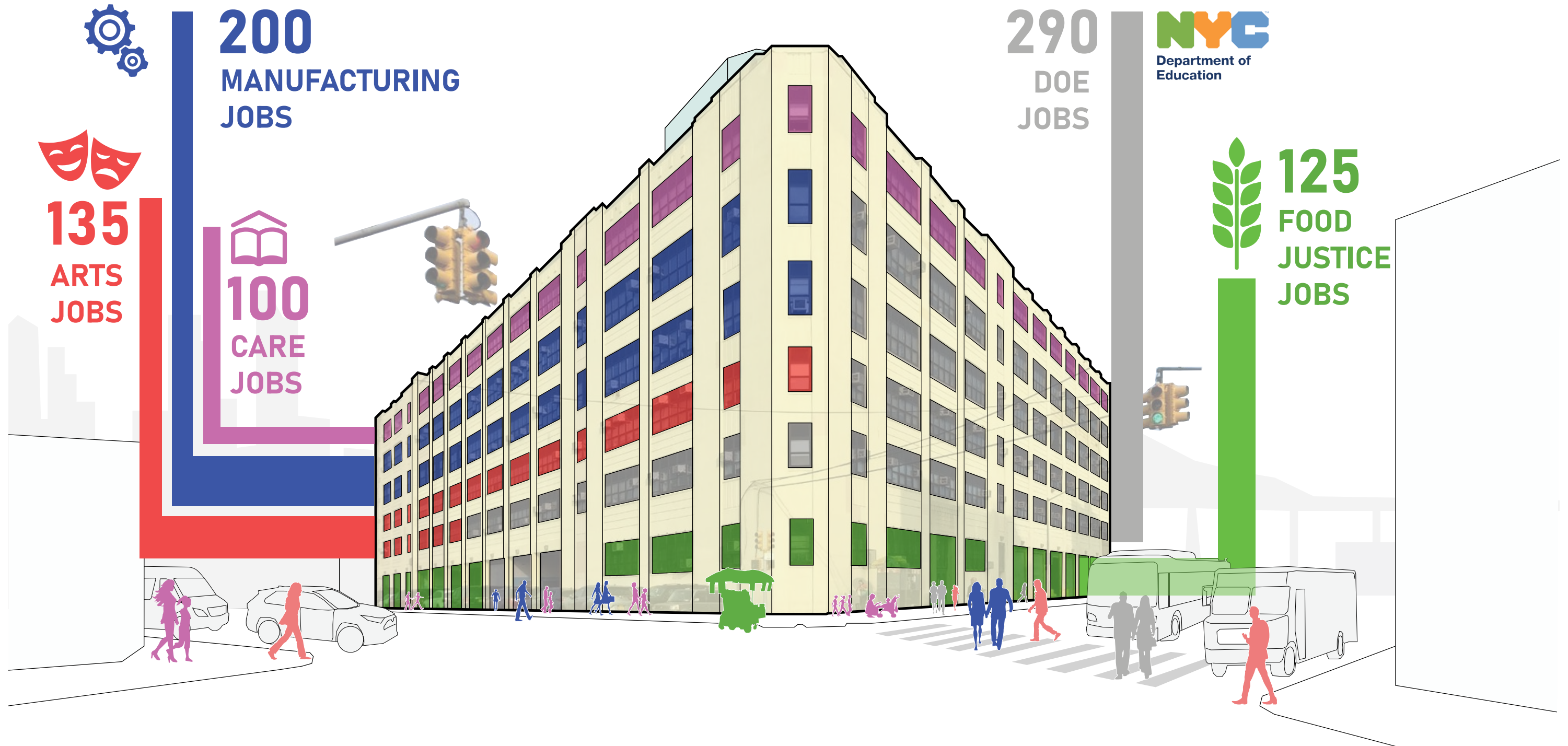




Public Land in Peoples Hands Community Festival at Queensbridge Park, Queens.
(2021)

850 JOBS HOUSED

While we are projecting the Queensboro People's Space to house over 850 jobs in the physical location, the project will create and preserve many hundreds more jobs indirectly. The project will generate new construction jobs throughout the renovation phase and additional jobs throughout the supply chain. Furthermore, an affordable community hub would provide ongoing economic and cultural benefits to residents of Western Queens who are all-too-often overlooked.



COMMUNITY SERVED

