

Queens College-Hunter College Downtown Flushing Urban Planning Workshop
Spring 2009

Saturday, 10am-2pm

QC Professor Tarry Hum and Hunter College Professor Lynn McCormick

Email: Tarry.Hum@qc.cuny.edu, 718 997 5124 (QC), 914 582 8075 (cell)

Email: lmccormi@hunter.cuny.edu, 212 772 5733 (Hunter), 914 633 5026 (home)

COURSE DESCRIPTION/OBJECTIVES:

The NYC Economic Development Corporation prepared a comprehensive revitalization plan for Downtown Flushing to reconnect the downtown to a revitalized waterfront and redeveloped Willets Point. The controversial Willets Point rezoning was recently approved by the New York City Council securing its future as a mixed retail, commercial, housing, and convention center site. Downtown Flushing is a vibrant commercial and transportation center anchoring the area as one of NYC's regional economic centers. The infusion of Asian capital and small immigrant business start ups helped establish Downtown Flushing's economic revitalization in the early 1980s.

With ongoing large scale development projects in Downtown Flushing including Sky Parc View and Flushing Commons, this urban planning workshop will examine the city's plans to promote the development of a mixed commercial-retail center encompassing Willets Point, Flushing's waterfront and Downtown area. Our workshop will focus on the city's efforts to facilitate downtown expansion to the waterfront. Specifically, we will study the multiple immigrant businesses that comprise Flushing's core downtown commercial and retail activity, their contributions to the local and regional economy, and challenges as well as opportunities for incorporating a diverse immigrant economy in the expansion and revitalization of the Flushing waterfront and connection to a redeveloped Willets Point.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

(1) **Background and Introduction**

Brief introduction to Flushing neighborhood, immigrant economies, transportation networks, historic significance, and development trends. We will study and summarize EDC's plans for the Downtown Flushing area including Flushing's waterfront and Willets Point; and related rezonings. We will locate the numerous individual and institutional stakeholders involved in Downtown Flushing and waterfront revitalization.

(2) **Profile of Flushing downtown economy**

We will use economic and census data to build a comprehensive profile of downtown Flushing's regional economic center. We will identify industry and occupational specializations, and growth sectors.

(3) **Flushing Waterfront**

The Flushing waterfront was rezoned in 1998 from a manufacturing zone to a C4-2 commercial zone which allows residential and commercial development. However, existing uses still include industry. We will conduct a census of land uses near and along the waterfront to assess the number and types of businesses including industrial firms,

and identify related planning challenges to revitalizing the waterfront including Flushing River cleanup and brownfield remediation.

(4) **Stakeholder Interviews**

We will develop an interview template for our stakeholder interviews. We seek to gather information on stakeholder views on Downtown Flushing assets/challenges, current linkages to Flushing Waterfront, vision for Flushing River waterfront, and strategies to link downtown Flushing and waterfront.

(5) **Business Owner Survey**

We will work with the Downtown Flushing Business Improvement District (BID) to conduct a survey of business owners with a special focus on the needs and concerns of immigrant business owners regarding opportunities and challenges for small business operations and growth in Flushing.

(6) **Best Practices and Organizations**

We will research and identify best practices and organizations that should be studied to help with a comprehensive planning effort to address growing immigrant economies and regional economies, community-based regional development, waterfront cleanup/planning/revitalization, and public access/public space.

(7) **Final Report**

We will prepare a planning and policy document that identifies recommendations to help incorporate immigrant economies and linkages to the Flushing waterfront and Willets Point.

(8) **IRB Training**

Students will be required to take the IRB training module, available at: http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/irb/education_and_training.htm.

GRADING:

Grading for the course is designed to reflect the course objectives and will consist of the following components:

Background paper:	10%
Economic profile:	15%
Land use paper:	10%
Stakeholder interviews:	10%
Business survey:	10%
Best practices paper:	15%
Final paper:	20%
<u>IRB training:</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total:	100%

If work remains uncompleted at the end of the course, students will be graded on that portion which has been completed. Incompletes will be given only after consulting the instructor and will be based on her discretion.

COURSE MATERIALS:

NYC Economic Development Corporation Downtown Flushing Plan
<http://www.downtownflushing.com/Report.htm>

New York State Comptroller. 2006. Economic Development and the Economy of Flushing, Queens -- <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/osdc/rpt4-2007flushing.pdf>

Asian Americans for Equality. 2007. Flushing's Fortune: Will Gateway Give Way to Luxury Development. Available online: <http://www.aafe.org/rsr/PDF/FlushingReport.pdf>

Smith, Christopher and John R. Logan. 2006. "Flushing 2000: Geographic Explorations in Asian New York," in Wei Li, ed., From Urban Enclave to Ethnic Suburb: New Asian Communities in Pacific Rim Countries, University of Hawaii Press

Smith, Christopher J. 1995. "Asian New York: The Geography and Politics of Diversity," International Migration Review, Spring, Vol. 29, No. 1.

NYC Economic Development Corporation Willets Point Redevelopment --
<http://www.nycedc.com/Web/AboutUs/OurProjects/CurrentProjects/WilletsPointDevelopmentDistrict.htm>

Municipal Arts Society, Chapter 1: Conducting a Land Use Survey.

Understanding Your Industry, University of Minnesota, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs,
http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/slp/economic_development/understanding_industry.html.

Using Employment Data to Better Understand Your Local Economy, series, Penn State, Center for Economic and Community Development,
http://cecd.aers.psu.edu/pubs/using_employment_data_to_better.htm.

Herbert J. Rubin & Irene S. Rubin. 1995. Chapter 9: Topical Interviewing, Chapter 10: What Did You Hear? Data Analysis, Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 196-256.

Eugene Bardach. 2004. A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, Step 3: Construct the Alternatives and Part III: "Smart (Best Practices" Research: Understanding and Making Use of What Look Like Good Ideas From Somewhere Else, CQ Press.

Newspaper Articles including:

Sheftell, Jason. 2008. “Business, condos, new stadium fuel growth in downtown Flushing,” New York Daily News, April 18. Available online at:

http://www.nydailynews.com/real_estate/2008/04/18/2008-04-18_business_condos_new_stadium_fuel_growth_-1.html?page=1

Vandam, Jeff. 2006. “Sensory Overload as a Way of Life,” New York Times, December 10. Available online at:

Flushing/Willets Point/Corona Local Development Corporation – <http://fwcldc.org/>

Downtown Flushing Business Improvement District, <http://www.flushingbid.com/>

Blogs on Queens development include [queenscrap.blog](http://queenscrap.blogspot.com),

<http://noticingnewyork.blogspot.com/2008/12/will-it-come-what-bloomberg.html>, Iron Triangle Tracker, <http://irontriangletracker.com/>, Develop Willets Point, <http://developwilletspoint.com/>

COURSE SCHEDULE AND TASKS:

	Class	Outside work
1/31	CLASS: Intro: client, class & assignments; Downtown Flushing/Flushing Waterfront Walk	IRB Training (due by end of semester)
2/7	No Class	
2/14	CLASS: Political and Institutional Analysis; and Guest Speaker (at Flushing)	READINGS: Smith 1995, Smith and Logan 2006; Downtown Flushing Plan, AAFE 2007, NYS Comptroller Flushing Economy Report, Flushing Organizational Websites, related newspaper articles; and Patton and Sawicki Chapter 4, Meltzner’s Schema for Political Analysis
2/21	CLASS: How to conduct a street level land use study and census with block/lot maps to note business activity/type. Discuss econ. data sources; excel, economic base theory & related methods (at Hunter)	Assmt #1: Background and EDC Plan Analysis READINGS: Municipal Arts Society, Chapter 1, Conducting a Land Use Survey; University of Minnesota’s Understanding Your Industry; Penn State’s Using Employment Data to Better Understand Your Local Economy
2/28	CLASS: Develop Stakeholder Interview template and business survey instrument coding & analysis (at Flushing)	Assmt #2: Local Economy READINGS: Rubin & Rubin Chapter 9 Topical Interviewing and Chapter 10 What Did You Hear? Mabel Law – Downtown Flushing Business Improvement District (Guest Speaker)

3/7	CLASS: Starting Fieldwork; Conduct Street Level Census	Census – debriefing at conference room
3/14	FIELDWORK: Conduct Stakeholder Interviews and Business Survey	Assmt #3: Waterfront Census Fieldwork – debriefing at conference room
3/21	FIELDWORK: Conduct Stakeholder Interviews and Business Survey	Fieldwork – debriefing at conference room
3/28	CLASS: Best Practice research (at Hunter)	Assmt #4: Stakeholder Interview Findings READINGS: Bardach
4/4	CLASS: Working session (at Hunter)	Assmt #5: Business Owner Survey Findings
4/11	Spring Break	
4/18	Spring Break	
4/25	CLASS: Wrap-up & informal presentations of findings	Assmt #6: Planning/Policy Recommendations
5/2		
5/9	End of semester	