

# Staten Island on a Roll

## Other Projects Move Ahead as City Council Approves Plan for Ferris Wheel, Mall

By

RICHARD MORGAN

Updated Nov. 1, 2013 12:34 a.m. ET

Amid celebration in Staten Island this week after Wednesday's City Council approval of a an eye-catching Ferris wheel and an adjoining outlet mall and hotel, a number of smaller-scale nearby plans have been progressing with less attention.

A husband-and-wife team, Scott Van Campen and D.B. Lampman, has expanded and converted its metal shop into Staten Island Makerspace, a nonprofit business incubator in Stapleton on the island's North Shore. The project is inspired by 3rd Ward, a now-defunct design and education workspace based in Brooklyn's Bushwick neighborhood, and the Entrepreneur Space, a kitchen incubator in Long Island City in Queens.

During superstorm Sandy last year, the couple's workshop was flooded and filled with knee-high mud. Now cleaned up, it has expanded to 6,000 square feet from 2,800, offering 16 studios to local craftspeople from 20-somethings to septuagenarians.



A rendering of a 625-foot Ferris wheel approved by the City Council as part of a retail and hotel complex on the Staten Island waterfront. *NYC Mayor's Office*

The first workshop, for a group of women welders, opens on Monday.

Mr. Van Campen hopes the effort will "help people here just get back on their feet, and feel better about themselves and their home while doing it."

In addition, plans were announced last week to convert New York City Farm Colony, a derelict poorhouse and hospital in Willowbrook, Staten Island, into Landmark

Colony, a retirement community. On a per-capita basis, Staten Island has the largest elderly population of the five boroughs.

And in June, plans were announced to build mixed-use apartments at the Homeport, a 35-acre decommissioned naval base.

"We have a buzz and it feels good," said Cheryl Adolph, the chief operations officer at the Staten Island Museum, who moved to the borough in 1993. "This is the biggest thing to happen to us" since the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, she said, referring to the Ferris wheel approval and other projects.

"The whole culture has transformed since those old days."

The City Council has approved a plan for a 625-foot Ferris wheel that is slated as one of the world's largest, with views of the Statue of Liberty, New York Harbor and the Manhattan skyline.

Dubbed the New York Wheel and scheduled for a 2016 opening, the attraction is aimed at the 22 million local, national and international tourists who ride the Staten Island Ferry annually.

Debi Rose, a City Council member who pushed hard for the New York Wheel, promised "we're coming up to the apex of a renaissance here."

Making comparisons to the Wheel and development at Governors Island, Randall Island, Long Island City and the Brooklyn waterfront, Kyle Kimball, president of the city's Economic Development Corporation, which is behind many of the projects, cheered "the reconnection of the city and its waterfront."

He called it "just a tremendous asset that has been underutilized for far too long."

Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro Thursday called the latest flurry of development "just the beginning."

While it would be the biggest Ferris wheel in the world if it were built today, a 689-foot wheel is planned for Dubai.

Mr. Molinaro laughed when the competitive challenge was pointed out.

"Let them," he said. "Our ferry ride is shorter. And cheaper, too, you know what I mean?"

Mr. Molinaro is so confident in his borough's new gleaming future that he has started trying out a new name for the North Shore: "Battery Park West."