

**Minutes of the Economic Development Committee for Bronx Community Board 8
Tuesday, March 7, 2023; In person meeting held at Montezuma Restaurant, 119 West
Kingsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10468**

Committee Members in attendance: Nick Fazio (chair); Moses Esema (vice chair); Miguel Matos; Rhashida Hilliard

Guests: Nate Gray (EDC); Maria Liriano (Artizen NYC); Adam Liriano (Artizen NYC); Serdar Acar (Community Member); James Deworte (community member); Jessica Sosa (community member)

Community Board 8 Members: Deb Travis

Chair Nick Fazio called the meeting to order @ 7:45 PM.

- I. Introductions of Committee Members and Special Guests
 - A. N. Fazio congratulated Miguel Matos for joining the Economic Development Committee (the Committee) as a community member.

- II. Presentation and Discussion on the Kingsbridge Armory, Nathan Gray, NYC Economic Development Corporation
 - A. Nathan Gray presented the Armory's background, history, and EDC's outreach initiatives (Presentation attached). Mr. Gray indicated that the EDC designed the outreach effort and various community working groups to get feedback from the community and perspectives from labor, business, and residents. He also conveyed that there are opportunities to sign up for a tour of the Armory:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040f44afae23a6fb6kingsbridge1?useFullSite=true#/>. Mr. Gray stated that many residents had expressed a need for recreational space and community programming. He suggested the Recreational Center in the former Bedford Armory as an example. Other ideas included space for workforce development and co-working space for artists and entrepreneurs. According to Mr. Gray, an anchor tenant must occupy a significant portion of the building for the Armory to be sustainable as a recreation or community space. Mr. Gray concluded by stating numerous upcoming opportunities for the public to share ideas and learn more about the process. He suggested that anyone interested go to EDC's website to get more information about upcoming events (<https://edc.nyc/project/kingsbridge-armory>).
 - B. Mr. Gray and the attendees discussed the RFP, timeline, and reconstruction of the building.

- i. M. Esema asked if the high operational expenses and need for a rent-paying anchor tenant eliminate the recreational use concept. Mr. Gray responded by stating that EDC's focus is on maximum community benefit and that there are recreational uses that may generate revenue.
- ii. Jessica Sosa asked how EDC will incorporate local workforce development to reconstruct the space. Mr. Gray indicated that EDC had yet to look into that. However, he agreed that the labor force during the construction phase must be skilled in environmental remediation, asbestos removal, etc.
- iii. Deb Travis asked if EDC considered current tenants around the Armory on short-term or month-to-month leases. Mr. Gray stated that it is a concern, and EDC will hold an event with SBS on Commercial Lease Assistance specifically for those businesses potentially impacted by the Armory's redevelopment. Mr. Gray stated that he would provide the Committee with information about the event.

III. Local Business Report: Presentation by Maria Liriano and Adam Castillo; Artizen NYC, 3700 Riverdale Avenue, (<https://www.artizennyc.com/>).

- A. Ms. Liriano and Mr. Castillo presented Artizen's business model as a café and co-working space for local business owners and residents that work from home and need a quiet professional space. They indicated they also own Opex Riverdale Fitness, located at 3603 Fieldston Road (<https://www.opexriverdalenyc.com/>). Since they had an established relationship with the landlord, they could negotiate a lease for the co-working space. Ms. Liriano and Mr. Castillo discussed the challenges and aspirations of their new business endeavor. They thanked the Economic Development Committee for providing them with information about commercial lease assistance and connecting with DOB's Small Business Development Team. In closing, they offered to host an upcoming meeting of the Committee.
- B. Ms. Liriano, Mr. Castillo, and attendees discussed ways the Committee could support them moving forward.
 - i. M. Esema asked about their most significant challenges and how the Committee can assist them.
 - ii. Miguel Matos indicated that although the SBS Opportunity Loan Fund has been temporarily closed, he would forward any information about new loans or grant programs to Mr. Castillo and Ms. Liriano.

IV. Discussion about the Betty Campbell-Adams Most Valuable Merchant Award, 2023

- A. N. Fazio described the spirit of the award and provided attendees with a brief history.

- B. The Committee discussed the timeline for nominations and the Committee's review and selection processes.
 - i. Committee members in attendance agreed to open the nomination period on March 15 and close it on April 15.
 - ii. N. Fazio said he would notify the board office and ask them to disseminate a press release.

V. Committee Discussion of Budget Item Suggestions for FY 2025.

- A. The Committee discussed their current suggestions.
 - i. Committee members in attendance agreed with the current proposals. N. Fazio stated that he would reach out to the chair of the Public Safety Committee to see if the two committees could submit a joint request for cameras near commercial corridors. Committee members and attendees suggested the corner of West 238th Street and Bailey Avenue. N. Fazio stated that he would find out from the Public Safety Committee which commercial corridors need more cameras.
 - ii. N. Fazio asked committee members to add any additional suggestions to the Google Document:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1eogzg4cvaRdUyIYiHF_dZXilWvCUBmfH/edit#gid=685388108.
 - iii. Deb Travis suggested that the Committee explore whether a proposal around NYC MESH (broadband WiFi) would be within the purview of the Economic Development Committee. The Committee discussed the idea and agreed to investigate it in more detail.

VI. Chair's Report

- A. N. Fazio stated that he provided Ish Gonzalez and Ciara Gannon from the Bronx Borough President's office with the feedback and data from the Committee's research on a digital currency (Bronx Bucks) and reward program idea.
- B. N. Fazio reported a fire at Game Day Bar, 5757 Broadway. Owner Derek Rodriguez reached out to the Committee for guidance. N. Fazio said he connected Mr. Rodriguez with SBS's Emergency Response Unit, Bronx Chamber of Commerce, and NYC Legal Aids.
 - i. Mr. Matos also met with the owner and provided him with information and resources they might need as they go through the re-opening process. Mr. Matos volunteered to continue to work with Game Day and suggested that we connect Mr. Rodriguez with DOB's Small Business Development Team once they receive their fire report.
- C. N. Fazio stated that Intro 837 has gone on the Committee at the city council community of consumer affairs and worker protection. He indicated that several business owners had expressed their displeasure over the legislation. He indicated that he would endeavor to keep the Committee informed about the progress of the legislation and a pending hearing on the bill
<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5958217&GUID=44D72CEC-FE82-4A43-BA31-4BB15FBC15EB>).

- D. Fazio stated that the SBS Opportunity Loan was temporarily closed due to the high number of applicants. He recommended that businesses go to the SBS website and sign up for up-to-date notifications: <https://sbsopportunityfund.nyc/get-notified/>.
 - E. N. Fazio thanked Ed Green, Laura Spalter, and Pablo Romano for their efforts to redress an apparent honest mistake by the State Liquor Authority (SLA) in Albany, which temporarily prevented The Bronx Public (P & K Grill Inc.) from serving alcohol. He stated that the full board would vote on a resolution to waive a 30-day waiting period and renew The Bronx Public's License on Tuesday, March 14. He stated that the Bronx Public employed 25 local residents, was a thriving business in the community, and offered to host the Committee on numerous occasions. He added that the owner, Seth Kaplan, provided the Committee's "Business Owner's Report" in September of 2021.
- VII. Outstanding Business/ New Business
- A. The Committee discussed dates for their following commercial corridor walkthrough. The members in attendance agree to aim for Friday, April 21, @ 3:30 PM. They also discussed possible locations.
- VIII. Approval of Minutes from January 26, 2023
- A. The Committee Committee unanimously approved the minutes as amended.
- IX. N. Fazio adjourned the meeting at 9:14 PM.

Nick Fazio submitted the minutes, respectfully, on March 16, 2023.

An aerial photograph of the Kingsbridge Armory in New York City. The large, historic brick building with a prominent arched roof and two towers is the central focus. It is surrounded by a dense urban landscape of various buildings, streets, and greenery. A large body of water is visible in the upper right corner. A train is visible on the tracks in the foreground.

Kingsbridge Armory

Community Board 8 Economic Development Committee

3/07/2023

together for
KINGSBRIDGE
juntos para

Kingsbridge Armory Community Engagement

- We are engaging residents, workers, and community groups to define a vision for the Armory's future.
- We will release a Vision for the Armory's future by Spring 2023.



Who is on the Community Working Group?

- **Co-Chairs:**
 - Council Member Pierina Sanchez
 - Sandra Lobo, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC)
- **Elected Official Offices:**
 - Borough President Vanessa Gibson
 - Congress Member Adriano Espaillat
 - Senator Robert Jackson
 - Senator Gustavo Rivera
 - Assembly Member George Alvarez
- **Community Stakeholders:**
 - **Community Groups:** Community Board 7, Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, Gardiner Foundation, Mekong, Dominicanos USA
 - **Labor:** Central Labor Council, Local Union 79
 - **Small Businesses:** Kingsbridge Merchants Association, Burnside-Tremont-Jerome Merchant Association, Street Vendor Project
 - **Faith Based:** Our Lady of Angels
 - **Health:** Morris Height Health Center
 - **Academic:** Lehman College, Monroe College, School District 10
 - **Economic Development:** Bronx Overall Economic Development Corp, Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative- BCDI

Kingsbridge Armory History

- Operated as an Armory from 1917 to 1994
- Used for shows, exhibitions, and filming
- Landmark building
- Largest Armory in NYC
- Two previous redevelopment attempts



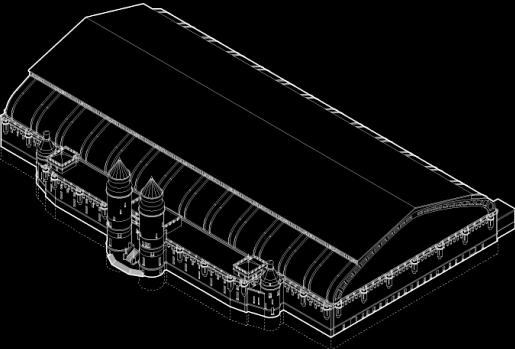
Existing Conditions Overview

The Armory has been vacant for nearly 30 years and is in need of significant and costly repairs and restoration.



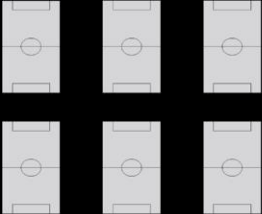
The drill hall is 180,000 SF and 115' tall at its highest point

Scale Comparisons

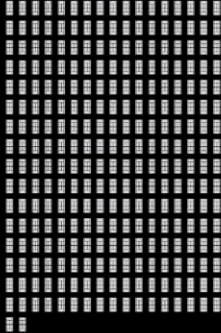


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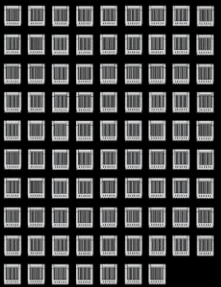
- **835,000** square feet of programmable space
- **115'** tall Drill Hall interior
- **181,000** square feet of clear area in the Drill Hall



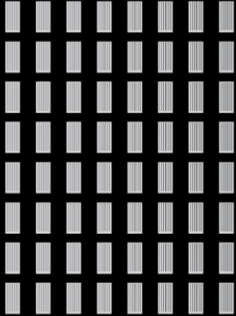
6 FOOTBALL FIELDS



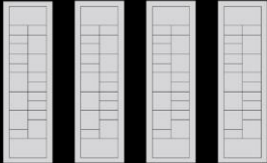
274 TENNIS COURTS



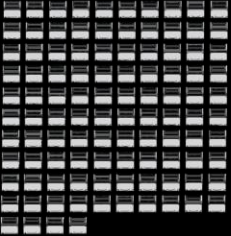
88 BOWLING ALLEYS



64 OLYMPIC POOLS

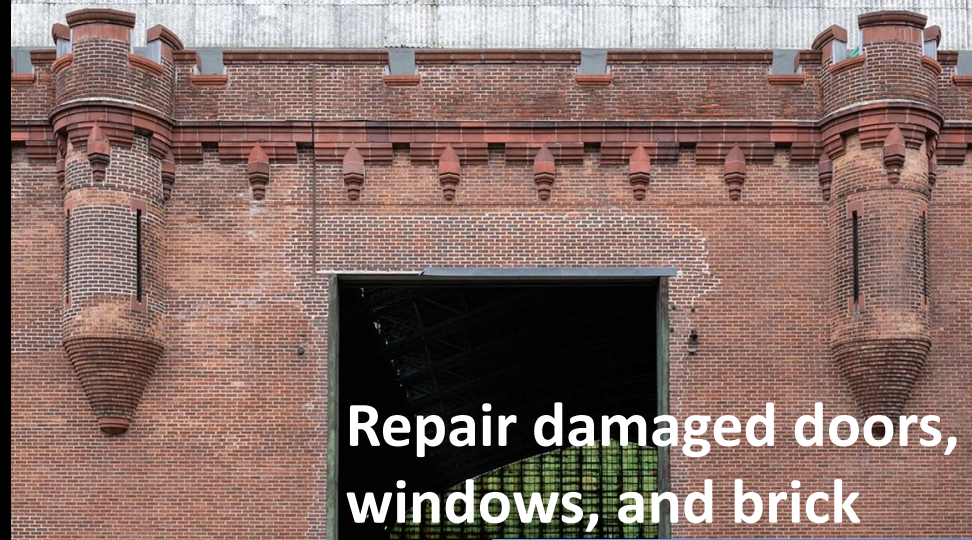
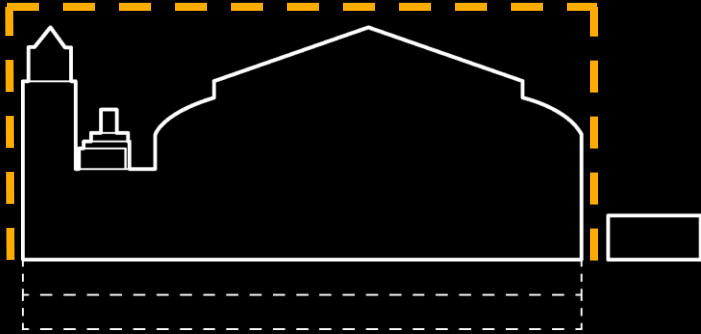


Almost 4 NYC BLOCKS



104 MOVIE THEATERS

Exterior & Roof



Repair damaged doors, windows, and brick

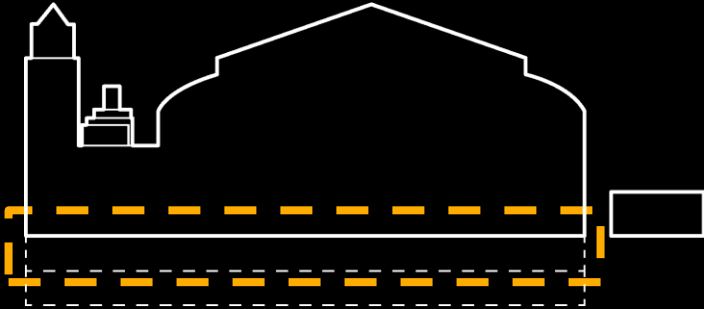


Create access for people with disabilities



Replace roof

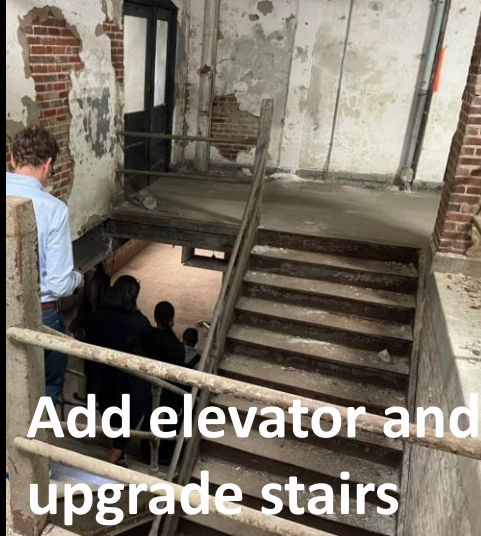
Cellar



Upgrade
lighting and
ventilation



Repair floors
and walls

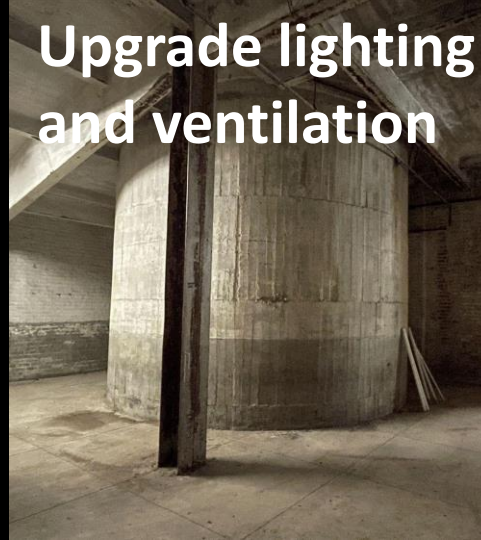
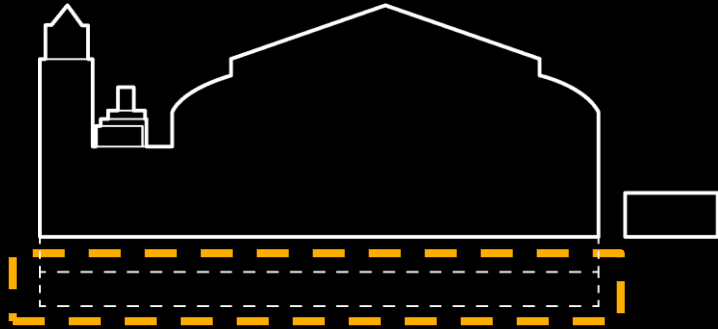


Add elevator and
upgrade stairs



Fix flooding

Sub Cellar

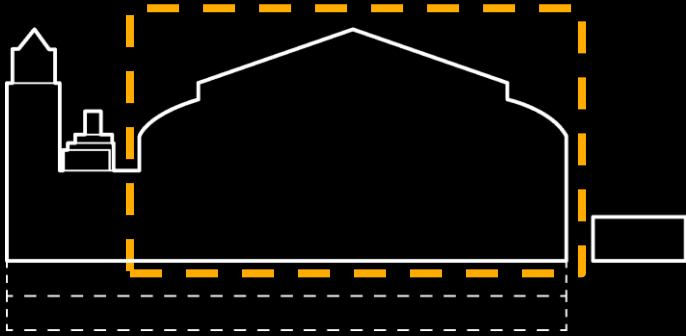


Remove asbestos and lead

Upgrade lighting and ventilation

Repair floors and walls

Drill Hall



Remove asbestos and lead



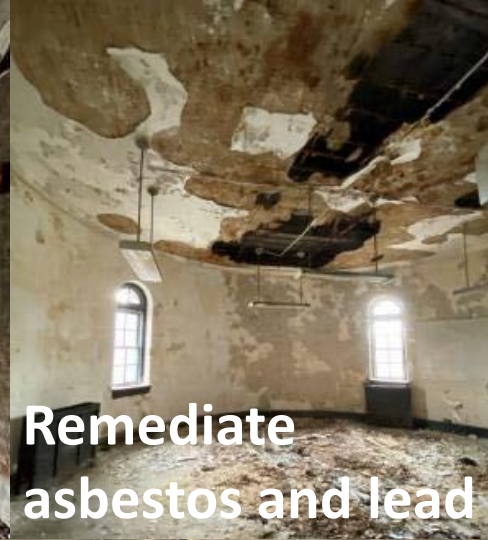
**Refinish
floors, walls,
and structure**

**Replace broken
& aging
windows**

Head House



Update lighting
and ventilation



Remediate
asbestos and lead



Fix ceiling, wall, and floor finish

Engagement Snapshot

- 4 Community Board 7 meetings
- 5 Community Working Group Meetings
- 15 Small Group Discussions
- 250+ attendees at 2 online events
- 400+ attendees at 2 public workshops
- 575+ Community Surveys



What have we heard?



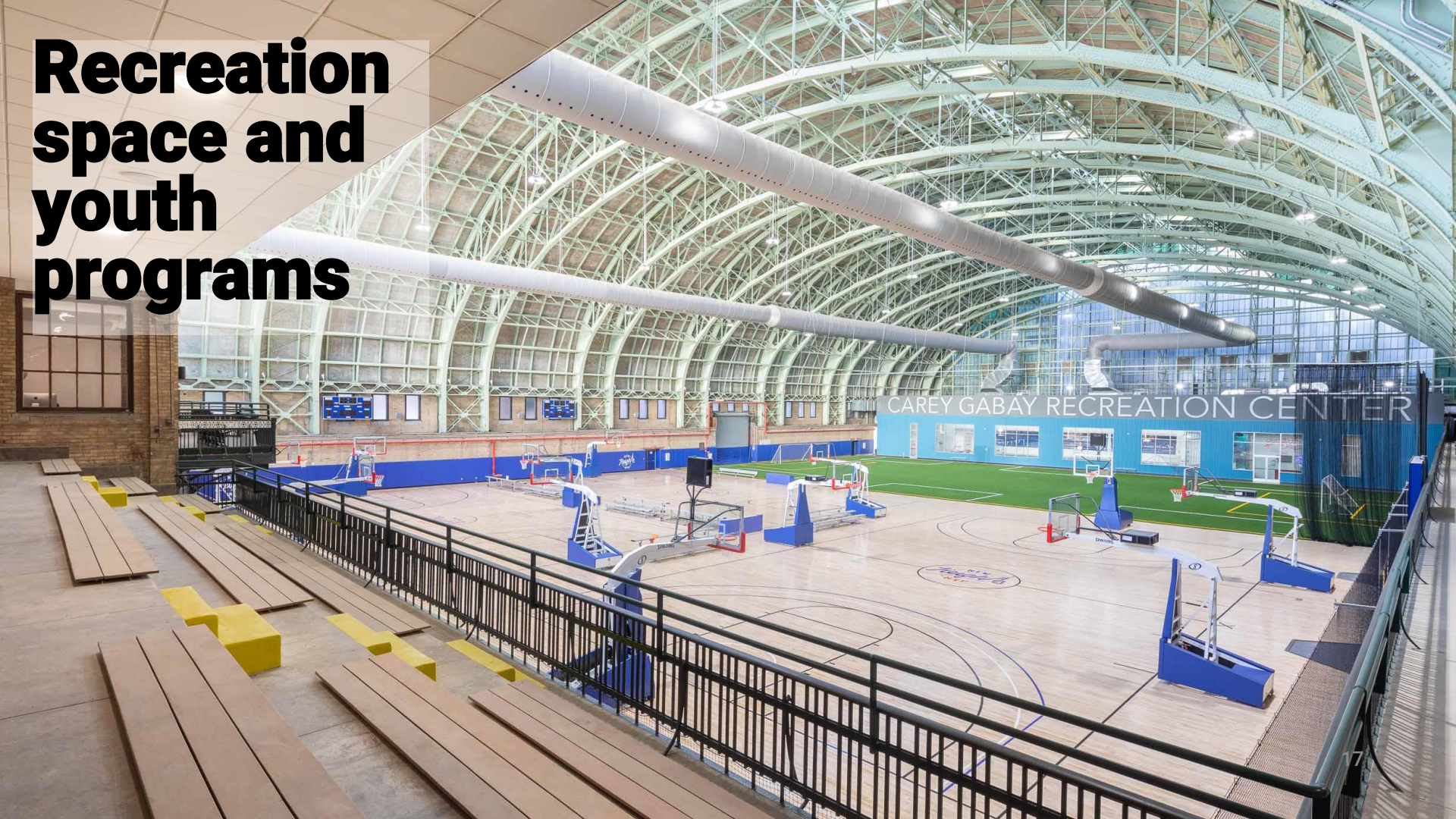
Core Strengths of the Bronx

Its People	Diversity in Culture	Resiliency + Creativity
Green Spaces	Long + Rich History	Local Organizing

Community Values of the Bronx

Collective economy	Togetherness + mutual support	Strong work ethic, working class values	Diverse, inclusive of all cultures
Educational + vocational progress	Family	Resilience through creativity + organizing	Kindness + compassion towards others

Recreation space and youth programs



CAREY GABAY RECREATION CENTER

A place for jobs & economic development





**Training the community
for careers & good jobs**

Space for events & collaboration





A destination that celebrates Bronx history & culture

What do you want to see in the Armory?

Do you have any questions for us?