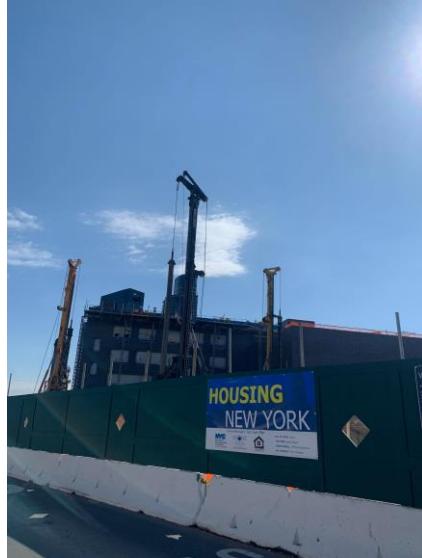


Kimberly Pacheco  
URBS 10100  
Visual Essay: Long Island City Piers.



Previous transfer bridges  
“gantries”



Previous railroad tracks





Proof that I was here!!



Food court



Queens Public  
Library.

I chose the Long Island City Piers at Hunter Point, Queens because it is a beautiful open space to walk around, exercise and hang out with family and friends. I first visited this place in 2018 because it was close to LaGuardia Community College, where I used to attend. The LIC Piers is constituted by other places such as parks, a food court, the ferry and evidently the east river. However, I decided to focus on it as a whole because I have noticed some changes each time I have gone since my visit in 2018. Back in 1925, the LIC Piers was a recent Long Island Rail Road facility where tugboats would travel from the east river to Manhattan loaded with railroad tracks,

the boats would approach the shore through transfer bridges. These transfer bridges had black towers that were called “gantries” and they would lower the deck of the bridge to pull the railroad cars to place them on the ground. According to the New York Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation, around the 1970s the transfer bridges were no longer used and the area was rezoned to later open the Gantry Plaza State Park in 1998. I am not quite sure about who specifically lived around this area, but I would assume they were immigrants who would work on the railroad facility and their families.

The LIC Piers can relate to some of the themes we went over in class, specifically to gentrification because it went from being a space where railroad, shipment and factories’ activities took place to a place where people wants to live because of the amazing views around the water. In the second chapter *Planning Gentrification* by Sam Stein, it is mentioned that re-zoning eases enclosure movements which means that air and ground are privatized (62). I understand this, in the sense that the everything that surround the LIC Piers is privatized including the businesses and residential home that surround it. Up-zoning also took place as factories were tore down to build new projects, for instance, right where the Gantry Plaza State Park is today there used to be one of Pepsi-Cola’s bottling plant. Today, the only thing that is left from Pepsi-Cola’s bottling plant is the huge Pepsi-Cola sign that you can see lighting up the park. In addition, all you can see around the LIC Piers are the actual modern residential buildings, and the uprising buildings that are under construction right now. On the other hand, in the reading it was explained how re-zoning does not necessarily equals to gentrification, and how it can be used to prevent gentrification and segregation against working-class people from happening. An example of this could be some of the residential building under construction that are for public housing in 2023. The way I see the

work progress of these future buildings is as if the city is trying to balance the “power” that is being concentrated in that area.

If you go to LIC Piers you can see all kinds of people because it has become a touristic place where everyone wants to go and take nice pictures and overall have a nice time. However, you can assume who are the residents of that area and who are not. For instance, people like me who just go once in a while is because maybe I want to take pictures, or I want to take the ferry to the Manhattan or maybe hang out at the food court and eat something. While residents make use of it to do exercise, to walk their dogs around the dog’s park or take their kids to the park. I would assume they are not that amused by the LIC Piers because is part of their everyday life. The role of the built environment in this area, I believe is to keep attracting more people, so the city invests in more upcoming projects that would assure more people with money coming in to buy residential homes, and more money spent in touristic activities such as taking the ferry and consuming the expensive food at the food court.

In this case, I believe power is located on real estate development firms such as Gilbane Residential Construction LLC, which is a building company that is currently in charge of the buildings that will be for public housing in 2023 and Center GC LLC which is in charge of other residential buildings for 2021. On the other hand, a symbolic representation of power in this space is the actual people who inhabit this area. Most of the people who live in this area are predominantly white, and this reminded me of a discussion we had previously in class where we talked about power was centralized where white people are. For instance, redlining, this practice marked which areas in the city were considered bad, dangerous and enough to be good based on the ethnicities that inhabited them. The areas that were considered dangerous were the ones where the most disadvantaged lived limited of security, home loans, education and health, while these things were

being easily provided in areas that were labeled as good. I think part of this previous practice can be seen on how things are structured around the LIC Piers, everything is put very conveniently, like nice schools, a library, good medical centers and safety 24/7.

There is a lot to cover about this place, specifically about the history of the Rail Road Facility, other factories beside Pepsi-Cola's bottling plant, and the people who used to live by these areas when these activities were taking place. I kept looking for signs that would give me more context about the history of them but there were few only. Besides, when you look it up online most of the information is updated with the current activities that take place in the LIC Piers. It would be helpful to conduct and interview to someone that has been able to see major changes in this area.