

DAILY NEWS

Full speed ahead! Historic Brooklyn Navy Yard exploding with new development, job opportunities

The DUMBO site is exploding with new development — ranging from a mega supermarket to massive new sound stages and medical labs — and it promises to create job opportunities for battalions of Brooklynites.

BY [REUVEN BLAU](#)

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A locksmith opens a door to a vault inside Building 77.

Damn the torpedoes! This boom will resonate across the borough, and it has nothing to do with old artillery.

The historic Brooklyn Navy Yard is exploding with new development — ranging from a mega supermarket to massive new sound stages and medical labs — and it promises to create job opportunities for battalions of Brooklynites.

The more than 330 businesses in the historic Yard in DUMBO now employ about 7,000 people, up from 3,600 in 2001, according to the Brooklyn Navy Yard Corp. That number could rise by several thousand over the next decade, officials say.

“Job creation is a core part of our mission,” said David Ehrenberg, the Navy Yard president.

One of the final pieces includes the renovation of Building 77, the biggest building in the complex.

Navy Yard officials plan to repair the 16-story former ammunition plant with the help of \$60 million in mostly city and state grants.

It’s not all smooth sailing.



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Building 77 will eventually house a massive medical lab.

The building only has windows on the top two floors, and is blocked by landmark tax breaks from installing any on the lower levels.

And much of the interior is still being cleared out and demolished, a process that will likely take more than a year.

Still, officials have already landed an anchor tenant, Jack Basch, a Brooklyn-based developer who plans to take over 240,000 square feet for his own medical lab and to rent other firms.

Despite all the hustle and bustle, a few pockets of the site remain empty, accounting for roughly 20 acres of the 300 acre site.

Navy Yard officials hope to eventually attract developers to reconstruct those spots too.

“We have a lot of space here we will continue to leverage for our job generating mission,” Ehrenberg said.



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In the meantime, the Navy Yard’s little known employment center has helped find jobs for 250 mostly entry-level applicants last year and 2,000 since 1999.

They’ve been matched up with work at various industries at the site. The positions traditionally pay more than the low level retail jobs typically offered to those workers.

And they offer more opportunities to grow into mid-level and management roles.

“People progress relatively quickly and start earning more and more,” Ehrenberg said.

That includes Maria Angelo, 50, who now works for FC+Skanska Modular, which is busily building modular units for its massive Atlantic Yards project.

She walked into the employment center at Building 92 last July hoping to land a job after roughly 10 years of unemployment.



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Admirals Row at the Brooklyn Navy Yard has been demolished to make way for a mega supermarket.

“They helped me fill out the application online,” she said.

Now she makes \$25 an hour as a logistics team staffer and expects a raise to \$27.50 an hour soon.

“I was unemployed for a while,” she said. “I hadn’t had a really good job for about 10 years due to bad choices in my life.”

The Navy Yard opened in 1806, authorized by President John Adams as one of the young country’s first naval shipyards.

In its heyday, the Yard employed 70,000 people, who helped build military supplies for World War II. The Yard closed in 1966, but the federal government only recently began transferring the bulk of the site to the city.

The Bloomberg administration invested \$250 million to boost the infrastructure around the yard, including water, sewer and roads.

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