

# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF NEW YORK'S SOUTH STREET SEAPORT HISTORIC DISTRICT

## FROM SAVE OUR SEAPORT

What is the heart of the District, what makes it unique to the City and an attraction for visitors and New Yorkers alike? The ships, the waterfront, and the venerable streets and buildings that lead to them. Previously we wrote about possible uses for the Tin and New Market Buildings, neglected by the NYEDC since the exodus of the Fulton Fish Market. Now SOS outlines what we think can be done to bring the District to life once again while adhering to the concept of the Historic District as originally intended. At the heart of the District, and at the center of its mission, is the South Street Seaport Museum.

## FAIR LEASE = FAIR WINDS

### ADVOCATING FOR THE SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM, THE HISTORIC DISTRICT, AND ITS WATERFRONT

SAVE OUR SEAPORT reminds the City of New York that the South Street Seaport Museum is no longer the master leaseholder of the Pier 17 Festival Marketplace. If the Museum is to fulfill any part of its original mission, its 1981 lease must change to allow it to meet these new circumstances.

The South Street Seaport Museum needs the right to properly utilize its real estate assets to promote its mission as the educational and cultural steward of the South Street Seaport Historic District.

### **The time to revise the 1981 Museum lease terms is now!**

- 1) The South Street Seaport Museum needs to receive a lease (not a license) to control all three sides of Pier 16, exclusive rights to the bulkhead between Piers 15 and 16, and the right to lease any and all spaces on Pier 16 for museum revenue generating uses.
- 2) The marginal street under the FDR adjacent to Piers 15 and 16 should be added to the Museum lease to be utilized for generating museum revenue.
- 3) Piers 19-21 should be leased to the Museum for water-dependent or waterfront-related activities, including the berthing of visiting historic ships.
- 4) The John Street Lot, lost to cover back rent to the City, should be returned to the Museum with public/private funding identified to construct a new Schermerhorn Row museum building, including resilient infrastructure.
- 5) A portion of the third floor of Schermerhorn Row that is clearly under the

Museum's control needs to be recognized in the City records as a museum asset.

- 6) The South Street Seaport Museum's lease should be expanded to allow non-cultural uses, including commercial retail and office rental to generate long-term museum revenues.
- 7) New lease terms for the Museum that reflect current circumstances will do much to secure its future and the future of The South Street Seaport Historic District. The City of New York has other steps it can take as well....The South Street Seaport Museum should receive Cultural Institution Group status (*or any effective substitute*) so as not to be burdened with base or additional rents or utility payments on city-owned land. Any outstanding debts should be waived. Other cultural institutions in the City enjoy these privileges. Why must they be denied to the South Street Seaport Museum?
- 8) The Seaport Museum should return to its role as the interpreter and curator of the Historic District. Specifically, the programming of de-mapped streets especially Fulton and Water should include significant input from the SSSM and in no case should HHC be permitted to obstruct programming and access at the SSSM.
- 9) All East River waterfront infrastructure repair or replacement should be suitable for maritime uses as required for a Street of Ships.

The other major presence in the South Street Seaport Historic District is the Howard Hughes Corporation. The developer's lease will require it to pay less than \$4.00/square foot in rent. The developer's projects will be enhanced, even identified, by their maritime surroundings.

- 10) Howard Hughes Corporation should provide the South Street Seaport Museum with a mandated contribution of \$2.0 MM per year (adjusted for inflation) dedicated to its collection of historic ships.
- 11) The Developer's Marketplace Lease should be amended to require it to provide a reasonable degree of maritime-related commerce and products through its tenants, in keeping with the original concept of the South Street Seaport Historic District.