

DRAFT

SEAPORT WORKING GROUP
GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES



On February 24, 2014 members of the South Street Seaport Working Group (SWG) convened for the first time as to engage in a candid, community-driven dialogue that focused on the future development of the South Street Seaport Historic District and its immediate vicinity. The SWG was formed by Manhattan Community Board 1, Councilmember Margaret Chin, Borough President Gale Brewer, State Assemblyman Sheldon Silver, State Senator Daniel Squadron and Congressman Jerrold Nadler following concerns raised by Community Board 1, local residents and others regarding the proposal by the Howard Hughes Corporation for redevelopment of the Seaport. The SWG, facilitated by Professor Jonathan Martin of the Pratt Institute, considered the neighborhood's history, vital infrastructure, and the increasing need for services and amenities for Lower Manhattan's growing residential population. NYC Economic Development Corporation, NYC Department of City Planning and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs also participated to provide technical support as needed to the SWG. The development guidelines presented here are the result of this dialogue.

Over a ten week period, members of the SWG worked to define this set of shared guidelines to provide recommendations to inform cohesive developments in the South Street Seaport Historic District and its immediate vicinity. The guidelines seek to cover key aspects of any development initiative. The SWG categorized the guidelines as follows:

- Community and Connectivity
- South Street Seaport Museum and Waterfront
- Open Space
- Preservation
- Vitality
- Building Height & Views
- Resiliency
- Pedestrian Environment

To provide a clearer understanding of the community's specific needs and concerns in connection with each general guideline, the SWG developed and agreed on a number of principles that articulate each guideline further. The SWG's intention is that the following guidelines and their respective principles inform any future development initiative in the Historic District and its immediate vicinity.

1. COMMUNITY & CONNECTIVITY

GUIDELINE:

Maintain the historic character and sense of place of the Seaport by making stronger physical, social, and economic connections within and beyond the Seaport community, including other Lower Manhattan neighborhoods and areas easily accessible via ferry, through a variety of innovative and convenient transportation modes, including trolley, walkways, bike paths, and ferries.

PRINCIPLES:

- 1.1 Integrate a contextual way-finding signage system, in accordance with LPC guidelines, identity graphics, and appropriate branding that respect and celebrate the Seaport's history and identity.
- 1.2 Create a structure for sustained community and citywide input and participation, including that from residents and business owners, in preserving and protecting the historic character and integrity of the district.
- 1.3 Actively encourage public access to the water, water dependent uses and waterborne activities through diverse programming of public space and connections with other maritime uses and sites in New York harbor and beyond, including Governor's Island and other ports, potentially via a visiting ships program.
- 1.4 Create stronger connections between the Seaport stores, cultural activities and amenities, and the upland community through public and family-oriented programming and curated independent shops, services, and events.
- 1.5 Support the community through creation of a community center, accessible open space, and partnerships with local educational institutions that provide Programming for all ages at the Seaport.

2. MUSEUMS & WATERFRONT

GUIDELINE:

Maintain the historic character and sense of place of the Seaport by recognizing and supporting a reinvented South Street Seaport Museum as the cultural anchor of the district.

PRINCIPLES:

- 2.1 Preserve, protect, and strengthen the museum through creation of a long-term strategy that ensures financial and institutional sustainability and independence.
- 2.2 Strengthen physical and visual connections between the museum, the waterfront, and the historic ships while maintaining a museum presence in the uplands.
- 2.3 Ensure that an active and historic waterfront is maintained and that ships remain prominent on the waterfront by providing sufficient berthing space for the museum and visiting ships.
- 2.4 Consider different ideas for maintaining the Peking on the waterfront and encouraging other tall ships.

3. OPEN SPACE

GUIDELINE:

Maintain and improve the existing open space at the Seaport and create new open space along the water's edge that is publically accessible, including indoor and outdoor spaces programmed for passive and active recreation.

PRINCIPLES:

- 3.1 Maximize access to existing and new open space, including roofs of privately owned buildings, to appeal to a wide variety of users, including workers, local residents, families and visitors, for daytime and evening activities.
- 3.2 Improve the public realm in existing open spaces and create new features in suitable locations with consideration for view corridors.
- 3.3 Complement the historic district with decorative amenities, such as street furniture, planters, and appropriate lighting.
- 3.4 Activate, recapture and revitalize underutilized areas under FDR Drive with creative, cultural and contextual programming and physical improvements such as landscaping, lighting and acoustic treatments.

4. PRESERVATION

GUIDELINE:

Maintain the historic character, visual corridors and sense of place of the Seaport through the preservation and creative adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings to the greatest extent practicable.

PRINCIPLES:

- 4.1 Utilize adaptive reuse of buildings so as to preserve the historic integrity of the district.
- 4.2 Preserve sense of place, "authentic," historic character, and low-rise scale by keeping buildings in scale with the historic fabric of the district.
- 4.3 Use historically appropriate materials that complement the existing buildings.
- 4.4 Appropriately program the Seaport with input from the museum to maintain and improve the historic character and sense of place.

5. VITALITY

GUIDELINE:

Create a Seaport that supports commercial vitality through diverse retail programming that is cohesive and distinct from other nearby shopping areas and serves local residents, families and visitors, and integrates the uplands with the waterfront.

PRINCIPLES:

- 5.1 Support retail programming at the Seaport that is distinctive, vibrant, diverse and attractive to a broad spectrum of people, including local residents, workers, and tourists.
- 5.2 Create a retail mix that prioritizes smaller, local and regional purveyors and retailers, including those specializing in artisanal foods, craftsmanship, and art relevant to the Seaport.
- 5.3 Create a year-round public market district based on successful precedents from around the world that prioritizes and incubates local purveyors selling locally and responsibly sourced foods and goods and restaurants that appeal to locals, families and visitors and are true to the spirit and character of the district's traditional role as the city's marketplace.
- 5.4 Schedule time-based events and public programs that appeal to a variety of people in order to create diversity and varied interest through the day, week and year at the Seaport provided events do not adversely affect the surrounding area.
- 5.5 Eliminate short-term storefront vacancies through creative strategies such as temporary uses and "pop-up" local stores, cultural exhibits and galleries so as to create active street frontage and enhance pedestrian interest.
- 5.6 Develop temporary signage program that complements the Seaport's historic character during construction periods to orient people to, from and within the Seaport.
- 5.7 Develop public art opportunities at the Seaport that include stakeholder input and take advantage of the area's social and cultural history or New York artists and scholars.
- 5.8 Create opportunities to engage the water in a variety of ways from viewing, touching, and entering.

6. BUILDING HEIGHTS & VIEWS

GUIDELINE:

Buildings developed on properties adjoining the South Street Seaport Historic District should not adversely impact neighborhood scale and character.

- 6.1 Alternatives to the proposed 50-story tower should be sought and any building on the New Market site should be contextual with the buildings within the South Street Seaport Historic District.
- 6.2 Encourage the transfer of development rights to incentivize lower buildings and public open space in the immediate vicinity of the South Street Seaport Historic District in conformance with the design objectives of the 1998 Urban Renewal Plan Area.
- 6.3 Preserve and protect all historic east-west view corridors delineated in the 1998 Urban Renewal Plan and views of the Brooklyn Bridge and historic ships.

7. RESILIENCY

GUIDELINE:

Resiliency measures should include preserving historic character of the Seaport and access to the waterfront the maximum extent possible.

PRINCIPLES:

- 7.1 Develop a resiliency plan for the Seaport through a process of collaborative consultations with stakeholders, community members, and experts.
- Develop green guidelines for future development, when applicable, including measures that minimize greenhouse gas emissions and generation of energy from alternative sources such as wind and solar.

8. PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

GUIDELINE:

Create an attractive and functional pedestrian environment by balancing pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation.

PRINCIPLES:

- 8.1 Develop a vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle flow plan to better accommodate pedestrians and bicycles, private vehicular traffic and service and commercial deliveries, including tour buses.
- 8.2 Develop a beautification plan to maintain and enhance the visual appearance of the Seaport
- 8.3 Develop a waste management plan to minimize litter and trash collection impacts.
- 8.4 Prohibit vehicular parking east of the FDR Drive.

T9. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION/STUDY

- 9.1 Create a process for ongoing community engagement: Study the shifting of governance from NYCEDC to a new entity that would include community members.
- 9.2 Study the creation of the “Eleanor Roosevelt High Line” by building a trail above the FDR Drive south of the Brooklyn Bridge to the Battery Maritime Building. This new trail could provide connective links to support pedestrian and bicycle access to the Brooklyn Bridge and Seaport.

