

# SOUTH STREET SEAPORT SEAPORT COALITION STRATEGIC PLAN

Manhattan Community Board 1 and our elected officials are to be thanked for their past support of the *Seaport Coalition*, an all-volunteer, grass-roots community alliance.

We choose to follow the *Guidelines and Principles* adopted by the Seaport Working Group.



Children  
First

NEW YORK CITY

November 18, 2019

# COALITION PLAN OUTLINE

- The Plan's Foundation
- A Model with the Public at its Center – Righting an imbalance
- South Street Seaport Historic District – Sense of Place
- Overcoming Challenges
- Public Space and Resiliency
- A new Public Market
- Seaport Air Rights
- New Market Building
- The Street of Ships, the South Street Seaport Museum
- 250 Water Street
- Eleanor's Walkway
- Guidance for an Historic Public asset
- Beyond the Physical Landscape



# FOUNDATION OF THE COALITION PLAN

TRANSFORMING THE EAST RIVER WATERFRONT  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK



Transforming the East River Waterfront, 2002



SeaportSpeaks Charrette, 2006



A People's Plan for the East River Waterfront 2009



Seaport Working Group- Guidelines and Principles, 2014



The Vision for the Seaport, 2014



Southern Manhattan Coastal Protection Study, 2014



A PUBLIC-PRIVATE  
PARTNERSHIP OUT OF  
BALANCE

RIGHTING A WRONG MODEL

It is increasingly evident that the public-private partnership model for revitalizing and restoring assets in the Seaport Historic District is out of balance.

Looking beyond Howard Hughes Corp.'s new master planning initiative – this after years of a segmented approach – the Seaport Coalition believes that a plan for the area that focuses on public value and use of this public asset is needed.

The following points underlie the various topics considered in the coalition plan:

- The public should have a leading role in the planning of public assets
- A private developer should not be the sole or primary engine for change in the historic area
- There are clearly written rules in place, thought out over time
- Public assets should not be used as bargaining items, and one constituency should not be pitted against another
- Public assets can and should be funded through the public process of government.

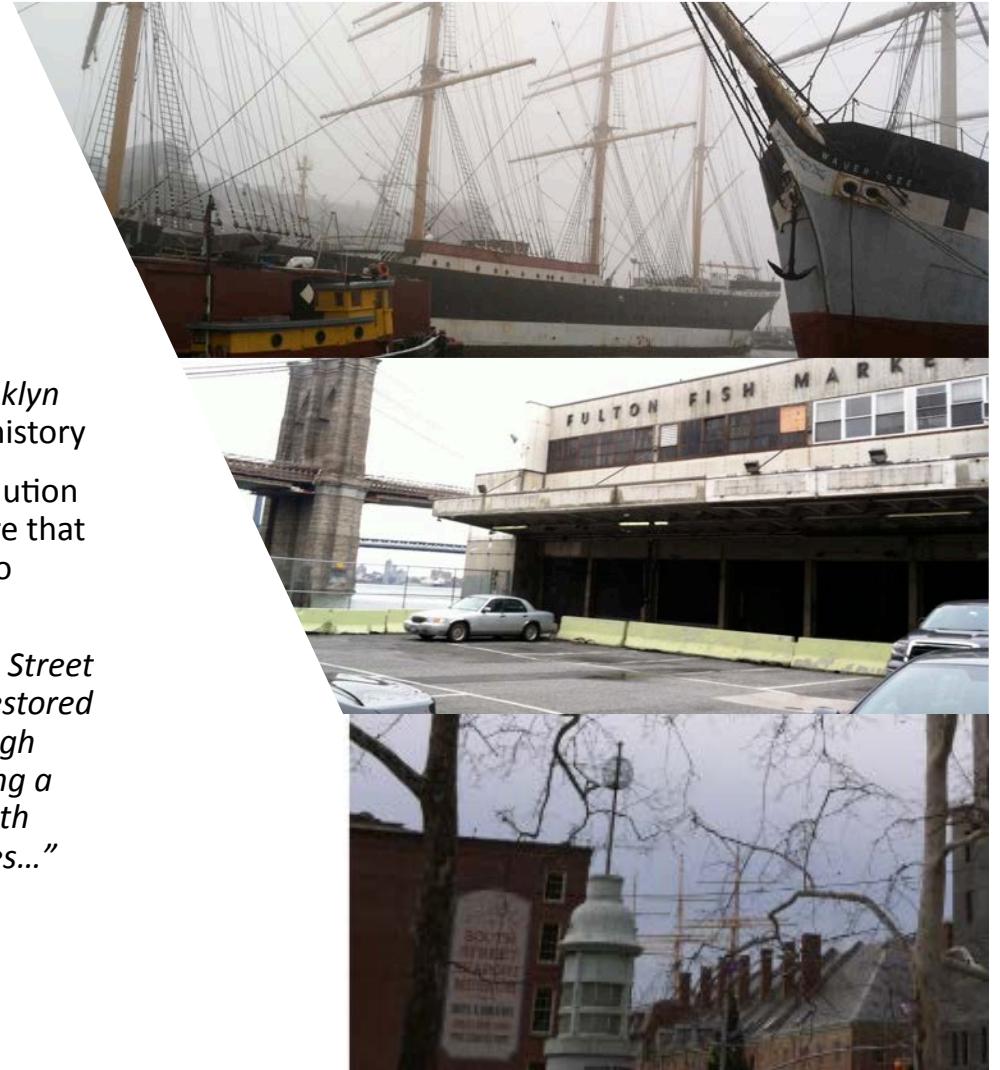


# SOUTH STREET SEAPORT HISTORIC DISTRICT

The South Street Seaport, adjacent to the iconic *Brooklyn Bridge* in New York City, is part of our nation's living history

- In 1977, the City of New York passed a zoning resolution creating a special 10-block historic district to ensure that the Seaport would survive for future generations to enjoy. It specifies as one of its purposes:

*“to restore, preserve and assure the use of the South Street Seaport Subdistrict as an area of small historic and restored buildings, open to the waterfront and having a high proportion of public spaces and amenities, including a South Street Seaport Environmental Museum, with associated cultural, recreational and retail activities...”*



# SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - CHALLENGES

The New York Times

The *National Trust for Historic Preservation* included the South Street Seaport in its 2015 list of:

**“America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places”**

Ongoing challenges :

- Threat of privatization of public assets
- Partnering with a sole developer
- Out-of-scale development

In his State of the City Address: Feb 3, 2015

Mayor de Blasio stated:

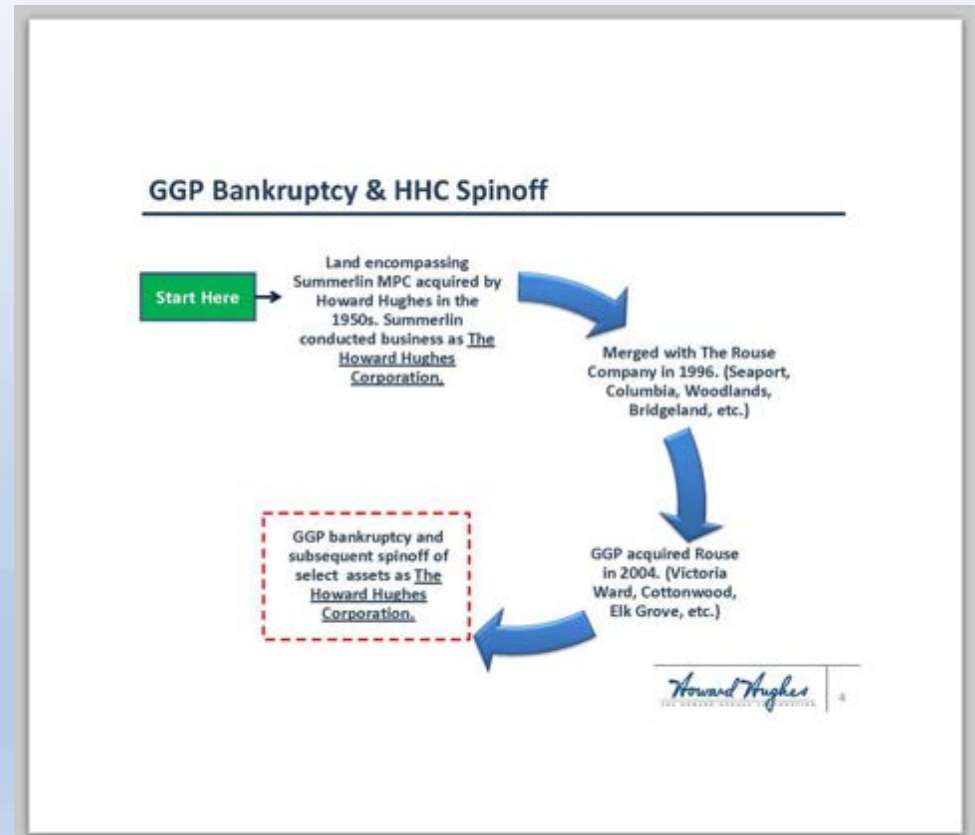
*“We are not embarking on a mission to build towering skyscrapers where they don’t belong. We have a duty to protect and preserve the culture and character of our neighborhoods, and we will do so.”*

## *South Street Seaport Tops Preservation Trust’s List of Endangered Historic Sites*



Construction at Pier 17 at the South Street Seaport. The Howard Hughes Corporation is spending \$425 million to rebuild Pier 17 and erect a glassy four-story mall. Pablo Enriquez for The New York Times

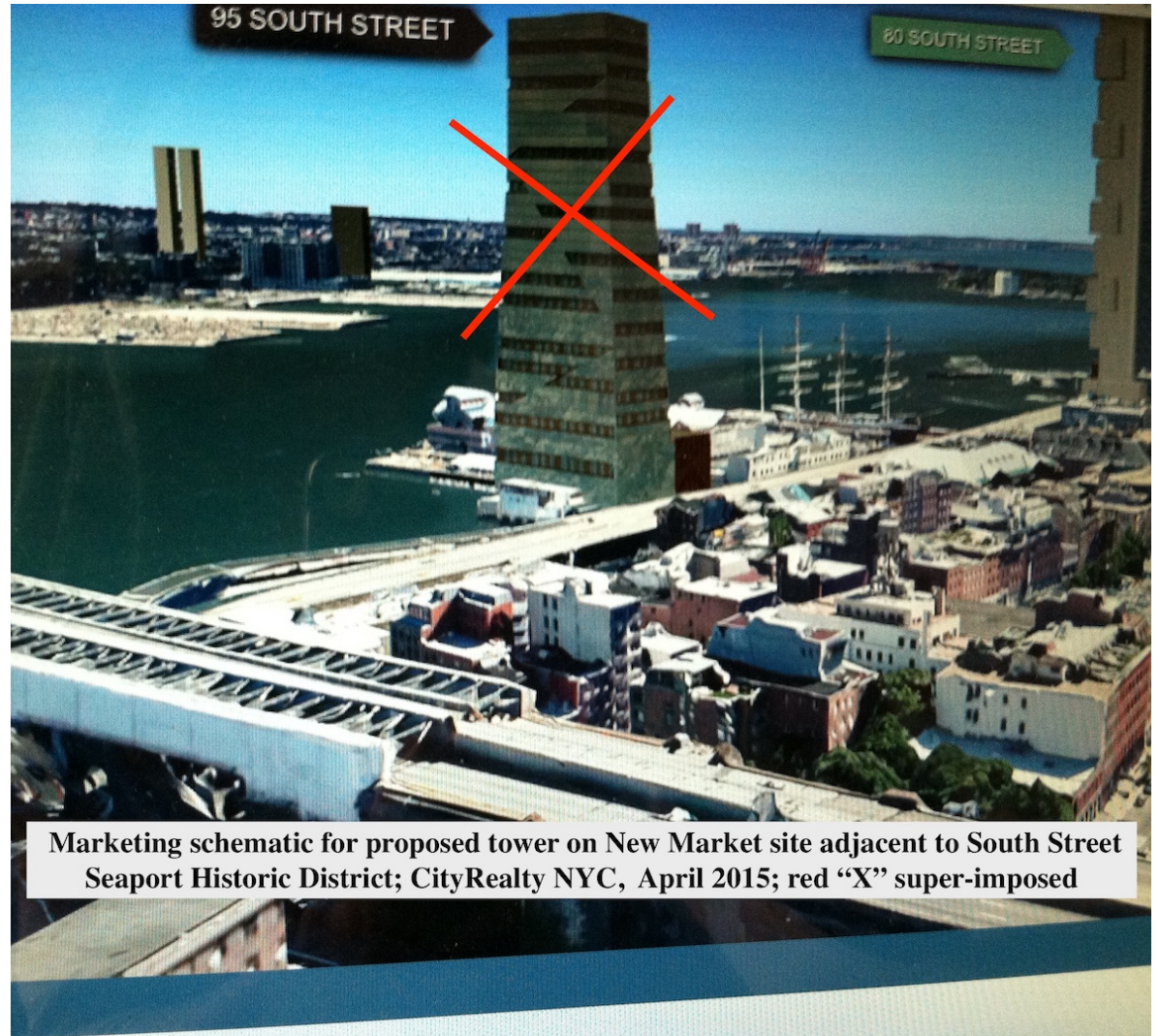
# SOUTH STREET SEAPORT CHALLENGE — SOLE DEVELOPER





## SOUTH STREET SEAPORT CHALLENGE – OUT-OF-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

Rendering of proposed tower over  
New Market site  
CityRealty NYC, April 2015; red “X”  
super-imposed





# CREATING NEW PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

The population in Lower Manhattan continues to grow very quickly, creating the need for more open spaces for families, especially with children.

This is particularly challenging on the east side of Lower Manhattan, where much of the population growth is taking place.

Several proposals that have strong community and Community Board 1 support include:





# ROOFTOPS

- Utilize the rooftops of existing and new public buildings in the Seaport to create playing fields and other recreation spaces. In the planning and approval stages, Pier 17 was designated to be utilized in this manner, with a grass turf roof for public use. But, after winning approval, HHC switched to intensive commercial use of the roof, for concerts and other activities. HHC should be told to make the Pier 17 rooftop far more accessible to local youth.
- We also suggest that a rebuilt New Market Building have a rooftop that can allow children and others to play/relax.





# THE DUGOUT UNDER THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE



Another nearby site that should be explored for conversion to open space is the “Dugout” . This area is being used by NYC Dept. of Transportation (DOT) and only a handful of cars/vehicles park there. This space should be turned over to Dept. of Parks to create a new park



A photograph of the Brooklyn Bridge Banks area. The scene shows a paved plaza with a person standing in the center. To the left, there are several wooden benches and a set of stairs leading up to a building. The building has a curved facade and is supported by large columns. In the background, the Brooklyn Bridge is visible, along with other buildings and trees. The text "BROOKLYN BRIDGE BANKS" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

# BROOKLYN BRIDGE BANKS

The City should rebuild and reopen the Brooklyn Bridge Banks which had long served the area with skateboard areas, basketball courts and other open spaces until it was closed over a decade ago when Brooklyn Bridge reconstruction got underway

We should immediately explore rebuilding that space for community use.



# PUBLIC SPACE IN RESILIENCY PLANS

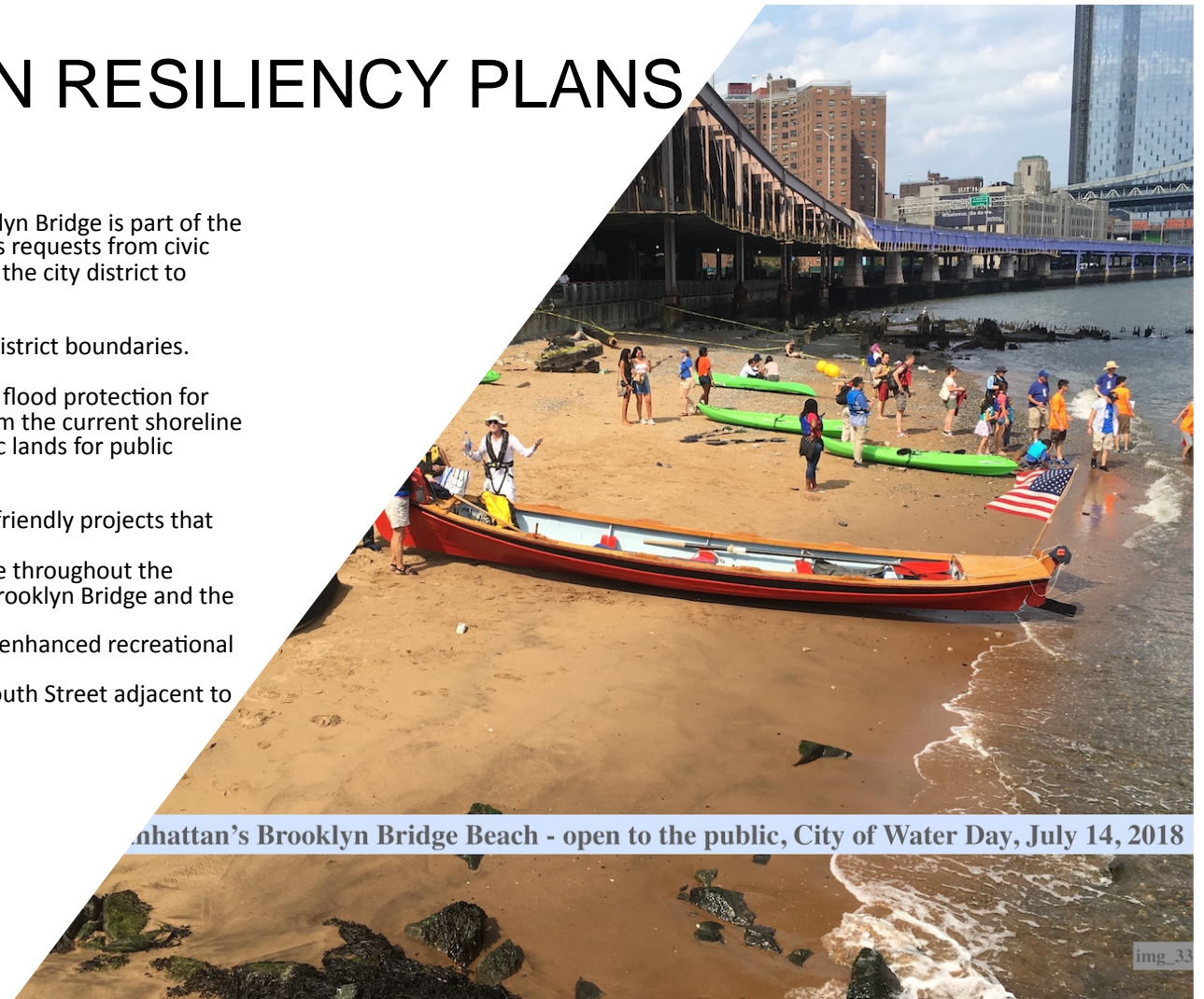
The area from the New Market site up to the Brooklyn Bridge is part of the national Seaport Historic District. Despite numerous requests from civic groups, the City of NY has refused to date to extend the city district to match the national district.

We support including the area in the city's historic district boundaries.

In keeping with the Mayor's newly released plan for flood protection for the Seaport area, any land created into the river from the current shoreline up to the Bridge should be developed keeping public lands for public purposes.

The Seaport Coalition proposes 2-story community friendly projects that would:

- a) Protect the views: of the iconic Brooklyn Bridge throughout the Seaport, and of the historic Seaport from the Brooklyn Bridge and the Brooklyn waterfront
- b) Support water-dependent maritime and water-enhanced recreational uses
- c) Stimulate compatible commercial activity on South Street adjacent to new public use facilities.



Manhattan's Brooklyn Bridge Beach - open to the public, City of Water Day, July 14, 2018



## A NEW PUBLIC MARKET



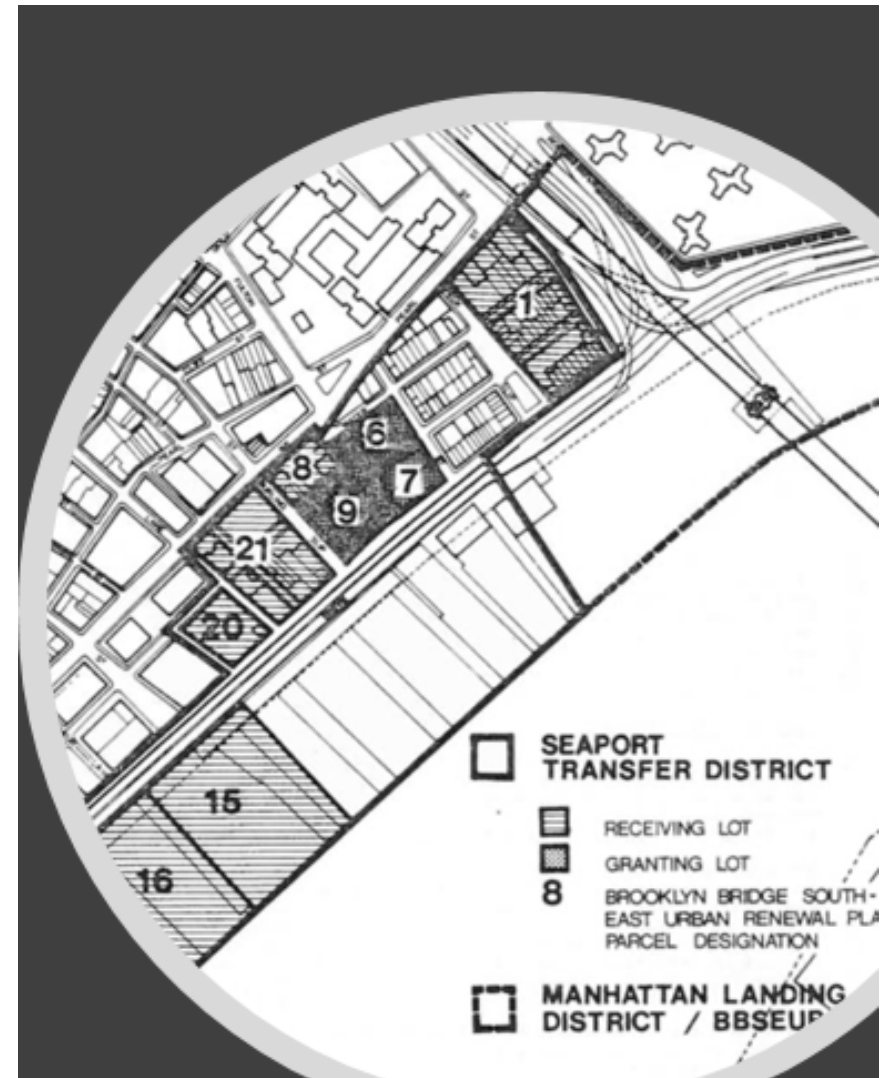
Even before New Amsterdam became New York in 1664, the seaport was home to a thriving farmers market, one that developed from what had already been a trading center for indigenous peoples. More recently, a growing public market – the New Amsterdam Market – was providing locally and regionally sourced fresh food to the New York community.

The Seaport Coalition supports a marketplace of multiple vendors that includes locally and regionally sourced food items, open to the public seven days a week - in keeping with the District's past and the goal of retaining that history while serving contemporary needs.

- 10,000 square feet on the ground floor of the Tin Building should be designated for such a market.
- The preponderance of goods available should not be solely for point of purchase consumption.

# SEAPORT AIR RIGHTS

- ✓ Re-build the New Market pier/platform and building
- ✓ Re-build a John Street building for the South Street Seaport Museum
- ✓ Create community open spaces
- The Seaport Coalition believes that any and all air rights from the Seaport District should only be allowed to be transferred to sites **OUTSIDE** the Historic District
- **Funds received from the sale of city-owned air rights should be dedicated to new construction at the New Market and John Street Lot sites and other important community needs**
- The New Market Building has an estimated 210,000 +/- square feet of unused development rights (aka air rights) and there may be additional air rights which are owned by the city that could be monetized to fund a dedicated Seaport improvement district





# A REBUILT NEW MARKET BUILDING – NEW COMMUNITY FACILITY

In 2007, the NYC Dept. of City Planning in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement (2)* for the waterfront outlined parameters for a Proposed Action, when funding became available, for the New Market as follows:

*“... a new building of up to approximately 40,000 square feet is envisioned, potentially housing a mix of uses...It is expected to have an open floor plan for community, cultural, and/or commercial uses...The height of the building is assumed to be approximately 50 feet with a footprint of roughly 146 by 137 feet.” [ Pg 1-15 of FEIS; emphasis added]*



## NEW MARKET REIMAGINED

- Adjacent waterfront reserved for working waterfront components
- Rooftop outdoor open space for public access and recreation
- Dedicated space for community facility
- Dedicated space for South Street Seaport Museum (SSSM) maritime activities.



# NEW MARKET— CITY- OWNED



In a Dec. 12, 2011 *Letter of Intent* (1), the NYC Economic Development Corp. (NYCEDC) entered into a “public-private partnership” with the Howard Hughes Corp. which offered up the New Market as a private development venture (triggering strong community resistance in the years to come).



HHC missed a milestone date of Aug 31, 2016 (Exhibit B of Mixed-Use Project) to exercise this option.



NYCEDC has affirmed to the Seaport Working Group, and to its successor, the Seaport Advisory Committee, that the City of New York retains control of the air rights at the New Market Building site.