

5.19 CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL PLANS

This section presents a summary of current public policy for Lower Manhattan and the study area relating to land use, economic development, transportation strategy, and community vision. This section also presents a summary of policies and visions that have been created to encourage rebuilding and transformation in Lower Manhattan, specifically those formulated after the events of September 11, 2001.

5.19.1 Lower Manhattan Recovery Plans

Historically, much of the planning for Lower Manhattan was guided by the *Plan for Lower Manhattan*, issued in the 1960s by the New York City Department of City Planning (NYCDCP). This plan attempted to induce high-density development along the waterfront and create retail and pedestrian corridors between developments on the waterfront and surrounding areas. The plan for the *Special Manhattan Landing Development District* adopted in 1973 was to guide off-shore development from Battery Park to the Manhattan Bridge along the East River. However, development as proposed by the above-mentioned plans did not materialize, and was subsequently not considered an influential factor in the development of the City.

One of most influential public policy initiatives that has helped generate new economic activity in the area is *The Lower Manhattan Economic Revitalization Plan* initiated in 1995 by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. The plan provided real estate tax abatements, commercial rent tax special reductions, and energy cost initiatives to attract commercial and residential investment in the area. *The Alliance for Downtown New York*, established in 1995, is the City's largest business improvement district (BID). The BID covers 100 city blocks from City Hall to the Battery and East River to Route 9A/West Street and provides supplemental sanitation and security, economic development, streetscape, design and transportation services, marketing and enhanced tourism programs, and special events to the area. The Alliance also identified the lack of economic diversity among Lower Manhattan businesses, and the need to encourage residential development, as critical factors governing the future of Lower Manhattan. In order to induce change and convert the area into a mixed use community while maintaining the historic character of the area, the Special Lower Manhattan District (LM) was created in 1998. Simplified rules governing land use, zoning and the utilization of underused commercial buildings are some of the measures adopted to create the mixed use community.

Plans and Policies for Lower Manhattan - Post 9/11

Already beginning to experience an economic downturn and weakening commercial office market, the Lower Manhattan community was dealt a severe social and economic blow by the events of September 11, 2001. The events of that day had implications for existing plans to improve Lower Manhattan's transportation network, and to complete the area's transformation into a mixed use residential neighborhood. In response to this challenge, a range of targeted policy initiatives were undertaken to reinforce and refocus those in place prior to 9/11.

In order to coordinate the long-term efforts of federal, state, and local agencies in rebuilding Lower Manhattan after the events of 9/11, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) was created. LMDC has been entrusted with the task of planning for the World Trade Center site and surrounding neighborhoods, and also initiating redevelopment and revitalization programs for all areas within Lower Manhattan below Houston Street.

As described in Chapter 1, Governor Pataki and the federal government outlined a set of priority projects to restore Lower Manhattan's transportation infrastructure. The Governor outlined a four point plan to achieve this objective:

1. Create a grand point of arrival in Lower Manhattan.
2. Rationalize and improve the area's subway lines.
3. Provide a respectful setting for a memorial and the creation of a West Street promenade.
4. Provide direct rail and ferry access to Long Island and the region's airports.

In December 2002, Mayor Bloomberg released *City Vision for a 21st Century Lower Manhattan*, which outlines many of the concepts and plans that may influence the development of Lower Manhattan in the future. The Mayor's vision calls for the renewal and revitalization of Lower Manhattan as a more vibrant center of culture and commerce and a community to live, work, and visit. The three primary areas of focus identified by the Mayor are:

1. Improve transportation links between Lower Manhattan and the surrounding region.
2. Build new neighborhoods.
3. Create more public spaces.

Central to both the Governor's and the Mayor's visions for Lower Manhattan are specific transportation investments to be made by the public sector in order to improve the connectivity of Lower Manhattan with the region. LMDC's *Urban Planning and Transportation Study* (LMDC, 2002) states that "rapid transit connections are [Lower Manhattan's] greatest asset, but in need of improvement." The study discusses the impact of full peak hour trains, overcrowded and obsolete stations, and inadequate connections between stations. Similar concerns have been mirrored in the Mayor's and Governor's visions for the area. These reports propose improvements for rail stations and services that would include the Permanent WTC PATH Terminal, the Fulton Street Transit Center, and subway stations such as South Ferry.

The workforce and residents of Lower Manhattan are some of the most transit-dependent populations in the City. It has been estimated that up to 80 percent of those working in Lower Manhattan live within an area served by subway or bus. The majority of the remainder resides in areas served by commuter railroads. However, many of the existing services and infrastructure are crowded and aging. The perception of poor transit access is often cited as a major reason why firms relocate away from Lower Manhattan. As such, improvements in the condition and efficiency of existing transit services, as well as

the improvements to regional connectivity, are central to public policy for Lower Manhattan.

As described in Chapter 1, the South Ferry Terminal Project is one of the three priority projects identified by the Governor and federal government to address the urgent need for the rebuilding and development of comprehensive transit improvements in Lower Manhattan in response to the events of September 11. Because of its position as a key intermodal point, as well as a stepping off point to numerous important commercial and cultural destinations in Lower Manhattan, addressing the deficiencies of the existing South Ferry Station is integral to improving the functionality of the area's transportation infrastructure, thereby supporting Lower Manhattan's full economic recovery. The Proposed Action, therefore, is consistent with and implements the policies and visions for Lower Manhattan.

5.19.2 Other Plans

According to the New York City Zoning Resolution (Article IX), the study area is within the boundaries of three Special Zoning Areas. The Special Zoning Areas include: the Special Lower Manhattan District (LMD, described in the previous section); the Brooklyn Bridge Southeast Urban Renewal Plan (URP); and the "Special Zoning Regulations Applicable in the Waterfront Area."

The Special Lower Manhattan District (LMD) was established by the NYCDOP in 1998 to oversee development of Lower Manhattan south of Murray Street and east of West Street. Specific goals of the LMD, among others, are improved waterfront access, enhanced pedestrian environments, the development of public spaces and amenities with associated cultural and recreational activities, and the promotion of the most desirable use of City land. The proposed replacement of the existing South Ferry Station with a new and improved terminal facility would comply with the objectives of the LMD. By improving the physical and operational capabilities of the existing station, the proposed project will offer better passenger accessibility, improved transit connections benefiting both commuters and visitors, and help facilitate economic recovery in Lower Manhattan.

A small portion of the study area falls within the jurisdiction of the Brooklyn Bridge Southeast Urban Renewal Plan (URP) and the "Special Zoning Regulations Applicable in the Waterfront Area." Within the study area, the URP governs the industrial district below South Street between the NYCDOT building and the U.S. Coast Guard Building. The "Special Zoning Regulations Applicable in the Waterfront Area" apply specifically to developments on zoning lots within waterfront blocks. Since the proposed project does not include development within the jurisdiction of the URP or on a lot within a waterfront block, the project would impact neither the URP nor the waterfront area regulations. See Section 5.5: Navigable Waterways and Coastal Zone, for a discussion of policies affecting the waterfront areas of the study area.

Another transportation initiative in Lower Manhattan involves the reinforcement of the regional New York Harbor ferry network by increasing connectivity between waterborne

mass transits and inland activity centers (U.S. DOT and FTA, 2003). The proposed East/Harlem River Ferry Landings project would facilitate trans-Hudson ferry traffic from New Jersey to Manhattan's eastside, and create capacity for further increases in ferry demand including routes to New Jersey, LaGuardia Airport, Brooklyn, and Queens, and intra-Manhattan community routes. One of these proposed ferry landings would be located at the Battery Maritime Building, located at the southern tip of Manhattan adjacent and to the northeast of the Whitehall Ferry Terminal. It is anticipated that users of this particular ferry landing location would include both commuters and tourists, and that some of these users would also access the South Ferry Subway Terminal for travel to destinations north of the area.

The Battery Park Master Plan represents another planning effort in the South Ferry Terminal project area, as described in Section 5.3: Public Open Space. The Master Plan has been developed by The Battery Conservancy; their vision is to return the Battery to its historic role as the center of cultural life in the Harbor and Downtown New York.

There are four main principles guiding the Battery Park Master Plan. *The Water's Edge* principle includes extending the green of the park closer to the water's edge, thus giving the Battery a more park-like character. *The City Edge* concept reinforces the park edge via the creation of a broad new walkway and new park entrance. *The Park Interior* principle involves opening up the park interior for improved physical and visual access through the park to the water, and reducing the amount of pavement. *The Town Green* notion entails the transformation of the existing Eisenhower Mall into an open, expansive lawn that would serve as a "Town Green" for numerous new uses and special events. An area designated as the "Bosque" is for passive recreation along the waterfront; the Bosque would offer picnic areas and gardens, in addition to specialized horticulture.