

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 31, 2005

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MAYOR BLOOMBERG UNVEILS PLANS FOR EAST RIVER WATERFRONT ESPLANADE, PAVILIONS AND NEW OPEN SPACE

\$150 Million in LMDC Funds Announced Last Week to be Used For Redevelopment Project

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today detailed plans developed by the Department of City Planning (DCP) to dramatically transform the East River Waterfront from Battery Park to East River Park. The East River Waterfront Plan proposes a greatly enhanced public esplanade, the addition to waterfront amenities and the creation of new commercial, cultural and community destinations along this 2-mile stretch of waterfront. This is the next step in completing the 32-mile Manhattan Greenway, and will greatly improve the connection between the Battery and East River Parks, two of the largest open spaces in Lower Manhattan. The implementation of the Plan fulfills a key element of the Mayor's Vision for Lower Manhattan announced in December 2002. Funding is being provided by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), which announced last week that \$150 million would be provided for the project. This is the largest off-site allocation of funds for rebuilding in Lower Manhattan, and this funding commitment ensures that implementation begins immediately. The Plan provides increased open space and amenities for residents, visitors and employees of the financial district.

The Mayor unveiled the Plan on Pier 35 and was joined by Councilmembers Margarita Lopez and Alan Gerson, City Planning Director Amanda M. Burden and the lead consultants for the urban planning team, New York-based SHoP Architects represented by Greg Pasquarelli, the Richard Rogers Partnership from London, and landscape architect Ken Smith, who worked with the City to create the East River Waterfront Plan over a year of planning and design in close partnership with the local communities in Lower Manhattan, Chinatown and the Lower East Side.

"A bold new vision for the East River Waterfront is a critical component of our efforts to revitalize and transform Lower Manhattan," said Mayor Bloomberg. "There is a direct connection between improving our waterfront and retaining and attracting business and jobs to Lower Manhattan. I want to thank Governor Pataki and the LMDC for working together with the City to fund this plan, which allows us to fulfill our commitment to improve this celebrated gateway to our City, and enables us to immediately begin realizing this vision as part of our larger commitment to redevelop Lower Manhattan, strengthen the financial district, and reconnect the area's diverse communities."

"Reclaiming the waterfront for the Lower Manhattan community has been key part of our rebuilding efforts," said Governor George E. Pataki. "The plans for the East River Waterfront will allow for a continuous stretch of open space from the east to west side of downtown. Together, Mayor Bloomberg and I have committed the largest investment in parks in Lower Manhattan since the creation of Battery Park City. Open spaces such as the East River Waterfront help build stronger communities, which is why we are creating or renovating green spaces throughout Lower Manhattan. All of these park projects are part of our vision for transforming downtown into a thriving mixed-use community."

"The announcement of the East River Waterfront Esplanade is long-awaited good news for the Lower Manhattan community," said Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. "The esplanade is a great addition to ongoing plans for the East Side Waterfront, such as the imminent exodus of the Fulton Fish Market from South Street Seaport, removal of unsightly fencing, and the soon-to-be-finished construction of the East River Park Promenade. This project will beautify the eastside's buried treasure, which had been neglected and misused for years. It will also expand the waterfront into a modern and attractive place for residents, workers and visitors alike to gather, explore and have fun."

"The East River Waterfront in Lower Manhattan is the final frontier along Manhattan's shoreline to be improved," said Deputy Mayor for Economic Development & Rebuilding Daniel Doctoroff. "Together with the City's other initiatives to help strengthen the central business district in the area, and the exciting private sector plans that have been encouraged by the Mayor's Vision for Lower Manhattan, our East River Waterfront plan will make this extraordinary area a far more enjoyable place for all of those who live, work and visit it."

The \$150 million dollars allocated to the East River Waterfront plan represents the single largest allocation, after the World Trade Center memorial, of the \$800 million of the LMDC's remaining Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan. Initiated by the Bloomberg Administration, the East River Waterfront Study was completed over the past year. With a team of consultants, the City developed a plan that will greatly enhance access to the waterfront, a priority repeatedly expressed by local community organizations during the City's outreach. Over 70 separate meetings have been held over the past year with the community boards, tenant

associations, civic leaders, maritime experts and local elected officials. This study was guided by three major goals - to create a spectacular waterfront esplanade, to complete the Manhattan greenway and to reconnect the communities of Lower Manhattan to the East River Waterfront.

"The legacy of this community will be our unshakeable commitment to gain access to the East River Waterfront," said Councilmember Margarita Lopez. "With this initiative, Mayor Bloomberg fulfilled his promise of economic growth and greater quality of life for generations to come."

"I thank the Governor and the Mayor for allocating funding to begin to create a Lower Manhattan waterfront loop, completing and connecting the Hudson River Park to the East River Park, which is long overdue," said Councilmember Alan Gerson. "To make the waterfront accessible and rehabilitated to become a wonderful space for everyone to enjoy is the best investment for our city. It will uplift the spirits of everyone downtown as well as all New Yorkers in the aftermath of 9/11 and contribute to our economic revitalization. Lower Manhattan will celebrate its rebirth with the best East-West waterfront, river to river, as we reclaim our nautical heritage."

"The LMDC is pleased to provide \$150 million to support the reinvention of the east river waterfront," said LMDC President Stefan Pryor. "This initiative will transform this underutilized area to a year-round recreational oasis for Lower Manhattan families. Chain-link fences and concrete barriers will be replaced by cultural facilities, unique recreational spaces, and community amenities. I commend Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Pataki for their vision and their commitment to securing the resources to make this important project a reality"

"The revitalization of the East River Waterfront is an historic opportunity to shape the future of Lower Manhattan for generations to come," said City Planning Director Burden. "This innovative design and program for the waterfront between Battery Park and East River Park will serve diverse communities including Wall Street, the Seaport District, Chinatown and the Lower East Side. Although Lower Manhattan is surrounded by water on three sides, currently there are too few opportunities to enjoy its proximity to the East River waterfront. It has been extremely gratifying to work with the community to help realize a shared vision for Lower Manhattan's waterfront."

The waterfront esplanade is the most important component of this project. It will stretch along an entire two-mile length of the river's edge, from historic Battery Park at the tip of the island to East River Park, the Lower East Side's principal open space. The new waterfront walkway will include traditional waterfront amenities such as seating and plantings, as well as innovative improvements such as new cladding and enhanced lighting beneath the FDR. New pavilions planned for underneath the FDR viaduct may include commercial, cultural and community uses that will complement the public open space experience by bringing activity and the vitality of the City to the water's edge.

Numerous connections will link the waterfront to its adjacent communities and public open spaces along the waterfront will further engage these communities with the East River. A new plaza in front of the historic Battery Maritime Building and an expansive entrance to East River Park will ensure completion of the Manhattan Greenway and graciously link the Battery to the East River Park and beyond. The plan includes the transformation of Pier 35 at Rutgers Street, which is currently used by the Sanitation Department, into a three-quarter acre public pier.

The plan calls for:

- A new waterfront esplanade with new plantings, benches, tables, repaving, improved lighting and a widened bike path.
- Reconstruction of Pier 15 for two levels of community open space and expanded programs for the South Street Seaport Museum.
- Transformation of current Sanitation pier into a publicly accessible open space on the water.
- Adaptive reuse of land under the FDR Drive for community, commercial and cultural programs in new pavilions along South Street.
- New and expanded upland parks and open spaces in the historic slips which line South Street, including Peck Slip, Catherine Slip, Rutgers and Montgomery Streets, that will draw people to the waterfront.
- Enhanced and expanded access into East River Park.
- Design and engineering for a new public plaza in front of the historic Battery Maritime Building to improve the connection from the Battery to the East River. The project includes the extension of the Battery Park underpass 350 feet to the north in order to improve pedestrian safety.

With the funding now in place, the City will immediately begin implementation. This will include environmental review and detailed design of the esplanade, new open spaces and rehabilitation of pier structures. Since the inception of the East River Waterfront Study, many City agencies have worked together to create a coherent plan. This same approach will be used in the implementation phase, as lead agencies work together to garner approvals at the City, State, and Federal levels.

The City will also identify immediate improvements in the study area that can be accomplished within the next two years. Immediate improvements will likely include the slips and other adjacent inland open spaces. Pending approval from the relevant City and State agencies, a majority of the improvements will be constructed in the next three to five years.

For renderings of the East River Waterfront Plan, go to www.lowermanhattan.info.

About City Planning

The Department of City Planning is responsible for the City's physical and socioeconomic planning, including land use and environmental review; preparation of plans and policies; and provision of technical assistance and planning information to government agencies, public officials, and community boards.