



Water Street POPS Programming - **Approved!**

Update June 12, 2013:

On June 12, 2013 the City Council adopted the Water Street POPS Text Amendment and it is now in effect until January 1, 2014.

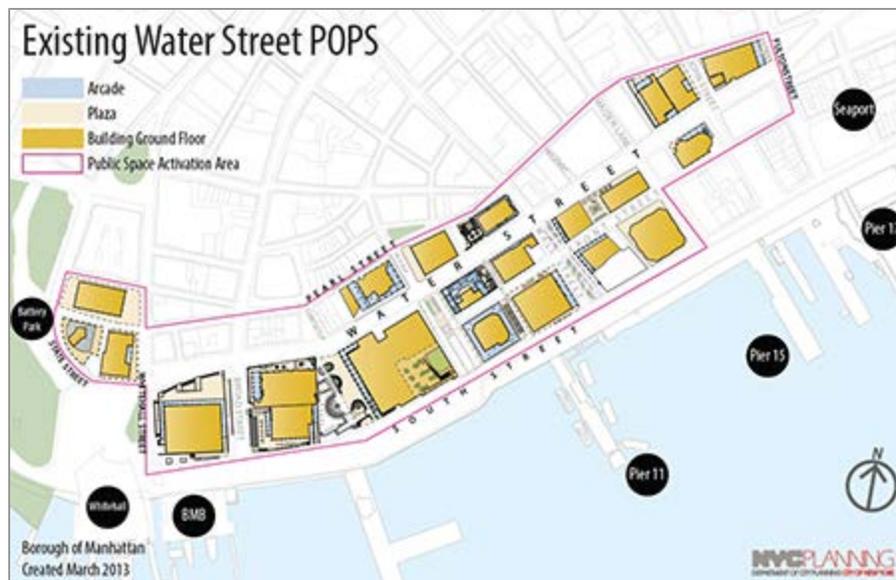
Introduction

The Department of City Planning (DCP) proposes a zoning text amendment to the Special Lower Manhattan District to allow events and new amenities in existing [privately owned public spaces](#) (POPS) along the Water Street corridor for the summer, fall, and holiday season of this year. This text amendment would apply to all existing POPS, which are public spaces that have been provided in exchange for additional floor area, along or near Water Street between Fulton and State Streets. The text amendment is intended to facilitate efforts to help rejuvenate the Water Street corridor after the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy by allowing temporary programmatic changes to POPS that would help activate these open space resources and attract residents, workers, and visitors.

Area Description

Water Street is one of Lower Manhattan's most important commercial corridors, with 19 million square feet of Class A and B commercial office space and over 100,000 employees within the half-mile stretch. Water Street is located on the east side of Lower Manhattan and is lined with a mix of high-rise commercial office buildings, former office buildings converted to residential and hotel use, and several historic townhouses.

The proposed text amendment would apply to the area generally bounded by Pearl Street, Fulton Street, South Street, and State Street – an area designated the "Public Space Activation Area".



Twenty-two buildings in the Public Space Activation Area have one or more POPS. They have generally taken the form of plazas (20), arcades (19), sidewalk widenings (3), and an indoor pedestrian space (1). - [View a larger image.](#)

Water Street Privately Owned Public Spaces

Many of the POPS within the Area were developed under the earliest guidelines for bonus spaces, which did not require the amenities that have been provided in many of the recently designed POPS around the City. The concentration of these POPS, their particular designs, and lack of amenities have failed to support the active street life originally envisioned along Water Street, and DCP has been interested in encouraging owners to upgrade spaces to help improve the vitality of Water Street.



At-grade plaza at 55 Water Street



Plaza and arcade at 1 New York Plaza.

In April 2011, the City Planning Commission approved a text amendment to the Special Lower Manhattan District to allow tables and chairs in existing arcades along Water, Front, and South Streets by Chairperson Certification (see [Lower Manhattan Arcades Text Amendment](#)). The Commission noted that Water Street is not used by the majority of pedestrians as their north-south route and that the pedestrian environment and vitality of Water Street needs to be improved. The text amendment served as a tool to strengthen this important connection from the South Street Seaport area to The Battery, and several buildings have already taken advantage of this new provision.

Post-Sandy Revitalization

In October 2012 the inundation caused by Hurricane Sandy brought significant damage to Lower Manhattan, and exacerbated the broader challenges that have been facing Water Street. Many office tenants had to temporarily relocate to other parts of the City, and some still haven't returned. Local businesses were severely damaged, especially in the Seaport area, and businesses are only slowly coming back to life. Those buildings that sustained significant damage continue to be restored months after the storm.



Small businesses that have yet to recover from the storm
(March 9, 2013)



Generators and equipment at 1 New York Plaza (March 9, 2013).

Following the storm, DCP has been working closely with the Office of the Mayor, the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and the Department of Transportation (DOT) on short-term efforts to rejuvenate the Water Street and Seaport areas. A major component of this effort is the ongoing development of a summer/fall program of events and activities that would utilize Water Street POPS. Farmers markets, small musical performances, outdoor fitness events, and food tastings during work hours and into the evenings are examples of the type of activities that are envisioned - the goal being to create excitement and economic activity, reinforce community connections, and reverse the cycle of negative news and perceptions associated with Water Street.

Given that the Department has also been interested in understanding how POPS along Water Street could be improved, the proposed text amendment would provide an opportunity to evaluate the most successful activities that may inform strategies for the long-term activation of these underutilized spaces and the Water Street pedestrian environment.

Proposed Text Amendment

A new section 91-82, in the Special Lower Manhattan District, is proposed that would allow events and a wide range of temporary amenities to occupy an existing POPS on and near Water Street *as-of-right* until January 1, 2014. Current regulations require a Chairperson Certification for a design change to define, on an updated site plan, the area where non-permanent, moveable amenities and temporary exhibitions would be located. Events are not expressly permitted in these spaces, and are more commonly found in special permit spaces as part of the special permit conditions. The text amendment would allow:

- Temporary amenities (up to 60% of the public space area)

- Events that are open to the public

Event descriptions will be sent to [The Mayor's Street Activity Permit Office \(SAPO\)](#), and events that will extend to City sidewalks and streets will require a SAPO permit.

 View the [proposed text amendment](#).

Public Review

The proposed text amendment was referred on March 4, 2013 to Manhattan Community Board 1 and the Borough President for a 30-day review period.

On March 22, 2013 the Department of City Planning filed a revised application (N 130206(A) ZRM) that extends the boundary within which the proposed text amendment provisions will be applicable. The new boundary, designated the "Public Space Activation Area," includes three additional properties to the west that would help provide an important link between Battery Park and the Bowling Green subway station and the Water Street corridor. The proposed boundary would be added to the existing Public Access Areas map in Appendix A (Lower Manhattan District Plan Maps) of the Special Lower Manhattan District text. The review period for SAPO was also reduced to be consistent with their current review procedure. All other aspects of the previously-referred application remain the same.

 View the [revised text amendment](#).

On April 10, 2013 the City Planning Commission held a public hearing for the applications, and on May 8, 2013, the City Planning Commission approved the revised application (N 130206(A) ZRM).  [Read the CPC Report](#).

On June 12, 2013 the City Council adopted the Water Street POPS Text Amendment and it is now in effect until January 1, 2014.

For more information about this proposal please contact the Manhattan Office of the Department of City Planning at (212) 720-3480.

Related Notes

-  Items accompanied by this symbol require the [free Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).
- Brief explanations of terms in *green italics* can be viewed by [visiting glossary page](#). Words and phrases followed by an asterisk (*) are defined terms in the Zoning Resolution, primarily in Section 12-10. Consult the Zoning Resolution for the official and legally binding definitions of these words and phrases.