

May 20, 2015

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: The South Street Seaport

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

The undersigned represent thousands of New Yorkers concerned about plans for the South Street Seaport, a local and National Register Historic District.

We are deeply troubled that:

- The city is repeating past failures to protect the Seaport by entrusting the future of the district to a single developer.
- There is an egregious absence of transparency and public review of the plans for the Seaport.
- Stewardship is being entrusted to a developer who has not adequately demonstrated capacity, experience or desire to create a sustainable plan linking the interests of preservation to the economic vitality of the area.
- Plans for a skyscraper in the heart of the District will irreparably compromise the integrity of this treasure.

The South Street Seaport Museum is the City's last link to the commercial maritime history that fueled New York's economic success. You acknowledged this last fall in the *Downtown Express*, "**I think the Seaport Museum is really crucial to the city and I think it has to be protected because this is how New York City became New York City.**" The historic buildings the Museum occupies embody this narrative, yet they are at risk in the current proposal.

We ask you to pause all activity and provide material insights into:

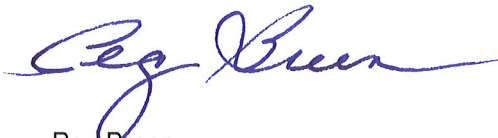
- The developer's full plan for the Seaport.
- The current status of all ownership and leases on Seaport buildings and sites, including the right to program public spaces.
- The rationale for continuing the Museum's dependency on developer revenue instead of the City-funded approach typical at other cultural institutions across the City.

The unique character of the historic buildings and the Museum itself are a natural magnet to attract New Yorkers and tourists to the Seaport. They must be strengthened to ensure the area's future economic viability. The Seaport is ideally suited to reclaim its role as our City's market district and to welcome visiting historic vessels. The Museum should serve as the hub of an arts district. Better transportation by land and sea should connect the Seaport to downtown and other shore attractions throughout the City. Retail uses that complement the area's character will promote its economic success. Alternative stewardship models for managing and maintaining the Seaport and surrounding waterfront must be considered.

Past developers have not delivered promised revenues or district-wide revitalization. We fear that the current absence of comprehensive planning allows development to head in the wrong direction again and squander the potential of this remarkable resource. We demand an opportunity to get this right.

We look forward to an opportunity to sit down with you and the appropriate Commissioners to discuss this vital issue.

Sincerely,



Peg Breen
President, The New York Landmarks Conservancy

ON BEHALF OF:
City Club of New York
Friends of South Street Seaport
Historic Districts Council
Manhattan Community Board 1
Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
The New York Landmarks Conservancy
Save Our Seaport
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council

cc: The Honorable Gale Brewer
The Honorable Margaret Chin
Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen