

A. INTRODUCTION

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has requested funds from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) for a project involving the reconstruction of Peck Slip in Lower Manhattan (Proposed Action). The project site runs along Peck Slip and is bordered by Water Street to the west and South Street to the east (see Figure 1-1).

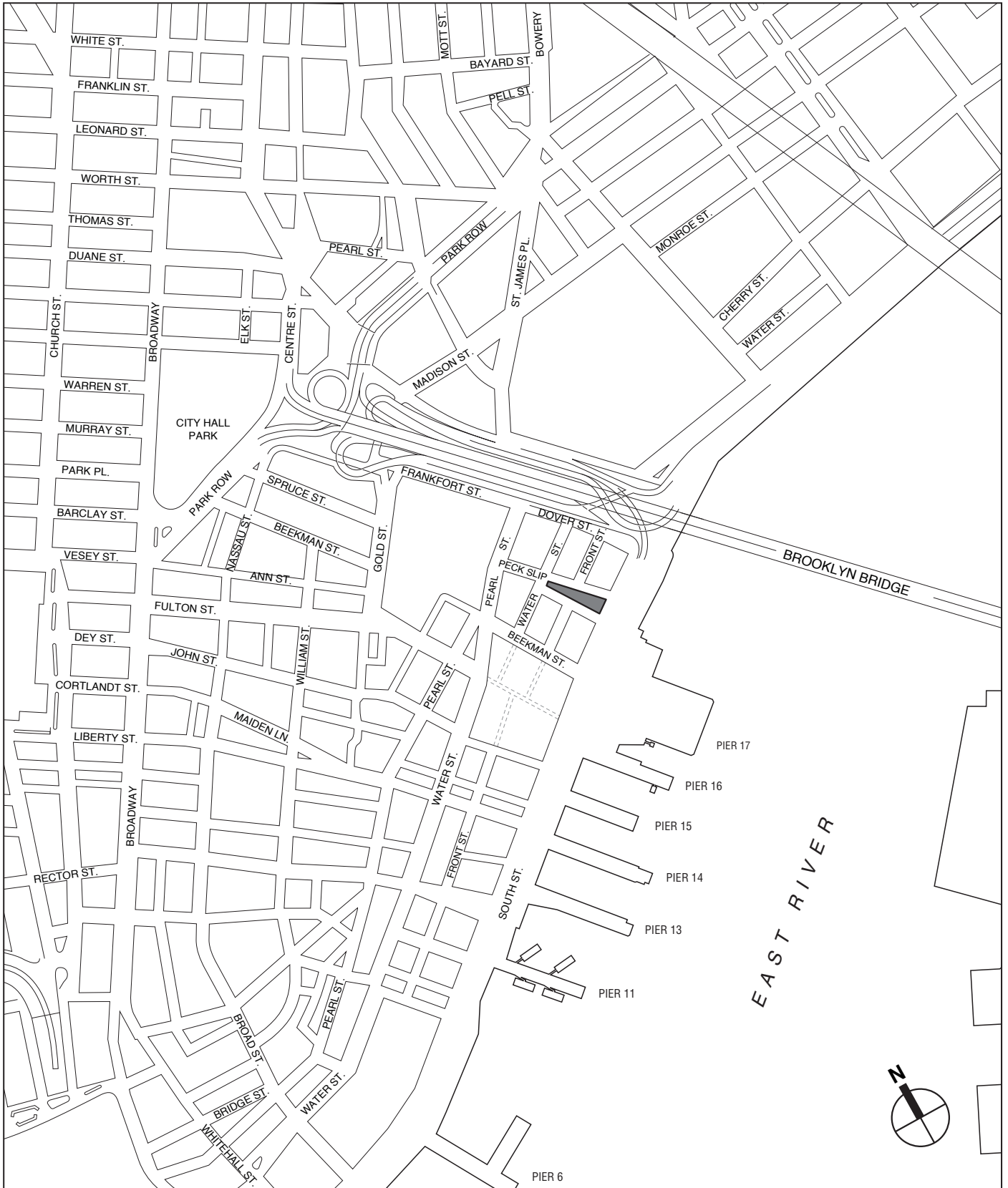
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The project site is owned by the City of New York and contains a paved median currently used as a parking lot. The Proposed Action would reconstruct the median along Peck Slip between Water and South Streets as an open space for recreation. It would close Front Street to traffic where it traverses Peck Slip, and would remove the parking lot that currently occupies the Peck Slip median.

The Proposed Action aims to provide pedestrian connections to the waterfront in order to enhance the quality of life in Lower Manhattan and contribute toward the restoration, stabilization and enhancement of the community. It would replace surface parking with a much-needed open space for the burgeoning residential population of Lower Manhattan. Not only would the Proposed Action provide for recreational space and amenities, it would improve the overall visual character of Peck Slip and would serve as a gateway to the East River Esplanade from interior blocks.

The Proposed Action would be coordinated with New York City Department of Transportation's (NYCDOT's) planned streetbed reconstruction project at Peck Slip, which is a separate action being approved and funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Proposed Action would close the portion of Front Street that crosses Peck Slip and would remove the existing Belgian block- and asphalt-paved centrally-oriented surface parking from the project site. As part of the Proposed Action, Peck Slip's street geometry would be formalized by creating a median in Peck Slip with a paved and landscaped open space and installing new granite slab curbs that would define the north and south extent of the proposed open space. The granite Belgian block pavers at the project site's existing surface parking area would be salvaged and re-used in the proposed open space design. Salvaged pavers would also be used for the reconfigured streetbeds and crosswalks with additional salvaged pavers to be laid to contrast the streetbed pattern and demarcate the extent of the crosswalk boundaries.

The landscaped open space has been designed in consultation with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to be contextually appropriate to the South Street Seaport Historic District and Extension. The project site has two distinct areas. As currently planned, the portion of the project site between Water and Front Streets would be redeveloped as an open space paved with salvaged Belgian block pavers. This area would have walkways, benches and granite block seating, trees, and other landscaping elements. Trees and other plantings would be located near the project site's southern



 Peck Slip Project Area

0 2000 FEET
SCALE

East River Waterfront Access: Peck Slip

boundary and would be spaced so as to not obstruct important views to nearby and more distant architectural resources. A vertical stone element with a mast light would be located near Water Street.

The eastern portion of the project site—from Front Street to the west side of South Street—would also be redeveloped as an open space using salvaged pavers and landscaping elements. It would include an area demarcated by granite steps in a shape reminiscent of a ship. The pavers within this ship-like area would be laid in a ripple pattern symbolizing water movement. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant pavers would be integrated into the ripple design. The granite steps at this part of the project site's northern boundary would be accented with slender vertical steel and wood rib-like elements with granite bases. They would range in height from 9 to 16 feet. These rib-like elements would be similar to the ribs of a ship, further evoking this area of Manhattan's waterfront history which included shipbuilding. Spaced at approximately 8-foot intervals, the rib-like vertical elements would maintain views to and across the project site to architectural resources within the surrounding historic district, and more distant views to architectural resources, including the Woolworth Building and the Brooklyn Bridge. An additional vertical, rib-like element with a mast light and a water feature would be located near the intersection of Front Street and Peck Slip. The southern boundary of this area of the project site would have granite elements spaced at the same interval as the bases of the rib-like elements at the northern boundary. These design components could be used as seating and would be supplemented by granite block seating and moveable wood crate seating. The eastern open space would also have trees and other plantings located near its southern boundary that would not obstruct important views to nearby and more distant architectural resources.

Construction would begin in 2009 and be completed by 2010. The City of New York would coordinate construction activities with the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center. Furthermore, the City would comply with the requirements of New York City Local Law 77, the New York City Noise Control Code, and the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's Environmental Performance Commitments.

LMDC would provide a portion of the funding for the proposed reconstruction of Peck Slip. Established in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, LMDC coordinates the rebuilding and revitalization efforts in Lower Manhattan. LMDC is a subsidiary of the New York State Urban Development Corporation, doing business as Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), a political subdivision and public benefit corporation of the State of New York. The Proposed Action would create a new public open space at Peck Slip and contribute to the continued revitalization of Lower Manhattan.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

LMDC is responsible, pursuant to federal statute 42 U.S.C. § 5304(g) as the recipient of United States Department of Housing and Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant program funds, for conducting environmental reviews of projects receiving HUD funds in accordance with 24 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 58, as well as other laws and regulations. LMDC is serving as lead agency for the environmental review of the Proposed Action under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) and its implementing regulations are referenced as appropriate. Because the Proposed Action is located in New York City and will involve actions by the City, the *CEQR Technical Manual* (Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination, 2001) generally serves as a guide with

respect to methodologies and impact criteria for evaluating the Proposed Action. In addition to NEPA and SEQRA, the review of the Proposed Action has been coordinated with review pursuant to other applicable laws and regulations, such as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). The City is serving as a cooperating/involved agency through relevant departments including DPR, NYCDOT, and New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC). *