

A. INTRODUCTION

The City of New York proposes to enhance Fulton and Nassau Streets and their environs into a vibrant retail corridor serving the surrounding commercial and residential sectors as well as the burgeoning visitor market. The Fulton Corridor Revitalization Program (the Proposed Project) includes public investment in streetscape improvements, public open spaces, and incentives to spur private rehabilitation and renovation.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and a number of City agencies, including the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP), the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT), the New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC), the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), and the Department of Small Business Services (DSBS) would work collaboratively to implement the project.

As the Proposed Project is necessary to the continued revitalization of Lower Manhattan, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) would provide a portion of the funding. 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.

Pursuant to federal statute 42 USC § 5304(g) as the recipient of the U.S. Department of Housing and Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds, LMDC is responsible for conducting environmental reviews of projects in accordance with 24 CFR 58, as well as other laws and regulations. LMDC is serving as lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

Because the Proposed Project is entirely within New York City and will involve actions by the New York City Planning Commission (CPC), the review references the City Environmental Quality Review law (CEQR) as appropriate, and the *CEQR Technical Manual* generally serves as a guide with respect to methodologies and impact criteria for evaluating the Proposed Project in this Environmental Assessment. The City is serving as a cooperating agency through relevant departments including DCP, DPR, NYCDOT, DDC, DCAS, HPD, and DSBS. EDC will continue to work with the City in connection with the Proposed Project, including the identification of an administrator of the grant program for storefront and façade improvements, which is further explained below.

B. BACKGROUND PLANNING AND CONTEXT

Fulton and Nassau Streets have historically been two of the major commercial corridors in Lower Manhattan. In this area north of the original Dutch settlement, streets were laid out in the

Fulton Corridor Revitalization Program

late 17th century and in the 18th century. Since streets were not regulated at that time, they vary in width and alignment, and Nassau Street curves slightly at its north end. Fulton Street, Manhattan's first paved river-to-river street, has been an important commercial and retail corridor since Robert Fulton began running his ferry from Beekman Slip (now the foot of Fulton Street on the East River) to Brooklyn in 1814. Located just south of Beekman Slip, Burling Slip remained largely open and in use until it was filled by the City of New York in 1835-36.

Through the 19th century and into the 20th century, Fulton and Nassau Streets and the buildings along them formed a densely built up commercial district with counting houses, stores, office buildings, and skyscrapers. The earliest development consisted of modest brick or wood buildings that were used for both residential and commercial purposes. By the 1830s, a significant number of commercial buildings had been erected, and by the 1860s the area had been transformed into a commercial district with brick buildings in the Greek Revival style and stone-fronted buildings in the Italianate style. Early commercial buildings were four to six stories tall, but by the 1880s New York's earliest skyscrapers began to rise, with notable examples at the north end of Nassau Street. Many of the buildings from the 19th and early 20th centuries still line Nassau Street, Fulton Street between Broadway and Gold Street and in the South Street Seaport, and Burling Slip, though in many cases they have been subdivided and significantly altered.

C. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Fulton and Nassau Streets currently feature the largest concentration of storefront space in Lower Manhattan. However, the mix of retail that exists today does not optimize the potential of the streets. The poor condition of many buildings conceals details of historic and architectural merit, signage is chaotic and often inadequately maintained, and the pedestrian experience is fragmented with opaque storefronts and gaps in the streetwall.

An opportunity now exists for Fulton Street to become Lower Manhattan's vibrant 24/7 "Main Street." On-going improvements at the World Trade Center (WTC) site will reintroduce Fulton Street between Church Street and Route 9A, increasing its importance as an east-west corridor in Lower Manhattan. Currently Fulton Street and its environs are also home to a significant and growing residential population. In addition to several large, new residential developments, many of the area's historic commercial buildings have been converted to residential use in recent years, a trend that continues with success. The anticipated Fulton Street Transit Center, which will be one of the City's premier transportation hubs, will have its main entrance at the southeast corner of Fulton Street and Broadway. Finally, the South Street Seaport remains one of New York's most popular visitor destinations, providing a space for museums, historic activities, shopping, and a connection to the planned East River Esplanade and Piers project.

The Proposed Project is intended to revitalize and improve Fulton and Nassau Streets and their environs so that they can be a vibrant mixed-use retail area serving the surrounding commercial and burgeoning residential sectors as well as the numerous tourists and other visitors to the area. The Proposed Project would use public and private investments in streetscape improvements, public open spaces, and incentives to spur private rehabilitation and renovation of retail components, and potential development of mixed-use properties.

Specific problems found in the streetscape, such as overly wide and barren sidewalk conditions on Fulton Street between Gold and Pearl Streets, would also be addressed to enhance the pedestrian experience.

D. PROJECT SITE

The Proposed Project centers on Fulton Street between Broadway to the west and Water Street to the east. It also includes Nassau Street between Spruce Street on the north and Maiden Lane on the south, and other streets intersecting Fulton Street up to a three-block area north and south, including John Street from William Street to South Street; and Burling Slip, located one block south of Fulton Street and east of Water Street (see Figure 1).

E. ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The core components of the Proposed Project include improvements to the streetscape and storefronts, and façades of buildings that contribute to the heritage and experience of the corridor, as well as the creation, expansion, or improvement of open spaces within the project site.

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Comprehensive streetscape improvements to enhance the pedestrian and vehicular movement in the portals leading to Fulton Street, including John Street from William Street to South Street to enhance the connection to Burling Slip, would be undertaken. Potential upgrades would include new sidewalks and curbs, street furniture, street lighting fixtures, way finding signs, and plantings, as well as the removal of extraneous signage or other sidewalk obstructions.

If approved, LMDC would fund improvements to:

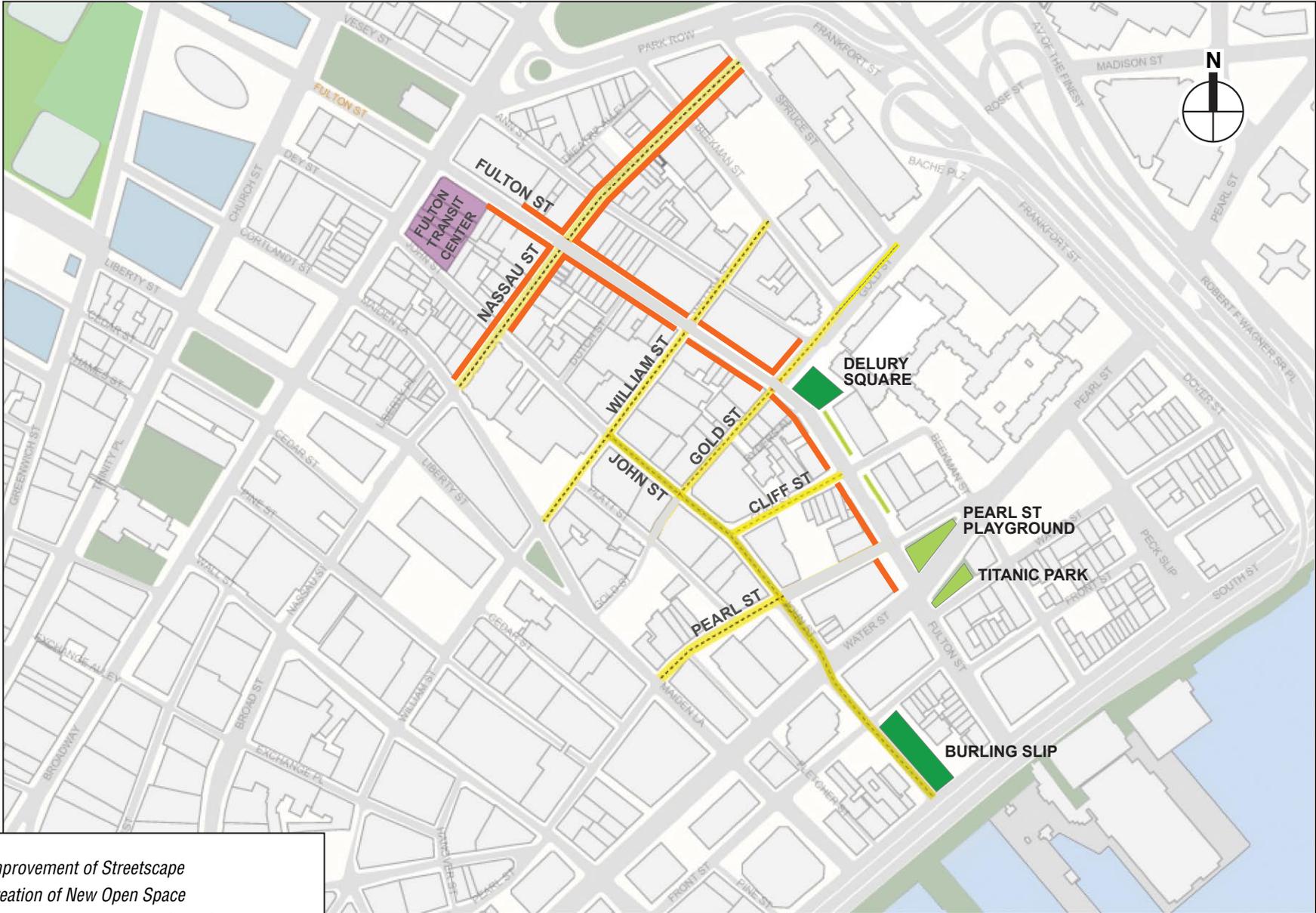
- Nassau Street between Fulton Street and Maiden Lane;
- William Street between Maiden Lane and Beekman Street;
- Gold Street between Platt and Beekman Streets;
- Cliff Street between John and Fulton Streets; and
- Pearl Street between Maiden Lane and John Street.

Within the boundaries of the South Street Seaport Historic District, which is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR), LMDC and the City will make a final selection of street furniture and improvements, including light poles, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The Proposed Project's new light poles would be limited to the area along Burling Slip, where four poles would be replaced.

Sidewalks throughout the area would follow the Alliance for Downtown New York (ADNY) standard, including granite curbs and tinted concrete. Way finding elements may be included to improve the current signage system.

In addition to the streetscape improvements described above, the Proposed Project will provide streetscape features along Fulton Street between Gold and Pearl Streets (which is outside the Fulton-Nassau Historic District), including landscaping, seating, new sidewalks and curbs, and increased open space. As is described below under the DeLury Square and Pearl Street Playground sections of Open Space Improvements, traffic flow and operation modifications would be necessary.

At Fulton Street and Gold Street, the westbound Fulton Street free-flow right turn onto northbound Gold Street would be removed, and right-turn traffic would be reconfigured to align with the westbound Fulton Street approach at the signalized intersection with Gold Street. Pearl Street Spur/Little Pearl Street between Fulton Street and Pearl Street would be pedestrianized,



-  Improvement of Streetscape
-  Creation of New Open Space
-  Enhancement of Existing Open Space
-  Storefront & Facade Improvement Program

Fulton Corridor Revitalization Program

and vehicular traffic would be diverted onto the southbound approach of Pearl Street at Fulton Street. The additional traffic at the Fulton Street intersections with Gold Street and Pearl Street would require traffic signal timing and phasing modifications, additional parking prohibitions, and pavement marking modifications, or more stringent measures—including additional curb or traffic flow modifications—depending on the improvement options adopted.

The proposed streetscape enhancements would improve the visual appearance, accessibility, and walkability of the project site.

FAÇADE AND STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENTS

The Proposed Project would include several components to enhance the exterior and interior of buildings along Fulton Street between Broadway and Water Street, and along Nassau Street between Spruce Street and Maiden Lane.

The Proposed Project would provide grants to eligible property and business owners who apply for funds to restore building façades, and improve commercial storefronts and interior space. Design Guidelines and an Incentives Review Panel (consisting of a program administrator, various City agencies, LMDC, and a qualified historic preservation consultant as requested by SHPO) would ensure that the funds would be used appropriately.

The Proposed Project would also provide technical assistance to property and business owners who are receiving grants for façade and storefront improvements. Specifically, the services of a historic preservation consultant would be provided by the Program Administrator to ensure that the designs enhance and protect (rather than detract from) the historic nature of the project site. The improvements would be implemented by a group of qualified contractors procured by the administrator following HUD guidelines.

Grants would be conditioned in compliance with the Design Guidelines that will help ensure that the revitalization meets the overall vision for the corridor while respecting its historic character. The Design Guidelines will apply to façade restoration and storefront appearance with the goal of encouraging the use of unifying elements to promote a cohesive sense of place. However, the Design Guidelines would be flexible in order to accommodate changing conditions in the future and to allow for certain aesthetic preferences of property owners and retail tenants.

The City will finalize the proposed Design Guidelines following review by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and SHPO. LMDC and the City are consulting with SHPO regarding the incentives for storefront and façade improvements, including the Design Guidelines that will guide the Incentives Program.

IMPROVEMENTS

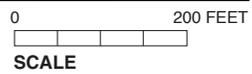
There are three tiers of improvements, as described below. The discussion of eligibility is preliminary, and the City will finalize the eligibility guidelines before implementing the Proposed Project.

Tier 1: Awnings, signage and security gates—Target incentives to buildings with problematic signage, awnings, and/or gates across the program area.

The grant program would pay for 100 percent of these costs and directly implement the improvements with the consent of the landlord or retailer. There are 73 buildings and 188 discrete storefronts that have been identified as potentially eligible for Tier 1 improvements (see Figure 1-2).



- Project Area Boundary
- Tier 1 Storefronts
- Storefronts



Tier 2: Integrated Storefronts—Target incentives to properties with problematic storefronts, including lack of transparency, poor condition of bulkheads, entrances, cornices piers and pilasters, transoms, and/or appropriate installations of air conditioner units.

The grant program would subsidize up to two-thirds of the improvements (depending on when the application is made) for landlords or tenants (with landlord consent) and use pre-procured, certified and bonded contractors to implement the improvements. There are 67 buildings and 177 discrete storefronts that have been identified as potentially eligible for Tier 2 improvements. A map of the Tier 2 potential eligibility is provided in Figure 1-3.

Tier 3: Building Façade Restoration and Interior Reconfiguration—Target incentives for building façade or other improvements on a basis determined by the program administrator and the Incentive Review Panel.

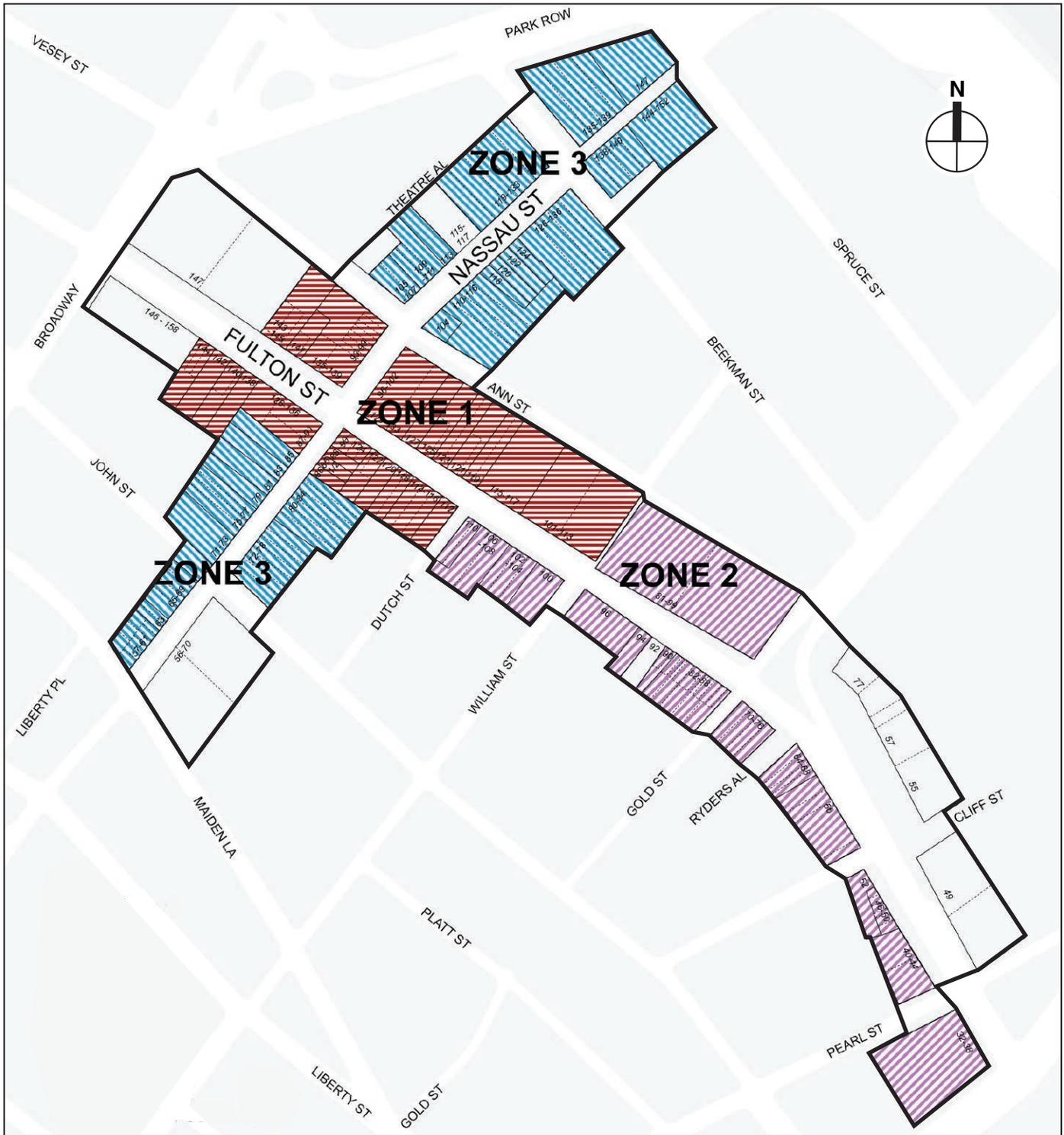
These incentives would be directed at the owner. The grant program would generally subsidize up to two-thirds of the cost of work, depending on when the application is made, with the remainder coming from the landlord or alternate sources. This is the most intensive tier of improvement with the most expensive restoration work taking place. Improvements to cornices and parapets, façade improvements to masonry, cast-iron, metal curtainwalls, façade signage, windows, and interior retail upgrades would be included. While 73 buildings are identified as potentially eligible for these improvements, 34 buildings have been identified as being particularly meritorious (see Figure 1-4).

For both Tier 2 and Tier 3 work, proposed improvements would require the technical assistance of the historic preservation consultant, and review and the approval of the Incentive Review Panel.

The tier-based incentives structure was created based on a thorough evaluation of historic, urban design, architectural, and economic factors present in the project area. The evaluation included a complete photographic inventory, visual inspection, historic research of buildings in the project area, conversations with local property owners, and study of successful storefront Incentives Programs from other cities around the country. Potential improvements were divided into three tiers, based upon the level and intensity of work required and the potential impact in advancing the project objectives. Tier 1 was structured to ensure that improvements which require a minimum level of investment, but could offer a positive impact to the project area, could be implemented directly and efficiently throughout the district to appropriate buildings. Tier 2 was created to specifically address concerns regarding building storefronts and urban structure at a pedestrian level. Tier 2 improvements are of a moderate level of investment and would require more design and review consideration. Tier 3 improvements, addressing building façades and interior storefront spaces, require the largest amount of investment, design, and review. The Incentives Program allocated funds between the three tiers based on an assessed need and expected impact of the program.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The program administrator would reach out to landlords or retailers in the area and propose to make improvements as identified in the Design Guidelines manual and the associated action items document. The grant recipient would work with the program administrator's designer and historic preservation consultant to identify possible improvements. The program administrator will be authorized to approve Tier 1 grants. For Tier 2 and Tier 3 work, the individual storefront and/or façade improvement proposal would be considered by the Incentive Review Panel for appropriateness and benefit to the area.

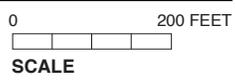


-  Project Area Boundary
-  Zone 1
-  Zone 2
-  Zone 3

0 200 FEET
SCALE



-  Project Area Boundary
-  Tier 3 Eligibility
-  Storefront



OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

CREATION AND EXPANSION OF NEW OPEN SPACES

The Proposed Project would reconfigure and expand DeLury Square and create a new public open space at Burling Slip, dramatically expanding the open space available to workers, residents, and visitors in this densely developed area of Lower Manhattan.

DeLury Square

John DeLury Sr. Plaza, a small paved plaza located at the intersection of Fulton Street and Gold Street (see Figure 1-5), would be expanded to create a unified public space. The section of street that links westbound Fulton Street to northbound Gold Street (a turning lane) would be closed and connected to an adjacent, privately owned parcel of land which would be acquired by DCAS on behalf of DPR. The enlarged space would be mapped as park, subject to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The total open space area would be expanded to 10,900 square feet, including the small planting and seating area at the northeast corner of the intersection. The existing improvements to the plaza and pavement of the street would be removed, while maintaining, to the extent possible, the existing mature trees on the expansion site. The design goals for DeLury Square are to create an attractive, safe, and completely accessible public open space for passive recreational use.

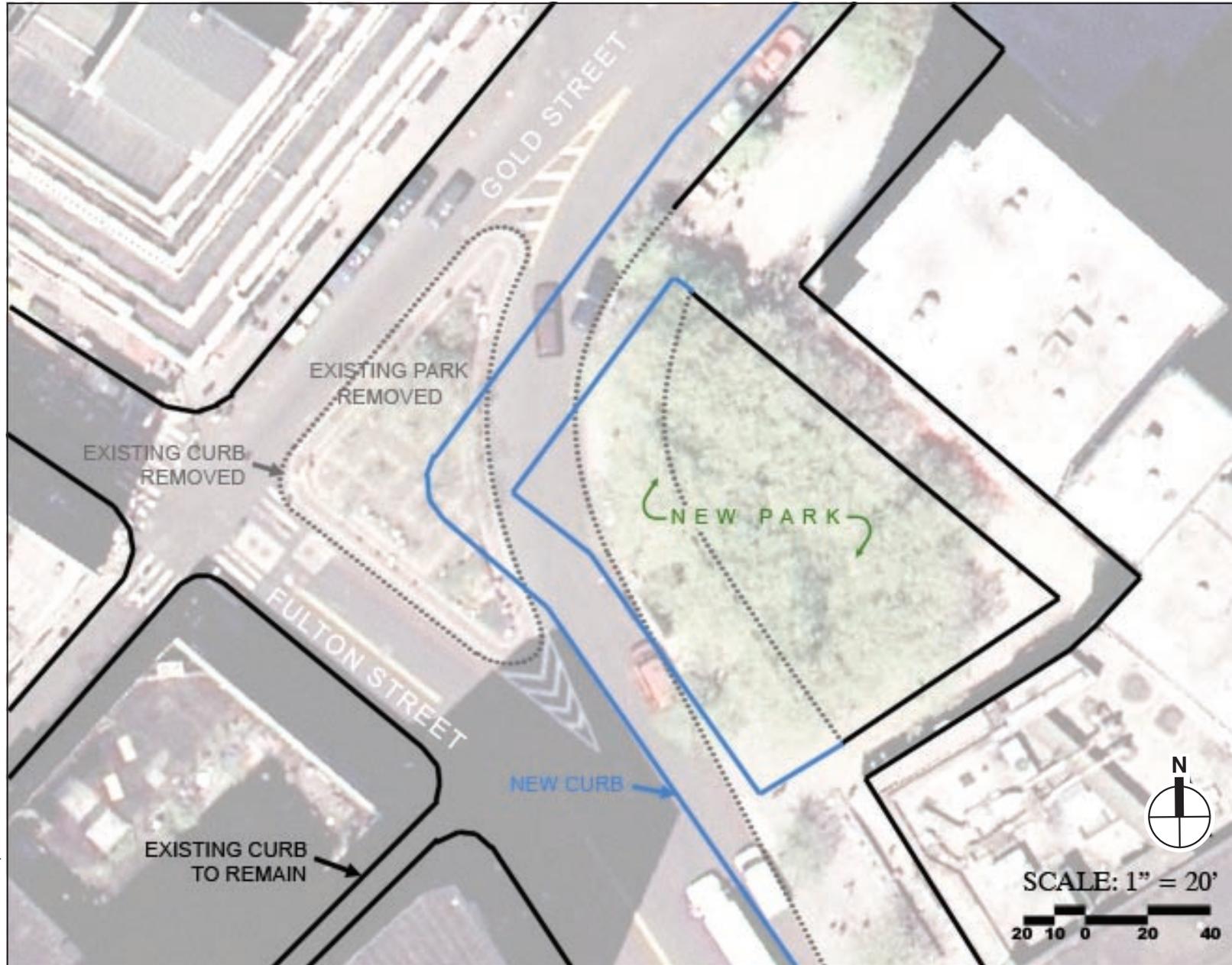
To be constructed by DPR, the new open space would include a number of features to achieve these goals. The concept for DeLury Square could include a lawn, planted areas, a pond, and a fountain (see Figure 1-6). This water feature could be designed to provide visual interest while helping to mask traffic noise and to define the site. The open space could be surrounded by a fence with gates at the three pathway entrances. The existing mature trees would be complemented by new plantings, arranged to provide a lush, green feel without blocking visibility. Seating in a simple and graceful design to match the water feature would be provided to accommodate visitors. The design would enhance accessibility to and in the open space. The design would shelter its visitors from the adjacent streets as much as possible while retaining visibility for safety. All of the new park features would be designed to withstand tough urban conditions while minimizing necessary maintenance.

Burling Slip

A new children's playground would be created at Burling Slip, which is currently an asphalt-paved open space owned by HPD and DSBS and temporarily used for parking City vehicles (see Figure 1-7). The Proposed Project would create 22,000 square feet of public open space. It is designed to be an inviting complement to the planned East River Esplanade and Piers project and to the adjacent South Street Seaport Museum facility, and provide needed recreation amenities to Lower Manhattan's growing residential population.

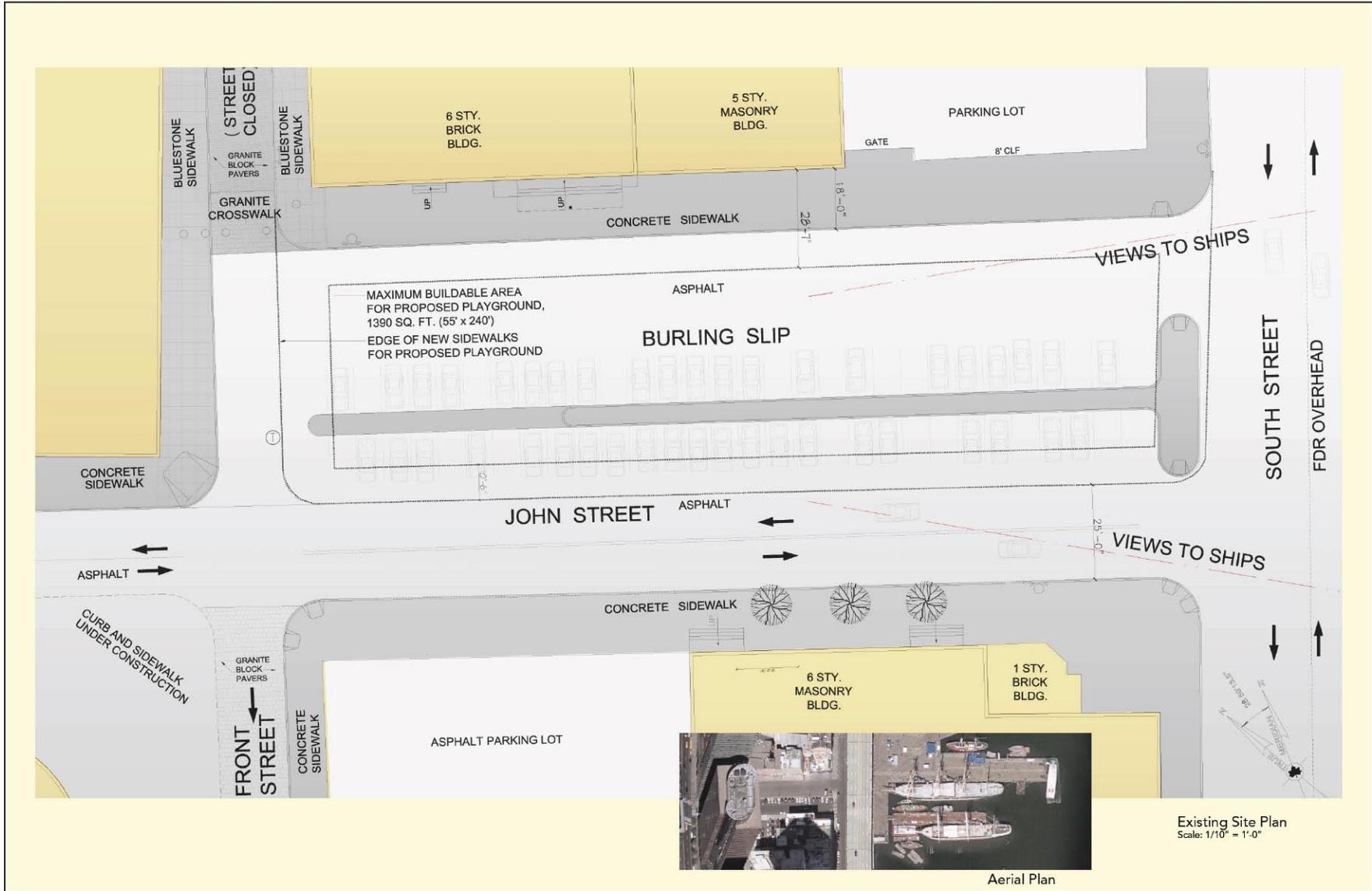
Located a block south of Fulton Street between Front and South Street, it would provide a link to the East River waterfront and create a public amenity in an historic open space. A playground would be developed as well as some accompanying gathering space. DPR would construct the open space, and the City Parks Foundation would maintain it.

The proposed design, which recalls the maritime history of the slip, is based on both new and old ideas of how a playground operates, utilizing trained "playworkers" to supervise playground operations and allow a more flexible play space. Programming would be allowed to change over time in response to need.



Source: NYC Department of Parks and Recreation





SOURCE: NYC Department of Parks and Recreation; Rockwell Group

The playground would consist of a wooden structure with a sand play area at the western end and a water feature and sitting area at the eastern end (see Figure 1-8). At the western end of the playground, a wooden ramp would rise to a height of 5 feet, 6 inches. A “crow’s nest” atop a structure resembling a smokestack would stand on the northern edge of the playground. It would provide an elevated viewing platform and would also house a bathroom and a storage area. A “sound fence” with hollow tubes that make and transmit sounds would run along the northern edge of the playground. Wooden benches would be arranged along the southern edge of the playground and at each of the site’s four corners (see Figure 1-9). Trees at the northeastern and northwestern corners of the site and along the southern edge of the playground would provide shade for parents and caretakers observing children as they play. Additionally, seating areas with mounting elements for movable umbrellas would be provided to create shade as needed. Around the wooden structure of the play area, the asphalt pavement would be replaced with cobblestone paving.

Burling Slip is in the South Street Seaport Historic District, listed on the S/NR and within the historic district of the same name designated by LPC.

ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACES

The Project would renovate Titanic Memorial Park and improve the Pearl Street tot lot. Titanic Memorial Park is located in the South Street Seaport Historic District listed on the S/NR and designated by LPC.

Titanic Memorial Park

The 3,500-square-foot Titanic Memorial Park would be refurbished to become an improved gateway to the South Street Seaport. This open space currently includes benches, landscaping, and the Titanic Memorial (see Figure 1-10). Proposed improvements to seating and landscaping are intended to create a more attractive community gathering space. The design would also consolidate planting and seating areas to achieve a more efficient and functional layout. The proposed design recalls the original shoreline of the East River in this location. A water feature would evoke the original shoreline, which ran across this open space (see Figure 1-11). Water would flow down this line, meandering through boulders and creating a water play area for children. Granite benches along the stream would provide seating for onlookers. The memorial structure would be retained in the memorial area at Fulton Street, and groups of boulders with pockets of plantings would provide seating. On the upland side of the stream, the seating area with plantings and paths would be focused toward the historic South Street Seaport buildings across Water Street. The transition from the “water” and “upland” areas of this open space would also be marked by a change in paving pattern, with a wavelike pattern near Fulton Street.

The space is owned by HPD but located within the Seaport area and maintained by General Growth Properties. DPR would carry out the proposed improvements to this open space.

Pearl Street Playground

The triangular-shaped, 5,200-square-foot Pearl Street Playground, bounded by Fulton, Pearl, and Water Streets (see Figure 1-12), would be renovated to become a more welcoming area for children, families, and local residents. The Proposed Project would upgrade the existing facility and provide an enhanced play environment for local children and their caregivers. Among the improvements that may be incorporated are new play equipment and play surfaces, enhanced seating, new plantings, lower fencing, and possibly a water feature. This effort will also seek to expand the amount of area used for the playground. The design framework for the Pearl Street



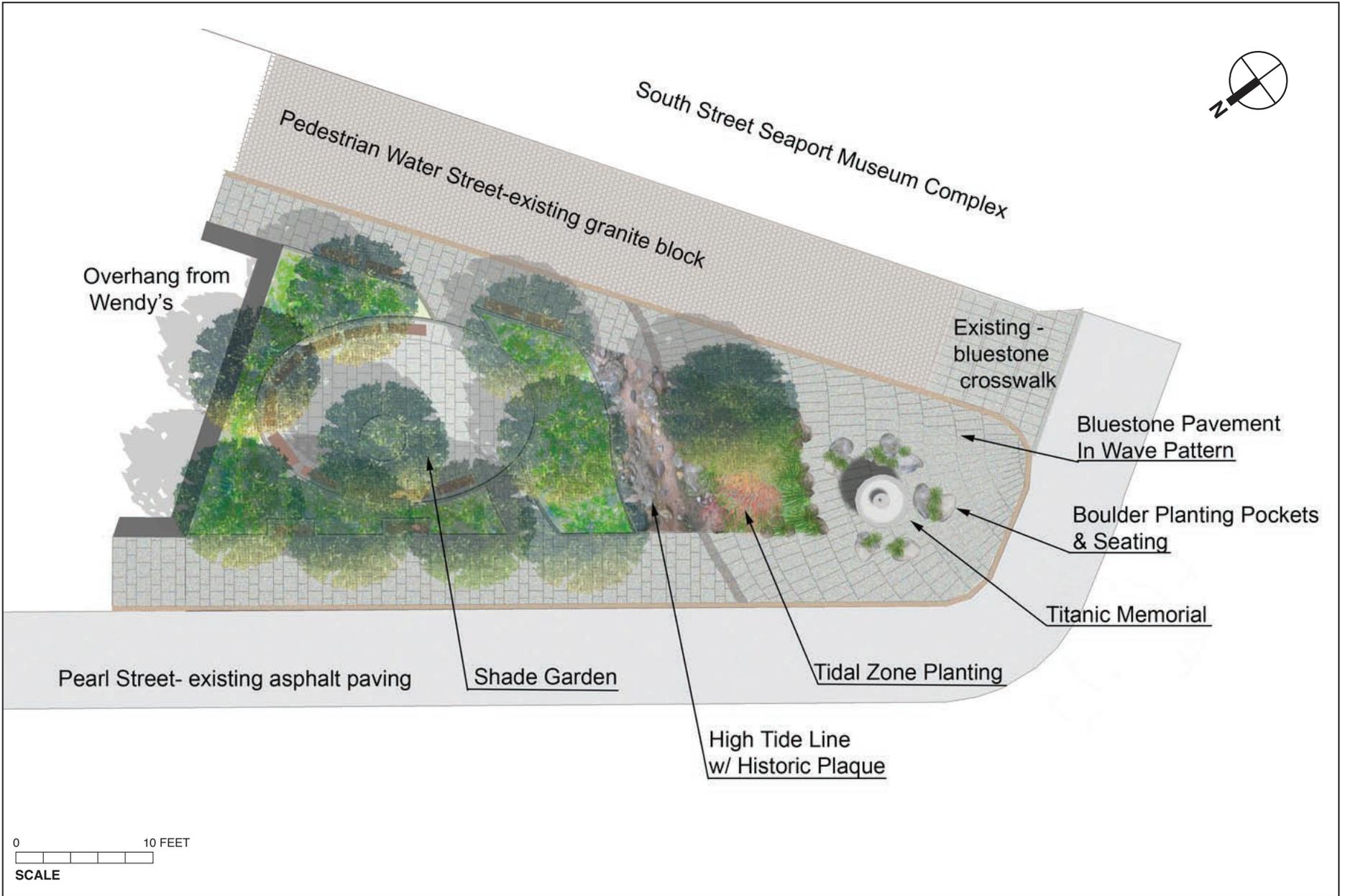
SOURCE: NYC Department of Parks and Recreation; Rockwell Group

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SOURCE: NYC Department of Parks and Recreation; Rockwell Group







Fulton Corridor Revitalization Program

Playground improvements includes a playground area and a children's garden to the north, with seating along the perimeter (see Figure 1-13). Seating areas, including game tables, would also be provided adjacent to Fulton Street. The Pearl Street Playground improvements would be constructed by DPR.

The renovated Pearl Street Playground would open onto a generous new public plaza, a community amenity that would be created by pedestrianizing Little Pearl Street. This action would entail eliminating vehicular access on Little Pearl Street and replacing the roadbed with a pedestrian plaza, including decorative pavers, trees, plantings, benches, and other street furniture. Provisions would be made for emergency vehicle access and deliveries. The pedestrian plaza at Little Pearl Street would also add a link to the an existing network of pedestrian streets and open spaces that extend through Southbridge Towers and would complete a seamless pedestrian connection from DeLury Square to the Pearl Street Playground.

The closure of Little Pearl Street would necessitate modifications to the intersection of Fulton and Pearl Streets in order to allow proper traffic flow. To accommodate the change in traffic patterns, the eastern curb of the playground space would be reconfigured, and a turning lane would be added on Fulton Street to facilitate southbound traffic on Pearl Street. At the north end of Little Pearl Street, the curb would be extended north from the existing northern edge of the playground to the northwest corner of Beekman and Pearl Streets. Retractable bollards or other devices would be placed across the curb cut at this location in order to restrict regular traffic but still allow occasional deliveries to and trash removal at the adjacent St. Margaret's Nursing Home and Southbridge Towers. A similar treatment would be applied to the south end terminus of Little Pearl Street at Fulton Street.

F. ACTIONS AND APPROVALS

FEDERAL

If funding is approved by LMDC, the City would use HUD funding for improvements to the streetscape and open space, and for the Incentives Program. HUD must also authorize the use of federal funds for the Proposed Project. Although they are analyzed as part of the Proposed Project, any changes to the street geometry of DeLury Square and Little Pearl Street would be funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

STATE

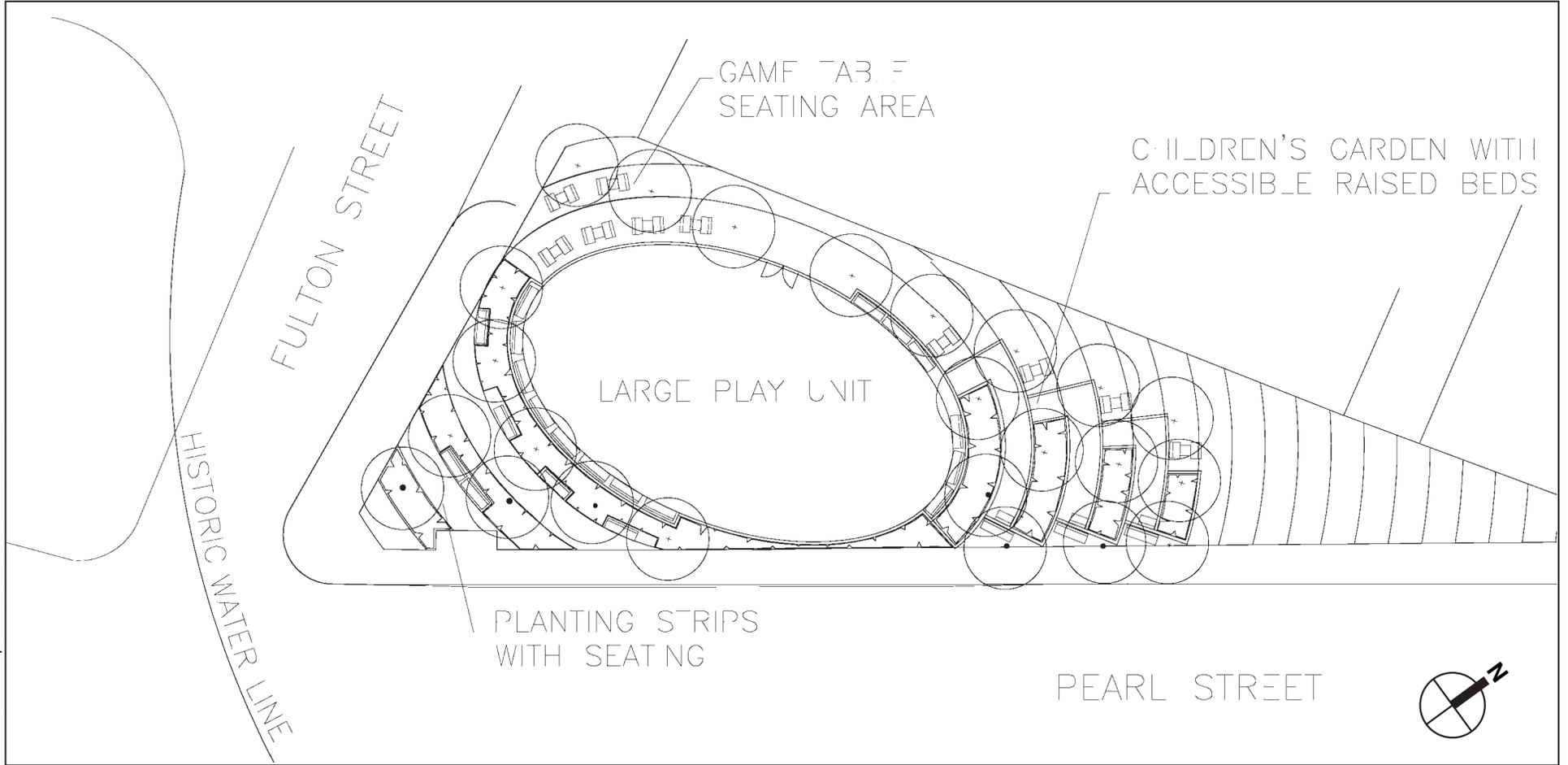
NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

LMDC and the City will consult with SHPO regarding project components located within the Fulton-Nassau Historic District and the South Street Seaport Historic District pursuant to the Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act. The State Historic Preservation Act would also apply, but compliance with Section 106 satisfies LMDC's responsibilities under state law.

LOWER MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

LMDC will carry out reviews pursuant to NEPA, SEQRA, Section 106, the Coastal Zone Management Act, HUD regulations, and any other applicable laws and regulations. Following completion of those reviews, LMDC will make a decision on funding for the Proposed Project.

Because effects on certain historic resources cannot be determined prior to the completion of environmental review, LMDC and SHPO will prepare a programmatic agreement pursuant to



Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, a draft of which is attached to this environmental assessment.

LOCAL

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Some of the Proposed Project's elements are located in the LPC-designated South Street Seaport Historic District. Therefore, the City must submit designs for areas within the Historic District to LPC for review. The City has already sought and obtained approval from LPC for the proposed design of the Burling Slip open space. Titanic Memorial Park is also located in the South Street Seaport Historic District and would be subject to LPC review. Any individual New York City Landmark participating in the storefront and façade restoration program would still be subject to LPC review and approval prior to any work being performed.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE

Improvements to DeLury Square are contingent on DCAS acquiring the private land for the project under the Subrecipient Agreement. The site would also be mapped as parkland. Both the acquisition and the mapping are subject to ULURP.

G. INDEPENDENT PROJECTS IN THE SAME AREA

Funds from FHWA, which are administered by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), are being used for the emergency reconstruction of Fulton Street from Church Street to Water Street, and Nassau Street from Fulton Street to Spruce Street.

The City is also receiving FHWA funding for various streetscape improvements near Fulton Street. These nearby street improvements are included in this environmental review as background projects and taken into account in the cumulative impact analysis.

As part of the ongoing Lower Manhattan street reconstruction project, the City currently plans to replace existing light poles along Fulton Street, if approved. *