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What Makes Lower Manhattan Such a Great Place? Here's the Downtown Alliance's Top 10 for 2010

New York, NY (December 21, 2010) — With World Trade Center site construction moving full-steam ahead, new playgrounds and hotels opening, and a surge of new media tenants, 2010 was an eventful year below Chambers Street.

"New Yorkers and visitors alike are discovering what we have known for years—that Lower Manhattan is a great place to live, work and visit," said Elizabeth H. Berger, President of the Downtown Alliance. "Every major element of the World Trade Center site is now in construction. We're the city's fastest-growing media district. And with 1,050 restaurants and retailers, 55,000 residents, more than 300,000 workers, and nearly six million visitors a year, Lower Manhattan is alive around the clock—after work, at night, and on weekends, too."

Here's a look back at 10 things that made Lower Manhattan great in 2010:

1. Construction at the World Trade Center site

The year was a milestone for reconstruction of the World Trade Center as major agreements paved the way for accelerated progress. Today steelwork for 1 World Trade Center is at 52 floors, halfway to the top. Four World Trade is at 10 floors on its way to 64. Below-grade work has begun on Towers 2 and 3. Tree-planting started in August at the 9/11 Memorial site, which is on schedule to open on the 10th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks. Meanwhile, 2011 promises to be another landmark year.

2. Hotels are hopping

The December 14 opening of the 400-room Doubletree Hotel at 8 Stone Street marked the fifth hotel opening of 2010 and 18th hotel overall below Chambers Street. That number has tripled since September 11, 2001, and the number of rooms—4,100—has increased by almost 80 percent over the same period. Other openings in 2010 included the 220-room W New York—Downtown at 123 Washington Street, the 169-room World Center Hotel at 144 Washington Street., the 112-room Holiday Inn Express at 126 Water Street, and the 253-room Andaz Hyatt Wall Street at 75 Wall Street. Two more are on the way for 2011.

3. Foodies rejoice

With new hotels came hot new restaurants, including BLT Bar and Grill and the W – New York Downtown, Wall & Water at the Andaz Hyatt Wall Street and 8ight at the Doubletree. Other newcomers included Swedish coffee bar and café Fika on Pearl Street, banh mi shop Baquette and Julian Medina's Toloache Taqueria on Maiden Lane and one of President Obama's favorite haunts, Five Guys Burgers and Fries, on Fulton Street.

4. A new kind of playground

Not many playgrounds are designed by a prominent architect, built only after intensive progressive child development research and feature a ribbon-cutting with Mayor Bloomberg. But the figure-8-shaped Imagination Playground, opened in July and designed by David Rockwell, is a far cry from the run-of-the-mill jungle gym and swing set. There are large foam "loose parts" building blocks, water spouts that can be channeled and dammed in myriad ways, a set of lifts and pulleys, wooden masts built by an actual shipbuilder, along with several ramps and pools. Downtown Alliance research released in May shows that more families are moving below Chambers Street—and staying. What better time, then, to open the first new Lower Manhattan playground in more than a decade?

5. Queen for a Day

On July 6, Queen Elizabeth II made her first visit to Lower Manhattan since the 1976 bicentennial. On a day when temperatures flirted with 100 degrees, she visited the World Trade Center site and the British Garden and Hanover Square.

6. Media on the move

It has been decades since printing presses whirled on Park Row, but now a new wave of media tenants is moving to Lower Manhattan. According to CB Richard Ellis, 60 media firms are situated below Chambers Street in all today—occupying more than 1.15 million square feet of office space—and more have recently signed deals and are on the way. The Deal, LLC signed a lease at 20 Broad Street in March. The New York Daily News and sister company U.S. News & World Report signed a lease in July for 100,000 square feet at 4 New York Plaza, and American Media, Inc.—publisher of Star and the National Enquirer—has a 100,000 square-foot-lease pending in the same building. The newly formed Newsweek Daily Beast Company signed at 7 Hanover Square in October. And in August, global publishing giant Conde Nast signed a letter of intent to move into 1 World Trade Center following the building's completion in 2014.

7. A new way to eat lunch

The New York City Department of Transportation opened the city's first pop-up sidewalk café in August. It's an innovative, temporary new curbside wooden seating platform featuring a sleek, modern design on Pearl Street between Broad Street and Coenties Slip. Though it's paid for and maintained by the adjacent restaurants, Fika

and Bombay's, the platform and its bright red tables and chairs are open in warmer months to anyone who wants to sit and take in the bustling streetscape.

8. Fulton Transit Center Foundation Completed

Though it's hard to tell from street level, construction at the \$1.4 billion Fulton Street Transit Center is humming along and on schedule for completion in 2014. In August, crews completed the station's main foundation, along with the underpinning of the nine story, 121-year-old Corbin Building on the northeast corner of Broadway and John Street. The main terminal will include a glass façade, more than 26,000 square feet of retail space and an oculus in the ceiling that will filter light down onto subway waiting platforms. More milestones are ahead for 2011.

When it opens, the Fulton Transit Center will be a world-class transit hub in the heart of Lower Manhattan. The finished product will improve connections to 10 subway lines: Fulton Street 2, 3, 4 5, J and Z; Broadway-Nassau Street A and C; Chambers Street-World Trade Center E; and Cortlandt Street R. Additionally, it will connect with the Cortlandt Street 1 train station, World Trade Center Calatrava PATH Station and the World Financial Center.

9. Downtown Alliance presents a new vision for Water Street

In June, the Downtown Alliance unveiled a proposal to strengthen the Water Street corridor through capital improvements, land-use changes and programmatic incentives so that the district's prime commercial corridor can remain an economic engine for Lower Manhattan. In July, Community Board 1 announced its unanimous support for the report, "Water Street: A New Approach – Transforming Lower Manhattan's Modern Commercial Boulevard."

Water Street runs more than a half-mile from Whitehall to Fulton streets. Flanked by more than 19 million square feet of Class A and Class B+ commercial office space and housing more than 70,000 workers, the corridor accounts for more than 20 percent of commercial real estate below Chambers Street.

The Alliance will continue working with the City in 2011 to encourage implementation of the proposal. "Water Street," Community Board 1 said in its resolution, "certainly merits a transformation along the lines advocated by the Downtown Alliance."

10. East River Waterfront Phase 1 Nears Completion

Work on Phase 1 of the two-mile East River Waterfront Esplanade will be completed in February. The segment—from Wall Street to Maiden Lane—will include a variety of seating, lush landscape plantings, new paving, a continuous innovative railing, an integrated lighting system, and a dog run. The overall project is being funded by a \$137 million grant from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation and was developed by the New York City Departments of Planning and Transportation, and the City's Economic Development Corporation.

The mission of the Alliance for Downtown New York is to be the principal organization that provides Lower Manhattan's historic financial district with a premier physical and economic environment, advocates for businesses and property owners and promotes the area as a world-class destination for companies, workers, residents and visitors. The Downtown Alliance manages the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Business Improvement District (BID), serving an area roughly from City Hall to the Battery, from the East River to West Street.

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