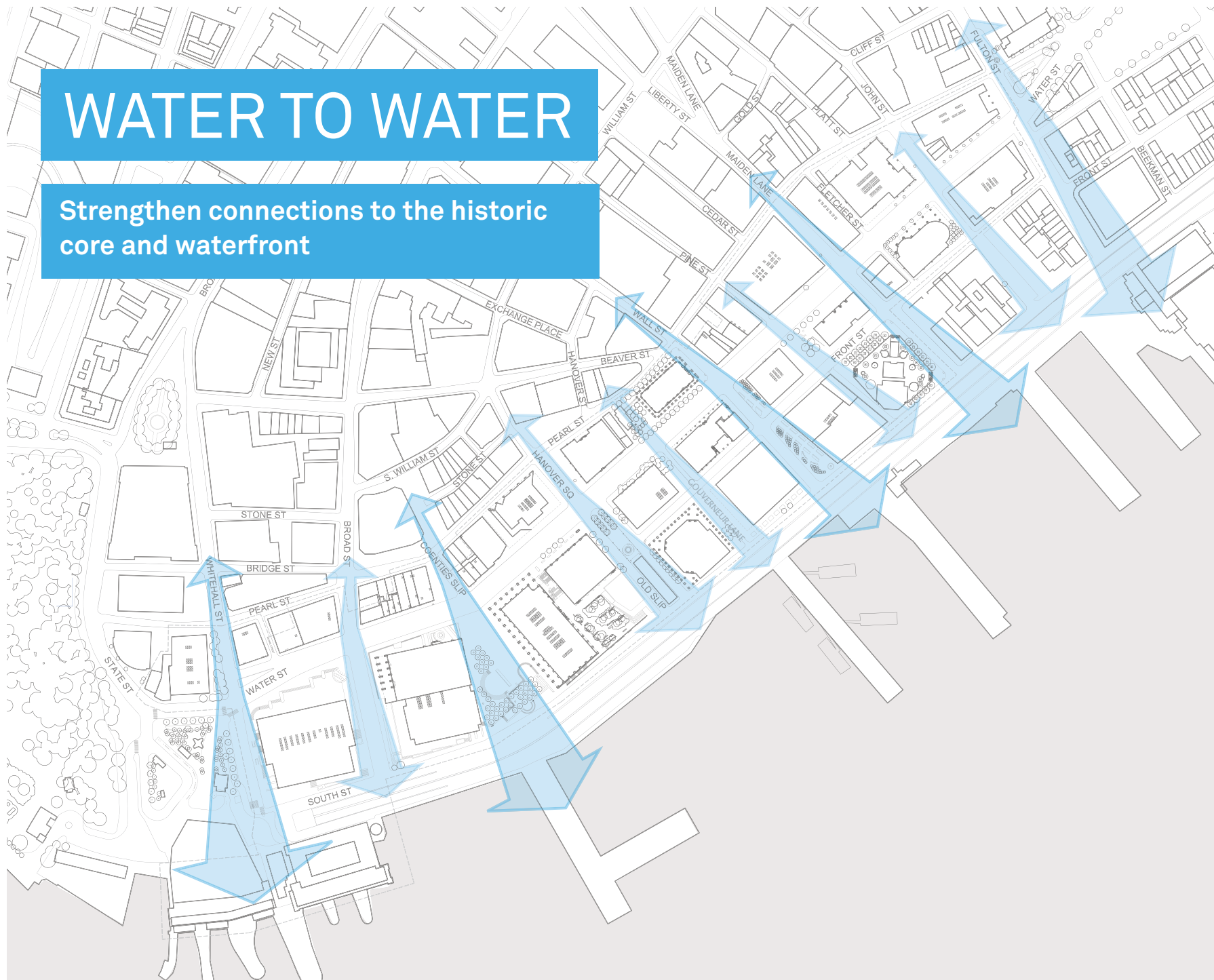


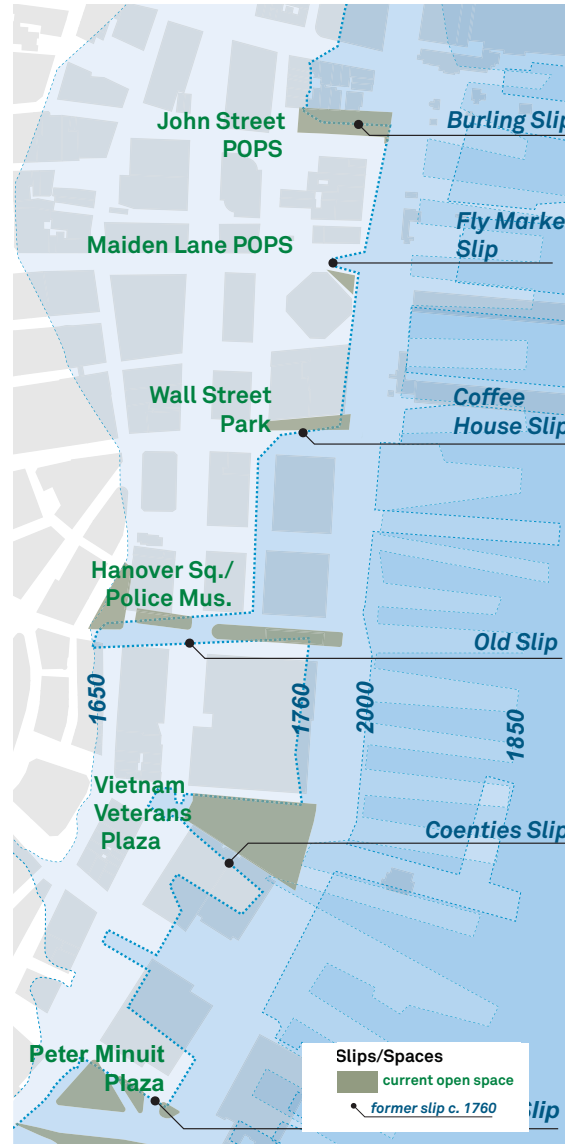
# WATER TO WATER

Strengthen connections to the historic core and waterfront





Top: View along Maiden Lane from Water Street, once known as Fly Market Slip; Bottom: Mannahatta Park at Water Street and Wall Street, once known as Coffee House Slip



As Manhattan Island expanded, many of the historic boat slips between blocks were left open; these spaces were too small as development parcels, but too large for streets, resulting in open views between large buildings.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Create a physical and programmatic link between Water Street and the East River Waterfront
2. Improve sightlines between historic slips and the East River
3. Expand central open space to create an active, programmable destination
4. Integrate sustainable design into site improvements

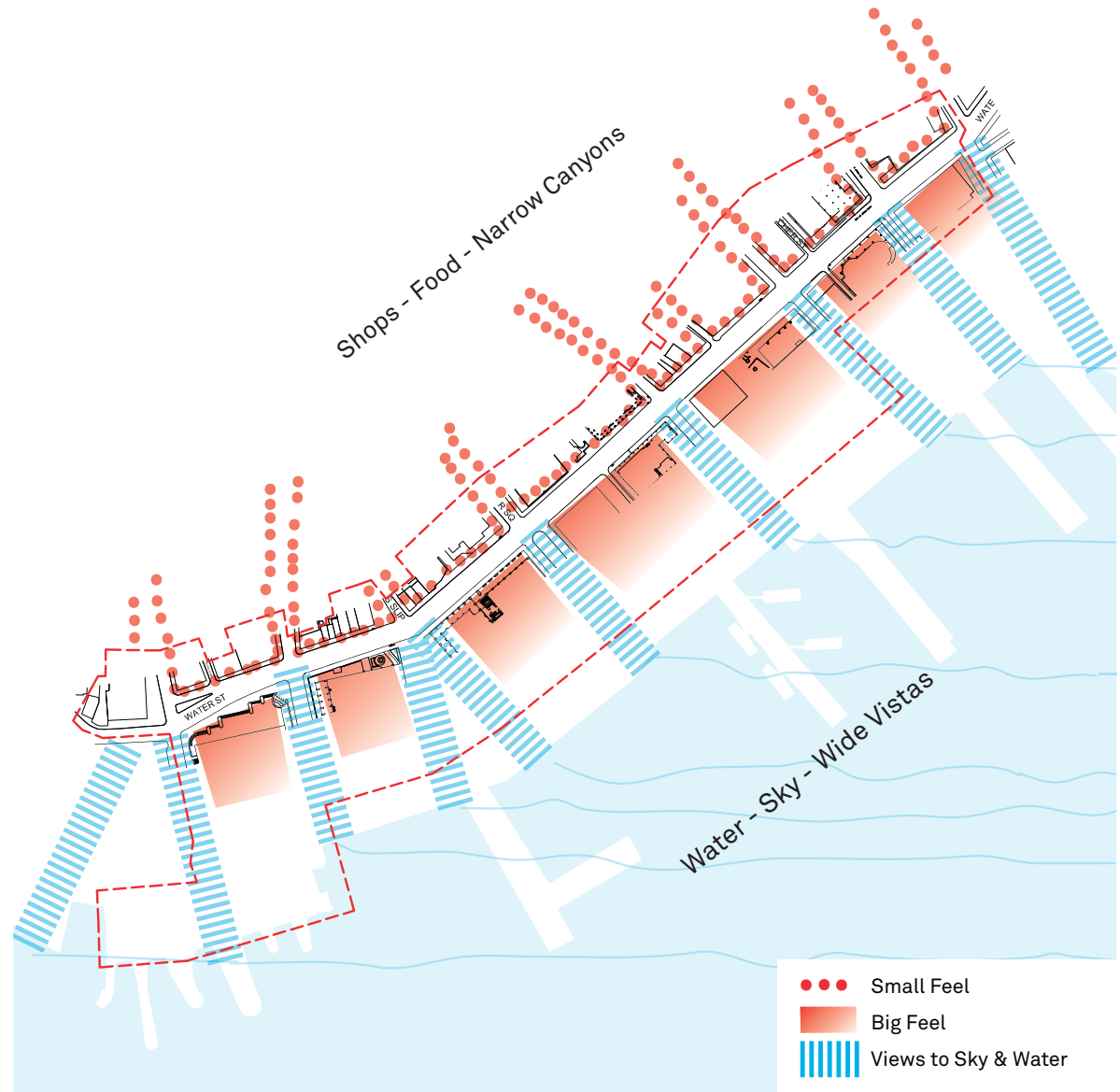
The irony of Water Street is that there is no sense of how close the water actually is. Water Street can be the threshold or “seam” between the traditional Lower Manhattan experience and the new waterfront. The waterfront is one of Lower Manhattan’s greatest assets and in recent years there has been a concerted effort to reclaim it for the public. On the east side, the original slips which had been filled in generations ago and paved over have one by one been converted into pocket parks, with varying degrees of success. The South Ferry Terminal project is complete and plans have been approved to develop the Battery Maritime Building where ferries brought 275,000 people to Governors Island in 2009. [And, construction is under way on the \\$150 million East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers Project, which will thankfully reopen Lower Manhattan’s waterfront for public use, two blocks from Water Street.](#)

## CROSS STREETS

There is a sharp contrast between the east and west sides of Water Street. **Narrow side streets, smaller building footprints and more sunlight define the western side, while larger buildings and views towards the water dominate the east side.** These different characteristics create a natural edge for a pedestrian walking eastward out of Lower Manhattan's knot of streets onto Water Street and then toward the water.



Top: Large buildings dominate the east side of Water Street;  
Bottom: Small storefronts and narrow streets line the west



Water Street is a seam in the urban fabric, creating a different feeling on either side of the street

## STREET TREES

Currently, the trees along both Water Street and its cross streets are unequally distributed and their plant beds are inconsistent. *Though there are too few, the existing green areas do hint at potential visual connections along the street and suggest opportunity for enhancing the cross street transition between Water Street and the water.*

Two different groupings of tree species are proposed—one group along Water Street and the other down the cross streets. The cross street mix should be airy and transparent, such as honey locust, adding green to the street while still maintaining open views to the water.

Along Water Street a variety of species are proposed. The trees in the amenity strip would be planted in groups and clumps of like species to vary the pedestrian experience along the street. Species groups would include large trees such as Oaks, European Hornbeam, Ginkgo, Dawn Redwood, and Bald Cypress and small trees such as Amelanchier, Redbud, and American Hornbeam.

Long, continuous shared soil beds are proposed for the trees on both sides of Water Street, which will significantly contribute to their growth and longevity potential. Street tree planting on the cross streets should similarly seek the opportunities for continuous soil zones or larger tree pits for individual trees. *In addition to the visual and air quality benefits from street trees, these expanded planting areas detain storm water through infiltration, reduce the volume of water entering the sewer system and lessen the discharge of pollutants into the river during storms.*

## Existing green areas offer opportunities to improve the connection between Water Street and the water.

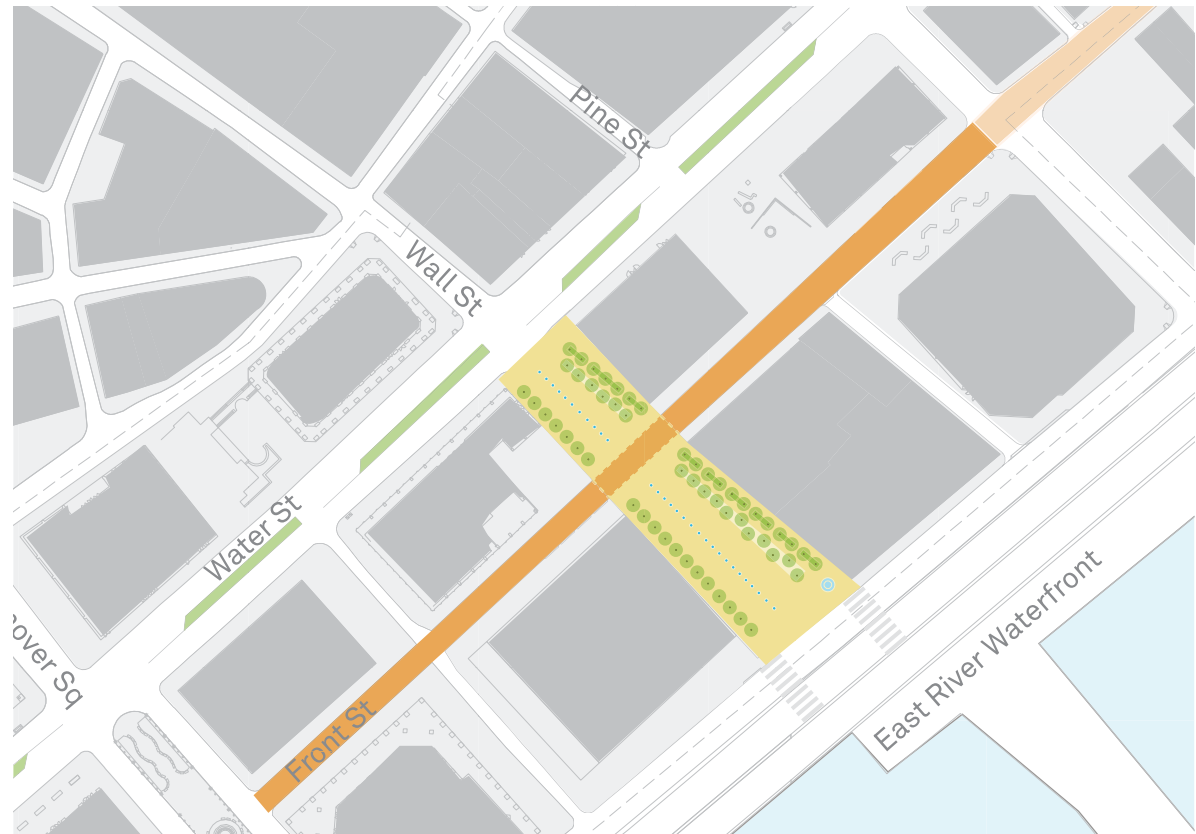


*Below: Tree planting links the waterfront to the narrow streets of the Financial District and also clusters along Water Street; Inset: Existing soil bed conditions, left, inhibit growth; proposed conditions, right, would allow healthier street trees with more significance on the street. Source: Casey Trees, Washington, D.C.*

## FRONT STREET

With a few notable exceptions, such as the front door to 180 Maiden Lane, Front Street, between Maiden Lane and Old Slip, serves as back service access for the buildings along Water Street. Though under-populated at most hours, on warm days the POPS along Front Street can be full of people eating lunch from the nearby mobile food carts.

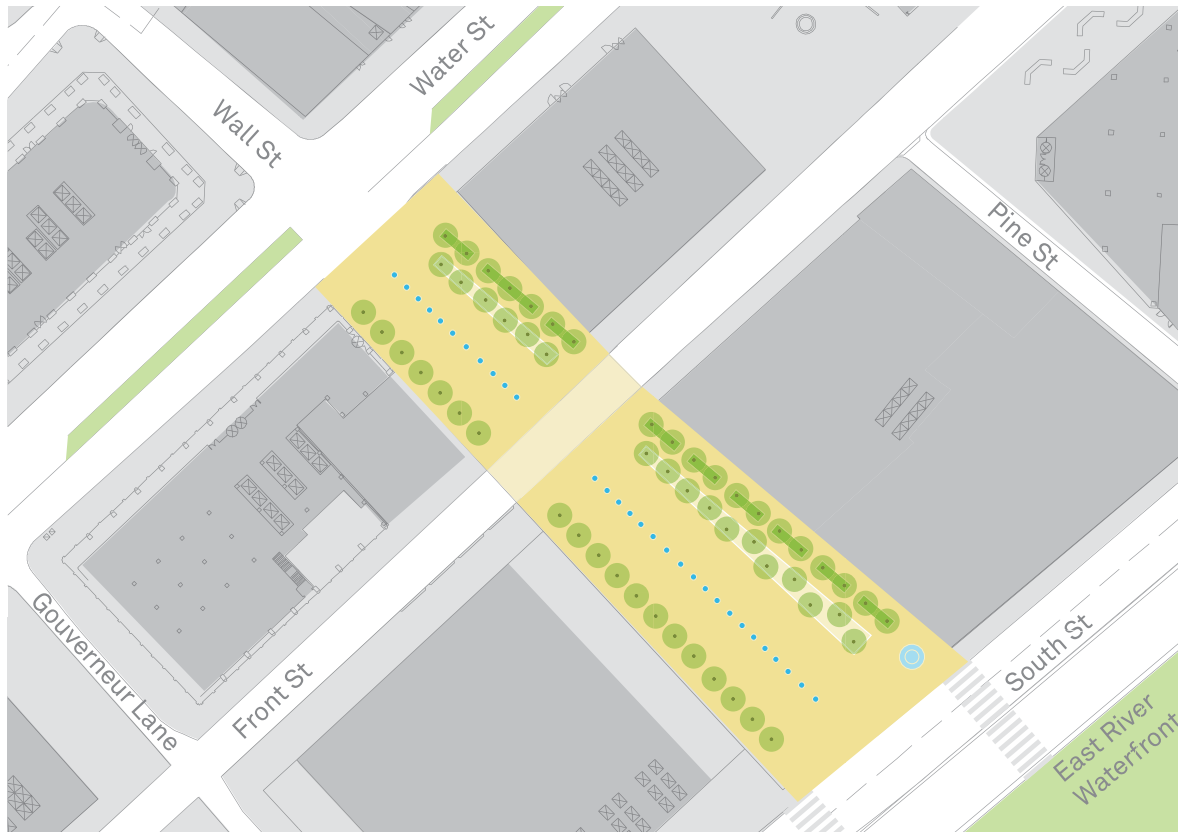
Because so few personal vehicles use the street, **Front Street should become a shared street with partial traffic closures.** Partial traffic closures would allow space for events, such as lunchtime festivals, and could be coordinated with building deliveries and service needs to avoid significant disruptions to traffic flow.



*Front Street between Maiden Lane and Old Slip will have partial closures for programmed events, such as those shown below; when not programmed, the street will allow vehicles to move through Mannahatta Park.*



*Programmed events on Front Street from left to right: Food Festival; Yoga in the park; Gourmet Food Truck at Mannahatta Park*



Security around the stock exchange has turned much of Wall Street into a pedestrian zone—an expanded Mannahatta Park between Water and south Streets would capitalize on this condition.



An expanded Mannahatta Park creates a new destination space along a major pedestrian route.

## MANNAHATTA PARK

While retaining its prominence as a business and tourist destination, in the last decade Wall Street has become a residential and retail hub. Security constraints around the New York Stock Exchange have also changed the experience of the street. **The western half of Wall Street is now a de facto pedestrian zone, which has in turn greatly reduced traffic on the rest of the street.**

Between Water and South Streets, Mannahatta Park replaced parking spaces for city vehicles with benches, plantings and a fountain, while maintaining a lane of traffic and two parking lanes. **Remaining limited traffic volume and growing appeal to pedestrians suggests the space can become more.**

At the western end of the street, Trinity Church, Federal Hall and the New York Stock Exchange define one of the most iconic architectural tableaux in the world. At its eastern end, Wall Street is the main entrance to the new East River Waterfront. However the existing design of Mannahatta Park and adjacent parking lanes do not fully leverage the opportunity to celebrate this important entrance. **A redesigned park could become a grand entrance to the waterfront while maintaining limited vehicular access on a shared street.** This will allow the entire space to be used to host events during weekends and off-hours. While still intimate in scale, the expanded space will be large enough to support daytime amenities like a temporary market and evening events like outdoor dancing and performances.

The new center of activity will draw more engaging ground-floor uses to the surrounding buildings. The reconstruction of the road bed into a pedestrian space offers the opportunity to reduce the flow of stormwater that causes sewer overflows to the river, through the use of permeable pavements, infiltration and subsurface detention in the new design. **The expanded Mannahatta Park creates a flexible, high-performance space with new capabilities for events, ground floor activities and environmental sustainability.**



*Potential weekday use of expanded Mannahatta Park*

A redesigned park could become a grand entrance to the waterfront.



*Left: Wall Street pre-Mannahatta Park Construction, 1997; Right: Mannahatta Park existing conditions*



*Potential weekend program for Mannahatta Park with an interactive fountain, cafe seating, open spaces for greenmarkets or events, and a direct path to the East River Waterfront*

## EXPANDED MANNAHATTA PARK GOALS

1. Limit vehicle access to create a significant pedestrian plaza
2. Celebrate history as edge of old city and former slip
3. Reinforce connections between the Financial District and the East River Waterfront
4. Create high-performance space amenable to both the work day and weekend visitors