

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## Virtual Open House #2 Workshops

### FIDI-SEAPORT CLIMATE RESILIENCE MASTER PLAN | 3.11.21

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#### KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE #2 WORKSHOPS

**The FiDi and Seaport neighborhoods have high concentrations of cyclist and pedestrian activity, and many participants expressed support for improving connectivity, safety, and congestion for these uses.** The study area sees a lot of bikers and pedestrians, especially along the esplanade. However, narrow lanes, car congestion, and a lack of clearly defined pathways can make it difficult for bikers and pedestrians to get around, creating an unpleasant and oftentimes dangerous experience, particularly near the Battery Maritime Building. Participants expressed a desire for improvements such as wider pedestrian walkways, increased bike access, clear pathways, and more connections between these pathways and the transportation nodes in the area.

**Participants expressed frustrations with the FDR drive, though they acknowledge the importance of car roadways in this area.** The FDR Drive serves an important purpose as a highly used roadway to get through Manhattan. However, noting vehicle congestion and the unattractiveness of overhead infrastructure, participants expressed a general desire to reimagine the FDR and improve the neighborhood's public space. Some participants reacted positively to the prospect of making changes to the FDR Drive in order to site on-land flood protection. Additionally, some participants emphasized that the FDR Drive is a barrier to the waterfront and limits space for pedestrians.

**Participants prioritize public safety and well-being, both in the short- and long-term.** Mitigating noise pollution, air pollution, and urban heat island is important to participants. Participants support solutions that would decrease the number of cars and vehicles that pass through this area, which would also address safety concerns for pedestrians and bikers. Some participants also highlighted a desire for more shaded areas as a way to address extreme heat risks. In the longer-term, many participants also expressed a desire to explore opportunities that encourage improved sustainability in the FiDi-Seaport area.

**Participants asked for improvements to connections between the transportation system, existing public open space, and the waterfront.** Many participants noted that the east side of Manhattan does not have good connections to the East River and other open space. Participants noted that the area's limited bus access and pedestrian walkways contribute to this, making it

challenging to go between the inland neighborhood and the waterfront. This also negatively impacts inland small businesses, highlighting a desire to encourage more foot traffic between the waterfront and the rest of the neighborhood. The subway network plays an important role in access to the waterfront, highlighting the critical need for flood protection of the subway system -- though some participants noted that it can still be challenging to access the waterfront using subways alone. Additionally, the limited connections between the existing open spaces along the waterfront, and a lack of water touchpoints, natural grass areas, and public spaces make the area less enjoyable and usable. Participants expressed a desire for direct access to the water via bikeways and walkways, waterfront access by the FDR Drive, and more open promenades for all types of users.

**Access to the water is also a social equity issue.** Participants noted that they experience inequitable access to the waterfront, due to limited parking, a lack of waterfront accessibility for people with disabilities, and limited bus access to the waterfront.

**Participants asked for more water-related experiences, and both passive and active open space.** Many participants highlighted a desire for a greater variety of recreational programs and types of open and community space in the FiDi-Seaport area, especially active spaces for residents, children, and families. Participants suggested a variety of ideas, including more playgrounds, outdoor gyms and exercise spaces, educational programs, public art opportunities, public gardens, kayaking, and a community center for the FiDi-Seaport neighborhoods.

**Maritime activity and water-related uses are defining elements of the FiDi-Seaport neighborhood's character.** This area has frequent and concentrated maritime activity including ferries and boats, in addition to recreational activities such as sailing and fishing. Because of this, participants highlighted the importance of protecting and preserving access to maritime assets and ferry service. Participants especially noted the importance of maintaining utilities (electricity service, drinkable water, etc.) on both sides of the coastal defense system to ensure continuity of maritime service and ability to program the piers. Participants also noted that a shoreline extension should consider and minimize potential impacts to water navigability and should not limit direct access to the water.

**The historic and cultural integrity of the FiDi-Seaport area must be preserved.** Participants emphasized that it is critical to protect historical resources in the area. Additionally, participants expressed the importance of preserving the neighborhood's character and existing viewsheds, and minimizing dense infrastructure and dense development.