

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Virtual Open House #3 Workshops

FIDI-SEAPORT CLIMATE RESILIENCE MASTER PLAN | 6.28.21 & 6.30.21

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE #3 WORKSHOPS

Transportation & Access

The project is evaluating options to keep the FDR Drive elevated as a viaduct or to replace the viaduct with an at-grade roadway. Here's what we heard about the future of the FDR Drive viaduct:

- Some participants noted the value of the elevated FDR viaduct for providing shade and for keeping pedestrians separate from high-speed vehicular traffic. They expressed concerns about the feasibility of transforming the viaduct into an at-grade boulevard, particularly because of safety impacts to pedestrians who will need to cross the roadway to access the waterfront.
- However, many participants view the FDR viaduct as a barrier to the waterfront and see it as an eyesore. Many feel strongly that taking down the elevated viaduct would improve overall access to the waterfront. Taking down the viaduct would also enhance views of the FiDi-Seaport neighborhood from the newly created space along the river.
- The study area for this project extends to the Brooklyn Bridge, but participants from the Two Bridges neighborhood, north of the Brooklyn Bridge, were interested in exploring taking down the FDR viaduct further north.
- If the FDR viaduct is kept in place, some participants were excited about the opportunity to improve the quality of space underneath the structure through measures such as enhanced lighting, public art, or new programming, while others expressed hesitation about the ability to successfully transform the space beneath the viaduct. There was some interest in converting the FDR viaduct into a highline.
- Participants emphasized the need to maintain and enhance bike lane connectivity, as well as to address congestion and smog under the roadway.

Open Space & Buildings

The project will construct flood protection along the shoreline, which will also create new areas that can be used for open space, buildings, or other park amenities. Here's what we heard about prioritizing uses in this new space:

- Participants were excited about the opportunity to shape the open space experience and envisioned spaces designed for a diverse group of visitors while preserving the historic maritime legacy of the South Street Seaport.
- Participants noted a need for more outdoor spaces for gathering and exercise in the Fidi-Seaport area and emphasized the desire to see a variety of programming for active and passive recreational activities.
- Participants expressed a range of opinions about the role of buildings in this project, including suggestions to limit or have no development in the Seaport. Participants noted that the Financial District and Seaport areas already feel very built out, leading to a desire to appropriately limit development of the waterfront.
- Participants discussed drawbacks associated with buildings, but also acknowledged the potential for buildings to provide revenue. Participants were interested in shorter buildings with small footprints that could activate public spaces, like those related to recreational, civic, and cultural activities.
- The project team heard concerns about the potential for tall buildings to disturb the historic character of the Seaport area. Specifically, participants discussed that tall buildings could cut off views, create shadows, or make the waterfront area feel boxed-in.

Waterfront Esplanade & Maritime Activity

The project will provide an opportunity to reimagine and enhance waterfront experiences. The existing maritime facilities, such as the ferry terminals, will need to be replaced or adapted to protect them from rising sea levels and flooding. Here's what we heard about shaping the neighborhood's future connection to the East River:

- Participants noted the importance of preserving the historic vessels of the Seaport and suggested designing the space to further emphasize the historical maritime background of the area.
- Many participants were excited about seeing educational opportunities and aquatic recreational activities such as kayak or small boat launch spots, although feasibility must be further examined because the East River is less hospitable to kayaking than the Hudson River.
- Participants expressed concerns over the potential proximity of various maritime activities to each other in the East River, between ferries, historic vessels, and more.

General Q&A Room

A general Q&A room was available for participants to ask questions or share additional comments with the project team. Here's what was asked and/or discussed most frequently about the project:

- Participants asked about funding for the project, with specific questions related to stimulus and infrastructure spending opportunities coming out from Washington, DC.
- Participants asked about drainage infrastructure, including what type of elements would complement the coastal defense. There was a preference for green strategies as compared to grey strategies, where possible.
- Participants asked about long-term operations and maintenance (O&M) as well as who would be responsible for maintaining any newly created infrastructure.
- Participants asked about waves in the study area, looking to better understand the wave climate in FiDi-Seaport as compared to other neighboring projects.