DAY TO NIGHT

Extend the hours of activity along Water Street
Clockwise from top left: Sidewalk and POPS in front of 88 Pine; Public art in POPS at 88 Pine; Blank wall and parking garage at Water Street and Pine Street; Arcade at Hanover Square obscuring retail.

OBJECTIVES

1. Program open spaces with regular and seasonal events and public art

2. Illuminate pedestrian space and building facades

3. Provide publicly accessible Wi-Fi and other information technology

Changes on Water Street should cultivate street life that extends beyond peak commuting hours. The re-envisioned street and plazas will offer a stage to extend activity into the evening, through the weekend and across the seasons. By generating new activity and building on the improvements being made in the surrounding areas, a coordinated framework for art and events will extend the presence of people, enhance the value of open space and reposition the role of Water Street in Lower Manhattan.

EXISTING STREET ACTIVITY

Activity on Water Street is dominated by office workers during commuting hours and at lunchtime on weekdays. The busiest intersections during rush hour are at the most convenient access points for public transportation: Fulton, Wall, Broad, and Whitehall streets, with up to 2,000 pedestrians crossing Water Street in one direction in an hour at each intersection.
During warmer months, office workers venture to public spaces and sidewalks where street vendors are set up. People gather outside to eat or socialize, whether on nearby benches or in those public plazas with ample sun, minimal wind, and vegetation, such as Old Slip and 100 Wall Street. Some retail spaces have outdoor cafes that are also busy at lunch time.

But weekday pedestrians typically avoid many of the open spaces and sidewalks of Water Street because there is not much to see or do there. And, despite destinations such as South Street Seaport, Battery Park and ferries to Staten Island and Governors Island at either end, there is little weekend activity on Water Street. Pedestrian counts show no more than a dozen people walking the length at any given time. Vehicle traffic is also much lighter on weekends, with only three to four cars lined up at red lights.

**PROGRAMMING**

Coupled with physical changes, intensive programming would contribute to making Water Street a more lively place. A varied mix of events will leverage the diverse range of large and small spaces on Water Street, while seeking to capture the attention of workers, residents and visitors alike. Along with the reconfigured street, the public realm of plazas and arcades could create a vibrant and engaging environment, building a meaningful connection to people and place, while extending activity well into the evening, through the weekend and across the seasons.

**Intensive programming would contribute to making Water Street a more lively and engaging place.**
Water Street can be activated through a rhythm of programmed events and markets in public spaces along the corridor.

Midsummer Night Swing at Damrosch Park

Holiday Festival at Saks Fifth Avenue

River to River concert at Castle Clinton

Outdoor public performance at Lincoln Center

Community Planting Day at Mannahatta Park
Performance and Events: Outdoor concerts, shows and exhibitions are a Lower Manhattan tradition. The annual River to River Festival and predecessor events draw people to venues throughout the district, including the Elevated Acre at 55 Water Street, home to an outdoor movie series. Water Street’s many empty plazas present staging opportunities for more festival programming.

Markets: Temporary green market installations create a reason for people to gather, and foster the mixing of diverse groups. With a strong history of regular markets at Bowling Green, Zuccotti Park, and the recent additions of the Fulton Stall and New Amsterdam Markets in the Seaport, Lower Manhattan has proven to be a successful destination in the citywide trend. With low start-up costs and mobile infrastructure, markets could be deployed to solidify the urban life of key spaces along Water Street. Supported by a dense mix of workers and residents, the most viable locations for additional markets are the parks at Wall Street, Old Slip and Coenties Slip, all of which connect pedestrians moving between Water Street and the historic Financial District. An expanded Mannahatta Park could serve as a new destination green market at the heart of the district.

Placemaking: Colorful arrangements of tables, chairs, umbrellas, portable landscaping, flowers, banners, and kiosks could create comfortable places for daily relaxation and social life. Recurring patterns of these elements could serve to link the various parks and plazas of Water Street, encouraging pedestrians to extend their journey. Temporary installations and special events can draw people to inhabit and appreciate spaces in new and surprising ways.

Top: Regular events, such as Movie Nights at the Elevated Acre or the New Amsterdam Market can bring new life to Water Street; Bottom: A giant chess game has become a placemaking anchor at a park in Switzerland
Curated art in public spaces, including the median, will help create a compelling identity for Water Street.

Iconic Art: From grand gestures to subtle surprises, public art is an essential tool in creating compelling and memorable experiences on Water Street. Installations on Water Street are memorable but they lack a meaningful and defining link. To achieve this, the new landscaped median could become the site of distinctive permanent art. New sites for public art should be identified wherever possible in the redesign and modification of existing plazas and building arcades. Iconic installations would draw people along the street and announce the importance of Water Street as a premier commercial boulevard. Key intersections at Fulton, Wall and Whitehall streets could provide ideal locations for noteworthy works to signify gateways onto and through Water Street.

Left to right: ‘Play Me I’m Yours’ creates a thread of serendipitous performance in London; Iconic art at 7 World Trade Center New York City, Balloon Flower by Jeff Koons; New York Avenue median, Washington D.C., Nana on a Dolphin by Niki de Saint Phalle.
Temporary art: Deployment of temporary installations on Water Street would ensure that the corridor remains fresh and relevant. Building setbacks, arcades and plazas could become sites for a renewed experience ranging from contemplative to dynamic and engaging. A vibrant community of arts and cultural organizations have long ensured that Lower Manhattan is a nexus of captivating, premier visual and performance art. Building on a long history of temporary art in Lower Manhattan, the Downtown Alliance continues to apply its own program of Re:Construction, a public art program made possible by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation. Similarly, on Water Street, designated sites in building arcades and plazas can take the form of a curated thread of rotating works executed in partnership with public agencies and private property owners.

Functional art: Contemporary streetscape embraces contributions from a wide range of disciplines including furniture design, environmental signage, and sustainable design. When implementing open space modifications, private owners can incorporate creative and functional street furniture into the redesigned public realm. Addition of tables, chairs, umbrellas, portable landscaping, flowers, banners, and kiosks will serve to link the various parks and plazas visually, encouraging pedestrians to extend their journey another block along the street.

From grand gestures to subtle surprises, public art is an essential tool in defining a compelling identity for Water Street.
Threads are multi-part art works that could create a narrative along all or parts of Water Street, leading visitors on an adventure.

“We are attracted to the best streets not because we have to go there but because we want to be there. The best are as joyful as they are utilitarian.”

- Allan Jacobs, Great Streets
**Pedestrian Lighting:** Lighting contributes to an exciting urban environment by extending the life of a street beyond work hours. All too often, however, city streets are lit for the benefit of motorists while ignoring the sidewalk. Appropriate design and application of lighting can help to privilege the scale and experience of pedestrians.

Effective lighting should provide an attractive pathway for pedestrians moving east and west along established commuter pathways, while also drawing visitors through the district along Water Street. Pedestrian-scaled lighting would reinforce connections and the identity of Water Street, enabling visitors to recognize and appreciate their experience of the street. Small fixtures placed in tree pits could create a soft glow bouncing off of the street trees and landscape. Lighting in the proposed median would further complement the sidewalk treatment reinforcing the identity of a reconfigured commercial boulevard at night.

**Facade Illumination:** Working in tandem with private and public interests, the illumination of Water Street can expand existing programs for architectural lighting throughout Lower Manhattan. Recent years have brought complementary efforts by Wall Street Rising and the Downtown Alliance to enhance the nighttime experience of the Financial District with dramatic facade illumination. A new and expanded program of compelling and coordinated lighting installations could make use of Water Street’s arcades, blank walls, and tall buildings as well as the open spaces along its length, turning dark spaces into bright ones and animating static spaces with movement.
Annual Festival: An annual festival could build on the precedents for integration of dramatic light installations that have transformed Lower Manhattan in recent years. Brought together under the auspices of the Municipal Art Society and Creative Time, the annual Tribute in Light® is now made possible by a grant from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation and assistance from Con Edison. Connecting live performance with visual art, and advanced technologies to reinforce the identity of place, a Festival of Light and New Media could anchor a unique series of annual programming on Water Street.

FREE WIRELESS INTERNET

Ubiquitous access to information and modes of communication have become a proxy for economic development the world over. Providing an amenity for area workers, residents, and visitors in Lower Manhattan, the Downtown Alliance has installed a successful network of hotspots to make the public realm more useful and enjoyable. Expansion of this network along the sidewalk and in the plazas of Water Street would drive traffic to area retailers and cultural attractions, and allow office workers to check email while sipping a latte in the park. The opportunity to create a continuous Wi-Fi zone along Water Street might be accomplished efficiently with installation on the top of light poles at strategic locations to provide coverage throughout all public spaces along the street. A wide array of programming could leverage the investment in a connected corridor including interactive public art, and smartphone apps. Visitors, workers and residents would benefit from easier access to information on next bus timing, historic and cultural attractions and nearby retail and dining options.

Top: Accent lighting in the median and uplighted landscape elements would provide a pedestrian level glow along the streetscape; Bottom: Light projected on building facades for holidays and celebrations could bring inanimate walls to life with dynamic images