



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sunday, June 10, 2007

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A VISION FOR MIDTOWN'S EAST RIVER WATERFRONT IS UNVEILED

A group of six leading landscape architects united for a day of brainstorming and collaborative synergy late last week to develop a bold vision for Midtown's inaccessible East River waterfront, and today they presented the resulting concepts and images to a crowd of more than 200 interested New Yorkers. The intensive day-long design workshop, known as a charrette, was organized by the Municipal Art Society, City Council member Dan Garodnick and Manhattan's Community Board 6.

"By realigning and lowering the 42nd Street exit ramp off FDR Drive, the architects hit upon the concept of 'elevating the people, not the traffic,'" said Frank E. Sanchis, III, MAS senior vice president. "They proposed a grand urban terrace above the FDR overlooking the river from 38th Street to 42nd Street. They also proposed a 'forested hill' surrounding an existing ventilation shaft at 42nd Street and proposed creating a glowing six-story 'pylon' which would anchor a ferry terminal, restaurant and vertical public space, and provide a means to descend to the river."

The landscape architects included Ken Smith, designer of the rooftop garden at the Museum of Modern Art and the elevated plaza at 55 Water Street; Ricardo Scofidio, designer of the High Line and the redevelopment of Lincoln Center; Matthew Urbanski, designer of Brooklyn Bridge Park; Margie Ruddick, designer of improvements to Queens Plaza and a master plan for downtown Trenton; Kate Orff, a principal at SCAPE Studio and a protégé of Rem Koolhaas; and Brian Jencek, a principal at Hargreaves Associates.

The charrette was organized because Manhattan has a rare opportunity to open up public access to Midtown's East River waterfront, create a new park and complete a greenway connecting the Battery to Harlem. The state is planning to rebuild the midtown section of FDR Drive, the former Con Ed power plant site is being redeveloped, and the city is planning to facilitate the expansion of the United Nations campus and create an adjacent waterfront esplanade. The charrette explored how the projects could be planned together and result in an open waterfront from 34th Street to 63rd Street.

Representatives from the state's Department of Transportation, the city's Department of Parks and Recreation and East River Realty Company, LLC — the developer of the former Con Ed site — participated in the charrette briefing.

The charrette took place in a storefront space at 866 United Nations Plaza on Friday, June 8, and the concepts and images presentation were presented in the rotunda at Hunter College's Brookdale Campus.

Elected officials who attended included Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, state Senators Liz Krueger and Thomas Duane, state Assembly members Jonathan Bing, Brian Kavanaugh and Micah Kellner, and City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn.

The Municipal Art Society of New York is a private, non-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote a more livable city. Since 1893, the MAS has worked to enrich the culture, neighborhoods and physical design of New York City. It advocates for excellence in urban design and planning, contemporary architecture, historic preservation and public art.

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