



Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Selected to Helm Master Planning Process for Ongoing Revitalization of Lower Manhattan Seaport District

June 6, 2019

NEW YORK, June 6, 2019 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- As part of a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to urban planning within Manhattan's historic Seaport District, The Howard Hughes Corporation (HHC) has selected Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM) to advance a forward-looking plan for the continuing evolution of Seaport District properties. SOM brings highly relevant expertise to this important commission and will work with HHC and local stakeholders to create a compelling vision that respects the area's character, its local community, and the dynamic role the Seaport has played throughout New York City's history.

The Seaport District is New York's original commercial hub, located along the East River in Lower Manhattan among historic cobblestone streets and restored 19th Century buildings with unparalleled views of the Brooklyn Bridge, Statue of Liberty, and the city skyline. HHC's goal in engaging SOM is to facilitate a process that will produce a clearly stated vision for the future of its Seaport properties in the context of the surrounding area, in collaboration with local residents and businesses, community leaders, elected officials, Community Board 1, the South Street Seaport Museum, historic preservation advocates, and the educational institutions and nonprofits that call the Seaport home. HHC and SOM will soon begin meeting with local stakeholders and hosting dedicated public forums in order to create a plan that is responsive to community members and preserves the historic character of this distinctive neighborhood while guiding its growth and revitalization.

For this project, SOM has assembled a team of seasoned urban designers and architects from its award-winning City Design Practice. The team, to be led by SOM Managing Partner T.J. Gottesdiener, Design Partner Chris Cooper, and City Design Practice Leader Keith P. O'Connor, will be taking into consideration notable elements including the area's public space and community facilities; resilience and sustainability efforts; affordable housing; pedestrian, bicycle and traffic circulation; streetscape and wayfinding strategies; as well as infrastructure and public transit conditions. SOM will focus on providing a comprehensive plan for HHC's Seaport District properties in the context of the neighborhood, with a particular focus on the surface parking lot at 250 Water Street as well as other potential improvements to the Seaport District.

A key objective of this planning strategy will be to ensure a sustainable future for the South Street Seaport Museum, a community anchor that embodies the South Street Seaport Historic District's enduring role as a "port of discovery." The Howard Hughes Corporation is a long-standing supporter of the Museum and has directed SOM to pursue strategies that will continue to help strengthen this vital organization so it may continue to fulfill its role in connecting the area's past, present, and future in a meaningful way.

HHC President of the New York Tri-State Region, Saul Scherl, said, "We are pleased to be working with SOM and the community on a plan for the Seaport District that will build on the success of the revitalized Pier 17 and the preservation of the Fulton Market, Tin Building and adjacent blocks in the Historic District. The plan will address the needs of the neighborhood in the context of Lower Manhattan and New York City as a whole. The depth of SOM's work in New York—on everything from development in historic districts to adaptive reuse of landmark buildings and the design of resilient waterfronts—makes the firm uniquely qualified to help lead the Seaport District into its next phase. HHC is committed to advancing a plan that serves the needs of this vibrant community and enhances the district's role as a vital economic hub for the city."

SOM's design work in New York City includes the restoration of the landmark Farley Post Office Building into the new Moynihan Train Hall and residential projects within historic neighborhoods such as 101 Warren Street, which integrates a contemporary high-rise in Tribeca while creating new housing for a range of income levels. The firm's waterfront resiliency and education-related planning projects include the award-winning master plan for the Cornell Tech campus on Roosevelt Island and the University Center at The New School, the vibrant heart of an urban campus.

"We look forward to collaborating with HHC, residents, community leaders, elected officials, the South Street Seaport Museum, and representatives of the educational institutions that call the Seaport District home," said **Design Partner Chris Cooper**. "We are eager to craft a compelling and inclusive plan for these Seaport District properties with an eye toward the larger neighborhood and the Lower Manhattan context—one that enhances and preserves the historic character of this distinctive New York City waterfront community, while contributing to its ongoing growth and revitalization."

"We look forward to helping envision a more resilient future for the Seaport—one built on its long history, rich texture, and the dynamic maritime activity and complex ecology of the East River," said **Keith O'Connor, City Design Practice Leader** at SOM.

HHC and the Seaport District

Since assuming a long-term lease for Pier 17 and portions of the South Street Seaport Historic District in 2010, HHC has invested over \$600 million in the Seaport District. Drawing on the area's storied past as a center of maritime trade and commercial innovation, HHC is building and renovating more than 450,000 square feet of space in the district, creating new culinary, fashion, entertainment and cultural experiences as well as public open space, allowing more New Yorkers and visitors to connect with the waterfront in a variety of new ways. When current projects are completed and fully leased, HHC will have added some 1,740 jobs and the Seaport District properties will generate over \$200 million of economic activity each year.

Highlights of the Seaport District include the four-story Pier 17—a 1.5-acre rooftop which serves as a cultural event space and year-round community amenity. With seating for the public and a view of the iconic Lower Manhattan skyline, The Rooftop at Pier 17 Rooftop transforms seasonally from the city's first open-air rooftop ice skating rink to an outdoor performance venue. HHC has introduced community health and wellness programming on the Pier, with free fitness classes curated by some of New York's top fitness experts, as well as a series of classic movie screenings. Opening this year, Pier 17 will soon include waterfront restaurants from Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Andrew Carmellini, David Chang of the Momofuku Group, and Helene Henderson of Malibu Farm. The Pier has been home to ESPN's new live broadcast studios, which opened in April 2018, and a new Nike Design Center will be opening in 2019.

The Seaport District features unique retail, including the only U.S. location of Carla Sozzani's experiential store, 10 Corso Como, Sarah Jessica Parker's flagship SJP store, Big Gay Ice Cream, as well as the first iPic Theaters location in Manhattan. And starting in 2020 the Seaport District will also be home to a 53,000-square-foot food hall by Jean-Georges in the restored Tin Building.

In addition to its dedicated support of the South Street Seaport Museum, HHC is delighted to provide space for local nonprofits including Black Gotham Experience and Kubemas tutoring program, and, through its Seaport Cares program, to support and participate in many community celebrations, including the Seaport District's own holiday tree-lighting and menorah-lighting festivities; the Waterfront Alliance's City of Water festival and Heroes of the Harbor event; the Downtown Alliance's food festivals "Dine Around Downtown" and the Taste of Seaport; the Seaport Animation Festival; the NYPD 1st Precinct National Night Out; and Open House New York. HHC is a proud sponsor of Downtown Manhattan Little League baseball, the National 9/11 Memorial, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Lower Manhattan Historical Association, Peck Slip School Parent Teachers Association, Spruce Street public school, Downtown Little School, and Friends of Governor's Island.

About Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM) is one of the leading architecture, interior design, engineering, and urban planning firms in the world. Since its founding more than 80 years ago, SOM has earned a reputation for design excellence with a portfolio that includes some of the most important architectural accomplishments of the 20th and 21st centuries, and has been a leader in the research and development of specialized technologies, new processes and innovative ideas, many of which have had a palpable and lasting impact on the design profession and the physical environment. The firm's longstanding leadership in design and building technology has been honored with nearly 2,000 awards for quality, innovation, and management. The American Institute of Architects has recognized SOM twice with its highest honor, the Architecture Firm Award—in 1962 and again in 1996.

About The Howard Hughes Corporation

The Howard Hughes Corporation owns, manages and develops commercial, residential and mixed-use real estate throughout the U.S. Its award-winning assets include the country's preeminent portfolio of master planned communities, as well as operating properties and development opportunities. Dedicated to innovative placemaking, HHC is recognized for its ongoing commitment to design excellence and to the cultural life of its communities. The Howard Hughes Corporation is traded on the New York Stock Exchange as HHC. For additional information visit www.howardhughes.com. For additional information on the Seaport District, visit SeaportDistrict.NYC.

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