October 31, 2013

Kyle Kimball
Executive Director
New York City Economic Development Corporation
110 William Street
New York, NY 10038

Dear Mr. Kimball:

As elected officials representing the South Street Seaport, we write to strongly urge the City and the Howard Hughes Corporation to embark on a collaborative, community-based planning process for the Tin Building, the New Market Building and other potential development sites in the Seaport. We are pleased that the City has secured a new operator for the Seaport Museum and feel that it is now appropriate to begin a broader planning process in the interest of achieving community consensus.

There is a great deal of frustration within Community Board 1 and within the community regarding lack of information about plans for future development in the South Street Seaport. Residents are concerned by the prospect of inappropriate height and density in the Seaport. Local stakeholders have asked for an extension of the South Street Seaport Historic District to include the development sites mentioned above. They also seek to avoid the type of high-rise construction that is out of scale with the immediate area.

As we address the Seaport's physical development, we must also address the growing need for services and amenities geared towards the neighborhood's residential population, such as schools and parks, in addition to retail. The east side of Lower Manhattan is among the fastest growing residential communities in the city and its needs have become more diverse. The limited information and lack of meaningful outreach to the community regarding potential development only exacerbates these pressing concerns.

To that end, we urge an inclusionary planning process involving residents, neighborhood stakeholders, Community Board 1, and local elected officials to craft a series of Planning and Urban Design Guidelines that would act as the governing principles for any new development in the South Street Seaport.

The future of the Seaport is a critically important planning and development issue facing Lower Manhattan and we still have a chance to get it right. We strongly urge you to work with our community on an inclusive, community-driven planning process.

Sincerely,

Assemblyman Sheldon Silver

Congressman Jerrold Nadler

Borough President Scott Stringer

Senator Daniel Squadron

Council Member Margaret S. Chin