

## **Questions Generated from Community Meeting Re: River Street Master Plan**

### **Affordable Housing**

- ★ *What is the affordable housing program you are pursuing at the River Street site? At what levels of affordability? Will any units be for the lowest income bracket? Will it be permanently affordable?*

Two Trees will pursue a mandatory inclusionary affordable housing option at this site, which will include a total of 250 permanently affordable rental units. These dedicated units represent 25 percent affordable housing across the entire site, including:

- 225 units for low-income New Yorkers making 60 percent Area Median Income (AMI):
  - Eligible income is \$68,220 for a family of 4;
  - Rent for a 2-bedroom would be \$1,366/month.
- 25 units for very low-income New Yorkers making 40 percent AMI:
  - Eligible income is \$45,480 for a family of 4;
  - Rent for a 2-bedroom would be \$854/month.

Two Trees is open to conversations with the community and Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) about programs that would produce both more units of affordable housing and lower AMI's.

- ★ *How many other units of affordable housing are in the vicinity and how do these units help with the affordable housing crisis?*

According to the [Department of City Planning](#), there have been 2,100 new affordable units created in this area since 2007. Within the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) study area of the proposed River Street project (which represents a mile radius of the site), there will be 1,300 affordable units, including the 700 affordable units at Domino.

The 250 proposed affordable units would represent a 12 percent increase in the number of affordable units in Community Board 1 (CB1) and represent a 19 percent increase within one mile of the site. Including the affordable units at Domino, Two Trees' efforts would increase affordable housing within a mile of the site to 1,566 units from 616 units, a 250% increase representing a significant economic diversification of the area. They will be high-opportunity affordable units with access to the immediate neighborhood's safety record, good schools and ample open space.

★ *Has Two Trees created and treated affordable housing in other developments?*

Two Trees has generated approximately 500 high-quality affordable housing units in Brooklyn and Manhattan since 2005. As of early 2020, the firm has an additional 500 affordable units in the pipeline at Domino, excluding the 250 proposed units at River Street, making Two Trees one of the most active affordable housing developers in Brooklyn. All of these existing and pipelined units are set to be permanently affordable at income levels at or below 60 percent of AMI.

All of the low-income units Two Trees has constructed are identical to the market-rate apartments with the same finishes and amenities. There are no separate entrances for affordable and market-rate tenants and affordable units are distributed throughout all buildings. All residents at Two Trees properties have full access to the same services and amenities offered on a complimentary basis to market-rate tenants, including all residential common spaces, a bike storage room and shuttle bus service.

Half of the affordable units will be offered first to residents of Community Board 1, the maximum allowed by current City policy. Two Trees routinely partners with local organizations to ensure that all qualified area residents are aware of its affordable housing opportunities. Two Trees will commit to extensive, multi-lingual outreach to ensure that the 50 percent community board preference for affordable housing units is met at both River Street and the remaining Domino units.

★ *What types of tax abatements will Two Trees get for this project? How does 421-a interact with this project?*

The residential buildings will be eligible for 421-a, a state tax abatement program that incentivizes rental construction and affordable housing creation by abating property taxes for a certain number of years. The program is designed to address the city's dramatic housing shortage by encouraging developers to undertake mixed-income projects that would otherwise be financially unfeasible but for the tax abatement.

## **Population Growth/Gentrification**

★ *How is Two Trees addressing issues of gentrification and erosion of diversity in North Brooklyn?*

The River Street site has been zoned for manufacturing uses for decades, was an active utility site as recently as 2008 and has not had any residential population in recent

memory. With the River Street development, Two Trees is committed to promoting diversity that reflects the urban fabric of the surrounding area through:

- Adding 125 units of affordable housing units set aside specifically for qualifying Community Board 1 residents and another 125 units for other qualifying New Yorkers;
- Investing in workforce development and local hiring to ensure the project will be a net positive in terms of creating benefits for area residents;
- Building a state-of-the-art YMCA that will serve socio-economically diverse neighborhood families.

Since opening two years ago, Domino Park to the south of the River Street site has also brought tremendous diversity to the Williamsburg waterfront. Two Trees hired multilingual local staff and worked hand in hand with the local community to listen to priorities and create an inclusive public space that would be used by all of the different communities that live in the immediate area.

Similar to our outreach work and programmatic engagement at Domino, Two Trees will from Day 1 strategically partner with area institutions, including the Community Board, schools and local non-profits to draw a diverse mix of area residents to the new River Street park. It is a top priority to ensure that the new River Street park will reflect the incredible mix of Community Board 1 residents.

★ *What do studies indicate about the rate of gentrification in Williamsburg?*

According to a [recent analysis](#) by the Department of City Planning (DCP):

- The population has grown 39.81 percent in the Williamsburg/Greenpoint rezoning area since 2006.
- Between 2006 and 2017, the Hispanic population has increased, as did population in all other race groups.
- Hispanic population saw a reverse in a trend of decline observed since the 1990s;
- While there has been an increase in the number of households earning \$50,000 or more, the number of households earning under \$50,000 and under \$25,000 has not changed significantly.
- Job growth in the private sector was 50 percent faster than the NYC average post-recession, including 8,600 jobs added on the waterfront—a 129 percent increase compared to 2002-2010 numbers. This growth was seen in both higher-earning and lower-earning jobs.

Positive Community Impacts of Domino and River St Rezonings Within CEQR Study Area

IMPACT AREA	WITHOUT PROJECTS	WITH PROJECTS			TOTAL CHANGE
		Domino	River Street	TOTAL	
Population	35,000	5,800	2,200	43,000	23% increase
Open Space	22 acres	7 acres	6 acres	35 acres ( <i>including in water activities</i> ) 32 acres ( <i>including only land</i> )	30% increase per person 18% increase per person
Affordable Housing	600 units	700	250	1,550 units	950 new units
Public Elementary School Seats	565	580	0	1,145	65% increase per person
Brooklyn-Based Office Space	655,000 SF	600,000 SF	70,000 SF	1,325,000 SF	64% increase per person
Linear Waterfront Access	.67 miles	.28 miles	.17 miles	1.12 miles	36% increase per person



- ★ *How will Two Trees ensure that the public space at River Street is truly inclusive and open to everyone?*

Preconstruction: During the preconstruction phase, Two Trees intends to select a community organization as an interim user with the goal of creatively activating a portion of the waterfront site for a period of at least one year and likely extending beyond that. This effort, which began in early 2020, has been delayed by COVID-19.

Nevertheless, this new recreational open space on the East River will expand waterfront access and offer programming aimed at children and young adults starting hopefully in Fall 2020, pending further health advisories.

There will continue to be a private parking and equipment storage facility on the remainder of the vacant site until construction commences.

Park Design: Two Trees and [James Corner Field Operations](#) conducted pre-design visioning sessions with the community about the park over the summer of 2019 and the design is a direct reflection of input gathered at these meetings. Participants voiced concerns that other recently built waterfront parks and esplanades were not well designed, lacked waterfront access and were less well maintained. Many said they wanted a more resilient design that engages the river with a soft edge and promotes water dependent uses, including a boat launch. As a result, the design of the River Street park is intended to maximize public access to the waterfront. Designers have taken great care to provide diverse park amenities in terms of use, scale, variety and experience and provide an educational environment that supports youth-based activities for nature and estuary education. Some design features include:

- Places to gather such as the lawn, beach, amphitheater and water play area
- Places to have more passive and quiet moments such as the nature trails, wetland walk, overlooks, seating and picnic areas
- Rare and unique experiences in the city, such as the tidal classroom, bird hide and protected in-water uses

The park will be ADA-accessible and is expected to be managed by the same team that manages Domino Park, in partnership with NYC Parks, and be accessible to all year-round.

Neighborhood Integration: Working with [Bjarke Ingels Group](#) and James Corner Field Operations, Two Trees has taken steps to ensure that the River Street master plan generates connections and nodes to the surrounding community and existing infrastructure. This includes:

- A grand, public entrance at the terminus of Metropolitan Avenue

- A connection to Grand Ferry Park to the south and another connection to the Waterfront Esplanade in front of 184 Kent Ave to the north, and expanded park access to Domino Park
  - Filling the gap at River Street which represents one of three obstacles from connecting a planned string of waterfront parks that will run from the Williamsburg Bridge to Newtown Creek
  - Commitments for the residential buildings to have a public-facing ground plane, with community and park-oriented programs facing the waterfront and neighborhood oriented-retail facing the streets
- ★ *With the additional influx of residents, including school-age children, how does Two Trees envision school capacity concerns to be handled? What is the projected number of new school seats?*

As part of the required environmental review for the proposed project, Two Trees will conduct an environmental impact study to determine the school age population that is likely to materialize from a project of this size. Currently, there are 565 K-through-8 school seats within the study area, one mile from the proposed site.

At Domino, Two Trees is constructing a new 580-seat K-through-8 district school, tentatively scheduled to open in 2023. Including the 580 new seats at Domino, there will be a 100 percent increase in the number of K-through-8 seats in a one-mile radius from the site. Two Trees projects that this increase of seats is more than sufficient to meet demand, according to School Construction Authority and Department of Education projections.

- ★ *What is the trash management plan for the site?*

Residential trash collection will be carried out by the NYC Department of Sanitation. The new open space will be operated and managed privately by Two Trees, which will be responsible for trash collection and general maintenance. The overall condition of Domino Park, which is seen by users as generally better maintained than city-managed parks, will be the standard for the River Street Park.

- ★ *What is the plan for reducing the impact of construction on neighbors?*

For all of our projects, past and present, Two Trees serves as its own general contractor and construction manager, giving us increased command of its workforce relative to other large builders. This is an advantage in reducing construction impacts because Two Trees has responsibility and accountability for the conditions at the site, site safety and the

quality of the finished product. Because we manage our own construction, we build efficiently and on schedule. At Domino, Two Trees has worked hard in collaboration with local leaders and the Department of Buildings to minimize traffic and overall disruption, and will continue to apply best practices to our operations at River Street as well.

## **Traffic/Public Transportation**

- ★ *How much additional traffic is projected for the surrounding area because of this development? How will this affect/slow traffic or its patterns? What are the effects of this additional traffic in terms of its impacts on air quality and associated health effects such as asthma?*

As part of the required environmental impact review for the proposed project, Two Trees will conduct a traffic analysis and impact study for the proposed development.

Preliminary studies show that an as-of-right, manufacturing use on the property (consisting of a last-mile delivery facility with retail, office and parking) would create significantly higher vehicular traffic than the proposed residential development. In fact, initial projections show that vehicular trips for Two Trees' proposed plan are 40 percent lower than the estimated trips for the as-of-right option. The proposed residential plan would generate less truck, auto and taxi trips than an as-of-right plan under existing zoning.

Two Trees is also committed to creating a Working Group that meets regularly with neighbors, the Department of Transportation and local elected officials on solutions to long-standing traffic issues along River Street and Kent Avenue. As long-term owners, we often share interests with neighboring buildings and residents on quality of life issues, including traffic.

As part of the required environmental impact review for the proposed project, Two Trees will also study impact on air quality. Due to the lower number of vehicular trips generated under the mostly residential River Street proposal, impacts on air quality associated with additional traffic would be far less under the proposed plan.

- ★ *Will parking be included in this project? Will it be onsite? If so, where? Will street parking be affected?*

The current parking regulations for a 1,000-unit apartment building would require 400 spaces but Two Trees is seeking a reduction in the requirement to 250 spaces. The spaces will be underground and will be accessible from North 1st Street. Existing on-street parking along River Street is unlikely to be impacted. Based upon parking demand we

have seen at Domino, this accessory parking should be more than sufficient to meet project-generated demand.

- ★ *How will the residents in these towers impact the public transportation in the area? How will people access the MTA?*

L-train ridership has been relatively flat between 2013 and 2018. Most recently in the pre-COVID era, about 400,000 people rode the L on weekdays. MTA capital improvements completed by end of 2020 will result in a 10% increase in peak hour train capacity, or about three more trains an hour. The improvements currently underway at the Bedford Avenue station will result in an approximately 75% increase in street stair capacity and a roughly 25% increase in turnstile capacity, reducing crowding at the morning and evening rush hours.

Two Trees survey data indicates that about 30 percent of current residents at Domino use the subway to commute in and out of Manhattan during rush hour. The other 70 percent of residents telecommute or work in other areas of the city, and use car services, bikes, ferries and other means of transport. We expect the number of renters who telecommute or take alternate modes of transport to grow in light of COVID-19.

At River Street, Two Trees is committed to expanding its free Domino shuttle service to the J/M trains at Marcy Avenue, or the G train stations at Nassau or Metropolitan as a way to ease congestion at the Bedford L station. As part of our planned Working Group, we would also help to convene the right people at the MTA to discuss transit improvements at the Bedford L station as well as area improvements in area bus service. Our future residents at River Street will share the transit concerns of current neighbors and we are committed to trying to find solutions.

- ★ *Does Two Trees plan to push for a new ferry stop on the Williamsburg waterfront?*

Two Trees is committed to exploring and supporting a variety of public transit options such as increased and supplementary service, as well as a feasibility study for underused modes of transportation. There is an additional ferry stop that is permitted at the Domino site but has not been built yet.

- ★ *What is Two Trees' relationship to the Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX)? Would that change if the River Street project is built or rejected?*

Two Trees supports innovative transit solutions that enable public access to the waterfront and an equitable distribution of public resources in underserved communities. Two Trees principal Jed Walentas is chair of the nonprofit Friends of the BQX and has been a strong advocate for the project for more than five years.

## **Power/Wastewater**

- ★ *How would this development affect the power grid and as a result, the community?*

New York City has one of the oldest legacy power networks in the country. It also has a citywide goal of shifting to 50 percent renewable energy by 2030. Two Trees is committed to leading the renewable transformation in Brooklyn by installing a first-of-its-kind microgrid which will remove stress from the local network. Located above the 500-year floodplain, it can meet onsite energy demand and provide neighborhood grid assistance for local Con Edison infrastructure in case of a power outage. Microgrid is a technology that harnesses energy from solar, natural gas or biogas to produce and store energy through advanced battery storage.

- ★ *Will this be a carbon-neutral development?*

Two Trees is in the process of aligning energy capacity with appropriate guidelines and certifications to determine our net-zero goals in terms of construction and operation. While we integrate the highest standards in our energy production and will be highly energy-efficient and likely close to net zero energy, the carbon value chain remains a challenge industry-wise and achieving net zero carbon requires further feasibility assessments.

- ★ *How will wastewater be handled? Will all wastewater be managed onsite? Will this development strain the local wastewater infrastructure?*

River Street is inspired in many ways by its proximity to the water and responsible wastewater management is integrated into the overall design. Following our initiatives at Domino, River Street will apply to be part of the innovative DEP District Water Reuse Pilot Program. This wastewater reuse system includes an onsite wastewater treatment plant that will treat all of waste generated by the development and reuse it onsite for non-potable demands such as toilets, cooling and irrigation. This system makes efficient use of the municipal supply of water and eliminates all discharge to the combined sewage network.

Two Trees is also in the process of voluntarily implementing a wastewater reuse system for buildings at Domino.

- ★ Could this proposed development help divert or treat the combined sewer overflow issues from the surrounding neighborhood in addition to taking care of its own wastewater?

Yes. In addition to treating all wastewater from the project onsite, the project also includes the rerouting and upgrading of the Metropolitan Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) which will lead to better performance during storm events. It also includes extensive in-water CSO mitigation measures such as wetlands, marshes and reef. All of these measures together are expected to improve the quality of the adjacent river water dramatically.

## Waterfront Issues

- ★ How does this development consider the flood zone and future flood zone issues?

The River Street plan is a bold, innovative model of urban resiliency that works with nature-based solutions to mitigate issues that affect traditional waterfront construction, such as flooding or power outages. The first of its kind in New York City, the plan will institute a series of groundbreaking measures to reduce the risk of flooding not just for the new buildings but also more than 500 upland properties in the surrounding neighborhood. The hope is that the project can set a new precedent for resilient and interactive waterfront residential construction in New York and beyond.

The primary measure to reduce risk of flooding is the construction of three large, in-water breakwaters that absorb wave action and slow the velocity of flooding during storm events. The creation of a softened shoreline (as opposed to a typical, hard bulkhead) including wetlands, salt marsh and the use of sponge-like plantings and materials, will further reduce wave action, mitigate flood damage, and stabilize soils during storm surge. The plan also includes a new tidal basin capable of holding four million gallons of water that is designed to flood, mitigating damage from receding waters.

All building mechanicals will be located on the second floor and above the 500-year floodplain. In the event of a local power outage, River Street's microgrid and energy stored in batteries will be able to continue independently supplying power to the onsite buildings and jumpstart the local network to restore power to the neighborhood.

- ★ Residents are concerned about the optics of having a beach in a body of water that has not historically been a place for swimming. How will residents know if the water is safe to swim in? How will public swimming space interact with existing CSO outfalls in the East River, both those that are on Two Trees properties and those that are not?

The East River was once a pristine estuary that was home to a wide variety of wildlife and was clean for wading, swimming and other in-water uses. It has not been considered a place for swimming due to pollution from waterfront industries as well as lack of safe public access, but both of these factors have been trending in the right direction over the last few decades.

In fact, under current conditions, many places along the East River have water quality that is generally “swimmable,” as defined by the Department of Health (DOH) standards for beaches, except during and within 48 hours of heavy rainfall. Two Trees participates in the Citizens' Water Quality Testing Program to understand the existing conditions at the proposed beach and, even without pursuing a CSO relocation, the location is comparable to other beaches along the East River:

For context, the percentage of testing days that water is “acceptable” for swimming per NYC DOH Standards:

- Pier 4 Beach in Brooklyn Bridge Park: 89 percent
- River Street “Proposed Beach”: 78 percent
- Bushwick Inlet Beach: 73 percent
- Dumbo Cover Beach: 67 percent
- Hunters Point 2nd Street Kayak Launch: 53 percent

The proposed redevelopment will improve conditions exponentially through the following measures:

- Proposed outfall will be north of a landfill peninsula which redirects CSO flow away from the cove.
- In conjunction with reconstruction, outfall infrastructure will be upgraded.
- All stormwater and wastewater on the River Street sites will be treated onsite.
- Water quality mitigation measures will be installed both at the new outfall and the proposed beach (wetlands, salt marshes, reefs, etc.).

River Street beach will not officially be a swimming beach. The hope is that as the water quality continues to rise, it will soon become one. Once the park is complete, onsite signage, online notifications, and potential public art installations will be utilized to notify parkgoers about current water quality conditions.

★ *How does Two Trees plan to ensure and support the cleanup of local waterbodies?*

The River Street Park will restore native intertidal and subtidal habitats that once made the East River a healthy ecosystem by reintroducing a number of built and natural design features, including upland and coastal scrub-shrub, freshwater wetland, salt marsh and tidal pools, offshore shallows, reef balls, oyster cages and eelgrass planting. In addition to sustaining habitat, these nature-based features are proven to improve water quality.

Two Trees will also extend its multi-year partnership with the [Billion Oyster Project](#) and [Brooklyn Boatworks](#) to create a curriculum around water quality and boat building that can be taught to local schools. Over the long term, giving many more residents waterfront access and inviting them to engage and interact directly with the river will increase awareness of water quality issues and could lead to political and infrastructure solutions for further cleanup.

- ★ *What accommodations are being made for existing wildlife in the space and/or wildlife in the proposed plan?*

The plan requires approval by the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and all in-water construction will be closely monitored to ensure minimal impact on existing wildlife in the river. As part of the Joint Permit Application (JPA), Two Trees conducted an ecological survey in November of 2019 to identify existing flora and fauna. The only wildlife observed were two bird species, along with a small collection of insects and encrusting organisms. It is expected that more varieties of wildlife would occupy the site at other times of year, though the lack of available habitat would continue to be a limiting factor for species diversity.

The site currently features piers and caissons that create the opportunity for attachment sites for oysters and mussels; however, none were observed during the survey. In addition, while a number of fish species have the potential to be present, none were observed during the survey. All of this is to say that the existing wildlife will only be dramatically increased with the addition of the proposed park.

The proposed park intentionally integrates native habitats such as salt marshes, tidal pools, freshwater wetlands and upland and coastal scrub-shrub (paired with the appropriate substrate, hydrology and solar exposure) to attract a diverse array of wildlife including: coastal, migrating and foraging birds, waterfowl and wading birds, butterflies, insects, fish, mussels, oysters, shellfish, snails, crabs, finfish, other crustaceans and even mammals. The upland, intertidal and subtidal habitat zones each attract a variety of desirable species and together strengthen overall ecological connectivity.

## Park

- ★ *How did Two Trees decide to build this park? Is the park envisioned as a neighborhood amenity or a city-wide attraction?*

Williamsburg has one of the lowest ratios of population per acre of open space in the city and the demand for high-quality parks is extremely high. The experience of designing, building and operating Domino Park was Two Trees' inspiration for River Street. Like

River Street, the waterfront at Domino was fenced off from the neighborhood for decades and, when Domino Park opened in June 2018, it was immediately embraced by neighborhood residents. With over 2 million visits in the two years since it opened, mostly repeat users from the neighborhood, the diversity of park users is astounding, reflecting the multiculturalism and socio-economic diversity of the neighborhood and the city as a whole.

At River Street, the park is planned with several unique features that will likely make it a big attraction on weekends and holidays, but the main function of the park and its future programming is to serve the surrounding neighborhood.

★ *How have community concerns informed the design of the River Street park? How will the community have input on the running of the park?*

Two Trees and the landscape architecture firm James Corner Field Operations hosted a series of proactive and informative pre-design visioning sessions with the community about the park over the summer of 2019. The design is a direct reflection of input gathered at these meetings, including the desire for the park to:

- Be a model for resiliency;
- Engage the river, provide waterfront access and promote water dependent uses;
- Create a more natural environment, including a soft edge and places for respite in contrast to Domino Park, which is more urban; and
- Provide an educational environment that supports youth-based activities for nature and estuary education.

The concept for the Master Plan is also highly informed by the community's 197a plan (see attached). An iterative design process will continue until community concerns have been heard and hopefully addressed. At Domino Park, a community programming committee with appointees from local Community Board 1 as well as local elected officials meets several times a year to ensure there is appropriate community input. Two Trees is committed to a similar arrangement at the River Street Park and is open to other ideas as well that will provide ongoing engagement with the community.

★ *What is the size of the public park? What is the land area of the park? What is the water area of the park?*

The waterfront open space includes a 2.9 acre public park (over four times what is required under the proposed rezoning) with an additional 2.3 acres of protected and accessible in-river space and nearly one acre of intertidal habitat, for a total of 267,840 square feet, or roughly 6.1 acres.

- ★ *How much open space per capita of new residents will be produced? Is the water area of the park included in open space projection numbers?*

The proposed park will improve the ratio of open space to people within the community board district. Including projected new residents, the proposed River Street park and Domino Park will provide an 18 percent increase in open space per person within a half mile of the project. That projection does not include in-water acreage.

- ★ *The renderings show towers that are very close to the park space. How will a sense of separation be created?*

The goal of the River Street Master Plan is to maximize the amount of open space on a site that is only about 3.5 acres, so the tower footprints are designed to be as slender as possible. In contrast to Domino Park, where a public street separates the new buildings and the park, the layout and physical constraints of River Street do not allow the same approach. Instead, our plan dedicates the street level of the buildings to public amenities that seamlessly connect with the park, creating a clear separation between the public space at the ground level and the private space above. Street level public amenities will include a 50,000-square-foot YMCA and another large community facility space, as well as neighborhood-oriented retail. This strategy reinforces an overall sense of publicness along the park interface, helping to mitigate the valid concern that the building adjacency and proximity will create a private backyard. In addition, the Metropolitan Avenue corridor, reinforced by the “opening up” of the building footprints, is designed as a generous and inviting entrance with high visibility, connectivity and accessibility to the beach.

- ★ *Can the green space pay tribute to Sister Francis Kress, the Newtown Creek advocate?*

Two Trees is open to all ideas that ground the new park in the community, including honoring local environmental advocates.

- ★ *Would Two Trees be willing to turn land on Newtown Creek into public access open space?*

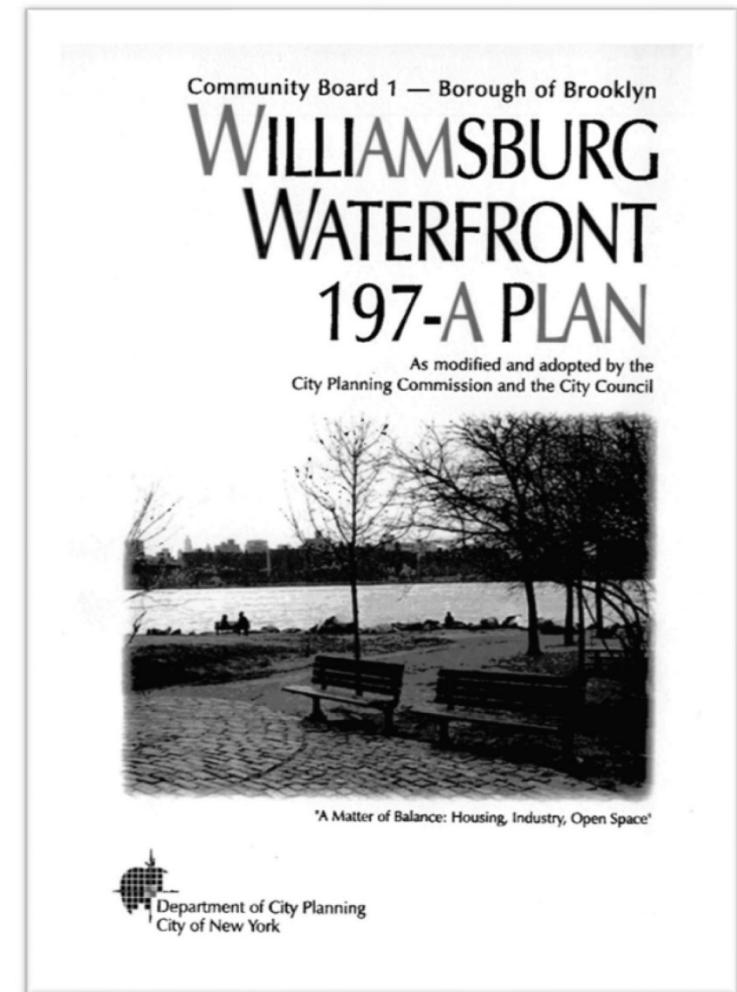
Two Trees owns a site on Newtown Creek that is leased long term to a utility company. We’re open to the idea of increasing public access to Newtown Creek at the site, if feasible.

## OPEN SPACE

- Continuous waterfront esplanade.
- Maximize waterfront access and public open space.
- Expansion of Grand Ferry Park.
- Estuarine Wetlands with public access and recreational use.
- Open blocked-off waterfront streets, expanding public view corridors to waterfront.

## LAND USE

- Redevelop vacant and underutilized waterfront sites for housing, particularly where there are adjacent housing sites.
- Maintain neighborhood diversity by pursuing all opportunities to develop and encourage affordable housing.
- Develop a vibrant, mixed-use waterfront with housing that is compatible with adjacent communities.
- Encourage neighborhood-scale retail (no superstores), minimizing truck traffic.
- Integrate community facilities within mixed use developments emphasizing needs for youth/seniors/health & wellness.
- Promote local job growth by providing space within mixed use communities (walk-to-work opportunities).



## PLANNING FRAMEWORK: 197-A WILLIAMSBURG WATERFRONT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Height & Size**

- ★ *Nearby residents are concerned about the impacts on nearby visibility. What steps are you taking to address this?*

The buildings are designed to be tall and slender to both maximize the public open space and minimize the impact on views in nearby buildings. The south tower is oriented to minimize impacts on the east-west Metropolitan Avenue view corridor and the north tower is oriented north-south to better protect the East River views of the existing waterfront towers. If the buildings were to be shorter and squatter, the interruption of views of the surrounding buildings would be more dramatic.

- ★ *Residents are concerned that the footprint of the building takes up far too much space on the lot. Why can't the project be smaller? Why can't the towers be shorter?*

River Street is designed to be consistent with the R8 residential zoning that dictates the waterfront development north and south of the site while maximizing public open space and protecting views. In general, accommodating this zoning requires one of two approaches: either a tall and thin building on a compressed footprint (like at Domino) which maximizes open space and the ground level public realm or shorter and fatter (like the buildings north of the site), which results in a more traditional waterfront esplanade on a bulkhead.

In an effort to create this unprecedented waterfront park, we've chosen to compress the buildings into slender towers that quickly taper to the dimensions of 70 feet wide by 150 feet long. The base of the building is slightly wider to support neighborhood-level retail and the YMCA. As designed, the buildings are at least 60 feet from any other building and take up less than 15 percent of the total lot area to maximize the public park. While traditional waterfront zoning requirements would mandate that only 0.7 acres of the lot be dedicated to the waterfront esplanade and open space (as exists along the waterfront north of the site), we are proposing to create three acres of park and another three acres of newly created accessible in-water recreation areas.

As noted, the proposed density is consistent with the waterfront zoning north and south of the site. In fact, when you consider the private streets and roads at Domino and the northside projects that generated floor area for those developments, this project is effectively less dense than what exists to the north and south. Making the project smaller would inhibit our ability to deliver 250 low-income housing units and the \$100M+ investment in the new park and its resiliency measures.

- ★ *Could a profit be made on the land with a smaller project?*

There are feasible as-of-right alternatives on the site, but Two Trees has put forth a visionary, balanced plan that is consistent with neighborhood density and will generate enormous public benefit for the community—including a world-class park, bold architectural and infrastructure design, groundbreaking environmental standards, an unprecedented waterfront resiliency strategy, affordable housing, a YMCA and educational opportunities.

## Alternative Uses

- ★ *What would this space become if rezoning is not approved?*

The as-of-right scenario for the site would likely produce a last-mile delivery facility with additional office space, large format retail and up to 1,600 parking spaces. The site layout would allow for a bulky 15-story building that would block all pedestrian views of the river. There would be no required waterfront esplanade, no park or open space and no affordable housing.

While there is some flexibility in the possible as-of-right use, in most cases the environmental impact from traffic, noise, air quality and open space would decrease the quality of life for the surrounding buildings and the neighborhood, and leave the immediate area vulnerable to future storm events.

- ★ *Would Two Trees be willing to donate the property to the community for a park? Or a non-commercial urban space? Or to a project such as North Brooklyn Farms?*

No. Two Trees paid \$150 million to Con Edison for the site and has set forth a plan that will leave the neighborhood and the city in far better shape than it is today. Our philosophy and our experience in other neighborhoods demonstrate that well-planned, well-executed, innovative development creates greater, better opportunities and outcomes for residents. We have a civic responsibility to contribute to the prosperity of the neighborhoods where we develop and we have a long track record of supporting creative and nonprofit tenants, integrating affordable housing into market-rate development and engaging in public-private partnerships to fund and construct neighborhood infrastructure and amenities such as schools, parks and cultural spaces. As long-term property owners, we invest in community assets that may not have immediate financial returns, but add to the vitality and sustainability of the neighborhood over time.

## General Sustainability

- ★ *Will the construction material be non-toxic, sustainable, and/or renewable?*

Yes, Two Trees builds in accordance with LEED certification standards.

★ *Please share any additional information about the project's sustainability features.*

The River Street Master Plan is at the forefront of responsible urban development and embraces social and environmental sustainability measures that align with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Living Building Challenge guidelines, Waterfront Alliance WEDG waterfront design principles and the sustainability agenda set forth by the OneNYC 2050 strategic plan.

These far-reaching measures include coastal risk reduction, energy efficiency, inclusive planning, community access and connection, sustainable landscaping, creating green jobs, green mobility and wildlife habitat creation, among others. Two Trees is committed to contributing to the health of the North Brooklyn ecosystem through transparency about our impacts and mitigation efforts as the project progresses.

With the proposed River Street development, Two Trees is also considering:

- Supporting green mobility by installing bike parking and bike share stations;
- Following circular waste management principles, such as reuse of construction waste, mandatory textile recycling and organics collection;
- Proactively managing the site for light and noise pollution;
- Utilizing carbon capture cement in construction;
- Utilizing permeable surface cover;
- Harvesting rainwater for landscaping irrigation;
- Redlisting certain chemicals used in construction and landscaping; and
- Using integrated pest management in landscaping.

★ *Will this site be subject to the New State Environmental Quality Review Act?*

The site will be subject to the City's Environmental Quality Review process as part of the ULURP certification.

★ *Will the new development follow all the current rules and regulations, or will it be eligible to be grandfathered into any energy consumption/infrastructure issues?*

The proposed development will be subject to all current rules and regulations, as well as any future Department of Building standards established prior to obtaining any building permits. There are no grandfathered energy rights associated with this site.

## **Additional Information**

- ★ *What are the shadow-impacts on the surrounding buildings? What are the impacts on Grand Ferry State Park?*

A full shadow study will be undertaken as a part of the required Environmental Impact Statement. The preliminary shadow analysis shows little to no impact on Grand Ferry Park.

- ★ *How is the YMCA involved in plans for these towers? Does the YMCA have any input as to the facilities that will be provided? How will this affect the current YMCA building?*

Two Trees has an agreement with the YMCA to build a state-of-the-art, custom-designed, 50,000 square foot facility at River Street that will serve community residents. Two Trees has been working with the Y for several months to design the facility to their specifications and it will include a swimming pool, indoor running track and gymnasium. The Y has been looking for an opportunity to expand its capacity to serve the Greenpoint and Williamsburg communities for decades. The Y has told us it is committed to maintaining their presence in Greenpoint and their plans for the Greenpoint Y are not contingent on the new Y at River Street.

- ★ *This property was bought as a commercial property. How will this proposal provide the type of good quality jobs that would have been provided if the project was commercial?*

The existing zoning of the site is M1-3, a manufacturing zone that allows for some commercial and retail uses. Most of the waterfront sites in Williamsburg and Greenpoint were rezoned in 2005 to allow for residential uses. Two of the sites that were left out of that zoning were the Domino Sugar site, which was an active sugar refinery until 2006, and the Con Edison site at River Street, which was an active utility site and a transformer station until 2012. The Domino site was rezoned in 2008 and again in 2014. The Con Edison site is one of the last remaining manufacturing sites on the Williamsburg and Greenpoint waterfront.

Today, the highest and best use for manufacturing sites in Brooklyn and Queens that are proximate to residential areas and a good highway network, including the River Street site, is for last-mile delivery facilities, such as the ones that have recently sprung up in Red Hook. These facilities are known for low-wage jobs and low job density. While the City has been able to sustain some level of manufacturing in updated formerly industrial buildings, new construction is prohibitively expensive and has only occurred with massive public subsidy, such as at the City-owned Brooklyn Navy Yard. At River Street,

Two Trees is proposing a change of zoning use from manufacturing to residential. The proposed change is in line with a number of community priorities, including generating additional housing, affordable housing and public open space.

The project will generate significantly more jobs than a last-mile delivery facility, including several hundred well-paying construction jobs, as well as dozens of well-paying permanent jobs as building service workers, park employees, YMCA and community facility employees and neighborhood retail employees.

At Domino, Two Trees has worked closely with St. Nicks Alliance to provide training and construction job opportunities, and has placed more than 200 workers from the extended local community in well-paying jobs. Two Trees would be open to a similar arrangement for River Street for construction and park jobs as well as retail and community facility jobs.

According to an analysis of the proposed project costs, the number of onsite jobs would be approximately 2,050 direct construction jobs (i.e., 2,050 full-time person years of employment over the duration of the construction project). The project is also anticipated to generate an additional 1,100 indirect jobs related to construction of the proposed project.

★ *What is the role of the Army Corps of Engineers in this development?*

All of the in-water construction will be reviewed and permitted through a joint application to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Army Corps of Engineers.

★ *The building facade is dark. Why does it not fit in with surrounding buildings?*

The renderings do not represent a final design but are a work-in-progress as the design team continues to work on all aspects of the project, including the façade.

Two Trees prioritizes great design and builds teams made up of world-class architects. We devote time, sweat equity, and significant resources towards developing high-quality projects that have earned widespread critical acclaim. In Williamsburg, we have built the Wythe Hotel, 325 Kent, 1 South First, Domino Park and we're currently undertaking a museum-quality restoration of the landmarked Domino Sugar Refinery. We hope that our track record and the quality of the team that we're assembling – in this case James Corner Field Operations and the Bjarke Ingels Group – will inspire confidence that we will deliver a beautiful project at River Street.

- ★ *What kind of assurances does the community have that promises made about sustainability, infrastructure, etc. will be fulfilled? Will anything be legally binding? How can we be assured that potential benefits to the community will not be delayed until the development becomes profitable or is less profitable than projected?*

All of the open space features and the overall site plan will be written into the land use approvals and any space designated for community facility uses will only be able to be used for exactly that. So will the obligations to provide public access and maintain the open space and to provide the affordable housing. And Two Trees will commit to building the park in conjunction with the first building, so that the park will be open to the public before we begin on the second tower.

Beyond that, Two Trees has an established track record of delivering on its promises to the community, at Domino, in Dumbo and beyond. As long-term owners with a large local footprint, our incentives are aligned with the community on creating high-quality developments that deliver significant public benefits. For example, at River Street, we are committed to building the entire park in tandem with one of the towers. We are willing to make firm commitments on the park, affordable housing, infrastructure and sustainability measures through the rezoning process, ensuring that the project we are presenting now is the project that gets built.

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