Allen And Pike Street Pedestrian Malls
Community Visioning Process
Final Report September 2008

United Neighbors to Revitalize Allen and Pike (UNRAP):
Asian Americans For Equality, Community Board 3, Hester Street Collaborative
Lower East Side BID, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Two Bridges Neighborhood Council,
Office of City Council Member Alan J Gerson

prepared by
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The Take Back Your Park events were conducted as part of the People Make Parks project
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I. Introduction
The UNRAP Coalition coordinated a series of “Take Back Your Park” events and activities this summer to engage community members in the redesign of the Allen and Pike Street Malls and ensure that the renovated malls respond to local residents’ needs. The Coalition has worked closely with the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation to make sure that the community is receiving accurate information about the parameters of the capital project and that the input gathered will be integrated into the design of the malls.

The UNRAP Coalition embarked on “Take Back Your Park” in Spring 2008, after learning that Parks had released an RFP for a design consultant and design would soon commence on capital improvements to the Allen and Pike Street Malls. $5 million to fund this project was awarded by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation in 2006, which will be supplemented by additional funding from Councilmember Alan J Gerson.

Rather than starting from scratch, UNRAP planned a community input gathering process that would reflect and synthesize the long history of local advocacy and planning efforts around the malls. The findings of previous community studies were re-presented to local residents and park users for comment and evaluation, and community members were encouraged to visit the recently completed demonstration mall and to analyze its strengths and weaknesses as a prototype for the malls currently being redesigned.

The UNRAP Coalition believes that gathering community input when a capital project is actually underway is essential in order to cultivate a community of people who will become committed stewards and caring park users once the space reopens. Community members who shared their ideas at “Take Back Your Park” this summer will be able to see their input incorporated into a design that will be realized soon – ground is expected to be broken in Spring 2009. Collecting local knowledge and involving community members in an inclusive design process will encourage long-term community ownership of the malls.

“Take Back Your Park” is both the culmination of earlier community input and a jumping-off point for sustainable community involvement in caring for and programming the new malls once they reopen.
Existing Site Conditions

The Allen and Pike Street malls stretch from the East River waterfront at South St. north for 14 blocks to Houston St. They pass through three different neighborhoods: Two Bridges, Chinatown, and the Lower East Side. A more detailed description of existing site conditions can be found in the PPS study (see Appendix 1).
The malls were originally built on the foundations of old tenement buildings, which have settled and sunk after decades without renovation. Creating a level paved surface may be very expensive but will allow more active uses than are possible now.

Allen Street has a high volume of traffic from buses and delivery trucks. This not only creates a lot of noise within the malls, but raises safety concerns. Several pedestrian and cyclist accidents have occurred along the corridor, and they are not currently configured for pedestrian crossing from mall to mall.
II. History of the Visioning Process (2003-08)

Efforts around the revitalization of the Allen and Pike Street corridor stretch back to the mid 1990s, when the Lower East Side BID secured Federal funding of approximately $1.1 million to build a demonstration mall between Delancey and Broome Street, the goal of which was to advocate for additional funding for the malls. The community visioning process for the entire stretch of malls from Houston St. to the East River began when UNRAP was formed in 2003, and hired Project for Public Spaces to do the first planning study. The process culminated at this Spring's Take Back Your Park events. This report seeks to document each step of the visioning process and provide the reader with the suggestions and materials each produced.
Project For Public Spaces 2003-2004

In 2003, the UNRAP Coalition engaged Project for Public Spaces, Inc. (PPS, a New York-based planning and design nonprofit with a focus on creating and sustaining public spaces), to undertake a community study of Allen and Pike Streets. PPS was asked to hold several community workshops and gather other information through interviews and meetings with city agencies, in order to analyze and come up with a new vision for Allen and Pike Streets.

Key Ideas

→ An “Avenue of the Immigrants” which highlights the immigrant contributions to the adjacent neighborhoods

→ A green, pedestrian friendly “destination” that connects the local communities of the Lower East Side, Chinatown, Two Bridges, and the East Village

→ Traffic calming to increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians

→ Take advantage of place-making opportunities such as the comfort station above Delancey Street, and the “double mall” between East Broadway and Division
Inter-Agency Planning Meetings January-July 2005

The Inter-Agency Planning Meetings were initiated and convened by City Councilmember Alan J. Gerson, in collaboration with the UNRAP Coalition, to coordinate the efforts of the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR), Department of Transportation (DOT), and Department of City Planning (DCP) around the redesign of the Allen and Pike Street Pedestrian Malls. These three agencies created a task force in January of 2005 to study the malls, and in June and July of 2005, they used the results of that study as the basis for a series of community planning sessions. The task force’s recommendations for the redesign of the malls arose from this series of meetings and community planning sessions, as well as analysis of past studies of the area.

Key Ideas
→ Introduced the idea of “active” (programmed) vs. “passive” (green) malls
→ Safe and legal pedestrian crossings between the malls
→ Maximize plantings and create a community maintenance program to encourage stewardship of the mall plantings
→ Unobstructed access to the waterfront
→ Site-specific recommendations along the malls

Chinatown Design Lab June-July 2005

The Rebuild Chinatown Initiative held a design lab in 2005 to study and generate ideas for open spaces throughout Chinatown. The Allen and Pike Street Malls were one of those sites.

Key Ideas
→ Expression of cultural identity
→ Access to waterfront through innovative design and materials
→ Art as an anchor for cultural tourism

Allen Street mall proposal © Marissa Yiu
The Demonstration Mall  Evaluating a prototype

UNRAP (United Neighbors to Revitalize Allen and Pike) has worked with the Parks Department to develop the Demonstration Mall prototype since 1996. Construction began in the Fall of 2007 and was completed in April of 2008. The mall provides a possible vision for the rest of the malls, and the PPS Study recommended evaluating its success as such upon its completion. Evaluation of the Demonstration Mall was incorporated into the Take Back Your Park events.

Scholar’s Rocks
Designed by artist Justen Ladda, these sculptures recall traditional Chinese garden elements. Many people like them and think they add a unique element to the design, but local concerns arose that sculpture installations might have increased the overall cost of the demonstration mall.

New Planter Beds
The new beds give more space for the rows of trees to spread their roots, and for additional plants. Most community members thought that this move to green the mall was the best aspect of the design, but would like to see higher plantings to help insulate the malls from traffic.

New Pathway
Many people feel the pathway is too straight and that it should meander, and that pedestrian crossings between malls should be made possible to connect the pathways from mall to mall.
Post and Chain Fence
Most people feel that this is the most problematic element of the design. It is easier to replace in the event of a vehicular accident, but less of a barrier to vehicles. They also allow people to cross the mall mid-block, creating a safety hazard. Some recommendations are to create a planted barrier or a sturdier fence that could also be some sort of art element.

Benches
Benches at the ends of malls are inviting to passerbys but also face oncoming traffic, making them feel unsafe. Benches should be turned inward and could even be facing each other to create more social space.

Ideas about how to improve upon the design of the Demonstration Mall:
III. Culminating Visioning Events

Take Back Your Park
Community Design Meeting
Dept. of Parks Scope Meeting
New Design High School Summer Session
Take Back Your Park The Planning Process

The planning for Take Back Your Park brought everyone responsible for the Allen and Pike Street Malls capital project (including the Parks Capital Division and Manhattan Borough office, the design consultant, UNRAP Coalition members, and other community stakeholders) to the table to learn from each other and collectively shape the input gathering process. With support from Partnerships for Parks, UNRAP was able to develop relationships with the Parks Department that opened up communication throughout the process, from the visioning day to the scope meeting. This allowed UNRAP to learn from Parks about the timeline, budget, and parameters of the capital project, shape the input gathering process accordingly, and know that the community input would be taken into account once it was compiled.

- Planning began at the April, 2008 Sara D. Roosevelt Park Operations meeting when Roberto Ragone (LES BID) and Anne Frederick (HSC), representing the UNRAP Coalition, proposed gathering community input prior to the Allen and Pike Street Malls capital project to Manhattan Borough Commissioner Bill Castro.

- With help from Partnerships for Parks, UNRAP communicated with the Manhattan borough office and the Capital Division of the Parks Department to understand the timeline of the capital project and the need to gather input prior to the scope meeting, scheduled for July 16th.

- On May 6th, Hester Street Collaborative hosted a community planning meeting for the input gathering process. UNRAP member organizations were present, as well as other local stakeholders and a representative from Councilmember Gerson's office. Attendees brainstormed ideas for how “Take Back Your Park” events, including the visioning day and charrette, should be run. There was extensive discussion about outreach and everyone agreed to work together to reach out to park users, local residents, local workers and business owners, and passersby to make sure that everyone's voices would be heard in the redesign of the malls. It was agreed that future visioning events would integrate the findings of previous studies.

- On May 17th at It's My Park! Day at Sara D. Roosevelt Park, surveys about the Allen and Pike Street Malls were introduced and about 150 completed surveys were collected. Hester Street Collaborative also presented an exhibition highlighting plans for neighborhood parks, including the malls, and encouraging people to attend the visioning event, Take Back Your Park Day, on June 14th.

Initial surveying
Surveys asking general usage questions about the malls were distributed at the spring It's My Park! Day event in Sara D. Roosevelt Park, and at Take Back Your Park Day. 191 people were surveyed. Surveys were administered by youth volunteers from Chinese-American Planning Council and Asian Americans For Equality.
On May 29th, members of the UNRAP Coalition hosted a second planning meeting for the input gathering process. This meeting, convened with support from Partnerships for Parks, brought together members of the UNRAP Coalition (including Hester Street Collaborative, Asian Americans for Equality, and the Lower East Side BID), the landscape architect chosen to design the malls (EDAW), and project managers from the Capital Division of Parks. UNRAP received feedback from the design consultant and Capital about what kinds of input would be most useful to them, and the meeting concluded with everyone touring the malls together to look carefully at the site and discuss design possibilities.

Outreach Process

Outreach for Take Back Your Park was targeted to a broad range of stakeholders. At the two planning meetings, participants discussed the challenges of organizing around a public space that is underused. To address these challenges and ensure that the process was inclusive, invitations were sent out to over 30 organizations – including local nonprofits, religious institutions, neighborhood schools, Community Board #3, and the Office of Councilmember Alan Gerson. Representatives then outreached to their memberships, allowing us to reach a larger audience.

In addition, street outreach was conducted at different community events and at It’s My Park! Day. Event flyers were widely distributed to partnering organizations, local businesses, and posted throughout the neighborhood.

As another organizing tool, local press played an invaluable role in informing the Chinatown community about Take Back Your Park. Sing Tao and World Journal newspapers, the two most widely read Chinese newspapers in the community, both provided a tremendous amount of press coverage before and after the event.

Take Back Your Park Events Participating Organizations

- 45 Allen Street Tenants Association
- Asian Americans Art Center
- Asian Americans For Equality
- Better Chinatown Society
- BRC Senior Center
- CAAAV – Chinatown Tenants Union
- Chinatown YMCA
- Chinese American Planning Council
- Community Board #3 – Manhattan
- Dr. Sun Yat Sen Middle School 131
- EDAW
- Eldridge Street Project
- Goddard Riverside Community Center
- Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES)
- Henry Street Settlement: Community Consultation Center
- Hester Street Collaborative
- Immigrant Social Services
- John Heuss House
- Leroy Street Studio
- Lower East Side Business Improvement District
- Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center
- Lower East Side Peoples Mutual Housing Association
- Lower East Side Tenement Museum
- New Design High School
- NYC Department of Homeless Services
- NYC Department of Parks & Recreation
- NYC Department of Transportation
- New York Immigration Coalition
- Office of City Councilmember Alan Gerson
- Picture the Homeless
- Public Housing Residents of LES (PHROLES)
- St. Augustine Church
- Transportation Alternatives
- Two Bridges Neighborhood Council
- University Settlement

Article about Take Back Your Park Day from Sing Tao Newspaper, June 15, 2008
Take Back Your Park Day June 14th, 2008

Take Back Your Park Day was held on June 14th. Activities were located on the mall between Hester and Broome Streets as a central location, and participants were encouraged to walk the length of the malls. It was essential that the event was held on site to allow participants to experience the malls and think carefully about their challenges and potential as a public space. Participants were able to make creative suggestions, informed by their local knowledge, for how the malls can be improved.

The Take Back Your Park activities sought to illustrate the different ways in which the malls could potentially be rebuilt and to make the visioning process open and accessible to the all community member. Relevant data and suggestions that had been gathered through the previous planning processes around the malls were used to inform the activities. Over 150 people came out to the malls to participate in Take Back Your Park Day. The activities were designed to be interactive and cater to a variety of age groups from youth to the elderly, with particular emphasis on language access. Activities were translated into Chinese and Spanish wherever possible, and Chinese speakers were on-hand to lead walking tours and provide one-on-one translation.
Take Back Your Park Day Activities

Exhibition boards
A series of eight exhibition boards were created that both recounted the major issues of the renovation effort around the Allen and Pike Street Malls and illustrated what some previous suggestions could potentially look like. The boards were interactive, allowing participants to vote with stickers to indicate ideas that they liked. They could also write in their own suggestions.

Below is a bar graph of sticker responses to the question: How can the new Allen & Pike Street Malls reflect the unique cultural identity and history of our community?

Model Making
Participating youth built models of malls out of everyday craft materials. The models allowed us to see some more whimsical visions for the malls, and also revealed different ways of organizing the space of a mall, with elements like winding paths, water, and plantings. Models also suggested possible programming ideas, like art installations, playgrounds, and ice cream stands.
Walking Tour

Two walking tours were outlined in multi-lingual booklets that could be self guided or used by large groups. The walking tours encouraged participants to experience how the malls change from block to block, to get a sense of the challenges to making the malls inviting, and to give feedback and recommendations about specific sites. Participants wrote their suggestions within their walking tour booklets and sketched their visions for the malls over maps and renderings. Each walking tour started at the mall between Hester and Grand Streets. One tour guided people north to Delancey Street, the other took them south to the East River waterfront. Over 60 walking tour booklets were completed and collected that day.

Below are some of the responses from the booklets:

- Decrease noise with walls, plantings, or art installations
- Widen the malls; take lane of traffic from downtown Allen St or from both sides of the malls
- Pedestrian cross-walk between malls
- Malls should reflect the culture and history of the neighborhood
- Culturally relevant programs and activities
- Temporary community art installations & exhibitions
- Secluded greenways, shaded areas or shade structures
- Emphasize culture with decorative paving, mosaics
- Food festivals, film festivals, dances, and concerts
- Culminating Visioning Events

See Appendix III
For a copy of the walking tour booklet in English
Interviews

UNRAP collaborated with the Oral History Project of the NYC Dept of Parks & Recreation Library to record stories from park users. Several community leaders accepted an invitation to be interviewed on Take Back Your Park Day. They were asked to speak about the character of the neighborhood, what makes it special, and their visions for the malls.

Interviewees were asked the following questions:

→ Do you use the malls now? How frequently? How do you use them?

→ Do you have memories of either good or bad things that you’ve experienced or observed at the malls?

→ What makes this neighborhood special? What features of the neighborhood should be preserved?

→ Allen Street is co-named the Avenue of the Immigrants. What does that name mean to you? What aspect of neighborhood history would you like to see commemorated in the malls?

→ This neighborhood has changed drastically in the past several years. How would you characterize that change? Can you describe both a negative change and a positive change?

→ What could the malls contribute that the community needs/is lacking? Think about the needs of different populations within the community: local business owners, students, residents...

→ If you could pick only one thing to change about the malls, what would it be?

→ In your wildest dreams, assuming that anything is possible, describe your ideal malls.
Community Design Meeting  July 9, 2008

An evening charrette was held on July 9th at Middle School 131. Approximately 70 community members attended, as well as representatives from the Department of Parks & Recreation and the Department of Transportation. The meeting was introduced by Roberto Ragone, Executive Director of the Lower East Side BID and the Chair of the UNRAP Coalition. Anne Frederick, Director of Hester Street Collaborative, then gave a presentation summarizing the input and suggestions from the visioning processes to date. Participants then broke into 6 different groups each dealing with a different aspect of mall renovation. There were four groups dedicated to overall themes; Long-Term Maintenance and Stewardship, Safety and Transportation, Community and Historical Representation, and Supporting Local Businesses and Residents. There were also two groups dedicated to the Northern and Southern portions of the malls respectively.

Participants were asked to think about the suggestions presented from the previous studies, prioritize those that resonated with them, and brainstorm any solutions that might not have been previously suggested.

Charrette brainstorming groups:

- Maintenance + Long-term Stewardship
- Incorporating Community/Historical Representation
- Safety and Transportation
- Supporting Local Residents and Businesses
- Lower Malls Double Mall at East Broadway Connection to Waterfront
- Upper Malls Comfort Station Building
Dept. of Parks Scope Meeting  July 16, 2008

Organized by the Department of Parks & Recreation, the scope meeting is held in the park slated to undergo a capital renovation and offers a public opportunity to share ideas for the project.

Representatives from Parks, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of City Planning attended the Allen and Pike Street Malls scope meeting. Community organizations represented included the UNRAP Coalition and the Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center.

Parks shared that there is $5.4 million available for the next phase of the Allen and Pike Street Malls renovation. Parks also communicated that the project area for this phase had not yet been established, and Parks and DOT suggested that widening some of the malls might be possible, but fewer malls will be completed if money is spent on widening.

Some Suggestions from the Scope Meeting:

- Make the malls a safe, comfortable, attractive community gathering place.
- Activate the malls.
- Connect the malls.
- Plant trees to buffer the traffic noise.
- Bike parking.
- Lighting.
- Malls should reflect the culture and history of the neighborhood.
- Wayfinding pavers directing visitors to Chinatown, the river, and neighborhood landmarks.
As part of an intensive 2-week summer school program at New Design High School, 20 students studied the Allen and Pike Street Malls, local history, and community advocacy. Students learned about the history of community-led efforts to renovate the malls, and the suggestions that have come out of them. New Design High School partnered with Hester Street Collaborative and Open Road to teach the course, which asked students to propose an architectural design and memorial for the Allen and Pike Street Malls.

The students interviewed residents of the Lower East Side to receive fresh ideas for the malls. Feedback from the residents suggested they would like to see areas created for relaxation, performances, vendors, bike lanes, dog parks, and athletic spaces. The students spent 2 weeks visiting memorial sites like the African Burial Ground, and created one of their own “memorial and remembrance” designs for the malls.

In their History workshops, students researched a wide variety of events that occurred in the L.E.S. in order to come up with concepts for their memorial designs. In their English workshops, students learned interviewing techniques and created written essays describing their design proposals. In Design workshops they created temporary street art pieces by applying stencils to the pavement of the malls, using chalk. They learned about basic architectural representation and developed 3 different architectural drawings of their proposals including: an aerial view, an elevation view or perspective view, and a detailed rendering.

The summer school session concluded with a formal design critique where students presented their proposals to representatives from Partnerships for Parks, local architects and artists, and community organizers.

See Appendix V to see all of New Design's proposals including each student's project statement and drawings.

Allen Street Malls Proposal: The New World Memorial
By: Ahlem Dakhlaoui
This design is meant to honor the immigrant's journey to New York...
Allen Street Mall Proposal: “Chinese Immigrants' Triumph in L.E.S”
By: Jessica Segarra
This design is meant to memorialize Chinese immigrants who fought to be employed in Chinatown...

Allen Street Mall Proposal: 20th Century War Memorial
By: Eshaine Rossi
This design is memorializing the casualties of the wars of the 20th century....
IV. Summary of Suggestions

Community and Historical Representation
Supporting Local Residents / Businesses
Safety and Transportation
Community and Historical Representation

Cultural Imprinting through Art and Programming
Throughout all of the various studies and input processes the idea that the Allen and Pike Street Malls should reflect and incorporate the rich identity of the Lower East Side and Chinatown has been come up repeatedly. This was also the original impetus for the co-naming of Allen St. as the Avenue of the Immigrants and what made the Avenue of the Immigrants art installation so successful. UNRAP sees the idea of cultural imprinting through art and programming as a way of making these spaces a vital and unique asset to the neighborhood. We also see this as a way of fostering community stewardship of the malls and ensuring their long term sustainability.

“Remember it's the people. We are very fortunate to have all races and nationalities here. It’s the people that make the neighborhood. I've been to other neighborhoods but I don't find the warmth and the sincerity that I do in the Lower East Side.”

Robert Humber
M'minda Kalunga Community Garden

“Mary Spink
Lower East Side People’s Mutual Housing Association

What does the name “Avenue of the Immigrants” mean to you?

Robert Humber
M'minda Kalunga Community Garden

“Victor Papa
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council

Amy Stein
Milford
Eldridge Street Project

“It's important to show the cultural backgrounds of the immigrants that have been down here. It’s not a bad idea to have the malls change from section to section. The mall near East Broadway has to have a Chinese theme, and further South this area was Southern European for the most part and that heritage should be reflected.”

“What I feel is so unique is the very layered and diverse history, with many different kinds of communities - be they ethnic, cultural, or economic. You have just an incredible range of communities and people who are passing each other as they walk in the street and I find it incredibly energizing.”

“It’s the people. We are very fortunate to have all races and nationalities here. It’s the people that make the neighborhood. I’ve been to other neighborhoods but I don’t find the warmth and the sincerity that I do in the Lower East Side.”

“The Malls need to speak to the [local] history, but they also have to speak to the changes and who we are and what's here now. They need to reflect all the nationalities and age groups that are going to them. It can’t just be a place for people to sit on a bench.”

Mary Spink
Lower East Side People’s Mutual Housing Association
Recommendations of how to incorporate Community and Historical Identity into the malls:

Flexible Spaces
Allowing for multiple uses

Paving
Incorporating cultural references
Could be used to create event spaces

Local Stories/Storytelling

Work with Schools

Temporary or Permanent Art Installations
Participatory / Changing to represent new histories
Supporting Local Residents / Businesses

The Malls should support the needs and enhance usage for both local businesses and residents in the Lower East Side, Chinatown, and Two Bridges.

**Open spaces as extensions of living rooms**

Open spaces in these neighborhoods are at a premium, often serving as an extension of a person’s living room. Despite Community District Three being one of the top five most densely populated areas in New York City, the percentage of open space where this area’s 200,000 people live is dismally small: only 0.7 acres of open space per 1,000 people, as opposed to the 2.5 acres per 1,000 people the Department of City Planning recommends. The malls should be renovated with this in mind and be made inviting for people to use.

**Support local businesses and maintain affordability**

There is a desire to highlight the sorts of local businesses that make the Lower East Side and Chinatown famous, particularly food, coupled with idea that any vendors should be affordable and accessible to neighborhood residents. This is a way to not only draw residents and visitors to the malls but a way to develop local small businesses.

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“Families can come out of the small teeny apartments where they have no space and on a weekend they can barbecue and there’s a place for the kids to play.”

Margaret Chin
Asian Americans for Equality

“In this community, in the example of the tenements, the spaces are small. Growing up, we had a three room apartment and there were five of us. It was too crowded. In a way, the Allen Street malls really represent an extension of the family’s living room, where you can actually go and hang out with your friends, sit with your family... have a little space. You couldn’t do that in an apartment, its too small.”

Mary Spink
Lower East Side People’s Mutual Housing Association

“The area is a kind of Mecca of number ones. The number one bagel, the number one pickle... the two best candy stores in the city, the best knish, and the list goes on. Between the theme of the old and the new side by side and this theme of the number ones, people should be interested in exploring the area.”

Deacon Edgar Hopper
St. Augustine’s Church

“Make the malls conducive, receptive, and comfortable for people of moderate means. If vendors are too upscale, too far out, too high priced...it will make people not want to go because it makes you feel insecure if you can’t take the things that are being offered to you.”

Margaret Chin
Asian Americans for Equality

“In our community, you see a lot of street vendors, people trying to make a living starting their own small business. So, on the mall we should have people selling food or items. Small business opportunities can happen at the malls.”

Roberto Ragone
Lower East Side BID

“Support local businesses and maintain affordability”

Victor Papa
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council

Summary of Suggestions

“I think the malls should be used like the mall on Delancey (the Demonstration Mall)– people sit there, relax, pass through, help make the area look nice. (Improving the malls) reflects on the city’s commitment to take care of poor neighborhoods like ours to the same degree they would take care of any other neighborhoods. Improving the malls shows people that the city cares about them.”

Victor Papa
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council
Recommendations of how the malls can support Local Residents and Businesses:

- **Creating a barrier / buffer from the street**
- **Pathways**
  - Unobstructed paths
  - Winding paths
  - More legible crosswalks between malls
- **Green the Malls**
  - Trees along mall
  - Higher plantings, vines, & low trees to buffer noise
  - Landscaped or raised areas for plantings
- **Widening the Malls**
- **Different types of seating**
  - Tables and Chairs
- **Shade Structures**
- **Wayfinding**
  - Informational Paving & Signage
  - Maps
  - Information booths
- **Vendors**
  - Rows of local kiosks
- **Public Restrooms**
Safety and Transportation

Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Access

Allen and Pike Street have a high volume of bus and truck delivery usage, but otherwise they are not heavily used. This causes traffic to move very rapidly on them due to their width and creates a very unsafe condition for pedestrians and cyclists alike. Crossing Allen St. is currently very difficult to do in one signal cycle. Allen should be traffic calmed by either widening the malls or creating sidewalk bump outs to allow easier crossing. Crossing between the malls is currently very dangerous, and should be made more accessible.

Allen and Pike Streets are also a perfect cycling route inland and to the Manhattan Bridge from the East River greenway. Many community members have expressed interest in creating some kind of bike lane adjacent to the malls that helps to calm traffic. This bike lane should be physically separated from the street.

“Widen the malls, connect the malls, find creative ways of fixing traffic patterns in the area.”

Roberto Ragone
Lower East Side BID

“It would be great if we could make it wider. It means we may have to take away some of the traffic lanes. Crossing Allen Street is not easy, especially for seniors. You’re looking at the light while you’re standing in the middle and the cars just zoom by you. So if there’s a way to maybe make the malls bigger, that would create more use.”

Margaret Chin
Asian Americans for Equality

“I’m worried about the pollution from the cars going by...I would like to see the malls widened. I think that if we could widen and have bike lanes on both sides all the way down to the water I think it would be a wonderful thing.”

Robert Humber
M’finda Kalunga Community Garden

“I just hope that [widening the malls] wouldn’t stop tourism and traffic to the Chinatown community, which relies on truck traffic and buses. It relies on that for its very vitality, so if that’s going to threaten that in any way, I would be against it.”

Victor Papa
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council
Recommendations of how Safety and Transportation can be improved:

**Traffic Calming**
Reduce number of traffic lanes

**Better Pedestrian Crossings**
Narrow the crossings with Bump Outs
Allow crossing between malls

**Change Signal Timing**

**Bike Lanes along entire length**
Along the side & separated from street
Could act as a buffer for noise and slow down traffic

**Connecting Malls**
Close certain intersections to traffic

**Widen the Malls**
V. Specific Opportunities for Expanded Use

- Vacuum Comfort Station
- Double Mall Condition
- Connection to Waterfront

Locations:
- East River Waterfront
- Allen Street
- Pike Street
The Comfort Station building on Delancey St. has been vacant and unused for many decades. The building should be adaptively re-used for some community purpose. The building also blocks passage through the mall from one side to the other, so some way of passing through the building or around it should be incorporated into any mall renovation at this site.

Suggestions for adaptive re-use:

- Community Space
- Public Restrooms
- Food Vendors, Concessions
- Library/ Gallery
- Visitor’s Center
Double Mall Condition East Broadway and Division St.

In many of the studies, the malls from Henry to Canal have been suggested as the most suitable for expanded use. At East Broadway there is a double mall that many people have said creates a dangerous condition for both cars and pedestrians. The double mall could be combined into one mall and become a larger open space for community use. UNRAP hopes that DOT and DPR can study the possibility of reconfiguring the street.

Potential ways the street could be reconfigured to allow for expanded use:

- Expanding the sidewalk and closing the right hand turning spur
- Expanding the central mall into Pike St. and demolishing the double mall
- Rerouting the downtown lane of Allen through the right hand spur.

Potential uses for a combined mall:

- Community Square / Public Plaza
- Green Market
- Green Space
- Event / Gathering Space
Connection to the Waterfront

The Connection to the proposed East River Waterfront could become a vital resource for the neighborhood.

Some suggestions for connecting to the waterfront:

- **Continuous walk to the water**
- **Highlight views of the water**
- **Create water elements that guide to the waterfront**
- **Create linkages with other open spaces**

Nearby open spaces the malls could be linked to:

- Public paths and green space within Rutgers Houses
- Coleman Skate Park
- East River Waterfront

The malls could be connected at Monroe St. since it is demapped through the Rutgers Houses

The Green Street at Pike Slip Could be expanded and connected

The malls leading up to the waterfront could be substantially widened and connected responding to the lower volume of traffic on Pike St.
VI. Conclusions and Next Steps
Conclusions
UNRAP feels that these issues are priorities and should be addressed in the renovation of the malls.

→ Widen malls and create adjacent bicycle lanes

→ Make pedestrian crossings safer

→ Buffer noise through greening and planting strategies

→ Create flexible / multi-use spaces for programming

→ Community-led art installation(s)
UNRAP would like to continue a dialogue with the DPR design consultant to find a way of integrating art installations, into the design or accommodating places for temporary art, factoring in issues of aesthetics and utility.

→ Phased rebuilding
UNRAP would like to think of DPR’s proposed scope of work as Phase 2 of the malls’ renovation (with the Demonstration Mall as Phase 1) and will continue to advocate elected officials including the Borough President and local Councilmember for funding to renovate additional malls in future phases.

Next Steps

Community Arts Panel
UNRAP would like to convene a community arts panel to explore options and ideas of how to develop an installation for the malls.

Develop Design Suggestions and Proposals

Advocate for Funding
At the Parks Dept. Scope Meeting NYC DOT representatives stated that it was seeking funding from the New York State DOT for work on Allen/Pike. UNRAP will lobby the state to award this funding. UNRAP will continue to support agency efforts to advocate for more funding from local elected officials for further mall renovations.

Temporary Improvements
UNRAP will outline temporary improvements that can be implemented at sites that are not currently funded for capital renovation, such as temporary art, planting, cleaning, and painting. UNRAP will work with DPR to encourage and facilitate community stewardship of the malls.
Appendices

Appendix 1: Project for Public Spaces Report
Appendix 2: Inter-Agency Planning Study
Appendix 3: Take Back Your Park Walking Tour Booklet
Appendix 4: Transcript of Community Interviews
Appendix 5: New Design High School Proposals