Since 2005, New Amsterdam Market has advocated for the rehabilitation of the Fulton Fish Market in Lower Manhattan as a year-round, permanent public market to serve all New Yorkers. The Fulton Fish Market comprises a number of city-owned structures including: the Tin Building, the New Market Building, the Fish Market Stalls, and the Working Pier (former Pier 18) as well as spaces around these structures, as indicated on the attached site plan.

We seek to preserve and revitalize this last remnant of the city’s original working waterfront by reviving its historic use: the buying and selling of food in a wholly public setting. As confirmed by a recent segment on National Public Radio (October 1, 2012) around the country, local food markets are proliferating and “old indoor markets are getting facelifts.” In New York, we are fortunate to have a market site that has been in continuous use since the 1640s, and whose historic market sheds have remained intact and essentially unaltered since they were vacated by their last tenant in 2005, when the Fulton Fish Market (itself incorporated in 1839) was relocated to the Bronx.

The Pier 17 Renovation U.L.U.R.P. application now before Community Board 1 seeks to rezone not only Pier 17 but also a part of the East River waterfront that includes a substantial portion of the Fulton Fish Market (the Tin Building and the New Market Building) as a potential future development site.

Rezoning for the proposed Pier 17 project must not predetermine the type and/or configuration of uses in the Fulton Fish Market development site. The proposed zoning must allow the essential uses for public markets such as fish, meat, and produce processing and distribution. If necessary, the zoning text of Special District should be revised to ensure these uses be permitted.

Several special permit findings in the Pier 17 U.L.U.R.P. involve sites that are not within the project zoning lot: i) a proposed “lay-by” lane fronting the Tin Building; ii) the city-owned parking lot also fronting the Tin Building; and iii) a pedestrian walkway between the Tin Building and New Market Building leading to the Working Pier (former Pier 18).

The proposed lay-by lane, the city-owned parking lot and the pedestrian walkway are all part of the Fulton Fish Market development site. As such, the existence, design, function, and/or configuration of these elements should not be considered permanent features of the Pier 17 project. Instead, the long-term use of these areas should be determined as part of a comprehensive development plan for the Fulton Fish Market development site.
The proposed Pier 17 renovation will result in the alteration of the Working Pier (former Pier 18). The Working Pier was used and operated by the Fulton Fish Market continuously starting in the 19th century, and remained a vital and functioning part of the Fulton Fish Market until the market was removed in 2005.

The Working Pier should be recognized as part of the Fulton Fish Market and any future restoration of market functions to this site should have access to the pier or a pier of equivalent size, function, and adjacency.

To initiate our next phase of development, which involves the expansion of storage facilities and activities better suited to an enclosed space, New Amsterdam Market seeks to establish part of its operations within a portion of the landmarked Tin Building, fully acknowledging and respecting the need to conform to all requirements for public safety. We intend to pursue this possibility with the Office of the Mayor and the New York City Economic Development Corporation.

New Amsterdam Market requests support from the Community Board and Lower Manhattan’s elected officials to realize our shared vision for what is arguably one of New York City’s most important public assets.

Sincerely,

Robert LaValva, Founder & President
New Amsterdam Market