

## POWERCENTER

# New Transit Hub to Bolster Downtown Brooklyn's Rebirth

The New York and Washington, DC metro areas are setting new standards for transit-oriented developments. Another large project has been announced in Downtown Brooklyn, an urban area poised for a renaissance, thanks to a variety of public and private investment initiatives.

By Stacey Corso

In the past two years, a number of transit-oriented development projects along the Eastern Seaboard have made headlines in Manhattan; Westchester County, NY; northern Virginia, Downtown Washington, DC; Atlanta and other regions. Developers, architects, planners, designers and local government agencies have embraced these design

principles and are committed to the revitalization of the inner city.

Now, Downtown Brooklyn, NY can be added to the list of major metropolitan areas poised for a rebirth. Part and parcel to this renaissance is new commercial development, which will spring up from the Long Island Rail Road train station hub. The new Atlantic Terminal train station will serve as an anchor for the variety of new real estate projects in the works.

Through the New York Industrial Development Agency, the feds have issued \$114 million in Liberty Bond financing for Forest City Ratner to build the terminal.

"The new Atlantic Terminal will serve as a travel, business and retail focal point for Downtown Brooklyn," remarks Alexandra Champalimaud, the hotel designer who has been contracted to design the interior spaces and



The new Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn



A rendering of Atlantic Terminal's interior spaces

shopping pavilion for the project. Champalimaud is a principal at the interior commercial design firm, Alexander Champalimaud & Associates of New York City.

The hub of the project will be located at the rehabilitated Long Island Rail Road terminal, where nine subway lines intersect beneath the complex, serving an estimated 130,000 commuters a day. There will be 470,000 sf of retail space located above the LIRR terminal as well as a 470,000-sf office tower above the transit and shopping facilities. Last fall, the Bank of New York preleased 80% of the tower (396,000 sf) from Forest City Ratner, a deal that will keep 7,700 jobs in the City of New York.

"The style of the interior public spaces," says Champalimaud, "such as the shopping pavilion, will be based on classic design for what is destined to become a hub for both transportation and commerce. ACA's vision for the retail space includes a robust and rhythmic arrangement of columns. Atop the columns are envisioned ethereal 21st century interpretations of vaulted ceilings using acrylic. The vaults, illuminated from behind and imprinted with designs, would recall the history of the site." Champalimaud compares the "grandeur" of the new Atlantic Terminal to that of the recently revitalized Grand Central Station at 42nd Street in Manhattan.

Complementing plans for the Atlantic Terminal is New

York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg administration's proposed Downtown Brooklyn Redevelopment Plan, part of the administration's overall plan to stimulate growth in New York City's various business districts and retain and increase jobs in the Big Apple.

The New York City Economic Development Corp. and the Department of City Planning, along with the Downtown Brooklyn Council, will lead the planning effort. The proposal calls for the city to increase zoning allowances, assist in the assembly of commercial and residential sites and help develop a series of infrastructure improvements that would lead to residential and commercial development.

The plan calls for the development of three new office towers, with as much as three million sf, to be constructed adjacent to a new, 1.5-acre park on Willoughby Street. In addition, the administration is calling for a second office complex, with a development potential of up to 850,000 sf, to anchor Boerum Place.

New residential and office space would be created on the eastern side of Flatbush Avenue, and more residential units would be constructed along Livingston Street, between Smith Street and Flatbush Avenue. The Flatbush Avenue Extension, Brooklyn's main thoroughfare, would be transformed into a pedestrian-friendly gateway to Brooklyn for residents and workers.



A view of the outdoor space proposed at Willoughby St.



Part of Bloomberg's plan for Downtown Brooklyn: Jay St.