



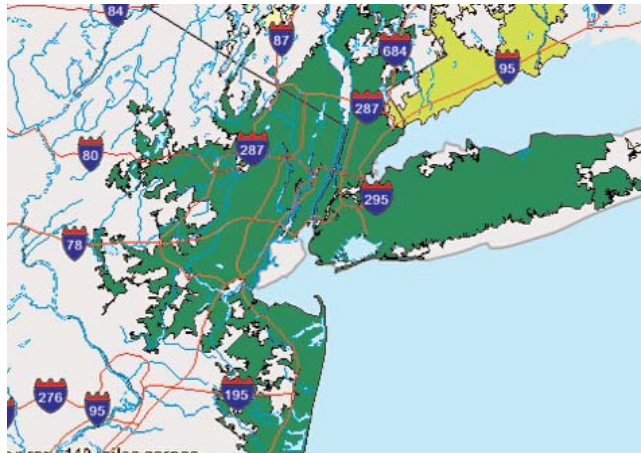
# New York

New York is the largest city in this study and the largest conurbation. The wider metropolitan area had a population of almost 19m persons in 2005 [1] Though unlike London it is not the capital of the USA and it is not the seat of the legislature. This fact is a chance of history. After the civil war the South wished to have a capital that was mid-way between the Northern Cities and itself. The decision was to build Washington as a new and thus untainted capital.

By not having these functions New York has established itself as the commercial and financial capital and as a focus for the arts, sports and culture. It is still the most important route into the USA for those travelling across the Atlantic by sea or air. And it is a hub for road, rail and transport.

I have analysed the city itself, but my figures also look at the wider metropolitan area which includes New Jersey and Long Island. New York is one of the few American cities that can rival Europe for density. Its public transport systems are well

*New York, wider urban area including New Jersey and Long Island*



established, though as in many of Europe's established capitals ancient public transport systems are showing signs of wear. The New York skyline of skyscrapers is well known, but its population may just as likely live in an elegant brownstone, or a clapboard row house in one of the "burbs" as New York suburbs are called.

My most recent visit in 2007 has coincided with a downturn in the Dollar, a slump in US house prices, a crisis in mortgage defaults and a downturn in business. Despite all these New York still buzzes and bustles. New Yorkers, renowned for their brazen qualities, were still strolling along Fifth Avenue, spending money in the smart shops and analysing their psyches and those of their friends at the tops of their voices and with much aggression!

Since my first visit in late 80's the quantity of Manhattan housing developments has soared and areas that had been pretty tough in former times have been regenerated. For example the twin neighbourhoods of SoHo and NoHo (North and South of Houston Street) which had become a Mecca for art galleries and trendy shops, has now lost these. Most of the old buildings have been or are being remodelled as apartment blocks. In 2006 the number of housing units in this area (southern Manhattan) went up by 4320 units, an increase of 16% in one year. [2] Haarlem, which was a no-go area is now resuscitated and has become a vital and pleasant neighbourhood. Central Park is now much safer and thus more used. And the Meat Packing District on the lower west side is now home to a string of newly developed and extremely elegant modern galleries which have clustered as if by magic into a few streets surrounding the Chelsea Art Museum.

Part of this revival is due to the efforts of Michael Bloomberg, New York's Mayor from 2001. Michael Bloomberg was an ultra rich and successful businessman before he entered public life. His election came just two months after the tragic attacks of 9/11, at a time when many believed that crime would return, businesses would flee, and New York might never recover. Instead, under Mayor Bloomberg's forward-looking leadership, and with his determination to build on the spirit of unity that defined the city after the attacks, New York rebounded faster and stronger than anyone expected.

In his first term, Mayor Bloomberg cut crime rates by 20 percent; created jobs by supporting small businesses; unleashed a building boom of affordable housing; expanded parks and worked to revitalize the waterfront. He implemented ambitious public health strategies, including the successful ban on smoking in restaurants and bars; expanded support for community arts organizations and improved the efficiency of government. In addition, fulfilling a campaign promise and mirroring the action of Mayor Daily in Chicago, he won control of New York's schools from the broken Board of Education, and began turning around the nation's largest school district by injecting standards into the classroom and holding schools accountable for success. As a result, graduation rates have increased nearly 20 percent, and reading and mathematics scores have both risen to record levels.

In 2005, Mayor Bloomberg was re-elected by a diverse coalition of support that stretched across the political spectrum. In his second term, while balancing the budget and driving unemployment to a record low, Mayor Bloomberg has taken on a number of new challenges. He launched an innovative

program to combat poverty that encourages work and makes work pay. He has undertaken a far-reaching campaign to fight global warming and prepare New York for an estimated million more residents by 2030. And as co-founder of a bipartisan coalition of more than 200 mayors from every region of the country, Mayor Bloomberg has worked to keep illegal guns out of the hands of criminals and off city streets.

So, like Chicago, New York is focussing on:

- Public safety
- Education
- Environment

Though New York is planning for growth its plan is not as focussed on attracting new business as Chicago's. But the 9/11 events have opened up for development a whole swath of south central Manhattan that will benefit the commercial potential of the city. As a part of this redevelopment new and improved public transport is being pushed through. And federal sentiment has voted money for New York, where before it may not have been seen as such a worthy recipient.

It was Mayor Giuliani before him who did so much to improve public transport in New York, introducing safer trains, getting rid of the graffiti and setting up a new ticketing system that is now being copied throughout the world. During his term he transformed a moribund system into one that everybody uses once more. However he did not invest heavily in new rolling stock or stations, instead concentrating on safety, ease of use and integration with the other public transport systems within New York. I would characterise his focus as being on management not development.

The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) was created in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 by Governor Pataki and Mayor Giuliani to help plan and coordinate the rebuilding and revitalization of Lower Manhattan, defined as everything south of Houston Street. The LMDC is a joint State-City corporation governed by a 16-member Board of Directors, half appointed by the Governor of New York State and half by the Mayor of New York City. LMDC is charged with ensuring Lower Manhattan recovers from the attacks and emerges even better than it was before. The current centerpiece of LMDC's efforts is the creation of a permanent memorial honouring those lost, while affirming the democratic values that came under attack on September 11.

LMDC works in cooperation with its partners in the public and private sectors to coordinate what has become a controversial long-term plan for the World Trade Centre site and surrounding communities, while pursuing short-term initiatives to improve the quality of life for residents during the revitalization effort.

LMDC has expressed itself as committed to an open, inclusive, and transparent planning process in which the public has a central role in shaping the future of Lower Manhattan. The process started well with a congress for debate which invited all comers and set a new international standard for public consultation. At the event, tables of interested parties and representatives discussed a whole series of issues and came to some joint decisions. There was much good publicity for this project and people who attended felt optimistic and involved. The "Principles for Action" as they now stand (they have since been redrawn) cover an extremely large set of ambitions.

- Make decisions based on an inclusive and open public process.
- Create a memorial honouring those who were lost, while reaffirming the democratic ideals that came under attack on September 11.
- Assist the rapid revitalization of Lower Manhattan, in a manner that does not preclude desirable future development plans.
- Coordinate and encourage the infrastructure improvements that will trigger the private investment needed to sustain and enhance Lower Manhattan.
- Support the economic vitality of Lower Manhattan as the financial capital of the world with new office space.
- Develop Lower Manhattan as a diverse, mixed-use magnet for the arts, culture, tourism, education and recreation, complemented with residential, commercial, retail and neighbourhood amenities.
- Develop a comprehensive, coherent plan for transit access to Lower Manhattan that expands regional and local connections and improves transit facilities.
- Connect the neighbourhoods of Lower Manhattan and improve the pedestrian experience of its streets.
- Expand and enhance public and open spaces.
- Preserve the historic character of Lower Manhattan and the existing civic and cultural value of its cityscape.
- Promote sustainability and excellence in design, for environmentally sensitive development.

This list demonstrates the drawback of poor consultation. Unfocussed consultation can lead to a dilution of effort, trying to be *all things to all men*. To me the redevelopment seems to lack a serious focus. The list above could apply to any large urban neighbourhood. I think that masterplans must be more distinctive than this. Economic success of the neighbourhood is referred to but not seen as paramount. Yet for the developers the creation of high quality office accommodation is fundamental. They are pressing ahead with a very commercial scheme. But since the first heady days of community involvement things have changed. Recently the redevelopment has become shrouded in

controversy. (Something that native New Yorkers are rather good at!)

In May 2005 David Teather of the Manchester Guardian observed;

*"The rebuilding project at the 16-acre (9/11) site has been frustrated at every turn - not least by the number of interested parties. They include the Port Authority of New York, which owns the site; Larry Silverstein, who leased the site shortly before the attacks and is rebuilding it with insurance money; state and city redevelopment agencies; fundraising committees; and the families of the victims."*

The designs ran into trouble right from the very beginning. Daniel Libeskind, the world renowned architect who won the project after an international competition has not been retained. The developer, Larry Silverstein has now called in his own architect David Childs, leading to some very public and bitter infighting.

Today the international estate agents *Cushman Wakefield* estimate that the redevelopments around the World Trade Centre will bring in 14 million new square feet of commercial space (replacing the 10 million that was lost). According to the Downtown Alliance [3] 6000 new apartments have been built in the last four years and a further 5000 are planned. Despite the developer's caution, people have moved into this area in their droves and are happily inhabiting the once quiet streets, stimulating a rush of new shops, from Tiffany to Hermès as well as new restaurants and cafes. Older office buildings have been converted by smaller developers into condo's and other facilities, such as private schools. A new and dynamic mixed use area is emerging out of the dust, just as the community



*Notes*

- [1] *USA Census figures 2005*
- [2] *USA Census figures for Public Use Microdata Area 03810 southern Manhattan 2006 72941 housing units, 2005 68621 housing units.*
- [3] *www.downtownny.com*

wanted in spite of the developer's dreams of single use prime office space. However new rents are high. There is no low cost residential property left any more and locals fear that they will be pushed out. However a more grass-roots group, "The Downtown Alliance" was set up in 1995 to run a business improvement district. Much of the redevelopment, on a small scale has been championed by this group, including the new nightlife focused around Stone Street, the re-landscaping of local parks and plazas and the installation of a network of free wi-fi hot spots.

Slowly the sites are being bought up and redeveloped. However the holistic and brave nature of the original competition winning scheme, which included building way and above the highest building in the world, has been much diluted to the point where there is really no serious masterplan anymore.

*Stone Street at Night R Stolank NY Times*



*Chris Hanson & Hendrika Sonnenberg Fence The Lath Picture Show Friedrich Petzel Gallery Chelsea New York*

