

Essex Crossing's enormous, 'world-class' marketplace gets new renderings

The Market Line will stretch over 150,000 square feet across three separate buildings

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The transformation of the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area into the megaproject known as [Essex Crossing](#) is slowly but surely moving forward, and more pieces of the puzzle are being put in place. One of the biggest elements of the development—both in size and potential community benefit—is [the Market Line](#), a 150,000-square-foot retail destination that will anchor several of the megaproject's buildings. It will also serve as a new home for the 76-year-old Essex Street Market, which provided inspiration for the new, modern bazaar.

“You’re taking something that’s been in this community for years and building off of that,” explains Rohan Mehra, a principal at [Prusik Group](#), the firm that’s working on Essex Crossing’s commercial spaces. Prusik has been working on the Market Line

since 2013, when the development team behind the megaproject (Delancey Associates, a partnership of BFC Partners, L+M Development Partners, and Taconic Investment Partners) won the initial RFP for the space. Now, the firm is working on filling out the myriad restaurants, boutiques, and other vendors that'll call the space home. New renderings give an idea of what those might look like, and Mehra filled Curbed in on what visitors can expect when the market opens in a couple of years.

Mehra compares the Market Line to similar bazaars like Seattle's Pike Place Market or Barcelona's La Boqueria—not merely a place to grab a quick bite, or a farmer's market, or a shopping destination, but an amalgam of all three, or as he calls it, “hubs of activity.” When completed, the whole thing will stretch over 700 feet across three of Essex Crossing's buildings, incorporating both the revamped Essex Street Market (which will still be operated by the city), along with several new spaces.

Though they'll be in separate buildings (Sites 2, 3, and 4), the three market spaces will be connected in a couple of ways. A series of passageways will be built below-grade so that shoppers can easily travel from one place to another without having to go above-ground (and, importantly, deal with the traffic around the entrance to the Williamsburg Bridge).

The Market Line will also be connected visually on the Broome Street side by a design element that Mehra calls a “light scoop”: As conceived by SHoP Architects and Beyer Blinder Belle, each building will have a 40-foot-tall glass wall that both lets light into the subterranean market spaces, as well as allowing for several levels of shops within the bazaar itself. It'll also face the public park that will run along Broome Street.



2013 rendering shows what the “light scoop” might look like *SHoP Architects*

Each space will also have a distinct purpose. Site 2 will take inspiration from and building on the Essex Street Market, with an expanded, nearly 60,000-square-foot “traditional shopping market that’s reflective of the Lower East Side,” according to Mehra. Site 3 will be home to galleries, shops that focus on fashion and art, and things of that ilk. And finally, Site 4 will have a food hall.

Mehra is, of course, aware of the perception that new projects like this—or megaprojects in general—can change the essential character of a neighborhood, or ignore the concerns of longtime residents. “When you talk about megadevelopments like that, that’s an issue—you’re creating something entirely new and wondering how it’s going to fit in,” he notes. “We’re not trying to create a new neighborhood, we’re trying to represent the next step in the evolution of the Lower East Side.”

To that end, Prusik has already begun outreach to fill the commercial spaces within the Market Line, and has been getting input both from local vendors and the larger community (through public meetings, the community task force, and more) to ensure that the vendors coming to the Market Line aren’t catering only to a non-local audience, but to longtime neighborhood residents as well. “Our mantra from the beginning has been, if the locals shop here, everyone else will follow,” says Mehra.

The Market Line is due to be completed in phases: the first, part of Site 2, is scheduled to open by mid-2018, while the second (the shops in Sites 3 and 4) will be completed sometime in 2019.



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