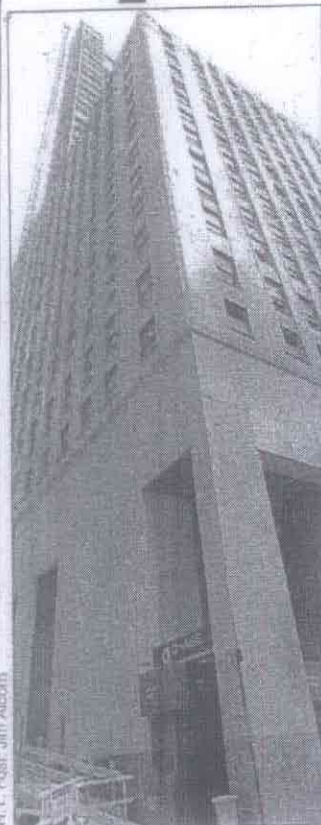


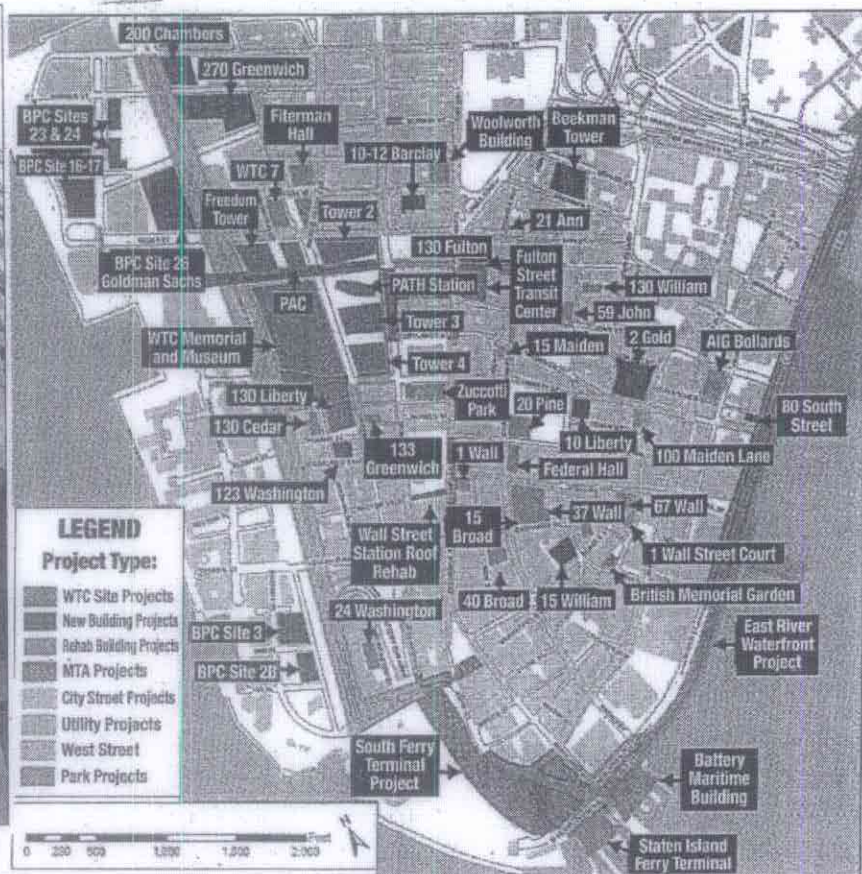
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# Up with downtown



**HIGH THERE:** Construction at Pine and Nassau streets.



## 59 projects at once a bigcrippler

By STEPHANIE GASKELL

A square-mile area of lower Manhattan is choked with an unprecedented 59 simultaneous construction projects — more than any other neighborhood in the city.

And relief is still four years away.

"People think we are closed," said Pamela Gil, general manager of Les Halles on John Street, one of the most hardhat-clogged streets in the area.

Gil said the scaffolding everywhere, and closing storefronts, have hampered business.

"But when people come here, they say 'Thank God, you're still here,'" she said. "We stay

for them. There's a special attachment to this neighborhood and what went on."

"The promise of the 'lower Manhattan of the future' has spurred a lot of new residential and commercial construction," said Charles Maikish, executive director of the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center. The center was created after 9/11 to oversee the \$22 billion in public and private projects in the area.

"This isn't just repairing the damage, it's also improving the infrastructure so that we can handle all the new growth that's going on in this area."

The infrastructure is so old in this historic slice of New York

that workers have found water mains made of wood, and the time it takes to fix roads, sewer and water pipes, and utility lines, or to erect a building, can double.

"Lower Manhattan is extremely challenging when compared to other parts of the city because the streets are so narrow, the buildings are tall, demand for utilities and telecommunication lines is high and there are subways under many of the streets," said Josh Rosenbloom, director of city operations.

The federal government poured in hundreds of millions of dollars for several projects, including the Fulton Street

Transit Center and the South Ferry Terminal.

There is construction on nearly every street — with Broadway, Fulton, John, William and Dey Streets and Maiden Lane particularly busy.

While business owners are feeling pinched — sales are off, and it's difficult to get deliveries or just to get around — they say it's going to be worth it.

"One they build the Freedom Tower, it's going to be the most magnificent neighborhood," said Ralph Baldera, who has worked at the John Street Florist for nearly a decade.

"You just have to try to survive until then."

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