

The Party Circuit

CO'S DOWNTOWN OFFICE PANEL

Nov. 28, 195 Broadway

When **Larry Silverstein** realized he would have to rebuild the **World Trade Center** in 2001, he never anticipated that the Financial District would experience a renaissance. But after the construction of three new World Trade towers, the new **Fulton Transit Center**, the **Oculus**, and the **Shops at Brookfield Place**, Manhattan's long-sleepy Downtown is seeing something of a rebirth.

"Sixteen years later, it's nothing short of remarkable," Silverstein said at Commercial Observer's New Face of Downtown event in **L&L Holding Company's 195 Broadway**. He touted the area's 12 subway lines, its wealth of new restaurants and its relatively youthful residential community compared to more established hoods like the Upper East or Upper West Sides.

"We've decided we're moving away from the old fogies up there because of the youth down here," said Silverstein, who is himself picking up and moving with his wife from Park Avenue to his new condo development at 30 Park Place. "It's the youthful vibe, it's the authenticity, it's the access to great amenities, access to great transit."

Downtown Alliance head **Jessica Lappin** pointed out that the Financial District offers Class A office space at an average of \$63 a square foot, a \$20 discount from typical asking rents in Midtown, and Class B office space for \$53 a square foot. And 90 percent of the neighborhood's jobs are within a five-minute walk of at least seven subway lines, she said. Their conversation, which occurred during the day's second panel on the "WTC Effect," was moderated by **Michael Zetlin**, the founding partner of **Zetlin & DeChiara**.

During the morning's first panel, on how building upgrades could attract tenants to Downtown properties, everyone agreed that millennials and their companies were looking for more efficient workspaces and amenities that could help them attract talent and run their businesses well in the 21st

century. **Fried Frank** real estate chairman **Jonathan Mechanic** moderated, and the speakers included **Brookfield Properties** Senior Managing Partner **Ric Clark**, **L&L Holdings** Chairman **David Levinson** and **Matt Straz**, the founder and chief executive officer of a human resources software startup, **Namely**.

Clark explained that he had encouraged his tenants to use an app called **Ritual**, which allows workers to order food from restaurants in the **Shops at Brookfield Place** and get a notification to go down and pick up their food when it's ready, rather than standing in line. He's also working on setting up a security system that allows tenants to use an app on their phones rather than a key card to swipe into the building.

"Most of our tenants look at geography as the key," said **Cushman & Wakefield** Chairman **Bruce Mosler**. "They want open space, large floor plates. They want to be around a 24/7 environment."

Mosler emphasized the need for landlords to bring in companies like **Convane**, which create communal workspace amenities, like conference rooms, that tenants can choose to rent on an hourly or daily basis. "Ownership that has gone through those processes [to invest in their buildings] are going to reap the benefits," Mosler said. "And buildings that haven't been invested in are going to have trouble in the future."

Levinson explained that he had tried to "future-proof" 195 Broadway, which is a century old but features large blocks of column-free space. However, he noted that "some people want something with a vintage, a history," even though older properties like 195 Broadway have lower ceiling heights than new construction.

Ultimately, though, everyone wanted to celebrate FiDi's new lease on life.

"You'd come down here at 5:30 at night and there'd be no one on the street," said Levinson. "Now it's a full-blown, serious community." —*Rebecca Barid-Remba*



Left to right: Matt Straz, Jonathan Mechanic, David Levinson, Bruce Mosler and Ric Clark.



Commercial developers and brokers talk about attracting tenants to downtown.



L&L's David Levinson talks about 195 Broadway, where the conference was held.



Left to right: Larry Silverstein of Silverstein Properties, Jessica Lappin of the Downtown Alliance, and Michael Zetlin of Zetlin & DeChiara.