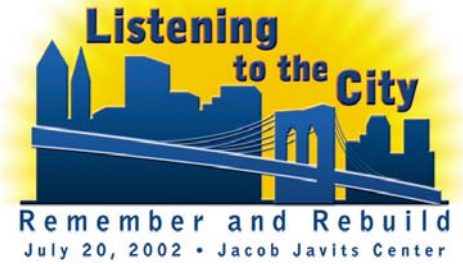


Preliminary Report

July 20, 2002 • Jacob Javits Center



More than 4,000 people from New York and the tri-state area gathered on July 20 at the Jacob Javits Convention Center to play a role in rebuilding Lower Manhattan. Over the course of the daylong forum, participants in "Listening to the City" deliberated options for redeveloping the World Trade Center site and considered the critical issues that must be addressed to help people rebuild their lives in the aftermath of September 11 and memorialize those who were lost.

The public conversation was attended by many of the decision-makers and leaders who will ultimately decide the future of Lower Manhattan, including officials from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the State of New York, and the New York City Mayor's Office and City Council. The results of the forum will be presented to these decision-makers to guide their work.

"Listening to the City" is a project of the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York, a broad-based coalition of nearly 100 groups committed to devising strategies for the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan. The Civic Alliance was convened by the Regional Plan Association, in conjunction with New York University, New School University and the Pratt Institute. This 21st Century Town Meeting™ was designed and facilitated by AmericaSpeaks™.

The Civic Alliance sought to represent the rich diversity of the metropolitan region at "Listening to the City." This goal was achieved more closely in some areas than in others. For example, 53% of the participants were female and 47% were male, while the region is 52% female and 47% male. In addition, 27% of the participants were 20 to 34 years old, compared to 22% for the region. People 65 and older made up 10% of the forum, close to the regional figure of 12%. On the other hand, while 20% of the region is African-American, the room was only 7% African-American. Similarly, participation was higher among people in the top income brackets and among those who live in Manhattan. The Civic Alliance will continue to try to ensure that all voices are proportionally represented at future activities.

Forum participants related to the events of 9/11 and the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan in a variety of capacities:

- 8.9% had a family member who was a 9/11 victim
- 19.7% are survivors of the events of 9/11
- 23.6% lived in Lower Manhattan
- 41.4% worked in Lower Manhattan
- 33.5% were at or near Ground Zero on 9/11
- 21.5% became displaced/unemployed as a result of 9/11
- 6.2% were rescue or recovery workers
- 71.1% attended primarily as interested citizens

Demographics

Participants in the forum came from all walks of life and represented the rich geographic, racial and income diversity of the metropolitan region. These figures are compared below to the official demographics of the region.

Gender	July 20	Region
Female	53%	52%
Male	47%	48%
Age		
19 and under	4%	27%
20-34	27%	22%
35-54	45%	30%
55-64	14%	9%
65 and better	10%	12%
Household Income		
Less than \$25,000	17%	26%
\$25,000 - 49,999	21%	25%
\$50,000 - 74,999	20%	18%
\$75,000 - 99,000	14%	12%
\$100,000 - 149,999	15%	11%
\$150,000 - 199,999	13%	8%

Race	July 20	Region
African-American	7%	20%
Asian/Pacific Islander	13%	9%
Caucasian	66%	64%
Native American	0%	<1%
Mixed Race	5%	2%
Other Race	9%	n/a
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	10%	20%
Non-Hispanic	90%	80%
Geography		
Manhattan	46%	} 47%
Brooklyn	18%	
Bronx	3%	
Queens	10%	
Staten Island	1%	
Elsewhere in NYS	6%	23%
New Jersey	10%	30%
Elsewhere	6%	

Hopes and Concerns

Participants were asked to discuss their most important hopes and concerns about rebuilding and remembering. A high priority for many is a memorial that is inspirational and serene and respects the now-hallowed ground where thousands died.

At the same time, a significant number of people wanted to restore lost jobs and rebuild the economy. Many cared deeply about ensuring that Lower Manhattan becomes a lively, 24-hour community that contains housing and offers residents, workers and visitors a mix of business, retail and cultural facilities and open space. Achieving this, many participants pointed out, requires a better-integrated transportation network. As one participant said, we need to “build a new heart for New York City.”

Of course, participants had concerns as well. Some worried that the World Trade Center site would be over-developed, with too much commercial space. Said that the process is being rushed and is too political. As a result, they feared that important voices would go unheard and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to remake the city would be lost. Many also cautioned against a memorial that is either too tacky or too somber.

REBUILDING THE SITE

An informed citizenry is vital to a properly functioning democracy. To help the participants deliberate, representatives of several agencies gave detailed presentations on issues related to six preliminary ideas for rebuilding the World Trade Center site. Senior officials such as the chairman of Lower Manhattan Development Corp (LMDC) and the executive director of the Port Authority were on hand to gauge the discussion.

In its presentation, the Port Authority of New York stressed that a proper memorial and the economic revival of Lower Manhattan are its top priorities. The agency noted that it has legal obligations to the site’s leaseholders, which require it to provide office, hotel and retail space.

The LMDC discussed elements of the six proposals and ideas for the area surrounding the trade center site, including parks and promenades, cultural institutions and transit improvements, among them a new “gateway” center. Details of the proposals are available at www.renewnyc.com.

Rebuilding the Site: Advice to Planners

Participants discussed the six site options in two sessions. First, they were asked to accept the program established by the Port Authority and explain which features of the design schemes they like and dislike. Participants then selected the single most important piece of advice they wished to give the planners from among the themes of that discussion. The top three were:

1. Preserve the footprints as a “remarkable symbol”
2. Buildings should be visually interesting to the skyline.
3. Build the West Street tunnel: “reconnects the neighborhood, minimizes commercial traffic, opens waterfront.”

The rest were:

- Extended promenade is a good way of using green space to connect community.
- Traffic: Like the interconnected hub, ample pedestrian walkways and restoration of street grid.
- Support cultural uses, including performance venues.

In addition, participants discussed features of the plans they dislike. The ranked themes were:

1. Schemes are not ambitious enough – the buildings are too short; “Nothing here is truly monumental;” “Looks like Albany.”
2. Include more non-office uses, including residential (affordable program) and cultural – these schemes will not produce a 24/7 community.
3. Plans are too dense – too many buildings that are too large

The other themes concerning features that participants disliked were:

- Do not pursue “Memorial Square” because it walls off the courtyard – “feels like an open casket.”
- Don’t cut off the neighborhood with wall of tall buildings, buildings too tall.
- Do not build on the footprints of the WTC towers.
- Promenade is “too skinny” and cuts off Battery Park City.

Rebuilding the Site: Advice to Planners, cont.

In the second discussion segment, participants were invited to offer the LMDC and PA any additional advice, either within or outside the program. Themes were distilled from the discussion and ranked through polling with wireless keypads. The results – in ranked order – are as follows:

1. Be bold in design, stressing innovative, quality design – perhaps a design competition.
2. Seek other ways to address and solve leasehold requirement – “Cancel the leases. Start fresh.”
3. Diversify uses – reduce amount of office space; add schools, libraries, recreation centers; include affordable senior housing.
4. Employ safety and security measures in any design.

Rebuilding Lives

September 11 destroyed more than buildings. In response, participants discussed economic development and employment issues, transportation, housing and neighborhood amenities.

The top message on housing was to provide affordable and middle-income housing for all ages. The top two messages on transportation were to expand transit service and to improve the existing systems. The top two messages on economic development were to promote business diversity without diluting the character of Lower Manhattan as a financial district and to create jobs and training programs, especially for those directly affected by the events of 9/11.

Conclusion

LMDC’s Lou Tomson and Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff responded to the participants’ message, indicating that they would look at including more uses on the site, reducing the density and addressing the issues created by the leaseholders’ rights.

Asked about the pace of the rebuilding process, 50% of the participants said it was about right, 13% said it should move faster and 29% said it should be slower.

The day closed with evaluation questions. 79% of the participants felt very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of the dialogue. Asked if they believe their voices would have an effect on decision-makers, 33% were very confident or confident, 45% were somewhat confident, and 22% had little confidence.

Polling on Concept Plans

LMDC/PA authored fourteen multiple-choice questions to obtain information about particular issues in the concept plans. Participants answered the questions using wireless keypads, and the results were aggregated to produce the following results:

Participants were asked to describe which elements of the six plans were most important to them. More than half – 57% -- said they believe it is important to add a major symbol to the skyline.

Opinions were more varied on whether it is necessary to restore the street grid through the World Trade Center site, with 35% saying it is very important, 21% saying it is important and 18% saying it is somewhat important.

Eliminating West Street as a barrier between Battery Park City and the rest of Lower Manhattan was considered very important by 71% of the participants & important by 17%.

Most of the participants, 53%, thought it was better to have a variety of differently sized open spaces than a single large space.

In reviewing the potential settings for a memorial, participants were not especially pleased with any of the concept plans. The Memorial Plaza, Memorial Square and Memorial Triangle proposals were all ranked as poor or unsatisfactory by a significant number of participants. The Memorial Plaza drew the best response: 15% thought it was excellent and 21% said it was good. Just 35% ranked it as poor or unsatisfactory, whereas more than half disliked the Memorial Square and Memorial Triangle plans.

Planning the Memorial

Creating an appropriate memorial to those who died September 11 was the top priority of the participants. All of the proposals for the site were designed around the concept of a memorial, but it may be some time before a decision can be made about what a proper memorial should contain.

A representative of the victims’ families read a mission statement that defines the broad goals of a memorial, saying it should honor those who died and those who carried on as well as the brave people from around the world who joined the rescue efforts. This mission statement was generally received well and drew praise for its simplicity and inclusiveness, although some suggested that it be made more “global.”

Participants said that a great memorial should be designed first, and then planners should map out the area around it to ensure an appropriate overall plan for the entire site.