

JULY 20 & JULY 22, 2002 • JACOB JAVITS CENTER • NEW YORK CITY

# LISTENING TO THE CITY

## REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS



JULY 29 – AUGUST 12, 2002 • ONLINE DIALOGUE



*The Civic Alliance would like to thank the following underwriters for their generous support of Listening to the City and for keeping the spirit of democracy alive.*

**The Atlantic Philanthropies**  
**Rockefeller Brothers Fund**  
**Lower Manhattan Development Corporation**

**Port Authority of New York and New Jersey**

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**Keyspan Corporation**

**Brookfield Properties**

Dear Readers:

Last month, more than 5,000 people came together to make a difference in the city that they love. Total strangers sat with each other at diversely assembled tables and over the course of a day shared their stories and emotions, puzzled over plans and the challenges facing this city and our region, and pondered how to create a suitable and moving memorial for those who lost their lives on September 11. Unlike public hearings or traditional town hall meetings, at these forums everyone had a chance to speak and everyone had a chance to listen.

We are proud to present you with this Report of Proceedings for Listening to the City and the Online Dialogues. In many regards Listening to the City was successful beyond our wildest hopes. The sheer number of people who chose to donate their valuable time to shape the future of Lower Manhattan, the attention paid to the meetings by the media, and the initial positive steps by decision makers and official agencies in response to Listening to the City has validated the work we put into hosting these meetings.

The Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York came together shortly after September 11, 2001, to engage the public and the civic community in the rebuilding process with the goal of achieving a rebuilt city that is more accessible, more equitable, and more successful than it was before. The tragedy of September 11 demands that the rebuilding process leave 'business as usual' behind and be conducted in an open manner, drawing upon broad and diverse input from across the region. We are satisfied that Listening to the City took a large step towards opening up the planning process in an unprecedented way.

At the one year anniversary of September 11, the pain, sadness, and disruption caused to so many lives is still fresh in our minds and our hearts. The rebuilding process that served as the focus of Listening to the City is an opportunity born out of tragedy – an opportunity we wish we had never been given. Therefore we dedicate this report to every victim of the terrorist attacks of September 11 and every person whose life was irrevocably changed.

In this report you will find an account of the rich dialogue that took place at Listening to the City, polling results from questions asked at the forums, photos of participants, and information on next steps. Each participant contributed to what is contained in these pages and we thank each and every one of you who contributed to the forum. Thank you for reading.

Sincerely,

Ed Blakely, Milano Graduate School, New School University  
Arthur J. Fried, Center for Excellence in NYC Governance, NYU/Wagner  
Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, *AmericaSpeaks*  
Ron Shiffman, Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development  
Robert D. Yaro, Regional Plan Association

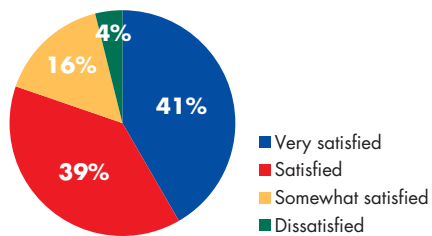
# Executive Summary



**“Together we are going to create a Lower Manhattan that is better than ever, a grand tribute to the individuals we have lost, a magnificent symbol of our community’s unshakable spirit.”**

— John Whitehead,  
Chairman of LMDC

## Satisfaction with Dialogue



Note: Combined result from both Javits forums

In an extraordinary demonstration of faith in democracy and love for a great city, some 5,000 people from throughout metropolitan New York pooled their energy and talent in an historic series of public meetings and online discussions called "Listening to the City." Through these 21st Century Town Meetings – designed to give people a voice in rebuilding the World Trade Center site, New York City and the region – people strove to make a virtue of their differences by joining together to describe their visions for the future and to help each other recover from a shattering attack.

The messages generated by this committed, energized assembly – one of the largest gatherings of its kind – reached decision-makers quickly and unmistakably. People urged their leaders to think boldly, to be imaginative and above all, to chart a course that honors the victims and the heroes of September 11 with dignity. They called on government officials and planning agencies to seek ways of rebuilding not just "ground zero," but also the neighborhoods around it, the city and the thousands of lives affected by September 11 and its aftermath. And they stressed the need to make much-needed housing and transportation infrastructure improvements in Lower Manhattan and beyond.

What they asked for, indeed, was nothing less than a new downtown that is inspired in design, that mixes commerce, culture and homes for people of all income levels, that helps drive the region's economy and that restores the grandeur that the New York skyline lost when the Twin Towers fell.

For its participants, the size and diversity of "Listening to the City" were galvanizing. "Listening to the City" brought more than 4,300 people to the Jacob Javits Convention Center on July 20. About 200 more participated

in a similar meeting on July 22. And more than 800 took part in the two-week online dialogue that followed. People who might normally never meet – relatives of victims, downtown residents, survivors of September 11, emergency workers, business leaders, the unemployed and underemployed, interested citizens and community advocates – sat side-by-side and contributed myriad points of view, debated planners' redevelopment ideas and shared their hopes and concerns about how to reconstruct lives profoundly disrupted on September 11.

As John Whitehead, chairman of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), observed the forum, he told the *New York Daily News* how much he was moved by this exercise in participatory democracy. "This is what the terrorists didn't understand," he said. "This is what they didn't know. It's absolutely beautiful."

"Listening to the City" participants were asked to give their thoughts about six preliminary concepts for the Trade Center site, which the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the LMDC unveiled days before the forum. Many criticized them as too dense, too dull and too commercial. The poor reception these concepts received reflected disappointment not only with the plans themselves, but also with their underlying premise, which seemed to produce not six different ideas but a half-dozen variations on one idea. In a widely quoted comment that became the signature remark of the July 20 forum, one participant dismissed the designs by saying they all "look like Albany."

Shortly after "Listening to the City", LMDC and the Port Authority pledged that a new program will be developed. Although a new set

of criteria for the development program has not yet been issued, the agencies have invited architects from around the world to submit new ideas for the World Trade Center site and the neighborhoods nearby. And at the highest levels, leaders began talking about new, creative approaches. Innovative proposals began to emerge, among them, moving some of the commercial development from "ground zero" to other locations to make more space for a memorial and other appropriate uses and developing a Lower Manhattan economic development zone encompassing Chinatown and the Lower East Side. Prior to the forums, LMDC also took a step toward creating the kind of memorial that so many people yearn for by hiring a vice president to oversee what they promise will be a more open design process that includes related cultural activities.

Ordinary New Yorkers, many of whom arrived at "Listening to the City" doubting that those in power would hear their voices, discovered they had, indeed, made a difference. The agencies' response underscored what Roland Betts, a member of the LMDC board, told the July 20 gathering: "Everyone seems to fear that the real meeting is going on in some other room," he said. "Let me tell you something – this is the real meeting."

A major reason "Listening to the City" had such resonance was its incredible diversity. People of different ages and economic backgrounds, members of different racial and ethnic groups, residents of different parts of the city and the suburbs and representatives of communities that are not always included in the civic dialogue joined forces in this demonstration of the spirit of New York and the nation. Participants spoke with infectious enthusiasm about the people and

ideas they encountered. One of the July 20 participants said her table included an extremely diverse group of people who argued all day. Yet, when the session was over, they made sure they exchanged contact information and promised to stay in touch. They even had a group picture taken.

Overall, participants said they were pleased with "Listening to the City." Polled about their satisfaction on July 20, four in five said they were either very satisfied, satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the quality of the dialogue. On July 22, 100 percent said they were very satisfied or satisfied. Among those in the online dialogue, 84 percent were at least somewhat satisfied.

Organized by the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York, in concert with other civic organizations, "Listening to the City" married computer technology and the venerable concept of the town hall meeting, creating dynamic forums that were striking in both their scope and depth.

AmericaSpeaks, a nationally recognized non-profit organization, worked with a diverse advisory group to develop the format for "Listening to the City" and provided the technology that made it possible for people to make real connections with each other despite the enormous size of the gatherings. Participants could see their ideas and votes flashed on giant screens as the sessions progressed, allowing the large and diverse group to discuss an array of issues and make its feelings known almost instantly.

The online dialogue used techniques developed by the non-profit think tank Web Lab to foster in-depth discussion and allow a diverse group of people who could not attend the Javits sessions to participate.



**“Any development we do here should be something spectacular”**

— Participant

In addition to LMDC Chairman Whitehead and board member Betts, many other officials from the agencies responsible for rebuilding Lower Manhattan monitored the Javits Center proceedings closely and several addressed the gathering. Among those present were LMDC's president, Lou Tomson, and its vice president for planning, design and development, Alex Garvin. Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff represented the City of New York. Port Authority representatives included executive director Joe Seymour and chief engineer Frank Lombardi.

These officials and others are already using the input from "Listening to the City" to guide the next steps in planning the rebirth of Lower Manhattan. The Civic Alliance and its partners will continue to work to ensure that they broaden their focus to address regional issues so that principles asserted during the forums will form the basis of the next round of proposals. New rebuilding proposals are expected around the end of the year and the Civic Alliance plans to take an active role in ensuring that the public has a voice in this ongoing process.

# What is "Listening to the City?"



**"It is a powerful experience to speak out and influence the decisions that impact our lives and the lives of future generations. 'Listening to the City' is a real exercise in participatory democracy."**

— Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer,  
President of AmericaSpeaks

"Listening to the City" is a project of the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York, a coalition of more than 85 civic, business, environmental, community, university and labor groups that seeks to develop consensus strategies for redeveloping Lower Manhattan. The Civic Alliance was convened by the Regional Plan Association in partnership with NYU/Wagner, New School University and the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development.

"Listening to the City" is one of many such efforts in recent months organized by a variety of groups, some of which are also members of the Civic Alliance. These efforts, which helped shape some of the ideas that informed "Listening to the City," include forums, workshops and reports by Imagine New York, the Labor Community Action Network,

the Environmental Coalition for Rebuilding Lower Manhattan, Rebuild Downtown Our Town, Rebuild with a Spotlight on the Poor, New York New Visions and others.

"Listening to the City's" first public event was a forum at the South Street Seaport that brought together more than 600 people from throughout the metropolitan region on February 7. Decision-makers from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, New York City and New York State heard participants outline their vision for Lower Manhattan and discuss the elements of a fitting memorial. The vision and values identified on February 7 helped guide the decision makers as they developed the official principles for rebuilding.

*Andrea Howe was a facilitator at table 498 on July 20, where she helped guide nine people through "Listening to the City." She left convinced that everyone had just taken "a giant positive step" toward rebuilding Lower Manhattan and healing the city.*

There is no way to experience something like this without being changed...I am reaffirmed in my essential beliefs: (1) that people working together – in pairs, teams, organizations, and communities – can do amazing things when offered the right opportunity, the right "space," and the right support; (2) that participation is an essential component of creating momentum for and ownership of change; (3) that people thrive when they are part of magical experiences that invite their spirits to come alive and (4) that we all love to take part in creating stories that we can't wait to tell.



# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Town Meeting

"Listening to the City" combined technology with face-to-face dialogue, using a format developed by *AmericaSpeaks*, a non-profit organization that has pioneered techniques for bringing citizens together in large forums while preserving the benefits of face-to-face discussion. The *AmericaSpeaks* 21st Century Town Meeting model captures the full range of participants' ideas and allows these ideas to be heard and discussed not only by people at the same table, but by the entire assembly.

Participants in "Listening to the City" held 10-to-12-person roundtable discussions, each led by a trained facilitator skilled in small-group dynamics. A network of laptop computers recorded ideas generated during the discussions. Each table's input was instantly transmitted to a "theme team" composed of volunteers and *AmericaSpeaks* staff that identified the strongest concepts from the discussions

and reported them back to all the participants.

Based on the roundtable discussions, the "theme team" quickly developed a set of priorities and questions that were posed on large screens throughout the meeting hall, allowing people to get quick feedback about how their perspectives compared to the thinking of the larger group. Each participant used a wireless polling keypad to vote on these questions and the results were immediately displayed. This process also allowed the agenda to be modified to correspond more closely to the tenor of the discussions.

The facilitators were volunteers from all 50 states and from countries as far away as Afghanistan, Australia and South Africa who paid their way to New York because they wanted to help the city heal and recover. Services available to participants also included sign language and simultaneous spoken translation; facilitators who spoke Spanish and Chinese; foreign-

language, Braille and large-print copies of important discussion materials and constituent services and grief counselors.

Another key component of "Listening to the City" was a two-week online dialogue. Between July 29 and August 12, a total of 818 people exchanged ideas and expressed their priorities through this dialogue. The format and technology were developed in conjunction with Web Lab, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating innovative, Web-based projects that bring fresh perspectives and new voices to the discussion of public issues.



*Erin Doyle of Manhattan, a "Listening to the City" participant, spent three years working for organizations that promote democracy in the new states of the former Soviet Union. None of that, however, prepared her for the emotional lift she got from seeing the democratic process in action right in her hometown.*

["Listening to the City"] was nothing short of extraordinary. I had witnessed countless similar exercises in new democracies, but nothing can compare to what happened in New York City that day...The dynamic in the room was phenomenal as everyone was focused on the task at hand (we worked straight through lunch), [was] serious about discussion and considerate of everyone's opinions. Participants laughed and cried together...

Most of all, I was proud of making my voice heard and honored to have the opportunity to participate in an historic process, the result of which will stand as a great symbol of the freedoms we Americans hold so dearly and take, all too often, for granted.

# Who Participated?



“I wanted to give back to New York what New York has given me”

— Participant

From the outset, the goal of "Listening to the City" was to make the process of rebuilding Lower Manhattan open and democratic. To that end, the event was designed to reflect the rich diversity of the New York metropolitan region while ensuring that those most directly affected by the terrorist attacks – victims' families and people who live or work or used to work downtown – were adequately represented. Member groups of the Civic Alliance did extensive outreach to bring an array of constituencies to the forum. They were successful at ensuring that the assembly reflected the demographics of Lower Manhattan, but some important groups in the region as a whole were underrepresented, a situation the Civic Alliance will strive to remedy at any future events it holds by building on the networks established in developing "Listening to the City."

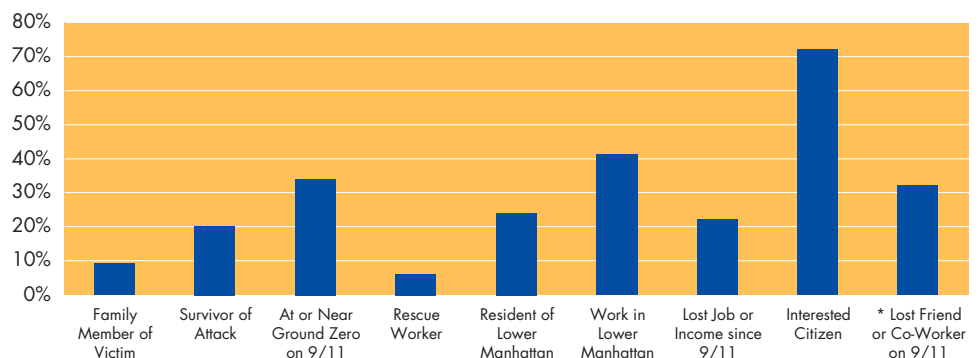
Using their electronic keypads, participants supplied demographic data at the start of the July 20 and 22 meetings. The data show that each meeting included a broad cross-section of the region and the demographics for the two sessions were quite similar. Participants came from many backgrounds and income levels and lived in all parts of the metropolitan area.

On both July 20 and July 22, the balance between men and women closely mirrored that of the general population. Whites and Asians were present at "Listening to the City" in roughly the same proportions as in the general population, but blacks and Hispanics were somewhat underrepresented. Blacks made up seven percent of forum participants compared to 20 percent of the the general population and Hispanics made up 10 percent of the forum participants compared to 20 percent of the population.

The age breakdown of participants corresponded fairly closely to that of the regional population, although the event included a fairly high number of people aged 35 to 54. People in the upper income brackets also participated at a somewhat high rate compared to the general population while those in lower income brackets were somewhat underrepresented.

There was considerable geographic diversity among the participants. Although Manhattan residents were most heavily represented, a significant number of participants came from other boroughs and New Jersey. Brooklyn residents made up roughly one-fifth of the group on both days. Connecticut and other parts of the

**Personal Connection of Participants to the Events of September 11**



\* Asked on Monday only

Note: Participants identified as many categories as applied to them. Combined results from Saturday 7/20 and Monday 7/22

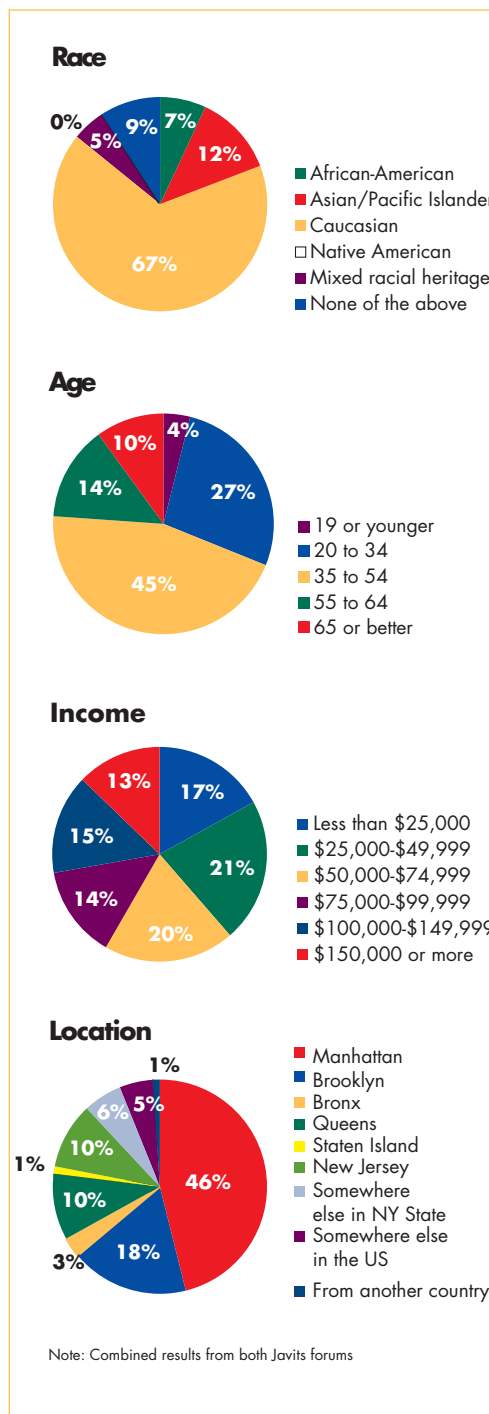
United States were also represented: 5 percent of the July 20 group and 3 percent of the July 22 gathering said they lived somewhere in the U.S. other than New York or New Jersey. Those who lived in other countries made up 1 percent of the group on each day.

In most categories, the breakdowns among those who participated in the online dialogue were similar. Again, the demographic profile of the participants matched that of the metropolitan region better in some aspects than others. Online participants tended to be wealthier and younger than the group that attended the meetings at the Javits Center in July, most likely because ownership of a computer, or at least access to one, was a prerequisite.

Many "Listening to the City" participants said they had strong links to the World Trade Center and the events of September 11. Roughly one person in five on both July 20 and 22 identified themselves as survivors and about one-third said they were at or very near Ground Zero on September 11. Many were working in Lower Manhattan when the attacks occurred. Relatives of those who died made up a significant segment of the participants on both the 20th and the 22nd. The data also show that the forums drew a number of people with professional or academic interests in architecture and planning. A number of artists also attended.

Most people said they decided to participate in "Listening to the City" because of a strong sense of civic responsibility and a deep desire to ensure that many voices are part of the rebuilding process. "I wanted to give back to New York what New York has given me," said one participant. Said another: "I came here to represent my family, my nation and my organization." Some came

because they wanted to hear first-hand what their neighbors had to say. A significant number believed that "Listening to the City" gave them a unique opportunity to support the ideals that came under attack on September 11.



# Hopes and Concerns



**“The challenge is how to balance different interests — how the process can be open, inclusive, reflective of the common desires and truly visionary without creating a watered-down plan, and gridlock.”**

— Participant

**“[My concern is] that all of the ideas and suggestions given today will go unheard”**

— Participant

Participants in "Listening to the City" challenged their leaders to achieve two ideals: They said the city must transform Lower Manhattan into a vibrant, 24-hour commercial, cultural and residential community and it must create a serene and dignified memorial to those who died at the World Trade Center. Many feared that without bold and creative thinking, an historic opportunity to achieve these goals would be lost.

One participant after another stressed that the New York area stands at a crossroads. They urged decision makers to seize this opportunity to seek ways to revitalize all of Lower Manhattan by fostering a mix of uses that contribute to the economic vitality of both the city and the surrounding communities.

Central to this broad view of the rebuilding mission was a desire to ensure that the needs of low- and moderate-income people and new immigrants are not forgotten. The idea of including poor and moderate-income New Yorkers permeated "Listening to the City;" participants repeatedly reminded decision makers to make affordable housing a priority, to promote job-training and development programs for those who lost jobs or were left underemployed in the wake of September 11, to deal with the physical and mental health needs of those affected by the attacks, to provide adequate public facilities such as childcare centers and schools and to take steps to maintain the vibrancy of Chinatown and other downtown communities.

Many participants were determined to ensure that plans for downtown Manhattan include housing. After dis-

cussing the need for various amenities, 55 percent of the July 20 participants identified housing for all income levels and ages as most important, saying it would help create a 24-hour neighborhood, attract business and help those in need.

In addition, many hoped to attract a diverse array of businesses to an area that historically has relied on the financial industry. Connecting the area's various subway, commuter and ferry lines was also considered vital, as was ensuring the safety of residents and businesses in this high-profile part of the city. Some participants also said they hoped that environmentally friendly principles would be integrated into both design and construction.

Alongside economic concerns, an important thread running through the discussion was a desire to ensure that planning for the site and planning for the memorial proceed together so that the memorial is not merely an afterthought. People talked about creating something "exciting and special," not just a bland monument surrounded by office buildings. As one person said, the architecture of the entire site should "transcend and celebrate." Another envisioned the World Trade Center site as a place to reflect on those who died that does not also "crowd out" the living, a place "to remember our past and thrive in our future." Polled about the need to link the development of a memorial to the planning of the rest of the site, 64 percent on July 20 said it was very important and 65 percent said so on July 22.

A good deal of the debate on hopes and concerns focused on just how to

create a fitting memorial. Participants said that they hoped the memorial's design would be an inspired one, making it an enduring symbol for the city, the nation and the world. One person said the memorial should be "a place that gives back life." Many also wanted it to recognize the impact the attacks had beyond America's borders. Some suggested that it contain an educational component focused on tolerance and diversity.

A significant view held that nothing should be built on the "footprints" of the Twin Towers. Those who expressed this opinion felt quite strongly about it, and their opinions seemed to resonate with the group, including the victims' relatives, many of whom view the Trade Center site as hallowed ground. Some people, however, disagreed and said that preserving the footprints did not matter to them.

Alongside their hopes, "Listening to the City" participants articulated additional concerns. They feared that business interests would dominate the redevelopment process and that undue attention would be paid to the needs of the Trade Center leaseholders at the expense of the public's interests.

Participants were divided as to whether the process was moving too quickly or too slowly. One person, expressing a fear that the process would drag on, said that "construction will last for 20 years and we will not have anything better than what we had before." A large number of people, however, thought things were moving rather fast and they recommended that officials step back and solicit a wider range of proposals or

**"[I'm concerned] that construction will last for 20 years and we will have nothing better than what we had before"**

— Participant

hold a design competition. In polling on July 20, half the participants said the pace was about right, while 29 percent said it should be slowed and 13 percent said it should go faster. On the 22nd, 36 percent said the pace was right, 39 percent said it should be slowed and 10 percent said it should speed up.

To a large degree, the hopes and concerns of participants in the online dialogue matched those of the people who attended the Javits Center forums. Online participants said they would like to see a new landmark "fill the void in the sky" where the Twin Towers stood. They, too, warned against accepting uninspired plans and incomplete solutions to the neighborhood's traffic, transit and economic problems. Some also cautioned against too solemn a memorial, saying they feared it would turn the site into a "giant mausoleum."



# The Six Concept Plans



**“We want to hear your ideas as we continue to evaluate options and develop more refined plans.”**

— Joseph Seymour,  
Executive Director of Port Authority

During "Listening to the City," the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey described details of six concept plans for rebuilding the World Trade Center site and the surrounding area. The concepts, which had been unveiled several days earlier, were not fixed blueprints; rather, they contained design elements that could be combined in many ways. In addition, none of the buildings represented in the plans depicted a final design. The forms were displayed to show the approximate space structures would fill. Final architectural details were to be worked out in the future.

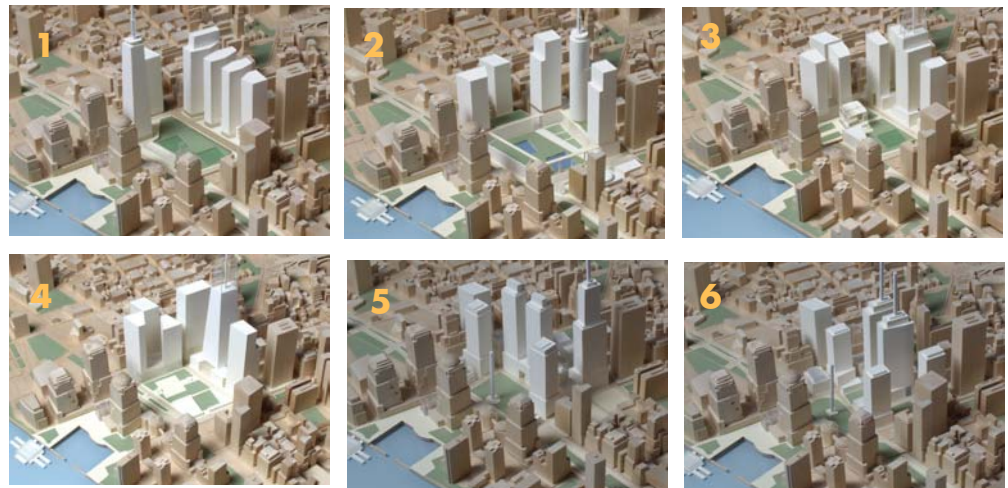
Each of the plans included a memorial, open space, room for housing and cultural institutions, a hotel the size of the destroyed World Trade Center Marriott, 600,000 square feet of stores, 11 million square feet of office space and a new transportation center – dubbed a "Downtown Grand Central" by the LMDC – that was designed to allow commuters to transfer from ferries and New Jersey PATH trains to the New York City subway. The plans also included such elements as park-like promenades along West Street and a transit center at the nearby Fulton Street subway stations. The proposals also restored a part of the city street grid that was erased from the map when the World Trade Center site was assembled in the 1960s.

**“It looks like Albany”**

— Participant

**“Nothing here is truly monumental”**

— Participant



- 1. Memorial Plaza**
- 2. Memorial Square**
- 3. Memorial Triangle**
- 4. Memorial Garden**
- 5. Memorial Park**
- 6. Memorial Promenade**

**“These Six Plans are conceptual and preliminary.”**

— John Whitehead  
Chairman of LMDC

# Responses to the Concept Plans

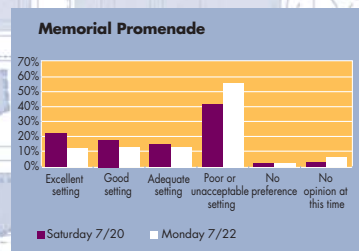
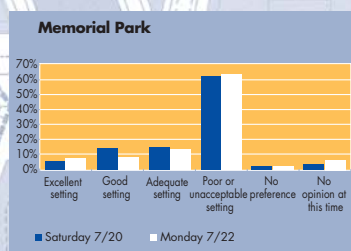
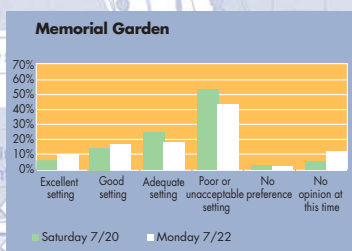
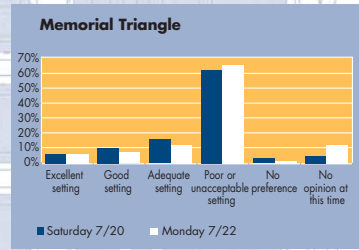
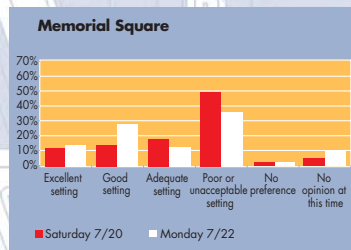
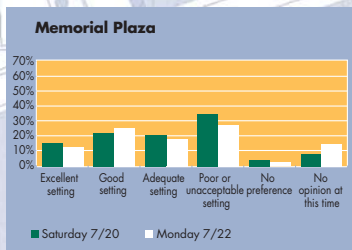
“Listen to the people... there are thousands of creative ideas”

— Participant

“Listening to the City” had a direct and swift impact on the fate of these concept plans. Just weeks after the six plans were introduced as a starting point for discussion, the program they were based upon was set aside, largely because of sharp criticism at “Listening to the City” and other public feedback. On both July 20 and 22, people voiced strong objections to elements of all six proposals, particularly the dense office and commercial development they called for. Participants said that although the concept plans seemed to meet the Port Authority's desire to replace the offices, retail space and hotel rooms destroyed on September 11, they did not provide an appropriate setting for

a memorial, nor did they reflect the economic realities facing the city and the metropolitan area.

Most participants agreed that there should be office space and retail development to boost the neighborhood's economy, and some ideas in the plans, such as the transportation improvements and the promenade atop West Street, drew praise. But a consensus was quickly reached that all the proposals were fundamentally inadequate. Many participants critiqued the plans as mediocre and lacking the vision necessary to reflect the significance of this historic moment. Missing from the concepts, they said, was any sense that some-



# Response to the Plans



**“This is a once in a century opportunity to dramatically change the face of a vital section of the city, we should not lose it just because somebody has a lease for a certain amount of office or hotel space”**

— Participant

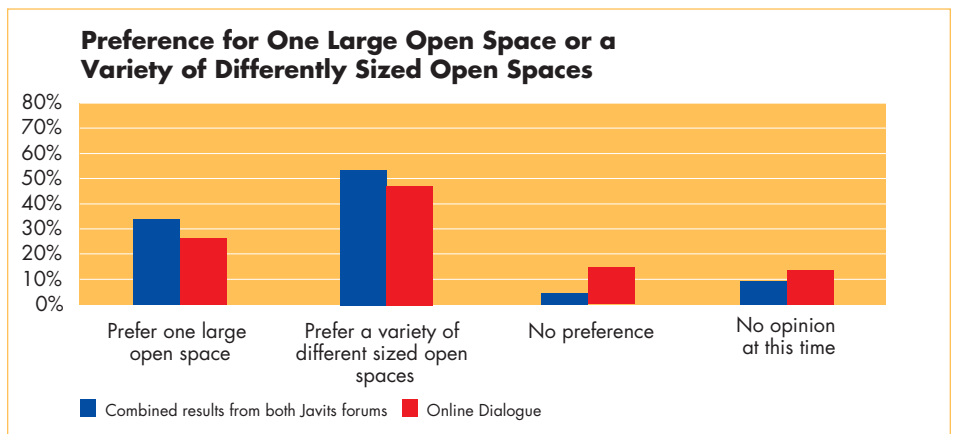
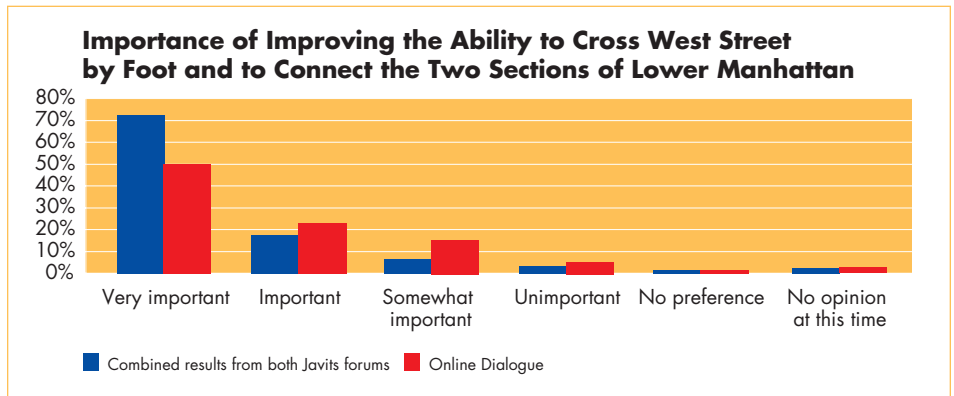
thing enduring would rise from the ashes of ground zero to help define Lower Manhattan the way the Twin Towers once did. "There is no 'wow' factor," said one participant. Another said the ideas had no "soul." Urged another: "Start over!"

A key "Listening to the City" recommendation was that every effort be made to cancel the current lease for the site so that planning decisions are not governed by its requirements. As one participant said: "I worry that decisions about space allocation will be made based in a 99-year lease agreement the [Port Authority] signed, and this does not...meet the actual needs of New Yorkers."

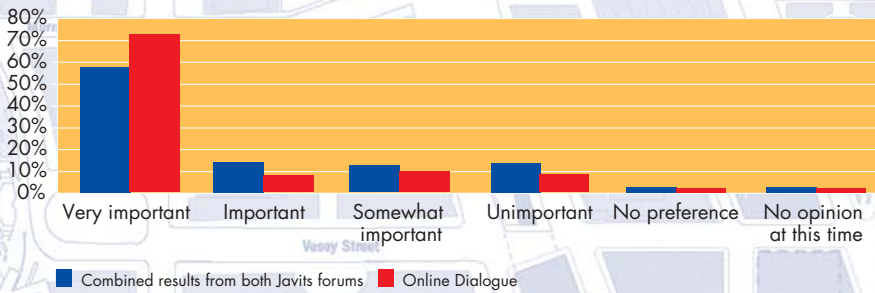
At the July 20 session, a third of the participants said the six plans were

not ambitious enough. Almost a quarter – 23.5 percent – said more non-office uses should be included. About 16 percent described the plans as too dense. At the July 22 session, 29 percent said there must be a better mix of uses.

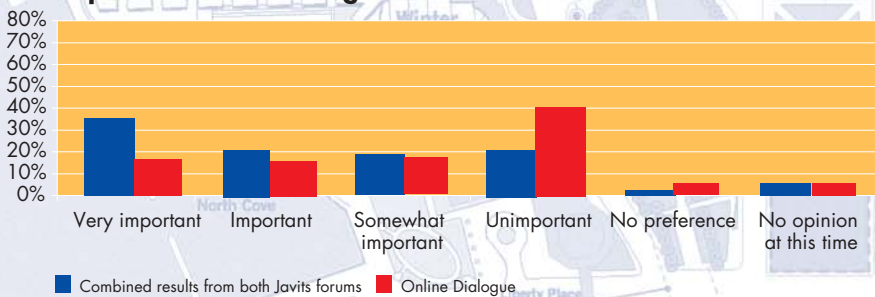
Polled about specific features they liked from the plans, 35.6 percent of the July 20 group said preserving the footprints of the towers "as a remarkable symbol" was most important to them, 21.7 percent said visually arresting buildings were their top priority and 15.5 percent gave high marks to depressing and covering West Street to connect Battery Park City with Lower Manhattan. The idea of a promenade connecting the World Trade Center site and Battery Park also drew relatively strong support.



### Importance of Adding a Major Symbol or Structure to the Skyline



### Importance of Restoring Part or All of Street Grid



Most people favored more open space or a variety of small linked open spaces, provided nothing is built on the footprints of the towers, but there were some strongly held minority opinions. One person said leaving too much open space would make the site "cemetery-like" while another said that it would be okay to build on the towers' footprints if it would keep jobs from moving out of state. Restoring the street grid through the site was not as high a priority.

There were divergent opinions about whether it is advisable to build extremely tall structures, but most people favored seeing something noteworthy constructed. Asked about the need to add a major symbol or structure to the skyline, 57 percent on both July 20 and July 22 said it was

very important. Participants in the online dialogue were more interested in using height to make a statement, with 71 percent saying that it is very important to add a signature element to the skyline.

Asked about the six plans as settings for the memorial, only the Memorial Promenade scheme was considered reasonably good: 56 percent of the July 20 participants thought it was adequate, good or excellent, although at the July 22 session, only 37 percent thought it was at least adequate. Victims' families, however, liked it much less. On the 20th, 64 percent of victims' relatives described the Memorial Promenade concept as a poor setting. The Memorial Plaza scheme went over best with the families, with 70 percent saying it is at least adequate.

Most important, however, the participants in "Listening to the City" made it clear that they believed that restoring the vitality of Lower Manhattan means more than arranging buildings and trees; they demonstrated a strong sense that decision makers must tackle the area's economic, housing and transportation needs. "Listening to the City" dealt with these issues as well in a wide-ranging discussion titled "Rebuilding Lives."

# Memorial

## Mission Statement

We create this memorial to honor the 3,042 innocent lives lost in the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 when American Flight 11 and United Flight 175 crashed into and destroyed the World Trade Center Towers, American Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, and United



Flight 93 crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and when the World Trade Center was bombed on

February 26, 1993. These were attacks on our loved ones, our cities, our nation, our way of life and our very freedom. We respectfully honor those who died and those who survived and carried on, those who came

to help and those who risked their lives to save others, and those brave and compassionate citizens from around the world who stood with us in our time of need.

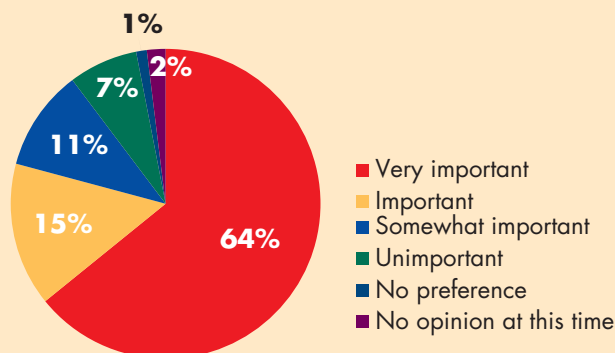
For all who come to learn and understand, we dedicate this memorial to the unfulfilled dreams of those lost, to our country and the strength of our democracy, to our resolve to preserve an open, diverse and free society, to our determination to remain ever vigilant in order to safeguard our nation and to those peoples around the world who unite with us in a joint quest to end hatred, ignorance, intolerance and strife and promote peace.

With the horrors of September 11 still fresh to so many people, "Listening to the City" participants were keenly interested in making sure that an appropriate memorial is erected. Nikki Stern, whose husband, Jim Potorti, a vice president at Marsh & McLennan, died at One World Trade Center, read a mission statement for a memorial that was drafted by the families advisory council of the LMDC. This statement became the starting point for a discussion about what the memorial should commemorate, whom it should be for and what it should look like.

The discussion generated hundreds of ideas. It gave people a chance to talk, often in emotional terms, about how they coped in the aftermath of the attacks and to express their gratitude for the courage and sacrifice that so many people displayed. People spoke again about their admiration for the heroism displayed on September 11 and they reflected on the sense of unity and resolve that followed the attacks. Many wanted these elements to be reflected in the memorial as a record of the profound ways people were affected by the events of September 11.

A fairly large number of participants said they agreed with the thrust of the mission statement. About 15 percent of those who commented on the statement described it as capturing their feelings well. Many thought it was appropriate that the families had so much influence in crafting the statement; because so many victims

### Importance of Linking Planning of the Memorial to Planning of the Rest of the Site



Note: Combined results from both Javits forums

**“I hope that the space will be used in a way that promotes peace and understanding and educates people worldwide to prevent future such occurrences.”** — Participant

# Rebuilding Lives

**“[After September 11] our world grew smaller, but the sense of family grew larger”**

— Participant

disappeared, the memorial will be the only place where many families can grieve. There was strong support, though, for a broadly inclusive design process.

But although the general tone of the statement won support, there was considerable debate about individual points in it, including whether the memorial should focus only on the World Trade Center, on the broader events of September 11 or on victims of terrorism in general. There was discussion about how to remember those killed in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and how to recognize rescue workers and victims from other countries. Online participants engaged in some respectful debate about the level of involvement the victims' families should have during the planning and design of the memorial.

People also seized this discussion as an opportunity to volunteer ideas for what a memorial should look like. Many said the names of the victims must be incorporated to help preserve the essence of each person who was killed. One person suggested a "memorial bell" that would toll every September 11. Another recommended an eternal flame. The more unusual recommendations included erecting 110-story flagpoles and sky-scraping windmills. Quite a few participants wanted the memorial to incorporate water or living elements such as trees and flowers.

**“If Lower Manhattan is to become a vibrant 24/7 community, it must have parks, housing and cultural institutions. Healthy communities are diverse.”**

— Participant

The events of September 11 destroyed more than buildings – the lives of people throughout the region were seriously disrupted by the physical, economic and emotional upheaval that the attacks caused. Seeking ways to repair this damage was an important focus of "Listening to the City."

Participants emphasized that the futures of Lower Manhattan, New York City and the metropolitan region rest on the decisions that will be made about the World Trade Center site and the surrounding area. Rebuilding, therefore, also means addressing a range of issues, among them economic development, transportation, the environment, housing, neighborhood amenities and safety. "Rebuilding Lives" gave participants an opportunity to expand their discussion of these issues, which they had also touched upon during other parts of the forum.

## Economic Development and Jobs

Even before September 11, Lower Manhattan – the birthplace of New York City and the nation's traditional financial center – was losing employers to Midtown, New Jersey and other parts of the metropolitan area. In discussing the economic future of downtown Manhattan, "Listening to the City" participants talked about whether the area should continue to rely on the financial industry, what

steps might be taken to attract a more diverse array of businesses, how to help those who lost jobs as a result of September 11 and how to make sure that recovery spreads to nearby neighborhoods, including Chinatown and the Lower East Side.

"Listening to the City" participants strongly expressed a desire to see Lower Manhattan become a more diverse and complete community. Improved transportation, affordable housing and amenities were seen as important ways to spur economic development. Job creation and training programs also ranked as important with many participants, while some people wanted to see financial incentives used to attract business. Notably, a number of people cautioned against letting commercial interests outweigh others, such as the quality of life of area residents.

Asked to choose the most important idea from their discussions of economic development issues, 27 percent of July 20 participants said it was the need to promote a diverse mix of businesses in Lower Manhattan without diminishing the area's strength as a financial cen-

**“Jobs, jobs, jobs, jobs, jobs”**

— Participant



# Rebuilding Lives



ter. Creating jobs and job-training programs for people of all income levels, especially those affected by September 11, came in a close second, with 26 percent choosing it as most important. Promoting tourism and other activities downtown and in Chinatown was selected by 19 percent. Another 16 percent said tax incentives to draw businesses and residents were most important.

Among the July 22 participants, job creation and training programs scored highest, with 26 percent identifying this as the top economic development priority. A quarter of the participants selected balancing commercial and residential interests, while 24 percent chose business diversity, with an emphasis on supporting small business.

## Transportation

There was a strong consensus that transportation improvements are critical if Lower Manhattan is to recover and thrive as a business center. Participants said that simply rebuilding the transit lines that were damaged on September 11 is not enough – service must be expanded and the neighborhood must be better connected to the rest of the region. People

called for bringing suburban commuter railroads directly into downtown Manhattan, adding new ferry routes to Brooklyn, Queens and New Jersey, connecting the New Jersey PATH trains with the city subway and building new rapid transit lines such as the Second Avenue subway. Many pointed out that tying all of the region's diverse transit services together downtown would make it easier not only to connect from one line to another, but would also create new ways to travel east-west and north-south through the congested Financial District.

**“If [there are] not enough resources for all transportation improvements, plans must be fair in selecting projects that help residents and needs of all boroughs and people of all incomes.”**

— Participant

On July 20, 38.9 percent of participants said the most important transportation goal should be expanding service, including bringing commuter trains directly downtown and providing better access to nearby neighborhoods such as Chinatown. Another 16.5 percent said reducing car and truck traffic and encouraging alternative vehicles such as bicycles should be the top goal. Creating new transportation financing mechanisms, such as a commuter tax, congestion pricing and lower bus and subway fares, was most important to 11.4 percent. Improving pedestrian circulation was the first choice of 7.4 percent. A number of participants also mentioned the need to make transportation facilities accessible to the disabled.

Many in the July 22 group, 39.8 percent, said the most important trans-

portation-related issue is the need to promote mass transit and non-polluting modes such as cycling and walking. Another 16.5 percent said a transit hub with connections to suburban buses and railroads was most important while 15.5 percent said the key goal should be creating a grand gateway hub for the area.

## Housing and Civic Amenities

There was a strong consensus that providing housing for people in all income groups is critical to sustaining the city's economy and helping Lower Manhattan recover and become a vibrant round-the-clock community. Therefore, short- and long-term solutions to New York's perpetual housing shortage received considerable attention at "Listening to the City." Many participants said the plans that they had seen for the Trade Center site paid too little attention to this issue.

Some also saw the rebuilding of downtown Manhattan as an opportunity to provide much needed low-, moderate- and middle-income housing and to improve conditions in crowded Chinatown. Further, many participants asserted that providing accessible, affordable housing is a way to enable everyone to benefit from the large public expenditures that will be made in Lower Manhattan; and to ensure that the end result is a community that reflects values such as diversity and opportunity that help define New York.

Polled on July 20, a majority of the participants said a top goal should be creating affordable housing, including housing for senior citizens. Affordable housing for a diverse range of income levels was also a key goal for those who participated in the July 22 session – 34 percent identified mixed-income housing, with special consid-

**“Include affordable housing so that people working in the area can also live in the area.”**

— Participant

eration for September 11 survivors, as a priority. In addition, 35 percent said it is important to bring cultural and civic amenities to the neighborhood to help attract residents.

Participants reinforced the importance of housing when asked to select the most vital piece of advice they would give planners considering the future of the World Trade Center site. Twenty-five percent said they thought developing multiple uses on the World Trade Center property, including hous-

ing and neighborhood services were most important. Only the desire to see a more competitive design process scored higher on this question, with 29 percent.

Many people also said there should be a cultural component to the redevelopment to help turn Lower Manhattan into a more vibrant neighborhood. They said they envisioned performing arts spaces, galleries, movie theaters, museums, restaurants and other facilities. Such amenities, they noted, would help attract tourism and economic activity not only to the immediate area of the Trade Center site, but to nearby neighborhoods as well. Participants encouraged the creation of something unique, not merely a duplication of the kinds of cultural amenities already available elsewhere in the city.

## Environment and Safety

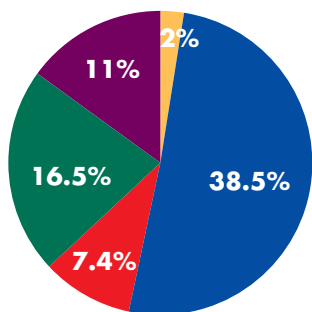
Widespread concerns remain about the quality of the air in Lower Manhattan, and many people asked that health services be expanded for those who live and work in the area. In addition, they recommended that mental health services be maintained to help those who continue to have difficulty coping with the effects of the terrorist attack.

Some 21 percent of the participants on July 20 also said it was important for the city to develop an environmental plan for downtown Manhattan that deals with issues of air quality and hazardous materials and uses "green" building techniques, open space, non-polluting transportation and innovative ecological approaches that do not export pollution burdens to other communities.

Safety, both in terms of combating street crime and protecting against another attack, was also an important concern voiced at "Listening to the City." A few participants expressed fear that too prominent a development would simply invite another terrorist attack. There was also concern that officials were planning a new, densely developed project without considering how it and the surrounding neighborhood could safely be evacuated in an emergency.

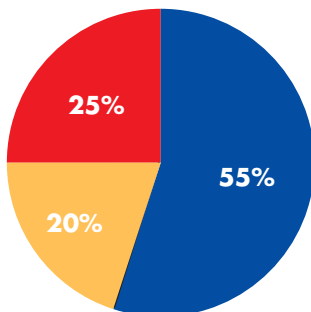


### Transportation\*



- Rebuild and improve existing system: PATH, link subway lines, accessibility and ADA compliance
- Expand transit service: LIRR, NJT, Chinatown, finish 2nd Ave. subway, expanded ferries.
- Improve Pedestrian Transportation: walking malls, street transport
- Reduce Cars and Trucks – bicycle access and other alternative transport
- Financial suggestions: commuter tax; congestion pricing; reduce MTA fares.

### Housing and Civic Amenities\*



- Provide affordable and middle income housing for all ages including seniors. Housing will help create 24/7 neighborhoods and attract business.
- Create arts on the site. Ideas range from performing arts, art space, galleries, and movie theatres.
- Green space is needed. Options to consider include open parks, a community garden, and recreation. Open up access to the waterfront on the west and east sides.

\*Results from Saturday only; Participants were asked to select the most important theme from their discussions regarding site options.

# Online Dialogue

**“I couldn’t come in with a shovel and a pair of gloves — but this has allowed me to do something, however small, to express my love and support for NYC and the victims.”**

— Online Participant

From its inception, an important goal of "Listening to the City" was to use new technologies to make it possible for a broad cross-section of the region to help set priorities for rebuilding downtown New York and the surrounding area. A key component of this effort was a two-week online dialogue in which 818 people working in 26 small discussion groups exchanged ideas, reviewed proposals and debated key policy issues.

Participants followed an agenda similar to the one that governed the Javits Center sessions, but the extended time enabled them to explore issues in much greater detail. In all, roughly 10,000 messages were exchanged during the online dialogue and important themes were sifted from it. Participants were able to make their priorities known through 32 polls based primarily on the themes that emerged from the discussions.

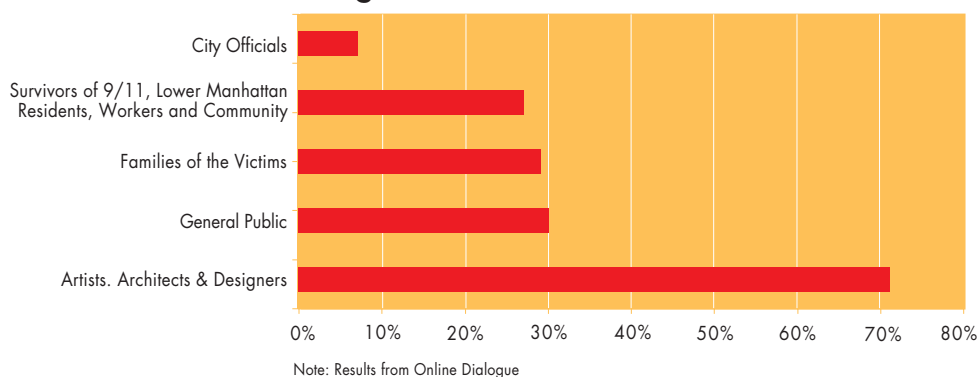
In some cases, the online dialogue echoed the opinions expressed in the other "Listening to the City" sessions. But it also yielded some unique ideas and provided additional perspectives. Online participants, for example,

agreed that the city should encourage the transformation of Lower Manhattan into a thriving community served by a large, modern transit hub and linked to Battery Park City by a new public space over a buried West Street. A large number of downtown residents, however, objected to the depression of West Street, saying it would increase pedestrian traffic on quiet residential blocks and force them to endure the hassles of a long-term construction project in their backyards.

In addition, online participants in large numbers emphasized the importance of giving the downtown skyline a focal point, with 60 percent supporting a new structure as tall or taller than the World Trade Center. They also suggested that reestablishing the financial industry in Lower Manhattan would be the best way to drive growth in the neighborhood. There was a strong feeling that housing does not belong on the 16-acre World Trade Center site itself, but should be built nearby. "The city needs housing," one person wrote, "but not here."

The online participants were divided into groups of about 30, with assignments made by computer to ensure that each group included people with diverse backgrounds. Unlike typical Internet "chat" sessions, the online dialogue encouraged considered exchanges because participants did not have to be online simultaneously or respond immediately. Participants could read messages posted by members of their group and respond at their convenience. They could also follow the discussions underway in other groups and review a wide range of maps, letters from officials and other background documents that were made available online.

**Who should guide the design process in the design and creation of a Memorial?**



The small group format allowed people to develop relationships quickly despite sometimes dramatic differences in their backgrounds and perspectives.

Working over an extended period, people encountered ideas different from their own and participants found this inspiring and stimulating.

"Sometimes you don't understand what an issue is about until you start talking to people," one participant observed.

At the end of the online forum, more than half the participants – 55 percent – said some of their feelings or opinions had shifted as a result of the discussion. And 84 percent said they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the dialogue itself.

As with the Javits forums, efforts were made to replicate the rich diversity of the New York area, and to include people who were most directly affected by September 11. Nearly nine percent of participants were family members of September 11 victims and more than 12 percent were survivors of the attack. Almost 23 percent were employed in Lower Manhattan, 19 percent were residents and nearly 13 percent were displaced or unemployed as a result of September 11.

The online dialogue had a higher representation of young people, with 44 percent of registrants under 34 years old, as opposed to 31 percent at the July 20 event. Manhattan residents accounted for 45 percent of both online and Javits Center participants, but the other New York City boroughs were slightly better represented in the Javits forums, while non-city residents were slightly better represented online. Nearly 25 percent of online participants were non-white compared to 35 percent of Javits participants and nearly seven percent of online

participants were Hispanic compared to 10% of Javits participants. In addition, online participants tended to be wealthier than the group that attended the Javits forums in July. Another notable statistic showed that nearly half of the participants had never been involved in an online dialogue before.

The climate of the public discussion changed in the days following the Javits Center events and the online dialogue reflected this. During the dialogue period, for example, momentum moved away from the idea of restoring all the commercial space lost on September 11. As a result, there was somewhat less concern online about the Port Authority-LMDC concept plans and whether they provided an appropriate setting for a memorial.

Online participants felt strongly that agencies in charge of rebuilding should seek out world-class designers and make sure that efforts are made to revitalize the entire area. Some people also mentioned the need to make sure any development is not vulnerable to terrorists and is friendly to the environment. One participant noted that the best legacy the city could leave to future generations is "a downtown that works."

On specific elements of the concept plans, 50 percent said it is very important to make it easier to cross West Street and 46 percent said they favored a variety of different sized open spaces.

Asked about a memorial, 64 percent said it was most important that the memorial be designed for future generations, 72 percent said it was most important to include the victims'

names and 59 percent said integrating the planning of the memorial and the rest of the site is a top priority.

There was some debate over whether the families of victims have too much influence over the process of creating a memorial. Some supported the idea that the family members have a special claim on the site, while others believed that a memorial must speak not only to the victims or survivors, but also to people around the world.

Some participants feared that competing interests would lead to bland planning. "Don't let anyone get away with business as usual," a participant wrote.

The complete online discussion is archived at:

<http://dialogues.listeningtothecity.org>

**“The most compelling legacy of 9/11 will be the instant unified purpose that transcended everyone within a few minutes of the first tower being struck.”**

— Online Participant



# Impacts



"Listening to the City" proved to be an electrifying event that demonstrated the power thousands of people from all walks of life can exercise when they join together, exchange ideas and speak their minds. The Civic Alliance and the four sponsors of "Listening to the City" were excited by the depth and breadth of the discussion that the forum generated and they are gratified to have sponsored this unusual and unprecedented example of participatory democracy.

"Listening to the City" drew intense coverage from news organizations around the world, and those who participated in this historic event described it as thought-provoking and exhilarating. Many participants offered touching stories about the close, personal connections they made during the Javits Center forums and online. The Civic Alliance was especially gratified that several public agencies involved in the rebuilding process responded so quickly to the messages they received from the assembly.

Even before the July 20 meeting ended, public officials had pledged to go back to the drawing board to rethink the plans they had drawn up

and the assumptions on which those plans were based. Since then, further progress has been made on many fronts. For example:

- \* LMDC has announced it will open the planning process to five new design teams from around the world. These teams, to be selected by a panel recom-

mended by New York New Visions, a coalition of design professionals, will prepare additional concept plans for the next phase of the planning process. LMDC has instructed the teams to base the plans on a set of program elements, developed in response to public input at Listening to the City and other public forums held by LMDC.

- \* Of the \$21 billion in federal money promised to New York City, \$4.55 billion was earmarked for Lower Manhattan transit projects, a key recommendation of the Civic Alliance and a broadly supported initiative at "Listening to the City."

- \* LMDC has begun in earnest the task of creating a memorial, hiring Anita Contini as vice president to oversee the design process and related cultural activities. The agency plans to hold an international design competition for the memorial beginning in early 2003.

**"All around this vast room, you heard citizens saying politely to others, "What do you think?" and then listening — actually listening — to the replies. In this room "I" had turned to "we" ... and it was absolutely thrilling."** — Pete Hamill, *New York Daily News*

## Evaluations

*At first, some participants were doubtful that "Listening to the City" would make a difference. But the innovative, technologically advanced format, the openness and frankness of the discussion and the broad range of viewpoints represented won over many of the skeptics.*

*"It was quite wonderful to exchange opinions with diverse people. I have to say it changed my perspective of democracy," said one participant. Said another, "[it was] fascinating to see that 5,000 people are able to communicate." And yet another said: "It was great to interact with others and bounce ideas [around], especially since we were from different backgrounds and demographics."*

*Many said that their participation gave them new perspectives on the issues and reaffirmed their faith in the democratic process. Only 22 percent of those who participated on the 20th and just 14 percent of the participants on the 22nd expressed little confidence that decision makers would heed their ideas.*

*There was, of course, criticism of both the "Listening to the City" concept and the agenda people were asked to follow. Some participants wanted more time for discussion. Some thought polling questions could have been better worded. Said one person: "Some of the 'voting' questions limited our ability to provide expansive answers, but I'm not sure how it could be different with so many people."*

# Next Steps



**“If I had to sum up what I heard today in one phrase it would clearly be: Don’t settle. Do something great.”**

— Daniel Doctoroff  
Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding

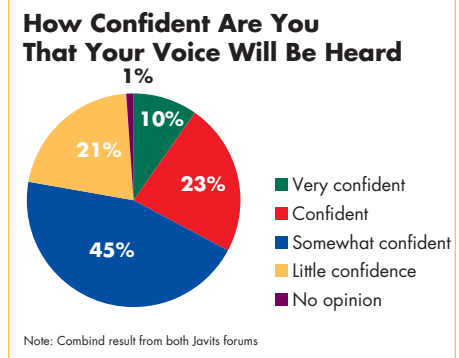
**“Let’s do this right the first time and take the time that’s needed.”**

— Participant

The Civic Alliance is committed to work with others to follow through on the ideas and suggestions that emanated from "Listening to the City" to ensure that decision makers take seriously their responsibilities to the public. Although a date has not yet been set for another "Listening to the City" session, the Civic Alliance hopes to host a similar event in the future at another critical juncture in the planning process, possibly during the Spring of 2003.

In the meantime, the Civic Alliance and its member groups continue to work closely with public and private groups to help shape the future of Lower Manhattan and all the areas of New York City and the region that were affected by the events of September 11. The Civic Alliance plans to be an aggressive advocate for its principles while continuing to cooperate with the LMDC, the Port Authority and other agencies to advance the rebuilding process. The goal is to ensure that future plans are based on regional economic considerations and infrastructure needs while at the same time promoting principles of social, economic and environmental fairness and sound urban design that were articulated at "Listening to the City."

One of the Civic Alliance’s immediate priorities is to work with its partners to help create a well-conceived and

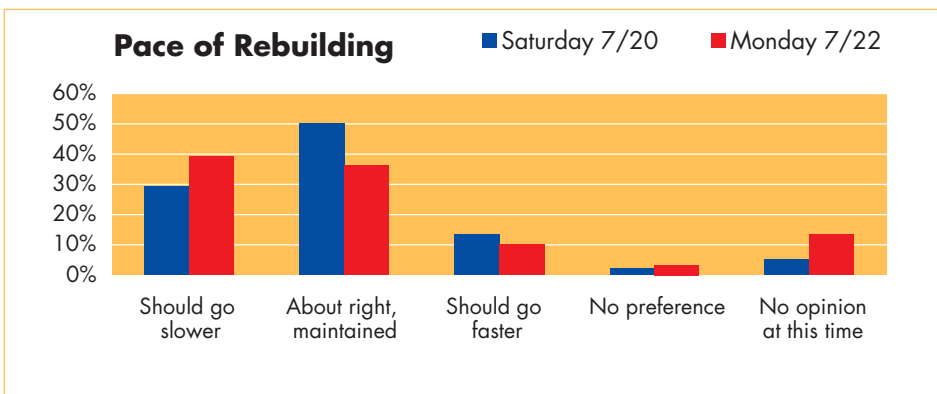


broadly supported development program for Lower Manhattan. In addition, the Civic Alliance has also announced that it sees the need for an economic development action plan geared toward job creation that is comparable in scope to the LMDC's recent incentive programs for downtown businesses and residents. The Civic Alliance also plans to continue to advocate for low- and moderate-income housing as part of any housing that is developed in lower Manhattan. The Civic Alliance believes that housing for people in all income groups is as important to the economic revitalization of the region as transportation and other amenities.

Finally, taking a cue from "Listening to the City" participants, the Civic Alliance has also recommended strongly that the process of planning for the World Trade Center site be integrated with the planning of the memorial, and that this process be based on the values that best capture the spirit and ideals of New York – a diverse and dynamic city that represents opportunity to people from all social and economic backgrounds and all parts of the world.

**“I hope the process remains open, inclusive and democratic.”**

— Participant



## Sponsors

The July 20th Listening to the City event at the Jacob Javits Center was organized by the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York and is supported by the Center for Excellence in New York City Governance at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University, the Regional Plan Association, the Pratt Institute's Center for Community and Environmental Development, the New School's Milano Graduate School, and AmericaSpeaks.

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**Report Produced by:** Katie Taylor, Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development; Petra Todorovich, RPA; Tara Colton, NYU/Wagner; Joseph Goldman, AmericaSpeaks. Written by: Mike Markowitz

### Photographs courtesy of

Eileen Colton Photography  
Jacquie Hemmerdinger  
Ron Shiffman

### For more information please contact:

#### Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York

4 Irving Place, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10003

For an electronic version of this report and to view more detailed data from "Listening to the City," please visit:

[www.listeningtothecity.org](http://www.listeningtothecity.org)

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