

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEW YORK NEW VISIONS, IMAGINE NEW YORK AND CIVIC ALLIANCE
CALL FOR CITY TO PLAY LARGER ROLE
IN FUTURE OF LOWER MANHATTAN**

Three major civic organizations involved in the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan today called for strong leadership and a closer partnership between the City of New York and LMDC at a moment when difficult decisions need to be made regarding the future of the World Trade Center site and Lower Manhattan.

“The public has been clamoring for the City to be more visible in the rebuilding process, particularly since the Mayor released his vision plan for Lower Manhattan,” said Kent Barwick, president of the Municipal Art Society, which spearheaded Imagine New York. “The Mayor’s vision and the planning process for the site should be discussed in the same breath.”

“If the City steps up its role in the rebuilding process, it will help clarify questions of control and decision-making for both design and planning issues,” said Mark Ginsberg, AIA, of New York New Visions. “Each entity involved should be charged with doing what it does best – the City working with LMDC to integrate the Trade Center site into its Lower Manhattan strategy, the State of New York coordinating funding and development tools, and the Port Authority concentrating on transportation and infrastructure.”

“We must look at rebuilding decisions in the context of the entire district and city, and the City is best positioned to do that,” said Robert D. Yaro, President of Regional Plan Association and Chair of the Civic Alliance. “By looking beyond just the 16 acres, the Mayor’s vision incorporated many of the guiding principles supported by the civic community in the type of plan that could revitalize all of Lower Manhattan.”

The civic groups said that the goals of expediting the redevelopment of the site and integrating it into the City’s broader plans for the revitalization of Lower Manhattan might best be served by transferring control of the site from the Port Authority to the City of New York. One way to accomplish this is by consummating the proposed swap of the World Trade Center site for LaGuardia and Kennedy airports, but the airports are extremely valuable assets, and transfer of the World Trade Center site to the city should not be made contingent on a resolution of the long-standing airport issue.

The civic organizations emphasized that the Mayor and Governor should be equal partners in selecting the next executive director of the LMDC. Together, the Mayor and Governor can identify a candidate who has experience getting large-scale planning projects done in New York City and working with City and State government, civic groups, and the public.

The groups also called upon the LMDC and Port Authority to work with the City to create and release a long-term schedule for reviewing actions that would impact Lower Manhattan. Marcie Kesner of New York New Visions said, “The best way to expedite the redevelopment process is to give Community Board 1, the Manhattan Borough President, the City Planning Commission and City Council an official role sooner rather than later – especially in assessing proposals that fall beyond the 16-acre site. We’re not looking for a drawn-out review, but we do want to see an inclusive process.”

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New York New Visions (NYNV) is a *pro bono* coalition of twenty-one architecture, engineering and planning organizations, which released last week its professional evaluation of the nine “Innovative Design” proposals commissioned by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation for the World Trade Center site.

Imagine New York, a region-wide public outreach project of the Municipal Art Society and nearly 200 organizations, was launched after September 11 to collect the public’s ideas and concerns about the future of the World Trade Center site and their own communities. Imagine New York just released its report *Imagine New York II: The People’s Response*, a summary of the public’s response to the nine latest proposals.

The Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York is a coalition of more than 80 civic, labor, business, academic and community groups convened in October 2001 to provide a civic voice in rebuilding plans for Lower Manhattan in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center. The Alliance was convened by Regional Plan Association in partnership with the New School University, Pratt Institute and New York University.

The three groups have collaborated on a variety of projects related to the future of the World Trade Center site and Lower Manhattan.

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