

March 26, 2004

RESOLUTION

Whereas approximately \$2.7 billion in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) were made available for economic development in Lower Manhattan after 9/11, to be administered by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), and after a series of allocations for business recovery and retention, residential grants, economic development and open space, only \$1.2 billion remain.

Whereas at the March 16 “Beyond 16 Acres” public forum sponsored by Fiscal Policy Institute and Regional Plan Association to discuss priorities for the distribution of CDBG funds, approximately 150 audience members ranked priorities for the funding, rating mixed-income housing at the top of the list, followed by local economic development, community services and facilities, arts and culture, and finally, a Lower Manhattan to LIRR and JFK Airport rail connection.

Whereas other community members and organizations have reinforced this message: a recent Pace University poll showed 51% of Lower Manhattan residents in opposition to the rail link, because its construction would “deplete New York City’s Federal cash grants,” and last July Community Board No. 1 passed a resolution recommending the CDBG funds be used for a range of non-transportation needs.

Whereas the Civic Alliance strongly supports implementing a set of comprehensive physical planning initiatives in Lower Manhattan in order to make the district a more accessible and attractive place to live, work and visit by improving the streetscape, enhancing open space, improving access to the waterfront and expanding a residential base of diverse incomes, among other improvements, and believe these measures could be financed by CDBG funds, at the same time creating new jobs in Lower Manhattan for many who remain unemployed since 9/11.

Whereas Governor Pataki has initiated a study led by the LMDC to evaluate options for providing a rail link from Lower Manhattan to the LIRR and JFK Airport, and will release the results of the study in April 2004. And whereas some business leaders and public officials have proposed to use all the remaining CDBG funds to partially finance this project.

Now therefore be it resolved that the Civic Alliance opposes the use of CDBG funds to finance the rail connection from Lower Manhattan to LIRR/JFK Airport, in favor of directing the funds towards initiatives that will improve Lower Manhattan’s attractiveness as a diverse, mixed-use, livable community and create jobs.

And be it further resolved that the Civic Alliance withholds judgment on whether to support the proposed LIRR/JFK link, pending the results of the Governor’s study to be released in April 2004, weighed with a comprehensive look at major new transportation investments for New York and real financing plan.

This Resolution adopted March 26, 2004 by the voting members of the Civic Alliance:

AFG Construction Management, Inc.
American Institute of Architects, New York Chapter
American Planning Association New York Chapter
Coalition of 9/11 Families
CUNY Institute for Urban Systems
Environmental Advocates of New York
Environmental Defense
Family Association of TriBeCa East
Fine Arts Federation of New York
Fiscal Policy Institute
Municipal Art Society
New School University Milano Graduate School
New York League of Conservation Voters
New York Metro American Society of Public Administration (ASPA)
NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign
Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA
Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development
Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund
Rebuild Downtown Our Town
ReHo
TIME/ To Improve Municipal Efficiency
Tri-State Transportation Campaign
University Settlement
Urban Agenda
Waterfront Park Coalition
Women's City Club of New York

Abstained:

Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE)
Regional Plan Association