

Draft Meeting Notes
Tuesday, April 19, 2005
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Center for Architecture

The meeting was brought to order at approximately 9:05 a.m. Bob Yaro welcomed the group to the Center for Architecture and invited the participants to identify themselves. A list of meeting participants is included at the end of these notes.

Bob Yaro noted that several events recently have moved the planning process in Lower Manhattan forward. Most significantly, the New York State Department of Transportation's selection of the At Grade alternative for the treatment of Route 9A/West Street near the World Trade Center site removes an uncertainty that had been holding up the process for over a year. Last June, the Civic Alliance had opposed the Short Bypass Tunnel option that was also under consideration, and therefore should be pleased with the outcome of the decision. Of course, Goldman Sach's opposition to the tunnel as well must have had something to do with it, Yaro remarked.

Second, the LMDC is moving ahead with a Draft Allocation Plan for the remaining rebuilding funds for Lower Manhattan. This comprises the overall focus of the meeting, and specifically the second half in which Kevin Rampe will directly address the Draft Allocation plan.

Petra Todorovich then briefly introduced Michael Samuelian, representing the New York City Department of City Planning to give a presentation on the conceptual East River Waterfront Plan. Petra noted that this plan was one of many of the off-site plans that the Civic Alliance has supported as part of a comprehensive overall effort to revitalize Lower Manhattan in addition to and beyond the World Trade Center site. The previous week, the Greenwich Street South plan was presented at the Center for Architecture, and the Chinatown Circulation Plan was scheduled for presentation later in the week. The Fulton Street Corridor Plan has yet to be released and the Civic Alliance is eager for it to be vetted with the public.

Michael Samuelian opened his presentation by noting that the conceptual plan has gone through much iteration, from the Mayor's Vision for Lower Manhattan, first presented in December 2002, to community plans focused on the East River waterfront and meetings with Manhattan Community Boards One and Three. Talented consultants, such as local SHoP Architects, Richard Rogers Partnership, and Ken Smith Landscape Architects have worked on the plan.

Michael put the plan in the context of 11,000 new residential units that are planned or proposed in Lower Manhattan and the need to provide amenities and access to the waterfront for existing and new residents. The plan focuses on approximately two miles of waterfront, with specific focus on the water's edge. It addresses problems such as broken links between the upland and the water's edge, blockages, lack of amenities and underutilized areas.

The plan also places the East River Waterfront in the context of a gateway to all of New York Harbor and a network of green spaces that can be connected by ferry, including the newly publicly accessible Governors Island, Brooklyn Bridge Park, East River Park and the Battery.

The major action of the plan is to create a waterfront esplanade along the East River Waterfront. The plan does not consider taking down the FDR Drive, but rather proposes strengthening connections under it, and placing activities in pavilions under the Drive to bring people to the waterfront. The pavilions would not block view corridors or connections and would be constructed in of light glass structures. They would house activities supported by the community, such as flower markets, dance lessons and performances, and other activities. Along the promenade, slow traffic areas for walkers would be separated from fast lanes for bicycles and rollerblades by landscaping elements, seating and planting. Since this section of the waterfront is almost completely south-facing, it will benefit from ample sunshine and support the growth of plants and trees. The plan also contemplates creative cladding material for the underside of the FDR Drive. This must be further researched to understand the technical issues.

The second major component of the plan is proposed improvements to the area in front of the Battery Maritime Building. The Battery Maritime Building is the terminal for ferries that travel to and from Governors Island. Governors Island, which will soon become a major public recreation area, will need safer and more attractive pedestrian access to the building as well as more ample space for automobile queuing and drop-off. The plan proposes to extend the mouth of the tunnel that currently surfaces in front of the BMB approximately 350 feet to the north, creating a new at-grade plaza in front of the BMB for these improvements. \$7 million for preliminary engineering and environmental review for these improvements is requested as part of this plan.

The remaining components of the East River Waterfront plan included targeted improvements to specific access points and piers along the river. New improvements or activities are proposed to Burling Slip, Peck Slip, Pier 15, Catherine Slip, Pike/Allen Streets, Pier 35 and Pier 42. The complete plan can be viewed on the New York City Planning website, <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/erw/index.html>.

After Michael's presentation, the floor was open to questions. David Dyssegaard Kallick of Fiscal Policy Institute spoke first. He commended the City on the plan and the improvements that had been made since the previous versions he saw. David noted that any proposals to build into the water will be controversial because of environmental issues. He raised concern over gentrification of the neighborhood and what this plan

might do to encourage it, and whether measures to create affordable housing such as inclusionary zoning could be implemented with the plan. He noted that pavilions could be very exciting, but asked who would own and control them, as well as who would be responsible for the overall operation of the Promenade.

In response, Michael replied that all the proposed improvements in the plan are on City-owned land. They are currently exploring a variety of different models for the operation of the Promenade, such as the Hudson River Park model, a City-owned and run operation, or an LMCC or Downtown Alliance scenario.

With regards to capital costs, the City is requesting \$152 million from LMDC for this project, which would cover everything in the plan except for the Pike/Allen improvements, Burling Slip and Pier 42, which are covered in other funding requests. The improvements to the Battery Maritime Building are estimated to cost about \$65 million, of which only \$7 million are requested in this plan.

Daniel Petterson asked, what uses have the community objected to in previous meetings?

Michael responded that they have suggested that pavilions not be used for tourist attractions, such as T-shirt or cell phone stores. Community Board Three is concerned about gentrification, singling out Starbucks as objectionable. However overall, both CB1 and CB3 have been overwhelmingly supportive. CB3 has collected signatures for a petition in support of the plan.

In response to a question about timing, Michael responded that it would take 3-5 years for the bulk of the improvements to be implemented once the funding is secured. The Battery Maritime Building is a ten year project. The cladding of the underside of the FDR drive would take longer.

Barbara Caporale raised the issue of environmental remediation of these sites, especially if they are to be used for activities for children. This concern was noted. It was also suggested that since the entire site is south facing, that solar panels and other alternative energy methods be used to support activities in the plan.

Nikki Stern stressed the importance of providing access to the physically challenged or handicapped.

Sound level mitigation from the FDR Drive was also raised as a concern.

Michael Bradley raised the question of whether active recreation could be incorporated anywhere in the plan, to which Michael Samuelian replied that the community was always supportive of basketball courts, while there was not enough room for tennis.

Next on the agenda, Bob Yaro introduced Kevin Rampe, President of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation to present the LMDC's Draft Allocation Plan

framework for remaining funds. Bob thanked Kevin for coming to the meeting to engage in a dialogue with Civic Alliance members.

Kevin opened the presentation by describing how the Draft Allocation Plan has responded to public comment gathered in LMDC's extensive public outreach process to date. The plan outlines five objectives of the LMDC for funding, and five categories of priorities for the funding.

The five categories include:

- Memorial complex
- WTC site (including public infrastructure)
- Planned high-impact, large-scale off-site initiatives
- Long Island/JFK Rail link
- Broader Lower Manhattan recovery and revitalization projects

He added that the priorities generally exclude categories such as venture capital projects, relieving debt, and operational costs.

Kevin went on to describe the process for allocating the remaining funding. Once projects have been determined to fall in the priority categories, there are several options for allocation. Projects may: receive immediate, direct funding; funds may be placed in reserve for the project; or the projects can be positioned for a subsequent funding round.

There are approximately \$735 million remaining funds and there have been over \$4 billion in requests for the money. The objective is to give the community an opportunity to comment on the process. On Wednesday, April 27 at 6:00 p.m., the LMDC will host a public forum at the National Museum of the American Indian at the U.S. Customs House at 1 Bowling Green. Board members and staff members of the LMDC will be present. The LMDC is also accepting written comment through May 1 by email on www.RenewNYC.com, and by regular mail.

Kevin concluded his remarks and the floor was open to comments and questions. Petra Todorovich noted that she was pleased the LMDC was able to attend the meeting and engage in a dialogue with Civic Alliance members. Previously, the Civic Alliance steering committee had consulted with the LMDC on two occasions to suggest that the LMDC conduct a multi-phase process for the allocation of the remaining CDBG funds. This is the first phase in such a process.

Nikki Stern asked the first question. She asked to clarify the process for fundraising around the memorial and whether she understood the process correctly to be that the LMDC was first campaigning publicly among corporate donors for the memorial, or whether they would be putting in a challenge grant from the CDBG funds and then fundraising to fill the gap?

Kevin responded that the Memorial Foundation has embarked on a public campaign for fundraising for the memorial. It is possible there will need to be some public funding put

into the memorial, but for now they are waiting to see how the fundraising process goes first. The LMDC's hope is that the success of the fundraising effort will reduce the need for LMDC money.

As a follow-up question, Nikki asked for Kevin to clarify how the memorial design and development process was proceeding in relation to the fundraising effort. How was the fundraising effort being conducted before the programming for the memorial and cost estimates are complete? Was it LMDC's intention to value engineer the memorial if the fundraising effort fell short?

Kevin responded that the memorial and fundraising efforts were on a parallel course.

Esther Regelson, a resident of the Greenwich South neighborhood asked Kevin to address the demolition of multiple buildings in her neighborhood. She asked, what are you doing to encourage residential development?

In response, Kevin cited the development of the Greenwich Street South urban design plan, recently released on April 7 at the Center for Architecture. This plan will aim to create additional housing units in the neighborhood by decking over the entrance to the Brooklyn Battery tunnel. The plan aims to provide more open space and amenities to the neighborhood, and take buses off the street by building a bus garage.

Bettina Damiani asked: what do you see as LMDC's role in protecting residents from being forced out by gentrification?

Kevin replied that the Governor and the Mayor have been involved in the allocation of funding for the creation of affordable housing. The hold-up has been creating the best plan for maximizing the funds to create affordable housing.

Paul Nagle asked for a clarification regarding a reported \$2.7 billion to be used in the Greenwich Street South plan. Kevin Rampe was not familiar with this figure.

Bob Yaro commented on the memorial fundraising, noting that he assumed LMDC and the Governor would ensure that the memorial received adequate funding, no matter how the fundraising effort of the memorial foundation goes. Regarding the site infrastructure, he asked in what ball park the funding directed toward site infrastructure might be. Kevin suggested it was likely to be less than \$100s of millions. Finally, Bob asked, what other uses could the \$700 million freed up by from West Street be directed towards?

Kevin replied that this depended on the restrictions of the Federal Transportation Administration. It's clear the funding needs to be directed towards transportation uses, but he's not sure about the flexibility of the funding to be directed towards projects such as streetscape improvements or transportation uses at the World Trade Center site.

Marc Ameruso asked whether the advisory committees of the LMDC would be consulted for this round of consultation for the Draft Allocation plan? And, can the Advisory Committee meetings be opened to the public and the press?

Kevin noted the suggestion to consult the Advisory Committees during this round of public input. Kevin explained that all advisory committee meetings (with the exception of Families Advisory Council and 130 Liberty) are open to the public. Minutes are posted on the two aforementioned meetings.

David Dyssegaard Kallick spoke next, and congratulated the LMDC, or the responsible agency, on the decision regarding the West Street tunnel. He remarked that the Draft Allocation Plan report is a little like reading tea leaves. The overall priorities seem OK, but the language of the objectives is not clear. It is difficult to discern, for example, what projects are including in these priorities and what are not? For example, it didn't seem like the small scale improvements described in the East River waterfront plan were in keeping with the "planned high-impact, large-scale off-site initiatives" described in the objectives.

In response, Kevin clarified that indeed projects like the East River Waterfront plan were included in the objective described as "planned high-impact" projects. All of the off-site neighborhood planning studies funding by LMDC money to date are included in this.

As a follow-up question, David asked, what about affordable housing? What about the community proposals?

These are not necessarily excluded, responded Kevin. He went on to clarify that there is an emphasis on capital funding. The LMDC Board is looking for projects with real impact that make a big difference. Kevin clarified that there is not an emphasis on a jobs program, as had been proposed by some groups in the past.

Andrew Flamm of the Downtown Alliance asked: what is the timing of the Deutsche Bank dismantling, and what is the timing of retail at the World Trade Center site?

Kevin Rampe replied that Port Authority recently put out a Request for Expressions of Interest for the retail, which should move forward shortly.

Regarding the Deutsche Bank building, they are anticipating sign-off by the EPA by early summer, which would allow them to begin deconstruction by mid summer. Any cost overruns over a certain number are covered by Deutsche Bank's insurance.

Michael Bradley asked: in light of the recent attention by Steve Cuozzo of the *New York Post* about delays in the rebuilding process, has there been any movement forward?

Rampe replied that, no, policy at the LMDC isn't driven by the *New York Post*.

Barbara Caporale recommended that a lump sum of money be allocated to community priorities, such as the preservation of existing affordable housing in the neighborhood. She suggested \$300 to \$400 million.

Lisa Frigand suggested that LMDC consider putting out a challenge grant for the memorial to aid in the memorial fundraising.

Sandra Edwards raised the importance of building an intergenerational community in Lower Manhattan. Her firm specializes in child-sensitive design, and would be eager to assist in ensuring that consideration of children shapes the design process as it moves forward.

Kimberly Flynn seconded Barbara's request that a lump sum be set aside for the preservation of affordable housing in Lower Manhattan. She also said she was disappointed to hear that job creation will not be a focus of the CDBF funding and requested that the LMDC reconsider this exclusion. She also stated her opposition to \$70 million being used for the Hudson River Park, citing environmental concerns for building in the river.

The questions were brought to a close and Kevin Rampe stated that after the conclusion of the public comment period in early May, the LMDC would come back to the public regarding funding decisions by mid-May to early June.

Bob Yaro thanked Kevin Rampe again for his presentation and for answering the questions of the group. A brief announcement period took place in which the time and place for the LMDC's public forum were restated. A presentation on Chinatown Circulation at the Center for Architecture on April 21 was also announced.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:55 a.m.

Meeting Participants:

Jonathan Oakman, Alliance for Downtown New York
Noreen Doyle, Hudson River Park Trust
Michael Bradley, Riverside South Planning Corporation
Ken Lustbader, Lower Manhattan Emergency Preservation Fund
Colleen M. Delaney, Esq.
Seth Johnson, Municipal Art Society
Al Butzel, Friends of Hudson River Park
Arielle Goldberg
Paul Nagle, Councilmember Alan Gerson's office
Daniel Peterson, ARUP
Claudia Green, Center for Downtown New York Pace University
Leslie Grinner, Urban Agenda
Kate Millet, LMDC
Melvin Galloway, LMDC

Tracey Hummer
Frank Sanchis, Municipal Art Society
Raphael Shammaa, Tactical Branding One
Ned McGuire, Civic Alliance
Roland Gebhardt, R-Dot
Bettina Damiani, Good Jobs New York
Marc Ameruso, CB#1 Member/ Self
Peter Marcuse, Columbia University
Barbara Caporale, Community Labor Coalition
Lisa Frigand, Civic Alliance
Matthew Blake, Urban Agenda
Andrew Flamm, Downtown Alliance
Esther Regelson, Resident of Lower Manhattan
Ramon Cruz, Environmental Defense
Kevin Rampe, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation
Stefan Pryor, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation
Joanna Rose, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation
Michael Samuelian, New York City Department of City Planning
Petra Todorovich, Regional Plan Association
Robert Yaro, Regional Plan Association
Chris Jones, Regional Plan Association
Ramon Cruz, Environmental Defense
Etta Sanders, TriBeCa Trib
George James, Environmental Simulation Center