



Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York
Testimony to the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation
May 28, 2003

Good Evening.

My name is Tom Wright, and I am with Regional Plan Association. I am testifying today on behalf of the memorial committee of the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York, which is co-chaired by Marian Imperatore and Diana Balmori.

The Civic Alliance is a coalition of over 75 civic, academic, community, labor and environmental groups that came together after September 11 around a vision that the rebuilt Lower Manhattan should embody the first true 21st century city, using the best practices in urban design, sustainable development and social equity, while creating a respectful and inspirational memorial at the world trade center site to honor the people who lost their lives on September 11.

One of the driving principles of the Civic Alliance is that the World Trade Center site should be planned in the context of a broad vision for all of Lower Manhattan and the metropolitan region. We were pleased with the selection of the Studio Libeskind master plan is that it places the memorial site at the heart and soul of the master plan. Now the challenge will be to select a memorial design that can be integrated with the rest of the site and Lower Manhattan, and can respond with similar power and strength to his master plan.

The Civic Alliance has passed several resolutions regarding the use of the WTC site that will have a direct impact on the context, approach and treatment of the memorial.

First we feel strongly that the placement of approximately 1 million square feet of retail space in the World Trade Center site is incompatible with the sanctity and respect that is due to this sacred site. The idea of a visitor visiting the memorial and then venturing underground to purchase a sweatshirt does not inspire images of one of our nation's most respected places. We need to maintain an appropriate separation between the memorial and other commercial and retail activities on the site.

Second, the Civic Alliance has resolved that the LMDC and the Port Authority should explore options to locating a bus garage in the bathtub of the World Trade Center site. While we are aware of the need to manage bus traffic of visitors to the memorial, the public deserves to be presented with more than one viable scenario for the design and scope of the facility. We would particularly like to see the team of Studio Libeskind

given an opportunity to integrate portions of the footprint, all the way down to bedrock, in their plans for the site.

Finally, we want to reinforce the assertion that there must be an opportunity for the public to comment on the memorial finalists. The public must have a chance to understand and debate the merits of the final proposals before the winning design is selected.

Never has a memorial been planned in our country so quickly after so great a disaster. We must plan with a long vision into the future for this place. The memorial should be powerful, beautiful, and moving. We must not be afraid to design something transcendent, because of the way this event defined and changed so many of our lives.

Thank you.