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“Listening to the City” Releases Preliminary Findings and Polling Results from July 20 and 22 Town Hall Meetings on Redevelopment of Downtown NY

21st Century Town Hall Meetings Impacts Decision-Makers

New York, NY - July 25, 2002 – Organizers of “Listening the City,” the town hall meetings held July 20 and 22 at the Javits Center to consider plans for the redevelopment of downtown New York and the creation of a memorial for the victims of 9/11, today announced that 4,500 people from around the tri-state region attended the two sessions. In addition, the organizers published the preliminary findings and full polling results from both days at www.listeningtothecity.org.

Key findings:

- The participants strongly rejected all six of the concept plans presented by Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), concluding that the proposed 11 million square feet commercial space, and 600,000 square feet each of retail and hotel space overwhelmed the site and did not provide an appropriate setting for the memorial.
- Participants wanted more majestic plans for the redevelopment of the site and bold, innovative designs.
- A high priority for participants is a memorial that is inspirational and serene and respects the now-hallowed ground where thousands died, including preserving the footprints as a “remarkable symbol.”
- Participants supported job creation, especially for those directly affected by the events of 9/11, housing affordable to all income groups, and the development of cultural institutions.
- 57% of the participants said it was important to add a major symbol to the New York skyline.
- Almost 90% said it is important to eliminate West Street as a barrier between Battery Park City and the rest of Manhattan.

During the event, Lou Tomson of LMDC and New York City Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff responded to the participants’ message, indicating that they would look at including more uses on the site, reducing the density and addressing the issues created by the leaseholders’ rights. Doctoroff added the day’s events would have a profound impact on the process. According to press reports that followed, the mayor has already indicated support of mixed-income housing on the site and LMDC and the PANYNJ are considering delaying the next steps in the rebuilding process and reducing the office space requirements based on the citizen feedback they heard during the two events. The

Saturday, July 20th event had 4,300 participants while Monday, July 22 added an additional 200 voices.

Beginning on Monday, July 29, “Listening to the City’s” online dialogues will give an additional 2,500 citizens the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process for a two-week period. Participants will have the chance to review proposals and share their reactions, and also to make concrete recommendations by voting on key issues. The results of these online deliberations will be reported to LMDC and the PANYNJ, along with the results from the face-to-face discussions. The organizers of “Listening to the City” will release a final report on the major themes from the day in August.

“Listening to the City” is sponsored by the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York, a coalition of more than 85 civic, labor, business, environmental groups and academic institutions, and is committed to ensuring that community voices are heard. Its main organizers are Regional Plan Association, the Center for Excellence in New York City Governance at NYU/Wagner, the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Economic Development, the Milano Graduate School and *AmericaSpeaks*, which designed the innovative meeting methodology, and facilitated the forum.

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