

Civic Alliance Meeting Notes  
Tuesday, September 9, 2003  
New School University, Orozco Room  
66 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
9:00 – 11:00 AM

Bob Yaro opened the meeting at 9:00 AM and introduced Jeff Zupan, senior transportation fellow at Regional Plan Association. Zupan gave a presentation on the options for transit access from Lower Manhattan to Long Island and the JFK airport, which is currently under study by consultants to the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC). Governor Pataki has asked LMDC and the cooperating agencies -- MTA, the Port Authority, and NYC EDC to determine the best alternative by May 2004. Funding for the project is uncertain. Zupan noted that providing a one-seat ride to JFK Airport has emerged as a priority among the downtown business community and public officials, including Mayor Bloomberg in his December 2002 speech.

The purpose of Zupan's presentation was to highlight important criteria for the consultants to the LMDC to use in evaluating the alternatives, as well as to inform the civic community about the different options that exist. Options fall under two general categories: service that can be provided using existing tunnels under the East River, and service that would require construction of a new tunnel. While the construction of a new tunnel is clearly more expensive; it provides the benefit of not disrupting existing subway service, and may provide additional benefits to the transit system.

"Fatal flaw" criteria, which would eliminate options in his opinion, included:

- Negative impacts on subway riders
- Lack of one-seat ride from Kennedy Airport

Zupan also indicated other important criteria that should guide the selection of a preferred alternative:

- Service at reasonably high speed
- Good distribution throughout Lower Manhattan, i.e., more than one station in Lower Manhattan
- Through service to maximize value and more attract riders
- Well-located stations in Downtown Brooklyn

Zupan presented a range of options to the group, some of which provided service in downtown Brooklyn and others that would provide quicker service but less connectivity to downtown Brooklyn options. In Lower Manhattan some options could connect to the Second Avenue Subway, terminate in the vicinity of the World Trade Center site, or provide through service to the E or N/R subway lines.

While all options require further study, Zupan drew the following conclusions at the end of the presentation.

- Only a new tunnel can carry both AirTrain and new transit service without negative impacts on the subway system and its riders
- Distribution in LM criteria is met best by options that connect to Second Avenue Subway or existing subway lines.
- All alternatives could connect LIRR riders to Lower Manhattan with fast, frequent, two-seat ride.
- All alternatives could connect JFK to Lower Manhattan with fast, frequent one-seat ride.
- Alternatives with stops in the Metrotech / Borough Hall area of Downtown Brooklyn would serve it best.
- Alternatives that link to the SAS with a branch to WTC vicinity are likely to provide the most rider benefits among the “new tunnel” alternatives.
- MTA reluctant to “load on” more to SAS, given federal processes.
- The physical and operating feasibility of all alternatives are unproven.

Comments and discussion:

Numerous alliance members spoke up that it would be useful to look at a broader spectrum of transportation options for increasing mobility between Lower Manhattan and the rest of the region, not just to and from Long Island. They desired an evaluation of different costs and benefits of a greater range of options for rebuilding measures as well.

Al Papp indicated that access to Newark Airport was more important than access to JFK, arguing that the extension of PATH to Newark Airport is to be preferred to all the options to JFK. Zupan disagreed, suggesting that the airports are of equal importance.

Paul Epstein made the point that this focus by the downtown business community and others on providing JFK/ Long Island access reflected the goal of perpetuating Lower Manhattan as primarily a financial district in the future. He raised the question that if Lower Manhattan were to grow in different ways, perhaps towards more creative industries like publishing and advertising (as explored in the civic alliance planning workshop) would one-seat ride to the airport be such a priority?

Another Lower Manhattan resident, Gail Karlsson noted that one-seat ride airport access is not necessarily the top priority of local residents. Maurice Paprin commented that these transportation options were “pie in the sky,” since the outlook for federal funding of transit investments is growing increasingly dim. There was general consensus that the Civic Alliance should pursue further study of different transportation investment options and the costs and financing available for the remaining rebuilding efforts. It was noted the financing aspect will be in part the subject of next month’s meeting on October 14.

Beverly Dolinsky indicated that the PCAC has been promoting the short-term and inexpensive alternative of putting back in operation an improved version of the “Plane to the Train,” but the MTA has rejected it.

Next on the agenda, Petra Todorovich gave a brief overview of the goals that the Civic Alliance established for itself when it came together almost two years ago, and what progress it has made towards achieving those goals. She described the Civic Alliance’s initial objectives in 2001 as to:

- Create an open democratic process to advance rebuilding plans.
- Provide an umbrella for all groups engaged in the process to share ideas and reach broad consensus on strategies and necessary actions.
- “Raise the bar” for public debate over the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan’s future.
- Promote an expedited process for rebuilding and an ongoing advocacy process to ensure necessary public follow through and investment in downtown.
- Ensure that principles of equity and social justice guide all aspects of the rebuilding process.

Of these goals, she assessed that the Civic Alliance has achieved great success in achieving some of its objectives, particularly in creating a lasting forum for the exchange of information and consensus building among different interest groups in New York, and by promoting public participation and dialogue at “Listening to the City.” However, as the rebuilding process now moves into the implementation phase, numerous challenges present themselves related to a schedule for decision making tied to the official process. For discussion only, she proposed five immediate objectives for the Civic Alliance in the coming 6 – 12 months:

- Reduce the program for commercial office and retail space at the World Trade Center site in order to implement a development plan that reflective of the economic need of the greater district and city. (This objective is tied to the EIS process)
- Monitor the study of transit access to JFK Airport and promote the best alternative.
- Ensure that allocation of remaining rebuilding funds, including \$1.2 billion in CDBG funds, is allocated in a way that benefits the public interest.
- Promote public participation and dialogue in the review of memorial competition finalists.
- Continue to promote comprehensive development strategies for all of Lower Manhattan, to implement street management, a public realm strategy, waterfront access, historic preservation, affordable housing and increased environmental quality and green space.

A discussion followed. Numerous meeting participants expressed the need to include a focus on sustainability in the objectives of the Civic Alliance over the next year. As we enter the implementation phase, the crafting of design guidelines and whether they will

require sustainable design/ high performance building standards is of utmost importance. It was noted that the green buildings group of the Civic Alliance has been particularly active lately, and with the recent launching of Green Ground Zero, now is a crucial time to increase advocacy related to implementing sustainable design systems at Ground Zero and in Lower Manhattan. Petra agreed and said that she was sorry she left this issue off the list. It was also urged that special attention be paid to follow-up with the EIS process.

Ethel Sheffer commented that priorities should be positioned in the context of a timeframe for upcoming activities, i.e., what needs to happen in the next 2 years, 5 years, 10 years, etc.

Barry Benepe urged the group to focus on the World Trade Center site, and not neglect design specific aspects, such as movement through the site, and how Greenwich Street is treated.

Paul Elston urged the group to focus on larger systems for the World Trade Center site, which he divided into three categories: energy, goods delivery and waste movement, and water. He agreed that priorities should be positioned in terms of timing or annual quarters; and that advocacy should now be directed to the Governor, because his influence is the most important.

Rick Bell noted that the strength of the Civic Alliance is rooted in the experience of the different constituent organizations and the breadth of expertise. For this reason, he urged us to continue to approach problems holistically.

Al Papp suggested that we organize a meeting with Silverstein to make our concerns known.

To draw the conversation to a close, Bob Yaro suggested that the civic alliance steering committee finalize a work plan and objectives for the Civic Alliance based on these comments, and bring it back to the group.

Next on the agenda, Darya Cowan gave an update on the upcoming Imagine New York workshops for the public to engage in dialogue about the memorial competition finalist designs. She emphasized that opportunity should be given to the public before the final design is chosen to discuss and reach fuller understanding of the different alternatives designs.

The date for the Imagine New York workshops are not set yet because they depend on when the memorial competition announcement will be made, which is not certain. However, they are holding two sets of alternated dates: October 2, 3, 4 or October 16, 17, 18. They will be looking for facilitators, so Civic Alliance members should get in touch with her if they are interested in facilitating ([Dcowan@mas.org](mailto:Dcowan@mas.org)). The workshops will most likely take place at Pace University or St. Johns University, so participants can view the designs in the Winter Garden before engaging in discussion nearby. Satellite

workshops will also take place throughout the region, and they are currently seeking host locations for these activities.

After Darya's presentation some discussion ensued. Civic Alliance members were supportive of the Imagine New York program and thought the Civic Alliance should be as active as possible. Some members were displeased that LMDC was not conducting public outreach related to the memorial competition.

Finally, several announcements were made at the end of the meeting. Announcements related to upcoming events have been forwarded to the entire Civic Alliance by email.

Paul Epstein announced that several graduate students will be assisting the scorecard working group in its research this semester.

Petra Todorovich announced that an organization named Jazz for Peace had approached the Civic Alliance and would like to do a benefit jazz show on an upcoming Saturday night for the Civic Alliance.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45 AM.

Minutes submitted by Petra Todorovich.

In attendance:

Dean Edward Blakely, Milano Graduate School, New School University; Roland Gephardt, Jesica Pozzoli, R.Dot; Shirley Secunda, CB2; Ethel Sheffer, APA; David. D. Kallick, LCAN/ Fiscal Policy Institute; Coco Gordon, TIKYSK; Jeff Jones, Environmental Advocates of New York; Abby Suckle, Culture Now; Tracey Hummer, AIA; Ricka Mazar, CUNY; Sue Labouvie, Studio L'Image; Roger Herz, TIME; Barry Benepe, Fine Arts Federation; Maurice Paprin, BLCC; Paul Epstein, ASPA; Ken Lustbader, Lower Manhattan Emergency Preservation Fund; Gail Karlsson, Citizens Network for Sustainable Development; Bernie Tuchman; Josh Andrix, University Settlement; Bruce Rosen; Joel Farber, ReHo; Catherine M. Hughes; Helen Speck, Women's City Club; Ellie King, Women's City Club; Barbara Barrett, Women's City Club; Bill Shore, Institute for Public Administration; Paul Elston, New York League of Conservation Voters; Albert Papp, NJ Association of Railroad Passengers; Beverly Dolinsky, PCAC; Joann Byron, PICCED; Jeremy Reiss, Consortium for Workers Education/ Central Labor Council; Azza Manassah, AFGCM; Marian Imperatore, RPA; Rick Bell, AIA; Petra Todorovich, RPA; Bob Yaro, RPA; Jeremy Soffin, RPA; Jeff Zupan, RPA