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**“Listening to the City” Releases Final Report
from Historic Public Forums on Redevelopment of Lower Manhattan**

*Organizers Laud Government Reaction to Public Input,
Push for Inclusive Rebuilding Process*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 24, 2002

New York – Organizers of “Listening the City,” the town hall meetings held in July at the Javits Center and the online dialogues conducted in August, today released the final report of proceedings for the historic public forums on the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan. In releasing the report, now available online at www.civic-alliance.org and www.listeningtothecity.org, they applauded the active participation of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation and the Port Authority and urged them to see an inclusive, open planning process to fruition.

“Listening to the City proved that engaging the public in the rebuilding process is not only necessary, but can be extremely constructive and positive,” said Bob Yaro, President of Regional Plan Association. “Citizens spoke strongly and clearly about the need to make a bold statement with the rebuilding.”

By employing innovative meeting methodology and new technology, Listening to the City overcame the limits inherent in traditional town hall meetings, bringing a large group of people – 5,500 participated in the forums and online dialogue – together in small group discussions. As a result, the public’s voice was heard and impacted the rebuilding process.

“Listening to the City provided a historic moment in participatory democracy, charting new ground in terms of technology, scale and impact,” said Arthur Fried, Executive Director of the Center for Excellence in New York City Governance at NYU/Wagner. “Real New Yorkers had a say in the planning process, and public officials listened.”

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Based on overwhelming public consensus at the forums, public officials have slowed the planning process and promised to incorporate key elements from the forums in new plans, including:

- Construction of a transit hub along with key transit improvements
- Restoration of a street grid through the site
- Addition of a major symbol to the skyline
- Inclusion of residential housing in the rebuilding plans
- Grand promenade on West Street
- Inclusion of cultural elements

“For Listening to the City to have a long-term impact, the key elements now supported by LMDC and the PA must be combined with the public’s demands for community development, low- and middle-income housing and job creation to develop a program for rebuilding,” said Ron Shiffman, Director of the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development.

“The response of the decision makers to this round of Listening to the City has been heartening to all New Yorkers and the region,” said Carolyn Lukensmeyer, Founder and President of *AmericaSpeaks*. “The challenge in the future will be to ensure that the public voice continues to play a role in the rebuilding and creation of the memorial.”

“Listening to the City” was sponsored by the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York, a coalition of more than 85 civic, labor, business, environmental groups and academic institutions. Its main organizers were 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, AmericaSpeaks, which designed the innovative meeting methodology, and facilitated the forum, and WebLab, which designed and facilitated the online dialogue.

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