

Civic Alliance General Meeting
Meeting Notes
October 14, 2003, 8:30 – 10:30 AM
Center for Architecture

Rick Bell, Executive Director of the American Institute of Architects opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the AIA's new space at the Center for Architecture. He mentioned that this was the first meeting of at the Center following the opening Architecture Week.

Bob Yaro then introduced the items on the agenda. First, he brought to everyone's attention the latest news regarding the preservation of the Corbin Building on Fulton Street. MTA chairman Peter Kalikow recently announced that the Corbin Building will be preserved when the MTA renovates the existing Fulton Street subway lines and builds a new Fulton Street transit center. The Corbin Building may even be incorporated into the entrance to the new station. Yaro mentioned that several Civic Alliance participating organizations including the Lower Manhattan Emergency Preservation Fund, MAS, and RPA had been active in promoting the preservation of this building.

Next, Yaro introduced the first speaker on the agenda, William Wheeler, director of MTA's Special Project Development and Planning, to speak about the South Ferry station redesign project. Before Mr. Wheeler began, Yaro pointed out that the Civic Alliance recommended the redesign of this century-old station in the Civic Alliance Planning Framework it released in 2002.

Mr. Wheeler began his presentation by outlining goals and objectives of the project. Goals for redesigning South Ferry include overcome long-standing obstacles to better access and supporting the recovery of Lower Manhattan. The objectives of the project are to:

Correct functional deficiencies in 98-year old station (built 1905)

Improve connectivity to adjacent ferry and subway service

Minimize impacts to adjacent Battery Park

The current station is used by approximately 6 million people a year and provides an important gateway for tourists and visitors to the harbor and its attractions such as the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. The southern end of the 1/9 is also important to the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan because it provides direct access to the World Trade Center site at the Cortlandt Street station.

Existing problems with the current station have to do with the station's age and the fact that it was only built to accommodate a five-car train. The track's current loop configuration requires subway cars to slow significantly on entering the station and passengers are required to move to the first five cars to enter and exist. The station also uses mechanical "fingers" to extend from the curved platform to the subway car, which

the MTA would like to eliminate because it takes additional time and creates a safety hazard. The current station is also not handicap accessible and has only one exit for entrance and egress.

The MTA looked at a variety of options for a new station and track configuration. The option that they now prefer provides a two-track station with a full 10-car platform. It is positioned under State Street near the Staten Island Ferry terminal and would also provide direct access to the Staten Island Ferry terminal and Peter Minuit plaza and free transfer to the N/R. Mr. Wheeler discussed the impacts of the new station on Battery Park. He stated that the MTA has been working with community groups, including the Battery Park Conservancy, to minimize impacts on Battery Park. In response to input regarding the impact on Battery Park, the new station's closest entrance is just outside the park boundary. He noted that park advocates were pleased with the change from an old plan that was more disruptive to the park, but still had concerns about construction methods and timing, and the impact they would have on the park. They were also concerned about the 40 mature trees that would have to be moved and replaced during construction.

In summary the benefits on the project include:

Improved reliability and on-time performance

Reduced customer travel time

Accessibility for the disabled

Improved customer safety and security

Improved passenger connectivity to Staten Island Ferry and N/R subway

Supports economic recovery of Lower Manhattan

Mr. Wheeler then took questions from the Civic Alliance. The first questioner asked whether the connection would be direct to the Staten Island Ferry terminal, whether the new station would be climate controlled. Mr. Wheeler said that there are some engineering problems involving the water table that might prevent a direct connection to the ferry terminal, and that the engineers were looking into it. He stated that the new station would not be air conditioned, but that they were considering some cooling techniques like the ones that use at Grand Central Station, involving using chilled water and blowers to cool the space.

Mr. Wheeler replied to a question about how the new station would affect travel time along the entire 1/9 subway lines. The current station is a chokepoint which dictates the schedule along the rest of the 1/9 line; the reduced travel time from Penn Station could be as much as five minutes; and the MTA is expecting millions of additional visitors on that line when the World Trade Center memorial is built. A redesigned station would allow the MTA to add additional trains when needed (for example, when tourist traffic is heavy) and create time savings along the line. (The current travel time from Penn Station is 14 minutes, and it could be reduced to 9 minutes.)

Jeff Zupan of RPA noted that he thought the project was valuable to the revitalization of Lower Manhattan and that he had left a sheet listing the benefits of the project at the sign-in table.

Ellie King from the Women's City Club asked where the \$400 million for the project was coming from. Mr. Wheeler replied that the project was to be funded by the \$4.5 billion allocated for Lower Manhattan transportation projects by the Federal Transportation Authority (FTA).

In response to another question he also added that the project was slated to begin at the end of 2004 after an environmental review process, and finish by the end of 2007.

To wrap up the agenda item, Bob Yaro asked for a show of hands to indicate the sense of the room on whether the South Ferry station project was a project that the Civic Alliance should support. A majority of hands in the room went up. When he asked if anyone opposed the project, no hands were raised. Numerous participants did not raise their hands at all.

Next on the agenda, Bettina Damiani, project manager for Good Jobs New York gave a presentation on the status of federal funding for the rebuilding process. Good Jobs New York advocates for an open public process for the distribution of federal funding for the rebuilding process. They contend that rebuilding funds should be used in ways to benefit all New Yorkers located in all five boroughs, not just corporations in Lower Manhattan. In her presentation she stated that there has been a lack of public input thus far in how the state government allocates funding for corporate retention. Good Jobs New York helps arm nonprofits and community groups with the tools to have access to the decision making process and provide input about the distribution of funding.

There has been much discussion about whether New York City will get the full \$21 billion that we were promised. Of that money, approximately \$8.8 billion has been channeled through FEMA; about \$5 billion comprises Liberty Bonds; there is about \$3.4 billion in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding; and \$2.3 billion for transportation. Of all the money the CDBG funding is the most flexible, and is in the form of cash.

To the City of New York's credit, it is charging a 3% fee to developers who use Liberty Bonds in order to create a cash pool to be used for affordable housing throughout the city. However the fact that Liberty Bonds have not been used to create any affordable housing in Lower Manhattan poses questions about economic segregation and the type of community we are building in Lower Manhattan with funding for the rebuilding process. Commercial Liberty bonds are currently set to expire at the end of 2004. There is somewhat broad political support for extending the deadline so that New York City can get the full benefit of this funding; however it's unclear whether Washington would approve the extension. Ms. Damiani went through a list of projects that the Liberty Bonds have been used for, including \$650 million for the Durst/ Bank of America building in midtown. Ms. Damiani argued that this was not the best use of the funding in her organization's opinion, although they would be in favor of using the Liberty Bond's to spur development in some of the city's sub-centers such as downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City.

After Ms. Damiani's presentation, Petra Todorovich moderated the question period. She started off by saying that of all the issues that Bettina presented, two issues stood out as issues that the Civic Alliance might get behind. The first is that the process for allocating the CDBG funding should go through a more open public process. The second is that the deadline for using liberty bonds should be extended. Petra mentioned that Jennifer Brown of the LMDC has been invited to the next Civic Alliance meeting to report on the results

of the community meetings held this summer by the LMDC and the City in which the CDBG funding was discussed.

Sally St. Amand opened the questions by suggesting that the Civic Alliance might recommend that a set of standards be set in place to determine how the Liberty Bonds should be used. She noted that this tied into the work of the Scorecard working group. Ron Shiffman followed up on this point and recommended that some sort of exactions might be required of developers who were given the Liberty Bonds.

Ken Lustbader pointed out that John Whitehead, chairman of the LMDC had expressed his objection to the use of Liberty Bonds on the Bank of America project in midtown. Ellie King wondered if there was any downside to extending the deadline and whether we might wish to only extend it for a certain period of time.

Laurence Frommer asked whether there were already standards in place to determine which projects can receive financing by the Liberty Bonds.

Nancy Owens made several comments. Particularly, she was concerned about how Silverstein has plowed ahead with the design for World Trade Center 7 and how the new design does not provide the substantial right-of-way of Greenwich Street as local residents had hoped.

Paul Elston suggested that the steering committee discuss what kind of exactions or standards could be set for Liberty Bonds and bring the recommendations back to the general civic alliance.

He also called everyone's attention to green buildings standards and the need to focus on this issue in the near term. He also urged that we invite Kevin Rampe to the next Civic Alliance meeting to present options for the remaining CBDG funding, and other LMDC plans.

Joanne Derwin pressed the group to consider that accountability and timeline were the key factors that the Civic Alliance should push for related to the distribution Lower Manhattan funding. She also thought that CDBG funding should be spent now, since there are real needs now and that waiting is just hurting New Yorkers who need jobs. She also expressed her disappointment that we have gotten no follow-through from the LMDC following these summer community meetings in which they were supposed to be gathering input on how to use the CDBG funding.

Ron Shiffman commented that there should be a link between the Liberty Bonds and requirements to build with green building standards.

Petra Todorovich brought the meeting to a close at 10:00 AM. She said that the steering committee would consider standards or exactions for the use of Liberty Bonds and bring this issue back to the Civic Alliance at the next meeting on November 18. She also stated that a resolution would be drafted in support of the South Ferry station project of the MTA, and circulated in advance of next month's meeting.

Paul Elston suggested that the Civic Alliance vote on the issue now since the informal "sense of the meeting" poll had demonstrated unanimous support. Petra was hesitant to do so since many meeting participants were getting up to leave, but mentioned that there was a provision in Civic Alliance bylaws for an email vote, if we discover that the situation is urgent and a resolution is needed immediately.

Finally, she announced that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday, November 18 at Merrill Lynch in the World Financial Center. A representative from the LMDC will be

invited to present at that meeting. In closing she thanked Rick Bell and the AIA for hosting the Civic Alliance at the Center for Architecture.
The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:05 AM.

In attendance:

Andrew Sanchez	Hunter College (guest)
Laua Sanzel	Hunter College (guest)
Anthony Armstrong	Hunter College (guest)
Muntaka Abdul Samed	Hunter College (guest)
Ellie King	Women's City Club
Bettina Damiani	Good Jobs New York
Jim Morgan	NYU
Roger Herz	TIME
Tracey Hummer	Art in America
Gil Malamut	Hunter College (guest)
Paul Elston	New York League of Conservation Voters
Nancy Owens	CB1
Laurence Frommer	CIUS
Meloney McMurry	Millbank
Azza Manassah	AFGM
Bonnie Harken	APA
Ron Shiffman	PICCED
Arielle Goldberg	CUNY
Jen Hensley	Downtown Alliance
John Fontillas	HHPA
Rick Bell	AIA
Kate Brower	PCAC
David Woods	ARI/R.Dot
Abby Suckle	AIA
Joan Byron	PICCED
Petra Todorovich	RPA
Bob Yaro	RPA
Chris Jones	RPA
Jeffrey Zupan	RPA
William Wheeler	MTA (guest)
Paul Epstein	ASPA NY Metro Chapter
Sally St. Amand	
Darya Cowan	MAS
Jesi Pozzuli	R.Dot
Roland Gephardt	R.Dot
Jeremy Soffin	RPA
Ernie Hutton	New York New Visions
Joanne Derwin	Consortium for Workers Education
David Kallick	Fiscal Policy Institute/ LCAN

