

# YR3 AGENDA FOR ACTION

Three years into the rebuilding process for Lower Manhattan, the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown recognizes the extraordinary contributions of the City and State of New York, the Port Authority, LMDC, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and other public agencies in the post-9/11 recovery, planning and rebuilding process.

While progress is being made however, particularly in the expansion and renovation of transportation infrastructure, there remain major uncertainties surrounding the WTC Site rebuilding plans, architectural continuity at the site and implementation of off-site planning efforts. The Civic Alliance calls on New York State and New York City to direct the Port Authority and the LMDC to take the following three actions to speed the revitalization and recovery of Lower Manhattan.

1. **Allow maximum program flexibility at the World Trade Center site, particularly for sites 2, 3, 4 and 5.** Explore the feasibility of opening up sites 2, 3, 4 and 5 to activities that will maximize public access and civic benefit during the interim period before towers are built. Over the long term, study market demand for new uses that could include an expanded retail program, hotel/hospitality uses, and possibly housing, in addition to office space. Uses should be able to generate revenue for the Port Authority, support pedestrian activity and vitality in the district, and fit into the current master plan.
2. **Ensure unified and excellent architectural and landscape design.** Release the Draft WTC Commercial Design Guidelines for public review, incorporate feedback, and set a deadline for their adoption. Integrate the guidelines with existing sustainable guidelines and a site-wide public and open spaces plan. With multi-agency and public consultation, implement a structure for the administration of all architectural and sustainable design guidelines and decisions for future development.
3. **Implement a process and plan for allocating remaining CDBG funds.** Develop a timeline, criteria, and list of options for spending the remaining \$850 million in CDBG funding, with an emphasis on off-site planning initiatives.

## DETAILS and BACKGROUND

1. In light of limited funding for the rebuilding of the WTC site, an uncertain economic outlook and sluggish office demand, the leaseholder agreement with Silverstein Properties and the program for the World Trade Center site should be revisited. New plans should consider what public and private financial resources will be available for development, whether alternative uses such as housing may make sense for some of the remaining building sites, and interim strategies for animating the site before office space demand materializes.
2. Design innovation and excellence are broadly supported goals for the rebuilt World Trade Center site. However, commercial design guidelines drafted in February 2004 that would promote unified design for commercial buildings and public spaces throughout the site have been stalled indefinitely. Current development at the site is being governed by a stripped-down General Project Plan, which lacks the comprehensive scope and detail of the original Libeskind Master Plan. Comprehensive design guidelines for the WTC site that encompass commercial buildings, the memorial precinct and environmental sustainability objectives must be drafted, vetted and adopted before significant development moves ahead.
3. The opportunity to use CDBG funds to implement a coordinated off-site revitalization strategy along the lines of the Mayor's "Vision for Lower Manhattan," is slipping away. CDBG fund allocation has largely been haphazard, with a poor process for public input and a lack of articulated priorities for the funding. The Civic Alliance supports using the funds for a variety of measures including the creation of civic amenities, improved parks, streetscapes, and waterfront access, affordable housing, job creation and arts and culture. Now is the time to develop a coordinated plan and schedule for allocating the remaining CDBG funds to promote their maximum impact.