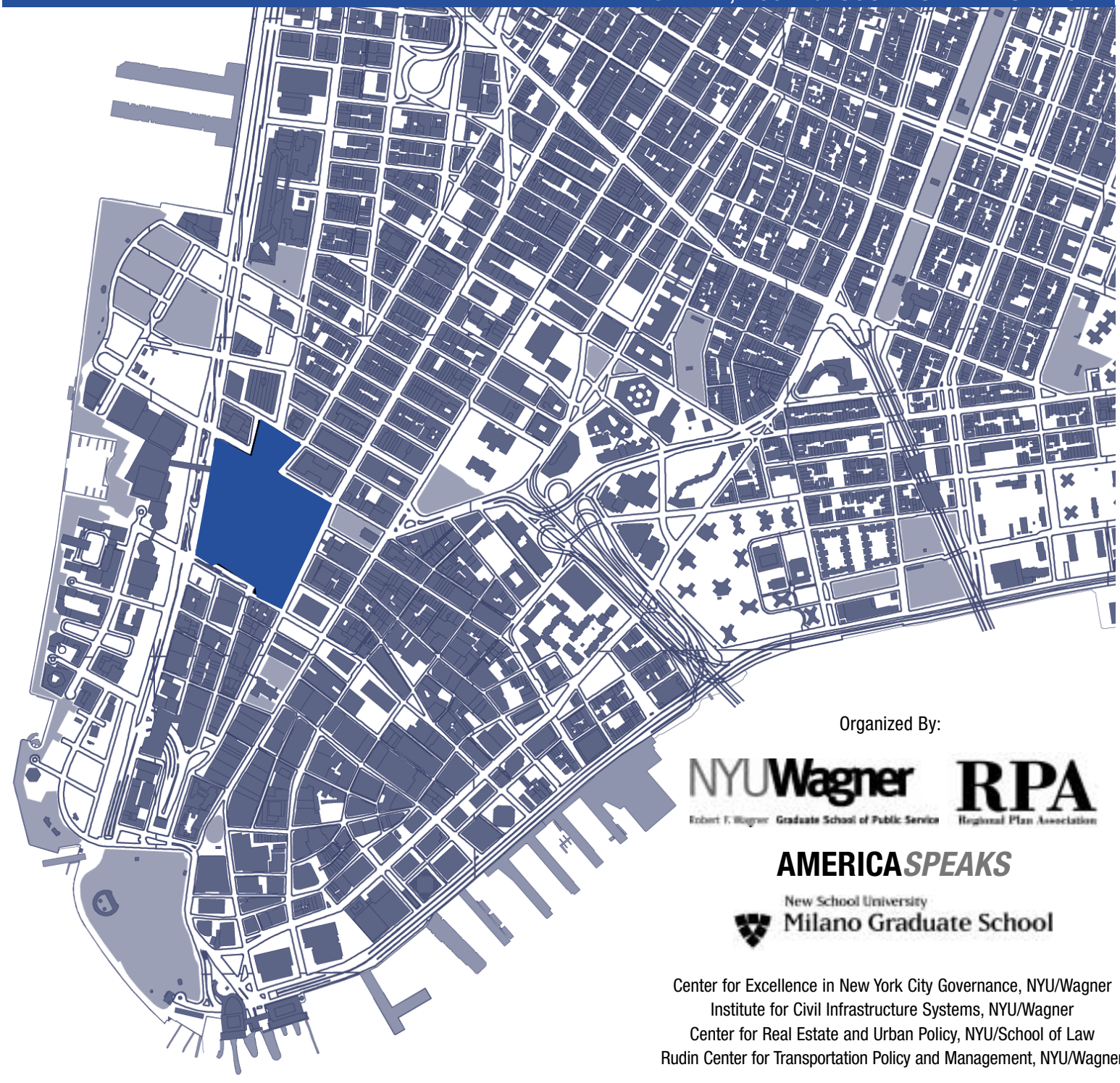
A PROJECT OF THE CIVIC ALLIANCE TO REBUILD DOWNTOWN NEW YORK

LISTENING TO THE CITY

FEBRUARY 7, 2002 | SOUTH STREET SEAPORT



Organized By:

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Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, NYU/School of Law
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THE CIVIC ALLIANCE TO REBUILD DOWNTOWN NEW YORK

CONVENER: Regional Plan Association

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATORS: New School University, New York University, Pratt Institute

CIVIC ALLIANCE PARTICIPANTS:

American Institute of Architects New York Chapter
Alliance for Downtown New York
American Planning Association NY Metro Chapter
Architecture Research Institute
Association for a Better New York
Business Labor Community Coalition (BLCC)
Center for an Urban Future
Center for New York City Law
Center for Urban Research
Century Foundation
Citizens Budget Commission
Citizens Housing & Planning Council
Citizens Network for Sustainable Development
Citizens Union
Columbia University Center for Urban Research and Policy
Commonwealth Fund
Community Board 1
Community Cartography
CUNY Institute Urban Systems
Design Trust for Public Space
Environmental Advocates of New York
Environmental Defense
Environmental Simulation Center
Fine Arts Federation of New York
Fiscal Policy Institute
Five Borough Institute
Ford Foundation
General Contractors Association
Guggenheim Museum
Housing First
Independence Community Foundation
Institute for Urban Design
J.M. Kaplan Fund
Landair Project Resources Inc.
Lincoln Square B.I.D.
Robert J. Milano Graduate School, New School University
Municipal Art Society
Natural Resources Defense Council
New York Building Congress
New York Community Trust
New York Immigration Coalition
New York League of Conservation Voters
New York New Visions
NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund
NY Lawyers for Public Interest
NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign
NYS AFL-CIO
NYU Brennan Center for Justice
NYU Center for Excellence in New York City Governance
NYU Institute for Civil Infrastructure Systems (ICIS)
NYU Institute of Public Administration
NYU Real Estate Institute
NYU Robert F. Wagner Graduate School
NYU Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management
NYU Law School Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy
Pace University
Parks Council
Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development
Prosperity New Jersey
Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF)
Real Estate Board New York (REBNY)
Rebuild Downtown Our Town (RDOT)
Regional Plan Association (RPA)
Riverside South Planning Corporation
Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Rutgers University
Surdna Foundation
Sustainable South Bronx
Take the Field
Transit Workers Union Local 100
Urbanomics
Van Alen Institute
Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts
West Harlem Environmental Action (We ACT)
Women's City Club
Women in Housing and Finance

Representatives of the following public agencies have also attended meetings and expressed support:

Empire State Development Corporation, NYC Department of City Planning, Manhattan Borough President's Office, Port Authority New York New Jersey

LISTENING TO THE CITY

Welcome to the Civic Alliance's first public conversation, "Listening to the City." This day-long event provides people who live and work in the metropolitan region with a chance to influence the rebuilding of Downtown New York in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks and destruction of the World Trade Center and surrounding area.

One way to honor and remember those who lost their lives is to establish an appropriate memorial, and to rebuild to make Lower Manhattan an even better and more dynamic place to live, work and visit. The redevelopment of Lower Manhattan demands a vision for the future that recognizes its history, its geography, its status as a world financial capital, and the people who live and work here.

The most valuable insight about a place is usually provided by the people who live and work there daily, or who have a personal stake in it. The residents, the workers, the survivors, the relatives, and the rescue workers of Lower Manhattan must have a powerful voice in planning the future of New York because they understand the real needs of the city and they will be most impacted by how the city changes. In this spirit, hundreds of people from around the region are coming together today to develop a bold vision to guide the rebuilding process. They come from all walks of life and each brings a unique and important perspective to the dialogue.

The redevelopment of the World Trade Center site and its surroundings will affect the entire city, the region and the world. While our planning must focus on Lower Manhattan, we must also consider its relationship to the rest of the City and Region. We have all been impacted by the events of September 11th and we all must be part of the solution.

The results from today and subsequent conversations will be used by the Civic Alliance to shape their recommendations for rebuilding Lower Manhattan. They will also be used by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation and other critical entities to guide their planning.

WHO IS THE CIVIC ALLIANCE?

The Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York is a broad-based coalition of nearly 100 civic, business, environmental, community, university, and labor groups committed to devising strategies for the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan. It has been convened by Regional Plan Association in conjunction with New York University, New School University, and the Pratt Institute.

The Civic Alliance's goal is to create a fitting tribute for those who were lost and to transform Lower Manhattan into the world's first great twenty-first century urban center. The Alliance will provide a forum for ideas and consensus building that will help government agencies create the best possible plan for this critical regional center, while generating broad public support for its rapid implementation.

THE IMPACT OF SEPTEMBER 11

The September 11th tragedy has touched all of us in many ways. The deaths of nearly 3,000 people in and around the World Trade Center, along with hundreds of others killed at the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania, have left many families devastated, and have had a profound impact on all New Yorkers, all Americans, and much of the world. The attack has also had an enormous impact on New York's economy and on the conditions under which we must live and work.

Economy and Business

The economic impacts are staggering. The New York City Partnership and the Fiscal Policy Institute have completed economic analyses of the attack. They estimate that 100,000 jobs were lost in Lower Manhattan; over one quarter of total employment for the district. Most of those who lost their jobs earned less than $25,000 per year. The finance, retail, and hospitality sectors were hit especially hard. Fourteen million square feet of commercial office space were destroyed and nearly 16 million square feet were damaged – over one quarter of all commercial office space in Lower Manhattan. The district also lost over 500,000 square feet of retail space just within the World Trade Center shopping mall, the third busiest in the country.

Over 700 small businesses were destroyed when the towers came down on September 11th. Many other merchants and small businesses in the Financial District, Tribeca, Battery Park City, Chinatown and the Lower East Side have seen sales volumes drop by up to 80 percent. Lost government revenues and increased operating costs have opened up multi-billion dollar deficits in the New York City budget and the New York and New Jersey state budgets.

Transportation

More than 500,000 people who travel through Lower Manhattan feel the impact in longer and more crowded commutes. The N, R, 1 and 9 subway lines and the Downtown PATH were disabled. While the subways have been partially restored, five stations, serving 128,000 commuters, will remain out of service for up to two more years. Private ferry services have more than doubled their ridership to over 60,000 daily riders, the Uptown PATH has added 50,000 riders and NJ TRANSIT's Penn Station trains cram in more than 30,000 extra riders every day.

Infrastructure

Local utilities were also hit hard. Con Edison lost two electrical substations at Seven World Trade Center and Verizon lost a switching station and other equipment. Both utilities, as well as the Department of Environmental Protection, will need to replace their networks beneath most downtown streets, which will cost nearly $400 million and disrupt access for businesses and residents for some time.

Security

Security is now a paramount concern. Concrete barriers have been installed on streets and sidewalks, which make movement much harder for pedestrians and vehicle traffic. In the long run, these difficulties may be relieved as security measures are integrated into the design of buildings and public facilities. These new measures will add still more costs to construction in New York City, already the most expensive construction market in the country. Security concerns have absorbed public resources that could be used productively elsewhere.

Quality of Life

Lower Manhattan is home to more than 50,000 people. These people, along with the rest of the metropolitan region who work, shop and visit there, have experienced countless other impacts to their daily lives, which cannot be measured statistically. Parents were forced to explain harsh realities of our world to young children. Others had to leave their homes amid falling debris, only to return to a massive cleanup effort and a chilling view of the area where the twin towers once stood. Their lives are a constant reminder of the events of the 11th. Some are not interested in returning. School children were displaced, and embraced in their new environments. Questions about health and environmental quality abound. Concern for personal safety has become a far greater part of every day life. The attacks of September 11th have impacted how we view ourselves, how we relate to one another and how New York City is viewed by the world.

We dedicate this work to all those who lost their lives and those whose lives were forever changed on September 11th.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN THE MONTHS AHEAD

As we consider the goals and objectives of the rebuilding process over the next several months, we will need to answer many questions. Among these questions are:

Building for the 21st Century Economy

- How do we create a healthy, diverse, and sustainable mix of commercial and residential development in Lower Manhattan?
- What relationship should a reconstructed downtown New York have with other economic centers in the City, State and Region?
- How can we maintain a critical mass in financial services and other business activities?
- What, if any, new business sectors should we try to attract to Lower Manhattan?

Improving Mobility

- How can we improve and expand the subways, transportation systems and streets that will be rebuilt?
- How do we balance the need to rebuild with the need to maintain mobility?
- How will concerns about security affect vehicular access to downtown?
- How can we strengthen regional transportation links to Lower Manhattan?

An Appropriate and Respectful Memorial

- What is the essence of what we are memorializing?
- How can we bring together and recognize the diverse memorials that have sprung up around the City, Region, and World?
- What kind of memorializing process do we embark on that involves the input of a wide range of those impacted by the tragedy?
- How do we balance the need to remember those who lost their lives with the need to restore Lower Manhattan?

Creating a Great Urban Space

- What opportunities exist for improving pedestrian circulation in Lower Manhattan? Should we restore the historic street grid?
- How should different building sizes, uses and types relate to the surrounding community and incorporate environmentally responsible practices?
- How can different land uses such as waterfront access, public space, cultural institutions, and others, rejuvenate Lower Manhattan as a neighborhood and destination?
- How can urban design incorporate new security and safety concerns?

Ensuring that Redevelopment Addresses the Needs of Everyone

- How can we ensure that the clean-up and rebuilding processes have as little environmental impact as possible and do not unduly affect communities of color or low-income populations?
- How can the social and economic needs of workers, low income populations, and new immigrant communities, which have been disproportionately impacted by the attacks, be sufficiently addressed as the City and State continue to rebuild downtown New York?

REBUILDING DOWNTOWN NEW YORK: THE PROCESS

The Civic Alliance has worked to ensure that its efforts are inclusive and coordinated with the planning process of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), as well as other public, private and civic efforts. The Alliance will work closely with the various constituencies that have a strong connection to the World Trade Center site, particularly the families of the victims. It will continue to build upon the excellent work already completed, such as the New York City Partnership's *Economic Impact Analysis of the September 11th Attack* and New York New Visions' *Initial Recommendations for the Rebuilding of Lower Manhattan.*

Today's Conversation will produce a shared vision for the future that will inform decision makers through the planning process and guide the work of the Civic Alliance's eight working groups that have been convened to address the critical issues involved in the rebuilding process. The visions will also be presented to the Municipal Art Society, New York New Visions, Rebuild Downtown Our Town, Community Boards One, Two and Three, and others to help shape their work.

Over the next several months, a draft report to the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation will be crafted by the Civic Alliance to assist LMDC in the development of a master plan for downtown. Thousands of citizens will review the report, as well as other ideas and plans being developed, at a Citizen Summit in the Spring. Following the Summit, a final report will be presented to the LMDC, as well as other relevant public and private entities.

REBUILDING DOWNTOWN NEW YORK: WHO'S WHO

Several public agencies will play critical roles in the planning and rebuilding of Lower Manhattan:

Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC): A subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation, the LMDC has the responsibility to oversee all aspects of revitalizing and rebuilding Lower Manhattan south of Houston Street.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey: The Port Authority is a bi-state agency that owns the World Trade Center site. Its board and both Governors must approve any plan to redevelop the site.

Federal, State and Local Agencies: The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, NYC Planning Commission, NYC Department of Design and Construction, NYC Department of Environmental Protection, NYC Department of Transportation, NYC Economic Development Corporation, Battery Park City Authority and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation will all play a role in the redevelopment process.

The Federal Government will provide much of the funding needed to restore Lower Manhattan's infrastructure.

In addition to the Civic Alliance, several civic groups are working to assist in the rebuilding process:

Community Boards One, Two and Three: NYC Charter-mandated organizations representing the neighborhoods of Lower Manhattan that provide residents with the opportunity to have input into community planning.

Municipal Arts Society: A private non-profit organization that champions excellence in urban design, planning and the preservation of the best of New York's past.

New York New Visions: A group of planning and design professionals led by the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the New York Metro Chapter of the American Planning Association that came together following September 11th in a pro-bono effort to address the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan.

Rebuild Downtown Our Town (R.DOT): A coalition of downtown residents, businesses, artists, colleges, professionals, designers and public officials seeking to develop a collective vision to shape downtown.

Regional Plan Association: The nation's oldest independent regional planning association, RPA has developed proposals to promote economic development, and improve quality of life and environmental conditions for the 31 county region.

The Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York would like to thank the following organizations for their generous financial support:

Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Commonwealth Fund
Ford Foundation
JM Kaplan Fund
Rockefeller Foundation
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Surdna Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts
Charles H. Revson Foundation
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
FB Heron Foundation
Fund for the City of New York
Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
Schumann Fund for New Jersey

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