

June 14, 2004

RESOLUTION: World Trade Center General Project Plan

Whereas the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) adopted on June 2, 2004 the General Project Plan (GPP) for the World Trade Center Memorial and Cultural Program, which will allow construction to begin on the Freedom Tower on July 4, 2004, signifying a major step forward in the rebuilding and revitalization of the World Trade Center site and Lower Manhattan.

Whereas the GPP outlines in broad terms the World Trade Center memorial and redevelopment program, streets and public open spaces, and depicts the redevelopment plan with some level of detail in a plan diagram, allowing room for modification as the process moves forward.

Whereas the Civic Alliance supports the expeditious construction of the World Trade Center site to minimize the length of disruption to the local community and hasten the revitalization of Lower Manhattan; and to that end, has consistently maintained that the current program of approximately 10 million square feet of commercial office space on the project site is more than New York's weak office market can absorb at the present time or by the project's build-out horizon year 2015 (an assertion supported by the LMDC's office space absorption analysis in the FGEIS), and creates more density on the site than is desirable from the standpoint of creating a comfortable and hospitable urban environment for pedestrians.

Whereas the concentration of up to half the one million square feet of planned retail space below ground will both adversely affect the viability and vitality of existing retail streets, compromise the setting of the memorial and related civic space, and have the effect of drawing pedestrian traffic below grade, especially since the first phase of above-ground construction (mainly the Freedom Tower) incorporates little or no retail in its ground floor level.

Whereas recent legal defeats suffered by Silverstein Properties indicate that the expected insurance payment for the rebuilding will be less than \$4.5 billion, an amount insufficient to rebuild even half the proposed program described in the GPP.

Whereas the Civic Alliance maintains the goal of stimulating the prompt economic revitalization of Lower Manhattan would not be hampered by a net reduction of density on the WTC site, and/or the substitution of civic, cultural, residential, or hospitality uses in place of some of the office program. In fact, the current program of 10 million square feet office space is likely to be delayed substantially if financed conventionally; or conversely, is likely to flood the market with unneeded office space if built as planned.

Now therefore be it resolved that the Civic Alliance urges the LMDC and the Port Authority to take steps immediately to reduce and adjust the overall program for the World Trade Center site, allowing for a greater mix of uses including new housing, civic, cultural, and hospitality program elements in place of portions of the office space program that can be built on a quicker time table and be supported by existing and anticipated market demand, and to reexamine the Port Authority's relationship with leaseholder Silverstein Properties to allow for such adjustments.

And be it further resolved that the program for underground retail be reduced and phased so as not to undermine the creation of above-ground retail at the World Trade Center site, and that the GPP in general should favor above-grade street activity over below-grade activity.

This Resolution adopted June 14, 2004 by the voting members of the Civic Alliance.

VOTING RECORD:

VOTES IN FAVOR: 15

VOTES AGAINST: 0

ACTIVE ABSTENTIONS: 2

Organizations abstaining from vote:

Environmental Defense

Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA

Civic Alliance Voting Member Organizations, June 2004

AFG Construction Management, Inc.

American Institute of Architects New York Chapter

American Planning Association New York Chapter

American Society of Public Administration New York Metro Chapter

Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE)

Coalition of 9/11 Families

Consortium for Worker's Education

CUNY Institute for Urban Systems

Environmental Advocates of New York

Environmental Defense

Family Association of TriBeCa East

Fine Arts Federation of New York

Fiscal Policy Institute

Municipal Art Society

New York League of Conservation Voters

NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign

Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA

Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development

Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund

Rebuild Downtown Our Town

Regional Plan Association

ReHo

TIME/ To Improve Municipal Efficiency

Tri-State Transportation Campaign

University Settlement

Urban Agenda

Waterfront Park Coalition

Women's City Club of New York