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TESTIMONY OF ALEX GARVIN, VICE PRESIDENT, PLANNING, DESIGN
AND DEVELOPMENT
LOWER MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
BEFORE NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
NOVEMBER 13, 2002, 10:30 AM

GOOD MORNING SPEAKER SILVER AND MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY. MY NAME IS ALEX GARVIN AND I AM THE VICE PRESIDENT OF PLANNING, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE LOWER MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION. THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY TODAY.

THIS MORNING I WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH AN UPDATE ON THE PLANNING FOR THE WORLD TRADE CENTER SITE AND AN OVERVIEW OF THE NEW PROGRAM GUIDELINES DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF OUR COMPREHENSIVE SOLICITATION OF PUBLIC COMMENT.

I WILL BEGIN BY EXPLAINING THE PROCESS BY WHICH WE MET THE CHALLENGE OF GATHERING PUBLIC INPUT.

IN APRIL WE LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR PLANNING PROCESS BY RELEASING OUR PRINCIPLES AND PRELIMINARY BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE OF LOWER MANHATTAN. WE THEN SET OUT TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT ON THESE PRINCIPLES BY SOLICITING FEEDBACK FROM OUR ADVISORY COUNCILS, AS WELL AS THE GENERAL PUBLIC. BASED ON WHAT WE HEARD, WE UPDATED THE PRINCIPLES AND BLUEPRINT.

THE RELEASE OF THE SIX INITIAL CONCEPT PLANS IN JULY BROUGHT THOSE CHALLENGES INTO FOCUS AND PROMPTED AN UNPRECEDENTED PUBLIC DIALOGUE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF LOWER MANHATTAN. TO GIVE YOU SOME INDICATION OF THE LEVEL OF INTEREST, OUR WEBSITE RECEIVED OVER 1.2 MILLION VISITS OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE RELEASE OF THE SIX DESIGNS WE SPONSORED "LISTENING TO THE CITY"- ONE OF THE LARGEST TOWN HALL FORUMS IN HISTORY- WHICH DREW OVER 4,500 PARTICIPANTS.

IN THE MONTHS TO FOLLOW, WE ALSO HELD PUBLIC HEARINGS IN EACH OF THE FIVE BOROUGHES AND NEW JERSEY.

THE SITE CONCEPTS WERE DISPLAYED AT AN EXHIBITION AT FEDERAL HALL WHERE VISITORS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THEIR OPINIONS ON COMMENT CARDS. THE PLANS WERE ALSO DISPLAYED ON THE LMDC WEBSITE THROUGH WHICH THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS SUBMITTED COMMENTS TO LMDC.

THROUGHOUT THIS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, OUR ADVISORY COUNCILS WERE INCLUDED IN EVERY ASPECT OF OUR DISCUSSION AND PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN GUIDING THE PROCESS. LMDC HAS EIGHT ADVISORY COUNCILS INCLUDING A FAMILIES ADVISORY COUNCIL AND A GENERAL ADVISORY COUNCIL COMPRISED OF ELECTED OFFICIALS INCLUDING SPEAKER SILVER.

WHAT MADE OUR OUTREACH CAMPAIGN ESPECIALLY UNIQUE, AS WELL AS DIFFICULT, WAS THAT WE ACTUALLY DOCUMENTED THE COMMENTS THAT WE RECEIVED. THEY ARE BEING CAREFULLY RECORDED AND CATALOGUED- AND HAVE BEEN SUMMARIZED IN OUR PRELIMINARY PUBLIC DIALOGUE REPORT. THE REPORT INCLUDES COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS, ADVISORY COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS, COMMENT CARDS AND FROM THE THOUSANDS OF EMAILS SENT VIA THE WEBSITE.

A POINT THAT RESONATED FROM THE VERY START OF THE PUBLIC PROCESS WAS THAT THE INITIAL SIX DESIGNS WERE LACKING IN THE KIND OF GRANDEUR AND IMAGINATION THAT PEOPLE HAD COME TO EXPECT. AS A RESULT, WE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY REDIRECTED OUR PROCESS. WE DECIDED TO INVITE ARCHITECTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO SUBMIT QUALIFICATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN A CONCEPT DESIGN STUDY FOR THE WORLD TRADE CENTER SITE. WE HAD ONE OVERRIDING GOAL: TO ENGAGE THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST MINDS IN OUR PROCESS.

THE RESPONSE TO OUR RFQ WAS REMARKABLE. WE RECEIVED OVER 400 SUBMISSIONS FROM ARCHITECTURAL TEAMS THAT INCLUDED ARCHITECTS FROM EVERY CONTINENT – WELL, EXCEPT ANTARCTICA. A DISTINGUISHED PANEL RECOMMENDED BY NEW YORK NEW VISIONS HELPED WINNOW DOWN THE SUBMISSIONS TO 13 AND LMDC SELECTED SIX TEAMS TO WORK ON THE STUDY. THE TEAMS SELECTED COUNT AMONG THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUCH WORLD FAMOUS WORKS AS THE JEWISH MUSEUM IN BERLIN, THE GETTY CENTER IN LOS ANGELES AND THE AOL/TIME WARNER HEADQUARTERS AT COLUMBUS CIRCLE.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE NEEDED TO DEVELOP NEW GUIDELINES FOR THE SITE BASED ON WHAT WE HAD HEARD DURING THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD. WITH THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY AND THE CITY OF NEW YORK, WE CREATED A NEW PROGRAM. THE NEW GUIDELINES WERE DESIGNED TO INCORPORATE THE MAIN POINTS OF PUBLIC FEEDBACK AND TO GIVE THE ARCHITECTURAL TEAMS MORE FLEXIBILITY TO CAPTURE OUR IMAGINATION WITH THEIR DESIGNS.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE NEW PROGRAM FOCUSES NOT ONLY ON THE 16-ACRE WORLD TRADE CENTER SITE BUT ALSO LOOKS BEYOND THE SITE TO IDENTIFY THE BEST WAYS THAT LOWER MANHATTAN IN ITS ENTIRETY CAN BE REINVIGORATED. SOME OF THE MAIN THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE PUBLIC PROCESS AND ARE NOW INCLUDED IN THE NEW GUIDELINES ARE:

- *RESTORING THE SKYLINE.* WE REPEATEDLY HEARD AT OUR MEETINGS THAT PEOPLE WANTED TO REPLACE THE VOID THAT THE LOSS OF THE TWIN TOWERS HAS LEFT ON NEW YORK CITY'S SKYLINE. THE NEW GUIDELINES CALL FOR A TALL STRUCTURE OR SYMBOL.

- *PREFERENCE FOR PRESERVING THE FOOTPRINTS OF THE TWIN TOWERS.* THE PROGRAM REFLECTS A STRONG PREFERENCE THAT THE AREA ON WHICH THE TWIN TOWERS STOOD BE RECOGNIZED IN THE NEW DESIGNS FOR MEMORIAL OR MEMORIAL RELATED ELEMENTS. THE ARCHITECTURAL

TEAMS WERE ASKED TO SET ASIDE MEMORIAL SPACE IN THEIR DESIGNS BUT NOT TO DESIGN THE MEMORIAL- WHICH WILL RESULT FROM AN INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION BEING LAUNCHED NEXT YEAR.

- *IMPROVING LOWER MANHATTAN'S CONNECTIVITY TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.* THERE WAS WIDE CONSENSUS THAT THE NEW GUIDELINES SHOULD INCLUDE THE CREATION OF AN IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN LOWER MANHATTAN. ONE ALTERNATIVE IS THE CREATION OF A TRANSPORTATION STATION AKIN TO GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL THAT WOULD HELP CONNECT THE 18 SUBWAY LINES AND PATH TRAIN THAT RUN THROUGH LOWER MANHATTAN.
- *CREATING A GRAND PROMENADE THAT WOULD CONNECT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER SITE TO BATTERY PARK CITY, BURYING A PORTION OF WEST STREET.* THIS CONCEPT WHICH WAS PART OF ONE OF THE INITIAL SIX PLANS WAS WIDELY PRAISED- NOTABLY BY FAMILY MEMBERS- BECAUSE IT WOULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM CREATED BY HAVING AN 8-LANE HIGHWAY ADJACENT TO THE MEMORIAL SPACE. MANY FELT THAT REMOVING THE NOISE OF WEST STREET FROM THE MEMORIAL AREA WAS ESSENTIAL TO CREATING A FITTING AND REFLECTIVE MEMORIAL SPACE. THE PROMENADE WOULD ALSO CONNECT HISTORICALLY SEVERED RESIDENTS AND WORKERS TO ADJACENT AREAS OF LOWER MANHATTAN.
- *CONNECTIVITY WITHIN LOWER MANHATTAN.* RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES VOICED THEIR INTEREST IN RESTORING THE STREET GRID AND CREATING A MORE EASILY NAVIGATED LOWER MANHATTAN. THIS GUIDELINE ENHANCES THE LOOP CREATED BY THE PROMENADE ON WEST STREET CONTINUING AROUND THE SOUTHERN TIP OF MANHATTAN, RUNNING UP WATER STREET, AND ESTABLISHING FULTON STREET AS THE EAST WEST CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SOUTH STREET SEAPORT AND THE WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER.
- *MORE FLEXIBILITY WITH OFFICE AND COMMERCIAL SPACE.* THIS WAS A HIGHLY CONTENTIOUS ISSUE. OUR SOLUTION WAS TO

ADD MORE FLEXIBILITY WITH REGARD TO REQUIRED COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL SPACE ON THE SITE. THE NEW GUIDELINES ALLOW FOR A RANGE OF OFFICE SPACE - CUTTING THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT FOR THE SITE NEARLY IN HALF TO 6.5 MILLION SQUARE FEET.

ON OCTOBER 11TH THE ARCHITECTURAL TEAMS GATHERED IN LMDC'S CONFERENCE ROOM AND WERE PRESENTED WITH THIS NEW PROGRAM AND INFORMED OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE DESIGN STUDY THAT THEY WERE ABOUT TO EMBARK UPON. THE TEAMS WERE ALSO GIVEN INFORMATION REGARDING THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS, SUCH AS THE PRELIMINARY PUBLIC DIALOGUE REPORT, TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PUBLIC'S VIEWS THUS FAR.

THROUGH THE COURSE OF THE DAY THEY HEARD REMARKS FROM LMDC PRESIDENT LOU TOMSON AND MYSELF- AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL, STATE AND CITY GOVERNMENT.

WE EXPECT THAT THE NEW CONCEPT DESIGNS WILL BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF THE CALENDAR YEAR.

THE NEW DESIGN CONCEPTS WILL BE NEW *OPTIONS* FOR LOWER MANHATTAN. I EMPHASIZE THE WORD OPTION BECAUSE LMDC HAS NOT MADE ANY FINAL DECISIONS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER SITE. THE DESIGN STUDY THAT I JUST DISCUSSED IS INSTEAD INTENDED TO EXPLORE THE MANY ALTERNATIVES FOR THE SITE.

WE WILL EVENTUALLY NARROW THESE ALTERNATIVES DOWN TO ONE AS CONSENSUS IS REACHED. AT THAT TIME, WE WILL MOVE THROUGH A FORMAL ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS.

WE VOWED EARLY ON TO INCORPORATE PUBLIC COMMENT IN SITE PLANNING - WITH OUR NEW PROGRAM AND DESIGN STUDY WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THIS.

LOOKING FORWARD, WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO AN INCLUSIVE AND TRANSPARENT PLANNING PROCESS FOR LOWER MANHATTAN- BY CONTINUING TO KEEP THE PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK SPEAKER SILVER AND THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE VARIOUS ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES FOR HOLDING THIS HEARING AND FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS LMDC'S PLANNING FOR LOWER MANHATTAN.