

For Immediate Release

For more information, contact:

Hugh Hardy FAIA, Chair, NYNV Plan Review Committee

(212) 677-6030

Mark Ginsberg AIA, Co-Chair, New York New Visions

(212) 929-4417

Marcie Kesner AICP, Co-Chair, New York New Visions

(212) 318-6918

Ernest Hutton, AICP Assoc AIA, Chair, Communications, NYNV

(212) 206-0460

December 16 2002

NEW YORK NEW VISIONS APPLAUDS MAYORAL INITIATIVE
FOR LOWER MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENT.

New York New Visions (NYNV), a coalition of twenty-one architecture, engineering and planning organizations, has responded positively and enthusiastically to Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed vision for downtown's redevelopment as a 24/7, mixed-use, international center.

"The proposal presents a challenging and far-sighted framework for future specific projects," stated Mark Ginsberg AIA, co-chair of NYNV. "By creating an ring of mass transit connections, public amenities and development incentives, it establishes the context for an integrated World Trade Center plan, up to now a missing piece in the puzzle."

"Although we have continuing questions as to permitting and financing," added Marcie Kesner AICP, "we are pleased at how the proposal fleshes out the broad themes that New York New Visions has always articulated, at a level of detail and commitment which has been lacking to date in the planning process. These themes include enhancing New York as an international city, making Lower Manhattan a walkable and livable mixed-use center, and defining the public infrastructure—transportation, parks, and community facilities—that will make it happen."

NYNV's Plan Review Task Force, convened to provide an independent civic sector evaluation of upcoming Trade Center plans, discussed the Mayor's proposal following its recent announcement.

Using NYNV's previously announced evaluation criteria, the Task Force analyzed the Mayor's proposal in terms of each of its component parts:

- *Memorialization:* members spoke approvingly of the emphasis on a downtown-wide 'living memorial' of trees and open space—which must be complemented by programs and facilities on the Trade Center site itself.
- *Uses and Phasing:* the Mayor's framework proposes a strategy for commercial development that will ensure New York's international preeminence while defining a neighborhood-based quality of life that will attract both full time residents and part time visitors. It uses phased public infrastructure as incentive for responsive private actions.

- *Transportation and Connections:* along with its welcome emphasis on pedestrian movement and understanding of the significance of active street life, the proposal defines a rationale for regional and city-wide transportation improvements—an approach that needs more detail regarding funding impacts on other unmentioned priority projects such as the Second Avenue subway.
- *Open Space:* the welcome creation of a rich fabric of different types of open spaces—parks, plazas, market squares, boulevards—needs to be elaborated in terms of linkages between those spaces, creating a logical sequence of activity and visual clarity.
- *Feasible Program-* the positing of a budgetary framework of sources and uses of funds is a welcome implementation tool and the basis for a dynamic dialogue-- negotiation and consensus as to costs and benefits. Innovative ideas such as tax increment financing and various tax incentives need to be coupled with close examination of obstacles to be overcome in such concepts as platforms over river edges. Remaining issues include the relationship to existing zoning and permitting requirements, as well as how to fund aspects of the concept relative to competing city-wide projects.
- *Relationship to Context-* The proposal represents a new and much needed context for Trade Center development. At the same time, however, it provides an especially welcome perspective linking Lower Manhattan to a much larger context—that of the city, region, and world.
- *Overall Plan Quality:* in summary, the Task Force feels that the Mayor's proposal presents a promising and sustainable vision, focused on enhancing public and pedestrian life, integrated with the region, and as mindful of its waterfront edges as it is of its internal fabric.

"The Mayor's proposal succeeds in terms of the same criteria we will use for evaluating Trade Center plans," said Hugh Hardy FAIA, chair of the Plan Review Task Force. "It both takes the pressure off those plans to accomplish everything within the 16-acre boundary, but it also raises the bar for how those plans must relate to this new and compelling context.

"This will not be a complete vision until a memorial and development plan is agreed upon for the Trade Center site, details are refined by relevant city agencies, and larger issues of funding and feasibility are resolved," Hardy continued. "That being said, however, the Mayor's thoughtfully-prepared concept presents a welcome next step to defining what kind of future we want for our city, and inventing the innovative tools we need to achieve that future."