



January 10, 2006

James T. Connors
Director, World Trade Center Redevelopment
Port Authority of NY & NJ
225 Park Avenue South, 19th fl
New York, NY 10003

Dear Mr. Connors,

The New York Metro Chapter of the American Planning Association, representing over 1,200 planning professionals working in the New York area, has followed with interest and has commented upon the plans for redevelopment of the World Trade Center site in Lower Manhattan for over four years. This letter reflects our concern regarding the Port Authority's plans for the reconstruction of Cortlandt Street and, by extension, the issue of recreating the street grid through this former superblock.

New York Metro has consistently advocated for the creation of a well-designed network of streets in Lower Manhattan in rebuilding the World Trade Center site. We believe that good planning and economic growth of the area require an integrated pedestrian network that provides sidewalk retail uses, maximizes visual links from east to west and to the memorial, and reintegrates streets with transportation facilities.

The current proposal for Cortlandt Street creates a glass three-story retail galleria with internal bridges that, we believe, is contrary to the World Trade Center Master Plan, which encouraged accessible, vibrant streets with diverse economic, physical and social activities. Although the proposed design of Cortlandt Street is allegedly based upon retail and security concerns, we believe that closing the street to all vehicular traffic is, a simplistic—and ultimately ineffective—means to achieve true urban security. Increase pedestrian and vehicular traffic, increased street activity, and extensive ground floor uses would more effectively promote street safety. More sophisticated design solutions—for example those currently implemented in Washington, D.C., can provide security without enclosing streets in glass.

New York Metro Chapter

Steven L. Newman Hall
137 East 22ND Street, ROOM 313
New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212.228.5084
Fax: 212.228.5093
Email: office@nyplanning.org
Web: www.nyplanning.org



We are also concerned that the placement of an escalator enclosed in a retail mall, sitting in the middle of the streetbed would effectively foreclose all potential for reopening the street to the public later, when security concerns have lessened and/or more advanced security techniques become available.

A new Cortlandt Street, open to the sky and linked with the rest of the street network, can be planned and built to be compatible with security needs. As we proceed with the rebuilding of this key area of New York City, we should encourage good planning, economic vitality and physical flexibility by making Cortlandt Street open and public, a corridor that can serve pedestrians only or both vehicles and pedestrians in the future. New York Metro Chapter reiterates its long-held position that the Lower Manhattan street grid should be extended through this former super block. This will provide for a more secure and economically successful streetscape and will provide for flexibility in the future.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ethel Sheffer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ethel Sheffer
President

cc: Kenneth J. Ringler, Executive Director Port Authority of NY & NJ
John C. Whitehead, Chairman Lower Manhattan Development Corp.
Stephan Pryor, President Lower Manhattan Development Corp.
Eric Deutsch, President Downtown Alliance
Daniel Doctoroff, Deputy Mayor Economic Development & Rebuilding
Amanda Burden, Director of City Planning
Raymond Gastil, Director Manhattan Planning, Dept. of City Planning
Charlie Maikish, Executive Director Lower Manhattan Construction
Command Center

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