



Public Dialogue Report

**on the
Memorial Center Advisory Committee
Draft Recommendations for the Memorial Center
July 19, 2004**

**John C. Whitehead, Chairman
Kevin M. Rampe, President**

Introduction

On June 2, 2004, the LMDC released for public comment Draft Recommendations for the Memorial Center at the World Trade Center Site. The Draft Recommendations were developed by the Memorial Center Advisory Committee, consisting of victims' family members, residents, survivors, first responders, historians, preservationists, and curators. During the public comment period, the Draft Recommendations were available for download on the LMDC website along with a comment form that could be completed on-line or downloaded and mailed to LMDC. The LMDC sent the Draft Recommendations and comment form to over 5,000 family members and performed additional email outreach to available family databases. In addition, the LMDC presented the Draft Recommendations to the LMDC Families Advisory Council, which consists of representatives from several family organizations that actively work to include their respective constituencies in the public process. Draft Recommendations and comment forms were also sent to local elected officials, area community organizations, and other established outreach partners to disseminate throughout the area. Public comment was accepted through July 1, 2004.

Public Comment Response

In the comment form, the public was asked to respond to three specific questions with regard to the Draft Recommendations, as follows:

- Do you have any comments regarding the **purpose** of the memorial center?
- Do you have any recommendations for the **centerpiece** of the Memorial Center?
- Do you have any additional topics that you would like to have considered under **supporting exhibits**?

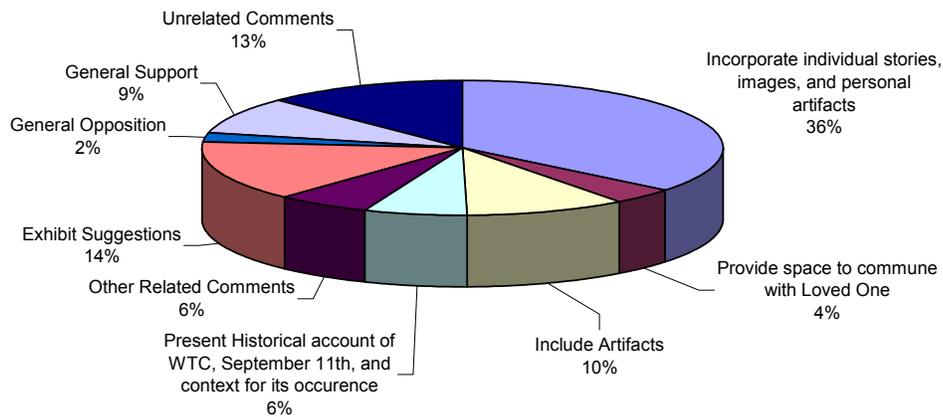
The public was also given the opportunity to state their **general comments** regarding the Draft Recommendations.

By the end of the public comment period on July 1, 2004, the LMDC received over 400 submissions. Of those, 67% were received through the on-line comment form and 28% were received through forms returned from the family mailing. The remaining submissions were received at a meeting of the Family Advisory Council, and through general comment forms and letters mailed to LMDC. Family members of victims had the highest response to the recommendations, with 78% of the total submissions.¹

¹ The comment form permitted individuals to indicate one or more stakeholder category. If an individual provided comments through more than one source (i.e. FAC meeting, family mailing comment form, or website) each comment was counted as a separate record. Therefore, the stakeholder percentages reflect the percentage of total comments attributed to the various stakeholders' categories, rather than the percentage of individuals who provided comment. Please note that 3% of the submissions were identified as "Other" in the stakeholder category. One of the records in this category represents a petition that was received and had been signed by 309 individuals. This number of individuals is reflected in the comment analysis; however it is not included in the stakeholder analysis.

Analysis of Public Comment

The complete text of all submissions was entered into a database and, after thorough analysis, broken down into a total of 1,070 individual comments. Because in many cases the comments did not correspond directly to the specific questions posed in the comment form, comments were grouped by topic, which in turn suggested **nine broad thematic categories**, as described in the chart below:



Thematic Categories: Percentage of Total Comments

The categories that represent **comments in support of the Draft Recommendations** include:

- Incorporate individual Stories, images, and personal artifacts (36% of total comments);
- Exhibit Suggestions (14% of total comments);
- Include Artifacts (10% of total comments);
- General Support (9% of total comments);
- Present an Historical account (6% of total comments);
- Other Related Comments (6% of total comments)

The categories that represent **comments that may indicate a review, clarification, or revision of the Draft Recommendations** include:

- Provide space to commune with loved one (4% of total comments)

In addition, **within** the categories that represent comments in support of the Draft Recommendations, are the following **comment categories that may indicate a review, clarification, or revision**:

- Comments stating that the stories of the victims should be the centerpiece or top priority (2.9% of total comments); and
- Comments opposing the inclusion of factual presentation of what is known of the terrorists and the attack (2.4% of total comments).

The categories that represent **comments unrelated to the Draft Recommendations** include:

- Unrelated Comments, which refer to the site plan and other elements of the rebuilding process (13% of total comments)
- General Opposition, representing a range of singular opinions on the rebuilding process in general (2% of total comments)

Background on Thematic Comment Categories

Incorporate Individual Stories, Images, and Personal Artifacts

Of the total 1070 comments, this category received 384 comments (or 36%). Within this category, comments can be broken down as follows:

- support for the inclusion of individual stories (253 comments)
- support for the inclusion of individual pictures (65 comments)
- support for including personal effects (34 comments)
- statements indicating that victim's stories should be the top priority or centerpiece (32 comments)

Several comments put forth proposals for the grouping and presentation of victims' stories. One respondent stated that "Most important [sic], the memorial should breakdown each victim by what company or civil service department in which they worked." Another respondent stated: "Conveying the individual and collective stories of the victims – I would like my daughter to be remembered along with the other 650 Cantor Fitzgerald employees who died that day. Their names should be collectively together..." Another element that was addressed in this category of comments was the importance of providing an individual marker or space to tell the story of each victim. For example, one respondent stated "Since the memorial itself does not have an individual marker representing the life of each person lost, the Memorial Center (museum) must provide adequate space to tell the story of each person."

Exhibit Suggestions

Of the total 1070 comments, this category received 155 comments (or 14%), which generally confirm the topics recommended for the supporting exhibits in the Draft Recommendations, with the exception of those that opposed the inclusion of a factual presentation of what is known of the terrorists (27 comments out of 155; see below). Within this category, comments can be broken down as follows:

- Include Public Expressions of Support, i.e. quilts, poems, drawings, etc.(32 comments)
- Do NOT include a factual presentation of what is known of the terrorists and the attack (27 comments)
- Include a factual presentation of what is known of the terrorists and the attack (22 comments)
- Create exhibits that promote peace and inter-cultural understanding (17 comments)
- Include Exhibits on the Significance of the Attacks on the City, Nation & World (15 comments)
- Create Exhibits that are simple and tasteful (12 comments)
- Include Exhibits of the Recovery Effort (10 comments)
- Include Description of the WTC Prior to 9/11 (8 comments)
- Include an exhibit on the terrorist attacks of February 26, 2003 (5 comments)
- Include the tribute in lights. (4 comments)
- Create exhibits that allow for a dialogue that serves as a gateway for information (2 comments)
- Include Exhibits of the Rebuilding Effort (1 comment)

Only two comments spoke directly in opposition to the recommendations regarding exhibits, with one expressing that "...points 4 and 5 in the draft in the area of the exhibits I think are pointless and a waste of money..." and the other comment stated, "It is revolting. 'Interactive' displays of the dead. How dare you. My dead niece is NOT an 'exhibit'."

Include Artifacts

Of the total 1,070 comments, this category received 107 comments (or 10%) which generally confirm that artifacts are powerful communicators and should be included. Within this category, comments can be broken down as follows:

- Include the building façade (25 comments)
- Include the sphere (23 comments)
- Include the cross (18 comments as well as a petition to include the cross with 309 signatures)
- General Inclusion of physical remnants from the site (18 comments)
- Support for including an icon at or above street level (15 comments)
- Support for the preservation of the slurry wall and box beam columns (7 comments)
- Disagreement with an icon placed at or above street level (1 comment)

Present an Historical Account

Of the total 1,070 comments, this category received 68 comments (or 6%) which were generally supportive of the ideas put forth in the Draft Recommendations, and which present a range of ideas consistent with the Draft Recommendations on how to convey the events of September 11, 2001. Within this category, comments can be broken down as follows:

- Preserve History (58 comments)
- Provide Context and background for the attacks (6 comments)
- Sustain Authenticity of the World Trade Center site (4 comments)

Other Related Comments

Of the total 1,070 comments, this category received 62 comments (or 6%) which were generally supportive of the ideas put forth in the Draft Recommendations, but which represent a range of singular ideas. Of particular note were a few comments raising questions on whom from the family members will be contacted, and how, to provide and approve stories and memorabilia for individual victim exhibits, raising the issue of conflicting parties within families. A few comments also expressed a desire for unidentified remains, including remains from Fresh Kills in Staten Island to be incorporated.

Provide a space to Commune with Loved One

Of the total 1,070 comments, this category received 41 comments (or 4%). All of these comments came from family members and are similar. Comments consisted of requests for private family times, or a private space, so that families could reflect and visit with their loved one without the general public overwhelming their experience.