

**TESTIMONY OF LOUIS TOMSON, PRESIDENT  
LOWER MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
Thursday, March 7, 2002**

The attack on the World Trade Center had a severe impact on Lower Manhattan's transportation infrastructure. It curtailed vehicular access, disrupted subway and bus service and exacerbated congestion. The various city, state and federal agencies working to address these problems have done a tremendous job to restore service as quickly as possible and to minimize the impact on residents and visitors. For example, construction of a temporary pedestrian bridge over West Street is now underway to connect Battery Park City with the financial center, and a temporary roadway will allow for the reopening of Battery Park Tunnel in the near future.

As we move forward with the process of revitalization, the challenge before us now is to address the shortcomings of Lower Manhattan's transportation infrastructure, not simply recreate it as it existed prior to September 11. West Street effectively erected a barrier between Battery Park and the rest of Lower Manhattan. The World Trade Center site disrupted the street grid, impeding east/west movement. And from a mass transit standpoint, midtown is certainly a more preferable work location for commuters from Long Island, Connecticut and Upstate New York compared to downtown, which requires making a connection at Penn or Grand Central stations.

The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation believes that rebuilding and enhancing the infrastructure in Lower Manhattan will be a central component of any redevelopment plan, if we are to succeed in creating a vibrant mixed-use community. Since the issue of transportation is relevant to every constituency in Lower Manhattan, the subject transcends all of our Advisory Councils – the Residents Council has discussed the need to limit the number of instances the same road is dug up for construction work, while the Arts, Education and Tourism Council contemplated ways to make it easier for visitors to explore downtown's cultural treasures. But recognizing the centrality of this issue to the revitalization effort, the LMDC has created one specific Council to focus solely on transportation and commuters.

The Advisory Councils are tasked with providing input to the LMDC on goals and objectives for each of their respective constituencies. The Transportation and Commuters Advisory Council is comprised of planning and civic organizations, small businesses, corporations, environmental organizations, transportation experts and residents. The Council met for the first time on Tuesday, March 5. It was a very productive meeting, as members discussed a number of ideas for improving the transportation infrastructure, such as the desirability and feasibility of depressing West Street. The suggestions of the Advisory Council will help the LMDC craft its overall transportation objectives for the region.

The LMDC is meeting regularly with officials from various agencies, such as the Port Authority, the MTA and the city and state transportation departments, to identify short term and long term ways to improve the transportation infrastructure. The LMDC is working closely with Con Edison to facilitate the building of a substation on Greenwich Street in a way that does not foreclose the possibility of reopening Greenwich Street to pedestrian or vehicular traffic in the

future. The LMDC is also considering ways to better exploit underutilized modes of transportation in downtown Manhattan, such as ferry service.

As we coordinate the revitalization of Lower Manhattan, it's essential that the input underlying this process is broad based. We look forward to working closely with the City Council -- and this Committee in particular -- to meet the transportation challenges in Lower Manhattan and explore the possibilities.

Thank you for inviting us to submit this testimony today.