

Home

BUSINESS LISTS

MARKET FACTS

SIGN-IN/REGISTER

SEARCH

**BREAKING NEWS | THIS WEEK'S ISSUE**

Restaurant Reviews

Commercial Space

Classifieds

Contact Crain's

Advertise In Crain's

Real Estate

Rebuilding New York

Wall Street

Opinion

Politics

Health Care

Small Biz

Hospitality

Who's Who In City Hall

Human Resources

Careers/Exec Moves

Technology/New

Media

Biz People

Gadgets & Gizmos

Golf Guide

Growing a Business  
Guide

Not-for-profit

Arts & Culture

Meeting Planners  
Guide

Executive Life

Executive Education

Women in Business

James Brady

**Public weighs in on new WTC designs**

by Lore Croghan

Three key messages emerged from Monday night's lengthy hearing about the latest set of World Trade Center designs: create a public forum for debating the merits of the plans, don't construct a tunnel under West Street, and rebuild the twin towers.

The discussion, held by the Lower Manhattan Development Corp. at Pace University's Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts, ran for five hours. Scores of participants who took a turn at the microphone called on the LMDC to create a forum that would enable thousands of New Yorkers to give opinions on the different designs. They said there should be another town-hall meeting about design similar to the day-long event held at Jacob K. Javits Convention Center last summer. The extreme dissatisfaction expressed at the meeting regarding a first set of designs put pressure on the LMDC to scrap those plans and assemble a lineup of famous architects to create a new round of drawings.

"There is no need for the artificial deadline that says we have to have a master plan finished by next month," one man said.

The second message came from the residents of Battery Park City. They spoke vehemently against the construction of a tunnel under West Street. "Don't create a boondoggle," one woman said.

But the strongest passions of the night surfaced when participants recommended the rebuilding of the twin towers, as tall or taller than they had been before they were destroyed in the terrorist attack of Sept. 11. Cheers erupted every time the idea was mentioned.

"The 77th floor of 1 World Trade Center wasn't my apartment, but it was my home," said Jon Hakala, a former tenant and the spokesman for a group called, Team Twin Towers.

Mr. Hakala, who wore a photo of a friend who died in the attack pinned to the lapel of his suit jacket, suggested there be an open design competition that would be judged by the International Union of Architects and the public. "When we see the eighth wonder of the world, we will know--and we haven't seen it yet," he said.

A firefighter in dress uniform spoke of his fallen colleagues' sense of duty in calling for bolder, more daring designs than the nine now under consideration.

"We have a saying in the fire department: 'Step up and do the right thing,' " he said. "I'm telling this panel and these architects, 'Step up. Do the right thing. Give us greatness.' "

Other calls to action were repeated less frequently, but greeted with enthusiasm. One was a request that the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey swap the site in exchange for ownership of the metro New York airports. Another was that designers have ignored the issue of access for the disabled, and should correct their oversight.

There were some surprises for those who toughed it out and stayed the entire evening. The biggest was an appearance by developer Abe Hirschfeld, recently released from jail. He provoked laughter when he proposed building one of his parking garages at the trade center site as part of a development that would include 10 floors for the New York Stock Exchange and apartments.

Copyright 2003, [Crain Communications, Inc](#)

Other Top Stories  
Making Headlines

**Kmart to close stores  
in Brooklyn, Queens**

**NY execs call for  
investment in city**

**Silverstein gets tax-  
free bonds for 7 WTC**

**City, state settle  
home care lawsuit**

**Making banking laws  
permanent**

**CNN Chief Walter  
Isaacson resigns**

**Chase hires key  
banking exec from  
Citi**

**Another upscale  
restaurant shuts its  
doors**

**FAO Schwarz's  
owner files for  
Chapter 11**