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# The Political Fabric of Design Competitions

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# The Political Fabric of Design Competitions

## **Abstract**

Design competitions are commissioned for many reasons, almost none of which have to do with design and all of which have to do with political motivations. A political agenda always presides over the important but ancillary search for new design possibilities, innovative solutions, or a compelling architectural or urban vision. Though political agendas vary quite a lot, they are lodged in the fundamental need to create or cultivate a strong constituency and garner the necessary resources to advance a desired project.

## **Comments**

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Princeton University

# The Politics of Design: Competitions for Public Projects



POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
FOR THE REGION

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ANTHONY SHORRIS, DIRECTOR

EDITED BY CATHERINE MALMBERG

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WWS Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs

# The Politics of Design: Competitions for Public Projects

Catherine Malmberg, Editor

Essays and commentary sponsored by the Policy Research Institute for the Region at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, the Princeton University School of Architecture, and the Van Alen Institute.

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# The Political Fabric of Design Competitions

Lynne B. Sagalyn  
University of Pennsylvania

Design competitions are commissioned for many reasons, almost none of which have to do with design and all of which have to do with political motivations. A political agenda always presides over the important but ancillary search for new design possibilities, innovative solutions, or a compelling architectural or urban vision. Though political agendas vary quite a lot, they are lodged in the fundamental need to create or cultivate a strong constituency and garner the necessary resources to advance a desired project. Because they follow a competitive format and employ professional advisers, design competitions are a practical tool for avoiding charges of favoritism in selecting designers. Sponsors have historically held traditional architectural competitions for other reasons as well: they did not want to be responsible for the design selection; they wanted the best architecture but didn't know the best talents; or they needed cover for some degree of pre-selection. The extension of the competition to urban design and planning changes the game. The reasons for holding these competitions are different and always political. Urban design and planning competitions are about political issues as much as about new design pos-

sibilities, innovative solutions or design visions. Political considerations drive the decision to mount a competition, and though less transparent, shape the details of how a competition is structured and implemented.

Urban design competitions are different from architectural competitions in important ways. First, the resolution of an urban design problem requires different skills and knowledge drawn from multiple disciplines. Second, the content differs: urban design problems focus on the relationships among architectural and non-architectural elements, whereas building competitions focus most intently on single-purpose architectural products (Witzling and Farmer, 1982, as cited in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris 1990, 125). Third, the context differs: if the site is vacant, a blank slate, the competition problem is akin to a building competition, but when the site is within a neighborhood or a downtown district—within the fabric of a city—change represents an intervention (Barnett 2005). Fourth, the physical terrain of the competition is a complex combination of public and private interests and domains, often in conflict with each other. Resolving these types of problems often involves real or symbolic redistribution or regulation of territorial power, control and the rights of different social groups.<sup>1</sup> Not only are these conditions complex and typically



*Proposal for Olympic Village. Courtesy Thom Mayne/Morphosis*

controversial, they fall squarely in the realm of political decision making. When public officials use competitions to shift that decision making to designers, it heightens the stakes for both sponsor and competitors.

In this paper I discuss how political motivations revealed themselves in several urban design competitions in New York City in the past two decades. I have not attempted to be exhaustive. *There have been dozens of such competitions over this period.* Rather, I have focused on several high-profile recent competitions. I begin by identifying competitions in terms of their strategic political objectives. I argue that these strategic underpinnings of competitions have become more compelling during the last quarter of the 20th century as cities with large ambitions were forced to rely on their own resources as a consequence of the federal government's withdrawal of support for cities in the 1980s. Utilizing two case studies, I address several questions. What political circumstances prevailed at the time of the design competition, and how did this context influence the structure of the competition? In sponsoring a competition, what

constituencies did the sponsor seek to reach, influence, and galvanize into action? What unresolved conflicts lay hidden under the umbrella of the program brief and rules of the competition? How did the competition succeed or fail to meet the political objectives of its sponsors? How do the lessons of these competitions enhance our understanding of the political dynamics of urban development? I

conclude with some comparative remarks on political dynamic of development competitions.

## POLITICAL PRECURSORS

A strong and identifiable constituency is a political imperative for any substantial city-building project, particularly one with a long implementation horizon. Sometimes a natural constituency exists in a broad-based special interest, for example, historic preservation, or an iconic city district such as Times Square. In other instances, the currency of an idea or issue exists but lacks a constituency, and sponsors mount an open competition to create that constituency. Examples include the TKTS Booth (1998) and Pier 40 (1999) design competitions sponsored by the Van Allen Institute. Using an open ideas competition to create the type of broad-based grassroots support that draws the attention of elected officials, along with a commitment of resources, defines the constituency-building competition. The political motivation works both ways: For projects they want to promote, politicians use open ideas competitions to, in the words of Josh Sirefman, executive vice president and chief

operating officer of NYC's Economic Development Corporation, "strategically galvanize people" (Alschuler 2004).

Sometimes the constituency-building motivation is geo-political, as in the case of the Queens West Olympic Village competition (2003). This competition was sponsored by NYC2012, the privately-funded committee, which led New York's bid to become the host city of the 2012 Games. The purpose was to attract the support of countries needed to assure the selection of New York. This part of the agenda was never made explicit. A two-stage process allowed NYC2012 to choose five teams from a list of firms that responded to an international request for qualifications. The short-listed teams—from Denmark, Holland, Great Britain, and two from the U.S.—produced designs in a process that generated "major media buzz" along the way, creating the international platform Daniel Doctoroff, founder of NYC2012, sought: "These spectacular designs put the athlete at the center of the New York Games while forming the model for future urban housing" (Alschuler 2004). While the competition did produce compelling designs, the city did not win the brass ring.

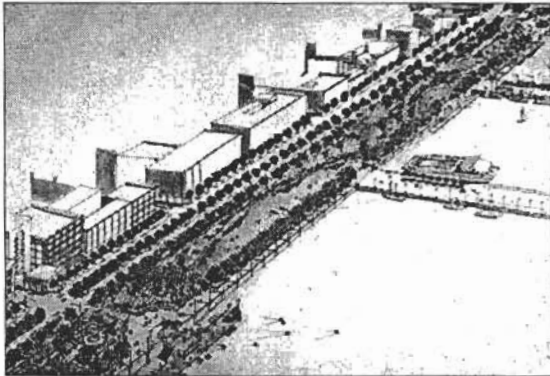
Sometimes an ideas competition is used to advocate for the preservation of a symbolic icon, as when the Municipal Art Society (MAS), in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), sponsored an open competition to address the fate of the Times Tower (1984) during the contentious early days of the redevelopment of Times Square. Strictly an idea competition, it was part of a larger set of tactics designed to

focus attention on "the future of this volatile project." It put a spotlight on the city's plan to demolish the defaced but much beloved sign tower, an intention that symbolized its short-sighted disregard for the defining character of this world-preeminent entertainment district (Sagalyn 2001, 198–204). "It worked," said Kent Barwick, "because it was a prolonged public relations device. It got people talking and asking questions" (Gilmartin 1995, 457).

In a similar vein, the political-challenge competition seeks to pressure politicians who resist making a funding commitment to a project for which they have expressed rhetorical support. For example, not long after the West Side Task Force, a state panel chaired by Arthur Levitt Jr. and charged with finding a successor plan for the aborted Westway project, delivered its report to Governor Mario Cuomo and Mayor Edward Koch, both politicians stalled on taking steps that would further serious planning. The battle over Westway had defined the parameters of a new "national paradigm for government paralysis" (Purnick 1988): an intractable conflict between transportation interests, transit advocates, and environmentalists. A crucial element of the tension-packed compromise sketched out by Task Force was the creation of a broad waterfront esplanade that included a walkway, parks, and bicycle path—a sweetener for the new six-lane roadway. While the mayor endorsed the report and park, the governor held back on any commitment to the esplanade, and without the esplanade the fragile consensus holding the compromise together threatened to unravel. Months passed with no action. To build public support and get the



necessary detailed planning moving, the MAS mounted an international ideas competition for all or parts of the waterfront, a decrepit and inhospitable environment made more so during the more than 15 years of controversy over Westway (Hack 2005). The MAS framed



*Sketch of West Side Waterfront Park. Courtesy Carr Lynch Hack and Sandell*

its announcement in design terms: "What the city most needs today is a sense of possibilities, an exercise in imaginative conceptual thinking" (Giovannini 1987). Six months later, the governor and mayor took the first significant step in a long process by signing a memorandum of understanding for moving the project forward.

Design competitions have been motivated by several other types of political agendas. Sometimes the scale and scope of a problem is so unprecedented that no obvious platform exists for figuring out how to approach the problem. The task of transforming the 3,000 acres of Fresh Kills landfill presented such a challenge, and the international call for ideas (2001) was a dealing-with-the-unprecedented competition sponsored by the Department of City Planning, in an usual joint alliance with the Departments of Sanitation, Parks and

Recreations, and Cultural Affairs, and the MAS with support from the National Endowment of the Arts. Political considerations also define enlarging-the-scope-of-possibilities competitions. In such cases, sponsors mount a design competition in response to political forces surrounding volatile citywide policy issues such as school construction (New Ideas for New York City Schools 1998) or housing (Model Tenement, 1897; New Housing, New York Design Ideas Competition 2003). Public sponsors may use competitions for political cover, asking the jury not to pick a single winner but rather to pick the top three, sometimes ranked, sometimes not—a rule that provides "wiggle room" for the sponsor.

The competition format similarly lends itself to situations where a political deadlock exists, for example, when officials cannot resolve a programmatic conflict or are confused about the direction of the program, as was the case in the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's master-plan competition for the World Trade Center (WTC) site (2002–03), discussed in the next section. In other instances, the sponsor seeks a wide impact beyond the explicit design agenda of the competition in order to mobilize the resources necessary to make implementation possible. The ideas competition sponsored by the Friends of the High Line for the 1.45 mile industrially urbane elevated structure (2003), also discussed in the next section, typifies the liberate-resources competition. In each of these scenarios, sponsors have used the competition as a public platform to further particular political strategic objectives.

## MOTIVATING CONTEXT

Design competitions were exceptional events in the United States until relatively recently. Whereas competitions for major buildings, both public and private, were frequent and numerous in New York in the late 19th and early 20th centuries,<sup>2</sup> soon thereafter not a single competition was held for an American public building for 50 years until the city of Boston announced a competition for a new city hall in 1960 (Campbell 2005). Still, design competitions did not come back into fashion until the early 1980s (Witzling, Alexander, Caper 1985).<sup>3</sup>

The story behind such a long historical hiatus remains a future topic for scholars, but changes in the altered state of political economy in the last quarter of the 20th century, following the withdrawal of federal funding for cities and the ascendancy of public-private partnerships as the policy of choice for complex development projects, surely matter. In the absence of urban renewal and UDAG monies, cities with large development ambitions were hard-pressed to find alternative sources of funds at a time when elected officials were confronted by local fiscal pressures made more difficult by growing taxpayer revolts. New legislation establishing comprehensive environmental impact reviews and mandating freedom-of-information access to public documents furthered the ease with which opponents of any project might use litigation as an effective strategy to severely cripple, if not kill, a project. Westway and the failed first efforts to redevelop West 42nd Street and the Coliseum at Columbus Circle head the list of such casualties.

To manage the new political calculus, mayors, civic organizations, and project advocates alike needed tools that could build diverse and sustainable political support. Mayors, in particular, could no longer depend on the conventional coalition of government, business, and union labor to push through city-building projects; they had to find ways to accommodate newly organized (or readily organized) interests—preservationists, environmentalists, community groups, or any number of other highly localized special interests—any and all of whom might find standing through the new legislative mechanisms. The politics of financing city development changed as well. Without federal funds, cities and their pro-growth forces needed alternative sources of funds for redevelopment projects, funds that might be raised from the project itself or through less transparent (and inevitably complex) off-budget mechanisms that would not jeopardize spending for police and fire protection, health services, and education. As has often been the case in New York, city agencies might find expedient cause to join forces with state public authorities that control greater powers or financial resources. In this recast political landscape, design became a handmaiden of broader political agendas, while the competition format promised a professionalized platform for debate. As cities increasingly choose to implement large-scale projects through public-private arrangements, some form of competitive selection became economically wise as well as politically essential<sup>4</sup> (Sagalyn 1993).

“With the help of a powerful multimedia focus, competitions have transformed planning

from boring to sexy in the public mind," wrote Karen Alschuler, an urban planner, in "The Competition Craze" (2004).

The jolt of intense, coordinated, creative thinking about challenging urban sites can stretch the concept of urban living in ways that public agencies may never achieve otherwise. Finally, a well-conceived competition can provide a valuable test run for a public-private partnership before everyone signs long-term agreements.

Self-described as someone with a previously "long-held prejudice against competitions, especially planning competitions, [which] after all, must deliver a robust constituency for long-term implementation," Alschuler speaks from practical experience in arguing that the political elements of urban design and planning competitions can be positive by creating strong leadership for a project encouraging, strategizing about how to develop political support for a design or planning agenda, and bringing forth clear ideas on how to use a design competition for maximum return. Ideally, design competitions also can appeal to democratic sentiments (Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris 1990, 116):

There is something very open, civic-minded, and public spirited about a design competition. It catches the fancy of lay citizens, draws the attention of the news and engages the interests of potential donors and philanthropists, stimulates young designers to devote their creative talents to developing innovative ideas, and so on.

The strategic use of competitions as a public platform sets up its own political risks. Com-

petitions are open and relatively transparent processes. They are news events designed to attract media attention. They can create big expectations among diverse constituencies, with the danger that the winning proposal might unrealistically raise public expectations about the outcome of the project. They can develop a life of their own similarly uncontrollable by public officials or sponsors. These risks are higher, in general, in planning and urban design implementation competitions than in architectural competitions. Previously, scholars argued convincingly that a sponsor's lack of experience increased the risk of mounting a complex competition. While the rise of professional advisors has mitigated somewhat the technical risks of a weakly structured competition, it cannot insulate sponsors from bureaucratic obstacles, politics within juries, litigation, and insufficient resources—in short, the conventional challenges of implementing big plans (Sagalyn 2001).

## CASE STUDIES

### BREAKING THE DEADLOCK: WTC COMPETITIONS

Among the many goals for rebuilding the WTC site, three stood out as essential: deciding upon a memorial design, selecting a master plan for the site, and implementing the public pieces of the rebuilding agenda. Only the memorial process was spared political struggle, though the chosen design was not greeted with universal acclaim. In contrast, the selection of Libeskind's Memory Foundations master plan and the cultural components of the plan engendered gigantic tussles over who would manage the process and caustic

debates over the final decisions. The politics surrounding these conflicts were exceptionally complex.<sup>5</sup>

Three conditions confounded and frustrated the task: a lack of clarity and firmness on the part of public officials (despite public pronouncements otherwise) about where the priorities—remembrance or rebuilding—would be; institutional barriers to such clarity rooted in competing jurisdictions among the major public stakeholders—the State of New York, the City of New York, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PA); and the inability of any of the principal stakeholders to submerge their individual political interests to the greater civic good. In this contentious arena, design competitions would come to play a strategic political role. More than once, political officials attempted to use the design process to resolve these conflicts, not surprisingly, to no avail.

When the public dramatically rejected a first set of plans issued by the LMDC and the Port Authority in July of 2002, LMDC officials initiated a second design process, the “Innovative Design Study,” which ran from September, 2002 through February, 2003. It became the focal point of worldwide coverage, extensive debate from design professionals, and intense lobbying on all sides, thrusting design into an unprecedented level of popular attention. Given the high stakes of what would become a competition, design teams engaged in high-visibility public relations to be selected, which were avidly chronicled by the media. On the day he chose Libeskind Studio’s “Memory Foundations” as the winning design, Governor

Pataki became the arbiter of a highly politicized process. In contrast, selection of a memorial design took place on a completely separate and quite different track from master planning for the site, deliberately so. The independent jury’s selection, however, challenged the Libeskind master plan and firmly resolved (for a time) how the tension between remembrance and commercial reconstruction would be managed on the site.

The WTC controversies have differed from previous development battles among business interests, unions, and civic and citizen groups over large-scale development projects in New York. They have not been just about a symbolic memorial, or the design of a particular building, or how best to rebuild the entire neighborhood, but all of them and more—a healing vision. The multi-faceted scope of this task fell outside established institutional arrangements. In the highly visible first phase of planning, neither the LMDC as lead agency, nor the Port Authority as landowner, nor even the mayor as democratically elected steward of the body politic, could successfully claim legitimate authority over the dual objectives of remembrance and rebuilding. No established procedure existed for this unprecedented task and ad hoc arrangements struck among the contending principals failed as substitutes. Each public agent brought its own statutory authorities and administrative process to bear on parts of the process, but none could achieve mastery over the process. The result was fragmentation and confusion. The authorities tried to fill this gap by charging designers with arriving at a master plan, but while the designers could articulate possible alternatives, they

too could not resolve competing claims on the contested site. In the end, only the governor could resolve these conflicts and make final decisions, but he would step in only when compelled by circumstances to do so. And even his power has not overcome the political struggles and market realities that continue to frustrate progress on rebuilding.

### DEVELOPING A MASTER PLAN

No one expected the process of planning how to rebuild the WTC site to be anything less than complicated and contentious. Not only were the objectives of repairing an emotionally traumatized neighborhood, physically rebuilding a devastated site, and memorializing the losses experienced there likely to run counter to each other, but the figures involved in decision-making all had big ambitions, strong emotions, and conflicting goals. Three imperatives shaped the planning process: first, as hallowed ground it is imbued with the superior moral claim that it memorialize the 2,749 persons who died in the attack; second, the site represents a long-term public commitment to city building; and third, whatever is built on the site must recognize the ownership claims flowing from a business transaction completed only weeks before the disaster and sustain the payments to the Port Authority. How would public officials reconcile these competing claims?

The 16-acre site is large by New York standards, equal to all of Rockefeller Center or the entire Grand Central Station district. Still, it was not large enough to accommodate the planning ambitions for Ground Zero voiced by different interests.<sup>6</sup> There would not be much

room to maneuver, nor to explore notions of city building that might not address the PA's financial concerns. This created the constant refrain in public discourse that planners were loading the site with densely packed commercial towers which threatened to crowd out a meaningful memorial space. In time, the principal decision makers came to realize that the only way out of this dilemma was to expand the site beyond Ground Zero.

The LMDC was ambiguous about how it would reconcile competing priorities. It would push simultaneously for the "preservation of the site as a place of remembrance and memorial," and new development that would "enhance and revive Lower Manhattan as a center of new financial, cultural, and community activity" (LMDC 2004a, S-6, S-7). These goals would also have to take a back seat to the PA's nonnegotiable demand to replace the 10-million-plus square feet of office space that generated \$120 million annual ground-lease payments stemming from the 99-year lease encumbering the site to Larry Silverstein and his investor group (for two towers) and Westfield America (for the retail mall). Absent buying out these claims, Port Authority officials intended to honor the lease, which gave Silverstein and Westfield the right as well as obligation to rebuild exactly what was in place prior to the attack.

The Port Authority's legal and financial constraints posed an obvious potential problem for the LMDC. Like the city, the LMDC had no authority over the PA, a state of affairs that was bound to create tensions with the quasi-independent authority. Its 16-member

board had a strong mandate, at least on paper: total control over the WTC site. But given the Port Authority's ownership of the site, Roland Betts, chair of the LMDC site planning committee, asked himself how the LMDC could actually exercise this control.

"It's the Port's site from an ownership standpoint and what's the point of developing a whole plan and getting into a pissing contest with the Port because they don't like it?" Betts said. Both he and [Alexander] Garvin started out believing that if the Port Authority had the right to determine the program for the site—that is, what functions would occupy the land and how much space would be devoted to each—the LMDC would have the right to figure out what the whole thing would look like (Goldberger 2004b, 87).

The struggle over who would actually control site decisions came into public view in early April 2002, when the LMDC, on its own, put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for urban planning consulting services for the site and surrounding areas. The LMDC quickly pulled the RFP after angered Port Authority officials vehemently objected that they had not been asked for advice. Shortly afterwards they issued a nearly identical joint RFP, but with the Port Authority's name listed as the lead agency on the cover page. The Port Authority and the LMDC announced at the same time that they had negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding spelling out their respective roles in the rebuilding process and a division of labor for the planning process.<sup>7</sup> Five weeks later, the agencies jointly selected Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners (BBB), in association

with Parsons Brinckerhoff, to provide consulting services to the agencies; the full team included 11 other specialty and engineering firms. Phase I, scheduled to be completed in July 2002, promised up to six concepts for land use on the site; phase II was "to further develop and define these options based on the public input received," and phase III was to result in a "preferred land-use and transportation plan." The work never got beyond phase I, after a highly publicized meeting of some 4,500 people in July 2002, unambiguously rejected all six plans presented, described in the press as "strikingly similar," "dismal," "disappointing," "uninspiring," "mediocre," "no soul," "lacking vision," "not broad enough, bold enough, or big enough." The group gathered at "Listening to the City" made it clear that the plans were simply inadequate.<sup>8</sup>

The press savaged the alternatives in ways no elected official could ignore. In "The Downtown We Don't Want," the *Times* editorial page called the plans "dreary, laden proposals that fall far short of what New York City—and the world—expect to see rise at ground zero." The editorial put the onus squarely on the requirement that the site "be packed with a full 11 million square feet of office space, 600,000 square feet of retail space and another 600,000 square feet for a hotel." And the *Times* put officials on notice that they would be held accountable for something visionary: "What these proposals demonstrate most conclusively is that nothing memorable can be done in Lower Manhattan if the Port Authority insists on reclaiming every inch of commercial space that it controlled before Sept. 11" (*New York Times* 2002a). A couple of

days later, the *Times* made a more direct call to hold Governor George Pataki accountable in "Talk to the Man in Charge" (*New York Times* 2002b).

Editors at the *Daily News* penned a sharper critique of the Port Authority, which they said was "flawed by design." "The LMDC, though filled with talented people, had been handcuffed by its boss, the Port Authority. It had to follow orders... As the design concepts prove, the PA still places its own needs first... It is accountable to no one. And that's the real problem." Over the next 10 days, the *Daily News* followed up with two more editorials, upping its criticism of the Port Authority's "severe limitation on the land use" which made "a visionary plan impossible" (*Daily News* 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002d). *Newsday* told its readers: "None of the WTC Proposals Is Good Enough." Its editors similarly laid the blame squarely on the broad shoulders of the Port Authority and the requirement for putting the leaseholders first. They argued several positions: "forget about legalisms," "slow down," "creativity is key," and "hold Pataki responsible" (*Newsday* 2002). Alone among the city's dailies, only the *Post* seemed to like what had been produced, remarkably, considering the near universal sentiment otherwise; its editors said, "So far, so good" (*New York Post* 2002).

After publicly bungling phase I, the LMDC obviously needed to get it right the second time.<sup>9</sup> Betts believed that lack of specific enabling legislation made the LMDC's *ad hoc* planning process susceptible to legal challenge, but he considered it critically important to

move the process forward. To "organize" would have taken a year of precious time (Betts, 2004).<sup>10</sup>

To recover momentum, he decided to throw out the BBB plans and start over. The "mistake" in the first round, he said, was to present the plans as massing models showing a layout without defining what the buildings themselves would look like. The public "thinks you've designed a building." Betts felt that the BBB architects had not been invested in their plans; he now wanted to involve the world's best architects in the process. He had strong support from his committee, which included architect Billie Tsien. To sell this course of action to the Port Authority and the city, LMDC executive director Tomson, who had a good relationship with Seymour, would work the Port Authority, while Betts, who had a long and close relationship with Doctoroff, would work the city. They would mention the 50 million Web site hits on Design I, how the eyes of the world were watching what we are doing; how such a big project demanded world-class talent, and we must do it right. Before they could launch their campaign, however, someone leaked their plans to the *Times*, and Betts recalled the task became "very difficult" (Betts 2004).

Alexander Garvin, LMDC vice president for planning, design, and development, understood as well the strategic value of playing "the architectural card," to make the LMDC, "at least for a few months at the end of 2002, into the most conspicuous architectural patron in the world," as Paul Goldberger explained in his account of the inside maneuvering

(Goldberger 2003). "It was a shrewd decision, because it moved the planning process to an area that the Port Authority had traditionally shown little interest in." Within the month, the LMDC launched a worldwide "Innovative Design Study" (design 2) with a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to select as many as five architecture and planning firms to offer new ideas for the WTC site.<sup>11</sup> The LMDC emphasized the word "innovative" to signal how different this process (and presumably the product) would be.

Design 2 implicitly challenged the designers to resolve competing claims—in effect, to accomplish the political task that politicians were reluctant to do. Despite what the RFQ stated—in boldface: "This is NOT a design competition and will not result in the selection of a final plan"—the Innovative Design Study had morphed into a design competition among world-class architects that would produce one winner. Given the high-profile talent brought to bear on a task and the worldwide attention, it could hardly have been different. The competition unveiled nine design schemes<sup>12</sup> in December 2002, yielding praise for the LMDC (if not for the actual designs) for calling for a big vision and a standard of world-class design. Yet the bold ideas and visual clues of a new future for the WTC site could not paper-over the continuing confusion among civic groups, design professionals, and the public concerning how these critical decisions would be made. Nor did they mute the persistent call for less commercial space. They could not. The role for the winner of this competition was never clear because the LMDC did not have the power to implement the selected master plan.

The Port Authority had never relinquished its power to control the site agenda,<sup>13</sup> and was reportedly holding out the ability to combine several aspects of several designs (Wyatt 2003).

Port Authority officials appeared indecisive during the earliest stage of planning, but the public debacle over the BBB designs and the LMDC's architectural competition triggered the PA into an even more intense struggle for control over site decisions. It felt that determining the configuration of memorial, commercial space, and cultural facilities was equivalent to programming the financial equation. If the LMDC maintained the lion's share of responsibility for planning the 16-acre site, the LMDC would be determining how much revenue the Port Authority would get. PA executives were tellingly absent when the LMDC launched the Innovative Design Study. Within the month, just days before the LMDC was set to announce the seven new design teams, the PA hired Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn (EEK), to do in-house transportation planning and design coordination. This further confused observers about how key decisions would be made and who would really lead the effort (Hetter and Janison 2002).

The Port Authority initially focused on rebuilding the towers and associated infrastructure demands; its institutional authority over infrastructure was unchallenged. To the PA's way of thinking, the LMDC would supply the "vision" thing, which would be inserted into the site plan like a LEGO toy. In other words, the LMDC's role in the decision-making for the master plan would be limited to



"pretty building designs," as EEK partner Stanton Eckstut reportedly said, adding that he alone was developing substantive plans for the site's streets, transportation facilities, and underground infrastructure (Neuman 2002b, Wyatt 2002b). This infuriated Garvin, who had broader ambitions in mind when the LMDC commissioned the seven high-profile design teams. According to Goldberger, Betts and Garvin saw the design study as a way to get more inspired designs from architects more creative than BBB, "They had long ago accepted the notion that a truly visionary plan for Ground Zero stood no chance of surviving the political process. They saw their roles as trying to squeeze as much design quality as they could out of that process, not of bypassing it altogether" (Goldberger 2004b, 128).

Skeptics and veterans could not help wondering aloud whether the LMDC's Innovative Design Study was really just a sideshow while the PA made the real decisions. "It's a beauty contest and a distraction," said Robert D. Yaro, leader of the Civic Alliance (Flint 2002; Bagli 2003; McGeveran 2003). "Fundamentally it's a sideshow because none of these things will be built," said one LMDC director about the December 2002 unveiling of the nine conceptual visions produced by the design 2 competition, "But they did show a variety of ways the site could have commercial development and a memorial without looking like a mess" (Bagli 2002). Shortly after these visions were presented, the *Daily News* (2002e) let go with force: "What a healthy, open process. And what a monumental waste of time," the editors complained. "One suspects the PA will dismiss the LMDC plans outright and selfishly

plow ahead with what it wants. If that is not the intention, why does Eckstut's work continue in secret?" the editors asked. "Both sides have promised to work together, but it's not easy to trust the PA promises."

The competition had become more politicized with each step forward. Press coverage during this period focused on the "superbowl of design," and how the dramatic architectural visions produced by the seven design teams were whittled down to the semifinalist runoff between Daniel Libeskind and Rafael Viñoly. Both semi-finalists "grasped the political nature of the selection process from the start, playing straight to the public as if the citizens of New York City were the clients for the job" (Lovine 2003). When the governor decided to award the master-plan prize to Libeskind's "Memory Foundations," against the recommendation of his LMDC site-planning committee, which had taken a consensus vote for Viñoly's THINK-team and its latticework scheme "Towers of Culture," political intervention had come full circle.<sup>14</sup>

The final selection of the Libeskind plan did not resolve the key master plan issues—whether there would be four or five office towers, how the cultural facilities would be integrated into the plan, how much of the historic street grid would be reinstated, where to place underground security screening and bus parking facilities, and how deep to expose the slurry wall. To the contrary the two agencies and their respective teams of designers, planners, engineers, and associated professionals debated these issues for months on end.

## SELECTING A MEMORIAL DESIGN

The memorial design process followed an entirely different pattern of political decision-making. It proceeded in a straightforward way because this task floated above the institutional turf fights and political gray areas besetting the commercially sensitive decisions over density, land uses, street patterns, pedestrian ways, and vehicular traffic. That is not to say it was not subject to delays or criticism. How LMDC structured this competition and protected it from political interference presents a sharp contrast to the intense politicization plaguing the site-plan selection .

LMDC officials did not structure the memorial-design competition to be an "open, inclusive process" but rather a series of controlled public forums where members of the jury could hear the views of different constituent groups. Confidentiality governed the jury's activities. Its 13 members all signed agreements barring them from speaking to the press about the memorial-selection process until the winner was announced. (The eight finalists, model makers, illustrators, and computer animators also signed confidentiality agreements.) To head off the public-relations battles that had poisoned the site-plan competition, these agreements also included a clause prohibiting negative comments about peer designs that extended through December 31, 2005. The juror's notebooks never left the office where they reviewed the 5,201 entries (mounted on 30-by-40-inch boards) propped up on easels in rooms protected by a double-key system. The eight finalists were selected anonymously.

The hard-learned lessons of the site-plan competition led LMDC officials to decide to keep politics at bay. They succeeded in part because Governor Pataki, Mayor Bloomberg, and former Mayor Giuliani (who was not far removed from commenting in public on 9/11 events) all agreed that the memorial decision should be the jury's alone. The remembrance element was too hot to touch. Governor Pataki's voice was heard only at the press conference, not before. The Port Authority was nowhere in the conversation, yet alone in the deliberations, on this most sensitive element of the WTC site; it was not represented on the memorial jury. The political calculus of this model was likely to work for the governor, regardless of the outcome. If it went well, the governor could take credit; if not, they were distanced from the result. "You can't have a memorial designed by politicians," Pataki remarked after the winning design had been unveiled (Collins and Dunlap 2004). Ironically, the LMDC's ability to shelter the memorial process from the Port Authority or the City enabled it to negate important parts of the selected master plan.

The rules set forth by the LMDC Memorial Competition Guidelines, which is to say no rules, gave the jurors complete flexibility to alter the parameters of the Libeskind plan. The "rules" specified that competitors could create a memorial "of any type, shape, height or concept" so long as it included five specifically enumerated physical elements essential for a fitting 9/11 memorial.<sup>15</sup> Design concepts needed only to be "sensitive to the spirit and vision of Studio Daniel Libeskind's master plan for the entire site." And the jury was not

restricted in reviewing design concepts that “exceed the illustrated memorial site boundaries” (LMDC 2003bc). Rampe reiterated this point at the press conference launching the international design competition, saying “it may take going outside those guidelines” for competitors to express their creativity. By professional inclination, the jurors were intent on considering all proposals. To attract high caliber jurors, LMDC officials undoubtedly assured them that they would be the sole authority in this matter. Repeatedly, well-known juror Maya Lin was mentioned as someone who “broke some of the rules” to produce a spectacularly successful Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. (Wyatt 2003; Graves and Neuman 2003). In short, jury members could disregard Libeskind’s site plan if it created problems in selecting what they considered to be the most creative proposal.

The unique surviving element of Libeskind’s vision was the slurry wall of the bathtub, which he deliberately left exposed as an ever-present reminder that the foundation held even as the seemingly invincible buildings crumbled. Libeskind’s site plan defined a memorial area of 4.7 acres depressed 30 feet below the level of the street—called “the pit,” “commemorative pit,” “sunken pit,” or “desolate pit” by different news media. The site plan articulated place-holding museum and cultural buildings at the edges of the memorial area to shelter it from adjacent commercial activities. These conceptual elements created a specific physical template for the memorial, in effect, pre-designing aspects of the memorial.

The LMDC’s memorial program drafting committee did not want to sequester the memorial in isolation: “Designs should consider the neighborhood context, including the connectivity of the surrounding residential and business communities” (LMDC 2003a, 10). Reading between the lines, this could be understood as permitting applicants to violate the approved master plan. The committee wanted “the memorial and site-planning processes to influence and be coordinated with one another for mutual benefit.” The memorial program would be “used as one of the criteria for the site plan selection. Once the memorial designer is selected, both the memorial designer and the site planner will work together to integrate their efforts.” The words sounded right, but the site plan had already been selected when the memorial competition was launched; the premise of the jury’s actual charge signaled permission to reject the LMDC’s own approved master plan. “The jury was always thinking it is smarter than the others and removed some placeholders,” one juror said at an academic meeting. “All memorials are negotiated. Nothing is set in stone.”

The logic of the master plan was to define a blank space that the memorial design competition would fill in, but the competition rules unambiguously defined the memorial selection as the planning priority to which the site plan would have to respond. “It was the memorial site competition,” one juror said to the press (Collins and Dunlap 2004). The jury objected to the way that the master plan called for the memorial to be depressed 30 feet below street level when many jurors preferred a grade-level solution. (This feature also both-

ered downtown business interests and Battery Park City residents, who considered the pit an obstacle to passage through the WTC site.) Regardless of the logic or merit of the Libeskind vision, jurors wanted the memorial design to knit the trade-center site back into the neighborhood. "We also had to face the stark reality of reintegrating into the urban fabric a site that had been violently torn from it," the jury emphasized in its statement on the winning design. And their recommendations were made contingent on achieving that end (LMDC 2004b).

It seems obvious that the jury would not want to cede even small degrees of its prerogatives over the selection. Yet the jury was resolving an ambiguity that had bedeviled the entire planning process—how to balance remembrance with rebuilding. It used the moral authority of the memorial mission and its prerogatives as an independent jury to assert remembrance as the centerpiece of the endeavor. And it chose to do so in a way that would reunify the WTC site with the urban fabric of Lower Manhattan, healing the planning wounds of the past.

All eight finalist designs turned their back on the idea that the entire memorial should be depressed below street level, and the three proposals all violated Libeskind's master plan. The final choice also repudiated the master plan in the latest and perhaps most serious of steps weakening its integrity. The executive editor of *Metropolis* remarked on the "near-erasure" of Memory Foundations. (Pedersen 2004). All the signature elements of the plan—the Wedge of Light, the Park of Heroes,

the exposed slurry wall, and companion sunken memorial site—had been "altered, reduced or eliminated," wrote Robin Pogrebin from the *Times* cultural desk (Pogrebin 2004).

The jury's decision also put LMDC's Rampe in a bind: "Kevin Rampe couldn't reverse the independent jury, nor could he afford to alienate Libeskind, who ideas for Ground Zero had been enthusiastically endorsed by Pataki, Rampe's boss," Goldberger wrote in *The New Yorker*. "The solution to this dilemma was, like everything else at Ground Zero, a delicately stitched-together web of politics, policy, and disingenuous public statements" (Goldberger 2004a). When viewed through the lens of interests competing for primacy on this contested turf, however, the memorial competition allowed the independent jury to make the first controlling claim on the remembrance-versus-rebuilding conflict separate from the factors that inevitably put LMDC at a disadvantage to the Port Authority or the lease holders. Soon after the winning announcement, Rampe announced: "We said from the beginning—and I think the selection by the jury shows that we didn't just say it, we meant it—that the memorial is the centerpiece" (Dunlap 2004).

#### LIBERATING RESOURCES: THE HIGH LINE

On July 9, 2003, New York City Council Speaker Gifford Miller announced that the City would provide \$15.75 million of the estimated \$65 million cost of restoration of the abandoned High Line, which runs for 1.45 miles down Manhattan's West Side. This was the first formal financial commitment for the

open-space project that had been described as quirky and quixotic at best and had just barely escaped near-death by bulldozer. He made the announcement at a benefit preview co-hosted by actor Edward Norton and author Robert Caro in Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall, where more than 100 of the 720 submissions from the "Designing the High Line" international ideas competition had been put on display for public viewing. "The new funds secured by the Speaker will have a multiplier effect. We can use the City's financial commitment to the project to attract major private,



View of the High Line. Courtesy Joel Sternfeld © 2000

corporate, foundations, and federal funds," said Philip Aarons (FHL 2003b), chairman of the board of directors of the Friends of the High Line (FHL), a nonprofit organization established in 1999 to preserve the structure as public space and sponsor of the competition, along with the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Council, and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development. The commitment marked a stunning political turnaround, a David-versus-Goliath triumph for a grass-roots

effort dedicated to preserving the 22-block-long elevated rail structure as an industrial icon and turning it into a public greenway akin to the Promenade Plantée in Paris.

The 2003 ideas design competition played an important role in the FHL's strategy to build broad-based support from public quarters and private interests and prevent a teardown, something seemingly more imminent following Mayor Giuliani approval of authorizing papers signed by the Economic Development Corporation at the end of his administration. An organized group of owners of property underneath the structure had been lobbying for demolition since the mid-1980s; one owner had already demolished the southernmost five blocks of the High Line, bringing its terminus to Gansevoort Street in 1991. Giuliani, who rarely engaged in any development project, saw no value in the antiquated structure. His City Planning Commissioner Joseph B. Rose cited "significant financial, maintenance, operation and liability issues, as well as well as the structure's blighting effect on multiple properties," in concluding that the practical obstacles to achieving FHL's vision for reuse are "profound. He cautioned its advocates not to expect government funds since the Hudson River Park was underway nearby. "This is an area where the city and state are spending hundreds of millions of dollars for parkland across the street," he said. "It is unrealistic to expect that the restoration of the High Line for a nontransit use is something that would be financed publicly" (Dunlap 2000).

The High Line was developing a "good head of political steam," with endorsements from

federal, state, and local elected officials. FHL's co-founders, Robert Hammond and Joshua David, found other key private-sector allies through "friends, friends of friends, friends' parents" (Dunlap 2000). The *New Yorker's* Adam Gopnik brought national attention to the six-decade old High Line with a story featuring the elegiac landscape photographs of Joel Sternfeld, who later explained: "concrete imagery can be absolutely essential to the process of land-use debate" (Dunlap 2002). Pro-preservation editorials appeared in the *Daily News* and the *Villager*. Media-attracting benefits were held. FHL secured planning support from the Design Trust for Public Space and produced a comprehensive 90-page planning report, *Reclaiming the High Line* exhibited at the Municipal Art Society and published in a book sponsored by AOL Time Warner. Articles in the *New York Times*, the *Daily News*, the *Village Voice*, and several magazines brought the fight to save the High Line to citywide and national prominence.

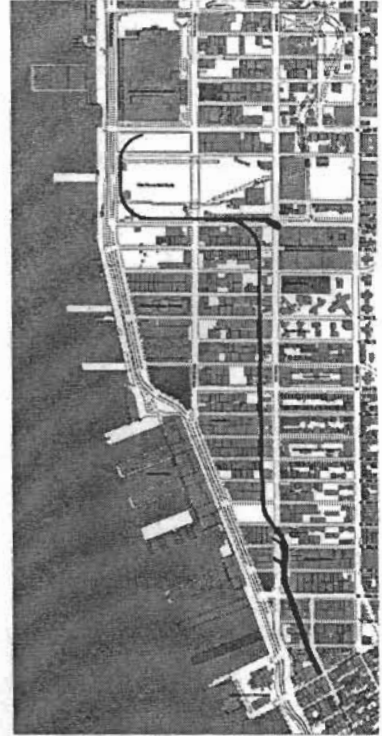
In July 2001, in a vote of 38–0, the City Council passed a pro-preservation resolution urging the City and State to "take all necessary steps" to preserve, rail-bank, and reuse the High Line. The vote of confidence would have little effect, however, if CSX Transportation Inc., the inherited owner of the High Line, could not be persuaded to follow an alternative course of action. CSX wanted an exit strategy that would eliminate liability claims and maintenance expenses, which reportedly were running \$400,000 per year (in 2000); though the company did not appear to have an agenda it was determined to follow to achieve those aims (Dunlap 2000). A preliminary financial

plan for the reuse of the High Line, including full structural rehabilitation, the construction of five access points, and landscaping and paving costs, had been estimated at \$40 million to \$60 million (New York City Council 2001). "Money doesn't grow on trees," the commercial property owners said in one of its fliers. "And the last time we checked, it wasn't growing in the weeds of the High Line, either" (Dunlap 2002). The

rhetoric underscored the fact that no money existed to create a public space, nor even a plan to follow—in short, that the initiative to reclaim the High Line faced complex political, legal, and financial hurdles.

Though it would not be announced until February 2003, by fall 2001 FHL was in line applying for funds from NEA to support a design competition that would "generate creative schemes for reuse of the High Line." As an ideas competition, "Designing the High Line" sought:

To catalyze the development of truly original designs, but those designs did not necessarily



From a report, "Reclaiming the High Line," prepared by the Design Trust for Public Space, with Friends of the High Line. Courtesy Friends of the High Line

have to be realistic or practical. Rather, they were meant to provoke public debate about what's best for the High Line and to make the ultimate selection of a design team a more creative process (FHL 2003a).

FHL's constituent audience included CSX, the City and State's U.S. Congressional representatives who could push for additional funds in transportation bills, the Bloomberg administration, and citizens at large. It had been moving on several fronts; the odds in its favor were slowly increasing. At the end of 2002, FHL and its advocates won a major legal victory when Justice Diane A. Lebedeff of the New York State Supreme Court ruled that plans to demolish the High Line had been "undertaken in violation of 'lawful procedure' and [were] an 'error of law'" (FHL 2002). Facing more legal hurdles before the rail structure could be converted to public use, FHL needed political and financial resources more than ever.

The international design competition liberated the resources. In 2004, following a second competition to select a master-plan design team (Field Operations and Diller, Scofidio & Renfro), Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announced \$43.25 million in capital funding for a public park (increasing the City's earlier commitment by \$27.5 million); the City also filed papers seeking permission to transform the High Line into a public space through the federal rail-banking program. And by August 2005, Senators Schumer and Clinton and Congressman Nadler had secured additional funding for the project, including \$18 million in the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill.

## DEVELOPMENT COMPETITIONS ARE DIFFERENT

Competitions to select development partners for publicly sponsored projects differ in substance and complexity from ideas competitions. Typically, the development competition involves a public/private venture in which the public sector is searching for the right team to work with to meet specific public objectives. Such city-building objectives include the creation of a district (Battery Park City), transformation of a district (42nd Street Development Project), or redevelopment of a high-profile site (Coliseum at Columbus Circle). In response to an RFQ or RFP, competitors must demonstrate proven capabilities in a wide range of disciplines: planning, design, engineering, marketing, finance, and development; they must offer a sophisticated financial package that meets the sponsor's financial objectives as well as a design vision, and perhaps a detailed programmatic plan. Developers, not architects or planners, lead the entering teams. Sponsoring agencies are likely to ignore some of the traditional features of the competition format, for example, replacing the independent jury of peers with a selection committee more closely calibrated to serve the sponsor's interests. The economics of the development proposal are paramount in any selection, as is an ability to execute on a proposal—especially over multiple phases if the competition involves a large-scale project. Selection is more likely to produce tangible results than an ideas competition.

Selecting a developer is a lot about dollars, but not exclusively so; it is also about assuring delivery of the public benefits in the development equation—open spaces, public amenities, subway improvements, or specific programmatic space such as a renovated theater or jazz center (Sagalyn 1997). In the classic trade-off of a development competition the public sector offers favorable terms (financial incentives, help with land assembly, infrastructure, and eased bureaucratic procedures) to achieve specific programmatic objectives from developers who can access deep pools of investment capital in exchange for the desired package of public benefits. Successful competitors must be able to perform on a complex set of deliverables.<sup>16</sup> A development proposal has to be “smart” with regard to what a public sector partner is looking for, both in terms of design and ease of working relations. For designers, this might mean being more conservative than otherwise and packaging the design in certain ways (Corner 2005).

Using competitions to make complex development decisions is far more difficult than using them as a strategic political platform under any of the political motivations mentioned in the beginning of this paper. How much weight do sponsors give to the role of design in these competitions?

Design strength may be a necessary condition for selection in development competitions but it is not a sufficient one. In most instances, it will not take precedence over economics; the political stakes of a development competition—of failing to execute—are too high. On the other hand, design can mediate the heavy

weight given to economic criteria and execution capability in development competitions, but it operates within a limited range. The reputation and capability of designers on the development team, for example, help shield the public entity against the potential that a developer will make poor aesthetic choices, though it cannot protect the public sponsor from the political risk of a serious architectural miscalculation, as was the case with the much-debated and widely despised designs produced by Philip Johnson and John Burgee for the four office towers of the 42nd Street redevelopment project. Selection on the basis of design capability also cannot mitigate the political risk of policy overreaching, as in the case of the first competition for redevelopment rights of the Coliseum at Columbus Circle when the City and MTA lost a critical lawsuit linked to the project's unpopular and excessive density, which the judge ruled constituted “zoning for sale.” On the other hand, design excellence built into specific design guidelines or performance requirements of the development project can build credibility and public trust in large-scale public developments as illustrated in Battery Park City.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Competitions are here to stay. They are a relatively inexpensive way to serve their sponsors' larger political objectives. In reality, they transfer the cost to designers, who spend many times the fees they are given. In the WTC competitions, for example, designers spent 10 to 20 times the amounts they were given. This is a unique situation: no other professions are prepared to “give away” their



time. Designers have in mind immortality and, as often, naïve impressions that their plans will be implemented as they draw them.

For young designers, entering competitions is a way to achieve public notice, maybe the most effective form of self-promotion. Witness Michael Arad, who succeeded in the WTC memorial design competition. More experienced designers are much more selective in the competitions they enter. Some avoid them entirely. Others make calculated investments of time and resources. They understand that the competition is political in nature and go

to great lengths to position their work so that it is attractive to the jury or politicians who will determine their fate. They customarily cultivate the press to be sympathetic to their cause and routinely hire public relations firms to plead their case.

The blend of politics and design forces designers to adjust their sights and working methods. They need to see themselves as actors in a political system, not floating above it as artists or neutral professionals. Without political skills, they will find their efforts outflanked by those accustomed to acting in the political arena.

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## Notes

1. See in particular, the case study of the design competition for Pershing Square, a five-acre park in downtown Los Angeles (Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee 1987).

2. The most frequently cited competitions are those for Central Park (1858), Washington Square Arch (1889–92), and New York Public Library (1897). See Spreiregen 1979.

3. Witzling, Alexander and Casper analyzed 51 urban design competitions held between 1978 and 1984. Half of these were initiated by public agencies; public sponsors were more likely, they reported, than private sponsors to hold what they called "implementation competitions" (versus concept competitions) because "Public bodies may also be less able to allocate funds for the generation of concepts alone so that the intention to imple-

ment the results becomes a political condition for funding" (14).

4. Political ambitions have long shaped elected officials' motivations to run competitions, whether architectural or planning or urban design. Public building projects offer opportunity for patronage jobs; as an emblem of a great city (or state), a high-profile public project can be used as a platform for higher office; control over major public construction projects can also serve as a tool of bigger political party strategic ambitions. The design competition for New York's Central Park in 1858 embedded all these themes in what was a political struggle between the state and city for control over the park. See Rosenzweig and Blackmar 1992, 96–97.

5. Much of this case study has been drawn from a complete discussion of the first three years of

WTC rebuilding presented in Sagalyn (2005).

6. Rebuilding the site presented city planners with the opportunity to correct past mistakes and remedy the district's deficits in the area's quality of life. Reinserting part of the historic street grid emerged as a rare point of consensus among city planners, downtown business interests, and residents of Battery Park City.

7. The memorandum provided that the LMDC would control the memorial design process and reportedly contained concessions from the Port Authority releasing some land for a memorial and allowing cultural facilities as well as commercial buildings on the site, and considering reopening the street-grid, all of which might reduce the land available for the original program of 10 million square feet of office space.

8. The excessive amount of office space was a chief complaint. New Yorkers are used to density but a dense cluster of office towers, however configured, seemed an inappropriate setting for remembering those who tragically perished on September 11. Participants recommended making every effort be made to cancel the Silverstein lease so that the Port Authority's commercial requirement would not govern planning decisions. "Listening to the City" attendees put forth rebuilding proposals that called for a suitable memorial as the centerpiece of rebuilding, restoring Lower Manhattan's skyline, eliminating West Street as a barrier to the waterfront, restoring the street grid, emphasizing street-level activity, reducing the amount of office space on the site, and providing memorable architecture (Civic Alliance 2002).

9. Although design I was an embarrassment, the LMDC had been called to task for failing to articulate clear priorities and manage the consensus-building process. The decision to make a master plan for the entire site before designing the memorial struck many citizens and professionals alike as proceeding in reverse gear. Should not the memorial design come first and constrain the master plan? Starting with a master plan focused decision-making on how much territory would be reserved for a memorial, whereas the critical planning question might logically have been how best integrate an appropriate memorial design into the redevelopment of the site and the fabric of lower Manhattan? The decision to proceed first with a master plan put the LMDC on the defensive when its handpicked me-

memorial jury selected Michael Arad and Peter Walker's Reflecting Absence in an unapologetic violation of Daniel Libeskind's Memory Foundations master plan. In short, the LMDC appeared opportunistic, uncoordinated, and confused. Even its president acknowledged in a January 2003 breakfast speech at New York University Law School that "We've screwed up lots of times along the way." One of the biggest mistakes, Tomson said, was releasing the first set of rebuilding plans. "We did not convey to the public what we were trying to do with the plans we released in July" (Rogers 2003).

10. The site planning committee was "comfortable enough, but not very enthusiastic" about the Design I schemes, Betts recalled. After "Listening to the City," it took to heart the lessons that the historic street grid should be reinserted, a transit hub created, a first-rate memorial built, West Street broadened and landscaped, and the skyline of Lower Manhattan remade with an iconic tall tower.

11. The LMDC was not in a good position to manage this process. It had planning expertise, but no design capability. To fill this gap, LMDC met regularly with New York New Visions members to provide a "kitchen cabinet of sorts" for Garvin, who asked them for advice on how to run a competition, input on the criteria to include in the Innovative Design Study RFQ, and a list of architects and planners to review the RFQ responses. Garvin initially asked NYNV to run the competition, but the group said no. Marcie Kesner, an experienced planner who had worked in the Queens Borough President's office and co-chaired the group's executive committee, firmly believed that LMDC should run the process. She wasn't sure why NYNV was being asked to manage it. Like other "on-call advisors," she was concerned that LMDC might just want them to provide cover. The extent to which Garvin relied on the group was "flattering" but, always caused NYNV committee members to ask, "What is our role?" (Kesner 2002).

12. Six teams, not five, were chosen by the LMDC site committee, and Garvin added his in-house consultants, Petterson Littenberg, to the list of competing architectural teams. The THINK team led by Raphael Vifioly, submitted three designs, making for a total of nine designs from the seven teams.

13. After negotiations with the PA, few weeks after the seven teams were chosen, the LMDC

announced a revised the office space component from 10 to 6.5 million square feet of space. The Port Authority, however, had not actually changed its position—"you can't assume the Port Authority is going to give up its real estate interests," a PA source was quoted as saying—but rather suggested some of the space would be accommodated on parcels outside the WTC site. Since the City and the Port Authority were still at loggerheads about where this might occur, "it was left purposely amorphous" (Wyatt 2002a). The new revision also allowed for as much as two million additional square feet each of hotel and retail space. These revisions reflected the fluidity of the planning situation as well as ongoing negotiations between the City and the Port Authority over "a raft of issues," including the airport/WTC land swap put on the table by Doctoroff ten weeks earlier (Neuman 2002a).

14. Up to this point, the governor and mayor had not been involved with the design process. In mid-December, the governor had walked around the Winter Garden with Betts, Charles Gargano (chairman of the Empire State Development Corporation, LMDC's parent organization), and LMDC's Alex Garvin for about an hour asking questions. He wanted to see the Viñoly and Libeskind plans again. Now, just before the decision day, Lou Tomson told Betts the governor was okay with both plans. Doctoroff told Betts the mayor was okay with both plans. Betts did not foresee a problem with either selection. The full site committee heard the worked-through revisions to both master plans only the day before the vote. The committee like both plans, said Betts; his job was to persuade them of the Viñoly plan. He did not want the LMDC to dissent on the final vote, so if something went awry, it would support the Libeskind plan. The site committee voted unanimous for the Viñoly plan, though Tomson abstained. "This should have

told me something," Betts later remarked, but "I missed this because Tomson did not care about the aesthetics of the decision," just the power and politics of the situation. At 5:30 a.m. the next day, Doctoroff called Betts to tell him that the report in the Wall Street Journal that they worried about was buried and harmless. Something else, however, was brewing; the Times piece. The phones started ringing incessantly; the governor's press agent yelling, who do you think you are? "This introduced a new factor—pride and who calls the shots" (Betts 2004). The governor and mayor met in a tiny room for a final review of the two plans. The architects had not been scheduled to make presentations, but they were called in early that morning. By several accounts, Libeskind was said to have done a great job; not so Viñoly. The governor made a series of emotional statements, and, according to one person attending speaking on the condition of anonymity, said, "I hate these towers, skeletons of death. I will never build them." The meeting fell apart soon after the governor left.

15. The five physical elements were: recognition of each victim of the attacks, an area for quiet contemplation, a separate area for visitation by the families of the victims, a 2,500-square-foot area for the unidentified human remains collected at the trade center site, and a way to make visible the footprints of the original twin towers.

16. Sometimes political considerations interact with complex performance objectives when competition sponsors make up teams by matching different respondents to an RFP in development competitions. Another way in which a competition can become a political platform is when a competition ends with a public presentation before final selection, and the event is used for show biz and sizzle and entertainment.