

WTC Survivors' Network Position Statement: World Trade Center Site Memorial and Redevelopment



Introduction

The World Trade Center Survivors' Network is a community of evacuees, workers, residents and witnesses, united by their common experience of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. We are one of the only organizations representing survivors and want to encourage and foster this vital perspective. Therefore, the WTC Survivors' Network is requesting full inclusion in the process of accurately recording the story of the attacks for future generations, identifying and preserving historic artifacts and redeveloping the area. While we can never bring back those who died, we can bear witness and ensure that the full story of September 11, 2001 is never forgotten.

Background

In the aftermath of September 11, many WTC evacuees, area workers and neighborhood residents were in varying degrees of shock, unemployment, under-employment or homeless. Most were unable to participate in the planning process for the redevelopment of the WTC site when it first started in late 2001 and as it continued throughout 2002. As a result, many people directly impacted by the terror attacks were silent as they focused on the grim business of mourning their dead, cleaning their homes, finding new jobs and otherwise picking up the pieces of their lives.

The World Trade Center Survivors' Network was formed in 2003 in response to this reality and to help facilitate the healing process. While our struggle is not yet over, we have regained our voice.

We are now asking for support from the other stakeholders in the redevelopment process – the families, other survivors, memorial and museum designers, foundations, and government agencies – to enable us to properly honor the memory of our friends, neighbors, colleagues and family members who were murdered in the attacks on the World Trade Center. We also want to memorialize the first responders who died coming to our aid as well as to recognize the many people who participated in the rescue and recovery efforts or lent support as volunteers in the following weeks and months.

We think that rebuilding is both desirable and necessary, but the site must also maintain a balance between commercial development and memorial. We are asking for support in recovering the unique spirit of the World Trade Center area. And we want to convey our experiences to assist in advancing the construction of safer workplace environments.

Additionally, survivors are uniquely qualified to help define how the story of the attacks on the World Trade Center is recorded for future generations and to help in the process of identifying artifacts of historic importance.

To achieve these goals, the WTC Survivors' Network is emphasizing four main areas of concern:

- (1) Promoting survivor participation in all aspects of the redevelopment process
- (2) Preserving all historic artifacts, especially those still within the WTC site
- (3) Providing healing and support for all survivors within the Memorial Quadrant
- (4) Creating a survivors' registry to accurately reflect the full story of the evacuation

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Objectives

The WTC Survivors' Network is recommending that the following actions be taken.

- 1 **Preserve the “Survivors’ Stairway”** (near Vesey Street and West Broadway, it was the last means of escape for many survivors on September 11 and is the only remnant of the WTC complex remaining above ground)
 - a) Recognize the inherent historic significance of the stairway and take measures to preserve it
 - b) Make the Survivors’ Stairway an integral part of the memorial quadrant design
 - c) Consider the stairway as the lead artifact for the entrance to the museum
- 2 **Modify plans for the Memorial Quadrant to reflect the need for survivor healing**
 - a) Update the memorial design to include a private, reflective space within the Memorial Center for survivors
 - b) Include a tree or fountain within the Memorial Grove, the memorial’s garden, as a symbol of hope for those living victims of both attacks
 - c) Ensure that survivor and evacuee accounts are an integral part of the museum
 - d) Buffer retail areas from the memorial by maintaining an adequate transition area
- 3 **Create a Survivor’s Registry**
 - a) Build a registry of survivors to determine the number of people who survived the attacks in order to accurately portray the evacuation story of September 11
- 4 **Promote safer work environments, learning from the lessons of September 11**
 - a) Advocate for buildings to include the latest safety measures for construction, evacuation and security and apply the lessons learned from the evacuations of 1993 and 2001 to all new buildings on the site
 - b) Integrate safety and evacuation recommendations made by credible organizations such as National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), giving due consideration to studies about the psychological factors of evacuation
 - c) Develop clear action plans for evacuating surrounding buildings in the area and ensure that all workers can have a reasonable understanding of what to do in case of emergency

About the WTC Survivors' Network

Formed in 2003, the WTC Survivors' Network is one of the only organizations for survivors of the two attacks on the World Trade Center. The main objectives of the network include:

- ▶ Enabling survivors to successfully deal with the impact of the attacks
- ▶ Empowering survivors to find renewed purpose in their personal and professional lives
- ▶ Ensuring that the historical record accurately reflects the events of September 11
- ▶ Using our experience to assist survivors of other disasters

The WTC Survivors' Network also functions as a resource for interested parties to obtain survivors' perspectives and serves as a conduit for the common thoughts of survivors. Other members of the survivor community are always welcomed and encouraged to join us in our efforts. WTC SN is a non-profit organization under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service, depending upon private donations to cover operational expenses.