

## **A changing identity and diversified employment**

Since the 17th century, Lower Manhattan's identity has been based upon trading and banking. In the 20th century, many financial companies moved to the city's midtown, a mixed-use business centre with its newer transportation, easy access to regional locations and up-to-date infrastructure. Occupancy rates of financial companies on Wall Street declined. Reacting to business shutdowns caused by the destruction of September 11, financial companies that were located downtown are dispersing their financial operations to more than one location. Decentralization ensures that if one part of the company is destroyed, the rest of the company can carry on its work. This has further eroded Downtown's office building occupancies.

New York economists Alice Rivlin and Rosemary Scanlon concluded in a study for the Civic Alliance that financial services will continue to be an important component of Lower Manhattan's economy, but their size and functions could change considerably after September 11. They explain that 'the continued diversification of the area into a more mixed-use, economically integrated community is both likely and desirable'. They suggest that the identity of Lower Manhattan's identity may change with a potential expansion of both knowledge-based industries, and from overseas and domestic tourists attracted by its culture. They also argue that 'citywide demand for housing is likely to fuel a continued expansion of Lower Manhattan residential population, but both its rate of growth and composition will depend considerably on housing policies and land-use decisions' for example, to subsidize low-to moderate-income housing to achieve a diversity of income, age, and ethnicity (Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York, 2002).

## **Making Lower Manhattan sustainable**

Rebuilding means rethinking how Lower Manhattan should physically, economically, and socially function in a 21st century context and how Lower Manhattan could be reshaped in a sustainable manner. Two documents, a Statement of Guiding Principles and an Urban Design Armature for Rebuilding Lower Manhattan, were initially used to explore possibilities (Figures 10.4 and 10.5).

<b>Guiding principles</b>
<p><b>Self-determination and inclusion</b> The state and the city must commit to a transparent planning processes and to giving civic and community voices from the immediate neighbourhood and adjacent neighbourhoods a meaningful place at the planning table.</p>
<p><b>Memorialization</b> WTC bears witness to the death of thousands of New Yorkers, residents of other cities and citizens of many other countries, of innocent people of all cultures, ethnic backgrounds and, religious belief. It is also a testament to the surrounding community and the living, near and far, which responded to the tragedy. A fitting memorial will honour the dead and their families, celebrate the human spirit, and communicate the worldwide symbolic meaning of the site.</p>
<p><b>Livability and balance</b> Develop WTC with fresh eye, inviting those elements – residential, commercial and retail, community places and services – that contribute to a 24-hour mixed use character; and connecting the distinct but related neighbourhoods of TriBeCa, Battery Park City, Chinatown, South Street Seaport, the Financial District, and the Lower East Side.</p>
<p><b>Arts and culture</b> The arts humanize, give voice, stimulate, educate, socialize, build esteem, attract business and are essential to Downtown's rebirth and economic recovery.</p>
<p><b>Productivity</b> New York's strength is in the intellectual, technological and creative skills and hard work of its people. Seek out essential new business sectors, individual entrepreneurs, and small businesses, as well as large.</p>
<p><b>Decentralization</b> Communications technologies now make it possible for many business sectors to disperse without loss of cohesion and make high-density conglomeration less necessary.</p>
<p><b>Sustainability</b> Build a healthy neighbourhood for our children and us, as a model for other cities. Sustainability has many applications: 'Green' architecture, energy efficiency, air and water quality, construction codes, materials and methods, use of local manufacturing capabilities for reconstruction purposes, utilities, and emergency services, pedestrian and mass transportation, outdoor spaces and our rivers.</p>
<p><b>Diversity</b> Lower Manhattan's historic character is reflected in today's vibrant ethnic communities, convergence of many cultures in the workforce and the energy of local colleges with their multi-cultural student bodies poised to inherit an equal share of the future city.</p>
<p><b>Efficient transportation</b> Recognize that Lower Manhattan is a surface and sub-surface transportation hub of the PATH, LIRR, city subways and buses, water traffic, landscape features, pedestrian connections, deliveries, sanitation and security. Services must be up to supporting future needs without burdening other neighbourhoods.</p>
<p><b>Pride of place</b> Architecture is public art that is a measure of our values, teaches design, proportion, materials, health, technology, and science – buildings and spaces that encourage visual and social literacy.</p>

Figure 10.4  
Guiding principles for rebuilding.