

Dear Mayor Bloomberg, Gov. Paterson, Gov. Corzine, and Speaker Silver,

The people are hopeful that as the “top-tier stakeholders” gather at the Gracie Mansion WTC Summit, you will remember you are only there because you represent us. You are there to serve our best interests. That is what you were elected to do; what you are paid to do; what you took an oath to do.

As you know, the Twin Towers were public property. But they were not just our tangible property, they were our intangible property. When we leased them to Larry Silverstein he signed a contract that required him to rebuild them if they were ever destroyed. We the public had more than thirty years of our lives invested in those towers. They were the location for millions of happy hours and they inspired millions of cherished dreams. They were the welcoming lights of home and most of us want them back.

Please have the courage to give this appeal the consideration it deserves. Officials have had almost eight years to get it right and have clearly gotten it wrong. That’s okay. We all make mistakes. But you do not have the luxury of perpetuating those mistakes, when all that is standing between the American people and new Twin Towers is you.

There is no way you can honestly assess the situation without factoring into your discussions the advantages of the "Twin Towers II" plan. New Twin Towers would be far more cost-effective and time-saving because you would be building one uniform building twice, instead of four dissimilar structures. The flexibility of the plan’s mixed-used Twin Towers would support the business environment of New York and enhance the vitality of the whole city. As an investment, they would be a spectacular improvement on the current scheme.

The "Twin Towers II" design is built at grade level, so that the neighborhood is easily drawn into its vibrant pedestrian byways. The protective “superblock” is maintained, so the Twin Towers can once again feature sun-drenched lobbies, instead of the paranoid environment of the windowless “Freedom Tower.” The top forty floors above each 66-story commercial base would be built around an atrium, resolving the density issue.

The "Twin Towers II" memorial was designed in consultation with 9/11 family members, who much prefer it to the current design, which manages to be extravagant and insipid at the same time.

There is still time to ask Kenneth Gardner, the engineer who designed "Twin Towers II" – along with his mentor, the late Herbert Belton, an architect on the original WTC team – to set up the half-million dollar, ten-foot presentation model in Gracie Mansion, so that you can make a more informed judgment. But be prepared to be convinced, because no one who has ever seen it has failed to be won over by it. He could bring along the full set of blueprints and answer any questions you may have.

He could brief you on the sophisticated transition plan and back up the claim that the Towers could be topped off by the tenth anniversary of the attacks. He could explain why it makes good fiscal sense and why there is no need to go backwards. And there is even a way to provide the elusive financing that should more than satisfy everyone.

What is at stake here is not buildings, but the integrity of our system of government. A recent MSNBC poll showed 90% support for scrapping the "Freedom Tower" complex and replacing it with "Twin Towers II." Does what the American people want matter? Do we have representatives who are truly responsive to us or are they autonomous?

There are some who will insist that the Twin Towers should not be built. But their problem is that they are in the minority – and a small minority at that. Unfortunately, that minority has had the power to frame the debate, but it is not too late to finally respect the will of the people and get this right.

Rebuild the Twin Towers for all the brave men and women who rushed into those burning buildings on 9/11. Rebuild them for those who never made it out – and for those who did, but will never be the same.

Rebuild the Twin Towers for the servicemen and women who enlisted after 9/11 and would love nothing better than to come home and salute those icons rising.

Build them for the victims' families who believe that new Twin Towers would be the best memorial of all. Build them for the victims, who walked into towers they loved and never walked out.

Build them for the children who grew up with the nightmare vision of the crumbling towers, to reassure them that we can make anything better if we have the heart.

Build them for the construction workers who offered to work for free if only they could rebuild the Twin Towers.

Build them for all who still look into the sky from around the city and across the harbor, trying to will them back to life.

Build them for those who still encounter them every day in the movies, on the sides of vans, and on diner walls.

Build them for the people who never climbed to the Top of the World and would dearly love another chance.

Build them for the residents and workers of Lower Manhattan who have endured a gruesome eight years and want a normal life.

Build them for the people in other lands who saw the Twin Towers as the goalposts of a great country.

Build them for all the people who say the announcement of new Twin Towers would mark the happiest day of their lives.

Above all, build them for the cynics who think that America is nothing but a giant corporation and that democracy is a fable, or worse yet, a farce.

As we stand at the threshold of another summer, we have forty days between this year's Memorial Day and July 4th to reflect on how faithful we are to those who have given their lives for this country from its start and exactly what kind of a country we want it to be. New Twin Towers would be stunning proof that our democracy is alive and that it is well.