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Bloomberg envisions apts. at Ground Zero

By ERIC HERMAN and MICHAEL SAUL
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

When the World Trade Center site is eventually redeveloped, apartment buildings — and not exclusively office towers — could be part of the answer, Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg said yesterday.

Bloomberg noted there's a dearth of affordable housing and a glut of office space in the city. "The first step," he said, "is to say, 'What does this city need?' "

"Housing is certainly one of those things that should be . . . considered," Bloomberg said. "We should consider everything. We just shouldn't go in with a preconceived notion."

The redevelopment of lower Manhattan — along with tackling the city's projected multibillion-dollar deficit — certainly will be among the Bloomberg administration's sternest tests in its first year.

But how and when the Trade Center site will be rebuilt is open to debate.

Larry Silverstein, who controls the Trade Center site through a 99-year lease from the Port Authority, wants to replace the twin towers with four shorter office buildings and possibly build a hotel and a performing arts center.

'Important memorial'

Yet John Whitehead, the new board chairman of the Lower Manhattan Redevelopment Corp., said yesterday that construction of an "important memorial" to victims of Sept. 11 was a priority.

"We need a very important memorial of some sort, be it a park, a chapel — who knows what it should be? But land must be . . . set aside and preserved for an appropriate memorial," said Whitehead, 79, a former investment banker and diplomat.

Whitehead also questioned Silverstein's plans to start rebuilding by the end of next year, calling that "a little optimistic."

He allowed that Silverstein would be "first on my list of people to call tomorrow."

Silverstein's spokesman, Howard Rubenstein, said the developer agrees that a memorial is necessary, but he anticipates the site will be "predominantly commercial space."

"One of the things that they've been looking at is the possibility of a hotel with condominiums above it," Rubenstein said.

Silverstein and Bloomberg met last week at Bloomberg's midtown offices to discuss redevelopment plans.

As for the housing option, Rubenstein said, Silverstein "has great respect for the mayor-elect and would certainly dis-



SUSAN WATTS DAILY NEWS

NEW VIEW Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg suggests including apartments in rebuilding of the twin towers area.

Whitehead, former co-chief of Goldman Sachs and deputy secretary of state under ex-President Ronald Reagan, will help coordinate rebuilding efforts and help disperse federal aid.

Gov. Pataki named seven members of the 11-member redevelopment corporation board yesterday; Mayor Giuliani named the other four.

In addition to Whitehead, Pataki picked ex-Nasdaq chief Frank Zarb, developer Roland Betts, union leader Ed Malloy, Carver Federal Savings President Deborah Wright and Lewis Eisenberg, who will resign as chairman of the Port Authority to serve on the board.

Advisory panel

Pataki also named Madelyn Wils, who heads downtown's Community Board 1.

Giuliani named lawyers Howard Wilson and Paul Crotty, who worked for him in the past. Deputy Mayor Robert Harding and New York Stock Exchange Chairman Richard Grasso.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg announced the creation of an advisory committee of 24 local elected officials to help with the transition process. Nathan Leventhal, Bloomberg's transition chairman, said the changeover is "going extremely well," adding that Bloomberg has interviewed a number of candidates.

Bloomberg said appointments should be made "no later than the week after next and perhaps earlier than that."

But Deputy Mayor Joseph Lhota informed Team Bloomberg that he plans to step down Dec. 31. He will "be available to [Bloomberg] in an advisory capacity," said Bloomberg spokesman Ed Skyler.

Lhota said, "I will help him in any way he deems fit." But at the end of December, he said, "[I'm] packing my office."

With JoAnne Wasserman

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