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DEPUTY MAYOR FOR ADMINISTRATION

To: Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg

From: Edward Skyle 

Date: July 3, 2007

Re: WTC Human Remains Recovery Update

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On June 1, I reported that planned operations at the World Trade Center (WTC) site were nearly complete. Although that is still the case, areas in two neighboring sites have since been identified that will need to be searched by the Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME): (1) the area fronting the World Financial Center that extends from Vesey Street to Liberty Street; and (2) Cedar Street from Washington Street to West Street. In addition, OCME will likely search a portion of Washington Street following completion of the deconstruction of the Deutsche Bank building at 130 Liberty Street. These areas were identified as part of the ongoing recovery operation and as a result of OCME's regular inspections of areas that are being excavated as part of the rebuilding under way at the World Trade Center site. This memo describes the additional areas that will be searched and provides a brief status report on the recovery effort to date.

**1. World Financial Center**

The Port Authority (PA) is excavating an area in front of the World Financial Center (WFC) for the construction of a tunnel that will extend beneath Route 9A from the WFC to the World Trade Center site. During the excavation, the PA recovered material that OCME has determined could be World Trade Center debris. To date, approximately 850 cubic yards of material have been removed and OCME, in cooperation with the PA and the New York State Department of Transportation, will do test pits and trenching to determine if other areas in front of the WFC need to be searched. Any excavated material will be sifted for potential human remains.

## **2. Cedar Street**

While conducting test pits and borings on Cedar Street in connection with preparatory work for the construction of the south bathtub, the PA discovered what OCME confirmed to be World Trade Center debris. Due to this discovery, OCME is excavating the entirety of Cedar Street from the Washington Street western curb line to West Street. OCME has completed the excavation of all available material, with the exception of part of the southern sidewalk, an area under a contractor's trailer and the area beneath scaffolding around 130 Cedar Street, which are currently inaccessible. The entire excavation could generate up to 600 cubic yards of material for sifting. Any areas that cannot be accessed now will be searched as soon as they are available for excavation.

## **3. World Trade Center Rebuilding Procedures**

Although there is no evidence that additional sections of the World Trade Center site could contain human remains, OCME is working closely with the PA and will observe excavations undertaken as part of the rebuilding of the site. OCME will maintain an ongoing presence at the site to consult with the PA and on-site contractors on any issues that may arise. Consistent with its practice to date, OCME will remove any material for sifting that it determines could contain potential human remains.

## **4. Buildings and Rooftops**

Full searches of the rooftops of Fiterman Hall and 130 Cedar Street still await final environmental regulatory approval. We estimate that the Fiterman Hall work will begin in October and that the 130 Cedar Street work will begin in August and anticipate that these remaining searches will be completed quickly once the necessary approvals are obtained and work begins. Meanwhile, OCME, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the relevant building owners have developed a search plan for the 8-inch gap between 130 Cedar Street and 90 West Street.

## **5. Subterranean Structures**

As of my last report, Con Edison, Verizon and DEP had identified a total of 637 subterranean structures outside the WTC site. Since that time, the total number of structures to be searched has been revised to 634 due to the continual refinement of the inventory of existing structures. To date, 525 subterranean structures have been evacuated, yielding approximately 88 cubic yards of material. Nearly all of this material has been sifted and 12 potential human remains (PHR) were found. Of the 109 subterranean structures that still require investigation, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) estimates that as many as 50 structures may have been removed during prior reconstruction work and is working with Con Edison and Verizon to verify which structures are still in place. Access to many of the other structures is obstructed due to ongoing construction in lower Manhattan. Inaccessible structures cannot be searched immediately, but we expect to complete the evacuation of all accessible structures shortly, and OEM will continue to track structures that are currently

inaccessible to ensure that they are searched as soon as possible. In addition, evacuation of the DEP sewer line located beneath the Haul Road is complete and the sifting of this material is underway.

## 6. Conclusion

Due to the additional material that needs to be excavated and sifted, the one-year goal for completing this operation is no longer attainable. In fact, our experience over the last nine months and the ongoing rebuilding of the World Trade Center site and surrounding area suggest that search operations will continue in one form or another for the foreseeable future. We will add additional areas to the search plan as necessary, and OCME will likely have a presence at the WTC site for some time to come. We are working with the affected agencies to make sure that budgetary, equipment and personnel needs continue to be met so this effort can be undertaken carefully and thoroughly.

The following table provides a summary of PHR recovered to date<sup>1</sup>:

PHR Recoveries (as of July 3, 2007)		
Location	PHR Recovered	Sifting Status
Haul Road (proper)	398	Complete
Haul Road (9A)	4	Complete
Haul Road (Con Edison Structures)	209	Complete
Haul Road (DEP Structures)	13	In Progress
140 Liberty Street (St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church)	39	In Progress
Cedar Street	0	Not yet started
130 Liberty Street (Deutsche Bank)	785 <sup>2</sup>	Complete
130 Cedar Street	2	Not yet started
Fiterman Hall	0	Not yet started
Subterranean Structures	12	In Progress
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1462</b>	

I will continue to keep you up-to-date on this effort.

<sup>1</sup> All PHR recovered to date are in various stages of testing for DNA identifications. While PHR recovered since October 2006 have not yet yielded any new identifications, OCME will continue to report testing and identification results as they become available.

<sup>2</sup> Includes 766 PHR recovered from the rooftop of Deutsche Bank prior to the discovery of PHR in the Con Edison manholes beneath the Haul Road last October.