



REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION, INC.

... a research and planning agency supported by voluntary membership to promote the coordinated development of the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Region.

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE: Wednesday A.M.
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The attached statement by John P. Keith, Executive Director of Regional Plan Association is to be submitted to the City Planning Commission at its hearing on City Departments' capital budget proposals on Wednesday, December 18, 1963 at 10:00 a.m. The statement refers to the Department of Parks request.

Statement of John P. Keith
Executive Director, Regional Plan Association
before the City Planning Commission
on City Departments' capital budget proposals
held on December 18, 1963 at 10:00 a.m.

My name is John Keith. I am speaking for the Regional Plan Association of which I serve as Executive Director.

Gentlemen, time's a wasting. So is the precious opportunity to create the great beach park at Breezy Point called for by the Board of Estimate last September 12.

Regional Plan is pleased to learn that title has been taken to the tract bordering Fort Tilden owned by the Atlantic Improvement Corporation. But that is only the first step as indicated by Mayor Robert F. Wagner's statement of September 12 as Chairman of the Board of Estimate. The remainder of the park must be mapped and acquired.

More rapidly than any of the proponents dared to hope, the Department of Defense has moved to inactivate the Nike base at Fort Tilden. Now all the many officials and citizens who agreed that the Fort was an indispensable addition to Riis Park--no matter what their stand on the full park--can work together for acquisition of the Fort by the City. If for good but unstated reasons, the Department of Defense must retain title to all or part of the 317 acres in the Tilden area, then a dollar a year lease arrangement similar to that established for New Jersey to use Sandy Hook should be arranged. Regional Plan urges that the Fort Tilden area be mapped as part of the park and that a sum be included in this budget with which to commence purchase.

Equally important is the need to map and purchase the 232 acre tip of Breezy Point now owned by Atlantic Improvement Corporation. What holds these steps up? We urge inclusion of funds in this budget to purchase the tip and a speeding of administrative actions required in the taking of title.

The Board of Estimate also stated its intent that the City take over some 40 acres of beach fronting on the Breezy Point Cooperative Association. Questions of title have been raised about this important strip that ties the 4 1/2 mile park together. How much is owned by the Cooperative and how much is already in state ownership as foreshore? Has search and mapping begun? Again, follow-up of the intent of the Board of Estimate is urged by inclusion of a Breezy Point allocation in your proposed capital budget.

On a day like today few New Yorkers are beach minded. But next spring you may anticipate a surge of interest in Breezy Point. By then, with action today, Breezy Point can "be made a fact and not kept as a dream," to use Mayor Wagner's words. Next summer the people of this City can begin to use this magnificent beach in limited fashion. Nothing you could do through this budget document could better show this Commission's concern for the people of the City and their future.

In sum, Regional Plan respectfully requests that the City Planning Commission promptly place on its calendar a hearing on mapping the remainder of the proposed Breezy Point park and include in this capital budget funds under Project P-56 (line 306, page 13) to cover the acquisition of all or part of Fort Tilden, whatever beach in front of the Cooperative is in private ownership, and the tip of the Point.