

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.

New Jersey Committee
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR INFORMATION CALL:
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Enactment of legislation "making Tri-State Transportation Committee a statutory and ongoing agency" was recommended by George F. Smith, Chairman of the New Jersey Committee of the Regional Plan Association in a statement read into the record of a hearing on the bill, S-222, before the State, County and Municipal Government Committee of the New Jersey Senate.

The statement was read on Mr. Smith's behalf by Harold S. Osborne, Mayor of Montclair and Chairman of the Regional Plan Association's New Jersey Committee's Transportation Subcommittee.

Mr. Smith's statement argued that New Jersey is economically and socially a part of the tri-state metropolitan region, and that as such its welfare depends upon the efficiency of the regional transportation network. Mr. Smith pointed to the estimated increase of 3 million population in the nine northeastern counties

of New Jersey by 1985 as a compelling reason for New Jersey to engage in "comprehensive transportation planning." Mr. Smith argued that it made no sense to leave Connecticut out of the plan, since no one denies that the Fairfield area of that state is a part of the metropolitan region. Mr. Smith contended that Tri-State's \$10 million program would amount to about \$1 of research and planning for every \$1,200 in estimated transportation investment during the next 20 years.

The statement in full follows:

Regional Plan Association
New Jersey Committee
April 22, 1964

THE CASE FOR THE TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

A Statement on behalf of the
REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION

by

George F. Smith, Chairman, New Jersey Committee
and
Member of the Board of Directors of the Association

Regional Plan Association and its New Jersey Committee recommend that New Jersey approve legislation similar to legislation enacted by New York in 1964, making the Tri-State Transportation Committee a statutory and ongoing agency of the three states instead of an ad hoc administrative unit resting on the personal agreement of the three governors. A bill, S-222, for this purpose is now before the New Jersey legislature.

Economically, Northern New Jersey is part of a vast metropolitan complex that includes New York City, Long Island and Rockland, Westchester, Putnam, Orange and Dutchess counties in New York and the southwestern corner of Connecticut. This great area includes one-sixth of the people of the United States, and includes the highest-income and best-educated population in the world. Northern New Jersey is the heart of it.

The jobs of many Northern New Jersey residents who work in local industries are dependent upon the Regional transportation network which provides the economic linkages with the rest of the regional economy.

The Need for Comprehensive Transportation Planning on a Regional Basis

Every indicator points to an increase in travel over the coming years--a need for more highways and better public transportation.

Regional Plan has estimated that if present development patterns continue, we will invest \$12 billion in major highways (excluding local roads and streets) and public transportation in the Region between 1960 and 1985. We are spending \$4½ billion in the Region just for Interstate highways to be built between 1956 and 1972. The Tri-State Commission's \$10 million planning program looks none too large when seen alongside the investment it is to guide--\$1 of research and planning for every \$1,200 in estimated transportation investment.

As citizens and taxpayers, we should be sympathetic with the federal government's position that inadequately planned expenditures for metropolitan highways are likely to be wasteful and should not be made from the federal treasury.

Since this is a single Region for transportation purposes, it makes sense to plan it as a whole. Northern New Jersey, for example, has seen many problems caused and opportunities lost when its interests are not adequately represented in our neighbors' decision-making, as with New York's failure to build the Lower Manhattan Expressway.

Some people have asked why Connecticut must be included in the Tri-State Commission. The answer is simple: a piece of the metropolitan area is in Connecticut--a piece that lies astride a main transportation corridor. The Fairfield area of Connecticut is as much a part of the metropolitan region as is Westchester County, New York. If it were in New York State, no one would ever suggest that it should be excluded from the transportation planning agency's jurisdiction.

Regional Plan's success in influencing the choice of the present location of the George Washington Bridge, against the proposed 59th Street location, was based upon consideration of transportation linkages between New Jersey and New England which could by-pass the congestion of Manhattan. A current problem having similar far-reaching implications is the proposed construction of a bridge between Long Island and Connecticut, which would have an obvious impact upon traffic patterns affecting Goethals Bridge and Outerbridge Crossing between New Jersey and Staten Island.

As the metropolis spreads, people increasingly go across or around New York City to do business or to visit. This is especially true of goods distribution. Traffic is therefore increasing between the Region's outlying parts, including New Jersey and Connecticut.

We might rather raise the question of why Connecticut should not be in the Tri-State Commission. We have had more than two years experience with the Tri-State Committee. Has Connecticut raised any problems? Caused any trouble?

The so-called Bi-State Agency is little more than a paper organization operating within the Tri-State Committee - and even its basic law would have to be changed, if it were to be entrusted with this large planning program.

The Port Authority is primarily an operating agency; it is not in a position to take on over-all metropolitan planning which affects the future of its own enterprises as well as competitive ones, not to speak of a large portion of the highway programs of two states.

As to cutting the problem to size by excluding that fraction of the Region's area and population that is in Connecticut, this would, we believe, not reduce the problem; it would simply keep us from looking at a part of it.

The Transportation system is an interrelated network of highways, railroads, bus routes, subways, air and water freight and passenger service. Breaking it into two packages, New York and New Jersey and New York and Connecticut, as some have

proposed, would complicate the planning process beyond measure. New Jersey and Connecticut would be at the ends; New York would be in the driver's seat in the middle.

Regional and Local Planning

It has also been objected that the Tri-State Commission would take over the land-use planning powers of municipalities. Regional planning, such as the Tri-State Commission would be asked to do, is quite a different thing from local planning and zoning, which all three states entrust to the municipalities and which will remain a municipal function. Metropolitan planning is broad, not detailed. It provides a framework for transportation decisions not a strait-jacket for local communities.

The New York statute authorizing the Tri-State Commission makes this clear with the following paragraph, which could be inserted in New Jersey's bill:

"It is not the intent of this act nor shall it be construed to restrict or diminish any powers heretofore conferred by law upon any political subdivision of the state or any governmental agency, interstate, state or local, including, without limitation, powers relating to planning and zoning."

Contingency Clause

The bill before you provides for future enactment of concurrent legislation by the party states empowering that Commission to contract for or operate transportation service. The clause does not really set anything in motion and is not essential to the present planning purposes of the Tri-State Committee.

Furthermore, the main New Jersey concern about this contingency clause --that the state might be forced to support the bankrupt New Haven Railroad--is specifically taken care of in New Jersey S-222. No action to contract for or provide transportation of any kind can be carried out without the New Jersey legislature's approval. If it were agreed that New York and Connecticut should work through the Tri-State Commission to keep the New Haven running, none of the costs would fall on New Jersey or its municipalities.

Summary

We now have in Tri-State a large and apparently capable organization doing this planning. All it needs to be fully effective is a charter covering a reasonable period of time so that this important, costly and massive project is not suddenly dropped, so that it can obtain the public funds which it requires and to which it is entitled, and so it can operate with proper but efficient fiscal controls.

New Jersey depends heavily on good transportation for a prosperous economy and satisfactory living conditions. There is a great deal to do to improve present transportation and prepare for the anticipated population boom--adding 3 million more people in Northern New Jersey's present 4½ million by 1985.

The Tri-State Commission is a reasonable effort to get the most for our transportation dollar. We ask that it be given the assurance of continuity so that it can get on with its important tasks.