



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.

230 West 41st Street, New York 36, N.Y.

(Area Code 212) LOnacre 5-1714

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For Information call William B. Shore
LOnacre 5-1714 or 914 MEdford 1-0053
(home)

FOR RELEASE: Monday a.m., May 23, 1966

The attached statement by C. McKim Norton, President Regional Plan Association is to be given before the Council of the City of New York on Monday, May 23, 1966 in support of the transportation proposals of Mayor Lindsay.

STATEMENT OF C. McKIM NORTON

PRESIDENT OF

REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION

before

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

May 23, 1966

on two bills to amend the public authorities law known as

Senate Int. 4134; Pr. 5588

Assembly Int. 5147;

Senate Int. 4153; Pr. 3589

Assembly Int. 5418;

1. Regional Plan Association urges the council to take favorable action on the above mentioned bills to enable them to be acted upon at the current session of the State Legislature.
2. These bills have been amended since their first introduction in Albany. We understand they now have the support of President O'Connor as well as Mayor Lindsay and that there are no features which adversely affect bondholders of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority.
3. Our reasons for urging this action is the need for better coordination for transportation policies and programs in New York City and the Metropolitan Region. These bills seem to us a modest step in the right direction.
4. Regional Plan Association has long urged that New York City emphasize improvement of public transportation by subway and bus to meet the passenger transportation needs of its central business areas.

We are glad to be able to report that the New York City Planning Commission, the Commissioner of Traffic and Tri-State

Transportation Commission all have made recommendations similar to ours urging greatly increased investments in public transportation within and to the City's central areas rather than increasing vehicular access to the Central Business District.

Our reasons for this recommendation are set forth in a statement published last February, a copy of which is filed with this testimony. In our report, we make this main point: Transportation to Manhattan's Central Business District has fallen well below the standards we have a right to expect in the 1960's. The only way to improve those standards is by giving budget priority to public transportation investment.

To add automobile arteries into Manhattan, south of Central Park, will neither speed driving nor move many more people. For example, the number of additional people who could pass through a third tube of the Queens Midtown Tunnel during the morning rush hour would not fill two subway trains. The automobiles entering would only slow Manhattan's average eight miles per hour cross town auto speeds in the rush hour.

The week before last, on the first day of the taxi strike which caught the automobile public by surprise, cross town traffic speeds in mid Manhattan increased substantially by our count. The number of cabs not operating on this day has been variously estimated at between five and eight thousand, a small proportion of the vehicles operating in the Central Business District.

5. Yet, despite this unanimous agreement on transportation policy for New York's central areas, in which Mayor Lindsay concurs, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority has announced and insists it will construct a third tube of the Queens Midtown Tunnel. Such a project runs counter to the City's announced policy. If there were no other reason for bringing the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority programs in line with a coordinated attack on New York's transportation problems, this example would justify the bill relating to that agency.

There are further reasons, however. The Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority recently announced a list of capital projects for the years 1966-1971 totaling over \$100 million, all of which it can initiate quite independently of City policy. Yet, all of the projects listed which directly relate to transportation are highway-oriented. Some of these doubtless will fit into the City's transportation policies for its outer areas but under the present setup there is no effective control by the City of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority's planning process.

Furthermore, there are several projects on the announced Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority agenda (each probably excellent in itself) which seem unrelated to the transportation needs of the City or the motorists tolls that will pay for them. Some of such projects are:

- A fourth floor addition to the Colosseum
- Richmond Town Landmark Preservation project
- New York City Building at the World's Fair site
- Flushing Meadow Park

These projects total \$9 million.

6. The Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority and the Transit Authority were organized with separate operational powers for fiscal and administrative reasons.

If, as we believe, mass transportation is the key to moving people to and within the City's central areas, then the Transit Authority must be related more closely to where policy is being made so that its full potential for speed, comfort and tieing together the other subsidiary modes can be realized. If the City is to get the full benefit of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, then it, too, must respond to City planning policies.

The bills before you will help to redress the balance between the City policy and separate management of the two agencies. They give the Mayor an affirmative voice where he now can guide the agencies' policies only by blocking specific proposals long after their planning stage through indirect means, such as refusing street closings and the like.