



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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REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION URGES BOARD OF ESTIMATE NOT TO DEMAP LOWER MANHATTAN EXPRESSWAY

Speaking for the Regional Plan Association before the Board of Estimate today, Sheldon Pollack, Deputy Information Director, made the following statement.

My name is Sheldon Pollack. I am Deputy Information Director for Regional Plan Association. I appear here today, on behalf of the Association, to urge the Board of Estimate to not demap the route of the proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway.

The Association's concern for a Lower Manhattan Expressway is of long standing, extending back to the first Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs prepared in the late 1920's. On numerous occasions since that time, we supported efforts to place the route on the City map and to advance its construction.

In 1964, the Association did add one condition to its support for a Lower Manhattan Expressway--that it be constructed below street level to avoid the blighting effects of an urban elevated highway.

We would like to make the following points at this hearing:

1. There is a proven need for this facility. Last year, EBS Management Services surveyed traffic needs for the City Transportation Administration and substantiated the case for this artery which had for many years been argued by Madigan-Hyland, consultants to the Construction Coordinator. There can be no doubt now that this is the most heavily travelled truck route in the world.

2. The highway should be constructed below surface level. Robert Moses and Madigan-Hyland originally refused to consider this proposal, citing the extra costs and the fact that the federal government would not meet its 90 percent share of any added cost. However, in December 1965, Regional Plan Association received an assurance from the U.S. Department of Commerce that it would be receptive to a quality solution. Philadelphia has succeeded in getting federal approval of a similar proposal and has been given an award by HUD for solving a difficult problem.

3. The need to relocate families and businesses is the major obstacle to constructing the Lower Manhattan Expressway. While we are aware of the serious problems involved in moving people from neighborhoods within which they have roots, such problems cannot be allowed to impede all highly necessary public improvements. The answer must lie in eliminating most of the hardship for those affected, including higher relocation payments.

Higher relocation payments might be a way of easing local opposition to needed public improvements. We recognize that this means developing a new policy with national implications, but it may be the least expensive and most expeditious in the long run. For example,

if each family in the path of the Lower Manhattan Expressway were given \$5,000 relocation expenses, these relocation payments would amount to approximately \$10 million, far less than increases in building costs over the last few years while relocation problems deterred construction of the expressway. A generous sum would allow those displaced to pay higher rents or put a downpayment on a home or cooperative apartment of their own. It would seem more desirable to find ways of handling relocation equitably and humanely rather than holding up needed improvements in a dynamic city.

Rather than demap, we urge the Board of Estimate to press the City Administration to complete present studies of alternate designs and to develop a relocation policy that would be advantageous to those who must be displaced for this vitally needed public improvement.