

Regional Plan Association

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

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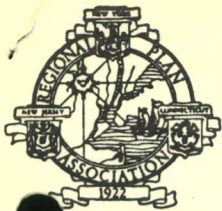
FOR RELEASE: a.m.'s Thursday
July 6, 1972

BLUE HILL HIGHWAY SHOULD HAVE A LOW
PRIORITY, REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION STATES

Urges State Funds Be Used Instead
To Assist Redeveloping Cities

The attached statement contains the views of Regional Plan Association on the proposal to widen the roads serving the Blue Hill office development. RPA's statement calls the priority to widen Veterans Memorial Drive and Gilbert Avenue, designed to serve the office complex, a prime example of the failure of State planning.

The Association points out that White Plains, Newburgh, Poughkeepsie and Kingston have had their needed arterial highways shelved because of the shortage of highway money. These cities, undergoing renewal with State and federal funds, badly need the access roads to spur their redevelopment. Yet, the State Department of Transportation is about to assign a higher priority to an isolated development.



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Statement of Regional Plan Association
Public Hearing
New York State Department of Transportation
on Reconstruction of
Veterans Memorial Drive - Gilbert Avenue
Rockland County

Submitted July 5, 1972

The proposal to reconstruct and widen Veterans Memorial Drive and Gilbert Avenue in Rockland County, to serve "the major single traffic generator," the Blue Hill office development, is a prime example of the failure of planning by New York State.

New York State's capital budget, its agencies and semi-public authorities, today are among the major development forces at work in the State. Where the State University puts a college, new towns develop; where the highway department places an exit from a limited access highway, shopping centers, factories, and offices, including those of local government, locate; where the MTA places its transportation centers, commerce follows; where the Urban Development Corporation builds its facilities and housing will determine the future of many communities. The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation, the Port of New York Authority, the Transportation Department, and so on, are determining the future of the State by where they put and do not put facilities. Supposedly under the control of the State, each agency, all too often, acts independently, sometimes at cross-purposes, vitiating the effect of other agencies' plans and investments.

The most dynamic part of this Region's economy is the huge growth that will take place in the office industry. We project it to increase by the year 2000 from 1.8 million to 3.5 million jobs, while industrial jobs will remain about constant.

Where we locate those office jobs--"the new economy"--will determine the character of this Region. Spread throughout the Region, up and down every highway, unrelated to other activities (as in Blue Hill), they will unnecessarily use up much of our vacant land, encourage the spread of jobs and housing, and necessitate a complete reliance on the automobile for all trips except those to Manhattan. In addition, as these jobs locate in suburban, isolated areas, we will leave behind in our old cities--not just New York City--lower-income families, particularly black and Puerto Rican, who are least able to reach the opportunities scattering far away from them. As a result, the cities will be left with a declining tax base, a greater number of dependent people, and a rising welfare load.

Blue Hill is designed to take advantage of the projected office growth. However, the questions we ask are: Should State money be used for highways which will likely hasten the abandonment of the old cities and their inhabitants? Or, should State funds--highway money included--be used for building blocks to rebuild our older communities first, and toward desirable social and economic objectives?

Blue Hill, thus, is an important issue to Regional Plan Association because it epitomizes what is happening wrong in this Region, the proliferation of "spread city" encouraged by State agencies.

Four communities in the same general area that are attempting, with State assistance, to revive their downtowns and attract employment and commercial activities--White Plains, Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, and Kingston--have a great need for arterial highways that are already planned, approved, but not funded. Their access roads have been shelved because of the lack of highway funds. Yet, the Transportation Department seems to find this road for Blue Hill of more importance. To Regional Plan Association, the city downtowns deserve priority, not the "spread" development that will slow and weaken the State and federally funded renewal progress of those cities.