



# 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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## NEWS RELEASE

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### In Just Nine Months Since Proposal...

NINE STEPS TOWARD PATERSON 'METROPOLITAN CENTER'  
REPORTED BY REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION

In just nine months, progress has been made on almost every step needed to begin to transform Paterson into a major center of office jobs and services for Northern New Jersey, Regional Plan Association reported today. The Association issued a printed version of its report, made to the City of Paterson last May, which acknowledged the feasibility of a Paterson "metropolitan center" and recommended needed action.

The Association had observed that when highways now planned and under construction were completed, downtown Paterson would become the most accessible place in Northern New Jersey -- within half-hour range of 2.8 million people by car with highway capacity to bring 36,000 cars an hour into the center of the City. The Association said that in addition to its transportation advantages, the City would need the State's leverage to bring together the activities that will make a modern "downtown" for Northern New Jersey, including higher education, health services, regional library service, office jobs, department stores and the arts.

Among the recent developments which Regional Plan had felt would be necessary to achieve such a center are:

- Governor William T. Cahill's endorsement of the proposal
- Assembly of financing for the first large office building in Paterson's downtown renewal area
- Opening of I-80 expressway through central Paterson
- Resolution of the design of New Jersey 20 so it directly serves downtown Paterson and does not damage the historic and scenic Great Falls area
- Development of new City improvements in the Great Falls area with a very-well-patronized Great Falls Festival and serious interest by the National Park Service in a proposed National Historic Park there.
- Organization of the Inner Loop Development Corporation by more than two dozen businessmen to create a multi-million dollar shopping mall on Lower Main Street
- Temporary location of Passaic County Community College in the City with the strong possibility that it can permanently locate in renovated historic factories there
- Initiation of substantially more City-sponsored and assisted housing
- Organization of the Committee on the Future of Paterson, composed of about 75 citizens representing the black and Puerto Rican communities as well as others, which has already held three meetings considering goals for the City. There is near unanimous agreement among the hundreds of Paterson residents who have commented on the Regional Plan report after seeing a slide presentation: they are willing to take the steps needed to build a metropolitan center in downtown Paterson.

Citizen interest was demonstrated last month when a busload of Paterson residents toured Jamaica, Queens, where somewhat similar efforts are being made to build a metropolitan center for Queens. A similar field

trip to Paterson will be conducted by the Association on March 8. The public and press are welcome.

Two other events have given Paterson's prospects a large boost. One is its selection by the federal government for participation in the "planned variations" program of model cities, so the City is receiving a large non-earmarked federal grant this year. It is one of only 20 cities to be designated. The second is the court case just won by Jersey City in cooperation with Paterson and others declaring local real estate taxes for schools unconstitutional. Paterson real estate taxes are among the highest in the State -- without producing very high revenue per school child, so equalization throughout the State will benefit the City.

Paterson's mayor when Regional Plan's study was commissioned, Lawrence F. Kramer, is now New Jersey Commissioner of Community Affairs, but the new mayor, Arthur C. Dwyer, also favors the program to develop Paterson as a major urban center.

The cost of the Regional Plan study was shared by the City, from federal aid, and by the Association.

Regional Plan has recommended that about two dozen metropolitan centers be built all around the Tri-State New York Urban Region, bringing together the major facilities that large numbers of people travel long distances to do together -- rather than stringing the facilities along highways or scattering them in the countryside as has been done generally in the last decade.

Wherever possible, the Association recommends, downtowns of older cities should be renewed to become these metropolitan centers. The main reason is to assure full opportunities for lower-income people living in

these older cities, in large part black and Puerto Rican families, to have a chance at the growing office jobs and get higher education, good health care and retailing. When people of all income levels come together for work and other activities in these older downtowns, the Association observes, the poor are not isolated in a separate society. Also, building on older downtowns provides private investment for the renewal of older cities and strengthens city tax bases.

In addition to Jamaica and Paterson, the Association has pointed to the potential of renewing downtown Brooklyn, Newark, White Plains, Stamford, Bridgeport, New Haven, Poughkeepsie and Newburgh into metropolitan centers, with other sites also possible.

Regional Plan Association is a nonprofit civic organization which has been working since the 1920's for a more efficient and satisfying tri-state urban region surrounding the Port of New York.

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(Note: The Regional Plan Association report to Paterson is attached.)