



Regional Plan Association

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

235 East 45th Street

New York, New York 10017

(212) 682-7750

NEWS RELEASE

No. 1161
September 25, 1972

For Further Information Call
William B. Shore (212) 682-7750;
(914) ME 1-0053 (home)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MORE CONCENTRATED DEVELOPMENT NEEDED TO CONSERVE OPEN SPACE, PROVIDE ENOUGH HOUSING, PLANNING SPOKESMAN SAYS

Regional Plan President Emphasizes Mutual Interest of Housing Advocates, Conservationists

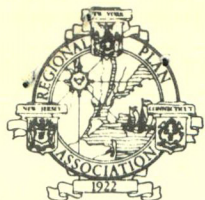
Conventional thinking in urban development has led us to a policy of scarcity--scarcity of housing and scarcity of open space, Dr. John P. Keith, President of Regional Plan Association, this morning told a conference on Housing and Open Space, sponsored by the Middlesex-Mercer-Somerset Regional Study Council, at Rutgers University, New Brunswick.

Ironically, the Region could allocate less land for housing and get more housing while more natural landscape would be left over, he said. "Our policy of scarcity must be reversed," Dr. Keith stated, "for the benefit of those living today who are deprived of decent housing and access to employment and for the generations that will follow us and who will condemn us for having been so profligate with the land and water, laying waste to it unnecessarily."

Dr. Keith called for a change in policy by State and local communities that would allow housing to naturally cluster around centers of jobs and services, as recommended by The Second Regional Plan.

By concentrating in urban centers the facilities that large numbers of people travel to, we can make public transportation possible, he explained. By concentrating housing around the centers--zoning for apartments, town houses, and homes on small lots there--we can allow the private housing market to build for 50 percent of the households in this Region rather than the present 20 percent. And by doing both, we save valuable open space from needless intrusion of buildings and highways, Dr. Keith emphasized.

Thus, "in this search for more housing and more open space, both conservationists and housers have a mutual interest in The Second Regional Plan's centers and communities principle. Working together, there is a chance to change the present trend."



Regional Plan Association

235 East 45th Street • New York, New York 10017 • (212) 682-7750

Excerpts from an Address of
John P. Keith

President, Regional Plan Association

At the Public Policy Forum on Housing and Open Space

Sponsored by the Middlesex - Somerset - Mercer Regional Study Council
in Cooperation with the
College of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Rutgers University
New Brunswick, September 26, 1972

I am pleased to be the keynote speaker here today. For Regional Plan Association is always delighted to find citizens in various parts of our giant Region concerned sufficiently about their future to band together to form a regional planning organization. To the extent that we can be helpful, we are anxious to be so. To the extent that you can carry a message - on your level - similar to that of Regional Plan Association - to that extent - our work is made easier and both of us have a better chance of success.

We have had, over the years, an excellent working relationship with a similar organization in the Mid-Hudson area, Pattern for Progress, and have engaged in a number of joint programs with them.

The message I bring to you today is one that I am certain you are well aware of - growth is coming. But how you shape that growth will determine the quality of your communities and the quality of life for you, your children and the newcomers to your area.

First, picture, if you will, your three counties with the combined population of metropolitan San Diego, metropolitan Tulsa and metropolitan Toledo - except that they have almost 10 thousand square miles against your 846 square miles. For each of your counties in the year 2000 will be the equivalent of one of those metropolitan areas today. And then realize what you must plan for in the way of industrial and commercial facilities, colleges, hospitals as well as housing and open space.

<u>County</u>	<u>Year 2000 Pop.</u>	<u>Sq. Miles</u>	<u>Comparable Metro. Area</u>	<u>1967 Pop.</u>	<u>Sq. Miles</u>
Middlesex	1,150,000	312	San Diego	1,198,000	4,262
Somerset	450,000	307	Tulsa	460,000	3,781
Mercer	<u>650,000</u>	<u>227</u>	Toledo	<u>670,000</u>	<u>1,519</u>
	2,250,000	846		2,328,000	9,562
	Equals	St. Louis	Pop. 2,311,000		4,119 sq. miles

To help emphasize the points I shall make shortly, let me give you a few more projections:

Employment will rise. Mercer County with 141,000 jobs in 1967 will have 213,000 in 1985; Middlesex County with 188,000 jobs in 1967 will have 326,000 in 1985; and Somerset County with 55,000 jobs in 1967 will have 117,600 in 1985. Just about a doubling in each case.

But the type will be different than today. Mercer with 37,000 industrial jobs in 1967, will have a decline to 35,000 industrial jobs by 1985. Middlesex with 81,000 industrial jobs in 1967 will have 110,000 in 1985. Somerset County with 20,000 industrial jobs will have 26,000 in 1985. And there will be little industrial growth after 1985.

Employment in the office industry will present a vastly different picture. Mercer in 1967 had 30,000 office jobs. That will increase to 48,000 by 1985. Middlesex with 13,000 office jobs in 1967 will have 46,000 by 1985. Somerset with 5,000 office jobs in 1967 will have 18,000 by 1985. And office jobs should continue to increase after 1985.

The picture that emerges is little to no growth in industrial jobs but doubling to tripling in office jobs.

Now, take a look north and see how development has taken place - Morris County, Bergen County - or even parts of your own counties. By 2000, you will be almost a Los Angeles in population (2.5 million). Will you be a Los Angeles in style?

For certainly that is the prevailing nature of the development that is taking place today throughout our Region and in your three counties. In some parts of the Region there is no longer an opportunity to change that pattern - Nassau, Bergen, Rockland. You still have a chance.

Regional Plan Association believes that growth can be handled and fashioned to provide a desirable, high-amenity environment. It was to that

end that it developed the Second Regional Plan, a series of policies to guide development of our 31-county Urban Region to the year 2000.

Simply put, the Plan says: This Urban Region is not one huge metropolitan area but a series of metropolitan communities - corresponding to the present counties - most of which by the year 2000 will have a population in excess of a half million people. Consequently, each metropolitan community should have a center where those facilities that large numbers of people will use will be located - office buildings, major retailing, cultural and governmental facilities, medical centers, colleges, etc. Housing then should be located around the center with the highest density closest in, thinning out as one moves away from the center.

Concentrating development will secure several objectives. We will use less land for development and consequently save more for open space. Only with concentration of housing, jobs and facilities is public transportation viable. Minorities and low-income people will have better access to employment because there will be public transportation, and to housing because there will be greater choice. Public transportation also will cut down on highway needs, save open space and reduce pollution.

The expected growth in office jobs, as the pivotal economic force in the Region, makes the Second Regional Plan feasible because office jobs, more dependent on other services, prefer a central location and, unlike industry, are less dependent on highway access.

Concentrating housing means we must zone for more apartment units, more town houses and more houses on small lots; by doing so we can make more housing available to low- and moderate-income people. Today, in most parts of the Region, 80% of our residents cannot afford new housing. Large lot zoning is the main culprit. If we are able to build more apartments, town houses and homes on small lots, then the private market could house at least 50% of the residents of the Region.

Despite the effort made during the first Green Acres program, in which the three counties almost tripled their public open space, the State in 1967 anticipated a need to double that amount for the second stage of Green Acres. Regional Plan's policy, on which it supported the recent Green Acres bond issue, is to buy now all of the open space that will be needed for the next fifty years with long-term bonds. Land cost is rising more rapidly than interest costs and by acquiring now we will make certain that the public has the land it wants, not the leftover.

Another means of acquiring needed open space, at the local level, is through greater use of cluster zoning or planned unit development (PUD). Clustering allows the community a more forceful hand in shaping development-providing benefits to both the developer (lower development costs for streets, utilities, etc.) and the community - which secures open space. This often can mean saving stream banks, wetlands, ridges; the ecological features that can give character and shape to our communities.

In this search for more housing and more open space, both conservationists and housers have a mutual interest, and so with the Second Regional Plan. Without the pattern I have enunciated, this three-county area will be covered with houses on large lots and facilities scattered along every highway, demanding constantly increasing highway expansion. Working together, there is a chance to change the present trend. But policy changes will be necessary and a greater effort will be required to do it right.

First, in securing change the county must have a larger voice in planning and in the location of major facilities, those that large numbers of people travel a distance to use. There will have to be a county density plan based on such objective criteria as transportation access, sewage facilities, water, employment and other environmental factors, taking into consideration not only the needs of those who live here today but your children and those who will move into these counties, as many of you did, as the area to the north reaches maturity.

There must be a greater role for the county in providing low cost and public housing for those who cannot afford what the private housing market can provide. This includes not only the very poor, but those working and not earning enough to afford private housing, and the aged. Again, location must relate to their needs for employment and services.

On the State level we must remove local property taxes as the means of supporting education and, as the courts seemingly will mandate, have the State assume the cost of education. Governor Cahill's tax reform proposals recognized this need. The State too must make certain that its capital budget and its agencies - highway, housing, colleges - work toward the common objective of concentrating development. In other words, a State development plan is essential, one which carefully preserves the best remaining of this most urbanized State.

As you well know, what is happening almost universally throughout this Region is the reverse of what I have proposed. Conventional wisdom has led us to a policy of scarcity - scarcity of housing and scarcity of open space. It is such thinking that must be reversed - for the benefit of those living today who are deprived of decent housing and access to employment and for the generations that will follow us and who will condemn us for having been so profligate with the land and water, laying waste to them unnecessarily.

If it is your decision to work for the changes I have recommended, your job will not be an easy one. People do prefer what they know to the unknown. Major changes in public attitudes take time - and we do not have much time. What you build in the next decade, as your counties reach maturity, will be with us for a long, long time.

This may be the last chance to build well and preserve much of this splendid section of New Jersey.