



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.

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OFFICE OUTMOVEMENT FROM CITY DOWNTOWNS FOUND INSIGNIFICANT BY REGIONAL PLAN STUDY

During the 1960-70 decade, office development continued to favor central cities despite the decentralization of population, Regional Plan Association reports in a study on The Office Industry, published today by MIT Press.

The study shows that the downtowns of the nation's 21 most office-oriented cities had 477 million square feet of office space in 1960, which grew to 681 million square feet in 1970, almost as fast as office space grew in the nation as a whole. As a result, the 21 downtowns' share of the nation's office floorspace shrank very little, from 24 percent in 1960 to 23 percent in 1970; an insignificant decline, considering the fact that the central cities share of the nation's population shrank at more than twice that rate during the decade.

"This finding indicates the important role the burgeoning office economy can play in the rebuilding and revitalization of our old cities," John P. Keith, Regional Plan Association President, commented. "Business, by following its indicated preference for downtown office locations, could

be the means of keeping the old cities the centers of the nation's life."

The Regional Plan study shows that the fastest-growing downtowns were those of Los Angeles, Atlanta and St. Louis, which more than doubled their office space during the decade. The biggest absolute increases were in Manhattan, which added 68 million square feet during the decade, followed by Los Angeles and Washington, which added 19 and 18 million, respectively, then Chicago (16 million added), Boston and San Francisco (10 million each) and Houston and Atlanta (9 million each). The total figures for 1960 and 1970 are shown in the enclosed table.

In the forward to The Office Industry, Dr. Keith stated:

"Offices, their number and their location, are emerging as a key, strategic element in the planning of major metropolitan areas. Urgent issues--such as the integration of the urban ghettos into a white-collar economy, the provision of viable public transit, the attraction of the middle class to the central city--are all related to office growth and location. Yet, the impact of offices on urban form has been so little understood in the United States that they are barely noticed in government statistics.

"Early in our work on The Second Regional Plan, it became all too clear that the fast pace of office growth might make it the hinge on which any plan for the New York Region might swing, that neither forecasts of a probable shape of the future Region nor proposals for change could be made without an understanding of the potential scale and locational requirements of the office industry.

"A number of conclusions of national importance have been drawn from this study by Regional Plan Association: (1) The nation is becoming white collar at a faster rate than commonly believed; (2) large metropolitan

areas are and seem likely to remain its dominant office centers;
(3) despite heavy odds in favor of dispersal, the central business districts of the nation's largest 21 metropolitan areas have been, on the whole, holding their own in the past decade; while population decentralized, offices largely did not; (4) because office jobs are suited to city centers, they offer the nation a chance to harness private enterprise to renew older cities and keep them attractive to all income and ethnic groups. The alternative--for the new economy to turn its back on the older cities--can only aggravate the urban crisis and unnecessarily despoil the natural environment."

	Est. priv. and pub. of- fice space in downtown (X 1 mil- lion sq ft)	
	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
New York	179	247
Los Angeles	16	35
Chicago	47	63
Philadelphia	26	34
Detroit	16	23
San Francisco	16	26
Boston	24	34
Pittsburgh	15	22
St. Louis	4	8
Washington	36	54
Cleveland	8	11
Newark	12	14
Minn.-St. Paul	10	12
Houston	13	22
Milwaukee	12	14
Paterson	1	1
Dallas	16	22
Cincinnati	10	12
Kansas City	6	9
Atlanta	8	17
Wilmington	2	3
<u>Total</u>	<u>477</u>	<u>681</u>

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