



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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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:

Wednesday, P.M.
May 28, 1975

ROUTE 287 COMPLETION SHOULD DEPEND ON LAND-USE ACTION THAT WOULD PREVENT URBAN SPRAWL, REGIONAL PLAN TELLS MORRIS COUNTY FREEHOLDERS

The attached letter was sent to all members of the Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholders reaffirming the Association's recommendation that, as a means of curbing the continuation of urban sprawl, Route 287 not be completed.

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May 19, 1975

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Mr. Dean A. Gallo
 Director
 The Board of Chosen Freeholders
 County of Morris
 Court House
 Ann Street
 Morristown, N.J. 07960

Dear Mr. Gallo:

I regret that Regional Plan Association finds itself in disagreement with the Board of Chosen Freeholders about completion of Route 287. So that you may more fully understand our position, I am enclosing three recent items released by the Association: the statement on highway priorities; the last issue of our News, The State of the Region; and our statement to the Governor's Capital Needs Commission.

The State of the Region indicates that--despite population stabilization--new housing and jobs are continuing to locate at the fringes of the Region, furthering "spread city" and the isolation of the less mobile from employment opportunities. The resulting effect is to weaken the Region's economy, penetrate open countryside unnecessarily, enlarge its energy consumption and exacerbate its social problems.

In the absence of land-use legislation which would dampen urban sprawl, it is doubly important to restrict the element that most encourages a scattered and costly development pattern--highway access to undeveloped areas. We do not deny that this will cause hardship for those already located at the periphery, but not to do so will create greater future difficulties for the Region as a whole.

As you may recall, at our public meeting in Morris County, where we presented the enclosed report, The Future of Morris County, we warned that continued spread development pattern would create serious travel and environmental difficulties for the County. We regret that the Morris County Chosen Freeholders were unable to resolve that issue and prevent construction of the additional isolated facilities that have been added in Morris County over the past five years. Holding off access seems now to be the only antidote available to the State.

Our statement on highway needs is consistent with the basic principles of the Second Regional Plan. Large scale facilities such

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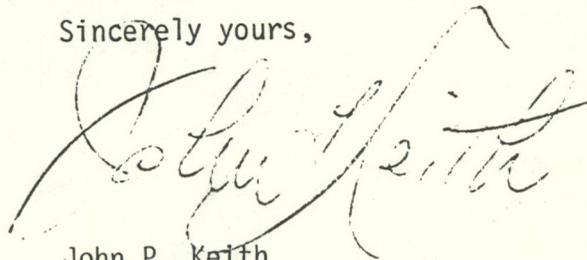
as office, commercial and civic should be located in centers to reduce highway construction and automobile travel, conserve land, provide for public transportation, and provide economic opportunity for all of the Region's citizens. This is possible only with centers of jobs and activities and moderate residential densities. The deteriorating regional economy and locational policies that encourage it have forced us to take another look at proposals that not too long ago would have been accepted, such as Route 287, and to call them into question.

The Region's last remaining growth in labor force, jobs and added households needing homes will take place in the coming decade and a half. Every year counts in locating that growth where it will best benefit the entire Region. In the absence of broader land-use legislation by the State of New Jersey and its counties--and none has even been proposed--expressway planning is a roundabout way to affect land-use planning.

For nearly 15 years, since the publication of Spread City, the Association has warned the Region of the consequences of that loose and scattered pattern of land development. We have urged instead that the States and the counties develop plans for alternative growth patterns. Unfortunately, we have not been too successful, and we now find ourselves, for the first time, advocating controls that prohibit development as the last resort in the effort to shape the Region's development, as the crises to which The State of the Region points become reality.

I do think that, from a regional perspective, we have made a reasonable decision. I understand the concern of the Freeholders and I assure you that RPA would reconsider this unpalatable approach if Morris, Passaic and Bergen Counties could develop practical and enforceable plans which call an end to sprawl.

Sincerely yours,



John P. Keith
President

JPK/wk

Encs.

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