

# Transportation and the Manhattan Central Business District

## A Regional Plan Association Policy Statement

### PRESS RELEASE

The only way to end traffic jams in Manhattan and the approaches to it is by making public transportation better, Regional Plan Association stated today (February 7, 1966).

As long as public transportation remains slower than traffic jams and more uncomfortable than a car, any additional highways and river crossings will fill up as soon as they open, leaving the motorist in the same position as he is today, the Association said in a policy statement.

"Today's traffic in the central business district (south of Central Park) moves at an average speed of about 8½ mph," James S. Schoff, Regional Plan Chairman, commented. "On approach expressways to Manhattan during rush hours, speeds are as low as 13 mph in many places. But on the average, door-to-door travel by rail is even slower than by car.

"Since incomes are going up, and we are raising living standards in other parts of our lives, people are trying to improve their commuting conditions, too," Mr. Schoff went on. "They can't do that on subways and commuter trains, which are no faster and, on the whole, little more comfortable than they were forty years ago. So people are switching to cars.

"As incomes and the number of automobiles go up in the Region, the only way to raise automobile speeds is to raise public transportation speeds and attractiveness. Then the man who must drive his car will find the streets free of those who can use rails.

"Regional Plan is issuing this policy statement now, though it is only part of a regional transportation plan due next year, because there is strong pressure to provide more highways and parking for the central business district on the one hand and for new funds just to maintain present rail service for the district on the other."

### Priority for transit—and why

The Association concluded that priority should go to transit improvements rather than additional space for automobiles because:

1. This concentrated business center can only work if it has public transportation.
2. Business wants to locate in this kind of center.
3. This concentration of business activities is more important to people than using their cars to get to work.

Regional Plan suggested an investment of about \$1.5 billion over a decade in better subways. The Association also reiterated its 1961 proposal for \$800 million to modernize the commuter railroads of the Region.

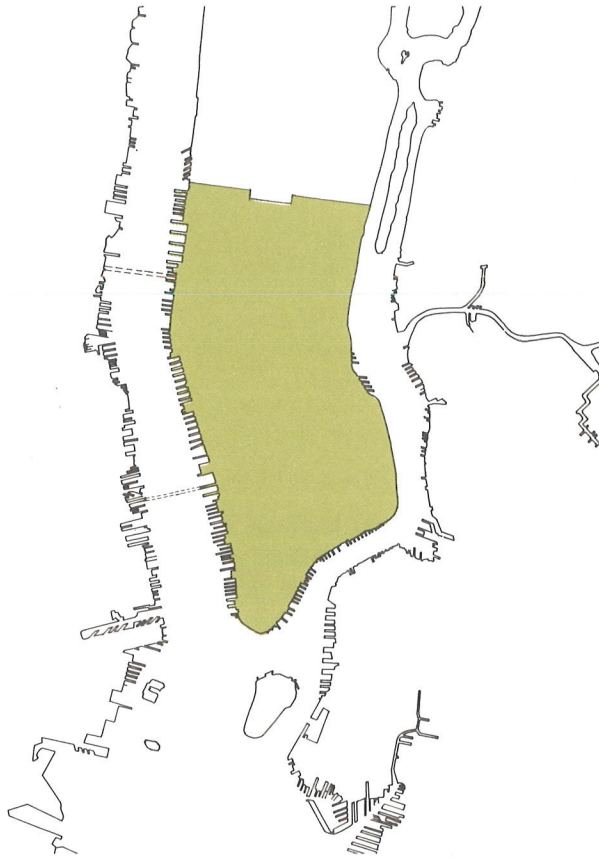
These investments should have top priority along with new kinds of mechanical conveyances for people going short distances in the central business district and separation of pedestrians from motor vehicles. Highway priorities, the Association said, should include the Lower Manhattan Expressway (in a deep cut) and missing links of the by-pass system around Manhattan, particularly the Cross-Brooklyn Expressway and Hoboken Freeway. The Association opposed investment at the present time in:

- a third tube of the Queens-Midtown Tunnel
- the proposed Bushwick Expressway in Brooklyn
- widening of the Henry Hudson Parkway
- double-decking the Long Island Expressway
- doubling the width of the New Jersey Turnpike up to the Lincoln Tunnel Approach (though doubling the width to the Newark Airport and a new route from there west of the Meadows is advisable)
- additional public parking facilities in the central business district.

### Who should pay for transit improvements?

The Regional Plan statement argued that benefits from improved public transportation would accrue to motorists in the Region, to New York State and New York City.

"Particularly the City has a stake in better transit," Mr. Schoff added. "Like the builder of an office tower who has to provide good elevator service to maximize the use of his building, the City must assure good transportation to make the most of the continuing attraction of the Manhattan central business district for office, retail and cultural activities.



The Manhattan Central Business District: the 8.6 square miles south of 61st Street, where over 28 percent of the labor force in the 7,000 square mile Region works.

“Good City transit also would hold those middle and upper-income families in the City who might move to the suburbs partly because subway riding is disagreeable.”

In general, the Association argued that the criteria now used by highway agencies to select priorities for road construction be applied to all forms of transportation in and to the central business district. The benefits of any project—time it would save for travellers, added comfort and amenity multiplied by all the people benefitted—should be compared to the cost, with highway and public transportation projects considered together.

If this were done, the Association is confident that better transit and improved pedestrian movement in the central business district would show up as the highest transportation priorities “because so many people are involved and no one has paid much attention before to saving the time of transit riders or pedestrians,” Schoff explained.

“All of this seems to be the basic approach of the new City administration,” Schoff observed.

More federal money should be available for public transportation because “the Region should be allowed to spend federal highway and public transportation grants in the way that would bring the greatest transportation benefit,” according to Schoff. “Each part of the country has different transportation needs at dif-

ferent times. This Region must emphasize rails now. Restricting most federal transportation funds to highway construction therefore penalizes us.”

The Association has calculated that federal highway grants in the Region have averaged over \$100 million a year in the past decade while public transportation aids, available only in the last three years, have averaged about \$15 million.

### The three premises supported

“The subway strike demonstrated the first premise in our position—that the central business district can’t work without transit,” Schoff explained.

“Several hundred thousand workers didn’t get to work each day and those who did took longer and had to stagger their trips over a long period, about 5:30 to 10:30 a.m. This can be done in an emergency, but obviously in normal periods it is impossible,” Schoff commented.

“Furthermore, few people other than workers tried to come into the central business district. Normally, more than 40 percent of the people entering the area come for reasons other than work.

“Finally, getting around the central business district was difficult throughout the day, so workmen went without materials and meetings had to be cancelled. There is no doubt, in sum, that the central business district cannot work without the subway.

“Figures show that getting along without even a part of the subway would be difficult. If only 10 percent of the peak-hour subway riders to the central business district had to switch to their automobiles, the number of cars trying to get into the central business district between 8 and 9 a.m. would jump by 75 percent. And there is no more room for cars.

“The second premise in our position—that business wants to locate in a concentrated center—is supported by the tremendous office building boom here.

“The third premise is backed by Regional Plan analysis of how people get to work, showing that people use rail where it is faster than car, and particularly upper-income suburbanites, who can afford to drive, choose the train.”

### Importance to whole metropolis

“The continued choice of public transportation by the majority of central business district employees is important to people living and working in the boroughs and suburbs surrounding Manhattan,” Schoff observed. “All approach roads are at capacity during rush periods, so more traffic there has to mean more highways. But most of the area around Manhattan is heavily built up. So more highways would disrupt homes and work places.

“Of course new highways in built up areas are expensive and most of us join in paying for them wherever we work.



Jam-up entering the Queens-Midtown Tunnel. Between 8 and 9 a.m., 8,000 persons use this facility to enter the central business district while 140,000 enter on the Queens subways and 33,000 on the Long Island Rail Road. A third tube and its Queens approaches would cost \$275 million and yet allow less than 3,000 additional persons—2 percent of the peak hour arrivals from Queens—to enter Manhattan between 8 and 9 a.m.

“As an example, current highway proposals of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority to widen the Henry Hudson Parkway, build a third tube to the Queens-Midtown Tunnel and link it with two expressway approaches would cost \$350 million. This would allow 8,000 peak-hour commuters and perhaps another 8,000 in the preceding and succeeding hours to switch to cars at a cost of about \$22,000 per person.”

### Getting around Manhattan in midday

Even midday traffic should be discouraged from the central business district because traffic never lets up, the statement said. Regional Plan tests showed that midtown Manhattan traffic actually moves more slowly in the daytime *between* rush hours than during rush hours. This means that no parking garages, even for short-term parkers, should be built in the central business district if they would add to street congestion, the statement recommended.

The following equation, showing the difficulty of depending on automobiles to bring shoppers close to stores, was based on supporting research papers: To increase a single large department store’s daily shoppers by only 9 or 10 percent through easier automobile access would require a 1,500-car garage which empties and fills three times in the off-peak period between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (Proposals for garages for short-term parkers specify that they should not interfere with rush-hour traffic.) Since Manhattan streets have an hourly capacity of about 750 cars, the 4,500 cars would fill a block constantly for the six hours just to serve the one garage which would serve less than 10 percent of the single department store’s daily customers. (And what about the other stores nearby?)

Instead, the Association suggested looking toward greater amenity for Manhattan shoppers and others, with easier and pleasanter pedestrian movement, perhaps new mechanical conveyances for short distances, and separation of pedestrians from cars wherever possible.

Manhattan’s attraction to people is variety, a high degree of choice and the chance to do several things conveniently in a single trip because theatres, restaurants, art galleries, museums and stores are close together. These assets, rather than easy automobile access, draw people to Manhattan, according to the Association staff.

“The contrast between New York and other major cities of the world in the cleanness and attractiveness of transit and arrangements for pleasant walking in the central business district was stressed by the Board,” Schoff observed. “The wealthiest metropolitan area in the wealthiest land lags far behind some very poor countries in amenities for the commuter and pedestrian.”

## THE POLICY STATEMENT

### THE SALIENT FACTS

**The immediate problem: better public transportation or more highways for travel to Manhattan**

The New York Metropolitan Region faces a basic decision about commuting to the central business district of Manhattan (the CBD): whether to meet immediate transportation problems by enlarging the capacity for bringing cars into the CBD or by improving public transportation. Six proposals have been made for major expansions of highway capacity to the CBD, and several proposals would enlarge parking capacity in the CBD. At the same time, the subway system and several commuter railroads need new sources of revenue just to continue present standards of service.

Pressure is growing to enlarge automobile entryways and parking space because standards of living are going up but standards of public transportation are not. Where public transportation is poor, people are using their increased income to buy better and faster transportation by car.

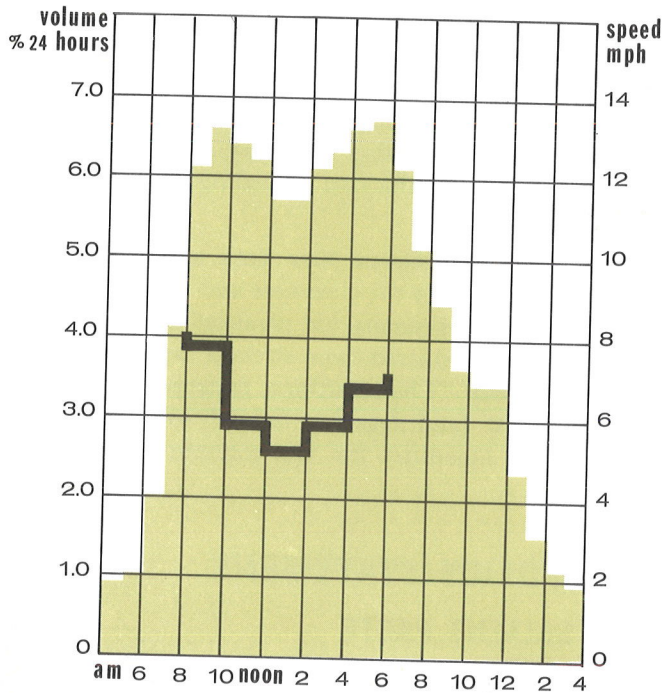
Though the following policies are directed to CBD commuting, they affect the entire Region. The CBD is only 8.6 of the Region’s 7,000 square miles—just the third of Manhattan south of Central Park—but it is the cornerstone of the Region’s economy and the focus of its transportation system.

### Regional Plan’s recommendation: improve transit

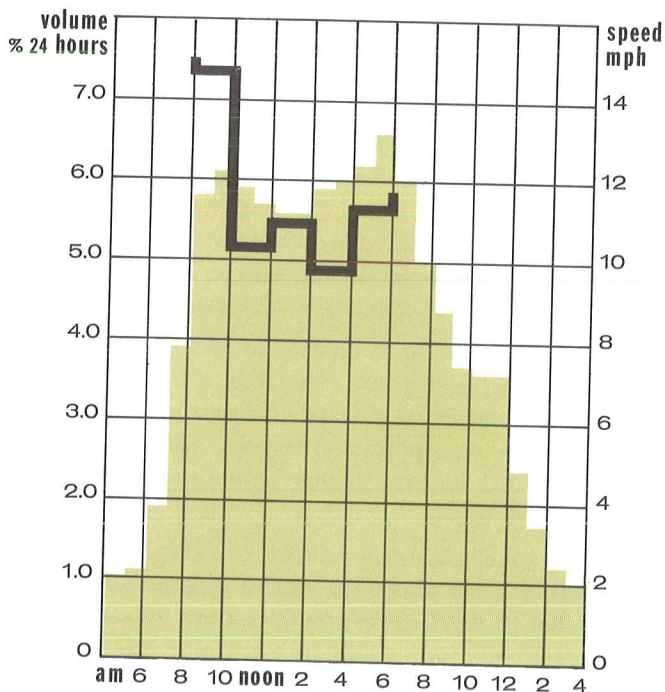
The CBD’s transportation system is unique in the nation in the tremendous number it carries every day, the staggering peak loads during short periods, and

# AVERAGE HOURLY VOLUME VERSUS AVERAGE HOURLY SPEED

MIDTOWN STREETS



MIDTOWN AVENUES



Line indicates average speed; shaded block shows volume of cars moving through central business district streets each hour. Central business district traffic is congested through the business day, not only when people come and go for work. Even though the number of cars moving through the streets declines in midday, there is actually less room in the streets, as evidenced by the fact that average speed also declines toward midday.

the degree of reliance on public transportation. Nearly as many people as live in the entire City of Chicago are brought in and out of the Manhattan CBD every day—3 1/3 million. About 850,000 enter in a single hour, 8-9 a.m. Of these, only 9 percent come by car and taxi; 72 percent come by subway, 11 percent by commuter railroad. Were all the entry streets, highways and river crossings into the CBD to be doubled—that is, for every Manhattan avenue another one of equal width, another East River and West Side Drive, another Queens-Midtown, Brooklyn-Battery, Lincoln and Holland Tunnel, another bridge to Queens, three more to Brooklyn—and if all the extra lanes were used exclusively for cars, the percentage of persons arriving by car in the CBD during the peak hour would still be only 22 percent.

**CONCENTRATION PRECLUDES MORE AUTOS.** We have approached the limit to the number of cars either that can enter the CBD during journey-to-work periods or that can circulate there during the day.

No significant increase in automobile capacity can be provided in the CBD without using more space and so diluting the CBD's purpose—to bring people close together.

No more capacity can be provided on approach highways to alleviate rush-hour congestion except at exorbitant expense in money and disruption of heavily built-up areas or mutilation of badly needed parks.

**CONCENTRATION IS DESIRED.** The value of this extreme concentration has been endorsed by business and non-profit organizations locating in the CBD. In the last twenty-five years, about as much office space has been built—and occupied—in this 400,000th of the nation as in the rest of the country combined. Thirty-five new buildings are underway or projected, according to a *New York Times* survey, indicating that the demand remains strong. Regional Plan projects substantial growth in the Region's office activities in the years ahead.

This concentration applies in time as well as space, for there is little point in building offices close together if people do not fill them during roughly the same hours.

**THEREFORE, CBD TRANSPORTATION MUST BE ECONOMICAL OF SPACE.** The Region's CBD transportation policy should aim at channeling the effective demand for better transportation into more space-saving modes—subway, commuter train, bus, and pedestrian aids such as moving sidewalks and escalators.

**PEOPLE WILL USE SPACE-SAVING MODES IF SERVICE IS GOOD.** Evidence clearly indicates that CBD employees will choose public transportation if reasonable standards of speed, frequency and amenity are maintained.

### Some possible sources of funds: motorists, the city, state, United States

CBD traffic creeps at an average speed of 8.5 miles per hour throughout the business day. As long as the demand to come into the CBD remains extremely high and there is no limit on the number of cars allowed to enter, traffic speeds will not rise much higher until public transportation speeds do. Should an added highway or tunnel to Manhattan raise the average speed of automobile travel *to* the CBD or should the elimination of curb parking or new electronic signalling raise the average speed of driving *in* the CBD, the tremendous pent-up demand for better transportation will quickly pour more cars into the area to take advantage of the improvement. The added cars will then slow traffic until it is once more just about as fast as public transportation. Then people again will see no great advantage to using their cars and a new equilibrium will be reached with fewer public transportation riders and more motorists, both traveling at the same speed as before.

Therefore, the only sound investment for speeding motor vehicles is improved public transportation. This being so, it is reasonable to pool highway and public transportation funds related to the CBD and invest them where they will bring the greatest benefits to both.

The City and State would be justified in contributing more to CBD transportation because transportation appears to be the limiting factor on CBD jobs and business. Therefore, City and State taxes can be expected to increase with improved CBD transportation.

The federal government contributes heavily to transportation financing, but its grants are now earmarked. As a result, more than \$100 million a year has been received for the Region's highways since 1955 and only about \$15 million a year in aid of public transportation over the last three years since federal public transportation grants began. Because investment in public transportation at this time would bring the most gains in the movement of people in this Region, a federal grant policy allowing the Region itself to determine its own transportation priorities (via the Tri-State Transportation Commission and the three states) would seem more likely to achieve the purposes of the federal transportation program than the present earmarked allocations.

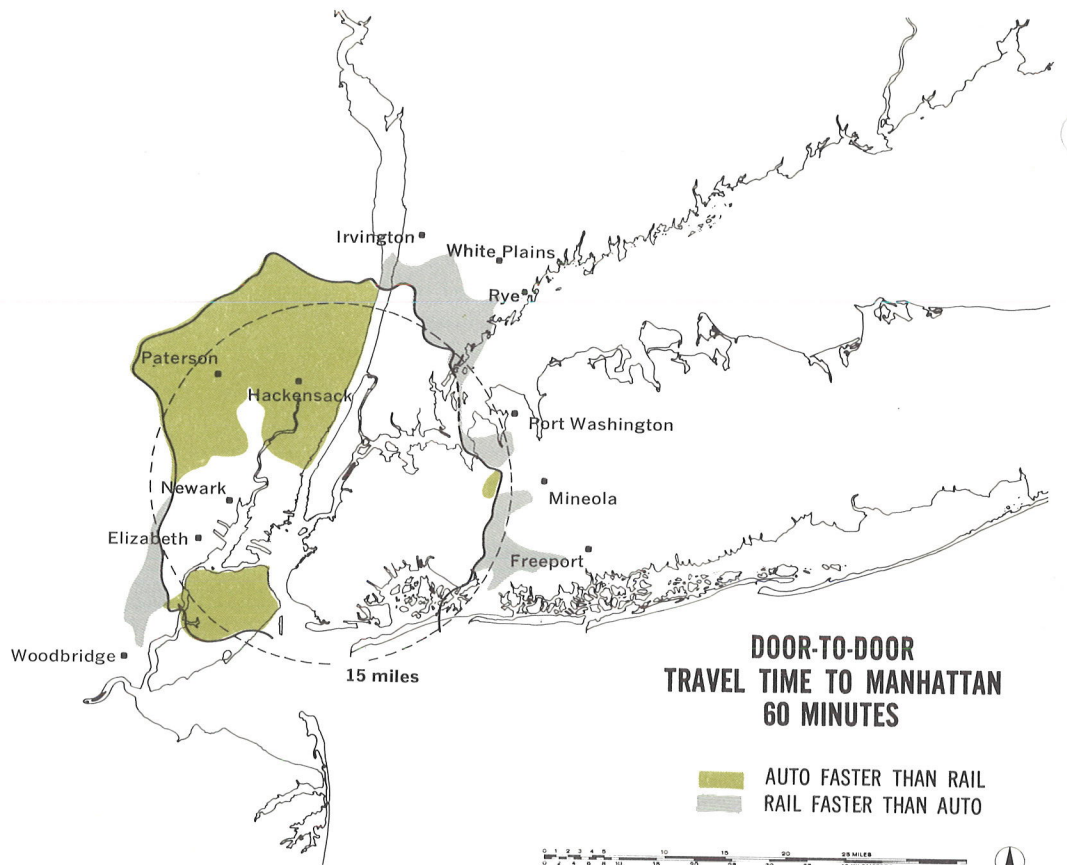
### Improved CBD street flow also needed

Transportation tasks that can be performed only by cars and trucks would overtax CBD streets even with maximum diversion to public transportation. Therefore, some investment is needed in improved motor vehicle flow within the CBD.



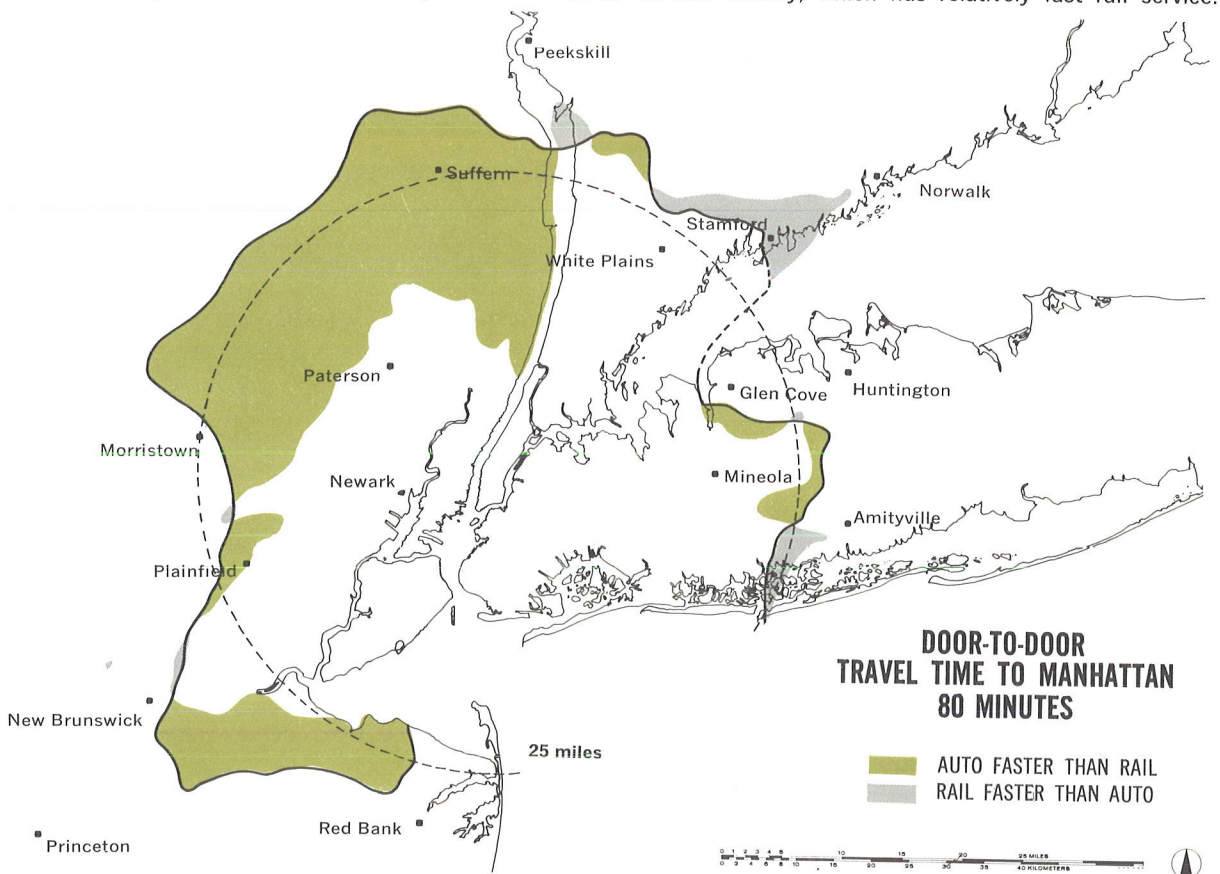
LOUIS SCHLIVEK

Compactness makes the central business district work. Traffic problems, caused by tremendous activity in very little space, are very difficult to solve unless as much movement as possible is shifted to mass transit or foot. Some typical difficulties of surface transportation: (1) interference from off-street as well as on-street parking; (2) loading and unloading; (3) conflicts between pedestrians and autos.



Inner edge of shading is the point where the slower mode requires 60 minutes (or 80 minutes) door-to-door travel. Outer edge of shading is the point where the faster mode requires 60 minutes (or 80 minutes) door-to-door travel. The solid line is the 60-minute (or 80-minute) point for auto travel. People do

care about speed—the proportion of auto commuters to Manhattan is highest in those areas where rail is significantly slower than auto. From the poorly served north-western sector over 20 per cent drive into Manhattan, compared to only 6 per cent from Fairfield County, which has relatively fast rail service.



## SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

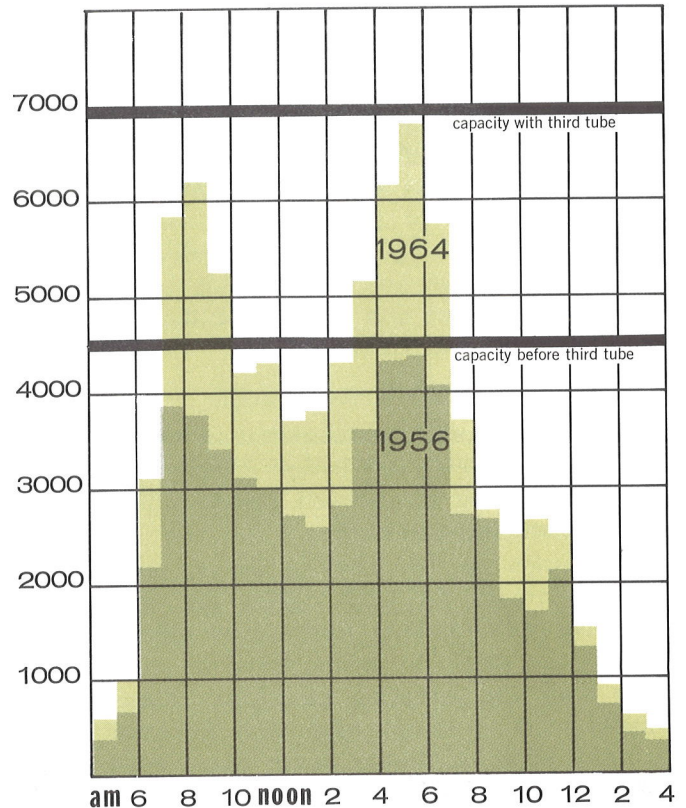
These facts lead Regional Plan Association to the following policy recommendations:

### I. Priorities In Transportation Investment

All CBD-related transportation should be considered together in setting investment priorities. Generally, cost-benefit studies should be used to point out CBD transportation projects that would provide most improvement for the cost. Amenities and the effect of transportation investment on adjacent property should be included in the computation. The following priorities appear likely to provide the highest ratio of benefits to costs:

- A. About \$150 million a year should be invested for ten years in subway capital improvements to increase speed, expand capacity from Queens and the East Bronx, expand access to the East Side of Manhattan, provide some degree of comfort, and allow faster and more pleasant pedestrian movement in major stations. In addition, an operating increase of about \$25 million a year should be spent on keeping stations cleaner, better ventilated, cooler in summer and more attractive.
- B. Ways should be developed to speed people on short trips in the CBD with new kinds of mechanical conveyances. Walking should be made pleasanter: pedestrians could be separated from autos in some places by closing off streets to automobiles or putting pedestrians on a different level.
- C. The commuter railroads should be modernized at a cost of about \$80 million a year for ten years to speed service, bring people closer to their CBD destination, and cut steadily rising operating costs.
- D. As public transportation is improved, commuter railroad, subway and express bus stops should be made more accessible to commuters who do not live within walking distance of them. Generally, feeder bus service should be improved, additional convenient parking provided, and more public transportation stops linked to fast highways. Because highways leading to the CBD are crowded, park-and-ride facilities should be arranged to attract people to public transportation as far out in the Region as practical, i.e., near their homes rather than near the CBD.
- E. The Lower Manhattan Expressway should be built (in a cut) to clear surface traffic and speed truck service to industrial areas.
- F. Construction of the remaining links in the bypass system around Manhattan, such as the Cross-Brooklyn Expressway (to the Verrazano

## LINCOLN TUNNEL HOURLY TWO-WAY VOLUMES Before and after the third tube



The third tube of the Lincoln Tunnel still serves mostly rush hour drivers—many of them former rail passengers. Eight years after the third tube was opened, there were less than 10,000 daily trips (both directions) above the 2-tube capacity. Thus, a 50 per cent increase in capacity served a 17 per cent gain in traffic.

Bridge) and the Hoboken Freeway, should be expedited to relieve routes toward Manhattan of through traffic.

### II. Projects That Should Be Deferred

Following the principle of setting transportation priorities by comparing their costs and over-all benefits, the following recent proposals for bringing more cars into the CBD should not be built at this time. They have very low ratios of benefits to construction costs, and they would further congest CBD streets, adding to costs of present street users.

- A. A third tube of the Queens-Midtown Tunnel.
- B. Greater capacity on the Henry Hudson Parkway (though reconstruction of the West Side Highway for safety and greater amenity appears necessary).
- C. Double-decking of the Long Island Expressway.
- D. The Bushwick Expressway aimed at Manhattan along the Queens-Brooklyn border in Brooklyn.

- E. Doubling of the New Jersey Turnpike lanes to the Lincoln Tunnel approach (though doubling the width to the Newark Airport and a new route from there west of the Meadows, presently under design, is advisable).
- F. An extension of the proposed East Hudson Expressway south of the Tappan Zee Bridge feeding into Manhattan.
- G. Additional parking space in the CBD, private as well as public, to the extent that it would add to street congestion. For example, this policy would preclude most additional off-street parking facilities for all-day non-resident parkers and would be highly selective on the number and location of short-term parking facilities in the CBD.

### III. Financing CBD Transportation

A. All New York City transportation facilities should be financed through one budget so that expenditures which will bring the greatest benefit will have first call on transportation funds.

B. Charges on the driver of the car entering and moving around the CBD during the business day (whether tolls, parking fees or any other kinds of charges that might be made) should be set in accordance with the foregoing principles. These charges should work in conjunction with improved public transportation to protect street space from serious congestion.

C. Similarly, public transportation fares should be reviewed to assure that they do not work against the fullest and most efficient use of the transportation facilities.

D. City and State investment in CBD transportation and pedestrian circulation should be increased.

E. Federal grants for highways and public transportation, now earmarked for one or the other, should

be allocable to either at the discretion of the states and the regional planning body required under grant legislation (in this Region, the Tri-State Transportation Commission).

### IV. Coordinating Transportation Policies

In addition to coordinating major transportation policies of New York City agencies through a common budget, the City, through its new Transportation Administrator and Council, should convene on a regular basis the directors of all parts of the City's transportation system, e.g., the Departments of Traffic and Highways, the Transit Authority and Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, with spokesmen for the City Planning Commission, Tri-State Transportation Commission, Port of New York Authority, Metropolitan Commuter Transportation Agency (of New York State), Connecticut Transportation Authority, and the New Jersey agency responsible for commuter rail service, so they can inform each other of forthcoming projects and problems and identify conflicts.

## REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS ON TRANSPORTATION TO MANHATTAN

### Hub-bound Travel in the Tri-State New York Metropolitan Region

Persons and Vehicles entering Manhattan South of 61st St. 1924-1960. Regional Plan Association Bulletin 99, December 1961. 24 pp.

### Better Rapid Transit for New York City

A Report and Program by The New York City Planning Commission, May 1, 1963. 25 pp.

### Journey to Work Manhattan Central Business District

New York-New Jersey Transportation Agency, June 1964. 36 pp.

### Journey-to-Work in the Tri-State Region

A Summary of Census Travel Data by Counties. Tri-State Transportation Committee, June 1964. 52 pp.

### A Modern Transportation System for New York City

Issued by John V. Lindsay, New York, 1965. 19 pp.

### Arterial Progress

Issued by the Chairman of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority and Coordinator of Federal-State-City Arterial Projects, November 8, 1965. 32 pp.

### Metropolitan Mobility

Proposals for Improved Transportation to Serve New York City. City Planning Commission, November 15, 1965. 34 pp.

### Queens-Midtown Tunnel Third Tube

Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, December 1965. 16 pp.



THE PORT OF NEW YORK AUTHORITY

Comfort and amenity must be improved and train speed increased so that public transportation can better compete with the automobile. The new Port Authority Trans-Hudson cars (above) are air conditioned and pleasant.



World-Telegram  
February 8, 1966

## Well, They Walked...

By today's standards, \$80,000 is probably petty cash. This is what the Transit Authority and the federal government will spend between them in financing a survey of the effects of the transit strike on subway and bus passengers.

The idea is that interviewing 20,000 of them on their pre-strike travel patterns, their emergency adaptations and their post-strike patterns will help chart future transportation needs.

It's probably too late to save the \$80,000, but here goes. Gentlemen, this is the way it was:

When the strike came, some walked, some took cabs, some hitch-hiked, some got into car pools and some decided they were either non-essential or not up to the ordeal and stayed home.

When the strike ended, they resumed their old ways—save for those who learned to love 10-mile hikes, cab fares or unemployment.

Oh, a few dotty souls may have decided car pools were great—but check back with

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Long Island Press  
February 8, 1966

## The Case for Mass Transit

Yesterday's report by the Regional Plan Association (RPA) calling for \$150-million-a-year subway improvements as the "only" way to end traffic congestion in Manhattan was good news for every Long Island commuter.

It was gratifying to see a report like this from the RPA, a non-profit organization of planners from the 22 counties in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut that make up our metropolitan area.

The Press has not always seen eye-to-eye with the RPA because the planners have occasionally demonstrated some lack of sensitivity in local matters. But yesterday's transit report, one of the best at a time when transit reports and recommendations are at floodtide, sums up beautifully what The Press has been pleading for for years. It marshals all the arguments in favor of an intensive and aggressive concentration on transit improvement.

Long Island can take special encouragement because it clearly assigns a top priority to the need for new subway improvements in Queens. Too many city planners and Manhattan-based newspapers fail to see the urgent need for relief here and, ironically, how that relief will also help Manhattan.

The RPA proposals make sense on several counts. In the crucial area of financing, it calls for greater federal help, pointing out that since 1955 Uncle Sam has contributed more than \$100 million a year for highways in our area—compared with only \$15 million for public transportation over the past three years. Obviously, a greater federal effort is essential.

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them six months from now.

If the foregoing free analysis seems a bit too brief or unprofessional, the survey squad could still save \$80,000 by leaving through the latest report by the Regional Plan Assn.

It says the fellow who drives to work pays a lot more than the mass transit rider and only saves five minutes each way. It proposes a variety of transit improvements and driving discouragements to persuade more motorists to leave the driving to the TWU and the railroad brotherhoods.

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To put it another way, the Transit Authority already knows the transportation needs of the future.

The problem is finding the money.

The Regional Plan Assn. report isn't much help on that score, but, then, the \$80,000 survey won't be, either.

This much is obvious, though: The longer the political dodo of a 15-cent fare hangs on, the worse things will get.

The key point, however, was the emphasis on the need to make transit competitive with autos. And to do this we'll have to spend at least the huge sums advocated by RPA. The RPA trotted out dramatic statistics to show how expensive, inconvenient and impractical auto travel can be. Crosstown speeds average only five to eight miles-an-hour and, in the overall trip, the average commuter saves only five minutes a trip "while paying three times as much as the transit user."

But the problem in luring the car commuter to the subway is more than a matter of economics. It is also a matter of psychology. The auto represents an awful lot to modern man. No matter how many hours a week he may lose in traffic jams, the car represents individuality and freedom of motion—at a time when all these are increasingly rare. Even if it's only an illusion that in a car you can come and go when you please, in solitude and comfort, it is an important illusion. It helps explain why we put up with so much on the roads.

That is why the RPA's suggestion that we not only speed up the subways, but we also give more attention—and money—to the amenities of subway travel makes so much sense. We will have to do more than just speed up the trip, we have to make that subway trip a pleasant experience.

How much thought and money is spent on this added dimension—this need to humanize the subways—will ultimately determine how much benefit the whole area will get out of rail improvement.

We hope that Mayor Lindsay has been furnished a copy of the RPA report.

The New York Times  
February 7, 1966

## Realities of New York Transit

A massive technological breakthrough that will revolutionize urban living through new methods of mass transit was envisioned last week at the first International Urban Transportation Conference in Pittsburgh. But the immediate realities for transit in New York—as in most other metropolitan centers—are more prosaic and a good deal more bleak.

They necessitate a basic policy choice on whether to seek improved access to Manhattan's central business district by enlarging the capacity for bringing in private cars or by strengthening public transportation. A new study by the Regional Plan Association provides impressive support for the City Planning Commission and other urban specialists who are convinced the decision must be for improved mass transit.

The area south of Central Park is the nation's corporate and financial capital; every day nearly as many people as the entire population of Chicago enter and leave it. Within this district about as much office space has been built in the past twenty-five years as in all the rest of the United States combined. It would be both impractical and impossible to meet downtown Manhattan's transportation needs by the endless building of more expressways and parking garages. Seventy per cent of downtown Los Angeles is swallowed up by facilities for the automotive age; in Boston the figure is 38 per cent; in Detroit 33 per cent.

To provide a better answer here, the Regional Plan Association urges that \$150 million a year for ten years be spent on subway capital improvements; it also suggests an outlay of \$50 million a year to modernize the commuter railroads. At the same time it opposes a series of projects that would encourage the entry of more automobiles into the area: A third tube for the Queens-Midtown Tunnel; increasing the capacity of the Henry Hudson Parkway; double-decking the Long Island Expressway; the Bushwick Expressway aimed at Manhattan; doubling the New Jersey Turnpike lanes to the Lincoln Tunnel approach; extending the proposed Mid-Hudson Expressway into Manhattan and providing additional parking space in the central business district.

These are all sound positions, as is the further recommendation that the city's major transportation policies should be coordinated through a common budget. The association also wants Mayor Lindsay's new Transportation Administrator and Council to consult regularly with the City Planning Commission, the Tristate Transportation Commission, the Port of New York Authority, the Metropolitan Commuter Transportation Agency of New York State, the Connecticut Transportation Authority and whatever agency may come out of the rail commuter crisis in New Jersey.

From these consultations there might eventually emerge the tristate agency that will ultimately have to take over the commuter railroads of the entire metropolitan area, probably with Federal financial support, and combine them with the New York City subway system in a single unified operation. Such an integrated agency is an indispensable element in solving the mass transportation problems of the 17 million people, split up among three states and twenty-two counties, who comprise the metropolitan area.

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# STATUS REPORT

## Hudson River Valley Commission reports

The New York State Hudson River Valley Commission has called for a joint New York-New Jersey-United States planning commission for the Hudson to be established by compact with congressional approval. Nine members would be named by New York, three by New Jersey and three by the federal government. The Commission appeared to have in mind citizen members rather than officials.

Governor Rockefeller indicated that the proposal was simply a basis for negotiation with the other two units of government.

The present Commission was named by the Governor early last year to make a detailed analysis of land use in the Valley and to recommend ways to protect its scenic, historic and cultural resources. Laurance Rockefeller, Chairman of the State Council of Parks, is the Chairman.

The new intergovernmental commission should have a special fund of \$100 million to acquire land or protect it with easements—apart from regular state and federal park purchase money. Some 150 sites along the River were recommended for this. The report proposed that the money come from all three units of government and private donations. The new commission would have no power other than buying land and easements, reviewing proposed developments in the Valley, holding hearings and making recommendations.

New York officials will now discuss the intergovernmental approach with New Jersey and federal officials. In anticipation of the compact, Governor Rockefeller included funds in this year's State budget for New York's contribution to commission operations.

This report also asked for an exhaustive investigation of alternatives to the Consolidated Edison Storm King plant, though the Commission recognized the importance of industry in parts of the Valley and suggested that it be concentrated where industry presently exists.

It emphasized the importance of coordinating the planning of the Lower Hudson, as demonstrated by the preliminary look at the area below the George Washington Bridge done by Regional Plan.

The report also called for a State Trust for Historic Preservation and a unified tourist program including a Hudson River Tourway which would connect places of historical, cultural and scenic interest.

Public access all along the River was enunciated as a principle to be followed where feasible.

For example, the report said the projected Hudson Expressway from Ossining to Tarrytown should be

bordered with a nine-mile-long waterfront park including marinas, beaches and other facilities, with many access points over the highway and railroad.

An extensive highway beautification program also was proposed, including junkyard and billboard controls, scenic protection along highways and improved highway landscaping.

Power lines should be placed underground in areas where scenic values are strong, the report added. In crossing the Hudson, they might follow the underside of bridges.

The report also asked that state park districts be extended to cover the entire State so that state parks can be located throughout. New York City is among the areas not now covered.

Representative Richard L. Ottinger, who has pending in Congress a bill for federal protection of the River, said he had some reservations about the report but generally was pleased with it, according to the *White Plains Reporter-Dispatch*. He called for a federal-state conference to work out details of the proposal.

The report, which was issued January 31, is available from the Commission office: Mr. B. Howlett, Hudson River Valley Commission, Iona Island, Bear Mountain, New York 10911.

## The New York Herald Tribune December 26, 1965

### Hudson at the Peril Point

The Regional Plan Association points out that the Hudson River below the George Washington Bridge is in for a lot of change. If the riverfront is to be put to best use and appearance, the time to plan is right now. Bob Moses, for instance, is projecting a vast reconstruction of the West Side Highway which would be a wall between people and river. The city has in mind a big pollution control plant between 137th and 145th Sts. protruding into the water 500 feet. More huge apartment developments are in prospect for the Palisades, which would radically alter the western view. Then there is the proposed expansion of Hoboken cargo-handling facilities. The RPA also refers to lighterage consolidation which would divide Liberty Park from part of Jersey City.

All this adds up to a billion dollars

and more in construction. It sounds fine, economically. But there is also a larger consideration. The developments ought to be located and designed so there won't be any regrets a decade hence, when it's too late, about riverfront ruin.

The Hudson River, as a great natural resource, has commanded growing public interest. But its preservation and improvement depend on full-scale planning, and this requires the co-operation of Federal, state and local governments. The RPA urges prompt formation of a high-level commission to plan while there is time. The warning about the lower river in particular must be heeded at once. For the city, the states of New York and New Jersey and the entire country have a joint interest in acting to preserve and enhance the Hudson treasure.

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## The New York Times, January 25, 1965

### Improving the Lower Hudson

Both banks of the Hudson along the eighteen-mile stretch between the George Washington Bridge and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge are undergoing great changes. Projects costing \$1.5-billion are under way or in preparation; within a decade they will radically transform both sides of the majestic river. They point up the urgency of coordinated planning to protect a magnificent natural resource.

The Regional Plan Association recently made a survey of the planned and proposed undertakings, and concluded that they offer both great opportunities for improvement and serious threats of lasting harm. For example, the \$225-million World Trade Center about to be built near the Hudson will have no planned relation to it. The Regional Plan experts believe it could be a much greater project if it were designed with access to the river.

Robert Moses' plan to rebuild the West Side Highway would enlarge the barrier which forces the city to face inward rather than toward the Hudson. Instead of a massive elevated structure, the highway should be reconstructed to facilitate access to the

waterfront, an idea that fits in with recent proposals to the City Planning Commission regarding future development of lower Manhattan.

The sewage disposal plant to stretch along the Manhattan shore from 137th Street to 145th Street would be an eyesore as presently designed, but, properly planned, its roof could be turned into a recreation area that would be a boon to the neighborhood and the city.

Across the river, indiscriminate "improvement" of the top and face of the Palisades cliffs is destroying their great natural beauty. The projected Palisades freeway is another threat to the landscape.

Since New York State and New Jersey are equally involved, the rehabilitation of the lower Hudson is obviously beyond the scope of the Hudson River Valley Commission set up unilaterally by New York State. A permanent joint commission is needed, including representatives of the Federal Government and the two states, to work out a plan for the most effective use of that great national asset—the Hudson River.

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# BOOKSHELF

**NEW YORK CITY'S RENEWAL STRATEGY/1965.** Community Renewal Program, The City of New York, 2 Lafayette St., New York, N. Y. 10007. 93 pp.

This report is the culminating document of a five-year effort by the New York City Community Renewal Program. It postulates a number of idealistic objectives as a framework in which short-term housing renewal strategy should be conceived, chief among them use of the City's resources primarily to help those least able to help themselves. The programs directed to these ends are only sketchily drawn, however, and significantly missing is a sense of urgency commensurate with the task of substantially improving the housing conditions of perhaps half a million families. (Ronald Greenwald)

**THE POLITICS OF ZONING: THE NEW YORK EXPERIENCE** by S. J. Makielski, Jr. Columbia University Press, 1966. 241 pp. \$6.00

The history of efforts by municipal reformers between 1910 and 1960 to establish zoning and city planning in the City of New York has provided material for examination of an urban political system in action. Since Regional Plan Association was one of the "actors" in this movement, Mr. Makielski's study will be of particular interest to RPA members.

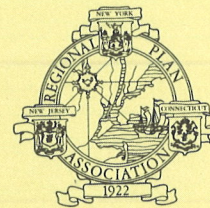
**THE HIDDEN DIMENSION** by Edward T. Hall. Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1966. 201 pp. \$4.95

The author, an anthropologist, believes that far too little is known about man's reaction to crowding and the space around him. He finds that people from different cultures react differently to the same spatial dimensions. In this interesting book he acquaints us with various investigations into the effects of overcrowding and urges that man's psychological reaction to space become a major consideration in architecture and city planning.

**LONG ISLAND WHERE ARE WE GOING? A Local-State-Federal Planning Conference held at Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York, October 16, 1965. 64 pp.**

This was the third conference in ten years convened by Hofstra University to consider major problems confronting Long Island. The speeches and reports of panel discussions included in the proceedings cover regional planning, population and industry, transportation, health and welfare, higher education, employment and training, housing and urban renewal, recreation and conservation, and governmental structure.

*Sarah Smith Hasbrouck*



## Regional Plan Association

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