

Dec 2020

# RPA Annual Report, FY2020

Reflecting on the past year and planning for the region's recovery and renewal, we can be proud of RPA's contributions at this critical moment toward a more equitable, healthy, and sustainable society.



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### **To our Supporters and Friends:**

When RPA's staff and Board of Directors gathered nearly 12 months ago to set goals for the year ahead, the region and the world could not have looked more different than it does today.

In 2020, we have been challenged like never before. As of this writing, a global pandemic has killed nearly 50,000 of our family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors in the New York metropolitan region. This has led to an economic crisis resulting in millions of lost jobs and shuttered businesses, with the burden falling hardest on service and retail workers and people of color, many of whom do not have citizen status, access to federal relief, or sufficient assistance. At the same time, the tragic murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery unlocked a fire that had been raging just below the surface of our society in the form of mass protests throughout the country against long-standing systemic racism and structural inequality.

As the year gradually comes to a close, and with new leadership in Washington on the horizon, it is time for us to take stock of what we've come through and how we can continue to create a better future. The New York metropolitan region c an and should lead the nation in this recovery. And there is no better organization to provide the kind of thoughtful and comprehensive solutions to help the region navigate what will be a difficult recovery than RPA. Our Board is comprised of a diverse array of leaders from regional, national, and international industries, academia, and the non-profit sector who not only provide critical insights into issues affecting our region, but, more importantly, consider it their fiduciary responsibility to promote the long-term sustainability of the region. Our talented and dedicated staff provide the independent research and critical analysis to better understand what is happening and provide realistic solutions to the challenges facing us. At a time when our political discourse is too often focused on spin and slogans, RPA's work is more important than ever.

Our region's challenges are great, but by no means are they insurmountable. And while we are confident that the tri-state region will rise again, our recovery is not inevitable, nor will it happen overnight. 2020 has been marked by humanitarian and economic catastrophes of mammoth proportions. There will not be a return to what once was, nor should there be. Instead, in order to attain a recovery that positions our region to be more prosperous and more equitable than before, we need innovative and comprehensive solutions that create a path forward and champion what will be difficult decisions ahead. No other organization is better suited to provide these solutions than RPA.

Whether we are entering an era of decline or come back stronger, fairer, and more resilient will depend on the choices we make now. As the trusted voice in matters related to planning for the region's future, RPA is proud to once again lead the way.

Thank you once again for your support and dedication to RPA's mission. We look forward to working with all of you as we plan for a better and brighter future.

**Scott Rechler** 

Chairman

**Thomas K. Wright** 

President and CEO



### Health

### During the development of the Fourth Regional Plan, RPA committed to incorporating health as a core value of our work.

In 2020, we advanced strategies to better link planning and health in our region and beyond. Through project work, reports, and social media posts, RPA used our platform to amplify the importance of addressing urban planning's role in health disparities in our region and the need for our field to acknowledge and address those past wrongs.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take its toll on our region, we acknowledge that low-income communities have been disproportionately harmed. The pandemic has exposed deep disparities in health according to race, class, and geography. As we know from our research on the connections between planning and health outcomes, the recommendations made by planners have significant consequences in the face of a virus like COVID-19. The virus is most likely to affect people with pre-existing conditions, which can often be connected to the environments in which they live.



economic health, we must treat the underlying conditions that made us so susceptible to the COVID-19 pandemic."



### **Christopher Jones**

Senior Vice President & Chief Planner

The RPA team is set to kick off the second phase of the Healthy Regions Planning Exchange program in 2021, consolidating the network of planners, practitioners, advocates, and community-based representatives who have convened in the past two years to address the structural issues that influence health and equity through regional planning across the United States. With support from Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, RPA will focus on knowledge sharing and network development, supporting regional partners to enable more effective responses to COVID-19, and addressing the structural roots of racial inequities affecting community health.



# **Housing**

The events of 2020 have driven home the need for safe, healthy, and affordable housing for all.



This year we focused on the potential value of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and conversions throughout the region, and found that we could create more than 500,000 new homes without any major new construction. These lower-cost, lower-impact housing solutions are particularly valuable for seniors who want to age in place, people who cannot afford a single-family home, and families who'd like to earn extra income. Our next step is implementation, and we're working with coalitions to draft statewide language for ADU policies in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.



Rendering from RPA/Peterson Rich Office report: Scalable Design Solutions for NYCHA

### **Restoring the Promise of Public Housing**

RPA published reports outlining the health impacts of NYCHA conditions and offering strategies to repair and upgrade buildings.

### RPA also continued our work to restore New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)

facilities to a state of good repair to improve health and quality of life for the 400,000 New Yorkers who live in NYCHA housing. By partnering with Community Voices Heard, we conducted the farthest-reaching assessment to date on the relationship of housing conditions to resident health at NYCHA. We learned that approximately four out of five NYCHA residents need apartment repairs, and that living conditions affect the mental health of one in three residents. Our inaugural Kaplan Fellows for Urban Design also developed a new resident-first approach to upgrading NYCHA buildings and campuses.

**In New York,** RPA's testimony for New York City's Fair Housing Plan, "Where We Live," helped support a major policy shift toward prioritizing affordable housing in wealthier areas which have been able to prevent needed development.

This fall, RPA published detailed data on demographics and housing characteristics for every city, town, and village on **Long Island**. By presenting over 30,000 data points in a visual, accessible way, our *Long Island Housing Data Profiles* are helping communities

address the gap between rising housing costs and stagnant incomes as well as the legacy of housing discrimination which persists in some areas.

In New Jersey, RPA has collaborated with the NJ Chapter of the American Planning Association and the County Planners Association to build awareness around policies that advance ADUs through a survey of planning and housing professionals, strategy planning sessions with State officials, and a panel discussion with elected officials. The discussion –"Two Homes, One Roof: Making New Jersey More Welcoming with ADUs," – made clear the depth of interest in ADUs in New Jersey and hit on effective ways to pitch their benefits to the public.

Investing in a diverse mix of housing options for people of all incomes is essential for economic recovery in Connecticut."



**Melissa Kaplan-Macey** 

Vice President, State Programs & Connecticut Director

**In Connecticut,** RPA has focused on bringing economic opportunity and greater diversity to Fairfield County, which has the highest income disparity of any metro region in the United States and some of the worst residential segregation. Through our partnership with Fairfield County's Center for Housing Opportunity (FCCHO), we are advancing new narratives to change how residents think about affordable housing and deconstruct the psychology of NIMBYism.

Statewide, RPA delivered to Connecticut's Department of Housing a comprehensive guidebook that every municipality can use to develop better affordable housing plans. We are also partnering with Desegregate CT, a coalition of neighbors and nonprofits working to change exclusionary land use regulations and create more diverse communities. Now is the time for Connecticut communities to change the planning and zoning codes that stand in the way of a more equitable and prosperous future.



## **Transportation**

As a result of the pandemic, public transit has been facing an existential crisis in 2020.



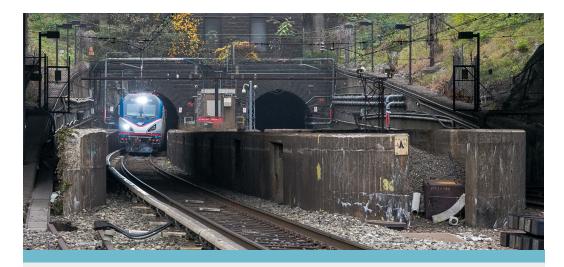
### **Essential Service**

At a time when the region faces a deep recession and the future viability of the transit system is at risk, there are no good options for cutting costs. Read our recommendations on rpa.org.

The pandemic has taken a devastating toll on subway, bus, and commuter rail ridership and revenue throughout the region. Recognizing the dire situation facing our region's transit agencies — especially the MTA — RPA immediately joined with advocates to push the federal government for more emergency aid and we haven't let up. Since agencies received a first round of funding from the initial CARES Act in March, a broad coalition of advocates has been fighting to ensure future relief bills include funding for transit agencies. In addition, as RPA recommended, the MTA and Port Authority have been given access to the Federal Reserve's Municipal Liquidity Facility.



As people across the region and country have grown more reliant on alternative modes of transportation during the pandemic, we've seen a dramatic increase in bike use. Services like CitiBike have set new daily ridership records month after month. Speaking directly to this biking boom, RPA released *The Five Borough Bikeway* in June calling for a 425-mile comprehensive, citywide network of protected, high-capacity bike lanes throughout New York City. The report illustrates the need and the opportunity for increased, safe cycling to address issues of climate change, congestion, health, and mobility equity, and we are working with partners across the city on its implementation.



### **Building Gateway**

After more than a decade of advocacy from RPA, the region is closer than ever before to breaking ground on the Hudson River Tunnel project.

learn more at rpa.org

RPA continues to make the case for Gateway and a better Penn Station. The Gateway Program got some good news this summer when the Portal Bridge, a key piece of the project, finally received a green light and federal funding. A survey conducted by the Build Gateway Now coalition this fall demonstrated that residents believe commuters will return to mass transit, transit agencies should get more emergency aid, and that Gateway deserves public investment. Now under a new federal administration, the Hudson River Tunnel may be closer to construction than ever before, with a Record of Decision for the long-stalled environmental impact statement and billions in federal funds close to being unlocked.



**RPA continues to urge state and federal leadership to fund NJ Transit,** especially the bus network. Our report *Better Service: Improving the Bus Network in New Jersey* pointed out that essential frontline workers, people of color, and women disproportionately depend on local buses, and that buses must be prioritized in state budgets and on city streets.

See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter

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# **Energy, Climate, and Open Space**

# RPA is focused on research and advocacy that will deliver the policies, practices, and investments needed for a just transition to a decarbonized future.

Our region has committed to hitting ambitious climate targets that approach or achieve carbon neutrality by mid-century, requiring an aggressive shift away from the status quo. But we must address the climate crisis in ways that don't trigger other crises of equity, affordability, or economic decline, and make the right short-term decisions that allow us to meet long-term decarbonization goals and common sense energy transmission investments. The Fourth Plan and the Board of Director's Energy Task Force have guided our energy and climate efforts.

RPA continues to build support for regional collaboration around the emerging offshore wind industry. All three states have made strong commitments to developing offshore wind and each are in the process of getting their first major projects underway. RPA's focus has been on facilitating conversations between states, particularly New York and New Jersey, to consider how a collaborative approach to port development, transmission, and industry attraction would ensure greater benefits to the region versus an individual, go-it-alone approach.



Max Parrot, QNS

### **Planning for Resilience**

Through a community-driven process, we've been learning what climate justice looks like for residents in Queens, NY.

learn more at rpa.org

In New Jersey, we see infrastructure investment as a potential solution to not only provide good jobs and put people back to work, but also as an opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while stimulating the economy. The need is vast — whether it's public transit or port infrastructure needed to usher in the offshore wind industry, billions of dollars of investment are required. With the right policy choices, this investment and these green jobs can come in a way that benefits communities most affected by COVID-19 and the economic crisis.



Image by NCP, Scenic Hudson, and Siteworks NCP

### A park grows in Poughkeepsie

New City Parks, in partnership with the City of Poughkeepsie, Scenic Hudson, and the community, has begun construction of Pershing Avenue Park.

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, access to green spaces that promote play, exercise, and contact with nature is more important than ever. Unfortunately, a study has shown parks in low-income communities are four times smaller and more crowded than parks in high-income communities, and parks for communities of color are half the size and five times as crowded as parks that are located in majority white communities. New City Parks (NCP), incubated by RPA, is hard at work creating more parks in low-income communities and communities of color.

and to build mind and muscle. In light of the COVID-19 crisis, parks are more important than ever, and they should be part of every urban neighborhood."



**Rose Harvey** 

Senior Fellow for Parks and Open Space

In New Jersey, NCP has partnered with the city of Passaic and the community to redesign Latona Griffin Park, and is in close collaboration with stakeholders in Jersey City to turn asphalt lots into green, welcoming community spaces. In New York, NCP, with the city of Poughkeepsie, the community, and Scenic Hudson, has broken ground on Pershing Avenue Park and is finalizing the design and financing for the revitalization of Malcolm X Park. Meanwhile, in Buffalo, NCP, Trust for Public Land, and the community are collaborating with the city on finishing a new parks plan, including the revitalization of two to three community parks.



### **RPA In-Person and Online**

# Although changes arrived a mile-a-minute in 2020, RPA kept up thanks to your support.

In the first half of the fiscal year, we hosted hundreds of friends and individuals from the civic, government, and corporate sectors across the region at in-person events ranging from report release breakfast briefings at our office, on-site tours of transportation projects that are re-shaping our region like East Side Access and Moynihan Train Hall, and larger gatherings with key partners on issues like the future of the Triboro line and how to reduce flood risk in our region and country. We also hosted our second annual Celebrate the Tri-State Benefit honoring the World Trade Center Master Plan and the legacy of John Whitehead, as well as regional champions Nancy Douzinas and Maxine Griffith.

### The new rpa.org

Since its launch in May 2020, RPA's new website has seen:

- 95,000 unique visitors
- 250,000 page views

**In Spring 2020,** RPA immediately pivoted to virtual events to enable critical and timely conversations and share important information with a region in the grips of the pandemic. Just a few weeks after the region shut down, we held our 30<sup>th</sup> annual spring Assembly featuring 10 virtual discussions that addressed pressing urban issues in the context of the prevailing health, economic, and social justice crises.

From our Assembly series on *Confronting COVID-19* in the region, the nation, and the world, to the *Our Digital Future* and *Saving Public Transportation* panels, RPA was able to convene thought leaders from around the world and attract an audience of thousands. We continued to use our new digital platform throughout 2020 to draw attention to urban planning priorities such as charting a pathway toward desegregating our neighborhoods, decarbonizing our economy, and working towards an equitable recovery for our region.



Mayor David Dinkins presents the Above and Beyond Award to RPA Board member Maxine Griffith at the fall 2019 Benefit.



RPA Assembly: "Scenarios for Recovery & Renewal in the Tri-State Region"



 $\ensuremath{\mathsf{RPA}}$  brings together  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{New}}$  Yorkers to discuss the Triboro line and outer borough transit.



RPA Board member Jun Choi interviews David Dixon about his book "Suburban Remix."



RPA Assembly: 2020 Zuccotti Award Recipient the Honorable Henry Cisneros interviewed by PBS NewHour's Judy Woodruff



RPA Board members and friends tour East Side Access.



RPA Board member Mike Sweeney speaks with transit experts during "Protecting Tri-State Transportation."



Moses Gates presents "Time to Act: Restoring the Promise of NYC's Public Housing" to RPA members.

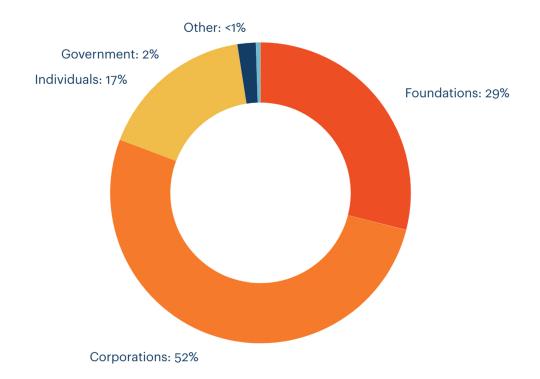


 $RPA\ convenes\ the\ second\ symposium\ of\ the\ Healthy\ Regions\ Planning\ Exchange\ in\ New\ Orleans,\ Louisiana.$ 



## **Financial Information**

Financial and donor information for Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020):



### **Operating Revenue**

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Foundations	\$1,115,092
Corporations	\$1,992,467
Individuals	\$645,697
Government	\$76,635
Other	\$18,469
Endowment revenue	
Peter Herman Chair	\$20,250
Dividends and Capital Gains	\$102,108
Total Endowment Revenue	\$122,358
Total Revenue	
	\$3,970,718

### **Expenses**

### **Operating Expenses**

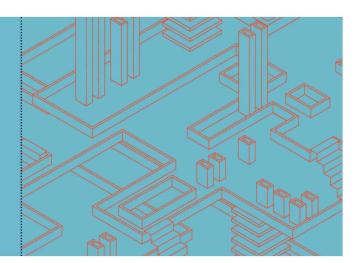
Research	\$2,808,936
Public Affairs	\$545,144
Management and General	\$360,265
Fundraising	\$774,178
Net Surplus	
	-\$517,805

### **Assets and Liability**

Total Assets	\$5,356,626
Total Liability	\$918,857
Total Net Assets	\$4,437,769

# Thank you for your generous support!

Thank you to all of RPA's members and funders for supporting our work. Your partnership makes the progress highlighted in this annual report and other initiatives possible.



### FY2020 Donors

(July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020)

### Donations above \$100,000

Bloomberg Philanthropies	New York State Health Foundation	Laurance S. Rockefeller Fund	SL Green Management
Durst Organization	Richard Oram / Fund for the Environment and Urban Life	RXR	Jennifer Speer
JPB Foundation	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Siegel Family Endowment	Suffolk Construction
\$50,000 - \$99,999			
A Woodner Fund	Cushman Wakefield	JPMorgan Chase	Ralph C. Wilson Foundation
American Express	Steve Denning	Leidos	Sidewalk Labs
Blackstone	Deutsche Bank	Lily Auchincloss Foundation	Robert K. Steele
Brookfield Properties	Ford Foundation	Jan Nicholson Fund	Walentas Foundation
Crown Castle	Paul Gertner	Prudential	WSP
\$25,000 - \$49,999			
Anonymous	Emigrant Bank	Jacobs Engineering	James Rubin
Audible	Energy Foundation	James Capalino Associates	Siemens
Stephen Beckwith	Ernst & Young	M&T Charitable Foundation	STV
Elizabeth Belfer	Fairfield County Community Foundation	McKinsey & Co.	TIAA/Nuveen
Eugenie Birch	Fisher Brothers	Meridiam Infrastructure	UBER
Bombardier	Sarah Fitts	New York Community Trust	United Airlines
Jun Choi	The F. M. Kirby Foundation	NRG Inc	Verizon
Citigroup	The Fund for New Jersey	Orsted	VHB
Con Edison Foundation	Goldman Sachs	PNC Foundation	Vornado Realty
Deloitte	Guidehouse	PSEG	Wells Fargo
Michael Drinkard	Peter Herman	PSEG-LI	
Dyson Foundation	HNTB Corporation	Rauch Foundation	
Edison Properties	InterPublicGroup	Ravenswood Generating Station	

### \$10,000 - \$24,999

AECOM	Lisa Diaz	Long Island Community Foundation	Sam Schwartz Engineering
American Airlines	Greater Jamaica Development Corporation	Matt Kissner/Wiley	The Scherman Foundation
ARUP	The Gunk Foundation	Ben Korman/Lotus Equity Group	Marilyn Taylor
Marcia Bateson	Dylan Hixon	Northwood Investors	Jane Veron & Andrew Fieldstein
CBRE	Hollomon Price Foundation	Omnispective	Westfield
Henry Cisneros	David Huntington	PAU	WeWork
Columbia University	Hyde & Watson Foundation	Jason Post	WXY Studio
The Critelli Family Foundation	KPF Foundation	Rudin Management	
\$5,000 - \$9,999			
Ashforth Properties	GHD	Mathis Pfohl Foundation	Larry Rockefeller
Covanta Energy	Hargreaves Assocaties	Nolan Partners International	Jonathan Rose Companies
Nancy Douzinas	David Hoffman	Northwell Health	Skidmore Owings & Merril
George and Amy Klette Newman Foundation	Langan	Pew Charitable Trust	
\$1,000 - \$4,999			
Kate Ascher	Maxine Griffith	Bryna & Joshua Landes	Tokumbo & Sheethal Shobowale
AT&T	Rachel Haot	Brenda Levin	H. Claude Shostal
BerlinRosen	Linda Harrison	Jill Lerner	Siebert Williams Shank & Co.
Cacace Tusch & Santaga	Henry and Sammi Hatch	Adam Meister	Susan Solomon & Paul Goldberge
Art Chang	Henry Luce Foundation	Philip Milstein	Marian Starr
Convene	Brian Hughes	Sanjay Mody	Robert Stromsted
Linda Cox	Catherine McVay Hughes	Nancy Owens Studio	Luther Tai
Jerome Davis	Kenneth Jackson	Larissa Ortiz/Streetsense	Bill Thompson
David Earls	Anaita Kasad	Daniel Rose	Tonio Burgos Associates
First Republic Bank	Hope Knight	Lynne Sagalyn	Woods Bagot
Rosalie Genevro	Bradley Kranz	Aditya Sanghvi	
Government			
Amtrak	Suffolk County IDA	New Haven	Waterbury
Connecticut Department of Housing	Bridgeport	Stamford	



**Regional Plan Association** is an independent, not-for-profit civic organization that develops and promotes ideas to improve the economic health, environmental resiliency and quality of life of the New York metropolitan area. We conduct research on transportation, land use, housing, good governance and the environment. We advise cities, communities and public agencies. And we advocate for change that will contribute to the prosperity of all residents of the region. Since the 1920s, RPA has produced four landmark plans for the region; the most recent was released in November 2017. For more information, please visit **rpa.org**.

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