Planning the Hudson

Consolidated Edison's proposal to build a new kind of hydroelectric plant at Storm King mountain on the Hudson River focused a growing but unorganized interest of the Region's citizens in

- preserving especially beautiful natural sites,
- enlarging the opportunities for outdoor recreation in and near the Region, and
- saving the natural habitat of fish, animal and plant life.

Now those three interests are organized as they relate to the Hudson. Several citizen groups have begun work on preserving the river's natural beauty, expanding access to it and its use for recreation, and reclaiming parts of the shore which have been blighted.

Congressman Richard L. Ottinger made the Hudson River his primary campaign issue last year and won election. Immediately after Congress convened, he filed a bill to give the Secretary of Interior powers of control and development over a limited portion of the River. More than thirty bills covering the same and different sections of the River, but providing for the same action, have been filed since.

Governor Nelson Rockefeller appointed a Hudson River Valley Commission to plan a section of the Hudson and named Conrad Wirth, recently retired National Parks Director, to head the staff. Later, a large advisory committee was added, composed of leading conservationists and representatives of businesses and others with a special interest in activities along the River.

Below are statements Regional Plan Association made about these two important steps toward better enjoyment of the Hudson River.

Congressman John G. Dow has filed a bill quite similar to what Regional Plan has proposed. He later endorsed our position specifically and forcefully in a letter to President Johnson. The New York Times, New York Herald Tribune and Newark News endorsed our positions editorially (see page 9).

Since the Regional Plan statements were made, consideration has begun of a permanent New York-New Jersey-U.S. joint commission by all three parties. The U.S. Department of Interior staff, augmented by representatives of the departments affiliated with the recreation advisory council, and the Hudson River Valley Commission staff, have been working together in surveying the facts and analyzing the problems, according to a Commission spokesman.

Association spokesmen have presented the position on Channel 2 television and before several open meetings.

STATEMENT

by Arthur Palmer for Regional Plan Association to the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs at a Hearing July 24, 1965 on H.R. 3012, the Ottinger Bill, and similar bills to provide for the establishment of the Hudson Highlands National Scenic Riverway.

We feel that the kind of planning Regional Plan Association has been doing provides an appropriate perspective through which to view the best use of the Hudson River. Regional Plan has pioneered since the 1920's in concepts of design (for example, the concept of Rockefeller Center was first publicized in our 1929 Plan); in promotion of aesthetic development (our PLANNING AND COMMUNITY APPEARANCE manual); in preservation of natural open space (our 1960 RACE FOR OPEN SPACE report); and in planning for outdoor recreation (for example, THE DYNAMICS OF PARK DEMAND). But in addition, we work for efficient job location, convenient transportation and good housing (illustrated in COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION and SPREAD CITY, 1961 and 1962 reports on railroad problems and the over-all growth of this metropolitan area), and these factors also must be considered in planning the Hudson.

While the purposes of the bills before you, well stated in the preambles to the Ottinger Bill, are en-
From Glens Falls, where the Hudson River Valley begins, to Upper New York Bay, where the River flows into the Atlantic Ocean, the Hudson is about 175 miles long. A plan for the Valley should respect the extreme differences of rural and urban environments along the River.
endorsed by Regional Plan Association, we would suggest quite different action right now.

Nevertheless, we welcome the considerable interest in the Hudson demonstrated by the introduction of these bills and demonstrated as well by the recent statements of the Secretary of the Interior, the creation by New York State of a Hudson River Valley scenic and historic corridor, and the naming by the Governor of an extremely able planning commission for the Hudson.

The bills before this hearing provide that the Secretary of the Interior shall establish a National Scenic Riverway covering certain segments of the Hudson River Valley. Our experience leads us to suggest that the objectives of these bills could best be achieved by broadening their *ultimate* objectives and restricting their *initial* objectives: broadening by extending the coverage of the bills to the length of the Hudson, and narrowing, at first, by limiting the immediate authority to the establishment of a commission for the vital purpose of planning what should happen along the river. After a plan is prepared, we feel, the authority needed at various levels of government to achieve the goals of the plan can best be defined.

We would suggest, then, a five-point program for your consideration:

1. First, a physical plan for the Hudson should be prepared.

2. It should be drafted by a top-level planning staff in accordance with advice and directions of a distinguished planning commission.

3. The planning commission should represent all four levels of government concerned: (a) federal, (b) New York and New Jersey, (c) the thirteen counties of the two states which border on the River, and (d) the municipalities along the river. It should represent a truly cooperative effort.

4. The plan should cover almost the entire river, from the New York Harbor to the Adirondack State Park just below the source. It is probable, however, that for planning purposes, the river should be classified into eight separate segments.

5. As a physical plan for the river is being completed, the Commission should work out the authority and public funds that will be needed at all levels of government to achieve it. The Commission probably should continue with a skeleton staff to keep under survey the steps toward establishment of the goals it has proposed.

These points are very similar to the provisions of H.R. 9868, introduced on July 15 by Congressman Dow. As you will see, our differences with the Dow bill are small.

1. The need for a plan

It has been the experience of this Association over the thirty-six years in which Regional Plan has worked on proposals for the development of the New York Metropolitan Region that one can avoid fruitless and painful debates as to which governmental unit should do what, and with how much authority, by first deciding in general terms what needs to be done and only thereafter attempting to identify the forces needed to achieve it.

Doubtless you will hear such debates in these hearings—arguments that the federal government should not have the authority proposed here or that it extends too far geographically or legally. The fact is that we do not know what powers are needed and in whom the authority should rest until the objectives are more specific: what *should* happen to the Hudson?

At this stage, then, a very general plan is required: one that suggests the general uses that should go on along the shores of the river but leaves the detailed design to others. Such a plan would, for example, identify stretches where parks seem most appropriate; other parts that offer opportunities for housing; some areas where it would seem best to continue the farms that establish the character of that segment; and adequate space for industry where it would be efficient and appropriate.

The level of detail and type of issues the Commission might consider are best explained by illustration.

Recent studies indicate the feasibility of consolidating freight piers and rail freight yards along the lower Hudson, freeing valuable space for other uses. Probably the proposed Planning Commission need only evaluate the prospects of consolidation, press for it where it seems advisable, and then suggest the best alternative uses seen from the viewpoint of the whole lower Hudson not simply from the handful of blocks directly affected. New York City and Jersey City already are considering new waterfront uses; the Commission may find it has only to encourage full consideration of appearance, use and maximum integration of the river in the projects they contemplate.
Similarly, the Commission might propose a grand scale Appalachian National Park, of which the Hudson Highlands would be an important part. How much of the Highlands? What kind of park? The Commission could deal with this kind of question.

North of the Highlands, the shores of the river that should be preserved in their present state might be identified or, if much of the area is sufficiently similar in topography, a rough allocation of the shoreline to various purposes might be proposed with the exact locations to be decided with local governments later.

If the railroad tracks along the bank appear to the Commission to impede the best appearance and use of the river, the Commission might suggest a study of the feasibility, costs and benefits of rerouting rail traffic south of Newburgh to the Erie mainline so that some shoreline tracks can be eliminated. Similarly, questions of an expressway along the Hudson and overhead power lines near the river would have to be considered, and the monetary and aesthetic costs weighed.

Because of the tremendous growth in pleasure boating, a plan for their facilities might be advisable.

All of these are just examples of the kinds of questions and the level of detail at which the Commission should work. Further examples can be found in “Break-Through to the Hudson River,” a study by the Columbia Architectural School in 1964, and the report this year by the Hudson Highlands Committee of the New York State Council of Parks.

2. A top-level professional staff

The Hudson River Valley is one of the most splendid natural features of America. It is an extraordinary canvas; only the most skilled, the most talented vision should be imposed on it. We would be glad, along with others, to suggest to the Commission several people whom we feel might be capable of this vision.

Park experts cannot be expected to do the job alone. The plan must consider industry and navigation and housing as well. This is not just an aesthetic and recreation plan; the Hudson is too much a part of the warp and woof of the whole area to be treated as a scenic backdrop or a playland. The staff that works with the Commission must be broadly aware of population, economic, social, land-use and transportation trends and plans to produce a relevant plan.

For example, until recently, it seemed reasonable for New York City residents to escape the City for
weekend recreation. Those who try, now, as well as those who study the population trends of the suburbs in every direction know that this is increasingly difficult. New York City must, increasingly, provide its own one-day recreation facilities. This underscores the importance of recreation opportunities of the Hudson in New York City and Hudson, Bergen and Westchester Counties. But only a person well versed in the whole development of the New York Region would be likely to see that. Similarly, New York City's changing job picture—from blue collar to white collar—and its social problems, which cause and are caused by a social and economic imbalance in population, would affect the allocation of riverfront space for housing of various types. This is true in parts of Westchester and Rockland, Dutchess and Albany counties as well; the central cities' social problems must be considered.

While the staff must be experienced in dealing with all these factors in planning, they will not need to spend time doing a great deal of broad basic surveys because municipal, county, regional and state planning agencies already know a great deal about the social, economic, population and transportation projections for the area along the Hudson. Their job, mainly, will be to make sure that aesthetic, recreation and conservation considerations are given full weight and expert guidance where local and county planning already is underway.

While we will explain the desirability of planning the whole river at once, we also must observe that the Hudson River really presents eight separate planning problems. Our staff would identify these as follows. One would be the two sides of the river below 72nd Street in Manhattan and south of the Lincoln Tunnel in Hudson County, New Jersey; the rest of New York City's riverfront is a second, and the rest of the New Jersey shore to the George Washington Bridge is a third; the fourth is Westchester County, and the fifth is the New Jersey and Rockland County shore north to the Highlands; the Highlunds themselves constitute a sixth segment; the sloping agricultural land on both sides of the river north to the Albany area is a seventh; and the Albany area north to the Adirondack State Park is the eighth.

I emphasize the complexity of planning the Hudson because the desperate urge to save the river from one affront or another could spur us into errors that expert planning and calmer contemplation—that would re-
quire only about a year—could avoid.

The Association is confident that the best men and women could be obtained to serve on the Planning Commission. Governor Rockefeller’s Commission, already appointed, demonstrates that first-rate people will answer this call. And, if the Commission has character and distinction, it will be able to obtain and in fact will insist on the best possible planning staff.

3. An intergovernmental commission

Students of government as recently as thirty years ago were taught that the federal government had one set of responsibilities, the state governments another set, local governments a third. We now know, with half a glance at any of a dozen different public programs, that all levels of government are involved in almost all public programs, including—as we shall show—planning the Hudson. In addition, neighboring governmental units at the same level affect each other’s relationship to the Hudson. It is New York that suffers when West New York tops the Palisades with apartments. Railroad lines that cross many municipal and county boundaries are integral to River plans, and freight piers in one municipality cannot be considered without looking at freight piers throughout the harbor.

The federal government must be involved because of its responsibility for national parks (one is already planned on the Jersey City waterfront), its responsibility for electric power facilities, navigation, urban renewal, public and middle-income housing, highways, water pollution, agricultural programs, public transportation. Of course, since two states, not one, border the River, a plan by a single state could not do the whole job.

The state governments, on the other hand, also have major responsibilities related to the river. They are responsible for state parks and have had a hand in urban renewal, public and middle-income housing, highways, water pollution, real estate taxation, public transportation and, in New York, the State capital. Counties have acquired parks along the Hudson and have some transportation and sewage treatment responsibilities; perhaps most important, the counties have been doing some over-all planning on land uses that spill over from one municipality to another. Municipalities have basic planning and zoning powers and will be responsible for the detailed planning following the more general Hudson River plan; further, they are involved in urban renewal, housing programs, wa-

ter supply, sewage treatment and transportation. New York City already is doing a full-scale plan for Lower Manhattan, which should fit into the entire river plan.

In short, any broad and profound study of what should happen on the Hudson could not help but deal with questions which are now the responsibility of all levels of government. Some levels no doubt could be left out; their viewpoint could be ignored. But we are sure that once it is clear to those working for the best development of this river that the questions to be decided cut across responsibilities of all these levels of government, there will be quick agreement that the Commission should represent all their interests.

As you see, we are more insistent than the Dow bill that all levels of government should be represented.

Large apartment buildings are being constructed rapidly on the top and face of the Palisades Cliffs.

Representation of all levels of government seems the surest way to resolve the two basic different points of view on the river: that of the visitor to the Hudson and that of the resident or worker along its shores. Throughout the planning process, these two points of view will be a little different and both must be accommodated. Representation on the Commission of all levels of government would assure that both interests are considered and in proportion to the intensity of their concern. The Hudson’s close neighbors will be represented by all Commission members—by municipal representatives because they are local citizens, by their county and by their state and nation; people nearby but not living along the River also will have county, state and national representation; those somewhat further away will have spokesmen for their state and national interests; and the whole country will have its national spokesmen because this is a scenic heritage of all.
4. A plan for the whole river

We have learned in planning matters to take the wind of public opinion at the full. While the public is alert to the need, let us plan the whole river.

It may be true that some stretches of shoreline are not going to change for many years and might be ignored for a time. But it is not at all clear, without a total look at the river, exactly which areas are under pressure and which are not. Who would have predicted five years ago that there would be a fight over a power plant at Storm King and over an Expressway along the Westchester shore? So, planning for even the rural parts of the river must go forward.

In any case, a plan for one part of the river would not work well if the rest of the river were not considered. There is no point in planning beaches downstream if pollution continues upstream, and a depollution program will affect and be affected by land use plans. Further, it would be fruitless to spend heavily to renew poorly developed waterfront while upstream a virgin stretch is ruined; it would have been far cheaper to protect the natural open land than to renew what was badly developed. Also, the allocation of riverfront for various uses—particularly for industry in the lower reaches and for all kinds of urban uses in the upper half—could best be planned as a whole. Scattering industrial uses or concentrating them, for example, could be one of the important questions to be determined by planning. The answer will affect all uses of the river and its appearance as well as transportation and access to it. Another river-long question is how much total public park land is needed and how much public access to the water.

So, it seems highly advisable that the planning process cover the length of the river. In this, again, we differ with the Dow bill provisions.

5. Achieving the recommendations of the plan

As a second part of the plan, the Commission should recommend allocation of responsibility for assuring that the plan is fulfilled. Right now, municipalities along the river have the power to control land use. All levels of government have or contemplate parks along the shore. The federal government has exclusive control over navigation (which includes permission to create "fill" land along the banks). The federal government regulates, to some degree, electric power facilities. The states control over-all real estate tax policy, which influences how the municipalities use the land. Either landowners take the initiative that develops land in one way or another or business and government entrepreneurs seek out sites for various purposes, from factories to universities.

The first half of the plan—what the Hudson could look like at its best and how it could best serve the most people—is, in effect, advice to the people and institutions whose decisions determine what actually happens. The second half of the plan should consider the leverage which is needed to get the decision-makers to follow the plan generally.

In some cases, all that is necessary is to put the government units or landowners or entrepreneurs in a position so that their enlightened self-interest fits the plan. For example, municipalities along the shore might feel they desperately need the riverfront for industry to strengthen their tax base, but if real estate tax pressures could be relieved or if tax returns from industry that is located properly along the Hudson were distributed fairly to municipalities where other facilities might be better located, everyone may well go along with the plan. Similarly, landowners have a constitutional right to retain the value of their property, but public purchases of development rights or scenic easements might satisfy all parties. These might be federal, state, county or municipal easements, depending on their size and purpose.

Certain parts of the plan probably will require federal dollars and will fit into the evolving national park program; other parts might seem more suitable
for state, county or municipal parks. Again, the second part of the plan might suggest appropriate responsibility.

Finally, transportation to serve the proposed uses of the riverfront must be considered. Dozens of agencies are involved in transportation.

Recommendations of the action needed to fulfill the plan will depend upon what is happening and is likely to happen without any planning, on the one hand, and where the opportunities are greatest to make the right things happen, on the other. One example of soon-to-be-lost opportunity is the $525 million World Trade Center about to rise near the Hudson but without any planned relation to it. It could be a much greater project if it were designed with access to the river. Across the river from Manhattan is an example of an immediate and most serious threat: the rash of apartment building on former parkland defacing the Palisades—among the most famous cliffs in America—seen by more people than any other. Both potential threat and great opportunity are offered by the proposal to rebuild the West Side Highway in Manhattan. This certainly should not be done without reference to a plan for that part of the Hudson.

So the second half of the plan should propose a strategy to achieve the first half, including priorities for protection and improvement. Because the plan is likely to be carried out over a long period of time by many different organizations and levels of government, it would seem advisable for the Commission or some similar group to lay on with a small staff to encourage action and work out obstacles in the plan’s achievement.

This is similar to our Association’s history. After the first Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs was published in 1929, the planning organization was transformed into the Regional Plan Association, with responsibility for promoting the plan’s recommendations.

The next steps

We therefore urge that arrangements be made to bring together the major parties at interest, particularly the Secretary of the Interior and the two governors. As a first step, it is they who must establish the legal and financial framework for an intergovernmental Planning Commission.

Second, the Commission must be appointed in such a way that its members truly represent, and are felt by residents to represent, local, county, state and national interests in the Hudson.

Third, the Commission must have a top-quality staff. We estimate that it will need five professional staff members and some part-time consultants, a budget of about $250,000, and a year’s time to produce the plan we have described.

The staff would survey what is now on the shore and transportation plans and trends along the shore and then set out the fundamental issues that must be decided. Many of these issues have been mentioned above. The Commission would decide the issues generally as a basic guide to the staff. At each stage in the plans, the staff recommendations would be considered and approved by the Commission or returned to the staff for revision or further information.

Fourth, the Commission should arrange for a great deal of public discussion of the plan before it is in final form so that public response can be taken into consideration.

Finally, the Commission should initiate action following the second half of the plan, which suggests what powers or shifts in taxes or other arrangements might be necessary to achieve the plan. The Commission and a small administrative staff might stay on duty to see that action is completed.

We hope these steps can be taken promptly.

**STATEMENT**

by Albert W. Merck for Regional Plan Association before the Hudson River Valley Commission meeting, July 29, 1965

Regional Plan Association participated in the hearings before the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation last weekend. After hearing and reading the testimony to the congressional subcommittee, we have concluded that there is broad agreement on all but two points. We feel that here today we might begin to bridge the relatively small gap on those two points.

Everyone concerned about the Hudson River now appears to agree that:

1. Planning the river should come first, before a permanent assignment of authority to control development. In other words, let’s agree on what should happen along the river and then decide how to assure that it will happen—who is to do what.

2. The federal, state and local governments all have a stake in what happens to the river and somehow should be involved in the planning.
Plan for the Hudson

After many years of neglect, suddenly the Hudson River Valley has become the object of much solicitude. The protracted controversy over the Consolidated Edison Company's plan to build a hydroelectric power plant on Storm King Mountain generated a great deal of interest in the subject. Although conservationists and nature lovers lost that battle before the Federal Power Commission, they succeeded in calling attention to the woeful absence of legal protection for a great national heritage.

Early this year Representative Richard L. Ottinger introduced a bill that would have created the Hudson Highlands National Scenic Riverway, between Beacon and New York City. Described as a new kind of regional conservation and development plan, it provided for federal assistance to state and local governments in setting up park areas within the Riverway. Senators Javits and Kennedy gave bipartisan sponsorship to a similar measure in March and other bills along the same line have been introduced in the House.

Governor Rockefeller has rejected the idea of Federal intervention from the beginning. Last month he asked the Legislature to create the Hudson Valley Scenic and Historic Corridor, running all the way from the Adirondacks to the Hudson River. Contending that there was no place and no need for the Federal Government to "isolate the river," the Governor persuaded the Legislature, virtually without debate or opposition, to create the corridor and a commission to make plans for it.

Now the Regional Plan Association, out of its long experience with fractious debates over which governmental unit should do what, has offered a valuable suggestion: that a plan for the full length of the Hudson should be prepared by a top-level professional planning staff, under the direction of a distinguished planning commission. The commission would consist of representatives of the Federal Government, the states of New York and New Jersey, the thirteen counties in the two states that border it, and the local municipalities along the river's banks.

The Federal Government must be included because of its responsibilities for national parks—one of which is now planned for Ellis Island and the Jersey City waterfront—for electric power facilities, for navigation, urban renewal, public and middle-income housing, water pollution, agricultural programs and public transportation, all of which are elements of the Hudson Valley's problems. Since the river is the boundary between two states, obviously one state cannot solve all its problems.

Governor Rockefeller and the Hudson River Valley Commission should find it possible to accept these cogent arguments and to work out a plan for cooperation with the Federal Government. The state of New Jersey and the local governmental entities involved. The Hudson River Valley, with all its scenic and historic treasure, is worthy of the combined efforts of all who would preserve it unspoiled for future generations.

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Hudson's First Need

NEW JERSEY has more than a neighborly interest in pending federal legislation to preserve the scenic beauties of the Hudson Valley. Although New York sometimes appears to regard itself as the sole proprietor, 25 miles or so of the Hudson's western shore are in New Jersey.

One bill, by Rep. Ottinger of Pleasantville, would create a Hudson Highlands National Scenic Waterway, extending one mile inland on both sides, from the Bronx to Beacon. A supplementary measure by Rep. Ryan of Manhattan would extend the national waterway from the Bronx south to the river's mouth.

Since the Bronx and Manhattan are opposite Bergen and Hudson counties, both bills would affect New Jersey's interests, to an extent not yet desired by the GOv. Rockefeller has attempted to forestall federal action by creating a Hudson Valley Scenic and Historic Corridor. From the mouth of the river to the Adirondacks, he has appointed a commission empowered to acquire thousands of acres for parks and to build scenic roads. The governor's case against federal intrusion has merit; it would be stronger had he moved earlier.

The Regional Plan Association has suggested this jurisdictional dispute be resolved by the appointment of a commission to draw up a master plan for the valley. The commission would represent the federal government, New York and New Jersey, their counties that border the Hudson and the municipalities along the river.

The association would have the planning commission go beyond the recreation, conservation and scenic concerns to which the Rockefeller Corridor and the Ottinger Waterway are limited. It observes that industrial development, river transportation, port facilities and housing also require consideration. To these should be added sanitation.

A Congressional subcommittee which has been holding hearings on the Ottinger bill had a horrifying look at what man has done to despoil not only the shores but the river itself. Interior Secretary Udall last year called the Hudson an "open sewer." The committee discovered what he meant as they cruised through oil slicks, dead fish, garbage, detergent foam, beer cans and other debris and watched raw sewage pour into its waters.

There is room for differences of opinion about how and by whom the Hudson legislation is to be protected and its grandeur preserved, but there can be no dispute about what it needs first. To be cleaned up.

The Newark Evening News
July 27, 1965

The New York Herald Tribune
August 2, 1965

Hudson Planning Comes First

The current controversy about the Hudson River's future is over whether the Federal government or New York State should have controlling authority over beneficial development. Everybody is agreed on the need for wise planning. But Congressman Ottinger and other lawmakers contend that national intervention is immediately essential. They want to set up a National Scenic Riverway to stop further ravishment. Governor Rockefeller disputes this; he argues that the State Hudson River Valley Commission is quite able to stand up for conservation and the public interest.

It's splendid, of course, to hear so much concern expressed. If the Hudson could speak, the majestic river polluted and scarred by decades of neglect might well ask why so late.

The dispute over governmental authority misses the point. The nation and New York State are both involved, and so are New Jersey and all the municipalities and every private interest along the river. All of us should think about equal participation in planning, to agree first on what is to be done about beauty and business alike. And then in common mind we ought to be able to settle on controls. In short, policy-making is not the exclusive property of any one government.

The Regional Plan Association urges Governor Rockefeller to meet with Secretary Udall and Governor Hughes of New York for the establishment of an intergovernmental planning commission of the nation's best experts. This makes sense; it increases the best for the Hudson's future. That's what everybody wants. Where general goals are already agreed upon, the ultimate effectiveness must depend on all parties working together. This is both fair and essential.

Let's begin with the planning at once, and from that point of agreement the matter of authority should become one of co-operation in the same desire.

—1965, New York Herald Tribune Inc. reprinted by permission
3. Industry, commerce, housing and transportation all must be considered in the planning along with aesthetics and recreation. This is no wild river to be kept pristine. This is an urban river, whose beauty must be considered, but as part of the daily lives of several million nearby residents as well as visitors to its shores.

Regional Plan now seeks agreement among all who are concerned about the Hudson's future on the remaining two points, on which there is disagreement.

First, since all levels of government are involved in the many issues to be resolved in planning the Hudson, all levels of government should participate on an equal basis in the planning. This is important for several reasons.

First, a plan is not an architect's blueprint, which—once presented—will be followed precisely under the aegis of an all-powerful government agency. A plan is a set of recommendations to the many decision-makers who will determine what actually does happen along the Hudson. Keeping federal representatives off the planning commission for the Hudson does not exclude federal decision-making about the river. Federal agencies still have power to choose National Park sites, to back or not back urban renewal programs, to allow or not allow filling along the shore, power plants along the shore, interstate highways along the shore. Control of navigable streams is one of the major powers specifically exercised by the federal government. One can exclude federal participation in planning only at the risk of excluding federal participation in making the plan come true.

Furthermore, full participation of federal representatives is fair as well as expedient. There is inevitably some conflict between what those who live and work along the river want and what those who visit the river want. By including representatives of municipal, county, state and federal governments, we would assure representation of all concerned. This is a national resource and all Americans are concerned. But we assure more representation for those who live nearby and whose lives are touched by the river most.

A great deal was said at the congressional hearings about state government being closer to the people than federal government. But the real question is: "Which people?" More than the citizens of New York and New Jersey are involved—the people we encourage to visit this country as tourists, other Americans visiting the Northeast. Everyone praised the Hudson as a national resource, worthy of the attention of the whole country.

The fact is that this river is so fraught with national, two-state, thirteen county, and hundreds of municipal considerations that there seems no way to arrive at both a fair and effective plan without including all their considerations and following those considerations in the conclusions.

The second point of disagreement is whether some authority should be established to curb action along the river pending completion of the plan. Our position, we think, makes this question irrelevant. We feel that we could complete the plan before any legislation might be approved. We feel that if Governor Rockefeller, Governor Hughes and Secretary Udall met, they could establish the commission and finance the necessary staff without additional legislation and that the commission and staff could complete a plan within a year. In the meantime, if a top-flight commission and staff were working on the plan, there would be a presumption against any action that was not unanimously acceptable or clearly so pressing that it had to be pushed through before the plan could be completed. Each issue would have to be decided on its own merits, with the presumption for delay if possible.

As a resident of New Jersey, I believe it would be unfortunate to see New York plan for the river alone. For 21 miles we share the banks of the Hudson. The extensive commercial activities provide a challenge in finding the proper mix of public and private use, for housing and recreation as well as piers and warehouses. But the banks are also in a period of change: railroad yards are being abandoned, others combined; and pier use is shifting to Port Newark and Brooklyn. These changes provide us with great opportunities for breaking through to the river.

People entering via New York harbor see both banks. Depredations along the Palisades mar the view from New York. Both sides contribute to the pollution and both sides will benefit from depollution.

We have reason to believe that Governor Hughes and Secretary Udall would meet with Governor Rockefeller to begin a plan for the Hudson. We urge you to encourage the Governor to agree to a commission that is truly intergovernmental, truly representative of all levels of government, and staffed by experts in all phases of urban and resource planning—the most imaginative planners in the country. The Hudson deserves no less.
THE LOWER HUDSON
The Need for Immediate Attention

The eighteen miles of the Hudson between the George Washington and Narrows Bridges deserve immediate and intensive planning attention. What happens there will be seen and felt by more people than what is done along all the rest of the River. Furthermore, in the crowded core of the Region, open space and natural beauty are especially valuable.

And just now, the use of the entire Hudson waterfront between the bridges is in flux.

Declining activities and departures

Rail freight tonnage moving through waterfront yards declined 30% from 1950 to 1960. The effect of this is obvious on the New Jersey side of the River, where large railroad yards lie idle or under-used. Much of this land will become available as the railroads merge, consolidate facilities and continue shifting to "piggy-back" and all-rail routes to accelerate freight movements. Several large plots of railroad land, totaling over 500 acres along almost four miles of waterfront, may soon be available in New Jersey. Later mergers and consolidations could substantially increase the amount of land available.

Industrial land, too, is subject to change. In recent years, 4 of the 14 large industrial firms on the New Jersey waterfront have departed; 2 more have announced plans to leave soon. Many factors contribute to these departures. There is decreased dependency on the river for the movement of goods and poor accessibility by car and truck, little space for expansion, and increasing taxes levied by the declining, needy municipalities.

The same reasons which have caused established industries to depart apparently have discouraged new ones from locating on the waterfront. Jersey City, trying to attract industry to its vacant riverfront area, has been able to put into productive use only 60 acres of some 800 it acquired from railroads during the past twenty years.

Across the River, cargo-handling activities have been moving from the Manhattan waterfront to newer, more efficient facilities elsewhere in the port. Brooklyn and Newark Bay have increased their share of the port's cargo-handling operations while Manhattan's share has steadily lessened. This trend is neither surprising nor alarming; 75 percent of the cargo unloaded at Man-
hattan’s waterfront is immediately trans-shipped from the Island, mostly by truck, through the slowest traffic in the Region. Furthermore, Manhattan real estate is expensive, and modern cargo handling—particularly containerized operations—requires more back-up space than the piers have now. The Manhattan waterfront can be used much more valuably for a great passenger ship terminal, housing, restaurants, and parks complementing the increasing office and other high-density activities on the Island. Relocation of Manhattan cargo facilities, therefore, should be encouraged generally, though some are still needed and must be modernized.

Current projects

Private and public interests recently have invested or are preparing to invest over $1.5 billion in projects on both sides of the Lower Hudson. The largest is the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan, estimated to cost $525 million. On the other side of the River, high-rise apartment buildings are going up on the Palisades—piecemeal fashion—often cutting into, dominating and destroying the form and beauty of this unique cliff.

Other large projects, imminent or underway, are: Liberty State Park, a 400-acre tract behind Liberty and Ellis Islands; a sewage treatment plant on the Manhattan waterfront along Riverside Drive at 137th Street, ($60 million); Litho City over the New York Central yards at 60th Street, Manhattan ($175 million); West Shore High School, Manhattan (about $10 million); new and improved cargo and sight-seeing piers, Manhattan ($15 million). About $22 million will be spent for improvement of the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (H & M) system. The West Side Highway and Henry Hudson Parkway are to be completely rebuilt ($160 million). Governor Rockefeller has proposed large-scale housing plans for the riverfront in lower Manhattan.

Issues and conflicts

All of these projects will affect each other functionally, visually and economically whether they are coordinated
or not. Coordination and over-all planning should precede and guide the huge investments anticipated on this waterfront.

There are several proposed projects where location or design might conflict with full enjoyment of the River. Though in the net, some of these projects may prove advisable, the possible damage to the other uses along the River should be considered.

1. The West Side Highway. An elevated highway encourages the City to keep facing inward rather than toward the Hudson.

Litho City, the Passenger Liner Terminal, Gansevoort Urban Renewal Project, Washington Market Urban Renewal Project and the World Trade Center all would be substantially enhanced if the West Side Highway were reconstructed in such a way that it would not be a barrier between them and the River.

Recently published plans propose instead to enlarge this barrier and pave over parts of Riverside Park.

2. Palisades Cliffs. Indiscriminate development of the top and face of these cliffs is destroying a famous American natural resource. Municipally owned park land has been sold for development. At Colony Estates, Edgewater, New Jersey, proposed high residential towers could obscure a particularly beautiful part of the Palisades.

3. North River Pollution Control Plant. As presently designed, this facility, seven blocks long by 500 feet wide, could damage the appearance of the River, which, paradoxically, it is intended to improve.

4. Palisades Freeway. A freeway from the tunnels to the George Washington Bridge could, unless designed as an integral landscape component, violate the Palisades and make the waterfront inaccessible.

5. Hoboken. The historic center of this town is threatened by the planned enlargement of cargo handling activities.

6. Lighterage Terminal. A large facility of this sort at Morris Canal Basin would separate Liberty State Park from Exchange Place in Jersey City, two areas that would benefit from a strong connection.

Opening access to the River by replacing obsolete goods handling facilities with increasingly desired parks and outdoor activities in a river setting and creating less cluttered views of the spectacular landscape—New Jersey's cliffs and Manhattan's skyline—are possible if the Region plans for them.

Philip Issiel and Carlisle Towery

STATE REPORT

State meadowlands development plan recommended

"...To permit the development of the meadowlands as it is now proceeding in an undefined and haphazard fashion would be to dissipate the potential of what has been called the most valuable piece of real estate on earth,"...the New Jersey Commission to Study Meadowland Development concluded last June.

"...The best way to insure the orderly development of the meadows is through the trusteeship of a strong state agency," an authority with broad powers to plan, finance, and execute a reclamation and development program," the Commission added.

The report is before the Legislature for action. A "lame-duck" legislature will meet this year, a new legislature next year.

The Commission recognized that no development plan could succeed without solving the problem of infirm title to portions of the Meadowlands which recent court decisions had declared state property. Development has been slowed because lending institutions and title companies are reluctant to make loans or insure titles. The Commission proposed procedures for delineating the extent of state ownership and adjudicating conflicting claims expeditiously.

A California consultant firm, Bechtel Corporation, particularly warned against leaving development to the thirteen municipalities, even though they are joined in the intermunicipal Meadowlands Redevelopment Agency (MRDA). Each municipality, in effect, could veto a plan that best served the whole, Bechtel noted.

The Commission agreed:

The Bechtel study has confirmed our beliefs that present efforts lack both the coordination and direction that is essential for a satisfactory Meadowlands development, and that the present pace of planning activity is too leisurely to prevent private, piecemeal reclamation from causing irreparable harm to Meadowlands potential. Moreover, any expectation that an intermunicipal agency, such as MRDA, is the appropriate body to plan for and carry out a reclamation scheme seems to us a highly unrealistic assumption—for all of the reasons stated in the Bechtel report. Unless that agency were endowed with powers not depending on the concurrence of the local communities, their differences in political and economic views, their quite disparate stakes in the outcome of Meadowlands development and their frequent turnover of elected officials, would almost certainly paralyze the agency from maintaining a continuous, broadly-visioned program. In their off-the-record discussions with members of the Commission, local officials have corroborated this view, despite their nominal support of MRDA. [Emphasis added.]

The Commission concluded that full scale reclama
tion required "unified direction with the planning, financing and execution powers, the personnel and the breadth of vision, to make sense of Meadowland development."

Regional Plan Association's New Jersey Committee had issued similar recommendations in 1968.

The proposed Authority would be organized like the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, composed of three members appointed by the Governor for staggered five year terms, the appointments subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. One member would reside within a Meadowlands community. A Coordination and Technical Advisory Board, named by the Authority, would represent the various public and private parties with a stake in the Meadows' future.

The Authority could issue bonds, receive state and federal funds, acquire, hold and dispose of property, regulate the use of property, make contracts and construct projects, and levy and collect special assessments upon land owners benefitting from reclamation.

In-lieu-of-tax payments on state-owned land should be made to municipalities, the Commission recommended, and the revenue should be distributed "on an equitable basis to reflect the extent of Meadowlands within each community and the cost of providing local services to the reclaimed area."

This means that municipal revenues resulting from state-owned property should be distributed on the basis of the percentage of the total land under the Authority that falls into each municipality, regardless of where the revenue-producing facilities are located—with adjustments for the municipal service costs attendant on the installations in each municipality.

This is a key to over-all planning of the Meadowlands since it frees the planning agency from concern for locating "tax profitable" installations according to tax need or tax justice. With distribution of in-lieu-of-tax payments on the basis of each municipality's area in the Meadowlands, one municipality can get all parkland, another all industry, a third all housing, if that seems the best plan, without losing a fair share of municipal revenue.

To apply university knowledge to urban problems

The Russell Sage Foundation and Regional Plan Association last month announced a new $100,000 three-year program to increase the application of scholarly knowledge to the solution of urban problems.

The new program will emphasize closer communication between researchers in the relevant social and physical sciences and persons actively working to eliminate social problems in the New York Region and other metropolitan areas. These will include local, state and federal government officials as well as representatives of civic organizations, businessmen and independent professionals.

The program also aims at encouraging cooperation on urban research among universities in the Region and among scholars approaching related problems from different fields of knowledge. Aid would be provided scholars in obtaining funds for joint research projects.

The new program is based on recommendations made to Regional Plan Association in an earlier project on Urban Research and Education (the Perloff-Cohen report) which pointed to the lag in university research and education related to urban problems and noted the availability of research funds for well-conceived projects.

An Inter-University Committee on Urban Affairs was convened by Regional Plan, made up of representatives of 22 presidents of major universities in the Region: Adelphi, City University of New York, Columbia, Connecticut, Cornell, Drew, Fairleigh Dickinson, Fordham, Hofstra, Long Island University, Newark College of Engineering, New School for Social Research, New York University, Pratt Institute, Princeton, Rutgers, St. John's, Sarah Lawrence, Seton Hall, State University of New York, Stevens Institute of Technology and Yale. This committee urged Regional Plan to try to obtain financing for the new project, which Russell Sage is now providing.
Legal Aspects of Planned Unit Residential Development. Urban Land Institute, 1200 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 1965. 96 pp. $6.00

This report is the third in a series exploring new forms of residential development sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders and the Urban Land Institute. Its concern is the search for flexible zoning and planning controls which will permit the building of varied, large-scale residential developments. (This idea was first suggested in a model planning enabling law published by the Committee on the Regional Plan, RPA's predecessor, in 1925.) Part I is an analysis by Jan Krasnowiecki of existing and proposed laws and administrative procedures; Part II presents a model state enabling act and an illustrative ordinance with commentary.


This is a book to lift the scales from the eyes of laymen and urban designer alike. Chermayeff and Alexander give the problem of urban design a radical re-examination, addressing themselves to the nature of problem-solving itself and to the immutable—although currently neglected—human needs which must inform good design. The authors propose designs to restore an equilibrium between community and privacy which they feel has been disrupted in today's housing types. [Caroline S. Mack]

Pratt Guide: A Citizens' Handbook of Housing, Planning & Urban Renewal Procedures in New York City by Robert Alpern. 1965. 318 pp. $3.00 from Planning Department, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, N.Y.

This book is dedicated to the "struggle for environmental excellence" by the citizens of New York. It provides them with a commendably complete handbook on where and when to mobilize their efforts. To help them affect decisions at critical points on planning, zoning, neighborhood character and appearance, schools, traffic and transportation, housing and urban renewal, information is given on administrative procedures, public hearings, etc. for each of these topics.

Sarah Smith Hasbrouck

Man in Metropolis by Louis B. Schlissel is available free to Regional Plan members. It is a 432 page book with 350 photographs published by Doubleday November 19, showing how the decisions of real people (whose real names and stories are used) contribute to the forces of metropolitan development in the New York Region and are affected by these forces. For your free copy, write Miss Joan Luster, Regional Plan Association, 230 West 41st Street, New York 10036. Non-members may order the book from Regional Plan at $7.50.