

## RPA PURSUES BROWNFIELDS RECLAMATION

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RPA's Third Regional Plan was based on an intensive analysis of urban and regional development policies and plans in other great world centers, including London, Tokyo, Paris and Berlin. It became clear that reclamation of brownfield sites is a focal point of development plans in all of these cities.

RPA has initiated a Metropolitan Brownfields Initiative to facilitate reclamation of the region's vast inventory of bypassed and derelict brownfields sites. Its objective is to review New Jersey's experience in reclaiming contaminated sites and to promote and expedite brownfields redevelopment throughout the Tri-State Metropolitan Region. Building on this

work, RPA, with a grant from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, is convening a national brownfields conference in May, which includes panel discussions during the Regional Assembly, site visits and production of a publication documenting the conference proceedings. The Initiative is identifying a critical path for successful redevelopment projects and reviewing state legislation designed to promote these sites. It will provide a background paper to guide discussion of the conference, providing analysis of proposed tax abatements, liability reform, and public grants to local governments. RPA's perspective—which puts brownfield redevelopment projects into a regional development context—will provide the basis for consideration of the success or failure of public incentives, community planning efforts and development strategies.

Brownfields are former industrial sites, frequently located in close proximity to major transportation nodes and centers of commercial and industrial activity. EPA defines brownfields as "abandoned, idled or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination." There are more than 100,000 leaking under-



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Successful brownfields redevelopment projects, such as Daybreak Express in Newark, NJ, are critical to realizing RPA's goals for the region.

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ground fuel tanks on former industrial sites included in the government's registry of toxic sites in the Region. In certain cases, these sites may pose a threat to people who live nearby. But many of these sites have limited contamination problems. They are simply eyesores that undercut the viability of urban communities, limiting their quality of life, property values and employment opportunities. Making these sites productive once again promises to bring new opportunities to urban neighborhoods blighted with derelict land, and to clean areas that are being neglected and left to decay.

In 1991, RPA initiated a project to determine the location and extent of bypassed and contaminated sites in Union County. This area was chosen because of its concentration of older industrial land and access to transportation systems which are characteristic of many of the Region's urban areas. The inventory identified more than 185 sites, totaling over 2,500 acres of re-developable land. One-tenth of this land would be sufficient to accommodate Union county's projected employment growth to the year 2010. The inventory also found that the sites were larger than expected, averaging 14 acres each, and cleaner than expected.

Consequently, RPA helped shape legislation that became the 1992 New Jersey Industrial Sites Reclamation Act (ISRA), which provided for differential clean up standards for residential and non-residential reuse, allowed for on-site non permanent remedies such as capping, provided a fund for hazardous waste cleanup and allowed for

self-monitored remedial investigations. To demonstrate the efficacy of ISRA, RPA promoted and helped expedite permitting for the \$2.5 million Orion reclamation project on a former landfill on Elizabeth's waterfront now being developed as a regional retail center. The project generated a public-private task force of community leaders, the developer and public officials. As a result, all permits were issued in less than a year.

RPA is now working with all levels of government—from local to federal—to create and implement regulations and incentives to address these issues. RPA met with a seven-member Congressional coordinating committee which discussed brownfields as an economic development strategy, completed an analysis of New York State's pertinent environmental laws, and participated in several EPA Brownfields pilot programs. In Newark, RPA is chairing the Legislative and Regulatory Reform subcommittee of the Brownfields pilot program which is helping implement an "Environmental Opportunity Zone," where businesses may deduct remediation expenses from municipal property taxes. The Committee also presented testimony on proposed legislation which was signed by Governor Whitman on January 6, 1998. The final bill incorporated many aspects of RPA's testimony, including issuance of a "covenant not to sue," third-party protection, and other provisions.

While the bill provided much necessary aide for brownfields redevelopment in New Jersey, it also raised new issues that remain unresolved, mostly that of selecting remedial actions and community involvement. DEP

regulations still require that any site redevelopment receives community input. Meaningful and productive community involvement in brownfields redevelopment remains an elusive goal, requiring further investigation and debate. •

*For information about brownfields, contact Tom Wright at 973-623-1133 or e-mail him at tkwright@aol.com.*

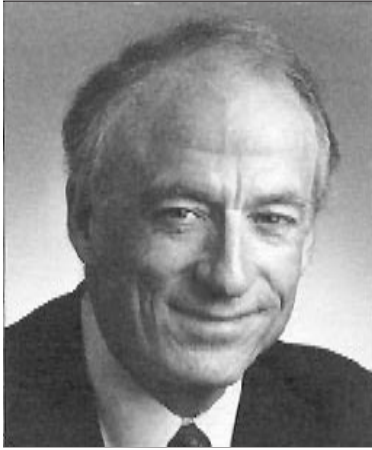
### NEW PUBLICATIONS

**Building A Metropolitan Greensward Report.** Two generations of suburban sprawl and urban disinvestment has dramatically altered the landscape and the communities of the Tri-State Region. Continuing exurban development at a rate of more than 30,000 acres a year threatens large areas of open land and environmental resources at the Region's outer edge, more than 50 miles from Manhattan. At the same time, the fiscal imbalances resulting from this decentralized growth have helped contribute to the deterioration of urban parkland and other public spaces. A new report from RPA summarizes our proposal for a Metropolitan Greensward that safeguards the Region's water supplies and recreational opportunities and shapes its future growth by integrating revitalized urban parks and open spaces, protected large-scale landscape resources, and an established regional network of greenways. The report was produced with the help of the USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry Northeastern Area, the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, Fairchild Publications, ABC, Inc. and The Walt Disney Company.

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**Government Actions on Climate Change in the Metropolitan NY/NJ/CT Region: A Preliminary Survey.** Who affects—and is affected by—climate change? RPA invited a sample of regional, state and local government agencies to indicate what they are doing to mitigate, adapt to or find opportunity in potential climate change impacts. Highlights include findings from agencies in transportation, land use, construction, energy use, water supply, coastal change, finance and insurance, forestry and demography.

*For information on ordering either of these publications, call 212-253-2727 x309, or visit our website at [www.rpa.org](http://www.rpa.org).*

## GUEST COLUMN: Robert R. Kiley on the Region's Capacity for



After five consecutive years of job growth, the New York region is in a buoyant mood. Wall Street continues to boom, industries ranging from technology to tourism are expanding, and there are visible signs of renewal in places as diverse as Times Square and downtown Newark. New York City added more jobs in 1997 than in any year since 1984, and the economy appears poised to continue its growth in 1998. While much of the Region's expansion is due to a healthy national economy, we are also benefiting from improvements in local business conditions, most notably reductions in crime and tax rates that improved our image as a place to live and work.

In spite of this momentum, there are serious questions concerning the Region's capacity to sustain a robust rate of growth. Anyone who witnessed the sharp decline that followed our economic boom in the 1980's understands how quickly fortunes can be reversed. Perhaps more importantly, the Region has been underperforming the national economy for decades. Part of the reason is that we are a dense, high-cost region with less room to expand than areas in the South and West. However, other older metropolitan areas, including Chicago, Boston and Detroit, have managed to grow at a sub-

stantially faster pace during the recent expansion.

There are other reasons why we cannot accept relatively slow growth as an unalterable condition. New York City and other cities in the Region have higher unemployment rates, receive larger numbers of immigrants and must find jobs for more public assistance recipients under the Federal welfare-to-work law than most other cities. Without a large increase in the number of job opportunities, we have little chance of reducing unemployment and absorbing a sufficient number of former welfare recipients into the labor market.

The question that the Region now needs to address is how to create the conditions that will lift our underlying rate of growth. Two critical issues are how we can create the physical capacity for growth, and how we can provide enough skilled workers to maintain a robust expansion.

Creating the physical capacity for growth will require new investment in infrastructure systems, particularly transportation. It should be no surprise that we have been unable to keep pace with other regions when we have added almost no new capacity to our transportation system since the Verrazano Bridge was completed in 1964. Unlike other regions, however, the objective of new transportation capacity should not be the outward expansion of the metropolitan area. We are running out of room for growth at the exurban edge of the region. Rather, we need to focus investments on expanding the capacity of the system to handle growth in currently developed areas. This can include improving access to areas with underutilized office

space, such as lower Manhattan. It also means addressing glaring gaps in service, such as connecting the Long Island Railroad to Grand Central Terminal, that weaken the competitive position of the Region.

A second physical capacity constraint is the Region's low rate of new housing production. Housing construction has been anemic in the Region for decades, and our level of production in the 1990's is considerably lagging the rate of construction in the 1980's. The results are spiraling costs and limited housing choices that place an enormous burden on companies trying to retain or recruit high-quality staff. Unlike transportation, where the problem is finding the means to make the necessary public investments, here the issue is to address the legal and regulatory barriers that make housing construction a difficult and expensive proposition.

In addition to retaining and attracting skilled workers, the Region needs to do a better job of preparing young people for tomorrow's workplace. This is a complex issue requiring improved management of public school systems, investments in facilities and staff development, and sustained commitment from both public and private sectors. The business community's role in this effort is limited but important. It can provide guidance in creating management reforms, and it can provide incentives for improved performance, such as the performance bonuses for teachers and principals that will be provided by members of the New York City Partnership.

Addressing these challenges will not be easy, but neither is it impossible. It will require finding the means to invest in ne-

glected infrastructure, but if other regions are accepting this challenge, then we must as well. It will also require finding the will to restructure long-standing regulatory systems or institutional relationships. However, the recent reform of the New York City school system's management and governance structure demonstrates that we are capable of these actions. Our current task is to keep our optimism from slipping into complacency, and to use our accomplishments to demonstrate that we are capable of even larger improvements. •

*Robert R. Kiley is President & CEO of the NYC Partnership & Chamber of Commerce and is on RPA's Board of Directors.*

What do you think of our newsletter? We invite you to send your comments. Write us, or send us an e-mail to [karen@rpa.org](mailto:karen@rpa.org).

## RPA Instrumental in Congestion Reduction Plan for Connecticut

Connecticut Governor John Rowland recently announced a five year, 15-point plan to reduce traffic congestion in the heavily traveled southwestern part of the state, which includes I-95, the Merritt Parkway and U.S. Route 1. The governor emphasized that the plan is based on providing more commuter choices, adding, "Commuters need more options from their employers, and the state needs to do a better job of working with the private sector to make these options more viable." The plan is based on recommendations from the Coastal Corridor Coalition (CCC), a group of business, civic and environmental organizations, including RPA, that is focusing on transportation problems and solutions.

RPA has been working with Coalition members, other transportation stakeholders and the Connecticut Department of Transportation

on strategies to reduce traffic on major arteries in the corridor by five per cent within the next five years. RPA Senior Fellow of Transportation Jeff Zupan and Connecticut Director Helen Speck have been active participants in this effort, along with Connecticut Committee members Joseph McGee, Ruth Sims and Emil Frankel.

Governor Rowland's plan relies entirely on transportation demand management strategies, such as increasing train and bus ridership, ridesharing, van pooling, telecommuting and flex time. Its implementation will be overseen by a working group reporting directly to the governor and consisting of representatives from state and local government, commuter organizations, the CCC and the trucking industry. •

*RPA has received the following new grants:*

**Research Foundation of the City University of New York**, \$90,000 for Gowanus Tunnel, Phase I . . . **Altman Foundation**, \$50,000 and **J.P. Morgan & Co.**, \$50,000 for the Building Leadership for Community Revitalization program . . . **New York Community Trust**, \$50,000, **The JM Kaplan Fund**, \$50,000, and the **Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust**, \$10,000 for Governors Island . . . **Philip Morris Companies**, \$10,000 for the Long Island East End Initiative.

*The following companies continued their support by making Leadership grants:*

**Deloitte & Touche**, \$25,000 . . . **General Electric Company**, \$25,000 . . . **Public Service Electric & Gas**, \$25,000.

*The following contributions were received toward a special campaign to help build RPA's reserve capital:*

**Mr. Stephen R. Beckwith**, \$10,000 . . . **Mr. David E.A. Carson**, \$2,000 . . . **Mr. Peter H. Nachtwey**, \$2,000 . . . **Pitney Bowes**, \$2,500.

**Thank you.**

• • •

RPA Executive Director Robert D. Yaro has received the **President's Award** from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

## Kennedy Airport Is Finally Getting Rail Access

Rail access to JFK International Airport, long advocated by RPA, is finally becoming a reality. In February, the Federal Aviation Agency approved the use of some \$1 billion collected from a \$3 per passenger fee known as a passenger facility charge (PFC) for the construction of a rail link at JFK. The Port Authority of NY/NJ will contribute the remaining \$300 million for the project, which will be built through a design-build-operate-maintain arrangement.

The 8.4-mile line will stop at six locations in the central terminal area operating in a loop, serving each of the major terminals, including the new Termini-

One scheduled to open this year, and the new International Arrivals Terminal, whose construction is now underway. The line will stop at the rental car and long-term parking lot areas and continue on with two branches. One will serve the Howard Beach station, where A-train riders will have a new easy transfer. The other will continue over the Van Wyck Expressway to the Jamaica Station of the LIRR, enabling easy transfers for passengers arriving and departing on trains from Penn Station and Long Island, in addition to the E, J and Z subway lines. This loop portion of the project and the Howard Beach segment will open, if all

goes well, in 2002, the remainder a year later. The planned LIRR connection to Grand Central Terminal will also make the project more effective, giving east midtown rail access to the airport.

As RPA has vigorously recommended, the new rail link will be built to be compatible with either the New York City subway system or the LIRR. By having a system compatible with the rest of the regional rail network, the region will have the opportunity to plan for future direct one-seat rides to JFK from both midtown and lower Manhattan. The City and the Region deserve nothing less. •

## RPA Prepares Action Plan for New York City Urban Forest

RPA and the Environmental Action Coalition have developed an Action Plan to establish a larger, healthier and more diverse urban forest. A series of short- and long term actions are proposed, including steps to enhance growing conditions and instituting regular maintenance cycles which can address hazard trees and other management concerns before problems occur.

New York City's urban forest—a patchwork of 5.2 million trees along streets, in parks,

woodlands, vacant lots and private yards—contributes in many ways to the quality of life. Trees deliver environmental and social services—from cleaner air and water, to reduced energy costs, from a sense of well-being, to outdoor education opportunities.

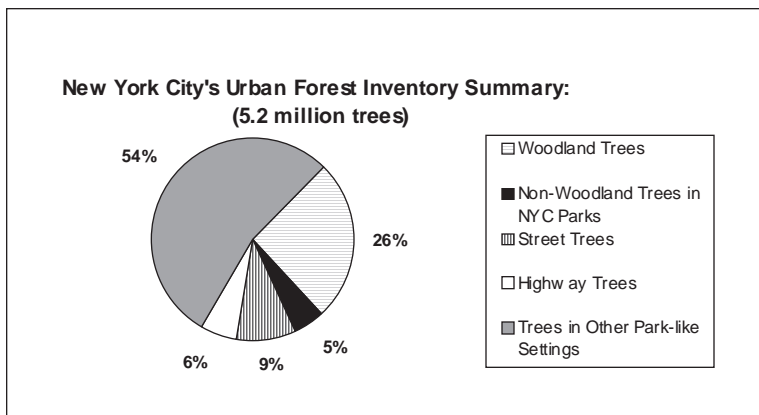
But the potential of this green infrastructure is not being fully realized. According to recent research by the USDA Forest Service, New York City's 17 percent of tree cover is much less than similar cities in the United

States—many community boards in the Region have less than half this low city average.

Key to improving the status of trees in the City is to recognize that these trees are part of an urban forest ecosystem—an interactive network where human activities are its most influential variable. Unlike most public infrastructure, this ecosystem is comprised of living organisms. In fact, trees appreciate in value as they grow older and larger.

A conference to present the findings from the recently released Action Plan will be held from 8:30-11am on May 13 at Bell Atlantic, 1095 Avenue of the Americas at 42nd Street, in the 1st Floor Conference Center. The conference is free, but preregistration is required. To register or for more information, please call RPA at 212-253-2727 x323. •

To purchase a copy of the Action Plan, call 212-253-2727 x309.



## Blueprint

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aram@rpa.org.*

## . . . RPA NEWS . . .

The General Services Administration is offering free walking tours of **Governors Island** the following dates: May 13, June 10, July 15, August 12, September 16 and October 14. Pre-registration is required. To register, call 212-253-2727 x393, e-mail your response to ray@rpa.org, or fax your name and telephone number to 212-253-5666, attn: Ray, two days before your preferred date. The tours depart at 10am from the Battery Maritime Building Coast Guard waiting room, located immediately north of the Staten Island Ferry Terminal at the foot of Whitehall and South streets in Manhattan. For more information on Governors Island, visit the GSA Governors Island website at: [www.gsa.gov/pbs/pr/govisland.htm](http://www.gsa.gov/pbs/pr/govisland.htm).

Former New Jersey Governor **James J. Florio**, **Peter H. Nachtwey**, a Partner at Deloitte & Touche LLP, and **Stevan A. Sandberg**, Executive Managing Director at Cushman & Wakefield Inc., have been elected to **RPA's Board of Directors**.

RPA, in partnership with Abeles, Preiss, Phillips and Shapiro, Inc., has been awarded the contract to produce the **Comprehensive Plan for the City of Stamford**, Connecticut. This unique partnership will combine the professional expertise of one of the area's leading planning firms with RPA's capabilities in growth management, transportation and urban design, as well as bringing a regional perspective to the Third Plan.

The environmental review process, institutionalized in New York City through CEQR (**City Environmental Quality Review**) was intended to promote effective and thoughtful land use planning. An AIA conference held on May 7, and co-sponsored by RPA, will explore the need for reform, and to develop consensus proposals for advancing reform. For more information, call Rob Lane at 212-253-2727 x326, send an e-mail to [lane@rpa.org](mailto:lane@rpa.org).

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