

RPA Aids Chicago Planning Efforts

For the past year in a partnership supported by the Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation RPA has been assisting the Metropolitan Planning Council in its transportation, tax reform and economic development initiatives for the Greater Chicago Region.

Cooperation between these two regions is not new. Prior to coming to New York early in the century, RPA's founder, Charles Dyer Norton, led efforts to create Daniel Burnham's influential Chicago Plan. Founded in 1934, MPC is the nation's second oldest metropolitan planning organization. While MPC has never completed a comprehensive regional plan, its plans for housing, urban design and transportation have had a profound effect on Chicago and its region.

MPC's agenda is driven in part by the need to manage rapid economic and population growth and to address the region's growing racial, economic and social divisions. Today, the Chicago

region is growing at twice the rate of the Tri-State region, and while the city itself is sharing in this growth, it continues to lose jobs and residents to the suburbs, and continues to house a disproportionate share of the region's poorest residents.

A major concern facing the Chicago region is the decline in ridership in the region's rapid transit and bus system operated by the Chicago Transit Authority. The CTA lost one-third of its total ridership over the past decade as state and federal financial support dwindled. By comparison, the Tri-State region has experienced a modest increase in transit ridership, although until the introduction of free transfers in 1997, bus ridership declined here as well.

In response to these trends, MPC organized a special group of business leaders to focus public attention on the need of the transit system. Jeffrey Zupan, RPA's Senior Fellow for Transportation has advised MPC and this committee on a range of transportation issues. He is now helping MPC develop strategies to integrate elements of the CTA and commuter rail system and to

improve its distribution in Chicago's downtown Loop district. Zupan will also help MPC analyze alternative financing structures for Chicago's toll road revenues, so that excess profits might be redirected to transit and urban highway needs.

MPC's top priority was to reform Illinois' tax system, with special attention to growing fiscal inequities between urban and suburban school systems. Although MPC's reform legislation was widely supported, it did not pass during the regular legislative sessions, and was the focus of a special legislative session in December.

MPC President Mary Sue Barrett outlined the Council's rationale for Tax Reform at RPA's 1997 Regional Assembly, and MPC staff met with local and state officials and business leaders from the Tri-State Region to discuss how this experience might be adapted. Through such efforts, RPA and MPC hope to continue their collaboration in the years to come.

a strategy to prevent continued sprawl. An immediate focus will be on building public support for State legislation in 1998 to authorize creation of land banks in all five East End towns. The groups will also work with the Town of East Hampton on a set of model land use regulations and land conservation strategies that can be demonstrated there, and then replicated throughout the East End.

groundwater supplies and the Peconic estuary; and that

- a range of steps is required to achieve these goals, including improved zoning and subdivision controls, better design standards for highways, and new open space acquisition programs. RPA and its civic partners are now working with town officials and citizens to develop

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For membership information, contact RPA's Vice President, Program Development, Aram Khachadurian, at 212-785-8000 x310, or by e-mail at aram@rpa.org.

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RPA Hosts Roundtable on Transfer of Development Rights

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ment rights in sending and receiving areas to insure a market; creating a program that is simple to understand and administer, but complex enough to be fair; and creating the community support to insure that the program is used.

There were a number of significant findings. It became apparent that there is no formula—the structure of each of the working TDR programs reflects the particular political, economic and geographic circumstances of the program. Secondly, excessive expectations for these programs account in large measure for their perceived failure. Third, TDR

programs are but one tool in a larger arsenal—those TDR programs that work are but one component of a larger, long-term land use plan that has the commitment and political will of the community behind it. Finally, it was agreed, that in keeping with RPA's agenda, equity must be part of the equation: it is important to understand who benefits most from the program and who may be hurt by it.

The next step for RPA will be the development of a model state enabling legislation to be used in this region and elsewhere in the country.

For more information on TDR programs, contact Rob Lane at 212-785-8000 x326, or e-mail lane@rpa.org.

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NEW JERSEY'S STATE PLAN IN CROSS ACCEPTANCE

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Chicago-MPC Partnership
NEW FEATURE
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TDR Roundtable

Last fall, the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) released a report that included proposed changes to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). The SPC then invited county and local governments to present their positions on the report in a process called Cross Acceptance. This process is the most important part of the plan's reauthorization.

The goal of the SDRP is to rationalize investments and planning in the state, designating planning areas that contain certain qualities and characteristics, and advancing programs that preserve or enhance those positive qualities. The SDRP also works to enhance communities by focusing development into areas with infrastructure while preserving environmentally sensitive lands and open spaces.

Cross Acceptance takes place in stages and allows input and commentary not only from local governments, but also private citizens, civic associations, and other interested parties. Currently, local governments are preparing Comparison Reports. With dozens of public meetings throughout the state to gather input, they are preparing responses to the plan's provisions, including its designa-

tions of planning areas, what those designations mean, identification and location of Centers, and other important issues. Once completed, the process will enter the Negotiation Phase, where the SPC and local communities work through their differences between local plans and the SDRP. These negotiations are anticipated to last for three to six months.

Following Cross Acceptance, the Commission will release an Interim Plan that will undergo an Impact Assessment Report, similar to the report released by the Center for Urban Policy Research in 1992. With the result of the impact assessment, the SPC will consider final changes before, hopefully, adopting a new plan in 1999.

New Jersey's SDRP was the result of unprecedented coordination between public, private and civic groups at the local, regional and state level. However, effective implementation of the Plan remains a concern for RPA and other planning groups. While other states have built successful planning initiatives on statutes that provide powerful implementation tools—most recently in Maryland New Jersey's State Planning Act

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East End Rescue Coalition

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coastal natural areas are key contributors to rural character, and must be preserved through creation of town land banks and other means;

- growth must be focused in and adjoining villages and hamlets;
- the area is fast approaching the capacity limits of its highways,

NJ State Plan in Cross Acceptance

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provides only limited administrative authority. Last year the New Jersey Builders Association filed a suit against the Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner's order that DEP staff make decisions consistent with the plan. In December, the Court found for DEP, upholding the right of Commissioners to work within the SDRP framework. Without this victory, implementation would have been further stalled. In addition, implementation has been hampered because the Commission has two vacancies and several members who continue to serve after their terms have expired, and OSP funds have been cut or remained flat for several years.

New Jersey's civic, environmental and other groups, including RPA, have discussed a unified approach to Cross Acceptance. Even as we support the goals of the plan and try to make the process of reauthorization as effective as possible, we have urged the SPC to add two missing components to the process: urban communities and state agencies. Without greater participation of New Jersey's major urban communities, the SDRP loses the support, guidance, and advocacy of one of its natural constituencies. With the resignation of Plainfield Mayor Mark Fury, the Commission now has no representative of an urban area in its composition.

Governor Christine Todd Whitman and the SPC have recently made funds available for New Jersey's major cities to prepare Comparison reports alongside their county govern-

ments an important first step to addressing this issue. But State Agencies still remain elusive players in the process. Their capital budgets have profound effects on the state's future and they hold significant seats on the SPC. While they have participated in the creation of the plan, they are not required to prepare public Comparison Reports. The response to Governor Whitman's 1997 executive order on the SDRP, in which many agencies failed to identify the true obstacles to their implementing the plan's goals, demonstrated how critical it is that the agencies become active and public participants in the dialogue.

Despite the apparent obstacles, the good news is that New Jersey still has a State Plan. New York and Connecticut have much to learn from the New Jersey experience. As the Impact Assessment report made clear six years ago, planned growth can enhance quality of life, contain the costs of public services, and ensure that we leave a state to later generations as beautiful and prosperous as the one we inherited.

For more information about Cross Acceptance, call Tom Wright at 973-623-1133, or e-mail tom@rpa.org.

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RPA Hosts Roundtable on Transfer of Development Rights

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a means of redirecting development away from one site often a natural resource to be preserved (sending areas) to sites that are more suitable for development (receiving areas). A working TDR program would seem to satisfy in a single stroke the complementary goals of RPA's Greensward and Centers campaigns: the natural resource is protected, and the new development is directed to an existing town center.

In the interest of exploring the complexities of TDR programs, RPA, through a grant from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, hosted a two day National Roundtable and Regional Workshop in December on the use of TDR for balanced development. Led by Rob Lane, RPA's Director of Design Programs, the Roundtable brought together land use and planning experts from around the country, and was devoted to exploring the state of the art through most recent experience and current legal challenges (for example, the recent Supreme Court case *Suitum v. Tahoe*).

The conference revealed that while it is often easy to agree on the resource to be protected, there are still many challenges to a working TDR program, which include: finding communities that will accept higher densities; calibrating values for develop-

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GUEST COLUMN: F. Carlisle Towery on Jamaica Center, Queens An RPA Legacy

Jamaica is growing again, emerging into middle-income viability, some two decades after the noose of four regional shopping centers closed around its downtown, killing its department stores and siphoning off economic activity. The impetus of this promising growth comes from two main forces: aspiring families with an energetic work ethic who have stayed or moved here by choice, investing in homes, education and businesses; and the redevelopment of Jamaica's older downtown shopping district into a regional center of commerce, employment, government services, higher education and the arts.

Jamaica is located in the Long Island sector of the region. Its problems and prospects were foreseen by RPA in its Second Regional Plan. RPA's Jamaica Center concept backed by solid research and fostered by a broad public and private sector consensus have been a powerful force toward breaking the shopping center noose and in setting this community on course for realizing its particular potential in the regional economy.

The Jamaica Center idea has bridged the uncertainties of changing economic conditions and demographics and shifting government priorities. Early on, it founds its champion in John Lindsay, whose weighty mayoral decisions favoring Jamaica launched RPA's plan. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, former Representative Floyd Flake, and Queens Borough President Claire Shulman acted decisively to put public projects here which reinforced the idea and advanced Jamaica's recovery. A

steady effort to develop home-ownership opportunities led by Shulman is producing major transformations in sections of South Jamaica which at one time were virtually written off.

RPA's active involvement in implementing the plan has contributed to this momentum. Two federal agencies serving the government's northeast region are here: the U.S. Social Security Administration moved into its new million square-foot facility atop the new Jamaica Center subway terminal in 1990 and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's regional laboratory and office headquarters will soon occupy an \$80 million custom-designed facility, about to go into construction on York College's new campus. Both the College and the subway with its collateral benefit of enabling removal of a blighting elevated line were fundamental public investments recommended to decision-makers in the Second Plan and persistently

advocated thereafter by RPA.

Greater Jamaica Development Corporation is pleased that the Third Plan has confirmed the importance of centers. We intend to continue our thirty-year partnership with RPA as we work to make Jamaica the center RPA has envisioned, and which Jamaica is now positioned to play. The proposed rail connection to JFK International Airport would enhance Jamaica's ability to accommodate major private enterprises, both international and domestic. Our local planning efforts are aimed at relating Jamaica to the airport economy and at strengthening the competitive position in the global marketplace of this sector of the region.

Our theme, Gateway Jamaica, buttresses the Third Plan's objectives. Making Jamaica a focus of its Centers Campaign would engage RPA's skills at this opportune time and could bring big pay-offs for the region.

F. Carlisle Towery is President and Executive Director of Greater Jamaica Development Corporation.



F. Carlisle Towery on a rooftop overlooking Downtown Jamaica

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RPA has joined the Hudson River Park Alliance, a coalition of New York environmental and civic groups, fighting for a new waterfront park along the Hudson River from Battery Park City to 59th Street. Although the State and City support Hudson River Park, there has been limited follow-through on their commitments, and the Park is in trouble today. HRP needs your help to ensure that the waterfront is transformed from rotting piers to a recreational and environmental resource for everyone.

Become a member of *New Yorkers for Hudson River Park*. Membership is FREE all we ask is that you voice your support for the Park at critical times by calling or sending cards to key public officials. To join, send your name, address, phone, fax and e-mail stating that you want to join, to Andy Darrell, Hudson River Park Alliance, c/o EDF, 257 Park Ave. So., NY, NY 10010, or fax 212-505-2375.

LI East End Rescue Coalition

On December 6th, RPA and several Long Island civic and environmental groups, including East End Forever, the North Fork Environmental Council and the Peconic Land Trust, convened two public forums on the threats that unplanned sprawl poses to the quality of life and rural character of the Island's East End. In the past, these same groups helped build public support for successful efforts to preserve the Long Island Central Pine barrens. RPA's Third Plan identified both areas as proposed regional reserves, key components in a network of 11 such protected landscapes containing the region's most important natural and scenic resources.

More than 200 concerned citizens and officials discussed the challenges facing the area and the strategies that might be employed to manage growth in this important natural resource area. Michael LoGrande, Chairman of the Suffolk County Water Authority and Co-chair of

RPA's Long Island Committee led the morning discussion on the North Fork, and RPA Executive Director Robert Yaro led the afternoon discussion on the South Fork.

A panel of local and national planning experts posed to the quality of life and outlining how other rural areas successfully manage sprawl. Suffolk County Planning Director Stephen Jones presented computer-generated build-out maps demonstrating how current zoning will consume most of the area's remaining open space by 2010. Local residents then spoke out on their vision for the East End's future, and the strategies needed to achieve it. A strong consensus emerged from this discussion that:

- ♦ the area's rural character and natural resources are its principal economic asset;
- ♦ remaining farmland and

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RPA has received the following new grants:

The Bodman Foundation, \$25,000 for Governors Island...**Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust**, \$10,000 toward an upcoming publication...**The Energy Foundation**, \$75,000 toward the Mobility Campaign...**Fund for The City of New York**, \$5,000 for Governors Island...**Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation**, \$35,000 for general operating support...**The New York Community Trust**, \$50,000 for Governors Island...**The New York Times Company Foundation**, \$10,000 for general operating support...**The Prudential Foundation**, \$40,000 for the Newark SID project...**Surdna Foundation**, \$90,000 toward the Mobility Campaign...**DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund**, \$97,000 for the Regional Technology Careers initiative.

The following companies continued their support by making Leadership grants:

Brooklyn Union, \$30,000...**Johnson & Johnson**, \$35,000...**KPMG Peat Marwick**, \$35,000...**New York Life Foundation**, \$27,500.

European American Bank initiated a special campaign to help build RPA's reserve capital with a \$10,000 contribution. They have already been joined by: **American International Group, Inc.**, \$10,000...**Aristides W. Georgantas**, \$2,500...**Peter W. Herman, Esq.**, \$5,000...**Joelson Foundation**, \$2,500...**KPMG Peat Marwick**, \$10,000...**Karen Wagner, Esq.**, \$5,000.

Thank you.

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