

Contact: Jeremy Soffin, 212/253-2727, ext. 303, jeremy@rpa.org or 917/860-9076



**REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES
TACKLED AT PLANNING WORKSHOP**

*Conference Is First Step in Region's Move Toward Adoption of Innovative
Environmental, Economic and Social Policies*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 24, 2003

NEW YORK – Regional Plan Association (RPA) – along with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2 (EPA), the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Milano Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy at the New School University – today hosted a planning workshop on regional sustainability at New School University. The conference, entitled “Transitioning the Tri-State Region Towards Sustainability,” was designed to obtain a broad-based assessment of where the region stands with respect to environmental, economic and social sustainability, and how it can improve.

The conference brought together more than 100 leaders in the environmental, academic, civic and government communities to pool the best thinking and experience on the initiatives the region should pursue to transition towards sustainability.

“Sustainability is a concept that’s both difficult to define and crucial to the future of the region,” said Robert D. Yaro, President of RPA. “By treating the environment as a source of wealth instead of an obstacle to economic growth, the region can find the resources it needs to address not only its environmental problems, but its economic and social problems as well. Today’s conference is a first step in recognizing the inherent links.”

Mayor Michael Bloomberg highlighted the day with a luncheon address on the City’s sustainability initiatives. Panelists also included Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi, DEP Commissioner Chris Ward, and EPA Regional Administrator Jane Kenny. The diversity of workshop topics underscored the crosscutting nature of sustainability, and included: energy, land use, water resources, housing and communities, social equity, public finance, business, biodiversity and transportation.

--more--

RPA Hosts Sustainability Conference/Page 2

“The high level of both speakers and participants at today’s conference shows that the region’s leaders have made sustainability a priority that cuts across policy areas,” said Albert Appleton, a Senior Fellow at RPA and the conference’s coordinator. “We plan to use what we learned here today to continue to work with public agencies and private sector groups across the region to set an aggressive agenda for pursuing a range of sustainable initiatives.”

***Regional Plan Association (RPA)** is the nation’s oldest independent regional planning organization. For more than 80 years, RPA has worked to improve the quality of life in the 31-county New York-New Jersey-Connecticut metropolitan area by creating long-term comprehensive plans and promoting their implementation across political boundaries. With offices in New York City, New Jersey, Connecticut and Long Island, RPA remains the most influential organization focused on planning from a regional perspective.*

###