

SHAPING THE CITY'S FUTURE

NEW YORK CITY
PLANNING AND ZONING
REPORT



NEW YORK CITY
PLANNING COMMISSION

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For Public Discussion
Spring 1993



NEW YORK CITY
PLANNING COMMISSION

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CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF NEW YORK

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Dear New Yorker:

The one constant in New York City is ceaseless change. To meet the challenges and seize the opportunities change presents, New York must plan for its future. *Shaping the City's Future* is a discussion document in which the New York City Planning Commission sets forth its planning framework for public review.

New York can generate new employment opportunities by enhancing its leadership in the world economy, create a healthier and more sustainable environment, and make its diverse neighborhoods more desirable places to live and work. By planning for change, channeling market forces, and wisely allocating its resources, the City can improve the quality of life for all its residents.

Sound planning balances the interests of all New Yorkers and engages them in the ongoing process of planning. The release of this discussion document is an important step in this process. Initially, the Commission reached out to civic and professional groups, experts, elected officials, and the general public to solicit ideas and promote debate on the city's future. Now that this report has been released, the Commission will hold public hearings on these recommendations in the five boroughs, beginning this spring.

Shaping the City's Future goes beyond the City Charter's requirement of a planning and zoning document for the next four years. It articulates the City Planning Commission's vision for New York's long-term future and presents a preliminary set of planning and zoning policies to make the vision a reality. The Commission's policies and actions cannot, by themselves, meet all the city's needs or solve all the problems identified in this report. However, the Commission hopes that *Shaping the City's Future* will help public agencies and communities balance local and city-wide perspectives in the preparation and review of their plans.

New York continues to be an extraordinary city of opportunity for millions. Yet far too many New Yorkers do not share in the city's benefits. New York will not achieve its promise until it successfully confronts the problems that exclude so many from educational opportunity, economic growth, and participation in governance. To shape the city's future, New York must make difficult choices on where and how to invest its limited resources. Pressing needs demand that the city devote its resources to both physical and human investment. The city must rethink its regulatory structure to achieve public objectives and to encourage the private sector to expand employment and economic development opportunities.

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INTRODUCTION

By the end of World War II, New York had become the quintessential city of the twentieth century. Its skyline fired the imaginations of millions. Its financial institutions, corporate headquarters, and factories epitomized economic power. Its cultural life was a magnet for the world's most talented artists. Its port was one of the world's busiest; its transit system was the world's most extensive; and its economy offered unparalleled opportunity to a diverse population.

But challenges to New York's preeminence began to surface early in the post-war era. Mass automobile ownership was about to change the way Americans lived. A restructured world economy would lead to the decline of manufacturing in the city. Massive population movements, within and across the nation's borders, would make the city even more heterogeneous, testing its commitment to opportunity for all.

New York Today

New York is still the emblematic city of our time. Though widely imitated, the New York skyline remains the instantly recognizable standard. New York continues to be the world's cultural and communications capital, its leading financial center, and, with the presence of the United Nations, the closest approximation to a world capital. The 7.3 million residents of New York City—clearly an undercount by the Census Bureau—constitute the most diverse population concentrated at one time in one place. Half a million Asians live together with 1.8 million blacks, 1.8 million Latinos, and 3.2 million whites. No racial or ethnic group forms a majority, and each includes recent immigrants. This increasingly heterogeneous population enriches New York like few other places, but the constant demographic churning also places new demands on a mature city of built-up neighborhoods.

New York City today epitomizes the extreme contrasts of urban life. While 3.3 million people work in the city, thousands of homeless people live on its streets. Nearly all neighborhoods reported income gains in the last decade, yet 20 percent of New York's population lives below the poverty line. The rate of new housing construction in the city hit a 13-year high in 1989, but decent housing is still too expensive for many households. As Saul Bellow noted, "What is barely hinted in other American cities is condensed and enlarged in New York."

A World City

More than any other place, New York is where the United States meets the world. More foreign businesses come to New York than to any other American city, and

more services are offered here to American companies with business abroad. In an increasingly integrated global economy, New York is one of the world's economic command posts—a place where international traders exchange information and ideas. It is a world capital of commerce and culture. It is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural amalgam of diverse neighborhoods that support the city's economy. It is an incubator for new ideas, entrepreneurs, and industries. Observers of urban affairs have coined a phrase to describe such a place—"world city."

New York is unequivocally a world city. Other cities share New York's role as financial and media capitals of their nations. But most of them—like London, Paris, and Tokyo—are also the seat of their national governments, which recognize the benefits of supporting their premier cities. Though clearly this nation's premier city, New York does not enjoy a similar national largesse. In fact, recent national administrations have sought political advantage by attacking their country's primary link to the world economy. Such attacks are hard to understand. Contrary to the popular view that the city is constantly seeking handouts from the federal government, Washington has been redistributing New York's income to the rest of the country for more than a hundred years. The federal government collects far more in tax revenues from New York City than it returns in the form of services and disbursements.

Washington has not only lacked a policy of fostering its world city, it has shifted its focus away from cities generally. Federal assistance declined sharply over the last decade, leaving America's cities to face seemingly intractable problems alone. The current level of federal aid pales in comparison to the concerted efforts of the 1960s and early 1970s, when Washington saw the well-being of cities as synonymous with the well-being of the nation.

Today, almost half of all Americans live in suburbs, and less than a third in cities. Yet the new administration in Washington offers hope that the problems of the cities will no longer be ignored. The nation cannot prosper without healthy cities, and neither cities nor suburbs can thrive—or even survive—if they are increasingly isolated from each other. Some say that the problems facing our cities, including New York, are insurmountable. But, removed from the headlines, a troubled though surprisingly dynamic New York City has demonstrated remarkable resilience.

Vision for the Future

Although New York's economy should experience modest growth as the nation emerges from the recession, the city faces major challenges to its competitiveness. The city's economic boom in the 1980s was the result of many fortuitous circumstances: a concentration of the nation's growth industries; an extraordinary, if aging, infrastructure; and the presence of a host of talented and enterprising peo-

ple, native- and foreign-born. The city cannot assume such advantages will be manifest in the future.

New York must act aggressively to nurture its assets. It cannot defer critical decisions on investments in physical and human capital. The city must position itself now to meet the competitive challenges from other world cities, metropolitan-area suburbs, and regional centers. By acting in concert with regional and national policy makers, the city can create new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, retain its leadership in the world economy, improve its environment, and enhance the quality of life in its neighborhoods. It can realize a vision for tomorrow's New York City that does not sweep away the old to make way for the new, but builds on the city's strengths.

The City Planning Commission's vision for the future includes seven distinct but interrelated elements:

- **A world city of opportunity.** The city's best prospect for expanding opportunity and combatting poverty is to maintain its position as a global leader in finance and advanced business services, communications, and the arts—the industries that drive the city's economy. The global cities of opportunity in the next century will be those that dominate international finance, trade, and culture, just as New York prospered by serving these roles nationally during the last century. To maintain its preeminence, the city must continue to be a magnet for creative people of every race, ethnicity, and culture. It must draw on its diversity as a source of creativity and enhanced competitiveness in the global economy, recognizing that education, training, and child care will be required for its residents to participate fully in its economy. It must remain not only receptive to the new but prosperous enough to weave newcomers into its rich urban fabric.
- **An anchor for the region.** The five boroughs of New York are inextricably and beneficially linked to the suburbs. The suburbs provide service-sector support functions to the city: manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution; important components of the region's information network; and highly skilled workers. But suburbs cannot stand alone. They benefit from access to the city's economy, labor force, markets, business expertise, cultural amenities, and international connections. The region's competitive position and quality of life will deteriorate if the city and suburbs become increasingly isolated from one another. City and suburban decision makers must recognize the benefits of cooperation and of coordinating policies to promote economic recovery, mobility, and environmental improvement.
- **An environmentally sustainable city.** New York must continue to rebuild and expand its infrastructure to permit economic and technological growth with-

out overburdening natural systems. Because of its density and mass transportation systems, the city is uniquely positioned to accomplish this goal. It must ensure the efficient movement of people, goods, and information within its borders and strengthen its links to the region and the world beyond. Simultaneously, the city must continue to improve its air and water quality, resource conservation, energy efficiency, and waste disposal. Otherwise, it will be unable to sustain its economy and improve the quality of life.

- **A city of diverse and desirable communities.** New York must recognize the potential of its extraordinary array of physically and culturally distinctive neighborhoods. The city must continue to support, stabilize, and revitalize its neighborhoods and improve the quality of life by responding to residents' needs for housing, economic opportunity, recreation and open space, cultural amenities, convenient shopping, and community facilities.
- **A visually distinctive and more livable city.** While providing opportunities for new ideas, technologies, and architecture, New York must continue to preserve its architectural heritage, the character of its neighborhoods and their culture. The distinctive visual character of New York is formed by the dynamic interplay among its public spaces (streets, squares, parks, and waterfront), the architecture of its built form, and the variety of its neighborhoods. The city must promote the best qualities of New York's urban design and encourage the many building types and open spaces that create the diverse visual experience of the city.
- **A city reconnected to its waterfront.** New York must reclaim its waterfront, provide public access to it, and reintegrate it into the fabric of the city. Too much of this precious asset—the longest waterfront of any city in America—has been cut off from city neighborhoods and permitted to deteriorate. The waterfront offers unique opportunities to realize other elements of the vision: expanding economic opportunity, improving the environment, revitalizing neighborhoods, enhancing the city visually, and promoting development that recognizes the special qualities of the water's edge.
- **A more inclusive city.** The city must further engage its people in its governance. New York City was a pioneer in empowering communities by creating community boards that advise on all land use matters. The city must involve the public not only in the review of plans and policies but in their development as well. It must also provide resources to support communities initiating their own studies, plans, and development activities.

Public debate often casts these elements as discrete concerns competing for position atop the city's agenda, but the City Planning Commission is keenly aware that these elements are intertwined. For example, the same transportation infra-

structure needed to move people and goods is essential to ensure clean air and to provide residents with access to employment. To achieve the overall vision for the city, all seven elements must be realized.

Achieving the Vision

New York must plan today to position itself to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. By acting with foresight, the city can channel market forces and allocate government resources to shape its future and build a sustainable, prosperous, and equitable New York.

It was with this goal in mind that the 1989 Charter revision called for a zoning and planning report every four years to ensure that planning and zoning actions are considered in the broader context of the city's long-term strategic needs. *Shaping the City's Future* fulfills and goes beyond the Charter mandate: It articulates the City Planning Commission's vision for New York, the planning policies to achieve the vision, and the actions necessary to implement these policies.

To make its vision a reality, the Commission will use its power to plan comprehensively and to build a consensus that points the way for public action, investment, and regulation. The Commission has a range of tools it can use to implement its plans, including: collaborating with other agencies and the public on urban renewal and community-sponsored plans; determining the appropriate disposition of city-owned property and siting of public facilities; recommending capital investments; reviewing actions for consistency with the Waterfront Revitalization Program; coordinating zoning and historic preservation actions; and mapping streets and parks.

The Commission's most powerful implementation tool, however, is the Zoning Resolution, which was comprehensively revised in 1961 and has been amended many times since. The Resolution consists of the zoning text (the regulatory tools) and the zoning map, which applies specific tools to particular areas. Because the Resolution determines how land is used and developed, the 1989 Charter highlighted the importance of zoning in implementing the Commission's planning policies for the next four years.

In considering its planning agenda, the Commission asked a fundamental question, "Does New York need a new zoning resolution?" Any zoning ordinance requires constant review and revision to ensure that it reflects the planning goals of the community. The Resolution adopted in 1961 was designed to implement city planning concepts of the 1940s and 1950s, including large-scale clearance and redevelopment, towers surrounded by open space, strict separation of uses, and increased parking.

The Resolution often ignored the architectural and historic character of existing neighborhoods. Over the years, the Department addressed the needs of individual neighborhoods by creating special districts, special permits, and mixed-

use zoning districts. Many criticized this approach for addressing citywide issues with site-specific solutions, for lacking a comprehensive vision of land use, and for being difficult to administer and enforce. In response, the contextual zoning movement evolved during the 1980s. Contextualism sought to be responsive to both local conditions and citywide planning concerns. It recognized that New York is a mature city requiring a variety of zoning districts that would allow new development to reinforce the city's distinctive neighborhoods.

More than 30 years have elapsed since New York's basic regulatory tools were created. In many areas, the zoning map no longer makes sense and does not reflect today's planning values. A major overhaul is certainly needed. Nevertheless, the Commission believes that the vision for the city presented in this report can and should be realized within the broad framework of the current Zoning Resolution. The Resolution has evolved through incremental modifications in response to complex land use planning issues. Residential zoning regulations have been revised substantially; manufacturing and community facility regulations are being reviewed; and large areas of the city have been remapped.

The city must confront several serious challenges immediately. Scrapping the existing Zoning Resolution and "starting over" would not only be enormously costly and time-consuming, it would divert attention and resources for years to come. Amended and clarified, the Zoning Resolution can provide a serviceable, largely as-of-right framework for addressing current and future needs. This report articulates a comprehensive set of planning policies, zoning initiatives, and other actions to shape a more livable and prosperous city for the twenty-first century. It offers no quick fixes. Grand plans to sweep away the old have little merit and less chance of success. New York is a complex, mature city of extraordinary scale—its population is larger than that of 41 states. The seven elements outlined earlier provide the best prescription for the city: Build on its strengths and rich diversity as a foundation for the future.

In the pages that follow, the Commission describes the planning policies and work program to achieve its vision for New York. The Charter gives the City Planning Commission and the Department of City Planning the responsibility for planning for the orderly growth and development of the city. But the Charter and other laws disperse authority for implementing plans among various agencies and public authorities. No single agency has the resources to integrate these plans. The Commission has a unique role to play in synthesizing disparate plans and reconciling conflicting points of view.

The Commission's actions must therefore be coordinated with those of other public entities, particularly those responsible for environmental protection and infrastructure investment. Commission policies must also be responsive to the needs of the private sector, which supplies most of the housing, jobs, goods, and services New Yorkers require in their daily lives. In the implementation of these

planning policies, the role of the Commission and the Department is to provide a regulatory framework that accommodates change and guides development to achieve strategic planning objectives and public policy initiatives.

The planning and zoning policies in this report, though interrelated, are grouped into four sections:

Part One: Economic Opportunity

This section explores the city's role in the international economy, the provision of local goods and services, combatting poverty, and employment opportunity issues. New York is a world leader in finance, law, advertising, fashion, trade, the arts, media, higher education, and health care. These are the city's export industries that bring money into New York by selling a large share of their services to customers located outside the city. Yet, one-fifth of New York's population lives below the poverty line.

The Commission's policies seek to expand employment and entrepreneurial activities and the city's role in the world and region. The Commission recommends strategies to encourage growth in export industries—primarily located in Manhattan's central business district but also in the other boroughs—and to capture in all five boroughs a larger share of industries that serve predominantly local markets. The Commission also recommends ways for the city to combat poverty not only by spurring economic development, but by providing residents with skills and access to employment and by improving the quality of life in low-income neighborhoods.

Part Two: Sustainable Environment

These chapters examine the movement of people and goods and the land use implications of the city's transportation, waste disposal, and water supply systems. These basic infrastructure systems are fundamental to creating a sustainable environment, which is essential to a sound economy, revitalized neighborhoods, and the well-being of city residents.

Unlike younger, auto-dependent cities, New York has developed a mass transit system unparalleled in this country. Improving and expanding this system must remain the top priority for moving people. The city must create a seamless transit system of subways, rail lines, ferries, express buses, and other alternatives to the private automobile. It must expedite freight movement by investing in needed highway improvements, expanding rail and waterborne goods movement, and mitigating traffic congestion.

Increased conservation and recycling are essential to avoid enormous future capital investments and operating expenditures for water treatment and waste

disposal systems. Commission policies would continue strategies to reduce water usage and solid waste, limit impacts of rapidly rising water and sewer charges, and better match sewage treatment plant capacity with demand. The Commission recognizes that solid waste and other municipal facilities must be accommodated safely without unduly burdening nearby communities.

Part Three: New Yorkers and Their Neighborhoods

This section looks at the strengths and needs of the city's communities, their housing, and support services. New York's buildings and neighborhoods are as varied as its people. Planning for neighborhoods is one of the Commission's central tasks. How the city implements its land use and capital budget policies will affect the quality of New York's neighborhood life into the coming century.

Commission policies support the characteristics that make neighborhoods lively, distinctive, safe, and desirable places, taking into account both local and citywide needs. The Commission emphasizes the importance of policies that enhance New York's diverse communities and reinforce neighborhood fabric. Its policies accommodate appropriate housing opportunities, foster economic integration, support neighborhood reinvestment, and promote the use of city-owned land in ways that support community revitalization. This planning framework facilitates neighborhood economic development, improves neighborhood streetscapes, addresses quality-of-life issues, and provides for open space, recreation, and other local needs.

Part Four: Defining an Agenda for the Future

The city's planning process and the roles of the Commission, the Department, and the public are examined in this part. Specific policies are articulated to expand opportunities for city residents to participate more fully in public policy decisions, and to improve environmental planning and review. The Commission's recommended planning agenda for the next four years is summarized in this section.

Public participation and an improved planning process are cornerstones for achieving the Commission's vision for the city. The Commission emphasizes the need to build consensus in land use planning and review, support community-based planning and revitalization efforts, and balance a citywide perspective with respect for local needs and concerns. The sheer size, pace, and diversity of New York City make consensus-building a daunting task. Meaningful public participation requires that the city involve the public early and throughout the planning

process. Together with steps to improve environmental planning and review, these efforts can provide a solid basis for more effective comprehensive planning in the city.

Implementing these planning policies will require New York to chart new directions in confronting enormous socioeconomic, environmental, and physical development issues. By moving forward with the strategies outlined in this report, policy makers can ensure that New York will remain the quintessential city into the twenty-first century.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Despite the enormous transformations of the post-World War II era—the decline of manufacturing, the rise of services, the spread of urban settlement to the surrounding counties, racial and ethnic succession, and the acceleration of immigration—New York has shown an overall stability rare among older American cities over the last 40 years.

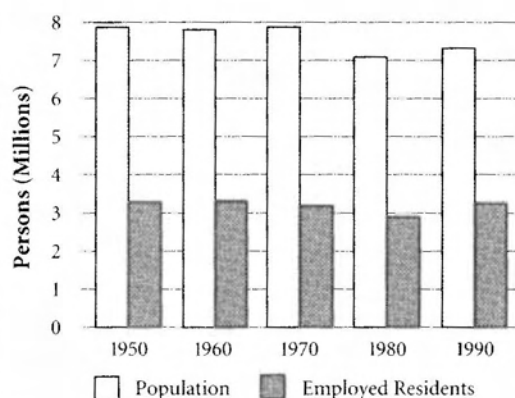
The city's population of 7.3 million in 1990 was only 6.8 percent less than it was in 1950. The number of employed New Yorkers in 1990—3.2 million—was only 0.6 percent less than in 1950 (Figure 1.1). In contrast, of the 18 U.S. cities that were already major population centers in 1900, five—Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis—lost more than 40 percent of their populations between 1950 and 1990. Only three—New York, San Francisco, and Milwaukee—lost less than 15 percent.

New York's stability over the past 40 years reflects the city's remarkable ability to reinvent itself. Like the rest of the nation, New York City has a high rate of household and business turnover: Businesses open and close, people move in and out continually. Unlike less fortunate cities, New York has attracted enough new people, new businesses, and new sources of capital to maintain its population and job base. For example, in 1990, nearly one million New Yorkers were immigrants who had arrived since 1980. In 1988, 25 percent of the city's jobs were in businesses that did not exist in 1984.

Not just businesses, but entire industries rise and decline, changing the economic structure of the city. Over the past 30 years, for example, a 50 percent decline in the city's industrial sector has been balanced by a rise in financial and business services (Figure 1.2). Today, New York is a world leader in finance, law, advertising, fashion, trade, the arts, media, higher education, and health care, and employs the largest, most diverse work force in the country. At the same time, the city remains a high-cost business location with an aging infrastructure and one-fifth of its population that, even in prosperous times, lives in poverty.

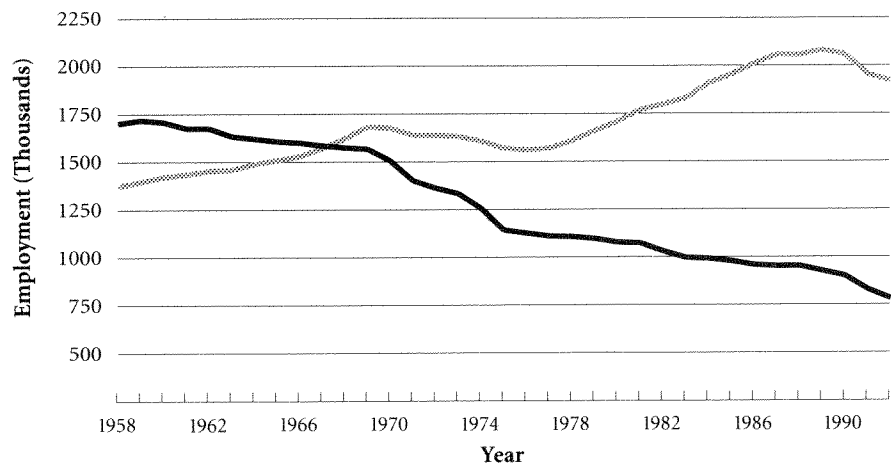
As an older city, New York must accommodate demographic and economic changes within built neighborhoods and business districts. Former manufacturing loft buildings have been converted to studios, offices, and homes. Housing

Figure 1.1 Population and Employed City Residents, 1950 to 1990



Source: Census of Population

Figure 1.2 New York City Private-Sector Employment, 1958 to 1992



..... Non-Industrial — Industrial

Source: Current Employment Survey, NYS Department of Labor

stock in residential neighborhoods has been replaced or reconfigured to meet current needs and standards. Many older buildings that make their neighborhoods architecturally distinct and beautiful have been recycled and transformed into economic assets.

New York's continuous evolution requires a high level of investment to restore, upgrade, retrofit, or replace buildings. The city must balance the need for reinvestment against the preservation of valued structures. New investment is necessary to bring the city's buildings and infrastructure up to the higher standards New Yorkers have come to expect. As their average income has risen and businesses have become more productive, New Yorkers expect housing, workplaces, and public facilities with more space per person and enhanced amenities. Even without population or employment growth, existing structures must be improved and the total stock of built space expanded.

The key point in any discussion of the city's economy is the need to accommodate change and redevelopment through better land use planning and increased public investment. Even without gaining population or jobs, the city has experienced rising traffic congestion, water usage, and solid waste generation. As an already large, mature city, New York must continually improve economic opportunities and quality of life, recognizing that its ambition is not necessarily to become bigger, but better. Only with continued investment and economic development will the city be able to maintain its role in the world and the region, achieve a sustainable environment, and maintain and revitalize its neighborhoods.

AMERICA'S INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY

The service and information-based “export industries” concentrated in New York drive its economy. Export industries bring money into the city from elsewhere and sell a large share of their products and services to clients located outside the city—in the region, the nation, and overseas. In 1991, export industries directly employed 1.4 million, or 42 percent, of the 3.3 million people working in New York; and they paid \$62 billion, or 53 percent, of the \$118 billion in wages earned in the city. They define the city’s role in the national and global economies and position New York as America’s international gateway.

When these industries grow, their employees and firms have more money to spend, leading to growth in other industries that serve local needs. The share of New York City employment in export industries, local-market industries, and government is shown in Figure 1.3.

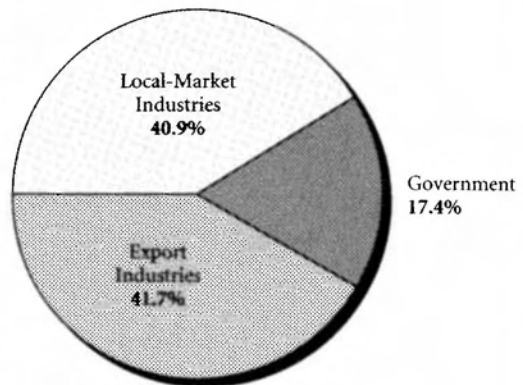
New York City’s export industries fall into five predominantly knowledge-and design-oriented categories (Figure 1.4). These categories, along with the 1991 employment figures for each, are:

- Finance and advanced business services (645,000)
- Hospitals, universities, and non-profit headquarters (247,000)
- Fashion-related goods (166,000)
- Media, culture, tourism, and entertainment (152,000)
- Transportation and trade (146,000)

Over the past 300 years, New York City’s role in the national economy has changed along with its export industries. In different periods, the city has become the nation’s center for oceanborne trade, light manufacturing, and corporate headquarters. Since 1960, however, the city has lost more than half its industrial employment and more than two-thirds of its manufacturing workers. Today, New York City exports primarily information and services, rather than manufactured goods.

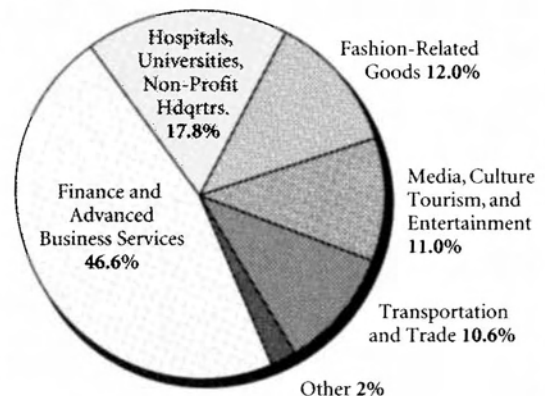
The city’s growing export industries are tied to its continuing role as America’s international gateway. Every job in New York City, whether in industry, retail

Figure 1.3 New York City Employment, 1991



Source: ES202 Data, New York State Department of Labor Categories and Calculations by the Department of City Planning

Figure 1.4 New York City Export-Industry Employment, 1991



Source: ES202 Data, New York State Department of Labor Categories and Calculations by the Department of City Planning

trade, non-profit organizations, or even local government, depends directly or indirectly on the continuation and enhancement of this role.

Finance and Advanced Business Services

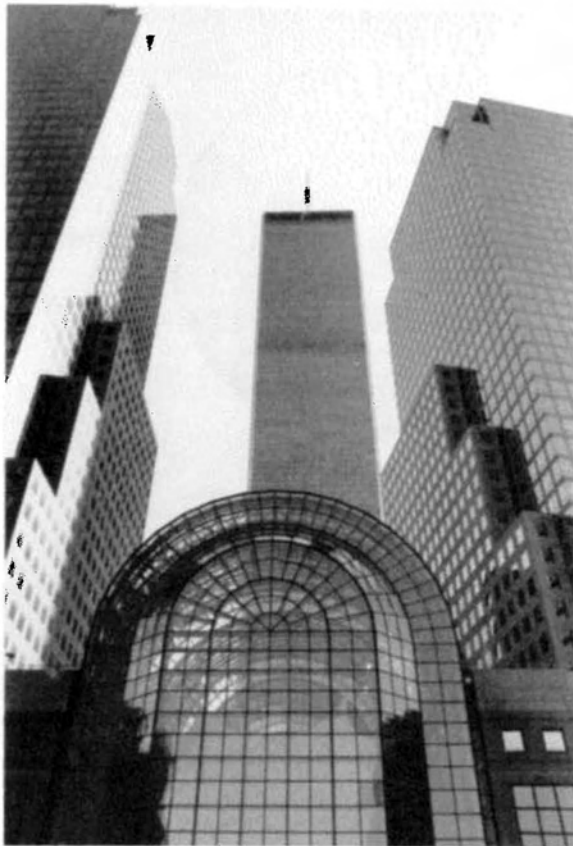
Finance and advanced business services are the city's largest export industries. In 1991, they employed 645,000 or 47 percent of all export industry workers. That year, they paid \$35 billion in wages and salaries or 57 percent of the total export industry payroll. They are located south of 60th Street in Manhattan, with the securities industries concentrated in Downtown, and banking, advertising, management consulting, accounting, and other corporate services concentrated in Midtown.

These industries were primarily responsible for the city's economic boom from 1983 to 1987, as their inflation-adjusted payroll increased from \$25 billion to \$36 billion. The 1987 stock market crash ended this positive trend, and private employment has been declining ever since. Is this a temporary, recession-induced decline or the beginning of a long-term trend? There is reason for concern. Growing regional centers—Boston, Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco—can now provide U.S. companies with many financial and advanced business services that were previously available only in New York. European and Asian financial centers are competing for New York's international business. In recent years, many prominent New York financial firms have shifted some routine clerical activities to lower-wage locations and automated others.

Most of these companies are retaining their most knowledge-intensive activities in the city, however, and many other firms from around the world have established New York offices to take advantage of the city's concentration of business activity. Sophisticated financial and advanced business services rely on information to thrive, and New York's critical mass of intellectual capital is unparalleled among American

cities. The concentration of talented people in New York will continue to be an important economic advantage. And compared with other international centers—although not with the suburbs and other American cities—New York is also a relatively low-cost city in which to do business.

To retain its talent pool, the city must address quality-of-life issues, which are key to attracting and keeping businesses and residents. New York's cultural and intellectual resources are world famous. Its drawbacks, however, are just as well known. To maintain its competitive position, New York must improve the quality of life in the central business district and in the city as a whole.



The World Financial Center houses many of the firms that are at the heart of New York's role in the global economy.

Hospitals, Universities, and Non-Profit Headquarters

In 1991, the city's hospitals, universities, and non-profit headquarters employed 247,000 workers, 18 percent of export-industry employment, with hospitals accounting for 146,000 of these workers. Together, they paid \$7.9 billion in wages and salaries, 13 percent of export-industry payroll. Although New York's hospitals and universities primarily serve the needs of local residents, they also bring income into the city by attracting patients from across the nation and students from around the world. They are an important component of the knowledge-and design-based export industries, supplying research and graduates.

The city's hospitals and universities in all boroughs have consistently increased employment since 1977 and provide an opportunity for New York to attract biotechnological research and development in health-related fields. This growth is based on the research and creativity of academics and health professionals, but recruitment of top-rated professionals is hampered by the cost and quality of available housing.

New York is home to a wide range of national and international non-profit organizations. Recently, however, some non-profit headquarters have left the city in search of lower operating costs, and some agencies of the United Nations have threatened to move and are being courted by other areas. Like its business headquarters, most of the city's non-profit headquarters are located in Manhattan. In the 1980s, many moved to Midtown South.

Fashion-Related Goods

New York has historically been one of the world's fashion capitals. It remains a principal location for the design, marketing, trade, and distribution of high-quality apparel, leather goods, cosmetics, and jewelry. Fashion-related industries employed 166,000 workers in 1991, 12 percent of export industry employment; they paid \$5.5 billion in wages and salaries, 9 percent of export industry payroll. While the standardized, mass-production activities of these industries have been moving to developing nations, where semi-skilled workers are available at low wages, the city has retained the more advanced activities. Many of the most stylish and highest-quality clothes and accessories are still produced in New York. The city's remaining semi-skilled fashion-related jobs are of critical importance because they provide entry-level work for immigrants and others without English language skills and high school diplomas. The fashion-related industries account for more than half the remaining manufacturing production jobs in New York.

Like the city's other export industries, fashion has become information-based. Every day, New York's fashion-related businesses interact with, and set the style for, apparel producers and consumers around the world. Manhattan's Garment Center is now more a design and trade center than a production center. It is tied to the city's large and influential advertising, printing, and media indus-

tries—the nation’s marketing complex—also located in and around Midtown. Much of the production activity that remains in New York has dispersed to areas with large, semi-skilled work forces, such as Chinatown in Manhattan, Sunset Park in Brooklyn, and parts of Queens. To support these industries, which are dominated by small businesses, the city must allow them to locate in areas close to their workers and customers. In 1987, the Special Garment Center District was added to the Zoning Resolution to help maintain the concentration of firms in Midtown. The *Citywide Industry Study* recommends expanding those areas in Manhattan where fashion-related production and wholesaling are permitted.

Media, Culture, Tourism, and Entertainment

Employment in the city’s media, culture, tourism, and entertainment industries also expanded during the 1980s, reinforcing the city’s status as a cultural capital. These industries directly provided 152,000 jobs in 1991—11 percent of all export industry employment—and indirectly supported many self-employed artists, writers, and entertainers. They paid \$6.4 billion in wages and salaries—10 percent of the total export industry payroll. Although cultural institutions and tourist attractions are scattered throughout the city, much of the activity in this category is concentrated in Manhattan—entertainment in the theater district, media in West Midtown, publishing in Midtown South.

New York’s media, art, tourism, and entertainment industries have benefitted from expanding international connections as well as the rich diversity of the city’s



One of New York’s principal cultural attractions, the Metropolitan Museum of Art drew more than four million visitors in 1992.

new immigrants. Exchange rates have been favorable for many foreign visitors for several years, making the city a preferred destination for international tourists. Some contend, however, that the city's high hotel tax discourages visitors and has cost the city some major conventions.

The most important resources for the city's media, culture, and entertainment industries are the authors, journalists, actors, artists, musicians, and other performers who work here—many of them the most creative artists from around the world. Their cross-cultural interaction makes the city a trend setter in style and the arts. The creative energy of New York makes it the premier location for publishing and broadcasting companies, most of which find it necessary to have an office in the city, even those that are headquartered elsewhere. These industries are especially important because of the image benefits and creative intensity they bring to the city. Last year the Mayor's Management Advisory Task Force Committee on Incentives and Tax Policy recommended business tax credits for contributions to cultural institutions. The city's policies must recognize the special value of these industries and the talented people who work in them.

Transportation and Trade

New York is one of the nation's most important transportation and trade centers, particularly for international trade. Transportation and trade industries employed 146,000 workers in 1991, 11 percent of export industry employment; they paid \$5.9 billion in wages and salaries, 10 percent of export industry payroll. Although overall employment in this category has been stable over the years, certain sectors have expanded considerably. Air passenger and cargo activities have been major growth sectors in the past three decades, with most of the growth centered in Queens, at or near the city's two airports. With the relocation of most of the region's port activity to New Jersey, however, the city's maritime industries have declined steeply, leaving large areas of the waterfront vacant or underused.

Buoyed by immigrants with business ties to their native countries, import-export firms have been growing in New York, as have firms specializing in financing international trade. Even when goods do not pass through New York, trade transactions are often negotiated, financed, and managed in the city. Most import-export and related support firms are located in Midtown South, although significant growth has also taken place in immigrant neighborhoods in other boroughs.

The city's air transportation industry is its link to the rest of the world. The hub of international travel, John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), provides New Yorkers with more direct international air connections than any other American airport. City residents also benefit from the goods imported by air and sea. Although New York City is an expensive place to live, many goods imported by air—apparel, electronics, flowers, gourmet food, etc.—are cheaper here than

elsewhere. Falling trade barriers and rising international trade improve life in New York by increasing the amount of international business employment in the city and by providing access to goods from abroad.

The Role of the Central Business District

The city's export industries are concentrated in the Manhattan central business district (CBD), the area south of 60th Street, which accounts for 40 percent of all employment in the city. The enormous concentration of activity in this relatively small geographic area is the defining characteristic of the city's economy. The CBD's attraction is high value, not low cost. Its principal competitive advantage is its unparalleled capacity to bring people together.

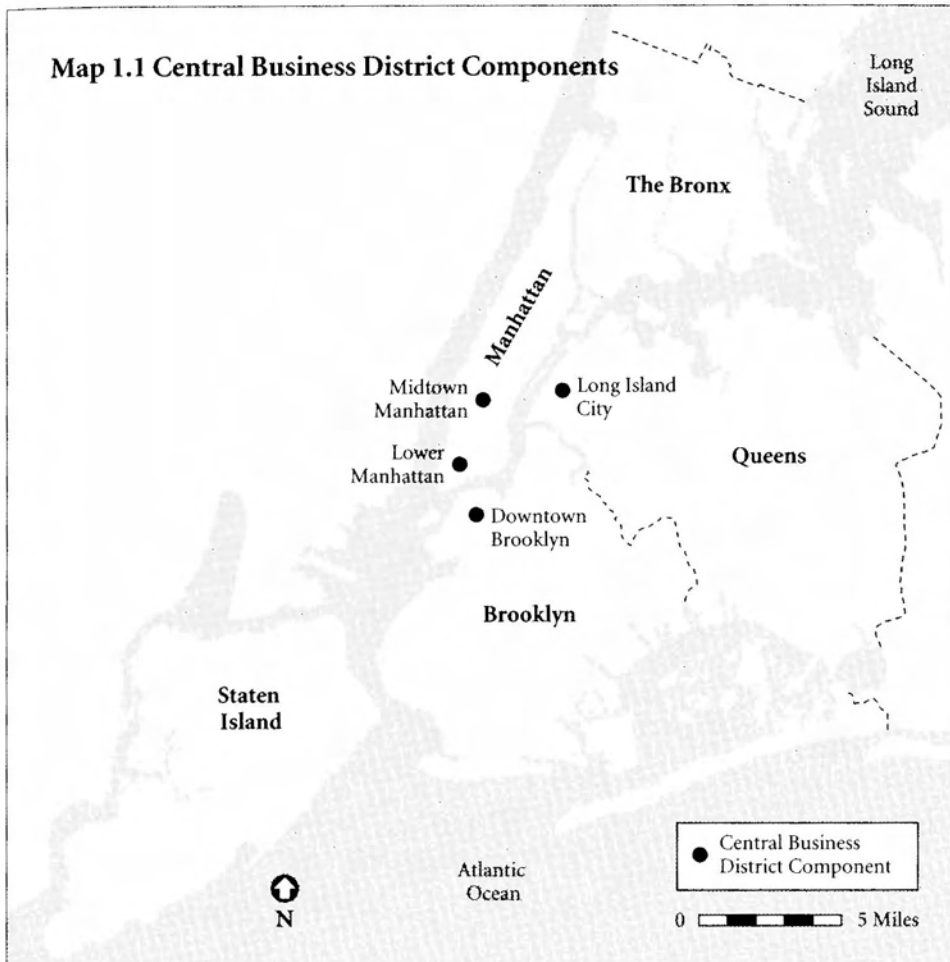
The Manhattan CBD has traditionally been divided into Downtown and Midtown. Downtown is the historic heart of the city and the hub of its subway system. Today, it is primarily a center of financial and government activity, although firms in other industries, such as advertising, began to locate Downtown during the 1980s. Midtown, a newer, more diversified center, has direct commuter rail access to the suburbs as well as subway connections to the rest of the city. All the city's export industries are represented in Midtown.

In the 1980s, Downtown Brooklyn emerged as a third component of the CBD. It now serves as a back-office location for firms headquartered in Manhat-



In the 1980s, planning policies encouraged new office development and other reinvestment in the Times Square area in West Midtown.

Map 1.1 Central Business District Components



Manhattan, especially Downtown. The city plans for Long Island City, Queens, to become a fourth component of the CBD. Just as Downtown Brooklyn serves as a back-office location for Downtown Manhattan, portions of Long Island City could emerge as back-office locations for Midtown (Map 1.1).

The metropolitan area's extensive mass transit system gives Manhattan access to a large number of workers with a wide range of skills. The public transportation network is vital to the Manhattan CBD and, therefore, the entire city economy. It gives New York a unique advantage among America's cities, most of which are largely dependent on automobiles.

Manhattan businesses have historically had good access to customers, clients, and suppliers located elsewhere. Today, this access is provided primarily by the city's airports and its telecommunications network. Because New York City was a pioneer in international air transportation and advanced telecommunications, it has maintained its position as the nation's international gateway. The city has more international air connections and a more sophisticated telecommunications network than any other American city. But the airports are old, and the telecommunications network has been disrupted recently by highly publicized failures.

Other American cities now have more modern airports with better mass transit links to their CBD. Some serve as domestic hubs of major carriers and are increasing their international linkages. Without a strong public-sector response, these changes will threaten New York's competitiveness.



The CBD's expansion to Downtown Brooklyn accelerated with the development of MetroTech, which houses back-office functions for several Manhattan financial firms.

Like the airports, some other activities in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island also bring money into the city. Nevertheless, these boroughs and northern Manhattan are largely dependent on the CBD. In 1990, 40 percent of Bronx workers, 38 percent of Brooklyn and Queens workers, and 31 percent of Staten Island workers were employed in Manhattan. Most of the remaining workers in these boroughs owe their jobs indirectly to businesses located in the Manhattan CBD. Income earned in Manhattan by residents of the other boroughs supports the retail stores, services, and institutions that are the mainstays of local business activity.

While some businesses require the access and intense activity of a Manhattan location, others cannot afford the high cost. If these businesses do not locate in the other boroughs, they will move to the suburbs or out of the metropolitan area. As a result, the city's policy has been to encourage

investment in the other boroughs to complement investment in Manhattan. For example, the city has redirected its commercial tax incentive programs to areas outside the Manhattan CBD. In the past decade, these efforts contributed to decentralizing the city's economy without reducing employment in Manhattan. From 1980 to 1990, the number of people working in Manhattan rose only 5 percent, from an already substantial base, compared to a rise of 19 percent in Queens, 20 percent in Brooklyn, 24 percent in the Bronx, and 28 percent on Staten Island. Since 1990, employment in Manhattan has fallen more steeply than employment in the other boroughs, refocusing attention on areas of Manhattan, particularly the Downtown CBD, as well as the other boroughs.

The CBD, and the city's economy as a whole, also rely on links to the suburbs. Suburban businesses are an important market for the city's advanced business service industries. Suburban corporate headquarters, in turn, are attracted to the region by proximity to the center of international business, culture, and design in Manhattan. Suburban commuters add to the labor force available to New York's businesses and, increasingly, New Yorkers are taking jobs in the suburbs. In 1990, 20 percent of the people working in New York City, or 735,000 workers, commuted from the suburbs, while 220,000 city residents—up 32 percent since 1980—worked in the suburbs.

In many ways, the city and suburban economies are complementary and interdependent rather than competitive. Unfortunately, suburban jurisdictions often compete to attract businesses while attempting to exclude their lower-paid

workers from living there, a practice exemplified by the lack of affordable housing and the labor shortages in most of the suburbs around New York. City residents working in the suburbs often face long, expensive commutes. Building better rail connections between the city and suburbs, clustering new suburban housing near rail stations, and grouping suburban businesses in satellite centers with transit service would make commuting easier for suburbanites and city residents and expedite business transactions in both areas.

Some suburbs are adopting planning policies that could promote cooperation with New York City and with one another. These policies could reduce reliance on the automobile and lessen pollution; encourage the redevelopment of existing urban land rather than the continuing loss of farmland and open space; provide better access to suburban jobs for city residents and better access to city jobs and other resources for suburbanites. The city should encourage, and cooperate with, plans to improve the regional economy as a whole.

To retain and expand its role as America's international gateway, New York City must respond to the rapidly changing business needs of the modern global economy. The city's central business districts must be adaptable, flexible, and able to reinvent themselves and their surroundings to remain productive.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Facilitate the Expansion of the Central Business District**

Since many industries have workers based in both offices and other types of buildings (stores, factories), it is difficult to measure office-based employment separately from other types of employment. From 1980 to 1990, the number of Manhattan employees in primarily office-based industries grew from 798,000 to 915,000. At the same time, the space standard for office workers increased to accommodate equipment and changing needs. This resulted in a 20 percent expansion of Manhattan's stock of office space in the 1980s, from 300 to 360 million square feet. The number of workers in predominantly office-based industries outside Manhattan also increased, from 107,000 to 140,000. Growth expanded the geographic boundaries of the city's CBD to Battery Park City, TriBeCa, Midtown South, Downtown Brooklyn, and Long Island City.

While there is a current surplus of office space, if the city's economy is to expand over time, new commercial space must eventually be built. The large blocks of vacant office space now available in the CBD parallel the experience of the 1930s and 1970s. After those periods of economic distress, the vacant space was filled, and development resumed within a decade. In the short run, efforts must be focused on reinforcing the existing CBD and absorbing the existing supply of buildings. History suggests, however, that modern space is reabsorbed by the market with economic recovery, and obsolete space is adapted for new uses or

demolished. As rentable office space becomes scarce, a new round of office development begins.

The city must ensure that appropriate as-of-right zoning is in place to accommodate expansion and future office needs. Zoning map changes provide a clear guide for private-sector investment and are a relatively inexpensive way for the city to promote economic development. The Department's Lower Manhattan and Long Island City comprehensive business district plans will recommend specific zoning changes and infrastructure improvements to accommodate future office space and other development needs. The Department should also examine accessible areas near Midtown and Downtown Manhattan, such as Downtown Brooklyn, to determine appropriate zoning map changes. The Department should coordinate new office development with needed infrastructure investments to ensure that the quality of life of CBD workers is maintained and enhanced.

As part of the *Citywide Industry Study*, the Department identified the needs of, and proposed recommendations for, the city's industrial sector. The Department should also begin a focused study of the city's critical export industries to identify industry-specific needs, locational requirements, and additional land use and zoning changes needed to facilitate environmentally sustainable economic growth throughout the city.

- **Reuse and Retrofit Existing Buildings in the Central Business District**

In the 1980s, many obsolete multi-story factories were converted to studios, offices, housing units, institutions, and retail stores. In the 1990s, the city will need to facilitate the reuse of older Manhattan office buildings, many of which, even if renovated, cannot accommodate the needs of modern offices.

One possible new use is housing. The "loft zoning" text amendments adopted in 1981 facilitate conversions of obsolete non-residential buildings to housing. Studies such as the *Lower Manhattan Plan* will evaluate whether any additional actions are necessary to encourage the reuse of older buildings. Housing development in business areas, however, must be evaluated in light of the role these areas play in providing all New Yorkers with jobs. For each proposal, the Department should examine the opportunities as well as any potential conflicts between new residents and existing businesses.

Another possible use of obsolete office space is wholesale trade and light assembly and distribution. The number of import-export firms has been growing in Midtown South and Lower Manhattan. Other light assembly and wholesale trade firms are also located in the CBD and other commercial districts, but current zoning restricts their presence. To allow older office buildings to be reused, the Commission will consider a Department proposal to permit wholesale trade and light manufacturing to expand in older non-residential buildings in sections of Midtown South, Chinatown, and the Lower East Side. The Department should



The Grand Central Business Improvement District helped enhance the appearance, safety, and environment of Midtown.

examine more areas and potential uses for obsolete office buildings and develop a strategy for facilitating appropriate reuse at suitable locations.

- **Upgrade the Public Environment of the Central Business District**

Many areas of the CBD are marred by streets, sidewalks, and public spaces in poor condition; missing or confusing public signs; and poorly marked, badly maintained, or unsafe subway entrances. These shortcomings discourage businesses from locating in the CBD and make the city less attractive to tourists and visitors. The *Lower Manhattan Plan* is examining these issues in the area south of Chambers Street. Comparable initiatives need to be carried out in Midtown and in Downtown Brooklyn to develop a coordinated, interagency strategy to correct existing problems. Possible improvements include signs in different languages, better regulation of sidewalk obstructions, and enforcement of amenities required by the zoning, such as plazas kept open to the public with public seating.

The waterfront represents a major opportunity to improve the public environment of the central business district. Waterfront areas formerly used for manufacturing and shipping are adjacent to the Manhattan CBD, Downtown Brooklyn, and Long Island City. The Department's recently released *Comprehensive Waterfront Plan* recommends adapting portions of the waterfront for commercial, residential, and recreational uses that would enhance the nearby business districts. The Department should pursue the actions necessary to implement these recommendations.

Existing Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in Midtown have helped make these areas cleaner, safer, and more pleasant. Consideration should be given to expanding the coverage of BIDs to appropriate areas in the CBD, provided the BIDs are responsive to the concerns of local businesses and residents. But not every area in the city has the financial resources and cohesion to support a BID.

Poor air quality—most of it caused by motor vehicle emissions—and traffic congestion already compromise New York's competitiveness. To reduce air pollution in highly congested CBD areas, the city should discourage the entry of private cars and reduce emissions from buses, taxis, trucks, and vans.

- **Improve Central Business District Accessibility**

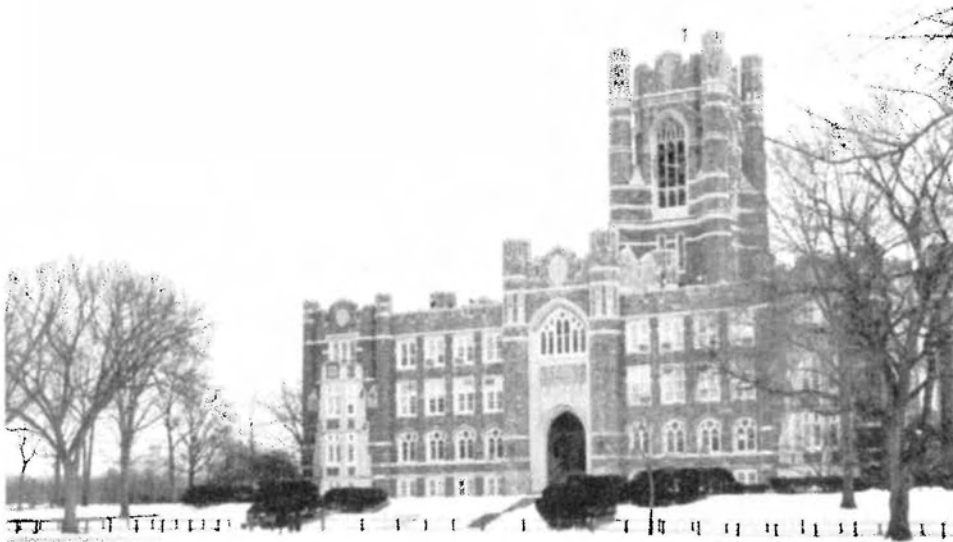
The key to CBD accessibility—the mass transportation system—must be improved. This requires an unflagging commitment to capital and maintenance investment in the existing infrastructure. But even if it were in good repair, this system—most of which was built more than 50 years ago—no longer meets the needs of many CBD-bound travelers. Many areas in the region were developed after the completion of the city's rail-transit network. Transit service must be expanded to serve these areas better, as well as areas where future development is constrained by capacity limitations.

The most pressing need for improved access to the CBD relates to New York's airports. The airports are the modern era's gateways to the city, linking New York with the rest of the world, but they lack the amenities of airports in many competing cities. While the airports are currently being rebuilt, to remain competitive they require direct, convenient mass transportation links to the CBD. Competitive world cities already provide such access. High-speed-intercity rail could provide alternative direct access from the CBD to other cities, particularly in the northeast corridor. High-value goods, destined for locations throughout the region, also arrive at the airports and compete for access on congested highways. The city must develop and implement plans to expedite freight movement from the airports to the CBD and other freight distribution centers.

Finally, the city must ensure that its telecommunications network remains among the best in the world. New York has a head start on competing world cities. The Mayor's Task Force on Network Reliability has brought telecommunications companies together in a pioneering effort to prevent catastrophic service failures, and it has proposed a number of tax and regulatory changes to encourage improved telecommunications quality and competition.

- **Support Export Industry Growth Outside the Central Business District**

New and renovated buildings outside the Manhattan CBD have demonstrated potential for supplying back-office space for Manhattan export-industry firms, as well as space for showroom, sales, and distribution services that support the

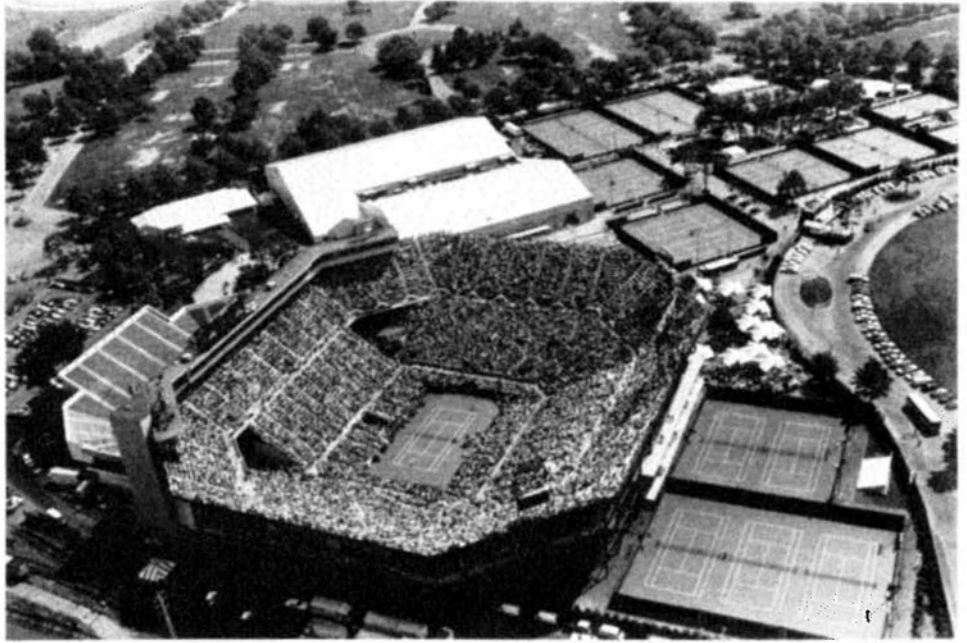


Institutions are a major export industry. Fordham University, whose Bronx campus is shown here, attracts 62 percent of its students from outside New York City.

CBD. The city should continue to make zoning changes and infrastructure investments to strengthen such non-Manhattan business districts as Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City. It should also provide the zoning flexibility and freight-movement improvements needed for expansion of wholesale, retail, and light-manufacturing enterprises that provide support services for the CBD. Crime and image issues are critical to expansion to areas outside Manhattan, many of which also suffer from an unattractive public environment. Efforts to address these issues must work in tandem with financial incentive programs. The recommended study of export industries must also address ways to enhance their growth outside the Manhattan CBD.

Port facilities in Brooklyn and Staten Island have the potential to recapture some of the region's oceangoing trade. *The Comprehensive Waterfront Plan* and the *Citywide Industry Study* highlight this possibility, while emphasizing the need for major infrastructure improvements to provide the necessary landside access. The city's *1994-2003 Preliminary Ten-Year Capital Strategy* has proposed a wide range of port and waterfront improvements. The Department should work with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to ensure that the needs of the working waterfront are met.

The city's major hospitals and universities, many of which are located outside the CBD, play an increasingly important role in the economy. Classified as community facilities under zoning regulations, they must be permitted to expand and to operate different types of facilities that reflect the changing nature of health



The National Tennis Center, site of the U. S. Open, draws over 500,000 people to Flushing, Queens every summer.

care, research, and education. To encourage their growth, the city must ensure that regulations balance community concerns with the need for ongoing expansion. The boroughs outside Manhattan also have the potential to become centers of biomedical technology. Much medical research already takes place in the city, but the resulting production generally takes place elsewhere.

Many of the city's tourist attractions—especially large cultural and recreational activities and vibrant ethnic centers—are located outside Manhattan. The city must ensure they are publicized and accessible to visitors. Such major sporting events as the New York City Marathon and the U.S. Open have grown with the popularity of running and tennis and now have considerable public relations and economic value to the city. The city and region should continue to cooperate to attract major cultural and sporting events, such as the coming Goodwill Games in 1998. These kinds of activities help publicize tourist attractions outside the Manhattan CBD. Finally, the entire city, and especially the boroughs outside Manhattan, suffer from a shortage of hotel accommodations at affordable prices.

SERVING THE LOCAL MARKET

New York City's economy relies on its export industries, but most city residents work in local-market industries, which provide goods and services predominantly to other city residents and businesses. Industries that serve the local market contribute directly to the well-being of New York's consumers. They also influence the extent to which New York is a competitive location for its export industries: If the cost, quality, and availability of local goods are as good or better here than they are elsewhere, New York will attract businesses.

The city's local-market industries employed 1.4 million workers in 1991 (government employed an additional 600,000). They can be divided into five categories (Figure 1.5):

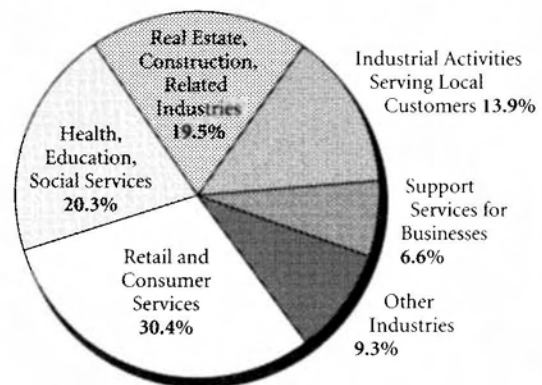
- Retail trade and consumer services (411,000)
- Health, education, and social services (276,000)
- Real estate, construction, and related industries (265,000)
- Industrial activities serving local consumers (189,000)
- Support services for business (90,000)

During the 1980s, as export industries brought more income into the city, local-market businesses showed employment gains. While employment in the city's export industries began to fall after the 1987 stock market crash, local-market industries did not show declines until 1989. The link between export industry payroll and local-market employment points to a possible scenario for the future. If the city's export industries continue to relocate cost-sensitive operations outside New York, they will not add as much employment as in the 1980s, but they may continue to generate increased income. In that case, much of the city's employment gains may be in local-market activity supported by the growth of export-industry income.

Unfortunately, New York's suburbs captured most of the 1980s regional gain in local-market activity. There is substantial evidence that the income generated by New York City's export industries could support an expanded local economy, especially outside Manhattan. Such additional activity would increase the amount of export industry income recirculating within the city's economy.

Local-market industries represent an opportunity for employment and income gains in the coming decade, particularly for the less skilled. They also provide an opportunity for entrepreneurship and the development of new, locally owned businesses. However, current trends and conditions in the local-market economy raise several critical issues.

Figure 1.5 New York City Local-Market Employment, 1991



Source: ES202 Data, New York State Department of Labor
Categories and Calculations by the Department of City Planning

Retail Activity

Manhattan provides the greatest variety of highly specialized, high-quality goods and services in the nation, but the other boroughs have far less retail activity than the income of their residents justifies. Several trends contributed to this situation.

First, recent innovations in retailing have bypassed urban centers, including New York. These include factory outlets and “warehouse stores,” which rely on high volume and operating efficiencies to provide a wide range of goods at low prices, and retail chains desiring one-story, relatively column-free space, convenient parking for customers, and good access for trucks and cars. As a result, the cost of many standard goods in New York City is higher and the selection inferior to that outside the city. Second, during the 1980s, the income of New York City residents rose faster than the level of retail services. Constrained by rising rents and lack of room for expansion, the city’s retailers were unable to capture the growing retail expenditures of city residents. Third, more New Yorkers have

access to a car—44 percent of New York households in 1990—and can shop at more modern stores in surrounding suburbs.

During the 1980s, most new stores in the region were built in the suburbs, leaving the city’s retail sector undersized relative to residents’ income. In 1987, for example, although Nassau County and Queens County residents each reported about \$33 billion in personal income, Nassau County stores had \$12.1 billion in retail sales, while Queens had only \$6.7 billion. In 1990, if the city had the same share of regional retail sales and employment as of personal income, it would have had an additional \$6.6 billion in retail sales, 48,000 retail jobs, and millions of dollars in sales tax revenue.

Virtually all neighborhoods in the city have food stores. But many—especially low-income neighborhoods—are vastly underserved by supermarkets. Although supermarkets are usually the lowest-priced source of food and other basic goods, limited competition among supermarkets in the city often results in higher prices, smaller selection, and inferior

food quality. A key goal for the city is to ensure that every neighborhood of the city is well served by supermarkets.

Regional Commercial Centers

Traditional regional centers—such as 125th Street in Manhattan, Fordham Road and the Hub in the Bronx, St. George on Staten Island, Flushing and Jamaica in Queens, and Flatbush and Kings Highway in Brooklyn—resemble the downtowns of older small cities. They sell goods and services not purchased regularly, such as apparel, home furnishings, appliances, legal services, accounting, and



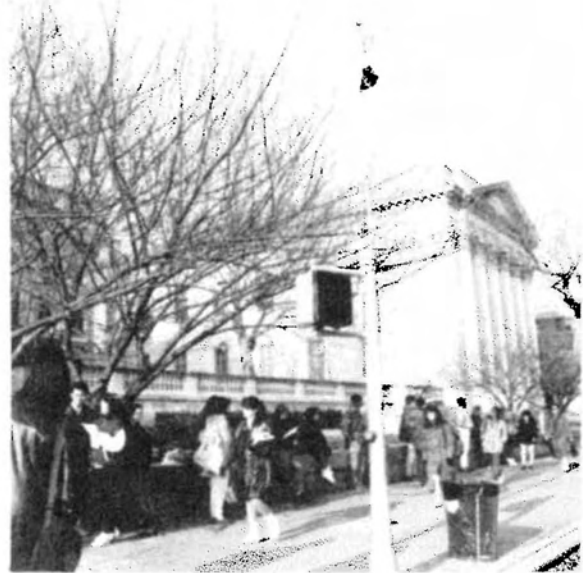
The Hub, part of the Bronx Center area, contains major stores and institutions.

banking. They attract business from a much larger area than the local commercial streets, which provide such regularly purchased goods as food.

The city's regional centers can be divided into categories based on their mix of uses. Some, like St. George, are primarily governmental and institutional. Others, like Flatbush, are primarily retail. Centers that combine retail and institutional activities, such as Bronx Center, often have substantial office space occupied by lawyers, accountants, and medical offices.

New York City's traditional regional centers were built to accommodate foot traffic and transit access rather than automobiles. Their buildings are often old and poorly maintained, and adjacent residential neighborhoods often limit the potential for expansion and new development. Like downtown areas throughout the nation, these regional commercial centers have difficulty competing with auto-oriented centers, many of which are located in the suburbs, and have highway access, extensive parking, security, and other amenities.

Nearly all the city's regional commercial centers declined steeply during the 1970s. But like the city as a whole, New York's traditional regional centers bucked a national trend in the 1980s: They were saved by major public investments, population and income gains, and an influx of immigrant entrepreneurs and customers. More recently, some areas have been losing their department store anchors, and once again their future is in question. To survive, they must attract enough customers and business activity to rehabilitate their existing buildings and develop new ones.



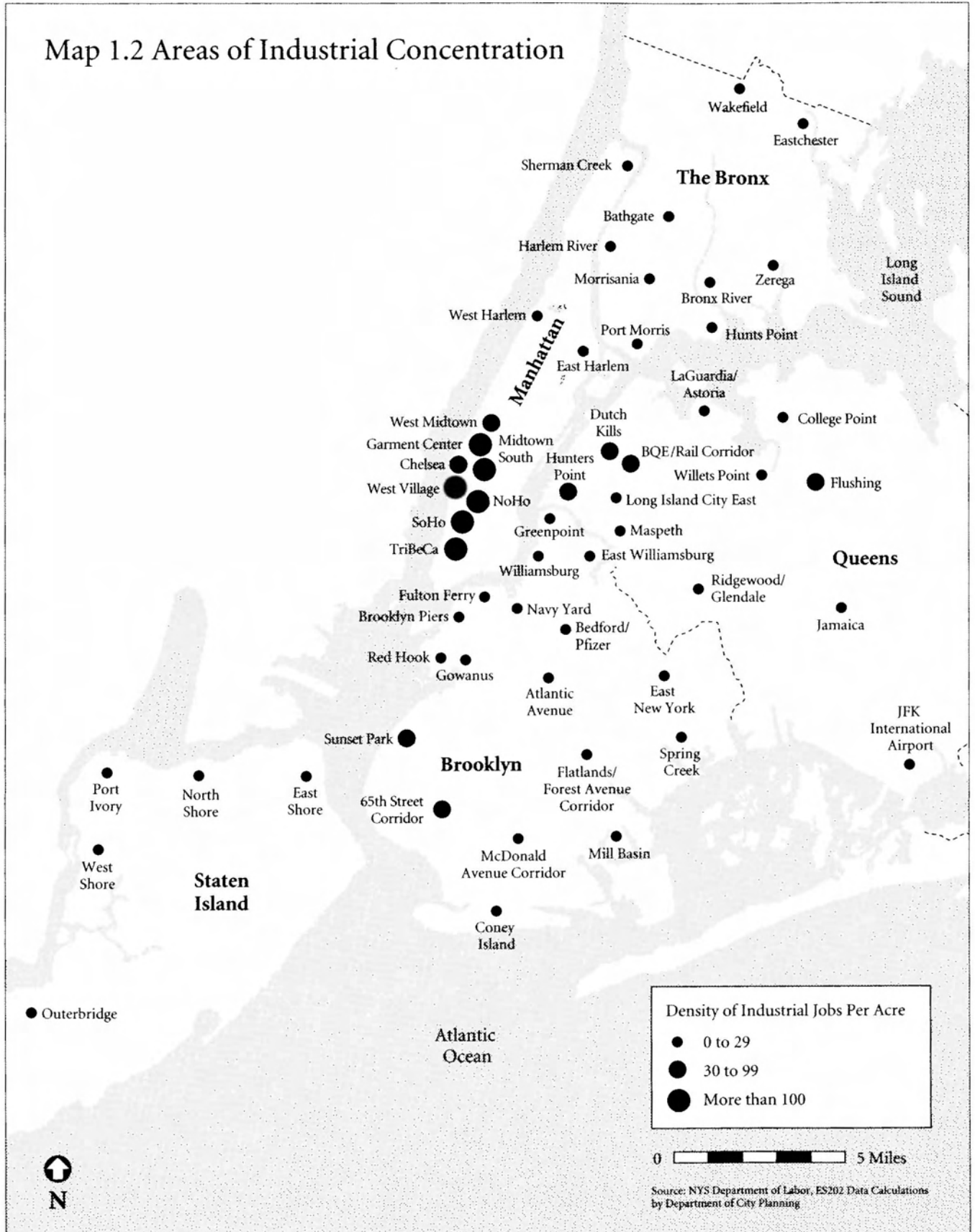
St. George regional center on Staten Island is characterized by government uses.

Local-Market Industrial Activities

Like retail trade, local-market industrial activities have the unrealized potential to provide additional entry-level, semi-skilled jobs for New Yorkers. The New York metropolitan area is no longer a competitive location for most large-scale manufacturing exporting to national and international markets. This portion of the regional economy has declined steeply and continuously. At the same time, industrial activity serving local and regional markets—construction, distribution, transportation, utilities, and customized light assembly—has grown in conjunction with increases in office-based activity. Aside from construction, most of this growth has occurred in the suburbs.

The city's industrial areas vary by location, industry mix, and intensity of use. The concentration of industrial activity is higher in the Manhattan central business district than anywhere in the city. The CBD contains much of the city's remaining blue-collar export industry activities—jewelry, high-value apparel

Map 1.2 Areas of Industrial Concentration



production and wholesaling, and import-export wholesaling. It also provides support services for the city's non-industrial export base, including printing, trucking, theater-related manufacturing, and wholesale trade in paper and professional and commercial equipment.

Industrial areas on both sides of Newtown Creek, including Long Island City, Maspeth, East Williamsburg, and Greenpoint, serve as industrial back-up areas to the CBD. These areas have high levels of industrial employment—much higher on the Queens side than the Brooklyn side of the creek. Some outlying areas of the city—such as the 65th Street Corridor in Brooklyn, Eastchester in the Bronx, and Flushing in Queens—are relatively healthy. These areas have a mix of industrial and non-industrial activities serving local needs, including wholesaling, auto repair, and construction. But most outlying industrial areas—with the exception of the airports—have relatively little industrial or non-industrial activity. The airports and adjacent areas, though land-intensive and low-density, provide employment for large numbers of workers (Map 1.2).

Although the city has a surplus of industrial land, it has a shortage of modern one-story buildings and developable sites in low-crime, mixed-use areas with access to uncongested interstate highways. Where such space is available, the vacancy rate for industrial space is low, and employment is high. Most modern local-market industrial businesses do not have the nuisance potential of “smoke-stack” industries. They are relatively clean and quiet neighbors—increasingly mixed-use establishments that combine wholesale distribution with retail, office, and light-assembly activities. These hybrid establishments have been attracted to suburban business parks. While undeveloped areas will always have more large, low-cost sites available, the city's inability to capture a greater share of the indus-



New York's industrial sector, including Long Island City, primarily serves the local and regional markets.

trial activity serving its own population and businesses still represents a missed opportunity for its semi-skilled workers.

To attract a larger share of the region's light industry and distribution, the city's manufacturing districts must evolve into areas these businesses prefer—an urban response to suburban business parks with a comparable mix of activities, security, amenities, and freight access. This will require improvements in security and in transportation infrastructure as well as more flexible zoning regulations.

The city did experience employment gains in construction and related industries during the 1980s. Over the short term, surpluses of office and residential space will depress new construction, but there continues to be a need to modernize space or renovate it for new uses. If construction is to show employment gains during the 1990s, the city's economy must grow, and development and redevelopment must be encouraged in appropriate locations. The city's own capital spending on roads, bridges, mass transit, water supply, water pollution control, and subsidized housing also supports the local construction industry.

Regulatory Climate

Further growth of the local economy depends on its ability to generate new businesses, but the complexities of municipal regulation and taxation discourage entrepreneurs. Still, the city's small businesses prospered during the 1980s. While employment rose only 10 percent from 1983 to 1989, the number of self-employed New Yorkers increased by 29 percent—and self-employment income rose by 67 percent. The growth of new businesses cuts across racial and ethnic lines. From 1982 to 1987, the city showed a 46 percent increase in businesses owned by blacks and a doubling of businesses owned by Hispanics and Asians, according to the *1987 Survey of Minority-Owned Businesses*, published by the Bureau of the Census. Access to capital for these groups remains severely limited.



This workshop/store manufactures pasta for sale both on-site and at other retail locations in the city.

The city could stimulate even more entrepreneurial business development by becoming an easier place to start a business. City regulations affecting business, including zoning, are extensive, complex, and difficult to understand. Many potential entrepreneurs are neither sophisticated enough nor rich enough to endure the rigor of negotiating the city's regulatory framework. Many other small businesses do not attempt to

comply with its rules. They form the city's "informal sector," where they have difficulty getting credit and face the constant threat of enforcement actions.

New York City's high local taxes also discourage new business, as documented recently by the Mayor's Management Advisory Task Force Committee on Incentives and Tax Policy. The city levies many local business taxes that are

unique to New York—like the unincorporated business tax, which puts a heavy burden on entrepreneurs. In the short run, these taxes provide revenues for city services without burdening city residents, but they may ultimately reduce employment opportunities by encouraging businesses to locate elsewhere.

For New York's local-market economy to achieve its potential in the 1990s, the city must provide a responsible regulatory climate that permits development of modern retail stores, encourages investment in industrial areas, increases the viability of older regional commercial districts, and makes it easier for entrepreneurs to start and operate businesses, without compromising the environment or public safety.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

• **Increase the Vitality of Regional Commercial Centers**

The long-term vitality of the city's regional commercial centers depends on their ability to retain and attract office uses, institutions, and stores. While regional centers' specific needs must be identified and addressed through individual studies, these areas must improve their appearance and accessibility, generate sufficient foot traffic for retail uses, and provide the amenities shoppers expect.

Concentrating new institutions—including hospitals, colleges and universities, central libraries, and government offices—in regional commercial centers can provide many benefits. Institutions such as libraries can provide support services for local businesses. Since regional commercial centers are traditional transit hubs, vehicular use is minimized, energy efficiency is maximized, and the institutions better serve residents who do not have automobiles. Spillover effects on residential areas are minimized. Moreover, the large number of people traveling to and from the institutions increases the viability of local retail stores.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the city located government offices at Fordham Plaza, Hostos Community College in Bronx Center, and government offices and York College in Downtown Jamaica. During the 1990s, the city plans to construct a new police academy in Bronx Center and new court buildings in a number of regional centers. The city should coordinate these investments with improvements in other community services, such as child care. Although the city should encourage new institutions to locate in regional centers, it is difficult and expensive for existing institutions to relocate. Therefore, those not located in regional centers must also be permitted to expand at their current locations.

The city has also encouraged the development of housing in and near these commercial centers, increasing the number of regular shoppers. During the 1980s, the city's vacant building rehabilitation and new construction programs added many housing units to areas near Fordham Road, Bronx Center, and 125th Street. During the 1990s, additional new publicly subsidized development is



Publicly sponsored institutional development near retail areas—like Hostos College in Bronx Center—enhances these areas' vitality.

planned for such locations as Melrose Commons in Bronx Center and Bradhurst in North Central Harlem.

To attract shoppers from larger areas, the city's regional commercial centers must provide such common amenities as an aesthetically pleasing environment, restrooms, signs, seating, and promotions. BIDs can provide a mechanism to fund common amenities, but not every regional center can support a BID. The city must ensure that an adequate level of public services is available in all its major commercial areas.

The city's regional centers developed in part because of their superior transit access, but population shifts and changing transit habits will compromise this superiority unless transit service is improved. Subway and bus service must be reliable, convenient, and perceived as safe. Concentrating activity in these areas will help generate ridership, which in turn will improve security.

Accommodating the automobile is also a critical issue. The Department should follow up its recent studies of major zoning use categories, including residential, manufacturing, and community facilities, with a study of commercial regulations, including commercial parking requirements. As part of its comprehensive business district plans, the Department should recommend specific traffic and transit improvements, and study regional commercial centers where such issues as traffic and transit have been raised.

- **Expand Opportunities for Retail Facilities**

Because suburban markets have recently become saturated, some large national store chains have begun to consider urban locations in such regional shopping areas as the sites vacated by the bankrupt Alexander's department store chain in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. Some locally based independent large stores have also attempted to expand in the city. Unfortunately, modern retail establishments face multiple problems when seeking a New York City location. Existing commercial centers are usually narrow strips abutting residential neighborhoods. The narrow dimensions of most of these strips make it difficult to build modern stores or provide parking, and vehicular access is limited.

Rising incomes and the city's commercial revitalization programs have helped many of these strips to remain stable during the past decade. But to fulfill its potential to generate both retail employment and sales tax revenue, the city must capture a greater proportion of retail trade. Zoning must respond to evolving retail practices. The Department should incorporate into its work program specific area studies to evaluate the depth of mapped commercial zoning districts and such infrastructure investments as transit, traffic or parking improvements needed to attract retail activity to important shopping areas.

As part of its *Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans*, the Department should also continue to evaluate the potential for new supermarkets and public markets. A number of proposals have already been made for the development of smaller supermarkets, and the Economic Development Corporation is in the process of marketing these sites. Urban design issues must also be addressed to ensure that new retail development enhances the character of the surrounding community.

Another opportunity for capturing retail activity is in industrial areas where large sites are more readily found. However, current zoning restricts many types of large stores in industrial areas. With limited exceptions, retail stores bigger than 10,000 square feet are not permitted as-of-right but require costly and lengthy public reviews. This is one of several factors that discourage developers from investing in modern supermarkets, warehouse and discount stores, factory outlets, and department stores in the city.

Given the growing interest of major chains in city locations, making retail sites available in industrial areas could lead to the development of additional modern supermarkets and retail stores. The Department has proposed zoning amendments to relax the existing restrictions on large retail developments in light- and medium-manufacturing zones. To ensure that land use issues associated with retail development are addressed, the Department will also propose rules treating all large retail developments consistently. The Department should explore how best to weave new retail development into the existing urban fabric while preserving the vitality of neighborhood shopping streets.

- **Promote Investment in Industrial Areas**

The city's industrial areas should be upgraded to attract local-market industry. Although it cannot duplicate the low-density, auto-oriented developments of the suburbs, the city must develop an urban equivalent, with improved freight transport, to attract light industry. This would provide the mix of uses, level of activity, appearance, freight access, and security of modern industrial areas. Local-market manufacturers and distributors, especially those producing customized products and services, must be able to attract customers and clients to their sites.



The 65th Street Corridor in Brooklyn contains a mix of industrial and commercial activity.

In active neighborhoods like the 65th Street Corridor in Brooklyn, industrial workers and business customers fill the area on weekdays, and consumers shop on weekends—there is activity every day. In many New York industrial areas, in contrast, there are empty lots and buildings used for long-term storage. In the evenings and on weekends, these areas seem empty and threatening. Permitting large retail stores could increase the level of activity in many industrial areas, making them more inviting and more secure.

Business improvement districts and the city's industrial parks can also help to improve the environment in many of the city's industrial areas. In suburban business parks, development managers provide a wide range of common amenities, including parking and security. In the city-owned industrial parks, park management can provide the range of services industrial businesses expect. In many locations outside the industrial parks, industrial BIDs could allow businesses in areas with diverse ownership to band together to provide common services. Each BID must be evaluated to ensure that area businesses can support the added costs, however, and the city must ensure that an adequate level of public services is available in all industrial areas.

Zoning regulations for manufacturing districts now permit the full range of industrial uses, provided the uses comply with the performance standards applicable in each district. These standards were state-of-the-art when adopted more than 30 years ago, but they have not been revised or reviewed since. In some cases, the standards may be superseded by more recent environmental laws or may no longer adequately protect adjacent uses. The Commission supports an interagency review of performance standards.

- **Encourage Entrepreneurship**

Regulatory and bureaucratic obstacles are among the most daunting and unnecessary impediments to new business activity in New York. To open a business that

requires multiple regulatory reviews can mean renting a store and holding it vacant for a year or more, and hiring expensive consultants, without any certainty of approval. While most of these regulations and procedures were adopted for good reasons, the cumulative effect has been to discourage entrepreneurship. New York needs to rethink many of its regulations, including those embodied in the Zoning Resolution. The city can encourage entrepreneurship by ensuring that its regulations are easy to understand and administer and serve a public purpose whose value is greater than their administrative cost.

Many light-industrial activities are located in commercial districts throughout the city. They include bakeries, wholesalers, custom apparel manufacturers, electronics assembly, and printers. Their dispersed locations are convenient for customers and clients, allow their owners to work near home, and permit the hiring of workers from the area. Under current zoning rules, however, these activities are often either restricted or prohibited on local commercial streets. For example, bakeries are allowed only 750 square feet of baking space, and apparel and custom manufacturing are not permitted at all. Retail uses are often subject to rigid limits on location and size. Therefore, the Department will propose allowing currently permitted industrial-sector activities to occupy more space in certain commercial districts. The Commission recommends the Department's commercial district zoning study also examine the possibility of permitting additional retail uses and workshop/stores on these streets. This study should also determine which uses could be permitted in additional locations without adversely effecting neighborhood character and area residents.



GROWING AFFLUENCE, PERSISTENT POVERTY

Despite the recent recession, the past 15 years have been a time of prosperity for many New Yorkers. In 1979, the average New York household earned 17 percent less than the average American household. By 1989, the two averages were about the same: New York's median household income had risen 28 percent to \$29,800; the nation's was \$30,100. In ten years, New York City rose from being a substantially poorer-than-average area to being about average for the nation and wealthier than most large American cities—a reversal of the city's 1969 to 1979 decline. The post-1989 recession has eroded gains, but evidence indicates the city has retained most of this major increase in income. From 1979 to 1989, the average inflation-adjusted wage and salary income of New York households with at least one member in the work force increased by more than a third, from \$32,000 to \$43,000. In 1990 the average annual pay of New York City private-sector employees was \$35,000—50 percent above the national average.

This substantial increase in prosperity improved the lives of many, but by no means all, New Yorkers. In fact, the percentage of the population living in poverty barely declined, and the number of adults living in poverty actually rose. In 1990, 393,000 New York City adults—one adult in 14—relied on public assistance. More than a third of the city's children are living in poverty. The increase in prosperity raised median household income in almost all city neighborhoods, and the number of people dependent on public assistance declined during the expansion and rose during the recession. Still, many New Yorkers have not participated in the city's rising economy. Economic growth is a prerequisite for improving their lives, but growth alone is not sufficient.

The Changing Labor Market

The education and skills of New York's labor force have increased, along with the needs of the new economy. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of college graduates rose by 346,000 while the number of adults with less than a high school degree fell by 239,000. Still, only 68 percent of adult New Yorkers had a high school degree in 1990, compared with 77 percent of adults nationwide. What's more, only 40.1 percent of public high school students in the class of 1988 graduated after four years. The figure rose to 57 percent with additional years and high school equivalency diplomas included.

In New York City today, there are fewer job options for the less educated and less skilled. First, industries that have traditionally employed less educated workers, like manufacturing, have been declining; while industries that employ few workers without diplomas, like finance, have been expanding. Second, skill requirements have been increasing within all industries. In 1970, city residents held 200,000 more management and professional jobs than college degrees. In 1990, the number of city residents with college degrees exceeded the number of employed managers and professionals by 125,000. The same trends occurred nationally. As a result, college graduates are taking jobs once filled by high school graduates, and high school graduates are taking jobs once filled by dropouts. Third, business has taken advantage of technology to increase productivity. Because of automation, manufacturing employs more skilled technicians and fewer unskilled laborers. Because of computer technology, office-based industries employ fewer semi-skilled typists and clerks and more administrative assistants with a wide variety of skills.

Unfortunately, many New Yorkers face other barriers to full participation in the economy—discrimination for some, lack of affordable child care for others. For example, the *Citywide Industry Study* found that the few higher-paid jobs available to those without high school diplomas were disproportionately held by non-Latino whites. As a result, the average white high school dropout earned more than the average black high school graduate. What's more, the composition of the city's labor force has changed in such a way as to make the availability of child care an increasingly important issue. Women now constitute 47 percent of the labor force. Of these, almost 12 percent have children under six. In the last decade, the greatest growth in the female labor force has been concentrated among these women. Almost half of them worked outside the home in 1990.

To break down those barriers, the city has undertaken several recent initiatives: encouraging minority and women-owned businesses to bid for city contracts; increasing education funding; and reaching an agreement with local construction unions to recruit woman and minorities. Community-based development organizations and groups like the New York City Partnership's Community Partnership Program have sought to direct public construction dollars to firms owned by members of minority groups, allowing several African-American and Latino homebuilders to get access to bank financing for the first time. New York City can and must continue to expand economic opportunity by providing low-income people with skills, access, and opportunity to work and by making child care facilities more accessible to working mothers.

Persistent Poverty

Due to a growing disparity in wages between more and less educated workers, the benefits of the 1980s economic expansion accrued primarily to the better off—in

New York City and in the nation. The percentage of New Yorkers below the poverty line dipped slightly, from 20.0 percent in 1979 to 19.3 percent in 1989, but the number of working-age adults living in poverty actually rose.

The metropolitan area's low-income people are concentrated in the city. In New York's suburbs, only 6.5 percent of the population lived below the poverty line in 1989, compared to 19.3 percent in the city. Among most of the other American cities with populations over one million, however, the percentage below the poverty line was similar to New York's: 18.9 percent in Los Angeles, 21.6 percent in Chicago, 20.7 percent in Houston, 20.3 percent in Philadelphia, 13.4 percent in San Diego, 32.4 percent in Detroit, and 18.0 percent in Dallas.

Even the slight decline in New York's rate of poverty bucked the national trend in the 1980s. The percentage of all Americans living in poverty rose from 11.7 percent in 1979 to 12.8 percent in 1989 and to 14.2 percent in 1991. The percentage in poverty rose during the past decade in each of the other cities over one million in population except Philadelphia.

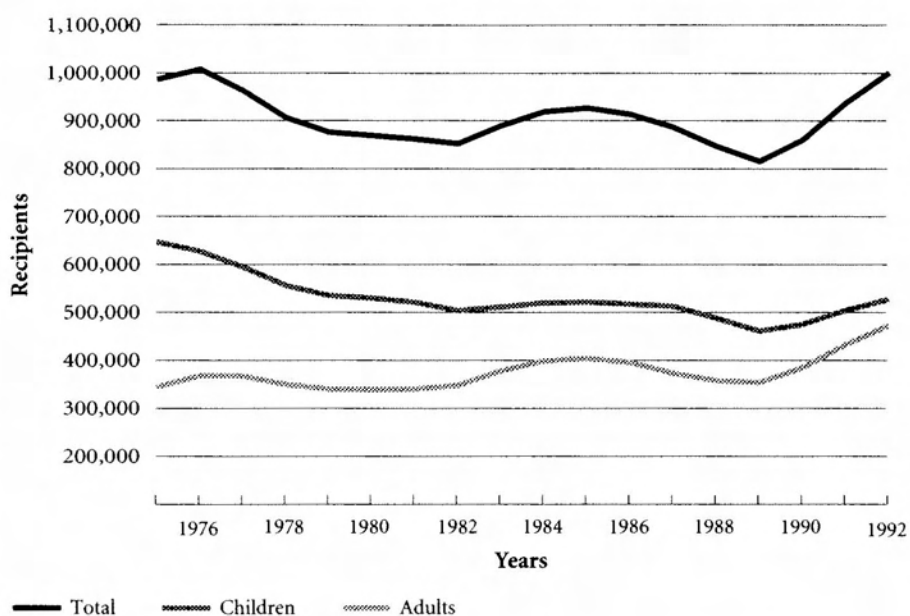
Low-income residents were slightly less concentrated within the city in 1989 than in 1979. In 1979, 66 percent of the city's low-income people lived in community districts where at least 20 percent of the population was low-income. In 1989, 62 percent of the city's low-income residents lived in such districts. Moreover, most middle-income and even low-income neighborhoods in New York City showed substantial increases in inflation-adjusted income during the 1980s. Only three community districts—all in the South Bronx—had a reduction in inflation-adjusted median household income.

Still, 19.3 percent of 7.3 million people translates into widespread hardship, and the post-1989 decline in the city's economy has exacerbated the plight of low-income people. This is evident in the increase in the number of children and adults dependent on public assistance programs—Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Home Relief, and Supplemental Security Income. While the number of city residents receiving public assistance stood at 815,000 in 1989, down from more than 900,000 in 1985, the number has since risen to more than one million (Figure 1.6). Nearly two-thirds of the residents added to the public assistance rolls are adults. Moreover, when adjusted for inflation, the average public assistance grant fell by 15 percent from 1979 to 1989. For New Yorkers of all incomes, the suffering of low-income people is evident on a daily basis.

The needs of the city's low-income population have a major impact on local tax rates and services. As the federal government has withdrawn funding to older cities where low-income people are concentrated, local governments have been left without the resources to provide social and other services to their growing low-income populations. And unlike most other states, New York State requires local governments to pay 25 percent of welfare and Medicaid costs, placing additional fiscal pressure on the city.

New York City's political climate is more compassionate toward low-income residents, and the city provides better services for them than most areas do. But

Figure 1.6 New York City Public Assistance Recipients, 1975 to 1992



Source: Current Employment Survey NYS Department of Labor

lack of financial support from other levels of government and the size of the city's low-income population have prevented New York from providing the quality of services its most vulnerable residents require.

Poverty is a national problem. Central cities, where low-income populations are concentrated, simply do not have the resources to address it adequately. Fortunately, New York has retained a larger share of affluent and middle-income households and businesses than most central cities. This has given the city a relatively healthy tax base. The city spends more on education, as a share of its residents' income, than other large cities, although less than the national average. The city's public transit system, unavailable in auto-dependent cities, gives low-income people low-cost access to employment. Despite its problems, New York remains the city of opportunity, an irresistible attraction to many throughout the world who wish to better themselves.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

• Support Overall Economic and Tax Base Expansion

Any discussion of poverty must focus on employment opportunities. The city must spur overall economic development by fostering the knowledge-intensive industries that help make it a world city. These industries provide few jobs for

high school dropouts, and are providing fewer jobs for high school graduates as routine back-office operations become automated or are relocated to lower-wage areas. Indirectly, however, these industries are vital to the city's ability to provide opportunities for low-income residents. They bring income into the city, leading to employment gains in local-market industries, which do provide employment opportunities for the less-educated. Export industries and their high-income workers also pay a preponderant share of the taxes that permit the city to provide social services, health services, education, and mass transit for all residents. As detailed in Chapter 1, the city can foster overall economic development and expand its tax base by facilitating the expansion of the CBD.

New York City's local sector provides a wide range of employment opportunities for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. As discussed in Chapter 2, retail trade, wholesale distribution, light assembly for the local market, construction, transportation, and health services represent the city's best opportunities to increase employment.

- **Improve Facilities for Public Education**

Education has long been a key to advancement in America, and this is truer today than ever before. Business, labor, and political leaders and most city residents recognize that major improvements in public education and job training are needed to give all New Yorkers, especially the low-income, the knowledge and skills they require in today's information-intensive economy.

One of the problems confronting the city's educational system is the age and condition of its physical plant, which has experienced problems due to deferred maintenance and overcrowding. The city plans to spend \$7.4 billion over the next ten years to address these problems. The goal is to restore the system to a state of good repair by 2001, modernize the schools, and relieve overcrowding. Because school enrollments are cyclical, the city should take care not to overbuild new school capacity to meet a temporary peak demand. The Department, working with the Board of Education, should develop better enrollment forecasting models to determine long-term need.

- **Increase Access to Child Care**

To take full advantage of available employment opportunities, and to give their children an educational head start, women and men who are primary care providers need access to convenient, competent and affordable child care. The provision of child care needs to be given a higher priority on the public agenda. Many alternatives are being proposed and devel-



Child care is essential for many parents to participate fully in the labor force.

oped to reconcile the competing demands of parenting and work. In conjunction with the Human Resources Administration, the Department should use its data and research resources to identify child care needs and evaluate the extent to which zoning regulations may limit the availability and accessibility of needed facilities. For example, child care facilities are generally not permitted in manufacturing districts, many of which contain substantial business activity or are adjacent to residential communities.

- **Improve Living Conditions in Low-Income Neighborhoods**

The low-income population relies on public schools, public libraries, public transportation, public parks and recreation, public health care, and, in some cases, public housing. When city services deteriorate, as they did during the 1970s fiscal crisis, all New Yorkers suffer, but low-income people suffer the most.

As people rise out of poverty, they often leave their low-income neighborhoods and the city. To retain such individuals and their families, the city must improve the quality of life and city services in its poorest neighborhoods. This means addressing public safety concerns, improving the quality of public education, and providing a range of housing options in low-income neighborhoods. In some neighborhoods, a decent quality of life can seem a distant promise. Part Three of this report outlines an agenda of land use and capital budget actions that can, in conjunction with other policies, help improve life in all city neighborhoods.



Developed with the assistance of the New York City Housing Partnership, this housing on city-owned land in the South Bronx is one example of how reinvestment can improve living conditions in low-income neighborhoods.

The concentration of poverty in a few neighborhoods reduces New York's quality of life. The city should pursue policies promoting economic integration. For example, in predominantly low-income neighborhoods, the city's subsidized housing program provides opportunities to retain or attract middle- and moderate-income households. At the same time, in affluent neighborhoods, the inclusionary housing program provides or preserves low-income housing units. Neighborhood land disposition plans can also be used to alleviate poverty by allocating space to uses that will increase neighborhood reinvestment. (These policies are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.)



SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Over the long term, New York's role in the world and in the region rests, in part, on its ability to achieve a sustainable environment. Despite obvious problems, the city approaches environmental policy with several distinct advantages:

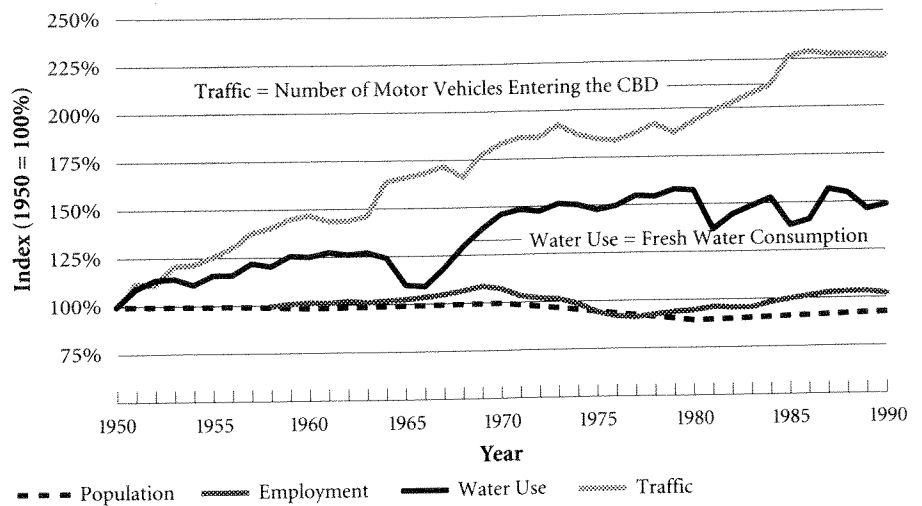
- **Its pattern of land use.** Because New York is developed largely at densities that can sustain mass passenger transportation, it is not inherently dependent on the automobile. This makes New Yorkers among the most efficient per capita users of energy in the country. It also gives the city options for controlling pollution and congestion that other cities lack.
- **Its historical lack of heavy industry.** This allows the city to control pollution and avoid hazardous waste cleanup problems on the scale faced by other areas.
- **The investment in infrastructure made by prior generations.** New York's pioneering investments in its water supply and subway systems have provided more than 150 years of abundant, high-quality drinking water and almost 100 years of mass transit.

Despite these advantages, the city has also faced many of the environmental problems of other municipalities. Both air and water quality were degraded. The subway system declined drastically due to years of deferred maintenance. The aging water system has been subject to breakdown. In the 1980s, however, New York made dramatic progress in beginning to address its environmental problems, spending more than \$16 billion in city capital funds to improve environmental quality and enhance transportation mobility. The city's air and water are now among the cleanest recorded since measurement began. The transit system has greatly improved its quality of service. The third water tunnel nears completion.

Yet as some problems are addressed, new ones emerge. The quality of drinking water is now threatened by development in upstate watersheds. The city's traditional methods for disposing of solid waste and sewage sludge are no longer environmentally acceptable. And just as the city has made progress transporting people, it must also address major deficiencies in the equally critical area of transporting freight.

More effort and investment will be required to respond to increasingly complex problems, comply with federal standards, meet rising public expectations, and improve the quality of life for New Yorkers and the millions of others who work and visit here. The cost of additional environmental infrastructure is largely a func-

Figure 2.1 Changes in New York City Traffic and Water Use



Source: Census of Population (Population); Current Employment Survey (Employment); Department of Environmental Protection (Water Use); NYMTC Hub Bound Survey (Traffic). Note: Population data were available only for census years. Missing years were interpolated. Employment data were not available prior to 1958.

tion of residents' consumption patterns. Over the last 30 years, water usage, sewage and solid waste, traffic congestion, and air pollution have grown while the city's population and employment base have remained relatively stable (Figure 2.1). There is some evidence that per capita water usage and solid waste generation may be stabilizing, however. Accounting for the true environmental and economic costs of consumption offers one of the best approaches to modifying consumer behavior and improving environmental quality. Education and pricing policies or other innovative regulatory mechanisms can drastically reduce the need for major new capital investments and operating expenditures.

Many of the environmental issues confronting the city require regional cooperation. Compact centers within the region could permit greater use of mass transit, walking, and other means of travel than the private automobile. Jobs, services, and recreation would be within easy reach of households, reducing fuel consumption and emissions, travel time and expense, and even traffic congestion. Construction costs for new roads, highways, and utilities could be minimized. Farmland, forests, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas could be preserved.

The economic gains of the past decade, coupled with the environmental progress of the past 20 years, have improved the city's and the region's ability to cope with these issues. With a commitment to confront the major challenges, assistance from the state and federal governments, and the increased resources generated by an expanding economy, New York City can be one of the prototypical environmental cities of the twenty-first century. The goal of a sustainable environment can be achieved.

MOVING PEOPLE AND GOODS

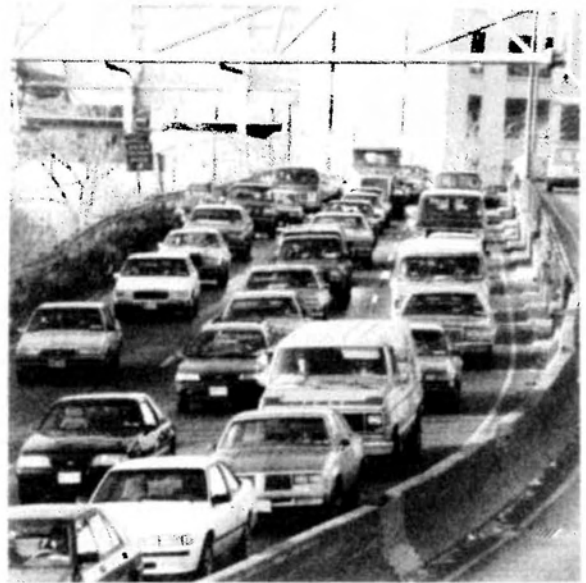
New York's City's size and density, its national and international preeminence resulted largely from the development of its outstanding port, rail, road, and transit facilities. Over the past 30 years, however, the transportation network has not kept pace with the pattern of population and economic activity dispersed throughout the city and the region. Mobility on the city's and the region's transit systems, streets, highways, and bridges is constrained by decades of deferred capital investment. Demand has often outstripped capacity.

During the 1980s, car ownership in New York City rose 28 percent, while federal Clean Air Act standards became more stringent. If the city is to meet the new federal standards and provide the mobility essential to its economy, New York must increase mass transit ridership. It must intensify public and private efforts to achieve mandated reductions in vehicular emissions. And it must actively pursue movement of freight by rail and water.

New York City and the region must comply with Clean Air Act standards for carbon monoxide by the end of 1995 and for ozone by the year 2007. The act calls for development of strategies to reduce traffic congestion and resultant air pollution. Technological solutions, such as cleaner engines and fuel, have dramatically improved carbon monoxide levels. Further technological improvements and the use of alternative fuel cars (electric and natural gas) may play a role in the long term. The city and private fleet owners are exploring conversion of fleet vehicles to natural gas. But the principal strategy for maintaining mobility and clean air in New York's dense urban environment will be reducing traffic congestion and increasing transit use, particularly rail.

Like the city's economy, its transportation network has enormous strengths, including one of the world's most extensive transit systems, a network of highways, two of the region's three major airports, one of the best natural harbors in the country, and freight rail line and marine terminal capacity. The network's chief liabilities are age, deferred maintenance, and lack of systematic modernization. The last significant addition to the highway system was the West Shore Expressway on Staten Island in 1972, and few rail transit extensions have been completed since World War II.

Billions of dollars of investment will be needed to overcome decades of disinvestment in the transportation infrastructure. Poor airport access could jeopardize the city's role in the world economy. Moreover, limited integration of the different transportation systems within the city and the rest of the region weak-



Traffic congestion adversely affects the city's economy, environment, and quality of life.



New York's mass transit system supports an unparalleled concentration of business activity in the CBD.

ens not only the city, but also the metropolitan area. The city and the region must be committed to creating a seamless transportation web to move people and goods and to make its transportation gateways attractive and inviting.

The transportation network has many modes within it. If they were arranged in a hierarchy of efficiency, different modes would emerge as best for different functions. For moving people into and out of the Manhattan CBD, rail mass transit is the most efficient. Ferries, express buses, and vans can supplement rail transit and provide alternatives to the private car, which must be actively discouraged from entering the CBD. People can cover short distances on foot or bicycle. Given the wide dispersion of population and business, goods movement throughout the city will continue to depend on trucks. Waterborne and rail freight must play an increased role, primarily for relatively high-weight, low-value, time-insensitive goods. Higher-value goods will, in all probability, continue to move mostly by truck and air.

Transportation policy must recognize that each mode has a different role in addressing a broad range of needs, from bicycle access to transit line extensions. While the city's focus must remain on maintaining the subway, highway, and bridge systems (which represent massive investments impossible to replicate today), New York must also plan carefully for expanding the transportation system.

Moving People in the City and in the Region

On a typical business day, nearly 3.3 million people converge on the Manhattan CBD. During the three-hour morning peak period, close to 75 percent of the 1.4 million arrivals are by subway and commuter rail lines; about 15 percent by automobile, taxi and van; and 10 percent by bus. During the day and into the evening, the use of subways decreases, and the share of people entering by automobile increases (Figures 2.2 and 2.3).

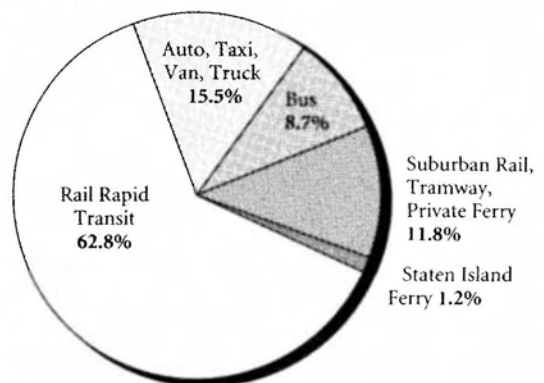
Each day, the Transit Authority's local bus routes carry 1.5 million passengers, mostly on intraborough, non-CBD trips. Since 1980, the number of city residents working in the suburbs has increased 32 percent. However, commuter rail and transit systems are oriented toward bringing suburbanites to the CBD; many suburban job sites are at densities too low to support extensive transit service. Unless a higher proportion of suburban jobs are concentrated in compact centers, and a more extensive bus and van network is organized, an increasingly significant number of single-occupant automobile trips will originate in New York City, congesting city and suburban roads.

Increased automobile use is caused not only by shifts in population and employment, but also by a failure of the city and the region to coordinate infrastructure investments and provide safe, dependable alternatives to the automobile. For years, public officials have discussed major infrastructure projects to add transit service capacity, then deferred them for lack of funding. As New York approaches the twenty-first century, it must make far-sighted investments in transportation to achieve economic growth, clean air, and a more livable city.

Getting the Most Out of Rail Transit

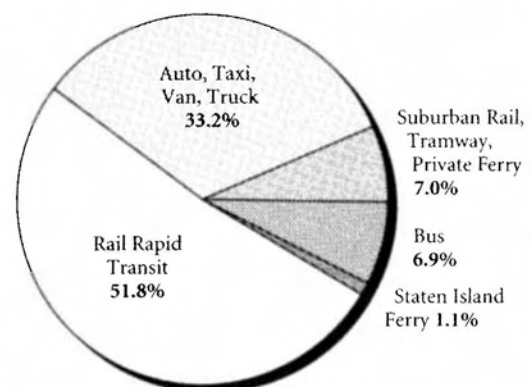
The existing rail transit system (Map 2.1) must be the centerpiece of any mobility strategy. The New York City subway system, one of the world's largest, carries 3.5 million riders each day in 6,000 cars over 714 miles of track. Built largely between the turn of the century and World War II, the subway system shaped New York's development. In 1982, the first Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) five-year capital rebuilding program for subways and commuter railroads began making the major investments needed to overcome decades of deferred maintenance and restore the system to a state of good repair. Remarkable strides have been made, but much remains to be done, even after ten years and the expenditure of \$16 billion.

Figure 2.2 People Entering the CBD, 7 to 10 am, by Mode of Transport (1.4 million)



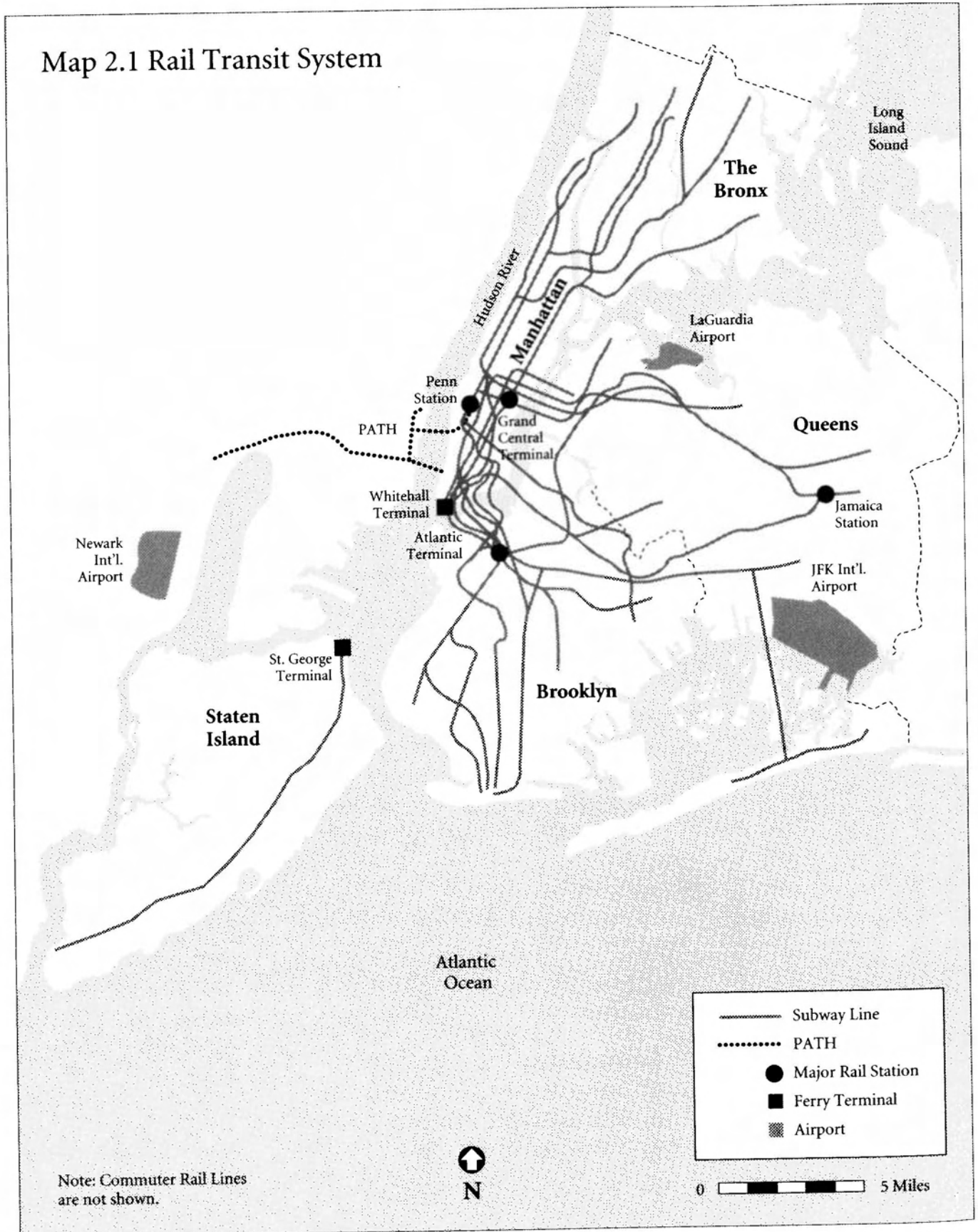
Source: New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, 1991

Figure 2.3 People Entering the CBD, Over 24 Hours, by Mode of Transport (3.3 million)



Source: New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, 1991

Map 2.1 Rail Transit System



New York City is linked to its suburbs by three commuter railroads with a ridership of 221,000 into the CBD on a typical business day. Metro-North Railroad operates trains from Grand Central Terminal to the northern suburbs. The Long Island Railroad runs out of terminals at Penn Station, Flatbush Avenue, and Hunters Point Avenue, with a major transfer station in Jamaica. New Jersey Transit provides rail service to Penn Station. The Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) lines bring an additional 100,000 passengers a day to stops in Lower and Midtown Manhattan.

Inadequate rail and subway service to outlying sections of the city and the suburbs has resulted in increased automobile and illegal van usage and overcrowding on certain subway lines. Underserved areas include central and south Queens; the east Bronx corridor extending from Co-Op City south; the east side of Manhattan; Staten Island; and the area of New Jersey just west of Midtown Manhattan. Enhanced transit service is needed for these and other areas with overcrowded lines. Conversely, certain subway lines contain excess capacity and offer opportunities for accommodating growth without major capital expenditures (Map 2.2). In addition, the proposed five-year MTA capital program would build the "Queens Connection" between the 63rd Street subway tunnel and the Queens Boulevard lines, permitting trains to run more often and reduce crowding.

Alternatives to Rail Transit

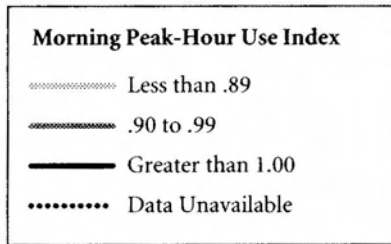
Increased use of rail transit to the CBD is the city's best hope for reducing congestion and pollution. But ferries, express buses, vans, and bicycles can also play a useful role. In 1910, 35 ferry lines connected Manhattan below 59th Street to the rest of the region. By 1967, only two were left—one to Staten Island and the other to Governor's Island. During the 1980s, private operators added new ferry routes to meet the transportation demand generated by residential and commercial development along the Manhattan and New Jersey waterfronts. The average number of week-day passenger trips on these ferries grew from fewer than 1,000 in 1986 to 16,500 trips in 1992.

In the late 1960s, the Transit Authority and private bus companies instituted express bus service to connect areas without convenient subway or local bus service to the Manhattan CBD. These areas included Douglaston in Queens, Riverdale and Co-Op City in the Bronx, and Port Richmond on Staten Island. On a typical business day, more than 160,000 people enter the CBD aboard 7,300 express buses. Another 67,000 passengers enter the CBD on local buses. During the 1980s, the use of vans to transport people into the CBD grew, as did van use along local bus routes to subway stations, and from areas unserved by mass



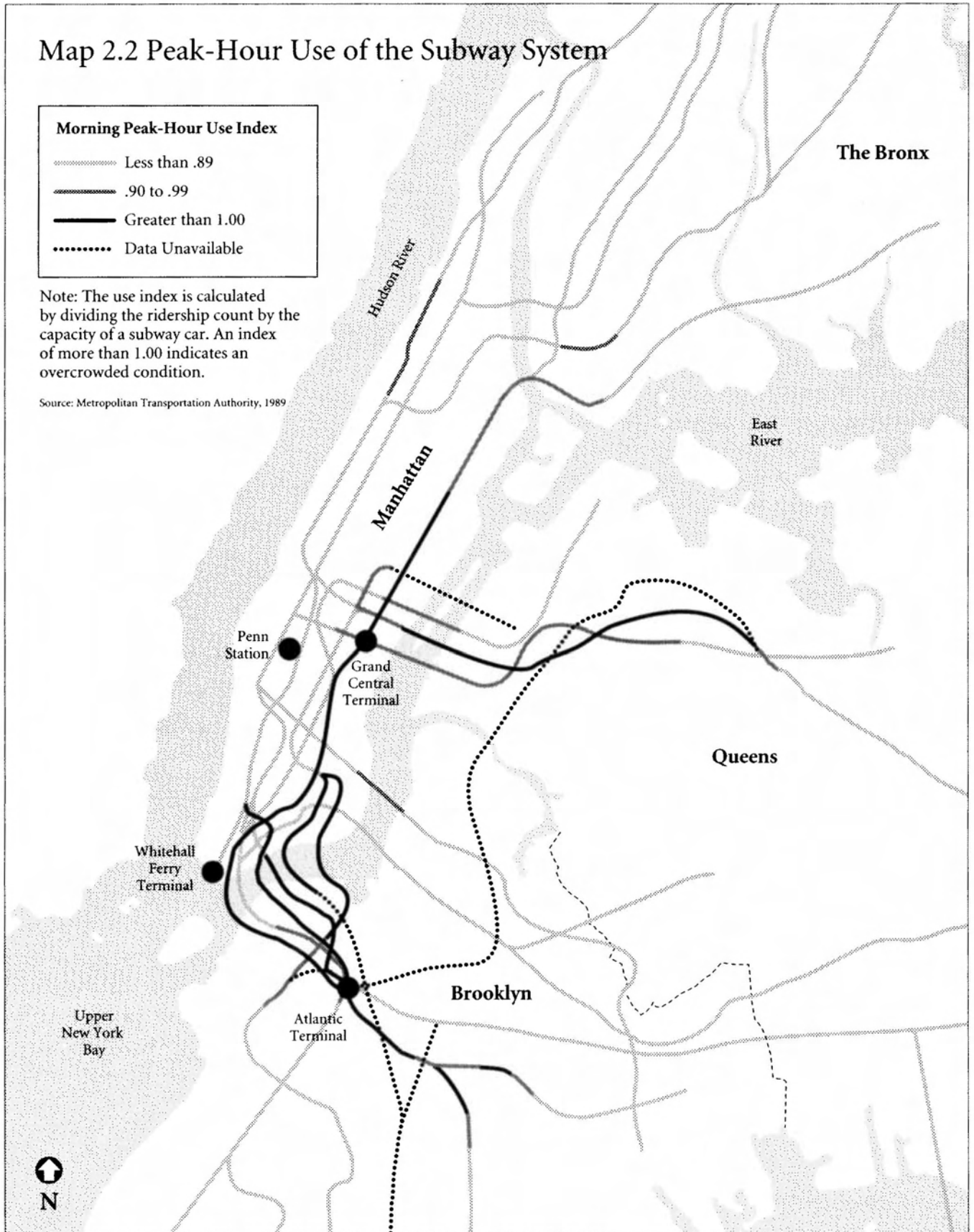
The Staten Island Ferry, the oldest and largest of New York's passenger ferries, carries 65,000 passengers a day.

Map 2.2 Peak-Hour Use of the Subway System



Note: The use index is calculated by dividing the ridership count by the capacity of a subway car. An index of more than 1.00 indicates an overcrowded condition.

Source: Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 1989



transit. The concentration of express buses and vans has contributed to congestion, particularly in the CBD, adversely affecting certain neighborhoods.

Moving Goods in the City and in the Region

New York's future as a leading economic center is contingent on its ability to move goods, particularly on the region's highway system. In 1989, 90 percent of all freight moving throughout the region traveled by truck for at least part of the journey. Each day more than 30,000 trucks cross the Port Authority bridges and tunnels from the west into the city. Poor highway access, congestion, and the physical condition of highways and bridges in the region hamper goods movement and add to shipping costs.

Given the patterns of freight movement in the city, both around and into the central business district, trucking will continue to be the primary means of freight movement. Since the highest-value freight arrives by air and distribution facilities are located in the suburbs, most peripheral freight movement (around the Manhattan CBD) must also be made by truck. However, New York City must take advantage of opportunities to modernize rail freight service and to shift freight traffic from the roads to rail or water to produce both economic and environmental benefits (Map 2.3).

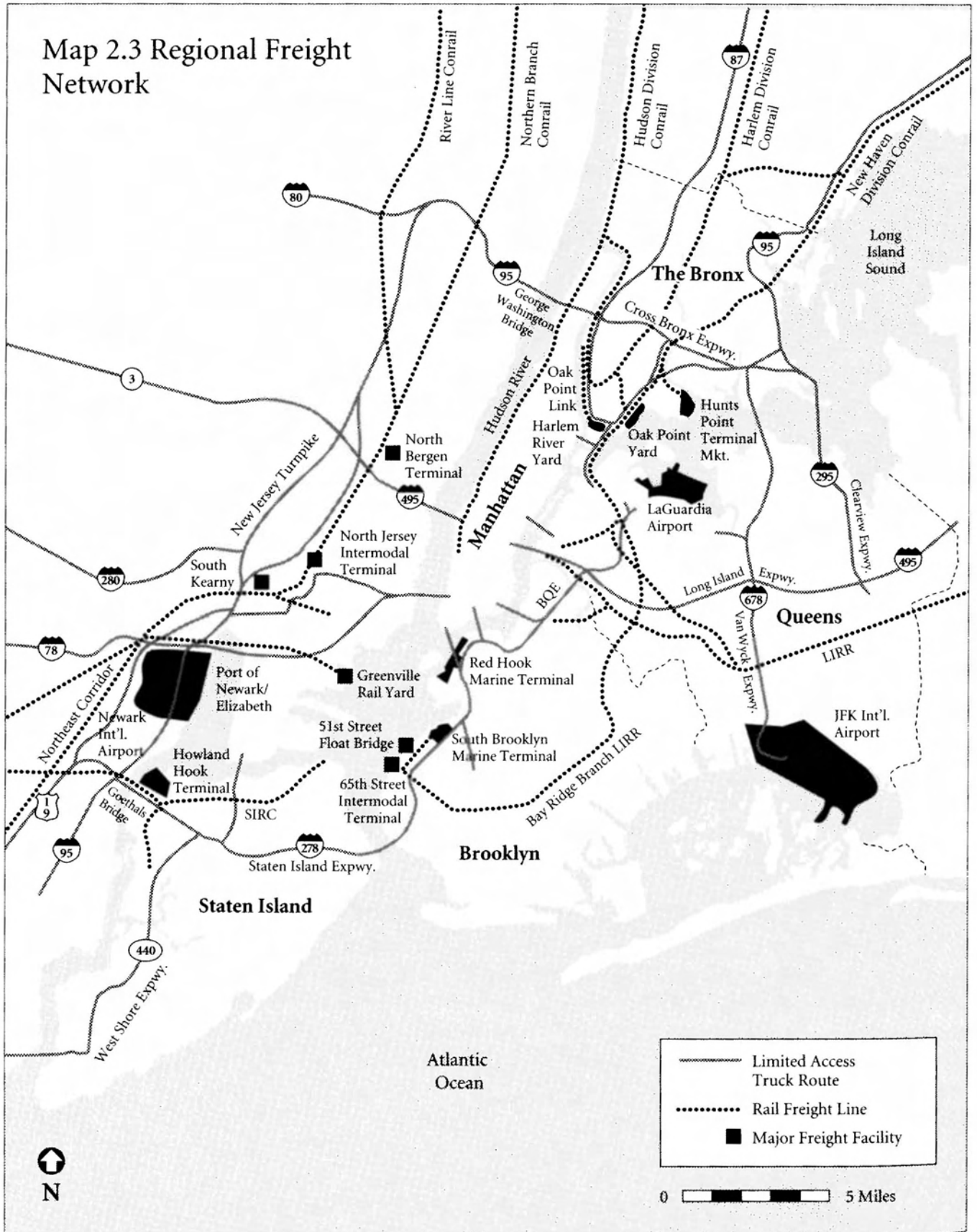
Moving Goods by Truck

The city's commercial transportation flow has changed from one going west-bound, shipping goods from factories to the rest of the country, to one that now flows east, delivering goods to the first (New York City) and the ninth (Long Island) largest markets in the country. Only eight major truck routes enter New York City from the mainland of the United States: three bridges to Staten Island, two tunnels and one bridge to Manhattan, and two major highway connections in the Bronx.

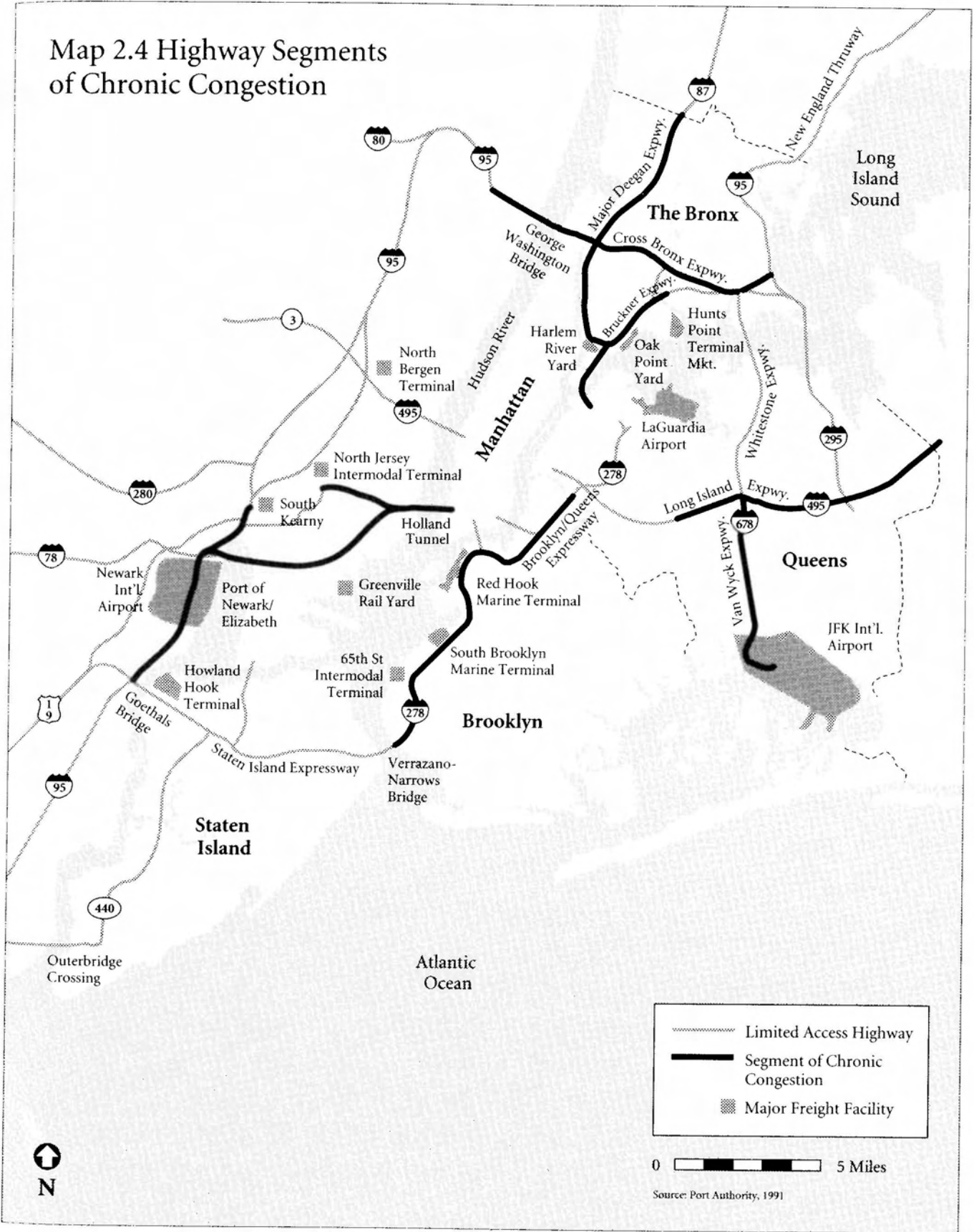
Truck-freight movement in the city has two major components. The first is the peripheral movement around the Manhattan CBD, resulting from the initial shipping to warehouses in New Jersey of a large portion of the goods destined for markets in southeastern New York State. The peripheral movement reflects the dispersion of region-serving local industries, and the role of JFK Airport as a major air-freight destination. The second component involves movement of goods into and out of Manhattan, primarily to office-based industries and retail businesses in the CBD. River crossings on both sides of the CBD connect it to a complex network of suppliers and services.

The city's highway system has seen little improvement since the early 1970s. Many highways and bridges cannot accommodate the largest interstate trucks, because of low clearances, narrow lanes, or statutory restrictions on commercial traffic. At the same time, truck-freight has increased because of economic growth

Map 2.3 Regional Freight Network



Map 2.4 Highway Segments of Chronic Congestion



and the decline of rail and waterborne freight. As a result, many parts of the truck-movement system operate above capacity and are congested even at non-peak hours (Map 2.4). Because the city's highways are often surrounded by dense development, expansion or modification is severely limited. And improvements that simply encourage use of the highways by additional single-occupant passenger cars would not facilitate freight movement.

Moving Goods by Rail and Water

The New York City rail-freight system is composed of various mainline and branchline routes running throughout the city. Access to the rest of the nation is provided primarily by Conrail via Selkirk, New York, near Albany. The New York Cross Harbor Railroad (NYCHRR) provides a little-used alternative by floating freight cars across New York Harbor between Greenville, New Jersey, and the Brooklyn waterfront. The rail-freight system is hampered by conflicts with passenger train services (which have priority on shared tracks) and inadequate bridge clearances for modern rail equipment.



A \$16 million modernization and expansion is planned by the Port Authority for the Red Hook Marine Terminal in Brooklyn.

Since the mid-1960s, the Port of New York's shipping activity has been shifting to the New Jersey side of the harbor, which now handles over 80 percent of the region's oceanborne trade. Shipping on the New York side is hindered by a lack of backup space for container operations and poor landside truck and rail access. The Port Authority is investing \$25 million to improve the 187-acre Howland Hook Marine Terminal on Staten Island, whose operations will resume in 1993. A \$16-million modernization and expansion is planned for Brooklyn's Red Hook Marine Terminal, the only major active containerport in the city. Farther south on the Brooklyn waterfront, the city has successfully converted part of the 110-acre South Brooklyn Marine Terminal to a cocoa storage facility, and the city's Economic Development Corporation is pursuing a marketing and infrastructure study of this site.

Capital Investment and Funding

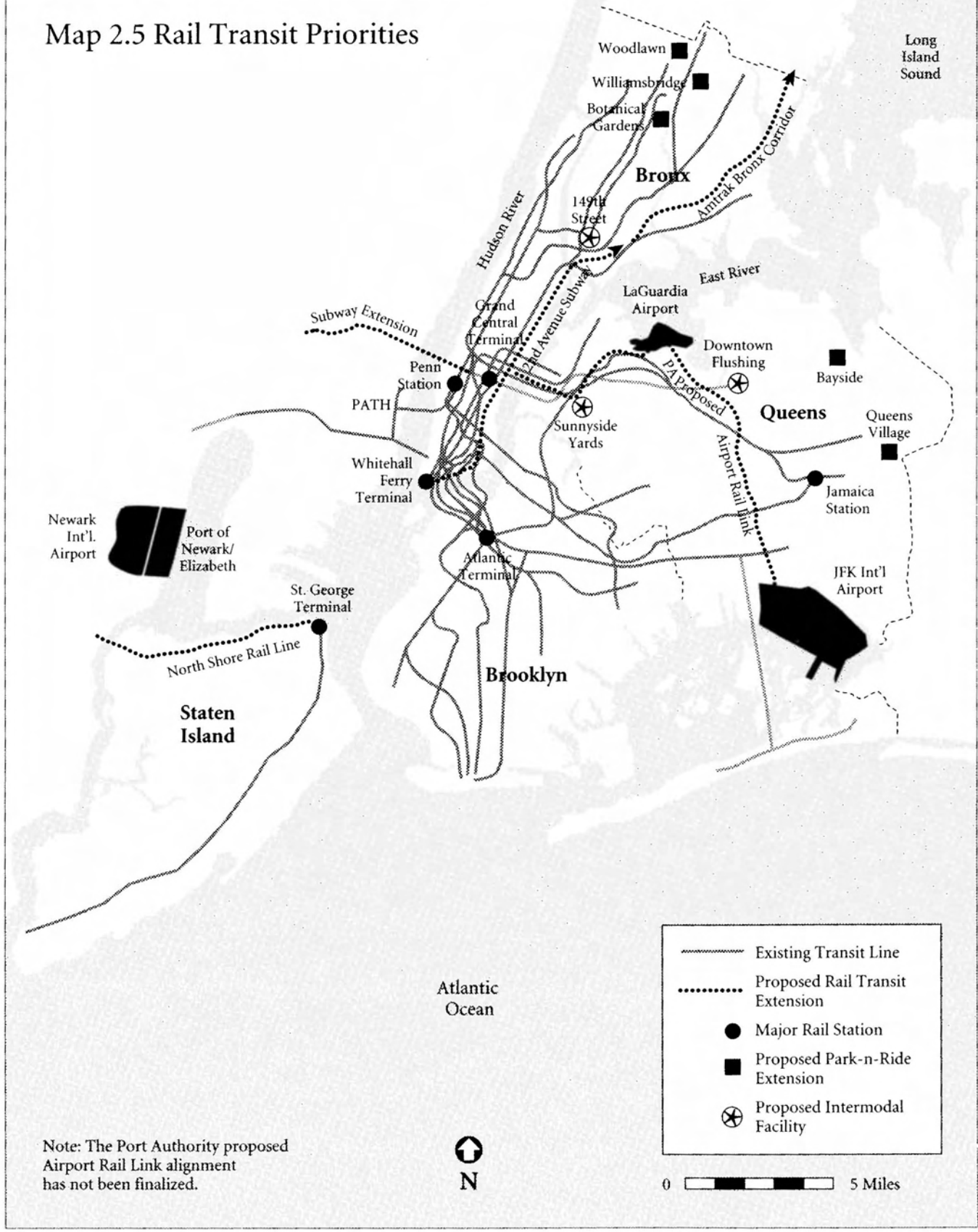
Of the city's major infrastructure systems, transportation is the most underfunded. The needs far outstrip available resources. The New York State Department of Transportation has estimated total transportation infrastructure needs in the city for rebuilding and maintenance at \$100 billion over the next 25 years. Of this amount, roughly \$70 billion is needed for transit, and \$30 billion for highways and bridges. The cost of the MTA's proposed five-year capital program for 1992 to 1997, which includes projects to achieve a state of good repair and new needs, is estimated at \$9.6 billion. In 1992, New York State approved only a one-year allocation of \$1.6 billion.

The recently enacted federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) promises to focus attention on transit and to provide more flexible funding. Use of ISTEA funding to improve truck-freight movement presents the city with a significant planning challenge. Trucks share the roads with private cars. The ISTEA legislation generally prohibits areas like New York City that have not met federal carbon monoxide and ozone standards from receiving funds for any highway project that will promote increased single-occupant automobile use.

The Federal Aviation Administration approved the Port Authority's request to collect from each airline traveler a Passenger Facility Charge of three dollars, to be earmarked for financing a rail system to LaGuardia and Kennedy airports. There are other proposals suggesting additional revenue sources for funding capital improvements and operating expenses for the transit system. While politically charged and fraught with implications that must be carefully evaluated, these proposals merit serious public debate.

Collecting tolls on the East and Harlem River bridges could fund bridge and highway operating improvements or finance bonds. Some revenue could be allocated to finance mass transit, as is done with Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA) tolls. Air quality, traffic flow, and fare collection would have to

Map 2.5 Rail Transit Priorities



Note: The Port Authority proposed Airport Rail Link alignment has not been finalized.



	Existing Transit Line
	Proposed Rail Transit Extension
	Major Rail Station
	Proposed Park-n-Ride Extension
	Proposed Intermodal Facility

0 5 Miles

be addressed in evaluating this proposal. The Commission believes a time-of-day toll structure for all Manhattan bridges and tunnels holds significant promise for improving traffic flow and air quality within the CBD and in communities along transportation corridors leading to the CBD. Time-of-day tolls or a permit system for vehicles entering Manhattan could also better link the economic costs motorists bear to the social costs of automobile use and street congestion.

Over the years, the share of TBTA surplus allocated to the Transit Authority by formula has declined and no longer reflects the share of TBTA users from within the city. The formula represents a substantial subsidy by city residents to suburban rail commuters and should be revised to support the Transit Authority better. In April 1993, additional transportation funds will be available from the state's Petroleum Business Tax, but they have not yet been allocated.

Increasing the transit fare usually leads, at least temporarily, to declines in ridership. Reduced transit usage can adversely affect air quality and other efforts to mitigate congestion. While fare-setting is outside its purview, the Commission believes that responsible agencies should consider the fare structure from both an environmental and budgetary standpoint. Agencies should also accelerate those capital improvements, like automated fare collection, that can encourage ridership, better integrate transit system components, and provide for time-of-day or other flexible pricing.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Maintain and Selectively Expand the Rail Transit System to Increase Ridership, Reduce Congestion, and Improve Access and Mobility**

Improving the existing rail transit system must remain the top priority. Many more stations need upgrading, and better bus connections are essential to integrating the two systems. Long overdue: an automated fare collection system—compatible with commuter railroads, ferries, buses, and subways—to facilitate commuting throughout the city and the region.

New projects to expand the rail system merit serious consideration (Map 2.5). Several would require substantial interagency coordination to plan and implement. The Department can be instrumental in ensuring that appropriate land use decisions are made for these projects and in coordinating transportation agencies' planning with the concerns of other public entities.

The 63rd Street Link to the Jamaica IND line in Queens. Scheduled for completion in the year 2000, this is one of several transit projects that in the long term would reduce traffic congestion, air pollution, and commuting times. To build upon this connection and the nascent CBD development in Long Island City, an intermodal facility in the Sunnyside Yards could connect nearby subway lines with Amtrak's intercity rail service, the Long Island Railroad, and New

Jersey Transit, which now pass through the yards. Passengers could transfer between modes and lines, thus establishing a regional transportation center.

Airport Link. The Port Authority and an interagency working group are planning a rail system linking JFK and LaGuardia airports with the existing subway and rail commuter system, the Manhattan CBD, and possibly the proposed intermodal facility at Sunnyside Yards. It could reduce automobile traffic and help maintain the regional and international competitiveness of the two airports. The system must be integrated with the rail transit system and offer comfort, convenience, easy luggage handling, and security if it is to lure people out of their cars and taxis.

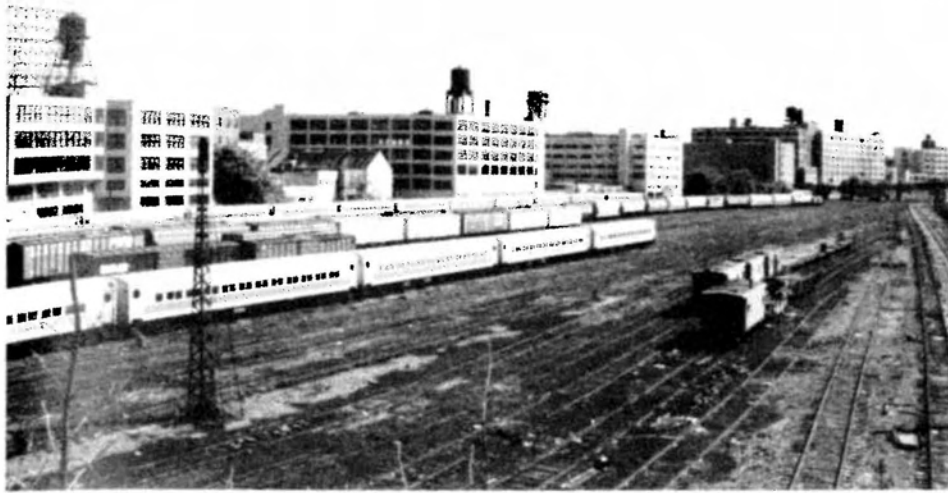
Second Avenue Subway. In 1990 the MTA proposed to resume construction of this line between 125th Street and 63rd Street, where it would connect to lines providing access to Midtown. (One mile of tunnel and three stations were built in the mid-1970s.) Demand for transit is high in this dense residential and commercial corridor on Manhattan's East Side, and extending this line to Lower Manhattan and the Central Bronx may also be appropriate in light of the need to improve CBD access.

Amtrak Bronx Corridor. This line in the East Bronx is used for passenger service by Amtrak and freight service by Conrail. The right-of-way is wide enough to accommodate an extension of the proposed Second Avenue Subway, which could then reach underserved areas of the South and East Bronx.

Subway Extension to New Jersey. Extending the IRT Number 7 line west from Midtown and building a tunnel under the Hudson River to the New Jersey Meadowlands, would link a number of economic centers more directly. A faster rail trip could induce some New Jersey and suburban New York commuters to switch from automobile to bus and subway service, reducing congestion on the Hudson River crossings and promoting better accessibility between the Meadowlands, Manhattan, Long Island City, and Flushing.

Intermodal Facilities. In addition to an intermodal facility at Sunnyside Yards, another is needed in Downtown Flushing. There, near the Main Street subway station, 19 bus routes carrying 25,000 persons a day converge. The facility could better accommodate the bus routes and connect with the Main Street subway station. A high volume of bus and subway transfers also occurs at 149th Street and Third Avenue, the only remaining free transfer point in the Bronx. A bus and subway complex would facilitate movement and encourage ridership. Over the long term, the building and extension of the Second Avenue subway could be linked with this proposed complex.

North Shore Rail Line. This unused right-of-way along the north shore of Staten Island may have the potential to provide mass transit service between St. George and the auto-dependent north shore communities to the west. A more detailed study is needed to examine the financial feasibility of reactivating rail service and the residential densities needed to support it.



A transit hub at the Sunnyside Yards in Queens could link subway, commuter, and intercity rail lines.

Park and Ride Facilities. These facilities can reduce automobile travel to the CBD by encouraging use of rail transit. While almost all suburban commuter railroad stations provide parking, most commuter stations within New York City do not. Additional parking may be feasible at three stations in the Bronx—Williamsbridge, Woodlawn, and the Botanical Gardens—and at the Queens Village and Bayside, Queens, stations. In addition, some city parking facilities near rail stations may have potential for expansion.

Improving reverse commuting from the city to the suburbs and outlying areas requires regional solutions that reduce reliance on the private automobile. More frequent service on existing commuter rail lines may be needed to ensure that existing capacity matches demand. If densities in suburban locations are too low to support rail transit connections, bus or other connections may be necessary. The city must work with municipalities and other transportation agencies to coordinate service and improve connections at the suburban end of the commute.

- **Expand Ferry Service to the CBD**

Ferries are a clean alternative to automobile travel and can provide access to the CBD from dispersed points of origin. The *Comprehensive Waterfront Plan* and the 1990 Department report, *Land Side Opportunities For Expanded Ferry Services*, identified sites with sufficient population density and other characteristics indicating immediate service potential. The city and state will provide piers and terminals to ferry operators at little or no cost to facilitate new ferry service at locations in the city and suburbs.

Map 2.6 Conceptual Greenway System



The city expects to begin major reconstruction of the Whitehall Ferry Terminal in 1995; the Department's forthcoming *Lower Manhattan Plan* urges reconstruction of ferry piers in Lower Manhattan; and the proposed waterfront zoning would expand the number of locations where ferry piers are allowed. The Commission supports this zoning revision and recommends that additional issues, such as coordinating ferry service with other transit services, be addressed to facilitate greater use of ferries.

- **Rationalize Express Bus, Van, and Jitney Service through Better Planning and Regulation**

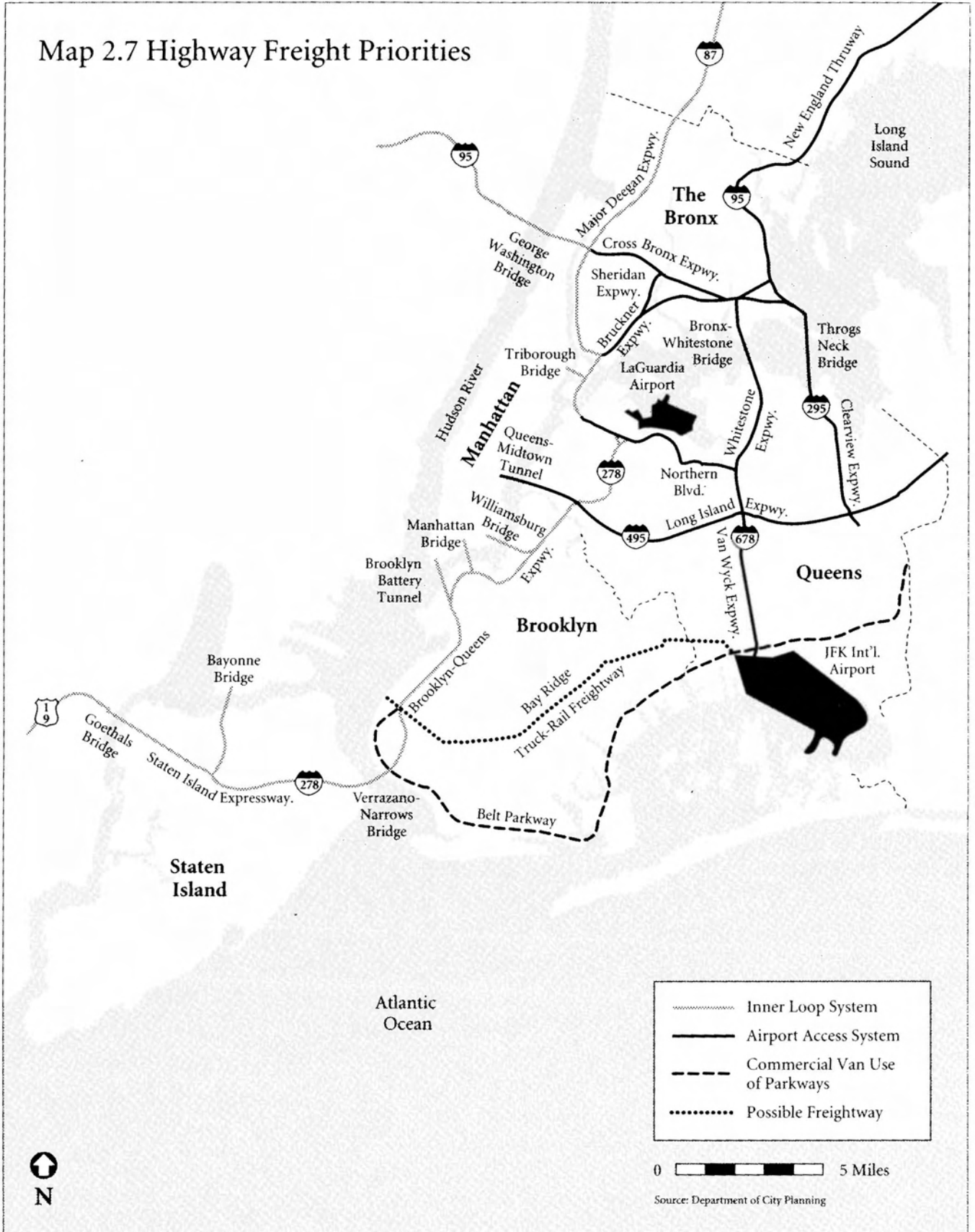
Rail transit continues to be the best way to move people into and out of the CBD. But express buses, vans and jitneys can fill the gaps in places without ready access to subways or good local bus service connections. Where these services can move people with less pollution than automobiles, and where rail transit capacity is not available, the Department, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the city's Department of Transportation (DOT) should evaluate giving them priority over private cars. Vans and jitneys often contribute to traffic congestion, however, particularly near city bus stops. Recognizing that better regulatory measures are needed, the state recently authorized the city to license and regulate vans, which should mean better coordination with other transit services.

The express bus system has expanded in the absence of an overall policy and strategy. The Commission believes express buses should be limited to areas that do not have existing bus or subway services, unless the subway lines are congested. To enable express buses to travel more efficiently, the city should explore opportunities to expand priority lanes for them. Providing adequate off-street bus storage during the day can reduce idling, vehicle miles traveled, air pollution, and traffic congestion. The *Lower Manhattan Plan* will support the location of an express bus terminal in Lower Manhattan. In parts of Midtown where there is no off-street space for bus storage, improved regulations are needed to reduce disruption of neighborhoods.

- **Promote Bikeways and Walkways**

The Department, the Parks Department, and city DOT are evaluating the feasibility of implementing segments of a conceptual citywide bikeway and greenway plan (Map 2.6) that seeks to promote safe pedestrian and bicycle circulation. An initial framework encompasses Hudson River and East River trails, South and North Bronx bikeway systems, the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway, Shore Parkway, West Queens, and the Staten Island north shore. The Department and city DOT are also examining improvements to promote pedestrian circulation in dense areas—like Lower Manhattan, Chatham Square, Herald Square, the Grand Central Terminal area, and Downtown Brooklyn—where commercial activity attracts heavy auto and pedestrian traffic.

Map 2.7 Highway Freight Priorities



- **Increase Truck-Freight Mobility**

No single action can alleviate the area's highway problems. The Department's *Citywide Industry Study* does, however, identify highway improvements of particular economic importance to the city. As the first priority, it recommends exploring low-cost options to expedite freight movement, including identification of alternate routes utilizing the street network parallel to crowded highways; improving lane channelization and signalling; and allowing commercial vans on city parkways. The Department should continue its program of studies to examine industrial areas in detail and identify access problems and needed improvements. It should coordinate these studies with city and state DOT, the Economic Development Corporation, and the business community.

Movement of truck freight could also be expedited by reducing auto traffic on truck routes. Strategies employed in other regions of the country to facilitate highway vehicle movement, such as High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) priority lanes, are difficult to implement within New York City because of limited roadway space, congestion at ramps and on local streets, and the poor physical condition of many roadways. Because of these physical constraints, only a few HOV options are likely to be effective.

For larger, more complex capital projects, the city should give priority to improving airport connections and the "inner loop" of interstate highways, which provides primary access to the CBDs and industrial areas containing two-thirds of the city's industrial jobs (Map 2.7).

The George Washington Bridge (GWB) provides the city's only full-service truck connection with most of the nation's highway system, because of physical restrictions on the other Hudson River and Arthur Kill crossings. To lessen the reliance on the GWB, construction of a twin span at the Goethals Bridge on Staten Island should be considered. The traffic from the GWB is bottlenecked at the Major Deegan Expressway-Alexander Hamilton Bridge interchange. Improvement of this section of the network would improve access to the Cross-Bronx Expressway to the east, the Major Deegan to the north, and the Triborough Bridge to the south.

Freight traffic using the Triborough Bridge to reach LaGuardia Airport and other parts of northern Queens must travel on local streets for part of the journey. An improved connection between the Triborough Bridge, the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE), and Northern Boulevard is needed to promote airport growth and industrial development in these important areas and remove trucks from local streets.

The BQE is the major truck route through the important industrial areas of the Brooklyn waterfront and western Queens. Although much of the roadway has been, or will be, reconstructed, the access ramps are often inadequate to handle trucks. Improving access to the BQE would enhance the ability of Brooklyn industrial areas along its route to retain and attract industrial firms.



JFK International Airport is the nation's busiest handler of international air cargo.

JFK Airport is a major employer and generator of economic activity within the city. Commercial vehicle access to the airport is restricted primarily to the congested Van Wyck Expressway. Improving airport access should be a top priority. The city should explore widening the Van Wyck Expressway, possibly reserving a lane for automobiles with at least two passengers, buses, and trucks. The city should also consider allowing commercial vans on the Belt Parkway, to facilitate freight movement across southern Brooklyn and Queens and to JFK; and on the Grand Central Parkway, to expedite freight movement to LaGuardia.

Other improvements to facilitate truck freight include upgrading Bruckner Boulevard, located beneath the Bruckner Expressway, for use as a full-scale service and truck route; and reconstructing the Bruckner-Sheridan interchange to provide improved freight access to the South Bronx and to the expanding Hunts Point Market industrial area. The city should evaluate the feasibility of converting the LIRR Bay Ridge line right-of-way into a combined truck and rail freightway between the Gowanus Expressway and Linden Boulevard. This route could become a cross-Brooklyn, limited-access truck route connecting the airport to the inner loop, providing better access to the Brooklyn waterfront, Lower Manhattan, and New Jersey.

Since the costs and impacts of right-of-way acquisition and road construction are immense, the Commission recognizes that maintenance and rehabilitation of the city's existing highway and street network will remain the highest priority. Moreover, the larger and more complex projects require more detailed evaluation by city, state, and regional agencies. Planning for any future highway improvements will also have to ensure that additional road capacity is not used by single-occupant passenger vehicles.

- **Expand Rail-Freight Movement in the City**

The Full Freight Access Program is a state initiative to facilitate rail-freight movement across New York. Among other improvements, the program raised bridge clearances between Albany and the Bronx to accommodate Trailer on Flat Car (TOFC) service, which transports truck trailers on rail cars. Completion of this program would construct the Oak Point Link, providing a dedicated freight rail line in the South Bronx. The completed program will improve the city's freight distribution and promote distribution-related industrial development. For example, some freight now shipped by truck or through New Jersey rail terminals could be captured by the rail-truck intermodal facility to be built at the Harlem River Yard (Map 2.8).

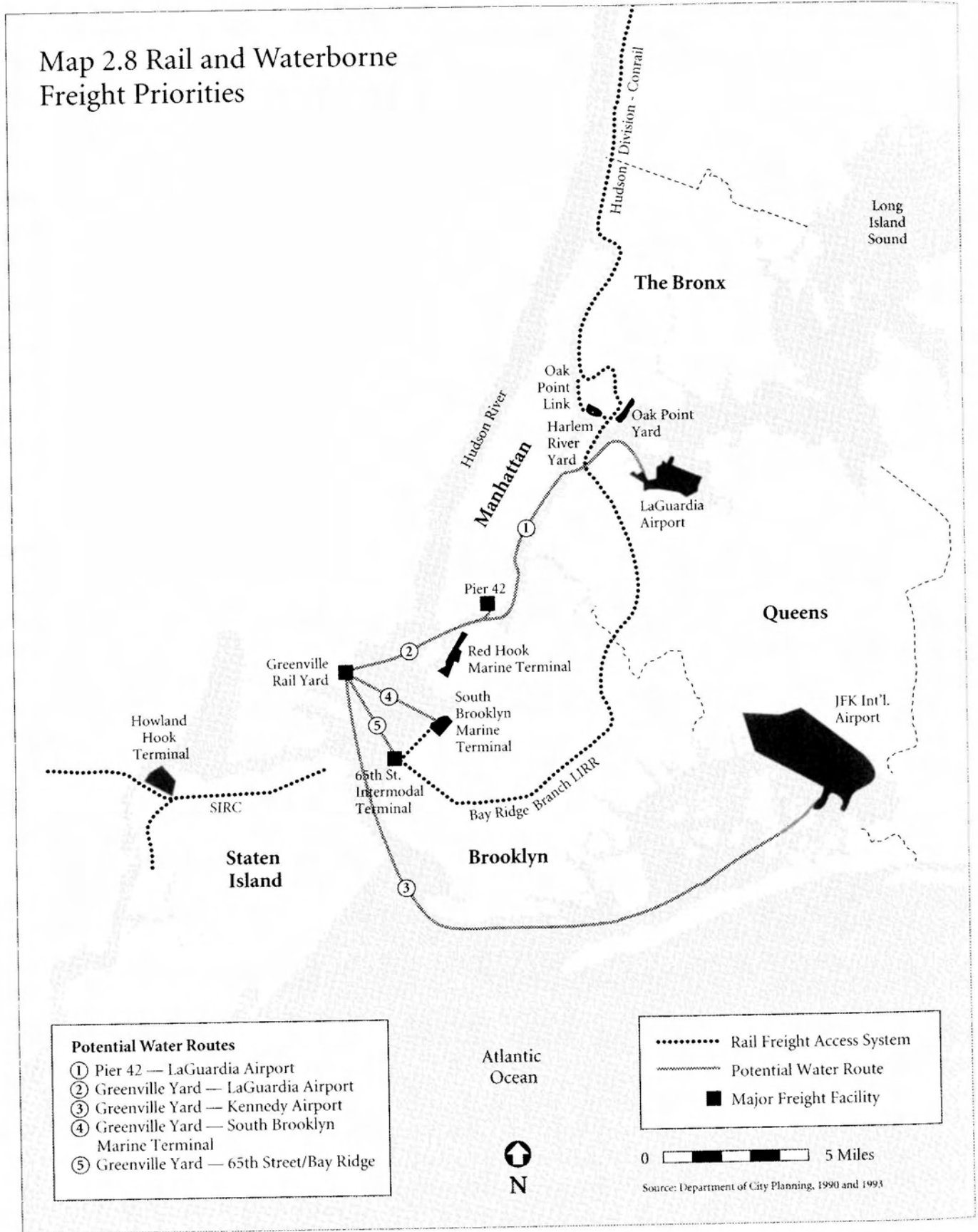
ISTEA authorizes \$150 million for the Oak Point Link, which could be used to raise bridge clearances from 17'6" (the clearance required for TOFC) to 20'6". The higher clearance would accommodate double-stacked Containers on Flat Car (COFC) service, in which two cargo containers are transported one atop the other on rail cars. Further study is required to determine the feasibility and benefits of these improvements. As an alternative, or as an interim measure to COFC shipment, containers and trailers from New Jersey could be floated by barge to the Sunset Park waterfront in Brooklyn. The 65th Street rail yard in Sunset Park is being modernized. A new floatbridge is planned to facilitate the shipping by barge of containers and trailers at this location. The branch of the Staten Island Railway on the borough's North Shore is the only direct rail connection between Conrail's mainline rail system in New Jersey and New York City. It runs from St. George on Staten Island west to New Jersey. It is critical that the segment extending west from the Arlington Yard, potentially serving a revived Howland Hook Marine Terminal, be reactivated.

Some rail transportation advocates and planners have proposed a study of a possible cross-harbor rail tunnel as part of a "northeast freightway." Such a tunnel could provide direct rail service from New Jersey to Staten Island, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. It would reduce the number of cross-harbor truck crossings, they argue, and improve the competitiveness of the Brooklyn port facilities. The Department and EDC are initiating a study to evaluate this proposal and other freight alternatives and port intermodal improvements.

- **Promote Waterborne Movement of Freight**

Although not currently available in the region, waterborne fast-freight service could be used for delivery of time-sensitive, high-value goods. Depending on the routes and the ultimate destinations, this service could be competitive with truck delivery. Several locations offer promise for waterborne goods movement. In addition, the Port Authority has recently established a free barge service from the Red Hook Marine Terminal to Port Newark to allow the Red Hook facility's

Map 2.8 Rail and Waterborne Freight Priorities



prime tenant to remain competitive. This will help mitigate the transportation disruptions from the Gowanus Expressway reconstruction.

These projects and the Port Authority's and the city's efforts to modernize and expand marine terminals represent a substantial commitment to maintaining a working waterfront on New York's side of the harbor (Map 2.8). The *Comprehensive Waterfront Plan* identified a number of strategies to promote waterborne transportation of goods and use of the city's marine terminals. The Commission recommends that the Department make a concerted effort to implement these recommendations and undertake appropriate land use studies to target needed infrastructure improvements for waterfront industrial areas.

As the city improves its waste management systems, it must site new municipal facilities like waste transfer stations and sludge processing facilities involving the transport of bulky, low-value materials. The water transportation of such materials should be integrated into these facilities, wherever feasible, to help minimize land use impacts and reduce reliance on trucks.

- **Reduce Traffic Congestion While Maintaining Mobility**

City DOT and DEP are evaluating a number of initiatives to increase highway efficiency, control vehicle entry into the CBD, and better relate parking regulations to traffic congestion. Specific initiatives include adding priority lanes for buses; expanding the number of high-occupancy vehicle lanes on highways; testing time-of-day bridge and tunnel tolls; and reducing alternate side of the street parking regulations.

The Department of City Planning will review zoning regulations enacted in 1982 that limited new off-street parking facilities in the Manhattan CBD. Although these regulations were intended to help control car travel into the CBD, automobile usage there has continued to increase. The study will evaluate the relationship between parking requirements, vehicle use, and air quality and recommend zoning changes, if appropriate. Once DOT and DEP complete their evaluations of congestion mitigation measures, they will prepare a set of targeted recommendations as part of the State Implementation Plan. The Department should work to ensure that the evaluation of congestion mitigation measures by DEP and DOT considers economic impacts, neighborhood planning issues, and effects on quality of life.

MANAGING WATER AND WASTE

Population shifts and changing lifestyles impose new demands on the city's environmental infrastructure systems, which supply New Yorkers with drinking water and treat and dispose of wastewater and solid waste. At the same time, increasing the systems' capacity has become even more difficult for many reasons, including a changing regulatory environment, increased environmental awareness, the problem of siting any new facilities in the city, and the enormous long-term capital investments needed to ensure clean water.

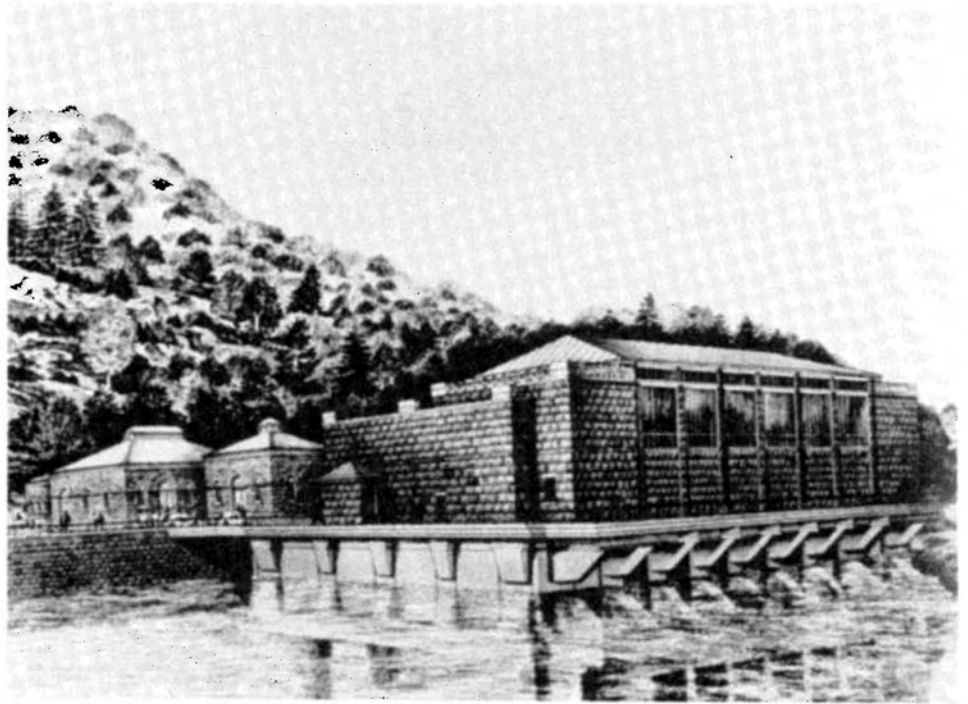
Conservation will enable the city to achieve its environmental goals and minimize costs and land use impacts. But a strategy that reduces water use and waste generation and dramatically increases recycling will require financial inducements for New Yorkers to conserve. Only when all New Yorkers change their fundamental attitudes and behavior and take responsibility for the environment will the city's long-term livability and economic viability be assured.

Managing the Water Supply

In 1990, New Yorkers consumed about 1.5 billion gallons of water a day. That is an increase of 20 percent, or 360 million gallons a day, since 1960, even though population has declined by 6 percent and employment has remained constant. Growing water use and the loss of water due to an aging, leaking distribution system have increased consumption to the point where daily demand can exceed the "safe yield" of 1.3 billion gallons per day. (Safe yield is the estimated amount of water the reservoir system is able to provide each day during drought periods.)

In the past, New York City has usually handled drought by intense short-term restrictions on water consumption. In the long term, however, the best way for the city to minimize water shortages is through a sustained reduction in water consumption. Otherwise, New York must increase supply, a costly and potentially environmentally damaging alternative. Limiting water consumption can also reduce the size of capital investments needed for wastewater treatment facilities and allow the city to accommodate areas of growth and redevelopment.

Conservation strategies must be coupled with capital expenditures to reduce leaks and water main breaks and to increase water pressure in outlying parts of the city. The city's *Ten-Year Capital Strategy* allocates \$1.3 billion for completing stages one and two of the third water tunnel. Completion of the third tunnel will allow the two older tunnels to be closed, inspected for leaks, and surveyed for required reconstruction. The added capacity provided by the new tunnel will also



A rendering shows the Croton Gatehouse in Westchester County, part of the planned new filtration system for the Croton reservoir system.

alleviate water pressure problems at the ends of the water distribution system in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island.

The success of the city's conservation efforts will determine whether it must find new sources of water. The city is reviewing the need to augment the water supply by drawing water permanently from the Hudson River via a pumping station near Newburgh, New York. This station has been used in the past only in drought emergencies. Serious concerns have been raised about the quality of Hudson River water and about the impact pumping may have on Hudson River fisheries and water quality. Tapping the underground aquifers in Brooklyn and Queens is another option under review.

New York City's water is generally of high quality. Unlike most municipal water systems, the city's water is essentially unfiltered and untreated except for chlorination. But because of development and runoff in the northern Westchester-Putnam County watershed area, drinking water from the Croton reservoir, the city's smallest system, now requires treatment to maintain quality. To treat Croton water, which accounts for 10 percent of New York's supply, the city will build its first filtration system, at a cost of almost \$600 million. Ninety percent of the city's water comes from the Catskill and Delaware reservoir systems. These two systems do not require filtration, although water quality is deteriorating because of development and agricultural practices in the watershed. This has prompted DEP to promulgate the first comprehensive set of regulations to control runoff and pollution within the watershed. Some upstate communities have

argued that the regulations are insensitive to local concerns and would stifle economic development.

In response, DEP is drafting alternative regulations or “whole community plans.” These plans would allow communities, under certain conditions, to modify city watershed regulations to respond to local land use needs while adequately safeguarding water quality. Increased land use regulation and city acquisition of additional land and development rights in the watershed should preserve water quality. Though costly, such an approach would be far less costly in the long term than building filtration plants for the Catskill and Delaware reservoir systems.

Sewage and Sludge

In 1990, the quality of the waterways surrounding New York City was the highest ever recorded since monitoring began in 1909. Water quality has improved dramatically because of the city’s aggressive environmental leadership, billions of dollars invested in water pollution control, and improved control of industrial discharges. These improvements have greatly enhanced the city’s water recreation resources, upgraded important natural areas, and opened up new opportunities for other activities on the waterfront.

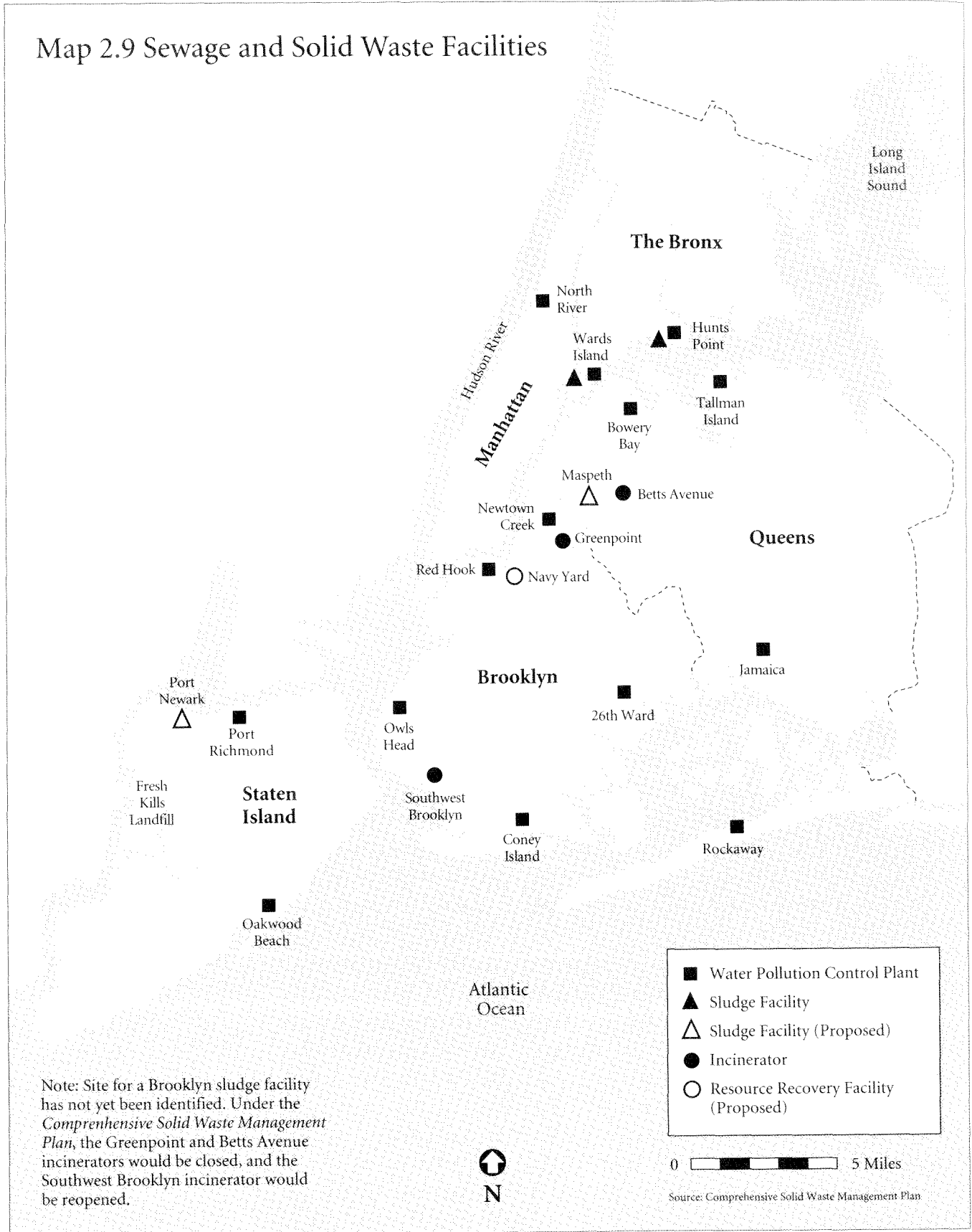
Sewage Treatment and Water Quality

The dramatic improvement in water quality is largely the result of the city’s sewage treatment program. New York City operates 14 Water Pollution Control Plants (WPCPs) that treat wastewater before discharging it into the waters surrounding the city (Map 2.9). The two newest WPCPs—North River and Red Hook—were completed in the 1980s at a cost of \$1.4 billion. Eleven of the city’s plants are operating at the required secondary treatment levels. The upgrading to secondary treatment standards of the Owls Head and Coney Island WPCPs is underway and will be completed by 1995; the Newtown Creek WPCP upgrading will extend into the next century.

Despite this enormous investment, the city’s ability to treat wastewater adequately in some areas of the city is uncertain. Of the city’s 14 WPCPs, eight have excess capacity; three are operating at close to the capacity allowed by their New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) permits; and three others have operated above their permitted capacity and are the subject of consent orders between the city and DEC. The Manhattan CBD—the city’s economic core—is served by the North River, Newtown Creek, and Wards Island WPCPs, which are operating close to or over their permitted capacities. Failure to provide adequate capacity could adversely impact water quality and limit the growth of the CBD and development of new housing.

Approximately 70 percent of the city’s sewers are “combined” sewer lines carrying wastewater and stormwater. During heavy rainfall, untreated sewage mixed

Map 2.9 Sewage and Solid Waste Facilities





Brooklyn's Red Hook Water Pollution Control Plant, the city's newest, began operating in 1988.

with stormwater bypasses the WPCPs and is discharged directly into the waterways. Combined sewer overflows and stormwater discharges are a major source of pollutants entering New York's waters. The city has begun a program to control combined sewer overflows in key locations and eliminate unacceptable levels of water pollution in vulnerable tributaries, bays, and inlets. During heavy rains, retention tanks will store combined system effluent and pump it back to the treatment plants after the rain.

Processing Sludge

In compliance with federal law, on June 30, 1992, the city ended ocean disposal of sewage sludge, a by-product of sewage treatment. The fiscal and potential land use impacts of this federal mandate are substantial. In a relatively short time, New York must develop a large sludge processing program. In addition to complex siting issues, the city faces a number of technological decisions to construct environmentally sound facilities that will process all the city's sludge. In the interim, the city has begun using private contractors to haul dewatered sludge to out-of-state landfills. The plan developed by the city to process its sludge for beneficial land disposal is estimated to cost \$1.2 billion. It anticipates a sludge processing plant in each borough (Map 2.9).

Solid Waste Management

The city must streamline and modernize its solid waste collection system, currently a combination of public and private services relying on landfill and incineration of municipal waste, and on the export of commercial waste to other states. Effective management of solid waste would minimize environmental damage from disposal, maximize the reuse of resources, and create economic opportunity and jobs.

New Yorkers' per capita generation of waste has increased from approximately 4.7 pounds in 1960 to 5.5 pounds today. During that same period, the city has reduced its disposal capacity. During the 1960s, New York had 14 active landfills. Today, it has only one: Fresh Kills in Staten Island, which accepts virtually all the city's municipal waste. Used at the current rate, Fresh Kills will close in 2010. The city has also reduced the number of incinerators from 11 in 1960 to two today. Environmental concerns about landfills and incinerators make it difficult to open new facilities of either kind in the city. Further, there are no readily available sites for new landfills in the city, and community opposition to incinerators has created obstacles to their siting.

The city is proposing to export incinerator ash to out-of-state landfills and may have to export other waste as well. Export remains an uncertain alternative, however, because many receiving jurisdictions are seeking from Congress the right to restrict solid waste that has been transported across state lines.

State and city law set the city's waste management strategy and establish a hierarchy of approaches for managing the waste stream. Under this hierarchy, the most desirable approach is preventing waste (for example, by reducing packaging), followed by waste recycling, including composting. Incineration and landfill, in that order, are the two least desirable alternatives for waste disposal.

State law requires that by 1997, 8 to 10 percent of the city's solid waste be eliminated by waste prevention, and 40 percent be recycled. It also requires that a plan for the collection and disposal of solid waste be completed and approved by DEC. In addition, New York City's Local Law 19, adopted in 1989, requires the recycling of 4,200 tons per day by 1994 (about a third of the municipally collected waste). The Department of Sanitation has prepared a combined *Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan* (CSWMP) and *Generic Environmental Impact Statement* (GEIS) that has been approved by the City Council. The CSWMP includes a "near-term" plan for the next five years to allow the city to explore which disposal methods are most appropriate.

Waste Prevention

The city can establish educational and procurement policies and regulations that reduce waste. Most waste prevention, however, depends on federal and state governments strengthening regulations on packaging and use of recyclable materials. A successful waste prevention program can reduce land use impacts.

Recycling

The recycling process has three steps: collection and transfer; separation and processing to turn waste into useable raw materials; and use of these materials for new products. A successful recycling program will require the cooperation of the public to separate paper and newspapers from glass, metal, and plastic, and conveniently located buy-back and drop-off centers. The Department has proposed a waste management zoning text amendment to permit these uses in certain local commercial districts.

The second recycling step converts collected waste into raw materials. This involves separating materials from the waste stream and processing them by cleaning, grinding, or crushing. To operate efficiently, processing facilities are generally located close to collection routes. As a result, these are expected to be sited throughout the city.

The CSWMP estimates that 10 to 12 five-acre sites, totaling 60 acres, would be required in manufacturing districts to process the city's recyclable waste, in addition to the acreage currently used for separation and processing. Additional land would be required for smaller neighborhood-based collection and transfer sites. (Recycling is a more efficient use of land than composting or incineration.) The near-term plan calls for a new processing center and buy-back facility in each borough.

The third step in the recycling process involves manufacturing new products from recycled materials. New York City already has some green industries that use recycled waste as a raw material, but expansion of such industries is constrained by the need to create new markets, inadequate freight access, high energy prices, and site limitations. The New York area has the potential, however, to offer a steady supply of recycled raw materials and a market for manufactured products.

Composting

Composting turns biodegradable solid waste, such as food or garden waste, into soil supplements that can be used in parks, beside roads, and as landfill cover. It reduces the amount of waste to be landfilled or incinerated, but it requires more land than other methods of waste disposal. Composting on a large scale has had a limited application in urban areas. In addition to high land use requirements, potential for transportation and odor impacts is increased.

Under the near-term plan, anywhere from 3 to 25 percent of the solid waste stream could be composted. This would require between 100 and 280 acres of manufacturing-zoned land on new sites in addition to the sludge treatment facilities proposed by DEP. Finding sufficient large, vacant sites for large-scale composting, even at the low end of the range, will be difficult.



The Village Green Recycling Center is a neighborhood drop-off center, which allows New Yorkers to recycle many materials not included in the curbside program.

Incineration

While clearly less desirable than waste reduction, recycling or composting, incineration will continue to be necessary for that portion of the city's waste that cannot practically be recycled, composted, or landfilled. It does not increase collection costs, requires less cooperation from the public, and is a potential source of energy. However, construction of environmentally safe incinerators is expensive. Control devices must be employed to prevent harmful emissions, and any toxins in the waste fuel will be concentrated in the ash that remains after incineration.

The CSWMP anticipates two incinerators operating in New York City. An incinerator in Southwest Brooklyn, which is not currently operating, would be upgraded to meet Clean Air Act standards. A new resource recovery (waste to energy) facility would be built at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The Betts Avenue and Greenpoint incinerators would be closed (Map 2.9, page 76). Under the plan, total incineration capacity would roughly triple, to 3,750 tons per day. The city would export ash and concurrently develop beneficial uses for it, such as roadbed construction.

Landfill

Landfill is an engineering solution with a limited life span in the city. It is the primary method now used to dispose of the city's solid waste and, as such, does not increase collection costs as long as capacity exists. The plan does not anticipate the siting of additional landfills in New York City. To prolong the life of the Fresh Kills landfill, however, the Department of Sanitation increased the cost of dumping commercial waste in 1988. Private haulers now export most commercial waste out of state, first bringing it to a central location for transfer to larger, long-haul trucks. The resulting proliferation of waste transfer stations has been detrimental to adjoining uses, particularly nearby residences. A coordinated enforcement effort has substantially improved these operations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continue Strategies to Reduce Water Usage, Limit Impacts of Rapidly Rising Water and Sewer Charges, and Match Sewage Treatment Plant Capacity with Demand**

The city must bring water and sewage demand in line with capacity. Most of the increase in sewage flows comes from rising per capita water use (not new development), distribution system leaks, and open fire hydrants. The increased use by existing residences and businesses results from lifestyle changes, such as more frequent use of dishwashers, smaller households, and more buildings centrally cooled by water-using air conditioning systems. New Yorkers' inefficient use of water dilutes sewage and is a primary cause of WPCP capacity problems.

While the city's total population remains below its 1970 peak, there have been shifts in population location, altering the burdens on individual sewage treatment plants. Where possible, rerouting wastewater flows from a catchment area where WPCP capacity is inadequate to one where excess capacity is available, can better utilize existing infrastructure and minimize capital investments. In addition, the Department should produce more sophisticated projections of population shifts and the relation between needed treatment plant capacity and demand trends, to plan accordingly for new needs.

It is often difficult to determine treatment plant design capacity because of unresolved technical and operational issues. DEP must continue to resolve issues relating to measuring WPCP flows and capacity accurately. It should also better determine the relationship of DEC permit capacity to plant design capacity, and the relationship of the DEC permit capacity to plant flows and water quality.

Aggressive water conservation measures will free up treatment plant capacity and reduce the need for costly expansions. The city is implementing several programs designed to reduce water consumption that will be critical to ensuring adequate supply in future drought years and avoiding the need for costly and potentially environmentally unsound new sources of water. One of the major programs is the installation of water meters in all residential buildings. Currently, water charges for most residents are based on building frontage and other property characteristics, not on the amount of water actually used. Water meters would tie the charges directly to consumption, thus providing an incentive to fix leaks and consume less water.

Since nearly 80 percent of New Yorkers live in multi-family housing where individual metering is not feasible, problems may arise. Tenants may not have sufficient incentives to conserve since they will not bear the direct cost of water use. Undue financial burdens could fall upon property owners. In addition, as water and sewer rates rise to reflect the costs of water pollution control plant improvements and sludge management, large increases in water and sewer bills could make low-income housing and low-income tenants particularly vulnerable.

The success of the program requires continual monitoring and evaluation. The city has already identified a number of programs to provide relief to property owners from rising water and sewer charges, and it must minimize the financial burdens placed on low-income housing. The city should also consider advancing programs to provide incentives for retrofitting existing buildings with low-flow fixtures. Buildings erected after 1992 are already required to install water-conserving toilets and showers.

- **Improve Water Quality and Maximize Waterfront Benefits**

Combined sewer overflow retention facilities can range in size from 3 to 10 acres and must be located near waterbodies because of the design of the sewer system. To enhance waterfront use, these and other waterfront facilities should be



Page Avenue freshwater wetlands form part of the Staten Island Bluebelt.

designed to accommodate waterfront recreation and access and, where appropriate, environmental education.

The city should continue to pursue a number of other water-quality improvement initiatives, such as those proposed in the *Comprehensive Waterfront Plan*. These include the dredging of certain waterways to remove contaminated sediments and using city-owned land and wetlands—particularly on Staten Island—for stormwater control. In five Staten Island communities with substantial concentrations of city-owned wetlands, *Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans* identify wetlands for transfer to DEP as a cost-effective means of managing storm water runoff.

- **Implement City Policies that Encourage Waste Prevention and Create Markets for Recycled Materials**

Environmental organizations have begun to reexamine energy use and waste generation in office buildings. Several prototype “environmentally friendly” office building renovations have been undertaken. City agencies should monitor the results. If they prove both successful and cost-effective, the city should explore ways to promote or require more environmentally benign renovations and new construction.

The city itself purchases billions of dollars of supplies and equipment each year while disposing of 3.8 million tons of waste annually. To the extent that the city can use its purchasing power to create markets for products made with recycled materials, it can reduce the need to find space for waste disposal. A systematic review of the city’s purchasing requirements should be undertaken with the

goal of maximizing the purchase of recycled materials, particularly from products made, at least in part, from the city's waste.

- **Regulate Waste-Transfer Stations and Recycling Facilities to Accommodate Them Safely within the City's Land Use Planning Framework and the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan**

Sites for plants processing recyclables will be needed in a number of manufacturing areas. The Department has proposed a zoning text amendment to control the siting, layout, and operations of waste-transfer stations and recycling facilities. The Department of Sanitation has proposed siting regulations designed to complement the proposed zoning amendment. In addition, buy-back and drop-off centers for recyclables must be able to locate close to residential areas, which generate waste. The proposed zoning text amendment includes revisions to permit such centers in local service districts. Zoning regulations have also been proposed to control the siting of other solid waste facilities. The Commission will review the zoning proposals as part of the implementation of the *Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan*.

- **Consider Land Use Implications and Fair Share Issues When Siting Sludge and Waste Management Facilities**

The Commission recognizes the controversy involved with siting sludge and waste management facilities and favors siting these facilities in the context of a comprehensive plan for affected communities that balances benefits and burdens. In addition, it stresses that sites must be well buffered from residential communities. Building and operating these facilities acceptably will enhance the city's credibility to manage other environmentally significant facilities. To reduce potential impacts from their operation, the city should provide opportunities for intermodal connections via barge or rail where feasible. These waterfront municipal facilities may offer opportunities for public access, including educational features that convey the plants' environmental role.

In the coming years, the Commission will be required to balance competing interests when making siting decisions for sludge processing and to implement the *Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan*. The Charter establishes a "fair share" requirement to avoid undue concentrations of less desirable city facilities. Waste management facilities require manufacturing zones, which are concentrated in a few areas. DEP and the Department of Sanitation must continually reevaluate waste management technologies, land requirements, and long-term waste management solutions. With this information, the Commission will review the implications for land use and infrastructure, to ensure the appropriate siting of waste management facilities and maximum use of rail and water transport to minimize traffic and other adverse consequences.



ATLANTIC ANTIC
DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN'S ANNUAL CELEBRATION
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30



PART THREE

NEW YORKERS AND THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS

New York's neighborhoods are as diverse as its population. Manhattan contains the densest neighborhoods in the nation. But the high-rise core accounts for only a small part of the city. The city offers an extraordinary array of neighborhoods and housing choices that serve almost three million households. Onto this physical plant, the city's many cultures have stamped their identities, further distinguishing the array of distinctive neighborhoods. Not all the differences among New York neighborhoods are desirable, however. In some areas, years of decline and disinvestment have resulted in deteriorated housing, lack of retail services, inadequate recreation facilities, and public safety concerns.

With the exception of parts of Staten Island, and a few tracts in the other boroughs, New York's land has already been built on, and sometimes rebuilt several times with successive waves of development. Unlike newer cities, New York does not grow by annexation, but through reinvestment and redevelopment. Its neighborhoods evolve over time.

A historic resource—the landmark church or the tree-lined boulevard—is often the focal point of a neighborhood. New York is a mature city filled with historically significant buildings and places. These are the jewels of the city's architectural heritage. The Landmarks Preservation Law protects many but not all of them. The city's land use policies must guide neighborhood reinvestment in ways that are compatible with historic resources.

How the city implements its land use and capital budget policies will help determine the quality of neighborhood life for New Yorkers during the next century. Public policy should support the characteristics that make collections of streets and buildings into lively, identifiable neighborhoods.

The city must be sensitive to local and citywide needs as it balances competing concerns. The city must (1) promote the critical mass necessary to support local retail and service uses; (2) coordinate population density with mass transit, roads, and other infrastructure capacity; (3) maintain neighborhoods' physical character, which reinforces their identity, encourages familiarity among neighbors, and promotes public safety; and (4) accommodate housing opportunities



Historic buildings—like these rowhouses in Bedford-Stuyvesant—contribute to the sense of place in many New York neighborhoods.

for all at appropriate locations. In neighborhoods where private investment is unlikely without government support, the city should focus its limited resources—in city-owned land and capital investment—in such a way as to encourage revitalization.

Quality of life is a primary concern in all neighborhoods. New Yorkers want their neighborhoods to be free from blight and fear. Good land use planning with attention to urban design and streetscape can enhance some neighborhoods, revitalize others, and establish new ones.

HOUSING AND THE URBAN FABRIC

The array of housing choices in New York is extraordinary, ranging from high-rise apartments to single-family homes with yards and gardens. In a city symbolized by the skyscraper, most residential communities are three stories or less in height. New York is able to retain many people within its boundaries because it offers so many neighborhood choices.

Today, most of the city is developed. This invariably raises questions of where and how to integrate new development into existing neighborhoods. Accommodating change in built-up neighborhoods, while maintaining the qualities that make neighborhoods desirable, is one of the major challenges in shaping the city's land use policies. Including community residents in the process of planning for change is another.

Zoning plays a key role in how neighborhoods balance the concerns of current residents with the need to accommodate change. It limits the size, shape, and location of new buildings and the uses to which neighborhood property can be put. These powerful regulations can be flexible. They can promote new development and new uses in the neighborhood—even those that might significantly alter it—or they can maintain its specific character.

Preserving the neighborhood's physical character has been a primary goal in many communities in recent years, but it cannot be done without continuous public and private reinvestment. Reinvestment takes many forms—from demolition and new construction to rehabilitation and restoration. Sound planning seeks to weave new development into the fabric of a community at an appropriate scale and at densities suitable to the available infrastructure.

Contextual Zoning

The relatively recent development of contextual zoning codifies certain physical characteristics—housing type, lot size, yards, and height—that form the built fabric of a neighborhood and mandates similar development in the future. It recognizes that people have chosen to live in certain neighborhoods, at least in part because of those neighborhoods' particular physical characteristics, and that new development should be sympathetic to existing surroundings. Retaining the characteristics of individual neighborhoods, and reinforcing what makes them special, preserves the full range of choices for the city's population. It is one of the key features enabling the city to satisfy the many different neighborhood preferences of its residents.



New York's neighborhoods offer a variety of built environments.

Much of the city, however, is not composed of large, uniform neighborhoods. Communities are often ensembles of blocks with mixed building types and those with uniform types, of wide and narrow streets, of areas close to and far from mass transit. Such variations in the texture of a community offer opportunities for a relatively fine-grained approach to zoning within a neighborhood. Areas of consistent built character can be zoned to promote contextual development, while areas that have a different physical pattern, and appropriate infrastructure, can more readily accommodate other building types and densities.

Since 1984, the City Planning Commission has systematically created new contextual residential zones to ensure that development will be sensitive to the built fabric of established neighborhoods. The Commission added 18 contextual districts to the 14 non-contextual residential districts previously in the Zoning Resolution. This has allowed the Commission to map zoning districts that more closely reflect the diversity of the city's neighborhoods and provide a variety of housing choices within them. Such changes to the Zoning Resolution provide a basis for encouraging development appropriate to the city's varied neighborhoods. The Commission believes that more zoning revisions are needed, however, to achieve this objective.

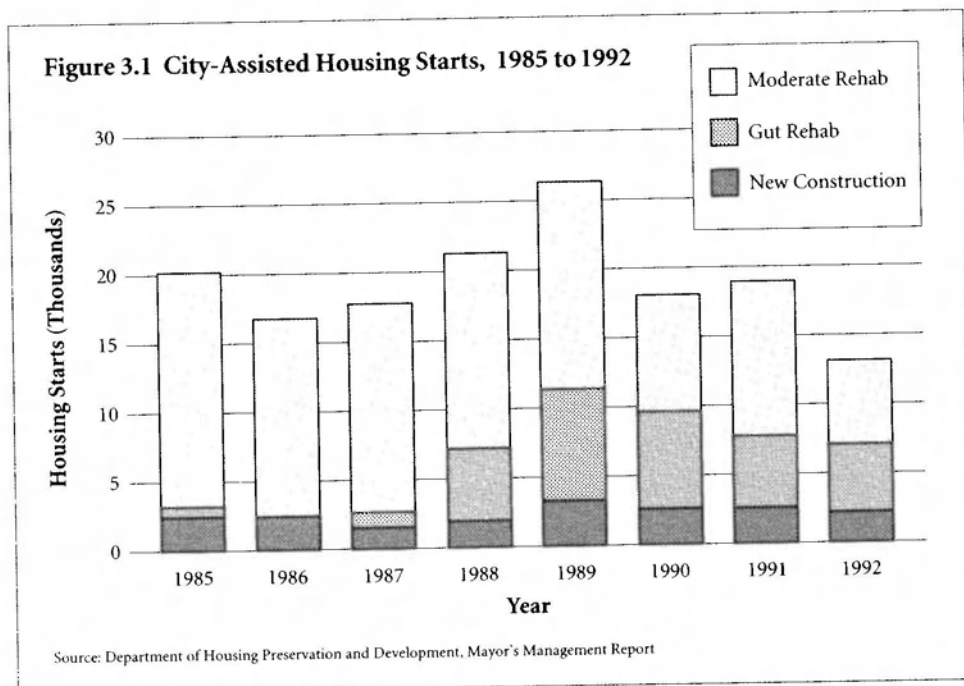
Many communities are concerned that their zoning permits far more development than their infrastructure could comfortably support and that the permitted density should be reduced. Citywide, the zoning permits housing for more than 10 million people. While a buildout to this level could overwhelm the city's ability to provide many services, fears of massive development are unwarranted.

The city's population has fluctuated between seven and eight million for over 50 years and is projected to remain within that range for the foreseeable future. Excess zoning capacity should be available in a wide variety of neighborhoods to ensure fluidity of land markets to provide building sites without skyrocketing land prices. The lessons of the 1980s are instructive: As housing demand rose, the marketplace responded by developing a variety of housing types throughout the city, rather than concentrating development in the highest-density communities. Public policy that provides sufficient zoning capacity, and promotes desirable, accessible communities throughout the city, best ensures balanced levels of development among New York's neighborhoods.

Housing for New Yorkers

New York's municipal housing program represents a remarkable achievement in the face of sharply declining federal support for the housing needs of the nation's cities. More than any other city in the country, New York has harnessed its own resources to support ambitious housing objectives. Combining its funds with state and federal assistance, the city started construction or substantial rehabilitation of 43,000 housing units in the five fiscal years ending June 30, 1992 (Figure 3.1).

Nevertheless, the city's current housing needs ultimately will require greatly increased federal assistance. The most recent data available, from the 1991 *Housing and Vacancy Survey* (HVS) conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, illustrate the problems that remain. Rents continue to be higher than most low- and moderate-income city residents can afford, even with public assistance. More than 47 percent of city households now spend more than 30 percent of their



monthly income on rent. Although vacancies have increased during the current recession, they are predominantly in more expensive units. Many New Yorkers are homeless. In fiscal 1992, the city's emergency shelters housed an average of 7,290 single persons per night, and as of June 30, 1992, some 5,230 homeless families were in emergency housing.

To address these problems, the *Ten-Year Capital Strategy* maintains the largest municipally funded housing program in the country. The most recent strategy, the *1994-2003 Preliminary Strategy*, allocates \$5 billion for Department of Housing Preservation and Development programs, including \$3.9 billion of city capital funds.

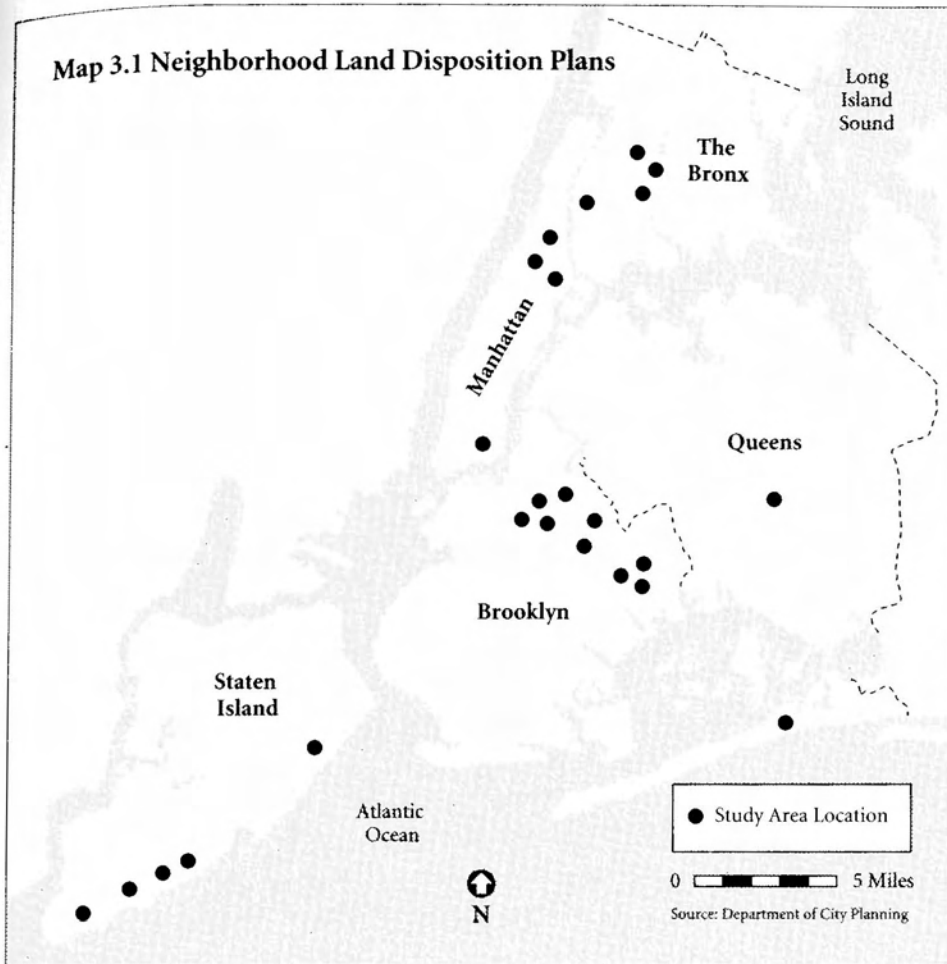
The Role of City-Owned Land

Low-income communities throughout the city continue to be plagued by pockets of blight—vacant land and vacant or dilapidated buildings—often owned by the city. The city acquired most of these properties through urban renewal and tax foreclosure. The revitalization of these neighborhoods will be largely determined by how the city uses its property and by its public investment in infrastructure and services. In the past, the city's disposition policies often emphasized maximizing short-term revenues and gave little thought to long-term community revitalization. As a consequence, inappropriate land uses, continued vacancies, and deterioration frustrated local redevelopment efforts.

At the Commission's request, the Department has identified 19 built-up neighborhoods with concentrations of vacant city-owned property. (Five others on Staten Island have large tracts of city-owned land that remain undeveloped because of environmental constraints.) The Department is currently drawing up *Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans* for these 24 areas to help the city use its property in a manner that stabilizes and rebuilds neighborhoods and encourages productive reinvestment (Map 3.1).

Neighborhood Economic Integration

As housing prices rose during the past two decades, some historically mixed-income neighborhoods evolved into more economically homogeneous communities with fewer opportunities for lower-, moderate-, and middle-income households. In 1987, the City Planning Commission adopted a pioneering experiment—inclusionary zoning—to promote the development of low-income housing in high-density communities where the traditional mix of income groups was being altered by the influx of more affluent households. The Commission believes inclusionary zoning has demonstrated the feasibility of linking market-rate and lower-income housing.



Limiting Regulatory Costs of Housing

In recent years, New York City has systematically revised its residential zoning text to avoid imposing unnecessary regulatory costs on new housing investment. These costs can stem from such procedures as requiring special permits, mandating higher-cost construction prototypes, or calling for excessive parking, for example. Unnecessary regulation raises the costs of both publicly assisted and unassisted housing and worsens New York's chronic housing shortage.

Many common New York City housing types are costly to replicate. The housing types least costly to build are two- and three-story rowhouses and garden apartments with unenclosed parking and no elevators. In communities with large vacant sites, mandating lower densities than are achievable in the rowhouse configuration could raise housing costs. Requiring middle-density housing to adopt costly setbacks or enclosed parking, or to use expensive poured-in-place concrete or steel construction, may also make new housing unaffordable for large segments of the population.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Reinforce Neighborhood Fabric While Accommodating Appropriate Housing Opportunities**

In preparing neighborhood studies, the Department should balance the preservation of the physical character of communities with the need to encourage future housing development. The Commission and the Department should continue monitoring the results of the contextual zoning regulations. In June 1992, the Department published *Quality Housing Zoning*, a proposal to resolve problems with contextual zoning in middle- to high-density residential districts (R6-R10). This proposal would make the contextual zoning regulations more flexible and usable in more locations, without compromising the goal of having new construction fit in with existing buildings. In 1993, the Department will submit a formal zoning text amendment, which the Commission will evaluate.

The Commission will continue to develop and apply contextual zoning to areas with well-defined physical attributes. Newly redeveloping areas or those with a mix of building types may benefit from an alternative to both contextual zoning and to "height-factor" zoning that would promote a sense of place, enhance street life, and ensure greater safety.

The Department should review the 1961 residential zoning regulations sometimes referred to as "height-factor" regulations in R6 districts and above. These regulations were intended to produce tall buildings set amid generous private open space. Because all the development can be aggregated on a small part of the lot, however, and the height and setback regulations have minimal impact on large lots, the resulting buildings have often been very tall, isolated towers surrounded by parking. This type of development is usually out of character with its surrounding community and can decrease activity and safety on nearby streets.

The Department should explore revision of height-factor zoning regulations and consider incorporating such safety and security measures as requiring direct sightlines from the street to the building entrance and from the elevator to apartments. Manhattan's Upper East Side is one area where revisions to height-factor zoning may be appropriate. Using computer

simulations, the Department has been working with community and elected representatives, the real estate industry, and architects to evaluate proposed new height and setback regulations for high-density residential buildings. In addition, the Department should determine how the current plaza bonus regulations shape buildings in high-density residential areas and assess their appropriateness.



Quality Housing development provides such amenities as indoor recreation space for its residents and a built form consistent with many older neighborhoods.

While demand for market-rate housing is slack today, it is likely to revive in the long term. Zoning must permit privately financed housing development to meet the rising expectations of an increasingly affluent population. The same zoning must also accommodate needed publicly assisted housing both inside and outside areas where such housing is now concentrated. As areas are rezoned, the Commission will seek to preserve neighborhoods and expand opportunities for reinvestment, rehabilitated housing, and new construction in appropriate locations with adequate infrastructure.

- **Use Vacant City-Owned Land as Part of Comprehensive Neighborhood Plans to Promote Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization**

The Commission believes that neighborhood plans for vacant city-owned land must be developed in consultation with the affected communities and key city agencies. The plans should ensure that disposition actions reflect a comprehensive examination of neighborhood needs for housing, social and economic opportunity, open space, community facilities, and other quality-of-life improvements. These plans must (1) evaluate strategies for use of vacant city property; (2) identify assemblage possibilities; and (3) balance short-term revenue objectives against long-term community benefits.

In many communities, the city's holdings are interspersed with privately held, often blighted properties. Plans must determine whether city-owned land should be sold to produce needed revenue or withheld from auction and "land-banked." While small lots may be useful to adjoining property owners, large lots are likely to be redeveloped only when public-sector funding becomes available. The costs of holding such properties off the market are small, while the potential benefits of coordinated redevelopment are large. The city can expedite community revitalization by using its urban renewal powers to assemble more developable sites. Plans must also address the issue of the appropriate density of new development. Lower-density housing programs have successfully kept down construction costs and promoted home ownership. Some communities are concerned, however, that land once occupied by multi-story tenements is being redeveloped at densities too low to recapture the neighborhood's former vitality. Higher-density housing would better use existing infrastructure and help support a greater variety of local retail and other services.

Each plan must strike a balance among competing concerns. The strategies must be tailored to each neighborhood's specific conditions, concerns, and



Height-factor zoning may result in isolated development out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood.

opportunities. The Commission will review the plans to ensure that they not only create new housing but also revitalize neighborhoods, with adequate recreation, retail, community facilities, and other services.

- **Promote Community Economic Integration**

New York must have a policy of promoting economic integration of neighborhoods to offer improved opportunities for economic mobility, access to public and private services, and housing opportunities to all New Yorkers, from the very young to the very old. The Commission recommends that the Department expand the existing inclusionary zoning program, which applies only in R10 districts, and develop a comprehensive inclusionary zoning strategy. Such a program must balance the need to encourage market-rate housing production with achieving meaningful economic integration.

The goal of inclusionary zoning is economic integration. It is not intended to be and cannot serve as a substitute for a well-funded housing program. As a precursor to such a program, the Commission set a precedent when it required the recently approved Brighton-by-the-Sea project to include units for lower-income housing. For the Riverside South development, the Commission structured a more refined inclusionary approach, requiring a range of affordable housing types.

- **Support Residential Reinvestment in Neighborhoods**

In future zoning efforts, the Department should continue to be sensitive to the costs of regulations, ensure that new regulations do not unnecessarily impede neighborhood reinvestment, and strive to develop balanced plans. For example, although adequate parking is essential to prevent congestion, excessive parking requirements can unnecessarily raise housing costs. Car ownership patterns have evolved since the zoning parking requirements for multi-family residences went into effect in 1961. The Department should examine current car ownership patterns, mass transit availability, and other factors to determine if current parking requirements should be modified, particularly for housing for the elderly and low-income families, to ensure that unnecessary expense is avoided.

The Department should also review the zoning of manufacturing-zoned areas that may no longer be needed for industrial and municipal uses. The Commission is aware of the economic importance of many manufacturing-zoned areas and recommends a number of policies to support industry (Chapter 2). The long-term decline of New York's industrial sector, however, has reduced the need for manufacturing-zoned land. The Department will begin studies evaluating opportunities to map as-of-right residential zoning in such industrial areas as portions of the West Side of Manhattan, Downtown Flushing in Queens, and similar areas with little industrial activity and a significant residential presence.

NEIGHBORHOOD LIFE

A good quality of life is one of the most important characteristics of a stable neighborhood. Many factors help create it: public safety, recreation, street maintenance, enforcement of nuisance laws, the quality and variety of local shopping. The Commission's planning policies can influence many of these factors.

Neighborhood Economic Development

Local retail streets are an essential part of many neighborhoods. They provide convenient access to frequently needed goods and services, function as centers of activity within communities, and enhance the desirability of surrounding residences. Yet some city neighborhoods still lack adequate retail services, so residents must choose between travelling farther or shopping locally where there is less selection at higher prices. In some areas, the absence of convenient shopping and the corresponding depressed neighborhood commercial streets can contribute to blight.

The city has launched a number of initiatives to help small businesses and neighborhood shopping districts, including the creation of the Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Small Business, which is addressing issues related to city regulation, taxation and services; establishment of Business Improvement Districts; and the inclusion of \$41.4 million in the *1994-2003 Preliminary Ten-Year Capital Strategy* for commercial revitalization and traffic and parking improvement programs.

In some cases, the 30-year-old zoning framework has failed to keep pace with changes in modern retailing, services, and entertainment. In many local retail districts, stores are subject to size and use limitations that no longer reflect current business practices. This discourages local economic development by restricting new businesses that could be compatible with existing uses—like workshop/stores that have production and sales on the same premises.

The traditional zoning approach of strictly separating land uses may not serve neighborhoods in a society marked by changing technology. Conversely, some changed business practices, permitted under the current



Local commercial strips, such as Roosevelt Avenue in Queens (top photo) and 181st Street in Manhattan, are at the heart of many New York neighborhoods.

zoning, have potential land use impacts. For example, the local movie theater, with little or no parking, has evolved into a regional multiplex cinema attracting many cars to residential communities.

In many communities, shopping streets evolved from village or town centers. Modern retailing has located away from these traditional centers, particularly in outlying areas where residential densities are low and car ownership is widespread. The mapped zoning districts in many of these traditional centers are outdated. For example, the Commission has often mapped commercial overlay districts 150 feet deep to provide room for off-street parking, even though commercial uses were generally found only in the first 100 feet, with residential uses in the next 50 feet. In some places, the 150-foot depth is needed to provide a large enough assemblage to permit modern retail development. In others, the 150-foot depth permits inappropriate commercial activity to intrude on residential blocks.

Neighborhood Streetscape

The physical arrangement of buildings and public spaces can significantly affect residents' perceptions of their neighborhoods. Poorly located and designed open spaces, blank street walls, and isolated high-rise developments contribute to the alienation of residents. Even rowhouses, if poorly designed, can eliminate on-street parking and diminish street life. Zoning can encourage uses and building arrangements that bring activity to streets and other public spaces and ensure that the scale of buildings and amenities complements their surroundings.

Community Facilities

Strong local social, cultural, civic, and religious institutions are essential to neighborhood stability. The availability of community facilities providing quality health care, education, or child care, or catering to specific religious affiliations or ethnic identities, is often a determining factor for New Yorkers choosing a neighborhood. The city's aging population needs nursing care. Substance abusers need treatment centers. The mentally ill need supported housing. The not-for-profit sector—especially health care and educational institutions—is a growth sector of the economy. Income earned by employees helps support families and businesses, and these institutions often anchor retail streets. Conflicts can occur, however, when these facilities expand into residential neighborhoods.

Recognizing the importance of community facilities to neighborhoods and to the city as a whole, the zoning ordinance treats them as a special category of use. The Zoning Resolution's community facilities provisions are the most liberal in the nation: They generally permit such facilities as-of-right in all residential and commercial districts. In New York City, where space is at a premium, these permissive regulations have created situations where residents and community facili-

ty users compete for scarce parking, light and air, and building space. Conflicts are inevitable.

Since 1961, some community facilities have radically changed or expanded their mission. The office of the family doctor who lived on a residential street has been replaced by a medical center of unlimited size complete with a 24-hour emergency entrance and limited on-site parking. The zoning regulations treat both facilities the same. Parking requirements for community facilities are minimal and do not reflect the facilities' changing uses. Regulations that determine a building's maximum size are generally more liberal for community facilities than for neighboring residential development. In some zoning districts, community facilities are permitted twice the floor area of a residential building and are permitted to extend into required rear yards.

Finally, schools, group homes, and houses of worship are afforded constitutional or regulatory protection. The New York courts have been consistently averse to regulations that limit the location or operation of such facilities.

Recreation and Open Space

Recreational facilities and open spaces are crucial to sound neighborhoods. New York City is fortunate to have a wealth of these resources. However, they are not evenly distributed throughout the city, and their capital and maintenance needs have often been neglected.

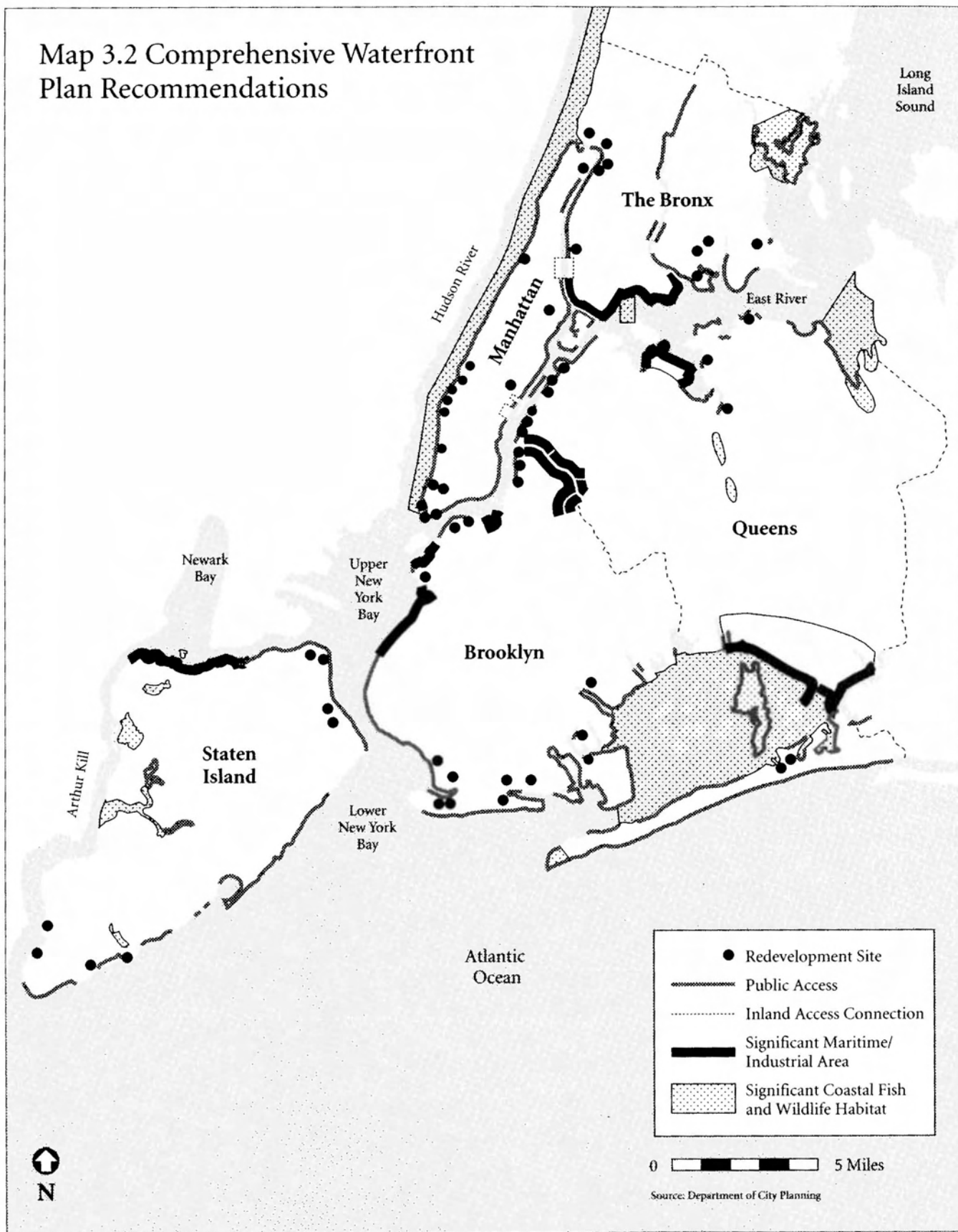
Open space serves a number of functions essential to the quality of life in urban areas, including recreation, respite from city life, and contact with nature. Trees and green spaces clean the air, offer shade on a hot day, help cool dense urban centers, protect natural resources including wildlife habitats, and help manage stormwater runoff. A good park is a vital community asset, allowing for the social interaction that promotes neighborhood cohesion.

The open space system New York has inherited—its green infrastructure—is exceptional both in size and character. Over the past century and a half, the public sector has acquired or otherwise protected over 20 percent of the land area of New York as public open space. The city's parklands include large parks such as Central and LaTourette parks, small neighborhood playgrounds, waterfront esplanades, natural wildlife preserves, beaches, and many other types of open space. The city's Department of Parks and Recreation has jurisdiction over 26,175 acres of parkland; the State, 324 acres; and the National Park Service, another 7,043 acres, most of it in Gateway National Recreation Area. In addition, public space is available at schools, housing projects, plazas, colleges, hospitals, and botanic gardens. Some



Faber Park Pool on Staten Island is one of more than 40 swimming pools operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Map 3.2 Comprehensive Waterfront Plan Recommendations



open spaces are not intended primarily for public recreation, but for preservation of natural habitats or unique resources like Jamaica Bay.

New York's public open space is unevenly distributed, however, and many neighborhoods have little or none. In middle- and high-density residential neighborhoods and business districts, the ratio of public open space to population is relatively low, while large tracts of parkland lie at the perimeter of the city, far from population concentrations. In a dense city where many residents have no yards, open space close to home is essential.

Keeping a vast system of parks clean and well maintained is an enormous task requiring far greater resources than New York has had available in recent years. The city's park system keeps growing—from 22,192 acres in 1963 to 26,300 acres today—but staff to operate it has shrunk from about 6,000 workers in 1963 to about 3,400 today. The city has spent nearly \$1 billion in the last decade rebuilding the parks system, yet less than half the needed improvements have been made, and insufficient maintenance funding puts even recent improvements at risk.

Neighborhoods and the Waterfront

The city is blessed with the longest, most diverse urban waterfront in the country. Close to 40 percent of it is parkland. Yet highways and other barriers often cut off the waterfront from adjoining areas, or the waterfront parks are located far from denser neighborhoods. The waterfront edge of the city should be reclaimed and reintegrated with adjoining communities.

In 1982, the city adopted the first Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP) in New York State. The City Planning Commission, in its capacity as the New York City Coastal Commission, is the decision-making body for WRP, with the Department serving as staff. The Commission reviews local discretionary actions within the coastal zone for consistency with WRP policies that address problems and opportunities associated with a wide range of coastal issues.

The Department's recently issued *Comprehensive Waterfront Plan* presents a vision that balances the long-range needs of environmentally sensitive areas and a working port with opportunities for waterside public access, open space, housing, and commercial activity (Map 3.2). One of the plan's primary goals is to reconnect the city's residents and neighborhoods to the waterfront by providing opportunities for communities to expand to the waterfront, creating new communities at appropriate locations, and encouraging waterfront uses that attract people and activity.

The quality of significant natural areas, especially on Staten Island, is still at risk. Protection may be enhanced by acquisition and by less costly methods, including conservation easements and refinement of existing regulatory programs. The waterfront plan identifies three special natural areas that merit added protection—Jamaica Bay/Rockaway Peninsula, wetlands on Northwest Staten



The Shore Parkway Esplanade in Brooklyn offers a panoramic view of sea, sky, and land.

Island, and sections of the Long Island Sound shorelines in Queens and the Bronx. It also maps a strategy for maintaining their long-term value.

The plan's waterfront zoning proposal introduces mandatory public access requirements, permits the integration of water-dependent and waterfront-enhancing uses into neighborhoods, and ensures that the scale of development is appropriate for the waterfront and compatible with adjoining communities. The proposed regulations would require public access and view corridors in most non-industrial development. They would establish specific height and setback requirements and regulate uses, bulk, and parking. The proposed zoning would also allow water-dependent uses like ferries, marinas, recreation, and commercial activities in more locations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Develop a Land Use and Regulatory Framework that Promotes Neighborhood Economic Development and Better Reflects the Needs of Retail and Service Businesses**

The city must promote local economic development and convenient access to shopping for residents in all neighborhoods, a challenge made more difficult by the significant post-1989 economic decline. The Department should build upon the city's commercial revitalization programs by initiating the first comprehensive study of commercial zoning regulations since 1961, and by examining other

needs of regional and local centers such as urban design, transportation, and zoning map changes. Use regulations and corresponding standards should be reevaluated as part of the review of commercial district regulations. The Zoning Resolution could promote new economic development opportunities by permitting a wider variety of small businesses to open on local retail streets, subject to standards that prevent adverse impacts. Conversely, the study should also evaluate regulations for permitted uses that may have significant land use impacts.

The Department should examine how current zoning and infrastructure policies limit neighborhood retail development in these areas and recommend appropriate strategies to sustain them. In addition, the mapping of neighborhood commercial zones needs to be examined in light of changes in retail concentrations and activities since 1961. Some areas that were zoned in 1961 to serve as regional centers no longer function as such. Others have grown to assume a regional role, but may not be zoned to accommodate the range of the services they could provide. Obsolete mapping of commercial districts needs to be reviewed to provide for a wide range of siting opportunities at appropriate locations for commercial activities and to protect adjoining residences and businesses where necessary.

The Department's neighborhood planning studies should evaluate the mapped pattern of commercial zoning and recommend appropriate remapping. In addition, the Department should explore the feasibility of streetscape regulations to ensure protection of residential blocks while allowing flexibility in commercial development.

Certain commercial districts—even in automobile-oriented areas—have unrealistic parking requirements. Where requirements are excessive, investment is discouraged; where parking is inadequate, traffic congestion can disrupt business and residential uses. The commercial zoning study should also examine existing requirements and recommend adjustments based on observed demand, area automobile use, and national standards.

- **Address Quality-of-Life Issues and Improve the Neighborhood Streetscape through Zoning and Other Measures**

The Commission's zoning authority and its Charter-mandated reviews of site selection, land disposition, and urban renewal proposals can promote development that reinforces the urban fabric and includes adequate space for social, educational, and recreational services. The Commission believes it is imperative that the need for these services be taken into account in long-range land use planning, especially in the Department's *Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans*.



Workshop/stores are a new type of commercial use that combines retail sales and assembly in one location.



Active retail centers—like Fordham Road—promote public safety by attracting many “eyes” to the street.

One of the most important design considerations in the physical arrangement of neighborhoods is providing “eyes” to watch public streets. Activity centers like stores and hospitals attract people to an area. Locating these facilities near transit nodes can benefit the activities, transit, and the public. In the *Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans*, for example, the Department is proposing that city-owned assemblages on key streets, particularly near transit stations, be marketed for retail use.

In some instances, the plans recommend zoning to permit commercial uses in areas where they would enliven a neighborhood and increase safety. In other instances, it may be beneficial to shrink commercial overlays to concentrate activity at key locations. Streetscape regulations could also complement increased activity. Zoning regulations and other land use policies should encourage development that avoids poorly located and designed open spaces, disruptive parking lots, blank street walls, and isolated high-rise developments.

The Department’s neighborhood planning efforts should promote security through increased activity by zoning important locations for higher density, or for commercial or institutional use. Middle- and high-density contextual zoning brings buildings closer to the street and helps to provide “eyes on the street.” It could be used more widely with the added flexibility of the proposed Quality Housing amendments.

- **Balance the Needs of Community Facilities and Residential Neighborhoods**

The Department is completing a comprehensive review of the community facility regulations. Concern for protecting neighborhood context must be balanced with the need for these facilities and constitutional or legislative protection afforded some uses. The regulations must reflect the changed nature of community facilities, help preserve neighborhood character, and accommodate community facility growth in appropriate locations.

In addition, the regulations must also recognize the effect of changing demographics and lifestyles on the need for community facilities. For example, with more women and two-income households in the work force, child care facilities should be permitted at locations accessible to work sites in industrial and commercial areas as well as to residences. The comprehensive review will form the basis for a full public discussion of revisions to the community facility zoning regulations in 1993.

- **Maximize Existing Open Space Resources and Plan for New Needs**

The city should develop a strategy to improve open space opportunities in its most underserved areas. This may involve creating new parkland through transfer of city land to the Department of Parks or by acquisition of private land. Creative use of vacant city-owned land and open space on sites with city-owned housing for mini-parks can provide meaningful open space in dense underserved communities. The *Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans*, the *Comprehensive Waterfront Plan*, and urban renewal plans identify publicly owned properties appropriate for open space. The Department should also complete its regional open space needs studies in each borough.

The level of maintenance must be adequate to protect the investment of public resources. However, open space and recreation facilities alone will not address recreation needs in many communities. These facilities must be programmed to maximize their use and, in some instances, to ensure any use at all. Low-income neighborhoods especially need recreation programs that offer young people constructive alternatives to the street. These neighborhoods are often densely populated and have less open space per capita than lower-density areas of the city.

Another method of maximizing recreation resources is to make better use of non-park facilities, such as schools and Housing Authority playspaces. By encouraging recreation and community use of underused spaces, operating costs can be shared and more hours of recreation provided at the same capital cost. In particular, the Department should work with the Board of Education to identify



There are 7,000 acres of natural lands in New York City parks, including the pristine woodland of High Rock Park on Staten Island.



Recreational programs, like storytelling in Central Park, enhance the public's enjoyment of the city's open spaces.

available school recreation facilities in communities with the greatest need. Programming community art, cultural, and performance spaces should be encouraged.

The Department has helped shape a conceptual plan for a greenway system of bicycle and pedestrian paths offering mostly traffic-free travel corridors linking areas throughout the city (see Chapter 4). Half the 350 miles of paths suggested in the plan already exist. Of these, only 17 percent are in good condition, such as Brooklyn's Ocean Parkway, which for over a century has fulfilled Frederick Law Olmsted's goal of making the journey to Prospect Park a park-like experience. Priority should be given to those segments of the greenways that close key gaps in existing routes or open spaces; have potential as important travel corridors; or form part of long-distance routes, such as the East Coast Greenway and the Hudson River Greenway. A greenway system could connect underserved communities with nearby regional facilities, large parks, and open spaces.

- **Reclaim the City's Edge by Implementing Components of the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan**

Adoption of a waterfront zoning text amendment is critical to the successful implementation of the plan and reclaiming the waterfront. The Commission is currently reviewing regulations that propose expanding the locations where water-dependent and water-related uses are permitted, incorporating urban design controls, and requiring provision of public access. These regulations

would provide important planning tools to help neighborhoods extend to the waterfront and reestablish the waterfront connection that has been weakened over the years.

Zoning map changes that apply these new tools are essential to reconnecting neighborhoods to the water's edge. Some of the major criteria for selecting redevelopment sites in the plan included the potential for strengthening nearby residential or commercial areas and for opening up the waterfront to the public.

Recommended zoning map changes, as modified after public discussion, may be initiated by public and private land owners, community groups, community boards, elected officials, public agencies, or the Department. Upon adoption of the zoning text reform, the Commission recommends that the Department initiate the recommended land use changes. The number of changes initiated will depend, however, on available resources and Commission review of the specifics of each proposed map change. In some cases, detailed land use studies may be necessary to determine more specifically the zoning and land use changes and infrastructure needs. As resources permit, these studies will be integrated into the Department's work program. Should others apply for zoning map changes, the Commission will look to the plan as a framework and citywide context for review of proposals.

Some of the plan's key recommendations would be implemented through reform of the WRP policies. Incorporated into WRP, for example, would be designation of special natural areas and significant industrial and maritime areas. Review of redevelopment proposals would be guided by the plan's recommendations. In reviewing discretionary actions, the Commission will also be guided by other components of the plan, many of which seek to reestablish a vibrant relationship between the public and the waterfront.



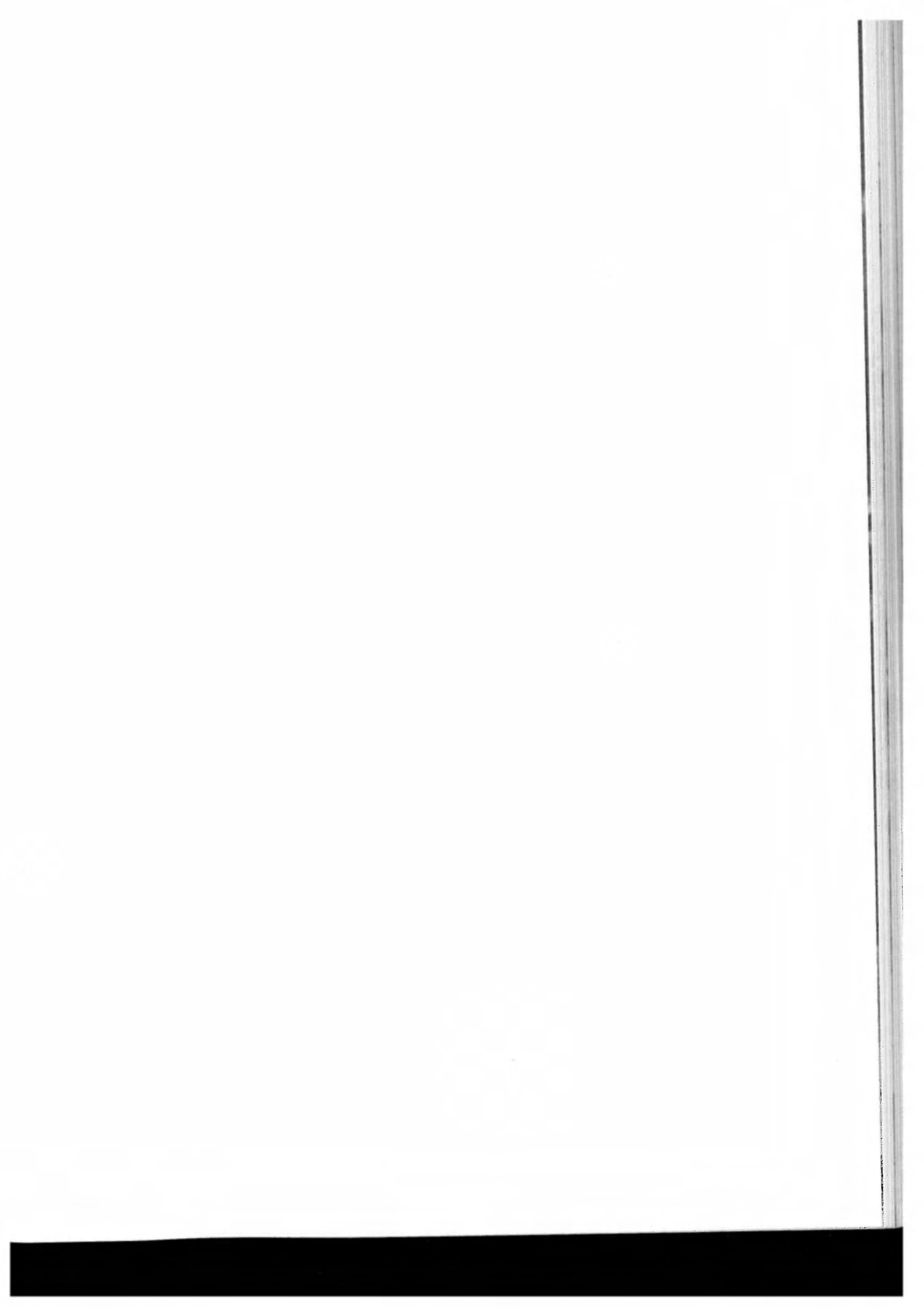
PART IV

DEFINING AN AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

This report is only a beginning. Achieving consensus on a vision for tomorrow's New York City requires sound planning within a framework of meaningful public participation. Public involvement in decision-making is a hallmark of New York City's planning process. Few, if any, major cities can match New York in the extent to which it has decentralized its operations and opened its land use planning and review procedures to public scrutiny. Yet the sheer size, pace of change, and diversity of New York City make consensus-building a daunting challenge.

New Yorkers must be informed early and consulted throughout the planning process. Communities, elected officials, and public agencies must recognize that citywide and local interests have to be balanced, and pragmatic, environmentally sound solutions found to complex problems.

The new Charter-mandated rules and documents provide an opportunity to create a more coherent planning process for New York. Additional actions are needed, however, to address deficiencies in the environmental planning and review processes, inadequate planning resources, fragmented planning activities, and the lack of focus on the capital planning and budgeting needed to make many plans a reality. Addressing these problems, together with the other policy recommendations in this report, defines a planning agenda for the next four years.



PLANNING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The 1975 City Charter formalized the structure of 59 community boards, giving them broad advisory powers in matters of land use, budget, and service delivery. It also established the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), formalizing an advisory role for the affected community and borough boards, and requiring public hearings throughout the process.

Some critics claim these provisions slow—or even stop—desirable change in the city. But public policy decisions are generally better, and more readily accepted, when the people most affected by them participate at all stages in the decision-making process. The framers of the 1989 Charter revisions clearly thought so. The new Charter expanded opportunities for public participation in governance, introduced the notion of equity in the distribution of city facilities among communities, and gave the City Council a role in the land use review process.

The revised Charter also mandated Mayoral and Borough President Strategic Policy Statements every four years; a City Planning Commission public hearing on the Mayor's draft *Ten-Year Capital Strategy*; and a new *Annual Report on Social Indicators* intended to help community boards formulate their budget priorities, and to provide a factual basis for public debate on economic, social, and environmental conditions in the city.

Not least among these new initiatives is this report itself. *Shaping the City's Future* articulates a vision for the city and a set of policies and specific proposals for achieving this vision. In preparing this discussion document, the Commission reached out to a variety of elected officials, civic and professional groups, experts, and the general public. These efforts included a public hearing in December 1991, at which individuals and organizations described their visions for the future of the city. In January 1992, together with the New York Metro Chapter of the American Planning Association and the Department, the Commission sponsored a symposium on the past, present, and future role of planning and zoning in shaping New York City.

Following the symposium, the Commission held a series of panel discussions that brought together a wide range of individuals, including business leaders, community representatives, economists, elected and appointed officials, real estate developers, social service providers, and urban planners to advise the Commission. The symposium and panel discussions were broadcast on Crosswalks, the municipal public access cable network. The Commission will seek public comment on this report at hearings in each borough beginning this spring.



Public participation in the Planning and Zoning Symposium and other forums helped shape the recommendations in this report.

Community-Based Planning

The new Charter responds to the growing interest in community-based planning by strengthening the provisions of Section 197-a, which grants community boards, the City Planning Commission and the Department, borough presidents, and borough boards the right to propose plans. The plans are subject to City Planning Commission and City Council review and approval. To help community boards exercise this right effectively and to consider the broad implications of their plans, the Commission established minimum standards for form and content and guidelines for sound planning policy in its rules for processing 197-a plans. Adopted in June 1991 after extensive public outreach, the rules provide for a flexible planning process that accommodates both comprehensive master plans and targeted plans addressing one or more issues of concern.

These rules do not ensure that communities wishing to initiate plans will be able to do so, however. Community objectives may be frustrated when preparation of an extensive plan requires research and analysis beyond the resources of a volunteer board with limited staff. A frequently noted concern is that boards in affluent areas may have better access to necessary expertise and funding, while such resources are not available to other boards. Other concerns involve the length of the 197-a review process and the risk that the plan ultimately approved and adopted by the Commission and the City Council might be modified so much it would no longer reflect the community's vision.

These concerns may have diminished somewhat with the approval by the Commission and City Council of the first community board 197-a plan in the fall of 1992. The plan, *Partnership for the Future*, was prepared for one of the poorest

districts in the city by Bronx Community Board 3, with the aid of a modest foundation grant, donated consultant services, and technical assistance from the Department's Bronx Office and the Office of the Bronx Borough President. The Commission modified a few recommendations, but the approved plan retains the community board's major goals and most of its recommendations.

Sharing the Benefits and Burdens of City Facilities

Like other cities, New York often faces storms of controversy when siting new facilities. The Charter directly addressed this problem—and broke new ground—by requiring the City Planning Commission to adopt criteria “designed to further the fair distribution among communities of the burdens and benefits associated with city facilities.” The city was required to issue an annual *Statement of Needs*, listing the facilities it planned to site in the next two years, together with a map of all city-owned and leased properties. Community boards were given the opportunity to comment on the statement, and borough presidents were authorized to propose alternate sites.

In December 1990, the Commission adopted the fair share criteria to guide city agencies in deciding where to site, expand, reduce, or close city facilities. The criteria require site planners to balance program needs and cost-effective service delivery with the effect of facilities on neighborhoods and the goal of broad geographic distribution. The Commission concluded that it could make more appropriate siting decisions, which would be accepted more readily, if communities were informed early and given the opportunity to participate throughout the planning process.

The criteria establish procedures for notifying communities early, discussing site proposals with them, and allowing them to monitor a sited facility's performance. Although the criteria cover all types of municipal facilities, there are special rules for waste management and transportation facilities, which pose unique environmental concerns, and for residential facilities, which often have been concentrated in the city's lowest-income neighborhoods.

It is too soon to judge whether the new process has been effective in building consensus or in promoting greater equity in the distribution of city facilities. However, the Commission looks forward later this year to receiving from the Department a status report on the program and recommendations to enhance its effectiveness. As the Commission strives to maximize economic opportunity, achieve a sustainable environment, and ensure vibrant neighborhoods, its policies must also reinforce the commitment to fair and open decision-making that balances a citywide perspective with the aspirations of the city's communities.

Constraints on Planning

The 1975 and 1989 Charter amendments promoted a more inclusive planning process, but planning in the city remains decentralized, with authority fragment-

ed among many agencies. The Commission believes that in exercising its oversight role, it should help coordinate decentralized planning functions in the city. Working with other agencies, it can use its powers to plan comprehensively and to build a consensus that points the way for public action, investment, and regulation.

The Department's ability to plan, however, has been limited by recent funding cuts. Even before those reductions, when measured by the number of planners per 100,000 residents, the Department ranked in the bottom 10 percent of planning departments in the nation's 100 largest cities. Moreover, considerable Departmental resources are devoted to processing environmental and land use reviews, further reducing resources available for comprehensive planning.

A significant though clearly unintended constraint on the Department has been the state-mandated City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), required when city agencies consider discretionary actions. When proposed uses or buildings are not permitted as-of-right, applications for the required discretionary zoning changes, special permits, and authorizations are subject to CEQR. The current review process unrealistically places much of the responsibility for ameliorating environmental concerns on the small number of households and businesses that will occupy new discretionary developments. This raises costs but rarely, if ever, addresses the major environmental problems confronting the city. In only a few areas of New York is the impact of new housing or commercial development significant when compared with underlying trends in the community or in the city as a whole.

Changing lifestyles (rising auto ownership, for example) and business practices (increasing reliance on long-distance trucks) have a much greater effect on environmental quality than discretionary development. By placing a heavier regulatory burden on new discretionary development and planning processes, the city's ability to plan, rezone and modernize its physical plant is reduced, and the economic activity that produces the resources to improve environmental conditions is impaired. The environmental review process is not a substitute for comprehensive environmental planning.

Moreover, environmental litigation is too often seen as a means to achieve in the courts or through litigation-induced delays, what was unachievable in the planning, public review, or legislative processes. This has led to a mutually reinforcing dynamic: Environmental review documents become increasingly complex to avoid litigation, while litigants continually try to enlarge CEQR's purview. In short, the current environmental review process has become an extraordinarily expensive, time-consuming, and litigation-driven impediment to sound planning and is in need of reform.

The Commission has adopted new CEQR rules to simplify the processing of these reviews, but more needs to be done. More flexible as-of-right regulations are needed so that the city and applicants can avoid unnecessary reviews, of

which the environmental component is usually the most costly. The city's Office of Environmental Coordination has just issued a new environmental review form that will clarify when a full Environmental Impact Statement is required. The Department, with other agencies, is preparing a *CEQR Technical Manual* to help public and private applicants prepare environmental reviews.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Build Consensus in Land Use Planning and Review Processes**

As it has since it first convened in July 1990, this Commission will continue to reach out to all affected and interested parties early and throughout the planning process, and in its deliberations on proposed zoning and land use actions. Public participation must involve the public in the development as well as the review of plans and policies. The Commission is uniquely positioned to bring together the concerns of communities, borough boards, public agencies, civic and professional organizations, and the business community. Listening to divergent views, the Commission can use its unique role to work with other agencies and the public to build consensus, synthesize disparate plans, reconcile opposing points of view, and point the way for public action, investment, and regulation.

Because the Charter disperses planning authority among many agencies, implementation of most of the policies outlined in this report will require coordination of planning activities beyond the direct purview of the Commission and the Department. Therefore, the Department must actively integrate its work with the efforts of other entities, including borough and community boards, community development organizations, and elected officials.

The Department should expand its public outreach in the preparation of area plans and proposals for zoning map or text changes. Inclusive planning approaches—such as fostering early and frequent dialogue with elected officials, communities, and the public at large—lead to better plans and sounder proposals. For example, the *Comprehensive Waterfront Plan* was shaped with the help of a citywide advisory committee that brought together a wide range of competing interests. Currently, the *Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans* are being developed in conjunction with interested city agencies and in dialogue with affected communities, council members, and borough presidents.

Community boards serve as local forums for eliciting public opinion. They work best when they have a full complement of volunteer members, and a diverse range of interests in the community are given an opportunity to be heard. Yet many New Yorkers are unfamiliar with these boards, and some boards have trouble attracting candidates for membership. Greater awareness of community boards should be promoted.



Community residents tour the northeast corner of Central Park as part of the planning for the reconstruction of the Harlem Meer.

- **Support Community-Based Planning and Revitalization Efforts**

There are a number of ways the Commission and the Department can involve communities more at all stages of the planning process to help them realize their land use and planning objectives. The Department should continue to make available to community boards (1) adequate resources for their planning efforts; (2) a common information base to help them understand their needs in relation to those of other communities and to citywide trends; and (3) data from the Department's extensive data bases and research reports to help them prepare plans, evaluate land use proposals, and set budget priorities.

The Department plans to issue a guide to 197-a planning for community boards and organizations. The guide will describe the process and rules adopted by the Commission; offer guidance on conditions for undertaking a plan; suggest sources of planning and financial assistance; provide a bibliography of information sources; and outline a step-by-step approach to plan preparation. The policies articulated in this report should help communities prepare plans that meet community goals and are consistent with, and help realize, citywide objectives.

The Department's own work program incorporates initiatives that respond to community-defined goals and issues. The development of contextual zoning, for example, and the many contextual zoning studies undertaken in the past few years have addressed neighborhood preservation and development objectives in residential communities throughout the city. Some of these studies were joint efforts of the Department and neighborhood groups. Other aspects of the

Department's work program respond to specific neighborhood issues, such as the desire to revitalize the commercial center in Stapleton, Staten Island.

- **Balance a Citywide Perspective with Respect for Local Needs and Concerns**

The Commission and the Department must be attentive to community goals and priorities as they revise zoning and land use policy. They must implement fair share in the site selection process, consider competing needs for city-owned land and buildings, and participate in setting priorities for capital programs in the city's *Ten-Year Capital Strategy*.

As part of this effort, the Commission seeks to promote equity in the distribution of city programs and facilities. Taking into account the requirements for specific programs or facilities, individual communities should not be burdened by a disproportionate share of city facilities serving a wider region or facilities that may be viewed as having a negative impact. It is equally important that services and other enhancements such as parks and libraries are dispersed equitably throughout the city.

Since needs always outstrip resources, not all local needs can be satisfied. The community view must also be balanced against overriding citywide needs, competing uses for city-owned property, or limited choices in selecting sites for certain facilities. Nevertheless, the Commission, the Department, and communities should work together to ensure that each community's plan serves as a building block, instead of a stumbling block, toward a better city.

- **Improve Environmental Planning and Review**

The Department should work with other agencies to integrate environmental and land use planning so that citywide concerns resulting from both discretionary and as-of-right development, as well as from underlying societal trends, are addressed rationally and comprehensively. One step in this process would be to track population growth and real estate development more closely, and to produce a more sophisticated model of alternative development scenarios involving both the projected levels and distribution of citywide development. This data can help the Department to assess more accurately the relation between needed infrastructure capacity and demand trends and to plan accordingly.

The integration of environmental and land use planning would help target infrastructure investment, resolve environmental issues, and allow more carefully targeted Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) when impacts are truly project-specific. It would also facilitate preparation of EISs so that areawide plans can be implemented more easily in conjunction with appropriate infrastructure investments. Another step to improving environmental planning is simplifying the CEQR process. The completion and periodic updating of the *CEQR Technical*

Manual should help applicants prepare EISs more easily. New rules that protect the environment and encourage participatory planning without creating undue administrative burdens should be pursued.

- **Provide Adequate Resources to Carry Out Planning Functions and Responsibilities**

Other world cities have recognized the importance of aggressive, well-coordinated planning in competing in the global marketplace. While the Commission recognizes that many city agencies are understaffed as a result of recent cutbacks, the current level of Department staffing limits the resources that can be devoted to new initiatives. Adequate resources are needed to integrate capital and environmental planning, continue the full range of local and citywide studies and the ongoing processing of ULURP and other applications, and plan for the city's long-range competitiveness.

- **Participate Fully in the Preparation of the Ten-Year Capital Strategy, the Four-Year Capital Plans, and the Annual Capital Budget**

Comprehensive planning will not be successful unless it is linked to the capital strategies and budgets. Much of the ten-year capital program is non-discretionary, resulting from emergency conditions and state and federal mandates. Decision-makers concerned with implementing the strategic policy recommendations outlined in this report have to confront the paucity of available resources. Opportunities do arise to fund new initiatives, however. To be effective, planning input should be reflected in the public investment decisions around which the four-year capital plans and the annual capital budgets are constructed.

PLANNING AGENDA FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

The policies articulated in this discussion document—for promoting economic opportunity and a sustainable environment, for improving neighborhood life for all New Yorkers, and for making planning and public participation more effective—reflect the Commission’s vision for New York. These policies provide a framework for Commission actions and planning efforts in the city. The Department can advance many of the policies over the next four years by acting on the specific recommendations articulated in this report. These include undertaking new actions and completing plans, studies, and zoning initiatives currently underway. These initiatives, described below, in addition to the ongoing responsibilities and functions of the Department, would form the planning agenda for the next four years.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

America’s International Gateway

To expand economic opportunity and maintain and enhance the city’s role in the world and region, Commission policies support export industry growth within and outside the CBD. Policies seek to facilitate expansion of the CBD, reuse its existing buildings, upgrade its appearance, and improve access to it.

Provide as-of-right zoning for expansion of the CBD. Examine and recommend zoning map changes to expand and strengthen the CBD, and accommodate export industry office needs. Complete the Long Island City and Lower Manhattan Comprehensive Business District Plans. Undertake studies of other areas near the existing Midtown and Downtown CBDs and in Downtown Brooklyn. Coordinate new office development with needed infrastructure investments and quality-of-life improvements.

Study export industry needs to facilitate their growth within and outside the CBD. Determine the unique roles these industries play outside the CBD, industry-specific needs, and location requirements, and recommend appropriate land use and zoning changes to facilitate their growth throughout the city. Focus on the following export industries: finance and advanced business services; media, culture, tourism, and entertainment; transportation and trade; fashion-related goods; hospitals, universities, and non-profit headquarters.

Examine zoning text amendments to strengthen the CBD by facilitating reuse and retrofitting of obsolete office buildings. Study potential commercial and manufacturing zoning text changes and other actions to facilitate reuse of older buildings in the CBD. Evaluate the potential of appropriate locations for housing, light assembly, and distribution.

Develop interagency strategies to upgrade the CBD's appearance. In addition to the Lower Manhattan and Long Island City plans, conduct studies in Midtown Manhattan and in Downtown Brooklyn to identify the need for improvements in signs and maintenance of public spaces. Consider use of Business Improvement Districts. Remap or adapt waterfront areas adjacent to the CBD for new uses.

Conduct transportation studies and recommend infrastructure investments to improve CBD access. Studies should encourage moving people by mass transit into the CBD and facilitating freight movement, particularly from the airports.

Identify zoning changes and infrastructure needed to support export industry growth outside the CBD. Examine and make appropriate zoning map changes in non-Manhattan business districts. Provide zoning flexibility to support the expansion of wholesale, retail, and light-manufacturing enterprises in appropriate areas. Conduct transportation and infrastructure studies to improve rail, water, and highway freight movement. Complete the *Community Facilities Study* and amend the zoning text, as appropriate, to address operational needs of major hospitals and universities. Examine potential zoning text modifications to permit more tourist facilities outside Manhattan.

Serving the Local Market

To expand economic opportunity, enhance the city's role as an anchor for the region, and revitalize neighborhoods, Commission policies seek to increase the vitality of regional commercial centers, expand retail opportunities, promote investment in industrial areas, and encourage entrepreneurship.

Examine regional and local commercial centers to increase their vitality and expand retail opportunities. Specific area studies of regional and local commercial centers should evaluate zoning, urban design, public amenities, transportation access, and other concerns. Zoning and other strategies should be examined to promote convenient access to supermarkets—particularly in low-income areas—and other retail and business services, and to integrate new retail development with the existing urban fabric.

Conduct a comprehensive study of commercial district zoning to promote economic growth and neighborhood revitalization. Address use, bulk, and parking regulations citywide. Amendments should seek to promote economic growth,

protect the environment, provide access to services, and revitalize commercial areas while assuring neighborhood compatibility.

Propose manufacturing zoning text amendments to expand industrial-sector investment and retail opportunities in manufacturing-zones. Zoning amendments should facilitate industrial development and relax existing restrictions on large retail developments in light- and medium-manufacturing zones.

Conduct an interagency review of manufacturing zoning performance standards to promote industrial area investment. Update performance standards to reflect current laws, technology, and business practices.

Growing Affluence, Persistent Poverty

Combatting poverty and promoting economic opportunity go hand-in-hand. The planning initiatives (described elsewhere in this report) that support overall economic and tax base expansion, encourage local-sector expansion, and improve housing opportunities and living conditions in low-income neighborhoods are essential to combat poverty in the city and improve the quality of life for its residents.

Develop, with the Board of Education, better enrollment forecasting models to improve facilities for public education. These models would be used to determine long-term educational facility needs.

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Moving People and Goods

The ability to move people and goods efficiently is a cornerstone for a sustainable environment, economic opportunity, and revitalized neighborhoods. Commission policies support selected rail transit expansions for moving people, and creation of a seamless transit system for subways, rail lines, ferries, express buses, vans, jitneys, and bicycles. They call for increased truck-freight mobility, expanded rail and waterborne movement of goods, and mitigation of traffic congestion.

Address land use issues and coordinate planning efforts of other agencies to maintain and expand the rail transit system, and improve access and mobility. With operating agencies, identify and assess the need for rail system expansion, ensure that appropriate land use decisions are made in support of projects, and coordinate the planning efforts of the transportation agencies with the concerns of other public agencies.

With other agencies, evaluate and improve ferry, express bus, van and jitney service to increase mobility and reduce neighborhood disruptions. These evaluations should rationalize and improve transit services, expand ferry service, and reduce reliance on the automobile.

Evaluate the preliminary citywide bikeway and greenway plan; study pedestrian improvements. The bikeway and greenway study currently underway will evaluate the feasibility of implementing segments of the bikeway and greenway plan. Pedestrian improvement studies for dense areas like Lower Manhattan, Chatham Square, Herald Square, and Downtown Brooklyn should be undertaken or completed.

Conduct transportation studies designed to reduce automobile traffic, alleviate highway congestion, and improve truck-freight movement. Studies should examine highway operating improvements and other short-term measures, as well as larger, more complex capital projects to improve CBD, industrial area, and airport access. Studies should also examine the feasibility of expanding the number of high-occupancy vehicle lanes, and promote park and ride facilities at Long Island Railroad and Metro North stations.

Continue studies of industrial areas to promote investment by increasing truck-freight access and other types of freight mobility. These studies examine industrial areas to identify access problems and needed improvements. Additional areas should be studied and coordinated with other city agencies and the business community.

Implement components of the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan and undertake land use studies to target waterborne, rail and truck access improvements. Identify and evaluate steps necessary to create and implement a regional intermodal strategy for waterborne and rail transportation and to expand waterborne and rail goods movement.

Review Manhattan CBD parking regulations as part of the city review of congestion mitigation measures. This study will evaluate the relationship between parking requirements, vehicle use, and air quality. Studies should also be undertaken for other CBD locations, such as Downtown Brooklyn.

Managing Water and Waste

Like the transportation system, infrastructure systems that supply New Yorkers with drinking water and treat and dispose of wastewater and solid waste are crucial to a sustainable environment, a sound economy, and healthy neighborhoods. Commission policies support strategies to reduce water use, limit impacts of rapidly rising water and sewer charges, and better match sewage treatment plant capacity with demand. These policies seek to improve water quality while maxi-

mizing waterfront benefits, discourage waste generation, and create markets for recycled materials. They also would accommodate solid waste and other municipal facilities safely within the city's land use planning framework in a manner that does not unduly burden nearby communities and that considers land use, environmental, and fair share issues.

Develop models for projecting growth and its distribution to better match infrastructure capacity with demand. These models would enable the city to assess more accurately population shifts and the relation between needed infrastructure capacity and demand trends and to plan accordingly.

Follow up on the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan and the Staten Island Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans to improve water quality and maximize waterfront benefits. These plans will recommend utilizing appropriate city-owned land and wetlands for managing storm water runoff while retaining significant habitats.

Amend the Zoning Resolution to accommodate solid waste facilities better within the city's land use planning framework. Together with the parallel Department of Sanitation siting regulations, this text amendment would control the siting, layout, and operations of solid waste transfer and recycling facilities and better accommodate them within the city's land use framework.

NEW YORKERS AND THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS

Housing and the Urban Fabric

To enhance New York's diverse and distinct communities, Commission policies seek to reinforce neighborhood fabric while accommodating appropriate housing opportunities. City-owned land would be used to promote housing and neighborhood revitalization. Policies also promote community economic integration and support residential reinvestment in neighborhoods.

Submit Quality Housing Zoning Text amendments to reinforce neighborhood fabric. These amendments would make the contextual regulations in medium and high-density districts more flexible and applicable in more locations to better accommodate appropriate housing opportunities while reinforcing neighborhood context.

Explore the revision or replacement of the 1961 height-factor zoning and reevaluate the current plaza bonus regulations. While areas with well-defined physical attributes should continue to be contextually rezoned, other areas with a mix of building types and newly redeveloping areas could benefit from a non-contextual alternative to height-factor zoning that would promote a sense of

place, street life and safety. In high-density residence districts, the shape and height of buildings is also influenced by the plaza bonus. The appropriateness of these regulations should be evaluated.

Develop neighborhood plans to ensure that the city's disposition actions reflect a comprehensive examination of neighborhood needs and promote housing and neighborhood revitalization. *Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans* have been initiated for 19 built-up neighborhoods with concentrations of city-owned property. These and future plans should guide property disposition in a manner that stabilizes and rebuilds neighborhoods and encourages reinvestment.

Develop a comprehensive inclusionary zoning strategy to promote community economic integration. As a matter of sound planning, a more comprehensive inclusionary zoning program to achieve meaningful economic integration should be developed linking market-rate and affordable housing.

Conduct area zoning studies that support residential reinvestment in neighborhoods. Promote opportunities for privately financed housing development and accommodate needed publicly assisted housing. Balance preservation and growth, and correct mismatches between zoning and the built fabric.

Examine and modify, where appropriate, residential parking requirements to support residential reinvestment. Relationships among car ownership patterns, mass transit availability, and other factors should be examined to determine if the current parking requirements for multi-family residences should be modified. The study should specifically address the requirements for low-income and elderly housing to ensure that unnecessary expense is avoided.

Study the potential for residential reinvestment in manufacturing-zoned areas that may no longer be needed for industrial and municipal uses. Areas with low levels of industrial activity, and in some cases a significant residential presence, should be examined to determine if rezoning opportunities exist to permit as-of-right residential development.

Neighborhood Life

Enhancing neighborhood life can be achieved by revitalizing neighborhoods, promoting economic opportunity, and reconnecting the city to its waterfront. Commission policies provide a framework to promote neighborhood economic development and better reflect modern retail and service business needs. They seek to improve the neighborhood streetscape, address quality of life issues, balance the needs of community facilities and residential neighborhoods, and maximize existing open space resources and plan for new open space needs.

Study regional and local commercial centers to develop a land use and regulatory framework that promotes neighborhood economic development and better reflects the needs of retail and service businesses. Studies should examine neighborhood and commercial zoning, infrastructure needs, and streetscape improvements to reflect neighborhood needs and the needs of retail and business services. These studies would complement the recommended comprehensive study of commercial district zoning.

Conduct neighborhood planning studies and implement strategies that improve the neighborhood streetscape and address quality of life issues. Through the *Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans* and other local plans: propose the marketing for retail use of city-owned land in key locations to enliven neighborhoods and increase safety; examine the market potential for new supermarkets and public markets; and promote development that reinforces the urban fabric and includes adequate space for social and recreational needs. Rezoning other areas for higher density or for commercial or institutional use should be considered to promote the objective of security through increased activity.

Complete the Comprehensive Community Facility Study and revise the zoning regulations to balance the needs of community facilities and residential neighborhoods. Recommendations should reflect the significant changes in the delivery of community facility services, their importance to the city's economy, and their effects on neighborhoods.

Conduct an interagency assessment of child care needs of households to increase access to child care. This assessment would permit the city to measure more accurately the need and locations for child-care facilities. The Department should also examine how to incorporate the provision of child care facilities into the Zoning Resolution.

Complete the boroughwide and community district open space studies. These studies examine regional recreation and open space needs, and the needs in underserved community districts, and will provide the basis for extensive, informed public involvement in open space planning. Ongoing planning efforts should develop strategies to improve open space opportunities through transfer of city-owned land, by acquisition of private land, and by the creative use of vacant city-owned land and open space on sites with city-owned housing. The greenway and bikeway study should give priority to those segments that close key gaps in the existing network or are part of long-distance routes.

Work with the Board of Education to identify available school recreation facilities in communities with the greatest need to maximize open space resources. By encouraging recreational, cultural, and community use of underused facilities, operating costs can be shared and more hours of activity can be provided without building new facilities.

Implement components of the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan to reclaim the city's edge and link neighborhoods to the waterfront. The Plan's recommendations seek to reestablish a vibrant relationship between the public and the waterfront by a mix of regulatory reform, zoning map and land use changes, and infrastructure investments. Specific work efforts include responding to public concerns on the waterfront zoning text, reforming WRP, and undertaking land use and infrastructure studies for remappings.

DEFINING AN AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

Planning and Public Participation

Public participation and an improved planning process are essential to achieving the Commission's vision for the city. Commission policies seek to build consensus in land use planning and review, support community-based planning and revitalization efforts, and balance a citywide perspective with respect for local needs and concerns. Policies also call for improved environmental planning and review, expanded resources for carrying out functions and responsibilities, and full participation in key capital planning documents.

Prepare a status report on the "fair share" process to balance a citywide perspective with respect for local needs and concerns. Assess the effectiveness of the process in building consensus and promoting equity in the distribution of facilities.

Develop and issue a 197-a planning guide to support community-based planning and revitalization efforts. This guide should facilitate preparation of 197-a plans. The Department's data bases should continue to be made available to communities and the public, and support should continue to be provided for plan preparation.

Integrate work program with efforts of other agencies. Work with other city agencies to implement policies outside the direct purview of the Department and Commission.

Coordinate environmental and land use planning. Use projections of population growth and real estate development, including its distribution, to integrate environmental and land use planning with new infrastructure needs.

Complete the CEQR Technical Manual to help improve environmental planning. This manual will facilitate preparation and review of environmental documents and should improve the planning process.

Participate fully in capital planning and capital budgeting efforts. Ensure that Department planning input is reflected in capital investment decisions.

A Foundation for the Future

Little more than five years have elapsed since the Commission on the Year 2000 issued its report, *New York Ascendant*. It noted the “exuberance of a re-energized city” and suggested that New York City was well positioned to tackle its immense problems. Less than four months after the report’s publication, in October 1987, the stock market crashed and ended the 1980s boom. Perhaps unreasonable public confidence in a better future has been replaced by an often unjustified sense of gloom. This Commission’s review of the state of the city has certainly found many causes for concern; however, most of the strengths that fed the optimism of *New York Ascendant* remain.

Building on the city’s strengths and developing a consensus to overcome its weaknesses are tasks confronting all New Yorkers. During the next four years, we must plan for the New York City of the twenty-first century. It can be a century of increased economic opportunity with a sustainable environment and strong, vibrant, and safe communities. The Commission hopes that this report, *Shaping the City’s Future*, will stimulate the debate on how to achieve these objectives and help build the consensus needed to plan for the city of tomorrow.



FOUR YEARS OF PLANNING 1989-1992

This appendix summarizes the major plans and studies that the Department of City Planning has completed or undertaken in the last four years. It is divided into two sections: citywide actions that transcend specific neighborhoods, and planning and zoning studies related to local needs.

The adoption in 1989 of the new City Charter established many new Departmental responsibilities, including preparation of the *Annual Report on Social Indicators*, the *Citywide Statement of Needs*, the *Mayor's Strategic Policy Statement*, and the *Ten-Year Capital Strategy*. The Department helped the Commission develop rules and regulations for 197-a plans and City Environmental Quality Reviews (CEQR) and "fair share criteria" for the siting of city facilities.

The Department is responsible for a number of continuing land use review and planning support activities. These include the timely processing of environmental and land use applications; maintaining a computerized land use applications data base; and issuing 1990 Census data reports, a zoning handbook, and annual reports on community district needs, new housing development, and, with other agencies, the *Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy*. With other agencies, the Department has undertaken preparation of a *CEQR Technical Manual* to streamline and clarify the preparation and review of applications. Additionally, the Department provides mapping and technical assistance to private and governmental entities, including other city agencies and community boards. It also maintains a number of data bases and provides data and analysis for other private and public entities.

As anticipated by the Charter, plans and studies have also been prepared over the last four years by elected officials, other city agencies, community boards, and neighborhood groups. These include Charter-mandated plans, such as the borough presidents' Strategic Policy Statements; community-generated 197-a plans, such as Bronx Community Board 3's *Partnership for the Future*; and agency plans, such as the *Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan*.

Citywide Planning and Zoning

Major zoning initiatives undertaken or completed include the Lower-Density Contextual Zoning Amendment and follow-up Technical Amendments; Quality Housing Technical Amendments; and the zoning study for Community Facilities. Among the most prominent planning studies of the last four years are the *Com-*

prehensive Waterfront Plan: Reclaiming the City's Edge and the Citywide Industry Study: New Opportunities for a Changing Economy.

Comprehensive Waterfront Plan. Released in the summer of 1992, this plan addresses a range of citywide policy issues including the need to protect natural areas, guide waterfront development, and provide infrastructure investments to support the working waterfront. The plan proposes a comprehensive set of zoning regulations that recognize the unique nature of waterfront development, incorporate public access requirements, and increase the number of areas where maritime uses may locate. Individual studies of each of the city's 22 waterfront reaches are being prepared. Related studies completed within the past four years include *Waterfront Zoning*, *Maritime Support Services Location Study*, and *Harbor Estuary Water Use Management Study*.

Citywide Industry Study. Comprised of a summary document and five technical reports, this comprehensive study was released in January 1993. It examines the city's industrial-sector businesses; all major concentrations of manufacturing-zoned land; existing employment and industry data for each area; and labor force issues. The transportation component of the study assesses the city's rail, water, air, and highway freight networks and makes targeted recommendations for improvements. Finally, the study evaluates existing zoning regulations governing manufacturing-zoned land and industrial-sector uses. It recommends zoning text changes that could increase the economic development opportunities available to industrial-sector businesses throughout the city and to non-industrial businesses in manufacturing zones.

Community Facilities. The Zoning Resolution encourages community facilities in all but manufacturing and automotive districts and permits them to be larger than other uses. In response to concerns raised by the Commission and others, the Department is studying conflicts that have arisen in residential communities because of the changing nature of community facilities and the "bulk advantages" they receive. Zoning amendments will be recommended based on this review.

Lower-Density Contextual Zoning. Prompted by evidence that zoning failed to control effectively the bulk and density of new development in lower-density neighborhoods, the Department initiated a comprehensive zoning amendment for R3, R4, and R5 districts. The amendments, adopted in 1989 and 1990, revised residential bulk and added parking location regulations and seven new contextual districts where the configuration, height, and density of new buildings would be limited.

Waste Management Facilities. The number of waste transfer stations has grown significantly in recent years, adversely affecting many communities. The Department was a member of the city's Transfer Station Task Force and proposed zoning

regulations governing the location and operating requirements of these facilities to reduce their impact on surrounding communities.

Zoning Studies and Text Amendments. Several other citywide amendments to the Zoning Resolution were initiated or completed, including revisions to Quality Housing; regulations governing the location of hotels and motels and entertainment facilities; general large-scale developments; extension of the Relocation Incentive Program (BRAC); new M1-D manufacturing districts that recognize pre-existing residential communities; and balcony controls.

Recreation and Open Space Studies. In conjunction with the Parks Department, the Department is preparing an inventory and map of the city's public open spaces and recreational facilities. This information and the issues it raises will provide a planning framework for the improvement and expansion of these spaces.

Transportation Studies. The Department has conducted a number of transportation planning studies that focus on ensuring the speedy movement of people, goods, and services; maintaining the city's existing transit system and its network of streets, highways, bridges, and tunnels; promoting the use of mass transit to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution; and expanding mass transit and freight movement alternatives. More than a dozen studies have been completed.

Immigration Study. In 1992, the Department completed *The Newest New Yorkers*, an extensive analysis of previously unpublished data on immigration and naturalization. This report includes information on the neighborhoods where immigrant groups settle and their employment and demographic characteristics.

Criteria for Location of City Facilities. "Fair share" criteria adopted by the Commission in 1990 define procedures and policies for locating city facilities. To facilitate implementation, the Department developed procedures for integrating fair share analyses in ULURP, issued a guide for city agencies, and conducted training sessions for the public.

197-a Rules. The Commission established minimum standards for the form and content of community, borough, and citywide plans prepared under Charter Section 197-a, and procedures for their review. It distributed the rules and has been working with several community boards preparing or revising 197-a plans, the first of which was adopted in 1992.

Rules for City Environmental Quality Reviews (CEQR). Under new Charter responsibilities, the Commission developed and adopted new rules governing the CEQR process. These include provisions for the selection of a single "lead" agency for any action subject to CEQR, increased opportunities for public comment during early stages of the review process, and delineation of the role of the new Office of Environmental Coordination.

Local Planning and Zoning

Local planning is concerned with the specific needs of individual communities or small areas. It includes rezoning to reinforce the built fabric; plans for the disposition of city-owned property; and plans and rezoning for revitalizing neighborhoods and directing new development to appropriate locations with adequate infrastructure and services.

Neighborhood Land Disposition Plans. The Department has initiated land disposition plans in 24 neighborhoods with large concentrations of vacant city-owned land and buildings. The plans will provide a framework for land disposition by describing the physical character, land uses, and population of each neighborhood; evaluating housing and economic development opportunities; and assessing needs for retail services, schools, open space, other community facilities, natural resource protection, and stormwater management.

Contextual Rezoning Program. With the adoption of Quality Housing Zoning in 1987 and Lower-Density Contextual Zoning in 1989, the Department launched a citywide program to zone for appropriate development in built-up neighborhoods. In reviewing these neighborhoods, the Department seeks to balance the built context with the needs of a diverse population, coordinate with infrastructure capacity, and allow opportunities for new housing and expansion of existing housing. Since 1989, studies and remappings in all boroughs are underway or have been completed.

Comprehensive Business District Plans. The Department has selected three of the city's major commercial districts—Lower Manhattan, Long Island City, and Downtown Flushing—for long-range comprehensive planning. Plans will address the current pattern of development; growth opportunities; zoning and urban design; infrastructure needs; and improvement of the public environment.

Local Area Plans and Studies. The Department has undertaken a number of neighborhood studies in each of the boroughs to examine in detail the planning actions needed to strengthen them. Initiatives ranged from large urban renewal projects like Melrose Commons in the Bronx and Arverne in Queens, to urban design studies for the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. In Manhattan, major initiatives included adoption of the Grand Central Subdistrict and preparation of the Lower Manhattan Mixed Use District study. On Staten Island, studies undertaken included the mixed-use Charleston area and the Stapleton Commercial Center. Brooklyn efforts included development of a rezoning plan for the Special Ocean Parkway District and revisions to the Special Sheepshead Bay District.

Significant Site Planning Guidelines. As part of an interagency effort, the Department identified significant city-owned sites that were considered design sensitive. The Department is preparing urban design guidelines to ensure that

future development of the sites will be sensitive to their unique settings. Guidelines have been completed for the Mill Basin redevelopment site adjacent to Four Sparrows Marsh in Brooklyn, a 125-acre vacant site in Charleston, and the College of Staten Island's Sunnyside campus.

Transportation. In addition to regional studies, the Department has also completed more than 20 transportation studies that relate to specific neighborhood concerns. These include examinations of traffic and transit improvements in Coney Island and Jackson Heights, and pedestrian circulation and access improvements to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal.

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