A PROPOSAL FOR THE STRUCTURAL REORGANIZATION OF THE PLANNING FUNCTION IN NEW YORK CITY

by

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May 19, 1950

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Dear Professor Adams:

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in City Planning, I submit this thesis entitled A Proposal for the Structural Reorganization of the Planning Function in New York City.

Respectfully,

Frederick H. Reuter

Frederick H. Reuter

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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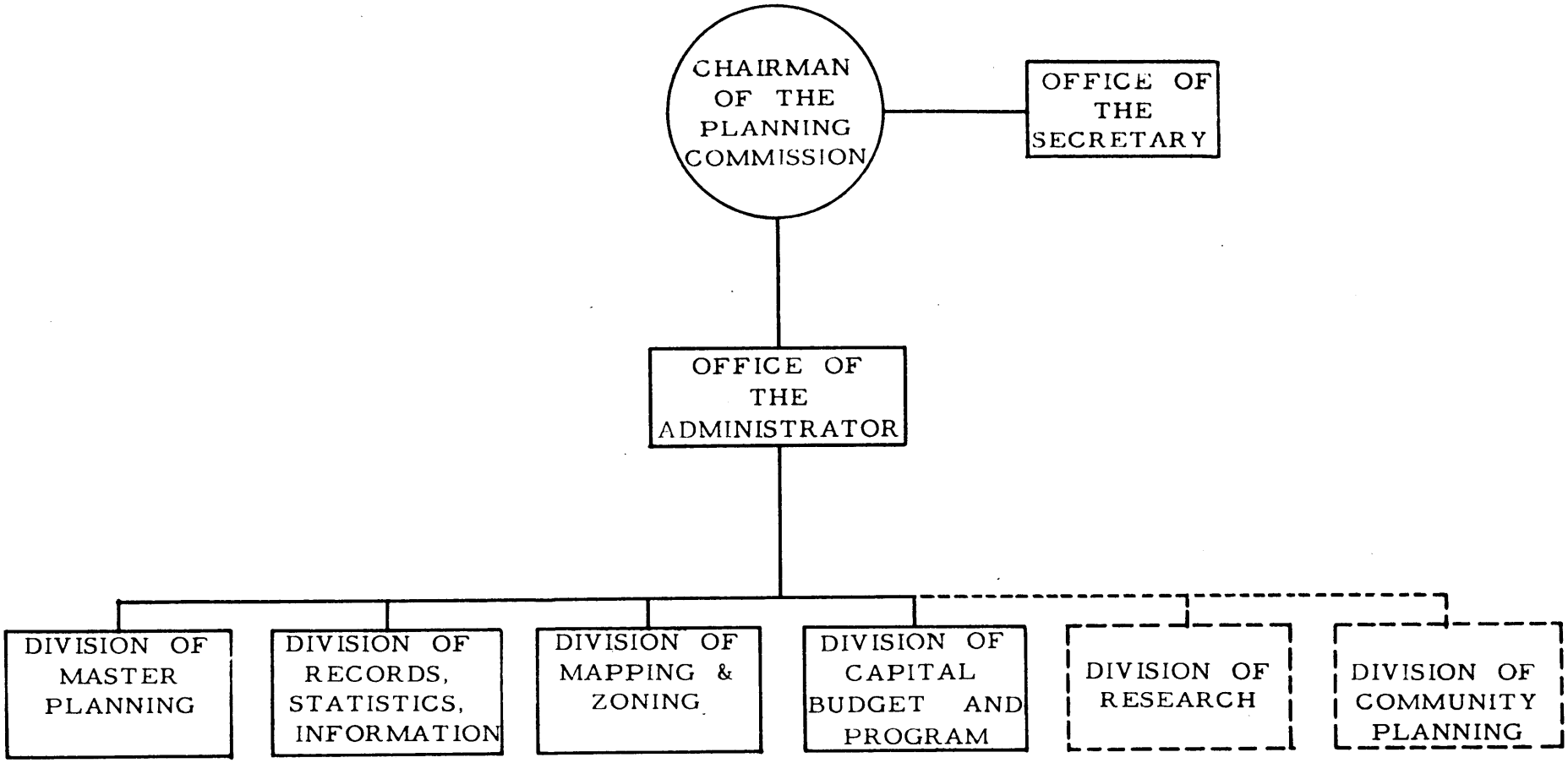

EXISTING PLANNING COMMISSION
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CITY PLANNING
in the
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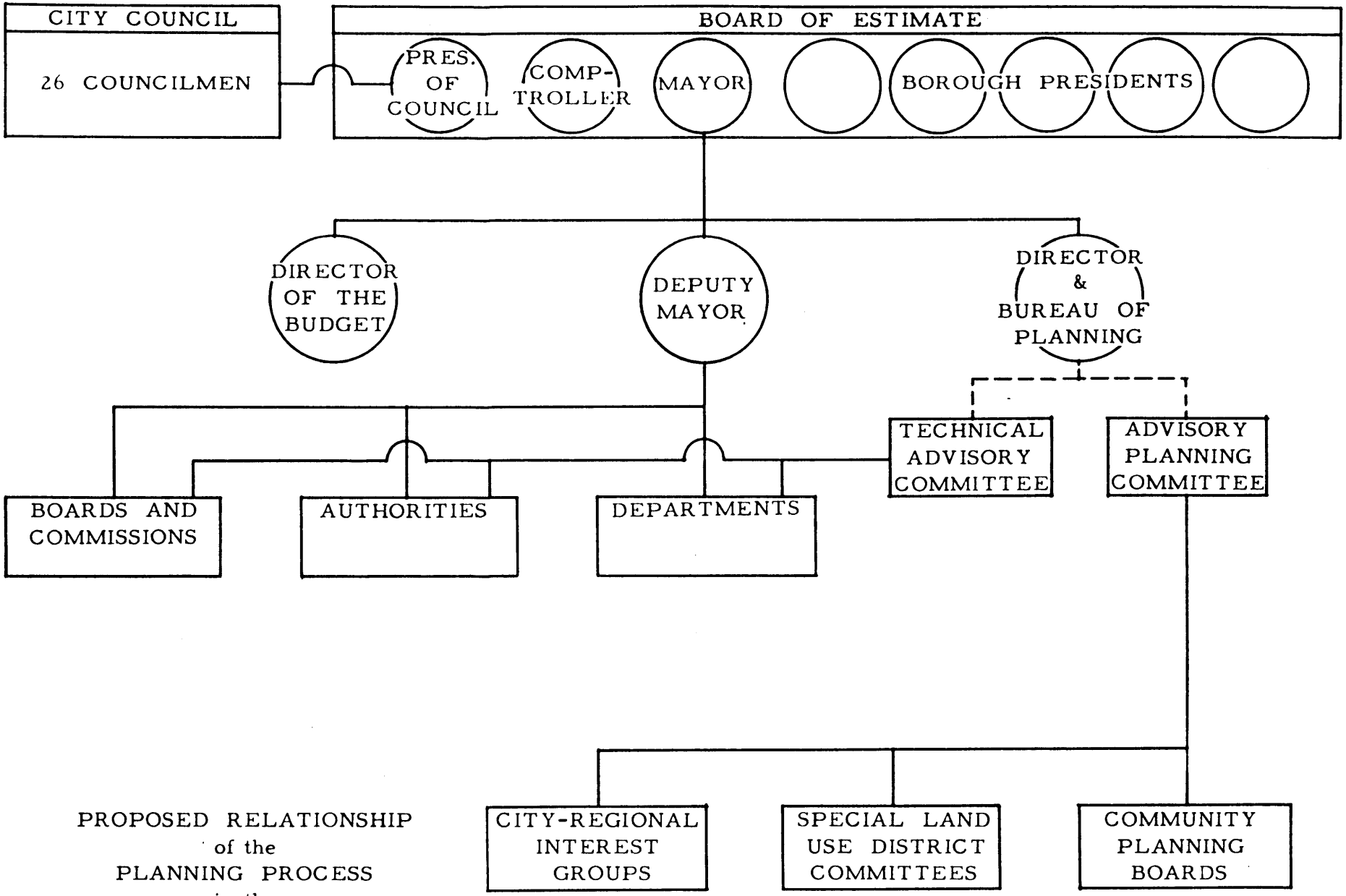

PROPOSED RELATIONSHIP
of the
PLANNING PROCESS
in the
NEW YORK CITY GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

New York City is the largest city in the world and shows every sign of maintaining that position. It is also the heart of a great metropolitan region. Even within its city limits there are clear signs of the typical interdependent functional areas such as the villages of Queens County and the Wall Street or Times Square districts.

A great city-- and yet, a city which is on the borderline of bankruptcy. It can also be said that "The mass of citizens . . . . . are too absorbed in particular interests and predilections to inform themselves or to think much about complex city problems. Many of them are not conscious of any feeling for the community as a whole."[1.]

The Chairman of the City Planning Commission states in his budget request for 1950-1951:

> "New York City is at present in a critical stage of its development . . . . . Specifically, we need the impetus and positive direction which only a fully developed Master Plan, together with such additional resources for urban redevelopment as are embodied in the new Federal Housing Act, can bring to bear . . . . . In default of action now, the golden opportunity will be lost."[2.]

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1. Rodgers, Cleveland, and Rankin, Rebecca: New York: the World's Capital, Harper and Brothers, 1948 - p. 127.
2. New York City Planning Department: Request of the City Planning Department for 1950-1951, mimeo dated 2/1/50 - p. 3 and 4.

The previous planning budget of $328,205 was "barely sufficient to cover the routine phases of city mapping, zoning, garage applications, capital budget and review of assessable improvements."[1] Although the newspapers and such civic organizations as the Citizens Budget Commission backed him in a major share of his request, the Chairman got $577,251 instead of $1,149,954: 47 new employees instead of 136. On a per capita basis this compares with other metropolitan cities as follows:

New York City (1950-1951) . . .	7.2¢
Philadelphia (1940 population) .	25.
Los Angeles "	24.
Detroit "	18.
Cleveland "	12.
Cincinnati "	16.

This, in the highest budget ever for New York City, indicates that planning is still considered a luxury by the city government.[1]

What happens to the Capital Budget and Program in New York City after it is passed by the Board of Estimate and the City Council depends on a single official, the Construction Coordinator. He has broad powers to schedule public works, survey material and labor costs, and negotiate for the removal of obstacles in the way of letting contracts. Further, he is designated as the city's representative with all federal and state agencies from which the city might get grants in aid of its building program. A position tailor-made for

1. Ibid, p. 3 and 4.

Robert Moses, assisted by "an able and devoted staff of experts in the various agencies he heads" which "he uses as a team on any job that comes along." [1] Such a position fills a definite need of the city government.

Planning for community areas in New York City has been frustrating. Citizen organizations actively interested in planning have only slight funds and no real assistance is available from the City Planning Commission due to its lack of funds.

This thesis presents a concept for the structural reorganization of the planning function in New York City within the limits of the city government. Two levels of comprehensive planning are recommended: city-regional and community. City-regional planning is assigned to a Bureau of Planning headed by a Director of Planning on the level of an assistant mayor and responsible to the mayor and Board of Estimate. It establishes a continuous planning effort from long range inception through project effectuation. Administrative procedure and standards for both levels of planning are established by the Director of Planning with legislative action by the Board of Estimate on a suspensive veto basis. Community planning is assigned to Community Planning Boards. Planning control resolutions by communities are channeled by the Borough Advisory Planning Boards through the Bureau of Planning to the Board of Estimate for

1. Rodgers and Rankin, op. cit. - p. 238.

legislative action on a suspensive veto basis. This concept strengthens the top level of the planning function and broadens its base as well. The thesis further suggests that certain characteristics of this structural organization are existent in the current city government.

The development of this proposal is based on two assumptions:

1. N.S.B. Gras's concept of the mutual dependence of the various levels of community organization which are existent within the metropolitan economy: he says:

> "We may think of metropolitan economy as an organization of people having a large city as a nucleus, just as a town economy has a town as its center. Or we may put it this way, metropolitan economy is the organization of the producers and the consumers mutually dependent for goods and services, wherein their wants are supplied by a system of exchange concentrated in a large city which is the focus of local trade and the center through which the economic relations with the outside are established and maintained."
>
> "Just as villages remained when town economy prevailed, so do towns remain when metropolitan economy comes into existence. Towns remain but in economic subordination to the metropolis . . . . . Towns exist but not town economy . . . . . "

"A closer examination of these dependent towns would show different types performing different functions, but all subordinate. And beyond towns there are more or less scattered communities of producers of food stuffs and raw materials, such as farmers, miners, fishermen, and lumbermen."

"The large area of many communities, or rather the population, may be called a 'metropolitan market', and the organization that sustains it a 'metropolitan economy'. It is true that in studying this organization we are inclined to emphasize the great metropolitan center; but to forget the large dependent district would be fatal to a correct understanding of the subject. Perhaps, indeed, it is somewhat incorrect to speak of the area as dependent on the center, for, though it is true, the center is also dependent upon the outlying area with its towns, villages, and scattered homesteads. Interdependence of the parts is really the key to the whole situation." [1.]

2. The essential elements of the Program for Community Planning by the Citizens Union of New York City: it states:

"If the citizen is to concern himself intelligently with city planning in its several aspects he needs to have a knowledge of the ways in which the shape of the whole affects the parts and he must have some aspirations and ideas about the

1. Gras, N.S.B.: An Introduction to Economic History, Harper and Brothers, 1922 - p. 186.

protection and improvement of his own neighborhood and community. Local communities are largely at the mercy of the city-wide developments, but for a good many features of their life they can still be self-determining. It is the conviction of the Citizens Union Committee on City Planning that both city-wide and local community problems will be better solved if citizens and citizen groups participate actively in this solution. Such participation is dependent in large measure on the creation of the setting which enables a citizen to get his bearings and to take hold. He cannot easily take hold of anything so vast as New York City, but he can feel a part of his neighborhood if it has any separate existence. The committee feels that the forces that destroy local communities, that tend to rub out their identity, and thereby undermine the citizen's sense of responsibility for what happens can be brought under control and it has announced that it proposes to go all out for a program to bring back the sense of 'home town' that New Yorkers used to have."

"Our proposal to start the process is . . . . . that any planning which involves essentially local action be undertaken on the basis of nuclear districts, most of them already in existence and easily identifiable. Conveniently located in each

would be developed, eventually, a genuine civic center, toward which a substantial start could be made by a better planned arrangement of the new construction already scheduled for the post-war period."

" 'The city should be resurveyed so that its health, fire, police, welfare, educational and library services may be consolidated, particularly in the newer sections. Apart from the saving in construction and maintenance costs, there would be a gain in efficiency by having the functions in a district brought together in a district civic center.' " (a statement by Councilman Isaacs quoted in the Program).

"Once our own city has begun to develop more organically, there will easily and almost inevitably follow a further useful subdivision into neighborhoods . . . . . What we must strive for just now is the beginning of a process of readjustment whereby in the course of time we shall again have genuine communities within the overall community of the metropolitan area. Thus the great sprawling city can be brought again into human scale."

"Another (further) suggestion is that of existing civic groups, where more than one is active within a given district, form(ing) in each such district a community or area council which would include representatives of the various interests and

neighborhoods within the district, so that each council would represent its respective district at city-wide meetings and official hearings. The possibilities of such local councils, or of having a city-wide conference or federation of local groups, have not been fully explored or developed. They would appear, however, to be natural next steps if official recognition is to be given to the general principle described in our program." [1.]

This thesis will not answer many of the questions on functional assignment and classification that it will give rise to. It cannot, for as Roscoe Pound writes in regard to the problems of classification in the development of a federal polity:

> "It does not invalidate classifications to show that a hundred per cent delimitation, ... is impossible. We are dealing with practical activity and our classifications and categories are intended for and to be judged by results." [2.]

---

1. Citizens Union of the City of New York: The Searchlight Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, July, 1947.
2. Roscoe Pound, et al: Federalism as a Democratic Process, Rutgers University Press, 1942 - p. 20.

THE PLANNING PROCESS: PRESENT AND PROPOSED

The present structure of the planning process in New York City has the following features: [1]

1. The legislative power related to planning is vested in two bodies: the Board of Estimate and the City Council. The Board of Estimate votes on both the Expense and the Capital Budget and Program prior to the City Council consideration. It may increase or decrease, add or strike out, items in both budgets. The Capital Budget and Program is recommended by the City Planning Commission. All new items must be referred to the City Planning Commission. Failure to adopt a Capital Budget and Program between the 25th of November and the 4th of December means the automatic adoption of the recommended budget. The Board of Estimate exercises legislative authority on all planning control measures (zoning on a suspensive veto basis). In many cases a three-quarters majority is required to override a City Planning Commission recommendation. The City Council's authority is extremely limited. It votes on both budgets established by the Board of Estimate and may only decrease or eliminate items. Other planning measures, not specified as within the jurisdiction of the Board of Estimate, must be upheld by a referendum.

1. See Charts I and III.

2. The mayor is the head of the Board of Estimate as well as the chief executive of the city. He has almost constant advice from special committees directly responsible to him. They have studied city planning, property improvement, and similar problems.
3. The City Planning Commission is a staff agency responsible to the mayor. It consists of the chief engineer of the Board of Estimate and six men appointed by the mayor. It was designed as a watchdog; the preserver of the general welfare. The planning function, including master planning, planning controls, and Capital Budget and Program, are highly centralized in this body. In practice the Commission is swamped with routine administration. Its staff is inadequate and its appropriation is too small.
4. Special function planning is likewise highly concentrated. It is found in such groups as the Board of Education and the New York City Housing Authority. They must have City Planning Commission approval on general site location and items added to the Capital Budget and Program. Coordination of the special function planning is difficult. After the approval of the Capital Budget and Program by the City Council scheduling for project activation is done by the Construction Coordinator not by the City Planning Commission.

5. Program planning for action is done by the Construction Coordinator. He adjusts, coordinates, and generally expedites the construction of all capital improvement projects. This single official is responsible to the mayor.
6. Each borough has a three man Borough Advisory Planning Board appointed by the borough president. Advice may be requested by the City Planning Commission or the borough president. They may also initiate advice. Some of these have functioned, others have been treated as mere formalities by the borough presidents.
7. The Board of Standards and Appeals is a three man body appointed by the mayor. It interprets and varies planning controls and administrative codes for the whole city.
8. The private citizen, as an individual or in small groups, has been practically excluded from the planning process. It has become too complex. The interests in most cases are highly specialized and highly organized. This is not intentional, but results from the magnitude of the problems.

Two terms used in presenting the proposed structure of the planning process must be defined.

City-region means the geographic area of the City of New York: the area to which this thesis is limited. The compound term is used

to emphasize the dependent relationship of that core area to the greater metropolitan region and its functions. Government boundaries, as unrelated as they are to the interdependent functional areas of the region, fix the extent of the official planning. Metropolitan regional studies, however, must be the basis for determining the provisions of such official planning. City-regional planning deals with factors of regional impact, e.g. gross population distribution, major highway network, railroads, airports, utilities, major recreation areas, special land use districts (Wall Street and Times Square), etc.

Community means a predominantly residential area of sufficient size and population to make the decentralization of planning and city administrative services both socially and economically desirable. Communities would probably follow the boundaries of traditional villages and towns which have lost their political identity through annexation. Their population would range from 50,000 to 150,000 people. Neighborhoods and lesser units of various land uses would be included within their boundaries. Clear boundaries are obviously a problem but they could be evolved for all practical purposes. Planning for the community falls within the framework of the city-regional plan. The community plan deals with factors of community impact, e.g. detailed zoning map, street system, schools, local recreational areas and parks, civic center, shopping, etc.

The proposed structure of the planning process in New York City has the following features:[1.]

1. The present legislative power continues with two exceptions: one, simple majority rule in all cases of planning legislation, and two, the extension of the suspensive veto to include project regulations.
2. The present powers of the mayor continue. Special committees concerned with planning, however, are organized through the proposed Director of Planning.
3. The Director of Planning is an assistant mayor. He is responsible for all planning of a city-regional nature.
4. The Bureau of Planning is the planning unit under the Director of Planning. It functions on a city-regional basis in three ways: one, long range or master planning; two, short range or Capital Budget and Program planning to the point of effectuation; and three, supplying the information and basic data services and the educational program.
5. The Bureau of Planning has two regular advisory bodies: the Technical Advisory Committee made up of liaison men from each action arm of the government, and the Advisory Planning Committee made up of representatives of city-regional interest groups including the communities.

1. See Charts II and IV.

6. The present Borough Advisory Planning Boards accomplish preliminary screening and channeling of planning control measures through the Bureau of Planning (for city-regional review) to the Board of Estimate for legislative action.
7. Community Planning Boards provide comprehensive planning within the communities. It includes the coordination of action arm projects.
8. The Community Planning Board has three regular sources of advice: one, the Bureau of Planning for comprehensive planning advice and planning services; two, the action arms for special function planning advice; and three, the Citizen's Planning Committee made up of representatives of community interest groups including neighborhood associations.

These proposed features have the following advantages:

1. The treatment of comprehensive planning problems on a level relative to their importance. Effective use of staff competency on these levels clears the way for action in both city-regional and community planning.
2. Application of local planning control measures by the Community Planning Board. At the same time the establishment of uniform planning administrative procedure and standards by the Director of Planning.

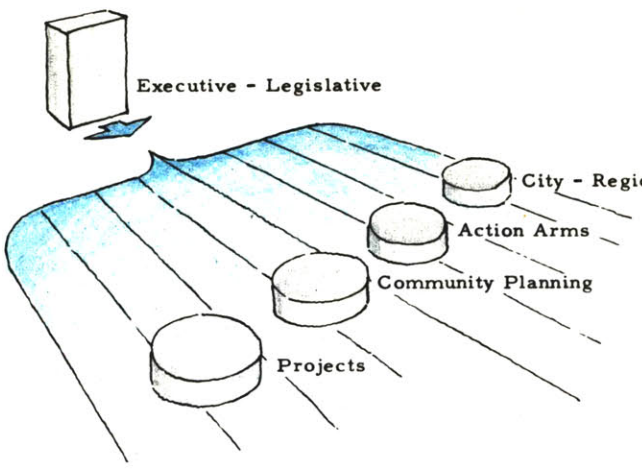
3. The more effective use of citizen advice, technical advice, and interdepartmental liaison through the provision of an adequate structure.

4. Effective management of fiscal planning for capital improvements and of the timing and coordination of the action arm projects by establishing a continuous planning process: long range comprehensive planning on the one hand and the adjustment, coordination and supervision of planning in action on the other.

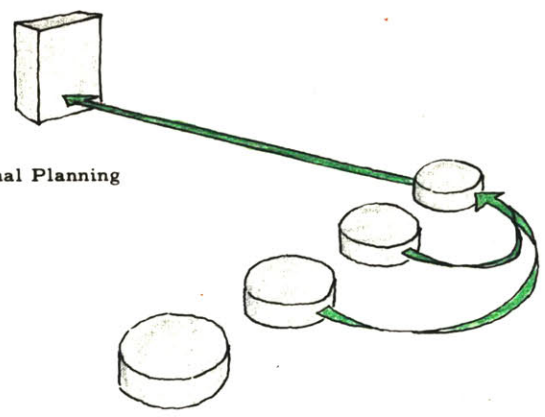
5. The use of an informational and educational system through two levels of planning makes for consistency and closer contact with the general public.

6. More detailed assignment of the planning process balances the relationship between special function planning by the action arms of the government, e.g. the departments, authorities, and boards, as well as the semi-public and private action arms, and comprehensive planning. Both types of planning are essential to the city's welfare. Either one operating without the other is an inefficient use of staff and may even lead to disaster. Major reasons why this balanced relationship is important are:

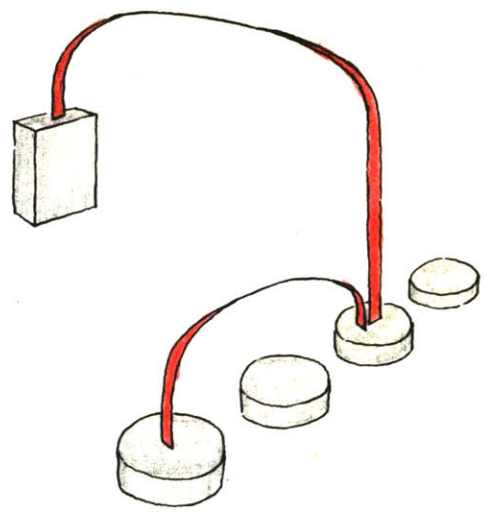
    a. Special function planning dominance leads to obscuring the process of comprehensive planning and vice versa.



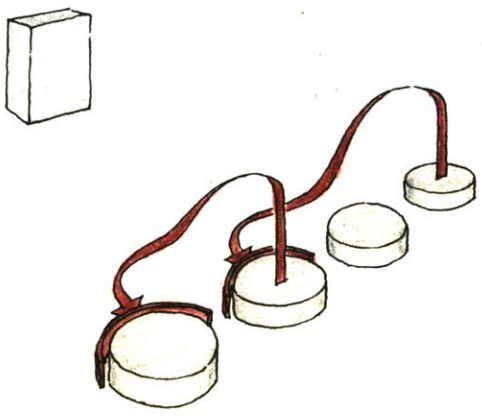
LEGISLATING



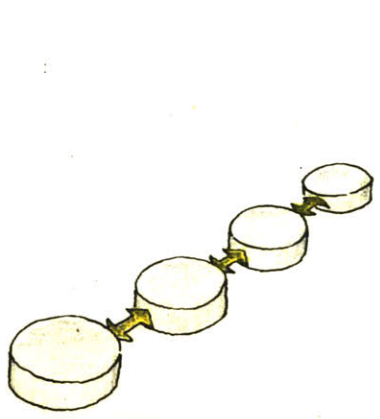
CAPITAL PROGRAMMING



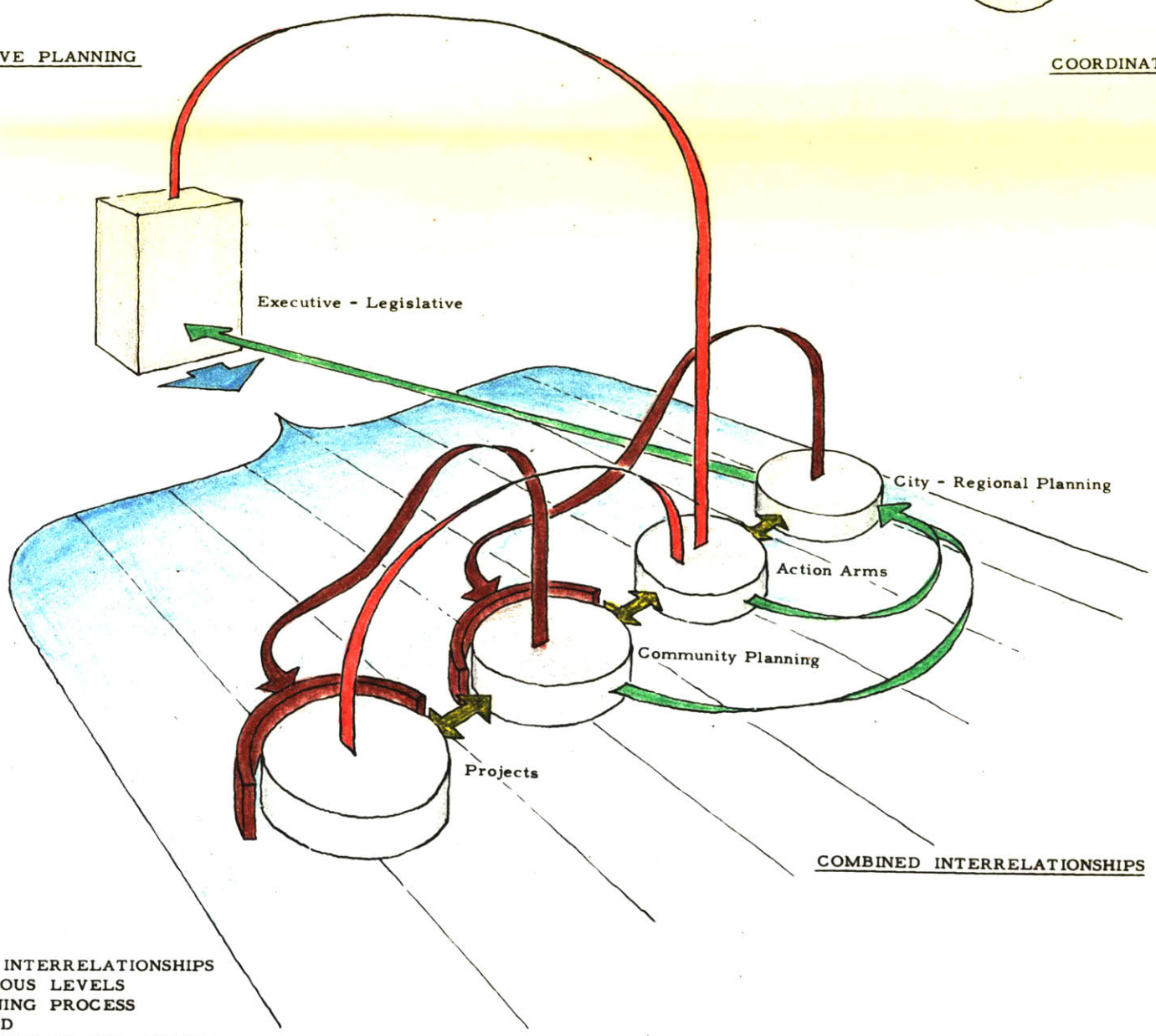
PROJECT DEVELOPING



COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING



COORDINATING



COMBINED INTERRELATIONSHIPS

GENERAL OPERATING INTERRELATIONSHIPS
OF THE VARIOUS LEVELS
IN THE PLANNING PROCESS
AND
IN THE PLANNING PROGRAM FOR ACTION

b. Special function planning is more easily understood by the public.

c. Comprehensive planning leads to an economy of government effort through coordination.

d. Special function planning leads to highly centralized autonomous units with vested interests.

e. Proper assignment of work to special function planning or comprehensive planning leads to economy of personnel and expenditure.

f. Comprehensive planning on the basis of geographic area leads to finer coordination. It has advantages in programming improvements.

Chart V indicates schematically the general operating interrelationships of the various levels both in the planning process and in the planning program for action.

Flexibility in the initiation of planning measures for the communities is essential for two reasons: one, some communities may not set up planning units, and two, some planning units may be inadequate thereby jeopardizing the city-regional interest.

The following section of the thesis gives a more detailed account of the units and the duties assigned to them.

THE UNITS OF THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE

The City Council:

Function:

To continue its present determinations: specifically as related to the expense and capital budget.

General Description:

The City Council passes on local legislation. Its functions are limited. Ordinances to change the powers of the planning process or its relationship to the Board of Estimate must be passed by a referendum. Even its power to pass on the budget is limited to decreasing or eliminating the amounts to be spent on various items.

The Board of Estimate:

Function:

To continue its present determinations: specifically as related to planning controls (zoning, project regulation, and the city map), the expense budget and the Capital Budget and Program.

General Description:

The Board of Estimate is an extraordinary body. Its duties are in part administrative. It also has legislative duties: the Charter says, "The Board of Estimate, subject to this charter, shall exercise all the powers vested in the city except those otherwise provided for by law."[1.]

1. New York City Charter, Chapter 3, Sec. 70.

Besides those powers already mentioned which relate specifically to planning, it has control over all the city real estate.

The Board may increase or decrease, add or strike out, items on the expense and Capital Budget and Program. The results of their vote are deliberated on by the City Council.

Zoning and project regulations measures initiated by a planning unit are ruled on by suspensive veto. [1] All other measures are ruled on by resolution. A simple majority is required for all decisions.

Reasoning:

A simple majority vote on all planning resolutions permits legislative consistency and recognizes the legislative responsibility of the Board of Estimate.

Charter provisions for the expense budget require only a simple majority decision. The planning process can be gagged at this point: to require a three-quarter majority to override a planning recommendation is inconsistent. Besides, the votes of the mayor, the president of the City Council, and the comptroller, are nine of the sixteen votes in the Board. These three are elected by the city at large.

The present weighted recommendation gives authority to an advisory function. This is a potential source of irritation to the members of the Board of Estimate. It also leaves an opening to argue usurpation of the legislative power.

---

1. Measures become law automatically unless vetoed within a specified time.

The Mayor:

Function:

To continue to be responsible as the executive (with the assistance of the Board of Estimate) for the general administration of the city and the execution of policy established by resolution and ordinance.

The Director of Planning:

Function:

To advise the mayor and Board of Estimate on policy matters related to planning the development and redevelopment of the New York City environment.

To direct and be responsible for the functions of the Bureau of Planning.

General Description:

The Director is appointed by the mayor as an assistant mayor. Members of the Bureau of Planning assist him in his duties.

Reasoning:

The commission form has several inherent disadvantages in the planning process. Robert A. Walker "discovered early in this study that city officials in turn frequently hold uncomplimentary opinions of the planning commission and their work" (their usual attitude towards "lay boards") and that this is an "unsatisfactory atmosphere for advice

where confidence and mutual respect are necessary." [1] The question of action in planning depends on compatibility of the agency with the mayor and the legislature. It is not very likely that such compatibility will develop in a unit which is ostensibly out of politics and a watchdog over the city administration. Walker's observations also indicate that whatever advantage may be gained by an effective organization which is objective and above politics has been nullified in several cases by actual political appointments. [2] Another important point is the ability to reach a decision. Mayor O'Dwyer's recent experience on this matter with the Traffic Commission has led to that body's elimination because of failure to get results and slowness when action was needed. The mayor plans a new city department headed by a single commissioner with extraordinary powers. He states: "He can send anyone who seeks to interfere with him over to City Hall where most of the crackpots come and I will deal with that person." [3] A justification for the commission is that its members would have some special competence and would be able to take a long range view of the planning proposals. There seems to be ample evidence throughout the country that the most competent men do not have the time. In New York City the appointees have already been established as full-time professionals. There is little doubt that a

1. Walker, Robert A.: The Planning Function in Urban Government, University of Chicago Press, 1941 - p. 133.
2. Ibid,, p. 147 (note also p. 153-155).
3. New York Times, April 5, 1950, p. 1, col. 1 - O'Dwyer to Abolish Own Traffic Board for One-man Rule.

six man commission is not representative in any direct fashion of the interest groups in a city of 8,000,000 people.

City-regional planning in New York should be organized with several characteristics in mind. Facility with which advice may be given is an important criterion in a staff unit. The broad functions of the Bureau of Planning make flexible and decisive leadership essential. Such executive management calls for a single rather than a multiple head as in the traditional commission form.

From the mayor's point of view the number of units of government he must keep track of is an important matter. In New York City they are innumerable. A single director in the planning process makes it possible for him to focus in one man what he now has in several special committees, the Construction Coordinator, the City Planning Commission and various other commissions and authorities which have been doing planning that is a part of the comprehensive planning process.

If one agrees that consent is a necessary prerequisite to action (even if a very devious process is involved), the general citizen interest will be protected by exercising the right to vote and through the representation of the city-regional organizations on the Advisory Planning Committee.

The Bureau of Planning:

Function of planning:

To prepare a long range comprehensive city-regional plan (including the related research).

To prepare and recommend resolutions establishing administrative procedures and standards for zoning, project regulation, and the city map.

To prepare and recommend resolutions establishing quotas of various land use categories and their intensity for each community and special land use district.

To maintain the city map.

To prepare and adopt comprehensive plans and recommend planning control resolutions for the special land use districts and such communities as have inadequate plans.

To make recommendations on measures initiated by Community Planning Boards for Board of Estimate action where they pertain to city-regional planning.

Function of informing and educating:

To collect, coordinate, and disseminate basic data, planning studies, publicity, etc.

To establish educational policy and programming including the organization of materials and direct assistance to the community and other educational units.

Function of program coordination and capital budget:

To adjust, coordinate, and inspect Bureau of Planning programs in action.

To evaluate the results of planning programs and report on them through the Director of Planning to the mayor.

To expedite fiscal planning and coordinate grants in aid from other levels of government.

To prepare and recommend to the Board of Estimate a Capital Budget and Program including a project schedule (done with the assistance of the Director of the Budget).

To study particular and typical problems in the field by the use of committees or staff.

General Description:

The Bureau of Planning has three principal divisions: Planning, Information and Education, and Program Coordination and Capital Budget. It is authorized both to make plans and to expedite their effectuation. The Bureau of Planning is headed by the Director of Planning. His staff is responsible for general administration, advisory committee administration, and the processing of official reports. An assistant to the New York City Corporation Counsel will be assigned to his staff. Each division is headed by a division chief.

The Division of Planning has two principal continuing functions: the long range comprehensive city-regional plan, and the special land

use district plans. It contributes to the preparation of the capital budget by the Division of Program Coordination and Capital Budget. It drafts recommended resolutions on administrative procedures and standards and the specific measures of planning control. These will require only occasional amendment if done well at the outset. The chief planner heads a group of experts in the various fields contributing to the long range comprehensive city-regional plan, e.g. an economist, a sociologist, a land use planner, a traffic expert, etc. Each expert has an adequate staff for his work including research.

The Division of Information and Education has two sections: information, and education. These activities serve both levels of comprehensive planning, the action arms, and interested individuals.

The Division of Program Coordination and Capital Budget has two sections: one for the adjustment, coordination, and inspection of the Bureau's planning program in action; the other for the development of the Capital Budget and Program. Each section carries on research incidental to its function. The program coordination section observes the capital budget's evolution to completed projects. If observation indicates that an adjustment or further coordination of planning - physical, fiscal, or priority - is needed, the Division is authorized to arrange for it much as the Construction Coordinator is today. This is limited by the appropriations in the capital budget. It does allow leeway in grants and public authority bond issues. The section will

has both a field and office staff.

The preparation of the Capital Budget and Program will be dealt with separately in a later section of the thesis.

The Reasoning:

To plan is to desire a certain result. If this is not so evident in terms of long range planning, it is quite evident in capital budget planning. If results are not expected from planning, why plan?

Assuming that our plans are aimed at results, two considerations seem to be logical. First, since action depends on consent to a large degree, we must prepare the ground for understanding these plans through an educational program in official and public circles. Second, a neatly laid out plan is no guarantee of results. Someone must follow that plan in operation to iron out inherent imperfections and to adjust to changing circumstances. Such observation leads to an evaluation of the original plan which makes it possible to learn from experience. It will also alert the mayor to problems in his administration.

The Division of Planning is responsible for all long range comprehensive planning activities. It will be in contact with every-day planning decisions, however, through referrals for expert advice on current problems and the preparation of the capital budget.

The Division of Program Coordination and Capital Budget is responsible for short range program planning: effectuation and

evaluation. A large amount of its work is in the field. [1.]

The Division of Information and Education establishes a unified approach to the two major activities in which the planning process makes its contacts with the public. The function of collecting, coordinating, and disseminating basic data, planning studies, and publicity has a high educational potential if properly used. Traditional methods of data collection would seem to have little connection with the education but in this proposal it becomes a process of collecting from other units active in comprehensive and special function planning. The value of the basic data, the methods of collecting data, and the development of easily coordinated standards all involve instruction of the various units in the field. These units are participating in the planning process: their instruction is an important part of the educational program. A consistent, well organized policy in the central office of the Division of Information and Education is essential to gaining and maintaining both participation and consent.

The Liaison Men and the Technical Advisory Committee:

Functions:

To advise on the relationship of special function planning in the various city departments to comprehensive planning and to particular problems of the comprehensive planning units.

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1. The Division of Capital Budget and Program in the present Planning Department cooperates with the other city departments in the preparation of their capital budget and program proposals.

To infiltrate the comprehensive planning concept into the city departments, authorities, and semi-public agencies.

To act as a sounding board.

General Description:

Each governmental department and authority assigns a responsible member of its internal planning staff to work with the city-regional and community planning process. The liaison man is also a member of the Technical Advisory Committee. This body meets regularly. Detailed technical advice on particular points is gained through informal subcommittee arrangements to suit the occasion. Administrative matters are handled by the Director of Planning's staff.

The Reasoning:

It is essential that planners within the departments and authorities of the New York City government understand the comprehensive planning process and its problems: the concept of the city-region in particular. The internal planning and daily decisions of these departments and authorities either directly construct new portions of the physical environment or indirectly perform services closely related to the use of that environment. They are the action arms. Only through their operations will the comprehensive planning concept serve any practical purpose in giving direction to the development of the environment.

A similar procedure should be used with those public utilities which are privately owned.

An additional value of liaison is that these men are planners in specialized operations who are well qualified to advise in their field. It would in effect tap a vast source of valuable information, close at hand and relatively inexpensive.

The Advisory Planning Committee:

Functions:

To act as a sounding board and to advise on particular problems.

To serve as an educational medium for the comprehensive planning concept.

General Description:

The Advisory Planning Committee is a loosely organized body. Its membership will represent all the city-regional groups including those of the communities and the special land use districts. It creates sub-committees or other units to fit the needs of the function. Membership may be gained by application to the Director of Planning on the basis of the city-regional nature of the applicant.

A chairman is elected by the members.

The Advisory Planning Committee meets with the Director of Planning and the key men of the Bureau of Planning. Special meetings

may be called by either the chairman or the Director of Planning.

The Reasoning:

Since the public does delegate to certain civic leaders and groups the formulation and expression of its views - actively or by default, the public's confidence and consent must be gained in a large part through those leaders and groups. A first step then must be to educate and gain the consent of these leaders. For this purpose a loosely knit committee would seem to be an adequate answer.

Such a committee would prove of little value in working out details and specific problems. For this purpose informally organized teams or sub-committees are established.

The Borough Advisory Planning Board:

Functions:

To endorse and channel to the Board of Estimate through the ~~through the~~ Bureau of Planning:

Zoning map resolutions by the Community Planning Boards.

City map changes proposed by the Community Planning Boards.

Community Planning Board recommendations for community capital budget programs and expense budget items (for action by the Bureau of Planning).

To screen proposals and resolutions of the Community Planning Boards for inconsistency and inadequacy (on which basis they might be informally rejected).

To advise on coordination of planning within the borough.

General Description:

This board will continue in its present structural form: three members appointed without pay by the borough president. Staff will be provided for in the Bureau of Planning expense budget request.

The Reasoning:

Preliminary screening and focusing on the borough level of all proposals and resolutions originating within the borough is needed to eliminate extra duties and confusion in the Board of Estimate. The introduction of borough matters with the endorsement of the borough planning unit and the knowledge of the borough president will make for a more logical and authoritative statement to the Board of Estimate.

This coordinating stage is also logical in the light of the decentralization of the more routine public works operations in the borough president's office, e.g. construction and repair of public roads, local sewers and drainage, etc.

Referral of such proposals and resolutions to the Board of Estimate should be assured.

The Community Planning Board:

Functions:

To prepare the comprehensive community plan within the framework established by the comprehensive city-regional plan.

To coordinate project planning within the comprehensive community plan.

To recommend city map changes.

To recommend a capital budget and program for the community to the Bureau of Planning.

To adopt resolutions in community zoning map changes subject to the veto of the Board of Estimate.

To organize the educational effort within the community.

To organize continuing and intermittent committees as needed to represent neighborhood and special interests and to advise on particular problems.

To represent the community interest in the City- regional Advisory Planning Committee.

To channel data to the Division of Information and Education of the Bureau of Planning.

General Description:

The Community Planning Board is an unpaid citizen organization representative of the interests of the community.

Flexibility in the structure of the Community Planning Board and its supporting organization is essential for effective and natural adaptation of the present structured units in the various communities. The development of a Community Planning Board would be guided by the higher planning units and the general policies determined in ordinances and resolutions. The Board of Estimate might establish criteria in terms of general function and policy as well as optional forms of structure. These optional forms should offer at least two methods for the election of members to the Community Planning Boards. One would be direct election by the voters of the community; the other, election by the members of the Citizens Planning Committee which is representative of all the community organizations including the neighborhoods.

The staff - administrative and technical - is financed in three ways: one, by funds or services from the community organizations; two, by short term staff loans from the Bureau of Planning for emergency problems, and by staff subsidies established in the expense budget of the Bureau of Planning. In addition volunteer staff may be available.

An annual report is submitted through the Borough Advisory Planning Board to the borough president and the Bureau of Planning. This report, or an investigation of it, and the Community Planning Board's general activity are the basis of an official estimate of its reliability. The estimate will determine the authority of the Board's

planning control resolutions and other recommendations in the Bureau of Planning and the Board of Estimate.

The Reasoning:

It is difficult for a citizen to appreciate or show much interest in the planning of a special function for 8,000,000 people. It is still more difficult in the case of focusing all the special function planning for 8,000,000. The result is that he attempts to deal with those special functions which appear to be critical in his life. In addition he makes some attempt at focusing localized special functions.

Cleveland Rodgers explains the current situation in this way:

> "The mass of citizens in New York are too absorbed in particular interests and predilections to inform themselves or to think much about complex city problems. Many of them are not conscious of any feeling for the community (New York City) as a whole. As a result there is a fractioning of public interest, which centers on the neighborhood and borough matters or on problems that directly affect citizens as members of groups and sections." [1.]

In order to focus this "fractioning of public interest" the essential polity of the public on the community level must be recognized. A comprehensive planning unit with limited autonomy at this level can

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1. Rodgers and Rankin, op. cit. - page 127.

deal more directly with local problems and clarify the relationship to city-regional problems. The public wants the right to make its own decisions and to shape its own community environment even though it may not exercise that right. Ignoring this polity on the local level has often proved a stumbling block for metropolitan regional planning.

The community is workable from the standpoint of population, area planned for, and spread of administrative responsibility. There would be between 60 and 80 communities ranging in population from 50,000 to 150,000 people. Community activities are channelized through the five Borough Advisory Planning Boards.

Perhaps equally important, the Bureau of Planning can develop the comprehensive city-regional plan and carry out its other functions if it is not swamped with local matters. The implications of the city-regional plan within the community may then be interpreted by the Community Planning Board. Thus, what in present practice is a fragmentary master plan without clear concept, may now take on an organized form which can be appreciated from the layman's point of view.

Flexibility of structure for the Community Planning Board is important for two reasons: one, it facilitates the initiation of such Boards; two, it allows room for exploration in different forms.

The Community Planning Board may tap an activate new sources of opinion and assistance in terms of funds and possible service.

Through specification by the city-regional planning process these activities do not jeopardize the city-regional comprehensive plan. In fact, they advance it by dealing with the lesser problems that might confuse the issues on the higher level.

The Citizens Planning Committee:

Functions:

To advise the Community Planning Board on the particular problems of the community.

To act as a sounding board.

To serve as an educational medium for the Community Planning Board.

General Description:

This group is similar to and serves the same general purpose as the Advisory Planning Committee. It represents such organizations as the local churches, storekeepers, neighborhood associations, etc: the leaders of the community. Eligibility for membership is based on the membership, role in the community, and accomplishments of the organization.

ZONING: THE CONTROL OF PRIVATE LAND USE

The Community Planning Board adopts:

A community zoning map.

The Borough Advisory Planning Board endorses and channels to the Board of Estimate through the Bureau of Planning:

Community zoning maps.

The Bureau of Planning recommends action on:

Community zoning maps in so far as they relate to city-regional planning.

The Bureau of Planning adopts:

Administrative procedure and standards.

Quotas of land use and their intensity for the communities and the special land use districts. [1]

Zoning maps for special land use districts.

Marginal coordination of community zoning maps (on a specified jurisdictional basis).

The Board of Estimate approves on a suspensive veto basis:

Administrative procedure and standards.

Quotas of land use and their intensity for the communities and special land use districts.

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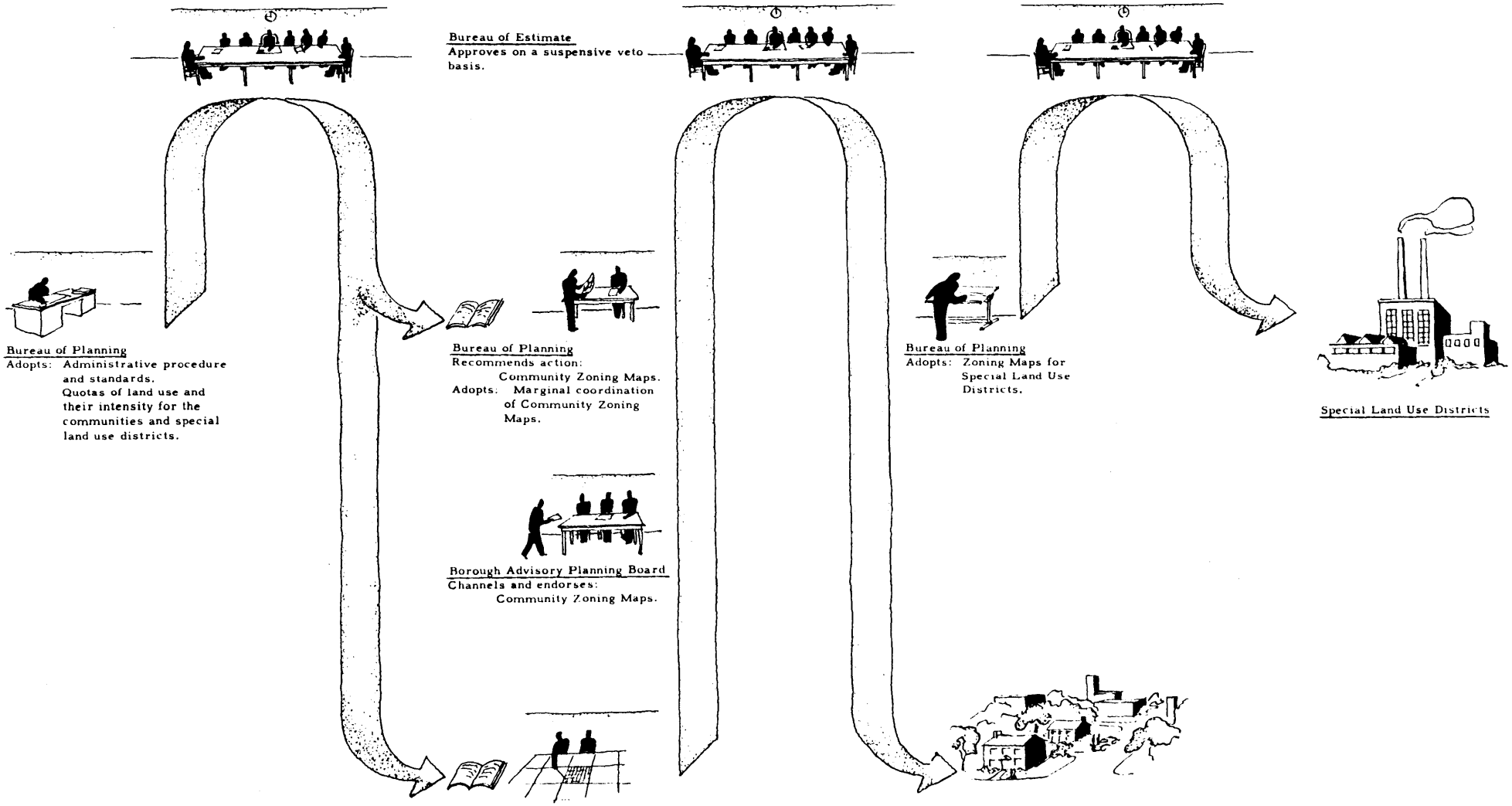
1. The Bureau of Planning makes changes in the boundary lines of communities and special land use districts in this same way.



ZONING
THE CONTROL OF
PRIVATE LAND USE

Community and special land use district zoning maps.

General Description:

To reshape a local business zone a community zoning map change is drafted by the Community Planning Board. It complies with the administrative procedure and standards established by the Bureau of Planning. It must check with the quota for local business use of that intensity within the community. After adoption by the Community Planning Board the resolution goes to the Borough Advisory Planning Board. At this point the resolution is screened for errors and lack of general planning sense. It is endorsed and forwarded to the Bureau of Planning for recommendations on such matters as it finds to be of city-regional importance. Finally the Board of Estimate considers it on a suspensive veto basis. If not vetoed it becomes law.

A zoning map change within a given distance of a community boundary (or related to some city-regional feature) would be subject to a suspensive veto by the Bureau of Planning prior to reaching the Board of Estimate. If this veto were used the change would go no further.

The reasonsing:

In considering such a scheme for private land use control the feasibility must be determined. This is the line of argument in support of the proposal:

There is in existence:

The current land use pattern of the environment.

A study which will presumably become a zoning resolution that considers the land use requirements of the city for some years in the future and provides a districting map and regulations for procedure.

The contention presented here is that:

If the function of the community and special land use districts of the city has been determined in the light of balanced functioning of the whole city by this study, and

If the needs in terms of land use categories and intensities (to cover population density as well) have been assigned to specific areas, and

If rules and regulations of procedure are established by the Board of Estimate on the recommendation of the city-regional Bureau of Planning, and

Since the existing land use pattern should prove to be a stabilizer in the face of rapid and irresponsible change,

Then, a responsible Community Planning Board should be allowed to function within those limits in terms of adjustment or rearrangement of the land use districts within its area.

Further, the Board of Standards and Appeals might likewise be decentralized, retaining supervisory and review powers in the city-regional body.

Partial or complete inadequacy of the Community Planning Board's action, or the absence of any action on its part, has been guarded against by allowing initiation to be exercised by the Bureau of Planning and the Board of Estimate.

This operation is important because it gives at least some of the initiative and responsibility for shaping the community environment to the community. It brings the hearings and decisions into the area which they effect.

PROJECT REGULATION: THE CONTROL OF PRIVATE AND SEMI-PUBLIC WORKS

The project developer:

Accomplishes the project planning and constructs the project in accordance with the approval of the Community Planning Board and the provisions of the various planning controls and city codes.

The Community Planning Board:

Coordinates the project plan with the comprehensive community plan.

Carries out the administrative procedure and applies the standards to the project as established by the Bureau of Planning.

Initiates proposals for changes in zoning, land use quotas and intensities, and the city map.

Approves the project within the limits of its authority.

The Bureau of Planning:

Adopts administrative procedure and standards.

The Board of Estimate on a suspensive veto basis:

Approves administrative procedure and standards.

General Description:

All types of land use projects will be considered in this manner (including assembly of lands as well as subdivision). Municipal projects will be processed in the Capital Budget and Program. Projects involving

special funds and grants will be checked by the appropriate agencies, e.g. redevelopment projects under the Housing Act of 1940 by the HHFA.

Projects may be initiated by the Bureau of Planning or other city units. They will be referred to the Community Planning Board for recommendations and then for action. Thus a community which has fallen behind in its development may be caught up by the city-regional agencies. Projects initiated in this fashion may not be rejected by the Community Planning Boards.

THE CITY MAP: THE CONTROL OF PUBLIC WAYS AND PLACES

The Community Planning Board recommends:

Changes related to the development of the community, e.g. residential streets, squares, etc.

The Borough Advisory Planning Board endorses and channels to the Board of Estimate through the Bureau of Planning:

Recommendations from the Community Planning Board.

The Bureau of Planning recommends:

Changes related to the city-regional plan from two sources: the Community Planning Board and the Bureau of Planning itself.

The Bureau of Planning adopts:

Administrative procedure and standards.

The Board of Estimate adopts:

All changes in the city map. Those related to city-regional factors shall have recommendations by the Bureau of Planning.

The Board of Estimate approves on a suspensive veto basis:

Administrative procedure and standards.

General Description:

The Division of Planning of the Bureau of Planning is the custodian of the map. The city map is used by both levels of planning.

THE CAPITAL BUDGET: THE CONTROL OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Community Planning Board:

Prepares a program of capital budget items and forwards them through the Borough Advisory Planning Board to the Bureau of Planning. These same items are also forwarded by the local administrative unit of the action arm involved through its departmental headquarters to the Bureau of Planning.

The departments and authorities of New York City:

Initiate a Capital Budget and Program recommendation for public works related to their special function regardless of the items initiated in the communities. The referral of those community initiated items to the Bureau of Planning with recommendations for action is mandatory. The resulting two sets of recommendations are adequately cross indexed for easy reference.

General Description:

The preparation of the Capital Budget and Program including a schedule for the activation and coordination of the various public works is directed by the Director of Planning. The fiscal scale of the budget is determined by two opinions: the Comptroller's on the amount of debt which may be incurred by the city, and the Director of the Budget's as to the effect of such a debt on the expense budget. The Director of the

Budget also assists with fiscal advice and technical service in setting up the accounting. The Division of Planning will provide the long range view of the budget. The Division of Program Coordination and Capital Budget is the responsible unit for the actual preparation of the Capital Budget and Program. It also provides the short range view of the budget and consideration on matters of planning coordination and financing.

Referral to the Bureau of Planning of items added by the Board of Estimate is mandatory. This referral will probably be little used because the borough presidents would have had one opportunity already to make recommendations prior to the preparation of the Capital Budget and Program by the Bureau of Planning (this may save some reformulation).

The Reasoning:

Recommendations from the Community Planning Boards make it possible to develop capital budget programs of a comprehensive nature for the community which coordinate all the various needed projects and evaluate them on that level. Endorsement, favorably or unfavorably, by the Borough Advisory Planning Board and the departments and authorities of the city government should establish the soundness of such proposals on both a general and special functional basis. In addition there will be the proposals prepared by the departments and

authorities on the basis of their own special function throughout the city. Such a procedure will be more time consuming but it will provide an authoritative evaluation on which the Bureau of Planning can coordinate improvements in terms of time scheduling as well as in terms of fiscal planning.

As compared with the existing method there is no substantial change seen in the Board of Estimate and City Council stages of the process. A new relationship is found in the assistance of the Director of the Budget. It is hoped that a better understanding of the inter-dependence of related projects will result from this procedure.

EDUCATION: THE DIRECTIVE FORCE

That indefinable something which is more than the sum of its parts - morale in the military services, Gestalt in psychology, the spirit of a person - is also present in a great city. Side-by-side with provincialism such as we find in Greenwich Village, there is a loyalty and identification as a New Yorker. It is clearly felt even by those who live in the dormitory suburbs outside the city limits.

This emergent spirit of the city is important. Just as a friend worries with another person who is "down in the dumps", so an individual reacts, consciously or unconsciously, to the spirit of the city. These conditioned reactions effect the course of issues and events within the city.

Conditioned reactions are related to the planning process. Favorable reactions to planning proposals must be obtained. In the democratic process consent becomes a matter of majority rule which makes necessary the compliance of the minority although they do not agree with the proposal. Clearly the conditioned reactions, or morale, of the city will dictate how high a rate of compliance will result. Consent and compliance are important to planning because they make possible action which deals with the physical environment. The physical environment in turn has a considerable effect on the morale.

Understanding is important to high morale. To date planners have dealt with historic trends in a perfunctory manner. The projection of these trends into the future has been a statistical matter which in many cases defies layman understanding. The people of the city-region must be able to appreciate the characteristics and trends of their environment. These trends must be given life and meaning. The unnatural status quo concept must be eliminated. Having established the existing environment as being in a process of constant change, the planner must then identify the desirable and undesirable factors and their likely effect on the future environment. If we have agreement on the concept of trends and on the desirable and undesirable factors, proposals based on them have a chance to achieve consent. Security and confidence on the part of the public in its own ability to understand and deal with the situation in at least a limited way will lead to higher morale.

We could paraphrase Dr. James B. Conant's reasons "why any but a relatively few experts need understand science" in terms of planning. They are in brief:

1. It is the only means to assimilate science into the secular cultural pattern.
2. People in positions of authority and responsibility as well as those who shape opinion are profoundly affected by the applications of highly technical scientific considerations.

3. The methods of the sciences are all tangled up with education and the investigation of current issues. A clarification of popular thinking about the methods of science is needed if the layman is to have any clear ideas about the relationship.[1.]

Such an educational program as would promote understanding of planning need not be prohibitively technical. Turning once more to Dr. Conant we read:

> "For there are two ways of probing into complex human activities and their products: one is to retrace the steps by which certain end results have been produced, the other is to dissect the result with the hope of revealing its structural pattern and exposing the logical relations of its parts, and, incidentally, exposing also the inconsistencies and the flaws. Philosophic and mathematical minds prefer the logical approach, but it is my belief that for nine people out of ten the historical method will yield more real understanding of a complex matter."[2.]

> ". . . . . a discussion of the evolution of a new conceptual scheme as a result of experimentation would occupy a central position in the exposition (in his hypothetical course on the Tactics and Strategy of Science)".[3.]

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1. James B. Conant, On Understanding Science: An Historical Approach, Yale University Press, 1947 - p. 3-5.
2. Ibid - p. 12.
3. Ibid - p. 19.

There are cities in which the core of planning activity has been the historical tradition and its development. The method might be used in New York through case studies of the community history, a particular industry's decentralization move, a particular school building's history and its effect on the community, or many other similar studies. The material should have a decided planning interpretation but one that is phrased in lay language rather than in technical jargon.

The educational program is an auxiliary to the planning process and therefore should occur on each of the levels of comprehensive planning. The need for interrelationship in levels of education is similar to that in the planning process itself. An educational unit will be organized in each planning unit. They will range in size from a group of men to a partial assignment for a single man depending on the size of the planning unit. Their responsibility will be to systematically propogandize the government officials and the public on the essential nature of the environment and the planning processes proposals for guiding its development. Materials for this activity will be organized and made available by the Division of Information and Education of the Bureau of Planning.

PRECEDENTS

It is the intention to merely note in this section cases of structure or function which are similar to those proposed by this thesis. These precedents exist in the government structure of New York City today.

Single directorship supported by an administrative organization occurs in at least two places on the top level of government: the Director of the Budget and the Construction Coordinator. Mayor O'Dwyer recently announced that the Traffic Commission of his own design would be abolished and a single commissioner with extraordinary powers at the head of a traffic department would be established. Such action indicates a decided dissatisfaction with multiple head agencies in times of crisis.[1.]

The importance of experts in the planning process has led to the waiving of the residence requirement in many cases. Mayor O'Dwyer wrote to Chairman Finklestein of the City Planning Commission as follows: "It is my sincere desire that the commission scour the country for the best technical brains in the field of planning to help us. . . . . ."[2.]

The head of the planning agency as a focus for the mayor's committees on specific problems is omened in the current assignment of the chairman of the City Planning Commission as the Chairman of the

1. New York Times, May 5, 1950 - col. 1, p. 1.
2. New York Times, May 10, 1950 - editorial quoted a letter dated May 9, 1950 from Mayor O'Dwyer to Chairman Finklestein.

Mayor's Port Committee. This Committee will study means of developing greater volume of commerce through the Port of New York in the face of what Mayor O'Dwyer considers a serious downward trend.[1.]

Technical advice and liaison on an interdepartmental basis is evident in principle in the five man membership of the Bureau of Smoke Control. It includes the Commissioner of Health, the Commissioner of Housing and Buildings, a licensed professional engineer, a mechanical engineer, and a stationary engineer. Their job is to regulate smoke and investigate complaints. A rather similar case is that of the Traffic Commission. Its membership includes the Executive Director of the Traffic Department (a professional traffic engineer), the Police Commissioner, the Commissioner of Public Works, the Chairman of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, the Chairman of the Board of Transportation, the Chairman of the City Planning Commission, and the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate. This body passes administrative regulations, establishes and determines signs, etc., for the regulation and control of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, proposes comprehensive city traffic plans to the mayor (without referral to the City Planning Commission), recommends capital and other improvements, keeps the mayor advised of traffic conditions, coordinates the efforts and reports of public and private agencies and groups, and

1. New York Times, May 9, 1950 - p. 53.

carries on educational activities. Interest in technical advice and interdepartmental liaison on an area basis can be seen in the Citizens Union Program for Community Planning. The Board of Education is currently holding up its revision of school districts to coordinate them with the City Planning Commission's future proposals for planning districts.

The importance of education was recognized recently in the charter provision for the Traffic Commission which said it would "Carry on educational activities for the purpose of promoting traffic safety and the free movement of vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the city." [1] It has also been the practice of LaGuardia and O'Dwyer to have regular radio programs on which they explain city affairs.

The idea that too costly services may be gained through the use of unofficial sources is evident in Director of the Bureau of Smoke Control Byrne's statement that, the scope of a genuine atmospheric study in New York would be "so great as to be prohibitive in cost". He noted that some newspapers and civic organizations were doing this sort of thing. Such material would be pooled and cleared through the Bureau whose work would be speedier and more efficient through such coordination. [2] The Traffic Commission has rather similar provisions for the coordination of work done by private agencies. [3]

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1. New York City Charter, par. 1064, sec. 1 (1949).
2. New York Times, Byrne Seeks Pool on Air Pollution, April 14, 1950.
3. New York City Charter, par. 1064, sec. j.

The function of providing information and records has been partially carried on by the Regional Plan Association. Henry Bruere suggests something similar in his "department of research and reporting" which would send out "a steady flow of information on city work, needs, and plans." [1.]

Greater control of the planning program for public works was a need which brought about the position of Construction Coordinator. Henry Bruere comments generally on this matter of budget making and suggests that, "Sound budgeting requires continuous and critical control apart from the spending officials." [1.] Robert Walker notes that in general "The budget is itself a plan for work. . . . . there is no sharp line between 'planning' and 'budgeting' " and that the trend in budgeting is towards "a more systematic use of the budget as a tool of management." [2.]

The community as a planning unit has been the subject of innumerable reports by civic organizations. Community planning efforts exist today as the result of local organizations ranging from single interest groups such as the chambers of commerce to federations of many community interest groups. The principle of community planning has been recognized by the City Planning Commission on the basis of centralized planning. The Mayor's Committee on Property

1. New York Times, letter from Henry Bruere, published March 8, 1950.
2. Robert A. Walker, The Relation of Budgeting to Program Planning, in the Public Administration Review, Vol. IV, No. 1, Winter 1944 - p. 97.

Improvement under Mayor LaGuardia studied four communities. In the future the Housing Act of 1949 may turn out to be an important factor in the development of communities (note particularly the redevelopment provisions).

The initiation of assessable capital improvements on a local level is found in the twelve Local Improvement Districts of Chapter 12 of the Charter. The local board members are the borough president, the councilman elected at large for the borough, and the councilmen of the councilmanic district involved. This board may initiate proceedings for an assessable improvement on the basis of petitions from the property owners affected or a request from the borough president. Public hearings are held on such matters before they are passed on to the Board of Estimate. Each request must meet certain specifications in form and be recommended by the City Planning Commission and the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate.

The use of advisory committees on a continuous and intermittent basis is common. In connection with housing, Leo M. Drachsler's study indicates the essential part they played during the formative stages of the New York City Housing Authority. Lack of funds made their successful use imperative.[1] The Mayor's committees have been operating for many years in the field of planning. The one of the most recent is that

1. Leo M. Drachsler, Advisory Bodies and the Public Housing Authority of New York City, published by the Department of Investigation, City of New York, Studies in Municipal Problems No. 3 - no date - p. 13.

of the Committee on Slum Clearance by Private Capital chairmanned by Robert Moses. Under this organization the city will attempt to obtain funds for redevelopment through the Housing Act of 1949.

The use of gross quotas for population distribution has a possible forerunner in the assignment of floor area ratios to redevelopment areas in the Master Plan for Sections Containing Areas for Clearance, Redevelopment, and Low Rent Housing, etc.

These brief statements are not meant to cover all existing organizational and functional precedents but rather only a few examples to indicate that there are such precedents.

CONCLUSION

The proposed new structure for the planning process in New York City and the assignment of functions to the various units of that structure have been outlined. In conclusion four principal areas of advantage are noted. They are:

1. Administrative decentralization.
2. Improved mayoral control.
3. Provision of a core element for the focus of the decentralized administrative units advocated in the Citizens Union Program for Community Planning.
4. The maximization of land use benefits to New York City as a whole.

In advocating administrative decentralization George C. S. Benson wrote an excellent summary of the arguments for and against such a policy.[1] Benson's arguments are briefly identified here and followed by comments on their relationship to the proposed structure.

Arguments for decentralization:

1. Speed and efficiency in decision making: The Bureau of Planning will gain in this respect through the use of the single head and the elimination of decisions which can be properly handled at the community level. The community level, on the other hand, is not troubled by the

1. Benson, George C. S.: Administrative Decentralization, in the Public Administration Review, Vol. VII, No. 3, Summer 1947.

referral of everyday decisions to the Bureau of Planning.

2. Internal cooperation and responsibility: A further definition of functional responsibility by area helps to establish clearer jurisdictions and simplifies the problems faced by the administrator. Focus on two levels will facilitate the coordination of special planning functions.

3. Administrative experimentation and adaption: These will be achieved through the provisions for more local autonomy and the allowance of flexibility in the organization of community level planning organizations. A less swamped Bureau of Planning will have more time to evaluate these experiments and perhaps initiate some of its own.

4. External cooperation: Since the Community Planning Boards can make day-to-day decisions, they should be able to deal more effectively and satisfactorily with external factors. This being the case the Bureau of Planning in turn will be freer to deal with such external factors as well. The Division of Information and Education can prepare the grounds for such activity.

5. Development of line executives: The experience of the staff and the members of the community level groups in comprehensive planning should help groom them for city-regional positions of greater responsibility.

6. Economy of operations: Time consuming routine matters can be handled in local offices thus saving time of the high level staff and

the effort lost in transmittal and time lag. This is also an economy over the alternate proposition of a field staff dependent on the Bureau of Planning for all authority. It makes it possible to use more effectively appointive and volunteer services.

7. Reduction of administrative detailing at the central agency: The Bureau of Planning will be relieved of a great deal of the current administration and planning control which now swamps it.

8. Improvement of public relations: This is accomplished through recognizing the planning polity of the community: by offering the people an opportunity to help shape their environment. It also brings the educational program closer to the public.

Answers to arguments against decentralization:

1. Lack of politically responsible control: The principal decisions are still reserved for the Board of Estimate and community proposals are screened by the Borough Advisory Planning Board. City-regional planning is done in the Bureau of Planning. It might be pointed out that internal community political responsibility is perhaps not well served in every respect by a centralized planning function since it lacks considerable detail and insight into the community life.

2. Weakened lines of technical control: This would be undeniably true in some degree. It is, however, an alternate for practically no local planning at all at present since the city government is not willing

to foot the bill. In the use of planning controls this proposal allows for technical specification in the establishment of administrative procedure and standards. An adequate educational program committed to decentralization might do a good deal to simplify technical operations for local operation.

3. Lack of qualified personnel: This, is a problem which will have to be covered through the use of citizen groups in coordination with the educational program and the gradual development of such qualified personnel by the Bureau of Planning. Planning consultants could probably help fill this gap to a great extent.

4. Lack of uniform policy: This would be covered in the legislative action by the Board of Estimate; the administrative procedure and standards; and the framework of the city-regional comprehensive plan.

The national governments of Germany, Russia and Italy have indicated that in the long-run, top heavy administration is inefficient.

There is an advantage from the standpoint of improved mayoral control. Mayor O'Dwyer has appointed an Executive Committee on Management. Its purpose is to reorganize the city government machinery so as to free the mayor of details and make for all-around efficiency; to streamline and coordinate; to eliminate the duplication of effort; sources of friction, and unnecessary work for the high officials. The problems of the city's executive are of an order second only to those of the president of the United States according to some observers.

This concept of structural organization consolidates at the staff level the processes of long range comprehensive planning, programming for public works, and the adjustment, coordination and inspection of planning throughout the action phases of the city's development: a continuous and homogeneous process. It is directed by a single person: the Director of Planning. This not only establishes responsible control but also facilitates liaison with the mayor and the Board of Estimate.

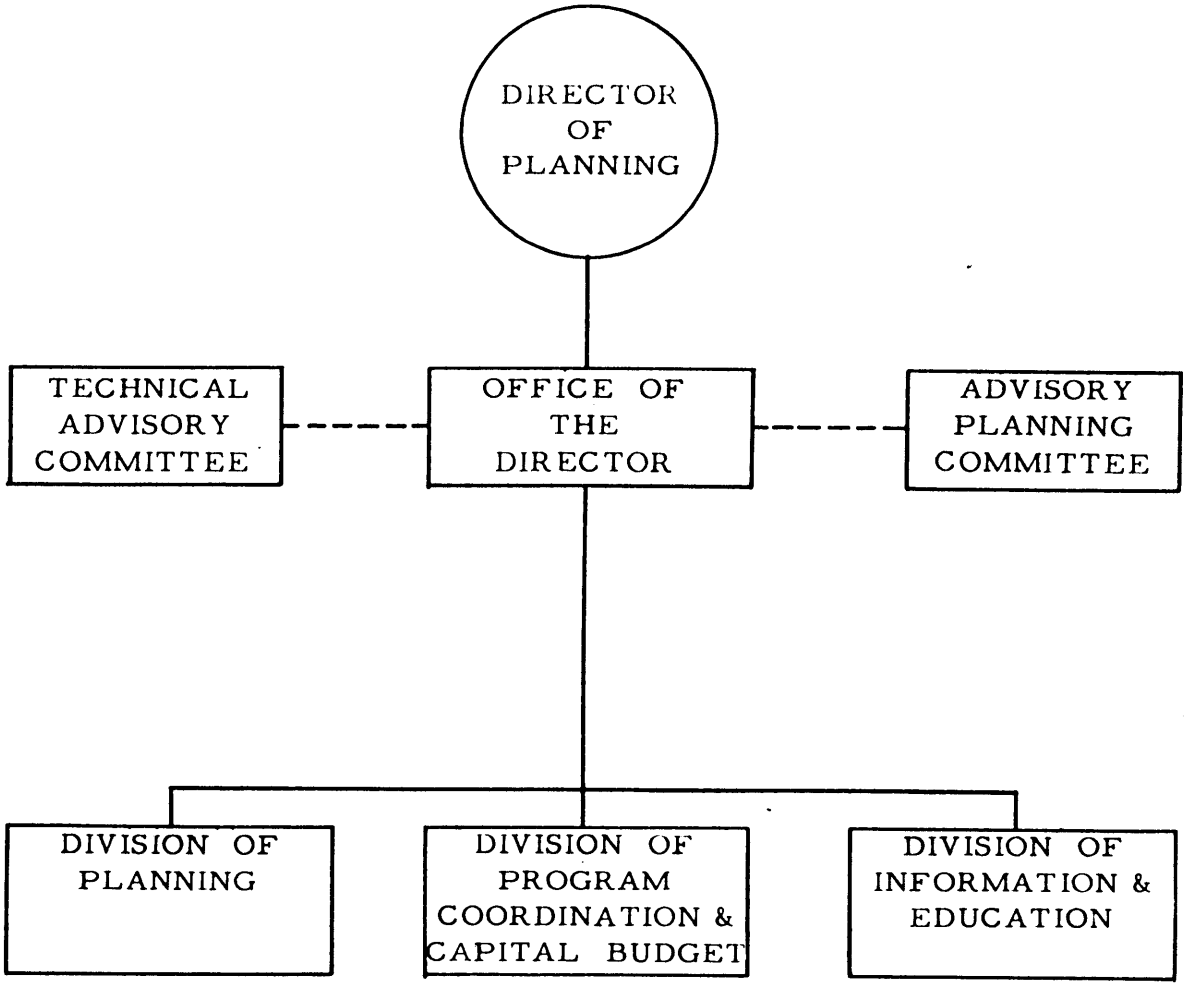
Staff service of this type makes it possible for the mayor to follow the developments and measure their effectiveness. Administrative problems might be caught before they reach critical importance.

The provision of a core element to which the decentralized administrative services of the city government could tie in is an important factor in considering the Citizens Union's Program for Community Planning. The Community Planning Board and its comprehensive plan for the community make such a core an active element operating on the spot rather than a passive paper plan or a mere assumption of coordination of those decentralized administrative services. It will make vocal the community's interest in such coordination.

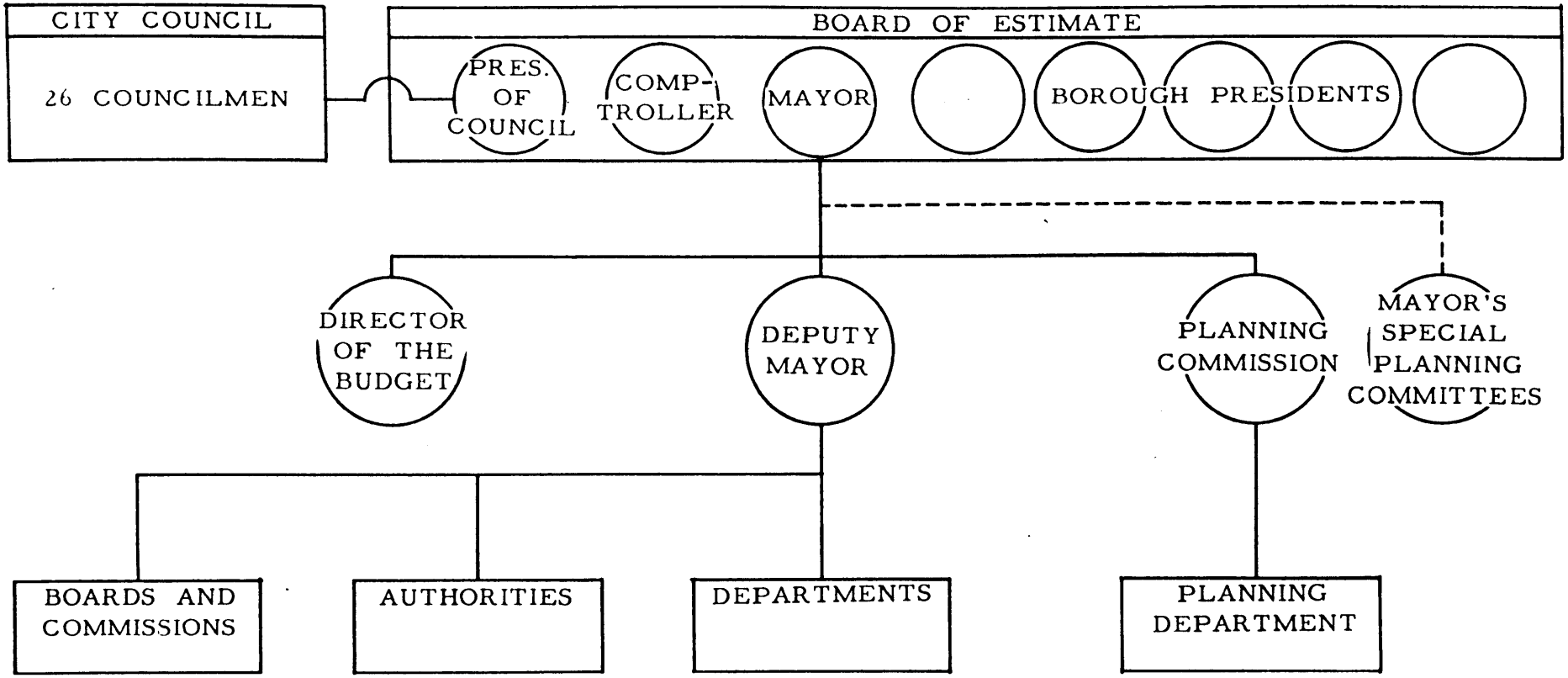
Finally, with the increasing cost of government, it behooves New York City to maximize the benefits from its expenditures and its sources of revenues. Public works are a major part of the expenditures.

The real estate tax is a major part of its revenues. The government and the public should be encouraged and led to use the land as effectively as possible in relationship to both capital improvements and the operating expense pattern of the city. This requires an all-out planning effort consonant with the democratic way of life. One which can gain consent of the officials and the public as well as plan.

The proposed structure for the planning process in New York City has been designed with the idea of providing a form for that all-out planning effort.



PROPOSED BUREAU OF PLANNING
for
CITY-REGIONAL PLANNING
in the
NEW YORK CITY GOVERNMENT



EXISTING RELATIONSHIP
of the
PLANNING PROCESS
in the
NEW YORK CITY GOVERNMENT

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