

BUILDING LIKE MOSES WITH JACOBS IN MIND:

REDEVELOPMENT POLITICS IN
THE BLOOMBERG ADMINISTRATION

by

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Abstract**BUILDING LIKE JACOBS WITH MOSES IN MIND:
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by

Scott Larson

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For decades the legacies of Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses have loomed over redevelopment politics in New York City, serving as ideological opposites in ongoing struggles to influence the form of the city's built environment. Yet recent revisionist readings have sought to reframe popular perceptions of the pair. Moses' supporters argue that his public works have positioned the city to remain ascendant into the 21st century (Ballon and Jackson); opponents counter that Jacobs' ideals continue to provide the prescription for curing contemporary urban ills (Municipal Art Society, Klemek). In devising its own vision of the city, the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg has sought to bridge this divide, countering that it is "building and rezoning today once again like Moses on an unprecedented scale but with Jane Jacobs firmly in mind,..." (Burden, 2006). This project aims to critique the narrowness of this debate, arguing that both Jacobs and Moses represent a class-based strategy for remaking the city. While Moses' modernism might appear to stand in stark contrast to Jacobs' localism, when synthesized in the Bloomberg agenda both represent a call for the building and rebuilding of the city for people of middle rather than lesser class privilege.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In October 2006, the Gotham Center for New York City History at the City University of New York's Graduate Center hosted a public forum at which a select group of historians, architects, planners, community activists, developers and politicians engaged in a spirited conversation about which urban vision – that of Jane Jacobs, the legendary urbanist and writer who penned the now-classic attack on planning as practiced, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*,¹ or her frequent antagonist, Robert Moses, the master builder of the mid-20th century – dominates New York City's approach to city building today.² Pointing to promotional posters that showed the pair posed as if ready for a modern-day gunfight at OK Corral, event moderator and Gotham Center Director Mike Wallace suggested the imagery was symbolic, indicative of “the ur status” Moses and Jacobs have reached:

They seem to have become almost iconic figures, touchstones with whom participants in contemporary debates on city building often seek to align themselves. In part, perhaps, this is because their clashes back in the '60s were so intensely dramatic. Yes, they each channeled and shaped forces far vaster than themselves, but their combat was also between two unique and powerful personalities. They really did detest each other, as far as I know, and what they believed the other stood for.

While Wallace spoke as if the two were truly physical combatants engaged in direct confrontation over particular projects, Jacobs and Moses had relatively few face-to-face encounters. Many of Moses' major projects had long been completed by the time

¹ In 1995 *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was named one of the 100 most influential books “since the war” by the *Times Literary Supplement*, a list that included Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, Carl Jung's *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Michel Foucault's *Madness and civilization: A history of insanity in the Age of Reason*, and Milton Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom* (Times Literary Supplement 1995).

² Jane Jacobs vs. Robert Moses: How Stands the Debate Today? Oct. 11, 2006, The Graduate Center, The City University of New York

Jacobs came on the scene – his proposals for the construction of a highway across Lower Manhattan and the re-configuring of Washington Square to make way for an extension of Fifth Avenue among the more notable exceptions. In fact, while Jacobs clearly inveighs against the results of Moses-style building and her abhorrence of his authoritarian style lies at the heart of the activist bent in *The Death of Life Great American Cities*, in the book she mentions her foe by name only seven times, preferring instead a more broad-brushed critique of the ideas and methods he so fully represented.³

As for Moses, did he publically acknowledge Jacobs at all? More often he lumped her in among an amorphous, non-descript crowd of naysayers, know-nothings, “malcontents” (Caro 1974, 1097) and “Beiunskis” (Moses 1944, 16) who stood in the way of progress and simply did not merit individual scorn. In fact, collective derision proved to be a favorite weapon for Moses, one that for a time he wielded masterfully in minimizing and marginalizing opposition. One particularly representative example – almost joyfully recounted by Wallace to stoke the fires for the Gotham Center forum – came when infuriated by efforts to derail his plans to run a road through Washington Square, Moses bellowed, “There is nobody against this. Nobody! Nobody but a bunch of ... mothers!” Even in cases where Jacobs, the mother of two sons and a daughter, was a particular target of his contempt, Moses avoided referencing her explicitly. In one instance – an especially acerbic letter written to her publisher characterizing *The Death*

³ One reference is in an explanatory footnote; three others come on a single page (Jacobs 1992, 360). By comparison, she mentions other urban thinkers worthy of critique just as often, if not more: the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier 10 times (and his concept of the Radiant City dozens more); Lewis Mumford six times, and Ebenezer Howard 15 times (with multiple additional mentions of his concept of the Garden City).

and Life of Great American Cities as “libelous” “junk” – Moses dismissed “the book” without referring to it by name and makes no mention whatsoever of its author.⁴

Of course that is not to say that the pair did not despise each other. Instead, it serves to illustrate how their duel, while between two powerful personalities at seemingly opposite ends of the debate over how best to plan and build cities, was and remains representative of things much larger. Jacobs’ overarching goal was not to bring down Moses, though surely she reveled in his eventual demise. Her aim was to stop his projects: to derail the ramming of an expressway across Lower Manhattan and a thoroughfare through Washington Square Park, and to argue for a different way of thinking about, planning and governing cities. Moses, whatever he thought of Jacobs, had little interest in her, or most people it seems. His overriding focus was on getting things built.

As a result, it has been largely left to others to flesh out the full oppositional nature of the Jacobs-Moses dialectic. Because they were such powerful personalities who engaged in bigger debates over broader ideals, the two have come to be viewed as the larger-than-life symbols of those debates, as well as figureheads for the subplots subsumed in them. Over time, they have evolved into poster material for all manner of principles and broadly defined, easy dichotomies – good vs. evil, progress vs. preservation, people vs. the state, diversity and density vs. chaos and overcrowding, the city ascendant vs. cities in decline.

Yet, partly because Moses and Jacobs have become so identified with so many things – though forever in relation to New York City and always at odds with each other

⁴ The full contents of the blunt missive addressed to Bennett Cerf at Random House and dated Nov. 15, 1961: “I am returning the book you sent me. Aside from the fact that it is intemperate and inaccurate, it is also libelous. I call your attention, for example, to page 131. Sell this junk to someone else. Cordially, Robert Moses.” (Moses 1961).

– their legacies remain works in progress, points of tension perpetually being reconstituted and reshaped by the ongoing spatial and temporal transformations of urban form. In a certain sense, Wallace hit the mark: their legacies have a remarkable and persistent way of participating in the shaping of urban processes. Still, what we think of these pivotal figures and their ideas at any given point in time seems to be fundamentally informed and wholly influenced by our image of the city at that particular moment. Urban thinkers and planners, after all, like the practice of planning and the ideas that guide it, build both literally and figuratively on the past, inheriting from bygone eras built environments and particular problems as well as frameworks and conditions for thinking about potential solutions. Jacobs makes this point explicit in the oft-cited Introduction to *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, where in the span of nine pages, she traces and critiques the evolution of planning theory by connecting past theoretical paradigms – from Daniel Burnham’s City Beautiful through Howard’s Garden Cities to the utopian Radiant Cities of Le Corbusier – to their normalization within planning and design orthodoxy. It is from this context, of course, that she launches her withering “attack on current city planning and rebuilding” (Jacobs 1992, 1).

MOSES AND MODERNISM

At the heart of Jacobs’ critique stands Moses’ ability to marshal federal programs and the resources they represented as part of a broader modernist project prompted by visions of a creating a “new society” in the wake of World War II (Scott 2003, 127). On the eve of the war, New York City, like virtually all American cities, was heavily dependent on industry; nearly 40 percent of its work force was still engaged in making things, and the city was “by far the nation’s largest manufacturing district” (Schwartz

1993, 234). Yet as early as the 1920s, groups like the Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs had begun arguing that the future of industry would lie outside the central city, and in the years following the war the end of World War II with the momentous socio-economic shifts they would bring, “few disagreed that New York could become a postindustrial metropolis if enough land could be cleared of factories to make it so (Schwartz 1993, 230).

At the same time, dilapidated housing, vast slums and creeping blight framed the public’s image of inner cities. In 1943, Charles Merriam, a member of Pres. Franklin Roosevelt’s National Resources Board, suggested in a report entitled “Make No Small Plans,” that the country was “on the verge of a new era in city development,” one where a far broader and near-utopian focus would lead to programs and policies “for sounder urban living” (Merriam, quoted in Gelfand 1975). The resulting modernist moment, grounded in a liberal reformist tradition but constrained by market forces and the perquisites of private property, sought not only to address urban ills like slums and blight but to set in motion wholesale transformations of urban built environments that would position cities for a more harmonious future: “As capitalism was tamed, the city organized and prosperity diffused socially and spatially, the lower classes would rise to affluence and take on the values and behaviors of the middle class” (Beauregard 1989, 387). Even though Moses balked at what he saw as the social engineering inherent in much of the liberal orientation of the modernist enterprise, he embraced the aspirational vision of the middle-class city it inspired – as well as the vast resources and power it promised – and he eagerly framed ensuing fights in terms of what kind of city needed to be built for the public good.

Within this environment, federal programs such as Urban Renewal and the Title I projects intended to see it through were conceived to counter the rapid suburbanization and decentralization that were threatening American inner cities (Ballon 2007). In essence, the Title I program presumed that the physical attributes of dilapidated neighborhoods were to blame for the “unnatural” conditions and social ills that inflicted many urban cores. Substandard housing, as well as “unwise mixture of residential and commercial uses of land, overcrowding and bad planning of the land, lack of recreational facilities, frozen patterns of street layouts and traffic congestion” all contributed to the creation and maintenance of slums.⁵ As such, Title I offered a simple solution: “Replot the streets, replace the site plan, build anew, and the reformatted city would generate a better life” (Ballon 2007, 108).

On one hand, these federal programs were devised to eliminate slums. Moses, however, saw them as a means of forcing the city into the post-industrial future: his projects razed not only blighted neighborhoods but also manufacturing districts, on which he would build massive public-housing projects as well as educational institutions and government centers intended to “galvanize downtown investment” (Schwartz 1993, 246). And just as Moses aggressively pursued Title I projects as a means of inner city rejuvenation, he every bit as tenaciously hatched schemes to build new highways that would – in his view – further reinvigorate city centers by connecting them with their growing suburbs. Ultimately, though, opposition to the destruction of existing urban neighborhoods in order to build highways through the heart of dense urban areas meant a limited number of such projects were built – the Cross-Bronx Expressway being one

⁵ Division of Slum Clearance and Urban Redevelopment, Housing and Home Finance Agency, *The Relationship between Slum Clearance and Urban Redevelopment and Low-Rent Housing* (Washington, D.C: 1950), p. 13; as quoted in Ballon 2007.

notable exception – even as networks of suburban and interstate highway systems were expanding. In a spectacular example of unintended consequences, Moses’ support for the automotization of the country fostered the forces that propelled people and businesses out of the city centers he was attempting to save. Put another way, “the development of modernity has made the modern city itself old-fashioned, obsolete... by a fateful dialectic, because the city and the highway don’t go together, the city must go” (Berman 1982, 307).

‘THE KIND OF A PROBLEM THE CITY IS’

Jacobs, of course, would zero in on these destructive impulses within Moses’ modernism and develop her own interpretation of what makes a city successful in response, prompting Marxist cultural theorist Frederic Jameson to assert that modernity “began to end the night Jane Jacobs delivered the first lecture in what was to become the *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*” (Jameson 1996, 32). Yet while she is often portrayed as a radical thinker and an anti-planner presenting her work “in part as a polemic against her predecessors,” Jacobs’ critique of planning emerged from a distinct historical lineage, and “her ideas gain in coherence and logic when they are situated alongside those of her colleagues in the larger stream of planning thought” (Sternberg 2000, 273). Among the more influential of these were members of an ecological tradition within early urbanism that included Camelo Sitte, the 19th-century Viennese writer and critic whose appreciation for the organic intricacy and complexity of medieval city form inspired a critique of the technical aspects of planning; and the British architect Robert Morris, who like Sitte distinguished between organic, or natural – though not necessarily unplanned – cities and those conceived through more rigid applications of the grid.

Sitte, in particular, serves as a theoretical forerunner to Jacobs. Writing in the 19th century, at a time when enhancing the salability of subdivided property was paramount, he argued that the market alone, as a purely mechanical instrument, could not account for “good” urban design and artistic principles (Lilley 1999, Sternberg 2000), and that “relation and proportion at the urban scale... must be willfully brought into existence through planning – through a design intelligence exercised on the collective behalf” (Sternberg 2000, 271). Sitte championed “curving and irregular street layouts” (Lilley 1999, 431), the juxtaposition of varied buildings as a means of framing visual features as parts of “a cohesively observable whole” (Sternberg 2000, 270) and the use of aesthetic and historical precedent to create human scale (Gilbert 2001).

These ideas, of course, would find purchase in Jacobs own conceptualization of good urban form. In the forward to the 1992 edition of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs likened her own work to “something analogous to the study of natural ecosystems” (Kidder 2008, 253), arguing that cities are units of organized complexity, and that to approach understanding them as if they were simple problems involving one or two variables examined in isolation only invited failure, as previous planning practice could attest. Instead, Jacobs advocated for thinking of cities as processes, unique and interrelated, but natural and observable, nonetheless: “The cities of human beings,” she wrote “are as natural, being a product of one form of nature, as are the colonies of prairie dogs or the beds of oysters” (Jacobs 1992, 444). Through these close observations she would devise her precepts for making cities livable – a mix of uses, diversity, short blocks – and over time these would take hold as a set of planning

and design principles that have come to serve almost as best practices within the field of urban design (Gilbert 2001, Sternberg 2000, Punter 1990).

This tension between ecological and modernist visions of the city, however, provides still more background for the Jacobs-Moses divide. Decades before Moses lambasted Jacobs for her broadside against his version of the future, Le Corbusier, whose Radiant City towers-in-the-park would find material – if somewhat diminished expression – in Moses’ super-block housing developments, mocked Sitte’s views on medieval design as not only “based on the past...” but “in fact WERE the past... a sentimental past... on a small and petty scale” representative of the “scatter-brained mentality of a donkey” (Le Corbusier, quoted in Lilley 1999, 435). Such polemics quickly informed conceptions of “good” and “bad” urban form for succeeding generations of urbanists (Lilley 1999), serving as useful tools in ideological arguments over how best to plan and build cities. As Lilley suggests, “What emerges from this is a complex picture in which the ideas of particular urbanists came to be misrepresented, or misunderstood, either deliberately or unintentionally, by their contemporaries” (Lilley 1999, 428), in a battle of ideas that is very much mirrored in the ongoing “gunfight” between Moses and Jacobs.

It is this duality, then, this constant push and pull of cause and effect, of influenced and influencing, that continues to inspire the periodic re-visiting and reassessments of Moses and Jacobs: a conference at Hofstra University in 1988 in celebration of the centennial of Moses’ birth; another, *Ideas that Matter*, in Toronto in 1997 that generated “a wave of renewed public interest” in Jacobs (Montgomery 1998); then, of course, their deaths – Moses in 1981, Jacobs a quarter of a century later – which

sparked further reflection on their ongoing influence on urban form. In between, occasional essays or opinion pieces in the print media, typically provoked by events or new ideas in planning and development, set off additional rounds of re-engaging these figures and their pivotal roles.

Most recently, a new wave of redevelopment activity washing over New York City and the rhetoric that surrounds it, loaded with references to both Jacobs and Moses, has rekindled interest in the pair and their ongoing influence over how best to build a successful city. In early 2007 two Columbia University historians launched a Moses rehabilitation campaign with the opening of a three-part exhibition, *Robert Moses and the Modern City*, and the publication of a companion collection of essays, *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York*, that sought to re-think Moses and his contributions from the present day. Not to be outdone, that September Jacobs' supporters gave her legacy its own shot in the arm with the opening of *Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York*, a three-month exhibit at the Municipal Art Society of New York. And in the summer of 2009 Random House, the publisher of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, published *Wrestling With Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City*, in which Anthony Flint, an author and journalist with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, recounts the "epic rivalry of Jacobs and Moses," a "thrilling David and Goliath story" of the struggle for the soul of a city" (Random House 2009). Populist in tone, the book provides a running commentary on Jacobs' role in defying Moses' plans – a significant part of the story that was conspicuously missing from Robert Caro's Pulitzer prize-winning Moses biography, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* – and serves as a rebuttal of sorts

to Ballon and Jackson's recent revisionism. Yet while Flint makes note of early "critiques of Jacobs' theories" (Flint 2009, 127), especially in relation to gentrification, and her embrace by conservative thinkers such as William Buckley and Martin Anderson, his work is less a thorough critical engagement of Jacobs' ideals or of the various interpretations of her views than a detailed biographical accounting of her involvement in three key battles in mid-century New York City planning: Moses' proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway, the fight over Washington Square Park and planned urban renewal in Greenwich Village. Flint does devote a handful of pages in the book's epilogue – pages 188-192 – to a cursory discussion of the contested nature of the Moses and Jacobs legacies, but ultimately he avoids any meaningful attempt to situate Jacobs or Moses within ongoing debates. As such *Wrestling With Moses* does little to break new ground regarding their meaning and resonance. From Flint's perspective, Jacobs has still won, and Moses still nearly wrung the life out of New York City.

But is this the full story? After nearly six decades of debate, a handful of biographies, dozens of interpretive studies and the seemingly perpetual re-examination of their "ur status" at fixed and opposing ends of the urban planning spectrum, have we fully explored and firmly settled the nature of the Moses-Jacobs divide?

While other recent works – from Ballon's and Jackson's *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York* to Flint's *Wrestling With Moses* and Alice Sparberg Alexiou's 2007 biography, *Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary* – have focused on re-arguing whose vision offers the best path to creating the successful city, this project aspires to critique the narrowness of the prevailing Jacobs vs. Moses debate by exploring an alternative take on the widely accepted notion that the two are ideological opposites. It

argues that in spite of the acrimony surrounding their many – and important – differences, at a far more fundamental level Moses and Jacobs are in complete agreement. For sure, if one is thinking of the pair in terms of urban renewal, the size and shape of city blocks, catastrophic money as opposed to gradual money, the differences might seem to make their competing notions incompatible. But when viewed from the broader framework of disciplining the city for capital accumulation and promoting middle-class values, both represent a distinctly class-based strategy for remaking the city, and it is here that they converge in contemporary New York City redevelopment politics. In devising its own vision of the city’s future, the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg has sought to bridge the divide, arguing that it is “building and rezoning today once again like Moses on an unprecedented scale but with Jane Jacobs firmly in mind...” (Burden 2006b). In this sense, while Moses’ modernism might appear to stand in stark contrast to Jacobs’ localism, when synthesized within the Bloomberg administration’s ambitious plans for redeveloping neighborhoods from Manhattan’s Far West Side to Willet’s Point in Queens both represent a call for the building and rebuilding of the city at the expense of those of lesser class privilege.

What follows is an exploration of how this can be true, and what the resulting details look like.

METHODOLOGIES AND PLAN OF THIS WORK

Just as to varying degrees Caro, Ballon and Jackson, Klemek, Flint and the Bloomberg administration have marshaled concepts and ideas – and in some sense ideology – in order to create narratives around Jacobs and Moses, the following dissertation is a narrative in its own right. As such, it is not intended to be passive; rather,

my intention is to focus a critical light on the limits of these previous works and their relation to ongoing debates. Ultimately, I argue that any meaningful solution to the problems that continue to plague cities requires an exploration of alternative forms of urbanism that do not begin or end with Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs.

In gathering the information that accounts for the basis of this argument I incorporated mixed research methods, with the main means of data collection consisting of archival research, close readings of both primary and secondary sources, interviews, and participant observation. My timeframe for research ran, roughly, from May 2007 to December 2009, a period in which the latest round of debate over Jacobs' and Moses' legacies coincided – not so coincidentally, it turns out – with the Bloomberg administration's effort to gain public approval for elements of its build-big agenda.

During this period I attended scores of lectures, panel discussions, public forums, museum exhibits, speeches, presentations, community board meetings, walking tours and community protests at which administration figures and city officials regularly engaged with community members, activists, planners, academics and developers; these observations provide much of my dissertation's primary material. Many of these events were related to redevelopment – with a particular emphasis on specific big-build proposals whose approval relied on rezoning and/or the use of eminent domain. Others focused on the recent reassessment of Moses and celebration of Jacobs. In both cases, however, my observations of these events and the debates surrounding them are part of a conscious effort to let public discourse concerning contemporary development policy and the intellectual debate over the legacies of Jacobs and Moses speak for themselves.

To further contextualize these observations and gain additional insights to the processes at play, I also conducted interviews with the organizers of Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York, scholars active in the Jacobs/Moses legacy debates, current practitioners in the fields of architecture and urban design, community members and activists, and prominent figures in New York City planning.

In order to establish and critique Jacobs' and Moses' foundational ideas, and to contextualize their contributions to debates over urban development, I focus on the evolving body of written work that strives to define the pair and their legacies. In Jacobs' case, the main source for this analysis is a close reading of her ideas as set forth in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, the book that would establish her as an urban thinker and most fully articulate her attitudes regarding urbanism. By focusing on this one book I intentionally avoid engaging Jacobs' other major works – *The Economy of Cities* (1969), *Cities and the Wealth of Nations* (1984), *Systems of Survival* (1992) and *The Nature of Economics* (2000).⁶ This decision is not intended as a critical comment on the contents of those later works. Instead, it reflects the profound and singular influence of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*; an influence none of her subsequent books would achieve, in part because they veered more toward explorations of cities as economies, not further formulations of urbanist ideals.

In regards to Moses, my analysis revolves around Caro's *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, the voluminous, Pulitzer Prize-winning biography that cast Moses as the face of urban decay in the second half of the 20th century, and the redemptive, revisionist interpretation offered by Ballon and Jackson in

⁶ In addition, Jacobs penned a biography of her great aunt titled *A School Teacher in Old Alaska*, an examination of succession in Quebec, and a final book, called *Dark Age Ahead* (2004), in which she describes what she sees as the decline of U.S. and Canadian society.

Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York. In both instances, the resulting portraits of Jacobs and Moses are augmented by the expansive, evolving body of discourse – in the form of books, journal articles, newspaper stories and magazine essays – generated by repeated revisittings.

In order to fully understand the ways in which the legacies of Jacobs and Moses have evolved over time and subsequently been deployed, I identify and examine in more detail specific moments or junctures at which the pair and their ideas figured prominently in debates over and influenced the direction of redevelopment in New York City. Chief among these are ongoing debates over urban design, including the emergence of New Urbanism and struggles over the design and eventual development of major projects that bear its mark; the ongoing evolution of New York City's planning infrastructure in general and zoning regulations in particular; and the release by the Regional Plan Association in 1996 of its Third Regional Plan, "A Region at Risk." Each of these critical junctures plays a significant role in the organization of the body of the dissertation, informing, and in certain cases framing, individual chapters.

Chapter 2, *The Patron Saint and the Git-r-Done Man*, traces the evolutionary arc of the Moses and Jacobs legacies, using secondary sources, press reports, as well as interviews and the range of commentary at public events to examine how perceptions of the pair have evolved over time. A particular emphasis of the chapter is on highlighting and problematizing the ways those legacies have been read, reinterpreted and at times mobilized in the service of specific planning ideologies, up to and including their appearance in contemporary debates over development policy in New York City.

With revisionist elements of recent scholarship serving as the basis for both positive and negative comparisons between Moses and a Bloomberg administration intent on a revival of build-big urbanism, Chapter Three, *The Bloomberg Practice*, offers a closer look at four of the mega projects that have helped define redevelopment in New York City for much of the first decade of the 21st century. Drawing from media reports and my first-hand observation of community responses to these projects, this chapter also introduces the administration's evolving campaign to win approval of specific projects and promote its overall development agenda.

Chapter Four, *Calls for a New Moses*, turns to a closer examination of that campaign, and specifically the role that Jacobs and Moses play in the administration's effort to win over public opinion. As a means of contextualizing that discussion it provides a concise history of the collapse of planning and development in New York City that followed from Jacobs' crusading response to Moses-style, top-down large-scale planning and projects.

Chapter Five further interrogates the power of narrative in planning and introduces a recurring theme in New York City planning history: the narrative of threat, which is explored in detail through a close reading of the Regional Plan Association's influential report, *A Region at Risk: The Third Regional Plan for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Area*. The chapter also explores the influence of Jacobs and Moses on *A Region at Risk*, which came to serve as an early model for neoliberal urbanism as well as the Bloomberg administration's re-development agenda.

Chapter Six, *The Armature for Development*, addresses the administration's effort to synthesize aspects of both Jacobs and Moses within its agenda, most prominently

through the aggressive rezoning of much of New York City. Once again, Jacobs and Moses played a vital role in the evolution of zoning as a tool for city planning, and that history is recounted before the chapter turns to a detailed analysis of the administration's rezoning strategy and the ways in which it is reshaping the city.

Drawing from interviews with members of the design community and statements made during public events, Chapter Seven describes the role that design, and in particular class-oriented design imperatives, combine with vestiges of Jacobs' and Moses' ideals and other aspects of the administration's agenda to enhance real-estate values and foster gentrification in the name of creating what administration officials call an aspirational city. Ultimately the chapter problematizes that approach to urban redevelopment within the context of recurring crises of global capitalism, and argues that the current financial crisis offers a valuable opportunity to interrogate the fallacies and limits, not only of the underlying logic of real-estate driven redevelopment and of the role of capital accumulation in the processes of urbanization as imagined by the Bloomberg administration, but of the relationship of the legacies of Moses and Jacobs to those processes.

Finally, Chapter Eight takes up that call to offer an original reinterpretation of Jacobs and Moses, relying on a close read of Jacobs' foundational concepts and re-counting of Moses' record as the master of modernist urbanism to make the case that the administration's invocation of the pair and their ideals is a selective usage that promotes gentrification and artificially constrains debates over redevelopment alternatives. In the end, then, this dissertation asserts that neither Jacobs nor Moses offers a comprehensive model for fashioning a more just approach to urbanism.

Chapter 2: The ‘Patron Saint’ and the ‘Git-r-done Man’

When Jane Jacobs’ died in 2006 she was widely viewed as the patron saint of urban dynamism, an irascible but venerable champion of street-level vitality and neighborhood diversity whose views “changed the way we think about livable cities” (Dreier 2006, 227). Tributes flowed in the obituaries and remembrances that followed news of her passing,⁷ and within weeks, journalist Alice Sparberg Alexiou published a glowing biography, *Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary*, while the American Sociological Association journal *City & Community* devoted a full edition to essays commemorating Jacobs’ words and work. “Now the sorrowful and celebratory obituaries have been written,” Herbert Gans wrote in that commemorative issue’s introductory essay, “and we can begin to assess her contributions to urban studies and urban policy” (Gans 2006, 213). In that assessment, contributors painted Jacobs as a passionate proponent of the “joyous urban jumble” (Halle 2006, 237); an articulate voice against slum clearance, highways and out-of-scale development; and a revolutionary thinker who “touted the role of cities as the engines of economic prosperity” (Dreier 2006, 226) and inspired a generation of activists to stand up for their communities. “[L]ike William Whyte, C. Wright Mills, Betty Friedan, and other iconoclastic authors of the time,” sociologist Sharon Zukin wrote in her contribution, “Jacobs indicted powerful elites and large-scale organizations for enforcing conformity – in her case, about principles of urban design – and stifling dissent” (Zukin 2006, 233). By the 1980s, Zukin recalled, Jacobs’ ideals about urban design and what constitutes a livable city had become “firmly rooted” and her influence on community organization was widespread. The establishment of New

⁷ See, for example, Bernstein 2006, and Martin 2006.

York's democratically inclined if politically constrained community boards, for instance, "testifies to the strength of her vision" (Zukin 2006, 223).

Yet at the time of Jacobs' death, that vision appeared to be under attack by a new wave of mega-projects that once again aimed to transform New York City on an enormous scale. From a failed plan to win the 2012 Summer Olympic Games and the proposed \$4.4 billion redevelopment of Brooklyn's Atlantic Yards, with its controversial use of eminent domain to make room for luxury condominiums, affordable housing, office towers and a \$1 billion dollar basketball arena designed by noted architect Frank Gehry, to an aggressive agenda for rezoning neighborhoods across all five boroughs and an ambitious, ever-expanding and evolving proposal to transform midtown Manhattan's Far West Side into the city's "newest central business district," the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg had embarked on a massive city makeover that harkened back to an earlier era. By the summer of 2009, more than 94 rezonings covering 8,000 city blocks had cleared the City Council, with 15 more on the docket. Among the more prominent projects remaining on the administration's agenda: the planned development of an East River Science Park as "the flagship" of the city's effort to become a biotech hub (Pinsky 2008); in Queens, the redevelopment of the industrial neighborhood of Willet's Point from a "toxic wasteland to a green and renewable neighborhood" and Hunter's Point, with 10 acres of open space, \$92 million in housing subsidies and 5,000 new units of housing – 60-percent of which would be affordable to middle-income residents; the 75-acre rezoning of Coney Island in Brooklyn; and in the Bronx the rezoning and redevelopment of Hunt's Point along the East River (Pinsky 2008). Central to a number of the proposed projects – including Atlantic Yards, Willets Point and a

proposed expansion of Columbia University – was the specter of the powers of eminent domain being invoked to clear the way for redevelopment.

That this re-birth of citywide urban engineering coincided so closely with Jacobs’s passing was surely coincidence. But that it happened at all clearly invited, if not required, a critical assessment of past planning practice in New York City, and within a year major retrospectives promising to re-examine the legacies of Jacobs and her long-time nemesis, the modernist Robert Moses, were underway. As the writer Paul Goldberger noted in *The New Yorker*, “[T]he notion of Moses as the evil genius of mid-twentieth-century urban design got a boost spring in obituaries of and tributes to Jane Jacobs, a longtime antagonist” (Goldberger 2007a).

REHABILITATING ROBERT MOSES

For the better part of 40 years, the prevailing view of Moses had been that crafted by Robert Caro in his epic, Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. By Caro’s account Moses was imperious, exacting, demanding, and for 34 years – spanning the administrations of six governors and five mayors – he “shaped a city and its sprawling suburbs and influenced the destiny of all the cities of twentieth-century America” (Caro 1975, 5). The degree to which Moses transformed the city and the metropolitan region is legion. Among his works, all catalogued by Caro, are roads – from Harlem River Drive and the West Side Highway to miles of parkways and all of the region’s major expressways – and the seven bridges that knit the city’s five boroughs into an auto-oriented metropolis, as well as buildings (1,082 containing 148,000 units of public housing and the private housing developments of Stuyvesant Town, Peter Cooper Village and Co-op City), and the 658 parks, more than a

dozen beaches and the string of cultural, educational and political institutions – from the United Nations and Lincoln Center to Shea Stadium and campuses for Long Island, Fordham and Pratt universities – that helped solidify New York City’s status as a world-class cultural and commercial capitol.

Of course the story of Moses as told by Caro is very much a two-sided tale. On the one side, there was “America’s greatest builder,” the “shaper of the greatest city in the world” (Caro 1975, 19). On the other stood a power-hungry apostle of modernity who “to build his highways...threw out of their homes...more people than lived in Albany or Chattanooga, or Spokane, Tacoma, Duluth, Akron, Baton Rouge, Mobile, Nashville or Sacramento” (Caro 1975, 19); who “flooded the city with cars,” starved public transportation, and skewed “city expenditures toward revenue-producing services” at the expense of programs for the poor (Caro 1975, 20).

Thanks in no small part to this withering portrayal, for the better part of 50 years Moses had been regarded in the collective public imagination as the embodiment of the rhythms of capital as it restlessly remade the New York City landscape, ripping out the old to make way for the new in a process that Schumpeter had recognized – and others would further refine – as capitalism’s compulsion toward creative destruction. In the essay, “Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination,” geographer David Harvey reflects on how the civic planner Baron Haussmann sought to transform mid-19th century Paris into a cleaner, safer and more easily controlled city by imposing “an entirely new conception of space into the fabric of the city” (Harvey 1990, 426). Driven – much like Moses would be a century later – to re-engineer the city through a frenzy of construction that turned narrow streets into wide boulevards,

reshaped existing parks and erected new monumental public buildings, Haussmann pursued his plans with single-minded resolve, destroying much of the city's medieval character and uprooting its working class. To Harvey such projects can be seen as the inevitable hallmarks of capitalist expansion, or more precisely as the temporal and spatial upheavals that entail "...not only the destruction of ways of life and social practices built around preceding time-space systems, but the 'creative destruction' of a wide range of physical assets embedded in the landscape" (Harvey 1990, 425). Indeed, within the inexorable advance of capitalist accumulation "[W]hole landscapes have had to be destroyed in order to make way for the creation of the new" (Harvey 1990, 426). More recently, efforts such as urban renewal and regeneration have assumed major roles in the process as developers and financial institutions have fought for the means "to recolonize" what they have viewed as declining but still strategic city centers (Harvey 1990, 421).

To be sure, Moses' legacy was fashioned on its bearer's ability to creatively destroy at a spectacular scale, prompting some to liken him with his predecessor in Paris (Jackson 2007, King 2007, Harvey 1989). Clearly, Moses saw much in Haussmann that he admired – "...Haussmann's great merit lay in the fact that he was both able and willing to grasp the entire problem" (Moses 1942, 58) – and he found inspiration there for his own approach to modernizing the city and financing his schemes. As a particularly effective practitioner of the modernist project, Moses viewed the past as an impediment, its outdated buildings and insufficient infrastructure a physical weight trapping the city in time, the anchor of "a history to be transcended" through progress (Scott 2003, 131). And like Haussmann, Moses possessed the political skills and imperturbable resolve to bend the city to his singular vision of the future. From this vantage, "the certainty of a better

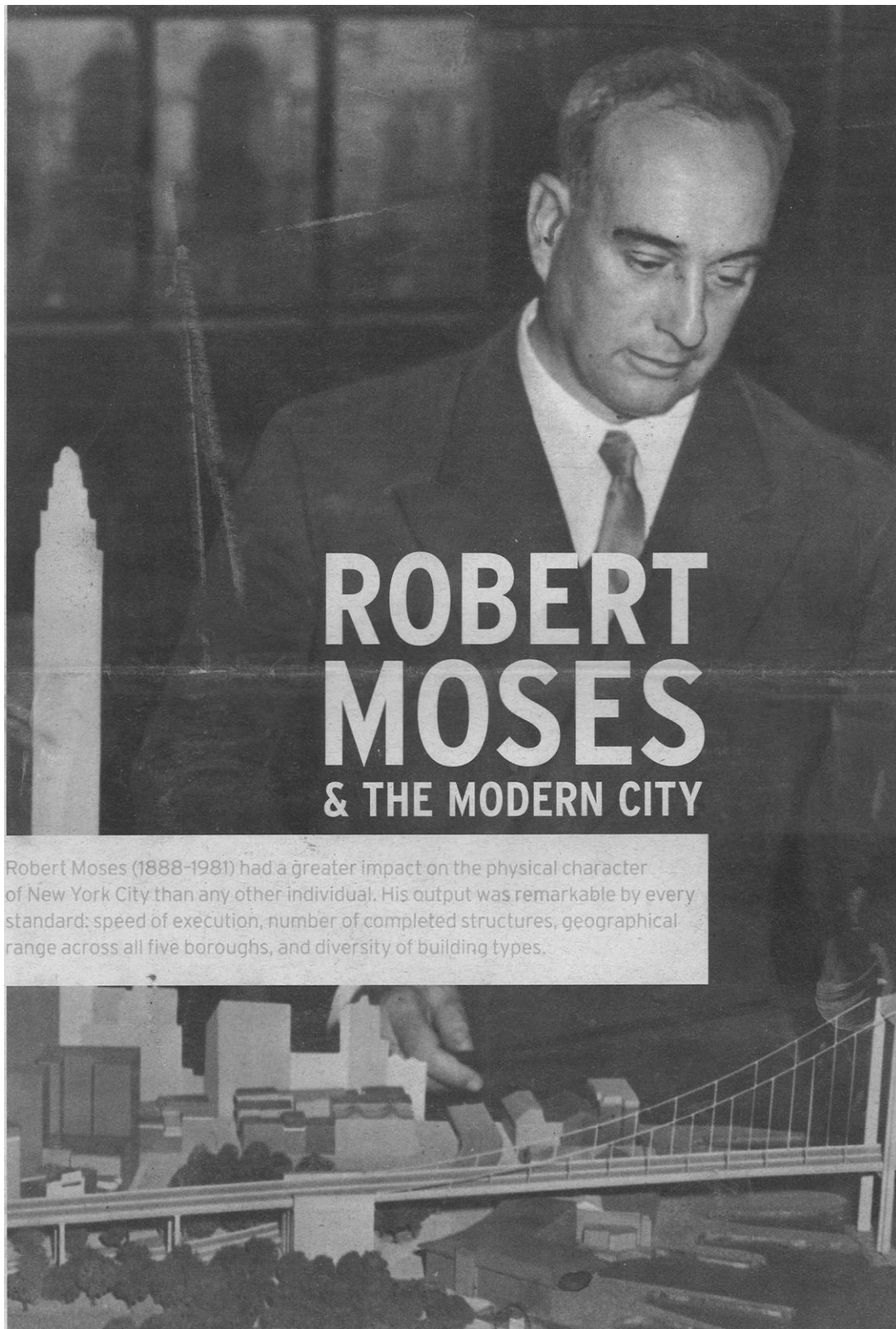
future” justified the wholesale demolition of the historical city and the imposition through sheer force of will “the many short-term sacrifices required to get there” (Scott 2003, 131). To oppose Moses and the particular vision of the future to which he subscribed was “... to oppose history, progress, modernity itself” (Berman 1982, 294).

The irony, of course, is that the bearer of this legacy eventually imploded, unable to withstand the sustained fits of megalomania that made his downfall, captured by Caro in such dramatic detail, perhaps his most singularly spectacular destructive act. The telling of that story not only won Caro the Pulitzer Prize, but for the next three decades it cemented Moses’ reputation by making his name “synonymous with ugly and brutal city planning” (Kennicott 2007).

Yet, just nine months after Jacobs’ death, three concurrent exhibits promising “a fresh look” at Moses’ legacy opened in New York City (Pogrebin 2007).⁸ Together with a companion collection of essays, *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York*, the exhibits explored, in the words of their promoters, “the controversial vision of this important force in planning and development and consider[ed] his legacy in the context of urban issues of his time” (Museum of the City of New York 2007).

Actually, the exhibits, conceived and curated by then-Columbia University architectural historian Hilary Ballon, and the companion book, which was edited by Ballon and her Columbia University colleague, history professor Kenneth Jackson, did far more than resurrect Moses in the 21st century; they cast in relief the contested way in which we recall the past and contend with its spatial consequences. The exhibits featured previously

⁸ “Remaking the Metropolis,” which opened at the Museum of the City of New York on February 2, 2007, focused on Moses’ roads, major buildings, monuments and parks. “The Road to Recreation,” which opened February 4, 2007, at the Queens Museum of Art, documented his expansion of roads and recreation in the 1930s. “Slum Clearance and the Superblock Solution,” which opened on January 31, 2007, at Columbia University’s Wallach Art Gallery, featured Moses’ 1950s urban renewal program.



Robert Moses (1888-1981) had a greater impact on the physical character of New York City than any other individual. His output was remarkable by every standard: speed of execution, number of completed structures, geographical range across all five boroughs, and diversity of building types.

Figure 1. Cover of a brochure explaining the three-part exhibit, Robert Moses & the Modern City (Source: Museum of the City of New York).

unpublished renderings and archival and contemporary photographs and models, each beautiful in the abstract. In the sketches that accompanied one of the exhibits, “Remaking the Metropolis,” for instance, sleek, stylized cars whizzed down futuristic highways embedded within buildings, unperturbed by the productive intensity of the city, and vice versa. They and their inhabitants sped along an endless landscape of modernity carried forward by the transformative powers of the mobile age. Aerial images show projected highway arteries superimposed on the cityscape so as to make the requisite erasure of existing buildings, parks, streets and human beings walking along them seem a foregone – and to some certainly terrifying – conclusion.⁹ Of course what was missing from this designers’ view of Moses’ dream city – and to a large extent from the exhibits themselves – were the people whose homes and businesses were to be wiped out by these fantastic schemes. Indeed, this shoving aside of the era’s destructive consequences appeared to be the point, for just as Moses’ modernist project not only scrubbed the city of its blighted neighborhoods but obliterated the accumulated history of their “pre-modern” traditions and sensibilities (Berman 1982), Ballon’s and Jackson’s revisionism relied on a parallel creative representational destruction: the privileging of the present at the expense of the past and the erasure of the intervening years in which, by Caro’s, Berman’s and Harvey’s accounting, Moses’ works forcefully imposed a new and very particular future onto New York City’s landscape and its people. While Caro argued for a good Moses, bad Moses and focused his descriptive powers on what – from the midst of the urban crisis of the 1970s – could surely be depicted as modernist planning’s catastrophic contribution to the decline of cities, Ballon and Jackson countered that the passage of time provides a different perspective. At the time Caro wrote, in 1974, “New York City was in

⁹ See for instance Berman 1982.

shambles,” Ballon told alumni of the Masters of Urban Planning program within New York University’s Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service at a lecture in February of 2008. But, she added, when Moses was amassing his extraordinary powers in the 1930s and using them to reshape New York City over the course of the next three decades, “cities were endangered places,” threatened by the gravitational pull of an emergent suburban nation. The publishing of *Robert Moses and the Modern City* and the conception of its offshoot exhibitions, Ballon asserted, were intended to “reprise the revisionist arguments” – originally made two decades earlier by Jackson and others at Robert Moses: Single Minded Genius, a Hofstra University conference coinciding with the centennial anniversary of Moses’ birth¹⁰ – in order to address the “imbalance” created by *The Power Broker* and to “historicize” the moment within which Moses operated (Ballon 2008).

Writing in the introduction to *Robert Moses and the Modern City*, Ballon and Jackson point out that public opinion of Moses has swung dramatically over the years, from admiration for his use in the 1930s of federal funds to build “indispensable” public works and renew the city’s parks, to disdain engendered by the “physical destruction and social displacement” visited on postwar New York City by urban renewal, public housing and the construction of the Interstate Highway System (Ballon and Jackson 2007, 65). Caro, Ballon claimed, was guilty of fostering much of that disdain by making “causal connection” between Moses’ projects and the city’s steady decline from immediate post-

¹⁰ Moses’s achievements, Jackson declared at the time, are best put in perspective when measured against New York City circa 1988: “Since Moses lost power in 1968, New York City has built no new bridges, no new highways, virtually no new public housing projects, no new performing arts centers, and no new beaches. Its parks have deteriorated, and its infrastructure is crumbling. The sewage treatment plant on the west side of Manhattan, which was under construction when I moved to New York in 1968, is still unfinished, twenty years and a billion dollars later. Similarly, the Second Avenue sub way and the third water tunnel threaten to drag into the next century” (Jackson 1989, 30).

war period through the mid-1980s, and her goal, she explained, was to respond to elements of the Moses legacy that were left out or “underrepresented” in *The Power Broker* (Pogrebin 2007). From the first decade of the 21st century, the Ballon and Jackson argument goes, Moses’ projects “have been absorbed into the fabric of the city,” and some of the urban problems he recognized – like “the vulnerable stake of the middle class” – and many of the strategies he adopted for ameliorating them – including “the potential of art centers and universities to serve as engines of redevelopment” – remain current in projects such as Columbia University’s proposed construction of a new research campus in West Harlem (Ballon 2007, 94). Having acknowledged the existence of Moses’ “errant ways” (Ballon 2007, 94) and his “gross abuse of power” (Ballon 2007, 95), Ballon contended that Moses was far from an omnipotent autocrat, but rather an alert opportunist in tune with the times, and that his projects were “aligned with national policy” and “a manifestation of public policies.” He was, for instance, the “first mover” on federal Title 1 legislation, which he shaped to “reinforce the role of” New York City’s “central city” and keep it “the thriving center of a spreading metropolitan region...” (Ballon 2007, 106). His was a three-part vision, as described by Ballon at the Gotham Center forum and her meeting with NYU alums, as well as in her contribution to *Robert Moses and the Modern City*:

Objective one was to recapture the middle class, which had chosen the suburb over the city, by building modern, affordable housing. Objective two was to establish New York as a center of higher education by making land available for university expansion. Objective three was to elevate the national and international stature of New York with magnetic world-class institutions (Ballon 2007, 106)

Contrary to Jacobs' localized focus on the neighborhood, Ballon maintained, Moses "thought about the city in relation to the region, the nation and world," and with his legendary single-mindedness he set out to define "a mission for New York in the post-industrial age" (Ballon 2008). In all of this, Ballon and Jackson – echoing arguments Jackson first made in 1988 – maintain that Moses marshaled federal policy to "shape the processes of the market through planning" (Ballon 2007, 96), with the ultimate goal to "modernize the metropolis and keep it strong..." (Ballon and Jackson 2007, 66).

In this sense, the revisionist reading moves from merely rehabilitative to redemptive: Moses would have been ahead of his time, reading broader trends in the evolution of postwar capitalism to anticipate what city officials and planners today see as the perquisites for urban health, the "capacity to project to the world beyond that New York is a city offering opportunities for great financial *and* cultural reward" (Wells 2007). Whatever his faults, then, this reasoning goes, Moses was ultimately and selflessly devoted to the public good, concerned only with positioning the city for a prosperous future. "Had the city not undertaken a massive program of public works between 1924 and 1970," Jackson wrote in *Robert Moses and the Rise of New York*, his provocatively titled contribution to *Robert Moses and the Modern City*, "... had it not built an arterial highway system, and had it not relocated 200,000 people from old-law tenements to new public housing projects, New York would not have been able to claim in the 1990s that it was the capital of the twentieth century, the capital of capitalism, and the capital of the world" (Jackson 2007, 68).

Since the 1980s, Ballon and Jackson suggest, Moses' reputation has been on the mend, "propelled" toward the positive by the sense that New York City is no longer

capable of executing the types of ambitious projects required to maintain its elite status in the world because of “a multilayered process of citizen and government review” (Ballon and Jackson 2007, 65). The turning point, they claim, came with “the defeat” in 1985 “after 14 years of debate and litigation” of Westway, a \$2.1-billion federally funded scheme originally proposed by Moses to submerge New York City’s West Side Highway and build a park in its place. More than any other event, they suggest, an unrealized Westway symbolized New York City’s physical paralysis.

REVISITING JANE JACOBS

In the fall of 2007, a little over nine months after the Moses retrospective sought to recast the Power Broker in the public’s eyes, riders on a number of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s New York City buses were encouraged to “Look outside” by advertisements for *Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York*, a three-month exhibit opening that September at the Municipal Art Society of New York. “The City is changing fast,” the ads observed. “Is it moving in the right direction? Use your Metrocard to find out how a legendary activist changed New York in the 1960s and how you can shape the city today.”

The exhibit, as the show’s literature explained, was designed to “inspire citizens to support and fight for the health of their own neighborhoods,” and to encourage “city officials, developers, planners and architects to embrace and implement Jane Jacobs’ teachings” (Municipal Art Society 2007a). But beneath its seemingly coherent, focused message, the exhibit was the product of a behind-the-scenes tug of war between three vital forces in contemporary efforts to come to terms with Jacobs’ legacy. Each, as it turns out, had its own ideas about Jacobs’ lasting relevance and, as a result, the most

Can One Person Change The City?



Jane Jacobs's Principles

Jacobs observed four key qualities of healthy, vibrant cities: mixed uses, frequent streets, varied buildings, and concentration.

For a street to thrive, Jacobs argued, there must be a mix of uses. "Intricate minglings of different uses in cities are not a form of chaos," she wrote. "On the contrary, they represent a complex and highly developed form of order." When offices exist alongside residences, shops, and restaurants, a neighborhood is active throughout the day and night. This ongoing activity creates safer streets, offers opportunities for businesses to take hold, and provides residents with necessary services.

"The advantages of short blocks are simple," Jacobs noted. Walkers in such neighborhoods frequently encounter corners, each offering an opportunity to follow an alternate path. These options create more places for commerce and for encountering neighbors, and thus contribute to the social and economic life of a neighborhood.

Jacobs articulated her observation that varied buildings could foster diversity in a simple aphorism: "New ideas often need old buildings." Older buildings, she maintained, made it possible for neighborhoods to support a variety of uses. A mix of old and new buildings allowed small businesses to coexist with larger ones and populated a neighborhood with people of different incomes.

Jacobs also argued that concentrations of people make neighborhoods safer and allow them to support a greater range of services and uses. "The presence of great numbers of people gathered together in cities should not only be frankly accepted as a physical fact. It follows that they should also be enjoyed as an asset and their presence celebrated."

JANE JACOBS AND THE FUTURE OF NEW YORK

A PROJECT OF THE MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY

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THE MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Kent Barwick, President

Jean Tatge, Chief Operating Officer

The Municipal Art Society of New York is a private, non-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote a more livable city. Since 1893, the MAS has been a pioneer in enriching the culture, neighborhoods, and physical design of New York City. It advocates for excellence in urban design and planning, contemporary architecture, historic preservation, and public art. Visit us at www.mas.org.

Photo credits: Top: Frank Lennan/Toronto Star. Bottom left: Courtesy of the Jane Jacobs Papers, John J. Burns Library, Boston College. Bottom center: Courtesy of NAG.

Figure 2: Detail from promotional flyers for the Municipal Art Society Exhibit, Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York (Source: Municipal Art Society).

appropriate direction for the exhibition to take.

Even before the Moses retrospective kick-started efforts to rehabilitate the Power Broker, Jacobs' original benefactor, the Rockefeller Foundation, had begun planning a commemorative exhibit that would celebrate its own affiliation with her works and ideals.¹¹ The show's curator, Christopher Klemek, a professor of history at George Washington University who has written extensively about Jacobs, however, was interested in his own "scholarly, critical mission" of continuing to understand Jacobs and

¹¹ In 1958 Jacobs received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation for the research and writing of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In February 2007 the Foundation announced the creation of the Jane Jacobs Medal, an annual prize "to recognize visionary work in building a more diverse, dynamic and equitable city through creative uses of the urban environment." The award honors individuals "whose accomplishments represent Jacobsean principles and practices in action in New York City" (Rockefeller Foundation n.d.).

her ever-evolving relationship with historical context (Klemek 2008a).¹² Meanwhile, MAS, as an urban advocacy organization and the exhibit's host and chief sponsor, hoped to emphasize Jacobs' enduring impact on community organizing and urban form. The organization came late to the event, according to Kent Barwick, who twice served as MAS's president before retiring in late 2008, entering into the planning just nine months before the exhibit was set to open. That late start prompted what Barwick deems a "crash-course submersion" in Jacobs, her accomplishments and her legacy, and led to the question: "How would Jane Jacobs react to what is going on today?" (Barwick 2008). "What became clear," Barwick says, "was that Jane would say 'Well, what do *you* think?'"

According to Klemek, these three forces worked "in tension" to create "an open text, a conversation" that encouraged the exhibit's viewers to consider a number of implicit and explicit arguments about Jacobs, her life's work and its impact on New York City (Klemek 2008a). With contemporary and controversial projects like the redevelopment of Atlantic Yards and Columbia University's proposed expansion serving as a backdrop, the exhibit also sought to reinvigorate Jacobs' relevance at a time when "the cards seem stacked against the individual in the neighborhood, through the use of eminent domain, for instance" (Barwick 2008). As a result, the exhibition was conceived as two distinct but complementary halves of a whole. Literally split into two rooms, it celebrated Jacobs' lasting influence on contemporary community organizing in one, while highlighting her four foundational tenants of healthy neighborhoods in the other.

In the first room, photographs and text illustrated how Jacobs's ideas have served as inspiration for neighborhood organizations in "continuing to develop cutting edge

¹² See, for example, Klemek 2008b and Klemek 2007.

tools to effect positive change and greater public participation,” (Municipal Art Society 2007a) or what Barwick calls a focus on the Jacobsean notion of giving “people confidence to make their own judgments about the world they live in... empowering a new generation to shape their own environment, not drawing directly from Jane Jacobs, necessarily, but from a tradition from Jacobs to Holly Whyte of getting people to stop and look” (Barwick 2008).¹³ One section of the room detailed the “human-scale” planning and grassroots organizing that helped Jacobs and her neighbors, in 1961, defeat proposals to urban renew a 14-block portion of Greenwich Village.¹⁴ Another section of the first room of the MAS exhibit celebrated examples of Jacobs’s contemporary ideological offspring, including Nos Quedamos, a grassroots planning group which successfully spearheaded community opposition to a redevelopment plan for Melrose Commons in the Bronx. “Today her example inspires new generations of activists,” the exhibit’s text declared, and *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* serves “as a bible for nascent grassroots movements to preserve and rehabilitate traditional urban neighborhoods” (Municipal Art Society 2007a). “We wanted to show through example how citizens could change the outcome, that if you saw what happened at Melrose Commons, you would not

¹³ Whyte, whose given name was William, is an urbanist, sociologist and one-time editor of *Fortune* magazine who commissioned Jacobs to write an article for the Fortune series, “The Exploding Metropolis” in 1958, based on her work for the *Architectural Forum*. That article would catch the attention of the Rockefeller Foundation and ultimately result in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

¹⁴ 1961 was also the year Jacobs’ foundational work, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*, was published. In February of that year, New York City’s Housing and Redevelopment Board (HRB) sought a \$300,000 planning grant in order to study the potential for urban renewal in Greenwich Village. The request was the outgrowth of meetings between the HRB, New York University and two neighborhood community organizations – the Greenwich Village Association and the Middle-Income Co-operators of Greenwich Village – which were promoting the need for low- and middle-class housing. But the funding request was made public two days before it was to be voted upon, and residents, fearing “that an Urban Renewal study will inevitably lead to a destructive Urban Renewal project” (Rich n.d., 5), formed the Committee to Save the West Village, which operated out of Jacobs’ house and employed a range of tactics – from 12-hour filibuster sessions at public hearings and attracting local and national media coverage to on one occasion Jacobs’ shredding meeting minutes to render the session invalid – to force withdrawal of the request for funds nine months later in October. The West Village Committee then developed its own urban renewal plan, using funds from the Mitchell-Lama Act, for the construction of the West Village Houses, 475 units of affordable housing in five-story buildings built on six vacant lots. Drawn up in 1962, the plan was approved in 1969 and the first tenants took up residence in 1974. Their stay was brief, however. Just one year after opening, the development was forced into foreclosure by “market pressures,” and today the units are privately held cooperative apartments. See also Flint 2009.

shrink from trying,” Barwick explained. “For MAS that was the goal: to give the visitor the sense that their impressions are as valid as any expert’s” (Barwick 2008).

The exhibition’s second room offered a different if complementary outlook on Jacobs influence, focusing on the four principles of urban design – varied building ages, frequent streets, concentration and mixed uses – that made *Death and Life* an instant classic. “Jacobs’s observations,” the exhibit declared, “and her willingness to act on them – remain critical to New York today as it is being reshaped by a private-development boom and, soon enough, by the goals outlined in the city’s current plan for the future, PlaNYC 2030” (Municipal Art Society 2007a).¹⁵

From Klemek’s perspective, the exhibition also served to some degree as a response to the revisionist readings of Moses that had dominated discussions of the pair following the publication of *Robert Moses and the Modern City* and its companion exhibitions the previous spring. While Klemek readily agrees with Ballon’s and Jackson’s notion that a more nuanced reading of Moses is necessary to counterbalance what could be referred to as Caro’s “sensationalized” treatment in *The Power Broker*, he contends that many of the efforts aimed at rehabilitating Moses too often come in relation to – if not at the expense of – Jacobs. In effect, Klemek argues, they serve to solidify the notion that if Moses was right on some issue or topic, Jacobs had to be wrong.

Such reductionist dualisms, Klemek warns, threaten to over-emphasize and inflate aspects of both figures’ thinking beyond recognition, while downplaying others. In Jacobs’ case, he contends, they have been used to paint her as, among other things, “the

¹⁵ PlaNYC 2030 is the first comprehensive master plan proposed for New York City since 1969. Based on department of City Planning projections that show the city’s population swelling by more than one million by the year 2030, the plan calls for a range of land-use initiatives, including the construction of 265,000 new housing units and vastly expanding the city’s open-space network. It was announced, symbolically, on Earth Day, April 22, 2007.

prophet of NIMBYISM” or an anti-government elitist. For instance, in his unfinished contribution to *Robert Moses and the Modern City*, contributor Joel Schwartz asks “[w]as Jane Jacobs a heroine or did she merely give an eloquent voice to Greenwich Village chauvinism, bolstered by reform Democratic politics, which combined into a selfish NIMBYism?” (Schwartz 2007, 133).¹⁶ Jacobs’s interest in diversity, Schwartz contends, had little to do with economic growth or the creation of jobs, but rather the construction of:

...a varied ‘ambience’ – a carnival atmosphere in the West Village, an array of delights and attractions for the flâneur, the casual observer, and the middleclass café idler. Note that she applauded changes from factories to services and residences, never the reverse...She supported blue-collar jobs only when they sustained the ambience of middle-class residential neighborhoods (Schwartz 2007, 132-133).

Schwartz goes on to cast Jacobs as naïve, of promoting a “blithe...bootstrap improvement of incomes without an incomes policy,” while Moses understood that policy “must be the handmaiden to economic development...” (Schwartz 2007, 133).

REINTERPRETING – OR MISREADING? – RECENT URBAN HISTORY

Yet are such connections necessarily revisionist, and one-dimensional oversimplifications? Is any rehabilitation of Robert Moses intimately linked to a critical reappraisal of Jacobs? Does it require one? Such questions, and the range of answers they inspire, expose the complicated nature of the Jacobs/Moses dialectic. For example, at the Gotham Center forum, which was held six months after Jacobs died but before the Moses retrospective opened, Ballon argued that while Moses believed in a decisive role for government in guiding urban development – an argument that can easily stand on its

¹⁶ As noted in Jackson’s introduction to his essay, Schwartz died before completing the piece but the unfinished draft was included “as a tribute to his scholarship on Robert Moses...” (Ballon and Jackson 2007, 130).

merits – she then took aim at Jacobs, noting that in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* “government was seen as more likely to harm the community than advance it” (Ballon 2006). That notion of a pro-government Moses set in opposition to an anti-interventionist Jacobs, delivered by Ballon as the forum’s lead-off speaker, served as a flashpoint and set the stage for a one of the more engrossing subplots of the conversation that followed. Two speakers later, Brad Lander, director of the Pratt Center, picked up on the theme of the planning and the government’s role in the process. Lander suggested that early on, Jacobs’ critique of state planning in the Moses style was understood as being “against planning all together” (Lander 2006). But by the late 1970s and 1980s her ideals had evolved from broad prerequisites – like short blocks and mixed uses – for generating diversity into detailed sets of design precepts for fostering “successful” neighborhood development. In New York City’s Battery Park City, for example, the architects Alexander Cooper and Stanton Eckstut drew inspiration from Jacobs in devising a series of guidelines dictating the use of specific materials and architectural styles that could be found in the city’s grand historic neighborhoods (Cooper 2009, Morrone 2008). On a broader scale, the concept of New Urbanism, with its “new generation of land regulations,” drew directly from Jacobs’ “intellectual legacy” to establish “vitality (and the urban texture that generates it) as a pervasive consideration in urban design” (Sternberg 2000, 273). Jacobs the anti-planner, Lander noted at the forum, had emerged as the “patron saint” of urban design. Yet at the same time Jacobs’ ideals also had begun to be used to “give intellectual, moral and aesthetic cover to right-wing efforts” (Rich n.d.) “to drown the state in a bathtub” (Lander 2006) by attacking planning as a means of government regulation. To drive the point home, Lander cited conservative

scholar Martin Anderson's take on Jacobs in his critique of urban renewal, *The Federal Bulldozer*, as well as the rhetoric and policies of conservative groups and figures from Ronald Reagan to the Institute for Justice, the Castle Coalition and Americans for Limited Government.¹⁷

Lander, like Klemek, rejects the suggestion that Jacobs was anti-interventionist, arguing instead that such a read represents a selective and willful misuse of Jacobs' ideals. Indeed, as Jackson's and Ballon's revisionism focused renewed attention not only on Moses, but on Jacobs as well, the emerging debate over Moses and Jacobs and their legacies increasingly hinged on conflicting and often competing interpretations of who those figures were and what they ultimately represented, generating a further round of essays and events – including a March 2007 panel discussion at the Museum of the City of New York entitled *Interpreting and Misinterpreting Jane Jacobs: New York and Beyond*. There, Michael Sorkin, director of the Urban Design Program at the City College of New York, argued that Jacobs is often misread because of a tendency to focus on one aspect of her thinking rather than the interdependent ideals as captured by the MAS exhibit – to “divorce Jane Jacobs the activist from Jane Jacobs the gifted observer of urban morphologies” (Sorkin, quoted in Haley 2007).

Lander went on to cite an unpublished essay, “Big Plans & Little People, or Who Has the Keys to the Federal Bulldozer,” in which Damon Rich, a planner for the city of

¹⁷ For example, writing in *City Journal*, the quarterly journal of the conservative Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, in 1994, Howard Husock argued that Jacobs' opposition to urban renewal was based on economics, not design or planning. Her objection to the construction of public housing in East Harlem in the 1950s, Husock insisted, had as much and perhaps more to do with the use of public funds – some \$300 million – as with the displacement of 1,300 Puerto Rican businesses and the residents they served. “Jacobs still has much to offer us, but not what is commonly assumed. Though culturally associated with the Left, Jacobs dared to follow the logic of her own observation in ways that lead her to oppose much that the Left stands for. The real Jane Jacobs not only enjoys busy city blocks, but deplores high levels of welfare spending that inhibit urban economies. The real Jane Jacobs not only enjoys the great variety of small businesses which cities offer, but questions the public operation of services such as transit that preempt the formation of private competitors” (Husock 1994, 111).

Newark, New Jersey, and the founder of the Center for Urban Pedagogy, examined the role public narratives played in forming and transforming public debates over urban renewal, with a particular emphasis on Jacobs and her efforts to defeat the proposed urban renewal of her neighborhood. This battle, as Rich points out, was not a showdown between Jacobs and Moses, who by that time was no longer a member of the Committee on Slum Clearance. But decades later, it would be cast as just that in the award-winning 2001 television documentary series *New York: A Documentary Film*, produced by Ric Burns. The segment of the film that deals with the Jacobs/Moses rivalry – Episode 7: The City and the World - begins by documenting the early battle between the pair over Moses' intentions to ram an expressway across lower Manhattan (a project that came to be known as LOMEX). But it soon expands across the city and takes on an almost mythic tone, establishing Jacobs as a saint come to stand up against the “inhuman, abstract, ugly icons of architectural modernism” for which Moses is easily made the poster boy (Rich n.d., 15). In the end, of course, Moses is vanquished, done in by Jacobs' “endurance, wit and kooky grace” (Rich n.d., 15). But, as Rich asks, “[W]hat marks her victory?” The answer: Legislation, signed by Mayor Robert Wagner on April 9, 1965, establishing the Landmarks Preservation Commission. “The struggle that began against the unjust Lower Manhattan Expressway and the destruction of neighborhoods concludes with institutionalized protection” – that is “clearly focused on the domain of the affluent and the aesthetically inclined” (Rich n.d., 16) – “for buildings and neighborhoods that are deemed historically or architecturally significant,” Rich writes (Rich n.d., 15). To Rich, the Burns documentary can be seen as a widely viewed and influential example of the “mainstreaming of recent urban history,” a flawed product of a legacy-building industry

whose message hinges on a “misrepresentation” that “enables Burns’s narrative device... the old-fashioned showdown between Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses” (Rich n.d., 14-15).¹⁸ That device can be traced to Caro’s damning accounts in *The Power Broker*, and the degree to which Moses’ name over time has become so synonymous with large-scale public housing projects promulgated under the urban renewal banner that history easily can be obscured, almost as if it does not really matter if Moses had been involved in the urban renewal of the West Village or the bulldozing of a neighborhood for the construction of any particular public housing project or not. Those projects bear the unmistakable imprint of Moses’ earlier actions and ideology and therefore he might as well be held accountable. Indeed, the device is a central element of Anthony Flint’s 2009 accounting of Jacobs’ rivalry with the Power Broker, *Wrestling With Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took On New York’s Master Builder and Transformed the American City*. While Flint acknowledges that in 1961 Moses was no longer in a position to directly command the Committee for Slum Clearance bulldozers, he asserts that Moses must have lobbied for urban renewal in Jacobs’ neighborhood as an act of revenge (Flint, 2009).

Rich and others have argued that in addition to launching a populist revolution, Jacobs’ ideals have been co-opted by mainstream forces within planning and development to promote large-scale redevelopment efforts she most certainly would have abhorred. By “mainstreaming” her terminology and popularizing her vocabulary, planners, developers and real estate interests have reworked her invocation of words like “vibrant,” “human-scale,” and “livable” to promote and market “large, top-down projects” (Shiffman 2007). Over time her core conception of diversity has become

¹⁸ In the introduction to *Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary*, Sparberg Alexiou credits the Burns’ documentary for providing the “germ” for her project (Sparberg Alexiou 2006, ix).

planning's "moral watchword" (Kidder 2008, 260), and the principle of "mixed-use" is no longer "a sharp-eyed writer's observation of what underlies a strong, organic urban fabric but a developer's mantra" (Goldberger, 2007b). Sociologist David Halle meanwhile, writing in the commemorative issue of *City and Community*, argues that some critics have turned Jacobs "into a conservative opponent of modern architecture" (Halle 2006, 237), a devotee of the quaint and the small-scale whose vision "had now become dominant to the detriment of good urban planning" (Ouroussoff, 2006a).

As a result, as Klemek suggests, Jacobs and Moses largely have been reduced to "characterizations," or more accurately, stand-ins for battles over big vs. small, public vs. private, the individual vs. the state, competing notions of the "public good" and any number of good vs. bad dualisms.

MOBILIZING THE LEGACY MACHINE

Barwick, like Klemek, sees shortcomings in such easy dichotomizing. "I thought the great trap was in them being seen as opposite poles," he says, "They probably agreed on a great many things. Both were certainly for a certain kind of development. Nevertheless, they became surrogates for points of view, monochromatic characters" (Barwick 2008). To Barwick, Jacobs' true legacy is less tied to Moses and – while still centered on her principles of urban design and community organization – much more expansive, spiraling outward as time passes and the city evolves to encompass the wide range of topics for programs that MAS sponsors, from "Livable Neighborhood" training workshops "designed to help communities plan for equitable and sustainable change" (Municipal Art Society n.d. a) to walking tours of New York City neighborhoods, funded by a Rockefeller Foundation grant, that are "designed to encourage New Yorkers to learn

from Jane Jacobs's examples of careful observation and civic involvement" and public programs "aimed at fostering dialogue and advocacy" (Municipal Art Society n.d. b).

And Moses?

As noted earlier, with Jacobs' death – and the outpouring of remembrances, accolades and calls for renewed attention to her ideals – came compelling reasons to revisit her old antagonist as well, and with the Moses exhibit and Ballon's and Jackson's book serving as the spark, journalists, writers and urban thinkers took up the call. A series of reviews appeared that, while not entirely embracing the idea of a rehabilitated Moses, celebrated the attempt to rethink the Power Broker from a new temporal and spatial perspective. For some, Moses' ability to command the creative destruction of entire city blocks seemed every bit as important as the resulting public housing complexes, highways and cultural institutions. Writing in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, urban design journalist John King noted: "If Moses wielded power with too heavy a hand, at least he got things done," (King 2007), and *New York Times* architectural writer Nikolai Ouroussoff, in his comments at the Gotham Center forum, conjured up images of a New Orleans still devastated 14 months after Hurricane Katrina's wrath to speak "to the tension" between the personas of Jacobs and Moses. As destructive as Moses was, Ouroussoff suggested, he still offers an "enticing sense of what can be done when government can mobilize itself" (Ouroussoff, 2006b).

Such arguments prove particularly compelling in the current political-economic environment, one in which crumbling and inadequate infrastructures, economic restructuring, global climate change and other issues are reshaping contemporary cities as well as the debates over what forms they should take. While King invoked the Moses

legacy as a model for solving contemporary transportation problems in San Francisco, and Kennicott argued that its lessons about politics and power reverberated in contemporary battles over plans for extending Washington, D.C.'s Metro, Ballon waxed nostalgic for New York's return to a foregone era: "Living in New York, one is aware there has been no evident successor or successors to Moses. There are no master builders. Who is looking after the city? How do we build again for the future?" (Pogrebin 2007).

Not surprisingly, these interpretations have been accompanied by calls for a new Moses to shepherd the contemporary city into the future (Jackson 2007, 1989; Kennicott 2007; King 2007; Pogrebin 2007). Jackson would be among the first, arguing as early as the 1988 Hofstra University conference celebrating the centennial of Moses' birth, that Moses essentially built the infrastructure for New York City's ascendance to global financial and cultural capital and made possible its survival into the 21st century. "If another Robert Moses does not appear, however," he warned at that time, "New York is not likely to retain its exalted status in the face of fierce competition from Tokyo, Sao Paulo, Mexico City, and Los Angeles" (Jackson 1989). Yet as Caro pointed out, to large degree Moses' effectiveness as "Bob the builder" depended on his ability to convince the public that he was "engaged in a series of great works as necessary for the greatness and even the survival of twentieth-century New York..." (Fishman 2007, 123). From this perspective, Moses was not merely building things but literally saving the city. This narrative is based on the notion that Moses was a non-ideological intermediary between the often-conflicting aims of the public realm and the private market and that the projects he built under the urban renewal umbrella "was the last chapter of a career-long attempt

to... recruit the private sector to participate in solving a big urban problem” (Ballon 2006).

Yet the argument that Moses saved the city is highly problematic on a number of levels. As even Ballon and Jackson note, Moses’ success in getting things built was predicated on his ability to convince others that he alone had seen the future, fully understood its nature and best knew how to build bridges to it. “The problem,” they acknowledge, “is that Moses felt himself uniquely able to interpret the public good. Putting his trust in experts, he doubted the capacity of democratic methods to arrive at the common good” (Ballon and Jackson 2007, 66). Calls for a new Moses also overlook the fact that a large degree of his success in getting things done was the direct result of the incredible power he was able to amass – often through unscrupulous means (Kidder 2008, Caro 1974). Simply put, Moses was so successful at building roads, bridges, housing and other public works all the while displacing people and their modes of making a living because he had written the laws that gave him the power to control vast resources, manipulate public opinion and the media and determine, without any meaningful opposition, what constituted the public good (Kidder 2008). In this sense, Moses was very much a man of his times because today it is unlikely he – or very likely anybody else – would be able to get away with such a bald power grab.

Even more problematic, however, is the clearly debatable suggestion that whatever Moses did, he did in the name of the greater public good. Writing in the journal *Architectural Record* not long after the most recent round of rethinking Moses hit its stride, Sorkin argued that while it is necessary to celebrate Moses’ “constructive side,” three “indelible charges” continue to resonate negatively in terms of his legacy and

contemporary planning: the “fundamentally undemocratic instruments for planning” that he “pioneered and ruthlessly wielded;” the “distortion” of his planning priorities “to the detriment of a more ‘holistic’ view of urbanism;” and the fact that his projects “disproportionately harmed the poor and people of color” (Sorkin 2007). Suggesting that Moses should be seen in a softer light, Sorkin concluded, “risks the same kind of distortion as does a view of Mussolini through the filter of Terragni or the train schedule” (Sorkin 2007).

And so the debate rages on, with Moses and Jacobs serving as foils representing opposing ends of the urban planning spectrum while scholars, activists, journalists and planners contest the nature of their legacies. As the recent array of reflective exercises – from the Gotham Center forum to the Moses and Jacobs retrospectives, dozens of retrospective and commemorative essays, a growing list of new books and numerous round-tables and panel discussions – so effectively underscores, that battle often is less about two historical figures and more about how they are perceived, interpreted and perhaps misinterpreted in the present. In some cases what Moses and Jacobs might have said, done or believed is now almost secondary, mere background for forces that have adopted, even co-opted, their legacies in order to employ them to new purposes and broader ideological means. All the while, the pair frames – some might say haunts – any discussion over the future shape of the city. Referencing the Bloomberg administration’s ambitious redevelopment agenda, with its reliance on the Moses-like mechanisms of massive public subsidies for essentially private projects and the specter of forced displacement through eminent domain, Lander, at the Gotham Center forum, suggested that in spite of the prevailing picture of a triumphant Jacobs long ago vanquishing Caro’s

Power Broker, Moses-scale planning continues to threaten New York City neighborhoods. Regardless of the deification of Jacobs, he contended, “There are ways that we have not left Moses behind” (Lander 2006). And contemporary urban development remains “an elite set of bodies leading the public by the nose.”

Chapter 3: The Bloomberg Practice

From the moment Michael Bloomberg assumed the mayor's office in 2002, his administration sought to reshape New York City's built environment on a scale not seen since Robert Moses' big-build era. While some hailed the administration's ambitious plans as a rebirth of big ideas and a throwback to an era when leaders got things done (Ballon 2008, Goldberger 2007a), others questioned the redevelopment agenda's underlying economic rationale and lamented the potential negative impacts of particular projects on neighboring communities as well as the autocratic means by which they were pursued (Lander 2006, Wells 2007). No sooner were the Mayor's earliest proposals unveiled than they engendered comparisons with the worst aspects of Moses-like top-down planning (Angotti 2005, 2007; Sorkin 2007) and aroused opposition, from local neighborhood groups to members of the New York State Legislature. The following chapter offers a closer look at four projects that exemplify the administration's agenda, and underscores the contested nature of its plans.

NYC2012: OLYMPIC AMBITIONS

For decades, Manhattan's Far West Side – a 360-acre swatch of mixed light-industrial, residential and transportation uses anchored by the Hudson Yards, two below-grade Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) railroad facilities spread over 39 square blocks west of Ninth Avenue between 28th and 41st Streets – has been viewed as an underutilized and underdeveloped remnant of New York City's industrial past, marking it, in the parlance of redevelopment advocates, as “the last frontier for development” in an otherwise densely built borough (New York City Department of City

Planning n.d. c).¹⁹ As early as the 1970s and then again in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the administrations of Mayor Ed Koch and his successor, David Dinkins, called for redevelopment of the area from a “literal hole in the ground into a profitable development project” (Brash 2006, 64). In both cases, redevelopment efforts stalled, stymied in no small part by community opposition fueled by the lingering specter of the excesses of the Moses era. But in 1996, those efforts were reborn by the Giuliani administration, which pushed for the construction of a new stadium for the New York Yankees, the city’s storied Major League Baseball franchise, and simultaneously explored the possibility of bidding to host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. By the late 1990s a booming economy led by growth across the real estate, financial, media and high-technology sectors generated talk of expanding the city’s midtown central business district (CBD) westward.

Ultimately, New York City opted to bid to host the Olympics in 2012, and the Yankee stadium idea foundered, killed off by animosity between Giuliani and then-Gov. George Pataki and Giuliani’s own authoritarian tactics and stubbornness in the face of public opposition. But toward the end of Giuliani’s tenure in 2001, New York City and NYC2012, the privately run, privately funded organization founded to oversee the city’s Olympic effort, moved forward with separate but complementary plans to deck and redevelop Hudson Yards. First, in August 2001, NYC2012 published details of a hugely ambitious, \$1.2-billion project that called for the existing Jacob Javits Convention Center to be expanded and joined with a domed, 72,000-seat stadium that would serve as the main Olympic venue and, once the Games were over, a new home for the National

¹⁹ The Metropolitan Transportation Authority is the public benefit corporation responsible for overseeing public transportation in New York City’s five boroughs and its suburban counties.

Football League New York Jets. In addition, the proposal called for the construction of two large hotels, a new Madison Square Garden and an 80-story, 1.2 million-square-foot media tower that after the Olympics would serve as ““a signature office building’ anchoring commercial development on the rail yards,” all complemented by an 8½-acre plaza with green space, shopping arcades and cafes (Brash 2006, 92). Developed under the leadership of Daniel Doctoroff, a former investment banker who, while at the private equity firm Oak Hill Partners in 1994, founded NYC2012; Alexander Garvin, an urban planner and former member of the New York City Planning Commission; and Jay Kriegel, a former senior vice president of CBS and one-time aide to Mayor John Lindsey, the proposal linked planning for the 2012 Olympic bid to CBD expansion, which in turn was to be fueled by the proposed extension of the No. 7 subway line west from Times Square to the to-be-expanded Jacob Javits Convention Center. As such, the proposed redevelopment brought together real estate developers, planners, corporate executives and politicians, uniting the city’s pro-growth elites in an effort to overcome political opposition that to that point had stymied attempts at transforming Hudson Yards. From the outset, Doctoroff would acknowledge, “the Olympic bid provided a patina of legitimacy to both individual development projects and the drive for a citywide campaign of urban development” (Brash 2006, 76).

Two months later, with the election of Bloomberg to the city’s highest office, Doctoroff was tapped to become the administration’s Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding, and the Department of City Planning detailed its proposal for rezoning the Far West Side in a report, *Far West Midtown: a Framework for Development*, that included a master plan for the city’s vision of Hudson Yards

redevelopment. Intent on seeing the proposal become reality, Bloomberg and Doctoroff sought to outflank potential opposition by sidestepping the New York State legislative process and courting business leaders, and then pressing ahead with the rezoning, prompting the first of what over time would become a chorus of comparisons to Moses. “[T]he opportunity to plan and design an entirely new district, encompassing a wide mix of uses, waterfront development, and the development of an open space network, awoke the Robert Moses or Baron Haussmann lying in the hearts of elite urban planners,” wrote urban anthropologist Julian Brash (2006, 113). Still, New York State’s partial ownership of the rail yards meant the administration would eventually need legislative support to move ahead. But even as it became obvious their strong-arm tactics had backfired, creating resentment among some lawmakers, Bloomberg officials continued to force the issue by delivering repeated threats, deadlines and ultimatums. In the meantime, critics bashed the plan as an example of privatized planning, whereby a private organization was attempting to spur greater redevelopment in ways that ran counter to the local community’s own desires and with very little public oversight or input in spite of the fact it would require significant public funding and the use of public land.

All the while, and regardless of a concerted campaign by the city and NYC2012 to generate excitement around the bid, the residents of New York City remained largely indifferent to the idea of hosting the Olympics and the notion of a mid-Manhattan stadium. As the administration’s arbitrarily imposed deadline for action approached, a rival bid to redevelop the Hudson Yards was submitted by Cablevision, a local cable television provider which viewed a new stadium as competition for Madison Square Garden, the sports and event venue which it owned. In the early summer of 2005 Sheldon

Silver, the speaker of the New York State Assembly, vetoed the stadium plan, and weeks later the Olympics were awarded to London. In the end, in spite of the administration's efforts to unite members of the city's elite, redevelopment of Hudson Yards was shelved.

HUDSON YARDS

Plans for remaking the area would not die there, however. Even after the defeat of the Jets stadium proposal and the awarding of the Olympics to London, plans for the transformation of the Far West Side emerged yet again within a new Bloomberg administration proposal to rezone and redevelop the site. Described by historic preservation consultant Laurie Beckelman at an October 2007 panel discussion "The Future Face of New York" as "the largest redevelopment scheme in New York since Rockefeller Center," the Hudson Yards proposal amounted to creating "a whole new city" – minus the stadium – with zoning creating the necessary conditions (Beckelman 2007). On Nov. 23, 2004, the City Planning Commission approved a series of zoning changes to facilitate high-density office, residential and commercial development on the eastern half of the 26-acre site, and rezoning for the western portion was finalized on Dec. 21, 2009 (nyc.gov 2009).

In October 2007 five companies submitted bids to develop Hudson Yards, and in March 2008 the MTA announced that real estate developer Tishman Speyer had been awarded the rights. But just six weeks later, the developer backed out, citing its inability to reach a deal with the MTA to delay the start of the project until the western rezoning was finalized. The bid passed to the Related Companies, which at various times could count three veterans of the earlier stadium battles among its senior leadership: Jay Kriegel, Doctoroff's "right-hand man" in the unsuccessful Olympic effort, who on May

11, 2007 was named a senior advisor to the company (New York Times, 2007); Jay Cross, who as president of the New York Jets was “the public face” of the failed effort to build the Jets stadium as part of the city’s Olympic bid (Brown, 2009); and Vishaan Chakrabarti, who in 2002 was named by Amanda Burden, the director of the New York City Department of City Planning, to run the agency’s Manhattan office and in that capacity lead the city’s side of the stadium push. In July 2008, Chakrabarti joined Related as its executive vice president of design and planning, though in the summer of 2009 he left that post to become the director of the real estate development program at Columbia University’s School of Architecture and Planning.

Related’s vision for the site featured 13 towers – including a hotel, office buildings and as many as 5,000 apartments – and a giant retail complex set on two massive platforms – each costing around \$1 billion – all atop the rail cut. The total tab: \$15 billion. Initially the project was to include new corporate headquarters for Condé Nast, News Corp and Morgan Stanley. But with the economy ailing, those featured corporate tenants pulled out and in early 2009, with available financing in short supply, Related sought and reached an agreement with the MTA to further delay closing on the project while the two sides worked out details of a 99-year, \$1 billion lease. By late 2009 Related had found a new corporate partner, Goldman Sachs, the powerful investment bank whose role in the sub-prime mortgage crisis led to its 2008 restructuring as a traditional bank holding company. But in January 2010 Goldman Sachs “unexpectedly” backed out of the project, delaying it yet again (Bagli 2010).

Aside from the slowing economy, the project was also by plagued by the collapse or slow progress of the three big projects that had been expected to “kick start” further

west-side development (Sagalyn 2008): the \$14 billion plan to move Madison Square Garden and replace it with a new rail terminus, to be called Moynihan Station; the No. 7 subway extension; and efforts to expand the Jacob Javits Convention Center. Eventually the Bloomberg administration, through a specially created authority, issued \$2.1 billion in debt to finance the extension of the No. 7 line (Pinsky 2008), projecting that the debt eventually would be paid from taxes generated by the new development. But with no development on the horizon, critics began warning that the city could be “on the hook for \$100 million a year in payments” (Buettner and Rivera 2009). A 2007 report by the New York City Bar Association said the Hudson Yards financing scheme “bears an eerie resemblance to the development of Battery Park City,” which nearly defaulted and helped plunge the city into a fiscal crisis in the 1970s. That report also asked, if development of the West Side was inevitable, “why should costly artificial economic incentives be offered to encourage that development?” (Buettner and Rivera 2009).

Richard Ravitch, a former chair of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, offered his own withering critique at a January 2008 Museum of the City of New York panel discussion, “The Fate of the Far West Side.” Arguing that “the full value of Hudson Yards won’t be realized until the full development of Moynihan Station,” Ravitch called the push to redevelop the site without concrete commitments for the subway extension or Moynihan Station “planning run amok” (Ravitch 2008). The project, he added, “raises serious questions about how we make decisions” regarding where growth will occur and how resources are allocated. Planning without a clear picture of who is going to pay,” he concluded, “is an academic exercise.”²⁰

²⁰ On February 16, 2010, Sen. Charles Schumer announced that the federal government had awarded \$83 million in stimulus funds for Phase 1 of the two-phase project.

ATLANTIC YARDS

Another of the more ambitious, and contentious, of the administration's early megaprojects is Atlantic Yards, a 22-acre parcel of downtown Brooklyn that includes an eight-acre open rail cut – the Vanderbilt Rail Yards – also owned by the MTA. In 2002, the development firm Forest City Ratner announced its interest in re-developing the site, which sits at the intersection of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues where three of Brooklyn's neighborhoods – rapidly gentrifying Prospect Heights and Fort Greene, and the already tony Park Slope – meet. It is also adjacent to two earlier Forest City projects: Metrotech, an 11-building, 5.7 million-square-foot commercial, academic and office project on 16 acres that was conceived during the Koch administration as part of a strategy to draw commercial and office development to the outer boroughs; and Atlantic Center, a 24-acre, \$200-million retail and residential development built in the mid 1990s.

In 2003 Bloomberg and Forest City publicly announced plans for the company to develop Atlantic Yards in conjunction with Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), and in early 2005 the city and the developer signed a memorandum of understanding that paved the way for Forest City to buy the Vanderbilt Yards from the MTA for \$100 million. Yet, from the outset the project was dogged by controversy and community opposition. Initial plans called for a Frank Gehry-designed village that included eight acres of public open space and 16 mixed-use towers with more than 1 million square feet of residential, commercial (including 230,000 square feet of new retail and 600,000 square feet of offices) and hotel space anchored by an 18,000-square-foot arena that would serve as the future home of the New Jersey Nets, the National Basketball Association franchise that Forest City CEO Bruce Ratner purchased in 2004



Figure 3: A portion of the proposed Atlantic Yards development site near the intersection of 5th Avenue and Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn (Photo by the author, Jan. 26, 2010).

and planned to move to Brooklyn.²¹ In addition to the arena – which was to be called the Barclays Center following the signing of a 20-year deal that granted naming rights to Barclays Bank in exchange for \$400 million – the architecturally ambitious project was to include four office towers and the soaring 620-foot mixed-use tower nicknamed Miss Brooklyn. As originally conceived, the complex of towers that defined the plan were touted as “striking,” “resembling falling shards of glass,” (Ouroussoff 2009a), and Miss Brooklyn would have been the tallest building in Brooklyn, featuring 1,300 condominium and 4,500 rental units.

²¹ In September 2009, in a bid to generate more cash for Atlantic Yards, Ratner sold an 80-percent stake in the Nets and a 40-percent share of the arena to Russian mogul Mikhail Prokhorov.

Supporters hailed the project as a much-needed injection of development capital capable of generating local jobs (Forest City claimed Atlantic Yards would provide 15,000 construction jobs and house 6,000 office positions), tax revenue and affordable housing. They pointed to a Community Benefits Agreement (BPA) negotiated between local community organizations and Forest City that promised 2,250 units – or 50 percent of the project’s total number of rental residential units – would be designated affordable or middle income and that 30 percent of construction contracts would go to contractors run by minorities or women.

Opponents, meanwhile, argued the plan was ill-conceived and out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood, and that it ultimately would require as much as \$2 billion in government-backed funding for a privately owned project that would overwhelm existing roads, subway lines and schools. As initially planned Atlantic Yards would have produced the highest density census tract in the country. Opponents also challenged Forest City’s proposed use of eminent domain to gain ownership of properties it could not acquire through more conventional means. On Dec. 8, 2006, the ESDC notified property owners and tenants in the Atlantic Yards footprint that the State would use its power of condemnation to clear the portion of the site not occupied by the rail cut, providing the impetus for the formation of a number of community coalitions to fight the proposal and setting off a series of protests and at least seven court challenges. One lawsuit, *Goldstein vs. Pataki* filed in 2006, alleged that the transfer of private property to a private entity such as Forest City did not constitute public use and therefore did not meet the requirements for applying eminent domain as set forth in the United States Constitution or New York State law. After losing their original case and subsequent

appeals (the plaintiffs appealed all the way to the Supreme Court, which declined to hear the case), property owners and tenants took a different tack, arguing in New York State Court (Goldstein et al vs. Empire State Development Corporation) that Atlantic Yards' use of eminent domain violated the state constitution because it proposed using public funds to underwrite an urban renewal project without restricting redevelopment to lower income occupants. While that claim was rejected, the State of New York Appeals Court agreed to hear the case, but dismissed that challenge on Nov. 24, 2009.

Still, community opposition, as well as rising costs, ultimately forced Forest City to repeatedly scale back aspects of the project. In 2007, local ire over the fact that Miss Brooklyn would tower over the nearby Williamsburg Savings Bank, a historic landmark and the tallest completed structure in Brooklyn, led the developer to reduce the building's height by more than 100 feet, rename it B1 (for Building One) and redesign it as strictly an office tower. That prompted another lawsuit on the grounds that since the scope of the project had changed, the existing Environmental Impact Study was no longer valid. Then in March of 2008, with the credit crisis deepening and available lines of credit tightening, Forest City announced that initial construction would focus on building just two residential towers and the arena, leading community advocates to assert that the developer had reneged on promises regarding affordable housing and open spaces. At the same time, the projected price tag for the arena ballooned, more than doubling to \$1.1 billion, and in June 2009 Forest City announced that in an effort to save more than \$200 million, Gehry's design was being dumped in favor a far more conventional design by Ellerbe Becket, prompting critics to charge that elements of the plan that were essential to



Figure 4: Site of the future Barclays Center. Rising in the background is the Williamsburg Saving Bank building (Photo by the author, Jan. 26, 2010).

its initial approval had been abandoned in what amounted to a “shameful betrayal of the public trust” (Ouroussoff 2009a), and leading to the filing, on Nov. 20, 2009, of yet another legal challenge.

Even with Forest City’s cost-cutting changes, state officials warned that overall development costs for Atlantic Yards could reach \$4.9 billion – more than \$1 billion more than initially estimated – and in May 2009 the City of New York Independent Budget Office issued a revised cost benefit report that suggested far from providing benefits – in 2005 initial projections suggested the city might realize \$500 million over 30 years – the project might actually cost the city \$65 million over that span (City of New York City Independent Budget Office 2009). In September 2009, the real estate

consultant Karr Real Estate Group issued its own risk analysis, suggesting that a glut of high-end apartments in Brooklyn and the tough financing environment meant it would take 20 years to finish Atlantic Yards (Bagli 2009). In the meantime, 28 of 53 existing buildings scheduled for demolition to clear the way for the project had already been torn down.

In spite of delays and ongoing opposition, construction on the arena – the first phase of the project to be started – began on March 14, 2010.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY EXPANSION

Columbia University's proposed expansion is representative of the uncompromising nature of the planning process under the Bloomberg administration. In spite of broad-based and sustained community opposition, the University sought and won the city's approval of plans to redevelop 17 acres of the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattanville by arguing that a lack of space for expansion at its existing campus less than one mile to the south put it at a competitive disadvantage. "With only a fraction of the space enjoyed by our leading peers across the country," a University website created to promote the proposed expansion asserted, "Columbia has had to face an especially critical need for space in a dense urban environment" (Columbia University n.d.).

The \$6.3-billion redevelopment – designed to make room for 6.8 million square feet of classrooms, research facilities, administrative offices and University housing and parking – is scheduled to take place in two stages. The first, originally slated for completion by 2015, includes the construction of a medical research center and new homes for the Columbia Business School, School of International and Public Affairs, and

School of Arts. Phase II, to be completed by 2030, would include additional classroom and research space, as well as housing for graduate students and faculty.

Columbia's plan requires the rezoning of an area – currently home to a mix of self-storage warehouses, auto-repair shops, out-of-the way restaurants, a bus depot and 132 residential units that occupy gritty industrial land framed by 135th and 125th streets and elevated stretches of the No. 1 subway line and Riverside Drive – from manufacturing to mixed use, which the city council granted in December 2007. But as with all of the megaprojects proposed during the Bloomberg administration, Columbia's expansion plan engendered considerable controversy as it made its way through New York City land use review process. In 2007, Columbia's proposal was rejected by the local community board, Manhattan CB 9, which since 1991 had been preparing its own development plan for the area. That alternative, crafted in conjunction with the Pratt Center for Community Development, called for the expansion of light manufacturing uses and the provision of affordable housing and was submitted for review at the same time as Columbia's proposal. In spite of the dramatic differences between the two plans, the City Planning Commission and the City Council simultaneously approved both. While both were approved, however, the subsequent rezoning of the site rendered CB 9's alternative obsolete, and Columbia's plan cleared an additional hurdle in May 2009 when the Public Authorities Control Board gave its stamp of approval.

Similar to Atlantic Yards, one of the major – and lasting – impediments to the Columbia plan has been the proposed use of eminent domain to secure the necessary land. While Columbia was able to acquire 61 of the 67 properties in the proposed expansion area, the owners of two gas stations and Nick Sprayregen, whose Tuck-It-

Away storage business operates out of four buildings in the rezoned neighborhood, refused to sell. On July 17, 2008, the ESDC voted unanimously to declare the 17-acre site “blighted,” paving the way for the powers of eminent domain to be invoked, but the holdouts filed suit in January 2009 against the ESDC arguing the site is not blighted and therefore not subject to eminent domain. Among the criticisms articulated by opponents of the expansion is that a Columbia-funded consultant – the environmental planning and engineering firm, AKRF – conducted the study that deemed the area blighted and established the prices landowners were offered for their properties. Those critics charge that AKRF came up with a three values for each property, based on the existing industrial zoning – not their worth once re-zoned for mixed use – and offered the middle value to property owners (South 2007).

On Dec. 3, 2009, the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court ruled that the condemnation procedure was unconstitutional, and that the State could not use eminent domain to acquire the remaining properties. The ESDC planned to appeal.

As in the case of other megaprojects initiated during the Bloomberg administration, Columbia’s rationale for the use of eminent domain involved abstract notions of the greater good and economic development. The University maintained that decades of construction required to build the new campus would generate 1,200 construction jobs a year, and that once completed the expansion campus would represent 6,000 University positions and solidify “Upper Manhattan as a world center for knowledge, creativity, and solutions for society’s challenges” (Columbia University n.d.). In addition, Columbia pointed to the creation of between 50,000 and 94,000 square feet of publically accessible open space as well as retail amenities.

 COALITION TO PRESERVE COMMUNITY -
 United for an Open and Strong Community
 POST OFFICE BOX 50 - Manhattanville Station
 365 West 125th Street
 NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK 10027

MARCH ON COLUMBIA SATURDAY, November 10

- * MEET AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH, 521 W 126th Street,
 11:30AM and we will march to Columbia from there
- * RALLY AT COLUMBIA AT 12:30PM – COME OUT!

DEMAND THAT COLUMBIA WITHDRAW ITS EVICTION “c” PLAN

- * 5,000 RESIDENTS WILL BE DISPLACED
- * TENANTS ARE ALREADY BEING EVICTED
- * WE ARE LOSING JOBS AND LOCAL STORES

SUPPORT THE COLUMBIA STUDENTS WHO ARE SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

- WE DEMAND: (1) NO DISPLACEMENT
 (2) NO EMINENT DOMAIN ABUSE
 (3) NO BIOTECH-ON-THE-HUDSON
 (4) NO RISKY BATHTUB CONSTRUCTION**

WHAT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY THINKS OF YOU:

- * That it can give you a “better life” by removing you from your home
- * That longstanding local businesses are “outsiders”
- * That preserving manufacturing and other blue collar neighborhood jobs is unimportant
- * That concerns about having a biohazard level-3 lab in our community which could work with deadly materials is “not something people should worry about.”

CONTACT US ABOUT THE MARCH, CALL WITH YOUR IDEAS:

For more information contact: Coalition to Preserve Community (CPC). Email: bfrappy24@aol.com. Call (212)-666-6426, (212) 234-5005, o (se habla espanol: (212) 234-3002; website: www.stopcolumbia.org

Figure 5: A flyer announcing a Nov. 10, 2007 march to protest Columbia University’s proposed expansion and use of eminent domain (Source: Coalition to Preserve Community).

Unappealed, the community formed the West Harlem Local Economic Development Corporation to press for additional concessions. While that group has yet to

reach agreement with Columbia on a community benefits agreement, it has won the University's commitment to spend \$150 million over 12 years on the establishment of a community-based K-8 public school administered by Columbia's Teachers College, as well as \$20 million for support of affordable housing initiatives.

Expansion opponents and community residents, led by the local organization, The Coalition to Protect Community, also voiced concerns about the inevitable gentrification of surrounding neighborhoods, arguing that Columbia's plan would eliminate manufacturing jobs and result in rising rents even as it cut into the stock of low-income housing in the area. To back those claims, the group pointed to 2007 rezoning documents in which the Department of City Planning acknowledged that 85 businesses with 880 employees and 219 residents would be displaced by the actual expansion, while rising rents would displace an additional 1,318 residents by 2030.

OVERCOMING THE PAST

Taken together, the early setbacks involving the Olympic bid and the effort to prompt further west-side development by building a new stadium at Hudson Yards proved in no uncertain terms that the Bloomberg administration would not be able to force its redevelopment agenda, Moses-like, on New York City. Even fierce, ongoing opposition to continuing projects like Atlantic Yards and Columbia University's proposed expansion underscores the degree to which planning in general, and the prospect of megaprojects in particular, continue to conjure up images of Moses eager to bulldoze whole city blocks while Jacobs mobilizes the community in protest. To be sure, the Bloomberg administration is operating at a time when local concerns regarding its redevelopment plans are not easily ignored. Often bearing the banner of Jacobs's legacy,

opposition to contemporary redevelopment projects has become more informed, engaged and organized, if not always effective. In order to accomplish its broader redevelopment goals, then, the administration came to realize it must contend with planning's tarnished reputation and diminished stature as a government institution, the roots of which could be traced to the excesses of the Moses era and Jacobs' "spirited attack on the modernist concepts of master planning" in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Muschamp 1998).

Chapter 4: Calls for New Moses

While revisionist readings of Robert Moses were underway long before Jane Jacobs' death (Jackson 1989, Schwartz 1993), the resurgence of the project just months after she passed away underscored the degree to which the two figures had become conjoined in the public imagination, and further fanned the debates over their lasting legacies. But to Barwick and others familiar with the politics behind the effort, "the whole Moses/Jacobs revisiting" was "provoked" by the Bloomberg administration, which came into office with a clear physical agenda and "conscious strategies" for how to implement it, yet was fully unprepared to contend with the unexpected obstacles (e-mail exchange with author, Nov. 25, 2008). "Moses would not have awakened six weeks before the Olympic selection committee was to make its decision to discover somebody named Sheldon Silver who could kill his project," Kent Barwick contends. "Moses would have set up [approval of the proposed New York Jets stadium] 10 years ahead of time or written the legislation himself" (Barwick 2008). As such, far from complicating the administration's effort at promoting its ambitious redevelopment agenda, the memorializing of Jacobs and simultaneous rehabilitation of Moses would come to play a powerful role in informing and transforming public debates, fostering the sense that if New York City ever wanted to successfully build big again it would have to confront and ultimately contend with the long-held negative connotations associated with the Moses legacy while at the same time making its own bent toward creative destruction amenable to Jacobs' notion of a livable city. Indeed, the revisionist readings of Moses and the flood of commemorations that followed Jacobs' death were soon followed by calls from Doctoroff and other powerful voices in New York City development and planning for a

reconsideration of the two figures in a way that could make the ideological case for a new era of building characterized by super projects of a Moses-like nature but in sympathy with Jacobs's ideals of neighborhood diversity and dynamism (Hume 2007). At "Learning From Moses," a panel discussion that kicked off the Moses exhibitions' three-month run, Doctoroff spoke of the lessons to be culled from Moses' mistakes – essentially the hazards of not listening to people – but even more importantly from his successes: his efficiency, "adeptness at harnessing public and private resources and negotiating bureaucratic tricks and traps" and ability to see "beyond the lived particularity of urban life and conceptualize[d] the city as a whole" (Wells 2007). Not long later, Burden, the director of the New York City planning department, would make an even more direct appeal. "Clearly the struggle between these two icons is continuing today," she said during her comments as the city's representative at the Gotham Center debate:

It is certainly clear to me that Jane Jacobs is the prevailing force as it stands today. It is to the great credit of the mayor that we are building and rezoning today, once again, like Moses on an unprecedented scale but with Jane Jacobs firmly in mind, invigorated in the belief that the process matters and that great things can be built through a focus on the details, on the street, for the people who live in this great city (Burden 2006a).

In this regard, the administration has grown to conceive of the two figures less as antagonists, but potential partners whose core notions, when updated to the present, can be complementary – Moses, the "git-r-done" man capable of preparing the city to meet its future; and Jacobs, whose small-scale devotion to mixed uses, diversity and community represent the cure-all for local ills. Meld them together, this argument holds, and contemporary problems can be solved. In fact, this campaign for synthesis entered

seamlessly into the administration's narrative of a new city ascendant, serving as a powerful justification for the desire to build big again. In a 2007 interview with *The New York Times*, Doctoroff echoed comments made by Ballon three months earlier at the Gotham Center forum, suggesting that New York City was now:

...in a period of time when we have finally overcome a fear of overdevelopment that was in part the result of Moses' excesses. Part of the reason we haven't been able to do much is because people over-interpreted the lessons from that period of time" (Pogrebin 2007).²²

At this point, then, it becomes helpful to consider the role "Moses' excesses," to pick up on Doctoroff's words, and Jacobs' crusading response played in the evolution of institutionalized planning in New York City, first by fostering the rejection of top-down, large-scale planning and projects, and then, in the rehabilitative twist to the Bloomberg administration's subsequent invocation of the tale, helping overcome the "fear of overdevelopment" that characterized and at times paralyzed the city's planning apparatus for more than 40 years.

THE COLLAPSE OF PLANNING

Early in the 20th century New York City helped pioneer the notion of an active city government intent on shaping social and economic environments through physical planning. It adopted the nation's first zoning ordinance in 1916, and the New York City Planning Commission held its first meeting in January 1938. That body soon reflected prevailing modernist wisdom – and Robert Moses' influence – by recommending in November 1938 that "[O]nly by wholesale demolition of block after block of slum

²² Ballon's statement, at the forum: "We are perhaps now coming out of a prolonged period of cynicism about large-scale government planning efforts, and Moses' dilemmas are instructive" (Ballon 2006).

buildings can the evil be removed” (Dunlap 1988b), and over the course of the next two decades its role largely centered on overseeing local implementation of federal programs aimed at slum clearance and urban renewal. In 1960 the Commission revamped the city’s zoning resolution – its first real milestone of the modern era – and in 1969 produced its first comprehensive plan: a six-volume “Plan for New York City” that set an ambitious development agenda – and in many ways prefigured issues that would continue to resonate for decades. But the plan had “little lasting effect” – virtually none of its proposals was ever seen through to completion – and 20 years later, as the Planning Commission turned 50 in 1988, it was widely seen as a “narrowly focused body” forced to “share the planning stage” and influence with local community boards, other government offices and what the *New York Times* deemed “the politically charged Board of Estimate” (Dunlap 1988a, 1988b). Ordinary citizens, meanwhile, had come to associate planning with Moses and “the crude postwar urban-renewal projects” that Jacobs had “so cogently attacked” in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Muschamp 1998).

Worse still, with the completion of the World Trade Center towers and its 10-million-square feet of office space and the deepening of the city’s fiscal crisis in early 1970s, large-scale project development in New York City virtually ground to a halt. Suddenly, there was no market for office space – a glut of available units and declining demand sent rents tumbling. No new projects were underway in Lower Manhattan and successive schemes to launch the proposed development of Battery Park City – the 92-acre mixed-use community built on the Hudson River using 1.2 million cubic feet of fill excavated from the World Trade Center site – foundered, including plans to finance the

project's middle-income housing through the sale of housing revenue bonds. In 1974, the Nixon administration ended federal payouts for funding low-income housing, putting an end to urban renewal as it was known, and New York City's luxury housing market collapsed, putting the brakes on private development. As a result, for the better part of two decades the Planning Commission had "virtually no growth to orchestrate" (Dunlap 1988a), forcing it to concentrate instead on "workable" small-scale zoning and land-use issues rather than far-reaching master plans. "...(P)lanning itself," the *Times* intoned, "has been eclipsed by process – the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, known as ULURP..." the standardized multi-step approval regimen adopted in 1975 during the Beame administration as a means of limiting government power as "personified by Robert Moses" by increasing local participation in planning decisions (Dunlap 1988a). It would not be until the makeover of Times Square – a project with its roots in the Dinkins administration but realized during Mayor Giuliani's second term – that the city would be able once again to see through a project of any meaningful scope.

That is not to suggest that earlier administrations did not aspire to more aggressive large-scale planning as a means of reinvigorating the city. In 1982, under the direction of Mayor Ed Koch's first Planning Commission chair, Herbert Sturz, the city rezoned mid-Manhattan West to allow for increased building density, and in 1988 New York City's 578 miles of waterfront were the focus of potential, though still scattershot, re-development with seven separate projects being "studied." At the time virtually every zoning and land-use initiative was obliged to navigate ULURP, requiring a six-month review by local community boards – which were theoretically grounded on Jacobs' notion that local residents should have a voice in the planning process – and votes by the

planning commission (which was made up of seven members, all appointed by mayor) and the Board of Estimate. Viewed by many in the planning community and city government as overly burdensome, the resulting process was demonized as creating bureaucratic paralysis, and in 1989 a New York Charter Revision Commission was appointed to study its overhaul.

Initially, that commission proposed abolishing the Board of Estimate and giving expanded powers to a larger and conceivably less political City Planning Commission, suggesting that the City Council “was not the appropriate body to decide questions such as precisely where to place city shelters and incinerators and whether to approve special zoning exemptions for individual private development projects” (Finder 1989a). It proposed replacing the existing seven-member planning board – all of whose members were appointed by the mayor – with an 11-member planning body, only four of whom served at the mayor’s discretion. The planning community – including sitting and past Planning Commission chairs – objected, arguing that as the city’s chief executive the mayor was ultimately responsible for providing direction for city planning and should have more say over who sat on that body (Finder 1989b). The charter commission then revised its proposal, boosting the Planning Commission’s membership to 12, with six appointed by the mayor, one by the president of the City Council and one by each borough president. The move was described as a means of balancing competing interests but, in effect, it would have given the mayor considerable leverage in battles over the Planning Commission’s action as initiatives required seven votes to pass (Finder 1989b). Following “wide-ranging criticism” from community, environmental and housing groups which wanted elected – not appointed – officials making planning decisions, the charter

commission again shifted its stance, proposing that following Planning Commission review, initiatives involving zoning changes, urban renewal plans and most city-owned residential property would go the City Council for a vote. In addition, certain issues passed by the Planning Commission – including special zoning exemptions for private developers and the location of shelters and incinerators – could be appealed to the City Council if the affected borough president and local community board objected. As a result, “...almost every zoning and land-use proposal could, at least potentially, be reviewed by the Council” (Finder 1989a). The charter commission ultimately proposed a 13-member board, with seven members appointed by the mayor and one each by the City Council president and each of the five borough presidents. The proposal, which went before voters in a November 1989 referendum, would allow the mayor to veto land-use matters approved by the Council, but the Council could override the veto with a two-thirds vote.

The lead up to the referendum featured vigorous debate, reflecting the extreme tensions over how best to balance the desire for community representation with the need for getting projects approved and built. While advocates of the charter commission’s proposed changes argued their plan would produce a two-step process that would insure elected officials a reasonable means for reviewing “significant or controversial land-use initiatives,” opposition ranged from those who insisted that too many decisions would still be made by a panel of appointed officials, the majority of whom served at the whim of the mayor, to those who felt the mayor should have even more power so as to provide a broader citywide perspective to planning (Finder 1989c). The referendum ultimately passed, and in 1990 a larger, more politically diverse City Planning Commission retained

its “powers as a central arbiter of zoning and building.” Now, however, its decisions were subject to final review by the City Council, not the Board of Estimate (Purdum 1990), and the full ULURP process involved votes by the local community board(s), the appropriate borough president, the borough planning board, the City Council, the Department of City Planning and the mayor.

Even with an overhauled planning commission and ULURP process in place, by the final years of the Giuliani administration “planning had all but collapsed in New York City,” amounting to a series of limited proposals – from moving Yankee Stadium from the Bronx to Manhattan’s Upper West Side and building a casino on Governor’s Island to rezoning waterfront manufacturing areas to make room for private residential development and giving Broadway theater owners expanded development rights (Muschamp 1998). While large, these plans were reflective of the administration’s preference for getting government out of the way and allowing the private market to determine what was to be built, and they were roundly criticized as unimaginative in scope, “disconnected” ideas “floating in the void that city planning has become” (Muschamp 1998). To some who wanted to see New York City begin to build again, Jacobs had almost single-handedly, though perhaps inadvertently, crippled planning for almost four decades. While her critique may have been convincing when it was made in the early 1960s, these critics pointed out, the social, economic and political underpinnings of urbanity had changed:

... That was 40 years ago. She probably did not foresee that planning would be substantially dismantled, or that its collapse would leave the public realm defenseless against market pressures. Nor could she have anticipated that the eyes on the street, the natural crime deterrent afforded by a vibrant street life, would need to be augmented by police

surveillance cameras...the city's current mood of triumphalism has a hollow ring... New York is back, but also backward. There's no overarching vision of the post-industrial metropolis the city could become (Muschamp 1998).

SHAPING THE CITY: A STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT FOR NYC

Bloomberg's election as mayor in 2001 would change all that. In spite of the outgoing administration's pro-development bent, but in keeping with its laissez-faire orientation, the Department of City Planning (DCP) under Giuliani had not been seen "as an economic development agency," relegated instead to a relatively minor role within the same agency that oversaw "culture and schools" and its efforts were focused primarily on one borough: Manhattan (Burden 2008). But in 2002 – or not long after Bloomberg first took the oath of office – the DCP was placed under the direction of Doctoroff, the Deputy Mayor of economic development, marking an important shift in role within New York City government and a rebirth of comprehensive planning.²³ One of Doctoroff's first charges in the new administration was to produce a long-term strategic plan for the city. According to Doctoroff, what started as simple land-use plan borne of the city's challenges in finding space for basic government functions evolved rapidly into a future-oriented, long-term growth plan that established economic development as the fundamental goal, the driver of New York City's planning efforts (Doctoroff 2009). In the administration's view, "[A]ll the solutions" to all of the city's physical problems were linked (Doctoroff 2009), and the resulting plan was developed as part of an emerging administration narrative that focused on the long-term sustainability of the city. Drawn up

²³ Doctoroff officially stepped down as Deputy Mayor in December 2008 to return to the private sphere and become president of Bloomberg L.P., the information services and media company founded by the Mayor. Even so, Doctoroff continues to advise the administration and remains intimately involved in many of the bigger development projects begun on his watch.

by a Sustainability Advisory Board, led by Doctoroff, it centered on six core principles, as outlined by Burden (2009, 2008, 2007a):

- (1) That New York City do whatever is necessary to compete with Paris, London, Tokyo, Singapore, Shanghai and other “global cities” in a rapidly evolving, hyper-competitive global economy.
- (2) That New York City grow in a sustainable, environmentally conscious manner, a concept that gave rise to a second plan-within-a-plan: PlaNYC 2030, which very symbolically was announced to much fanfare, on Earth Day 2007. “What does sustainability mean?” Doctoroff would ask. “To us it means almost a sacred obligation to leave future generations a cleaner, healthier, more prosperous city than the one in which we inhabit today” (Doctoroff 2009).
- (3) That New York City is a city of neighborhoods, 188 distinct neighborhoods whose unique characters are “to be protected,” in keeping with broadly accepted wisdom of Jane Jacobs.
- (4) That within its densely built environment, New York City should strive to create “signature sites” in order to “make great places.” Not piecemeal development of individual, isolated projects, but comprehensive, iconic places conceived of through master plans.
- (5) That the city “recapture” its vast waterfront – which historically has been given over to industrial uses – and “revitalize the street” through the development of public space – another very Jacobsean notion.²⁴
- (6) And finally, to quote Burden, that “design matters,” and “architectural excellence is good economic development.”

Ambitious in scope, the plan conjured up images of a bygone era, and Doctoroff, as the chief architect of the Mayor’s development agenda, emerged as the face of the new Moses (Barwick 2008, Wells 2007). “The aggressive leadership of the Bloomberg

²⁴ The notion of recapturing New York City’s waterfront from industrial uses is not new; members of the Dinkins administration advocated such a redevelopment strategy in the early 1990s.



Figure 6: Dan Doctoroff, former deputy mayor for economic development, NYC2012 founder and “the new Robert Moses” in the Bloomberg administration (Source: Getty images).

administration and in particular Dan Doctoroff engendered comparisons between Doctoroff and Moses – in both admiration and disapproval – and that resulted in the inevitable invocation of Jane Jacobs,” Kent Barwick says.²⁵ “While it may have secretly pleased [Doctoroff] to be compared to Moses, I don’t think he had much time or interest in shaping academic discussion.” Instead, like Moses, Doctoroff wanted projects built, and the rehabilitation of Moses was seen as an important if symbolic step in what the Bloomberg administration saw as “the emerging political battle over the next shape of the city” (Smith and Larson 2007).

While Doctoroff would pitch the administration’s plans as visionary, in many ways its roots rested on strategies that had been pursued for years. Beginning with the Koch administration, which in the late-80s appointed a Commission on the Year 2000 to

²⁵ For a positive comparison, see Halle 2006; For more critical reads see Fainstein 2005a and Wells 2007.

prepare its own long-range plan, dubbed City Ascendant, the aim of securing New York's status as a leading world city through the post-industrial expansion of its business-friendly environment has become a reoccurring focus of subsequent mayoral administrations. In the early 1990s the Dinkins' administration summed up this approach to planning policy by declaring that "the city's best prospects for expanding opportunity and combating 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" (New York City Planning Commission 1993, 3).

Even earlier, the paralyzing effects of the fiscal crisis in the 1970s had created a "crucial turning point" in the formation of a local coalition of "real estate developers, conservative ideologues and corporate executives" – the very folks who controlled those sectors of the economy. Intent on restructuring New York "along lines more [to] their liking than those drawn by decades of liberalism and labor action" (Freeman 2000, 258), and under the guise of insuring the city's long-term competitiveness and economic growth, this development elite and a globally integrated, New York-based faction of what has been called the Transnational Capital Class (TCC), sought to influence and rationalize urban development, transportation, infrastructure and economic policy (Brash 2006, 39) in order to "reshape the environments in which they find themselves" (Brash 2006, 133). Essential to the success of this enterprise was the rationalization and normalization of their mission, and for that they relied – much as Moses had for more than four decades – the rhetoric of the greater good.

The ideological figure of the global executive legitimizes the increasing wealth and power of members of the TCC by rooting their dominance in the natural order of things...even as it assures us we are in good hands: the use

of this enormous power will be governed by respect for cultural diversity and expertise and by a sense of social responsibility (Brash 2006, 144).

...[B]y acting to shape the city in accordance with this image, especially under the rubric of enhancing the ability of the city to compete for global investment, New York-based members of the TCC can claim to be pursuing the prosperity of the city as a whole, even as they enhance their own interests as the owners of the very global capital that is being wooed (Brash 2006, 145).

In a circular, self-perpetuating process that results in the naturalization of the outcome, Brash contends that this attempt to remake the city is driven by the desire of coalition elites to consolidate power. The “relentless” recruitment of the well-educated, highly paid professionals –the professional/managerial class (PMC) – to run the global corporations in turn attracts additional “high-margin businesses in growth industries” and bestows upon the professional/managerial class “a privileged role” in the formation of local economic and development policy (Brash 2006, 149-150). At the same time the efforts of the city’s real estate-driven traditional growth coalition contributes to the growing PMC population and its high profile, which in turn creates the continued impetus for urban development policies that are perceived to be in keeping with the group’s preferences. This in turn deepens the post-industrial transformation of the city’s economy and built environment, which enhances the position and visibility of the PMC even further (Brash 2006, 151). As Brash points out, these elites found a natural ally in Bloomberg – the corporate CEO turned billionaire politician whose private-sector inspired, technocratic approach to governance and economic development, in particular, is inherently linked to the city’s shifting class structure. Within the administration, city government is seen as a corporation and the city as a product to be branded, at once

“privileging the interests and experience of certain class factions at the expense of others” (Brash 2006, 7).

Abetted by this powerful ideological partner, New York City’s development elite undertook placemaking on a scope and scale not seen since the Moses era. But by midsummer 2008, a little more than 18 months before the end of his second– and at the time presumably last – term, these business leaders and corporate “titans” had begun searching for a replacement, arguing that the Mayor’s financial independence, lack of party affiliation and “corporate, by-the-numbers approach of management have created a golden age of New York City government” (Barbaro 2008). New York City’s business leaders:

...of course, have a vested interest in recruiting one of their own, like Mr. Bloomberg, to run for mayor. The Bloomberg administration is considered an ally to many corporations, especially developers. Rezoning projects under his watch have opened large swaths of the city to new construction. And Mr. Bloomberg, especially, travels in the same orbit as many of the city’s elite; he goes to their functions and they to his; he gives to their causes and they reciprocate (Barbaro 2008).

Fears of not being able to find such a successor – and of what a perceived return to partisan governance might bring – had some suggesting a movement to overturn laws limiting the Mayor to two terms, arguing eight years is too short. At the same time, citing a “keen awareness of time and the potential for future administrations to undo or derail many of his initiatives,” Bloomberg and members of the administration “ramped up efforts to push some projects through and pass legislation to make it harder to undo his legacy,” (Barbaro 2008). According to *The New York Times*, developers, especially those of large projects that often span decades from conception to finish, and real estate

moguls, whose wealth is contingent on the long-term prospects of property, were especially supportive of the notion. In early May of 2008 the City Council approved a bill that made the Office of Long Term Sustainability and Planning – the body created to devise and implement the administration’s PlaNYC 2030 initiative – permanent and mandated that it be updated every four years, ensuring sustainability would remain a future municipal priority, regardless of who became mayor (Doctoroff 2009). Ultimately, with the support of this corporate elite, Bloomberg used the economic crisis of late 2008 to successfully make the case for overturning laws limiting the mayor to two terms, and in November 2009 he won re-election to a third term.

BREAKING THE DEVELOPMENT IMPASSE

In sum, then, for nearly four decades and over the course of four different mayoral eras, conventional wisdom has held that a good business climate equals expansion of a post-industrial, office-based and globally-oriented New York City where city government best serves its citizens by fostering the necessary climate through tax breaks, zoning and spending priorities even as it scales back social programs and at the expense of what little remains of an industrial economy and the working class (Brash 2006, Freeman 2000). Even during the budget-slashing days of the 1970’s fiscal crisis, for instance, subsequent administrations devised schemes for expanding the city’s Central Business District by re-developing the far west side of Midtown Manhattan, efforts that would re-emerge again and again in subsequent years, most boldly as a core component of the effort, born by the Giuliani administration but pursued with single-mindedness by Bloomberg, to bring the

2012 Summer Olympic Games to New York.²⁶ Strategically, New York's pro-development elite saw the Olympics as "a forcing mechanism" or "new lease on life" for development projects that "would allow the imposition of an elite development agenda unable to win approval through normal democratic processes" (Brash 2006, 75). Even though these efforts foundered, the Bloomberg administration resuscitated the idea of redeveloping the Hudson Yards and assimilated it into its then still-evolving land-use plan, which was foreshadowed by two of the then-largest rezonings in the city's history – of the waterfront in Greenpoint/Williamsburg in Brooklyn and Manhattan's Far West Side. Within the city's narrative, those initial zoning changes, along with support for Atlantic Yards and other big development projects underway at the time, "were aimed at revitalizing underutilized land for economic development and expanding the city's property tax base," and were "accomplished, in part, by tying them to the city's timetable to apply for the 2012 Olympic Games" (Roberts 2006). In November 2006, Doctoroff told *The New York Times* that he viewed the Olympics "as a vehicle to drive the sort of longer-range planning in which local governments rarely have the resources, or the vision, to indulge" (Roberts 2006). The ultimate aim of the bid, he admitted, was to create the conditions for the development of the West Side and portions of Queens, as well as the revitalization of New York City's transportation network, the need for which had been articulated several years before by a panel of business, political and labor leaders known as the Group of 35 that was convened by Sen. Chuck Schumer and Robert Rubin, former Treasury Secretary in the administration of President Bill Clinton. That group warned in 2001 that New York City's long-term economic growth would be

²⁶ Mitchell Moss, professor of urban planning at NYU and chair of The Group of 35, touted the Games' transformative potential in a story that appeared in the *New York Times* (Applebome 1996)

limited by a severe lack of office space and it advocated for breaking the development impasse through the use of condemnation and eminent domain and the provision of tax breaks for developers, a call Schumer would repeat four years later:

At the dawn of the last century, New York built a subway system and grand public works like Grand Central Station. In the late 1930s through the 1960s, we built a highway system, Lincoln Center and the World Trade Center. But there hasn't been a major public work built in the city for 50 years. Why? I believe a culture of inertia has set in. Criticism predominates over construction; critics are given more weight than those trying to build. (*Newsday* 2005)

The Group of 35 report – with its critical assessment of the sort of territorialism and geography of special interests that had dogged previous large-scale development efforts, including the creation of Battery Park City – would become a powerful influence on the Bloomberg administration's land-use agenda (Burden 2007b), and in some ways it served as an important early salvo in the rehabilitation of Moses by making the case for a new era of big projects. Another key influence was the comprehensive master plan of 1969. To Bloomberg administration officials, that plan represented a “stirring” philosophy and set of ideas for transforming the city, and they drafted a number of its contributors – including Garvin, the architects Alexander Cooper (who with then-partner Stanton Eckstut produced the master plan for Battery Park City) and Jacqueline Robertson, and communications executive Jay Kriegel – to help orchestrate the NYC2012 Olympic bid and the Hudson Yards project. But the 1969 plan's failure to result in any progress of consequence – “Almost nothing in [the 1969 plan] that was proposed ever happened,” Doctoroff told a Museum of the City of New York panel discussion in April 2009 – offered a valuable lesson. As a result, the administration vowed not to make a “single proposal” that it “could not identify the funds for or actually

implement,” and to begin implementation immediately after the project was announced” (Doctoroff 2009).

Almost immediately, however, this return to big planning conjured up images of the Moses era and inspired opposition, including some from a familiar and somewhat formidable corner. As the city’s proposal for rezoning the Greenpoint/Williamsburg waterfront went before the City Council, Jacobs weighed in by penning a letter addressed to Mayor Bloomberg that was published in the *Brooklyn Rail*, a local newspaper, on April 15, 2005. In it, Jacobs – who moved to Canada in 1968 and had been living in Toronto for nearly four decades – argued in support of the local community’s alternative plan, maintaining it provided for affordable housing, schools, daycare and recreational facilities without violating the neighborhood’s existing scale, and that it would encourage “the visual and economic” characteristics that attract artists and other live-work craftsmen and therefore initiate “spontaneous and self-organizing renewal” (Jacobs 2005).²⁷ After cataloging the various ways the community’s plan would not “destroy” the neighborhood’s existing vital elements, Jacobs took aim at the City’s plan:

...the proposal put before you by city staff is an ambush containing all those destructive consequences, packaged very sneakily with visually tiresome, unimaginative and imitative luxury project towers. How weird, and how sad, that New York, which has demonstrated successes enlightening to so much of the world, seems unable to learn lesson it needs for itself. I will make two predictions with utter confidence. 1) If you follow the community’s plan you will harvest a success. 2) If you follow the proposal before you today, you will maybe enrich a few heedless and ignorant developers, but at the cost of an ugly and intractable mistake. Even the presumed beneficiaries of this misuse of governmental powers, the developers and

²⁷ As part of New York City’s land use approval process (ULURP), local communities are empowered to propose their own neighborhood redevelopment plans, which are known as 197a plans. These community-generated plans are non-binding, and are required to pass through the same multi-step approval process as other plans.

financiers of luxury towers, may not benefit; misused environments are not good long-term economic bets.

Come on, do the right thing. The community really does know best (Jacobs 2005).

Barwick, who admits to a bad break with the administration over its plans for the rezoning and redevelopment of Greenpoint/Williamsburg, also accuses the Bloomberg administration of a conscious attitude of ignoring public input. Doctoroff, he says, was able to hold access to city-owned land over developers' heads, threatening them with being shut out if they did not concede to do the city's bidding (Barwick 2008). And anticipating further political battles ahead, the city adopted a page directly from the Moses playbook and began a campaign to "de-legitimize opposition to particular development projects by ascribing it to knee-jerk emotional reaction rather than to rational analysis or thoughtful, political judgment" (Brash 2006, 56). Here the revisionist effort on behalf of Moses, with its suggestions that large-scale development driven by a government that understood the city's long-term needs and had not only the vision but the means to lay the groundwork for a successful future, would dovetail nicely with the Bloomberg administration's ambitions. An important part of that campaign would be to convince a wary populace to at least reconsider, if not embrace, the Moses legacy.

Chapter 5: Planning and the Narrative of Threat

Planning, it has been suggested, is the creation of a master narrative about the future, “the construction of stories that describe the pattern of a desired world” (Mandelbaum 1991, 210) as a means of normalizing and rationalizing the logic behind proposed projects and redevelopment schemes (Dear 1989, Throgmorton 1992). From this position, planners become “authors who actively construct views of events” that others “read (construct and interpret),” though at times in “diverse and often conflicting ways” (Mandelbaum 1991, 211). As planning regularly confronts contested terrain in which a variety of counter narratives are forced to compete for legitimacy and support, a challenge for promoters of any particular plan is to convince the greater public that theirs is the preferred vision for the future, to produce superior narratives. In a society whose structures are built upon the asserted rigor of scientific reason, these generally emerge as empiric visions that rest on “the construction of a regime of facts” that guide inexorably to a single ‘Truth,’” as determined – we are assured – by dispassionate experts and authoritative processes (Mandelbaum 1991, 211). Indeed, planning as a practice can be “distilled to an exercise in the mechanics of persuasion” in which the goal is getting “to ‘yes,’” or, in other words, arriving at a successful “professional encounter” (Dear 1989, 456). Non-planners or those not in a position to participate in the act of plan development or promotion are told to “abandon control of their memories” to those who have assumed the role of “moral guardians” (Mandelbaum 1991, 212) and whose command of specialized knowledge entitles them to prescribe the right actions for the greater good and act in the name of an undefinable “public interest” (Dear 1989, 459).

Robert Moses, of course, was a particularly effective practitioner of such truth building, and if “good planning is persuasive storytelling about the future” (Throgmorton 1992, 17), he was an especially successful raconteur. He not only mobilized deception to “clear a path to power” (Kidder 2008), but once enthroned as head of the various commissions he oversaw, he marshaled “experts” whose supposed scientific rigor not only embodied the modernist moment but helped sell its more utopian notions. In pushing his agenda, Moses leaned on specialists in the fields of real estate, finance, architecture and engineering to create a masterful narrative, adorned with reams of inscrutable data in the form of “detailed plans, construction schedules, and financial calculations...” that were then packaged in glossy marketing brochures (Ballon 2007, 99). Not surprisingly, the experts he chose – figures like General George Nold, former director of the Joint Construction Agency, European Command – shared Moses’ technical, engineering and management-oriented approach to renewal (Ballon 2007, 108), and the narratives they helped create were designed to make Moses’ projects – what Ballon calls “untested experiments in urbanism” – appear to be done deals, “irrefutable, routine projects” (Ballon 2007, 99). To a large degree the intended audience was not the public, which to Moses was largely irrelevant, but the city’s political and business leaders, without whose buy-in his agenda would have gone nowhere (Ballon 2007, 100). The Moses method also featured liberal use of creative assumptions, delivered as facts, such as using projected property resale prices – which as Ballon notes were nothing more than “guesswork” (Ballon 2007, 100) – rather than market values to determine the write-down for assembled renewal sites.

In no small part due to Moses' mastery of planning narrative and the ultimate effectiveness of the Jacobsean moment in countering it, proponents of public works and other large construction projects in contemporary times face a gauntlet of regulatory red tape, budgetary pressure and community input before being allowed to build. In order to overcome those hurdles and see projects proceed or long-range development schemes enacted, many developers, planners, politicians and other growth coalition proponents have learned to engage in "Machiavellian" games of deception (Flyvberg 2005, 50) that rely heavily on Moses-like rhetorical constructions. Armed with their own self-justifying narratives – what Flyvberg identifies as "a fantasy world of underestimated costs, overestimated revenues, overvalued local development effects, and underestimated environmental impacts" – they set out to establish the legitimacy and effectively sell the logic and value – even absolute necessity – of their projects (Flyvberg 2005, 50).

One particularly persistent tactic for attempting – though not always successfully – to overcome opposition in recent New York City planning history has been the assertion that the city's literal future depends on the successful implementation of specific projects or plans. At a July 2008, Museum of the City of New York panel discussion on Westway, the failed highway and park development Moses proposed for New York City's Hudson River waterfront, Albert Butzel, a former president of the Friends of the Hudson River Park and an attorney for the Westway opposition during the proposal's tortured life, told of how the project was marketed as just such a city-changing public work. "It was said at the time that the city can't grow or be a great city without this project and the opposition was just marginalized," Butzel recalled (Butzel 2008). That argument is symptomatic of what Butzel defined as a tendency among New York City

administrations and planning institutions past and present to promote projects as “absolutely essential” to the future, and warn that the city “would fall apart” if they were not built (Butzel 2008).²⁸

Over time this narrative of threat has become a powerful theme – one that underscores continuity in discourse that runs from Moses through even Jacobs and Caro to the Schumer Group of 35 – of decisions to be made that have life-and-death ramifications for the city and its inhabitants. For Moses, the threat came in the form of blight and backwardness, and as long as New Yorkers bought the notion that he had the city’s – and their own – future best interests in mind, the “Power Broker” could plan and creatively destroy with impunity while all criticism was marginalized as the work of know-nothings and doubters (Fishman 2007). Ultimately, Jacobs was able to counter the Moses narrative with her assertion that it was Moses and other modernist planners meddling with the natural rhythms and designs of neighborhoods who were rendering cities unlivable. Soon Caro, Berman and additional critics followed suit, rewriting “the drama of Big Bob the Builder by casting him as the principal villain in their own production of ‘The People versus the Planner’” (Fishman 2007, 123).

The fundamental premise of this narrative of threat – regardless of the era or the specific vision of urbanity from which it emanates – has always been that the city is under siege and its very ability to survive has been rendered uncertain by some combination of malevolent forces, bureaucratic incompetence, outdated ideas, economically induced inertia and outright malaise that require immediate, decisive action. Over time the direction from where these threats have appeared, as well as their

²⁸ Another “crucial” project referenced by Butzel was Consolidated Edison’s unsuccessful proposal to build a hydroelectric plant at Storm King Mountain on the Hudson River in 1966.

intensity and the appropriate responses for dealing with them – has evolved. But the danger and subsequent demand for a response through planning always remains.

In 1996 this narrative of threat took on an especially explicit and geographically expansive form with the publication of *A Region at Risk: The Third Regional Plan for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Area* by the Regional Plan Association, the not-for-profit planning organization whose self-described mission is to improve “the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the 31-county” region surrounding New York City (Regional Plan Association n.d.).²⁹ Using the economic recession of 1989-1992 and the long, slow process of recovery that followed as a backdrop, the framers of *A Region at Risk* drew heavily from both Jacobs and Moses in pushing for a new, post-industrial form of urbanism geared toward enhancing the region’s competitiveness given “new global trends [that] have altered New York’s national and global position” (Regional Plan Association n.d.). As such, *A Region at Risk* would serve as an important forerunner for the Bloomberg Administration, influencing not only its approach for pushing forward with an ambitious redevelopment agenda but also its mobilization of Jacobs and Moses to that end.

A REGION AT RISK

With the lingering effects of the 1989-1992 recession prompting planners to reconsider certain of the assumptions that had guided previous attempts to shape urban environments, the authors of *A Region At Risk* surmised that “success is no longer guaranteed and that a new plan for the future of the region should not be about managing growth that is inevitable, but about finding new ways to stimulate growth that is

²⁹ Robert Yaro, the president of the Regional Plan Association and co-author of *A Region at Risk*, jokes of having a “Death of New York bookcase” in his office, anchored by Caro’s *The Power Broker* with its assertion that Moses had engineered the “Fall of New York” (Yaro 2009).

uncertain” (Yaro and Hiss 1996 xix). To accomplish that, they concluded, would require nothing less than “a decade of region-shaping investments” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 41) as a means of “building the region’s economy in the new landscape of global competition” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, xix). Not surprisingly, the economic focus of this assessment resulted in a business-friendly plan that was the collective product of a who’s who of the region’s corporate leaders and growth coalition members. A group of business leaders from eight key industry sectors was invited by the RPA to offer insights into how best to “address the dilemma of regional competitiveness in the global economy” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 9), and at the time the plan was created the group’s Executive Committee included Chairman Gary C. Wendt, CEO of GE Capital; and vice chairmen and co-chairmen Aristides W. Georganas, chairman and CEO of Chemical Bank, N.J.; Bruce L. Warwick, executive vice president of The Galbreath Company, one of the nation’s largest privately held real estate development firms; J. Christopher Daggett, managing director of the global merchant bank, William E. Simon & Sons; and John L. Lahey, president of Quinnipiac College. Its full Board of Directors comprised 54 members representing a range of financial services, architectural, media, real estate, energy and pharmaceutical companies as well as representatives of six area academic institutions, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; the National Minority Supplier Development Council and the United Federation of Teachers.

As the name suggests, the third regional plan was not the RPA’s first attempt at developing a “long-range, comprehensive blueprint” for the greater New York City metropolitan area. In 1929 the group, then called the Committee on the Regional Plan for New York and its Environs, proposed the “world’s first long-range metropolitan plan”

based on the premise that the New York metropolitan region's population would double – to 20 million inhabitants – by 1965.³⁰ Its agenda, as the introduction to *A Region at Risk* points out, centered on the construction of highways, bridges, parkways, parks and “proposals to create new kinds of urban and suburban communities,” and even though it spawned criticism from notable corners, it proved successful in providing the planning framework that allowed “master builders Robert Moses, Austin Tobin, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr.,” to tap federal funds for their projects (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 2).³¹

In 1968 a second regional plan was completed, conceived in certain ways to deal with the consequences – suburban sprawl and urban decline, among them – fueled by the automobile-oriented aspects of the first.

The “Introduction” to *A Region at Risk* also acknowledges the distinctive planning and political/economic environments in which each of the RPA's plans emerged. While those plans' broad frameworks – a regional focus on economic expansion and preserving green space during times of seismic demographic growth and

³⁰ It would not be the last time that the narrative would revolve around scenarios of projected population growth and the threats, or at least challenges, associated with it. Writing in the *Municipal Review* in 1948, at the height of the Moses era, Paul Windells, then president of the Regional Plan Association, estimated that by 1970 two million additional people would reside in the New York metropolitan region. “This may be the best, it may also be the last, opportunity for an effective decision as to our future,” he concluded (Windells 1948).

In a late 1962 edition of the Pratt Planning Papers, published from 1962-1968 by Pratt Institute's Department of City and Regional Planning, relied on that same prediction to argue that those additional residents would “settle” more than 1,500 square miles of undeveloped land in the New York metropolitan region while an equal number of inner-city residents would migrate from the city center to its outskirts and “1½ million minority group members will be added to the region's as yet unassimilated two-and one-half millions” (Pratt Institute Department of City and Regional Planning 1962, 1). Exactly one year later, another editorial warned that due to a lack of room for expansion in an already acceptably dense central city, “by 1985, it is expected that the surrounding communities will have to absorb the entire forecast 6 million population growth” (Pratt Institute Department of City and Regional Planning 1963, 2). At the time, the metropolitan region's population was already at 16 million. “The six million extra people will be here by 1985, whether we like it or not. They will need homes...”, the editorial warned, and it went on to argue for “channeling of growth” by regulating development and passing state legislation that would allow “the establishment of public development corporations empowered to acquire land – by eminent domain, if need be – and to build all public facilities, streets, and utilities needed by the future population of the town” (Pratt Institute Department of City and Regional Planning 1962, 2-4).

Then, in 2007, Mayor Bloomberg would launch his PlaNYC2030 on the basis of projections that New York City's population would grow by another 1 million people by the 2030. See p. 33.

³¹ Among those critics was Lewis Mumford, who questioned the notion that population growth was inevitable and argued for restricting development and de-concentrating the urban core (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 1)

cyclical economic crisis – drew inspiration from past planning paradigms and have remained fundamentally consistent, each grew out of geographically and historically specific contexts. This had important ramifications, not only in terms of the economic landscape, but in political and planning dynamics as well. As the *Region at Risk* details, the researchers and writers who crafted the third plan worked, “(I)n an era in which narrowly focused, one-issue-at-a-time strategic planning” predominated and federal powers and funds were rapidly being transferred to states and regions as part of the greater shift toward neoliberal policies (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 2). “The current approach,” they wrote at the time, “presents the very real danger that the national government will abrogate responsibility for urban centers and the needs of the poor and elderly” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 2). As a result, *A Region at Risk* represents what its authors believe to be “a radical departure” from the conventions of the day. By proposing a comprehensive, long-term approach to planning for the region’s economy, equity and environment – what they dubbed the “three E’s” – the plan’s drafters sought to re-affirm the region’s “ability to chart its own course” in an age when technological advances in communications and the rise of a global economy mean that “(C)ompanies, and even whole industries that had been the mainstay of the regional economy, are no longer ‘bolted down’ here” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 2-3) and where – “in a post-Cold War, deregulated, Internet and inter-linked world” – those global businesses “can pack up shop any time and head for some place that has not already been fouled up” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 9). They warned that the threat from this looming storm was immediate and potentially catastrophic. Noting that the 17-county New York metropolitan region lost 770,000 jobs and almost one fourth “of its share of national output in key industry sectors, including business services, media and

3. Economy: Transformation to a Competitive Global Economy

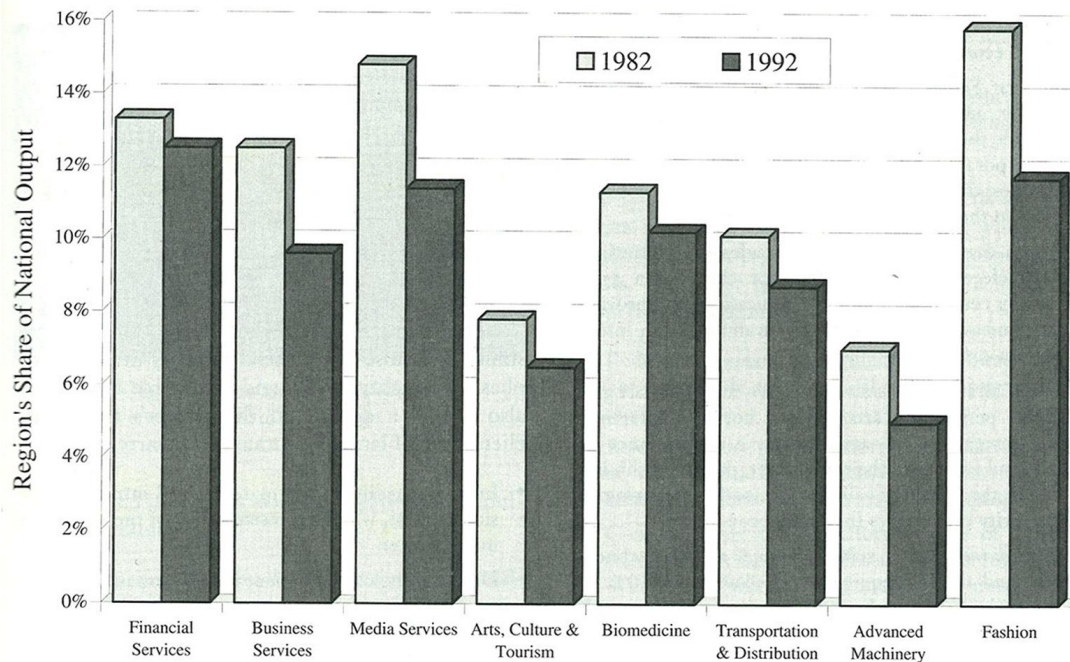


Figure 14: Share of U.S. Output in Major Industry Clusters, 1982 and 1992.

Source: DRI/McGraw-Hill, Inc., *The Tri-State Competitive Region Initiative, Diagnostic Assessment*, April 1994.

Figure 7: Graph from *A Region At Risk* illustrating the New York metropolitan area's shrinking share of key industry sectors "in a post-Cold War, deregulated, Internet and inter-linked world" (Source: *A Region At Risk*, by Robert D. Yaro and Tony Hiss. Copyright © 1996 by Regional Planning Association. Reproduced by permission of Island Press, Washington, D.C.).

communications and advanced manufacturing" during the 1989-1992 recession, they suggested "that modest growth in the next few years could mark the beginning of a long, slow, and potentially irreversible and tragic decline" (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 5-7). Traffic congestion, environmental degradation, sprawl, inadequate infrastructure and underinvestment in human capital all contributed to a growing inability to compete in the global economy, they maintained. Additional concerns included "fluid" economic conditions, "shifting employment prospects created by global competition, industry restructuring and immigration; growing disparities between poor central cities and inner suburbs and rich outer suburbs;" racial and social polarization; a decline in the number of

low-skill employment opportunities; stagnant middle-class incomes; and gridlock, the “result of decentered, automobile-based growth” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 11).

By emphasizing a wider geographic context, the RPA sought to tap into an emerging shift in planning orthodoxy regarding scale. In the last decade of the 20th century, planners around the country maintained that given the linkages – economic, infrastructural, cultural – between older central cities and their surrounding suburbs, solutions to the ills of one or the other required integration and regional perspective (Fishman 2000). Without a resurgence of the type of metropolitan-wide “cooperation, competitiveness and investment” that Moses had championed decades earlier, the framers of *A Region at Risk* contended, the citizens of the greater New York City region faced a future of “declining growth and diminished prosperity” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 6).

Yet by setting up a doomsday scenario, the authors also set the stage for potential salvation. A sustainable “alternative future is possible,” they maintained, “... because of new opportunities inherent in the transformed world economy” and the relative strengths of the New York City metropolitan region in seizing them (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 8). To “recapture the promise of the region,” the authors wrote, it would be necessary to “reconnect” it to three basic and “interlocking” foundations – economy, equity and the environment – that together comprise “the components of our quality of life” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 6). The proposed solution would be to rebuild these “Three E’s” “through investments and policies that integrate and build on our advantages, rather than focusing on just one of the ‘E’s’ to the detriment of the others” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 6). At the time, the authors suggested, too much emphasis was being placed on economic development, leading to what amounted to “border warfare, as states within the region try

to steal businesses from each other in what amounts to a zero-sum game” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 6). Lost in that game, they asserted, was an effective approach to festering social ills, which were left to be addressed by a “bloated” system of welfare that failed to bring its recipients into the economic mainstream, or a meaningful, long-term plan to deal with increasingly apparent and rising environmental concerns (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 6).

Still, within the globalizing economy New York City was, in their view, especially well positioned to leverage its existing strengths into building an infrastructure for the future: its cultural and arts institutions, universities and research centers “provide a foundation for continuing leadership in creativity-based industries, including advertising, broadcasting and publishing.” Despite sprawl, the region remained “strongly centered, compactly developed,” and at its economic heart was an expanding Central Business District that “takes in Downtown Brooklyn, Long Island City and the Jersey waterfront (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 8). “As markets have transformed in scope from a national to an international focus – tied together by global networks of information transmission, production, and distribution, and given new range by liberalized agreements on trade in goods and services,” the authors wrote, “knowledge-based world cities have emerged as global capitals in design, management, and financial services for high value-added products” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 27). The existing “concentration of globally oriented firms” in Manhattan – “the region’s core” – served as a magnet for other international firms, they asserted, but global competitiveness requires highly skilled workers and those workers “are attracted to a world city-region not solely by its economic opportunity, but also by its quality of life” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 30).

To be sure, the city already had benefited greatly from this “structural transformation of the economy” and the resulting concentration of high-value industries at its heart. The study notes that between 1970 and 1989 the region’s payroll employment jumped from 7.9 million to 9.5 million, with virtually of that growth coming after 1977 and 420,000 of the new jobs centered in New York City, reflecting the onset of “a period of rapid acceleration in international trade and the integration of global markets” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 28). At the time of the plan’s writing, the region accounted for some 50 percent of all securities traded, exceeding \$3 trillion in 1994, and “more foreign companies were listed on the New York stock exchanges than in London or in Frankfurt, Paris and Tokyo, combined” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 27). Twelve of the largest 20 international law firms and five of the six largest accounting firms of the day had their headquarters in New York City (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 27), and “advanced white collar skills” – executive, managerial, professional, and technical positions – accounted for three in every four net new jobs” created between 1980 and 1990 (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 30). In a cyclical process that fueled itself as well as the system it relied on, “technology elevates the level of skill required of the workforce and creates new demand for goods and services – by increasing productivity and therefore real incomes, and by generating new products of consumption” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 30). In turn, the needs and whims of the sophisticated, highly compensated work force that exhibited those skills would spin off ever greater demand for a range of “in-person” services – health care, personal care, entertainment, etc. – that could not be outsourced or replaced through technology and therefore provide additional jobs and income (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 33).

Yet because of that outsized reliance on Wall Street and downtown corporate functions for regional vigor, the city's economy and the quality of life it aspired to spawn remained especially susceptible to the volatility associated with the global economy, a susceptibility that in turn was passed on to the surrounding suburbs. Periodic recessions and global downturns routinely resulted in slashed incomes and fits of corporate downsizing and layoffs that rippled outwards from the region's epicenter. From 1989 to 1992, for instance, a "world-wide collapse of property and equity markets" meant the loss of 770,000, or 8 percent of the region's total, jobs; 42 percent of which were located in the city. A decline in old-economy manufacturing jobs and what *A Region At Risk* refers to as a restructuring of labor relations toward short-term employment contracts and performance-related pay brought about by global drives to enhance cost competitiveness and shareholder value teamed with increased demand for "a highly skilled cadre of independent professionals who trade on knowledge, contacts, and virtual office technology" to help create an "hourglass economy," with middle-class incomes and opportunities squeezed by the same forces that beginning in the 1970s contributed to a widening divide between rich and poor (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 34). From 1979 to 1989, the wealthiest one-fifth of the region's households saw their incomes grow 40 percent while the poorest fifth saw theirs climb just 7 percent. The greatest impact on wages and employment, the study surmised, came from "technological change that displaces routine labor and increases the productivity and bargaining power of workers with higher cognitive and technical skills" (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 50). During the 1980s, it continued, "over 1 million managers, professionals and technicians" were added to the region's payrolls, "while jobs that required primarily manual skills...declined by 140,000" (Yaro

and Hiss 1996, 51). As manufacturing jobs continued to fade, the study warned: “By continuing to lag behind national economic performance, the region is likely to forfeit 590,000 jobs it might otherwise have created by 2005” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 32).

In an effort to better understand the region’s relative strengths and weaknesses, the RPA and the economic consulting firm DRI/McGraw-Hill “engaged industry leaders” in financial, business and media services; arts, culture and tourism; biomedicine; transportation and distribution; advanced machinery and systems and fashion “in a collaborative process to determine industry priorities and to develop strategies to address competitive challenges” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 35). Not surprisingly, this elite group of globally oriented, predominately white-collar industry leaders recommended plan prescriptions and strategies that prioritized their needs, from lowering regulatory barriers and upgrading workforce skills to retaining and attracting highly skilled professional talent, in part via the enhancement of the region’s quality of life (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 36). “With the ability to attract and retain creative talent repeatedly cited as the major competitive issue for most of our leading industries, improvement in the region’s quality of life is clearly a leading competitive priority” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 38), the authors noted. As for what constituted quality of life the RPA turned to a Quinnipiac College Polling Institute survey of regional residents. That poll found that safe streets and strong communities and neighborhoods – notions at the core of Jane Jacobs’ ongoing appeal – ranked highest, followed by strong financial institutions and good public schools (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 38). As a result, making the city safer and more appealing to “high-value industries” and their mostly white-collar potential workforces would become a central focus of the third regional plan, and its core strategies would be conceived to “underpin

the region's quality of life and competitiveness" as a means of guiding "us to sustainable growth as we enter the 21st century" (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 13).

QUALITY OF LIFE AS COMPETITIVE EDGE

Among the key proposals in this regard was what the RPA dubbed its "Greensward" initiative. Conceived as a third great round of "city-scaping and urban parks construction" (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 101) after the Olmsted and Moses eras, the greensward effort served as equal parts urban environmentalism and economic development and featured three central components: the creation of 11 regional preserves; reinvestment in urban parks and public spaces and the creation of a network of greenways, or linked open-space corridors; and within these, the potential to create "sensational new harborfront parks," including the Brooklyn Bridge Park (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 101).³² Within this initiative, limits would be set on future growth so as to "safeguard the region's green infrastructure of forests, watersheds, estuaries, and farms." Growth, instead of sprawling outward from New York City and the surrounding metropolitan region, would be focused inward, on existing employment and residential centers, augmented with improved mobility provided by complementary transit initiatives that would revitalize the region's transportation infrastructure in order to link those hubs. Investments in workforce skills and training would fuel the region's economic dynamism and enable more of its residents to join the mainstream, while new forms of governance would energize and reorganize political and civil institutions. Well-designed "parks, playgrounds, and streetscapes" would help make urban areas "livable and attractive for residents and businesses" (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 14). "Abandoned and underutilized"

³² The name "greensward" was drawn directly from Frederic Law Olmsted, the renowned designer of New York City's Central and Prospect Parks (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 83).

waterfronts, leftover industrial sites and landfills – together accounting for 50,000 acres of brownfield – would be redeveloped (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 15). “Transit friendly” initiatives, including proposals to develop an integrated regional rail network to smooth gaps and inefficiencies caused by seven separate systems operated by three distinct entities at the time, coupled with “civic design improvements in Manhattan’s midtown and downtown districts” would re-emphasize New York City’s traditional business districts as the economic anchor of the region (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 16). Similarly the Central Business District – essentially the downtown half of Manhattan from Midtown south – would be strengthened by “coordinating transit initiatives to connect Lower Manhattan to regional rail with an effort to guarantee the district’s role as a global financial center,” extending public transportation across Midtown (from the United Nations to the Hudson River and south past the Javits Center) and providing better public access to the Hudson River waterfront (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 120).

In keeping with the neoliberal orthodoxy of the times and its emphasis on increasingly shifting the responsibility for funding for federal programs to the states – what *A Region At Risk* refers to as “the newest federalism currently in vogue” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 40) – the plan acknowledged a “universal disdain for big, distant government” leading the RPA to shy away from proposing the formation of a “general purpose metropolitan government” to oversee its proposed transformation.³³ Instead, it focused its government initiatives on ways to “rationalize the activities of existing authorities, ‘right size’ spending programs and encourage service sharing among municipal governments, and lend support to more effective state and regional land use planning programs” (Yaro

³³ For instance, the report noted that federal funding for communities in New York and New Jersey to meet the goals of the federal Clean Water Act fell from \$600 million in 1972 to \$235 million in 1987, and that that funding came in the form of low-interest loans rather than direct grants (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 64).

and Hiss 1996, 17). The plan acknowledged that pursuing a new era of park expansion within such a resource-challenged environment made “innovative” strategies essential.³⁴ Among the options for funding and maintaining the urban parks it proposed were property tax surcharges real estate transfer taxes, property tax surcharges linked to rises in property values and park improvement districts, as well as private funds – which the RPA credited with playing a vital role in successful restoration efforts in Central Park, Brooklyn’s Prospect Park and Bryant Park in midtown Manhattan. “As shown in Bryant Park, improvements paid for by [these] taxes can help pay for themselves by increasing property values and rents,” the report reads, though it acknowledged that “...these assessments are likely only to support parks in wealthier areas” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 110). To fund parks in less wealthy areas, the plan suggested concessions and turning over swatches of public space to profit-seeking private enterprise. Waterfront parks and green spaces, for instance, should include “just enough water-related development – marinas, restaurants and the like – to raise the requisite operational funds (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 108). Similarly, in a section entitled “Environment: Green Infrastructure Under Siege,” the plan argued that business should take the lead in addressing environmental issues as part of a wider “shift from ‘regulate the process’ to ‘set the standard for the outcome’” that was increasingly reflected in public policy. It suggested such business leadership could take the form of “collaborative pilot projects” and “incentive (but not subsidy) programs” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 77).

³⁴ Creating 100 new parks and recreation areas in “underserved neighborhoods” alone was projected to cost \$195 million; to maintain them an additional \$20 million annually, according to the New York City Parks Council (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 110).

‘NUANCE’ AND ‘BOLD STROKES’

In spite of being shaped by such contemporary political economic trends, the Third Regional Plan is rife with influences from past planning paradigms, and Moses and Jacobs weigh prominently, if not always explicitly, in its formulation. To Robert Yaro, the RPA’s president and co-author of *A Region At Risk*, “both traditions influenced us” (Yaro 2008). Jacobs’ legacy, Yaro suggested, was “one of nuance,” and by the time the *A Region At Risk* was conceived her “extraordinary” influence on urban design had been assimilated into the mainstream to become a fundamental element of the planning orthodoxy that shaped the RPA’s plan. “She’s St. Jane, and for good reason,” Yaro said. “She’s made a remarkable contribution” (Yaro 2008), and in certain sections of *A Region At Risk* the links to her are especially pronounced. At one point the plan advises towns to adopt zoning ordinances in order to encourage high-density, mixed-use development in their centers; in another, in language practically culled directly from *The Death and Life and Great American Cities*, it argues for future development that would “fit the character of existing” neighborhoods (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 105). The plan also raises the specter of Jacobs when it proclaims that “involving neighborhood residents through community management strategies” can help secure park safety and contribute to maintenance in a time of shrinking municipal budgets. Much like Jacobs’ celebrated notion of “eyes on the street,” the RPA suggests that “[M]aintaining an increased local presence in the park can also reduce vandalism and help make residents feel more secure when using parks” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 110). It argues for incentivizing transit- and pedestrian-friendly development and advocates for the implementation of mixed-use planning and design principles (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 120).

Moses, on the other hand, represented “bold strokes, big moves, less nuance,” and his shadow also looms over the plan’s ambitious scope and scale (Yaro 2008). According to Yaro, *A Region At Risk* built off of and, in a sense, served as a response to the elements of the region’s built environment that Moses was responsible for. Within the plan, for instance, “there is a widespread recognition that there are few ways to expand the regional highway system so we have to develop more efficient ways to make use of it” (Yaro 2008). Moses also casts a significant shadow over the plan’s emphasis on regional integration, and the RPA undoubtedly had him in mind when it encouraged finding innovative ways of channeling federal money for local and regional projects.³⁵

In a significant sense then, the Third Regional Plan, “splits the difference,” incorporating elements of both Jacob and Moses (Yaro 2008): at its heart it is “a transit plan” that is regional in scope, making it consistent with Moses, with much in it about city planning and community design that is derived directly from Jacobs (Yaro 2008). The plan’s “centers campaign,” for instance, calls for “investing in the creation of 11 regional downtowns” – revitalizing “inner-city communities by reinforcing community-based organizations and linking them and the residents they serve with the regional economy” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 117) – to absorb projected population growth and expand future economic opportunity. An important aspect of this campaign is what the RPA calls a revolution in design and the principals upon which communities are planned. In post-war America, the RPA observes, “...[W]e built a new civilization around the interstate highways and the automobile and walked away from cities and older suburban neighborhoods” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 118). In response, the plan promotes compact,

³⁵ Two examples highlighted in *A Region At Risk* were the New York City Department of City Planning’s use, in the 1990s, of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) to fund the rebuilding of a hiking and biking trail along the Shore Parkway in Brooklyn and to acquire the abandoned North Shore Staten Island Railroad right of way for extension of its greenway plan (Yaro and Hiss 1996)

mixed-use development in existing centers rather than new centers on the city edge, acknowledging a debt to New Urbanism, which draws its inspiration from Jacobs. The plan calls on metropolitan governments to use all of the resources at their disposal: “private initiative, community input, and the public tools of planning – zoning, incentives and master plans...” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 124).

Among the areas to be revitalized and transformed into new regional centers were Jamaica and Long Island City in Queens, and downtown Brooklyn, which, according to *A Region at Risk*, “has all the ingredients of a great downtown,” defined by a distinctive melding of Jacobsean and Mosaic ideals: “a ceremonial entrance, via the Brooklyn Bridge, to a civic park and an historic city hall; seven institutions of higher education; world-class cultural institutions; an active pedestrian-oriented retail area; a state-of-the-art office and academic complex; headquarters of major government agencies and federal and state courts; a commuter rail system and excellent public transit access; a diverse population; and historic brownstone neighborhoods” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 122).

Ultimately, however, the legacies of Moses and Jacobs converge in the Third Regional Plan as the promotion of an emergent form of urbanism in which planning *is* economic development. Virtually all of the RPA’s proposals – from big projects such as reinvigorated waterfront development, to small ones like plans for planting street trees – are geared as much toward enhancing property real estate values and attracting the sophisticated, highly compensated workers needed to keep New York City’s information-based, globally oriented economy humming as they are toward reworking the region’s transportation networks or limiting sprawl and preserving its green spaces. Citing a December 1993 Parks Council and Central Park Conservancy publication, *Public Space*

for *Public Life*, the authors of *A Region At Risk* directly assert that “[W]ell-managed and attractive open space” is a vital element of redevelopment efforts as “[N]umerous studies have clearly shown that adjacent parks, street trees and woodlots, and views of open space or water can significantly enhance rents, property value, and property taxes” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 108).

Together with *A Region at Risk*'s unquestioning emphasis on enhancing New York City's competitive position while privatizing services and scaling back social welfare, the economic development orientation of the plan opens the RPA to criticism that it aspires to build a city for the middle- to upper-classes. This charge – of gentrification through public policy – is one Yaro readily acknowledges, and claims to take seriously. He tells the story of attending a forum where he met Jacobs on what would be her last visit to New York before she died and asking her about the transformation of Greenwich Village. “I said the neighborhood has been protected but the characters haven't,” Yaro recalled (Yaro 2008). “It gentrified. I asked her, ‘How do you deal with that?’ She said, ‘Well, I don't think it will last.’”

“[Gentrification] is a real quandary,” Yaro continued. “You preserve character and preserve the quality of life and people with money buy in and people without are pushed out. How do you deal with that? Subsidies? Direct intervention? New York City has had a housing crisis since 1940,” he concluded. “It is one of the constants, one of the results of the success of the city” (Yaro 2008).

GENTRIFICATION AS URBAN STRATEGY

At the time Jacobs was crafting her conception of the successful city in *The Death and Life Great American Cities*, gentrification had yet to appear as a recognizable process

– even the term had yet to be coined – and her fix-it-up ethos was welcomed as a small-scale, largely local and thoroughly private initiative for addressing what previously had been a public concern: the dilapidated state of urban housing and the range of social ills that were associated with it. Even as the notion of buying existing, relatively low-cost housing and renovating it in order to increase its value became more commonplace, gentrification remained a sporadic, historically discreet and far from generalized phenomenon (Smith 1996). Only as the rapid – and federally subsidized – suburbanization of the United States after World War II set in motion large-scale shifts in urban land values that resulted in new rounds of slum creation did these physical manifestations of capital’s tendency toward uneven development become ripe for large-scale reinvestment (Smith 1996).³⁶ At the local level, gentrification remained the product of neighborhood housing markets, the seemingly quaint and somewhat “quixotic” rehabilitation and renovation of existing housing stock that occurred through the turning of tenements into historic brownstones, for instance (Smith 1996, 57). But at the metropolitan scale the process began to take shape as a central feature of the broader economic and social forces reshaping cities in the advanced capitalist world, prompting a critical shift in the perception and politics of gentrification.

With the loss of manufacturing jobs and the related growth in “producer services, professional employment and the expansion of so-called ‘FIRE’ employment (Finance, Insurance, Real Estate)” that accompanied post-war economic restructuring came a “concomitant” restructuring of the processes shaping urban landscapes (Smith 1996, 38-39). In the United States and Europe, as well as in parts of the “developing” world,

³⁶ For a detailed discussion of uneven development see Smith, 1984; for a more focused discussion as it relates to gentrification see Smith, 1996 pp. 77-92

urbanization – through the establishment and promotion of private property rights and real estate markets intimately linked to the circuits of international capital connecting an emerging network of global cities (Harvey 1989, Peck and Tickell 2002) – swiftly emerged as a critical vehicle for the absorption of surplus capital (Harvey 2008). Local governments, eager to harness these forces and channel their productive capacities to their own benefits, increasingly turned to urban policies promoting the redevelopment of regions deemed under-utilized, under-performing or otherwise blighted as a generalized strategy for re-incorporating them into the local economy. Through the late 1970s and 1980s neoliberal reforms aimed at deregulating markets, slashing public spending and dismantling existing welfare states propelled these policies forward, transforming cities into “geographical targets and institutional laboratories” for a range of “policy experiments” – from place-marketing and local tax abatements to urban development corporations and public-private partnerships – whose ultimate aim was the mobilization of “city space as an arena both for market-oriented economic growth and for elite consumption practices” (Brenner and Theodore 2002, 368). Within this increasingly global strategy, real-estate development became a centerpiece of the urban economy, justified by appeals to jobs, taxes, and tourism and abetted by the privatization of planning, apiece with the subsequent “commodification” of planning functions and their “absorption” by the private sector (Dear 1989, 449). This “corporatist approach” to planning was granted even greater heft by local governments’ need for private funds to help finance public projects, creating “a climate in which the necessity and wisdom of so-called ‘public-private partnerships’ go unchallenged” and the “rules of the development game are ceded in advance...” (Dear 1989, 451-452). From this confluence of forces a

new form of urbanism, molded by economic development corporations, business improvement districts and other forms of private encroachment on the public realm, took shape.

Meanwhile, neoclassical economic explanations attributing gentrification to “gentrifier’s preferences” increasingly were exposed as “excessively narrow,” ignoring the role of builders, developers, landlords, mortgage lenders, government agencies and real estate agents as co-agents in its production (Smith 1996, 39). Soon, these limited understandings gave way to broader theories that situated the process as a calculated component of the intentional and methodical production of urban environments – “festival markets to attract local and not so local tourists,” international investment in city-center luxury housing, a “proliferation of wine bars” and other “recreational and retail landscapes” – amenable to global corporations and their highly compensated workers (Smith 1996, 39). Over time, then, the process of gentrification became less about the local “conversion of socially marginal and working class areas of the central city to middle-class residential use” (Zukin 1987, 129), and more a generalized recipe, now fully state-supported and embedded within the larger logics of advanced capitalist urbanization, for remaking entire urban landscapes.

In an evolved form of urban renewal practices from earlier decades, local governments turned to the powers of eminent domain to carve out space for the construction of private housing, corporate office space and cultural facilities as a means of repositioning themselves as global capitals and leaders in growth industries such as management, information, culture and ideas (Holgado 2008). Abandoned and under-utilized industrial spaces – from working waterfronts to entire manufacturing districts –

were re-zoned for “adaptive” reuses or slated for demolition and redevelopment (Fishman 2000). “Privatised pseudo-public spaces,” including city squares, plazas and waterfront promenades, became key components of this wholesale reconstruction of civic identity, intentionally embedded with cultural and ideological attributes intended to signify affluence and attract investment and tourism (Miles 2000, 225). Cultural institutions – following the model of architect Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain – “become flagships for the redevelopment of whole quarters” (Miles 2000, 256), and enclaved neighborhoods like Battery Park City assumed positions as sites of affluence, symbolic “parts of a global city of electronic dealing in financial services and futures” within the greater city (Miles 2000, 257).

Design also took on new ideological force, serving to reify class relations and helping “secure the hegemony of certain groups” through the aesthetic preferences of local decision makers (Duncan and Duncan 2001, 393). This design imperative found expression in a number of material ways, often working in conjunction with local developers, real estate interests, architects and local governments to produce iconic symbols of a city’s cultural and economic capital. Spectacular architecture (Holgado 2008) – striking and unconventional new buildings designed by famous and innovative architects, dubbed “starchitects” – became landmarks, “self-contained urban refuges” for global elites and physical manifestations of a city’s global prestige (Ouroussof 2004). More than mere buildings, these attention-grabbing works of art were made conspicuous by design, “paradises for aesthetes” that served to draw tourists and boost nearby real estate values as a means of priming further development (Holgado 2008; Ouroussof 2007, 2004) while simultaneously embodying the social, economic and cultural shifts that

fostered growing class divisions (Harvey 2008) and “decorating the conditions of power” (Cruz 2009). Supported by “a concerted and systemic partnership of public planning with public and private capital” (Smith 2002, 441), this “third wave” of gentrification represented nothing less than the “retaking” of cities by the upper and middle classes (Harvey 2008, Smith, 1996, Smith 2002, Smith and DeFilippis 1999).

CONTINUITIES IN PLANNING

Just as the Third Regional Plan drew from Moses and Jacobs – among others – in attempting to address the stubborn issue of housing, it would come to serve as an influential model of gentrification through public policy for the Bloomberg administration, offering ideas that would reverberate through issues ranging from waterfront development and extending the No. 7 subway line west from Times Square to catalyze development of on Manhattan’s Far West Side to a new great era of park building. Indeed, much of the administration’s redevelopment agenda reads as if it were plucked straight from the pages of the Third Regional Plan. While *A Region At Risk* suggested that “[t]he reclamation of the region’s urban waterfronts offers opportunities to create extraordinary new public spaces” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 108), Bloomberg’s Director of City Planning Amanda Burden would talk of “iconic public spaces” and “reclaiming the city’s waterfront.” In others ways, the Third Regional Plan presages many of Bloomberg’s signature initiatives, including the overt call for the provision of affordable housing options through “density bonuses” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 105) and the focus on outer-borough development, including the RPA’s call for regional central business districts. Under Bloomberg, redevelopment in Long Island City would be



Figure 8: Brooklyn Bridge Park, one of the Bloomberg administration’s signature efforts to reclaim the working waterfront (Photo by the author, Feb. 7, 2010).

reconceived as a “revitalized Queens West waterfront” (Yaro and Hiss 1996, 123), and in Jamaica the administration would produce one of its earliest “superior narratives” in pushing for a transit-oriented, mixed-use transformation of the neighborhood. In time Bloomberg would also embrace the use of parks and open spaces to enhance real estate values and drive development, and raise issues of environmental sustainability and projected population growth to assert the need for immediate and decisive action. Like the RPA, the administration would steadfastly promote the privatization of public space as a way of covering the costs of redevelopment, focus on supporting institutions – such as Columbia University in its fight to claim room for expansion – that contribute to the

city's image as a global capital, and embrace a class-based, value-laden definition of quality of life.

According to Yaro, this nexus of ideas – from Moses and Jacobs through the Third Regional Plan to Bloomberg –was “no accident” (Yaro 2008). Having served on the sustainability advisory board that led to Bloomberg's PlaNYC 2030 and prior to that on Schumer's Group of 35, Yaro has been an influential member of the planning elite that has written New York City's redevelopment narrative for nearly three decades. “In the regional planning business,” he noted, “things take time” (Yaro 2008).

While the resulting vision for transforming New York City's built environment harkens back to a time when “we took for granted that our leaders had physical agendas” (Barwick, e-mail exchange with author, Nov. 25, 2008), it stands in marked contrast to city leadership from the end of the Moses era through the 1970s fiscal crisis and up to Sept. 11, 2001. As with many things, 9/11 changed the existing development landscape in New York City, ushering in a period “of enormous optimism” when “we were in the mood for rebuilding in the wake of 9/11” and prompting calls for a development czar as well as spawning much discussion about what kind of city to rebuild. Into this build-friendly environment stepped the recently elected Bloomberg, with Doctoroff as his “development guru” (Barwick, e-mail exchange with author, Nov. 25, 2008).³⁷

At the time, Barwick recalls, the Municipal Art Society was holding a series of workshops where city residents were given the opportunity to express their views and “aspirations for Ground Zero” (Barwick 2008). “There was recognition that you had to

³⁷ For a complete discussion of issues surrounding the rebuilding of the World Trade Center see *Contentious City: The Politics of Recovery in New York* (Mollenkopf 2004). As Lynne Sagalyn wrote in the chapter, *The Politics of Planning the World's Most Visible Urban Development Project*: “Early in the rebuilding dialogue, some advocated for a powerful rebuilding czar, a modern-day Robert Moses, who could overcome the conflicting imperatives and incessant pressures to show quick progress in the effort” (Sagalyn 2004, 26).

rebuild, but people wanted something to happen that addressed the problem, what led to the attack... a U.N. or a great university, something terrific. But you can't build cities for symbolic purposes. There has to be some economic underpinning. So when in trouble, reach for Bob Moses.” With Doctoroff – who by then had engendered numerous comparisons to the Power Broker much as Moses had written about and been compared to Haussmann – serving as “the new Bob Moses” (Barwick 2008),³⁸ Bloomberg, using the specter of the World Trade Center disaster and the city’s precarious future as a “bully pulpit” (Pinsky 2008), would set his redevelopment agenda in motion.

³⁸ See, for example, Harvard Design Magazine 2005.

CHAPTER 6: THE ARMATURE FOR DEVELOPMENT

For a Bloomberg administration bent on a neoliberal building spree and needing citizen buy-in to see it through, one of the essential challenges has been how to make the case for building on a scale not seen since the Moses era in a city still enamored of Jacobs. To be sure, by asserting as Burden has that the battle between Moses and Jacobs is over and Jacobs has won (Burden 2006a), the administration is acknowledging a very important truth, one that no city agency or public entity claiming to represent the greater good can afford to ignore: In the wider court of public perception Jacobs *is* triumphant and widely viewed as the champion of the livable city. She was a celebrity endorser, a veritable stamp of legitimacy for any author writing of urban design, and even 50 years after the publication of her most pertinent work, *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, her legacy continues to resonate with city dwellers and remains influential within planning theory.³⁹ In 2007, the Rockefeller Foundation established the annual Jane Jacobs Medal to “reaffirm the Foundation’s Commitment to New York” and to “recognize visionary work in building a more diverse, dynamic and equitable city through creative uses of the urban environment” (Rockefeller Foundation n.d.), and in the fall of 2009 Flint’s *Wrestling With Moses* reclaimed – for the moment at least – Jacobs’ place atop the podium in her ever-evolving match of legacies with Moses. Earlier that summer Jacobs was introduced to a new generation as the quintessentially rational,

³⁹ In advertisements for *The Power Broker* that appeared in the *New York Times Book Review*, for instance, Jacobs enthusiastically trumpeted Caro’s work: “What a great thing Caro has done! I could hardly put it down. I had to force myself to ration it in order to continue my own work. Apart from being so good as biography, as city history, as sheer good reading, *The Power Broker* is an immense public service” (The New York Times Book Review, Oct. 13, 1974: 11).

unproblematically non-ideological heroine of a young-adults book, *Genius of Common Sense: Jane Jacobs and the Story of The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, prior to the revisionist efforts of Ballon and Jackson, Moses had become frozen in ignominy, the perpetual evil villain of urban renewal and big plans whose underlying ideals and heavy-handed approach to process seemed to secure his fate as Jacobs' eternal opposite. Yet in virtually the same breath she used to assert Jacobs' victory, Burden embraced Moses' ability to build big by suggesting that under Mayor Bloomberg New York City was building like Moses but with Jacobs' principles in mind (see p. 39).

In his discussion of storytelling strategies within planning, Mandelbaum argues that one of the more powerful means for resolving conflicting narratives is to synthesize their competing notions in a manner that “makes sense of the parochial difference in accounts and perspectives” (Mandelbaum 1991, 212). Much in the manner that the RPA drew from both Jacobs and Moses in drafting its Third Regional Plan, the Bloomberg administration has incorporated select aspects of the pairs' foundational precepts into its redevelopment agenda, as if through a reworking of those legacies to the purposes of the present, those planning New York City's future could bury the Moses/Jacobs hatchet once and for all and provide a clear blueprint for – to incorporate a Jacobsean phrase – a truly successful city. Indeed, this effort at synthesis has become a critical piece of the administration's planning rhetoric, an essential component in its strategy for legitimizing its redevelopment agenda. In speeches and frequent appearances at forums and urban policy discussions, Doctoroff, Burden and other New York City officials have taken their

⁴⁰ In keeping with its ongoing celebration of the Jacobs spirit, the Municipal Art Society hosted a book launch celebration on June 16, 2009.

case to the public, repeatedly offering a more tempered view of Moses even as they describe a rebirth of planning under the Bloomberg administration and argue for a very specific version of what the city should look like in the years to come.

‘A DIFFERENT KIND OF THINKING’

At the July 2008, Museum of the City of New York panel discussion on Moses’ proposed park-and-highway project Westway (see pgs. 29, 84), for example, Adrian Benape, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, spoke of the assorted “what ifs” and “give-and-take of whether something is a good idea or not” associated with planning. He argued that while Westway and its associated park were defeated, a “successor park” – the extended Hudson River Park that is currently working its way in increments up the western waterfront of Manhattan – is “the right park for 2008” and represents “the will to continue to build waterfront parks” (Benape 2008). Pointing to Springfield, Mass., and Hartford, Conn., Benape argued that in hindsight, “We now know... what it’s like in cities with elevated highways running through downtown. It kills the downtown.” But he also suggested that there was a time when the “Olmsted landscape” – a clear reference to New York City’s Central and Prospect parks – was not held in high regard, and that Orchard Beach in Pelham Park – a wetlands when Moses proposed turning it into a public beach – “would never get built today.”

Celebrating the Bloomberg administration’s positive bent on Moses, he suggested that the 11 municipal swimming pools that the Master Builder built through slum clearance in the single summer of 1936 were representative of the “great challenges of can you build in the face of opposition? If you get bogged down in factionalism and

infighting, you will never build the great parks and great public works – the city changing public works – of the 21st century” (Benape 2008).

As Burden’s standard presentation of the administration’s redevelopment agenda, *Shaping the City: A Strategic Blueprint for New York’s Future*, makes clear, the administration intends to avoid that fate by planning and building – much as Moses presumably would have – while preserving the fine-grain, block-by-block diversity that Jacobs argued gives the city its dynamism (Burden 2007a, 2008, 2009a). Similarly, just as much of Moses’ ability to build big was based on the effectiveness of his rhetoric regarding the threats to New York City’s continued prosperity, and just as Jacobs crafted her response to the destructive effects of modernist urbanism as a literal question of death and life and the RPA framed its Third Regional Plan as a response to the risks the greater metropolitan area faced at the end of the 20th century, the Bloomberg administration generated its own narrative of imminent danger as the justification for a new era of aggressive planning. At the heart of this narrative, indeed the point on which it pivots, is the sense that contemporary New York City faces a pair of new and distinctly 21st-century challenges to its future prosperity. The first, as articulated by Bloomberg in his 2008 state-of-the-state speech and routinely reiterated by administration officials, is that a densely built and bureaucratically hamstrung New York City is under siege in a high-stakes battle for prominence in the global economy:

We are in a competitive struggle. And the stakes couldn't be higher. Over the past year, I've seen cities from London to Paris to Shanghai, pushing the frontiers of progress. They are doing everything they can to attract the best and the brightest in every field: medicine; engineering; construction and more. These cities are not putting up barriers; they're not looking inward or blaming someone else. They're not afraid of the new or the different, and we

shouldn't be either. If we are, we won't have a future.
(Bloomberg 2008)

The second major threat stems from questions about the city's sustainability given projections that its population will swell by 1 million inhabitants by 2030 even as its quality of life is assailed by "an increasingly unpredictable [natural] environment" and aging infrastructure (Bloomberg 2008).

The resulting plan, or "blueprint" as articulated by Burden, represents a mix of the "git'r-done" modernism and best-for-the-common-good justifications of Moses along with the urban design emphasis and more capital-friendly elements of Jacobs' enduring appeal (Burden 2009, 2008, 2007a). While it stresses New York City's competitive relationship to other cities in a global economy, it nonetheless rests on the Jacobsean notion that healthy neighborhoods make for healthy cities, and just as Jacobs had a distinct, class-based notion of what healthy should entail, the Bloomberg administration prescribes its own formula for "protecting" the "unique character" of largely middle- and upper-class single-family residential neighborhoods while rezoning "under-utilized," industrial and working-class areas like Willets Point and Manhattanville to allow for more productive uses. Just as Jacobs saw a revitalized Lower Eastside waterfront catalyzing the economic development of nearby Manhattan neighborhoods by drawing residents, corporations and tourists (Jacobs 1992, 159), the Bloomberg administration has aggressively sought to "reunite" upland New York City with its historically industrial waterfront and "promote new uses" of "underutilized" land through the creation of parks and other public amenities in all five boroughs (New York City Department of City Planning n.d. a). Throughout the plan regular references to "mixed use," density, reconnecting the waterfront to the rest of the city and fostering dynamic street life

(Burden 2007a, 2008, 2009) underscore the administration's adoption of Jacobs' foundational ideas. Indeed, Halle, writing in the commemorative issue of *City & Community*, contends that it is Jacobs, through her call for locally oriented, market-based development, who has left the more indelible imprint on the Bloomberg agenda: "In Jacobs' spirit, Bloomberg and his [Department of City Planning] see government's role as facilitating urban growth and density..." by "fostering 'multiple downtowns' in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island, as well as on Manhattan's Far West Side..., while also 'downzoning' certain neighborhoods to protect them from excessive development" (Halle 2006, 240).

Yet even as the physical manifestations of the Bloomberg agenda "represent an absorption of Jane Jacobs," and "are not Modernist in their physical forms, they are in their functionalist aims" (Fainstein 2005a, 2). Unlike Jacobs, who preached the self-healing powers of neighborhoods and embraced small-scale incremental change, the Bloomberg administration has advocated an aggressive new round of creative destruction that harkens back to Moses and his methods, complete with a readiness to invoke eminent domain and to employ a creative blend of incentives, tax subsidies and the blurring of public and private monies in order to secure developer participation.⁴¹ This aggressiveness stems, in part, from the administration's belief that the only way to ensure that once started projects will be seen through to completion is to get them far enough along that they cannot be sidelined or abandoned by future forces. Admitting some "nostalgia for Moses" and his ability to get things built, Burden wrote in the *Gotham Gazette*: "With the limitation of a two-term mayoralty, it is an enormous challenge to get great new open spaces such as Fresh Kills, the East River Waterfront in Lower

⁴¹ See Caro 1975, p. 321.

Manhattan, the High Line and the Greenpoint/Williamsburg waterfront approved, designed and built so that the initiative cannot be undone by subsequent administrations” (Burden, 2006b). Similarly, Rohit Aggarwala, who in 2006 was named Director of the New York City Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability, the department created for the express purpose of producing the long-term sustainability initiative that would become PlaNYC 2030, acknowledged “running as fast as possible” to impose as much of the sustainability agenda before Bloomberg leaves office so that it would “live well past the Bloomberg administration” (Aggarwala, 2007).⁴²

Moses’ lineage can also be found in the plan’s orientation of future development around existing or proposed transportation infrastructure – seen most keenly in efforts to extend the No. 7 subway line and replace the existing Penn Station with a new and expanded transportation hub, to be called Moynihan Station, as means of opening Manhattan’s Far West Side to redevelopment, as well as the creation of a new CBD in Jamaica, Queens, where subway, regional rail and Airtrain access to John F. Kennedy airport converge. Moses also resonates through the administration’s focus on building and expanding cultural and educational institutions – including Columbia University’s proposed expansion and a renovation of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, completed in 2009 – and what administration officials like to call the third great era of park building and expansion in New York City history after the City Beautiful era, during which many of the city’s playgrounds and monuments were built, and Moses’ 26-year tenure as the head of city parks department, a period in which the acreage within the

⁴² Prior to joining the administration, Aggarwala worked in the U.S. Department of Transportation during the Clinton administration and as a consultant at McKinsey & Co. He also earned a Ph.D in history at Columbia University where Kenneth Jackson, the author of two attempts to rehabilitate Moses, served as the faculty advisor for his dissertation, *Seat of Empire: New York, Philadelphia, and the Emergence of an American Metropolis, 1776-1837*.

parks system tripled (Benape 2007). “Moses would build in six months or a year what it takes us three or four years to build...,” Benape said in a 2008 interview with *Landscape Architecture* magazine. “He did not need to be nearly as accountable to the community as we do now” (McIntyre 2008). Nonetheless, since Bloomberg took office in 2001 the city has added 416 acres of new parkland, and in 2007 the administration proposed spending \$3 billion over three years to develop eight regional parks and expand the city’s network of green spaces so that no New Yorker was more than a 10-minute walk from a park or patch of grass (Benape 2007). Plans for proposed waterfront redevelopments in Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens feature additional public open space, ensuring city residents access to the water while at the same time providing developers with nearby public amenities sure to enhance the value of their projects (Burden 2007a).

Inherent throughout the plan, as well as in the narrative supporting it, is the notion that at the same time the administration is looking out for New York City’s greater good, it is pursuing a thoroughly – if not the only – rational course for securing its physical and economic salvation. According to Aggarwala, planning for growth in an “old, mature American city” such as New York City “requires a different kind of thinking,” a discourse focused on “how to recover, not expand” (Aggarwala 2007). He and other administration officials routinely characterize this new approach as visionary, and even after his departure from the administration Doctoroff continued to pitch the Bloomberg redevelopment agenda as “aspirational,” “a detailed action plan... that embodies values specific to the city,” and “a transformative vision” for “what we wanted the city to be, to stand for” (Doctoroff 2009). According to Doctoroff, ultimately what has made the Bloomberg administration more effective than previous administrations in

pressing its redevelopment agenda is a “lack of fear of addressing problems even when they are not politically – especially when they are not politically – palatable” (Doctoroff 2009).

Of course, unlike in the Moses era, the administration’s grand notions still largely transcend its ability to dictate the course of that future. After all, it is not the administration that is building big again, but private developers, who through tax incentives, subsidies and favorable zoning changes largely have been handed the reins to New York City’s redevelopment (Angotti 2007, Wells 2007). In fact, the only concrete mechanisms the administration has for pursuing its agenda are the creation of specific master plans – which Burden describes as “drawing what we want [spaces] to look like – and the power to dictate land use by, in the language of its master narrative, providing “the armature for development” through zoning (Burden 2007a). As Burden admits, “All we can really do is zone for the right height and for the right use and then let the market come” (Burden 2007a). Still, by recognizing the power of its land-use decisions to drive development in “underutilized” neighborhoods, even as they protect single-family home values and middle- and upper-class qualities of life in others, the administration has mobilized zoning as the chief vehicle for remaking the city along class lines.

At this point, once again it proves instructive to consider the role Moses and Jacobs have had on specific aspects of the planning process, in this case the general evolution of zoning, and more specifically the zoning standards that have guided development in New York City for nearly a century.

ZONING: ‘A MASS OF CONTRADICTIONARY IMPULSES’

From its very inception, zoning has been seen as a vehicle for social engineering, a way to protect public health, safety, morals and general welfare and promote certain activities while prohibiting others through the regulation of land use (Wickersham 2001). As previously mentioned, New York City adopted its – and the nation’s – first zoning ordinance in 1916 as a means of controlling densities by encouraging the development of tall towers set in broad plazas, introducing restrictions on floor-area ratios (FARs)⁴³, and separating uses by dividing the city into residential, manufacturing and commercial districts. The underlying assumptions of this “Euclidean” zoning were in line with the “functionalist” shift in planning during the 1920s, which itself was aligned with the Taylorist vision of the city as “a large and smoothly operating machine” (Wickersham 2001, 251). The core components of this functionalist view, including the separation of land uses, served as the framework for Moses-style modernism, with its superblocks and institutional campuses set off from surrounding neighborhoods as the ideological basis for urban renewal and suburban sprawl. By 1926 all but five states had passed zoning enabling acts and zoning had become the default “template for the creation of new urban and suburban districts” (Wickersham 2001, 251).

Once in place, these comprehensive zoning standards would guide New York City’s development for the next 45 years, even as over time piecemeal exceptions – some 2,500 by the late 1950s – added to the document’s bulk and complexity, and the lack of height limits lead to fears that Manhattan would become a series of canyons, its streets and avenues running between rows of skyscraping towers. Civic groups and reformers

⁴³ FARs are multipliers for determining a building’s size; For example, 15, the median FAR for commercial use at the time, meant a developer could build a building that has overall square footage equal to the square footage of the lot multiplied by 15.

pushed for a complete overhaul, and in 1961 the city responded by reducing FARs, meaning that in order to reach higher, a building's footprint would have to cover a smaller portion of a lot. Included in those revisions was a shift away from across-the-board regulations in favor of a more flexible, case-by-case approach as well as the introduction of the nation's first incentive zoning initiative as a means of creating new open spaces (Kayden 2000). This earliest form of incentive zoning allowed developers to build higher in exchange for providing public amenities, like plazas, atriums, gallerias, roof gardens and covered pedestrian walkways. FARs were raised from 15 to 18 and for every foot of public space agreed to produce, builders earned the right to extend their buildings 10 feet higher. The only additional requirement was that the plazas had to be open to the public at all times. Developers embraced the incentives because greater densities meant higher profits, while communities initially welcomed the creation of new public amenities. The approach had the added benefit, from the city government's point of view, of boosting property assessments and enhancing tax receipts.

The results of the program, however, were decidedly mixed. An impressive amount of public space was created – some 3.5 million square feet from its inception until 2000 (Kayden 2000) – much of it in parts of the city with little access to such amenities. Yet while some spaces proved to be valuable public resources, others were inaccessible or devoid of features that attracted public use. According to survey sponsored by the Municipal Arts Society and the City Department of Planning, roughly 16 percent of the spaces served as regional destinations or neighborhood gathering spaces while 21 percent were used as brief resting places, 18 percent were used as little more than shortcuts between two points and 41 percent were deemed “of marginal utility”

(Kayden 2000).⁴⁴ Almost immediately critics charged that the plazas generated by the incentives were lifeless and “sterile,” open expanses of concrete and stone suited to little more than walking across (Whyte 1989, 234). Jacobs, sensing the Radiant City influences at the heart of this “progressive zoning,” was among the earliest opponents: “No matter how vulgarized or clumsy the design, how dreary and useless the open space, how dull the close-up view, an imitation of Le Corbusier shouts ‘Look what I made!’” (Jacobs 1992, 23).⁴⁵ Indeed, zoning, with its traditional focus on the separation of uses, reduction of density and privileging of automobiles over pedestrians, is historically at odds with Jacobs’ most cherished ideals, and her “libertarian economic tendencies” (Wickersham 2001, 549) led her to conclude that zoning, by its nature, is “at odds with the needs of real life” (Jacobs 1992, 235). Still her opposition was directed specifically at the mobilization of zoning in support of large-scale cataclysmic projects, dynamism-killing separation of uses and what she surely saw as an unnatural suppression of the market. In contrast, however, Jacobs advocated limited forms of government intervention – what she referred to as moving chess pieces – “as an appropriate means of controlling the pace and nature of smaller-scale, more gradual changes in urban land uses” (Wickersham 2001, 550).

Contributing to the clamor for further zoning revisions was the fiscal crisis of the 1970s. As construction activity collapsed in the middle of the decade – in 1973 12,260,000 square feet of office space were built; by 1976 that figure had shrunk to 360,000 square feet (Kayden 2000) – builders and developers advocated changes that not only would make it easier for them to build, but also build bigger on more desirable and

⁴⁴ At the time of the survey, the remaining four percent were under construction or being renovated (Kayden 2000).

⁴⁵ Jacobs was writing *The Death of Life of Great American Cities* as the 1961 zoning changes were being considered. Of them she wrote: “There are several dozen use categories, each differentiated most carefully and thoughtfully – and all of them are irrelevant to the real life problems of use in diverse city districts” (Jacobs 1992, 235).

therefore profitable sites closer to the existing CBD in Midtown Manhattan. In May 1975, the New York City Board of Estimate, which at the time still held sway over the City Planning Commission, responded to the growing chorus by easing height restrictions resulting in FARs in the 20s (developer Donald Trump's 58-story Trump Tower on the corner of Fifth Avenue and 56th Street, which was completed in 1983, maxed out at 21.6), and allowing new bonuses for through-block corridors, atriums and shopping arcades (Kayden 2000). New restrictions, however, required that the plazas not only be open, but amenable, to public use. To insure that occurred, the BOE adopted a series of detailed design guidelines conceived by William "Holly" Whyte, the sociologist and urbanist whose observational studies sought to explain urban life by quantifying – often in extreme detail – how people use and interact with public spaces. Like Jacobs, Whyte was an early skeptic of the city's incentive zoning bonuses and a critic of some of the public spaces they produced. In the early 1970s his Street Life project set out to determine "what made good plazas work and bad plazas not work, and the reasons why" and to "translate" those findings "into tight guidelines" the City Planning Commission eventually incorporated into its zoning regulations in 1975 (Whyte 1989, 234). Included were formulas for determining the appropriate amount of seating – one linear foot for every 30 square feet of plaza – and a range of additional detailed prescriptions that critics contended amounted to top-down proclamations that "dictate design by formula" (Whyte 1989, 235). Also in 1975, voters in New York City approved a new city charter which established the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP), exposing proposed development projects to mandated additional layers of review. Developers chafed, arguing that such an onerous approval process would stall certain projects and possibly

even kill others, which in turn would lead to lost construction jobs and prompt corporations to move to the suburbs where land and construction costs and building requirements were less restrictive. Although they failed in their effort to derail ULURP, developers soon became adept at skirting the guidelines by applying for special dispensations, and by the late 1970s so many of these “spot zoning” releases had been granted that the zoning code had swelled to two massive volumes.

Once again, Whyte would play an important role in the ever-evolving efforts to rationalize New York City’s zoning regulations, employing time-lapse photography to study how plazas were used as part of the planning commission’s Midtown Zoning Study in 1979. Whyte argued that bonuses for atriums and other inside spaces represented “an internalization of public space and a drain on the vitality of the street” (Whyte 1989, 248). One potential solution: off-site bonuses, or the creation of nearby small urban parks, which were adopted in 1982 during a broader, sweeping revision of zoning in Midtown. FARs were reduced from 18-21.6 to 15-18, though on Manhattan’s west side, where the city was trying to drive development, higher ratios were left in place. Bonuses for everything but parks and plazas were eliminated and instead of incentivizing amenities, the City Planning Commission began requiring them.

By 1992, scores of additional revisions and amendments again rendered existing zoning standards “a mass of contradictory impulses, no longer embodying a vision or plan” (Dunlap 1992), and with a new cycle of economic downturn putting the brakes on construction, the Dinkins administration saw the political opening to push for additional revisions that could pave the way for a new era of mega-project development. “Free from the pressures posed by intense construction,” *New York Times* journalist David Dunlap

wrote at the time, “planners have the chance to chart a fresh course in zoning, instead of incessantly fine-tuning a document that took effect 31 years ago, when New York was a much different city, before communities were given a formal role in land-use review” (Dunlap 1992). Critics of the proposed revisions, however, including Peter Salins, then-chair of the urban affairs and planning department at Hunter College and a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, argued that zoning regulations were created to prevent excessive density, the juxtaposition of incompatible uses and visual offenses, not to serve as the basis for implementing comprehensive plans and pursuing “planning objectives of the moment” (Dunlap 1992). Eventually, the ongoing “economic paralysis” led the City Planning Department to cut its staff by 25 percent between 1990 and 1992, and in the end, opposition from the real estate industry buried the revision effort (Barbanel 2004). At the time, Dunlap mused that New York City might never find the political will to rewrite its zoning rules, suggesting that if “zoning is the regulatory tool by which a comprehensive plan is shaped, some broadly held vision of New York’s future would be a necessary precursor to a thoroughly revised ordinance” (Dunlap 1992).

ZONE, AND LET THE MARKET COME

A decade later, however, the Bloomberg administration would enter the picture with its renewed emphasis on Moses-scale planning in which zoning would emerge as among the most powerful tools in New York City’s planning “toolbox” (Burden 2007a). Once geared toward controlling dense, mixed-use development, zoning was now viewed as a mechanism for actively fostering density and mixed uses (Wickersham 2001), and on the surface at least it would be portrayed as a means of creating Jacobs’ preconditions for diversity. In terms of scale, however, its intended effects more closely resembled Moses-

style cataclysmic redevelopment, and soon the administration was well into the process of touting the wholesale transformation of the city. In 2004, Burden took a reporter for the *New York Times* on a personal tour of an exhibit of the administration's plans at the Center for Architecture:

“FLICKERING before Amanda M. Burden, the city planning commissioner, was a vision of New York City of the future. A computer animation showed the view from a car driving toward the Greenpoint waterfront in Brooklyn. The industrial buildings were gone, replaced by a stately procession of five- and six-story brick and stone apartment buildings, culminating in high-rise towers scattered along a wide landscaped promenade along the East River.

Then she moved on to a cardboard and Lucite model showing a far West Side of offices and apartments in oddly shaped towers and spires rising along a midblock park between 10th and 11th Avenues stretching from 34th to 39th Streets, part of the Hudson Yards development.

In another room was a view of the High Line, the long-abandoned elevated freight railway in West Chelsea, with a description of a complex plan to turn it into a landscaped promenade that could link up with the planned park in Hudson Yards. As part of the plan, owners of nearby properties would be able to sell air rights -- enabling new structures to be larger than zoning would otherwise allow -- to developers of new buildings.

Down the hall, she pointed out drawings and zoning maps for a planned office and residential center in section of Downtown Brooklyn where height limitations and design guidelines were choreographed, sometimes building by building, to create what she called 'a sense of place, a great place.'

These plans... show a city transformed, but they are only a small fraction of the planning projects and zoning proposals under study or recently adopted across the city in a burst of activity not seen in many years, planners say. 'We are creating the conditions for growth where the city can handle it,' Commissioner Burden said, 'while preserving the character of neighborhoods.' (Barbanel 2004)

Indeed, over time, little in the Burden's presentation of the administration's "strategic blueprint" has changed other than the steady progression of the number of neighborhoods that have been re-zoned. When Burden detailed the plan to Hunter College urban design and planning students on Nov. 5, 2007, the DCP had completed 78 rezonings, representing 6,000 blocks – or one out of every six blocks in the five boroughs – in 88 neighborhoods (Burden 2007a). By a May 26, 2009 presentation at the American Institute of Architect's Center for Architecture, those numbers had climbed to 94 rezonings (81 of which were outside of Manhattan) covering 8,000 blocks, including 64 downzonings to "protect neighborhood character," with another 15 rezonings awaiting City Council action (Burden 2009). At that point the presentation had also taken on a subtitle, The Five Borough Economic Opportunity Plan, a theme that also had found its way into Bloomberg's re-election campaign literature, and grown to include the assertion that the administration was committed to "zoning to improve peoples' lives" by addressing the disappearance of local grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods and expanding inclusionary housing bonuses to include home ownership (Burden 2009).

While the City Council has the ultimate say on all zoning changes – following advisory review local community boards, borough presidents and the City Planning Commission – as of September 2009 none of the proposed zoning modifications put forward by the Bloomberg Department of City Planning had been rejected.

Within the administration's planning narrative, this invigorated approach to zoning represents what officials describe as a customizable approach to land use, featuring regulations that vary neighborhood by neighborhood. In certain cases, the DCP advocated for the use of "contextual" zoning – or what Burden calls "fine-tuning"

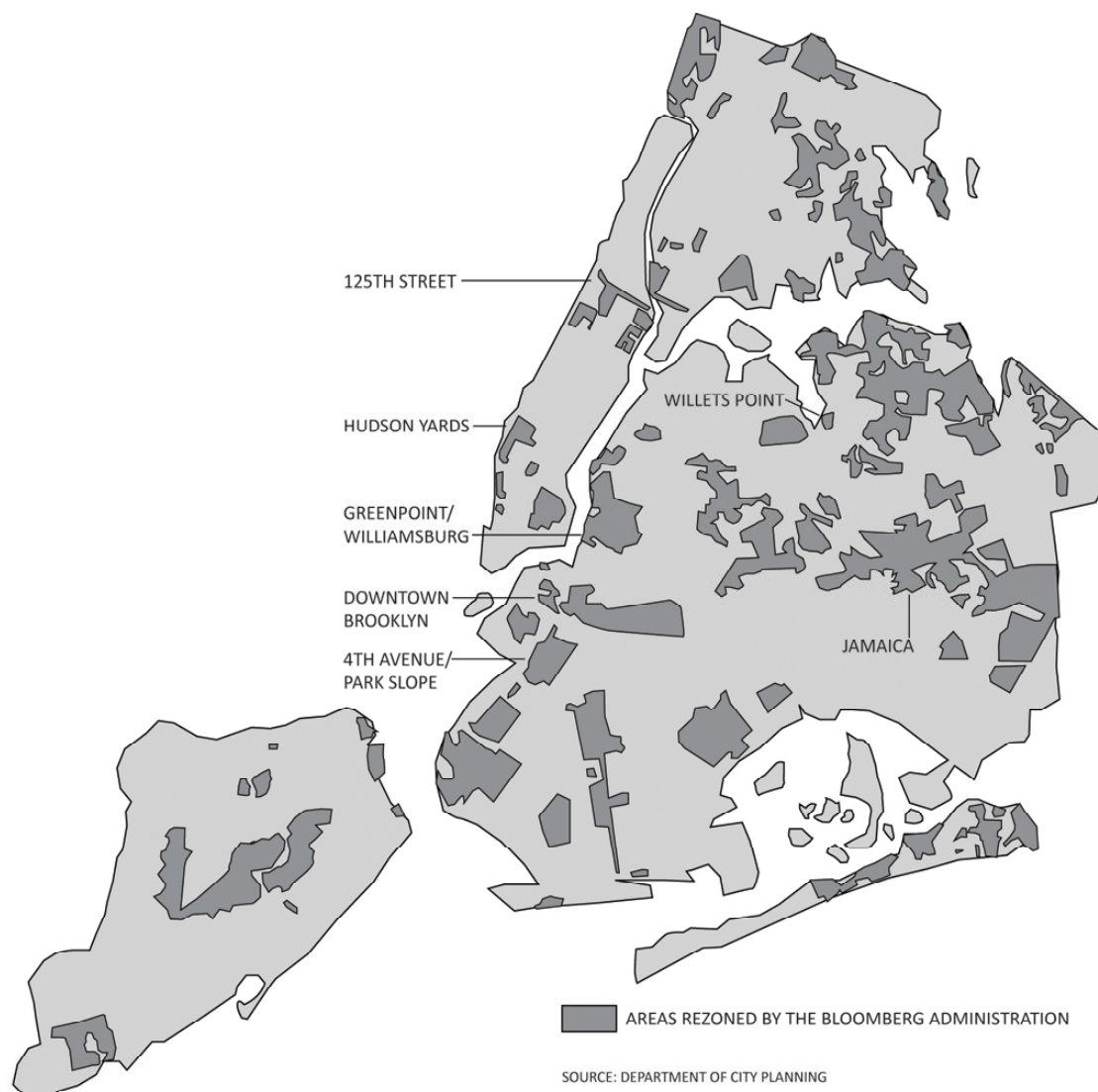


Figure 9: Citywide map of rezonings enacted by the Bloomberg administration, as of Nov. 1, 2009 (Map by Jamie Larson).

(Burden 2007a) – to limit the size and appearance of buildings on side streets while pushing higher densities and bigger buildings on avenues. In 2003, for example, 100 blocks of East Harlem and Central Harlem around Frederick Douglass Boulevard were rezoned to direct development by allowing for the building of a new generation of 12-story apartment houses on neighborhood avenues while protecting the row-house nature of side streets (Barbanel 2004). Fulton Street in Brooklyn’s Bedford-Stuyvesant



Figure 10: Through upzoning, the Bloomberg administration spurred the construction of 12-story luxury apartment buildings along Fourth Avenue in Park Slope, Brooklyn, top; while protecting the low-density brownstone nature of side streets like Second Street, bottom (Photos by author, Jan. 26, 2010).

neighborhood was proposed as another site for higher densities, and in Park Slope zoning was enacted that reduced development on side streets but allowed for 12-story buildings on Fourth Ave. As part of the later deal, which was adopted in April 2003, the city guaranteed Park Slope several million dollars in city programs that offer subsidies to developers who produce below-market-rate housing.

As many of the rezonings were being contemplated, New York City was in the midst of a housing boom. In the 40 months leading up to year-end 2003, more than 60,000 building permits were issued, a number greater than the total issued between 1990 through 1998 (Barbanel 2004), and the effort “followed the revitalization of the housing market” to the outer boroughs, where the DCP insisted it was “laying the groundwork for the next generation of office development and tens of thousands of new jobs too” (Barbanel 2004).

Indeed, a central focus of the rezoning effort has been the creation of additional, less-expensive back-office space in Long Island City and Downtown Brooklyn in order to compete with New Jersey for those corporate functions. In Jamaica, Queens, city planners seized on the recently completed Airtrain link to John F. Kennedy Airport to call for rezoning of 400 blocks that would foster the creation of a new business district – replete with construction of new office buildings, hotels, retail space and housing – while preserving the residential nature of nearby neighborhoods. But this burst of this activity put extreme development pressure on low-density residential areas, pressure the administration hoped to lessen by downzoning neighborhoods such as Clinton Hill and Bay Ridge in Brooklyn, Riverdale in the Bronx and Richmond Hill in Queens, while upzoning in order to drive more dense residential development to communities with

significant transit access, including Jamaica, Harlem and Williamsburg/Greenpoint. As *The New York Times* pointed out, “much” of the proposed downzoning was taking place in neighborhoods that voted heavily for Bloomberg “and where he is working hard to rebuild support after the city adopted an 18.5 percent property tax increase” (Barbanel 2004). In certain instances, neighborhoods seized on the opportunity to be proactive in determining their futures by requesting downzoning as means of keeping out higher-density apartment buildings. “We are seeing six- to seven-story apartment buildings where there is a lot of detached housing, and that is of concern to us,” Regina Meyer, the director of city planning for Brooklyn, told the *New York Times*. “For the first time in decades neighborhoods like Bensonhurst have been asking us for rezonings” (Barbanel 2004).

Burden and other DPC representatives like to present these down-zonings as examples of administration planners working in consultation with local neighborhoods to promote and develop community-oriented plans. “If you wanted the public to buy in, you had to ask them first,” Doctoroff insisted, referencing what he described – in the context of formulating PlaNYC 2030 – as an “unprecedented outreach effort” that included an advisory board of “experts,” the hosting of 11 town hall meetings and consultation with more than 150 advocacy groups in addition to mechanisms for website feedback (Doctoroff 2009, Aggarwala 2007). In terms of zoning, in general, Burden likes to tell the story of how she insists that the city’s planners attend community board meetings, walk the streets and make sketches of what they observe, all the while keeping an appreciation of the community as the “backbone” of the neighborhood in mind (Washburn 2008a, Burden 2007a).

Manhattan's Community Board 4, which represents the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen neighborhood directly north of Hudson Yards, provides a distinctly alternative take on the rezoning process, however. In December 2007, the City Planning Commission presented its proposal for rezoning the neighborhood – bounded by 10th Avenue and the Westside Highway and 43rd Street to 55th Street – to the community as part of the public outreach process required by ULURP. At that presentation, a group known as the Westside Neighborhood Alliance responded with its own list of concerns and development priorities, including the creation and preservation of affordable housing in the area. Six months later, Community Board 4's Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee hosted a second meeting, at which Erika Sellke, a representative of the City Planning Commission, presented a revised draft of the rezoning proposal, noting that the CPC were "co-applicants with the Community Board in the process."⁴⁶ In her introductory remarks, however, CB4 chair Anna Hayes Levin pointed out that even though the rezoning was "something [the CPC] are doing with us, not to us," the Commission had to be "cajoled" before it "finally agreed to work with us." It did not take long before it became apparent that community members attending the meeting were not convinced. Following Sellke's technocratic, detail-oriented description of the revised plan's intentions – including encouraging residential and office development on the industrial-oriented west side of 11th Avenue and preserving the "typical Clinton walk-up" residential nature of street mid-blocks – a parade of area residents stepped to an open microphone to voice their displeasure. Most were clearly frustrated, while others turned emotional. One after another they argued for more than just rezoning. They asked for more hospitals and green spaces, for "affordable housing, not just residential housing."

⁴⁶ The meeting occurred June 11, 2008, at PS 51 Elias How School, 530 W. 45th Street.

Finally one mother burst into tears as she voiced her fears of finding a school for her daughter. “You’re bringing in more residents,” she implored, “but no more schools.”

DISAPPEARING THE WORKING WATERFRONT

Yet a third, and equally contentious, focus of the rezonings has been the conversion of large tracts of land historically devoted to industry or manufacturing to office and residential use, especially along large waterfront properties which the city has deemed ideal for new – though primarily market-rate and in many cases luxury – housing. Yet in spite of suggestions to the contrary, industry has not completely abandoned New York City, and although the nature of the goods produced has changed – from ships and textiles to niche segments like specialty foods, high-end lighting and sets for Broadway shows – and the overall number of jobs has dwindled to a fraction of former levels, some 105,000 New Yorkers still make their living making things (Pratt Center for Community Development 2008). Equally important, the jobs that do remain generally offer higher wages - \$49,000 per year, on average – than other blue-collar options such as retail (\$39,000) or food service (Pratt Center for Community Development 2008).

In 2005 the Office of Industrial and Manufacturing Business (OIMB) was created as part of the Bloomberg administration’s “comprehensive industrial policy,” which included efforts to promote industrial expansion and manage newly created Industrial Business Zones (IBZs), ostensibly as a means of diversifying the city’s economic base (OIMB). Still, the city’s own redevelopment policies and rezoning initiatives ran counter to whatever efforts were made toward industrial retention by fueling demand for space for alternative uses – residential, commercial or mixed use – and thereby driving up real

estate values. In 2002, 12,542 acres of land were zoned for manufacturing in New York City; by 2008 that number had shrunk 20 percent, to 10,746 acres, with another 1,800 acres slated to be converted to other uses by anticipated future rezoning (Pratt Center for Community Development n.d.). Of the 95 rezonings approved from 2003 until the end of 2008, one quarter converted manufacturing land to some other use while none added to the amount of available industrial land (Pratt Center for Community Development n.d.). “We only have any meaningful amount of manufacturing remaining in the city because we used the strong regulatory power of the state to require that in some areas that’s what you can do with your property,” the Pratt Center’s Brad Lander pointed out during the Gotham Center forum. “There may have been a time when an economic mix of uses would have sustained itself, but the threat to our manufacturing spaces is the rents. Owners of those properties would like to convert them because they could make a lot more money if they were allowed to convert to residential development...” (Lander 2006). Likewise, just because land has been zoned industrial that offers no guarantee that it is used for manufacturing. New York City’s zoning regulations allow big-box retail stores, shopping malls, hotels and in some cases even office buildings – which Burden noted the administration is willing to incentivize “because that generates an enormous amount of jobs and tax revenue” (Burden 2006a) – to occupy land zoned for industrial uses.

Even the efforts of the OIMB suggest the administration is serious only about retaining a minimal level – and then of a certain kind – of manufacturing. Through 2008 the OIMB had created 16 IBZs covering 4,100 acres – or less than one third of the total land devoted to manufacturing in 2002 and less than half of remaining industrially zoned

space – none of it in Manhattan. Most of the existing IBZs are run in partnership with local non-profit development corporations and receive city financial support – \$17 million in direct funding and up to \$9 million in tax credits through 2009 – to assist in business relocation and provide grants for employee training and assistance. Still, that support pales in comparison to the massive public subsidies provided any one of dozens of individual private redevelopment projects.⁴⁷

Altogether, the conversion of industrial spaces to other uses factored into a wide range of the administration's proposed redevelopment projects, including many of the most high profile. Hudson Yards, where redevelopment, as conceived in 2004, was expected to play out over four decades and require \$5 billion in development costs to be shared by the City and State, was among the most ambitious (Barbanel 2004). Just to the south, portions of 10th and 11th Avenues and some mid-block side streets in West Chelsea, historically the home of New York City's meatpacking district – were re-zoned in 2004 to allow for loft apartments and commercial buildings. High-rise towers were allowed opposite Chelsea Piers overlooking the Hudson River and the owners of properties adjacent to the High Line were granted permission to sell their soon-to-be-more-valuable air rights for new and bigger buildings, including luxury housing, even as a nascent section of art galleries was protected from redevelopment by preservation of its manufacturing zoning. Space bonuses were provided on certain blocks in order to provide subsidized housing in line with the 80/20 inclusionary plan. Earlier, portions of Long

⁴⁷ In June 2007 Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn, a non-profit community group founded in 2004 to fight the proposed redevelopment of Atlantic Yards, calculated that Forest City Ratner was slated to receive \$2.11 billion in public subsidies of one form or another for the re-development of Atlantic Yards, including \$650 million for the proposed Frank Gehry-designed events arena (Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn 2007). An April 2006 report by the City of New York Independent Budget Office estimated construction of a new stadium for the New York Mets baseball franchise would cost New York City approximately \$177 million – and the State of New York an additional \$89 million – over 40 years, while New York City would provide \$220 million for parking facilities, waterfront parkland and other work related to a new ballpark for the New York Yankees (City of New York Independent Budget Office 2006).

Island City in Queens, directly across the East River from Manhattan and the proposed hub of the Olympic Village were New York to win the 2012 Summer Games, had been rezoned from manufacturing to office and residential, and 1½ miles of industrial waterfront in the Greenpoint and Williamsburg section of Brooklyn were rezoned to accommodate a public park and promenade surrounded by mostly luxury residential towers up to 35 stories tall. In each instance, community leaders and housing advocates pressed for requirements that developers provide below-market housing, but city officials argued the high cost of construction on the waterfront would lead developers not to build.

THE HIGH COST OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Still, the administration has turned to zoning-related initiatives as a means of helping address New York City's affordable housing issue. Acknowledging that without some form of government intervention, the working poor and increasingly the middle class will be priced out of New York, the Mayor unveiled a 10-year, \$7.5 billion New Housing Marketplace Plan in December 2002. That initiative proposed to create 92,000 units and preserve another 73,000 of low- to middle-income housing by 2013, enough – according to the administration – to house 500,000 New Yorkers (New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development 2002). By rezoning “underutilized manufacturing districts” and “under-built avenues near transportation nodes” in neighborhoods such as Sherman Creek and Bedford-Stuyvesant, the administration argued it could foster the creation of “thousands” of new housing units (New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development 2002). An estimated 68 percent of those units would be earmarked for families earning less than 80 percent of the area median income (AMI), with the other 32 percent targeted at moderate and middle-income

groups making from \$50,000 to \$100,000.⁴⁸ Included in the latter category were 435 units in rezoned sections of the Hudson Yards and West Chelsea neighborhoods.

Inclusionary zoning, or the offering of density bonuses to developers who agreed to include a certain percentage – typically 20 percent of the total – of low- and moderate-income units in their projects, served as another mechanism for mobilizing support of the initiative. Originally limited to the highest density districts in Manhattan, where it was specifically intended to address gentrification concerns, inclusionary zoning was extended to the outer boroughs and medium-density areas by the administration in 2005. All told, the tactic was expected to produce 6,000 new units of affordable housing, including 220 units in the 1,100-unit Studio City development as part of the massive Hudson Yards rezoning (New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development 2002). In addition the New York City Acquisition Fund, a \$200 million public/private limited liability corporation established to provide acquisition and predevelopment loans to small developers and non-profit groups for the creation or preservation of affordable housing in the city's five boroughs, was projected to generate 30,000 units of affordable housing. The Fund leverages \$40 million in city and foundation funding to attract an additional \$160 million in private capital from “the City's largest banks and financial institutions” (New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development 2002). A final source involved the establishment of the New York City Housing Trust Fund, including \$70 million of Battery Park City revenues, which in conjunction with Low Income Housing Tax Credits was projected to create 2,000 units for households earning below 30 percent and between 60-80 percent of area median income. As of September 2008, the midway point in its expected lifespan,

⁴⁸ In 2004 the area median income was \$50,000 for a family of four.

the New Housing Marketplace Plan had generated financing for 82,500 units – or half of its total target number (Fernandez 2009).

But like so many of the city’s projects, the New Housing Marketplace Plan relies on a combination of government subsidies and private-sector financing and is tied to the willingness of private-sector lenders and developers to finance, acquire and build affordable units. That in turn makes the effort dependent on larger real estate dynamics, and in the fall of 2008, as the full effects of a global economic slowdown began to impact the price of the federal low-income housing credits used to finance low-income housing construction and lines of available credit for developers began to shrink, Bloomberg was forced to announce a one-year “extension” of the program due to the “difficult” economic times (Fernandez 2009).

Burden contends that in spite of such setbacks, the administration’s “aggressive” approach to rezoning represents an effective strategy for coaxing the private sector to participate in the provision of affordable housing. “You know this [is] the most aggressive affordable housing plan in the nation – \$3 billion leveraging 168,000 units of affordable housing,” she asserted in response to a question posed from the audience during the Gotham Center forum. “It is incredibly aggressive, and that is public sector initiatives. And yes, in each one of those initiatives we tried to leverage to the greatest maximum extent affordable housing and public space... We really squeeze the private sector as hard as we can” (Burden 2006a).

To be sure, a wide-ranging coalition of voices – from housing advocates to city officials and even private developers – agree that construction of affordable housing is among New York City’s greatest needs. Many, however, question whether inclusionary

zoning is the best solution, ultimately suggesting that the Bloomberg administration lacks the political will to realistically address the problem. At a Municipal Arts Society forum, “The Oversuccessful City: Developer’s Realities,” held Nov 27, 2007, at the New York Times Center Stage Auditorium in conjunction with a series of events surrounding Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York, *The New York Times* journalist Charles Bagli asked if the city – as a result of the administration’s aggressive rezoning – wasn’t losing its “heterogeneous nature” and becoming “exclusively for the rich?” The topic swung to inclusionary zoning and the affordable housing it is designed to generate, which the panelists – developers Douglas Durst of the Durst Organization, Carlton Brown of Full Spectrum New York and Greg O’Connell of Kings Harbor View Associates; and Eugenie Birch, professor of city and regional planning at the University of Pennsylvania – agreed should be made mandatory and permanent. But, Bagli wondered, is the existing ratio of 80 percent market-rate housing to 20 percent affordable enough? “Does that serve the need?” he asked. “Does that fulfill demand?” Brown noted that for the private sector to build affordable housing it required incentives – cheap land, tax credits. But, he admitted, “80/20 hasn’t solved all the needs.” He and O’Connell also noted that affordable “means different things to different people,” and Durst suggested that there was no reason the percentage of required affordable housing could not be higher. The administration, he argued, needs “to force developers to build less expensively.”

Even then, Bagli suggested, “is it possible to create neighborhoods that espouse the characteristics” – mixed uses – “espoused by Jacobs?” This time Birch answered. Referring to Jacobs as “a gentrifier,” she argued that “[I]f New York is to be a successful city it must set the rules. Developers will follow rules, but you can’t bargain bit by bit.

New York [City] sits back and waits for the developer to come. The city is not proactive. It is reactive.”

Other critics have pointed out that the cyclical nature of housing markets and the inevitability of economic downturns underscore the flaws inherent in the administration’s reliance on the private sector to participate in the provision of affordable housing, and have suggested that redirecting private real estate toward addressing the problem represents a neoliberal abdication of a necessary government function. Sorkin, in response to Burden’s assertions, suggested that New York City’s experience creating “a city hospitable to all of its citizens” through direct public investment offered “a cautionary tale...” (Sorkin 2006). “However welcome the city’s inclusionary zoning initiatives... may be, they seem out of sync with the magnitude of what is nothing less than a housing crisis.” Lander, meanwhile, pointed to what he called a fundamental contradiction in the administration’s policy for determining which neighborhoods qualify for downzoning to protect existing character and which to upzone in order to house future generations of New Yorkers and the office developments they conceivably would work in. He noted that local community groups that worked with the Pratt Institute’s Center for Community and Environmental Development in regard to the redevelopment of the Greenpoint waterfront and in West Harlem proposed provisions for housing for lower income residents in new developments and zoning that would further protect manufacturing. But when they put their alternatives forward, city officials responded that the market could not support them. “They embrace using zoning in an anti-market way on Staten Island for neighborhood preservation, Lander suggested. “But they are not willing to use it for broader social and political purposes” (Barbanel 2004).

Chapter 7: Design As Civic Virtue

With Dan Doctoroff, Bloomberg's deputy mayor for economic development, providing the vision for a slate of ambitious projects designed to re-shape New York City on a Moses-like scale – and engendering comparisons, both positive and negative, to the Power Broker as a consequence (Wells 2007, Brash 2006) – the task of infusing the Bloomberg redevelopment agenda with just enough human scope to make it amenable to a city still enamored of Jane Jacobs fell to Amanda Burden, the socialite/civic activist-turned-planner who was appointed Director of the Department of City Planning and Chair of the New York City Planning Commission following the Mayor's election in 2002.

Born into one of post-war New York City's prominent families, Burden came to planning relatively late.⁴⁹ After earning a degree in environmental sciences from Sarah Lawrence College at the age of 34 she joined the Street Life Project, urban sociologist William "Holly" Whyte's observation-based effort to provide a detailed analysis of how people use public spaces. She then worked at the New York State Urban Development Corporation, and from 1983 to 1990 was in charge of planning and design for Battery Park City while pursuing a graduate degree in urban planning at Columbia University. Prior to becoming New York City's chief planner early in Bloomberg's first term, she spent over a decade as a one of the City Planning Commission's appointed members.

From the beginning, however, Burden's tenure in the Bloomberg Administration was marked by a contentious relationship with Doctoroff. Initially, that animosity

⁴⁹ Burden is the daughter of Stanley Mortimer, heir to the Standard Oil fortune, and Babe Paley, the New York City socialite and fashion icon. Twice divorced, Burden's first husband was Carter Burden, a descendant of Cornelius Vanderbilt and one-time owner of the *Village Voice* who, in addition to building a broadcast media empire, served three terms on the New York City Council. Her second was Steve Ross, the one-time head of Warner Communications. She more recently she has been the companion of TV personality Charlie Rose.

stemmed from Burden's support of Bloomberg rival Mark Green in the 2001 mayoral race, and following Bloomberg's victory, Doctoroff actively advocated for Alexander Garvin, then chief planner for the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, one of the architects of the city's 1969 master plan and a partner in the preparation of the city's 2012 Olympics bid, to lead the City Planning Department. Like Doctoroff, Garvin was a vocal proponent of transforming New York City through large-scale redevelopment, and he helped conceive the administration's Hudson Yards plan. He was also an outspoken admirer of Robert Moses' ability to get things done, arguing that "[N]obody, not even Baron Haussmann in 19th-century Paris has ever done more to improve a city" (Jackson 2007, 71).

While Doctoroff eventually acquiesced and Burden assumed the city's planning reigns, the rift between the pair only widened as Doctoroff sought to assert control over major development decisions.⁵⁰ "She is in a tough position in this administration," said Kent Barwick, the past president of the Municipal Art Society and a long-time Burden acquaintance. "Typically the director [of City Planning] is a sort of physical secretary of state to the mayor. In the Bloomberg administration, Doctoroff was in between" (Barwick 2008)

Whereas Doctoroff represented the administration's technocratic corporatism and desire to transform the city on a Moses-like scale, Burden brought to her position an aesthetic imperative, a distinctly high-brow sense of what constitutes good design merged with an appreciation for the Jacobsean notion of street vitality and a commitment to

⁵⁰ Publicly, Doctoroff denies any rift with Burden and has played down any inference that she was an alternative choice to serve as planning director. In a 2002 interview with *New York* magazine Doctoroff noted that he interviewed Burden three times and conducted "extensive due diligence and what I found was somebody who was strikingly substantive, passionate about her work, passionate about New York City, and had a sense of where she wanted to take the City Planning Commission. I was very comfortable" (Gardner 2002).

enhancing the vibrancy of New York City's streets and open spaces. Still, Burden's sense of design – and its role in enhancing the city's stature as a top-tier global city – as well as her planning experience conform to the greater development orientation of the Bloomberg agenda. Her biography on the Department of City Planning website describes her as spearheading the Mayor's "economic development initiatives with comprehensive urban design master plans designed to catalyze commercial and residential development throughout the city and to reclaim its waterfront" (New York City Department of City Planning n.d. b). Speaking at the American Institute of Architect's Center for Architecture in May 2009, Burden emphasized that good design can help drive development by adding "value to the neighborhood" (Burden, 2009). "Great architecture keeps the city young, vibrant and competitive," she argued, drawing on the clear association of certain terms and notions – neighborhood vitality, economic health – with Jacobs to reinforce a theme that has become a trademark of the DCP's articulation of the Bloomberg narrative (Burden 2009). Several years earlier, not long after Jacobs' death and in the wake the launching of the Moses revisionist effort, Burden told the *New York Times*: "You can measure the health of the city in the vitality of the street life" (Caldwell 2007).

Perhaps equally important, however, Burden's interest in fashioning a certain kind of city through its physical form and public spaces is reflective of a broader class-based planning ideology that she shares with Bloomberg and Doctoroff.⁵¹ In a profile written not long after her appointment as Planning Commissioner and just eight months after

⁵¹ In July 2004 Bloomberg announced the creation of a Design and Construction Excellence (D+CE) initiative as a means of demonstrating the administration's "commitment to fostering good design in our City," and expanding New York City's "pre-eminence as the design capital of the world." Administered through the city's Department of Design and Construction (DDC), the program's "hallmark" involves the adoption of a quality-based selection process "for procurement of design services" (New York City Department of Design and Construction n.d.).

9/11 – a pivotal moment in New York City redevelopment politics – *New York Magazine* described Burden as the quintessential “Bloomberg-era civil servant:” well-connected, well-off, and like the Mayor, Doctoroff and others in the administration, someone who doesn’t need the job but is “motivated to make a difference” (Gardner 2002).

Indeed, since taking New York City’s planning reins Burden has emerged as one of the key members of the administration, the face of a newly aggressive planning department and therefore a major figure in the implementation of its urban development agenda and a power broker in her own right. During Bloomberg’s first term, Burden championed the revitalization of the dilapidated High Line elevated rail line even after the Mayor initially opposed it, arguing that plans to turn the abandoned railway into a park were not just about creating an “iconic” and “world-class” public space in keeping with New York City’s ambitions as a global city, but also enhancing real estate values and catalyzing development along Manhattan’s Far West Side (Burden 2009). By March of 2008 – a full year before the High Line’s planned opening – 30 projects were either planned or in construction nearby (Burden 2008), including a luxury apartment tower at 11th Avenue and 19th Street designed by starchitect Jean Nouvel, and a planned 14-floor condominium tower adjacent to the park at 23rd Street by another noted architect, Neil Denari.⁵²

In 2008 the *New York Observer* ranked Burden fifth on its list of the 100 most powerful people in New York real estate, behind Bloomberg and a trio of developers and

⁵² On Oct. 19, 2009, the same day the New York City Council approved the rezoning of the western half of the Hudson Yards, Burden announced that the city would move ahead with plans to purchase the remaining northern-most section of the High Line, which runs along the southern and western edges of the Hudson rail yards (The Architect’s Newspaper 2009).



Figure 11: New buildings under construction along the unfinished northern section of the High Line. Building of the elevated park has “catalyzed” development by helping enhance real-estate values in formerly industrial areas on Manhattan’s Far West Side (Photo by the author, Aug. 1, 2009).

property owners – Jerry Speyer, chairman and CEO of Tishman Speyer; Stephen Ross, chairman and CEO of Related Companies; and Marc Holliday, CEO of SL Green, New York City’s largest commercial landlord. In explaining that ranking, the newspaper noted: “Any major land-use change in the city must pass over Ms. Burden’s desk—if it didn’t originate there in the first place... and to date, she is the shining star of the Bloomberg administration’s still-incomplete development legacy” (*New York Observer* 2008). In 2009, with the city’s real estate market in retreat due to the onset of the economic crises in 2008, the newspaper dropped her to No. 8 explaining that: “[N]ew condo towers used to sprout wherever Ms. Burden would point. Those days are over of course, but as the empress of zoning and public approvals of large scale development in this city, she still holds a very strong hand, especially if any private developer ever wants to build again” (*New York Observer* 2009).

Burden has also become the administration’s main voice as it attempts to mobilize and synthesize the seemingly disparate if not irreconcilable visions of Jacobs and Moses in support of its goals. Aside from participating at the Gotham Center forum – and subsequently publishing her presentation in the *Gotham Gazette* (Burden 2006b) – Burden regularly articulates the direct ideological links between certain of Jacobs’ and Moses’ foundational precepts and the administration’s development philosophy. The concept of diversity, for instance, is made material through rezoning initiatives that include a Jacobsean commitment to creating a deliberate mix of working, living, shopping, relaxing and cultural uses to return life to the city while still making room for Moses-scale creative destruction. “[B]ig cities need big projects,” Burden has argued,

because they “are a necessary part of the diversity, competition and growth that both Jacobs and Moses fought for” (Burden 2006a). But the goal of city planners, she insists:

...is no longer the broad brush, the bold strokes, the big plan. Although, make no mistake about it, we have an enormous need to build thousands of units of affordable housing, we must create a broad spectrum of jobs for our rapidly expanding population, we need to reclaim and revitalize our waterfront and we must lay the foundations to support the growth that is to come and which we welcome. But it is just not acceptable, or wise, or even possible, to undertake these challenges without espousing Jacobs’ principles of city diversity, of the rich detail or urban life and to build in a way that nourishes complexity (Burden, 2006a).

Some observers suggest that Burden is not being disingenuous or insincere when she talks of building like Moses but with Jacobs in mind. For instance, in an effort to generate “sidewalk vitality” at the proposed Jets stadium on midtown Manhattan’s Far West Side, Burden argued for building parks on all four sides and advocated for retail and public uses at its street level (Pogrebin 2004). Likewise, supporters suggest that her efforts to improve initial plans for Atlantic Yards by insisting on more public space were fundamentally consistent with Jacobs’ principles even as the scale of those mega-projects and the means by which they were approved “overwhelmed any discussion of a possible relationship” to Jacobs’ thinking (Barwick, e-mail exchange with the author, Nov. 25, 2008).

IN THE SHADOW OF ‘HOLLY’ WHYTE

Yet while Burden trumpets Jacobs’s influence on contemporary planners and urban form, that influence plays an ancillary role in her personal approach to urban design. Instead, her inspiration stems from a long and close relationship with Whyte, the

trained planner who also served as a mentor to Jacobs, and like the latter was a keen observer and promoter of the dynamism and diversity of city spaces. Whyte casts a long shadow over more than a half a century of urban design development in New York City, having served as senior editor at *Fortune* magazine in 1946 when Jacobs penned the critique of urban renewal that would later become *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* before, as noted earlier, going on to play an instrumental role in the evolution of the city's zoning regulations and influencing a number of high-profile people and projects through the Street Life Project. Whyte also mentored Fred Kent, who, like Burden, worked on the Street Life Project then went on to found the Project for Public Spaces, an urban nonprofit organization which incorporates the observational techniques pioneered by Whyte as it aspires to help "people turn their public spaces into vital community places" through "placemaking" (Project for Public Spaces n.d. a).⁵³ Whyte also conceived and wrote the 1980 plan for the restoration of Midtown Manhattan's Bryant Park as well as the rezoning/redevelopment of Times Square – two projects critics often cite as emblematic of the homogenized, highly disciplined pseudo-public spaces that result from neoliberalism's public-private approach to urban redevelopment.

To be sure, Whyte shares many of Jacobs's foundational ideas, and his prescriptions for revitalizing city centers and creating dynamic public spaces draw on her concepts of small blocks oriented to pedestrian traffic, street vitality and a mix of old and new buildings (Whyte 1989, 334), as well as the underlying belief that urban redevelopment equals economic development. Though in certain ways at odds with

⁵³ The Project for Public Spaces includes both Whyte and Jacobs among its select group of "pioneer placemakers." According to the Project's website: "The Placemaking movement was born over forty years ago, when pioneers like Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte published their groundbreaking ideas about Americans and the urban experience. Back then there was no name for their way of thinking – they simply showed us that cities should be designed for people, with walkable streets, welcoming public spaces, and lively neighborhoods," (Project for Public Spaces n.d. b).

traditional development practices in New York City – he rejects the “belief that major office projects are the prime source of new jobs” (Whyte 1989, 334), for instance – Whyte embraces the notion that, in general, what is good for business is good for the city, so the city should understand what amenities attract successful companies, both large and small, and encourage the provision of them.

Writing in the late 1980s against the backdrop of the failures of liberal urban policies of previous decades, and under cover of the ascendant rollout neoliberalism of the Reagan-Bush years, Whyte offered an explicit defense for the active and deliberate promotion of gentrification, suggesting the only way for cities to draw people back to their abandoned centers was to promote the rehabilitation of sub-standard housing as an alternative to the “bleak new utopias” of federal Title I redevelopment projects (Whyte 1989, 326). Drawing from Jacobs’s cogent observation of the difficulties residents in blighted neighborhoods face in improving their physical living conditions, Whyte lauded the 1969 *Plan for New York City*, which included proposed loans and mortgage guarantees for one- and two-family homes; loans for renovation work; and temporary tax abatements on home improvements. “If brownstoners have done what they have done in the face of major difficulties,” he wrote, citing the transformation of Brooklyn’s Park Slope from a rundown, crime- and drug-infested neighborhood in the mid-1970s into a model of largely white, upwardly mobile urban regeneration, “it is staggering to think of what could be done if the difficulties were removed” (Whyte 1989, 327).

Whyte attempts to debunk claims that gentrification displaces families – by arguing that low-income renters are frequent movers anyway (Whyte 1989, 328), regardless of the reasons why – and that certain municipal rehabilitation programs backed

by government resources make room for “low-income blacks” or some existing residents.⁵⁴ He concludes that “Harlem might one day be an example” of what gentrification can do for a neighborhood. Some evidence suggests that at the time Whyte was writing it already had.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, by turn of the 21st century the makeup of some traditionally low-income African American neighborhoods had shifted enough to make Whyte’s assertion that gentrification has no relationship to displacement laughable.⁵⁶ Abetted by the then-proposed rezoning of 125th Street and the creation of a 125th Street special district, by the first decade of the new century Harlem had emerged as the epicenter of a demographic-shifting speculative real estate boom (Williams 2008).⁵⁷ From 2004 to 2007 the median sale price for town houses in the area rose 150 percent, to \$1.4 million from \$554,250, according to the real estate tracking website StreetEasy.com. As a means of comparison, prices on Manhattan’s Upper East Side rose 38 percent over the same period (Haughney 2009). In early 2008, the average price for new condominiums in the area reached \$900,000, even though the average household income remained below \$25,000 (U.S. Census).

⁵⁴ In particular, Whyte cites Savannah, Georgia’s “Landmark Rehabilitation” effort, which leverages local, state and federal funding to “maintain a neighborhood mixed by class and race” (see Hodder, Robert, 1996. Savannah’s Changing Past: Historic Preservation Planning and the Social Construction of a Historic Landscape, 1955 to 1985. In Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver, (Eds.), *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City*, pp. 361-382. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.)

⁵⁵ Schaefer and Smith (1986, *The Gentrification of Harlem?* *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 76(3): 347-365) draw on previous studies by Schill and Nathan (1983); and Hartman (1979) and LeGates and Hartman (1981) to argue that gentrification does lead to displacement.

⁵⁶ For example, between 1990 and 2000 the percentage of residents in Harlem census tract 197.02, an area bounded by W. 110th Street on the south, Manhattan and Morningside avenues on the west, W. 114th Street on the north and 8th Avenue on the east, who earned an annual income of \$75,000 or more rose from 8.4 percent to 19.5 percent while the percentage of African Americans living in the neighborhood fell from 75 percent to 60 percent. During the same period, the percentage of residents paying less than \$500 per month on rent dropped from 85.5 percent to 44.4 percent (conversely, the percentage paying \$1,000 or more per month rose from 1.5 percent to 8.3 percent). Taken together, these shifts suggest that a new group of residents with higher incomes and a willingness to pay higher rents moved into the neighborhood, displacing some of the earlier residents. Source: U.S. Census.

⁵⁷ In May 2008, the City Council approved the re-zoning, which allowed for high-rise office towers and some 2,100 new market-rate condominiums. At the time it was estimated about 70 small businesses would be forced to close and some residents displaced by the new provisions (Williams 2008)

How much of Whyte's embrace of gentrification informs the Bloomberg agenda by way of Burden is hard to tell. However, Whyte's influence on the Burden Department of City Planning emerges explicitly in a number of distinct ways. Most important, perhaps, is in the steadfast belief that diversity and other "desirable pieces of the urban fabric" can be achieved through planning.⁵⁸ Even Whyte, however, warned of the pitfalls of creating diversity from scratch, and, echoing Jacobs, he foreshadowed a number of critiques that would come to frame debates over the Bloomberg administration's plans for Hudson and Atlantic Yards: "Cities-within-cities, alas, are still being built," Whyte wrote. "They are usually very large-often on clear tracts, such as obsolete freight yards, that give architects and developers the blank slate they would be better off for not having... for services the projects provide bits and pieces within: a gourmet food shop, a simulation of a raffish pub" (Whyte 1989, 329).

Whyte was also an early proponent of downzoning as means of preserving existing neighborhood character (Gilbert 2001, 8), and his belief – conceived in the context of the incentive zoning debacles of the 1960's and 1970's – that good design can be decreed by adherence to basic formulas lives on in a series of increasingly narrow prescriptions that have become entrenched in New York City Planning Commission design guidelines for privately owned public spaces. These include precise mandates, based on his Street Life Project's detailed observations, regarding sidewalk and building widths, building setbacks, ground-floor retailing requirements and rules regarding the planting of street trees, all as means of re-creating in modern city centers "places to meet

⁵⁸ The quote, on p. 330 of Whyte 1989, is attributed to Catharine Ingraham, *Inland Architect*.

and talk” and “a convenient focus for city life” reminiscent of the *agora* of ancient Greece.⁵⁹ Summarizing the Street Life Project’s findings, Gilbert notes:

It was observed that the amount of “sittable” space (places where people can sit) is directly related to how much a public space is used. The location of the space is also important - it should be in the heart of the downtown area, preferably on a major corner, as people need to be able to walk to it easily. At least 80% of users are likely to come from a radius of three blocks. Other points the team noted were that the shape of the space is not crucial (one of the most popular spaces in New York was a long narrow indentation in a building) and that the supply of spaces creates demand. A good new space induces people to use it and creates new habits in them - eating outdoors, walking etc. Interestingly, it was observed that people like to position themselves in well-defined spaces – near steps or the border of a pool. The finding that people rarely choose the middle of a large space also supports Sitte’s principle that irregular shaped public plazas work best. Finally, the relationship of the location of the space and the street is important – if the space is physically close and visually accessible to the public street it becomes almost instinctive that people enter it. Where the street functions as part of the plaza or public space, the social life of both spaces flows back and forth. (Gilbert 2001, 8)

In this way, Whyte’s sense of *agora* and Jacobs’ notion of community and street life filter through Burden’s Department of City Planning to emerge as the vague, but oft-articulated principle “design matters” (Burden 2006a). This focus on the way things look has become a trademark of Burden’s tenure at the DCP, and over time she has used her growing influence to define and enforce a singular vision of what “quality” or “great”

⁵⁹ One example is a series of “seating standards” for public plazas adopted by the City Planning Commission on Sept. 19, 2007 and approved by the City Council one month later as part of a broader set of design guidelines for privately owned public spaces. According to these standards, “There shall be a minimum of one linear foot of seating for each 30 square feet of #public plaza# area” – a holdover from Whyte’s earlier guidelines – and seating arrangements should “provide ample opportunity for social seating as a basic seating type that consists of seats that are placed in close proximity and at angles to one another or in facing configurations that facilitate social interaction” (New York City Department of City Planning 2007, 43). Among the additional requirements are: “Seating requirements may be satisfied by the following seating types: moveable seating, fixed individual seats, fixed benches with and without backs, and design-feature seating such as seat walls, planter ledges, or seating steps. All #public plazas# shall provide at least two different types of seating” (Department of City Planning 2007, 43). Trees are another prescribed feature. According to the design guidelines, all public plazas must have at least four trees (Department of City Planning, 2007, 45).

design might be (Gardner 2002). “As director of the City Planning Department, she has built her reputation on a concern for aesthetics: how a building looks, how it relates to the street, how it serves the people who use its public spaces,” journalist Robin Pogrebin wrote in a 2004 *New York Times* profile. “Compared with a Robert Moses... Burden might be considered an aesthetic watchdog” (Pogrebin 2004). Yaro, of the Regional Plan Association, meanwhile, refers to her as “the design conscience of New York” (Pogrebin 2004).

A FIXATION WITH THE WAY THINGS LOOK

Yet far from being a neutral activity or a mere expression of creativity or imagination, design functions as a powerful tool in determining the profitability and salability of a product (Forty 1992). In the case of the Bloomberg administration, that product is the city, itself, and with Burden leading the charge, design has become a critical element in the marketing of the administration’s larger redevelopment narrative. Arguing that “[G]ood architecture is good economic development,” Burden has prodded developers to employ “starchitects” in designing their projects (Burden 2007a). In overseeing the master planning process for a new East River waterfront in Lower Manhattan, for example, she insisted that the architect Richard Rogers be involved (Burden 2007a), and she regularly touts projects designed by renowned figures like Frank Gehry, Jean Nouvel, Neil Denari and Alf Naman (Burden 2009).

Among developers and the design community, however, Burden has become a lightning rod for criticism not only for that unyielding opinion about what constitutes “good” design but for imposing it through an imperious approach to her position. That imperiousness extends inside the walls of the Department of City Planning, where staff



Figure 12: “Iconic” buildings designed by “starchitects” Frank Gehry (left) and Jean Nouvel (middle) dominate the horizon near the High Line (photo by author, Aug. 1, 2009).

refer to her as “the Chair,” never by name, and throughout the design community, where she has been dubbed “the city’s interior designer” and, less flatteringly, “Demanda” for her insistence on personally vetting minute public project details. Developers complain that Burden’s preference for starchitects unnecessarily increases project costs (Municipal Art Society 2007b), while architects and design professionals speak of participating in meetings and approval processes where Burden holds up projects, “micro-managing” details (Caldwell 2007) and causing costly delays to insist that benches be rearranged, specific types of paving stones be used or that seat heights, depths and widths conform to exacting measurements. Others contend that the formulas prescribed in the city’s zoning

criteria stifle innovation. At the panel discussion “The Oversuccessful City: Developers Realities,” developer Carlton Brown of Full Spectrum NY complained that zoning regulations in New York City have become so restrictive they “limit creativity” (Brown 2007).

Burden’s unyielding belief in the superiority of her own sense of design also contributed to her strained relationship with Doctoroff, in particular over the design of the proposed Jets stadium on Midtown Manhattan’s Far West Side. And in September 2009 it led her to lop 200 feet off the top of Nouvel’s design for a 1,250-foot skyscraper next to the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) on 53rd Street in Midtown Manhattan on the grounds that its peak did not meet the city’s aesthetic standards (Ouroussof 2009b).⁶⁰

Burden’s supporters counter that such criticisms of her approach to design, especially given its context within the administration’s development agenda, are unwarranted. Barwick, for instance, contends that while major planning decisions were made by Doctoroff, Burden spent much of her time “trying to ameliorate the worst aspects, from the street point of view” of these projects, including the planning of public spaces around the original Frank Gehry-designed arena to be built for the New Jersey/Brooklyn Nets at Atlantic Yards (Barwick, 2008). But others question whether the role of the city planning commissioner should involve such a hands-on approach to the way things look. One architect whose working relationship to Burden spans three decades, describes her as “a planning figurehead” and “an unqualified social appointee capable of holding hearings and getting votes” but whose own views on planning are “academic,” “who throws architects at problems,” and whose own design ideas “really have to do with open space” (personal interview).

⁶⁰ If built as originally designed, the building would have been as tall as the Empire State Building.

Regardless, under Burden a focus – some say fixation – on the way things look has become an integral component, not just of the DCP’s mission, but the administration’s overall approach to redevelopment.⁶¹ In 2006, Burden hired New York City’s first-ever Chief Urban Designer, Alexandros Washburn, whose job is to oversee “city-wide policy development and design review of scores of new urban design projects that are now being planned to accommodate a million more New Yorkers in a period of rapid climate change” (American Institute of Architects 2008).⁶² As Washburn tells the story, he received a call from Burden, who suggested that with Bloomberg as mayor and herself as director of the planning department, New York City was entering a unique moment in history and in city government, “a time to bring design to the front” (Washburn 2008a). His position was created to help seize that moment, one that he acknowledges will likely disappear, along with his post, when a new mayor takes office.

True to the Bloomberg administration’s narrative, Washburn pursues his mission with the stated intention of producing “the quantity of Robert Moses with the quality of Jane Jacobs,” though he admits that an important element of his job is to get projects “up to snuff” so that they meet Burden’s design criteria and win her approval (Washburn 2008a). “Don’t even think about coming in until it’s great,” he said, paraphrasing Burden, at a May 2008 presentation at the American Institute of Architects’ Center for Architecture (Washburn 2008a).

A frequent spokesman for the city at design-related events, Washburn regularly speaks of the Bloomberg administration’s belief in “civic virtue by design” (Washburn,

⁶¹ Like Burden, New York City Parks Director Adrian Benape also takes a “hands-on” approach to the way projects under his purview look, and he, too, “reviews all designs at the final schematic stage” (McIntyre 2008, 57)

2008b). Defining civic virtue as “the cultivation of habits important for the success of the community,” he described the Bloomberg planning agenda as a “paradigm shift...

nothing short of a new compact with nature.” To express it, he argued:

(W)e must transform the rigidities of architecture into the adaptations of nature. The stone column crumbles and is replaced by the growing stalk. Networks of green signify community in ways that the architecture of the past no longer can. City-initiated rezonings center around new public spaces or streetscape improvements and each is crafted in consultation with the community it serves” (Washburn 2008b).

To the administration, and the people like Burden and Washburn who have been chosen to determine the city’s future face and sell that vision to the public, New York City is a “transformative city... Every project has a transformative or positive or negative effect” (Washburn 2008a). It is not always possible to predict what that effect will be, Washburn acknowledged. Nonetheless, “It’s cumulative. It’s iterative...building upon itself to propel forward a comprehensive sense of what the city should look like” and “setting the pattern for the greatest wave of urbanization that the world has ever seen.” New York City, Washburn trumpeted, “is at the pinnacle of urban thinking” (Washburn 2008a).

In the eyes of the administration, for example, the provision of “world-class” amenities like the High Line are to be the drivers of the redevelopment of Manhattan’s Far West Side, enhancing real estate values along select streets and avenues, thereby providing the “armature” for the transformation of whole neighborhoods along designated corridors (Burden 2009, 2008, 2007a). In Hell’s Kitchen, certain streets have been up-zoned to allow for greater residential densities of market-rate apartments and condominiums, with height variances added on for ensuring 20 percent of the total

number of units remained “affordable.” Other streets were re-zoned to allow the arrival of commercial tenants and office buildings. Still others were to be disappeared by eminent domain to make way for a proposed “grand boulevard” reminiscent of the great broad thoroughfares of Paris (Burden 2008).

Beyond the boosterism though, the administration’s design vision is more mundane. While touted as transformative and at the forefront of urban design, the plans that result from it are more often modified versions of model concepts from other cities, and zoning regulations are conceived as the necessary safeguards “to prevent bad developers and designs from ruining” them (Washburn 2008a).⁶³ Urban spaces are approached as if there is a single, universally recognized sense of street aesthetic, of what constitutes good design, which can only be insured by the creation of design standards intended to impose it. Critics contend that such slavish devotion to prescriptive guidelines and formulas will inevitably lead to its own form of homogeneity, a city of pre-planned public spaces scrubbed clean of innovation or sense of place in their own right, just more plazas, streetscapes and stamped-out parks culled from a template. “Control of the public realm through design,” is how one designer described Burden’s approach, while others agreed that it results in heavily prescribed, disciplined public spaces that are designed to encourage normative activities – sitting and talking while consuming the products from nearby cafes, for instance – while actively discouraging anything that might run counter to those purposes (personal interviews).

⁶³ For example, in an effort to capture and recreate Copenhagen’s lively street café scene, Burden and Washburn traveled to Denmark, where they paced off the exact dimensions of a waterfront café in Copenhagen. Washburn, in his presentation to the AIA, included a photograph of Burden riding a bicycle through the city.

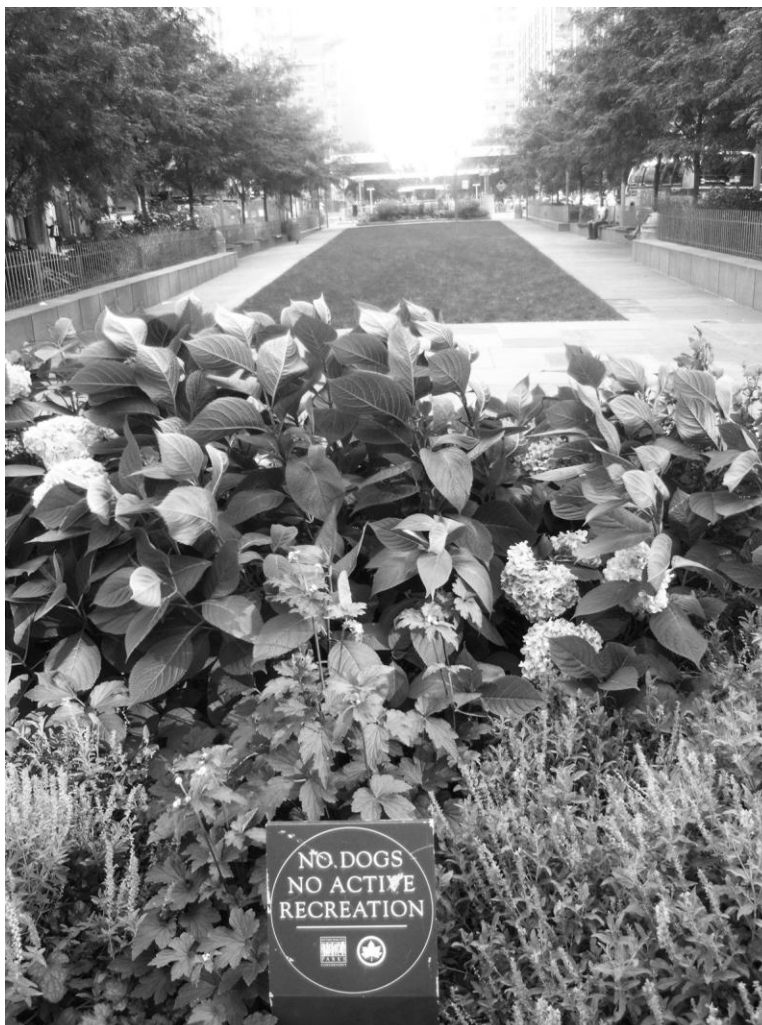


Figure 13: A park in Battery Park City, emblematic of what critics contend is “control of the public realm through design” (Photo by the author, Aug. 1, 2009).

In this way, much as the Bloomberg planning narrative – like the Moses narrative before – rests on the notion that planning is value neutral and that the administration only is acting in the best interests of the city, the articulation of design as a civic virtue serves to naturalize and normalize the class-based values inherent in the administration’s larger redevelopment agenda. Through its constant celebration of the transformative potential of the parks, plazas, streetscapes and buildings planned and constructed as part of the production of a global capitalist city, the administration insists its overriding interest is in

ensuring New York City has the means to compete in a set, immutable future. What the administration's plans actually do, however, is set in motion a series of infrastructure improvements, public works projects and redevelopment initiatives that ever more tightly embed "the logics, threads and assumptions of capital accumulation" in the urban landscape (Smith 2003, xxi) and make it ever more difficult to think "cities against the grain of dominant capitalist imaginaries" (Pinder 2005, 13). When Burden and Washburn speak of the civic virtue of design, what they are really describing is the process – through rezoning and the related critique and control of private sector design – of making the city more saleable. To the administration then, design's true civic virtue is its ability to make real estate worth more and to valorize a specific, class-oriented notion of quality of life.

THE NARRATIVE COLLAPSES

For as long as New York City's economy boomed, powered along by a raging real-estate market and easy access to credit, the Bloomberg camp enthusiastically echoed earlier administrations in arguing that building a city amenable to the expansion of the financial services sector and its ancillary services was the best way to ensure the city's successful future. But by the fall of 2007 the administration's narrative of a city ascendant had begun to collapse under the weight of its own contradictions and looming a worldwide financial crisis. The same debt explosion and speculative housing bubble that generated huge profits – as well as enormous salaries and bonuses – within the financial industry, in turn driving up real estate values, filling New York City's and New York State's tax coffers and propelling further speculative development, triggered the sub-prime mortgage crisis, prompting the collapse of three of world's largest investment

banks. As the financial sector unraveled and global recession deepened, access to credit dried up, and by late March 2008 some \$20 billion “of high profile developments across the city – many designed by world-renowned architects and touted by top officials” – were “dead or at risk of never getting off the drawing board” (Lemire 2008). Among the projects most drastically impacted were Atlantic Yards and the proposed redevelopment of Willets Point, which saw essential funding mechanisms disappear. Meanwhile, a plan to replace Midtown Manhattan’s outdated Penn Station with the new Moynihan Station fell apart, stalling expansion of the Jacob Javits Convention Center and Hudson Yards (see Chapter 3; see also Bagli 2008). In addition, scores of smaller-scale private construction projects ground to a halt – 48 in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Bushwick alone, according to the locally based non-profit Make the Road by Walking (Lopez 2009) – rendering New York City a patchwork of “cranes on pause.”⁶⁴

Even as the crisis was unfolding, however, members of the administration and its allies within the city’s growth coalition sought to reinforce the Mayor’s vision for refashioning the city. On Sept. 18, 2008, just days after the collapse of financial services firm Lehman Bros. in the largest bankruptcy in U.S. history, Seth Pinsky, the president of the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYEDC), delivered an “Update on New York City’s Economic Development” at a joint gathering of the American Institute of Architects and the American Planning Association at the Center for Architecture in Manhattan.⁶⁵ Pinsky opened by noting that “just a few short years ago

⁶⁴ In 2008, local public radio host Brian Lehrer launched a website that allowed New York residents to list stalled projects, “Cranes on pause,” as part of the radio station WNYC’s “Your Uncommon Economic Indicators Series.” The site can be accessed at <http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msa=0&msid=102520626049988660817.00046e3703b8126b12edb&ie=UTF8&ll=40.700422%2C-73.970947&spn=0.057262%2C0.077248&z=13&source=embed>

⁶⁵ The EDC is a non-profit, public-private agency whose mission is to strengthen New York City by “fostering economic growth and developing programs that help business and entire business sectors achieve success...” (New

people were wondering if anything would ever get built in New York” (Pinsky 2008).⁶⁶ Citing the \$2 billion earmarked for the expansion of the No. 7 subway line, he touted the progress being made in laying the groundwork for establishing the Far West Side as the city’s “newest” central business district, and the planned development of an East River Science Park as “the flagship” of the city’s effort to become center of biotech research. But he quickly shifted gears to seize on the growing economic uncertainty to echo the Bloomberg administration’s narrative on the risks ahead. Now, not only was New York City in danger of losing its position as “the economic capital of the world,” but looming budget deficits imperiled the Mayor’s redevelopment agenda and the then-still emergent crisis within global financial networks was threatening to send the world economy into a tailspin (Pinsky 2008).

Unlike in the 1970s, when the city cut services to make up for the dwindling tax revenues that accompanied that particular crisis, Pinsky maintained that the emphasis this time should be to continue to “build the city, maintain the quality of life” (Pinsky 2008). For the final 16 months of Bloomberg’s second – and at the time seemingly final – term, he insisted, the Mayor would focus on pushing forward the various projects already underway or envisioned in his plan. Peppering his talk with boosterish phrases like

York Economic Development Corporation n.d.). The NYEDC has been intimately involved in the planning and execution of the Mayor Bloomberg’s development agenda, working closely in an “iterative process” on major projects including the revitalization of 125th Street in Harlem and Willets Point (Pinsky 2008). The NYEDC is controlled by the mayor through his direct appointment of seven members of its 27-member board, including the chair, who nominates 10 additional members. The remaining 10 board positions are filled by the City’s five borough presidents, who each appoint one, and the Speaker of the City Council, who appoints five. According its 2007-2008 budget, the NYEDC received nearly \$589.9 million in “reimbursements and other grants” from the New York City. That accounted for almost 70 percent of the NYEDC’s \$848.8 million total operating revenues for the year. Another \$122.6 million (14.4 percent) in operating revenues was generated by real estate sales and property rentals, with the balance coming from “power sales” and “fees and other income” (NYCEDC).

⁶⁶ Prior to taking the reins of the NYEDC in February 2008, Pinsky, a real estate lawyer, served as the corporation’s executive vice president, co-directing the Financial Services Division where he administered many of the New York City’s discretionary incentive programs and helped negotiate a number of major development projects, including Atlantic Yards. Even earlier he had helped coordinate the NYEDC’s efforts at Hudson Yards.

“bullish on the long-term prospects,” “moving forward,” and “planning for the future,” Pinsky argued that the “frontiers of development” were “virtually limitless” and that “every project is a priority” (Pinsky 2008). However, he warned, in a difficult economic environment the city would be forced to ask for even less from the private sector and instead need to “entice” it with additional subsidies, tax credits and favorable zoning changes to provide the “necessary improvements.” Regardless, Pinsky assured, the Mayor’s legacy as a great builder in the can-do tradition of Robert Moses “would become clear as the conditions for future growth continue to bear fruit” (Pinsky 2008).

From a different point of view, though, the global financial crisis and its local ramifications offer a valuable opportunity to interrogate the fallacies and limits, not only of the underlying logic of real-estate driven redevelopment and of the role of capital accumulation in the processes of urbanization as imagined by the Bloomberg administration, but of the relationship of the legacies of Moses and Jacobs to those processes as well. Given that the administration’s basis for invoking the duo is grounded, to a significant degree, on their ideological justification of and for a particular form of urbanization, one could argue that we have arrived at a moment when it is instructive for yet another reassessment of the pair.

Chapter 8: Building Like Moses With Jacobs in Mind

As the Mayor says, ‘If you want to solve the problem of gentrification, you should have crime go up, the schools get worse, the parks dirtier.’ Gentrification is a natural product of market forces.”

- Dan Doctoroff (Acitelli 2007)

In November of 2007 the Institute for Urban Design hosted a public forum, New York 2030: New York’s Green and Just Future, at which city officials, policymakers and urban designers discussed the Bloomberg administration’s sustainability initiative, PlaNYC 2030.⁶⁷ Following a series of presentations by administration representatives, including Adrian Benape and Alexandros Washburn, an audience member rose to ask if design was a civic virtue and diversity – which she noted was a hallmark of Jane Jacobs – was a goal, how did the city reconcile its support for Columbia University’s expansion into West Harlem in spite of significant community opposition and “the inherent contradictions between short-term actions and long-term impacts?” Rohit Aggarwala, as the Director of the New York City Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability and one of the chief authors of PlaNYC2030, chose to respond: “[T]he city is full of contradictions, so the plan is too.” Arguing that there are trade-offs in any plan, he insisted that Columbia University’s expansion was “economically important to the city” and that it was representative of “the necessary trade off of Jacobs vs. Moses.” Jacobs, he continued, “wasn’t against large-scale development but rather poorly conceived development. She wasn’t out to destroy growth, but to figure out how to do it right” (Aggarwala 2007).

⁶⁷ The Institute for Urban Design is a New York-based non-profit that aims to provide a “central platform for debate over issues related to urban planning, development and design” by “creating a common territory for architects, planners policy-makers, developers, academics, journalists, and urban enthusiasts...” (www.ifud.org/about-us/)

While that is likely true, the very suggestion of design as civic virtue is a notion that would presumably cause Jacobs to turn in her grave. To Jacobs art was “arbitrary, symbolic and abstracted,” selective and limited in its ability to represent the endless intricacies of urban life (Jacobs 1992, 373). “[A] city,” she emphasized, “cannot be a work of art... To approach a city, or even a neighborhood, as if it were a larger architectural problem, capable of being given order by converting it into a disciplined work of art, is to make the mistake of attempting to substitute art for life” (Jacobs 1992, 372-373). To Jacobs, previous paradigms in planning – from the City Beautiful and Garden City movements to the Radiant City of Le Corbusier – register as “primarily architectural design cults...” (Jacobs 1992, 375). And while she agreed that that too much intensity and diversity is overwhelming, the closest she came to providing prescriptions for enforcing visual order (Jacobs 1992, 379) was in her discussion of trees and pavements (“with strong, simple patterns”) and possibly awnings as street unifiers (Jacobs 1992, 390).

As such, Burden’s sense of design as a civic virtue capable of fostering urban dynamism represents just one of a number of selective ways in which Jacobs’ ideals have been incorporated into the Bloomberg administration redevelopment agenda and then synthesized with choice aspects of Moses’ legacy as a means of reconciling the fundamental differences and making the case for building like Moses with Jacobs in mind. This synthesis, it turns out, is not only selective, but interpretive as well, for just as Burden insists her understanding of the value of urban street life draws direct inspiration from Jacobs, her celebration of diversity, mixed uses, neighborhood vitality and citizen participation in the planning process represents a highly problematic (mis)use of Jacobs’

ideals. In fact, within the administration, one could argue, those ideals are often secondary, adoptable rather than foundational, and applicable only when they mesh with or can be adapted to fit the broader intentions of the administration's plans.

In one sense, by giving lip service to elements of Jacobs that do not conform to its agenda the administration can, through its own version of the mainstreaming of recent urban history, mask the inherent contradictions within its redevelopment narrative. To Burden's Department of City Planning, for instance, the administration's promotion of diversity and mixed use through the forced rezoning of "blighted" neighborhoods like Manhattanville or Willet's Point in Queens, while scores of firmly middle- to upper-middle class communities have the luxury of requesting their streets, lined with single-family homes, be down-zoned to preserve their character translates as a "fine-grain," block-by-block (read Jacobsean) appreciation for the differences between New York City's many neighborhoods. Of course at its heart, selective downzoning also can be read as a not-so-thinly veiled euphemism for defending real estate, and by extension class, values. And despite the administration's steady rhetoric of working with communities in crafting its plans, the nature of public participation actually engaged in is hardly the kind envisioned by Jacobs. As community experiences surrounding projects such as Columbia University's expansion and the redevelopment of the Atlantic Yards and Hudson Yards rail cuts suggest, neighborhood concerns and priorities for development are only taken seriously when they conform to the administration's pre-established agenda.

Washburn, the administration's chief urban designer, meanwhile, identifies where the real participatory influence lies. Asked at his presentation to the American Institute of Architects how designers and related interest groups could have input in proposed zoning

changes, Washburn responded that “most decisions are made in [internal] meetings, meetings that are on your calendar but you may not have thought are important. So, if your point of view isn’t in the room, it won’t be heard” (Washburn 2008a). The point, of course, is that the general public is not invited to participate in these meetings. Instead, even as Doctoroff, Burden and other city officials publicly insist community input is a necessary and valued part of the planning process, the reality is that within the Bloomberg framework, plans and decisions integral to their creation are made in closed meetings, and only then taken to the public for comment once the details are in place. Those who are critical of these plans are then painted – very much in the Moses tradition – as naysayers, rabble-rousers and petulant opponents of progress or change (Brash 2006). As a result, while New Yorkers – with Jacobs leading the charge – may have won the right to participate in the production of their city through the creation of community boards, the drafting of 197a plans and input at public hearings, that right has proved to be an empty one.

In another sense, the administration’s effort at synthesis allows it to incorporate selective lessons from both Moses and Jacobs in order to promote its own big-build strategy. As Doctoroff contends, the administration has learned from past experiences with the Olympics, the new Jets Stadium and Hudson Yards to cherry-pick aspects of Jacobs’ and Moses’ ideals – to assemble a set of best-practices, if you will – as it single-mindedly pursues its vision of the city. In this way, the selective re-packaging of Moses and Jacobs and the subsequent mobilization of them to support the administration’s redevelopment agenda is far from a subjective attempt to re-examine a fixed history, but rather, as we have seen, an ongoing act of representational creative destruction that

materializes from the spatial and temporal evolution of the city itself. In this way, and over time, Jacobs and Moses have been made to serve as ideological bookends, framing – and in important ways also constraining – debates over development in New York City. Indeed, to most urban observers, Amanda Burden’s suggestion that it is possible to build and rezone, “once again, like Moses... but with Jane Jacobs firmly in mind” (Burden 2006) requires a fairly large leap of logic, especially in a city where negative reaction to Moses’ excesses and generally positive associations with Jacobs’ localism have dominated the debate over redevelopment for decades. But with Jackson and Ballon reopening the door by questioning the narrowness of the prevailing Jacobs-was-right, Moses-was-wrong dichotomy, a parallel imperative to re-visit Jacobs seems only natural.

RE-VISITING JANE JACOBS, REDUX

Over the years it has become de rigueur to assert, as Burden does, that in the battle of urban ideas Jacobs has “prevailed” and that her “influence is much more deeply rooted and widely felt by urbanists, planners and elected officials” (Burden 2006a). Yet one could reasonably suggest that the passage of time and the stubborn persistence of urban poverty, inequality, lack of affordable housing and segregation along class and racial lines argue for a new and more nuanced reading of Jacobs much in the manner that Ballon’s and Jackson’s revisionism rests on the assertion that Moses should be judged from the perspective of today, not the immediate aftermath of the postwar period in which he operated. Jacobs’ ideas, after all, were essentially a response to the logic of post-war urban renewal and large-scale planning that Moses was emblematic of, an era that has come and gone, giving way to a new form of globalized urbanism that rejects broad federal programs, large-scale public housing projects and top-down planning in

favor of public-private partnerships, vouchers for subsidized housing and participatory planning (Brash 2006, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Harvey 2008a, Smith 2002, Tickell and Peck 2002). Whether or not Jacobs' principles regarding what constitutes a livable city still resonate when the old social, economic and political logics underlying that city have shifted, seems a question worth asking.

In her discussion of the value of short blocks in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, for instance, Jacobs takes her readers on a tour of the Upper West Side of Manhattan. She describes Columbus Avenue from 80th Street to 89th Street as “endless stores and a depressing predominance of commercial standardization” (Jacobs 1992, 180), concentrated there because the street blocks are so long – 800 feet – they keep area residents from forming “reasonably intricate pools of city cross use” (Jacobs 1992, 181). “Around about stretch” streets like 88th Street between Columbus and Central Park West; dismally long strips of monotony and darkness – “the Great Blight of Dullness,” (Jacobs 1992, 180) and “stagnation” (Jacobs 1992, 181) – that she argues typify “city failure” (Jacobs 1992, 180).

To Jacobs, Manhattan's Upper West Side is “badly failed” (Jacobs 1992, 204).

Fast forward nearly 50 years and the streets running perpendicular to Columbus Avenue in the west 80s – at least in terms of their physical characteristics and use – look much the same. West 88th Street is still 800-feet long and lined with stoop after stoop leading to four- to five-story residential buildings. No ground-floor retail. No mid-block tailor, locksmith or café. Save for a school and the relatively recent addition of a high-rise condominium tower overlooking Central Park, in fact, the block and the buildings on it are just as Jacobs described. How then does one account for the fact that this very same

block is among the most desirable places to live in New York City, fetching some of the highest residential real estate values in the Manhattan?⁶⁸ For a badly failed block, West 88th Street occupies a special place among New York City's middle and upper classes. Which begs the initial question: Do Jacobs' prescriptive prerequisites for generating the diversity that she deemed essential to successful neighborhoods – the short blocks, blend of old and new buildings, mixed-uses and population density – still make as much sense in the first decade of the 21st century as they did almost five decades ago?

The short answer is that within the most recent rounds of reassessment no shortage of voices has emerged to question the unproblematic embrace of Jacobs as winner in the battle of urban ideas. A number of critics have pointed out that the prescriptions presented in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* offer few answers to the types of problems contemporary cities face (Ouroussof 2006a, Perrine 2008, Sorkin 2008). They note that in spite of the broad adoption of many of her principles by city planners beginning in the late 1960s, cities in general and New York City in particular remain paralyzed by “intractable issues – traffic congestion, population growth, lack of affordable housing – that community organizing and gradual change do nothing to resolve” (Sorkin 2008). Others have argued that her focus on the local misses the global nature of urbanization that exists in the 21st century (Fainstein 2005a, Harvey 2008a).

To be sure, Jacobs remains powerfully influential. As *Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York City* demonstrated, her efforts as a community organizer and activist remain a universally championed element of her legacy. Likewise, the ecological framework that

⁶⁸ In 2000, of the 48 owner-occupied units in Census Tract 173 – an area bounded by Amsterdam Ave., 90th Street, Central Park West and 86th Street – 36 had values of \$1 million or higher. The median family income for the area was \$124,000. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

formed the basis for her understanding of cities has become a cornerstone of her appeal, spawning new generations of planners and urban designers who have embraced the notion that it is possible not only to identify but deliberately reproduce the physical conditions for successful neighborhoods. Over time, that ecological sensibility has even given rise to “a best-practices” approach for determining from ‘healthy urban ‘ecosystems’” what works and incorporating those elements into new projects (Kidder 2008, 259). The architects Cooper and Eckstut based their design criteria for Battery Park City on such a practice, and the broad urban design themes Jacobs first articulated in *The Death and Life Great American Cities* are now embedded in the principles of the Congress for New Urbanism, as well as zoning regulations in cities across the country. They also inform the latest thinking of regional planning bodies like the Regional Plan Association and have become lynchpins of recent urban strategies for revitalizing economically underutilized city districts, as Burden’s call for building like Moses with Jacobs in mind attests.

But while Jacobs was “an urban flâneur of the first order” who “reminded us that cities could only be fully understood with our eyes, feet and ears...” (Ouroussoff 2006a), she focused her observational powers primarily on her own neighborhood – devoting just two sentences in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, for example, to the Bronx (Perrine 2008) – and she saw her urban experience as the measuring stick for all urban experience (Montgomery 1998). Jacobs’ model was Greenwich Village, and her ideas were constrained by what she saw there (Berman 1982). So while she wrote of embracing chaos – in opposition to Moses’s mission to impose order – her willingness to champion the jumble and diversity of urban life only went so far. To Jacobs, design might help

“illuminate, clarify and explain the order of cities,” (Jacobs 1992, 375) but she attacked rote formulas for making cities better places even as in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* she promoted her own prescriptions, best practices, if you will, that tended to reinforce the values she found and cherished in her own neighborhood.

Through the veil of the intervening years, one wonders whether intentionally or not Jacobs is a champion only for certain neighborhoods, those whose well-worn features, brownstone buildings, rich cultural heritage and dynamic character – or at least some simulation thereof – speak to the uprightness of their inhabitants and the latent real estate values of their buildings.

While Jacobs clearly advocates for mixed uses, a range of building ages and types, and frequent streets to break up blocks and foster interaction, her notion of neighborhood diversity is biased towards categories found in the physical environment. Indeed, she “gives physical differentiation a causal role in producing the other types” of diversity (Fainstein 2005a, 5), arguing that through the promotion of physical diversity, other forms of diversity – an expanded public realm, a diversity of active and empowered social groups and a mixture of uses – will follow. As a result, in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs mentions racial segregation just three times (Montgomery 1998), and the Greenwich Village streets she describes are ethnically homogenous (Berman 1982). In her neighborhood residents not only know each other, but look alike, share the same social values and seem to live in a perfect bubble of shared expectation and natural harmony. In an early manuscript in which Jacobs explored the themes that would eventually make their way into *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, she marveled at the “balance between public and private life” that is made up of “many small,

sensitively managed details, practiced and accepted by consensus, so casually they are utterly taken for granted” (Jacobs n.d.). Here, bourgeois shopkeepers – folks like “Mr. Jaffe, whose formal business name is Bernie,” the “proprietor of the candy and oddment store around the corner” – serve as de facto arbiters of neighborhood life, upstanding symbols of the small-scale, local business enterprises that Jacobs believes not only provide the neighborhood with its economic vitality, but establish its underlying norms and conventions (Jacobs n.d.).⁶⁹ To Jacobs, Mr. Jaffe is representative of “the small business community of practical, law-abiding citizens devoted to ‘free enterprise’ and ‘social mobility’” (Jacobs 1992, 190), and in this neighborhood, his most important job is to reinforce – and enforce – the normative behaviors that make the street safe for commerce and life as everybody knows it. Mr. Jaffe, of course, is more than willing to project these “taken for granted” norms of behavior on the neighborhood, and he is just as likely to be seen lecturing kids trying to buy cigarettes and laying down the law to “rowdies” whose rowdy behavior is never described but nonetheless has been deemed detrimental to the street’s sense of order (Jacobs n.d.). In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* this informal means of social control emerges as Jacobs’ concept of “street eyes,” and like so many of her ideas, it subsequently has been translated into generalized design standards, this time for making neighborhoods safe (Newman 1996).

In spite of Jacobs’ inference that all of this – from self-policing by local residents to the market logics that provide the neighborhood with its economic underpinning – occurs as part of some “intricate, underlying order of cities,” and in direct rebuttal to assertions that she is an anti-government libertarian (Anderson 1964, Ballon 2006,

⁶⁹ Mr. Jaffe also appears in *Life and Death of the Great American City*, though in a modestly revised role.

Husock 1994), Jacobs argues that government plays an essential role in fostering functional neighborhoods. Public policy, she writes, can encourage diversity by moving the city's "chessmen" – primary land uses that serve as incubators for other uses – in concert to encourage mixed use (Jacobs 1992, 167). Diversity of other types, she writes, "depends directly or indirectly" on "the presence of plentiful, convenient, diverse city commerce" (Jacobs 1992, 148). In short, Jacobs believed "public intervention was crucial to guaranteeing that the market would produce human and functional diversity that was for her so seminal for good cities" (Sorkin 2006). Today, such public intervention has taken the form of mixed-use zoning, and in New York City it is one of the most material ways that Jacobs' legacy lives on in the Bloomberg administration's redevelopment agenda.

WHERE JACOBS AND MOSES MEET

At this point, then, the question becomes not whether Jacobs believed cities need activist governments intervening to shape the built environment in order to achieve certain purposes, but rather what those purposes should be and which values should inform a city's ultimate shape. In this sense, Jacobs shares much in common with Moses – something her supporters have not been entirely comfortable acknowledging. To return to our initial question: What might those similarities be?

To begin with, both Moses and Jacobs viewed the built environment as the root of the problem and therefore focused their efforts on spatial transformation rather than re-imagining underlying social or economic processes to mitigate against what radical urbanist Henri Lefebvre saw as "the brutal demands of economic growth and competition" (Lefebvre 1996, 149). In fact, these attempts at manipulating space served

to conceal the full force of the processes at play, and to pathologize space into “healthy and diseased spaces” that could then be diagnosed and reconceived as “harmonious social space, normal and normalizing” (Lefebvre 1996, 99). While Jacobs and Moses, as examples of what Lefebvre might call “physicians of space” (Lefebvre 1996, 99), viscerally disagreed on what the appropriate environment should look like, in the material sense, they wholeheartedly embraced the notion that the private market with the occasional but highly prescribed assist from public policy offered the best means for reshaping space. In Moses’s case, both Title I and urban renewal were based on the notion that the best solution to the prevalence of slums and the social problems associated with them was wholesale clearance, not piecemeal rehabilitation of individual buildings or blocks, followed by re-planning and ultimately private redevelopment of public housing.

In Jacobs, the preoccupation with physical form is an obvious reaction to what she and other critics of the age viewed as the social engineering aspects of Moses’ modernist agenda. Whereas Moses and others framed blight and urban decline as a housing issue and advocated for large-scale slum clearance and neighborhood renewal, Jacobs offered a more organic, do-it-yourself revitalization based on the notion that active streets, a mix of old and new buildings, vibrant small enterprise and plenty of eyes on the street were the keys to the successful city. She disparaged the type of renewal supported by the 1954 policy of conservation and rehabilitation – “not the bulldozer approach” (Jacobs 1962, 2) – that replaced slum clearance, arguing for a more gradual influx of money:

Where rehabilitation occurs in cities, because a neighborhood population is staying there while its economic condition improves, instead of leaving, this rehabilitation does not occur all at once. One of the

attractions of such a neighborhood is its population stability. But all the members of a stable population do not improve their economic lot at the same time, or to the same extent. Under the urban renewal concept of rehabilitation, everyone is supposed to be able to rehabilitate, or to support rehabilitation done for them more or less at once. Those who cannot [SIC], do not fit into the plan (Jacobs 1962, 2).

Her critique might have exposed the destructive power of mass rehabilitation's catastrophic money; however it failed to foresee the power of the fix-it-up ethos to reverberate throughout the neighborhood in a manner that inherently displaces those who for whatever reason do not have the means to participate in the process. Gradual rehabilitation might make economic sense for those who own real estate or their homes and can enjoy their improving prospects as the value of their property appreciates. But in a city such as New York, where the vast majority of residents do not own their own homes, those who rent ultimately bear the brunt of the neighborhood's revival through rising rental rates, and in many cases displacement.⁷⁰

Jacobs also has much to say about "failed" city districts, including those which she equates with "destructive" (Jacobs 1992, 230) or "low economic" (Jacobs 1992, 231) land uses – the junkyards and used-car lots that to her mean a certain slice of the city is not living up to its full economic potential. In her eyes these spaces are rundown and dismal not because such uses are located there. Instead, the inverse is true: those uses are attracted to unsuccessful spaces. This, in her view, is blight by definition. "Probably everyone (except possibly the owners of such objects) is agreed that this category of uses

⁷⁰ In 2000, 30.2% of New York City residents owned their own homes, compared with 53% for New York State and 68.9% for the United States. The median value of owner occupied housing in the City was \$211,900 while citywide median household income was just \$38,293. In comparison, the median value of owner occupied housing statewide was \$148,700 and median household income was \$43,393. Slightly more than one in five – 21.2% – of New York City residents lived below poverty, compared with 14.6% statewide (United States Census 2000).

is blighting,” she argues (Jacobs 1992, 230), and the only solution for salvaging the space “is to cultivate an economic environment which makes more vital uses of the land profitable and logical” (Jacobs 1992, 231). Where low-margin economic uses like repair shops or storage facilities should ultimately operate, however, she does not say. Perhaps in the successful city she espouses these uses simply would not exist; people would not need to junk their cars, or get them fixed, or to store things. Or maybe no one would even need cars (or least be well-off enough to afford ones that would not break down) and their houses or apartments would be roomy enough to hold everything they own – though not so big they would lead to suburban-style sprawl.

Were she writing of low economic land uses today, Jacobs would no doubt be describing the New York City neighborhoods of Manhattanville in West Harlem and Willets Point, Queens, where 62 acres of industrial uses, including row after row of small-scale, flood-prone auto repair shops, sit within an epic home-run’s reach of Citi Field, the new \$700 million home of Major League Baseball’s New York Mets.⁷¹ In fact, powerful forces have used Jacobs’ failed city district argument to have Willets Point and Manhattanville designated blighted and rezoned in order to make way for more vital, “successful” land uses – the Bloomberg administration’s proposed \$3 billion redevelopment of Willets Point that includes office buildings, a hotel and convention center, parks, retail stores and 5,500 apartments; as well as the \$6.2 billion Columbia University campus expansion in West Harlem.

Of course there is another view of these places – that of the people who call the neighborhoods home or own or work at the business located there. In this view these

⁷¹ Opened in April, 2009, the 45,000-seat stadium was built with more than \$160 million in city and state subsidies and \$540 million in tax-exempt financing.



Figure 14: Site of Columbia’s proposed expansion in Manhattanville, West Harlem, looking northeast from Riverside Drive. The sign above the car wash at the bottom of the photo reads, “Dear Columbia: No Forced Displacement.” (Photo by the author, June 13, 2009).

areas provide low-cost housing, and jobs – some 1,700 in Willets Point – and judging from their persistent existence, services that a significant portion of the New York City population deems essential.

One can only assume that the economic environment Jacobs and – by extension – Columbia University and the Bloomberg administration wish to “cultivate” in these “failed” districts does not involve those already living and working there. Instead, their revitalization will make room for a whole new class of folks with the skills and resources to dislodge existing inhabitants. One can make that assumption because nowhere in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* or in Columbia University’s plans or the

administration's objectives are there provisions to guarantee any other outcome. Just as Jacobs naively conflates geographic proximity of mixed primary uses with jobs for neighborhood residents (Jacobs 1992, 174-175), one of the key points made by the Bloomberg administration in rationalizing its vision of the benefits to be derived from an expanded Columbia University and a rezoned, de-industrialized Willets Point are the jobs that redevelopment will bring. To be sure there will be jobs building, maintaining and operating the new research laboratories or hotels and convention centers. And as part of the administration's plan to transform the area, Willets Point workers have been offered free training to "learn to use a computer, wait on tables, keep books, fix cars or simply speak English" through a \$2.5 million program known as Willets Point Worker Assistance (Santos 2009). But will the autoworkers of Willets Point in 2009 become the bellboys and service staffs at the hotels and convention centers of tomorrow? And even if they do, will the minimum-wage paychecks those jobs offer keep pace with the rising rents increasing property values are likely to generate, regardless of the administration's promise to add 1,000 or so units of "affordable" housing through inclusionary zoning? Just like the working class members of Jacobs' Greenwich Village neighborhood, these residents eventually will be forced to seek new neighborhoods in which to live, and many have argued the money for the worker assistance program would be better spent helping relocate the businesses they work for now and the jobs they already have. "I don't see the point in training people who can't work if there's no guarantee they'll ever find jobs," Marcos Neira, a Colombian immigrant who owns Master Express Deli and Restaurant on Willets Point Boulevard told the *New York Times* (Santos, 2009).

Central to Jacobs' and Moses' views is also a shared faith in the private market – again, with a little government intervention here and there – to solve urban housing woes. This embrace of free enterprise, in fact, is among their most important points of convergence. Moses, as Ballon notes, was a firm believer in the ability of the private sector to solve the middle-class housing problem (Ballon 2007, 97). Likewise, Jacobs and her fellow “bohemians” in the West Village argued that “private enterprise could do the job of development... just fine, and without any publicly subsidized affordable housing” (Lander 2006). In her critique of the three forms of money that “finance and shape most of the changes that occur in residential and business properties in cities,” Jacobs’ touchstone for public funds are the public housing projects and clearance programs born of the Moses era and the suburb-building mortgage guarantees provided by the FHA and the Veterans’ Administration, all underwritten by federal, state and city governments (Jacobs 1992, 292). These programs are prone, she notes, to behave cataclysmically, “like manifestations of malevolent climates...affording either searing droughts or torrential, eroding floods” (Jacobs 1992, 293). The kind of money needed for nurturing healthy neighborhoods, she asserts, the kind that supports and encourages gradual change, is in short supply.

At the heart of this relationship between space and market, then, is what both Jacobs and Moses see as the seeds of the real estate-based economic development serving as the key to urban regeneration – Moses through the clearance of slums and blight, the segregation of public housing and the development of civic institutions such as Lincoln Center and the United Nations; Jacobs in the house-by-house, block-by-block rehabilitation of aspiring neighborhoods. The way Caro tells the story, whether standing

on a bluff overlooking the “filthy shanty town” of Marble Hill (Caro 1975, 534) or walking through the “valley of ashes” that was Flushing Meadow (Caro 1975, 1,083), Moses simply could not be concerned with the systemic inequities and market failures that created New York City’s Hooverilles or the homeless who lived in them. Instead, he saw blight and wasted space and was driven to erase it. Indeed this is a portion of Caro’s narrative that Ballon willingly accepts. Moses, she contends:

...understood that the dynamics of New York City real estate and the housing market would not generate affordable middle-income housing. He warned that Manhattan would become a polarized city of rich and poor unless government intervened. And he used the Title I urban renewal program to build affordable housing for teachers, nurses, garment workers, municipal employees... the middle class (Ballon 2006).

Jacobs, too, envisioned a city populated by the middle class and those aspiring to reach it. While she bemoaned the class-stratification of suburbs where, she claimed, the lack of public life meant opportunities for mixing do not exist, she was blind to the fact that just because those opportunities exist in cities, where folks do mix, they do not mean class differences go away or that that they do not matter in material ways. Today, poor kids from any of New York City’s neighborhoods can play alongside rich kids in Greenwich Village playgrounds, but their working class parents still struggle to pay the rent and do not have health insurance.

Jacobs is not completely antagonistic to the poor. In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* she notes the paternalistic nature of slum clearance and urban renewal programs, arguing that fixing slums is “no simple matter of supplying better housing” (Jacobs 1992, 271). She even suggests that slum residents should not be seen as victims, but people capable, should they choose, of improving their own lots in life. The reason

slums persist, as she sees it, is once an area begins to unslum, too many people move out too fast. Citing census figures from Greenwich Village and Boston's North End, she argues that unslumming "did not represent a replacement of the old slum population by a new and different middle-class population; it represented much of the old population moving into the middle class" (Jacobs 1992, 281). In her view, then, successful unslumming depends on the retention of enough existing residents and businesses – just not those, operating businesses that represent low-economic or ruinous uses (Jacobs 1992, 230) – who over time will make "modest gains," thereby gradually raising the "threshold of success or ambition" and revitalizing the neighborhood over time (Jacobs 1992, 232).

Still, she offers no concrete mechanism for making that happen, no explanation for how those who stay make the leap up in class, just a vague endorsement of organic regeneration as means of staving off the slippery slope to perpetual slumdom. "Cities," she asserts, "grow the middle class" which in turn is "a stabilizing force in the formation of a self-diversified population" (Jacobs 1992, 282). Jacobs acknowledges that as neighborhoods improve, newcomers seeking "a place to live which is fit for city life" will want to move in, but in her estimation they only add to the diversification and contribute to the neighborhood's new standards of success (Jacobs 1992, 283). Once the residential character of the neighborhood diversifies, commercial diversification will naturally follow, and in turn "visitors and cross-use" from other neighborhoods will occur in what she portrays as an ongoing and inevitable natural process.

As such, Jacobs' lessons on unslumming provide an anecdotal counterpoint to the effects of urban renewal – and further rebuttal to Ebenezer Howard's utopian Garden

Cities – but not a sense of the underlying political economic causes of poverty and the role of real estate markets in the uneven creation and distribution of wealth. In fact, her assumptions rest on an unproblematic embrace of the same socio-economic myths – in which the fruits of generated wealth naturally filter down to those who work hard, aspire to own their own home and be faithful, productive members of a normative society based on the principles of the capitalist system.

“The processes that occur in unslumming,” she writes, “depend on the fact that a metropolitan economy, if it is working well, is constantly transforming many poor people into middle-class people, many illiterates into skilled (or even educated) people, many greenhorns into competent citizens” (Jacobs 1992, 288). Of course, those metropolitan economies do not always work well, as regular, periodic rounds of capital crisis in 1973, 1988, the early and late 1990s and the sub-prime mortgage-induced collapse in 2008 painfully remind. What to do in those cases is just one of many unanswered scenarios in Jacobs’s equation.

Eventually, Jacobs even turns paternalistic in her own right. What she describes as “perpetual slums,” or areas “which show no signs of social or economic improvement” (Jacobs 1992, 272), are that way because those who are smart enough, ambitious enough and enterprising enough have already left (Jacobs 1992, 273), leaving behind only the “apathetic” and “immigrating hillbillies” whose limited economic horizons doom them to the worst urban neighborhoods (Jacobs 1992, 274).⁷² What ultimately is to become of them if and when their neighborhoods improve is never made clear. While Jacobs decries

⁷² Here Jacobs adopts a notion – not to mention language – culled straight from Adam Smith’s discussion of primitive accumulation and the origins of capitalism: “Long, long ago there were two sorts of people; one, the diligent, intelligent and above all frugal elite; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance, and more, in riotous living...” (Sites 2003, 13).

the “slum-shifting” endemic to slum clearance of the urban renewal model, she never accounts for anyone other than those capable of hauling themselves by their bootstraps into the middle class.

Clearly, the sense of spatial determinism that resides in Jacobs’ views of slums and successful cities is at the core of more contemporary efforts to foster dynamism and diversity through the built environment. As noted earlier it provides the basis for Cooper’s and Eckstut’s vision of Battery Park City – as well as Cooper’s later work with NYC2012 and the Hudson Yards master plan – and they have become foundational elements in the New Urbanist agenda. While the Charter for New Urbanism claims to “recognize that physical solutions by themselves will not solve social and economic problems,” it maintains, clearly drawing from Jacobs, that “economic vitality, community stability and environmental health” cannot be sustained without a coherent and supportive framework” (Congress for the New Urbanism 2001). And Battery Park City, with its planned-in mix of uses and simulated Main Street, was consciously designed with Jacobs’ precepts for generating diversity in “the air” (Cooper 2009).

But these spaces have engendered criticism in their own right. Some have argued that among those guilty of distorting Jacobs’ original ideals, New Urbanists are guiltiest, reducing “her vision of corner shops and busy streets to a superficial town formula that creates the illusion of urban diversity, but masks a stifling uniformity at its core” (Ourossoff 2006a). Much as Jacobs ignores the very real issues of poverty by privileging spatial form over social processes, New Urbanism attempts to mask social inequality simply by designing a new physical environment (Harvey 1997). Battery Park City, meanwhile has been described as an early model for the “isolated, self-enclosed patches

of development” – in this case stretching along Manhattan’s “once-forgotten waterfront” – that serve as “postindustrial service centers planned to attract the young urban professionals and double-income childless couples increasingly populating the city” (Boyer 1992, 183-184).

JACOBS AND GENTRIFICATION

While a clear – if contested – case can be made for the relationship between Jacobs’ fix-it-up-ethos and the rehabilitation-orientation of early neighborhood-scale gentrification, her ideas figure prominently in more recent manifestations of the process as well.⁷³ With the publication of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* Jacobs would add her voice to those who as early as the 1960s identified New York City’s working waterfront as a “wasted asset” (Jacobs 1992, 159), and she called for its redevelopment as a means of diversifying and therefore catalyzing the economic development of Lower Manhattan. Pointing to the area’s monochrome devotion to the financial and office sectors and a surrounding “ring of stagnation, decay and vacancies,” Jacobs argued that a “great marine museum,” complete with embarkation points for tour boats and seafood restaurants – “as glamorous and salty as art can make them” – would draw residents, corporations and tourists (Jacobs 1992, 155). Further inland, she suggested a specialized marine library branch, free aquarium and inexpensive opera and theater (Jacobs 1992, 159) would serve to attract visitors in the late afternoon and on

⁷³ Jacobs herself bears the characteristics of an early gentrifier. A “middle-class girl from the working class city” of Scranton, Penn., upon moving to New York City she and her husband bought a “tiny old rowhouse” on Hudson Street – at the time a predominately Irish working class part of Greenwich Village – and renovated it, transforming it into a “middle class rowhouse” (Gans 2006, 213). Still, Gans argues that Jacobs has been unfairly “blessed and blamed for inspiring or encouraging” a greater “gentrification boom...” (Gans 2006, 214). Likewise, Klemek argues that a close read of Jacobs’ chapter on preservation in *the Death and Life of the Great American City* and her advocacy for older, less-up-to-date structures as an economically viable source of affordable housing proves the point (Klemek 2008).

weekends to counter the intensive day use generated by the denizens of the area's offices. As the district "liven[s] up" during the off hours, Jacobs reasoned, new residential use would "appear spontaneously" (Jacobs 1992, 160).

A little over two decades later, Jacobs' prescription for the area would find expression in the creation of South Street Seaport, a private redevelopment project on the East River just north of Manhattan's Financial District. Here, early 19th-century counting houses were rehabilitated as museums, boutique shops and restaurants, transforming a "leftover space of derelict structures" from New York City's mercantile days into an "upscale marketplace catering" to Wall Street workers, tourists and urban adventurers (Boyer 1992, 181). Designated an historic district, complete with berths for renovated ships evoking the "city's maritime history," South Street Seaport was a further iteration of the Jacobs-inspired inner-city marketplace concept originally conceived by shopping center developer James Rouse and previously implemented in Boston's Faneuil Hall, Quincy and South Street markets and Baltimore's Harbor Place. Marketed as "leisure-time zones combining shopping and entertainment with office and residential development" (Boyer 1992, 181), these anti-modern urban renewal projects joined Battery Park City and the emerging New Urbanism movement in drawing from Jacobs' core precepts while appealing to a sense of nostalgia and referencing a perceived historic heyday in order to convey new urban aspirations.

Whether or not they have proved successful, however, depends on one's point of view. To those inheritors of Jacobs' mantle who designed and planned these redevelopment schemes, successful neighborhoods could be defined by the quality of life they offered, and a good, or at least acceptable, quality of life was determined by a

decidedly class-oriented notion of access to certain amenities – open space, restaurants, retail shops and cafes, the South Street Seaport Museum. Viewed from the angle of these designers and planners, such amenities represented Jacobs’ prescription for a mix of diverse land uses, and in keeping with her logic they would attract a higher standard of potential residents, spurring additional investment. As planning historian David Gordon notes in his detailing of the story of the development of Battery Park City, for example, public spaces were completed first, “in advance of private development in order to increase the value of the adjacent sites” and shape “the image of the project to the rest of the city and to potential private investors” (Gordon 1007, 81).

These redevelopment projects also became central elements, weapons in a sense, in the competitive location game being played between cities within this emerging form of global urbanism. If a city was to attract the finance, advertising, insurance, fashion, design and art firms that insured it membership in the network of select global cities, it had to market itself, and design codes and architectural patterns spoke the language of livability (Miles 2000). With local governments directing the nature of redevelopment through zoning regulations and design guidelines, “architects and artists” in places like Battery Park City, a refurbished Times Square and South Street Seaport “focused their designs to appeal to the tastes of white-collar workers and upper-middle class consumers” (Boyer 1992, 193).

To critics, however, these redevelopment projects suggested “simulcrums of authenticity” (Fainstein, 2005b) that romanticize the city’s past even as they erase swaths of its working-class history and gloss over very real social issues by designing out socio-economic – and by extension racial – diversity (Boyer 1992, Miles 2000). Just as the



Figure 15: A street in Battery Park City. The designers drew inspiration from Jane Jacobs in devising guidelines dictating the use of specific materials and architectural styles to mimic the city’s grand historic neighborhoods while creating a middle-to-upper class enclave (Photo by the author, Aug. 1, 2009).

shops in South Street Seaport beckon to a certain class of clientele, in Battery Park City, which is owned and operated by a public-benefit corporation created by the State of New York, geography has been deployed in the creation and ongoing enforcement of a middle- and upper-class enclave. In a deal brokered to insure the flow of private investment and development interest, the Battery Park City Authority was exempted from including any affordable housing in its development plans (Gordon 1997). Instead, the BPCA was permitted to use revenues – initially projected, eventually real – to finance the rehabilitation and/or construction of low-income housing in Harlem and the Bronx, those faraway, largely lower-class “neighborhoods with the greatest need” (Gordon 1997,

101).⁷⁴ As a result, by 2000, 71.4 percent of residents of Battery Park City were white, compared with 35 percent citywide (US Bureau of the Census 2000a); the median family income was \$136,811, compared with \$42,235 for all of New York City, and 67 percent of annual family incomes were more than \$100,000, compared with 15.3 percent for the city as a whole (US Bureau of the Census 2000b).

Non-members of the middle and upper classes continue to feel the actually existing effects of Jacobs' influence on redevelopment in other ways as well. To Jacobs, re-investment in a neighborhood by the business community was an essential element of the unslumming process and a critical driver of desired diversity. While in her day that reinvestment might have taken the form of small entrepreneurs – the barber, the hardware store owner and the shoemaker she celebrates in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* – by the last decade of the 20th century it was more likely to appear in the form of chain retail stores and restaurants. Indeed, to many residents of economically marginalized neighborhoods long-abandoned by investment capital, the arrival of a corner Starbucks' coffee house or neighborhood Dunkin' Donuts franchise signifies a rediscovery by the wider world. But while the inexorable spread of coffee houses whose familiar symbols – their commonplace logos, easily identifiable color schemes and trademark designs – that elsewhere seem to be *everywhere* certainly indicates an infusion of capital, it also serves as a forceful reminder that access to mainstream consumerism

⁷⁴ The arrangement also included a loophole, however, allowing New York City to divert those funds to maintain existing municipal services. Over time, this loophole became a budgeting crutch, and off-site housing programs were suspended in 1990 as a consequence of budget shortfalls. All told, the initiative generated pledges of \$1 billion but the actual amount spent on housing was far less and the number of units created limited: the rehabilitation of 1,557 units and community facilities in vacant city-owned buildings, and the renovation of 14 abandoned buildings with 893 units in the South Bronx; an additional 40 vacant buildings and 664 units in Central Harlem. Another 2,128 units were generated through the sale of empty buildings to non-profit developers in the South Bronx (Gordon 1997). In 2006, an agreement was reached whereby \$130 million in Battery Park City revenues was used to create the New York City Housing Trust Fund and provide seed financing for the New York Acquisition Fund, an initiative to preserve and construct 30,000 units of off-site affordable housing over 10 years (New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development 2008.)

and its related retail amenities have become central to the American notion of quality of life (Sutton 2009). At the same time, the ubiquity and calculated sameness of chain expansion threatens to flatten the urban streetscape, rendering once ethnically and culturally iconic boulevards such as 125th Street in Harlem virtually indistinguishable from most other streets in most parts of any other city.

Presumably, given her elevation of diversity to a foundational characteristic of urban success, Jacobs would detest this creeping homogenization of the built as well as cultural and culinary landscapes even as she would applaud the arrival of new streams of investment. In fact, Jacobs acknowledges the potential for the “self destruction of diversity” that unchecked neighborhood revitalization can create (Jacobs 1992, 331). In her later years she even seemed to recognize the direct relationship between the processes she advocated and the types of neighborhoods they produced, conceding that gentrification “can turn ‘vicious and excessive’ when demand for improved neighborhoods has outrun supply” (Rochon 2007, 42). As important as increasing the availability of nice neighborhoods, she ultimately acknowledged, is a conscious and steadfast commitment to engendering class and racial diversity. Still, that recognition feels incomplete, arrived at in hindsight, and it suggests that at best Jacobs only understood the destructive potential of her ideals once they were unleashed. At worst, it means that she understood very well what was likely to happen and encouraged it regardless in the name of promoting certain class values over others.

Of course in a certain sense the issue is not whether Jacobs can be read as promoting gentrification. Rather, an equally relevant concern is that her views have been mobilized by others in ways that displace and marginalize the poor in the name of

building what she believed was a better city. And to be fair, Jacobs cannot be held fully accountable for the ways her principles and ideals have been put in action. Some she clearly would not condone. But looking back with the benefit of hindsight, Jacobs was far more accurate in her critique of modernist planning than in her diagnosis of the nature of urban space. One of the things she clearly overlooked, or possibly just failed to foresee, was the dynamics of a speculative real estate market naturally inclined toward the accumulation of wealth. At any rate, in the end her ideals are inherent in contemporary forms of gentrification, propelling it forward in places like Battery Park City and in the principles of New Urbanism.

MOSES AND THE MIDDLE-CLASS CITY

Less widely considered, though perhaps more cleanly outlined, is Moses' contribution to the historic evolution of gentrification. With federally funded Title I and other urban renewal programs emerging as a predominant strategy for the absorption of surplus capital during the post-war period, Moses, as a uniquely efficient practitioner of slum clearance and redevelopment, literally paved the way for a massive reshaping of New York City along class lines.⁷⁵

At the heart of the Title I enterprise was a land subsidy, known as the write-down, through which the federal government would cover two-thirds of the losses a developer incurred in assembling and clearing land for private redevelopment. Cities picked up the other third under the assumption that they would recoup those moneys through higher tax revenues (Ballon 2007, 97). Through these write-downs, then, the state assembled

⁷⁵ During his 12-year tenure (from 1949-1960) as chairman of the Mayor's Committee on Slum Clearance, Moses obtained 32 planning grants, saw 17 redevelopment/renewal projects completed and helped New York access \$65.8 million in federal Title I resources (Ballon 2007).

properties “at a ‘fair-market value,’” and supplied them to developers at subsidized prices, making possible the “capital devalorization” that established the “broad conditions” for stimulating private market “redevelopment, rehabilitation and land use conversion” that marked urban renewal efforts (Smith 1996, 70).

While in certain ways Moses tried to link Title I dollars to the construction of public housing,⁷⁶ the program was explicitly conceived to promote private re-development of blighted areas, not provide housing for the displaced, and the real estate economics of the time – high construction costs, debt service payments and taxes – ensured that market-rate housing produced was “well beyond the reach of the middle class,” not to mention those of lesser means (Ballon 2007, 97). As a result, existing residents of neighborhoods slated for Title 1 clearance rarely could afford the new apartments created where their homes once stood and thus were forced to move; in effect, Moses’ Title I projects gentrified whole neighborhoods long before the term was even conceived (Ballon 2007, 102). Similarly, the Housing Act of 1949, which expanded the scope of federal urban renewal legislation, did not mandate land-use restrictions and therefore did not require replacing existing housing with new housing. Moses would use this opening to mobilize federal funds for the clearance not only of slums but for parts of the city devoted to manufacturing in order to make room for the civic institutions that he held were crucial to New York City’s future as a preeminent global capital, even as it meant a net loss of lower-class housing and jobs (Ballon 2007, 108). From 1945 to 1955 along the East River alone, Moses’ Title I projects cleared the way for the United Nations, Stuyvesant Town, Peter Cooper Village, NYU-Bellevue, public housing in

⁷⁶ Moses sited 12 of his 17 Title I projects near existing public housing projects; in two cases Title I projects were built in conjunction with public housing projects (Ballon 2007, 102).

Corlears Hook and the Brooklyn Civic Center at the cost of at least 18,000 blue-collar jobs. While a relatively small percentage of the city's 3.5 million total jobs at the time, those lost jobs delivered "a body blow to the factory economy" (Schwartz 1993, 239).

The act also did not contribute funds for rehabilitating buildings and neighborhoods, privileging instead a "bulldoze and build" mentality (Ballon 2007, 102). Only passage of the 1954 amendment to the act allowed cities to hatch alternative schemes and the emphasis to shift from urban redevelopment to urban renewal through rehabilitation (Ballon 2007, 109). Even though this new mass attack on slums also drew Jacobs' derision for its catastrophic potential, it did denote the end of the era of wholesale clearance and helped usher in a new, though at least to some equally destructive, approach more closely aligned with the notions of incremental change and "the self-healing powers" that Jacobs extolled (Ballon 2007, 112).

Even more so, Moses fundamentally altered the very nature of urbanism, much as Haussmann had a century before, by seizing on the primacy of the urban property market as a means of "expanding the terrain of profitable capitalist activity" (Harvey 2008b, 28). By tapping into new financial institutions and tax arrangements to propel urban expansion, Moses helped pioneer debt-financing mechanisms that, while effective in assuaging the post-War capital absorption crisis, eventually and inevitably came home to haunt through the "bursting of the global property market bubble in 1973" and the subsequent fiscal bankruptcy of New York in 1975 (Harvey 2008b, 28), a systematic meltdown of capitalist urbanism with global ramifications. "Fastforward," as Harvey suggests, to late 2008 and the rapid unraveling of the global economy following the sub-

prime mortgage and housing asset-value crisis in the United States, and “[T]he parallels with the 1970s are uncanny” (Harvey 2008b, 31).

A CONVERGENCE OF CLASS POLITICS

Ultimately, whether one thinks Robert Moses saved New York City by positioning it for the future or sparked its decline by orchestrating the ascendance of urbanism to mainstay of the capitalist economy, whether one believes his force-fed modernism is responsible for situating the city for a new life or hastening its death, depends not only on one’s views of planning and how cities work but one’s situation in time and space.

Yet if Moses was a man of his times, Jacobs was certainly a woman of hers, and as much as she has come to represent a fix-it-up ethos that inspires neighborhood diversity and dynamism, her notion of a “creative city” can be read as just another accumulation strategy, kinder and gentler on the surface but nevertheless paving the way for a block-by-block gentrification that leaves little room for the working class and people of color (Smith and Larson 2007).⁷⁷

As with planning in general, the characterizations that typically mark Jacobs and Moses revolve around questions of who benefits, and at whose expense? For the better part of 50 years that divide has been seen as one of dichotomizing extremes, of big vs. small, do something vs. do nothing, of Moses vs. Jacobs for New York City’s very soul. But those dichotomies are not anywhere as complete as we have been made to believe, and calls for a new Moses to guide New York City into the future have cast the pair in a new light, calling into question many of the steadfast assumptions that for decades have

⁷⁷ See also Jameson, Frederic, 1995.

cemented them as ideological opposites. As the easy characterizations begin to fade it becomes possible to see that those simplistic dualisms served to mask greater ideological agreements, and the insistent focus on their differences is exposed as a parochial position that only makes sense from within the naturalized, taken-for-granted logic of capital accumulation. As different as they were – and it is essential to reaffirm that in many aspects those differences were extreme as well as important – within the context of an emerging urbanism shaping cities in the wake of post-War economic restructuring, Jacobs and Moses found fundamental common ground in a shared ideology of building and rebuilding the city for people of greater rather than lesser means.

While both envisioned a future of economically vibrant cities without slums, neither questioned nor addressed the root cause of slum creation. Instead, when examined through a class lens, the poor become the problem and the answer to that problem lies in disciplining the neighborhood by, respectively, fixing it or bulldozing it completely to make room for new highways, office towers, high-rise condominiums, waterfront parks, even new forms of urbanism conveniently dubbed New Urbanism – whatever the prescription that feeds real estate values and conforms to existing capitalist orthodoxy.

It is here, then, in the convergence of class politics, that Amanda Burden's suggestion of a Bloomberg administration building like Moses but with Jacobs in mind becomes an essential and extremely powerful tool within the city's greater redevelopment narrative. While the pair's legacies continue to be viewed in the context of their antagonisms, those struggles represent battles among the privileged; In the end Moses and Jacobs did not disagree with each other's grander ambition – the exaltation of a middle-class America – so much, as they did with the means of getting there. And it is

also here, in New York City's class dynamics and the political economics surrounding them, that the very act of reinterpreting the legacies of Jacobs and Moses emerges as inherently problematic. For what are at issue are not specific historical events or social conditions, but how they are selectively aligned to reflect certain ideologies. Casting Moses and Jacobs as ideological opposites therefore intentionally and artificially constrains the debates over urbanism to a narrow band that blindly accepts and promotes the logic of capital accumulation, reinforcing the very class dynamics that created slums in the first place. From this vantage point, one can ask whether the argument between today's Moses resurrectionists and Jacobs' defenders turns on a question of scale. Where the two sides meet is in the politics of gentrification; both are for it, just by different means (Smith and Larson 2007), and far from representing the source of a truly aspirational city – or at the least a model of urbanism that subordinates development to social justice – neither Jacobs or Moses serves as a useful model. This reliance on remobilizing tired notions in support of neoliberalism's growth-oriented ideology only perpetuates existing inequalities, encouraging "accumulation through dispossession" (Harvey 2008a) and exacerbating the physical conditions Jacobs and Moses claimed to want to address. Only by recognizing this reformulation for what it is – a justification for urban class engineering – and moving beyond Jacobs and Moses can we confront the normative logic at the heart of the Bloomberg agenda and begin what Lefebvre conceived as the struggle to gain command and control over urban spaces in order to construct a city for all of its inhabitants.

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