

# Sunnyside Surprise

Anyone who likes surprises will just love the Sports Center proposal for the Sunnyside yards in Queens made by the newly created State Racing and Wagering Board. New York City doesn't like it very much, and for good reason.

It isn't just a simple matter of the courtesy of informing or consulting someone, somewhere, in the municipal administration about such a proposal, before dumping it on the city and the press. It is the much more serious matter of not consulting the City Planning Commission, the agency that determines a good part of the city's future with considerable power and professional expertise. It is inconceivable that any group should be so uninformed of the planning process as to flout it in this fashion.

The state should know better, having dumped the bombshell of Battery Park City on New York in much the same way a number of years ago. The upshot was lengthy, painful negotiation with the city to coordinate that project with the official Lower Manhattan Plan. Only an urban masochist would want to go through that performance again. The probability is that the racing board had nothing more purposeful in mind than torpedoing bond sales for New Jersey's projected sports complex, an objective it seems to have achieved. But Governor Rockefeller, who is giving all-out endorsement to the Sunnyside center, ought to take a view that looks beyond the pari-mutuel window.

Although city officials haven't been asked, they make no secret of their belief that the New York scheme—if seriously intended—is singularly ill-advised. Two carefully studied previous proposals for the Sunnyside site have been shelved because of the enormous cost of platforming the rail yards that would be necessary to build anything there at all. If one sought a sure-fire bottleneck for the permanent traffic jam of all time, a sports complex in this area would do the job.

The priorities of the land, so close to the work center of New York, still point to housing, if costs are ever feasible. The odds on a Sunnyside Superfecta ever being run are very long indeed. No one is taking any bets.