

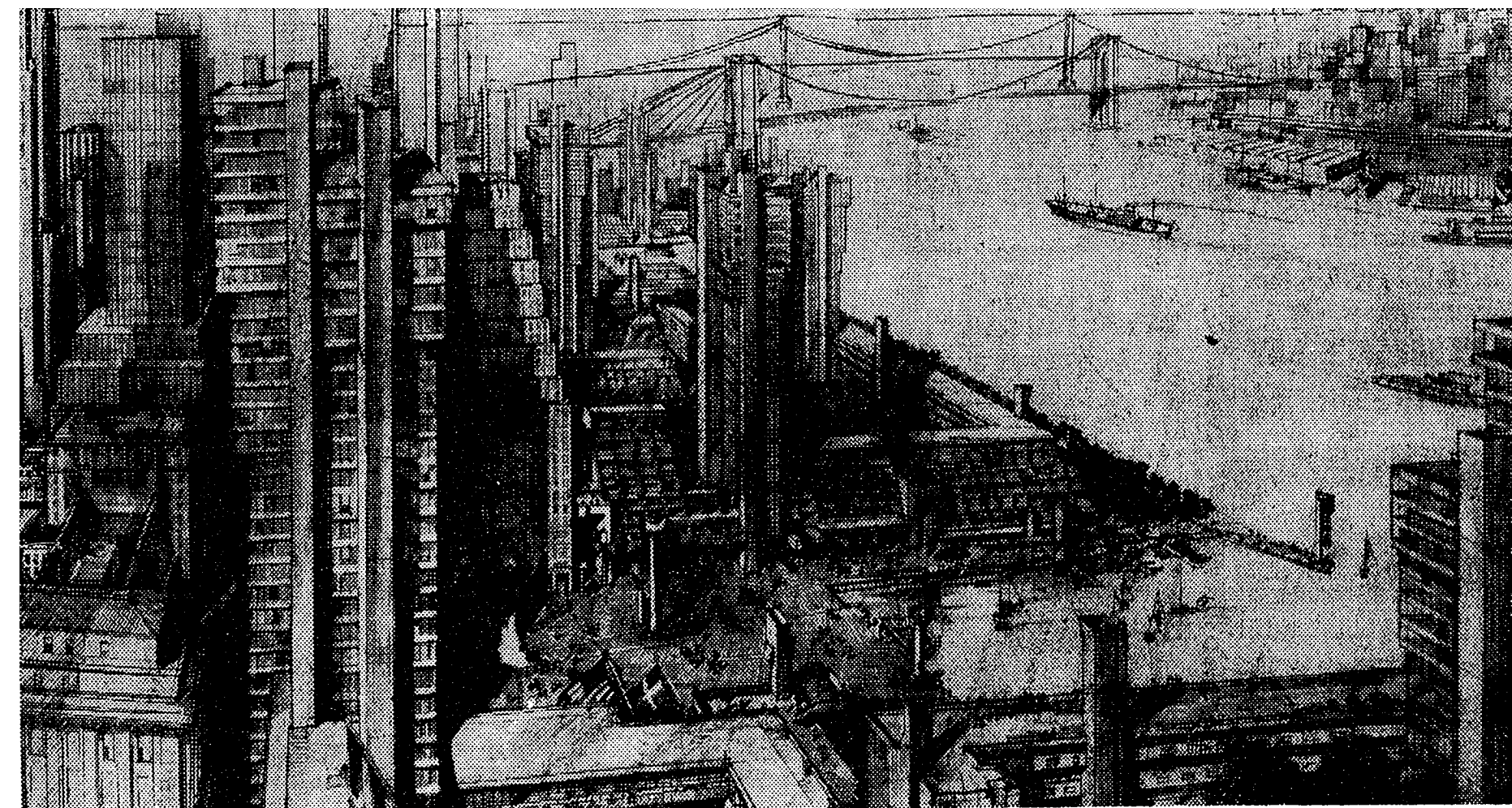
City Gets a Sweeping Plan for Rejuvenating Lower Manhattan: City ...

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

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City Gets a Sweeping Plan for Rejuvenating Lower Manhattan



Rendering of lower Manhattan waterfront, looking up the East River toward Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. In foreground is a pedestrian plaza and marina, surrounded by walk-to-work housing built on filled land. Elevated highways along river would be rebuilt as tunnels under the fill.

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

A comprehensive plan for lower Manhattan from Canal Street to the Battery was released by the City Planning Commission yesterday.

The plan's sweeping proposals were previewed briefly by the commission in an interim report last December.

In their final form they range from the immediate improvement of pedestrian and vehicular circulation in the con-

gested downtown core to the creation of a totally new waterfront of parks, plazas and housing. The latter, to be completed by the year 2,000, would be for a community of 100,000 and would be built on 200 acres of filled offshore land.

This new land would extend lower Manhattan's present shoreline several hundred feet into the East and Hudson Rivers between the bulkhead and pierhead lines. The eleva-

ted highway now along the water's edge would be rebuilt as a depressed road within the new landfill.

Lower Manhattan would be ringed with residential and recreational facilities, including a chain of river-side parks and plazas that would serve as "windows on the water." They would be connected by pedestrian streets to the business core.

In making the report pub-

lic, William F. R. Ballard, chairman of the Planning Commission, called it "a bold guideline for the downtown renaissance."

"This strikingly creative proposal captures the promise and potential of an area possessed of great vitality and rich with tradition, but beset with problems of obsolescence and slated for massive change," he said.

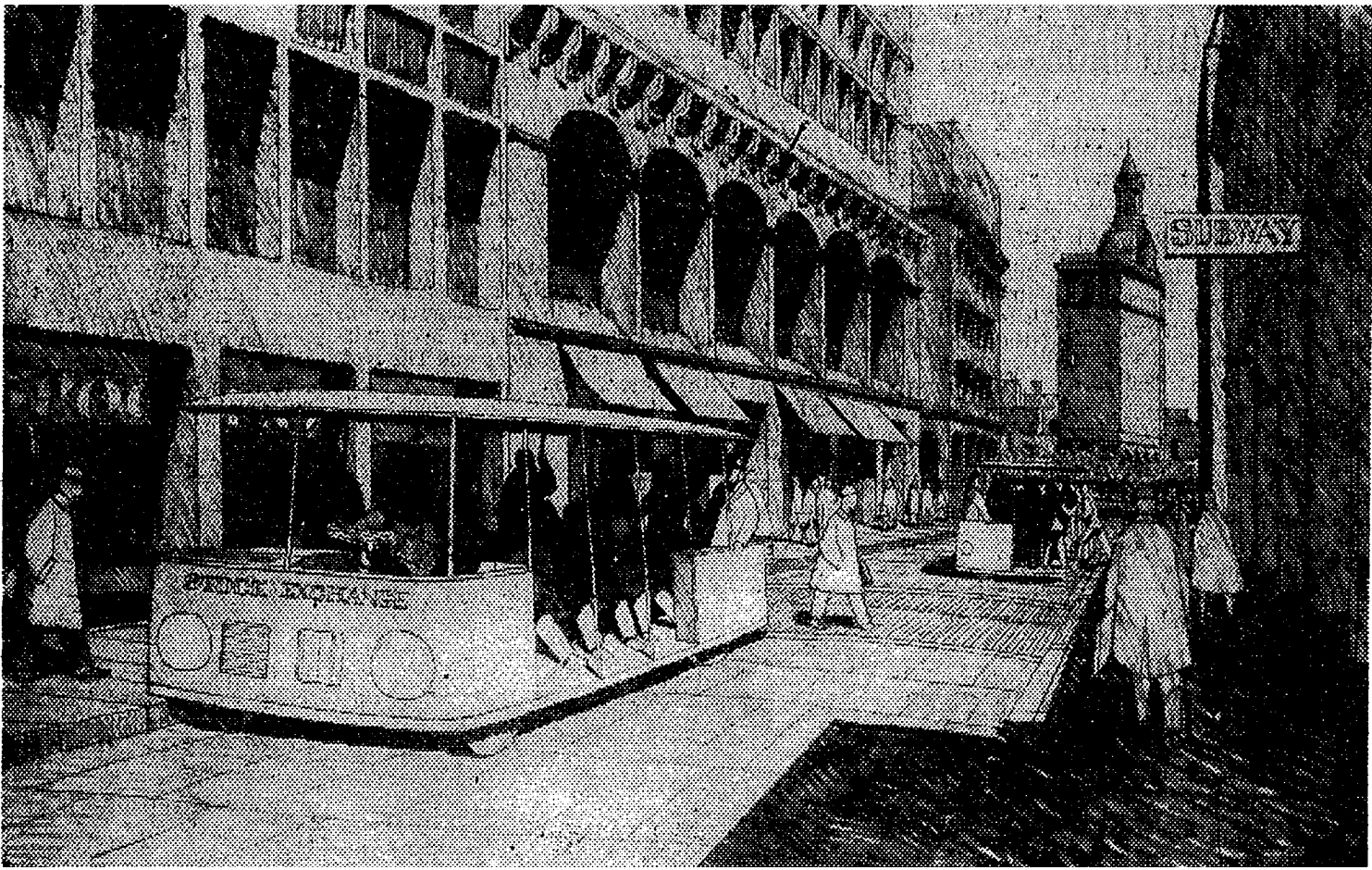
Planners and architects who

had seen the plan before its general release have hailed it as a standard-setting design, not only for New York, but also for the American city. But observers are divided between optimism and pessimism on its realization.

Sources of conflict are already apparent. The report's conclusion that the controversial World Trade Center, the

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City Planners Release a Long-Range Study Calling for Expansion of Lower Manhattan and Easing of Traffic Problems



Rendering of a pedestrian street lined with arcades. Small, open-sided "intra-buses" provide rapid transportation.

City Gets a Long-Range Plan To Rejuvenate Downtown Area

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Port Authority's proposed giant complex of commercial and governmental buildings, will produce no undue congestion in the area, is not expected to please the center's critics. The Planning Commission also expects inevitable comparison with Governor Rockefeller's recently announced plan for offshore development that pre-empts part of the consultants' proposals.

Financing of the various proposals would also be complex, with funds coming from private sources and from Federal, state and local governments.

For example, middle-income housing would be eligible for state assistance, and urban renewal projects would be aided by Federal grants. Much of the construction within the renewal areas would be done through private investments.

Mr. Ballard first disclosed the outlines of the plan when his job seemed threatened by Mayor Lindsay's administrative changes at the end of last year. That preview is now followed by the final, massively detailed report, complete with charts, graphs, statistics and specific details and recommendations for execution.

Study Began in February
The \$196,700 study of the area was begun in February, 1965, by a special group of consultants retained by the City Planning Commission. The lengthy report is also supported by technical data, based on elaborate computer analysis of problems and solutions and illustrated by striking architectural drawings.

The consultants were Alan M. Voorhees and Associates of Washington, transportation planners; Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd of Philadelphia, landscape architects; Whittlesey, Conklin and Rossant of New York, urban planners and designers, and Jack C. Smith, coordinator.

Professionals consider these firms to be among the vanguard of urban designers in this country. Whittlesey, Conklin and Rossant are the planners of the new town of Reston, Va., considered a model of progressive community design by many critics.

The plan is a three-stage one. The first stage deals with immediate solutions for urgent problems of traffic and circulation caused by downtown's narrow, winding, 17th- and 18th-century streets.

Pedestrians Considered
The chief objective of the plan would be the conversion of pedestrian streets as part of a reclassified street system of walkways, expressways and arterial avenues. Chambers, Dey, Fulton, Wall, Broad and Nassau Streets would be redesigned for pedestrian use. Nassau Street is scheduled for the first pedestrian conversion.

Other traffic improvements recommended by the consultants are completion of the widening of Water Street as a major north-south artery, and the widening of Liberty Street-Maiden Lane, Worth and Fulton Streets as east-west arteries.

The city will seek a Federal demonstration grant to develop a small, opensided vehicle, or "intra-bus," to serve pedestrian routes. Subway stations would be modernized with building and transit programs.

The second stage deals with the impact of a record amount of large-scale, public and private construction proposed and scheduled for the downtown area in the next five years.

These projects include the 16-acre, \$525-million World Trade Center set to be built pending settlement of negotiations between the city and the Port Authority. The 15-acre Brooklyn Bridge Southwest urban renewal area, now approaching the construction stage, will include new buildings for Pace College and Beekman-Downtown Hospital and a large Tishman residential-commercial

complex. An additional 31-acre renewal area has been designated for the Washington Street neighborhood, including the old market site. Extensive Civic Center construction has also been approved.

With the Stock Exchange's cancellation of its option on a new building near the Battery, these East Side blocks are slated for sizable speculative development by their private owners.

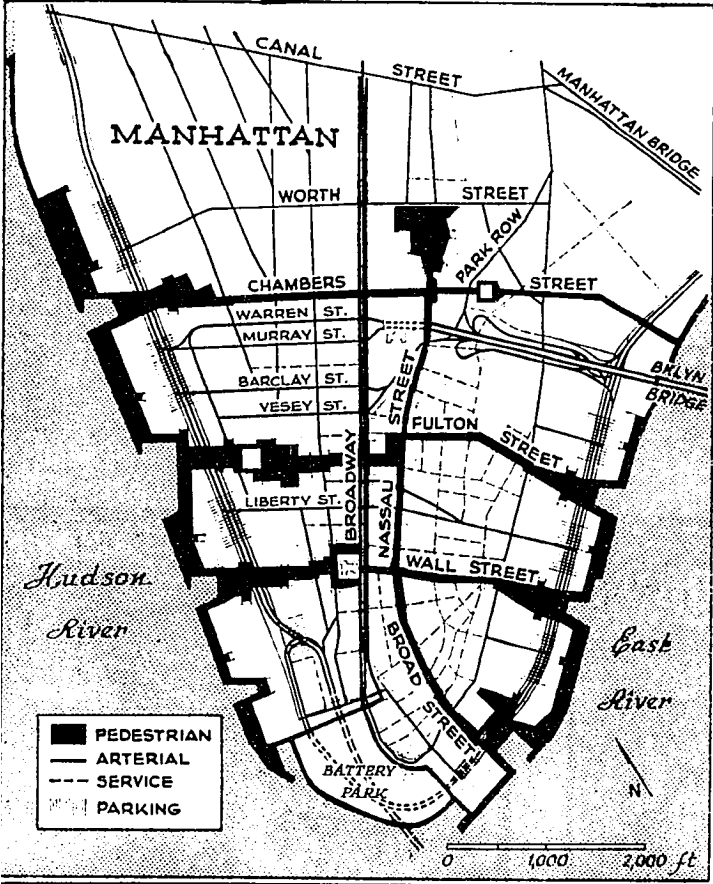
The third stage of the plan is the provision of a long-term, over-all design for the future of lower Manhattan, to act as a guiding framework, or "strategy," for the area's needs by the year 2000.

This would include the dramatic waterfront developments. At this final stage, the pedestrian streets would lead to the new waterfront plazas. These plazas would make a continuous river esplanade connecting a series of small waterfront parks. They would link old and new sections of the city and open the waterfront for direct access to the river.

The cost of the land to be used for this development is estimated by the consultants to be less than \$25 a square foot, as opposed to about \$110 a square foot for prime core land. The total cost of \$2-billion for land development would be offset, according to the report, by benefits in new land value, taxes and sales.

All phases of the plan are related to the functions of the central business district, to the entire city, and to regional goals. The basic concern has been to strengthen the commercial community as a cohesive whole, rather than to encourage its further decentralization.

The area covered by the plan is the historic heart of New York, its traditional financial



The New York Times June 22, 1966
Map shows changes proposed for downtown Manhattan.

center and one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in the world. Its tightly juxtaposed contracts range from Wall Street to Chinatown. Ship chandlers in 19th-century brick lofts face brokerage houses in glittering skyscrapers. Its products are as diverse as Pop Art and stocks and bonds, paprika, pistachio nuts and government paperwork.

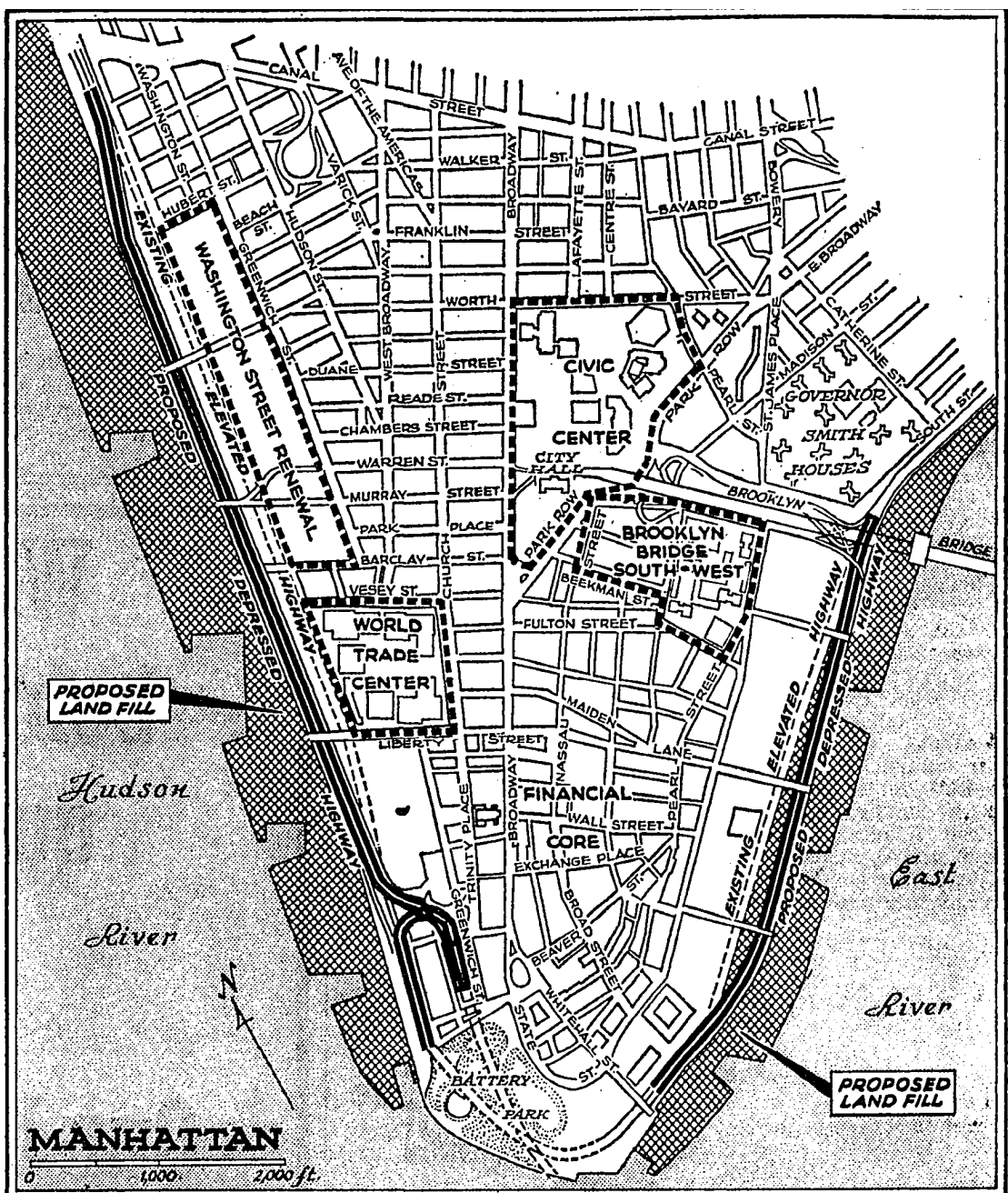
But the economic base of the community has been slipping steadily, adversely affected by the move uptown of banks and insurance and investment firms and the attrition of blue-collar industry.

According to the report, employment figures are down, with a reduction from 90,000 to 70,000 in the area north of Chambers Street and west of Broadway in the last five years. Goods

handling activities have declined recently by 35,000 jobs. About eight million square feet of loft space will be lost with already completed and planned demolition.

Port functions are changing, with not more than 18 of 51 piers on both rivers in regular use, of which only seven are of post-1914 construction and in good condition. Trucks, not boats, bring 93 per cent of the city's fish to the East Side Fulton Fish Market.

The consultants estimate that future growth and change will eventually release approximately 515 acres within a half mile of the downtown core for new development. This fact has been tied to a future pattern of optimum land use that emphasizes the spectacular potential of



The New York Times June 22, 1966
Map shows proposed landfills and building projects envisioned in lower Manhattan plan

lower Manhattan's maximum density, water-surrounded land.

Although the plan has been widely acclaimed even before its release, its realization raises numerous questions. For example, questions are being raised as to whether the city has the resources or the centralized authority to rebuild the elevated highway, although procedures have been under discussion for some time for partial reconstruction on the West Side, with or without a plan. There is covert concern, even within the City Planning Commission, that other pressures and priorities will put the larger aims of the plan at the unreachable bottom of the city's list.

The Board of Estimate has virtual veto power over the commission's plans. The commission's three formal Charter assignments are to prepare and maintain "a master plan of the city," to prepare proposed zoning regulations for submission to the Board of Estimate and to prepare annually the proposed annual capital budget.

In releasing the study, Mr. Ballard stressed that it would be reviewed by the commission and other city officials and agencies. The Departments of Traffic, Highways and Public Works, the Transit Authority and the Office of the Borough President have been collaborating during its preparation.

He said that the next step would be to confer with the downtown community, which has had periodic reviews. This will include the Downtown-Low-

er Manhattan Association, an organization representing 200 businesses and the area's major economic interests.

The association has "vigorously" endorsed Governor Rockefeller's recent independently conceived plan for a Battery Park City on landfill on the west side waterfront. David Rockefeller, one of the Governor's brothers, is head of the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association.

A spokesman for the association said yesterday that the group hoped to find the two plans compatible.

Mr. Ballard called the commission-sponsored study a "strikingly original plan." He said that "every expeditious effort should be made to determine the best course for implementing it." He added that the Governor's plan "should be reviewed in this light."

The consultants suggest implementation of a development corporation, a financial and ad-

ministrative device used for major renewal programs in a number of American cities. This would be a quasi-public body of private citizens and public officials with the power to acquire, create and plan land and supervise the phased design. Capitalization is generally by bond issue. In this case, the sale of new land would help finance other developments.

The earlier stages of the plan, dealing with circulation, can be carried out after departmental and community reviews. Mr. Ballard hopes to inaugurate the pedestrian streets as soon as possible.

Most professionals consider the plan the most important in the city's history since the original gridiron streets were laid out in 1811.

"We are very enthusiastic," said Stanley Tankel, planning director of the Regional Plan Association. "The plan is a fine combination of imagination and soundness. This is the way New York should go."