

# Lower Manhattan

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such innovations as pedestrian streets, transportation reform will be inadequate. As long as it is considered shrewd business procedure for private developers to buy up controlling amounts of the land earmarked for public renewal, sabotaging the city's intentions, or forcing prices to windfall levels, the cause of planning is a lost one.

Large and small obstacles and negative attitudes make for inaction. Add to these deterrents the fact that New York's renewal programs have been conspicuously deficient in design or human sensibility, and the planning climate is far from propitious. But more than climate and administrative reform are necessary. The program must be worth implementing, and now New Yorkers have one that is.

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New York, sometimes a visionless city, was presented with a vision this week. The City Planning Commission released a sound, comprehensive design for the future of the area from Canal Street to the Battery, the city's compacted, dramatic heart and historic core. The proposals range from an immediate solution for critical circulation problems in the congested financial district to creation by the year 2000 of a spectacular new waterfront of parks, plazas and walk-to-work housing.

The year 2000 is less than 35 years away; a short time for history but a long time for New York. This is a city that until recently suffered chaos gladly. But the mood has been changing from tolerance and even a kind of masochistic pride to frustration, impatience and alarm. Planning is no panacea, but the ills of any city, including New York, are susceptible to attack by rational and ordered analysis of needs and aims and the programing of solutions in the design of the physical environment.

A plan, however, is only a beginning. Solutions on paper are meaningless to communities in decline or to people in trouble. As long as conception remains separate from realization and ideas filter into a dozen departmental dead ends, as long as New Yorkers value economic license above city development, there will be nothing but conflict ahead. As long as special-interest organizations, such as business and automobile groups, automatically oppose