

The Convention Center

New York needs the proposed new convention center. The competitive disadvantage of this city's present inadequate trade-show facilities is evident, as is the pressing need for employment opportunities—particularly for minorities—that the center would create. The project is in a sense a major defensive operation, to enable the city to keep and enlarge its trade-show business as critical support for its all-important tourist, hotel and service industries.

The economic arguments are cogent enough to warrant taking risks that are as monumental as the building itself. The risks include the possibility of community disruption, extremely dubious transportation provisions and potentially adverse environmental impact. There is also the acknowledged possibility of an operating deficit—but the city administration looks at this as an investment in employment and taxes. The building's blockbuster cost and size have raised grave doubts in the Planning Commission.

While the city in this planning stage has shown unusual concern for the problems of the neighboring Clinton community, the temporary safeguards now provided will not eliminate the pressures of speculative land assembly and its threat to the community's future. More permanent forms of protection are still needed.

Air pollution effects will apparently be within Federal limits, but transportation planning is still totally inadequate. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's word that it will supply special buses is hardly an answer at all; it has yet to come up with anything resembling progressive or permanent transportation planning.

The use of a minimum of \$200 million in capital budget funds for this project over the next four years requires assurance of more positive safeguards than has yet been given.

But in spite of the difficulties, construction of the convention center gives promise of economic revitalization for the city.