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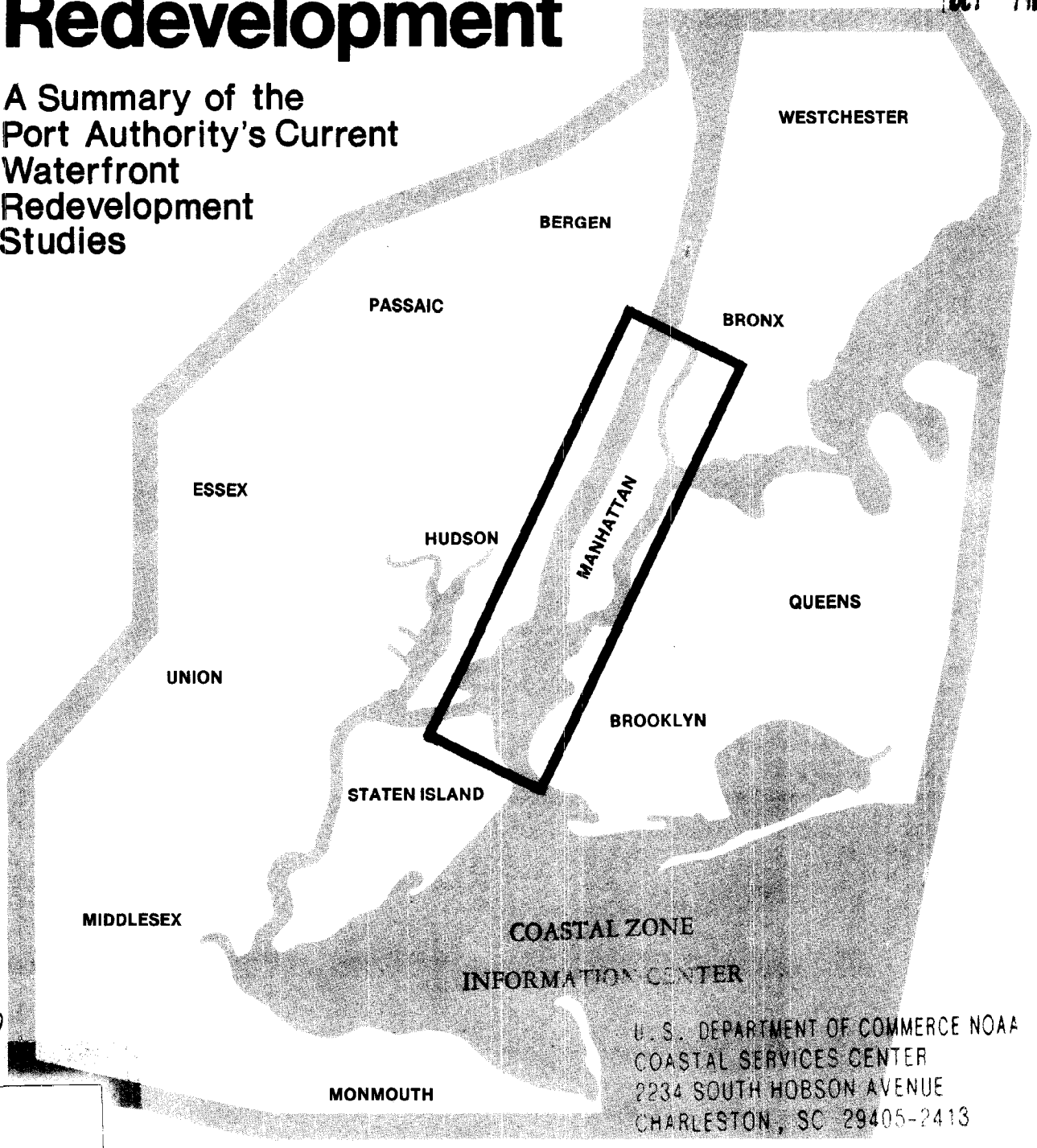
Targeted Inner Harbor Redevelopment

A Summary of the Port Authority's Current Waterfront Redevelopment Studies



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A Summary of the Port Authority's Current Waterfront Redevelopment Studies

INTRODUCTION

The New York/New Jersey Port is the nation's premier port, and has been this region's major economic asset for over three centuries. Its natural deep water harbor allowed the region to become the largest, most industrialized area in the nation. The region's 750 mile waterfront is one of the largest in the world. The combined waterfronts of Baltimore, Boston, Oakland, Philadelphia, San Diego, San Francisco, and Toronto equal less than one-third of the size of the New York/New Jersey Port. Yet much of this waterfront asset lies fallow in abandoned and deteriorated condition, due largely to the shift of economic growth and development away from the inner urban waterfront areas. Underutilized rail yards, deteriorating pier facilities and empty warehouse buildings provide examples of these changing economics affecting the greater Port area. The result has been disinvestment and blight in what was once the economic backbone of the region.

The now underutilized inner harbor waterfront in the New York/New Jersey Region is a significant and very visible resource worthy of recapture. The availability of formerly developed land, operating port facilities including break-bulk and containerized cargo operations, underutilized structures and an extensive transportation network, create unique opportunities for redevelopment. Efforts by other cities to reclaim their waterfronts have yielded admirable results and have established models for others to follow. Based on the experience of these cities, there are a number of uses, such as commercial, recreation, residential, office and hotel, that could be combined to create complexes that can return deteriorated waterfront area to active and productive

use. We are convinced that the opportunity exists on our waterfront to launch new investment ventures that can create needed jobs and tax revenues, return deteriorated areas to accessible and productive use and significantly improve the quality of life in the Region.

WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Objectives

On June 21, 1979, the Port Authority sponsored the Congress for Regional Recovery in order to bring together Regional leaders to explore and discuss some of the issues facing the region. Several workshops were held on the topic of "Maximizing and Revitalizing Our Waterfront." Workshop participants not only agreed that the Region's waterfront presented both a severe problem and a dramatic opportunity, but also supported the concept of the Port Authority having an active role in this effort. In response, and consistent with its historic involvement in waterfront planning, the Port Authority increased its commitment to this area of work by establishing a Waterfront Redevelopment Unit.

The primary goal of this effort is to advance the redevelopment of the deteriorated, and/or underutilized portions of the waterfront in a manner which enhances opportunities for economic development, public access, private investment and an improved quality of life in the inner core of the Region. As first steps toward reaching this goal, the following objectives have been established for the Port Authority's Waterfront Redevelopment Program:

In cooperation with local and State governmental units,

*Encourage efforts to replace waterfront blight and underutilization.

*Assess marketability and feasibility of mixed-use redevelopment of waterfront districts.

*Plan for redevelopment where feasible.

*Activate institutional mechanisms for implementation.

*Attract private investment using public funds to leverage where necessary.

Targeted Strategy

Working with interested municipalities, three target areas in the Inner Harbor have been identified for initial attention. These areas offer an opportunity to apply the lessons of other cities and to demonstrate the feasibility of mixed-use development. In New Jersey, detailed feasibility studies are being undertaken in cooperation with the cities of Hoboken and Jersey City and with the New Jersey Department of Transportation. In New York, studies are being done in cooperation with city agencies through the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Policy. The boundaries of the three study districts are shown in Attachments A, B, and C. Descriptions of these districts follow.

The Hoboken - North Jersey City Waterfront Redevelopment District spans the waterfront boundary of the two Hudson County municipalities and consists of 317 acres, of which 146 is land under water. The current land use in this district varies in each city, with the Hoboken portion characterized by underutilized railroad, industrial and marine related facilities. The Jersey City portion is characterized by deteriorated and abandoned piers on the waterfront, underutilized land formerly in railroad use and scattered industrial activity.

The focal points of the district are the very active NJ TRANSIT

Rail Station and the former Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Ferry Terminal which was built in the early 1900's. In 1973, this facility was placed on the National as well as the New Jersey Register of Historic Places. The NJ TRANSIT rail facility serves more than 28,000 commuters daily and, with the PATH connection, serves as a major link to mid and downtown Manhattan.

The Manhattan - North River Waterfront Redevelopment District is located on Manhattan's West Side between 42nd and 79th streets. Its size is approximately 259 acres, of which 161 acres is land under water. The current land uses in this district are varied, with a concentration of piers in varying degrees of disrepair, underutilized railroad-owned land (the "60th Street Yards"), roadway and parkland. This district includes the Port Authority Passenger Ship Terminal, and the New York City Department of Parks 79th Street Boat Basin.

The Staten Island Waterfront Redevelopment District is located in the communities of St. George and Stapleton on the northeast shore of the island borough. The district includes 395 acres, of which 258 acres is land under water. The current land uses in the district include the St. George Ferry Terminal which is scheduled to undergo extensive renovation and reconstruction over the next several years. The St. George Ferry Terminal serves 22,000 commuters daily. As one of the few remaining ferry operations, the Staten Island Ferry has become a major tourist attraction bringing 1.8 million tourists annually to the site. The district also includes an SIRT train repair facility and a deteriorated and vandalized public park on Pier 13. Other uses in the district include an underutilized rail freight and transfer yard and a commuter parking lot operated by the New York City Department of Marine and Aviation.

Proposed Development Study Methodology

The Port Authority has retained the American City Corporation to provide private sector development advice for the targeted waterfront districts. These development studies are composed of six major parts.

1. Market Analysis: outlines present and projected demographic, socioeconomic characteristics of the population in each district as well as insight into the trends at work in the local and regional market areas including present market demand.

2. Local Development Objectives: as provided by local officials, articulates the needs of the community.

3. Development Program: defines the types and scales of uses that are suggested for the site, consistent with market analysis and local development objectives.

4. Land Use and Configuration Planning: generates a possible physical layout of the proposed development program on the site, with appropriate engineering analysis.

5. Financial Feasibility Analysis: computer-based analysis which shows whether financing, constructing, and operating the project as proposed in the Land Use Configuration Planning phase is possible by the private sector alone and, if not, with some combination of the private and public sectors.

6. Implementation Analysis: qualitatively analyzes the necessary public and private sector roles in actual development.

This six-step development process is augmented by a Public Impact Assessment -- a tool devised by the Port Authority to anticipate the general environmental, economic and planning implications of a proposed development.

Public Impact Assessment

The Public Impact Assessment component of our work, funded in part by the Federal Economic Development Administration, United States Department of Commerce, includes several additional steps in the waterfront redevelopment process. On each suggested development program for which implementation studies are warranted, the Port Authority is performing an economic impact assessment, environmental impact assessment, a planning assessment, an inventory of the permits and approvals needed for development, and an identification of necessary public sector steps and suggested public sector roles.

The purpose of the preliminary economic impact assessment is to determine the impact of each of the proposed development programs on the economic activity of the Region. The environmental impact assessment seeks to identify potential environmental problem areas which, if addressed with sufficient lead time, can be minimized as possible impediments to development. The purpose of the planning assessment is to determine and evaluate existing and proposed conditions within each district and in adjacent areas. The planning assessment and the environmental assessment are strongly interrelated.

At every step, the cooperation and input of local government bodies as well as citizen groups is needed to insure that the plan accounts for the present and future needs of the community. The active involvement of state, regional and federal agencies is necessary in most instances and can provide the opportunity for a wider variety of legal and financial arrangements which may be necessary for a plan's implementation. Provisions for this inter-governmental and inter-agency coordination have been integrated in this proposed development methodology.

COMMERCIAL FISHING

A related effort on the waterfront is the Commercial Fishing Study. The Port Authority is actively involved with a number of other public bodies in an effort to attract the commercial fishing industry back to the Port District.

As part of the work leading to the Congress on Regional Recovery, the Port Authority studied the history of the commerical fishing industry in the Region, analyzing reasons for its decline and identifying potential opportunities for its redevelopment. A New York City Business Marketing Corporation study examined several underutilized waterfront sites in the Region's Inner Harbor as possible locations for an initial seafood complex centered on underutilized species. Further work has been identified aimed at the need to determine project feasibility. The Port Authority believes the commercial fishing study effort complements and enhances other waterfront redevelopment efforts.

CONCLUSION

The underutilized inner harbor waterfront is a significant resource worthy of reclaiming. The successes experienced by other cities serve as prime examples of what can occur in a waterfront area when the dynamics of the area are understood and innovative means are pursued to spur redevelopment.

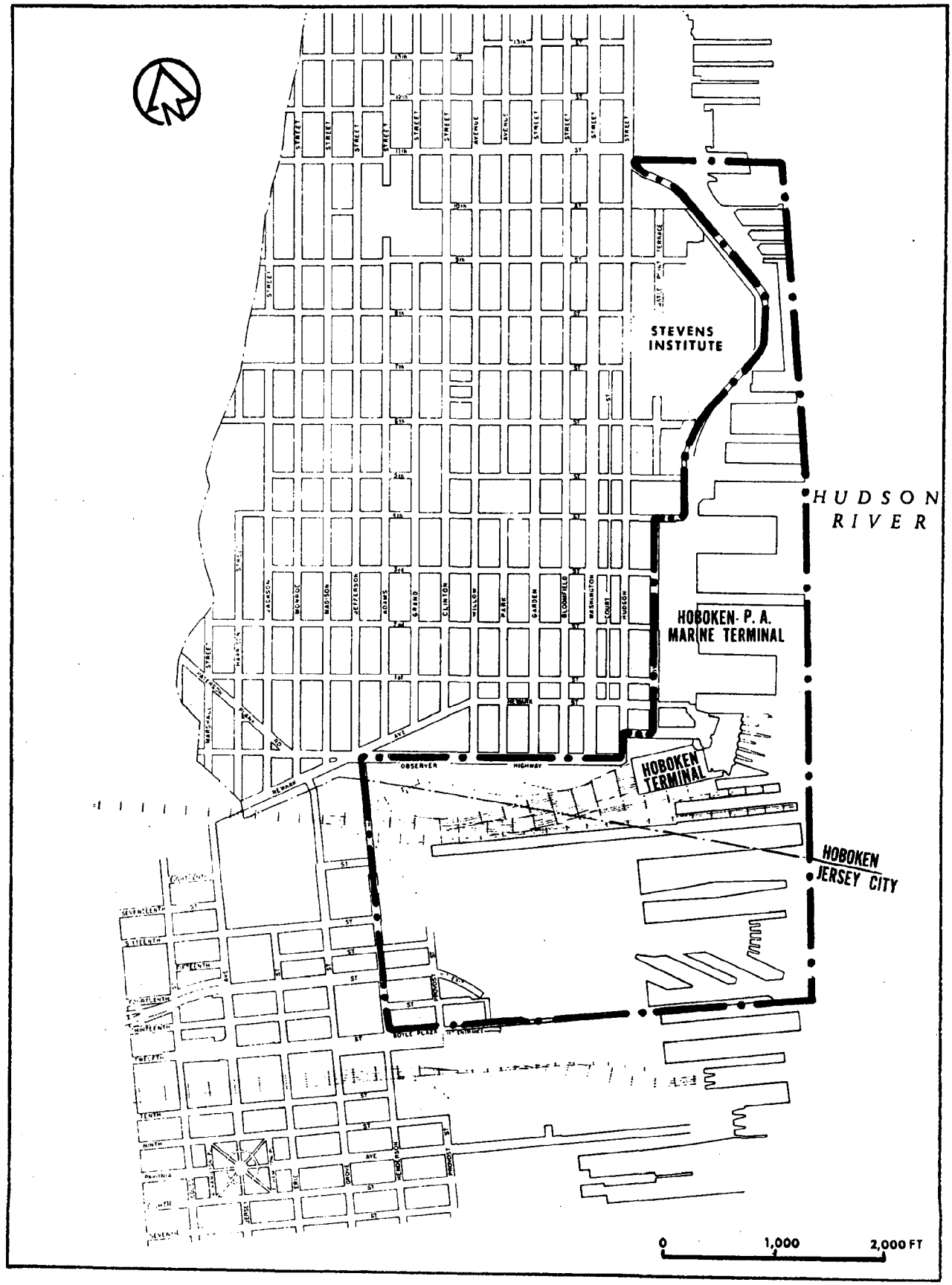
The Port Authority believes that the opportunity exists to launch new investment ventures that can create needed jobs, significant tax revenues, return vast areas of the waterfront to accessible and productive use and significantly improve the quality of life in the Region. After years of disinvestment and neglect, our inner harbor waterfront can

be reclaimed if the tremendous resources of our region are marshalled and applied in a cooperative, timely fashion.

Thus, the Port Authority looks forward to continuing to work with interested municipalities and state agencies to foster this worthwhile objective and to receiving public input on our studies. Our current joint planning and development studies will assist the Port Authority, the municipalities and other local and regional interests in defining appropriate roles for potential public and private partners to bring about waterfront redevelopment.

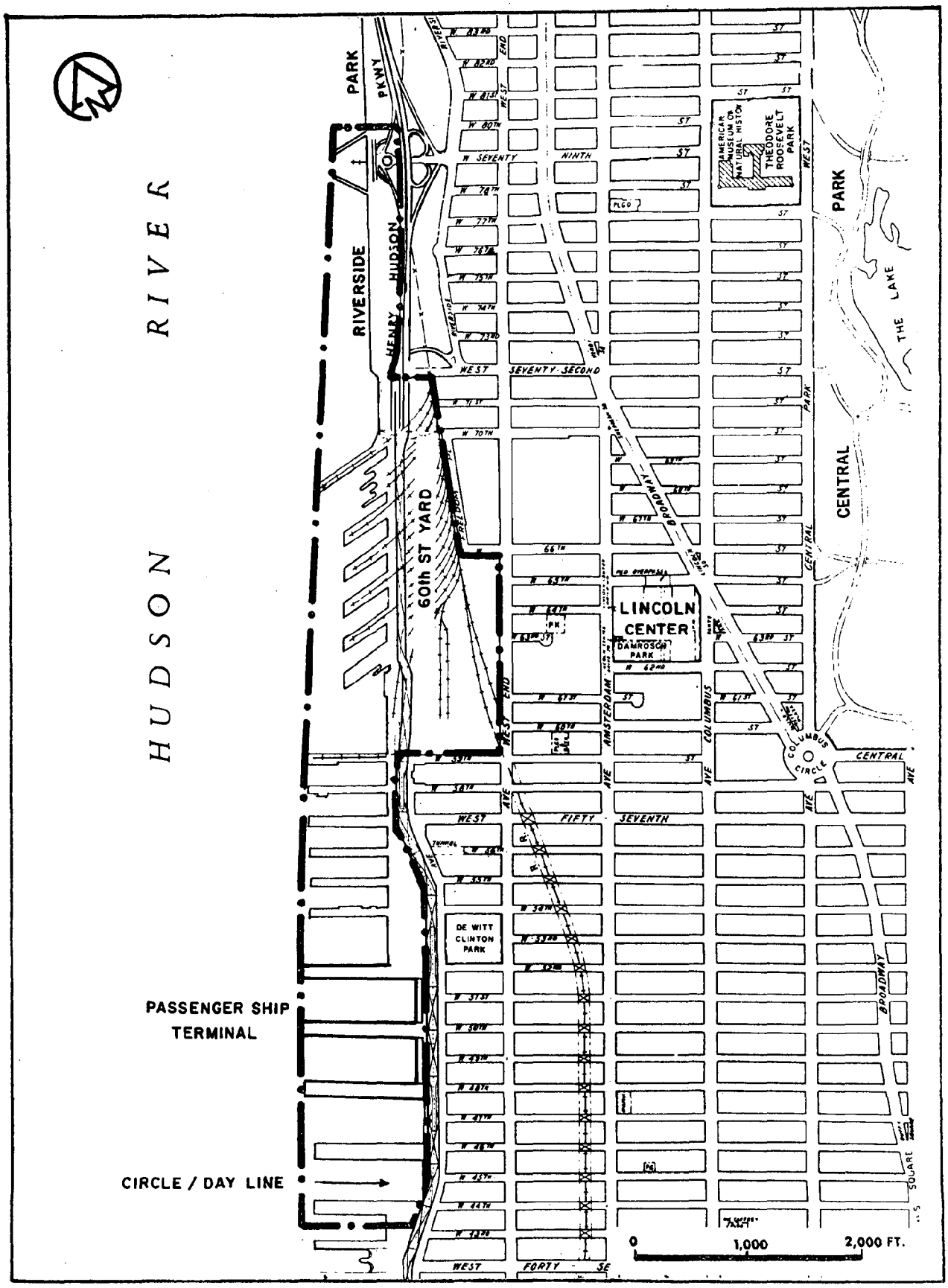
HOBOKEN / NORTH JERSEY CITY

ATTACHMENT A



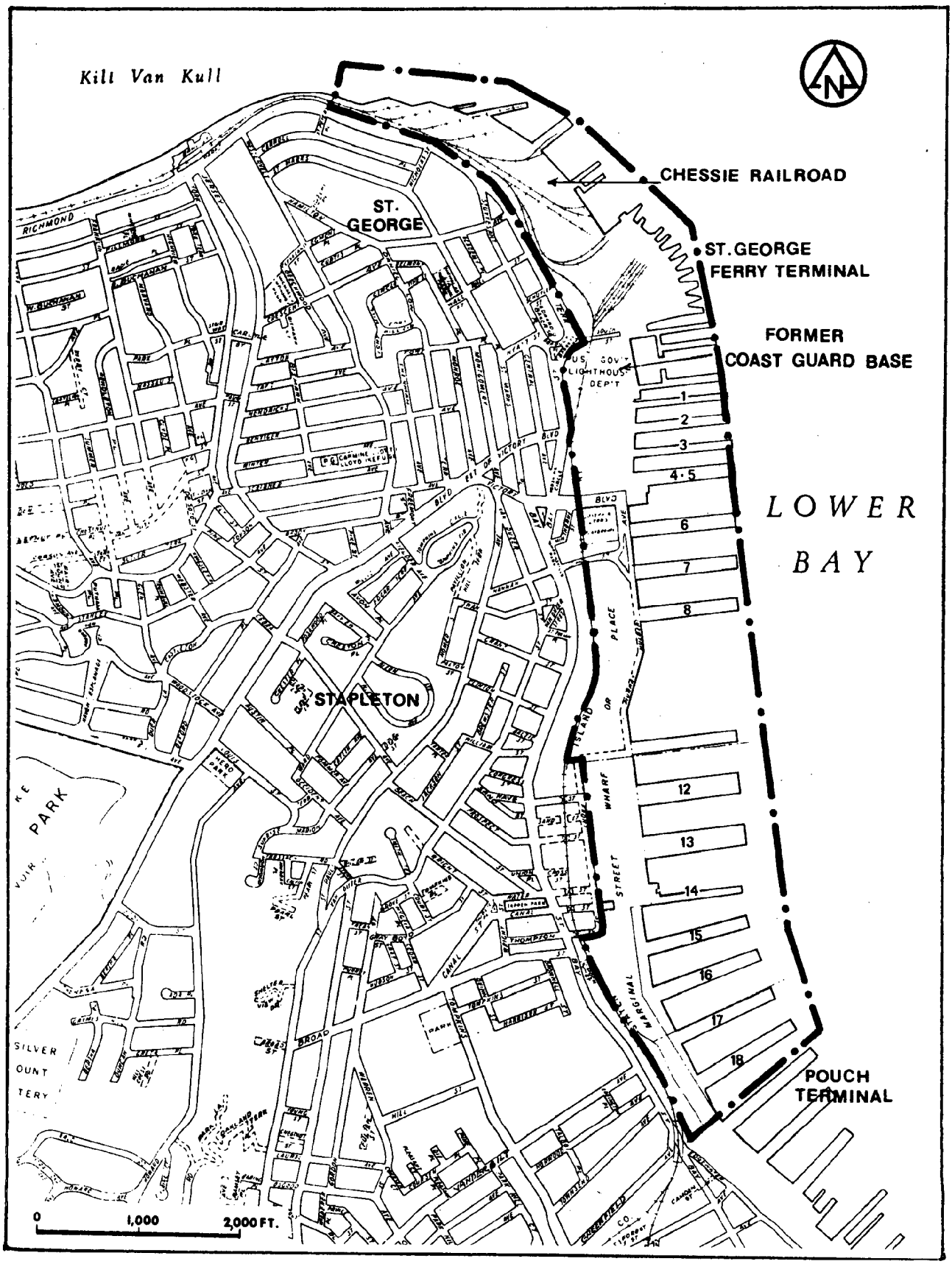
MANHATTAN-NORTH RIVER

ATTACHMENT B



STATEN ISLAND

ATTACHMENT C



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