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A shortsighted view of Yonkers waterfront By GEORGE M. RAYMOND

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As a graduate of Columbia University's School of Architecture, recipient of the Medal of the American Institute of Architects, former professor of planning, 16-year chairman of the Pratt Institute Department of City and Regional Planning, retiree after a 58-year career as city and regional planning consultant, former president of the New York metro chapter of the American Planning Associates, and a "Fellow" of the American Institute of Certified Planners, please permit me to take part in the tug of war regarding what is the appropriate height of buildings along the Yonkers Hudson River waterfront.

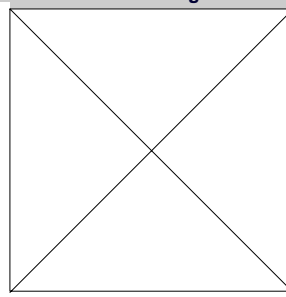
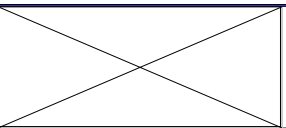
The waterfront is on the verge of vigorous redevelopment. It appears the developers who have been granted a preferred status in the prospective program are seeking permission to build several 25-story towers as part of the redevelopment project. Scenic Hudson has taken a position that buildings should not exceed eight stories because a waterfront land-use plan, which was developed by the city long before it became realistic to look forward to what is possible today, recommended an eight-story limit.

I submit that there is nothing duller and dispiriting than eight -story boxy apartment houses such as those that line the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. On the other hand, in reviewing plans for two-story townhouses on the waterfront side of the Irvington railroad station, the village's planners and trustees are anxious to protect the view of the Manhattan skyline from a village park. From 30 miles away, that skyline appears a fraction of an inch above the horizon! Also, aboard the ocean liners of long ago nearing New York City, the travelers all rushed to one side of the ship to view the New York City skyline. No one would have rushed to see trees and, maybe, a cow or two.

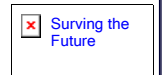
Scenic Hudson also claims that taller buildings block the view of the river from the city. Eight-story parallelepipeds are no more transparent than the lower parts of taller buildings. In fact, the spaces between taller buildings that are needed to help assure high rents from future residents may offer more and broader glimpses.

Clearly, if it were faced with the possibility of a 25-story wall solidly blocking all views of the city from the river and vice-versa, Yonkers would be justified in saying "no." On the other hand, a few such towers accenting its downtown area would put the city on the map of aesthetic Hudson riverfront attractions. I believe Scenic Hudson's aesthetic sense should not preclude the possibility that travelers on the reviving Hudson River water transport system may get something more attractive to look at than the alternative advocated by it.

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