

***Voice in the community***

# Board 3 area on South Shore fastest developing in the state

By DOUGLAS PATRICK

Because soaring mortgage rates and high costs continue to paralyze development in most parts of New York, the concentrated construction activity in the Community Board 3 area stands out as an exception.

It is — besides being the city's largest community board in area and smallest in population — probably the fastest growing area in the state.

"The rest of the state has never recovered from the recession in 1974, and this area has become the boom area of homebuilding," said Joseph Margolis, executive vice president of the New York City Homebuilders Association.

While there were 84,000 housing units completed in the state in 1973 "I don't think it will reach 40,000 units by the end

of this year," Margolis said.

In contrast, a list of recent proposals for large-scale developments within the board's South Shore area includes: Country Woods Estate, 120 homes on 60 acres in Great Kills; Woodale Village, 215 homes on 20 acres in Woodrow; Treetop Village, 400 homes on 35 acres in Woodrow; Woodbrook Estates, 629 townhouses on 50 acres in Rossville; Arden Woods, 175 homes on 15 acres in Annadale, and Timber Ridge, 452 homes on 25 acres in Great Kills.

Community Board 3 is also the only board in the city to encompass an entire special zoning district, commonly known as the South Richmond Plan. It affects approximately 12,000 acres, an area about as big as Manhattan, and is designed to preserve woodlands, fields, streams, ponds and other open-space

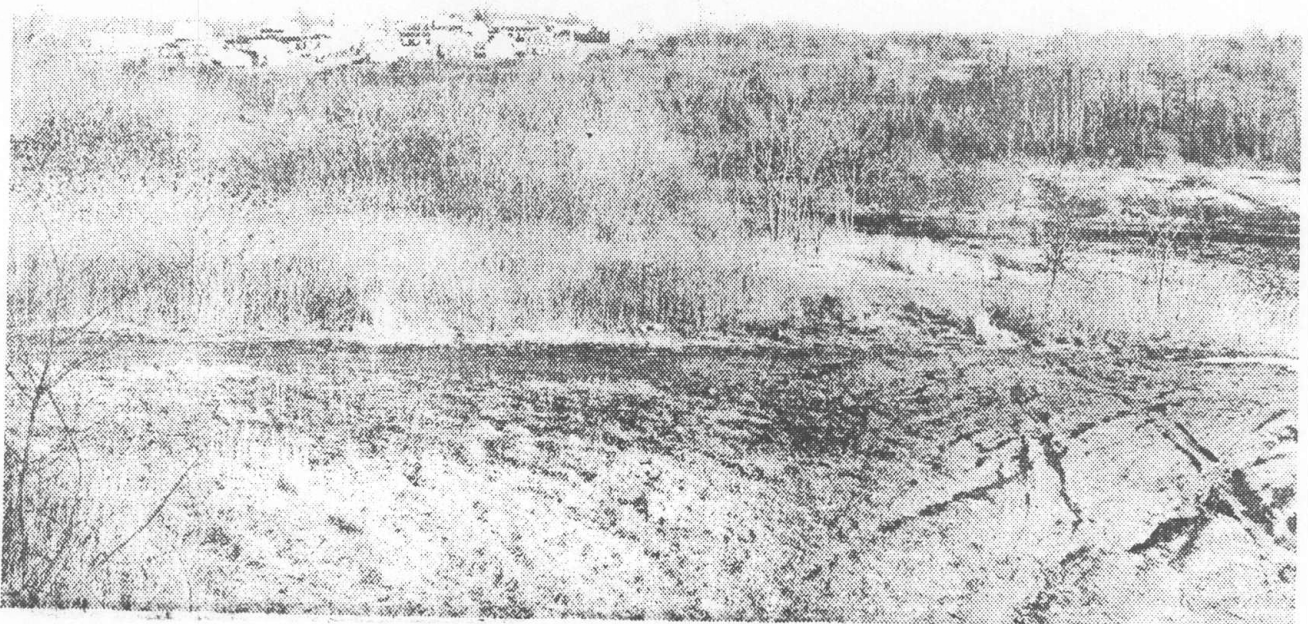
areas that make it the largest tract of unspoiled land in the city.

The South Shore is almost completely without sewers, and any plan for a large development must include a sewage treatment plant to discharge treated sewage, or effluent, into a nearby waterway.

The board is responsible for overseeing the development of the area, and it must make sure that a proposed development not pose any threat to the area's environment.

Treetop Village, a project vehemently opposed by area residents, exemplifies the complicated considerations board members must weigh before making a recommendation to the City Planning Commission.

The development's sewage treatment  
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Undeveloped land in Charleston with new homes on the horizon — a sight becoming more familiar in South Richmond.

Staten Island Advance Photo

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plant was designed to discharge 250,000 gallons of effluent each day into nearby Lemon Creek. The creek, as well as the surrounding wetlands, are protected by state regulations, and the state Department of Environmental Conservation had denied other applications before the Treetop proposal to build along Lemon Creek.

In addition to reading long and highly technical reports on the environmental impact of such a project, board members heard Woodrow residents say they strongly opposed the plan because the addition of 1,600 people into their sparsely populated community would strain existing services such as fire, police and sanitation.

In April, the board voted to oppose the development because it would threaten the environment. Two weeks later the state Department of Environmental Conservation approved the proposal, provided the developer make adjustments in the treated sewage to be released in the creek.

Richard McGivney, board chairman, said the board considers each proposal on its merits and does not, like some area residents, oppose large developments in general.

"We are for properly planned and well-engineered development," said McGivney, who also stressed the need for the board's objectivity in reaching decisions.

"This board is very serious about our responsibilities, and members do a great amount of research and read reams and reams of highly technical reports," McGivney said.

Although he admits that development proposals take up much of the board's time, McGivney said the board has worked hard in providing work and recreational programs for teen-agers and opportunities for the handicapped.

"The board was one of three community boards in the city to receive the Mayor's Spotlight Award for developing



The Lemon Creek area was one hotly debated item within the Community Board 3 area.

S.I. Advance Photo

youth programs for our area," McGivney said.

It is unlikely the board will run short of problems, but since Margolis predicts the construction boom on the South Shore will continue for 10 years, board members no doubt will become experts on large-scale developments and their environmental effect.

Last in a series.

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