

CENTRAL CITY, NEW COMMUNITIES

Perhaps the single most critical issue is the relationship between central city development and redevelopment and the creation of new communities in the metropolitan orbit. Key questions are: Do new communities compete with central cities for development, sapping the vitality of the central city? Is suburban "sprawl" actually an advantage to central cities? Would new communities compete for Federal urban development funds, drawing them away from central cities?

Fundamental to resolution of these questions are the trends, scale, and location of urban gains in U.S. metropolitan areas. Analysis of these trends and patterns—to be discussed in further detail below—points up a number of important factors that would hold whether or not a new communities policy were to operate for the Nation. These factors include the following:

The fact of urban growth is not arguable in terms of the past record, as well as the indicated future pattern.

The location of new growth within metropolitan areas has been and must continue to be dominantly peripheral, even though redevelopment and intensification in central city locations may occur. We are familiar with the pace of urbanization dramatically expressed by the reminder that 1 million acres of new land moves into urban development each year. And indeed, the function of the metropolitan periphery—where open land is available—is to absorb much of the new growth occurring in urban locations.

The largest share of urban gains is focused to a remarkably high degree on a selected group of U.S. metropolitan areas. These limited, maximum impact areas are the most seriously affected by growth and extension problems and, of course, would potentially be the most directly affected by new communities policies. I would estimate that only one-third of our 200-plus metropolitan areas would be substantially affected, based on present pace and scale factors in the marketplace.

Given the pattern of continuing, substantial, fast-paced urban gains, the key issues as they relate to city development patterns then become:

First, not whether metropolitan growth and extension will occur, but, rather, how, where, and when it will occur; and

Second, whether suburban development patterns typical of postwar United States are to continue—and make no mistake here, because the outlook is for a continuation into the future—or whether improved patterns based on specific program and policy intervention can be introduced to better this pattern.

In this context, the role of the central city would remain strong, although dynamically changing. The task of central city development is to identify existing as well as new strengths and support them fully and creatively by appropriate action. Rather than competing with central cities, in a rational distribution of the region's activities, new communities would complement them.

NEW COMMUNITY CONCEPTS

A new communities policy and effective programs for their development are potential basic ingredients in a new pattern of urban growth for the Nation. The prime objective in a new communities program would be to accommodate the Nation's urban gains on an improved basis. Critical to this concept would be a full response in the new communities to urban growth needs. To do this, they would need to be an integral part of the metropolitan regional system, directly relating to the metropolitan social and cultural structure: its economy, its transportation system, its open space and land development patterns, and the full range of its market systems.

Although some relatively isolated, semiautonomous, or economically specialized new communities might continue to be built, as in the past, the overwhelming orientation of new communities would be toward metropolitan locations, where the major population gains of the Nation and its primary economic growth are taking place. Los Alamos, Kitamat, and other "Shangri-La" communities are not relevant to the mainstream issues of urban and metropolitan problems in the Nation today.

No hard-and-fast definition of new towns is applicable to all situations in various parts of the country. This is especially true at the present time, even though a more sophisticated definition might evolve with further new community building in the years ahead. However, criteria relating both to scale and fea-