

COMPREHENSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS

Our official policy statement is silent upon the proposal embodied in the city demonstration program other than our policy of encouraging governmental cooperation through financial incentives. As initially stated, it is our opinion that the thrust of both the Urban Development Act and the community demonstration program is to encourage and facilitate a coordinated effort to meet the social and physical needs of our urban areas. We echo the concern of the American Institute of Planners that the titles of the two bills would appear to perpetuate the undesirable and inequitable pattern of fragmentation of urban areas by having one program for the core-central city and the other for the suburbs. Both programs will require comparable areawide coordination and cooperation if they are to be successful and should be considered as an entity. With respect to any efforts to rebuild or revitalize entire neighborhoods of slums and blighted areas, we feel it is vital to bear in mind that such areas are not limited to the core-central city. The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations study on metropolitan social and economic disparities; implications for intergovernmental relations in central cities and suburbs, disapproves the popularly held misconception of a basic central city-suburban dichotomy of economic and social characteristics. By this we mean the idea that the social and economic underprivileged are consistently concentrated in the central city while the suburbs enjoy the prosperity of the middle and upper income families. Of the 190 SMSA considered in the Advisory Commission's study only in the largest metropolitan areas and those located in the Northeast part of the country was the pattern one of a predominance of the underprivileged in the central city.

In small- and medium-sized metropolitan areas, outside the Northeast, elements of the low social economic status was equally important in the central city and in the suburbs. In many metropolitan areas of the South and West, poverty is more typical of the suburbs. Since the demonstration projects are to take place in all parts of the country and in communities varying in size, the projects will often not be in the central city. Consequently, if they are done, it will require the sponsorship of the county or one of the suburban communities.

One of our Pennsylvania members set forth the situation as follows:

We in Lackawanna County feel that in order for the city demonstration program to be a success, it must reach out beyond the municipal boundaries of our major city. In order to understand and to solve the problems of our urban areas we must disregard these municipal boundaries. Every person living in our urban area is confronted with similar problems which must be met head on through regional efforts. We must look at our problems of physical development in a broad setting. By improving our major cities, we are improving only a small part of our metropolitan area. If, however, we renew several neighborhoods in smaller communities these actions will serve as a stimulus for other actions.

In Lackawanna County, as in many other counties, the urbanized areas do not stop at the city's limits—it radiates out from the city or it extends through the valleys for many miles beyond the central city. These areas oftentimes are just as old, just as blighted, and just as much in need of special programs as our central cities.

The second point I would like to stress was brought out by Secretary Weaver's testimony where he stated, "that the city demonstration