

Jersey City, like New York City, has served throughout its history as a port of entry to the United States. It is symbolic that both Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty are located immediately off the Jersey City waterfront. The city grew steadily through the years, reaching a peak population of 316,715 in 1930. The population in 1960, however, was only 276,101.

Like many of the Nation's older central cities, Jersey City has experienced a flight of the middle-income segments to suburban areas of New Jersey and a correlated increase in its Negro and Puerto Rican population. It is estimated that Jersey City's population is now about 86 percent white, 11 percent Negro and 3 percent Puerto Rican.

Some industry, too, has joined the flight to the suburbs—and of even greater economic importance to Jersey City has been the sharp decline in its railroad rates. The railroads once owned 98 percent of the city's eastern waterfront, but they now own less than half and are continuing to withdraw.

B. What Jersey City will demonstrate

With the catalytic impetus of substantial Federal aid, Jersey City can begin putting into immediate effect programs presently scheduled to start years from now. The Demonstration Cities Act will enable the city to fully utilize its total community resources and experienced organizational skills in a program which will dramatically improve the physical, social, and economic environment of its deteriorating areas within a relatively short time.

The city will:

1. Eliminate all substandard housing conditions through the mechanism of code enforcement, conservation, rehabilitation or, when necessary, clearance.
2. Improve the physical environment to such an extent as to evoke a positive response from residents through the use of modern construction techniques, imaginative building types, integrated architectural effects of skyscrapers and landscapes, vistas, parks, and street patterns, and cleanliness of neighborhoods.
3. Provide housing at prices that our residents can afford.
4. Create or uncover additional jobs, reducing the unemployment rate to 3 percent or less.
5. Substantially reduce the welfare caseload.
6. Improve the health levels of the residents.
7. Increase the educational attainment levels.
8. Reduce discrimination in housing and employment.
9. Induce residents to participate effectively and enthusiastically in the social and physical rejuvenation of their neighborhood.
10. Accomplish any necessary relocation of residents with a minimum of hardship and inconvenience, and give these residents the opportunity to relocate either within or outside their neighborhood.

II. THE PROGRAM

The augmented community renewal effort envisioned by Jersey City will stress community participation and the mobilization of all the community's resources. Citizen participation can be achieved through expansion of the program of the city's present antipoverty organization and through setting up additional publicly financed citizen groups on both a neighborhood and a citywide basis.

Some of these groups, together with existing civic and social organizations, would concentrate their attention on special areas of concern, such as housing, employment and education. Others would focus their energies on the problems faced by the residents of a specific neighborhood or block.

All such groups will have representation in an areawide council, at which all concerned public and private agencies also will have permanent representation.

And bringing together the plans and the programs of all the groups involved, other than those on the Federal level, would be a local coordinator with broad powers who would report directly to the mayor and the governing body of the city.

A. The demonstration area

The section of Jersey City proposed as the location of the demonstration program (hereafter termed the demonstration area) is comprised principally of the neighborhoods known locally as Downtown, Lafayette and Bergen. These neighborhoods are the oldest and most deteriorated sections of the city.