

As you may know, the President last year announced a national demonstration program centered upon creation of complete communities or neighborhoods on Federal surplus land in urban areas. This program has now progressed through its preliminary phases, and responsibility for its continuing development is centered in the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Several sites in various areas have been identified, with three, in the District of Columbia, Atlanta and San Antonio already announced. Planning efforts are well under way for future development of areas that will not only enlarge housing choices but include a full range of uses—shopping, education, recreation, and other community facilities and public services for citizens of various income levels.

This program of Federal excess land for critical urban needs depends on securing maximum involvement of private enterprise and also requires cooperation among a number of Federal agencies. A creative and imaginative response on the part of local governments is a third essential—a local response that measures up to the unique opportunity for rapid, high quality and relatively low-cost development which the availability of surplus land may represent in communities where land is scarce in relation to urgent urban needs.

While the demonstration program has so far centered upon relatively large sites, the basic approach and concepts involved can also be applied to smaller tracts. These may be particularly useful, for example, for relocation housing or low- and moderate-income housing. But, again, the local governments must be prepared to seize the opportunity and, if necessary, to adjust their own plans and objectives accordingly.

Thus, while I accept in broad principle the provisions of title VII, I would urge that the resulting legislation or the pertinent committee report specifically state that these provisions are in no way supportive of unduly restrictive land use controls.

Title VIII, which would establish a uniform relocation assistance policy for Federal and federally assisted programs, embraces a philosophy which we have consistently advocated over the years. Although relocation assistance has often been inadequate, we take considerable pride in the role that our housing and urban development programs have played in pioneering the concept of governmental responsibility for families and businesses displaced in the course of carrying out public acquisition programs. From its inception some 19 years ago, the urban renewal program required that there be decent housing available for displaced families, and this was later supplemented with a system of payments to families, individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to cover moving costs and certain other relocation expenses. These requirements were also made applicable to other programs of the Department.

In many ways title VIII is an outgrowth of our experience and recognizes the appropriateness of extending these benefits to other Federal and federally assisted programs. Although HUD programs are covered by such legislation, many other Federal programs are not covered by adequate relocation requirements, and there are substantial differences in the requirements which do exist. It is our belief that legislation such as is contained in title VIII should be enacted as soon as possible, so that those who are required to move from their home or