HUD's New Communities Program Ends Unnoticed

By Philip N. Brownstein and Morton W. Schomer

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Lyndon Baines Johnson: "But there is another way as well, which no one has ever asked for and which is the new community, freshly planned and built.

Message on Housing and the City to the 96th Congress, February 26, 1968

They had terrific, new century names: Jonathan and Maxine, Flown, Clifton and Riverdale, and Radisson. They were "new communities." HUD's contribution, if you will, to the "Gospel that government and Riverton. Audubon."

And build new communities that would be perfect settings for this new community, represent the best thinking in design, in land use planning, in new innovations in transit and telecommumica-
tions technology.

The authors of the original act envisioned four types of what came to be called "new communities": expanded towns, self-contained new towns, satellites and "new-towns-in-
towns." (The last—seen by some as a new gaffe on the part of federal

renewal projects—was included as a sop to mayors of large urban centers who feared their office would be remnant, and particularly the federal government, had the broad perspec-
tive and the conceptual tools to end poverty, bring about equality for all Americans, and particularly blacks.

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Towns Suffered Unexpected, Crippling Problems

should support high density, high-rise residential facilities.

Jonathan, the earliest and poten-
tially innovative new community, never recovered from the unexpected death of its original developer, whose heirs' access to credit was unequal to the original planning requirements.

Every new community, however,

yet the program — and individual

was affected by at least four major

problems:

1) Tyng the new communities pro-
gram to national growth projections
stimulated development of projects of
unrealistic size and scale; 

2) Despite the clear intention of
Congress that a variety of types of
ventures, with their large land invest-
ments, would contribute a far-sighted
solution to the psychological
depression of the early 1970s hit the new commu-
nities, with their large land investments
and long-term plans, especially those
restraining rapid growth; 

3) Additionally, but not peripherally,

Cedar-Riverside, the new-town-in-

Heard that was celebrated in 1974 as
"the best use of a riverbank to the psychological
effect of planting ten thousand tulip
bulbs"* lost a year and a half in the
development process while HUD

concentrated its efforts on

land acquisition and devel-

opment. The New Communities Admin-

istration concentrated its efforts on

continuity of commitment from feder-

eral and local governments.

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* E.Y. Cahalan entitled: Antiquity and the Public Interest, Columbia.

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