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"A New Generation of New Communities"

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A New Generation of New Communities

It is a pleasure to be here today to discuss a topic of central concern to the profession of architecture and to my agency: the flowering of a new generation of new communities in America.

Quietly and with little fanfare, in the past several years we have reached a new stage of urban development in the United States. About a quarter of a century after the initiation of the post war British new towns, we have finally launched our own program stamped with a unique American character. In the 1950's we graduated into better planned subdivisions, shopping centers and industrial parks. In the 1960's we introduced some pilot new communities sponsored by private enterprise without government support which were well planned, but did not reach the fullest range of Americans by race and income. In the 1970's we have launched a national program of fully balanced new communities throughout the United States.

And with the new program off to a good start, we are already thinking of an even newer generation of new communities, more responsive to the needs of rural as well as urban America.
It is about time! A handful of American architects, together with some visionary city planners, were 40 years ahead of the rest of us in modern times in recognizing the full potential of creating whole new cities under a single plan and under single ownership: cities where automobiles would be the servant of man, not his master.

These pioneering architects took a broad view of their craft. They recognized that their task was not to build buildings alone, but to fashion a total environment responsive in scale and scope to man's aspirations.

Unfortunately, the visions of Henry Wright and Clarence Stein, the creators of Radburn, New Jersey, and others in the 1920's and 1930's did not become the predominant vision of American society.

Instead we built Los Angeles. We watched as New York spread across Long Island. The industry made great strides in home building, but there was little attention to community building. As late as the mid-1960's we were not ready for new communities, as evidenced by the fate of early legislative proposals for Federal assistance to new communities.

But by 1968 the climate had changed, and Title IV of the Housing and Urban Development Act of that year created the first modern new communities program, aimed solely at private enterprise. Its premise was that the power of Federal guarantees could harness private enterprise and private capital to public purposes. It was further perfected by Title VII
of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970, which recognized the full potential for organizing growth represented by public-agency developers working side-by-side with private enterprise. It extended the definition of costs eligible for guarantee assistance to include schools as well as other public buildings. And it widened the range of grants and loans to help new community developers and the local governments involved. A particularly important provision was the authorization of special planning assistance to improve the art and science of community building.

I. Selected Purposes of the Program

1. National Urban Growth Policy

More important even than expanded assistance for new communities, is the fact that forces have been set in motion to permit the establishment of a national policy context within which new communities will be established. New communities will not be viewed as isolated developments, responding only to local market forces, but as part of a broader national and state urban settlement pattern: a National Urban Growth Policy.

No one believes that such a sweeping national policy can be promulgated overnight without lengthy debate and study, nor that, when such a policy is promulgated, new communities alone can implement it. But it is obvious that even during the early stages of formulating such a policy, there is a potentially strong relationship between the emerging policy and new communities.
National urban growth policy is essentially a concern for achieving more efficient and desirable patterns of human settlement than would occur without conscious effort. It recognizes that virtually every major Federal and state action which allocates resources on a significant scale has implications for settlement patterns whether intended or not. Unless there is sufficient foresight, public policy or the absence of policy may produce highly undesirable patterns as it has in the past. We have had many policies with an effect upon growth and some directed at growth (such as the Appalachian program); but among these policies there has been much inconsistency and contradiction.

At one time we did have a coherent growth policy. Until the turn of the century our policy was to develop the frontier and we used the immense land resources of the public domain, as well as subsidies, to induce the railroads and canals to open up the hinterland. We gave free land, which was the working capital of the day. This produced one of the greatest resettlement movements in history. The nation became one. And it did not require vast central power and control.

Now the frontier is gone. The decline in agricultural and mining jobs and the increasing growth of specialized manufacturing and service jobs in the city have produced another great population movement in American history. Instead
of populating the hinterland, we are depopulating it. The sons and daughters of West Virginians, Iowans, North Dakotans, Nebraskans, and Arkansans are fleeing the homeland to which their pioneer ancestors moved with visions of great promise. Only the elderly are left with fond memories of better days in the gentle lands in which they labored for generations. The latest census shows that some of these small towns in the Midwest have completely disappeared from the map. From 1960 to 1970, two out of every five counties lost population.

At the same time, the metropolitan regions have experienced painful and explosive growth. Four-fifths of the 1960-1970 population growth occurred in metropolitan areas. Roads, sewer lines, schools and hospitals became overburdened. Smog and human effluent of all kinds are choking the air we breath and the water we drink in the great urban regions. Petitions are now appearing in the Far West, proclaiming: "Halt. We don't want more people and more industry."

The human toll of this unplanned massive migration was also great. Many came to the cities with life styles, family structures and skills that were poorly adapted to the demands of city lives. Blacks coming from the rural south had especially acute problems for they found themselves forced into those parts of the city with the poorest services, the highest crime rate, the worst housing, and the most rapidly declining job base. This combination of environmental and social conditions made matters worse. The result: high unemployment in the
ghetto even in periods of relative prosperity, crime, drugs, and demands for welfare and services which the cities were poorly equipped to give. The human condition has been debased in our cities, and the genial human resources of energy and imagination have turned to anger and frustration.

It is obvious that there is no simple solution. But two decades of false starts have taught us that we cannot solve city problems in an uncoordinated city-by-city approach within each separate political jurisdiction. The roots and the potential solution to the urban crisis lie not only in the city, but in the suburbs and countryside. Unless we mount a coordinated attack upon the problems of rural, suburban and urban development, we will continue to be disappointed by the small return on our public investment for problem-solving in the cities.

a. Redressing the Urban-Rural Balance

One of the key objectives of a national urban growth policy must therefore be to reverse or slow down the migration to the larger cities which damages both the city and the countryside from which the migration springs.

There is little doubt in my mind that a properly funded new communities program with adequate authority, if operated on a large enough scale and in conjunction with other Federal programs, could, over a period of time,
have significant impact in reshaping the urban-rural balance in the United States. The Soviet Union, Israel, Brazil, Venezuela, and India have used new communities as an effective instrument of national policy to open the hinterland and redistribute population. There is also little doubt that the current program needs strengthening if it is to achieve its full potential. I will have more to say about new initiatives later.

The potential of new communities for redistribution of population and development of rural and depressed areas is based upon several factors. They provide a framework for simultaneous development of all the facilities and services needed to support a primary job base. Since they are ordinarily constructed on undeveloped land at a fairly large scale, they are not entrapped in the cycle of decay, inadequate institutions and facilities often associated with existing communities in rural or depressed areas. They can be undertaken on a scale which is sufficiently large for supporting specialized services necessary for economic "take off" and they provide a framework for concentrating a tax base and Federal aids. The scatteration of Federal and state aid only dissipates resources and accomplishes little lasting effect.
There are also many problems in undertaking non-metropolitan new communities, not the least of which is the inability under current legislation to attract industry and the shortage of competent public and private developers in these areas. However, many of these obstacles can be overcome, if we are willing to make the effort.

Even with the current modest program, we can undertake some important pilot projects in non-metropolitan areas. We are now in the final stages of processing an application for assistance to a large free standing new community in the depressed Coastal Plains Region. And we have just received a promising pre-application proposal from a large public developer in the heart of Appalachia to be built around multi-million dollar Corps of Engineers and Forest Service facilities.

These projects are only modest beginnings in an attack against the massive problems of population imbalance. But, if successful, they will have great value in demonstrating what can be done through a creative use of our authority.

b. Controlling Metropolitan Growth

But the problems which a national urban growth policy must address are not solely the problems of redressing urban-rural balance. Other problems arise from poor distribution of population within large metropolitan areas. In spite of the massive growth in urban areas, many
sectors of our cities have actually lost population or remained stagnant. Four-fifths of the 1960 to 1970 population increase was in the suburbs.

Part of the problem of uneven urban growth is that of job allocation. Between 1960 to 1968 the percentage of jobs in the central city has decreased from 72 to 68 percent. In spite of the modest overall change, the composition and direction of this change should be cause for concern. According to a study of ten metropolitan areas almost 80 percent of employment growth in manufacturing between 1959 and 1967 took place in the suburbs. At the same time (in 1969), 80 percent of all blacks in metropolitan areas lived in central cities. Many of the suburban jobs would represent opportunities for minority residents were they not immobilized by racial and economic discrimination in sprawling suburbia.

The separation of jobs and people require time-consuming, dangerous and often unpleasant journeys to work and requires an over-built highway system aimed primarily at peak hour traffic which often blights the landscape and contributes to continued sprawl.

Just as in the case of redressing urban-rural balance, the control of massive urban growth in metropolitan areas cannot be accomplished by new communities themselves. We need effective regional government, revenue policies and land use controls responsive to local needs, transit
tied to and planned with community development, and more effective techniques to preserve land in open space and control the pace of development.

New communities are, however, an essential part of this larger effort. And even if the larger effort is not mounted in this decade, new communities can, by themselves, set a standard of excellence for other land development within the metropolitan market.

Because of the concentration of highly competent private enterprise and the good market conditions in metropolitan areas, all of our approved projects to date have been in these areas, although under quite a diverse set of circumstances: St. Charles is outside of the Washington SMSA but within its market area; Maumelle is within the Little Rock SMSA, but in a state and region which has suffered from chronic unemployment and outmigration; Jonathan is really a small town growth center in the jurisdiction of Chaska, Minnesota with a population of 2,500 in the Minneapolis urban area; and Flower Mound is in the center of a triangle, consisting of Fort Worth, Dallas and Denton, Texas.

In addition to the approved projects, we have 53 applications and pre-application proposals, of which 42 are within or directly adjacent to SMSA's. Should these projects be approved they would have a combined population
of 2.3 million people at peak development. Thus, within three years of operation of the new communities program, we have moved to a position where developers, in partnership with the Federal and local governments, could initiate twice the number of new communities initiated in England during the last 25 years. Although in terms of percentage of total current population growth, this achievement is modest, there is no reason why we could not accommodate from 15 to 20 percent of national population growth in new communities, substantially more than achieved in Great Britain even on a percentage basis.

Our metropolitan new communities attack urban growth problems from two angles: the revitalization of the center cities and smaller suburban towns and the concentration of growth in undeveloped suburban land where urban sprawl would have been the predominant pattern of development.

New-towns-in-town can assist with one half of the job: the revitalization of existing cities. With the advent of the new communities programs, particularly the public guarantee of private financing for public purposes, new tools have been added to our methods of dealing with urban blight and decay. Urban renewal, housing rehabilitation, construction of low and moderate income housing, and assistance for public facilities such as open space and water and sewer lines (or the subsequent consolidation
of these programs into special revenue sharing) will continue to be used as the central thrust of our attack on the center city problems.

However, the new communities programs can supplement this aid by providing either public or private developers with the financing and other incentives to plan a single area, and execute a 15 or 20 year program with a minimum of bureaucratic controls and without dependence upon the vagaries of the annual appropriation process. Surplus public land may be used, as in the case of Fort Lincoln, or developers may acquire vacant or undeveloped land, partially blighted, as in the case of Cedar-Riverside in Minneapolis -- our first new-town-in-town.

Suburban new towns attack the problem of growth from the other angle. They help focus growth into more efficient and desirable densities, with more open space, higher design standards, and more balanced development with jobs near places of employment for all races and economic classes.

c. **Strengthening State and Local Government**

An essential part of our emerging national urban growth strategy is increasing the capacity of state and local governments to deal effectively with their own growth problems. Our authority under Title VII to assist state
and local bodies brings the power and prestige of local governments into the battle for a more orderly pattern of human settlement.

We are reviewing three projects of the only state development corporation in the nation: in the State of New York. Among the other public bodies that we are dealing with are a Southern city which is working closely with a private developer to develop the largest new-town-in-town in the nation, and a special district in Appalachia to develop a free standing new town.

Although only one state has created a special development corporation with the capacity to undertake new communities, at least three or four other states are seriously considering such legislation. Still other states have passed special district legislation to encourage new communities. We continue to believe that public bodies hold the key to the most effective guidance of new community development as an instrument of urban growth policy.

2. Conservation

There are few issues, outside of the war in Southeast Asia, that have so excited and concerned our citizens as that of the environment. The green flag of ecology is flown proudly by young and old alike, by rich and poor, and by liberal and conservative. It is one of the few causes which unites us all.

One of the tragedies of unbridled growth is the fact that it has been so destructive of our irreplaceable natural
and historic resources. The new growth of the South and Southwest and every suburban area of the country has been welcomed by some. But the welcome may be shortlived. The visitor has bad manners. Growth has filled the flood plains, stripped forested slopes and polluted both the air and water.

Because of the large planning scale and control by a single developer, new communities can provide a greater opportunity than conventional urban development for reducing the pollution of air and water, preserving generous, accessible open space, promoting attractive architecture, providing recreational facilities, and, where undertaken in conjunction with existing cities, for restoring and preserving the man-made environment.

3. **Social Concerns**

Just as new communities are concerned with protection of natural resources, so they are concerned with realizing the full potential of human resources. The greatest tragedy of current growth patterns is not the physical form of that growth, but the fact that it has polarized Americans by race and class. Bankers, real estate brokers, homeowners, and unfortunately, even governments have conspired to "zone out" the poor and to exclude racial minorities.

An essential feature of new communities assisted under Title VII is that they must be designed to benefit all Americans. The developers undertake to provide a substantial amount of low and moderate income housing in the new community. Most of the assisted new communities will have at least
25 percent subsidized housing; some as high as 40 percent or 50 percent. And current policies prevent the concentration of this housing in any one location in the new community to avoid the debilitating isolation of different groups in our society.

Not only must developers comply with all of the civil rights laws and executive orders, they must take affirmative steps to make sure that minority groups in the area are welcome. Both employment and housing must be marketed affirmatively to insure equal opportunity. Participation by minority builders and other businesses is encouraged.

4. Innovation

We have only begun to apply the full genius of American enterprise to housing production. The movement started in motion by Operation BREAKTHROUGH could have a lasting impact on the home building industry. Now we must turn to an even more challenging task of applying this same genius to community building, which is many times more complicated. Advances have been made in transportation technology, as well as in solid waste management, pollution control, and development of individual shopping centers, industrial parks, and residential neighborhoods. These advances will be incorporated in our new communities.
But applying existing advances is not enough. We must test new concepts of community building on a larger scale than before and we must combine these concepts into an integrated whole. Some of the most important advances are not in the realm of physical design, but of social service delivery systems and forms of governance. Both approved new communities and those under consideration are exploring new avenues for research and demonstrations in community building.

New communities offer several advantages for testing innovations: they are undertaken on a large scale with relatively few constraints of existing infrastructure or institutions; they are sufficiently strong economically to permit some facilities which could not be afforded in smaller developments; and since they are planned from the beginning, new systems may be planned in concert in a way that would be difficult in existing cities.

II. Administration of the Program

The objectives of the new communities program are sweeping and ambitious. The stakes are high and the outcome uncertain. The prospects for either accomplishment or disappointment have rarely been so great for a new government program. The sad fact is that other programs, starting with high hopes have too frequently become diverted from their original objectives when the going got tough or have become ossified by too much red tape.
In administering the program, we have attempted to set the highest possible standards, relating to the objectives that I have discussed here today. We have also attempted to keep these standards in performance terms, so that the hands of the developer are not tied with second-guessing from Washington. The Project Agreement and Development Plan which each developer signs with HUD sets forth the 20-year program of the developer in general terms, but makes provision for specific commitments in one-year and three-year terms. Built into this administrative mechanism is provision for annual updating of the plan, taking into account changing conditions and feedback from each year's experience. Changes of minor impact (which are carefully defined) need not be approved by HUD.

Among the performance standards which the developers must agree to meet in order to qualify under Title VII are the following:

-- The project must have a general plan and development program designed to maintain an attractive environment, including a suitable site, effective land use and transportation plan, adequate environmental protection measures, adequate public facilities, architectural controls, and provision for relocation.

-- There must be a substantial amount of housing for persons and families of low and moderate income.

-- A full range of governmental services must be provided.
-- The plan for the new community must be consistent with area-wide planning and must have complied with the requirements of Office and Management and Budget Circular A-95 in terms of notifying appropriate regional clearinghouses before a full application is submitted.

-- The developer must secure all state and local reviews and approvals required by law or determined by the Secretary to be necessary for the project.

-- The developer must have or show that he will have the financial, technical, and administrative ability and background appropriate to the size and complexity of the project.

-- The project must be economically feasible in terms of economic base or potential for growth.

-- The developer must have a financial plan or program which indicates that the project is and will be financially sound and have a long term favorable impact upon the area in which the new community is located.

-- The developer must comply with all applicable civil rights laws and formulate and implement an affirmative action program for equal opportunity in employment, housing and business enterprise.

Of course, when a developer has convinced us that he has the capacity to achieve these performance standards, the work has only begun. Without reducing his freedom of action, we must insure that he actually meets expected performance.
In addition to the basic requirements of the law and regulations, HUD applies certain priority consideration to applications, in cases where they exceed available authority. We give special preference to projects which are especially innovative, to those of a type (such as free-standing communities) represented by few applications and to those located in regions where there are few applications.

As General Manager of the Community Development Corporation (which administers the new community programs), I wear two hats: I sit on the Board of Directors of the Corporation participating in the basic policy direction of the programs and passing on all new community commitments. I am also responsible for directing the new community staff both as General Manager and Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Management. The staff reviews the applications, prepares the regulations and presents its findings to the Board for final decision.

The other members of the Board represent important components of the new community development process: the fundamental link with transportation is recognized by the presence on the Board of James M. Beggs, Under Secretary, Department of Transportation; the critical relationships with HUD's renewal and public facilities programs are underscored by the presence of Floyd Hyde, Assistant Secretary for Community Development; and the importance of private finance is attested to by the presence of John Heimann of Warburg