HUD's Stewardship of National Urban Policy: A Retrospective View

Yvonne Scruggs, Ph.D.[1]
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

> There has always been a Federal urban policy. Unfortunately, no one has ever known what it was.[2]

Once again under a threat of dissolution, the 30-year-old U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is being assailed from many sides. HUD's enemies fail, through ignorance or through cynicism, to acknowledge the importance of the Department's basic historical mission to guarantee safe, sanitary, and decent housing in a suitable livable environment for all Americans. HUD's friends see a suicidal tendency in some of the Department's evasive survival measures that often appear to be cures worse than the disease. Students of HUD, with longer memories and more miles on their HUD-watching odometers, recall having heard all this before and realize that too few people are left who share these recollections clearly.

For all of its ponderous bureaucracy and glacial movement, HUD has always been the only Federal game in town for cities. From its origin—as successor to the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA)—under the leadership of the skillful, intellectual first Secretary Robert C. Weaver to its present reinvention by savvy urban partisan Secretary Henry Cisneros, HUD has provided the only effective, consistent "urban policy" that this Nation has ever had. Sometimes that urban policy has been good for cities and at other times it has been a disaster. And at least half of the time, this urban policy role and responsibility has devolved by default.

As yet another wave of hit squads takes aim at the Department along several flanks, it seems appropriate to offer some reflections and to recall some of its urban policy initiatives—both conscious and inadvertent, intended and unintentional. It remains true that, to the extent humans fail to learn from history, they are doomed to repeat its mistakes.

The Historic Context

There is a difference between "Federal urban policy,"[3] to which Roy Bahl referred in his testimony before the Reuss[4] Subcommittee on the City, and the Carter administration's National Urban Policy, which remains the only official, formulated, and documented urban policy in U.S. history. This difference is a matter of perception, definition, and codification.

The perceptual difference lies in whether the earlier efforts were intended to address the range and domain of urban America or only a narrow slice of urban geography—a limited dimension of the urban problem. The definitional difference is related to whether earlier efforts were viewed publicly as grand policy, as limited policy, or simply as problem-solving programs and projects. The difference involving codification is the rather straightforward manner in which earlier efforts were labeled; that is, whether or not they were presented as Federal (i.e., national) urban policy and accepted by Congress as such.

The more obvious and influential past experiences, also a part of the context of urban policy development, were a series of public and public/private joint ventures designed to respond to distressing urban phenomena as though they were discrete, generally independent functions within otherwise healthy urban environments. These earlier efforts were often the initial steps, without which the subsequent Carter administration urban policy effort could not have begun. Moreover, these early urban improvement efforts developed an institutional history that sensitized the public to the range and constraints of urban remedies. Finally, the determination to have a codified national urban policy had its genesis in the implementation of these earlier efforts.

Urban Renewal

Any discussion of precedents addressing the urban condition necessarily begins with early housing and urban renewal efforts by the Federal Government in response to a changing and aging urban environment.[5] The Housing Act of 1949—and subsequent amendments, up to and including those in 1954—provided for slum clearance, urban redevelopment, residential renewal and, subsequently, for downtown central business district (CBD) revitalization. Beginning with the Housing Act of 1950 and continuing through 1954, at least 54 separate pieces of legislation, Executive orders, and Government committee reports augmented, changed, and/or refined renewal policy, particularly with regard to housing.[6]

The Housing Act of 1954 broadened the slum clearance and urban redevelopment programs of the Housing Act of 1949. The 1954 Act authorized Federal assistance to help local communities, not only in the clearance and redevelopment of slum areas but also in preventing the spread of slums and urban blight through the rehabilitation and conservation of deteriorating areas.[7] It also provided support for local planning, and subsequently for metropolitan and regional planning. An illuminating view of the legacy of urban renewal and the inspiration that experience provided for a more comprehensive approach to the revitalization of cities has been reported by Marris and Rein, who labeled it "... a cynical expropriation in the interests of business, real estate, and the tax base."[8]

The larger context for Federal intervention in the economy of cities was the doctrine that economic growth would produce a filtering or trickle-down effect that would ultimately include most marginal and nonparticipating members of society in its benefits.[9] In other words, the poor and racial minorities in the cities, whose numbers were augmented by "the most massive migration in our history"[10] would eventually benefit from an increase in economic activity. The return to the city of the more affluent white population, in turn, would increase the business and commercial enterprises located there. Thus the number of jobs available in the transitional, postwar urban economy would increase.

With the progression of the decade, however, the results of this doctrine became increasingly discouraging. While absolute income rose, relative quality of life declined for the poor and for minorities. "Between 1950 and 1960, ... the central cities of the 12 largest metropolitan areas lost over two million white residents, and gained just under two mil-

lion non-whites, who [by the end of the decade] accounted for more than a quarter of their citizens. Meanwhile the suburbs had added only marginally to their meager [residents of color]."[11] Schussheim wrote that the urban renewal program promised too much, delivered too little too slowly, and probably was empowered to use tools—especially in the form of land write downs for commercial and industrial development—that were unnecessary and excessive subsidies for accomplishing the task at hand.[12]

In the mid-1950s the Ford Foundation—the philanthropic bankroll for innovation and research—had focused the energies of its Public Affairs Program on supporting and studying urban renewal and metropolitan government as possible solutions to the growing problems of cities. As urban renewal began to produce results, however, Ford and others found these results most distressing.[13]

The Grey Areas Project

Many now consider Ford's Public Affairs Program to have been the cutting edge of change. Its staff have been characterized as reformers and technicians for whom the guidance of social change was a career. The program's director, Paul Ylvisaker, was experienced in the problems of local government and led his staff of reformers on a search for alternatives—especially for the socially and politically disenfranchised—to the physical orientation of urban renewal.[14]

The Grey Areas Project took its name from that penumbra immediately surrounding the urban core and the CBD into which the displaced, the relocated, migrants, racial minorities, and economically and socially marginal people faded. The Project was intended to fulfill a broken promise and devise a new formula for equalizing the competitive disadvantage of those who lived in this literal and figurative shadow of urban prosperity.

The Grey Areas Project was the smallest, most limited in scope, and most narrowly focused of the major predecessors to the official National Urban Policy that HUD ultimately developed. At its zenith it functioned in only 17 communities, with direct funding support from the Ford Foundation.[15] Significant Federal dollars—notably from the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime (PCJD)—were joined with the private philanthropic and local matching dollars to support the innovative, experimental Project. But the scope of the program itself was not public, not government-wide, and not announced nationally as a "new" Federal policy to attack the problems of the cities.[16]

Furthermore, from the perspective of the total urban environment, the Grey Areas Project focused narrowly on the most troubled "grey area" around the urban core, intentionally avoiding (especially as far as the Ford Foundation's motives were concerned) a broad-gauged urban renewal or metropolitan range in its activities. Yet the Grey Areas Project broke through a barrier that confined treatment of urban problems to their physical dimensions, as reflected in the public policy orientation toward housing, slum clearance, and downtown renewal.

In addition to introducing the concepts of institutional change and social engineering, a number of Grey Areas Projects brought together the resources of HUD-supported renewal institutions responsible for planning housing and redevelopment projects and the expertise of social analysts, citizens, and service-delivery practitioners. Together they designed plans for community action that would change the way communities felt and behaved, as well as the way they looked physically and functioned economically.

As the earlier streams of thoughts and actions were translated into legislative language through the executive and congressional process, the influence of Grey Areas veterans intensified. Along with mayors and top staff from the most innovative Grey Areas programs, the veterans consulted with the task force created by President Johnson's antipoverty chief, Kennedy brother-in-law R. Sargent Shriver. In the only State-level Grey Areas Project, Terry Sanford, the Governor of North Carolina, made a special plea for replication of the experimental, research, and planning effort.[17]

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the antipoverty legislation that emerged from the Interagency Task Force and subsequent legislative processes had something for almost every dimension of the poverty problem. Of the eight titles in the Act,[18] Title II was the most urban in its orientation.[19] It provided for community action to plan and implement a comprehensive, coordinated approach for improving the quality of life in "pockets of poverty" in the cities that was similar to Grey Areas Projects. By the time President Johnson began the process of formulating a program in 1965–66 to dramatize the mission of the newly formed urban advocate, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, local political antennae already were aquiver. The administration's urban programs had become a threat:

> Giving blacks control over some new service agencies did not turn out to be the chief consequence of federal intervention in the cities, nor was it the main source of the controversy that ensued. The new programs progressively became the instrument with which the federal government attempted to prod municipal agencies [and the private social welfare establishment] into responding to blacks. If local white politicians were agitated at the out-set because a great deal of patronage escaped their control, they became hysterical when the federal government permitted, and often encouraged, its new apparatus of local agencies to put pressure on municipal services themselves—pressure to get more for blacks. And that was no small reason for anguish, because services are the grist of contemporary municipal politics.... By interfering with the allocation of these services, with who got what, the programs shook up established relations among constituent groups in the city. That urban politicians and bureaucrats reacted with indignation is hardly startling.[20]

Additionally, there were concerns in Washington that the "War on Poverty" was falling short of the desired goals, while extracting a high political price. Sundquist summarizes the thinking in the White House:

> If the national decision was for such a unified 'war on poverty,' what resulted [was] something less. Under the pressure of program operations, the movement [was] almost steadily from the broader to the narrower conception, from the 'war on poverty' to the 'poverty program' threatening ultimately only to add to the 'series of uncoordinated and unrelated efforts' that the President had decried. And by 1967 the President and the Administration appeared to be looking to a new program and a new device—the model cities program and the 'city demonstration agency'—to fill the unifying and coordinating role for which the poverty program and community action agencies had proved unsuited.[21]

Model Cities: Rhetoric and Reality[22]

In a May 1965 memorandum to President Johnson, Walter P. Reuther, resident intellectual of the labor movement, president of the United Auto Workers Union, and dreamer of an urban TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority), set forth proposals for large-scale, in-depth demonstrations to show how progress might be made toward fulfilling his dream. "It was this dream of Reuther's laid before the President on May 15, 1965, that can be taken to mark the genesis of the program that would bear the name model cities."[23]

In characteristic style President Johnson, who held a special preference for private, nongovernmental task groups to provide him with guidance and recommendations, appointed such a task force to review Reuther's suggestion in greater depth.[24] The Reuther memo had called for a demonstration in "six of the larger urban centers of America, [so that] ... architecturally beautiful and socially meaningful communities of the twentieth century" could be created.[25] The task force agreed, after much deliberation, that a demonstration program was desirable because, in part, "the urban crisis was not only serious but, particularly in the central cities, was becoming explosive."[26]

The task force did not agree, however, to confine the demonstration to the small number of cities that Reuther proposed to be the "research laboratories for the war against poverty and ugliness in the urban environment—the 'Grey Areas' that more and more are becoming ghettos for the poor and the racially discriminated—housed in 'hand me downs.'"[27] Rather, the task force recommended that 66 cities be chosen, "representing communities of different sizes and from different regions of the country."[28] HUD was legislatively mandated to operate the program.

Ultimately, a total of 150 cities were chosen to participate in the Model Cities program, which in many respects represented an aggregation of learning and experience from the predecessor Grey Areas Project and the Community Action Program (CAP). The Model Cities program guide acknowledged the importance of antecedent efforts in instructing cities:

> There is no single program prototype. Each city should plan and develop its own distinctive demonstration program tailored to its particular problems and resources, and building on projects and activities already being carried out in the area.[29]

Given the 17 original Grey Areas communities, the additional PCJD grantees, and the 1,045 local Community Action agencies that CAP had funded by the time Congress passed the Model Cities legislation in 1966,[30] most, if not all, Model Cities programs had sufficient local "projects and activities" on which to build.

Sundquist, Haar, Schussheim, and others agree that this complex effort to assist cities in improving living conditions met with uneven and generally ephemeral enthusiasm, and therefore with limited success. Moreover, a city participated in the program only by choice of its elected leadership. HUD committed funds for planning and supplemental funds for implementation to each participating city. The Department did this in exchange for each mayor's promise that citizen participation would be "widespread," that the plans would be comprehensive, and that coordination of Federal, State, and local public and private resources would take place. The goal of the demonstration was to "test whether we have the capacity to understand the causes of human and physical blight, and the skills and the commitment to restore quality to older neighborhoods, and hope and dignity to their people."[31]

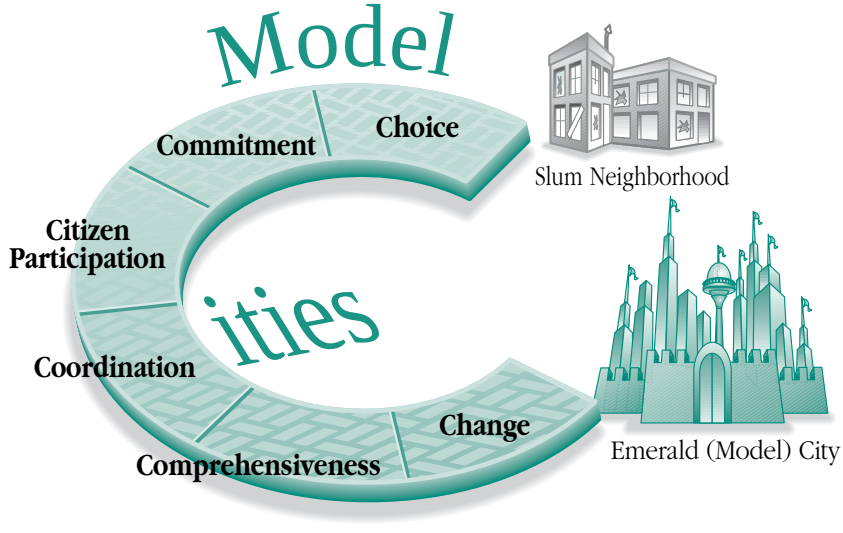
The Model Cities program was not permitted to survive long enough to work through the complexities of local-Federal coordination and a comprehensive approach to program operation. Following his inauguration in 1969, President Nixon began to dismantle the program, leaving cities feeling like Dorothy in L. Frank Baum's legendary book *The Wizard of Oz*, wondering how she and her traveling companions were to find the Emerald (Model) City on their own. Figures 1 and 2[32] allegorically capture a view of that 2½-year trek toward the ideal of a Model City from mid-1967 until the early 1970 dismantling.[33]

The New Federalism: Benign Neglect of Cities

The Nixon administration did not move into its urban policy posture without thoughtful guidance. A task force on Model Cities, chaired by Edward C. Banfield, reported a set of recommendations to the President on December 16, 1969. The report stated that the Model Cities program had made a useful contribution; that "the Model Cities proposals, although they do not open new vistas, compare very favorably with the general run of the proposals" receiving Federal support; and that "the Model Cities program is better than what went before."[34]

Figure 1

Follow the Yellow Brick Road!



Then you must go to the City of Emeralds.... You must walk. It is a long journey, through a country that is sometimes pleasant and sometimes dark and terrible.... The road to the City of Emeralds is paved with yellow brick....

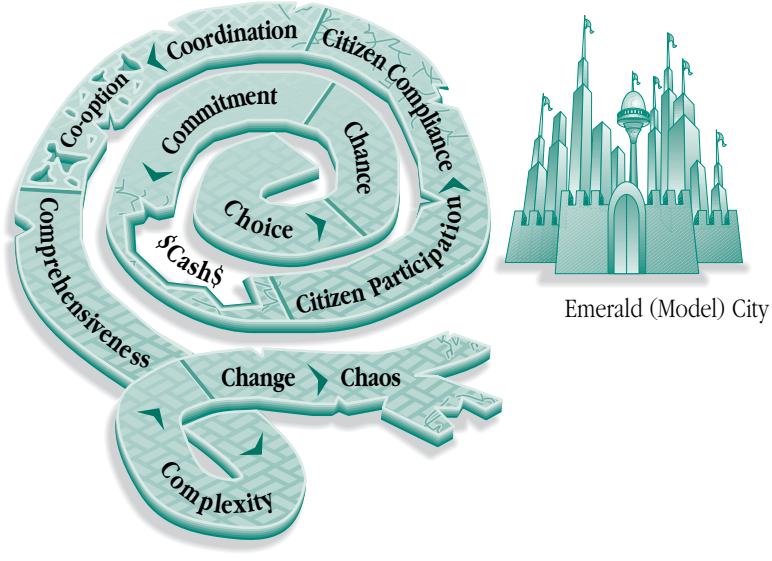
Nonetheless, the task force recommended decentralization of program administration. HUD Secretary George Romney issued new directives for Model Cities' administration that were more consistent with the laissez-faire, decentralization philosophy of the New Federalism—the Nixon administration's label for its policy framework. Greater discretion was given mayors for deciding where and how (that is, in which neighborhoods and on which projects) they would spend the money, and Federal review and monitoring were reduced.[35]

Although some apologists for the new policy have described the changes as a defense of the "central concepts of Model Cities: more money for needy cities, better coordination of Federal programs, and greater authority and flexibility for mayors in managing federal dollars,"[36] there was the suspicion among reform-minded Model Cities staff that the motive for the changes was to suppress the very spirit of resource and power redistribution and institutional change that made the program unique.

The advent of the New Federalism significantly altered the decade-long trend of urban policy leadership from the central Government, largely through HUD, with participation at the local level by the neediest sectors of the urban population. Indeed, the Kerner Commission Report on urban riots had called for both horizontal planning—among local public and private organizations—and vertical planning—among Federal, State, and local units of government—to achieve coordinated urban reform.[37]

Figure 2

Follow the Yellow Brick Road?



After a few hours the road began to be rough, and the walking grew so difficult that [they] often stumbled over the yellow bricks, which here were very uneven. Sometimes, indeed, they were broken or missing altogether, leaving holes....

Get Rid of HUD!

Although President Nixon's first message to Congress in January 1970 identified housing, transportation, open space and pollution control, and "more generally, building new cities and rebuilding old ones"[38] as priorities of his administration, the record shows that these priorities were low, at least for cities. As his "first gambit in urban policies,"[39] Nixon created an Urban Affairs Council whose members were Secretaries of the principal domestic departments and whose chairman was a Nixon appointee, conservative Democrat Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

The Urban Affairs Council was short lived. In July 1970 the President terminated its activities. The Council's functions—primarily as "window dressing for tightly controlled policy machinery in the White House"[40]—were to be performed by the Domestic Council in the Executive Office of the President. John Erlichman, the Domestic Policy Advisor to the President, was put in charge.[41]

In March of 1971, the President proposed a new Department of Community Development that was to absorb HUD, the vestiges of CAP, and urban-oriented Federal programs from the Departments of Transportation and Commerce. These activities were to be administered by a division within the new department called the Urban and Rural Development Administration.[42] "But the Nixon proposals were so radical and challenged so many powerful interests that they simply were not taken seriously."[43]

Various reductions in scale and funding ensued, initially affecting the Community Action Program most heavily. However, on January 8, 1973, the Nixon administration, in a speech by HUD's Secretary Romney to the National Association of Home Builders, announced the impoundment of housing subsidy and community development funds, including low-rent public housing, water and sewer facilities grants, open-space land grants, and public facility loans.

The declared intention was to freeze new commitments until existing programs had been reevaluated. Further, Secretary Romney announced that at the end of the fiscal year (that is, June 30, 1973) "similar action would be taken with respect to urban renewal and model cities programs.... The ban on the listed community development activities would continue until they were included in the community development special revenue sharing program."[44] The President subsequently presented his proposals and budget in support of revenue sharing to Congress at the end of January 1973.

Community Development Block Grants

The Community Development Block Grant program was created by Congress in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. It formalized a fundamental change in the Federal Government's financial assistance to communities for their physical development and fully replaced remaining Urban Renewal, Neighborhood Development, and Model Cities programs.[45] One-hundred-percent grants, distributed on the basis of a formula,[46] funded development of a city's plans and programs and gave its mayor broad authority and flexibility to determine the operations the community would undertake.

President Ford's "urban policy" has been described as advocating a national commitment to preserving and restoring central cities and neighborhoods "... targeting federal resources to the neediest areas, and more incentives for housing rehabilitation and central city economic development." Good grounds exist for challenging such a policy. Even Charles Orlebeke concedes that it did not provide "significant new money for the cities."[47] Furthermore, National Growth Reports issued in 1972, 1974, and 1976 (and discussed

below), which might have offered substantive policy directions, failed to go beyond the research and analysis phase. Thus this nascent urban policy was not widely publicized—partly, no doubt, because it *was* nascent.

Urban Growth Policies and Reports

> Urban improvement goals had resulted in many public programs throughout the 1930's, forties, fifties and sixties.... Collectively, they were this country's urban growth policy, although we did not conceive them as such.[48]

If a reasonably acceptable definition of *policy* is "... an organizing principle to guide action,"[49] the public programs that have been discussed are accurately described as this country's changing and fleeting national urban policies prior to 1977. Moreover, these policies were augmented by a series of National Growth and Development reports that appeared every 2 years, beginning in 1972.

Mandated by Title VII of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970, HUD prepared National Growth and Development reports for the President's transmission to Congress. The substance of these reports, however, again demonstrated that the central Government was continuing to address urban problems and urban crises instead of collecting the growing body of Federal experience into a coherent—if not comprehensive—national policy for urban communities:

> By dealing with 'problems' and the 'urban crisis,' this country avoided formulating an integrated domestic policy. Problem-solving programs which lacked consistent central purpose were characteristic of national urban policies.[50]

The Growth Reports of 1972, 1974, and 1976 became increasingly descriptive of the complexity of the urban growth problem and the effects of various solutions. In fact, the 1974 report already had identified the "inadvertent impacts of Federal actions on growth," a theme that was to become central to the 1977 urban policy process.

However, the 1976 report did not turn the corner by boldly offering guidance for action in the tradition of earlier policy statements. The late Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, a longtime advocate of Federal policy intervention in the cycle of city decline, commented that the administration was not only neglecting its responsibility for coordinating national programs but was also withdrawing from its commitment to provide programs for cities and depressed regions.[51]

In part, the failure of the biennial Growth Reports to be more directive and to provide policy guidance can be traced to the philosophy of both the Nixon and Ford administrations. Such policy direction at the national level would have been inconsistent with the spirit of New Federalism and would contradict the administration's intention of letting local governments set their own priorities with as little interference from the center as possible. Further, if local governments were to decide how Federal dollars were to be spent, the Federal Government could not very well establish policies requiring Federal money to be spent by local governments in a specific way.

Meanwhile, nipped in the bud by a change in Presidential leadership, the Model Cities program operated under its original mandate for only 1 year beyond the planning year. With the shift in focus from close Federal monitoring to local discretion in 1969, the program limped along until it was officially terminated in 1973. Although some cities

retained their original commitment to the Model Neighborhoods selected, national policy was laissez-faire with regard to program priorities and the enforcement of comprehensive planning.

The change in Presidential posture with regard to the problems of cities was most important under the Nixon/Ford administrations. Both Presidents launched abortive efforts to design a national urban policy based on experiences and lessons from the past. Nixon quickly shifted to a broader urban/rural design, while Ford's effort was too little and came too late in his administration to produce results. As noted below, in both cases there was a lack of Presidential commitment.

Sundquist writes that the guidance needed in order for policy evolution to be something other than a jumble must come from a thoughtful, single source of authority, usually the President. Thus the Carter Presidency was surely challenged to provide leadership for an assault on the urban crisis in 1976. The President himself was destined to be held answerable for improving upon the legacies of past urban policy attempts and for articulating a philosophy that would guide further efforts. This occurred in spite of the grim prognosis when Carter took office:

> Those working to revitalize the inner cities ... find themselves with their backs pressed even closer to the wall than they did in 1966 [when Model Cities began]. The most intractable problems remain. And our present urban programs exist with neither consensus nor conviction to support them.[52]

HUD's Conspiracy To Develop a Real National Urban Policy

> Critics of the series of reports in the Republican administration frequently charged that the collapse of the dream of a national urban ... policy stemmed from a lack of presidential commitment.[53]

There is substantial justification for having expected the Carter administration to be committed to producing a unified, national policy for cities. In spite of the frequently alleged insensitivity to urban matters and the implied lack of priority accorded urban issues by "an administration with rural roots [that] now must address the cities,"[54] Carter gave notice early in his Presidential campaign that he intended to draft an "urban policy for the remainder of the twentieth century."[55]

In a major address on urban policy to the U.S. Conference of Mayors in June 1976, Carter stated:

> Today, America's number one economic problem is our cities, and I want to work with [mayors] to meet the problems of Urban America just as Franklin Roosevelt worked to meet the problems of the rural south in the 1930's.
>
> ... I pledge to you an urban policy based on a new coalition—recognizing that the president, governors and mayors represent the same urban constituency. I pledge to you that if I become president, you, the mayors of America, will have a friend, an ally, and a partner in the White House.
>
> ... It is time for our government leaders to recognize that the people who inhabit even the poorest and most deteriorated of our central cities are our fellow Americans, and that they want the same things we all want....

> Our goal must be to develop a coherent national urban policy that is consistent, compassionate, realistic, and that reflects the decency and good sense of the American people.[56]

In his campaign speeches, Carter described several avenues through which he would seek to establish a "balanced national partnership [to carry out] a mutual commitment to the future of the American city."[57] Citing the preceding Republican administration's "indifference ... and divisiveness"[58] toward urban areas, Carter projected a position that was to serve, after his election, as the organizing context for urban policy development efforts. It would also serve as a weapon with which urban and poor people's lobbyists could badger his administration to be more sensitive to their concerns.

Unlike many campaign working papers and speeches, Carter's city policy paper and his Milwaukee speech were to appear again and again in the hands and on the desks of the staff drafting the urban policy. In fact, one copy carried the admonition from a principal administration policymaker to the executive director of the urban policy group: "We should always keep these ideas in our mind as we formulate an urban policy."[59]

Political Debts to Blacks, Other Minorities, and the Poor

President Carter's commitment to cities and to an open administration were only two elements of the context within which the National Urban Policy was developed. After the Carter administration had been in office for several months, those who viewed themselves as being primarily responsible for his victory at the polls began to agitate for some show of appreciation for their efforts. As *Philadelphia Daily News* columnist Chuck Stone pointed out in his column:

> Jimmy Carter owes his election to black support, not only in yesterday's massive turnout, but from the beginning when Atlanta blacks wrapped their arms around him and proclaimed to the nation he was no Lester Maddox or George Wallace.
>
> ... Carter's election ... does accomplish two things: it will move this country racially closer together and it will get the country moving again under a man who believes the President can take the lead in solving the awesome problem of unemployment.[60]

This view of the role of the black and urban vote in determining the election results was widespread and fairly well substantiated. According to a post-election analysis by the Joint Center for Political Studies (JCPS) in Washington, D.C.: "Black voters provided Carter with the crucial margin of victory in several closely contested States without which he could not have been elected."[61] Following a methodology that provided for the direct survey of a million black voters in areas that were at least 87 percent black, JCPS monitored results from 1,165 areas in 23 States. The results of the survey[62] showed the black vote to have been the margin of victory in 13 States, including Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin.

The Condition of the Cities

President Carter made a ceremonial visit to HUD on February 10, 1977, 21 days after his inauguration. Newly appointed HUD Secretary Patricia Roberts Harris, hosting the occasion, concluded her brief welcoming remarks with the comment, "We are glad that you share our concern for cities in distress."[63]

The characterization of cities as being *in distress* had by then become the euphemism for what was happening to urban communities across the country. The perspectives from various sectors altered the hierarchy within the litany of urban ills, but there was commonality among items on everyone's list.

Local governments were burdened with the "... accumulated discontent of millions of human beings, mistreated, discriminated against, ignored or dissatisfied with life in American cities."[64] Many cities were plagued by population decline, commercial and industrial disinvestment, attendant unemployment, social problems and antisocial behavior, housing and infrastructure deterioration, fiscal instability and crisis, and general abandonment.

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR), writing in 1976 about ways to improve urban America, listed specific deficiencies from which the Nation's urban areas suffered, including decayed central city housing and jerry-built suburbs; transportation problems, such as access and congestion; pollution of air, water, and land; paucity of recreational spaces; crime, safety, and delinquency profiles; low educational standards; and racial unrest and civil disorder. "These deficiencies were ... rooted in long standing and currently aggravating employment and other economic inequalities, making central cities pockets of poverty and disease."[65]

Energy as Equalizer

The President completed the administration's energy package quickly, in response to the rising costs of energy and the resulting inconvenience. Therefore, pursuit of a viable energy policy probably would not have benefited from inclusion in the complicated and controversial urban policy process. Instead, the President felt, energy policy development should continue on a separate fast track. Furthermore, the crisis offered an opportunity for city lobbying activity, not because careful analysis had shown concentration in cities to be an optimum response to the energy shortage, but because the energy shortage might offer an excellent opportunity to attract people back to cities, generating revitalization efforts and increasing revenues from the tax-paying public.[66]

These energy considerations, however, naturally led to a fuller awareness of the urban policy context. The population had changed from urban to suburban, from central cities to the peripheries of metropolitan regions and smaller cities, and from the industrial frostbelt cities of the North and Midwest to the smaller southern and southwestern sunbelt communities. The *1975 Interim Census Report* bore out the decennial trends, reflecting alarming changes in regional populations and in the demographic characteristics of city dwellers. (See figure 3.)

People and Job Losses

The *1970 U.S. Census Report on Population* reflected a change in the distribution of urban and metropolitan populations, reversing a trend of almost two centuries. In place of the historic pattern in which people moved toward the urban core or redistributed themselves within the urban region closer to the cultural, social, and economic institutions traditionally associated with the amenities of cities, most urban regions showed significant losses in population.

Furthermore, while no consensus exists regarding whether or not people follow jobs to nonurban locations or vice-versa, both people and jobs left the cities in droves. "Twice as many people left central cities from 1970 to 1975 as left during the entire previous

decade."[67] In addition to becoming less solvent, less densely populated, and less self-supporting, cities were also becoming more black and more populated with the unemployed.

Figure 3 summarizes the losses in jobs and people for the 20 largest Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) for the period from 1960 to 1977.[68] Older cities lost a great many of their middle-income residents. Between 1960 and 1970, Chicago, for example, gained 150,000 households in the lowest 40 percent of income and lost 140,000 in the top 40 percent. These and similar statistics appeared frequently in various tracts that discussed the urban problem. The significance of the fact that 10 of the 12 cities having the greatest increases in unemployment and the largest decreases in population since 1960 had given Carter 50 percent or more of their votes in the 1976 election was not lost on the President. In fact, the average percentage of Carter votes in those 10 cities was 59.8 percent.[69] (See figure 4.)

Figure 3

Change in Central City Jobs and Population for the 20 Largest SMSAs, 1960–77[70]

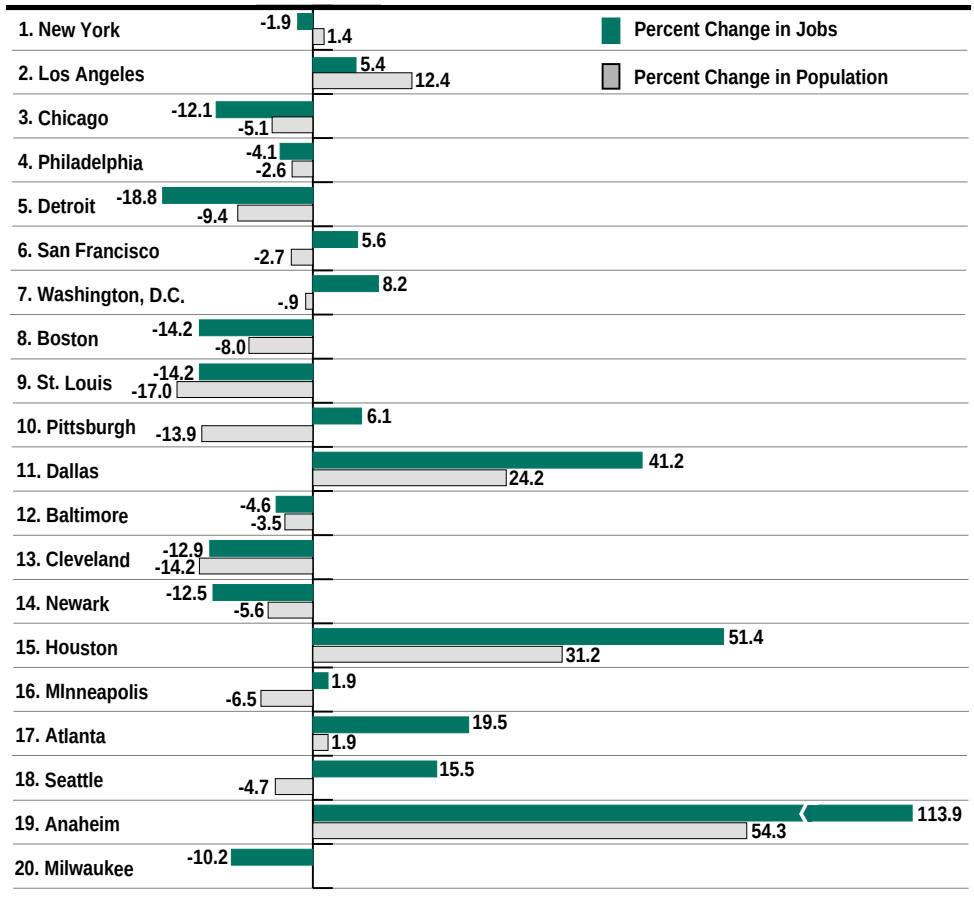


Figure 4

Votes for Jimmy Carter, Selected Areas

Cities Showing High Unemployment and Population Loss (Rank Ordered):	Percent of County Votes for Carter
New York	75
Los Angeles	50
Philadelphia	66
Detroit	60
Baltimore	70
Washington, D.C.	70 (estimated)
Milwaukee	55
San Francisco	52
Cleveland	56
Boston	61
New Orleans	55
St. Louis	55
Average	59.8

Source: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, *Focus* 1976.

Thus the predicament comes full circle. Carter had promised to develop an urban policy during his campaign, and in large measure he won his most critical election-day battles with the help of voters who had ample firsthand experience with problems that an urban policy could address. In fact, the most distressed cities, which supported Carter most generously in his election bid, had no difficulty dramatizing with numbers and hard data both the dimensions of their distress and the magnitude of their political support.

Jimmy Carter's campaign speeches and position papers set the tone for an open, pro-city administration, committed to writing a national urban policy. Additionally, the incidence of cities' high rank on the distress index because of job loss, fiscal insolvency, population loss, and resource scarcities threatened to intensify the decline and crises in urban communities.

Perhaps the most dynamic force in the environment surrounding the President's urban policy planners, however, were the poor people and minorities, whose lobbyists

gave expression to their concerns. Blacks in particular were determined to hold "their" Democratic political party and President Carter—whom they felt they had elected—accountable for the debts of the campaign and the traditions of the party. An urban policy, formal and unprecedented, seemed to offer a mutually acceptable settlement of the debt. These factors also helped to round out the potential context for developing the urban policy document.

Finally, and probably of greatest importance, was the reality that a Democratic president was following a Republican administration into the White House, with a zeal for new initiatives that demonstrated a changing of the guard. Nixon and Ford were viewed by many urban and minority constituents as having shirked the responsibilities of national leadership by failing to correct social ills and to right equity wrongs. Their specter could best be vanquished by bold Federal intervention—as HUD Secretary Patricia Roberts Harris said frequently—"... on behalf of the neediest, not of the greediest."

The Urban and Regional Policy Group

HUD was foreordained to lead the Carter administration's urban policy development process; events occurring within HUD reinforced the inevitability of this leadership role. Several of Secretary Harris' principal staff, notably Robert C. Embry, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development (CPD), and Donna E. Shalala, Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research (PD&R),[71] had importuned Harris to prod President Carter about the crises.

While seeking a vehicle to advance the Secretary's image as head of the "urban advocate" agency within the new administration, Harris' immediate staff hit upon the idea of exploiting the urban convener power. Her staff legal advisor, Joseph Burstein, a veteran of previous Democratic administrations and a seasoned poverty warrior, knew of the Convener Executive Order 11297, created for HUD's first Secretary, Robert C. Weaver, by President Johnson. The convener role assigned to HUD under the Executive order included initial responsibility for chairing the urban policy group and ultimate responsibility for coordinating the entire urban policy process.

Undertaking the development of an urban policy began to emerge as an increasingly attractive strategy to her staff as they sought to develop a distinctive quality for her stewardship of HUD. Thus two of her chief executive assistants, Henry Hubschman and Andy Weisman, collaborated in White House sessions with Bruce Kirschenbaum, Associate Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Relations, and Orin Kramer, White House Domestic Policy Staff liaison to HUD, to draft the President's March 21, 1977, memorandum (See Exhibit 1: Presidential Memorandum). It was this memorandum that provided the mandate and direction for the urban development process and designated HUD as the leader.

Addressed to the Secretaries of Treasury; Commerce; Labor; Health, Education, and Welfare; Housing and Urban Development; and Transportation, with copies to heads of departments and agencies of the Executive Branch, the memo directed the HUD Secretary to convene a "... working policy group on urban and regional development." The group was to have three responsibilities: conduct a comprehensive review of all Federal programs that impact on urban and regional areas, seek perspectives of State and local officials concerning the role of the Federal Government in urban and regional development, and submit appropriate administrative and legislative recommendations.

Exhibit 1

Presidential Memorandum

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 21, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF TREASURY
THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
THE SECRETARY OF LABOR
THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
THE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

During my campaign, I pledged an urban and regional policy based on mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual commitment between state and local governments on the one hand and the federal government on the other. Although we do not have as yet a national urban and regional policy, the first step toward achieving that goal must be coordination among federal departments and agencies.

I would like you to form a working policy group on urban and regional development. The purpose of the group will be to conduct a comprehensive review of all federal programs which impact on urban and regional areas; to seek perspectives of state and local officials concerning the role of the federal government in urban and regional development; and to submit appropriate administrative and legislative recommendations.

Under Executive Order 11297, Pat Harris has the responsibility to convene such a group and will do so shortly. I want to emphasize that development of an urban and regional policy should be a joint project with full participation by each of your departments, as well as from other federal agencies where appropriate. This is a high priority for my Administration, and I have asked Jack Watson and Stu Eizenstat to facilitate and support your collective efforts in every way possible.

I look forward to receiving a preliminary report on your progress and findings by early summer.

Jimmy Carter

cc: Heads of Executive Departments
and Agencies

Mr. Janis

Thus, through a careful correlation of the Harris staff agenda with priorities to which the President had committed himself during his campaign, HUD had created a vehicle for furthering its own image and had simultaneously placed itself in the driver's seat.

Taking its name from its presidentially assigned function, the Urban and Regional Policy Group (URPG) was underway immediately (March 1977), at least at the staff level. Secretary Harris convened her principal staff exactly one week following receipt of the President's March 21 memorandum.

Get Rid of HUD: Verse Two

Meanwhile, during the week following Carter's inauguration, in response to the President's campaign promise, Joseph A. Califano, Jr., Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, announced the formation of a consulting group to carry out "a great national debate on welfare reform."[72] Subsequent discussions led to a search for domestic programs that could yield funds for the emerging welfare proposal. HUD began to appear as a vulnerable primary money source:

> Harris' biggest battle (within the administration) is to prevent further erosion of HUD's housing subsidies. A couple of weeks ago she learned that top officials at the Office of Management & Budget and the Health, Education, and Welfare Department were pushing a plan to fold $1 billion or more of HUD housing subsidies into a comprehensive cash payment to poor families.[73]

An August 1977 hearing before the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee generated a report that stated:

> ... a bevy of witnesses assailed any efforts to change the subsidized housing program. They argued that housing subsidies play an important role in revitalizing urban areas.... [74]

The front page of the *New York Times* dated August 31, 1977, contained an article with the headline: "White House Orders Urban Policy Review; Revises Study Panel." Its subheads were: "Urgent Response to Blacks" and "Cabinet-Level Group Gets Timetable to Act—Treasury Unit Drafts Complex Financing Plan."

The story behind that headline was much more evolutional than the *Times* implied and, furthermore, was a month old. The changes in URPG had taken place officially on August 1, 1977. They were preceded by a number of pressures gradually building in the White House and within HUD, as well as those coming from URPG members.

Within HUD, pressure for a change in URPG management had been building from the beginning of the administration. The characterization of that pressure varies, depending on who is doing the characterizing. However, there is general agreement that certain HUD program offices—Housing and CPD in particular—felt that they, rather than PD&R, should be responsible for preparing an action-directive to produce change in cities.

All of these events transpired during late July 1977. By August 1 Robert Embry, Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development, who was, like Harris, an attorney, had accepted the assignment as her URPG deputy. On the same date, the author was named Deputy Assistant Secretary Designate for Community Planning and Development and was told by Embry that she was to be the Executive Director of URPG, to assist him in his new assignment. Thus, in addition to Secretary Harris' laser-like focus on cities and

their problems, Embry brought to URPG an excellent reputation earned as a successful leader in the revitalization of Baltimore's urban areas. The author, also an advocate for cities, had taken a leave of absence from her position as chairperson of Howard University's graduate-level Department of City and Regional Planning. She also had served as a consultant to all of the earlier national urban policy efforts, including the Grey Areas Project.

Occasional ripples were caused by such events as a speech by National Urban League President Vernon Jordan[75] that criticized the slow progress made in developing the urban policy. Otherwise, not much information was making its way through the Washington grapevine or reaching the ears of those outside the Federal bureaucracy to suggest that serious work was underway in fulfilling Carter's urban policy campaign promise. In fact, unless one religiously read the *Congressional Record* or *Housing and Urban Affairs Daily*, little information was available about the URPG structure, the growing focus within Congress on an urban policy, or the progress of any then-current policy development efforts. That there was little visible activity simply encouraged the status-quo disinterest and cynicism of the public.

At the first full URPG meeting following reorganization, held on August 23, 1977, commitments were made by URPG deputies to a series of specific tasks and deadlines in the URPG Planning Work Program, a planning and management instrument designed by the author. The President's Domestic Policy Chief, Stuart Eizenstat, chaired the meeting and directed the agenda. Embry provided the details for substantive discussion, enabling, Eizenstat—and thus the White House—to establish the pattern for a continuing role as URPG's traffic cop.

According to the Planning Work Program, an analysis of urban problems was due from URPG/HUD staff by September 1 and comments from other agencies by September 15. The budget proposals were to go to the Office of Management and Budget also by September 15, and Task Force products were due by October 1. A fully developed options paper, due to the President by November 15, would present products in preparation. These were to include proposals on tax credits, property tax relief, municipal bond financing, and an Urban Extension Service. The latter was to be designed and submitted to URPG by Presidential Assistant and White House political guru Jack Watson.

It was pointed out to the URPG deputies that the President's State of the Union speech would take place in January. The urban policy document and the message to Congress had to be completed by March 15, 1978. The offensive was underway, and all had their marching orders.

In all visible respects, URPG's design and structure was quite consistent with Carter's intentions. According to Wildavsky's analysis of the President's administrative style:

> Our hypothesis is that Carter's basic beliefs are about procedures for making policy—procedures about which he speaks with passion, determination, and consistency. He is concerned less with particular goals than with the need for goals, less with the content of policies than with their ideal form—simplicity, uniformity, predictability, hierarchy, and comprehensiveness.[76]

The objective of the process-oriented structure, however, was not to please the President. Rather, the intention was to create a context of order within which power-exchange activities of the bureaucracy could occur purposefully rather than haphazardly. The structure of the deputies group included precise protocols and high-level leadership, while the informal design of the task force system was generally one of open membership and

public/private composition. The latter provided opportunities for transactions between the public interest, research/academic, and citizens' sectors and the policy planning mechanisms.[77] These structures were obvious and uncomplicated enough in their mission to encourage, rather than suppress, external transaction and internal interaction.

The interactive and transactive nature of the urban policy development process was an important characteristic. The term "interaction" is used to express the give and take, combat and compromise, and horse trading and negotiating that went on constantly within the deputies group. In the final analysis, this dynamic interaction generated sufficient consensus to permit the policy document to be "signed-off on" by the Cabinet departments and announced by President Carter upon his departments' recommendation. This process of *creative contention* characterized most encounters between the lead agency and the other actors.

Hugh Heclo emphasizes the ability of the bureaucracy to obstruct exercises such as those of the URPG, an ability which, unless neutralized, poses a diffuse but inexorable obstacle:

> ... bureaucrats are able to generate their own power through an ability to give or withhold compliance, advice, and information. Their circuits are firmly based in loyalties to particular programs, functional specialties, and institutions rather than to any particular leader of the day.[78]

Indeed, infinitely more than any particular urban policy issue was always at stake in these interactions. Budget decisions, decisions on priorities within the reorganization plan, program control decisions, staffing levels—all of these informed each ostensible encounter about urban policy. To ignore this reality was to misunderstand an entire dynamic aspect of bureaucratic survival and to voluntarily relinquish any hope of achieving some level of consensus on the substance of the urban policy itself.

Moreover, the entirely fundamental reality of career civil service exerted an often subliminal and always powerful influence on the behavior of agency staff. Given the fluid nature of management priorities and values in a system with rotating ideological leadership—this time by the Democrats, next time by the Republicans—career staff are adroit in avoiding loose ends and incomplete circles for which they may have to design closure at a later date.

The "transactive" quality of the urban policy process refers to the constant, desirable, and frequently overwhelming dialogues with those from the private sector. These contacts included one-on-one meetings with many experts, some of whom called the urban policy process "a work in search of a mission."

Private citizens, in "Equity Forums" assembled in San Francisco, Chicago, and Washington, introduced their personal perceptions of the priorities that an urban policy should address. Not unlike their predecessors from the Northeast's "Cities in the Middle," who met in New Jersey earlier in 1977, Equity Forum participants called for "job creation and economic development, reducing fiscal and service disparities, physical revitalization and local capacity building."[79]

Between August 23 and November 15, 1977, HUD held more than 1,000 meetings and private conferences with individuals and groups from the private sector in an effort to gain the broadest possible exposure to ideas, priorities, and concerns among those outside of the public agencies. These included elder statespersons of the civil rights movement; staff chiefs of the National Urban League, National League of Cities, National

Association of Counties, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Governors' Association, NAACP, and the Joint Center for Political Studies; State legislators; and mayors and local legislators from Atlanta, Georgia; East Orange, New Jersey; Connecticut; and California. The list of appointments and conferences was endless.

In addition, HUD orchestrated highly structured White House meetings that the President often attended. There also were the regular URPG deputy and task force meetings, which public- and private-sector participants also attended. The opportunities for "transactions" were infinite.

A Partnership to Conserve America's Communities: A National Urban Policy

> We will ever strive for the ideals and sacred things of the city, both alone and with many: We will increasingly seek to quicken the sense of public duty; We will revere and obey the city's laws; We will transmit this city, not only not less, but greater, better and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.
>
> —*Ode of the Athenian City State*

By the end of February 1978, decisions had been made with regard to the analysis of the urban problem. The principles and objectives already had been approved by the President. The outcome of the baseline evaluation, which had assessed, rated, and ranked every conceivable federally funded "urban" program in existence, was available. The formulation of actual policies was in draft form.

A formal briefing of the President in the White House Cabinet Room was scheduled for March 15, 1978. URPG staff prepared flip chart exhibits and document-sized handout replicas of the flip charts. The briefing was conducted by Secretary Harris and Stuart Eizenstat, although almost all Federal staff directly instrumental in developing the policy were present, including HUD's Urban Policy staff and task force coordinators.

As it was, the final draft of the policy was constantly criticized as being too confrontational. A memorandum from an Assistant Secretary of Commerce to the Secretary at HUD pointed this out:

> The February ... draft presents a more thoughtful and balanced statement than earlier versions of the importance of cities and the factors which have led to their growth and decline. You and your staff are to be commended for the progress made in articulating the nature and causes of the urban problem. Moreover, the need to shift to a 'conservation ethic' which recognizes that our cities are 'valuable national resources' ... deserves major public attention.
>
> [However] I have already indicated to you a few examples of language in the report which tend to promote a specific program or to emphasize a particular approach at the expense of another, e.g., community development vs. economic development. These should be eliminated from the draft....[80]

The President's view, however, was that because the policies would be viewed by the public and press in terms of priorities, they should reflect the priorities that he supported. Carter was much more of a political strategist than he has been given credit for by casual and superficial observers. He was keenly aware of the relationship between an effort such as the national urban policy process and his 1980 Presidential reelection aspirations.

The final order and content of the 10 National Urban Policies is as follows:[81]

1. The Federal Government will administer existing and new programs in a coordinated, efficient and fair manner. Before approval, all key Federal activities will be evaluated to make sure they are [as] consistent as possible with the administration's urban policy.

2. The Federal Government will develop a firm partnership with State governments to solve urban problems. Federal incentives will be provided for States to implement comprehensive urban policy and strategies.

3. The Federal Government will encourage and support efforts to improve local planning and management capacity. Federal programs will support local efforts to develop economic, social service, and community development policies and strategies. Local government will play a major role in coordinating the use of Federal funds within borders.

4. The Federal Government will encourage and support the efforts of neighborhood groups in revitalizing their communities.

5. The Federal Government will carry out strong measures to eliminate discrimination and racism from all aspects of urban life.

6. The Federal Government will help expand business and job opportunities for the urban poor and minority men and women. Federal programs will seek ways to increase the mobility of the growing number of men and women trapped in poverty or dead-end jobs.

7. The Federal Government will offer strong incentives for businesses and industry to remain, expand, or locate in economically troubled central cities. To the extent possible, disincentives for locating in troubled central cities will be ended.

8. The Federal Government will help troubled central cities address their critical short-term fiscal problems. The Federal Government, working with States and local governments, will make efforts to strengthen the long-term fiscal condition of cities and reform the current chaotic system of intergovernmental aids.

9. The Federal Government will help make troubled central cities attractive places to live and work. It will help improve the range and quality of decent social services available to their residents. Federal efforts will help make decent housing available to the poor and remove barriers to their choice of neighborhoods. Federal programs will encourage the middle class to remain in or return to central cities.

10. The Federal Government will help cities develop efficient land settlement patterns. Federal laws and programs will be amended to discourage sprawl and encourage energy efficient and environmentally sound settlement patterns in urban areas.

The President's Urban and Regional Policy Group had met the deadline that the URPG executive director had set 7 months before, through the mechanism of the URPG Planning Work Program. This accomplishment was just as fascinating as everything else regarding the policy's announcement, given the deductive and intuitive process by which the milestones leading to the deadline had been selected. As the character in the Neil Simon play, *Biloxi Blues*, observed, "If you want people to believe that something is true, just write it down."

The President's press conference to announce the National Urban Policy was held in the East Room of the White House and met every expectation of pomp, circumstance, and excitement. Secretary Harris shared the podium when the President made the announcement. Governors, representatives of Congress, mayors, heads of urban advocacy groups, suburbanists, and small town and county advocates were in attendance, but all were outnumbered by the media.

The press coverage that ensued for many weeks was appropriate to the announcement of the country's first urban policy. The press emphasized the following as primary innovations of the new National Urban Policy: the types of tradeoffs; the administration's final arrival at consensus; and the President's compromise decisions and themes regarding limited spending, greater efficiency in existing programs, and partnerships with States, volunteers, and private organizations.

A sample of the press reports reveals, however, a wide variance in the understanding of the amount of money available and in the perception of who would benefit most from the policy proposals. That is not a surprise; the Urban Policy itself did not directly address issues of funding. The press materials, the President's message, and the message to Congress all contributed to the picture of the urban policy budget. Thus, depending on who was doing the counting, various dollars were or were not included.

In addition to the policies, program revisions, and new initiatives, four Executive orders,[82] drafted largely by HUD, completed the package of URPG recommendations, which the President accepted and eventually signed. These were:

Urban Impact Analysis—To establish an internal management procedure for identifying aspects of proposed Federal policies that may adversely impact cities, counties, and other communities.

Interagency Coordinating Council—To provide for interagency coordination of the implementation of Federal urban and regional policy.

Federal Procurement In Labor Surplus Areas—To strengthen the economic base of the Nation.

Federal Space Management—To target Federal leasing and space rentals to cities, in accordance with Section 205(a) of the Federal Property and Administrative Act.

Immediately upon announcement of *A New Partnership to Conserve America's Communities: A National Urban Policy,* the Urban and Regional Policy Group was disbanded. It never met again. The official coordination of urban policy implementation passed to the Domestic Policy Council in the White House and to Stuart Eizenstat's oversight.

Secretary Harris agreed to create the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Urban Policy to serve as the HUD liaison to the Domestic Policy staff and to the Interagency Coordinating Council. The HUD staff responsible for preparing the biennial *Urban Policy Report* (formerly the Biennial Growth Report) remained HUD employees (in the Office of Community Planning and Development) but worked in coordination with the White House, as did the new Urban Policy Deputy. The URPG leaders and the coordinators who were permanent HUD staff returned to their original assignments within the Department.

Sic Transit Gloria: National Urban Policy

During the years since the URPG faded away, another hiatus in serious national concern for cities has taken place. In fact, while researching current aspects of urban policy for this article, it became clear to the author that after 1986 there were not enough popular news stories or journal articles on urban policy to justify continuing the Urban Policy heading in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature.* The Reagan/Bush administrations promised little to cities and managed to deliver even less.

Industry has continued to abandon cities for nonurban locations at an alarming rate. Drug abuse and associated social disorganization, along with steadily increasing perceptions of violent crime against persons and property, characterize these communities.

Yet, in spite of these indications, cities are the primary repository for newly arrived immigrants, most of whom are now Spanish-speaking nonwhites, followed closely in number by Asians. Between 1980 and 1990, immigrants accounted for 39 percent of America's total population growth, and they caused a raw population increase of 11.5 percent in the Nation's 10 largest cities.[83] Metropolitan areas are also the primary residence for three out of four black Americans, in whose eyes cities still appear to be the surest promise of a ladder's climb out of poverty and into the American mainstream. In view of the still unyielding attitudes against diversity that pit whites against nonwhites and well-to-do against poor, cities are the only real alternative for those who are neither white nor well-to-do. Recent events have suggested that, because urban conditions are so deplorable, even this alternative sets the city against itself.

Years of Non-Urban Policies

Some observers feel that it is artificial to distinguish the Bush years from the Reagan years when it comes to Federal policy toward cities. In a very real sense, the impression of a seamless cheesecloth of policy about cities is well earned. The Reagan/Bush administrations succeeded in cutting the umbilical cord which, some said, stretched from the White House directly into the demanding bellies of city halls across the country.

Federal assistance programs and economic aid to cities and their residents were dismantled. Between the high point in 1978, when the National Urban Policy was announced, and the date when George Bush began his term as President 10 years later, direct aid to cities fell by almost one-third: from 28 percent of the total aid distributed in 1978 to 17 percent of the 1988 total. Conversely, general aid from the Federal Government to States and noncity localities, such as counties, suburbs, and rural districts, increased almost 100 percent in that same period, from $69 billion to over $114 billion.[84]

The Reagan/Bush team also owed substantial ideological debts to their supporters, who were mostly suburban or rural and, in the main, conservatives and self-made New Federalists. They believed that the best government was the one that governed least. The antiurban attitude of the Reagan era lasted throughout the Bush Presidency. Ronald Reagan danced with the mainly nonurban constituents who brought him to the Presidency. George Bush, Reagan's Vice President for two terms and his successor, inherited and continued to fill out Reagan's dance card.

Bush's 1988 campaign had promised "... a kinder, gentler Nation." But the Interagency Task Force that he appointed to study problems of poverty refused to propose new strategies for cities, saying that Bush should do as Reagan had advised: just make things work

better. One task force member with a rather macabre, callous sense of humor stated that "... it was *fun* to think about" things that might "do something about poverty,"[85] but that there was no money. So, *fun* or not, no recommendations were made.

This did not necessarily mean that the entire Bush administration was totally anesthetized to the concerns of cities. In the first year of the Bush Presidency, HUD Secretary Jack Kemp, a former Congressman from Buffalo, New York, advanced his perennial (since 1980) solution to urban decline: Enterprise Zones (EZs). In a HUD Report issued in 1989, *Enterprise Zones in America: A Selected Resource Guide II*, Kemp proposed an alternative to direct budgeting of Federal dollars for urban economic development.

EZs were intended to attract private investments and new small businesses to the inner city. Tax relief was the primary inducement, while the reduction of government regulations, replacement of abandoned commercial spaces with new businesses, and an increase in jobs for local residents were added attractions. No tax incentives were funded in the legislation, however, and as a consequence, the Bush administration was unable to come to any agreement with Congress that would have fully implemented Federal EZs.

Because of Secretary Kemp's dedication to EZs, the media reported that some of his detractors within the Bush administration had isolated him, and Bush's reported exclusion of Kemp from his inner circle prompted many urban advocates to withhold from the President the respect they grudgingly extended to Kemp. They saw the HUD Secretary as the only one in the Bush administration who cared about cities, even though he had failed to implement a meaningful urban strategy.

A HUD proposal issued late in 1991 promised to "chart a new course for our Nation's urban policy based on growth and opportunity for those in need."[86] Instead, a conglomeration of existing programs and value-laden pronouncements about fair housing, drug-free public housing, and the "tragedy of homelessness" were sum and substance of the offerings.

Then, in the spring of 1992, came the urban explosion in South Central Los Angeles, following the verdict exonerating four Los Angeles policemen who brutally beat Rodney King. South Central Angelenos, frustrated by poverty and joblessness, burned and looted the inner city—largely Hispanic but with almost as many blacks and some whites and Asians.

Urbanists described South Central Los Angeles' condition as typical of every other major urban center in the country: grim. Those who had been watching George Bush's lips—as he had instructed during his 1988 Presidential campaign—finally saw him whisper "urban policy."

The $5 billion price put on the consequences of the Los Angeles destruction forced the administration to review the bidding on urban aid. For the first time since Bush took office, the White House itself issued a formal statement on urban policy in a news release captioned "President Bush's Initiatives for Strengthening Urban Areas." The "initiatives" came mainly from Secretary Kemp's 1991 HUD budget request, with minor augmentation from other Federal departments with urban constituents. This action prompted a National Public Radio reporter to comment that Bush had finally discovered his urban policy; it had been hiding in Jack Kemp's drawer.

Highlights of the HUD/Bush initiatives included:

- **Weed and Seed—**$500 million to "weed out" the criminals and drug dealers from the streets and "seed" social programs and assistance, thus reducing crime and drug use.
- **Home Ownership for People Everywhere (HOPE)—**$1 billion to help 100,000 families living in public housing and other government-owned properties to purchase their own housing units.
- **Enterprise Zones—**Jack Kemp's response to urban disinvestment.
- **America 2000—**Largely noncash incentives for educational reform resulting from a set of summit conference recommendations, including the controversial proposal for parental choice of private, religious, or public schools.
- **Welfare Reform—**Focusing on flexibility in welfare administration, proposed to relax various welfare restrictions at both State and Federal levels.
- **Youth Jobs—**Urging congressional passage of a jobs and training program, long supported by urban and poverty activists.

In the aftermath of the 1992 Republican National Convention, Bush made expected efforts to transform his renomination into an electoral mandate, but the window of opportunity for a meaningful urban policy for Los Angeles and other urban time bombs had narrowed in direct relationship to the proximity of the Presidential election. The conservatives, small towners, and suburbanites who had brought Bush to the Presidential dance for the last election (and whom he hoped would bring him again) became strident and adamant about their positions on his dance card. They insisted on being first.

Reflections

If today—a decade and a half later—one were to try to undertake such an exercise as the Carter administration's National Urban Policy process, there probably would be very little support for the venture inside or outside the White House and even less support outside the boundaries of Washington, D.C. Many believe the era of grand national policies has passed. In the present environment of "What about my own issues?" it is difficult even to build a consensus regarding international strategies, where once the common American good and the notion of a collective public interest prevailed.

The belief that there is a collective public interest dense and massive enough to engender a constituency and support for a national urban policy effort meets with cynicism. This is especially true as individuals are increasingly isolated by the alternative of electronic interaction with their environment. As a consequence of supercharged, superhighway technologies, communicators can just as easily be on the other side of the world from one another as around the corner. For those who still live in inner cities and in impacted metropolitan places, the preference appears to be for the interactive environment, which *is* on the other side of the world rather than the one around the typical urban corner.

While there is general agreement that many urban places are far worse off than ever—and anyone who may have been unsure had an object lesson from Los Angeles in 1993—there is almost no consensus about why this is so and, more important, about whose responsibility it is to try to address this condition.[87] Schisms and balkanization have developed, even within interest groups that have a relatively obvious and permanent profile such as race or ethnicity and for whom there is thus an expected bond of shared values. Tensions about the costs and benefits of solutions rage as fully within American communities of color as they do between many whites and nonwhites.

More importantly, the sophistication gained from past experiences has discouraged all but the most optimistic and tenacious urban advocates from seeking a remedy on a national scale. The feeling is that, so far as urban remedies are concerned, each successive wave of massive intervention efforts—some have always referred to these initiatives as "liberal social engineering"—falls shorter of the stated goal of a decent quality of urban life. As a Nation, we seem to have a very underdeveloped span of attention.

In the current national environment, where few elected leaders appear to have firsthand information about the actual scope and shape of the urban problem, cavalier pronouncements prevail, and conventional wisdom is the accepted litmus test for the validity of proposals. Recently a Member of Congress, after visiting an elementary school classroom, was appalled to learn that one out of every four black youths in the room would be wounded or killed by gunfire within the next 8 years.

This is not a new statistic, but the Congressman is not alone among contemporary opinion leaders who find such figures surprising. This may explain why orphanages, like the one depicted in the 1940s movie *Boys' Town*, seem to some to be an acceptable solution to juvenile crime and violence.

Get Rid Of HUD! "Next verse, same as the first; ... louder and worse."

In part, of course, the disappointing culmination of the Urban and Regional Policy Group's National Urban Policy process and the Carter Presidency, which failed its re-election attempt in 1980, are not politically encouraging to aggressive urban agendas. Several conventional-wisdom parallels exist between the Carter Presidency and the Clinton Presidency, beyond regional similarities and the surprise election win against an entrenched Republican incumbency. Similarites that bear mentioning are the campaign promises each candidate made to cities during their respective Presidential bids and how each has fared in fulfilling those promises.

The Carter due bill has been fully explored above. Clinton, on the other hand, after a circumspect campaign in which he promised only "It's the economy, Stupid," announced during the first 90 days of his Presidency, in effect, "It's the cities, Stupid." Advancing an agenda on "Rebuilding America's Cities," President Clinton called for:

- Investing in communities.
- Empowerment through economic opportunity.
- A national crime strategy.
- Rebuilding our urban infrastructure.
- New hope for affordable housing.
- Fighting homelessness.
- Empowerment through education.
- Quality, affordable health care.[88]

Three years into the Clinton administration, however, the old distraction has resurfaced. Congressional critics have again proposed eliminating HUD. Permutations and variations on that theme abound on Capitol Hill, especially among the new Republican majority.

Based on some of the explanations offered in Congress about various HUD-dispersement proposals under discussion, however, it is clear that the illumination that lightning bugs carry behind them has yet to catch up with some of the latest HUD redesigners.[89]

There has been virtually no recent mention of an urban policy of any kind. Most urban policy initiatives are masked by implementation strategies far less targeted than a true urban agenda would require. Thus it is uncertain—even if these programs prove to be effective—that there will be any way to establish their effectiveness at replicating their successful outcomes or assessing their urban impact.

Time will tell whether Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities are to be the sum and substance of the Clinton urban policy agenda, or whether other items from the President's list will gain ascendancy. HUD continues to be the beacon—however dimly lit of late—for urban physical and economic revitalization.

Clearly, in the present cynical climate, small replications of strategies that work seem preferable to another attempt at rejuvenating the abortive National Urban Policy effort of almost 20 years ago. The Empowerment Zones being initiated in 6 large urban communities, 3 supplemental urban communities, 3 rural communities, and 92 Enterprise locations offer an opportunity for smaller scale, locally inspired experimentation with remedies that have a track record. The seasoned HUD staff monitoring and guiding the EZ/EC process are focusing on this rich resource.

Based on the descriptions in the EZ applications that many communities submitted to HUD last year, most of these ideas are residuals of the 30-year American experimentation with intentional and unintentional urban policies, which certainly is not all bad. If America's patience with HUD had been greater and the long-term insight among leaders sharper, many of these ideas would have been given a better opportunity to demonstrate their effectiveness the first time around. Most of them actually were quite good and, given the chance, could still make cities better places to live.

Author

Yvonne Scruggs is Director of the Urban Policy Institute (UPI) for the Washington-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, where she also directs the Executive Leadership Seminar and the National Policy Institute. She has served as Deputy Mayor of Philadelphia, New York State Housing Commissioner, Deputy Assistant Secretary of HUD, and Executive Director of President Carter's Urban and Regional Policy Group. Dr. Scruggs holds a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania.

Notes

1. This article is based on Yvonne Scruggs' forthcoming book, *Developing National Urban Policy Through Consensus and Compromise.*

2. Bahl, Roy, p. 149.

3. Ibid. Bahl had an additional concern that dealt with a series of so-called inadvertent public policies, not intended to address any aspect of the urban condition, directly or

indirectly, and implemented with no conscious regard for urban impact. See, for example, Stephen M. Barrow, "The Urban Impact of Federal Policies: Their Direct and Indirect Effects on the Local Public Sector," in Herrington J. Bryce, *Small Cities in Transition: The Dynamics of Growth and Decline*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1977, pp. 241 ff. This concern, however, is of lesser importance for purposes of the present discussion and will be treated more fully later, relative to the Urban Policy development process.

4. Former Congressman Henry S. Reuss, Chairman, Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, convener of two hearings on the problems of cities.

5. Of course, these programs had their own historic links to earlier New Deal responses to the needs of cities and to the original "... covert and indirect recognition given to cities as members of the federal system" prior to the transitions of the New Deal period in the 1930s. Martin, Roscoe C. 1965. *The Cities and the Federal System.* New York: Atherton Press, pp. 111–114. See also: Brooke Graves, "Federal Grant-in-Aid Programs, 1803–1958" (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, Legislative Reference Service, June 1958); and Coleman Woodbury (ed.), *Urban Redevelopment: Problems and Practices*, 1953.

6. Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development of the Committee on Banking, pp. 28–43.

7. Ibid., p. 46.

8. Marris, Peter, and Martin Rein, pp. 13–14.

9. Ibid., p. 10.

10. Kasoff, Mark J.

11. Marris and Rein, p. 12.

12. Schussheim, Morton J., pp. 107–121.

13. See, among many others, Edward C. Smith, p. 176; and James L. Sundquist, 1969, p. 80.

14. See Paul N. Ylvisaker; Marris and Rein, p. 1.

15. The Grey Area communities were Syracuse and Onondaga County, New York; Houston, Texas; St. Louis, Missouri; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Los Angeles, California; Harlem and New York City, New York; San Francisco, California; Chicago, Illinois; Charleston, West Virginia; Cleveland, Ohio; Providence, Rhode Island; Eugene, Oregon; New Haven, Connecticut; Boston, Massachusetts; Washington, D.C.; and the State of North Carolina.

16. The National Institutes of Mental Health made a preliminary research grant to Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, of the Columbia School of Social Work, to develop a research design to address the problems of gang delinquency, later to become Mobilization for Youth. For a full discussion of the Mobilization experience and its subsequent action program, see Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc.

(HARYOU), *Youth in the Ghetto: A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change*. (Prepared under the direction of Kenneth B. Clark [New York: HARYOU, 1964].) See also Howard E. Mitchell, Philadelphia Council for Community Advancement, for examination of individual Grey Area experience in that city.

17. For details of activities and their sequence in formulating the final anti-poverty legislation, see Sundquist, 1968, pp. 143–154.

18. Generally, the titles addressed the following: Title I: Youth Unemployment; Title II: Community Action; Title III: Rural Action; Title IV: Adult Basic Education; Title V: Small Business Development; Title VI: Work Incentive; Title VII: VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America); and Title VIII: Administration. For a definitive review of the content, the bureaucratic dynamics of drafting the legislation, and the compromises and negotiations in Congress see, for example, James L. Sundquist, *Politics and Policy*; Peter Marris and Martin Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform*; Daniel P. Moynihan, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*; Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor*; Sar A. Levitan, *The Great Society's Poor Law*; Elinor Graham, "The Politics of Poverty"; and S.M. Miller and Martin Rein, "The War on Poverty: Perspectives and Prospects," in Ben B. Seligman (ed.), *Poverty as a Public Issue*.

19. To appeal to the nonurban lobby and its constituencies, the Rural Action section of the Act, Title III, offered a similar comprehensive approach to planned action for rural communities.

20. Piven and Cloward. See also Clark and Hopkins, p. 7.

21. Sundquist. 1968, p. 154.

22. The official name of the Model Cities enabling legislation is the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966.

23. Haar, Charles M.

24. Charles Haar writes: "Johnson ... relied heavily on private task forces, cloaked in the secrecy he both enjoyed and regarded as indispensable for receiving unbiased and unvarnished judgments," p. 37.

25. Reuther, Walter P. May 15, 1965. Memorandum to President Lyndon B. Johnson, in Haar, Appendix I, p. 289.

26. Haar, p. 40.

27. Ibid., p. 290.

28. Ibid., p. 45.

29. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,1966, p. 8.

30. James L. Sundquist. 1969, p. 39.

31. Weaver, Robert C., p. ii.

32. Perry, Yvonne S. March 16, 1970. "Follow the Yellow Brick Road: An Overview of the Model Cities Program." Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Regional Office, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Paper presented at Orientation Conference for Model Neighborhood Residents.

33. A *New York Times* article on April 26, 1970, titled "Nixon May Divert Model Cities Aid for Schools' Use," stated in part, "Administrative sources said today that a memorandum had gone from John D. Erlichman, the President's chief advisor on domestic affairs, to the Department of Housing and Urban Development asking about the feasibility of taking $500 million from Model Cities for the next fiscal year for the Education effort." The budget allocation for that same period for Model Cities was only $575 million.

34. Banfield, Edward C. Chairman, Model Cities Task Force. Letter to the President. December 16, 1969. Harvard University, Department of Government, p. 15. Task force members included Edward C. Banfield, Joseph Barr, Charles Hill, James M. Buchanan, Bernard Frieden, Ralph Lazarus, Richard Lugar, William Robinson, David Rowlands, and James Q. Wilson.

35. Ibid., p. 3.

36. Ibid., p. 4.

37. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. March 1, 1968, p. 281.

38. Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, p. 154.

39. Orlebeke, Charles, p. 2393.

40. Ibid.

41. Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, p. 155.

42. For details, see Ibid., p. 174.

43. Orlebeke, p. 2393.

44. Ibid.

45. Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, p. 202.

46. The original formula took into account the relative normalcy of a city's poverty population, per capita income, level of unemployment, and change in total population. In 1976, a percentage of pre-1949 housing was added as an optional measure, creating what is referred to as the dual formula; that is, a city that might choose to use the formula would place it in the most favorable position with regard to dollar eligibility.

47. Orlebeke, p. 2394.

48. Parsons, Kermit C., and Pierre Clavel.

49. Morris, Robert, p. 1.

50. Parsons and Clavel.

51. Humphrey, Hubert H. January 19, 1976. "Comments on the Draft of the President's 1976 Biennial Report on National Growth." Washington, D.C. Mimeographed.

52. Haar, p. viii.

53. Mandelbaum, Seymour J., p. 7.

54. Reinhold, Robert. November 1977. "An Administration with Rural Roots Now Must Address the City," *New York Times*.

55. Jimmy Carter's Presidential Campaign, April 1, 1976. "Cities: Urban Policy for the Remainder of the Twentieth Century." Atlanta, Georgia. Mimeographed, p. 8.

56. Jimmy Carter's Presidential Campaign, June 29, 1976. "Urban Policy." Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Address to U.S. Conference of Mayors.

57. Ibid., p. 1.

58. Ibid.

59. Embry, Robert C. Handwritten note to Yvonne S. Perry, on face of Jimmy Carter's Milwaukee address. [See note 56.] August 1977.

60. Stone, Chuck. November 3, 1976. "Black Vote Did It Up Brown for J.C.," *Philadelphia Daily News*, p. 2.

61. *Focus*, November 1976. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies, p. 4.

62. Ibid. [See pages 3–6 for analyses and data.]

63. Presidential papers in archival materials.

64. Gulick, Luther, pp. 317–318.

65. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, p. 3.

66. Cose, Ellis, and Milton Morris.

67. Harris, Patricia Roberts, Stuart Eizenstat, and Robert McIntyre. Decision Memorandum to President Carter, March 21, 1978.

68. Urban and Regional Policy Group. March 1978. Staff briefing based on analyses in Council on Economic Development (CED). "An Approach to Federal Urban Policy," (December 1977) Figures 1 and 2, pp. 30–31.

69. Ibid.

70. Norelli, Deborah; 1975 population figures from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C.; Richard M. Scammon and Alice V. McGillivray.

71. Both Embry and Shalala were Carter appointees who took office in early 1977.

72. *Congressional Quarterly*, p. 20.

73. "An Erosion of Aid to the Cities," *Business Week*, August 15, 1977, p. 36.

74. *Congressional Quarterly*, p. 89.

75. *New York Times*, August 31, 1977, p. 10.

76. Wildavsky, Aaron.

77. Some of the research/academic participants included: Anthony Downs, The Brookings Institution; Herrington J. Bryce, Academy for Contemporary Problems (formerly research director, JCPS); Graham S. Finney, Philadelphia consultant; the late R. Joyce Whitley, city planner and Cleveland businesswoman; Thomas A. Reiner, University of Pennsylvania; Brian Berry, Harvard University; Morton J. Schussheim, Legislative Reference Service (LRS), Library of Congress; Norman Glickman, University of Pennsylvania; John Kain, Harvard University; William G. Grigsby, University of Pennsylvania; Ann Louise Strong, University of Pennsylvania; George Sternlieb, Rutgers University; Robert Green, Michigan State University; Reginald W. Griffith, Howard University; Thomas Muller, The Urban Institute; Phillip Clay, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); Bennett Harrison, MIT; James L. Sundquist, The Brookings Institution; Grace Milgram, LRS, Library of Congress; Lowdon Wingo and Roland Warren, Brandeis University; Donald Warren, University of Michigan; Marshall Kaplan, Dallas/San Francisco consultant; David R. Godshalk, University of North Carolina; Norman and Susan Fainstein, Columbia and Rutgers Universities; Roger Starr, Columbia and Pratt Universities; Herbert Gans, University of Chicago; Carol D. and Ortiz Walton, University of California at Berkeley; and Antoinnette McAllister, American Society of Planning Officials/consultant. More than 25 percent of the task force were blacks and more than 20 percent were women.

78. Heclo, Hugh, p. 7.

79. Jenkins, Timothy L., p. 22. Also see: "Cities in the Middle: The Way Back to Prosperity."

80. Memorandum from Lawrence O. Houston, Jr., Assistant to the Secretary of HUD. February 21, 1978. U.S. Department of Commerce, p. 1.

81. The President's comments, both in the briefing and later in his second decision memorandum. These policies are taken verbatim from the National Urban Policy document, dated March 23, 1978, pp. III–3 through III–42.

82.The author's personal archival materials. Also, Presidential Papers, Fourth Quarter, 1978. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

83. "The Immigrants: How They're Helping to Revitalize the U.S. Economy," *Business Week*, July 13, 1992, p. 118.

84. Nathan, Richard, and John Logo, p. 42. Other observations from Yvonne Scruggs, "The Cities," in *Eyes on the President: George Bush—History in Essays and Cartoons.* 1993. Occidental, California: Chronos, pp. 106–125.

85. Pear, Robert. July 6, 1990. "White House Spurns Expansion of Nation's Anti-Poverty Efforts," *New York Times*, p. 1.

86. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 1991. *The President's National Urban Policy Report.* Washington,D.C.: Office of Policy Development and Research.

87. Gibbs, Jewelle Taylor, p. 4:

> The 1992 riots did not cause the economic dislocation of South Central Los Angeles—they merely accelerated it by contributing directly to the loss of thousands of jobs, further weakening the economic base of the area by destroying the small business sector, further eroding property values in the low- to moderate-income neighborhoods, and discouraging potential capital investment to revitalize the area. About 20,000 workers became unemployed immediately after the riots. Although half returned to work by the end of May, 10,000 remained jobless.

88. "Bill Clinton on Rebuilding America's Cities," distributed by the Democratic National Committee in early 1993, photocopy.

89. Sam Erwin, the late Senator from North Carolina who chaired the congressional committee investigating the Watergate break-in, commented that human beings are like lightning bugs, inasmuch as they carry their illumination behind them.

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