



## League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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League of Women Voters EDUCATION FUND  
1730 M Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036

HB 4 FYI  
P.L.V

September 29, 1976

Jerry Enders, Chairman  
Council of Metropolitan Area  
Leagues, ILO  
2720 Urbandale Lane  
Wayzata, Minnesota 55391

Dear Mrs. Enders:

We think that you will be pleased to learn that the "Cities/Urban Crisis" focus on the national program was high on the agenda of the September meetings of the National Board. In preparing background briefings for the board, the staff made extensive use of correspondence and other communications from Leagues (including yours). The next Board Report will have a section reviewing Board Discussion and giving some preliminary direction to Leagues.

We decided that the best way to respond belatedly to your helpful letter is to provide you with a special dividend -- a preview copy (unedited draft) of the September Board Report section on Cities/Urban Crisis. We very much appreciated the time you took to write us about your concerns. Please keep us posted on your activities and let us know if you need other information or have further thoughts for "the long haul."

Sincerely yours,

Martha T. Mills  
Staff Director

EF: MM/hb

Enclosure

cc: ✓ Jerry Jenkins, State President

DEC 20 1976

Dear Friends:

Feed the Cities. Not the Pentagon should be the slogan ushering in the 1977 legislative year. Now is the time to inform the incoming President and the new and old members of Congress how we believe tax dollars should be appropriated.

A resolution adopted by the 1976 U. S. Conference of Mayors "calls upon the Administration and Congress to redress the imbalance between domestic expenditures and expenditures for the Pentagon and foreign aid, recognizing that the social defense of this nation is at least as important to the national defense as is our military defense."

Because this is the season when decisions regarding the federal budget are being formulated, it is vital that the priorities expressed in the mayors' resolution be impressed upon our politicians.

If you are unhappy and disturbed about how your tax dollars are used today, this is the time for your group to act. Your opinions can influence our politicians. Please visit or write to the appropriate officials listed below, as an organization and again as individuals.

*Ka P...*  
Women's International League  
for Peace and Freedom  
111 E. Franklin, Mpls., Mn. 55404

Write to:

Hon. Jimmy Carter  
Plains, Georgia 31780

U.S. Senators from Minnesota:  
Hubert H. Humphrey  
U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510  
Wendell Anderson  
State Capitol, St. Paul, Mn.

Also send messages to the  
newspapers, bulletins etc.

U.S. Representatives from Minnesota  
Albert H. Quie  
Tom Hagedorn  
William Frenzel  
Bruce Vento  
Donald Fraser  
Richard Nolan  
Robert Bergland  
James Oberstar  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515



++ PRIORITIES ++

## SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

W.I.L.P.F

FACT  
SHEETS

### SOME FACTS:

1. The United States leads the world in exportation of arms.
2. The United States ranks 15th in literacy.
3. The United States ranks 15th in infant mortality.
4. The United States ranks 18th in doctor/patient ratio.
5. The United States ranks 26th in life expectancy.

THE QUESTION: Does above fact #1 have any relation to #2,3,4?

or

SHOULDN'T WE LET CONGRESS DECIDE OUR PRIORITIES?



Of course, but our priorities must reflect the values and need of our society, so it is entirely proper for any citizen or elected official to participate in these decisions.

The Pentagon does. And in 1975 38% of our federal tax dollars went for current military expenditures, with another 9% going for costs of past wars.

In the last two years federal assistance to states and local governments has declined 2 billion.

### AREN'T THE INCREASED MILITARY COSTS CAUSED BY INFLATION?

Budget requests in FY76 was 96.2 billion for the Dept. of Defense. In FY77 it is 111.2 -- 15 billion more (15.6%). About half of that increase was probably due to inflation. Strangely enough, inflation didn't hit the Department of Agriculture, down 19.5% in the budget, or Housing and Urban Development, down 21.5%. Or several other departments.

(It is interesting to note that an estimated 44 million dollars is spent by the Pentagon Public Relations Department.)

### BUT THE COMMIES--HOW CAN WE SURVIVE AS A NATION UNLESS WE KEEP AHEAD OF THE SOVIETS?

Rather, how can we survive if we let our cities go down the drain?

The Pentagon, with its fantastic p.r., tells us that the Soviet Union will spend 50% more this year than we will. Granted, the USSR has 4.5 million armed forces to our 2.1 million. Not granted, is the way the Pentagon figures the pay of USSR soldiers at U.S. standards. Or the costs of Soviet armaments at U.S. standards. Not mentioned is the fact that USSR has potentially hostile neighbors on three sides.

Also not mentioned: we have enough missiles to destroy the people of the world 27 times over.....we have three times as many deliverable nuclear warheads as the Soviets....In the last 15 years we have built twice as many large combat ships as USSR.....

Probably not even thought about: National security is more than just a military problem. Poverty, unemployment, bad housing, urban decay and crime are weapons just as deadly as the most sophisticated weapons our enemies can purchase.

Q: And you do not detect any interest in Congress in this approach to ending the country's dependence upon the military for jobs?

ASPIN: It's tough. Government could shift the jobs. There is no reason why government cannot do something. Shifting a billion dollars, say, from defense to education would certainly create a lot more jobs than continuing to spend that same money on defense.

I think we have done a substantial job in reordering priorities in the country. It is unfortunate that when liberal activists succeed in doing something they somehow can't believe they have done it. That may be one of the reasons why we are so cynical about the ability of the people

to do something. I am convinced that liberal activists were very responsible for our getting out of the war in Vietnam. It did not happen when everybody wanted it to happen, but it did happen. Yet, people say, "Oh, we never really had much of an impact on the Vietnam involvement." Well, they had a lot of impact on that. And they have had a lot of impact on the defense budget.

A hundred billion dollars for defense—that sounds like an enormous amount of money. But there has been a lot of inflation and other

things. Government spending on defense in real terms has gone down and government spending on other programs has gone up. That is a victory. That doesn't say we must not keep trying. It does not say there isn't a lot more to do. But the re-ordering of priorities has been a victory.

TO CHEER US UP... A QUOTE  
FROM REP. ASPIN IN "The Center  
Magazine, May 76"

SO BE  
POSITIVE ☺



BUT WE HAVE COMMITMENTS TO OUR ALLIES?



We have over 500,000 GI's stationed at 222 bases around the world--139,000 of them still in Asia. To break it down even further, 40,000 of these are on the border between North and South Korea, along with about 600 nuclear weapons. Our ally, Korea.

Our ally Chile is the 9th largest buyer of U.S. weapons in the world, and Ford asked Congress to send an additional 193.3 millions worth of weapons to Chile.

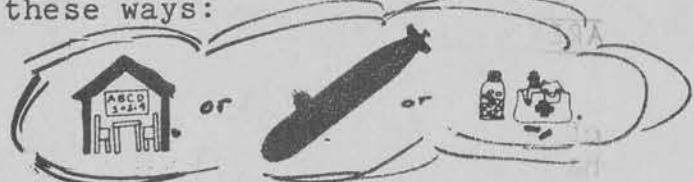
Senator Cranston says that 51 of our allies have repressive regimes and U.S. foreign aid in these countries turns out to be armies, repressive police forces and prisons. 2 billion each year of our taxes goes to support repressive and corrupt regimes, as our prestige declines throughout the world.

Senator Mondale says, "The profligate policy of selling arms to all comers, no matter how repressive or tyrannical the government, has had a terrible impact on our world position and reputation. America was once proud to call itself the arsenal of democracy. But recent Administrations have tried to turn us into just an arsenal."

WHERE CAN THE MONEY TO HELP THE CITIES COME FROM?

If the Federal Government was to help the cities, it would have to get the money in one of these ways:

1. increase the deficit
2. raise taxes
3. reform taxes
4. cut other programs



An analysis of the federal budget FY77 indicates that only about one quarter (95 billion) is viewed as "relatively controlled" (that is, not committed to spending levels by previous legislation). Of this 66.8 billion is scheduled for national defense (70.3%), indicating that cuts in military spending are more possible than cuts in non-military (human resources).

WHAT ABOUT OUR JOBS?

Think about the fact that huge sums are awarded to governments which allow US air and naval bases on their soil and offer a "favorable investment climate" for the big multinational corporations. That is, low wages, no unions, no strikes and no government control. An example is Motorola, which has exported its factories to South Korea where workers endure 10-14 hour shifts seven days a week in sweatshop conditions. In the US thousands of Americans are thrown out of work when electrical, clothing and agricultural facilities leave, and the unions lose bargaining power when companies threaten to move abroad.

Because military production requires an immense capital investment in materials and technology, but not in manpower, every dollar spent on civilian enterprises creates more jobs than that spent on military. Mayor Meier of Milwaukee says: "For every \$1 billion of defense spending we shifted to public service employment we would create an additional 57,000 jobs. For every billion dollars we shifted from defense spending to general revenue sharing for our hard-pressed cities, we would create 1000,000 jobs.

"The fact is that the \$15 billion which former high defense officials tell us can be eliminated without weakening our defense is three times the amount of the annual revenue-sharing funds... for all the cities, counties and states combined.

"It is six times more than is spent by the federal government for programs to develop our communities--all across the nation.....It is thirty times more than the federal government is spending on housing."

By making sensible reductions in the Pentagon budget, we could meet the pent-up needs of our cities.

"Poverty, unemployment, bad housing, urban decay and crime are weapons just as deadly...as the most sophisticated weapons our enemies can purchase."

SEE: FCNL Washington Newsletter, March 1976 SANE Newsletters  
The Center Magazine, May-June 76; Center Report, Dec '75; World Issues Dec 76  
The Pork Barrel, PIRGM Center Report, Apr '75

We have these and more if need them. Donations accepted.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 111 E Franklin, Mpls 55404

## Some Items in the Ford FY 77 Budget —

Headstart programs REDUCED by \$20 million to \$434 million  
 Six AWACS surveillance and command aircraft INCREASED \$120 million to \$584 mil.  
 Maternal and child health services REDUCED by \$112 million to \$210 million  
 One AS submarine tender INCREASED from \$0.5 million to \$263 million  
 Soil Conservation Service REDUCED by \$26 million to \$402 million  
 Sixteen F-16 air combat fighters INCREASED \$404 million to \$620 million  
 Legal services for the poor REDUCED by \$8 million to \$80 million  
 Strike cruiser (nuclear powered) INCREASED \$188 million to \$203 million  
 General mental health centers REDUCED by \$88 million to \$131 million  
 Army XM-1 Tank System INCREASED \$89 million to \$141 million  
 Multilateral development assistance REDUCED by \$300 million to \$1,205 million  
 Eight guided missile frigates INCREASED \$318 million to \$1,282 million  
 Food for Peace INCREASED ONLY \$79 million to \$1,169 million  
 Three B-1 Bombers INCREASED ELEVEN TIMES AS MUCH, by \$871 million to \$1,532 mil.  
 Food Stamp program REDUCED by \$865 million to \$4,743 million  
 Three nuclear attack submarines INCREASED \$719 million to \$1,338 million

DENVER—Immediate action by Congress and President-elect Jimmy Carter for a \$5.5-billion, public works program to provide jobs was urged here by the National League of Cities (NLC).

About 3,000 mayors and city councilmen here for the league's annual meeting were told yesterday that the need for such a program is "clear and compelling."

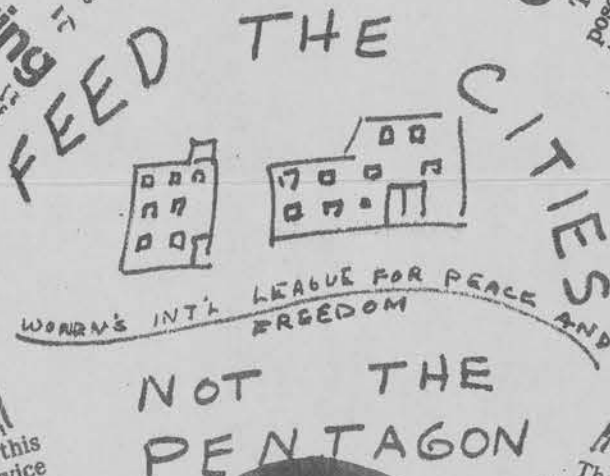
**A slowdown in city paving** — Minneapolis police administrators are considering shutting down the Sixth Precinct in the old Model Cities area of South Minneapolis to save money.

Minneapolis aldermen last night spiced a dinner for state senators and representatives from the city with a sales pitch for more municipal state aid next year. The city painted a troubled financial picture that indicates the disparity between property taxes levied by the city and its suburbs will increase next year.

**Pilot City Rejects Hennepin County Budget Reductions**  
 The Ways and Means Committee of Hennepin County has proposed a \$801,590 reduction in funds for medical and social services to North Minneapolis Residents. The three (3) basic service areas

He said the MTC is seeking \$35 million in state appropriations but that the Legislature won't be eager to authorize that much. The Legislature is likely to suggest an increase in the 50-cent fare on express commuter buses between central cities and suburbs, according to Petrafeso.

Recreation programs in Hennepin County parks will be limited in 1977 to comply with a \$408,000 budget cut made by the Hennepin County Board.



ST. LOUIS (AP) — Minnesota cannot force White Motor Corp. to fund its employee pension plan because federal labor policy overrides that legislative power, a three-judge panel of the 8th U.S. Circuit of Appeals ruled yesterday.

A military officer retiring this year after 20 years in the service can expect to receive pension checks equal to 44 percent more than he or she made in those two decades, according to a study by Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis.

Retired Rear Admiral Gene R. LaRocque, Director of the Center for Defense Information, which has criticized Pentagon budgets, claims that "Congress and the American people are being subjected to the most extensive fear campaign since the 1960 'missile gap.'"

**E**VERY GUN that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. . . . This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

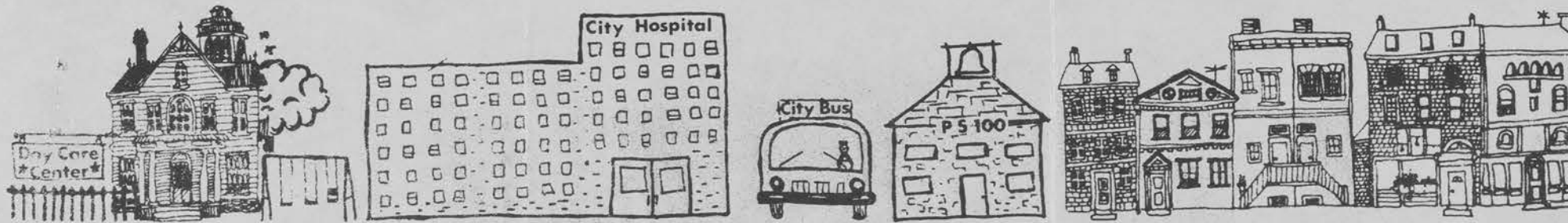
Governor Carter plans to make arms control a major focus of his Administration for two reasons: It makes sense for American security, and for peace in the world.

Walter F. Mondale

"Peace takes more than words. It takes hard work and large-scale efforts. Above all, it takes a government which is organized for the pursuit of peace as well as for the possibility of war, a government which has a program for disarmament as well as a program for arms." -- J. F. Kennedy

WILPF-MN  
 111 E. Franklin  
 Mpls MN 55404





## FEED THE CITIES...

In FY 1977, federal aid to cities and states will decline 30%, while military spending will increase 20%.

### Jobs

\$1 billion on military spending = 55,000 jobs  
\$1 billion on states and local government expenditure = 100,000 jobs

### Housing

66 low-cost homes = \$1 million = 1 Huey helicopter

### Child Care

Adequate child care for 300 children = \$300,000 = Average cost of training 1 pilot

### Education

For each of 250 communities, 3 equipped schools = \$6 billion = 6,000 aircraft lost in Indochina by October, 1969

### Health Care

18 health centers treating 40,000 people each per year = \$57.6 million = 3 F-14 aircraft

### Mass Transit

Increase in San Francisco's mass transit = \$475,000 = Cost of fuel for one aircraft carrier, on station, 13 days  
fuel bill for 1 year

### General Services

New York City Mayor Abraham Beame proposed cutting 1,510 city jobs = Estimated Department of Defense to save \$44 million public relations budget

Sources: Marion Anderson, *The Empty Pork Barrel* (PIRGIM, 590 Hollister Bldg., 106 W. Allegan St., Lansing, MI 48933); Seymour Melman, *The Permanent War Economy*; SANE Report (380 Mass. Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002).

## NOT THE PENTAGON!

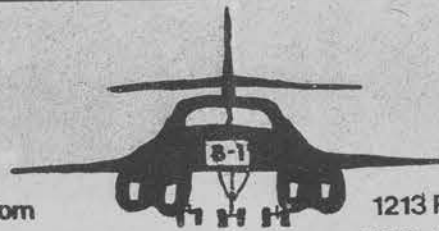
WORK WITH YOUR LOCAL AND NATIONAL OFFICIALS TO CHANGE PRIORITIES FROM THE PENTAGON TO PEOPLE.



FOR MORE INFO:



Women's International League for Peace & Freedom



1213 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107  
111 E. Franklin, Mpls MN



**Denver, Colo.**  
Jimmy Carter said Sunday that the nation's cities have been the victim of unfavorable economic policies. He pledged a "broad and comprehensive urban policy" to aid the troubled cities.

Carter spoke by telephone to the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials which met at Denver to honor Roy Wilkins.

Our determination to protect our security through our own arms efforts has never been matched by an equivalent determination in the field of arms control. For example, when we build a tank, like the MBT-70, and it turns out to be a failure, we don't give up on tanks. In the same way, despite the frustrations and disappointments of trying to reach truly effective arms control agreements, we must keep trying.

Walter F. Mondale

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience... In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Farewell Address as 34th President, January 17, 1961

HELENE-FYI - *Yours*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA

555 WABASHA • ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55102

PHONE: (612) 224-5445



MEMO

TO: Jerry

FROM: Lois

SUBJECT: Cities/Urban Crisis

DATE: March 21, 1977

*Lois put it on hold!*

Jerry, I'm at a standstill of what to do on the Urban Crisis issue. Following our Board meeting I phoned Jerry Enders to find out what had happened at that Washington Meeting she attended and if she herself might be willing to be the Bff=Board person for our Cities/Urban Crisis program.

Jerry E. thought the meeting unproductive. National kept repeating that they weren't going to give any direction to the program, and the eight League members they had convened were not to give direction to the program but come up with some project in this area that might be funded. Jerry felt there were so many "ifs, ands and buts" tied up with funding possibilities that it rather tied their hands.

As to what we should be doing here, she felt very strongly that we should wait at the state level until we see whether CMAL adopts an Urban Crisis study item for next year. If so, we should work something out in cooperation with them. Perhaps CMAL could cover the metro area, and LWVMN could do something in the rest of the state. Also she did not want to commit herself to being the off-Board person until she sees what CMAL does and how much she might be needed there. If they don't need her, she would be willing to do it. She did not want to suggest anyone else from CMAL.

/She feels that we in MN. are so far ahead of the rest of the country that there is no hurry, and that the new Board, not our present one, should decide what to do. By then CMAL would have had its annual meeting.

What do you think? Personally, I feel as if I'm dealing with a marshmallow. I would just as soon let it go, as I'm so darn busy trying to keep track of HR and education

legislation that I hardly know which end is up. But if you want me to take an end run around Jerry Enders and find someone in CMAL who will start charing it now, I will try to do so.



Helene - As you think  
we should pursue  
this - or wait?

League of Women Voters  
of the United States

1730 M STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

LWV Minnesota  
De Santis

April 4, 1977

Mrs. Nicholas Duff  
2830 Maplewood Road  
Wayzata, Minnesota 55391

Dear Ann:

C  
O  
P  
Y  
Thank you for sharing your perceptive and provocative thoughts on ways to work on the Cities/Urban Crisis study. There aren't many people who take the time or trouble to develop constructive ideas and communicate them to us.

Without responding just now to the substance of your good letter, I do want to assure you that we welcome your ideas as we go into national Council discussions in May about future direction for "Cities/Urban Crisis." Defining the best way Leagues can move together in this challenging new program is an important part of our agenda--both for Council and the national board.

I hope we will have a chance to go into it further when I am in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Ruth C. Clusen  
President



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF MINNESOTA**

PHONE (612) 224-5445  
555 WABASHA • ST PAUL, MINNESOTA 55102

Cities/Urban Crisis      Minnesota I  
An Introduction

PM-P

To: Local LWV HR/Cities/Urban Crisis Chairpersons  
From: Jerry Enders, LWVMN Cities/Urban Crisis Chairperson  
Date: August 15, 1977

The Cities/Urban Crisis study has been evolving since it was first proposed at the national Convention in 1976. With its adoption, it sparked much controversy and discussion. What is it? What are we going to do with it? Each level of League has been wrestling with its own capacity to "get a handle on it." The thrusts, interests, and points of view are now falling into place.

The national League will center its attention on a study of the impact of federal funding in urban areas. You have already received information from them, and additional publications will be coming early in 1978. Local Leagues should plan for spring unit meetings to incorporate material from national and state.

Those Leagues in the Twin Cities Metro Area will be working on the CMAL study. Out-state Leagues may wish to use CMAL as a resource to incorporate an awareness of Twin Cities' problems as an integral part of their study. Some Leagues have chosen to deal with a specific aspect of the urban crisis which relates directly to them. They have adopted a new study item, or they will integrate information already available. Almost any study or action item your League has done can fit into the Cities/Urban Crisis. Perhaps all you need do is view your present activities from a different perspective.

There are a variety of ways an individual League can approach this topic. No one way is "right." Here are some possibilities. They may be modified or combined or supplemented to suit the approach your League wishes to take.

1. Concentrate on the information provided from LWVUS. Emphasize the impact of federal funding on urban areas, and on the integration of national positions.
2. Using LWVUS information, analyze the impact of federal funding in your own community.
3. Using material from LWVUS and LWVMN, take a look at your own community to identify possible problems that are, or could become, crisis situations.
4. Select one problem already identified in your community and study it in depth.
5. Concentrate on the integration of consensus positions from all League levels to discover new relationships and to identify action areas available to you.
6. Analyze all League positions as they relate directly to the Cities/Urban Crisis study.
7. Select one or several large particularly crisis-ridden urban areas and study them to identify common urban crisis conditions.
8. Concentrate on the Twin Cities Metro Area as a case study to identify particular problems there, and to emphasize its relationship to the rest of the state.
9. Learn about several communities in Minnesota, and look for potential crises that should concern all Minnesotans.

(Over)

10. Incorporate information provided by the CMAL study -- "A study of the interrelationships within the Metropolitan Area with respect to social needs and conditions with emphasis on the integration of existing League positions."

As with all national studies, the role of the state League will be to assist local leagues in planning their study and in getting background material. The state will also act as coordinator and communicator to see that there is a flow of information both to and from the local Leagues.

To achieve this, the state Board has appointed Jerry Enders as off-Board Cities/Urban Crisis chairman. Her function will be to act as coordinator with local Leagues. Any problems or questions you have should be channeled through her.

The LWVMN will also assemble a bibliography and library of information which will be available to you. Rather than prepare one bibliography that may not be helpful to your study, we encourage you to utilize the material already made available to you. Then, when you have selected your emphasis, notify the state League, and we will provide you with information that addresses your study specifically. A questionnaire is enclosed to make your response easier.

Several publications will also be coming from state that should be useful:

- A. An updated Program for Action - a summary of present state and CMAL positions.
- B. The Urban Connection-Minnesota - a look at the relationships of LWVMN positions to the urban crisis.
- C. Three Cities/Urban Crisis Minnesota briefs:
  - a. This introduction to the study, "An Introduction."
  - b. "What is the Urban Crisis?" - a definition of the urban crisis and its causes.
  - c. "What can be done?" - a look at options for dealing with the urban crisis.

These publications are meant to give you suggestions of ways you can view the Cities/Urban Crisis in terms of your own community. And to help you understand and relate to the urban crisis in other parts of Minnesota and the nation.

As the study progresses, we will keep in touch with each local League, and we hope to have an opportunity to exchange ideas in a more structured way.

We would welcome any ideas you might have for a conference or series of conferences that would be of interest to your League. Here are some possible topics:

- A Look at the Twin Cities
- The Urban Crisis and the Small Town
- Let's Learn About Each Other - An Exchange of Information
  - About Cities Throughout the State
  - Cities in Crisis in the United States
  - The Impact of Federal Funding on Urban Areas of Minnesota
- Specific Urban Problems - Housing, Land Use, Crime, Taxes, Transportation, Water, etc.

To establish a network for communications, please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it as soon as possible to: Jerry Enders, 2720 Urbandale Lane, Wayzata, MN 55391 - (612) 473-4171. We welcome any comments or suggestions.

Cities/Urban Crisis Minnesota

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of League \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person in charge of study with whom we should communicate

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you chosen an emphasis for the Cities/Urban Crisis study?
2. What are your specific plans for dealing with the study?
3. Have you scheduled unit time? When? Have you scheduled general meetings? When?
4. Would you like help from LWVMN? How can we help you?
5. Would you be interested in a conference dealing with some aspect of the study?  
What topic is of interest to your League?
6. Comments or suggestions

Send response to:

Jerry Enders  
2720 Urbandale Lane  
Wayzata, MN 55391  
(612) 473-4171





**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
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PHONE (612) 224-5445  
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**CITIES/URBAN CRISIS MINNESOTA III**

**What Can Be Done?**

TO: Local Leagues (Cities/Urban Crisis or HR Chairs)

FROM: Jerry Enders, LWVMN Cities/Urban Crisis Chair

DATE: September 19, 1977

Finding solutions to the crises in specific urban areas of America can be a very complex process. Each city is unique. Each has its own combination of problems, and each requires its own set of solutions. The options are many, but finding the appropriate combination is a difficult task.

A redefining of the role of the city may be necessary. What are our priorities? How can we best achieve them? The time may be ripe for a new look at the role the city will play. Perhaps the day has passed when all our services need to be highly concentrated. However, the energy crunch will demand that we utilize more fully our energy - and resource - efficient cities.

We must first agree to make a conscious effort to make all parts of our urban areas viable. This will require a balance between our efforts to support other facets of our society and our efforts to direct specific help to the crises or potential crises in our cities.

"Cities and suburbs must recognize that in the long run they must all work together for economic development. A declining and troubled central city ultimately undercuts the vitality of all the surrounding suburbs."<sup>1</sup>

Solving our local problems is important, but in our interrelated society the crises in the large metropolitan centers affect everyone in the nation, and broad support is needed to meet them.

When we can identify specific needs, we can utilize resources to meet them. Many are common to all cities; others require unique and innovative solutions.

Though government may not be the cause of urban crisis problems, it is inevitably called upon to find solutions. It has been suggested that the federal government could help cities best by formulating an urban policy that will design programs to stimulate the economic health of the cities. This would include expansion of specific grant programs for such things as housing, employment, environmental protection, as well as general economic aid through revenue sharing, Community Development funds, or aids to education. It has also been suggested that the federal government could assume the full financial burden for such things as welfare and health care.

"The federal government should frame a national urban policy founded upon the 'three E's': equity, efficiency, and economic development. Equity is a fiscal concept related to ways to reduce tax disparities between communities. Efficiency involves improving government structure and strengthening management capacity to cope. Economic development is the stimulation of jobs in the troubled central cities."<sup>2</sup>

The state government could help the cities also, not only by financial aid such as assuming the burden of education costs, but by relieving some of the legal impediments that prevent cities from finding their own solutions. For example, they could enable cities to broaden their tax base by city-suburban tax base sharing or by redrawing political jurisdictions to allow for more efficient delivery of services. States could take a wider role in land use controls or in environmental protection.

We should keep in mind, however, that government at both the state and federal levels already plays a key role in keeping our cities sound, not only through aid programs directed to government but by aid to individuals in various national and state programs. Our cities would be in considerably more trouble if both the state and federal governments did not play a role. The question remains, should that aid be expanded? What should be government's part in finding solutions to the problems of individual cities?

"The basic problem confronting the nation is to determine how to develop policies and programs that take into account uneven rates of change in various regions and urban areas. Varying patterns of growth require a flexible system of incentives and grants as well as a new set of rules with respect to capital gains."<sup>3</sup>

The cities themselves have the biggest role to play. They must take the initiative to solve their own problems. A close look at the political structure is a good place to start. Is the political framework able to meet modern day needs? Are there too many political entities? Should the boundaries of those units be redrawn? Should new levels of government be created to meet larger than municipal problems? Should smaller than municipal institutions be created to assure citizen input? Perhaps the makeup of the units in terms of numbers of persons on decision-making boards needs to be changed.

Some cities need to take a look at assignment of function. Is the service being performed by the governmental level or agency that can provide it most efficiently or economically? Are there duplications of functions - too many agencies or units playing a part in the provision of a service? Perhaps the service could be provided by the private sector with or without governmental financial or administrative aid.

Are there problems in administration? Do clear lines of authority exist? Are modern business techniques being used to run government more efficiently? Should the civil service system be replaced by a bargaining mechanism, for instance?

Financial questions need to be asked. Is the city financially sound? How is the budget formulated? Is there long-term capital improvements planning? Where could cuts be made?

"Local governments can improve the financial situation of central cities by 1) increasing productivity to decrease costs, substituting capital equipment for labor (even though this may hurt the city's economy); 2) reducing benefits and tightening controls on government pension plans...; and 3) reducing local services where demand should decline with the decreased population."<sup>4</sup>

More specifically, a city should have an overall plan for its future, with realistic goals and steps for achieving them. Cities must work with the rest of the community to create the kind of city that can meet human needs.

"The older cities facing economic trouble should establish new organizations enabling government, business, and labor leaders to cooperate in designing and implementing an economic development strategy for the city."<sup>5</sup>

All citizens need to become involved in their communities, and mechanisms need to be established by which their needs can be heard and through which they can express their concern for their cities.

Another way of seeking solutions to the urban crisis is to isolate particular problems and then deal with them individually. We must keep in mind, however, that all problems are interrelated; and effective solutions must consider the interaction of many forces. Possible topics might be health care, housing, land use, environmental quality, business investment, employment, education, neighborhood involvement.

Once a problem has been identified, a mechanism is needed to study it and seek solutions. This can be a city department, a citizens group, or a state agency, or all

working together. Gathering the necessary data is the next step. What are the facts? Using these facts, next define the problem and its causes and seek practical solutions.

There are many possible ways of dealing with specific urban problems. Space does not permit us to go into detail here. Many excellent references are available and can give very specific suggestions once the decision is made to start.

"The strategy for each city will have to be tailored to specific targets of opportunity unique to that city. No single approach will work for all troubled cities."<sup>6</sup>

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Academy Proceedings: Revitalizing the Central Cities, The Academy for Contemporary Problems, January 13, 1977, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Roundtable Proceedings: Financial Relief for Troubled Cities, The Academy for Contemporary Problems, March 17, 1977, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Academy Proceedings, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Roundtable Proceedings, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>Academy Proceedings, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Academy Proceedings, op. cit., p. 1.





**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF MINNESOTA**

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**CITIES/URBAN CRISIS MINNESOTA II**

What is the Urban Crisis?

TO: Local Leagues (Cities/Urban Crisis or HR Chairs)  
FROM: Jerry Enders, LWVMN Cities/Urban Crisis Chair  
DATE: September 19, 1977

Defining urban is perhaps the biggest problem facing our League study of Cities/Urban Crisis. What do we mean by urban? Webster defines urban as "characteristic of, constituting, or pertaining to, a city or town." But what is a city?

Physically, a city can be defined by its natural boundaries, a river perhaps, or where undeveloped land begins. Economically, an urban area is a market, the geographic area within which commerce is carried on. It does not respect political boundaries but goes where the people are - where they shop, bank or use services. It is also possible to define urban areas in terms of political boundaries, but often they have little relationship to real human activities.

Realizing the difficulty of defining cities in terms of existing political jurisdictions, the federal government uses Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA). Census and commercial information is described in terms of geographical areas which include large center cities and the adjacent counties that are tied to the central city by jobs and other services. These SMSAs can extend across city, county, or state lines.

Urban, when used to describe the Urban Crisis, usually refers to the large (50,000 +) central cities of the nation, cities with high concentrations of problem situations.

"What is unique is the conglomeration and configuration of the problems facing the central cities. This leads to the indisputable fact of 'municipal overburden.'"<sup>1</sup>

However, the elements that lead to a crisis can be present in a city of almost any size. It is the city's ability to cope with problem situations that determines whether there will or will not be a crisis.

Each urban area is unique in its geography and its political structure. Some problems are shared, some are not. It is essential to look at each individually to really understand its problems.

The word crisis lends itself to easier definition. A crisis is that point at which a situation becomes intolerable. It can be in an individual's life or in the life of a city. Some crises are obvious and dramatic and constitute obvious threats to human safety. Others are more subtle, a bankrupt pension fund, a high crime rate, poor health care. All to one extent or another create crises in individual lives. Most problems which can lead to crisis are present in all cities, and it is possible to identify them before they reach crisis proportions.

Visual observation can give some clues. A large proportion of abandoned or dilapidated buildings or an absence of new construction are signs that the city is being abandoned and resources are being channeled elsewhere.

There are other indicators of a city's wellbeing. Population information can give good clues. If the city or any particular area of it has a large concentration of poor, aged or minority persons, it can be an indication that others are moving out, and those who require a high level of services are left behind with inadequate resources. Popula-



tion losses by the major cities have resulted in declining school enrollments. This, combined with aging facilities and high operation costs, has created a crisis in the inner city schools. Declining schools in turn accelerate the exodus to the suburbs. This same population shift has altered the structure of many smaller towns.

"Today's changing urban patterns reflect the shift from the factory city to the post-industrial society. With the production of goods already secondary to the provision of services, the new forces generating urban settlements are very different from what they used to be...Many of the benefits once derived from urban association no longer depend on proximity..."<sup>2</sup>

Hand in hand with population decline is the exodus of business and commerce. As people move out, the goods and services they require move with them, leaving the center cities with expensive services and reduced tax base. Central cities also have a large share of tax exempt property. They provide the facilities that serve a large area, but the expense of providing services to those facilities falls to the municipal government.

Age itself plays a part in the decline of cities. Buildings, houses, public facilities wear out, and the cost of replacement becomes very much higher than building new outside the city. Age also means dirt, congestion, pollution of both air and water as cities are forced to cope with a technical society they were never designed to accommodate. As the population shifts and the physical environment declines, the incentive to invest in the city also declines and deterioration accelerates.

Many of the forces that affect the condition of an urban area are beyond the control of government. They are the results of local or national economic conditions, business and personal decisions, fear (real or imaginary), prejudice, and most importantly, our basic value system. We live in a throw-away society where we have traditionally abandoned the old in favor of the new. We have assumed endless growth and infinite resources, and that attitude has been reflected in the way we have dealt with our urban areas. The Wall Street Journal exposed the consequences of this attitude when it described New York City:

"More than anywhere else in the United States, this is a political culture that believes in the free lunch. You can spend money you don't have, you can promise pensions that can't be paid, you can belabor business and still have efficiency, you can fret over minnows and still have electricity."<sup>3</sup>

Government, however, does play a role in the urban crisis. As cities age, the cost of running them becomes higher. This in turn calls for more taxes from local sources, which further speeds the exodus. It becomes more and more difficult to provide even minimal services while the demand for those services increases. This, combined with inefficiency, archaic political structures and practices, corruption, and mismanagement, has led many cities to the crisis status.

Here are some danger signals that can indicate pending trouble on the municipal level:

1. A bad bond rating.
2. Deficit spending or excessive borrowing to meet day-to-day operations.
3. Insolvent retirement plan.
4. Unbalanced budget.
5. No long-term budget or capital improvements plan.
6. No long-term planning for land use.
7. No cooperation between levels or departments.
8. A political structure that makes decision-making difficult.
9. Procedural mazes that discourage development, with too many permits, agencies, or approvals needed for a project to be completed.
10. No mechanism for citizen input.

Other indicators can give an idea of the stability of the community as a whole. Danger signals are: high crime rates, particularly in specific areas or among specific populations; inadequate housing, either not enough units, or none that are affordable; in-

adequate health care; unmet social or health problems; racial tension; neighborhood deterioration; poor transportation; inadequate parks; poor social services; high unemployment. Each indicates the inability of the community to meet human needs.

The federal and state governments have also played a role in creating the problems faced by many cities today. By making housing money available and by building the freeway system, they have contributed to the flight to suburbia and to the freeway interchanges. Even attempts to meet urban problems can be harmful. For example, restrictions on pollution emissions, while improving the urban environment, have forced business out of the city. State governments limit the taxing powers of the cities and thus limit their ability to generate needed revenue.

Both state and federal policies have encouraged good planning and land use practices in the suburbs, thus channeling development away from the center cities. Often that development has been premature and growth has been of a sporadic, leap-frog nature. The result is urban sprawl, and the shift of resources from the center cities to the suburbs.

"The overall impact of existing state and federal policies and programs encourages new construction in the developing suburban areas. The overall impact of metropolitan policies encourages a more rational, orderly new construction in the developing suburban areas. Public policy at all three levels does not promote or reinforce a continuous process of preservation, maintenance, reuse, reinvestment, and redevelopment."<sup>4</sup>

One element that is essential to the health of a city, yet is impossible to quantify, is attitude. Are the people proud of their city? Do they have a positive attitude about its future? Are lending institutions willing to invest? Are businesses able and willing to stay and grow? Are citizens actively concerned? Is the state government and are the people of the state aware and concerned, and are they willing to demonstrate that concern by personal and financial support?

The crisis of our urban areas is the sum of the crises of the individuals who live there. Our cities house most of the population and represent a tremendous investment we can not afford to abandon. But, what is the future role of the city? And what can be done to make cities viable?

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Edward R. Beandt, Robert H. Jackson, Johnathon J. White, The Plight of the Cities, August 1972, p. iii.

<sup>2</sup>Wilfred Owen, Making Cities Livable. Highlights of The Accessible City by Wilfred Owen, Brookings Research Report 126 (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1972), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Wall Street Journal, Review and Outlook, July 15, 1977, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Report of the Fully Developed Area Task Force, Metropolitan Council, January 7, 1977, p. 63.

C M A L   U R B A N   C R I S I S   S T U D Y

HOUSING QUESTIONS

TO: Metro Area Leagues only

How much does it cost to build a house in your community today which meets your minimum code requirements?

What was the average cost of a home built in your community last year?

What is your community(ies) rating on the Metro Council Policy 31 criteria?

Why? (If you do not have this information available, it can be obtained by a phone call to John Doyle at the Metro Council. They have sheets giving the ranking of communities, and a rating sheet which explains the points given.)

Are you participating in the Metro H.R.A. Section 8 program?

If not, why not?

If so, how many spaces were you allotted? How many applicants applied?

Were there sufficient units available for rent in your community at the allowable rental rates? If not, why not?

The Metro Council has arrived at a projected number of units of housing needed for various communities in the 7-county area over a 3-year period. How many have been allocated for your community(ies)? How many have been supplied by Section 8? How many are being supplied by the private sector? How many by the public sector? How many remain to be supplied? Does it appear your goal can be met?

Do you have an HRA?

If not, why not?

If so, are they active? What are they doing? Are HRA, Planning Commission, City Council, School District in harmony in what they are doing, or in conflict (i.e., does HRA consider comprehensive plan when making recommendations, do other bodies recognize need for low/moderate income housing, etc.)?

Do you have any existing subsidized housing other than Metro Section 8 rental Assistance in your community? If not, why not? If yes, has anyone ever surveyed to find where the people who live there come from, why they are there, what they consider important in housing, etc.?

What can you do? Have you looked to see if your codes are restrictive (large lots, housing size, garaging requirements)? Do you have a PUD ordinance? Are there negative attitudes toward low/moderate income housing in your area? (Perhaps you could do some education in this matter.) What has been the role of your local Human Relations Commission in the housing area - active with good results? (Support them.) Active with poor results - why? Can you assist them, possibly with education, PR, members willing to serve on HRC, etc.? If HRC is inactive, why?

Has your community taken advantage of the MHFA grants available to low income homeowners? What guidelines were used in allocating this money? How much of the total available to your community was used?

When low/moderate income proposals have been before your local planning commissions and city council has your local League appeared in support of the concept? Do you consider each proposal on its individual merits--its compatibility with the land use plan, appropriateness of the site for proposed use, proximity to bus line, etc.?



How well does your existing housing stock meet the social needs of those who require low/moderate income housing? Future needs?

If you have any questions about housing you would like some assistance with, contact CMAL Housing portfolio chairman, Lorraine Fischer, 777-5037. If she can't answer the question, perhaps she can tell you who can be of help.

Possible sources for answers to these questions:

1. your city hall, HRA chairman, HRC chairman, planner, or building inspector.
2. four publications available from Met Council, call 291-6464

Perspectives - July-Sept. 1976 "Modest Low Cost Housing"

(these were distributed at Sept. 1976 CMAL meeting - your League should have one - call Lorraine, she has a few extra.)

Modest Low Cost Housing in the Twin City Metropolitan Area - Report with recommendations to the 1977 Legislature from the Modest Low Cost Housing Advisory Committee.

Residential Zoning Ordinances in the Twin City Metropolitan Area, May 1977.

Advisory Standards for Land Use Regulation to Promote Housing Diversity in the Twin City Metropolitan Area - August 1977.

(These last two published jointly by the Metropolitan Council and the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities.)

Suggestions for background reading:

Current Focus - Growth and Housing: Connections and Consequences. LWVUS Ed Fund, #192, 40¢

Housing: It's Outasight - Time Magazine, September 12, 1977.

The Urban Predicament, William Gorham and Nathan Glazer, eds. Housing Sections.

Crisis in Urban Housing, Reference Shelf Series, Vol 45, #6.

The Community, Human Behavior Series, Time-Life Books.



C M A L U R B A N C R I S I S S T U D Y

CRIME AND CRIME CONTROL QUESTIONS

Metro LWVs only

1. Is your county participating in the Community Corrections Act? How long has it been a participant? If not, are there plans for participation? When?
2. Has the Corrections Advisory Board (established after county participates in the Community Corrections Act) devised a comprehensive plan for your county? How does your community fit into the plan? What will the major expenses be for the county under the plan? What are the sources of funding?
3. Do you have a community-based adult correctional facility in your town? Where does it receive its funding? What kinds of programs does it have for the chemical abuser, the unemployed, etc.?
4. What companies or small businesses in your town make a special effort to hire the ex-offender? What kinds of jobs are they? Are the programs successful?
5. What happens to the juvenile offender in your county, both before and after hearings are held? What community programs exist to aid the juvenile offender who is on probation? What are they, and what are their sources of funding?

To what extent are the public schools involved with a juvenile who is on probation? Do they have programs for employing them? Are they successful?

6. How are victims of crime aided in your town? How does a victim go about receiving assistance?
7. What measures for crime prevention have been instituted in your community (i.e. neighborhood assistant officer, school liaison officer, Project I.D., etc.)? What others have been proposed? Why are they not now in effect? Did they originate with citizen groups, police department, or schools? How successful have they been?

Sources:

Criminal Justice resource person in your League (check recent reports from State  
Criminal Justice Chairperson - Betty Phelan)  
Police Chief and Department  
Public Information Office for your county  
Chamber of Commerce

C M A L    U R B A N    C R I S I S    S T U D Y

TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS

Metro LWVs only

We suggest you use these as "teasers" in your bulletin - to stimulate members' thinking. Time will probably not permit discussing these at your unit meeting.

Number of members in your household?

Number of automobiles in your household?

What is the total annual cost of operation of all vehicles?

Number of daily trips of household members within your area? beyond your area?

Estimated annual mileage - for daily trips?

- for other routine trips?

Time spent on transit annually?

Time spent chauffeuring children and elderly?

What activities would your household members pursue given broader transportation alternatives...

Employment?

Education?

Social and cultural activities?

Volunteering?

Recreation?

How much time would your household members be willing to spend on public transit for these activities?

These questions can be used for gathering background information and as discussion questions for the unit meeting.

1. What are the needs of your community or area for upgrading mobility...

Intra-area public transit?

More roads? Special bus lanes?

Better scheduling?

Special transportation arrangements - for elderly, handicapped, pooling arrangements for special purposes?

What steps are being taken to fill these needs?

2. Does your community provide bikeways/walkways as a means of transportation?

3. How could special housing or land use planning affect mobility in your community?

4. What services does your community provide to transport elderly/handicapped?

5. Do any employers in your area provide organized transportation pool services?

Are there incentives for participation?

Approximately how many individuals are served?

6. Should public transit in your area be:

a) Self-supporting or partially subsidized?

b) Privately owned or government owned?

c) Free or reduced fare for any groups?

d) Line haul service (i.e. specific stops) or door to door?

e) Correlated with school bus service?

f) Promoted by special incentives?

C M A L   U R B A N   C R I S I S   S T U D Y

EDUCATION QUESTIONS

Metro LWVs only

1. What services (programs, specialized personnel, etc.), capital or physical equipment does your school district share with other districts, communities, or with your own community?
2. Do you have on-the-job training programs?
3. Does your district have a Vo-Tech School?  
Is your district part of a Vo-Tech District?
4. Do you have a vocational curriculum in your school?
5. Has your school district ever talked of consolidation? If so, with which districts?
6. Do you think that your school district is meeting the needs of society in the perspective of the urban crisis?

Your local League Education topic chairperson, your school survey, your school administrative office, your Vo-Tech School bulletin - should provide sources for this information.



DEC 12 1977

# Whatever happened to River City?

Urban Affairs Program  
Charles F. Kettering Foundation  
5335 Far Hills Ave.  
Dayton, Ohio 45429  
\$3.00

This publication is a result of the concern of the Kettering Foundation's Urban Affairs Program over the lack of a comprehensive and coordinated commitment to manage human settlements in the United States. In an effort to address this deficiency, the Urban Affairs Program has attempted to facilitate the development of the concept of national urban policy and has sponsored and conducted research which would aid this concept.

Much of this research has shown that not only does the United States lack a coordinated urban policy, but there have been many national government actions which inadvertently have resulted in harm to the quality of life in urban settlements. This booklet is a simplified depiction of the impacts of federal policies and programs on the spatial development of a fictitious American city — *River City*.

Simplification sometimes results in distortion. The problems entailed in developing a national urban policy are enormously complex. *River City* is not intended to be totally comprehensive. Its purpose is to illustrate a problem and to encourage a commitment to manage it.

*James E. Kunde*

Urban Affairs Director





Out of the rich natural resources of America has emerged a unique and paradoxical man-made environment. Cities and their suburbs now contain most of America's population . . . and produce most of its goods and services. On the one hand, these places have forged for Americans one of the highest material living standards in the world. On the other hand, they've produced environments where problems have become fantastically complex and where gaps in the distribution of benefits have become increasingly noticeable.

The U.S. is unusual among developed countries for not having a "national urban policy" or "urban growth policy" addressing the problems . . . and opportunities of cities. Many people believe that one will have to be developed soon, but if we are to have a national urban policy, then a wide variety of issues must be considered.

This booklet doesn't outline the structure of a national urban growth policy. Rather, it's designed to illustrate how the choices we make as a society on many single issues tend to add up to an urban growth policy, whether we intended that or not. In one sense, the U.S. already has an urban growth policy—but it is the chance product of many unrelated decisions about housing . . . transportation . . . taxation . . . defense spending . . . and other public policy issues.

The story of the "City" in this booklet emphasizes the impact of public policies. Powerful technological and economic forces have determined, for the most part, urban growth and land-use patterns. But when these forces have had bad side effects—such as air pollution and urban sprawl—government policy acted too often to reinforce rather than to dampen these tendencies. Our history reflects that government policy—taken as a whole—has been consonant with the concept of a resource-rich nation that could afford to think of its environment as expendable. As we increase our commitment to improve the environment, we must view our cities as a scarce and precious resource.

Being human  
is itself difficult,  
and therefore  
all kinds of  
settlements  
(except dream cities)  
have problems . . .  
But vital cities  
are not helpless  
to combat even  
the most difficult  
of problems.

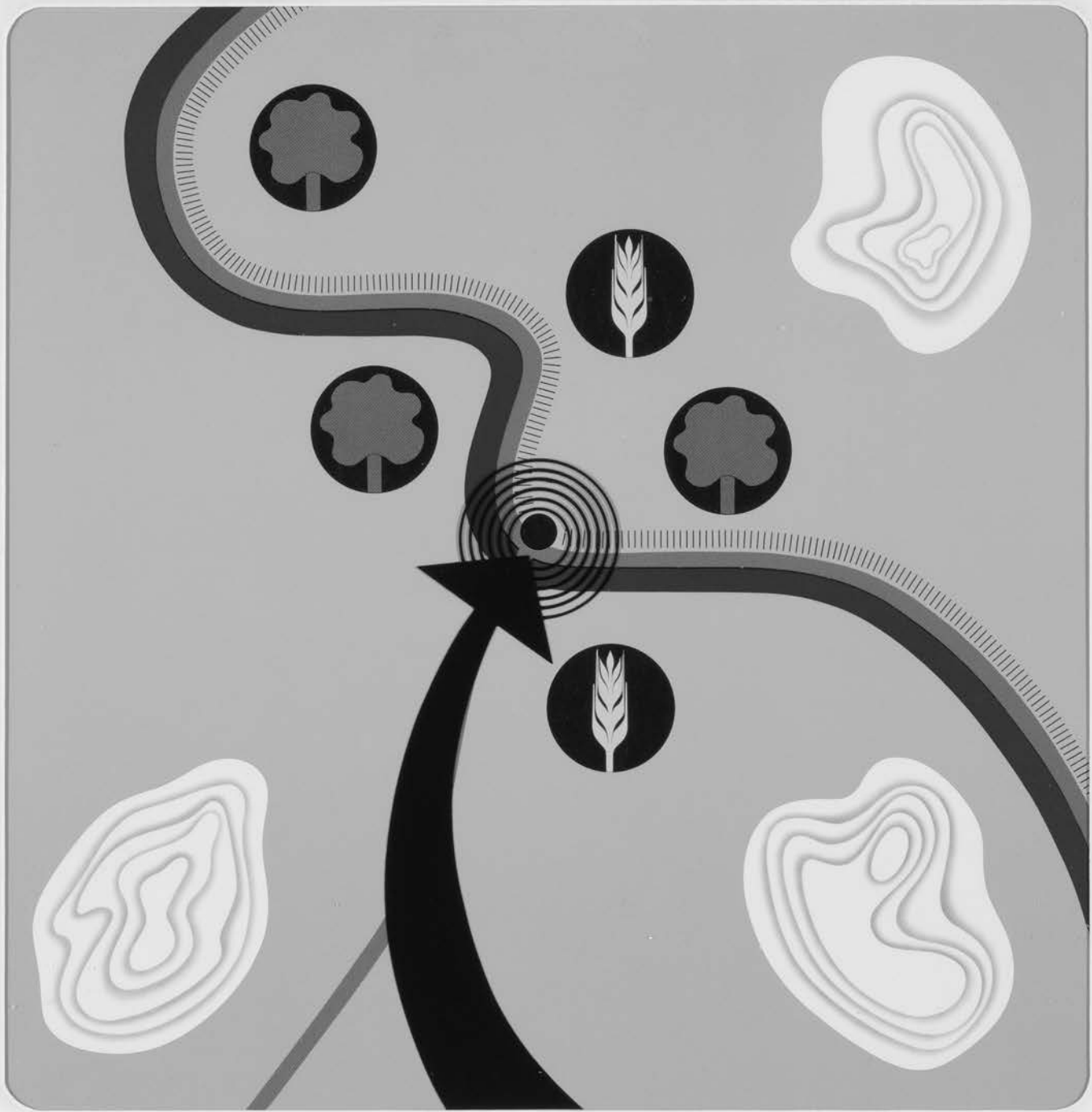
Jane Jacobs  
*The Death and  
Life of Great  
American Cities*



River City stage 1

**1** Welcome to River City. Laid out in the early 1800's along a major waterway in a valley rich in food crops and natural vegetation, River City developed as a trade center for its agricultural hinterland. Typically, a rail line—the first major transportation artery—followed the stream through valley, and eventually a road came in to connect it with other cities and tied it into the national fabric.





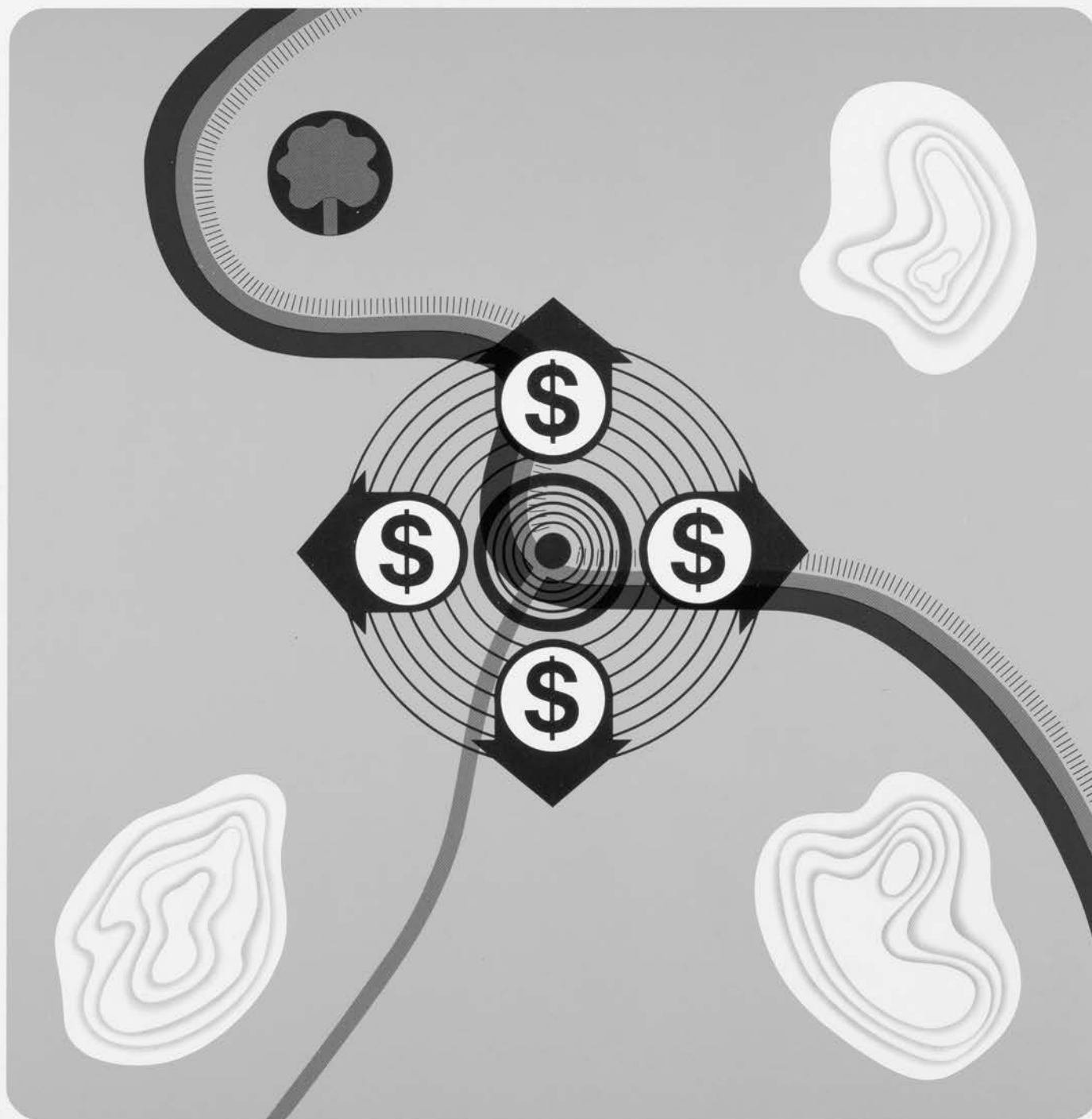
River City stages 1 and 2

The River City stages 1 and 2 map shows the location of the river and the surrounding area. The map is divided into two stages, stage 1 and stage 2. Stage 1 shows the river and the surrounding area, while stage 2 shows the river and the surrounding area. The map is divided into two stages, stage 1 and stage 2. Stage 1 shows the river and the surrounding area, while stage 2 shows the river and the surrounding area.

2

As industrialization proceeded, River City showed the concentric ring growth typical of American cities of the 19th and 20th centuries. With growth, new houses were generally built by higher income families in the newest ring, and the houses left behind were occupied by middle income households, who in turn, released their houses to lower income families. Succeeding waves of low-skill newcomers inherited the oldest and least desirable houses in the inner-most rings. There were important exceptions. Some of the close-in neighborhoods, built for the upper class, kept their desirability and

status through the 1940's. As each wave of newcomers attained affluence, they moved outward, and were replaced by steady in-migration from rural areas. The concentric zones reflected the age of housing almost like the trunk of a tree, except that the rings get closer as a tree gets older. In metropolitan areas, the rings may spread farther apart with greater distance from the city center as lot sizes grow larger.



### River City stages 1, 2 and 3

**3** By 1910, trucks replaced the horse and buggy. Manufacturing firms relocated on cheaper land away from the city center. Ten years of deep depression occurred in the 1930's, followed by five years of all-out war, creating a huge backlog in housing demand.

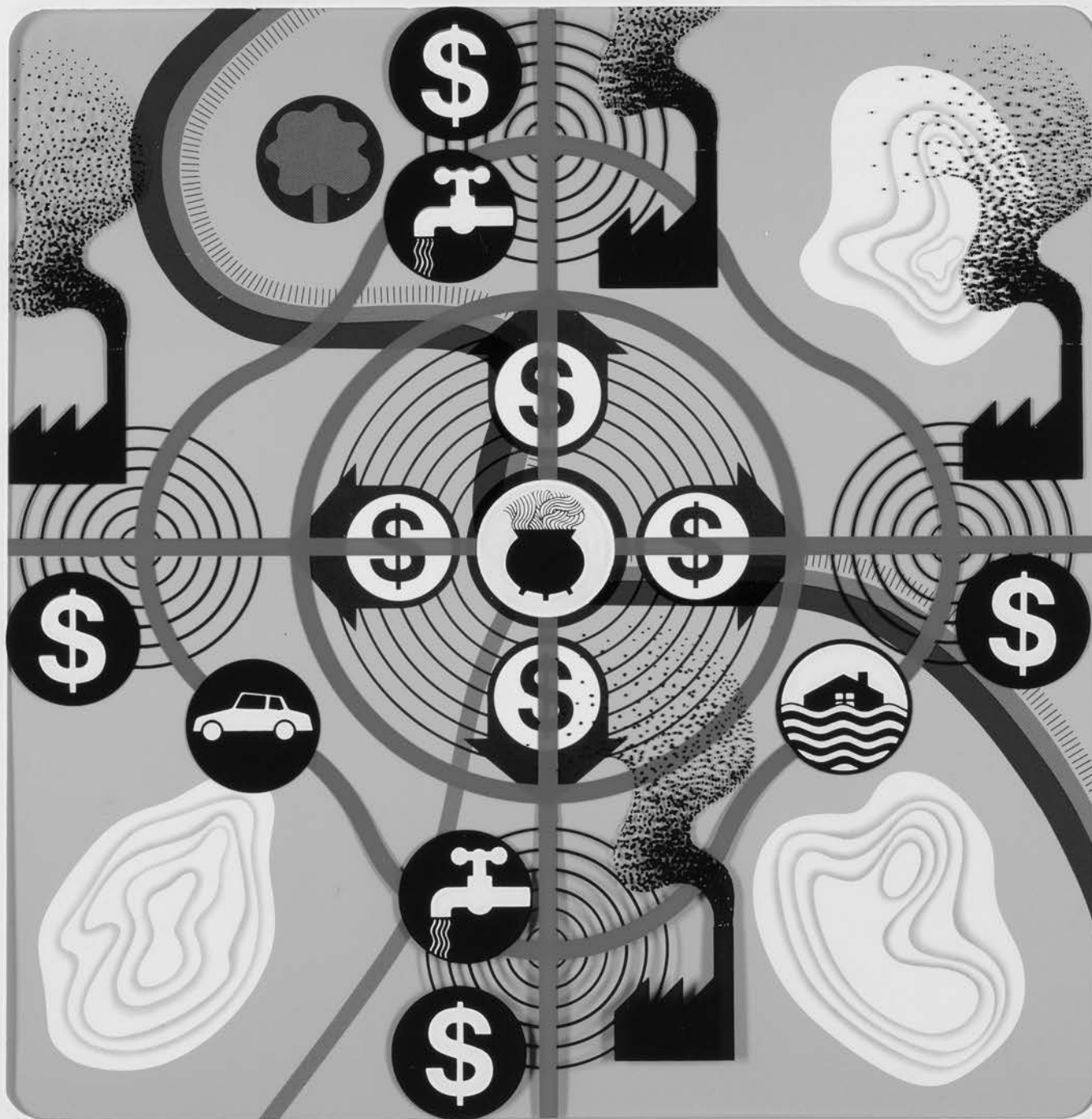
America set national goals and policies to meet this demand. Federal funds helped build new highways which opened up suburban land for the American dream—a single family

home. Federal housing policy strengthened these forces. In principle, low-cost mortgage insurance was available to all middle-class Americans. In practice, FHA and VA insured loans were made available largely to white buyers in racially homogeneous neighborhoods—thus strengthening the already strong tendency towards segregation.

The federal government also began to build public housing for poor people and blacks. These largely sterile high-rise developments in the inner-most ring helped trap and concentrate the disadvantaged minorities in the central core. Federal

urban renewal programs cleared away shabby but still usable older housing, which further reduced the housing supply available to the poor. This produced slums where market prices favored converting large single houses into multiple dwellings, and helped eliminate most of the white upper-class, inner-city-neighborhoods. Movement away from the center was accelerated by increasing federal expenditures to build new high speed roads—umbilical cords that permitted white middle-class access to jobs in the city. Now, most of the blue-collar jobs have left the inner city, but the poor—especially the black poor—remain.





#### River City stages 1, 2, 3 and 4

**4** The “cold war” had many interesting side effects. Even the Interstate Highway System had the words

“national defense” in its enabling legislation. Conceived in the 1950’s and built in the 1960’s, the interstate system—including its new “urban bypasses”—made it possible to “quantum jump” the concentric ring growth to distances undreamed of earlier. Although industry would have moved to suburbia anyway owing to the greater production efficiencies associated with single level sprawling plants, another quirk in federal policy accelerated the exodus. Industries could take ad-

vantage of low capital gains tax rates and tax-avoiding (for farmers) agricultural land swaps by getting into the land speculation “business” as long as it wasn’t their primary business. For example, a company making “widgets” could buy a large tract of land outside the city . . . develop a new plant on part of it . . . sell the remainder at a handsome profit . . . and be taxed at roughly half the rate of the profit for making “widgets.” Industries flocked out to the suburbs and even farther . . . and left the already impacted center city without the one big resource it had for those less educated and left behind: high-wage, blue-collar jobs.

Federal agricultural price supports and "soil bank" policies largely benefited better-off farmers, while workers and farmers on small marginal farms were pushed off the land, and many migrated to the center of large cities.

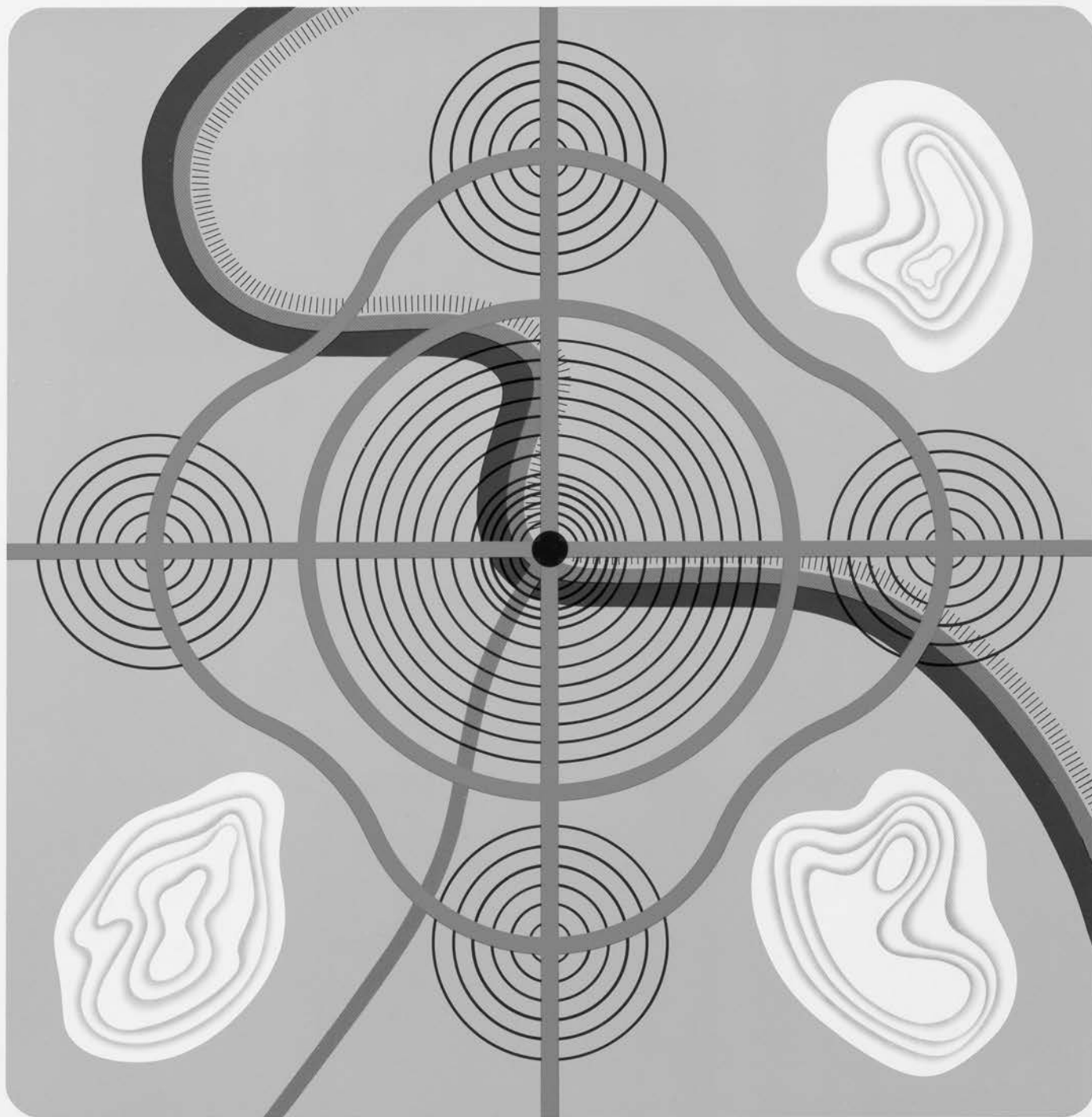
As the end of the 1960's drew near, the inner city had been drained of its middle class, its best jobs, and tax base. It had increasingly become the home of poor and frustrated blacks and whites trapped by the barriers of racial and economic segregation. Poor and inadequate housing and schools, coupled with scarce job opportunities, proved to

be deadly as fires and riots swept U.S. cities in the late 1960's.

The fires and riots of the 1960's were calmed by programs designed to deal with conditions in the inner city alone or "gilding the ghetto!" Providing new federal subsidies to the urban poor in new ways enabled some to escape the inner city, but did little to correct underlying causes of inner city unrest.

The fires died. But the situation of the poor—especially the black poor—was unchanged. They remained segregated, discontent, and potentially explosive, while middle-class society moved farther away. At the

same time, central cities suffered from soaring crime rates, especially drug related crime; suburbia required greater government subsidies for roads, sewers, water plants, flood control projects; and paradoxically schools, homes, sewers and water systems in the inner city lay idle and unused.



5

**We could make a fresh start:** we could abandon River City. But we cannot turn our backs on what exists—on

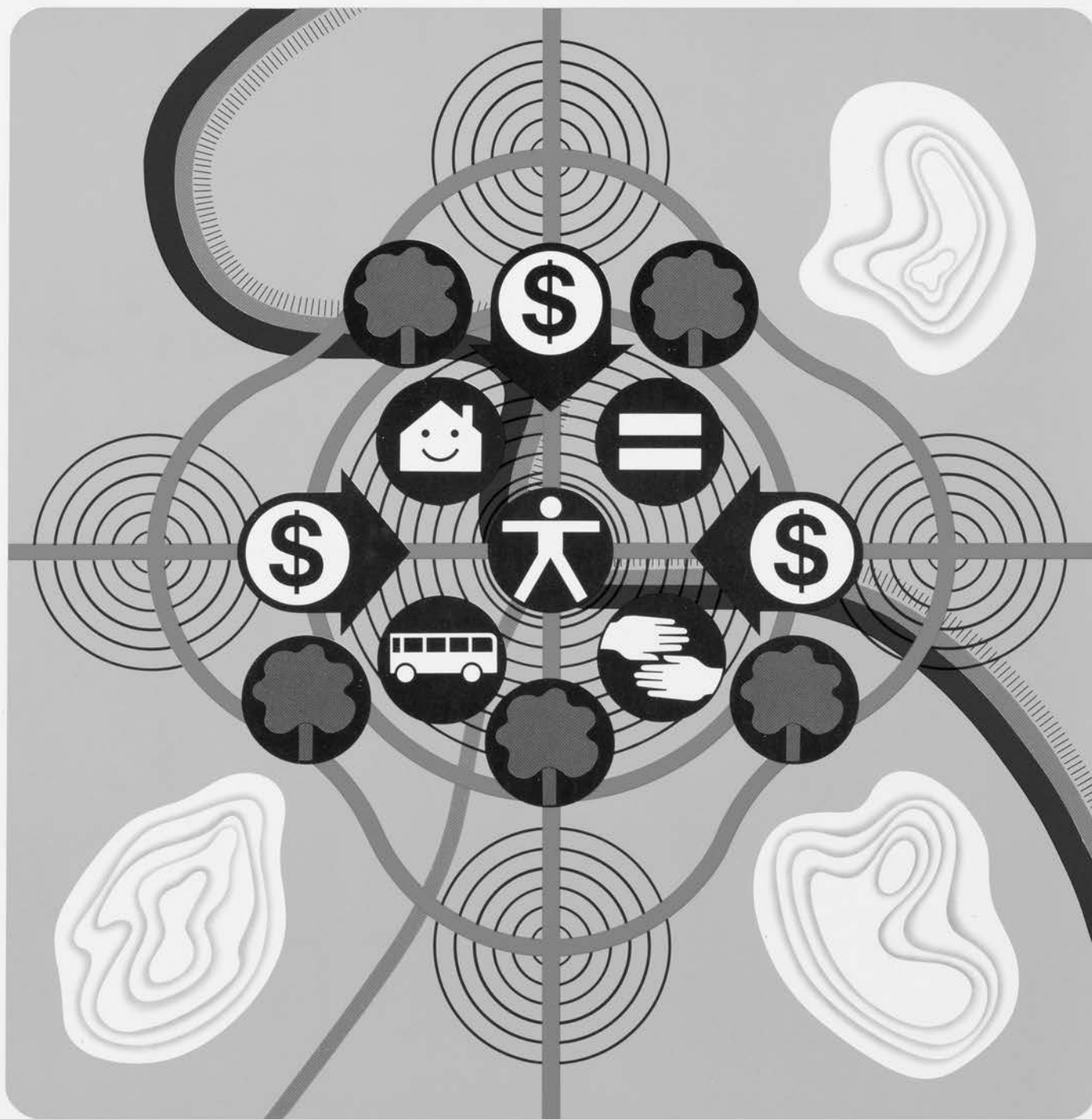
people caught by the legacies of pervasive bigotry, narrowly conceived economic growth, short-sighted federal programs such as highways, welfare, and a distorted tax system. Looking beyond to the relationship between city and region, we need to emphasize the U.S. role as a provider of food to the world, even though only a small part of our land is populated by cities and we as a nation are approaching a stable population. River City's sprawl has already taken

most of the agricultural valley. Our trees and meadows of a few years ago are now houses, streets, and subdivisions. Cheap energy that powered urban sprawl has suddenly become much more expensive. On "spaceship earth", the raw materials that promised us unlimited abilities to throw away and start anew suddenly appear more finite and precious. As we conserve open space and agricultural land, so too must we revitalize that which is already in place—our cities. How can we build in River City a habitat for a more crowded and scarcity prone world? We must start from where we are.

**Can we anticipate the inadvertent effects of federal policies on cities before Congress passes legislation?**

We are coming to the end of one major federal program—The Interstate Highway System—whose urban impacts were not anticipated in the 1950's. Are there comparable federal policies now at issue that would advantage the central city as much as it has been disadvantaged in the past? What about the whole set of federal policies that impact on the new set of technological and economic forces that are coming to bear on the central city, for example, the impact of the energy crisis on land use patterns and evolving





transportation systems?

**Can public service needs of central cities be met without reorganizing urban government within metropolitan areas, and linking central city needs more directly to state and federal resources?** There's a mismatch between the needs of inner city residents for public services and the ability of local government to raise money. State and federal levels are a better place to collect revenues. So we'll have to devise ways to get some of these funds back to the local level—revenue sharing and direct grants are examples. From the experience of New York City, we have learned the critical role and

responsibility played by the states. **Can we take limited public funds and invest primarily in mass transit systems that conserve energy rather than roads that eat up taxable land and divide neighborhoods?** This might require restricted automobile use during rush hours, taxing large cars and those carrying only one passenger, raising gasoline taxes, establishing exclusive bus lanes, and closing some streets to private cars. Doing all this will not be easy—it challenges vested interests and contemporary values. This will not be politically popular. But can we afford not to? Must we wait for a catastrophe to happen?

**Can we improve the quality of urban life in the key areas of education and public safety?** Cities should be places for children to get a decent education and to explore their values and those of others; where people can walk without fear for life and limb. We'll never get people to move back to the inner city until they feel safe and secure; and that public schools are doing a good job. **Can we dream of political leadership and private enterprise working together to improve inner city economies?** We'd better, because if we don't, there's a real risk that our way of life may not make it. The tax system has to reward restoring

**legend**



forests



employment opportunities



equality



automobiles



redirected property taxation



flooding



mass transit



the urban "cauldron"



utilities



federal funds



neighborhoods



agriculture



in-migration



industry pollution

land already served by public systems rather than encouraging residential and industrial leapfrogging onto valuable agricultural land. Government should work with banks to put an end to "redlining" and other practices robbing the inner city of scarce financial capital—capital needed to rebuild and restore homes, and to provide loans to small business and industry. Public policy should encourage business to invest in older city centers, helping to create new jobs and tax revenues.

**Can we develop new ways to build "neighborhoods" instead of "houses" where people really care**

**for and respect others?** Urban renewal, public housing, and highways, all destroy neighborhoods. Inner city residents feel hopelessly caught in the clutches of a public service monopoly—a giant bureaucracy increasingly unresponsive to their needs. A neighborhood voice in providing public services need not conflict with the necessity to minimize costs. With a lot of careful work, we can build neighborhoods, but we'll also have to meet injustice and discrimination head-on. Tomorrow's choice is not whether to have a national urban growth policy—we already have one, albeit incomplete, inconsistent, and in-

effective. Cities are crumbling; people are suffering and not reaching their full potential. We must recognize the unfolding implications of the course we are on and move instead toward other more rational choices, which in the long-run will be less costly. The trouble is, an urban growth policy cannot depend on a series of "technical breakthroughs." It depends more on a long rational process of working out the choices or tradeoffs as we go. These tradeoffs depend on a fair process of negotiating, not just to the advantage of the majority, but also to protect minority concerns.

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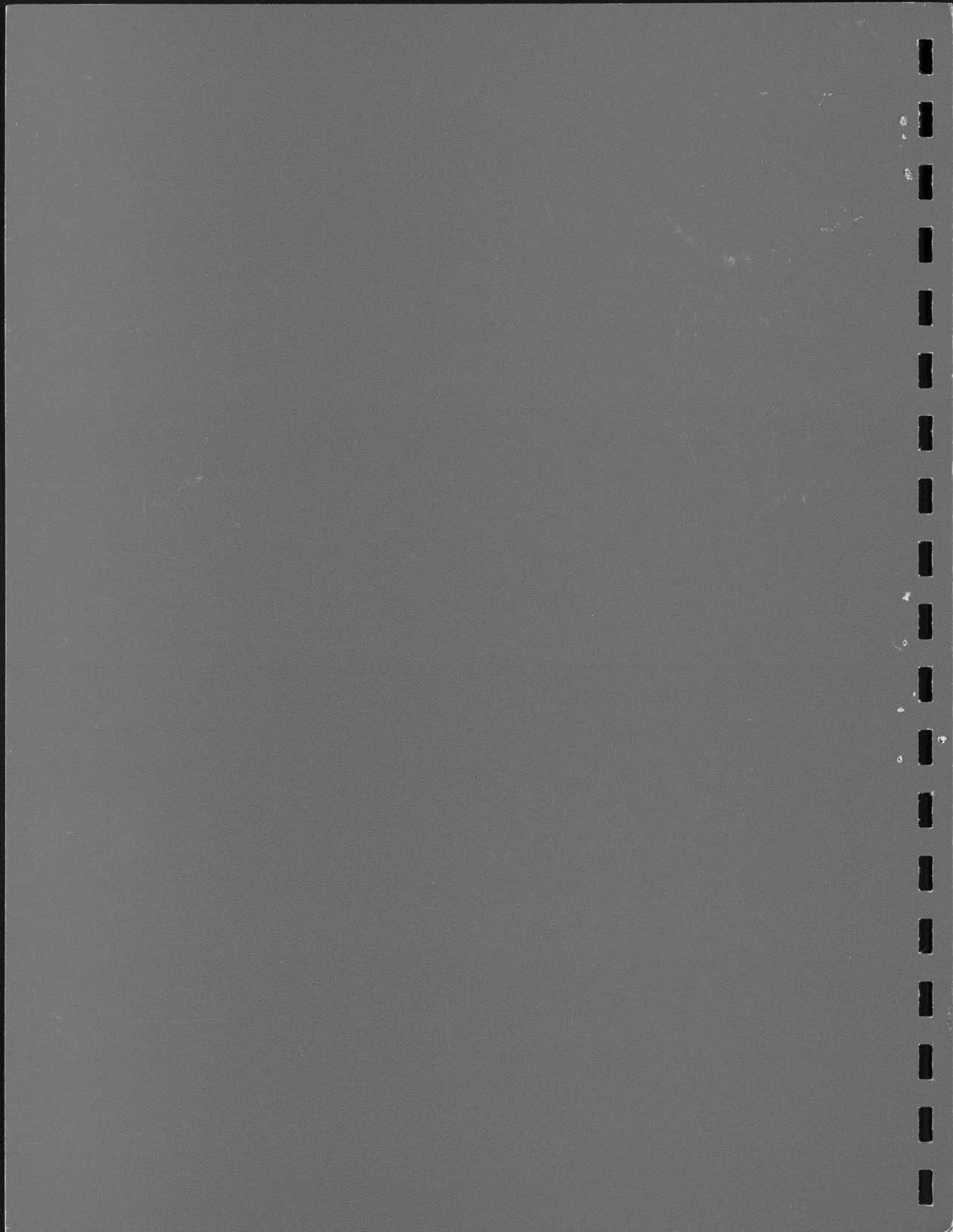
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River City is a fictitious city. The use of the name River City is not intended to reflect on any particular city; rather it is used to portray the impact of federal policies and programs on the spatial development of U.S. cities—many of which initially grew up around natural transportation features such as rivers.

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# CARING ABOUT CITIES

When New York City's fiscal crisis made the news in 1975, the initial reaction of many Americans was: "They got themselves into trouble by being big spenders and bad financial managers. Let them sink or swim."

Despite this widespread public attitude, the federal government did finally step in to help New York meet its financial obligations, after the city met stiff requirements for putting its fiscal affairs in order.

What happened was that even the most hardnosed Americans started to have second thoughts—What happens when a city goes bankrupt? What would a bankrupt New York mean to the banks and individuals holding its bonds and notes? What would *that* mean to the country's banking and financial structure as a whole? What would it mean to every other municipality, in terms of bond interest rates and saleability of bonds for capital improvements? Could it be that New York City was only the tip of the iceberg?

As reports of similar crises in city after city began to elbow aside the New York story, it became evident that the "New York City syndrome" was not after all confined to New York. Nor was it credible to assign blame in case after case to local officials' unwise decisions, out-of-balance budgets or sagging bond sales.

So "urban crisis" moved into the national spotlight, but the term is hardly new. Throughout the unrest of the 1960s, the plight of the inner-city poor became highly visible, and the federal government did respond with an array of measures to alleviate poverty. Whatever the assessment of the success or failure of these measures, many of the problems of the 60s are still festering in the central cities—problems compounded by the unintended but adverse impact of major federal policies and programs and by the double-edged sword of inflation/recession that has brought higher prices and rents and fewer jobs.

In short, too many cities and too many people in those cities are suffering from too many problems for bootstrap fortitude to be the only prescription: the people problems are feeding the fiscal problems and these are in turn fostering people problems in a vicious circle.

## The plight of cities: how did it happen?

Ever since World War II, two concurrent migratory patterns have been changing the face of the nation's large old cities: the migration of the rural poor to the central cities to seek a better life and the migration of the affluent and middle-income residents and of business and manufacturing from the central cities to the suburbs. Though both are now in flux, the consequences of the two historic trends have left their marks—on the people and on the cities. The exodus to the suburbs (or white flight) has left low-income, minority residents ghettoed in the core. Most jobs in

the core city are white collar—held by suburban commuters. Low-income residents' access to those suburban locations where unskilled jobs exist is limited for want of nearby housing and/or transportation. With much of the revenue-producing assessable base of the metropolitan area now outside the city's jurisdiction, the city's revenues have diminished, but the need for the city's services has not diminished correspondingly. Indeed, the public costs of counteracting the problems of poverty are high.

As the gap between revenues and expenditures widens, economies alone cannot bridge it; yet when a city raises taxes or cuts services to the detriment of the quality of city living, the flight from the city accelerates while the problems of the city and those who must remain become more acute. Alternatively, when a city borrows to cover the shortfall, the cost of borrowing escalates and its ability to get additional credit decreases. And so it goes.

The crisis proportion of urban problems is most conspicuous in the older, larger cities of the Northeast and Midwest. These are cities that are locked into old jurisdictional boundaries and thus have been unable to share in the metropolitan growth around them. These are the cities with old decaying infrastructures, both public (roads, buildings, water, sewer facilities) and private (housing and industrial plants). These are the cities whose public service rolls and wage rates have climbed rapidly. These are cities that have lost their desirability as manufacturing centers because of advances in communication, transportation and technology.

This leaders guide is designed as a tool for motivating citizens to become aware of the problems of cities and to become involved in combating urban decline. In particular, it provides:

**Introductory background on the plight of cities.**

**A challenge to leaders to mobilize for community education and problem solving.**

**Outlines of two major themes for meeting the challenge:**

- Raising citizen consciousness about why cities matter;
- Focusing on federal impacts on cities.

**Techniques for mobilizing citizens around urban issues:**

- Agendas for 90-minute meetings;
- Agenda for a day-long conference;
- Exercises in analyzing your urban area.

**The cutting edge of change:**

- Criteria and options for federal, state and local government reforms to improve the urban condition.

# community guide



League of Women Voters  
Education Fund  
1730 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036



Since these conditions are more typical among cities in the northeast quadrant of states, the urban crisis also threatens to become regional. The imbalances in population and economic growth between the frostbelt and the sunbelt are striking. The industrial northeast/midwest region, having lost its economic advantage, has been aptly described as one big "aging and declining central city" bordered by a burgeoning "suburban" region of southern and western states. The competition among governors, mayors and congressmen to get a "fair share" of both federal aid and private economic development has been dubbed the new "war between the states." Though later data suggests a slowing of the trends, a 1976 *National Journal* survey did support the claim of officials in the Northeast that the flow of federal dollars to state and local governments was tilting in favor of the sunbelt at the expense of the frostbelt.

The continuing serious problems of cities—seen most tellingly perhaps in the high jobless rate among inner-city youth and minorities—has prompted an urgent quest for solutions by the Administration, Congress, city officials, regional coalitions and other lobbying groups. So far, the result is an array of statistics and research studies and of suggestions for changes in priorities, policies and programs, but as yet there is no nationwide commitment to face up to urban problems.

### Some caveats

The variables that can be used to predict a city's financial condition are many. Generalizations about urban decline and shifts from city to suburb and from frostbelt to sunbelt should not overlook some caveats:

- Many newer and smaller central cities throughout the country have unmistakable signs of decline. Are these the early stages of the advanced illness of the northeastern cities? Even Atlanta, only a few years ago riding the crest of rapid growth, has its urban problems.
- Growth in the sunbelt does not mean universal wealth in the South and West. There are pockets of low income and decline in every part of the country. For this reason, some seek to play down the "war between the states" for federal aid in favor of a policy targeted to need, wherever it exists.
- Many of the older suburbs—around New York and Boston, for instance—have problems almost identical to those of their central cities. Does their experience hold a lesson for the growing suburban ring?
- Some cities in economically depressed areas are financially sound.
- Decline in population does not necessarily mean fiscal decline. Some cities may ultimately do better with a smaller population rather than seek a return to their former peak.

## An elusive numbers game

### What is urban?

Urban place\*: 2,500 or more (constitutes 70% of U.S. population).  
Urbanized area\*: one central city of 25,000 or more and its closely settled environs (60% of U.S. population).  
Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), a frequently used reference of urbanization: an "urbanized area" often including nearby rural areas (⅓ of U.S. population and increasing).

### What is city?

Cities of 500,000 or more: total of 27 cities (15% of U.S. population and declining).  
Central cities of SMSAs: 375 cities ranging from 20,000 to 8 million (31% of U.S. population and declining).  
Cities of 50,000 or more: 397 cities (34% of U.S. population and declining).

\*Census definitions

## The challenge: to mobilize for community education and citizen problem solving

This COMMUNITY GUIDE is predicated on the proposition that our nation's cities—their problems and their prospects—are everybody's business. The challenge to citizens, wherever they live, is to join with public policy leaders in a national effort to combat the decline of cities and to help shape decisions about their future—whether in national, state, regional or local arenas. This guide is intended to help concerned citizens take the lead in developing community awareness and commitment.

In some areas, citizen leaders who are ready to take up this challenge will find a cadre of fellow citizens ready to tackle a particular target for reform. But in most, they will discover that there is a big job of consciousness raising to be done first. A good many Americans living outside cities—in suburbs and small towns and rural areas—feel remote from the problems of cities and removed from all responsibility for solving them. And many core city residents do not realize that they need to work with their suburban neighbors. A strategy for community education and citizen problem-solving can be developed around these propositions:

- "The urban crisis" cannot be diagnosed simplistically; nor can it be relieved by applying simple, single measures, formulas or remedies.
- Cities don't all have the same problems. Solutions must have enough built-in flexibility to recognize the differences among cities.
- Cities have caused some of their own problems, and cities can be part of the solution of these problems.
- The policies and programs of the federal government have had major impacts on the condition of American cities. Some of these have been programs expressly designed to alleviate problems plaguing the cities—poverty, unemployment and urban decay. Some have had other expressed goals but have had significant (though unintended) side effects on cities. An overhaul of these programs must be part of the solution.
- States have played a part in compounding the problems of cities; they can also be part of the solution.
- Urban sprawl . . . suburbanization—by whatever name, this phenomenon is part of the problem of cities and must be part of the solution.
- Cities are, in the end, a collection of neighborhoods; the health of neighborhoods affects the health of the city.
- There is another dimension to urban problems—code-named the frostbelt/sunbelt issue—that relates both to the age of cities and regions and to technological change.
- The citizen role in solving urban problems is critical. In order to be effective agents for change, citizens must be helped to:
  - see the big picture—national and even international trends;
  - look at their "own" city and metro area through a new lens, one that sees strengths and weaknesses, one that looks beyond short-term, and narrow local self-interest toward the long-term wellbeing of the city—and the nation;
  - decide, realistically, what their city's future can and should be;
  - acquire the participatory skills that will enable them to translate awareness and commitment into action.

## Meeting the challenge: raising urban consciousness

Cities are not high on everyone's priority list. Indeed, they often inspire antipathy—or at least apathy. Anti-city rhetoric aside, many thoughtful persons have come to the conclusion that the reason for the city's existence is no longer justified. Indeed, some of the hard economic realities noted above may tend to support their view.

Should we then let cities go "down the drain" and leave them as reservations for the subsidized poor? Or is it time to take a new look at the city? A recent resurgence of interest in cities shows that a new look is indeed in order. But, before a national urban policy can

take shape, citizens—not only of the city but of suburbs and exurbs alike—must decide whether the city is, indeed, worth saving and revitalizing.

Citizen leaders building a community education project must face the question: *by what means* will we raise citizen awareness, evoke citizen response? No matter how important a committee knows a set of principles to be, no matter how many facts it has marshalled, the great trick is to find compelling ways to get citizen attention: What about press releases, neighborhood fairs, city-suburb parlor meetings, a TV call-in show, a speakers' bureau, go-see tours, seminars for community leaders, cooperative lectures at local colleges, a course-by-newspaper—in short, the works?

Even if the answer were "Yes to everything," there is still the job of fleshing out a bare-bones idea in such a way that citizens will be interested . . . persuaded . . . motivated. Listed below are some "starter" ideas—devices that citizen groups have actually used to stir people in their community, sample outlines for meetings, short and long, themes around which to build a program.

Each technique can stand alone or can be combined into a structured community education process. Each lends itself to cooperation among city and suburban groups.

Consider building your program around the theme, *Why Cities Matter*. "Your program" could mean a single evening or it could mean a well-developed strategy that moves from consciousness raising and education about the facts toward specific recommendations for change and an action program to achieve it. "Your program" could be limited to one event or it might be a carefully orchestrated sequence of the attention-getters mentioned above.

No matter what the scale, you will be pitching your program toward an examination of values. You may, indeed, move on to help citizens look at budgets . . . fiscal policy . . . building code enforcement . . . unemployment data . . . urban homesteading . . . guidelines for welfare decisions . . . allocation of revenue sharing money—all the numbing details that make or break a city. But you—and they—will be looking at them from a rooted judgment about *what* is important.

## Why cities matter

### A study outline

Below are examples of the kinds of value questions around which such an exploration would center:

### Do cities have intrinsic values that make them vital to the quality of life for us all?

Focus for discussion:

- Relate the question to "your" city by using a tool such as the questionnaire in the fall 1977 LWVUS National VOTER, "Test Your Urban Consciousness." (Single copies 50¢ from LWVUS.) You could send it out to potential attendees at a meeting. You could make it available as a prediscussion tool for simultaneous meetings of a range of citizen groups—church, chamber of commerce, school government courses.

### Can we afford the waste of continuing to abandon cities and of suburban sprawl?

Focus for discussion:

- Cost of reproducing the cities' existing public facilities (roads, sewers, schools) in the suburbs.

*Now as in the past, cities are the magnet to which the brightest, the most talented, and the most creative people are drawn. It is in cities, and only in cities, that the visual arts—theater, ballet, and opera—flourish, that great museums and concert halls thrive, and where our great universities are to be found. There, too, for better or for worse our styles and trends are set. And there, too, extremes in poverty and wealth abide cheek by jowl . . . it is also in the urbane cosmopolitanism that the greatest integration and fullest opportunity exist.*

*Perspectives on Urban America, Melvin Urofsky*

- Conservation of land consumed in suburban sprawl.

- Waste of energy used for commuting.

- Social cost—of alienated, jobless and dependent population isolated in cities, of inner-city neighborhoods disrupted by commuter roads.

**A tip:** Try using as a visual aid the booklet, *Whatever Happened To River City?* to get into a discussion about what happened to *your* city. River City is hypothetical but the successive stages of growth illustrated with map overlays is typical of urban development in this century. (Limited copies are available at \$3 from the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Suite 300, 5335 Far Hills Ave., Dayton, Ohio 45429.)

### What effect does the fiscal crisis of some major cities have on financial institutions? on the economy of the region?

Focus for discussion:

- Review New York City's fiscal crisis.

- Repercussions on other cities' efforts to sell bonds—both the reluctance of investors to buy bonds of financially troubled cities and the high interest rates charged to even relatively healthy cities.

- Repercussions of insolvency of major cities on commercial banks and financial institutions holding municipal bonds.

- Can suburbs survive the "death" of their core city?

**A footnote:** You might decide to catch media and public attention by getting out into the open the antipathy that lies near the surface among many suburbanites. Instead of striking a positive note, you might reach more people with a slogan such as *Why Bail out Central City?*

*City and Suburbs—Rivals or Allies?*

*What's In It for Us? Suburbanites Look at Central City*

## Symptoms of cities under stress: give your city a fiscal health check-up

### Suggested agenda for a 90-minute meeting

#### 1. Set the stage

Use a speaker, a panel, or a group discussion to develop insights:

- Why are so many cities in trouble? (Give a brief overview from the national perspective, and indicate some of the ways in which federal and state actions have exacerbated problems.) (10 min.)

- What are the danger signs? Use criteria such as those outlined in *Cities in Crisis: The Impact of Federal Aid* (December 1977, LWVEF, #601, 50¢); "Two Views of the Urban Blues," Summer 1977 LWVUS National VOTER, p. 25; and "The City as Endangered Species," Summer 1976 National VOTER, p. 26; or use the points identified in "The Spread of City Trouble." (20 min.)

#### 2. Focus on "your" central city

- Quickly establish the importance of the city nearest and most important to the participants, using a speaker or a self-evaluation such as the "Test Your Urban Consciousness" tool in the fall 1977 issue of the National VOTER, p. 14. (15 min.)

- Help people measure their city against the criteria presented earlier in the meeting. You could use a resource person . . . a set of brief fact sheets . . . a case study . . . a recent report on the city's budget or on metropolitan planning. (20 min.)

#### 3. End on a positive note

- What each level of government could do to improve the city's health and what citizens can do to stimulate such action. (10 min.)

**One idea:** A short buzz session to develop two or three possible reforms and a final 10 minutes for speedy reports and a "sense of the meeting" about next steps for participants. This kind of wind-up needs a skilled leader who can hold to a schedule, summarize ideas in an action framework, and evoke from the group suggestions about what interested citizens might do next.



## Central city: today's problems, tomorrow's hope

### Suggested agenda for a day-long conference

While it is possible to key this conference to cities generally, tying it to "your" particular city will enable you to help participants begin to recognize their stake in the fate of the city that serves them most directly, whether or not they live or work in it. Such a conference is an ideal vehicle for bringing together city and suburban residents.

#### 1. Registration and introductory remarks (9:00-9:30)

**2. The urban predicament (9:30-10:45, including a few questions)**  
Use an urbanologist to present the common denominators, a la *Cities in Trouble*, (by David Stanley, Academy for Contemporary

### Detroit: urban-suburban dilemma

Citizens from Detroit and surrounding suburbs began a dialog on their mutual urban problems at a daylong workshop sponsored by the Detroit Metropolitan Area League of Women Voters. The city's planning director and the county executive of a suburban jurisdiction kicked off the discussion with their points of view about the impact of federal funds on the city and on the suburbs, respectively, and then fielded questions from 130 representatives of Leagues and other community organizations.

During the rest of the workshop the group tackled the issues surfaced by the city's community organization director in an overview of urban-suburban dilemmas: What has suburban sprawl done to our environment? . . . to our quality of life? . . . in Detroit? . . . in the suburbs? A visual highlight of the workshop was a Go-See-Detroit slide show (prepared by a League member as part of a master's program) portraying decay and redevelopment, congestion and well-spaced sprawl, poverty and wealth. The scenes were far from a Chamber of Commerce presentation but did serve as provocative catalysts for the dialog.

The sponsors chose as the workshop setting a little-known Detroit attraction, the city's historical museum, and adorned it with clippings, photos, posters and charts portraying the urban area's history-in-the-making. The sponsors, taking advantage of the interest aroused and the success of the informal workshop format, moved to the next stage of citizen inquiry by planning another workshop—this time on neighborhoods.

### Bay area: looking at the realities for solutions

A series of public forums is bringing together—from throughout the San Francisco area—representatives of business, labor, governmental, educational and civic communities to exchange ideas and expertise on combatting decline in the area. The League of Women Voters of Central San Mateo started the process after its members tested themselves on the interdependence of San Francisco and the suburbs by using a questionnaire on city usage and an urban game they devised.

They enlisted the assistance of community colleges and a group of other Leagues and community organizations to cosponsor a forum series. Each was scheduled for a different locale to ensure wide geographical participation as well as to provide points of view from the different interests represented. The first, in San Francisco, was on the job realities of the region and featured a keynote speaker, a panel representing business, labor and local government, and a discussion period. Others in the series are on the economic realities of the city (in San Mateo), on urban-suburban realities (Marin) and the political realities (Berkeley).

The forums provide a vehicle for plugging into the *Urban Development Strategy For California* drafted by the governor's Office of Planning and Research. Citizens in the state are being asked to react to a broad series of proposals aimed at avoiding the fate of many eastern and north central states by committing the growing state, now a symbol of urban sprawl, to more compact urban areas, to the revitalization of existing core cities and older suburbs, and to the continued production of farm lands.

Problems, 1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43201; single copies free) and *Cities in Crisis: The Impact of Federal Aid*.

#### 3. Break for participants' audit (10:45-11:15)

Work out the mechanics of distributing an audit sheet to each participant just before the break. Ask each one to write down what he/she sees as the city's chief assets, chief liabilities and chief targets for change. Don't make your directions too specific. Let this sheet reflect participants' own first thoughts. Tell them to keep their sheets and to revise as much as they wish throughout the day.

#### 4. Perspectives on your city (11:15-12:30)

A panel is a reliable way to present varied perspectives on the health of the city and the causes and its problems. Try to use people who will talk out of a sense of their own involvement: you're trying to reach more than people's intellects. Persons from state and local government, business and labor are obvious candidates. Consider also representatives of neighborhood and minority groups, tenants' associations, housing groups, church and other social action committees, the League of Women Voters.

A major question to consider: Are you going to use city speakers only, or city and suburb? You will want an enthusiastic pro-city point of view but a good way to get issues out in the open is to have also some people with not-so-friendly viewpoints, such as the leader of a protest against commuter taxes or a small-town official with known anti-city views, or the head of a "keep-city-crime-out-of-our-suburbs" organization.

A tip: Try feeding in the hard data from other sources. Could you mount big comparison graphs on the walls? Consider a continuous showing of slides during registration and coffee breaks, before and after lunch. Maybe you could get reprints of a newspaper overview, comparing city-suburban disparities. Perhaps supplemental fact sheets would do the trick—especially if you keep them pithy and stick to basics.

An alternative: If talent and other resources permit, you might want to make this perspective portion a multimedia experience of the sights and sounds of the city. You could present everything from symphony orchestra to police sirens, from top restaurant to corner street gang, from art gallery to subway graffiti, from director of a national headquarters office to the food stamp queue. If you cover the metro area, you can speak volumes with contrasting shots: morning commuter traffic jammed up inbound while outbound buses and traffic lanes go half empty . . . abandoned factories at the core, new think tanks or streamlined assembly plants on the perimeter . . . ads from the Sunday paper, whether for apartments or jobs . . . brief statements from PTA presidents of an inner-city and a suburban school . . . the night sounds of an up-all-night city street and a secluded suburban cul-de-sac. A more modest alternative might be a photomontage covering the same spectrum.

#### 5. Lunch (12:30-1:30)

Make this lunch a time for participant exchange. Arrange for mixed seating of city and suburban participants, in small groups. Encourage some "buzzing" about their audit sheets and their reactions to the panelists.

#### 6. Who's responsible for our city's future? (1:30-3:15)

While part of the task of the afternoon's resource people will be to identify problems, the accent should be on problem *solving*. Use people who can identify broad trends, be specific about your city, and outline crisply some possible reforms. You don't need doom-sayers at this point in the conference.

A four-person panel might focus on:

- the impact of federal programs (what it has been, what it could/should be);
- the state role (e.g., aid to cities, tax policy, school finance);
- the metro picture;
- city initiatives (whether from perspective of city hall or a forward-looking neighborhood—or both).

#### 7. Wrap-up: options for change (3:15-3:30 or 3:45)

How you wrap it up will depend in part on the number of partici-

## The spread of city trouble

*City trouble has a widespread impact. The city government tries to solve its budget-balancing problems by raising taxes, imposing fees, reducing its work force, and cutting down on purchases and construction. These measures are bad for the local economy. Businesses may move away or cancel plans to expand. This hurts not only the city but the suburbs, where many employees live and where some suppliers of central city businesses operate.*

*As a city's finances become shaky, its bonds and notes may be hard to sell, will decline in price, and will cost the city more in interest. The effects can reach to other cities, as in 1975, when New York's problems caused a general lack of confidence in municipal securities which drove up interest rates. Under such circumstances, banks with large holdings of city obligations are put under strain.*

*Other levels of government are also affected. The state governments concerned may have to extend special credits, make extra grants, and correct and supervise the cities' financial practices. The financial stability of states containing large, troubled, central cities is impaired: nearly half of their budgets is spent on these cities. The federal government's provisions for general revenue sharing, block grants, and categorical grants are put under particular pressure. The question of special federal aid to New York City occupied much of the time and attention of both the Congress and the President in 1975.*

*The problems of troubled cities are, therefore, national problems—for federal and state governments, for private businesses, and for citizens. They are also, as this paper will show, problems that are intractable, grim, and discouraging. Solutions are much easier to conceive than to put into effect, considering the political balances in our federal system.*

*Cities in Trouble, David Stanley*

pants. One idea, for a smaller number: Post huge sheets on which to enter recommendations for change, as participants call out their top candidates from their much-revised audit sheets. As an alternative, to deal with larger numbers: Let each participant turn in on a card a first-priority change—based on importance and do-ability. You may want to reserve the last few minutes to offer people opportunities to sign up for a follow-up session, a post-conference newsletter, or notice of your next meeting. In any case, send people home with the conviction that change is possible and that they can and must be agents for the changes they believe in.

## Adventures in urban analysis

An examination of the problems of urban America ultimately comes down to an examination of your own urban community. Before deciding what kinds of governmental intervention are needed, citizens must understand that complex network that we call an urban area to see what's working and what isn't. The following exercises offer creative ways to analyze your urban area to help make visible that network of public and private "systems" and actions that interrelate in a multitude of ways.

### Analyze how your urban system works

A map overlay exercise is an effective way to involve a committee in important but nontechnical research and to convey to citizens a sense of the often invisible urban network.

#### Research component:

Begin with a barebones map of your metropolitan area; on a series of transparent overlays locate:

- transportation system—bus lines, major highway arteries, subway lines;
- housing patterns—coded to show subsidized, low-, moderate- and high-income housing;
- major employment centers—coded for manufacturing (or blue collar) and service (white collar) jobs.

- shopping areas—downtown, malls, neighborhood facilities;
- major recreation areas and cultural centers—parks, recreation centers, sports arenas, civic centers, museums, theaters, zoo;
- educational institutions—college, university, technical institute, vocational school;
- medical centers—hospitals, health centers;
- distribution systems—freight (rail and truck) terminals, wholesaling areas, warehouse districts;
- crime patterns—check with your council of governments or police department(s);
- municipal services—water sources, sewage treatment and solid waste disposal facilities, utility plants;
- jurisdictional boundaries.

This exercise need not require complicated research. Your aim is to get only enough depth and detail to show the interrelationships.

An example: *Whatever Happened To River City?*, mentioned earlier, shows how vividly a map overlay exercise can illustrate interrelationships. The same technique used to show "River City's" growth patterns can be applied to show your urban network.

### Community education component:

The visual aid you develop can be a great discussion starter within your own organization or for other community groups and joint meetings of city and suburban residents.

Use the map overlays to show the degree and dispersion of each element and their interrelationships; then focus on such questions as:

- How do crime patterns relate to housing patterns?
- How do housing patterns relate to employment centers? How do areas of low-income and subsidized housing relate to blue collar job locations?
- Where are the gaps in the transportation network in connecting housing, jobs, recreation, shopping and other services?
- How dependent are the suburbanites on the city?
- How dependent are city dwellers on the suburbs?
- What strategies would make your urban network operate more smoothly? Who can activate such strategies?

### Take another look at your city

A go-see tour of the city arranged for citizens from various parts of the metropolitan area will give them a first-hand sense of what city living is like and of the problems and hopes of the city. Such a tour is yet another way to make visible many aspects of the city that are largely invisible, especially to noncity residents.

#### Research component:

A city-based organization may be best equipped to coordinate a tour and select the most appropriate points to visit. Preliminary research by a committee will provide the tour coordinator with background information about each site to relay to the tour group. The tour leader can also point out other significant factors en route, such as major employment centers, closed factories.

### Community education component:

The tour might include:

- a variety of residential neighborhoods—a dying neighborhood, a healthy ethnic neighborhood, a well-to-do neighborhood, an example of neighborhood rehabilitation;
- central business district;
- welfare office;
- general hospital;
- museum or civic center;
- produce market;
- park or outdoor recreation area;
- public transportation (plan for your tour group to use it!).

Plan to have lunch at or near city hall. Invite the mayor and city council members to join you. Talk with them about the people/problems/programs you have seen and what needs to be done to improve the quality of life.



## Hoboken tour: the end of the line is just the beginning

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey chose Hoboken (the terminus of the Erie-Lackawanna railroad line) as the visual starting point for a study of urban problems in the state—partly because there is still visible decay in Hoboken and partly because there has been successful renewal. Many of the 200-plus tour group took the train to Hoboken and walked to the Stevens Institute of Technology where they first saw a film depicting the low point of Hoboken's blight and decay. A panel of local citizen leaders told how they had mobilized to reverse that trend and what they are accomplishing through a partnership of private initiative and government assistance. Community pride was in evidence as small groups went on walking tours of low- and moderate-income neighborhoods where brownstones have been reconverted from rooming houses to family homes, and of the business district, which is beginning to thrive again. The enthusiasm of the tour members has helped enthuse their own Leagues, which are participating in a survey of representative New Jersey cities. The state LWV is coordinating the survey with its long-term fiscal policy studies.

**Bring the city to the suburbs.** As an alternative to a tour, sponsor or collect a photo display or slide show featuring such locations as those listed for a tour (above) to use as backdrop to a panel discussion by city residents. The city panel can convey to the noncity audience a sense of what it is like to live in the city and how they are trying to improve the quality of life in the city. To select a characteristic mix for the panel, contact neighborhood groups, the urban affairs department of a local college or university, the city's League of Women Voters.

Whether your group visits the city in person or vicariously through pictures and words, build in time during the tour or at a follow-up meeting to address the penetrating questions such as encounter surfaces. Each community, with its own problems and strengths, will have to define its own questions; here are a few that are likely to arise:

- What makes some neighborhoods fail? Why do others thrive? What kinds of strategies can revitalize declining neighborhoods?
- Is business leaving the downtown? If so, why? What is the shift of business doing to the quality of city living, to the city's fiscal position?
- What is being done to bring jobs to people, people to jobs? What kind of jobs are needed to improve the city's wellbeing? (Check your employment classified section for kinds of jobs available. One recent survey showed a preponderance of engineering, accounting, secretarial jobs in the city and only a handful of unskilled labor, porter, busboy, dishwasher jobs—many of these in far suburbs.)
- What are the strengths upon which the city can build toward a better future?

## Federal payments to state and local governments and share to local governments, selected fiscal years 1952-75.

Fiscal year	Federal payments to state and local governments (millions of dollars)	Percentage of federal payments to local governments
1952	2,585	9.1
1956	3,347	9.6
1960	6,994	9.2
1964	10,097	11.7
1968	18,053	12.6
1972	33,584	18.2
1974	42,854	28.3
1975	49,628	28.6

Chart: "The Cities," by Richard P. Nathan and Paul R. Dommel, in *Setting National Priorities: The 1978 Budget*, Brookings.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Governmental Finances*, selected years, and *idem*, *Summary of Governmental Finances*, selected years.

## Meeting the challenge: focusing on the federal impact

In some communities, the consciousness-raising groundwork may already have been done. You may have a "clientele" that is well aware of its responsibility to the city and ready for a systematic examination of the difficult issues citizens must address in the search for solutions. Since the federal government—both by design and sometimes by accident—has become a major factor in the fate of cities, a close look at the impact of federal policies and programs on cities is essential.

The study/discussion outline below is designed to serve as a guide for a discussion meeting or series of meetings, a workshop, a seminar or a "short course." We recommend that two major resources be used with this study/discussion outline:

■ The LWVEF FACTS & ISSUES, *Cities in Crisis: The Impact of Federal Aid* (#601, 50¢) reviews and evaluates current federal aid programs.

■ *The Urban Impact of Federal Policies: A Preview of a New Rand Study*, identifies some of the inadvertent impacts of federal policies and programs. (Single copies free from Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Suite 300, 5335 Far Hills Ave., Dayton, Ohio, 45429.)

Also check out other resources in the LWV's URBAN BRIEF 1, *Sources on Cities* (#339, 15¢). For a quick review of how Congress and the Administration are organized to deal with urban issues, see URBAN BRIEF 2, *Who's in Charge? 1977* (#302, 15¢); use it as a take off point for keeping up to date through news media.

To use this outline for a single meeting, choose a single focus for emphasis and sketch in the background information quickly. An adaptation of the outline for a 90-minute (unit) meeting on the impact of major federal aid programs is suggested below. You may, of course, want to adapt it with a different emphasis suitable to your audience. In presenting this subject, keep a balance between the national and local perspectives. On the issue, for instance, of how federal grants should be allocated, don't lose sight of regional/national considerations. On the other hand, you are on the front lines for evaluating the impact of federal aid programs on your city.

## The cities: federal impact in perspective

### A study outline

#### What are the characteristics of urban hardship?

Focus for discussion:

■ Differentiate between acute urban hardship and long-range decline (see box below).

■ Review the shift in economic growth and population away from the old cities in the northeast quadrant of states to the South and West. Why have the old "frostbelt" cities lost their economic advantage?

■ Review the post-World War II shifts in population and economic growth affecting central cities and suburbs—the migration of rural poor to the cities and the migration of middle-class and affluent citizens, along with business and industry, from central city to suburb. Follow the cycle of urban decline that accompanies the flight to the suburbs. (See box, *The Spread of City Trouble*.) To what extent have disparities developed between city and suburbs in your urban region? Why?

■ Examine various indicators used to measure urban hardship and see where your community rates.

#### How have federal policies and programs affected cities?

Focus for discussion:

■ Inadvertently, many policies and programs that have been set in motion to address broad social, environmental or economic goals have had indirect and adverse impacts on cities. Some of these often cited are noted below; discuss how any of these policies and

*City trouble can be divided into two main types: (1) fiscal crisis, in which the city has neither cash nor credit to meet near-term expenses such as payroll and supplies; and (2) long-term decline, in which the city's economy, social conditions, and general enjoyment of life are slowly deteriorating. Neither type means that a city is "dying" or "uninhabitable"—cities cannot and will not be destroyed. Funds will be found somehow to meet the crises. The declines may continue but the cities will live on among growing crime, filth, flammability, and despair. Nor does trouble necessarily mean bankruptcy, which requires formal, voluntary action by a local government to request a federal court to supervise a plan for restructuring its debt.*

*Trouble . . . is not the annual struggle to balance the budget without raising taxes or cutting services. This occurs even in affluent localities with superior credit ratings. . . . Such governments feel distress, but the difficulty is of a completely different order.*

*Cities in Trouble*, David Stanley

programs have affected your city or urban area.

—FHA and GI mortgage guarantees that have facilitated owners of new, single family homes and, consequently, encouraged suburban development.

—Highway programs that have facilitated commuting between city and suburb and have often encroached on urban neighborhoods.

—Other strategies to stimulate the housing construction industry and/or auto industry, also indirectly encouraging suburban development.

—Federal tax policies that have served as incentives for locating homes and industry outside cities; tax policies (and subsidies) that have the effect of favoring new construction over maintenance of old buildings.

—Increased minimum wage for low-skilled work that may have encouraged employers to shift emphasis to higher-skilled work.

—Increased federal aid to depressed rural areas, thus favoring small localities over cities.

—Implementation of court decisions protecting the rights of criminals and the possible effect on the crime rate.

—Implementation of court orders to desegregate schools and the possible effect on accelerated suburban development and on quality of education in city schools.

—Federal response to welfare needs in cities.

—Anti-inflation strategies and their effect on employment opportunities in cities, where unemployment is highest (but also their effect on rents and prices).

■ The increasing role of federal aid in local government spending. What percentage of the funds available to your local government comes from the federal government? How much has this increased in the last 10 years?

■ The shift from categorical program grants to the "new federalism." How should federal shared revenues be allocated among local governments? Look at the issues of targeting aid to hardship cities and the factors that should be considered in aid formulas.

■ Review the major federal aid programs to local governments and evaluate how they address the needs of your city and urban region:

—General revenue sharing;

—Community Development Block Grants, including action grants (Housing and Urban Development);

—Housing programs (HUD);

—Employment and training block grant (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, Title I);

—Mass transportation (Urban Mass Transit Administration);

—Public Service Employment grants (CETA, Titles II, VI);

—Emergency public works (Economic Development Administration).

## Basic choices for national policy

Focus for discussion:

- How much should the federal government do to put more emphasis on relieving urban hardship? How should it do it?
- Review alternative strategies for federal action to assist cities.

## Federal aid to cities: the impacts

### Suggested agenda for a 90-minute meeting

**1. Sketch in the background quickly.** Establish the dimensions of the urban predicament from the national perspective with the assistance of such visual aids as maps, graphs, charts, photos, newsclip montage, succinct fact sheet. (5 minutes)

**2. The federal presence: historical perspective.** (10 minutes) Use a resource/discussion leader to:

■ review briefly the history of federal policies and programs that have had unintended, adverse effects on cities.

■ describe how cities have been affected by the shift from categorical (program) grants to revenue sharing and formula grants.

**3. Establish through brief discussion the issues involved in devising formulas targeted to the needs of declining cities.** (15 minutes)

■ disparities among regions of the country.

■ disparities within metropolitan areas; use your area as a case study.

■ factors that go into formulas for disbursing federal aid to cities.

**4. Zero in on federal aid to cities for the bulk of your meeting.**

Use a panel, either from your resource/research committee or a guest panel (city official, Council of Governments, business or financial leader, union representative) to discuss the major federal aid programs that are being implemented in your area. Show on a wall chart or fact sheet which they are, purpose of each, how much is allocated to the various jurisdictions in the area. Ask your panelists to focus on the following questions:

■ Who decides how the allocation is spent?

■ Have there been adequate opportunities for citizens to participate in the decisions from the outset?

■ How well are the programs meeting their goals in your area? Who benefits from the programs? Have there been adverse impacts?

■ What changes in federal strategies are needed to enhance your city?

**5. Save a few minutes at the end of your meeting to wrap up.** Summarize the findings and attitudes expressed. Draw from the group the issues they would like to explore further. See if you have new recruits and decide on your next steps.

## The cutting edge of change

In programming for citizen education about the problems of cities, a committee is unlikely to draw a sharp line between efforts aimed at increasing citizen awareness and efforts geared toward stimulating citizens to make choices and press for changes. Most programming will include some of each. In reality, decisions about where to put the emphasis will be determined by your assessment of the people you are trying to reach—some will be beginners, others will be veterans of the struggle to ward off urban decline.

The emphasis so far has been mainly on building a positive yet realistic attitude about cities, providing information and encouraging insights about the causes of cities' problems. No resource committee can or should lead citizens to prepackaged conclusions about what would be good for the nation's cities—or for their own city. What a resource committee can do is lay out some of the options for change—recommendations of experts and case studies of current reform experiments—and present some criteria that should govern any attempt to piece together a coherent set of strategies that might merit being labeled an urban policy.



## A citizen shopping list: some options for change

There is no shortage of suggestions about how governments could do better. Congressmen and senators, city planners, governors and state legislators, businessmen and trade associations, mayors and their lobbying organizations, university specialists, economists, sociologists—the advice flows freely.

In fact, the list of proposed remedies for urban ills is even longer than the litany of problems. There are dozens of prescriptions to cure each of the urban problems—inner-city poverty . . . unemployment . . . poor education . . . inadequate transportation . . . poor and segregated housing . . . crime . . . white flight to the suburbs . . . high taxes and a shrinking city tax base . . . slipshod city management . . . environmental degradation . . . economic shifts among regions . . . bloated city payrolls . . . underfunded pension plans . . . inequity in distribution of aid among local governments, and more. In fact, the very number and variety of the remedies threaten to repeat the failures of the past and the present—too little preventive therapy, too many laws and programs overlapping and counteracting one another.

There is one fact of national political life that will strongly affect the shaping of a total strategy—for good and for ill: we have marble-cake, not layer-cake, federalism in this country. In fiscal matters especially, responsibilities have never been assigned indelibly to the federal or the state or the local level.

Below is a distillation of some of the more thoughtful proposals for improving the way governments now address urban problems. Look on them as a stimulus for your own research, as a starter list for citizen discussion.

### Federal

- Develop mechanisms to review federal policies for their impact on cities and to coordinate programs for consistency with a commitment to cities.
- Restructure direct aid to local governments so that allocation formulas address hardship cities.
- Improve job training programs, establish youth employment corps.
- Create public-works and public-service jobs in areas of severe unemployment.
- Assume financing of welfare.
- Encourage more effective use of community block grants to stimulate economic development in troubled cities and neighborhoods.
- Provide incentives (sanctions) for low- and moderate-income housing in cities and suburbs to enable workers to live near jobs.
- Provide more funding for public transportation systems to enable city workers to go where jobs are located.
- Provide more support and incentives for housing rehabilitation to upgrade neighborhoods and provide jobs.
- Establish an "urban bank" to provide direct loans or to guarantee loans to local governments.
- Enact tax reforms to encourage private investment in needy cities.
- Provide help for low-income residents threatened by displacement due to rehabilitation of their neighborhoods (e.g. housing subsidies, tax abatement).
- Provide incentives to local government to improve their management capacity.
- Provide incentives/sanctions to encourage more progressive state and local tax systems.

### States

- Shift responsibility from the city to the state (or county or other regional entity) for financing certain functions, such as public education, hospitals or universities.
- Restructure state/local tax structure (e.g., property tax rebates for low income residents, revenues to cities from state income taxes, new sources of local tax revenues).
- Supervise and oversee local government fiscal procedures.

- Unite city with its metropolitan area, structurally and/or financially (e.g. annexation power, consolidation, creation of regional political entity, metro-regional tax/tax-sharing).
- Regulate locally administered pension funds.

### Local

- Improve fiscal management and reporting procedures to inspire confidence of taxpayers, investors.
- Give high priority to mobilizing revitalization measures based on city's economic potential.
- Scale down expenditures as much as possible without sacrificing quality of urban life.
- Adopt management procedures for increased productivity in city government.

## Building a multifaceted urban policy: some criteria

Even a cursory look at the shopping list(s) above makes plain some of the problems of developing a national urban policy. If any single one of these reforms were implemented, it would not by itself constitute an urban policy; if all were implemented, they would not necessarily constitute a coherent urban "package."

What then would a sound set of urban strategies—an overall urban policy—look like? Some criteria by which to judge proposals for change are beginning to emerge:

■ No *single* "urban policy" can be articulated to address the problems of all cities. Growing cities and declining cities need different treatment. Healthy cities and ailing cities need different treatment. A growing city isn't necessarily healthy nor does decline necessarily indicate crisis.

■ No one level of government can create or execute an effective package of urban reforms. It is not the federal government alone that will "bail out" the cities. Nor can city governments solve all their problems themselves. Each has its own role to play—and, since cities are "creatures" of the state, so do state governments through their power to establish boundaries, assign functions and authorize revenue sources and taxing power.

■ We must provide more effective roles for two "levels" of community structure—the metropolitan region and the neighborhood—that do not even have official status in our traditional federal system, despite the fact that they are often identified as keys to urban survival.

■ There must be strong leadership from the Administration to set a tone of commitment for reforms. Without that, we are unlikely to get politically feasible reforms from those representatives in Congress and state legislatures whose constituencies have abandoned the cities.

■ We need mechanisms to review federal and state programs and policies for their potential impacts on local governments.

■ We need a coordinated set of strategies, at all levels of government, to make cities attractive to private investment. There is probably not enough money in all public coffers to save the cities; political strategies can be used to make the cities attractive to private investment, yielding jobs and other benefits to alleviate poverty and tax revenues to restore public services and amenities.

■ There must be well-defined channels for effective citizen participation in and review of public policy decisions and program implementation.

Caring about cities is a prerequisite for those who want to help devise a new course of treatment. There is no easy cure. Some dramatic initiatives may be in order—to underscore the commitment of political leaders and to rebuild the morale of cities. But, there remains the hard, long-haul challenge; to diagnose the underlying causes of urban ills and to recast and harmonize policies and programs to meet the needs of cities wherever they are and whatever their problems.

For concerned citizens, the special challenge is to develop a creative working relationship with fellow citizens and public officials, in the common search for answers.



DEC 12 1977



League of Women Voters Education Fund • 1730 M Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036 Tel. (202) 659-2685

# memorandum

December 1977

This memo is going on DPM

TO: Local, State and ILO Presidents

FROM: Florence R. Rubin, Cities/Urban Crisis Chairman

RE: C/UC Community Guide and other C/UC resources

Here is the long-awaited Community Guide, CARING ABOUT CITIES, to help your League in its work under Cities/Urban Crisis. This Community Guide can serve as a committee guide to help your C/UC resource committee move forward on this League program area. The Guide also contains creative ideas for including your community in the exploration process.

Some very specific "ways and means" are the heart of this guide. Use them to stimulate members' and other citizens' awareness of the problems of cities and their involvement in combatting urban decline:

--One group of techniques focuses on raising the urban consciousness of citizens, wherever they live. It includes a study outline on "Why Cities Matter," which can be tailored to League use for unit discussions or workshops. This section also has two sample meeting formats (one, a 90-minute meeting; the other, a day-long conference) and do-it-yourself exercises on how your League (or other groups) can analyze your own city's strengths and weaknesses.

--The other major section focuses on the impacts (both direct and indirect) of federal aid to cities. Again, there is a study/discussion outline, and a suggested format for a 90-minute meeting.

...AND MORE

We are also sending one copy per League (Presidents Mailing only) of another publication that can serve as a useful supplement to the CyG:

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO RIVER CITY? This 12-page brochure, (courtesy of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation) traces the course of urban development since World War II through skillful use of transparent overlays. This is one of the techniques for urban analysis that the CyG recommends. We hope that River City inspires some of you to try this technique to analyze your own city!

(Presidents: Pass along to the resource committee chairman the copy you receive!)

STILL TO COME!!!

Three substantive publications that link closely to the CyG will go out after holiday mailing crunch!

--The first of the three projected Facts & Issues: CITIES IN CRISIS: THE IMPACT OF FEDERAL AID, #601, 50¢. This material has been adapted, under the direction of Richard Nathan of the Brookings Institution, from his published materials and Congressional testimony. Do plan to order copies for your League members--and promote its use by other organizations.

--THE URBAN IMPACT OF FEDERAL POLICIES, preview of a new Rand Corporation study (courtesy of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation; one copy per League). It focus on the unintended impacts of federal policies and programs on cities complements the new F & I, which deals with federal aid expressly aimed at urban problems.

--THE URBAN CRISIS--excerpts from the public forum series co-sponsored by the LWV of Cuyahoga County in Cleveland last spring. This League has made these copies available to us in order to share with you the remarks of some of the country's leading urbanologists on many of the issues covered in the CyG.

#### POSTSCRIPT

We also want to call to your attention another resource: TO SAVE OUR CITIES--WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE, by Rep. Henry Reuss (WI.) chairman of the House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs. This 69-page paperback presents in book form the report of the hearings of the Reuss Subcommittee on the City, the committee print of which is no longer available. It is filled with information about the extent and causes of urban decline and contains the congressman's own broad agenda for a national urban policy. The publisher is giving the LWVEF enough complimentary copies to enable us to send one to each state and ILO president. We have also arranged for Leagues to receive a 50-percent discount on the \$2 price on prepaid, bulk orders of 10 or more. Order from Public Affairs Press, 419 New Jersey Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20003. Be sure to identify yourself as a League member if you are using the quantity discount.

PRESIDENTS: MAKE SURE THAT THE COMMUNITY GUIDE AND ENCLOSURE REACH YOUR C/UC CHAIRMAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

# Focusing on Cities/Urban Crisis

*Urban America is where most of this nation's people live and work. The tone of the whole nation is set in its urban communities even though most of the nation's territory remains rural. Similarly, a very large share of the nation's domestic problems are generated or occur in urban areas. These problems range from crime to transportation to poverty, and they involve everyone.*

*Improving Urban America: A Challenge to Federalism*  
Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations  
September 1976

When the national board at its first post-convention meeting decided to treat Cities/Urban Crisis as an interrelated focus rather than as a separate program issue, it made a virtue of necessity. The 1976 national convention had added this not-recommended issue to the proposed national program without adding money to the budget or altering plans already approved for two national study-consensus rounds during the biennium. The board's solution gives the League a creative new approach to the concept of issue interrelationships that lies at the heart of the 1976-78 program.

The board used this interrelated program approach as it began implementing the outlook for work that was part of the convention motion: "Develop an urban policy by (a) examining present national League positions, (b) studying how government programs and policies affect urban problems." An Interrelated Program Committee (made up of chairmen of the Action, Human Resources, Natural Resources, Government and International Relations Committees and chaired by Ruth Clusen) undertook the first part of the outlook for work. The results of their efforts are summarized below. The committee and the board found—not unexpectedly—that the League already has a sound basis for effective national action on a range of urban problems. NATIONAL BOARD REPORTS, REPORTS FROM THE HILL and ACTION ALERTS will be giving specific direction as action opportunities arise.

The second part of the outlook for work will be developed through our cooperative learning experi-

ence about urban problems during the biennium. Many Leagues are already finding innovative ways to explore the issues. And what we learn from these explorations—in our ongoing dialogue with one another and from your responses to the annual report questions—can help shape proposals for concerted League study that might emerge in the 1978 program-making process.

In summary, the League's approach to Cities/Urban Crisis during this biennium will be two-fold: newly focused action under existing positions, and preliminary exploration of the nature and extent of the urban crisis and the role of government at various levels. Though a formal national study/consensus is not contemplated at this time, the work that Leagues undertake on urban issues during this period can help determine what the League might do in the future to tackle this timely and challenging problem effectively. Your League's participation will be vital to our successful action and exploration.

## Organizing to do the work

Your League will want to choose whatever organizational arrangement seems to suit you best. Perhaps you will assign the responsibility for the Cities/Urban Crisis focus to an interrelated program committee (as the national board has done). Or you may decide to appoint a coordinator to work with the relevant committees already established (e.g., Environmental Quality, Land Use, Housing, Justice, Government Structure, Budget, Revenues and Taxes, Transportation, Health, etc.). Perhaps you have already geared up with a special new committee or have assigned the urban focus to an existing committee. There are ideas to be gleaned from the accounts of what Leagues are doing, later in this publication.

If your League is still trying to chart its course, here are some management suggestions:

- Build a resource file of relevant League and non-League materials. Check public, college and government libraries; watch newspapers and periodicals; send for scripts of radio and TV talk shows. After some general exploration to become familiar with the range of urban issues, try to target your information-gathering as quickly as possible on your own League's focus; otherwise, your files will overflow fast.

- Draw on the special knowledge of League experts. If yours is a special urban crisis committee, keep in touch with interrelated committees. League volunteer time is too valuable to waste in reinventing the wheel.

- Maintain liaison with your state Cities/Urban Crisis chairman and, if your League is in a metropolitan ILO, with your areawide chairman.

- Establish contacts with key public officials to further your understanding of the scope and causes of urban problems in your area. Even a League hard pressed to take on additional work can use the occasion of updating its *Know Your Community* (or region) to include a profile of urban problems gleaned from interviews with public officials (see *Know Your Community*, Pub. #288).

This COMMITTEE GUIDE is designed primarily for Leagues that are just getting started on Cities/Urban Crisis. It capitalizes on what we already have: our positions, our management techniques and League experience. It includes:

- ☐ suggestions for how to organize an urban focus;
- ☐ an assessment of the urban implications of national League positions;
- ☐ a sampling of how some Leagues are handling the Cities/Urban Crisis assignment;
- ☐ some basic questions Leagues may want to explore.

Additional information will be outlined in forthcoming urban briefs, including an annotated bibliography and highlights of significant activities and developments on the urban scene.

# Committee Guide



League of Women Voters  
of the United States  
1730 M Street, N.W.  
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## The problems intermesh

There is scarcely a sector of American life, be it city, suburb or rural area, that is not affected by the vicious cycle, profiled below, that plagues the nation's largest population centers.

- The tax base of cities diminishes as industry and more-affluent residents move to suburban areas or out of the region.

- Cities that are unable to annex suburban areas are prevented from taking advantage of metropolitan growth.

- Low-income families, who come in search of jobs, become "ghettoed" in central cities without transportation for access to expanding employment in outlying areas and without access to suburban housing because of racial and economic barriers.

- The concentration of poverty in central cities is accompanied by substandard and deteriorating housing; unrest, crime and other social problems; air, water, solid waste and noise pollution.

- Unemployment and poverty add to the cities' tax burden by increasing welfare and other costs at the same time that inflation is pumping up the cost of normal municipal services.

- In this squeeze, cities must cut the very public services that could help counter their problems: code enforcement, sanitation, education, police, sewage treatment, public transportation and the like.

- When cities cannot generate enough revenue to meet mounting costs because their tax base has been eroded by loss of industry and of middle-income residents, they are forced to borrow to cover the shortages. Growing indebtedness makes it expensive if not impossible to get additional credit.

- Tap nearby experts from business, industry, labor, colleges, think tanks, civic groups and public agencies to assure a broad view. A public forum or panel discussion can often do an effective job of consciousness-raising.

- If there are other Leagues in your area, coordinate your interviews and requests for speakers to avoid overwhelming your sources.

- Identify the other organizations concerned with urban problems and find out what they are doing.

## National League positions: the urban connections

League positions on both human resources and natural resources issues speak directly to the urban crisis. This summary of League positions, based on the national board's review, sketches in broad brush strokes their relevance in combating urban problems, either as short-term relief or as long-range solutions. But there is scarcely any part of League program, at whatever level, that is not germane.

## The positions intermesh

Our national positions on Natural Resources and Human Resources are so intermeshed that the urban connections of one can hardly be sorted out from those of another. However, we do have separate positions with different histories and distinct focal points. Below are summarized the major urban connections under each of ten relevant positions. The order of arrangement has been dictated by a desire not to be repetitive; it is not intended to suggest action priorities (e.g., land use is listed first because the position was developed through a dual EQ and HR lens and hence enables us at once to get on the table commonalities among the positions).

### Land use

The League's land use position, which has from the outset been interdisciplinary in approach, has innumerable implications for attacking problems both within the inner cities and among the various metropolitan jurisdictions. One of the basic goals stated in the

position is, in fact, to "maintain and improve the quality of existing urban communities." Unplanned metropolitan doughnut growth, with burgeoning and affluent low-density suburbs surrounding declining and poverty-laden cities, has imposed an expensive burden on all taxpayers. Land use decisions made on an areawide basis may in time become the common base for resolving environmental, economic and social problems: the location of housing, employment, energy facilities, highways, parks and the other uses to which land is put all influence the pace and character of economic growth, the severity of social problems and the quality of the environment.

The League position defines planning processes for achieving specific goals and takes into account social, environmental and economic needs. Of particular relevance to the urban problems are the League's advocacy of:

- coordinated planning and cooperation among government agencies and levels of government, which can help cities and their suburbs tackle mutual problems of air pollution, sewer capacity, transportation, economic and racial segregation, etc.;

- identification and regulation of areas affected by high-impact public facilities (transportation, energy, water, sewer, solid waste disposal) and private development (industrial parks, subdivisions, new communities, shopping centers);

- public development of land for such uses as recreation and low- and moderate-income housing, when not provided by the private sector;

- innovative community design, to enhance the urban environment for residential, business, shopping and industrial uses;

Specifically, this position provides the basis for support at the national level of:

- national land use legislation that could give states federal assistance and incentives for developing planning mechanisms;

- Coastal Zone Management Amendments of 1976 that provide for planning for onshore impacts of offshore energy development. Land use decisions could, for instance, direct employment-intensive development to give an economic boost to depressed cities near the seaboard; assistance is available for impacted cities to provide needed government services;

- the HUD 701 Comprehensive Planning and Management Program that provides a source of planning funds for state, regional and local governments. The program is designed to coordinate separate local, regional, state and federal programs in an area such as urban renewal planning with water and sewer planning;

- Section 208 (see Water).

Leagues can also apply the national LU position at the areawide level in such ways as these:

- support location of mass transportation lines and employment centers to provide cheap, convenient access to jobs and at the same time promote energy conservation and clean air;

- resist exclusionary zoning and other practices that restrict housing choices;

- support comprehensive planning processes among jurisdictions within metropolitan areas to deal with problems between central cities and suburbs;

- support innovative community design to enhance the quality of life in the city and attract in-migration from the suburbs.

### Transportation

The League's transportation position is tailor-made for dealing with the urban crisis. It emphasizes integrated transportation systems rather than highways, in recognition of the cities' challenge to provide access to jobs and simultaneously combat air pollution from auto emissions.

The position is the basis for support at the national level of:

- legislation to permit use of the highway trust fund to finance part of the costs of integrated urban transit systems;

- subsidies for both capital and operating expenses of integrated transit systems.

At the community level, the position enables Leagues to address the urban crisis by supporting such measures as:

- reserved express lanes for buses and carpools;

- commuter bicycle lanes;

- location of transportation lines to connect high-density areas with major employment, shopping and business areas.

### Income assistance

The League supports a federalized uniform income assistance system. Shifting the cost of welfare to the federal government would give cities and states financial relief from swollen welfare burdens. It would acknowledge that the migration to the cities of jobless people seeking opportunities (and the accompanying out-migration of middle- and upper-income families and jobs to the suburbs) is a national problem and that the resulting financial burden should be distributed nationwide.

This position is the basis for our support of welfare reform legislation that provides a federalized system of income assistance with minimum uniform levels of cash benefits throughout the country, adjusted for regional differences. It also authorizes work on national, state and local levels for:

- interim support of specific federal programs for income assistance and supportive services (in-kind benefits) such as unemployment compensation, health and legal services and food stamps;

- programs that encourage work as an alternative to welfare, such as job training, counseling, day care, supplemental benefits for the working poor.

### Employment

The League is committed to a full employment policy through its Human Resources positions to "combat discrimination and poverty and provide equal access to employment" and to encourage work as an alternative to welfare (including counseling, realistic training for actual jobs and financial incentives). A full-employment policy can help reverse the trend toward urban decay—fiscal, social and psychological—by stimulating the economy with new jobs, thereby providing the cities with new taxpayers and more tax revenues from both individuals and business.

The League employment position is the basis, at the national level, for support of:

- full employment legislation that emphasizes creating jobs for the employable;

- assistance to cities for public service jobs;

- job training programs;

- incentives for housing construction;

- employment-intensive antipollution projects.

### Housing

League opposition to housing discrimination and support for an adequate supply of decent housing seek to break the housing patterns that characterize inner cities. Concentration of housing available for the poor limits job opportunities, and the crowded, dilapidated living conditions breed social and environmental decay that necessitate extra public services and inhibit economic growth.

The League housing position is the basis for support at the national level of federal housing legislation (and monitoring at the community level for effective implementation), including:

- incentives for regional planning that takes into account low- and moderate-income housing needs;

- fair housing;

- programs to rehabilitate existing housing;

- prohibition of real estate and mortgage financing practices that inhibit rehabilitation or construction of housing;

- programs for construction of new public housing (also creating jobs);

- incentives and subsidies for new privately-constructed housing;

## Revenue sharing reform—the urban connection and the LWV connection

As revenue sharing formulas now stand, cities are short-changed. If their needs were better measured we could move toward an allocation formula that would sharply step up federal revenues returned to the cities. The basic thrust of League action to bring about reforms in the revenue sharing program has been to seek a larger share of the funds where needs are the greatest, to demand tighter antidiscrimination provisions and to press for stronger citizen participation requirements. Although the League has no position on the concept of revenue sharing, its action in support of reforms has been to achieve a federal aid dispersal system which addresses goals long supported by the League. The interrelationships between many of these goals and urban problems are discussed under the various program positions.

- housing assistance to the poor in the form of direct subsidy.

Leagues can also act at the state and local level, on the basis of the housing position, for such goals as:

- changing exclusionary zoning practices;

- getting uniform building codes and code enforcement.

### Education

The League's commitment to assuring every child an equal opportunity for a quality education relates to the fiscal plight of the cities both directly and indirectly. Federal aid, when given to schools that serve the disadvantaged clustered in the cities, provides direct financial assistance. Indirectly, the League commitment is linked to reintegration of the cities: quality education for all in integrated schools can help attract business and affluent residents to the city as well as give children of poverty an opportunity for a better future.

The education position is the basis for support of federal education programs and appropriations for the disadvantaged; local monitoring can help bring about effective implementation.

In addition, local and state Leagues can use the education position to work for:

- peaceful school integration through effective desegregation plans;

- equalization of the school financing burden within a state, to improve educational opportunities in overburdened cities;

- vocational education programs directed toward the potential job market.

### Air

The continued decline of urban air quality jeopardizes the physical well-being of city residents and affects the cities' job market. Hence, the League's support for strict environmental controls on auto and industrial emissions, the two major causes of air pollution in metropolitan areas, can be significant in efforts to improve the quality of our nation's urban environment. Such accompanying problems as noise, traffic congestion and health hazards can also be addressed in the context of this position. (See also Transportation.)

Our air quality position is the basis for supporting full implementation of the Clean Air Act of 1970. Of special relevance to the urban crisis are these particulars:

- opposition to rollback of deadlines for compliance with auto emission standards;

- support of stringent "nondegradation" controls in clean air areas to discourage industries from leaving urban areas so as to avoid compliance with metropolitan emission standards;

- support of financial assistance to accelerate pollution control.

(NOTE: The League recognizes that "pollution control should be considered a cost of doing business, but citizens as consumers and taxpayers must expect some costs to be passed on to them." The League position also supports some governmental assistance

to industry in order to keep plants operating that would otherwise be forced by abatement expenses to close down.)

### Water

The League's water quality position, reflecting a long-time commitment to water treatment, conservation and development, has increasingly direct implications for the urban environment. The intensive use and abuse of urban waterways pose a health hazard for city populations.

On the basis of our water position, we support implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 and of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA) of 1972 and its subsequent amendments. Of particular interest is the areawide planning process under Section 208, FWPCA, to bring metropolitan jurisdictions together for joint water and land use planning. Specifically, the water quality position speaks to the urban crisis through support of:

- overall long-range planning and development of water resources;

- comprehensive planning, development and water management on a regional basis (i.e., municipal sewage treatment plants of a size consistent with future growth and land use plans);

- limited federal financial assistance to industry as a means of expediting abatement of water pollution, based in part on "economic base of community . . . and extent and complexity of pollution problem of the company and region."

### Solid waste

The League position recognizes the critical relationships between solid waste management and urban centers. Increasing volumes of urban refuse to be collected and disposed of and the growing pressure to use more and more land for disposal have intensified the need for effective sanitary measures to reduce, reclaim and recycle solid wastes.

The position is the basis for support at the national level of:

- legislation for a comprehensive solid waste management policy that includes a reduction in solid waste generation, resource recovery and safe transportation and disposal of wastes;

- federal financial assistance to cities for solid waste planning and implementation.

At the regional and local level Leagues also:

- support mandatory bottle deposit legislation;

- spur regional planning for solid waste management;

- promote local applications of EPA guidelines for land disposal, incineration, source separation, resource recovery and bottle deposits.

### Energy conservation

The League's energy conservation position can alleviate (although not solve) the urban predicament by paring fuel costs in city-owned buildings and vehicles. In addition, transportation policies oriented to energy conservation—mass transit, carpooling, disincentives for use of autos by single-occupant commuters—reinforce measures to solve related urban problems. (See Air, Employment, Transportation.)

The energy conservation position is the basis for support of:

- federal financial incentives for large users of energy in meeting thermal efficiency standards, thus lowering fuel consumption in city-owned buildings;

- federal aid to help low-income families weatherize their homes.

Leagues can also support at the state or community levels:

- a pace-setting role for city governments in energy conservation;

- energy recovery from solid wastes;

- utility rate structures that encourage conservation (e.g., peak load pricing);

- utilization of heat wasted by electricity generating plants to heat and provide hot water for public buildings;

- efficiency standards in building codes;

- building ordinances oriented to energy conservation.

### Government

**Open government:** The League's commitment to open government, voiced in many of our positions but most expressly in our national government position, has pervasive implications for action on urban issues. Leagues that have applied this position to a wide range of local and state problems will need few cues about how it can enable them to speak out on at least some aspects of the problems of citizens in cities. "Representative, accountable and responsive" . . . there's many a case in which a demand that governments live up to these standards would be a move toward more livable cities.

**Government criteria:** "Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs and performance must meet these criteria:

- competent personnel with clear responsibilities,

- coordination among agencies and levels of government,

- adequate financing,

- effective enforcement, and

- well-defined channels for citizen input and review."

Those criteria, which conclude the 1976-78 national program, afford Leagues still other possibilities for establishing an "urban connection." At the national level, we apply them as yardsticks for federal government performance. A League could make them the basis for action on a host of urban problems, whether covered by a League position or not. Consider only one of them, "well-defined channels for citizen input and review." That criterion could be the basis for helping to reduce the alienation that many city residents feel—by working, for example, to get better distribution of board and commission appointments, or to establish a network of neighborhood advisory committees, or perhaps to gain access to government-union negotiations.

## Finding urban connections in state, regional & local positions

Just as the national board's review of national positions discloses many urban connections so also can a state, local or ILO board's review of positions and action. Viewed through an urban lens, most local League positions—whether related to local schools, municipal finances, juvenile services or housing code enforcement—can take on a new dimension. So can a state League's work on administration of criminal justice or financing education. Of course, a metropolitan ILO's positions on such issues as mass transportation or regional arrangements for planning and decisionmaking have always had distinct urban overtones. The object of the exercise: to help attune your League to the creative use of existing positions in the context of an urban strategy.

Somé Leagues will find in the new urban focus the very impetus they've been seeking, to forge new action potential from the mix or match of existing positions. New "positions" often emerge not through the artifice of reordering words but through the practice of looking at specific situations—a new legislative proposal, perhaps—and seeing how established positions might apply.

Remember that interpreting positions (that is, deciding whether a position is applicable to a particular situation) is the responsibility of the League board at the appropriate level for action. A state board, for example, determines whether it makes sense to apply a national position to a bill before the state legislature. A local board would decide whether it would be appropriate to use the national criterion, "coordination among agencies and levels of government," as a basis for action on, say, the mayor's proposed new referral system for first-time offenders. Always influencing that decision would, of course, be the board's judgment about the state of member understanding.

## Learning from the pacesetters

The experiences of Leagues that are already working on urban problems demonstrates the rich variety of approaches to be found in the League's new focus on Cities/Urban Crisis. Some of these



Leagues got off to a running start after the new focus was added to the national program; others have been living among and working on urban problems for a long time.

## "The city" as case in point

The NEW YORK CITY League, which is considering its own city as a case study, has already produced a series of reports on that city's financial problems. The compilation of the reports prepared by the League's City Budget Committee covers the city's three-year financial plan, legislation, the city university, a look at hospitals and welfare (including discussion of federal programs) and a section that may have even further implications for other cities: "Is New York Unique?"

The SAN FRANCISCO League used the new focus as the theme of a public forum, "Is the Urban Crisis on the Fast Track from New York to San Francisco?" Business, civic and government leaders were invited to discuss provocative questions raised by the League. The forum doubled as a fundraiser and netted \$1,000.

The SEATTLE League was out in front when members added "Vision of a City" to its 1975-76 program. The League launched a two-year study in order "to create an awareness of what an urban community at its best might be, to illustrate that this means a good city for the poor as well as for the middle class, to demonstrate that urban decline is not inevitable and that such trends as alienation, feelings of insignificance, suburban sprawl, wastage of resources and loss of control over the destiny of city life can be reversed." A committee of about a dozen members was formed, including many newer members, whose backgrounds in urban planning, economics and history attracted them to this unique League study. They began with a philosophical examination of the elements of an ideal city and of factors that affect downtown vitality and neighborhood quality. Their immersion in written material, interviews, committee meetings (with speakers—from bureaucrats to ministers to community club leaders), meeting observation, university courses and field trips to neighborhoods produced a provocative study booklet, an all-member informational meeting, unit discussions and, by the end of the first year, a new position to complement the League's established physical and social planning goals. The new position:

*In our view of the most liveable city, individuals, community organizations, business and city government would cooperate to include the following elements:*

1. Diversity of people, of educational, cultural, recreational activities and of economic opportunities.
2. Institutions which are people-oriented, accessible to all and responsive to citizens' needs.
3. Good schools.
4. Personal safety.
5. A sense of community with both the neighborhood and the city as a whole.
6. Diversity of places, services and activities to encourage the use of the downtown.
7. Facilities for living in the downtown area.
8. Variety of ages, backgrounds and income levels among neighborhood residents.
9. Strong community organizations as a means of citizen participation.
10. Stability of neighborhoods.

Now the Seattle League is studying how citizens can achieve these goals, with an initial focus on zoning and its implications for citizen participation and neighborhoods.

This "vision of a city" approach has already been adopted by the DALLAS League.

Unlike some cities experiencing declining population, LEXINGTON-Fayette County, Kentucky—a consolidated city-county government—is experiencing part of the rapid Sun Belt growth. The League is looking at community-wide impact of endeavors by public and private decision makers to channel residential growth into downtown in order to contain urban sprawl and reverse the decay and decline of downtown. A side effect has been replacement of the black and low-income residents, who have

lived for years in downtown neighborhoods, by middle- and upper-income newcomers in "historic neighborhoods" of the inner city. The League has been particularly concerned about the human costs to low- and moderate-income families whose lives have been disrupted by bulldozing of their homes for a 16-acre civic center parking lot downtown. Even more may be displaced by planned access roads to the center—while replacement housing is diminishing in quality and quantity.

To get a handle on the Cities/Urban Crisis focus, the committee has been reviewing the results of past local League studies, reading information to give themselves an overview of urban problems in a national context, observing (e.g., a recent public conference on downtown living) and consulting with resource experts in political science, sociology and on community power structures to help get a perspective on Lexington's problems.

## Using metro linkages

Leagues in the CLEVELAND area, through their ILO in CUYAHOGA COUNTY, are using the new Cities/Urban Crisis focus to join forces with a public forum group in the city to launch an intensive public study of the basic causes of that area's urban problems. A month-long series of meetings will confront four basic issues:

- *economic realities*: money flow, tax structure, tax base, bond market, government funding, banking practices, private-sector investment, wage and price structures;
- *business realities*: business and professional organizations, business and foundation boards of directors, industry and business relocation patterns;
- *political realities*: visible and hidden political power structures, ethnic and minority politics, king-makers;
- *urban-suburban realities*: population shifts, housing patterns, transportation patterns, redevelopment.

The League steering committee for this effort was made up of the 12 local League presidents, a county-wide ILO study chairman, a League coordinator, representatives of the ILO board and Cleveland LWVEF board. After the series of public meetings, the ILO plans to expand its committee for indepth study of the topics and possible solutions. Materials will be developed for the public and for local League discussion units. The League regards its study as two years of gathering and dispersing information, to be followed by at least one year of consensus taking. The aim: innovative action to change the future of their urban center and the suburbs surrounding them.

In the WASHINGTON, D.C. area a National Capital ILO Urban Crisis committee, composed of the Urban Crisis chairmen from each of the local Leagues, is coordinating research on the urban related positions of each local League. At an ILO workshop representatives of local Leagues will look at what the housing positions (the initial focus) have in common and try to reconcile possible conflicts to see if an areawide League approach to housing problems can be formulated. The ILO also coordinated coverage of the hearings of the House Banking, Currency and Housing Committee, "The Rebirth of the American City."

A double-barreled combination of a metropolitan League structure and a metropolitan political structure (with some clout) provides an effective basis for regional League action on urban issues within the seven-county metropolitan area around MINNEAPOLIS and ST. PAUL:

□ The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) works to solve problems that extend beyond municipal boundaries, such as health care, housing, solid waste, transportation, taxes, government structure, land use and environmental quality. Representatives of the 35 participating Leagues study, monitor and lobby on these and other issues, all in an areawide context.

□ The Metropolitan Council, the areawide planning and coordinating agency created by the state legislature, provides the vehicle for achieving urban solutions in the areawide context. Unlike a typical council of governments, composed of representatives from each local government, the Metropolitan Council is composed of appointed members from districts apportioned on a one-person-

one-vote formula; it is not dependent on the participation or financial support of the individual jurisdictions.

The Council develops policies and goals for overall metropolitan growth, often by linking physical development plans with social problems. It attempts to meet the area's growth problems on several fronts. For instance, it reviews capital budgets of areawide transit, waste, airport and park agencies for conformity with the Metropolitan Council plan. It also can reward local governments with priority for funding for roads, parks, sewers if their local development plans meet areawide planning goals. But the real secret of the Metropolitan Council's effectiveness, in the view of CMAL, is the degree to which citizen participation is built into the decision-making process. Conflicts can be resolved early on, and wide understanding of goals and procedures facilitates acceptance of the Council's decisions.

CMAL uses national, state and its own positions to help shape policy and implement it—by serving on Metropolitan Council committees that make policy recommendations, by testifying at meetings and hearings where policy is being decided, by dealing informally with staff and council members. When existing positions need to be supplemented, CMAL formulates new positions after study. Such was the case when they wanted to be able to speak to the state's unique Fiscal Disparities Bill (see UPDATE ON COMMUNITY ISSUES, LWVEF #652). CMAL concluded that the measure, which provides for sharing 40 percent of growth in the commercial-industrial tax base among local governmental units, would counteract competition among local governments to attract industry, thereby reducing a major barrier to areawide planning.

The ILO also promotes a metro-wide view of metro-wide issues among local Leagues, local governments and the community as a whole through League membership on local boards, commissions and citizens committees; informational meetings and publications; metro-oriented action by local Leagues in their own municipalities, and cooperation with other groups.

## Using state linkages

With the blessing of the state League, the LWV of Cook County (Chicago area ILO) is developing a system to take the lead in ILLINOIS' Cities/Urban Crisis focus, a strategy that will stretch League personnel and prevent duplication of effort by many Leagues. Tentative plans call for a committee review of urban ramifications of League positions and research on problems of cities in the state, including Chicago, as they relate to state, regional and local positions. The resulting information will be disseminated not only to local Leagues in the ILO but statewide by the state League. The approach anticipates cooperation among Leagues and among program committees.

In MASSACHUSETTS the state League is taking advantage of its long experience with fiscal issues by examining the relationships between central cities and their suburbs or other nearby communities. The state Cities/Urban Crisis committee has prepared and sent to each local League some basic statistics about its own municipality and about its central city—median income, estimated equalized property tax rates, state assessments and distribution of funds. This information allows each community to compare its state receipts and assessments and to compare the ratio with that of other communities. At the same time each local League was asked to complete a questionnaire designed to build an understanding of how much residents of adjacent communities depend on the central city—for personal services such as hospitals, courts, legal counseling, etc.; transportation; education; entertainment and the arts; shopping; special events; business services and employment (either jobs in the city or the city as a source of workers). The state committee will make the questionnaire and feedback from the review of statistics (which tend to show tax inequities) the basis for discussion at spring unit meetings. Starting in February the state League will sponsor a series of seminars on cities: Fiscal Policies and Problems; Planning and Management; Quality of Life; Employment; Housing; Transportation; and Regionalization. The League then will feed results into a School of State Affairs, an annual public conference sponsored by the state League.

Order from League of Women Voters of the United States, 1730 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In MARYLAND, the relationship between the major city and the other communities in the state is the initial focus. After holding a workshop for representatives of local Leagues, the state League committee is producing a balance sheet showing the assets and liabilities of Baltimore in relation to the rest of the state. A tour of Baltimore harbor in conjunction with the workshop gave out-of-towners a chance to go-see that city's importance to the state.

## Developing insights through projects

The IOWA League is at work on a humanities grant-funded slide presentation to be used as a starting point for community discussions about present and future life in the city: "Cities in Transition—Up or Out?" The producers are using examples of ways cities are making themselves into interesting, vital places to live (and the opposite!), such as historic preservation, outstanding urban beauty (or visual degradation), creative ideas for utilizing old buildings, landscaping, transportation and diffusion of services. Public broadcasting is already considering broadening the discussion base via a presentation of issues followed by a public call-in program.

In addition, many Leagues are participating in urban-oriented projects sponsored by the League of Women Voters Education Fund. For instance, in 1975-76 eight Leagues conducted demonstration projects on improving local government productivity. Last summer one of eight LWVEF land use workshops was concerned with urban sprawl and ways to revitalize the inner city. Currently Leagues in 20 selected areas, chosen partly on the basis of problems caused by urbanization and industrialization, are spurring citizen involvement in regional planning for waste treatment management (under Section 208, FWPCA of 1972).

Leagues also have worked on General Revenue Sharing monitoring, on education finance reform and on unemployment surveys—all with strong urban implications. If your League is one that has participated (or has the opportunity to take part in future national urban-related projects), you have undoubtedly developed insights that will make League action on urban issues more effective, regardless of the level. (P.S. If your League is seeking funding for special projects, consider the urban focus in designing your proposals.)

## Exploring together

Work under the Cities/Urban Crisis focus can be a mutual learning experience among national, state and local Leagues and Inter-League Organizations. Although no formal national League study/consensus is anticipated, Leagues may want to consider some basic questions as they explore urban issues on the national scene and in their own communities:

- What are the basic dimensions of the urban crisis? (Without becoming bogged down in the complexities, try to gain an overall perspective.)
- What are danger signals of impending urban disaster? What are the early warning signs of urban decline—or recovery? Where does your community stand?
- What are the significant impacts, negative and positive, of government policies, programs and procedures as you see them in your community? Federal? State? Local?
- What are the options for reform? What changes are required at the local level? Regional level? State level? Federal level?
- Do you see an area in which the national League focus should be directed? The national board will be looking for your comments in the annual report: "What areas of emphasis would your League like to see for the second program year?"

*"While we as yet have no national urban policy, it appears that there is at last a recognition of this void, and a growing awareness of the need to reassess and coordinate existing programs and policies according to their impact on the urban scene. Turning awareness into action, however, requires great sensitivity to the numerous complexities of the urban environment. . . ."*

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Perhaps the most significant trend, analyzed by editors William Gorham and Nathan Glazer, is that of people leaving cities in unprecedented numbers. In the decade 1960-1970, about 3.5 million Americans moved out of the nation's sixty largest cities. Between 1970 and 1975, those cities have lost 1.4 million people annually.

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## Sense and Nonsense in Urban Policy

By IRVING KRISTOL

It was always a more squalid than gracious city, but it used to be a place of opportunity for its teeming population. In the last quarter of a century, however, it has fallen on hard times. Its manufacturing base has steadily declined; unemployment has skyrocketed; the welfare rolls have been increasing inexorably; the municipal treasury is effectively bankrupt; whole areas have been vandalized and abandoned; crime, alcoholism and other species of social pathology have reached quite incredible heights.

The national government has not been inattentive. It has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into subsidized housing and subsidized employment. But the only visible consequence of such a compassionate policy has been to increase the size of the dependent population and further to demoralize it. The entire city today seems on the verge of becoming a violent slum, and the policymakers are at their wits' end as to what to do about it.

The city in question is Glasgow, Scotland, inhabited by a people famous, if not for their sobriety, then at least for their diligence, thrift and self-reliance. And this should give us pause for thought, as we await President Carter's new urban program. For it suggests how intractable the problems of a declining city can be, and how these problems can be unwittingly magnified by well-meaning but erroneous social policies.

thing that is certain is that the clock cannot be turned back.

Nevertheless, a great many people seem determined to try to turn the clock back. They have apparently convinced themselves that the only reason these cities are in crisis is because the federal government has discriminated against them, by not spending enough money within the city limits, or by tempting urban residents to emigrate in order to enjoy the tax benefit associated with the deductibility of mortgage interest on a suburban house.

There is little substance to such notions. Canada has no deductibility for mortgage interest payments, and the process of suburbanization has proceeded there just as in the United States. Most people who move to the suburbs not only live there but work

terproductive. The kinds of jobs (unskilled, for the most part) these people can work at are not in these cities, nor will they ever be again. New York's central business district has lost over 400,000 jobs in the last decade. What "community development" program can possibly match that deficit?

It will at once be asked: But where will those poor people go? Well, since this is a free country, they will go where they wish to go—presumably where the jobs are. Government certainly can and should help them make the transition, and there is no reason why government should not be generous in its help, since the money would be well spent. But does it really make any sense today for the government to continue spending \$65,000 to build a two-bedroom apartment in a low-income housing project in New York? Or to offer make-work jobs—truly "dead-end jobs"—at \$3 an hour to unemployed teenagers, who quickly learn to have contempt for their work and a corresponding low opinion of themselves?

### Fresh Thinking Needed

The test of any "urban policy" for the poor should be whether it prepares them to leave areas that lack opportunity, not to stay there. It is impossible to believe that we could not devise such programs if we set our minds to it. But official thinking, warped by political pressures, is determined not to think along any such lines. Which is why we all ought to be pleased that current budgetary restraints will make it difficult for President Carter's new urban policy to be much more than an aggregate of token gestures.

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*The Carter administration thinks that an urban development bank, giving loans at low rates of interest, will tempt employers to build factories in the South Bronx. Not even interest-free loans would do that.*



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