

John Lacker

maps, notes

President Lundgren

REMARKS

~~Set Attractions~~
Commercial

BY

edu

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Pol. Rally

MINNESOTA SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS

Yonago

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

NOVEMBER 6, 1969

Of all the problems facing us in this decade, by far
 the worst is the failure of our urban systems. We are a
 nation of cities. Over 70 percent of our total population
 now lives in 212 urban areas and demographers tell us
 that by the year 2000 our urban population will rise to
 250 million -- Some 90 Percent of the anticipated total
 population at the brink of the 21st century.

But these figures don't begin to tell the urban story,
 for only the top and the bottom of the economic spectrum
 remain in the central cities -- and the bottom predominates.

↳ Already the inner cities have become the poor-
houses of America, strangling in the tight white suburban
nooses that surround them. ↳ Already industry is fleeing
the cities in hot pursuit of the middle class employee they
prefer -- who earlier fled in search of green grass, safe
streets and decent schools for their children.

↳ Left behind in the cities are those with all the
options (families who can afford private schools and high
rise apartments) and those with no options -- the families
who can't afford to move.

↳ Everybody worries about it. But the talkers who
have made discussion of urban problems the intellectual
parlor game of the 60s are far too often the escapists.

↳ They live in the suburbs -- and worry! They occupy
penthouses -- and worry! ^{and,} Too much talk comes from people
who don't like cities, who want to get away from them.

∟ I do like cities. I like the heterogeneity and diversity,
the gaudy and colorful contrasts and the intense throbbing
vitality. ∟ The contemporary American city seems to me to
offer the fullest, richest panoply of life experience available
to any people at any time on any part of the globe.

∟ In large part this is the result of America's fortunate
cultural diversity. ∟ We have restaurants and theatres and
films from every nation represented in our cities. ∟ Our major
urban areas offer unparalleled shopping, recreation and
cultural activity. ∟ The world's greatest symphonies and ballets,
writers and lecturers offer their wares on our home turf.

∟ Without leaving town we have the opportunity to view
the Bolshoi and the Beattles. ∟ Our department stores offer Dior
copies before the originals are off the runways in Paris.

∟ Our restaurant offerings range from blintzes and Peking
Duck to Shishkabob and Smorgasbord. ∟ Spaghetti and egg roll

are so familiar that many of us think of them as American food.

↳ The suburbs ^{often} lack this cosmopolitan diversity. Of course, they also lack the distressing every-day confrontation with poverty, filth and decay. With despair and dismay and delay.

↳ Over two years ago, I proposed a Marshall Plan for the cities. I did so from the conviction that only a program of this scope, only one of this vision, could generate the comprehensive support which is essential to the solution of the urban dilemma.

↳ My years of observing the massive and complex problems of the cities have taught me a great deal of humility when it comes to having all the answers, but I think I can identify some causes of failure and point to some hopeful avenues we might fruitfully explore.

∟ In reciting the facts and statistics of the urban crises, we usually forget that this is fundamentally a political crises -- an issue which, in the end, can only be resolved by concerted political action.

∟ Our failures to date are primarily political failures -- an inability or unwillingness of the people's elected representatives to act on a scale which reflects the magnitude of the crisis.

∟ I think the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations were moving on urban problems. Not that we had perfect wisdom -- no indeed. This is a trial and error business, my friends, and let no one tell you different.

∟ But we did care about these problems and we did establish an urban policy and we did create a climate in which change could occur.

*Dept HUD
Model Cities
Housing Act 1968*

Landmark legislation such as the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Model Cities Act and the Housing Act of 1968 were true steps forward. But institutional devices cannot progress in a vacuum. It is illusory to believe that sustained headway is possible without the political backing of our elected officials -- and without the support of the people who send them to office.

↳ Today the national government is in retreat.

↳ The Mayors of our large cities are crying out for help -- and the Nixon Administration is pushing for the most extravagant and questionable weapons system in all of mankind's history. ABM-MIRV

Lindsay

↳ Six weeks ago the City Council of one of our smaller cities -- Toledo -- declared a state of emergency and asked the assistance of Congress in subordinating the Supersonic

Aircraft Transport program to urgent domestic requirements.

↳ How did the Administration respond? With a request to Congress for nearly \$4 billion to rebuild the Merchant Marine fleet.

↳ I do not mean to imply that the Federal government is responsible for the problems of our beleaguered municipalities, nor that the Federal government could, with the best of wills, solve these problems independently.

↳ If we are assigning blame, it may be laid at many doorsteps. The nation's courthouses and city halls often seem to lack zeal for reform. ↳ There is plenty of limited vision and notable lack of dedication to be found among state governments.

↳ All over America we encounter an endless vista of municipalities and special service districts with overlapping responsibilities -- with widely varying and too often obsolete

building codes, with haphazard zoning regulations, and with piecemeal programs to correct these deficiencies.

↳ We need a national urban strategy to define basic social, economic and demographic objectives in order to guide our urban, suburban and rural growth.

↳ Let me be candid: our present governmental structure -- federal, state and local -- is incapable of planning and achieving the living environment our wealth and technology permit -- and which our survival requires.

↳ New urban planning and other single-purpose governmental agencies have been layered upon old and fossilized institutional structures. ^{all too often,} When one unit of government is prepared to act, others are not.

↳ Without cooperation and coordination of these disparate units, our resources, energy and confidence are frittered away and lethargy sets in.

↙ The Federal government -- the only government
 common to us all -- has one notable advantage in this
 arena. It has money.

↙ And make no mistake, ~~my friends~~, money is more
 than the mortar -- it buys the bricks! Money ^{may} ~~may~~ not
 solve the problems of the cities, but it sure helps and I
don't think we'll find many mayors saying no thank you, *to money,*
we'll take ideas instead,

But we need ideas too.

↙ I have proposed creating a National Urban Develop-
ment Bank financed through subscription of public and
private funds. ↙ The Bank would underwrite the special
risks attendant upon solving our most critical urban
problems -- low cost housing for example. ↙ Securities sold
 by the Bank would also attract private investment capital
for the revitalization of our cities. ↙ Federal funds would be

Regional Banks

used as seed money to get the Bank started.

< I have proposed a National Urban Homestead Act
 to subsidize land costs for qualified private housing
developments. Such a subsidy would make possible the use
 of high-priced urban and suburban land to relieve the
population pressure of the inner city.

< I long ago proposed a program of federal support for
state equalization of vital community services -- education
and welfare, for example -- to provide immediate assistance
 to ~~helping~~ local communities that have exhausted their
property tax base.

< Many of our cities are still using 18th and 19th century
management models as we head into the 21st century.

< I think we could profitably borrow some management
techniques from industry and apply them to the wheezy
machinery of local government. In the supersonic age,

SPAC
r

Americans seem more willing to modernize mechanical systems than ^{govt} management systems.

Habits become ingrained and the untried is often frightening. We know what we have, and we aren't a bit sure what we might get. But fear must be overcome. We must open some rusty windows and welcome constructive new ideas.

L Absent change, we'd still be delivering mail by Pony Express instead of building nose cones and re-entry capsules.

L ^{Without} ~~Absent~~ change, you gentlemen would still be building with logs and stone instead of the rich range of contemporary materials at your disposal today.

You would still be dealing with such simple problems as climate protection instead of worrying about the application of your professional expertise to the community's concerns.

Your whole convention is a sign of change. The notion

-12-

of architects convening to discuss "involvement" and the
total environment of the core city and how to house the
poorer tenth of our population is a pretty new one.

And an essential one. We cannot bring health and
 vigor back to our cities without you. We cannot pioneer
 the modern city without you. - *Learn from Europe*
International

∟ I have proposed that on July 4, 1976, we dedicate a
new American city, one which exemplifies the highest
standards of beauty and excellence.

∟ Bi-centennial City would test new ideas in land use,
housing technology and community development. ∟ Its con-
 struction would attract the finest talents in America. ∟ By
 reflecting what is best as well as what is possible, it would
 become a pilot city for a new America. ∟ It would provide the
visible evidence that progress is possible -- one of the essential
factors in the success of any enterprise.

L Our city needs are as diverse as the American metropolis itself. There is no perfect plan by which a city can best serve the needs of its residents. There is no optimum pattern to follow in forming buildings and land into the perfect city. There is no universal guideline that will guarantee a fit between our people and their dwellings and spaces.

The only generalization that we can make is that this conjuncture must come about and that our architects and city planners must show us the way.

L Cities, like people, can have friendly or forbidding faces. We can no longer plan our cities as islands, we must plan them as broad avenues of invitation, ^{yes,} two-way streets that beckon and invite passage and commerce between the city and the suburb.

Neighborhoods
 Sense of community
 Jobs + People + Housing
 Schools, etc nearby.

Most of today's cities grew like Topsy and their deterioration is proceeding in much the same fashion. The architects of their renaissance must restructure our cities as radiant centers of high density land use.

and High density does not necessarily mean overcrowding, *and*

low density does not preclude it. *L* On Park Avenue, density is 1000 to the acre. In Watts it is 20 per acre. But there are limits: if all of us were packed together like the residents of

✓ | Harlem, the whole population of the United States - over ²⁰⁰ million people - could be squeezed onto Long Island.

~~The new frontier is not out-sprawl but up-high?~~
~~rise and multi-use residential and service centers.~~

L Basically I'm an optimist. I think we can cut the white noose around the neck of our cities. *L* With our fast paced technological expansion, there is no reason why our cities should be dirty or dull or ugly or polluted or unsafe to walk

in and impossible to drive in.

↳ There is no reason why cities should not be good places in which to live and work and bring up our children.

↳ What it takes -- in addition to money and ideas -- is concern. No responsible member of the community dumps trash on his neighbor's lawn, and industry must observe the same strictures in disposing of chemical and liquid wastes.

↳ Housing codes must be enforced; by their neglect the city itself subsidizes blight, slums and sprawl.

Federal housing standards -- allowed to stand without revision for almost three decades -- must be brought in tune with today's housing expectations. As former HUD Secretary Robert Weaver said, the best answer to slum housing is to build enough good housing.

We have a long agenda for change:

. . . Schools are worst where educational needs are greatest.

air
jet

. . Garbage collection is slowest where the danger to health is greatest.

. . Police protection is least effective where crime rates are highest.

. . Health services are most limited where the need is greatest.

. . Public transport is worst where private vehicles are fewest.

*Need of
Public
Transport*

These things we know and they are arresting certainties. Equally arresting is our knowledge that it is a waste of time to remake our cities physically without a concurrent attack on the painful social problems bred by their decay.

This is a job for all of us and it is an urgent job for our cities fail, so in the end will our nation; and it is the personal investment of each of us that will in large part determine the ultimate outcome.

###



Dec 6, 1969

spec

MINNESOTA SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS
OF
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

DONALD W. HASSENSTAB
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

514 FOSHAY TOWER
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55402
(612) 339-7481

September 3, 1969

Mr. Hubert H. Humphrey
Macalester College
1600 Grand Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55105

Dear Mr. Humphrey:

This letter is to confirm our discussion of yesterday in which you have agreed to serve as keynote speaker to the Minnesota Society of Architects Convention on Thursday, November 6, 1969 at the noon luncheon.

You are invited to speak on any topic which you deem desirable for this group of people. I do note that Stuart Udall will be making a presentation as a part of the Overview Group and that the theme of the Convention is "Involvement". This involvement will be centered principally around mass housing, current research on problems in "Core City" and related discussion on the architects' role in the solution of these problems.

As you will be out of town prior to the Convention, I shall contact you early in the week of November 2nd and make arrangements for meeting you prior to the luncheon. I anticipate that perhaps I should call for you around 11:30 on November 6th. I shall also discuss the honorarium with you at that time. If you care to contact me about this, please do so at The Cerny Associates, 227-8201, 339-8371 or my home which is 926-3805.

Jane and I thank you and Muriel for your note on our marriage. Have a productive trip and I am looking forward to seeing you in November.

Sincerely,

JOHN HAGEN

JH/jc

ASSOCIATED CHAPTERS
MINNEAPOLIS ST. PAUL NORTHEASTERN MINN.

*Call Paul Wallace
man. H.H.I. office for data*

April 25, 1969

MEMORANDUM

Re: 1969 Minnesota Society of Architects
State Convention November 5, 6, & 7, 1969

From: John Lackens and Herb Ketcham

The following is an outline of our thoughts regarding the 1969 convention. These thoughts have been derived from a number of meetings.

A number of titles or themes for the convention have been discussed and to date, a specific theme has not been determined but we propose to develop the convention theme around the concept of total environmental design and the architects' role regarding this effort. We feel that specific emphasis should be placed on the overwhelming problem of the construction of mass housing. We feel that there should be an attempt to give the convention continuity and propose that a moderator be selected who would establish the theme at the commencement of the convention, act as moderator for the panel discussions and summarize the thoughts of the convention at the closing.

We propose that the awards jury be selected from a group from Chicago and suggest the following names for consideration:

Fred Koeper - Instructor at the University of Illinois, Chicago
Ralph Youngrin - Practicing in his own firm
Ben or Harry Weese
Gene Summers - C. F. Murphy
Bruce Graham or Walter Neitch - SOM
Edward Dart - Practicing in his own firm
Don Hanson - Head of Architectural School, University of Illinois

We also propose that with each award submittal, three slides be included in order that all of the award submittals can be shown continually throughout the entire convention.

We also propose that the slides of the 1969 National AIA Honor Award Winning Projects be displayed at the convention. In addition to showing slides of all of the MSA award submittals, we propose that, as in the past, 40" x 40" square mounts be displayed of the MSA award winners.

We suggest that emphasis should be placed on the convention graphics and publicity in order that we might encourage participation in the convention by not only architects but clients, governmental officials, students, etc. For this reason, we are proposing an evening cocktail hour to which we would invite clients, governmental officials, engineers, contractors, etc. We would hope to encourage members of the MSA to invite guests to this evening function.

With regard to the convention schedule, we propose that the mornings either be left open or only business sessions be scheduled. In order that our schedule be attractive to the exhibitors, we are proposing that there be a 1½ hour period prior to the luncheon and a one hour period following the luncheon for viewing of exhibits.

The following is a proposal of the schedule and speakers. More than one speaker is indicated for one session in order that we can consider a number of alternates.

Tuesday, November 4, 1969

Evening 5:30 - 7:30 P.M. MSA President's Reception - Minnesota Club.

Wednesday, November 5, 1969

Morning 11:00 - 12:30 A.M. Registration and viewing of exhibits.

Luncheon 12:30 - 2:00 P.M. Opening of convention by MSA President Louie Lundgren.

Moderator: Brief ten minute introduction by the convention moderator to establish the convention theme.

Fred Koeper
Wolf Von Eckhart
Ada Louis Huxtable

Intruduction of Keynote Speaker:

Mayor Thomas Byrne

Keynote Speaker:

Hubert Humphrey
Ada Louise Huxtable
George Romney
Fritz Mondale
Douglas Edwards

Afternoon 2:00 - 3:00 P.M. Viewing of exhibits.
 3:00 - 5:00 P.M. Presentation entitled "Industrialization in Architecture". A presentation by representatives of large industry regarding their research and development and proposals for the construction of mass housing.

Aerojet General
General Electric
Minnesota Mining
Jones & Laughlin
Lockheed Aircraft
United States Steel
Boise Cascade
Gulf Oil

Wednesday, November 5, 1969 (Continued)

Evening 5:00 - 7:00 P.M. Viewing of exhibits, hors d'oeuvres and cocktails in the exhibition area for clients, engineers, contractors and guests. Drink tickets provided for guests and MSA members.

Thursday, November 6, 1969

Morning 9:30 - 10:00 A.M. Coffee in the exhibit area.
10:00 - 11:00 A.M. First Business Session.
11:00 - 12:30 A.M. Viewing of exhibits.

Luncheon 12:30 - 2:00 P.M. Speaker:
Stuart L. Udall
George Romney
Lawrence Halprin
Neil Mitchel
Ada Louise Huxtable

Afternoon 2:00 - 3:00 P.M. Viewing of exhibits.
3:00 - 5:00 P.M. Panel discussion regarding total environment design and housing.

PARTICIPANTS:

Group A:

Convention Moderator
Paul Rudolph - Architect
Ed Logue - Boston Redevelopment Authority
Neil Mitchel - Systems Approach Engineer - Boston
Moshe Safdi - Designer of Habitat

Group B:

Convention Moderator
Walter Neitch - SOM - Chicago
Bertram Goldberg - Chicago Architect
Edmund Bacon - Philadelphia
Lawrence Halprin - Landscape Architect

Evening 5:00 - 6:30 P.M. Viewing of exhibits, buffet and cocktails in the exhibit area. (Free ticket for buffet, cash bar.)
6:30 - 8:30 P.M. Evening panel discussion. This will be an extension of the afternoon session with the same panelists and will encourage audience participation with regard to panelists' comments established at the afternoon session.

Friday, November 7, 1969

Morning	9:00 - 9:30 A.M.	Coffee in the exhibit area.
	9:30 - 11:00 A.M.	Final Business Session and Election of MSA Officers.
	11:00 - 12:30 A.M.	Viewing of exhibits.
Luncheon	12:30 - 3:00 P.M.	<u>Speaker:</u> Ada Louise Huxtable Wolf Von Eckhart - Washington Post Architectural Critic. Mayor John Lindsay John Andrews - Architect - Toronto, Canada
		Summary of convention and panel discussion by convention moderator.
Afternoon	3:00 - 4:00 P.M.	Viewing of exhibits.
Evening	6:30 - 7:30 P.M.	President's Reception.
	7:30 - 12:30 P.M.	Awards Banquet and Dance. Master of ceremonies to be the convention moderator or possibly a television personality such as Dave Moore of WCCO.

HHH/rw INV: *ACCEPT* Pending/ Minn. Soc.
of Architects
Nov. 6, 1969

September 3, 1969

Dear John:

As per our phone call, I will be with the Minnesota Society of Architects at noon on November 6th at the St. Paul Hilton Hotel.

I would appreciate any suggestions you might have as to how I can best participate and be helpful to the Society. In other words -- some points or suggestions that will make my speech meaningful and on a subject of concern to architects. Send anything that you have in mind to my office here at Macalester.

Sincerely,

Hubert H. Humphrey

Mr. John Hagen
The Cerny Associates, Inc.
Hamm Building
St. Paul, Minnesota
55102

For Release: Thursday PM's
November 6, 1969

For information: Caryl Conner
202-333-8750

Humphrey Discusses Problems of the Cities --
Says "The national government is in retreat"

Former Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey today called on architects and city planners to "pioneer the modern city."

"High density does not necessarily mean overcrowding, low density does not preclude it," Humphrey noted, citing 1000 per acre density on Park Avenue and 20 per acre density in Watts.

"The new frontier is not out -- sprawl, but up -- high rise and multi-use residential and service centers" the former Vice President told the Minnesota Society of Architects in St. Paul today.

"If our cities fail, so in the end will our nation," Mr. Humphrey concluded.

The full text of Mr. Humphrey's speech follows:

REMARKS
THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
MINNESOTA SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
NOVEMBER 6, 1969

THE ETHICS OF ENVIRONMENT

Of all the problems facing us in this decade, by far the worst is the failure of our urban systems. We are a nation of cities. Over 70 percent of our total population now lives in 212 urban areas and demographers tell us that by the year 2000 our urban population will rise to 250 million -- some 90 percent of the anticipated total population at the brink of the 21st century.

But these figures don't begin to tell the urban story, for only the top and the bottom of the economic spectrum remain in the central cities -- and the bottom predominates.

Already the inner cities have become the poor-houses of America, strangling in the tight white suburban nooses that surround them. Already industry is fleeing the cities in hot pursuit of the middle class employee they prefer -- who earlier fled in search of green grass, safe streets and decent schools for their children.

Left behind in the cities are those with all the options (families who can afford private schools and high rise apartments) and those with no options -- the families who can't afford to move.

Everybody worries about it. But the talkers who have made discussion of urban problems the intellectual parlor game of the 60s are far too often the escapists.

They live in the suburbs -- and worry. They occupy penthouses -- and worry. Too much talk comes from people who don't like cities, who want to get away from them.

I do like cities. I like the heterogeneity and diversity, the gaudy and colorful contrasts and the intense throbbing vitality. The contemporary American city seems to me to offer the fullest, richest panoply of life experience available to any people at any time on any part of the globe.

In large part this is the result of America's fortunate cultural diversity. We have restaurants and theatres and films from every nation represented in our cities. Our major urban areas offer unparalleled shopping, recreation and cultural activity. The world's greatest symphonies and ballets, writers and lecturers offer their wares on our home turf.

Without leaving town we have the opportunity to view the Bolshoi and the Beattles. Our department stores offer Dior copies before the originals are off the runways in Paris.

Our restaurant offerings range from Blintzes and Peking Duck to Shishkabob and Smorgasbord. Spaghetti and egg roll are so familiar that many of us think of them as American food.

The suburbs lack this cosmopolitan diversity. Of course they also lack the distressing every-day confrontation with poverty, filth and decay. With despair and dismay and delay.

Over two years ago I proposed a Marshall Plan for the cities. I did so from the conviction that only a program of this scope, only one of this vision, could generate the comprehensive support which is essential to the solution of the urban dilemma.

My years of observing the massive and complex problems of the cities have taught me a great deal of humility when it comes to having all the answers, but I think I can identify some causes of failure and point to some hopeful avenues we might fruitfully explore.

In reciting the facts and statistics of the urban crises, we usually forget that this is fundamentally a political crises -- an issue which, in the end, can only be resolved by concerted political action.

Our failures to date are primarily political failures -- an inability or unwillingness of the people's elected representatives to act on a scale which reflects the magnitude of the crisis.

I think the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations were moving on urban problems. Not that we had perfect wisdom -- no indeed. This is a trial and error business, my friends, and let no one tell you different.

But we did care about these problems and we did establish an urban policy and we did create a climate in which change could occur.

Landmark legislation such as the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Model Cities Act and the Housing Act of 1966 were true steps forward. But institutional devices cannot progress in a vacuum. It is illusory to believe that sustained headway is possible without the political backing of our elected officials -- and without the support of the people who send them to office.

Today the national government is in retreat.

The Mayors of our large cities are crying out for help -- and the Nixon Administration is pushing for the most extravagant and questionable weapon system in all of mankind's history.

Six weeks ago the City Council of one of our smaller cities -- Toledo -- declared a state of emergency and asked the assistance of Congress in subordinating the Supersonic Aircraft Transport program to urgent domestic requirements.

How did the Administration respond? With a request to Congress for nearly \$4 billion to rebuild the Merchant Marine fleet.

I do not mean to imply that the Federal government is responsible for the problems of our beleaguered municipalities, nor that the Federal government could, with the best of wills, solve these problems independently.

If we are assigning blame, it may be laid at many doorsteps. The nation's courthouses and city halls often seem to lack zeal for reform. There is plenty of limited vision and notable lack of dedication to be found among state governments.

All over America we encounter an endless vista of municipalities and special service districts with overlapping responsibilities -- with widely varying and too often obsolete building codes, with haphazard zoning regulations, and with piecemeal programs to correct these deficiencies.

We need a national urban strategy to define basic social, economic and demographic objectives in order to guide our urban, suburban and rural growth.

Let me be candid: our present governmental structure -- federal, state and local -- is incapable of planning and achieving the living environment our wealth and technology permit -- and which our survival requires.

New urban planning and other single-purpose governmental agencies have been layered upon old and fossilized institutional structures. When one unit of government is prepared to act, others are not.

Without cooperation and coordination of these disparate units, our resources, energy and confidence are frittered away and lethargy sets in.

The Federal government -- the only government common to us all -- has one notable advantage in this arena. It has money.

And make no mistake, my friends, money is more than the mortar -- it buys the bricks. Money may not solve the problems of the cities, but it sure helps and I don't think we'll find many mayors saying no thank you, we'll take ideas instead.

But we need ideas too.

I have proposed creating a National Urban Development Bank financed through subscription of public and private funds. The Bank would underwrite the special risks attendant upon solving our most critical urban problems -- low cost housing for example. Securities sold by the Bank would also attract private investment capital for the revitalization of our cities. Federal funds would be used as seed money to get the Bank started.

I have proposed a National Urban Homestead Act to subsidize land costs for qualified private housing developments. Such a subsidy would make possible the use of high-priced urban and suburban land to relieve the population pressure of the inner city.

I long ago proposed a program of federal support for state equalization of vital community services -- education and welfare, for example -- to provide immediate assistance to bankrupt local communities that have exhausted their property tax base.

Many of our cities are still using 18th and 19th century management models as we head into the 21st century.

I think we could profitably borrow some management techniques from industry and apply them to the wheezy machinery of local government. In the supersonic age, Americans seem more willing to modernize mechanical systems than management systems.

Habits become ingrained and the untried is often frightening. We know what we have, and we aren't a bit sure what we might get. But fear must be overcome. We must open some rusty windows and welcome constructive new ideas.

Absent change, we'd still be delivering mail by Pony Express instead of building nose cones and re-entry capsules.

Absent change, you gentlemen would still be building with logs and stone instead of the rich range of contemporary materials at your disposal today.

You would still be dealing with such simple problems as climate protection instead of worrying about the application of your professional expertise to the community's concerns.

Your whole convention is a sign of change. The notion of architects convening to discuss "involvement" and the total environment of the core city and how to house the poorer tenth of our population is a pretty new one.

And an essential one. We cannot bring health and vigor back to our cities without you. We cannot pioneer the modern city without you.

I have proposed that on July 4, 1976, we dedicate a new American city, one which exemplifies the highest standards of beauty and excellence.

Bi-centennial City would test new ideas in land use, housing technology and community development. Its construction would attract the finest talents in America. By reflecting what is best as well as what is possible, it would become a pilot city for a new America. It would provide the visible evidence that progress is possible -- one of the essential factors in the success of any enterprise.

Our city needs are as diverse as the American metropolis itself. There is no perfect plan by which a city can best serve the needs of its residents. There is no optimum pattern to follow in forming buildings and land into the perfect city. There is no universal guideline that will guarantee a fit between our people and their dwellings and spaces.

The only generalization that we can make is that this conjuncture must come about and that our architects and city planners must show us the way.

Cities, like people, can have friendly or forbidding faces. We can no longer plan our cities as islands, we must plan them as broad avenues of invitation, two-way streets that beckon and invite passage and commerce between the urb and the suburb.

What the modern city needs is a sense of community -- of belonging. To humanize our cities, we need to think in terms of neighborhoods that offer their residents a full life. Our task is to bring people in closer proximity to their jobs, their schools, their health services, their recreation areas and their cultural institutions.

People must feel close to their public services and to those who provide these services. And these people -- the policeman and the educators and the health professionals -- must in turn identify with those whom they serve.

Jobs should be near people and industry should design development plans with such proximity in mind.

This is a matter of self-interest for industry. Facilities in inner-city locations will help eliminate turn-over and recruitment problems. The labor force will be right on the doorstep.

Such changes can make the city liveable; such changes can make living a pleasure - rather than a constant chore - for the city-dweller.

Most of today's cities grew like Topsy and their deterioration is proceeding in much the same fashion. The architects of their renaissance must re-structure our cities as radiant centers of high density land use.

High density does not necessarily mean overcrowding, low density does not preclude it. On Park Avenue, density is 1000 to the acre. In Watts it is 20 per acre. But there are limits: if all of us were packed together like the residents of Harlem, the whole population of the United States - over 2 million people - could be squeezed onto Long Island.

The new frontier is not out -- sprawl -- but up -- high rise and multi-use residential and service centers.

Basically I'm an optimist. I think we can cut the ~~white noose~~ white noose around the neck of our cities. With our fast paced technological expansion, there is no reason why our cities should be dirty or dull or ugly or polluted or unsafe to walk in and impossible to drive in.

There is no reason why cities should not be good places in which to live and work and bring up our children.

What it takes -- in addition to money and ideas -- is concern. No responsible member of the community dumps trash on his neighbor's lawn, and industry must observe the same strictures in disposing of chemical and liquid wastes.

Housing codes must be enforced; by their neglect the city itself subsidizes blight, slums and sprawl.

Federal housing standards -- allowed to stand without revision for almost three decades -- must be brought in tune with today's housing expectations. As former HUD Secretary Robert Weaver said, the best answer to slum housing is to build enough good housing.

We have a long agenda for change:

- .. Schools are worst where educational needs are greatest.
- .. Garbage collection is slowest where the danger to health is greatest.
- .. Police protection is least effective where crime rates are highest.
- .. Health services are most limited where the need is greatest.
- .. Public transport is worst where private vehicles are fewest.

These things we know and they are arresting certainties. Equally arresting is our knowledge that it is a waste of time to remake our cities physically without a concurrent attack on the painful social problems bred by their decay.

This is a job for all of us and it is an urgent job for, if our cities fail, so in the end will our nation; and it is the personal investment of each of us that will in large part determine the ultimate outcome.

###



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org