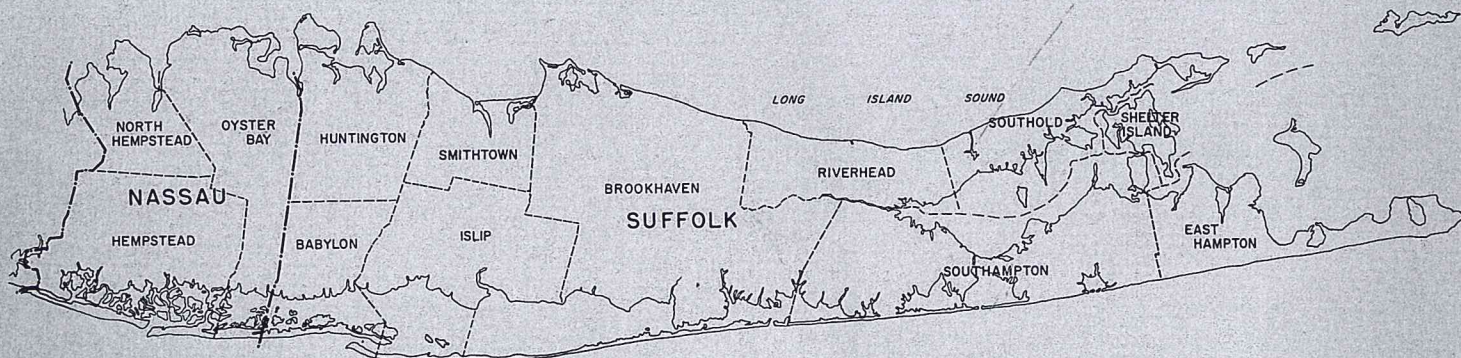


PROGRESS REPORT
RESIDENTIAL MARKET ANALYSES
NASSAU - SUFFOLK REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD



Consultants: RAYMOND & MAY ASSOCIATES

PROGRESS REPORT

RESIDENTIAL MARKET ANALYSIS

PART I

A HOUSING PROGRAM FOR

NASSAU AND SUFFOLK COUNTIES

A HOUSING PROGRAM FOR NASSAU AND SUFFOLK COUNTIES*

A housing program for Nassau and Suffolk Counties should be directed to three goals:

1. To stimulate a rate of housing construction adequate for an expanding population, and to provide a decent home for all residents regardless of age, income, or ethnic background, with maximum choice of rental or ownership, type and location.
2. To eliminate deficient housing and prevent future blight, through the expansion of current programs and initiation of new programs for construction, rehabilitation, and demolition.
3. To encourage the development of communities with a balanced population, a variety of housing types, employment opportunities, park and recreation space, and an accessible town center with shopping and community facilities.

Many programs directed at these goals already exist, such as fair housing laws, public housing rent subsidies, Federal and State financing assistance, and grants for urban renewal, code enforcement, community facilities, urban beautification, and open space grants. The various existing Federal and State programs, which should be more widely used on Long Island, are woefully underfunded. To accomplish the above goals, however, new programs and strengthened administrative procedures are also needed. The policies and programs recommended herein are of two types: (1) those authorized by present laws; and (2) those which require new Federal or State laws and programs.

Poverty is a major cause of housing problems stemming from complex factors -- racial discrimination, unemployment, lack of education, social maladjustment. While the focus of this report is on improvement of housing, proposed actions should be closely related to programs in education, job training, medical care, and income maintenance.

*As this report was going to press, the 1968 Housing Act was enacted by Congress. The complete text of the new act is not available at this time; nor are any administrative interpretations. It is known, however, that the new housing act opens many new vistas (as well as expansion of existing programs) which will help to implement the proposals contained herein.

I. Volume of Construction

Construction must be sufficient (1) to accommodate Long Island's growing population, and (2) to permit replacement of the worst housing. While current construction totals are adequate to accommodate growth, an increase in volume and a two-fold shift in emphasis both away from one-family houses and to acceptance of financing assistance are necessary to meet an increasing need for (1) apartments and (2) publicly-aided housing for low- and middle-income families and the elderly. Estimates projecting need to 1985 appear in Table 1.

State and Federal housing programs have been enacted to produce these units, but are insufficiently funded. Further, few local governments in Nassau and Suffolk have taken advantage of public or middle-income housing programs to date.

Suburban communities have been reluctant to undertake public housing or encourage middle-income developments for a variety of reasons. First, the majority of people are simply not aware of the serious housing problems which exist in their community. Second, there has been a natural reluctance of government to take on functions which many consider should be reserved for private enterprise. Third, the various State and Federal programs are complex and difficult to undertake with the personnel resources generally available to local municipal governments. Lastly, local government is very dependent upon the real property tax; and housing programs which involve tax exemption or abatement are unpopular. Even though the general principle of a tax system which generally aids those who are less fortunate is well established at higher levels of government, there is a strong reluctance to tax some members of the community to assist in housing other members of the community.

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION GOALS (1968-1985)

I OVERALL GOALS

TOTAL HOUSING INVENTORY TODAY
 BLIGHTED UNITS REQUIRING DEMOLITION
 UNITS REQUIRING REHABILITATION
 HOUSING STARTS NEEDED BY 1985
 TO ACCOMMODATE GROWTH
 TO REPLACE BLIGHTED UNITS & OTHER HOUSING LOSSES
 TOTAL HOUSING INVENTORY 1985

NASSAU	SUFFOLK	BY COUNTY
(numbers rounded to nearest 500)		
376,500	242,000	618,500
7,000	12,500	19,500
6,000	7,000	13,000
126,500	283,000	409,500
112,500	264,500	377,000
14,000	18,500	32,500
489,000	507,000	996,000

II APARTMENT GOALS

TOTAL INVENTORY OF APARTMENTS TODAY
 (in buildings with 10 or more units)
 APARTMENT DEMAND, 1968-1985

34,000	10,500	44,500
62,500	66,000	128,500

III GOALS FOR PUBLIC & PUBLICLY ASSISTED HOUSING

UNITS FOR THE ELDERLY
 IN OPERATION OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION TODAY
 NEEDED BY 1985
 ALREADY PROPOSED
 ADDITIONAL UNITS NEEDED TODAY
 ADDITIONAL UNITS NEEDED BY 1985
 ALL OTHER PUBLIC & PUBLICLY ASSISTED UNITS
 IN OPERATION OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION TODAY
 NEEDED BY 1985
 ALREADY PROPOSED
 ADDITIONAL UNITS NEEDED TODAY
 ADDITIONAL UNITS NEEDED BY 1985

500	*	500
9,000	8,000	17,000
1,500	*	1,500
3,500	4,000	7,500
4,000	4,000	8,000
1,000	*	1,000
18,500	43,500	62,000
500	*	500
18,000	19,500	37,500
	24,000	24,000

* LESS THAN 250.

In view of these obstacles to housing action by municipal governments, it is suggested that counties be empowered to meet pressing needs.

Recommendation 1:

That each County Planning Department should prepare and maintain a guide to localities, setting forth targets for residential development. Such targets would be an expression of regional and county projections of the distribution of total population as well as population characteristics in terms of age, income group, race and tenure, and the resulting distribution of needed housing, by type and cost or rental. These guides should be developed in close consultation with the relevant State agencies.

Recommendation 2:

That the State, by legislative action and constitutional amendment, authorize the establishment of County Housing Authorities, and that both Nassau and Suffolk Counties take advantage of such a law if enacted.

Such legislation should provide that the burden of any tax exemption may not be borne exclusively by the municipality affected. This might be accomplished by State subsidies, or by a supplementary annual payment to the municipality by the county government of any tax contribution to the reduction of rents.

Recommendation 3:

That housing authorities should consider alternatives to the traditional large-scale public housing project. Current thinking favors:

- a. Construction of town houses (as in Rockville Centre) and one- and two-family detached homes (as in Glen Cove);
- b. Construction on scattered "vest-pocket" sites with only a few units at each location;
- c. "Turnkey" construction by private builders for sale to housing authorities on completion. (This process, now being used in a project in the Town of Hempstead, speeds construction and permits greater flexibility and choice in site selection.);
- d. Leasing and rehabilitating units in existing buildings, especially for large families; and
- e. Purchase, rehabilitation, and rental of existing houses.

To permit the required level of apartment construction, both assisted and unassisted, local zoning policies should be revised. This is discussed more fully in Section VI.

II. Rent Subsidies

One of the most direct and rapid ways to alleviate the housing problem is for government to absorb the difference between housing costs and the amount which poor people can afford to pay. The subsidies required are based on the size and income of the families and there must be safeguards to assure that the money is spent for housing, that the housing meets minimum standards, and that its cost is not excessive. The present Federal rent subsidy program provides subsidies for low-income families in new and rehabilitated units developed under the FHA 221(d)3 program. This program is quite limited in terms of the appropriations which have been made and the amount of such housing which has been authorized. Very little 221(d)3 housing construction has been undertaken on Long Island. A great advantage of this program is that it allows for participation by private, limited-profit, and philanthropic non-profit sponsorship, rather than limiting the program to construction and ownership by a public housing agency; and rent subsidies provide the potential for greater integration than might be possible in public low-rent housing by facilitating an economic mix of middle- and low-income families.

Recommendation 4:

That local governments in Nassau and Suffolk Counties should stimulate wider use of the existing Federal rent subsidy program.

Recommendation 5:

That Nassau and Suffolk Counties should urge their Congressional representatives to press for a higher level of funding of the federal rent supplement program to enable them to satisfy as great a segment of the local housing market as possible.

III. Middle-Income Housing Construction

Recommendation 6:

That a joint public-private effort should stimulate the creation of limited- and non-profit corporations to sponsor 221(d)3, Mitchell-Lama, and other middle-income housing developments.

Assistance to potential sponsors such as churches and unions could be given by a public or non-profit corporation, financed with public and private funds. Such a corporation could also loan sponsors seed money for site acquisition and planning if State funds legislated for this purpose were to be unavailable. The Long Island Builders Institute has the expertise to provide the needed leadership in the creation of such a corporation

Increased Federal subsidies of interest charges on limited- and non-profit housing construction proposed in the Housing Act of 1968, could significantly reduce monthly rentals in such housing. This financing could be used for condominiums and cooperatives, for town houses, or even one-family detached homes where appropriate.

IV. Home Ownership by Lower-Income Families

Current mortgage practices are designed to facilitate the purchase of new housing in sound residential areas by middle- and upper-income families. Favorable mortgage terms do not exist for lower-income families wishing to purchase and rehabilitate existing homes in older neighborhoods. The usual conventional mortgage terms for existing housing in older areas has been a 75 percent loan at 6 percent for a period of 15 years (the maximum interest rate has recently been increased to $7\frac{1}{4}$ percent). Such purchase requires a substantial down-payment which many people cannot afford and which many frequently finance by means of secondary financing on onerous terms. Also, the relatively short period of amortization and high interest rate raise the monthly payment beyond the means of lower-income families. By contrast, for newer homes, FHA offers mortgage insurance of 95 percent of value at about the same interest rate, but for 30 years

Recommendation 7:

That Federal or State guarantees of 20 to 40 year mortgages should be offered on existing houses with low or no down payments and reduced interest rates, subject to a reasonable relationship between cost and mortgage terms to house value and income expectations. Such financing terms should also be made available to homeowners for repair and rehabilitation.

Such a program would extend to all areas, assistance now given only in urban renewal areas. The effect would be to extend the market for purchase of existing homes to lower-middle-income families, and to stimulate rehabilitation and improved maintenance of the housing stock. It would also increase the number of potential buyers for the older homes, whose owners might sell and purchase larger new homes, thus expanding the demand for new construction.

V. Eliminating Substandard Housing in Ten Years

In Nassau and Suffolk Counties, where the percentage and total number of substandard dwellings is relatively low compared to older cities such as New York, it is feasible to commit sufficient resources to achieve the elimination of all substandard housing within ten years. The major tools in such a program are code enforcement, rehabilitation, demolition, and urban renewal, with aids furnished under various Federal and State programs.

a. Code Enforcement

Code enforcement is the chief weapon against decaying housing, and the best means of preventing older housing from becoming dilapidated. Housing codes should require that all housing, regardless of age or occupancy, be kept in good repair, with adequate heat, ventilation, hot and cold running water, bathrooms, sinks, and electricity. Overcrowded occupancy should be prohibited.

The owner bears the basic responsibility for maintenance. The major public cost is administration, with far less total cost than other housing programs. But code enforcement, no matter how vigorous, must be supplemented by the financial aids proposed above -- rent subsidies and attractive home improvement financing terms. Where it becomes necessary to vacate substandard structures, code enforcement must be backed up by available housing within the means of the families which such action would dispossess.

Housing code adoption and enforcement by municipalities in the two counties has failed to meet the growing problem of housing deterioration. Most communities have not

adopted housing codes and even those which have, seem to experience great difficulties in establishing effective enforcement programs.

Recommendation 8:

That county governments be authorized to adopt and enforce housing codes by general or special State legislation.

Experience with county health codes indicates the potential efficacy of a uniform housing code and enforcement by a central, professionally-trained staff, working in close cooperation with agencies involved in relocation, rehabilitation, and financing. A county code enforcement program, coordinating all social, housing, health, and other community improvement programs, could also draw Federal Section 117 grants for concentrated code enforcement programs in deteriorated areas. Eligible costs under this program include: code inspections and administration; related staff services to aid in securing federal rehabilitation loans; assistance to families who must relocate; demolition of unsafe buildings, and the provision and repair of necessary streets, curbs, sidewalks, street lighting, street tree planting, and similar public improvements. County and municipal governments would share the local cost of public improvements under this proposal.

b. Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation, suggested as part of related programs above, is appropriate for housing which has deteriorated to a point beyond which code enforcement, alone, can bring it up to standard; frequently, major repairs and renovations are needed.

While some rehabilitation can be induced by offering more attractive mortgage financing, property owners in many cases will feel that the income potential resulting from their investment would be insufficient.

Recommendation 9:

That public housing authorities and non-profit groups should purchase or lease housing which can be rehabilitated and then sold or leased to elderly and other low-income families. Limited Federal funds and State financing assistance are available for such a program.

Section 312 rehabilitation loans are available within Federal Code Enforcement and Urban Renewal Projects. These provide a direct Federal loan (currently set at 3 percent) to private owners for financing the rehabilitation required to bring property up to code standards. The period of such a loan may be for as long as 30 years, but cannot exceed three-quarters of the remaining economic life of the building. The maximum amount of the loan is generally limited to \$10,000 but exceptions can be made.

Outright Federal grants are available to low-income owner occupants of one- and two-family homes in code enforcement or urban renewal project areas. These grants are limited to \$1,500; for families with incomes of over \$3,000, it may not exceed that portion of the rehabilitation cost which could be absorbed by the applicant without causing his total monthly housing expenses to exceed 25 percent of his monthly income.

The legislation which governs the State Urban Development Corporation permits activity in this field, but the role which the Corporation may wish to play has not yet been clarified.

c. Demolition

Recommendation 10:

That as the supply of new and rehabilitated housing within the means of lower-income families increases, county health agencies or local building departments should demolish increasing numbers of dilapidated houses and shacks being used for dwelling purposes.

Elimination of unfit housing is within the power of health authorities, but is little used because of the lack of relocation housing and the lengthy legal procedures involved. Use of this tool must thus be closely coordinated with other housing programs, and, as in the case of code enforcement, should be handled on a county-wide basis. Federal grants are available to cover two-thirds of the cost of a program for demolishing unsafe structures unfit for human habitation. Where relocation is involved, 100 percent Federal grants of up to \$200 per family are available to meet moving and related costs.

d. Urban Renewal Programs

In areas where housing deterioration is serious and widespread, urban renewal is the only effective means for treatment. Renewal programs may be undertaken with State and Federal assistance in areas of concentrated deterioration near the centers of older communities, or in sections where blight is scattered and where vacant land predominates.

An urban renewal plan may include reuse of land in accordance with the best interests of the community; new housing; commercial, industrial or public uses; parking lots; parks or playgrounds; new or widened streets, etc. Any cleared land is sold to private owners or public agencies with the requirement that it be developed in accordance with the renewal plan. All families displaced must be relocated in decent, safe and sanitary dwellings within their financial means. The net cost of relocation of families and businesses is met entirely with Federal funds. Families may receive up to \$200 for moving expenses and businesses a reimbursement of such expenses up to a maximum of \$25,000.

The net cost of a renewal project (which is computed by totaling the cost of land acquisition, building demolition, utility and street improvements, planning and administration, and subtracting the resale price of the cleared land) is shared in the following manner:

- (1) $2/3^*$ is borne by the Federal Government;
- (2) $\& 1/6^*$ is borne by the State Government;
- (3) $\& 1/6^*$ is borne by the local government.

If the community or any other non-Federal agency has contributed any land, performed any service or constructed any improvements which are related to the project, such expenditures may qualify as part of the community's share. The entire local share, either cash or public improvements, may be provided by long-term financing. Experience in many renewal projects has been that tax revenues after renewal greatly exceed those previously received. Thus many municipalities have recovered their renewal investment in a relatively short time, and have thereafter recapped the dividend of added tax revenues, in addition to all the other social benefits of community revitalization.

* - $3/4$, $1/8$, $1/8$ for communities under 50,000 population.

Because urban renewal is a complex program, it usually progresses very slowly. Few small communities in Long Island can recruit the skilled personnel needed or have made sufficient use of professional assistance required for an effective program.

A new approach to urban renewal - the Neighborhood Development Program - is proposed in the 1968 Housing Act. The present renewal program with its requirement for detailed and complete planning is not well structured to deal with the problems of large residential areas of hundreds or even thousands of acres where blight is scattered throughout. The proposed Neighborhood Development Program would provide assistance to communities to carry out urban renewal activities in one or more areas through annual Federal grants for two-thirds (three-quarters in communities of under 50,000 population) of the net cost of all eligible activities undertaken during a given year. The activities would be the same as those now eligible for assistance in urban renewal projects. The principal difference would be that the community would annually request assistance for the specific activities it proposes to carry out in the coming year. These activities could include continuation of detailed planning as well as actual redevelopment work. Under this system, there need be no major lag between the time that a decision is made that the area is in need of renewal and the beginning of activities to correct blighted conditions. Plans could be flexible and subject to continual change as activities proceed. Housing rehabilitation could proceed along with public improvements. The added flexibility will make it easier to coordinate urban renewal activities with social services programs.

Recommendation 11:

That the State, by legislative action and constitutional amendment, authorize the establishment of county urban renewal agencies, and that both Nassau and Suffolk Counties take advantage of such a law, if enacted, by instituting renewal projects and neighborhood development programs in cooperation with municipalities.

e. Relocation Assistance Program

The scale of relocation payments and the quality of services differs widely among the many Federal, State and local agencies whose programs cause the displacement of families.

Recommendation 12:

That the State enact legislation which will establish adequate and uniform relocation payments and services for all persons or families displaced by any public project, whether undertaken or assisted by the Federal, State or local government.

A Local Relocation Agency established under such a program should be reimbursed for the full amount of relocation payments and for 50 percent of the operating expenses incurred in performing relocation services for covered capital projects. Such State legislation was proposed in 1968 by Senator Seymour in S4092 and by Assemblyman Kretchmer in A6028. Relocation, by its very nature, cannot be limited by municipal boundaries. Skilled staffs with complete up-to-date information on available vacancies are essential for an effective program.

Recommendation 13:

That the counties establish relocation agencies to assist families displaced by any public project.

VI. Zoning, Subdivision, Building, and Housing Regulations

Current municipal controls relating to residential development permit great variations in standards and enforcement among the towns and villages in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. In some cases, regulations are inadequate to assure development at a minimum standard, while in other cases requirements go far beyond realistic minimum standards. Procedures vary greatly, and are sometimes so flexibly applied as to either greatly benefit or seriously harass and delay development, cutting or significantly adding to cost.

The ability to meet the growing demand for housing on Long Island and to meet the targets for middle- and lower-income families proposed above is in some measure affected by local regulations and procedures. Greater uniformity and simplicity in ordinances, regulations, and procedures, and fairness in enforcement would assist in increasing housing production and lowering housing construction costs.

a. Zoning

Zoning is a matter of local concern affecting most property owners, businesses and residents which cannot be easily moved to another level of government. However, when the total effect of all municipal zoning regulations in an area is to exclude a sizable proportion of the families seeking housing, some review of zoning standards is appropriate.

Recommendation 14:

That the housing goals set forth by each county* should include suggestions to localities regarding the number of acres which seem necessary in each general zoning classification, such as single-family lots of various sizes, town houses, and apartments, as well as a guide as to the proper location of different housing types with respect to transportation, employment opportunities, and conservation values.

Although the county would have no legal power to enforce or require zoning in accord with such suggested guidelines or targets, their mere proposal would be of value in securing gradual progress towards housing goals. Failure by the counties and their component municipalities to fulfill their goals may, of course, lead to direct action by the State through its Urban Development Corporation, which can disregard local zoning controls.

Recommendation 15:

That in addition, each County Planning Department should continue to promote the adoption of more flexible local zoning regulations to permit construction of a broad range of housing.

b. Subdivision Control

A review of subdivision standards among municipalities in both counties and a change in the procedures for subdivision review in Suffolk County seem appropriate since in Nassau County the review of subdivisions by the County Planning Department has proven very successful.

Recommendation 16:

That a bi-county study of subdivision standards be undertaken to propose optimum regulations. Such regulations should strike an equitable balance between excessive initial costs of installing public improvements and burdensome subsequent costs to municipalities for their maintenance.

*See Recommendation 1.

c. Building Codes and Regulations

While substantial benefits (in terms of uniformity of standards and procedures, and savings in administration) would probably result from adoption and enforcement of building codes by counties, such a change should not be made without a thorough study of existing local codes and their administration. County government can perform some services in this field to aid municipalities, however, which would perhaps serve to reduce some housing costs.

Recommendation 17:

That each county should establish a Construction Standards Board to

- (1) Review and comment on local building codes and proposed amendments, on request;
- (2) Contract with any municipality to provide building inspection services;
- (3) Promote more flexible standards to permit sound prefabricated and modular construction and generally the use of new materials and methods;
- (4) Promote uniform, simpler, and fairer requirements and procedures; and
- (5) Establish Civil Service requirements for building inspectors.

d. Regulation of Rental Units and Seasonal Housing Units

More formal procedures and stricter regulations are needed to assure the proper maintenance and occupancy of housing units in which deterioration is likely to occur.

Recommendation 18:

That a special certificate of occupancy should be required for seasonal housing, and, where a seasonal house is converted to year-round use, a new certificate of occupancy should be required to assure conformance with all codes.

Recommendation 19:

That municipalities or the counties should require the licensing of year-round rental housing units. Such units should be re-inspected, with each change in tenancy, to determine their continued conformance with all codes. The cost of such a program should be covered by the license fee, with an additional charge for each inspection. Absentee landlords should be required to designate a local agent with full power and authority to maintain properties in accordance with code requirements.

e. Flight and Noise Zones

Many homes are bedevilled by a location within the noisy approach and take-off patterns of a busy jetport. With the tremendous expansion of both housing and air traffic now underway (and the pressure for additional airports), it is necessary to define and limit the area of conflict.

Recommendation 20:

That a study be made of the effect of aircraft operation on housing of all types, with a view to developing measures designed to (1) achieve optimum land use patterns in areas so affected, particularly with respect to delineation of sections in which residential use is totally inappropriate; and (2) develop plans for correcting existing incompatibilities by means including possible reuse of residential areas. The study should consider age and condition of dwellings and should develop residential construction performance standards designed to minimize impact of aircraft noise on residents.

The establishment of flight and noise zones in zoning regulations would enable official cognizance of such areas as either unsuitable for residential development, or suitable only with compliance to construction performance standards as the study recommends.

Such a study cannot be definitive; aeronautics is a rapidly developing and changing technology. That which is a problem today, may be solved by technological means. Conversely, the development of new types of aircraft may intensify the problem.

VII. Housing Welfare Families

Concentration of welfare families in one building or a group of buildings in the same area has contributed to the spread of serious blight in certain locations. These concentrations are undesirable because they isolate underprivileged members of society. Most welfare recipients are: (1) mothers who receive aid to dependent children, and (2) the elderly. A portion of the welfare load, however, is composed of so-called hard-core families who create serious social threats -- crime, drug addiction, vandalism, and similar behavioral problems. Such families quicken the rate of decline of the area in which they live, and spread serious physical and social blight to surrounding areas.

Welfare Department policy is not the cause; welfare agencies attempt, when possible, to avoid such concentrations. Frequently, however, families move to such locations independently, and request welfare assistance after the fact. Welfare agencies are prevented by law from locating families in substandard housing, but frequently find great difficulty in locating standard housing. In many cases excessive rents are paid regardless of the condition of housing.

Recommendation 21:

That consideration should be given to a new approach, with hard-core families located in housing where a maximum amount of professional social services can be made available to aid in their rehabilitation and possible upward mobility.

It may be that such services can be best made available in publicly administered housing, at a cost equal to, or less than, that currently incurred by welfare agencies.

Recommendation 22:

That if county housing authorities are not created by the Legislature, as was recommended earlier, the County Social Services Departments should be empowered to purchase and operate housing for a certain portion of their case load.

VIII. Housing Information Services

Little comprehensive information is available to those with housing problems, especially among lower-income groups. By knowing what choices exist, families can do a great deal to obtain better housing. The poor, for example, need information on available subsidies, means of finding satisfactory housing, the proper relation between rental and income, requirements of sound housing, landlord and tenant responsibilities, reasonable rentals for specific units, comparable rentals in other locations, availability of employment opportunities and costs of transportation.

Counselling services are needed on housekeeping to encourage tenants to meet their obligations and report problems promptly to the landlord, and to instruct owners on repairing and maintaining properties on a do-it-yourself basis. Information is also needed on larger repairs, on identifying needs, estimating costs, and finding reliable firms to do the work.

Recommendation 23:

That the counties provide housing information and establish counselling service centers at key locations.

IX. Public Land Acquisition and Development

Massive land acquisition and development will occur in Nassau and Suffolk Counties in the next two decades, involving highways and public buildings, recreation areas, open space, and conservation easements; development of new communities and redevelopment of blighted urban areas. A strong government role is needed to guide this development process.

The State recently created the Urban Development Corporation to undertake redevelopment projects with little or no participation by municipalities. A major tool for this program is expected to be an indirect State guarantee of private investment in such projects.

Recommendation 24:

That a land development corporation covering Nassau and Suffolk, or two separate county corporations, should be created by the Legislature, with powers similar to those of the State Urban Development Corporation.

The corporation should be empowered to acquire and improve property prior to sale or lease for new development in accordance with approved plans. It would thus be able to acquire open land for new towns or new community developments, for which it would prepare the land by clearing and grading, and by installing streets, water and sewerage systems. This corporation could also serve as the county urban renewal agency.

The corporation should be able to receive grants from the State and Federal governments in addition to county sources, and should be able to borrow money in the private market. Profitable ventures, such as the purchase, preparation, sale, or lease of land for private development, would subsidize less profitable ventures. The corporation should only have power to undertake projects authorized by the County Boards of Supervisors.

Recommendation 25:

That the counties undertake a study of the feasibility of a "Land Bank" program for advance acquisition of land for public projects. Under conditions in which land prices in metropolitan areas have been rising about ten percent per year for the past decade, it may very well be feasible to make sufficient savings to more than cover the cost of interest on funds borrowed for such purposes. The county might serve as the land "banker" for municipalities, school districts, park and recreation agencies, etc., provided lands were acquired in accordance with an officially approved plan. In case of a change of policy on the part of the local agency involved, the land could be sold to another public agency or disposed of to private interests, subject to suitable restriction. The land functions described above might be lodged in a County Department of Real Estate or, conceivably, assigned to the land development corporation proposed above. All sites purchased should be approved by the Board of Supervisors, after public hearing.

X. Proposed County Administration for Housing Construction and Maintenance

The organization and administration of programs at the county level is needed to remedy substandard housing conditions which now exist and to meet the goals in construction, rehabili-

tation, social services, and community design embodied in the above recommendations. County action is needed because of:

- (1) The lack of adequate action by local governments to cope with the problem to date;
- (2) The inability or unwillingness of local governments to provide the necessary tax reduction incentives needed for low- and middle-income housing;
- (3) The potential increased efficiency and reduced cost in centralized administration at the county level; and
- (4) The probability that county action may be a preferred alternative to direct action by the State.

Recommendation 26:

That each county establish a County Housing Agency to be headed by a Housing Programs Coordination Board. This Board should appoint an executive director or county housing coordinator. An Advisory Committee representative of all elements of the public should be appointed by the Board of Supervisors to review the Board's policies and programs. Two major divisions of the board should be established: (1) the Housing Development Division to be charged with new housing construction programs; and (2) the Housing Services Division to be responsible for all social services in connection with housing programs. Within this general framework, two additional quasi-independent agencies should be established: (1) the Housing Construction Standards Board, to be responsible for codes and their enforcement; and (2) a Land Development Corporation to undertake the planning and execution of urban renewal projects and new towns or new communities projects. In addition, specific powers and responsibilities relating to housing and community development programs are proposed for the County Planning Departments and Departments of Real Estate.

a. Housing Programs Coordination Board

Composition: 5 citizens appointed by the County Executive, with the advice and consent of the Board of Supervisors, plus three county officials serving ex officio: Commissioner of Planning, Commissioner of Health, and the County Comptroller.

Advisory Committee: 25 to 50 citizens from throughout the county.

The Board shall appoint an executive director or housing coordinator to supervise the administration of all divisions and to coordinate the activities of the Board with those of the Construction Standards Board, Land Development Corporation, and other county agencies. The Board would prepare an annual housing program with budgetary recommendations as a step toward the achievement of a ten-year program for housing improvement. It is assumed that the transition of housing activities from municipal to county level will be gradual over a period of years. During this initial period the Housing Programs Coordination Board would monitor and evaluate local programs in terms of the goals established as recommended earlier and would promote housing improvement programs of a governmental and private nature.

b. County Housing Development Division

This division would be responsible for the planning, construction, leasing and management of low-rent housing and housing for the elderly if and when authorized by State legislation. It would also purchase or lease existing homes for rehabilitation and re-leasing or sale to low-income families. The division would be responsible for administering, or, in the absence of action by others, for building middle-income housing programs and rent supplements programs under State and Federal legislation.

c. Housing Services Division

This division would be responsible for all social services related to housing, including housing information and counselling services. Such services should be provided at strategic locations throughout the two counties to encourage and enable families to obtain better housing. These services should be administered in coordination with the work of the Human Rights Commission.

- (1) Relocation assistance. The administration of adequate and uniform relocation services for all persons or families displaced by any capital improvement project, whether undertaken or assisted by the State, county, or local government.

- (2) Rehabilitation Advisory Services. Where rehabilitation is to be undertaken by private owners, whether or not as part of concentrated code enforcement or urban renewal programs, there is a need for professional assistance and advice in design and contracting for alterations and repairs. Advice is also needed regarding the various financing programs available to assist owners in rehabilitating their homes.
- (3) Housekeeping methods. The provision of counselling services to families on good housekeeping methods can aid particularly hardcore families in meeting their obligations for property maintenance and reporting of problems promptly to the landlord. They would include instruction on minor repairs which tenants might be reasonably expected to make.
- (4) Community Services. One of the problems contributing to the deterioration of some neighborhoods is the lack or inadequacy of public services. A staff should, therefore, be established to receive complaints regarding inadequate street cleaning and maintenance, garbage collection, utility problems, and other public services normally provided in residential areas. The agency could investigate the validity and cause of the complaint and bring it to the attention of the appropriate local authorities for correction.

d. Housing Construction Standards Board

This Board should be appointed by the County Executive and Board of Supervisors and should probably consist of only three members with knowledge and experience in the construction and housing fields. Its responsibilities and duties should be as follows:

- (1) To prepare and enforce a County Housing Code, if authorized. Prior to such enactment, the board should contract with local authorities for the provision of housing code enforcement service. A special branch should be established to work with the County Health Departments in the enforcement of housing codes affecting seasonal and migrant farm workers' housing.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
1. Housing and Land Acquisition Budget and Program
2. Subdivision and Large Project Review
3. Community Facilities Review
4. Housing Guides and Goals to Municipalities

REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT
1. Advance Land Acquisition for Public Projects
2. Land Bank Activities *
3. Acquisition of Development Rights and Easements

HOUSING PROGRAMS
COORDINATION BOARD
1. Program Coordination
2. Evaluation and Monitoring
3. Promotion of Programs

HOUSING PROGRAMS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HOUSING COORDINATOR

CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS BOARD
1. Housing Codes
Preparation
Enforcement
2. Building Codes
Review and Advice to Localities.
3. Licensing of Contractors
4. Municipal Building Inspectors Civil
Service Examinations

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
AND URBAN RENEWAL DIVISION
1. Public Housing
Construction
Leasing
Management
2. Middle Income Programs
Administration
3. Rent Supplements Program
4. Public Rehabilitation Program
5. Urban Renewal Project
Administration *

HOUSING SERVICES DIVISION
1. Information and Counseling
2. Relocation Services
3. Private Rehabilitation
Counseling
4. Homemaker Training
5. Community Services
Review
6. Housing Services for
Human Rights Commission

LAND DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION
1. New Towns and
New Community Land
Development Activities
2. Urban Renewal Project
Administration (if
designated)
3. Land Bank
Activities for Real
Estate Department
(if delegated)

- (2) To review and advise localities in the adoption, amendment, and enforcement of building codes, and to provide inspection services under contract on request of a municipality.
- (3) To recommend Civil Service qualifications for building inspectors and supervise in-service training programs.

e. Land Development Corporation

The Land Development Corporation would be a public corporation established by the State Legislature. One corporation serving both Nassau and Suffolk Counties would be preferable, but separate corporations could also be created. Its functions would include the undertaking of urban renewal projects, if designated as urban renewal agencies, and land assembly and development programs for new towns or communities. It might, in addition, assume the responsibility for other land acquisition operations proposed for the Real Estate Department below. Otherwise, the Land Development Corporation's form and powers would be similar to those established under recent State legislation for the State Urban Development Corporation.

f. Real Estate Department

This department of county government would have responsibility for all land acquisition for public purposes within the county not ascribed to the Land Development Agency, including the following:

- (1) Advance acquisition of land for public projects, including county highways, parks, and open space, etc., and lands for school sites and other local government facilities, upon request.
- (2) Acquisition of development rights and easements for open space and conservation purposes on behalf of the county or local government.

All lands purchased and held by the county would constitute a land bank.

g. The County Planning Department

The County Planning Department's activities directly relating to housing programs should include the following:

- (1) Prepare and maintain housing goals for localities for residential development including recommended acreage in various density categories and estimated requirements for housing for various population groups by age, income, race, and tenure; and prepare guides to the proper location of different housing types with respect to transportation, employment opportunities, and conservation values.
- (2) Participation in the preparation of the capital budget and program for housing improvements and land purchases by the Real Estate Department.
- (3) Preparation and maintenance of subdivision regulations and review of subdivisions in accordance with such regulations, including inspection of public facility installations.
- (4) Review of large scale plans, such as cluster developments and planned unit developments, proposed by private developers, as well as plans for redevelopment and new towns proposed by the Land Development Corporation.

The Planning Department would also be expected to propose standards for local community facilities and review the adequacy of such facilities in local neighborhoods, particularly where housing problems are known to exist, and would prepare recommendations to local governments in connection therewith.