

Need for  
Special Legislation for the  
Revitalization of  
Central Business Districts

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By enacting appropriate legislation:

1. Providing for planning and carrying out the revitalization of an entire central business district, to allow for staged renewal on a functional rather than a limited geographical basis, and to provide for greater opportunity for the relocation of individuals and businesses within the area.
2. Encouraging preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of historical and other significant structures.
3. Recognizing that certain public facilities essential to the central business district should qualify as non-cash grants-in-aid.

The Congress would permit cities to:

1. Plan for and guarantee the total revitalization of the central business district so that developers and investors will be encouraged to participate more readily, thus stimulating maximum participation by private enterprise with a minimum of public acquisition.
2. Stage urban renewal action on a more efficient basis so as to reduce the time lag between demolition and reconstruction.
3. Finance its urban renewal and other related activities on a more efficient and orderly basis.
4. Increase job opportunities through the revitalization of the primary employment area.
5. Strengthen the economic base of the community.
6. Provide increased cultural opportunities for the community.

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URBAN RENEWAL AREAS INVOLVING  
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

People live in urban areas because they seek the combined advantages which these areas can offer as compared to more sparsely settled areas. Such advantages include increased employment opportunities, good housing in attractive neighborhoods, adequate and economical transportation facilities, the cultural and social advantages offered by the great educational institutions located in such areas, and the convenience and enjoyment of the varied facilities afforded by the central business district. It is the total urban "package," rather than any special element thereof, which is the magnet of attraction. It is therefore essential that any national legislation to assist cities in the renewal of their urban areas should permit effective assistance to be made available for the renewal of any blighted or deteriorated sections of an urban community so that any such section can be redeveloped to provide any one or more of such desired and needed advantages.

To a large extent, our present national urban renewal legislation recognizes this principle. In areas of specialized need, such as mass transportation and such as colleges, universities and hospitals in or near urban renewal areas, it recognizes that the standards applied must be different from those applied in residential area projects. In the case of central business districts, however, this is not the situation. This could be corrected by granting the necessary flexibility to provide, in the case of central business district areas, the varied procedures and treatment required to provide effective assistance for the renewal of such areas.

It is to be remembered in respect of the national urban renewal program that the capital grant "write down" is extended to the community to enable it to provide, by proper redevelopment, the advantages its citizens need. The benefit is to the whole community, not to any particular redeveloper, be he a private entrepreneur providing housing, a medical institution providing hospital facilities, a college or university providing any one or more of the wide range of facilities such an institution must provide, or a department store building a new structure as a part of the community effort to revitalize its central business district. The total community benefits by the better housing provided through the redevelopment of one residential area, just as the total community benefits by the revitalization of a central business district through the redevelopment of its deteriorated parts.

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