

The Brookings Institution



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Visiting Scholar Programs

January 23, 1969

Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr.
City of Atlanta
City Hall
Atlanta, Ga. 30303

Dear Mayor Allen:

I want to thank you for the interview on urban renewal which I had with you during my recent visit to Atlanta over the Christmas holidays. Your summary of what urban renewal is accomplishing in Atlanta and some of the problems it is encountering is most helpful in my project on the history of the program.

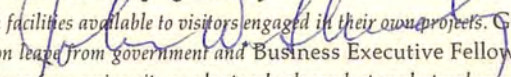
I also appreciate the discussions I had with Mr. Sweat, Col. Jones, and Mr. Satterfield and other staff of the Housing Authority. I have just finished converting my notes to tape and find that these discussions, together with the written materials furnished me, give me a current and comprehensive view of the Atlanta urban renewal program.

Anyone who has been to Atlanta at different times over the last quarter century, as I have, cannot fail to be impressed by the tremendous progress that has been made in both the city's physical and social development. The primary role that you have assigned to urban renewal is therefore most gratifying. This is particularly so in view of the attacks which have been leveled against the program in the last several years.

The most recent is the chapter, "From Slum Clearance to Urban Renewal," in the report of the National Commission on Urban Problems, which has just been released. I understand that this chapter was written personally by Senator Paul Douglas, chairman of the Commission. Unfortunately Senator Douglas's attack is based in large part on a distorted and inaccurate version of the legislative history of the program. My conclusion is based on the opinions of others who participated in this history, my observations over two decades of close participation in the legislative and policy development of the program, and the review of events leading to the original enactment in 1949 which I have just concluded as part of my project.

Programs like that in Atlanta and the support they have from the community are undoubtedly better answers to that kind of criticism than any attempts I or others can make to straighten out the record. So I wish you and your associates continued success in your new efforts which have just been announced.

Sincerely yours,


John W. Shively

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