

# CITY OF ATLANTA



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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
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*To Collier Gladin*

## MEMORANDUM

FROM: Planning Staff  
TO: Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. and Alderman Rodney M. Cook  
SUBJECT: Background material on Equal Opportunity in Housing Study

In securing the Federal Grant Funds for the undertaking of the Community Improvement Program one of the conditions was the preparation of an Equal Opportunity in Housing Study. The following federal guidelines established the scope and content of such a study.

1. "Survey and analysis of the existing patterns of residence of Negroes and other minority groups in the community, including an appraisal of the extent to which the pattern is the result of discrimination. The survey and analysis shall include considerations of the quality of housing and of related community facilities and services available to minority groups, in relation to the quality of housing and related community facilities and services available in the community at large."
2. "Development of an affirmative program to expand the housing opportunities available to minority groups in the community, including increases in the quantity and improvement in the quality of available housing, and to eliminate discriminatory barriers obstructing open access to housing. The affirmative program shall include consideration of how both federally assisted and other programs of housing improvement can be used to attain these objectives."

Essentially the Equal Opportunity in Housing Report meets the federal guidelines and requirements for such a study as a part of the Community Improvement Program. Our disagreement revolves around the following:

1. Conformity to and interpretation of the requirements of the contract for such a study executed between the City of Atlanta and Candeb, Fleissig & Associates, dated May 6, 1965. The City questions whether the report meets sections Ib, II(1) and II(2) of the contract.
2. Crediting the City for what has been done during the Allen Administration in the way of improving public services and facilities serving Negro areas, and
3. Reliance on the interview technique as a means of drawing conclusions on public services and facilities without checking and testing the validity of the information thus obtained prior to its incorporation in the report.

Each of the above points are discussed below:

1. Conformity to and interpretation of contract.

The Consultant appears to have met most of the requirements of the contract with the following notable exceptions:

Section 1b of the contract reads as follows:

"The Consultant shall determine the adequacy of community facilities and services in areas in which Negroes lives, (such as schools, parks, playgrounds, public housing, libraries, streets, utilities, sewers, and services from data supplied to the Consultant by the Local Staff). Adequacy shall be determined by applying nationally recognized standards of adequacy and service as modified by established local standards and shall include appraisals of intensity of use, variety and scope of services provided, and public attitude toward such facilities and services. For the latter purpose, interviews with informed sources in the Negro community and in various appropriate professional associations will be used to secure their reactions to the adequacy of these facilities."

The phrase, "adequacy shall be determined by applying nationally recognized standards of adequacy and service as modified by established local standards..." was a problem for the reviewers. What proof exists in the report that this was done? This is not apparent in reading the text of the report, its appendices or methodology. Were comparable statistics of cities of Atlanta's size available in so far as the provision of public services and facilities? If so, how did Atlanta compare with these cities?

Section IIId(1) of the contract reads as follows:

"The consultant shall: 1) Appraise factors which are conducive to the establishment of an atmosphere of equal opportunity and those factors which create a negative atmosphere to the establishment of equal opportunity through selective interviews of representative neighborhood leadership, businessmen, realtors, and residents in selected neighborhoods of contrasting ethnic and economic composition."

Where in the text or the appendices of the report does a treatment of this exist? Such a treatment would entail, we would think, an identification, appraisal, and findings of both positive and negative factors related to an atmosphere for establishing equal opportunity in housing. According to Section IIId(2) of the contract, the consultant was to have made such findings. This is extremely important and should be the crux or basis of the program recommendations. The tenor of the program recommendations contained in Part II of the report, essentially requires and demands the existence of a "favorable environment". If this interpretation is correct, the consultant has apparently found some positive factors that exist which are conducive to the establishment of an atmosphere of equal opportunity. But, the reviewers could not find any discussion of such a "favorable environment" or positive factors in the report. Apparently, the sole basis for the program recommendations appears in the Introduction to the report. It reads as follows:

"Increasing residential segregation, dilapidation of non-white rental units and accompanying social problems are highly important to, but not peculiar to Atlanta. Statistical findings coupled with interview results indicate that the City needs a strong program in equal opportunity in housing..."

Section IIId(1) and (2) of the contract read as follows:

"The Consultant shall develop specific recommendations based both on experience in other cities and on the findings regarding community attitudes. These recommendations will pertain to:

1) general community attitudes and programs to deal with equal opportunity in housing and to reduce or eliminate friction and tension; 2) small area development and programs particularly applicable for areas for renewal to deal with softening of attitudes with respect to equal opportunity.

The key words in these three clauses of the contract are the development of specific recommendations. In reading the recommendations contained in Section II there are few specific recommendations. A considerable number of the recommendations are extremely general, vague and to some extent useless. Examples of specific recommendations are:

"The City support legislation at the federal and state levels to prohibit discrimination in the sale or rental of housing on the basis of race, creed or national origin. If action in this area is not forthcoming at the federal or state level, it is recommended that the city adopt local fair housing legislation."

"The City adopt an anti-"block-busting" ordinance which would make it illegal to employ panic-inducing tactics to promote a rapid turnover in housing occupancy."

"It is recommended that the Community Relations Commission be given the responsibility and adequate staff and budget to carry out the city's program for the achievement of equal opportunity in housing."

Examples of general, vague and to some extent useless recommendations are:

"It is recommended that the city utilize federal assistance available to cities through the Department of Housing and Urban Development to cover part of the cost of a concentrated code enforcement program in designated areas of the city."

"It is recommended that the city re-evaluate its housing code and other codes to make sure that they provide adequate tools for improving existing housing."

"It is recommended that the city move, under the Federal Demonstration Cities Program to improve selected areas on a massive scale."

"It is recommended that all city departments examine their activities and levels of service to determine if they serve adequately each residential area regardless of racial occupancy. Programs to correct deficiencies and inequalities should be prepared and implemented."

"It is recommended that housing for mixed occupancy be encouraged in outlying areas so that population shifts to the suburbs, if any, will be racially balanced."

"It is recommended that the city prepare and implement a formal program to more actively accomodate in-migrants."

2. Crediting the City for what has been done.

The Report uses the statistical technique of comparing public services and facilities serving Negro areas to those serving the entire City. Although this technique provides an absolute comparison, it does create a false impression and a negative connotation that nothing is or has been done to improve the situation found to exist. This technique combines what has been done in the ancient past to what has been or is being done in the immediate present with no differentiation between the two. Such a statistical technique makes the current administration look exceedingly blameful, when in fact the current administration has made great strides in these areas. Public services and facilities have been improved and subsequent administrations should be encouraged to follow its example. Although, the contract does not specifically require the consultant to provide this credit to the City, it is deemed advisable and desirable in order to dispell the false image created.

To illustrate statistical technique mentioned above the following discussion appears in the appendices, (Section III, page 11), under Parks and Recreation.

"Community parks in the city contained a total of 287.9 acres. Of this total 34.1 percent (98.2 acres) are located in areas in which Negroes live. This indicates that 43.6 percent of the population of the City of Atlanta has only 34.1 percent of the parks space available in their neighborhoods. Another method of stating this deficiency is that there is one acre of community park space available for every 1,753 people in the city as a whole but only one acre for every 2,240 persons in neighborhoods in which Negroes live.

The parks classified as neighborhood parks contain 216.2 acres in the whole city of which 41.7 percent of 90.1 acres are located in areas in which Negroes live. This category of park space comes closest to providing space equivalent to population ratios.

Green spaces in the Negro residential areas are the most inadequate of all three park categories analyzed. Of the total 88.3 acres in this category, only 10.3 percent (9.1 acres) are located in Negro residential areas. To indicate this vast difference another way, the city-wide average is one acre per 5,717 people whereas in the Negro residential areas there is only one acre per 24,296 people."

In the Summary of Interviews the following statements appear,

(Section III, pages 14 and 15):

"One interviewee covered the entire range of responses relative to parks received in all interviews in this brief statement:

'Park services are woefully inadequate. Fifteen years ago there was only one (Negro) park for the whole city. The parks we have now are poorly maintained. The programs that are given are pretty good, but there's a need for more programmed recreation. The city promised to build about seven parks in the last bond issue; none were built'

These remarks were all repeated in one or more other interviews. All indicated that Negroes thought conditions were better in all-white neighborhoods."

This illustrates a damaging statement which was not verified or substantiated, particularly when the facts of the last five years or more are that:

1. Presently there are a total of 13 playlots in the City. Twelve of these are in Negro areas.
2. Twenty-one playlots are planned; 20 of these are for Negro areas.
3. Since September, 1964, twenty-two major park projects have been initiated. Ten of the twenty-two are clearly in Negro neighborhoods with the remaining twelve categorized as general service type facilities, such as the Grant Park Children's Zoo.
4. The City has purchased 14 new park sites in the last 2 years; 7 of these are clearly in Negro neighborhoods.

In relation to schools, the Report recommends, (page 12) that:

"The City take immediate steps to improve the educational programs and facilities serving Negro residential areas and to bring them up to the level of white areas."

Yet the facts indicate that within the last 5 years or more that:

1. Eighteen schools have either been built, or have undergone modernization and/or enlargement of facilities. The latter would consist of new classrooms, gymnasiums, etc. These schools primarily serve Negro areas.
2. Seven schools are currently under construction which would primarily serve Negro areas. If the new school at Grant Park which will have a ratio of about 50% white and 50% Negro were included this would bring the total to eight.

The above are intended as examples only, but should serve to give the consultant some idea of the type of credit that the City is due.

### 3. Reliance on Interview Technique

The use of interviews was made a part of the contract as a means of securing local comments and criticisms of facilities and services provided to Negro areas in the City. As a part of this effort, the consultant did invite CACUR to suggest the names of knowledgeable individuals whom they might consider for inclusion in such interviews. But, to our knowledge, the City has never seen and been provided the whole and official list of those interviewed, what was asked, what was said, or how the results may have been used by the consultant in this report.

As the interview technique has been used in this report the following observations are made:

1. The names of the persons interviewed are not listed in the Appendix.
2. The Consultant apparently has taken verbatim the responses which were derived in the course of the interviews as repre-

senting absolute factual information. Obviously, the results of the interviews contained in the report represent slanted and damaging statements which could have been heard in any section of the City - White or Negro. Yet, nowhere did the report attempt to verify the validity of the comments obtained through the interview technique.

3. The information generated by the interview technique has been used in some instances as a basis for program recommendations (as set forth in Part II of the text of the report). Since no attempt was made to verify these comments, responses from the interviews can be taken for no more than hearsay information. Yet, it is this information which provides the basis for some of the program recommendations.

It would have been more appropriate had the Consultant attempted to extend the scope of his interviews to include responses, replies, and/or reactions from the officials and agencies being criticized. Such an expanded technique would have given a much broader and fairer presentation of the two or more viewpoints, while at the same time such a technique would not have precluded the Consultant from making a judgement between which of the two or more viewpoints was more factual.