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WSB VIEWPOINT
"THE NEED FOR MORE
SUBSIDIZED HOUSING"

by
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Novelist Jan Struther once wrote: "A city is greater than its bricks and mortar; it is greater than tower or palace, church or hall; a city's as great as the little people that live there."

We agree with the sentiment expressed in these lines, but if we expect the little people to prove their greatness, aren't we duty bound to ask ourselves, what kind of living quarters are we providing for them?

Many families in Atlanta are living in decrepit apartments and rat-infested slum housing. Their so-called homes are unfit for raising children. They lend themselves more often to serving as breeding places for discontent, disease and crime.

While we have replaced some of these hovels and shacks, and expect to meet the Mayor's quota of 16,800 replacement units by 1971, we aren't providing nearly enough low and middle-income housing.

And we aren't subsidizing the building of such units in enough different places in the city.

Clarence Coleman of the Housing Resources Committee of Atlanta headed a team that studied this matter thoroughly. Its members concluded that (1) subsidized housing must be fairly distributed through the city; and (2) the only politically feasible way to do this is by a "package deal," which designates some ten areas located in various sections, north, south, east and west, all of which are suitable for housing development.

The plan isn't new, but its never been given a vote of approval by the Board of Aldermen. If they would say yes, housing development could move ahead in a way to make 1969 a banner year for Atlanta.

Our city has proved its ability to redesign our skyline with magnificent new office buildings, hotels, luxury apartments and shopping complexes. This same kind of vision and energetic leadership is sorely needed in the building of adequate subsidized housing.

Besides eradicating substandard dwellings and bringing new sunlight into thousands of lives, such an enlightened effort on a massive, city-wide scale could perhaps do more than any other thing to promote social and economic stability and stimulate peaceful progress throughout our community.

A great many business, professional and church leaders are solidly behind this program. A number of our top civic organizations are enthusiastically supporting it.

What we need now is a resounding expression of approval from the vast majority of our local citizens.

If we make it clear and convincing that we, the people of Atlanta, are behind this package proposal--and we earnestly want to see subsidize housing distributed throughout the city--then we will improve vastly the chances that our Housing Authority and our Aldermen will hear and give this program the green light.

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