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MEMORANDUM

URBAN POLICY COUNCIL

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The purpose of this memorandum is to present a statement of the need for establishing a steering committee or Council on Urban Policy in this state to consider formulation of policy recommendations with regard to local government involvement in the development of federal grant-in-aid legislation as affecting urban program development in Georgia.

As a basic premise it is felt that local government officials and administrators should play an active part in the initial formulation of federal grant-in-aid legislation that affects the growth, development, administration, and operation of local government in Georgia. Local government officials and administrators should also be consulted in the development of implementing administrative regulations for such legislation.

Many federal grant-in-aid programs appear to be founded to a large degree upon criteria or standards of application as determined almost entirely at the federal level. An example is current legislation in Congress to establish community development districts, the makeup and composition of which is proposed to be approved by a cabinet officer based upon predetermined criteria.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

There is strong probability that future urban programs, of even our larger cities, will as a prerequisite to federal approval, have to be reviewed by regional organizations or area planning and development commissions. The Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1965 (S. 561) which passed the Senate and not the House would have required review by a metropolitan planning agency before the federal government would act.

Regional organizations composed of public officials are now recognized by federal law. These organizations have come into being to meet the need for dealing with problems of urban development that transcend established political and jurisdictional boundaries and cut across entire regions. These organizations will play a vital role in total coordinated urban development.

Only recently were these organizations recognized by the federal government to be more than mere planning agencies. Future federal policy contemplates grants to these agencies conditioned upon mandatory not voluntary membership. Also being considered in some quarters is the evolvement of this regional voluntary association of local governments into an instrumentality, either operating regional type functions or serving as the control center over other regional, functional units. Thus, our traditional general purpose cities and counties of today may be defining tomorrow's regional general purpose network of government. It should be apparent that these developments are restructuring our intergovernmental relationships in the urban area.

#### Workable Program

Part of the problem of local inflexibility and lack of administrative coordination perhaps lies with the over involvement of federal staff personnel in the development and implementation of federal grant-in-aid programs. There has not been enough involvement by local administrators and decision-makers in federal aid program development and implementation.

There are many examples of past legislative grant-in-aid enactments by the Congress that often hamstring local government administrative machinery because of the inflexibility of black and white implementing

federal rules and regulations which apply to all units of government regardless of size. A good example is the workable program for community development. This program as a prerequisite to involvement in certain federal programs is lacking in flexibility, in its application, and imposes standards laid down without regard to the fact that local ability to implement and execute programs varies between large and small cities.

The requirement of a long range capital improvements budget is certainly desirable as a basis for scheduling of projects. However, many local units of government do not even have annual operating budgets. Consequently, the reality of a blanket requirement of a long range capital improvements program without requiring operating budgets is open to question.

The arbitrary requirement that the workable program be recertified each year regardless of size of city results in local administrative falsifying each year. There is a real question of whether the large city should be required to recertify the workable program each year -- why not every five years or every ten years?

One large city produced a model workable program and was so claimed by the federal administrator to be one of the best workable programs in the nation. The next year the workable program of that city was not recertified because the federal administrator had said that it had not changed enough over the previous year as reflected by the city's progress reports. Another city was refused recertification because the administrator said the city needed four additional housing inspectors over the previous year's commitment. Yet no standards or justification were stated as to why these requirements were imposed.

In large cities, specific programs do not necessarily reflect dramatic changes on a yearly basis. Thus, recertification of the workable program for many cities is certainly jeopardized unless that city can "pad" its progress reports in order to convince the federal administrator of progress (not given units of progress but progress) and thus secure recertification.

There is involvement in the initial drafting and development of federal legislation because of NLC, USCM, and NACO activities, committee hearings, etc. Yet it appears that broad discretion is given to federal administrators with regard to program implementation of legislation. This can be seen in the writing and drafting of agency regulations for implementation. The preparation of such regulations should involve the local public official or administrator in order to bridge the gulf between policy makers and practitioners. Quite often the administrative regulations seem to go much further than the intent of legislation.

#### Urban Renewal

In the case of urban renewal, real estate acquisition is supposed to be based upon a program of local determination. The criteria on rehabilitation are extremely rigid on what a city is allowed to do. The same criteria apply to a large agency with large projects as well as to a small agency working on a single project. The large agency with the larger projects need more flexibility in the planning, direction, and execution of such projects than would be the case of a small agency.

Urban renewal regulations make reference to specific noncash credit items such as a 100% credit for a street serving the project, 50% for a boundary street, 25% for sewer line, etc. However, specific noncash items cannot always be apportioned in specific terms to a given urban renewal

project. As an alternative, why not allow an overall total grant with credit given for noncash items in a program sense rather than in specifics so that the local credit items could be reflected in an overall urban renewal plan, as opposed to specific items on a project basis.

Specific criteria and prerequisite standards are applied in the development of urban renewal projects. Yet similar requirements for streets, highways, and other physical facilities may be programmed with a total disregard for city's master plan.

#### Economic Opportunity Program

The following is a discussion of areas where cities (particularly, mayors) have encountered local problems in administration of the Economic Opportunity Program.

Many mayors would have liked to have had some say in the initial development of VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America), or domestic peace corps program. Apparently, many mayors were not involved in the initial development of this program, and consequently, found it necessary to refuse participation in the VISTA program or were required to use their influence to cancel VISTA programs operating within their communities.

An understanding of the extent of the role of VISTA within the political area is a demand the mayors could assert. However, this would be in opposition to the philosophy of VISTA in granting great flexibility and freedom. Thus, EOA, bearing in mind the problems which could be created for the mayor and the city council by completely unhindered volunteers, has had to demand that VISTA volunteers be tied down to specific assignments. This has been particularly true of the program in Atlanta.

The question of the mayors veto of OEO projects is continuously raised. Certainly obstructionist politicians should not be able to deny necessary and reasonable programs for their citizens. Yet, neither the federal government nor any other agency should be in a position to institute programs utilizing tax resources in a political subdivision with complete disregard of the elected leaders of that subdivision.

The OEO philosophy demands involvement of the poor at the local level by CAP agencies in planning and in conducting CAP programs. However, this philosophy of involvement does not apparently apply at the Washington level. Many programs have originated from Washington with fairly stringent guidelines in which there have been no participation by municipal officials or other interested groups at the local level. Many of these programs are under the guise of demonstration programs such as the Foster Grandparents Demonstration project (as conducted in Atlanta) and many of them are actually designed to be on-going projects.

Recent changes in the requirements of the Small Business Development Center program under Title IV of the Economic Opportunity Act is an indication of lack of consideration on the part of local officials in making sweeping changes in the intent and content of a program. The original Title IV provision was designed to help increase employment by providing low interest loans to small businessmen who would guarantee creation of additional jobs which could be filled by the poor as well as the creation of new entrepreneurs under low income groups. The initial guidelines have now been so changed that the program simply is being conducted to see how many loans can be granted to persons who are not now in business and who are in poverty. The SBA makes it clear that it is interested in making as many loans as possible to Negroes to start small businesses.

## Recreation

Recent Congresses of the United States, recognizing the growing demand by citizens for recreation and parks, have passed considerable legislation affecting these movements. The recreation profession, although pleased to see the vast interest in recreation and parks on the Federal level of government, does hold some reservations about it.

Specifically, the Federal government has classified all recreation and parks under one heading -- "Outdoor Recreation". This fact alone contributes to a narrow view of recreation. Recreation, as it is conducted in Georgia cities, includes every facet of leisure pursuits for the development of the citizenry. The area of "Outdoor" recreation is only one component of the field of recreation. It is the feeling of many persons in the field that future wording in Federal legislation should state plainly -- "Recreation" in its broadest sense and not "Outdoor Recreation".

Current Federal laws, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund Bill, the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, the Older Americans Act, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1965, and many others have affected the growth and development of recreation in the nation. Basically sound legislation has lost the main emphasis on the programs through guidelines established by the various Federal departments administering the programs. Basic programs originally included in the legislation have been given such low priority that approval of an application is almost impossible.

Recent Federal legislation relating to recreation and parks will have a great impact upon the recreation and parks movement in the United States. There are, however, many areas of the present legislation which could be improved to better serve the communities.



These are:

1. The Federal government or the Federal departments administering the legislation has placed guidelines on the programs which make them quite difficult for many communities to take advantage.
  - (a) Practically all the current programs require detailed community-wide planning. Although this requirement is basically good, it makes many of our smaller communities ineligible from lack of proper finances for planning. Federal agencies administering the programs should be given leadway in approving applications from small communities who do not fully meet the guidelines established by the Federal department.
  - (b) The community leadership should be permitted to best determine the more suitable location for any program or facility. It should not be restricted entirely to poverty areas.
  - (c) State governments should be given the authority to renew, recommend, and approve applications prior to submission to the Federal government. State agencies are aware of the needs of communities in their respective states and will act with speed and efficiency. Currently many programs by-pass the state altogether. In such instances this renders the area planning and development commissions and similar groups less effective in guiding orderly planning and development. By the same token, state agencies capable of assisting communities with various developments, are seldom consulted.
  - (d) Present program applications are by far too difficult for the average community to complete and file with the proper agency. Present methods almost require the full-time services of a person trained for this purpose. Many of our smaller communities cannot afford to employ such a person.

- (e) Guidelines should be set forth in common terms understandable by all communities. Presently, it is the case where some of the federal employees with the administering departments do not agree on the requirements. This simply causes confusion and misunderstanding on the part of local governments.
- (f) Federal employees should be qualified to interpret and supervise Federal programs in which they work. It is inconceivable that a person trained in forestry, agriculture, and horticulture can do the total job necessary for recreation and parks. Recreation is a new profession with personnel trained in this field. Personnel possessing the broad concept of recreation and parks should administer Federal programs.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Bill is designed to provide matching funds up to 50% to states and their political subdivisions for planning, acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas.

State planning is essential. Each state, in order to be eligible (Georgia could receive up to \$2 million annually in this 25-year program) must prepare a state plan which must be approved by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. As of May 1, 1966, comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plans have been approved except Georgia, Iowa, North Carolina, Utah, and Wyoming. Projects will not be approved until the state plan is approved.

This law states specifically that matching funds "may be made available to political subdivisions".

Upon making further inquiries as to how the communities actually fit into the plan and how they will participate in the program, no clear cut answers were available. Actually, local communities do not now know to

what extent they will be included in the program.

The contention of many is that a state plan cannot be a comprehensive one unless it includes the needs and capabilities of communities. After all, the masses of the people are located largely in the urban areas. Although the Georgia plan now being developed might include the communities, this does not seem to be the case since inquiries point to the fact that no community has been requested to participate in the planning. It seems, in this light, plans cannot be made for communities without the communities' assistance.

This piece of legislation is vital to all cities and consequently, they should have a voice in the make-up of the program in Georgia.

In other states attempts have been made to remove the L&WFB from politics and to insure that projects are considered on the basis of need. In one state, for example, over 100 carefully selected leaders were brought together in the forming of a council for the purpose of establishing guidelines for the program. It was their responsibility to determine a real basic point -- what percentage of the funds would be allocated to local communities, state parks, and federal agencies within the state.

A lay group, representing various interests, should be appointed for the purpose of making these same decisions in Georgia. Additionally, this same group or a similar one should be appointed and authorized to review each piece of federal legislation prior to its implementation in Georgia, and make certain procedural recommendations.

Without positive action there is a possibility that Land and Water funds will completely elude the cities of Georgia. This situation requires immediate positive steps.

### Conclusion

The broad shopping market of federal programs portrays a gross amount of money for use locally as the federal government sees fit, and according to its program emphasis. In many cases, the emphasis on specific programs and projects is determined nationally not locally. However, it is believed that many of our cities, large and small, do have the capability of making such determinations and should be allowed the administrative flexibility to determine the level of emphasis that should be placed on specific local programs. If such were the case, a city could submit a comprehensive statement of its needs in terms of priority and emphasis on local programs and be given a grant with the necessary flexibility for implementation in accordance to priorities as determined locally by that city.

### Urban Policy Council

In conclusion it is felt that this state could take a very positive step toward harmonious coordination of federal grant-in-aid programs and urban development by establishing a steering committee or council on urban policy charged with the responsibility of developing a statement of policy for coordination, development and administration programs dealing with the total growth and development of our communities. Such a committee should be composed of the following: representatives of municipal government through the Georgia Municipal Association; representatives of county government through the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia, representatives of state government through the Executive Office; and representatives of Georgia's Congressional Delegation.

This committee could have the given responsibility for the performance of the following basic functions:

1. To analyze the trends, conditions, needs, and problems affecting local government in Georgia's rapidly urbanizing state;
2. To define the complimentary and cooperative roles of local, state, and federal agencies with respect to the development and implementation of urban programs;
3. To recommend appropriate policies that would govern the working relationships between local, state and federal agencies in the development, implementation, and coordination of programs to cope with urban growth.