

land yesterday. Sparks from the bus exhaust pipe, apparently ignited gasoline leaking from the

got out safely. The bus was badly damaged. (AP Wire photo)

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Urban Renewal:

What's It All About?

(Editor's note: Urban renewal, a term often confused with slum clearance and big cities, has become an everyday phrase in Santa Cruz since the December flood. To explain the meaning of urban renewal and to outline the steps being taken by the city redevelopment agency to redevelop the Front - Water - Ocean - Soquel quadrangle — officially named the San Lorenzo park project — Earl Newkirk will write three articles each week. The articles will appear in The Sentinel-News each Sunday, Wednesday and Friday.)

By Earl Newkirk

We hope you saw the sketch in last Sunday's paper which showed one conception of how our city might redevelop the San Lorenzo park project.

To those of you who have already responded to our invitation to please tell us what you think of it, our sincere thanks.

And to those of you who have not yet done so for one reason or another, please call or drop in. If you've not seen the sketch, come visit us at the office, 322 Church street, and see it there.

After all, we are trying to prepare a plan that will be the best for the entire city—a plan that reflects the thinking and desires of the great majority, and a plan that is financially feasible yet embodies our best dreams for the future.

Will you help your redevelopment agency do the job which you have handed us?

And speaking of the job we have ahead, redevelopment of the San Lorenzo park project is just one of a series of steps your community proposes to take in the field of urban renewal. That brings us to the questions:

"What is urban renewal?"

"How does it differ from redevelopment?"

Actually, "redevelopment" is just one phase of "urban renewal." The expression urban renewal simply means the sum total of all methods devised by the city to create a more efficient, more attractive and more economical community. It means making plans necessary to achieve these goals and then taking the steps necessary to carry them out.

Cities have been "renewing" themselves from time immemorial. But the modern federal application of urban renewal began as a program designed solely to clear slums (this would hardly interest us here in Santa Cruz). But congress quickly found this only partially solved the problem anywhere.

And here is where we come in . . . congress passed additional legislation expanding the old concept of clearing slums to one designed for prevention as well as clearance of "blight"—rehabilitation and conservation of areas that can still be saved. And, to us in Santa Cruz, an opportunity as well to do some effective replanning and redeveloping of our areas threatened by flood has been presented.

It seems to me we have a terrific opportunity. We don't have slums—certainly we don't want any (look at the eastern part of our country).

But we will surely wind up with them just as did our cities in the east if we don't have enough foresight to prevent them from developing in the first place. Thus we need to renew before the slums ever get here.

And now we have an opportunity to get federal assistance from the urban renewal administration to do just that.

What kind of assistance can we get from the federal government?

We can get loans to plan, and grants to help carry out, urban renewal projects such as our San Lorenzo park project. We can get planning, informational and technical help. And any city with a real urban renewal program can assure for its citizens more liberal FHA mortgage insurance

terms both within and outside a project area.

However, to qualify for all this assistance, we have to meet the requirements of two distinct phases of this program.

First of all, this federal assistance is available only to the community that takes an inventory of its total situation regarding blight conditions, the methods it is using to prevent future blight — then pledges itself to work in good faith to remove and prevent the growth of further blight.

It means simply that we take a look at all the methods designed to prevent blight and lay out a plan for bettering them. This plan, or "blueprint," is known in government parlance as a "workable program."

It must be spelled out, approved by your elected city officials, signed by the mayor and submitted to the federal government as proof of our desire to help ourselves. Then, and only then, does the government make available such additional aids as loans and grants to actually carry out our San Lorenzo park project.

In brief, this "workable program" is merely a plan of action for the community as a whole—a plan whereby we set down how we stand in relation to the seven basic goals designed to prevent the occurrence of blight in the first place and our long-range plans for reaching these goals.

(In next Thursday's article, Newkirk will list the seven basic goals at which a city must arrive to keep renewing itself to keep pace with the progress of civilization.)

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