

# Urban Renewal:

## What's It All About?

(Earl Newkirk, executive director of the city redevelopment agency, discusses urban renewal in these columns on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday. Suggestions and comments may be offered in person, by mail or telephone. The redevelopment agency office is in the city hall annex, 322 Church street, telephone GA 6-1460.)

By Earl Newkirk

Several people have asked me how widespread is this urban renewal business. I ran across an item on this in my mail the other day. Perhaps you'll find the facts as interesting as I did.

Seems there are now some 365 slum clearance and/or urban renewal projects currently under way with federal assistance. These projects are in more than 225 different communities in 31 states, the District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Of the total of 365 projects, two west coast states—Oregon and California—have 12. Of these, one is in Oregon and the remaining 11 are here in California. Unfortunately, the state of Washington has no legislation enabling

it to participate in the federal urban renewal program.

These projects range from "little ones," a few acres in Richmond (Calif.) to 20-odd acres in Calexico (Calif.) (population 8000) to huge ones such as Columbus circle in New York City; from the extreme of total clearance and redevelopment of slums to the rehabilitation and conservation of areas on the downgrade.

All this certainly attests to the growing realization throughout the country of the importance of doing something now—not only about slums already in existence but about preventing them from occurring in the first place; a realization that here is a program designed to help a city help itself plan for the future.

Don't know about you, but I'm kinda proud of Santa Cruz' participation—it takes foresightedness and faith in the future of our community.

And, if I may say so, not even the flood-stricken New England communities I was sent to help last fall showed as much verve and enthusiasm for what this pro-

gram could do for them as we have right here in Santa Cruz.

At this point I'd like to extend another invitation or make another "plea" or what have you. How about more of you collectively or individually publicly indicating your support of, or opposition to, your city's program of urban renewal—especially our San Lorenzo park project—and why you're for or against.

I mean organizations, churches, individuals—the entire city—and particularly project property owners and residents. What other country so protects its citizens in the right and duty to "stand up and be counted?"

And I'm serious. In my six-plus years with the federal government—most of it with the urban renewal administration as a field representative first in Washington, D. C., and then in San Francisco—I've rarely seen it fail: all may seem fine to those of us trying to do the job you hired us to do and then wham!

Public hearings . . . and who shows up?

The minority, usually suddenly mighty vociferous in their opposition. Those whom we have invited time and time again, in these columns and elsewhere, to voice themselves now or "forever hold their peace."

It costs you and me and all the other taxpayers a whale of a lot of money, time and effort, all because a few didn't have the intelligence to express their opinions early enough in the game to

prevent all the waste entailed when a plan is turned down by the city council at the last minute due to unexpected opposition. And nine times out of 10 the opposition comes from those who didn't bother to let us know their thoughts when we urged them to do so.

I know it will be impossible to please everyone. But we can't begin to please anyone—even the majority—unless two things happen.

First, those of you who are opposed, tell us why. Be certain you have the facts. If you have question, ask us. Then give us some constructive suggestions as to what you think the majority want and maybe we can come up with something together.

Second, those of you who are in favor of urban renewal—be it clearance and redevelopment, rehabilitation or a combination of all—stand up and help us convince the rest how essential it is we resolve any difference which may develop. Help us prove that we here in Santa Cruz not only recognize the vital need to plan for the future of our city but that we mean to take advantage of every means possible to guarantee that that future will be the brightest possible.

If you have faith in the future of Santa Cruz, then come on—"last chance" for you to let us know what you think, one way or the other. We don't guarantee the impossible—we know we're not going to make everyone jump



**PARTY FAVOR**—Yugoslavia's Marshal Tito has invested Soviets' defense chief, Marshal Georgi Zhukov, with the "Order of Freedom," highest honor of Tito's regime. It is the first time that a foreigner has been so recognized.

with joy—but we'll come a lot closer if you'll help.

If not, then Newkirk had rather know now and pack up before speeding any more of your tax money—and his.