POLICY AND DESIGN FOR HOUSING
Lessons of the Urban Development Corporation 1968-1975

Journal Articles

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New Towns in Old Cities

Title VII of the 1970 Housing Act offers tools for large-scale development inside the city limits as well as on fresh land beyond. By Simpson Lawson.

Mention "new community" to the man on the street and, most likely, the visions that leap to his mind will be Reston, Va.'s handsome waterfront plaza or one of Columbia, Md.'s village centers. Despite their efforts to attain a more representative population mix, these trailblazing new towns remain fixed in the public mind as islands of affluence on the fringes of metropolitan areas.

Hence, advocates of new communities meet a wall of skepticism when they speak of new towns with "substantial provision for housing within the means of persons of low and moderate income." The skepticism lingers despite the fact that this is precisely the language Congress used to describe one of the conditions which the federal government must observe in assisting sponsors of new communities under Title VII, the section of the Housing Act of 1970 providing such assistance.

Among those skeptics until last year were the mayors of the nation's big cities. None of the glaring "cracks" in the picture windows of conventional suburbia had diminished its pull on tax-paying city residents. The mayors were not about to support federal subsidies to even more attractive residential magnets far from their boundaries.

It had become increasingly apparent to supporters of new-community legislation that broad federal assistance for the programs they sought could not get through Congress without big-city support. To get it they asked the mayors and their staff technicians to have a significant hand in writing such legislation.

Largely as a result of this bill-drafting assistance, Title VII called for development of a national urban growth policy which ". . . would foster the continued economic strength of all parts of the United States, *including central cities* . . . [and] refine the role of the federal government in *revitalizing existing communities* . . ."

In another part of the law Congress found "that the national welfare requires the encouragement of well-planned, diversified, and economically sound new communities, *including major additions to existing communities*, as one of several essential elements of a consistent national program for bettering patterns of development and renewal." One of the purposes of the law is to "encourage the fullest utilization of the economic potential of *older central cities* . . ."

Finally, though a technical error placed a cloud over its statutory force, the new law revises urban renewal regulations to remove the requirement that land must be declared blighted before it can be classified as an urban renewal area. The same provision extends new-community assistance to "all uses associated with *new communities in town* or similar large-scale undertakings *related to inner-city needs*, including concentrated sources of employment."

In perhaps the most fundamental departure from earlier new-community legislation, Title VII made public as well as private sponsors eligible for assistance. It vastly expanded the federal government's authority to guarantee the enormous, long-term loans needed for large-scale developments, permitting sponsors to borrow at much lower interest rates. HUD is authorized to underwrite up to $50 million of indebtedness for a single community.

By no means did the major-city intervention convert Title VII into an instrument exclusively for urban improvement. There are strong suggestions that the White House, though it sought to delay its enactment, sees the law as a tool to assist growth centers outside of metropolian areas. Foreshadowing greater developmental impact are reports that Title VII is stimulating a diligent land search by scores of corporations and big developers. A spokesman for Westinghouse, involved in a Texas new-town venture and studying the feasibility of reviving Washington's Fort Lincoln new-community proposal, told the Wall Street Journal: "We believe that one of the growth industries of the '70s will be new-communities development."

While generally applauding such suggestions of developer enthusiasm, even the most avid advocates of a new-town strategy want to guard against repetition of the FHA- sanctioned postwar residential expansion which set the still-entrenched pattern for economically homogeneous enclaves. As more central cities edge toward black majorities—there are three more than in 1960—emerging black leaders are taking a very dim view of suburban new towns which would welcome middle-class blacks but price out the poor of all races.

"The whole point of Title VII was that new-town building makes sense only as related to inner-city problems," says Hugh Mields, one of the law's draftsmen and a former executive director of the National League of Cities.

Designed as it is to attract private capital, Title VII may become increasingly useful to cities as they face declines in the traditional kinds of federal assistance. With the Nixon Administration withholding $1.3 billion in appropriated urban funds while Congress works over the President's special revenue-sharing plan for community development, the in-city entrepreneurial opportunities of Title VII loom as an attractive if untested vehicle.

For those who shrink from testing it, Representative Thomas Ludlow Ashley, the chief architect of Title VII, offers encouragement. He recalled in an interview that none of the broad range of corporate executives who testified at exhaustive hearings he chaired on urban growth were opposed to involvement of public bodies in new-community development. They recognized, he said, that schools, water and sewer installations, and zoning board decisions add to the value of land.

"The pattern of past development favored speculative developers at the detriment of the taxpayers," the Toledo Democrat said. "I'm suggesting that you can bring lower-income housing into new communities if you capitalize the value created through public decisions."

Local officials attempting to parlay Title VII and urban renewal assistance into a redevelopment strategy are likely to find HUD's Office of New Community Development responsive. Its director, William Nicoson, suggested that cities might use a renewal agency's power of land acquisition and cost write-down in ways that would enhance its chances for approval for new-community assistance. "While the new-community program can assist only projects which are economically feasible, I'm not sure it would be contrary to Congressional intent to consider the prospect of government assistance in determining feasibility," he said in an interview.

From two highly knowledgeable sources comes caution against raised expectations. Though he has great hope for a new community ready for development on a 16-square-mile tract recently annexed by his city, Milwaukee Mayor Henry Maier insists that the federal government must break the grip of exclusionary zoning before suburban new communities can be built which will significantly relieve inner-city housing pressures. Veteran San Francisco Redevelopment director M. Justin Herman warns cities not to be diverted into new, expansive programs while Washington fails to fund existing ones.

But the optimism that stimulated big-city support for Title VII, not surprisingly, has spawned a wide range of plans that conveniently resemble the kinds of communities the law describes.

Even before Congress enacted last year's sweeping new-community provisions, the city of Cleveland proposed a new town which could reach a population of 24,000 two miles beyond its eastern boundary. It would include structures ranging from single-family units to elevator apartments. More than a third of its 8,150 projected housing units would be for low- and moderate-income families.

Though the 800-acre site is owned by the city, opposition from surrounding communities mounted to the point that Mayor Carl Stokes cited it as a factor in his decision not to seek reelection. The plan faces an uncertain future.

In Representative Ashley's own district, a county agency has taken the initiative in establishing clear links between an exurban new town and the city of Toledo. The community, Spencer/Sharples, is an amalgam of contiguous urban renewal areas which contain the essential residential, commercial, and industrial components. The Lucas County Renewal Agency negotiated a plan under which the Toledo school system supervises schools in the still sparsely settled community and the Toledo Metropolitan Housing Authority manages 54 units of turnkey public housing.

A plan which carefully and deliberately relates new-community building to the inner city has been developed for the southeastern Michigan region by the Metropolitan Fund of Detroit. It calls for a system of up to 10 new towns in undeveloped suburban areas which would be "paired" with approximately the same number of inner-city areas. Though pairs of towns would be separated by distances of 20 to 40 miles, steps would be taken to link them politically, socially, and economically, according to a report of the nonprofit urban affairs foundation.

Linkages already exist between existing suburbs and Detroit, "but their fiscal and social implications are ignored," the report asserts. It cites deficits incurred by extension of bus lines, the loss of an estimated $3.3 million a year in taxes from the 3,000 acres of freeway right-of-way in the city, and Detroit taxpayers' support of libraries, museums, and parks, with no reimbursement from the thousands of suburbanites who use them.

Under the fund's proposal, housing to attract a range of income levels would be built in both the "in-towns" and "out-towns" of the network. Transit systems would link each of the pairs, both in-town and out-town residents would send their children to the same school system, vote for the same town officials, and share the same recreational facilities. Citizens would have the option of living in either an urban or suburban setting.

The team of economists, ecologists, architects, and social scientists who developed the concept said construction of a prototype pair of towns would take a capital investment in public and private funds totaling slightly more than $1 billion. Their economic modeling outlines a series of financing options with results ranging from a deficit of $26 million to a profit of $85 million over the project's projected 20-year development period.

New Town on a New York Island

The city's most neglected piece of real estate may become 'the best address in town.' By Richard Rogin.

Late last summer, on one of those sanguine "once upon a time" mornings in New York City, half a dozen architects took their brown, white, and gray model buildings, made of cardboard, painted wood, and styrofoam out of plain brown wrapping paper and cardboard boxes and placed them precisely on a site plan of Welfare Island. They were just starting work on what many felt might be the best address in town in 1976.

The plan spread over two pushed-together tables in the 46th-floor Manhattan offices of the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC). Through its subsidiary, the Welfare Island Development Corporation (WIDC), UDC is responsible for bringing off the $250-million (the total cost has ascended to $400 million in some conversations) metamorphosis of the weedy, mostly neglected, narrow, 147-acre, two-mile-long island which few New Yorkers know about. Despite the fact that it lies in the East River, a couple of hundred yards off the Queens and midtown Manhattan shorelines, only a relative handful has ever visited it. Unless you are interested in desuetude, silence, ruined dark-stone buildings, and dusty groves of London plane trees, there is little to attract the casual visitor and access is poor.

Richard Rogin, a New York free-lance, frequently writes about urban affairs.

But UDC staff members and the architects see the renascence of Welfare Island pointing the way to "another chance for cities" all over America.

With some of this presumably in mind, several architects dropped their chins onto the tabletop and squinted and peered through and past the models, studying perspectives over imaginary East River channels, at an equally imaginary East Side of Manhattan with its swanky penthouses and potted trees, and at the industrial littoral of Long Island City, marked by Consolidated Edison's massive Ravenswood generating plant.

Then like wise children content for the moment that their Lego construction was complete, the architects sat down around the four-foot-long North Town—the first phase of a new island community of 17,000 to 20,000 people of all income levels in approximately 5,250 apartments, with a revolutionary ban on the private car—to discuss the long-deferred but impending development of Welfare Island.

The city has owned the island since 1828 and has used it primarily to house Dickensian outcasts — lunatics, criminals, the indigent, aged, and disabled.

Structures presently used on it include two city hospitals for the chronically ill and disabled, several hospital utility buildings, a central nurses' residence, the Fire Department Training School, the New York University Medical Center primate colony, three churches, and a former synagogue. Only the hospitals and one church will survive demolition. In December, 1969, New York City, the island landlord, signed a 99-year lease with UDC and WIDC to develop the island in accordance with a master plan desired by the city which provides an even mix of parks and housing.

"Here we're not displacing anything," says Edward J. Logue, UDC's president and chief executive officer. "And we're trying to prove something which is desperately important: To prove in New York City, perhaps more than any other place in the United States, that we can get people of varying incomes and backgrounds to live in the same community and to send their children to the same schools." Logue is a husky, energetic man of 50 who has achieved almost mythological status in the annals of urban renewal, as hero and ogre, by tearing down and rebuilding large sectors of New Haven and Boston.

The impetus for the current island project — scores of other plans have been discarded over the years—stemmed from the possibility of the Welfare Island subway station which was all the new city administration of Mayor John V. Lindsay needed to seize the future. In January, 1968, the mayor appointed a group of high-powered citizens as the Welfare Island Planning and Development Committee. It could have foundered as other prestigious groups before it, but the mayor wisely chose Benno C. Schmidt, a concerned and decisive New Yorker from Texas, who is managing partner of J. H. Whitney & Co., an investment firm, as chairman.

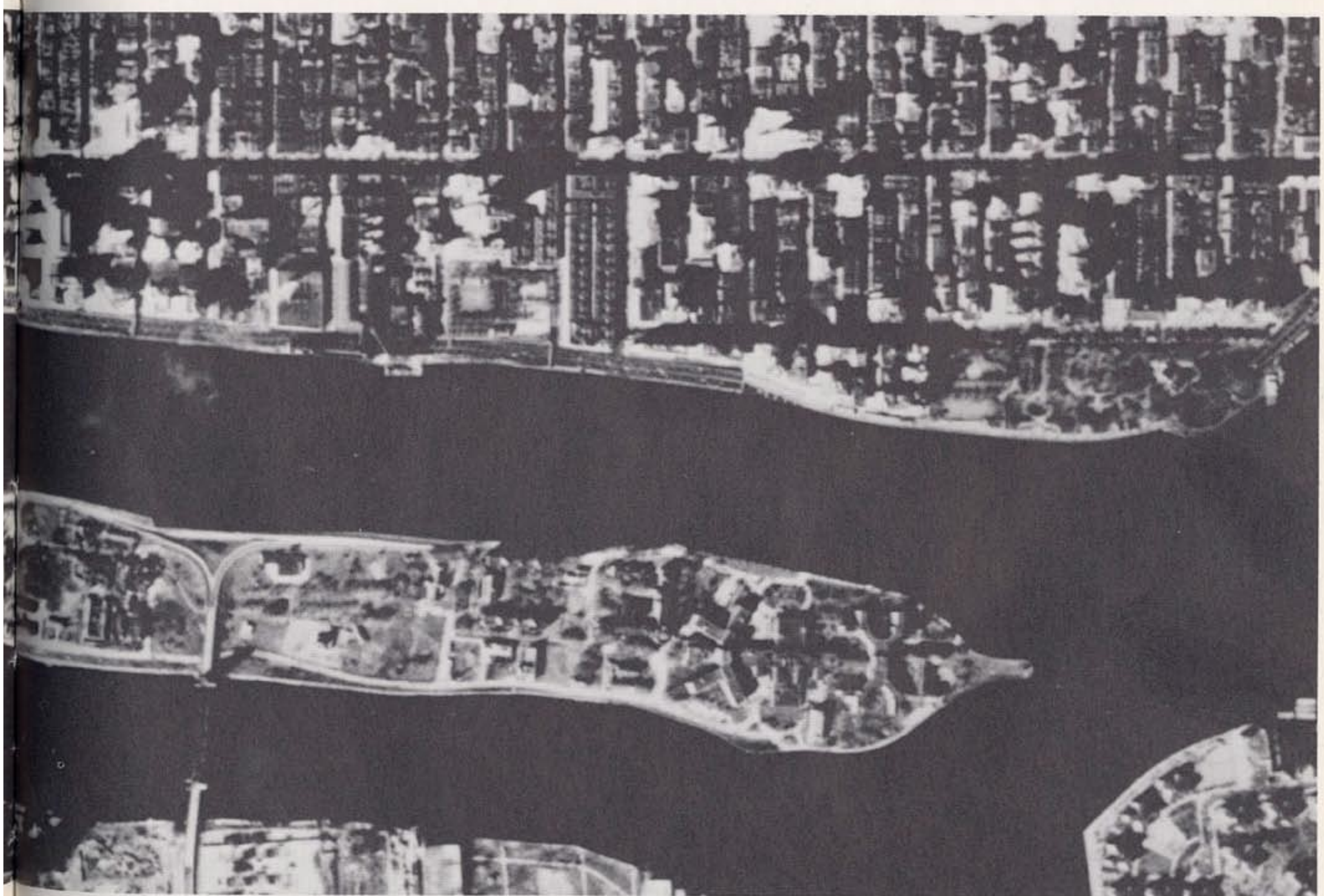
The committee's 141-page report, which Schmidt handed in to the mayor in February, 1969, is a model of a lucid, well-considered study. Its recommendations are said to be largely the result of skillful negotiation and persuasion by Schmidt and Philip Johnson, the architect, who was on the committee. Their efforts resulted in a compromise solution, somewhat resembling the present plan, between committee members who favored all parkland and those who urged extremely dense housing.

Omitting any specific architectural design, except that the buildings should be low enough to prevent a wall between Queens and Manhattan, Schmidt's committee recommended that a special development corporation such as UDC, or UDC itself (which had been created in April, 1968, by the state legislature over the fears of home-rule advocates such as Lindsay), be empowered to turn the proposal into reality.

The committee also opposed any attempt to tie the island to Manhattan by tunnels or bridges because of what it said was the enormous cost of building under or high over the commercial West Channel, which is used by deep-draft vessels and governed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. There would also be the problem of unwinding an access road from a high bridge down onto the island.

Schmidt, a big, deliberate-talking man, recalls: "Welfare Island was sitting there, in the middle of the East River, in the center of the city of New York, as attractive a piece of real estate potentially as there was in the city, not only being devoted to no use but worse than that, in a state of disrepair and dilapidation that was actually a disgrace to the city."

Jason R. Nathan, then head of the city Housing and Development Administration (HDA), "had a hell of a time persuading Lindsay to let UDC do Welfare Island," according to Samuel Ratensky,



a former HDA assistant administrator who now works for UDC. "If the city did it, it would become hopelessly mired in the geological time spans of city projects. If it had been done as a project of HDA, it would have been subject to every check and balance, endless public hearings, endless debates. It would have taken three times as long. UDC was new. It had very impressive powers. "In the end," he says, "it was a trade."

Nathan, who was responsible for the city's side in the difficult, extended negotiations with UDC, also says that Lindsay really wanted to do Welfare Island and was disappointed at losing the chance.

"We had more than we could possibly handle," says Nathan. "It was terribly important to lock arms, not horns, with UDC, which was potentially a very important additional capacity. It was not a dollar issue. It was absolutely essential to harness UDC's talents and powers—and they're considerable — and make them work for the city. Logue is a beautiful old pro in using political pressure to move his programs and he does it in an admirably Machiavellian way.

"Ed wanted something very important, very visible, and what has less relocation, less heartache, less backache, than Welfare Island? Ed wanted Welfare Island like he could taste it. I wanted UDC to do some of the tough nitty-gritty projects. I told Ed that if he wanted Welfare Island he had to take some of the other projects."

"Logue agreed to take the rough little vestpocket projects in the Bronx and Harlem," adds Ratensky, "in exchange for one visible attractive project."

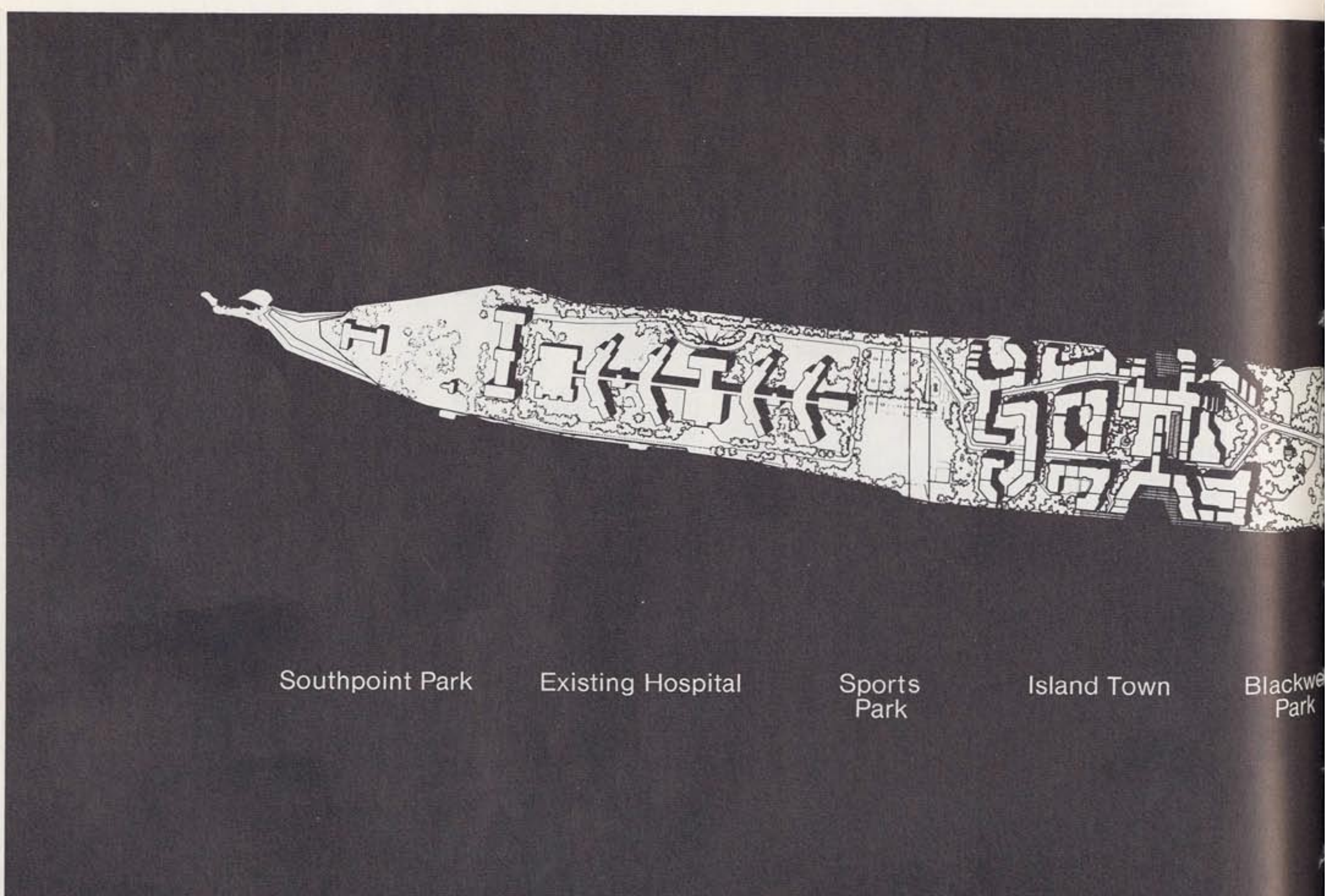
Of the "package deal," Logue says with a mischievous grin, "I'd say there's quite a lot of truth [in it]."

Albert A. Walsh, the present HDA administrator, disagrees with Nathan that the city could have handled the project financially. He feels that Welfare Island would have ranked far down on the city's list of capital budget priorities.

The tortuous city-UDC negotiations finally concluded in May, 1969, when Lindsay and Governor Rockefeller announced that UDC would develop eight projects with more than 11,000 housing units in the city, including the development of Welfare Island based on the Schmidt committee report. UDC then selected the architectural firm of Philip Johnson and John Burgee to come up with an island master plan in general accordance with the city's wishes.

Johnson says that he had recommended I. M. Pei for the master planner's job. Pei, who master-planned Logue's highly successful Boston government center, felt strongly that Welfare Island should be an extension of Manhattan's East Side, linked to it by two bridges. A source familiar with Pei's ideas says the architect wanted "to really make it a swinging part of the city rather than a suburb." He adds that the city's and UDC's main objection to the plan was not based on cost or technical difficulties because of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' bridge requirements, but the time needed to work out matters with various agencies. "Time is not available," says the source. And indeed, UDC very much wants to be known as a swiftly moving, can-do agency, solving urban ills in terms of environment, exhibiting a vigor that reflects a positive glow on Governor Rockefeller.

Pei, therefore, never really entered the scene and by October, 1969, Johnson and Burgee had finished their master plan. Architecture critics raved about their town-and-park banding of the island. Mayor Lindsay praised it as "a brilliant answer to 50 years of neglect—a bold plan for turning the most underutilized island in the world into a pacesetting new community."



The current project plan, parts of which are still in the conditional stage, envisions a diverse group of residential buildings generally stepped down from 18 stories inland to five stories near the water with grassy courtyards and splendid river and city vistas. There would be efficiencies and four-bedroom apartments, with a strong emphasis on family living, at rents ranging from a projected $60 a month to $1,250.

UDC hopefully expects there would be welfare tenants receiving $4,000 a year and other tenants with incomes over $100,000. High- and middle-income tenants will share some buildings and low- and moderate-income tenants others. But since the whole community—the North Town separated by five-acre Blackwell Park from the South Town with its commercial Town Center—is only about 12 blocks long, connected by a crooked Main Street, everyone would live in close proximity.

A total of about 1,500 apartments, or 30 per cent, would be reserved for low-income persons ($18-$20 monthly per room); 500 of them for the elderly. Twenty-five per cent have been set for moderate income ($40-$45); 20 per cent so-called middle income ($75-$80), and 25 per cent high income ($150-$180). Almost 20 per cent of all the apartments, or 1,000 units, have been assigned for hospital staff and patients with 250 of these specially designed for handicapped patients and their families. There would be such amenities as laundry rooms on upper floors for low-income tenants and a quiet pneumatic garbage-disposal system which would hurry compacted waste along underground pipes to a central collection point on a 60-mile-per-hour current of air.

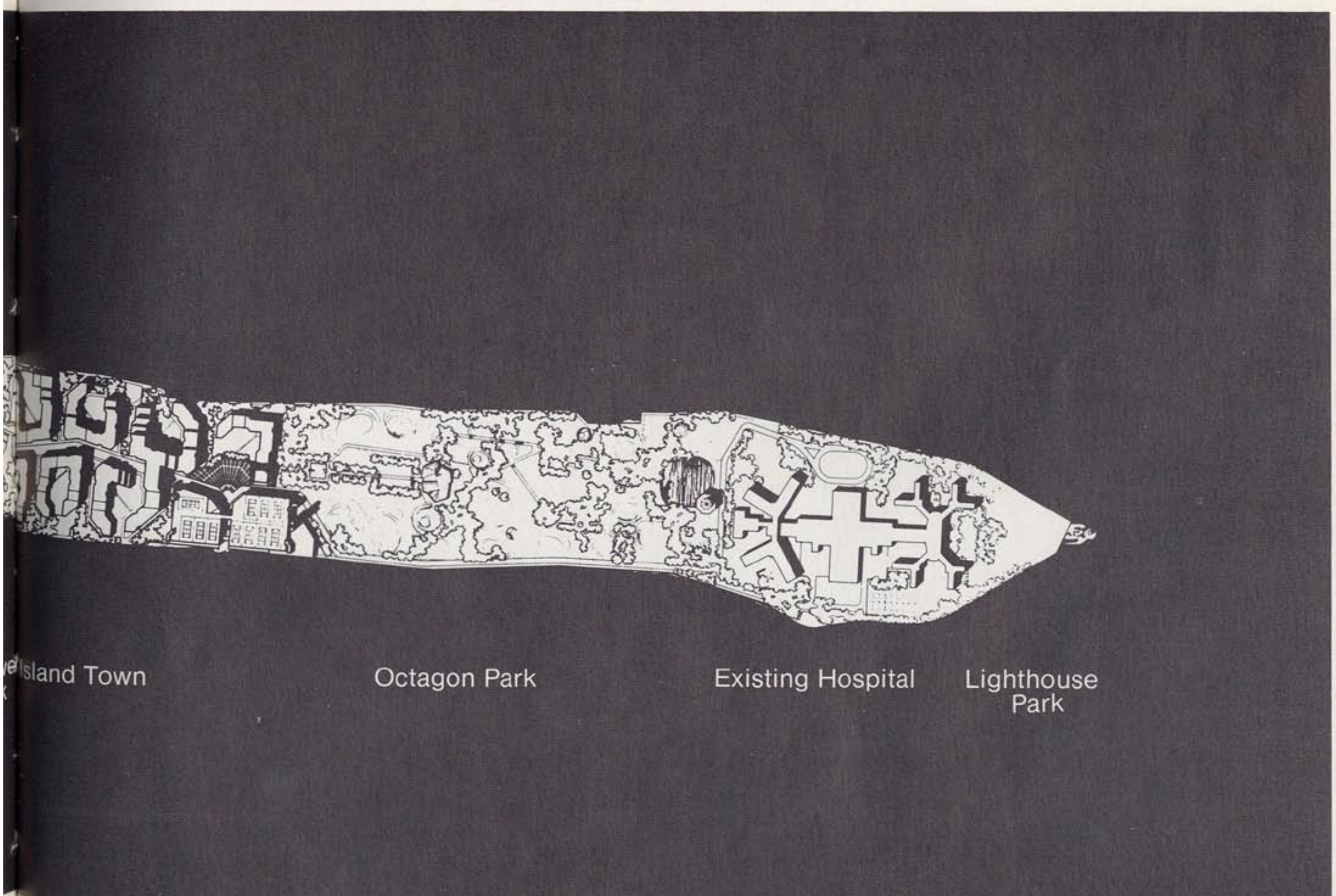
Five parks, covering about 50 acres, would band the island, including a 25-acre ecological study area and a six-acre sports park under the Queensboro Bridge with an underground gym. A four-mile promenade, cantilevered at spots over the river, would circle the island. There would be an infant care center (in the building for the elderly), an island health plan, community centers, and a dispersed educational system from kindergarten to high school. Secondary school students would move around the island during the day to scattered storefront educational facilities and "home bases."

At the island end of the Welfare Island Bridge from Queens there would be a 2,500-car computerized garage, perhaps eight decks high, known as the Motorgate, where all private cars would be parked. Taxis and service vehicles would be allowed to travel around the island. (An earlier plan, which was scrapped, would have permitted private autos on the island for brief periods, monitored by a computer.) Residents and visitors would transfer at the Motorgate to an electric minibus service to transport them and their baggage.

A collection of seven historical landmark buildings, ranging from the shabby Blackwell family farmhouse, built around 1789, to thick stone-walled 19th-century structures such as the octagonal stair tower of the old New York Lunatic Asylum, the old City Hospital, and the former Smallpox Hospital would be restored for possible use as museums, an exhibition hall, an artists' residence, and a restaurant.

The Town Center would start with a town square facing Manhattan with a Welfare Island station on a new subway tunnel expected to be operational by 1977. Access would also be provided by ferry service and possibly a cable car from Manhattan. UDC plans to move its New York City headquarters into a 15-story office building on the square.

A 100-yard-long, glass-roofed shopping arcade, 16 feet wide and 75 feet high, looking like a deep, narrow trench



of air, would connect the side facing Manhattan with a harbor and 300-room hotel on the Queens side where steps would lead down into the East Channel in the fashion of an Indian ghat. All around and on upper stories of the Town Center would be commercial and office space, mixed in with educational facilities, a movie house, a theater, a sculpture garden, and apartments.

Away from the architectural drafting boards, the city and UDC had been going through five long months of detailed negotiations on the lease arrangements under which UDC would develop the island. On October 29, 1969, the city Board of Estimate unanimously passed the complex 59-page lease which instructed UDC to carry out the general goals of the Johnson-Burgee master plan with the approval of its subsidiary corporation, WIDC, whose membership, in effect, is dominated by the city.

It was at the Board of Estimate's public hearing on the lease—the only formal public review the project ever had though there have been *two* Metropolitan Museum of Art shows of the plans—that angry charges surfaced accusing UDC and the city of steamroller tactics. Representative Edward I. Koch, then-councilman-candidate Carter Burden, and members of Community Planning Board No. 8 led the attack on the absence of the usual city review powers and local accountability, which the law allows UDC projects.

"It's just like the Defense Department," says Koch of UDC. "They know they're above reproach." The city also agreed to pay a 2-per-cent developer's fee to UDC, which could amount to $5 million or more over the 99-year lease, and Koch called this a "big giveaway." The city countered that UDC was taking unusual risks but the lease was amended to give the city an option after five years of paying UDC 40 per cent of the profits each year instead of the annual 2-per-cent fee.

Dr. Frank S. Kristof, another former top city housing aide who switched to UDC as its chief housing economist, estimates that the city may net $2.5 million in ground rent and taxes annually from the project. Kristof adds that if it were politically feasible for New York to use Welfare Island for top commercial and luxury residential development at the same volume as the present plan, it could have made $7.5 million in rent and taxes annually. Of course, then it also might have languished another 50 years as a kingdom of weeds.

Despite criticism of the project, almost no one has said it will never get built. Koch and some planners and architects are skeptical about the final construction's resembling the present plans. Koch would also have liked greater residential density, higher buildings with as much park space. Other critics would prefer to fill the island with low-income apartments to alleviate the city's desperate shortage of decent housing.

To this, Logue answers testily: "Well, if anybody wants to stand up and say we ought to stuff 30,000 low-rent public housing units with the usual lack of amenities into Welfare Island, let them. If this were the only thing the Urban Development Corporation were doing in the city of New York, that would be something else. But we are not neglecting the troubled areas of this town."

As to some criticism that the current architectural designs seem to lack daring, Logue says, "Thank God, it's not a Soleri. Habitat's fine, $140,000 a unit. That's a little much. What's unique about it is not the far-out architecture but the pleasant amenities."

Deadlines were written into the lease: groundbreaking by this June 23 (probably earlier in June on the Motorgate, roads, utility systems); completion by December, 1977, unless the subway station is delayed well past its winter 1976-77 scheduled operating date.

Philip Johnson says Logue "sort of collects architects for breakfast" and by early last summer he had signed up most of the best building, landscape, and restoration architects in the East to participate in the project's first phase (3,250 apartments in the North Town and Town Center, and the Center itself), set for fall, 1973, tenant occupancy. The second and final phase has a 1975-76 finish to its timetable.

The architects, all of whom were publicly delighted at the start to be working together in a diversified team effort—though Johnson wryly expressed regret at not being asked to design the whole works—are: Johnson & Burgee; Conklin & Rossant; Zion & Breen; John M. Johansen; Giorgio Cavaglieri; Kallman & McKinnell; Dan Kiley & Partners; Sert, Jackson & Associates, and Mitchell/Giurgola Associates. Gibbs & Hill Inc. are the engineers for utilities, transportation and the seawall, and Gruzen & Partners are assisting WIDC in systems analysis.

A UDC architect, commenting on the first of an unprecedented almost-weekly series of architects' meetings last summer at the UDC offices, says, "Everyone wondered whether it would be a massive ego trip or whether they would work as professionals." Though there have been reports of some minor friction, the consensus is they have acted as pros. Conklin & Rossant, however, are no longer on the team.

The reasoning behind the two-part town, says Johnson, is to preserve the historic buildings in their green settings and make the living more pleasant. "It's more like a sensible French village where the housing may be very tight," he says, "but you go outside the walls and you're in the country. Rather than split it all up, make parks, parks and make towns, tight towns. We architects hope that this will be a prototypical development, that towns in a town can be done perfectly well. It's what the Japanese did at Osaka right after the fair."

Last August, WIDC held its first official meeting and approved Logue's highly significant choice of Adam Yarmolinsky as its chief executive officer at a salary of about $40,000.

The 49-year-old Yarmolinsky, a native New Yorker, has an impressive record as an administrator. He was Robert S. McNamara's chief aide at the Pentagon during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations when systems analysis came into prominence, drafted much of the federal antipoverty program, and has been a professor at Harvard Law School since 1966 teaching courses such as "Introduction to Urban Legal Studies." He is now on a two-year leave of absence from Harvard.

Criticizing the "nightmarish quality" of some of the big housing projects in the city (though with a cautious Pentagonized sense of political consequence, names of specific projects are ruled off-the-record), Yarmolinsky adds, "If you built up Welfare Island that way, you would still not make a significant dent in New York City's housing deficit."

Some of the problems Yarmolinsky faces are collecting substantial amounts of scarce federal housing subsidy funds and exerting a degree of control over what he terms the expensive, backward building industry. Then, too, the cost of money itself is a major concern.

UDC expects to have formed its own limited-profit housing company or companies (similar to the state Mitchell-Lama program) in time to provide mortgage loans for construction of the low- to middle-income housing at an interest rate about 2 per cent lower than the private market rate. The Welfare Island project, a WIDC spokesman says, has access to a recent $250-million UDC bond issue. Moderate-income rents will be achieved by "piggybacking" the Mitchell-Lama type of program with the Federal Housing Administration's Section 236 program which subsidizes interest rates down to 1 per cent. The federal rent supplement program will be used to provide subsidy funds to produce low-income housing. There are tenant income limits associated with all these programs except luxury housing.

Dr. Kristof says that "subsidy funds are a real problem." And an FHA spokesman in Washington adds that the Section 236 situation is "always tight."

UDC has also applied to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for designation as a "new community" under Title VII of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970. By this action, WIDC officials hope to cut the estimated $27-million cost of "amenities" such as the parks, minibuses, and pneumatic refuse system by "triggering" aid from another HUD program and the Department of Transportation, as well as getting assistance under Title VII.

WIDC hopes to cut construction costs significantly through the use of technological innovations and perhaps such common building elements as standard floor-to-ceiling heights, closets, bathrooms, kitchen cabinets, and elevators. But all this, as a WIDC aide said, is "terribly iffy." Confronted with stringent construction cost limits to qualify for federal subsidies, UDC views mass production and an assured market as a way to reduce expenses. UDC adds that it has had an encouraging response in its delicate negotiations with unions and contractors in this area.

UDC could build all the public facilities—water and sewer lines, schools, fire and police stations (both planned for the Motorgate) and then sell or lease them back to the city, which will gain title in any event when the lease expires. The parks might also be financed by the New York State Parks Commission for the city of New York; they would then come under state control.

There are indirect expenses for the city, however, such as the projected transfer of the Fire Department Training School to Ward's Island, which will cost an estimated $12 million, and the approximately $16-million replacement of the central hospital laundry building. The NYU Medical Center primate colony is also stuck with finding a new home for its 200 rhesus and stump-tailed monkeys, and a few baboons.

Though UDC can be a builder of last resort, one of its imminent concerns is signing up a single developer or consortium of developers for the construction on the island. The long delay in selecting a developer—as late as two months before groundbreaking, nothing conclusive had happened—leaves UDC publicly unworried. Dr. Kristof even said in April that it was not a question of hunting for a developer but of choosing from among those interested.

If Welfare Island is "nobody's turf," as UDC chief architect William Chaffee says, in the classic New York sense, some long-term hospital patients and the few other inhabitants have strong feelings about the island.

Mrs. Gloria Chapin has lived for more than six years with her husband, a Protestant chaplain at one of the hospitals, and her three children in the fine old redbrick Chapel of the Good Shepherd, the only church which is slated for preservation. "Mainly, we have privacy here," she says. "We have space, we have quiet. We're like a little country place in the middle of the city, but we're not shut off. We're hoping to get one of the apartments if they develop it."

UDC has already received hundreds of letters applying for Welfare Island apartments. A form letter goes back saying UDC is not ready to take applications. No application system has been worked out yet. It will be, Yarmolinsky admits, "a complex and difficult problem." According to Timothy Seldes, a WIDC aide, people phone up and say, "Nonsense, we know you have a secret list." A handful of applicants have even come up to UDC's offices to press their requests in person. After all, Ed Logue sees it as a match-up for the Île de la Cité, the 65-acre island in the Seine, which only offers the Cathedral of Notre Dame and some of the loveliest residences in Paris.