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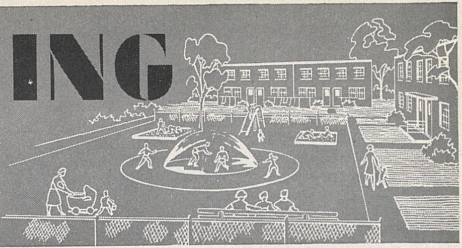
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PUBLIC HOUSING

Weekly News

FROM AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ABOLISHING SLUMS AND BUILDING LOW-RENT HOUSING



Federal Works Agency - John M. Carmody, Administrator

Vol. 1, No. 45 - June 18, 1940

U. S. Housing Authority - Nathan Straus, Administrator

Mt. Hope Smallest Town With Housing Project ~~Houston~~ Project Sets Low Record In Cost of Annual Contribution

With the completion this summer of Stadium Terrace, 70-unit low-rent housing development in Mount Hope, W. Va. (pop. 2,750), the little West Virginia town will become the smallest community in the United States to have a USHA-aided public housing project.

To those who are accustomed to associate low-rent housing and slum clearance with large metropolitan cities such as New York, the Mount Hope project will serve as a reminder that housing for the lower income groups is a problem which confronts all communities, regardless of size.

The sturdily built, two-story duplex frame houses which make up the project are designed for the families of miners employed in the nearby coal mines. Because Mount Hope is a one-industry community, it was necessary, before the project could be approved, that there be some reasonable assurance that the coal industry in Mount Hope will continue to provide employment during the 60-year amortization period of the project. Following a study of the resources of the mines, it was disclosed that the Mount Hope coal fields and those in the adjoining county should be workable for approximately 125 years.

In order to cut cost of the project to the minimum, the city of Mount Hope gave the local authority excellent cooperation. The site of the project was donated by the city;

(Continued on page 4)

When Cuney Homes, USHA-aided project in Houston, Tex., is open to tenants some time in July, Uncle Sam's contribution per family will be \$6.57 per month or \$1.52 per week—the lowest Federal subsidy achieved to date on any USHA-aided project.

The phenomenally low annual subsidy of 1.862 percent of the development cost of the project for Cuney Homes nearly halves the maximum subsidy (3.5 percent) permitted under the United States Housing Act. It was achieved after months of careful study on the part of USHA officials, and indicates an important advance in the Authority's financial policy. On the basis of the maximum Federal subsidy, the monthly Federal contribution for each family would have been \$12.36.

Originally, due to a lack of complete information on local rental markets and to a desire to attain the lowest rentals possible, contracts called for the maximum subsidy permitted under the law. More and more, however, USHA and local officials have been impressed with the fact that Federal subsidies might well be lowered and rents still kept within reach of the lowest income groups.

Until a few months ago the maximum annual contribution from the Federal Government was considered a constant factor by means of which rents could be driven down as low as possible. In future, the rental will

be the constant, and the subsidy the variable. The local authority's first task will be to discover the existing rental market—what families now living in substandard housing actually are paying. With this factor as the constant, the amount of subsidy will be calculated to bridge the gap between the rental the tenant can pay and the rental he would pay if the entire cost of the development were to be amortized from rent alone. In practically every case, this will mean a reduction in subsidy from the Federal Government. At the same time, it will tend to keep project rentals about the same or slightly below what low-income families pay for substandard housing. In Houston, the local authority has been studying the problem of subsidy reduction for months, and has given USHA officials complete cooperation.

The annual incomes of the Negro families admitted to the Houston project are expected to average only \$618 a year as compared with the \$758 annual average income of Negro families living in substandard housing throughout the city. Project tenants will pay an average shelter rental of only \$13.03 a month; whereas Negro families living in substandard housing in Houston pay an average shelter rental of \$16.34. Thus both rentals and incomes in the project fall well within the low-rent housing market for the city as established by the local authority's thorough going survey.

This housing project, which provides new homes for 70 low-income families, marks Mount Hope, W. Va., as one of the most progressive small towns in the country.



Judge J. R. King Upholds Columbus Contract

Judge John R. King, of the Court of Common Pleas of Franklin County, recently upheld the validity of the contract between the city of Columbus, Ohio, and the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority for three more low-rent housing projects in the city.

The decision was made in a suit brought by City Attorney John L. Davies, at the request of Thomas J. Potts, taxpayer, seeking to declare void an ordinance passed by city council covering various services the city is to furnish without cost.

The suit attacked the furnishing of such services as fire, police and health, street maintenance, and garbage and refuse collection, without cost, and the privilege of building without payment of building and inspection fees. Judge King, in denying Davies the relief sought and ordering the petition dismissed, said:

"The evidence discloses the need in the city for slum clearance and also for houses of low rent. The authority, by its contract, agrees to furnish houses to families with low income, and the city agrees in the cooperation contract to eliminate houses which are detrimental to the safety, health, and morals of the community. The two objects here indicated are concomitant."

Harvard Gives Course In Regional Planning

A new course in Regional Planning is being offered for the first time this summer in the Harvard University Summer School by the Department of Fine Arts. To be known as Fine Arts S7c, the course will count as related work in Government, Geography, and Urban Sociology.

The lecture schedule will include:
INTRODUCTION.—Nature and Scope of Course.
I. GENERAL THEORY OF REGIONAL PLANNING.
II. THE METHOD OF REGIONAL PLANNING.

Surveys, presentation of survey data, analysis of problems, design of possible solutions, provision for administration of recommended solutions.

III. APPLICATION OF THE METHOD OF REGIONAL PLANNING TO SPECIFIC PROBLEMS.

Land use, with an introduction to urban

Rent-Income Relationship Subject Of Recent Meeting

Meeting in Washington recently, a group of local housing experts, including Dr. Edith Elmer Wood, well-known writer, and Dr. B. J. Hovde, Administrator of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, discussed a new approach to rents and incomes.

Although details of the new policy have not yet been finally approved, at least two important suggestions were made: (1) That in every community applying for USHA assistance, a thorough analysis of the current rental market should be made in accordance with approved techniques; and (2) that an attempt should be made to allocate units which are inevitably more desirable, because of differences in outlook and attractiveness of layout, to the higher rent grades, and those which are relatively less attractive to the lower rent grades.

According to a preliminary statement which eventually will become a revision of Bulletin No. 24, *Establishing Rent Schedules for USHA-Aided Projects*, "With rents established according to the needs of low-income families and with annual expenses held to the lowest possible amounts, it has been found that few, if any, projects require the maximum annual contribution . . . and that most projects will require very much less than full subsidy."

land use; soil conservation, including reforestation; flood control, including comprehensive water planning; transportation (all forms); zoning, with an introduction to county zoning; housing, or the design of residential areas, under both private and public initiative; recreation; public works programming and budgeting; fiscal policy.

IV. THE PRACTICE OF REGIONAL PLANNING AS REVEALED IN THE WORK OF SELECTED AGENCIES.

National, regional, State, and local planning by such agencies as The National Resources Planning Board, The New England Regional Planning Commission, The Tennessee Valley Authority, The Massachusetts State Planning Board, The Boston Metropolitan District Commission, and The New York City Planning Commission.

"Housing and Welfare" Published by USHA

"Housing and Welfare," recently published USHA booklet, is the report of a survey (first of its kind to be undertaken) concerning the relationships between public welfare and public housing agencies. Conducted by USHA in cooperation with the Social Security Board, the survey was undertaken "in the belief that public welfare and housing officials are seeking the same goal, namely, an adequate standard of living for all persons who are unable to obtain for themselves the minimum necessities."

Findings of the study are presented under three main headings: A—The housing situation of relief and public assistance recipients; B—What has been done about the housing of relief and public assistance recipients; and C—Major problems in the housing of relief and public assistance recipients which confront both housing and welfare officials.

Conclusions are separated into two main divisions: A—What can welfare agencies do? and B—What can housing authorities do? The answers are stated in terms of immediate and long-time programs for both types of agencies.

An extensive, annotated bibliography is appended to the report, together with a "List of National, State, and local agencies, public and private, concerned with housing and/or welfare."

In the "Foreword," signed by Nathan Straus, USHA Administrator, and Oscar M. Powell, Executive Director, Social Security Board, the purpose behind the study is discussed.

"In the extension of each program—housing and social security—the establishment of the legal right to disburse security benefits and to construct public housing has been only the first hurdle. The real task has been and will continue to be the establishment and maintenance of standards on which these programs can be soundly and efficiently administered.

"Through the joint efforts of persons interested in these two fields, we may discover the answer to the problem of adequate public assistance standards which include adequate housing for all."



They will cost Uncle Sam less by nearly one-half. Dwellings under construction on the Cuney Homes project in Houston, Tex., where the Federal subsidy is only 1.862% of development cost; legal maximum subsidy is 3.5%.

Rents and Incomes— 49 Project Averages

This week, PUBLIC HOUSING starts the publication of average rents and incomes as they are established in the management resolutions adopted by local housing authorities. It is planned to publish this information periodically upon the receipt of the necessary data from local authorities.

Since the USHA regions do not lend themselves readily to statistical reporting, it was decided to establish geographical regions which would be comparable with other statistical data published by the Federal Government. With this in mind, the various States have been grouped according to the regions used for many years by the U. S. Census Bureau. A minor exception is that information for New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey will be reported under the heading "North Atlantic States" rather than under the Census heading of "Middle Atlantic States." The Census group of "South Atlantic States" has been subdivided into "Middle Atlantic States" and "South Atlantic States." It will, of course, be possible to combine data for these two regions in order to make comparison with Census or other statistical data. All other regions include the same States and bear the same names as those reported by the Census Bureau. The complete listing of regions and States follows:

NEW ENGLAND:	
Maine	Massachusetts
New Hampshire	Rhode Island
Vermont	Connecticut
NORTH ATLANTIC: (Middle Atlantic in the Census.)	
New Jersey	Pennsylvania
New York	
MIDDLE ATLANTIC: (Part of South Atlantic in the Census.)	
Delaware	West Virginia
Maryland	Virginia
District of Columbia	
SOUTH ATLANTIC: (Part of South Atlantic in the Census.)	
North Carolina	Georgia
South Carolina	Florida
EAST NORTH CENTRAL:	
Illinois	Ohio
Indiana	Wisconsin
Michigan	
EAST SOUTH CENTRAL:	
Alabama	Mississippi
Kentucky	Tennessee
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL:	
Arkansas	Oklahoma
Louisiana	Texas
WEST NORTH CENTRAL:	
North Dakota	Nebraska
South Dakota	Kansas
Minnesota	Missouri
Iowa	
MOUNTAIN:	
Arizona	Nevada
Colorado	New Mexico
Idaho	Utah
Montana	Wyoming
PACIFIC:	
California	Washington
Oregon	
ISLAND POSSESSIONS:	
Hawaii	Puerto Rico

The average rents and incomes shown in the accompanying table are "weighted" averages. That is, regional averages are obtained by multiplying the average established for each individual project by the number of dwelling units in that project, adding the totals together, and dividing by the total number of dwelling units in all projects in the region.

The rents and incomes reported here are those *finally* established for projects. Since these figures are dependent upon the final adoption of a management resolution, they

Average rents and family incomes: USHA-aided projects for which management resolutions have been approved by the Administrator and adopted by the local housing authority, as of June 10, 1940¹

Region, city, and project	Number of dwelling units	Average monthly shelter rent per dwelling unit	Average annual family income anticipated in project
Total, all regions (49 projects)	15,843	\$13.38	\$782
North Atlantic	8,787	14.95	857
Elizabeth (NJ-3-1) Mravlag Manor	423	14.74	868
Long Branch (NJ-8-1) Garfield Court	127	12.92	925
Newark (NJ-2-1) Seth Boyden Court	530	17.86	1,000
Newark (NJ-2-2) Pennington Court	236	13.79	842
Newark (NJ-2-6) Stephen Crane Village	354	17.72	1,000
North Bergen (NJ-4-1) Meadow View Village	172	13.73	925
Trenton (NJ-5-1) Lincoln Homes	118	11.06	817
Trenton (NJ-5-2) Mayor Donnelly Homes	376	15.47	927
Buffalo (NY-2-1) Lakeview	668	13.35	850
Buffalo (NY-2-2) Willert Park	173	12.91	750
Buffalo (NY-2-3) Commodore Perry	772	13.22	825
Syracuse (NY-1-1) Pioneer Homes	678	13.72	834
Utica (NY-6-1) Adrean Terrace	213	12.71	800
Yonkers (NY-3-1) Mulford Gardens	552	16.65	1,110
Allentown (PA-4-1) Hanover Acres	322	13.99	878
Pittsburgh (PA-1-1) Terrace Village I	3,073	15.61	778
Pittsburgh (PA-1-2) Bedford Dwellings			
Pittsburgh (PA-1-3) Terrace Village II			
Middle Atlantic	1,151	12.41	763
Annapolis (MD-1-1) College Creek Terrace	107	11.09	802
Charleston (W VA-1-1) Washington Manor	304	10.50	680
Charleston (W VA-1-2) Littlepage Terrace	170	15.00	1,000
Huntington (W VA-4-1) Washington Square	80	10.16	640
Huntington (W VA-4-2) Northcott Court	136	10.75	640
Huntington (W VA-4-3) Marcum Terrace	284	14.98	790
Mount Hope (W VA-7-1) Stadium Terrace	70	11.88	759
South Atlantic	1,705	10.16	641
Charleston (SC-1-1) Robert Mills Manor	266	12.26	765
Charleston (SC-1-6) Robert Mills Manor Extension			
Augusta (GA-1-1) Olmsted Homes	167	10.35	665
Augusta (GA-1-2) Sunset Homes	168	8.52	498
Daytona Beach (FLA-7-1) Pine Haven	167	7.36	470
Jacksonville (FLA-4-2) Brentwood Park	230	10.58	750
Miami (FLA-5-1) Edison Courts	345	11.90	750
Pensacola (FLA-6-2) Attucks Court	120	8.22	482
St. Petersburg (FLA-2-1) Jordan Park	242	8.85	525
East North Central	667	12.98	796
Dayton (OHIO-5-2) DeSoto Bass Courts	200	12.72	797
Toledo (OHIO-6-1) Charles F. Weiler Homes	384	14.00	839
Vincennes (IND-2-1) Major Bowman Terrace	83	8.85	592
East South Central	2,853	11.55	677
Frankfort (KY-3-1) Leestown Terrace	91	9.86	750
Louisville (KY-1-1) Clarksdale	786	13.00	750
Chattanooga (TENN-4-1) College Hill Courts	497	9.06	625
Chattanooga (TENN-4-2-R) East Lake Courts	437	10.30	680
Knoxville (TENN-3-1) Western Heights	244	11.16	659
Knoxville (TENN-3-2) College Homes	320	10.01	631
Memphis (TENN-1-1) Lamar Terrace	478	14.46	636
West South Central	680	10.88	637
Austin (TEX-1-1) Chalmers Street	86	8.62	640
Austin (TEX-1-2) Rosewood	60	6.97	550
Austin (TEX-1-3) Santa Rita	40	6.59	545
Corpus Christi (TEX-8-1-R) Kinney Place	134	9.59	751
Houston (TEX-5-1) Cuney Homes	360	13.03	618

¹See accompanying text for explanation of the averages and for lists of States included in each region. This table does not include any project which does not have a finally approved and adopted management resolution, even though the project may be open.

will lag somewhat behind the "rents and incomes approved by the Administrator." Furthermore, the data will not be complete for all projects now open, because management resolutions have not yet been adopted by local authorities for some of the projects

which have been opened for occupancy. This issue of the Weekly should be preserved for reference purposes since space limitations will not allow of such complete explanations of the averages and the regions in the future.

Mayor of Twin Falls Lends Personal Funds

Mayor Joe K. Koehler, of the city of Twin Falls, Idaho, has made a personal loan to the local housing authority to cover its preliminary expenses. This was done, Mayor Koehler said, "to forestall any unfavorable action being taken regarding who should put the money on the line, and, further, to give moral support to the local Low Cost Housing Committee. This is the move of a plain American citizen just wanting to help another worthy cause."

Mayor Koehler says that he is making this loan without any interest or carrying charges. In commenting upon his action, the Mayor said, "There is a need for a low-rent housing program in our city. The project must go ahead. I am glad that I can, in this small way, make it possible to move some of our more unfortunate citizens from shacks and hovels into decent, clean homes."

The Twin Falls Housing Authority, the first in Idaho to begin a low-rent housing program, has begun work on two projects. It is anticipated that applications for financial assistance will be forwarded to the USHA sometime in June or July.

The Twin Falls Housing Authority was created by action of the City Council on January 15, 1940. Immediately, Mayor Koehler appointed five civic-minded citizens to administer the local program. The members of the local authority are: O. P. Duvall, Chairman; H. H. Hedstrom, Vice-Chairman; Eugene B. Scott, Secretary pro tem; Capt. C. H. Thomas; and Miss Vernis Richards.

Twin Falls has an estimated population of between 12,000 and 13,000, representing approximately a 33½-percent growth since 1930.

Residential Vacancy Surveys, 1928-39, by S. B. Barber. Construction and Real Property Section, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, U. S. Department of Commerce. May 1940. 10¢. 24 pp. Processed.

This study summarizes the methods used in securing vacancy data during the past decade. The advantages and disadvantages of the various types of surveys are enumerated and potential new sources of vacancy data are brought to the reader's attention.

Mt. Hope Smallest Town With Housing Project

(Continued from page 1)

the city auditor will collect rents under the supervision of, but at no expense to, the authority; workmen from the city water works will make minor repairs; city wholesale purchases are extended to the project; the city will, upon receiving permission from the Public Service Commission, furnish water and electricity to the project at a wholesale rate; the city bore the cost of new street improvements to and through the project; and the city installed water and sewer mains which were tapped at the project's expense.

The project is located on a narrow strip of rolling land about three-quarters of a mile long. It contained 34 dilapidated wooden shacks. A natural bowl which is used for a municipal stadium faces the site on the northeast. Nearby are two playgrounds. Across Pax Avenue from the site is another strip of land now being made into a park by the city. Schools, stores, and churches are all within a few minutes' walk from the site.

Although Mount Hope is the smallest city in the United States to have a USHA-aided housing project, it is not unusual for small cities to apply for USHA assistance. According to a recent check-up, "fully one-half of the demands of local housing authorities for funds to participate in the United States Housing Authority's program are from cities with populations of less than 50,000." In a recent tabulation of 181 applications in excess of available USHA funds, it was disclosed that 35 percent of the applications were from communities of less than 25,000 population, and that 19 percent were from cities between 25,000 and 50,000 population.

Part 2 summarizes "types of useful vacancy data," while pointing out that excellent vacancy surveys can be made without going into the detail outlined. Part 3 presents summary vacancy data for over 80 cities, including most of the complete surveys known to have been made—with the exception of publicly sponsored Real Property Inventories—during the period January 1, 1936-December 31, 1939. Vacancy data by type of structure in selected cities and revised and supplementary vacancy data, 1928-35, are also shown.

Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended June 7, 1940	Week ended May 31, 1940	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction ¹	215	215	No change
Number of dwellings under construction ¹	82,550	82,550	No change
Total estimated over-all cost ² of new housing.....	\$366,252,000	\$366,214,000	+0.01
Average over-all cost ² of new housing per unit.....	\$4,437	\$4,436	+0.02
Average net construction cost ³ per unit.....	\$2,776	\$2,775	+0.04

¹ Includes projects which have been completed.

² Includes: (a) Building the house, including structural costs and plumbing, heating, and electrical installation; (b) dwelling equipment, architects' fees, local administrative expenses, financial charges during construction, and contingency expenses; (c) land for present development; (d) nondwelling facilities.

³ The cost of building the house, including structural, plumbing, heating, and electrical costs.

Demonstration Unit In Raleigh Project

According to the North Carolina Housing Review for June 1, complete furnishings and equipment for a two-bedroom demonstration apartment in Raleigh's Halifax Court housing project were provided "in cheerful and modern style for the unbelievably small sum of \$127.83."

"The demonstration unit was set up by Mrs. Marie L. Goodwin, supervisor of tenant selection, with the aid of Miss Maude McInnes, county home demonstration agent, and others. The craft shop and sewing room of the Work Projects Administration played a large part in preparing the articles of furniture and decoration.

"As an example of what imagination and ingenuity can accomplish in home furnishing at negligible cost, the living room chair was made from a barrel which cost 50 cents, cotton padding costing 31 cents, and covering material costing \$1.14, total cost of the chair, \$1.95.

"A studio couch was created out of an old steel frame cot, padding and pillows, and a slip cover. The total bill for the studio couch and end tables came to \$19.48. A console table emerged from what had been an old wash stand, costing 45 cents to re-finish.

"Curtains throughout are made of inexpensive material, some of it as low as 5 cents per yard. The treatment, however, is varied, unbleached domestic with ball fringe being used in one chamber, a printed fabric in another, and a heavy striped stuff in the living room. Since the closets are without doors, to permit freer furniture arrangement, these openings are draped with sack cloth, hung in pleats on a slide rod and stitched near the bottom with a colorful border."

Schedule of Bid Opening Dates ¹

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Biloxi (Miss.-5-2).....	100	7-10-40
Biloxi (Miss.-5-3).....	100	7-1-40
Columbus (Ohio-1-4).....	350	7-6-40
Honolulu (T. H.-1-2).....	122	7-1-40
Houston (Tex.-5-1-A).....	204	6-27-40
Houston (Tex.-5-2).....	328	6-18-40
Martinsburg (W. Va. -6-1).....	48	6-25-40
Martinsburg (W. Va. -6-2).....	52	6-25-40
Memphis (Tenn.-1-4).....	500	6-28-40
Montgomery (Ala.-6-2)	150	7-1-40
New Britain (Conn. -5-1).....	340	6-28-40
New Orleans (La.-1-1, Pt. II).....	36	7-17-40
Phenix City (Ala.-5-2).....	206	7-5-40
Phoenix (Ariz.-1-1).....	225	7-1-40
San Antonio (Tex.-6-3).....	796	7-18-40
San Antonio (Tex.-6-4).....	236	6-20-40
San Antonio (Tex.-6-5).....	342	7-12-40
Spartanburg (S.C.-3-1).....	150	7-2-40
Stamford (Conn.-7-1).....	250	7-10-40

¹ There is usually a 30-day period between bid advertising and bid opening.

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