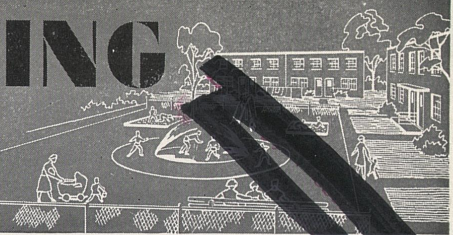


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PUBLIC HOUSING

Weekly News

FROM AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ABOLISHING SLUMS AND BUILDING LOW-RENT HOUSING



Vol. 1, No. 24

Federal Works Agency, U. S. Housing Authority—Nathan Straus, Administrator

January 23, 1940

More Short-Term Loans Soon to be Issued by Local Authorities

Another \$35,501,000 of private money will go into the financing of public housing projects late this month when 10 local housing authorities open bids for their 6-months Temporary Loan Notes. Bids are to be opened January 24.

This will be the second time that local authority short-term notes have been offered for public sale. The initial issue of \$50,000,000 was snapped up by private investors at rates of interest averaging slightly less than six-tenths of 1 percent.

The authorities participating in the second issue represent the cities of Los Angeles, Calif.; Bridgeport, Conn.; Boston, Mass.; Fall River, Mass.; Lowell, Mass.; Cleveland, Ohio; Dayton, Ohio; Toledo, Ohio; Chattanooga, Tenn.; and Memphis, Tenn.

From Kinston, N. C., Langdon Post (USHA Consultant) brings this item: At a meeting of the Mayor, the city council, the housing authority, and prominent citizens, the local housing program was under fire.

"What proof do we have," asked one skeptic, "that the site the local authority has selected is really in a substandard area?"

"Only this," someone replied, "there are 150 condemned dwellings on that site, and altogether there are only 6 toilets and 1 bathtub."

Syracuse Dedicates 678-Unit Project— Banquet Features Opening of "Pioneer Homes"

"Pioneer Homes," in Syracuse, first New York State project approved under the USHA program, was officially opened and dedicated recently. USHA Administrator Nathan Straus was at the same time presented with a medal for outstanding citizenship by the Syracuse chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, and Sergei N. Grimm, Secretary and Executive Director of the Syracuse Housing Authority, received a citizenship medal from the Syracuse chapter of the American Legion.

Three hundred guests, at a banquet in the evening following the dedication ceremonies, cheered Mayor Roland R. Marvin, whose support of public housing in Syracuse has been invaluable.

In his address Mr. Straus complimented the city administration for its

enthusiastic support of the public housing program.

Mr. Straus said the Syracuse program is proof that public housing is one of the few important issues which all political groups and organizations can support on 100-percent nonpartisan grounds.

To the 678 low-income families who will make "Pioneer Homes" their new home, the project provides clean, decent living conditions at an average shelter rental of \$13.72 per month.

Prominent guests were: Mayor Vincent Currau of Utica; Albert Merrill, President of the Syracuse Chamber of Commerce; Ralph Tracy, Director of the local Community Chest; Joseph Teatum, Central New York Trades Assembly, A. F. of L.; and Father Leo Geary of the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority.



"Pioneer Homes" in Syracuse, N. Y.—new USHA-aided 678-unit project recently opened for occupancy. Shelter rent will average \$13.72 per month.

Current Housing Literature

FARM HUT-CLEARANCE: USHA PLANS TO EXTEND PROGRAM TO RURAL AREAS WITH HOUSES RENTING AT \$4 TO \$5 A MONTH, *Business Week*, Dec. 23, 1939, pp. 16-17.

A brief account of USHA's proposed rural housing program.

CLOSE COORDINATION SPEEDS BUFFALO HOUSING PROJECT, *Engineering News-Record*, December 1939, pp. 44-47.

Efficient job organization is resulting in rapid construction operations on the 50 buildings of USHA's Commodore Perry low-rent housing project. Costs of three Buffalo housing developments compared. Illustrations.

LONG-BOOM CRANE HOISTS 50,000 CU. YD. OF STRUCTURAL CONCRETE FOR SIX-STORY HOUSES, *Construction Methods*, December 1939, pp. 52-54, 72-76.

Use of long-boom crane in hoisting concrete and reinforcing steel on the superstructures of the Queensbridge Houses project described and illustrated.

THE MARKET FOR SMALL HOMES IN THE AVERAGE COMMUNITY, by Fred H. Ludwig, *The Plan*, December 1939, pp. 8-10, 55.

Road to recovery in America lies in providing homes for the average family in communities adjacent to central cities.

A STATEMENT CONCERNING THE PROFESSION OF ARCHITECTURE, *The Octagon*, December 1939, pp. 6-15.

Discusses architects and building projects, describing methods of selecting an architect, his fee, contract, and type of services normally rendered by him on a building project.

THE LOW-COST HOUSING PROGRAM OF THE FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, United States Department of Agriculture, 1939, 4 pp. Mimeographed.

Describes construction methods and house plans which the Farm Security Administration has developed as a result of its 5 years' experience in rural housing.

HOUSING IN LEEDS, by R. A. H. Livett, A. R. I. B. A., *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, June 1939, pp. 268-275.

Discusses progress of Leeds' rehousing program and describes one of its outstanding features, the variety of cottages and flats intended to meet the needs of large and small families, the aged, single men and women, etc.

SALE OF BONDS STUDIED BY USHA, *Engineering News-Record*, Dec. 28, 1939, p. 6.

Discusses percent of permanent financing bonds to be offered to the public by the USHA.

PROGRESS IN PUBLIC HOUSING—A SYMPOSIUM (including PRESENT STATUS AND NEEDS, by Blanche Halbert), *Journal of Home Economics*, January 1940, pp. 20-24.

A summary of the housing reports of outstanding home economists submitted at the San Antonio meeting of the American Home Economics Association. Miss Halbert of the USHA also briefly describes the present status and needs of public housing.

LOW RENT HOUSING, by Walter G. Ramseur, *Florida Municipal Record*, December 1939, pp. 12-13.

An address by the president of the Florida Association of Housing Authorities. Describes the detrimental effect of slums on society, the enactment of the Wagner-Steagall bill, and the progress of public housing to date.

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT, Federal Home Loan Bank Board, for the period July 1, 1938-June 30, 1939. Washington, D. C., 1939. 242 pp.

Covers operations of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board and its agencies. Presents a survey of residential construction and describes the activities of the real estate market. Charts and exhibits.

FOUR DECADES OF HOUSING WITH A LIMITED DIVIDEND CORPORATION, Federal Housing

(Continued on page 4)

Straus, McCornack Address Regional Conference; USHA and NAHO Sponsor Five-Day Boston Meeting

Public housing officials attending the Regional Conference on Housing Administration and Management at the Hotel Bellevue in Boston heard Dean Walter R. McCornack, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, state that obsolete building codes (enforced to protect vested interests) still restrain the introduction of modern low-cost materials suitable in the construction of homes for low-income families.

Dean McCornack further declared that faulty codes retard prefabrication, designed to make homes cheaper without lowering standards of construction.

Outmoded building restrictions, he said, are responsible for 20 cents out of every dollar paid for new homes.

The 5-day conference opened Monday, January 8, and continued through Friday, January 12. It was conducted by NAHO in cooperation with USHA and the Boston Housing Authority.

At the opening session on Monday Carl Henry Monsees, of NAHO, Conference Director, stated the purpose of the conference: "To review the growth of housing authority administration and management, and to help

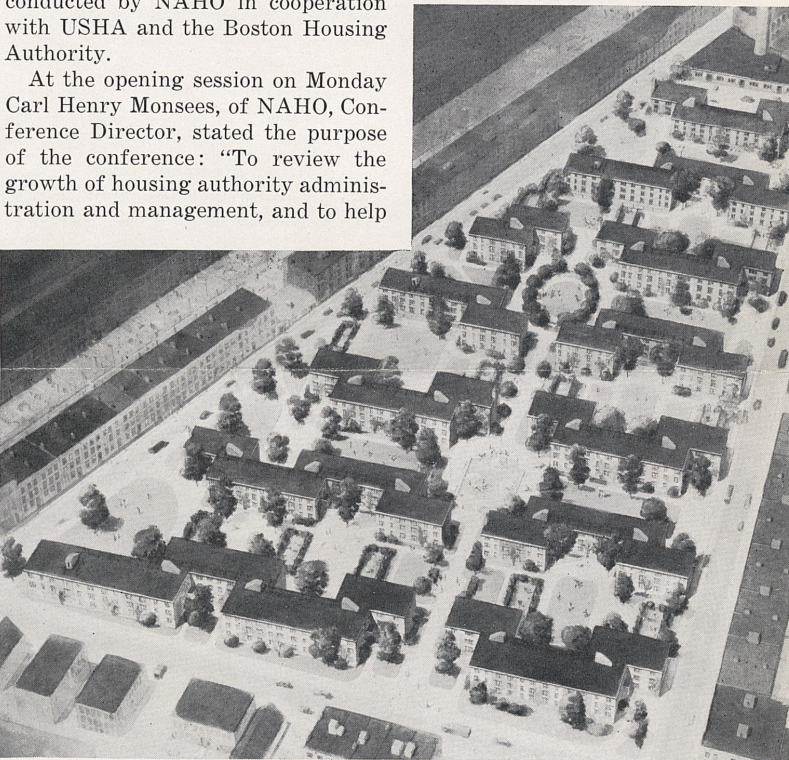
the movement now under way toward more consistent local programs, sounder administrative practices, and higher professional standards in low-rent housing."

John A. Breen, Chairman of the Boston Housing Authority, and John Carrol, Chairman of the State Board of Housing, presided at the Monday sessions, where local authorities were given an opportunity to air their problems. Orient Laplante, Chairman of the Fall River (Mass.) Housing Authority, stated his chief problem in winning Fall River to public housing had been the opposition of certain business groups.

USHA Administrator Nathan Straus addressed the conference, reviewing the public housing program in New England.

Mr. Straus was the guest of honor

(Continued on page 3)



Bird's-eye perspective of housing project (Mass. 2-4) to be erected in Roxbury by the Boston Housing Authority, with USHA aid.

1/30/40

"Planning for Safety" is the title of a new USHA publication now in preparation. "Adequate safety standards," the Bulletin points out in its introduction, "are a prerequisite of good housing and as such they become the responsibility of all those who are engaged in the planning, design, construction, and management of projects." The enormous economic loss resulting from home accidents throughout the Nation (which, in 1938, killed as many people as the automobile) is widely recognized; for low-income tenant families such losses represent a much greater burden than for the Nation as a whole.

The publication will contain suggestions for reducing accident and health hazards both through improvement in site development and physical structure and through various management functions.

Under the heading of "Design Factors," the Bulletin comprises three main subdivisions—The Site, Buildings and Dwelling Units, and Utility Systems. "Management Factors" include: Maintenance (Staff Responsibility and Training, Care of Buildings and Grounds, Treatment of Accidents, etc.); and Health and Safety Program (Formal and Informal Health and Safety Education, etc.).

Careful site planning can minimize many accident hazards. Streets and drives require special attention, in the interest of improving visibility and discouraging through travel. Dead ends (with convenient turning areas), single lane service drives, and other devices help to accomplish these purposes.

Sidewalks and steps frequently provide hazards. Slippery surfacing should be avoided, as well as open or uneven joints which might catch high heels. Conservative slopes of walks, especially on the north side of buildings where the danger from ice and snow is greatest, also promote safety. The number of outside steps should be minimized. Handrails and some form of nonslip finish for steps are recommended.

Keeping Up With USHA Research

New Bulletin to Aid Local Authorities in Achieving Safety Standards

Play spaces should never be located near streets, drives, or parking areas, and should be accessible without crossing streets or drives. Play equipment with moving parts (such as swings) should be separated from areas used for group games, and protected with fences. Wading pools should have rough finish concrete bottoms, to prevent slipping. Play areas used by small children should be segregated.

There are almost innumerable safety elements to be considered in connection with project buildings and dwelling units. Fire hazards may be reduced in several ways: By noncombustible partitions enclosing stairways and separating dwelling units; by noncombustible roofing; by fire-stops in frame walls; and by a dozen other structural devices. Entrance platforms should be only one step

above grade whenever possible. Bathtubs with flat bottoms, medicine closets out of reach of small children, safety control handles on gas ranges—scores of small details like this are important in guarding against the common causes of home accidents. The Bulletin specifies certain minimum distances between window sills and floor level and minimum head room for stairs.

Utility systems (including water supply, drainage, heating, ventilating, and electrical distribution) must be carefully designed with the health and safety of the tenants in mind. Combination faucets, for example, will minimize the danger of scalding by hot water. Flues should be separated from woodwork and other inflammable materials. Yard lighting should guarantee visibility of steps; there should be no dark areas in public halls. Electrical switches in bathrooms and kitchens should be located away from plumbing appliances to avoid possible shocks caused by touching two fixtures simultaneously.

Management's part in project safety programs involves both maintenance and educational elements. Safety regulations must be established, hazards must be corrected by repair, and health clinics and similar tenant activities must be encouraged.

Boston Meeting

(Continued from page 2)

at a dinner Wednesday evening at the Boston City Club. The 750 guests included members of the Boston City Council and the mayors of eight New England cities, together with other local and Federal officials. Among them were: Mayor Maurice Tobin of Boston, former Mayor William Yoerg of Holyoke, now Executive Director of the Holyoke Housing Authority, Francis X. Lane, Executive Director of the Boston authority, Calvin Yuill, Executive Secretary of the Housing Association of Metropolitan Boston, Mayor A. C. Archambault of Lowell, Mass., Carleton Hunneman, President of the Boston Real Estate Board, and Edward Sorois, representative of Governor Saltonstall.



Planning for safety in dwelling-unit design. Note that range is placed across the room from the window to prevent possibility of curtains catching on fire.

Construction Bids

Bid Openings Definitely Scheduled

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Baltimore (Md.-2-1).....	701	2-14-40
Bristol (Va.-2-1).....	142	2- 7-40
Bristol (Va.-2-2).....	74	2- 7-40
Gary (Ind.-11-1).....	305	2-15-40
Harrisburg (Pa.-8-2).....	200	2- 5-40
Hartford (Conn.-3-2).....	222	1-25-40
Nashville (Tenn.-5-2).....	332	2- 2-40
New Orleans (La.-1-5).....	903	1-25-40
Washington (D. C.-1-2).....	203	1-30-40

Bid Openings Tentatively Scheduled¹

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Akron (Ohio-7-1).....	276	3- 1-40
Baltimore (Md.-2-3).....	658	3-16-40
Birmingham (Ala.-1-3).....	614	2-25-40
Birmingham (Ala.-1-3A).....	292	2-25-40
Butte (Mont.-3-1).....	225	3- 1-40
Charlotte (N. C.-3-1A).....	108	3-15-40
Denver (Colo.-1-2).....	348	3-15-40
Farjardo (P. R.-3-1).....	210	3- 9-40
Frederick (Md.-3-2).....	50	3-15-40
Hattiesburg (Miss.-1-2).....	120	2-20-40
Helena (Mont.-4-1).....	71	3- 1-40
Jacksonville (Fla.-1-2).....	708	3-20-40
Lexington (Ky.-4-1).....	86	3- 1-40
Lexington (Ky.-4-2).....	206	3- 1-40
Macomb (Miss.-3-2).....	90	3-20-40
Meridian (Miss.-4-4).....	89	2-28-40
New Haven (Conn.-4-3).....	246	3- 3-40
New Orleans (La.-1-8).....	746	3-14-40
New Orleans (La.-1-1 Pt. 2).....	36	3-20-40
New York (N. Y.-5-5).....	1,326	3- 5-40
Oakland (Calif.-3-1).....	396	3-14-40
Omaha (Nebr.-1-2).....	283	2-20-40
Philadelphia (Pa.-2-4).....	950	3-15-40
Savannah (Ga.-2-3).....	330	3-15-40
Tampa (Fla.-3-2).....	320	2-20-40
West Palm Beach (Fla.-9-2).....	120	2-18-40

¹ There is usually a 30-day period between bid advertising and bid opening. None of the bid openings shown here have as yet been definitely scheduled.

Three New USHA Leaflets Ready for Distribution

USHA is currently releasing a series of brief, nontechnical leaflets, dealing with the essential considerations behind the slum clearance and low-rent housing program.

The first three, *Housing and Your Community*, *Low Rents for Low Incomes*, and *Housing and Juvenile Delinquency*, are now available, free of charge, upon request to the Informational Service Division, USHA.

The leaflets are short, illustrated with pen and ink drawings, and written in an easy, popular style. They are intended for distribution among school children, clubs, and civic organizations of all sorts.

Housing and Your Community is a review of some of the reasons for Federal aid to communities in meeting local housing problems. Good housing, the leaflet points out, is necessary to healthful, decent family and community life. By providing it we create jobs for labor and a demand for manufactured materials.

Low Rents for Low Incomes is the first authoritative and popular discussion of rents and incomes of families within the orbit of USHA operations.

Housing and Juvenile Delinquency presents a convincing argument for diverting at least part of the funds now being spent to maintain truant officers, social workers, police, reform schools, and jails, to the construction of decent homes for families of low income.

Current Housing Literature

(Continued from page 2)

Administration, Washington, D. C., 1939. 108 pp.

An examination of the historical development and expansion of the City & Suburban Homes Co., one of the oldest limited dividend housing corporations in existence, and an analysis of its policies and practices evolved in the successful management of its properties since 1896. Charts and tables.

PRIVATE SLUM CLEARANCE DRIVE CONSIDERED, *Real Estate Record*, Dec. 30, 1939, p. 2.

Citizens' Housing Council studies problem of cooperation of business, financial, and housing interests with Government agencies in clearing slums.

FORTY HOUSES EAGERLY BOUGHT BY SMALL-INCOME FAMILIES, *American Lumberman*, Dec. 30, 1939, pp. 36-37.

How the Wilbur Lumber Co., of West Allis, Wis., cooperating with a contracting organization, is providing low-cost housing by means of a plan based on constructing 40 homes at a time, improvements to be made by the purchasers. Illustration and floor plan.

Alexandria, Va., Program Started

The City Council of Alexandria, Va., in a special session recently passed a resolution authorizing Mayor Richard L. Ruffner to sign the cooperation agreement with the local housing authority.

All provisions of the agreement were accepted, including tax exemption, equivalent elimination, and the furnishing, by the city, of the usual public services. Housing Authority Chairman John Barton Phillips of Alexandria, states that application has already been made for USHA assistance.

Construction Report Analysis

During the week ended January 12 only one new project went into construction. Since, however, the new project (368 units in Jacksonville, Fla.) had estimated costs well below the national average, the addition of this one project was sufficient to cause fractional declines in the average costs shown in the accompanying table.

Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended January 12, 1940	Week ended January 5, 1940	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction.....	164	163	+0.61
Number of dwellings under construction.....	64,943	64,575	+0.57
Total estimated over-all cost ¹ of new housing.....	\$290,984,000	\$289,694,000	+0.45
Average over-all cost ¹ of new housing per unit.....	\$4,481	\$4,486	-0.11
Average net construction cost ² per unit.....	\$2,819	\$2,821	-0.07

¹ Includes: (a) Building the house, including structural costs and plumbing, heating, and electrical installation; (b) dwelling equipment, architect's fees, local administrative expenses, financial charges during construction, and contingency expenses; (c) land for present development; (d) nondwelling facilities.

² The cost of building the house, including structural, plumbing, heating, and electrical costs.

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