

HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT



Mr. & Mrs. Donald Hartman
1415 Vista Road
El Cerrito, Ca 94530

THE MASTER PLAN OF
RICHMOND
CALIFORNIA

1950

F O R E W O R D

The following report includes findings and a tentative program of long-range planning in matters of Housing and Redevelopment, approved by the Planning Commission by resolution dated December 19, 1949. Provisions of the Conservation and Planning Act of the State of California require that public hearings be held by the Planning Commission before adopting any portion of the Master Plan. In order to fully inform the general public prior to hearings, copies of this report will be distributed to all public agencies, individuals and organizations interested in civic affairs. In the meantime, because of the critical urgency of the housing situation in the City of Richmond, and the necessity of providing immediate comprehensive planning to cope with imminent disposition of temporary war housing by the U. S. Public Housing Administration, the Planning Commission has adopted the appended report as a portion of the Master Plan on an interim basis, subject to revision after official public hearings.

* * * * *

THE RICHMOND CITY COUNCIL

DANIEL M. BRADLEY

Mayor

CLARENCE D. ERICKSON

Vice-Mayor

GUST J. ALLYN

EDWARD J. J. McKEEGAN

WALTER J. JOHNSON

ROBERT H. MILLER

JAMES P. KENNY

FRANK E. TILLER

GAY G. VARGAS

* * * * *

WAYNE E. THOMPSON
City Manager

THOMAS M. CARLSON
City Attorney

EDWARD A. HOFFMAN
Director of Public Works

D. M. BRADLEY, Mayor
T. M. CARLSON, City Attorney
E. A. HOFFMAN, City Engineer
W. T. HELMS
WALTER JOHNSON
JOHN MASSEY
RODNEY BROTHERS
J. B. CORRIE
MORRIS LEVIN
JOHN NEWSTROM

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY HALL
RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

JOHN J. MASSEY
President

WALTER T. HELMS
Secretary

ALBERT C. WHITE
Planning Director

December 20, 1949

Honorable Mayor and City Council
of the City of Richmond
Richmond, California

Gentlemen:

Submitted herewith for your study and approval is the report on HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT, an element of the Master Plan of the City of Richmond, compiled in accordance with provisions of the Conservation and Planning Act of the State of California, prepared by our technical staff and approved by resolution of the Planning Commission under date of December 19, 1949. The Planning Commission recommends that this report and the accompanying plans be adopted as a part of the Master Plan of the City of Richmond.

The staff work for developing the current report was accomplished by technicians employed by the City under the supervision of L. Deming Tilton, Planning Consultant of wide national reputation, recently of San Francisco and now deceased. Mr. Tilton's active participation in this report is highly regarded by the Planning Commission, and the successful implementation of Richmond's Master Plan will be deemed a tribute to his memory. Mr. Earl O. Mills, Planning Consultant with whom Mr. Tilton was associated in developing the basic framework of Richmond's Master Plan, was responsible for the initial form and content of the HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT report but has not had the opportunity of reviewing this latest draft.

The Planning Commission desires to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Mr. Wayne E. Thompson, City Manager; Mr. E.A. Hoffman, Director of Public Works; Mr. Frederick Bold, Jr., Assistant City Attorney, and other officials who have assisted the Planning Commission in the production of the accompanying report.

Respectfully submitted,

RICHMOND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

By *Albert C. White*
ALBERT C. WHITE
Planning Director

ACW/djc

INTRODUCTION

The problems of adequate housing, schools, parks, recreational facilities and the many other elements of a comprehensive Master Plan would be comparatively simple in the City of Richmond were it not for the terrific impact upon the City's economy and future well-being, caused by the continued existence of temporary war housing with its thousands of inhabitants. The planning problems applicable to the remainder of the City are dwarfed by comparison with the problem of redeveloping the areas covered by government housing projects and relocating the tenants in new, substantial quarters within their ability to pay rent.

The Community Redevelopment Act of the State of California, enacted in 1945 and amended this year, and the Federal Housing Act of 1949 provide the necessary legislation to enable the City to implement a comprehensive plan of housing and redevelopment. The creation of the Richmond Redevelopment Agency by the City Council on October 24 of this year now establishes the administrative organization through which this tremendous task of redevelopment may be channelled.

Certain aspects of the problem of improving conditions in other and older residential neighborhoods of Richmond have been discussed in a previous report on SCHOOLS, PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS. The principal obstacle to a reorganization

of these districts, to increase both their livability and their housing capacity, is the "checker-board" rectangular street system laid out in earlier days by subdividers and real estate promoters. Means of dealing with the housing situation in these older areas will be further considered in this report.

Blight and property decay are already beginning to appear in Richmond, even though the City is less than 50 years old. The causes of such conditions must be thoroughly analyzed and steps must be undertaken to arrest the destructive trends and protect the areas exposed to them.

The urgent demand for housing which exists at the present time indicates that there is a shortage of dwellings for those who work in Richmond and for others who work elsewhere and want to live here. The unimproved land in the City, which was so evident only a few years ago in thousands of vacant lots, has in the meantime been largely absorbed for government housing. The remaining parcels, mostly isolated groups of lots, are steadily disappearing. What lies ahead? Since population growth is directly dependent upon the ability of the City to provide suitable housing for new families, how much can Richmond grow and what patterns should this new development take? Obviously, such questions again involve the temporary war housing and the policies which will govern its removal and the permanent relocation of its tenants.

It is the purpose of this study of the problems noted above to outline a comprehensive municipal policy for housing

and redevelopment. Richmond faces a challenge in its present split development, more critical perhaps than that encountered in any other city in the country. It cannot consider itself a normal community so long as more than half of its people live in flimsy, expendable dwellings built to serve during a very short war period. Responsible citizens, good workers, healthy, well-adjusted families are formed in substantial, permanent housing. It will be a long, time-consuming, difficult task to transform war-famous Richmond into a peace-serving community that is equally notable -- but the job must be done. The officials upon whom fall the duties of organizing and directing this effort will need the support of all of its citizens.

** * * * *
Even if every citizen of Richmond, from an aged man to a young child, will work, it will take a long time to complete a program that removes slums and creates decent, modern living conditions. The many paths toward this ideal, some good, some bad, in this and related fields of endeavor, must be planned and followed. The first step is to determine what is to be done, and the second is to do it.

THE BASIC HOUSING PROBLEM

Richmond is an exceptional city in its housing characteristics. Over 55 percent of its present population, four years after the war, live in housing built and managed by the Federal government. The remainder of the population, in the number of 45,600, live in private housing, predominately single-family dwellings, most of which are owned or being purchased by the occupants. The basic housing question in Richmond is: How can the vast areas of war housing be transformed to well-arranged, self-supporting permanent neighborhoods?

Most of the government housing was built during the war and is regarded as temporary and expendable. It is obvious that such housing must eventually be replaced. The occupants are aware of its deterioration and of the increasing costs of maintaining it. They are also conscious of the present shortage of permanent dwellings, and of the prices asked for new homes. They appreciate the economic advantages which they enjoy as tenants of the government and are disturbed by the prospect that they will eventually have to move.

The City also faces this essential reconstruction with many misgivings. The new dwellings which eventually will take the place of those built for war purposes, whether public or private, must meet the permanent housing needs of Richmond and reflect higher standards of design and spacing. The problem is at once economic and social, calling for a

skillful adjustment of public and private interests, and the most effective coordination of governmental effort.

Statistics released by the R.H.A., under date of December 24, 1949, show a total population of 51,539 persons and 13,665 families living in government housing, or an equivalent of 3.77 persons per family. Of these totals, 677 persons, or 200 families, are domiciled in permanent public housing projects, and the balance in temporary war housing.

It is essential, therefore, that well considered plans be drawn to guide the transformation of the old war-stimulated developments. The occupants of the temporary housing cannot be evicted and left homeless. A firm and effective, but humane, plan must be devised to reclaim for permanent use the areas which they now occupy. The interests of the community as a whole, as a matter of fact, demand a housing redevelopment program that removes rather than creates social conflicts. This study points toward goals considered desirable in this and related fields of housing.

HOW RICHMOND FAMILIES ARE HOUSED

Reference has been made to the extraordinary percentage of Richmond citizens now living in government housing. Plate 1, a land use map, shows the proportions of the City devoted to housing of the several residential classifications. The areas occupied and significant ratios are as follows:

TABLE 1

PRINCIPAL HOUSING AREAS

RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

	<u>Units</u>	<u>Area Occupied</u>
Private		
Single-Family Dwelling Units.....	12,249	1244 acres
Multiple-Family Dwelling Units.....	1,306	96 acres
Government		
Permanent Multiple-Family Dwelling Units.....	750	83 acres
Temporary Multiple-Family Dwelling Units.....	14,833	709 acres

The policies of the City with respect to development or redevelopment of each of these major forms of housing will be determined by a study of their predominant characteristics and special problems.



PRIVATE HOUSING

Single-Family Units

Privately owned housing in Richmond varies widely, ranging from cheap, flimsy shacks to large, hill-top estates. The typical predominant type is the one-story detached cottage containing from 1000 to 1500 square feet of floor space and standing on a 50-foot lot with a front yard depth of 15 feet.

There are 17 blocks in the City entirely occupied by single-family dwellings, and 403 blocks in which only occasional vacant lots disturb the uniformity of the frontage pattern. The population density in a typical cottage area is about 28 persons per net acre.

Over the City as a whole, the single-family dwelling areas have in 1949 a total assessed value of \$20,427,835. These districts constitute 27 percent of the City's tax revenue. At current prices and valuations, each new dwelling of this type represents an addition of approximately \$10,000 to the capital assets of the community. Wage-earning workers in large numbers are buying these homes and making this contribution to the City. Their efforts are responsible for the quality and attractiveness of the typical residential neighborhoods of Richmond.

Multiple-Family Units

Duplexes, bungalow courts, apartments, and other rental units also appear in the permanent housing pattern. They are found grouped and interspersed with business uses along main

arterials, like San Pablo Avenue, Macdonald, Twenty-Third, and Tenth, and have also begun to appear as spots in the small cottage districts. The ratio of private multiple-family units to single-family units, however, is low (15%) and the percentage of land area in the City devoted to such purposes (1.1%) is about normal. These structures, which represent a more intensive occupancy of the land, show population densities in the order of 78 persons per net acre, which is not considered extreme or objectionable in California cities.

The valuations in private multiple-unit sections of the City deserve attention. The average four-family apartment occupies a plot 50 x 100 feet and has a valuation (1949) of approximately \$30,000. All such areas show a total assessed valuation of \$2,556,000, which means that these rental properties pay approximately four percent of present Richmond taxes.

Temporary Units (Trailers, Auto Courts)

Richmond is unique among California cities in the fact that house trailers are not permitted within the City limits. Moreover, there are few tourist or auto courts. The number of such units has been limited by zoning ordinance restrictions confining them to commercial districts requiring special permit.

PUBLIC HOUSING

Prior to the war, a Richmond Housing Authority was formed to represent the community in carrying out the Federal Public Housing program for low-income families. The Authority built two permanent projects and a third was started but converted to war housing, providing accommodations for 750 families. To meet industrial demands during the war, the low-income housing program was practically forgotten and temporary war housing was initiated and built up to boom-town proportions. At its peak, approximately 14,833 dwelling units were utilized for family occupancy and 4,904 rooms in dormitories for individual use.

Permanent Dwelling Units

The locations of the above mentioned permanent housing projects are shown on Plate 1. These units were originally built on vacant land. No slum areas were cleared, but tenants presumably were accumulated from sub-standard dwellings in various other areas to conform with the Federal Public Housing law. Sub-standard dwellings equivalent in number to the new units constructed were either removed from their sites or brought up to standard, also as required by law.

The permanent housing projects now operated by the Richmond Housing Authority are well designed and popular with the tenants. Their principal characteristics are shown on Table 2.

TABLE 2

PERMANENT PUBLIC HOUSING

RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

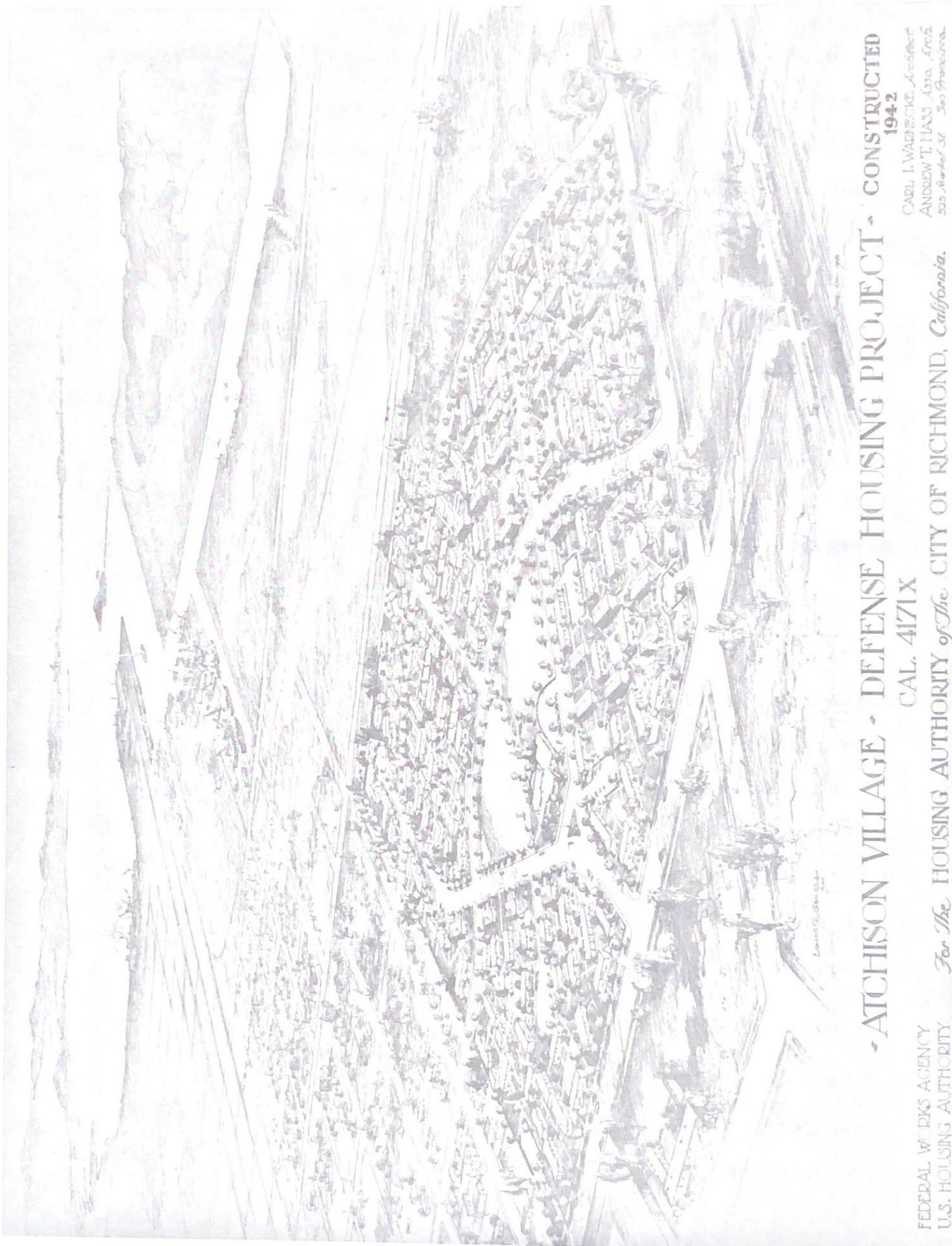
<u>Project</u>	<u>Site Area in Acres</u>	<u>Dwelling Units</u>	<u>Type of Con- struction</u>	<u>% Land Coverage</u>	<u>Monthly Rental Scale</u>
*Atchison Village	56.63 gross	450	2 & 4-family frame-rustic	15.4	\$ 32.50 to 39.50
*Atchison Annex (11.7)	10.34/AC.	100	demountable plywood		
Nystrom Village	12.86 (net) 12.60/AC.	102	2-family frame-stucco	14.0	\$ 32.50 to 39.50
Triangle Court	13.77 (gross) 83.26 14.0 AC. 750	98	2-family frame-stucco	12.5	\$ 32.50 to 39.50

AVER. = 11 UNITS/ACRE

* The Richmond Housing Authority has applied for approval of Atchison Village and Annex as permanent low-rent housing.

The permanent public housing in Richmond will remain with the community for many years. For economic reasons it is built to have a structural life of from forty to sixty years. Whether more of the type now in use are built in the future depends largely upon the efforts made by the Federal government to rehouse and improve living conditions for families in the lower income brackets.

For several reasons these permanent projects deserve wider public notice and more continuous observation. They demonstrate some of the economies and advantages of group



-ATCHISON VILLAGE - DEFENSE HOUSING PROJECT - CONSTRUCTED
1942

CARL J. WADENOK, Architect
ANDREW T. HAN, Assoc. Architect
525 Market St. San Francisco.
FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
U.S. HOUSING AUTHORITY
For The HOUSING AUTHORITY of THE CITY OF RICHMOND, California.

CAL. 4171X

living. The sites are large and well planned, with space for children's play areas, automobile parking, safe and quiet streets, open lawns and attractive planting. The buildings rarely cover more than 15% or 20% of the site and every dwelling is assured an outlook, ample sunlight and fresh air. The population densities, per acre, are comparable with those found in single-family residence areas. True, families living in government housing miss the pride and challenge associated with home ownership, but they have other compensating, beneficial experiences. There are reasons for believing that privately built rental housing of similar standards for middle-income families would be equally popular and advantageous to Richmond.

Temporary Dwelling Units

The landscape of this community changed almost overnight under the impact of war. Today the so-called temporary war housing dominates the scene. Plate 1 shows the locations of these projects, which are now under the management of the Richmond Housing Authority. The temporary housing occupies 7.8 percent of the land area of the City and houses 51.4 percent of its population. The following table summarizes the record.

TABLE 3

TEMPORARY WAR HOUSING
RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

<u>Project</u>	<u>Site Area in Acres</u>	<u>Dwelling Units</u>	<u>Type of Construction</u>	<u>% Land Coverage</u>	<u>Monthly Rental Scale</u>
Esmeralda Court	9.43	10/Acre 94	2-family demountable plywood	17.5	\$ 31.50 to 39.50
Harbor Gate	120.61	15/Acre 806	2-family demountable plywood	11.7	30.00 to 39.50
Richmond Terrace	29.85	576	16 & 32-family frame-rustic	35.6	28.00 to 35.00
Canal War Apartments	42.43	1312	16-family frame-stucco	28.00	
Canal Addition	21.06	800	frame-stucco	20.6	to 35.00
Seaport	42.24	494	3 & 8-family frame-stucco	10.8	28.00 to 35.00
U.S.M.C. Div. 1	52.51	2002	8,9,12,13-family frame-rustic	25.1	30.00
U.S.M.C. Div. 2	75.84	2940	8,9,12,13,14-family frame-rustic	30.3	30.00 to 32.50
U.S.M.C. Div. 3	39.70	1453	8,9,13-family frame-rustic	28.8	26.00 to 30.00
Cutting War Apts. and Div. 4	108.88	1980	8 & 14-family frame-gypsum & rustic	25.4	26.00 to 35.00
Cutting War Apts., Cutting Annex & Div. 5	49.96	1210	3,8,14-family frame-gypsum, stucco, rustic	21.7	26.00 to 35.00
Pullman War Apts. & Div. 6	47.13	1166	3,8,14-family frame-rustic, stucco	16.8	26.00 to 35.00
	639.64	14,833			

Temporary public housing -- the answer to sudden, urgent need for housing thousands of war workers at the beginning of World War II -- is the opposite of the well-planned, spacious permanent projects. Through sheer expediency, some of the self-contained, temporary housing projects were developed in large available tracts of industrial land. Other temporary housing buildings, comprising 72% of the total war housing units, were interspersed with private dwelling units.

Presence of temporary public housing in industrial areas is not conducive to good living. City and school authorities are naturally reluctant to develop public residential facilities in those areas. Industrial interests are anxious to put the land to more suitable use. Intermingling of temporary housing buildings with private residences is also detrimental to both. Private development is discouraged and public housing lacks adequate yard space and maintenance.

Buildings originally intended to house war workers are serving beyond their time because of the continued shortage of housing. They violate building code requirements in construction and interior arrangement. Land coverage runs twice as high as in permanent housing areas. Population densities range from sixty to two hundred persons per net acre -- two to five times greater than normal private development. All these factors add to administrative and financial problems of the City. The standard of living, an important key to the future of Richmond, is seriously lowered in the temporary public housing areas.

HOUSING PROBLEMS IN RICHMOND

SALIENT FEATURES

The housing problem in Richmond can be readily stated and analyzed, but immediate solutions are difficult to find.

1. The demand for homes far exceeds the supply.
2. Expansion of industry will reduce the areas available for housing while increasing employment and the need for homes.
3. Costs of construction are steadily mounting.
4. Land for new dwellings continues to be available, but vacant lots are disappearing in the private residential sections of the City.
5. Publicly owned temporary dwellings, built for war occupancy, remain in use but are becoming increasingly difficult to maintain.
6. Slums and blight appear in some sections of the City in the fringe areas outside its boundaries, casting a dark shadow over good property.

Because it is the purpose of this section of the Master Plan to outline housing and redevelopment policies for the City, the problems noted above will be examined more closely to determine what action the City can legitimately and properly take to solve them.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

An acute housing shortage plagues every large city in California at the present time (1949). It is doubtful if any problem with which local government is concerned has had more

attention or fewer suggested solutions lying within the power of local government. The demand for homes is due to a wide range of causes, among them being: the movement of people into this state, decentralization and shifts of industry, increases in marriages and the sizes of families, high earnings of workers, dissatisfaction with old dwellings and depressed areas of cities. The failure or inability to meet demands can be charged, among other things, to: decline of home building during the war, shortages of materials and labor, rigid financial controls, unreasonable restrictions and codes, speculative costs, and taxation policies.

As these matters are reviewed, it becomes apparent that the City of Richmond alone can do very little to increase the supply of dwelling units. By teamwork with the State and Federal government, however, some relief in this sector of the housing field might be offered.

The City does have some control over its land resources and might do more than it is now doing to bring vacant property into use. By modification of its system of taxation, the practice of holding land out of use for speculation could be curtailed. Hundreds of close-in lots, with all utilities installed, now stand idle, paying only a small fraction of government costs. These properties should be improved. Supplementing such a program should be municipal action designed to put all tax delinquent property into use. Transfers of title could be restricted to the extent necessary to assure

construction rather than continued speculation upon abandoned lots and parcels within the City.

Costs. Many factors influence the costs of building -- inflated material costs, wages, profits, fees, fixed charges, interest rates, and the like. Land costs are encountered early in any building operation, and if they include large, speculative profits, the financial load immediately becomes heavy. A shortage of labor at the mills and quarries and on the site tends to increase costs. A limited material supply induces sharp bidding and prices rise in consequence. The annual output of homes throughout the nation is determined largely by the costs of production, which costs are a reflection of economic conditions generally. We are in a period of high costs, and no local efforts such as might be undertaken in Richmond can be notably effective in the removal of financial obstacles to building.

Space. At the present time (1949), there are approximately 542 acres of vacant land in Richmond zoned and usable for residential purposes. This is roughly the equivalent of 3,960 50-foot lots, or 5.9 percent of the area of the City. These properties are being used for new homes at the rate of approximately 600 per year. At this rate, Richmond will be almost completely built up in about seven years unless areas now devoted to war housing are cleared in the meantime.

The most promising and advantageous release of space for new construction depends upon policies of the Federal govern-

ment covering the removal of temporary war housing. There are 792 acres, including streets, now occupied by war housing. Most of these areas can be improved with permanent dwellings in the years ahead. Richmond must have a good deal to say about the new uses of this property and must be prepared with redevelopment plans for the larger areas. This phase of the problem will have more extended treatment at a later point in this chapter.

TEMPORARY WAR HOUSING

Large scale elimination of temporary war housing at the present time is practically impossible because of the critical shortage of homes. Failure of the Federal government and the State to provide funds or adopt policies relating to the construction of dwelling units for low-income families has complicated the problem of moving families out of the war units. It is estimated that approximately 11 percent of those now occupying such structures would fall within the so-called low-income group. The Housing Authority has estimated that it could permanently fill 2,500 units from this group and has applied for Federal funds to implement its construction program. The provision of low-rent quarters, even in small quantity, would enable transfers to be made so that clearance and rebuilding of temporary sites could start. The longer this operation is deferred, the more serious will be the decline of these vast areas, and the more injurious their effect upon the City as a whole.

SLUMS AND BLIGHT

Richmond is a comparatively young, new city but already it shows evidence of blight and decay in certain districts. And on the outskirts, just beyond its boundaries, are large areas of shacks and flimsy dwellings which present health, fire, and police problems worse than any found inside the City. It will be incumbent upon Richmond to take such action as may be feasible to protect itself against the injurious effects of these conditions. Cooperation with the State and with Contra Costa County becomes imperative in this field.

For many years, however, the primary concern of the City will be its potential slums, the large areas now devoted to temporary war housing. Considerable uncertainty exists with respect to the future of these public properties. They were built to last only about five years. Pressure for their continuance in service at low rentals will always be strong, and with proper maintenance these structures can provide shelter for hundreds of families for many years. If maintenance is neglected, however, deterioration can be very rapid. Within a few years the war housing in Richmond can become a vast, ugly slum, a reproach to the City and a constant source of trouble, conflict, and expense.

The policies of the Federal government will largely determine what happens to the temporary housing. Knowing this (that the seat of future trouble is in Washington), Richmond can fortify itself by advancing its own plan for the progressive redevelopment or transformation of these areas. It is the purpose of this study to present relevant facts concerning areas of potential blight and slums, and to outline a general program for the solution of the redevelopment problem.

BLIGHTED AREAS

TEMPORARY
WAR
HOUSING



AND
NORTH
RICHMOND
SHOWING OPEN
DRAINAGE DITCH



AND

SLUMS



IN THE
FRINGE AREA
NORTH OF
RICHMOND
CITY LIMITS



RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA



FOUR - FAMILY
APARTMENT
BUILDINGS



A TWELVE
FAMILY
APARTMENT

TYPICAL
MULTIPLE - FAMILY HOUSING
RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

THE HOUSING PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA ENABLING LAWS

The California State Enabling Law (1) and The California Planning Act, which governs all local planning, provides for the inclusion of a chapter or section on Housing in every Master Plan covering a:

"Survey of housing conditions and needs, and plans and procedure for improvement of housing standards and for provision of adequate housing."

The Community Redevelopment Act, which provides authority for financing and clearance of slums and blighted districts, requires a city to have a Master Plan which must include, among other things:

- (a) The general location and extent of existing and proposed future major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other major public utilities and facilities.
- (b) A land use plan which designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and grounds, and other categories of public and private uses of land.
- (c) A statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended in and for the various districts and other territorial units, together with estimates of future population growth in the territory covered by the plan, all correlated with the land use plan.
- (d) Maps, plans, charts or other descriptive matter showing the area or areas in which conditions are found indicating the existence of blighted areas.

It is the intent of this report to meet the requirements of the above acts. The housing problems of Richmond, as noted

above, involve mainly: (1) Single-family residential areas or neighborhoods, (2) Multiple-family districts, (3) Public housing for low-income families, (4) Temporary war housing, and (5) Slums and blighted districts. Feasible lines of action which the City may take in each of these fields will be outlined to enable Richmond to work effectively to provide all its present and future citizens with good homes.

PROTECTION FOR SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS

In another chapter of the Master Plan, the report on Schools and Recreation Facilities, the concept of a neighborhood was introduced. Efforts to create neighborhood unity, to stimulate pride in home districts, and to foster community pride should be continuous. Those sections of Richmond where single-family homes predominate should have the utmost official support and protection. Seventy percent of the dwellings are owned by the occupants, many of whom have assumed heavy burdens of debt and taxation to provide good shelter for their families. The long-established ideals of America are represented in these neighborhoods of small, pleasant, single-family homes. These home-makers, who ask for little, deserve every encouragement and every bit of aid that can be offered by their government.

There are various things Richmond can do to help its home-owning citizens to make their streets quieter and safer, to stabilize and increase property values, and to give these neighborhoods greater attractiveness.

1. Route trucks over special marked, heavy-traffic arteries to keep them off residential streets.
2. Close streets to stop fast, through traffic and secure additional space for play purposes.
3. Acquire school-playground-park centers as focal points for neighborhood activity.
4. Hold zoning standards to prevent spot invasions by apartments and stores and protect home investments.
5. Provide shopping centers and store groups at traffic intersections to offer service with least offense or injury to residents of neighborhoods.
6. Adhere to one house per lot standard and enforce requirement of 5000 square feet of lot area per family to preserve open spaces for gardens, sunlight and views.
7. Check building construction according to codes to prevent introduction of shacks and make-shift dwellings.
8. Control home occupations and operations of boarding and lodging houses to maintain the harmonious residential character of neighborhoods.
9. Establish and enforce rigid traffic regulations to make streets safe.
10. Provide small play lots, one in every block if possible, to keep children off hazardous streets.
11. Plant trees uniformly on streets, and eliminate poles and wires from streets to enable trees to grow without severe trimming.
12. Establish planned set-back or building lines to vary the uniformity and monotony of street frontage vistas.
13. Provide uniform modern lighting and well chosen street signs to add dignity to the district.
14. In residential districts, avoid pavements of excessive width to increase areas for pleasant lawns and landscape effects.
15. Compare and equalize valuations for tax purposes to lessen burdens upon homes that have no income producing ability.

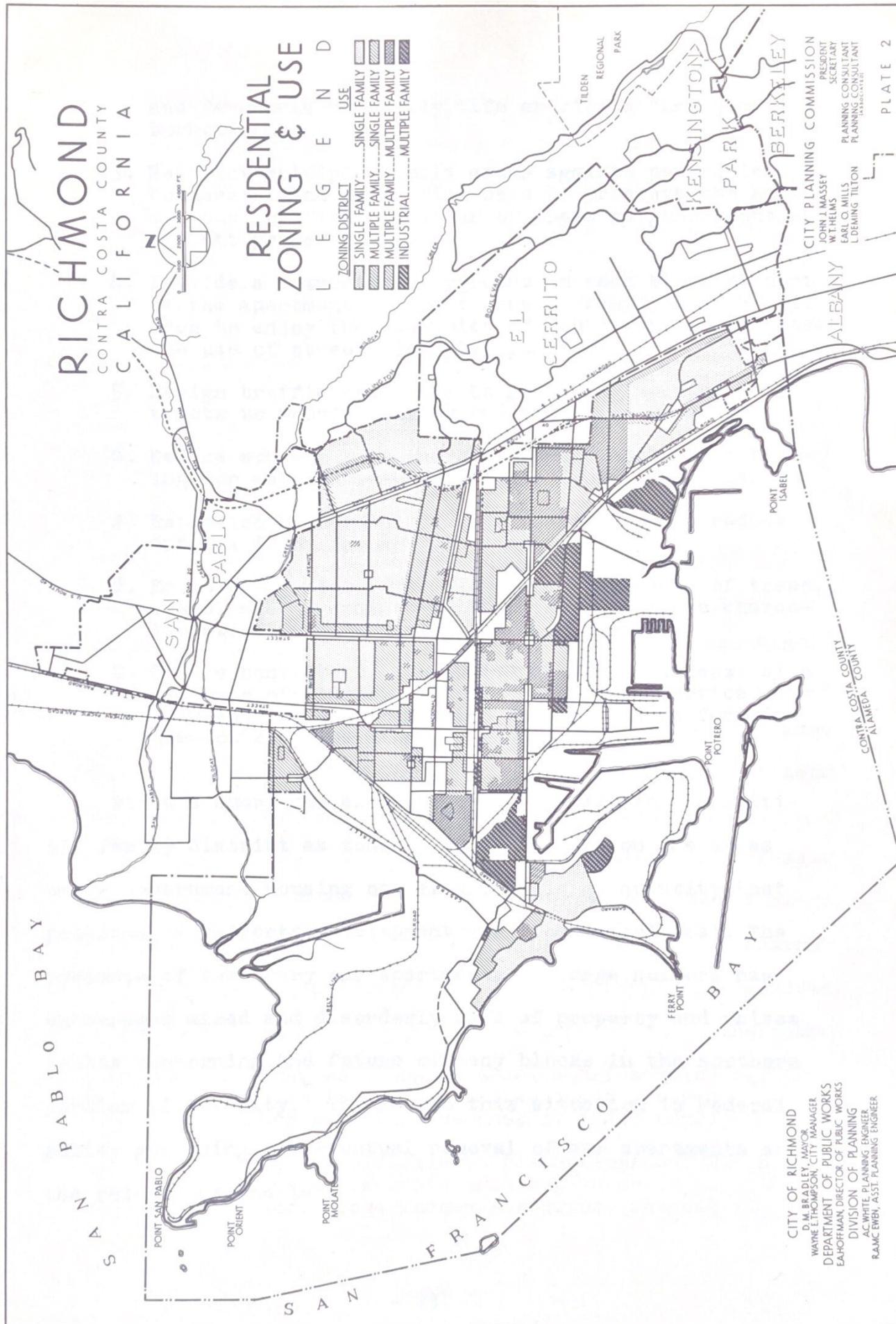
Plate 2, based upon the zoning ordinance, shows the single-family districts in which such measures, as are noted above, can be effective. As new sub-divisions are opened or new home districts are added to the City, the same fundamental principles can be applied. It is the duty of the Planning Commission, more than any other agency, to observe constantly the growth and development of Richmond and to urge the establishment and enforcement of rules for the protection of residential value. The check-list above will suggest appropriate lines of policy and action.

IMPROVEMENT OF MULTIPLE-FAMILY DISTRICTS

Many of the principles and standards established for single-family home neighborhoods are equally applicable to multiple-family districts. Over 1100 acres, or 12.2 percent of the total area of the City, are zoned to permit such uses in the future.

The encouragement of a proper development of these large districts, and establishment of satisfactory protection for their values are responsibilities of the City. The Planning Commission must assume leadership in exercising these responsibilities. In particular, the following policies are recommended:

1. Enforce large lot area and wide yard regulations to prevent overcrowding and the close spacing of structures found in tenement and slum areas.
2. Encourage and aid construction of garden apartments on sites of generous size, with coverage under 20 percent, to create rental properties as attractive



and favorable to family life as single-family neighborhoods.

3. Restrict multiple-family areas against parasitic spot commercial and industrial uses to preserve the harmonious, unified character of these neighborhoods and protect property values.
4. Provide a community playground in each block as part of the apartment scheme to enable families with children to enjoy the economies of rental units and lessen the use of streets for play purposes.
5. Design traffic arterials to go around apartment districts to provide safety and quiet for occupants.
6. Reduce street space and concentrate off-street parking for automobiles to eliminate noise and hazards.
7. Establish high standards of construction to reduce dangers from fire and other disasters.
8. Encourage generous planting and maintenance of trees, lawns, and gardens to prevent tenement house characteristics from appearing in these areas.
9. Create convenient, attractive shopping centers, with adequate off-street parking, to provide service to occupants of apartments and lessen demands for single-lot store permits in the district.

Plate 2 shows the extensive, widely-distributed multiple-family district as zoned. It is largely on the areas where government housing now exists in large quantity that problems of property development will become critical. The presence of temporary war apartments in large numbers has encouraged mixed and disorderly uses of property and raises doubts concerning the future of many blocks in the southern portion of the City. The key to this situation is Federal policy governing the eventual removal of war apartments and the release of the land.

west of the main line of the Santa Fe Railway, and adjacent to Giant Road. This major home development is designed to provide for 4,000 homes in a completely planned community of 700 acres, with shopping centers and recreational facilities, estimated by the home building corporation to involve an ultimate outlay of approximately \$30,000,000. Construction work on the first group of 333 homes was initiated in November of this year. The project is financed under F.H.A. title and is racially unrestricted. Because of its proximity to Richmond, the construction of these 4,000 homes should be regarded as an important factor in absorbing a substantial portion of the local housing demand.

EXPANSION OF PUBLIC LOW-RENT HOUSING

The Richmond Housing Authority is the agency through which Federal funds for housing are channelled for the construction, operation and maintenance of low-rent public housing. The Housing Authority, under State law, is a separate corporation operating independently of the City of Richmond. The State of California, likewise, plays no part in public housing and offers no financial aid for such a program.

There are many in California who believe that a powerful public housing agency, operating under Federal policies and inserted prominently into local affairs, is not wholly advantageous. The Housing Authority should be more definitely local, its policies more closely related to those of this municipality. The State also should be more actively concerned

with the housing problems of its low-income families, and should encourage them to look more toward Sacramento rather than Washington for aid and relief. The State has full power to assume responsibilities in this field, can easily become the channel for expenditure of Federal funds, and can utilize its municipal corporations, the cities, to formulate and implement a public housing policy adapted to California needs.

The plight of low-income families everywhere has been aggravated by rising prices. Their best protection comes through control of rents and government low-rent housing. Any steps to modify present policies which threaten the advantages now enjoyed by these families will undoubtedly meet strong resistance. The City of Richmond officially must accept and support a reasonable amount of public housing, and use its influence to make such housing available for families that are demonstrably underprivileged and distressed. The City cannot suffer in any manner if such families are provided with good shelter. This was the original worthy purpose of public housing.

The quantity of public housing needed for low-income citizens in a community like Richmond can be determined best by study of family incomes. (See Table 4)

TABLE 4
INCOME CLASSIFICATIONS
IN TEMPORARY WAR HOUSING AREAS

<u>*Proposed for Early Redevelopment</u>	<u>Low-Income Families (Less than \$200 per month)</u>	<u>Upper-Income Families (More than \$300 per month)</u>
Stege-Pullman	1,068	250
Portions of Divisions 1, 2 and 3	1,201	258
Scattered Small Parcels in Divs. 1 to 6, Inc.	1,385	299
	<u>3,654</u>	<u>807</u>
<u>*Proposed for Interim Housing</u>		
Harbor Gate	236	122
Esmeralda	46	6
Seaport	156	38
Div. 2	439	94
Terrace	57	8
Canal	654	93
	<u>1,588</u>	<u>361</u>
TOTAL	5,242	1,168
Total Low-Income Families	5,242	
Total Middle-Income Families	5,722	
Total Upper-Income Families	1,168	
Total Families, Temporary Housing	12,132	

*See "Recommendations" on page 50 for classification of areas.

On the basis of social surveys, applications received and estimates of future demand, the local Housing Authority has indicated to the central Federal office a desire to enlarge the capacity of its permanent low-rent projects by approximately 1,750 dwelling units. If there were 2,500 permanent public housing units, approximately ten percent of the anticipated total population of the City would be sheltered in part at public expense. The projects would absorb about 240 acres altogether. The cost of such a program at present prices, assuming Federal acquisition of sites, would probably be in the neighborhood of \$14,000,000, or about \$8,000 per dwelling unit.

The aims of the Housing Authority for construction of these proposed permanent units include:

- (a) Use of certain sites now occupied by temporary war housing, with possibly some construction on new sites in North Richmond.
- (b) Site plans comparable in coverage, open space and building arrangement, and general landscape character with the three permanent projects now in operation.
- (c) Buildings to house two to four families at rental scales within reach of low-income families.
- (d) Cooperation of the City in provision of utilities, streets, and other services.

The above program, even if funds were made immediately available in total amount, could not be executed in any short period of time. Sites must be secured, sub-standard dwellings in equivalent amount must be eliminated within five years,

and families occupying the sub-standard dwellings must be re-housed. The completion of public housing, therefore, is probably many years away. This offers time and an opportunity for the City to examine the entire public housing situation with a view toward adopting policies in this field more closely related to local needs and interests.

There are various assumptions embodied or implicit in the proposed public housing program that are subject to question at the present time. These questions deal mainly with the organization and composition of the program.

- (a) To what extent and in what manner does public housing meet the problems of veterans, as distinguished from the needs of underprivileged, low-income families?
- (b) Can a valid claim be made that Richmond must provide low-rent public housing for ten percent of its population?
- (c) Is it necessary for Richmond to seek authority to build an additional 1,750 units of public housing to offset the required equivalent elimination of approximately 1,000 sub-standard dwellings, most of which lie outside the City limits?

These queries are introduced mainly to direct attention to the need for a more realistic local housing policy, one designed to meet in a practicable manner all reasonable demands of the underprivileged elements of the population.

The Planning Commission should provide the forum in which such matters may be discussed, and its final Master Plan is designed to include a comprehensive, long-term formula to provide housing for self-supporting middle-income families, as well as those in the low-income brackets, and for veterans in all groups

who need shelter for their families. Public aid from the City, the State, and the Federal government is needed to increase the housing supply, to enable fast-growing Richmond and vicinity to meet the demands of its people. Such aid should be allocated to no single group or element of the population but should be channelled wisely toward the rebuilding of areas now occupied by temporary war housing. It should include housing in limited quantity for low-income families, and should serve to relieve this City of the charge that it is mainly a vast subsidized housing project, a mecca for those seeking government aid.

As of December 22, 1949, some 576 families living in Richmond Housing Authority projects were carried on county relief rolls, or approximately 4.3% of the total occupancy of 13,429 families.

Although segregated information of unemployment in Housing Authority areas is not available, records of the State Employment Agency show that 4,868 claimants in the regional district had filed during the week ending December 24, 1949, of which approximately 3,000 live in the City of Richmond. This means that approximately $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the workers living in the City of Richmond are today unemployed. However, it should be noted that at least 70% of the claimants who live in Richmond work elsewhere in the Bay Area.

The earning power of workers living in Richmond Housing is estimated by R.H.A. statisticians to be \$2,763,000 per month, or an average salary of \$203.04 per month per employee.

REDEVELOPMENT OUTLINE FOR SLUMS AND BLIGHTED AREAS

PROCEDURE IN GENERAL

Under California law (Chapter 1515, Statutes of 1947), redevelopment of slums and blighted districts in cities can be undertaken by harnessing public and private efforts. Public funds and the power of the City to acquire private property can be used to assemble land, and private initiative and funds can then do the actual building on these sites. This is a new formula for accomplishing one of the major purposes of Federal public housing, the elimination of sub-standard dwellings. The final aim is the construction of permanent well-designed buildings in a modern city pattern where obsolete and deteriorating structures once stood.

The reduction of rents to meet the demands of those with low earning capacity, however, is not one of the goals of redevelopment. If such an objective is sought, the subsidy formula of the Federal government, as exemplified in public housing or some parallel policy, must be employed. There is nothing in the California law to prevent private redevelopment and public housing from being planned and operated together. Definite advantages can result from such an arrangement.

There is an obvious need for redevelopment plans in Richmond, and it is the purpose of this report to outline such plans, as required by California law. The procedure involves the following steps:

1. Identification and designation of areas of blight or slums as these terms are defined in the Community Redevelopment Act. This is a task for the Planning Commission, covered largely by this report.
2. Official designation of a redevelopment area by the City Council after a public hearing, as proposed in this report.
3. Creation of a Redevelopment Agency to carry redevelopment projects forward by arranging for preparation of tentative and final project plans and for adequate public and private financing.
4. Preparation of tentative project plans to determine priorities and clarify various social and economic problems. This duty may be assumed by the Planning Commission, or be undertaken at the request of either the City Council or Redevelopment Agency.

The City Planning Commission is required to make only the initial study, plans, and preliminary calculations of costs and returns. The City Council provides administrative funds for the Planning Commission and the Redevelopment Agency and, at the appropriate time, acquisition funds for land assembly. The Redevelopment Agency acquires land, clears the site, and arranges for the sale or lease of properties to private developers, but constructs no buildings. Private capital builds all structures for private use.

It is obviously impossible in the Master Plan report to do more than establish the fact that Richmond does have a redevelopment problem, to direct attention to specific areas where conditions indicative of slums and blight are in evidence or emerging, to provide documentation in support of such findings, and to outline a program of further action. The following summary notes will cover pertinent facts and indicate procedure in this important field:

IDENTIFICATION OF AREAS FOR REDEVELOPMENT

Areas for which redevelopment procedures are instituted must be typical slums or blighted districts, as defined in the Community Redevelopment Act. Two types of problem areas which show conditions indicative of present or potential blight may be noted:

1. Government war housing areas distributed throughout the southern part of the City, as shown in Plate 1, which are deteriorating and becoming increasingly blighted and a handicap to the proper development of Richmond. (The Community Redevelopment Act defines temporary war housing to be blighted.)
2. Private areas showing slum and blight characteristics, as revealed largely by social and economic data to be hereinafter presented.

The latter areas, most of which are to be found in North Richmond, are adapted to clearance and rebuilding under a joint program of public housing and redevelopment, with Contra Costa County and Richmond participating and coordinating their efforts.

NEED FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF NORTH RICHMOND WEST OF TRACKS

1. Location: In the northwest section of Richmond on the west side of the Southern Pacific Railway, extending north along the railroad beyond the north City limits.
2. Size: Approximately 75 acres within Richmond, 150 acres north of the City limits.
3. History: Beginning with low land values, the area has been developed with cheaply constructed homes adjacent to industry and railroads.

4. Governmental Jurisdiction: One-third governed by City administration, two-thirds by Contra Costa County as an unincorporated area.
5. Ownership: In small private parcels, generally 25 to 50 feet in frontage.
6. Land Use: Predominately small, single-family homes with scattered commerce, bordered by heavy industry and railroads. Though there are numerous vacant parcels throughout the area, existing buildings are crowded together.
7. Zoning: Residential, but separated from other residential areas by large bands of industrial property.
8. Drainage: Poor, because of flat topography. Many of the original wooden drains should be replaced.
9. Sanitation: Generally satisfactory, since all streets are sewered.
10. Improvements: Residences are low-valued improvements, cheaply constructed and small in size. Buildings generally present a run-down appearance.
11. Streets: Surfacing is oil or gravel. Many streets lack curb and gutter up to modern standards.
12. Schools, Play Areas: No school is provided. Children must cross the railroad to the nearest school nearly three-quarters of a mile away. One playground serves the entire area and it is lacking in equipment.
13. Social Conditions: About 3500 persons live under crowded, sub-standard conditions in the area. Large families are inadequately housed in small, poorly constructed shacks. As a result of these poor living conditions, police calls are three times as high as in other private residential areas. (See Plate 3, "Civic Services") General assistance welfare is ten times as high. Juvenile delinquency is almost twice as high. The blight of poor construction is reflected in the need for twice as many fire calls.
14. Economic Conditions: Only 1.4% of the City residential valuation is in the North Richmond area. Tax returns per capita are only \$8.28, less than

half the average per capita return from other private residential areas. Considering these low tax returns, higher costs for public services are even more serious. Police and fire protection cost twice as much per capita as in other private residential areas.

With reference to the blighted fringe area located along the northerly City limits west of the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way, the Planning Commission is in receipt of an excellent report prepared by a class of graduate students of the University of California, under the tutelage of Mr. T. J. Kent, Jr., Chairman of the Department of City and Regional Planning. This report includes extensive studies and recommendations for the redevelopment of the North Richmond neighborhood extending from Vernon Avenue north to Wildcat Creek, and from the Southern Pacific Railway west to First Street, covering 73 blocks of land. The recommendations presented in this report (which is on file in the Office of the Planning Commission) involve rehabilitation of a majority of the dwellings in the area, and a comprehensive plan of redevelopment of street layout, community shopping center, schools, parks, playgrounds, and special neighborhood improvements. This study by the student group was undertaken at the request of Mr. E. P. Stephenson, Social-Industrial Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, who conducted an exhaustive social survey of living conditions in the area.

NEED FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF TEMPORARY WAR HOUSING AREAS

1. OWNERSHIP: 177 acres publicly owned in fee by the Federal government; 388 acres in numerous parcels of varying sizes, leased by Federal agencies from individual and corporate owners of fee title.

2. PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Overcrowding: Population densities range from 21 to 54 families per acre in temporary war housing areas as against an average of 8 families per acre in private housing areas.

Lack of Adequate Recreation Space: Lack of play space for children was covered in the Recreation report, revealing that there is far too little open space for leisure time purposes.

Temporary Construction: Buildings constructed in 1943 were built to last only five years. While buildings are not structurally unsafe, they contain many sub-standard deficiencies, such as plasterboard exterior surfaces, faulty flues, fire hazards, improperly vented plumbing fixtures, haphazard electrical wiring, inferior roofing, etc. All of these cause increasingly high maintenance costs.

Violation of State Housing Act: Many of the temporary buildings are arranged with interior kitchens and bathrooms leading off kitchens. Both situations, as well as lack of adequate fireproofing on stairways, are in violation of the State Housing Act (Health and Safety Code).

Fire Hazards: Faulty interior arrangement, inadequate fire-proofing within the buildings, and lack of yard space to separate buildings create greater fire hazards than in private residential areas.

Fire department records show that the proportion of fire protection cost in temporary public housing areas is three to four times greater than in private residential areas, the result of greater hazards and over-crowded buildings.

3. SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Overcrowding and lack of open space in public housing areas create adverse social conditions also. These undesirable social conditions, along with a lack of

interest in local civic affairs and a generally lower plane of living, are the results of crowding in temporary structures.

Police Calls, with relation to population, are fifty percent higher than in private residential areas. Aid to needy children is twice as great.

Delinquency: There are almost twice as many cases of delinquent children in proportion to the population in public housing areas as there are in private residential areas.

4. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Sub-standard Physical and Social Conditions lead to undesirable economic conditions as reflected in the cost records of the temporary public housing areas as compared with private residential areas. (See Plate 4, "Cost of Civic Services")

Police Calls use twice as much of the tax money per capita in temporary public housing areas as in private residential areas.

Fire Calls use three times as much.

Public Welfare uses more than five times as much.

Juvenile Delinquency uses 35% more tax money.

When it is realized that per capita tax revenue is twice as high in private residential areas as in public housing areas, the economic comparisons are even more startling.

5. FEDERAL POLICIES:

In addition to Federal payments in lieu of taxes, the Federal government also makes grants to assist in fire and police protection and to provide recreation centers. These various grants, however, merely ease the burden on City finances. The basic physical, social, and economic problems cannot be solved by financial grants, but call for correction of the undesirable conditions through better housing.

Maintenance Policies on the temporary housing create less desirable living conditions. For example, no records of complaints are kept. Tenants have no assurance that a leaky roof or bad plumbing will be repaired. General repairs are kept to a bare minimum.

Temporary war housing was constructed primarily to house wartime workers. Though wartime needs have been supplanted by the need to alleviate the housing shortage, Federal policy still regards the housing as expendable. It is evident that this policy cannot provide suitable, well-maintained housing.

GENERAL REDEVELOPMENT AND REHOUSING POLICIES

1. North Richmond West of Main Line Railroad Tracks

The North Richmond area, lying between the main line tracks of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway and the Belt Line Tracks to Point Richmond, which is now occupied by many large industries, also contains privately owned dwelling sites which should be acquired and resold or leased for industrial uses. Plans for redevelopment should contemplate and include removal of present occupants to either (1) public low-rent housing, or (2) old private dwellings meeting City standards, or (3) new housing built for rental or sale on raw land outside Richmond or in central redevelopment areas. The location of this blighted area, pinched between two very heavily used railroad lines in promising industrial districts with advantageous rail, highway, and power facilities, suggests a restriction against any further subdivision or improvement of such property for residential use.

2. North Richmond Fringe Area

In the blighted area of North Richmond lying west of the tracks, located partially inside and partially outside the City limits, no effort should be made to establish public housing until it becomes clearly evident that no demand will appear for industrial sites in this section that may be of paramount importance to the industrial life of the City of Richmond.

In any rehousing plan offered by any public agency to permit redevelopment of an area such as North Richmond, "West of the Tracks," where the housing problems of a minority group are involved, there can be no racial discrimination.

3. Temporary War Housing Areas are both publicly owned and leased. Policies governing areas held in fee are not applicable to the areas where the fee ownership is still private. In the latter case, retention of Federal control must be assured until a redevelopment plan acceptable to the City has been formulated for such properties.

The timing of redevelopment on any temporary war housing site will be largely dependent upon the physical conditions of the buildings now occupying the site, or the policies of the Federal government covering the maintenance and continued use of such dwellings. There are few such areas that can now (1949) show severe blight or slum conditions, but deterioration is evident at many points and is continuous. These areas can be classed as slums in a few years, and are presently considered to be blighted in terms defined by the State Community Redevelopment Act.

Rehousing of the occupants of these temporary structures takes place constantly as families move in response to employment opportunities or acquisition of better quarters. There is no racial issue involved in such continual voluntary shifting, and no minority problems need arise in any redevelopment program applied to these areas.

A redevelopment policy, looking toward the substitution of permanent dwellings for the temporary units now on these sites, can be made effective at any time by the housing management. Dwelling units in any area designated for clearance, once vacated, need not be reoccupied.

WAR HOUSING AREAS CLASSIFIED FOR FUTURE REDEVELOPMENT

1. Areas owned in fee, now occupied by government housing but zoned for ultimate industrial use, not to be considered for housing redevelopment, but retained as reservoir housing:

Harbor Gate Project, 101 acres, 806 units
Canal Project, 48 acres, 2112 units

2. Areas owned in fee, now occupied by government housing, to be continued in service until industrial demand, deterioration or government policy requires demolition:

Terrace Project, 10 acres, 576 units

3. Areas leased, occupied by government housing but zoned for industrial use, to be continued in service until industrial demand, deterioration, or government policy requires demolition:

Esmeralda Project, 8 acres, 94 units
Seaport Project, 29 acres, 494 units
Portions of USMC Div. No. 2, 28.5 acres, 978 units
Area south of Potrero Avenue and west of Harbor Gate Project
Area south of Cutting and east of South 30th Street