

HOUSING

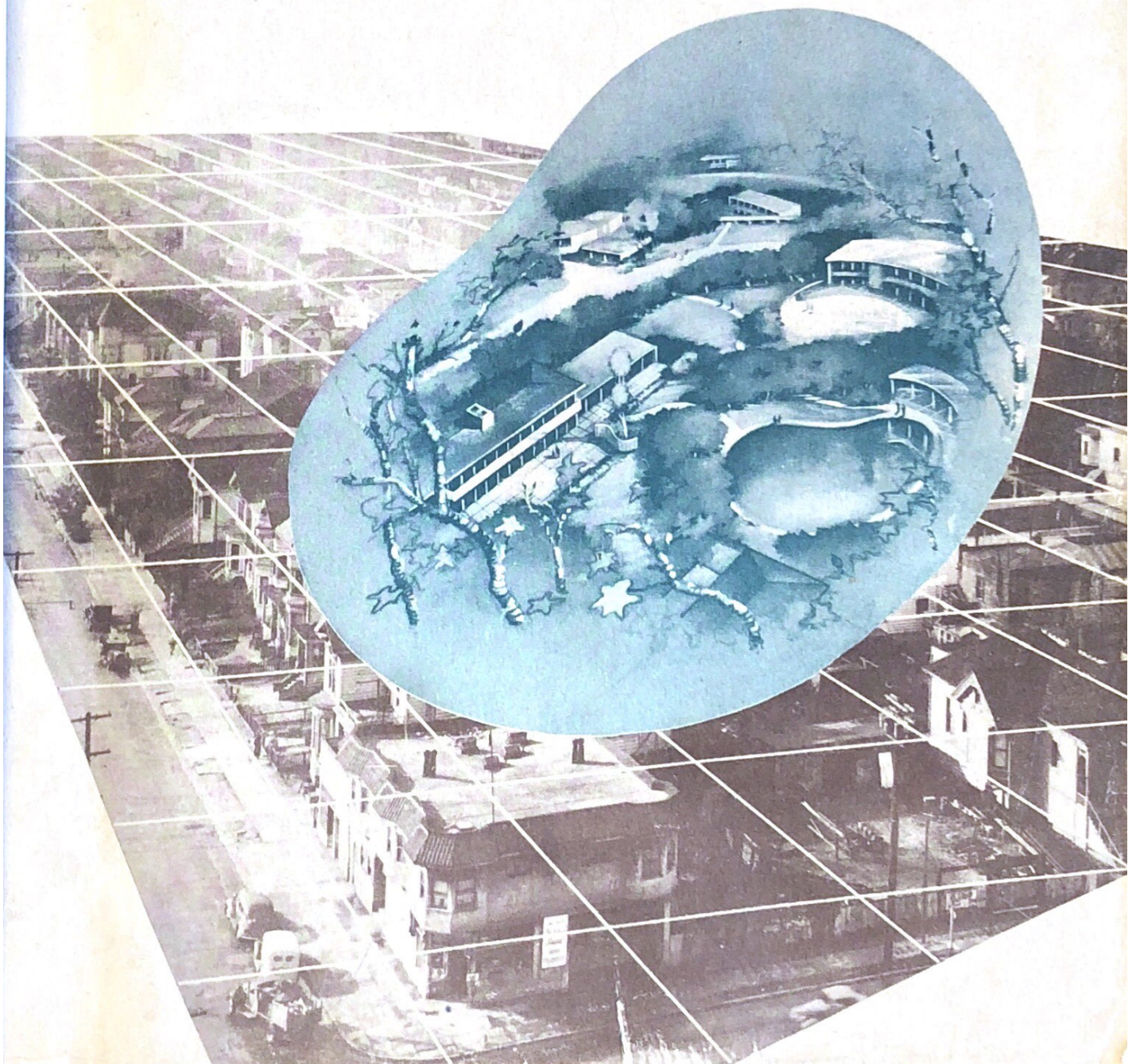
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*Council*

*July 30/49*

# REDEVELOPMENT

## IN OAKLAND





URBAN REDEVELOPMENT IN OAKLAND

*Oakland, Calif. City Planning Commission.*

An initial study to determine  
the extent of blight in Oakland  
and to recommend a course of  
aggressive action for a solution

NOTWITHSTANDING ANY STATEMENT  
MADE IN THIS REPORT, IT IS NOT A  
RECOMMENDATION OF THE PLAN-  
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REPORT TO THE COMMISSION.

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AT FIRST IMPOSSIBLE."

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OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

1948 - 1949

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## CITY OF OAKLAND CALIFORNIA

### CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

June 30, 1949

City Manager, Mayor, and  
Honorable City Council  
City Hall  
Oakland, California

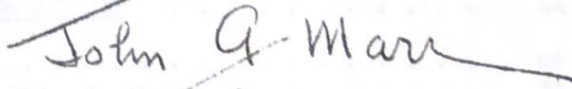
Gentlemen:

We transmit herewith an initial report on the California Community Redevelopment Act as it might apply to Oakland.

It is the purpose of this initial report to indicate the prerequisites which must be complied with and to define the extent of "blighted areas" in Oakland. It is, further, the purpose of this report to recommend action for redevelopment of sections of Oakland for housing and industry, recognizing and outlining the problems which accompany such redevelopment.

It is recommended that an Urban Redevelopment Agency be established to work cooperatively with the City Planning Commission and the Housing Authority of the City of Oakland in selecting sites for public and private redevelopment, to develop preliminary designs for projects, and at the same time to carry on essential public education.

Respectfully submitted,

  
John G. Marr  
City Planning Engineer

JGM:gh




TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
City Council . . . . .	2
Planning Commission Members . . . . .	3
Letter of Transmittal . . . . .	4
List of Illustrations . . . . .	6
Summary of Recommendations . . . . .	7
 <u>PART I - INTRODUCTION</u> . . . . .	 9
 <u>PART II - PREREQUISITES OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT ACT</u> . . . . .	 12
 <u>PART III - CRITERIA OF BLIGHT</u> . . . . .	 14
A. City-wide	
1. Population Loss and Gain - 1940-1945 . . . . .	17
2. Density of Population - 1945 . . . . .	18
3. Over-Age Dwelling Units by Census Tracts . . . . .	19
4. Inadequate Bath Facilities by Census Tracts . . . . .	20
5. Dwelling Units in Need of Major Repair by Census Tracts . . . . .	21
6. Mean Contract Monthly Rent by Census Tracts . . . . .	22
7. Owner Occupied Dwellings by Census Tracts . . . . .	23
8. Overcrowding of Dwelling Units by Census Tracts . . . . .	24
9. Average Number of Persons per Dwelling Unit by Census Tracts, 1945 . . . . .	25
10. Interior Dwelling Fires by Census Tracts . . . . .	26
11. Juvenile Offenders by Census Tracts, 1947 . . . . .	27
12-13. Distribution of Class I Offenses and Arrests by Census Tracts . . . . .	28
14. Tuberculosis Deaths by Census Tracts . . . . .	29
15. Infant Mortality by Census Tracts . . . . .	30
16. Summary of Blight Characteristics . . . . .	31
B. West Oakland Neighborhood . . . . .	33
C. East of the Lake Neighborhood . . . . .	37
D. Vacant Property and the Housing Situation . . . . .	40
 <u>PART IV - RECOMMENDED PROGRAM FOR ACTION</u> . . . . .	 44
A. Initiating Action . . . . .	46
B. Financing Redevelopment . . . . .	51
C. Relocating Displaced Families . . . . .	55
D. Selecting the Sites . . . . .	58
E. Designing the Projects . . . . .	60
F. Public Awareness - The Key to Redevelopment . . . . .	62
 <u>APPENDICES</u> . . . . .	 64

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<u>ILLUSTRATION NUMBER</u>	<u>OPPOSITE PAGE NUMBER</u>
1. Blighted Areas . . . . .	8
2. Population Loss and Gain - 1940-1945 . . . . .	17
3. Density of Population - 1945 . . . . .	18
4. Over-Age Dwelling Units . . . . .	19
5. Inadequate Bath Facilities . . . . .	20
6. Dwelling Units in Need of Major Repair . . . . .	21
7. Mean Contract Monthly Rental . . . . .	22
8. Owner Occupied Dwellings . . . . .	23
9. Overcrowding of Dwelling Units . . . . .	24
10. Average Number of Persons Per Dwelling Unit . . . . .	25
11. Interior Dwelling Fires . . . . .	26
12. Juvenile Offenders . . . . .	27
13. Distribution of Class I Offenses . . . . .	28
14. Distribution of Class I Arrests . . . . .	28
15. Tuberculosis Deaths . . . . .	29
16. Infant Mortality . . . . .	30
17. Incidence of Characteristics of Blight . . . . .	31
18. Land Subdivision - West Oakland Neighborhood . . . . .	33
19. Land Subdivision - East of the Lake Neighborhood . . . . .	37
20. Vacant Property as of 1948 . . . . .	40





# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

OAKLAND

CALIFORNIA

BY THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION





SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Commission recommends that the City Council take the following steps to initiate community redevelopment and to provide additional low rent housing in Oakland:

1. Adopt a resolution accepting the report, "Redevelopment in Oakland," and designating it a part of the Master Plan.
2. Adopt a resolution finding that blighted areas exist in Oakland as indicated in the report and designating them a redevelopment area.
3. Adopt resolutions finding that in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare a Redevelopment Agency should act and requesting the Mayor to appoint five members thereto.
4. Adopt an ordinance finding that low rent housing is needed in Oakland to the extent of not less than 3,000 units and directing the Housing Authority to apply to the U. S. Housing and Home Finance Agency for this number of public housing units.
5. Direct the Housing Authority to apply for a preliminary loan in the amount of \$100,000 to finance necessary surveys, preliminary project designs, and preparation of applications for grants for low rent housing and redevelopment projects.
6. Request the Housing Authority to establish a section to deal with the problem of relocating families displaced from low rent housing and redevelopment project sites.
7. Direct the Housing Authority and the City Planning Commission jointly to recommend sites for not less than 3,000 units of low rent housing on vacant land and in blighted areas.
8. Direct the City Planning Commission to recommend sites within blighted areas for redevelopment projects to be constructed by private enterprise.
9. Direct the Housing Authority and the City Planning Commission jointly to prepare preliminary site plans for low rent housing projects.
10. Direct the Redevelopment Agency and the City Planning Commission jointly to prepare preliminary site plans for redevelopment projects.
11. Direct the Housing Authority to conduct a campaign to inform the public of the need for low rent housing and the ways in which it will benefit the city.
12. Direct the City Planning Commission and the Redevelopment Agency to conduct a campaign to make the public aware of the potentialities of redevelopment and to interest private enterprise in investing in slum clearance projects.

(See Appendix for Suggested Ordinances and Resolutions)

## PART I

# INTRODUCTION



PART I - INTRODUCTION

Most of our cities contain blighted areas--grim, ugly neighborhoods in which housing has fallen into disrepair, industrial and commercial uses have intruded among the residences, traffic conditions are hazardous, recreation areas and other community facilities are inadequate, and the general environment has degenerated to an unwholesome level. The California Community Redevelopment Act officially recognizes that such conditions endanger the public health, safety, and welfare and that eradicating blight is a public responsibility.

"Redevelopment" is a term used to describe the process of clearing blighted areas, replanning them, and rebuilding them for residential, industrial, commercial, or public use.

The intensity of current interest in community redevelopment is indicated by the fact that the 1949 session of the State Legislature amended the Act in detail. The revisions greatly simplify the procedure for initiating redevelopment projects.

California is not the only state which has adopted redevelopment legislation. More than half the states now have such laws on the books. New York has provided for partial tax exemption over a 25-year period as an incentive for private capital to invest in redevelopment. Illinois has appropriated \$13,000,000 for grants to be matched by local contributions. The Indiana act enables municipalities to levy direct taxes to be used to rehabilitate slums. In many other states enabling legislation is stimulating cities to attempt to rebuild their blighted areas. The extent of activity is indicated by the many reports issued by aggressive planning commissions and redevelopment agencies proposing various methods of attacking the problem.

Up to the present time the lack of funds has been the principal obstacle in the path of redevelopment. Cities could not afford to buy up slum land and rebuild on it or to transfer it at a reduced price to private developers. However, the Housing Act of 1949, recently passed by Congress, provides federal funds for both low rent housing and slum clearance. The Act authorizes the construction of 810,000 units of low rent housing. It provides for 40-year loans covering as much as two thirds of the cost of redevelopment projects. A maximum of \$25,000,000 is authorized for 1949 and \$225,000,000 for each succeeding year, with a total limitation of \$1,000,000,000.

On April 20, 1948, the City Council requested the Planning Commission to make investigations to determine whether redevelopment is needed in Oakland and to make recommendations for action, as justified by the facts.

This report is the first published in response to that request. It attempts to answer the questions: Are there blighted areas in Oakland? and if so, where are they located? It also outlines the provisions of the Community Redevelopment Act, surveys alternative methods of financing the rebuilding of blighted areas, points out problems which will arise in the process, and proposes solutions. Finally, the report recommends the steps which must now be taken if Oakland is to wage war on blight.

# PREREQUISITES OF THE ACT



PART II - PREREQUISITES OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT ACT

Oakland has complied with the following preliminary prerequisites to proceeding under the Community Redevelopment Act of 1945.

1. Oakland has had a City Planning Commission since 1932.
2. Oakland has adopted the following master plans:
  - A. "Freeways and Major Streets," adopted on March 4, 1948, by the City Council as a part of the Master Plan.
  - B. "Transit Facilities and Mass Transportation," adopted on November 20, 1947, by the City Council as a part of the Master Plan.
  - C. A zoning ordinance adopted on February 5, 1935, by the City Council.
  - D. "The Civic Center and Lake Merritt Improvement," adopted September 25, 1947, by the City Council as a part of the Master Plan.
  - E. The Commission has prepared and adopted other plans for civic development including fire house location, health center location, off-street parking, unified terminal facilities, and low rent housing--all parts of the Master Plan.
3. Population density and building intensity standards for the various zoning districts were adopted in 1935 as a part of the zoning ordinance (474-475 C.M.S.).
4. Estimates of future population for 1970 and 2000 A.D. have been prepared by the Commission. These are revised periodically as additional information becomes available.
5. A study of the areas within which blight exists is presented herewith. This report has been adopted by the City Planning Commission.

### PART III

# CRITERIA

# OF BLIGHT



PART III - CRITERIA OF BLIGHTA. City-wide

The Community Redevelopment Act defines the criteria indicative of blighted areas. Not all of these criteria can be intensively investigated on a city-wide basis, because of practical limitations. Many of them can be investigated in detail only when project areas are designated. A house to house canvass should be made in each project area to provide a solid basis of fact on which to predicate corrective measures.

From an analysis of the Community Redevelopment Act, the factors indicative of blighted areas--whether occupied or vacant, whether used for residence, commerce, or industry--include one or any combination of the following:

Conditions Relative to Buildings

1. Defective design and character of building.
2. Faulty interior arrangement.
3. Faulty exterior spacing with inadequate light and air.
4. Over-age buildings, buildings needing major repair or unfit for use.
5. Obsolescence because of poor siting, design, or mixed use.
6. Unsafe structural conditions.

Conditions Relative to Population

7. High density of population.
8. Overcrowding of dwelling units.
9. Inadequacy of recreation facilities.
10. Excessive juvenile delinquency and crime rates.
11. Loss of population.

Conditions Relative to Land and Public Utilities

12. Uneconomic lot shapes and sizes.
13. Street plan and subdivision not adjusted to topography.
14. Improper or inadequate provision of public utilities.
15. Land subject to inundation.
16. Uneconomical use of land detrimental to the public health, safety, and general welfare.
17. Uneconomical extension of municipal services to outlying areas.
18. Disproportionate expenditure for police and fire protection and other public services.
19. Dispersal of ownership of land.
20. Lack of building activity.

Conditions Relative to Health

21. Unsanitary conditions breeding disease and increasing infant mortality.

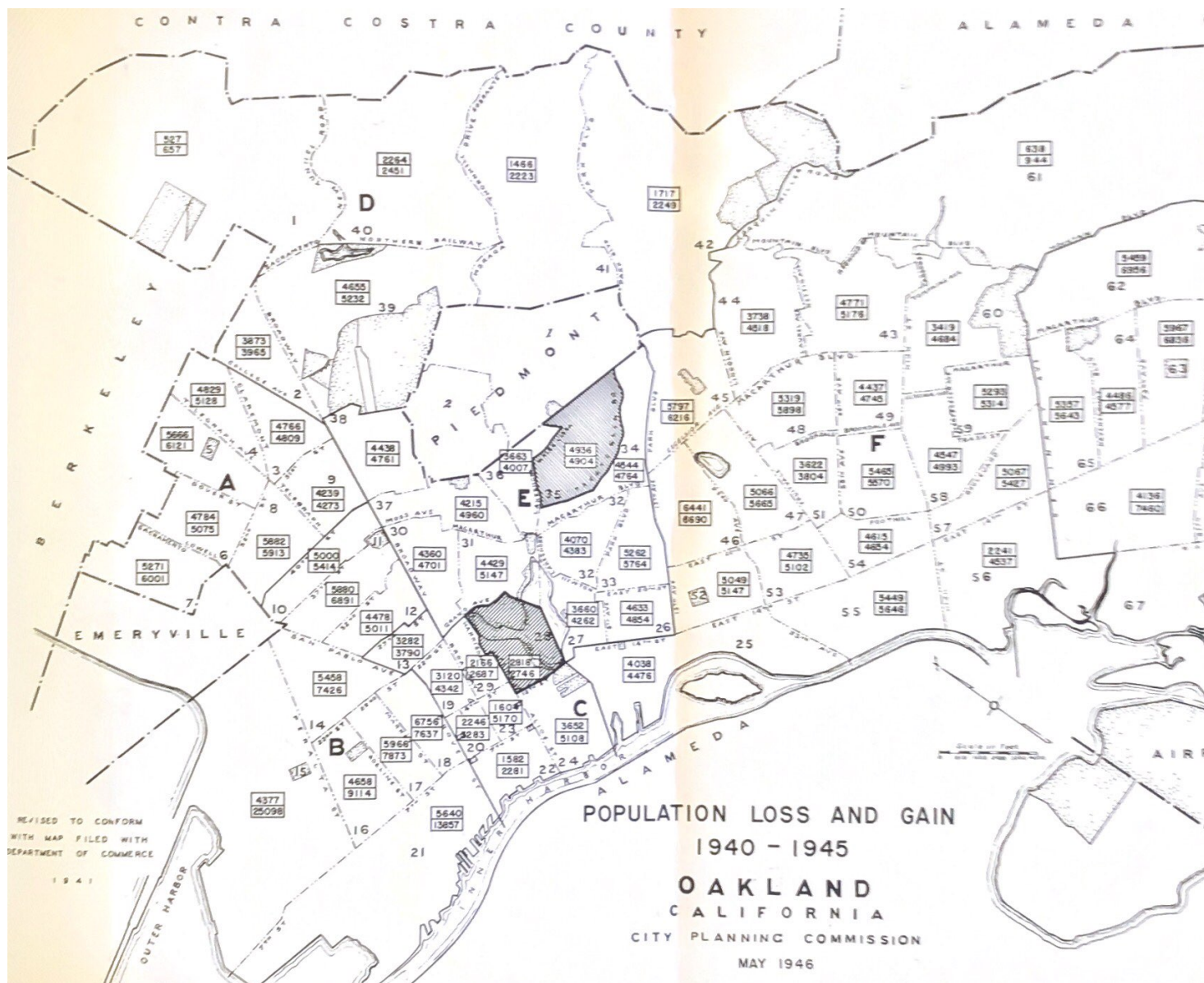
Conditions Relative to Value

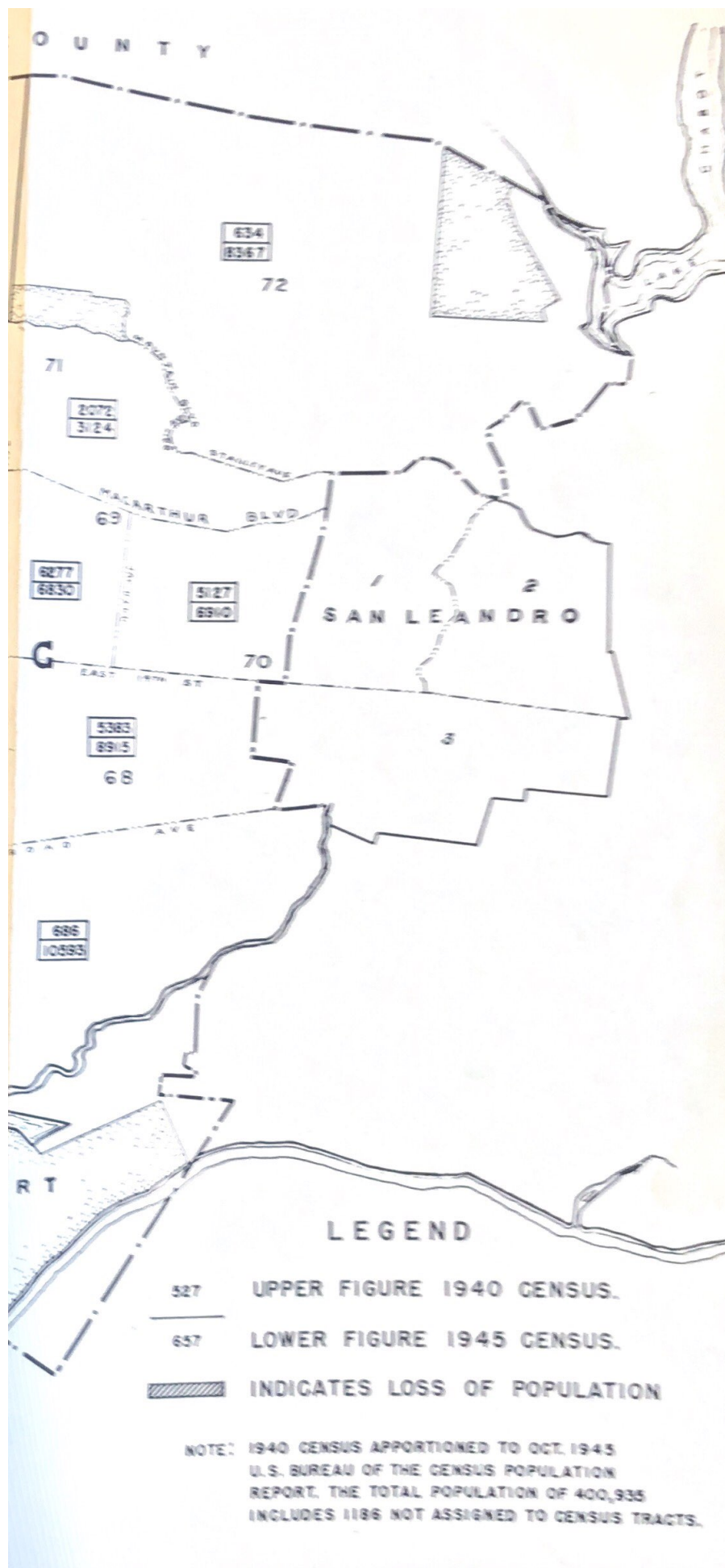
22. Impairment of tax structure owing to depreciated property values.
23. Inadequate tax receipts in relation to service costs.
24. Disproportionate number of tax foreclosures.

The following 15 sections of the report contain detailed studies of many of the criteria of blight outlined above. Individual blight characteristics are separately analyzed and the incidence of each one in each of the city's 72 census tracts is shown.











# 1. Population Loss and Gain, 1940-45

The civilian population of Oakland increased from 302,163 to 369,196 between 1940 and 1945. The greater part of the increase was due to in-migration. All census tracts except Numbers 28 and 35 showed a population increase. In some the increase was quite substantial, as in parts of West Oakland where temporary and emergency war housing projects were located. In many of the medium-aged residential areas the population remained practically constant.

The attached map indicates for each census tract the 1940 population as the upper figure and the 1945 population as the lower figure. The two census tracts which lost population are indicated by a distinctive symbol.

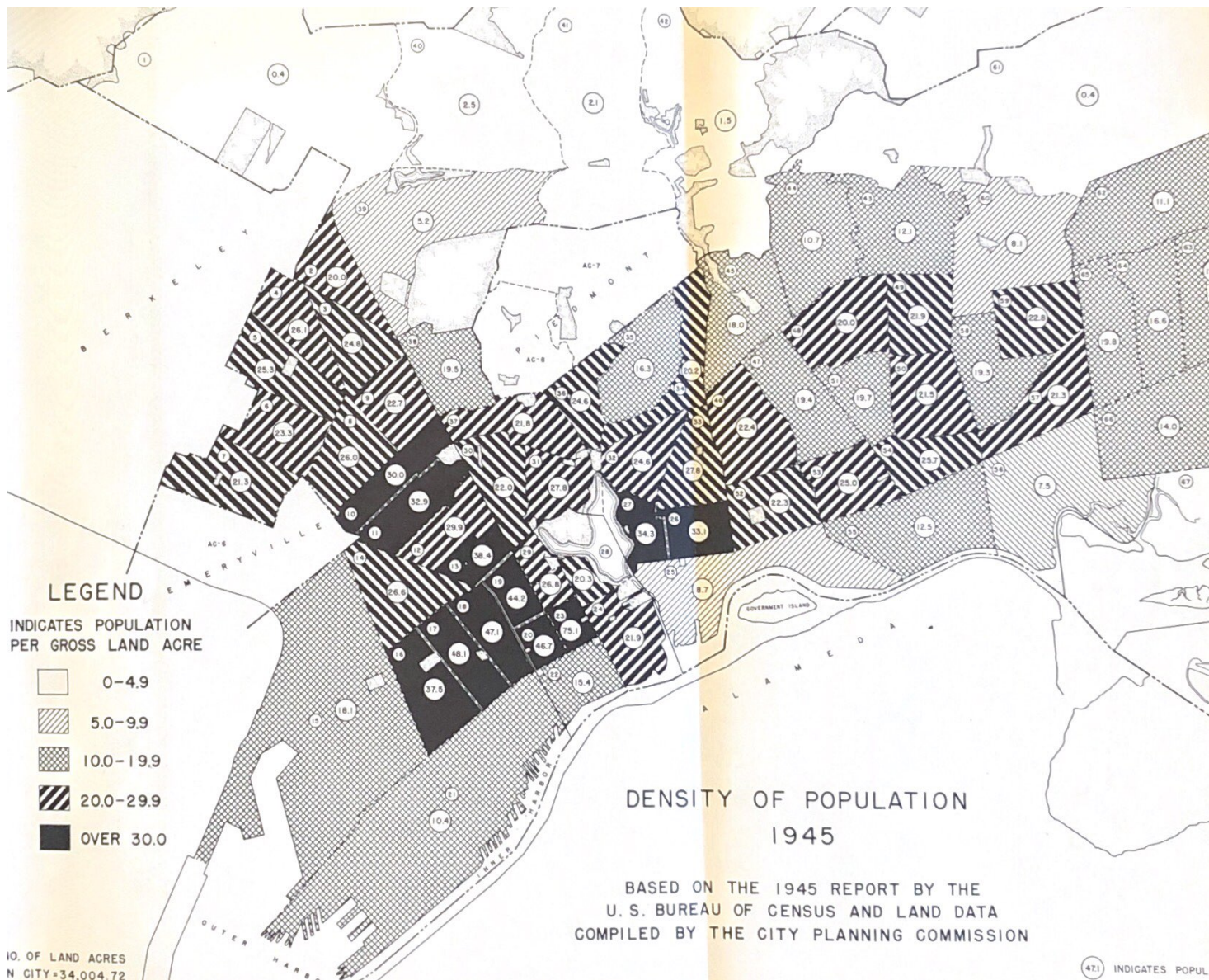
It should be noted that conditions indicated by the Census of 1945 represent only a temporary situation. Non-resident military personnel based in the city were included in the enumeration. The total military population was recorded as 31,739 with the major concentration occurring in Census Tract Numbers 15, 21, 23, 67, and 72. This military personnel swelled Oakland's population to a total of 400,935 in 1945.

A recent study made by the City Planning Commission indicates that the trend of 1940-45 has continued with the population for 1950 estimated to reach a total of 438,000 persons. This will be the greatest numerical increase for any decade in Oakland's history.

It is to be noted that new dwelling units were produced at a rate barely sufficient to replace housing which became obsolete during the period 1940-1950, let alone sufficient to care for this rapid population increase. The average net increase for 1940-48 was at a rate of 1,517 dwelling units per year. These include the permanent but not the war emergency and temporary dwelling units. The adjusted average, including the temporary and war emergency housing, would increase the number per year to 1,893 dwelling units. The dilemma of too many people for too few dwelling accommodations is obvious.

The stimulation of building in all fields--low, medium, and high rental--is a must. Public housing must be anticipated as an integral part of the future program. The temporary and war emergency housing, built in accord with no reasonable standard of permanency, safety, or livability, must be replaced as soon as possible.





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## 2. Density of Population - 1945

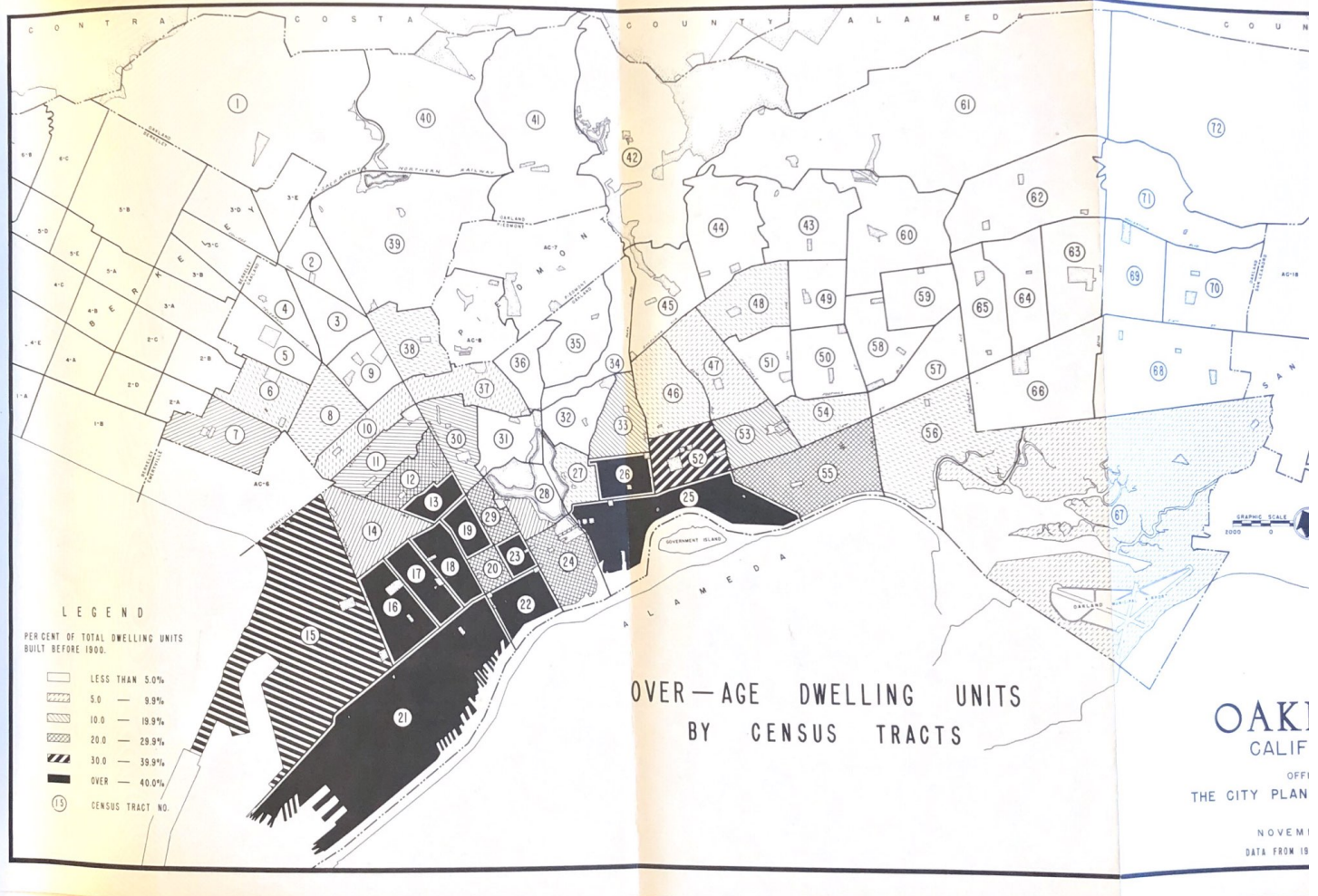
Ten years ago there was an excess of vacant lots in Oakland. They were available at comparatively low prices. Today practically all level lots have been absorbed by building. The hill lots where the ground slope is in excess of 15 per cent are still available but expensive to improve. Conversion of close-in property to a more intensive form of use has proceeded at an accelerated pace as vacant land has been withdrawn from the market. As a result, there has been an increase in the density of population on the close-in land.

The attached plan indicates the average population density per acre by census tracts for 1945. There is a variation from a minimum of 0.4 persons per gross acre to a maximum of 75.1 persons per gross acre. The average for the entire city was 11.8 persons per gross land acre.

The areas of concentration are shown by the solid black indications, while areas of decreasing densities are shown by successively lighter symbols. The individual densities are shown for each census tract by the figures within the larger circles. The smaller circles and the figures therein indicate the census tract number.

Portions of West Oakland and East of the Lake are now the areas of greatest population concentration. In estimating conditions as of today and as they can be expected in 1950, it should be noted that the majority of the close-in areas are more densely occupied now than they were in 1945. The number of census tracts in the highest density classification (over 30.0 persons per gross acre) will continue to extend farther into West and East Oakland during each successive census period. In the close-in areas there has been little or no new housing development. The population increase has been accommodated primarily by conversions of existing housing.

Nowhere in Oakland has there been an increase to a point where the density of population by census tract, per se, is any indication of blight. Preservation of the individual home with its surrounding open spaces, low average height of buildings, high percentage of home ownership, relatively high percentage of area in streets in the close-in sections, all have tended to keep the density per gross acre low. Because of these factors, it is believed that even with the estimated increases for the future, the density per gross acre in Oakland will never produce the problems encountered in San Francisco and other larger cities where much greater concentration exists.





### 3. Over-Age Dwelling Units by Census Tracts

Oakland is a young and growing city compared with those in the East. The facades of Oakland's older buildings appear relatively modern compared with the relics in eastern cities. The preponderance of all structures are wood-frame construction adapted to the milder climate. This has resulted in a lighter and less permanent type of structure than is found in the East.

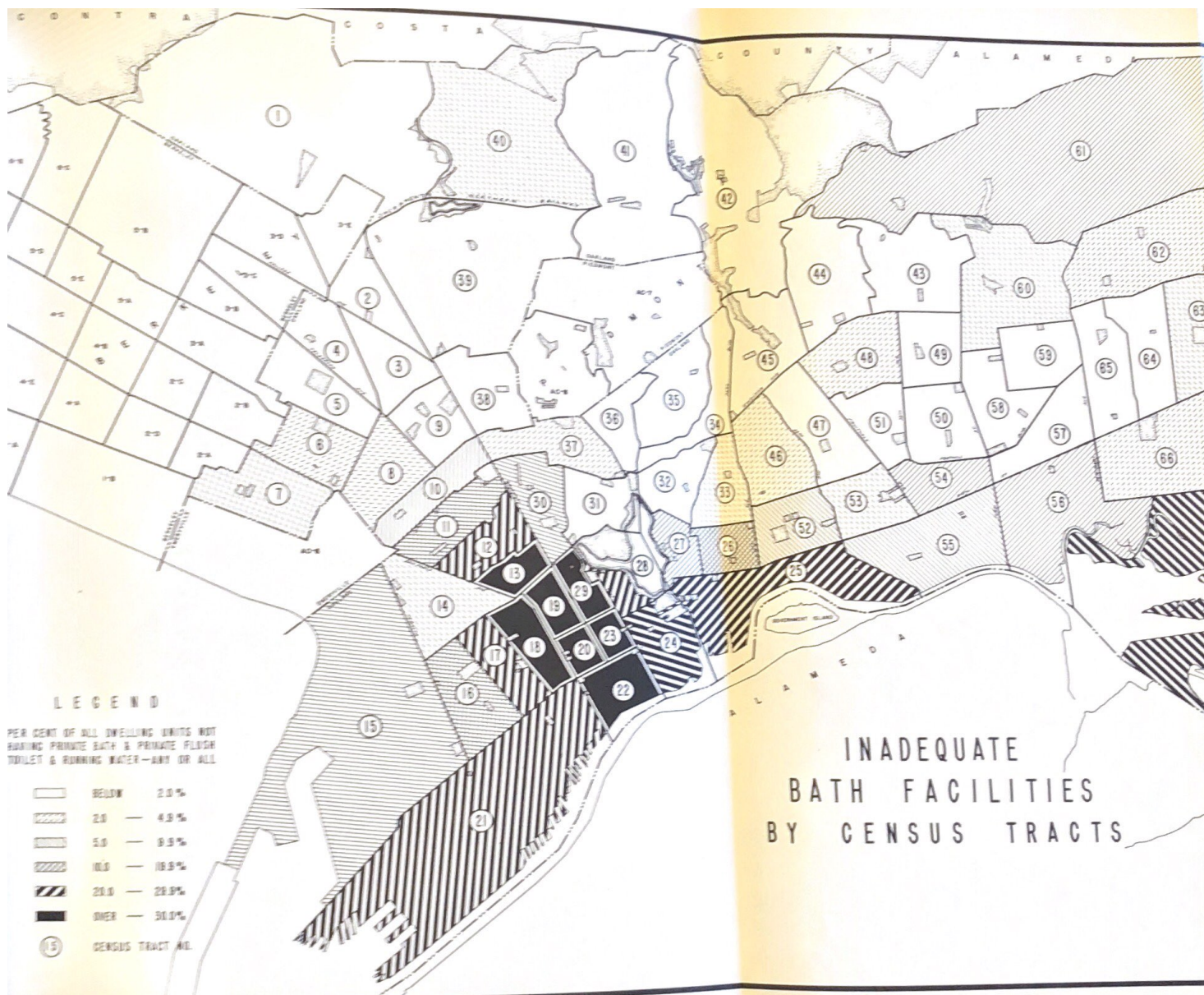
Fifty years is a long time in the life of any wood-frame building. No one has ever calculated with any degree of finality the economic life of various types of structures, but for wood-frame construction an accepted estimate is 30 to 35 years. The rapid increase in maintenance and upkeep costs and the factors of obsolescence and style certainly become very appreciable after 30 to 35 years.

The illustration opposite is presented to emphasize the point that a large proportion of Oakland's dwelling units is approaching the age when replacement becomes necessary. This map indicates the per cent of all dwelling units by census tracts built prior to 1900--almost 50 years ago. An average of 12.6 per cent of the city's dwelling units were built prior to 1900. On the other hand, half of the census tracts in the city contained only 4.3 per cent or less of dwelling units built before 1900. The basic data were secured from the 1940 Federal Census of Housing and are equally valid today except that the buildings are now 10 years older.

The map shows rather strikingly the concentration of older structures in the close-in sections and the progressively decreasing age beyond the Central Business District. There are nine census tracts where over 40 per cent of the dwelling units were built prior to 1900. It is apparent that consideration must be given as to what should be done with these over-age structures. A gradual process of individual building replacement does not appear to offer any solution, because it is inevitable that the original units will be further subdivided for more intensive use, and that by slow accretion the open spaces about the buildings will be reduced progressively to the bare minimum requirements of the zoning ordinance.

The usual experience of cities has been to solve this problem of obsolescence by ignoring it and permitting layers of over-age residences to accumulate as the city's growth continues. Oakland is fortunate in being aware of this problem before its effects acutely disrupt the city's economy. As the city grows older and population densities increase, the opportunity we have now will be lost.







#### 4. Inadequate Bath Facilities by Census Tracts

The percentage of the total number of dwelling units in each census tract having inadequate bath facilities or sharing bath facilities with other dwelling units is shown on the accompanying illustrations. The map does not include the status of facilities in transient hotels or in other non-household accommodations.

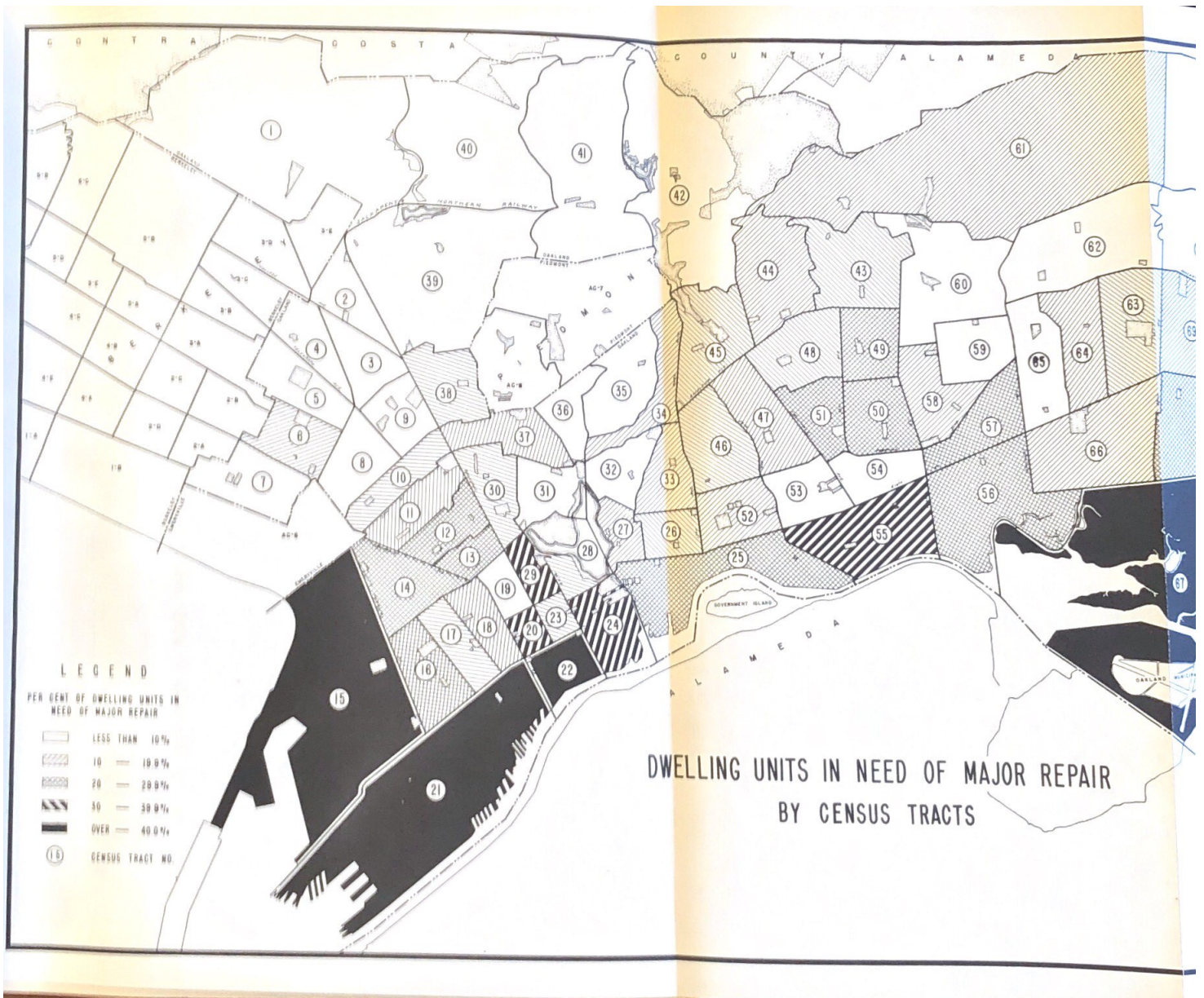
By bath facilities is meant all three of the following:

1. Private bath tub or shower.
2. Private flush toilet.
3. Running water within the dwelling unit.

Absence of any or all of these facilities classifies the dwelling unit as below a reasonable standard. Today to accept less than this minimum certainly would not be in the public interest and by no criterion could such dwelling units be considered adequate. The State Housing Act, Sections 17450-17585, and the Oakland Municipal Code, Article 8, outline the minimum satisfactory standards.

The source for the basic data is the 1940 Housing Census. Conditions today are considerably worse than indicated in this study because of more concentrated use of dwelling units.

It should be noted that, while the mean for the entire city was 9.0 per cent and the median 2.7 per cent, in three census tracts over 70 per cent of the dwellings lacked adequate bath facilities. On the other hand, one-sixth of the city's census tracts had less than one per cent of inadequacy. In 14 of the 72 census tracts studied, over 20 per cent of the dwelling units lacked adequate bath facilities. All of these except Census Tract 67 are in the older sections of the city.





5. Dwelling Units in Need of Major Repair by Census Tracts

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the census tracts within which the condition of dwelling units indicates the necessity for some program of action. Interesting correlations can be made between the studies showing over-age dwelling units, inadequate bath facilities, and mean contract monthly rent. The tendency for conditions inimical to the public interest to cluster is beginning to become apparent.

This map shows the per cent of the total dwelling units within each census tract which are in need of structural repair to the extent that the dwelling is either unfit for use now or will become so unless major repairs are made.

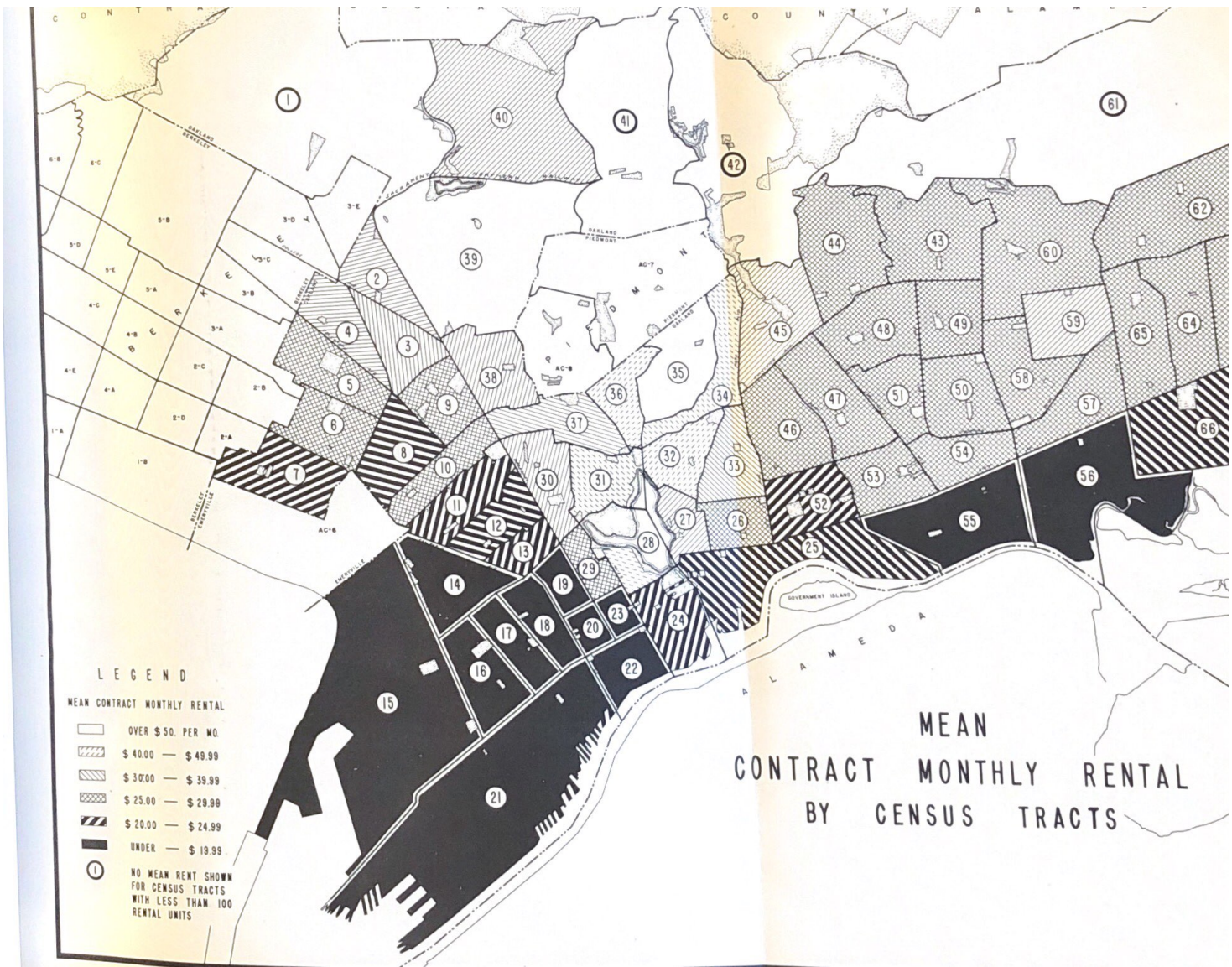
The data were taken from the United States Census report on housing for 1940. In a study of this kind it must be recognized that any evaluation made by a large number of investigators is subject to individual judgments. However, there is no evidence that the study is not representative of average conditions, or that the relative standings of census tracts would be changed by more precise and detailed investigations. Conditions today are but little changed from those indicated by the census. Modernization in the areas where the need for repairs is greatest has not proceeded at a rate that has produced any appreciable change. There has been no program of demolition or correction of housing and building code violations since 1942. The City of Oakland will have to adopt a forceful policy of ordering demolition of buildings where necessary, or of requiring corrective action if present conditions are to be improved.

The total number of dwelling units reported in need of major repairs (14,930) was 14.4 per cent of the city's total dwelling units. Of the 72 census tracts, the twelve closest to the Central Business District contained only 18.3 per cent of the total dwelling units but at the same time contained 31.3 per cent of the units in need of major repairs. Expressed in another way, the dwelling units needing major repair in these twelve census tracts comprised 24.7 per cent of the total number of units in these tracts, whereas, for the remainder of the city, the dwellings in need of major repair comprised only 12.1 per cent of the total number of units.

In these twelve census tracts over 4,500 substandard dwelling units are crowded onto expensive land near the heart of the city. Because of their age and obsolescence these dwellings are generally occupied by tenants in the lowest economic brackets. The land, in many instances, is held for speculative purposes. This results in overcrowding already inadequate housing with more tenants to produce the maximum possible income, irrespective of effect on tenants.

Generally, lots are too small and costs too high to permit owners to rebuild independently. Clearly, no permanently desirable solution to this dilemma is possible without a broader concept of the need for open space and community facilities necessary for desirable urban living.







## 6. Mean Contract Monthly Rentals by Census Tracts

A comparison of mean contract monthly rentals by census tracts provides a clear indication of the economic status of the various areas of the city. The data presented on the plan were secured from the 1940 census and have validity for comparative purposes today because rents were frozen by federal action shortly after the data were acquired.

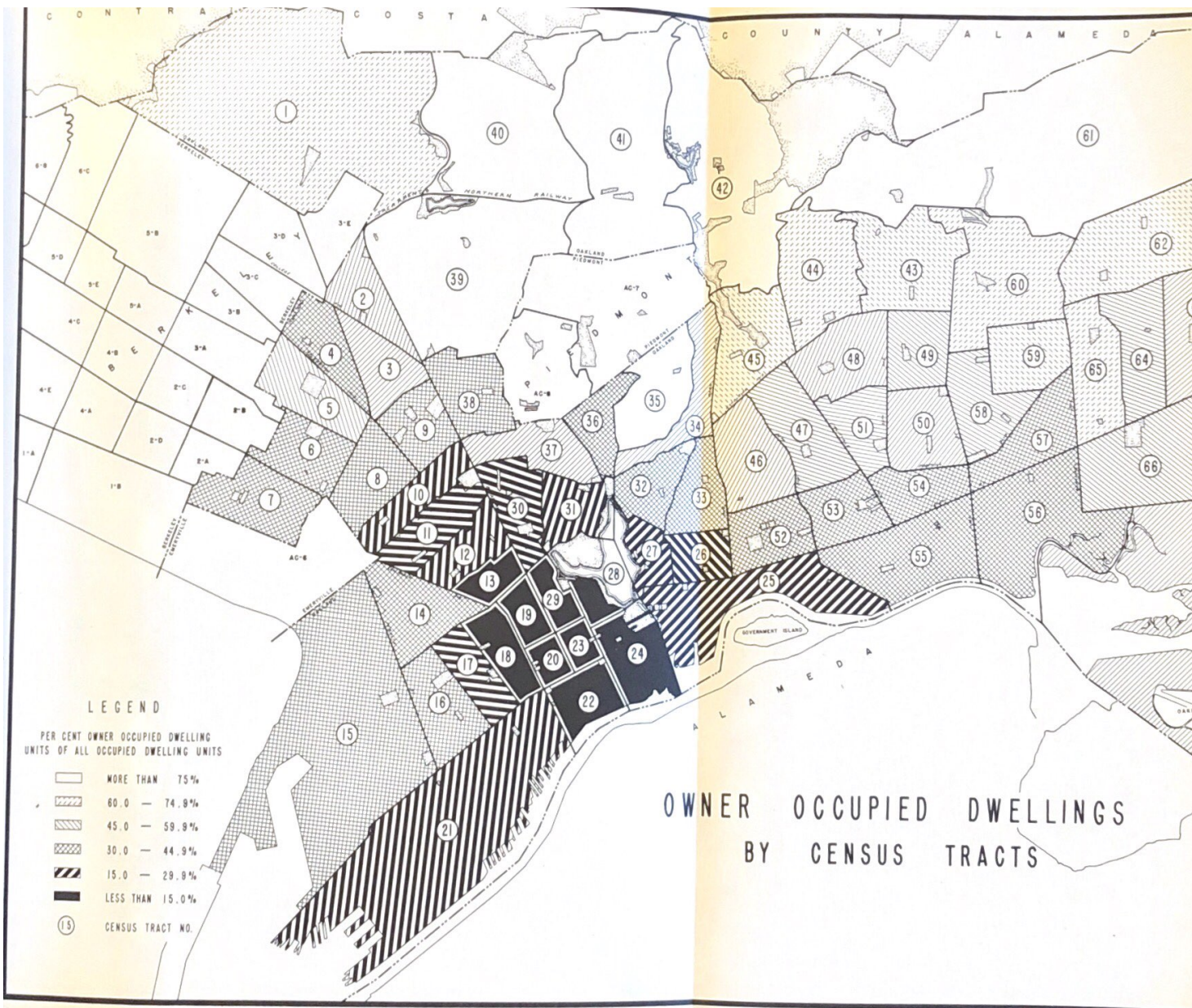
Information was limited to rental facilities. It does not include owner occupied units, but does include hotels, apartment houses, and other tenant occupied units as well as the estimated rentals of vacant rental units. Although data for both mean and median rentals are available, only mean rentals were indicated. The areas of lower rentals are emphasized. At the time of the Census of 1940 rental units were in more nearly normal supply and there was no housing shortage. During the ensuing nine years, inflation and heightened demand would have produced a generally higher rental were it not for the imposition of rent controls.

If rent controls were removed, the dollar values presented herewith would have to be revised upward. Although it is difficult to predict to what levels mean rentals might rise, the relative standings of the census tracts would remain practically the same irrespective of decontrol.

Low rentals are usually symptomatic of blight. The lowest mean contract monthly rentals are concentrated in West Oakland. However, two census tracts (25 and 55) below East 14th Street, in the vicinity of High Street, are also in this lowest classification. The successive bands of increasing rentals appear north and east of the Lake as the distance from the Central Business District increases.

OAKLAND  
CALIFORNIA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS





## 7. Owner Occupied Dwellings by Census Tracts

The per cent of owner occupied dwelling units in each census tract emphasizes the correlation between absentee ownership and sub-standard condition of structure. The illustration indicates the per cent of all occupied dwelling units which are either occupied by the owner or from which the owner is only temporarily absent. The statistics do not include vacant units or those offered for sale.

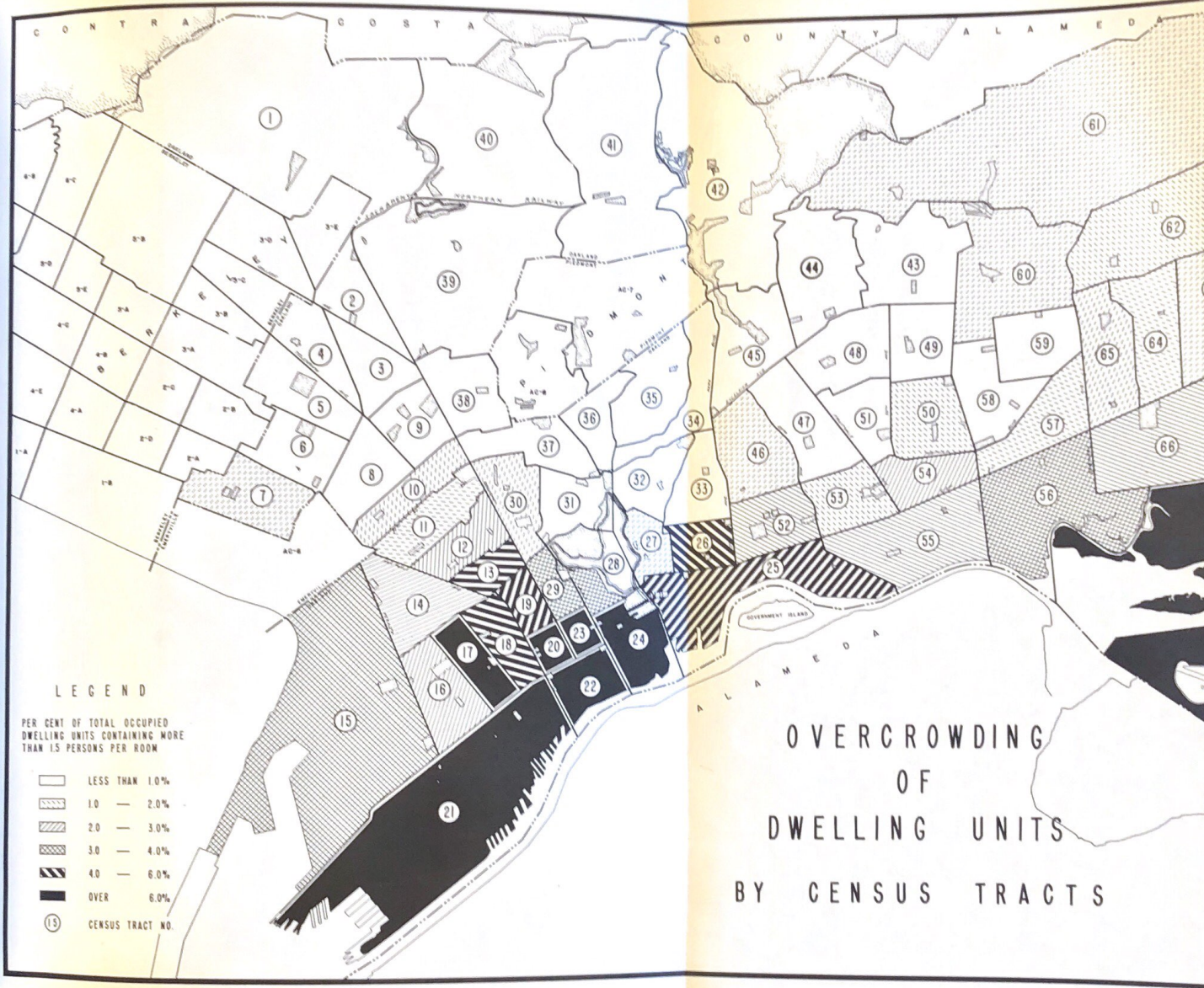
A comparison of this map with that showing the need of major repairs will reveal the fact that when owners move out of blighted areas to other more desirable districts, neglect of the older rental units becomes inevitable. The attitude of the absentee owner then becomes one of realizing the maximum return irrespective of the housing conditions and their effect on the people forced to occupy these dwellings.

The data were selected from the 1940 Housing Census. From the analysis of the changes that have taken place since that time it is estimated that these statistics are uniformly low. There have been a considerable number of forced and voluntary sales where tenants became owners not through choice but because of the necessity of having shelter at any cost.

The per cent of owner occupancy is also an indication of the degree of difficulty in acquiring sites for redevelopment. The higher the percentage of owner occupancy, the greater the degree of difficulty in acquiring sites for project development. This was found true during the time of acquisition of land and improvements for low rent housing. The relative difference in dollar value plus difficulty of acquiring new homes for persons who might be displaced by redevelopment projects introduces one of the most serious problems in redevelopment.

Here again the concentration of the lowest percentage of owner occupancy occurs in the immediate vicinity of the Central Business District, and an increasing percentage of owner occupancy occurs as the distance from downtown increases. Owner occupancy within certain income groups should be stimulated. In other income groups rental occupancy should be fostered. In any city the size of Oakland there is room for both types of occupancy. There is also a responsibility for the provision of rental housing in public housing projects designed to serve the lowest income brackets. The per cent of owner occupancy varies from decade to decade and also shows a definite decline as the city increases in size. The statistics of other larger cities verify such a conclusion. Oakland can probably look forward to an increase in the percentage of owner occupancy in 1950 and a decline in percentage in the succeeding years.







8. Overcrowding of Dwelling Units by Census Tracts

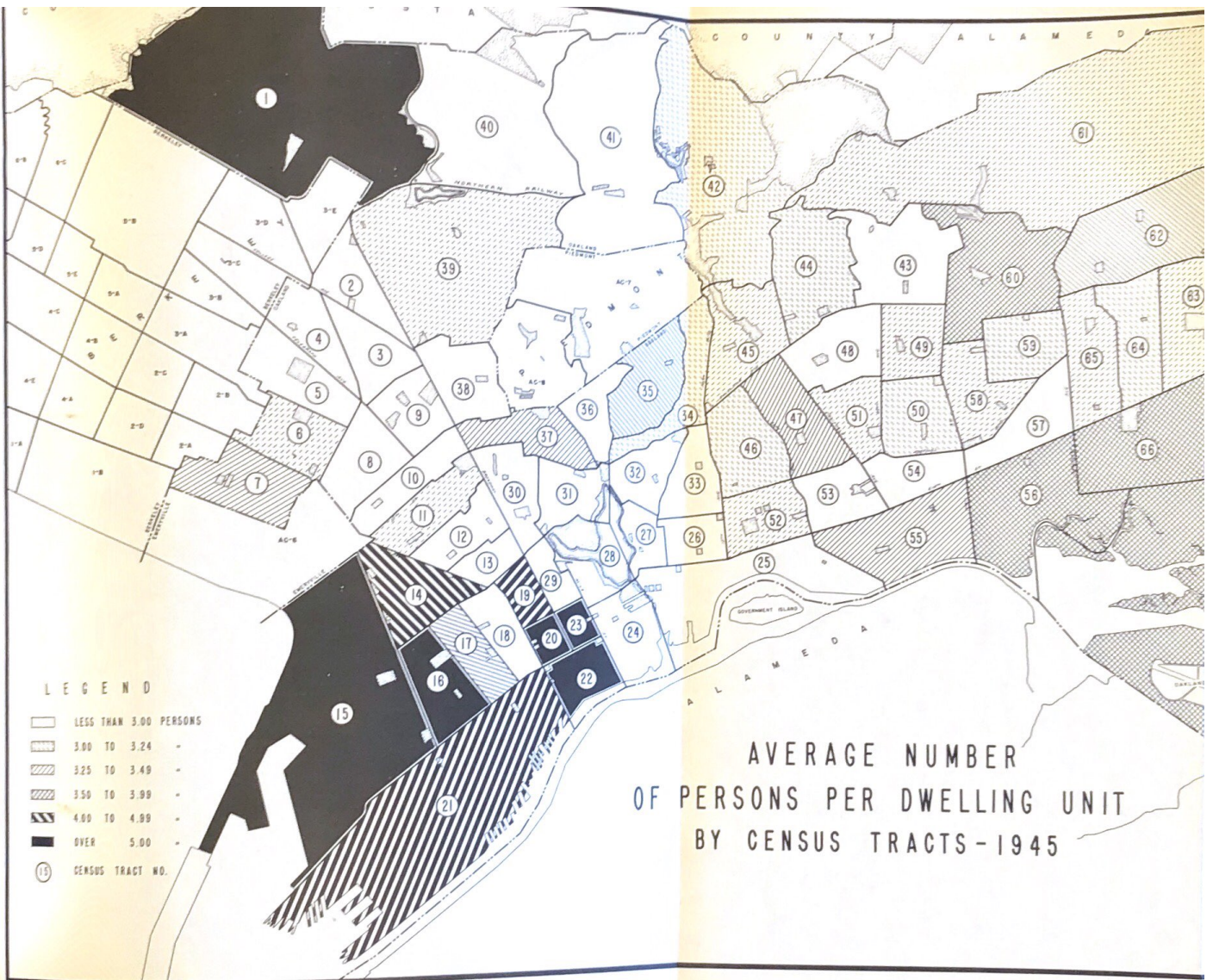
One of the criteria which are indicative of conditions inimical to the public health and welfare is the overcrowding of dwelling units. The illustration presented herewith indicates the extent of overcrowding. Where more than 1.5 persons live in one room, overcrowding is said to exist. It must be stated that there are individual instances of two-person families occupying single-room apartments where such occupancy would not constitute unhealthy overcrowding.

The data presented were taken from the 1940 Housing Census. Overcrowding is much more intense today because of the influx of population and the restricted number of new dwelling units which have been created by new construction or renovations since 1940. The population has increased approximately 125,000 over the 302,163 of 1940, while only 14,283 new dwelling units have been constructed. An additional factor which has increased overcrowding is the higher cost of living. This has reduced income available for housing and without question has resulted in further doubling up. The return of veterans has also resulted in more intensive use of existing facilities.

The 10 close-in census tracts within which housing is a desirable future use show greater overcrowding than the average conditions for the city. Within these census tracts the over-all population increased from 45,361 to 57,821 persons. The most substantial increase occurred within Census Tract Number 16.

Both of the census tracts in West Oakland potentially desirable for future industrial use indicate a substantial increase in population with consequent overcrowding. These are census tracts Numbers 15 and 16 west of Peralta and south of 7th Street. With the production of low rental housing units this overcrowding could be reduced. Most of the residents of this section are low-income families, eligible for accommodations in public projects. Gradually Census Tracts 15 and 16 could be cleared of housing, and the land could be put to its best use. As has been pointed out, this process would not create density problems in other parts of the city because most of Oakland still is far from overcrowded.





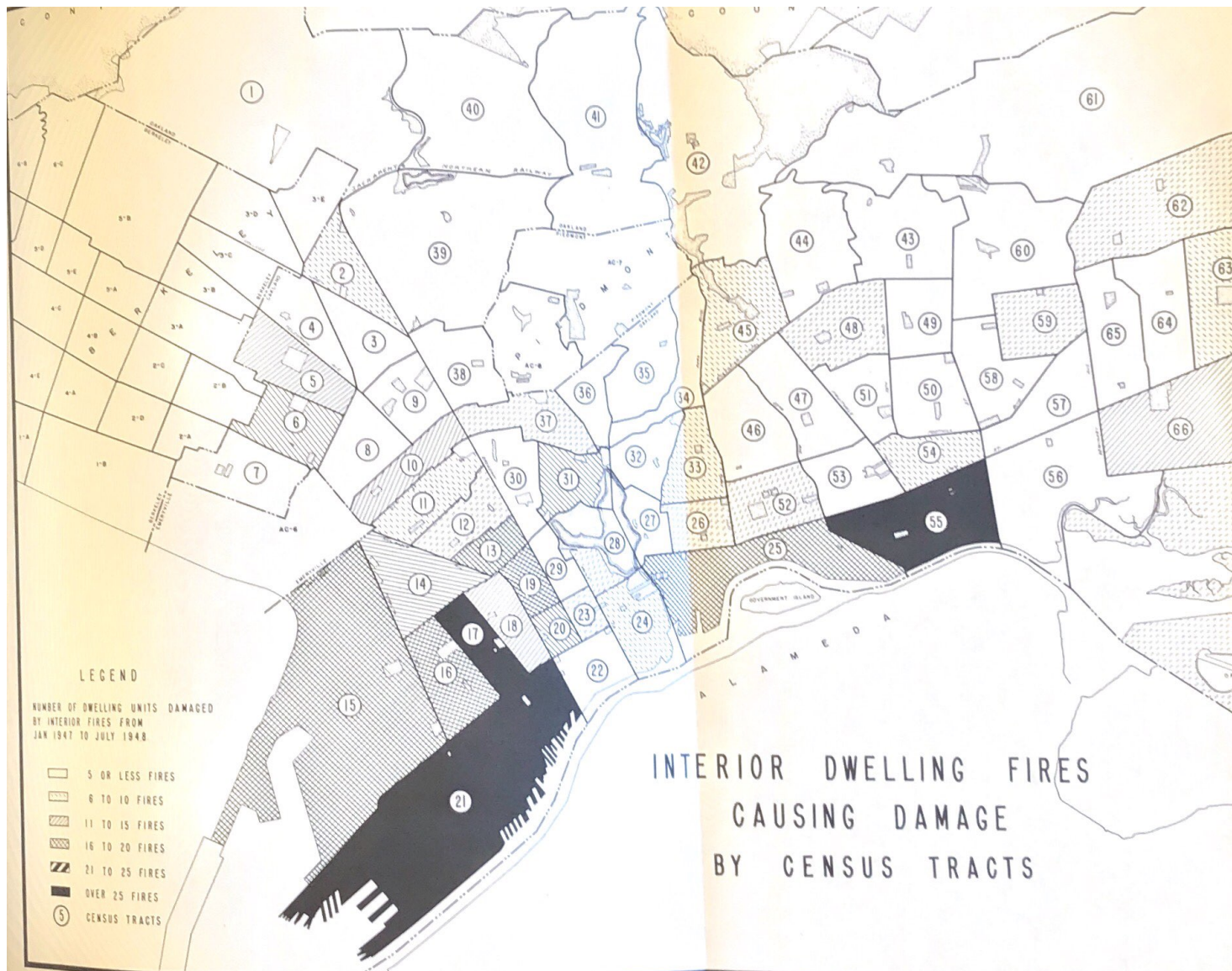


9. Average Number of Persons per Dwelling Unit, 1945, by Census Tracts

The average number of persons per dwelling unit as shown for the 72 census tracts in the Special Census of 1945 is indicated graphically in the accompanying illustration. This information supplements the data shown in "Overcrowding by Dwelling Units." Generally where there are more than 1.5 persons per room and a high average number of occupants per dwelling unit, an exceptionally undesirable situation exists. However, the latter condition standing alone does not necessarily indicate blight.

Since 1945 the city has continued its rapid growth. On the basis of experience between 1940 and 1945, it is expected that this growth will be reflected in a sharply increased number of persons per dwelling unit in West Oakland and a few other areas due to doubling up. However, in most sections no substantial change is anticipated.

Statistics on the average number of persons per dwelling unit are significant in planning for redevelopment. From these data it probably can validly be concluded that large families and doubling up are common among the occupants of blighted districts. Accommodations of sufficient size should be provided to rehouse these families.





10. Interior Dwelling Fires by Census Tracts

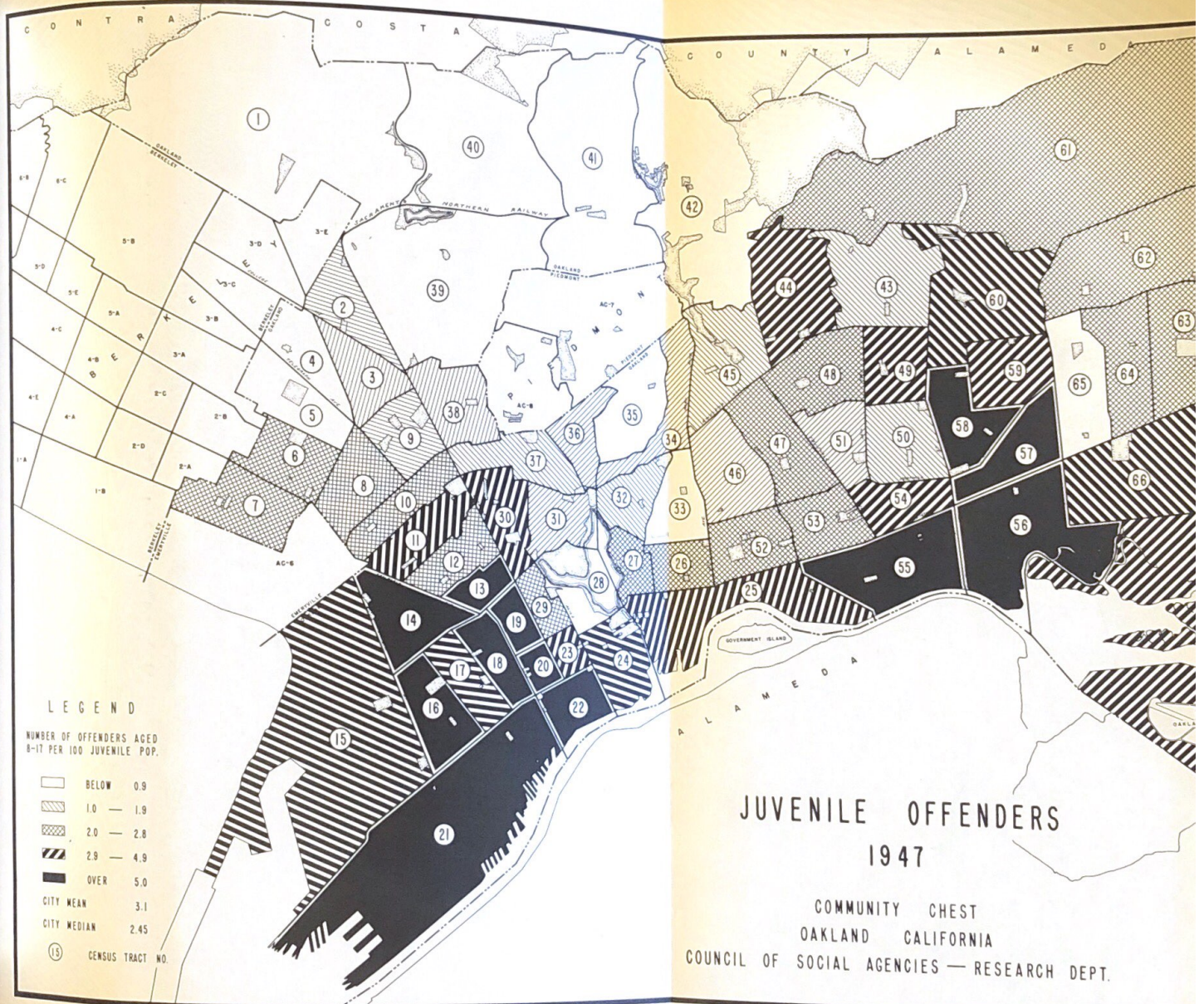
The following map shows the number of fires which caused property damage and which occurred in residential structures from January 1947 to July 1948. It does not indicate damage, cause of fire, or responses of fire equipment to false alarms or non-residential fires. The full cost of fire in terms of property damage and lives lost, in terms of higher insurance and fire protection costs, can only be implied in a study of this kind.

The data were taken from records of the Oakland Fire Department. Since a period of only eighteen months was studied, the possibility of chance variations is moderately great. However, the uniformly high incidence of fires throughout the blighted census tracts establishes a pattern scarcely attributable to chance.

The validity of this conclusion is confirmed by the results of a comprehensive study of residential fires in Oakland made by the Bureau of Public Administration of the University of California ("Fire Losses and Fire Risks"). The study, covering a period from 1935 to 1940, reveals very strong positive correlation between fire probabilities and age of structure. Other factors which showed a positive relationship to fires were overcrowding and need for major repairs. Average monthly rent also was positively correlated, although this would appear to be a less reliable index.

From this analysis it is apparent that no single factor is responsible for the high incidence of fires in the blighted areas. Hence, no simple solution for this needless destruction can be offered. Only a solution which deals at once with all of the multiple causes of fires, and of blight, can create safer and more satisfactory places to live.







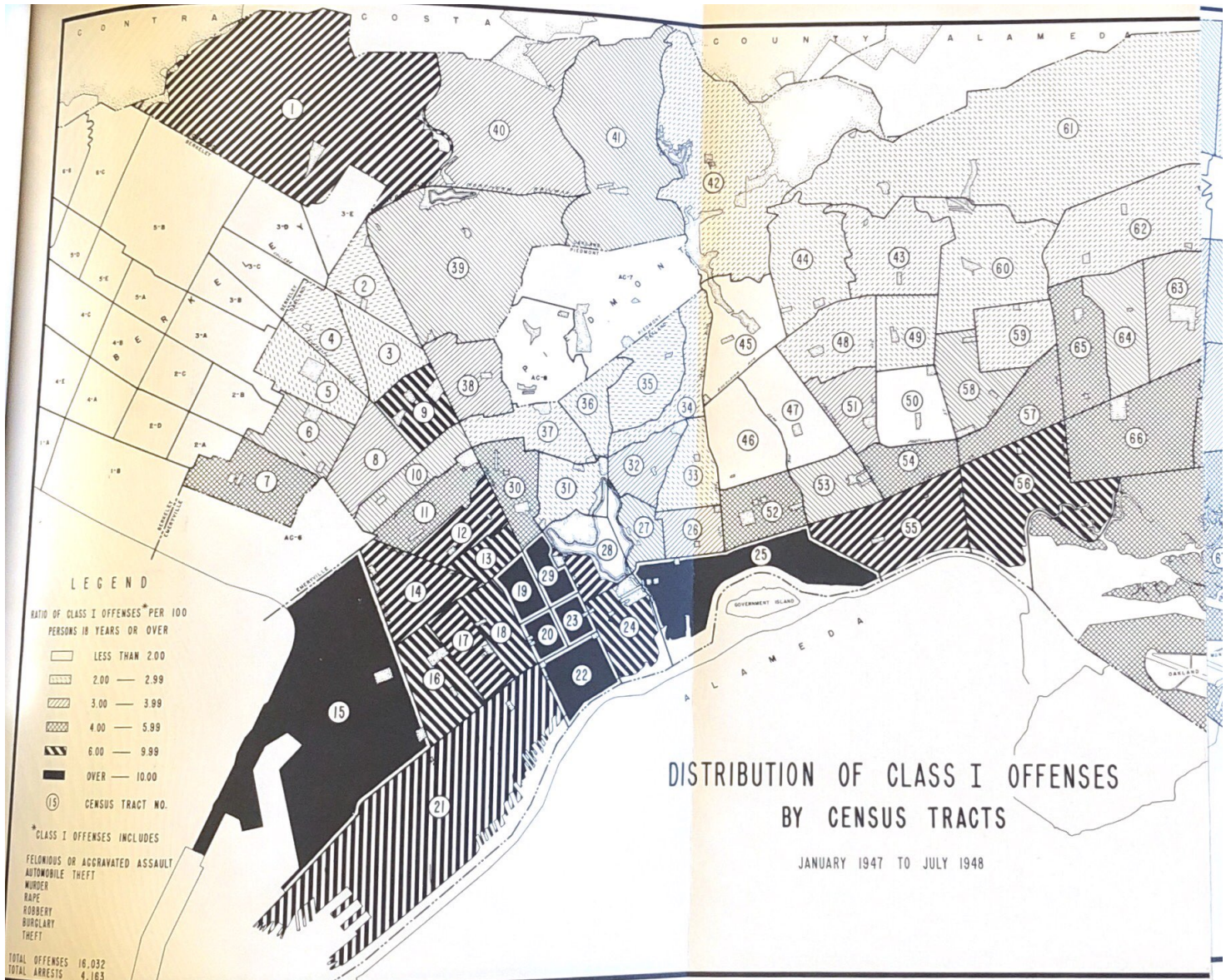
11. Juvenile Offenders by Census Tracts, 1947

The accompanying map indicates the ratio of juvenile offenders per 100 children from the ages of 10 through 17, by census tracts. These juveniles are assigned to census tracts according to place of residence. The study does not show the total number of offenses committed or the extent of recidivism. Neither does it show the breakdown by sex, nor the census tract in which the offense was committed. The data used were compiled for 1947 by the Research Department of the Oakland Council of Social Agencies. Since juvenile delinquency rates change from year to year, some of the rates shown for 1947 may not reflect today's conditions. Yet the fact remains that the delinquency rate in the worst areas remains high year after year. The rapid turnover of residents experienced in most of the problem areas suggests that this environment is like an infectious disease which affects new and old residents alike.

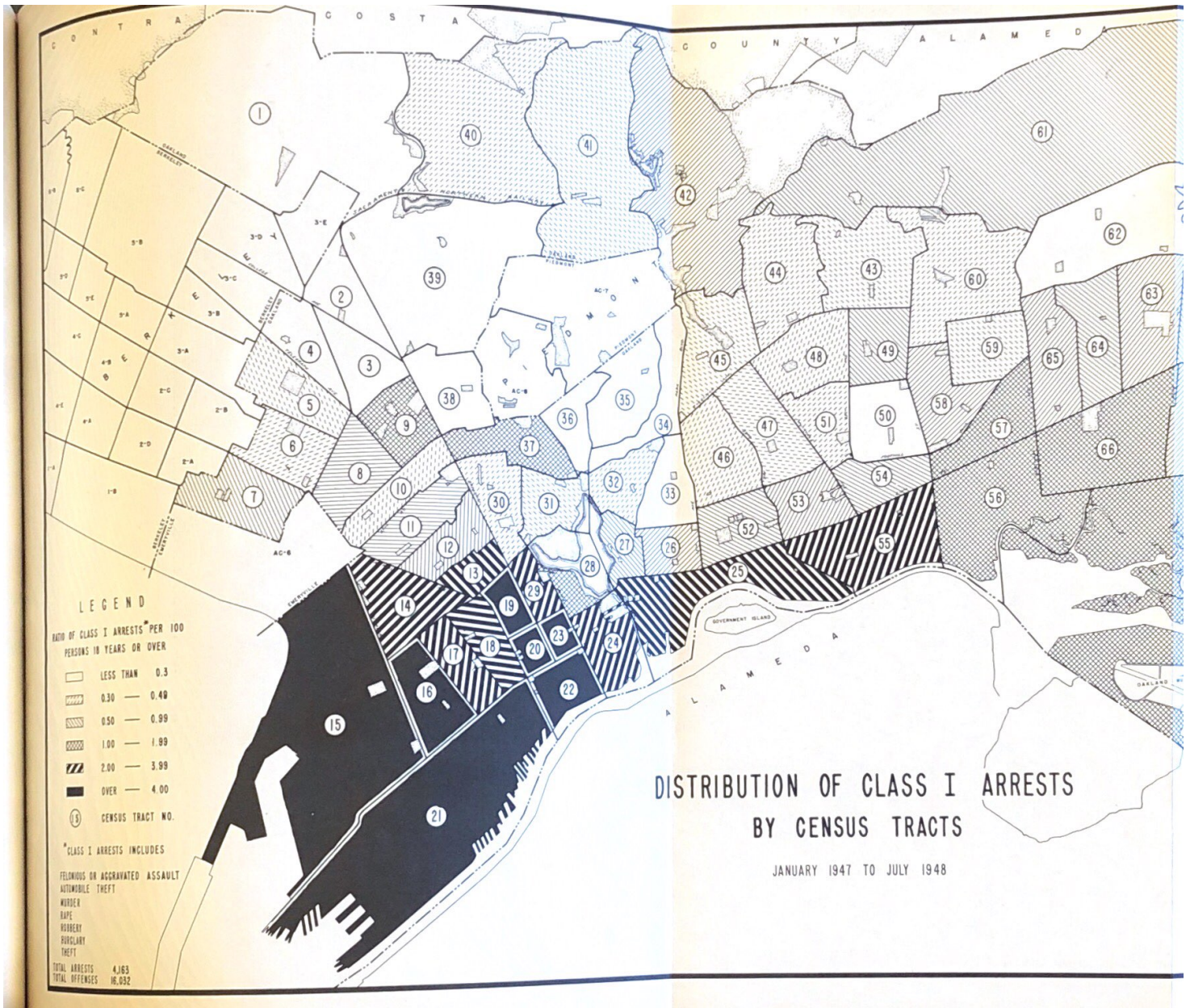
The age limits 10 through 17 are used here because so few offenses are committed by children under 10 that any percentage figures based on the total number of children would be misleading. There are doubtless many juvenile offenders whose offenses are either undetected or unreported.

There is no simple explanation of this pattern of delinquency. It is not caused solely by substandard housing, inadequate recreation facilities, or other physical conditions. Rather it is a situation which, like blight itself, results from a wide variety of factors. No one alone could create the problem, but all taken together cause conditions that must be corrected in the interest of a healthy urban society.













12-13. Distribution of Class I Offenses and Arrests by Census Tracts

The distribution of Class I offenses and arrests by census tracts is shown on the accompanying maps. These were prepared to show the relationship between blight and distribution of Class I offenses and arrests.

One of these maps shows the number of major crimes committed, the other the number of arrests made. These are classified according to the census tract in which the offense occurs or the arrest takes place. The figures shown are the ratios of arrests or offenses per 100 adults (18 years or older) as calculated from the 1945 census.

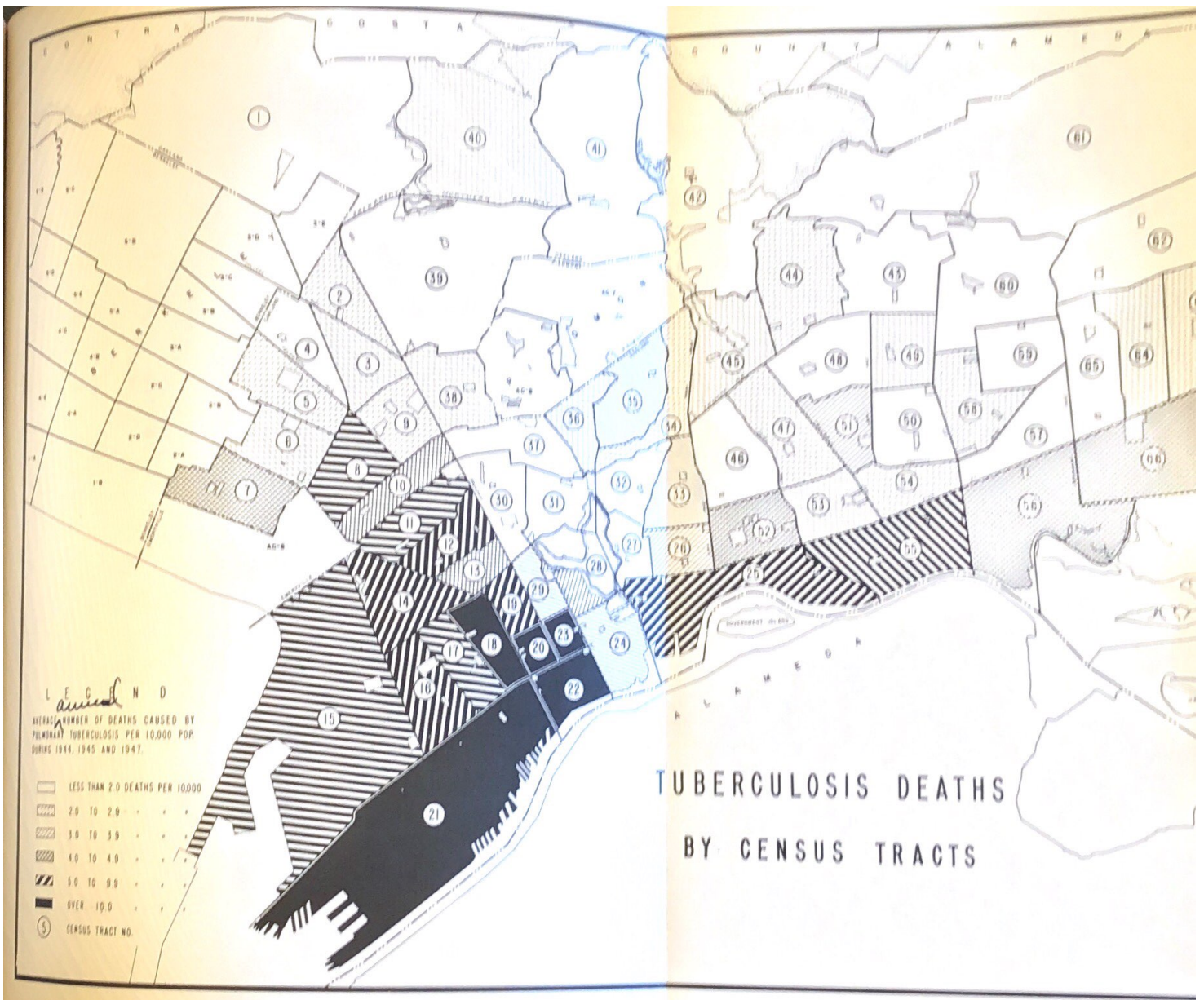
The statistics do not include all types of criminal offenses or arrests but merely those in Class I. Class I offenses include felonious or aggravated assault, auto theft, murder, rape, robbery, burglary, and theft. Class II and III offenses include misdemeanors and less aggravated felonies not necessarily committed by confirmed criminals.

The data were provided by the Statistical Division of the Oakland Police Department and cover a period of 18 months from January 1947 through June 1948.

The fact that offenses and arrests are not adjusted for the census tract residence of the offender or the person arrested introduces another source of possible error. In the Central District, where many people congregate, there is apt to be a great deal of crime not attributable to residents. Conversely, in other districts where few criminals reside there may be extensive criminal operations. This fact probably accounts for the high offense rate in Census Tract Number 1. ✓

The maps show the high crime rates and high police protection costs in areas of urban blight.







14. Tuberculosis Deaths by Census Tracts

That the effects of urban blight are not limited to observable environmental factors is well known to city health officers. The physical environment, in terms of housing, bathing facilities, overcrowding, and adequate light and air, all have a profound effect on the health of the city's inhabitants. These statistics indicate the extent to which tuberculosis deaths tend to occur in areas of blight.

No claim is made that there is a direct relationship between tuberculosis and any single environmental factor. Yet the data show unmistakably that there is a relationship between ill health and the total environment. It may not be possible to cure the disease overnight, yet improvement of the areas where disease strikes hardest is an essential first step toward the control of tuberculosis.

The statistics presented here are the average of the number of deaths per year per 10,000 population caused by pulmonary tuberculosis, by census tracts. The data for the years 1944, 1945, and 1947 were supplied by the Oakland Health Department and the population base used was the 1945 census.

Of the 13 census tracts with highest death rates, 12 are concentrated in and about the Central Business District. The thirteenth is Census Tract 55, west of High Street between East 14th Street and the Estuary. Of the 13, nine census tracts have a death rate in excess of three times the city's average of 2.6 per 10,000 persons. One of the tracts (Number 20) had in excess of 10 times the city's average.







15. Infant Mortality by Census Tracts

The illustration shows the number of deaths of infants under the age of one year in 1945. The figures include not only lives unavoidably lost because of immature development, but also deaths caused by infectious diseases. Deaths, particularly in the latter group, often are attributable to environmental conditions.

The chief causes of infant death are gastro-intestinal diseases, such as diarrhea and enteritis, and pulmonary diseases, mainly whooping cough and pneumonia. Both of these classes of disease have a definite relation to conditions typical of low socio-economic status. Diarrhea is largely caused by improper refrigeration and food preparation. Pulmonary diseases are contracted and spread where there is overcrowding and inadequate light and air.

Just as in the foregoing illustrations, here again we have a concentration of socially wasteful and dangerous conditions in a single area. Eight of the ten census tracts nearest the downtown area are among the worst third of the census tracts in the city in terms of infant mortality.

Just as in the case of tuberculosis, it cannot be said that good housing alone is the complete answer to the problem. However, it can be validly concluded that provision of adequate housing coupled with a sound follow-up program of dietary and health education on a community-wide basis would materially reduce the infant mortality rate.



SOURCES:  
U. S. CENSUS 1940, 1949  
COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES  
OAKLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT  
OAKLAND HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
OAKLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

# INCIDENCE OF CHARACTERISTICS OF BLIGHT BY CENSUS TRACTS

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

OAKLAND

CALIFORNIA

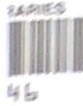
1949

CENSUS TRACT NUMBER	DENSITY OF POPULATION	OVER-AGE DWELLING UNITS	INADEQUATE BATH FACILITIES	DWELLINGS IN NEED OF MAJOR REPAIR	MEAN CONTRACT MONTHLY RENTAL	OWNER OCCUPIED DWELLING UNITS	OVERCROWDING OF DWELLING UNITS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER DWELLING UNIT	INTERIOR DWELLING FIRES CAUSING DAMAGE	JUVENILE OFFENDERS	DISTRIBUTION OF CLASS I OFFENSES	DISTRIBUTION OF CLASS II ARRESTS	TUBERCULOSIS DEATHS	INFANT MORTALITY	CENSUS TRACT NUMBER
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## LEGEND

- CENSUS TRACTS WITH GREATEST CONCENTRATION OF BLIGHT (RANKING 1<sup>ST</sup> TO 12<sup>TH</sup>)
- CENSUS TRACTS WITH SECOND GREATEST CONCENTRATION OF BLIGHT (RANKING 13<sup>TH</sup> TO 24<sup>TH</sup>)
- CENSUS TRACTS WITH THIRD GREATEST CONCENTRATION OF BLIGHT (RANKING 25<sup>TH</sup> TO 36<sup>TH</sup>)
- CENSUS TRACTS ABOVE AVERAGE (RANKING 37<sup>TH</sup> TO 72<sup>ND</sup>)





16. Summary of Blight Characteristics

The accompanying chart summarizes the material presented in the preceding 15 sections, in which individual characteristics of blight were analyzed. From these maps and the statistical analyses on which they are based it is simple to find which census tracts contain the highest percentage of old houses, the worst juvenile delinquency problem, and other isolated indications of economic and social dislocation.

But the real test of blight is not the scattered occurrence of a few of these symptoms. Many otherwise sound and livable neighborhoods are deficient in a few respects, yet they cannot be classified as blighted. In other instances, a scattering of a number of blight symptoms of varying intensity may occur in a single census tract. These generally are borderline cases, not quite blighted but caught in the slow process which leads to ultimate blight. An immediate vigorous program of rehabilitation and elimination of non-conforming uses can restore these areas to full social and economic usefulness. Otherwise, they will eventually become burdens to the entire city.

Blight is not a condition which can be directly observed or defined. It is a complicated pattern caused by many related conditions and exhibiting interdependent symptoms. If a neighborhood is jerry-built and poorly laid out, people who can afford to, eventually move away. Rents decrease and, as a consequence, dwellings are converted for more intense occupancy to compensate for the rent loss. Crowding and poverty lead to tuberculosis and other diseases. The death rate climbs. Lack of yards and parks forces children into streets in order to find play spaces. Business, industry, and dilapidated residences are indiscriminately mixed. Family unity is disrupted. The step from there to juvenile delinquency is short; shorter still is the second step into crime. And who can put his finger on a single cause for all this degradation? There is no single cause. The interaction of a great many forces produces blight. Therefore, the acid test of blight is to find where most or all of these traits occur simultaneously.

The accompanying chart unmistakably illustrates the correctness of this conclusion. From Census Tract 11 through Census Tract 29 there is a nearly unbroken band of black, representing a concentration of the most deleterious conditions in Oakland. This area lies in the heart of the city. It covers all of West Oakland, all of the Central Business District, and all area directly southeast of the business district as far as 14th Avenue.





Along the Estuary at the foot of High Street lies another, smaller blighted area. This former residential district has been bisected by the freeway and thoroughly penetrated by industries seeking the advantages of a site on the Estuary and near rail transportation. Further industrial development on this site probably will take place, gradually eliminating residential use. Because of its location and character, a more detailed study of the area for redevelopment as an industrial site is in order.

Judgment must be reserved on the condition of Census Tracts 66, 67, and 68 until the results of the 1950 census become available. Recent residential building expansion in the Brookfield Village neighborhood has so improved the character of the area that reliable conclusions cannot be drawn from the 1940 census data.

No such favorable changes have occurred in the heart of the city. Permanent residential construction has been at a standstill since 1930, while the population has rapidly increased. The poor housing and sanitary conditions which, as this report shows, existed in 1940 have been greatly intensified during the past decade. Whatever change the 1950 census may reveal about Census Tracts 11 through 29 undoubtedly will be for the worse.



LEGEND

-  LOT SUBDIVISION
-  PARKS, SCHOOLS, PLAYGROUNDS & OPEN AREAS
-  PUBLIC HOUSING

# LAND SUBDIVISION

WEST OAKLAND  
NEIGHBORHOOD

CITY PLANNING  
COMMISSION

OAKLAND CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER, 1948



B. West Oakland Neighborhood

The city-wide studies presented in the preceding section indicate that the main concentrations of symptoms of blight occur on the fringes of the Central Business District and in the West Oakland and East of the Lake neighborhoods. Most of the land surrounding the commercial core is appropriately zoned for business and light industrial uses. The remaining areas are chiefly zoned for housing and appear to be urgently in need of rehabilitation. However, before concluding that they are ripe for redevelopment, these districts should be scrutinized from several additional points of view.

A great deal of pertinent information can be gained from detailed surveys of land subdivision, street patterns, land use, and the age and condition of individual structures. Before any sound redevelopment program can be formulated, the characteristics of the population to be housed must be known. A check of existing and projected schools, community buildings, permanent housing projects, and open spaces will indicate the possibilities of particular areas for rehabilitation.

The West Oakland neighborhood, as the term is used in this report, includes the area bounded by Wood, 3rd, Market, 22nd, Grove, Brockhurst, and 34th Streets. As indicated on the map, the residential land is subdivided into small lots, many with frontages as restricted as 25 feet. Although the typical side yard is extremely narrow, not many buildings fall below minimum standards for light and air because few structures are taller than two stories and front and rear yards are provided on practically all lots. However, the yards generally are not large enough to be suitable for recreation or other types of outdoor living. As a result, junk and refuse have been allowed to accumulate in many of them, and some of them have become breeding grounds of disease.

The subdivision of land into small lots and diverse ownerships makes it practically impossible for a private agency to accomplish the rehabilitation of the area without public aid. To overcome the difficulty of land assembly, the power of eminent domain is necessary.

The street pattern, a gridiron traversed by several diagonal arteries, cuts the neighborhood into small blocks. Approximately 35 per cent of the area is devoted to streets. The gridiron pattern and the excessive amount of street space make it possible for a great deal of high-speed traffic to penetrate residential sectors. All the traffic between the Central Business District and San Francisco funnels through West Oakland. Noise and dangerous traffic conditions result. Ideally, through-traffic should be routed around residential segments of the neighborhood on major arteries designed



to handle heavy flows. The lack of any such channeling in West Oakland adds to the complexity of the city's over-all traffic problem.

The land use map reveals an undesirable intermingling of different types of use in the West Oakland neighborhood. (The map is not reproduced here; a display map is available.) The proximity of industrial plants and commercial establishments to residences creates hazards to safety, health, and morals, as well as being objectionable from an aesthetic viewpoint. In the long run, a pattern of mixed uses also tends to depress property values.

The need for open space and community recreation facilities is greatest in areas of high population density and low average family income. In West Oakland only 1.2 acres per 1,000 residents are devoted to parks, playgrounds, and school sites. A city-wide average of 10 acres per 1,000 population is recommended by the American Public Health Association's Committee on the Hygiene of Housing. Authorities on recreation suggest five acres as the minimum size for an elementary school playground, yet none of the elementary schools in West Oakland has a site of more than three acres. Junior and senior high school facilities likewise are inadequate. The area standards are 15 and 25 acres respectively. It is clear that the layout of the neighborhood falls far short of minimum open space standards.

The maps in the preceding section show general conditions regarding age and condition of dwellings by census tracts. House-by-house information on the age of units is available from the 1938 Real Property Survey. These data reveal that 35 per cent of the residential structures in West Oakland are 50 years old or older and definitely can be classed as over-age. An additional 42 per cent were built between 30 and 49 years ago. Most of these are obsolete or about to become so.

Data on the number of dwelling units needing major repairs and the number lacking private baths is available on a block-by-block basis in the U. S. Housing Census. In West Oakland an average of 29 per cent of the housing in each block needs major repairs, and an average of 22 per cent of the units in each block has no private bath. Before the final planning stage is reached, it may be necessary to make a house-by-house survey to gain detailed information on these subjects.

Despite the prevalence of blight, West Oakland has a number of existing features which make it potentially a desirable residential neighborhood. Two permanent low-rent housing projects are located there--Peralta Villa, on a site bounded by 8th, 12th, Union, and Cypress Streets, and Campbell Village, on a site bounded by 8th,



10th, Campbell, and Willow Streets. These projects consist of modern, well-constructed row housing units surrounded by adequate open space and proximate to schools. They might well form the nuclei of future redeveloped neighborhoods.

Several existing public buildings and open spaces are appropriate for community use. De Fremery Park occupies 9.5 acres close to the center of West Oakland. A swimming pool has just been constructed there, and the balance of the recreational area is scheduled for early renovation. A satisfactory community house is located in the park. The entire area with its improvements would make an ideal recreation center for a residential neighborhood. It has been proposed that the Alameda County Juvenile Detention Home, immediately adjacent to De Fremery Park, be converted to a community health center when the new detention home is constructed.

The school department has an extensive program calling for the construction of some new buildings, the modernization of others, and the enlargement of play areas in West Oakland. McClymonds High School is to be moved to a new building on the old high school site at 26th and Myrtle Streets, and the area has been enlarged by closing Filbert Street. The present McClymonds High School building is scheduled to be reconstructed for use as a junior high school with additions to the present site. The school department has recommended that Tompkins School be reconditioned and that Clawson, Durant, and Prescott Schools be completely modernized. Lafayette School, at the east boundary of the neighborhood, currently is being rebuilt, and enlargement of the site of Herbert Hoover Junior High School, just north of West Oakland, has been recommended.

In redeveloping the area, the excess streets can be closed and the land devoted to more appropriate uses. A logical new circulation pattern can be worked out which will route high-speed traffic around each section of the neighborhood served by an elementary school. For example, north and south through-traffic could be confined to Cypress, Peralta, and Market Streets and east and west through-traffic to 22nd, 14th, and 7th Streets.

One of the prime advantages of West Oakland as a residential neighborhood is its accessibility to both the Central Business and the Industrial Districts. Many of the residents live within walking distance of their places of employment. Not only does this mean convenience and economy for the people who live in the area, but also a proportionate reduction in the intensity of the city's transit and traffic problems. Where mass transit is required, both local and inter-urban service is readily available in West Oakland. Local motor coach lines run on 7th, 12th, 14th, 22nd, Poplar, Adeline, and Market Streets. The "A" and "B" trains run on 12th

and 22nd Streets, respectively, and provide the neighborhood with direct connections with San Francisco and with the Havenscourt and Trestle Glen districts east of Lake Merritt.

In order to illustrate the conditions outlined above, five display maps were prepared. One of these, Land Subdivision, accompanies this section. The others include:

1. Present Land Use.
2. Age of Dwelling Structures.
3. Public Property.
4. Census Tract Information.

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LEGEND

- ST. BOUNDARY
- PARK, SCHOOL, PLAYGROUND & OPEN SPACE
- PUBLIC HIGHWAY

# LAND SUBDIVISION

EAST OF THE LAKE  
NEIGHBORHOOD

CITY PLANNING  
COMMISSION

OAKLAND CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER, 1948



C. East of the Lake Neighborhood

In the district bounded by Alice Street, 14th Avenue, 20th Street, and the Estuary, known as the East of the Lake neighborhood, land has been subdivided somewhat more rationally than in West Oakland. Lot sizes are considerably larger, and front, side, and rear yards are more generous. As a result, the property around more of the houses is used for gardens and for outdoor living. None of these generalizations apply to Census Tract 24 in the southwestern sector of the district. There lot sizes and coverage are similar to conditions in West Oakland.

Diverse ownerships in the East of the Lake neighborhood make the assembly of tracts of land large enough for redevelopment practically impossible as far as private agencies are concerned.

The street pattern is a gridiron chopping the neighborhood into small square blocks, considerably smaller than those in West Oakland. Approximately 30 per cent of the total area is devoted to streets. Although part of the area is hilly, the topography was not taken into account in laying out the street pattern. The north-south streets within the neighborhood carry relatively light through-traffic loads because of the hills, but 12th Street, 14th Street, and Foothill Boulevard, running east and west, are heavy through-traffic arteries and are extremely congested at peak hours. The completion of the Eastshore Freeway will relieve this situation for a short period of time, but it is anticipated that eventually increased traffic will create a situation closely paralleling the present one. Continual noise and danger of accidents are the inevitable concomitants of the heavy traffic flow.

Different land uses are not as badly mixed in the East of the Lake neighborhood as they are in West Oakland. Industry is concentrated on sites close to the Estuary; commercial uses generally are confined to ribbon developments along the principal traffic arteries. From the standpoint of efficient land use, the ribbon pattern is only slightly less objectionable than random scattering of commercial establishments.

In the area bounded by 14th-19th Streets, Alice Street, and the Lake, conditions differ from those in most segments of the neighborhood. Lot sizes are considerably more generous. Much of the property is occupied by large, old-fashioned homes with considerable open space around them. Most of these are now used as multiple dwellings. There also are a number of apartment houses in this section, most of them over 30 years old but in good condition. Commercial land uses are relatively few, and there are no industrial uses. Because the Lake constitutes a barrier on the north and east, little through traffic penetrates the area.



Census Tract 24, bounded by Alice and Fallon Streets, 12th Street and the Estuary, also departs from the typical pattern of the neighborhood. Except in the industrial sector to the south, residential and commercial uses are mixed indiscriminately. On the credit side, this tract has direct access to a generous amount of open space. Madison Square is the only park actually located within the area, but it is flanked on the west by Lincoln and Harrison Squares, on the east by Peralta Park, and on the north by the future Civic Center.

In the entire East of the Lake neighborhood there is an average of 3.5 acres of public open space per 1,000 residents. This figure represents a more desirable situation than exists in West Oakland but still falls far short of the optimum standard of 10 acres per 1,000 population. The statistics do not tell the complete story in the East of the Lake case. Of the total of 65.5 acres of open space in the neighborhood, 51.1 acres are concentrated in the extensive park development around Lake Merritt. There are only two public squares and four small school sites in the rest of the neighborhood. Such an unbalanced distribution of open space is undesirable because most of the available area is more than one-quarter mile distant from residences east of 5th Avenue and more than one-half mile from residences east of 8th Avenue. The situation is ameliorated to some extent by the fact that the 12-acre San Antonio Park is located only one block east of the neighborhood boundary.

The 1938 Real Property Survey gives the age of individual structures in the East of the Lake district. According to this source, 25 per cent of the residences were built before 1900 and can be classified as over-age. An additional 40 per cent are between 30 and 49 years old. Most of these also are obsolete or are about to become so.

The U. S. Housing Census provides block-by-block data on the number of dwelling units in need of major repairs and the number lacking private baths. On the average, in the East of the Lake neighborhood, 18 per cent of the housing on each block needs major repairs and 16 per cent of the units have no private bath. It may be necessary to make a house-by-house survey to gain detailed and completely up-to-date information on these conditions prior to the final planning stage.

Many existing and projected public improvements give promise that redevelopment would transform the East of the Lake neighborhood into one of the most desirable residential districts in the city. The area is wrapped around the southern end of the Lake with its surrounding parks and public buildings. Generally considered Oakland's major aesthetic asset, the Lake Merritt development probably will serve to stabilize property values in the neighborhood



for many years to come. An important addition will be the new Civic Center which, when completed, will occupy a 95-acre site at the core of the area.

The administrative buildings, scheduled to be constructed first, will be grouped around a handsome, landscaped mall located approximately on the boundary between Census Tracts 24 and 28. The recreational and cultural groups also will be surrounded by park areas, increasing the total amount of open space in the neighborhood.

In cataloging the existing assets of the East of the Lake district, the small squares and school playgrounds and San Antonio Park, just beyond its bounds, should be included. The school department's program does not call for any expansion of sites within the area. A new building for the Central Trade School now is under construction, and the department has recommended that the Franklin School be rebuilt. The Bella Vista School is scheduled to be moved to a slightly larger site outside the neighborhood.

In the course of redevelopment a considerable number of streets could be closed and others re-routed without interfering unduly with the flow of through traffic. Particularly in the hilly areas, modification of the gridiron pattern would be a logical change.

The neighborhood is well served by mass transit facilities. The "A" rail line running on 12th and East 14th Streets provides direct connections with San Francisco. Motor coach lines, spaced at reasonable intervals, supply local service on 10th and 14th Streets and Foothill Boulevard, running east and west, and on 5th and 8th Avenues running north and south.

Perhaps the major advantage of the East of the Lake neighborhood is the fact that it is easily accessible from the Central Business District. Much of the area is within walking distance of the retail shopping and financial sectors and will be immediately adjacent to the new Civic Center. Residential sites which offer such convenience combined with proximity to an outstanding recreational and aesthetic attraction such as Lake Merritt are unusual in American cities.

A similar series of five maps was prepared for the East of the Lake neighborhood area. They include:

1. Present Land Use.
2. Land Subdivision.
3. Age of Dwelling Structures.
4. Public Property.
5. Census Tract Information.



D. Vacant Property and the Housing Situation

In devising a redevelopment program, it is necessary not only to discover what areas are in need of rehabilitation, but also to determine the city's present and future requirements for various types of land uses. This information is fundamental to sound decisions on the replanning of blighted areas. Under the Community Redevelopment Act a number of alternatives are possible. Section 14 of the Act defines redevelopment as "the planning, development, re-planning, redesign, clearance, reconstruction or rehabilitation, or any combination of these, of a redevelopment area or part thereof, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial or public structures or spaces as may be appropriate or necessary."

At present the city faces pressing shortages of land appropriate for industrial and residential uses. Sufficient area is available for commercial establishments, although much of it is not effectively used.

Reference to the accompanying map shows that the only vacant potential industrial sites are located on San Leandro Bay and adjacent to the airport. Much of this land will have to be filled before it can be used for building. Situated close to railroad and port facilities, the area between the Eastshore Freeway and the Estuary and between Cypress Street and the Army Base could be used for industry if it were not cut up into such small parcels. Land prices are comparatively high, and it is extremely difficult to assemble areas large enough for industrial sites. Under the Redevelopment Act it would be possible to acquire and clear suitable areas and sell or lease them to private industry.

As indicated on the map, almost all the raw land adaptable to residential sites is located in outlying hill areas where building costs are high. The high cost of providing utilities and streets in these sections also is reflected in the total cost of dwellings. It is clear that most of the available vacant sites are unsuitable for low rental and most medium rental housing. Distances from places of employment and the availability of public transit must be given consideration. In view of all these factors, it appears that other sites must be found if the housing needs of Oakland's population are to be satisfied.

Despite the cost of condemnation and demolition, it appears that the most economical and practical locations for new medium and low rent residences are in the present blighted neighborhoods. The public subsidy which reduces the cost to the private builder can, itself, ultimately lead to major savings to the taxpayer through more efficient use of land, higher assessed valuations, and lower total outlays for public services.





Although public attention has been focussed on the housing shortage only during the last decade, actually the building industry for many years has failed to keep pace with the city's expanding requirements. With a continuing chronic shortage of residences, it has been practically impossible to demolish hopelessly unfit, unsanitary, and unsafe structures.

Housing unquestionably is Oakland's greatest need. It is essential to determine just how great this need is before making decisions on land use in proposed redevelopment areas. Using information from the 1940 census, supplemented by data on subsequent population changes and the rate of production of new dwelling units, it is possible to approximate closely the extent of the city's housing deficit.

In 1940 the U. S. Census reported that the city contained 103,709 dwelling units, of which 14,930 were in need of major repair or unfit for use. It is not assumed that all of the units reported below standard should be written off as irreclaimable, but until such structures are returned to minimum standards of repair they must be considered inadequate. Consequently, it is fair to state that there were 88,779 dwelling units fit for use in 1940. At the same time the population was 302,163. The average family size, as estimated by the census, was 3.04 persons. Thus, a total of 99,325 families was housed in 88,779 adequate dwelling units, leaving a deficit of 10,546 adequate dwelling units at that time.

Between 1940 and 1945, 8,842 new permanent dwelling units were constructed in Oakland (not counting temporary housing which is to be removed, but including permanent low rent housing). This brought the number of suitable housing units to 97,621 in 1945. At the same time the civilian population of Oakland increased to 369,196; the number of persons per family increased, because of the rising birth rate, to 3.15; and the total number of families was 117,150, resulting in a deficit of 19,529 suitable dwelling units. Thus the shortage of suitable dwellings had increased during the five-year period by 8,983 units. At this time all dwelling units in the city were occupied (including those needing major repair or unfit for use) and, in addition, about 4,500 families were doubled up.

On the basis of dwelling unit construction rates since 1910, a future production rate was projected. It is reasonable to anticipate an average rate of 1,600 dwelling units per year during the next two decades. Solely as a basis for comparison, it was estimated that an annual maximum production of 3,000 units might be possible. This figure may be criticized as over-optimistic in view of prior construction experience. It is used here to convey an idea of the work to be done if the gap between housing and demand is to be closed.



It is predicted that between 1945 and 1950, 7,280 new units will be constructed, bringing the gross sum of suitable dwelling units in the city up to 104,901.

To make allowance for the destruction of residences through fire, condemnation, deterioration, and obsolescence, a depreciation rate of 1.5 per cent per year, or 15 per cent per decade, should be applied to the number of existing dwelling units. This is considered a reasonable estimate in view of the fact that the economic life of a wood-frame building is, at most, 50 years. On this basis alone the depreciation rate would be 20 per cent per decade without considering losses due to fire and other premature destruction. Counterbalancing this depreciation rate is the fact that high construction costs tend to encourage renovation or moving of houses which would otherwise be razed. Therefore, the 15 per cent per decade figure is believed to be conservatively realistic.

Applying the 15 per cent depreciation rate to the number of suitable dwelling units existing in 1940, it is necessary to write off 12,885 units for the 1940-50 decade. This leaves a total of 92,016 suitable units in 1950.

The 1950 population, as estimated by the Planning Commission, will be 438,000 persons. Since the average number of persons per family is estimated to be 3.2 persons, 136,900 dwelling units will be required. With 100 per cent occupancy of existing suitable units there would be a deficit of 44,884 adequate dwelling units in 1950.

At the building rate of 1,600 per year, 16,000 dwelling units will be built in the decade 1950-60. Adding this sum to the 92,016 of 1950 and allowing a depreciation rate of 15 per cent (13,810), a total of 94,206 suitable units should be available in 1960. Using the more optimistic building rate of 3,000 units per year, the total would be 108,206. The 1960 population is estimated at 493,000 with a family size of 3.1 persons. Then 159,000 units will be needed, and at the building rate of 1,600 per year the deficit will have grown to 64,794 units. At the faster rate of 3,000 per year the shortage will still have grown, but only to 50,794 units.

The same process, applied to the decade 1960-70, yields the following results:



Dwelling unit construction rate per year	1,600	3,000
Number of suitable units - 1960	94,206	108,206
Permanent new units added (1960-70)	16,000	30,000
Less 15% of 1960 suitable units	<u>14,125*</u>	<u>14,125*</u>
TOTAL suitable units - 1970	96,081	124,081
Estimated population - 1970	550,000	550,000
Number of persons per family	3.1	3.1
Number of units required	172,400	172,400
<u>DEFICIT - 1970</u>	76,319	48,319

\*Note: 15 per cent of 94,206 units is used in both columns as the depreciation figure.

Interpreting these data, it is clear that Oakland's deficit of suitable housing will steadily mount if current population and dwelling construction trends continue. If, on the other hand, house building is stepped up to what appears to be its absolute maximum level, there still will be a shortage of 48,319 dwelling units, assuming occupancy at 100 per cent. Provision of the one or two per cent of vacancy which is desirable in any normal housing market to permit the tenant to choose a location, and the landlord to maintain his facilities, would require even more construction.

The conclusion appears inescapable that if the facilities of the city for housing its population are to be supplied and maintained in a manner in accord with reasonable growth, the city has a pressing responsibility to encourage residential construction and to enter the field of public housing.

The temporary housing projects built during the war years have produced Oakland's sorest blight problem. Frankly designed to meet an emergency situation, these units were hastily and cheaply built of substandard materials. They have been poorly maintained and most of them now are beyond the salvage point. Squalid and unkempt, they are unsuitable for housing or any other use.

A recent amendment to the California Redevelopment Act declares that all temporary housing shall be designated as blighted. There are 3,213 such units in Oakland. The families occupying them have been taken into account in calculating the city's total housing deficit. But the appalling condition of these dwellings makes it particularly urgent that they be replaced at once.

Since the great majority of occupants of war emergency housing units are in the lowest income group, public projects offer the only means of rehousing them adequately. To give these people a chance to live decently, not less than 3,000 units of permanent low rent housing should be constructed immediately.



PART IV - RECOMMENDED PROGRAM FOR ACTION

The City Planning Commission presents herewith an analysis of the California Redevelopment Act, its comments on the ramifications of redevelopment, and its recommendations for action by the City Council.

Do the Facts Justify Action?

The Commission has presented the facts on the existence of blight in Oakland, as obtained from the most reliable sources. Its investigation has covered key physical, social, and economic conditions throughout the city. On the basis of the facts, the Commission can only conclude that there are areas of Oakland in need of redevelopment.

Redevelopment means replanning as well as rebuilding. It cannot be achieved by proceeding on an individual lot basis. Only by developing projects of substantial size can the face of a neighborhood be changed.

The Commission bears the responsibility of planning for all groups in need of housing. Its investigation has indicated a pressing need for low rental units in Oakland. Provision of such accommodations is an essential part of a balanced redevelopment program. Furthermore, under the terms of the California Community Redevelopment Act and the U. S. Housing Act of 1949, blighted residential areas cannot be cleared until adequate housing has been provided for the displaced families. New low rent projects will satisfy this requisite and at the same time will protect the city from the further spread of blight through overcrowding of existing dwelling units.

The facts that have been presented indicate clearly that undertaking redevelopment would be in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare. Such a program would make the city a more efficient place to carry on industrial production, a more convenient place to transact business, a more desirable place to live.

The Commission can foresee a great many complex problems which will arise if the bold step of redeveloping our blighted areas is undertaken. These include initiating action at the governmental level, financing the program, relocating displaced families, selecting the sites, designing the projects, and making the public aware of the need for redevelopment. The problems are called to the attention of the Council so that it can be prepared to meet them as they arise.

A. Initiating Action

Oakland is a physical plant built to satisfy the social, economic, and cultural needs of its people. Like any physical plant, portions of it wear out either because of normal use, changing requirements, or inadequate original design. It is then that cities face the choice either of ignoring the blight and allowing it to spread or of undertaking the job of replacement. If Oakland is to continue to fulfill its function as an efficient and convenient place for people to live together, substantial portions of it must be rebuilt.

This large-scale replacement process is redevelopment. It is a process which involves planning not merely for streets or transit or housing, but for all the facilities of urban living. It offers the opportunity to realize simultaneously all aspects of a planning program. It is the only tool which a large city can use to cope with extensive obsolescence and decay.

The Community Redevelopment Act is the instrument by which Oakland and other California cities can rid themselves of blight. It is a long and complex piece of legislation, placing much responsibility and work in the hands of the City Council. The principal features of the Act and its procedural requirements are presented herewith.

The Community Redevelopment Act  
(As amended in 1949)

Redevelopment Agency

The Act creates in each city a Redevelopment Agency which is not authorized to do business until the Council, by majority vote, declares a need for the Agency to act. The Mayor must appoint five resident electors to the Agency, subject to confirmation by the Council. The Council may then appropriate funds, either as a grant or as a loan, for the Agency.

Establishment of a Redevelopment Area

The first step in the process of redevelopment is the outlining of general areas of blight within which projects will be considered. To do this the Council must adopt, by majority vote of the entire membership, an ordinance designating an area or areas in the city where redevelopment would be desirable.

Preliminary and Tentative Plans

Once a redevelopment area is delimited by the legislative body, the responsibility for producing a preliminary plan outlining specific project sites rests with the City Planning Commission.



1. The preliminary plan must contain
  - a. A description of project boundaries;
  - b. A general statement of proposed land use, street layout, population densities, and building intensities and standards;
  - c. Evidence that the purposes of the Act would be achieved by the plan; and
  - d. Evidence that the plan would conform to the Master Plan.
2. The Planning Commission must submit the preliminary plan to the Redevelopment Agency. The Agency then must draft a tentative plan based on the preliminary plan.
3. The Agency must hold a public hearing on its tentative plan before submitting it to the legislative body. Notice of the hearing must be mailed to the last known owner of each parcel of land within the project area and must be published in a newspaper once a week for four successive weeks. All evidence relating to the tentative plan or to any alternative plans which may be submitted must be received at the hearing.
4. The tentative plan must be submitted by the Agency to the Council accompanied by a report
  - a. Setting forth the reasons for its selection as a project area;
  - b. Describing the conditions existing in the area—physical, social, and economic;
  - c. Including a preliminary financial analysis of the proposed project, together with proposed rent ranges indicating the general character of the proposed residential development; and
  - d. Including the report and recommendations of the Planning Commission.
5. Should the Planning Commission recommend against approval of the plan, it can be approved only by two-thirds vote of the entire membership of the Council. Otherwise, the Council may approve the plan by majority vote.
6. Before passing upon the plan, the legislative body shall give notice by publication and shall hold a hearing on the adoption. At any time prior to passage of the plan anyone may submit alternative redevelopment plans which shall be considered and submitted to the Agency and the Commission for study.
7. After hearing on the tentative plan, the Council shall
  - a. Determine whether the redevelopment of the project area is in the public interest and would effectuate the Redevelopment Act;

- b. Approve or reject the tentative plan or any alternative plan or modify any such plan and approve or reject it as modified.
- c. If the Council approves a plan it shall adopt it by ordinance by a majority vote of the entire membership. The ordinance must contain
  - (1) A legal description of the project area;
  - (2) A statement of findings setting forth the extent of blight and substandard conditions in the area and the detrimental effects of these conditions upon the public health, safety, and welfare; and
  - (3) The tentative plan, showing how the features of the Master Plan apply to the tentative plan.

Redevelopment Revolving Fund

The principal function of the Redevelopment Agency is to purchase, clear, and reconvey the land. In order to finance the assembly of blighted land the Act empowers the Council

1. To establish a redevelopment revolving fund by selling general obligation bonds, without regard to statutory debt limitation; and
2. To expend sums from the revolving fund for the purchase of clearance of land or for aiding in the relocation of site occupants, by resolution passed by majority vote. Such land may not be re-sold for less than 50 per cent of the amount expended on it from the revolving fund.

Redevelopment Plan

The Redevelopment Agency, in consultation with the Planning Commission, must prepare final detailed plans and conduct negotiations for redevelopment of the project area.

1. The plan must
  - a. Be based upon the approved tentative plan;
  - b. Conform to the Master Plan;
  - c. Describe the proposed method of financing;
  - d. Show the amount of open space, street layout, type, size, height, number and uses of buildings, number of dwelling units, property to be used for public purposes, and any other restrictions or conditions to be imposed by legislature;
  - e. Provide for the lease, sale, or transfer of all land acquired by the Agency, except such land as may be conveyed to the city for public purposes; and



Since blight, within the definition of the Redevelopment Act, has been proved to exist in Oakland, the city can now take action to make redevelopment a reality.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL--

1. Adopt a resolution accepting the report, "Redevelopment in Oakland," as a part of the Master Plan, after hearings held by the City Planning Commission and the City Council in conformity with the provisions of the State Conservation and Planning Act.
2. Adopt a resolution finding that blighted areas exist in Oakland and that in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare a Redevelopment Agency should be appointed.
3. Adopt an ordinance designating the following area as blighted and delimiting it as a redevelopment area:

From the city limits of Emeryville, south along the eastern line of the Southern Pacific right-of-way to 1st Street; thence east along 1st Street and the northern line of the Southern Pacific right-of-way to 14th Avenue; thence north to Newton Avenue; thence west to Brooklyn Avenue; thence west to Lakeshore Avenue; thence south to 12th Street; thence west to Lakeside Drive; thence north to the projection of Alice Street; thence south along the projection of Alice Street and Alice Street to 8th Street; thence west to Grove Street; thence north to San Pablo Avenue; thence north to 22nd Street; thence east to Broadway; thence north to Hawthorne Avenue; thence west to Telegraph Avenue; thence north to 32nd Street; thence west to San Pablo Avenue; thence north to the Emeryville city line; thence west to the point of beginning.

4. Request the Mayor to appoint five members to a Redevelopment Agency established in conformity with the provisions of the Community Redevelopment Act.
5. Adopt an ordinance finding that low rent public housing is needed in Oakland to the extent of not less than 3,000 dwelling units and directing the Housing Authority to apply to the U. S. Housing and Home Finance Agency for this number of units.

B. Financing Redevelopment and Low Rent Housing

Redevelopment.

Fundamentally, the financing of redevelopment is a simple process. The city uses its power of eminent domain to assemble a large parcel of blighted land. It then sells or leases the land to someone else to rebuild according to an officially adopted plan. However, the actual procedure is more complicated than this. Speculation and exploitation have pushed blighted land prices up. Builders cannot afford to buy land from the city at the city's acquisition price, particularly if they are to set aside areas for public open spaces and community facilities.

Simply stated, the problem resolves itself into the question: How can the price of slum land be reduced to a point where it can be profitably re-used by private developers and at the same time conform to planning standards which will protect the area from future blight? There are a number of possibilities; public policy will determine which one is to be chosen.

One possibility is that the present owner, who took a speculative chance when he bought his property, should absorb the loss by being awarded only the reasonable value of his property for its best use. However, usually the present owner is only one of a long succession of purchasers, each of whom has taken a profit. Often he is a home owner who has invested his life's savings in an antiquated dwelling. In such a case the present owner is not directly responsible for the slum, and unless his property is detrimental to public health and safety, it would be inequitable to condemn it for less than its fair market value.

The problem of slums and blighted areas is created by public acts, omissions, and attitudes. Its cost should be distributed among the public at large to equalize the financial impact. It is arguable that the cities should bear the greater part of the burden, since slums are primarily a local problem. However, passage of the U. S. Housing Act of 1949 acknowledges the fact that not cities alone, but the whole national economy is responsible for slums and blight. The Act recognizes that the best way to attack slums successfully is to spread the cost as far as possible.

To this end, under the Housing Act of 1949 the Federal Government has agreed to absorb, by a grant of money, two-thirds of the loss which will be sustained in squeezing the water out of slum land prices. The remaining one-third must be borne by the cities, either through cash outlays, donations of public land, or provision of municipal services of direct benefit to the redevelopment project--such as parks, playgrounds, or public buildings and facilities.



out of tax funds. Incurring bonded indebtedness would permit spreading a greater cost over a longer period; the direct levy would cost less but would come out of today's earnings.

It would be undesirable for Oakland to make a major part of its contribution in cash. The city can reduce its total outlay for redevelopment materially by spending most of its share of the write-down cost on public improvements in the project areas. In this way local funds can serve the dual purpose of matching the federal grant and of paying for improvements which would, in any case, be necessitated by redevelopment. Careful consideration should be given this aspect of redevelopment when the municipal capital improvements program is formulated.

The foregoing is merely a sketch of the financing of land purchase and clearance under the Housing Act of 1949. There are many other possibilities for independent local action without federal aid, but from a practical viewpoint none offers the advantages of the Act.

#### Low Rent Housing.

The U. S. Housing Act of 1949 recognizes that the problems of slum clearance and the provision of decent housing for low-income families are inseparable. For that reason the legislation provides for a coordinated program of redevelopment and low rent housing.

Low rent housing is not a new thing in Oakland. In 1938 the first of three permanent federal low rent housing projects was begun. The projects were completed without incident and have since stood as oases of desirable housing and open space in a desert of substandard housing.

The financing of these projects was a simple matter for the city. The United States Housing Authority sold its bonds to raise up to 90 per cent of the total project development cost; the local authority was required to provide the remaining 10 per cent. Since local authority bonds enjoyed increasing popularity among investors, substantially more than 10 per cent of the project cost was financed locally.

To maintain the low rent character of the housing projects, the Federal Government at present makes annual contributions to cover five-sixths of the gap between the operating costs of projects and the rents received from them. The city is required to supply the other one-sixth either in cash or by making the projects tax exempt. Oakland has chosen to give tax exemption to its projects. Until 1948 the Housing Authority remitted 10 per cent of its rentals to the city in lieu of local tax payments. The new housing act continues this policy and requires retroactive payments of five per cent of rents received in the years 1948 and 1949 when "in lieu payments" were suspended.



### C. Relocating Displaced Families

The experience of other cities indicates that one of the most serious problems arising from a redevelopment program is the relocation of families displaced from project sites. Coming at a time when the post-war housing shortage was at its worst, the early programs met with strong opposition from people threatened with the loss of their homes. It became clear that redevelopment would not work unless occupants of project sites were protected against being left homeless in the wake of demolition. Most states inserted provisions in their redevelopment enabling acts requiring that dwellings must be available for displaced families, and the U. S. Housing Act of 1949 sets up a similar prerequisite to grants-in-aid to local agencies.

Having experienced an unusually large population growth during the war and post-war years, Oakland is faced with a more acute housing shortage than most cities of equal size. In 1945 one-sixth of the families in the city were in need of adequate dwellings. The Redevelopment Act requires that housing be available for all families displaced from project sites before demolition can commence. Clearly, it will not be easy to satisfy this requirement.

Merely providing a number of dwelling units equal to the number of families displaced by demolition will not be sufficient. The problem is not that simple. Rentals will have to be in line with the incomes of prospective tenants, most of whom stand low in the economic scale. Many of the dwelling units will have to be of sufficient size to accommodate large families. Schools, recreation areas, and other community facilities must be readily accessible from the substitute housing, and such housing must not be located unreasonably far from the places where relocated wage earners are employed.

To ensure that relocation will not result in the shifting of conditions of blight from one district to another, the California Act requires that "adequate" facilities must be provided, and the U. S. Housing Act specifies that the new units must be "decent, safe, and sanitary." However, it may be possible to use the relocation process as a means of raising housing standards beyond these bare minima. Certainly where new dwellings are provided, and possibly in certain other instances, families can be moved into quarters substantially better than those they left behind.

Where can the displaced families be rehoused? Acceptable dwelling units generally are obtainable at low rentals only in public housing projects. Long lists of people currently are waiting to get into all of the Oakland projects. Nevertheless, it would be justifiable to grant priorities to families displaced by redevelopment projects. A considerable number of vacancies will become available when the shortage eases to the point where it becomes possible for the Housing



Authority to evict families whose incomes exceed the maximum prescribed for admission to low rent housing.

In all probability it will be necessary to provide additional public housing facilities to take care of displaced low-income families. The Housing Act of 1949 recognizes the intimate relationship between low rent housing and redevelopment by providing for grants and loans for both types of projects. The first public housing projects will have to be built on vacant land in order to accommodate the first low-income families moved from redevelopment sites. Once sufficient slum land has been cleared to permit rebuilding at a scale sufficient to achieve a minimum per unit cost, families can be rehoused on the same project site or at least within the same neighborhood.

Undoubtedly it will not be possible to relocate all the displaced families in low rent public housing. Private accommodations will have to be found for a considerable proportion of the total. It will be necessary to take advantage of vacancies occurring in satisfactory existing dwelling units. If the new favorable F.H.A. financing provisions succeed in inducing private capital to invest in rental housing, it may be possible to rehouse some of the middle income families in such units. Certain other families may be able to purchase their own homes. The home loan provisions of the G. I. Bill of Rights have made ownership possible farther down the income scale.

Although permanent relocation is more desirable, it may be necessary to move some families from project sites temporarily, guaranteeing them an opportunity to return when new housing is built. Interim accommodations might be provided in certain existing temporary war housing projects assuming they were properly renovated and maintained. Priorities for admission could be granted displaced families, as in the case of permanent low rent housing. Existing vacant facilities might be leased to help solve the relocation problem. For example, the empty Hotel Carillon could be used to house hundreds of single persons and childless couples.

Since the Redevelopment Act requires that homes be found for displaced families, some public agency will have to perform this function. Preliminary to clearing sites for redevelopment, the Chicago Housing Authority found it necessary to set up an emergency committee on relocation. This group managed to rehouse a considerable number of displaced families by finding vacancies in private dwellings and obtaining priorities for admission to public projects. It was possible to relocate a number of families ineligible for low rent housing by exchanging public for private accommodations. Eligible off-site families were moved into the vacancies thus created. The committee also set up a small loan fund to assist needy families and actually helped people to move in a number of instances. The report on the Chicago experience strongly recommends the establishment of a permanent relocation service.



D. Selecting the Sites

Issues of vital concern to the city must be faced in selecting sites for low rent housing and redevelopment projects. Properly located, such projects can be community assets of the highest type. Unwisely situated, they can give rise to the very problems that redevelopment aims to eliminate. To ensure that sites are well chosen, all of the pertinent issues should be carefully studied. The advantages and disadvantages of possible sites should be carefully scrutinized with regard to all fundamental city planning principles.

As has been pointed out, the first public housing projects will have to be located on vacant land, but later ones, as well as redevelopment projects, will be built on cleared slum land. The topography of the blighted areas will not create construction or design problems. But with Oakland's shortage of level residential sites, it may be difficult to find vacant land suitable for low rent housing projects.

Consideration should be given to the location of the site in relation to the city's present pattern of traffic circulation and the future pattern prescribed by the Master Plan. Heavy through traffic should not penetrate the project site, but access must be provided for vehicles destined for points within the area.

Mass transit lines with both local and interurban connections should be within easy reach of the project. The distance to major centers of commercial and industrial employment is important. The journey to work is an unpleasant detail of existence, which should be minimized. More people living within walking distance of their places of employment means fewer transportation problems to be faced by the city. For the convenience of householders, local shopping facilities should be close at hand.

It is desirable to relate the open spaces in housing developments to the parks and playgrounds in the surrounding area. This will assure sufficient space for recreation and will give the residents a chance to enjoy the advantages of outdoor living. In some instances, skilful planning makes it possible to connect the open spaces within a project site directly with an existing park or playground, creating a continuous stretch of green running through the neighborhood.

The location of existing and projected schools should be surveyed before selecting sites for redevelopment and low rent housing. A nursery school should be within a quarter-mile walking distance of the project, an elementary school within a half-mile, a junior high school within one mile, and a high school within one-and-a-half miles. Other neighborhood facilities, such as a community house, a health center, and commercial recreation establishments also should be conveniently accessible.



The designs should be simple and straightforward, particularly in the case of low rent housing, but at the same time they should be imaginative and aesthetically pleasing. Every effort should be made to avoid the institutional look for which housing projects often have been criticized. One of the advantages of living in Oakland is the fact that the climate makes it possible to enjoy the outdoors throughout the year. Both public housing units and redevelopment projects should be designed to facilitate the indoor-outdoor way of life typical of California.

As has been pointed out, project areas should be carefully related to community facilities. Some of these facilities may appropriately be situated on the site itself. Where neighborhood shops are not readily accessible, a small shopping center should be incorporated in the layout of the project. It may be desirable to locate a day nursery, a health center, a recreation hall, or even a school within a project area in certain cases.

Within the past few decades architects, landscape architects, and city planners have collaborated in the design of handsome, comfortable, functional housing projects. With a wealth of talent to draw on, there is no reason why Oakland cannot build some of the world's finest housing projects in the course of redeveloping its blighted areas.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL--

Direct the Housing Authority and the City Planning Commission jointly to prepare preliminary site plans for low rent housing projects.

Direct the Redevelopment Agency and the City Planning Commission jointly to prepare preliminary site plans for redevelopment projects.

F. Public Awareness - The Key to Redevelopment

The essence of this report can be distilled into a single sentence: Redevelopment is necessary and it is possible in Oakland.

Large blighted areas now lie close to the heart of the city. Year by year this blight is spreading and sapping Oakland's economic strength. Decisive action is necessary to solve this problem once and for all. Fortunately, we now have a way to get the job done--redevelopment.

Analysis of the Redevelopment Act has shown that it is an effective weapon for war on blight. Under the U. S. Housing Act, funds are available to finance action. In place of block after block of crowded, dilapidated housing, we can surround the city with pleasant, livable neighborhoods.

All the tools necessary to solve our blight problem are available, save one. In a very real sense, this missing instrument is the most important one of all. It is the necessity that the people of Oakland recognize the need for improving their city.

It is difficult for people who have lived in a community for a long time to be aware of its faults. Human beings have an infinite capacity for adjusting themselves to their surroundings. City dwellers only become aware of congestion, noise, ugliness, and dirtiness when they return home from the unspoiled countryside. The shock of the contrast lasts until the blinders are put on once again and the disagreeable features of the city are shut out of their consciousness.

While this kind of thinking may result in peace of mind for the individual, it has proved disastrous to the city as a whole. All progress really stems from dissatisfaction. Unless people are conscious of the defects of their community and are genuinely anxious to improve it, very little can be accomplished.

The job that remains to be done, then, is to make the public aware of the need for improvement. It is not a question of "selling" redevelopment. It is not necessary to sell what everyone wants. It is a matter of communication--of continually reminding the people of the kind of city they can have if they want it and demand it.

The responsibility for getting this job done rests with everyone interested in making Oakland a better place to live in. The Redevelopment Agency, the Housing Authority, and the City Planning Commission have the duty of ensuring that the widest possible audience is informed of the purposes and aims of redevelopment. Service organizations, clubs, and local improvement associations can accomplish a great deal. Discussion groups and forums can be organized and public meetings can be held in many parts of the community. Maximum circulation should be





given progress reports of the various agencies involved. The rich possibilities of the press and the radio should not be overlooked.

Redevelopment is an issue which affects the future of every resident of Oakland. Is the city going to forge ahead through this process of renewal? Or is it going to retrogress and decay? The answer is up to the people of Oakland.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL--

Direct the Housing Authority to conduct a vigorous campaign to inform the public of the need for low rent housing and of the ways in which it will benefit the city.

Direct the City Planning Commission and the Redevelopment Agency to conduct a similar campaign to make the public aware of the potentialities of redevelopment and to interest private enterprise in investing in slum clearance projects.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SUGGESTED RESOLUTION ADOPTING  
"REDEVELOPMENT IN OAKLAND"  
AS A PART OF THE OAKLAND MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS: The City Planning Commission advertised a public hearing on the adoption of the report, "Redevelopment in Oakland," as a unit of the Oakland Master Plan in the Oakland Tribune of \_\_\_\_\_ 1949 and held such public hearing on \_\_\_\_\_ 1949; and

WHEREAS: The City Planning Commission carefully considered all of the evidence submitted at such hearing and by resolution adopted the report and accompanying maps as a unit of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS: An attested copy of the report, including text and maps, was certified to the City Council on \_\_\_\_\_ 1949; and

WHEREAS: The City Council advertised in the Oakland Tribune of \_\_\_\_\_ 1949 and held a public hearing on the adoption of the report, "Redevelopment in Oakland," on \_\_\_\_\_ 1949; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the City Council adopts this report and accompanying maps as a part of the Oakland Master Plan; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the City Planning Commission is directed to determine reasonable and practical means of putting such plan into effect and to recommend necessary actions to the City Council from time to time.

*Suggested Resolution: That the Mayor be and he is hereby requested to introduce into the City Council a resolution to the effect that the City Council be authorized to acquire in whole or in part the property of the Redevelopment Authority in order to carry out the provisions of the Redevelopment Act.*



APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED RESOLUTION FINDING THAT BLIGHTED AREAS EXIST  
AND DECLARING A NEED FOR A REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
TO FUNCTION IN OAKLAND

- WHEREAS: The City Council has carefully considered the report, "Redevelopment in Oakland," submitted by the City Planning Commission on July 29, 1949; and
- WHEREAS: The evidence submitted indicates that there are extensive blighted areas in Oakland which are delimited in such report; and
- WHEREAS: The City Council believes that private enterprise should be encouraged to rebuild large sections in these areas; and
- WHEREAS: Such rebuilding is in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare and further provides an opportunity to reduce costs of municipal services; now, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED: That the City Council hereby finds that blighted areas exist in Oakland; and be it
- RESOLVED: That the City Council declares that there is need for a Redevelopment Agency to function; and be it
- FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Mayor is hereby requested to nominate five resident electors of the City as members of the Agency in accord with the provisions of the Community Redevelopment Act.



APPENDIX C

SUGGESTED ORDINANCE DESIGNATING  
A REDEVELOPMENT AREA IN OAKLAND

WHEREAS: The City Council, by Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.,  
has determined that blighted areas exist in Oakland;  
now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Oakland as follows:  
That all of the area hereinafter described shall constitute a redevelopment area within the meaning of the  
Community Redevelopment Act:

From the city limits of Emeryville, south along the  
eastern line of the Southern Pacific right-of-way to  
1st Street; thence east along 1st Street and the northern  
line of the Southern Pacific right-of-way to 14th Avenue;  
thence north to Newton Avenue; thence west to Brooklyn  
Avenue; thence west to Lakeshore Avenue; thence south to  
12th Street; thence west to Lakeside Drive; thence north  
to the projection of Alice Street; thence south along  
the projection of Alice Street and Alice Street to 8th  
Street; thence west to Grove Street; thence north to  
San Pablo Avenue; thence north to 22nd Street; thence  
east to Broadway; thence north to Hawthorne Avenue;  
thence west to Telegraph Avenue; thence north to 32nd  
Street; thence west to San Pablo Avenue; thence north  
to the Emeryville city line; thence west to the point  
of beginning.





APPENDIX D

SUGGESTED ORDINANCE FINDING THAT 3,000 LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS ARE NEEDED IN OAKLAND AND DIRECTING THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO MAKE APPLICATION FOR THE SAME

- WHEREAS: The City of Oakland has increased in population at an abnormal rate since 1940 and the production of housing units has not kept pace with this population increase; and
- WHEREAS: A considerable proportion of the increased population is in the low income group; and
- WHEREAS: Evidence indicates that overcrowding in substandard dwelling units exists within the blighted areas to an extent inimical to the public health, safety, and welfare; and
- WHEREAS: Over 3,000 units of temporary war emergency housing are now in use, although they have officially been designated as blighted by the Community Redevelopment Act; and these dwelling units are occupying land needed for industrial expansion; and
- WHEREAS: Not less than 3,000 units of low rent public housing are needed in Oakland; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Oakland as follows:  
That the Housing Authority is directed to apply to the United States Housing and Home Finance Agency for 3,000 units of low rent public housing; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED: That the Housing Authority and the City Planning Commission are directed to proceed with site selection and preliminary project design for such public housing.

APPENDIX E

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While the City Planning Commission accepts full responsibility for the contents of this report, the Commission wishes to express its gratitude for the invaluable encouragement and assistance of the following agencies:

Oakland Council of Social Agencies

Oakland Housing Authority

Oakland Police Department

Oakland Fire Department

Oakland Health Department

Oakland Engineering Department

Oakland Building Department

Oakland City Clerk's Office

Bureau of Public Administration,  
University of California