

COMMUNITY

A Publication of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs



SPRAWL—It's virtually impossible for motorists driving this section of Highway 22 in Union Township to pick road signs out of this forest of commercial advertisements. Strip developments such as this could be prevented under the "critical areas" regulations of the Land Use Planning and Development Act.

—Photo by Nelson Silver

Bill to Regulate Land Use Introduced; Hearings Expected in Coming Months

A comprehensive land use bill, which would strengthen and recodify the laws under which New Jersey municipalities exercise their planning and zoning powers, has been introduced into the Legislature by Governor Richard J. Hughes's administration.

The bill, titled the "Land Use Planning and Development Act," was drafted by the Department in consultation with a wide variety of interested groups, including other state agencies, local and state planning groups, local officials, housing and civil rights groups, builders, architects and attorneys.

Chief sponsors of the bipartisan bill are State Senators Willard B. Knowlton of Bergen County and Richard J. Coffee of Mercer County.

Governor Hughes proposed the legislation in his Annual Message last January. In that message he said:

"With the enormous pressures of urbanization in this State—the most

heavily urbanized state in the nation—it is essential that we wisely control land development in our communities . . . Our present land use laws are sorely in need of revision, and I shall therefore send to you a proposed new State Land Use Act to ensure, through improved balance in land development and renewal, that we will benefit from growth rather than be victimized by it."

Municipal zoning powers are governed by the provisions of a 41-year-old law, the Municipal Zoning Enabling Act. In 1953, the Municipal Planning Enabling Act set forth the basic provisions for local planning. These laws have been modified by other legislation and by court decisions, but have not kept pace with the needs of modern, orderly development.

The main focus of the bill is on strengthened municipal powers, but it would give the State important

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State Bond Bank, First of Its Kind, Proposed in Bill

A bill to create a New Jersey Municipal Bond Bank, which would help the State's most fiscally strapped communities save costs in financing needed public improvements, has been introduced into the Legislature.

It would be the first state-sponsored municipal bond bank in the nation.

The bill, drafted by the Department's Division of Local Finance, has bipartisan sponsorship. Its sponsors are State Senators James H. Wallwork of Essex County and J. Edward Crabel of Middlesex County.

The bank would be an independent agency "in but not of" the Community Affairs Department. It would be empowered to buy and sell bonds issued by New Jersey municipalities, counties, school districts and local authorities to finance local capital improvement projects such as schools and sewer systems.

Specifically, the bank would purchase bonds of those communities most in need of new public facilities but least able to afford them—communities whose low credit ratings would otherwise require their bonds to be sold at prohibitively high interest rates, if they could be sold at all.

"In the next five years, New Jersey communities will need to build some \$200-million worth of new schools and \$500-million worth of sewer systems and pollution control facilities," said James A. Alloway, Director of the Division of Local Finance.

"Many of these projects would be beyond the fiscal ability of local governments to provide unless these governments could be guaranteed a market and a reasonable interest rate for their bond issues," he said.

The bank would be self-sustaining. It would receive an initial start-up appropriation, which would be repaid to the State within a short time. It

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New Jersey Is Pilot State for Annual Planning Aid Award

The State of New Jersey and three other states have been selected to participate in a pilot project to give the states additional responsibilities in the administration of federal planning assistance programs.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded a grant of \$1,222,398 to the Department of Community Affairs for comprehensive planning assistance under Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954. The grant will cover a one-year period beginning last February 15.

The Department, in turn, will make grants from this fund to municipalities and counties for preparation and updating of comprehensive community plans. It also will provide technical assistance, direction, and evaluation of local planning activities, and will utilize a portion of the fund for statewide planning and special planning projects.

"We are pleased that New Jersey will play a leading role in demonstrating that the states can assume important responsibilities in the conduct of federal aid programs," said Sidney L. Willis, director of the Department's Division of State and Regional Planning, which administers the planning assistance programs. "It gives New Jersey wide opportuni-

ties for giving priority consideration in planning assistance to areas within the State where the need is greatest, and for developing programs to meet this need over a 12-month period, rather than piecemeal."

Other states participating in the pilot project with New Jersey are Colorado, Missouri and Minnesota. The approach being followed by these states, developed jointly by the states and HUD, will be extended by HUD to all the states beginning July 1.

Under the Comprehensive Planning program, the federal government pays two-thirds of the cost of approved comprehensive planning projects for communities or groups of communities with fewer than 50,000 people, state and regional planning agencies, metropolitan cities and special planning projects. The municipality, state, district or agency receiving the grant must pay the remaining one-third of the cost.

Until now, requests for planning assistance were considered by HUD on an individual basis. The Community Affairs Department would review and comment on the individual applications, and channel the funds from HUD to the recipient body.

Under the new system, the Department will consider all applications for funding within the 12-month

period as a group. It will then establish priorities by which those it considers as having the most merit will be included in its request to HUD for a single annual award.

The \$1,222,398 grant to New Jersey will be distributed as follows:

▶ \$148,307 to finance comprehensive planning projects in 14 municipalities, to be announced during the year;

▶ \$394,841 to aid similar projects in 10 counties;

▶ \$236,797 to the Department for six comprehensive statewide planning projects, including the State Development Plan (\$89,420); human resources planning (\$40,000), and capital improvements programming (\$22,770);

▶ \$79,020 to support regional planning programs of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and the newly created Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission;

▶ \$343,381 for special innovative state planning projects, including a pilot Planning-Programming-Budgeting System project jointly sponsored by the Department and the State Treasury Department; and

▶ \$20,052 to the Division of State and Regional Planning for state planning advisory services.

Plainfield Gets Rent Supplement Grant to Aid 50 Families

The City of Plainfield has received a \$141,750 rent supplement grant from the Department to help some 50 of its low-income families relocate into better housing.

The grant was made from the Department's \$2.25 million Relocation—Rent Supplement state aid fund, which went into operation in the current fiscal year. It will be used to provide three-year rent supplement payments and counseling services to the families, whose homes must be demolished or rehabilitated to meet local standards.

Claude P. Miller, the Department's director of housing program development, said, "This will be an experimental program. Relocation poses many problems both for the city and for the families. We hope to find ways to minimize these problems, and to

help families make a smooth transition into decent housing in new neighborhoods."

He said Plainfield has a shortage of decent low-cost housing. Without the rent supplement payments, he said, the families might not be able to afford decent housing.

Plainfield officials expect that several hundred families may have to be relocated over the next six years because of planned construction due to Plainfield's Model Cities and urban renewal programs.

Under the Department's program, families who are forced to relocate are eligible to receive rent supplements for that portion of their rent which exceeds 25 per cent of their income after allowable deductions. They may also purchase their own homes under

the program. Assistance payments may be made for up to three years.

Mayor Frank H. Blatz, Jr. said that the city would offer the families financial and personal counseling to help them become self-sustaining after the three-year program ends.

"This is the first step toward a self-help approach to our housing problems," Mayor Blatz said.

Four smaller grants also were made from the fund during the past month. These went to the city of Bayonne (\$18,200), Neptune Township in Monmouth County (\$9,000), and the Boards of Education of Orange (\$5,800) and South Orange-Maplewood (\$600). These grants will defray the relocation costs of 90 displaced families and five businesses in the communities.



FLOOD—These relatively new homes in the Trenton area were inundated by the flooding Delaware River (background) in 1955. The Land Use Act would regulate the development that could occur on flood plains.

—Photo courtesy The Evening Times, Trenton

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powers as well to plan and regulate land use to protect its own facilities.

The bill would create a new State Planning Commission, consisting of eight cabinet officers, which could make recommendations to the Governor for the following kinds of actions:

► Adoption of an annual State Capital Improvement Program, covering a six-year period.

► Designation of certain areas adjacent to public facilities as "critical areas" within which development would have to conform to state regulations. These areas include state highway rights-of-way, flood plains, approaches to airports, and state and federal parks, forests, reservoirs, historic sites, state educational facilities and institutions.

► Acquisition of land by the State for needed public facilities, such as reservoirs. The State would have the option to hold such land for two years prior to purchase. Owners would be paid for any loss suffered and the property would remain on local tax rolls during the two-year option period.

► Determination of criteria for optional review of municipal zoning and planning ordinances by the Governor. This review could be made only upon request of a municipality and within

the terms of the purposes stated in the law.

The bill would also create a State Land Reserve Bank which could purchase land needed for state facilities. Land could be acquired only for legally specified purposes; state agencies needing the land would have to receive statutory clearance and appropriations from the Legislature in order to acquire the land.

State agencies would not become involved in enforcing "critical area" regulations unless local zoning made inadequate provision for protecting the state facility. The enforcement powers of state agencies would be subject to the normal court appeal process.

One of the principal provisions of the bill is a section restating and amplifying the public purposes or reasons for which local land development regulations may be adopted. Examples of new purposes include the appropriate timing of land development, encouragement of development-wide density controls, protection of public facilities, and prohibition against use of zoning powers to exclude economic, racial, religious or ethnic groups. The bill keeps the basic structure of the present local zoning system, which provides for the courts to hear appeals from local decisions.

The bill also sets forth objectives

for local master plans. These include broadening the meaning of the master plan to include economic and social considerations, defining goals and objectives to give overall direction to orderly community development, and strengthening the relationships between the master plan and tools of implementation such as zoning, subdivision regulations, the official map, and capital improvement programs.

Under the proposed law, all zoning ordinances would have to be based on an adopted land use plan, and would have to take into consideration such regional factors as housing, transportation and open space needs and the elements of county, state and regional plans.

It would permit municipalities to exercise planning and zoning powers jointly, and would require local review of planning and development regulations at least once every five years to ensure that they are up to date.

Property owners would be given the legal right to be heard in court when they are damaged by land use actions of a neighboring municipality.

Commissioner Paul N. Ylvisaker, who conducted a briefing on the bill for newsmen, called it "conservative in the true sense of that word—it seeks to conserve our natural resources, our green space, our tax

GROWTH—Subdivisions such as these in northern New Jersey are rapidly consuming available land, often with little regard for transportation and community facilities. The Land Use Act would strengthen the powers of municipalities to guide this growth in an orderly manner.



DCA Helps Students Earn Diplomas By Taking Examinations in Spanish

The Department has awarded a \$27,852 grant to help 400 Spanish-speaking high school dropouts earn diplomas by passing achievement tests written and administered almost entirely in Spanish.

Students who pass the test will receive high school diplomas awarded by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

The grant, made from a \$900,000 state aid appropriation for basic education in the Department's 1968-69 budget, went to the North Hudson Community Action Corporation (NHCAC), the antipoverty agency serving northern Hudson County.

Under the novel program, applicants attend special review training classes sponsored by NHCAC over a four-month period. Then they take the high school achievement test prepared by the Puerto Rico Department of Education—a six-part examination written and administered entirely in Spanish except for the English competency section.

The training program is open to Spanish-speaking New Jersey residents who have been out of high school for at least one year.

Mrs. Catherine Havrilesky, chief of the Department's Bureau of Basic Education and Training, said the project is designed to reach Spanish-speaking people who have dropped out of high schools in Puerto Rico or the United States or who are Cuban high school graduates whose diplomas are in Cuba.

"In the past, these students have been hampered in their efforts to obtain employment and college positions for their lack of a diploma," she explained. "Now they will be able to earn one by demonstrating their knowledge through the language they know."

Brother Jeremias Feulner, C.P., of the Roman Catholic Church's Passionist Order, is administrator of the project, which also involves the cooperation of antipoverty agencies in Newark, Dover, Plainfield, Jersey City and Paterson.

Brother Jeremias said that a battery of achievement tests was scheduled to be administered on May 16 and 17. The tests are administered at no cost to the students by representatives of Puerto Rico's Department of Education.

The project was launched several months ago by NHCAC with the aid of a \$500 grant from the Department. The pilot project was financed and staffed largely by volunteer efforts.

As a result, 364 Spanish-speaking former dropouts have earned Puerto Rican diplomas. Of these, 11 are now attending local colleges, three are enrolled in computer programming classes, one is in barber school, two are in beauty culture courses, and two have joined the West New York Police Department. The remaining graduates are regularly employed.

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would raise funds by selling its own tax-exempt revenue bonds to private buyers. Proceeds from these bond sales would finance the bank's transactions.

Alloway said that bond rating firms have indicated that the bank would qualify for a relatively high credit rating. This means that it could sell its own bonds at a relatively low interest rate, he said, and pass on the savings in interest costs to the communities whose bonds it buys at a slightly higher rate. These savings could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars over the life of a single bond issue, he said.

"In effect," he said, "the bank would be lending the use of its higher credit rating to New Jersey's neediest communities."

Besides helping to save interest costs, Alloway said, the bank would help strengthen the fiscal soundness of localities by working with them to improve fiscal management, and by advising them on which public improvements would be of greatest value as assets to the community. He noted that the bank would have discretion to invest selectively, although it would not compete with investment firms for the better rated local bond issues.

As communities aided by the bank improved their own credit ratings, he said, they would eventually become independent of the bank and would return to the open market.

The bank would be administered by a five-member board of directors.

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NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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dollars, our air and water, our community environment and our constitutional principles of fair play.”

He said, “We can see what is at stake when we realize that in the next 20 years, New Jersey’s growth will exceed the development we have seen since World War II. While it is unrealistic to think any land use law could undo or correct all of the mistakes we have made in the past, there is hope that we can do better in the future.

“The proposed Land Use Planning and Development Law seeks to deal realistically with this future while leaving the basic powers at the local level.”

Ylvisaker said he hoped that hearings on the bill would be held during the coming months, during which time “we expect considerable debate and discussion.”

He said, “At no time did we have the illusion that a new land use bill would receive universal acclaim. No such land use law is possible. Even the status quo is not a popular position.”

Copies of the bill, as well as a digest of it and a statement by Commissioner Ylvisaker, are available without charge from the Office of Public Information, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, P.O. Box 2768, Trenton, N.J. 08625.

State Training Program, Nation’s First, Has Served Over 4,000 Local Employees

New Jersey’s year-old Community Development Training Program, the first federally-funded state training program in the nation, has helped to improve the job skills of 4,185 municipal employees since its inception last summer.

Other persons have benefited from the training program, too, but it is primarily designed to provide training activities for local government employees who, by virtue of limited local resources and staff, would otherwise not receive in-service or pre-service training.

The program is financed by \$260,000 in federal funds under Title VIII of the Housing Act of 1964 and \$250,000 in state aid appropriations. It is administered by the Bureau of Recruitment and Training in the Department’s Office of Community Services.

The need for the program was emphasized in responses to a recent poll of local officials, conducted by Michael J. Herbert, chief of the bureau.

“Of the 90 municipalities who responded, only 17 per cent said they provide any in-service or pre-service training,” Herbert said, “even though 92 per cent thought it was necessary.”

He said that most municipalities that do not have their own training programs blamed a lack of personnel to conduct such programs. He said that there is only one full-time training director on a local government payroll in New Jersey.

This year, the Department program provided for 174 training projects, including regular and special college-level courses, day-long conferences and a summer intern program.

In-service activities centered around 22 curriculum areas ranging from courses for plumbing inspectors to a bilingual Spanish language and culture institute for administrators, police and education officials.

The program focuses on improving the job skills of local employees, while preparing them for management positions and helping them to relate their jobs to total community development.

Special one-day conferences are being scheduled on such topics as involvement of community groups in urban renewal and housing, effects of developing the Hackensack Meadowlands, and recent recommendations of the County and Municipal Government Study Commission.

Universities which helped develop the courses and conferences, and provided faculty and classrooms, include Rutgers (particularly its Bureau of Government Research), Princeton, Seton Hall, and the Newark College of Engineering.

“Local officials are anxious to become more skilled in modern management techniques,” Herbert said. He noted that applications for some courses far exceed the number that can be accommodated.

Several pre-service training programs have been started to prepare young people to fill municipal government positions. One of these, consisting of an orientation session and weekly seminars, is part of the Department’s Interns in Community Service program. Herbert said that more than 1,200 students have applied for the 170 positions in this summer’s program, which begins June 23. (An article about the program appears on page 5.)

The most pressing local personnel need, according to Herbert, is for municipal engineers. A two-year program, developed in connection with the Newark College of Engineering, has recruited 25 engineering students, some from minority backgrounds, who now are employed full-time by municipalities. There were 60 applicants for the limited positions available.

Other participants in the training program include staff members of nonprofit groups, especially those working in local Model Cities programs, and small contractors and businessmen active in community development.

“We think it’s important that all persons engaged in public service in their communities have access to the training they need,” Herbert said. “This training can be the factor that spells success for any given venture.”



Evaluation Report Hails Intern Program, Urges Continuation

An independent evaluation of the second Interns in Community Service summer program sponsored by the Department last year has rated it "highly successful" and has recommended that it "be continued and extended."

The 30-page evaluation was prepared by Dr. Donald Herzberg, director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, at the Department's request.

"The overall response from both the interns and their supervisors indicates that the program continues to be highly successful," Herzberg's report said. He described the program

as "well conceived and soundly administered."

Similar praise was given earlier to the program by the Fels Institute of Local and State Government of the University of Pennsylvania which rated the pilot 1967 intern program as "truly outstanding."

Last summer's 11-week intern program employed 148 students, nearly twice the number hired for the 1967 program. Applications from prospective interns more than doubled.

The evaluation was based on a written survey of all 1968 job supervisors and interns, interviews with some of them, and a review of program records.

The report made the following findings:

▶ Eighty-three per cent of the supervisors rated their interns' performance as "exceptionally good" or "highly satisfactory." Another 11 per cent said they were satisfied.

▶ Seventy-five per cent of the supervisors said they would have hired their intern if a position had been open on their staff. More than half of the

supervisors would have paid the intern between \$7,000 and \$10,000.

▶ All the interns in the program rated it "good" or better, with 85 per cent rating it "very good."

▶ Sixty-nine per cent of the interns said their interest in "some aspect of public service in New Jersey" had been strengthened.

The report said that the program could be made even more successful if it:

▶ Placed "continuing emphasis" on recruiting members of minority groups.

▶ Held an annual conference with appropriate legislative leaders and committee chairmen to discuss the intern program.

▶ Involved job supervisors both as speakers and participants in the seminars and at the orientation session.

Lester Appointed To Housing Body

Richard A. Lester, Dean of the Faculty of Princeton University and a well-known economist, has been appointed to a three-year term on the New Jersey Housing Finance Agency (HFA) by Governor Richard J. Hughes.

He succeeds Lester V. Chandler, Professor of Economics at Princeton, who is leaving the university this fall after 18 years on its faculty to teach at a consortium of five predominantly Negro colleges in Atlanta.

Commissioner Paul N. Ylvisaker, HFA chairman, welcomed the appointment of Lester and praised Chandler for his "invaluable help in HFA's early stages of organization." He said that Chandler, as vice-chairman, had given the agency "leadership toward making a quick start on needed moderate-income housing in New Jersey. We wish him well in his challenging new position."

Chandler will hold an endowed chair at the Atlanta University Center and will teach banking and finance.

Lester was sworn in at the May 20 meeting of the HFA. The five HFA members also elected him vice-chairman.



Richard A. Lester

New County Role Urged in Report

A legislative commission has recommended that New Jersey counties be given the power to strengthen and modernize themselves under four different optional forms of government.

In its 128 page report, "County Government: Challenge and Change," the County and Municipal Government Study Commission also urged that the full costs of state-mandated services, chiefly welfare and administration of justice, be assumed by the State. Much of these costs are now supported by local property taxes.

The commission, headed by State Senator William V. Musto of Hudson County, said that a "middle level government" such as a restructured county "is an absolute necessity if we are to preserve local government in the face of an ever-growing maze of complex and desperate problems."

The report is available from the Commission, 113 W. State St., Trenton, N.J. 08625.

Newark Business Project Funded

The Department has awarded a \$20,000 grant to the Minority Economic Development Industrial and Cultural Enterprises, Inc. (MEDIC) of Newark to help establish minority-controlled businesses and industries there during the next 12 months.

The grant was made from the Department's economic opportunity technical assistance fund.

MEDIC is a non-profit community development corporation formed through the aid of the Greater Newark Urban Coalition. It will raise additional money by selling its stock to neighborhood residents, and through loans. It has also received a \$20,000 grant from the Center for Community Change.

Elvin R. Austin, president of MEDIC, said that his organization is "going into the business of making businesses."

Austin said MEDIC would help create new or purchase existing businesses in areas of the city where minority groups live, particularly in the Central Ward. He said the businesses, to employ from 20 to 300 workers, would be owned by community stockholders and operated by experienced managers drawn from ghetto areas.