

1c  
New Jersey, Department of  
" Community Affairs.

THE DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS.

974.90

R424

1976j

copy 2

January 22, 1976

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
A. WHY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS WAS ESTABLISHED	1
DCA and Poverty .....	2
"One Stop Shopping" .....	4
Reasons to Exist .....	6
B. HOW DCA WORKS TODAY .....	8
Housing .....	8
Human Problems .....	10
Local Government Services .....	11
State and Regional Planning .....	13
C. IF THERE WERE NO DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS .....	15
How Much Money Would Really Be Saved? .....	15
Less Efficient Operation .....	16
Loss Of The Synergistic Effect .....	17
Dealing With Local Governments .....	18
Looking At The "Urban Problem" .....	19
The Federal Perspective .....	19
Wall Street .....	20

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Summary of Katharine Elkus White Report of June 19, 1962
2. DCA - Annual Report - FY '75
3. DCA Assists Local Governments In Federal Funding: An Interlocal Services Success Story
4. How It Might Have Been
5. DCA Budget Information

A. WHY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS WAS ESTABLISHED

Community Affairs is many things to many people. In order to evaluate it today, it is necessary to review the reasons for which it was established.

Following World War II, our society underwent a number of fundamental changes. Many of these had been developing even in earlier decades, but the late forties and fifties saw disruptions in existing social patterns, a growing awareness of the plight of the poor, a decline of urban centers, and many more problems that we are all familiar with. They are sometimes lumped together under the term "the urban problem." Society began to get more complex, and there were the stirrings of the national recognition of the need to adjust government to these changing conditions.

In his special message to the Legislature that urged the creation of the Department of Community Affairs, Governor Richard J. Hughes said:

Population growth and mobility, new technology and rapid economic development, new buying and living taste, the emergence of whole new suburban communities, the paradox of slums and poverty in the midst of affluence - all have produced unique pressures and problems for local and state government.

Governor Hughes had advanced the idea of a Community Affairs Department early in his first term.

In November 1963, Katharine Elkus White submitted to Governor Hughes a major report entitled "Toward More Effective Government - A Proposed Department of Community Affairs." [Attachment 1 - material copied from summary of that report.] It is interesting to note that all members of the Governor's Cabinet participated in that study. In the letter of transmittal, Katharine Elkus White observed:

While these problems of urbanization are most apparent in and around our growing cities and towns, both their cause and solution must be considered within a broader community context.

Therefore, the problems of the urban community cannot be isolated from those of the larger community setting of which they are a part. We must look for more concerted action by the variety of existing agencies and programs which bear on the total problem as well as by the new programs which are necessary. Much can be achieved toward this end through a more appropriate grouping of many such agencies within the proposed department.

The report found that "the programs of many of these (State) agencies are poorly related to those of the Departments within which they are presently located," and went on to observe that a Community Affairs Department would not only improve New Jersey's overall approach to community development problems, but would also be a move toward more effective government as well. (Page 16)

As a result, the Department of Community Affairs was established on March 1, 1967.

#### DCA and Poverty

Some observers have expressed the thought that Community Affairs was established as an instrument to carry out the poverty programs of the Johnson administration, and since those programs are no longer operative, the need for DCA no longer exists. The observation is fallacious for several reasons.

First, the chronology of the argument is all wrong. The basic problems pointing up the need for a Department of Community Affairs preceded the beginning of the Great Society programs. Johnson did not become President until November 1963. He did not start the national war on poverty until October 1964, at which time the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity was established by Executive Order.

The committee working on the establishment of a Department of Community Affairs had reported to Governor Hughes in substantial detail as early as June 1962, and the final report was submitted in November

1963. So while there undoubtedly was some commonality of recognized social needs behind both the war on poverty and the establishment of DCA, the actions were independent. The White report did not even show a poverty office on its proposed organization chart for the Department. The war on poverty had not even yet begun.

Second, when the Department finally was put together, the Office of Economic Opportunity was only one of seven divisions located within the Department. The Department immediately went after all available federal aid, and naturally, substantial sums of money were available through the various poverty programs, but that was a fortuitous circumstance not originally envisioned. While over \$5 million in federal funds were received by the Department in its first fiscal year of operation, the State government itself appropriated over \$7 million, and it is clear that the Department was quite capable financially and organizationally of conducting extensive activities even without federal aid.

Third, the unfortunate events that occurred on the streets of Newark and other cities in the summer of 1967 obviously colored the purpose of the Department in the eyes of many observers. But even through the difficult times of civil disorder and the heyday of the Great Society, the Department still continued on an even keel with many non-poverty activities operating on an expanded basis. The fact that DCA served as a "lightning rod" for serious poverty problems should not lead to a distortion of its broad mission and diversified operations.

Fourth, simply because federal funding for poverty programs has been reduced and its format changed, the basic problems continue to exist, and in fact, the problems of the poor are inseparable from the problems of society at large. The Department recognizes this, and continues an effective and many-sided approach to these problems.

If poverty has not yet disappeared, and housing is not yet available for all, and federal funding has become more difficult, does this mean that the State of New Jersey should turn its back simply because the problems sometimes seem to be without final solution? Would Labor and Industry be abolished because unemployment stays high? Would we do away with law enforcement agencies because crime continues?

"One Stop Shopping"

Another observation recently made about the Department is that it was supposed to be a one-stop shopping point for local officials and citizens, and with the advent of other agencies such as the Public Advocate or the Department of Environmental Protection, this concept no longer holds; therefore, a major reason for the Department's existence is no longer present. This observation combines some factual information with a lack of appreciation of the dynamics of governmental bureaucracy and citizen involvement in government.

If there were such a thing as "one stop shopping" there would be only one office of state government, and one can only speculate as to how that might be organized internally! A good idea need not be extended to a point of absurdity and then struck down.

If the Legislature has seen fit to establish other agencies and vested them with substantial powers concerning local actions, that does not lessen the need for providing a mechanism to at least try to help the local official and the local citizen find his way through the confusing maze of state bureaucracy. It may even point towards a need to consider the relocation of additional functions into DCA where they can be effectively harmonized with existing operations that deal with local governments and community life in a broad and comprehensive manner.

In point of fact, DCA has met with substantial success in providing such assistance to local officials and citizens. The Department receives thousands of letters, telephone calls and visits annually from people who don't really know where to go. The title "Community Affairs" does catch the eye of many people, and since most things can be classified as a community related problem, they come here for help. Long before the notion of governmental ombudsmen, DCA was intervening in local problems and serving as an advocate for their solution. Everything from helping a senior citizen secure relief from barking dogs in a neighbor's yard to helping a growing suburban government file an application for Green Acres funds or Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation funds.

Simply within the functions that are assigned to the Department today, a person may walk in the front door with a problem, and find people interested in discussing it from all of its perspectives - physical planning, housing needs, powers of local government, rights of the underprivileged or discriminated against. Does a solution always ensue? Not always, but our policy is to leave no stone unturned, and to try to seek answers for people rather than merely bouncing them on to the next department down the street.

Some of the areas in which we are not able to provide a single solution reflect problems inherent in the nature of state government. Many observers of New Jersey government have pointed out the difficulties every incoming governor is faced with in securing effective executive control over the various departments, many of which are quite strong in their own right. If the State government does not always fully mobilize all of its resources to confront every urban problem, this is only a part of a larger problem, and it is complicated by the presence of legitimate but competing citizen expectations and the absence of clear solutions to vexing problems of our society.

So if "one stop shopping" is not all that one might like, there should be recognition that here at least is one attempt to lend some assistance to local people. The fact that the Department continues to receive requests for help, often from the same people, shows that the Department is providing an effective and desirable service.

A single tool in helping local people understand state government has been DCA's "Catalogue of State Aid Programs." Originally issued in 1972, it is now being revised. It was not without difficulty that all of this information was obtained from the different State departments, but local officials have found it of continuing value.

Inherent in the notion of "one stop shopping" is the fact that DCA views local problems with an understanding of the local viewpoint. It often then attempts to mediate between local people and the other State departments, advocating greater appreciation of local needs. While this role sometimes may lead to friction, it is nonetheless a vital role whose loss would only lead to frustration and greater tension between levels of government.

#### Reasons to Exist

New Jersey was one of the first states to establish a Department of Community Affairs, and many states have patterned their own departments after this one. The reasons for having a Department of Community Affairs can be expressed in many ways. Perhaps the least biased way is to let the reader answer the following questions:

1. Is New Jersey still a highly urbanized state with growing problems?
2. Are these problems solving themselves, or are they impacting on not only each other but on the state government as well?

3. Is it helpful in dealing with the federal government to have a cabinet level focus on community problems?
4. Do the solutions to the urban and suburban problem involve social, economic, technical, and political factors, and if so, should there be some mechanism at the state level to try to bring together these various delivery and decision making services?

It is suggested that the answers to these questions are readily apparent, and it will be the purpose of the rest of this report to review how well DCA works in actual practice, and what might happen if there were no DCA.

## B. HOW DCA WORKS TODAY

As it has matured, the organization of DCA has evolved. Today, the responsibilities of the Commissioner are administered by six Divisions: Housing and Urban Renewal, State and Regional Planning, Aging, Women, Human Resources, and Local Government Services. In addition, the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission, the Housing Finance Agency, Mortgage Finance Agency, and Urban Loan Authority are attached to the Department. An organization chart may be found in the accompanying Eighth Annual Report of the Department. This report also describes in substantial detail the extensive programs administered by the Department, and they will not be repeated here.

A general review of some of the major programs provides insight as to how by being together under one roof, they mutually reinforce one another. The Department believes that the combining of such programs under common direction provides a synergistic effect, with the total strength of the Department substantially exceeding the sum of its individual programs.

### Housing

New Jersey is faced with a serious deficiency of housing units which is growing at a rate of 60,000 to 70,000 units a year. Population growth, the depressed economy, deterioration of older homes all contribute to this national problem. Shelter is one of man's basic needs.

Housing, though, implies more than four walls and a roof. This fundamental fact makes the Division of Housing and Urban Renewal's location in Community Affairs especially appropriate. Before housing can be built or renovated, financing is required. The Division works closely with the New Jersey Housing Finance Agency and the New Jersey Mortgage Finance Agency

in this regard.

Recognizing that difficulties are incurred in securing mortgages and rehabilitation loans, the Division has pooled its resources with the Mortgage Finance Agency, the Division of State and Regional Planning, and the Housing Demonstration Fund to undertake a study of a possible housing insurance program. This endeavor goes beyond what would be possible with the resources of any one of these agencies. By working together, different viewpoints will be brought to bear and a program may be devised that no single agency could have put together itself.

When the Legislature passed the State Building Code Law recently, it did not appropriate money to the Department to implement its responsibilities under this, which include the promulgation of a standard State Building Code. To meet these responsibilities, the Commissioner authorized the establishment of a task force staffed by specialists from the Divisions of Human Resources, State and Regional Planning, Housing and Urban Renewal, training and other areas. Interlocal aspects of code inspections are being examined in consultation with the Division of Local Government Services which administers the Interlocal Services Program. All of these agencies share a common interest in solving community problems, are under common executive direction, and accordingly can work together to assume a major responsibility that otherwise could not have been met because of lack of resources.

The Division of Human Resources has been especially interested in the serious housing needs that fall so heavily on the poor, and it prepared an application for \$1.1 million of Federal Section 8 Housing Funds to be made available to the Division of Housing and Urban Renewal.

There are many additional examples of how housing problems really turn out to be problems of financing, poverty, governmental efficiency, planning

and zoning. As it is presently structured, the Department is able to pull together these diverse aspects in a way that would not be possible if these agencies were scattered among other departments.

### Human Problems

The impact of so many of the urban problems really falls on people as individuals and as members of their social group. Community Affairs addresses these problems with special emphasis through its Divisions of Aging, Human Resources, and Women. It should be readily apparent that there is substantial overlap of concern, since social problems fall so heavily on the poor, and many elderly are poor, more women are living longer than men, and so forth. Accordingly, these three Divisions work very closely together. They share several advocacy roles, first in representing a commitment by the State government that these people are especially important and warrant a continuing central focus on their problems so as to bring State resources to bear; second, to serve as advocates for the people themselves in their capacities as individuals and as consumers.

The problems of the aging represent a major national priority which the Department shares. With more people living longer, this series of problems will continue to grow, and is made all the more acute by the condition of the national economy.

The Aging program is heavily dependent on interaction with other Divisions in the Department. The Division of Human Resources has assisted in establishing special programs for the elderly, the Division of Local Government Services has aided in establishing contractual procedures through which local governments provide feeding programs for senior citizens, and in establishing performance evaluation systems required as a condition of

Federal funding for the Nutrition Program. Fiscal Year 1975 saw the receipt of over \$8 million in Federal funds under various aging programs. These have a tremendous impact and are one of the most rewarding areas of activity of the Department.

An especially interesting pending grant would permit the Department of Community Affairs to set up an Office of Volunteer Services. This would be funded by the Federal agency ACTION, and will permit retired people and other volunteers to work for various local social agencies and local governments. This is an example of an activity which does not fit within any given Division of the Department, because volunteer action can be applied to so many areas at the local level. Consequently, the program would be administered by an Assistant Commissioner of the Department. There are many other similar activities which simply would have no reasonable place to go if the individual Divisions of the Department were scattered in different directions. These will be discussed in a later section.

#### Local Government Services

Our 567 municipalities and 21 counties are on the firing line of many of these problems. Assuring their fiscal integrity and strengthening their administrative capabilities are essential responsibilities of the State which have widespread consequences. With some 45 percent of the State budget going as State-aid to local governments, the manner in which these local governments expend this money is critical. Many local governments still have part-time officials, turnover is a serious problem, and many governments are so small in relative size that they cannot afford the economies of scale that would accrue to a larger operation. While many local governments operate quite effectively, many others simply are not large enough or don't have the money to operate with full efficiency. These local governments are heavily

dependent on assistance which can be given by the Division of Local Government Services. One example of a multiplier effect resulting from a modest State investment may be found in the Local Planning and Management Assistance Programs which produced benefits for the State's local governments in 1975 valued at over \$20 million for a cost to the State of \$925,000.

One of the problems often encountered in providing assistance to local governments is that they have not defined what their problem is. Often it turns out to be something different than what they thought it was, and the ability of this Division's staff to call on people who are working in the housing and poverty areas of the Department greatly reinforces the effectiveness of this technical assistance.

The Safe and Clean Neighborhoods Program, serving 28 towns, supports 840 local policemen and 533 neighborhood workers. The approach taken by the Division to the police component of this Program is different than might be taken by another State agency concerned only with law enforcement. This Division's approach related police to the concept of neighborhood pride and safety. A number of the neighborhood preservation areas being administered by the Division of Housing and Urban Renewal overlap with the Safe and Clean Neighborhood. In one city, Safe and Clean is funding a self-help housing improvements program, so close coordination is maintained between Local Government Services and the Division of Housing and Urban Renewal. By approaching this program in terms of the broad area of concern of the Department, Safe and Clean is a different program than it might be if it were viewed merely as a grant program to support police departments and public works activities.

This Division in particular views the spectrum of local functions as part of a whole requiring decision-making and effective management, rather

than as a series of separate functional areas. As a result, it can administer a pilot performance audit program which can evaluate shade tree operations, water utilities, housing inspections, and tax collection systems. The Division can be mobilized quickly to meet problems that are not foreseen but which may require concentrated short term attention. As an example, the floods of the past summer led to a need for a task force to administer the Federal disaster assistance program (Section 408). Departmental auditors, planners and management specialists were pressed into service. As a result, 620 families were able to receive \$922,000 of Federal and State assistance quickly to help them to get back on their feet, and it was not necessary to set up a major bureaucracy to accomplish this mission.

When the Federal government enacted the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, drastically altering the scheme of Federal aid for a broad range of community development programs, the Division took the lead in conjunction with virtually all other parts of the Department in analyzing the Legislation, helping towns to understand it and apply for the funds. As a result, New Jersey local governments have been highly successful in securing these funds, and a special effort by the Division resulted in seven counties receiving over \$5.5 million in the first year which they would not otherwise have received.

(See Attachment 3)

### State and Regional Planning

Inherent in the nature of planning is contemplation of the future rather than conducting on-going routine activities. The Division of State and Regional Planning has traditionally served as a resource for special projects of concern not only to the Department but also to the Executive Branch generally. While conceptually different arguments may be advanced as to

where the planning function should be located in an organization--in the operating units, in the Chief Executive Office, a separate department by itself--its location in Community Affairs has worked quite well.

In an urban area such as New Jersey, State problems are inherently local and vice versa. By being located in Community Affairs, where there is a general across-the-board interest in meeting problems (even those not yet fully defined) State planning has been able to conduct meaningful studies of such things as the effect of State environmental policies on sewer programs and the resulting impact on growth patterns, and projecting local housing needs for various parts of the State. Housing and planning are inextricably related.

Capital planning for a number of years was supported through this Division, and now the Treasury Department has been given a mandate to establish an organization for this purpose. This is perhaps illustrative of how various functions have been started by the Department (perhaps most notably in the human resources area) and then spun off to other operating agencies.

This role of having DCA take the initiative but not getting bogged down in administering every program it gets started has contributed to its continued ability to define new problems and proposed solutions. Consequently, the fact that many programs are eventually turned over to other departments does not signify that somehow DCA has lost out on a bureaucratic fight. What it really means is that DCA has succeeded in influencing other departments of the State government to carry out new programs that otherwise might never have been started.

The Meadowlands Development Commission is an outstanding example of the results of efforts of this Division in coordination with other agencies.

C. IF THERE WERE NO DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

The Department of Community Affairs has been in operation for nearly nine years. It is not unreasonable, especially in times of fiscal turmoil, to raise questions about the legitimacy of any agency of government. In fact, it is a responsibility to do so.

Community Affairs can build a strong case based on its accomplishments of the past. It can be pointed out that the Department has brought \$70 million of Federal funds into New Jersey, and has assisted local governments in securing countless millions more. The Department can point with pride to the fiscal solvency of our cities, even though pressed by hard times, in the face of difficulties being encountered in New York City and in other urban centers. It can point to having saved millions of dollars by helping local governments improve their efficiency, their bond ratings, and so forth. It can speak of the Meadowlands, and many other things not quantifiable and often not even recorded in the daily operations of government.

But another way to look at it is to ask what would happen if DCA were dismantled, with many of its programs being assigned to other departments. The answers to that question are just as compelling in a negative sense as are the records of the Department's accomplishment.

Let us examine some of those consequences.

How Much Money Would Really Be Saved?

With a total appropriation of \$64 million, some \$56 million, or 87 percent of the Department's budget, goes to local units through state aid programs. Only about 6 percent of the Department's budget is earmarked for salaries. If large amounts of money are to be cut, it is going to have to come out of State aid. State aid can be cut whether the program is located in DCA or anywhere else. Consequently, there is no effect on

savings in that regard.

Second, it has not been advocated that all programs currently administered by this Department be abolished. Accordingly, if programs are to be assigned to other State agencies, then the major dollar savings would be the salaries of the Commissioner's office and some related support staff. The amount of money involved here is virtually of no consequence in the face of a State deficit of some \$400 million or more.

It can only be concluded then that the prospect of securing any major economies by dismantling DCA is a poor one. Not only will the savings from the dismantling of the Department be insignificant, but the State will actually suffer losses. First, by depriving the present parts of DCA of the opportunity to support each other's activities, those activities that are continued may cost the State more since each agency will have to budget for the full costs of its operations rather than being able to take advantage of already budgeted help from sister agencies working closely together. Second, the State has made a major investment in recruiting and training the staff of Community Affairs. There is relatively little about the functions of the Department that is routine, and the type of concerned and knowledgeable people that have been assembled in the Department represent an asset of the State which once given up would take years to duplicate.

#### Less Efficient Operation

Dismantling the Department will result in less efficient State government. The conditions documented by Governor Hughes' study group in 1962 and 1963 would return. Functions dealing with local problems would be once again splintered over various other State agencies.

It would be a return to the days when the relationships between different government functions were poorly understood.

Picture the local official desiring to improve the organization and operation of his municipal government. He would have to come to a number of different State agencies for help. He would have to go to the Treasury Department for help in analyzing his financial operations. To Environmental Protection for planning assistance. To Institutions and Agencies for advice on his programs dealing with the poor and the aging.

Instead of getting help from a central point where there was an overall concern for his problems, the local official would in effect have to try to pull together the different advice he would be receiving from different State agencies. In other words, in trying to create an effective well integrated government, the local official would be asking the State for something that it did not have itself.

Beyond this, with the various DCA parts scattered to other State agencies, how much concern and time could they afford to devote to helping the local officials? It is a well known fact that governmental operations tend to become self centered. The reason for DCA's existence is to serve local government, but the reasons for other State departments existing is generally to serve the State government, so as various problems arose, local assistance staff would find themselves reassigned to working on State problems. These people would find their career advancement related not to how well they help local governments, but how well they fitted in to meeting the internal needs of the various State departments.

#### Loss Of The Synergistic Effect

This effect is defined as "the simultaneous action of separate agencies which, together, have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects." This means that DCA has been able to accomplish significant results because its Commissioner could use the concerns and the resources of the different divisions working together towards objectives that don't

fit neatly within any single division.

Section B described a number of examples of results achieved by the divisions working together. One of the most noteworthy has been the departmental task force that saw representatives from all divisions pressed into service to help local governments understand the new way of delivering Federal money to local governments through the Community Development Revenue Sharing program. That Federal program puts a responsibility on the local governing officials to set their own priorities for use of Federal money over a broad range of community development programs. These individual activities don't fit within any single division of DCA, and it would prove virtually impossible for the State to encompass all of these activities in a rational manner if DCA were scattered away. We are talking about a program that means \$81 million to New Jersey's local governments each year.

There are a number of programs that would be likely to fall between the cracks, not really belonging to any single division, but part of the Department as a whole.

For example, how would the Safe and Clean Neighborhoods program be characterized -- as a housing program, or a law enforcement program, or as a poverty program? DCA can treat the program as part of our overall effort to deal with community needs, but assigning it to some other State department would inevitably characterize the program in one direction or another.

#### Dealing With Local Governments

New Jersey local governments exist and operate under the control of elected governing bodies. Certainly some State agencies can deal with specific local problems, but how does it all get put together? With DCA torn asunder, who is going to think about the overall efficiency of local

governments? Who will be able to carry on a program designed to improve the organization of county government as envisioned by the Optional County Charter Law? Yet it is such fundamental improvements in local government's ability to manage itself that in the long run will affect the efficiency of the individual local departments.

#### Looking At The "Urban Problem"

The urban problem really is just as much a suburban problem. Somebody in State government has to be devoting full attention to it. Someone has to be looking at the pattern of governmental relationships and trying to guide the use of State grant funds so that they all mesh together so as to foster viable local government.

The State has made a commitment to dealing with these local problems. The commitment is expressed primarily through the existence of the Department of Community Affairs. Local officials and community groups are accustomed to having a Department to deal with -- a Department primarily concerned with trying to meet their needs. Where will they go to make their voices heard in the future? Will they see this as the reneging by the State on its commitment? How will the mayors, the freeholders and the people in the ghettos react? Will this reaction be worth whatever dollar savings might be realized?

#### The Federal Perspective

Simply because the Great Society programs have been dismantled and the present national administration has not looked kindly on such activities is no reason to turn our own backs on the legitimate needs that continue to exist. There are still many federal aid programs available. There are still many federal bureaucracies that must be dealt with.

Whatever form federal aid takes, it is still coming, and as these programs change there is a need for a State agency to interpret these

changes and help local governments get their fair share of the national pie. Of particular concern, if the Democratic Party should endorse an urban plank, and there should be a change in Washington, would not New Jersey really be in a sorry situation?

### Wall Street

One of the most pressing problems facing every town in America today is the financial crisis. What happens on the bond market is affecting us all. We have before us a major challenge to restore Wall Street's confidence in local bonds.

If the State of New Jersey, which to date has maintained a good reputation on Wall Street, were to dismantle its Department of Community Affairs, Wall Street would really take a second look at bond ratings and the bond buyers would be thinking twice before purchasing New Jersey Municipals. The result could be devastating. The results would be felt not only in every town but in the State government as well.

In summary, there is just not that much to be gained by dismantling Community Affairs, and there is the potential for extremely serious consequences. Regardless of whatever funding difficulties may exist, it is inescapable that the needs and problems of local government are those of the State. It is a condition of our urban society.

## Attachment 1

From: A PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (June 19, 1962)\*

### SUMMARY

The impact of population growth and technological advancement upon our society today is most clearly seen through the profusion of problems in our urban areas. To meet these problems, New Jersey has developed new programs in housing and local planning assistance. It has increased its participation in Federal programs. And it has expanded its services to municipalities. However, it is quite apparent that if attempts to meet the mounting problems of urban blight, traffic, mass transit, housing, and community facilities are to be more effective, strengthening our overall State program is still necessary.

Because the wide variety of Federal and State programs, available to meet our urban problems, are diffused throughout the total governmental structure, there exists a particularly important need for improved administrative machinery. This is necessary in order to achieve better integration and coordination of the overall Federal, State and local effort.

The State's position between the Federal government, which provides the bulk of financial assistance for urban programs, and the local governments, which are the recipients, makes it the obvious choice to initiate action toward such improvement.

Specifically, the State can go far in meeting the needs of our urban areas by establishing an agency which does the following:

- 1) Establishes one central location to which municipal officials can refer in order to receive assistance as to which of the many programs available bear on their community development problems, and how to go about receiving such assistance.

\* Preliminary Report to Governor Richard J. Hughes submitted by Katharine Elkus White on behalf of special cabinet level study group. This effort led to the establishment of the Department of Community Affairs.

- 2) Strengthens the broad general planning and planning coordination of all State programs and pertinent Federal programs, including inter-state aspects, insofar as they influence the utilization and development of all State resources.
- 3) Concentrates State functions in the closely related programs of housing, local planning assistance, urban renewal, and community finance, through some of which both Federal and State financial assistance is made available, in order to more efficiently capitalize on such programs and determine where new programs or improvements to existing ones are necessary.

While the above items have been stated separately, it is necessary to show their important interrelationship. For example, the study and analysis conducted as part of the planning operation would rely heavily on the experience gained from closer relationship with municipal officials and the analysis of programs referred to in Item Three above. The planning effort, in turn, thus guided by a more intimate knowledge in both of these areas would be able to develop a framework through the over-all State Planning Program, more accurately geared to the needs of community development.