

NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

**REBUILDING
PROVIDENCE
1956**

PROVIDENCE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

TO MAYOR WALTER H, REYNOLDS
THE HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
AND THE CITIZENS OF PROVIDENCE . . .

In 1956 the most significant accomplishment of the Agency was the beginning of redevelopment action in the West River Industrial Park, by far the largest project area to date in Providence.

The Rhode Island General Assembly approved the Redevelopment Act of 1956 to aid private enterprise in the prevention and remedy of blighting conditions, as well as to continue authority for the clearance of areas beyond recall. The City Council of Providence adopted the Ordinance providing Minimum Standards for Housing, a potentially powerful instrument for blight prevention. These measures were initiated and prepared with the assistance of the Agency.

Preliminary planning for one urban renewal project was completed during the year while three others were in various stages of progress.

We take pleasure in reporting to you on these and other accomplishments.

Respectfully submitted,

Chester R. Martin
Chester R. Martin
Morris S. Waldman
Albert Harkness
Edmund M. Mauro
Timothy A. Purcell

IN CITY COUNCIL

JUN 6 - 1957

READ:

WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

H. Everett Whelan
CLERK

THE AIMS OF URBAN RENEWAL

In recent years the purposes envisioned for the redevelopment activities of both the national and the state governments, including Rhode Island, have gradually broadened. The clearance of existing slum buildings in deteriorated or arrested areas continues to be a primary purpose; but increasing importance is now being placed upon the prevention of housing blight and the replacement of substandard areas by well-planned and more highly productive neighborhoods. Legislative changes have consistently followed and are implementing this trend. Many central cities including Providence are taking increasing advantage of the expanding Federally-aided urban renewal program.

Unlike the comparatively simpler clearance program, the process of blight prevention is a many-sided activity still in the pioneering stage. It includes the voluntary rehabilitation of housing in areas not too seriously deteriorated; the enforced repair and maintenance of housing that has fallen below certain minimum standards of safety, sanitation, or occupancy; the improvement of municipal facilities, utilities and services; the conservation of good housing areas where blight has begun or threatens to begin; and the organization of various advisory and financial services for these purposes.

In an almost completely developed central city area such as Providence, new subdivisions cannot contribute significantly to the increase to the tax base necessary to meet modern standards of

municipal services and facilities. The only alternative is to encourage the greater productivity of land already privately occupied.

The replacement of deteriorated areas promptly after they pass beyond the feasibility of rehabilitation is necessary for the social and economic welfare of the entire city. The new use of redeveloped land converts a serious tax drain into a substantial tax asset and source of additional employment, and substitutes progress for decay in the life of the community.

LEGISLATION AND LAW

The year 1956 was an unusually active one in the development of the legal framework for urban renewal progress in the Nation, in Rhode Island, and particularly in Providence.

In the Housing Act of 1956, Congress again liberalized the program of Federal assistance for local renewal programs established in 1949 and broadened in 1954. Relocation payments are now authorized to families and businesses for eligible moving expenses and property losses incurred by their displacement from renewal projects. Federal advances may now be made for the preparation of a General Neighborhood Renewal Plan. Certain non-residential areas may be redeveloped for non-residential uses with Federal assistance under a ten percent financial limitation for the nation as a whole. Other provisions increased the scope of mortgage insurance assistance for home repairs and improvements under several existing Federal programs, including relocation housing, cooperative housing, and housing for the elderly.

In Rhode Island, the General Assembly adopted the Redevelopment Act of 1956 repealing and replacing the 1950 legislation. The new law eliminates the necessity of preparing a tentative plan in addition to the redevelopment plan for each project. A redevelopment agency may now undertake and encourage a variety of measures short of clearance in those areas which may be susceptible to rehabilitation and improvement to standard conditions. Technical assistance may be given to property owners to facilitate

voluntary improvement of their real property. These provisions make it possible for Providence to take greater advantage of the Federal urban renewal program established in 1954 and expanded in 1956. The new Rhode Island law further provides for the proration of taxes for the year in which property is taken for redevelopment, and for payment of taxes for property owned by the Agency.

Another action by the General Assembly, the Minimum Standards Housing Act, gave to Providence and other communities the authority to require the maintenance and repair of dwellings in compliance with minimum standards of health and safety. Within three months after this action, the City Council of Providence enacted the Ordinance providing Minimum Standards for Housing which had been developed during three years of intensive study by the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing with the aid of the Agency staff. By the close of 1956, a Director was appointed for the Division of Minimum Housing Standards and the organization of staff and program for this work was progressing satisfactorily.

On July 13, 1956, the Supreme Court of Rhode Island delivered its unanimous opinion sustaining the Agency's appeal from a Superior Court decision eighteen months earlier which had recognized the Agency's right to take all but one of the properties in the Point Street Project Area. The Supreme Court recognized the authority of an agency in accordance with Rhode Island law to determine which properties must be taken in order to accomplish the public purpose of redevelopment within an approved project area.

P R O J E C T P L A N N I N G

Four project areas were in various stages of planning during 1956. Of these, planning for one was completed, for another was resumed, and for the third was continued. On the fourth, planning activity has been generally deferred pending the results of studies by others.

WEST RIVER - Plans for the West River Industrial Park were substantially revised in cooperation with the Housing and Home Finance Agency, in respect to the exclusion of existing industrial plants which were not to be acquired but were formerly to have been included within the project area. The final project plans were submitted to HHFA in April, approved by the City Council in July, and in September the federal capital grant allocation was made. Project development was undertaken prior to December 31 and is described in a following section.

POINT STREET - After successful conclusion of more than five years of litigation in the Rhode Island Superior Court and Supreme Court, the Redevelopment Agency is in a position to make the many revisions of the project plan now required by changed circumstances in the Point Street area. The size of the project has been reduced by the recent expansion of a large jewelry plant to cover one entire block, and the planned industrial re-use of the area must also be adjusted with respect to a portion needed for the proposed route of the North-South Freeway.

LIPPITT HILL - Preliminary survey and planning work were

virtually complete by the close of 1956, for the first project involving a combination of urban renewal measures under the federal Housing Act of 1954 as amended. Portions of this area, not yet finally defined, are contemplated for clearance and redevelopment, while other sections along three sides and including the higher elevation are expected to display a variety of rehabilitation and neighborhood improvement techniques, of primarily private value when this project goes into the development stage. Planning tasks remaining include much consultation with the Federal Housing Administration and with neighborhood leaders, groups, and individuals; economic studies to determine the marketability of various housing types for this area; final delineation of clearance and non-clearance areas; decisions on commercial and institutional questions; and preparation of proposals for City Council and HHFA approval.

CONSTITUTION HILL - Since most of this area is affected by the need for coordinating the Agency's plans with current detailed studies being undertaken by the City Plan Commission and by the Providence Preservation Society, the Agency's preparation of specific project plans has recently been deferred. Certain housing quality survey information has been developed by field inspection during the year.

P R O J E C T D E V E L O P M E N T

During 1956 West River, the third project area in as many years, was acquired; the previous project, Willard Center Unit Two, was about two-thirds completed; and the initial project, Willard Center Unit One, was about three-quarters completed.

WILLARD CENTER UNIT ONE - At the year's end 50 of the 60 structures in the Unit One area had been demolished, and the occupants of two of the remaining structures were awaiting their opportunity to move into a new shopping center in Unit Two. Ground was broken May 15, 1956 for construction of the new South Providence Elementary School by the City of Providence, which was 40 percent completed by the end of the year.

WILLARD CENTER UNIT TWO - Residential relocation was completed during the year, the last three families having moved from the area in March, 1956. Only 26 of the area's 157 structures remained standing on December 31, of which 10 were occupied by merchants awaiting space in the new shopping center. Four acres of land for the center was purchased by Willard Center Realty, Inc. in October, and on December 4, construction was begun of the building which will accommodate 22 stores. Off-street parking in front of these stores and individual loading facilities at the rear will mark this as a fully modern commercial development. About 9 acres remain to be sold to the city and developed for school playground and neighborhood playfield purposes.

WEST RIVER - The Agency on December 13, 1956, took title by eminent domain to 57.4 acres of land and 507 buildings, and began the conversion of the old North End neighborhood into the West River Industrial Park. A number of circumstances which formerly accelerated the residential blight, such as the adjoining railroad and major industries, natural barriers, and heavy traffic routes, are important advantages to a modern industrial development. The absence of bed rock allows the economical removal of the hill to the adjacent areas where fill is needed. And, under the new federal roads program, the proposed North-South Freeway will soon become the eastern boundary and will serve the industrial park with convenient exit and access ramps. It is also expected to merge with the Louisquisset Pike immediately south of the project shortly after its completion.

Redevelopment in West River accomplishes much more than the elimination of a blighted residential area. The owners of every property in the City of Providence will gain an important tax advantage from the production of new property values in the West River area. Industrial buildings and other taxable property to be installed are expected to pay their own way as part of an improved city tax base, producing many times as much tax income as formerly was contributed by the property now being demolished.

In addition to improving the city's tax structure, West River makes possible a much more important improvement in the city's economy. While no accurate estimate can yet be made, the amount of industrial employment to be created by the West River industries

will be a substantial increase for the city. It begins to relieve the pressure of need for industrial sites in a nearly filled-up city in which the scarcity of vacant land has prevented the establishment of thousands of job opportunities in central locations. A large part of this need is felt by existing local plants occupying crowded quarters, unable to expand where they are and unable to afford the double cost of old buildings and demolition, in addition to the purchase price of the land and the cost of new construction.

Redevelopment for industry has, despite these obstacles, been taking place on a piecemeal basis during the entire history of the city. The modern, publicly-assisted program of urban renewal now enables this redevelopment to proceed, as in West River, in a wholesale and orderly manner by retiring an entire neighborhood area where blight is predominant and severe.

City of Providence Funds - Fiscal Year 1955-1956

F I N A N C I A L S T A T E M E N T

	APPROPRIATION	EXPENDITURES	SURPLUS Returned to General Fund
Salaries	\$45,847.00	\$40,021.75*	\$5,825.25
Contract Services	3,640.00	1,713.26	1,926.74
Materials and Supplies	950.00	751.30	198.70
Equipment and Furniture	<u>4,785.00</u>	<u>4,233.64</u>	<u>551.36</u>
	\$55,222.00	\$46,719.95	\$8,502.05

* Includes Local Cash Grant-in-Aid of \$4,742.10

Federally Aided Program of Redevelopment

B A L A N C E

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash in Bank - Survey and Planning Accounts

West River	\$	1,378.98	
Constitution Hill		2,517.06	
Lippitt Hill		6,165.82	\$ 10,061.86

Cash in Bank - Project Development Accounts

Willard Center Unit One			
Project Expenditures Account	\$	72,882.43	
Project Temporary Loan Repayment Fund		1.62	72,884.05
Willard Center Unit Two			
Project Expenditures Account	\$	23,152.75	
Project Temporary Loan Repayment Fund		7,420.83	30,573.58

Accounts Receivable

Revolving Fund	\$	1,125.00	
Imprest Funds			
Willard Center Unit One		500.00	
Willard Center Unit Two		1,000.00	
Escrow Account - Superior Court			
Willard Center Unit Two		122,657.84	125,282.84

TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS			\$ 238,802.33
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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COSTS

West River	\$	85,233.40	
Constitution Hill		6,283.23	
Lippitt Hill		12,578.86	
Willard Center Unit One	\$	715,073.70	
Less Price of Land Sold		67,584.82	647,488.88
Willard Center Unit Two	\$	1,692,193.91	
Less Price of Land Sold		6,775.00	1,685,418.91

TOTAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COSTS			2,437,003.28
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TOTAL ASSETS			<u>\$2,675,805.61</u>
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Projects As of September 30, 1956

S H E E T

LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL

LIABILITIES

Accrued Interest Payable

West River	\$ 2,377.63
Constitution Hill	320.29
Lippitt Hill	394.68
Willard Center Unit One	8,576.02
Willard Center Unit Two	<u>4,827.33</u>

Total Accrued Interest Payable \$ 16,495.95

Advances and Loans Payable

West River	\$ 72,475.00
Constitution Hill	8,630.00
Lippitt Hill	18,500.00
Willard Center Unit One	233,481.91
Willard Center Unit Two	<u>609,000.00</u>

Total Advances and Loans Payable 942,086.91

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$ 958,582.86

CAPITAL

Local Cash Grants-in-Aid

West River	\$ 11,984.75
Willard Center Unit One	159,705.00
Willard Center Unit Two	<u>585,000.00</u>

Total Local Cash Grants-in-Aid \$ 756,689.75

Federal Capital Grants

Willard Center Unit One	\$ 319,410.00
Willard Center Unit Two	<u>641,123.00</u>

Total Federal Capital Grants 960,533.00

TOTAL CAPITAL 1,717,222.75

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL \$2,675,805.61

THE HONORABLE WALTER H. REYNOLDS
Mayor, City of Providence

THE PROVIDENCE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Chester R. Martin, Chairman Morris S. Waldman, Vice-Chairman
Albert Harkness
Edmund M. Mauro
Timothy A. Purcell
Charles R. Wood, Secretary

Donald M. Graham, Executive Director
Robert F. Rowland, Deputy Director*
John R. Kellam, Assistant to the Executive Director
D. Reid Ross, Assistant to the Executive Director*
Norman K. DiSandro, Accountant
Mrs. Florence Spirito, Secretary

James F. Reynolds, Senior Engineer
Melvin St. J. Susi, Project Supervisor
Michael J. Kopeski, Assistant Project Supervisor
Anna A. Fera, Secretary

Stanley Bernstein, Real Estate Officer

Timothy J. McCarthy, Attorney
Sidney Kramer, Attorney
Vincent J. Baccari, Attorney**
Joan F. D'Iorio, Secretary

Robert C. Smith, Senior Planner
Morton B. Braun, Senior Planner*
Richard S. Bolan, Associate Planner*
Thomas B. Marston, Jr., Project Planner
Mrs. Margaret B. Geddes, Project Planner
Mrs. Marian L. Rasmussen, Assistant Project Planner*
James F. Ross, Assistant Project Planner**
William R. Tipple, Planning Assistant**
Ann A. Edmonds, Secretary

David Joyce, Director of Relocation**
Joseph P. Iacono, Housing Inspector
Shirley Weiss, Social Worker
Mrs. Helen R. Murphy, Secretary

* Resigned

** Part Time

December 31, 1956

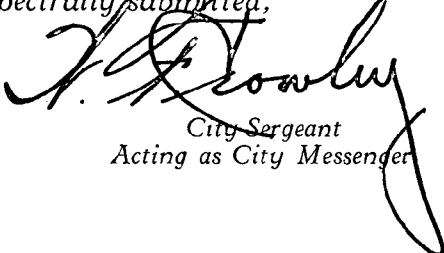
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REPORT OF THE CITY MESSENGER
For the month of A P R I L
1 9 5 7

TO THE HONORABLE THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE:

Complying with the provisions of the City Ordinances the undersigned reports to your honorable body the following statement of "the expenditures and liabilities incurred in the care and superintendence of the City Hall and adjacent sidewalks," for the months of

For lighting City Hall,.....	\$ 977.30
“ power,	210.56
“ fuel,	1,725.60
“ pay-roll of clerks, engineer, fireman, janitors, elevator men, watchman, etc.,	6,727.40
“ supplies,	3,042.05
“ salary of City Sergeant and Deputy,	934.00
“ new furniture,	
“ furnishings and repairs,.....	
“ telephone service, excess calls.....	2,504.79
Rent - 112 Union St.	900.00
“ 49 Westminster St.	300.00
	<hr/>
	\$ 17,321.70

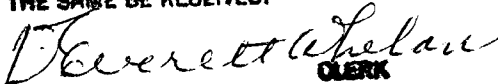
Respectfully submitted,


City Sergeant
Acting as City Messenger

IN CITY COUNCIL
JUN 6 - 1957

READ:

WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.


CLERK

1957

Weekly Report of the Superintendent of the Dexter Asylum
To the Honorable Mayor and the Honorable the City Council of Providence

The Superintendent of the Dexter Asylum herewith reports on admissions
and discharges for the week ending.....May 19,.....1957

Admitted 0 Discharged 0 Remaining 22

ADMISSIONS

Date	Name	Age	Birthplace	Admitted by Director of Public Welfare

DISCHARGES

Name	Discharged by	No.

Respectfully submitted,

James V. McQuinn
.....Superintendent
Director of Public Welfare

In City Council.....JUN 3 - 1957.....

Read, whereupon it is ordered that the same be received.

Devereett Helan
.....Clerk.

Weekly Report
of the
Dexter Asylum
Week Ending
May 26, 1957

Weekly Report of the Superintendent of the Dexter Asylum
To the Honorable Mayor and the Honorable the City Council of Providence

The Superintendent of the Dexter Asylum herewith reports on admissions
and discharges for the week ending.....June 2,.....1957

Admitted 0 Discharged 0 Remaining 22

ADMISSIONS

Date	Name	Age	Birthplace	Admitted by Director of Public Welfare
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DISCHARGES

Name	Discharged by	No.
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Respectfully submitted,

James V. McGraw
.....Superintendent
Director of Public Welfare

JUN 6 - 1957

In City Council.....

Read, whereupon it is ordered that the same be recorded.

Robert H. Whelan
.....Clerk

Weekly Report
of the
Dexter Asylum
Week Ending
June 2, 1957

TO THE HONORABLE THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE:

At a meeting of the School Committee of the City of Providence, held May 27, 1957, the following resolution was adopted;

No. 156

RESOLUTION approving preliminary drawing for the Joslin Street School.

RESOLVED, That the School Committee hereby approves the preliminary drawing for an elementary school, said plan showing floor arrangement, as prepared and presented by Howe, Prout and Ekman, architects, under date of March 21, 1957; said plan being designated by said architects as the Joslin Street School.

Respectfully submitted,

James J. Foley
Secretary School Committee

IN CITY COUNCIL
JUN 6 - 1957

READ:
WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

Beverett Whelan
CLERK