



# WORKABLE PROGRAM

FOR

## URBAN RENEWAL

IN

PROVIDENCE, R.I.



CITY OF PROVIDENCE • RHODE ISLAND • Walter H. Reynolds • Mayor

## EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

CITY HALL

December 31, 1957

Mr. Albert M. Cole  
Housing Administrator  
Housing and Home Finance Agency  
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Mr. Cole:

I respectfully request that this statement and documentation be approved as fulfilling for the City of Providence the workable program requirement established by Section 101 (c) of the Act of 1949, as amended by Section 303 of the Housing Act of 1954, and that you so certify to the constituent agencies of the Housing and Home Finance Agency to insure against any delay in the Federal aids and assistance needed to continue and expand our program for eliminating and preventing slums, for halting the spread of blight, and for improving housing and living conditions in the City of Providence.

Sincerely yours,

IN CITY COUNCIL

JAN 2 - 1958

READ:

WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT  
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

*Robert Whelan*  
CLERK

*Walter H. Reynolds*  
Walter H. Reynolds, Mayor  
City of Providence, Rhode Island



CITY OF PROVIDENCE • RHODE ISLAND • Walter H. Reynolds • Mayor

## EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Charles R. Wood  
Urban Renewal Coordinator

City Hall  
Providence 3, R. I.

December 2, 1957

The Honorable Walter H. Reynolds  
Mayor of Providence  
City Hall  
Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Mayor Reynolds:

Attached is a proposed "Workable Program" for the City of Providence. For the preparation of this and previous drafts particular acknowledgement is due the Providence Redevelopment Agency which made staff members available to your Coordinator in the persons of James F. Ross and John R. Kellam.

The present draft has been carefully reviewed by your Technical Steering Committee and at a meeting held on November 26, 1957, upon motion duly made and seconded, was unanimously approved by the Committee with the recommendation that it be transmitted to you for submission to the Housing Administrator for certification.

As a "Workable Program" it represents the progressive thinking and constructive contributions of responsible heads of a number of municipal departments, offered as an integrated plan for a concerted attack upon the problems of urban blight and depreciation.

Execution of the plan in the manner set forth, and through the cooperative and democratic methods described, will do much to assure improved conditions for work, for living, and for recreational and cultural opportunities for all of the citizens of Providence.

Respectfully yours,

Charles R. Wood  
Urban Renewal Coordinator and  
Chairman, Technical Steering Committee

CRW:vmg

Encl.

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## INTRODUCTION

Providence, located at the head of Narragansett Bay, founded in 1636, and incorporated in 1832, is one of the oldest and largest (18.91 sq. miles) New England seaport cities. With some 250,000 persons within a metropolitan area of three quarters of a million, Providence is the capital of the most densely populated state in the Union.

The City has become the largest producer of costume jewelry in the world, and a center of manufacturing for machine tools, textile machinery and products, plastics, rubber, electronics, scientific instruments, chemicals and silver arts, with a total of 1,632 separate manufacturing plants. The industrial diversity of Providence has always been broader than that of many other comparable New England cities.

One of New England's educational centers, Providence is the home of Brown University, Providence College, Rhode Island College of Education, Rhode Island School of Design and a number of outstanding private schools, such as Bryant College and Katherine Gibbs Secretarial School.

A unique feature of the dwelling units of Providence is this: almost the entire city is built of wooden frame houses. Of the 72,000 dwelling units within the city, three out of four, or 54,000, are over 35 years old. Most of these older units have provided homes for several generations of families, have been occupied and re-occupied many times.

It was estimated in 1954 that 35,000 dwelling units were or soon would be below current standards of desirable housing. Of the total of 72,000 units, 60,000 were within areas requiring some form of organized neighborhood improvement, although 53,000 were in areas requiring action short of clearance. But even so, that left 7,000 units in areas requiring redevelopment.

Considerable progress has already been made against these 7,000 critical units. Between 1955 and 1957 over 400 units were demolished and another 700 substandard units will be demolished before 1958. However, we realize that if it took ten years to remove one-seventh of the slum blight, and if it took only fifty years to create all of it, unless the program is accelerated or the development of new blight is prevented, the city will be consumed by internal decay faster than it can be renewed.

The only solution is to do both: prevent the incipient blight and accelerate the attack against existing deterioration. Hence we have enacted codes and ordinances to prevent the spread of blight; we have accelerated the redevelopment program to recoup the ground lost to complete deterioration and we have planned a vigorous program of citizen participation to halt the progression of blight in areas which should be conserved or rehabilitated.

THIS IS OUR WORKABLE PROGRAM: TO PREVENT NEW SLUMS AND DETERIORATION; TO ERADICATE THE WRECKAGE OF THE PAST; TO CONSERVE WHAT IS STRONG AND REHABILITATE WHAT IS WEAKENED; TO RENEW THE HOUSING; TO EXPAND THE INDUSTRIAL BASE OF THE CITY; AND TO PROVIDE A DECENT, SAFE AND SANITARY HOME FOR EVERY CITIZEN OF PROVIDENCE.



SECTION I . . . . . CODES AND ORDINANCES

The City of Providence has completed the establishment of a comprehensive system of codes and ordinances which prescribe minimum standards of health, sanitation, and safety under which dwellings may be lawfully occupied. At present the enforcement of these codes is active, including the Housing Ordinance under which inspection and enforcement has recently begun.

Housing Ordinance

The Providence Minimum Standards Housing Ordinance (Exhibit I-A), passed by the City Council on July 5, 1956, was approved by the Mayor on July 9, 1956. Enabling legislation for this ordinance, drafted by the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing, had been enacted by the Rhode Island General Assembly as Chapter 3715 of the Public Laws, 1956, approved April 12, 1956 (Exhibit I-B).

This ordinance was prepared during two and one half years of intensive study involving 65 meetings of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing. In most respects the ordinance

is modeled upon ordinances adopted by other cities and the APHA model ordinance. The housing ordinance establishes minimum standards for (1) sanitary facilities, plumbing and drainage; (2) heating and refrigeration equipment; (3) lighting, ventilation and electrical facilities; (4) dwelling space, use and access; (5) safe and sanitary maintenance; (6) responsibilities of owners, operators and occupants; and (7) rooming houses. These standards apply to all dwellings, rooming houses and rooming units throughout the city. The enforcing officer has the power to order vacated and to secure dwellings that create serious hazards to the health or safety of the occupants or the public, and the power to issue orders to correct violations of the provisions of the ordinance.

After the Providence Minimum Standards Housing Ordinance was approved, provision was made in the 1956-1957 City Budget for the operating expenses of the Division of Minimum Housing Standards, which the ordinance created within the "Executive Department" (Mayor's Office), as the enforcement agency for that ordinance. Because of the Mayor's direct interest and its importance to the city, the ordinance as amended established the position of Urban Renewal Coordinator, who is a special administrative assistant to the Mayor. The Coordinator has,

in addition to the functions to be described later, responsibility for securing cooperation among the agencies engaged in fulfilling the purposes of this and other ordinances related to housing.

Providence launched its systematic housing inspection program in May, 1957. Copies of inspection forms are attached (Exhibit I-C). This enforcement program and the methods of coordination between building and housing inspection agencies are described in Section IV, Administrative Organization.

#### Building Code

The Building Ordinance of the City of Providence (Exhibit I-D) was passed by the City Council, approved by the Mayor on December 22, 1956, and became effective March 31, 1957. This Ordinance, primarily a performance type of code, replaces the outmoded September, 1926 ordinance, and its amendments. Preparation of this code involved 89 conferences with professional organizations on the kind and extent of content necessary. Enabling legislation for the code had been enacted by the General Assembly as Chapter 3338 of the Public Laws, 1954, approved April 26, 1954 (Exhibit I-E). The Building Code consolidated several of the inspectional services of the city into one Department of Building Inspection with a Division of

Structures and Zoning; a Division of Plumbing, Drainage and Gas Piping; a Division of Electrical Installations; and a Division of Air Pollution, Mechanical Equipment and Installations. The granting of permits follows upon signed recommendations by all the division heads involved in the type of work to be done (Exhibit I-F).

Standards of quality and testing incorporated by reference in the code are those recommended by recognized professional, technical and manufacturing institutes and societies, the U.S. Bureau of Standards, the Department of Commerce, and Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc., and other nationally recognized testing agencies.

The code provides plumbing requirements for the design, installation, alteration, maintenance, and inspection of all systems of plumbing, water supply, drainage and gas piping in all buildings erected or altered. These requirements replace the chapters of the City ordinances relative to plumbing, as adopted in 1914 and revised in 1917, 1921, 1923, 1934 and 1944.

Electric wiring and equipment is similarly inspected and controlled under the comprehensive building code. The electrical code which the city had adopted in 1949, by amendment

to Section 52 of the building code of 1926, was substantially the National Electrical Code of 1947. This was replaced in Section 1500.0 of the 1956 Building Code, as amended, by the National Electric Code, edition of 1956; and the applicable standards in the 1957 revision of the Rhode Island Industrial Code were incorporated by reference in Section 1600.1, as amended.

Fire resistance and fire safety requirements are contained within the code insofar as methods, standards and materials of building construction and alteration are concerned.

The control of air pollution, formerly within the Public Service Division of the Department of Public Works, is now administered by the Division of Air Pollution, Mechanical Equipment and Installations, in the Department of Building Inspection. The provisions of all ordinances governing the construction and operation of fuel burning equipment have been replaced by sections of the Building Code; and the advisory and appeal boards under the air pollution ordinances have been supplanted by the Building Board of Review operating under the new code.

### Zoning Ordinance

See Sections II and IV below.

### Other Ordinances

Establishment of a bureau of Fire Prevention was authorized in 1944 by ordinance, and in 1947 this Bureau was placed under the control of the Commissioner of Public Safety although direct supervision continues to be exercised by the chief of the fire department. The duty of the Bureau is defined in Sec. 30.4 of Article II of Chapter 12, Revised Ordinances of the City of Providence, 1956 Supplement, (Exhibit I-G), as the enforcement of all laws of the state and ordinances of the city, and all regulations of the Commissioner of Public Safety, pertaining to fire prevention. The Bureau conducts periodic inspections of all buildings other than private dwellings, as required by law, and in addition inspects over 90% of all dwellings annually on invitation of owners or occupants, for the purpose of obtaining correction of any fire hazards. Every fire is investigated as to cause, and complete records are maintained and analyzed by the Bureau.

Ratproofing of all structures is required by Article III of Chapter 17, Revised Ordinances of the City of Providence,

1956 Supplement. Premises may be inspected upon complaint or at the discretion of the Superintendent of Health. Rat infestations or the lack of ratproof condition of a structure can be ordered corrected. Provision for ratproofing of new construction or repairs, alterations or extensions of existing structures is mandatory as a health measure, in addition to compliance with specifications contained for such treatment in the Building Code.

#### Coordination of Enforcement

The City has achieved a satisfactory method of coordinating the activities of the Department of Building Inspection, the Health Department, and the Division of Minimum Housing Standards. A description of these procedures will be found in Section IV, Administrative Organization.

The procedures for enforcement detailed in the Housing, Building and Zoning Codes respectively provide that in case of failure of property owners or other responsible persons to comply with orders of the Director of the Division of Minimum Housing Standards, the Director of the Department of Building Inspection, or the director of any other authorized enforcement agency, the City Solicitor shall take the necessary legal

action under Sections 57 (d) and 58 of the Charter of the City of Providence (Public Laws of R.I. 1940, Chapter 832). The Housing and Building Codes also provide the enforcement agencies with authority, subject to appeal and review, to take immediate remedial action in situations seriously imperiling the common welfare.

The City of Providence codes and ordinances adequate to safeguard a program for urban renewal. Moreover, the city is committed to a program of vigorous enforcement of these codes and has provided the staff necessary for their implementation.



## SECTION II . . . . . A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Since the Providence City Plan Commission was reorganized in 1944, Comprehensive Community Planning has been a major element in its work. The Comprehensive Planning Program is divided into four parts: The Master Plans, Planning Studies, Preparation of, and Referral Services under Regulatory Controls, and Capital Improvement Programming. Each of these is described below, and in addition there follows a description of the organization of the City Plan Commission and an indication of the extent to which such planning is utilized.

### The Master Plans

Five of the major parts of a general plan for Providence have been prepared by the City Plan Commission. In 1946 the Commission adopted a MASTER PLAN FOR THOROFARES, (Exhibit II-A), a MASTER PLAN FOR LAND USE AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, (Exhibit II-B), and a MASTER PLAN FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS, (Exhibit II-C). The first of these plans was amended in 1950; but changes in State plans for freeway alignment have rendered the plan obsolete in some details and the City Plan Commission has placed revision of the plan among

the work to be accomplished in the near future. In 1950, the Commission adopted a MASTER PLAN FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL SITES (Exhibit II-D), and in 1953, a MASTER PLAN FOR PLAYGROUNDS AND PLAYFIELDS (Exhibit II-E).

It has been further determined that to give the most logical and systematic guidance to the City's Urban Renewal program, a further master plan element called a MASTER PLAN FOR URBAN RENEWAL should be scheduled and prepared by the City Plan Commission. The present planning schedule of the Commission is so heavy that immediate preparation of the plan is precluded. But it is expected that within a year its preparation will have been given a definite place in the planning schedule. This plan will complement and supplement the MASTER PLAN FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS, will further discuss the rehabilitation and conservation plans of the city, and will offer a schedule of priorities for the preparation of General Neighborhood Renewal Plans and for the application of renewal procedures. The chief function of this plan will be to guide the Commission in its preparation of neighborhood plans and to assist other departments in the long-range scheduling of their activities.

### Planning Studies

Besides the preparation of over-all master plans of a very general nature, the City Plan Commission has devoted considerable effort to the preparation of other studies which, while not of such general nature, are still more comprehensive than neighborhood planning. These studies which have appeared in published forms are listed as follows:

FUTURE POPULATION OF PROVIDENCE, 1945 (printed)\*

PLAN FOR FIELD'S POINT PORT AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT, 1946  
(printed)\*

A HOUSING PROGRAM FOR PROVIDENCE, 1946 (mimeo)\*

LOW-RENT HOUSING PROJECTS SITE SELECTION STUDY, 1947  
(mimeo)\*

ZONING PLAN REPORT, 1949 (printed) (Exhibit II-F)

PARKING IN DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE, 1950 (Collaborative, printed)  
(Exhibit II-G)

TRAFFIC - TRANSIT INTEGRATION PLAN, 1951 (printed)\*

This study was made under contract between the City of Providence and Smith, Dibble and Company. (Will be brought up to date)

THE EFFECT OF EXPRESSWAY CONSTRUCTION ON SURROUNDING PROPERTIES, 1953, (printed) (Exhibit II-H)

RAILROAD RELOCATION, 1953 (printed), (Exhibit II-I)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNIMPROVED STREETS, 1954, (mimeo)  
(Exhibit II-J)

1946 - 1953 LAND USE COMPARISON, 1955 (printed) (Exhibit  
II-K)

The following studies were not published, were prepared only in preliminary form, or are presently in process of completion:

NEIGHBORHOOD DELINEATION AND CONSERVATION STUDY, 1947\*

FIRE STATION SITE SELECTION STUDY, 1947\*

INVENTORY OF REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT SITES, 1948  
(collaborative)\*

SHADE TREE STUDY, 1950\*

Various continuing studies relating to the location and designing of:

The Olneyville Expressway, North-South Freeway,  
Louisquiset Pike, Western Expressway, Olneyville  
Connector, and Huntington Avenue Extension.\*

The studies marked by an asterisk (\*) are out of print and therefore not available for submission. Copies have, however, been submitted to HHFA previously.

#### Preparation of, and Referral Services under, Regulatory Controls

The Regulatory Controls prepared by the City Plan Commission are of two general classes: Zoning regulations and subdivision regulations.

Twenty-five years after the city's first zoning ordinance was passed in 1923, a complete revision was drafted by the City Plan Commission, and was adopted three years later, on September 21, 1951. Copies of this Ordinance as amended were reprinted in August 1957 (Exhibit II-L). Amendments have served to keep the ordinance current and further changes will be initiated as required. Statistics on the number of zoning exceptions and zoning variances are supplied in Section IV below.

In September, 1956, The City Plan Commission prepared a draft for subdivision regulations which were given extensive consideration by the Department of Public Works, the Redevelopment Agency, and the Executive Department. Since much of the vacant 14.9% of the City's total land area, exclusive of streets and water, is rendered economically unusable by topography and by the fact that it is in widely scattered small parcels, there is actually very little land area within the city which could be subjected to subdivision controls. Moreover, since the present zoning ordinance specifies lot sizes and frontages as well as use regulations; and since Chapter 987, Public Laws of Rhode Island of 1913 requires approval by the City Council of any proposed subdivision which involves the platting of new streets; and since any extensive

subdivision within the City is likely to be done under redevelopment plans, which require referral to the City Plan Commission, and approval by the City Council, it has appeared that the enactment of subdivision regulations would not be essential to adequate land controls in Providence.

The Zoning Board of Review is required by Section 91 of the Zoning Ordinance to refer all petitions for variances and special exceptions to the director of the City Plan Commission for an advisory recommendation thereon.

The Redevelopment Act of 1956 (Section 45) requires redevelopment agencies to consult with planning commissions in formulating redevelopment plans before their submission to the legislative body, and requires their concurrent submission to planning commissions which shall report within thirty days to legislative bodies on such plans and their conformity to master plans.

Chapter 8, Section 16 of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Providence, 1946, provides that all proposed ordinances or resolutions of the city council which affect the city plan or concern the plan, design, character, extent, location or use of any public improvement or public property or change thereof, or concern zoning or other regulations

affecting or controlling the use or development of land or otherwise coming within the functions of the City Plan Commission as set forth in this chapter, and all maps, plans and charts required to be submitted to the city council under provisions of Chapter 987 of the Public Laws of 1913, before the final passage thereof shall be submitted to the City Plan Commission for report and recommendations.

This section has been interpreted in practice to require that subdivisions requiring the platting of new streets, petitions for the redemption of land taken by the city in default of taxes, petitions for licenses for junkyards and like uses, disposition plans for land entrusted by the Smith Estates, the Dexter Donation and the Anna Mann Estate, proposed amendments by the zoning ordinances, plans for the establishment of recreation sites, plans for the construction of school sites and plans for all other proposed public improvements must be referred to the City Plan Commission for recommendation before being acted upon by the City Council.

#### Capital Improvement Programming

Capital Improvement Programming was inaugurated in 1950. Each year this program is revised by the City Plan Commission

and the Finance Director and priority status is assigned to each project. Capital projects are closely coordinated with the master plan elements and the planning studies described above. Six-year Capital Improvement Programs for 1951 through 1957 are submitted (Exhibit II-M). Details of the coordination procedures between the general advisory activities of the Technical Steering Committee, the Urban Renewal Coordinator, the Finance Director and the City Plan Commission in preparing the Capital Improvement Program are given in Section IV.

#### The Organization of the City Plan Commission

The City Plan Commission, established by city ordinance in 1914 under provisions of the State Enabling Act of 1913, now operates under provision of Chapter 329 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, 1938, and Chapter 8, of the City Ordinances of 1946 as amended (Exhibit II-N). Between 1945 and 1957 the Commission's permanent staff increased from six persons and a budget of \$25,000.00 to twelve persons including one Director, two Senior Planners, two Associate Planners, one Associate Analyst, two Planners II, two Associate Planners I, one Secretary, and one Librarian-Stenographer, and a Budget of \$69,779.00. In addition, fourteen positions are temporarily provided for under the Demonstration Grant Contracts with



HHFA on the Central Business District and College Hill studies. Annual reports have been published regularly from 1944 to the present (Exhibit II-0).

At present the City Plan Commission intends to revise certain master plan elements and to continue Capital Improvement Programming. The City Plan Commission will also continue to undertake such further analysis of land use trends, population and economic changes, public facility and transportation patterns as may become necessary for successful urban renewal and conservation.

#### Community Utilization of Master Plans

An indication of the extent to which master plan elements and planning studies have been used to guide construction and redevelopment progress is found in the following outline:

The MASTER PLAN FOR LAND USE has served as a general guide in the preparation of the Zoning Ordinance and other master plan elements, for the location and construction of public facilities, and for the designation of re-uses in areas which are redeveloped. This element of the master plan has influenced every other feature of planning and renewal and will have direct influence upon the general neighborhood re-

newal plans.

The MASTER PLAN FOR THOROFARES has provided a general guide for determining alignment and connections for the North-South Freeway and Louisquisset Pike, both of which are now under construction, for the completed Olneyville Expressway, and for the completed Pershing Square Rotary; and has provided the basis for the City Plan Commission's continuing highway studies noted above.

The MASTER PLAN FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS has provided a basis for the City's present renewal program. It was the basis for the City Council's designation, in 1948, of 17 redevelopment areas covering 25 per cent of the city's area (Exhibit III-A). The six redevelopment projects now in various stages of planning or development are within the area delineated in the Master Plan, and comply with its recommendations. One of the areas, D-7, was recently extended by the City Council, to include the easterly portion of the Lippitt Hill Project.

The MASTER PLAN FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL SITES has provided an extremely useful guide for the scheduling of an elementary school in the Fox Point Area, a second elementary school now under construction in South Providence, and for a third under

construction at Joslin Street. The plan has also been a guide for scheduling the abandonment of seven obsolete school buildings and for the improvement and modernization of many other schools.

The MASTER PLAN FOR PLAYGROUNDS AND PLAYFIELDS has served as a guide for the development of recreation facilities (and has also contributed toward the planning of sites for new school construction noted above.) It has guided the development of new playgrounds at Sackett Street, Whitman Farm, Clara-Danforth Street, Willard Center, and Knight Street, the abandonment of outmoded play areas such as the Ruggles Street and the Livingston Street playgrounds, and the improvement of properly located play areas such as the Fox Point, Cypress Street, Patterson Street and Davis Park playgrounds.

Coordination in planning and programming has been particularly successful with respect to the MASTER PLAN FOR SCHOOL SITES and the MASTER PLAN FOR PLAYGROUNDS AND PLAYFIELDS. The consolidation of these facilities and the avoidance of duplication has achieved a consequent saving in the City's capital outlay.

The City of Providence has sufficient general planning completed, and a program of revision and expansion of its

comprehensive community plans adequate to give intelligent and continuing guidance to the urban renewal program. It has been and will continue to be the practice of the City Plan Commission to subject the various elements of the Master Plan to a thorough re-examination each time the specific neighborhoods or planning areas of the city are studied in view of possible urban renewal projects.

### SECTION III . . . . . NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSES

Since 1916 when the first comprehensive neighborhood analysis was directed by John Ihlder and sponsored by the Providence Chamber of Commerce, analysis of neighborhood conditions have been an important part of planning, and has recently been applied to urban renewal and Capital Improvement Programming in Providence. Studies including the real property inventory of 1934, the low-rent housing survey of 1941, the U.S. Census surveys of 1940 and 1950, and the . . . A.P.H.A. housing quality survey of 1951, have severally documented housing conditions in Providence. As necessary, this information will be reviewed and brought up to date.

#### Determination of the Extent of Blight

The MASTER PLAN FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS, (Exhibit II-A) identifies areas in Providence which are characterized by inadequate housing, high density of dwelling units, overcrowding within dwelling units, delinquency and waywardness, deaths from tuberculosis, decline in land value, high incidence of fire, improper subdivision of streets and

lots, tax delinquency, low value and low density, or inadequate city services.

The REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR CENTRAL AREAS to be described below, formulates in detail these factors, and indicates the income, racial and other characteristics of families affected.

In 1948, the City Council, acting on these City Plan Commission recommendations, designated by ordinance 17 redevelopment areas, after a public hearing to which the 11,000 property owners involved received postcard invitations.

Blighted areas were designated by ordinance (Exhibit III-A) as nine arrested areas and eight deteriorated areas. These seventeen redevelopment areas include 25% of the City's land area, 37% of its dwelling units, and 40% of its population.

The twenty neighborhoods of the city were defined and named by the former Council of Social Services now called the Council of Community Services. These neighborhood boundaries were revised to conform to the redefined census tract boundaries prepared in 1947 by the Mayor's Committee for the Revision of the Census Tracts in Providence, with staff work performed by the City Plan Commission. Blocks within these

neighborhoods are classified and mapped as excellent, acceptable, intermediate, substandard, or blighted according to information derived from the U.S. Census and A.P.H.A. housing surveys.

From the information contained in the surveys and studies mentioned above and in the REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR CENTRAL AREAS to be described below, the extent, causes and location of blight have been discovered. A summary of the U.S. Census conclusions is given in Neighborhood Conservation Memorandum No. 7, (Exhibit III-B). Further evaluation of the extent and character of blighted conditions is contained in Special Report No. 1 of the Providence Redevelopment Agency, entitled THE SCOPE OF THE PROVIDENCE HOUSING PROBLEM AND THE ROLE OF RE-PLANNING, URBAN REDEVELOPMENT, REHABILITATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION IN BLIGHT ELIMINATION AND SLUM PREVENTION, prepared in 1953 in response to a request from Mr. James W. Rouse, then Chairman of the Subcommittee on Urban Redevelopment, Rehabilitation and Conservation of the President's Advisory Committee on Housing (Exhibit III-C).

It is the conviction of the City Plan Commission staff that the information described above on the extent, location and causes of blight is reasonably current and that the

characteristics of the City have not changed significantly in the last few years, except for the slum areas cleared under the redevelopment program.

#### Analysis Applied to Individual Neighborhoods

The City Plan Commission has completed individual surveys of each of the City's twenty neighborhoods. Standard base maps were prepared, upon which have been mapped: the census tracts, blocks, the existing zoning, land use, population densities, dwelling conditions, existing community facilities and proposed public facilities. The neighborhood analysis work program of the City Plan Commission is described in its work outline, DETERMINATIONS OF STANDARDS AND POLICIES, (Exhibit III-D).

The City Plan Commission has undertaken two special research projects in neighborhood analysis. The first is concerned with preservation of the many authentic, historic structures in one of the city's oldest neighborhoods. This research into the methods and possibility of restoring the neighborhood is financed by a URA Demonstration Grant, and by contributions from the city government and from private individuals.



The second project is concerned with the special problems of the Providence Central Business District and, in particular, with the extent to which civic and business groups can participate in and contribute to the planning and programming of renewal for the business district.

Details of these projects were submitted by the Mayor to HHFA in the applications for the grants.

#### Neighborhood Renewal Planning

The next step in neighborhood planning will be a General Neighborhood Renewal Plan for each neighborhood of the city, conforming to the master plan and to this workable program, which will outline the urban renewal activities proposed for each neighborhood, providing a framework for the preparation of urban renewal improvements and indicating generally the land uses, population density, building coverage, prospective requirements for rehabilitation and improvement of property, and any portions of the area contemplated for clearance and redevelopment. The plan will further indicate reasons for priorities given to each neighborhood in the citywide renewal program; and will be based upon an analysis of existing neighborhood characteristics.

These renewal plans will be prepared by the City Plan Commission with the assistance of the Urban Renewal Coordinator and city agencies including, in respective degrees as each aspect of the plan may require, the School Department, Park Department, Recreation Department, Public Works Department, Traffic Department, Health Department, Redevelopment Agency, Housing Authority, Department of Building Inspection, and the Division of Minimum Housing Standards.

Each such neighborhood renewal plan will further contain a schedule, reviewed and endorsed by the Urban Renewal Coordinator, for the execution of the elements of the neighborhood program. In preparing this schedule careful consideration will be given to the integration of Capital Improvement Programming.

Neighborhood planning can be considerably accelerated by provisions of the Federal Planning Advances authorized by the Federal Housing Act of 1956. At the initiation of the City Plan Commission with concurrence of the Providence Redevelopment Agency, or upon its own initiative, the Agency with the approval by resolution of the City Council, may request the HHFA for such planning advances. It is anticipated that such applications would be prepared by the City Plan Commission with

submission of same to be made by the Agency. It is further expected that the City Plan Commission would be engaged to do the planning work upon a contract basis.

#### Designation of Priorities for Urban Renewal

THE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR CENTRAL AREAS (Exhibit III-E), prepared in 1951 by the Providence Redevelopment Agency in collaboration with the City Plan Commission and the Health Department, concluded a comprehensive analysis of twelve survey areas within eight "planning districts" in the central sections of the City with a guide plan and priority rating for the redevelopment of eleven possible project areas.

In order to prepare the priority study, housing conditions within each area were carefully surveyed and documented, an analysis was made of each area, in terms of the master plans, to determine the proper relationship between the possible redevelopment projects and other proposed improvements of the district; and a market analysis was made to provide a realistic appraisal of the re-use potential for each area.

As progress warranted, reassessments of priority ratings have been made from time to time. The most recent PROJECT PRIORITY STUDY, prepared by the Providence Redevelopment

Agency in March 1957, (Exhibit III-F), described the present schedule of first priority projects as it has been modified since 1951 and extended to cover projects which can be completed by 1965.

Priorities included in the future planning program are of several kinds, three of which are important here. First there are the general priorities given to various areas of the city for neighborhood renewal planning; that is, the priorities which schedule planning activity. The choice of one area over others for planning in advance of immediate renewal action has over the last ten years been determined by realization of obvious renewal need and the ineluctable urgency of action. But now that the information is available upon which to erect a body of general neighborhood renewal plans, the Plan Commission will in course of preparing a MASTER PLAN FOR URBAN RENEWAL determine a schedule for this body of neighborhood renewal plans, logically uniting the whole planning program.

The second type of priority assignment will be to the various elements of each general neighborhood renewal plan: elements such as conservation, rehabilitation and redevelopment action, code enforcement programs, installation of public facilities etc. The neighborhood plan will range the various

elements of the plan in a time order based upon their logical relation to the renewal effort, the neighborhood's characteristics and their importance to the city as a whole.

The third type of priority will be that given to the various urban renewal activities by the departments involved. In this regard these departments, with the assistance of the City Plan Commission will, insofar as proves practicable, arrange their project schedules in a priority order which corresponds with the various General Neighborhood Renewal Plans and the Master Plans of the City.

General advice on policy and renewal programming was given, from 1949 to 1956, by two special committees: the Mayor's Conservation Committee and the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing which succeeded it. These groups, among other things, prepared several outstanding reports on matters of conservation and urban renewal (Exhibit III-G), entitled respectively: A NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM FOR PROVIDENCE; ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MAYOR'S CONSERVATION COMMITTEE; HOW DO WE REMODEL THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF PROVIDENCE; and A PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM IN THE MOUNT HOPE NEIGHBORHOOD.

## SECTION IV . . . . . ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Constant re-examination and improvement has given Providence an effective administrative organization controlling code enforcement and urban renewal. This section describes the enforcement agencies and the other agencies and procedures of urban renewal.

### ENFORCEMENT OF STANDARDS

The responsibility for the enforcement of codes and ordinances relative to urban renewal is divided among four agencies: the housing code, enforced by the Division of Minimum Housing Standards; the building code and zoning ordinance, by the Department of Building Inspection; the city ordinances and state laws relative to fire prevention, by the Fire Prevention Bureau; and the rodent control ordinances and other ordinances relative to public health and safety, by the Health Department and the Commissioner of Public Safety.

#### Housing Code Enforcement

The Division of Minimum Housing Standards was established

by the Minimum Standards Housing Ordinance Section 2.7, July 1956, to enforce the provisions of the ordinance and to carry out the educational and promotional work essential to gaining voluntary compliance with the ordinance and recognition of urban renewal objectives. The Division is under the general direction of the Urban Renewal Coordinator and under the immediate supervision and control of a Director, appointed by the Mayor, subject to the approval of the City Council. The Division is staffed by: a Director, a Chief Housing Inspector, four Housing Inspectors I, a Clerk Stenographer II, and a Clerk Typist I; and operated during 1956-1957 on a budget of \$40,496.00.

The program of systematic enforcement was ready for action in April, 1957. A significant report on housing conditions in the enforcement areas will be available as soon as the initial results can be analyzed and prepared for publication.

The procedures of enforcement are initiated in two ways: in the course of systematic inspection of designated areas, and in response to complaints. The area enforcement program has several phases. First, a printed brochure describing the objectives, steps, and schedule of the inspection is sent to each property owner and resident of the locality; at the same

time, the local press gives supporting coverage to the program. Then, the inspectors conduct a house to house survey. Experience, so far, indicates that given ample and sympathetic prior notice, the residents are cordial to and cooperative with the inspectors.

Inspection reports are divided according to structures and dwelling units within each structure (Exhibit I-C). If no violation is observed, the report is placed in the Division's inactive file. Should one or more conditions in violation of the ordinance be discovered, the Director of the Division sends a notice of violation to the owner or tenant (depending upon who is responsible); and a copy of the notice is sent to the Department of Building Inspection. If a property owner believes that he is entitled to an exception by reason of hardship or is dissatisfied with the order of the Director, he may appeal to the Housing Board of Review. Should he be dissatisfied after the hearing before the Board, and should he be able to raise a question of law, he may file an appeal to the Supreme Court. Failure to respond to the compliance order from the Director is prosecuted by the City Solicitor.

Property owners are requested to notify the Division when the corrective work is completed; and where building permits



are necessary, these involve the re-inspection service of the Department of Building Inspection. The Housing Inspectors may be required under certain circumstances to resurvey the structures. Thus, the enforcement procedures are detailed and complete.

The Housing Code enforcement program will be coordinated with the help of the General Neighborhood Renewal Plans with other elements of the renewal program, including, by means of conferences with the Providence Redevelopment Agency, provision of the code enforcement essential in areas surrounding urban renewal projects.

#### Building Code Enforcement

The Department of Building Inspection, established by section 107.0 of the Building Ordinance of December, 1956, is the enforcement agency for all building regulations. Previously, enforcement was not as well consolidated; nor were the provisions of the previous building code as comprehensive. Inspectional services were divided among the Building Department, Plumbing and Drainage Department, the Electrical Inspection Division and the Air Pollution and Smoke Abatement Division of the Public Works Department. The 1956 Annual Re-

ports of the Fire Department, Inspector of Buildings Department, the Zoning Board of Review, and the Department of Public Works summarize the enforcement activities of the various departments, prior to the integrated inspection system begun this year (Exhibit IV-A).

The Department of Building Inspection, organized under the Building Ordinance of 1956, is supervised and controlled by a Director who is biannually appointed by the Mayor subject to the approval of the Council. As was remarked in Section I, there are several divisions within the department, headed, respectively, by a Chief Inspector of Electrical Installations, a Chief Inspector of Structures and Zoning, a Chief Inspector of Plumbing, Drainage and Gas Piping, and a Chief Inspector of Air Pollution, Mechanical Equipment and Installations. One of the Chief Inspectors is appointed Deputy Director and the personnel are appointed, with the approval of the Director, by the Chief Inspectors of each division. Professional requirements for all personnel are specified by the Building Ordinance.

The Director, through those delegated by him, must enforce all provisions of the code and "act on any question relative to the mode or manner of construction and materials

to be used in the erection, alteration, repair, removal, demolition, installation of service equipment, and the location, use occupancy and maintenance of all buildings and structures, except as may otherwise be specifically provided by statute or ordinance, and as herein provided" (Section 108.0, Building Ordinance of 1956). The Director must receive applications, issue permits, inspect premises for which permits were issued to enforce compliance with the code, and issue all notices or orders to remove illegal or unsafe conditions.

The Department of Building Inspection, as it now exists, functions as a unit office both in inspection and in enforcement operations. When an application for a permit is received, copies are submitted to each of the divisions involved in the type of work to be done. Each division makes a preliminary inspection of the plans, which must be submitted at the time of application; and all sections of the plans found to be in violation of the ordinance, are noted and corrected. The permit is issued only upon the signature of the head of each division concerned. After the property owner notifies the department that the work is completed, there is an inspection of the premises by representatives of the divisions concerned and the Director issues the certificate of use or occupancy upon notice from the division chiefs.

In cases where violations are noted and orders to correct are issued, interested parties may appeal to the Building Board of Review which will hear cases alleging error by an administrative officer in the enforcement of the code, and appeals requesting modifications of provisions of the code. The Board may reverse or affirm wholly or partly or modify the order, requirement, decision, or determination involved, and may exercise the powers of the official from whom the appeal was taken.

Further appeal to the Supreme Court may be taken by individuals alleging illegality in the decision of the Board.

The following are the staff and budget descriptions for the Department of Building Inspection from April 22, 1957 through September 30, 1957:

Administrative - 1 Director of Building Inspection,  
1 Plan Estimator, 1 Clerk IV, 1 Clerk III, 1 Clerk  
Stenographer III, 2 Clerk Stenographers II, 1 Clerk  
Stenographer I, 3 Clerk Typists II, 1 Clerk Typist I,  
and 1 Automobile Driver.

Division of Structures and Zoning - 1 Chief Inspector  
of Structures and Zoning, 1 Building Inspector III, 2

Building Inspectors II, and 8 Building Inspectors I.

Division of Plumbing, Drainage and Gas Piping - 1  
Chief Inspector of Plumbing, Drainage and Gas Piping, 1  
Plumbing Inspector III and 4 Plumbing Inspectors I.

Division of Electrical Installations - 1 Chief In-  
spector of Electrical Installations, 1 Electrical In-  
spector III, and 4 Electrical Inspectors I.

Division of Air Pollution, Mechanical Equipment and  
Installations - 1 Chief Inspector of Air Pollution,  
Mechanical Equipment and Installations, 1 Air Pollution  
and Mechanical Equipment Inspector III, 3 Air Pollution  
and Mechanical Equipment Inspectors II, 3 Air Pollution  
and Mechanical Equipment Inspectors I, and 1 Steam  
Engineering Examiner.

The Budget of the Department of Building Inspection for  
this period was \$93,000.00 (Exhibit IV-B). The Ordinance  
establishing the staff divisions listed above was effective  
April 22, 1957 (Exhibit IV-C).

In 1956, the former Inspector of Buildings Department  
completed 15,206 building inspections and issued 357 permits  
for new buildings, 1068 permits for additions and alterations

and 184 permits to raze dilapidated buildings. There were 7185 plumbing and drainage inspections and 68 illegal installations corrected. 17,587 electrical inspections were made and 1452 notices of defects were issued. 5714 inspections were made and 3099 permits were issued by the former Air Pollution and Smoke Abatement Division of the Department of Public Works. In 1955 the U.S. Public Health Service, after comparing atmospheric conditions in Providence with thirteen other cities, found this city to have in its air the smallest amount of organic or particulate matter. The above figures are taken from the annual reports of the respective divisions of inspection (Exhibit IV - A).

#### Zoning Ordinance Enforcement

Article VIII of the Zoning Ordinance of 1951, as amended through 1957, designates the Inspector of Buildings of the City of Providence as enforcement agent. Section 108.0 of the Building Code of 1956 provides that upon the appointment of the Director of the Department of Building Inspection, all duties, powers and functions formerly vested in the Inspector of Buildings, become those of the Director. Therefore, the Director of the Department of Building Inspection is now the enforcement agent for the Zoning Ordinance.

The duties of the enforcement agent are: to review site plans, to ascertain compliance with both Zoning and Building Codes before issuing building permits; to administer the issuance of certificates of occupancy or use in case of any change of use for buildings or land, except to grow crops; to keep records of the certificates of occupancy issued; and to investigate reports of Zoning violations. The Zoning Code provides for penalties up to 100 dollars each day for any violation, and provides that once the Director of the Department of Building Inspection or the Zoning Board of Review has notified the City Solicitor that a violation exists, he will institute injunction, abatement, or any other appropriate action to prevent, enjoin, abate or remove such violation.

The Zoning Code explicitly provides for special exceptions and variances, requests for which are heard by the Zoning Board of Review. The special exceptions refer to such things as the conversion of large old homes in R-1 zones into multiple dwelling unit structures under conditions affording proper safeguards. The zoning variances allowed within the ordinance require demonstration of unnecessary hardship if the request should be denied. A person may appeal to the Board of Review if he is dissatisfied with the decision of the Director of the Division of Building Inspection and anyone seeking a

variance or special exception must appeal directly to the Board. An appeal may be taken from the Board of Review to the Courts on any question of the legality of the decision of the Board. The ordinance requires that all requests for variances and special exceptions be referred for written recommendation from the Director of the City Plan Commission. The recommendations of the Director and the resulting action of the Zoning Board of Review are listed at the end of each annual report of the City Plan Commission (Exhibit IV-D). During the last year, 1956, the Zoning Board of Review received 173 requests for special exceptions and variances and granted 138.

#### Fire Prevention

The Bureau of Fire Prevention is under the control of the Commissioner of Public Safety and is directly supervised by the Chief of the Fire Department. The Bureau of Fire Prevention, headed by a battalion chief appointed by the commissioner, is the enforcement agency, within the city, for all state laws and city ordinances covering: the prevention of fires; the storage and use of explosives and flammables; the installation and maintenance of automatic and other fire alarm systems and fire extinguishing equipment; the condition and accessibility of exits in case of fire, from all public places;



and the investigation of the cause, origin and circumstances of all fires. In cases where routine investigation suggests that a fire may be of suspicious origin, the Chief of the Fire Department is notified and the police are informed.

The Bureau of Fire Prevention is required by law to inspect, at least four times every year, all hazardous manufacturing processes, storage of explosives and flammable materials, interior fire alarms, automatic sprinkler systems, etc.

All public buildings must be inspected twice a year in outlying districts and four times a year in closely built sections of the city. The inspectors of the bureau are authorized by ordinance to enter any building, except a private residence, in answer to a complaint that dangerous conditions exist, or in the course of the routine inspections required by law. The Chief of the Bureau has the power to order removed any obstructions to exits, any waste materials, rubbish, or any other dangerous material; and in case of failure to comply, the Chief may remove the objects at the expense of the responsible person. In cases where the inspectors discover other conditions dangerous to life or health, they are required by ordinance to notify the Department of Building

Inspection. In addition to the legally mandatory inspections of public, commercial and industrial structures, Providence has one of the largest and most successful voluntary inspection programs in the country. In 1956, 127,055 voluntary semi-annual fire inspections were conducted in dwellings, apartments and rooming houses. Because of the emphasis placed on fire prevention in Providence, the City was given the Grand Award by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in April 1955, for the best fire prevention accomplishments of all cities in the country. The entire Fire Department force of 480 is used to conduct the semi-annual inspections, and entry is gained to over 90% of all city dwellings at least once a year. Such inspection is a direct aid in fostering safe and sanitary living and working conditions in Providence.

#### Other Ordinances, Enforcement

The enforcement agent for rat-control ordinances designated by Section 34 of Article III, Chapter 17 of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Providence, 1946, as amended through 1956, is the Superintendent of Health, who is also responsible for the enforcement of the ordinances relative to the purity and wholesomeness of food products.

Enforcement of other ordinances relative to public safety is under the supervision of the Commissioner of Public Safety.

#### Judicial and Legal Aids to Enforcement

The City Solicitor, under Section 57 (D) and 58 of the Charter of the City of Providence (Public Laws of Rhode Island, 1940, Chapter 832) has the responsibility of acting as attorney for all City Departments in all suits or causes, to furnish counsel, and to take legal action in their behalf. In addition, the Housing Code, Section 13.1, specifically provides that "The City Solicitor shall, upon complaint of the Director, institute injunction, abatement, or other appropriate actions or proceedings at law or in equity to restrain, prevent, enjoin, abate, correct, or remove such violations." Section 122.2 of the Building Ordinance of 1956 provides that "If the notice of violation or order is not complied with promptly, the Director shall institute the appropriate proceeding at law or in equity to restrain, correct or abate such violation..." Because the Department of Building Inspection does not have its own attorneys, such cases are handled by the City Solicitor under the general Charter directive, cited above, and under Resolution No. 113 of the City Council passed in 1947 which authorized the City Solicitor to appoint a special assistant for the

prosecution of violations of the building and zoning ordinances and the rules of the Board of Health. The Revised Ordinances of the City of Providence 1946, as amended in the 1956 cumulative supplement, Chapter 12 Section 30.24, require that the City Solicitor "shall assist the inspectors in the investigation of any fire which, in their opinion, is of suspicious origin;" other legal action is taken in behalf of the Bureau of Fire Prevention by the City Solicitor under his general Charter directives.

With the types of organization and the legal authorization described above, Providence is well equipped for vigorous and efficient enforcement of its codes and ordinances and has confirmed the value of this organization in practice.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF URBAN RENEWAL

Renewal efforts in Providence are divided among several agencies specifically equipped for each phase. Overall coordination among the agencies is achieved through the office of the Urban Renewal Coordinator. Assisting him in integrating city-wide renewal effort is a Technical Steering Committee comprised of the heads of departments and agencies of the city administration. The agencies directly concerned in Urban

Renewal are the City Plan Commission, the Providence Redevelopment Agency, the Providence Housing Authority and the enforcement agencies described earlier in this section. Giving frequent auxiliary services to Urban Renewal are the Finance Director's Office, and other departments such as Public Works, the School Department and the Department of Recreation.

The passage of the Minimum Standards Housing Ordinance in 1956 streamlined the administration of Urban Renewal by designating the Coordinator as a special assistant to the Mayor for the express purpose of securing the cooperation of the various departments involved in the renewal program. With the advice of the Urban Renewal Coordinator and that of the Technical Steering Committee, the Mayor will recommend whatever further administrative organization or legislation may become necessary in the program. He will continue to take an active interest in the pace of the program, the kinds of projects and their financial support, using his executive authority to solidify and expand renewal efforts.

The Technical Steering Committee was also created by the Housing Ordinance of 1956 to assist the Urban Renewal Coordinator and advise on general policy questions of renewal, and on the coordination of department interests.

The Urban Renewal Coordinator, whose original title of "Housing Coordinator" designated in the Minimum Standards Housing Ordinance of July 1956 was changed by ordinance of April 4, 1957 to read thus, is the Mayor's direct representative in all matters respecting housing. The Coordinator is directed to secure cooperation and assistance from any or all municipal departments, commissions and agencies, in enforcing the Housing Ordinance; to develop a workable program of Urban Renewal; and to utilize federal housing aids and financial assistance for housing improvement and urban renewal.

The ordinance designates the Urban Renewal Coordinator as Chairman of the Technical Steering Committee, the purpose of which is to assist him and the Mayor in the administration of urban renewal. In recent months, the work of the Urban Renewal Coordinator has been directed to organization for enforcement of the housing code, coordination between housing and building code inspection procedures and the preparation of the Workable Program. But gradually the scope of coordination will widen to include matters of mutual concern among the Redevelopment Agency, the City Plan Commission, the Housing Authority and other agencies within the city government.

The City Plan Commission performs and will continue to perform the functions described in the sections on Comprehensive Community Plan and Neighborhood Analysis above.

The Providence Redevelopment Agency was established in 1947, under terms of the "Community Redevelopment Act," Chapter 1802 of the Public Laws of Rhode Island, 1946 (Exhibit IV-E), and by City Council Resolution No. 644, approved December 20, 1946 (Exhibit IV-F).

Redevelopment legislation was subsequently amplified by the passage of the "Slum clearance and redevelopment act," Chapter 2574 of the Public Laws of Rhode Island, 1950 (Exhibit IV-G).

The Constitution of the State of Rhode Island was amended at a special election on July 12, 1955 to give an explicit constitutional basis to the renewal program. The text of the amendment is found in the 1955 Annual Report of the Providence Redevelopment Agency (Exhibit IV-H). The General Assembly of Rhode Island repealed the "Slum clearance and redevelopment act" of 1950 and replaced it by the "Redevelopment Act of 1956," broadening the powers of the Agencies to include rehabilitation projects, technical assistance to owners in the voluntary improvement of their property and other measures

short of clearance.

The Redevelopment Agency members, five in number, are appointed by the Mayor to serve staggered five year terms, as provided by Sections 32 and 33 of the "Redevelopment Act of 1956." The Redevelopment Agency Staff are: an Executive Director, an Assistant to the Executive Director, a Senior Engineer, a Real Estate Officer, a Planner IV, a Chief of Renewal Services, a Planner III, two Planners II, a Planner I, an Attorney II, two Attorneys I, a Project Supervisor, an Assistant Project Supervisor, a Relocation Director, a Housing Inspector, two Social Workers II, an Accountant II, an Accountant I, two Clerk Stenographers III, a Clerk Stenographer II, and two Clerk Stenographers I. An organizational chart is attached (Exhibit IV-I).

During 1956-57 the agency's operations were financed by a city budget of \$44,174.45 with additional funds from federal planning advances and project grants. Each year the Agency submits an annual report to the Mayor. (Reports for 1950-1956: Exhibit IV-J).

The Agency retains all staff, determines policy and priorities, reviews all plans and programming submitted by the staff for approval, executes all contracts and agreements with



the HHFA, exercises the power of eminent domain in the acquisition of property, disposes of property and stipulates the conditions of future use of such land.

Through its staff, the Agency, as the L.P.A., prepares all Survey and Planning Applications, based upon general neighborhood plans to be supplied by the City Plan Commission. Beyond the foregoing, project plans for federal assistance through Loan and Grant Contracts and for local grants-in-aid are the responsibility of the Agency, which may contract with the City Plan Commission or with other planning consultants for this work, which is to be prepared with due regard to conformity requirements.

At the present time, the Agency staff is preparing project plans for the Point Street and Lippitt Hill projects. Survey and Planning applications have been submitted for the Randall Square and Central-Classical Projects.

Project Development activity is in full swing: the elementary school in Willard Center Unit One is fast nearing completion; the shopping center has opened for business and recreation facilities will soon be developed in Willard Center Unit Two; West River, the industrial park project, has been virtually cleared, site improvements will begin very soon and

peripheral sites available within this project are being sold. Considerable market interest has been exhibited and indicates successful completion of this project. Because Point Street is so fast approaching the development stage no slack is anticipated in project execution, and it is expected that the project will be closed out by July 1958. The Agency expects to proceed according to the priorities described in Section III and Exhibit III-F, if possible increasing the speed at which redevelopment and rehabilitation projects are executed.

The Providence Housing Authority over the past fifteen years has constructed and operates seven federally aided public housing projects containing the 2531 public housing units and a 256-unit city aided development for veterans. In the planning stage at present there is a project for aged couples and single persons. The Annual Report of the Authority describes the projects and the pertinent facts about public housing in Providence (Exhibit IV-K). The construction of projects will be carefully coordinated with the relocation needs and housing market status in the city through the representation of the Housing Authority on the Technical Steering Committee and through the Urban Renewal Coordinator.

The Mayor's Conservation Committee, a committee of municipi-

pal department heads, was created in 1949 to study ways and means of conserving the city's older neighborhoods. The committee prepared "neighborhood conservation memoranda" some of which had great merit as guide plans to the renewal program (Exhibit III-G).

The Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing, appointed in 1953, made a general study of housing problems, reviewed the various draft housing ordinances and after 65 meetings presented the recently enacted Minimum Standards Housing Ordinance. In its final report the committee took a broad view of the renewal program and made important procedural recommendations (Exhibit IV-L). Since the functions of the above two committees have been completed in the passage of new legislation and in the administrative organization described here, they have disbanded.

The enforcement agencies are all, including the usual agencies of police and fire, integral parts of the renewal program in maintaining stable social conditions, respect for the property of others, discharge of duty to one's own property or tenancy, and a general awareness that the environmental welfare of the people is a concern and a duty of the city government. Other agencies including the Public Works De-

partment, the Finance Director's Office and the School Committee are frequently involved in the renewal program; and it is the work of the Urban Renewal Coordinator to arrange the program to the mutual convenience of the departments and in accordance with desirable priorities.

It is our conviction that Providence has, by means of a long and consistent series of administrative adjustments, established an efficient program of code enforcement and of urban renewal. The City government is dedicated and publicly committed to this task.

SECTION V . . . . . FINANCING

The financial experience of the City of Providence has demonstrated the feasibility of continuing the renewal program on its present intensive level. Available federal aids remain the most substantial governmental incentive toward more rapid progress. Other important incentives include the revival of land values, the opportunity to stimulate large private investments in new construction, the concomitant strengthening of the municipal tax base, and the augmenting of demand for labor during construction of new housing and commercial buildings and after construction of the latter.

These contributions toward the economic health of the community comprise an ample return upon the city's investment in the entire cost of efficient administration in the planning and code enforcement programs, and in the city's one-third share of federally aided urban renewal work. Insofar as the magnitude of the federal aid program can stimulate the economic and physical welfare of people in urban areas across the nation, we believe the federal investment to be thoroughly justified as well. The actual number of city and federal

dollars to be spent amounts to a very small fraction of the private dollars of investment and long-range profits involved in the overall renewal job.

The municipal financing of urban renewal is achieved in Providence by periodic adjustments in the operating budget and by provisions of the Capital Improvement Program.

#### Operating Budget

The annual operating costs incurred by the various departments involved in the urban renewal program have been and will continue to be met out of their regular yearly appropriations. These appropriations are part of the overall operating budget raised by real estate taxation and various other revenue sources (Exhibit V-A).

Consequent upon the adoption of the Housing Code, several additions were made to the operating budget of the "Executive Department" namely: the addition of the position of Urban Renewal Coordinator, the creation of the Division of Minimum Housing Standards, and institution of the Housing Board of Review. The first fiscal year's expenditures for enforcement of the Housing Code will approximate \$32,000; the second year's budget is \$52,763.00.

Similarly, shifts in appropriation from the Department of Public Works budget and from the former Inspector of Buildings Department budget were effected to provide for a consolidated inspection agency: the Department of Building Inspection.

The Administration of the city is committed to a program of making whatever further adjustments of the operating budgets may be necessary from time to time to supply sufficient staff for code enforcement and other renewal activities.

#### Capital Budget and Capital Improvement Program

Redevelopment projects and all large-scale city improvements are scheduled through Capital Improvement Programming, which was initiated in 1950 (Exhibit V-B). The current program provides for \$21,230,686 in improvements, including eight redevelopment projects, five and part of a sixth of which are to be financed from existing bond authority. A total of four and one half million dollars has been made available through two bond authorization referenda for redevelopment projects; the first, for two million dollars, was approved by the voters in 1948; and the second, for two and one half million dollars, was approved in 1955.

Experience with Capital Improvement Programming has

indicated that the local cash financing of redevelopment can be effectively supplemented by the installation of public facilities carefully synchronized with urban renewal projects so as to qualify many city improvements as local non-cash grants in aid.

Providence and other cities and towns of Rhode Island are not hampered in raising funds for redevelopment by restrictions which prohibit bonded indebtedness in excess of a certain percentage of the assessed value of the land of the city. Article VII of the Redevelopment Act of 1956 exempts bonds for redevelopment from any statutory limitation as to amount. The Charter of the City of Providence provides that the issuance of bonds, except in times of emergency, must be approved by the voters at a general or special election, as does the state act cited above.

It is a requirement of the City Charter that Capital Improvement Programming be carried on. It is a matter of policy that the city will make at least part of its one-third contribution to the cost of redevelopment in the form of public improvements, whenever possible; that a reasonable schedule of priorities will be continued; and that the City's financial commitments to renewal will be fulfilled.



### Present Financial Situation of the City

The last sixteen years have seen the following achievements in city finance: the abandonment of borrowing to meet operating expenses, the reduction of the floating debt and success in keeping debt obligations relatively constant, and the abandonment of tax anticipation borrowing and of municipal bond refunding.

Since Providence is retiring about two and one half million dollars of old bonded debt each year, and since the existing level of debt and debt service is manageable, additional borrowing at the rate of retirement can occur without increasing the debt. While the decreasing resident urban population is accompanied by a proportionate increase in per capita indebtedness as well as per capita operating costs, it is the combination of corporate and personal investment in real property which meets the cost of municipal programs, rather than per capita income.

Before urban renewal could begin to have a positive effect upon the tax base, the increasing blight of residential neighborhoods and marginal intrusions of industry within them have been largely responsible for the failure of the tax base to expand commensurately with rising costs of government, and the

property tax has had to be increased from \$28.00 to \$35.50 per thousand since 1950.

Aware of the anomaly of annually increasing demands upon a relatively stable amount of revenue, the Mayor in January 1957 appointed a Committee on Municipal Revenues, comprised of citizens experienced in economics, accounting, law, real estate and business, to suggest sound procedures for increasing and diversifying city revenues. This committee is expected to report before the end of the current year.

Although there is concern over the problems facing the city's long-range future finances because of the declining population and the rising cost of operation, it is evident that the present condition of the city's finances is sound and should remain so. Among the brighter prospects which lie in the financial future is the fact that new residential, commercial and industrial improvements being stimulated by the renewal program will yield more tax revenue to help meet the rising operating costs.

The attitude of the voters is of great importance to the financial welfare and foresightedness of the city. Hence, the administrative and legislative officials do all they can to stimulate public support of sound financial policies and to

keep the public realistic about the financial obligations of the city. Providence has not had the experience of having an important bond issue defeated by an uninformed or apathetic public. The Mayors and their financial advisors of recent administrations have continuously sought and utilized the counsel of the leading and informed citizens of the community, and Providence has been secure because its citizens are confident that the bond referenda submitted to them are sound and necessary.

## SECTION VI . . . . . HOUSING FOR DISPLACED FAMILIES

The City of Providence, a pioneer in providing relocation services to families displaced by governmental action, recognizes its obligation to assist such families in locating decent, safe and sanitary accommodations at rentals or purchase prices they can afford.

### Family Relocation Service

In 1949, when construction of the Olneyville Expressway displaced many families, it was decided that a city relocation service within the Mayor's office was necessary to assist families to relocate into adequate homes and environment. With the growth of the redevelopment program, the relocation service staff was transferred to the staff of the Redevelopment Agency, while continuing on occasion to handle relocation programs arising from other governmental actions, such as freeway, school and public housing construction. So far, 1,327 families have relocated from project areas directly aided by the Family Relocation Service. The staff presently consists of a Director of Relocation, a Housing Inspector, two Social Workers, and a

Clerk Stenographer.

Other Aids in Relocation

In addition to the solicitation, inspection and referral of new housing and commercial accommodations for displaced families and businesses, limited payments authorized under the Housing Act of 1956 are now made to relieve the cost of moving. A higher proportion of the available dwelling units are registered with the Family Relocation Service, and are thoroughly inspected and rated in accordance with minimum standards before they are suggested to relocatees. Moreover, information is kept as to where each family has been relocated in order to allow the preparation of scientific studies of relocation.

Knowing that most families displaced by governmental action have not the money necessary to purchase new homes without mortgages and that many would have difficulty obtaining adequate housing unless the total supply is stimulated by additional governmental action, the Mayor has requested and received certification for 375 units of Section 221 housing for Providence.

### Housing for Minority Groups

Rehousing displaced persons who are members of minority groups has been a serious but not insurmountable problem. There has been no occasion on which the progress of demolition has needed to be held up because families could not be relocated from the project. The longest wait, by any family, for suitable accommodations involved eight to ten weeks.

The non-white population of Providence in 1950 was 8,304 persons, a little more than 3% of the total; and even in the Lippitt Hill Project Area, where a very high percentage of the people are Negro, the relocation program is expected to make reasonable though deliberate progress. Experience in the Willard Center Project Areas showed at that time that Negro families could be relocated without much greater difficulty than white families.

In 1954 the Urban League of Greater Providence completed a study of non-white housing demand. The study staff interviewed 207 of the 2000 Negro households within the city. This 10% sample indicated that of those respondents who desired rental accommodations, the majority (57.8%) were looking for units with monthly rents of \$30.00 or more. Of those who wished to buy homes, 87.0% thought they could afford \$8,000 or

more. A copy of the Housing Survey Abstract is submitted (Exhibit VI-A).

With the necessary elimination of discriminatory practices and systematic enforcement of the housing code, it is expected that over a period of time all the improvable units occupied by minority families can be raised to standard condition and the remaining units vacated and demolished.

#### Housing Market Analyses

From time to time studies of the local housing market have been made as a guide for judging housing recourses and requirements. Examples are:

A HOUSING PROGRAM FOR PROVIDENCE, 1946 (City Plan Commission, mimeo)

POSTWAR HOUSING, 1947 (Providence Redevelopment Agency, typed)

MEMORANDUM ON REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND HOUSING NEEDS IN PROVIDENCE, 1948 (Providence Redevelopment Agency, typed)

MARKET APPRAISAL OF TWELVE REDEVELOPMENT AREAS, 1951

(Prepared by Edward Bernard Murphy for the Providence Redevelopment Agency)

REPORT ON RELOCATION AND REHOUSING NEEDS, 1952 (Prepared by the Providence Redevelopment Agency for submission with the Loan and Grant Application, Point Street Project No. UR R.I. 1-1, supplemented by subsequent submissions for Project Nos. UR R.I. 1-2, 1-3, 1-5, and 1-6.

REPORT OF CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON ORDINANCES ON RENT CONTROL, 1952 (mimeo)

In summary, experience and analysis indicate that vacancies in private rental housing and a turnover rate of approximately 25% per annum in over 2500 units of low-rent public housing will provide enough relocation housing to meet present and proposed displacements by governmental action.

The greatest housing problem for this city is to provide replacements, in the long term, for the increasing proportion of units in all rental brackets which are becoming obsolete.

Redevelopment and rehabilitation project areas are expected to supply the sites for new construction needed to meet that portion of the long-term housing demand which is expected to remain within the central city of Providence; areas already considered desirable are Lippitt Hill, Constitution Hill and Mashapaug Pond.



As the programs of redevelopment and housing code enforcement grow larger, a possible situation of inflated rents could result from the displacement of too many families at a time while the cost of maintaining rental units rises and while the overall number of available within city units decreases with increased industrial, commercial and public uses.

The urban renewal program will be adjusted in pace and emphasis to avoid a convergence of causes which would thus complicate relocation problems.

The Providence Housing Authority will have increased its assistance to relocation efforts when, as mentioned previously, it has completed a special housing project for single persons and aged couples.

By maintaining controls on the pace of displacement and a reasonably accurate inventory of available and anticipated housing, the City will be able to administer relocation as smoothly in future projects as it has done in the past.

SECTION VII . . . . . CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The urban renewal program of the City of Providence has been supported throughout the last ten years by the labor, business, religious, service, educational, professional and civic organizations of the city.

Public support has been exhibited in many ways: by financial subscriptions, by provision of personal services, by educational programs, by stimulating legislative support and by the support of the voting public on legislative and bond referenda.

The willingness of citizens to contribute financial support has been demonstrated by the successful fund drives for the historic-neighborhood demonstration-grant study, sponsored by the Providence Preservation Society; and for the downtown business area demonstration-grant study, sponsored by the Downtown Business Coordinating Council of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce.

The cooperation of outstanding citizens in the community has been evidenced by their willingness to serve without com-

pensation as members of organizations for urban renewal, which involve a great deal of time and effort, such as the Mayor's Conservation Committee, the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing, the Recreation Advisory Committee, the Board of Park Commissioners, the Providence Redevelopment Agency, the City Plan Commission, the Providence Housing Authority, the Mayor's Committee on Municipal Revenues, the Housing and Redevelopment Committee of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Business Coordinating Council of the Chamber, the Providence Preservation Society, and others.

The fact that response is enthusiastic to the Mayor's requests for help is ample indication of the confidence with which the renewal program is viewed by citizens who can be truly called leaders in the community.

The clubs, churches and organizations which have devoted special meetings, committees and careful preparation to educational programs on urban renewal, programs designed to familiarize their members and the general public with the problems of urban planning and to enlist their understanding, good opinion and public influence, have indeed been numerous; some of them are: the Providence League of Women Voters, the Urban League of Rhode Island, the Civic Planning and

Traffic Division of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, numerous settlement houses, and a few local groups such as the East Side Neighborhood Council.

When the 1956 Housing Code was being prepared, a series of meetings on the principles and objectives of the new code was held with representatives of the Urban League of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the local lending institutions, the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, the Family and Children's Division of the Council of Community Services, the Providence Real Estate Board, the Joint Legislative Council of Rhode Island, the League of Women Voters of Providence, the East Side Neighborhood Council, the Society of Residential Appraisers and the Home Builders Association of Rhode Island. At these meetings, there was considerable discussion of the overall urban renewal program, and the approbation of the conferees represented the support of people who are regarded as opinion-makers and civic leaders. Many of the organizations passed resolutions recording their support (Exhibit VII-A).

The redevelopment amendment to the State Constitution, authorizing rehabilitation and improvement as well as clearance

of blighted and substandard areas, was adopted in July 1955, by a three to one vote in Providence and two to one throughout the state.

Twenty-two organizations and newspapers throughout the state, of which sixteen were in Providence, had endorsed the measure publicly. These included the following: the American Institute of Architects, the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, Democratic Party, Republican Party, East Side Neighborhood Council, Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing, Providence Teachers Union, American Federation of Teachers, Building and Construction Trades Council, Citizens Committee for Redevelopment, the Providence Real Estate Board, State Federation of Labor, the Urban League of Greater Providence, the Providence Journal-Bulletin, and The Providence Chronicle.

The Citizens Committee for Redevelopment was formed initially to assist in gaining public support for the passage of the Constitutional Amendment. Besides enlisting support among personal acquaintances, members of the committee published a large advertisement recommending the amendment and listing their names in public endorsement of redevelopment and renewal (Exhibit VII-B).

After the successful campaign for the constitutional

amendment, members of the Citizens Committee decided the group should continue as a permanent citizens organization to aid in urban renewal. During the following year, members of the committee conducted a study program on the proposed housing code, and in the fall of 1956 sponsored, with the American Institute of Planners and others, a local presentation of the ACTION production OUR LIVING FUTURE. The committee is at present marking time while awaiting the stage where a specific project can be assigned for city-wide citizen action.

The Providence Journal-Bulletin has been a forthright and outspoken supporter of urban redevelopment and renewal in editorial and news policies throughout the last twelve years (Exhibit VII-C).

In the past, responsibility for stimulating public support and education had in practice devolved upon the Mayor, members of the City Council, the Providence Redevelopment Agency, the City Plan Commission, and their staffs, who gave speeches and conducted informational programs wherever there was an opportunity. In 1956 provision was made in the Providence Redevelopment Agency budget for a Chief of Renewal Services who would be responsible for programs of education and citizen participation. With the appointment of the Urban Renewal Co-

ordinator, the functions of encouraging the rehabilitation of substandard houses and effecting the conservation and improvement of basically sound neighborhoods were delegated to him, although he is authorized to secure assistance from the Chief of Renewal Services and other city officials in the exercise of that responsibility.

Providence has not yet executed a rehabilitation or conservation project because of substantial prior commitments in the slum clearance and redevelopment program; however, there are three projects in planning stages which involve a substantial percentage of rehabilitation. As plans for these projects become crystallized, the attention of the Urban Renewal Coordinator and the Chief of Renewal Services will be directed to specific methods of inducing voluntary acceptance and adherence to a set of neighborhood standards sufficient (as a minimum) to satisfy the requirements for local credit and federal mortgage insurance. It is possible that even higher standards might turn out to be financially feasible and acceptable to the property owners if the banks can provide liberal credit at the time of project execution.

Prior to the final project report, details will be worked out for enlisting the voluntary cooperation of project residents

in a plan tailored to the specific project area, utilizing the known cohesive forces and local groups.

It should be noted that Providence, unlike many other cities of similar civic strength, does not abound in neighborhood improvement organizations. Civic interest is expressed in two differing but highly effective types of organizations: first, in civic bodies concerned with citywide problems either general or specialized; and second, in religious, social, and professional organizations whose interest in civic affairs is an outgrowth of their narrower purposes and functions. Furthermore, there are numerous small language-group clubs and definitely constituted political clubs on the ward level which are quite localized by neighborhoods; but in the sense of universally representing all the civic-minded people of every persuasion in each residential neighborhood, these clubs do not generally qualify as non-partisan community clubs or neighborhood improvement organizations. Whether such organization in conjunction with urban renewal is necessary or possible of formation in Providence depends primarily upon how effectively the existing local organizations of a specialized type can take up the renewal challenge, on behalf of each area affected.

General features of a plan of action for neighborhood re-



habilitation are already agreed upon. The city will publish material describing the plan for rehabilitation, the sources of money available to the individual householder, the steps of code enforcement to be taken by the city, the city's pledges of public facilities and services, and the program for the presentation, consideration and local acceptance of voluntary rehabilitation standards. It is expected that through the agency of local organizations, the residents will have opportunity to question, discuss and make mutual agreements on the issues involved.

It is considered possible that a committee of volunteer professional people, lawyers, contractors, architects, bank-representatives and others, may be necessary to supply technical information to the residents, as to the most economical financing, the details of title clearance, retaining contractors, and the soundest kinds of improvements. If such assistance should be necessary, personnel will be enlisted from the many professional organizations which have supported and expressed willingness to cooperate in urban renewal.

The "general" program of citizen education and participation will be continued through the already friendly and helpful press, the radio and television stations (who have

already expressed their willingness to cooperate with time and facilities,) and the many opportunities offered city officials to address clubs, associations, and similar groups, on the subject of urban renewal.

The City of Providence understands that many difficulties are involved in rehabilitation projects; but we are not pessimistic about the outcome. We are convinced that adequate research and organization, the proper method of public relations and careful, friendly, but insistent encouragement and guidance will guarantee the success of our rehabilitation and conservation programs.

- N: Revised Ordinances of the City of Providence, 1946 and Chapter 329 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, 1938
- O: Annual Reports of the City Plan Commission

### Section III: Neighborhood Analysis

- A: 1956 Supplement to the Revised Ordinances of the City of Providence Chapter 30A
- B: Neighborhood Conservation Memorandum No. 7
- C: Special Report No. 1 of the Providence Redevelopment Agency
- D: Determination of Standards and Policies
- E: Redevelopment Proposals for Central Areas
- F: Project Priority Study by the Providence Redevelopment Agency
- G: Neighborhood Conservation Memorandum Nos. 3, 4, 6, and 10

### Section IV: Administrative Organization

- A: 1956 Annual Reports of Fire Department, Inspector of Buildings Department, Zoning Board of Review and Department of Public Works
- B: Ordinance Amending Chapter 1050 of the Ordinances of the City of Providence
- C: Ordinance Amending Chapter 1052 of the Ordinances of the City of Providence
- D: 1956 Annual Report of the City Plan Commission
- E: Chapter 1802 of the Public Laws of Rhode Island, 1946
- F: Resolution No. 644, December 20, 1946 of the City Council
- G: "Slum Clearance and Redevelopment Act" of 1950, Chapter 2574 of Public Laws of Rhode Island 1950
- H: Constitutional Amendment Text in Annual Report of Providence Redevelopment Agency 1955
- I: Organizational Chart of Providence Redevelopment Agency
- J: Annual Reports of the Providence Redevelopment Agency 1950-56

- K: Sample Report of the Providence Housing Authority
- L: Final Report of Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing

Section V: Financing

- A: Budget of City of Providence, 1956-57 and Financial Report, 1956
- B: 1957 Capital Improvement Program

Section VI: Housing for Displaced Families

- A: Non-White Housing Survey Abstract

Section VII: Citizen Participation

- A: Resolutions of Public Support for Urban Renewal
- B: Citizens Committee Advertisement
- C: Representative Newspaper Clippings