

SOUTHEAST DENTON: A CITY'S ATTEMPT  
TO CORRECT BLIGHTED CONDITIONS

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This study is concerned with the problem of outlining and analyzing the efforts of the City of Denton to correct blighted conditions in its southeast section. The thesis is a case study partially based on field research and personal interviews. It was written by one who witnessed and participated in many of the events which are therein described. Most of the resource materials were obtained from the City of Denton, the Denton Record Chronicle, and publications distributed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters which analyze the significant developments which occurred from 1960 to 1970, as they affected the southeast Denton area.

The characteristics of the City of Denton, both as a city and as a governmental entity, are presented. The City's 1960 Master Plan, which was the first official recognition that the southeast area constituted a serious problem for the city, is summarized and its recommendations outlined. The findings of a 1965 Community Action Survey of the area are also presented. These findings served to further document that the neighborhood was in need of basic comprehensive improvements.

After establishing the characteristics of the city and the southeast Denton neighborhood, the attention of the thesis is

focused on the Urban Renewal election of 1966 and the aftermath of the election. The thesis then outlines the programs of improvement in the area which have been considered and initiated since the election.

The study concludes that the political environment of a municipality can never be underestimated when public policy is formulated and that the technical solutions to a given problem are certainly not the only considerations which should be given. If a solution is politically unacceptable, it must therefore be considered impractical. A general lack of interest in neighborhood improvement in the southeast area is cited as a basic reason for its continued substandard condition. The thesis concludes that until the southeast area is politically organized with black leadership, and is capable of maintaining support and interest, little will be initiated in the area beyond work which is already underway.

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TO CORRECT BLIGHTED CONDITIONS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to outline and analyze the efforts of the City of Denton to correct blighted conditions in its southeast section. It is hoped that this study will ~~enlarge~~ enlarge the existing basis for realistic generalizations about the government process and contribute to a broader and more helpful understanding between scholars and officials who are concerned with municipal government.

#### Method of Study

This study is partially based on field research and personal interviews. The names of many who were interviewed have not been cited in order to preserve anonymity. It was written by one who witnessed and participated in many of the events which are herein described. Most of the resource materials were obtained from the municipal administration of the City of Denton, the Denton Record Chronicle, and publications distributed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

#### Characteristics of the City

Denton was founded in 1857, as the new county seat of Denton County.<sup>1</sup> The city is located in the geographic center

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<sup>1</sup>Freese and Nichols, Land Use, Phase II of Comprehensive Plan for Denton, Texas, 1960-1985 (Denton, 1960), p. 16.



of Denton County at the apex of a triangle formed by Fort Worth, Dallas, and Denton. Interstate Highway 35 enters the city from the north and splits into 35 E and 35 W in the city limits, the east section leading to Dallas, the west to Fort Worth. This highway is the major artery extending from Texas to the mid-western market area. State Highway 24, crossing North Texas, oriented east and west, bisects the city and completes major highway connections from Denton to all potential market centers. The general area is considered North Central Texas. The city is located only thirty-five miles south of the Texas-Oklahoma boundary.

Denton's location as the geographic center of the county was the basic reason for its establishment as the county seat and has also made it the logical market place for farm products raised in the county. The eastern quarter of the county produces farm products while the western half produces grains and livestock. It was quite natural that the city of Denton, located between these two agricultural subsections, should be the trading center for the area. This factor was the primary reason for the city's growth to 4,187 people by 1900.<sup>2</sup>

The agricultural products of the county have been and remain one of the most important sources of dollar income. Income from farm products and livestock produced more than twenty-two million dollars in 1964, representing a 100 per cent

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<sup>2</sup>Freese and Nichols, Basic Studies, Phase I of Comprehensive Plan for Denton, Texas, 1960-1985 (Denton, 1960), p. 5.

increase in a ten-year period.<sup>3</sup> The number of people employed in agricultural work has steadily been decreasing, however, due to modernization of equipment. The Texas Employment Commission's 1965 report on Denton County indicated that less than 10 per cent of the labor force was engaged in agricultural pursuits.<sup>4</sup>

In 1903, a major development in the economic life of the city took place. Denton was chosen as the location for two new state supported schools, known now as North Texas State University and Texas Woman's University. The founding of these two schools established Denton as an educational center and helped insure its future growth and development. Today North Texas State University occupies 340 acres, and the physical plant is valued at over \$43,500,000. Texas Woman's University has grown to 275 acres, with the physical plant valued at \$35,685,310.<sup>5</sup> Their combined enrollment is over 20,000 students. Over 30 per cent of the labor force of the city is directly connected with higher education.<sup>6</sup> Other developments in recent years, such as the addition of the Denton State School for mentally retarded children located southeast of the city and a rapidly expanding public school system, have further enlarged the economic importance of education to the community.

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<sup>3</sup>Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide (Dallas, 1969), p. 380.

<sup>4</sup>Texas Employment Commission, Labor Market Report, Denton, Texas Area (Dallas, 1966), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>Freese and Nichols, Basic Studies, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

Although education has played a major role in shaping the economy of Denton, the city could not be classified simply as a "college town." A well diversified industrial base has been established and is continually growing. The number of manufacturing establishments within the city grew from sixteen in 1933, to twenty-four in 1954, and, by January of 1968, there were fifty-four. The number of employees has grown from 132 in 1933 to 1,162 in 1954, to more than 2,600 in January, 1968.<sup>7</sup> The economic importance of manufacturing to the city has increased significantly in the past ten years and is expected to continue. Of the total employment in the city, manufacturing has risen from 12.3 per cent of the labor force in 1950, to 18.6 per cent in 1960.<sup>8</sup> The largest of the local manufacturing firms are listed in Table I. This table shows the products, employees, and market area, and it serves to illustrate the diverse manufacturing base which has been developed in the city.

The wholesale and retail trade has also made gains over the past decade. In 1950, 19.2 per cent of the labor force was engaged in these activities. The figure had increased to 20.1 per cent in 1960.<sup>9</sup> The wholesale and retail trade characteristics for Denton and Denton County establish Denton's position as the county's trade center. Of sixty wholesale

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<sup>7</sup>Denton Chamber of Commerce, "A Report on the Need for Direct Access to the Regional Airport," unpublished report, Denton, Texas, 1968, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>Freese and Nichols, Basic Studies, p. 41.

TABLE I  
MANUFACTURING FIRMS\*

Firm	Product	Staff	Market
Moore Business Forms, Inc.	Business System Forms	600	International
Victor Equipment Co.	Welding and Cutting Equip.	330	International
E. M. C. Plastics Co.	Plastics Products	220	National
Russell Newman Mfg. Co.	Ladies Lingerie	200	National
Acme Brick Company	Face Brick and Tile	200	Regional
Trinity Steel	Tanks and Trucks	130	National
Whitson's Food Products	Canned Foods	120	National
Brown and Sharpe	Twist Drills	112	International
Public Construction Co.	Asphaltic Concrete	100	Regional
Morrison Milling Co.	Flour, Meal, and Feeds	90	International
M. & B. Manufacturing Co.	Ladies Ready-to-Wear	88	National
Denton Publishing Co.	Daily Newspaper	70	Local
Turbo Refrigeration Co.	Ice-making Machines	52	International
Foremost Mobile Homes Mfg. Co.	Mobile Homes	50	Regional
Rapco Plastics Extruders	Plastics	50	National
Denton Concrete Co.	Concrete Products	36	Local
Harpool Seed Co.	Feed, Seed, etc.	25	Intrastate
Coca Cola Co.	Bottled Coca Cola	23	District
Jostens	School Class Rings	20	National
Interstate Hwy. Signs Mfg. Co.	Highway & Municipal Signs	18	State
Texas Neon Sign Co.	Commercial Signs	15	State

\*Source: Denton Chamber of Commerce, "Report," 1968, p. 3.

establishments of various kinds in the county in 1965, forty-seven were located in the city with an annual payroll of \$1,250,000. Of the 556 retail establishments in the county, 300 are in the city limits.<sup>10</sup>

Governmental entities in the area are other sources of employment which further serve to diversify and add to the economic stability of Denton. The first underground Civil Defense Control Center in the United States is located in Denton. It was constructed by the federal government at a cost of \$2,400,000. The center employs 100 full time personnel and has an annual payroll of \$750,000.<sup>11</sup>

Other large governmental sources of employment in Denton include the State Highway Department resident office with sixty employees and the City of Denton whose staff has doubled over the past ten years to a present employment of 432 persons.<sup>12</sup>

The economy of Denton is further integrated into the economic, physical, and social systems of Denton County and the larger metropolitan Fort Worth-Dallas area. There is no doubt that Denton's economic status and population would be considerably less had the city been further removed from the larger cities. Tangible proof of this fact is that 20 per cent of Denton's work force is employed in Tarrant and Dallas Counties.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Denton Chamber of Commerce, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>13</sup>Freese and Nichols, Basic Studies, p. 11.

Since the early 1940's, a number of communities in Dallas and Tarrant Counties, which were previously only a fraction of Denton's size, have mushroomed to cities with populations in excess of 40,000 people, as a result of the urban area expansion. Most notable in this category have been Garland, Irving, Grand Prairie, Arlington, and Richardson. These satellite communities were in the immediate path of the larger cities' growth and have now been absorbed into a Dallas-Fort Worth megalopolis. Their rapid development is expected to be repeated at increasingly greater distances from the central cities in future years.

It is apparent that Denton's future is tied closely to that of the metropolitan area, and that any economic reaction in the larger cities will be felt proportionately in Denton. The completion of the recently initiated regional airport, to be located nineteen miles from Denton, will further accelerate the city's growth and absorption into the greater urban area.

But Denton cannot be classified as a satellite city. It must be classified as a central city, due primarily to its distance from the two larger cities. The Dallas central business district is thirty-eight miles from Denton; Fort Worth's business area is thirty-five miles away. While Denton will not become a suburb of either Dallas or Fort Worth for many years, it will continue to experience many of the direct effects of this massive urbanization in the form of decentralized manufacturing facilities and commuting residents who work in the larger cities.

The effects of the expanding Dallas-Fort Worth complex have been increasingly apparent with the more rapid growth of Denton's population in recent years. The figures presented in Table II are census statistics which serve to illustrate the slow, steady growth which has taken place until 1960.

The county had some rapid growth in the early years but has leveled out since that time in all but one decade, 1920-30, in which it showed a decline. The city has shown moderate increase through 1960 with the exception of the decade between 1940 and 1950. The jump from 11,192 to 21,372 can be directly attributed to the addition of college students to the federal census population figures in 1950.

The decade between 1960 and 1970 has seen a rapid growth rate with 40,000 people estimated to be residing in the city in 1970. According to studies recently completed by the City of Denton's Planning Department, this growth will continue, and it has projected a conservative 21,000 increase by 1980.

The city of Denton then, while slightly over one hundred years old, has reached its present size and degree of maturity through a consistent population increase and a steady economic growth. It is a heterogeneous community in that its economic base is diverse with no one industry dominating the city's economic life.

The city has experienced a rapid growth in recent years which is expected to accelerate. While this growth has made

TABLE II  
POPULATION GROWTH OF DENTON AND DENTON COUNTY\*

Year	Texas	Denton County	Denton
1850	. . .	641	. . .
1860	. . .	5,031	. . .
1870	. . .	7,251	. . .
1880	. . .	18,143	1,194
1890	. . .	21,289	2,558
1900	. . .	28,318	4,187
1910	3,896,542	31,258	4,732
1920	4,663,228	35,355	7,643
1930	5,824,715	32,822	9,587
1940	6,414,824	33,658	11,192
1950	7,711,194	41,365	21,372
1960	9,579,617	47,000	26,844
1970**	11,500,000	70,000	40,000

\*Source: Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide (Dallas, 1965), pp. 130, 134.

\*\*Source: Estimate by City of Denton Planning Department.



the community more aware of the rapidly growing metropolitan area of which it is a part, the attitudes and values of the town are basically of a conservative nature which is usually associated with smaller communities that have experienced moderate growth.

### The City Government

In April, 1958, the citizens of Denton, by a large majority, elected a commission of fifteen citizens to write a new charter for the city. As proposed by the commission and adopted by the voters on February 24, 1959, the new charter changed the form of the city government from the mayor-commission to the council-manager form of government.<sup>14</sup> Under the new charter, the City has and exercises all of the powers granted to Cities by the Constitution or laws of Texas, including specifically those powers made available to cities of more than 5,000 inhabitants by what is known as the Home Rule Amendment to the Constitution of Texas.<sup>15</sup>

As spelled out in the charter, the policy making body or over-all agency of the city is the City Council, which is composed of five members elected by the city at large for a term of two years. (The terms are staggered so that two vacancies

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<sup>14</sup>A full discussion of the change from old to new charters is presented in Jimmie Don Starr, "Municipal Government Transition in Denton, Texas," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Government, North Texas State University, Denton, 1962.

<sup>15</sup>Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes, Article 1175, paragraph 34, p. 85.

will occur one year and three the next year. The mayor is elected from within the Council membership, is recognized as the head of the city government for ceremonial purposes, but has no special administrative duty other than presiding over meetings of the City Council. The Council has the power to pass ordinances, determine all matters of policy, and appoint a City Manager. The Council holds the Manager responsible for the proper execution of its policies and the effective administration of the departments, agencies, and services of the city. (The Council may remove the Manager if he does not perform these responsibilities properly.) The charter requires that the Manager chosen by the Council must have had at least two years experience as a City Manager or as an Assistant City Manager.<sup>16</sup>

As the chief administrative officer of the City, the Manager appoints and may remove the directors of the departments and other employees. He has the duty of preparing the annual budget as well as presenting periodic financial statements for the information of the Council and the public. It is also his duty to attend all Council meetings, make recommendations to the City Council, and see that all ordinances are properly enforced.<sup>17</sup>

The general scope of responsibility and authority, then, for the city government is well defined in the city charter,

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<sup>16</sup>Denton Charter Commission, Proposed Charter for the City of Denton, Texas (Denton, 1958), preface.

<sup>17</sup>Home Rule Charter for the City of Denton, Texas (Denton

as it is in most council-manager cities. The Council has the final authority and responsibility for policy matters and the City Manager makes recommendations and serves as the administrative head of the city government. The city charter, within this structure, also goes to great lengths to assign specific areas of responsibility and authority by creating nine administrative departments.

The nine administrative departments created by the charter are placed under the City Manager, and the same provision permits the creation, by ordinance, of others.<sup>18</sup> These nine are important because they represent areas which the charter commission felt were in need of specific mention. For purposes of this study, the eighth mentioned, the Planning and Zoning Department, bears close observation. It is to this department that the charter assigned the responsibility for action involving blighted areas within the city.

Of major interest is the fact that 4 1/2 pages of the city charter are devoted to Planning and Zoning, whereas only 6 1/2 pages are devoted to finance. This fact is of significance because at the time the new charter was being written the major reason for the change in form of government was the poor financial status of the city. It can be safely assumed then that Planning and Zoning was felt to be of major importance to the city's future, by the coverage devoted to it in the city charter.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., section 5.05.

Article 10 of the city charter provides for a Planning Department and a Planning and Zoning Commission. It specifies that the department be headed by a Director of Planning who is appointed by the City Manager. The Director is to serve as the executive officer and technical advisor of the Planning and Zoning Commission. He may also have other duties and responsibilities as the City Manager may assign him.<sup>19</sup>

The City Planning and Zoning Commission consists of five real property taxpayers who must be residents of the city. They are appointed by the Council for two-year staggered terms, with three members being appointed each odd numbered year and two each even numbered year. The City Manager, Mayor, and Director of Public Works serve as ex officio members but have no vote. The members cannot hold any other public office or position in the City while on the commission, and they serve without pay. The Commission elects its own chairman from its members and adopts such rules and regulations as it deems best concerning its meetings. If a vacancy occurs, the Council appoints a Commissioner to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.<sup>20</sup>

Under Article 10, Section 10.03, the charter sets out the duties and powers of the Planning and Zoning Commission under two subsections:

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., section 10.01.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., section 10.02.

- (a) The Planning and Zoning Commission shall:
- (1) make, amend, extend and add to the master plan for the physical development of the City;
  - (2) formulate and adopt regulations governing the planning or subdividing of land within the City (The applicable provisions of Charter 1, Title 28 of the Revised Civil Statutes of the State of Texas, 1925, as now or hereafter amended, are hereby adopted and made a part of this charter, and shall be controlling on the Planning and Zoning Commission.);
  - (3) draft for the Council an Official Map of the City and recommend approval or disapproval of proposed changes in said map; keep such map up-to-date so as to reflect any changes in the boundary or the zoning plan for the City;
  - ✓ (4) make and recommend plans for the clearance and rebuilding of any slum districts or blighted areas within the City;
  - (5) recommend approval or disapproval of proposed changes in the zoning plan and ordinance of this City and have all the power, duty, and authority of a Zoning Commission as provided in Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes, 1948, Article 1011f, as now or hereafter amended, all of which are hereby adopted as a part of this charter;
  - (6) submit annually to the City Manager, not less than ninety days prior to the beginning of the budget year, a list of recommended capital improvements, which in the opinion of the Commission ought to be constructed during the forthcoming five-year period (Such list shall be arranged in order of preference, with recommendations as to which projects should be constructed in which year, and the City Manager shall forthwith furnish a copy of such recommendations to each member of the Council.);
  - ✓ (7) promote public interest in and understanding of the Master Plan and of planning, zoning, clearance of blighted areas and development of the City;
  - (8) meet not less than once each month and keep a public record of its resolutions, findings and determinations; and
  - (9) hold such public hearings as it may deem desirable in the public interest and advise the Council upon such matters as the Council may request its advice.
- (b) For the accomplishment of the foregoing purposes the Planning and Zoning Commission is hereby empowered to:

- (1) require information which shall be furnished within a reasonable time from the other departments of the City Government in relation to its work;
- (2) within its budget appropriation, recommend the employment of city planners and other consultants for such services as it may require;
- (3) request additional assistance for special survey work of the City Manager, who may at his discretion assign to the Planning and Zoning Commission employees of any administrative department or direct such department to make special studies requested by the Commission;
- (4) in the performance of its functions, enter upon any land and make examinations and surveys and place and maintain necessary monuments and marks thereon; and
- (5) make and recommend plans for the replanning, improvement and redevelopment of neighborhoods or of any area or district which may be destroyed in whole or in part or seriously damaged by fire, earthquake, flood or disaster.<sup>21</sup>

The duties mentioned in numbers four and seven are of particular interest as it is here that specific responsibility for making, recommending, and promoting public interest in plans for the clearance and rehabilitation of blighted areas within the city is assigned.

Just as significant, however, is the broad scope of responsibility which is assigned to the Commission in the other seven duties described in subsection (a). The duties, although all concerned with the field of planning and zoning, are broad and require large outlays of time to properly evaluate, even for a small city. The tasks of reviewing revisions to the master plan; formulating subdivision regulations; establishing plans for slum and blighted areas; submitting a five year

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., section 10.03.

capital improvements program annually; and promoting public interest and understanding while conducting public hearings and formulating recommendations on zoning requests hardly make for an enviable job.

The powers assigned by the charter to enable the Commission to perform its duties demonstrate the intent of the charter commissioners to <sup>formally, not just casually</sup> equip the Planning and Zoning Commission with all of the tools available to insure a satisfactory job.

The charter goes on to further set authority for slum clearance and rehabilitation of blighted areas in the last section of Article 10:

The Council may adopt, modify, and carry out plans proposed by the Planning and Zoning Commission for the clearance of slum districts and blighted areas within the City and, for the accomplishment of this purpose, may acquire by purchase or condemnation <sup>all</sup> all privately owned land, buildings, and other real property interest within the district; may establish, locate, relocate, build, and improve the streets and other public open spaces provided for in the plan; may maintain, operate, lease or sell said buildings or any of them; may sell the land or any part thereof designated for buildings and private open spaces upon such terms and conditions and subject to such restrictions as to building uses and open spaces as will substantially carry out and effect the plan.<sup>22</sup>

This section reasserted the authority of the Council in this area of government activity even though it is implied by its previously being mentioned in the Article as a duty of the Planning and Zoning Board. This power for action in slum clearance is also granted by state law, so it was specifically

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., section 10.12.

on the minds of the Commissioners that the voters approve this section although it was already a power of the municipal government, regardless of whether it was included in the charter.<sup>23</sup>

Among the duties of the Planning and Zoning Commission, and basic for the accomplishment or implementation of the Commission's other duties, was that of compiling and recommending a comprehensive master plan. Such basic planning data as land-use maps and indications of the general direction of growth were necessary before the Commission could perform its other duties.

The city charter, in the fourth section of Article 10,<sup>23</sup> specifically set forth the requirements for the master plan for the physical development of the city. It had to show the Commission's recommendations for the development of city territory, and was to include, although not be limited to the following:

- (a) the general location, character, and extent of streets, bridges, parks, waterways and other public ways, grounds and spaces;
- (b) the general location of public buildings and other public property;
- (c) the general location and extent of public utilities, whether publicly or privately owned;
- (d) the removal, relocation, widening, extension, narrowing, vacation, abandonment or change of use of such existing or future public ways, grounds, spaces, buildings, property or utilities; and
- (e) the general extent and location of public housing projects and slum-clearance projects.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes, Article 1175, paragraph 34, p. 85.



The legal effect of the required master plan was specifically set forth in the fourth section of Article 10 and made the master plan or its revision mandatory for future public improvements.

No street, park, or other public way, ground or space, no public building or structure and no public utility whether publicly or privately owned, shall be constructed or authorized in the City, nor shall any real property be acquired by the City, until and unless the location and extent thereof shall have been submitted to and approved by the Commission; provided that, in case of disapproval, the Commission shall within thirty days communicate its reasons to the Council, which shall have the power to overrule such disapproval, and upon such overruling, the Council or the appropriate office, department or agency shall have power to proceed. The widening, vacating or change in the use of any street or the sale of any public buildings or real property shall be subject.<sup>25</sup>

#### Conclusion

There are no two cities which are exactly alike. They may have striking similarities, but each city has its individual characteristics which establish it as a unique and separate entity. For the purpose of this study, the characteristics of Denton, both as a city and as a governmental entity, are important in order to better understand the environment in which the events which are discussed herein took place.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., section 10.05.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE SOUTHEAST AREA

In 1960, in accordance with the city charter, the City of Denton entered into a study which resulted in its first Comprehensive City Plan for Community Improvement.<sup>1</sup> Included in the 1960 Comprehensive Plan was the first official recognition that the southeast area constituted a serious problem for the city.

The City of Denton had prepared two city plans prior to the 1960 project. The first plan was completed in 1931 when the city was estimated to have a population of 14,000. The plan included studies on streets, utilities, parks, zoning, and subdivision regulations, but the majority of the study was devoted to street improvements. The area covered in the 1931 plan was approximately two-thirds the size of the city in 1960.<sup>2</sup>

A second plan was completed in 1948. By this time the city was estimated to have a population of 20,000, and the city's

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<sup>1</sup>Freese and Nichols, Basic Studies, Phase I of Comprehensive Plan for Denton, Texas, 1960-1985 (Denton, 1960), p. iii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

boundaries were nearly the same as they were in the 1960 study. This plan, like the 1931 study, was largely devoted to street improvements.<sup>3</sup>

\* In 1960, the City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission took the initial steps to begin work on a new plan. Two <sup>(in the question, not)</sup> planning firms from the city of Fort Worth were selected as the planning consultants.<sup>(from V/A/S)</sup> The city administration then decided to seek financial aid from the federal government. Such assistance was offered for advanced planning as set forth in the Title VII, Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954 as amended. This act made grants-in-aid, up to 50 per cent, available for urban planning assistance to cities of less than 25,000 population.<sup>4</sup> The funds were administered through the Housing and Home Finance Agency of the federal government and the Texas State Department of Health.<sup>5</sup>

In 1960, the plan was prepared for the city by the consultants through the use of 701 funds. In this way, the city was able to obtain a more comprehensive plan than it could have obtained through its own limited resources. Actual work on the plan began in November of 1959.<sup>6</sup>

The Comprehensive Plan was prepared in seven separate phases, each stage of work consisting of a separate submission to the city Planning and Zoning Commission. The separate

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. 68, Part I, p. 590, (1954).

<sup>5</sup>Freese and Nichols, Basic Studies, p. iv.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid p. v

reports in the order of accomplishment were as follows:

- Phase I        Basic Studies
- Phase II       Land Use
- Phase III      Thoroughfares and Parking
- Phase IV       Community Facilities
- Phase V        Capital Improvements Program
- Phase VI       Planning Controls and Plan Administration
- Phase VII      Comprehensive Plan Report<sup>7</sup>

The Land Use Plan submitted as the second phase was an evaluation of the various land uses that would be required by the future population of Denton. The projections in the plan were for a twenty-five-year period. The purpose of the plan was stated thus:

. . . to produce an efficient arrangement of land uses, in proper quantities and relationships to insure the greatest practical economy in the provision of services that will contribute to preservation of property values and assets and a full realization of the benefits and advantages of urban living.<sup>8</sup>

In order to achieve this purpose, the sixth section of Phase II was devoted to the first official evaluation of blighted conditions in the city.

#### Areas With Blighted Conditions

The report noted that there were several areas within the city which could be classified as substandard. Four

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Freese and Nichols, Land Use, Phase II of Comprehensive Plan for Denton, Texas, 1960-1985 (Denton, 1960), p. iv.

reasons were given why these areas should be a cause of concern to the city:

- a. Not only is growth impaired in the immediate vicinity, but their state of condition reflects upon the character of the community, its pride, and general welfare.
- b. A retarded growth area is subject to blight causing a drain on the city financial structure.
- c. Such sections require police and fire protection and welfare funds far out of proportion to their tax returns.
- d. Of the most concern is the tendency of such blighted areas to continue in deterioration and bring adjoining districts down to their level rather than remaining static or disappearing by themselves.<sup>9</sup>

Several reasons were given for the continued existence of substandard areas in the city. The majority of the areas were found to be the result of slow and limited land use succession. When these areas were originally developed, they were the better neighborhoods in the city. They were developed, however, when standards of living were much lower and such improvements as paved streets, utilities, and residential lots larger than fifty feet were considered luxuries. As standards of living improved, the families in these sections moved to better neighborhoods, and in too many cases the older homes became rental units for lower income families. The rental units generally were not improved since the added costs would increase the rents they would have to command to far above the reach of most neighborhood residents. Those homes which were privately owned also received little improvement due to the owners' financial inability.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

Other substandard areas found in the city were sections which had always been substandard. The lack of adequate building codes, subdivision and zoning regulations, and their enforcement had permitted the growth of haphazardly planned neighborhoods that had resulted in instant slums. These conditions were cited among the most serious problems facing the city of Denton at that time.<sup>11</sup>

The consultants went on in their report to generally describe blighted conditions in the city as an almost <sup>contiguous</sup> contiguous area on the <sup>perimeter</sup> perimeter of the developed city on the south, southeast, and east. Only one blighted neighborhood was found to be outside this area and it was described as south of Hickory Street and west of the North Texas State University campus, on the western edge of the corporate limits. Not all of the structures located in this area were thought to be substandard. It was stated that there was, however, an overall tendency in each of these areas toward deterioration and limitation of acceptable development.<sup>12</sup>

Surveys conducted by the consultants <sup>revealed</sup> revealed that very little residential growth had taken place in recent years. This was not true of other sections of the city as most had experienced a rapid growth. The new construction that had taken place was for commercial and industrial use and was located near the railroads or highways.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 60, 61.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

The entire black population of the city was found to be living in the southeast section of the city, which was classified as substandard. This concentration was considered to exist because of the low income of the group. For various other reasons, the blacks were located apart from the rest of the community, <sup>regardless</sup> regardless of individual income. This was felt to be in conflict with the mobility of white residents of the city who could live <sup>throughout</sup> throughout the community and were only limited by their financial status. It was considered an axiom in the report that no family will live in a substandard neighborhood if it can afford to move to a better neighborhood. Conversely, it was assumed that upgrading and improving a substandard neighborhood was a desired goal of all the residents of such an area.<sup>14</sup>

#### Characteristics of the Blighted Neighborhoods

The location and characteristics of the blighted neighborhoods were documented by two surveys of the entire city of Denton. A land use survey was conducted to find the use of each piece of property and the location and condition of all structures in the city. Additional information concerning street width, surfacing, and drainage was collected during a second survey. After the data was compiled from these two surveys, an additional study was made of each area found to be substandard.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

This third survey revealed that the predominant characteristic of these neighborhoods was the presence of substandard housing. Throughout the city, 280 structures were classified as substandard. In all, 274 of the structures were single family residences and the remaining six were duplexes. These houses only represented 4.5 per cent of the single family homes, and only 3.7 per cent of the total residential units in Denton, but the consultants felt that the presence of 280 substandard structures was a problem of major consequence.<sup>16</sup> For the purpose of the survey, a residence was considered substandard if any of the following conditions existed:

1. Structurally unsound or in a very bad state of repair.
2. No inside water, no hot water, no inside tub or shower, no electricity, or no kitchen sink.
3. No properly functioning method of disposing of household sewage (no connection to public sewer or septic tank.)
4. Any living or sleeping rooms without adequate light, ventilation, or screened openings.
5. Inadequate or unsafe heating facilities.
6. Insufficient size for the number of persons residing in the house (less than one room for each 1.5 people.)
7. Poorly graded lot allowing water to stand under house or on premises.
8. Inadequate yard space for some degree of privacy, laundry drying, play area for children, and normal family activities.<sup>17</sup>

The lack of paved streets and inadequate drainage were two characteristics of the blighted neighborhoods which were reported as constituting the largest problems facing the city. Throughout Denton, little underground storm drainage existed and in the substandard areas there was little or no control of

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 64.



storm water. A study of the entire street system revealed that only 40 per cent of the 107 miles of streets in Denton were paved. It was noted that most of the unpaved streets were in low cost housing areas where property owners could not afford normal assessment costs for paving and drainage control.<sup>18</sup>

Other characteristics which were found to be contributing to substandard conditions in the neighborhoods included overcrowding of land due to small lots and the existence of incompatible land uses where industrial or commercial uses were located adjacent to homes, causing reduced residential values. The areas described as substandard also contained a large number of vacant lots. This was considered a result of the general conditions of the neighborhoods, but the unused lots had grown up in weeds and collected debris causing additional blight.<sup>19</sup>

In order to analyze each blighted area, the consultants established four categories. Each of the areas that had some degree of blight were placed under one of the following headings:

Conservation A.--The areas which were included in this classification were those in which structures were thought to be predominantly standard. Only normal maintenance and modernization of structures, and protection from adverse influences such as the intrusion of nonconforming uses were required to sustain the desirable characteristics of the area.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

Conservation B.--Areas included in this classification were those within which definite deterioration was evident. Remedial action was thought practical and was required to return the areas to satisfactory condition. It was felt that such neighborhoods would gradually fall into a lower classification if deterioration and lack of repairs were allowed to continue.

Redevelopment A.--These areas contained definite blight to the extent that rehabilitation was required. Residential structures within the area were described as generally unsatisfactory and were classified in one of the following ways:

1. The basic structure was sound, reasonable repairs would make the house standard and would not exceed 50 per cent of the value of the structure.
2. The basic structure was unsound, and it had less than 400 square feet of living space and repairs would exceed 50 per cent of the value after repair.

Areas included in Redevelopment A contained many type (1) structures and scattered type (2). Overcrowding of land that was to be included in this classification would be general. Rehabilitation areas, because of location, character of structures, and land use, were recommended for consideration for rehabilitation in any urban renewal program.

Redevelopment B.--This type of area was one which contained predominantly substandard dwellings, type (2) above. Serious

crowding was evident. Rehabilitation was not considered practical due to the condition of structures, or because residential uses were inappropriate and could not be retained. This latter effect was attributed to existing industrial uses or evident appropriate industrial use.<sup>20</sup>

In order to present more detailed study of the existing neighborhoods showing signs of decline, the consultants outlined each area and presented brief descriptions of each area. They were described in relation to the preceding classifications. A total of six areas were outlined. Four of them were described as white and were composed of low income residents. The encroachment of commercial and industrial uses was thought to be the primary reason for blighted conditions in all four areas. The southeast section of Denton constituted the remaining two areas and were listed as areas number four and five. These two large contiguous areas were considered by the consultants to be the major blighted sections in the city.

Area number four.--This area was reported to be heavily developed and one of the older parts of the city. It was described as roughly bounded by the Dallas highway on the west, vacant land on the south, industrial use on the north, and a park on the east. With few exceptions, the area's residents were found to be black. Two main railroad lines and a switching connection cut through this area. One large branch of Pecan

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-67.

Creek, a major drainage creek running through the city, bisected the area from west to east. One hundred and twelve substandard residential units were reported within its boundaries. Only a few blocks of streets were reported to be paved. The reasons that were given for the substandard nature of this area were the railroads, the lack of paved streets, and, basically, the low income of its residents. This area was classified partly in both Redevelopment A and B. Certain parts of the tract on the park side and to the near south were considered very desirable for rehabilitation as residential use. Enough standard and near standard structures were available to make such a move economically feasible. On the west side of the tract and around the railroads it was considered advisable to allow the land to convert to industrial use. Such revision, it was noted, would probably require positive action by the community. Regardless of the future use, however, the consultants felt that the area was in need of street improvements and major rehabilitation of the Pecan Creek branch.<sup>21</sup>

Area number five.--This area was described as the eastern edge of the city with agricultural land along its eastern border. To the west was a park, a cemetery, and several industrial sites. The north boundary was McKinney Street with standard housing beyond. Most residents of this area were also black. A total of fifty-six dwelling units within this tract were of substandard conditions. One of the major deterrents to acceptable growth

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 70-71.

was found to be the uncleared and largely uncontrolled branches of Pecan Creek. The branch mentioned in area four and the main <sup>main stem</sup> stem of the creek meet in this area and divide it into three separate units. Further influences on the area were the <sup>area of land</sup> cemetery, the adjoining industries, and occasional odors from the City sewage treatment plant which was located farther down Pecan Creek. It was felt that residential use should be maintained and that the entire tract could be classed as Redevelopment A. In order to remedy existing blighted conditions, a first step recommended was to require clearing and channel <sup>take out miasma from</sup> rectification of the streams. It was also noted that paved streets were a must since many of those existing then were nearer trails than roadways. Since existing plans by the City were to move the sewage treatment plant much farther downstream to a new site, the odor problem was not considered <sup>referring directly</sup> pertinent. A community urban renewal effort was considered and recommended for this area in order for the residential structures to be brought up to standards.<sup>22</sup>

#### Recommendations for Removing Blighted Conditions

In their conclusion, the consultants outlined several means available to the City for eliminating the blighted conditions outlined in their report. At the City level, there were several major steps that were recommended to improve the substandard areas and keep similar situations from recurring.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 71-72.

in the future. Actions which were recommended included the following:

- a. The formation of some sort of a "Grass Roots" or "Citizens Committee" would be a means of obtaining public support for the proposed measures. A city-wide organization of this sort could be further broken down with the representatives of the group meeting with the people in the neighborhoods. In this way, more people could become aware of the problems and their solutions.
- b. The enactment of more thorough zoning and subdivision controls.
- c. The enactment of a minimum standards housing ordinance.
- d. The enactment of improved sanitation laws.
- e. The provisions of needed public improvements throughout the existing areas. These would not only include existing retarded areas, but would also take in areas of the city where potential problems exist or may occur.<sup>23</sup>

These local community actions were considered the most desirable method of correcting the blighted conditions in the community. It was pointed out, however, that they would not obtain significant results without substantial public interest and support. In view of the large financial commitment that would be necessary, federal aids in the form of financial and technical assistance were recommended, if the projects could not be handled at the local level. These federal aids included Urban Renewal and Public Housing.<sup>24</sup>

The primary program of improvement that was recommended by the 1960 report was made available by the federal government through the Federal Housing Act of 1949, as amended. The

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 73-74.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

Housing Act of 1949 was the first legislation to combine public and private enterprise, acting jointly to provide housing, clear slums, and redevelop the cleared areas. The Act had two major provisions. Title I provided for federal financial aid, to be administered through local public agencies, for slum area redevelopment by private enterprise or by public nonprofit agencies. Title II provided for public housing.<sup>25</sup>

Urban Renewal, as set forth in the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, was a long-range effort to achieve better communities through planned redevelopment of deteriorated and deteriorating areas, both residential and nonresidential, and the removal of factors which created slums and blight with various types of federal assistance. It was designed to be carried out at the local level and involved cooperation among local governments, private enterprise, citizens, and the federal government.<sup>26</sup>

A Title I Urban Renewal project could involve acquiring and clearing a slum or blighted area and disposing of the land for redevelopment in accordance with planned uses. A project could also involve rehabilitation of structures in a deteriorated area by property owners accompanied by improvement of community facilities by the local government. The project could also involve a combination of these activities.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. 63, Part I, p. 413, (1949).

<sup>26</sup>Office of Economic Opportunity, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (Washington, D. C., 1969), p. 321.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

In the Urban Renewal Program, assistance was provided for a wide scope of activities and made it the most comprehensive federal aid program for blighted areas. In the first step of the program, assistance was provided for initial surveys and planning for over-all community improvement. Then an advance of funds was made for the planning of specific Urban Renewal projects. When these detailed plans were completed, the Housing and Home Finance Agency, which administered the program, provided temporary loans, definitive loans, and capital grants for carrying out the project. Under various housing programs, FHA Mortgage Insurance was authorized for up to 95 per cent of the value of a home for rehabilitation, for the construction of new multiple family units, or for the rehabilitation of rental housing. Another FHA program was available to provide low-cost housing for families displaced by government action during the project. Mortgage Insurance was also available to encourage home ownership of new or rehabilitated housing by providing for a 5 per cent down payment and a maximum mortgage amount of \$9,000.<sup>28</sup>

Through various programs which were available only in Urban Renewal areas, funds were available for the acquisition of property in the project areas, for the demolition or removal of buildings, and for improvements made in accordance with plans for the area. The installation, construction or reconstruction of streets, utilities, parks, playgrounds, and other

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<sup>28</sup>Freese and Nichols, Land Use, p. 75.



necessary public improvements were also funded through the project. Funds were also available for the sale of any property acquired in an Urban Renewal area including sales, initial leasing, or retention by the local agency administering the Urban Renewal program, at the fair market value, in order to accomplish the objectives of the program. Funds were also available to provide for a program of voluntary repair and rehabilitation of buildings.<sup>29</sup>

Urban Renewal then was and is a comprehensive process that can involve both clearance and conservation of structures. It can also include the costs of providing public facilities and make it economically feasible for residents in the areas to build new housing or rehabilitate older structures. The program has flexibility and allows considerable local discretion in what it will include and how it will be administered. Generally, however, an Urban Renewal project proceeds along the following lines:

1. The submission and approval of a survey and planning application for an urban renewal project.
2. The undertaking of the necessary surveys to provide the data essential for programming the project, and developing of the urban renewal plan.
3. The acquisition of properties.
4. The relocation of all families and businesses.
5. *Destroy - pull down old buildings*  
Demolition of structures.
6. The rehabilitation or conservation of all structures determined to be economically feasible for such treatment and permitted by the plan.

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

7. The installation of all public improvements such as roads, sidewalks, utilities, schools, parking lots, and parks.
8. The resale or other disposition of the cleared land to developers who have agreed to build in accordance with the provisions of the urban renewal plan.
9. Finally, the completion of the new construction.<sup>30</sup>

When an Urban Renewal project has been completed, the federal government pays two-thirds of the net cost of the project and the local community pays the remaining one-third. The local community's share of the cost could be met by a cash payment from local bonds or revenue. The city could also meet any portion of the project cost by performing approved work or services in connection with the program.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> The Urban Renewal Program is one of the most controversial federal programs to be initiated in recent times. The program presents a departure from land use theory of the past, and the fundamental principal upon which it is based, its revolutionary use of eminent domain to condemn private property for resale to private developers, was upheld by the courts in 1954. The plaintiffs lost their suit to enjoin the Urban Renewal agency from condemning their property. They contended that the Housing Act of 1949 was unconstitutional; they held that it permitted public condemnation of private property and resale to other private persons. A United States District Court and later the United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Urban Renewal Program. The court held that the concept of the

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<sup>30</sup> Alfred P. Van Huyck and Jack Hornung, The Citizens' Guide to Urban Renewal (New Jersey, 1963), p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> Freese and Nichols, Land Use - 77

public welfare is broad and inclusive, and defended the public power to take private property and resell it to other private persons for public purpose.<sup>32</sup>

Also recommended by the consultants in the 1960 report was the possible use of public housing within the city. As set forth in Title II of the 1949 Act, and as amended, it provides for public housing for families of low income under a local Public Housing Authority.<sup>33</sup> In the public housing program, standard housing is made available to low income families through a federal subsidy which makes up the difference between the economic rent which would have to be paid to finance the project and the rental which the tenants could afford to pay.

#### Conclusion

The 1960 Master Plan was written primarily to serve as a twenty-five year guide for future public facilities. Therefore it was quite general and oversimplified. However, as pointed out in the introduction, this was the first over-all attempt by the city to make a comprehensive evaluation of its condition, and certainly in such an undertaking, all materials had to be limited to a general approach and simplified. It was, however, an important contribution toward improving blighted conditions in the southeast Denton area in that the problems were defined and solutions proposed. The recommendations for local action provided the basis for implementing actions which provided the

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<sup>32</sup>Berman v. Parker, 348 U. S. 26 (1954).

<sup>33</sup>U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. 63, Part I, p. 413, (1949).

City with the necessary tools to control urban decay in the future. The specific recommendations for federally aided Urban Renewal and Public Housing programs were also to have importance for future efforts in the area.

## CHAPTER III

### THE 1965 COMMUNITY ACTION SURVEY REPORT

#### The Survey

During the early 1960's, interest was continually growing — for some type of action by the City to correct blighted conditions in the southeast Denton area. The interest and growing awareness of the problems in the area was not the result of an organized local campaign. It was due primarily to three factors: the priority and publicity which was being given to poverty areas at the national level; a growing number of complaints by southeast Denton residents; and the concern that was expressed by a growing number of residents in other areas of the city.

This growing concern led Denton Mayor Warren Whitson, in June of 1965, to appoint twenty-eight Denton citizens to serve on a committee to investigate Denton's possible participation in the federal War on Poverty Program. The members of the committee consisted of leaders from both the white and black communities.<sup>1</sup>

The primary program of the War on Poverty, as administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity, was the Community Action

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<sup>1</sup>The Denton Record Chronicle, June 19, 1965.

Program. This program combined local effort and federal financial assistance to concentrate efforts to enhance economic advancement in poverty areas. There were several programs which could be coordinated through the Community Action Program such as Head Start, the Job Corps, and legal services, to name only a few.<sup>2</sup>

In order to qualify for a Community Action Program, the area under consideration had to qualify as a low income or poverty area in comparison with the rest of the city in which it was located. In order to determine if the southeast Denton area would qualify as a poverty area, the committee, in July of 1965, using local volunteers, made a survey of the area.

The lack of census tracts for the city made it impossible to use census data for the detailed information needed on the southeast area. Members of the survey committee collected data from the Denton public schools, the Denton office of the Texas Employment Commission, the Denton office of the State Department of Public Welfare, the Selective Service Bureau, the United States Census where possible, City offices and agencies, and largely from the residents themselves.<sup>3</sup>

During the survey, sixty-six volunteer interviewers, working in teams of two, contacted 220 families representing 923 persons, or about one-third of the total residents of the

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<sup>2</sup>Office of Economic Opportunity, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, (Washington, D. C., January, 1969), p. 486.

<sup>3</sup>City of Denton, Texas, Survey Committee Report, Community Action Program (July, 1965), p. 1.

area. Each interviewing team was composed of a resident of the area and one other Denton resident.<sup>4</sup> Table III presents a summary of the committee's findings.

The area covered by the survey teams was the entire area which had been presented as two tracts in the 1960 Master Plan evaluation. It was estimated to contain 12 per cent of the population of Denton, or 3,220 persons. Almost all of Denton's black residents were found to be living in the area, as well as a few Mexican families, and some described as American whites.<sup>5</sup>

Southeast Denton was described as consisting of small frame houses which were primarily residential. Almost without exception the dwellings were reported to be one-story buildings. A count of general appearance, taken from the survey, indicated that a small proportion of the houses were good or very good, while a large number gave a fair or poor appearance. The area was generally described as typical of the low income section of an American city the size of Denton, except perhaps for the great variation of conditions from house to house found in Denton. It was further described as not corresponding in physical appearance to such an area in a large metropolitan community, since there were no tenement or similar dwellings.<sup>6</sup>

The survey report directed its attention to six areas of inquiry which were felt would most reflect poverty conditions, if present. These included housing, education, employment, health, mobility, and community participation.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

TABLE III  
A COMPARISON OF THE TOTAL COMMUNITY OF DENTON  
AND THE SOUTHEAST DENTON AREA

Item	Denton*	Southeast Denton**
Total Population	26,844	3,220
Total Number of Families	5,918	710
Home Ownership	60.3%	57%
Median Rent Per Household	\$62 per month	\$34 per month
Median Number of Rooms Per Household	4.6 rooms	4.2 rooms
1.01 or More Persons Per Room	10.5%	30%
Median Education Obtained by Males	11.1 grades	8 grades
Median Education Obtained by Females	11.1 grades	9 grades
Males in Occupations Classed as Laborers, Operatives, Service, Private Household Work	33%	94%
Females in Occupations Classed as Laborers, Operatives, Service, Private Household Work	36%	92%
Total Number of Families With Income of Less than \$3,000	1,433	267
Median Income per Family	\$6,117	\$3,600
Per Cent of All Families With Income Less than \$3,000	24.2%	37%

\*Source: Information obtained from 1960 Census.

\*\*Source: Information obtained from 1965 Survey of the Area.



### Housing

Housing conditions were evaluated in the report because they provide the most visible and obvious reflection that poverty exists in an area. Final tabulations of the survey indicated the following:

- a. Home ownership was found to resemble the city as a whole. One hundred and twenty-six, or 57 per cent of the families in southeast Denton owned their homes as compared to 60.3 per cent of all families in Denton at large.
- b. Rents ranged from a low of \$12 per month to a high of \$60. The median rent was \$34 which was well below the 1960 Denton median rent of \$62.
- c. The number of persons per household ranged from one to fifteen, with a median of 4.18. The median for the city was 2.6.
- d. A minimum of one person per room was established as a minimum standard. Thirty per cent or sixty-six families had more than one person per room in the southeast section, and thus did not meet this standard. The 1960 census showed that 10.5 per cent of the households in Denton had 1.01 or more persons per room. The figure of 30 per cent for the study area was then also far in excess of the city's proportion of 10.5 per cent.
- e. Eight per cent of the families in the area were without sewage and so were without indoor bathrooms.

- f. The necessity of using the living room for sleeping purposes was also considered a factor in overcrowding, lack of privacy, and so, substandard housing. Of the families surveyed, 28 per cent were using the living room for sleeping purposes.<sup>7</sup>

The conclusion of the report was that the study area contained a large percentage of the city's substandard housing. This was considered to be true as measured by rents, number of rooms per house, persons per household, persons per room, sewage facilities, and the use of the living room for sleeping. The standard housing found in the area was a small percentage of the total units and was not considered typical of this section of town. The large proportion of unpaved streets was also noted.<sup>8</sup>

#### Education

The educational level of the population of Denton is high, perhaps because of the two universities. The city proudly boasts that one of every hundred residents holds a doctoral degree. This was considered when analyzing the educational level of the persons in the southeast area. The final report indicated the following:

- a. According to the 1960 census, the median educational level of all city residents was just above the eleventh grade.
- b. The educational range of the male respondents was from three with no schooling to four with college degrees.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

- c. The median grade completed by male respondents was the eighth grade which was over three years below the male median for the city.
- d. The women respondents ranged from one with no schooling to one college graduate. The ninth grade represented the median educational level attained by these women. This was more than two grades below the median for all women in the city.
- e. A few of the men had some additional job training, but in most cases it was not significant.<sup>9</sup>

On the basis of these findings, the area was considered far below the Denton median. Information provided by the public schools revealed that approximately 42 per cent of the Denton dropouts were living in southeast Denton. Fred Moore School, located in the area, had a dropout rate of 15 per cent, which was well above the over-all Denton average of 3.5 per cent. About half of this 15 per cent had cited financial reasons for leaving school.<sup>10</sup>

In summary, occupations which would be open to persons with an eighth grade education or less were thought to be limited in desirability of work and income earned. According to the information provided by the public school system, the cycle created by lack of education was self-perpetuating.

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

### Employment

Employment held by the area residents was found to be closely related to the neighborhood's educational level, and this was especially true for those in the lower academic levels. The study indicated the following:

- a. General labor which required little skill or training was the largest category for male employment. Over 94 per cent of the men were classified as laborers.
- b. In the 1960 census, 33 per cent of the men were classed as laborers.
- c. Eight hours of work per day was the median for the study area. This was considered to be misleading, however, since many of the men held seasonal jobs and often worked less than eight hours a day.
- d. Hourly wages for men ranged from less than one dollar per hour to \$4 per hour. The median hourly wage was \$1.69.
- e. Hourly wages for women were from less than one dollar to \$2.25. The median hourly wage was \$1.20.<sup>11</sup>

The incomes of the southeast Denton residents were then found to be low when compared with the rest of the city. In order to calculate family income, the earnings of both husband and wife were combined. Those living on old age assistance and Social Security were included in the report totals for those whose incomes were less than \$1,000 a year.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-11.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

The final tabulations of the report indicated that 27 per cent of the families in the area had an annual income below \$2,000. Over 44 per cent of the families had an annual income below \$3,000, as compared to only 24 per cent for all Denton families, as given in the 1960 census. The median family income in the city of Denton was \$6,117. This was almost twice the \$3,600 median reported for families in the study area. The study concluded that in terms of employment, hourly wage, and family income, the residents of southeast Denton represented the poverty level of the city's population.<sup>13</sup>

#### Health

In 1965, the city of Denton did not have a health unit which could provide information concerning general health conditions in the southeast area. In order to gain a better understanding of the health problems in the study area, respondents were asked to name their doctors, with the assumption that being able to provide such information would mean familiarity with Denton physicians.<sup>14</sup> The findings of the survey follow:

- a. Eleven per cent of those questioned could not name a doctor in Denton who had treated them.
- b. Dental care was much less frequent, with 47 per cent giving no name of a dentist.
- c. Of those questioned, 60 per cent said that someone in their immediate families had been in the hospital

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

in the last five years. Such a large percentage was believed to reflect the poor health in the area.

- d. Fifty per cent felt they did not have adequate medical care due to their limited financial ability.
- e. Of the families with children living at home, one-fourth had had a dental check-up for their children in the past year.
- f. Of the families questioned, 45 per cent of the children had received a check-up from a physician in the past year, 11 per cent in the past two years, and the remaining per cent had not been checked in over two years.<sup>15</sup>

Upon consideration of these factors, medical care was not considered absent in the area, but far below what was considered normal. Financial limitation was felt to be the major reason for the lack of medical care in the area. The large proportion who had received hospital care was felt to indicate the poor general health in southeast Denton.<sup>16</sup>

#### Community Participation

Studies of low income areas in American cities note the lack of participation in clubs, organizations, and community activities. To see if southeast Denton displayed this characteristic, Community Participation was included in the study.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 12-13.    <sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 13.    <sup>17</sup>Ibid.

The organization of the southeast Denton area was found to revolve almost entirely around the churches in the neighborhood. For a low income area, the proportion of church membership was high, 88 per cent. Membership was found to be the only high area of involvement, however, as only 20 per cent were active in any church activities and organizations. A few residents mentioned participation in the P.T.A., American Legion, Masonic Lodge, and a garden club, but the total club membership was less than 4 per cent.<sup>18</sup>

The political life of the southeast community had followed this same pattern of non-involvement with few residents in the area taking part in municipal, state, or national elections. This low degree of participation by the residents in their own community and the lack of any organized community structure, other than the church, was felt to be evidence of the low income characteristics of the neighborhood.

#### Mobility

The residents of the area were found to represent a very stable element of the total population of Denton. Forty-four of the respondents had lived in Denton for 25 years or more. This pointed out the large number of elderly and retired people living in the area. Only 13 per cent had lived in Denton less than five years. The median length of residence in Denton was twenty-three years.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

Area residents had not remained stable in their residences, however. Forty-four per cent had lived in their present dwelling less than five years. Eleven per cent had lived in the same house for twenty-five years or more. The median residence in the dwelling at that time was six and one-half years.<sup>20</sup>

#### Suggested Action Programs

The second phase of the survey was designed to obtain the reactions of the residents to possible programs or changes which could help their neighborhoods. The lack of community participation and education led to a concentration of suggestions offered by the area residents on the more material, tangible, and noticeable needs of the area. For this reason, specific suggestions were presented to the residents by the interview teams in order to obtain their reactions to certain proposals. These items included job training, special school work, a medical center, a recreation center, a day nursery, and public transportation.<sup>21</sup>

The study committee felt that the large number of unskilled or semi-skilled workers might indicate a need for some type of night trade school which could lead to better jobs. Seventy-five men expressed an interest in such training, and the greatest interest was in auto mechanics, electrical work, welding, and machine training. Women showed the greatest interest in secretarial training and nursing.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.



Parents of teenagers were asked if it might help keep the children in school if they were able to obtain part-time employment after school hours. All of the area residents felt it would.<sup>23</sup>

Fifty-one per cent of the respondents said they had put off needed medical care for financial reasons. When asked if they would go to a doctor if there were a medical center in Denton where one would be charged only what he could afford to pay, 72 per cent answered in the affirmative. Only 10 per cent answered negatively. When asked if they thought they would get more medical care than they did at present, 58 per cent answered affirmatively.<sup>24</sup>

A number of years before this survey was taken, a recreation center building was constructed in Fred Moore Park, which is located in the area. It was open to the residents of the area for a number of recreational activities. This structure was later converted into a day nursery. Fifty-five per cent said they had used the recreation center when it was open and sixty per cent said they would use it if it were reopened.<sup>25</sup>

Of the families who were using the Fred Moore Nursery, over half expressed the belief that it would help them if it were open at night. The residents were critical of the nursery and listed possible improvements including longer hours, more room and better facilities, more staff, and more supervision.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

The southeast area is located some distance from the downtown section of Denton, from grocery stores, and other retail establishments. At one time there was a city bus system and 70 per cent of those interviewed said they had used it. Forty-five per cent had to use taxis since there was no other public transportation. Fifty per cent of the respondents said it would be helpful to them if there were a city bus.<sup>27</sup>

The interviews were closed with a request that the residents make suggestions as to the ways in which they would like to see the area changed. As was previously noted, the overwhelming majority of suggestions dealt with material and physical changes, so those named most frequently represent a list by priority. The most frequently mentioned, thus given top priority, was the paying of street and general street improvement in the area. Better housing was the next most frequently named, followed by bus service, and better job opportunities. Others most frequently suggested in order of descending frequency were cleaning of vacant lots and weed control; improved law enforcement in the area; improved educational facilities; street lights; recreation for the young people; trade training and night school; lower utility rates; lower housing loans; a medical center; opportunity to buy land; improvement of day nursery; and more industry.<sup>28</sup>

#### Conclusion

The 1965 survey was made, as mentioned earlier, to see if the southeast area of Denton would qualify for relief as a poverty

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

area under the federal War on Poverty Program. The survey was initiated in June and completed during July. The opinion of the survey committee was that the southeast area would qualify as a poverty area in comparison to the rest of the community. As a result of the recommendation of the committee, application was made for a Neighborhood Youth Corps program as administered through a Community Action Program. On July 20, 1965, a Neighborhood Youth Corps was approved for the city of Denton by the Office of Economic Opportunity.

The survey report was organized, directed and conducted by local volunteers. As such, it was not a professional survey and many of the criteria used for evaluating the area are questionable. It did accomplish its purpose, however, and that was to establish the southeast Denton area as a poverty area with the Office of Economic Opportunity.

The most important contribution of the report was that it was a local effort and focused the attention of the leaders of the community on the area. It enabled the residents of the area to contribute and it also established, without doubt, that the area was in need of basic comprehensive improvements.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE URBAN RENEWAL CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION OF 1966

#### Background

After the completion of the Community Action Survey in July of 1965, the City Council, concerned by the findings of the report, engaged a private consulting firm to evaluate the area. The services of the private firm were sought in order to gain a professional evaluation of conditions in the area and to obtain recommendations for improvement.

The Council engaged the firm of Carter and Burgess of Fort Worth, and on January 15, 1966, the firm submitted their study to the City Council. The letter of transmittal read as follows:

Gentlemen:

In accordance with our discussion with Mr. Jack Reynolds, we have prepared for your consideration an analysis of the area in the southeast portion of Denton as a possible renewal area.

The intent is to present a possible schematic solution with a budget-type estimate indicating the cost to the city of upgrading and modifying the land usage in the area to a modern, marketable community assuming federal participation through their planning program.

There are several alternate routes and the exact boundaries of the proposed area should be determined by the City, and, of course, is subject to any size and shape desired. It is considered possibly on too large scale for first program and consideration should be given to scaling it down.

We trust you will give this your careful consideration and instruct us of any additional information that would be helpful for your consideration of a program.<sup>1</sup>

The \$2,500 feasibility study recommended that the city apply for federal Urban Renewal aid. Table IV presents a summary of the characteristics of the land and housing found to exist in the area.

TABLE IV  
PRESENT CHARACTER OF URBAN RENEWAL AREA AND  
CONDITION OF BUILDINGS\*

Item	Est. Acreage in Area by Character of Land			Est. No. and Cond- ition of Bldg.	
	Total	Impvd. Land	Unimpvd.	No. of Bldgs.	With Deficiencies
Total	328.44	216.98	111.48	732	668
Streets, Alleys, Right of Way	78.60	68.50	10.10	. .	. .
Residential	197.85	116.29	81.58	666	617
Nonresidential	51.99	32.19	19.8	66	51

\*Source: Carter and Burgess, Denton Feasibility Study (Denton, 1965), p. 2.

The subject area was found to be a low income residential neighborhood of non-conforming residential dwellings with a number of large industrial and warehouse buildings, encroaching on the residential area. The neighborhood characteristics

<sup>1</sup>Carter and Burgess, Denton Feasibility Study (Denton, 1965), P. 1.

contributing to the blighted neighborhood were the ratio of substandard dwellings (617) to standard housing (49) and the lack of paved streets, with additional consideration being given to the incompatible land uses, the vacant area (111.48 acres), and the sparsely developed areas which did not have a plan for orderly neighborhood growth.<sup>2</sup>

The consultants recommended that the area, after Urban Renewal treatment, be returned to predominantly residential uses. The recommended treatment of the area included the clearance and redevelopment of 185.52 acres and the rehabilitation and conservation of 142.92 acres.<sup>3</sup>

It should be pointed out that this study was not intended to provide specific data on the area but to provide general estimates. Funds for more comprehensive planning were included in the budget that was recommended by the consultants should Urban Renewal be approved.

The budget which was prepared by the consultants included all estimated costs which would be incurred during the proposed project. The budget included the following:

A. Survey and Planning	\$ 238,239
B. Administrative Costs in Execution	386,702
C. Land Acquisition	1,514,100
D. Project Improvements and Supporting Uses	
<u>Project Improvements</u>	
I. Street Improvements	273,565
II. Storm Drainage	137,000
III. Bridge Construction and Improvements	84,755
IV. Sanitary Sewer	39,876
V. Water	60,695
VI. Landscaping	24,556
VII. Traffic Control	26,556
Sub-Total, Project Improvements	\$646,627

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<u>Supporting Facilities</u>		
I. Park Improvements	\$ 6,000	
II. School Improvements	<u>18,900</u>	
Sub-Total, Supporting Facilities		\$ 24,900
Total, Project Improvements and Supporting Facilities		671,527
E. Section 107 (a) Non-Cash Local Grants-in-Aid		n/a
F. Section 112 Non-Cash Local Grants-in-Aid		n/a
G. Other Project Execution Costs	<u>349,100</u>	
Gross Project Cost	\$3,159,668	
H. Land Disposal Proceeds	<u>885,635</u>	
Net Project Cost	2,274,033	
Local Share = 1/4	568,508	
Federal Share = 3/4	1,705,525	
I. Relocation Payments	<u>272,750</u>	
Federal Grant	\$1,978,275	4

If approved, the total cost of the program amounted to \$3,159,668. Of this amount, the local share was to be \$568,508. Part of the local share was to come from \$380,500 of bonds which were approved by the voters in 1964, for improvements in the area. The remaining \$188,000 was to come out of the City's general fund surplus.<sup>5</sup>

On April 12, 1966, seven days after an uncontested Council election, the City Council took the first step toward calling an Urban Renewal election. It made the Carter-Burgess study and its recommendation for an Urban Renewal program public knowledge and, in unanimous action, voted to hold a public hearing on June 14, 1966. The public hearing, which under Texas law must be held, was planned by the Council to see if

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>The Denton Record Chronicle, May 25, 1966.

citizens would support an Urban Renewal program. The Council also decided that if enough citizens were in favor of the proposal, an election would be set for Friday, July 15.<sup>6</sup>

The Council pointed out that if an election were held and the proposal passed, it would authorize the City Council to enter into a contract with the federal government for Urban Renewal projects in any area of the city, but made plain its intentions to confine Urban Renewal to southeast Denton.<sup>7</sup>

The Council's decision to hold a public hearing on Urban Renewal brought the issue up for a second time in Denton. The first time the issue came up was in 1963, and about one-fourth of Denton's property owning voters turned out to reject the proposal by a 53 to 47 per cent margin.<sup>8</sup>

The 1963 campaign did not seem to generate much interest, if the number of votes cast is any indication of public interest. Only 1,909 votes were cast in this election. This was a better than average turnout in Denton, but two years earlier 2,645 voters had turned out to vote on a one-way street issue.<sup>9</sup> To what extent the low voter turnout was an indication of voter apathy is an open question, but the 1963 election did prove to be a relatively mild one.

In 1963, voters were asked to approve a plan which would have made land available through Urban Renewal to North Texas

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., April 12, 1966.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., July 14, 1966.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.



State University and Texas Woman's University. The main opposition to the plan was a group of landowners in the North Texas State University area whose homes were to be affected by the expansion. The opponents were helped by the fact that the Urban Renewal area had not been defined. No definite Urban Renewal area was ever outlined. Also, unlike the program which was proposed for the southeast area, there was to have been no rehabilitation of any homes. All of the land was to be cleared and redeveloped by the colleges. The members of the City Council did not take a position either for or against the proposal in 1963.<sup>10</sup> The issue was initiated by the universities and evidently the Council decided to let it stand on its own merit.

The Urban Renewal issue failed in 1963 even though it was strongly supported by both universities and a large segment of the business community. The local newspaper, the Denton Record Chronicle, also supported the Urban Renewal measure in 1963. The paper officially came out in opposition to the 1966 effort.

The opponents of Urban Renewal in 1963 relied heavily on newspaper coverage including letters to the editor and advertisements. They also used direct mailings although to a lesser degree. The opposition organized into a group calling themselves the "Eagle Drive Community," and in a newspaper advertisement spelled out their dismay:

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Denton is a prosperous, growing city. It is preposterous to think we have to embrace Urban Renewal and all that it implies in order to buy a few acres of land for college buildings.<sup>11</sup>

A leader in the 1963 fight against Urban Renewal, in a later assessment of the campaign and election, said that the primary reasons for its defeat were poor communications and the fact that, in his words, "People are just generally opposed to Urban Renewal."<sup>12</sup>

The political impact of the 1963 Urban Renewal election is difficult to assess. The close margin by which it was defeated and the low voter turnout certainly left a doubt about whether the decision at the polls was representative of the entire community.

The issue was initiated and strongly supported by the two universities. The business community and the Denton Record Chronicle, the town's only newspaper at the time, also were in favor of the proposal. The opposition consisted of a relatively unorganized and small group of land owners in the affected areas. That this small group could muster enough support to defeat the issue is certainly an indication that the proposal conflicted with the attitudes and values of a large segment of the community. If the 1963 election had any lasting effect, it was that it left an unfavorable atmosphere for future attempts to revive the issue in the community.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

### The 1966 Campaign and Election

Prior to the called public hearing that was to be held on June 14, the City Council decided to present the Urban Renewal program to southeast Denton residents. On May 24, Mayor Warren Whitson, the City Council, and members of the City staff met with about eighty-five residents of the area at the American Legion Post located in the area to talk about the Urban Renewal program.<sup>13</sup>

Most of the predominately Negro audience at the meeting seemed interested in the program, but were hostile and more interested in discussing the alleged failure of the City to spend already voted bond money in their area. Mayor Whitson explained that the City had held off spending the money which had been voted for projects in the area until a larger solution to the area's problems could be reached.<sup>14</sup> Whitson told them:

The City Council is neither for or against Urban Renewal. Our only purpose in being here is to explain what is expected under an Urban Renewal program. The Council has been concerned for a long time about what we could do for southeast Denton. We all know that of all the areas in Denton, this area has the biggest problem. The Council's purpose is to put the question of Urban Renewal to the people and to abide by the decision of the voters.<sup>15</sup>

Whitson went on to explain the program by outlining the scope of work that would be done. He pointed out that regardless of the outcome of the Urban Renewal proposal, southeast Denton bond money would be spent in the area. When asked what

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., May 25, 1966.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

would happen to people who lived in an area which was to be re-zoned for industry, specifically those who did not want to be relocated, Whitson stated that they would have to move. His answer brought a storm of protest from the audience. He then asked the crowd not to make any decision before he explained how the program worked.<sup>16</sup>

He explained that everyone would be treated fairly. Citing from the proposed project budget, he indicated that some \$1.5 million would be spent buying property in the area while only \$885,000 was anticipated from the resale of the property. He pointed out that this would mean that \$700,000 more would be paid for the property than it would be resold for. This, he felt, meant that someone was going to get a good deal and that it was going to be the residents of southeast Denton.<sup>17</sup>

Whitson continued by explaining that all standard homes in the area would be left. For the substandard homes which could be rehabilitated, he outlined the various methods which would be used to renovate them. First, for families whose income was below \$3,000 a year, a \$1,500 grant was available to help them repair their homes. If a family made over \$3,000 a year, a 3 per cent, thirty year loan was available to help them make repairs. Whitson also explained that this loan was available to those persons who qualified for the \$1,500 grant, if it was not enough. Also, if a home was not repairable, a

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

homeowner could sell his home to the Urban Renewal agency but keep his lot and then use the money he had received for his house and the 3 per cent loan to rebuild.<sup>18</sup>

A question from the audience seemed to sum up the crowd's feelings and turned the attention of the people back to street paving. The question was as follows:

As far as Urban Renewal is concerned, I don't know anything about it and you do. So I can't argue with you about it. But we pay taxes--why don't you put in paved streets here? That would do us a lot more good than this Urban Renewal thing.<sup>19</sup>

Whitson explained the City policy that bond money could not be used to pave streets in neighborhoods. He said that under the city's assessment policy, paving had to be paid for one-third by the city and two-thirds by the landowners on both sides of the street. He pointed out that the city had not been able to get an assessment program started in the southeast portion of the city because the people would not sign up for the program since most could not afford to pay the \$4.10 per front foot assessment cost.<sup>20</sup>

The meeting began to digress further when another spectator brought applause from the audience when he said: "If you really want to help us, give us jobs and pay us decent wages. If you give us work we will raise ourselves out of this mud hole."<sup>21</sup>

At this point, City Manager, Jack Reynolds, concluded the meeting and summed up the city's proposal by telling the audience:

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

If the people of this area and the rest of the people of Denton really want it, then we will have Urban Renewal. If they don't want it, then you are going to have to be satisfied with conditions as they are in this area. If we paved all the streets down here, it still wouldn't do anything about the shacks on property here. Good roads are not going to do anything for low income people. I and the members of the Council can't provide you with jobs, but through Urban Renewal we can do something about these other conditions.<sup>22</sup>

On June 14, the City Council held the public hearing to decide if there were enough support for an Urban Renewal election to be held. Nearly 400 citizens were present to hear or voice opinions about using federal funds to rehabilitate the southeast area of Denton.<sup>23</sup>

The Council opened the meeting restating what could be expected if an Urban Renewal election was held and the proposition passed. The Council's description of the program had appeared previously in the Denton Record Chronicle on June 9, 1966. First, it was explained, the Council would appoint an Urban Renewal Board which would be responsible for the project. The Board would be comprised of Denton residents, and the Council would have the final say on any decision the Board might make. The Board would then hire an executive director who would hire other personnel needed. Before any work started, the executive director would supervise a survey of the proposed area to be made by a private firm at a cost of \$238,000, and it would be an extensive study of the area.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., June 16, 1966.

The survey would detail the redevelopment of the area and establish which houses would be repaired or removed.<sup>24</sup>

As presented by the Council, this study would include complete planning for relocating any families who would have to be relocated. It would also suggest new zoning for the area. The plan would also describe the public facilities, such as roads, bridges, parks, and drainage, which would be required to be improved, and the cost involved.<sup>25</sup>

It was pointed out that the housing in the area would be evaluated according to certain professional standards. Deficiencies would include inadequate plumbing, heating, or electrical facilities; overcrowding; excessive dwelling density; unsafe and poorly designed streets; and inadequate public facilities.<sup>26</sup>

The Council stressed that the entire cost of the planning and survey would be met by a grant from the federal government. If, after the survey was completed and a complete picture of the area was presented, the City Council felt that Urban Renewal was not needed, it was pointed out that the project could be abandoned at no cost to the City.<sup>27</sup>

If, however, the survey indicated that an Urban Renewal project was the answer, the Council would seek federal approval of the project and, if it was approved, work would begin. From

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., June 9, 1966.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

that time on, it was stressed, the entire Urban Renewal project would be in the hands of the local Urban Renewal Agency and the City Council, except for federal inspection.<sup>28</sup>

After the preliminary planning and approval was over, which the Council indicated could take a year or more, the Urban Renewal Agency would start operating. It would use the survey as a guide and work with homeowners to fix up houses where it was possible.<sup>29</sup>

Where the home was substandard or in a commercial zone, it was explained, the home would be bought from the owner. The Council stressed that the owner must be paid a fair market value for his land and that two independent real estate appraisers must look at the land and make final recommendations. If the owner did not agree with the value placed on his home, he could appeal to the courts and a jury would decide what his land was worth as in normal condemnation proceedings.<sup>30</sup>

While this was in progress, the Council indicated that public improvements would be made. It said that all streets would be paved with curb and gutter, that inadequate water and sewer lines would be replaced, and that drainage problems would be corrected in the area.<sup>31</sup>

After explaining the program, the Council then opened the hearing to listen to arguments for and against the proposition. The supporters of Urban Renewal told the Council that they

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.



believed that the federal program was the only practical solution to the problems of the southeast area. Their arguments were confined mainly to answering attacks that had been made against the program in several letters to the editor which had appeared in the local newspaper before the public hearing. One supporter answered several controversial questions when he said:

This is not using the power of eminent domain for private purposes. In the final analysis, Urban Renewal will fill a very real public purpose for an even greater City of Denton. Also, Urban Renewal must provide houses for any person displaced by it and opponents are using false charges about resettlement to stir up fear among the people. . . . As for too much power in the hands of a few persons, the Urban Renewal Agency will be made up of from five to twelve persons, appointed by the City Council. Having seen the past performance of the City Council, I believe it will include leaders from all areas of Denton to govern Urban Renewal.<sup>32</sup>

Another supporter pointed out the limited scope of other proposals because of the limited financial ability of the City. This is what he said:

Surely we agree there is a problem. We must decide on how to solve it. The City can't afford to renew this area by itself and bring it up to standards. The only program I know of that can work on this scale is Urban Renewal.<sup>33</sup>

A supporter from the area summed up the feeling of those area residents who shared his opinion:

I have lived in this blighted area for forty-three years, Urban Renewal seems to be the answer to our problems. Some say we can do it ourselves but for forty-three years it has not been done and it is still not being done.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., June 16, 1966.      <sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

The speakers against Urban Renewal charged that the program was unnecessary, wasteful, possibly socialistic or communistic, and would be better done by private enterprise.

Jerry Stout, a local businessman, spoke first for the opposition, telling the Council that he would assemble Denton citizens to fight against the proposed Urban Renewal program. In speaking for many present, he said:

We are not against Urban Renewal. We are against Urban Renewal Federal-style. You may think that this is a play on words, yet we don't think so. Urban Renewal will violate the constitutional rights of the people who own their own homes. I am against this use of the power of eminent domain. The City should have the right to condemn for public use, but not to resell land at the expense of the public.<sup>35</sup>

Stout went on to say that he had made a survey of Denton and had discovered only thirty-one standard homes available at that time for people displaced by such a project. He said that it would be impossible to relocate all the people Urban Renewal would displace in present facilities. Stout summed up by saying, "Those people in the proposed Urban Renewal area said at a public meeting, 'Give us a chance and we will lift ourselves out of this mud, if you will give us the streets.' I think we should do that."<sup>36</sup>

A Negro southeast Denton resident seemed to convey the feeling of many of the residents of the area when he said:

We have been promised so much in the years past. We are not fighting progress to improve the city of Denton, but we are scared. It should be sufficient to see for any reasonable man that this thing is suicide for two-thirds of us. If we want to commit suicide, the quickest way is with a gun.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

After listening to the arguments for and against the proposition for three hours, each Councilman spoke in favor of the proposal. A vote was then taken and the Council decided unanimously to call an election on the Urban Renewal issue for July 16, 1966.<sup>38</sup>

With the 1966 election set, the various groups, both for and against Urban Renewal, began to form. A group known as "The Denton Citizens for Continued Progress" was formed to support efforts to obtain an Urban Renewal program. The group was headed by Tom Harpool, a prominent local businessman and civic leader. Chief opposition to the election came from a group calling themselves "The Committee for the Protection of Property Rights." This group was headed by Jerry Stout.<sup>39</sup>

Those supporting Urban Renewal consisted primarily of interested citizens in the city; no local organizations officially backed the movement. The chief spokesmen for those backing the issue were Tom Harpool and Mayor Warren Whitson. The purpose of the proponents was to pass the Urban Renewal proposal because they believed it to be the only feasible approach for the area.

The city staff was considered neutral on the issue, although several city officials spoke out for its approval. All of the City Council members were on record as supporting

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<sup>38</sup>City of Denton, Texas, Minutes of the City Council, Vol. 17 (June 14, 1966), p. 441.

<sup>39</sup>The Denton Record Chronicle, June 15, 1966.

Urban Renewal. The member who took the leading role and the only one who strongly supported the issue was Mayor Warren Whitson. The other Councilmen did not involve themselves with the issue during the election. The Mayor used all of his influence toward the passage of Urban Renewal. From the administrative staff, only City Manager Jack Reynolds, though trying to remain neutral, could have been interpreted as supporting the plan. He appeared before various service clubs to explain the proposal on behalf of the City Council.

After the election was set, Jerry Stout made his debut into local politics by forming his group in opposition to the proposal. Mr. Stout was the chief spokesman for the group, and through a series of articles he expressed the group's main opposition to the election.

First, in a six-point letter to the editor, Mr. Stout expressed the general dissatisfaction of the group:

. . . We are alarmed about a program that poses a threat of condemnation over a man's home and to the very rights of owning that home. The 185 acres of land to be cleared and sold to private developers is too large an area to be glibly explained away as a minor relocation of people.

We are greatly concerned about prior commitments of the city and their inability to build and maintain present services. . . . When it is not safe to travel a major thoroughfare in the city, one cannot help but wonder how the city can participate in a \$3,170,000 program without strapping the city of already committed funds.

Our opposition will be one of pointing out the dangers of urban renewal, its threat to private property and the fact that once urban renewal is voted for this particular section, it can be extended to any section or part of the city by simple majority vote of the City Council.

It causes great alarm and concern when one realizes that this present Council can handle your affairs as poorly as they have handled the city's. We will have an alternate plan that we will suggest as a way of solving this problem.

It will be our position that brick and mortar is not the total solution, but of equal importance is the human element. People are involved and their rights must be considered; they must be given the opportunity and the incentive to maintain the area once it is rebuilt. It would not be in this mess if any help could be expected from the city.

A little quick figuring shows that this proposed program will cost around \$5,000 per residence. Our opposition will be concerned with this high per capita cost and the mass relocation of people, and our alternate plan will cost only already voted and committed money from the city plus a private low-cost housing plan.<sup>40</sup>

Stout later narrowed the group's opposition to three specific areas which he felt were the key questions involved: the use of eminent domain to condemn private property for resale to private developers; the lack of adequate provision for the relocation of persons displaced by Urban Renewal; and the expense of the Urban Renewal program.<sup>41</sup>

Stout went on to say that he thought that private enterprise should be tried first. Then, if it did not succeed, he felt that the City should use the bond money already voted for the area to pave the streets and extend utilities, and then the problem should take care of itself. He ended the text of his opposition by stating: "I have talked with many Negro leaders and they would like to do it themselves. Let's let them."<sup>42</sup>

As the campaign progressed, both sides became increasingly active. Countless meetings were held, and each side conducted

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., May 31, 1966.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., June 13, 1966.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

campaigns which included mass mailings, door-to-door canvassing, debates, and advertisements in the local newspaper. The proponents and the League of Women Voters conducted trips to Grand Prairie to visit Urban Renewal projects in that city. They also brought in several out-of-town speakers who favored Urban Renewal. Principal among the speakers was Mayor C. P. Waggoner of Grand Prairie. The opposition did not promote trips to other cities, but they did import their own speakers.

The experiences of other Texas cities with the Urban Renewal program had an important effect on the issue in Denton. Grand Prairie, as mentioned, had a progressive Urban Renewal program and it was cited by the proponents as a model of what Denton could have. The city of Lubbock's Urban Renewal project, on the other hand, was cited by the opposition as a failure which was representative of the program. Although the programs of these two cities were prominent factors in the campaign, that of the city of Fort Worth had the most direct influence on the local issue.

On March 7, 1966, the City Council of Fort Worth set an Urban Renewal election for April 12, 1966. This campaign took place immediately prior to the City of Denton's announcement that it intended to hold such an election. The campaign in Fort Worth received area-wide news coverage and was closely followed by the Denton Record Chronicle. The hotly contested campaign resulted in an overwhelming defeat for Urban Renewal. The example set by this larger city had a major effect on

Denton voters.<sup>43</sup> The Fort Worth experience was repeatedly referred to during the campaign, and the opposition, led by Jerry Stout, used many of the same printed materials and tactics which had been used in Fort Worth.

One unexpected turn of events at the outset of the campaign was the opposition of the local newspaper. The owner of the Denton Record Chronicle had assured various supporters before the Council called the election that the paper would remain neutral.<sup>44</sup> Far from following a neutral course, the paper came out strongly against the issue. The paper built its opposition around the works of Martin Anderson, a Columbia University professor, and a highly outspoken critic of Urban Renewal. He is the author of The Federal Bulldozer and The Fiasco of Urban Renewal. The paper also used unfavorable letters from businessmen in Lubbock, relating their experiences with Lubbock's program.

In the paper's final editorial before the election, this statement was made on the issue:

It is not enough for the City Council to say, "Take our word for it. We've checked into Urban Renewal and it is the only way that this section can be decently improved." We are not sure that this is so, we are not convinced that southeast Denton's only hope for improvement is for the citizens of Denton to embrace the Urban Renewal program.

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<sup>43</sup> A complete discussion of the 1966 Urban Renewal election held in Fort Worth, Texas, is presented in Ralph L. Liverman, "Community Improvement and Code Enforcement in Fort Worth, Texas, 1961-1966," unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Government, North Texas State University, Denton, 1967.

<sup>44</sup> Statement by Jack Q. Barton, City Attorney, City of Denton, August 16, 1970.

We suggest today that the proper course for Denton would be to vote against Urban Renewal. Other possibilities of solving this dilemma of southeast Denton--and indeed, of other ugly areas--should be thoroughly explored before we jeopardize the property rights of a single citizen of this community.<sup>45</sup>

As the campaign drew to a close, each side became very critical of the other and each side accused the other of not being objective. One of the hottest developments of the campaign was the feud which developed between Mayor Warren Whitson and Jerry Stout. The proponents accused the opposition of being against progress and the opponents accused the proponents of trying to destroy property rights. Many issues were brought into the campaign which were not relevant. There were only two real issues: eminent domain and the relocation of persons from the area. The opposition feared the use of eminent domain and the relocation of Negroes throughout the city, while the proponents maintained that the City had always exercised eminent domain and that relocation would be handled to the satisfaction of everyone.

On July 16, 1966, the citizens of Denton went to the polls to vote on the issue. The election drew the largest number of votes ever cast in a municipal election in Denton. A total of 3,554 persons voted, with 2,993 against and 561 for the issue. This overwhelming margin of more than five to one was a tremendous defeat for the Urban Renewal proposal.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>The Denton Record Chronicle, July 15, 1966.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., July 17, 1966.



### Conclusion

There were several groups which combined to defeat the Urban Renewal proposal, and they made strange partners. The black community, bombarded by information from both sides of the issue, remained confused and unorganized throughout the campaign. In the end, the Negroes turned out in large numbers to vote against the issue because they were afraid they might lose their homes. Many segments of the white community opposed the program because they feared the relocation of blacks throughout the community. Another group, and perhaps the most vocal, was comprised of those who were opposed, out of principle, to any "intervention" by the federal government into local affairs.

The proponents were hard-pressed from the outset of the campaign. They could not muster any real support for the program among most of the black community who would have benefited by the proposition. The load of the campaign was carried by a few individuals. Furthermore, the lack of any detailed relocation plans was a major setback. This lack of detailed plans, not only in relocation but also in the assigning of areas to be redeveloped, forced the group into a defensive campaign from the beginning. This lack of detailed plans was a built-in handicap of the program. However, funds for advanced planning were not available until after the voters approved the issue.

Other mistakes which were major factors in the defeat of the program were the short period allowed for public discussion of the issue before the election and the failure of the Council

to appoint a citizens' study group to explore all the possibilities. Another glaring oversight by the Council was its apparent decision not to use the Planning and Zoning Commission as it was intended to function by the charter. The Commission was never deeply involved with the renewal program.

The election of July 16, 1966, created deep divisions within the community which are present to this day. Although the opposition frequently mentioned alternative plans, none were ever used. The campaign represented an impressive defeat for Urban Renewal, but it was also to have important future political repercussions.

## CHAPTER V

### THE AFTERMATH OF THE ELECTION

#### Political Repercussions

In 1960, when the council-manager form of government was adopted, a group was formed to provide support for the new form of government in Denton. As in many council-manager cities, the group was organized as the Charter Association (Denton Charter Association), and its primary function was to recommend and support qualified men for the City Council.

Table V, on the following page, lists the elections, issues, and degree of voter participation from the beginning of the council-manager form of government in Denton in 1960, to the 1967 election. The table serves to illustrate the impressive record that the Denton Charter Association (D.C.A.) had compiled before 1966. As portrayed by the election table, the D.C.A. had not experienced a defeat in its history until the 1966 election. Its candidates had dominated the Council and all issues had been approved with the exception of the Urban Renewal election of 1963. In the 1963 election, however, the members of the Council had refused to take a stand for or against the issue.

Although the D.C.A. had remained undefeated until the 1966 election, as shown in the table of statistics, one noteworthy point is the extreme fluctuation in the degree of

TABLE V  
 DEGREE OF VOTER PARTICIPATION IN DENTON  
 CITY ELECTIONS, 1960-1967\*

Year	Election	Vote	Remarks
1960	Bond Issuance	1,632	Approval averaged 3-1, several issues
1960	Council	135	Two races; D.C.A. nominees unopposed
1961	Council	2,689	Three races; D.C.A. nominees won easily
1962	One-way street	2,645	Administration plan won by 1,412 to 1,233
1962	Council	647	D.C.A. won; 232 write-in votes cast
1963	Urban Renewal	1,909	For: 893; against: 1,016
1963	Council	1,663	D.C.A. nominees won; fourth candidate ran 57 votes behind
1964	Bond Issue	2,246	All issues approved, rates from 2-1 to 8-1
1964	Council	680	Two D.C.A. nominees drew 75% of votes cast
1965	Council	158	Three D.C.A. nominees elected without opposition
1966	Council	123	Two D.C.A. nominees unopposed after fight in the nominating session
1966	Urban Renewal	3,554	For: 561; against: 2,993
1967	Council	2,935	D.C.A. candidates defeated; opposition "ticket" won three races

\*Source: Denton Record Chronicle, issues of the days following elections.

voter participation. The ratio of votes between the highest and lowest turn-outs is roughly twenty-nine to one. The support given D.C.A. candidates ranged from strong support in 1961 to success by default to near loss of one seat in 1963. The Council races in 1964, 1965, and 1966 were highlighted by the extremely low degree of voter participation. To what extent the low voter turn-outs and the lack of formal opposition to D.C.A. candidates meant approval by the voters of the administration is an open question. If any pattern can be found in the statistics, it is that there is no clear-cut consensus on the importance of voting in municipal elections in Denton.<sup>1</sup> Be that as it may, the D.C.A. had passed the politician's test for measuring success over past years regardless of the low voter participation: it had won.

The 1966 Urban Renewal election defeat must have been hard for the D.C.A.-backed Council to accept because of its past history of success. All of the members of the Council had gone on record as supporting the issue, and the Mayor made a public statement of disappointment at the outcome of the election. With all members of the Council closely identified with the defeated issue, there were to be important repercussions in the 1967 municipal elections.

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<sup>1</sup>A complete discussion of the political environment in Denton is presented in John W. Joyce, "The City of Denton Computer Installation: A Study of Conversion in a Medium-Sized Municipality," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Government, North Texas State University, Denton, 1967.

<sup>2</sup>Denton Record Chronicle, July 17, 1966.

The formation by Jerry Stout, local businessman, of formal opposition to the Urban Renewal election was politically the most significant development of the Urban Renewal campaign, and it turned out to be more than a passing phenomenon. Under his leadership, various local interests who felt they were not being represented organized formal opposition to the D.C.A. That Stout intended to remain active in local politics was evidenced by his post-Urban Renewal election statement in which he criticized the Charter Association. He said:

Since the Charter Association was formed no genuinely representative election has been held in Denton. Excellent men have served on the Council and are today on the Council but they have listened to a small vocal group who have successfully exercised an influence greater than their numbers justified.<sup>3</sup>

Stout went on to say that his organization favored the town hall concept:

The Council meetings should be held at a convenient hour and the public encouraged to attend. The Council would get a better idea of the wishes of the public and it would no longer be necessary to depend on and be obligated to a small group who by charter endorsement made their election in fact an appointment.<sup>4</sup>

In view of this, Stout felt it would be a good step in clearing the way for solutions to the problems which must be solved if the Charter Association would be dissolved.<sup>5</sup>

After this post-election speech, the battle lines were clearly drawn for the upcoming April 4, 1967, municipal election

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

which was still eight months away. With a voting majority of the Council to be selected, speculation began immediately as to what lasting strength Stout might have from the Urban Renewal issue.

The eight month period between the July 16, 1966 election and the April 4, 1967 Council election was a time of anxiety for the administration. The city government moved cautiously during these months in anticipation of the political battle which was forming for the Council race.

After a hotly contested election campaign, three candidates endorsed by Stout and his supporters won election to the Denton City Council, upsetting candidates backed by the Denton Charter Association and ending seven years of domination by that group.<sup>6</sup> Of the ten candidates who sought election, the best any D.C.A. candidate could do was fifth place.<sup>7</sup>

With the 1967 upset, the Stout-backed Council was assured of a voting majority on the Council for two years. Their first action was to elect a mayor from among their own midst.

In Denton, the Mayor is elected each year by the Council, from its own membership. The Mayor presides at meetings of the Council and is recognized as the head of the city government for all ceremonial purposes, but has no regular administrative duties. He also votes on all matters considered by the Council, but does not have the veto power.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>The D.C.A. was unable to present a united front due to an internal split among its members before the 1967 Council election. This also contributed to its defeat.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., April 5, 1967.

<sup>8</sup>Home Rule Charter for the City of Denton, Texas (Denton 1959), section 2.03.

At the first meeting of the new Council, the incumbent Mayor, Warren Whitson, was unseated, and Zeke Martin was chosen to serve as Mayor for the next year.<sup>9</sup> This fulfilled the expressed desire of the Stout-endorsed Council to unseat Mayor Warren Whitson, who would now serve out his remaining year as a Councilman. This first action by the new majority set the tone for the first year they were in power, and the year was marked by split three-two votes on the City Council. The majority also conducted an all-out campaign this first year to obtain the resignation of the City Manager, Jack Reynolds, who was closely associated with the ex-Mayor.

The tactics used by the Stout-led group to achieve its ends included the establishment by Stout of a local newspaper, the Denton Enterprise, to get his views before the public, and the establishment of its influence through the votes of the Council majority. The opposition fought back with both referendum and initiative campaigns on several issues which came before the Council. Stout's efforts were successful to the extent that City Manager Jack Reynolds resigned within eight months after the 1967 election and ex-Mayor Warren Whitson chose not to run the following year for a fifth term. In all probability, however, the ex-Mayor would not have sought another term regardless of the turn of political events, since he had served for an eight-year period.

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<sup>9</sup>City of Denton, Texas, Minutes of the City Council, Vol. 18 (April 11, 1967), p. 16.



Throughout the first year during which the Stout-endorsed Councilmen served, neither side seemed to be able to obtain a clear indication of majority support from the people. Issues which were brought before the people resulted in split victories for both Stout and D.C.A.-backed candidates to the Council. The year ended in the 1968 election of two D.C.A.-backed candidates to the Council. This was a questionable indication of popular support for the D.C.A., however, since Jerry Stout did not endorse candidates.

The second year that the Stout-backed majority served was relatively quiet and tranquil. A new City Manager was appointed who was soon accepted as a professional and neutral administrator by both sides. The new manager, Jim White, did much to achieve compromise on both sides of issues coming before the Council. This second year was spent in anticipation by many, however, of the upcoming election in 1969, when a majority of the Council would again be up for re-election.

The election of 1969 was one which surprised many. The Stout-endorsed majority serving on the Council chose not to seek second terms. Stout in turn did not choose to endorse other candidates and the result was several independents running against three D.C.A. candidates. The election saw two independents elected to the Council and one D.C.A. candidate, giving the D.C.A. a majority on the Council. The 1970 election, in which two D.C.A. candidates were elected without opposition, seemed to indicate general support for D.C.A. candidates once again.

The aftermath of the 1966 Urban Renewal election, then, was marked by political turmoil. Jerry Stout seemed to have accomplished, for a limited time, his objective to defeat Mayor Warren Whitson and destroy D.C.A. influence. Although the D.C.A. regained its strength in the 1968, 1969, and 1970 elections, the organization did not enjoy the unopposed role it once had. The opposition remains active in its criticism of the D.C.A. and City policy in general through the newspaper, the Denton Enterprise, which Jerry Stout established in 1967.

#### Southeast Denton

Following the 1966 Urban Renewal election, any chances for meaningful progress in correcting blighted conditions in the southeast area of Denton seemed to have been completely destroyed. While opponents of Urban Renewal had mentioned alternate federal and local programs, no program was ever formulated and presented. There was a general feeling among leaders in the community who had supported Urban Renewal that nothing would be done for the area beyond bond funds already voted for improvements. It was in the context of these developments that the 1967 Council election was held.

In the 1967 election, one of the primary supporters of Jerry Stout's endorsed candidates were black residents in southeast Denton. The majority of the black community had voted against Urban Renewal, and it was then natural that they would favor anti-renewal candidates in the 1967 Council election,

if Urban Renewal was made an issue. The Stout-endorsed candidates, recognizing the probable support in the southeast area, courted the black vote and promised a program to help pave all of the streets in that area. The blacks responded with the largest show of black voter turn-out at the polls in Denton's history and were instrumental in the election of the three candidates.

After the election, the newly elected Councilmen, including Mayor Zeke Martin, a local gas distributor, publically expressed sympathy for southeast Denton residents and pledged their support to seek a solution to the problems in the area.

Council action began with the appointment of a "Mayor's Committee for the Development of Southeast Denton." Mayor Zeke Martin picked thirteen residents of southeast Denton to serve on the committee. The group was to serve in an advisory capacity to the mayor and make recommendations for improvements in the area.

On August 13, 1967, the Mayor's Committee reported to the Council and made the following recommendations for improvement:

- a. Paved streets for the area.
- b. Negro representation on the City Park Board.
- c. Two Negro policemen.
- d. Clearing of right-of-way of MKT Railroad which bisects the area.
- e. Regular clean-up periods for City trucks to be used to pick up trash.
- f. Better lighting on the main streets.

g. Clearing of junk cars.

h. Cleaning and mowing of vacant lots.<sup>10</sup>

The Mayor's Committee report was taken under advisement and the Mayor assured the committee that steps would be taken to help solve their problems.

Following the Mayor's Committee report, on September 28, 1967, the City Council met with a representative of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).<sup>11</sup> Presented with the magnitude of the problems in the area and the amount of money that would be necessary to even make a respectable showing, the Council considered once again the problem of how local funds could be stretched through federal help. The only federal program available which could possibly meet the problems in an area like southeast Denton, except for Urban Renewal, was the Concentrated Code Enforcement Program.

The Code Enforcement program was undoubtedly of interest to the Council because of its success in neighboring cities. Grand Prairie and Fort Worth were two cities which had been closely observed during the Urban Renewal campaign, and they both had highly successful Code Enforcement programs. Another factor which made this program attractive was that the power of eminent domain was not used to redevelop neighborhoods and the program generated little relocation.

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<sup>10</sup> Mayor's Committee for the Development of Southeast Denton, "Recommendations for the Improvement of Southeast Denton," August 13, 1967.

<sup>11</sup> Denton Record Chronicle, September 28, 1967.

Under the 1967 Code Enforcement Program, grants up to three-fourths of program cost for municipalities 50,000 or under in population are made for planning, reviewing, and administering Code Enforcement programs in selected local areas. Eligible project expenses include planning, administration, and public improvements, such as necessary streets, sidewalks, curbs, street lighting, tree planting, and similar improvements. Direct federal 3 per cent rehabilitation loans up to \$10,000 are available to owners. Also available are \$1,500 rehabilitation grants to eligible owners and tenants of property in the area.<sup>12</sup>

The Council and two members of the Mayor's Committee met a representative from the Code Enforcement Program to discuss the steps which would be necessary for implementation of a Code Enforcement Program in the southeast area. The HUD official, after study of the southeast Denton area, said he did not see how Code Enforcement could be substituted for Urban Renewal in that area. In his conclusion he stated:

If a neighborhood could be delineated apart from the whole area, it possibly could be improved through Code Enforcement, however, Code Enforcement is not the answer to the entire area. A Code Enforcement Program is designed to keep neighborhoods from deteriorating into an Urban Renewal situation where it must be cleared to do any good. Southeast Denton is a good Urban Renewal area and I don't see how you could make it work under Code Enforcement.<sup>13</sup>

With the decision of HUD that the entire southeast Denton area would not qualify for a Code Enforcement Program, the

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<sup>12</sup>U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. 68, Part I, p. 590, (1954).

<sup>13</sup>Denton Record Chronicle, September 28, 1967.

Council turned to initiating local efforts to improve the area. Beginning in the autumn of 1967, the Council began improvements in the area, using local resources. The following projects were initiated during the next two year period.

#### Southeast Denton Paving Project

Through the combined efforts of the City Council, City staff, and residents in the area, an assessment paving program was developed that included the paving of all streets in the area. Under the established paving assessment policy of the City, residents on both sides of a street pay one-third of the construction costs and the City pays one-third. Assessments may be paid out in monthly payments with an 8 per cent interest charge. Under the terms of the southeast Denton project, property owners on both sides of the street are assessed one-fourth of the cost of construction. There is no interest charge for monthly payments. Extended utility services are also a part of the program, and, with the completion of utility relocation, utility services will be available to all residents in the area. The entire project is now under construction and expected to be completed in February of 1971, at a cost of \$606,000.

#### Clean-up Campaign

A clean-up campaign was launched in the area. During this period the Deputy Health Officer removed 512 abandoned automobiles and investigated an average of fifteen complaints per day related to weed control. Officials of the railroad bisecting the area

were contacted regarding the mowing of their right-of-way and that company began a program of compliance in the area. Although much remained to be done in 1969, considerable progress was made in improving the general appearance of the area and in eliminating health hazards.<sup>14</sup>

### Black Representation

The request by the Mayor's Committee for representation on the Parks and Recreation Board and on the police force was met with mixed success. A black board member was appointed to the Parks Board. The hiring of a black policeman proved to be a more difficult task. Obtaining qualified applicants who could pass the civil service test was found to be extremely difficult. One Negro was hired, but he failed to stay past the six months probationary period.

### Conclusion

The political aftermath of the 1966 Urban Renewal election was important in the effect it had on established structures in the community and the deep divisions that it created throughout the community. It was also significant for the purpose of this study in its effect on actions in the southeast Denton area.

The programs initiated by the Council from 1967 to 1969 resulted in major improvements to the area. Both factions of the Council were in favor of the improvements and worked together to make them possible.

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<sup>14</sup>City of Denton, Texas, Workable Program for Community Improvement (Denton, 1969), p. 4.

The improvements that were initiated during this period would probably not have been possible, however, if it had not been for the concern created by the Urban Renewal issue. The studies of the area confirmed that it was in need of comprehensive basic improvements, and highlighted the plight of many of its residents. The involvement of local residents in the studies also helped to create a real concern among many residents in the community who might have been unaware of the magnitude of the problem.

The Urban Renewal issue also served to remove opposition to these improvements. The amount of money spent in southeast Denton during this period represented a sizeable expenditure of local funds which far exceeded the bond funds which had been approved for improvements in the area. The scattered opposition which was present to these improvements was an indication that it would undoubtedly have been much greater had the need of the area not been so well documented. Most citizens in the community, however, seemed to approve of the program regardless of their stand on Urban Renewal. After the rejection of Urban Renewal, the supporters of the issue felt that the local improvements were the least that should be done for the area, while those who had opposed Urban Renewal must have felt that the improvements were a welcomed alternative.

While the improvements initiated during this period have achieved major results, they were never a part of a comprehensive program, but were uncoordinated efforts to meet the



most obvious and immediate problems in the area. The greater economic, social, and physical problems of the area still remained.

It was in light of this that the City staff, under the direction of City Manager Jim White, began an evaluation of possible alternatives and began to develop a program which would give direction and coordination to future efforts to meet the needs of southeast Denton.

## CHAPTER VI

### A PROPOSED PROGRAM OF IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SOUTHEAST DENTON AREA

#### Background

During the summer of 1968, work began in the City Manager's office, at the administrative level, to establish a comprehensive program of improvement for the southeast area. The primary purpose of the program was to provide over-all direction, including control, communications, and coordination for improvements already underway and for programs which were anticipated in the future.<sup>1</sup>

As local resources were exhausted, the primary goal of the program was to find state or federal programs which could be used to provide a more comprehensive approach to help solve some of the basic economic, social, and physical problems in the area.

First, it was recognized that Urban Renewal was without doubt the best technical answer to the many problems in the area. It had not been politically acceptable, however. In view of this past lesson, consideration was only given to those programs which were thought to be politically acceptable and therefore practical.

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<sup>1</sup>The author of this thesis prepared and gathered the research material which was contained in the "Proposed Program of Improvement for the Southeast Denton Area."

Another limiting factor on the approach taken in compiling a program for improvement in the area was the limited number of programs offering financial assistance. The State of Texas has not initiated any programs of aid for the improvement of blighted areas. The federal government has a limited number of grants-in-aid which serve as substitutes for Urban Renewal, and many of these lack adequate funds. The recommendations contained in this report were based on aid programs for which the City might qualify in light of evaluation at that time.

#### Proposed Program

With the above limitations, the following program was completed and presented to the City Manager for his evaluation in November of 1968. It has served as a guideline for the improvement of the area since that time.

The report was composed of six recommendations which were considered to represent a balanced and coordinated program, based on the financial ability of the City and the grants-in-aid which were available. The City government's responsibility for the area was to provide the tools for self-improvement and to coordinate community programs to insure orderly development. The proposed program was felt to meet this responsibility and was designed to put the burden of action on the residents it was designed to help. The following steps, some already in progress, were the recommendations for a continuing program of action.

### Recommendation Number One

The paving and utility relocation project in southeast Denton was already underway when this report was completed. The report did note, however, that upon the completion of the project, all streets in the area would be paved and utilities made available to all residents. The provision of these basic improvements was felt to be the number one priority of the area.

It was the recommendation of the report that efforts to complete the program at the earliest possible date be continued. The target date for completion was set for February, 1971.

### Recommendation Number Two

The second recommendation of the report was to continue and to increase local efforts to clean up the southeast section in order to bring it up to acceptable standards for a future Code Enforcement Grant-in-Aid Program.

In 1967, the City had initiated several clean-up projects. This effort had included the removal of many abandoned vehicles and a crackdown on the care of vacant lots and public rights-of-way. The report recommended that this effort be continued, and went one step further to include the demolition of vacant substandard structures. The large number of buildings which were in this condition was alarming and was considered a serious fire and health hazard to the neighborhood.

Based on surveys conducted during the study, all structures in the area were classified according to minimum standards as

set forth by the City's Planning Department. The survey showed the following:

- a. That there were 757 owned and rented structures in southeast Denton.
- b. That 280 or 37 per cent of this total were substandard and would have to be removed. Of the 280, fifty-one were vacant.
- c. That 349 had some code violations but could be rehabilitated.
- d. Only 128 houses in the area could be classified as standard.

The housing problem was then felt to be a major one which was far beyond the ability of local resources. The only program found to be available which could supply the funds necessary to correct the housing conditions and provide the staff to implement such an undertaking was the Federal Concentrated Code Enforcement Program.

To qualify for Federal Code Enforcement Aid in the area, the housing that must be removed must be a small percentage of the total code violations. The Code Enforcement Program is designed to bring up declining areas and is not intended to be used for wide clearance like Urban Renewal. Therefore, as the City was told by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1967, the 280 substandard structures would prohibit Code Enforcement in the entire area.

To meet these problems, to clean up the area, and to bring it up to acceptable standards to qualify for a Code Enforcement Program, it was proposed that the fifty-one vacant, substandard structures located in the area be eliminated

as soon as possible. As low income rental housing which was proposed in this report became available, it was believed that many area families would be leaving other substandard structures which would also become vacant. As these structures became vacant, it was recommended that they also be removed.

During this same period the street paving in the area was to be completed, and many homes were expected to be improved by their owners as a result of the street paving. The area then would undergo considerable improvement and could be expected to qualify in whole or in part for a Code Enforcement Program. Although long-range, this approach was the recommendation of the study and was believed to be the only practical approach to improve existing housing.

#### Recommendation Number Three

The third recommendation of the study was for the City to submit a Workable Program for Community Improvement to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This was considered to be an important step in the City's program in that the Workable Program would provide additional planning aids and would satisfy federal requirements for financial assistance for several grant-in-aid programs.

The Housing Act of 1949, as amended, requires that a City must have completed a Workable Program before federal aid can be made available for certain programs. The requirements are as follows:

. . . a Workable Program for Community Improvement (which shall include an official plan of action, as it exists from time to time, for effectively dealing with the problem of urban slums and blight within the community and for the establishment and preservation of a well-planned community with well-organized environment for adequate family life) for utilizing appropriate private and public resources to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of slums and urban blight, to encourage needed urban rehabilitation, to provide for redevelopment of blighted, deteriorated, or slum areas, or to undertake such of the aforesaid activities or other feasible community activities as may be suitably employed to achieve the objectives of such a program.<sup>2</sup>

The basic purpose of the Workable Program, then, is to insure that community has adequate plans to control conditions which contribute to slums and blight. In order to insure that this purpose will be met, the Workable Program has requirements in the following areas:

- a. Code Adoption and Enforcement: The adoption of housing, building, and related codes, and development of an effective code enforcement program which is at least adequate to deal with areas having high priority need for enforcement, including both blighted areas and basically sound but deteriorating neighborhoods, and which is geared toward eventual community-wide compliance with such codes.
- b. Planning and Programming: The establishment of a continuing public planning and programming process which develops action programs within a comprehensive planning framework for overcoming the major physical, social, and economic problems related to the slum and blighted areas of the community, and for establishing and preserving a well-planned community with suitable living environment for family life.
- c. Housing and relocation: The development of a centralized or co-ordinated program for assisting in the relocation of all persons and business concerns displaced by public action in the community and the development of a program to expand the supply of housing for low and moderate income families on the basis of equal opportunity.

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<sup>2</sup>United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Workable Program for Community Improvement Handbook (Washington, D. C. , 1968, p. 1.

- d. **Citizen Involvement:** The establishment of programs designed to achieve meaningful involvement of citizens, including poor and minority groups, in planning and carrying out HUD assisted programs related to the Workable Program.<sup>3</sup>

The fulfillment of these requirements is mandatory for the approval of the Workable Program by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The grants-in-aid which would be available if they were met was only a part of the City's interest in completing them. They would also provide a continuing planning process, an organizational structure, and several tools for controlling urban decline.

The Code Adoption and Enforcement section was considered highly important for the city. Denton met all of the code requirements except the Minimum Standards Housing Code. This code is the most important tool available to cities in controlling the deterioration of the urban housing stock. It is important because the code sets minimum standards which buildings must meet after construction. No other code effectively regulates the condition of structures after their initial construction. The adoption of a Minimum Standards Housing Code and the establishment of an effective enforcement program were considered to be the keys to any program designed to eliminate substandard structures in the community.

The planning and programming section requirements were also considered to be of value to the City. The Department of Housing and Urban Development requires that a Workable Program,

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 2.



once approved, must be recertified every two years. To gain the recertification, a city must show that its plans are relevant and that it is making progress. This type of continuing planning and programming system would insure the continuity that any program would have to implement in order to improve conditions in southeast Denton.

The housing and relocation requirements were also vital for program development by the City. No reliable community-wide housing inventory had ever been conducted in the city. It was therefore impossible to develop a balanced program to expand the supply of low and moderate income housing when that need was not known. The information which would be compiled through the Workable Program would enable the City to formulate intelligent housing goals for the entire community.

The last section, citizen involvement, was perhaps the most important of all the requirements. There was a great need for some type of structure to involve interested citizens in a program of this nature. This was especially true of southeast Denton where little community leadership through organized structures existed.

The programs which the city might qualify for if the Workable Program requirements were met are all designed for low income groups. The following are programs administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for which the Workable Program is a requirement:

- a. Urban Renewal Program.
- b. Neighborhood Development Program.
- c. Concentrated Code Enforcement Program.
- d. Interim Assistance for Blighted Areas.
- e. Demolition Grant Program.
- f. Community Renewal Program.
- g. General Neighborhood Renewal Plan.
- h. Rehabilitation loans and grants in urban renewal and concentrated code enforcement areas and in other than urban renewal or concentrated code enforcement areas assisted under the provision of Sec. 115 (a) (2) and Sec. 312 (a) (1).
- i. Low-rent Housing Program, except for Section 23, Short Term Leased Housing.
- j. Mortgage insurance under FHA Sec. 220, for housing construction and rehabilitation in urban renewal project areas.
- k. Mortgage insurance under FHA Sec. 221 (d) (3) at market or below market interest rate projects for low and moderate income families.
- l. Rent Supplement Projects under Sec. 221 (d) (3) for low income families, with certain exceptions.<sup>4</sup>

The City of Denton was not interested in all of these programs at that time. The Code Enforcement Program, however, was included in immediate plans, and by completing Workable Program requirements, the City would have a flexible course for the future if it should become necessary to use additional programs.

On May 27, 1969, the City Council approved a Minimum Standards Housing Code for the City of Denton.<sup>5</sup> The approval

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>City of Denton, Texas, Minutes of the City Council, Vol. 18 (May 27, 1969), p. 212.

of this ordinance satisfied the requirements of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and made it possible for the City to submit a Workable Program Application. In April, 1970, the Council reviewed and approved the submission of a Workable Program Application that had been prepared by the City staff. The Application is now pending approval by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

#### Recommendation Number Four

This section of the report was devoted to Code Enforcement and recommended that the City apply for a Concentrated Code Enforcement Program for a 147 acre tract that comprized the southernmost portion of southeast Denton.

As was noted earlier in the report, the entire southeast Denton area would not qualify for Code Enforcement. There were far too many substandard units, 280, and they were distributed fairly evenly throughout the area. This latter fact eliminated the possibility of including several pocket areas into a Code Enforcement Program.

There was one area, however, which could possibly meet the requirements of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It was designated in the study as a 147.38 acre tract which included most of the better housing in the area. The housing breakdown in the area was as follows:

TABLE VI  
HOUSING CONDITIONS IN SOUTHEAST DENTON

Condition	Number	Per cent
Standard	109	45.60
Rehabilitational	93	38.92
Occupied-Substandard	27	11.30
Vacant-Substandard	10	4.18

The housing conditions in this area represented a fairly stable but declining neighborhood. By removing the ten vacant substandard units through local action prior to submission of a Code Enforcement Application, the percentage of all housing which would have to be torn down would be lowered to 11.79 per cent. This figure would represent a small percentage of all housing in the area and the section was expected to qualify for a Concentrated Code Enforcement Program.

The City was primarily interested in these areas of financial aid under the Code Enforcement Program, which included the three-fourths grant to the city of all administrative costs in the program, the \$3,000 grants to eligible residents to rehabilitate their homes, and the 3 per cent long term loans which would be available to rehabilitate or completely rebuild.

The three-fourths administrative grant to cover costs of implementing the program was the most important aid to the city.

The additional staff which would be necessary to enforce a Minimum Standards Housing Code was beyond the financial ability of the City. This grant would enable the City to establish an adequate inspection staff at one-fourth of the actual cost.

The financial assistance to area residents to upgrade their living conditions was important in that it would enable the residents to comply with City codes. In the past, inspection of substandard homes had borne little result because the homeowners did not have the financial ability to correct inadequate conditions. The City in turn could not condemn the homes because the occupants could not be relocated in standard housing.

The conclusion of the study was that the aids offered in this program would offer a solution to the difficulties which the City had experienced in the past and would form a vital part of the total City program.

#### Recommendation Number Five

The fifth recommendation of the study suggested several programs which should be explored to provide low and moderate income housing in the immediate future. The study indicated that there was a need for rental units and homes which could be purchased at below market terms.

The report also recommended that a housing committee be appointed by the Council to formulate long-range plans to meet the housing needs of low and moderate income groups. In order to meet the immediate problem, however, several programs were recommended for consideration.

The first program recommended by the study was the Rent Supplement Program which could provide rental units in the immediate future. The program, as authorized by Congress, makes it possible for private enterprise to provide housing for low income families and individuals, who in addition to their low income can qualify in one of the following categories:

- a. has been displaced by governmental action.
- b. either he or his spouse is 62 years of age or older.
- c. either he or his spouse is physically handicapped.
- d. now lives in substandard housing.
- e. occupies or did occupy living units destroyed or extensively damaged by natural disaster.<sup>6</sup>

For projects which are approved by HUD, rent supplement payments are made to the owners of projects on behalf of eligible tenants. Only new housing projects or existing housing projects involving major rehabilitation are eligible for this program.<sup>7</sup> Almost without exception, mortgage insurance and rent supplements must be approved for a project before construction or rehabilitation is begun, and must be owned by one of the following: a private nonprofit organization; a limited dividend mortgagor; or a cooperative housing corporation.<sup>8</sup> All of those who are eligible for rent supplements must pay 25 per cent of their income for rent. The difference between this amount and the full market rent for the living unit represents the amount of the rent supplement for that family or individual.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Department of Housing and Urban Development, Rent Supplement Program Public Information Guide and Instruction Handbook (Washington, D. C., 1966), p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

A number of units in a rent supplement project can be made available to tenants who pay the full market rent without subsidy. The program also permits a tenant to continue to live in the supplement complex as his income increases, paying a higher rent and receiving a lower supplement as his income rises, or he is allowed to continue to live in the project after he can no longer qualify for rent supplements.<sup>10</sup>

On November 22, 1969, the Council considered the request of a private developer for approval of a 198 unit rent supplement apartment complex in southeast Denton. In view of the programs which the City expected to initiate in the area, it was the City Manager's recommendation that the Rent Supplement Project be approved, with the stipulation that any Denton resident who needs housing because of local government action in the next five years have top priority on the waiting list for the units. It was felt that a much needed facility would be provided in the southeast Denton area and, at the same time, it would assure relocation facilities if a Code Enforcement Program was later adopted. The 198 unit request was approved by the Council and the units are now under construction.<sup>11</sup> The completion date for the project is June of 1971.

Other programs which were recommended for further study in the report included the Public Housing Program, the FHA

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>City of Denton, Texas, Minutes of the City Council, Vol. 18 (November 22, 1968), p. 157.

Rental Housing Program Number 236 for moderate income families, and the Number 235 Home Ownership Program for low and moderate income families.

In May of 1970, a Public Housing Authority was created by the Council and an application is now pending for 250 units for the elderly, disabled, and handicapped. The latter two programs which were recommended in the study are both sponsored by private developers. A limited number of these units have been constructed in Denton, but none to date is in the southeast section of the city.

#### Recommendation Number Six

The sixth recommendation was to develop a Neighborhood Facilities Program to house community action programs to offer aid for individual development and to provide for the social and economic improvement of the neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Facilities Grant Program provides financial and technical assistance for the development of centers which can house health, recreational, social, and other community services and activities for low and moderate income persons. By locating such a facility in southeast Denton, the report noted that it could provide local officials and other interested groups with an additional tool to meet some of the social and economic problems of the residents of the area.

Interest in self-improvement and participation in neighborhood and community life was also to be encouraged by the presence of activities and services in the problem area. If



the City were to provide such a facility, it was recommended that a community action program be established which could include such programs as the following:

a. Social Services

1. Individual and family counseling
2. Homemaker education
3. Legal advice and services
4. Consumer education
5. Day care centers

b. Employment and Training

1. Job training and vocational counseling
2. Youth opportunity center
3. Vocational rehabilitation

c. Education

1. Basic adult literacy
2. Citizenship classes
3. Project head start

d. Housing

1. Relocation information
2. Rehabilitation assistance (advice on loans, grants, required improvements)
3. Code Enforcement (advice on rights and duties of owners and tenants)

e. Assistance to the Aged

1. Information on Social Security, Medicare, and other benefits
2. Special health services
3. Social activities
4. Handicraft shops

f. Civic Participation

1. Planning for renewal
2. Organization for citizen action
3. Participation in the Community Action Program
4. Municipal services information center

g. Health

1. Health stations
2. Referral services to community health centers
3. Medical and dental screening clinics
4. Environmental health information services
5. Mental health referral services

h. Cultural Enrichment

1. Library services
2. Museum tours
3. Musical instruction and appreciation
4. Dramatic productions

i. Recreation

1. Active sports programs for youth and young adults
2. Active and passive programs for older groups <sup>12</sup>

Under the Neighborhood Facilities Grant Program, the federal grant may cover up to three-fourths of the development costs.<sup>13</sup> The facility which was proposed would have offered a variety of opportunities to the residents of southeast Denton. It was to provide a nucleus from which a community effort could be based to help the people in the area help themselves.

### Conclusion

The six recommendations of the 1969 Southeast Denton Improvements Program were limited by the fact that consideration was given only to those programs which were considered to be politically acceptable in the community and therefore practical. The defeat of Urban Renewal severely limited the approach which was taken in the report.

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<sup>12</sup>United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Neighborhood Facilities Grant Program Applicant Handbook, Chapter Three (Washington, D. C., 1969), pp. 1-3.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Chapter One, p. 1.

Three of the recommendations have been implemented and are in various stages of completion, including street paving, utility relocation, the Workable Program, and the recommendations on housing programs for the community. The remaining three recommendations were dependent upon the certification of a Workable Program and are considered as the next steps which will be taken in the area, although no timetable has been established. These recommendations included the local efforts to clean up the area in order to bring it up to standards for a Comprehensive Code Enforcement Program, the Code Enforcement Program for 147 acres of southeast Denton, and the Neighborhood Facilities for the area.

The program as proposed in the 1969 report does not provide total solutions for the many problems of the southeast Denton area. As has been pointed out, it was a limited approach from its original conception. The report must be considered a success, however, in that it did accomplish its basic purpose. A sense of direction was provided by the program which has been evidenced by the implementation of many of its recommendations. The report was also successful in that it provided the City of Denton with a Workable Program.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The physical structure of Denton, its operation, its growth processes, and administration represent an intricate economic and social organism. The city's over-all character, its continuing development, and its future objectives were all the subject of re-evaluation and change in the 1960's. The effects of the expanding Dallas-Fort Worth urban complex on the city of Denton were becoming increasingly apparent with the more rapid growth of the city's population. The community structure which had served the town well as a small community was no longer found to be sufficient to cope with the problems which were accompanying this urban growth. This fact manifested itself in the reorganization of the City government in 1959, and set the tone for the 1960's. The ability of the community to accept change was limited, however, because a large segment of the community still retained the attitudes and values of a rural community. It was in the context of these developments that attempts were made to improve the southeast Denton area.

The 1960 Master Plan represented the first attempt by the City to formulate a comprehensive plan to guide its future growth and development. Its adoption by the City constituted the first official recognition that the southeast section of

the city was in serious trouble. The plan was also important in that it defined the problems of the area and proposed definite solutions.

The 1965 Community Action Survey Report served to further document the needs of southeast Denton. Its most important contribution, however, was that it involved many local people in the problems of the neighborhood and served to focus the attention of the entire community on the area.

The 1966 Urban Renewal election did little more than create deep divisions throughout the community. The fact that the area was in need of basic comprehensive improvements was never an issue in the campaign, nor was the City's responsibility to provide aid questioned. The choice of methods by which aid was to be provided was the only major point of contention throughout the campaign. If any conclusion can be drawn from the election, it would be that the voters displayed a strong disapproval of any encroachments on property rights and were generally opposed to the intervention of the federal government at the local level. The possible relocation of blacks outside the southeast Denton area was also certainly a factor to many white voters.

The 1966 Urban Renewal election also destroyed any chances for immediate comprehensive improvement for the southeast Denton community. The defeat of Urban Renewal meant the rejection of the only single capable program for correcting the many problems of the area. The defeat of the issue also had

additional repercussions than just the rejection of Urban Renewal. After the election, residents in the area demanded that the bond funds which had been voted for the area be spent. The Council action to spend these funds, although providing greatly needed facilities, limited the ability of the City to enter into any other program such as Code Enforcement. The funds spent in the area could not be credited as the City's share of any new programs. The City, faced with limited resources and other priorities, simply did not have any additional funds approved for the area; therefore, the possibility of bringing grant-in-aid programs to the area was unlikely.

If any lesson can be learned from the events of the 1966 Urban Renewal election, it is that the importance of the political environment in which an administrator works can never be under-estimated. Often, and as evidenced in this study, an administrator can be caught up in political events beyond his control. A review of the circumstances surrounding the Urban Renewal election certainly reinforces this point.

The community of Denton, as has been shown, is basically of a conservative nature usually associated with small southern communities. In this type of environment, new roles for municipal government can usually be expected to evolve slowly and are watched cautiously. This fact in itself would have made the decision to propose Urban Renewal for the southeast Denton area highly questionable. Be that as it may, the 1966 Urban

Renewal election certainly reasserted the conservative nature of the community. The issue was defeated at that time even with the support of two major segments of the community, the universities and the business community. Although situations are always viewed more clearly through hindsight, it certainly seems apparent that the conservative characteristics of the community and the results of the 1963 Urban Renewal election were strong indications that the Urban Renewal Program was incompatible with the attitudes and values of the community. Had these characteristics of the community been heeded more closely, the Urban Renewal issue might have been avoided in 1966 and a more acceptable program chosen, such as Code Enforcement. If this program could only have been obtained for part of the area, it would have stretched the available funds and would have established a continuing program.

Another point well made by the defeat of the Urban Renewal issue was that the technical solutions to a given problem are certainly not the only considerations which should be given. Of the programs which were available at the time, Urban Renewal, if administered effectively, was without question the superior technical solution to the rehabilitation of southeast Denton. It was not acceptable to the community, however, and should have been considered impractical.

The 1966 Urban Renewal election then, certainly did stress the importance of the environment in policy formation. A knowledge of what a given community will accept is certainly

basic to the formation of any policy direction. Being able to interpret one's environment is the difficult problem which is presented however, and underscores the importance of the art of administration in policy formation.<sup>1</sup> What may be unacceptable in a given community one day may be accepted with little opposition the next. The administrator and the Councilman are thus tested through their abilities to interpret the community and through their use of timing in presenting any given proposal.<sup>2</sup>

If any philosophy underlay the 1969 program for improvement for the southeast area, it was one of extreme caution. The program represented an attempt to regroup the City's administrative forces and to add some direction to the chaos which followed in the aftermath of the Urban Renewal election.

The recommendations in the 1969 program represented a limited but well balanced approach in light of City finances and the grant-in-aid programs which were available. Many of the recommendations which were made in the study have been implemented and are making a decided improvement in the appearance of the neighborhood. The paving and utility relocation project and the 198-unit rent supplement apartment complex have provided most

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<sup>1</sup>For information pertaining to this subject, see C. A. Harrell and D. G. Weiford, "The City Manager and the Policy Process," Public Administration Review, XVIII (1959), 101-107.

<sup>2</sup>More information can be found in The International City Manager's Association, The Technique of Municipal Administration, Fourth Edition (Chicago, 1958), p. 15.



of this improvement. The most important contribution of the 1969 program however, was that it provided a Workable Program which will enable the City to apply for future grants-in-aid under the Department of Housing and Urban Development. These programs might well include the Concentrated Code Enforcement and Neighborhood Facilities programs included in the 1969 report. The submission of these applications will depend to a large extent, however, on the residents of southeast Denton.

The years since 1966 have witnessed many changes in Denton and the nation which have affected the priority of the southeast Denton area. On the national level, the Nixon administration has reordered the nation's priorities with the result that problems such as water and air pollution have largely replaced the priority given to the rehabilitation of poverty areas. This national trend has also been reflected at the local level with the result that the southeast Denton area no longer enjoys the attention it once had. The city administration has more recently involved itself with the pressing problems of thoroughfare construction, extending water and sewer facilities, and, in general, trying to meet the demands of a rapidly growing city.

The southeast Denton residents have contributed to this loss of priority at the local level through their inaction. The neighborhood was never organized politically throughout the 1960's. They were courted by opposing factions in the 1966 Urban Renewal election and issues immediately after that, but no leadership from within the neighborhood ever emerged.

Little initiative or interest has been displayed by the neighborhood toward achieving any improvements in the area beyond the projects now underway. This non-involvement of the area residents has persisted despite local efforts by the City to inform the neighborhood of the benefits which could be derived from the Code Enforcement Program. This lack of interest and leadership in the area is difficult to explain as there are a number of well educated black residents who are capable of assuming leadership roles. It is the opinion of this writer that until the southeast area is politically organized with black leadership and is capable of maintaining the support and interest which will be necessary to secure a large commitment of public funds, little will be initiated beyond the work which is already underway.

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