

An Experiment in Community Renewal

**by Lloyd Axworthy and Ralph Kuropatwa
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The Institute of Urban Studies is an independent research arm of the University of Winnipeg. Since 1969, the IUS has been both an academic and an applied research centre, committed to examining urban development issues in a broad, non-partisan manner. The Institute examines inner city, environmental, Aboriginal and community development issues. In addition to its ongoing involvement in research, IUS brings in visiting scholars, hosts workshops, seminars and conferences, and acts in partnership with other organizations in the community to effect positive change.

AN EXPERIMENT IN COMMUNITY RENEWAL:

**Observations and proposals arising from
a demonstration project in Winnipeg**

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Foreward

This paper is intended as an introduction to the discussion of how to implement an experimental program of community renewal in the Urban Renewal Area II of Winnipeg, or elsewhere for that matter.

It is the first of six reports on the subject. Other papers will deal with issues raised in this paper in a more specific and detailed manner. The other five reports will cover the following subjects:

- Community Renewal Corporations
- The role of local, provincial and federal governments
- Plans and Projects for Renewal
- The Role of the Private Sector
- Techniques of Community Analysis and Evaluation

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Abstract

Discussion of citizen participation in community renewal has frequently been based upon a conflict of ideas as to how, or why, such participation may occur. This paper does not intend to add one more review of the literature on this topic, but is interested, instead, in reporting on an action research project in Winnipeg's Urban Renewal Area #2. A central function of the project was the research for some basic operating principles by which community renewal, directly involving local residents, could take place. Out of the experience in Winnipeg, and its comparison with other efforts at organizing renewal in deteriorating urban settings, emerged a number of principles and proposals for the effective operation of a community renewal program. These included the favouring of developing representative neighbourhood groups over narrower special interest groups, support for an alliance between citizen groups and independent organizations with technical and professional resources, the concept of anticipatory planning, and the practice of resource concentration and mobility for the relatively fast and tangible accomplishment of community objectives. In addition, the proposal is made that an effective vehicle for the participation of local residents in community renewal is the establishment of a community renewal corporation.

A. Introduction

Across Canada citizens groups are challenging the way cities are governed. Participation in policy-making, new forms of community controlled programs, a more equitable distribution of goods and services, and decentralization of power and authority are the kinds of demands being made by these citizens organizations. They want a reappraisal of the principles and a re-working of the practices that presently form the basis of our local government system.

The citizens organizations have emerged because existing systems of government have not been able to successfully manage the changes taking place in the urban environment. Conflicts over public housing, programs of redevelopment and renewal, expressway systems, the delivery of welfare services, have been the catalysts for the formation of new groupings of citizen-based opposition. Changes are being demanded in the way these programs are planned and executed at the community level. New structures and a new process of policy making must be devised in dealing with those issues such as housing, social services and urban redevelopment that can be characterized as issues of community renewal.

The difficulty is that there are few models of what the new systems of planning and policy should be. As much as the issue of citizen involvement has become part of the drama of city politics, and as much as there have been innumerable demands for basic reforms in the name of

participation and grass roots democracy, there is a noticeable lack of wisdom on the means of achieving these ideals. Advocates of citizen involvement argue from a weak position because they lack realistic prescriptions on how to implement a more democratic form of local government.

Only when there are workable models of how effective decision-making can be exercised by citizens in important urban matters, will efforts to democratize the cities have a chance for real success. Until proof is available showing that a system of citizen involved decision-making can deal with the problems of planning, managing and implementing needed urban programs, the skeptics will have the upper hand and continue to say that the theory of citizen involvement is a nice ideal but not feasible.

A further source of possible discouragement is the very basic question of whether we are not already too late to worry about community renewal; if there has not already occurred an eclipse of community.¹ There is, after all, a perfectly respectable position suggesting that the processes of urbanization have inexorably converted personal communities into impersonal entities. Where in the pre-industrial past we have been able to observe that agriculturally based communities were characterized by an intimacy of interpersonal relationships, as well as a profound communal "We" feeling, we now observe these warm, personal aspects of community increasingly replaced by impersonal and contractual relationships, leading to personal isolation and alienation, as well as the loss of any sense of community. If one product of such changes is the urban dweller's feeling of being a stranger in his own city, such a sense of not-belonging

would, predictably, be directly related to an absence of participation by local residents in their community's affairs.

The rebuttal to this position is fairly simple. First, there is the research and experience of others. For example, James Q. Wilson found that a sample of 1,000 ^{Boston} householders felt that 'the sense of failure of community' was the most serious urban problem.² Second, there is the research and experience of the Institute of Urban Studies. We know that a sense of community may exist, may be developed and may be mobilized in the pursuit of the community's interests because we saw it happen, even as we helped it happen.

At the same time, no one would deny that urbanization and bureaucratization have led to an increase in the exercise of centralized authority and a proportionate decrease in the exercise of direct democracy. Efforts at involving local citizens in community renewal are not based upon a nostalgia for the "good old days", but rather upon the observation that local citizens want to participate in the development and living history of their community, beyond the election of aldermen, councillors, or provincial and federal legislators.

This sets a compelling need for experimentation in the field of urban government. Applied research and development, testing new systems of decision-making, utilizing different ways of planning, managing and implementing urban programs are vitally necessary. The pressure of the citizen movement is forcing change in the ways we govern ourselves. The corollary step must be devising what those ways should be.

B. The Demonstration Project

In October of 1969 the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg³ began an experimental project in the central part of Winnipeg's Urban Renewal Area II, a district which came to be called Roosevelt Park. The purpose of the demonstration project was to explore ways in which the process of renewal in inner city areas could be effectively carried out with the involvement of the residents of the area.

The various events that took place within the project area were recorded by the staff of the Institute, using video tape and written reports. The data thereby collected was independently evaluated. At the same time, staff of the Institute were analyzing the experience of other community organizations and attempting to develop assessments of their own of the experience in Roosevelt Park.

An appraisal of the information gleaned from this demonstration project gives a basis for developing some tentative propositions about the process of community renewal, or citizen based redevelopment of our inner cities. Properly, any propositions should await a further lengthening of the process and a more complete testing through comparison with community renewal experience in other areas. But, the issue of who should control the redevelopment of our cities and how it can effectively be done is too contemporary and too important an issue to await a lengthy period of more scientific research. The aim of the project was to help in developing innovative approaches to renewal and to relate the findings as they occur.

There are two impending developments that bear especially on the need to draw early conclusions from this project. The first is the revisions of federal policies related to urban redevelopment. The second is the reorganization of local government in Greater Winnipeg. Both are scheduled to occur within the next year. It is foreseeable that both might benefit from the lessons learned in Roosevelt Park, and incorporate some of these lessons.

In a demonstration project of this kind many areas of work are involved, and many interrelated areas of experimentation undertaken. The group building process of community organization, the techniques of community research and analysis, the actual work of rehabilitation are all aspects of the project that will appear in later reports by the Institute.⁴ This account will leave aside observations on these areas and center on questions of the principles and policies of community renewal. This means first examining the experience of the Roosevelt Park Project, the lessons learned by other community action projects, what is the basic rationale for programs of community-controlled renewal, what are the means by which they can be carried out, what difficulties are likely to be met in trying to implement community-controlled renewal, and how can such difficulties be overcome?

i) The Area: Roosevelt Park is an area falling into the designated boundaries of the City of Winnipeg's Urban Renewal Area #2, and is thus formally recognized as an urban locality requiring renewal and redevelopment. The Roosevelt Park area lies within one of the oldest residential

districts in the city; residential development goes as far back as the 1870's. Physically, the area enjoys an elevation somewhat higher than surrounding districts, and the housing stock was initially erected to serve upper and middle-income residents. The introduction of the railway yards stimulated additional housing for railway workers as well as a variety of businesses, including warehouses. At the same time, predictably, the upper and middle income residents moved out of the locality. Deterioration of the physical neighbourhood continued with industrial development along the tracks. In the last decade the area has steadily deteriorated both physically and socially.

The Roosevelt Park area has been part of a much studied section of Winnipeg. Major renewal reports go back to 1937 with successive reports occurring in 1955, 1957, 1959, 1960, 1966 and 1968.⁵ As far back as 1955 the studies showed that the area was decaying and needed revitalization. For example, at that time it was found that only 6% of the dwellings were being adequately maintained while 60% required minor repairs, and 34% required major repairs. All the reports recommended the conservation, renewal, and construction of units for low-income families. In addition, there were plans proposed in which an industrial park and/or extensive public buildings (such as libraries and vocational schools) would make up important elements of renewal developments. In 1957 the suggestion was made that an urban conservation and rehabilitation board be established, including the introduction of community organization resources.

A Social Service Audit, reporting in 1968, identified Urban Renewal Area II as a much disorganized social entity, with high transiency rates, and little evidence of a sense of community. These perceptions of the project area were not supported by the Institute of Urban Studies' survey which not only found community strengths in Roosevelt Park, but may also be said to have had these strengths demonstrated through the course of the experimental project.⁶

ii The Project: IUS intervention in the Roosevelt Park area took the form of an action research project designed to test a number of hypotheses regarding community renewal. Among these hypotheses were, first, the idea that developing representative neighbourhood groups would result in more effective community renewal than trying to develop narrower interest groups that might be found, more or less unorganized, within the community. A second hypothesis was that an alliance, between representative community renewal groups and private, professional third parties, such as the IUS, would be capable of more effective community renewal than unallied community groups, or community groups left to work with organizations more directly dependent upon government or other established interests. A third hypothesis was that anticipatory planning would lead to community renewal of greater effectiveness and quality than community reaction to the decisions of public or private developers. Anticipatory planning is understood as the attempt to assist a community to organize itself in such a way as to encourage the community action group to assume the initiatives in planning, thereby forcing government or others to respond to the community's wishes, rather than vice versa.

A fourth hypothesis was that the concentration of all available resources in the achievement of immediate, limited, but tangible goals was likely to result in a more effective community renewal than the traditional effort at diffusing resources over a broad target.

The project has basically undergone four distinct phases:

1) an initial phase of preparation; 2) a phase in which the community action and renewal group was established; 3) a phase dominated by a sub-project of moving a six-unit apartment block; and, 4) the present phase.⁷

The first phase saw a great deal of IUS time, effort, energy, and resources invested in preparing for the most useful entry of the Institute into the area. This included a proposal to Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, outlining the nature of the pilot project, and securing the necessary funds. This first phase then moved into the activities of

- a) IUS recruitment of a technical committee, thus establishing a pool of voluntary resource people in a variety of professional and entrepreneurial skills; eg. (architecture, law, business, mortgage and other financing, CMHC regulations and procedures);
- b) the early pushes into the area including establishing a relationship with the residents as well as gathering of data by interviews and questionnaires;
- c) the contacting by IUS staff of individuals, government officials, and social agencies that were interested and active in matters relating to the social and economic situation in Roosevelt Park.

A number of experiments aimed at ascertaining community needs were conducted. These included working in the schools, observation analysis, ^{and} group meetings. The preparatory phase was climaxed, and ended, with a public meeting in March 1970 (attendance about 200 out of an area population of 1,200 households). The IUS reported its findings to the community and the community responded by establishing a Steering Committee, later to become known as the People's Committee. The People's Committee then undertook a series of discussions with the area's residents regarding the needs of that community, and how the priorities among these needs were locally being identified. An office was located within the project area, and the Committee published and circulated a newsletter. Video tape recordings were used as a learning and communication device. Regardless of which communication techniques were employed by the People's Committee, the residents consistently identified adequate, low-cost housing as the first priority.

In April 1970, the People's Committee took notice of tenders for the demolition of twenty housing units in the area issued by Greater Winnipeg Metropolitan Corporation in preparation for building a new roadway. These tenders were issued by the Metro Corporation as part of their plan to introduce changes in the transportation routes within that area of the city (the Cumberland extension). The People's Committee viewed this as an opportunity for reclaiming old housing and their decision was to move and rehabilitate some of these units, rather than have them destroyed. The People's Committee succeeded in moving and rehabilitating a six-unit apartment block. This was an important demonstration of their capacity to

handle such a renewal project - including the ability to go through all the necessary steps (approaching and negotiating with the Metro Corporation, the provincial and municipal governments; drawing up and presenting briefs; and of course, the physical moving of the apartment block.)

The technical committee proved to be of particular value in this process. The People's Committee received considerable and crucial technical help in a number of areas, including the persuading of government officials that the People's Committee's plan was workable, and that the People's Committee itself was a group capable of effectively carrying out the plan. This was also the time in which the legal resources, available through the technical group, were used to identify the value of incorporating the People's Committee into a neighbourhood development corporation; consequently the committee became incorporated under the Companies Act of Manitoba and was named the People's Committee for a Better Neighbourhood Inc.

The People's Committee did not end their apartment sub-project with its physical move from one lot to another. The Committee further undertook the physical rehabilitation of the block, and on the successful completion of that, the business of managing the block so that, today, six families live in the block at a monthly rental, ranging between \$75.00 to \$90.00 . The tenants and the Board of the People's Committee decided as a group on the conditions in the rental agreement.

Difficulties were encountered by the People's Committee in their relationship to the City of Winnipeg. The City would not provide city-owned land for the apartment block. City officials then organized

a Steering Committee of its own in Urban Renewal Area II that competed with the People's Committee and was at first recognized by City officials as the only voice of residents in the consultation processes between the City and residents in matters of planning for housing and related needs. The People's Committee, however, chose to confront the City and won recognition for itself on its own terms.

The confrontations between the People's Committee and the City government have not yet ended. Skirmishes between the two have continued, and the results have shown an ability on the part of the People's Committee to prevent the imposition by the City of its own plans, without recourse to consultation with, and accounting for, the proposals and responses of the committee. One example of this was the city's plan to use the reclaimed Midland Railway property for an athletic park. The People's Committee opposed the move on the basis that residents in the area were not consulted and that there would be better uses of the land than the proposed major athletic complex.

Over its months of operation, the People's Committee, has increasingly become a group primarily interested in the accomplishment of tasks within its community. Neither the People's Committee, nor the City Steering Committee, nor any other group that works in that area of Winnipeg, can be said to be fully representative of the Roosevelt Park community. And, while we do not yet have any clear mechanism available for the desired, full participation, the People's Committee, as well as the other groups, does illustrate one workable fashion for residents of an urban area to gain access to local government by means of the pluralism of concerned and active community groups.

In addition, the Roosevelt Park experience tested a number of approaches to the introduction and organization of community renewal in a deteriorating urban area. Among these approaches tested and found effective were, first, the practice of seeking to develop and maintain a representative community group that, as far as possible, would attempt to reflect and pursue the interests of the total community, and not just any one segment in particular. Second, an alliance between the residents' group and an organization such as the IUS, which provides continuing operational support plus access to expertise within the larger community, was found to be particularly valuable to the citizens' group in overcoming obstacles such as recalcitrant local authorities. Third, the more traditional approach of helping a community organize in reaction to the initiatives of government or business, was replaced by anticipatory planning by the community for its continuing renewal. As a result, the local residents were able to formulate their own priorities for change, and pursue these with the planning authorities of the municipal, metropolitan, and provincial governments. In a reversal of the more conventional planning process, the citizen's group assumed the initiatives to which governments had to react. Fourth, the resources that could be mobilized and introduced into the community renewal process were concentrated on the achievement of rapid, visible, tangible, if limited objectives. As a result, there was little diffusion of resources, and those resources available to the community were used with near maximum efficiency.

C. Community Renewal

Before any conclusions can be drawn from the work in Roosevelt Park and before any strategy for future developments in that area can be devised, it is necessary to examine more extensively the issue of community renewal and see what lessons can be learned from experiences elsewhere, particularly those in the United States. The project in Winnipeg is presently just another isolated case of community action among the many that have come and gone in this country. But, if its experience can be related to other experiences, and conclusions made on practical ways for that project to proceed, it may cast light upon the way that local government may be restructured to give people real power over decisions in their community.

The idea of community renewal in Canada owes much to the community action programs arising out of the American civil rights movement and the War on Poverty of the Kennedy, Johnson administrations. These ideas were quickly transmitted across the border during the mid 1960's and picked up by Canadians working in the field of social development.

Federal government agencies and politicians then gave serious impetus to the emergence of citizen movements and the idea of community participation. The Company of Young Canadians became involved in a series of community action projects and succeeded in spawning a number of citizen groups. Wide spread popularization of the idea came about as a result of Prime Minister Trudeau's repeated call for a form of participatory democracy during the 1968 election campaign. The Federal Task Force on Housing and

Urban Development further emphasized the need for a different approach to the solution of urban problems. It provided a forum for many citizens groups during its cross country tour in the autumn of 1968, and incorporated many of the ideals of citizen participation in its report.⁸ The subsequent stoppage of federal urban renewal assistance and more tenant oriented approaches toward public housing reinforced the movement towards programs based on some kind of citizen involvement. The argument can thus be made that the federal government bears a good deal of responsibility for the growth of this development and is thereby under an obligation to maintain its support for citizen action groups.

The nature/^{what}of these groups strive for, however, is still somewhat ambiguous and without clear definition. Some have very limited ambitions. They simply want more services, better treatment, an end to bad policies. Others are far more radical. They want to change the basic structure of how decisions are made, by altering the framework of representative government, and changing the power relationships in society. If there is an element common to all it is to regain a degree of self-rule and self-control over the decisions that affect their life styles and life chances.

This common principle can be viewed several ways. Robert Aleshire has set out five ways of viewing the role of citizen groups:⁹

- total elitist view which assumes that citizens should accept the decisions of professional experts and elected representatives;
- the citizen has the right to veto decisions made by the elite;
- the citizen should have his needs and concerns analyzed, surveyed and maybe even listened to;

- the citizen should be consulted - what he calls the Uncle Tom approach where options are presented and groups asked for advisory opinions;

- the citizen group has the right to make decisions, even if they are wrong.

It is this last category which strikes at the real meaning of citizen involvement or community renewal. The issue is whether citizens in a community will have the right to share in the power of decision-making. They should not be seen as supplicants in their relations with government or as recipients or complaintants, but actually be able to exercise judgement on programs and have control over the implementation of policies that intervene in their community.

This means going beyond citizen advisory committees that provide suggestions to government. It is quite different from holding public hearings where different views can be aired. It requires more than submitting different plans developed by professionals to neighbourhood meetings for their comment and choice, and it certainly needs more than social development workers attached to a government agency for purposes of animation.

At the same time, it does not mean going the full distance towards the radical rhetoric of those who envision forms of isolated neighbourhoods working in complete freedom from one another, totally relying on the inspiration and resources of community people battling against middle class foes - a derivation of the "noble worker" theory of the nineteen thirties, and the Anarchist philosophies of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

To give meaning to the concept of community renewal requires a different structure of government. It means that community people would have responsibility for policy making in certain issues affecting their community. They would have sufficient technical resources and professional advice so that the decisions can be based on good information. They would have assistance in organizing and developing new patterns of political and social behaviour. They would receive a legitimation of the operation so that it develops continuity and credibility.

But will it work?

The potential of community renewal has already been tested in a number of practical situations. The most obvious sources of data are the Community Action Programs conducted under the auspices of the American Office of Economic Opportunity. In just over one year, between November 1964 and January 1966, more than nine hundred grants were made to CAPs in about one thousand counties. "All of the fifty largest cities in the country had CAPs."¹¹ By and large, the efforts at community renewal, represented by these CAPs, have been evaluated as being failures. But they have failed largely in the sense that they have not accomplished the goals they set for themselves. It would be careless to ignore many of the very useful lessons learned from the programs, the problems they encountered, the achievements that were realized, and even the defeats and recurring failures that did characterize so many of the programs.

In many respects, programs failed due to a lack of clarity as to what were the actual goals. An additional frequent cause of distress for CAPs was the presence of mutually incompatible goals. An example of such incompatibility is the effort to simultaneously perform the functions of service

delivery and program co-ordination as well as the stimulation of effective political activism. Where both these objectives were reflected in the activities of a program, the general rule was that "neither occurred, and in the process of not occurring, all hell broke loose all over the place".¹² Where the distinctions were made between programs pursuing service objectives and programs pursuing political objectives, the indications are that successes were recorded, particularly in the case of the former programs. Those programs that set out to stimulate political activism by means of a general militancy toward local governments and established service organizations, found themselves in a process that most frequently led to failure. Moynihan, for example, identified a four stage sequence that characterized the history of militant CAPs, oriented toward the objective of political activism.

"First, a period of organizing, with much publicity and great expectations everywhere. Second, the beginning of operations, with the onset of conflict between the agency and local government institutions, with even greater publicity. Third, a period of counterattack from local government, not infrequently accompanied by conflict and difficulties, including accounting troubles, within the agency itself. Fourth, victory for the established institutions or at best, stalemate, accompanied by bitterness and charges of betrayal."¹³

Evidence for the success of programs seeking co-ordination or delivery of services is plentiful. The most dramatic illustrations of these successes are programs such as Head Start and Neighbourhood Legal Services.¹⁴ These, and similar inputs aimed at community renewal have been so successful that they are now taken for granted. Pre-school education, as one example, is now considered to be a service that any community

can expect as a right. Communities without such a service now properly consider themselves deprived of a standard community feature.

In addition to these successes in the development of categorical services, there are (Moynihan presumes) "a great number and wide variety of innovations, changes, improvements that took place as a result of the community efforts stimulated by the Economic Opportunity Act."¹⁵ Among the unanticipated lessons learned from community renewal programs was the technique of mobilizing a full array of resources - money, material, personnel, skills and talents in organization, communication, information, participation, - - - drawn from a broad community constituency (including the university, the residents of the target area, volunteer contributions of technical expertise), and applied to the accomplishment of short-term tangible accomplishments within a relatively small urban area, an approach adopted in the Roosevelt Park project. The gap between this lesson and the initial goal of many programs is very obvious: for many, the major objective of a community renewal program is to provide a local power base that would serve as a countervailing force to the established powerful organizations . public and private, as well as the vehicle for the introduction of social, physical, and economic changes that those residents in the locality deem necessary or, at least, highly desirable. The experience of CAPs has not supported the simplistic approach to the development of local, community power. The record shows that the effort at moving into an urban community with the objective of simply giving "power to the people" is naive, doomed to failure, and consequently, a cruel toying with the hopes and aspirations of the community's residents.

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Clark and Hopkins found that they were able to describe some characteristics common to those CAPs that could be evaluated as having been relatively effective. Their common characteristics included: - a clear statement of purposes, definitions and goals of community action - actual programs which seemed relevant to and compatible with the stated community action purposes and goals - effective, strong, and articulate staff leadership, generally backed by a sophisticated board with some base of realistic power - some form of involvement or representation of the poor in policy making at the staff level - an early confrontation with the local political apparatus and progress toward the working out of an acceptable accommodation by which the community action program is permitted to operate either with minimum political interference and with integrity, or with the political apparatus as an ally actively protecting the integrity and effectiveness of the anti-poverty program - (and) some early evidence of actual positive changes in the conditions of the poor, or evidence that through the activities of the program the poor have learned or developed methods and techniques by which to help themselves in the future."

It will be recalled that the Roosevelt Park project reflected a number of these characteristics; the committee and the local government came to confront one another, and did so early enough for an accommodation to be worked out. There was also the clearest evidence of early, actual, and positive change resulting from the activities of the People's Committee. The most dramatic single event being the apartment block sub-project.

These characteristics, drawn from evaluations of actual programs, would seem to support the idea that "power" as some abstract and ambiguous notion, cannot simply be thrust upon residents of an urban community without considerable additional input of a very concrete nature. Merely to drop "power" into a community - without tangible accomplishments, leadership, clarity of purpose, a realistic alliance with a "third-party" that can wield influence in the community, or an equally realistic accommodation with the established local political forces - is not to convey real power at all. It is what Moynihan calls "a kind of play acting at power".¹⁷ The history of the CAPs in the United States is the clearest demonstration we have that play acting at power usually will produce little more than an album of press clippings, the transitory attention of the media, rapidly rising community expectations, and, ultimately, exposure of powerlessness, defeat, and bitterness.

Whatever approach is used, the initial task, both for planning and evaluation is that of somehow organizing the manner in which residents participate in community renewal programs.¹⁸

Perhaps the determination of that issue will rest on how good a rationale can be developed for the objective of community renewal and whether it can be introduced without engendering serious cleavage and conflict. Here again the American experience is instructive. Aleshire in his analysis of the benefits of community participation and community renewal emphasizes that not only does it result in a more democratic system, but many urban programs fail because they do not match the needs of the people for whom they are intended.¹⁹ If people are involved in deciding on the

process, they have the chance to fit programs to need and the result can be better urban programs. It is really a variation of the old Aristotelian formula that only those who wear the shoes know when they don't fit. Kenneth Clark supports this claim in his examination of community action programs and adds another. He shows that community action also produces new leadership in lower income communities, enabling them to compete more effectively with those that now exercise power.

Two good examples of the benefits of community controlled renewal would be the operation of the Hough Development Corporation in Cleveland and the Jeff VanderLou neighbourhood corporation in St. Louis. Both grew out of community initiative, not government sponsorship, and have grown to a point where they have undertaken major redevelopment activities. The Hough Corporation, initiated by a broadly represented community group, has undertaken major programs of economic development in an area of Cleveland that suffered severe rioting in 1966.²⁰ It operates a loan guarantee program, a home maintenance program and is in the advanced stage of planning for a unique shopping center - housing complex. In St. Louis, the residents of the Yeatman district became increasingly disturbed by the indifference of local government to the steady deterioration of their area. They banded together, formed the Jeff VanderLou Community Corporation in 1968, and have since undertaken a major rehabilitation of 300 homes in the area, built a community park and started a medical clinic.²¹ They had problems, mainly from/^acity government which refused to give them money and designated another neighbourhood group as the area's official poverty agency, a happening similar to that experienced in Winnipeg. The Corporation has persevered and now

receives major federal financing for its work of rehabilitation. Both cases demonstrate that there is a capacity for self-renewal in lower income areas and that the programs devised by the community corporations can often undertake more effective renewal action than conventional government agencies.

The cause of community renewal can be supported, therefore on a dual basis. It provides a more meaningful sense of citizenship for urban residents and equalizes the rewards of society. And, secondly, it has the potential for yielding policies and programs that can more effectively solve urban problems than those devised by administrators, planners, or politicians who are unable to perceive or understand the problems as realistically as those affected.

Neighbourhood Government

If that rationale can be accepted, then the question comes down to the mechanism for implementing the idea. One answer proposed with increasing frequency is the idea of neighbourhood government or neighbourhood corporations. The most radical expression of this idea has come from Milton Kotler. In his book, Neighbourhood Government he claims that the definition of neighbourhood has always been in political/^{not sociological} terms and that the history of cities is characterized by neighbourhood governmental units.²² As cities become increasingly centralized economically and politically, it is important that independent neighbourhood corporations be used to counter-act this trend and give people some opportunity for self-rule.

Arguing in a different vein, the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders in the United States advocated a decentralization of city government

itself, beginning with the creation of neighbourhood task forces. Some forms of this have begun to be implemented in cities such as Boston and New York.²³ Government officials in these cities have²⁴ begun to share responsibilities for the delivery of local services, receive complaints from residents, and develop programs for the local community. It is a start in sharing power, not a division of power.

Perhaps the most detailed examination of the idea has come from the Harvard University Program on Technology and Society.²⁴ They have developed working models of local development corporations and worked closely with Paul Yuilsacker when he was Commissioner of Community Affairs in New Jersey to set up an extended system of new community development organizations.

The essence of all these suggestions is that some type of organization or formal structure is necessary to implement community renewal. It will not work if community people operate through informal associations. They have no legitimate authority, must wait upon the decisions of those in power, and can be dismissed. There are some differences in the way that neighbourhood corporations or councils relate to the wider structure of government. This is an issue that almost has to be worked out according to individual situations. But, there should be some integration of the neighbourhood unit with the city government in order that plans and programs be co-ordinated, and to avoid continual conflicts.

There remain many unanswered questions. What is the scale of community within the large urban areas into which this neighbourhood government might fit? What is the way to organize citizens and begin the process

establishing aimed at/ a new neighbourhood government structure? Can citizens actually exercise judgement and responsibility on difficult, complicated matters relating to redevelopment? How? What should be the functions performed by these neighbourhood governments? In what ways do they meld into the need for metropolitan area-wide planning decisions? How will the local politicians react? What is the role of senior levels of government?

These are the kinds of questions that can only be answered through application and testing. The model of a neighbourhood government appears to be one useful way of meeting existing problems, the next step is to try it out and see how it will work. This is an opportunity that now exists in the Urban Renewal Area II of Winnipeg.

E. A Community Renewal Corporation

The experience of the Roosevelt Park Demonstration project suggests that a form of community renewal corporation could be introduced in that area and would work. Several factors support this claim. First, there is a significant sense of community identity and attachment in the area. Contrary to what previous reports have suggested (see Social Audit, 1968 Urban Renewal Study), there is a degree of cohesion among the residents and an apparent willingness to become involved in activities that aim at improvements in the area, as long as those activities are of a tangible, practical nature.²⁶ Rhetoric about participation is not appealing, but the prospect of better housing is.²⁵

It is also apparent that people in this community are able to participate meaningfully in making decisions and carrying out projects. They know what they want and what they don't want. They are prepared to work,

to attend meetings and to take action, particularly when immediate goals are at hand.

This kind of involvement, however, must be buttressed by technical, professional assistance. The work of the Institute staff and the Technical Advisory Group provided needed skills, and continuous labor that could not be provided by members of the Committee. Purists in the field of community development object to this, feeling that the professional advisors really run the group. This was not the case in the demonstration project. What the professional advisors and the workers were able to do was supply knowledge, skill and time that gave the committee the capacity to act. Without that support, no citizens group, except some where a wide range of skills exist (say Don Vale in Toronto) can hope to act effectively. As Kenneth Clark suggests, the only way community action will work is when there is an alliance between community residents and professionals.²⁷ This suggests the need for changes in the method of community organizing. Increasingly the need will be for specific skills in housing, law, business management and government additions - talents not usually found in the present breed of community development workers.

The chartering of a non-profit community corporation also proved a useful departure. It provided legitimacy, and a sense of continuity. It imposed a discipline on the People's Committee, and instilled a sense of permanency, often lost in ad hoc citizens organizations. There are many problems to be worked out in this device of a non-profit community corporation. But, the experience in Roosevelt Park, and similar experience gained in a non-profit housing corporation operated by people of native ancestry in Winnipeg, suggests that this is a very useful mechanism through which community renewal activities can be conducted.²⁸

There is also now an expectation within Urban Renewal Area II that some form of citizen involvement will take place in the renewal process. Even though the People's Committee and the City Steering Committee were organized on a different basis, have followed somewhat different lines of action, and have had their disputes, they have succeeded by their efforts in instilling a sense that the community must decide on renewal. Up to now, this expectation has not been fulfilled. The kind of involvement given citizens has varied according to Aleshire's typology between the "Uncle Tom" variety and the idea that the citizen must be listened to. As yet, however, no realistic formula for citizen involvement has been offered by any of the levels of government, even though all give lip service to the ideal.

Both Winnipeg citizens organizations are in a position, however, to father a new form of community control organization with wider representation and real powers of decision-making. The most important immediate task of these organizations should not be to promote different kinds of plans and proposals for the area, but to go back one step and begin working together, if possible, to bargain for the right and power of residents in the area to make decisions on what those plans should be through a new form of community renewal organization.

Timing is another factor of considerable importance.²⁹ There is currently a favourable climate for change and experimentation in urban matters. The federal government, since its stoppage of urban renewal, has not yet re-introduced any new programs. Several of its moves in the field of housing have indicated that it is disposed toward programs of innovation, especially those involving the users of programs. Moreover, a number of

task forces and investigations are in process, grappling with more effective means of providing assistance to the citizens. Thus, on the federal level there exists an opportunity to make a case for community renewal before new policies are set and given institutional immortality.

It is, however, an opportunity that may not last long. Already there has been serious reaction by municipal politicians against programs of community action. The federal minister of Housing and Urban Affairs is increasingly involved with city governments in matters of urban policies. The outcome of these could be a system of federal support going to existing municipal structures, thus leaving the citizens organizations dependent on local administrators and politicians. As the American experience shows, this would effectively kill community action or community renewal efforts.³⁰ The time for introducing significant change in the process of Canadian local government may therefore not last too long.

Winnipeg itself is at a stage where significant change is also possible. People in Urban Renewal Area II are primed for action - with expectations for major redevelopment. The city has not yet applied any set formula to the renewal process. Most important a new form of municipal government will come into effect on January 1, 1972. It will be based on a new ward system, each ward representing an average of 10,000 people. The scale on the ward level is small enough for the operation of new forms of neighbourhood level government. (For summary description of the new scheme, see Appendix A).

The introduction of a new form of municipal government also means that opposition from local politicians and administrators, normally a major obstacle to introducing forms of community renewal programs could not be as easily mobilized. The fact of the matter is that city leaders, both political

and administrative feel threatened by activist citizens movements. It is a new kind of happening, not understood in conventional political terms, therefore feared. The result is a confrontation where city officials usually win. As Michael Svirdorf, the administrator of New Haven's anti-poverty programs commented, in reflection, "Dick Lee (Mayor of New Haven) wasn't a power sharer - power sharing is a fine art, which no mayor has figured out how to do."³¹ Svirdorf goes on to conclude that the only way to bring power sharing about is through the creation of community-based corporations, decentralizing the school system and giving the leaders of these citizen groups the instruments for the development of their leadership.³²

The opportunity now existing in Winnipeg is for an experiment to take place to show that "power sharing" is something that can work and become a fact with which municipal politicians and administrators can learn to live. The onus for introducing the change lies clearly with the provincial and federal governments. The one to introduce it, and the second to support it.

F. A Strategy for Change

With conditions being so appropriate for the introduction of a significant experiment in community renewal, what is needed is some model of what form that experiment should take. The following is offered as one proposal.

The first step is for the provincial government to charter an experimental community renewal corporation which will have powers to undertake

the renewal and redevelopment of the area presently designated as Urban Renewal Area II. The corporation would be composed of a board which will have the majority of its members elected by the residents of the area. One form of that election could be on a block basis similar to that conducted in several American cities. Other members of the board might be the aldermen elected from the wards contained within the renewal area under the boundaries drawn from the new government, and other private citizens deemed useful for the functioning of this corporation. This would combine community representatives, elected officials, and members of the community at large.

There is already a precedent for such a move. In 1963 the Manitoba Government formed the Civic Development Corporation, a private non-profit corporation given wide powers of borrowing and land expropriation, charged with undertaking the redevelopment of the downtown area of Winnipeg lying east of Main Street to the Red River, between the CPR tracks and Portage and Main. This Corporation had a board that was not resident controlled, but which was composed of influential businessmen. After securing land for a cultural center development, the Civic Development Corporation went into limbo. It still exists on the statutes, however, and with a few amendments could be reactivated to work in Urban Renewal Area II as a community-based renewal corporation.

The operation of the Renewal Corporation would coincide with the establishment of the new Metro government scheme. It would thus be fitted into a new governmental organization and not have well entrenched political or administrative interests in existence with which to contend.

It is also essential that the Corporation be given initial funds to hire staff. This staff would be community organizers and professional people such as lawyers,

architects; business management personnel. Funds on an experimental basis should also be available to enable the Corporation to initiate programs of rehabilitation, in-fill housing, recreation, and employment opportunities. At the same time, The existence of such a corporation would provide a vehicle through which private funds and private talent could also be recruited and put to use.

The powers of the corporation would be to plan and implement redevelopment programs. It should approach the renewal program as an on-going, evolutionary process, not in the older fashion of drawing up a massive static form of development. This means that the act of renewal would begin right away. The Corporation would be responsible for submitting its proposals to the new Regional Council as well as a budget, and working out the way city resources could be used in actions of community improvement.

The corporation itself would not necessarily be the sole agency undertaking renewal. It could work with groups of citizens in the area on individual projects, provide incentives for business groups, churches, trade unions, universities, to become involved and undertake programs. It should also seek to experiment with techniques for assessing, in an objective and independent fashion, the needs and preferences of the residents, and communicating these back to the community. This can serve to stimulate self-renewal by people within the area and aid in the recruitment of development efforts by other parties in the wider metropolitan community.

A primary ingredient in the working of the corporation is enlisting the support of community people. Here is where the existing citizen organizations in Urban Renewal Area II play an important role. They should have the responsibility for working in the area, explaining what the corporation is doing, stimulating interest, developing involvement and setting up a system of selection for members of the corporation. They are

critical to forming an involved citizen base.

As work in the demonstration project showed, the provision of information, delivered in ways that can be received and assimilated by residents is necessary for citizen participants. Apathy is not a problem, if people are informed. Techniques of communications such as community newsletters in various languages and especially a form of community television and radio can be particularly useful in creating an involved group of citizens.³³ It is often forgotten by those critical of efforts to develop citizen involvement, that we have in the society a number of constraints that inhibit involvement. One of these is a communications system that does not specialize or translate issues and ideas into local neighbourhood terms. People know more about the black revolt in American inner cities than they do about conditions in their own immediate area. It is not surprising, therefore, that there appears to be limited interest in neighbourhood affairs. (This can be overcome through serious efforts at organizing, such as those carried out as a first phase in setting up the Demonstration Project).

The establishment of a community renewal corporation has several advantages as a way of implementing the principle of community renewal. First, and most obvious it is a way of giving residents in the renewal area power over decisions, not just token involvement. It does not guarantee that each need of every resident is equally met, but it does provide a decision-making unit of sufficiently small scale that at least productive competition can and will take place amongst community people. They will have greater opportunity to exercise influence, develop programs fitting to their concerns, and even to make their own mistakes. It also deals with the problem of fragmentation of community groups. As matters now stand, a variety of citizens organizations

make direct representations for support to different levels of government and compete for resources. Often the result is confusion and a tendency for one group to be played off against another. The community corporation provides a framework within which these groups can operate. They can be represented on the board, and receive support for their individual initiatives, through the corporation. It acts as the conduit through which public money can be distributed to the renewal area. People in the area, through their actions in the corporation face the responsibility of deciding on priorities.

Secondly, this is a way of legitimizing the process of community control. It becomes part of the structure of local government, tied into the functioning of the larger system. It gives the local aldermen direct tasks related to their own areas and brings the elected representative and community representation together on the same board.

It also means that the renewal area is not divorced from the larger metropolitan community. Because the structure is related to the municipal government, and because budget and plans must be considered by the larger council, the dangers of fractionalization can be minimized. A later report will detail the alternative forms of relationships that can exist between the community renewal corporation and city government, and lay down how they can exercise respective areas of authority. Let it be sufficient to say that the working out of these questions of organizational arrangements does not pose major problems.

Another difficulty overcome by this plan of a community renewal corporation is that dealing with the relationship to senior governments (also the subject of forthcoming report No. 3 in the series). The quandry presently faced by senior levels of government, particularly the federal is

how to divide its support between city government and community action groups. City officials resent federal support, to citizens organizations, both because it creates opposition, and also ignites demands upon the city which they do not have the resources to meet. Conversely, the citizens groups rightly resent the antagonism of city officials and mistrust federally supported, city hall run redevelopment efforts.

With the existence of the community renewal corporation as the operative planning and implementing vehicle, the division between city government and citizen groups is reduced. The federal government and provincial government can supply funds for both operation of the corporation and the programs it undertakes. It avoids the problem of having to choose between citizens and city government.

Federal and provincial governments will require, however, a high degree of flexibility to properly support the work of a community renewal corporation. Their programs will have to be similar in intent, if different in application to United States' model cities programs, and not be administered through rigid formulae as was the case formerly under urban renewal.

Conclusion

The proposal for a community renewal corporation derives from the investigation undertaken in Winnipeg's Urban Renewal Area II eighteen months ago. It represents one kind of experiment that could be tried in order to find a more effective democratic way of governing our cities. The Community Renewal Corporation, of course, may not necessarily be the way of solving problems in different communities across Canada. It is designed particularly to fit the requirements of Winnipeg's renewal area.

What is of more general importance are the basic elements of a solution represented in the idea of a community renewal corporation. It is a means of enabling people to become involved in an on-going way with managing changes in their community. Assessment of the demonstration area in Winnipeg shows that people can make useful decisions and carry out programs if they have an appropriate structure to work through, if they have sufficient specialist resources to support their efforts, if there is assistance by independent non-governmental groups in organizing the community and initiating redevelopment efforts, and if the goals of the group are directed towards immediate neighbourhood improvement. Anticipatory planning by people is a workable possibility. They can be organized before the bulldozer comes, or the plans for the expressway are complete. All they need is the opportunity to become involved and sufficient help in preparing and executing plans. This needs a different organization of local government and the acceptance of a different kind of role for citizens.

The unfortunate part of the history of community action in Canada is that so much effort has ended in so much frustration, disillusionment

and bitterness. If communities are to be organized there should be some end in mind, other than taking on the "system" or marching on city hall. The end should be the reconstruction of institutions, the re-organizing of practices and the reallocation of power so that people can exercise democratic rights as a normal part of their lives in an urban society.

Appendix A

The provincial government proposes that all major services should be unified but that the political processes of local government must be decentralized and brought closer to the people. This unification of all major services and fiscal resources would be under the control of a 48-member central council. Such a council would provide at least one elected representative for every 10,000 people and provide at least three elected representatives for every municipality in Greater Winnipeg.

Since some municipalities have an insufficient population base to yield the three necessary representatives for every municipality in Greater Winnipeg.

The mayor of this large city would be the chairman of the central council, elected by the members of that council. In order to facilitate its decision-making and policy execution role, the council would have four major committees, one of which would be a six-member executive committee.

There would be eight Community Committees, one for each municipality and each will have at least three councillors. The Community Committees will be local committees of the Greater Winnipeg Council and will be responsible for local services in their immediate area.

Each councillor elected from one of the 48 local wards would become a member of the executive decision-making body, the Greater Winnipeg Council; and a member of the access vehicle (Community Committee) through which people could reach the local government system.

*Note: The government recently commissioned a 3-man board to look at the ward and Community Committee boundaries. This Commission has recommended that there should be 50 wards and 13 Community Committees.

Footnotes

1. Maurice Stein, Eclipse of Community, Princeton University Press, 1966.
2. James Q. Wilson, "The Urban Unease: Community as City", The Public Interest, Summer 1968, p. 26.
3. The Institute of Urban Studies was set up in 1969 as a university-based experimental research center charged with developing applied solutions to urban problems.
4. Five subsequent reports are being prepared by the Institute. They will deal specifically with operation of a community renewal corporation, economic, social and physical redevelopment plans for Urban Renewal Area II, the role of senior levels of government, the role of the private sector, and techniques of community research and analysis.
5. Miriam Kuropatwa, "Review of Renewal Proposals for Winnipeg's Urban Renewal Area #2", mimeographed, 1971. Report of the Institute of Urban Studies.
6. As part of its initial entry into the area, a survey was conducted among some 490 families in the Roosevelt Park area. This survey revealed a high degree of attachment to the area and a willingness to become involved in some form of community action. Other forms of testing were also used, including observation analysis. This opened an area of research on community attitudes, degree of cohesion and satisfaction by the Institute. Of particular interest would be an advanced form of neighbourhood satisfaction survey undertaken in the summer of 1970 in an area adjacent to Roosevelt Park. See Grace Parasuik's, A Neighbourhood Survey, a report of the Institute of Urban Studies.
7. See Ralph R. Kuropatwa, "The Roosevelt Park Project: Short-Form Evaluation", mimeographed, 1971. Report of the Institute of Urban Studies.
8. See L. Axworthy, "The Housing Task Force" in Bruce Doern, Peter Aucoin (ed), Policy Making in Canada, Macmillan, 1971.
9. Robert Aleshire, "Planning and Citizen Participation", Urban Affairs Quarterly, Vol. 5, No. 4, June 1970, p. 370.
10. This romantic notion of community action is well illustrated in the writings of James Lorimer. See, The Real World of City Politics, James Lewis and Samuel, 1970.

11. Daniel P. Moynihan, Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action in the War on Poverty, New York: The Free Press, 1969, p. 128.
12. Ibid., p. 130.
13. Ibid., p. 131.
14. Ibid., p. 129.
15. Ibid., p. 129.
16. Kenneth B. Clark and Jeannette Hopkins, A Relevant War Against Poverty, New York: Harper & Row, 1969, pp. 212-213.
17. Moynihan, op. cit., p. 137.
18. One especially attractive analysis of modes of resident participation is that of Ralph M. Kramer, Participation of the Poor, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969, p. 4.
19. Aleshire, op. cit. 375-379.
20. See "Community Capitalism Under Fire", City, June/July 1970.
21. See Arthur Tobin, "A Community Cop in the Housing Business", Housing and Education, p. 46-47. Special CUE Report.
22. Milton Kotler, Neighbourhood Government.
23. Donald Canty, The Single Society, (New York: Praeger, 1969), pp. 151-160.
24. See Richard Rosenbloom and Robin Marris (eds.), Social Innovation in the City, Harvard University Press, 1969.
25. See Social Service Audit, Winnipeg 1969.
26. Urban Renewal Report for Winnipeg - Winnipeg Metropolitan Corporation, 1968.
27. Op. cit., Kenneth Clark. pp. 254-55.
28. For a description of the operation of different non-profit community corporations initiated in Winnipeg by the Institute of Urban Studies, see L. Axworthy, "Private Answer to Low-Cost Housing", Canadian Welfare, Vo. 47, pp. 19-20.

29. For a discussion of the factors affecting the possibility of change see Lawrence Mohr, "Determinants of Innovation in Organizations", American Political Science Review, No. 1, (March, 1969), pp. 111-126.
30. As Clark and Hopkins comment -

"It is not likely even in the most effective of these programs that political and governmental officials will permit any type of program or any degree of intensity of community action program which would directly or indirectly threaten the maintenance of this political power", Clark, Hopkins, op.cit. p. 249.
31. Quoted in Fred Pawledge, Model City, (New York: Simon and Schuster), p. 332.
32. Ibid.
33. One of the offshoots of the work in the demonstration projects has been the initiation of IUS efforts to develop a community television system in Winnipeg. A conference held in early May resulted in the establishment of a community organization to set up a community TV corporation.