



Regional Plan Association

... a research and planning agency supported by voluntary membership to promote the coordinated development of the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Region.

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NEWS RELEASE

No. 1339
April 27, 1978

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FOR RELEASE:

A.M.'s, Monday
May 1, 1978

KRAMER, KOLEDA, WHITE HOUSE AIDES, TO ADDRESS PUBLIC MEETING ON NATIONAL URBAN POLICY MAY 9 IN NEW YORK

Regional Plan Association Calls Urban Policy Important Advance;
Proposes Campaign for Suburb Support, Corporate 'Adoptions' of Cities

Orin Kramer, Associate Director of the White House Domestic Policy Staff, and Michael S. Koleda, Director of the White House Conference on Balanced National Growth and Economic Development, will describe the President's National Urban Policy at 3 p.m., May 9, at The Ford Foundation, 320 East 43rd Street, New York, in the first New York area open question-answer session by White House spokesmen since the policy was announced March 27.

A panel of delegates to the White House Conference held January 30 to February 2 will comment on the two speeches in advance of audience questions.

The discussion is part of Regional Plan Association's 49th Annual Meeting. William M. Ellinghaus, Chairman of the Association and Vice Chairman of American Telephone and Telegraph, will preside. [Press coverage is invited.]

Regional Plan Views of Policy

The Association, which suggested the need for a National Urban Policy 13 years ago, praised the President's "pro-city, anti-sprawl

stance" and asked that the elements of the new Policy "be judged separately from the first-round programs proposed to carry it out."

Regional Plan identified 10 "significant signs of a new federal direction" in the National Urban Policy:

1. The Urban and Community Impact Analysis,
2. Incentives to business to put jobs in "distressed communities,"
3. Putting Federal jobs in cities,
4. Purchasing Federal goods from labor surplus areas,
5. Immediate money for "financially strained communities,"
6. Pressure on states to aid cities,
7. Focusing Federal resources "on conserving existing communities" and away from "wasteful sprawl,"
8. Strengthening neighborhood associations,
9. Increasing aid for transit and transit-related development,
10. A partnership for urban revitalization with all levels of government, business and voluntary associations.

"On the whole, Regional Plan feels the directions are right though there is not enough emphasis on keeping activities in city centers or on office jobs as the principal rejuvenator of city economies."

Corporations Will Be Key

Whether the Policy succeeds in revitalizing American cities will depend on the reaction of major corporations, the Association suggests. "They have been asked what conditions will attract their investment and jobs back into cities, but they have not provided a clear reply," according to Regional Plan.

The Association recommends "an 'adopt-a-city' strategy as the practical expression of the President's 'partnership' idea. In it, a half-dozen or so major corporations would select a city capable of again becoming a major center of jobs and services for its area but now losing that role. They would meet with officials of Federal, state and city agencies and spokesmen for neighborhood associations to lay out a plan to restore the city to leadership in its area and create conditions in which corporations can profitably locate jobs and investment there.

"Each partner would agree to carry part of the responsibility, conditioned on every other partner doing its share. In addition to jobs and investment, corporations might be asked to contribute management expertness to the city (as is happening in New York City) and participate in education and manpower training programs to assure a good supply of competent employees."

The Association proposes that the U. S. Commerce Department bring together corporations to consider the adopt-a-city strategy and recruit enough firms to try the program out in perhaps a dozen cities.

Persuade the Nation

"The National Urban Policy contains no argument for its goal of revitalizing cities," Regional Plan continued. "Many of the programs require congressional approval, and all are subject to negative pressures by those who feel they might be hurt." But the Association argues that the great majority of Americans--in suburbs as well as cities--will benefit and urges Federal officials to argue the case.

The Association observes that, until recently, the most vocal suburbanites were protesting the spread of urbanization around them. "The National Urban Policy could protect many suburbs from being further overrun with new development. All those anti-growth people are still out there in the suburbs," the Association says, "but their views have been muffled by the voices of state and local officials afraid of losing jobs in a time of unemployment. Jobs anywhere are welcomed even if they are escaping the cities that need them and scattering on land most people prefer to leave open.

"The National Urban Policy can save both the cities and the countryside. By putting together a coalition of Americans concerned about each, the Policy can win wide support. But the case needs to be argued and the coalition formed," the Association concluded.

Regional Plan Association, a nonprofit civic organization, has been working for suitable use of city, suburbs and countryside since the 1920's.

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The Association's analysis of the National Urban Policy is attached. The press is invited to cover the May 9 meeting with Mssrs. Koleda and Kramer: The Ford Foundation, Lower Level Auditorium, 320 East 43rd Street, New York.