

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Copy of letter sent to The Honorable Jerome P. Cavanagh

July 28, 1967

The Honorable Jerome P. Cavanagh  
Mayor, City of Detroit  
11th Floor, City-County Building  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

RE: MINORITY GROUP HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE

Dear Mayor Cavanagh:

In view of the recent chaotic condition with which the citizens of Detroit have been faced, we declare that immediate and substantial action should be taken by the captioned committee as well as the officials of City government in an effort to set up safeguards against the recurrence of the terrifying events of the past week.

Many have said over the past few days that no one has given audience to the many grievances related to the devastated east and west side communities, and that this may or may not be responsible for some of the incidents which have occurred. Needless to point out, over the past several years we have not been able to supply adequate low-income housing nor have we been able to meet many of the other problems attendant to this. This may be a paramount factor in the events that have occurred, notwithstanding the criminal acts committed by those who were involved.

In a motion by this committee this morning we are recommending that the emergency committee chaired by J. L. Hudson, Jr. just established by your action be instructed to create immediately a sub-committee comprised of grass roots citizens of the devastated areas on both the east and west side of Detroit, and that this grass roots committee be provided knowledgeable resources by a broad group of agencies and organizations involved and indigenous to the community. Further, that this special sub-committee hold immediate hearings in the devastated areas for the purpose of obtaining from the citizens of the areas what they believe will be the best and most fundamental approaches for the rebuilding of our city.

The grass roots committee should be comprised of representatives of all the organizations in the devastated areas including those referred to as the most radical organizations. Such committee should be supplemented by other citizens in this community and for resource purposes we would urgently request that the effective services of the Detroit Housing Commission be utilized in direct conjunction with these hearings. Moreover, we would suggest that as technical resources every community organization functioning in these areas including churches, civic and fraternal organizations be involved. These hearings should commence immediately and be held at an appropriate site within the community. We believe that the City should pay for necessary incidental expenses incurred in connection with the establishment of such hearings.

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We further ask that recommendations which may derive from this committee be given top priority by the emergency committee and the entire City administration whether in the area of housing, employment, education or social welfare.

Finally, we ask that because of the crucial lack of housing resulting from the catastrophe serious consideration be given to the immediate construction of low-income housing units on now available vacant land, including urban renewal land, for the relocation of these citizens.

We firmly believe that in view of the very fine race relations that has traditionally existed in Detroit, despite the recent unrest, the City administration should acquiesce in these proposals which, in our view, could provide to the people of Detroit an opportunity to reaffirm their faith and confidence in the leadership role of this city in the field of race relations.

Very truly yours,

(signed) Mrs. Mattie J. Myers  
Chairman, Sub-Committee  
on Minority Group Housing

Copies to: The Honorable Common Council  
Mr. J. L. Hudson, Jr.

This letter was written by the members of the Minority Group Housing Sub-Committee of the Detroit Committee for Neighborhood Conservation and Improved Housing, 2211 Orleans, Detroit, Michigan.

**STATEMENT OF HOUSING NEEDS**

Estimate of Housing Needs made after  
Consultation with the Office of Civil  
Defense, Detroit Housing Commission,  
and the City Plan Commission.

Prepared by

**COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM**

July 28, 1967

## STATEMENT OF HOUSING NEEDS

As yet it has been impossible to gather reliable information relating to the number of dwelling units destroyed and persons and families displaced by the recent civil disturbance in this city.

Field crews are now preparing to enter the areas where the most damage was incurred and aerial photos are now available to assist in the evaluation of housing needs.

While most of the structures destroyed were primarily commercial buildings, a great number of these buildings also contained housing units.

Our best estimate at this time is as follows:

Number of dwellings destroyed - 1000

Number of persons dislocated - 4000

Emergency housing has been provided for every case that has come to the attention of the local authority, however most of this housing is necessarily of a temporary nature.

This city which already was experiencing one of the lowest vacancy rates in the nation must move immediately to replace the loss to its housing stock. To do this federal aid through the following programs is urgently needed.

The waiver of the administrative procedure and delays that are involved in qualifying an area as a conservation project is needed. The feasibility of designating the entire riot area or areas, consisting of several square miles, as a renewal area by the Department of Housing and Urban Development should be determined.

If done, this would enable the City with the aid of the Federal Government to enter the area and demolish the existing shells of structures, acquire vacant property under eminent domain, and sell the property for new permanent and temporary construction.

This action would also qualify the residents of the area for low interest rehabilitation loans and hundreds of others for the section 115 rehabilitation grants of \$1,500.

In line with this the procedures for qualifying and processing 221d3 and other housing construction loans should be simplified and streamlined.

Because of the 4,000 persons who have been left homeless as a result of this disaster the staff of the Relocation Division of the Detroit Housing Commission should be greatly increased and the homeless families made eligible for relocation payments and relocation assistance as though they were being relocated from an urban renewal project.

In addition to the activities which will be needed to be accomplished in order to adequately rehouse the dislocated families and rehabilitate the area, an immediate allocation of additional public housing units should be made to the City of Detroit. In this connection the long delays and administrative procedures in order to construct public housing units should be waived to the maximum extent possible. Also permission should be granted to utilize the existing housing at Fort Wayne for an

extended period of time as public housing.

In addition to the thousands of families that are now homeless because of fires and vandalism, thousands of others will need to be relocated because of damages to the existing structures which has made them unfit for human habitation. The Department of Health and the Department of Buildings and Safety are now making inspections of the entire area to determine the extent of this relocation load.

# City of Detroit

JEROME P. CAVANAGH, Mayor

OFFICE OF

DETROIT HOUSING COMMISSION

2211 ORLEANS STREET

July 31, 1967

To the Honorable  
The Common Council  
City of Detroit

Re: Emergency Housing and Low-Rent Housing Program

Gentlemen:

We wish to report on the emergency housing and the low-rent housing program as follows:

## EMERGENCY HOUSING

1. The Housing Assistance Administration of the Department of Housing and Urban Development has authorized us to use all vacancies in our existing housing developments to house any family made homeless by the catastrophe. We had eighty-six (86) units of various sizes available for this purpose as of Tuesday, July 25, 1967. At this writing, we have leased to thirty-eight (38) families from the disaster area and appointments have been made for leasing to additional families.

In addition, future vacancies will be held for emergency housing. Our Central Tenant Selection and Management Offices were open last Saturday and Sunday for renting to families in need of emergency housing. We will not lease any vacancies to regular applicants on our waiting list until all homeless families are placed.

2. The Housing Assistance Administration has authorized suburban Housing Commissions that regulations may be waived in order to house homeless families from Detroit -- this includes Housing Commissions in Eastramok, Inkster, Ecorse, River Rouge, Mt. Clemens, Royal Oak, Ypsilanti, Wayne, Dearborn, South Lyon and Pontiac. Should the need arise, we will refer families to these Housing Commissions.
3. We have approval from the Housing Assistance Administration to lease an indefinite number of vacant homes which might be available on the private market. We have alerted the United Northwestern Realty Association and others to intensify their efforts in this respect.

In addition, the Housing Assistance Administration has relaxed the requirements of the physical condition of these dwellings in order to facilitate this program. We will continue our efforts to seek vacant dwellings which can be utilized for emergency housing.

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4. We have a lease with the Federal Housing Administration for sixty-one (61) vacant FHA foreclosures at a rental of \$1 per unit per month to be made available to disaster victims. These dwellings are vacant and our staff is inspecting them to determine availability, need for repairs, etc. This program will be expedited as needed.

Further, we have twenty-three (23) vacant dwellings made available by the Veterans Administration. We will make formal arrangements with them at a later date for the use of these dwellings if they are needed. These dwellings will also be inspected to determine their condition, livability, need for repairs, etc. We will report to you, in a separate letter, on this program.

5. We have approval from the General Services Administration to utilize officer and enlisted men quarters at Fort Wayne for homeless families. There are forty-eight (48) apartments which can be used for this purpose. Some of these apartments contain three and four bedrooms which can be used to house large families. Our staff inspected several of these dwellings on July 29, 1967, and found that most of them can be used immediately. We should be ready to rent these apartments to any family in need of them by Monday, August 7, 1967. We will also report to you, in a separate letter, on this program shortly.
6. We have two (2) sites available for temporary housing if needed. This housing would be in the nature of mobile trailers and plastic geodesic domes. These sites were formerly utilized for veterans housing which was removed back in 1955 and 1956. We have determined that some of the utilities originally placed on these sites can be salvaged if need be in order to expedite this program. We have been discussing with the Dow Chemical Company the possibility of using plastic geodesic domes for temporary housing.

In addition, we know that there are many trailer and mobile homes available in the Detroit area. Obtaining this type of temporary housing is dependent on our receiving federal funds for this purpose. We are currently discussing this aspect with the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

7. We have numerous staff people working in the disaster area in order to determine the number of dwelling units destroyed, presently estimated to total 642. We are also trying to determine the number of businesses destroyed.

Further, all of our staff are cooperating very closely with all agencies involved in alleviating the suffering of the homeless, and we are maintaining contacts so that they will know what we can offer in the way of emergency housing and other assistance.



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8. The Board of Education has offered several single homes and flats, a total twenty-eight (28) dwellings, which can be used for emergency housing. Some of these dwellings can be used for temporary housing for a few months and others can be used for a longer period of time. These dwellings are located on sites where new school construction is scheduled some time in the near future. We will arrange to inspect these dwellings to determine their condition and whether they can be utilized for immediate placement.

### LOW-RENT HOUSING PROGRAM

1. We have been discussing with the Housing Assistance Administration and the Renewal Assistance Administration requirements for speeding up the construction of all our low-rent housing in the planning stages. Specifically, we have asked the Renewal Assistance Administration to expedite the acquisition of land at Urban Renewal Project Mich. R-124. This urban renewal project is to be utilized for low-rent housing. One hundred and forty (140) apartments for large families is proposed on this site which is located at E. Forest, Russell, Chrysler Freeway and Canfield. Architectural planning for development is advanced far enough so that we can advertise for construction bids in approximately ninety (90) days if the land can be acquired shortly.
2. Urban Renewal Project Mich. R-160 is located in the vicinity of Myrtle, Humboldt and Magnolia and is scheduled for use as a low-rent housing site. Eighty-two (82) units for large families will eventually be built here and architectural planning is also well advanced on this site. In addition, the relocation problem on this site would be very small since there are only approximately fifteen (15) families in residence there now.
3. Urban Renewal Project Mich. R-145, located at E. Jefferson, Sheridan, Congress and Baldwin and to be used for senior citizen housing, has been submitted for quite some time and we have also asked that this site be expedited.
4. The Housing Assistance Administration has indicated that, if we will increase the number of units on four of our proposed senior citizen sites, they will do everything possible to expedite their approval so that we may proceed. We have previously informed your Honorable Body that we have had problems in connection with cost limitations which were delaying this program. In view of the developments of last week, it is our feeling that increasing the number of units on these sites would be advisable not only because of the great need for senior citizen housing but also because the increased units which would be built are needed in order to help alleviate the overall housing shortage. We have discussed this matter with the staff of the City Plan Commission and they are in agreement with this plan of action.

We will advise your Honorable Body from time to time in connection with the emergency housing program and will also advise you at a later date of the details in connection with the changes in the low-rent program. We will also shortly present additional vacant sites to your Honorable Body for appraisal. These sites will be primarily for large family units.

# City of Detroit

## DETROIT HOUSING COMMISSION

Re: Emergency Housing and  
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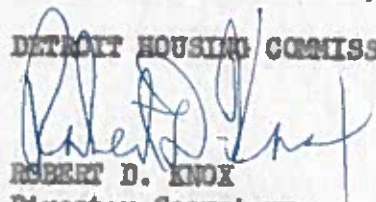
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The Department of Housing and Urban Development has designated Mr. William Lorenz of the Renewal Assistance Administration to act as coordinator for all Housing and Urban Development and other federal agencies to assist Detroit during this emergency. Mr. Lorenz has been very cooperative and helpful in all matters in their jurisdiction.

Respectfully submitted,

DETROIT HOUSING COMMISSION

  
ROBERT D. KNOX  
Director-Secretary

WNH:eg

TO: James Wiley, Assistant Director  
Community Renewal Program

FROM: Charles A. Blessing, Director of City Planning

DATE: July 28, 1967

RE: Dwelling Unit Destruction and Family Relocation Need

In response to your verbal request, I am submitting our best present estimate of dwelling unit destruction and family relocation need based on information which we have assembled on the major areas affected by the destruction of buildings by fire. In order that this be as specific as possible, I submit the following list by major streets affected:

	<u>Dwelling Units</u>
Virginia Park	280
Twelfth	-- 100
Linwood	-- 100
Dexter	-- 50
Pingree/Blaine Block	-- <u>30</u>
Butzel Area (2 large apartment buildings)	150
Grand River	100
Selden Court Area	30
Mack between St. Jean and Gratiot	10
Longfellow Area	15
Kercheval	25
Gratiot plus East Warren	25
Chene	5
East Side Industrial	6
Jefferson-Chalmers	4
Tiger Stadium	<u>2</u>
Total	642
Persons per dwelling unit	<u>x 4</u>
	2,568 or 2,570

While we do not have any basis for an accurate average number of persons per dwelling unit, we can reasonably estimate 4 persons per dwelling unit, leading to a total of approximately 2,570 persons displaced. This figure can be substantiated to a greater degree of accuracy as soon as we receive the latest aerial photographs provided through TALUS, which we should have in by next Monday morning, July 31.

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We are now mapping at the scale of 100 feet to the inch, the damage on all of the above commercial streets and should be able to get a more accurate figure on residential structure loss from the same aerial photographs. We will submit more valid data as soon as possible on Monday or Tuesday. We are concentrating our effort on an accurate mapping of all destroyed buildings and should have a reasonably accurate map available for use on Monday or Tuesday.

CAB:kwt

cc: Mayor's Office

July 26, 1967

(Dictated by Mr. Robert Knox at meeting with Mr. William Lorenz coordinating the Department of Housing and Urban Development programs as they apply to the city in response to the recent emergency.)

They have approved our request to house burned-out families in our available public housing units -- preferably to low-income families but on a temporary basis to any family. They have also requested the suburban housing authorities to house burned-out families on the same basis.

They have requested the Federal Housing Administration to make available their vacant units to us and, as of this afternoon, they have turned over 200 units to us at a minimum of \$1.00 a month. They have also requested the Veterans Administration to do the same. We have not heard from them yet.

We have also requested the General Services Administration to turn over the 48 units at Ft. Wayne for emergency housing -- and the Bureau of Public Roads to turn over any units they might have -- also the Wayne County Road Commission and the Department of Highways.

They have also contacted Asst. Secretary Ralph Taylor regarding the availability of any demonstration funds that might be available for emergency housing. Their staff and our staff have been investigating the availability of mobile homes and the availability of funding for mobile homes.

We have found better than 100 units in the area we can have within 24 hours and about 500 we can have within 48 hours.

If we are designated a disaster area, the funding will be available through the Housing Assistance Agency. If we are not, we are going to have to come up with City funding or funding from some other source -- possibly demonstration funding.

The demolition we are trying to carry out now we are hopefully going to fund with the Scattered Site demolition program. What we are doing now is just taking down dangerous walls that are overhanging sidewalks and dangerous buildings. But we are trying to keep accurate time and cost records so that we can fund this under available funding that we now have in the Scattered Site demolition funding. We are working on the mechanics of this this afternoon with the federal agency.

We are also checking in the urban renewal areas for vacant units that we already own to find any that might be habitable or might to made habitable to move families into.

RDK:de