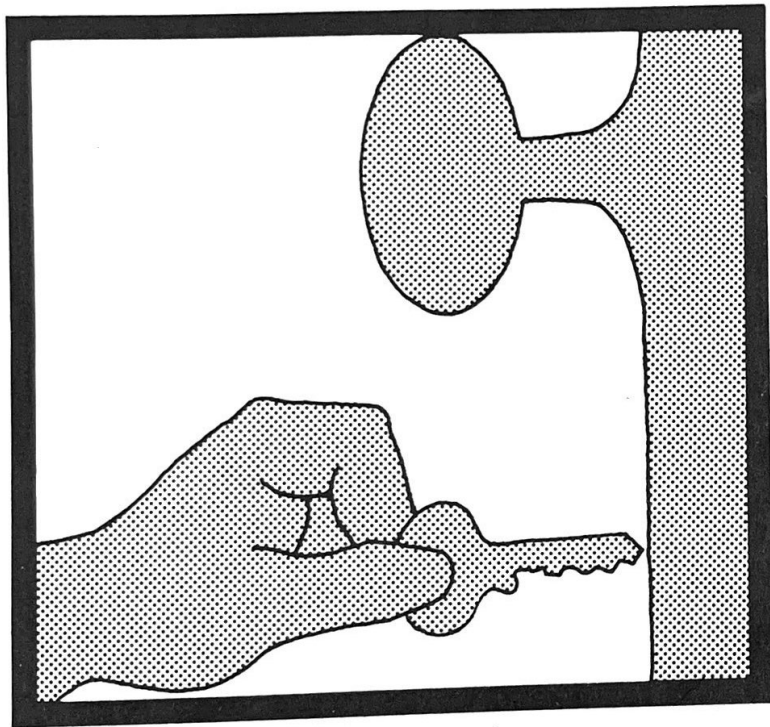


HOUSING

California Room Collection  
Marin County Free Library  
Civic Center Administration  
San Rafael, California

# HOME FREE?



# NEW VISTAS IN REGIONAL HOUSING

# 1 The Why of It

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Numerous studies, underwritten through government and private funding, have documented the obvious: Americans of color—black, brown, yellow and red—have been victimized by a system which has effectively excluded them from participation in decision-making. As a result, residential and economic opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities have been severely restricted. In a nation geared only to token recognition of their plight, they have been trapped in a seemingly unending struggle for simple survival, alienated from those institutions and groups in the society which control the pace and range of change.

Crammed into decaying urban core areas, this nation's minorities are manipulated by an array of institutions in which they have no voice and are pacified occasionally by handouts from corporate and governmental larders. They are cynical concerning the system's voiced commitments to rearrange structures and priorities to permit them a share in affluence and power, and that cynicism is warranted.

America's central cities are seething with angers and frustrations which sometimes reach the boiling point and explode into violence. When such outbreaks occur, the system reacts—first with superior power to end the violence and then with another study to reduce people to statistics, identify trends, prepare recommendations and note the "crisis nature" of the problem. From suburban sanctuaries, the decision makers converge to calculate the minimum costs of restoring the status quo, so that the nation's nerve centers—the cities—can continue their vital social, political, cultural and economic roles.

The material amassed through the report-producing mills of government and private sources underlines a central point—the price of peace is shared power. In the cauldron of the cities, the status will never again be "quo"! America's alienated groups want meaningful and permanent involvement in making the determinations which affect their lives.

With regionalism an emerging fact of life in urban America, minority communities isolated in central cities have little voice in the decisions made by regional bodies, decisions affecting housing, employment, transportation, the quality of air and water, the schools.

The national commitment to a program to provide all Americans with decent homes of their choice appeared to be well defined with the passage of the Fair Housing Law (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968), the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 and the Supreme Court decision (*Jones v. Mayer*) which outlawed discrimination in the sale, rental or lease of *any* housing.

In the light of these clear-cut developments, the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, Inc., decided that the time was ripe for action—action which, utilizing all the new legal tools, would demonstrate that massive change could be made in the segregated living patterns of America.

On this premise, NCDH submitted a proposal to the Department of Housing and Urban Development in August 1968, for a grant to establish an Urban Renewal Demonstration Project in the San Francisco Bay Area.

On January 16, 1969 the then Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Robert C. Wood, approved the grant (No. Calif. D-8) and the program concept to:

"develop, test and report on methods and techniques for achieving open housing within a metropolitan area, a necessary ingredient in the prevention and elimination of slums and blight, using the San Francisco Bay Area as an example."

The San Francisco Bay Area was selected as the ground for the project because: the pattern of residential segregation was relatively recent, hardly a generation old; it was an area of economic growth which offered job opportunities for minorities, providing a chance to loosen the white suburban noose

around the Black ghetto; the Federal government had a substantial financial investment in the area; and previous approaches had not made appreciable impact on the problem.

Included in the range of the project were the nine counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma.

It is important to note that approval of the NCDH Demonstration Project came during the final days of the Johnson Administration. With the advent of the Nixon Administration, although funding for the Project had already been approved, it was necessary to negotiate the action phase of the program with the officials of the new HUD administration before proceeding with program implementation.

Discussions with HUD Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, Harold L. Finger, resulted in agreement to divide the three year project into two phases, in order to determine the most effective program for achieving the massive change required to reverse the trend toward separatist societies. The first phase, a brief research period to get the "lay of the land" and to probe fundamental questions on jobs, housing and population trends, was to develop recommendations for the second (action) portion of the program.

According to the first HUD-approved work proposal, the program would examine a "wide range of economic and political, as well as social and legal factors which impede the free mobility of minority citizens, probing the interaction of housing, education, jobs, training and the linkage between these and other factors which determine the quality of life". The relationship between access to housing and access to employment was one of its major components.

As minimum accomplishments during the three year period of the grant, NCDH expected:

1. To help achieve, through the combined efforts of public and private resources and the coordination and refinement of a wide variety of approaches and techniques, major breakthroughs in expanded housing and related opportunities for minority families in the San Francisco metropolitan region.
2. To stimulate new programs and at the same time assist and enhance on-going activities in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area that prove to be

relevant to the goals and objectives of NCDH and its findings as developed in the course of the project.

3. To design a comprehensive, workable blueprint and guidelines which can be adapted for similar action in metropolitan areas across the nation based on the research and action undertaken, evaluated and recorded.

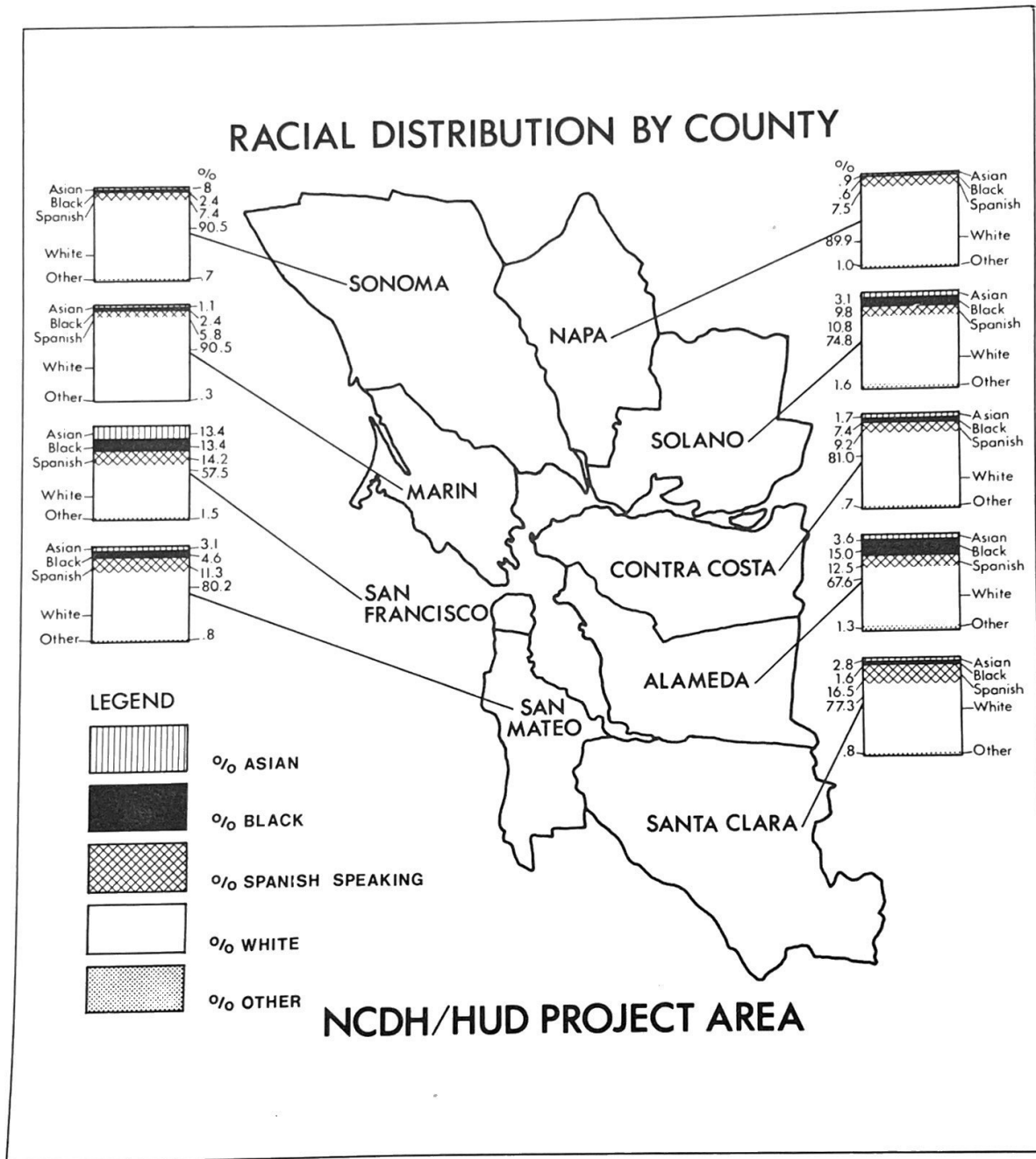
The Phase I program set itself five difficult goals:

1. To establish by a survey of existing knowledge the extent of segregation in Bay Area suburbs.
2. To identify barriers to minority access to jobs and housing there.
3. To uncover the institutional policies and practices that form and maintain those barriers.
4. To create a local identity and to establish a base within the various communities from which to mount an effective program.
5. To devise a program with more promise than any past program for bringing about the needed changes in public and private practices and policies in the suburban communities of the Bay Area.



*A SPIRITED EXCHANGE between Berkeley Councilman D'Army Bailey, extreme right, and Wilfred Ussery, (back to camera), Project Phase II evaluator, takes place as NCDH officials Aileen C. Hernandez, Jack Wood, National Co-Director; and Ernest Erber, Research Director; listen intently. The meeting was one of several held with the panel of minority consultants during the Project's beginning months.*

—ABLE photo



during its organization phase. One of the demands of the group was that HUD fund its activities to provide necessary community input into HUD programs, since HUD's outreach was so inadequate. For about six months, the Coalition met and developed strategies for increasing the supply of low and moderate income housing in the Bay Area and for giving local human relations commissions enforcement authority to implement employment and housing civil rights programs pre-empted by the State Fair Employment Practice Commission. When the Administration announced its moratorium on subsidized housing programs in early 1973, the Coalition members began to work actively in the California Coalition Against the Moratorium, and clerical assistance to the group was no longer necessary. It was also clear, before the Moratorium was announced, that the group would need some paid personnel to carry through on program thrusts if it was to remain viable. Without such staff, continuity of decision-implementing suffered. NCDH's assistance to the group made it possible for them to postpone their demise for six months and have some impact, even for only a brief time, on HUD and regional agencies.

### NCDH Terminates Project

At the start of Phase II, in the fall of 1970, the "new federalism" was beginning to be implemented under the Nixon Administration. In addition to the existing *Regional* offices, Area offices of HUD were formed and given substantial program responsibilities to implement the concept of local decision making.

The newly-appointed Area officials had no clear definition of the Project as a "national demonstration" model. Area officials also saw their role as one of close supervision of all aspects of the Project—including program determination and budget review. Their view was supported by national HUD which indicated that it had always expected the Project to work through its local field offices. NCDH sharply dissented from this approach. Contending that the "localization" of the Project would seriously limit the effectiveness of the program, NCDH terminated the Bay Area Demonstration Project and its staff, effective February 18, 1972.