

Planning

The solutions cannot occur within the community, because the life-line of the individual needs its connection with the total environment. The needs of the Black Grove community are not being met, and can never be met, under the *present planning system*. The best that could be expected would be a refurbished ghetto in place of a deteriorating ghetto. The heart of the problem is dehumanization, demoralization, and exclusion of the individual from the affluent majority society.

There exists now no blueprint for change for the individuals, or for change in the situation which confronts them. We must seek new methods toward creation of a successful coalition of conscience, professional skills, and human values. Let us agree on the goals and find the strategies to accomplish social change. We believe that the private sector can best bring about this change. The people now regard the PAC¹ as a wolf



Homeowners feel large, low-cost apartments are a blight. (Photo by John Massey)

pack destroying their community and low-cost housing in quantity as one effective way to deteriorate an area. Less than a dozen regularly-attending community representatives on the PAC cannot speak for 10,000 people. Only a Master Plan, looking at the situation in its totality, including the Golden Gate section of Coral Gables, can make an effective long-range contribution.

The basic evolution towards a vigorous new kind of life-style must have its growth first in the minds and emotions of the community. This is a community small enough to communicate among its people as to how and by what methods it wants to satisfy basic human needs, in all their multiplicity. Low-cost housing creates slums. The answer is

not concentrated packaging of people in poverty areas, but *diversified* and *open* housing. We are talking about *learning* and *attitudes* when we talk about improving the environment. Focusing on one small geographic area, as a model, is an excellent way to achieve results.

Resources

The basic resource is people, the human potential. A remarkable proportion of the people here own their own homes. They have a pride in themselves that is frustrated. The pride of community is also there, but it has been subjected to great strain. What is unique about this small area? A sense of a closely-knit community, a feeling of deep roots, of belonging to this place. The small businesses are grocery stores, beauty parlors, barber shops, clothing stores, gas stations, and food take-out enterprises. There is a high percentage of professional people and businessmen who would welcome and support a program of development to which they could freely contribute ideas and talents. These people would like to see the cancerous spine of Grand Avenue healed and transformed to become a well-planned and beautiful thoroughfare, giving new life to the area.

What is Black Grove? An Opportunity

The thinking and concepts of BLACK GROVE were being formulated as early as the spring of 1969. The basic concept was to draw upon human resources. There was general agreement that government agencies overlook the human factor and have contributed little to the area and in many cases they have done actual harm through inaction. We saw a situation here that is multiplied a thousandfold across the country: property ownership here is not translated into political power, as it is for example, in Coral Gables; zoning permits issued for atrociously inferior apartments are never granted for more affluent residential housing. Plans for two major limited-access highways cut right through the center of Black Grove. There is a white-owned bar on each of the four



The overcrowded apartments have inadequate play areas. (Photo by John Massey)

¹Project Area Committee, Housing and Urban Development.