

Spring 5-14-1968

**Newspaper Article, Urban Renewal: Proposal-Project Provides
Essential Improvement to family units In 'Needmore' Area, May 14,
1968**

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Urban

Project Provides

To 206 Families

by Sam Love

REFLECTOR EDITOR

Starkville and Mississippi State have embarked on a project of Urban Renewal to "remove the social blight" in the "Needmore" area west of the old cotton mill. Under the directorship of Mr. Earnest Jones, the effort is in the sixth month of planning.

According to an initial survey, 81% of the residences in the area are in "an advanced state of deterioration" and no streets meet the city's code for width. One street, Demorest, is only twelve feet wide and was designed for a horse and buggy, according to Jones.

The project area covers 67 acres and involves over 206 family units. Twenty-seven student groups are also in the locality. Because of the fact that Urban Renewal will force most of these people out of their homes, the Starkville Urban Renewal Board, consisting of the mayor and the Board of Alderman, must be able to statistically prove that a new home is available for each person.

Thirty families will be allowed to stay in the area if they agree to upgrade their property to meet minimum standards of housing as set by the city. Presently no one can be granted a permit to build within the Urban Renewal boundary.

Along with the grant, money is being requested for 150 new housing units. This is necessary so that 130 families being moved out can find a place to stay.

In other areas a rent supplement program will be applied so that people who cannot afford

Renewal : Prop

les Essential Improvement

y Units In 'Needmore' Area

the housing available in the Starkville area can rent apartments.

For those who have to move, a Relocation Adjustment Payment is made which gives them money to pay for their change.

Jones stated that every safeguard possible is being taken to help these people because they are being forced out for the public good." He further pointed out that any property that is bought may be able to be sold back to the owner for the initial purchase price.

Legally the city does have the powers of eminent domain, which means any property can be condemned and taken to court for settlement. Presently each

tenant in the project area must be given 60 days notice before he has to move.

Stressing that "we don't want to use the power to make the settlement in court," Jones said that most people contacted had not been against the program.

The 67 acres, when cleared, will have the streets completely rebuilt and brought to standards set by the city. A new four lane street will be placed on the old GM & O Railroad bed and will eventually connect to an overpass to be built over the Mississippi State bypass. When State completes the street east of the

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Renewal...

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bypass, the road will become the main entrance and exit to the University.

Jones said that the total project will cost on the "order of one million dollars." The city of Starkville will furnish one-fourth of the funds and the federal government will complete the bill. Starkville is being allowed \$160,000 on her share because of the university's investment in the old cotton mill.

All of the property in the area has been appraised and it will be valued again so that a "fair price can be given for the property owners." The evaluation is done by an independent appraiser.

"All the land will be rigidly zoned," Jones stated, "so that anyone who builds back will have to meet the standards set by the city." Commercial property will be first made available to those who presently operate businesses in the area and the value of it will be determined by independent appraisal.

Advising the Urban Renewal Agency is a biracial, Citizens Advisory Committee. Representing the university on it is Dr. T. K. Martin, Administrative Assistant to the President.

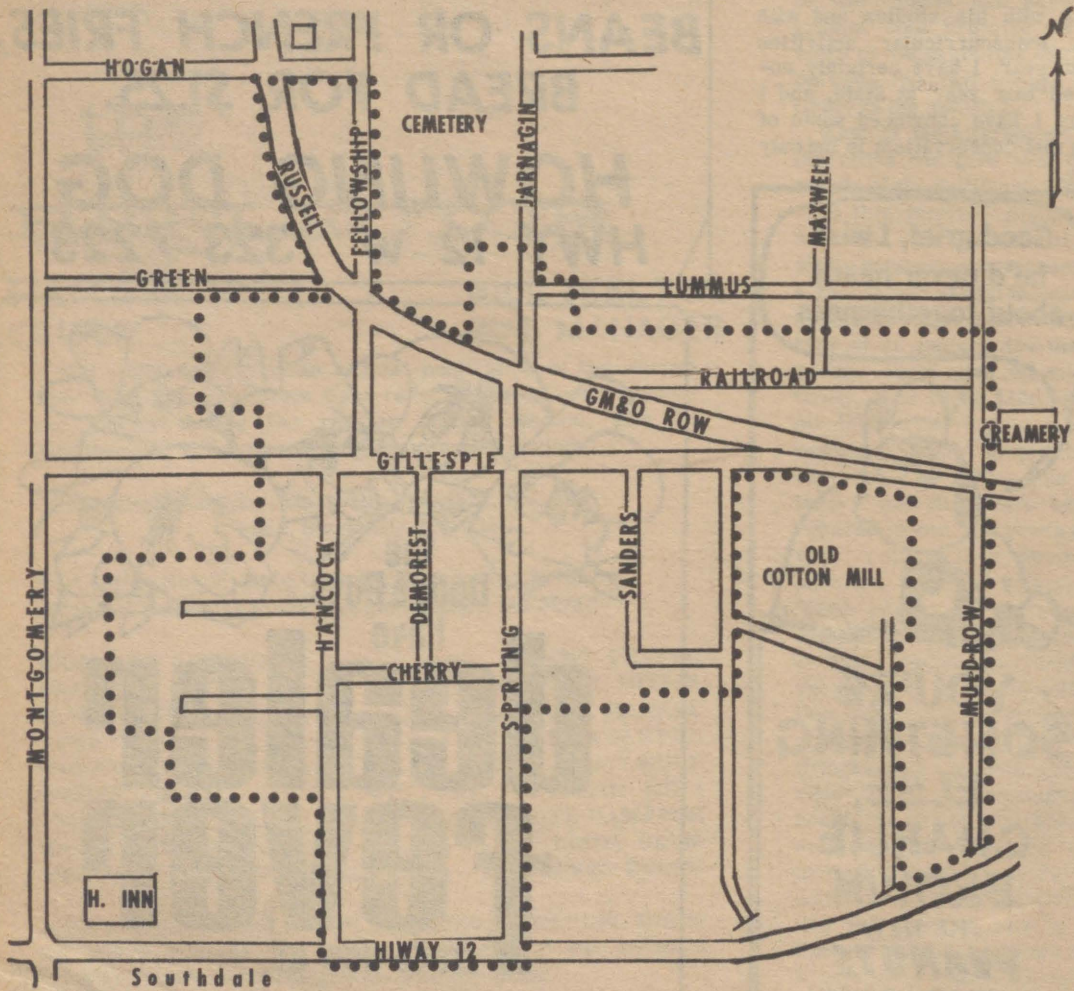
The next step before acquisition of the land is to hold public hearings so that citizens may express their views on the proposed venture.

One fear that usually surrounds a project is that the displaced people will not be found "standard homes." Displaced families are given priority on available public housing, but the enforcement of adequate "open-housing" laws sometimes make relocation difficult.

Another "danger" to the people involved is that they will lose their displacement allowance if they move before "formal relocation" begins.

Mississippi State will receive from the project an access to the campus and possibly some of the land adjacent to the old cotton mill. The time table for completion of the Urban Renewal Project is five years.

Initially Starkville was given a grant of \$79,000 for planning the project. Jones said that most of the money goes for contract services such as the real-estate appraisal.



Schematic
Not To Scale

— PROPOSED —
**CITY URBAN RENEWAL
PROJECT**

... BOUNDARY