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Copy of Feb. CURE NEWSLETTER article on So. Bay Terrace, written by Gladys Galion

Housing is desperately needed in San Diego. When a need exists, sometimes grave errors are made in attempts to fill it. The development of South Bay Terraces may well be such an error. It could set the already existing pattern of segregation in our city and make the success of future efforts to achieve an integrated community more remote than they are now.

This development is east of Paradise Hills, near Paradise Valley Road and the South Bay Freeway. Had homes been built on the natural terrain, the density for this area would have been very low. According to the Master Plan of South Bay Terraces, the projected population will be 32,700 people on 447 acres of the total 835 acres. (The remaining acreage will be parks, commercial, schools and other services.) Of the total 8,170 living units, 6,750 will be multi-family. This high density in an area approximately 1½ by 2½ miles will be achieved through massive grading of the land with the help of a 16 million dollar FHA insured load. It will require the building of 13 schools, instead of the four the School District had anticipated would be needed.

Under ordinary circumstance, the number of schools with the resultant cost to the taxpayers, the scarcity of parks, (71 of the total 119 acres are slopes of "passive play areas") and the large population in so small an area would be cause for concern. The proximity to Southeast San Diego with its concentration of minorities and poor people raised the serious question of whether this development will expand and perpetuate the ghetto.

According to the Planning Commission minutes of November 6, 1968, the original proposal showed the entire area developed through FHA programs, including much low-income housing. The Master Plan that was ultimately approved by the Planning Commission and City Council shows no designation of the use of Federal programs. Grave concern was expressed by the Urban League, CIC, the Planning Department, the School Distirct and many others that this development would become a concentration of low-income and minority people. The possibility of this occurring was repeatedly denied by the devoloper. The Planning Commission requested him to supply information to indicate that safeguards to prevent this were being taken. No detailed evidence to this effect was presented, nor was there an indication as to whether or not any Federally subsidized housing programs would be used.

When the City Council approved the Master Plan for South Bay Terraces it passed the following resolution: "That in view of the magnitude of this proposed development and its proximity to an area of the City increasingly occupied by minority

groups, and in recognition of the City's responsibility for anticipation and minimizing potential human relations problem areas, it is the Objective of the City to insure as far as possible that a balanced community will result and that racial, ethnic, and economic imbalance will be avoided."

The Board of Education has become increasingly concerned with its responsibility to provide racially balanced schools. In addition to requesting a joint conference with the City Council and Planning Commission, at which time the need for social planning as well as land planning was discussed, they have passed a resolution which says in part: "The Board of Education declares its intention to evaluate most carefully the impact upon the educational program of this School District of each new housing development proposed to be constructed within the School District...." It goes on to state that "no person associated with the planning, building or selling of housing in new housing development...should advise any other person that a public school will be built in any specific location."

If balanced communities were achieved by putting words on paper the intent of both resolutions would be realized without specific methods of implementation. The present plight of our cities is evidence enough that this doesn't happen. "People planning" is a relatively new concept and many public officials are just beginning to deal with it. Government cannot operate in a vacuum; they need citizen guidance and support in order to incorporate new ideas into standard land-planning laws and procedures.

In addition to the traditional practice of looking at the placement of each house and its relationship to the land and other buildings, implementation of the above resolutions will require examination in terms of the social implications of each development. A plan and criteria need to be formulated whereby all developments can be evaluated on a social basis. A wider range in house and lot sizes than is presently found acceptable, and a significant range in prices needs to be required, not just talked about. The kinds and numbers of rental units and homes which are Federally subsidized needs also to be looked at. Even the kind of advertising campaign and how is is conducted may be of importance.

If these and other procedures are not applied to South Bay Terraces any future efforts may be after the fact. If the possiblity exists that this huge development will set the pattern of economic and racial-ethnic segregation, any future application of criteria to developments in traditionally white areas may be a lesson in futility.

Although the rezonings for the project were approved over a year ago by the City Council, they are subject to the recordation of a sub-division map. This

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process is now underway. Thirteen of the preliminary or tentative maps will be the subject of a public hearing before the Planning Commission on March 4. Although this procedure is usually technical, with the discussions relating to lot sizes, easements, sideswalks, etc., the City Council resolution stating as its objective "to insure as far as possible that a balanced community will result" would make testimony to this point proper. The Planning Commission, in its advisory capacity to the Council, could require the developer to present evidence that safeguards are being taken to produce the desired result and recommend to the Council any further action or procedures that they feel are necessary. Whether or not they do this is their decision. The maps will then be referred to the City Council for final approval.

Any person may speak at public hearings before the Planning Commission or the City Council. Support, suggestions, and expressions of concern voiced by people who care about their community might make a difference.

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Housing is desperately needed in San Diego. But the question remains — Should that need be filled in an indiscriminate manner which may have a long-range detrimental effect on all of us who need the housing, or can we learn from the mistakes of other cities and demand that housing be provided in the context of goals and procedures insuring freedom of choice for all of our citizens? Your answer to that questions and what you do about it might make the difference.

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