

## My City Concept Sets Town's Leaders, Finds Opposition

The Union County town of Monroe has taken the first tentative steps in a venture aimed at rescuing some of its neighborhoods from the slum cancer.

Even though blight is still far in the future, a veteran Union County NAACP leader already sees the expiring gyrations as part of a white plot against Negro property owners.

But to the town leadership the urban renewal concept is a pioneering venture that no other North Carolina city of Monroe's size has yet tried to apply to its own problems.

Monroe has no concentrated slum areas such as Charlotte's Brooklyn but it does have some neighborhoods in various states of disrepair and blight.

"We have no dire situations now," says the city manager, J. E. Hinkel. "Our problems will be relatively simple to correct if we act soon enough."

At this point, Monroe officials envision that their participation in an urban renewal program will be in the form of neighborhood renewal and rehabilitation.

### Neutown Likely

As yet no specific neighborhood has been officially marked as the first project, although the Newtown section, a Negro neighborhood, is considered the most likely.

The section, which includes housing that ranges from near dilapidation to that in the \$20,000 and over class, was singled out by a federal official as a neighborhood that the city could use to qualify for federal assistance.

R. V. Connerat, of the Atlanta office of the Housing and Home Finance Administration (HHFA) said he thought the neighborhood would qualify because of a relatively high percentage of substandard housing.

This area is bounded roughly by Morgan Mill Road, the Seaboard tracks, John Street and Roosevelt Boulevard (Highway 70).

### 100 Substandard

Of the approximately 300 houses, a majority of which are owned by Negroes, at least 100 are listed as substandard.

City officials have limited these operations, attempting to point out that a neighborhood renewal program will benefit rather than hurt the property owners.

They have tried to point out that any and all codes adopted by the city will be applicable to all residents, whether they are black or white.

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