

Deregulating the Cities

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THE Model Cities program was to have been the crowning achievement of the "Great Society." It was designed for President Johnson by a task force of distinguished academic, business, labor, and civil-rights leaders, working in high secrecy far from the locks and tugs of interest-group politics. It was unveiled in the President's 1966 State of the Union address, in which he said the program would "set in motion the forces of change in great urban areas that will make them the masterpieces of our civilization," through "an effort larger in scope, more comprehensive, more concentrated than any that has gone before." In nine months, the program was passed by Congress and signed into law. Over the next eight years, Model Cities was administered by a bright, earnest, hard working Washington staff; was the subject of more Cabinet-level deliberation than any other domestic enterprise of the federal government; engaged the efforts of thousands of citizens, mayors, city planners, and state and city officials across the land; and received greater federal appropriations—just under \$3 billion by the end of 1974—than President Johnson had requested. And by 1974, when Model Cities was incorporated into special revenue-sharing for community development, and was thus effectively abolished, it was the most unequivocal failure of all the "Great Society" programs.

How this came to be is the subject of two recent books, *The Politics of Neglect: Urban Aid from Model Cities to Revenue Sharing*, by Bernard J. Frieden and Marshall Kaplan (The MIT Press, \$14.95), and *Between the Idea and the Reality: A Study in the Origin, Fate and Legacy of the Model Cities Program*, by Charles M. Haar (Little, Brown, \$15.00). Anyone who wants to know why a nation that used to be able to put a man on the moon can't solve the problems of the cities can find the answer in either book—preferably Frieden and Kaplan's, which is far better written, more analytical, and less polemical. All three authors were involved with Model Cities at one time or another. Frieden was a member of the original task force, chaired by Robert Wood, which proposed the program, and was later a member of another task force, chaired

by Edward C. Banfield, which reviewed the program for President Nixon; Kaplan was a consultant to the Model Cities Administration for most of the life of the program; and Haar was both a member of the Wood task force and later an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Both books are unstinting in their criticisms of the program and its administration, and both offer interesting and sometimes amusing peeks into the bureaucracy at work. But both fail to take full measure of the program's failure, and Haar suggests that things might work out better next time if everyone would just try harder. In what follows, I shall be drawing not only on the books themselves, but also on my own experience as a staff assistant in the White House during the early days of the Nixon Administration.

As conceived by the Wood task force, the Model Cities program was an effort to rationalize and redirect federal urban policy. Existing policy was seen as a hash of uncoordinated and often contradictory grant programs that either were not accomplishing their purposes or were accomplishing unworthy purposes. Urban renewal was working to the benefit of real-estate developers and the urban middle-class, not the poor, and it was at cross-purposes with the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) and highway programs. Programs which were explicitly directed at the most serious, poverty-related urban problems were (like public housing) concerned with "bricks and mortar" rather than deeper "social and psychological" problems, and were in any event too miserly to have much impact. City governments were not paying enough attention to their poorest slum neighborhoods, for reasons of politics and finances, and the federal programs were hurting rather than helping the situation: The single-purpose categorical grants increased the fragmentation of local government into independent agencies and authorities, stifling local leadership and making concerted attempts to improve slum conditions all but impossible. In sum, the cities were overregulated and underfunded. This was the prevailing view in the mid-1960's in academic circles and in the upper reaches of the federal establishment, and it was no doubt substantially correct. A strong sense of urgency was added to all this, just months before the Wood task force began its work, by the Watts riot in August of 1965.

The solution proposed by the task force was a program of "comprehensive city demonstrations," in 60 to 70 cities, that would blast through the rigidities of the categorical grant programs and demonstrate what a solidly funded, well planned effort could do to improve conditions in the worst city slums. This was to be accomplished by (to use the task force's words) *concentration*, *coordination*, and *mobilization*. Federal funds would be concentrated in the selected model cities by appropriating \$2.3 billion for "supplemental grants" to be spent by the cities on slum-improvement projects according to their own local plans—which would be

drafted by newly established "City Demonstration Agencies" (CDA's)—and also by making available as much categorical grant money as possible for use according to the local plans. The categorical grants would be coordinated for use in the city programs both from the "top down" and from the "bottom up": In Washington, the federal agencies administering the various categorical grants would coordinate their program requirements and funding decisions to accommodate local program plans; in the cities, the CDA's would use the supplemental grants to induce state and local agencies to expand their programs in slum neighborhoods and to administer them according to the demonstration plans. Mobilization of local initiative would be brought about through the decentralization of decision-making inherent in the noncategorical supplemental grants and in the federal coordination of categorical grants in response to local plans. Local mobilization, as well as an improvement in the "sensitivity" and "responsiveness" of city governments, would be further stimulated by requiring "widespread citizen participation" in the planning and execution of the cities' programs. Finally, since the purpose of the program was to demonstrate that the most serious urban problems could indeed be solved and to lay the political and programmatic groundwork for solving them in all cities later on, two further requirements would be made of local model cities programs: They would have to be based upon "comprehensive planning," attacking *all* the problems of the slum neighborhoods in a rational, systematic fashion; and they would have to be "innovative," employing promising new methods that might be evaluated and later applied elsewhere.

THE program did not turn out as the task force had hoped, and a principal reason was that the proposal, and the legislation drafted to implement it, was based on little more than hope. Although there was little disagreement over the shortcomings of the existing programs, most of the task force's ideas about how to improve on them were highly speculative. As Haar notes,

No study had shown persuasively that comprehensive planning, as envisioned by the task force, was feasible, or capable of achieving economies or efficiencies. There were only articles of faith that coordination and concentration of aid would bring significant improvements in cities, that the federal aid programs were too confining, that previous programs had not been sufficiently comprehensive, and that slum areas needed experiments and innovations rather than conventional public services received all along by other neighborhoods.

Nor did the task force say just how the reforms it proposed were to be accomplished. There was much theorizing among task force members about how the cities could use their supplemental grants to "fill the gaps" between the categorical programs and "lure" categorical grants into poverty neighborhoods, and how HUD (which would administer the program) would be the "lead agency" in

securing funds from other departments for use in model cities programs. But this too was just speculation. And there apparently was *not* much speculation about how the inconsistencies in the proposed reforms would be resolved—how coordination of federal programs (which implies the existence of a coordinator) would be reconciled with devolution of authority to the city level, or how systematic planning would be reconciled with widespread citizen participation.

The Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 did not illuminate any of these mysteries.¹ It did authorize the Secretary of HUD to make grants to cities to plan and execute programs that would “remove or arrest blight and decay in entire sections or neighborhoods,” and that would “make marked progress in reducing” a long list of social ills. But the law did not say how the Secretary or the cities themselves were to see that these things got done, nor did it say how the various agencies of the federal government were to “coordinate” their existing programs (the Secretary was directed to “consult” with other agencies about their programs), nor how the cities were to get widespread participation of their citizens in planning their programs. All of these matters were left to be worked out at the administrative level, so that, when the Model Cities Administration was established at the end of 1966, it was pretty much on its own.

When the first Assistant Secretary for Model Cities took office at HUD, he drew up some program guidelines, instructed his staff to begin making contacts in the other departments for the purpose of coordinating their program funds to meet model cities plans, and began traveling about the country to promote the program with city officials. The first guidelines limited city demonstration programs to “model neighborhoods” no larger than 10 per cent of the population of each city; this was necessary to maintain fund “concentration” because Congress, in enacting the program, had doubled the number of cities without increasing program funds substantially. Soon, hundreds of cities had mailed in applications for planning grants, and the Model Cities Administration staff set about choosing the 60 to 70 winners that would receive the “first round” of planning grants. The staff tried to formulate rigorous, objective criteria for choosing among the competing planning applications. But this proved impossible and the standards they eventually used were based on considerations of city “capacity” and “commitment,” which were so vague as to give the staff *more* control than in the case of categorical programs. As reported by Frieden and Kaplan, it was difficult to apply even these broad standards, since most of the cities had simply hired consultants to write their grant applications, or had assigned the task to one or two city hall staff assistants. There was, therefore, ample room for rank politics to influence the

¹ Although the law was titled “Demonstration Cities,” President Johnson changed the program to “Model Cities” after a number of Congressmen complained that the cities already had enough “demonstrations.”

selection of the favored cities: Pikesville, Kentucky, and Smithville, Tennessee, for example, were selected because they were the home towns of important Congressmen. The staff was not averse to a little politics of its own—Los Angeles, alone of all the large cities, was excluded from the first round because the Washington staff didn't like Mayor Yorty. (It was added in the "second round" of model cities after the appropriate Congressional complaints.) By late June of 1967, the Model Cities Administration staff had settled upon its choices for the first round of model cities, and then the summer and fall passed while nothing happened at all. Due to a number of frustrating political and administrative delays, no formal announcements were made or planning grants awarded until the following November. In the meantime, morale sagged in the Washington office, many CDA officials in the cities moved on to other pursuits, and the program fell under increasing attack from mayors and civil-rights spokesmen. By the time the first model cities were announced, much of the program's initial political allure had been lost, never to be regained.²

The model cities were each given a few hundred thousand dollars to engage in 12 months of planning, plus extensive guidelines and "technical-assistance bulletins" telling them how to plan comprehensively and how to stimulate participation of model-neighborhood residents. There was considerable unhappiness, in both the model cities and in Washington, over requiring the cities to spend an entire year doing nothing but planning. But many people in the Model Cities Administration, including the Assistant Secretary, believed that the only way the cities could intelligently spend the massive amount of money they were going to be getting, and coordinate its impact to achieve maximum results, would be if they first engaged in a highly systematic and rationalized planning process, which would identify the interrelationships among all the many problems of the model neighborhoods, and design projects to take account of them. Also, it was becoming clear that it would take at least an entire year for the Model Cities Administration to hold up its part of the bargain, by getting the other departments to begin putting their funds at the disposal of the local plans.

When the Model Cities Administration staffers began their first serious talks with people from other federal agencies about "coordinating" their categorical funds for use in the model cities programs, they made a number of disconcerting discoveries. Most of the categorical grant programs which seemed pertinent to the model cities plans were either administered according to

² Haar makes the harmless mistake of saying that the delay in announcing the first model cities planning grants took place in 1966, rather than in 1967. But he then proceeds to explain that one reason for the delay was to wait until the midterm Congressional elections were past! Frieden and Kaplan correctly note that the principal reason for the delay was to wait until Congress had acted on the Administration's request for first-year supplemental-grant appropriations.

precise statutory allocation formulas or were administered by the states, leaving little or no discretion for concentrating them on model neighborhoods or coordinating them in response to model cities plans. Only a small fraction of the billions of dollars spent each year by the Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), Labor, Commerce, Transportation, and the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) were within immediate control of the Washington offices. Those agencies which did have funding discretion, such as OEO and the Department of Labor, generally exercised that discretion for purposes of their own: to further national goals just as important as those of the Model Cities program (as those in the agencies themselves saw it), or (as those in the Model Cities Administration saw it) to satisfy the parochial demands of powerful local groups such as labor unions and Community Action Agencies. In any event, with few exceptions, none of the other agencies were agreeable to having their programs coordinated by the Model Cities Administration to fit the plans submitted by the CDA's. The only success that the Model Cities Administration had was in persuading some agencies *not* to fund new programs in model neighborhoods until approved by the local CDA's or citizen-participation organizations.

By the summer of 1968, the Model Cities Administration was swamped with proposals for using categorical funds in city plans, and the Assistant Secretary went to Joseph Califano, President Johnson's assistant for domestic affairs, and asked for his assistance in getting the other agencies to go along with the model cities plans. Califano responded enthusiastically, calling up the domestic Cabinet Secretaries and telling them how much importance the President attached to Model Cities, and sending out memos asking for specific procedural steps the Departments could take to accommodate model cities plans. The Departments' responses were not encouraging: Even where they had legal discretion over program funds, they felt they could not safely commit them in advance of yearly Congressional appropriations, and of course by the time the appropriations process was over, most of the funds would already be committed to projects favored by those who voted the appropriations.

Califano continued to exhort the Cabinet officers to do all they could, but he could do little more than exhort. A man as busy as he was could not be expected to get into the details of whether HEW should fund a model cities health center in Gila River, Arizona, or whether HUD's City Demonstration Agency or OEO's Community Action Agency should have the final say over manpower training in Seattle. And although our authors do not report on this, Califano must have realized that if he had gotten into the details, he would have found in every case that there were a dozen good reasons, which he could not reasonably contradict, for an agency's doing exactly as it had done.

The Model Cities Administration was successful in organizing a number of interagency committees in Washington and at the regional level to review model cities plans in detail and attempt coordination. But although the middle-level staffers from the other Departments attended committee meetings faithfully and were eager to help, they had no authority to commit program funds or revise program guidelines. As a result, these meetings were all talk and no action—as Frieden and Kaplan report, they “had a depressing quality of futility that is difficult to capture in words.” Moreover, the committee members from the other Departments had their own strong views about what constituted a sound drug-treatment program, or job-training program, or senior-citizen outreach program, and they didn’t mind saying that those people in Dayton should be told that their approach had been discredited years ago. In the eyes of the Model Cities Administration staff, those from the other Departments didn’t understand what Model Cities was all about. And the crowning insult came when it appeared just why some of the committee members were such faithful auditors of these meetings: in order to learn where and how the model cities were planning to use their supplemental grants, so their own Departments’ funds could be adjusted *downward* or redirected *elsewhere*.

By the time the first model cities programs were announced in December of 1968, the term “supplemental grant” had become an Orwellian misnomer—the grants were not supplementing anything, but were themselves the whole program. The HUD press releases announcing the model cities programs listed numerous projects funded by other agencies, but in most cases the non-HUD projects had neither been planned by the local CDA’s nor coordinated at the federal level to fit local plans. By this time, most of the local model cities administrators had come to realize that the promised gush of categorical grant money was never going to be more than a trickle. As a result, most of the supplemental grants were used for projects which could have been funded by the categorical grants, rather than for “innovative” projects or to “fill the gaps” between the categorical programs.

Under the Nixon Administration, Model Cities officials spent even more time trying to secure cooperation from the other Departments, faced as they were with ongoing programs in the full complement of 150 model cities. But they had no greater success than their predecessors, and their frustrations eventually led to the Administration’s proposals for consolidating the categorical programs (and Model Cities itself) into special revenue-sharing grants, two of which (for community development and manpower training) were enacted by the end of 1974.

BOTH of the two recent books conclude that the authors of the Model Cities program greatly underestimated the institutional barriers to program coordination at the administrative level. In-

deed, both books suggest that one of the program's principal contributions was to dramatize the strength of these barriers, thus paving the way for comprehensive consolidation of the categorical programs under the special revenue-sharing laws. (Though Haar has nothing good to say about the revenue-sharing proposals advanced by the Nixon Administration, he does favor special-purpose block grants to the cities "because of the almost impossible task of coordinating and scheduling federal projects at the local level.") Yet it is unclear why this was so. The institutional barriers that frustrated the Model Cities program were not built by the administrative agencies themselves. They consisted not of the bureaucratic arrogance and caprice celebrated in Chamber of Commerce luncheon talks, but of specific restrictions written deliberately by Congress into the categorical program laws and zealously enforced by those groups which benefited from the programs. It is a puzzle, therefore, why those barriers that successfully stood against coordination at the administrative level were later unable to stand against consolidation at the legislative level. Perhaps Congress, since it is more vulnerable to public scrutiny than the bureaucracy, is less free to place the narrow interests of organized groups above what is popularly regarded as the interest of the public at large. Or perhaps Model Cities itself, by advancing large sums directly to the mayors and other local officials, fueled them with sufficient energy and cohesiveness to override the interests of other groups. Neither Haar nor Frieden and Kaplan offer evidence or speculation on this point, nor has anyone else, so far as I know.

The cities had no greater luck than the federal government in fulfilling their part of the Model Cities vision. The planning guidelines which the Model Cities Administration sent to the model cities were incredibly complex—requiring cities to prepare, in sequential order, a precise quantitative analysis of all of the problems of their poorest neighborhoods, a statement of program goals, a strategy statement, a first-year action plan (which specified all proposed projects and the "linkages" among them), a five-year plan, a continuous planning and evaluation program, and an analysis of the proposed administrative structure. If taken seriously, the guidelines would have required social analysis of a kind which very few, if any, living Americans were capable. But the cities did not take them seriously at all. The planning requirements were "an obstacle to overcome rather than a welcome component of the program" (in the words of Frieden and Kaplan), and cities overcame the obstacle by submitting encyclopedic plans many thousands of pages long, containing everything at hand in the way of facts and figures about the model neighborhood, but very little analysis that was not off-the-cuff and faddish. Washington staffers who reviewed these plans would get the feeling—eight inches deep into their 26th plan, their eyes glazing—that they had read it all somewhere before. Sometimes they would check back and discover they *had*

read it before: Many cities, it turned out, simply copied portions of their problem analyses from other cities. But in truth, at the level of sophistication attempted by most of the plans, one city's problems were about the same as another's.

Frieden, Kaplan, and Haar agree that the Model Cities planning requirements were pretty ridiculous, but neither book says much at all about the actual content of the model cities plans, or how they were influenced by citizen participation, or their eventual impact on the model neighborhoods. This is disappointing, for although both books argue that the emphasis of the program was on "process" rather than "product," a central purpose was clearly to demonstrate substantial improvements in the conditions of slum neighborhoods through concentration of funds, innovation, and citizen participation. Of course, the failure of federal coordination undercut both concentration and innovation, as we have seen. Yet \$3 billion is a large sum of money, and both books assume, in criticizing the current revenue-sharing programs, that Model Cities, did achieve an important degree of concentration of funds into poverty neighborhoods and desirable improvements in citizen participation. Frieden and Kaplan note, for example, that although general revenue-sharing has typically provided cities with twice as much funds as model cities supplementary grants, "local political pressures could be counted on to make far less available for spending in the model neighborhood." And they criticize special (community-development) revenue-sharing for being "weak and ambiguous" in its requirements that funds be focused on improving slum conditions, and for its "failure to define a clear and measurable role for residents." But they do not attempt to compare with Model Cities the *total* effect of general and special revenue-sharing on the level of public expenditures benefitting model neighborhoods, nor do they explain how citizen participation has changed (or may be expected to change) from what it was under Model Cities.

Haar does not even attempt to measure the results of the Model Cities program, remarking that to do so would "take us more into the field of speculative theology than of practical politics." Yet Haar finds that the demise of Model Cities and the enactment of general and special revenue-sharing constitute an abandonment of the program's essential purposes, bringing about "changes which are essentially regressive in their probable effect," and he hints broadly that it is *because* the revenue-sharing laws are regressive that the Nixon Administration advanced them. He also believes that revenue-sharing, since it does not require "participation of interest groups not otherwise heard," is "spending without representation." The darkest of motives are lurking here as well: "Madison's reference in his Article 10 to the danger of a 'permanent minority' takes on ominous meaning in the context of the experience of general revenue-sharing to date, which, for example, has been uniformly devoid of significant citizen participation."

I know of nothing that suggests that Model Cities actually brought either a measurable concentration of public funds into model neighborhoods or the kind of mobilization of local initiative envisioned by the program's framers, and I know a good deal that suggests otherwise. A substantial amount of the cities' supplemental grants apparently ended up maintaining other federal programs which had been cut back in Washington or in the cities. For example, in 1969 the Department of Labor grew dissatisfied with its primary manpower-training program, the Concentrated Employment Program, and began cutting back its grants to local program sponsors. But by this time the program had developed considerable momentum at the local level, and model cities proposals began coming in with plans to reinstate the local programs using supplemental grants. In the same year, the Seattle model cities plan proposed to expand the city's OEO Legal Services Program with \$35,000 of supplemental funds—but when OEO's regional office learned of this (through the regional Model Cities coordinating committee) it proceeded to *cut* the Seattle program by the same amount. In both cases, the Model Cities Administration ended up writing out a check to the other departments. Examples such as these abounded in the cities and in Washington throughout the life of the program, to the considerable dismay of Model Cities officials.

More importantly, the elaborate "comprehensive planning" process imposed by the Model Cities Administration, and the requirement that all plans be ratified by citizen-participation organizations, delayed or halted the flow of funds into the model neighborhoods for years. It was *two years* after the signing of the Demonstration Cities Act before the first handful of cities received any supplemental funds at all, and most cities had to wait much longer. The delay was not limited to supplemental funds, for while the Model Cities Administration was almost totally unsuccessful in getting other agencies to commit funds for use in model cities projects, it did have some success in getting other agencies (especially within HUD) *not* to fund any projects in model neighborhoods without the approval of the local CDA and citizen participants. An FHA director reported in the fall of 1969 that he had already held up hundreds of thousands of dollars in mortgage guarantees in one model neighborhood because the local CDA and its citizen advisers had not yet agreed upon their comprehensive plan.

Model Cities officials felt that the initial delay was a small price to pay for the benefits which would come later—well thought-out projects that would produce tangible results and, therefore, Congressional support for even greater appropriations. But it was not that simple. The program created at least two new "veto groups" in every city, the CDA's and the citizen-participation organizations, and while it turned out that these groups had nothing to gain but the supplemental grants, their *mandate* was a sweeping one—to plan "comprehensively" for virtually everything that was

to happen in their model neighborhoods. And, of course, they took this charge very seriously—calling on mayors to block new construction projects, opposing changes in the administration of the police departments, and quarreling with the Community Action Agencies over the details of *their* programs. Mayor Lindsay had originally testified before Congress that Model Cities appropriations would have to be increased radically over President Johnson's request, because New York City alone would require "approximately" \$2 billion. But the planning and citizen-participation requirements engendered such (additional) confusion there that the city never was able to spend even half of the \$65 million supplemental grant it received for its first program year! This was apparently a widespread problem. Frieden and Kaplan report that actual expenditures of supplemental funds in all model cities were only 18 per cent of the funds HUD had committed in fiscal year 1970, and 54 per cent in 1972; they were expected to reach 75 per cent in 1973. It would be interesting to know the comparable results under special and general revenue-sharing.

WHILE the planning and citizen-participation requirements were apparently successful in stalling or preventing expenditures in the model neighborhoods, it is doubtful that they resulted in much improvement in the substance of the local programs. As plan-submission deadlines approached, the most aggressive of citizen-participation groups commonly yielded program authority to the professionals on the CDA staffs, who were wise in the ways of writing documents acceptable to Washington, and were also well connected with (and often on detail from) other local agencies. Perhaps as a result, a large share of the supplemental grant projects consisted of supplements to the budgets of the various local agencies, either to expand their regular services (such as day-care and youth-corps programs) or to engage in special projects (such as police-community or teacher-parent "communications" programs). In a study of citizen participation in New York City, where citizen's groups were more active than in most model cities, Seymour Z. Mann concluded:

While the record is somewhat different on each of the three Model neighborhoods in New York, the first-year plans submitted last May, which guaranteed for New York City the \$65 million allotment of supplemental funding, were not the product of the orderly, rational planning system mandated by the HUD guidelines; nor were they, in fact, in many important details the plans that had been developed through the citizen-participation mechanism that had been instituted by the City and approved by HUD.

They were, rather, manipulated and maneuvered out of the system through a fantastically complicated political dance on a taut tightrope accomplished to keep the facade of the process intact and to preserve New York's share of the pie. Here and there one sees an innovative

program or project included in the thousands of pages of plan submissions and something of the articulated linkages between social and physical planning as an aspect of the systems planning inherent in the intentions of the Model Cities legislation. For the most part, however, it is difficult to conclude that what was produced was very much different than would have been the case had the elaborate neighborhood planning mechanism and the citizen participation mechanism not existed at all.³

While one is hesitant to generalize about anything from the experience of New York, in this case it does seem to have been typical. It is reasonable to suppose that an accurate measure of the effectiveness of citizen participation is the extent to which model cities funds were spent directly in the model neighborhood themselves; indeed one of the primary reasons for the citizen-participation requirement was to increase the amount of funds going into target neighborhoods. If so, then a study conducted for the Model Cities Administration by Booz Allen & Hamilton is some indication of the effectiveness of citizen participation as well as the extent of concentration of the funds the model cities were able to spend. It found that, in 13 model cities studied, *60 per cent of the supplemental funds were spent outside the model neighborhoods.*⁴

THE change of Administration in January 1969 is described very differently in the two books. To Haar, the arrival of the Nixon Administration was a "calamity" and an "unparalleled disaster" for the Model Cities program. He does not explain why this was so, though he does say that the Johnson Administration had "considerable success in stimulating local response," while Nixon's "lack of belief in citizen participation . . . led to increased disaffection and alienation among poor and black residents." This may be true (Haar's book contains no examples of either the successes under Johnson or the disaffection and alienation under Nixon), but it does not seem a fair comparison. The Johnson Administration gave cities a few hundred thousand dollars apiece to plan to spend whatever was necessary to put an end to all their problems, and this naturally stimulated a certain local response. The Nixon Administration was presented with the bills for all of the plans the cities came up with, and no doubt there was some disillusionment and alienation when those bills could be paid only in part. But the Johnson Administration no more championed "citizen participation" than did the Nixon Administration. Indeed, one of the reasons President Johnson commissioned the initial Model Cities task force was his disillusionment with the Community Action Program, which he felt had been taken over by "kooks and sociol-

³ Seymour Z. Mann, "Participation of the Poor and Model Cities in New York City: The Impact of Participation and Has Participation Made a Difference," Hunter College, CUNY, Department of Urban Affairs, May, 1970.

⁴ Booz Allen & Hamilton, Inc., "Study of the Concentration and Dispersion Impact of the Model Cities Program (Washington, D.C., 1971).

ogists,” and it was his Model Cities officials who established the requirement that program authority must rest with the mayors rather than citizen participants.

Frieden and Kaplan give a far more detailed account of the frustrations of Model Cities under the Nixon Administration—President Nixon’s skepticism about the program; HUD Secretary Romney’s efforts to powder it up and make it look more “Republican”; Daniel P. Moynihan’s attempts to secure cooperation from the non-HUD agencies, similar to Califano’s efforts and with similar results; and the White House efforts to use program funds for its own purposes, such as school desegregation and revenue-sharing, which were blocked or revised by the mayors and City Demonstration Agencies. But what comes through the Frieden and Kaplan account is that the change of Administrations, far from being an unparalleled disaster, made very little difference at all. President Nixon did not like the program, and at an early meeting told Moynihan he wanted the program “killed.” But Moynihan demurred (my notes say that he responded, “Now you worry about our treaties in Southeast Asia and I’ll worry about our treaties with the cities”). Though Moynihan was hardly more enthusiastic about the program than was the President, he sensed that large promises had been made to the cities which had to be kept—and probably could not, as a practical matter, be broken. Within the federal bureaucracy, the friends and enemies of Model Cities were about the same as they had been before: HEW channeled more grant money into the model neighborhoods than any other agency; Transportation and Commerce had little discretion to exercise on the program’s behalf; Labor and OEO were generally hostile. President Nixon’s Model Cities officials fussed with the program—removing the 10 per cent model-neighborhood limitation, relaxing planning and review requirements somewhat, increasing supplemental grants to some cities and decreasing them to others—but they did not change its essentials. And they did not replace it with their own revenue-sharing programs until every last penny promised to the cities by the previous Administration had been committed. Frieden and Kaplan conclude:

At the White House, the Nixon Administration was clearly less supportive than the Johnson Administration had been, but the basic commitments were nevertheless kept. Despite reservations, President Nixon retained the program, was about as successful as his predecessor in earmarking funds from other federal programs, and eventually spent model cities funds at a rate that was consistent with the target figures the Johnson Administration had originally given to Congress. Efforts from within the White House to divert funds from model cities or to close the program prematurely were reversed as interest-group pressures made themselves felt.

Frieden and Kaplan are right. The remarkable thing about Model Cities is that the arrival of a new Administration, with a very

different constituency and viewpoint from the one that had launched it, was *not* a calamity. The same legislative and client-group constraints which prevented the program from achieving its highest ambitions also guaranteed that it accomplished its minimum objectives. This is part of the most important of all the lessons to be drawn from the program's history. There is a view of government that sees the large bureaucracies, especially at the federal level, as having a momentum of their own that can be harnessed, either by unworthy special-interest groups or by worthy public-interest groups, to achieve objectives not intended by the legislature. The authors of the Model Cities program believed this—that once the program was established, the executive branch might accomplish more with it than the statute directed—and they were wrong. The model cities were not transformed into the “masterpieces of our civilization,” but they did receive almost exactly what Congress said they would in the original legislation—no more, no less.