

GUND LECTURE SERIES,
HARVARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DESIGN
"URBAN REVITALIZATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH"
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SENATOR PAUL E. TSONGAS

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from Alice

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ASKING ME TO SPEAK TO YOU THIS EVENING. IT IS INDEED AN HONOR TO SPEAK TO SUCH A DISTINGUISHED GROUP OF PLANNERS.

YOU AND I SHARE A COMMON CONCERN FOR OUR URBAN LANDSCAPE. WITH 46 MIDDLE AND LARGE-SIZED CITIES IN OUR STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS, WE HAVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO PLACE A LASTING IMPRINT ON THAT LANDSCAPE. THIS IS AN ENORMOUS CHALLENGE. THE FUTURE OF OUR CITIES IS AT STAKE.

AS A CITY COUNCILLOR IN LOWELL, A COMMISSIONER FOR MIDDLESEX COUNTY AND, FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS, A CONGRESSMAN FOR THE FIFTH DISTRICT, I BECAME IDENTIFIED AS A SPOKESMAN FOR OUR CITIES. THE LOWELL NATIONAL PARK, THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTION OF MY CONGRESSIONAL STAFF, THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS WE HELPED LAUNCH IN LOWELL AND LAWRENCE, WERE CONCRETE STEPS TAKEN TO HELP BRING BACK THE CITIES IN MY DISTRICT.

I LIKE TO THINK OF MYSELF AS THE SENATOR FROM LOWELL. HAVING ROOTS THERE IS AS MUCH A PART OF MY PERSONAL IDENTITY TODAY -- PERHAPS EVEN MORE -- THAN IS MY GREEK HERITAGE OR MY PEACE CORPS BACKGROUND. LOWELL IS STILL MY HOME.

UNTIL RECENTLY, LOWELL WAS NOT A VERY ROMANTIC PLACE TO COME FROM. MOST PEOPLE DIDN'T LIKE TO SAY THEY WERE FROM LOWELL. LIKE OTHER MILL TOWNS OF THE NORTHEAST, LOWELL WAS A FORGOTTEN CITY. IN THE 1960'S WHEN CONCERN FOR THE URBAN POOR BECAME FASHIONABLE, NOBODY TALKED ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF LOWELL'S WORKING PEOPLE. IN FACT, LOWELL WAS SO DISCOUNTED THAT SHE COULDN'T FIND THE MONEY TO TEAR DOWN THE MILLS WHICH EVERYONE IN THE TOWN CONSIDERED EYESORES.

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IT IS MASSACHUSETTS' OTHER LOWELLS THAT NEED OUR ATTENTION NOW. AS A SENATOR, I HAVE EXPANDED THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTION OF MY STAFF TO SEVEN FULL-TIME PEOPLE IN MASSACHUSETTS AND WASHINGTON. THEIR JOB IS TO HELP FOSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION AROUND THE ENTIRE STATE. I HOPE I WILL BE REMEMBERED AS THE SENATOR WHO HELPED BRING BACK MASSACHUSETTS' OTHER FORGOTTEN CITIES.

THAT IS AN AWESOME TASK, PARTICULARLY AT A MOMENT WHEN THE GROUNDWORK LAID OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS TO REVITALIZE OUR NATION'S CITIES IS SHAKEY. AN URBAN POLICY PRESENTED BY PRESIDENT CARTER ONLY A YEAR AGO HAS ALREADY BEEN SCRAPPED. PROPOSITION 13 HAS DICTATED A FEDERAL BUDGET THAT SERIOUSLY LIMITS FEDERAL URBAN ASSISTANCE. THE ADMINISTRATION SAYS THAT "AUSTERITY" WILL CURE OUR URBAN ILLS. CONGRESS, EQUALLY BITTEN WITH THE "BALANCED BUDGET" BUG, I FEAR, MAY SLASH URBAN PROGRAMS EVEN MORE.

WHAT MAKES THE CURRENT POLITICAL MOOD STILL MORE FEARSOME IS THE CONCURRENT DEBATE ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT WE HAVE AN URBAN CRISIS. WE SPENT THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION DEBATING WHETHER OR NOT WE NEED AN URBAN POLICY. NOW WE ARE DEBATING WHETHER OR NOT WE HAVE AN URBAN CRISIS. YOU HAVE PROBABLY SEEN THE RECENT ARTICLES IN NEWSWEEK, THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE AND HARPERS ABOUT THE SO-CALLED URBAN RENAISSANCE. OUR BIG CITIES ARE PORTRAYED AS GLITTERING MAGNETS FILLED WITH AFFLUENT YOUNG PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE. WHETHER NEW YORK, BOSTON OR WASHINGTON, THESE CITIES ARE NOW CONSIDERED "PACE SETTERS OF THE POST-INDUSTRIAL AGE" WITH THEIR BOUTIQUE AND DISCO-LINED STREETS, RESTORED BROWNSTONES, AND SIDEWALKS CAFES.

WE SHOULD LOOK AT THIS RENAISSANCE AND ANALYZE WHAT IT MEANS SO WE CAN SET URBAN POLICY WITH A PERSPECTIVE ON THE FUTURE. BUT TO DISMISS

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URBAN PROBLEMS WITH THE MAGIC WAND OF A QUINCY MARKET OR A CITI-CORP TOWER IS DISTURBING. "GENTRIFICATION," THE NEW BUZZ WORD FOR MIDDLE-CLASS PEOPLE MOVING INTO INNER CITY NEIGHBORHOODS MAY HAVE SOME POSITIVE EFFECTS, BUT CERTAINLY IT HASN'T TURNED OUR CITIES AROUND. THE SAME URBAN PROBLEMS WE BEGAN TO TALK ABOUT IN THE SIXTIES ARE STILL WITH US.

HERE ARE A FEW DISTURBING FACTS ABOUT URBAN LIFE IN AMERICA:

* BETWEEN 1970 AND 1977, THE POPULATION IN OUR CITIES DECLINED BY FIVE PERCENT WHILE THE SUBURBAN POPULATION CLIMBED 12 PERCENT.

* AS A RESULT OF MIGRATION OUT OF OUR CITIES IN 1976, \$18 BILLION LESS INCOME WAS AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES LIVING IN OUR CITIES THAT YEAR.

* THE POVERTY RATE IN OUR CITIES WAS HIGHER IN 1976 THAN IN 1969.

* THE INCOME OF FAMILIES MOVING OUT OF OUR CITIES IS HIGHER THAN FAMILIES MOVING IN.

* TWO TIMES AS MANY WOMEN HEAD HOUSEHOLDS IN OUR CITIES THAN IN OUR SUBURBS.

NONETHELESS, THE ENCOURAGING SIGNS SHOULDN'T BE DISCOUNTED. A THREE YEAR DECLINE IN NEW YORK CITY'S TAXABLE REAL ESTATE RATES HAS JUST ENDED. A NEW YORK OFFICIAL SAID THE OTHER DAY THAT THERE HAS BEEN A WHOLE CHANGE IN CLIMATE IN MANHATTAN PROPERTY VALUES. BECAUSE OFFICE BUILDINGS ARE BECOMING FULLY RENTED, NEW HOTELS ARE BEING BUILT AND EMPTY LOFTS ARE BEING CONVERTED INTO APARTMENTS, VALUES ARE GOING UP. THAT'S MANHATTAN. REAL ESTATE IN THE BRONX AND BROOKLYN, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE AND PROPERTY VALUES IN THOSE BOROUGHES HAVE DECLINED.

WE HAVE SIMILAR EXAMPLES IN MASSACHUSETTS. QUINCY MARKETS IS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL RETAIL OPERATION IN THE COUNTRY -- PERHAPS IN THE

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Urban Speech

WORLD. IT HAS BROUGHT \$6 MILLION A YEAR IN REVENUE TO THE STATE AND ATTRACTS MORE PEOPLE PER DAY THAN DISNEYLAND.

DOES THAT MEAN WE CAN FORGET FALL RIVER, BROCKTON, HAVERHILL, NEW BEDFORD OR LAWRENCE WHERE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES RANGE BETWEEN 9 and 12 percent? I DON'T THINK SO.

THE LOWELL NATIONAL PARK WILL GENERATE \$120 BILLION IN SPENDING OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS. DOES THAT MEAN WE CAN FORGET THAT THE MEDIAN INCOME OF MASSACHUSETTS CITIES IS GROWING AT TWO THIRDS THE NATIONAL RATE AND THE GAP MAY BE WIDENING? I DON'T THINK SO.

WE HAVE MADE STRIDES IN ATTRACTING NEW INVESTMENTS, NEW JOBS AND NEW RESIDENTS TO CITIES. HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS ARE IN PROGRESS IN NEIGHBORHOODS -- DOWNTOWN RENEWAL PROGRAMS ARE TAKING PLACE IN CITIES AROUND THE NATION. NONETHELESS, THE URBAN CRISIS IS NOT OVER -- NOT SO LONG AS THE TREND TOWARDS A MORE SERVICE-ORIENTED ECONOMY CLOSES DOWN MANUFACTURING JOBS IN OUR CITIES; NOT SO LONG AS WE RETAIN A REGRESSIVE TAX STRUCTURE; CONTINUE TO DISPLACE OUR ELDERLY AND OUR POOR; POLLUTE OUR DRINKING WATER AND RUN THE RISK OF WATER SHORTAGES BECAUSE OF DECAYED INFRASTRUCTURES; NOT SO LONG AS OUR SCHOOLS DON'T EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN, AND BLACK YOUTHS ARE UNEMPLOYED AT RATES OF 35 to 40 PERCENT.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN'T NEGLECT OUR CITIES -- ESPECIALLY, OLDER, INDUSTRIAL, NORTHEAST CITIES, THE MOST SEVERLY HIT BY THE ECONOMIC CRUNCH. OUR DISTRESSED CITIES REAP THE LEAST BENEFIT FROM OVERALL ECONOMIC RECOVERY, SOMEWHAT LOWER INFLATION RATES AND SLIGHTLY REDUCED UNEMPLOYMENT.

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FEDERAL AID HAS BEEN CRUCIAL TO MAINTAINING THESE CITIES, AND THE LONG TERM OUTLOOK FOR THAT AID IS DISCOURAGING.

CITY SERVICES HAVE BEEN MAINTAINED AT RELATIVELY STABLE LEVELS BECAUSE OF DIRECT FEDERAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT, PUBLIC WORKS GRANTS AND REVENUE SHARING. THESE PROGRAMS HAVE ALSO AVERTED SHARP INCREASES IN LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES. UNFORTUNATELY, CITIES ARE BEGINNING TO CUT BACK SHARPLY ON SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS FOR LOW INCOME PEOPLE. BADLY NEEDED MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS OF CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS ARE BEING POSTPONED.

FACING THIS EVENTUALITY, WE NEED TO LOOK AT WHAT WILL COME OUT OF WASHINGTON THIS YEAR. DUE TO THE ADMINISTRATION'S ACCOMODATIONS TO AN AUSTERITY BUDGET AND CONGRESSIONAL SENSITIVITY TO THE TAX CUT REFERENDUMS, A NUMBER OF MAJOR URBAN POLICY INITIATIVES MAY NEVER GET TO THE CONGRESS OR MAY DIE THERE.

HERE ARE MY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE CITIES:

*THE PRESIDENT CUT ASSISTED HOUSING UNITS BY 25 PERCENT IN THE 1980 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION. WITH 60 PERCENT OF THE HOUSING IN MASSACHUSETTS OVER FORTY YEARS OLD, I CANNOT SUPPORT THAT DRASTIC A REDUCTION. I WILL SEEK MORE FUNDS.

* CONGRESS LET THE COUNTERCYCLICAL FISCAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EXPIRE AT THE END OF THE LAST CONGRESS. I WILL SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST FOR \$400 MILLION OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS TO HELP DISTRESSED CITIES WITH SHORT TERM FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.

* THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) WILL COME BEFORE

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CONGRESS FOR NEW AUTHORIZATION THIS YEAR. I WILL SUPPORT IT AND WILL WORK TO SEE THAT LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAMS FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ARE TARGETED MORE EQUITABLY FOR NEW ENGLAND'S CITIES.

*REVENUE SHARING FOR CITIES WILL EXPIRE THIS YEAR, IF CONGRESS DOES NOT TAKE ACTION. OPPONENTS OF THIS PROGRAM ARGUE THAT IT SHOULD BE PHASED OUT BECAUSE IT IS "DEFICIT SHARING". I SUPPORT REVENUE SHARING BECAUSE IT HAS ALLOWED CITIES TO STABILIZE THEIR PROPERTY TAX BASE WHICH IS AN IMPORTANT INCENTIVE TO PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

FUTHERMORE, THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET FOR NEXT YEAR CALLS FOR SEVERE CUTS IN WELFARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES. TO MY MIND, CUTTING BACK ON THESE VITAL PROGRAMS WILL MEAN BAILING OUT OUR CITIES AT AN EVEN GREATER COST LATER ON. THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT WILL BE TO HURT THE PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM THE GREATEST NEED IN OUR SOCIETY.

SO WHAT IS LEFT OF THE CARTER PROGRAM? THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK IS THE ONLY MAJOR ITEM WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION WILL ASK CONGRESS TO CONSIDER. THE BANK AS PROPOSED BY THE PRESIDENT WOULD FINANCIALLY SUPPORT LOW INTEREST LOANS TO BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY LOCATED IN DISTRESSED AREAS. I SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT BANK CONCEPT AS ANOTHER MEANS TO PROVIDE JOBS AND INCOME FOR THE POOR AND UNEMPLOYED.

THERE IS LITTLE AGREEMENT IN WASHINGTON ON HOW THE BANK SHOULD WORK AND WHO IT WILL HELP. LAST YEAR, THERE WERE SEVEN DIFFERENT BANK BILLS AND TWO MAJOR COMMITTEE STUDIES. THIS YEAR WE CAN EXPECT AS MANY. I WILL STRONGLY FAVOR A NATIONAL BANK THAT TARGETS MONEY TO HELP BUSINESSES IN DISTRESSED AREAS RATHER THAN SPREADING THE MONEY AROUND, AND FOCUSES

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PRIMARILY ON ASSISTING SMALL BUSINESSES. I SUPPORT THE LATTER BECAUSE THE BULK OF NEW MANUFACTURING JOBS ARE GENERATED BY BUSINESSES WITH LESS THAN 200 EMPLOYEES. I THINK WE SHOULD PUT OUR RESOURCES WHERE WE CAN PRODUCE THE MOST JOBS.

WITH A LACK OF STRONG INITIATIVE IN WASHINGTON, THE FATE OF OUR CITIES WILL FALL MORE AND MORE INTO THE LAPS OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, PRIVATE INVESTORS AND CITIZEN GROUPS. WE HAVE HAD STRONG LOCAL AND STATE EFFORTS HERE IN MASSACHUSETTS. IN FACT, THE OFFICE OF STATE PLANNING HAS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN HELPING LOCAL COMMUNITIES DEVELOP REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES. OUR STATE'S PROGRAMS HAVE GAINED NATIONAL ATTENTION.

WE NEED MORE THAN EVER TO CONTINUE THAT CREATIVE COOPERATION AT THE STATE, LOCAL AND FEDERAL LEVEL. MY OWN SUCCESS IN GETTING THE LOWELL PARK LEGISLATION PASSED IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW THAT PROCESS HAS WORKED IN THE PAST.

WHEN THE LOWELL PARK LEGISLATION WAS INTRODUCED FOUR YEARS AGO, THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OPPOSED IT. THE PARK SERVICE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN THE FAR-OUT IDEA OF A NATIONAL PARK IN AN URBAN AREA; THERE WAS NO PRECEDENT FOR TELLING THE STORY OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION; AND THE MAGNITUDE OF THE RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS IN THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION AREA REACHED FAR BEYOND THEIR SCOPE. THIS WAS MASSIVE URBAN REVITALIZATION, AND THE PARK SERVICE WOULDN'T TOUCH IT.

HOW DID WE TRANSFORM THEIR NOTION OF THE PARK AND HOW IT WOULD WORK? WE NEEDED ANOTHER AGENCY OF GOVERNMENT TO DEAL WITH THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS INVOLVED. WE HAD TO CONVINCE THE PARK SERVICE THAT

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THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WOULD CARRY ON WITH THE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT WORK -- IF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MADE A COMMITMENT. AND WE HAD TO CONVINCE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY THAT LOWELL WAS WORTH SAVING AND COULD COME BACK.

A PLANNER DREAMED UP THE IDEA OF A PARK COMMISSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL, STATE AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THE COMMISSION HAS THE AUTHORITY TO PRESERVE AND RESTORE HISTORIC STRUCTURES THREATENED BY ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT. IT ALSO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STRATEGY FOR USE OF THE CITY'S HISTORIC RESOURCES. SO FAR, NOT ONE FEDERAL DOLLAR HAS BEEN SPENT ON THE PARK. BUT THE NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARK HAS GIVEN THE BUSINESS AND BANKING COMMUNITIES THE CONFIDENCE TO INVEST IN LOWELL'S FUTURE.

IF YOU GO TO LOWELL TODAY, YOU WILL SEE THAT THE CITY IS A MODEL FOR OTHER CITIES. IT IS ALSO A SYMBOL OF HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO CONVINCE A CITY TO BELIEVE IN ITSELF ONCE AGAIN. TO MY MIND, THE WORST THING CONFRONTING REVITALIZATION EFFORTS IS NOT LACK OF MONEY OR A FEDERAL POLICY. IT IS THE ATTITUDE THAT A COMMUNITY CANNOT COME BACK.

THE LOWELL PARK IS A TURNING POINT FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WHICH HAS BEGUN TO SHIFT SOME OF ITS RESOURCES INTO OTHER CITIES. STATES, INCLUDING MASSACHUSETTS, ARE PUTTING PARKS ON THEIR URBAN AGENDA. THIS PROVES THAT THERE IS ALWAYS NEW GROUND TO BE BROKEN. THE CREATIVE ENERGY AND COMMITMENT WHICH INDIVIDUALS HAVE EXERCISED IN TURNING AROUND LOWELL MUST CONTINUE AND BE EXPANDED. IT IS THE LOWELLS, THE CHICOPEES, THE CHELSEAS,

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WHERE OPPORTUNITIES ARE TODAY. THE REAL TEST OF THE INNOVATIVE IDEAS YOU HAVE LEARNED IN YOUR STUDIES WILL COME IN THESE CITIES. IT IS HERE THAT THE REAL SOLUTIONS TO THE NITTY GRITTY PROBLEMS OF OUR CITIES LIE.

LOWELL IS A TESTIMONY TO THE WORDS OF THE FIFTH CENTURY POLITICIAN IN A CITY CALLED ATHENS. ARISTIDES SAID:

"NOT HOUSES FINELY ROOFED OR THE STONES OF WALLS WELL-BUILT
NAY NOR CANALS AND DOCKYARDS MAKE THE CITY, BUT MEN ABLE TO USE THEIR OPPORTUNITY."

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