

The Charlotte Post

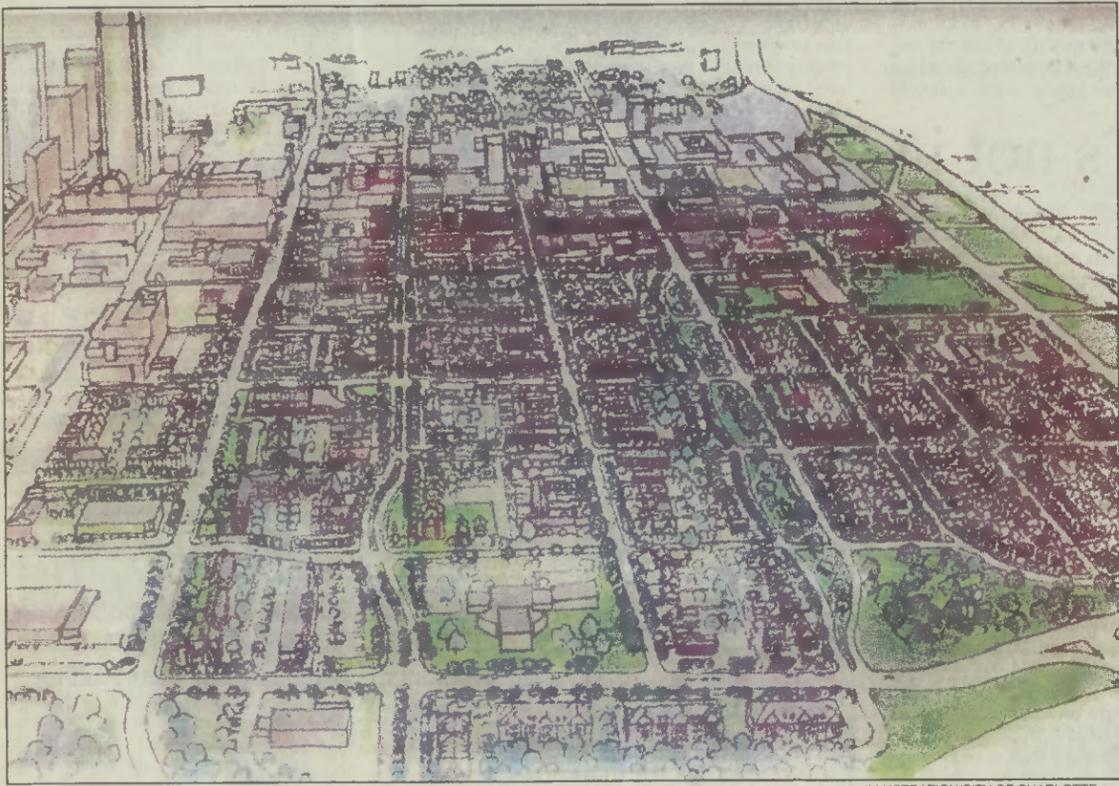
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75 CENTS

THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

ALSO SERVING CABARRUS, ROWAN AND YORK COUNTIES



ILLUSTRATION/CITY OF CHARLOTTE

This artists' rendition of First Ward includes a downsized Earle Village. About \$40 million is being spent to reduce the size of Earle Village uptown and Dalton Village in west Charlotte.

Urban Renewal

How secure is low-income housing in uptown Charlotte?

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Low income families in Charlotte have fewer housing options, in a market already short of decent housing for its poorest families, as a result of renovation projects underway.

Two of the city's largest public housing complexes are being downsized in renovation projects as part of a national strategy begun during the Reagan/Bush administrations and adopted by President Clinton.

About \$40 million is being

spent to reduce the size of Earle Village in uptown Charlotte and another \$24 million will be spent to do the same in Dalton Village in west Charlotte.

In all the city will lose nearly 10 percent of its 3,900 public housing units, for which hundreds of families are waiting.

Yvonne Scruggs, head of the Black Leadership Forum and a former national housing official, said the national effort could result in an increase in homelessness. Reducing housing for low income families, coupled with the cut off of federal welfare assistance, will force many families into the street or dilapidated housing, she said.

"We are going to have people sleeping on the street like we never saw before," said Scruggs, a deputy assistant secretary of

the Housing and Urban Development department. "There is no way to expect anything less than cataclysms in the social fabric."

The basic federal housing theory is to raze aging and deteriorating housing complexes and find alternative ways to fill the need for low income units, including use of vouchers and encouraging home ownership.

Nationwide at least \$2.5 billion has been spent over the past three years to demolish 23,000 housing units. Another 17,000 are scheduled for demolition - 4,000 to be replaced with new units - with \$716 million in grants announced last week by HUD officials. Another 63,000 units may be torn down by the year 2000, at a cost of about \$2.8 billion.

But advocates for the poor are predicting disaster, especially as welfare aid reductions begin.

"We are just beginning to see the effects of it," said Laura Weir, of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. "We will probably see more in the next couple of years."

"What has been happening with public housing is a reduction in the overall units available. Even when they are constructing new units, they are fewer than what was demolished. And for families receiving vouchers, often they are unable to use the vouchers.

Those who really are suffering are those waiting to get into public housing, a group likely to

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Scarborough takes reigns of N.C. League of Municipalities

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte City Council member Ella Scarborough took over the helm of the N.C. League of Municipalities Monday at one of its most critical times.

Her first priority as league president will be hiring a replacement for longtime executive director Dave Reynolds, who died Sept. 24.

For the past 15 years, Reynolds had been the organization's top employee, acting as lead lobbyist with the N.C. General Assembly.

Scarborough, a member of the league board for five years, will head the search process, which begins immediately, she said.

"The process was set up. The executive board met on that and developed a search committee," said Scarborough, a

five-term Charlotte council member. "Our second priority is to continue the lobbying effort with the N.C. General Assembly on issues such as annexation and unfunded mandates to keep our cities strong and healthy."

Scarborough is the first African American woman to head the League of Municipalities, which has had two black male presidents. She's the first Charlottean to

head the group since Jim Whittington in 1974.

Her one-year term ends with the league's next annual conference in October 1997 in Raleigh.

Scarborough gave the keynote address Tuesday at this year's conference at the Renaissance Center in Winston Salem.

Her fellow city council member, Nasif Majeed, a member of the group's nominating



Scarborough

committee, praised Scarborough and said he anticipated her strong leadership. "I think Ella is in a very strategic position," Majeed said.

"I think it is positive for the whole state."

"She will help our relationship with other cities. Certainly when we have someone from the largest urban core in the state working with other municipalities and helping them solve their problems, it helps people see our problems."

Scarborough said the new position will be a challenge, but one she's anxious to accept.

Adolescent pregnancy down among 15-19 year-olds

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Teen pregnancy in Mecklenburg County declined among girls 15-19 years old last year.

But more younger girls are getting pregnant, according to a study.

The N.C. Center for Health Statistics released statistics last week that indicate the pregnancy rate for females 15-19 went down for the fifth straight year, while girls 10-14 went up. In 1995, adolescent pregnancy in Mecklenburg dipped to a rate of 82.3 pregnancies per 1,000 females ages 15-19, a decrease of 9.3 percent from 1994's 90.7 percent. In North Carolina, the rate also decreased, sliding from

95.4 pregnancies per 1,000 females in 1994 to 91.4 last year.

"While the five-year trend for 15-19 year-olds is encouraging, the lack of a sustained reduction of the rates for 10-14 year-olds indicates the need for more work with this younger group of adolescents," said Dr. Stephen Keener, medical director of the Mecklenburg County Health Dept.

In Mecklenburg, 75 pregnancies to girls aged 10-14 were reported, for a rate of 4 for per 1,000 females in 1995. That rate is an 8.1 percent increase from 3.2 pregnancies per 1,000 the year before. The N.C. rate fell from 3.5 per 1,000 10-14 year-olds in '94 to 3.2 per 1,000 in '95.

Thereasa Elder, a member of

the Mecklenburg Council on Adolescent Pregnancy, said educating older teens is at least partially responsible for the reduction among 15-19 year-olds. In Mecklenburg, more emphasis has been placed on educating not only girls, but boys on the consequences of premarital sex in terms of pregnancy and sexually-transmitted disease.

"I think it's a combination of a lot of things," she said. "The programs have been geared for girls 15 to 19 years old and the men impregnating these girls are also getting this message."

The increase in 10-14 pregnancies is exacerbated by several factors, including older men establishing sexual relationships with girls, Elder said.



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