

Industrialization vs. dislocation in National City

Presently, in the West Side of National City we are witnessing a classical case of deslocation of their oldest Chicano barrio for the sake of progress.

HISTORY OF THE WEST SIDE

The West Side is where National City first originated, the majority of the people used to live in that area. At one time, City Hall was located there. The people and administration of National City were born here.

PLANS FOR RE-ZONING

The issue at hand, which is jeopardizing the survival of this historic and vital area is the conversion of this area from a residential zone to an industrial zone. Ever since 1958 the city Council has expressed deep interest for such an action. From this period up to the present there has been a total of three general plans proposed to select the course of development National City should follow. The general plans in Chronological order and their approximate cost are as follows:

- 1) 1960--\$40,000
- 2) 1965--36,000
- 3) 1974--50,000

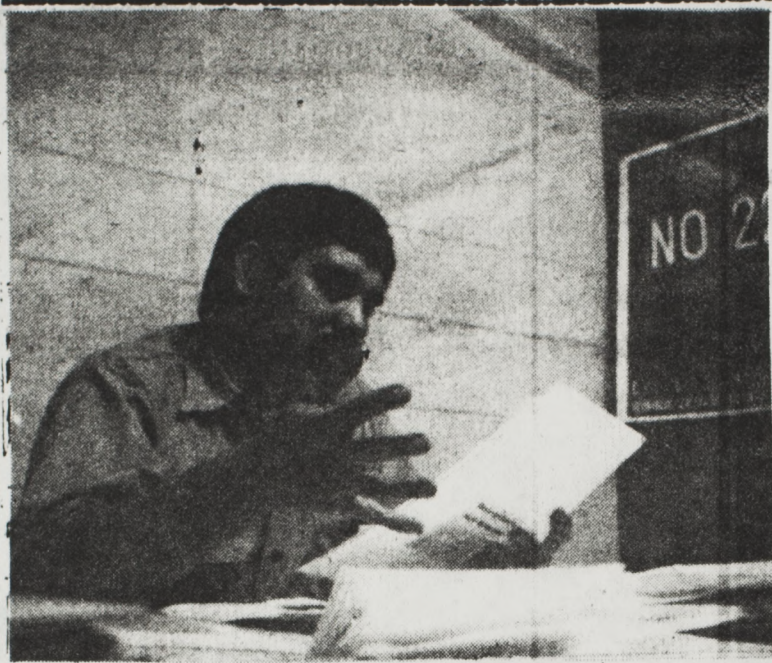
Those people responsible for the developing of these plans are consultants brought in from out of the city, as well as what the people of the community have come to know as "professional urban mis-planners". It is important to realize exactly who these people are and exactly whose interests they represent. Considering that these planners are brought in from out of the city and are making crucial plans for the direction of the city without consulting the people who live in the area, this fact alone demonstrates quite plainly that these planners do not represent the interest of the community.

What the attempt and probable success of re-zoning the West Side clearly illustrates according to Herman Baca, a Chicano community organizer of both C.A.S.A. and La Raza Unida Party, "is the corruption and misintensions of the vested interests of National City in relation to the Chicano community.

DETAILS OF RE-ZONING

What re-zoning from a residential to an industrial area entails is the destruction of the homes of 600 Chicano families, the destruction of Kimble School, as well as the destruction of St. Antonies' Church. As one can easily observe rezoning means the destruction of an entire community. The 600 Chicano families consist of generally older people who have grown up in this area and intend to spend the rest of their lives in this area. The people have developed a distinct loyalty for the area in which they have lived since their childhood. A significant amount of people, especially the older members, have expressed strong resistance to the demand that they move out of this area and look for some other place to live.

The general plan explicitly states that housing and industrialization will not be able to co-exist. The reason for such resistance



Community organizer, Herman Baca, relays the critical problem of dislocation in National City

from the community is due to several things, Kimble school being one of them. The composition of the student body attending Kimble is well over 90% Chicano. Kimble is one of the few schools in San Diego which administers bi-lingual programs. The need for a school of this nature is so great that people from throughout the city are being bussed in to benefit from such valuable programs. According to page 9 of the latest general plan, Kimble school would be closed upon the industrialization of the area.

The Church, as one may will imagine has a congregation which is highly made up of the 600 families being deslocated. The Senor Citizens as well as other members of the West Side community have developed great loyalties to the Church and its priest.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE PLAN

Now, the City Council has set up a formal procedure for the acceptance of the latest general plan. They have appointed an advisory committee which is suppose to hold eight meetings with the West Side community. What stands out as being an ironical characteristic of this committee is that no resident from the West Side has been formally appointed to this committee.

The first few meetings of the Advisory Committee were well attended by the West Side community (100-150 people) however, this rapidly changed. The people attended the meeting optimistically hoping to voice their opinions. Yet, once they arrived at the meetings they discovered that it was given entirely in English without any translation or interpreter offered. Even the general plan was solely written in English. Because, the majority of the residents monolingual, this type of procedure impedes their understanding and participation. Yet, the City Council seems to show little interest in changing this situation. The direction the Advisory Committee supports is well represented by one of their members, Ms. Teddy Tafoya, who is a resident of Chula Vista and is involved in the real estate business. At one meeting she stated that the West Side should be bulldozed for the area is blighted and should make way for progress. It was not until Ruben Rubio, four year resident of the West Side, we

went to the Town Council and brought to their attention the fact that the West Side residents were not represented on the Advisory Committee and at that moment he was arbitrarily appointed to the Committee. The community began to organize itself and appointed Jesse Ramirez to speak to the Town Council. Mr. Ramirez stressed that the residents of West Side National City are dead set against the general plan. At the same time he demanded that the plan be translated into Spanish, which according to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is a legal right of Spanish speaking people. The advisory Committee stated that such a translation would cost over \$3,188 and hence, decided against such an expenditure.

In another meeting of the Town Council the residents of the West Side demanded that anything making reference to the destruction of the 600 Chicano houses, Kimble School, or St. Antonies Church be deleted from the general plan. What is interesting to observe is that after the eight meetings of the Advisory Committee have been held, by supposedly by May 8, the City Council has the option of approving or disapproving any recommendations that may be proposed. Through this procedure one can see who is in total control and who is fighting an endless battle for representation.

Upon the re-zoning of the West side such commercial enterprizes such as hotels, motels, restaurants, and other quick-stop places of business will be constructed at the sacrifice of the Chicano community and its political power.

A PETITION IS MADE

A petition is presently being circulated in the West Side community. Basically what the petition contains are two things: 1) that any reference to the destruction of Kimble School, St. Antonies Church, or residential housing be deleted from the general plan; and 2) that the area known as the West Side be re-zoned back into a residential area. MAPA (Mexican-American Political Association) has already attained the signatures of 1,000 from the West Side. The Chicano community also intends to propose that the voting system be changed from one taken at large back to the ward system of voting, in which votes are taken according to blocks of concentration.

This whole issue is a classical one, which has consistently faced Chicanos, Latinos, Blacks, and Asians concentrated in one area, and hence perceived by the those ruling the government as a potential threat. Minorities and poor people are denied schools, and divided with the sole intention of weakening any potential power by destroying their basis of operation, the community.

It should be pointed out that in cases such as these, people are forced to react to the symptoms and not the real cause of their oppression. The real enemies are not the consultants, urban misplanners or even the tio tacos, but rather the governmental structure which allows such corruption to continue and which approves such misrepresentation. The continuous destruction of Chicano communities will not be stopped until the structure which supports it is destroyed!