

THE GOVERNMENT CENTER: BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Its Planning, Construction, and Importance to Boston  
and to Urban Renewal

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## PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to review the planning and construction of the Government Center of Boston, Massachusetts. As the first project in a general plan for the city of Boston that originally called for ten projects, the Government Center is particularly significant. This significance, its relationship to Boston's general plan, is an important and essential part of this paper, and warrants a great deal of discussion concerning Boston's urban renewal program.

The Government Center project is important to urban renewal because it has been one of the most successful efforts in that field. Its main coordinator, Edward J. Logue, was also the head of the New Haven, Connecticut, program, an equally successful endeavor. The structural links between these programs are largely the result of Logue's involvement and offer a guideline for urban renewal work. At the conclusion of this paper, a number of prerequisites for success in this field are suggested, based upon these structural links.

## INTRODUCTION

Since its official inception with the Housing Act in 1949, urban renewal has been one of the most controversial of topics, largely due to the fiascos that were perpetrated in the first decade of its existence. The 1950s were filled with uncertainties and blind attempts at achieving overnight successes in programs for the cities' problems. By 1960, the concept itself was under large-scale attack. By that time, however, many of the problems of urban renewal had been brought into sharp focus and a few areas were experiencing sound and fruitful results from local and federal agencies and planners. As an introduction to this paper, some of the recent studies of the problems and values of urban renewal are reviewed here.

Greer outlined the dilemma in the following terms:

Much of the confusion and downright contradiction in the present urban renewal program result from the unsystematic mixture of three quite different goals. The older goal of increasing low-cost housing, of eliminating and preventing slums, is mixed with the newer goal of revitalizing the central city; to both has been added the more recent goal of creating the planned American city through the community renewal program. But as these goals are translated into the actions of municipal bodies, based on local interests, they seem to be moving rapidly toward a program concerned only with revitalizing the central business district.<sup>A</sup>

The "problems" urban renewal faces are the result of land-use commitments originally made as a response to market values. They are complicated by the present governmental fragmentation of the urban area and the resulting tax inequities.<sup>B</sup>

James Q. Wilson presented six obstacles to urban renewal success:

(1) Federally-sponsored projects such as renewal require dealing successfully with almost endless amounts of red tape; it has taken a long time for city governments and

private developers to acquire the knowledge and experience required for this...

(2) it is not always easy to find a private developer to whom the land can be sold...

(3) Blighted areas are often Negro areas...

(4) (There is) mounting disagreement over the methods and even the objectives of urban renewal...

(5) The coalition among liberals, planners, businessmen, mayors, and real estate interests which originally made renewal politically so irresistible has begun to fall apart...

(6) the growing resistance of neighborhoods to clearance and renewal programs.<sup>C</sup>

A number of particular problems have arisen, and a great deal of study has been given to the role of and the effects on certain groups of urban renewal. These studies are sampled below:

For city-wide officials, such as mayors and planners, the crucial problem is how to make attention to...neighborhood demands compatible with city-wide programs, almost all of which will, to some extent, impose hardships on some neighborhoods.<sup>D</sup>

Local citizenship participation on a city-wide basis is usually not too difficult to obtain...But getting the participation, much less the acquiescence, of citizens in the renewal neighborhood is something else again...the increased vigor of neighborhood opposition has made such participation expedient if not essential.<sup>E</sup>

...that flexible instrument, the U.S. industrial corporation, has a large part to play in eradicating "the shame of the cities".<sup>F</sup>

We need to think carefully of the structure of government that can insure the essentials of redistribution, serve as an adequate protagonist for areal planning and the metropolitan housing and labor market, and still permit room enough for a vital and even competitive diversity among its municipal components...The most powerful antidote to locational obsolescence in the hands of a municipality is not in the brick and mortar cosmetics of urban renewal but in the continued human renewal of the quality of its public service.<sup>G</sup>

This last passage leads directly into the criticisms of urban renewal by recent researchers, some sympathizers and some condemnors. The first quote, by Greer, expands on the problems which have resulted in the broad criticisms even by those who sup-

port the concept of urban renewal.

The urban renewal program lacks the powers necessary to fulfill its radical aims. It also lacks the precedents that could create legitimacy for those aims. It is hemmed in by laws which support the individual's choice of residence and land use, which leave building to the marketplace and real estate, which leave action to the local public agency. But its most important limits are, simply, the limits of our knowledge. We have never before faced a wealthy, rapidly changing, urban complex, with a determination to mold it into a form suitable to our desires. We do not know enough about the forces producing the metropolis and we know less of the stratagems that would allow us to control its growth.<sup>H</sup>

To compound the failure of urban renewal to help the poor, many clearance areas were chosen,....,not because they had the worst slums, but because they offered the best sites for luxury housing--housing that would have been built whether the urban renewal program existed or not...

...because the policy has been to clear a district of all slums at once in order to assemble large sites to attract private developers, entire neighborhoods have frequently been destroyed...

...if urban renewal has benefitted anyone, it is private enterprise...

The solution, then, is not to repeal urban renewal, but to transform it from a program of slum clearance and rehabilitation into a program of urban rehousing.<sup>I</sup>

...the program's basic defects remain:

1. It overemphasizes slum clearance and lacks an adequate housing program for those it evicts and for those who live in slums it proposes tearing down...
2. It relies almost exclusively on the speculative profit motive for the clearance of these slums and the rebuilding of slum neighborhoods.
3. It deals primarily with only one aspect of the city's predicament...while it ignores its others--poverty, social unrest, school problems, racial frictions, decline of its economic base, and the lack of financial resources to cope with its major difficulties.<sup>J</sup>

The principal objection from which nearly all the specific criticisms flow is that the present program gives inadequate consideration to the realities of the residential real estate market, particularly as they apply to the housing needs of the low-income population.<sup>K</sup>

The most scathing critic of urban renewal has perhaps been Martin Anderson, particularly in his book The Federal Bulldozer.

...the main factors that will improve living conditions are (1) increased personal incomes and (2) improved housing technology that will lower housing costs...

There are many important issues in the urban renewal question, but there is one which is both the most important and the easiest to understand. The local government must have the power to take by force the private property of one man--his home, his land, his business--with the intent of turning it over to some other man for his private use and personal gain...

Urban renewal has been rejected by at least 70 towns and cities that I know of, and unquestionably many more will reject it in the future...

Anyone who is for an urban renewal program must also be for, at the same time

- . The forcible displacement of millions of citizens from their homes.

- . The seizure of one man's private property for another man's private use.

- . The destruction of hundreds of thousands of low-rent homes.

- . The spending of billions of dollars of the taxpayers' money.

...It is recommended that the federal urban renewal program be repealed now. No new projects should be authorized; the program should be phased out by completing as soon as possible, all current projects. The federal urban renewal program conceived in 1949 had admirable goals. Unfortunately it has not achieved them in the past and cannot achieve them in the future. Only free enterprise can.<sup>L</sup>

In answer to some of these critics are the following passages:

As I see it there are two dangers in the future.

The first is the existing tendency to cite the program's defects--real and imaginary--as a basis for doing away with it entirely...

The second danger...is that we will attempt to freeze the form of what is still a young and evolving program.<sup>M</sup>

If urban renewal has accomplished nothing else, it has stimulated a new interest in cities and highlighted the need for doing something about them before it is too late. If its impositions upon individuals have been oppressive and if some of its cleared sites may never see brick and mortar rise over them, something hopeful may yet be discovered in the rubble. If Congress can be aroused to keep looking and searching for the real causes and cures of urban erosion, urban renewal and its concomitant programs will be a gain.<sup>N</sup>

A number of solutions have been offered within the context of retaining urban renewal. The following, some of which contradict the others in a way, come from Gans, Greer, Fried, and Glad-

stone, respectively.

I believe that the only solution to the present impasse is more federal intervention, and since this cannot be achieved by federal control of local programs, it must be effected by the expenditure of more federal funds. Of course, federal subsidies are now accepted because of local demands and pressures for them, but the availability of new funds would create new local demands.<sup>0</sup>

...the power of eminent domain and the right to borrow funds for the temporary acquisition of land should be adequate. Since the benefits and interests are strictly local, these powers should be granted to the local development agency by the state, along with the responsibility for their use. With scarce funds and a broad assignment, the federal government should not be subsidizing real estate ventures in the cities when they are "winners". It certainly should not do so if there is no real demand for the sites and they are, consequently, "losers".<sup>P</sup>

In general, our results would imply the necessity for providing increased opportunities for maintaining a sense of continuity for those people, mainly from the working class, whose residential areas are being renewed. This may involve several factors: (1) Diminishing the amount of drastic redevelopment and the consequent mass demolition of property and mass dislocation from homes; (2) providing more frequently for people to move within their former residential areas during and after the renewal; and (3) when dislocation and relocation are unavoidable, planning the relocation possibilities in order to provide new areas which can be assimilated to old objectives.<sup>Q</sup>

Gladstone lists under possible approaches the following:

- 1-Substantially independent private operations, with minimum government involvement. Essentially this is a status quo approach. Further "encouragement" as appropriate, by use of government powers to control and spend-including zoning, utilities and municipal services extension, highway and access development, open space acquisition-might also be involved.
- 2-Land development insurance programs for large-scale building and land development operations. The beginnings of this program have been incorporated into the '65 act. This approach would involve private land acquisition and the development of sites with back-up support in the form of credit risk insurance through standard Federal Housing Administration sources.
- 3-Eminent domain procedure involving public acquisition by local authority and improvement, followed by subsequent disposition to developers for final construction operations. Fundamentally, this is an urban renewal type of operation...
- 4-Direct action by state agency to undertake new communities



development, with or without eminent domain procedures. A variant of this approach would be direct action by another specially created public or quasi-public development corporation, which would perform similar new community development tasks.<sup>R</sup>

It is in the light of this controversy and lack of understanding that Boston set out on its urban renewal program of gigantic proportions in 1960. The scepticism of the new decade reflected the failures, many of them absolute, of the 1950s in urban renewal. If only for its daring and its scope, this program deserves study. This paper is only a prelude to the study which is needed to understand the success of the Boston program in the 1960s and the problems and potential disaster it faces in the 1970s. It covers the first of ten original projects and thus is only that complete. Yet it serves a purpose against this introductory background. By relating the success of a major urban renewal project, it hopes to reinforce some support for that concept, which support has only seriously developed since the success of New Haven's program. The emphasis upon the importance of New Haven cannot be overdone, and in that light this paper attempts to focus upon the key figure in New Haven and Boston, Edward Logue. A study of the techniques of probably the most successful of the urban renewal figures in this country is another aim of this paper which is closely related to the questions and doubts the cited theorists have raised. In short, this is a record of a good urban renewal project, a record which seeks to illustrate the new hope for urban renewal that was expressed in that concept's second decade and how that hope was developed from the tragedies of its first ten years.

## BOSTON, 1960: A CITY IN CRISIS

During the decade that ended in 1960, Boston was struck by most of the problems of the major U.S. cities that had suffered a substantial loss of their core populations. Since 1950, the city's population had dropped from 801,444 to 697,197.<sup>1</sup> The productive age group had declined 8.4%, while the younger and older groups had increased 10.8 and 25.0%, respectively. While the white population declined by 17.1%, the nonwhite population increased 60.2%.<sup>2</sup> While the city, unlike its U.S. counterparts, experienced no construction boom after 1945, its major problem was its declining tax base, which constituted 65% of the city's income. The tax rate had risen to \$101.20 per \$1000 of assessed valuation by 1960, the highest of any major American city, more than twice that of New York, Cleveland, Philadelphia, or Chicago. Contributing to the problem was the fact that 42% of Boston's real estate was tax exempt (churches, schools, medical and governmental institutions). New construction was virtually impossible under the financial conditions; in 1960, Boston was the first U.S. city faced with the prospect of bankruptcy.

Several factors contributed to this decline. Since the early 19th century, Boston had changed from a strong-core radial city to a dispersed circumferential one. This process was accelerated by the growth of the highway and trucking industries after 1945. In Boston, this meant "the creation of the increased use of the automobile and the truck...and the diminishing need for workers to locate in the Regional Core and in the radial transportation corridors."<sup>3</sup> The major effect was on the shipping and textile industries, the former being largely displaced and the latter moving to the south and west. "About half the City's industrial

job losses occurred in the Regional Core. New methods of goods production and distribution placed the outworn, congested Core at a competitive disadvantage with more spacious, prestigious, and easily accessible suburban sites."<sup>4</sup> "Metal fabrication,...., along with electrical and non-electrical machinery and instruments manufacturing firms were among the first to migrate to the suburbs, and unless those that remain are provided with expansion space and sufficient transportation, they, too, (apparel, printing, and food processing equal about one-half of the present manufacturing activity) might eventually leave the City...Boston still has two-thirds of the Region's jobs in wholesaling, but the growth of wholesaling exclusively in the metropolitan area outside the City indicates that the City's share is diminishing."<sup>5</sup> It is "doubtful that manufacturing will ever again represent so large a share of Boston's economy as it did in the years before and during the Second World War."<sup>6</sup>

Boston's bond rating was lower than that for any other U.S. city over 500,000. It also suffered from "adverse development conditions" as a result of its "topography, tidelands and drainage channels,...historic railroad and harbor development patterns." It had "undesirable cleavages in the land, missing circulation links between centers of activity and a good deal of underused land and transportation resources."<sup>7</sup>

In addition, the city had such disadvantages as excessively burdensome electrical costs, high fuel costs, harsh climate, poor geographical position, low industrial wage rates, and no raw materials except scenery, historical buildings, and timber. It experienced environmental blight in the form of "external environmental influences, such as lack of sunlight, alterations

in area-wide patterns of development, neighborhood economic changes, incompatibility of land uses, inappropriate relationships between traffic and land uses, or lack of basic public services" that affected whole areas at a time.<sup>8</sup>

It was a city of "corrupt politics and warring factions."<sup>9</sup> As Mayor John F. Collins entered office in 1960 at the age of 39, a political dark horse with little or no restraining political ties, he found a central business district that had lost 14,000 jobs and 78 million dollars in taxable assessment in a decade. Recently, four large retail stores, doing \$50 million in business a year, had closed. The waterfront was "moribund". Total city employment since 1950 had declined by 16,000.

Boston possessed a number of assets, however, including "new investment capital, a developing back pressure from Route 128 (where new industrial parks had been developing in the suburbs throughout the 1950s), a pent-up demand for new office space, and cheap land made for profitable real estate investment if city taxes could be stabilized."<sup>10</sup> Boston had historic, variegated neighborhoods; regionally and nationally known cultural facilities and historic landmarks; existing and potentially open spaces along rivers and the harbor; topographical variety; and proximity of residential and major institutional and business centers.

With Collins as mayor, "Boston got moving again".

Having hit bottom economically with the departure of the textile mills and other large factories, the city turned to one of its oldest resources--its brains, the universities--and began to regard them as a major economic potential. The universities themselves had already begun ambitious building programs, but this was not enough. The leaders of the city proper--not only the politicians, but the professionals, the real estate fraternity, and the businessmen--also picked up the legend of historic gentility which enveloped the city and threw it out. Boston, lover of the past, was pushed into a passionate affair with a new swain, urban renewal.<sup>11</sup>

The chances that Collins took were great in number and scope. He confronted a prejudice against renewal that was as great as any in the country. Two attempts by his predecessors had turned out to be "unmitigated disasters".<sup>12</sup> In the early fifties, a 38-block, 41-acre low-rent neighborhood was levelled at Castle Square and New York Street where they were replaced by tasteless high-rent apartment houses. Later, in the West End, at the foot of Beacon Hill where the hill is separated from the Charles River, came the John F. Kennedy Expressway project which split the waterfront from the city, largely accounting for the former area's decay, a project "still cited as one of the horror stories of urban renewal."<sup>13</sup>

## THE GOVERNMENT CENTER BEFORE 1960-BEGINNINGS

The idea of a government center in Boston was tossed around as early as the mid-1930s. Not until the early 1950s, however, was there any serious consideration of the idea by the city government, and then their major contribution was one of recognition of the need for such a center. Boston's mayor during the 1950s was John B. Hynes. In 1951, a preliminary report on a General Plan for Boston was submitted, and development became a more real concern with Ordinance 4 of August 5, 1952, which established a nine-man City Planning Board to deal with a variety of problems including public buildings and urban redevelopment. The government center idea was seriously debated in 1954, and in August, 1956, the City Planning Board offered a preliminary report on the Government Center study. Another major step was the organization of the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 1957 as a semi-autonomous body. Support was gained from the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Committee on Civic Progress, the Boston Real Estate Board, the Municipal Research Bureau, the Retail Trade Board, labor organizations, civic groups, and government officials, especially the Boston City Council and Boston representatives in the General Court and the U.S. Congress. On January 1, 1958, Governor Furcolo announced:

I recommend that immediate steps be taken to authorize or provide for a state office building, at reasonable cost, in conformity with generally accepted conditions. I urge that favorable consideration be given to the location of the proposed state office building within the suggested area known as the government center and that cooperation be encouraged among the federal government, the state government, and the City of Boston in this endeavor to the end that this project may be undertaken without undue delay.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, in January, 1958, the City Planning Board issued a

paper on the Government Center Project. The following is the opening statement of that paper:

All levels of government--City, County, State, Federal--are in need of adequate and economical office space in Boston.

A site can be provided in downtown Boston for all of these accommodations within a single efficient center.

This integrated Government Center can be built on land now occupied by decadent and obsolete properties.

The proposed Center would be located close to existing Government buildings, the retail heart of the city, and the downtown office district. It has mass transit and automobile access advantages that cannot be duplicated elsewhere.

The construction of the Center would serve to stabilize private property values in the vicinity and to generate substantial new private investment.

It would be able to capitalize on the famous "Freedom Trail" of historic sites in and near the project area.

The proposal has already received enthusiastic support from business, civic and labor groups and government officials.

The Government Center is a large-scale undertaking. It can become a place of functional beauty. It can increase the attractiveness of Boston as a place to live and do business, and it can add greatly to the prestige that Boston now enjoys throughout the world.<sup>15</sup>

The Board argued that the present governmental facilities in Boston were inadequate, inefficient, and costly. For example, a new federal office building, consolidating eleven federal agency locations, would save approximately \$995,000 in annual rent.

The site recommended for the Government Center was Scollay Square. Scollay Square was Boston's honky tonk and Skid Row, filled with bars, flophouses, small businesses, and some light industry. It was close to the State House and adjoined the business and financial district. It was served by five subway stations and was just off the Central Artery, a major highway. According to the Board, it met the requirements of a site "at reasonable cost in which the present uses of the land are outmoded and decadent."<sup>16</sup> Also, the Board felt that there was "a dire need

to eliminate the present conditions, which are hazardous to the public health and safety...(and) to prevent the continued decline of property values in the area and to check the deep blight spreading into adjacent areas."<sup>17</sup> Another advantage of the site was that it was adjacent to a new parking garage to be constructed and an old existing one.

The Board listed several other objectives to be sought in the Government Center:

(1) The street and block pattern within the proposed project area is antiquated and inadequate. The plan provides for more direct and simplified traffic movements within the Center. These street improvements are beneficial to the Center and contribute as well to improved access to other parts of downtown.

(2) The plan capitalizes on the unusually good access to the site by rapid transit. The increased use of these transit facilities is essential to the future welfare of metropolitan Boston.

(3) The plan provides for the creation of necessary new public facilities in a presently low value area in a way designed to encourage new private investment and to stabilize and increase the values of existing properties adjacent to the Center.<sup>18</sup>

Sites for state, county, and federal buildings and a city hall were decided upon. Room was left in the project area for other proposals, such as "a consolidated police station, a School Committee building, or others as may be required."<sup>19</sup> Private development sites were divided between small prime sites, between the other buildings, and large new blocks, to be created by the new street pattern. The Board insisted that at the very minimum, "the Government Center project must be large enough to permit private enterprise to provide: (a) the accessory services to meet the demand created by more than two million square feet of floor space in new government buildings and (b) off-street parking accommodations insofar as it would be economically sound for private



parties to do so."<sup>20</sup>

The emphasis on beauty as well as utility was stressed in the following paragraph:

...it is absolutely essential that its physical layout be as efficient and attractive as any such center in the world, in keeping with the Boston tradition of charm and liveability. To achieve this, it will be necessary to utilize some of the land area made available within this project for public pedestrian ways and landscaped open space.

Related to this consideration is the opportunity to take advantage of historic assets within and near the Center.<sup>21</sup>

The project area was to be 32 gross acres at a 1957 assessment of land and buildings of \$12 million. The plan foresaw the following apportionments of land area and 1957 valuations of that land: state building site-180,000 square feet at \$1.9 million; county site-90,000 at \$1.1 million; federal site-180,000 at \$2.3 million; City Hall-150,000 at \$1.1 million; private development areas-350,000 at \$5 million; historic area-40,000 at \$600,000; plus future private development-320,000 at \$4.2 million for a total of 1.3 million square feet at \$16 million. These were the maximum figures.<sup>22</sup>

The Beard felt that the project did not qualify for federal funds since it was non-residential, but hoped to gain some aid by the Housing Act of 1954, Section 702, which provided for loans for the planning of public works. In February, 1958, Mayor Hynes and the City Council wrote a bill to borrow up to \$50 million for a City Hall and to construct and sell to the U.S. a federal office building. In 1959, the Board issued a plan for the project area by Adams, Howard, and Greeley that was "generally praised and did not involve federal funds."<sup>23</sup>

Thus, Mayor Hynes accomplished a great deal of work towards

the planning of the Government Center. His successors would retain most of the goals and the general format of the Center. Yet in 1960, the Government Center was still nothing but a bunch of papers and ideas, and Boston was facing a desperate economic threat. At a secret meeting in 1959 of major Boston bankers, presided over by Ralph Lowell of the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company, the subject was the possibility that Boston might have to declare bankruptcy and whether the bankers should stand by as receivers in that case. The outlook for the city was expressed by one banker as "we might as well fold up the whole show and put it to a Commission form of government."<sup>24</sup>

## THE TURNING POINT-1960

Mayor John Collins went into almost immediate action in his fight to save Boston. By reducing the number of city jobs by 1,200 and improving the efficiency of collection, he attacked the tax rate, managing to lower it to \$96 per \$1000 assessed valuation in 1963. He used the Boston Citizen Seminars at Boston College, a program established in 1954, to openly discuss the problems of the city and built up confidence in his plan for a "New Boston". These seminars were designed to get the "people who owned Boston on speaking terms with the people who ran Boston."<sup>25</sup>

In many ways Boston was ready for changes, not just from the viewpoint of desperation. The 47,000 jobs lost in the textile and leather industries from 1947 to 1959 were compensated for by a doubling of scientists, engineers, and technicians in electronics and defense industries and in transportation equipment manufacturing. The Boston Chamber of Commerce estimated that more than \$2 billion a year was being spent in Boston's vicinity by the federal government for new research, particularly in the rising space industry. This led to better chances that private risk money would be forthcoming. While previously Boston's capital, outside of property taxes, depended largely upon imports and exports, one Harvard economist felt that the surge of capital back to Boston brought about by these scientific enterprises was the first lasting growth factor to be experienced by the city since the Civil War. The demand, as well as the need, for improvement was also there.

The city went for years with no major construction, so that there is much pent-up demand. Important impetus for Boston's building boom also comes from the scientific community that has planted itself around Route 128, outside Boston.

Boston-based organizations a dozen years ago saw the

potential of the research-based industry and nurtured it. Now they are seeing the tangible results of their efforts.

For although the young scientific community has based its plant facilities outside Boston proper, it always has been dependent on the city's banks, investment companies, insurance groups, university facilities and faculties.<sup>26</sup>

Collins began immediately to insure the participation of the federal and state governments in his plans, especially for the Government Center. He "borrowed executives from Gillette Company and John Hancock to help run his administration efficiently. He auctioned off unused parcels of city land for commercial development, took a personal hand in locating new industry, and glossed over the Irish-Yankee rift with his own brand of non-partisan politics."<sup>27</sup> Later, his efforts would gain him the following praise:

In bringing responsible and honest municipal government to scandal-scarred Boston, he has so far managed to inspire a surprising amount of confidence with the Yankee business community. The latter, in fact, has even been enticed into the renewal of the waterfront and the central business district.<sup>28</sup>

In crystallizing his urban renewal program, Collins first major act was to enlist the services of Edward J. Logue. Logue had been Mayor Richard E. Lee's Development Administrator in New Haven, Connecticut since 1954. In New Haven, Logue "demanded" and got, the most massively centralized planning and renewal powers that any large city has ever voted to one man (other than New York's Robert Moses)."<sup>29</sup> With Lee, "the two wrote renewal history by accomplishing more with less cash than was done in almost any other U.S. city. Lee and Logue also wrote the urban-renewal plank at the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles in 1960."<sup>30</sup> Logue was appointed Development Administrator

under Collins of the Boston Redevelopment Authority and head of the office of development for the mayor in direct charge of all city planning. He was given a starting salary of \$30,000 a year fringe benefits, more than any other redevelopment executive in the country and more than either the mayor of Boston or the governor of Massachusetts. On January 25, 1961, the BRA was reorganized to give Logue his commanding position. Under him the BRA became the largest staff of its kind in the U.S.

On September 22, 1960, at the Old South Meeting House, Collins presented a city-wide redevelopment master plan, drafted by Logue, which outlined ten areas for renewal, including Scollay Square. It was "an entirely new approach",<sup>31</sup> a scale of renewal never before attempted. It was "a City-wide attempt to treat both the causes and major symptoms of Boston's physical decline. Its highest aim is to strengthen those unique assets which have made Boston, throughout its history, the 'City of Ideas!'.<sup>32</sup> This rebuilding would potentially affect 25% of the 31 square miles of Boston and half of its population. Collins was convinced that the "City of Boston can afford to undertake this program now and all at once. The more serious question is can it afford not to."<sup>33</sup> His sights were set high: "The most attractive city in America is our goal, and we will make it."<sup>34</sup> The mood of the address and the program was expressed five years later in a BRA report:

Changes in the postwar urban environment have been accompanied by a new, characteristically urban style of living. Rising personal incomes, increased mobility and leisure time, and mass education, among other things, have added immensely to the range of functions cities must perform if they are to retain their vitality.

In this context, Boston's potentials should more than offset its problems. Scientific research in the fields of space, medicine, electronics, and other manufacturing industries had already laid the foundation for an entirely

new industrial economy in the Region that promises, at the very least, to equal the accomplishments of the old. The Region's renowned educational and medical institutions, largely responsible for the new economic growth, continue to expand rapidly. And in terms of aesthetic appeal, Boston has never been lacking for unique architecture, an historic atmosphere, and almost unparalleled natural recreational assets. With assets such as these, Boston, the City of Ideas, should come to the forefront of an entirely new and advanced urban economy.<sup>35</sup>

Collins proposed two legislative actions to assist the program. First, "an amendment to the state redevelopment law to permit the borrowing of federal funds to acquire property during the planning of a project" and second, "a program of state financial assistance to cities for urban renewal projects."<sup>36</sup> Collins also supported his program from the standpoint of private investment potential.

The fundamental reason why the City of Boston has adopted a publicly-supported, comprehensive program of development is not that there has been too little desirable private development in Boston, but that there has been much less than there might have been, had private development been guided and encouraged by public action.<sup>37</sup>

"After 90,000 hours of debate and fights in neighborhood meetings, City Council chambers, in newspaper offices and on Beacon Hill, Boston adopted the plan."<sup>38</sup> The BRA put almost the entire city under General Neighborhood Renewal Planning, a system of surveys and evaluations. Thus, Collins and Logue were off on their "sweeping, federally assisted renewal program",<sup>39</sup> and Boston was well on its way to becoming "the busiest renewal city for its size in the country."<sup>40</sup>

The Government Center soon became the fastest moving of all the projects, the program's top priority. "The project was pushed first because there was no argument about need. The section was dilapidated, and it posed no tricky relocation problem."<sup>41</sup>

Collins and Logue supported the project for four reasons:

- (1) because it would boost what was then Boston's only growth industry, government;
- (2) because it would symbolize the New Boston which Collins had promised to build;
- (3) it would be strategically located to help revitalize all of downtown; and
- (4) because it could be realized at little cost to a financially pinched city.<sup>42</sup>

Further, they believed that it would "enhance the setting for historic buildings in the area, notably the Old State House, Faneuil Hall, and Sears Crescent on Cornhill."<sup>43</sup> Collins set off 52 acres evaluated at \$15 million on Scollay Square for the project and hoped to raise the valuation to \$16 million despite the prevalence of tax-exempt institutions in the plan. It was proposed that the plan be carried out through a "nonresidential federally aided redevelopment project."<sup>44</sup> The project would connect with a 48-acre West End redevelopment project to the west, a 100-acre waterfront project to the east, and the downtown and financial area to the south. It would include a \$20 million City Hall, a \$29 million federal office building, a \$34 million state service center, a \$26 million state office building containing 22 stories and 33 departments, a \$7 million parking garage for 2000 cars, a \$20 million private 8-story office building, a rehabilitated Sears Crescent block, new Massachusetts Transit Authority facility and track relocation changes at Scollay Square, about a \$45 million in further private buildings with more expected, four major and two minor streets to replace 22 old ones, and new Central Artery ramp changes to permit efficient traffic flow in and out of Government Center. It was Logue's idea to expand the project to include private office buildings to improve the tax base of the area since about 75% of the users would be tax exempt. The planners were

attempting to devise workable connections with the Central Business District, the West End apartments (along a broadened, tree-lined Cambridge Street), the waterfront development area (down State Street or over a pedestrian bridge from City Hall to Faneuil Hall), and Beacon Hill (through two 60-foot-wide portals piercing the Leventhal building). No good link with the North End exists because of the Central Artery, but such attractions as the Salem Street Peddlers' market have drawn people into the North End and will help join the two districts.<sup>45</sup>

Preservation was one of the major goals of the project, a lesson learned from the predominance of the bulldozer in earlier urban renewal catastrophes. Despite earlier plans for demolition to widen a street, even a 100-year old house at 30 Hawking Street was to be saved as a period piece restaurant.

Logue hired I.M. Pei and Associates to draw up the master plan for the project, the draft being completed in early 1961. It was Pei who reduced the 22 streets to six--four running north-south and two (Cambridge and New Congress Streets) running in an east-west arc. Aided by Boston historian Walter Muir Whitehill, Pei tried to preserve historic buildings based on a standard that "included buildings with a long, local tradition of special usage."<sup>46</sup> An example was the Sears Crescent, built in 1841, a bookselling area on Cornhill Street, the traditional route to Faneuil Hall, which was to be rehabilitated for offices and bookshops. Pei felt that the keystone of the project would be the new City Hall. "Set in a broad plaza, it would occupy a pivotal site, in view from many angles, and near to two cherished old seats of government, Faneuil Hall and the Old State House."<sup>47</sup> Pei set height limits for each section or parcel of the project with strict rules for setbacks and plazas. The plan was not without critics.. One architectural writer said the plan

predigested 60 cleared acres around Scollay and Dock Squares



as to placement, plans, and height of future buildings... an attempt to provide a concentric core...As commercial interests implemented the plan, the sector around city hall became chaotic and depressing, lacking clarity of communication and any architectural excellence...To the north looms the TAC-Glaser-designed Federal Office Building. It is an elephantine inarticulate mass...with a square column in each rounded corner. To the south rises a bank tower by Edward L. Barnes and Emery Roth & Sons whose elevation looks like a two-dimensional cardboard stencil to be crowded shortly by "at least ten" more commercial highrise buildings.<sup>48</sup>

Despite such criticism, which was aimed more at the interpretation of the plan, only one major change in Pei's draft occurred, which will be discussed later.

Logue was quick in bringing the project out of the paper stage and into the concrete stage. The first problem he attacked was the transportation facilities. Barton-Aschman Associates were commissioned to do a traffic and parking analysis. Logue convinced the Massachusetts Transit Authority to straighten one subway line and to rebuild the old station to serve Government Center. The straightening of the line, from Scollay Square to Haymarket, began before Labor Day, 1962, and most of the work on the MTA, a \$3,5 million undertaking, was completed by August 1, 1963. Logue's action in this case may have been historic--it was probably the first use of federal urban renewal funds for a rapid transit project. Engineering work on new streets and utilities was begun with construction on New Sudbury Street in November, 1962. Meanwhile, the Commissioner of the State Department of Public Works agreed to modify the Central Artery ramps to service the Government Center.

Before discussing the individual buildings which constituted the project, it is essential to stop and review the means by which the BRA and Boston hoped to finance the project.

## THE FINANCING OF THE GOVERNMENT CENTER

The nature of the Government Center project makes it difficult to speak in concise terms as to its financing in that it was constantly expanding. When Collins released his program in 1960, he felt that the city's contribution to the \$90 million endeavor would have to be \$30 million over six years. At that time, he believed:

The city's share of the cost can be financed through long-needed neighborhood improvements such as schools.

The cost of these capital improvements can be met without exceeding the amount presently paid each year for already outstanding debt service.

The decline in debt service charges over the years ahead gives the city this opportunity to finance a major rebuilding program without increasing the already burdensome tax rate.<sup>49</sup>

It was Logue who devised the means for financing the project through his great knowledge of federal directives for renewal projects. In a matter of weeks, he raised Boston in federal commitments from 17th (some sources say 25th) to 4th, behind New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. The federal commitment to Boston rose from \$13 million in renewal funds to \$120 and later to \$175. Logue used two methods of decreasing the costs to Boston of the program. First, "the law provides that instead of putting up cash a city may meet its obligations for a project area by building new schools, parks, playgrounds, and other improvements which will serve the area."<sup>50</sup> Collins put a capital-building program, mostly by issuing new municipal bonds, under the urban renewal program for the next twelve years, thereby reducing the cash he would otherwise have had to put into renewal sites. Second, by Section 112 of the Housing Act of 1961, a "city can apply to Washington for compensation and in effect can get

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\$2 of federal credit for every \$1 worth of land that such institutions (schools, hospitals, churches, etc.) have bought."<sup>51</sup> This provision on tax exempt real estate was applied to Boston by tax expert Julian Levi of the University of Chicago, hired by Logue, in a study in which Levi concluded that Boston was entitled to \$60 million in such credits.

About \$180 million was committed to the purchase and clearing of urban renewal sites, but Boston's contribution was still only about \$30 million. The first formal federal approval and financial assistance necessary to get the program underway was received from Urban Renewal Commissioner David M. Walker on December 15, 1960. Boston's cash contribution was actually only about \$7,850,000, only \$72,500 of which had been committed since Logue's arrival (figures up to mid-1964).

In the Government Center project, the U.S. released a grant of \$25.8 million on June 1, 1962, plus \$2.3 million for relocation payments. The Boston share of the Government Center includes no cash contribution. Instead, it receives credit for its one-third of the project by building a parking garage and putting in the City Hall plaza and landscaping. Also, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts accounts for one-half of Boston's share over a 20-year period. In November, 1962, Logue estimated the cost of the project at \$175 million divided into the following categories (rounded off to the nearest \$500,000): Private-\$45 million; City Hall-\$20 million; Federal Office Building-\$29 million; State Service Center-\$34 million; Garage-\$7 million; City and state contribution-(streets, utilities, etc.)-\$6.5 million; Other public investment-\$3 million; and Federal urban renewal grant-\$29 million. The project costs not including the costs of

construction of new buildings were outlined as follows:

Acquisition expense(title searches, appraisals,etc.)	\$440,000
Payments for acquisition of property	\$25,800,000
Demolition costs	1,850,000
MTA relocation costs	2,820,000
Public improvements and community facilities	13,650,000

Parking garage	\$7,000,000
Central artery	
ramps	610,000
Streets, utilities,	
plazas	5,200,000
Other	840,000
Interest payments on federal loan	920,000
Net property management costs	
(including payments in-lieu-of-taxes to the city)	1,600,000
Administrative, planning, and legal costs	1,200,000
Other project costs and contingencies	2,340,000

Gross project cost	\$50,700,000
Land disposal proceeds	9,900,000
Net project cost	40,800,000
Federal share	27,150,000
City and state share	13,650,000
Federal relocation payment	2,100,000
Self-supporting or state-provided facilities	
(Garage and Central Artery ramps)	7,610,000
Amount left	6,040,000

(Figures from BRA's Government Center Progress Report, Nov., 1962)

Logue expected at least \$6,040,000 in state urban renewal funds to cover the remainder. The parking garage was to be sold or rented to a private concern upon completion. Logue also saved money under the federal regulation that payments in-lieu-of-taxes could be made on properties that were improved as of the beginning of the year. Thus, the BRA, which owned the properties in the Government Center while it was being constructed, paid only \$1,314,635 in 1962, a figure which was expected to drop to about \$900,000 in 1963.

Thus, Logue concluded that "none of the City contributions are proposed in the form of a cash contribution to the project

but are totally in the form of tangible improvements."52

## PRE-CONSTRUCTION PREPARATIONS

The BRA was the first renewal agency in the U.S. to use the early land acquisition provisions of the 1959 Housing Act. Under that act, Logue took possession of and cleared most of the land before the general plan was even approved. On September 25, 1961, Urban Renewal Commissioner William L. Slayton approved an early acquisition loan from the federal government for the Government Center of \$21,260,470. Family and business relocation began a month later. By May 1, 1962, 102 families out of 264 and 77 individuals out of 176 had been relocated. By June 1, 1962, 276 out of 715 businesses had been relocated, most of them inside the city of Boston. By November 1, 1962, all but one of the 328 properties had been acquired. Of the payments for private properties, 218 had been accepted at a cost of \$12,075,900. In 55 other properties in which settlements had been reached, only two involved litigation. Also, as of November 1, 1962, 229 families and 145 individuals had been relocated, while 32 others had made definite plans to move. It was found that 87% of these people had moved to standard, inspected dwellings. Of the rest, 9% were in substandard dwellings where the BRA was attempting to arrange relocation to standard, while 4% had moved to substandard housing and had refused to relocate. As of November 1, 1962, 465 of 829 businesses had moved, with 105 others having definite plans to move. Of these., 90% were still in Boston, including 31 of the 33 large companies (more than 30 employees). Also, 60 of the 364 buildings had been demolished by that date, primarily for the federal office building and the MTA.

A review of the individual buildings is now appropriate.

## THE CITY HALL

In a number of ways, the new Boston City Hall is a unique structure. In February, 1960, a competition for the design of the building was approved, and the competition was announced in November of that year. This was the first open competition for a major U.S. structure in almost sixty years, and there were 256 entries. The winning design was chosen on the first ballot and had been submitted by three unknowns, none of whom had ever built a major structure of any kind before. The three were Gerhard M. Kallman and Noel M. McKinnell, professors at Columbia University, and Edward F. Knowles, a registered architect in New York who was asked by the other two to join them. According to the jury, (architects William W. Wurster, Walter A. Netsch, Ralph Rapson, and Pietro Belluschi; businessmen Harold D. Hodgkinson, O. Kelly Anderson, and Sidney R. Rabb):

At a distance the building achieves great monumentality, drama, and unity; and in detail the contrasting textures, the play of light and shade, the richness of forms and spaces, culminate in a series of terraces which provides a strong focus for the symbol of a city government. It is a daring yet classical architectural statement, contained within a vigorous unified form.<sup>53</sup>

The base of the building is brick walled and contains large, public use rooms. The upper part is coarse poured concrete and smooth precast concrete and contains offices and ceremonial spaces. Outside is a sloping plaza with a brick floor patterned with granite with pleached plane trees to one side. There are no typical floor plans until the top level which makes for impressive variety in the interior spaces. According to Kallman, "We wanted people to feel that this was their building. We wanted them to be drawn in."<sup>54</sup>

The design was the subject of an exceptional amount of architectural criticism throughout the country, mostly favorable. Walter McQuade called it "emphatic, forceful, and also true to the architectural current now running almost the whole world round."<sup>55</sup> Percival Goodman believed it "could be a turning point in American architecture,"<sup>56</sup> and said of the competition itself that "for something less than \$60,000 Boston secured preliminary designs that surely would have cost half a million dollars had they been commissioned in the normal way."<sup>57</sup> Harold Spitznagel said it looked "like a Mayan temple. . . as exotically daring as anything Boston has ever seen," while Walter Gropius commented upon its "beautiful scheme."<sup>58</sup> Among the praises for the design were these:

It combines traditional Boston brick with reinforced concrete, but the most striking thing about it is its use of ancient secrets to produce modern magic. It does indeed look something like a temple, nearly set within a plaza and punctuated by sloping terraces, sweeping public walks, and an endless play of light and shadow on a facade that is so deliberately broken up that it ignores floor lines except at the top.<sup>59</sup>

With every structural detail baldly visible, from the exposed air-conditioning ducts in the ceilings to the marks of the wooden forms on the poured concrete piers, the new city hall is more bold than beautiful.<sup>60</sup>

In appearances the new Boston City Hall belongs to the tradition shaped by Le Corbusier and best epitomized, in this country, by Louis Kahn. It is a style and strong and angular forms in plain, rough concrete, which respond closely to their functions and achieve elegance - - or beauty, if you will - - through the severe Spartan purity of their design. The budget at Boston was low, which oddly enough the architects welcomed, since it stimulated them to make the most of rough materials. In opening up the building's interior, making it easy to move in and out of, they aimed for a quality suitable to civic ceremony, both imposing and inviting - - a quality Kallman calls "democratic monumentality."<sup>61</sup>

The mayor's office goes around a corner and changes ceiling height. Enormous hoods of cast concrete lean out to shadow large glass areas. The big brick base is carved with stairways. Even the office walls of the upper building



wear strong verticals - exterior feeders for the high velocity air-conditioning system. There will be very few hung ceilings inside; instead the precast concrete floor structure will be left exposed overhead, to read as coffering in. Nor, will there be any expensive veneers covering brick or concrete; the designers have a very practical justification for this in the \$32 per square foot cost estimate for the building, not high for an important civic edifice.<sup>62</sup>

one of the best reviews was by the same man who was so critical of the other interpretations of the Pei master plan, who stressed

the ameliorating impact exerted on this ill-conceived perplexity by the new City Hall and its plaza...the four dissimilar facades of the free-standing structure and their strongly designed terminations transmit a concept of harmonized contrast. The flaring, light-reflecting wings of the southeast corner act as a space divider between the 94-foot height of the free-standing slab column on one end of the east elevation and the density of the 57-foot height brick mound wrapped around the northeast corner on the other. The south elevation is underplayed to give full range to the stepped entrances, except for the extravagant hoods on the south and east corner that locate the most important administrative offices on the elevations.

The diversity-in-harmony between the east elevation and the north and west elevations is dramatic. It expresses the dichotomous relationship of the building to the city. In the east the new building belongs to the street and the markets by forming their western enclosure...The high vehicular portal draws the street-life into the building ...In complete contrast, the north and west elevations ignore the street and relate only to the plaza.

The two outstanding characteristics of the plaza concept are total separation of the space from any vehicular traffic and definition by motion rather than by the traditional static elements of sculpture and seating areas.

The new City Hall, the first major one in the era of the Welfare State, will work if its participation spaces work. Its life will flow around the symbolic seat of power, ignoring it.

The highest meaning of the new civic center will come not from its monumentality but from a gradual awareness of its profound humanism by the citizens. This City Hall is not a building of the electronic age and therefore impervious to obsolescence. The 318,00 square feet of office space have an elastic timelessness that is meaningful because it is eternally serviceable. The claim to historical continuity of a traditional building in traditional materials might restore the dignity of a great past to the Old State House and Faneuil Hall, now no more than traffic obstacles. The roughness of the new structure, the refusal to be decorative, confesses to the absence of a formal esthetic in a period with shared visual standards. But it is this very plain-

ness that proclaims the supremacy of space experience over form experience. A visitor standing on the highest interior level experiences a kinetic continuity. He can follow the flow of space down the grand staircase into the urban microcosm of the passages and intersections of the concourse and onward toward the plaza. He will experience a freedom of perception in all directions that imparts a new visual dimension. City people are unschooled in environmental observation and it might need systematic guidance to make them aware of the many delights that this new civic center provides.<sup>63</sup>

While one city councilman complained that "All it's lacking are the gas pumps out front"<sup>64</sup>, Mayor Collins said in December, 1967, five months before the completion of the building, "The verdict has already been rendered by all the architects who have seen it. This is the most exciting building to be constructed in this country in this century."<sup>65</sup>

The construction of the City Hall began in the summer of 1963, and Mayor Kevin H. White moved in the week of February 17, 1969. The final cost of the building was about \$26.3 million.

## OTHER GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

The United States General Services Administration expressed a "willingness to locate a large federal building within the project area provided (they had) satisfactory assurances that suitable buffer buildings will guarantee that the federal building will not be isolated,"<sup>66</sup> and then they approved the preliminary plans for the building in 1961. The structure was designed by the Architects Collaborative with Samuel Glaser and Associates. The working drawings were completed in September, 1962, and construction began in November of that year. The first office workers were in the building in mid-January, 1966, and it was fully occupied in the spring of 1966. This John F. Kennedy Federal Building houses twelve formerly scattered federal agencies serving the New England region. It contains 600,000 square feet of office space and about 444 workers. It consists of a 26-story tower which is split by elevators in the middle and a 4-story annex which contains district offices and an employees' cafeteria. The two are separated by a glass bridge. The cost of the building was \$29 million.

The only major change in Pei's master plan was in the design of the State Service Center. According to BRA Project Designer Charles Hilgenhurst:

The Boston firm of Desmond and Lord (with Paul Rudolph as consultant) was retained to design the Mental Health Building; Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson, and Abbott were retained for the Employment Security Division Headquarters; and H.A. Dyer and Pederson & Filney were commissioned to design the Health, Welfare, and Education building. Under Ed Logue's and the State Government Center Commission's prodding, the five firms tried to come up with a comprehensive scheme for the whole complex and arrived at a solution which looked like an Italian town, full of small buildings. None of the firms was completely satisfied, though the BRA and State Commission tentatively accepted the plan. Then one day, at a meeting of the architects, Rudolph

walked in with what he called a "stake with a tail". Everybody became enthusiastic about the tower(although it exceeded Pei's height limits) and the low buildings enclosing the plaza; Rudolph was named design coordinator for the project. All the firms collaborated from then on, producing three buildings merged into one monolithic, monumental entity.<sup>67</sup>

As a result, the Service Center became

two low buildings joined together to form one long element which follows the irregular street pattern but is cut back at the street corners to form small, Boston-style plazas; and one long tower which acts as a pivot...(the designers) broke up the bulk into a cluster of pivots, with the clam-shaped elevator core, stair towers, and toilets all located on the outside.

It is a great plaza, almost completely enclosed, with a parking garage underground.

The low buildings surrounding the plaza step back in irregular ziggurat fashion, partly to form a great outdoor bowl and partly to provide an intimate, pedestrian scale in contrast to the monumentality of the project's outer walls.<sup>68</sup>

The preliminary plans for the State Service Center were drawn up in the summer of 1962 with construction to begin in the summer of 1963. The Massachusetts General Court authorized \$25 million for the project, and the governor sought another \$10 million. The changes in the plan delayed construction, however, and it was not begun until the late winter of 1965 and the early spring of 1966. It is expected to be completed in 1972 at a cost of \$34 million.

In addition, there is a 22-story state office building which is not in the Government Center and is not under the jurisdiction of the BRA. However, it is located near the State House on Beacon Hill. It was designed by Emery Roth & Sons and Hoyle, Doran, & Berry. The building houses 33 state agencies and includes

a 330-car underground garage. It was completed in 1966.

Next there is the 1850-car parking garage, built by the city, but leased to private interests. The garage was designed by Kallman and McKinnell with Samuel Glaser & Associates. At a cost of \$7 million, it was expected to generate \$14 million in federal grants for the Government Center and another \$3.5 million in state urban renewal assistance. However, the original financing was dependent upon the authorization of a \$5 million bond issue. The garage is a "dramatic structure - largely of precast/prestressed concrete - - with all columns, girders, and beams expressively interlocked."<sup>69</sup> It is 600 feet long, 200 feet wide, and 9 stories high, with a spiral access ramp that is 96 feet in diameter. Construction was to begin in the summer of 1963, and it was scheduled to be completed in the early summer of 1969. However, construction was delayed until June 1967, and the first half of the garage was not opened for public use until April 20, 1970. The entire structure was to be completed by the end of June, 1970, at a final cost of about \$6.7 million. By leasing out the garage, the city expects to get back at least that much from parking revenues. A major parking problem was created by the delay due to a lack of legal parking spaces in the Government Center.

Finally, a new police precinct was built in the Government Center. While the draft plan called for a police headquarters, this was rejected in favor of a plan to consolidate the city police force. Boston had more police stations for its size and population than any comparable U.S. city, and its stations had the oldest average age of any in the country. Thus, the

seventeen stations were consolidated into three new and two rehabilitated ones, with the Government Center station being Precinct 1 station. It was completed by the summer of 1959.

A fire station was originally in the draft plan for the Government Center, but the site was rejected by the fire underwriters. A different site, not in the Center project area, was chosen.

## PRIVATE BUILDINGS

Logue calculated that "for every government dollar spent, there should be at least five times as much private capital generated", and so far "he has been exactly right."<sup>70</sup> But, according to Logue, getting "private developers who were financially responsible, experienced in renewal, and willing to build handsome buildings was not so easy."<sup>71</sup> For example, only two were interested in a 875 foot long office building to the south, and the \$15-20 million job was given to Center Associates with architects Welton Beckman & Associates. The resulting design was for a long curved building opposite the City Hall. The lower level consists of shops and banks with an eight-story concrete office building on top. It is divided into three sections - One, Two, and Three Center Plaza. The first section was opened in late January 1966 and held 1200 to 1500 workers. The prime tenant was the Fireman's Fund American Insurance Company with 270 employees. All three stages, to have been completed in 1969, but not quite finished until 1970, hold 3600 to 4500 workers.

Probably the biggest controversy of the Government Center project, the only major one in fact, had to do with a private office building in parcel #8. In order to achieve better connections with the financial district, Pei suggested the demolition of two serviceable buildings, the New England Merchants National Bank at 30 State Street and Number 10 State Street. In its place, he planned a 40-story office tower at a cost of \$25 million. Pei's reasons were: (1) The new tower would produce more than twice the tax yield of the site at present; (2) It would provide a spacious and attractive setting for the bordering Old State House; (3) It would symbolize the regeneration of the downtown

area; and (4) It would block off Washington Street, simplifying and improving traffic circulation in the area. The first problem came from the Moskow brothers who owned No. 10 and filed five conspiracy suits totalling \$2.5 million against Cabot, Cabot & Forbes, the proposed developers of the parcel; the New England Merchants National Bank, which agreed to the project; Logue; Gerald Blakeman of Cabot, Cabot, & Forbes; and Richard Chapman, president of the New England Merchants National Bank. The suits went all the way to the Massachusetts Supreme Court where they were defeated in a five to two decision.

The other problem was in assigning developers to the parcel. In 1963, Cabot, Cabot & Forbes told the BRA that they would be willing to construct a 35-story office tower, and Logue agreed to the offer. However, the City Council, and particularly William Foley, blasted Logue for not letting developers openly compete for the project. Twice the Council voted against the project and, thus, against the whole Government Center plan. It was at this time that one writer observed that in 1964 the Government Center program "somehow (went) forward despite absence of the legally required City Council approval."<sup>72</sup> In the summer of 1964, an open competition was announced in which eight developers competed. The jury of lawyers Charles Coolidge and Robert Meserve, Episcopal Bishop Anson Phelps Stokes, publisher Harold Kern, and architects Pietro Belluschi, Benjamin Thompson, and Philip Bourne chose Cabot, Cabot & Forbes to be the developers with Edward L. Barnes as architect and Emery Roth & Sons as associates. The building has been completed with the New England Merchants National Bank as the chief tenant at a cost of about \$20 million.

The only other major problem with site owners came when



the Suffolk Nation Bank fought the taking of their eleven-story office building. It had been assessed at \$800,000, and lawyers had been pressing for tax abatements. The Bank claimed \$2 million and took the case to court. A jury awarded them \$1,676,250, and Logue was furious. Supposedly he refused to do business with them, which may have been a factor in the lag in the work on the Sears Crescent.

Among the other privately financed buildings is a Roman Catholic chapel to have been started in January of 1966 at a cost of \$850,000. St. Botolph's chapel was designed by Jose Luis Sert of the Harvard School of Design and is one of the last buildings in the Center scheduled to be completed. Also, there is a Jewish Family and Children's Service Center scheduled to be started in the late spring of 1966 and not yet completed. The architects are Marvin E. Goody and John M. Clancy, Incorporated. In addition, a State Street Bank Building was opened in the spring of 1966, and construction began on five smaller commercial buildings, a \$600 million, 300-room motel, and a \$1 million renovation program for Sears Crescent. The motel was another subject of controversy in the Government Center. City hotel interests were opposed to the new motel, which was to be located off the Central Artery, next to the garage. The BRA agreed to offer the parcel for 18 months as an office site. However, there were no takers, and in November, 1967, it was released to motor hotel interests for bidding. Against the complaint that the motel would offer too much competition in an insupportable market, the BRA stated that "against a projected demand for 3500 to 3750 more hotel and motel rooms, 3000 have been programmed (in Boston).<sup>73</sup> Also, with a new convention hall going up, they felt that "in order to maintain Boston's traditional importance as a tourist and convention

center, the balance of the demand for transient accommodations must be met."<sup>74</sup>

There were three additional buildings in the Government Center project area which were slated to be refurbished. The Sears Crescent renovation was designed by Stull Associates, while the Sears Block renovation was designed by F.A. Stahl & Associates. Another building to be renovated is the house at 30 Hawkins Street, mentioned earlier.

One of the problems created by this massive building venture was the criticism that too much office space was being constructed and that Boston could not supply the demand for it. Some believed that the purpose to be served by the approximately 1.7 million square feet of office space in the Government Center was vitiated by other developments, such as the new Prudential Center with about one million square feet of office space and the new British Properties Building with another 800,000. In fact, the first private office building in the Center was several months late in getting started because no major tenants had been signed. In 1963, the BRA commissioned an independent market analysis of the long-range need for office space, apartments, and hotel accommodations in Boston. As a result, consultant Robert Gladstone of Washington, D.C., advised that the downtown Boston market alone could soak up 5.5 million square feet of new office space. According to the BRA, "the fastest rates of growth in Boston's economy and the largest additions to its labor force are attributable to office work, particularly in the government and insurance fields."<sup>75</sup> Also, Logue felt that downtown had greater appeal and said "we have the place where people like to walk. It's better than up there at the Pru(dential Center)."<sup>76</sup>

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THE GENERAL PLAN FOR BOSTON, 1960-1975

The General Plan for Boston, 1960-1975 was compiled in 1965 and was greatly influenced by the problems and planning of the Government Center. Many of the policies set forth in the General Plan were a direct result of the experiences of the BRA in building the Government Center. Thus, it is somewhat of a compilation of the first five years of the Government Center, but it is also a guidebook for the remainder of the project and influenced the final stages of the project.

The plan was unveiled on November 23, 1964, at a general meeting of the Mayor's Citizens Advisory Committee on Community Development and was adopted as an interim guide by the BRA on December 17, 1964, pending "adequate public review and appropriate revisions."<sup>77</sup> Then,

Having completed broad distribution of the draft documents, several public exhibitions of the Plans, and numerous other discussions, the Authority...found a very favorable public reaction. Accordingly, at its meeting of March 11, 1965, the Authority adopted the revised text and maps as the official master plan of the City of Boston.<sup>78</sup>

The plan was prepared in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 652 of the Acts of 1960 which designated the BRA as the city's planning board and incorporated the 1952 ordinance which gave the City Planning Board a General Plan function. The 1952 ordinance "set the aims of the City's General Plan as the promotion of the coordinated improvement and development of the City, and the promotion of the health, safety, and welfare of its inhabitants."<sup>79</sup> The BRA stressed that the General Plan was not "immutable. It is anticipated that it will be amended from time to time to meet changing circumstances."<sup>80</sup>

The 1965 Plan set forth the following in regard to Boston planning:

1) comprehensive, long-range standards with which land assembly and redevelopment projects must comply for state approval; 2) guidelines for revisions of the City's zoning map and standards for passing on applications for zoning variances; 3) guidelines for all public facilities development, particularly for the City's Capital Improvements Program; and 4) guidelines for the formulation of: a) federally-assisted Urban Renewal project plans, which must conform to the General Plan; b) Boston's Workable Program, of which the Plan is an integral part; c) a Community Renewal Program, which, for federal approval, requires the substantial completion of a General Plan; and d) other studies eligible for federal financial assistance.<sup>81</sup>

The BRA went on to state that the Plan

is, to a great extent, a synthesis and reconciliation of other plans of various stages of execution, for different levels of local and City-wide development, and for widely varying periods of time.<sup>82</sup>

Among the policies established by the General Plan which were obviously directly related to experiences with the Government Center project were the following:

The needs of the City are too extensive to be met by local government alone. Therefore, publicly financed development projects must be so designed, located, and timed as to have the maximum generating, guiding effect on privately planned and financed projects.<sup>83</sup>

Accomplished advances in the City's development should be taken as points of departure for plans to come.<sup>84</sup>

because of limitations both to Boston's financial resources and to federally-aided Urban Renewal... (there is a need for) 1) utilization, through effective design, of the growth-inducing potential of public land, open spaces, and buildings; 2) utilization, through effective design, of the many influences of streets and public ways on physical development and design; and 3) improved relation, through public encouragement, of private development to constructive elements of the natural environment.<sup>85</sup>

(Boston should employ a policy of) Capital Design (which through the control of the geographic distribution, site

selection, and architectural and landscape treatment of municipal facilities, would control the beneficial effect of municipal facility construction and design on private development...(This should be done to avoid the past mistakes of) random geographical distribution of municipal facilities...(and) countless missed opportunities to preserve and to generate desirable private improvements.<sup>86</sup>

Throughout the City, important community facilities should be connected by public open spaces and relatively important, easily patrolled local streets. Extended continuously between significant landmarks and centers of activity, this "Capital Web" of community facilities would provide a unifying "seam" of services for the common use of neighborhoods on either one of its sides and along its length.<sup>87</sup>

It would be desirable, wherever possible, to bring into the Capital Web related private facilities, such as shops, churches, historic landmarks, multi-family, elderly, and otherwise special or unusually dense housing, local off-street parking, special features of the landscape, architecture, and street design, private community improvement ventures, and any other properties favorably affected by proximity to large public facilities.<sup>88</sup>

This last stipulation is closely related to the third point made by the BRA concerning its relation to the City's War on Poverty, which states that efforts should be made to "make health and welfare services physically visible and readily available to everyone in need of them."<sup>89</sup> One of the last policies set forth by the General Plan was a group of

four rules of site location: 1) Sites for public buildings of all types should be physically prominent and readily accessible, but so distributed about the City that there is no overlap of service areas; 2) related public programs should be housed in the same building or placed on the same site whenever it would increase the efficiency of the total operation to do so; 3) sizeable public facilities serving a Regional or City-wide population should be located where they will provide the greatest stimulus for new construction, new rehabilitation, and thus for higher land values in the area; 4) when combined together in the Capital Web, public and private community facilities should be linked by parks and other types of open spaces, and by specially designed public ways and streets, to improve the City-wide interrelation of public services and to maximize the impact of public on private patterns of development.<sup>90</sup>

The massive financial requirements of the Plan are outlined in the following table (in millions of dollars):<sup>91</sup>

City of Boston		
Federal grants	\$23 million	
State grants	109	
City of Boston	155	
	<u>\$287 million</u>	
 Boston means		
Self-sustaining services (sewer, water, parking)	\$57 million	
Sale of city property and library trust funds	11	
Tax revenues	87	
		<u>\$155 million</u>
 Commonwealth of Massachusetts		
10% share of costs of interstate highway system	\$17.4	
Community colleges	20.0	
State buildings (Government Center)	60.0	
		<u>\$97.4</u>
 Federal		
Renewal project grants	\$248	
Interstate highways	157	
Post office facilities	50	
		<u>\$455</u>

The BRA also summarized private construction expenditures as follows:<sup>92</sup>

	<u>17 Renewal Projects</u>	<u>Unrelated to Renewal</u>	<u>Total</u>
Housing	\$253.6 million	\$248.6 million	\$502.2 million
Commerce	213.6	188.2	401.0
Industry	36.6	5.8	42.4
Office Space	293.0	262.0	555.0
Institutions	253.2	255.4	508.6
 Total	 \$1050.0 million	 \$960.0 million	 \$2010.0 million
 Public construction			 \$1590.0 million
 Total (1960/1975)			 \$3600.0 million

These are rather incredible figures, particularly since the Plan developed out of Mayor Collins' \$90 million program of less than five years before.

## CRITICS OF THE GOVERNMENT CENTER PROJECT

The chief opposition to the Government Center project came from the Boston City Council, which quickly grew to hate Logue's power, methods, and even his person. Logue's greatest opponent on the Council was William Foley. Foley was critical of the simultaneous demolition of large tracts of land, which he felt would reduce the tax revenue for too long a period. He also felt that even when the new buildings were constructed they would not sufficiently replace the old tax base. He thought that Boston needed selective rehabilitation and not a shot-gun approach. He also criticized the size of the BRA staff, which grew to about 500 employees. According to Foley,

What Boston really needs primarily is economic rehabilitation. In addition, some attention is needed to some residential areas, but that attention might well be other than renewal. As development administrator, Logue ought to be out scrounging every minute for industry or business to stick into open space today. Logue is converting scarce and previous potential high yield tax revenue land from commercial and industrial areas to residential. If residential areas are socially healthy and 60 to 70 per cent of the land area is sound, why the renewed attention?...

Logue wants to be a power on the national scene. He wants to be in Washington before he is 50. Meanwhile he is filling up space with handsome buildings until the picture is flattering to himself. He is not remotely concerned with Boston.<sup>93</sup>

At times, Foley's criticism is even more strictly and more bitterly personal, calling Logue "a fraud and a demigod"<sup>94</sup> or simply saying

He's crazy. He's a megalomaniac. The truth is not in him. The outline of Logue's program is to go from the harbor to the South End, across Boston's taxable breadbasket, expend astronomical sums of money, and wind up with little if any net increase in taxable property.<sup>95</sup>

Among Logue's other critics on the Council is Mrs. Katherine Craven who has been quoted as saying, "the resemblance<sup>S</sup>

between Hitler and Logue are striking."<sup>96</sup> Mrs. Craven's criticisms have been directed basically against Logue's other projects besides the Government Center.

Washington Park has been 30 per cent rehabilitated and 70 per cent demoralized. I'm not against Government Center because it doesn't come out of the blood of the people. I'm just trying to help defenseless people whom Logue is lining up against the wall to shoot them down. Federal money has been the ruination of this city because it gives the loose idea that people are getting something for nothing.<sup>97</sup>

Another City Councilman, Gabriel Piemonte, has called Logue "a hatchet man for the mayor."<sup>98</sup> Other critics of Logue have said that he "doesn't know Boston...He's pulling it apart...There's not a decent sidewalk in Boston to walk on anymore." A Harvard sociologist has said that "Logue and the BRA are totally unwilling to face the problem of housing the poor."<sup>99</sup> Others believe that "Government Center will be a lifeless, though handsome, place and that its 'animation' will be dependent on the stores on the ground floors of the office buildings."<sup>100</sup>

Generally, the criticism of the Government Center has been minimal. This may be, as Mrs. Craven suggests, because the project is so heavily federally financed that it seems like a gift. Even so, this should not detract from the fact that Logue and the BRA were able to maneuver and take advantage of relatively untested government programs to the betterment of Boston. Even if it was simply a matter of getting there first before the federal government realized the potential scale of their contribution if applied on a national basis, one should give credit to Logue for having gotten there first. In the words of one writer, "Critics of Logue chiefly attack his strong-arm methods. Most agree that he is getting needed things done; or as one architect put it,



"He may be the hardest of all big-time administrators to get along with, but he's also the hardest to get along without."<sup>101</sup>

THE DEFENDERS OF THE PROJECT AND BOSTON, 1975

In defending the Government Center now, those involved with it merely point to its achievements, and the tone of Collins, Logue, and others is noticeably more confident than it was in 1960. At first, the city hoped to present the problem and a plea for cooperation, if not patience. This tone continued throughout the first few experimental years of the Boston urban renewal program. In 1963, Mayor Collins was determined to drum up support for a program that was becoming vaster in scope and finance all the time, when he wrote the following for a special advertising supplement of the New York Times:

This is a time of growth and change for Boston. It is a time when we have dedicated ourselves to the task of rebuilding Boston so we may secure a future that will be worthy of our past.

Like so many other American cities, Boston has felt the full impact these past years of spreading blight and the decline of neighborhoods.

Our development program is designed to reverse that decline and provide the framework for growth and revitalization. I believe we are perhaps unique in the scope and breadth of our efforts...

(There are) three key features of our work.

**A City of Ideas:** Boston is known throughout the world as the home of leading universities, hospitals, and research establishments. Our goal is to reinforce Boston's role as the City of Ideas, not in these areas alone, but in housing, neighborhood design, and other ways as well.

**Planning with People:** A cornerstone of our program is that there be active, vigorous citizen participation both in downtown rebuilding and at the neighborhood level as well. I would term this "Planning with People" rather than "Planning for People".

**Beauty and Tradition:** Boston contains much beauty; and a great part of American history lives on in numerous buildings and places. Our goal is to strive to preserve the beauty of Boston and to enhance its historic setting. To this end we are dedicated to excellence in design and architecture as with our striking new City Hall.<sup>102</sup>

In the same supplement, Logue put forth his views on the Boston program:

Boston's redevelopment program is dedicated to rebuilding where necessary and preservation and rehabilitation wherever possible. It is the old and proud City's answer to the pressing questions of physical decline and the spread of blight.

Our program is complete in scope, as well it must be. Boston's problems--and we have many--have not sprung from a single source. The development program is a bold effort to rebuild and renew Boston in comprehensive fashion.

There are several factors essential for the success of this program:

**Leadership from City Hall** Boston has this in the unusual vision and strong leadership of Mayor John F. Collins.

**Rehabilitation and New Housing** Our program emphasizes rehabilitation of existing housing and the construction of several thousand new, private low-cost units. Together, these efforts will provide a breakthrough in meeting Boston's housing needs.

**Attractiveness for Investment** No city can hope to rebuild itself without substantial new, private investment capital. Boston's money is at work throughout the world; we are also putting it to work at home. At the same time, we welcome outside investors with demonstrated ability to perform.

**Planning with People** We preserve neighborhoods through planning with people, the most unique part of the Boston program, one which underscores its strength today and in future years.

This is an unparalleled effort--unparalleled in this city of any other--to engage in constructive, cooperative discussions with neighborhood residents, to encourage more direct participation by Boston's citizens in the affairs and policies of their chosen government.

The result can be neighborhood supported, effective renewal plans that will bring strength and stability to the area in the years ahead.

In downtown rebuilding projects such as the Government Center, the Waterfront, and the Central Business District, the process can provide exceptional support and participation by leading business interests.<sup>103</sup>

In answering his critics, Logue is direct, if not brash.

He defends his minimum clearance policies by stating that "It's a hell of a lot more fun to plan a neighborhood with the people who live in it than to plan it for them as if you knew best,"<sup>104</sup> and in reply to criticisms of his methods, he simply says "In this business, you've got to take some guys by the throat and say, 'Look, do this or I'll break your neck.' And they've got to believe you'll do it."<sup>105</sup> Yet despite his brashness, Logue has

been effective, and probably because of it, he has been convincing, particularly with the business community. According to Frank S. Christian, senior vice president of the New England Merchants National Bank, "Logue came here with the support of businessmen, and he still has it."<sup>106</sup> In reference to the first of Logue's projects, the Government Center, it built "confidence in urban renewal and helped direct some Boston Brahmin money into the shabby business district next door."<sup>107</sup>

The target year for Boston is 1975. The goals for that year, as seen by the BRA are:

Construction of 80 new elementary and intermediate schools...  
Expansion of regional institutions of higher learning to handle nearly 90,000 more students in 1970 than in 1960, an increase of 80 per cent.

Investment of \$506 million in construction of new facilities for institutions of all kinds in Boston, primarily educational and medical, during the 1960-1975 period.

Construction of 37,000 new housing units during the 15-year renewal period and the rehabilitation of 32,000 others...

\$555 million worth of office building construction (mostly in the downtown area) to accommodate an increase in office employment of more than 50,000 or 36 per cent.

Expenditure of \$9 million annually on street and utility systems construction and repair.

Annual expenditure on road building alone of a little under \$5 million until 1970 to make up the city's backlog of street repairs, then \$3.2 million annually thereafter.

Opening of 10 new branch libraries, 15 new fire stations, and five new or rehabilitated police stations by 1975.<sup>108</sup>

The feelings of the leaders of this program are seen in the following statements about Boston and its future. The first is by the Right Reverend Monsignor Francis J. Lally, chairman of the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority looks to the future of Boston with hope and optimism. We believe that the next few years can well be crucial in Boston's efforts to renew itself.

We are confident of the future because it is, after all, to be determined by the efforts, imagination, and

enthusiasm of the citizens of our City. Without your support we could not have begun this task; without your continued determination and your willingness to participate actively, we cannot hope to reach our goals.

The work of the Boston Redevelopment Authority divides itself into several phases.

First, we must try to create a plan for each neighborhood and section of the City. Such plans must try to preserve the best that now exists and to make room for attractive new housing and other improvements. In each residential neighborhood we seek to plan in active cooperation with the residents of the neighborhood itself.

Second we must obtain the necessary citizen and legislative support to adopt and carry out the plan. In this respect, we look not only to the Federal Government but also to the Boston City Council and other government agencies.

Third we must carefully provide for the necessary acquisition of buildings and the rehousing of families. We are making every effort to be just and humane--our goal is not only to minimize relocation, but even there to help insure families find better housing at reasonable prices.

Fourth, it is our task to provide the sites for new construction largely by private enterprise. In the coming year, we look for the construction of several hundred moderate cost private units as well as construction of the Government Center complex and other buildings.

A City, above all else, exists for the people who live, work, and visit there. Boston has been famous throughout the world as a City which people loved and cherished. Our goal is to keep Boston that way.<sup>109</sup>

Mayor John F. Collins:

This is a decade of change and growth for Boston. Even more, it is a decade of decision and dedication. We are striving to create a truly "New Boston", one which will be worthy of our proud traditions.

The task we have set for ourselves is not an easy one. Boston has felt the full impact these past years of the spread of blight. I am confident, however, that with hard work and perseverance, we will succeed as we must.

What will Boston be like in 1975? ...I suggest there are four broad goals which we should seek to attain in the years ahead.

**A Renewed and Vigorous Downtown:** Downtown Boston is the very heart of the city, indeed of the entire metropolitan area. Yet its decline and obsolescence are visible to all. With the Government Center, ..., together with our efforts to renew the Waterfront and the Central Business District, Downtown Boston shall regain its once-proud position in our economic and cultural life. The Prudential Center, too, is a dramatic symbol of our increasingly healthy economic climate and prosperity.

**Better Neighborhoods:** Our goal is to stop the spread of slums and make our older neighborhoods attractive, safe and pleasant places to live and raise a family. In this planning

process--planning with people in the fullest sense of the word--the emphasis will be on conservation and rehabilitation rather than demolition.

**Improved Educational Opportunities:** Our schools can be the best guarantee for future strength in the neighborhoods of Boston. Too many of our schools today are old and obsolete. We must rebuild our school plant as one part of a vast effort to improve educational opportunities.

**Cultural and Institutional Strength:** We are the home of nearly countless educational, medical, and cultural institutions. They are a familiar and well-loved part of Boston. Our goal is to encourage the arts of learning and healing to be worthy in all respects of Boston's tradition for excellence and for beauty.<sup>110</sup>

Edward J. Logue:

Can Boston really rebuild itself with beauty and imagination?

Will the older neighborhoods of Boston--South End, Washington Park, Charlestown, and others--come back into their own as attractive and desirable neighborhoods in which to live and raise a family?

Can we renew our Waterfront, Boston's Window on the World, as a vital part of the City? And will Downtown Boston regain its leading role in the metropolitan economy?

Is there a solution to the transportation mess which threatens to strangle the City?

Can Boston, in short, find the ways and means as well as the self-confidence to renew itself?

These are some of the questions being asked today. Their answer will govern Boston's future.

The Boston Redevelopment Program is dedicated to finding a comprehensive solution to these vital problems. We cannot and should not make little plans--we need to be bold as well as prudent.

Our Program is guided by four key principles: Leadership from City Hall. No City can renew itself without bold and effective leadership from City Hall. There is too much at stake for timidity and buck-passing. Boston is fortunate in having in Mayor Collins a Mayor with both vision and courage.

**Active Citizen Participation:** We believe that the residents of Boston's neighborhoods should have an important voice in their own future. This is the essence of planning with people and it is a cornerstone of our program.

**Coordinated Administration:** Urban Renewal regrettably is complex. It requires careful meshing of local plans with Federal and State assistance and long-term capital programming. We cannot afford to rebuild Boston without substantial and continuing Federal aid, and indeed this is only just since cities are such a large source of Federal tax revenue. Boston is burdened with a bewildering government structure that encourages divided responsibility. Our program is built on coordinated administration under the Mayor's leadership.

A Concern for Beauty: Boston has a deserved reputation for beauty. It is entirely possible to rebuild our City in an unattractive and unimaginative way--It is also possible to provide for the best in design quality not only in new construction, but also in the restoration of existing neighborhoods. The latter is our goal, and I believe in the Government Center complex we will achieve an outstanding architectural complex worthy of the best in Boston.

I believe that with continued citizen support Boston can indeed rebuild itself.<sup>111</sup>

## THE GOVERNMENT CENTER-ACHIEVEMENTS AND EVALUATION

A number of benefits came as a result of the Government Center besides the primary goal of a consolidated, centralized group of buildings to serve the functions of local, state, and federal governments. One of the most important was its relationship to the other projects in Boston's urban renewal program. As the first project to be planned and constructed, it was crucial in determining the attitude of Boston towards the program. As noted earlier, two urban renewal projects were attempted on a small scale in the 1950s with disastrous results. It took a great deal of convincing to overcome the effect of those failures and get the city committed to a program as monumental in scale as Collins and Logue had in mind. The simple fact that the program was allowed to expand to such great proportions at a very fast rate is proof of the success of the initial projects. The task of the Government Center was not only to gain support for public construction, it was also, and perhaps primarily, an attempt to encourage and attract private investment which would cooperate with the city government in building the "New Boston". Thus, a major aspect of the project was psychological. In this way, particularly, it was an experiment, a test case, a trial on which Collins and Logue and others were betting their reputations, and probably the reputation of urban renewal itself. It was in this psychological respect that the Government Center achieved its most significant success. As such, it became the take-off point for Boston's entire fifteen year program. The program literally brought a whole city into a decade of concern for itself and its future, active concern.

Businessmen are learning not to look upon all political



figures as "dirty politicians" and vice versa.

University intellectuals are involving themselves more and more in Boston's economic, political, and social problems...

City and suburban leadership is merging, if slowly.<sup>112</sup>

From a city infamous for corruption, Collins built, in eight years as mayor, an attractive and inviting place to live. A man of many promises, he built a cornerstone of his support in the speed and sureness with which he brought solid results. The Government Center was the first major achievement in creating this reputation.

The political climate on the state and city level has improved immeasurably...

And most important of all that is happening in Boston is the new attitude of young people toward the city. No longer is it considered fashionable to go to New York or Chicago, St. Louis or San Francisco--anywhere but Boston--for a successful professional career and a lively life. They now find "action" here. And it is thrilling to see them becoming a part of the rebuilding of this very old and culturally-rich city.

The emergence of Boston as one of the half-dozen most "alive" centers in the nation is the most powerful ingredient going for the "New Boston".<sup>113</sup>

Government Center directly affects a number of other projects, such as North Station, which it has helped to open up to private concern. Another example of the interrelationship of these projects is the Waterfront project. It was largely the success of the Government Center which encouraged private investors to undertake the redevelopment of the Boston harbor. In addition, one of the motivating factors behind the Waterfront project was to "aid neighboring districts--including the nearby government center--by removing the pressure of waterfront blights."<sup>114</sup> One difference between the Government Center and later projects, however, particularly such projects as the Downtown Business

District, is that the planners had to be a great deal more cautious in the later projects, principally because they were more complex and more directly related to the people of Boston.

Planners estimate that the Government Center will draw some 50,000 people a day into the area, and they hope this will help to solve another Boston problem. To make the renewal plans a success, particularly in the downtown area, the planners are looking to a growth in the city's core population. In 1960, the regional core population was 125,000. It dropped to 85,600 in 1965, but planners hope and expect it will be around 113,300 in 1975, which would mean the reversal of a major American urban population trend.

One problem which seemed in control at the beginning of Collins' second term as mayor was the property tax rate in Boston. The city is virtually limited by state law to the property tax for income. Collins' initial successes brought it down from \$101.20 per \$1000 assessed valuation to \$96 by 1963. However, he was severely criticized when it went back up to \$99.80 in 1964. It seems that unless Boston finds some new substantial income, there can be no solution to this problem.

In addition to those policies formulated under the General Plan of 1965, a number of suggestions arose on city planning as a result of the Government Center experience. One was the need for greater consolidation and coordination of planning and development jurisdictions:

- 1) consideration should be given to legislation which would provide for review and reporting procedures on long-range plans and construction projects of any non-City agency active within the City limits;
- 2)...there is need for still more effective consolidation of government functions and law-making procedures which

would bind agencies to a coordinated planning process;  
and

3) study should be given to the passage of legislation which would unify the ownership of development rights for all railroad rights-of-way in the metropolitan area, primarily for eventual use by public transportation but possibly also for other vital uses.<sup>115</sup>

The latter was felt to be the major source of future city land acquisition.

This paper has been written with little reference to those directly involved, beyond the major figures, and it is important to realize the coordination and cooperation that was necessary in this project. Involving three levels of government as no other project had done--this was the first government center in the United States--and hundreds of people on all levels, this project required exceptional effort just to keep it organized. Most of the credit for this must go to the Boston Redevelopment Authority. In addition to Logue and Lally, already mentioned, the BRA staff included Melvin J Massucco(vice chairman), James G. Colbert(treasurer), George P. Condakes(assistant treasurer), Patrick Bocanfuso, Hale Champion, John Ryan, Stephen E. McCloskey, Kane Simonian, and about 500 others. Also, the BRA was assisted in problems of design by a five-man Design Advisory commission consisting of Hugh Stubbins, Pietro Belluschi, Jose Luis Sert, Nelson Aldrich, and Henry Shepley, who was replaced after his death by Lawrence B. Anderson. The number of people actually responsible for Government Center is almost impossible to estimate, yet it is too easy to slight their contribution to this project.

The accomplishments of the city of Boston in urban renewal were early recognized by the world beyond Boston. For example, it was designated as an All-American City by the National Municipal League and Look magazine in 1963 was one of the first three

American cities to receive large-scale grants for new programs in social services and other areas, having been chosen by the Ford Foundation. In the evaluation of Edward J. Logue, the Government Center accomplished the following achievements:

The Government Center accomplished many "firsts" for the Boston program, most importantly--early land acquisition and early property disposition, techniques which made it possible to save over two years in the execution of this (and other) projects.

Government Center also established Design Review as an ongoing and successful process and made possible its application to other projects.

But, in my view, the most significant achievement of Government Center was our success in obtaining the co-operation of no less than nine governmental agencies which participated in the development of the project...Each of these agencies with its own power of eminent domain, agreed to work together and with the BRA in the furtherance of a plan in which none could play a dominant role...

Also deserving of mention as a significant achievement is I.M. Pei's magnificent design for the Project--a master plan which is proving itself as brilliant in execution as in concept. <sup>116</sup>

No one is more able to summarize the position of Boston's program than the man who made it a reality, Mayor John F. Collins. Just before the end of his eight years as mayor of the city of Boston, he addressed this evaluation to the citizens of Boston in the Boston Globe:

In eight action packed years we have come further and faster than any American city.

We forged a unique new partnership between residents and City Hall for an urban renewal program in our most blighted neighborhoods which has become recognized as the most outstanding in the nation.

We have seen in the Prudential Center, the Government Center and in other public and private investments already under construction, completed or firmly programmed in the amount of two billion dollars--a building boom considered unbelievable even a few years ago.

While the face of the city will indeed be changed, we have been careful to preserve the best of the old. Thus, our new buildings are in harmony with those that have been here for some time.

No effort of this kind is easy. We have had our share

of controversy, to be sure. But in my visits around the city most of you tell me you feel deep pride in what has been accomplished.

We must candidly say that with the progress already made has come a rising level of expectation.

The demands for improvement in established city services are strong and growing and must be met. We are working continually to see that our streets are well-paved, well-lighted, well policed, adorned with trees, a pleasure to walk by and drive through.

I am confident that in eight years more the job of physical renewal and rehabilitation will be completed and we can celebrate it appropriately with our Freedom Fair--1975.

However, there is more to revitalization of an old city than physical renewal.

I am very seriously concerned about our fiscal picture. Boston's biggest problem in the years immediately ahead is obtaining an adequate amount of revenue to provide services the citizens deserve and which are necessary if we are to survive the unending competition between city and suburbs and between one region and another. Logically this help must come from the Federal government.

Beyond that, our most serious problem is developing job training and job opportunity programs for all of our citizens.

However, in a world of rapidly increasing, rising technology and increasing specialization, extraordinary efforts are going to have to be made by the private enterprise system to train those who seem almost untrainable; otherwise all of us are going to pay a very heavy price. This is the major challenge facing our private enterprise system--and one I am confident will be met.

This is a good time to pause, to look back, to look ahead...

When I look around and see the changes you and I have made together during these past eight years, I am confident that with the same spirit and the same energy and God's blessings we can finish the job.<sup>117</sup>

With the federal cutbacks under the Nixon administration's latest budget, finishing the job is not going to be easy. The pressure of decreased funds for urban development is already seriously felt and objected to among Boston's city leaders and the BRA. These cutbacks came at a crucial stage in Boston's development--at the two-thirds point in its General Plan for the city's renewal. It will probably drastically affect target dates and may even delay the completion of the State Service Center in the Government Center, scheduled to be completed in 1972.

Thus, the future of the Boston program is once again in danger after ten years of truly spectacular effort and dedication. It is hoped that such effort and dedication will not end in tragedy at the hands of misdirected federal priorities. The Boston program has been an example bringing new faith in urban renewal and the cooperation of different levels of government; now Boston is waiting to see if it will also be an example of the ease with which the federal government can collapse such progress in favor of more important considerations, as they see it. Boston hopes to celebrate the completion of its program in 1975 while celebrating the bicentennial of the beginning of the War of Independence. It would be bitter irony to have that hope destroyed by the federal administration.

As the first and most unique part of this incredible program, the Government Center is a significant example of the cooperation needed to complete the enterprise. It is a major phenomenon as a government site, an urban renewal project of exceptional dimensions, and as an architectural feat. Most significant is the fact that after ten years it is almost totally in operation. The city recognized a need that had been apparent for years, perhaps before World War II. The city government acted upon that need under Mayor Collins quickly and orderly. It brought in the most determined expert on urban renewal available, Edward Logue, and got to work. With a minimum of politics and a maximum of efficiency and craft, they built a Center, largely within the term of Collins, the scale of which was considered impossible when Collins took office. Whatever criticisms may be thrown at Logue and the BRA, both professional and personal, one thing cannot be denied--they got the job done and

at a minimal cost to the city of Boston. The result is a beautiful, strong, immense seat of public power and administration--the Government Center--"the most graphic illustration of the 'New Boston'". 118

## EPILOGUE

Boston's program is rather analogous to that of New Haven, Connecticut, Logue's first major effort in the field of urban renewal. Investigating this relationship, one finds that Boston satisfied a number of prerequisites for a successful program, many of which were noted in reference to New Haven in a study by Robert Dahl, part of his book entitled Who Governs?. First, there is a need for a liberal political figure to be elected largely on a platform of urban renewal and its related fields. In New Haven, this was Mayor Richard Lee; in Boston, it was John Collins and later Kevin White. This election serves as the general referendum of the citizenry, which must be understood as an expression of faith in the mayor's policies, actions, and appointments. Secondly, there is a need for an organization which represents the mayor yet at the same time is shielded by the office of the mayor from direct confrontation with political critics. This allows for a coordinated program that may run smoothly without the interference of politics. This organization needs to be apolitical and skilled in its field. To gain the necessary trust of the populace, these programs must produce results. One failure destroys countless other programs in its repercussions. Courses of action must be established in the early planning stage. Any changes thereafter must be accomplished through the flexibility and expertise of the development staff, not through political channels. Third, while avoiding political haggling, these organizations must be willing to hear and cooperate with the people whom their programs affect. Particularly in this sense they must be flexible, for the needs of different neighborhoods and even the particular cases of individuals must be adapted to as they are investigated. A fourth prerequisite is a relationship with the federal government that will lead to consent and fin-



ancial support. No urban renewal program that is meaningful can be financed by a city or state alone. The bulk of the funds must come from the federal government which may set guidelines, as it has done in the housing acts since 1949, but cannot expect to interfere on a large scale with the planning. This is a function of the relative lack of knowledge of the particular areas and problems. An urban renewal program in Boston cannot be directed from Washington. Washington exercises the power of the purse, but overexercise leads to certain disaster, a fate which will be difficult to avoid under the current government cutbacks. Also needed is cooperation with and from the business community as much as possible. This is particularly true in the case of such projects as the central business district or in Boston such unique projects as the waterfront, but it would be hoped that private business could in this way relieve some of the financial pressures of urban renewal and allow more of the government funds to go to such projects as housing where private developers are hard to attract and are perhaps undesirable. Fifth, there is a need for long-range planning, such as the fifteen year Boston program. You cannot renew a city in a year, perhaps not even in five years. Also, these projects must be durable. Stopgap measures are false promises. The need is for strong programs which need only to be rehabilitated in the future and not totally rebuilt. Finally, most cities require a take-off point, a clear renewal program that will overhaul the cities' blighted areas. The cities are at a crisis point which we cannot afford to ignore. A broad-range program is essential to their survival. This commitment, moral, physical, and financial, must be made now. A clear break with the past is required. Only when these cities have been revived

can we begin to talk about maintenance as opposed to reconstruction.  
The new priorities must be established at all levels of government  
or we will rot to death before external forces have a chance to  
destroy us.

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