

WPTV POST JAN 17 1973

Federal Cuts Hit E. Harlem Renewal

by ROBERTA B. GRATE

Alice Kornegay walks across 127th St. showing a visitor the semi-demolished sites that make up the 20-block East Harlem Triangle Urban Renewal Area. She is using a cane, due to a minor leg injury, and all sorts of neighborhood people stop to wish her well.

For 12 years Mrs. Kornegay has helped lead the community on the frustrating, uphill path to renew itself.

There have been accomplishments, to be sure—a new public school opened in 1969, nine renovated buildings with 179 apartments opened in the past five years, two overhead bridges allowing pedestrians to avoid crossing the FDR Dr., an almost completed Turnkey public housing building with 188 units and a multi-service welfare center now under construction.

But now, Mrs. Kornegay and the Triangle community are angry in the wake of the Nixon Administration's recent drastic reductions of federal housing subsidies.

'Damn Mad'

"We've had all the suffering that comes with redevelopment," Mrs. Kornegay says. "It's not easy to get people in the community to understand why things take so long and why they have to move and remove. We were just beginning to get people to have a little trust in the city's promises. Now there are a lot of people damn mad and I don't blame them."

Because of the federal cutbacks, the city has had to eliminate, at least temporarily, plans to build two of three federally-funded Section 236 buildings — reducing the number of new units from 606 to 246.

The Section 236 program is a mortgage interest subsidy that reduces rentals by almost half. For the Triangle site at 126th St. and Lexington, Av., projected rentals are \$38 per room per month.

The community was expecting and plans were completed for three buildings which, along with the Turnkey project, would mark the beginning for the official four-year-old Triangle renewal program that includes 13 sites and plans for 2400 units of housing.

But when the Lindsay administration learned of the federal cutbacks, they had to discontinue plans for ready-to-be-built housing all over the city. The Triangle, like everyone else, got hit.

"Actually," points out Barry Zelikson, HDA acting deputy commissioner for community development, "the Triangle site was for 606 units which is much more than most urban renewal sites around the city. We cut it down to 246 units, yes that's true, but that's the size of most urban renewal sites."

Many Triangle residents and even the city's project

director for the program, Dorothea Merchant, believe their area should have received proportionally larger slice of the city funding pie.

"We have no relocation problem as other areas do," explains Mrs. Merchant, pointing out further than more than 1000 families have already been relocated and only about 10 remain. "Most of our sites are completely cleared, we've had

complete unity with the community and we feel we've been the best in implementing the urban program of all projects in the city."

In comparison to other renewal areas, Mrs. Merchant adds, "this is so perfect for development. We've got parks, shopping and terrific transportation — several buses, the IRT, FDR Drive and the railroad."