

Poor face hurdles in move from city

Public transportation, affordable child care may be hard to find

Suburbs deemed wide open

Similar relocation in Chicago fared well, housing expert says

By DAN MORSE
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Poor Baltimore families who participate in a controversial housing relocation program will find the suburbs wide open — if they can overcome problems of public transportation, affordable child care and being away from family in the city.

The proposed program, which would settle part of a

lawsuit against the city to break up the concentration of black families in city housing projects, would place 1,342 inner-city families in predominantly white, middle- to upper-class neighborhoods in the next six years.

That would rule out most of Baltimore city but only limited parts of Baltimore Anne Arundel, Howard, Harford and Carroll counties, according to a computer analysis of area census figures done by *The Sun*.

Under a proposed settlement, the federal government would pay most of the rent for residents moving out of city housing projects. "The vast majority, it is expected, will [move] to the outlying counties," said Deborah S. Byrnes, an attorney representing the city.

And although suburban politicians expressed concern last week about an influx of poor people, a similar

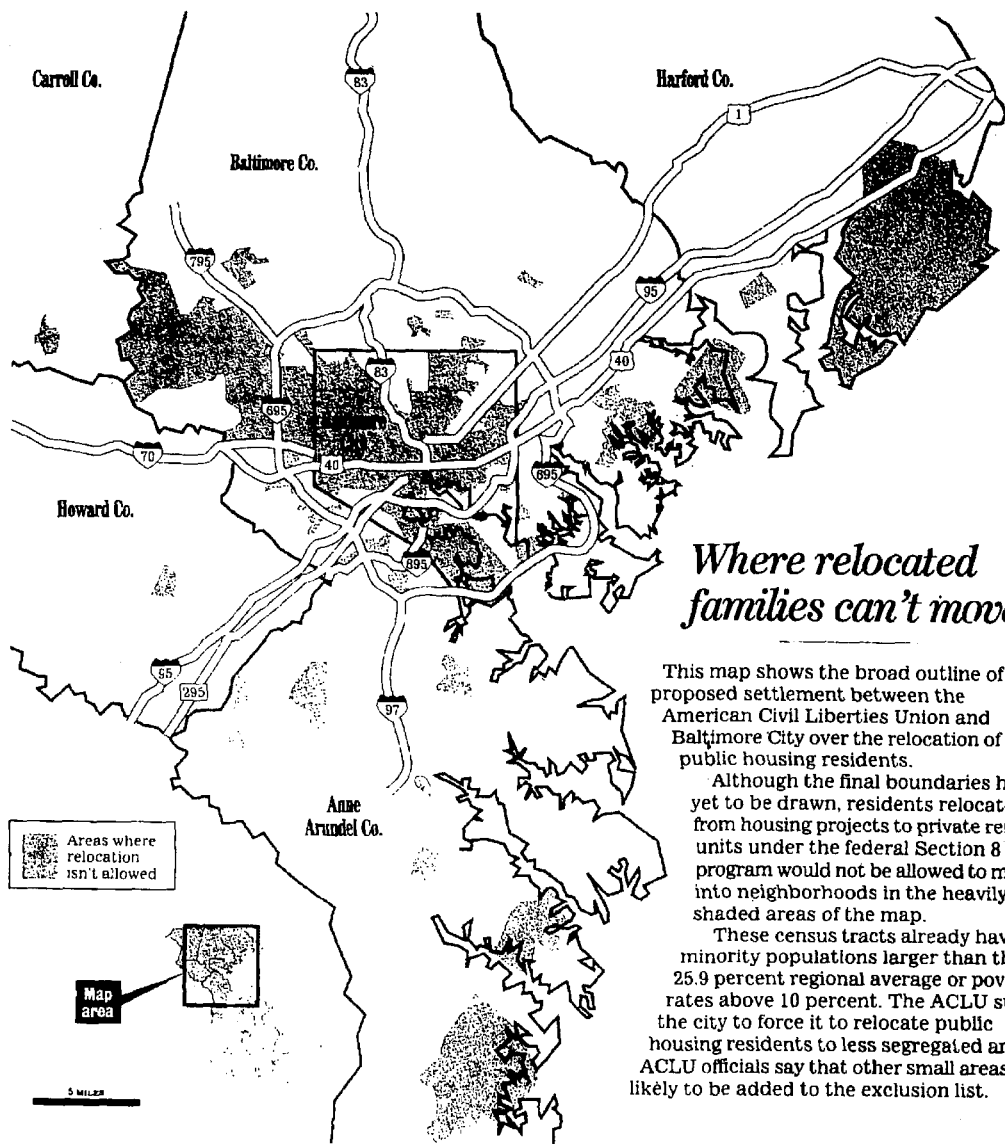
relocation program in Chicago has caused relatively few problems, said an urban housing expert who has studied relocation programs throughout the nation.

"Once the families move in, no one will notice that they're there," said Kale Williams, who administered the Chicago program and now is a professor at Loyola University of Chicago.

He said the 19-year-old Chicago program — one of 10 such relocation programs in the nation — started with a trickle of moves to the suburbs. But inner-city families told their relatives and friends about it, and now there are waiting lists. He expects a similar trend in Baltimore.

Baltimore's suburban politicians still are trying to determine exactly where the families eligible for the program would choose to live.

To par- [See *Housing*, 6B]



Where relocated families can't move

This map shows the broad outline of a proposed settlement between the American Civil Liberties Union and Baltimore City over the relocation of city public housing residents.

Although the final boundaries have yet to be drawn, residents relocated from housing projects to private rental units under the federal Section 8 program would not be allowed to move into neighborhoods in the heavily shaded areas of the map.

These census tracts already have minority populations larger than the 25.9 percent regional average or poverty rates above 10 percent. The ACLU sued the city to force it to relocate public housing residents to less segregated areas. ACLU officials say that other small areas are likely to be added to the exclusion list.

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Poor city families would face difficulties in suburbs

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icipate, they would have to move to neighborhoods in which no more than 10 percent of the residents live in poverty, no more than 25.9 percent are minorities and no more than 5 percent of the housing is subsidized, said Barbara Samuels, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, which filed the lawsuit.

In the counties surrounding Baltimore, only a few areas would be off-limits to participants. They are:

- In Baltimore County, the Liberty Road corridor west of the city, several areas in the southeast and a few small areas north of the city.

- In Anne Arundel, the western part of Annapolis; small sections near Fort Meade and Pasadena; and a larger, rural section south of Annapolis in and around West River.

- In Howard, the eastern section of Columbia.

- In Harford County, the Edgewood area and much of Aberdeen and the Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground.

- In Carroll, only a small area north of Sykesville.

A few other suburban areas could be excluded if they adjoin areas with high concentrations of minorities or poverty.

Participants also could choose to move to a limited number of

areas in Baltimore city, including:

- Predominantly white, blue-collar neighborhoods in the southwest.

- The well-to-do neighborhoods around Mount Washington and Roland Park in the northern end of the city.

- A narrow, wedge-shaped corridor in the northeast between Belair and Harford roads.

- A section of the city in and around Canton in the southeast.

Some of these areas still could be excluded, however, if a specific census tract is above the poverty level but adjacent to areas with large minority or poor populations.

Although they can't predict how many of the 1,342 eligible families would decide to move, urban housing experts expect the proposal to prove popular. They say the disadvantage of moving away from relatives is offset by the dangers of inner-city projects.

"A lot of people want out. They're scared," said Steven Souffer, a professor in the University of Maryland at Baltimore's School of Social Work.

But public transportation likely would be a critical factor in whether families would decide to participate — and in where they would move.

Baltimore County has 33 MTA bus routes, compared with six in Anne Arundel, three in Howard

and Harford, and none in Carroll, according to figures provided by the state Mass Transit Administration.

If Chicago's experience is any guide, however, families do not base their entire decision on public transportation. "By and large, most families have found a way to cope with that," said Mr. Williams of Loyola.

He said a lack of affordable child care has been a particular burden for families moving to the suburbs. When they move, the network of friends and relatives providing child care in the inner city is lost.

So far, Baltimore County officials have been the most active during discussions with the city and the ACLU on details of the relocation plan.

The county expects that no more than 60 families a year would move there from the city — and the county would go to court to enforce that limit if necessary, said Michael H. Davis, a top aide to County Executive C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger III.

None of the other counties asked for such caps, said Ms. Samuels, the ACLU attorney.

Last week, officials in Anne Arundel, Howard, Harford and Carroll counties said they did not expect many families to move to their counties.

"We're not the ones who are go-

ing to be as impacted as Baltimore County," said Anne Arundel County Executive John G. Gary. "We're not going to get anywhere near the number Dutch is going to get."

Said Howard County Executive Charles I. Ecker: "We're kind of out in the country."

Officials in Harford and Carroll counties expressed similar opinions. Officials in the two counties mentioned the lack of bus service as a reason why.

In Baltimore, two City Council members from eligible neighborhoods said Friday that they did not know the details of the plan — assembled in part by city-housing officials.

"They don't think they have to respond to the City Council," said John L. Cain, a Democrat representing the 1st District in Northwest Baltimore. "We're in the dark about this."

Council member Rochelle "Rikki" Spector, a Democrat from the 5th District in Northwest Baltimore, said moving poor families into her neighborhood could help the city.

"If the law is to try not to concentrate the poor people in one place and they're getting good counseling and job training and job possibilities, that would be a constructive thing," she said.

Sun staff writer Ellen Gamberman contributed to this article.