

ning Department, the director of which serves as chairman of the Council.

Just this week, I issued a proclamation putting into effect an amendment to our State Constitution which authorizes the General Assembly to empower any county or municipal corporation to carry out urban renewal projects involving the clearance, redevelopment and rehabilitation of slum or blighted areas.

Even though a community may be authorized by public local law to engage in urban renewal, it will find such an undertaking prohibitively expensive without the aid of federal funds. Before the Federal Urban Renewal Administration will approve such grants, two qualifications must be met. The community must have a recent master comprehensive plan, or a plan which has sufficient revision to bring it up to date, and it must have made a housing analysis study. Since these are considered to be responsibilities of a planning and zoning commission, a community which has neglected to set up such agencies will necessarily be delayed in obtaining federal funds for urban renewal.

At the present, 16 Maryland counties and 15 cities and towns have planning and zoning commissions. It is hoped that that others will join this group. One of the primary functions of our State Department of Planning is to give assistance and encouragement to local communities in their planning programs Direction and leadership is needed to bring about this intergovernmental collaboration, and we believe that it is the obligation of the State to assume the role of leader. Our State Department of Planning is, we think, making a real contribution in this respect

I pledge to all the communities of the State the wholehearted support of the State government, of which our State Department of Planning is a part, in their efforts in this field.