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GREENBELT COMMUNITIES

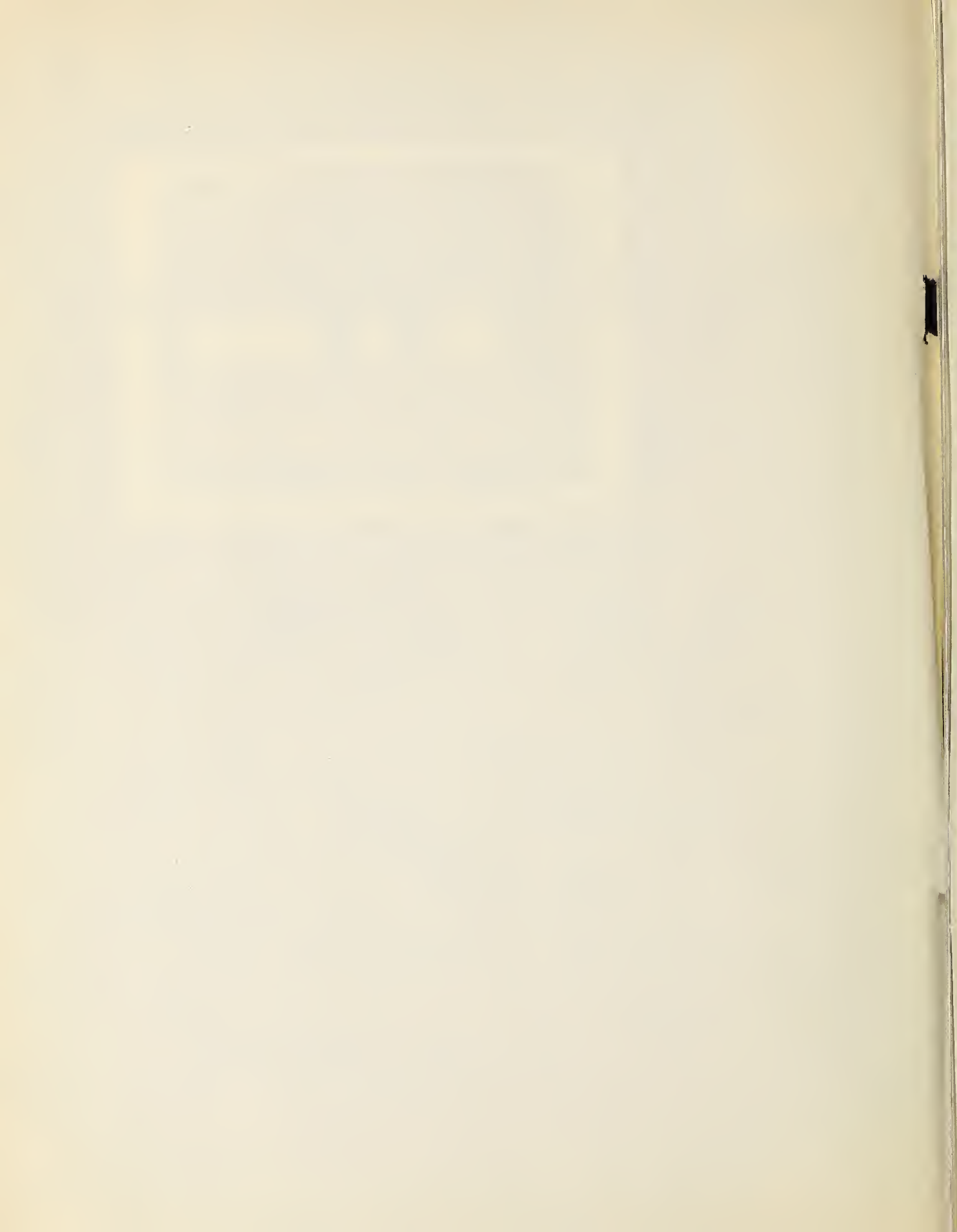
In 1935 the Resettlement Administration started to build three new communities, known as Greenbelt Towns. In doing this the government had four purposes in mind:

1. To demonstrate a new kind of community planning, which would combine many of the advantages of both city and country life.
2. To provide good housing at reasonable rents for moderate-income families.
3. To give jobs to thousands of unemployed workers.

Greenbelt, the town that was started first, is located in Maryland, seven miles north of the city limits of Washington, D. C.; Greenhills lies five miles north of Cincinnati, Ohio; and Greendale is three miles southwest of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Since the Resettlement Administration was discontinued in 1937, the three communities have been operated by the Farm Security Administration.

The greenbelt communities are different from any towns ever built, either in this country or abroad. They did not grow up in a random, hodgepodge way, like most villages; they were completely planned, in every detail, before construction started. Streets, utility systems, schools, stores, parks, and dwelling areas all are designed for the greatest possible efficiency and livability. There are no slums, junk yards, dumps, misplaced billboards, or run-down neighborhoods. Nor will there be any in the future. Each of the towns is surrounded by a protecting "green belt" of parks, farms and forests, to keep undesirable developments from crowding into the community; and the town's own plan will prevent such growths within the village limits.

These communities were completed in the summer of 1938, and nearly all of their 2,258 homes were filled early in 1939. Although there is a long waiting list, applications for vacancies are still being accepted at each of the three towns.



The Greenbelt Towns have attracted widespread attention from people interested in housing and town planning, both in the United States and in other countries. Many of their features already have been adopted in recent housing developments — both public and private — and their influence is growing steadily.

This leaflet is intended to give a brief history of the communities and their operation. Further information may be obtained by writing the Farm Security Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.; or by visiting one of the towns.

Why the Government Built the Towns

On April 30, 1935, the Resettlement Administration was created by the President under the authority given him by Congress in the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935. At that time there were many unemployed, and the Government was anxious to provide useful work for as many of them as possible. One of the ways the Government sought to provide jobs was through a large-scale housing program.

Building houses is an excellent way to create jobs. Not only is a great deal of labor necessary to erect the buildings, but work also is provided for men in the cement factories, the steel mills, the lumber mills, the pipe factories, and the mines and quarries that provide the building materials. As a result of building the three Greenbelt Towns alone, at the peak of employment more than 10,600 men were at work on the town sites; and it is estimated that at least twice as many more jobs were created in private industry.

Another reason for building the towns was the urgent need for rental homes in the cities near which the communities were located.

To show how better citizens and a full community life could be developed in a suburban town was also one of the reasons for creating Greenbelt Towns. Too often, families living in big cities lose nearly all contact with community affairs. The Government hoped to demonstrate that the Greenbelt Towns offered a better opportunity for families to lead a wholesome social, educational and civic life.

Finally, it was obvious that there would be a rapid increase in private building during the coming decade, in order to meet the

urgent needs for new housing which had piled up during the depression. In the past such building booms often resulted in unsightly, sprawling, badly-planned suburban developments, jumbled together with railway yards, filling stations, hot-dog stands, and through highways. This kind of building usually resulted in high costs, quick deterioration of property values, acute traffic problems, high taxes, and generally unsatisfactory living conditions.

Consequently, the government wanted to bring together some of the nation's best town planners, architects, social workers, and engineers, to demonstrate better methods of community development. It was felt that the three model communities which they produced would have a far-reaching influence on American home-building for many years to come.

Where the Greenbelt Idea Came From

The Greenbelt Towns are the first completely planned communities ever built in the United States. Many of the ideas upon which they are based, however, were adapted from earlier housing developments.

At Radburn, New Jersey, for instance, private enterprise has built a town in which there are more green spaces and fewer streets than in the average suburb, and in which the main streets, with their heavy traffic, do not pass by everyone's front door. Unlike the homes in the Greenbelt Towns, however, the houses at Radburn were built for sale. Chatham Village in Pittsburgh is another private development with some resemblances to the Greenbelt Towns; for instance, all of the houses in Chatham Village were built in groups, are owned by one agency, and are rented to the residents. The roots of all these communities, moreover, go back to England, where the "garden cities" of Letchworth and Welwyn set an example several years ago.

How the Towns Were Planned

The first step in building the Greenbelt Towns was the selection of a competent staff to carry on the work. Each of the towns would present a different set of problems — in the lay of the land, the climate, the materials available, the people who would live in the community. The Resettlement Administration, therefore, chose a separate team made up of a site planner, an architect, an engineer, and a co-ordinator, to plan and build each community. The manager also was selected and acted as a consultant during construction on two of the projects.

The selection of the cities near which the towns were to be built came next. In order to make this choice one hundred cities were studied from every angle. Was the population increasing? Was there an urgent need for new housing? Did the people have fairly steady employment? What was the size of their payrolls? Was there a large relief load? Was good land available at reasonable cost? These and many other factors were examined.

The suburban areas of the cities that appeared the best in this study were then surveyed for building sites. It was necessary to find a large block of land near the section of the city where most of the low-income families worked. Good transportation facilities; nearby water, electric, and other utility connections; and soil good enough for gardening were some of the other important requirements.

The cities finally chosen were Cincinnati, Ohio; Washington, D. C.; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and land was purchased on their outskirts for the town sites.

At Greenhills, near Cincinnati, 5,930 acres were acquired, of which 140 acres were used for the residential site, 1,783 for community purposes, and 4,006 for farms and future development reserves.

For Greenbelt, near Washington, 3,411 acres were purchased, of which 120 acres were used for the residential area; and more than 3,100 for parks and reserves for future development.

At Greendale, near Milwaukee, 3,410 acres were purchased, of which 82 acres were used for the residential site, 1,391 for community purposes, and 1,937 for farms and future development reserves.

Local authorities were consulted at length in the selection of the land and the planning of the towns. At Greenbelt, for example, not only was the Maryland State Planning Commission called in, but also representatives of the county, the school district, local citizens associations, and the nearby National Agricultural Research Center. At Greenhills the town plan was officially approved by the Regional Planning Commission of Hamilton County, Ohio, and the Hamilton County authorities were consulted and cooperated in the development of this community.

Ground was broken for Greenbelt in October, 1935; for Greenhills in December, 1935; and for Greendale in May, 1936. The first

houses were ready for occupancy at Greenbelt in September, 1937; at Greenhills in April, 1938; and at Greendale in May, 1938.

Laying Out the Building Sites

The general plans for roads, utilities and house sites varied considerably.

At Greenbelt, for example, the main streets were laid out along the crest of a horseshoe-shaped ridge. Shops, schools and other community buildings were grouped in the center of the horseshoe, where they could be easily reached from all parts of town. At Greenhills, on the other hand, the streets wind along the top of several ridges; while the Greendale street system is more like that of an ordinary suburb.

To some extent at all three towns, but particularly at Greenhills and Greenbelt, the houses were grouped in super blocks, four or five times as large as the usual city block. Instead of facing the street, nearly all of the houses face the interior of the block, which is laid out in lawns and playgrounds. Paths run through these interior parks, safe from traffic, and no sidewalks are necessary along the streets.

At all of the towns an effort was made to have living rooms face on to parks or open country. Bathroom and kitchens are on the street, or service court side, thus effecting savings in plumbing and utility installations, and making it easier to deliver groceries and coal, collect the garbage, and carry out other service functions.

Local preference at Greendale dictated the use of many single houses. At Greenbelt and Greendale, however, more row-houses and apartments were built.

In one sense Greenhills and Greendale are more complete suburban towns than Greenbelt. Each of these towns has more than 60 farms surrounding it, while Greenbelt does not have any farms in its own "Greenbelt area." These farms were planned to supply directly a large part of the food needed by the town residents, at a saving both to the farmers and the town people. To aid this purpose, Greenhills has a Farmers' Market in its town center.

In addition, garden plots were laid out at the edge of each village where any of the residents who want to may raise their own vegetables and flowers.

Streets and Sidewalks

Streets in all three towns were laid out so that a minimum of grading was necessary. In Greenbelt, where sidewalks lie almost entirely within the blocks, underpasses under the roads connect the houses with the business and school area. These underpasses make street crossing as safe as possible. At the other towns the lay of the land and the location of the streets weighed heavily against the use of underpasses. Consequently, sidewalks are placed alongside the streets and traffic lights are used at crossings. The fact that there was not a single major traffic accident in the three towns during their first year of operation speaks well for the planning of the street and sidewalk systems.

Sewers

All of the towns have a storm water system separate from the sanitary sewers. The storm water is collected in catch basins, and drains into nearby gullies or streams. Careful studies of the rainfall for each region were made before the size of the drains was determined.

The towns also have complete sanitary sewer systems. At Greendale and Greenbelt both a sewage disposal plant and an incinerator were built. At Greenhills, only an incinerator was necessary because the sewer lines connect with the county system.

Greendale sewer lines total 8.8 miles. Greenbelt has 16 miles of storm sewers and ten miles of sanitary sewers. At Greenhills there are 18.3 miles of sewers.

In all the towns refuse and garbage are collected regularly.

Water Supply

Greenhills has a water tower with a capacity of 1,500,000 gallons, and obtains its water from the City of Cincinnati. The water is metered by the City of Cincinnati and bills are collected directly from the tenant.

Greenbelt pipes its water from the nearby lines of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Water District, and stores it in a 2,000,000 gallon stand-pipe from which it is distributed to the community.

Greendale, however, dug two deep wells for its water supply and built a storage tank to aid in distribution.

Greendale water mains are 7.9 miles in length. Greenbelt has nine miles of new water mains, and four miles of service connection lines. The water mains at Greenhills are 18.6 miles long.

Electricity

In all three towns electricity is used for cooking and refrigeration, and in certain instances, for heating hot water in summer. In Greenbelt, power is purchased wholesale from the Potomac Electric Power Company and electric light poles carry the power to the various parts of the town. Greenhills obtains its power from the Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company, and all of its power lines are underground. Greendale has a similar arrangement in purchasing electric current wholesale, and its distribution system is entirely underground.

All three towns have automatic fire alarm systems, with a powerful siren at the fire house and alarm boxes scattered throughout the town.

Utilities Built for Future Expansion

All the basic utilities — the major roads, water mains, sewer pipes, and power lines — were planned with the growth of the towns in mind. Utilities at Greendale will accommodate an expansion up to 1,200 families; and at Greenhills they can serve an ultimate population of 1,500 families; at Greenbelt they were designed to serve a total of 3,000 homes.

Houses

The detailed planning that went into the design of the Greenbelt towns was carried into the houses as well. Questionnaires were sent out to thousands of families who would be eligible for residence in the towns. The persons who answered these questionnaires were asked to state the size of their family, whether they preferred to live in single or row houses, and many similar questions. When the houses were planned, these reports were taken into account. One result was that the sizes and types of homes vary according to the demand.

A comparison of the houses shows that Greenbelt has smaller, more compact units than the others. At Greenbelt each row of houses

has a central heating plant, while Greendale has a furnace in every home. Basements at Greenbelt provide for the heating equipment; and Greendale has no cellars at all, since first-floor utility rooms were preferred. The homes at Greenhills have larger rooms than at the other two communities. Half of the Greenhills units have basements and half have utility rooms. Heating units are supplied in each with exception of the apartments. A single plant is provided in each apartment building.

Materials used in building the houses vary widely. Homes are either concrete block, with brick trim; or have a wood frame covered with brick veneer, stucco, wood asbestos, or a combination of these. Windows are steel-projected in Greenhills, steel casements in Greenbelt, and wood double-hung in Greendale. Thorough insulation in all homes reduces heating costs to a minimum and makes the houses cooler in summer.

The use of different materials and varying colors of paint helps to give the houses in all the towns an individual appearance. The several sizes and shapes that were used also aid in this respect. All of the houses were placed to get the most sunlight, and windows were arranged to catch the prevailing breeze and look out on attractive landscapes.

The garages, which are provided for more than half the homes at all the towns, are either attached or built in rows near the homes.

All houses in the Greenbelt Towns are equipped with bath, lavatory, toilet, medicine cabinet, kitchen ranges, sinks and refrigerators. Laundry trays are either in combination with the sinks, or separate in utility rooms or basements. Shades, screens, and electric fixtures are provided.

Community Centers

In each town, a community center was built to supply the stores, schools, and community facilities a modern town needs, within easy walking distance of all the homes. In general, each community center contains a drug store; a grocery store; a barber shop; a beauty shop; a dry cleaning, laundry and shoe repair shop; a gas station; a post office; a bus station; and both police and fire department headquarters.

The second floors of the store buildings are used by the management and the town government. They also provide room for

several small offices and a telephone exchange. Greendale alone has a separate administration building which also serves as the Village Hall.

Schools

At Greenhills, as in the other towns, the school building was planned for use as a community building as well. The town library is located in the school and is operated by the Hamilton County Library Board. The school also contains social rooms, including a game room operated by the Community Council.

Greenbelt has a seven-grade elementary school located in the community center. This building contains several rooms which are used for both youth and adult education, such as the library and arts-and-crafts rooms. The auditorium is used for public meetings, church services, and as a gymnasium.

The high school at Greenbelt is located approximately a mile from the community center in order to serve both Greenbelt and the adjoining area. Buses transport the children to and from the high school.

Adequate senior high school facilities for children at Greendale, were found in West Milwaukee. A combination elementary and junior high school building was erected, however. The auditorium and other facilities are similar to that of the Greenbelt elementary school.

In all of the towns, adult education classes, held in the evening, include courses in all or most of the following subjects: commercial and vocational education, fine arts, music, parent education and home-making.

Costs

The total cost of Greendale was \$10,113,464; of this amount \$6,520,775 was spent for the houses and farms, and \$3,592,689 for the community facilities.

The cost of the 635 homes and farms includes \$4,951,498 for the labor and materials used in building the houses, \$328,316 for land improvement, and \$728,069 for the land.

Items of cost under community facilities include \$865,460 for buildings, \$1,359,840 for water and sanitation, \$673,356 for land improvement, and \$501,607 for the land.

The total cost of Greenhills was \$11,508,001; of this amount \$7,982,935 was spent for the houses and the farms, and \$3,525,066 for the community facilities.

The breakdown of the cost of the 738 homes and farms shows \$5,704,329 spent for the labor and materials used in building the houses, \$338,053 for land improvement, and \$1,132,457 for the land.

Included under community facilities are \$803,604 for buildings, \$1,052,436 for water and sanitation, \$467,255 for land improvement, \$524,114 for roads and streets and \$487,071 for land.

The total cost of Greenbelt was \$13,394,406. Of this amount, \$8,819,732 was spent for the houses; \$4,050,150 for the community facilities; and \$524,523 for the surplus land available for future expansion.

A breakdown of the cost of the 836 homes includes \$8,038,228 for labor and materials used in building the houses, \$409,946 for land improvement, and \$20,734 for the land.

Included in the cost of the community facilities are \$1,216,666 for buildings, \$1,104,329 for water and sanitation, \$1,033,837 for land improvement, \$504,867 for roads and streets, and \$29,109 for the land.

Using a large number of relief workers, instead of machines, in the clearing of the land and in other similar tasks made the cost of the Greenbelt towns a great deal higher than would otherwise have been the case. At Greenhills, for instance, 3,500 men were employed at one time, and construction of the town provided a total of some 4,300,000 man hours of work. At Greenbelt, Maryland, it is estimated that nearly \$5,000,000 was spent for labor that could have been saved if machines and highly skilled men had been used instead of unskilled relief labor. The parks, the community buildings, and the many other developments that make the towns complete also are costs that are not usually included in suburban developments, although such expenses must be met in one way or another by individual home owners or by local governmental agencies.

Furthermore, the streets, sewer and water systems, schools and other utilities were built to allow for a three-fold expansion of the communities. A considerable immediate saving could have been made if these utilities were built only to accommodate the present number of homes; but in that case, much larger future expenditures would have been necessary as the towns expand.

Finally the Greenbelt towns stand as models of complete town planning. The extensive planning costs that went into their creation will not have to be duplicated. Other communities may copy the work that has been done at the Greenbelt towns without this additional expense.

Project Revenues

The Federal Government collects more than \$400,000 from Greenbelt every year. This amount includes rentals from 886 houses, garages, store buildings and the motion picture theatre, together with the sums paid by the tenants for water, electricity and heating.

Out of these revenues the Government makes payments in lieu of taxes to the state, county and town, equal to the amounts which would be paid in normal taxation. The payments made to the town are its principal revenue and cover costs of police and fire protection, maintenance and lighting of streets and parks, and the operation of the sewerage system and garbage collection, the Public Health Department, the Town Hospital, and the adult education and recreational programs.

The rents collected also cover all costs of operation, maintenance and repair of the houses and other structures.

Over and above payments in lieu of taxes and all operating and maintenance costs, the revenues collected will produce a substantial surplus which can be used to repay the Federal Government for its investment.

The financial set-ups at Greendale and Greenhills are similar, and both are expected to produce substantial repayments for the Government. Exact sums available for amortization of the capital investment cannot be determined until the towns have been in full operation for a longer period of time.

OPERATION OF THE GREENBELT TOWNS

Rentals

Greendale rentals start at a minimum of \$19 per month for a one-bedroom apartment and extend to a maximum of \$33.50 per month for a four-bedroom house; the average monthly rental is \$27.95. Greendale has 572 homes in the town proper as follows: 44 two-bedroom single houses; 230 three-bedroom single houses; 12 one-bedroom units

in twin houses; 60 two-bedroom units in twin houses; 18 four-bedroom units in twin houses; 208 family units in group dwellings. In addition there are 63 farms in Greendale, making a total of 635 homes.

The rentals for the 676 homes in Greenhills start at \$18 per month for a one-bedroom apartment, and reach \$42 a month for a four-bedroom single family dwelling. The average monthly basic rent is \$27.62. The Greenhills homes are divided into the following units; 112 one-bedroom apartments; 40 two-bedroom apartments; 18 single family detached four-bedroom dwellings; 6 single family detached three-bedroom dwellings; 500 family units in group dwellings. In addition there are 62 farms in Greenhills, which bring the total homes up to 738.

Greenbelt rentals range from \$18 to \$41 per month, with an average rental of \$31.23 including heat. Electricity and water consumption are billed separately on the basis of amounts used. It is estimated that the average family pays 90 cents per month for water and \$3 per month for electricity, which is used for cooking purposes as well as lighting and refrigeration.

Greenbelt has 885 homes in the town proper and one house in the rural area. There are 574 units in group houses, all but 16 of which are two-story dwellings. The rental for the two-story dwellings, including heat, runs from \$29 per month for four room houses up to \$39 per month for seven room houses; a few units with full basements rent for \$41 per month. Five detached houses of experimental prefabricated design are included in the community, and rent for slightly more than the group houses.

The remaining 306 dwelling units are in apartments. The rents charged for these units include janitor service, as well as heat and water. Apartment rentals run from \$18 for one and one-half room dwellings, to \$27 per month for three-room apartments; and up to \$32 per month for dwellings consisting of three rooms and a sleeping porch.

Income Limitations for Residents

Residents of the three Greenbelt Towns are selected from applicants whose income ranges from \$1000 per year to \$2200 per year. In special cases large families with incomes slightly over \$2200 are also considered. The average income of the residents of the Greenbelt Towns falls between \$1500 and \$1700.



Family Selection

The main factor considered in selecting families, in addition to their income, is their need for better housing. Ability to pay rent regularly, of course, also plays an important part. A trained staff of family selection specialists carried on the work of selecting the first families. This entailed personal interviews both at the community office and in the families' former homes. An effort is made at all the communities to obtain groups of people who, in a general way, match the larger groups in the area from which the families are selected.

Recreational Facilities

In the center of each block at Greenhills are playgrounds for small children. In the area bordering the village are six baseball diamonds used extensively by a Softball League in which over 300 male residents take part. Also in a convenient location are a swimming pool, running track, and football field; tennis courts are being constructed by the residents themselves. Over 900 acres were given to the Hamilton County Park Board for development of an extensive park including picnic areas and an eighteen hole golf course.

Greenbelt has an artificially created lake of 25 acres available for boating, and a completely equipped swimming pool. There is also a large recreation center with baseball fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, and picnic areas. Trails and camp sites are located in the surrounding woods. All of these recreational facilities are available not only to Greenbelt tenants but also to the residents of adjoining communities.

With the exception of the lake and swimming pool, Croendale has similar facilities.

Government

Though the Farm Security Administration owns the land and buildings of the towns, it serves only as landlord. Each town has its own Government, elected by its citizens.

The Greenhills government was organized under the General Statutes of Ohio which require the Mayor-Council type of government as a prerequisite to any other type which later may be adopted. Greenhills was incorporated in the fall of 1939 and its first officers were elected on November 7.

Greenbelt has a city manager type of government. As at the other towns, all tenants are eligible to become voters. They elect a council of five members which appoints, and has the power to remove, a city manager who is charged with the execution of the policies established by the council. Greenbelt was incorporated June 1, 1937, under the laws of the State of Maryland.

Greendale is also an incorporated village under the law of Wisconsin, and has a city manager government similar to that of Greenbelt.

Cooperatives

In order to avoid any possibility of monopolistic abuse and to assure satisfactory service, the stores, theater, and gas station at Greenbelt were leased to the Consumer Distribution Corporation, a non-profit organization founded by the late Edward Filene.

This corporation ran the stores and other businesses and set aside all profits. In January, 1940, after a period of organization, the management and the profits were placed in the hands of a cooperative formed by the town's citizens.

At Greenhills and Greendale, cooperatives formed by the residents took over the management of the stores at the start of operations.

Group Health

The Greenbelt Health Association commenced its activities on April 1, 1938. The townspeople formed this association as a kind of insurance to provide them with adequate medical care. The membership, originally about 75 families, has increased to approximately 300. Monthly membership dues are \$1.00 for single persons, \$1.50 for a family of two, and \$2.00 for a family with children. For these charges, the families receive general practitioner care. The following extra charges are in effect; fifty cents for the first home visit in an illness, \$1.00 for such a visit if requested after 8 P.M., fifty cents for each week that an illness exceeds one week in duration, \$25.00 for obstetrical cases, and similar fees for such services as minor surgery and tonsilleotomies. There is an enrollment fee of \$5.00, to pay for the purchase of equipment.

At the present time, three resident physicians serve the Health Association. They engage in private practice as well and are members of the Prince Georges County Medical Society.



In the spring of 1939, the four-house unit used as Health Center was remodelled to include hospital facilities. This small hospital includes nine beds, three bassinets, and operating room facilities. It may be used by outside physicians and residents of Prince Georges County.

One of the resident physicians has been appointed Town Health Officer. The Town Council employs a full-time public health nurse. There is one dentist, engaged in private practice in the community. His offices are located in the Health Center.

An extensive program of preventive medical care for all the citizens of the town is carried on by the health officers.

Greendale has two group health plans in operation, each of which includes about one-third of the families in the community. The Greendale Health Association is a unit of the Milwaukee Medical Center, a clinic group offering medical services on a prepayment basis. Association members utilize the services of a resident physician and receive surgical and other specialist services from members of the clinic medical staff.

The more recently organized plan, that conducted by the Greendale Medical Union, is a health insurance plan sponsored by the Milwaukee County Medical Society and based on free choice of physicians.

Greendale has a part-time Health Officer, a physician appointed by the Board of Health. The School Board employs a public health nurse. There is one dentist engaged in private practice in the town.

Greenhills has two physicians living and practicing in the community, and one dentist, all of whom have offices in the Management Building. A public health program is to be developed to supplement the county program.

Community Life

Town planning, providing homes for moderate income families, giving work to the unemployed — these are all important parts of the Greenbelt Town idea. There is, however, a fourth item — not so commonly thought of — that is just as important. It is the development of a full community life.

The educational, social, recreational, and civic sides of community life are the heart of any town. Without them the town does not exist.

In building the Greenbelt Towns the Farm Security Administration did a great deal to encourage the growth of all these activities. When the schools and other community buildings were built, they were placed where they would be in easy reach of all of the homes. Meeting rooms, recreational rooms, and libraries were located in this community center. Parks and playgrounds were also placed where all could reach them.

As the towns were populated, the government urged the use of these facilities and the development of organizations that would serve to make the towns leaders in every phase of community life.

The result was the formation within a few months of three very active towns.

From the very beginning the residents took the reins of leadership into their own hands. In the large cities from which they came most of the families had little chance to take part in civic affairs or to become leaders in social or educational groups. In the Greenbelt Towns these opportunities are almost unlimited.

Greenbelt families own and run their own stores, debate their own problems in town meetings, form clubs and organizations that fulfill any social or educational needs that they may feel, partake actively in all sorts of recreational activities and, of course, elect their own local governing body.

Leading influence in civic affairs in each town is the Citizen's Association, in Greenhills called the Community Council. In Greenhills this group is elected each year by the citizens and functions as a committee. In the other two towns the group works in the style of the old-fashioned Town Meeting and all adult residents who desire attend and take part. While the functions and powers of this group are not laid along exactly the same lines in all of the towns, in general it serves as a sort of planning and guiding body for community affairs. It may, for example, recommend the adoption of certain town ordinances by the town government, and it serves as a sponsor and guide for the adult education programs. The Community Council at Greenhills directs the use of certain of the recreational facilities.

In addition to this civic affairs group a partial list of the community organizations to be found in all of the towns includes a Cooperative Educational Committee, a Better Buyers Group, a Health Association, a Pre-School Mothers Club, a Journalistic Club -- all of the towns have their own newspapers -- a branch of the American Legion, a Camera Club, a Parent-Teachers Association, a Dramatic Society, a Garden Club, Boy and Girl Scouts, and a Glee Club.

All of the towns also have a credit union and a volunteer fire department.

Church services at each town are held regularly in one of the town meeting places. Several denominations are represented in all of the communities, and plots have been set aside for churches if they wish to build them in the future.

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