The Somerville Housing Authority is now preparing final plans for the acquisition of properties, relocation of families and businesses and reuse for commercial and industrial purpose of approximately 800,000 square feet of land located in the so-called "Brick-Bottom" section of Somerville. This is the area bounded by the Northern Artery, Washington Street, the Boston & Maine freight yards and the A & P Warehouse on Fitchburg Street. (Existing Land Use Map).

Around the end of 1952, the Housing Authority will submit its final redevelopment plan to the Somerville Planning Board and to the Board of Aldermen. This will provide definitive information on the financing plan, the reuse and disposition plan, and all aspects of the physical plan for the area after redevelopment. In addition, the extent of the relocation problem will be described and the method by which the Authority intends to solve that problem discussed in detail. Before the Board of Aldermen can vote on the proposal, there must be a public hearing, after due notice, at which the public will be invited to express its views. Only after these preliminaries, and the vote of the Board of Aldermen in favor of the project, will the Housing Authority have the power and the funds necessary to carry out the redevelopment plan.

There can be no definite commitment until the necessary approval has been given by the Board of Aldermen. However, the Authority will meet now with potential redevelopers so that investor needs and requirements may be considered in the development of the reuse plan.

The law requires that all of the families affected be relocated prior to demolition. Thus, from six months to two years may lapse before the entire area is cleared, all the new roads and utilities completed and all parcels ready for reuse. The area will be cleared in stages, with relocation efforts concentrated on those families in the particular area to be cleared first, so that some land may be available for sale within six to nine months after approval of the Board of Aldermen. However, no fixed and definite time commitment can be made until the Housing Authority is certain of its ability to relocate the families affected because there can be no clearance of any part of the area until the families living in that part of the area are rehoused. The necessity of relocation is described so that the factors governing the timing of the availability of land may be understood.

Locational Advantages

The project area has locational advantages that are the basis of the decision that its highest and best use is for industrial and commercial purposes. Among these advantages are:

a. Labor Supply

The area can be reached by MTA Rapid Transit from four transfer points: Lechmere Square, Teele Square, Sullivan Square and Harvard Square. Frequent service will bring passengers from Lechmere Square to the area in five minutes, or less than fifteen minutes from Park Street, the central transfer point of the entire MTA system. (See Major Public Transit Lines Map). These convenient transportation facilities, plus the area's location in the heart of a congested area combine to provide an unsurpassed labor pool of both unskilled and skilled workers.

b. Accessibility to Major Truck Routes

The project area is located within Zone 1 for trucking rates. Completion of the highway improvements now planned for the inner Metropolitan Boston Area will provide express routes to downtown Boston via the Central Artery, to the North via Route #1 which abuts the area, to the West via the Inner Belt Route, which will be reached from the Central Artery, which in turn, will have a direct connection from the Northern Artery on Route #1. The Port of Boston is less than two miles distance along Washington Street, a major artery, and through the new Sullivan Square improvements which have eliminated that bottleneck. The map entitled "Major Traffic Arteries" shows graphically the strategic location of this area with respect to the network of major truck routes, existing and proposed, in the entire metropolitan district.

c. Rail Facilities

Rail facilities servicing this area are unsurpassed. The major Boston & Maine marshalling yards abut the area. Spur track facilities for those businesses that require same can be made available. The Boston & Albany Railroad (The New York Central System) passes within one-hundred feet of the area so that rapid transfer of freight to the West is possible. (See Rail Facilities Map).